

Chastised Rulers in the Ancient Near East

Dissertation

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Abstract

In the ancient world, kings were a common subject of literary activity, as they played significant social, economic, and religious roles in the ancient Near East. Unsurprisingly, the praiseworthy deeds of kings were often memorialized in ancient literature. However, in some texts kings were remembered for criminal acts that brought punishment from the god(s). From these documents, which date from the second to the first millennium BCE, we learn that royal acts of sacrilege were believed to have altered the fate of the offending king, his people, or his nation. These chastised rulers are the subject of this dissertation. In the pages that follow, the violations committed by these rulers are collected, explained, and compared, as are the divine punishments that resulted from royal sacrilege. Though attestations are concentrated in the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamian literature, the very fact that the chastised ruler type also surfaces in Ugaritic, Hittite, and Northwest Semitic texts suggests that the concept was an integral part of ancient near eastern kingship ideologies. Thus, this dissertation will also explain the relationship between kings and gods and the unifying aspect of kingship that gave rise to the chastised ruler concept across the ancient Near East.

Dedication

To my parents

τὸν κοπιῶντα γεωργὸν δεῖ πρῶτον τῶν καρπῶν μεταλαμβάνειν

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to my committee members, whose names grace the title page of this dissertation. I am particularly indebted to my advisor, Sam Meier, not only for his careful reading of my dissertation, but also for his valuable mentorship. My other committee members, Daniel Frank, Carolina López-Ruiz, and Bill T. Arnold, have offered valuable input that has greatly improved this project. My discussions with Tyler Yoder have also enhanced the focus of this study. I must extend my appreciation to the Melton Center for Jewish Studies for the financial support they granted me during my time at Ohio State.

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Fields of Study

Major Field: Near Eastern Languages and Cultures
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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgments.....	iv
Vita.....	v
List of Tables.....	xii
Abbreviations.....	xiv
Part I: Orientation.....	1
Chapter 1: Introduction, Definitions, Scope and Structure.....	2
1.1 Introduction.....	2
1.2 Definition: the Chastised ruler.....	3
1.3 Scope and structure.....	12
Chapter 2: Distinguishing Chastised from Unfortunate Rulers.....	14
Chapter 3: Distinguishing Chastised from Sinful Rulers.....	23
Chapter 4: Conclusions.....	29
Part II: Complex Chastised Rulers.....	33
Chapter 5: Complex Chastised Rulers – Analysis.....	34
5.1 Saul.....	34
5.1.1 1 Samuel.....	35

5.1.2 Chronicles.....	51
5.2 David.....	59
5.2.1 Samuel.....	59
5.2.2 Chronicles.....	69
5.3 Solomon (Kings).....	72
5.4 Jeroboam (Kings).....	76
5.5 Ahab (Kings).....	82
5.6 Manasseh (Kings).....	105
Chapter 6: Complex Chastised Rulers – Conclusions.....	112
Part III: Offenses that Precipitate Divine Punishment.....	117
Chapter 7: Crimes Directly Implicating the Gods.....	118
7.1 Failure to heed messages derived from special knowledge.....	118
7.1.1 Mesopotamian literature.....	119
7.1.2 Hebrew Bible.....	121
7.2 Cultic violations.....	124
7.2.1 Mesopotamian literature.....	125
7.2.2 Hebrew Bible.....	136
7.2.3 Hittite literature.....	140
7.3 Broken oaths, vows and alliances	144
7.3.1 Mesopotamian Literature	144
7.3.2 Hittite literature	147
7.3.3 Ugaritic literature.....	149

7.3.4 Hebrew Bible.....	150
Chapter 8: Violations of the Cosmic Order	154
8.1 Moral/ethical offenses.....	154
8.1.1 Adultery (Hebrew Bible).....	154
8.1.2 Perversion of royal duty (Mesopotamia).....	155
8.1.3 Violence.....	158
8.1.3.1 Mesopotamia.....	158
8.1.3.2 Hebrew Bible.....	159
8.2 Hubris (Hebrew Bible).....	162
8.3 Opposing the elect of the gods.....	172
8.3.1 Opposing the gods' elect ruler (Mesopotamia).....	173
8.3.2 Opposing cities with <i>kidinnūtu</i> status (Mesopotamia).....	176
8.3.3 Opposing the gods' domain.....	180
8.3.3.1 Mesopotamian literature.....	180
8.3.3.2 Hebrew Bible.....	190
8.4 Foreign alliances (Hebrew Bible).....	195
8.5 Varia.....	196
8.5.1 Mesopotamian literature.....	192
8.5.2 Hebrew Bible.....	199
8.5.3 Ugaritic literature.....	199
8.5.4 Hittite literature.....	200
8.5.5 Northwest Semitic literature.....	201

Chapter 9: Conclusions – Offenses that Precipitate Divine Punishment.....	203
Part IV: Punishments from the Gods.....	218
Chapter 10: The Consequences of Royal Sacrilege – Individual Punishment.....	219
10.1 Individual punishment.....	219
10.1.1 Physical affliction.....	219
10.1.1.1 Mesopotamian literature.....	222
10.1.1.2 Hebrew Bible.....	223
10.1.1.3 Ugaritic Literature.....	225
10.1.1.4 Hittite literature.....	226
10.1.1.5 Northwest Semitic literature.....	226
10.1.2 Mental affliction.....	227
10.1.2.1 Mesopotamian literature	228
10.1.2.2 Hebrew Bible.....	231
10.1.3 Violent Death.....	232
10.1.3.1 Mesopotamian literature.....	233
10.1.3.2 Hebrew Bible.....	241
10.1.3.3 Ugaritic literature.....	254
10.1.4 Rejection of Kingship.....	257
10.1.4.1 Mesopotamian literature.....	257
10.1.4.2 Hebrew Bible.....	259
10.1.5 Capture and Imprisonment.....	262
10.1.5.1 Mesopotamian literature.....	263

10.1.5.2 Hebrew Bible.....	263
10.1.6 Varia (Mesopotamia).....	266
Chapter 11: The Consequences of Royal Sacrilege – Corporate Punishment.....	268
11.1 Corporate punishment.....	268
11.1.1 Military disaster.....	268
11.1.1.1 Mesopotamian literature.....	268
11.1.1.2 Hittite literature.....	281
11.1.1.3 Hebrew Bible.....	282
11.1.2 Royal Family.....	293
11.1.2.1 Mesopotamian literature.....	293
11.1.2.2 Hebrew Bible.....	295
11.1.3 Administration.....	298
11.1.3.1 Mesopotamian literature.....	299
11.1.3.2 Hebrew Bible.....	299
11.1.4 Divine abandonment and wrath.....	300
11.1.4.1 Mesopotamian literature.....	301
11.1.4.2 Hebrew Bible.....	303
11.1.5 Famine and drought.....	305
11.1.5.1 Mesopotamian literature.....	305
11.1.5.2 Ugaritic literature.....	307
11.1.5.3 Hebrew Bible.....	308
11.1.6 Plague and epidemic.....	309

11.1.6.1 Mesopotamian literature.....	309
11.1.6.2 Hittite literature.....	312
11.1.6.3 Hebrew Bible.....	313
11.1.7 Varia (corporate).....	314
11.1.7.1 Mesopotamian literature.....	314
11.1.7.2 Hebrew Bible.....	315
Chapter 12: Conclusions – Punishments from the Gods.....	317
Part V: Synthesis.....	330
Chapter 13: Gods and Kings.....	331
I. Rulers before the gods, royal responsibility, punishment and fate of the land.....	331
II. Frequency, plausibility, and genre.....	352
III. Conclusion.....	359
Bibliography.....	360

List of Tables

Table 1. Failure to heed messages derived from special knowledge.....	124
Table 2. Cultic Violations.....	142
Table 3. Broken oaths, vows, and alliances.....	153
Table 4. Moral/ethical offenses.....	162
Table 5. Hubris.....	171
Table 6. Opposing the elect of the gods.....	194
Table 7. Foreign alliances.....	196
Table 8. Various offenses.....	202
Table 9. Physical Affliction.....	227
Table 10. Mental Affliction.....	232
Table 11. Violent Death.....	256
Table 12. Rejection of Kingship.....	262
Table 13. Imprisonment.....	265
Table 14. Various individual punishments.....	267
Table 15. Military Disaster.....	292
Table 16. Punishment inflicted on the royal family.....	298
Table 17. Punishment inflicted on the royal administration.....	300
Table 18. Divine abandonment and wrath.....	305

Table 19. Famine and drought.....	309
Table 20. Plague and epidemic.....	314
Table 21. Various corporate punishments.....	316

Abbreviations

A	Tablets from the Mari archives
ABC	Grayson, Albert Kirk. 1975. <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles</i> . Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns.
ANET ³	Pritchard, James B. 1958. <i>The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures</i> . 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Aram	Aramaic
ARM	Archives royales de Mari
BCHP	Finkel, I.L and R.J. van der Spek. Forthcoming. Babylonian Chronicles of the Hellenistic Period (preliminary editions available at http://www.livius.org/cg/cm/chronicles/chron00.html)
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A Briggs. 1906. <i>A Hebrew and English lexicon of the Old Testament, with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic</i> . Translated by Edward Robinson. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
BHLT	Grayson, Albert Kirk. 1975. <i>Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts</i> . Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.
BHS	K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. <i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> (Stuttgart, 1997)
BM	Tablets in the British Museum
CAD	The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago
CAT	Dietrich, Manfred, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. 1995. <i>The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts : From Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places</i> . Abhandlungen zur Literature Alt-Syrien-Palästinas 8. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag. Black, Jeremy A, A. R. George, and J. N Postgate. 2000. <i>A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian</i> . Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
CDA	Black, Jeremy, Andrew George, and Nicholas Postgate, eds. 2000. <i>A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian</i> . SANTAG Arbeiten Und Untersuchungen Zur Keilschriftkunde 5. Wiesbaden:

Harrassowitz.

Chr	Chronicles
Cole <i>Nippur</i>	Cole, Steven William. 1996. <i>Nippur IV: The Early Neo-Babylonian Governor's Archive from Nippur</i> . OIP 114. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
COS 1	Hallo, William W., and K. L. Younger, eds. 1997. <i>The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World</i> . Vol. 1. Leiden: Brill.
COS 2	Hallo, William W., and K. L. Younger, eds.. 2000. <i>The Context of Scripture: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World</i> . Vol. 2. Leiden: Brill.
Dan	Daniel
Deut	Deuteronomy
D.T.	Tablets in the Daily Telegraph collection of the British Museum
DtrH	Deuteronomistic History
<i>DUL</i>	del Olmo Lete, G., and Joaquín Sanmartín. 2003. <i>A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition</i> . Translated by W.G.E Watson. 2 vols. Leiden; Boston, Mass.: Brill.
EA	El Amarna
Esd	Esdras
ETCSL	The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature Glassner, Jean-Jacques. 2004. <i>Mesopotamian Chronicles</i> . Writings from the Ancient World 19. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
Exod	Exodus
Ezek	Ezekiel
Gen	Genesis
Glassner <i>Mesopotamian Chronicles</i>	Glassner, Jean-Jacques. 2004. <i>Mesopotamian Chronicles</i> . Writings from the Ancient World 19. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
<i>HALOT</i>	Köhler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner. 2001. <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . 2 vols. Leiden: Brill.
HB	Hebrew Bible
Hoffner <i>Hittite Myths</i>	Hoffner, Harry A. 1998. <i>Hittite Myths</i> . 2nd ed. Writings from the Ancient World 2. Atlanta: Scholars Press.
Hos	Hosea
IM	Tablets in the Iraq Museum, Baghdad

Isa	Isaiah
J. Westenholz <i>Akkade</i>	Westenholz, Joan Goodnick. 1997. <i>Legends of the Kings of Akkade</i> . Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns.
Jer	Jeremiah
Josh	Joshua
Judg	Judges
K	Tablets in the Kouyunkik collection of the British Museum
KAL 3	Frahm, Eckart. 2009. <i>Historische und historisch-literarische Texte, Keilschrifttexte aus Assur literarischen Inhalts 3</i> . WVDOG 121. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
KBo	Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi
Kgs	Kings
Koch- Westenholz <i>Liver Omens</i>	Koch-Westenholz, Ulla. 2000. <i>Babylonian Liver Omens: The Chapters Manzāzu, Padānu, and Pān Tākalti of the Babylonian Extispicy Series Mainly from Aššurbanipal's Library</i> . Copenhagen: Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Near Eastern Studies, University of Copenhagen : Museum Tusculanum Press.
l.	line
Lambert <i>BWL</i>	Lambert, W. G. 1960. <i>Babylonian Wisdom Literature</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Leichty <i>Izbu</i>	Leichty, Erle. 1970. <i>The Omen Series Šumma Izbu</i> . Locust Valley, N.Y.: J. J. Augustin.
Lev	Leviticus
LXX	Septuagint
M	Tablets from the Mari archives
Macc	Maccabees
Meso	Mesopotamia
MMA	The Metropolitan Museum of Art
MS	Tablets in the Schøyen Collection
MT	Masoretic Text
Neh	Nehemiah
no.	number
Num	Numbers

NWS	Northwest Semitic
o	obverse
ORACC	The Open Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/index.html)
p.	page
Pet	Peter
Prov	Proverbs
Ps/Pss	Psalms/Psalms
r	reverse
RINAP 4	Leichty, Erle. 2011. <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680-669 BC)</i> . The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 4. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns.
SAA 2	Parpola, Simo, and Kazuko Watanabe. 1988. <i>Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths</i> . State Archives of Assyria 2. [Helsinki, Finland]: Helsinki University Press.
SAA 3	Livingstone, Alasdair. 1989. <i>Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea</i> . State Archives of Assyria 3. Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki University Press.
SAA 10	Parpola, Simo. 1993. <i>Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars</i> . State Archives of Assyria 10. Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki University Press.
Sam	Samuel
Schaudig <i>Nabonid</i>	Schaudig, Hanspeter. 2001. <i>Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Grossen samt den in ihrem Umfeld entstandenen Tendenzschriften: Textausgabe und Grammatik</i> . Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.
Sm	Tablets in the Smith collection of the British Museum
v.	verse
VAB 4	Langdon, Stephen. 1912. <i>Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften</i> . Translated by Rudolf Zehnpfund. Vorderasiatische Bibliothek 4. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs.
Vol.	volume
YOS 10	Götze, Albrecht. 1947. <i>Old Babylonian Omen Texts</i> . Vol. 10. Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.

Part I: Orientation

Part I of this study will define and clarify the object of study: the chastised ruler. Previous work on the *Unheilsherrscher*, a related concept, will be summarized in chapter 1, for the *Unheilsherrscher* serves as a background for defining the chastised ruler. Then, a precise definition of “chastised ruler” will be provided. Chapter 1 will then close with a description of the scope and structure of the remainder of this dissertation.

The remaining chapters of Part I discuss two negative depictions of rulers that are related to, but distinct from, the chastised ruler concept. These concepts, the “unfortunate ruler” and the “sinful ruler” will be explained and contrasted with the “chastised ruler” in chapters 2 and 3, respectively. Chapter 4 will discuss the results of chapters 1-3, explaining how the chastised ruler concept represents the most negative depiction that a ruler could attain in literature.

Chapter 1: Introduction, Definitions, Scope and Structure

1.1 Introduction

Many texts from the ancient Near East have memorialized the deeds, exploits, and grandeur of kings. Several genres, such as epics, hymns, narratives, and letters, pay homage to these ancient rulers and their relationship to the gods. Generally, the production of most of these texts, at least in Mesopotamia, was under the guidance of the royal court. It is for this reason that Lambert, in his discussion of Mesopotamian kingship, says, “Thus, royalty figures often in the surviving documents, but rarely is criticism preserved – for obvious reasons.”¹

Lambert's statement is certainly true, particularly when scribes had native Mesopotamian kings in view. In fact, the royal court's involvement in the production of literature is surely a major factor that differentiates Mesopotamian literature from its Hebrew counterpart. The writers responsible for the Hebrew Bible had no problem criticizing its kings, for they were not necessarily writing under the supervision of the royal court. However, there is more to the criticism of kings than the domain in which it was produced. Even texts produced by the royal court could criticize kings, as can be seen in the examples of the “Sin of Sargon” text (7.3.1) and the Plague Prayers of Muršili (7.2.3).

1 Lambert 1998, 54.

Royal criticism, in general, ultimately stems from a darker side of kingship that has not received much attention in scholarship. The ancients believed their kings to hold a position that made their actions of great consequence before the gods. It is for this reason that scribes, across several ancient near eastern cultures, ascribed various disasters and misfortune to royal misdeeds, impiety, and sins. These rulers, those that scribes identified as the source of disaster, form a crucial aspect of royal ideology, namely, the “chastised ruler.”

It is the portrayals of these chastised rulers that are under investigation in this dissertation, both their violations and the ensuing consequences. The specific meaning of “chastised ruler,” as utilized in this dissertation, is informed by previous work on the *Unheilsherrscher*. In the following, several studies that deal with the *Unheilsherrscher* will be reviewed in order to provide a background for a precise definition “chastised ruler.”

1.2 Definition: the Chastised Ruler

Güterbock (1934) identified the literary character type *Unheilsherrscher* in his study of Babylonian and Hittite historical-literary texts. In particular, he labeled Narām-Sîn as the model “*Unheilsherrscher*.”² This initial identification of the typology is the groundwork from which further study ensued.

Evans (1983) carried out Güterbock's observations in a comparative analysis of Jeroboam and Narām-Sîn. In examining the depiction of Narām-Sîn as an *Unheilsherrscher* in Mesopotamian literature, Evans observed that the negative portrayal

² Güterbock 1934, 20, 75-76.

of Narām-Sîn conflicts with the positive records of this same king.³ As an *Unheilsherrscher*, Narām-Sîn is blamed for destruction brought upon his land, though the destruction is a telescoping anachronism.⁴ Such a tradition appears over time, beginning with the Curse of Akkad, manifesting itself in the Cuthean Legend of Narām-Sîn and the Weidner Chronicle. Evans notes that these texts are all of a different genre, written for different purposes, and that the *Unheilsherrscher* typology transcends both Narām-Sîn and the Akkad dynasty.⁵

According to Evans, Jeroboam fits the same mold as Narām-Sîn, though his sins are only part of the cause of the destruction of Israel in Kings. Like Narām-Sîn, Jeroboam was depicted as a hero in earlier tradition.⁶ The conflicting portrait, limited to the book of Kings where Jeroboam is responsible for the destruction of Israel, has a few differences from its Narām-Sîn counterpart: 1) Jeroboam was the first member of his dynasty, unlike Narām-Sîn, 2) and the telescoping is not backwards as in the account of Narām-Sîn, but forwards.⁷ Since Evans sees the same features in the account of Jeroboam as in that of Narām-Sîn, he concludes that both Narām-Sîn and Jeroboam are “...cast in the role of archetypal *Unheilsherrscher*.”⁸ The traditions concerning both Narām-Sîn and Jeroboam emphasize the ruler's misfortune and the disaster that overtakes the dynasty and nation as a result of varying religious offense by the king, sometimes anachronistically, and the destruction is portrayed by means of the retribution principle,

3 Evans 1982, 99, 110.

4 Ibid., 102.

5 Ibid., 104ff.

6 Ibid., 116-117.

7 Ibid., 121.

8 Ibid., 124.

which “...lends itself to the interpretation of other events and rulers.”⁹ As for the typology itself, Evans concludes that,

It is used primarily to explain the misfortunes that befall royal dynasties and the great calamities that plague nations, especially invasions and revolutions that change peoples' destinies. When coupled with a schematic pattern of 'good' and 'bad' reigns, it assumes propagandistic functions, perhaps to legitimize religious-political programs which, in their own way, are designed to change the course of events, to break the pattern of misfortune and defeat.¹⁰

Though his study only centers on Narām-Sîn and Jeroboam, Evans mentions other kings cast in the *Unheilsherrscher* role. From Mesopotamia he mentions Amar-Sîn, Ibī-Sîn, Šulgi, and Nabonidus.¹¹ However, from the Hebrew Bible Evans only mentions Manasseh,¹² stating that “...it is surprising that the typology is not more widely diffused in the biblical traditions.”¹³

With the purpose of providing a modern example of Scandinavian comparative study, Jensen utilized and built upon some of the observations made by Evans in a 1991 article.¹⁴ In tracing the central theme of the article, “the fall of the king,” Jensen first analyzes Indo-European texts which fall within his study’s purview: an Iranian myth involving the fall of Yima, an Indian myth involving Indra, an Indian parallel to Yima in the Mahabhrata about Yayati, as well as referencing Herodotus’ legend concerning king Kroisos.¹⁵ Turning to the ancient Near East, Jensen mentions the “Near-Oriental ‘*Unheilsherrscher*,’” relying heavily on Evans' work, specifically highlighting the

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., 124-125.

11 Ibid., 111-112.

12 Ibid., 123.

13 Ibid., 125.

14 Jensen 1991.

15 Ibid., 125, 127, 129.

similarities between Jeroboam and the Curse of Agade.¹⁶ Jensen goes on to analyze Isaiah 2, 10, and 14, Euripides' *The Bacchae*, the story of Romulus, and the death of Christ in the gospels, in light of "the fall of the king" motif.¹⁷ In his analysis, Jensen offers some helpful criticisms of Evans' original work. Jensen takes issue with Evans' assertion that the *Unheilsherrscher* motif was taken into the Hebrew tradition from its neighbors, in light of the fact that the same theme (per Jensen) is apparent in the Indo-Iranian and Greek traditions.¹⁸ This critique is somewhat helpful in that Evan's explanation is too simple for a certainly more complex reality. Quite helpful is Jensen's assertion that the theme manifests itself more often in biblical literature than Evans suggests. Jensen mentions that Saul, Solomon, David, Jehoiakim, Isaiah's "Assyrian king or his Morning Star," Deutero-Isaiah's "Babylonian queen," and Ezekiel's "king of Tyrus and his Pharaoh" all have characteristics of the *Unheilsherrscher*.¹⁹

In 1994, Arnold wrote on the Weidner Chronicle, partially in response to Evans and partially in response to newly discovered portions of that text.²⁰ Regarding Jeroboam and the *Unheilsherrscher* motif as outlined by Evans, Arnold agrees that the *Unheilsherrscher* motif occurs in both traditions. But Arnold goes on to state that the Deuteronomic History significantly differs from the Narām-Sîn traditions in that the king was not solely responsible for the disaster, but that the destruction was a result of the combined sins of Israel with that of Jeroboam.²¹ Furthermore, though he sees that both

16 Ibid., 129-130.

17 Ibid., 130ff.

18 Ibid., 131.

19 Ibid.

20 Arnold 1994.

21 Ibid., 140.

cultures viewed divine intervention in history in a similar manner,²² Arnold notes several more differences. Most obvious is the different use of lists in Mesopotamian chronography and biblical historiography: the list functions in the service of the larger literary unit in the biblical text, whereas older list-science forms the basis for Mesopotamian chronography.²³ Not as obvious, but equally important, is the difference in divine plan: in the Weidner Chronicle, "...the causal forces at work in this document are located in the mythical deliberations of Ea, Anu, and Enlil, in which divine decrees are set in force for all time."²⁴ Arnold explains the difference which follows this observation: in the Weidner Chronicle, maintaining the throne necessitated maintaining ritual as determined in the divine realm, whereas in the biblical text the "causal line" is located in the historical realm (covenant) with ritual only in the service of the covenant.²⁵ These two different locations for the point of causation (divine realm vs. a point in history) are fundamental differences pertaining to the concept of history between historiography in the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamian historiography.²⁶

Though not the central focus of their study, Tadmor, Landsberger, and Parpola examine the relationship between Sargon II, Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon, and visit the *Unheilsherrscher* typology in analyzing the "Sin of Sargon" text, making several critical (and contradictory) observations.²⁷ First, Sargon's battlefield death, along with the lack of a proper burial, would have led Assyrians to believe that it was Sargon's sin that lead

22 Ibid., 141.

23 Ibid., 142-144.

24 Ibid., 145.

25 Ibid., 145-146.

26 Ibid.

27 Tadmor-Landsberger-Parpola 1989.

to his unfortunate end.²⁸ The sin of Sargon is implied to be in line with that of Enmerkar and Narām-Sîn: not consulting the *barûs* (Landsberger).²⁹ Sennacherib's sin, on the other hand, was not building the statue of Marduk (Landsberger).³⁰ For his part, Landsberger does not see the *Unheilsherrscher* typology in this text.³¹ However, in the final analysis, Parpola states that these documents [K.4730(+) Sm. 1876] were political texts used to justify Esarhaddon's Babylonian policy, and have strong ties to the Cuthean Legend of Narām-Sîn, with Sennacherib in the role of *Unheilsherrscher* (contra Landsberger).³² Ultimately, Parpola argues that K.4730(+) was made to justify abnormal extispicy necessary to ensure the needed answer concerning the reconstruction of the Marduk statue.³³ Sargon's sin seems to be a "...purposely broken treaty which he had sworn to respect," thereby sinning against the gods who guarded the treaty (contra Landsberger).³⁴

These investigations, as well as several other tangential surveys which have identified the typology, have solidly established a starting point for this study: kings, in the role of *Unheilsherrscher*, played an important part in the life of ancient literature, culture, and politics. At the same time, the combination of the studies surveyed above highlight a problem of definition.

The studies above are not unified in their understanding of the *Unheilsherrscher*. Some seem to take *Unheilsherrscher* to indicate a king who brings an end to his dynasty

28 Ibid., 29.

29 Ibid., 34.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., 38.

32 Ibid., 46-47. Note especially Parpola's observations that both characters have a father sharing the same name and both texts propagate the importance of extispicy.

33 Ibid., 47.

34 Ibid., 48-49.

and nation.³⁵ But Jensen, specifically insinuating that the *Unheilsherrscher* typology surfaces in the stories of Saul, Solomon, David, and Jehoiakim, is working with a different understanding of *Unheilsherrscher*. Saul, for example, did not destroy his nation.³⁶ Not only did David not destroy his dynasty, others were preserved because of him.³⁷ The different conclusions reached by Landsberger and Parpola concerning Sennacherib demonstrate a loose understanding of what makes a king an *Unheilsherrscher*. Additionally, not every *Unheilsherrscher* plays the same role, as Arnold has shown.

In light of the above, one should note another scholarly perception of the *Unheilsherrscher*. Starr cites Amar-Su'ena as being remembered as an *Unheilsherrscher* in the omen tradition, based on Amar-Su'ena's association with negative omens, where the king alone is in view (not his nation or dynasty).³⁸ Similar to Amar-Su'ena in the omen tradition are many kings in the biblical text who receive individualized punishment not involving nation or dynasty.³⁹

The variegated picture of the *Unheilsherrscher* gleaned from these studies seems

35 See Evans 1983, 2-3. It should be noted that Evans is only talking about the Jeroboam and Narām-Sîn traditions, so it is precarious to draw too much from his discussion (note that Jensen [1991, 130] generalizes Evans' definition, but it is not entirely clear from Evans' work if this was intended). At the same time, Evans is surprised that the typology does not occur more often in biblical literature, claiming it only occurs in the DtrH, suggesting a more restricted definition of the typology (again, it is not entirely clear if Evans is talking about the typology occurring within the biblical text in general, or the typology applied specifically to Jeroboam in biblical literature). The confusion originates in the fact that Evans draws his definition of the “archetypal *Unheilsherrscher*” from Narām-Sîn and Jeroboam (Evans 1983, 124, first concluding paragraph), then proceeds in the next paragraph to speak of “the typology” with virtually the same definition (ibid., 124-125). Is “the typology” the *Unheilsherrscher* in general, or only the “archetypal *Unheilsherrscher*”? If the former, Jensen's critiques stand. If the latter, Jensen has overgeneralized Evans' work. In any case, since Evans seems unclear, and since Jensen is at odds with Evans, the point about needing to clearly define the typology stands.

36 But he did end his dynasty, see 1 Samuel 13 and 15.

37 But he did bring a degree of destruction on his land, see 2 Samuel 24.

38 Starr 1977.

39 See, for example, 2 Chr 26:16ff and Daniel 4.

to be reflected in English definitions of *Unheilsherrscher*. Evans notes that the term has been variously defined: “calamitous ruler” by Finkelstein, “ill-fated ruler” by Gurney, and “hapless ruler” by Hallo.⁴⁰ Sasson defines the term as “a misfortune-prone elect of the gods.”⁴¹ In fact, one can detect similar vacillation in Güterbock's original publication. In characterizing Narām-Sîn, Güterbock identified him as an *Unheilsherrscher* and an *Unglücksherrscher*.⁴²

Previous work on the *Unheilsherrscher* has been quite informative, but it is by no means monolithic in its understanding of the term. Instead, the studies above have helpfully indicated the complex reality of the ancients' depictions of royal misfortune. Because the object of study in this dissertation is related to some of the uses of *Unheilsherrscher*, but not others, precise definitions are necessary. In fact, the vacillating use of *Unheilsherrscher* seems to result from the application of *Unheilsherrscher* to three different sorts of rulers. These three types of rulers that fall under the *Unheilsherrscher* umbrella can be termed “unfortunate rulers,” “sinful rulers,” and “chastised rulers.”⁴³ Recognizing the differences in these three negative portrayals of kings is absolutely essential, for only the chastised ruler is under investigation in this study. The distinctions are so important that the next three chapters are devoted to distinguishing “unfortunate” and “sinful” rulers from chastised rulers.

The discussion that forms the bulk of this dissertation will defend the following definition: a “chastised ruler” is a ruler who brings punishment from the god(s) by means

40 Evans 1983, 99 and note 8.

41 Sasson 2005, 227.

42 Güterbock 1934, 75.

43 I am grateful for Daniel Frank's comments regarding the terminology used in this dissertation, and his suggestion which led to the use of this term.

of his action(s) that offend a deity or deities.⁴⁴ Several aspects of this definition must be held together at all times. First, the punishments of chastised rulers may affect the king alone, large populations, or both. However, the text must indicate that the punishment(s) unequivocally derive from the divine realm in some way. Secondly, offenses by the kings must offend the gods in such a way that the deities take action. Importantly, these violations must be somehow connected to divine reaction(s) in the text. This means that a king's offenses are not necessarily acts of impiety or sinful deeds, for such actions are not always answered by divine punishment. Finally, though divine action is a requirement of a chastised ruler type, it is not enough for it to simply be present in the text. The text must link the ruler's actions and the consequences of those actions with divine punishment in some way.

Whenever "chastised" is used in this dissertation, it is this very specific concept that is in view: a divine punishment is meted out to a human who has offended the gods. This specific definition, and the chastised ruler concept, will be utilized through the entirety of this dissertation, and must be kept in mind at all times. The following chapters in Part I will assist in further distinguishing the chastised ruler from sinful and unfortunate rulers, while the chastised ruler will be explicated in the remainder of this dissertation.

⁴⁴ Cf. the definitions of *Unheilsherrscher* given above. Identifying the typology of this study as either "hapless ruler," or "a misfortune-prone elect of the gods" is problematic in that they diminish the rulers culpability. "Ill-fated ruler" is equally problematic, in that the ruler is not necessarily "fated." "Calamitous ruler" is too general for this study. Even the German term *Unheilsherrscher* is too general, as it does not suggest the specific type of infraction (i.e., religious) that this study has in view. The term "chastised ruler" encapsulates both the ruler's culpability as an offender and the requirement that the offender be explicitly punished by the god(s).

1.3 Scope and structure

The scope of this study is naturally limited by the literature preserved in the textual record. For this reason, most attestations of the ancient near eastern chastised ruler occur in Mesopotamian literature and the Hebrew Bible. However, equally important examples from Hittite, Ugaritic, and Northwest Semitic texts are also utilized in this study. Temporally, these texts span millennia, with some texts occurring as early as the Ur III period (e.g., the Curse of Agade), and others as late as the Seleucid period (e.g., BM 55467, Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles* no. 48). As will become apparent, the genres of texts from these cultures are as diverse as their temporal dispersion.

In this study I have endeavored to identify, collect, and explain those chastised rulers attested in the literature preserved in the geographic and temporal confines mentioned above.⁴⁵ In the remainder of Part I (chapters 2-4), the chastised ruler type will be distinguished from other negative depictions of kings (i.e., unfortunate and sinful rulers). Part II (chapters 5-6) will analyze “complex chastised rulers,” a product of the Hebrew Bible alone. Part III (chapters 8-9) will collect, explain, and compare the crimes of chastised rulers. Part IV (chapters 10-12) will do the same for the consequences that result from the crimes described in Part III. Part V will close this study by situating the chastised ruler concept within the larger framework of ancient near eastern kingship ideology.

The approach taken in this dissertation is primarily ahistorical. This is because the aim of this project is to identify and explain the literary-religious phenomenon of the

⁴⁵ The only way to identify these rulers is to sift through primary literature. While I have tried to be as comprehensive as possible, I make no promises to have captured every extant attestation of the type.

chastised ruler. Though the quest for the historical circumstances that may be behind the production of such literature is certainly of value, it is the subject of a different work altogether.

Chapter 2: Distinguishing Chastised from Unfortunate Rulers

The chastised ruler needs to be separated from the “unfortunate ruler.” An unfortunate ruler is a ruler whose undesirable fate is recorded in literature. The ruler is not mentioned as having offended the gods via any actions. Put another way, the unfortunate ruler is not explicitly identified as one who angers the gods, though he suffers misfortune. Most important is that the fate which the ruler suffered is not directly connected to the gods. Instead, ancient scribes chose to memorialize notable negative experiences which rulers experienced in rather mundane language. These unfortunate rulers were so remembered because their sufferings were jolting, for rulers ought not experience such agony, as they held a unique position before the gods (Part V).

Several examples from Mesopotamia will help to demonstrate the concept of the unfortunate ruler. One type of literature, Mesopotamian chronicles, contains numerous instances that record a ruler's notable misfortune. For example, Hallushu-(Inshushinak II) captured his brother Shutruk-Nahhunte and “shut the door in his face” (*ABC 1 ii 33*).¹ The same text later explains that after Hallushu-(Inshushinak II) took the throne, his people rebelled against him and (ironically) “shut the door in his face” before assassinating him (*ABC 1 iii 7ff*).² A number of rulers were remembered as being either captured (or presumably captured) and executed or assassinated:

1 “Shut the door in his face” is Grayson's translation of *bāba ina pānīšu ip̄hi*, a phrase which occurs elsewhere only in iii7ff., and may be an Elamite idiom for “he threw him in prison.” See *ABC 1 ii 33* and Grayson's accompanying note, and cf. the following note below.

2 The phrase is almost identical to that above, save the number of the verb: [*bā*]ba ina pānīšu ip̄hū. See the note above.

(Nabu)-nādin-(zēri) (*ABC* 1 i 14)
 Kudur-(Nahhunte) (*ABC* 1 iii 14)
 Sennacherib (*ABC* 1 iii 34-35)
 (Nabu)-zēr-kitti-līšir (*ABC* 1 iii 39-42)
 ...-ahhē-šullim and Šamaš-ibni (*ABC* 1 iv 1-2, restored from *ABC* 14:10-11)
 Bēl-ēṭir (*ABC* 1 iv 38)
 an unknown MU.MU and Kudurru (*ABC* 14:19)³
 Karaḥardaš (*ABC* 21 i 8'-11')
 Tukultī-Ninutra (I) (*ABC* 22 iv 9-10).

In a few instances, the writers highlighted the particular manner in which a ruler was killed. The heads of the king of Sidon and the king of Kundu and Sisu were cut off and transported to Assyria (*ABC* 1 iv 6-7 // *ABC* 14:14; *ABC* 1 iv 7-8). *ABC* 21 points out the deaths of Marduk-šapik-zēri (ii 30'), Šamaš-mudammiq (iii 8), and ...Nabû]-apla-iddina (iii 26) using the idiom *šadû + emēdu*.

The captures of a number of rulers are scattered throughout the chronicles:

Aššur-nādin-šumi (*ABC* 1 ii 42)
 Nergal-ushezib (*ABC* 1 iii 4ff.)
 Mušēzib-Marduk (*ABC* 1 iii 22-23)
 MU.MU and Kudurru (*ABC* 1 iv 14-15)
 an Egyptian king's son (*ABC* 1 iv 27)
 the king of Kirbitu (*ABC* 1 iv 37)
 a king of Ashkelon (*ABC* 5:18-19 [obverse])⁴
 a king of Judah (*ABC* 5:12 [reverse])
 Appuashu (*ABC* 6:8ff)
 Nabonidus (*ABC* 7 iii 16)

Special bouts with illness merited writing space in the eyes of some compilers, as in the case of Humban-nimena's paralysis (*ABC* 1 iii 20-21), Humban-[hal]tash's paralysis and death (*ABC* 1 iii 30-31), as well as the mortal illnesses of Nabû-nāsir and Esarhaddon (*ABC* 1 i 11 and *ABC* 1 iv 31 // *ABC* 14:28-30, respectively).

3 In his note to *ABC* 14.1.19, Grayson states that the reading G[AZ(?)^m]^{e(?)} is “very uncertain,” but *a[b-k]u* cannot be read.

4 Ashkelon is uncertain. See Grayson's note to *ABC* 5.18 (obverse).

Other events appear to be recorded because they stood out as anomalies, such as when Humban-haltash died in his palace while healthy (*ABC* 14:16). Similarly, Erra-imitti is remembered as dying in his palace while sipping hot broth after he had placed Enlil-bāni on the throne as a substitute king (*ABC* 20A 34-35).⁵ A related tendency is noticeable when one compares attestations of defeats/retreats in the chronicles with Mesopotamian royal inscriptions which report victories. The divine support so prominent in the royal inscriptions is noticeably absent from the chronicles.

Chronicles are not the only Mesopotamian genre featuring unfortunate kings. Though some kings appear in omen traditions without any overt negative connotation,⁶ others are associated with unfortunate events. For instance, Amar-Su'en is recorded as dying from the “the goring of an ox,” *ni-kip* G[U₄(?) ÚŠ(?)], or the “bite of a shoe” (*ni-šik* KUŠ.E.SÍR) in an omen.⁷ Sargon is connected to natural disaster and chaos in the “Omen of Sargon whose troops were shut in by a rainstorm and exchanged weapons among themselves.”⁸ Similarly, omens record the death of Rimuš, while associating both Šarkališarri and Ibbi-Sin with destruction and Ku-Baba with ruin.⁹

5 Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 86 takes this as a criticism of the Assyrian substitute king ritual by a Babylonian chronicler. Notably, the criticism is not overt.

6 E.g., Sargon in Koch-Westenholz *Liver Omens* 94:23, 95:33, 139:47, 286:63, 371:145, 385:7, 398:20; Leichty *Izbu* V 33, 43, V 44, 47, 94, IX 32', 34', 61'; YOS 10 56 iii 52; Narām-Sîn in Leichty *Izbu* V 46, V 47, 88, VII 4, 118', XIX 9'; YOS 10 56 ii 22 and iii 40; Gilgameš in Koch-Westenholz *Liver Omens* 162:73, 413-414:29 and Leichty *Izbu* II 6; Šulgi in Koch-Westenholz *Liver Omens* 385:4 and YOS 10 56 iii 41; and Išbi-Irra in Leichty *Izbu* V 105.

7 Starr 1977, 160–161. *ABC* 19 (the “Weidner Chronicle”) reports this material within a literary framework. It will be handled in the chastised ruler section. Cf. Koch-Westenholz *Liver Omens* 244:137 (*amūt Amar-Su'ena šarri ša nikip al[pi iššaknū] šumma ina nišik šēni imūtu*) and her note (640) on YOS 10 25:32. The same fate, *nikip alpi* occurs in Koch-Westenholz *Liver Omens* 222:11'.

8 Translation from Koch-Westenholz *Liver Omens* 193:1 (cf. 191:A'9'-10'): *amūt Šarru-kīn ša ummānšu rādu isirūma tillišunu ana aḫāmeš ušpēlū*.

9 Koch-Westenholz *Liver Omens* 394:4 “Omen of Rimuš, the king [whom his courtiers killed] with their seals” (*amūt Rimuš [šarru ša māru ekallīšu] ina kunukkātīšunu idūkūšu*); 189-190:19: the “omen of Šarkališarri, destruction of Akkad” (*amūt Šarkališarri [šah]luqtu Akkadī*); 211:13': “Destruction, omen of Ibbi-Sin, king of Ur” (*šahluqtu amūt Ibbi-Sîn šar Uri*); YOS 10 56 i 17: “omen of Ibbi-Sîn, destruction” (*amūt Ibbi-Sîn šahluqtum*); Hunger 1992, no. 241 “Omen of Ku-Baba who ruled the land,

Like chronicles and omens, Mesopotamian royal inscriptions also contain unfortunate rulers. An enlightening example occurs in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions. After relating how Bēliqīša defied Ashurbanipal's dominion, the text (B §29 IV 61) mentioned that Bēliqīša died: “through a bite of a rat he gave up his life” (*ina nišik ḥumšīri [PÉŠ] ištakan napištu*).¹⁰ Though Bēliqīša defied Ashurbanipal's rulership,¹¹ his death is not clearly tied in a cause-and-effect relationship to his rebellion, making him an unfortunate ruler but not explicitly a chastised one. Moreover, the gods are not said to be involved in Bēliqīša's fate.

Bēliqīša's death stands out when compared to the deaths of Aḥšēri and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, both of which occur in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions. Though these two latter cases will be discussed in 10.1.3.1, they will serve to demonstrate the difference between the portrayal of an unfortunate ruler (Bēliqīša) and a chastised ruler (both Aḥšēri and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn). Aḥšēri and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn are both guilty of the same crime as Bēliqīša, yet both are said to die by the hands of the gods:

Aḥšēri, the one who did not fear my lordship, Aššur and Ištar delivered him into the hands of his servants (B §24 III 82-85).¹²

Aḥšēri, the one who did not fear my lordship, according to the word of Ištar who dwells in Arbela, which she previously spoke thus, “The death (*mītūtu*) of Aḥšēri, king of the land of Mannāyya, which I previously spoke, I will now carry out” (A §28 III 4-7).¹³

the land of the king will be plundered (Lit.: go to plundering)” (*amūt Ku-Baba ša māta ibēlu māt šarri nēkemu illak*). (Because the subordinate clause has the OB *-u* rather than the NA *-ni*, I have normalized the logogram DU [*alāku*] in the Babylonian form instead of the NA *tallak*). Cf. “If the right-handed 'wing' of the lungs is divided in three: it is an omen of Marran and Ḥadiruš, kings of Subartu and Gutium who laid siege to Nippur and whose...made them fall over, so that one killed the other with a weapon” (translation from George 2013, 235, line 43).

10 Borger 1996, 96 (transliteration) and 223 (translation).

11 This will be revisited in chapter 3.

12 Borger 1996, 35 (transliteration), 221 (translation).

13 Borger 1996, 35 (transliteration), 221 (translation).

Aššur, Šîn, Šamaš, Adad, Bēl, Nabû, Ištar of Nineveh, Šarrat-kidmuri, Ištar of Arbela, Ninurta, Nergal, and Nuska, who went before me, (who) killed my opponents, they threw Šamaš-šum-ukīn, the enemy brother who crossed me, in a blazing “fall of Girra” (*miqit Girra āriri*),¹⁴ and then they destroyed his life (A §39 IV 46-52).¹⁵

In these two cases, each respective king's actions are punished by the gods, making them chastised kings proper. Though the example of Bēliqīša approaches the chastised ruler concept, it remains at the threshold, for no clear connection between his actions, the gods, and his fate exists. Thus, the unfortunate concept of Bēliqīša's fate stands out when compared to the examples of the chastised kings Aḥšēri and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn.

Another example from a Mesopotamian royal inscription will complement the example of Bēliqīša. The Babylonian stele of Nabonidus depicts Sennacherib in the following way: “As for the king of Subartu, who by the anger of Marduk brought ruination of the land, a son, his offspring, struck him down (*urassibšu*) with a weapon.”¹⁶ Many have suggested that this line connects Sennacherib's murder with Marduk.¹⁷

However, such a connection can only be inferred. Consider Oppenheim's translation of

14 Following Borger, who translates “Fall des Gira' (d.h. Feuersbrunst?)” (Borger 1996, 234).

15 Borger 1996, 43–44 (transliteration), 234 (translation).

16 V I 35'-41': *šar Subartu ša ina uzza Marduk šalputti māti iškunu māru šit libbīšu ina kakki urassibšu*. For transliteration, see Schaudig *Nabonid*, 516. This translation follows that of Schaudig *Nabonid*, 523, which is nuanced differently than that of Oppenheim. Schaudig *Nabonid* translates “...den König von Subartu (aber) der durch den Zorn Marduks die Zerstörung des Landes herbeigeführt hatte,” which is different from Oppenheim's “...he who (once) upon the wrath(ful command) of Marduk (himself) had brought about the downfall of the country” (*ANET*³, 309).

17 E.g., Cogan states, “Such consecration could not go unrequited, and consequently, Sennacherib was cut down by his son” and later “...and the revenge he took on the Assyrian king for his depredations” (Cogan 2009, 168). Likewise, Beaulieu says, “As retaliation, Marduk causes Sennacherib's son to murder his father...” (Beaulieu 1989, 21). Roberts takes a similar stance: “The Assyrian was Marduk's tool for punishing Babylon, but that in no way justified Sennacherib's behavior. Nabonidus makes it clear that Sennacherib was guilty of great sacrilege even in the carrying out of Marduk's angry decree, and when the god's anger with Babylon subsided, the agent of his anger was punished in turn. One can hardly ignore the striking parallel in theology to Isaiah's theological treatment of historical events in Israel involving the same Assyrian *king*” (Roberts 1976, 10). The same understanding is reflected in Oppenheim's translation in *ANET*³, 309: “(Therefore) he made his own son murder the king of Subartu (Assyria)...”

urassibšu: “he made his own son murder the king of Subartu.”¹⁸ One is hard pressed to endorse the causative nuance of *rasābu*. Causative D-stem verbs typically stem from verbs that are active-intransitive in the G-stem, but *rasābu* “to strike down” is active-transitive in the G-stem. For this reason, it is not surprising that *CAD* provides no causative nuance for the D-stem of *rasābu*.¹⁹ The text, in fact, simply states that Sennacherib's son killed him, making Sennacherib another example of an unfortunate king.²⁰ The writer could have made divine punishment explicit by mentioning Marduk's role in summoning Sennacherib's son, just as Marduk levied the army of the Gutium against Narām-Sîn (11.1.1.1). Alternatively, Marduk himself could have killed Sennacherib in the way that a number of deities slay Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir in Elam (10.1.3.1). Yet the text does not go so far as to portray Sennacherib's death in terms that are appropriate for the chastised ruler. Instead, he suffers a notable unfortunate end.

A final Mesopotamian example comes from a different genre altogether. Ur-Namma A is a unique Sumerian literary composition that has traits of hymnic epics and contains laments.²¹ The composition covers the king's death, and statements such as, “Evil came upon Ur and made the faithful shepherd leave it” (6) and “The decreed fate that Enlil had fixed was altered deceitfully” (9), leave little doubt that the text portrays

18 See note immediately above.

19 *CAD* R *rasābu* A 2 (179-180). *CAD* accurately translates the line: “(his) son, his own offspring, struck him down.” Similarly, cf. *CDA* 299.

20 Parpola comes the closest to this assessment. Of Sennacherib's death, he says, “In Israel and Babylonia, it was hailed as godsent punishment for the 'godless' deeds of a hated despot...” In a note to this line, Parpola continues, “...the Nabonidus stele (Langdon, *VAB* 4 p. 272) implies a linkage between the destruction of Babylon, Marduk's wrath, and the murder” (Parpola 1980, 171 and 176 note 2). The text may be understood to “imply” such a connection, but the connection itself does not exist. I would add that Sennacherib is not even depicted as sinful in this text – thus solidifying his inclusion here as an “unfortunate king.”

21 Flückiger-Hawker 1999, 16.

Ur-Namma's death as an unfortunate tragedy.²² The gods did not orchestrate the ruler's death, nor did Ur-Namma commit a grievous violation. His death simply transpired as a misfortune, one that merited an entire text that lamented his fate.

Unfortunate rulers are not confined to Mesopotamian literature alone, for several kings are depicted this way in the Hebrew Bible. For instance, the narrative in the book of Kings depicts Shallum as an unfortunate king. After assassinating Zechariah son of Jeroboam (II), Shallum reigned in Samaria for one month before being killed by the usurper Menachem (2 Kgs 15:8-15). Shallum receives no religious condemnation for his actions, nor is his death associated with any action or proclamation of Yahweh. Instead, his death is related in mundane language, similar to the Mesopotamian Chronicles.

Particularly instructive is the case of Josiah, an example that also occurs in Kings. Josiah, whose piety was not outdone by any other king (2 Kgs 23:25), suffered death at the hands of Necho (2 Kgs 23:29). This battlefield death has received various treatments among scholars.²³ The quest for a theological rationale that explains Josiah's fall is reminiscent of some interpretations of Sennacherib's death according to Nabonidus' Babylonian stele (above). Like the stele, a clear theological explanation of King Josiah's death is noticeably absent from the text. Josiah commits no crime that offends Yahweh, nor does the text provide any hint of Yahweh's activity in the circumstances that led to Josiah's death. Thus, Josiah is an unfortunate king according to the books of Kings.

Ishbaal's²⁴ assassination in 2 Samuel 4 is likewise portrayed without any crime or divine involvement. Though the assassins, Rechab and Baanah, claim that Yahweh lay

22 Translations from Flückiger-Hawker 1999, 101-102.

23 See notes 13 and 14 on p. 122 (chapter 7).

24 On this spelling, see note 32 on p. 47 (chapter 5).

behind the murder (2 Sam 4:8), David's reaction suggests otherwise. David called Ishbaal "righteous" (2 Sam 4:11), and then ordered his men to slaughter the perpetrators for their crime (2 Sam 4:12). Outside of Rechab and Baanah's suspicious claim, no other evidence suggests Yahweh's involvement in Ishbaal's assassination. Ishbaal's death did not occur in retaliation for any offense(s). Instead, Ishbaal's death is simply recorded as an unfortunate event. Thus, the case of Ishbaal clarifies that the distinction between the chastised leader and the merely unfortunate one is a matter of perspective, but it is a distinction that the ancients themselves could make.

Little effort would have been required from both the biblical and Mesopotamian writers to have dressed these Mesopotamian and biblical texts in religious rhetoric. The ease by which a writer could portray an unfortunate ruler as a chastised ruler is succinctly demonstrated by the Chronicler's account of Josiah, where the introduction of Necho's speech repaints Josiah's determination to battle as opposition against God (2 Chr 35:20-24).²⁵ However, in the instances above, authors refrained from connecting each ruler's fate with the gods. Deities are not said to have inspired, orchestrated, or directed the above incidents, and any divine roles in these cases are, at the very best, only implied.²⁶

The unfortunate ruler concept, then, is one way that ancient scribes could negatively portray kings. Both the chastised and unfortunate ruler concepts share the same interest in the miserable fate of kings. This shared interest highlights the fact that ancient writers considered the agony suffered by kings to be exceptional. However, the unfortunate ruler concept does not connect a king's fate to both royal offense(s) and

²⁵ Incidentally, the Chronicler's explanation suggests that the account of Josiah's death in Kings did not have a theological explanation, necessitating the Chronicler's version.

²⁶ It is possible that some of the rulers mentioned in this chapter may be re-categorized in the case newly discovered texts.

divine repercussion(s). Thus, an unfortunate portrayal does not convey the same degree of negativity as does a portrayal of a chastised ruler. The latter is more unfavorable, for the offending king's fate comes from the hands of the gods. The chastised king, then, must be distinguished from the unfortunate ruler.

Chapter 3: Distinguishing Chastised from Sinful Rulers

The chastised ruler must also be separated from “sinful rulers.” Sinful rulers are those rulers who are reported as carrying out actions offensive to the gods or committing religious violations. Thus, the sinful ruler concept emphasizes the king's actions from a religious perspective, in contrast to the unfortunate ruler notion which stresses a ruler's fate. Importantly, however, the actions of sinful rulers are not directly linked to divine repercussions.

Sinful rulers arise in several places in Mesopotamian chronicles. In numerous instances, scribes pointed out a king's failure to hold the Akitu festival, a blunder constituting a major disruption in cultic life. Thus, the Nabonidus Chronicle makes special mention of Nabonidus' failure to keep the Akitu festival (*ABC* 7: ii 5ff, 10ff, 19ff, 23ff). Similarly, *ABC* 14:31-32 details the failure of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon to keep the Akitu festival, while *ABC* 15:22 states that Nabû did not come out for Bêl's procession during the time of Nabû-šuma-iškun. Similarly, the Akitu Chronicle (*ABC* 16) is concerned with remembering the failure of many kings to keep the Akitu festival.

Mesopotamian Chronicles also record other occasions of a king's impermissible activity. For example, BM 22115 contains an excerpt from a Babylonian chronicle (in addition to a planetary table) that reports that Šulgi committed a cultic crime by taking away the property of Esagil and Babylon: “He brought out the property of Esagil and

Babylon” (*makkūr* [NÍG.GA] *Esagil u Bābili* [TIN.ʽTIR.ʽKI] *ušēši* [Ē]).¹ Before he is assassinated, Tukulti-Ninurta I is reported to have committed evil against Babylon in *ABC* 22 iv 9-10: “he laid his hand on Babylon with evil intent” (*ana Bābili ana lemuttu* [*qātē*] *ubilu*).² Kings could even be remembered for committing egregious acts of violence, for the Assyrian king (Esarhaddon)³ slaughtered his “his numerous officials” (*rabūtīšu mādūtu*) according to *ABC* 1 iv 29 // *ABC* 14:27.

Literary texts from Mesopotamia also depict some kings as sinful. An exemplary text is that which Cole titled, “The Crimes and Sacrileges of Nabû-šuma-iškun.”⁴ According to this text, Nabû-šuma-iškun committed numerous violations, including introducing a leek into Ezida (ii 17-18), violating the exemptions of Babylon, Borsippa, and Kutha (iii 4'-11'), mistreating the property of Esagil (iii 32'-33'), and breaking a treaty sworn by the great gods (48'-49').⁵ Though he committed these offenses, and more, Nabû-šuma-iškun is not punished by the gods.⁶ Instead, the text portrays him as a sinful ruler.

Another Mesopotamian text, the Dynastic Prophecy,⁷ contains two examples of

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- 1 Leichty-Walker 2004, 204. Note the comment on 205: “The reference to Shulgi removing the property of Esagil and Babylon is an historical anachronism.”
 - 2 Concerning this chronicle, Glassner states, “The narrative explicitly made use of a casual connection, positing a direct link between the death of this king, assassinated by his son, and the sack of Babylon he had perpetrated” (Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 86). However, like Sennacherib in Nabonidus' Babylonian Stele, the text does not explicitly make such a connection – it may only be implied. A direct causal link would be akin to Utu-ḫegal's drowning death at the hands of Marduk (10.1.3.1), notably for the same offense (“Utu-ḫegal...laid his hand on his city [i.e., Marduk's city, Babylon] with evil intent [*qātsu ana ālīšu ana lemutti ubilma*]...he [Marduk] carried away his corpse”).
 - 3 See Frame 1992, 101 for this event and other possible sources.
 - 4 Cole 1994, 222. For the text, see von Weiher 1988, no. 58.
 - 5 For the text, see *ibid.*, 227-237.
 - 6 The text contains broken portions that could change the portrayal of Nabû-šuma-iškun should another exemplar be discovered.
 - 7 *BHLT*, 24-37.

sinful kings. One portion of the text describes a “rebel prince”⁸ who is oppressive⁹ and who will plot evil against Akkad (ii 11-16).¹⁰ It comes as no surprise that this king, who is Nabonidus,¹¹ is depicted negatively, for in this way the text corresponds with *ABC 7* (above), the Cyrus Cylinder (7.2.1), and the Verse Account (8.3.1). However, like *ABC 7*, Nabonidus' behavior is not tied to divine repercussions in the text at hand. Instead, Nabonidus is depicted as a “sinful king.”

The example of Nabonidus in the Dynastic Prophecy is instructive in another way. The text narrates how Nabonidus will be removed by a certain “king of Elam.” The “king of Elam,” who is “clearly Cyrus,”¹² will remove Nabonidus on his own initiative. No hint of divine activity surfaces in the text, for Cyrus will act on his own initiative: “He will remove him (*idekkēšuma*) from his throne.”¹³ The fact that the Dynastic Prophecy describes Nabonidus' loss of the throne without any divine agents qualifies Nabonidus as an unfortunate king. Thus, Nabonidus is at once an unfortunate king and a sinful king in the same text. He is still not a chastised king, however, for his sinfulness and his misfortune are not explicitly tied to the gods.¹⁴

Before describing the second example of a sinful ruler in the Dynastic Chronicle, a return to example of Bēliqīša in chapter 2 will serve to balance the dual presentation of Nabonidus as both sinful and unfortunate. It will be recalled that Bēliqīša experiences

8 Grayson's translation of *ellâ rubû* (*BHLT*, 33, ii 11).

9 Grayson notes that the phrase that he translates, “He will oppress the land,” literally means, “He will be stronger than the land” (*eli māti idanninma*); see *BHLT*, 33 ii 14.

10 “He will plot evil against Akkad” (*lemutti ana Akkadî ušamm[ar]*); see *BHLT*, 33 ii 16.

11 *BHLT*, 25.

12 *BHLT*, 25.

13 *BHLT*, 33 ii 18.

14 N.B., the genre of this text does allow divine intervention, for Enlil, Šamaš, and Marduk (will) help Darius III defeat (!) Alexander at Gaugamela (iii 15-19); on the problem of this *vaticinium ex eventu* and historical fact, cf. Grayson's comments (*BHLT*, 26-27).

death “through a bite of a rat,” a tragedy that makes him an unfortunate ruler. At the same time, the same text that describes Bēliqīša in this way also mentions that this ruler likewise defied Ashurbanipal's dominion, an offense that can incite divine punishment (8.3, and especially 8.3.1). However, this is not the case for Bēliqīša. Instead he, like Nabonidus in the Dynastic Prophecy, is depicted as both an unfortunate and sinful ruler.¹⁵ Similarly, the lack of divine punishment that bridges the behavior and fate of the ruler is absent, disqualifying Bēliqīša as a chastised ruler.

Returning to the Dynastic Prophecy, one finds that Cyrus, too, is depicted as a sinful king. The text narrates that Cyrus will oppress the land after overthrowing Nabonidus.¹⁶ Moreover, the text adds that Akkad will not experience peace during Cyrus' reign.¹⁷ Despite his mistreatment of the land, Cyrus is not punished by the gods, and so Cyrus serves as a second example of a sinful ruler in the Dynastic Chronicle.

The Hebrew Bible contains many examples of sinful kings, of which only a handful will be related here. King Jehoash/Joash of Israel is described as doing evil in the eyes of Yahweh and failing to turn from the sins of Jeroboam (2 Kgs 13:11). Instead of receiving divine punishment, Joash dies a peaceful death and has a proper burial (2 Kgs 13:13). Similarly, Jeroboam II received the same condemnation as his father, Joash (2 Kgs 14:24). Rather than punishing him, Yahweh used Jeroboam II as an instrument of salvation (2 Kgs 14:27). Menahem is also depicted as a sinful ruler, doing evil and following in the footsteps of Jeroboam (1 Kgs 15:17-22). Likewise, Ahaz is

15 Tukultī-Ninurta I (p. 14) is both sinful and unfortunate: he committed crimes against Babylon before he was assassinated (*ABC* 22 iv 9-11).

16 The writer uses the same phrase for Cyrus (ii 22) and for Nabonidus (see note 9 above).

17 See iii 24. I am working on Grayson's suggestion that the text covers Cyrus' reign through ii 24, with a new reign beginning in iii 1 (*BHLT*, 26).

characterized as one who “walked in the way of the kings of Israel and even made his son pass through the fire,” in addition to conducting illicit sacrifice (2 Kgs 16:3-4), but he is not punished for his crimes.

Not all sinful kings attain the same level of debasement. The example of Jotham demonstrates that one can detect different degrees of the sinful king concept. Jotham “did what was right (*hayyāšār*) in the eyes of Yahweh” (2 Kgs 15:34). However, the writer(s) add a qualification, namely that the high places were not removed and that the people still conducted cultic activity at those locations (2 Kgs 15:34). When paired with a sinful king such as Ahaz, one can see that Jotham, though sinful, was not considered to have reach the level of depravity as Ahaz.

In several places in the Hebrew Bible, a king is simultaneously portrayed as sinful and unfortunate. Such is the case with Zechariah, whose sinfulness (doing evil and not turning from the sins of Jeroboam) is not connected to his assassination by Shallum (2 Kings 15:8-12). Amon, whose sins imitated those of his father, Manasseh, died at the hands of his servants (2 Kgs 21:19-26 // 2 Chr 33:21-25), an act that did not involve Yahweh. Another king, Jehoahaz, did evil in the eyes of Yahweh (2 Kgs 23:32). Necho captured Jehoahaz and brought him to Egypt (2 Kgs 23:33-34). Jehoahaz's fate, however, is in no way connected by the narrative to the divine realm. In these examples, each sinful ruler, unlike those in the preceding paragraph, suffers an unfortunate fate. However, the writer(s) did not connect those fates with Yahweh's activity, so that these kings are both sinful and unfortunate, but not chastised.

The notion of the sinful ruler provides another way that ancient scribes could

negatively portray kings. In contrast to the unfortunate ruler, whose misfortune transpired in the physical world,¹⁸ the sinful ruler is portrayed negatively in religious terms. Sinful kings carry out actions that are odious to the gods. In this way, sinful kings are like chastised rulers, for both are portrayed as committing religious violations offensive to the gods. At the same time, sinful kings are not explicitly punished by the gods as are chastised kings. Because sinful ruler accounts do not connect religious violations with punishment(s), a portrayal of a chastised ruler is more unfavorable, for the gods take action against a king whom they punish. Thus, the chastised ruler must be distinguished from the sinful ruler.

¹⁸ I do not mean to imply that all unfortunate ruler accounts are historical. Rather, I mean that the fates that they suffer are misfortunes that correspond to physical reality, whether the actual event is historical or ahistorical.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

The discussions on unfortunate and sinful rulers in chapters two and three serve several purposes. First, the recognition of both concepts brings into clear view the object of this study, for neither the unfortunate king nor the sinful ruler qualifies as a chastised offender. This distinction is particularly important in view of the various uses of *Unheilsherrscher*, the very concept that launched this study (chapter 1). The presentation of the chastised ruler is a way in which kings could be depicted negatively, along with the presentation of unfortunate and sinful rulers. However, the latter two notions will not be part of this study, for they do not encompass all the elements of the chastised ruler concept.

The combination of the unfortunate, sinful, and chastised rulers may give the impression that these are mutually exclusive ways in which kings may be negatively portrayed. However, this is not necessarily the case. The discussion on Nabonidus, Bēliqīša, Zechariah, Amon, and Jehoahaz demonstrates that a given ruler could qualify as both unfortunate and sinful. Thus, instead of thinking in terms of isolated groups, one must think in terms of degrees of negativity. Though these degrees can not be easily quantified, they are nonetheless detectable. For instance, the accounts of kings that are both unfortunate and sinful are more unfavorable than those portrayals that are simply one or the other. The case of Jotham similarly indicates that one can detect degrees of severity within a single group. A king's negative depiction, then, could intensify if the

unfortunate and sinful concepts merged into one account.

A ruler's portrayal could be made more unfavorable by the inclusion of divine action. As mentioned in chapter 1, divine action is a requirement of a chastised ruler type. However, when divine action is combined with the unfortunate and sinful concept in the same account, that account still does not necessarily identify a chastised ruler. Instead, it may be just another example of an increased degree of a ruler's negative portrayal.

An example from the Hebrew Bible will demonstrate this point. Azariah (Uzziah) is an unfortunate king according to 2 Kgs 15:1-7. In this text, Yahweh struck the king so that he endured a skin affliction until he died: “Yahweh afflicted (*waynagga*’) the king, and he had a skin disease (*wayhî məṣōrā*’) until the day of his death” (2 Kgs 15:5). This unfortunate depiction is complemented by a sinful portrayal. Though Azariah receives a positive evaluation in 1 Kgs 15:3, he also receives some religious condemnation in 1 Kgs 15:4, for this king did not remove the high places. One can see, then, that Azariah is simultaneously portrayed as sinful and unfortunate. His sinful depiction is nuanced, as it is balanced with a positive evaluation, similar to the case of Jotham. Yet Azariah's account contains a new element: direct divine intervention in his unfortunate portrayal. Yahweh clearly intervened and caused Azariah's skin affliction. Azariah's overall depiction in this passage, then, is made more unfavorable than other kings, who are both unfortunate and sinful, by the detail presenting Yahweh's agency.

At the same time, Azariah is not a chastised ruler, for his religious condemnation is not connected to his skin affliction from Yahweh. Though Yahweh strikes

Azariah/Uzziah so that he is leprous (*waynagga' YHWH 'et hammelek wayhî məṣōrā'*), this is in no apparent way connected to an offense against Yahweh. Thus, the account of Azariah approaches the chastised ruler concept, but it stops just short of connecting all the elements. Put another way, Azariah's portrayal in 2 Kings 15 is not quite as unfavorable as an account of a chastised ruler, for his fate and offense are not tied together by divine action.

When 2 Kings 15 is read in light of the Chronicler's account of Uzziah (Azariah), one sees that the Chronicler increases the king's negative portrayal so that he is clearly a chastised king (2 Chr 26:16-23).¹ Since 2 Kings 15 has almost all the elements which one would expect for a chastised ruler, save a clear connection between sin and divine punishment, all that remained for the Chronicler was to unveil an offense which signaled that the affliction in 1 Kings 15 was a punishment. The Chronicler, then, connected Yahweh's action (10.1.1.2) with Uzziah's pride (8.2) and subsequent cultic crime (7.2.2). Thus, the Chronicler's account of Uzziah, in contrast to that found in 2 Kings, demonstrates how a chastised ruler account unites a king's crime and fate with divine agency.

The chastised ruler concept, then, shares the interest in royal misfortune suffered in the physical world that is reflected in unfortunate ruler accounts. The notion of the chastised ruler also echoes the religious concerns of sinful ruler accounts. However, it is the fact that a divine agency bridges royal misfortune and religious violation(s) that defines and separates the chastised ruler from all other negative depictions of kings.

¹ That the account of Azariah in 2 Kings 15 is not a portrayal of a chastised king is evidenced by the Chronicler's account of this same king.

Moreover, it is the bridging of a ruler's fate and his crimes by some divine agency that makes the chastised ruler concept the apex of unfavorable depictions. A chastised king is at the same time unfortunate and sinful, but is also an enemy of the gods, punished for his crime(s).

In sum, the previous two chapters have described ways in which kings were negatively depicted in the ancient world. Unfavorable depictions of rulers may be categorized as unfortunate or sinful, though gradations exist both within and without these groups. That these groups exist in literature suggest that that royal suffering was notable, as was royal behavior. These two concepts frame the chastised ruler. First, the presence of unfortunate and sinful accounts suggests that depictions of chastised kings were only utilized in certain contexts for certain reasons, and that accounts of chastised kings were not haphazardly deployed. Secondly, both sinful and unfortunate accounts stand in contrast to accounts of chastised kings, for though both share certain aspects with the chastised ruler, only the chastised ruler texts unite royal misfortune and behavior with divine action. Thus, the chastised ruler is the climax of negative royal depictions, and an object of study in its own right.

Part II: Complex Chastised Rulers

Chastised rulers in the Hebrew Bible may reach a level of literary complexity not approached by the other ancient near eastern texts. The crimes of these rulers are deeply intertwined within the fabric of the larger narrative and therefore these cases merit separate detailed analysis. Each analysis below will be complete in the sense that it will cover all the topics to be discussed in the following chapters. The results of each section in chapter 5 will then be used as reference points in the appropriate chapters in the remainder of this study.

Chapter 5: Complex Chastised Rulers – Analysis

5.1 Saul

Both the books of Samuel and Chronicles narrate offenses committed by King Saul that brought divine punishment, each corpus with its own distinct emphases. Saul fails to obey the divine word through the prophet on two separate occasions in the book of Samuel, and each occasion brings with it diverging consequences: the divine rejection of his dynasty and then his personal rejection. In addition to Saul's two violations of the divine word, the book of Samuel contains a third offense for which Saul was responsible and which brought divine punishment: Israel's first king broke a long-standing oath, a crime that had serious repercussions on his nation and family.

Saul's crimes and their consequences are by no means woodenly duplicated in the books of Chronicles. In addition to his failure to heed the prophetic word, the Chronicler accuses Saul of seeking advice from a medium, an offense with a cultic flavor in Chronicles. Though Saul's dynasty was rejected in consequence, Yahweh also killed Saul for his crimes.

In the following pages these portrayals of Saul as a chastised ruler are examined, tracing the contours of the narratives contained in Samuel and Chronicles in order to demonstrate the contributions that these accounts make in understanding the chastised ruler. The complexity of these accounts necessitates the extensive discussions below

which, though they might appear unusually extensive, by that very fact reflect the complex literary reality that exists in the narratives as they stand in their final form.

5.1.1 1 Samuel

In three cases in the book of Samuel, Saul's actions bring about divine retribution.¹ One of these episodes appears in 2 Samuel 21, a self-contained case that is not easily connected contextually with the surrounding material, and will therefore be handled at the end of this section. The other two instances appear in 1 Samuel 13 and 15, but the way in which they reach fruition requires extensive engagement with other portions of 1 Samuel.² Though the two offenses in 1 Samuel 13 and 15 result in their own specific punishments, they are complicated by Saul's own ambitions, and the result is that the demise of Saul and his dynasty is a conglomeration of two distinct divine punishments which are partially merged by Saul's own doing. The combination of Yahweh's action (and lack thereof) and Saul's own volition will be explained below so that one may gain an accurate picture of Saul as a chastised ruler.

In anticipation of the following discussion, it is important to distinguish the act of divine rejection from the subsequent downfall of Saul and his dynasty. The penalty of divine rejection for Saul's sacrilege encompasses two distinct rejections – one in 1 Samuel 13 and one in 1 Samuel 15 – separated by a substantial amount of time. These two rejections by Yahweh are to be distinguished from Saul's later death and the deaths of

1 An early version of the material in 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 may be found in Price, forthcoming.

2 Critical analyses have dealt with 1 Samuel 13 and/or 15, often in connection with larger hypotheses (e.g. Eissfeldt 1965, 271-275; Grønbaek 1971; Veijola 1975; Birch 1976; Mettinger 1976; Foresti 1984; Mommer 1991). Though I am aware of these results, I will be focusing on the final product of such activity – the final form of the text.

his sons in 1 Samuel 31. The battlefield deaths of Saul and his house are not unrelated to Yahweh's rejections, but Saul is the one responsible for bringing about his own death as well as that of his sons, as we will see. Though related, Yahweh's rejections and the later fate of Saul and his dynasty are not correlated in a one-to-one manner. Instead, I will argue that Saul participated in the unfolding of his divine rejections in such a way that he, not Yahweh, caused those rejections to be fulfilled in a violent manner.

The first step which must be undertaken in order to appreciate the presentation of Saul in Samuel is to examine initially the episodes of sacrilege themselves. Once Saul's crimes and their subsequent punishments are clear, Saul's own role in his punishment must be examined, as well as the role of Yahweh. Finally, the way these converge at the end of Saul's narrative will be explained.

Saul's first malefaction, occurring in 1 Sam 13:8-13, stemmed from Saul's violation of the prophet Samuel's antecedent instructions. Upon anointing Saul leader (*nāgîd*) over Israel (1 Sam 9:27-10:1) according to Yahweh's directive (1 Sam 8:22, 9:15-17), Samuel issued the following instructions to Saul concerning their subsequent rendezvous (1 Sam 10:8):³

You shall go down before me to Gilgal, and behold, I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings, to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days shall you wait⁴ until I come to you, and I will make known to you what you should do.

One sees, then, that Samuel's mandate required Saul to wait at Gilgal until Samuel was present.⁵

3 In light of temporal issues, see Long 1989, 51–66 for the relationship of this verse to chapter 13.

4 The verb *tôhēl* (*twhl*) is a rare occurrence of the second person volitive (aside from its use with *'al*). One would expect **tôhîl* (**twhyl*). It may, however, be better understood as an orthographic oddity, and thus read as an indicative.

5 Though the text clearly states these two requirements, not all catch this detail. Among those that do is Long 1989, 89.

Instead of diligently obeying Yahweh's message conveyed through Samuel, Saul failed to wait for Samuel's arrival. When the previously announced seven day period transpired without sight of Samuel, Saul reacted by performing the sacrifices despite Samuel's absence (1 Sam 13:7-9), a direct violation of his prophetic instructions. Arriving shortly after Saul's sacrifice, Samuel explains why he perceives Saul's action to be precipitous, initiating a dialog that underscores the both nature of Saul's offense and the ensuing consequence (1 Sam 13:11-14):

Samuel said, "What have you done?"

Saul said, "When I saw that the people scattered from me, and you were the one who did not come⁶ at the appointed time of days, and the Philistines gathered at Michmash, I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not appeased Yahweh.' So I strengthened myself and I offered the burnt offering."

Then Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of Yahweh your God which he commanded you. For in that case⁷ Yahweh would have established your kingdom over⁸ Israel forever. But now your kingdom will not stand. Yahweh sought (*biqqēš*) for himself a man according to his heart, and Yahweh appointed (*waysawwēhū*) him as leader over his people. For you have not kept that which Yahweh commanded you."

This interchange stresses that Saul's offense was his failure to keep Yahweh's command,⁹ the very command given through Samuel in 1 Sam 10:8.¹⁰ It further underscores that

6 The construction is emphatic with the inclusion of the second masculine singular pronoun (*wə'attā lō' bā'itā*). This contrasts with Samuel's wish (cf. note 4 above).

7 "in that case," following Driver 2009, 101.

8 MT *'el* where one might have expected *'al*. Cf. Waltke-O'Connor 1990, §11.2.2. Note LXX *ἐπί* and Vulgate *super*.

9 Saul's offense was not usurping priestly prerogatives; see Long 1989, 87–88, 132. Cf. Večko 1998, 203–205. McCarter 1980, 228–230 notes the play on *šiwwā* and *mišwā*, whereby Saul did not keep his commanded appointment with Samuel, and so he did not keep his appointment as king.

10 Boda 2009, 153 states that Samuel reproaches Saul for "impatient disobedience." Slightly differently, I would suggest that Saul's actions result from his desperation to keep his soldiers at his behest before battle with the Philistines, highlighting Saul's anxiety arising from his diminished forces rather than simple impatience. Saul's actions are not without precedent, for *ARM* 26 38 urges Zimri-Lim to come meet with the troops, conduct an offering, and calm the troops. Incidentally, the letter suggests to Zimri-Lim that the trip (back) would take six days, a curious detail in light of Samuel's seven day

Saul's disobedience was a direct offense against Yahweh.¹¹ As Yahweh's spokesperson, the prophet's word was Yahweh's word, a concept apparent in Samuel's criticism, "You have not kept the commandment of Yahweh your God."¹² Saul's failure to adhere fully to Samuel's instruction constituted an affront against Yahweh.

The ensuing judgment issued to Saul for this first offense contained two parts, and together they comprise the reason for God's rejection of his dynasty. In the first part (1 Sam 13:14a), Samuel states that Saul's kingdom *over* Israel would have been established had Saul obeyed the command of Yahweh (1 Sam 13:13), demonstrating that Saul's own dynastic rule is in view.¹³ Importantly, Saul's dynasty is not immediately affected, for it "...will not stand (*lō' tāqûm*)," an announcement meaning that Saul's family line will not hold on to the throne (1 Sam 13:14). No hint of a violent end for Saul or his line appears in the text.

waiting period. This letter was co-authored by a diviner, Ašqudum (see note 69 on p. 144 [chapter 7] for this spelling), and this divinatory connection further associates the letter with the account in 1 Samuel.

- 11 For a different perspective on this material see Polzin 1993b, 129–131. Polzin's emphasis on Samuel's failure to keep the prophetic appointment fails to take into account the role of the king vis-à-vis the prophet. The king is subordinate to the prophet, and must heed the prophetic voice. See, e.g., Meier 2009, 127–141, especially 129–130; cf. the comments in Bodner 2012, 18, 25, 29–30; Long 1989, 135–136, 167.
- 12 Cf. the subordination of the king to the prophet in note 10 above. In early poetic prophetic literature, there is a lack of concern to distinguish the prophet's word from Yahweh's word, as explained in Meier 2009, 70–77. Such a lack of concern seems to indicate that the prophet's word and Yahweh's word were one and the same in those texts which did not distinguish the two. Genre and dating issues notwithstanding, the association of Samuel's word with Yahweh's word in the text at hand appears indicative of the same situation, namely that Samuel's word *was* Yahweh's word. The same principle underlies Jehu's actions in 2 Kgs 9:14–10:28, with Yahweh acknowledging Jehu's actions in 2 Kgs 10:30, though the prophetic word given to Jehu in 2 Kgs 9:6–10 was clearly not what Yahweh intended (cf. 2 Kgs 9:3, 1 Kgs 19:16). Notice Samuel's words in 1 Sam 10:1, which relate Samuel's anointing of Saul to Yahweh: "Has not Yahweh anointed you over his possession as leader?" (*hālō' kī māsāhākā YHWH 'al nahālātō lənāgīd*). Thus, I do not sever the prophet's word from Yahweh, as do some scholars, e.g., Alter 1999, 73, 87, cf. 92.
- 13 McCarter 1980, 229–230; cf. Večko 1998, 205. The act is considered (perfectively) complete, a crucial detail lost if one places the action in the future. For a defense of 2 Sam 13:13–14 being authentic rather than a fabrication, see Avioz 2005.

In the second part of Saul's judgment, Samuel states that Yahweh has sought another, and has appointed him as leader (*nāgīd*) over his people (1 Sam 13:14b). This judgment, importantly, is perceived to be complete, for Samuel stated that Yahweh “sought” (*biqqēš*) another and he “appointed him (*wayšawwēhū*)” as leader. Since Saul still remained on the throne for some time, and since David (Saul's successor) had not yet been anointed,¹⁴ this second part of the judgment underscores the theological nature of Saul's dynastic rejection.

An entirely different military conflict served as the background of Saul's second offense, for Saul and his troops were on the offensive against Amalek. Yahweh had relayed the following instructions to Saul through Samuel concerning this military confrontation (1 Sam 15:3):

Now, go and smite Amalek, and you will devote to destruction¹⁵ all that is his, and you will not spare him. And you will put to death (all), from man to woman, from child to infant, from ox to lamb, from camel to donkey.

Once again, Saul failed to completely carry out Yahweh's command, for he spared the Amalekite king, Agag, and the best of the spoil (1 Sam 15:8-9). Yahweh then regretted (*niḥamtī*) giving Saul kingship (1 Sam 15:11) because Saul did not carry out Yahweh's words, demonstrating that Saul disobeyed the divine word conveyed through the prophet on a second occasion.¹⁶

Saul's penalty for his disobedience regarding Amalek is signaled by Samuel's

14 David is anointed in 1 Samuel 16.

15 Of the five verbs addressed to Saul in the second person, all but the third are singular. Some suggest emending the irregular plural verb to a singular on the basis of the LXX, e.g., Long 1989, 137.

However, the plural *wəhaḥāramtem* in light of the singular *tahmōl* stresses Saul's sole responsibility in sparing any lives that all his forces were to destroy. Though Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the spoil (1 Sam 15:8-9), only Saul would be held responsible for the violation. For this reason, Saul's attempt to place the blame upon the people (1 Sam 15:15) would not be accepted.

16 1 Sam 15:9 indicts the people along with Saul. However, only Saul is guilty of the crime.

response emphasizing obedience to Yahweh,¹⁷ with the last part containing the main point (1 Sam 15:23b): “Because you rejected the word of Yahweh, he has rejected you as king.” Saul, then, is personally rejected as king of Israel for his failure to once again heed the prophetic word.¹⁸

A critical detail from the mouth of Samuel follows Saul's personal rejection. In reaction to Samuel's words, Saul lunges after the departing Samuel, tearing Samuel's robe. Samuel immediately sees the significance of the moment¹⁹ and announces to Saul that “Yahweh has torn away the kingdom of Israel from you today, and he has given it to your neighbor, one better than you” (1 Sam 15:28). It is no insignificant detail that Yahweh took the kingship from Saul, at least in Samuel's prophetic eyes, that very day.²⁰ Saul was personally and immediately rejected from Samuel's perspective, even if his rule continued until his death in battle some time later. Moreover, in this second rejection episode, Saul's immediate personal kingship is in view, as the *kingdom of Israel* was taken away from Saul (1 Sam 15:28). In other words the royal throne had been ripped, theologically, from Saul's grasp.

17 1 Sam 15:22-23, cf. Hos 6:6, Amos 5:21-24, Mic 6:6-8, and Isa 66:2-4.

18 Cf. Večko 1998, 205, 207; Long 1989, 166–167; Zimran 2014, 9–12. According to 1 Sam 15:20-21, Saul believed he did carry out Yahweh's command, and he blamed the people for taking the spoil. However, in light of his admission of guilt in 1 Sam 15:24, Saul accepted full responsibility. The statement in 1 Sam 15:29, that Yahweh does not repent (*lō' yinnāhēm*) is often taken to contradict Yahweh's words in 15:11: “I repent that I caused Saul to reign as king” (*nihamtī kī himlaktī 'et šā'ūl lamelek*), e.g. Gunn 1981, 99–100. However, the former (like the latter) is bound to its context. As such, it is not a blanket statement about Yahweh's nature, but a contextual assertion about the situation at hand. Thus, it conveys that Yahweh will not waiver on the punishment he has dealt to Saul in 1 Samuel 15. This seems to be what Alter means when he says, “What Samuel says here is that God will not change His mind about changing His mind” (Alter 1999, 92; cf. the brief discussion in Long 1989, 163–164).

19 Meier 2009, 38ff, especially 39 notes the special ability of prophets to see significance in the ordinary.

20 Notice the verbs: *wayyim 'āsākā* YHWH (15:26), *qāra'* YHWH (15:28), *ūnātānāh* (15:28). Notice Long's comments: “...1 Sam 15 marks the effective end of Saul's reign. *De facto* Saul will continue to occupy the throne for some time to come, but *de jure* his rejection is an accomplished fact.” See Long 1989, 168.

Thus Saul's offenses in each episode are alike: failure to obey Yahweh's word through the prophet. The punishments which Saul received are also alike: God rejects his kingship. The first penalty concerned Saul's dynasty, whereas the second rejection focused on the man himself.

As stressed above, Samuel's diatribes against Saul present both rejections as being complete. Because Saul's rejections are considered accomplished the day that Samuel announced them, the text creates a disjuncture between divine rejection and physical fulfillment, particularly in the case of Saul's personal rejection as king. To state the obvious, for Saul to be physically rejected as king, he must be removed from the throne. The disjuncture between Samuel's prophetic pronouncement which portrays the rejection as complete and the actual removal of Saul from the throne creates a complicated relationship between divine and human agency in the events that lead to Saul's removal from the throne (i.e., his death). Before turning to the events which constitute Saul's removal from the throne, an examination of 1 Samuel 14 and 16 is in order.

Between Saul's two rejections, Saul placed his troops²¹ under oath, pronouncing a curse on any man who eats before both evening and Saul's revenge on his enemies (1 Sam 14:24).²² Jonathan had not heard the oath, and therefore unknowingly broke it (1 Sam 14:27). When Saul subsequently sought divine advice concerning battle against the

21 For *'am* as "military personnel," see *HALOT* 1:838. Cf. also 1 Sam 14:30-31.

22 "Oath," as used here, incorporates the curse. Most scholars accept that oaths contain a curse, whether stated or not. See Ziegler 2008, 32–37. Gunn 1981, 95–96 (cf. 107) views Saul's oath as "a token of devotion to Yahweh..." Similarly White 2006, 132 sees Saul's oath as originally pious. White's point about the admirability of Saul's willingness to put Jonathan to death (p. 135) is acceptable. However, it remains difficult to see how Saul's initial oath is in any way positive, as depriving one's army of food in the face of battle is best understood as unwise. Cf. 1 Sam 14:29-33. *ARM* 26 356, a letter sent from the division commander Ubariya to Zimri-Lim, presents a similar situation. Ubariya laments the poor morale of the troops, which is tied to poor provisions, and he even seems to suggest the possibility of desertion, demonstrating the kind of negative effects an oath like Saul's may have had.

Philistines but received no answer, he deduced that a sin had impeded divine communication (1 Sam 14:37-39). Saul then uttered a foreboding oath: “For as Yahweh lives, the one who delivers Israel, even if it is in Jonathan, my son, he will surely die” (1 Sam 14:39a). After Jonathan was identified as the culprit through casting lots (1 Sam 14:41-42), Saul commanded Jonathan to explain what had transpired, and after full admission, Jonathan declared that he should die (1 Sam 14:43). Saul immediately responded with yet another oath: “Thus may God do to me²³ and more, for you will surely die Jonathan” (1 Sam 14:44). Yet the people intervened and persuaded Saul to spare Jonathan (1 Sam 14:45).

Because oaths were serious matters in the ancient world, Saul incriminated himself by his failure to keep one. As evident in the case of Jonathan, even unwitting violation could yield consequences, as Jonathan's breach caused interference in human-divine communication. Jonathan himself acknowledged that he should die for his infraction, further demonstrating the seriousness of the oath. Saul concurred with Jonathan's assessment of the oath's severity, both before realizing Jonathan was the guilty party and after Jonathan admitted his guilt. Yet after putting himself under oath, with Yahweh as his witness, Saul disregarded that very oath under the compulsion of the people. Not only has Saul placed Jonathan under the curse of death, he has also invoked Yahweh against himself as the violator of his own oaths.²⁴

23 Reading *lî* with LXX (μoι) and Vulgate (*mihi*).

24 Though never explicitly stated, Conklin 2011, 24 assumes that the violation of an oath with this form (“Thus will X do to Y”) would be negative and likely deadly. Cf. also Ziegler 2008, 57ff. Similarly, Hawk 1996, 24 understands Saul's oath to have shifted the curse from Jonathan to Saul himself. See also McCarter 1980, 99. Saul's failed oaths may be compared to David's failed oath in 1 Sam 25:22 (“Thus may God do to the enemies of David, and thus may he add...”), where “the enemies of David” changes the whole orientation of the oath. McCarter 1980, 394 contends “the enemies of David” was added to protect David, or his descendants, from the oath. The point is, broken oaths were serious.

Thus, after the rejection of Saul's dynasty in 1 Samuel 13, Saul puts his own dynasty in danger through these oaths. Saul's oaths have physically placed Jonathan, his heir, within the realm of death, as well as theoretically compromising Saul's own well-being, both through Saul's own volition. These oaths represent the inception of Saul's destructive behavior towards Jonathan.²⁵ Saul will later unsuccessfully attempt to kill his heir by spear (1 Sam 20:33), only to knowingly lead Jonathan into certain death (1 Sam 31:2). In light of the divine rejection of Saul's dynasty, Saul's willful actions which endanger both himself and his heir are significant. This point will be revisited below, but for now it is sufficient to note that Saul, and not Yahweh, is at work against Saul's rule through these oaths.

Saul's rejection in 1 Samuel 15 is confirmed when Samuel anointed David in the very next chapter (1 Samuel 16), with the result that the spirit of Yahweh (*rûah* YHWH) came upon David and left Saul (1 Sam 16:13-14; cf. 18:12). Moreover, at this point an “evil spirit” (*rûah rā'â*) from Yahweh began to come upon Saul (1 Sam 16:14), demonstrating that Yahweh is at work to some degree in the following events.²⁶ This “evil spirit” appears to have functioned as a mechanism which drove a wedge between David and Saul in a similar way that an “evil spirit” (*rûah rā'â*) placed the men of Shechem against Abimelech (Judg 9:23). Admittedly, the exact nature of the “evil spirit” is not absolutely clear. It is not impossible that the text may have in view some sort of

Jephthah's vow is illustrative in this regard (Judg 11:29-40), for it was irrevocable (v. 35) and so a regretful Jephthah had to fulfill it (v. 39). Even Jephthah's daughter willfully submitted to her fate (Judg 11:37) in a manner similar to Jonathan, for a vow to Yahweh had could not be broken.

25 Cf. Long 1989, 123–129. Long argues for a growing rift between Saul and Jonathan. I do not disagree with Long's assessment, but I go further, connecting Saul's oaths to his later attempts on Jonathan's life, Jonathan's death, Saul's suicide, and Saul's ultimate complicity in the demise of his dynasty, all related to Saul's rejections through the king's very own volition.

26 Cf. the other occurrences in 1 Sam 16:15-16, 23; 18:10; and 19:9.

being sent by Yahweh to torment Saul, but a close look suggests that this is not the case. In the Hebrew Bible, in the few instances when Yahweh enlists or approves the work of a supernatural being from the divine council, that entity works under the sponsorship of Yahweh in order to achieve Yahweh's goals. For instance, the spirit (*hārūah*) which proposed to be a “spirit of deception” (*rūah šeqer*) in all of Ahab's prophets successfully does so in order to accomplish Yahweh's goal of enticing Ahab so that he would fall at Ramoth-gilead (1 Kgs 22:20-22). Similarly, “the adversary” (*hasśāṭān*) can only do what Yahweh had permitted in Job (Job 1:12-2:13). Conversely, the “evil spirit” in Samuel seems to work against Yahweh's intentions, for when Saul is prodded by the “evil spirit,” he tries to take David's life (1 Sam 18:10-11, 19:9-10). Yahweh had designated David king, and it is doubtful that part of that plan involved sending a malevolent being with a mission to incite Saul to kill David. On the contrary, that Saul twice missed David at point-blank range suggests the opposite: divine protection. At the same time, the “evil spirit” from Yahweh assisted the initiation of the physical transfer of Saul's authority to David.²⁷ The “evil spirit,” something from Yahweh yet not totally tethered by Yahweh's authority, is more likely a disposition than a being.²⁸ Namely, it most likely designates a

27 The combination of the Yahweh's absence and the “evil spirit” induced Saul to seek David's life. In 1 Sam 18:10, the evil spirit led Saul to attempt to kill David. Saul was specifically afraid of David, for Yahweh had left him and was with David (1 Sam 18:12), so Saul made him a commander (1 Sam 18:14). In that position, David had tremendous success, and gained the people (1 Sam 18:16). Saul then gives his daughter Michal to David in an attempt to kill him (1 Sam 18:21, 25). Yet the result is that David survives the dowry price and acquires the king's daughter, as well as a bid to the throne. Moreover, Michal later shows loyalty to David over Saul by saving David after Saul rages due to the “evil spirit” (1 Sam 19:9, 11ff). Saul's murderous attitude towards David, induced by the “evil spirit,” led to Jonathan's covenant with David (1 Sam 20:1ff). Saul understood Jonathan's loyalty to place David within reach of the throne (1 Sam 20:31). Thus Yahweh's absence and the “evil spirit” led Saul to give David a position of favor with the people, a bid to the throne, while also leading Saul's heir, Jonathan, to proclaim his loyalty to David. These events show the transfer of kingship from Saul to David, and that Saul's family supported David over Saul. In this way, the transfer of Saul's royal authority to David had already begun in a physical sense.

28 Cf. Večko 1998, 209 where a “distorted attitude” is suggested by the writers use of “evil spirit.” See Wolff 1996, 32-39 for a discussion of *rūah*, and note especially the examples of *rūah* that denote

mental state which fostered the cessation of the kingdom from Saul into the hands of David by creating friction between the two parties, something suggested by Saul's mania. Additionally, this “evil spirit” originated from Yahweh, showing that the deity was involved in the transfer of the kingdom from Saul to David.

The final chapters which narrate the end of Saul's life are a dense convergence of Saul's rejection and the human and divine action which operate to achieve that rejection.²⁹ In 1 Samuel 28 Saul turns to illicit divination to seek advice from the deceased Samuel (1 Sam 28:3, cf. 25:1) through the medium (*'ēšet ba'ālat 'ôb*) of Endor (1 Sam 28:7). Yahweh had not answered Saul upon his inquiry (1 Sam 28:6), so Saul is portrayed, as a last resort, seeking Yahweh's advice through the same means of divine communication which he had previously proscribed (1 Sam 28:3).³⁰ After the medium summoned Samuel, Saul questioned the prophet concerning the coming battle with the Philistines (1 Sam 28:15-16). Samuel's words to Saul predicted the imminent physical fulfillment of Saul's personal rejection as king (1 Sam 28:17-19):

Yahweh has done for himself just as he spoke through my hand, and Yahweh has torn the kingdom from your hand and he has given it to your neighbor, to David. Because you did not obey the voice of Yahweh and you did not execute his burning anger against Amalek, therefore Yahweh has done this thing to you this day. And Yahweh will also give Israel, with you, into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. Also Yahweh will give the camp of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

True to Samuel's words, Saul's sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua fell in battle

feelings (subdivision five, titled “Feelings” [36-37]). Cf. the similar usages in Judg 8:3; Prov 14:29, 18:14.

29 I am concerned with 1 Samuel 31 only, and I will not engage Saul's death as portrayed in 2 Samuel 1 here. This is primarily because it is 1 Samuel 31, and not 2 Samuel 1, that has direct ties to Saul's rejection (1 Sam 28:18).

30 On the Deuteronomistic historian's use of David's cleromancy in contrast to Saul's necromancy, see Arnold 2004.

with the Philistines (1 Sam 31:2). After suffering severe wounds, Saul asked his armor bearer to kill him (1 Sam 31:3-4a). The armor bearer would not follow through with Saul's request, and Saul committed suicide by falling on his sword (1 Sam 31:4b).

Samuel's messages spoken in the séance explain that Yahweh has already torn the kingdom out of Saul's hands and has given it to David, specifically referencing Saul's failure to execute Yahweh's wrath against the Amalekites. Accordingly, the prophetic announcement which Samuel spoke to Saul in 1 Samuel 15 is once again portrayed as completely fulfilled in Samuel's eyes.³¹ It follows that deaths of Saul and his sons in 1 Samuel 31 do not compose the rejection of Saul from *Samuel's prophetic perspective*. Whereas the kingdom *has been torn from Saul and given to David*, Yahweh will give (*wəyittēn*) Saul and Israel over to the Philistines, and “tomorrow” (*māḥār*) Saul and his sons will be with the deceased Samuel. From the perspective of the DtrH, Samuel's words indicate that the kingdom had not been Saul's since the very day he made the pronouncement in 1 Samuel 15.³²

With Saul's rejection as king fully completed in the eyes of the prophet, Saul's death is not necessarily part of that divine rejection. The same can be said for the deaths of Saul's sons. Before addressing Saul's death in particular, the deaths of Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua will first be considered in their significance to the rejection of Saul's dynasty.

31 Grammatically, the verbs in 1 Sam 28:17-19 corroborate that the transfer of the kingdom from Saul to David is complete: *wayya 'aś, wayyiqra', wayyittānāh*.

32 The stance taken by Samuel finds a degree of practical confirmation in the words of Israel in 2 Sam 5:2, and also by the observations noted above concerning the beginning of the physical manifestation of Saul's rejection. N.B. In 1 Sam 28:18, “this thing...today” (*haddābār hazzeh...hayyôm hazzeh*) which Samuel refers to is not the physical fulfillment of 1 Samuel 15 through Saul's death the following day, but the cessation of legitimate divine communication. Cf. 1 Sam 28:6, 15.

These three sons of Saul figure into this discussion insofar as their deaths are not the result of the rejection of Saul's dynasty in 1 Samuel 13. The rejection of Saul's dynasty is only a repudiation of that dynasty's potential endurance. Such a rejection needs no proactive measures to ensure its fulfillment. Rather, Yahweh needs simply to remain idle in order to fulfill the dynastic rejection. In other words, the dynasty need not be destroyed, but rather to exist as a non-established entity. This passive nature of Saul's dynastic rejection is supported by the text, as the deaths of Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua do not wipe out Saul's line.³³ Thus, the death of Saul and his sons was not required by the rejection of Saul's dynasty in 1 Samuel 13.³⁴

A noticeable dichotomy exists between the Samuel's *prophetic* perspective of Saul's personal rejection as king and the physical realization of that perspective. This dichotomy produces a tension which can only be erased through the physical removal of Saul from the throne. The tension is erased through Saul's death, but not in a straightforward way. Samuel's announcement of the deaths of Saul and his sons links

33 According to 1 Sam 14:49, Saul's sons were Jonathan, Ishvi and Malchishua. Though Abinadab is not listed in 14:49, it is critical to notice that Ishvi does not die with his brothers. Moreover, 2 Sam 2:8 makes it obvious that a son of Saul, Ishbaal (reading with Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion [*Ἰσβααλ*] for MT Ish-bosheth; cf. 1 Chronicles 8:33; 9:39), lives on beyond the deaths of Saul and his other sons. Whatever the relationship between the two lists and between Ishvi and Ishbaal may be, the narrative makes clear that Saul's descendants are not wiped out in battle with the Philistines on Mount Gilboa. Even after Ishbaal's death, Saul's line continues. David put to death seven sons and grandsons of Saul to expiate the bloodguilt caused by an otherwise unmentioned massacre of the Gibeonites at the hands of Saul (2 Sam 21:8; cf. Joshua 9). Not even this event ends Saul's line, as David spared Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth (21:7; he was crippled, and therefore an unlikely threat to the throne. See 2 Sam 4:4; 9:6, 10-13; 16:1, 4; 19:24-25, 30; 21:7-8). It must be stressed that Saul's line continues both after David becomes king and after the dynastic promise given David through Nathan (2 Samuel 7). Taken together, the above data demonstrate that the rejection of Saul's dynasty was a passive act that did not necessitate the slaughter of potential dynasts. Divine refusal to establish Saul's family line did not mean that Saul's genealogical descendants had to be terminated.

34 Similarly Zalewski 1989, 456: "Nowhere in the story do we find any hint whatsoever supporting the notion that Saul's death was considered as a punishment by the Lord for sins against him." Cf. Williams 2007, 185-186: "His removal from kingship is certain, but not necessarily the tragic circumstances in which he and his sons die."

Saul's instrumentality to both the rejection of his dynasty and the physical rejection of his kingship.³⁵

Saul's instrumentality is highlighted by the fact that Saul is painted as continuing to go into battle despite the prophetic announcement of death. It would be have been expected that Saul attempt to circumvent the impending doom in some way, particular in light of the fact that Saul never fully obeyed the prophetic word.³⁶ After Samuel's announcement of Saul's impending doom, Saul makes no attempt to counteract his looming death. Instead, he uncharacteristically accepts the reality of the announcement.³⁷ In doing so, he enacts the death of his sons, particularly his heir, along with himself by acting in accordance with the announcement.

Saul's instrumentality is a crucial element tying 1 Samuel 14, where Saul both invoked Yahweh against himself and placed Jonathan under the curse of death, with their exterminations in 1 Samuel 31. Saul fulfills his broken oaths himself through his own volition by going into battle despite the foreknowledge that it would mean certain death not only for himself, but for Jonathan. Though Saul unsuccessfully tried to kill Jonathan by spear earlier in 1 Sam 20:33, the revelation of what would transpire on Gilboa allowed

35 Thus, the relationship between 1 Samuel 28 and 31 is not that of prophecy and fulfillment, as claimed by some. Rather, as explained below, it is a convergence of theological perspective, physical manifestation, and human agency.

36 See 1 Sam 9:21, where Saul questions his own appointment as king; 1 Sam 10:8 and 1 Sam 13:11ff, as Saul does not keep his appointment made by Samuel; 1 Sam 15:1ff, where Saul does not fulfill the command given him by Samuel. Though Saul was silent regarding the rejection of his dynasty, note that Saul blatantly disregards the rejection of his dynasty in 1 Sam 20:31. Cf. 2 Kgs 20:19.

37 The distinctiveness of Saul's silent concession to Samuel's announcement of death is confirmed by other episodes in Samuel-Kings where rulers act to circumvent similar prophetic announcements of death. David, although instructed by Nathan that the son born out of David's affair with Bathsheba would die, attempts to spare the life of the child (2 Sam 12:14-18). Similarly, Ahab disguised himself in order to avoid the disaster which Micaiah proclaimed he would face in battle (1 Kgs 22:23, 27-28, 30-35). Cf. the "substitute king ritual" in Mesopotamia, where a substitute king was enthroned, then killed, to protect the true king from dangers signaled by negative omens.

Saul to inadvertently bring the curse on Jonathan to completion. Saul is the only character in the narrative who actively attempted to kill Jonathan, his heir, both by curse and by spear, and Samuel's disclosure to Saul of the events on Gilboa allowed Saul to ironically play a central role in Jonathan's death through Saul's passivity.³⁸

Saul's suicide further highlights his instrumentality in relation to his own rejection. According to the words of David, Yahweh's anointed could be removed one of three ways: Yahweh could strike him, the day of his death could come, or he could fall in battle (1 Sam 26:10). No human could strike down Yahweh's anointed.³⁹ The dichotomy between Saul and David is clear in this regard: Saul impetuously attempted to kill David, anointed of Yahweh, whereas David refused to strike down Saul, Yahweh's anointed. However, when Saul fell on his own sword, he finally accomplished what he tried to do with David: he successfully killed Yahweh's anointed.⁴⁰ Saul's death was not achieved in any of the ways mentioned by David, as Saul left no room for providence, death in due time, nor war to end his life.

In the end, Saul's portrayal as a chastised ruler in Samuel as it relates to his rejection is quite intricately textured. He is guilty of not heeding Yahweh through the prophet, which resulted in direct divine chastisement, leading to the divine rejection of his dynasty and his kingship. These rejections are carried out through a complex amalgamation of divine and human agency. The rejection of Saul's dynasty was a concept which needed no physical resolution. However, Saul's personal rejection had to

38 To be clear, I do not suggest Saul is acting with this motive in mind after hearing Samuel's forecast. I suggest the author is highlighting Saul's unintentional and ironic fulfillment of Saul's previous intentional actions.

39 1 Sam 24:4, 6, 10; 26:9, 11, 23; 2 Sam 1:14; cf. 2 Sam 19:21

40 Cf. McKenzie's comment: "In the end, he alone kills YHWH's anointed" (McKenzie 2006, 67).

end with his death to reach fruition. Saul's death is ultimately a matter of both his own volition and ambition, as well as divine rejection.⁴¹ Saul left no room for divine providence to play out in his rejection. Instead, through his suicide Saul killed Yahweh's anointed in a final act of defiance. Samuel's postmortem instruction highlighted Saul's agency in his own death and that of his heir, in that Saul uncharacteristically remained passive to the news and knowingly led his house to death's doorstep. Moreover, Saul's agency is further compounded in that he invoked Yahweh against himself through his broken oaths in 1 Samuel 14, as well as placing Jonathan under the curse of death.⁴² At the same time, Saul's mania, particularly as seen in his attempts to take the lives of David and Jonathan, was related to the "evil spirit" from Yahweh, which in turn linked to the prophetic understanding of the divine rejection of Saul's kingship in 1 Samuel 15. Thus Saul's divine rejection and its ultimate physical manifestation is a combination of divine machinery and Saul's own actions and ambitions, with the role of each discernible but not always clearly separable.⁴³

In addition to the divine rejection which Saul received from Yahweh for his

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- 41 Meier 2006 demonstrates that the book of Samuel exhibits the principle that those who live by the sword die by the sword, even if righteous, with David being the exception (see especially p. 164). The violent death of Saul (and Jonathan) are part of this global principle in Samuel. Notably, this principle does not require divine agency.
- 42 For a different and more general conclusion on Saul's agency in his demise, see Večko 1998, 211–214. Importantly, Večko concludes that Saul should not be considered a victim of divine persecution (212). The analysis above agrees that Saul is no victim, and one should also note the similar conclusions of Williams 2007 and Janzen 2005. Note that there has been discrepancy over the degree of divine and human responsibility in the Saul stories, see e.g., Amit 2006; Exum 1992; Gunn 1981; Gunn 1980; Hawk 1996, 20; von Rad 2001, 1:325.
- 43 Purposeful tensions in the book of Samuel have been noted, arising from the experience of the writers (e.g., see Meier 2006, 171–173 for tension between the king as a fighter and the biblical axiom that those who live by the sword die by the sword). One should not find it surprising that tensions should arise from life experiences which stand in opposition with belief about deity, nor that ancient writers would not hide these tensions. I take the ancients' admittance of such tensions throughout narrative as a sign of incredible literary and theological sophistication, even in the case of redaction. Ancient writers were fully capable of carrying out multifaceted and complex storylines, without relegating narrative to a forced (contrived) systematic theological paradigm.

failure to obey the divine word through the prophet, Saul committed another act of sacrilege which brought with it serious repercussions. In response to an inquiry made by David, Yahweh answered that Saul had brought bloodguilt upon his house for slaughtering the Gibeonites (*wayyō 'mer YHWH 'el šā 'ûl wə 'el bêt haddāmîm 'al 'ăšer hēmît 'et haggib 'ōnîm*) according to 2 Sam 21:1. The actual event to which the text refers is not contained within the pages of Samuel. It appears that the text assumes it sufficient enough for the reader to understand that Saul had violated the alliance made with the Gibeonites in Joshua 9. Specifically, Joshua had made peace with them (*wayya 'as lāhem yəhōšu 'a šālôm*) and had made a covenant (*wayyikrōt lāhem bərît*) guaranteeing their lives (Josh 9:15). Even though this covenant had been made under false pretense, the Israelites were obligated to keep it (Josh 9:18-20). Somewhere along the line, Saul had broken this oath, and the wrath (*qəšep 'al-haššəbû 'ā*) which Joshua and his constituents feared (Josh 9:20) had come upon the nation in David's time.

From the perspective of the narrative, Saul's violation of the alliance with the Gibeonites ensured the continuance of a famine for three consecutive years during David's time according to 2 Sam 21:1 (11.1.5.3). The whole nation, then, had suffered for Saul's transgression. Saul's dynasty itself was held in guilt for the crime, a curiosity in light of the fact that Saul, the perpetrator, was never designated as guilty during his life. Likewise, Saul did not pay personally for his crime. Instead, in response to David's request to make expiation, the Gibeonites request that seven members of Saul's royal family be handed over to them, that they might kill them (2 Sam 21:3-9).⁴⁴ David

⁴⁴ Cf. the seven princes slaughtered by Amenhotep II according to the Amada temple inscription. For the text, see Breasted 1906, II:313.

complied, sealing the fate of the seven sons of Saul. Thus, as the story stands, the nation suffers for Saul's violation of the alliance, and his dynasty pays the penalty.

In sum, this discussion of the material in 1-2 Samuel with regard to Saul has identified three instances of violations that bring divine punishment. Two violations involved Saul's failure to heed Samuel's instructions (1 Samuel 13 and 15). In consequence, Yahweh rejected Saul and his dynasty, and Saul participated in these rejections in such a way that he brought his life to a premature end and caused members of his dynasty to die violently. Saul's third crime was his violation of the alliance found in Joshua 9. The entire nation suffered from this crime, long after Saul's death, for famine relief was withheld until the violation was remedied. However, the remedy included the slaughter of Saul's sons,⁴⁵ so that Saul's line in particular also suffered for his crimes.

5.1.2 Chronicles

In contrast to Samuel, Chronicles narrates very little about Saul. Saul's genealogical pedigree in 1 Chr 9:35-44 leads directly into Saul's battlefield death (1 Chronicles 10). Relating nothing about Saul's life before the final event which led to his death, Chronicles assumes a degree of familiarity with the contents of its *Vorlage*.⁴⁶ Specifically, Chronicles presumes a general knowledge of the events in 1 Samuel 28, as the Chronicler's understanding of Saul's death depends on Saul's decision to seek a

45 On the continuation of Saul's line after the battle with the Philistines on Gilboa, see note 33 above and p. 55ff.

46 Ho 1995 argues that 1 Chronicles 10 is more original than its counterpart in 1 Samuel 31, with both texts based on a common source. However, I adhere to the stance represented by Klein, namely, that the Chronicler used a version of Samuel-Kings nearly in final form, but often variant from the MT (Klein 2006, 32). Knoppers 2004, 526 notes that the Chronicler's source was slightly smaller than the MT Samuel.

medium. Additionally, as argued below, the events of 1 Samuel 15 are referenced in the Chronicler's unique addition to Saul's account.⁴⁷

The Chronicler's narrative of Saul's battle with the Philistines on Mount Gilboa and his death largely follows 1 Samuel 31, with several minor differences which are not central to this study, save one (addressed below). On the other hand, the Chronicler makes a significant addition at the end of the account (1 Chr 10:13-14):

And Saul died because of his unfaithfulness whereby he acted unfaithfully against Yahweh,⁴⁸ concerning the word of Yahweh which he did not keep, and also for consulting a medium for guidance,⁴⁹ and he did not seek Yahweh. So he (Yahweh) killed him, and he (Yahweh) turned the kingdom to David, son of Jessie.

The unfaithfulness of Saul and the “word of Yahweh (*dabar* YHWH) which he did not keep” have been understood differently. Some argue the Chronicler's addition refers generally to Saul's behavior,⁵⁰ while others suggest it refers specifically to 1 Samuel 13 and/or 15.⁵¹

Saul's “unfaithfulness” is qualified by two specific elements: that Saul did not keep the word of Yahweh, and that Saul sought a medium instead of Yahweh. This latter element is a clear reference to the events of 1 Samuel 28. Similarly, the view taken here is that the first element also refers to a specific episode, namely 1 Samuel 15. The shared

47 Cf. Kalimi 2005, 209 where Kalimi asserts that the Chronicler used allusion (“intertextual structuring”, p. 194) to guide readers to 1 Samuel 13, 15, and 28; Williamson 1982, 92; Knoppers 2004, 527)

48 “And Saul died because of his unfaithfulness whereby he acted unfaithfully against Yahweh,” following Klein's translation (Klein 2006, 282, 289) of *bāma'ālō 'āšer mā'al baYHWH*. Concerning *m'l*, Japhet states, “The root...takes on a very general meaning in Chron., covering the whole range of man's sins against God, equivalent to 'forsaking God'” (Japhet 1993, 229-230).

49 “For guidance,” following Kalimi's translation and analysis of *lidrōš*. Kalimi argues that the redundant phrasing with *drš* and *š'l* is a purposeful maneuver by the Chronicler to make a double reading with Deuteronomy 18:10-11. Thus, the presence of *lidrōš* is neither a dittography, gloss, nor conflation. See Kalimi 2005, 139–140.

50 Mosis 1973, 33-44; Ackroyd 1991, 319; Williamson 1982, 95.

51 Kalimi 2005, 209; Duke 1990, 97; Kelly 1996, 70; Curtis and Madsen 1910, 182.

expression “word of Yahweh” (*dabar* YHWH) links these two episodes, and this phrase's repeated mention in 1 Samuel 15 leaves little room for doubt that the Chronicler has this specific incident in mind.⁵² Moreover, nowhere else does Saul not keep the “word of Yahweh” in 1 Samuel.⁵³ Thus the “word of Yahweh” which Saul did not keep is the divine order to exterminate the Amalekites (1 Sam 15:2ff).

The Chronicler's reference to the role of Saul's inquiry of the medium at Endor in 1 Samuel 28 is directly related to the central theme of Chronicles: “seeking Yahweh.”⁵⁴ “Seeking Yahweh” entailed wholesale devotion to Yahweh through the proper cultic means.⁵⁵ Saul's excuse that Yahweh did not answer him by dreams, Urim, or prophets (1 Sam 28:6) could not have overridden the Chronicler's comprehensive understanding of “seeking Yahweh.” For “seeking Yahweh” in the Chronicler's perspective was more than making a simple request, but involved broad legitimate cultic procedure. That Saul did not seek Yahweh, then, does not mean he did not seek Yahweh's advice. Rather, it meant that Saul did not properly seek Yahweh through the correct cultic means.⁵⁶ In the Chronicler's eyes, Saul's decision to seek a medium was the opposite of what one is

52 So also Ho 1995, 104. See 1 Sam 15:11, 13, 23, 26. N.B. The phrase does not appear in 1 Samuel 13. Schniedewind 1995, 133–135 has shown that the “word of Yahweh” refers to either the prophetic word or the Mosaic Law in Chronicles. In 1 Chr 10:13, the phrase seems to refer to the prophetic word, as the text is directly dependent on Kings. However, the legal terminology in 1 Chr 10:13-14 makes the identification of the “word of Yahweh” ambiguous in Schniedewind's view. Schniedewind's comments notwithstanding, based on the textual relationship between 1 Samuel and Chronicles, allusions in 1 Chr 10:13-14 to 1 Samuel (see Kalimi in note 47 above), and the prominence of the “word of Yahweh” in 1 Samuel 15, all coupled with the fact that Saul only breaks the “word of Yahweh” in 1 Samuel 15, leaves little ambiguity that 1 Samuel 15 is the antecedent to the “word of Yahweh” in 1 Chr 10:13.

53 In 1 Sam 13:13, Saul did not keep “the command of Yahweh” (*mišwat* YHWH).

54 Williamson 1982, 95 does not see this accusation as central, but rather as an example of what he understands as the general indictment in 10:14.

55 For details, see Duke 1990, 47–51 following the work of Schaefer 1972. Cf. Kelly 1996, 51–54. Arnold notes that the Chronicler succinctly summarized the contrast between Saul's necromancy and David's cleromancy appropriated by the Deuteronomist in 1 Samuel (Arnold 2004, 211-213).

56 Note that Kalimi 2005, 327–328 suggests that Saul not inquiring of Yahweh was essentially a theological emendation of 1 Sam 28:6. Cf. also Japhet 1993, 229. Here it is maintained that the apparent contradiction stems from the Chronicler's understanding of “seeking Yahweh.”

obligated to do, an offense constituting “forsaking Yahweh.”⁵⁷ For this reason, Saul's offense was cultic in orientation for the Chronicler.⁵⁸

With Saul's death came the death of his dynasty, as reflected in a significant detail found in the Chronicler's account. Whereas 1 Sam 31:6 narrates that Saul, his three sons, armor bearer and all his men died together on Gilboa, the Chronicler instead disclosed that Saul, his three sons, and “all his house” (*wəkol-bētô*) died together (1 Chr 10:6), with “house” denoting “dynasty.”⁵⁹ Such a statement runs counter to evidence elsewhere in Chronicles, where the Chronicler preserved the continuation of Saul's line in genealogical lists (1 Chr 8:29-40 and 9:35-44). Curtis and Madsen see the Chronicler as having made a “careless statement.”⁶⁰ Knoppers puts forward the possibility that the Chronicler may have Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchi-shua in mind.⁶¹ Japhet takes the contradiction to mean that the fate of Saul's dynasty was fixed on Gilboa despite its genetic continuance.⁶² Japhet's articulation is similar but not identical to Williamson, who understands the conflict to indicate theological judgment and termination of Saul's dynasty.⁶³

The position articulated by Williamson provides a launching point for further elaboration. Saul's dynasty was in the Chronicler's perceptual orbit, and its divine rejection was directly related to Saul's death on Gilboa. A dynastic rejection is precisely

57 Kalimi 2005, 328, 339 notes that 1 Chr 10:13-14 is an example of antithesis, a literary feature characteristic of the Chronicler's work. On Saul's behavior constituting “forsaking Yahweh,” see Japhet 1993, 229. Curtis and Madsen 1910, 182 believe the Chronicler's accusation misrepresents Saul, based on 1 Sam 28:6.

58 See Riley 1993, 39ff for the cultic nature of Saul's behavior.

59 Cf., e.g., 1 Chronicles 17 and 2 Samuel 7. Williamson 1982, 93 comments that “...the dynastic overtones of house (cf. 1 Chr. 17) are unmistakable.”; cf. Knoppers 2004, 522.

60 Curtis and Madsen 1910, 181.

61 Knoppers 2004, 522.

62 Japhet 1993, 226.

63 Williamson 1982, 93. Knoppers 2004, 522 suggests the possibility that the Chronicler may have Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchi-shua in mind when mentioning all of Saul's house. Even so, Knoppers concludes that the point is clear that Saul's dynasty is finished.

what appears in 1 Samuel 13, and it requires no physical manifestation of the deity's action (as explained above).⁶⁴ For the same reasons in 1 Samuel, the end of Saul's dynasty in Chronicles is no more than that: a religious concept with no physical manifestation. Such a concept is especially poignant in light of the Chronicler's genealogies which continue Saul's line. The deaths of Saul, his sons, and "all his house" were the manifestations by which the Chronicler understood Saul's house to be judged and rejected, despite further genealogical continuance. In other words, the death of all Saul's house could not have been the actual rejection of Saul's dynasty, especially since all his house did not actually die (according to the Chronicler's own evidence). Therefore, it was through the death of Saul and his sons that the Chronicler knew that judgment had passed over Saul's dynasty. The last words of Saul's account confirm that Saul's dynastic rule had been terminated despite its physical continuance: "And he (Yahweh) turned the kingdom over to David, son of Jessie" (1 Chr 10:14b).

Thus, the Chronicler was concerned with the end of Saul's rule and dynasty as manifested on Gilboa, and the way Saul's actions affected the outcome. With no prophetic pronouncement of judgment preceding Saul's death, judgment on Saul and his house was coterminous with Saul's death in the Chronicler's eyes. The Chronicler detected the causes for Saul's judgment and verdict, both of which he received simultaneously from Yahweh on the very day of his death and the death of his dynasty, in Saul's offenses found in 1 Samuel 15 and 28.

In the case of Saul, the Chronicler was guided by a theological conviction which

⁶⁴ Ho 1995, 87 connects "all his house" to 1 Sam 28:17-19, which cannot be accepted based on the analysis above.

saw in the events of history a causation conforming to the Chronicler's ideology of faithfulness (“seeking Yahweh”) or lack thereof. The Chronicler's emphases in his account of Saul result in a lack of systematic retribution. Although a time gap is implied between Saul's offense regarding the Amalekites and his death similar to that found in 1 Samuel, the Chronicler's time-line between offense and punishment is altered by his specific reference to Saul's second offense, the incident with the medium at Endor. The time lag between this second offense and punishment is just one day. These two divergent time-tables demonstrate that the Chronicler was not concerned with accounting for a one-to-one immediate correspondence between offense and punishment in this instance. Nor was the Chronicler looking to correlate the seriousness of offense with the degree of punishment. If so, one would have expected the Chronicler to explain why Saul's sons and “all his house” died with Saul. Rather, the Chronicler's global emphasis on faithfulness was the guiding principle by which the Chronicler viewed Saul's death. The Chronicler began with Saul's battlefield death, viewing the historical event found in his sources as the judgment and verdict on Saul. From there, the Chronicler found causation in Saul's unfaithfulness. Thus, the Chronicler was not guided by a theology of strict retribution, but by how he understood history as it converged with Chronistic theology.

As stated above, judgment was explicitly executed by Yahweh when Yahweh killed Saul on Gilboa. This point demonstrates the complex nature of the Chronicler's understanding of his *Vorlage*. The phrase “So he (Yahweh) killed him” (*waymîṭēhû*) directly implicates Yahweh alone in Saul's death.⁶⁵ The Chronicler sees Saul's death as

⁶⁵ The Chronicler was focused on Saul alone, as indicated by the third person masculine singular suffixed

directly delivered by Yahweh himself as punishment for Saul's offenses. Yahweh's involvement is particularly striking since Saul clearly commits suicide. The combination of divine agency and human action was a paradox that the Chronicler accepted. Important for the Chronicler was to demonstrate that Saul's death was a result of unfaithfulness and censured divination. These offenses caused death, with divine agency somehow concealed in Saul's suicide.

In Chronicles, then, Saul is portrayed as a king who does not heed the prophetic word (in reference to 1 Samuel 15), but also as a king who does not “seek Yahweh,” a central theme in Chronicles which entails properly seeking Yahweh through the correct cultic means. Saul is not just one who disobeys the prophetic word, but is an example of unfaithfulness through cultic violation. For the Chronicler, judgment on Saul himself was not preemptively executed as it was in 1 Samuel 15 via the word of the prophet. Saul's offenses, which the Chronicler referenced in 1 Samuel 15 and 28, were the cause of his judgment and verdict, both of which he received simultaneously from Yahweh on the very day of his death. In other words, Saul's judgment and death were coterminous in Chronicles. The Chronicler began with Saul's death, which led to a shift in the judgment-punishment time line from 1 Samuel to 1 Chronicles. Thus, in Chronicles, Saul's unfaithfulness preceded his physical judgment of death, whereas in 1 Samuel Saul's actions received immediate theological judgments, one of which Saul himself brought to physical completion sometime later by falling on his sword. Saul's death also signaled the divine rejection of Saul's line, as seen in that all of Saul's house died with him in light

pronoun on the verb. If the Chronicler wanted to demonstrate that Yahweh killed anyone else, the suffixed pronoun could have been made plural.

of the physical continuation of his line. In contrast to Samuel, the Chronicler places Yahweh's activity in the foreground, as Saul's death is placed squarely upon Yahweh's shoulders. In the background is Saul's own willful act of suicide. A direct correlation exists between Yahweh's role and causation.

5.2 David

In the Hebrew Bible, David's special status did not exempt him from being remembered for offenses that brought divine punishment. The book of Samuel in particular narrates David's murder of Uriah and affair with Bathsheba, offenses reckoned to be against Yahweh himself. Disastrous consequences followed, and David's dynasty suffered tremendously because of them. These consequences, like those accompanying Saul's behavior in 1 Samuel, are quite complex in their unfolding, and they will be addressed below. Additionally, David's decision to conduct an ill-advised census constituted another act of sacrilege according to both Samuel and Chronicles. The result of the census gravely affected David's entire nation according to both texts. Though both accounts are, in the main, quite similar, some significant differences in each account are addressed below.

5.2.1 Samuel

David's first crime that brought punishment from God transpired in Jerusalem when his army was out fighting Ammon. After spying a woman bathing while walking on his roof top, David sought her identity (2 Sam 11:1-3). David then sent for her, despite the fact that he learned that she, Bathsheba, was the wife of Uriah the Hittite (2

Sam 11:3-4), one of David's elite soldiers (2 Sam 23:39). David slept with her, resulting in her pregnancy (2 Sam 11:5), a situation that David attempted to cover up (2 Sam 11:6-13). When his attempts to cover up the pregnancy failed, David commanded his general to place Uriah on the front line of intense battle and then fall back so that Uriah would be struck down by the enemy (2 Sam 11:14-17).

That these acts constituted infractions against Yahweh is made clear through Nathan's parable and the prophet's brazen condemnation of the king (2 Sam 12:1-15). In particular, Nathan asks David (2 Sam 12:9):

Why have you despised the word of Yahweh, to do what is evil in his eyes? Uriah the Hittite you have struck down with the sword, and his wife you have taken for yourself for a wife, and you killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon!⁶⁶

Yahweh's assertions through Nathan show that these are not just intra-personal crimes, but they were also sins against Yahweh. Nathan asks why David "...despised the word of Yahweh to do what is evil..." (2 Sam 12:9), and he states Yahweh's words, saying that punishment will ensue "...because you despised me..." (2 Sam 12:10). David himself admits that his sins were articulated in this speech as offenses directed against Yahweh when he says in his confession, "I have sinned against Yahweh" (2 Sam 12:13),⁶⁷ further demonstrating that David's actions constituted acts of sacrilege.

Because David's crimes of adultery and murder were against Yahweh, they brought consequences that were as devastating as they were complex. First, it should be noted that David's sins merited death. After David's affair with Bathsheba and his murder

66 Driver 2009, 292 notes the emphatic positions of *'ēt 'ūriyâ*, *wə'et 'istô*, and *wə'ōtô*. Indeed, fronting the objects before the verbs stresses the heinous acts David committed.

67 Cf. Genesis 39:9, where Joseph states that an adulterous relationship with Potiphar's wife would constitute a sin against God. In contrast, note the similar circumstances in *ARM* 26 488, where the wife of Sin-Iddinam considered adulterous behavior to be against Sin-Iddinam – and not against a deity.

of Uriah, David inadvertently indicted himself through his response to Nathan's parable (2 Sam 12:1-4). David, enraged that the the rich man slaughtered the poor man's ewe, announced that the rich man deserved death (*ben-māwet*),⁶⁸ and that he must pay the fourfold restitution (2 Sam 12:5-6). Nathan then revealed the truth to David, saying, “You are the man!” (2 Sam 12:7). After Nathan's condemning diatribe, David admitted his guilt (2 Sam 12:13), to which Nathan replied, “Yahweh has also caused your sin to pass by. You will not die (*tāmût*)” (2 Sam 12:13). However, Nathan continued, saying that “the son born to you will surely die (*môt yāmût*)” (1 Sam 12:14). These verbs connect back to David's declaration that the rich man in Nathan's parable (i.e., David himself) deserved death (*ben-māwet*).

One can see, then, that David actually acquired a death penalty for his crimes. The fact that David's repentance removed him from the penalty does not diminish the original sentence. The text implies that David himself would have died if he did not repent. David's punishment is not mitigated by his confession, since it is qualitatively the same: death. Instead, the first victim will not be David, but his son.⁶⁹ The collateral damage of David's offense is the innocent child's life. Yahweh struck (*wayyiggôp*) the child, and the boy died as a result (2 Sam 12:15-18). The consequences of David's crimes, then, first surface in the death of his son.⁷⁰

68 McCarter 1984, 299 argues against the meaning “one who is good as dead” or “one who deserves to die,” stating that, “No good parallel for such a meaning exists among the numerous uses of the noun *bēn*, 'son'.” He prefers instead “a fiend of hell” from a comparison of *ben-māwet* and *'iš māwet* with the phrase *ben bālīya'al* and *'iš bālīya'al*, and proceeds to say that v.6, David's issuing of restitution, need not be understood to contradict *ben-māwet*. However, that *ben-māwet* refers to deserved death is defensible on the grounds that David, as the rich man in the parable, deserves death (2 Sam 12:7-7; elaborated below). Additionally, constructions of the form *ben-X* regularly mean that the referent belongs to the “X” class. Thus, *ben 'ādām* means “mortal” and *bānē 'elōhīm* “divine beings” (cf. Waltke-O'Connor §9.5.3).

69 Contra Boda, who claims that David's confession “mitigates” the death penalty (Boda 2009, 160).

70 Cf. Exod 20:5, 34:7; John 9:2.

Beyond the death penalty suffered by David's son, Nathan alerted David to several more consequences of the king's wrongs. These consequences are manifold, rooted in David's actions, and highlighted by repetition found in Yahweh's words spoken by Nathan. David took (*lāqaḥtā*: 2 Sam 12:9) Uriah's wife, so Yahweh will take (*wālāqaḥtī*: 2 Sam 12:11) David's wives. By the sword (*ḥereb*: 2 Sam 12:9) David killed Uriah, so the sword (*ḥereb*: 2 Sam 12:10) will not turn from David's house. David did evil (*hāra*: 2 Sam 12:9) in the eyes of Yahweh, so Yahweh will raise up calamity against David from his own house (*hinānī mēqîm 'ālēkā rā'ā mibbêtekā*: 2 Sam 12:11).⁷¹

As Nathan's warning suggested, the fallout of David's sins is far greater than the death of David's child. The truth of Nathan's statement concerning the sword not turning from David's house plays out in the grim story of David's succession. Though not said to be directly caused by Yahweh, the events are repercussions of David's offenses against Yahweh. Moreover, Nathan's statement is qualified by the following statements in 2 Sam 12:11, where divine agency is placed in the foreground as Yahweh speaks: “Behold, I am about to raise up (*hinānī mēqîm*) calamity against you from your house,” “I will take” (*wālāqaḥtī*) your wives, and “I will” (*wānātattī*) give them to your friend. The import of these statements cannot be overstated, for they show that the bloody events of the Succession Narrative⁷² result from David's acts. David's sins affect the entire nation,⁷³ and in this way it becomes evident that David's offenses have consequences that are far more extensive than those that follow upon Saul's disobedience in the book of Samuel.

On the surface, these events take place in a straightforward fashion. Calamity

71 For David's children, see 2 Sam 3:2-5, 12:24-25, 13:1 cf. 5:12-16.

72 Broadly understood as 2 Samuel 9-1 Kings 2.

73 Boda 2009, 162.

first arises from David's family when Amnon raped his sister Tamar (2 Sam 13:1ff). Two years later, Absalom killed Amnon to avenge his sister Tamar (15:23ff). Some time after this, Absalom took David's wives before all Israel (2 Sam 16:21-22) on Ahithophel's (Bathsheba's grandfather)⁷⁴ counsel. This was directly linked to Absalom's efforts to usurp the throne (2 Samuel 15). After Absalom died at the hands of Joab, (2 Sam 18:14-15), a newly crowned Solomon put Adonijah to death (1 Kgs 2:25) after Adonijah essentially asked for a bid to the throne (1 Kgs 2:22). Notably, the death of Adonijah followed the passing of a senile David (1 Kgs 2:10-12), showing that the consequences of David's actions transpired beyond the offender's death.

While Yahweh plays a role in the events of the Succession Narrative according to Nathan's pronouncement, the deity's role is not nearly as clear as the verbs in Nathan's speech suggest. This perspective, where Yahweh recedes to the background yet remains involved in human affairs, is a hallmark of the Succession Narrative.⁷⁵ Though Yahweh says (through Nathan) that he will do a number of things, these *goals* cannot be cleanly separated from the *ways* they are achieved. The divine goals are accomplished by autonomous humans with their own ambitions and volition. Additionally, Yahweh's

74 Cf. 2 Sam 11:3 and 23:34.

75 Though associated primarily with the Succession Narrative (e.g. Roberts 1976, 7), the same perspective is reflected elsewhere, such as in the accounts of Saul, Solomon, and Ahab (5.1.1, 5.3, 5.5). The notion that both Mesopotamian texts and the Hebrew Bible attest to the idea of historical events as divine manifestations has long been recognized (Albrektson 1967), but the ancients were sensitive to such involvement. Note the variants among the copies of the Weidner Chronicle (Al-Rawi 1990, 6): the Neo-Assyrian text A l. 52 reads “sleeplessness was set on him” (*la ṣa-la-lu GAR-[su] > lā ṣalālu šakin[su]*), whereas the Neo-Babylonian text B l. 12 reads “he imposed sleeplessness on him” (*la ṣa-la-la i-mid-s[u] > lā ṣalāla īmids[u]*). Similarly, Kalimi has pointed out a similar set of examples: Esth 6:1 MT reads, “That night the King's sleep fled,” whereas the Septuagint, Old Latin, and the First and Second Targums read, “That night *God* took away the King's sleep” (Kalimi 2012, 242; both translation and emphasis are Kalimi's). These variants attest to the ancients' sensitivity to the issue of divine involvement in human affairs (cf. the Chroniclers version of 1 Sam 31:3-4 [1 Chr 10:13-14] and 2 Kgs 23:29 [2 Chr 35:20b-24a]). Thus, one must remain sensitive to the degrees of divine involvement in ancient texts.

involvement notwithstanding, it does not necessarily follow that Yahweh is responsible for orchestrating all the events by which the divine goals are achieved. The events which transpire and their relationships to divine and human action are multiplex and deserve attention.

The characters involved in the events aspire to meet their own ambitions. Amnon's behavior is clearly deplorable and driven by his own immorality. At the same time, Amnon is heavily influenced by Jonadab who leads Amnon to make his poor decision. When Absalom murders Amnon and sleeps with David's concubines, both actions are conducted within the realm of human ambition: Absalom killed Amnon for raping his sister and Ahithophel advised Absalom to sleep with David's concubines in public. Nor can Ahithophel's advice be benign, for Bathsheba was his granddaughter (2 Sam 11:3; 23:34). This advice, suggested by Ahithophel and carried out by Absalom, is related to Absalom's ambition to take the throne, something never mentioned as a consequence in Nathan's condemnation of David's actions. Though the sword was never to depart from David's house, it is clear that Absalom's attempt to take the throne and kill David was unacceptable to Yahweh. Yahweh worked directly against Absalom's *coup d'état*, for he defeated Ahithophel's advice through Hushai in order to ruin Absalom (2 Sam 17:14) – in accord with David's request (2 Sam 15:31). Further, one should not lose sight of the fact that Absalom's aspiration to slay his father, an initiative seemingly feared by David (2 Sam 15:14), suggested by both Ahithophel (2 Sam 17:1-3) and Hushai (2 Sam 17:12) and pleasing to Absalom (2 Sam 17:4, 14), is at odds with Yahweh's clear statement that David's death was no longer part of divine punishment after David's

confession (2 Sam 12:13).⁷⁶ Joab failed to heed David's command to deal gently with Absalom (2 Sam 18:5) when Joab drove three spears into Absalom before his men cut the usurper down (2 Sam 18:14). Adonijah's death came quickly after he abdicated the throne to Solomon, for he asked for Abishag, his father's concubine, an act understood by Solomon as a bid for the throne (1 Kgs 2:17-25). David, in addition to the sins which he committed, plays a role in these episodes as well, for the text suggests that his poor parenting is also a factor in the events which unfold within his house (see 2 Sam 13:21; 1 Kgs 1:6).

In light of the personal ambitions of the parties involved, and particularly in light of those ambitions that worked against what Yahweh had announced (that David will not die) and what he had not decreed (e.g., Absalom's efforts to take the throne), there is a palpable tension between what Yahweh said he was going to do and how those goals transpire. The events are not all orchestrated by Yahweh, but are a combination of Yahweh's decrees and the human parties involved in those events which bring about the fulfillment of those decrees. This literary reality leads one to conclude that Yahweh was involved in the events to some degree, but that involvement remains hidden behind the human ambitions which somehow work with the divine pronouncement to bring about the consequences of David's sins. Moreover, Yahweh worked in spite of human actors in order to bring the punishments to fruition.

In the end, one can see that the unfolding of the consequences of David's crimes in the Succession History are complicated, containing multiple parties and agendas. The

⁷⁶ Noll 2013, 130. Instead of seeing a criticism of Yahweh, it is better to recognize that Absalom chose to work against Yahweh in this instance, and Absalom's demise reflects the consequences of the choices for which he was responsible.

fact, though, that the consequences are anchored in Yahweh's announcement does not allow one to separate Yahweh from those consequences, even if the narrator does not make Yahweh's actions explicit as the story unfolds. Conversely, the text implies that Yahweh is at work to ensure that the consequences do not go beyond his announcement through the prophet Nathan. The end result is that David's family line suffers tremendous loss because of their patriarch's crimes against Yahweh, for the deaths of Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah are tied to David's crimes.

When one combines the immediate consequences of David's crimes with the long-term consequences of those same crimes in the Succession History, the severity of David's punishment comes into view. David deserved death for his crimes, and Nathan's words in 2 Sam 12:13 demonstrate that David did not die only because he admitted his sins. This factor (David's repentance) does not detract from the fact that the writer readily admits that the king earned a death sentence for his crimes. David's repentance, then, saved his life, but the penalty remained in force with respect to his son. Yahweh struck the child and he died, and this death was the first of David's sons to die because of their father's crimes. Three other sons of David fall in the Succession History, and these deaths, too, are connected to their father's crimes.

Later in the books of Samuel, David commits another offense that results in punishment from God by taking a census (2 Samuel 24). This enigmatic passage starts by highlighting divine agency: "Now again the anger of Yahweh burned against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, 'Go, number Israel and Judah'" (2 Sam 24:1).⁷⁷

⁷⁷ The text is silent on the source of Yahweh's anger against Israel. Such disregard for the source of Yahweh's indignation is taken here as a clue for authorial intent: the text is not about Israel's misdeed(s), but David's complicity in their punishment.

David then commanded Joab to traverse the territories and number (plural, *ûpiqədû*) the people (2 Sam 24:2). Despite Joab's objections, David demanded the census (2 Sam 24:3-4). Upon receiving the results, David realized that he had sinned and repented (2 Sam 24:10).

The next day Gad approached David and, speaking on Yahweh's behalf, offered three modes of punishment: seven years of famine, three months of flight before enemies, or three days of pestilence (*deber*) in the land (2 Sam 24:11-13). David chose three days of pestilence, based on David's anticipation of Yahweh's mercy (2 Sam 24:14).⁷⁸ Subsequently, Yahweh sent pestilence (*wayyittēn* YHWH *deber*) which killed seventy-thousand men until it halted after Yahweh command the "Destroying Angel" (*lammal'āk hammašhît*) to cease before reaching Jerusalem (2 Sam 24:15-16).⁷⁹ David, seeing the angel, repented and asked that (Yahweh's) hand be against David and his house (2 Sam 24:17). After being instructed by Gad, David purchased the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, built an altar, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings (2 Sam 24:18-25).⁸⁰ The text then reports that, "Yahweh was moved by entreaties for the land and the plague was restrained from Israel" (2 Sam 24:25b).⁸¹

The sequence of events and the parties involved in David's census plague reveal an important dynamic between king and deity. The passage starts off with Yahweh angry at *Israel*, but then inciting *David* to command a census.⁸² David, after carrying out the

78 Notice that David connects the three days of pestilence (*deber*) with the hand of Yahweh (*yad* YHWH) in 2 Sam 24:13-14.

79 This is a supernatural envoy belonging to the class of ancient near eastern plague deities (Meier 1999b).

80 Ritual acts check plague elsewhere (e.g. Exod 4:25-26, Num 8:19; 25:8), particularly in regard to the Destroyer (e.g., Exod 12:23, [probably] Num 16:46-50 [Hebrew 17:11-15]; see Meier 1999b, 241-242; cf. Meier 1999a, 57).

81 Cf. 2 Sam 21:14.

82 Cf. 1 Sam 26:19; 2 Chr 18:31; Job 2:3.

census, realized his guilt and repented of the act.⁸³ Gad provided David the opportunity to choose *his* punishment even after David repented, and David's choice resulted in the death of many *Israelites*, the initial object of divine anger. David again admitted his guilt after seeing the *angel*, requesting that Yahweh be against *David* and his *father's house* and not against the people. At this point David heeded Gad's words and built an altar and presented offerings, and Yahweh was moved by entreaties for the *land*.

Since David recognizes his own guilt in 2 Sam 24:10 (*wayyak lēb dāwid, ḥāṭā'ī mā'ōd*), the text does not exonerate him from his actions despite the fact that Yahweh incited him (*wayyāset*). David is held fully responsible for conducting the census. Thus, this episode succinctly demonstrates that the kingship ideology espoused by the book of Samuel does not allow a king to be excused for sinful behavior even if divine agency influences the king. Rather, the king is fully responsible for his actions, regardless of any circumstances that led to his actions.⁸⁴

At the same time, David's offensive behavior was a means to punish Israel. David chose to take actions which were inexcusable (despite divine incitement), but at the same time those actions accomplished a feat of which David was unaware: the punishment of Israel. Behind Yahweh's use of David to punish Israel is the belief that a king's crimes may adversely affect that king's land. In fact, it is this belief, that the king's actions can affect his subjects, that underlies the whole passage. If this ideology was not presupposed, it would make no sense for Yahweh to incite David when the object of divine wrath was the people.

83 That David's actions brought about punishment for the nation is clear. Less clear is the reason why the census led to punishment. For discussion on the connections between census and plague, see McCarter 1984, 512ff.

84 Cf. the unwitting violation of the unnamed pharaoh in Gen 12:17.

Importantly, David assumes that his offense will have corporate consequences when he intervenes after seeing the angel. In 2 Sam 24:17 David emphatically says, “I myself have sinned, and I myself have committed iniquity” (*'ānōkī ḥāṭā[']tī wə 'ānōkī he 'ēwētī*). Yet in his effort to save the population from the plague, David asks that the hand of Yahweh be against not only David, but also against his father's house. Thus, David voluntarily implicated his father's house in his attempt to assuage the plague.⁸⁵ Built into David's confession of guilt is that the consequences of his royal crime are corporate, not individualistic.⁸⁶ Therefore, David offered up a corporate substitute – himself and his house – for the mass of people who were victimized for his crime.

The story of David's census in 2 Samuel 24, then, demonstrates not only the nature of David's offense, but also the severe consequences that a king's action may have for his nation. Moreover, this passage stresses that a king retains full responsibility before Yahweh, even if that king is led by Yahweh himself to carry out an offense. David, though seemingly in the service of Yahweh's anger, is nonetheless perpetrator in the fullest sense of the term, and his offense brings Yahweh's direct intervention in the form of a plague upon the nation.

5.2.2 Chronicles

The Chronicler's account of the census plague portrays David committing the same offense with the same consequences as in 2 Samuel 24, albeit with some

85 Importantly, David's plea was not the mechanism which stopped the plague.

86 Cf. Polzin 1993a, 212: “Despite the inference that three years of famine ought to have decimated at least as many Israelites as only three days of pestilence did, the seventy thousand deaths that chapter 24 enumerates have no counterpart in chapter 21, which emphasizes the effects of the king's decision upon Israel's welfare, rather than wider questions of national responsibility.”

differences.⁸⁷ After the census that David commanded was carried out, David admitted that he sinned (1 Chr 21:8). Gad, as in 2 Samuel 24, provided David three punishment options, and David chose to fall in the hand of Yahweh (1 Chr 21:13). Similarly, the plague claimed the lives of seventy thousand in Israel before it was checked by David's altar construction (1 Chr 21:14-27). Like its counterpart in Samuel, the passage in Chronicles demonstrates the corporate nature of David's crime of conducting a census.

At the same time, the Chronicler's account of the census plague in 2 Samuel 24 contains some significant differences which alter the dynamics appearing in 2 Samuel 24. 2 Chr 21:1 throws the whole account into a different light: “And an adversary (*śātān*)⁸⁸ stood up against Israel, and he incited (*wayyāset*) David to count Israel.” In Chronicles, instead of Yahweh inciting David to conduct a census, an unnamed adversary, perhaps comparable to the adversaries who later opposed Solomon (1 Kgs 11:14, 24), incited David to number the people without any clearly stated motivation. Additionally, Yahweh's anger with Israel, which triggered the episode in 2 Samuel, is absent in Chronicles, and therefore the events contained in 2 Chronicles 21 are no longer in reaction to divine anger inflamed against Israel.

Though David is not in the service of Yahweh's anger, a third party is still involved in the episode (“an adversary”), and it should be noted that David still maintains full responsibility for his crime. Yahweh's direct role in bringing the corporate consequences for David's sin reappears, for Yahweh again sent a plague (*wayyittēn* YHWH *deber*) upon the land, as well as an angel (*wayyišlah hā'ēlōhīm mal'āk*) against

87 See e.g., Auld 2012.

88 See the explanation for translating “an adversary” (instead of “Satan”) in Knoppers 2004, 744, 751.

Jerusalem (1 Chr 21:15).⁸⁹ Yet before this, and even before David's confession and the options for punishment offered to him through Gad, Yahweh brought punishment on the nation: “But this thing was displeasing in the eyes of God, and he struck (*wayyak*) Israel” (1 Chr 21:7). Whatever the nature of Yahweh's direct intervention may have been, it was physically visible to David, for it made the king realize that it was his guilt which caused it (1 Chr 21:8).⁹⁰

Thus, the episode in Chronicles is similar to 1 Samuel 24 in regard to David's offense, the corporate consequences which followed, and the direct role played by Yahweh in the dissemination of those consequences. That David maintained full guilt for his crime despite the prompting of a third party is also reflected in both accounts. A significant difference, however, is that Yahweh's anger against Israel does not appear in the Chronicler's account.⁹¹ Thus, David's crime is not in the service of a larger divine purpose as it was in Samuel. Though the divine purpose to punish Israel does not vindicate David in the slightest,⁹² it does make David's offense meaningful. However, the census plague is meaningless in Chronicles. Instead, the aimlessness of the Chronicler's census account serves primarily to expose David as a chastised ruler. In this light,

89 Chronicles connects the sword of Yahweh (*hereb* YHWH), pestilence (*deber*), the smiting angel of Yahweh (*mal'ak* YHWH *mašhîr*) to the hand of Yahweh (*yad* YHWH) in 1 Chr 21:12-13.

90 Cf. 2 Sam 24:10, where David comes into this realization through his own conscience (*wayyak lēb dāwīd*).

91 Klein 2006, 418 states that the omission of 2 Sam 24:1 by the Chronicler is due to the fact that it links back to 2 Sam 21:1-14, a text not included in Chronicles (cf. Japhet 1993, 373; Williamson 1982, 142). Even if one can confidently discern that the Chronicler's purpose for the omission of 2 Sam 24:1 was that 2 Sam 21:1-14 was not included in Chronicles, this would only explain the omission of “again” (*wayyōšep*). It does not necessarily explain the omission of Yahweh's anger against Israel. Furthermore, the connection between 2 Samuel 21 and 24 may be doubted. Nowhere does 2 Samuel 21 mention Yahweh's anger or animosity directed towards Israel. In fact, 2 Samuel 24 does not even mention that the famine resulted from Saul's crimes – only that famine relief was withheld because of those crimes (11.1.5.3).

92 Cf. the converse, held by Japhet 1993, 373 (on Israel's unspecified sin): “This theological presupposition reduces in great measure – but does not altogether remove – David's responsibility.”

David's depiction in this episode is more negative in Chronicles than in Samuel.

5.3 Solomon (Kings)

The cultic crimes committed by King Solomon, and the consequences of those offenses, appear in 1 Kings 11. The source of Solomon's deviation from his adherence to Yahweh worship alone is said to have originated from the foreign women that Solomon loved (1 Kgs 11:1). According to this text, Solomon's seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines led Solomon to follow other gods in his old age (1 Kgs 11:3-8), Ashtoreth, Milcom, Chemosh, and Molech in particular.⁹³ For both Chemosh and Molech Solomon built high places, and he did the same for all his wives who worshiped other gods (1 Kgs 11:7-8).

Solomon's sins, the worshiping of other gods and the construction of cult places for other deities, were cultic crimes for which he was held fully responsible.⁹⁴ As a result, the text preserves an oracle from Yahweh in response to his impermissible actions (1 Kgs 11:11-13):⁹⁵

And Yahweh said to Solomon, “Because this was your intention, and you did not keep my covenant and my statutes which I commanded you, I will surely tear away⁹⁶ the kingdom from you and I will give it to your servant. However, in your days I will not do it, for the sake of David, your father. From the hand of your son I will tear it away. Only I will not tear away all the kingdom. One tribe I will give to your son, for the sake of David, my servant, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.

93 According to 1 Kgs 11:4, Solomon's wives literally “inclined his heart” (*hiṭṭû 'et ləbābô*) after other gods. On Solomon's many wives, cf. Deuteronomy 17:17.

94 Cf. note 97 below.

95 The mechanism by which these words reach Solomon is left unclear, whether spoken directly to Solomon as in 1 Kgs 3:5, or mediated by a prophet (cf. Nathan in 2 Sam 12:1 and Gad in 2 Sam 24:11).

96 Notice that the phrase *qārōa' 'eqra'* is similar to Samuel's message to Saul in 1 Sam 15:26 (*qāra' YHWH*). This parallel is one of many that draw attention to the correlation between Saul and David on the one hand, and Solomon and Jeroboam on the other.

That Solomon's punishment was mitigated because of David (and Jerusalem) shows that the full punishment was the complete removal of the kingdom from Solomon and his line (and consequently, David's line). The perspective of the text suggests that the Davidic line would have been cut off from the throne because of the seriousness of Solomon's cultic violations, had it not been for the mitigating factors of both David and Jerusalem. The physical kingdom is not directly targeted by the punishment, for it will continue to exist under new leadership. Instead, the Davidic dynasty's rule over the kingdom is the object of punishment.

The punishment issued by Yahweh shows the extent of royal responsibility in that it targets Solomon alone. Though Solomon's wives moved his heart away from Yahweh to other gods (note the *Hiphil* verbs *wayyattû* in 1 Kgs 11:3 and *hitû* in 1 Kgs 11:4), they received no chastisement. We are not told what Yahweh's attitude was toward the wives who initiated the turning of Solomon's heart; we are only told that Yahweh was angry (*wayyit'annap*) with Solomon.⁹⁷ That the text implies that Solomon was enticed by his foreign wives does not mitigate Solomon's responsibility in the least, for Solomon was held fully responsible for his actions.⁹⁸ Thus, Solomon's full guilt vis-à-vis his wives is analogous to David's full guilt vis-à-vis incitement (by Yahweh and an adversary).⁹⁹

A closer look at Yahweh's announcement of punishment and the way that

97 Cf. 1 Kgs 11:9-10

98 Cf. also 1 Kgs 11:33, where the people are a source of punishment according to the plural verbs. Some read the verbs as singulars in accord with many of the text traditions (e.g., Cogan 2000, 340). The MT may be retained on the grounds that Solomon led the people into apostasy by his construction projects and religious practices. For instance, Bodner states "...I would incline toward the idea that the switch in pronouns signifies widespread corruption – as though the king led the way, and the people willingly followed" (Bodner 2012, 54). The principle that a king acts as the primary catalyst for punishment through his sacrilege by leading his people into that very act permeates the accounts of Jeroboam and Manasseh in Kings.

99 In light of this, the phrase *nāṭā ləbābô* in 1 Kgs 11:19 may be understood as "he turned his heart" rather than the less severe "his heart turned."

punishment comes to fruition is in order. Yahweh says he will tear *Solomon's* kingdom from *him* and give it to *Solomon's* servant, but this announcement is complicated by the fact that it will not be accomplished in Solomon's day. If this punishment does not take place in Solomon's time, how can Solomon's kingdom be torn from *him*? Obviously, Solomon's servant, Jeroboam son of Nebat (1 Kgs 11:26), does take control of the northern tribes after Solomon's son, Rehoboam, comes to the throne following Solomon's death (1 Kgs 11:41-43; 12). This development explains how Solomon's servant would inherit Solomon's kingdom. But does Solomon experience any immediate effects of Yahweh's declaration? Though the primary weight of punishment falls on the shoulders of Rehoboam, Solomon does not escape unscathed. Yahweh raised up (*wayyāqem*) an adversary (*śātān*) on two occasions against Solomon: Hadad the Edomite and Rezon son of Eliada (1 Kgs 11:14, 23). Both of these adversaries caused trouble for Solomon, providing Solomon both a glimpse of the coming punishment and a taste of judgment.¹⁰⁰

Despite these immediate consequences, the lion's share of punishment will come in the days of Solomon's son. When one examines how the long term aspects of Solomon's punishment unfold, a dynamic similar to that seen in Samuel appears. First, it should be recognized that Yahweh's speech in 1 Kgs 11:11-13 stresses Yahweh's own involvement in executing judgment at every turn, for Yahweh says, "I will surely tear" (*qārōa' 'eqra'*), "I will give" (*ūnātattihā*), "in your days I will not do it (*lō' 'e'ēšennā*),"

¹⁰⁰ Walsh 1996, 139–140 connects Hadad (and apparently Rezon) with the punishment in 1 Kgs 11:9-13. These adversaries are not unrelated to David's actions. David's campaign against Edom (where Hadad originated), cited in 1 Kgs 11:15-16, is also found in 2 Sam 8:11-14, undoubtedly making David (and hence his descendants) odious to remaining Edomites. David's martial attitude towards Edom should be contrasted with Deuteronomy 2, where the Hebrews are carefully instructed not to engage the Edomites (Esau) on their territory, for Yahweh had given Edom that land as their possession. Cf. Josh 24:4. In 2 Sam 8:3-8, David defeated Rezon's master, Hadadezer of Zobah, likely stirring animosity among survivors towards David's line.

“I will tear it” (*'eqrā'ennâ*), “I will not tear” (*lō' 'eqrā'*), and “One tribe I will give (*'ettēn*).” Similarly, when Ahijah the prophet designated Jeroboam as the future king of the northern tribes, he spoke on Yahweh's behalf and emphasized Yahweh's primary role in the punishment, saying, “I am about to tear (*hinānī qōrēa'*) the kingdom,” “I will not take” (*wālō' 'eqqaḥ*), “I will set him” (*'āšitenū*), “I will take” (*wālāqaḥtī*), “I will give it” (*ūnatattihā*), and “I will take (*'eqqaḥ*) you” (1 Kgs 11:31, 34, 35, 37).¹⁰¹ Thus, both Yahweh's words and Ahijah's prophetic endorsement of Jeroboam emphasize Yahweh's role in the events that would lead to the secession of the northern tribes.

As events unfold, however, the writer of the DtrH does not make explicit Yahweh's involvement to the same degree. Solomon instigated the conflict which drove Jeroboam, the future king of Israel, to Egypt (1 Kgs 11:40). Additionally, Rehoboam's burdensome policy towards his new subjects prompted the division of the kingdom (1 Kgs 12:1-19). Yet in this latter case, the narrator makes sure the reader does not lose sight of Yahweh's involvement, for Yahweh had orchestrated Rehoboam's circumstances himself:

The king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of affairs (*sibbâ*) from Yahweh in order to establish his word which Yahweh spoke through the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat (1 Kgs 12:15).

Again, Yahweh is involved in the events by which his own proclamation is achieved. Yet his involvement is not as straightforward as the proclamations lead one to believe, for Yahweh's actions remain veiled, hidden behind the events which complete his

¹⁰¹ In passing it should be noted that Ahijah tears the robe into twelve pieces (1 Kgs 11:30), and asks Jeroboam to take ten (1 Kgs 11:31), yet 1 Kgs 11:32 mentions only one tribe for David. That ten plus one is eleven, one numeral short of twelve, must have been as obvious to the writer(s)/redactor(s) of the text as it is to the modern reader. The apparent discrepancy is simply explained by Bodner, when he suggests that the missing number represents the landless tribe of Levi (Bodner 2012, 54).

declarations. The combination of the ambitions of Jeroboam, Solomon, and Rehoboam work together to bring about Yahweh's declaration. The idea is that of orchestration, rather than control, where Yahweh's judgment is actualized in spite of autonomous humans – precisely what one sees in the consequences of both Saul and David in Samuel. Ultimately, the affair with Jeroboam was punishment from Yahweh in response to Solomon's crimes.

One observation on the nature of Jeroboam's revolt is necessary. Though no fighting transpired according to 1 Kgs 12:21-24, the rebellion of the northern tribes constituted a civil war. Rehoboam prepared to go to war in an effort to regain the rebellious tribes, and the only reason battle did not ensue, according to the DtrH, was because of the prophetic word of Shemaiah. The fact that prophetic intervention was necessary to prevent combat highlights the fact that war itself was the consequence of Solomon's crimes.

In sum, the narrative indicates that Solomon's cultic crimes merited the dissolution of the Davidic dynasty. In fact, DtrH emphasizes that David's rule continued only because of David (and Jerusalem). Instead of removing Solomon's line from the throne, Yahweh orchestrated a civil war to remove the northern tribes from Davidic rule – though Shemaiah's intervention averted combat. Although the weight of Solomon's punishment would fall in the days of his son, Yahweh raised up adversaries who gave Solomon a taste of punishment.

5.4 Jeroboam (Kings)

Jeroboam, the ruler to whom Yahweh gave the northern tribes in the wake of

Solomon's sacrilege, later committed cultic crimes not too dissimilar from those of Solomon.¹⁰² Jeroboam is presented as fearful that his subjects might eventually kill him and return to the house of David due to the continued allegiance to the Jerusalem temple (1 Kgs 12:25-27), a fear that became the impetus for his cultic violations. To remedy his fears, made two calves of gold (*šānê 'eglê zāhāb*) and placed them in Dan and Bethel (1 Kgs 12:28-29). Upon completing the calves, Jeroboam addressed his people saying, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold, your gods, O Israel, who brought you from the land of Egypt” (1 Kgs 12:28). Additionally, the DtrH tells us that Jeroboam constructed a “house¹⁰³ of the high places,” appointed non-Levitical priests, made a northern festival to counter the feast held in Judah, built an altar at Bethel, and involved himself in priestly activities (1 Kgs 12:31-33).

Jeroboam's efforts to keep northern inhabitants from going to Jerusalem were understood as grievous cultic violations. As we have seen elsewhere, Jeroboam is not immediately on the receiving end of divine punishment. Instead, a man of God (*'iš 'ēlōhîm*) cried out against the altar of Bethel (*wayyiqrā' 'al hammizbēaḥ bidābar* YHWH).¹⁰⁴ The unnamed prophet's words proclaim that the victims of Jeroboam's cultic violations will be priests (1 Kgs 13:2):

...O altar, altar, thus said Yahweh, “Behold, a son will be born to the house of David, named Josiah, and he will sacrifice upon you the priests of the high places, the ones who offer incense upon you, and they will burn the bones of man upon you.”

This judgment against the altar comes to fruition around three hundred years later (2 Kgs

102 Cf. Mullen 1987.

103 Note LXX οἰκουσ, Vulgate *fana*, and cf. 1 Kgs 13:32 *kol bātē habbāmôt*.

104 1 Kgs 13:2; so also 1 Kgs 13:32.

23:4-20).¹⁰⁵ Though the priests are not explicitly sacrificed on the altar itself, Josiah does slaughter the priests of high place on other altars (2 Kgs 23:20). The doom which threatened the priests, then, is tied directly to Jeroboam's crimes.

As the narrative continues, when Jeroboam heard the proclamation against his altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand, commanding that the prophet be seized. Immediately his hand withered, and the altar was torn down and the ashes poured out, according to the sign announced by the prophet (1 Kgs 13:5, cf. v.3).¹⁰⁶ Jeroboam reacted by requesting that the prophet intercede on his behalf (*ḥal nā' 'et pānê 'ēlōhēkā wāhitpallēl ba'ādî*) to restore his hand (1 Kgs 13:6). Despite his extensive religious violations, the prophet interceded on Jeroboam's behalf and his hand was restored.

Despite his restored hand and the fulfillment of the sign announced by the prophet, Jeroboam did not abandon his religious violations, but continued to appoint non-Levitical priests. According to DtrH, the matter became sin to the house of Jeroboam, potentially leading to its destruction (1 Kgs 13:33-34). It is only after Jeroboam sends his wife to Ahijah to inquire about his sick son that an explicit judgment is announced against Jeroboam, for Yahweh tells Ahijah to announce the following concerning Jeroboam (1 Kgs 14:7-12):

Go, say to Jeroboam, "Thus said Yahweh the God of Israel. 'Because I raised you from the midst of the people and I made you leader over my people Israel and tore away the kingdom from the house of David and gave it you, but you were not like my servant David who kept my commandments, and who walked after me with all of his heart, to do only what is right in my eyes, and you have done evil more than all who were before you, and you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and you have thrown me behind

105 Notably, in narrative of Josiah's reforms, the actions taken by Josiah are considered to be against the altar of Bethel (2 Kgs 23:17).

106 The withering of Jeroboam's hand is echoed later when Nicanor's hand, which he arrogantly stretched out, is cut off along with his head (1 Macc 7:47).

your back. Therefore, behold, I am about bring calamity to the house of Jeroboam, and I will cut off from Jeroboam the one who urinates against a wall, bond and free, in Israel, and I will sweep away the house of Jeroboam just as one sweeps away dung until it is gone. Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city, the dogs will eat, and the one who dies in the field, the birds of the heavens will eat,' for Yahweh has spoken.”

After announcing that Jeroboam's child would die and be the only member of Jeroboam's family to be fortunate enough to be buried in the grave (1 Kgs 14:12-13), the prophet continues (1 Kgs 14:14-16):

And Yahweh will raise up for himself a king over Israel who will cut off the house of Jeroboam this day. What? Even now! And Yahweh will strike Israel just as the reed flutters in the water, and he will pluck out Israel from this good ground which he gave to their fathers, and he will scatter them across the river, because they made Asherim provoking Yahweh. And He will give up Israel on account of the sins of Jeroboam, by which he sinned and by which he caused Israel to sin.

The child did indeed die (1 Kgs 14:17), unlike Jeroboam who seemed to live out his days unscathed. After a twenty-two year reign, Jeroboam died a seemingly peaceful death (1 Kgs 14:20).

Jeroboam, then, suffered no personal punishment for his crimes, save his withered hand, which was only a result of his opposition to a prophet and which was immediately restored upon his request for prophetic intercession.¹⁰⁷ As announced in the texts above, the consequences of Jeroboam's crimes instead fall upon his descendants and nation.

The announcement against Jeroboam's house unfolds in the reign of Jeroboam's son and successor, Nadab. After a two-year reign (1 Kgs 15:25), Baasha assassinated Nadab (1 Kgs 15:27). Baasha subsequently proceeded to wipe out the rest of Jeroboam's house, and the text is explicit that this usurper's actions were a fulfillment of Ahijah's

¹⁰⁷ Note that Jeroboam does not send his wife to seek prophetic intercession for his child, but only to see what the sick boy's fate would be (1 Kgs 14:3).

prophetic word (1 Kgs 15:27-29).¹⁰⁸

At first glance it would appear that Baasha is simply an instrument by which Yahweh brought punishment upon Jeroboam's house, particularly in light of Yahweh's words spoken through Ahijah that Yahweh himself would bring destruction on Jeroboam's house. Yet the relationship between Baasha's actions and Yahweh's declaration is not so simple, for it is complicated by the fact that Baasha's violence against Nadab and Jeroboam's house bring punishment upon Baasha's dynasty according to 1 Kgs 16:7 (11.1.2.2). Within the Hebrew Bible, it is not unusual for an instrument administering Yahweh's punishment to receive punishment in turn. Such is the case concerning the king of Assyria in Isaiah 10 and the king of Babylon in Jer 50:18. Similarly, we will see below that Jehu receives a mixed review for his actions taken against Ahab's dynasty according to the book of Kings (5.5). In Baasha's case, he committed violence against the elect of Yahweh, a particularly abhorrent crime in the Hebrew Bible (see 8.1.3.2). The fact that his actions fulfilled Yahweh's intention does not exonerate Baasha, who, like David, maintained full guilt for his actions despite accomplishing Yahweh's divine goals (5.2.1). Importantly, one should not overlook that Yahweh never stated how he would have brought destruction on Jeroboam's house, nor was Baasha working under any stated divine commission or instigation.¹⁰⁹ Baasha fulfilled Yahweh's declaration by his own ambition without any recorded divine sanction. Thus, the relationship between Yahweh's announcement of his actions against Jeroboam's

108 This physical end of Jeroboam's dynasty is particularly sardonic in light of the potential Yahweh had previously announced to Jeroboam through Ahijah: "I will build you a lasting house just as I built for David" (1 Kgs 11:38).

109 In this sense, Baasha differs significantly from Jehu, for the latter thought he was operating under prophetic commission.

house and the unsolicited means by which Baasha achieved the divine declaration must be held in tension.

As stated earlier, the consequences of Jeroboam's crimes also fall upon his nation. Roughly three hundred and thirty years later, Israel will be destroyed, with Jeroboam's crimes as the primary catalyst from the perspective of the DtrH. However, an overemphasis on Jeroboam's role in Israel's exile would be misleading, for 2 Kings 18 stresses the central role played by the inhabitants of the northern kingdom in the exile of Israel by the Assyrians in 722.¹¹⁰ Indeed, the sacrilege committed by Jeroboam serves as the primary stimulus for the exile. Yet it is the people's actions which merit a significant amount of space in the explanation of the caused of Israel's exile (2 Kgs 17:7-18).

However at the end of this exposition concerning the grounds for Israel's destruction, Jeroboam's role is briefly mentioned (2 Kgs 17:21b-23a):

Jeroboam led Israel astray¹¹¹ from Yahweh, and he caused them to commit great sin. The sons of Israel walked in all the sins of which Jeroboam committed; they did not turn from it until Yahweh removed Israel from before him, just as he spoke through all his servants the prophets.

Jeroboam's role in the exile was chief instigator, creating conditions which eventually resulted in the exile, conditions which were carried on by almost all his successors in Israel.¹¹² The connection between Jeroboam and the people's illicit behavior in 2 Kgs

110 Scholars have long attributed this passage to different hands. At least as early as Stade (1886), the portion focusing on Jeroboam (2 Kgs 17:21-23) was separated from 17:7-18. The division continues to recent times. E.g., concerning 17:7-18 and 21-23a, Cogan-Tadmor 1988, 206 comment that, "These two units cannot be the product of the same historiographic outlook." They attribute 17:21-23a to Dtr1 and 17:7-18 to Dtr2 (ibid., 201). Similarly, Fritz attributes 17:21-23 to the Deuteronomic Historian, and considers 7-12, 18 as a first addition, and 13-17, 20 to be a second (Fritz 2003, 351-352). These divisions are, of course, related to the perception of redactional layers in the DtrH (among other studies, see Nelson 1981 and Dietrich 1972; cf. Römer 2000). The juxtaposition of the perspectives in 17:7-18 and 21-23 are taken synchronically in this study.

111 Reading *wayyaddah* with the *qarê*.

112 The following kings are specifically compared to Jeroboam: Nadab (1 Kgs 15:25-26), Baasha (1 Kgs 15:34), Zimri (1 Kgs 16:19), Omri (1 Kgs 16:25), Ahab (1 Kgs 16:31), Ahaziah (1 Kgs 22:52), Jehoram

17:7-18, in combination with the emphatic connections of succeeding Israelite kings with Jeroboam's sacrilege, underscore this king's role as chief, but not sole, perpetrator in Israel's exile.

The unfolding of Ahijah's declaration that Yahweh would exile Israel because of Jeroboam's cultic infractions (1 Kgs 14:14-16) plays out rather unexpectedly. The biblical account of the military campaign of Shalmaneser V against Samaria contains no hint of Yahweh's guidance or any divine intervention. 2 Kgs 17:3-6 reports the incident purely as the unfolding of natural events within the course of time. Hoshea, a vassal under Assyrian hegemony, rebelled against Shalmaneser by turning to Egypt. In turn Shalmaneser imprisoned the Israelite king, captured Samaria, and exiled the inhabitants of the northern kingdom. One would have expected a comment along the lines of 1 Chr 5:26 or Hab 1:6 which clearly show Yahweh's hand directly involved in the situation at hand. Instead of such a comment, Yahweh's role in the exile of Israel, emphasized by Ahijah's words in 1 Kgs 14:14-16 and supported by the narrator's words in 2 Kgs 17:18, remains hidden in the background of the politics and military campaign involving Israel and Assyria.

5.5 Ahab (Kings)¹¹³

King Ahab of Israel attained a position among the most decorated sacrilegious kings in the Hebrew Bible. This Israelite king received condemnation for doing evil

(2 Kgs 3:3), Jehu (2 Kgs 10:29), Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 13:2), Jehoash (2 Kgs 13:11), Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14:24), Zechariah (2 Kgs 15:9), Menahem (2 Kgs 15:18), Pekahiah (2 Kgs 15:24), Pekah (2 Kgs 15:28). Only Elah, Shallum, and Hoshea are not connected to Jeroboam.

¹¹³ The following analysis is based on the chapter sequences of 1 Kings found in the MT as opposed to the LXX. For an analysis of the characterization of Ahab in the MT and LXX, see Brenneman 2000.

more than those before him, walking in the sins of Jeroboam, marrying Jezebel, worshiping Baal, constructing a temple and altar for Baal in Samaria, and making an Asherah a pole (1 Kgs 16:30-33). However, before Ahab received condemnation for any of these transgressions, he received judgment for a sin of a different nature. After defeating the Arameans (1 Kgs 20:23-30), Ahab made the mistake of sparing their king, Ben-Hadad (1 Kgs 20:31-34). In response to Ahab's seemingly humane act, an unnamed prophet (*wə 'iš 'eḥād mibbnē hannəbî 'îm*) waited in disguise for the king to pass by, posing as if he were a wounded soldier until he had the opportunity to address Ahab (1 Kgs 20:35-41). At the right moment the prophet condemned Ahab for his actions, saying, “Thus said Yahweh, 'Because you have sent the man under my ban (*'iš ḥermî*) from (your) hand, your life (*napšəkā*) will be in place of his life, and your people in place of his people” (1 Kgs 20:42).

Though the narrative does not mention that Ben-Hadad, like the Amalekite King Agag defeated by Saul, was under the ban (*ḥērem*) outside of 1 Kgs 20:42, the text presupposes that Ahab was aware of this fact, for he does not protest the indictment. This presupposition, that Ahab had been sufficiently informed that the king was under the ban, left Ahab with no excuse for sparing the king. Within the Hebrew Bible, the concept of *ḥērem* demanded that all those persons placed under it be completely destroyed (Deut 7:1-5, 20:16-18), and it carried with it a distinctive religious orientation.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, the notion of a “ban” is not privy to the Hebrew Bible alone. The uses of the term *asakkum* and the idiom *asakkam alākum* at Mari betray a similar notion.¹¹⁵ Particularly

114 Malamet 1989, 73.

115 Ibid., 70–75.

enlightening is the parallel Malamat draws between the violator of *ḥērem* and the violator of *asakkum*. Using the story of Achan (Joshua 6-7) as a case-in-point, Malamat states that upon violating *ḥērem* the violator becomes taboo and must die, and Lev 27:29 supports such a punishment.¹¹⁶ Though the violator of *asakkum* (that is, one guilty of eating [*alākum*] the *asakkum*) typically pays a fine in Mari contracts, the original penalty appears worthy of death as it is called a “capital offense” (*dīn napištīm*) in one case, which “strongly suggests that the original punishment for the crime in question was death.”¹¹⁷ Ahab's knowledge, then, of the presupposed announcement that the king was under the ban, in conjunction with the general knowledge that breaking such a taboo would bring death, likely explains Ahab's failure to offer a rebuttal to Elijah's condemnation (cf. 1 Kgs 20:43).

Ahab's failure to carry out the extermination of Ben-Hadad meant that his life was in danger, for in violating the ban he placed himself under Yahweh's ban. Not only is this inferred from the larger biblical context and the Mari material mentioned above, but the judgment delivered by the unnamed prophet in 1 Kgs 20:42 specifically states this is the case: “...your life (*napšakā*) will be in place of his life.” However, the prophet goes beyond individual punishment by also stating that corporate consequences will follow: “your people in place of his people.” It is not clear if the group referred to in the text is Israel as a whole or a closer-knit group within Ahab's inner circle.¹¹⁸ What is clear is that Ahab's failure to execute the king under Yahweh's *ḥērem* yielded individual and corporate

116 Ibid., 73–74.

117 Ibid., 74. Malamat is utilizing *ARMT* VIII I:28-31.

118 In the phrase “your people in place of his people,” does “his people” refer to the massacred Aramean army in 1 Kgs 20:29-30, or Ben-Hadad's servants who fled the battle and approached Ahab in 1 Kgs 20:31-34? The latter seems preferable, and may suggest that Ahab's inner circle is in view.

consequences, and for Ahab, that meant death.

Ahab's failure to execute Ben-Hadad is complemented by another offense that results in punishment from God. The narrative identifies Ahab's wife, Jezebel, as one who executed a successful plan to murder an innocent Naboth so that Ahab could take possession of his vineyard (1 Kgs 21:1-16). After the murder and theft, Yahweh instructed Elijah to meet Ahab in Jezreel at Naboth's vineyard, where Yahweh told Elijah to issue the following oracle:

You will speak to him, saying “Thus said Yahweh: ‘Have you killed (*hārāṣahtā*) and also taken possession (*yārāštā*)?’” And you will speak to him saying, “Thus said Yahweh: ‘In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, the dogs will lick up your blood (*dāmākā*), indeed yours (*gam ’āttā*).’” (1 Kgs 21:19)

However, as the text stands, Elijah did not strictly adhere to the divine instructions, but instead expanded the oracle (1 Kgs 21:20b-24):

Because you sold yourself (*hitmakkerākā*) to do evil in the eyes of Yahweh, behold,¹¹⁹ “I am about to bring¹²⁰ against you (*’ēlēkā*) calamity, and I will sweep away (everything) behind you (*’ahārēkā*), and I will cut off from Ahab the one who urinates against a wall, bond or free in Israel. I will make your house (*bētākā*) like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha son of Ahijah, because of the anger which you provoked (*hik’astā*), and that you caused Israel to sin (*wattaḥāṭī*).” And also concerning Jezebel, Yahweh spoke, saying, “The dogs will eat Jezebel within the wall of Jezreel.” The one who dies in the city who belongs to Ahab the dogs will eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds of the heavens will eat.”

When Yahweh initially gave the oracle to Elijah in v.19, Ahab's penalty was connected only to the events orbiting Naboth's vineyard. When Elijah actually delivered the oracle, he expanded the penalty to include additional religious offenses (1 Kgs 21:17-26).¹²¹

119 The LXX has *τάδε λέγει κύριος* before *ἰδοὺ* (Hebrew *hinānī*).

120 Reading with the *qərē mēbī*. The *kātib* reads *mēbī*.

121 That is, as the text stands in its final form. The original aspects of the passage have been variously argued. For instance, Burney 1903, 249 believes the original elements of 1 Kgs 21:19ff (v. 19a, 20 to *māṣā ’ī*, vv. 27-29, probably 19b) to have been amplified by a pre-exilic redactor influenced by Deuteronomy; Montgomery 1986, 332 finds no reason to doubt the originality of 20:17-20A since it

Elijah, then, merged Ahab's guilt in the Naboth incident with his cultic violations, which are identified in the oracle as features by which Ahab “caused Israel to sin.”

The foundation for Elijah's expanded oracle is the more focused proclamation made by Yahweh in 1 Kgs 21:19. The pronouncement in 1 Kgs 21:19 has been subsumed into 1 Kgs 21:20b-24 with the effect that the individual punishment given to Ahab has grown to include more violations and consequences. The expansion is not without textual merit, for 1 Kgs 21:29 provides explicit confirmation that Elijah's expansion ultimately corresponded to Yahweh's intentions. When Yahweh says, “...I will not bring the calamity (*hārā'ā*) in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the calamity (*hārā'ā*) upon his house,” the calamity to which he refers is the calamity (*rā'ā*) occurring in Elijah's expansion (1 Kgs 21:21) but not in Yahweh's instructions found in 1 Kgs 20:19. That Yahweh himself both delayed the coming punishment and claimed that he was going to bring it in later days affirms the validity of Elijah's expansion given by Elijah. In this way 1 Kgs 21:19 and 21:20b-24 are clearly integrated in the text's final form.

The combination of these two passages presents several sins for which Ahab was held accountable. First, according to 1 Kgs 21:19, Ahab was guilty for the murder of Naboth and the theft of his vineyard, though the plan was devised, hatched, carried out, and completed by his wife Jezebel. Ahab's responsibility stems from the fact that he

was not exactly fulfilled, whereas he believes 20:20b-26 to be a redactional supplement based on 14:10f and 16:3, 13; Fritz 2003, 214 views the likely original core of 21:17-29 to be 17-19a; Na'aman 2008, 200 finds 21:1-21b_a (minus glosses) to be original, and attributes vv.20b_γ-24, 27-29 to have been penned by the Deuteronomist; White 1994, 74 defends the originality of 1 Kgs 21:21, 27-29 and argues that one of the Deuteronomists later added 21:20b, 22, 24). This sampling of previous scholarship shows that the text at hand and the other texts which have bearing on it are complicated by details in the text which betray editorial activity. Though cognizant of the possible reconstructions of redactional activity, the task taken up here is to explain how the individual parts of the texts work as a whole in regard to Ahab's offenses, punishments, and his ultimate fate.

knew his royal prerogatives did not allow him, an Israelite king, to take ancestral land from the inhabitants of Israel (1 Kgs 21:3-4). The Phoenician Jezebel did not share the same sentiment (1 Kgs 21:5-7), and the fact that she orchestrated Naboth's murder and the theft of his property did not exonerate Ahab of any guilt, for the king was well aware that Jezebel was going to accomplish this impermissible act (1 Kgs 21:9). Ahab's failure to stop Jezebel made him the primary guilty party.¹²² In consequence, Ahab was supposed to die a particularly detestable death in Jezreel where Naboth had died (cf. 1 Kgs 21:1).

In addition to Ahab's responsibility for the Naboth incident, Elijah's expansion of the oracle (1 Kgs 21:20b-24) includes three other accusations: doing evil in the eyes of Yahweh, provoking anger, and causing Israel to sin. These accusations are informed by 1 Kgs 16:30-33. In these verses, DtrH reports that, "Ahab, son of Omri, did evil in the eyes of Yahweh more than all who were before him" (v.30). Ahab also walked in the sins of Jeroboam (*lektô bəhatt[']ôṭ yārob'ām ben nəbāṭ*) according to v.31. His marriage to Jezebel led to Baal worship, the construction of a temple and altar for Baal in Samaria, and the production of "the Asherah (*hā'āšērā*)" (v.31-33). DtrH's evaluation of Ahab is summed up by a final accusation: "Ahab did more to provoke Yahweh, the God of Israel, than all the kings of Israel who were before him" (v.33).

¹²² The guilt of Ahab vis-à-vis Jezebel's actions is variously handled in scholarship. For instance, Wiseman sees Ahab as complicit in the act: "The use of the king's royal dynastic, administrative or even personal seal to gain his authority would require Ahab's collusion" (Wiseman 1993, 182). On the other hand, Rofé 1988, 94 sees a transfer of responsibility of an originally guilty Ahab to Jezebel. White 1994, 69 note 7 states, "The unique role of Jezebel in the vineyard story implies a judgment on Ahab's fitness to be king. Unable to control his dangerously foreign wife, he is judged unfit to rule the kingdom." The position taken here is reflected in Savran's comment concerning Ahab's passivity: "His passivity is no longer a sign of self-restraint but of silent partnership, and his unquestioning response to Jezebel's announcement in v. 16 is to proceed immediately to claim the vineyard. Elijah's accusation in 21:19 voices the connection between complicity and passivity by accusing Ahab himself, not Jezebel, of Naboth's murder" (Savran 1988, 81).

Elsewhere, one finds that DtrH associated the origin of Ahab's evil with Jezebel, for Jezebel incited (*hēśattâ*) Ahab to commit evil (1 Kgs 20:25). This accusation is analogous to Solomon, for his foreign wives “inclined his heart (*hiṭṭû ləbābô*) after other gods,” with the result that Solomon did what was evil (1 Kgs 11:4-6). The evil committed by both kings included cultic violations that originated from their marriages. In the case of Ahab, the marital origin is indicated by Jezebel's incitement in combination with Ahab's Baal worship and cultic constructions (1 Kgs 16:31-32; 21:26; for Solomon see 5.3). This connection between Solomon and Ahab has been noted, for it is difficult to miss the fact that both kings are depicted as introducing unacceptable cultic elements because of their foreign wives.¹²³

However, unlike Solomon, DtrH states that Ahab brought punishment for causing Israel to sin: “you caused Israel to sin (*wattaḥḥātī*)” (1 Kgs 21:22). This connection is obliquely referenced in 1 Kgs 16:31, for “walking in the sins of Jeroboam” is a reference to Jeroboam's cultic crimes.¹²⁴ Moreover, the “sins of Jeroboam” cause Israel to sin (1 Kgs 14:16), for they represent cultic violations that can affect the entire population.

In short, Jezebel incited Ahab to idolatry, and his subsequent cultic crimes caused Israel to sin. These cultic violations are referenced in Elijah's oracle, and thus serve as additional crimes that result in punishment from God. At the same time, Ahab's cultic crimes link him to both Solomon and Jeroboam.

The consequences for the combination of Ahab's crimes will be felt not just by Ahab, but by Ahab's dynasty (his “house”), for it will be entirely annihilated by the

123 E.g., Cogan 2000, 422.

124 See Fritz 2003, 156 (comment to 14:15-16)

calamity which Yahweh will bring. The likening of Ahab's dynasty to that of Jeroboam and Baasha not only suggests the extermination of Ahab's royal line, but also the violent way in which it will end, namely a *coup d'état* (5.4 and 11.1.2.2). Like Ahab's death sentence announced in 1 Kgs 21:19, the deaths that Ahab's dynasty will experience will be particularly degrading, as their corpses will serve as carrion for scavengers.

Moreover, Elijah's expansion ties Ahab's death sentence and the extermination of his dynasty to the same singular event. Elijah expanded the disaster that threatened Ahab (1 Kgs 21:19) so that it included Ahab's dynasty (1 Kgs 21:20b-24). Underscoring the fact that one event is in view is the fact that both 1 Kgs 21:19 and 1 Kgs 21:23 indicate that the place of punishment is Jezreel.¹²⁵ After Elijah's expansion, then, the same disaster that threatened Ahab in Jezreel also threatened Ahab's dynasty in Jezreel.

The way in which these consequences play out is exceedingly complex, and the simplicity of the pronouncements masks the sophisticated way in which they materialize. Four factors complicate the way the consequences come to fruition, the first being the

¹²⁵ That the judgment will transpire in Jezreel is directly tied to the location of Naboth's vineyard in Jezreel. Though 2 Kgs 9:21, 25-26 suggests a location outside Jezreel, the original location of Naboth's vineyard is in fact Jezreel, as argued by Na'aman 2008, 204–207. Of the evidence which seems to place the royal palace in Samaria (and thus Naboth's vineyard), only 1 Kgs 21:18 is problematic for the understanding of the text developed here. As will be discussed later, the locations associated with Ahab's death in 1 Kgs 22:38, (Ramoah-gilead and Samaria – not Jezreel) are crucial details according to the final form of the text. 1 Kgs 20:43 does not pose a problem, for the introduction to 1 Kings 21 allows for an unspecified time gap. That Jezebel sent letters when hatching her plan has been taken by some scholars to suggest the setting is in Samaria, not Jezreel. In response, Na'aman argues, “But the exchange of letters was dictated by the plot, as this was the only way to describe Jezebel as officially acting in the name of the king and secretly exchanging letters with her collaborators. It does not indicate a different place” (ibid., 206). Na'aman 2008, 206 goes on to state that the author was superimposing Samaria upon the long destroyed Jezreel. More generally, concerning Jezebel Sarna states, “Nevertheless, she realizes that if she is to secure the coveted property for her husband, her scheme must scrupulously preserve the appearance of legality, even though the substance of justice can be disregarded” (Sarna 1997, 120). Whether Na'aman correctly detects the later writer's memory is up for debate, but the circumstances allowed that Jezebel act in the name of the king within the standard procedure for arranging the “fast” in order to lure in Naboth. The letters, then, are a facade to give the elders the delusion of royal orders stemming directly from Ahab. They do not hint at a location in Samaria.

simple fact that death was announced for Ahab on two separate occasions. The other three factors are Ahab's repentance, Elijah's disobedience to Yahweh's command, and Jehu's ambition. Ahab's death sentences and his repentance will be handled first, before moving on to Elijah and Jehu.

Ahab, quite unexpectedly, reacted to Elijah's sentence by tearing his clothes, wearing sackcloth, and fasting (1 Kgs 21:27). Yahweh then told Elijah, "Have you seen how Ahab humbled himself (*nikna'*) before me? Because he humbled himself before me, I will not bring the calamity in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the calamity upon his house" (1 Kgs 21:29).¹²⁶ Ahab's unexpected act of repentance led Yahweh to postpone dynastic disaster until Ahab had died, and so by default Ahab could not be part of his dynasty's doom.

There are two features that need to be underscored. First, it is important to recall that Elijah merged Ahab's second death sentence, which he received because of the events surrounding Naboth's vineyard, with the fate of Ahab's dynasty. Second, Yahweh's decision to hold off the event which would potentially end Ahab and his dynasty serves as a ratification of Elijah's merger (2 Kgs 20:29). Yahweh's postponement, then, effectively removed Ahab from the "calamity" which Yahweh would bring against the king's dynasty in Jezreel. Since Ahab is exempted from the disaster which was originally to destroy both his life and dynasty, it is no surprise that Ahab did not die in the events in Jezreel which almost wiped out his entire dynasty.¹²⁷

Though Ahab would not be part of the massacre of his dynasty, it did not

126 This was not the case for Jeroboam and Baasha, despite the fact that these two kings did not die for their violations. Thus, Ahab's repentance was not necessary to explain the delay in punishment.

127 Ahab's house is not totally wiped out, as the parent's of Ahaziah II, from which came Jehoash, were Jehoram I and Athaliah.

necessarily mean that the king would not face his death sentence, particularly in light of the fact that he had essentially forfeited his life for failing to strike down Ben-Hadad in 1 Kgs 20:42. Ahab was simply spared seeing his dynasty's end by being removed from the event that would achieve that end. Nevertheless, he still was told on two separate occasions that his sins merited death. For these reasons, Yahweh took steps to enact Ahab's death (but outside the Jezreel event), and these steps are revealed in the dynamics of the “behind the scenes” episode involving the prophet Micaiah in 1 Kgs 22:19-23.

Micaiah's report in 1 Kgs 22:19-23 witnessed to a divine initiative to bring about Ahab's downfall in Israel and Judah's joint campaign against Aram. When initially asked if Ahab and Jehoshaphat should go to battle against Aram at Ramoth-gilead, Micaiah answers in the affirmative (1 Kgs 22:15). But when pressed further, Micaiah reveals what he knew to be true: that impending doom awaited the king of Israel (1 Kgs 22:16-18).¹²⁸ Then the prophet narrated what he saw on the divine council, explaining how the events surrounding Ahab were being orchestrated with a clear purpose:

And Yahweh said, “Who will deceive (*yəpattē*) Ahab, that he will go up and fall (*wəyippōl*) at Ramoth-gilead?” And this one said one thing and another something else. But the certain spirit came out and stood before Yahweh and said, “I will deceive (*’ăpattennū*) him.” Yahweh said to him, “In what way?” He said, “I will go out and be a spirit of deception (*rūah šeqer*) in the mouth of all his prophets.” He (Yahweh) said, “You will deceive (him) and you will certainly succeed (*wəgam tūkāl*). Go and do so.” (1 Kgs 22:20-22)

Micaiah's revelation shows that Yahweh had a hand in Ahab's fall at Ramoth-gilead.

Yahweh gave final approval of the plan, though he did not directly act within the events which led to Ahab's death. Rather, it was the deceiving spirit who led Ahab to go to

¹²⁸ For a radically different perspective, see Noll 2013 who tries to build a case for Micaiah as an unreliable/false prophet. Noll's analysis turns on a number of interpretive issues with which I disagree. Cf. Block 2005.

battle against Aram. Micaiah's comment in 1 Kgs 22:23 confirms the complex dynamic between Yahweh, the deceiving spirit, Ahab and his prophets: “And now, behold, Yahweh has placed (*nātan*) a spirit of deception (*rūah šeqer*) in the mouth of all your prophets. Yahweh has spoken calamity against you (*dibber 'ālēkā rā 'ā*).”

A four-way dynamic then appears in 1 Kings 22. Yahweh approves the spirit's plan by which it (the spirit) enticed Ahab through his prophets to go to Ramoth-gilead.¹²⁹ This, however, is not the end of the story. But before factoring in a fifth character, it should be remembered that the initiative to bring about Ahab's downfall links back to the capital punishment judgments accrued by Ahab. It is not necessarily a “fulfillment” of 1 Kgs 22:19-24, but the realization of those occasions where Ahab committed crimes meriting death, namely the sparing of Ben-Hadad (1 Kgs 20:42), the slaughter of Naboth, and the theft of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21). As argued above, the text stresses that Ahab will, in fact, not be part of the disaster announced in 1 Kgs 22:19-24, the event which will destroy his house. In this way it is not a “fulfillment” of 1 Kgs 22:19-24, but recompense for Ahab's capital crimes on an individual level announced in both 1 Kgs 20:42 and 1 Kgs 22:19-24.

According to the narrative, the deceiving spirit succeeded in enticing Ahab through his prophets to go into battle at Ramoth-gilead. Importantly, the preparations made before battle show that a fifth character, the king of Aram, had a hand in Ahab's fate, for he was specifically targeting Ahab (1 Kgs 22:31). Ahab must have been aware of this, for he told Jehoshaphat to wear his royal robes while he disguised himself (1 Kgs

¹²⁹ Block 2005 argues that the spirit caused delusion by instigating an ambiguous oracle announcement which Ahab would misinterpret thereby leading to his downfall.

22:30). Yahweh seems to have known the Aramean king's ambition as well, and perhaps this is why he selected the battle at Ramoth-gilead for bringing about Ahab's death.

Noticeably, the Aramean king is acting on his own initiative. The text does not explicitly indicate any divine involvement in his efforts to target Ahab.

Ahab's effort to camouflage himself initially worked, as an Aramean contingent mistook Jehoshaphat for Ahab, but they stopped pursuing the king of Judah after realizing he was not Ahab (1 Kgs 22:32-33). Though the army of Aram never discovered Ahab, Ahab's effort to disguise himself in battle ultimately was not enough to spare his life, for he was caught by a stray arrow: "But a man in his innocence drew the bow and struck the king of Israel between the scales and the coat of armor" (1 Kgs 22:34). The wound which the king suffered at Ramoth-gilead proved to be fatal as Ahab died in this specific location, while watching the battle from a distance (1 Kgs 22:34-35). Though he died at Ramoth-gilead, Ahab was brought into Samaria where he was buried (1 Kgs 22:37). The narrative carefully highlights that "the dogs licked his blood," along with a statement about prostitutes bathing, by stating that it was "according to the word of Yahweh which he spoke" (1 Kgs 22:38), referring back to 1 Kgs 20:19b.¹³⁰

Thus, the narrator clearly connects Ahab's death with the word of Yahweh (1 Kgs 22:38). Equally clear is that Ahab did not die exactly as proclaimed in 2 Kgs 21:19 which announces that Ahab would expire in Jezreel. The text instead connects Ahab's death with Ramoth-gilead and Samaria. As mentioned earlier, this is ultimately not surprising, because, according to the narrative, Ahab was removed from the destruction

¹³⁰ Margalith 1984, 229–32 connects the dogs' blood-licking with the Dionysus-Cybele cult from Asia Minor and Phoenicia in the 9th-8th centuries BCE, partially based on the use of *lqq* with *keleb*, with the latter taken to signify a temple-servant. At the same time, cf. note 140 below.

which would fall upon his dynasty in Jezreel due to his repentance. Yet Ahab was still deserving of death for his actions. As a result, he died in another event, namely the divinely orchestrated confrontation between Israel-Judah and Aram. In this way, Ahab's death was "according to the word of Yahweh which he spoke," a word which the reader knows was modified in accord with Ahab's repentance in 1 Kgs 21:29. Ahab's death is, in the end, achieved in this story by a casual Bowman under the authority of a king who, by his own volition, was hunting a disguised Ahab, an Ahab who decided to go to Ramoth-gilead because of a spirit whose deceptive activity ultimately had the approval of Yahweh.

Above it was mentioned that, in addition to Ahab's two death sentences and his repentance, both Elijah and Jehu behave in ways that complicate the consequences of Ahab's crimes. In fact, Elijah and Jehu are inextricably linked to Ahab by the roles that they played in bringing about the destruction of Ahab's house. Elijah's part goes back to 1 Kgs 19:15-16, where Yahweh instructed him to anoint Jehu king of Israel. In these verses, Yahweh commands Elijah in the following way:

Go return to your way towards the wilderness of Damascus. And you will enter and anoint Hazael as king over Aram, and Jehu son of Nimshi you will anoint as king over Israel, and Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel-meholah you will anoint as prophet in your stead.

This text bears witness to two factors of import concerning Jehu's anointing, the first being that Yahweh explicitly commissioned Elijah to anoint Jehu. Secondly, Jehu's anointing has nothing to do with Ahab at this point in the narrative.¹³¹

¹³¹ At the same time, Jehu's anointing is associated with violence, as Yahweh followed his commission with an enigmatic forecast in 1 Kgs 19:17: "And it will be that the one who escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill." Jehu will eventually kill Joram son of Ahab only after the latter had escaped death at the hands of Hazael's military forces (2 Kgs 8:28-29; 9:14-26). Yet there is no connection with Ahab nor with Jehu as an

The narrative makes it certain that Elijah failed to completely carry out his instructions from Yahweh; he only sought out Elisha¹³² and failed to anoint both Hazael and Jehu as kings.¹³³ Therefore the anointing of Jehu, originally Elijah's responsibility, was passed on from Elisha to a young member from the company of the prophets (2 Kgs 9:1, 4). Furthermore, Elisha himself fails to fulfill the commission, for he passes it off to another as well. When Elisha commissioned the unnamed individual, he told him to simply anoint Jehu at Ramoth-gilead (2 Kgs 9:1) and then immediately leave: "Take the flask of oil and pour it upon his head and then say, 'Thus said Yahweh: I have anointed you as king over Israel.' Then open the door and flee. You will not linger." (2 Kgs 9:3). However, the young member of the prophetic company elaborates on the instructions given him after pouring oil on Jehu's head (2 Kgs 9:6-10):

Thus said Yahweh the God of Israel: "I have anointed you king over the people of Yahweh, over Israel. You will strike the house of Ahab, your lord (*'ādōnēkā*), and I will avenge the blood of my servants the prophets and the blood of all the servants of Yahweh from the hand of Jezebel. All the house of Ahab will perish, and I will cut off from Ahab the one who urinates against a wall (*maštīn baqīr*), both bond and free, in Israel. I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha son of Ahijah. The dogs will eat Jezebel in the property of Jezreel, and there will be none to bury (her)."

The text then states that only then, after adding a supplement to the oracle, did the young

instrument of punishment.

132 Note that there is no indication in the text that Elijah anointed Elisha. On the contrary, Elisha's words in 2 Kgs 2:9 suggest that Elijah had not clearly designated Elisha as his successor (a possibility pointed out by Sam Meier in personal communication).

133 Nor did Elijah even go to the wilderness of Damascus. Elijah, who had previously traversed southward from Jezreel to Beer-sheba then on to Horeb (1 Kgs 18:46-19:3, 8), the very place where he received the commission, immediately set off and found Elisha (1 Kgs 19:19). Presumably, Elijah found Elisha around the vicinity of his hometown of Abel-meholah, since Elisha was both plowing his land at the time and able to bid farewell to his parents (1 Kgs 19:19-20). Elijah, then, moved from a southern location (Horeb) northward to Abel-meholah, which was likely located just south of Beth-shean (Cogan 2000, 208). There is no record that Elijah ever made it to Damascus, a fact highlighted by the text when it plainly states that "Elisha came to Damascus" (2 Kgs 8:7) where Elisha (doing Elijah's job) announced to Hazael that Yahweh had shown him that Hazael was to rule Aram (2 Kgs 8:13).

man open the door and flee, a comment serving to highlight the fact that the young prophet had elaborated the message that Elisha instructed him to deliver.

What is the precise significance of the prophet's expansion? The additions do correlate to a degree with the doom that Elijah had proclaimed against Ahab's dynasty in 1 Kgs 21:20b-24: both mention that Yahweh will cut off all males from Ahab's line; both compare the future of Ahab's house to the fate suffered by the house Jeroboam and Baasha; and both predict that Jezebel will be eaten by dogs. In this way the basic essence of both announcements are the same, namely, that Ahab's dynasty will come to an end by Yahweh's hand. Yet the young prophet mixed in a major addition in his announcement.¹³⁴ Instead of Yahweh bringing ruin upon Ahab's house (1 Kgs 21:20b), a very unspecific formulation which could have played out in a number of ways, the young prophet commissioned Jehu to massacre Ahab's descendants. Whereas Yahweh had previously announced that he would wipe out Ahab's line, the young prophet gave prophetic endorsement to Jehu in particular for his *coup d'état* and subsequent slaughter of Ahab's descendants. The difference is one of announcement verses endorsement, for Yahweh elsewhere never endorsed Jehu to take such action as that announced by the prophet.

The young prophet's extensive verbal supplement to his original commission is problematic for a number of reasons. Foremost, of course, is the fact that he violates the original orders Elisha gave him, namely, to deliver a single Hebrew sentence composed of four words, and "Then open the door and flee. You will not linger" (2 Kgs 9:3). The

¹³⁴ Other differences not significant for this study also occur. Though the prophet mentions vengeance for the blood of the prophets shed by Ahab, it is not considered a violation for which Yahweh legitimately issued punishment. Rather, it is another addition made by the young prophet. Though Jezebel appears to be responsible for this (1 Kgs 18:4; cf. 19:10, 14), it is not surprising that the prophet views Ahab as the guilty party. It is similar to Ahab's guilt in the Naboth incident which Jezebel carried out.

expansion's origin stemmed from Elijah, as he first announced the end of Ahab's house, and Yahweh had ratified this expansion in 2 Kgs 21:29. Yet Elijah's failure to carry out Yahweh's divine orders to personally anoint Jehu is precisely what led to the young prophet's opportunity to expand the oracle even further.¹³⁵ However, this latter case did not have divine approval. Jehu, by no fault of his own, falsely believed that he in particular had Yahweh's endorsement to slaughter all of Ahab's descendants.¹³⁶ Jehu would waste no time acting upon the erroneous prophetic endorsement, and the fallout would be disastrous for both the kingdom of Israel and Judah, as well as the Davidic line. In this way Elijah, via his inaction, is the epicenter for the mishandled anointing of Jehu and the following consequences.

Working under the illusion of legitimate prophetic endorsement, Jehu took immediate action against the house of Ahab. Jehu first victimized King Jehoram of Israel, son of Ahab (2 Kgs 1:17; 3:11). Jehoram had gone to Jezreel to recover from battle wounds which he suffered fighting against the military forces of Hazael at Ramoth-gilead (2 Kgs 8:28-29; 9:14-15). It is here, in Jezreel, that Jehu attacked and killed Joram (2 Kgs 9:14-24). As mentioned above, the sequence of events aligns well with the prediction coming from the mouth of Yahweh in 1 Kgs 19:17, namely that "...the one who escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill..." Joram escaped Hazael, but then died at the hands of Jehu.

After slaying Joram, Jehu quickly shackled Joram's death with the word of Yahweh when he declared the following to his officer Bidkar:

135 Cf. Heller 2006, where it is argued that the Deuteronomists approached prophecy with suspicion.

136 David's example in refusing to kill Saul sets the standard in the DtrH by which all future regicides are judged (e.g., 1 Sam 24:6, 2 Sam 4:9-12).

Lift and throw him in the plot of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite, for remember, you and I were riding together behind Ahab, his father, and Yahweh raised this pronouncement concerning him: “Surely the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons I saw yesterday,” declares Yahweh, “and I will repay you (*wəšillamtî ləkā*) in this plot” declares Yahweh. Now lift and throw him in the plot according to the word of Yahweh. (2 Kgs 9:25-26)

Some notable differences arise in Jehu's version of Yahweh's proclamation against Ahab, and one must ask why Jehu's recitation of the oracle which he claimed to have personally heard announced to Ahab differs from Elijah's version. Additionally, one must ask why Jehu referenced Naboth, for his prophetic endorsement made no mention of the Naboth incident which, according to the earlier narrative, had resulted in Ahab's penitence and the rescinding of his punishment.

The answer lies in a handful of clues in the larger literary context of Jehu's revolt. In several places, the narrative presents Jehu as one who was aware that the judgment announced by Elijah was known among the populace on some level (2 Kgs 9:36-37, 10:10; cf. the narrator's comments in 10:17). Moreover, Jehu only referenced Elijah's oracle to legitimize events, whether explicitly (2 Kgs 9:36-37, 10:10) or implicitly (as in the case here in 2 Kgs 9:25-26). Jehu never cited the oracle which he received from the young prophet to legitimize the transpired events.¹³⁷ Moreover, in the two instances where Jehu claims to repeat portions of Elijah's oracle, the oracle is expanded from the original (2 Kgs 9:25-26, 36).

These clues indicate that Jehu strategically cited Elijah's oracles to support his revolt. Elijah's pronouncement was portrayed as both well-known and reliable because of Elijah's reputation. Conversely, knowledge of the the unnamed prophet's declaration to

¹³⁷ Aside from 2 Kgs 9:11-13. Note that this was not used to legitimize Jehu's violence.

Jehu would not have been widely known, nor would it have the same authority as a declaration made by Elijah. For these reasons Jehu appeared to invoke Elijah's oracle on several occasions as a means to legitimize his violent activity, including 2 Kgs 9:25-26, even though Elijah is not specifically mentioned. Jehu, presumably aware of the short life-span of those usurpers who preceded him, relied on both the general knowledge of Elijah's proclamation against Ahab and Elijah's reputation to provide a prophetic angle to his violent slaughter of Ahab's son. Jehu did so in an effort to ensure the full cooperation of those who might oppose him.¹³⁸

After Jehu killed Joram, he then turned to Ahaziah. In a twist of fate, the DtrH indicates that King Ahaziah of Judah, who was related to Ahab,¹³⁹ happened to go to Jezreel to visit Jehoram (2 Kgs 9:16) on the same day Jehu came to Jezreel in his effort to assassinate Joram. After slaying Joram, Jehu quickly ordered his archers to shoot Ahaziah after the king took flight, and Ahaziah latter died of his wound in Megiddo (2 Kgs 9:27). Thus, the kings of both Israel and Judah were assassinated by Jehu on the same day, for they were both related to Ahab.

Jezebel's death soon followed, as Jehu commanded several eunuchs to throw her to her death in Jezreel, where dogs ate most of her corpse (2 Kgs 9:30-37).¹⁴⁰ Like the

138 Tangentially, a word must be said about the form of the oracles coming from the mouth of Jehu. Jehu's expansion of Elijah's oracle, both in 2 Kgs 9:25-26 and in v. 36-37, is unflattering for two reasons.

First, they are exaggerated and employed by Jehu to support his *coup d'état*. Secondly, the expansions remind the reader of the young prophet who initially gave Jehu illegitimate prophetic support by expanding on his instructions from Elisha. These two facts, combined with the fact that Jehu never cites the oracle provided to him by the young prophet but instead only cites Elijah, allows for the possibility that Jehu has a more sinister motive than might appear at first glance.

139 Ahaziah was the son of Jehoram of Judah (2 Kgs 8:24-25; cf. 2 Chr 22:1) and Athaliah (2 Kgs 8:18, 26; 11:1; cf. 2 Chr 22:2, 10). Athaliah is called the daughter of Omri in 2 Kgs 8:26, but the daughter of Ahab in 2 Kgs 8:18. Therefore, she was either Ahab's daughter or sister, and thus of the house of Ahab that would be exterminated according to the prophetic oracle. Note also 2 Chr 18:1.

140 In addition to the negative connotations in 1 Kgs 14:11; 16:14; 21:23-24; 2 Kgs 9:10, 36, one may note the canine consumption of the one who violates Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty (*SAA* 2 6: 481-484)

case of Joram above, Jehu cites Elijah's oracle to legitimize the death of Jezebel, but this time he provides explicit reference to Elijah (2 Kgs 9:36-37). Further, as in the case of Joram, Jehu's reproduction of Elijah's oracle is not exact – it contains an expansion – not a complementary detail in the light of the young prophet's similar behavior above.

Royal officials collaborated with Jehu to exterminate the remaining descendants of Ahab. At Jehu's request, the royal officials sent the heads of Ahab's remaining sons to Jezreel, and they were piled in two heaps at the gate until morning (2 Kgs 10:1-10). In the morning Jehu feigned not knowing how the sons had died when addressing the people of Jezreel, in an effort to thwart opposition against his revolt (2 Kgs 10:9). He acted as if the heap of heads was a mysterious fulfillment of Elijah's oracle – a ruse to thwart Jezreelite opposition. Again, Jehu referred to Elijah's oracle against Ahab, specifically to the dynastic aspect (*'al bêt 'ah 'āb*) of Elijah's proclamation (12 Kgs 10:10). Jehu's ploy and reference again show the pervasive nature of Elijah's oracle and the way in which Jehu used it to legitimize his actions, while at the same time displaying Jehu's more sinister side.

The narrator makes clear that Jehu killed not only all of Ahab's house in Jezreel, but also his officials, friends, and priests (2 Kgs 10:11). This expansion of violence was

and the same fate which might befall the one who violates the exemptions issued in Kataja-Whiting 1995 no. 25 and 26 and the grant in 31 (see line '31 in each text for the imagery at hand). Anubis, after learning that his wife has lied about Bata's advances, killed her and “cast her to the dogs” in the “The Two Brothers” (Lichtheim 1976, 207). In the “The Stories of Setne Khamwas,” Naneferkaptah's ruse, by which Setne consented to Tabubu's request to have Setne's own children killed, culminates with the following fictitious situation: “She had them thrown down from the window to the dogs and cats. They ate their flesh, and he heard them as he drank with Tabubu” (Lichtheim 1980, 135). Plutarch makes a further connection between a corpse and its mistreatment by a dog: “When Cambyses destroyed and threw away the Apis bull, no animal approached or tasted of the body save only a dog, and then it lost its primacy and position of highest honour among animals” (Griffiths 1970, 189). These examples show that this particular mode of desecration cuts across cultural boundaries and was universally recognizable as a deplorable end.

not commissioned by Yahweh, and it should be viewed as nothing less than Jehu intentionally overstepping the parameters of the oracle received from the young prophet.¹⁴¹ It should be noted that this is no unimportant detail, for even though it was not divinely legitimized, it brings to completion the narrative thread in 1 Kgs 20:42, where Ahab's "people" were taken in place of Ben-Hadad's people because of Ahab's failure as king to carry out the ban.

At this point, it should be pointed out that the fates of those associated with Ahab have been associated with the geographic location of Jezreel in one way or another. Joram, Ahaziah, and Jezebel all die in Jezreel, and the heads of Ahab's seventy sons were conveyed from Samaria to Jezreel. Furthermore, it was in Jezreel where Jehu went beyond the illegitimately stipulated parameters fabricated by the young prophet and massacred Ahab's associates. Thus, the destruction of Ahab's house took place through a singular event (Jehu's revolt) in a specific location (Jezreel).

It was argued above that the combination of the oracles in 1 Kgs 21:19-24 suggest that Ahab's house would be destroyed in a singular event located in Jezreel, and that because of his repentance, Ahab would not die in this event. Up to this point, Jehu's rebellion fits 1 Kgs 21:19-24. At the same time it will also be recalled that Jehu's revolt is a result of a series of blunders – Elijah's failure to anoint Jehu, Elisha's commission of a young prophet to carry out Elijah's task, and this young prophet's expansion of Elisha's instructions by which he illegitimately gave Jehu prophetic endorsement for his *coup d'état*. Jehu's specific actions were never part of the divine plan, and as shown above,

141 Whether Jehu may have been acting on Elijah's oracle which specifies "the one who dies belonging to Ahab" (1 Kgs 21:24) with the understanding that it referred to more than just blood relatives is moot: Jehu himself was not so commissioned.

Jehu himself had more sinister motives than to simply follow the pronouncement given him. Further complicating this mixture of divine pronouncement and human ambition is that the deaths of Ahab's associates, a consequence of Ahab's crime (1 Kgs 20:42), also came by way of Jehu's unauthorized commission.

In light of the geographic connections to Jezreel, it is curious that Jehu continued his revolt outside of that location, slaughtering several members of Ahab's line outside of Jezreel. More precisely, it is surprising that the narrator explicitly stresses that the location where Elijah's oracle against Ahab's house was finally fulfilled was not Jezreel. En route to the northern capital of Samaria, Jehu came into contact with forty-two relatives of Ahaziah (*'āḥē 'āḥazyāhū*), all of whom he slaughtered at Beth-eked (2 Kgs 10:12-14). Jehu then proceeded to Samaria where "...he struck all the remaining ones belonging to Ahab in Samaria, until he destroyed him according to the word of Yahweh which he spoke to Elijah" (2 Kgs 10:17).

The narrator's two-fold mention of Samaria in this comment purposely emphasizes the city Samaria, in contrast to Jezreel. Moreover, the association of Samaria with Elijah's oracle in 2 Kgs 10:17 is in contrast to 2 Kgs 10:10-11, the latter making no such reference despite taking place in Jezreel. For the narrator, Elijah's oracle did not come to complete fruition until Jehu's slaughter in Samaria. The narrator, then, is careful to underscore that Elijah's oracle – conveyed in a bungled fashion to Jehu via young prophet – did not unfold precisely as stated by the prophet himself. Though one event is in fact responsible for the demise of Ahab's house, the event (Jehu's unapproved revolt) did not unfold only in Jezreel but spilled over into Beth-eked and Samaria.¹⁴² This is

¹⁴² Besides the locations of Beth-eked and Samaria, another curious aspect concerning Ahab's house

directly related to Jehu's ambition to take the throne, a result of illegitimate prophetic endorsement for which Elijah was ultimately responsible in his failure to carry out his commission to anoint Jehu.

In this way Jehu and Elijah are linked to the annihilation of Ahab's dynasty.¹⁴³ Yet one more complication needs to be addressed. Jehu's review in 2 Kgs 10:28-31 is mixed. He is remembered for wiping out Baal worship, in addition to walking in the ways of Jeroboam and not following Yahweh with all his heart. Yet concerning his massacre of Ahab, the text reads:

Yahweh said to Jehu, "Because you have done well to do what is upright in my eyes, you have done to the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, your sons to the fourth generation will sit upon the throne of Israel" (2 Kgs 10:30).

Two aspects of Yahweh's word to Jehu are noteworthy. First, a limited dynasty is both positive and negative. A fully established dynasty is a sign of divine blessing, as in the case of the house of the faithful priest in 1 Sam 2:35, Saul's potential dynasty (1 Sam 13:13), David's dynasty (2 Samuel 7, 1 Chronicles 17, Psalm 89), and Jeroboam's potential dynasty (1 Kgs 11:38). Conversely, a dynasty which has been cut short is a sign of divine punishment, as in the case of Eli's house (1 Sam 2:30-34), and the dynasties of Saul (1 Sam 13:13-14), Jeroboam (1 Kgs 14:14-16), Baasha (1 Kgs 16:3-4, 7), and Ahab (1 Kgs 21:19-26). Jehu's dynasty falls between these poles: his dynasty is established

deserves mention. Jehu killed Ahaziah of Judah because he was part of Ahab's bloodline. Since Jehosheba preserved the life of Ahaziah's son, Joash, when Athaliah temporarily took the throne in Judah (2 Kgs 11:1-2), and since it was through Joash that the Davidic line continued (2 Kgs 11:4ff; 12:21), one can see that a member of Ahab's bloodline escaped the extermination.

¹⁴³ The repercussions actually extend further and confirm the illegitimacy of the oracle that Jehu hears from the young prophet. The Davidic line was almost wiped out by Athaliah when she took the throne in Judah, as only the young Joash survived her purge (2 Kgs 11:1-2). This event results from Jehu's assassination of Ahaziah, again ultimately linked to Elijah.

only for a limited duration. That Jehu is granted a dynasty is positive, but its limited duration is negative. These dual aspects of Jehu's dynastic promise correspond with the seemingly positive statement Yahweh made concerning Jehu's actions being in accordance with Yahweh's intentions. As argued earlier, it was Yahweh's intention that Ahab's dynasty be brought to an end because of Ahab's offenses, but the manner in which it was achieved was not endorsed by Yahweh. According to the way that the story is told, Jehu was unaware of this fact, and was working under the assumption that he had divine support. For this reason Jehu receives some approval, but it is clear that there is some alloy in Jehu's actions that prevents a full endorsement of the dynasty that he founds.¹⁴⁴

What, then, is the import of the dynamics between Elijah, Jehu, and Yahweh for Ahab's depiction as a chastised ruler? On the one hand, Jehu's mixed review in the books of Kings demonstrates that the disaster which befell Ahab's house was in fact in consequence for his crimes. On the other hand, those consequences were also intertwined with Elijah's blunder and Jehu's ambitions. Thus, Yahweh's initial ratification of the destruction of Ahab's house combined with Elijah's failure to anoint Jehu led to circumstances by which Yahweh's intentions were realized in quite unpredictable ways. The relationship between Yahweh's statement that he would bring the disaster and the events that bring about that disaster are related insofar as the divine goal was achieved. However, it must be emphasized that the means were carried out by human actors whose actions were imbued with incompetence and folly (Elijah, the young man from the company of prophets) and devoid of divine sanction (Jehu).

¹⁴⁴ This ambivalence is not shared by Hosea, where Jehu's actions are seen as entirely unjustified and serve as the basis for punishment. See 8.1.3.2.

In the end, one sees that Ahab's crimes led to his death, the death of his dynasty, and his officials. Ahab, then, suffers personally for his offenses. At the same time, his family and administration also suffer for his mistakes.

5.6 Manasseh (Kings)

The book of Kings depicts King Manasseh of Judah as a ruler who engages in an outrageously high degree of wickedness unparalleled by any preceding king of Israel or Judah.¹⁴⁵ So severe were his actions that the list of sins attributed to him (2 Kgs 21:2-9) is the longest list given to a king in the DtrH,¹⁴⁶ a powerful indictment placing Manasseh in a league of his own. 2 Kings 21 covers Manasseh's fifty-five year reign in a mere eighteen verses, all of which focus on his apostasy and negative influence. According to 2 Kgs 21:2, “he did evil in the eyes Yahweh” with the qualification, “according to the abominations of the nations which Yahweh dispossessed from before the sons of Israel.” The scathing charges in following verses relate numerous cultic violations, which include rebuilding the high places (*habbāmôt*) which were removed in the reforms of Hezekiah, erecting altars for Baal, making an Asherah as Ahab had done, placing the Asherah in the temple, worshiping “all the hosts of heaven” (*lʾkol šəbāʾ haššāmayim*), building altars for the “hosts of heaven” in the courts of the temple, making his son pass through fire, practicing witchcraft and divination, dealing with mediums and spiritists, and leading the people “...to do more evil than the nations which God had destroyed before Israel” (2 Kgs 21:3-9). In addition to these religious violations, Manasseh “...also poured out very

145 The Chronicler's account of Manasseh does not qualify as a complex account, and therefore it is handled in 7.2.2 and 10.1.5.2.

146 Cogan and Tadmor 1988, 270; Stavrakopolou 2004.

much innocent blood” (2 Kgs 21:16).

Perhaps the gravity of Manasseh's wickedness is best demonstrated through the statements that his sins induced irrevocable punishment upon Judah (2 Kgs 21:11-15; 23:26-27; 24:3). Significant is that Manasseh's evil was “according to the abominations of the nations which Yahweh dispossessed from before the sons of Israel” (2 Kgs 21:2) and that Manasseh “caused them (Judah) to do evil more than the nations which Yahweh destroyed before the sons of Israel” (2 Kgs 21:9).¹⁴⁷ That this comparison sets Manasseh apart from his predecessors has been noted, highlighting the nature of this king's crimes.¹⁴⁸

Since it was the wickedness of the nations who inhabited the land which led to their destruction (Gen 15:16, Lev 18:24-27, 20:22-24; Deut 9:4; cf. 1 Kgs 14:24), the association with these nations suggests a comparable fate.¹⁴⁹ Such an association implies that Manasseh is leading the nation to destruction, since he guides the people beyond the wickedness of the nations, wickedness which caused those nations to lose the land in the first place. Since Manasseh led his people into a level of depravity which surpassed that of the nations, the fate of those same nations awaits Judah. That Manasseh was remembered as leading Judah to surpass the evil of the nations who were destroyed elevates Manasseh beyond the most wicked Canaanite ruler, while at the same time further indicting him in the destruction of Judah. Thus it is not surprising that elsewhere in Kings the exile is overtly said to result from Manasseh's sin.¹⁵⁰

147 Cf. Ezek 5:6-7.

148 Stavrakopolou 2004, 27.

149 Williamson 1977, 18 suggests that 2 Kgs 21:9 may be an allusion to Deut 6:4ff., implying the same fate for Judah. It is not insignificant that a delay in punishment of the Amorite in Gen 15:16 finds a parallel in the DtrH, where Manasseh is blamed for the destruction brought on Judah many years later.

150 See 2 Kgs 21:10-14; 23:26-27; 24:3.

To accurately gauge the seriousness of Manasseh's actions and their consequences in the context of the DtrH, they must be read in light of Josiah's reforms. According to Halpern, Josiah's reforms seem to reverse Manasseh's sins, destroy the signs of the division of the United Monarchy, and address the sins of the Northern monarchy and population.¹⁵¹ Halpern suggests that the exilic editor of the DtrH (Dtr2) chose Manasseh as the main cause for the exile because Manasseh's sins were the very reason why Josiah's reforms failed, as well as the reason for Josiah's early death.¹⁵² Regardless of how one gauges redactional activity, synchronically Manasseh's sinfulness and his leadership in depravity beyond the Canaanites were so severe that not even the reforms of righteous Josiah could overcome the consequences. It was Manasseh's excessive sin and leadership that became the tipping point for Judah's destruction.

At the same time, a close examination of the dynamics between Manasseh's offenses and the ensuing divine punishment reveal a complex situation. First, it should be noted that Manasseh, like Jeroboam, receives no individual punishment for his offenses, a surprising fact given that Manasseh's cultic crimes were unparalleled by any other king. Instead of suffering for his practices, his nation would suffer complete destruction a half century after Manasseh's death.

Secondly, Yahweh clearly states that he will cause the consequences resulting from Manasseh's violations: "Therefore thus said Yahweh the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am about to bring calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah...'" (2 Kgs 21:12a). Similarly, in 2 Kgs 21:13-14 Yahweh states the following:

151 Halpern 1998, 489.

152 Ibid., 492-493

I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plumb-line of the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a bowl, having wiped and turned it upside down. I will abandon (*wənāṭašī*) the remnant of my possession and I will give them into the hand of their enemy. They will be plunder and spoil to all their enemies.

These excerpts witness to Yahweh's direct involvement in the events that will result from Manasseh's violations.

Thirdly, Yahweh's actions in these verses are tied to both Manasseh and the people. Impending doom is not just “Because Manasseh king of Israel has preformed these abominations...” (2 Kgs 21:11), but also “because they (the people) did evil in my (Yahweh's) eyes...” (2 Kgs 21:15; cf. 24:20). This verse continues, however, stating that the people's sin travels back in history to the time of the exodus from Egypt: “...and they have provoked me from the day that their fathers came out from Egypt unto this day” (2 Kgs 21:15). Implied here is an accumulation of sin over time, reaching the tipping point with Manasseh's leadership. Both Manasseh and the people are part of the long process of sin that led to the exile, and although Manasseh bears the most responsibility for the coming disaster, he is not the sole cause.¹⁵³ Therefore, according to Kings, two causative parties are unequally responsible for destruction: Manasseh and the people.

A fourth, and complex, feature is that the two causative parties (Manasseh and the people) bring judgment through three different structures. Manasseh, the main instigator and offender who plays the chief role in bringing the exile, committed cultic offenses which required the appropriate monarchical superstructure for their execution. Simply

¹⁵³ That Manasseh bears the most responsibility in the eyes of the DtrH is demonstrated by the fact that he, as an individual, is named as a catalyst for destruction. In his fifty-five year reign, his violations were the breaking point which brought Judah into irrevocable punishment. The people's numerous offenses, which had been taking place since the exodus, did not bring Judah into judgment until Manasseh lead them to a level not previously reached (2 Kgs 21:9). Additionally, the destruction is mentioned as stemming from only Manasseh in 2 Kgs 23:26-27; 24:3; cf. Jer 15:4.

put, Manasseh's sins required that he have the position, authority, power, and resources to carry out violations which would be extensive enough to implicate both himself and the people in the eyes of Yahweh. As for the people, they had been provoking Yahweh long before the monarchy had existed (2 Kgs 21:15), and the structure through which these offenses were committed was the people-group itself. The third structure by which disaster came upon Judah is the “book of the law” found in the time of Josiah (2 Kgs 22:8). After Josiah sent an envoy to make inquiry concerning the contents of the book, the prophetess Huldah made a clear connection with this book and the exile (2 Kgs 22:16-17):

Thus said Yahweh, “Behold, I am about to bring calamity to this place and upon its inhabitants, all the words of the book which the king of Judah read. Because they have abandoned me in order to provoke me to anger by all the works of their hands, my wrath will be kindled in this place, and it will not be quenched.

Since the DtrH works with the assumption that the book in view was some form of Deuteronomy, from this perspective the “book of the law” must predate the monarchy but post-date the point when the people began to accumulate guilt upon leaving Egypt.

Thus, one can see that the people are seen to accrue guilt before the monarchy came into existence by means of their own violations, and they also accumulated guilt through violating the “book of the law.” However, this discussion on the two causative parties and the three structures through which judgment came is not meant to diminish Manasseh's responsibility in the slightest. Rather, it serves to demonstrate that the cause of Judah's destruction in the DtrH was a complex and multifaceted conglomeration of factors. Manasseh, who was but one of these factors, was the primary catalyst who melded the people's offenses of the deep past with their more recent violations of

Deuteronomy, while inflaming the sins of the present through advancing his cultic crimes and infecting the population by means of his authoritative position as king of Judah. Importantly, it was his position as king that allowed him to lead the people to irrevocable destruction.

The ways in which the punishment stemming from Manasseh's sins plays out are not as clear-cut as 2 Kgs 21:11-15 and 23:26-27 suggest, not least because punishment comes in two waves: the deportation of 598/7 and the defeat and exile of 586. The first deportation carried out by Nebuchadrezzar¹⁵⁴ does correlate to a degree with Yahweh's declaration that he would himself bring disaster on Judah. After Jehoiakim's rebellion against Nebuchadrezzar, 2 Kgs 24:2 reads:

Yahweh sent against him bands of Chaldeans, bands of Arameans, bands of Moabites, and bands of Ammonites. He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of Yahweh which he spoke through the hands of his servants the prophets.

The text then immediately connects Yahweh's intervention with Manasseh's sins and violence, as well as Yahweh's intention of exiling Judah (2 Kgs 24:3-4a):

Surely through the command of Yahweh this came upon Judah, to remove (them) from before him, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all which he had committed, and also for the blood of the innocent which he spilled. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood.

As these verses attest, the DtrH sees Yahweh directly at work in the events subsequent to Jehoiakim's rebellion, sending enemy forces in retribution for the sins of Manasseh.

It is surprising, then, that Yahweh is not mentioned in any of the other events leading to the deportation in 598/7. Nebuchadrezzar and his forces simply act on their

¹⁵⁴ In all cases, I will translate this king's name as "Nebuchadrezzar" (e.g., Jer 29:21) rather than "Nebuchadnezzar" (e.g., Jer 29:1), for it more accurately reflects the Akkadian original (*Nabû-kudurrî-uşur*).

own accord in 2 Kgs 24:10-17. They besieged Jerusalem, took Jehoiachin prisoner, looted the temple, and deported inhabitants of Jerusalem. Similarly, Yahweh is not mentioned in the recounting of the destruction of 586 related in 2 Kings 25. Though 2 Kgs 24:20 connects the exile of Judah with the agency of Yahweh, neither Manasseh's role nor Yahweh's direct intervention are mentioned in the events which transpire and result in the 586 exile.

The text, then, keeps Yahweh's proclamation that he would be responsible for the destruction of Judah (2 Kgs 21:11-15) hidden behind the historical events by which that proclamation came to pass. This is in accord with the consequences of Jeroboam's violations, for the exile of Israel also plays out without mentioning Yahweh, despite the divine declaration of direct involvement (5.4). Nevertheless, both 2 Kings 24:2 and 24:20 provide glimpses of Yahweh's involvement.

Ultimately, Manasseh bears the primary responsibility in the DtrH for the destruction of Judah. His cultic crimes accelerated the people's long history of violations, and prodded the people to violate the "book of the law." The violence committed by Manasseh added to these crimes. Though he is primarily responsible for the corporate consequences that the nation suffered, Manasseh himself would not endure any personal punishment.

Chapter 6: Complex Chastised Rulers – Conclusions

The specific crimes and punishments associated with the chastised rulers in this chapter will be referenced in the appropriate sections in the following chapters.

However, some preliminary conclusions will be briefly observed here. Additionally, specific aspects of “complex chastised rulers” will also be mentioned.

In the first place, the consequences that result from royal crimes may affect the king himself, as in the case with David's potential death sentence, Ahab's death, and Saul's battlefield death (1 Chronicles 10). However, in the majority of examples from chapter four, the repercussions extend far and include other groups (“corporate punishment”). Israel suffers without famine relief because of Saul, plague strikes the land due to David's actions, the nation endures military conflicts because of Solomon, Israel is exiled because of Jeroboam, and Judah is exiled because of Manasseh. These particular examples of corporate punishment represent the widest circle of victims who suffer because of a king's crimes. In other cases of corporate punishment, the king's dynasty can be destroyed (Jeroboam, Ahab), rejected (Saul, Solomon [potentially]), or suffer much violence (David, Saul). Even royal administration may suffer, as in the case of Ahab.

The most striking aspect of corporate punishment, at least in the examples from chapter four, is that the offending king may not personally suffer at all. For instance, David escapes the consequences of his crimes without any personal physical suffering.

Similarly, Solomon experiences military conflicts, but he does not face punishment on a personal level. In this regard, both Jeroboam and Manasseh are the most surprising. These two kings, who bear the burden for the destruction of their respective nations, do not go through any personal punishment. Similarly, Saul did not suffer for his crimes against the Gibeonites. It also should be remembered that Ahab did was removed from the punishment that ended his house, though he would suffer death for another violation.

Before addressing specific aspects of “complex chastised rulers,” one general characteristic of the cultic offenses contained in these accounts needs to be mentioned. Several kings bring punishment because they introduced cultic elements. The introduction of cultic elements is not totally unique to the Hebrew Bible, but it is more typical of the biblical corpus than it is in Mesopotamian literature (chapter 9). However, the significance of illegitimate cult introduction in the Hebrew Bible is that it affects the people as a whole. The people, then, become guilty alongside the king, for they follow that king's cultic infractions. This is, in fact, the significance of both Jeroboam's and Manasseh's crimes.

Turning to the specific aspects of these accounts, it must first be mentioned that the literary complexity of these episodes in chapter four separates them from the other accounts in this study. The literary complexity of these accounts translates into theological complexity. This allows for a fuller expression of the dynamics of the crimes and their consequences than those shorter examples contained in the following chapters. Specifically, the complex chastised ruler accounts provide nuanced angles on the responsibility of the king before Yahweh, the remediation/mitigation of punishment, and

the unfolding of punishment.

The king held a unique position before Yahweh (see further Part V), and this position meant that a higher magnitude of relevance accompanied the king's actions. This increased significance meant that the king was held to a higher degree of responsibility for his actions. The king, by virtue of his position, was directly responsible for any action he took despite any extenuating circumstances. The example of David and the census plague in 2 Samuel 24 succinctly demonstrates this concept. Though incited by Yahweh, David is still held fully accountable for his actions.¹ Divine causation may have initiated David's decision, but it does not detract from David's full responsibility. The divine action worked in tandem with David's volition, but did not diminish David's culpability. David's full responsibility in 2 Samuel 24, despite the circumstances, is diagnostic for the similar cases surrounding Saul, Solomon, and Ahab. Saul is fully responsible for his actions despite the "evil spirit" (*rûah rā'â*) from Yahweh.² Solomon is not excused in any way for his cultic crimes even though he was enticed by his foreign wives. Like Solomon, Ahab alone is fully responsible for his cultic crimes, even though Jezebel incited him. Relatedly, Ahab's responsibility is not diminished despite the "spirit of deception" (*rûah šeqer*) in all of Ahab's prophets. Thus, crimes committed by kings that bring divine punishment are not mitigated by circumstances that have the appearance

1 Cf. Joab's words in 2 Sam 24:3-4, David's reaction and confession in v. 10, and the punishment options offered by Gad in vv. 12-13.

2 The notion of full responsibility is particularly relevant in the case of Saul. A number of studies have been carried out which acknowledge the tragic nature of Saul's portrayal in 1 Samuel, with different degrees of emphasis on divine and human responsibility. One extreme stresses Saul's innocence and understands Saul as a victim of fate (e.g., Gunn 1981), while another argues that Saul was not such an innocent victim (e.g., Williams 2007). However, because he was a king, Saul may not be held in the same light as non-royal personnel. He must be viewed in light of his royal position, and within this framework, Saul, like David, is no victim.

of entrapment.

However, the accounts in chapter four do provide examples where the consequences of crimes may be remedied, mitigated or absolved in some way. These examples fall into two groups. In the first group, the punishment of crimes may be remedied by a king's actions. For instance, David remedied the withholding of famine relief that resulted from Saul's slaughter of the Gibeonites by carrying out the slaughter of Saul's seven sons. Similarly, David's altar construction and the subsequent offerings led Yahweh to be moved by entreaties and thus restrain the census plague.

The second group contains examples of mitigation or acquittal that result from the goodwill of Yahweh. It will be recalled that Ahab humbled himself before Yahweh after hearing Elijah's sentence (1 Kgs 21:27). Yahweh then altered Ahab's punishment by removing the king from the disaster that ultimately came in his son's time. Similarly, after David admitted his guilt in his affair with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah, Yahweh removed David's death penalty, so that the king himself did not die as he deserved. Relatedly, though Solomon's violations merited the dissolution of the Davidic dynasty, Yahweh did not completely end the Davidic line because of both David and Jerusalem. These examples show that Yahweh reserved the right to diminish the impact of the consequences, though the consequences still remained.

The full responsibility of the king vis-à-vis seemingly extenuating circumstances and mitigating factors are part of the larger arc of the complex chastised ruler: the complicated unfolding of crimes and punishment. Though Yahweh may be responsible for orchestrating punishments in some cases (e.g. 1 Chr 10:13-14), other cases may be

complicated by autonomous individuals while Yahweh remains hidden in the background of the narrative. Such is the case with Saul, who brought about the physical rejection of his dynasty and kingship by his own volition. Similarly, David's family line suffered excessive internal violence, a result of David's crimes as well as the ambitions of the involved individuals. Baasha wiped out Jeroboam's dynasty in order to fulfill his own ambitions, and though this accomplished the punishment for Jeroboam's crimes, Baasha himself was held guilty for his violence. Ahab's crimes and their punishments involve complicating factors such as the blunder of Elijah, the mistake of a young prophet, and the ambition of Jehu. Even the crimes of the chastised kings may not be as clear cut as might appear at first glance. For instance, the case of Manasseh demonstrates that a king may push the accrued guilt of a nation towards irrevocable destruction.

The recognition of the complexity of these accounts allows one to appreciate the fact that the complex chastised ruler episodes may not fully explain Yahweh's role in the consequences of royal crimes. Instead, Yahweh's announcement of punishment may be achieved in spite of the activity of autonomous humans. Though Yahweh's role may not be fully explained in this process, one can see that the punishments as announced by Yahweh do come to completion. In this way, Yahweh's divine activity is detectable in those instances where his activity is not fully explained.

Part III: Offenses that Precipitate Divine Punishment

In this section, the offenses of chastised rulers are grouped into general categories, thereby demonstrating the types of offenses by which chastised rulers brought about consequence(s) across ancient near eastern literature. The crimes are divided into two general groups. The first group, “Crimes Directly Implicating the Gods” (chapter 7), contains violations of divine communication, abuses of the gods' paraphernalia, and the violations of oaths/vows. The second group, “Violations of the Cosmic Order” (chapter 8), includes offenses such as moral crimes, perversions of justice, and opposing those who have the support of the gods.

This section will provide a general indication of the frequency of the various sorts of attested violations that bring divine punishment, as well as their cultural dispersion. It should be noted that the textual record does not entail complete and comprehensive coverage, so the frequency of the offenses below are “general” in the fullest sense of the term. Along with the texts cited, the relevant material already covered in chapter 5 is referenced in this section. Closing each group is a chart that summarizes that group, with the offender, corpus, text, and general contours of the offense(s) listed. That these offenses elicit punishment is presupposed, and the specific consequences will be examined in Part IV.

Chapter 7: Crimes Directly Implicating the Gods

7.1 Failure to heed messages derived from special knowledge

Among the obligations of ancient near eastern rulers was a responsibility to pay close attention to messages concerning contemporary or imminent events gleaned from specialized means. In Mesopotamia, such messages in the main came in the form of omens.¹ In ancient Israel and Judah, at least as witnessed in the Hebrew Bible, Yahweh communicated most frequently with rulers by means of the *nābî'* (“prophet”), *ḥōzê* (“seer”), *rō'ê* (“seer”), and *'iš 'ēlōhîm* (“man of God”). Though the observation of omens and prophets have significant differences,² they may be grouped together in this study insofar as both disciplines deal with future events through access to specialized knowledge.³

1 E.g., in *ARM* 26 176 Baḥdi-Lim implores Zimri-Lim not to go to battle without support from extispicies. Similarly, Addu (via a prophet [*āpilum*]) tells Zimri-Lim never to go to war without seeking oracles in A.1968. Cf. also *ARM* 26 199.

2 A primary difference is that prophetic messages were theistic, whereas omens were essentially non-theistic. For instance, van Binsbergen and Wiggermann note the non-theistic nature of omens despite the fact that the “canonical view” understands them as messages of the gods (van Binsbergen-Wiggermann 1999, 25–27 and the literature in note 41).

3 Stökl groups both “technical diviners” and “intuitive diviners” as two branches under the larger umbrella of “diviner” (Stökl 2012, 10). Under the former he places non-intuitive diviners (e.g., haruspices) and under the latter he locates prophets. This is largely due to the practical nature of both disciplines: learned skill (haruspices) vs. no learned skill (prophets). Though one may debate the division and definitions, Stökl shows that the two disciplines (haruspices [and by extension omens in general] and prophecy) are somewhat related. Note also the arguments put forth in (Roberts 1975, 186–187).

7.1.1 Mesopotamian literature

Based on the surviving literature, Mesopotamian rulers paid serious attention to omens and any blatant violation of received omens must have been exceedingly rare. One composition, however, is primary about one king's failure to follow the omens which he received. The Standard Babylonian version of the Cuthean Legend of Narām-Sîn⁴ narrates how this king's hubris lead him to ignore omens before battle.⁵ As the text stands, Narām-Sîn's foes were the *Ummān-manda*,⁶ a mixed-type brood of divinely created barbarians: “An army with a partridge's body, beings with faces of ravens, the great gods created them” (31-32).⁷ After this force began a destructive rampage (47-62), Narām-Sîn sent a scout to prick the horde to see if they bleed in order to determine whether the force was composed of human warriors or supernatural creatures (63-71).

Upon discovering that they bled, Narām-Sîn calls diviners (*mārī bārē*) to inquire of the great gods, Ištar, Ilaba, Zababa, Annunītum, Šullat, Ḫaniš, and Šamaš (72-77). Though the text is narrated in the first person from the perspective of Narām-Sîn, the repeated focus in the text on the manner of the king's involvement in his inquest is nonetheless striking. For Narām-Sîn declares “I called” (*alsi*) and “I instructed” (*uma''ir*) the diviners, and he says “I assigned” (*alputu*) the lambs, “I established” (*ukīn*) the altars,

4 The numeration here follows that of the composite Standard Babylonian text found in J. Westenholz *Akkade* (text 22).

5 J. Westenholz *Akkade*, 264 notes that Enmerkar appears as a foil for Narām-Sîn in that the former did not inscribe a *narū*, and she also draws attention to the similarities between these two rulers in the Weidner Chronicle. It should be noted that in the broken text found in lines 4-30, Enmerkar appears to have disregarded omens, eliciting punishment from Šamaš.

6 See the discussion in J. Westenholz *Akkade*, 265-266.

7 For a placement of the *Ummān-manda* among Mesopotamian subhuman barbarians, see Cooper 1983, 30-33. It is worthwhile to note that the *iššūr hurri* was “...held in abomination” (according to van der Toorn 1985, 34) At the same time, note that the text seems to be a result of textual corruption, see J. Westenholz *Akkade*, 308 comment to line 31.

and “I questioned” (*ašālma*) the gods (72-75). The fivefold use of the verbs underscores, in poetic form, both Narām-Sîn's awareness of the importance of seeking omens and the king's role in the endeavor. As ruler, he took steps to secure favorable omens through extispicy.

However, when the gods did not grant permission for action (78),⁸ Narām-Sîn responds by saying:

Thus I said to my heart, surely I myself, saying,⁹ “Which lion preformed divination (*bīrī ibri*)? Which wolf questioned a dream interpretress (*iš'al šā'iltu*)? Let me go like a bandit in the contentedness of my heart (*[ina] migir libbīya*), and let me throw off the (oracle) of the god (*luddi ša ilimma*).¹⁰ Let me control myself (*yāti lušbat*).”

The king's admission is more than a strict repudiation of the god's negative response to his inquiry. The king takes aim at both divination and dream interpretation, professing that a ruler of his stature need not heed special knowledge obtained through divinatory measures. As king, he could stand on his own.

Under Narām-Sîn's blanket statement underscoring the needlessness of divination one may detect hubris.¹¹ However, though Narām-Sîn's decision to ignore the omens stems from his hubris, he is not overtly punished for his pride.¹² Instead, Narām-Sîn's punishment (11.1.1.1) arises from his divinatory blunder: failure to heed the omens.

Pride may be a motive behind the action, but the act that triggers military defeat is

8 Line 78 poses problems, but, as Westenholz comments, “It must contain the negative response to Naram-Sîn's query” (J. Westenholz *Akkade* 316, note to line 78).

9 Taking *lū anākūma* as the asseverative particle plus the first common singular pronoun with an enclitic *-ma*, making this construction very emphatic.

10 Following Westenholz's suggestion that *luddi* is not a noun but a first person precativum from *nadû*.

11 J. Westenholz 264 points out Narām-Sîn's hubris.

12 If pride was the central issue, one might expect a grammatical formulation which stresses hubris, such as this example found in KBo 1 1:17-18: *u šamši Šuppiluliuma šarru rabû šar māt Ḫatti qar[rād]u narām* “Tēšup attalak ana multarriḫut[tiš]u [š]a” *Tušratta*, “Now I, the sun Šuppiluliuma, great king, king of Ḫatti, warrior, beloved of Tēšup, went against the arrogance of Tušratta” (see Weidner 1970, 6 for transliteration).

Narām-Sîn's choice to ignore the disclosed will of the gods. Further evidence that failure to heed special information obtained by divination is in fact the central offense in the text may be gleaned from the lesson learned from the punishments. The lesson is not humility – one would expect an explicit act of humbling if pride were truly the central issue at hand in the text. Rather the text explicitly narrates that Narām-Sîn eventually recognizes that “without an omen” (*balu bīri*) he cannot act (125), confirming that obedience to information revealed through divination is the issue.

Another tradition about Narām-Sîn involves this king's failure to adhere to the omens which he received. However, as explained in 7.2.1, the actual offense that brings consequences in this text is cultic in nature, namely the destruction of the Ekur. Nonetheless, this unique composition merits mention in this section, for the connection between Narām-Sîn and omens is palpable.

7.1.2 Hebrew Bible

As detailed in 5.1.1, on two occasions King Saul decided to not follow Yahweh's instructions related through the prophet according to the book of Samuel. Instead of fully heeding Samuel's words in 1 Sam 10:8, Saul proceeded to preform sacrifices without Samuel (1 Sam 13:8-9). Likewise, Saul did not fully carry out the divine orders issued by Samuel to destroy Amalek completely (1 Sam 15:3, 8-9). Later, the Chronicler picked up Saul's failure to heed the prophetic word, specifically alluding to the king's failure to destroy Amalek. Though the incident in 1 Samuel 15 is not narrated within the pages of Chronicles, it is presupposed by the text and referenced in 1 Chr 10:13 (5.1.2).

Two other instances of punishment resulting from a ruler's failure to obey the

prophet occur in Chronicles. The first case is that of King Amaziah, who receives a significantly different treatment in Chronicles than the counterpart in 2 Kings 14. According to 2 Chr 25:16, an unnamed prophet announces to Amaziah, king of Judah, that “...God has decided to destroy (*lahašhîtekā*) you for you have done this and you have not listened to my advice (*wəlō’šāma’tā la’āšātī*).” This sin of omission is to be distinguished from the actual offense that Amaziah did, discussed under another category of this study (7.2.2). The prophet's other accusation, that the king did not heed his prophetic advice, is of course a failure to heed divine communication through the prophet. The unnamed prophet had been sent to deliver a message, and while the prophet was speaking, Amaziah commanded the prophet to cut off his message (2 Chr 25:16). Amaziah, then, quite literally did not listen to the prophet's message.

The second instance where a consequence surfaces because a king failed to heed the divine word involves, rather surprisingly, King Josiah. Though the battlefield death of the praiseworthy Josiah recorded in 2 Kgs 23:29 has been understood in different ways,¹³ in the end it is difficult to extract a theological rationale from the mundane language utilized by the author(s) in Kings,¹⁴ for the text contains no overt indications of any act of sacrilege. However, additional material in the Chronicler's account depicts Josiah as a king who failed to obey communication from God, a decision which ultimately led directly to his death. Necho, on his way to battle at Carchemish, responded to Josiah's opposition by imploring Josiah to desist (2 Chr 35:21). Necho's words in this verse are particularly striking, for it is he who had divine support and the king of Judah is

13 See, e.g. Avioz 2009, 5; Avioz 2007; Chisholm 2010; Delamarter 2004; Keulen 1996; Pietsch 2010; Talshir 1996; Hoppe 1998; Begg 1988; Begg 1987.

14 Cf. Klein's statement: “In my judgment, the death of Josiah in 2 Kings is not satisfactorily explained” (Klein 2012, 525); in addition to some of the sources above, see especially Frost 1968.

the one who had opposed Yahweh: “...Cease (*ḥādal lākā*) from (opposing) God who is with me so that he will not destroy you (*wəʿal yašḥîtekā*).” One ought not overlook the so-called *dativus ethicus*, for Necho's specific formulation stresses the precarious position in which Josiah had placed himself. The following verse, stemming from the narrator's perspective, confirms Josiah's failure to heed Necho's words while overtly merging Necho's message with Yahweh's will: “...he [Josiah] did not listen to the words of Necho from the mouth of God (*mippî ʿēlōhîm*)...” (2 Chr 35:22).¹⁵ The narrator's affirmation that Necho served as a conduit for the divine word sets the situation apart from instances like 2 Kgs 18:25, where a foreign leader claims Yahweh's support without any substantive merit. Curiously, then, the Chronicler's Josiah is an offender punished by God despite his favorable religious inclinations.

Finally, the exodus narrative portrays Pharaoh as failing to heed Yahweh's word conveyed through Moses on several occasions. Pharaoh's disposition is best captured at the outset of the narrative. Yahweh plainly states that he knows that Pharaoh will not heed the divine request to leave Egypt except by a “strong hand” (Exod 3:19). When Moses first announced the word of Yahweh to Pharaoh in Exod 5:1, Pharaoh responded

15 That the Chronicler's text provides theological elements which make Josiah's refusal to heed Necho an act against Yahweh is clearly stated. Less obvious are the reasons Josiah did not recognize that Necho was indeed speaking God's words. Japhet states that Necho referenced Necho's own Egyptian god in 2 Chr 35:21, possibly a statue, placing Josiah in “an impossible situation,” while also recognizing that 2 Chr 35:22 references the God of Israel (Japhet 1993, 1056–1057). In contrast to Japhet, Klein understands the referent in both v. 21 and v. 22 to be the God of Israel (Klein 2012, 526). Williamson believes it possible that Necho could have written Josiah, but says that, “As recorded here, however, the message goes further than just this, and it must be assumed that it has been written in an Israelite context in order to make of it a word of God to Josiah” (Williamson 1982, 410). Thus, it would appear that Williamson also understands the God of Israel to be the referent of Necho's words. While I do not agree that Necho was referencing an Egyptian deity, but rather the God of Israel, I do appreciate Japhet drawing attention to the issue of trustworthiness: how could Josiah be expected to heed Necho? It may be that Necho's words were an omen that Josiah misinterprets, similar to Isa 39:4-6, 1 Kgs 20:32-33, and John 11:49-52 (a possibility raised by Sam Meier in personal communication). Ultimately, the answer to this question is moot, for this very issue is suppressed in the text – Josiah's failure is the issue at hand, not the reason for it.

by saying, “Who is Yahweh, that I should listen to his voice to let Israel go” (Exod 5:2).

The next six chapters of the narrative explain the consequences that result from Pharaoh's refusal to heed Yahweh's word through Moses.

Table 1. Failure to heed messages derived from special knowledge

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Offense
Narām-Sîn	Meso – Cuthean Legend	Did not heed extispicies
Saul	HB – 1 Samuel 13, 15	Did not head Samuel's instructions concerning sacrifice and the Amalekites
	HB – 1 Chronicles 10	Did not heed Samuel's instructions concerning the Amalekites
Amaziah	HB – 2 Chronicles 25	Did not listen to the message of an unnamed prophet
Josiah	HB – 2 Chronicles 35	Failure to heed God's word through Necho
Pharaoh	HB – Exod 5:2	Failure to heed Yahweh's word through Moses

7.2 Cultic violations

In numerous instances, those ruling ancient polities committed crimes involving the cultic procedures or paraphernalia of their respective religious milieu. These various crimes, here falling under the large umbrella titled “cultic violations,” could arouse retaliation from the gods. The nature of cultic violations could vary, but they all have as their common denominator an underlying concept: offending a deity through a violation of that god's cultic system.

7.2.1 Mesopotamian literature

In Mesopotamia, the longest sustained text which has at its core a cultic violation is the Sumerian composition known as the “Curse of Agade.” In this text, Narām-Sîn carries out a seemingly outrageous act of cultic violation. After the text mentions Narām-Sîn (ᵈna-ra-am-ᵈsin-e) as king (40),¹⁶ the text hints at an ominous change in the *status quo*. Though the text is not entirely clear at this crucial point, the central issue concerns the lack of a temple.¹⁷ Understanding line 57 to refer to Narām-Sîn's request to rebuild the Ekur, Jacobsen clarifies what might appear as oblique:

Denial of permission to build or rebuild a god's temple indicated lack of favor with him. Lack of favor with Enlil, the chief god of the country, the one who bestowed or took away kingship and generally controlled the country's political fortunes, was clearly terrifying.¹⁸

Regardless of whether one understands the issue to revolve around the Ekur reconstruction¹⁹ or the construction of the temple of Inanna at Agade,²⁰ Jacobsen's point still stands: divine denial of temple construction was an egregious experience for an ancient near eastern ruler. Enlil's proscription hindering Narām-Sîn from building led to the abandonment of Agade by Inanna (62).²¹ The acceleration of divine disfavor follows in lines 67-69:

Ninurta brought (back) into his (temple) Ešumeša

16 All translations and references are from the composite text in Cooper 1983, 50–66.

17 Cf. lines 94-97 which recounts two negative omens concerning the construction project. Cooper 1983, 6 notes that 55ff. are still problematic to translate.

18 Jacobsen 1987, 359, 363 note 10. Notice that the text begins with Enlil granting kingship to Sargon.

19 Johnson 2014, 51 note 23. I find Johnson's suggestion to replace Aage Westenholz's “misunderstanding” with “misrepresentation,” along with his following comments, compelling. Following Johnson, the issue in the text becomes the permissibility (or lack thereof) of the Ekur reconstruction without favorable omens.

20 Cooper 1983, 5.

21 Similarly, the flight of Enlil and the Anunnaki ominously preceded the battle between Ninurta and Azag in “The Ninurta Myth Lugal-e;” see (Jacobsen 1987, 240)

The sovereign insignia, the royal crown
The ... and the royal throne which had been bestowed (on Agade)

Following suit, Utu (70), Enki (71, 74) and An (73) withdrew divine favor, and Narām-Sîn subsequently had a vision of a disastrous future (83-87).

Narām-Sîn sought to incite a reversal of Enlil's prohibition by demonstrating humility through a seven-year mourning period (88-92).²² Then after seeking a second omen which still did not allow him to build the temple (94-100), Narām-Sîn gathered his troops and began to destroy the Ekur (100ff),²³ a decision which brought with it disastrous results (see 11.1.1.1 and 11.1.5.1).²⁴

It is important that the offense which roused divine chastisement was not necessarily Narām-Sîn's disregard of negative omens. Narām-Sîn, seeking to rebuild the Ekur, reacted in militaristic fashion to his rejection as seen in the omens (101). Cooper puts it succinctly: “In his frustration, Naramsin attempted to alter Enlil's will by force. Mustering his troops, he attacked and pillaged Ekur, with disastrous results for Akkade.”²⁵ If Narām-Sîn would have been content to ignore the unfavorable omens, he simply would have done so by commencing reconstruction of the Ekur. Instead, the fact

22 Jacobsen 1987, 365 note 13 explains this was typical behavior if temple building was denied, and continued until the omens became favorable.

23 Not all understand the underlying event in the same way. Some see Narām-Sîn as destroying the Ekur, e.g. Cooper 1983, 5; Evans 1983, 101. Jacobsen 1987, 359, 360 understands Narām-Sîn to have misunderstood the omens, and thus started to rebuild the Ekur. Johnson's perspective is similar to that of Jacobsen but more nuanced, for “...the clergy who want to condemn Naram-Sin in *The Curse of Agade* describe the raw materials that Naram-Sin uses to rebuild the Ekur temple in Nippur as essentially 'recycled' from the previous incarnation of the temple rather than from the periphery” (Johnson 2014, 51). Important for the task at hand is to recognize that, as the text stands, Narām-Sîn destroys the Ekur, regardless of what the scribe's underlying motive may have been.

24 Johnson 2014, 56 states, “While framed in *The Curse of Agade* itself as a case of cultic infelicity (Naram-Sin's demolition of the Ekur without the benefit of the proper omens or divinely inspired dreams, interpreted as an act of hubris vis-à-vis the gods), the underlying problem with Naram-Sin that the authors of this passage wish to critique is presumably his failure to appease the clergy in charge of the Ekur temple.” Though I do not necessarily disagree, I am primarily focused on what the text portrays (Narām-Sîn's cultic transgressions – real or perceived) rather than what might stand behind it.

25 Cooper 1993, 17.

that the text portrays the destruction of Ekur²⁶ (the complete opposite of what he was seeking) which arose from his rage demonstrates that Narām-Sîn actually accepted the negative omens on some level.²⁷ Though omens and even hubris²⁸ are components of his offense, Narām-Sîn's primary violation that yielded repercussions was his direct assault and destruction of the Ekur. Enlil's reaction is not explicitly connected to omens²⁹ or hubris.³⁰ Instead, the text links Enlil's act of revenge to Narām-Sîn's destruction of the Ekur (151): “Enlil, because his beloved Ekur was destroyed, what should he destroy (in revenge) for it?” This episode, then is here grouped among cultic offenses.

Other Mesopotamian texts stress a connection between a ruler's cultic misdeeds and subsequent divine retribution. The Weidner Chronicle³¹ shows precisely such a concern, as it portrays violations committed by several rulers and the consequences which soon followed. In particular, the text draws a close relationship between Marduk, his cult, and Babylon, so that an act against either the Marduk cult or the god's city

26 Regardless of whether the background of this episode was the necessary steps taken to refurbish the temple or not, the text presents the king's act as destruction.

27 Notice the following comment made by Johnson: “The *Unheilsherrscher* is cursed not because of the existence of negative omens *per se*, which presumably could have been ameliorated in some way, but rather because he fails to react to negative omens in a ritually and legally appropriate way.” In a footnote to this comment, Johnson continues: “Mesopotamian omens are often misunderstood as signs of an inevitable future, but this is almost never the case; there are remedies and the contrast between *Heilsherrscher* and *Unheilsherrscher* is largely a function of whether or not a given ruler seeks out these remedies from ritual specialists or not” (Johnson 2014, 55 and note 30). Thus, Narām-Sîn's dissatisfaction with the negative omens is not necessarily offensive. Rather it is the manner in which he manifested his dissatisfaction, the destruction of the Ekur, which constituted a violation that brought punishment from the gods.

28 That hubris plays a role has been noted by many, e.g. Cooper 1983, 6; Cooper 1993, 12–13; Liverani 1993, 56; Johnson 2014, 56.

29 Cf. Narām-Sîn's words in the Cuthean Legend (p. 121), where failure to heed omens is highlighted in the king's purported words.

30 Hubris, as an explicitly occurring offense bringing divine punishment, is limited to the Hebrew Bible; see 8.2 and p. 210ff (chapter 9).

31 This text is actually a fictional letter narrating the unfortunate fates which fell upon a number of select ancient Mesopotamian rulers. For the identification of the Weidner Chronicle as a fictional letter, see Al-Rawi 1990. The transliteration and numbering of the Weidner Chronicle, followed here, can be found in Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 264ff, unless otherwise noted.

constituted a crime against Marduk himself. The crimes which are cultic in nature are handled here, whereas the crimes against the city appear in 8.3.1.

According to the Weidner Chronicle, both Šulgi and Amar-Su'en carried out cultic violations. Šulgi's crimes constituted distorting cultic rites: "...he did not perfectly carry out his cultic rites. His purification rites he defiled, and then..." (71: *parṣīšu ul ušaklil šuluḥḥīšu ula"īma...*).³² Unfortunately, the text is broken off, and so no clear repercussions appear, but Šulgi's actions are seemingly called "sin."³³ Given the text's trajectory, one can with a good degree of confidence assume that a specific punishment issued by Marduk likely occurred in the break. The text is consistently systematic in the way it assigns disaster to offense, as the crimes of those preceding Šulgi, namely Sargon, Narām-Sîn, the Gutians, and Utu-ḥegal, all receive punishment. Moreover, an overarching theology which espouses retribution for violations is explicitly stated earlier in the text:

Whoever sins (*ugallalu*) against the gods of this city, his star will not stand in the heavens [...] the king(ship?)³⁴ will come to an end. His scepter will be taken away. His treasury will be turned into a heap and ruin (37-38).

Thus, Šulgi almost certainly underwent some sort of punishment in accord with the text's overarching theological perspective.

Amar-Su'en fared no better than his predecessor according to the Weidner Chronicle. Concerning this ruler, the text (72) reports that, "Amar-Su'en, his son,

32 For *lu'û*, see *CAD* L, 258. The line has several lacunae at this point. Glassner reads: *an-na ŠĀ šú ... zu(?) -um-ri ... -tak-kan*, translating "...and his mind [*was deranged* (?)]" (Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 268-269). If Glassner is correct, then note that the consequences would fall in 10.1.2.1.

33 Understanding *anna* "sin" in line 71 as referring to Šulgi's actions (see note above for transliteration). (Similarly, Arnold 2006, 167; Al-Rawi 1990, 10 and *ABC*, 150. Glassner takes this differently (see note 32 directly above). Cf. line 75.

34 Grayson reads *šarra* (*ABC*, 146), but Al-Rawi (Al-Rawi 1990, 4) suggests *LUGAL-tu(?)* (*šarrūtu*).

changed (*uštepeľma*)³⁵ the large oxen and the offering of the New Year (festival) of the Esagil (*alpī rabûtim u nīq zagmuk ša Esagil*).” This short excerpt highlights Amar-Su'en as violator of cultic norms, an offense for which he would pay a steep penalty (10.1.3.1).

Šulgi's depiction as a chastised king who commits cultic offenses found in the Weidner Chronicle (above) is echoed elsewhere in Akkadian literature. Though the passage cannot be fully translated, the relevant lines in “The Chronicle of Early Kings” (*ABC 20A*) reveal enough data to indicate that Šulgi committed crimes against the Marduk cult: “He constantly sought out evil, and so he brought out (*uštēši*) the property of the Esagila and Babylon (*makkūr Esagil u Bābili*) as booty” (29-30). A late text known as the “Uruk Chronicle Concerning the Kings of Ur” (Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles* no. 48),³⁶ a chronicle specifically dated to August 14, 251 B.C.E., similarly denounces Šulgi for cultic offenses. Like *ABC 20A*, this text reports that “he (Šulgi) brought out (*uštēši*) the property of the Esagila and Babylon ([*makkūr*] *Esagil u Bābili*) as booty” (7). Yet this is not the end of the king's offenses, quite unlike *ABC 20A*. Instead, the text provides a rather expansive series of cultic violations supposedly committed by Šulgi (13-20):

He altered (*unakk[irma...]*) the cult of An (*paraš anūti*), ordinances (*uṣurtī*) of Uruk, secret knowledge of scholars (*niširti ummāna*), customs which are not proper, (deeds) which (were) not fitting, and then he wrote down the labor of Sîn ([...*ši*] *pir Sîn*), lord of Ur. During his reign, he wrote stelae of lies (and) tablets of shamelessness³⁷ concerning the purification rites for the gods (*narē surrāt tuppī šallāt [ana šu]luḥḥī ili*³⁸ *išturma*), and then he left (them).

35 N.B. *uš-te(?) -pe(?) -el-ma*.

36 Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 288–291.

37 The accusation of making “stelae of lies (and) tablets of shamelessness” (*narē surrāt tuppī šallāt*) is a rare instance of targeting of untruthfulness (Liverani 2010, 236–237). In this instance, the production of the false stelae is connected with the improper tampering with standing cultic procedure.

38 Following Wilcke, who has *ili*(DINGIR.RA) and translates “...für die Götter...” See Wilcke 1982, 143–144; cf. Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 289 “...for the gods...”

These two texts, along with the Weidner Chronicle, all agree in the main that Šulgi carried out cultic offenses which merited divine punishment (10.1.1.1).

Among the offenses of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn in “Aššur's Response to Ashurbanipal's Report on the Šamaš-šuma-ukīn War” (*SAA* 3 44) is an accusation of cultic impropriety. The text, written from Aššur's perspective, describes Šamaš-šuma-ukīn as one “who carried off the property of the gods” (18: [ša Šamaš-šuma-ukī]n? tābil makkūr ilāni). This offense, in combination with several others, brought with it multiple consequences (10.1.4.1, 10.1.5.1, 11.2.1.1, 11.2.3.1, 11.2.4.1, 11.2.5.1).

In the “Dialog between (Aššur-)Enlil and Išme-Dagan” (*KAL* 3 76) Aššur-Enlil answers Išme-Dagan's query requesting a reason for the deity's wrath by providing two infractions centered in the cult: “...because the offspring of a foreigner³⁹ stopped the great offering (*nīqu rabū*) and the great shrine of both of my cultic centers (*ešmaḥ ša kilallē māḥāzīya*) was destroyed” (13-14). The hiatus in the “great offering” is plainly linked to the “offspring of a foreigner.” Whoever it was that the text had in view, he must have been a candidate obvious enough that the original writer(s) did not feel the need to explicitly mention his name. With a degree of confidence one may assume that a king is in view, for kings possessed the power to alter major cultic regulations in a way which could arouse the ire of the gods, whether such power derived from the king's military jurisdiction or legislative authority. However, one cannot confidently assert which particular king is in view. Frahm, stating that the identity of “the offspring of a

39 In one of Esarhaddon's inscriptions, A.RI.A(.)TA(.)BAR is glossed by NUMUN *aḥū* (*zēru aḥū*), a suggestion made by Borger and discussed in Frahm *KAL* 3 149-150; cf. Leichty's comment to lines vii 13-15 in *RINAP* 4 57, p. 128.

foreigner” must remain open, provides some evidence that Šamšī-Adad I may be in view, but at the same time he notes problems with this identification.⁴⁰ One must be content to admit no more than the text indicates at this point, namely that the text likely has in view a particular ruler, one who cannot yet be confidently identified. Unlike his personal identity, the text is careful to credit this ruler with the specific crime of cutting off the “great offering.”

The party responsible for the other offensive circumstance announced by Aššur-Enlil, that is, the destruction of the great shrine, is not as straight forward as one might assume at first glance. That the great shrine “was destroyed” (*i'abtu*) may suggest that “the offspring of a foreigner” was responsible for the act, an act which was perhaps the reason for the “great offering” coming to an end. Yet grammatically, one would expect a verb form which indicts “the offspring of a foreigner” if the goal was to blame him for the current state of affairs. However, the presence of the N-stem *i'abtu* instead of the G-stem *i'butu* “he destroyed” (or perhaps a stative verb used actively paralleling *baṭlu*) deflects blame from the source and directs it towards the current situation. Because of the verb form, it is not entirely certain that “the offspring of a foreigner” was responsible for the destruction. All that can confidently be said is that the current state of the shrine upset the deity.

Taken together, Aššur-Enlil's response indicates that the god is not just concerned about the cause of the current cultic conditions, but also that they have continued unaddressed up to Išme-Dagan's time. For that reason one could argue that the god's response may indirectly accuse Išme-Dagan for a failure to repair the great shrine, an

40 KAL 3 p.150. See *ibid* for Frahm's other suggestion, which he admits is only speculation.

offense which, put colloquially, would be a “sin of omission.”⁴¹ At the same time there is no clear indication that the god blames Išme-Dagan for a failure to rectify the situation by both reinstating the “great offering” which stopped before his time and refurbishing the shrine.⁴² That the god's explanation lacks any direct blame aimed towards “the offspring of a foreigner” in the case of the shrine, or Išme-Dagan for inactivity, suggests that the god's main concern is practical: the current state of the cult.

Though Aššur-Enlil's concern is primarily with the current cultic state, his response does highlight the origin of his anger, at the very least in the case of the “great offering.” Though the identity of the culprit is not clear, he must have been a ruler who preceded Išme-Dagan. In the end, the significance of this particular text is two-fold. Most obvious is the connection between the cultic offense committed and the subsequent consequences (11.1.4.1). Less obvious, but nonetheless significant, is that despite the text's orientation towards the current cultic state, it is sure to make mention of a chastised ruler, as veiled as it may be. Such a detail attests to both the pervasiveness of the chastised ruler concept and its religious significance.

A letter from Nabopolassar to Sîn-šar-iškun published by Gerardi (BM 55467)⁴³ needs to be addressed here, though the context of this text is handled in 8.3.1. For the purposes of this section it will suffice to note that individual crimes that together

41 Cf. Zimri-Lim's failure to place messengers and a full report before Dagan in *ARM* 26 233 (below), as well as the case of Baasha (below) and the possible historical circumstances behind Shalmaneser V's violations in 8.3.1.

42 Just because the shrine was destroyed did not necessarily mean that a ruler could simply rebuild it – the ruler would have to seek the proper omens. Some scholars have speculated precisely this in regard to Narām-Sîn in the Curse of Agade. In this regard, Frankfort's quote concerning the king's duty regarding temples is noteworthy: “If the decay of the sanctuary was considered punishment from the gods and the existing of a well-functioning shrine a sign of their good will, then the rebuilding of a temple could not be started lightly. Imagine a man's presuming to begin the work before the divine interdict had expired! This indeed would be *hubris* and a certain cause of calamity” (Frankfort 1978, 269).

43 Gerardi 1986.

comprise the “evil deeds” preformed against Babylonia have a cultic dimension. However, it should be parenthetically noted that these crimes also have a moral component that condemns acts of violence committed against the citizenry of Babylon by Assyrian rulers (8.3.1). The cultic violation in this text involved the particularly reprehensible act of revealing and then removing the property of Esagil and Babylon to Nineveh: “You showed (*tušaṭṭilāma*) the property of Esagil and Babylon (*[makkūr] Esaggil u Bābili*) and then you brought (*tušēribi*)⁴⁴ it in to Nineveh” (°4). As explained in 8.3.1, the particular act in view is likely part of the destruction of Babylon carried out by Sennacherib in 689 BCE, and the guilty party includes those Assyrian kings from Sennacherib to Sîn-šar-iškun. The letter points out that part of the incurred guilt originated from the specific act of mistreating the cultic paraphernalia.

The Cyrus Cylinder (BM 90920) is a well-known text commemorating Cyrus' conquest of Babylon (539 B.C.E.). Written from the victor's perspective, it depicts Babylon's conquered king, Nabonidus, in sacrilegious terms. Lines 5-7 level a number of cultic accusations at the “lowly” (3: *maṭû*)⁴⁵ Nabonidus:

He built an image (*tamšīli*) of Esagil, and then [] for Ur and the remainder of cultic centers (*sittāti māḥāza*), an ordinance inappropriate to them (*paraš lā simātīšunu*), an impure *taḫlīm*-offering he devised⁴⁶ daily without fearing (*l[ā] pāliḥ ūmišamma iddenebbub*), and he spitefully discontinued (*ušabṭili*) the regular offering (*sattukku*). He delayed the cultic rites (*[...pelludê*). He placed [] in the center of the cultic centers (*qereb māḥāzī*). He ended (*i[gm]ur*) the reverence of Marduk (*palāḥa Marduk*), king of the gods, by his volition.⁴⁷

44 Ibid., 37 suggests that this form may be a scribal error since a plural form is expected. Her suggestion is followed here.

45 Cf. Cogan “incompetent” (COS 2.124, 315); Schaudig *Nabonid*, 554 “...ein Geringer.”; Weissbach 1911, 3 “ein schwacher...”; Berger 1974, 195 “ein unbedeutender.” For transliteration, see Schaudig *Nabonid*, 551ff.

46 For this nuance see *CAD dabābu* 6 3' (p. 11).

47 I read *karšuššu* as *karšu* plus the locative-adverbial *-um* with a pronominal suffix *-šu*

This litany of cultic offenses forms the lion's share of crimes leveled at Nabonidus in the Cyrus Cylinder. However, crimes of a different nature appear alongside these, and these offenses will be addressed below (8.3.1).

The Cyrus Cylinder's portrayal of Nabonidus conforms to another source concerning this same king. "The Verse Account of Nabonidus" (BM 38299) similarly projects the king as one who committed numerous violations. Because this text is damaged in places, it will be used cautiously in this study.

Before looking at the text itself, it should be noted that the historical value of the Verse Account, in particular Nabonidus' purported cultic renovations, has been doubted in recent scholarship.⁴⁸ Kuhrt, for instance, states the following:

What I would suggest is that the main point of the text was to provide an explanation of why Nabonidus was defeated by Cyrus. This did not happen because any one of his individual acts was in itself sacrilegious or caused offence to a definable group of the Babylonian population such as the priesthood; rather the *fact* of defeat indicated the support of the Babylonian gods for Cyrus and their condemnation of Nabonidus; they 'abandoned' Nabonidus, so that whatever he had done was, by hindsight, doomed.⁴⁹

It should be remembered that for the study at hand, the actual historical events lying behind the text and the motivations of those responsible for composing the text are secondary to the goal of viewing a text's particular religious formulation, whether it be "fact" or "fiction." For this analysis the impelling force behind the text's fabrication is moot. Rather, what is important is that the relationship drawn between Nabonidus and the divine realm in the Verse Account was apparently designed to be believable for some ancient audience.

48 See, e.g., Kuhrt 1990, 119–55; Moukarzel 2008.

49 Kuhrt 1990, 143.

In addition to his other offenses (8.1.2, 8.1.3, and 8.3.1), the Verse Account⁵⁰ implicates Nabonidus in several cultic crimes. Nabonidus “carried out what is not pure (*lā mēsu*)” (I.20') in addition to the accusation that he engaged in worthless construction activities – literally “he built foolishness” (I.21': [x x x]-na *ibtani zāqīqi*). This accusation is given more substance, for the text mentions “a god which no one in the land had previously seen” (22': [*ilu ša pānā*]m *ina māti lā īmuruš mamman*), and that “he placed (it) on a pedestal” (23': [x x x]-^ru¹ *kigalla ušarme*). The text explains that the image is named “Nanna” and describes its appearance at length (I 24'ff). Nabonidus then speaks in the text, saying “let me build his house” (II.4': *lubni bītsu*) and more specifically “Let me make a new appropriate image equal to the temple (Esangil)” (II.6': *ana ēkurru*⁵¹ *eššu tamšīlu simat lumeššil*). Until his building project reached completion, the king declared, “Let me abandon the festival, let me bring the New Year Festival to an end” (II. 11': *lūzib isinnu zammukku lušabīl*). Similarly, Nabonidus continued to “mix up rites and confused omens” (V.14': *iballal paršī idallaḥ tērēti*) and “he spoke abuse” (V.17'...*ītammi magrīti*) at the representations in Esangil.

Finally, in the composition known as Erra and Išum, Išum's speech in tablet IV provides an eleventh example of Mesopotamian cultic violation when it details a number of instances of destruction. Of particular interest for this study is the destruction of Uruk, as the speech related that, “A brazen unforgiving governor you placed over them. He caused them distress and then he transgressed (*ītet[iq]*) their cultic ordinances

(*paršīšina*)” (59-60).⁵² Erra's strategic appointment of a sacrilegious governor over Uruk

50 For transliteration, see Schaudig *Nabonid*, 565ff.

51 Oppenheim (*ANET*³, 313) reads É.KUR as Ekur, but Smith (Smith 1924, 88) and Schaudig (Schaudig *Nabonid*, 574) read it as *ēkurru*. Since II 15' has É.SAG.ÍL, I follow Schaudig and Smith.

52 For transliteration, see Cagni 1969, 110.

led to disaster arising directly from that governor's cultic offenses (11.1.1.1). It should be noted that the offending ruler in this case is a governor – not a king.

7.2.2 Hebrew Bible

Cases where cultic violations lead to consequences occur in several instances within the Hebrew Bible, some of which occur in the book of Kings. Several of these chastised kings have been covered already. Solomon's violations, constituting the introduction of cults, were explained in 5.3. Jeroboam's construction of calves, high places, and the Bethel altar were detailed in 5.4, as well as his appointment of non-Levitical priests, the creation of a northern festival to counter the Jerusalem feast, and his involvement in priestly activities. In 5.5 it was argued that Ahab was held guilty for Baal worship and idolatry in addition to other crimes. Well-known are the sins of Manasseh, which belong here due to their cultic nature (5.6).

In addition to those rulers already mentioned, the book of Kings presents both Baasha and Ahaziah as cultic violators. The former king's guilt for which he is punished consists of walking in the ways of Jeroboam and causing Israel to sin (1 Kgs 16:2), in addition to his moral crime of destroying the house of Jeroboam (1 Kgs 16:7).⁵³ “Walking in the ways of Jeroboam” is, rather uniquely, a passive offense. That is, Baasha did not partake in fabricating the structures that cause cultic violations. Instead, he is guilty for letting those structures which originated with Jeroboam continue to exist, and his failure to remove the cultic items made by Jeroboam is precisely how he caused Israel to sin. As for Ahaziah of Israel, he attempted to learn his fate by seeking out Baal-

⁵³ Even though this was sanctioned by Yahweh (1 Kgs 15:27-30). See 5.4 for details.

Zebub,⁵⁴ god of Ekron, after falling from his upper chamber (2 Kgs 1:2). For his impermissible act in/of seeking a foreign god, Yahweh proclaimed through Elijah that the injured king would, in fact, not recover (2 Kgs 1:6).

The book of Chronicles has a high number of rulers guilty of committing cultic and religious infractions. This is partly because of the Chronicler's distinctive notion of “seeking Yahweh,” a concept which entails proper cultic procedure with the proper cultic paraphernalia (5.1.2). Saul's portrayal in Chronicles has already been discussed in 5.1.2, where it was explained that Saul was guilty of two offenses against Yahweh, the second of which was cultic in nature as Saul failed to properly “seek Yahweh” by instead seeking out a medium. Solomon's cultic crimes are assumed by the Chronicles, though they are not explicitly mentioned.

The Chronicler references Ahijah's words in 1 Kgs 11:29ff, words that explain to Jeroboam that Yahweh would soon tear the kingdom from Solomon and hand it to Jeroboam (2 Chr 10:15). The Chronicler's reference presumes that the reader understands that this announcement was a consequence of Solomon's cultic crimes that infected the people.⁵⁵ Rehoboam, after growing strong, abandoned the law of Yahweh (*'āzab 'et tôrat YHWH*) along with “all Israel,” an act which constituted being unfaithful (*mā'ālû*) to Yahweh (2 Chr 12:1-2).⁵⁶ Rehoboam's crimes are, according to the overall assessment in 2 Chr 12:14, caused by this king's failure “to seek Yahweh” (*lidrôš 'et YHWH*).⁵⁷

Jehoram, king of Judah is guilty of two offenses, one of which was that “he

54 Baal-Zebub is likely a corruption of Baal-Zebal. See Fritz, 1 & 2 Kings, 230; Gray 1970, 463; Montgomery 1986, 349.

55 On the plural form in 1 Kgs 11:33, see note 98 on p. 73 (chapter 5). Cf. 2 Chr 11:4, where Yahweh takes responsibility for the split.

56 In 1 Kgs 14:22, only Judah is singled out. Cf. LXX: καὶ ἐποίησεν Ροβοαμ τὸ πονηρὸν ἐνώπιον κυρίου.

57 Note that 2 Chr 12:14 blames Rehoboam alone and does not mention the people.

walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, just as Ahab had done” (2 Chr 21:6), an offense elaborated by Elijah's letter which states that “you caused Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves (*wattaznê 'et yəhūdā wə 'et yōšəbê yərušāla[y]im*)” – that is, leading the people into illicit worship (2 Chr 21:13). Indeed, Jehoram had “made high places (*bāmôt*) in the mountains of Judah and he caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves (*wayy ezen*) and he led Judah astray (*wayyaddah*)” (2 Chr 21:11).

After the death of the priest Jehoiada, under the influence of his officials, Joash and those officials abandoned the temple (*bēt YHWH*)⁵⁸ and served the Asherahs (*hā 'āšērîm*) and idols (*hā 'āšabbîm*), despite prophetic guidance (2 Chr 24:17-19). The condemning words of the anonymous prophet recorded in 2 Chr 25:16 accuse Amaziah of idolatry (in addition for his refusal to listen to that same prophet, see 7.1.2), for he had brought the “gods of the sons of Seir” (*'ēlōhê bənê šē 'îr*) and established them as gods for himself (*wayya 'āmîdēm lô lē 'lōhîm*), worshiping and making offerings to them (2 Chr 25:14). After becoming strong, Uzziah grew proud (2 Chr 26:16: *ûkəhezqātô gābah libbô*), and despite the warnings from the priest Azariah, the pride of Uzziah tempted this Judean king to usurp the prerogatives of the priests and offer incense, a privilege reserved only for those who descended from Aaron (2 Chr 26:16-19). Ahaz's cultic sins are many, as this ruler made molten images for the Baals (*massəkôt 'āsā labə 'ālîm*), made offerings in the valley of Ben-Hinnom (*hiqtîr bəgê 'ben hinnôm*), made his sons pass through fire (*wayyab 'ēr 'et bānāw bā 'ēš*), and sacrificed at multiple (illegitimate) locations (*wayzabbēah wayqattēr babbāmôt wə 'al haggəbā 'ôt wətaḥat kol 'ēš ra 'ānān*), in addition

58 For a defense of retaining the MT *bēt YHWH* over against YHWH (LXX and Syriac) or *barîl YHWH* (with two Hebrew manuscripts according to the *BHS* footnote), see Japhet 1993, 848; cf. Williamson, 1982, 324.

to following in the footsteps of the kings of Israel (2 Chr 28:1-4).

Manasseh is the most decorated cultic violator in Chronicles, as he rebuilt high places (*wayyiben 'et habbāmôt*), erected altars for the Baals (*wayyāqem mizbəḥôt labbā 'ālīm*), made Asherahs (*wayya 'as 'ăšērôt*), worshiped and served the “hosts of heaven” (*wayyištaḥû ləkōl šabā' haššāmayim wayya 'ăbōd 'ōtām*), constructed altars in the temple (*ûbānâ mizbəḥôt bəbêt YHWH*), built altars for all the hosts of heaven (*wayyiben mizbəḥôt ləkōl šabā' haššāmayim*) in the two courts of the temple, made his sons pass through fire in the valley of Ben-Hinnom (*wəhû 'he 'ēbîr 'et bānāw bā 'ēs bəgê ben hinnōm*), involved himself in illicit divination (*wə 'ônēn wəniḥēš wəkiššēp wə 'āsâ 'ōb wəyiddā 'ônî*), placed an image in the temple (*wayyāsem 'et pesel hassemel 'ăšer 'āsâ bəbêt hā 'ēlōhîm*), in addition to misleading Judah (2 Chr 33:1-9).

The tradition of Manasseh's exuberant sinfulness which appears in both Kings and Chronicles is succinctly summarized in Jer 15:4 as “that which he did (*'ăšer 'āsâ*) in Jerusalem.” Though it is not explicit, this small excerpt relies on the reader's knowledge of the king's impious deeds. Regardless of whether or not Jer 15:4b is a secondary addition,⁵⁹ in its final form Jer 15:4 attests to the disastrous effects a chastised ruler might have on his nation.

The book of Daniel connects the pride of Belshazzar with the latter's cultic crimes, for the ruler had exalted himself against God, and then committed a cultic violation by misusing the vessels from the Jerusalem temple for his feast in addition to

⁵⁹ Holladay 1986, 440 (cf. 421 and 426) reasons that Jer 15:4b is an addition, particularly in view of Jer 14:20 which attributes coming punishment to both the sins of the people and their fathers, while noting that the preposition *biglal* occurs elsewhere only in Jer 11:17, part of a passage which likewise seems to be secondary. Most would agree that the passage is secondary with connections to the Deuteronomistic History, e.g. Lundbom 1999, 149, 692, 722; Allen 2008, 176.

engaging in idolatry (Dan 5:23; cf. 5:2-4).⁶⁰ Elsewhere in the book of Daniel, Antiochus IV Epiphanes is censured for intervening with legitimate cultic procedure. Dan 7:25 warns that Antiochus IV Epiphanes (represented as a horn) will strive to change the “times and law” (*wəyisbar ləhašnāyâ zimmîn wədāt*), understood as an ambition to replace Jewish rites with pagan counterparts.⁶¹ Dan 8:11b-12 reveals more cultic violations, saying that “it (the horn) took away⁶² from him⁶³ the regular sacrifice (*hattāmîd*) and the abode of his⁶⁴ sanctuary was overturned (*wəhūšlak*).” The cultic infractions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes reach a climax with “the transgression which desolates (*happeša’ šōmēm*)” (Dan 8:13), also called “an abomination which desolates (*haššiqqūš məšōmēm*)” (Dan 11:31; cf. 9:27, 12:11).⁶⁵

7.2.3 Hittite literature

In a search for the cause of the plague that ravished the Hittite empire, Muršili II confesses in the 14th century B.C.E. several offenses that he suspected to be the source of the epidemic. One of these offenses is a failure to preform a ritual. Muršili II claimed to have found two old tablets, the first of which states the following:

One tablet [dealt with the ritual of the Euphrates River...] Earlier kings [performed] the ritual of the Euphrates [...], but since the time of my father (Šuppiluliuma I) [people have been dying] in Ḫatti, [and] we have never performed [the ritual] of the Euphrates.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Collins 1993, 245 states that the issue is sacrilege, and that “Profanation of cultic vessels was an outrage even by pagan standards.”

⁶¹ Ibid., 322.

⁶² Reading *hērîm* with the *kātîb*. Other manuscripts read *hūram*.

⁶³ Understanding the antecedent of the pronominal suffix on *ūmimmennū* to be *šar haššābā’*, that is, God. On *šar haššābā’* as God, see Collins 1993, 333.

⁶⁴ That is, God. See previous note.

⁶⁵ Cf. the accusations in 1 Macc 1:41-59 and note the desolating abomination (βδέλυγμα ἐρημώσεως) in v. 54.

⁶⁶ COS 1.60, 158

Muršili confirms that the plague resulted from this failure in his appeal to resolve this situation:

Because [the ritual of the Euphrates] was ascertained for me [concerning the plague], and because I am now on my way [to] the Euphrates, O Storm-god [of Ḫatti], my lord, and gods, my lords, leave me alone concerning the ritual of the Euphrates. I shall perform the ritual of [the Euphrates], and I shall perform it fully. In regard to such matter as I will do it, namely the plague – may the gods, my lords, be well-disposed toward me. Let the plague abate in Ḫatti.⁶⁷

In this instance Muršili postulates that the plague, which started in the time of his father Šuppiluliuma I, coincided with the failure to carry out the “the ritual of the Euphrates” since his father's reign.

⁶⁷ COS 1.60, 158

Table 2. Cultic Violations

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Offense
Narām-Sîn	Meso – Curse of Agade	Destroyed the Ekur
Šulgi	Meso – Weidner Chronicle	Distorted cultic rites (<i>paršu</i>)
	Meso – ABC 20A	Brought out property of Esagila and Babylon (<i>makkūr Esagil u Bābili</i>)
	Meso – Uruk Chronicle	Brought out the property of the Esagila and Babylon (<i>[makkūr] Esagil u Bābili</i>), tampered with numerous cultic rites (e.g., <i>paraš anūti, ušurtī</i>)
Amar-Su'en	Meso – Weidner Chronicle	Changed (<i>uštepēlma</i>) offerings (<i>alpī rabūtīm u nīq zagmuk ša Esagil</i>)
Šamaš-šuma-ukīn	Meso – SAA 3 44	Carried off the property of the gods (<i>tābil makkūr ilāni</i>)
“Offspring of a foreigner”	Meso – KAL 3 76	Stopped the great offering (<i>nīqu rabū</i>) destruction of the great shrine(?)
Sennacherib to Sîn-šar-iškun	Meso – BM 55467	Revealing and removing the property Esagil and Babylon
Nabonidus	Meso – Cyrus Cylinder	Image (<i>tamšīli</i>) of Esagil, improper cultic procedures, ending/delaying cultic rites
	Meso – Verse Account	Introduction of cult image, Esagil replica (<i>tamšīlu</i>), ending New Year festival, mixing up rites, speaking abuse at cult images
Governor of Uruk	Meso – Erra and Ishum	Transgression of cultic ordinances (<i>paraššīna</i>)

continued

Table 2. Cultic Violations: continued

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Offense
Solomon	HB – 1 Kings 11	Introduction of cult
	HB – 2 Chr 10:15, 11:4	Introduction of cult assumed
Jeroboam	HB – 1 Kings 12	Introduction of counter cult
Ahab	HB – 1 Kings 16ff	Introduction of cult
Manasseh	HB – 2 Kings 21	Introduction of cult
	HB – 2 Chronicles 33	Introduction of cult
	HB – Jer 15:4	Introduction of cult assumed
Baasha	HB – 1 Kgs 16:2	“Walking in the ways of Jeroboam”
Ahaziah	HB – 2 Kgs 1:2	Seeking foreign god
Saul	HB – 1 Chr 10:13-14	Failure to seek Yahweh
Rehoboam	HB – 2 Chronicles 12	Failure to seek Yahweh
Jehoram	HB – 2 Chronicles 21	Introduction of cult elements
Joash	HB – 2 Chronicles 24	Worshipped Asherahs and idols
Amaziah	HB – 2 Chronicles 25	Introduction of cult elements
Uzziah	HB – 2 Chronicles 26	Usurp priestly role
Ahaz	HB – 2 Chronicles 28	Introduction of cult elements
Belshazzar	HB – Daniel 5	Improper use of vessels from Jerusalem temple
Antiochus IV Epiphanes	HB – Daniel 7	Tampered with cultic rites
Šuppiluliuma and Muršili	Hittite – Plague Prayers of Muršili	Failure to carry out the “ritual of the Euphrates”

7.3 Broken oaths, vows and alliances

Obligations broken by a ruler are construed as offenses which bring punishment in a number of texts from the ancient Near East. These “obligations” can be oaths, vows, or alliances – and in every case they are closely linked with a deity or deities.⁶⁸ When these divinely sanctioned obligations are not upheld by the ruler, explicit punishment from the divine realm soon follows.

7.3.1 Mesopotamian Literature

In a letter from Ašqudum,⁶⁹ to Yasmaḥ-Addu, the former writes to the latter concerning extispicies which he had made (*ARM* 26 84). Lines 10-11 explain that some extispicies were carried out in order to address the presence of the “hand of divinity” (*qāt ilūtim*). After explaining that the extispices indicated a vow to Sîn (*nidnat pîm*⁷⁰ *ana Sîn*) in 12-13, Ašqudum presses Yasmaḥ-Addu in 14-18 to see if he “gave his word” to Sîn (*qabâšu ana Sîn iddin*), or alternatively, if his father (Šamši-Adad) made a vow to Sîn (*nidnat pîm ana Sîn [id]din*). Unsure as to whether this vow was indeed made or not, Ašqudum's inquiry indicates that underlying this letter is the conviction that a vow transgressed by a ruler may bring divine punishment.

In another letter associated with Yasmaḥ-Addu (*ARM* 1 3),⁷¹ this king writes to Nergal, recounting to the god how Ila-kabkabu and Yagid-Lim had previously sworn

68 Cf. the discussions on the oath in the ancient Near East in Brichto 1968, 70-76 and Milgrom 1991, 313-314.

69 Heimpel explains the name Ašqudum is preferable to Asqudum, stating that the first sign, *aš*, did not seem to be used for *as* at Mari (Heimpel 2003, 529).

70 Durand translates “Promesse à Sîn” (*ARM* 26 I/1). Heimpel 2003, 209 translates “vow to Sîn.”

71 For the text, see D. Charpin and J.-M. Durand 1985, 293–343. Note that Nergal is restored by Charpin and Durand. Earlier studies believed the god was Dagan.

(*izkurūma*) a solemn oath (*nīš ilim dannam*) in times past (8-9). Yasmaḥ-Addu explains that though Ila-kabkabu had not “sinned” (*ul ugallil*) against Yagid-Lim, Yagid-Lim had violated the oath: “Yagid-Lim sinned (*u[g]allil*) against Ila-Kabkabu” (11-14).⁷² Though there is more to the offense than just a broken oath (8.3.1), this text demonstrates further that the violation of a divinely sanctioned oath (*nīš ilim dannam*) was a serious offense that brought divine punishment.

The Tukultī-Ninurta Epic,⁷³ a text which relates the victory of a pious Assyrian king, Tukultī-Ninurta, over an impious Kaštiliaš, presents the antagonist's main offense in terms of oath-breaking. Kaštiliaš is specifically called an oath-breaker (B obv I 33': *ʾana ētiq māmītiʾ Kaštiliaš*), an accusation repeated in several parts of the text (e.g. A obv F:y 28; ii A obv 20') – a sign of this crime's severity.⁷⁴ The text goes further than just mentioning that Kaštiliaš violated the oath taken between the Assyrians and the Kassite dynasty in Babylon. In his prayer to Šamaš, Tukultī-Ninurta addressed the god by saying that Kaštiliaš had violated “your oath” (*māmītka*) and that the king's crimes were against Šamaš himself (A obv ii 19'-21'), highlighting the relationship between the deity and offense.

The “Sin of Sargon” text (K 4730 [+] Sm 1876) is a “political and propagandistic document drawn up to justify Esarhaddon's costly and controversial Babylonian policy.”⁷⁵

72 The text goes on to relate the relations between Samsi-Addu and Yagid-Lim, Sumu-Yamam and Yaḥdun-Lim, as well as Sumu-Yamam's assassination. Since divine involvement is not explicit in these cases, they are not discussed in this study.

73 The text is fragmentary, reconstructed from Middle and Neo-Assyrian copies. The following analysis is based on the reconstruction by Machinist 1978.

74 The term *māmītu* is the most common for the Assyrian – Kassite treaty in the text according to *ibid.*, 159. The text also presents Kaštiliaš as one who committed treachery (B obv i 32': *šalpat šar Kaššī*). For a discussion on this reading and definition, see *ibid.*, 156–157. The word, as noted by Machinist, may be plural, “treacheries” (*šalpāt*).

75 Tadmor-Landsberger-Parpola 1989, 45. For the text, see *ibid.*, 10ff.

In this text, Sargon II's battlefield death and improper burial is assumed to have been caused by sin. The text details Sennacherib's quest to discover the cause(s) hidden behind Sargon's misfortune. Sennacherib's words presuppose that the king's fate was directly tied to some offense:

(saying) Let me examine the sin (*hītu*) of Sargon, my father, by divination, and then let me determine the circumstances, so that I may learn...the sin he committed against the god (*hītu ana ili ihītu*), let me make it my taboo, so that... I might deliver myself with the help of the god..." (10'-13').

Behind Sennacherib's plea is the presupposition that a serious offense must have played a direct role in the troublesome circumstances and the almost unparalleled fate of Sargon.⁷⁶

The casual link between Sargon's death and sin is accentuated by Sennacherib's effort to learn the sin in order to avoid the same fate. The haruspices asked:

Did he greatly honor the gods of the land of Assyria, and thus did he place them above the gods of Akkad (i.e., Babylonia) [...and concerning] the treaty (*adê*) of the king of the gods which Sargon, my father did not keep, was Sargon, my father, killed in an enemy land and then not buried in his house? (17'-19')

Miraculously, the haruspices, who had been divided and separated, all give a positive answer, showing that Sargon's death was a result of treaty violation, in addition to honoring the gods of Assyria over the Babylonian gods.

Some of the royal inscriptions of Esarhaddon present Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir as a chastised ruler.⁷⁷ Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir, son of the rebellious Marduk-apla-iddina II and therefore of royal stock, was a Chaldean from the Bīt-Yakīn tribe.⁷⁸ As governor of the

76 "Indeed, Sargon was the first and only Assyrian king in the Assyrian Empire to fall on the battlefield and not to receive fitting burial" (ibid., 29). One can count on one hand Mesopotamian kings who are known to have fallen in battle, which would include, in addition to Sargon, Ur-Namma. (N.B., though it is generally held that Ur-Namma died in battle [e.g., Michalowski 2008, 35 states that Ur-Namma died in battle], Flückiger-Hawker is less confident [Flückiger-Hawker 1999, 7 and note 62]).

77 For Esarhaddon's royal inscriptions, see RINAP 4.

78 Frame 1992, 42.

Sealand (*šakin māt tâmti*), Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir broke his loyalty oath and attacked Ur in 680.⁷⁹ Four texts color the ruler's rebellion by explaining that Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir's decision to transgress the oath served as the basis for the subsequent divine retribution. Of these texts, Nineveh A, which has copies dated to 673 and 672, represents the fullest and most complete depiction of Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir as deserving of divine punishment.⁸⁰ The relevant excerpt states that, “Because of the oath (*māmīt*) of the great gods which he (i.e., Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir) transgressed (*ša ētiqū*)...” (ii 55-56)⁸¹ thereby demonstrating that the violation of the oath served as an offense which merited a divinely sanctioned penalty. Incidentally, this text simultaneously demonstrates that governors may incur guilt for crimes committed against gods.

Likewise, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn commits a number of violations which lead Aššur to act on Ashurbanipal's behalf according to “Aššur's Response to Ashurbanipal's Report on the Šamaš-šuma-ukīn War” (*SAA* 3 44). One of these infractions involved this ruler's failure to heed the treaty governed by Aššur: “As for Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, who did not observe my treaty (*adēya*)” (°7). The speaker in this instance is Aššur himself – Šamaš-šuma-ukīn violated the treaty over which Aššur served as witness and thus evoked the deity's wrath.

7.3.2 Hittite literature

Upon ascending the throne of Hatti at the end of the 14th century B.C.E., Muršili II

79 For Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir's title see, e.g., RINAP 4 no. 1 ii 40 (p. 15) and *ABC* 1 iii 39. This was not the first time that this individual had royal aspirations. In *SAA* 10 112, the astrologer Bēl-ušēzib mentions that Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir had pursued kingship during the time of Sennacherib.

80 Nineveh A is text no. 1 in RINAP 4. Other attestations include Nineveh C i 16'-23' (RINAP 4 no. 3), Fragment A °4'-9'ff (RINAP 4 no. 30), Fragment B °1'-4' (RINAP 4 no. 31), and Fragment C ii 1'-9' (RINAP 4 no. 32).

81 RINAP 4, no.1 ii 55–56.

inherited a Hittite empire suffering from some type of pestilence. In order to relieve the epidemic, four prayers were composed. Though their order is not certain, scholars have suggested a sequence based on the prayers' internal logic.⁸²

Though all the prayers are related, each prayer has different addressees. The first prayer is addressed to a number of deities, the second to the Storm-god of Ḫatti, the third to the Sun-goddess of the town of Arinna, and the fourth to a large group of deities. In all four prayers, Muršili (or his scribes) refers to himself as priest of the gods, and he labors to persuade the deities to eliminate the plague ravishing his people, the plague already in its twentieth year.

According to what seems to be the first prayer, the plague stems from the “affair of Tudḫaliya the Younger.”⁸³ Šuppiluliuma, Muršili's father, along with others, violated an oath they swore to Tudḫaliya the Younger and killed him.⁸⁴ Similarly, the second prayer mentions the violation of an oath by the Hittites in the days of Šuppiluliuma. Muršili claims to have found an old tablet which indicated a violation of an oath with Egypt:

And although the Hittites and the Egyptians had been put under oath by the Storm-god of Ḫatti, the Hittites came to repudiate (the agreement), and suddenly the Hittites transgressed the oath.⁸⁵

And later:

It was ascertained (through an oracle) that the cause of the anger of the Storm-god of Ḫatti, my lord, was the fact that (although) the *damnaššara*-deities (guarantors of the oath?) were in the temple of the Storm-god of Ḫatti, my lord, the Hittites on their own suddenly transgressed the word (of the oath).⁸⁶

82 COS 1.60, 156.

83 COS 1.60, 156.

84 COS 1.60, 156ff.

85 COS 1.60, 158.

86 COS 1.60, 158.

In both cases the underlying offense is the violation of an oath to which the gods were witnesses.

7.3.3 Ugaritic literature

The Ugaritic Kirta epic appears to portray Kirta as one who did not keep a vow made to a deity.⁸⁷ Admittedly, this assertion is tentative, for breaks in the text do not allow absolute certainty. However, the appearance of a vow followed by personal disaster⁸⁸ merits inclusion, though speculative, in this study.

After losing his family and demonstrating that all he wants is offspring, Kirta receives instructions from El in a dream theophany, and then proceeds to carry out those tasks. Kirta washes, sacrifices, and makes the required food preparations and provisions his army before heading off to campaign against Udmu. On the third day of travel, Kirta arrives at the sanctuary of 'Aṭiratu. At this point the text reads:

There Kirta the noble vowed (*ydr*),
The offering⁸⁹ of 'Aṭiratu of Tyre,
and the goddess of Sidon,
If Ḥurraya into my house I take,
bring the girl into my mansion,
double her value in silver I will give,
and thrice her value in gold (*CAT* 1.14 iv 36-43).

Kirta, quite explicitly, makes a vow to 'Aṭiratu, pledging silver and gold should he take Ḥurraya into his house. Despite breaks in the text it appears that Kirta did bring Ḥurraya

87 That Kirta has royal status is confirmed by the phrase *bt [m]lk* “house of the king” (*CAT* 1.14 i 7-8) and the vocative *mlk* “king” (*CAT* 1.14 iii 27).

88 Knoppers 1994, 577.

89 In note 34, Pardee (*COS* 1.102, 336) says the following: “The meaning of the phrase '*i* 'itt is in doubt. Two principal explanations have been given: (1) a form of the particle of existence '*it*, meaning “by the life of” or “as she lives;” (2) a noun meaning “gift” (from the hollow root '*t*) and referring to the silver and gold promised in lines 205–206.” For the purposes of this study, it suffices to recognize that whatever the specific translation may be, Kirta nevertheless made a vow (*ydr*).

home (*CAT* 1.15 ii 21-23; iii 23-25; iv 3, 14, etc.). However, 'Aṭīratu remembered the vow that Kirta had made yet did not fulfill: "'Aṭīratu remembered his vow"⁹⁰ (*CAT* 1.15 iii 25-26). The larger context makes it apparent that 'Aṭīratu, in fact, did not let the unpaid vow pass by unrequited.

7.3.4 Hebrew Bible

The Hebrew Bible attests to only a few cases where a broken oath uttered by a ruler culminated with divine punishment. As described in 5.1.1, Saul's antecedent decision to put the Gibeonites to death, a violation of the alliance found in Joshua 9, not only brought bloodguilt upon Saul and his house, but was also the cause of the famine which occurred in the days of David (2 Sam 21:1 ff).

Ezekiel 17 preserves an accusation against Zedekiah for his failure to maintain his loyalty oath which he swore to Nebuchadrezzar, opting to violate it in order to make an alliance with Psammetichus II of Egypt. Following the "riddle" (*ḥidā*) and "allegory" (*māšāl*) in Ezek 17:1-10 is an explanation of Zedekiah's violation. After Nebuchadrezzar (simply referred to as the king of Babylon) took the king of Jerusalem (Jehoiachin) to Babylonian (Ezek 17:11-12), "he took one from the seed of kingship and the made a covenant with him (*wattikrōt 'ottō bārīt*), bringing him under oath (*wayyābē' 'ōtō bə'ālā*)" (Ezek 17:13a).⁹¹ Zedekiah then rebelled by enlisting the support of Egypt (Ezek 17:15): "But he rebelled against him (*wayyimrod bō*), sending messengers to Egypt to

90 *DUL*, under the entry /ḥ-s-s/ (volume I p. 410) has *yḥss*, but *CAT* reads *w ṯḥss*, as does Greenstein (Parker 1997, 26).

91 This event, recalled in *ABC* 5 '13, calls Zedekiah "a king according to his (i.e. Nebuchadrezzar's) choosing," (*šarra ša 'libbī 'šū*).

acquire horses and a great army for himself.”⁹² Zedekiah's alliance is associated with a breach of covenant (*wəhēpēr bərīt*; *hēpēr 'et bərītō*; *ləhāpēr bərīt*) and a repudiation of the oath (*bāzā 'et 'ālātō*; *ūbāzā 'ālā*), both understood as crimes against Nebuchadrezzar (Ezek 17:15-16, 18). However, when announcing judgment Yahweh proclaims that Zedekiah is guilty of violating “my oath” (*'ālātī*) and “my covenant” (*bərītī*). Since treaties invoked gods as witnesses, their violation would bring the wrath of those witnesses. Such is the case here: Zedekiah's rebellion against Nebuchadrezzar violated the oath witnessed by Yahweh.⁹³ Yahweh's claim in Ezek 17:20b further highlights the nature of Zedekiah's broken oath, for Yahweh says that the king will be judged for “his unfaithfulness which he committed against me” (*ma 'ālō 'āšer mā'al bī*).

The king of Egypt in Ezekiel 29 is indicted for the failed alliance between Judah and Egypt in addition to his pride (Ezek 29:6-7):

And all the inhabitants of Egypt will know that I am Yahweh,
because they were a staff of reed to the house of Israel;
when they took hold of you (*bəkā*) with the palm⁹⁴ you broke (*tērōš*)
and you split (*ūbāqa'tā*) their shoulder;
and when they leaned on you, you were broken up,
and you made their loins quake.⁹⁵

The event referenced in this oracle seems to be a failure on Egypt's behalf to fulfill their alliance with Judah. Historically, it has been suggested that the Egyptian force which

92 Greenberg has argued that v.17 has been modified by the addition of *parō'*, and that after this addition is excised, the Egyptian referent is Psammetichus II (Greenberg 1957, 304–9). Conversely Zimmerli understands Apries to be in view, in line with the events of Jer 37:5ff (Zimmerli 1979, 365). The latter position is taken here.

93 According to Tadmor, Ezek 17:13-14 attests to the only certain instance of a king of Judah taking an *adē* oath (Tadmor 1982, 152). Such an oath likely required Zedekiah to invoke the name of Yahweh (as suggested by Zimmerli 1979, 365–366), a possibility made stronger by the fact that foreign deities were regularly invoked in Neo-Assyrian treaties (Holloway 2002, 174-175 and note 309; Barré 1983, 128-136; cf. Cogan 1974, 47ff). In any case, the historical circumstances are transcended by the theological framework of the text: the *adē* is Yahweh's covenant.

94 Reading *bakkap* with the *qərē* for MT *bakkapəkā*

95 Reading *wəhim'adtā* for *wəha'āmadtā*. Cf. Zimmerli 1983, 107 note d on verse 7.

Hophra sent to help Judah during the siege of Jerusalem (cf. Jer 37:5) briefly alleviated the situation before abandoning the endeavor and going home, as there is no record of combat between the Egyptians and the Babylonians at this time.⁹⁶ It is this event – failure to uphold a military alliance – which is referenced in the text.⁹⁷

96 Ahlström 1993, 796; cf. Miller and Hayes 1986, 481. Holladay 1989, 287 dates this possible confrontation to the spring or summer of 588 B.C.E.; similarly Allen 2008, 406.

97 Zimmerli 1979, 112–113 suggests that the offense for which Egypt is held guilty is not a failure for being a stronger support for Israel, but that Egypt led Israel into a false trust – one that opposed Babylon – citing Ezek 29:16 in support of his conclusion. Underlying Zimmerli’s understanding is his assertion that Ezekiel has the same attitude towards Babylon as did Jeremiah. However, I do not think that such a contradiction is a problem. That Ezekiel may have had a more positive view of the Babylonians does not mean that Egypt could not be blamed for failure to support Israel against God’s instrument.

Table 3. Broken oaths, vows, and alliances

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Offense
Yasmaḥ-Addu	Meso – <i>ARM</i> 26 84	(Suspected) broken vow to Sîn (<i>nidnat pîm ana Sîn</i>)
Yagid-Lim	Meso – <i>ARM</i> 1 3	Violation of a solemn oath (<i>nîš ilim dannam</i>)
Kaštiliaš	Meso – Tukultī – Ninurta Epic	Broken oath (<i>māmīt</i>)
Sargon II	Meso – Sin of Sargon	Failure to keep treaty (<i>adê</i>)
Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir	Meso – Nineveh. A ii 55-56	Broke “the oath (<i>māmīt</i>) of the great gods”
Šamaš-šuma-ukīn	Meso – <i>SAA</i> 3 44	Did not observe the treaty of Aššur (<i>adêya</i>)
Šuppiluliuma along with others	Hittite – Plague Prayers of Muršili	Violated oath
Kirta	Ugaritic – Kirta Epic	Broken vow
Saul	HB – 2 Samuel 21	Violation of the alliance found in Joshua 9
Zedekiah	HB – Ezekiel 17	Failure to maintain his loyalty oath which he swore to Nebuchadrezzar
King of Egypt	HB – Ezekiel 29	Failed alliance between Israel and Egypt

Chapter 8: Violations of the Cosmic Order

8.1 Moral/ethical offenses

In this section, offenses that violate a moral/ethical standard are in view. These offenses are grouped together as “moral/ethical” because they display an element of injustice affecting human parties. The three subgroups in this category reflect this concern – adultery, royal violations of justice, and excessive violence all affect people unjustly.

8.1.1 Adultery (Hebrew Bible)

David's adulterous affair with Bathsheba is the only true instance of this sort of crime found in the texts covered in this study. As argued in 5.2.1, 2 Samuel 12 does not simply point out David's immorality, but it directly states that through his affair with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah, David had sinned against Yahweh. That an act of violence may bring punishment from God is attested elsewhere within the Hebrew Bible. However, David's case of adultery is unique in that it brings divine punishment, an otherwise unattested occurrence.¹

David's affair with Bathsheba recalls the so-called “wife-sister” narratives in Genesis. According to Gen 12:15, Pharaoh took Sarai, wife of Abram, into his house.

¹ In fact, the only remotely comparable instance of which I am aware is the practice of *ius primae noctis* attributed to Gilgamesh (see George 2003 vol. 1, 169, 455; Tigay 1982, 182–184).

Though unaware that she was Abram's wife, Pharaoh was nonetheless held guilty for this crime. Similarly, King Abimelech of Gerar, who did not know that Sarah was Abraham's wife, took her for his own according to Gen 20:2. Both of these crimes, though not necessarily adultery proper, were portrayed as violations of Sarai/Sarah's status as Abram/Abraham's wife.² Equally important is that punishments resulted from these offenses.

8.1.2 Perversion of royal duty (Mesopotamia)

Mesopotamian royal ideology has a long tradition that envisions the king as the administrator of justice. Mesopotamians believed that the gods wanted just rule and decreed justice as the societal foundation.³ The gods expected the king to carry out justice and eliminate injustice.⁴ Evidence of the king's association with justice surfaces, for example, in the king's association with Shamash in the Old Babylonian period,⁵ and the Neo-Babylonian king was the highest legal authority.⁶ Perhaps the most recognized instance of the king's association with Šamaš (and by extension, justice) is image on the diorite stela of the Code of Ḫammurapi, where Šamaš hands the symbols of kingship to Ḫammurapi. The connection between the king and justice transcended Mesopotamia, for the Hebrew concept of kingship also viewed the king as the administrator of justice.⁷ The connection between the king and justice was grounded in the will of the gods, and a

2 Cf. Gen 26:10.

3 Frankfort 1978, 239, 278.

4 Ibid., 278.

5 Charpin 2013; cf. Frankfort 1978, 308. Charpin argues that the association is based on imitation – the king is to imitate on earth Šamaš's judgment in the heavens (Charpin 2013, 71). Similarly, Beckman calls the Mesopotamian association a “metaphor,” in contrast to Ḫatti where the association was “quasi-identification” (Beckman 2002, 40).

6 Holtz 2014, 7–9.

7 Johnson 1958, 206.

violation of justice was then a violation of the the gods' plans for cosmic order.

Crimes involving a perversion of royal duty underlie a number of hypothetical scenarios in the wisdom text, “Advice to a Prince.”⁸ This text, which seems to belong to the Late Assyrian Period,⁹ provides the consequences of certain royal crimes in protasis-apodosis format. The text does not mention a specific ruler,¹⁰ but the concept underlying the pertinent portions of the text is, “if a king does X, then the god(s) will Y,” precisely the ideology examined in this study. Obviously, since the crimes are the object of inquiry in this section, the protases alone will be under examination.

Several of the crimes for which a hypothetical king receives punishment revolve around the king's failure to execute his duty to uphold justice:¹¹

(If)¹² he (i.e., the king)¹³ does not pay attention (*lā iqūl*) to a justified claim of his land (*dīn mātišu*)...¹⁴ (2)

(If) he treats a son of Sippar unjustly (*idāšma*) and then judges a foreigner (*aḥām idīn*) (9)

(If) they brought sons of Nippur to him for judgment and he subsequently took a bribe so that he treated them unjustly (*kadrā ilqēma idāssunūti*) (11)

...or (if he) hears the the case of Babylonians and then repays (it) with silence (*ana qāli turru*) (16)

8 The translations used here are composites of D.T. 1 and IM 77087 per Cole *Nippur*, with additions, numbering follows DT1 unless otherwise noted.

9 Per Böhl and Diakonoff, cited in Lambert *BWL*, 111.

10 The text seems to have a Babylonian king who ruled between 1000 and 700 B.C.E. in view (Lambert *BWL*, 111).

11 Many of the crimes in this text involve violations the *kidinnūtu* status held by certain southern Mesopotamian cities, namely, Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon. However, the particular violations in view here are a perversion of justice rather than a violation of the economic and military exceptions of the *kidinnūtu* status. See 8.3.2 for violations where *kidinnūtu* status is central.

12 Lambert *BWL* 110 makes the following comment: “It is also curious that the writer departs from omen practice in consistently leaving the 'If' unexpressed.”

13 LUGAL (*šarru*) appears in line 1.

14 For the nuance of *dīnu* as a justified claim, see *CAD* D, entry 4 under *dīnu* (p. 154)

The basis for all these crimes involves a perversion of justice: ignoring a a justified claim, unjust ruling, accepting bribes, and failing to properly adjudicate a case.

Another text also addresses concerns similar to the Advice to a Prince. The opening lines of the Verse Account of Nabonidus appear to describe this king's mistreatment of his subjects through his failure to carry out his royal duty as king. Admittedly, these lines are broken, but a sampling from the text itself does suggest that Nabonidus failed to rule well. If one follows *CAD*'s reconstruction of line I 3', "the ruler kills the maligner (?) with a weapon,"¹⁵ it seems as if the text suggests that Nabonidus ignored his duty to execute justice himself.¹⁶

Additionally, the Verse Account accuses Nabonidus of a different sort of perversion of royal duty. Nabonidus seems to be accused of running economic interference in I 4', where it is stated that "he cut off the way of the merchant" ([x x x ša] *tamkāru iptaras alaktu*). Moreover Nabonidus "scattered their property" (I 10'), and I 14'-17' attest to an unhappy population. After arriving in Tema, Nabonidus continued this economic suppression, for it is reported that, "as for the inhabitant of the city and the land, their herds he repeatedly slaughtered" (II 26)'. Nabonidus' unjust efforts to economically stifle the subjects of his rule may be contrasted to Aššurbanipal's Coronation Hymn, where the economic prosperity of the land is extolled.¹⁷

15 *CAD* Š 1, 101.

16 Smith 1924, 87 translates "the weak he killed with the sword," Oppenheim (*ANET*³, 312) renders the line "the nobles he killed in war," and Schaudig (*Schaudig Nabonid*, 572) likewise translates "den Fürsten erschlägt er mit der Waffe." In this case, the beginning of the line is reconstructed as [... *hu]šahhu* "need, shortage" and taken to go with the preceding broken portion. Oppenheim's translation appears to take some liberties, for Schaudig's transcription reads NUN *i-na-a-ri*, so if the line is taken in its entirety, it would be more proper to render NUN in the singular, namely *rubû*. Such an accusation, that Nabonidus killed the prince, seems doubtful, so I have followed *CAD*'s reconstruction. However, it should be noted that this is quite tentative.

17 COS 1.142, 473-474.

8.1.3 Violence

The following cases show that violence was understood as a crime that could result in punishment from God. These are not the only cases where violence serves as such an offense, for violence occurs in a number of instances in 8.3. The difference between the violent acts in 8.3 and those in the immediately following sections (8.1.3.1 and 8.1.3.2) is that the cases in 8.3 involve entities that have special standing with the god/gods involved. The cases in 8.3 are more nuanced because the object(s) of the violence held a special privileged position with the deity (or deities) involved. That is, the violations are not punished by the gods only because of violence, but because the violence was directed towards a particular entity. In contrast to those cases in 8.3, the violations immediately below are punished by the gods simply because of violence alone – they are acts of violence directed against what may be called “regular” people – those who did not necessarily enjoy privileged status in the eyes of gods.

8.1.3.1 Mesopotamia

The Verse Account of Nabonidus levels several accusations of violence at this ruler. It has been noted that line I 3' may refer to Nabonidus' killing of a prince, though this position is not taken here.¹⁸ Later, corpses are mentioned (I 12'[x x x p]*agrīšunu*), and it is presumably Nabonidus who is responsible for them. After arriving at Tema, “they killed the prince of the city of Tema with the sword,” an action undoubtedly carried out at the command of Nabonidus (II 25'). It is Nabonidus himself who is singled out for violence in III 3', as the text states that “he killed the people” (*iddūk nišū*).

18 See note 16 above.

8.1.3.2 Hebrew Bible

If the number of occurrences is any indicator, violence was a particularly reprehensible violation that could bring punishment from God in the Hebrew Bible. Several kings of Israel and Judah committed acts of violence which led to divine punishment. David's murder of Uriah, which he committed in the wake of his affair with Bathsheba, earned this famous king serious consequences according to 2 Samuel (5.2.1). Baasha, in addition to the cultic infraction of walking in the ways of Jeroboam and causing Israel to sin (7.2.2), is punished for destroying the house of Jeroboam (1 Kgs 16:7).¹⁹ In addition to other crimes, Ahab was held guilty of Naboth's murder (5.5). Jehu's violence in Jezreel (see 2 Kings 9-10) is presumed in the book of Hosea to be a crime that God will punish, for it yields serious consequences for Jehu's dynasty and Israel as a whole (Hos 1:4-5). Jehoram, king of Judah, is held guilty not only for his cultic violations, but also for assassinating all of his brothers upon taking the throne (2 Chr 21:13, cf. v. 4). In addition to his exuberant cultic sins, Manasseh is guilty of

¹⁹ 7b has caused consternation among interpreters, for Baasha appears to be punished for fulfilling a prophecy. Some translate *wə'al 'āšer* as “despite that” or “in spite of the fact that” (Gray 1970, 361; Montgomery 1986, 282). This seems to be based on the assumption captured well by Gray's words: “This, in so far as it was the fulfillment of the word of God through Ahijah, was considered meritorious” Gray 1970, 361). Others simply note what may be deemed a “theological problem” – namely Baasha was punished for actions which fulfilled prophecy (Cogan 2000, 409; Walsh 1996, 214). Yet there is no “theological problem” in the sense of an impossible contradiction, for Yahweh only said that he would bring disaster upon Jeroboam's house, thus destroying it (1 Kgs 14:10-14); it was not clarified who would do this or when it would happen. It is true that Baasha brings this punishment to fruition (1 Kings 15:25-30), but there is no record of Baasha doing so with divine support (i.e., prophetic guidance). For this reason, Fritz is most correct when stating that the addition (in his view) of 7b “... is made possible because Baasha acted without prophetic instruction; otherwise the Deuteronomistic redactor keeps his interpretive pattern that forsaking Yahweh also results in the destruction for the person who was originally chosen to be the tool of God” (Fritz 2003, 172). Viewing Baasha's guilt vis-à-vis the fulfillment of Yahweh's word as a problematic contradiction is to view the dynamics between Yahweh and Baasha too simplistically – as puppet and puppeteer – with no space for Baasha's own volition. If one factors in Baasha's ambition to become king and secure the throne with the fact that he does not act with divine support, one can see that the passage is less illustrative of “prophecy and fulfillment” as it is of Yahweh's transcendent ability to work in spite of human actions.

shedding innocent blood in both 2 Kgs 21:16 and 24:4.

The violence committed by one foreign king in the Hebrew Bible is portrayed as a violation which brings with it the threat of disaster. Isa 14:3-21 takes aim at the “king of Babylon” for offenses which he committed. The audience is told that they (literally “you”) will take up the mocking song (*māšāl*) against this unnamed king, a song found in 14:4b-21. The song depicts the king as an oppressor (*nōgēś*) and a *madhēbâ*²⁰ (14:4), suggesting that the excessive violence of this ruler was an offense to which Yahweh will respond.²¹ This suggestion is confirmed in the text, which says in 14:5-6 that,

Yahweh has broken the staff of the wicked ones,
the scepter of domineers,
which has struck peoples in rage,
(with) a continuous slaughter,²²
which ruled the nations in anger,
it did not restrain persecution.

The staff and scepter, representative of the ruler's power,²³ exemplify the Babylonian king's oppressive violence. The actions of the ruler and the staff/rod are one in the same, and thus the king is held responsible for both relentlessly striking the peoples of the world and his oppressive rule. After this same king dies on the battlefield, those who see him there will react by making the following consideration:²⁴

Is this the man who made the land quake,
the one who shook kingdoms,

20 The precise meaning of *madhēbâ* is unclear, but based on parallelism one can speculate that its meaning approximates “oppressor” (*nōgēś*). Among other proposals, *HALOT* and *BDB* suggest reading *marhēbâ* “onslaught” (*HALOT*), “boisterous, raging behaviour” (*BDB*). Elsewhere, Wildeberger suggests reading *marhīb* or *mārahēb* “tyrant, stormer” and emending *šābatâ* to *šābat* (Wildberger 1997, 43).

21 Who is this king? Many suggestions have been proposed, including Sargon, Sennacherib, Ashur-uballit, Nebuchadnezzar, Nabonidus, and Alexander the Great (see *ibid.*, 53–55 for a review of these options). To simply recognize the royal personality is sufficient for this study.

22 Literally “(with) a blow not turning aside” (*makkat biltī sārâ*).

23 Wildberger 1997, 57.

24 For the notion that the scene takes place on the battlefield and not Sheol, see *ibid.*, 68–69; cf. Oswalt 1986, 323. Sheol is not outside the realm of possibilities.

who made the world like the wilderness,
and who destroyed its cities,
who did not release his prisoners homeward? (14:16b-17)

As they gaze at the ruler's corpse, the onlookers recall this king's violent and oppressive tyranny. The king's rule is perhaps best captured by the phrase, “who destroyed its cities,” a consequence of military violence which builds upon the “continuous slaughter” of 14:6. Importantly, these two excerpts do not totally encapsulate the extent of the king's violent behavior, for he is guilty of oppressing not only foreign nations, but also his very own land: “...for your land you have ruined (*śiḥattâ*), your people you have killed (*hārāgtâ*)” (14:20b). Even if this violence resulted from the king's imperial ambitions,²⁵ the point that his behavior brought destruction and death on his people remains.

25 Cf. Wildberger 1997, 72; Oswalt 1986, 324–325.

Table 4. Moral/ethical offenses

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Offense
David	HB – 2 Samuel 11-12	Adultery
Pharaoh	HB – Gen 12:15	Took Sarai
King Abimelech of Gerar	HB – Gen 20:2	Took Sarah
Hypothetical king	Meso – Advice to a Prince	Failure to uphold justice (<i>dīn mātišu, lā iqūl, idāšma, ana qāli turru</i>)
Nabonidus	Meso – Verse Account	Failure to execute justice, economic interference, abuse of people's property.
Nabonidus	Meso – Verse Account	Violence (slaughter of population)
David	HB – 2 Samuel 12	Violence (murder)
Baasha	HB – 1 Kgs 16:7	Violence (assassination)
Ahab	HB – 1 Kings 20ff	Violence (murder)
Jehu	HB – Hos 1:4-5	Violence (assassination and murder)
Jehoram	HB – 2 Chronicles 21	Violence (fratricide)
Manasseh	HB – 2 Kgs 21:16; 24:4	Violence
King of Babylon	HB – Isaiah 14	Violence

8.2 Hubris (Hebrew Bible)

Hubris appears as a mechanism which contributes to a ruler's downfall in several instances. These instances can be subdivided into two groups. In the first group, pride – an attitude proper – is the offense in view. In these cases the offense is entirely intangible. In the second group, hubris leads the ruler to carry out another offense. The first group will be handled first, followed by the second.

A prime example of a ruler condemned for pride appears in the book of Isaiah

concerning the king of Assyria. Though Assyria is an instrument of judgment in the hands of Yahweh, they are not themselves immune from chastisement. The king of Assyria himself comes within the sphere of discipline in Isa 10:12-19. Punishment awaits the king of Assyria because of his hubris (10:12-14):

And it will be when the Lord cuts off his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will²⁶ punish the fruit of the arrogance (*gōdel lēbāb*)²⁷ of the king of Assyria and the pride of the haughtiness of his eyes (*tip'eret rūm 'ênāw*).²⁸ For he says:
“By the strength of my hand I have done it,
and by my wisdom, for I have understanding;
I remove the boundaries of peoples,
and their treasuries²⁹ I have plundered;
I bring down inhabitants like a bull.³⁰
Like a nest my hand has found
the wealth of peoples;
and like the gathering of abandoned eggs,
every land I have gathered,
and there was not one who fluttered a wing,
nor one who opened the mouth and chirped.”

In this case, it is not necessarily the actions of the king himself that bring punishment, but the king's failure to recognize that his success resulted from Yahweh's direction (Isa 10:5-6). Assyria did overstep the bounds that Yahweh set (10:7), but when the king himself comes into view, his hubris in particular brings punishment.

In the Hebrew Bible the Assyrian king Sennacherib is condemned for arrogance in the form of reviling Yahweh. The narrative contained in 2 Kgs 18:13-19:37 and Isaiah 37,³¹ which narrates Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, portrays that same king as punished by God for his offenses. Upon hearing Rabshakeh's threats (2 Kgs 18:19-35), Hezekiah

26 Reading *yipqōd* with the LXX ἐπάξει for MT *'epqōd*.

27 For *gōdel lēbāb*, see *HALOT*, 1:180.

28 For *tip'eret rūm 'ênāw*, see *ibid.*, 1:1773, cf. 1205.

29 Reading with the *kethib*.

30 Reading *kā'abbîr* for *ka(')bbîr*.

31 Cf. also 2 Chronicles 32.

sends Eliakim and Shebna to consult Isaiah. They say to Isaiah,

Thus said Hezekiah: “A day of distress and chastisement and disgrace is this day, for sons have come to breech but there is no strength to give birth. Perhaps Yahweh your God heard all the words of Rabshakeh whom the king of Assyria, his lord, sent to reproach the living God and requite the words which Yahweh your God heard. Therefore lift a prayer on behalf of the remaining remnant” (2 Kgs 19:3-4 // Isa 37:3-4).

Isaiah responds by giving an oracle of salvation (2 Kgs 19:6-7 // Isa 37:6-7). The oracle targets the king of Assyria, stating that Yahweh will cause the king to leave and die within his own territory. Immediately the text reports that the king had left Lachish to fight at Libnah (2 Kgs 19:8 // Isa 37:8). Hezekiah then receives another threatening message from Assyrian messengers (2 Kgs 12:9-13 // Isa 37:9-13), to which he responds by praying to Yahweh. In his prayer, Hezekiah implores Yahweh to “...hear the words of Sennacherib which he sent to reproach the living God” (2 Kgs 19:16 // Isa 37:17). Isaiah announces that Yahweh had indeed heard Hezekiah's plea, and he will punish Sennacherib for his arrogant mocking by denying the Assyrian king Jerusalem, causing Sennacherib to return home the way he came (2 Kgs 19:22-28, 32-34 // Isa 37:23-29, 33-35). Thus, on two occasions Sennacherib is condemned for reviling Yahweh.³²

In addition to the oppressive violence carried out by the “king of Babylon” in Isaiah 14 (8.1.3.2), this ruler is also called to account for his pride. Though the king's hubris is mentioned in Isa 14:11, “Your pride (*gə'ōnekā*) has been brought down to Sheol,” it appears most fully in Isa 14:12-14:

How you have have fallen from the heavens,
O Morning Star, Son of the Dawn!
You have been cut down to the earth in pieces

³² Cf. 2 Chr 32:16-19.

O conqueror of all³³ the nations!
 You said in your heart,
 “Let me ascend the heavens,
 Above the stars of God
 I will raise my throne,
 I will sit on the mountain of assembly
 in the recesses of the north,
 Let me go up to the heights of the clouds,
 I will liken myself to Elyon.”

This passage, rich in ancient near eastern imagery,³⁴ associates the Babylonian king with the Morning Star (*hēlēl*), Son of the Dawn (*ben-šāḥar*), and gives substance to the king's pride (*gā'ōn*). The king's pride took the form of his effort to exalt himself over and above Yahweh.³⁵ This king is essentially guilty of an attempt to usurp the kingship of Yahweh.

A similar case of hubris indicts the leader of Tyre (*lingīd šōr*) according to Ezek 28:2. The proclamation asserts that consequences will come because of this ruler's prideful claim of divinity:

Because your heart was exalted (*ya'an gābah libbākā*)
 and you said, “I am a god (*'el*³⁶ *'ānī*),
 I have sat in the dwelling place of the gods,
 in the heart of the seas” (Ezek 28:2).

This leader's pride, literally his exalted heart (*gābah libbākā*),³⁷ manifested itself in this ruler's claim to divinity. Such a claim is plainly rejected in the same verse: “But you are a mortal (*'ādām*) and not a god (*'el*), though you made (*wattitēn*) your heart like the heart of a god (*'ēlōhīm*).”³⁸ Indeed, the ruler was wise and successful (Ezek 28:3-5), and the

33 Reading *kol* for MT *'al*.

34 See, e.g., Wildberger 1997, 62–68.

35 The text, regardless of its origin, is placed firmly in a Yahwistic context; cf. the comments on the translation of *'el* in *ibid.*, 45.

36 For *'el* as an appellative (rather than “El”), see Zimmerli 1983, 77–78.

37 *HALOT*, 1:171 translates this phrase as “haughty.”

38 Notice the question addressed to the leader later in the oracle: “Will you really say 'I am a god (*'ēlōhīm*)?’” (Ezek 38:9).

ruler's trade success and great wealth inflated his pride (v. 5 *wayyigbah ləbābəkā*). For the sake of clarity, the charges are plainly laid out in verse 6: “Because you made your mind like the mind of a god” (*ya’an tittākā ’et ləbābəkā kələb ’əlōhīm*). This ruler's hubris manifested itself in claims of divinity, an offense not unlike the Babylonian king's effort to raise himself above Yahweh in Isaiah 14. The difference lies in the fact that he Tyrian ruler made an ontological boast in claiming divinity, whereas the Babylonian king made no such claim but attempted to usurp Yahweh's kingship.

Like the leader of Tyre, Pharaoh king of Egypt is also reprimanded for hubris in the book of Ezekiel. Pharaoh boasts, “My Nile (*yā ’ōrī*) is my own, and I have made it for myself (*’āšītīnī*)” (Ezek 29:3).³⁹ This accusation is repeated in 29:9b and serves as the reason for Yahweh's assertion that he is against Pharaoh and his rivers (Ezek 29:10a, cf. 3a): “Because you⁴⁰ said, 'The Nile (*yā ’ōr*) is mine and I have made it,' therefore I am against you and your rivers (*yā ’ōrəkā*).” The Egyptian king's statement is a veiled claim to divinity, for his assertion placed himself in the role of creator/provisioner – an unacceptable claim from a Yahwistic perspective.⁴¹ Zimmerli insightfully notes that the “insufferable hubris” of the Egyptian king's words come into sharp relief when compared to Yahweh's similar claim in texts such as Ezek 17:24 and 22:14.⁴²

Ezekiel 31 further implicates the king of Egypt for hubris. Ezekiel is instructed to

39 It is entirely possible that one should emend *yā ’ōrī* to *yā ’ōray* “My Nile branches” and *’āšītīnī* to *’āšītīnīm* “I made them,” as does Zimmerli, Ezekiel, 106. However, if one retains the text as it stands, both parts of Pharaoh's boasts are emphatic: “My Nile is *mine own*, and I have made it *for myself*.” For the dative pronominal suffixes in Hebrew, see Joüon and Muraoka 2009, §125 and especially bc.

40 Reading with the LXX (τοῦ λέγειν σε) for MT *’āmar*. Zimmerli and the BHS note that *’āmorəkā* may be read, and Zimmerli notes that *’ēmōr* is likewise a possibility; see Zimmerli 1983, 108.

41 Cf. *ibid.*, 111: “In contrast to the statement by the prince of Tyre, who deduced his divinity from his majestic dwelling place (28:2[9]), what is expressed here about the representative of Egypt is his unrestricted right of ownership of the precious waters of the Nile from which Egypt lives, a right which is justified on the basis of his own creative activity.”

42 Zimmerli 1983, 111.

speak “to the king of Egypt and his pomp (*hāmônô*),” comparing him to Assyria⁴³ (Ezek 31:2-3). The pronouncement extols Assyria, described as a cedar in Lebanon, for its former greatness (Ezek 31:4-9). But then a change in circumstances occurs, for Assyria received condemnation for pride: “Therefore thus said Lord Yahweh, “Because it⁴⁴ was exalted in height, and he placed its top between the boughs, and his heart was lifted up in his height (*wārām lābābô bāgobhō*)...” (Ezek 31:10). Assyria's disposition is particularly striking in light of Yahweh's assertion in verse 9: “I have made it (*’āšītîw*) beautiful...” Assyria, in its pride, had failed to recognize Yahweh's role in bringing it greatness. The underlying implication is that Assyria presumed to have made itself, recalling at once Pharaoh's explicit claim to have made the Nile earlier in the book (Ezek 29:3). The pride of Assyria relates directly to the king of Egypt by analogy, for just as the Assyria was condemned for hubris, so would the king of Egypt, an implication derived from both the question posed to the king of Egypt in Ezek 31:2 (“Whom are you like [*dāmîṭā*] in your greatness?”) and Ezek 31:18 (“Whom are you like [*dāmîṭā*] thus in honor and greatness among the trees of Eden?”).

Even exemplary kings were not immune from pride. According to the Chronicler, Hezekiah responded with pride to Yahweh's answer to the king's prayer concerning his deadly illness (2 Chr 32:25): “But Hezekiah did not give back according to his (received) benefit, for his heart was exalted (*gābah libbô*).”⁴⁵ Japhet correctly states that, “It is not

43 Many emend *’aššûr* in Ezek 31:3 to *ṭā’āššûr* (a type of tree); e.g. *BHS*, *HALOT* 1:94; Eichrodt 1970, 422; Zimmerli 1983, 141. I have retained *’aššûr* as it is because in my view it is entirely appropriate to compare the prideful Egyptian king with the vanquished Assyrian empire. Additionally, as Zimmerli notes, *’aššûr* is “unanimously attested by all the versions” (ibid., 141).

44 The MT reads “you were exalted” (*gābahtā*), but since the remainder of the passage is in the third person, it is necessary to emend the text to *gābah* with the note in *BHS*.

45 See note 27 on *gōdel lēbāb* above.

made clear in this passage what exactly in Hezekiah's actual conduct is conceived of as evidence of his 'pride'...⁴⁶ This is precisely the point: Hezekiah is punished for his hubris, his prideful attitude, not a specific physical act.⁴⁷ The king failed to acknowledge or credit Yahweh, a similar form of hubris to the king of Egypt discussed above.

Three rulers are accused of pride in the book of Daniel. The first of these is Nebuchadnezzar. Though the Babylonian king initially recognized the sovereignty of God (Dan 4:2-3 [Aram 3:32-33]), he later grows in pride. Nebuchadnezzar's pompous words highlight his offense: "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built as a royal house in the might of my power and for the majesty of my splendor?" (Dan 4:30 [Aram 4:27]). The immediate divine response ("a voice from heaven" [4:31, Aram 4:28]) to Nebuchadnezzar's reflection further illuminates the king's offense, for his punishment will last "...until you know that the Most High is master over the kingdom of humanity and he will give it to whomever he wishes" (4:32 [Aram 4:29]). Nebuchadnezzar, then, believed he built Babylon and achieved his great dominion by his own might. Later Daniel's words to Belshazzar accentuate Nebuchadnezzar's hubris, for in Dan 5:20 Daniel reminds Belshazzar that his predecessor was punished when "his heart rose up (*rim libābēh*) and his spirit grew strong so as to act insolently (*wərūḥēh tiqqat lahāzādā*)."⁴⁸

The other two rulers who are condemned for their pride in the book of Daniel are Belshazzar and Antiochus IV Epiphanes. These two rulers differ from those already mentioned, and thus belong to the second group of prideful rulers – namely those cases where a ruler's hubris is closely tied to another offense. Instead of a pride functioning as

46 Japhet 1993, 993.

47 This is what separates both Uzziah and Narām-Sîn from the rulers in this section (see below).

48 The idiom *rim libab* means "to be arrogant"; see *HALOT* 1:1980.

an offense in and of itself, it instead serves as a catalyst for a subsequent offense. In these cases an intangible prideful attitude manifests itself in a tangible offense.

Belshazzar is explicitly condemned for being a prideful ruler. In Dan 5:22 Daniel tells Belshazzar that, “You did not humble your heart” (*lā’ hašpēlt libābāk*). Such an attitude was especially flagrant since Belshazzar knew the punishment his prideful predecessor Nebuchadrezzar suffered for the same crime (Dan 5:21-22). Yet Daniel continues by saying,

and you have raised yourself up (*hitrōmantā*) against the Lord (*mārē’*) of the heavens, and the vessels of his house were brought before you, and you and your nobles, your concubines, mistresses, drank wine from them, and you praised (*šabbahtā*) the gods of silver and gold, bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see, hear, or know, but you did not glorify (*haddartā*) the God in whose hand is your breath and all your ways (Dan 5:23).

According to Daniel's words, Belshazzar's pride came first in that he did not humble himself, and his prideful attitude lead him to misuse the vessels from the Jerusalem temple, a cultic offense (7.2.2).

The ruler represented by the boisterous horn (*ūpum māmāllil rabrābān*) in Dan 7:8, that is, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, will speak words against God (*ūmillīn lašad ‘illā’ā*⁴⁹ *yāmāllil*) in connection with cultic crimes (7.2.2) and opposition against God's elect (8.3.3.2) according to the interpreter of Daniel's visions (Dan 7:25). Similarly, in Dan 8:11a the same ruler, again represented by a horn (v.9), acts arrogantly against God:

“Even up to the Prince of the Hosts (*šar haššābā’*)⁵⁰ it elevated itself (*higdīl*).”⁵¹ Again,

49 Reading with the *qārē*.

50 Collins states “...there can be no doubt that the reference is to God” (Collins 1993, 333).

51 The specific translation of *higdīl* is critical, for this verb implies hubris. The *hiphil* of *gd* can be intransitive, that is an “internal *hiphil*,” where “the subject causes itself to be regarded as great (i.e., ‘to talk big’)” (see Waltke-O’Connor 1990, 440, where Dan 8:11 is listed as an example of the internal *hiphil* in note 17). The translation “it elevated itself” captures the horn's volition by which it grew exceedingly proud.

this arrogance is connected with tampering with the cult (7.2.2). When Gabriel interprets Daniel's dream in Dan 8:23b, he describes this ruler as “a defiant king” (*melek 'az pānīm*), another description of his pride. In the same passage Gabriel continues, stating that “he will become great in his mind” (*ûbilbābô yagdîl*) and that “against the Prince of princes he will stand” (*wə'al śar śārîm*), a reference to the brazen arrogance by which Antiochus will oppose God himself (Dan 8:25). Relatedly, the hubris of Antiochus appears in Dan 11:36, where it is stated that the king will exalt himself above all gods and speak startling things against the God of gods (*'ēl 'ēlîm*), though admittedly there is no detectable consequence for this arrogance stated in the passage. Nonetheless, it supports the view of Antiochus as a prideful ruler elsewhere in Daniel, one who will eventually be punished.

One more example of a prideful king from the Hebrew Bible remains to be discussed. According to Chronicles, Uzziah's pride surfaced when he decided to attempt to take the role of a priest – an unlawful act for a king according to Chronicles. After becoming strong, Uzziah is described as growing proud (2 Chr 26:16: *ûkəhezqātô gābah libbô*) and then committing a serious cultic violation (7.2.2), an act interpreted as unfaithfulness to Yahweh (*wayyim'al baYHWH*).

Mesopotamian examples have been withheld from this section for one reason alone: pride is not explicitly stated as an offense or as a catalyst for an offense. Though the pride of Narām-Sîn may be a factor in the Curse of Agade (7.2.1), it is not explicitly stated as such. Similarly, Narām-Sîn's pride led him to discount the omens of the gods with disastrous results in the Cuthean Legend of Narām-Sîn (7.1.1), but hubris is not

mentioned as a problem in that particular text. Even Nabonidus' boast in the Verse Account does not properly fit here. When Nabonidus declares, “I am wise, I am knowing, I have seen what is secret” (V 9': *enqēk mūdāka atamar k[atimtu]*), it is not an offense proper, but an ignorant exclamation to be compared with the statements claiming that the king could not properly carry out cultic procedure.⁵² Though it may be maintained that these kings were indeed prideful, within the framework of this study that focuses on offenses that bring punishment, there is no such pride in these accounts.

Table 5. Hubris

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Offense
King of Assyria	HB – Isaiah 10	Hubris (<i>gōdel lēbāb, tip'eret rūm 'ēnāw</i>)
King of Babylon	HB – Isaiah 14	Pride (<i>gə'ōnekā</i>), likening to Yahweh
Sennacherib	HB – 2 Kings 18-19 // Isaiah 37	Arrogance, reviling Yahweh
Leader of Tyre	HB – Ezekiel 28	Hubris (<i>gābah libbākā</i>), claims divinity
Pharaoh	HB – Ezekiel 29, 31	Hubris (<i>wārām ləbābō bəgobhō</i>), claims divinity
Hezekiah	HB – 2 Chronicles 32	Hubris (<i>gābah libbō</i>)
Nebuchadnezzar	HB – Daniel 3/4	Hubris (<i>rim libəbēh, wərūḥēh tiqpat lahāzādā</i>)
Belshazzar	HB – Daniel 5	Hubris (<i>lā' hašpēlt libəbāk, hitrōmamtā</i>) as catalyst
Antiochus IV Epiphanes	HB – Daniel 7, 8, 11	Hubris (<i>higdīl, ūbilbābō yagdīl</i>) as catalyst
Uzziah	HB – 2 Chronicles 26	Hubris (<i>gābah libbō</i>) as catalyst

⁵² Cf. Machinist and Tadmor 1993.

8.3 Opposing the elect of the gods

When a ruler opposes any person or group under the special care of a god, this opposition can take a variety of forms. The type of action taken against these entities is less significant than the fact that the recipient of that action enjoys a high standing with the intervening deities. This standing, indicated by details in the text, makes the action of secondary importance – it shifts the focus from the crime to the victim of the crime. It is this focus that unites the crimes in this section. Those entities that held such special standing are at the core number of chastised rulers of this section, and will here be referred to as the “elect” of the gods.

Those whom a god specially cares for, as will be seen, can be a country, city, population, or specific ruler. In what follows, these elect fall into three general categories. Violations against the god's elect ruler, as in the cases of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, Aḥšēri, and Yagid-Lim, comprise the first category. The second category involves cities under *kidinnūtu*, a special status held by some Mesopotamian cities that exempted them economic and military burdens. In two cases below, the gods punish a ruler for his decision to violate cities under *kidinnūtu*. In the third category, several deities avenge opposition taken against their specific domains. Ninurta avenges the crimes committed in his temple against the people of Nippur, the home of Ninurta's main cult center. In a number of cases, Marduk retaliates for crimes committed against Babylon, the city where he served as the patron deity. Likewise, the mistreatment of the inhabitants of Uruk, Ištar's main city, is one of the crimes that angers Ištar. Similar to these examples are the biblical texts where Yahweh is said to take action against those who opposed

Israel/Judah. The cosmic effects of the Ruler of Malgium's attack on Yamūtbāl suggests that this attack offended “Šamaš, the lord of Yamūtbāl.” Relatedly, Antiochus IV Epiphanes' persecution of the Jews is also placed in this third category.

8.3.1 Opposing the gods' elect ruler (Mesopotamia)

Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's cultic crimes and his failure to keep the treaty of Aššur in Aššur's Response to Ashurbanipal's Report on the Šamaš-šuma-ukīn War (*SAA* 3 44) has already been mentioned (7.2.1 and 7.3.1). To these the text adds another offense: opposing Ashurbanipal. On two occasions, the action which Šamaš-šuma-ukīn took against Ashurbanipal is twice mentioned as serious violations in the eyes of the god Aššur. In the text, Aššur says that consequence befell Šamaš-šuma-ukīn “Because of these evil deeds (*epšēte annâte limnē!te*) which Šamaš-šuma-ukīn committed against you” (3). Elsewhere in this text the nature of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's offense is made more explicit, for Aššur says:

As for Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, who did not observe my treaty and then sinned (*iḫtū*) against the goodwill of Ashurbanipal, the king, beloved of my heart (*narām libbīya*)...(7-8).

Ashurbanipal's special standing with Aššur is confirmed as the god calls the king “beloved of my heart (*narām libbīya*).” In addition Aššur had personally appointed Ashurbanipal as king (12), underscoring Ashurbanipal as Aššur's elect. It is for this reason that Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's crimes are considered “sin” against Ashurbanipal. The “sin” is linked to Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's failure to uphold Aššur's treaty, but this does not necessitate the accusation of sinning against Ashurbanipal. Rather the “sinning” against Ashurbanipal and the violation of Aššur's treaty tie the two together, emphasizing

Ashurbanipal's high standing with Aššur. Finally, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's treaty violation is not the only offense in view: line 7 mentions the “evil deeds” carried out by the king, suggesting a number of actions taken against Ashurbanipal were in view.

A text encountered earlier in this study shows a scenario similar to that in *SAA* 3 44. Yagid-Lim violated a solemn oath (*nīš ilim dannam*) in times past according to *ARM* 1 3 (7.3.1). Like *SAA* 3 44, this broken oath is paramount to an act against another ruler: “Yagid-Lim sinned (*u[g]allil*) against Ila-Kabkabu” (11-14). The broken oath did not just involve Nergal (as will be seen in a moment) and another offender, but also another ruler. This other ruler, Ila-Kabkabu, quickly became favored by Nergal once the deity learned the circumstances of the violation (14), for Nergal sided with Ila-Kabkabu and battled on his behalf (15).

Both of the last two texts (*SAA* 3 44 and *ARM* 1 3), though similar to the oath violations in 7.3.1, differ from those violations in one important respect: both texts explicitly link a violated oath with a divine party and a wronged human party. It is true that a broken oath by nature would have involved a wronged human party, but a wronged human party is not always mentioned in the explanations of the violation. The inclusion of three parties (deity, offender, human victim) sets these two texts apart from those with only two parties (deity and offender), while highlighting the elevated status of the ruler with which the god sides.

The inscriptions of Ashurbanipal exhibit two instances where opposition against Ashurbanipal are considered violations that result in punishment from the gods. The first instance involves Aḫšēri, king of Mannāyya: “Aḫšēri, the one who did not fear (*lā pālih*)

my lordship (*bēlūtīya*), Aššur and Ištar delivered him (*imnūšu*) into the hands of his servants” (B §24 III 82-83).⁵³ Elsewhere this crime is repeated (A §28 III 4-7):⁵⁴

Aḥšēri, the one who did not fear (*lā pāliḥ*) my lordship, according to the word of Ištar who dwells in Arbela (*ina amāt Ištar 5āšibat Arbela*), which she previously spoke thus, “The death of Aḥšēri, king of the land of Mannāyya, which I previously spoke, I will now carry out.” She delivered (*tamnūšu*) him into the hands of his servants.

In these cases, Aḥšēri's failure to recognize the overlordship of Ashurbanipal, however it may have transpired historically, is an offense to which the gods react. That the specifics of the offense are not laid out (rebellion? failure to pay tribute?) demonstrates that the theological significance lies in opposing Ashurbanipal rather than the historical particulars of that opposition. The sentiment in both of these episodes are the same: Aḥšēri's doom, connected to the divine sphere, is tied to his failure to submit to the elect king.

In the second instance of punishable opposition to Ashurbanipal, the opposition is more clearly defined than in the case of Aḥšēri. Šamaš-šuma-ukīn incurred the wrath of a litany of gods for his rebellion against his brother (A §39 IV 46-52):⁵⁵

Aššur, Sīn, Šamaš, Adad, Bēl, Nabû, Ištar of Nineveh, Šarrat-kidmuri, Ištar of Arbela, Ninurta, Nergal, and Nuska, who went before me, (who) killed my opponents, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, the enemy brother who crossed me (*īgiranni*), they threw him in a blazing “fall of Girra,”⁵⁶ and then they destroyed his life.

Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's offense falls in line with that of Aḥšēri, namely opposition against Ashurbanipal. However, the case of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is more explicit, for the text states that this “enemy brother” crossed (*īgiranni*) Ashurbanipal, an allusion to Šamaš-šuma-

53 Transliteration from Borger 1996, 35.

54 Transliteration from Borger 1996, 35.

55 Transliteration from Borger 1996, 43–44.

56 Following Borger, who translates “Fall des Gira' (d.h. Feuersbrunst)” (Borger 1996, 234).

ukīn's rebellion against his brother. The offense is, again, directed against Ashurbanipal as indicated by the pronominal suffix on the verb (*īgiranni*) and answered by the gods. Thus, it is an offense against Ashurbanipal in particular, and his high standing among the gods, that constitutes an offense punishable by the gods.

8.3.2 Opposing cities with *kidinnūtu* status (Mesopotamia)

A limited number of Mesopotamian cities enjoyed *kidinnūtu* status. *Kidinnūtu* is defined as “privileged status (of city or temple personnel)”⁵⁷ and “exempt status, protection.”⁵⁸ It is an abstract noun formed from *kidinnu*, which designates “divine protection (mainly for the citizens of a city), divinely enforced security (symbolized by a sacred insigne).”⁵⁹ Cities described as being under *kidinnu/kidinnūtu* included Babylon, Nippur, Sippar, Uruk, Borsippa, Ḫarrān, and Assur.⁶⁰

Chamaza notes that cities under *kidinnūtu* status were privileged, protected by the ruler, and supposed to be exempt from certain economic and military burdens.⁶¹ Similarly, Holloway states that, “Generally speaking, such privileges entailed exemption from military conscription, corvée, and a variety of taxes and imposts.”⁶² In this way, *kidinnūtu* is difficult to separate from other similar privileges: *andurāru*, *šubarrû*, *zakûtu*.⁶³ These similar terms, however, highlight the civil nature of *kidinnūtu* status.

Though kings may grant (or re-establish) *kidinnūtu* status,⁶⁴ it ultimately came

57 *CAD K*, 344.

58 *CDA*, 156.

59 *CAD K*, 342. Cf. *CDA*, 156, which states that this noun approximates “protection, aegis.”

60 George 1992, 264-265 and Frame-Grayson 1994, 8 (note to 3').

61 Chamaza 1992, 26-27.

62 Holloway 2002, 296; cf. Frame-Grayson 1994, 7-8 (note to 3').

63 Frame-Grayson 1994, 7 (note to 3').

64 E.g., RINAP 4, no. 105, vii 33 (208).

from the gods. Note the following excerpt from the Advice to a Prince (29b-30):

An, Enlil, and Ea, the great gods, the ones who dwell in the heavens and earth, in their assembly (*ina puhrīšunu*) established (*ukinnū*) their exemption (*šubarrāšunu*).

Concerning line 30, George states the following:

The nature of *kidinnu*-status in the first millennium – exemption from military service, conscript labour and certain taxes and tribute – can be determined from the text known as Advice to a Prince, which explains that freedom from such obligations was decreed for Sippar, Nippur and Babylon in the divine assembly (*BWL*, p. 112, 30; the word used in this text to denote such freedom is *šubarrū*, a term synonymous in the context with *kidinnu*).⁶⁵

One can see, then, that the Mesopotamians believed that the gods granted these cities their special status. Thus, it is not surprising that a violation of the the civil privileges protected by the divinely decreed *kidinnūtu* status could bring punishment from the gods. Put simply, to violate a city's *kidinnūtu* status was to violate a divine decree, for such a city was under the aegis of the gods. Such a crime merited divine punishment, a notion suggested by the basic meaning of *kidinnu* and confirmed by the texts below.

A fragment (K 1349) which relates the ascent of Sargon II to the throne paints Shalmaneser V as a chastised king. The text reports the following:

Shalmaneser, who did not fear the king of everything, on that city he laid his hand with evil intent (*qāssu ana lemutti ubilma*) and then placed [...] he bitterly imposed (*[īmidm]a*) upon his people (state) service (*ilku*) and force labor (*tupšikku*),⁶⁶ and then he counted the population⁶⁷ as *ḥupšu*⁶⁸(31-33).⁶⁹

This excerpt accuses Shalmaneser of three similar infractions, all of which are tied

65 George 1992, 265.

66 A military connotation can underlie the phrase *ilku (u) tupšikku* (*CDA* p. 410).

67 Though *ummānāti* appears to refer to the people, the (common) military connotation of *ummānu* should be kept in mind, particularly in light of the previous and following notes.

68 *CDA* renders *ḥupšis* “as a plebeian,” (p. 121), but note *CAD*'s military nuance (*CAD* Ҫ *ḥupšu* A entry e, 241).

69 For transliteration, see Chamaza 1992, 23; Saggs 1975, 14.

together as a violation of Assur's status (12, 29: URU *ki-di-ni*), for Shalmaneser had acted criminally towards the city, imposed corvée upon the people and lowered their status to that of *hupšu*.⁷⁰ Shalmaneser's actions, as portrayed in the text, violated the privileges supposed to be protected by Assur's *kidinnūtu* status. Historically speaking, even if Shalmaneser V simply continued customary policy,⁷¹ the particular formulation of the text places full responsibility on Shalmaneser for eradicating the city's privileges. Thus, Holloway's comments are on point:

Whether Shalmaneser V systematically violated the civic privileges of Assur is historically moot; that Sargon II could exploit such a narrative as a foil for his better, fairer rise to kingship bespeaks the depth of the ideological connection between a just king and the maintenance of these exemptions.⁷²

In this case, historical reality is trumped by the text's portrayal of the circumstances that brought punishment on Shalmaneser.

Indeed, as Holloway's quote indicates, the king's maintenance of the *kidinnūtu* status of qualifying cities is a matter of justice, and violating that status constitutes a violation of royal duty. However, what separates this particular incident involving Shalmaneser from those in 8.1.2 is that in this case the violation is not just a perversion of royal duty, but a violation directed against a particular entity (Assur) which had special status (*kidinnūtu*) with a god. The combination of divine punishment, specific (civic) offenses, and special standing of Assur makes Shalmaneser's crime an example of opposing a city under the special care of a god.

Similar violations to those of Shalmaneser appear in the Advice to a Prince.

70 Holloway 2002, 297.

71 A possibility that Chamaza cautions may be the historical reality (Chamaza 1992, 28–29).

72 Holloway 2002, 297.

Though the Mesopotamian king's failure to uphold justice was an offense which brought divine punishment according to the Advice to a Prince (8.1.2), other portions of this text are specifically concerned with the king's mistreatment of the inhabitants of Babylon, Nippur, and Sippar, the southern Mesopotamian cities under the *kidinnūtu* status:⁷³

(If) he takes silver of the sons of Babylon and then sends it into (his) property (15)

(If) he simultaneously sets in motion Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon to impose forced labor on these people (*šābī šunūti tupšikka emēdam*), (and/or if) he assigns upon them the (state) service at the proclamation of the herald (*ilki šisūt nāgiri elišunu ukannu*) (23-25)

(If) he levies those people (i.e., the “sons” of Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon) in the call-up of the country's army or the king's troops (*šābī⁷⁴ šunūtu ina dikūti ummān māti ʿū šābī šarri⁷⁵ idekkū⁷⁶*) (35)

(If) he levies the tax of their sheep⁷⁷ (41)

(If) he voids their treaties (*riksīšun upaṭṭarūma*) and then changes their stelae (*narāšunu ušannū*), sends them on a campaign, (or) imposes work on them (*ana*

73 In their discussion of *kidinnu/kidinnūtu*, Frame and Grayson state the following: “...concern to protect the rights and privileges of the citizens of Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon is clearly what was behind the text known as “Advice to a Prince...” (Frame-Grayson 1994, 7 (note to 3’). Cf. also George 1992, 265.

74 ÉRIN.MEŠ.

75 Where Lambert *BWL* 112 has ʿitti šābī (‘ÉRIN.MEŠ’) for D.T. 1, Cole *Nippur* 270 has ʿu(!?) ÉRIN.MEŠ LUGAL’ for D.T. 1 and ʿū ÉRIN.MEŠ’ for IM 77087.

76 The verb *i-de-ku-ú*, which occurs only in D.T. 1 (IM 77087 is broken) is read differently by Lambert and Cole. Lambert’s translation suggests an N-stem (*iddekkū*): “and those men will be mobilized with the king’s men when the national army is conscripted” (Lambert *BWL* 113). Cole’s translation, on the other hand, suggests a G-stem (*idekkū*): “If [he called up th]ose [men] in a mobilization of the national or royal arm[y,...]” (Cole *Nippur* 273). Both understandings of *i-de-ku-ú* are possible, but *idekkū* makes the best sense of the context. If one reads *iddekkū*, the subjects of the verb are the “sons” of Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon, and they would then be included among the king’s fighting force as a consequence of the king’s action in line 31, where the king appears to inappropriately handle the fodder of the aforementioned group(s) by giving it to his own war horses. A problem with this reading is that the consequences of the king’s misuse of the fodder already occur, namely, that the animals will be led away (33-34). Such a punishment is an appropriate consequence given the text’s penchant for repeating a lexical item in the protasis and apodosis (in this case, *mūrnisqu*). Though not impossible, extending the consequences to include the mobilization and defeat of the army seems unnecessary. Instead, reading *i-de-ku-ú* as a third masculine singular G-stem durative with a subordinate *-u* creates another circumstance by which the king’s mistreatment of the inhabitants of Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon results in serious military disaster. In this case, the antecedent of *šābī šunūtu* is carried over from 31, that is, the “sons” of Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon.

77 Cole’s note to line 40 directs the reader to *CAD* Š entry *šibtu* C for *šibtu* as tax levied on animals (Cole *Nippur* 274). Note specially *šibtu* C 3’, where the example from the text at hand occurs.

*adê i[mannû]šunūti*⁷⁸) (51-52)

Later in the text a specific violation is expanded to include authorities subordinate to the king:

(If) either a shepherd (*rē'û*) (IM 77087: ⁵⁶ overseer/inspector [⁶*šāpiru/(w)aklu*]), or administrator of the temple (*šatam ēkurri*), or general of the king (*šūt rēši šarri*) who serves as an administrator (*šatam ēkurri*) of the temple in Sippar, Nippur, or Babylon, imposes forced labor of the houses of the great gods on them (*tupšikku bītāt ilī rabūti immedūšunūti*) (55-57)

That these authorities have lower political standing is an important detail, one already encountered in 7.2.1 (governor of Uruk) and 7.3.1 (Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir), demonstrating further that violations that bring divine punishment can be committed by high authorities other than kings.

These crimes from the Advice to a Prince can be generally placed into two groups. The first involves improper taxation, the second the appropriation of the inhabitants for the ruler's purposes (war, labor). These violations are against cities which otherwise are supposed to have special standing and are thus to be exempt from the taxation and corvée.

8.3.3 Opposing the gods' domain

8.3.3.1 Mesopotamian literature

A copy of a votive inscription published by George (MS 3210)⁷⁹ reports Kurigalzu II's fabrication of a sword for Ninurta in return for the god's act of vengeance on an unnamed ruler.⁸⁰ According to the text, Ninurta is reacting to the nameless leader's

78 For the restoration see Cole's note to line 52 (Cole *Nippur* 274).

79 Text no. 61 in George 2011, 117–118.

80 George 2011, 117.

actions taken against the god (1-15):

Against⁸¹ Ninurta, the lord who is endowed with fearsome fury, flattener of the enemy, a tireless flood, a certain son of someone (⁴*ištīn*⁸² *mār mammānāma*) levied wicked assistance from his mountains, who was of the mountains (and) who did not have a name (and) did not esteem gods, and then he seized the army of Dēr for help, sent (them) and he then brought out the sword in the forecourt of É.DINGIR.E.NE, and he poured out the blood of the sons of Nippur like water (¹⁵*dam mārī Nippuru* ¹⁶*kīma mē itbuk*).

An interpretive issue in this text revolves around the leader responsible for mustering the forces by which he slaughtered the inhabitants of Nippur. Quite obviously, he remains unnamed throughout the text. Additionally, his social and political status goes without mention as well. One can with confidence affirm that the person in view was a political leader, able to call up a military force large enough that it could threaten the dominion of Kurigalzu to such an extent that the latter could not rescue Nippur.

While the antagonist in the text is completely unidentified, one cannot help but notice that the text is directly focused on him. The verbs which convey the actions taken against Ninurta and Nippur are third singular: the antagonist levied troops (*idkâššumma*), seized forces (*iḥuzamma*), sent personnel (*[i]t²ru²da²mma*), brought out weaponry (*ušēšīma*), and poured out blood (*itbuk*). The repeated focus on this individual's actions suggests the possibility that, in its ancient setting, the context of these events was well-known and did not need to be spelled out, including both the actions and identity of this purported notorious ruler.

The actions of the ruler are against Ninurta, for the antecedent of the dative suffix on the verb *idkâššumma* is none other than the deity first mentioned at the very beginning

81 “Against,” with *ibid.*, 118. That the action (levying troops) is directed against Ninurta is revealed in the dative suffix on the verb (*idkâššumma*).

82 George's comments direct the reader for this use of *ištēn* (*ibid.*).

of the text. At the same time, the actions are manifestly against the people of Nippur, for the leader “then brought out the sword in the forecourt of É.DINGIR.E.NE, and he poured out the blood of the sons of Nippur like water.” The levying of troops and the slaughter of the inhabitants of Nippur, then, is considered to be against Ninurta himself.

The severity of the violent slaughter is heightened, for it transpired against the citizens of Nippur, the principle city of Ninurta's cult – this was no ordinary city in the eyes of Ninurta. Moreover, the unnamed ruler committed his crime in the forecourt of Ninurta's temple É.SAG.DINGIR.E.NE.⁸³ Both the victims and the location of the offense had special standing in relation to Ninurta, and so the crime was indeed against Ninurta. Ninurta will even act to avenge the slaughtered citizens of Nippur (17-18: *bēlum rabû Ninurta gimilli mārī Nippuru ana turri*). This act, then, is an example of opposing the domain of a deity.

A literary letter from Sîn-muballit (MS 3302), almost certainly the brother of Rīm-Sîn,⁸⁴ contains another example of the penalties which, according to ancient belief, a ruler could receive for opposing a divinely favored ruler. Unfortunately, the addressee's name is broken off, but George states “...as becomes clear from the rest of the letter, he is the ruler of a minority polity and evidently an erring vassal of Larsa whose actions have annoyed Rīm-Sîn.”⁸⁵ The polity at hand is Malgium, so that an unnamed ruler of Malgium who exercised power during the time of Rīm-Sîn (and Hammurapi, see note 86 below) is the assumed addressee. The unfortunate break, then, only minimally hinders

83 Ibid., 117 states the only known temple of Ninurta with this name was in Dūr-Kurigalzu (Aqar Quf), making the leader's slaughter of Nippur's inhabitants a curiosity in light of the long distance between the two locales. George speculates that perhaps the cult center in Dūr-Kurigalzu borrowed the same name from an unattested sanctum in Nippur. One would have expected É.ŠU.ME.ŠA₄.

84 George 2009, 113.

85 Ibid.

the inclusion of the text within the pages of this study.

In the relevant section of the text, Sîn-muballiṭ begins by explaining Malgium's loss of political independence in terms of divine punishment from Enlil and Ninurta.⁸⁶ In this initial portion of the section, the city itself is in view without any specific mention of the ruler. Then Sîn-muballiṭ quickly turns to the ruler and takes aim at his actions: “You interfered⁸⁷ and then you pushed away the heavens, and Yamūtbāl, the great brother, you attacked” (27-30: *[qā]tka tumaššī[m]a [ša]mê taskip ʿuʿ Yamūtbāla aḥa rabiam tegri*). Concerning these lines George points out that the ruler's actions were serious enough to “...offend the cosmic order, sending the very skies into reverse,”⁸⁸ at least in the eyes of Sîn-muballiṭ. The cosmic aspect of the ruler's actions is again repeated later in the text: “You interfered⁸⁹ (as if) trying to clamp the axles of the Wagon-of-the-Sky⁹⁰” (46-48: *qātka tumaššīma ana eriq šamê bubātim talât*). The cosmic dimension of the ruler's offense is complemented by the historical event to which the text alludes, that is, an attack made on Yamūtbāl. The attack, mentioned in lines 29-30 and occurring again in lines 51-52 (*Yamūtbālam aʿḥaʿm rabiam tegri*), is said to have been an act of sin against Yamūtbāl perpetrated by the ruler of Malgium (36-37: *ištu ūmim ša ana Yamūtbālim tugallilu*). As indicated by the singular verbs, Sîn-muballiṭ singled out the leader of Malgium for his actions.

The cosmic effects of a ruler's actions taken against Yamūtbāl suggest a divine

86 Ibid., 119 suggests the historical event referred to is the city's fall at the hands of Hammurapi of Babylon.

87 “You interfered (?)” following George (ibid., 116). See George's note to line 27 for his explanation of the translation.

88 Ibid., 114.

89 Following George, see note 87 above.

90 “(as if) trying to clamp the axles of the Wagon- of-the-Sky,” following George 2009, 116. See George's comments to lines 47-48 for details.

element to the ruler's "sinning" (*gullulu*) against that same territory. However, that Sîn-muballiṭ considered the attack on Yamūtbāl to be against the gods as well is put more plainly in lines 31-35: "The matter you carried out will not be extinguished forever. May Sîn (and) Šamaš, the lord of Yamūtbāl, not release you from the matter" (31-35: *awāt tēpušu ana warkāt ūmim ul tebe' lli' Sîn Šamaš bēl Yamūtbālim ina awātim ayy-ipturūnikkum*). The implication in these lines is that Sîn and Šamaš hold the ruler guilty for his specific entanglement with Yamūtbāl, and that these gods are responsible for the anguish from which the ruler suffers (10.1.2.1).

The Weidner Chronicle attributes an offense committed against a specific city to Sargon of Akkad. According to the text, after Sargon of Akkad found favor with Marduk, Marduk gave him the kingship of the land. But eventually, Sargon violated the sensibilities of Marduk by building a replica of Babylon: "He (Sargon) excavated (*issuḥma*) the dust of its pit⁹¹ and then, opposite Akkad, he made a city, and then he called it's name 'Babylon.'"⁹² Though the precise nature of Sargon's offense is debatable,⁹³

91 Reading *šat-pi-i-šu* (*šatpīšu*) with *ABC*, p. 149, cf. note 5. Alternatively, one could read *šat pi-šú* with Al-Rawi 1990, 6; Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 266.

92 Transliterations and numbering taken from the composite text in Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 266.

93 Glassner states, "Should we see here an allusion to the Assyrian practice of transporting soil from conquered territories to be trampled daily under the feet of its conquerors? This seems dubious. Rather, comparison with Nabonidus seems more likely, as he was reproached for wanting to construct at Tayma, in the north of the Arabian peninsula, a replica of the palace in Babylon" (Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 87). Van de Mieroop believes the ancients to have perceived the founding of a new city to be an act of hubris, and uses Sargon's similar offense in the Chronicle of Early Kings (see below) as his example (Van de Mieroop 1997, 59). Note that Inanna favors Enmerkar over the Lord of Aratta specifically because the latter does not build a temple like the Eanna in Uruk according to "Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta" (Jacobsen 1987, 287). In this same composition, the removal of dust is associated with the destruction of a city (Jacobsen 1987, 278). At the same time, the removal of dust is not always associated with destruction, for it can be associated with temple renovations, as in *ABC* 10:6, '13, 33; 11:2; *BCHP* 6:8'; AD I, p. 220-229, No. -321 (BM 34093 + BM 35758) 14' (http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/bchp-diadochi/diadochi_06.html#Ad2); cf. *BCHP* 13:9. Differently, yet not insignificant, is that organic material from sacred precincts takes on heightened significance elsewhere in ancient literature. Concerning Nippur, the Sumerian "Hymn to Enlil" states, "Its soil is the life's breath of the country, the life's breath of all the lands" (Jacobsen 1987, 106). After

Sargon's construction of a model of Babylon as a crime fits well into the overarching framework of the text. The initial portion of the text describes the supremacy of Marduk, Babylon, and Esagil, by way of a night vision (14-32). With Babylon in view, the text continues (37-39):

Whoever sins against the gods of this⁹⁴ city, his star will not stand in the heavens [...] the king(ship?)⁹⁵ will come to an end. His scepter will be taken away. His treasury will be turned into a heap and ruin.

Thus, the text's emphasis on Babylon is made clear at the beginning of the text. Babylon has special status, and any act against any part of the city would then be an offense that precipitated punishment from the gods. The offensive nature of Sargon's replica of Babylon, then, makes sense within the literary context of the work.⁹⁶

Sargon is not the only ruler guilty of committing hostile acts Babylon according to the Weidner Chronicle, for both Narām-Sîn and Utu-ḫegal are singled out for their deeds. Narām-Sîn is guilty of “ruining” the inhabitants of Babylon: “Narām-Sîn ruined (*ušalpitma*) the population (*nammaššê*)⁹⁷ of Babylon...” (62). Here it is a crime committed against the privileged city's inhabitants that is in view.

Utu-ḫegal's crime against Babylon in the Weidner Chronicle differs from the

being healed of his skin disease, Naaman asks for two loads of earth to bring back to Aram so that he might sacrifice to Yahweh in his homeland (2 Kgs 5:17). In *ARM* 26 184, clods from the cities of Urgan, Ašlakka, and Šuruzum are sent to Mari in order that they may be used in extispicies. Additionally, Al-Rawi 1990, 10 translates “...he took earth from his pit and built a city opposite Babylon; and called its name Agade,” and then adds that “all four mss. read here: build a city opposite Agade; and called its name Babylon.” Similarly, Glassner translates, “He took earth out of the ground and, facing Akkade, made a city and named it Babylon” (Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 267), and states on 291 note 10 that the two place names should be reversed.

94 Literally “that,” but since the anaphoric pronoun refers to the already mentioned city of Babylon, it is best rendered “this.”

95 On “king(ship?),” see note 34 on p. 128 (chapter 7).

96 I have not placed Sargon's replica in the same category as Nabonidus' replica. Both the Cyrus Cylinder and the Verse Account state that Nabonidus made a model of Esagil – a temple. Sargon made a copy of Babylon. Thus Sargon's offense is more akin to those crimes committed against special cities of high standing, rather than to offenses that deal directly with cult.

97 For *nammaššû* referring here to humans instead of “animals,” see *ABC* 147, comment to line 32.

crimes of both Sargon and Narām-Sîn. After Utu-ḫegal apparently gained divine favor by attempting to offer a fish to Marduk before the Gutians intervened, Utu-ḫegal's divine favor quickly deteriorated upon ascending the throne through maltreatment of Babylon: “Utu-ḫegal, the (temple) fisherman laid his hand on his city with evil intent (*qātsu ana ālišu ana lemutti ubilma*)⁹⁸” (69). Utu-ḫegal's offense, as generic as it may be, was leveled directly against Marduk's city.

The Weidner Chronicle's material concerning Sargon reappears in “The Chronicle of Early Kings” (*ABC 20A*), a text which seems to have used the Weidner Chronicle as a source.⁹⁹ Sargon's crime is quite similar to that found in the Weidner Chronicle, albeit in a slightly shorter form with a few stylistic differences. Lines 18-29 state that “He [Sargon] excavated (*issuḫma*) the dust of the pit of Babylon and then alongside Akkad he made a duplicate of Babylon.” This chronicle carries on the tradition of Sargon's crime against Marduk's city.

The “declaration of war” text published by Gerardi (BM 55467),¹⁰⁰ an Achaemenid/Seleucid era copy of a document which Gerardi suggests was written by Nabopolassar to Sîn-šar-iškun just before the Median and Babylonian coalition attacked Nineveh in 612, recites the offenses of Sennacherib and the far reaching consequences which emanated from those crimes. However, Sennacherib's involvement is not laid out in a straightforward way. Nor is Sennacherib the only perpetrator accused in the text, for both Sîn-šar-iškun and the Assyrian kings who preceded him are to blame for the coming punishment. Thus, a discussion of this nuanced text is in order. The following analysis

98 For *babālu* + *qātu* qualified by *ana lemutti*, see *CAD* A1, 19 (*abālu* A 5a).

99 *ABC*, 45ff. Cf. Waerzeggers 2012, 292.

100 Gerardi 1986.

explains who the perpetrators are, and how they relate to each other.

Of immediate interest is that the probable writer, Nabopolassar, explains that Marduk and the gods will avenge Akkad (ʿ10-11):

Because of the evil deeds you committed against the land of Akkad (*lemnētu māt Akkadī tēpušāma*), Marduk, the great lord, and the great gods will call you to account (*išallūʿku ʿnūti*).

One can see, then, that the ensuing punishment will come from the gods. Such divine involvement underscores the high offense which these crimes enumerated in the text had for the gods.

The connection between Sîn-šar-iškun, his predecessors, and the coming punishment may be inferred through both the suggestion made by Gerardi that Sîn-šar-iškun was the intended addressee in combination with the grammatically plural forms which occur throughout the text. Gerardi suggests that the plural forms in lines ʿ10-11, as well as those in ʰ2-9a refer to past Sargonid kings, whereas the singular forms elsewhere (besides ʰ4 and 6) refer to a particular Assyrian king.¹⁰¹ Thus, the plural forms refer to the line of Sargonid kings from Sennacherib (explained below) up through and including Sîn-šar-iškun, and so the accusations tie the current Assyrian ruler with the crimes of his royal ancestors.

The crimes for which Sîn-šar-iškun and the previous rulers incurred guilt are understood most generally as evil deeds committed against Akkad (ʿ10). In lines ʰ2-9a, the crimes are laid out in slightly more detail, including opposition against Marduk's city Babylon (ʿEʿ. KI), removing the property of Esagil to Nineveh (7.2.1), the slaughter of

¹⁰¹Gerardi 1986, 37 suggests the singular verb in ʰ4 (*tušēribi*) may be a scribal error. She offers no suggestion for the singular pronoun in ʰ6 (*harrānaka tēzibā*) because the sentence's meaning is unclear.

city elders, filling the land with disorder, the defeat of the Babylonians (DUMU.MEŠ E.KI), and fostering rebellion in the land without making peace. Taken together, these acts fall under the larger umbrella of evil deeds committed against Babylon. The particular mistreatment of Babylon, Babylonians, and Esagil by Assyrian kings comprises a long line of offenses that brought divine punishment.¹⁰²

Of particular interest is the texts' emphasis on the defeat and plundering of Babylon. As Gerardi states, the event in view could be either Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon in 689 or Ashurbanipal's defeat of Babylon in 648.¹⁰³ Yet the event is clarified in '3-9, where Nabopolassar announces that his divinely commissioned mission of vengeance stems directly from Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon.¹⁰⁴ Particularly relevant are lines '6-9:

By the mouth of Marduk, the great lord, like a heap of sand I will pile up the city of Sennacherib, son of Sargon, offspring of a household slave, plunderer (*[šā]lil*) of the land of Akkad, its foundation I will tear out and then I will destroy the foundations of the land. [...] from his family for all days from Assyria I will remove.

The locus for the divine judgment issued by Marduk and the great gods is Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon, and subsequent rulers continued the guilt until the instrument of divine vengeance (Nabopolassar) executed the gods' punishment.¹⁰⁵

In light of this, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that Sîn-šar-iškun is personally blamed for his part in the evil deeds against Babylon. The sender chastises the intended

102 One can perceive the overlap with the Weidner Chronicle, particularly given the the cultic flavor of the crimes involving the plunder of Esagil.

103 Gerardi 1986, 31.

104 Concerning lines '3-9, Gerardi 1986, 31 states, "These lines not only reveal the purpose of the text but also make the accusations of the obverse more explicit; the revenge desired is specifically in retaliation for Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon."

105 In relation to the line of guilt, Esarhaddon's reversal of his father's Babylonian policy is striking, for it did not atone for crimes of Sennacherib in the eyes of this text's composer.

recipient (likely Sîn-šar-iškun), saying, “Now at the mention of my name you were not afraid (*ul galtāt*). With the command of my mouth you were not in agreement (*ul magrā[t]*). [...] The tablet I sent to you...not...” The singular forms demonstrate that the addressee's personal failures represent the final offenses in the culmination of crimes against Babylon, crimes which originated with Sennacherib.

In this way BM 55467 accuses a series of kings for numerous crimes committed against Babylon. Beginning with Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon and ending with Sîn-šar-iškun's personal failures, all the Assyrian kings bring guilt for various crimes directed specifically at Babylon. This intergenerational transfer of guilt, and its accumulation over time, is unique in the Mesopotamian corpus.

The cultic violations attributed to Nabonidus in the Cyrus Cylinder have already been discussed (7.2.1). In addition to these offenses, the Cyrus Cylinder criticizes Nabonidus for opposing both the city of Babylon and its inhabitants. Line 8 reads, “He (Nabonidus) repeatedly committed (*[īr]eneppuš*) evil (*lemutti*) against his (Marduk's) city. Daily he destroyed (*uḥalliḳ*) all of [...his people] by a yoke without rest (*ina abšāni lā tapšuhiti*).” The misdeeds of Nabonidus are framed as offenses against the property of Marduk. Instead of being ordinary acts, they are instead acts leveled against entities that hold special standing with Marduk – his city and his people.

As previously mentioned, according to Erra and Išum the governor whom Erra placed over Uruk carried out cultic violations (7.2.1). In addition to these, it must be mentioned that this governor's actions had ill-effects upon the Urukeans. Line 60 states that, “He caused them distress (*uššissināīma*).” Whatever the nature of this oppression

may have been, it preceded the governor's cultic violations and constitutes an infraction in its own right.¹⁰⁶ Since Uruk held a special relationship with Ištar, the governor's actions that adversely affect the city's inhabitants are not benign.

8.3.3.2 Hebrew Bible

Opposition to Jerusalem is, in general, an offense against the God of Israel according to the book of Isaiah. Isa 7:1-9 describes the ambition of King Rezin of Aram and King Pekah of Israel to come up against Jerusalem in an attempt to remove Ahaz from the throne and replace him with a certain Tabeel. Isaiah received a divine command to meet, accompanied by his son Shear-jashub, King Ahaz of Judah in order to relay a divine message to the frightened ruler. The message adjured Ahaz not to fear, because the kings' intentions to overthrow Jerusalem and place a new king on the throne would not come to pass (Isa 7:5-7):¹⁰⁷

Because Aram¹⁰⁸ planned calamity against you, (with) Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, saying, “Let us go up against Judah, and let us frighten¹⁰⁹ her and take her by assault, so that we may install a king in her midst, the son of Tabeel,”¹¹⁰ thus said the Lord Yahweh: “It will not stand and it will not be.”

As Wildeberger states, Isaiah's admonitions stem from Zion theology,¹¹¹ a position which held that Yahweh would not permit Jerusalem to be conquered by enemies. In this way the military action conducted by Rezin and Pekah,¹¹² their plan to conquer Jerusalem and place the son of Tabeel upon its throne, opposed Yahweh's city, Jerusalem.

106 *uššissinātīma parṣīšīna ītet[iq]*.

107 Literally, “It will not stand, it will not be” (*lō’ tāqūm wəlō’ tihyē*).

108 Reading with the MT. “Aram” is missing in the LXX.

109 I translate the verb *ūnəqīšennā* as if it were from the *qwš* I as listed in *HALOT* 2, 1089.

110 Reading *tābā’ēl* for *tābā’al*.

111 Wildeberger 1991, 299.

112 Isa 7:1, 4 show that both Rezin and Pekah (son of Remaliah) are in view.

Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, opposition to Israel and/or Judah at large is in view. These examples are built upon the special relationship portrayed between Yahweh and Israel and Judah as portrayed in the biblical texts. One example comes from Jeremiah, where both the king of Assyria and the king of Babylon are singled out for destruction because of the manner in which they treated Israel.¹¹³ The king of Assyria “devoured” (*’ākālō melek ’aššūr*) Israel, and then Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon “gnawed its bones (*’iṣṣəmō*)” (Jer 50:17).¹¹⁴ The “devouring” and “gnawing” most probably refer to the destruction which these two nations brought, namely the Assyrian destruction of Israel in 722 and the destruction of Judah in 597 by Babylon.¹¹⁵

Another example comes from the book of Chronicles. The Chronicler recognizes that Jeroboam's revolt against Rehoboam was connected to both Solomon's sins and Yahweh's punishment for those offenses (2 Chr 10:15; 11:2-4). But once Abijah took the throne, his speech to Jeroboam and the northern forces with which Abijah is at war indicates that Jeroboam's actions were negative (2 Chr 13:5-7). Abijah continues, highlighting Jeroboam's military confrontation with Judah (their trust in numbers and the golden calves) as opposition to the “kingdom of Yahweh” (*mamleket YHWH*), chastising their expulsion of Aaronide priests and Levites to replace them with illegitimate clergy, and implying that they have abandoned Yahweh when he counters: “But as for us,

113 Holladay 1989, 393. Lundbom 2004, 395 states that many, but not all, understand 17a to be genuine and 17b a later prose expansion. Lundbom continues, saying that 17b is commentary, and 18-20 are genuine (after Eissfeldt).

114 In the LXX (= Jer 27:17), “Nebuchadrezzar” does not appear. The text simply mentions “the king of Babylon (βασιλεὺς Βαβυλῶνος).

115 The passage then speaks of Israel and Judah as a unity (“Israel”) rather than two distinct entities (“Israel and Judah”). That the text envisions a single people group is strengthened by Jer 50:17a, where Israel is an individual sheep (*šē*), as has been previously observed, e.g. Holladay 1989, 418; Reimer 1993, 200; Foreman 2011, 84; Lundbom 2004, 396. Lundbom 2004, 396 states, “Envisioned here is progressive destruction: Assyria consumed the flesh, and Babylon gnawed the bones. Reference is to the demise of Northern Israel in 722 B.C.E. and Judah in 586 B.C.E.”

Yahweh is our God, and we have not abandoned him (*'āzabnūhū*)” (2 Chr 13:8-10). Further, since “God is with us at the head” (*'immānū bārō 'š hā 'ēlōhīm*), Abijah warns the northern forces not to fight against Yahweh (*'al tillāḥmū 'im YHWH*) for success in such a scenario would be impossible (2 Chr 13:12). Since Yahweh's kingship and Israel's kingdom¹¹⁶ are coterminous in the eyes of the Chronicler,¹¹⁷ opposing Abijah amounted to a serious crime against Yahweh's domain.

Among the crimes of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, that is, the “horn” highlighted as exceptional in Daniel 7, is opposing (literally “he will wear down” [*yəballē*]) “the holy ones of the Most High (*qaddīšē 'elyônîn*)” (Dan 7:25). The identity of “the holy ones” is debated – some arguing that they are human¹¹⁸ while others contend that they are angelic beings.¹¹⁹ It may be best to avoid a clear distinction between the two options since earth has heavenly counterparts in Daniel.¹²⁰ With this being the case, the action of Antiochus could affect both human and angelic parties: his persecution of the Jews would have reverberations in the heavenly counterpart to earth. In any case, though the nature of “the holy ones” is up for debate, their allegiance is not: they align with *'elyônîn*, an epithet for God. Antiochus' action – the persecution of the Jews – against these holy ones, then, constitutes an act against the elect of God in his domain.

In the following chapter, Antiochus' persecution of the Jews appears again as an offense against God. In interpreting on behalf of Daniel, Gabriel explains that “he will destroy (*wəhišḥîṭ*) the mighty, that is the people of the holy ones (*wə'am qədōšîm*)” (Dan

116 Adapting the Chronicler's distinctive use of “Israel,” focusing primarily on the kingdom of Judah.

117 Cf. Japhet 2009, 308ff.

118 E.g., Di Lella 1977.

119 E.g., Collins 1993, 312–318, 321–322.

120 See Lucas 2002, 192.

8:24).¹²¹ Like Daniel 7, Antiochus is here targeted for oppressing the Jews.

¹²¹ I have understood the *waw* on *wə'am* as an explicative *waw*, with Lucas 2002, 208. Others understand the mighty ones (*'āšûmîm*) to be other rulers (e.g., Collins 1993, 341).

Table 6. Opposing the elect of the gods

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Offense
Šamaš-šuma-ukīn	Meso – <i>SAA</i> 3 44	Opposed Ashurbanipal (2x)
Yagid-Lim	Meso – <i>ARM</i> 1 3	Opposed Ila-Kabkabu
Aḫšēri	Meso – Ashurbanipal	Opposed Ashurbanipal
Šamaš-šuma-ukīn	Meso – Ashurbanipal	Opposed Ashurbanipal
Shalmaneser V	Meso – K 1349	Violated <i>kidinnūtu</i> status of Assur
Hypothetical king	Meso – Advice to a Prince	Violations of the <i>kidinnūtu</i> status of Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon
Unnamed ruler	Meso – MS 3210	Slaughtered the sons of Nippur in Ninurta's temple
Ruler of Malgium	Meso – MS 3302	Attacked Yamūtbāl
Sargon of Akkad	Meso – Weidner	Replica of Babylon
Narām-Sīn	Meso – Weidner	Ruined the population of Babylon
Utu-ḫegal	Meso – Weidner	Mistreated Babylon
Sargon of Akkad	Meso – <i>ABC</i> 20A	Duplicate of Babylon
Sargonid kings from Sennacherib to Sīn-šar-iškun	Meso – BM 55467	Evil deeds against Akkad, city of Babylon, Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon
Nabonidus	Meso – Cyrus Cylinder	Committed Evil against Babylon and its citizens
Governor of Uruk	Meso – Erra and Išum	Distressed the Urukeans
Rezin and Pekah	HB – Isaiah 7	Opposed Jerusalem
King of Assyria	HB – Jeremiah 50	Destruction of Israel
King of Babylon	HB – Jeremiah 50	Destruction of Israel (Judah)
Jeroboam	HB – 2 Chronicles 13	Opposed the kingdom of Yahweh
Antiochus IV Epiphanes	HB – Daniel 7	Wearing down the holy ones of the Most High

8.4 Foreign alliances (Hebrew Bible)

Foreign alliances brought with them serious consequences in several instances in the book of Chronicles. Asa relied on the king of Aram instead of Yahweh (*bəhiššā'enəkā 'al melek 'ārām wəlō'niš'antā 'al YHWH*), an action that also characterized the end of Asa's life (2 Chr 16:7; 11-13). Similarly, Jehoshaphat's marriage alliance with Ahab receives condemnation from Hanani (2 Chr 19:2; cf. 18:1).¹²² In another instance, Jehoshaphat joins (*'eṭhabbar*) with Ahaziah to build ships, an alliance for which he receives prophetic condemnation and divine consequences (2 Chr 20:35-37).

These offenses are unique to the Chronicler, for only in Chronicles are the actual acts of allegiance understood to have been answered with divine punishment. One can compare the alliance of Ahaz and Rezin in Isa 7, where the text states that the actual action (opposition to Jerusalem) was the offense (8.3.3.1) – not the alliance itself. Similarly, the DtrH states that Yahweh punished Solomon for his cultic crimes (5.3), not his marriage alliances recorded in 1 Kgs 3:1; 11:1-8 – though these marriages supposedly led to those cultic crimes. In fact, DtrH's condemnation of Solomon for his foreign marriages was based on the principle that those wives would lead the king into cultic violations (1 Kgs 11:2). Only the Chronicler portrayed acts of allegiance as offenses that could bring punishment from Yahweh (11.1.1.3, 11.1.4.2, 11.1.7.2).

¹²² At first glance it appears that Ahaziah was punished for his alliance made with Jehoram (2 Chr 22:1-7), for the downfall of Ahaziah was from God (*ūmē 'ēlōhīm hāyātā təbūsat 'āḥazyāhū*). However, the death of Ahaziah is connected not to this king's alliance, but to the destruction of the house of Ahab through Jehu (2 Chr 22:8).

Table 7. Foreign alliances

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Offense
Asa	HB – 2 Chronicles 16	Relied on king of Aram
Jehoshaphat	HB – 2 Chronicles 19	Marriage alliance with Ahab
Jehoshaphat	HB – 2 Chronicles 20	Business alliance with Ahaziah

8.5 Varia

In this section are those offenses that do not easily fit into the above categories. In some cases the nature of the offense is not even mentioned – only allusions to the offense are made. In other cases, the offense is unique in its own right, denying classification.

8.5.1 Mesopotamian literature

A number of rulers are guilty of carrying out general or unspecified offenses. A certain Nūr-Sîn wrote a letter (A.1968) to Zimri-Lim, king of Mari, where a prophet (*āpilum*)¹²³ of Addu named Abīya is reported to have given a message to Zimri-Lim.¹²⁴ After the epistolary introduction (1-3) is the relevant portion of Abīya's oracle, which reads as follows (5-9):

Thus (says) Addu: “The land, all of it, I gave to Yaḥdun-Lim. And by means of my weapons, he did not acquire an opponent. He abandoned my cause (*yātam*¹²⁵ *īzibma*), and so I gave the land which I had given to him to Šamši-Adad.”

123 For a recent discussion on the translation of this term, see Stökl 2012, 38–43.

124 For the text, see Durand 1993; see also Nissinen 2003, 21 for an updated bibliography.

125 This accusative feminine singular possessive adjective must refer to an omitted noun. Durand 1993, 45 translates “Il a abandonné mon parti...”; Nissinen 2003, 22 translates, “He, however, abandoned my cause...” I have followed suit. Malamat 1998, 158 states that Yaḥdun-Lim abandoned Addu resulting in the loss of his kingdom to Šamši-Addu, with the real offense being that Yaḥdun-Lim changed his allegiance from Aleppo to Ešnunna. If this is the case, one wonders if the unmentioned noun is *mātum*.

What constituted abandoning Addu's cause remains open and could hypothetically constitute a number of things.¹²⁶ Yet the general nature of the offense may be exactly the point: loss of kingship will follow any failure to follow Addu's causes.

Atamrum, king of Allahad who eventually ruled Andarig, is one of the subjects in a letter from Zimri-Lim to his wife, Šiptu (*ARM 26 185-bis*). The letter relates a response to Šiptu's previous inquiries to the gods concerning Atamrum. The text states: “That man (i.e., Atamrum), who brought evil to us, the god has called him to account” (16-17).

Though not entirely explicit, Atamrum receives divine punishment as a consequence of the general offense of bringing evil. The evil is understandably vague, as the letter is a personal communication concerning a commonly shared (and assumed) event. Zimri-Lim presupposed that Šiptu knew to what he was referring. Though we are not privy to the situation at hand in the letter, Heimpel makes a compelling case that the evil which Atamrum brought “...was surely the Babylonians.”¹²⁷ Importantly, in another letter in which Zimri-Lim writes to Iddiyatum (*ARM 13 97*), the offense¹²⁸ of Atamrum is slightly elaborated. Zimri-Lim states that Atamrum repaid the good deeds of Zimri-Lim with evil (4-8): “Atamrum, to whom I did good, he sinned against me (*šū ugallilam*). And for a return favor¹²⁹ a favor of evil he returned to me (*gimil lumni irtībam*).” The nature of the offense is quite general, as indicated in the consequence which followed (9-10):

“(because) he decided on evil” (*u ana lemnētīm pānīšu iškun*).¹³⁰

126 See Malamat's suggestion in the previous note.

127 Heimpel 2003, 159.

128 Assuming that both letters refer to the same event.

129 For the idiom *gimil dumqi*, see *CDA*, 62.

130 The purpose of this letter appears to be to simply inform Iddiyatum that the violation of Atamrum had been dealt with by a god. This particular text lacks the details necessary for inclusion in 8.3.1.

That royal impropriety could result in divine castigation appears in another epistolary text from Mari. A letter from Itur-Asdu to Zimri-Lim (*ARM* 26 233) narrates a dream of a certain Malik-Dagan, in which a seemingly mild offense committed by Zimri-Lim was reciprocated by an unhappy Dagan. Lines 22-31 read:

Before my going out, thus he said to me: “Why do the messengers of Zimri-lim not stay before me constantly? And why does he not place his full report before me?”

Zimri-Lim's failure to follow the correct protocol to properly relate with Dagan (at least according to Malik-Dagan's dream) led to rather clear-cut divine disfavor.¹³¹

In addition to the royal crimes involving a perversion of justice (8.1.2) or the mistreatment of the elect of the gods (8.3.1), another offense occurs in the Advice to a Prince which does not fit into either of these two categories – or any other crime for that matter. This single crime, which brought about disaster from the gods if committed by the king, involves another deity, namely Ea. Line 7 of the text reads, “(If) he pays attention to the plan of Ea...¹³²” It is difficult to elaborate on the nature of this offense. Since Ea is known to have deceived gods (e.g., Gilgameš) and humans (e.g., Adapa), this line might mean that the king retains responsibility for not being duped by the crafty god.

131 Similar accusations occur within the realm of relations between royal parties. For instance, part of Haya-Sumu's improper diplomatic relations in *ARM* 26 308 is this king's failure to provide a complete report (cf. *ARM* 26 394, where Habdu-Malik is clear to provide an excuse as to why he did not provide a full report). Note also that Lamassani asks Iltani why the later does not regularly send news (Dalley-Walker-Hawkins 1976, no. 122). Zimri-Lim's failure both to provide a full report and to regularly send messengers before Dagan are exacerbated by the fact that the offended party was a deity.

132 Lambert *BWL*, 113 translates “trick of Ea” for *šipir Ea*, Cole *Nippur* 273 translates “the craftiness of Ea,” and Foster renders the phrase as “clever trick” (Foster 2005, 867). Hurowitz, along with other interpreters, takes *šipir Ea* to be positive, and Hurowitz specifically argues that the phrase refers to the Advice to a Prince itself (Hurowitz 1998). However, the addition in IM 77087 warns that military defeat will follow a king's decision to heed the *šipir Ea* (11.1.1.1), and so the phrase can hardly be positive (cf. Hurowitz's excursus [*ibid.*, 43-44] which attempts to counter this problem).

8.5.2 Hebrew Bible

David is guilty of conducting a census in both Samuel and Chronicles (5.2.1 and 5.2.2). Because the nature of this offense is not entirely clear, it has been placed in this section of this study. For the same reason, Ahab's failure to place the Aramean king Ben-Hadad of Aram under the ban (5.5) is also placed here, though it should be remembered that this offense had a religious orientation.

8.5.3 Ugaritic literature

The story of Aqhatu contains a unique offense that has no parallel in this study. After the birth of Aqhatu, the bow which originated with Kothar-wa-Ḥasis is eventually bestowed upon the scion Aqhatu. Anat, eventually eyeing the bow, desires it so much that she offers Aqhatu payment for the weapon (*CAT* 1.17 iv 17-18). Aqhatu, uninterested in surrendering his bow, suggests that Anat gather the required materials and ask Kothar-wa-Ḥasis to fabricate a bow of her own (*CAT* 1.17 iv 20-25). Anat remains determined to acquire Aqhatu's bow in particular and offers him another deal: immortality (*CAT* 1.17 iv 26-29). Aqhatu responds to Anat's offer by telling the goddess that he, as all men, will die, and then refuses her the bow once more, suggesting that bows are not for women anyway (*CAT* 1.17 iv 34-41). The “offense,” then, is Aqhatu's refusal to give in to Anat's demand and turn over the bow to the goddess.¹³³ He adds verbal insult to this refusal, and the combination of the two responses anger the goddess enough to take action against

¹³³ This “offense” is unique in this study, for it is not necessarily “religious,” but rather a violation of Anat's personal sensibilities. In this regard, Anat is not necessarily portrayed justly, and the goddess does in fact resemble Ištar's relentless purse of Gilgameš in tablet VI (l. 6-79) of the *Gilgameš Epic* (George 2003, 619-623) as well as the relationships between Greek heroes and deities (pointed out by Carolina López-Ruiz in personal communication). Similarly, the nature of Anat's anger may be compared to the questionable actions of Erra in the text known as *Erra and Išum*.

Aqhatu. Anat, clearly unhappy with Aqhatu's refusal, ominously threatens Danilu's heir – a sign of Aqhatu's impending fate.

8.5.4 Hittite literature

In the Hurrian-Hittite Song of Release, Mēgi, ruler of Ebla, is not necessarily a direct offender, but he is nonetheless personally implicated in the failure of Ebla to take part in an obligatory debt remission.¹³⁴ Though the ruler himself had complied with the deity's orders to remit debt, the city had not followed suit. Mēgi, as ruler, appeared to hold the weight of responsibility for the city's failure to acquiesce, evidenced by the detail that Tessub arose before the ruler when the god addressed the group as a whole.¹³⁵ Tessub warns his audience that Ebla will soon be destroyed should the citizen's holdout continue.

Elsewhere in Hittite literature, an exasperated Muršili eventually concludes that he may be unaware of the specific offense that caused the continuing plague which afflicted his kingdom. In the Plague Prayers, the king pleads: “[Or] if people have been dying because of some other matter, let me either see it in a dream, or [let] it [be discovered] by means of an oracle, or let a prophet speak of it.”¹³⁶ Later the king confirms his ignorance:

[My] father repeatedly made oracular inquiries, but he did not discover (the mind of) you, the gods, <my> lords, through the oracles. And I have repeatedly made oracular inquiries of you, but I have not discovered (the mind of) you, the gods, my lords, through the oracles.¹³⁷

The king's assumption is that some offense occurred which resulted in the current

134 For the text, see Hoffner *Hittite Myths* text 18a sections 38-63.

135 Hoffner *Hittite Myths* 18a, p. 76 notes that the the second person verbs are plural, thus Tessub is addressing a group.

136 COS 1.60, 159.

137 COS 1.60, 160.

epidemic. Though this portion of the text does not explicitly assume an offense committed by a king, the entire rationale for the king's action is predicated upon his responsibility as king to remedy whatever the problem is, including royal sacrilege.

8.5.5 Northwest Semitic literature

An unspecified offense of Rib-Addi, ruler of Byblos, is admitted by that same ruler in EA 137 (27-35):¹³⁸

Now I am not able to enter into the lands of Egypt.¹³⁹ I am old, and a severe illness (*murṣu dannu*) is in my flesh. Also, the king, my lord, knows that the gods of Gubla are holy, and the pains are severe, for I committed sins (*hēṣī ep[šā]ti*) against the gods.¹⁴⁰ Thus, I will not enter before the king, my lord.

The offenses are no more than generic sins. The chastised ruler concept was sufficient enough to make Rib-Addi's political excuse believable to the Egyptian king (at least in Rib-Addi's mind).

138 For transliteration, see Knudtzon 1915, 574, and Shlomo Izre'el's contribution on ORACC (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/contrib/amarna/corpus>).

139 Note that the construction with the first common singular pronoun, *anāku*, is emphatic.

140 "And the pains are severe, for I committed sins against the gods," following (Moran 1992, 219).

Knudtzon 1915, 574 reads *ip-ti*, but against this see Moran's note (note 4), where he reads *ep-šā-ti*. Following Moran, I understand *ep-šā-ti* as a mixed form.

Table 8. Various offenses

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Offense
Yahdun-Lim	Meso – A.1968	Abandoned the cause of Addu
Atamrum	Meso – <i>ARM</i> 26 185-bis Meso – <i>ARM</i> 13 97	Brought evil Repaid a good deed with evil
Zimri-Lim	Meso – <i>ARM</i> 26 233	Did not place messengers and full report before Dagan
Hypothetical king	Meso – Advice to a Prince	Heeding the “plan of Ea”
David	HB – 2 Samuel 24 HB – 1 Chronicles 21	Conducted a military census Conducted a military census
Ahab	HB – 1 Kings 20	Failure to place Ben-Hadad under the ban
Aqhatu	Ugaritic – Danilu	Refuses Anat's request for his bow
Mēgi	Hittite (Hurrian-Hittite) – Song of Release	Failure of Ebla to take part in an obligatory debt remission
Muršili	Hittite – Plague Prayers of Muršili	Unknown offense
Rib-Addi	NWS – EA 137	Committed sins against the gods

Chapter 9: Conclusions – Offenses that Precipitate Divine Punishment

A number of conclusions concerning the violations of chastised rulers may be drawn from the examples in chapters 7 and 8. The most general conclusion is that offenders who draw divine punishment appear most often in Mesopotamian literature and the Hebrew Bible. Of the 107 offenses grouped into categories, 46 come from the Mesopotamian corpus and 54 from the Hebrew Bible, with 4 Hittite, 2 Ugaritic, and 1 Northwest Semitic examples remaining. These numbers are by no means exact – they are reflective of the number of texts available and utilized for this study. At the same time, these texts are a general indicator of a prominent chastised ruler concept in both Mesopotamia and the Hebrew Bible.¹

Among the texts appropriated, failure to heed divine communication is explicitly mentioned as a cause of consequences in a minority of cases. In the Mesopotamian tradition, only Narām-Sîn's failure to heed omens in the Cuthean Legend brings with it direct consequences. Though similar, the Curse of Agade presents this same king's offense primarily in cultic terms. In the Hebrew Bible, Saul's career is marked by his failure to heed Yahweh through the prophet Samuel in both 1 Samuel and 1 Chronicles. In addition to Saul, the Hebrew Bible contains only three other examples of this sort of offense, two of which are found in Chronicles. The Chronicler depicted both Amaziah and Josiah as failing to heed divine communication. Similarly, the Pharaoh of the exodus

¹ Such a concept is limited by kingship ideology. One can compare ancient Egypt, where criticism of the king could only be implicit (Baines 1998, 17).

refused to heed Yahweh's word through Moses. It may be important that warfare is a persistent theme underlying these offenses. Most of these rulers fail to heed divine communication in the face of battle: Narām-Sîn against the *Ummān-manda*; Saul against the Philistines and the Amalekites; Amaziah with the Edomites and Israel, and Josiah with Egypt.

The general concept that cultic violations committed by rulers might bring divine repercussions is at home in both the the Hebrew Bible and in Mesopotamian literature. Yet some idiosyncratic tendencies are detectable in each respective tradition. The royal destruction of cultic places by rulers (e.g., the Ekur and the great shrine) has no counterpart in the biblical tradition as a royal offense which bring consequences. Kings of Israel and Judah are rather commended for the destruction of alternate temples and sacred loci (e.g., Jehu, Hezekiah, Josiah).² The destruction of the Jerusalem temple is a consequence of royal sacrilege rather than an act of sacrilege – the blame falls upon the Judean king's shoulders. In this regard, the attitude towards Nebuchadrezzar in the Hebrew Bible is particularly revealing: though a foreign king responsible for destroying the Jerusalem temple, he is only punished for his treatment of the inhabitants of Jerusalem (8.3.2) and hubris (8.2). Nebuchadrezzar does not incur punishment for the temple destruction in the Hebrew tradition as similar offenses do in the Mesopotamian tradition.

The royal construction of a temple counterpart (*tamšīlu*) to Esagil attributed to Nabonidus is overtly reprehensible in Mesopotamian literature, specifically in the Cyrus Cylinder and the Nabonidus Verse Account. This offense is not mirrored in the Hebrew

² See 2 Kgs 18:4, 23:8; 2 Chr 17:6, 31:12; 34:3.

tradition. In fact, one may find it surprising that there is no biblical counterpart which chastises the existence of local constructions as inappropriate models of the Jerusalem temple.³

The destruction of cult centers and the fabrication of a copy of Esagil both betray a distinctive Mesopotamian concern: proper cultic procedure. In particular, the Mesopotamians were largely concerned with the nature of altering cultic procedure and ordinances. Repeated lexical items reinforce this primary concern. The Akkadian term *paršu*, which has a wide semantic range,⁴ demonstrates well the concerns reflected in the Mesopotamian corpus. The inadequate execution (*ul ušaklil*) of *paršu* memorialized Šulgi in the Weidner Chronicle, characterized the governor of Uruk (*paršišina itet[iq]*) in Erra and Išum, while Šulgi's alteration (*unakkirma*) of the specific *paraš anūti* is mentioned in the “Uruk Chronicle Concerning the Kings of Ur” (Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles* no. 48). Additionally, improper *paršu* (*paraš lā simātīšunu*) was one of the violations for which the Cyrus Cylinder chastised Nabonidus, and the Verse Account of Nabonidus blames this same king for mixing up (*iballal*) *paršī*. This latter charge against Nabonidus reminds one of the charge of impropriety (*ša lā simāt*) made against Šulgi (“Uruk Chronicle Concerning the Kings of Ur” [Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles* no. 48]). The verbs associated with *paršu* stress that the kings, in these cases, either did not adequately execute (*ul šuklulu*), mixed (*balālu*) or purposely transformed (*etēqu*, *nukkuru*) *paršu*. In this same vein, one should note that Šulgi defiles (*ula''īma*) the *šuluhhu* (“purification offering”) in the Weidner Chronicle, another purposeful act

3 For cult locations in Israel, see the material in Zevit 2001, 153-266.

4 *CAD C* p. 195 lists the following: 1. rite, ritual; 2. temple office; 3. prebend, income from a prebend; 4. symbol, insignia; 5. authoritative decision, command, decree; 6. custom, practice; 7. (uncert. mng). Cohen-Hurowitz 1999 argues that this term can at times designate a physical object.

designated by the verb *lu'û*. Perhaps the latter case is part of the same tradition which similarly remembers Šulgi for the tampering of *šuluhḫu* (“Uruk Chronicle Concerning the Kings of Ur” Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles* no. 48]). That Amar-Su'en changed the *nīq zagmuk* (Weidner Chronicle) and that the “offspring of a foreigner” stopped the *nīqu rabû* (KAL 3 76) both show concern for a change in the *status quo* of offerings. To this it must be added that Nabonidus was accused of interfering with standing cultic procedure. He “discontinued the regular offering (*sattukku*),” “delayed cultic rites (*pelludê*),” and “He ended the reverence (*palāḫa*) of Marduk” according to the Cyrus Cylinder. Likewise, the Verse Account states that Nabonidus made the following announcement, thus ending the New Years festival: “Let me abandon the festival (*isinnu*), let me bring the New Year Festival (*zammukku*) to an end.” A distinctive of the Mesopotamian offenses with a cultic bent involves the *makkūru* (property) which belongs to gods or sacred precincts. Šulgi is punished for bringing out the *makkūr Esagil u Bābili* in both *ABC 20A* and the “Uruk Chronicle Concerning the Kings of Ur” (Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles* no. 48). The entire line of Assyrian kings from Sennacherib to Sîn-šar-iškun were held guilty for Sennacherib's exposure and removal of the [*makkūr*] *Esagil u Bābili* according to BM 55467. Similarly, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn carried off the *makkūr ilāni* in *SAA 3 44*.

The Mesopotamian concern over cultic procedure is not overwhelmingly apparent in the Hebrew Bible. Instead, the Hebrew Bible views the regal introduction of cult elements and the worship of other gods as destructive offenses, an unsurprising observation given the monotheistic/henotheistic slant of the biblical text. This same

concern does not appear as significant in the Mesopotamian cases, at least on the surface, which are more concerned with proper execution and handling of cultic matters. This distinction is not universal nor rigid, for Nabonidus is held guilty for introducing cult elements (Verse Account), while numerous biblical kings commit violations concerning correct cultic procedure in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Ahaziah, Saul, Rehoboam, Uzziah, Belshazzar, Antiochus IV Epiphanes). At the same time, it cannot go unnoticed that Solomon, Jeroboam, Ahab, Manasseh, Jehoram (Chr), Amaziah (Chr), Ahaz (Chr), and Manasseh (Chr) bring punishment for introducing cultic elements, as opposed to altering them.

The significance of the Hebrew Bible's emphasis on introducing cult elements vis-à-vis the Mesopotamian perspective which is concerned with altering standing procedure is in certain cases reflected in the consequences which arise from those innovations. Though the consequences will be treated in Part IV, the fact that the cultic offenses in the Hebrew Bible indict the people under the king's rule in addition to the king himself highlights the exclusivity of the Hebrew religious perspective. That a king's crimes can lead the people into guilt, whereas the Mesopotamian offenses focus on the offending ruler alone is indicative of the differing cultural perspectives. This is not to say that a ruler's subjects did not feel the consequences of the cultic crimes of Mesopotamian rulers, for it is demonstrably true that they did (e.g., the Curse of Agade). It is the fact that the Mesopotamian subjects are not held guilty in the offense introduced by the ruler, whereas in the Hebrew Bible the people are often indicted along with the king. Such is the case when Solomon, Jeroboam, Ahab, Manasseh, and Jehoram (Chr) introduce cultic

elements. In these cases, the focus on *innovation* is brought out by the fact that what was introduced (and not *distorted*) permeated the populace.

That a violation of an oath could bring the wrath of the gods upon the violator has long been recognized as a prominent part of ancient near eastern thought. In the above analysis, eleven royal offenders failed to uphold an oath/vow in such a way that punishment soon followed the violation. These eleven instances occur across four different bodies of literature, namely Mesopotamian, Hittite, and Ugaritic texts, as well as in the Hebrew Bible. Similarities have been noticed before, particularly regarding Saul's treaty violation recorded in 2 Samuel and in the Plague Prayers of Muršili.⁵

It is noteworthy that five cases of oath violation are found in Mesopotamian literature. The first four cases involve political relations and/or the language accompanying such discourse. Yagid-Lim broke a solemn oath (*nīš ilim dannam*)⁶ which he swore (*izkurūma*) by sinning (*u[g]allil*) against Ila-kabkabu. Both Kaštiliaš and Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir receive punishment for transgressing (*etēqu*) an imprecation (*mamītu*).⁷ It comes as no surprise that Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is guilty of failing to observe (*našāru*) the treaty (*adê*) of Aššur, for *adê* designates a loyalty oath sworn by an Assyrian vassal.⁸ More surprising is the claim in the “Sin of Sargon” text which asserts that Sargon II's demise resulted partially from his failure to observe (*našāru*) the treaty (*adê*) “of the king of the gods.” Sargon II stands out as a native (Assyrian) oath-breaker. The fifth and final example from Mesopotamia is unique, at least grammatically, in its specific formation.

5 Malamat 1955.

6 Cf. the terminological discussion in Tadmor 1982, 132–133 and note that this formulation was commonly used in treaty formations in Mesopotamia and the west in the second millennium.

7 Tadmor 1982, 133 shows that this term was at home in Assyria and west of the Euphrates in the second millennium.

8 Tadmor 1982, 142.

In this instance (*ARM 26 84*), extispices indicated that a “promise to Sîn” (*nidnat pîm ana Sîn*) lay at the root of a deadly outbreak. That a vow is in view is betrayed by the diviner Ašqudum, who asks Yasmaḥ-Addu if he had given his word to Sîn (*bēlī qabāšu ana Sîn iddin*) or his father Šamši-Adad had made a promise to Sîn (*šarru nidnat pîm ana Sîn [id]din*). Since this last instance is not formulated in the idiom of political discourse, it may indicate a vow similar to that made by Kirta – namely a promise made within the realm of religion only without any external political ties.

Only two native Israelite kings – Saul and Zedekiah of Judah – bring punishment for this type of violation. Both instances involve political relationships. In Saul's case, 2 Sam 21:2 states that Israel had simply “sworn” (*nišbə ’û*) to the Gibeonites. The event on which Saul's offense is based is called a covenant (*bərît*) in Josh 9:14, the precise term one would expect for establishing political ties between two people groups. The other event is the covenant (*bərît*) made between Nebuchadrezzar and Zedekiah in Ezek 17:13, an offense which the text states is against Yahweh himself (Ezek 17:19-20). The *bərît* in view appears to be an *adê* imposed by Nebuchadrezzar on Zedekiah, and Tadmor argues that Zedekiah is the only king of Judah who “definitely took the *adê* oath.”⁹ Tadmor's conclusion, then, means that Ezekiel appropriated a historical *adê* on a theological plane to explain the fate of Zedekiah and Judah by making the *adê* Yahweh's *bərît*.

The only other similar violation that brings divine punishment in the Hebrew Bible concerns the king of Egypt in Ezekiel 29. This is not a broken oath – it is a failed alliance between Egypt and Judah, a failure which indicts the king of Egypt. Though not as strongly formulated as an oath proper, the circumstances behind the failed alliance are

9 Tadmor 1982, 152.

similar. Egypt had pledged support and Judah expected such support, a similar dynamic to that seen in broken oaths.

A number of offenses above are grouped together as “moral/ethical” offenses. All but three are found in the Hebrew Bible, though a few Mesopotamian offenses against the inhabitants of high-standing cities have clear affinities (i.e., those cities in 8.3.3.1).

Within the Hebrew Bible, all the offenses are associated with violence except for David's affair with Bathsheba. Such condemnation suggests a certain aversion to excessive violence within the Hebrew framework, particularly in light of the fact that examples are wide-spread, coming from the Deuteronomistic History, Hosea, Isaiah, and Chronicles. David's affair with Bathsheba stands out as a unique offense, both within the Bible and in the ancient Near East in general. It should be remembered that David's affair is linked with his decision and plan to murder Uriah.

The three Mesopotamian examples of moral/ethical offenses come from two sources. The Verse Account charges Nabonidus with excessive violence, economic violations, and with a failure to execute justice. This last offense appears in the Advice to a Prince as well. Though the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamia minimally share the nature of violence, the perversion of justice as an offense that is punished by a god is uniquely Mesopotamian.

A number of cases of hubris resulted in divine chastisement. Though pride has been associated with Narām-Sîn, in the analysis above the focus has been on those texts which are lexically explicit about hubris drawing divine punishment. As a result, all the cases of hubris are limited to the Hebrew Bible alone. Curiously, only one native king is

guilty of such an infraction, namely Hezekiah. All the other occurrences in the Hebrew Bible are tied to foreign rulers, including the king of Assyria, the king of Babylon, Sennacherib, the ruler of Tyre, Pharaoh, Nebuchadrezzar, Belshazzar, and Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Thus, this particular offense is primarily within the interest of the Hebrew writers while at the same time associated with foreign rulers. Additionally, the crime of hubris/arrogance in bringing divine punishment is a rarity in the historiographical texts of the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles (occurring two times), while being more at home in prophetic and apocalyptic literature (twelve occurrences across Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel).

It was mentioned in the analysis above that hubris takes two forms in the Hebrew Bible – an attitude proper and a catalyst for another offense. In both cases, the pride surfaces internally as a disposition (and leads to another offense in the latter case), a concept reinforced by the repeated roots: of the ten rulers, *lbb + gbl/gbh/rm/špl* is applied to eight of them. In three cases hubris takes the distinct form of intruding into the divine realm: the king of Babylon likens himself to Yahweh (Isaiah 14) and the ruler of Tyre claims divinity (Ezekiel 28) as does Pharaoh (Ezekiel 29, 31). Incidentally, this piece of evidence suggests that the kings of Israel and Judah did not claim divinity,¹⁰ for if they had, one would certainly expect criticism from the prophets.

If violence and hubris were more typical of the biblical corpus, then royal opposition against the elect of the gods tends to be at home in the Mesopotamian material, though it is not exclusively Mesopotamian. The “elect of the gods,” as seen

¹⁰ That is, they did not claim to be gods. The king was, however, divine in the sense that he was part of the divine family (Pss 2:7, 89:26-27; 2 Sam 7:14 // 1 Chr 17:13). I am in general agreement with Day's stance on Ps 45:7 (English 6), namely that the verse is not to be taken literally (Day 1998, 81-85).

earlier, may be either a country, city, population, or ruler. A total of five occasions convict three rulers from three texts for their opposition to an elect ruler. In *ARM* 1 3, Yagid-Lim commits a crime by sinning (*gullul*) against Ila-Kabkabu. Likewise, on two occasions Aššur tells Ashurbanipal that Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is guilty of opposing the divinely favored Assyrian king (*SAA* 3 44). In the first occasion, Aššur states that Šamaš-šuma-ukīn had carried out evil deeds against Ashurbanipal, whereas in the second occasion this same offender sinned (*ḥatû*) against the Assyrian, whose favor is indicated by Aššur addressing him as “beloved of my heart” (*narām libbīya*).” In Ashurbanipal's royal inscriptions, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is likewise punished for a similar offense, namely crossing (*egēru*) Ashurbanipal (A §39 IV 46-52). Aḥšēri's fate is due to opposition to Ashurbanipal according to his inscriptions (B §24 III 82-83 and A §28 III 4-7), as Aḥšēri's resistance to Ashurbanipal made this ruler guilty of not fearing (*lā pāliḥ*) Ashurbanipal's lordship (*bēlūtu*). Five instances of actions taken against a specific population likewise bring divine punishment. In the Literary Letter of Sîn-muballit (MS 3302) the ruler of Malgium had attacked (*gerû*) Yamūtbāl, a act by which this ruler sinned (*gullul*) against Yamūtbāl thereby accruing guilt in the eyes of Sîn (and) Šamaš. The unnamed ruler in MS 3210 slaughtered Nippurians, Narām-Sîn “ruined” (*ušalpitma*) the population of Babylon (*nammāššē Bābili*) according to the Weidner Chronicle, the brazen governor of Uruk distressed (*uššissinātīma*) the city's citizens in Erra and Išum, and Nabonidus destroyed (*uḥalliḳ*) the Babylonians by means of a yoke without rest (*abšāni lā tapšuḥti*) according to the Cyrus Cylinder. In this last inscription, Nabonidus is also guilty of committing evil (Gtn *epēšu + lemuttu*) against the city of Babylon. This

type of crime, one against a city/land favored by the gods, occurs in several other places with variations. Like Nabonidus, several rulers act criminally against a city in the most basic sense. The Assyrian kings from Sennacherib to Sîn-šar-iškun are generally guilty of committing evil against Akkad (*epēšu + lemnētu*) in BM 55467. Additionally, guilt is accrued because of hostility (*nukkuru*) against Babylon, including its destruction. The Weidner Chronicle records Utu-ḫegal's mistreatment of Babylon with the idiom *babālu + qātu + ana lemutti*. The same phrase occurs in K 1349, this time in relation to Shalmaneser's mistreatment of Assur. At other times, infractions are more specific, involving state service. For instance, Shalmaneser's crimes against Assur in K 1349 are further qualified by specific violations of Assur's *kidinnūtu* status, as he imposed *ilku* and *tupšikku* on the citizens rendering them as *ḥupšu*. The hypothetical ruler in the Advice to a Prince is similarly warned that imposing *ilku* and *tupšikku* on cities with *kidinnūtu* status will bring punishment, while adding that improper taxation, levying troops, voiding treaties (*riksu*) and imposing *adê* will likewise end in misfortune. A particularly unique offense is attributed to Sargon of Akkad, who built a city and named it Babylon (Weidner Chronicle), an offense slightly nuanced in *ABC 20A* as the creation of a duplicate of Babylon (*miḫir Bābili*).¹¹

The Mesopotamian emphasis seen above is minimally mirrored in the Hebrew Bible. Included among the violations of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in Daniel 7 is his opposition to “the holy ones of the Most High (*qaddīšê 'elyônîn*).” Similar offenses are attributed to the king of Assyrian and the King of Babylon in Jeremiah 50, as they are

¹¹ One may wish to compare Nabonidus' creation of an image (*tamšīlu*) of Esagila in the Cyrus Cylinder. This offense is reckoned among the cultic violations in this study.

chastised for the destructions of Israel and Judah. In accord with the so-called “Zion Theology” in the book of Isaiah, Rezin and Pekah are guilty of opposing Judah according to Isaiah 7. Finally, in opposing Judah, Jeroboam was opposing the kingdom of Yahweh in 2 Chronicles 13.

A minimally occurring offense that brings divine punishment is reliance upon foreign alliances. Not only is this offense specific to the Hebrew Bible, it is specific to the book of Chronicles in particular. Asa's reliance on Aram, Jehoshaphat's marriage alliance with Ahab, as well as his business alliance with Ahaziah, all end with degrees of divine punishment.

Finally, a group of offenses which are either vague or unique so as to avoid specific classification end the section on offenses that precipitate punishment from the gods. Five of these texts are Mesopotamian, four of which are letters from the Mari archives. In two of the Mari letters, kings committed a general offense directly against a god: Yaḥdun-Lim abandoned the cause of Addu and Zimri-Lim did not properly relate to Dagan. The other two letters report that Atamrum brought evil in a general sense upon Zimri-Lim by repaying good with evil. These last two instances differ from both Yaḥdun-Lim and Zimri-Lim in that they do not directly involve a god. Equally general is Ribb-Addi's confession that he suffered because he sinned against the gods. Aqhatu's mythological offense, angering Anat by withholding his bow, is unparalleled, for Aqhatu interacted directly (physically) with Anat. The last of the various offenses is Mēgi's implication in Ebla's debt remission.

A brief word must be said on the political status of chastised rulers in

Mesopotamia. Three texts addressed above confirm that rulers of lower political rank had the potential to elicit serious divine wrath. The unnamed ruler (*šakkanakku*) of Uruk and Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir (*šakin māt tâmti*), both governors, carry out crimes that draw divine punishment (7.2.1 and 7.3.1). Additionally, a shepherd (*rē'û*), overseer/inspector (*šāpiru/[w]aklu*), administrator of the temple (*šatam ēkurri*), or a general of the king who serves as an administrator of the temple in (*šūt rēši šarri ša ina...ana šatam ēkurri*) all have the potential to commit offenses punished by the gods according to the versions of the Advice to a Prince (8.3.1). Thus such violations were not necessarily limited to the political office of “king” (*šarru*).

It should be remembered that some rulers in chapters 7 and 8 commit a single crime while others carry out multiple violations. Since crimes that bring divine judgment are theologically framed, the number of offenses attributed to a single ruler can vary based on the emphases and goals of the writer(s) responsible for the work. As the divine repercussions of these offenses will show, there is no discernible qualitative correlation that accompanies the quantity of offenses committed. Put another way, a logical principle such as *lex talionis* does not govern the relationship between offense and punishment. Theoretically, any combination of offenses would have been possible. Since a one-to-one correlation between offense and punishment does not exist, it then follows that the quantity of sins committed is not a significant factor in the overarching chastised ruler ideology.¹²

In sum, the extant documents from the textual record of the ancient Near East analyzed in Part III provide an overarching picture of crimes that the gods punish. Two

¹² However, they may be relevant for each particular text's context and literary analysis.

types of royal sacrilege are confined to a single corpus. The perversion of justice is distinctly Mesopotamian, just as royal hubris is confined to the Hebrew Bible (typically in regard to foreign kings). Similarly, the divine punishment of foreign alliances is uniquely Chronistic, and the moral crime of adultery is limited to 2 Samuel alone. Other crimes that the gods punish are attested in at least two corpora: failure to heed divine communication, oath violations, violence, opposition to divinely favored entities, and cultic violations. However, the discussion above cautions against overlooking idiosyncrasies within these shared groups. Violence is more diagnostic of the outlook in the Hebrew Bible, whereas penalties for opposing a divinely favored ruler or population is more typical of the Mesopotamian corpora. Likewise, distinctive characteristics are detectible in the cultic crimes contained in the Hebrew Bible and the Mesopotamian literature. Mesopotamian cultic crimes consisted of the destruction of cult centers, the construction of temple counterparts, the muddling of cultic procedure, and the mistreatment of the gods' property. These Mesopotamian cultic crimes focus on the king alone. The cultic crimes in the Hebrew Bible, on the other hand, largely entail the introduction of cult elements. The nature of these crimes is uniquely reflected in the accusation that royally introduced cultic elements infected the people, a significant difference compared to what is seen in the Mesopotamian material. As explained above, these differences are not necessarily universal or rigid, but they are nonetheless indicative of the general cultural expressions of these crimes. Additionally, the *varia* category demonstrates that such crimes need not be clearly explained, but could remain quite general.

It must be remembered that these crimes bring consequence(s) from the gods, according to the texts used in this study. In accord with the definition and explanation put forth in Part I, the rulers in chapters 7-8 are not simply “sinful.” Their impermissible actions are answered by the gods, making them chastised rulers. The reasons why scribes portrayed these particular crimes of the kings in this study in this manner depends on countless factors, including social/cultural/temporal context, religious outlook, audience, genre, purpose, kingship ideology, etc. These factors do not apply to each corpora; they apply to each text in each corpora. Thus, a quest to uncover the factors that play into each individual text's portrayal of a chastised ruler is an important endeavor in its own right. However, equally significant, if not more so, is the fact that the chastised ruler concept transcended the many factors that figure into a text's formation. This is particularly important in regard to kingship ideology. The different genres of the texts in this study, the focus on both enemy and native kings, and the wide temporal and cultural dispersion of attestations demonstrate that the chastised ruler concept was more than a rhetorical device deployed by ancient scribes. Part V will explain how it was that scribes, from distinct cultures with differing kingship ideologies, shared and utilized the chastised ruler concept. Before that, however, the consequences for the crimes in chapters 7-8 must be examined.

Part IV: Punishments from the Gods

The nature of the consequences that result from the crimes in Part III are examined in this section. The consequences are grouped into categories that reflect general similarities shared within that particular group, particularly in regard to the victims of those consequences. All of the categories fall within two major divisions: individual punishment (chapter 10) and corporate punishment (chapter 11). More than anything, these groups (especially the latter) show the religious nature of the crimes committed by rulers. As is this case in Part III, the appropriate material from chapter 5 is briefly referenced alongside text citations in the categories. Likewise, each category is followed by a chart that summarizes the contents of that section – offending ruler, corpus, text, and the general nature of the consequence(s).

Chapter 10: The Consequences of Royal Sacrilege – Individual Punishment

10.1 Individual punishment

This section contains “individual consequences,” i.e. those punishments that target the offending ruler himself. The punishments suffered by the chastised rulers break down into the following categories: physical affliction, mental affliction, violent death, rejection of kingship, capture and imprisonment, and a varia category. It should be noted that some of these individual punishments are accompanied by corporate ramifications as well. In those cases, the corporate portions of the punishments will appear in the following section (11.1).

10.1.1 Physical affliction

All people, including kings,¹ were subjected to the realities of the surrounding natural world. Thus, diseases and afflictions, broadly understood, were not always an indicator of divine punishment but a natural part of the course of life. In support of this ancient truism, van der Toorn cites a letter from Ištar-šumu-ēreš to Esarhaddon, where the illness in question was understood to be a seasonal ailment (*muršu šatti* [MU.AN.NA]), one which the king need not worry about.² Extispicy determined that an illness of

1 E.g., inquiries concerning illness are made on behalf of Esarhaddon (*SAA* 4 185) and Ashurbanipal (Starr 1990 texts 187, 188, 276, 277, 317). Royal illness is the subject of *SAA* 10 217, 242, 243 (presumably), 315, and Koch-Westenholz *Liver Omens* 102:70-71, 169:132-133, 432:13. Cf. note 2 below.

2 Van der Toorn 1985, 67. For a recent version of the text, see Hunger 1992, no.1. Cf. the “seasonal disease” (*murši šatti*) suffered by the king, which the king was not to worry about in *SAA* 10 236.

Beltum, wife of Yasmaḥ-Addu, originated from natural causes.³ Additionally, maladies could be mentioned in purely mundane language, suggesting that they are perhaps just part of life, as in Ašqudum's case of emesis.⁴ Nor were the illnesses suffered by kings automatically connected to divine disfavor, for the diseases of both Išme-Dagan⁵ and Azariah/Uzziah (2 Kings 15) were reported without reference to sin.⁶ Even when the origins of an affliction lay outside natural causes, the malady could be associated with other supernatural phenomena, at least from a Mesopotamian perspective.⁷

On the other hand, gods could inflict individuals and large populations with disease, epidemics, or affliction. A deity spread an infection within a district according to a Mari letter from the hand of Ašqudum.⁸ Divine origins are suggested when ancient scribes titled epidemics “devouring of a god”⁹ or diseases a “hand of god.”¹⁰ The hand of Eštar of Radan afflicted Šattam-Kiazi,¹¹ while the “punishment of a god” tormented the

3 *ARM* 26 136, cf. 26 298.

4 *ARM* 26 85.

5 *ARM* 26 489; cf. *ARM* 26 370 and 26 371.

6 Though 2 Kgs 15:5 states that Yahweh struck the king, there is no clear connection with an offense (cf. chapter 4). That affliction need not be grounded in human offense is demonstrated by Job 1-2; cf. John 9:2-3. See also note 7 and 10 below.

7 In van der Toorn's words, “Only the extraordinary was directly reduced to the 'supernatural', and even then, sorcerers and spirits disputed the authorship of the gods” (van der Toorn 1985, 72).

8 *ARM* 26 17 On the concept of contagion, see van der Toorn 1985, 70.

9 E.g. *ARM* 26 248 (14': *ilu* [AN-lum] *ikkal*), 26 259 (4: *ukulti ilim* [An-lim]); *SAA* 10 text 94:12 (‘ DINGIR KÚ’), 362:12'-14' (DINGIR *ik-kal* and DINGIR.MEŠ KUR *ik-ka-lu*), Hunger 1992 no. 306, 6 (DINGIR KÚ); Koch-Westenholz *Liver Omens* 91:73 (*ilu* [ina *māt*] *rubē ikkal*), 325:105 (*ilu ikkal*), 112:66 (*Nergal ikkal*), 194:12 (*Nergal ikkal*); 305:59 (*Nergal ikkal*). Note the more neutral formulation with *mūtānu* “epidemic” and the verb *bašū* in omens such as Koch-Westenholz *Liver Omens* 112:66, 168:128, 128:25 and the formation in *ARM* 26 206 18 (*ukultum iššakan*).

10 An epidemic is described as a “hand of god” (*yd 'ilm*) in Ugaritic (CAT 2.10 lines 11-12) and Akkadian (e.g., Starr 1990, texts 183, 191, 192, 193, 195, 198; see Heeßel 2007 for a discussion on the uses of this terminology). It should be noted that the term “hand of god” may not indicate illness incurred from guilt. According to Dalley-Walker-Hawkins 1976, no. 65, “hair and fringe” (*šārtum u sissiktum*) appear to be used in order to discover if the individual suffering from a “hand of god” had been afflicted because of sin. That such a query could be made suggests that a “hand of god” disease may occur for reasons other than contracted guilt. In the Hebrew Bible the phrase may be negative (*yad 'ēlōah* in Job 19:21) or positive (*yad hā 'ēlōhīm* in 2 Chr 30:12; *yad 'ēlōhēnū* in Ezra 8:18 and 31; *yad 'ēlōhay* in Neh 2:18; cf. 1 Pet 5:6).

11 *ARM* 26 83; cf. 10 87.

maid Attuzar.¹² The Hebrew Bible associates Yahweh with plague on multiple occasions.¹³ That divine power could impose physical ailment is also observable in Neo-Assyrian treaties¹⁴ and in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁵

In a number of instances, ancient writers found the cause of certain afflictions suffered by rulers to stem from the gods. These attestations were apparently noteworthy, for they were not understood as conditions stemming from purely natural causes. Nor did these ailments affect the commoner only, but rulers as well, much higher on the social, economic, political, and religious scale. The suffering that rulers experienced, in the Mesopotamian view, could have conceivably been perceived as especially egregious in light of religiously motivated prophylactic and apotropaic measures taken to hold off infirmity.¹⁶ In these cases, scribes provided explanation for the suffering endured by rulers: they committed some sort of crime which gave rise to divine wrath which manifested itself in the form of disease or affliction.

12 *ARM* 26 279 (7: *šērat ilim* [AN-lim]).

13 Some examples include Gen 12:17; Exod 9:14; Lev 26:21; Num 11:33, 16:46; Deut 28:59; Ps 39:10; Ezek 14:21; Amos 4:10; Zech 14:15.

14 The moon god Sîn is invoked to strike the one who violates the treaty of Šamši-Adad V and Marduk-zakir-šumi with bodily affliction (*SAA* 2 1, '10-13). Sîn is specifically associated with inflicting leprosy, *saḥaršubbū*, in the treaty of Aššur-nerari V and Mati'-ilu (*SAA* 2 2, iv 4-7), Esarhaddon's succession treaty (*SAA* 2, 6:419-421), and in the Sin-šarru-iškun treaty with Babylonian allies (*SAA* 2, 11: '10-12). Similarly, Gula will supposedly strike the violator with physical malady in Esarhaddon's treaty with Baal, king of Tyre (*SAA* 2, 5:iv 3-4) and in Esarhaddon's succession treaty (*SAA* 2, 6:461-463).

15 Yahweh causes Miriam to be leprous (*məšōra 'at*) in Num 12:10, and supernatural power strikes Gehazi with leprosy (*šāra 'at*), through the mediation of Elisha (2 Kgs 5:27), and Egypt with boils (*šəḥîn*), through the mediation of Moses (Exod 9:10). Deut 28:35 warns that Yahweh will strike the people with boils (*šəḥîn*) should they violate the covenant. The sign given Moses by Yahweh in Exod 4:6 included a leprous (*məšōra 'at*) hand. The adversary (*haššātān*) of Job 2:7 had the power to afflict the patriarch with boils (*šəḥîn*) as well.

16 For example, an excerpt from the Nanaya Hymn of Sargon II (*SAA* 3 4) reads, "Illness (and) diminution drive away from his body! (^{r.ii}23' *liptu nušurrū šussī zumruššu*). Cf. the rituals in *SAA* 10 200, 201, 296, and the like.

10.1.1.1 Mesopotamian literature

Skin afflictions, particularly those designated by the Akkadian term *saḥaršubbû* and the Hebrew term *šārat 't*, seem to have been a particularly sinister affliction, one that was often associated with divine punishment.¹⁷ It should come as no surprise, then, that two Mesopotamian texts preserve traditions that associate skin afflictions suffered by kings with acts of impiety. One such text is *ABC 20A*, a text which documents the consequences of Šulgi's cultic violations (7.2.1). Though broken, Marduk appears to have struck the king with some sort of skin disease: “Bēl caused...to consume his corpse” (*Bēl...ma pagaršu ušākil dū ud til-šú*).¹⁸ The tradition that Šulgi suffered a skin affliction also surfaces in the “Uruk Chronicle Concerning the Kings of Ur” (Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles* no. 48). Enough of this text is preserved to reveal that An covered Šulgi's body with some sort of affliction: “he clothed his body with...” (*zumuršu ulabbiš*).¹⁹

Behind these two accusations one should be cognizant of the king as the image (*šalmu*) of the gods and the flesh of the gods (*šīr ilāni*). Machinist has noticed, at least in the Assyrian realm, that the king's body as the statue (i.e., *šalmu*) of the gods is an indicator of the king as a divine child.²⁰ Similarly, the king's body as the flesh of the gods

17 Van der Toorn 1985, 73–75.

18 *Bēl...ma pagaršu ušākil dū ud til-šú*. Concerning line 30, Grayson states, “The line is quite clear on the tablet...Thus it is mysterious that the line cannot be read” (*ABC*, 154, note to line 30). Note that Grayson reads line 30 as ^d*Bēl* igi x ma pagar(adda)-šú u-šā-kil dū tú bad šú (*ABC*, 154), whereas Glassner reads ^dEn...ma ad₆-šú u-šā-kil dū ud til-šú (Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 39).

19 Van der Toorn 1985, 73 notes that a god will clothe (*lubbušu*) an offender with leprosy (*saḥaršubbû*) in some curses (e.g., *SAA* 2 no. 2 iv 5'), so one suspects *saḥaršubbû* is in view in Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles* no. 48. Notice that the Weidner Chronicle portrays Šulgi as sinful, but the text breaks off before an expected consequence appears.

20 Machinist 2006, 162, 170ff.

(*šīr ilāni*) is also tied to the king as the god's statue.²¹ Though Machinist used the Tukultī-Ninurta Epic for much of his data, he recognizes that related antecedent concepts stem from (late) third millennium Babylonian traditions.²² Similarly, the attribution of *melammu* (radiance), *puluḫtu* (awesomeness), and *namurratu* (numinous splendor) to the (Assyrian) king also occurs in and originates from southern traditions.²³ When read in light of the importance of the king's body and radiance, Šulgi's skin afflictions come into sharp relief: they are not just a punishment but an indictment on his divine status.²⁴

10.1.1.2 Hebrew Bible

Divine castigation in response to royal offense reveals itself in terms of physical affliction in several instances in the Hebrew Bible. It has already been noted that Jeroboam's withered hand resulted from his attempt to lash out at the prophet who gave the proclamation against the king's altar at Bethel (5.4).

Despite the warnings from the priest Azariah, the Chronicler notes how the pride of Uzziah led this Judean king to attempt to offer incense, a privilege reserved only for those who descended from Aaron (2 Chr 26:16-19). When Uzziah grew angry after being told to leave, leprosy broke out on his forehead (*wəḥaššāra 'at zārəḥâ bəmišḥô*) and he was rushed out of the temple and remained afflicted with the disease the rest of his life (2 Chr 26:19-21). That Yahweh was responsible for Uzziah's affliction is stated in the latter part of 2 Chr 26:20: “And also he himself hurried to go out, for Yahweh afflicted him

21 Machinist 2006, 162-163.

22 Machinist detects a hesitancy in the Assyrian tradition to attribute full deification to the king as was the case in third and second millennium Babylonian sources (Machinist 2006, 163-164).

23 Machinist 2006, 163, 169-170.

24 Note that Šulgi's name appears with the divine determinative in both *ABC 20A* (28: ndŠul-gi) and Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles* no. 48 (10: ^{lid}Šul.gi; cf. line 48).

(*niggə 'ô*).” The Chronicler, then, connected Uzziah's affliction to his pride (8.2) and subsequent cultic crime (7.2.2).

Uzziah's affliction was especially suitable given his offense. The text states that “Uzziah the king was leprous (*məṣōrā'*) until the day of his death. He, being leprous, lived in a house of separation,²⁵ for he was cut off from the house of Yahweh” (2 Chr 26:21). Uzziah's attempt to usurp the role of priest was answered with a punishment that disqualified him from being able to enter the temple, a disqualification that he would endure until his death.

Though the episode in 2 Kings 1 concerning Ahaziah of Israel is not exactly a case where an offending king is smitten with disease in response to sin, it is nonetheless mentioned here, for it relates to illness and fits most closely here in this study. King Ahaziah of Israel, who falls from his upper chamber, is denied the opportunity for recovery by Yahweh through the prophet Elijah for this king's decision to inquire of Baal-Zebub of Ekron (7.2.2). Instead of being afflicted with illness, Yahweh declares Ahaziah's preexisting condition terminal (2 Kgs 1:4).

In consequence of his cultic sins (7.2.2) and the murder of his brothers (8.1.3.2), Jehoram suffers a particularly agonizing disease which ultimately ends in his death according to 2 Chr 21:18-19. Yahweh directly strikes the king with the illness, one which is described as having no cure: “Yahweh struck him in the bowels with an illness without a cure” (*nəḡāpô YHWH bəmē'âw loḥōlî lə'ên marpē'*). The king suffered under the affliction for two years until “his bowels came out” (*yāṣə 'û mē'âw*) and he died (*wayyāmōt*).

²⁵ Reading with the *qərê*.

Finally, Gen 12:17 is careful to portray Pharaoh, along with his house, as having suffered for taking Sarai: “Yahweh struck Pharaoh with great plagues, and his house, concerning the matter of Sarai, wife of Abram.” Though this punishment is corporate, the text underscores that Pharaoh himself personally suffered from the “great plagues.” For this reason, Pharaoh's fate is mentioned here as a personal affliction.

10.1.1.3 Ugaritic Literature

In spite of several breaks in the text, one can conclude with a good deal of confidence that the goddess 'Aṭīratu afflicted King Kirta with a severe illness for his unfulfilled vow. Not long after 'Aṭīratu recalled Kirta's vow, one learns that Kirta had entered a near-death state (*CAT* 1.16 i 2-23). The words of 'Iluḥa'u succinctly describe Kirta's deteriorated health: “Oh, like men you die also, father?” (*CAT* 1.16 i 3-4).²⁶ The bewilderment that one like Kirta can die in such a manner, if at all, is due to the fact that he is likened to the gods, as the question in *CAT* 1.16 ii 43 makes clear: “Or do gods die?” Kirta's health, quite clearly, is assumed to have reached a terminal state. One further discovers that Kirta's health had been failing for some time. Ṭitmanatu, after discovering that her father was ill, asks about the duration of the ailment (*CAT* 1.16 ii 19-20). 'Iluḥa'u responds, albeit in poetic style, that the affliction has lingered for three and four months (*CAT* 1.16 ii 22-23).

26 The phrase *'ap 'ab 'i kmtm tmtn* has slightly different translations. *DUL* (volume I p.1) has “father, oh, like mortals you also die,” Pardee (*COS* 1.102, 339) “Must you also, father, die like mortal men...?”, and Greenstein “How can you, father, die like a mortal?” (Parker 1997, 30). All, however, capture the bewilderment that one such as Kirta can die at all. In *CAT* 1.16 ii 40, the phrase reads *'ap 'ab kmtm tmtn*.

10.1.1.4 Hittite literature

Divine punishments for crimes (7.2.3 and 7.3.2) are manifold in the plague prayers of the Hittite king, Muršili II. One of the consequences was the death of his father, Šuppiluliuma, according to the first prayer. Muršili, imploring the gods, says the following:

But later, you came, O gods, [my lords], and now have taken vengeance on my father for this affair of Tudḫaliya the Younger. My father [died] because of the blood of Tudḫaliya.²⁷

The prayer does not describe the way Šuppiluliuma met his end. It seems likely that the king died from plague ca. 1322 B.C.²⁸ The larger literary context of the Plague Prayers seems to affirm this conclusion. Because this is likely the case, Šuppiluliuma's death is included here as an example of divine vengeance that took the form of physical affliction – a terminal illness. The text does not focus on the means of death. This, however, does not seem surprising since the prayers focus on alleviating the consequences of sacrilege rather than producing a didactic narrative on the nature of those consequences.

10.1.1.5 Northwest Semitic literature

In his correspondence with the king of Egypt (EA 137), an ailing Rib-Addi of Byblos provides health reasons for his inability to travel to the land of Egypt. He pleads his case by declaring that he is old and has a severe illness in his flesh (29030: *šībāti u muršu dannu ana šīr ramānīya*).²⁹ In contrast to the vague description of the illness, the

²⁷ COS 1.60, 156.

²⁸ See Bryce 2005, 188; cf. Kitchen 1962, Ahlström 1993, 268 note 1.

²⁹ Elsewhere illness appears to have been invoked where meetings or assignments were missed. In a letter from Urdu-Nabû to the Assyrian king (Cole-Machinist 1998 no. 65), Urdu-Nabû responded to the king's previous question as to why he turned back and did not enter the Inner City by saying, "I am sick" (°18: *lā allak maršāku*). The governor of Nippur sent a letter to the king (Reynolds 2003 no. 70), assuring the

disease's divine origins are made clear in the letter. After reminding the king of Egypt that the gods of Byblos are holy, Rib-Addi admits that he had sinned against the gods: “for I committed sins against the gods” (33: *u ḥēṭi ep[šā]ti ana ilāni*).³⁰ Whatever the particulars of Rib-Addi's suffering, it came in the form of physical retribution for offending the gods of Byblos.

Table 9. Physical Affliction

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Consequence
Šulgi	Meso – <i>ABC</i> 20A	Skin affliction
	Meso – Uruk Chronicle	Skin affliction
Jeroboam	HB – 1 Kings 13	Withered hand
Ahaziah	HB – 2 Kings 1	Injury deemed terminal
Uzziah	HB – 2 Chronicles 26	Leprosy
Jehoram	HB – 2 Chronicles 21	Disease – terminal
Pharaoh	Gen 12:17	“great plagues”
Kirta	Ugaritic – Kirta Epic	Disease
Šuppiluliuma	Hittite – Plague Prayers of Muršili	Plague – terminal
Rib-Addi	NWS – EA 137	Disease

10.1.2 Mental affliction

Rulers suffer psychologically for their crimes in a few cases in the ancient Near

king that the reason why the governor did not appear before the king was because he was ill, saying, “I am very sick” (5: *lu ma'da maršāk*). If the reconstruction in Whiting 1987, 60 no. 15:11 is correct, illness delayed a certain messenger of Bilalama, ruler of Eshnunna. According to a Neo-Babylonian trial record (Holtz 2014 no. 35), a certain Šillaya was unable to attend a hearing because he “was sick” (20': *maruṣma*). Physical injury may disrupt meeting plans as well, as in the foot injury which appears to have prevented Zakira-Ḥammu, the governor of Qaṭṭunan, from meeting with Zimri-Lim (*ARM* 27 33). In light of these, EA 137 stands out, for it is Rib-Haddi's admission that his affliction is a result of sins which he committed against the gods that makes his ailment unique.

30 Cf. note 140 on p. 201 (chapter 8).

East. The rulers who suffer mental affliction are not physically harmed, though the unfolding of the mental affliction had physical ramifications. These punishments are forms of internal anguish, and so they are grouped under “mental afflictions.”

10.1.2.1 Mesopotamian literature

The Weidner Chronicle describes insomnia as one of the consequences resulting from Sargon's replica construction (8.3.1).³¹ Two copies which record this consequence depict it in slightly different ways.³² The Neo-Assyrian text A states that insomnia came upon Sargon as a consequence of Enlil modifying his position due to Sargon's building project: *la ša-la-lu GAR-[su] > lā šalālu šakin[su]* “sleeplessness was set on him.” Put another way, sleeplessness came upon Sargon as a logical consequence of Enlil's stance, a modification the god made in reaction to Sargon's building project. Alternatively, the Neo-Babylonian text B states that Enlil³³ directly intervened and struck the king with sleeplessness: *la ša-la-la i-mid-s[u] > lā šalāla īmids[u]* “he [Enlil] imposed sleeplessness on him.”³⁴ *ABC 20A*, which appears to have used the Weidner Chronicle as a source,³⁵ also memorialized the tradition of Sargon's insomnia. Like text B, the deity (Marduk in this text) directly intervenes and strikes Sargon with insomnia: *la ša-la-la i-mi-id-[su] > lā šalāla imid[su]* “he (Marduk) imposed sleeplessness on him.” For the

31 Sleeplessness is specifically mentioned in ancient literature as a negative feature of one's circumstances. E.g., ARM 26 519; ARM 27 161; a *šigû* ritual from Boghazköy and a prayer fragment (both found in van der Toorn 1985, 130 and 137, respectively); Genesis 31:40; Dan 2:1, 6:18 [Aram 6:19]. The significance in the case of Sargon (and the ruler of Malgium [below]) is that the insomnia is related to each ruler's offense.

32 Cf. note 73 on p. 62 (chapter 5).

33 Enlil is restored from the Sippar text (S).

34 The text used by the scribe who copied the Sippar text (S) was already broken, as it reads: *hi-pí hi-pí*.

The Neo-Babylonian text C, as well as text D, are also broken here.

35 See note 99 on p. 186 (chapter 8).

issue at hand, it is important to note that these texts agree that Sargon personally suffered sleeplessness as a result of offending Enlil.

In the literary letter where Sîn-muballiṭ berates the ruler of Malgium for his actions (MS 3302),³⁶ the consequences which fell upon the ruler for attacking Yamūtbāl (8.3.1) are thoroughly individual (36-45):

From the day you sinned against Yamūtbāl, in your bed sleeplessness lies on you (*ina mayyālīka lā ṣalālum šakikku*); on the throne you sit upon, nervous restlessness (*gitallutu*) lies on you (*šakikku*); on the table where you eat, silences lie on you (*š'ak'nāku*); in the imprisonment of yourself (*ina šibitti ramānikāma*) you sit.

The affects of the actions for which Sîn and Šamaš hold the ruler guilty include forms of internal anguish. The ruler suffered from bouts of sleeplessness and was plagued by terror. Perhaps the silence which the ruler experienced also reflects some sort of inward agony related to insomnia and fearfulness.³⁷ In any case, the ruler was tormented in his own internal prison (44-55: *ina šibitti ramānikāma wašbāt*).

Regarding the insomnia, nervous restlessness, and the silence which enveloped the ruler, one should note the indirect relationship between the punishments and the gods. The punishments are formulated with stative constructions: *lā ṣalālum šakikku*, *gitallutu šakikku*, *qūlātu š'ak'nāku*. On their own, these formulations do not necessarily suggest divine involvement. However, Sîn-muballiṭ's wish that Sîn and Šamaš not release the ruler ties the gods to the ruler's suffering: "May Sîn (and) Šamaš, the lord of Yamūtbāl, not release you from the matter" (34-35: *Sîn u Šamaš bēl Yamūtbālim ina awātim ayy-ipturūnikkum*). Put another way, the ruler of Malgium's current circumstances, which

36 Text no. 15 in George 2009, 113–120.

37 Or might this refer to the silence of the gods?

stem from opposing Yamūtbāl (8.3.1), are supervised by Sîn and Šamaš.

In addition to sleeplessness, terror, silence, and his very own internal prison, the ruler of Malgium also experienced humiliation, for lines 49-50 state: “You have surrounded (yourself) with a neck-stock (*erinnam taḥtaparma*), and then you went around with kings.” The neck-stock (*erinnu*), was an instrument utilized for transporting prisoners of war,³⁸ and the implication here is that this ruler has been paraded around like a captive prisoner before kings. This degree of humiliation is all the more surprising when one recognizes that the responsible party – the ruler of Malgium – placed the neck-stock on himself (*taḥtaparma*) by his very own actions carried out against Yamūtbāl.

It is therefore clear from these examples that mental affliction is not a prominent punishment imposed upon Mesopotamian chastised rulers. It should be mentioned that Niehaus has suggested that Šamaš afflicted Kaštiliaš with terror in the Tukulṭī-Ninurta Epic.³⁹ If so, this punishment would be another case of mental affliction originating from the divine realm. However, this is not likely, for Machinist notes that, in this instance, Kaštiliaš is reacting to Tukulṭī-Ninurta's letter, and that the phrase *'urti šarri danni* “order of the mighty king” in IIIA/E 24' refers to Tukulṭī-Ninurta's letter.⁴⁰ Following Machinist, the case at hand is not an instance of mental affliction as a form of divine punishment from Šamaš, but rather the reaction of Kaštiliaš to his adversary Tukulṭī-Ninurta.

38 *CAD E*, 295.

39 Niehaus 1994, 303.

40 Machinist 1978, 275, 283.

10.1.2.2 Hebrew Bible

Nebuchadrezzar's prideful boasting (8.2) yielded immediate consequences, for a voice from heaven proclaimed that the kingdom has departed from him, and that the king will be driven from society to live as an animal until he comes to the realization that it is God who rules and gives dominion to whomever he desires (Dan 4:31b-32 [Aram 4:28b-29]). According to the narrative, Nebuchadrezzar should have already known that his hubris would bring this exact punishment, for Daniel had interpreted the king's dream which foretold precisely the king's hubris and its consequences (Dan 4:4-26 [Aram 4:1-4:23]). In Daniel's interpretation, the psychological nature of Nebuchadrezzar's coming affliction surfaces lexically in Dan 4:16 (Aram 4:13): "Let his heart (*libābēh*) change from a man's and let him be given the heart (*ûlābab*) of an animal." Such a punishment is particularly appropriate in the larger literary context of Daniel, as it will be recalled that Nebuchadrezzar's hubris took the form of an elevated heart (*rim libābēh*) according to Dan 5:20 (8.2). Nebuchadrezzar's mental affliction, lexically indicated in Daniel's interpretation and announced by the voice from heaven, takes physical form after the king's pride outweighed Daniel's attempt to lead the king into repentance (Dan 4:27 [Aram 4:24]). The consequences foretold by Daniel and announced by the voice from heaven came to immediate fulfillment (Dan 4:33 [Aram 4:31]). Nebuchadrezzar lived like an animal, unkempt and exiled from humanity, the results of some sort of psychological affliction. The king's madness did not abate until he acknowledged God's sovereignty, at which time the king said, "My understanding (*mandā 'ī*) returned to me" (Dan 4:36 [Aram 4:33]). That Nebuchadrezzar's understanding had left him further

underscores the mental aspect of his punishment. So powerful were these events that Daniel recounted them to Belshazzar in Dan 5:18-21 in order to provide Belshazzar with an example of the fate of a prideful ruler, a fate which would soon confront Belshazzar himself.

The only other instance of mental affliction involved the “evil spirit” which came upon Saul after his personal rejection as king, which has been argued to be a disposition earlier in this study (5.1.1). It should be remembered that the “evil spirit” was not a punishment *per se*, but a mechanism which served, in combination with Saul's volition and ambitions, to bring about the physical fulfillment of Saul's divine rejection. Nonetheless, because it derives directly from Saul's rejection in 1 Samuel 15, it needs to be mentioned in this section.

Table 10. Mental affliction

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Consequence
Sargon of Akkad	Meso – Weidner text A	Insomnia
	Meso – Weidner text B	Insomnia
	Meso – <i>ABC</i> 20A	Insomnia
Ruler of Malgium	Meso – MS 3302	Insomnia, terror, silence, humiliation
Nebuchadrezzar	HB – Daniel 4, 5	Madness

10.1.3 Violent Death

A frequently occurring punishment issued by the gods upon offending rulers is a violent death. The term “violent death” is used here to designate a death that is either

unfortunate, brutal, or unusual. Many of the following examples of violent death unfold in battle. But other examples are unusual in the method by which they transpire (e.g. a deity directly striking a ruler) or unfortunate in their means (e.g. drowning). In many cases, there are aggravating circumstance that make a violent death more heinous.

10.1.3.1 Mesopotamian literature

The Weidner Chronicle reports the death of two kings for their cultic transgressions. For his crime of committing evil against Marduk's city (8.3.1), Utu-ḫegal was sentenced to death by drowning: “Utu-ḫegal, the (temple) fisherman laid his hand on his city with evil intent,⁴¹ and then at the weirs⁴² of the river, he [Marduk] carried away his corpse.” The word choices emphasize the appropriateness of Utu-ḫegal's fate in light of his offense: ^d*Utu-ḫegal šukudakka qātsu ana ālīšu ana lemutti **ubilma** miḫrēt nāri šalamtašu **itbal***. The repetition of similar roots, *babālu* “to carry” and *tabālu* “to carry off,” emphasize the relationship between crime and punishment. Utu-ḫegal acted against Marduk's city (*ubilma*), so he met his fate and his corpse was carried off (*itbal*) down the river.

Utu-ḫegal's drowning death surfaces in the omen tradition, as pointed out by

Grayson.⁴³ Separating the Weidner Chronicle from the omen is the overarching

41 For *babālu* + *qātu* qualified by *ana lemutti*, see *CAD* A1, 19 (*abālu* A 5a).

42 Grayson, who did not have S at his disposal, translates “and the river (Euphrates) [*carri*]ed [*off*] his corpse” (*nāru šá-lam-ta-šú it-[bal (?)]*). With the discovery of S, a new reading surfaced: *mi-iḫ-rit* ID LÚ-BAD-šú it-’x’. The addition of *mi-iḫ-rit* in S has been treated in two ways. Al-Rawi (10) translates “his corpse was carried away by the river,” and Glassner renders the sentence “the river carr[ied away] his corpse” (Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 269). Arnold, on the other hand, translates “his corpse was carried away at the river dam” (167). I take the subject of *itbal* to be Marduk, as in the case elsewhere in the Weidner Chronicle, with *mi-iḫ-rit* ID “weirs of the river” (*miḫrēt nāri*) functioning adverbially as an accusative of place. Some support for rendering *mi-iḫ-rit* as “weirs” or the like may be found in omen traditions (see next note).

43 *amūt Utu-ḫegal ša ina sekēr nā[ri(?)]*, translated by Grayson as “The omen of Utu-ḫegal who [died] when damming the ri[ver]” (see *ABC*, 150 comment to line 62 for bibliography and translation). A

theological framework governing the text, that divine retribution answers criminal acts perpetuated by kings. Such a framework is absent from the omen. Within the framework of the Weidner Chronicle (addressed below), Utu-ḫegal's drowning was an act of divine retribution resulting from his mistreatment of Marduk's city, Babylon.

Amar-Su'en's death in the Weidner Chronicle vis-à-vis the omen tradition is similar to Utu-ḫegal's drowning. Amar-Su'en's death, which transpires due to his cultic crimes (7.2.1), is narrated in two ways: “it was said (he died) from the goring of an ox (*nikip alpim*), but then he died by the bite of his shoe (*ina nišik šēnēšu im[tūt]*).” Though the omen tradition similarly connects Amar-Su'en's death to “the bite of a shoe,” or the “goring of an ox,” they lack the retributive framework that governs the Weidner Chronicle (addressed below).⁴⁴ The Weidner Chronicle connects Amar-Su'en's fate with his cultic crimes by means of the text's overarching framework.

The theological framework of the Weidner Chronicle, assumed in the previous three paragraphs, is critical for understanding that the deaths of both Utu-ḫegal and Amar-Su'en result from their actions. Earlier in the Weidner Chronicle, the retributive principle governing the text surfaces in the following lines:

Whoever sins (*ugallalu*) against the gods of this⁴⁵ city, his star will not stand in the heavens [...] the king(ship?)⁴⁶ will come to an end. His scepter will be taken away. His treasury/foundation (*išittašu*) will be turned into a heap and ruin.⁴⁷

similar notion is found in Koch-Westenholz *Liver Omens* 107:11: “A weir will fall while damming its river; it will take me away” (*mehru ina sekēr nārīšu imaqqu ikkimanni*). This latter text accentuates the unusual fate of Utu-ḫegal, while at the same time pairing *mehru* and *sekēru*.

44 For the omen where Amar-Su'en is remembered for “the goring of an ox” and “bite of a shoe,” see Starr 1977, 160. Note that in a *tamītu* text which lists a number of dangers, both *[nik]pi alpi* and *nišik šēni* are mentioned. See text no. 1 (line 283 and 284) in Lambert 2007 for the text.

45 On “this,” see note 94 on 185 (chapter 8).

46 On “king(ship?),” see note 34 on p. 128 (chapter 7).

47 This is a composite text taken from A and S.

The city in view is, without question, Babylon. Babylon and Esagila are exalted throughout the initial portion of the text. These lines, referring to the mistreatment of Babylon, demonstrate the theological perspective of the text, a perspective that understood any action taken against the city to be an act that would be met with divine punishment. In this way, the deaths of Utu-ḫegal and Amar-Su'en result from their transgressions, according to the Weidner Chronicle.

It will be recalled that Atamrum, the king who was the subject of two letters sent by Zimri-Lim (*ARM* 26 185-bis and *ARM* 13 97), had committed a vague and generally worded offense against Zimri-Lim (8.5.1). Though it seems probable that Atamrum brought the Babylonians (with Heimpel), the language of the letters is plain. The repercussions are equally plain. In *ARM* 26 185-bis, it is narrated that “god has called him to account (*ištālšu*⁴⁸).” This punishment is admittedly couched in vague language, but it probably refers to the death of this king.⁴⁹ In the other letter (*ARM* 13 97), Zimri-Lim again announces this same fate: “god has called him to account (*ištālu*⁵⁰). Rejoice!” Again, it is hypothesized that Atamrum's death is in view, but absolute certainty remains elusive. Yet one can be certain about the source of Atamrum's punishment from the perspective of the letter: it comes from the divine realm. Zimri-Lim, then, provided a theological rationale for Atamrum's fate (presumably his death). One can also see that the punishment is focused on Atamrum himself. Though the writing of the verb that conveys divine punishment is abnormal in *ARM* 13 97, the singular pronominal on *ištālšu* in *ARM* 26 185-bis makes it clear that Atamrum alone is in view.

48 For this nuance of *šālu*, see *CAD* Š1 *šālu* A 2. Cf. *CDA* 's “call to reckoning, punish” (352).

49 Assumed by Heimpel 2003, 158–159, 524 (under the entry “Iddiyatum I”).

50 With Heimpel, the spelling *iš-ta-al-lu* is regarded here as an orthographic oddity. See Heimpel 2003, 493 for Durand’s suggestion that this is a “subjonctif emphatique.”

According to Kurigalzu II's votive inscription to Ninurta (MS 3210), the god repaid the unnamed leader who brought out a sword and “poured out the blood of the sons of Nippur like water (15-16: *dam mārī Nippuru kīma mē itbuk*)” (8.3.1): “The great lord Ninurta, to avenge Nippur, immediately allowed him no pardon⁵¹ and he then poured out his life like water” (17-20: *bēlum rabû Ninurta gimilli mārī Nippuru ana turri adi surri ul uškīssūma*⁵² *napištašu kīma mē itbuk*). Put plainly, Ninurta killed the leader for killing the deity's elect people. Yet the text paints the doomed ruler's fate quite poetically, for just as the ruler had poured out like water (*kīma mē itbuk*) the blood of the inhabitants of Nippur, so also the avenging Ninurta poured out his life (*kīma mē itbuk*). Noticeably, the god acted to avenge the slaughter, underscoring that the penalty stemmed from an act of sacrilege that offended Ninurta himself.

In the Sin of Sargon text (K 4730 [+] Sm 1876),⁵³ Sargon's battlefield death resulted directly from his failure to uphold “the treaty (*adē*) of the king of the gods”⁵⁴ (7.3.1). The text depicts Sennacherib making the following inquiry via divination (*ina bīr[i]*):

Did he greatly honor the gods of the land of Assyria, and thus did he place them above the gods of Akkad (i.e., Babylonia) [...and concerning] the treaty of the king of the gods which Sargon, my father did not keep, was Sargon, my father, killed (*dēkēma*⁵⁵) in an enemy land and then not buried in his house? (17'-19')

A positive answer followed, confirming that Sargon's death constituted a divinely

51 “Allowed him no pardon,” following George 2011, 118. See note immediately below.

52 Following George's suggestion that *uš-ki-is-su-ma* is from *kāšu* (ibid., 118 note 19). George cites the synonym list *Malku V* for the nuance “to show mercy” to support his literal rendering “he did not allow (anyone) to show mercy” and his smoother translation “allowed him no pardon.” The latter is adopted here.

53 For transliteration, see Tadmor-Landsberger-Parpola 1989.

54 That is, Aššur. For the title referring to Aššur in this text, and not Marduk, see Tadmor-Landsberger-Parpola 1989, 21, comment to 19’.

55 Reading *de-ke-e-ma* as a third person stative from *dāku* with a lengthened paragogic vowel lengthened under interrogative intonation, as argued by Tadmor-Landsberger-Parpola 1989, 20–21.

orchestrated penalty for his behavior. Sargon's punishment was not death alone, however, but also that he died in an enemy land and, subsequently, did not receive a proper burial.⁵⁶

As discussed earlier, the governor of the Sealand, Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir, attacked Ur in 680, thereby violating the “oath (*māmīt*) of the great gods” (7.3.1). After learning that Esarhaddon's troops were in route, Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir fled to Elam, where Humban-ḫaltaš II put him to death.⁵⁷ This punishment was understood to have been answered by the gods in several of Esarhaddon's inscriptions. Nineveh A ii 53-57 contains the most complete depiction of Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir.⁵⁸ The text reads as follows:

And he, Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir, rebel, insurgent, heard the advancing of my army and then he escaped like a fox to the land Elam. Because of the oath of the great gods which he transgressed, Aššur, Sîn, Šamaš, Bēl, and Nabû imposed on him a heavy punishment and then in the midst of the land Elam they killed him with a weapon (53-57).

The text is straightforward: Aššur, Sîn, Šamaš, Bēl, and Nabû strike down Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir in the land of Elam by weapon because of a broken oath (*māmītu*).⁵⁹ The governor's punishment for breaking the oath is his execution at the hands of the gods. In this case, Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir's fate is portrayed purely in religious terms, for his death is an act carried out by the gods alone. Even the human agent, the Elamite king, receives no mention in the text.

It is also worthwhile to mention the particular details of Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir's death. It could have sufficed to simply state that the deities killed the governor. Yet the

56 At this point it should be mentioned that, if '23' is to be restored as *ba-l[a²-iṭ ū-qat-tu-ú x x x x]*, then Sennacherib himself would qualify as a chastised ruler in this study. However, Sennacherib has not been included because, “The restoration *bal[āṭi uqattū]* is implied by the context but remains conjectural” (Tadmor-Landsberger-Parpola 1989, 24 note to 23’).

57 Frame 1992, 65–66.

58 See note 79 on p. 147 (chapter 7).

59 Fragment C ii 4' (RINAP 4 no. 32) reads AN.ŠÁR ^dUTU (Aššur and Šamaš) instead of ^daš-šur ^d30 ^dUTU ^dEN ù ^dAG (Aššur, Sîn, Šamaš, Bēl, and Nabû).

text's formulation places an emphasis on the violence of Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir's execution, as the gods killed him “with a weapon” (*ina kakki*). In this regard, one can notice the combination of the text's theological claim of gods' intervention by weapon and the Elamite king's historical act of execution. The text also emphasizes the geographic location of Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir's end, for his slaughter took place in Elam. In this regard, one cannot help but notice the connection with Sargon II's battlefield death: both rulers died violently in a foreign land.

The inscriptions of Ashurbanipal record two rulers who, because of their opposition to Ashurbanipal (8.3.1), faced a death penalty dealt by the gods. The death of one of these rulers, Aḥšēri king of Mannāyya, appears in different versions. One version appears as follows (B §24 III 82-85):⁶⁰

Aḥšēri, the one who did not fear my lordship, Aššur and Ištar delivered him into the hands of his servants (*imnūšu ina qātā⁶¹ ardānīšu*). The people of his land caused a rebellion against him. They threw his body into the street of his city.

Unlike the death of Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir, the deities do not carry out the penalty on the perpetrator themselves. Instead, both Aššur and Ištar act together to initiate Aḥšēri's demise, but are removed from the actual death of Aḥšēri.⁶² In fact, the particulars of the king's death are not mentioned at all. Instead, the final portion of the text simply assumes that the king has died: “They threw his body into the street of his city.”

Though Aḥšēri's death is assumed in the text, some circumstances surrounding his fate are mentioned. The text emphatically stressed that Aḥšēri's divinely triggered death

⁶⁰ Borger 1996, 35 (transliteration), 221 (translation).

⁶¹ Cf. Hämeen-Anttila, who says *ina ŠU.2-šú* (Borger has ŠU.MIN in the text at hand) should be read *ina qātīšu*, not **ina qātāšu* (Hämeen-Anttila 2000, 77). However, there is no pronominal suffix in this case.

⁶² In this regard, it is assumed here that the unwritten subject of the final verb (*iddū*) is carried over from the preceding sentence, and is therefore “the people of his land” (not Aššur and Ištar).

took place within his own domain. The gods delivered him into the hands of “his servants,” the people of “his land” rebelled against him, and the people threw his corpse into the street of “his city.” The text leaves little to the imagination when it comes to the geographic locus of Aḥšēri's death. Furthermore, the ignoble nature of Aḥšēri's fate is highlighted by the treatment of his corpse. His body was thrown out into the street, exposed and desecrated, without a proper burial.

In another version of Aḥšēri's fate, the episode is expanded, while also focusing on the agency of Iṣtar of Arbela. This version adds the following (A §28 III 4-7 expansions):⁶³

Aḥšēri, the one who did not fear my lordship, according to the word of Iṣtar who dwells in Arbela, which she previously spoke thus, “The death (*mītūtu*) of Aḥšēri, king of the land of Mannāyya, which I previously spoke, I will now carry out.” She delivered him into the hands of his servants.

One can see that Iṣtar of Arbela alone handed Aḥšēri over to his servants. Also different is that the king's death is explicitly mentioned, but as a foretold announcement of the goddess' intentions. In this particular version, then, Iṣtar of Arbela explicitly declared that Aḥšēri would receive a death sentence.

The other ruler who died as a result of divine punishment for opposing Ashurbanipal (8.3.1), according to Ashurbanipal's inscriptions, is Šamaš-šuma-ukīn. An impressive array of deities dealt Šamaš-šum-ukīn an unusual death penalty (A §39 IV 46-52):⁶⁴

Aššur, Sīn, Šamaš, Adad, Bēl, Nabû, Iṣtar of Nineveh, Šarrat-kidmuri, Iṣtar of Arbela, Ninurta, Nergal, and Nuska, who went before me, (who) killed my opponents, they threw Šamaš-šum-ukīn, the enemy brother who crossed me, in a

63 Borger 1996, 35 (transliteration), 221 (translation).

64 Borger 1996, 43–44 (transliteration), 234 (translation).

blazing “fall of Girra” (*miqit Girra āriri*),⁶⁵ and then they destroyed (*uḫalliqū*) his life.

From a historical perspective Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's fate remains obscure. As Frame notes, Ashurbanipal's claim may imply suicide or murder.⁶⁶ Whatever the historical facts may be, the event was theologized in this text. A number of deities directly intervened in the course of events and threw the rebellious ruler into a fire of some kind – this is what seems to be meant by *miqit Girra āriri*. This particular fate recalls the ignoble deaths called for in the series *Maqlū*: Girra is repeatedly called upon to burn witches and warlocks (e.g. I :110; II: 109).⁶⁷ Moreover, in this series Sīn is invoked to throw a witch into “a fall of water and fire (*ana miqit mē u išāti*)” (III: 99),⁶⁸ and Girra receives the epithet “blazing” (*āriru*) on several occasions (e.g., *Girra āriru bukur Ani*; II: 77).⁶⁹ These connections demonstrate that Šamaš-šuma-ukīn suffered a particularly degrading death, one wished upon the hostile occultists of Mesopotamian society.

The gods enacted Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's disgraceful death on their own initiative. The last portion of the text, “they destroyed his life,” underscores the agency of the deities. The death of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, then, was wholly a divine act. This means that the mode of the king's death was orchestrated by the deities. Thus, the gods increased the severity of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's fate by purposely penalizing the king with a death typically associated with witches and warlocks.

The account of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's death lacks any geographic indicators. In this regard, it differs from its counterpart that relates Aḫšēri's death. Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's

65 Following Borger, who translates “Fall des Gira' (d.h. Feuersbrunst?)” (Borger 1996, 234).

66 Frame 1992, 153-154.

67 Abusch 2015, 50 and 60.

68 Abusch 2015, 76.

69 Abusch 2015, 58.

account differs from Aḥšēri's in another way: mode of death. Though one can easily deduce that Aḥšēri had been killed, the specifics remain hidden. Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's mode of death, on the other hand, is both explicit and unusual: death by fire.

10.1.3.2 Hebrew Bible

Death also appears as a penalty for a number of rulers in the Hebrew Bible. An inconspicuous example from the book of Samuel that one should not lose sight of is the fact that David's affair with Bathsheba merited death – though the manner is not mentioned (5.2.1). The text's trajectory suggests that David would have died had it not been for his repentance. As it turned out, David's act of penance removed him from this penalty, though his son would not be spared. In this regard, one can see that the underlying penalty for David's sin was death.

As explained in 5.5, Ahab was also condemned to death – twice – for his violations. Though the relationships between Ahab and his fate are complicated, Ahab does meet his ultimate end on the battlefield. Importantly, though he died at Ramoth-Gilead, Ahab was buried in Samaria (1 Kgs 22:37). Such a detail softens the penal nature of Ahab's death, for it suggests a proper burial in his homeland.

Several examples of violent deaths connected to crimes come from the book of Chronicles. One case, already discussed, is Saul's death, for Yahweh killed Saul because of his offenses according to 1 Chr 10:13-14 (5.1.2). The manner of Saul's death is curious in light of the theological notion that implicates Yahweh's agency, for Saul fell upon his sword in an act of suicide. Saul's battlefield suicide, then, paradoxically involved his own volition and Yahweh's agency. Though he did not receive a proper

burial, Saul's remains were recovered by the warriors of Jabesh-Gilead, a positive detail which ends Saul's narrative.

Less extensive, but nonetheless illustrative, is the death of Jeroboam I. Though he is painted as a sinful ruler on numerous occasions, the book of Kings does not report Jeroboam receiving personal punishment from Yahweh outside of his withered hand (1 Kgs 14:4) and the death of his son (1 Kgs 14:12). Jeroboam's death is particularly uneventful, as 1 Kgs 14:20 simply reports that, “He slept with his fathers” (*wayyiškab 'im 'ăbōtāw*).

Chronicles provides a significantly different perspective, for it provides a consequence for Jeroboam's opposition to Yahweh's kingdom (8.3.2). In a battle with Abijah, God defeated Jeroboam leading to a Judahite victory (2 Chr 13:15). 1 Chr 13:20 not only mentions that Jeroboam never again regained his power, but also emphasizes divine intervention, stating that “Yahweh struck him and he died” (*wayyiggapēhū YHWH wayyāmōt*).⁷⁰

In this case, Yahweh's intervention is unmediated by any apparent physical entity, and this unmediated striking is what resulted in Jeroboam's death. Therefore the “striking” suggests a direct action by which the deity intervened in the situation. The nuance of *ngp* in this instance can be illuminated by David's words in 1 Sam 26:10, where David provides three legitimate ways that Yahweh's anointed can be removed from the throne (literally, destroyed): he may fall in battle, his day of death may come, or Yahweh may strike (*ngp*) him down. Put another way, Yahweh's anointed might die a natural death, a battlefield death, or a death by divine intervention. This latter option is in

70 Cf. Amos 7:9-11

view concerning Jeroboam's death in Chronicles, for Yahweh struck Jeroboam without any mediation in such a way that it lead to his death.⁷¹ Thus Jeroboam's death is thoroughly theologized – any specific mode of death remains hidden by the theological notion of Yahweh's intervention.

A word must be said about the timing of Jeroboam's death. That Jeroboam outlived Abijah, indicated by data in Kings, seemingly contradicts the Chronicler's assertion that Jeroboam appears to die in the days of Abijah.⁷² However, the Chronicler's assertion that “Yahweh struck him and he died” is chronologically ambiguous, a fact indicated by tentative formulations by both Japhet⁷³ and Klein⁷⁴ on the death of Jeroboam. 2 Chr 13:20 is only clear about Jeroboam not regaining his power during the lifetime of Abijah. The circumstances of death – the place and the (historical) mode of death – are lacking from the Chronicler's bare statement. Instead, the Chronicler located the death of Jeroboam in close proximity to his crime in an effort to underscore its relationship with Jeroboam's opposition to the kingdom of Yahweh.

In addition to bringing military defeat (11.1.1.3), in two ways Amaziah suffers personally for his crimes (7.1.2 and 7.2.2). He is captured in battle with Joash (10.1.5.2), a consequence of a circumstances in which Yahweh played a role (2 Chr 25:20). But the divine intent to destroy (*lahašhitekā*) Amaziah announced by the prophet in 2 Chr 25:16 reaches completion in 2 Chr 25:27. In fact, this announcement is the only indicator that

71 HALOT 1, p. 669 provides three definitions for the root *ngp* in the Qal: 1) to injure by striking; 2) to strike metaph. (with plague, death, illness, or defeat); 3) to strike (one's foot), stumble. 2 Chr 13:20 is given under the second definition, under the “death” subdivision.

72 Japhet 1993, 698; Klein 2012, 206; Williamson 1982, 255.

73 “Verse 20 concludes with the death of Jeroboam – apparently during Abijah's lifetime” (Japhet 1993, 698).

74 “This verse seems to say that Jeroboam died during the lifetime of Abijah” (Klein 2012, 206).

Yahweh had a part in Amaziah's death. 2 Chr 25:27 ties Amaziah's death at the hands of conspirators to the time when he turned from Yahweh (*sār 'āmašyāhû mē'ahārê* YHWH), an allusion to the king's introduction of the worship of the gods of Seir (2 Chr 25:15), precisely why the prophet announced Yahweh's intent to destroy the king (2 Chr 25:16).

The narrative provides further details with regard to the violent death of Amaziah at the hands of those who rebelled against him. The anonymous rebels are not indicated, but the text says that, “They formed a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem” (2 Chr 25:27). As a result, Amaziah fled to Lachish, where, “They (the rebels) sent after him to Lachish, and they killed him there” (2 Chr 25:27). The fact that Amaziah died in Lachish makes the retrieval of his body a possibility. If one reads with the MT (2 Chr 25:28), Amaziah is buried in “a city of Judah,” a circumstance that could indicate a progression of punishment, as argued by Japhet.⁷⁵ Other text traditions, however, support the reading “city of David,”⁷⁶ and the fact that Amaziah is buried “with his fathers” suggests that this reading, which indicates Jerusalem as Amaziah's place of burial, is the most probable.⁷⁷ Following this later option, Amaziah's burial is not unfavorable. It is only the mode of his death – assassination in Lachish – that constitutes divine punishment.

A final aspect of Amaziah's assassination is noteworthy. The conspiracy, which the Chronicler connects with Amaziah's crimes, is separated from those crimes by at least fifteen years.⁷⁸ The text makes no attempt to hide this, for 2 Chr 25:25 plainly admits the time gap. The Chronicler's goal, then, was not to portray immediate retribution, but to

⁷⁵ Japhet 1993, 872.

⁷⁶ LXX, Vulgate and some Hebrew versions.

⁷⁷ With Klein 2012, 364. It should also be noted that Klein, in his textual note to 2 Chr 26:28, notes that Dillard indicates that “city of Judah” is used for Jerusalem in the Babylonian Chronicles (Klein 2012, 353 note 42).

⁷⁸ Klein 2012, 364; Williamson 1982, 331.

closely connect offense and punishment on a theological level.⁷⁹

Perhaps the most surprising case of a chastised king who received a death penalty is Josiah. One can hardly appreciate the Chronicler's account of Josiah's death without first examining the counterpart in 1 Kgs 23:29, for it is devoid of any theological notion: "...the king, Josiah, went to meet him (Necho), and he (Necho) killed him in Megiddo when he saw him." The text reads most naturally as an account relating the bare facts without any theological backdrop: Necho simply kills Josiah in Megiddo.⁸⁰ The author(s) of Kings portrayed Josiah's death as nothing more than an unfortunate event.⁸¹

The Chronicler, on the other hand, provided theological rationale for Josiah's death. When Josiah goes out to meet Necho in battle, Necho sends the following message (2 Chr 35:21):

What do I have to do with you, King of Judah? (I am coming) not against you today, but to the house with which I am at war, and God told me to hurry. Stop opposing God who is with me so that he will not destroy you (*wə'al yašhîtekā*).

Necho's words suggest that he (Necho) is an agent of God doing God's work. Any attempt by Josiah to intervene would be opposing God, in which case God would destroy Josiah.

Josiah refused Necho's advice and instead faced him in battle. It is at this

⁷⁹ Cf. Japhet 1993, 871; Klein 2012, 364.

⁸⁰ Huldah's assertion, that Josiah will be gathered to his grave in peace, refers to his proper burial. This has been argued elsewhere, e.g. Pietsch 2010, 76–77. Similarly, Keulen 1996, 258 argues that the Huldah's promise refers to the circumstances of Josiah's burial, namely that he will not be left unburied. One should note that the Sin of Sargon text (K 4730 [+]) Sm 1876) indicates that Sargon II's improper burial was a trigger for investigation into the circumstances of his death (Tadmor-Landsberger-Parpola 1989). Cf. 1 Kgs 14:12-13, where a proper burial is granted to Jeroboam's sick son (Abijah) because a "good thing" was found in him – thus removing him from the egregious fate threatening the rest of Jeroboam's line (1 Kgs 14:10-11).

⁸¹ Likewise, the account of Josiah's death in 1 Esd 1:28, though related to the king's opposition to the divine word, is relayed in mundane language without clear ties to retribution. This is in accord with the absence of any thread of divine destruction in 1 Esdras like that which appears in 2 Chr 35:21.

point that the narrator affirms that Necho's words were in fact Yahweh's words, for the text states, “he (Josiah) did not listen to the words of Necho from the mouth of God but he came to the plain of Megiddo to do battle” (2 Chr 35:22). Josiah, in his failure to heed the divine word through Necho (7.1.2),⁸² was in fact opposing God. The Judean king's attempt to disguise himself, reminiscent of Ahab,⁸³ fails, and archers mortally wound Josiah (2 Chr 35:23-24).

The narrator's affirmation that Necho's words were from Yahweh consequently equates the fate of Josiah with Necho's warning. More specifically, Necho's threat that Yahweh would destroy Josiah if he opposed Necho was actualized in the archers who struck Josiah. The implication is that Yahweh orchestrated Josiah's fall. By not heeding God's words through Necho, Josiah is indeed destroyed by God, just as Necho had warned.⁸⁴ Noticeably, Josiah died in Jerusalem (2 Chr 35:24), though the arrows struck him on the battlefield at Megiddo – a detail in accord with Huldah's prophecy that the Judahite king would be gathered to his grave “in peace” (2 Chr 34:28). Josiah, then, suffered mortal wounds in battle, but did not perish on the battlefield. That Josiah died in Jerusalem contrasts with his death as recorded in 2 Kgs 23:29, where Josiah suffers a true battlefield death. The difference is significant, for death in battle is particularly ominous in the ancient Near East. In this aspect alone is the Chronicler's account is a bit more favorable than the King's account – a curiosity in light of the Chronicler's presentation of

82 Cf. Begg 1987, 158; Talshir 1996, 231; Delamarter 2004, 34; Frost 1968, 381; Mitchell 2006 takes a different approach to the mechanics of Josiah's fall.

83 See 2 Kgs 22:30 // 2 Chr 18:29. This connection has been widely pointed out.

84 Kalimi, noting connections with Ahab and Josiah in Chronicles, states “The Chronicler presumably wished to lead his potential audience to the conclusion that disobeying God's word ultimately brings death: the sinner may be either a wicked king (Ahab) or even a king with an extremely positive record (Josiah)” (Kalimi 2005, 23).

Josiah as a chastised king.

The parallel accounts of Sennacherib in Kings and Isaiah (2 Kings 19 and Isaiah 37) relate the consequences for the Assyrian king's prideful boasting against Yahweh (8.2). After Sennacherib had reviled Yahweh through his messengers, Isaiah informed Eliakim and Shebna to tell Hezekiah the following (2 Kgs 19:6-7 // Isa 37:7):

Do not fear the words which you heard, by which the servants of the king of Assyria reviled me. Behold, I am about to put a spirit in him and he will hear a report and return to his land, and I will cause him (*wəhippaltîw*) to fall by sword in his land.

On a second occasion Isaiah explains that Sennacherib will pay for his crimes (2 Kgs 19:22-23a // Isa 37:23):

Whom have you reviled (*hērapṭā*) and blasphemed (*wəgiddapṭā*)
against whom have you raised (*hārîmôtâ*) your voice and lifted up
your eyes (*wattîššā' mārôm'ênêkā*)?
Against the Holy One of Israel!
By your messengers⁸⁵ you have reviled (*hērapṭā*) the Lord.

At the end of his message, Isaiah states the following (2 Kgs 19:28 // Isa 37:29; cf. v.33):

Because you have raged (*hitraggezākā*) against me,
and your arrogance (*wəša'ānanākā*) has come up in my ears,
I will set my hook in your nose (*bə'appekā*),
and my bit in your lips (*bišpātêkā*),
and I will make you turn back (*wahāšîbōtîkā*)
on the way in which you came (*bā'tā*).

According to Isaiah, then, two things will happen to Sennacherib: Yahweh will lead him back to his homeland where Yahweh will enact his death by sword. The way in which Yahweh led Sennacherib back to Assyria is not explicit. Nevertheless, after an “angel of Yahweh” (*mal'ak YHWH*) struck down 185,000 in the Assyrian camp (2 Kgs 19:35 // Isa

⁸⁵ Isaiah reads “your servants.”

37:36), Sennacherib returned to Nineveh (2 Kgs 19:36 // Isa 37:37).⁸⁶ There Sennacherib's sons, Adrammelek and Sharezer “struck him down by sword” (*hikkūhū*), an act tied directly to Yahweh's claim that he would instigate this king's death in his home country (2 Kgs 19:37; cf. 19:6-7).⁸⁷

Sennacherib's violent slaughter indeed transpired in his own country. However, the text provides a precise location for this act of patricide, namely “the house of Nisroch his [Sennacherib's] god” (2 Kgs 19:37). That Sennacherib's murder unfolded in the temple of his own god⁸⁸ is not an innocuous detail. Rabshakeh, speaking for Sennacherib, asked those who could hear a rhetorical question: “Have any of the gods of the nations delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria?” (2 Kgs 18:33 // Isa 36:18). Sennacherib echos this same confidence in a similar rhetorical question (2 Kgs 19:12 // Isa 37:12) in a message sent to Hezekiah as the Assyrian king headed to Lachish. The fact, then, that Sennacherib fell by his own sons in his own land in the temple of his own god, is an indictment on the king's arrogance and his failure to recognize the supremacy of Yahweh.

The subject of the song in Isaiah 14, the “king of Babylon,” receives a specific consequence for his violence and pride (8.1.2.2 and 8.2). The song hints at the ruler's fate when it says that Yahweh has broken the staff – a representation of the king (Isa 14:5). The song becomes more precise about this king's demise when it talks about the king having reached his destination, the realm of the dead: “Indeed to Sheol you have been brought down, to the recesses of the pit” (Isa 14:15). This verse makes clear that the

⁸⁶ There is no explicit connection between the slaughter of the Assyrians and the offenses of Sennacherib.
⁸⁷ Cf. 2 Chr 32:20-23.

⁸⁸ Who is Nisroch? Several options have been posited, but Uehlinger argues the most likely candidate is Ninurta (Uehlinger 1999).

Babylonian king has been killed in exchange for his crimes, for his destination is Sheol – the realm of the dead.

Several factors indicate that the severity of the king's punishment is more than his death and confinement to the underworld.⁸⁹ The ruler died a particularly ignoble death and did not receive a proper burial (Isa 14:18-19a): “All the kings of the nations, all of them, lie in honor each in his house; but you yourself have been cast your from your grave.” Moreover, the king is reckoned among those “who have been pierced by the sword” (*təṭōʾānê ḥāreb*), indicating that the king died violently, counted among others who were slaughtered (Isa 14:19b). That the ruler's corpse is cast away from the grave demonstrates that the death took place far from home. Moreover, the song assures, the Babylonian king's corpse will never be properly buried (Isa 14:20).

Opinions differ as to the place of the king's death. Kaiser argues that one cannot discern with certainty whether the ruler died in battle or in some sort of execution,⁹⁰ while Wildberger states with confidence that “the author clearly has in mind a death in battle.”⁹¹ A cautious approach might admit that one cannot be absolutely certain that the king's death took place on the battlefield, but this nevertheless remains a strong possibility. It has been noted that the account resembles a battlefield death,⁹² and lack of any other details indicating a conspiracy or assassination lends support to this view. The position taken here is that the song does depict the king dying in battle, along with others slain in combat.

Yahweh, in response to the leader of Tyre's prideful claims to divinity (8.2), will

89 So also Kaiser 1974, 41.

90 Kaiser 1974, 42.

91 Wildberger 1997, 71.

92 Oswalt 1986, 323 note 19.

soon bring strangers (*hinəni mēbi' 'alēkā zārîm*) against this ruler (Ezek 28:7). Though such a military confrontation is naturally corporate (11.1.1.3), the text maintains a particular focus on the leader. In addition to the singular pronominal suffixes in Ezek 28:7, the following verse elaborates the personal penalty which awaits the ruler:

To the pit they will make you descend (*yôridûkā*),
and you will die (*wā mattâ*) the death of one pierced (*mə môtê ḥālāl*)
in the heart of the seas. (Ezek 28:8)

The violent death of the Tyrian ruler, achieved by the foreigners enlisted by Yahweh, serves not just as retribution, but also to demonstrate that the leader is no god (Ezek 28:9).

That this ruler ends up in the pit (*šahat*) is not a sufficient penalty, for he will die a disgraceful death. Not only is the construction emphatic (*wā mattâ mə môtê ḥālāl*), but it also suggests a soldier's death (*ḥālāl*), a fate to which a king should not come. More to the point, the death by which the leader would be punished was particularly opprobrious: “The death of the uncircumcised (*môtê 'ārēlîm*) you will die (*tāmût*) by the hand of foreigners (*zārîm*)” (Ezek 28:10). The image here is that Tyre would be overrun by an enemy force, and in that battle the king would fall. Above all it is the location of the Tyrian's end that ultimately signals his misplaced hubris and subsequent divine punishment. This leader, who had once said “I have sat in the dwelling place of the gods, in the heart of the seas” (Ezek 28:2), will meet his inglorious end in this very place – in the heart of the seas” (Ezek 28:8). This reference to the island fortress of Tyre, here depicted as the ruler's divine dwelling,⁹³ subverts the ruler's claim to divinity while desecrating his “divine dwelling.”

93 Cf. Zimmerli 1983, 78–79; Eichrodt 1970, 390–392.

Yahweh responded to both Pharaoh's pride (8.2) and his failure to assist Judah in her time of need (7.3.4) by announcing that the king of Egypt will be captured along with others. Yahweh instructs the prophet to relay the following:

I will place hooks (*ḥaḥîm*⁹⁴) in your jaws (*bilḥāyêkâ*)
and I will make the fish of your rivers (*dāgat ya'ōrêkâ*) cling to your scales
(*bāqasqāsōtêkâ*),
and I will bring you up (*wāha 'ālîtkâ*) from the midst of your rivers (*ya'ōrêkâ*)
and every fish of your rivers (*ya'ōrêkâ*) will cling to your scales
(*bāqasqāsōtêkâ*),
and I will cast you (*ûnāṭaštîkâ*) towards the wilderness,
you (*'ôtākâ*) and every fish of your rivers (*ya'ōrêkâ*);
upon the surface of the field you (*tippôl*) will fall
and you will not be gathered (*tē'āsēp*)
nor will you be brought in (*tiqqābēs*);
to the animals of the land and the birds of the air
I have given you (*nātattîkâ*) for food. (Ezek 29:4-5)

Though this king does bring corporate punishment upon his nation (11.1.1.3), the passage is directly aimed at Pharaoh, as exemplified by the singular suffixes and singular verbs. Moreover, Pharaoh's punishment is portrayed through fishing imagery in this passage, and through this imagery one detects the capture and death of Pharaoh.

Specifically, Pharaoh will be fished out of the water and thrown into the wilderness.⁹⁵ Though a particular mode of death is not described, Pharaoh's death is nevertheless depicted as violent and part of a massive execution. The Pharaoh, as *hattannîm hārōbēs* (Ezek 29:3), will be pulled from the safety of the Nile and killed.

Though specifics of Pharaoh's death are not supplied, the desecration of Pharaoh's corpse is in view. As a discarded corpse, Pharaoh's body will serve as carrion for consumption by scavengers. Though this scenario assumes that Pharaoh will not receive

94 Reading with the *qarê* for *ḥhyym*.

95 On fishing imagery in the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East, see Yoder 2015.

a proper burial, the text is sure to mention this fact: “you will not be gathered, nor will you be brought in.” Both the exposure of a dead corpse and lack of a proper burial have been encountered elsewhere in this study, and the abject treatment of Pharaoh's body would be viewed no differently.⁹⁶ The point is that Pharaoh will die and his remains will be utterly desecrated.

As has been the case with other chastised rulers who received death sentences, Pharaoh's punishment is geographically linked with offense. In Ezek 28:3, Pharaoh claimed, “My Nile (*yə'ōrī*) is my own, and I have made it for myself (*'āśītīnī*).” Yahweh warns Pharaoh that Yahweh will fish Pharaoh from the rivers (literally “your rivers” [*yə'ōrēkā*]). The connection between *yə'ōrī* and *yə'ōrēkā* ties Pharaoh's creative claim to have made the Nile (and its life-giving properties) with the fact that he has no control over it or its channels, for Pharaoh will die because Yahweh will pull him from it – and in this regard the fishing imagery comes into play. It must be admitted that the MT shows some variation regarding the noun *yə'ōr*, for it is plural in Ezek 29:4-5, 10 (*yə'ōrēkā*) – rendered here as “rivers” – and singular (“Nile”) in Ezek 29:3, 9. But when Pharaoh's claim occurs again, repeated by Yahweh in Ezek 29:9 as a basis for judgment in Ezek 29:10, the two are linked: “Because you⁹⁷ said, 'The Nile (*yə'ōr*) is mine and I have made it,' therefore I am against you and your rivers (*yə'ōrēkā*).” Therefore, Pharaoh's claim and his fate are cleanly linked: his boastful claim of creating and owning the Nile will result in his death from the rivers of his kingdom.

Pharaoh, for his hubris (8.2), receives a similar treatment in Ezekiel 31 based

⁹⁶ Possibly worse in view of ancient Egypt's mortuary traditions and their perception of the afterlife.

⁹⁷ On this reading, see note 40 on p. 166 (chapter 8).

upon the comparison this chapter makes between the king of Egypt and Assyria. The greatness of Assyria could not save it from divine discipline, for Yahweh said, “I gave it into the hand of a leader (*'él*) of the nations. He has verily dealt with it according to its wickedness. I have driven it out” (Ezek 31:11).⁹⁸ Foreigners (*zārîm*) cut down Assyria, portrayed as a cedar tree, and it lay broken, only to end up in Sheol (Ezek 31:12-17). The comparison of the king of Egypt to Assyria suggests a similar fate (Ezek 31:2), a fate brought into clearer view in Ezek 31:18b:

And you will be brought down (*wəhûradtâ*) with the trees of Eden to the lower land (*'eres tahtî*). In the midst of the uncircumcised (*bətôk 'ārēlîm*) you will lie, with those slain by the sword (*halālē hereb*). This is Pharaoh and all his pomp (*hāmônô*)⁹⁹, declares the Lord Yahweh.

In addition to corporate repercussions (11.1.1.3), this passage explains that Pharaoh faces death for his offense. Yet once again, a particularly dismal end for Pharaoh is in view. Pharaoh will be located with the uncircumcised and those killed by the sword. Pharaoh will not just die – he will die a victim of the sword. Such a death is the fate of a soldier slain in battle. That Pharaoh will lie among the uncircumcised (*bətôk 'ārēlîm*) places him among non-Egyptians, for the Egyptians practiced circumcision. In fact, Egyptians considered uncircumcised foreigners unclean.¹⁰⁰ Pharaoh's death, then, is doubly degrading. He will die violently by sword, and his corpse will lie among those he viewed

98 This verse is difficult, for the verbs are *wə'ettanēhû* and *ya'āsê* – imperfects where context suggests perfects. As Zimmerli notes, the LXX's *καὶ παρέδωκα αὐτὸν* implies a simple emendation to *wā'ettanēhû* (Zimmerli 1983, 143–144). The presence of *ya'āsê* is more difficult. The LXX has *καὶ ἐποίησεν τὴν ἀπώλειαν αὐτοῦ*, for which *BHS* proposes *wayya'as*. This may be evidence that the sentence is a secondary addition (Zimmerli 1983, 144). The defective spelling of *gēraštîhû* (*gršthw*) is eliminated by Eichrodt because it is “unintelligible” (Eichrodt 1970, 424). Zimmerli understands both *gršthw* and *krš'w* to refer to be variants of the same word (Zimmerli 1983, 144). I have emended the tenses of the verbs based on the LXX, particularly if one takes seriously the date recorded in Ezek 31:1. According to the date, the passage dates to the year 587, long after the Nineveh fell in 612.

99 Note the orthography: *hmwnh*.

100 Filer 2001, 135.

as unclean.

A final example of a death penalty comes from the “wife-sister” episode involving King Abimelech of Gerar. Because he took Abraham's wife, Sarah, Abimelech faced a death penalty (Gen 20:3; cf v. 7). Though Abimelech was released from his penalty because he returned Sarah to Abraham (Gen 20:7, 16-17), it does not diminish the fact that he was originally given a death penalty.

10.1.3.3 Ugaritic literature

Aqhatu experiences a gruesome death for his insulting refusal to give his bow to the goddess Anat in *CAT* 1.17-1.18 (8.5.3). Aqhatu's slaughter stands out not only for its careful planning and violent nature, but also for the way in which the goddess received permission to carry out the prince's death. The following discussion on the latter will encompass the former.

After Aqhatu angered Anat for his refusal to hand over the bow which she desired, Anat set off to visit El (*CAT* 1.17 iv 50-1.18 i 1-14). Upon meeting with El, the goddess slandered (*tlšn*) Aqhatu (*CAT* 1.17 iv 51), and then proceeded to give a speech now lost. Once the text resumes, Anat has threatened El himself: “I will make your grayness flow blood (*'ašhlk [šbtk dmm]*), your gray beard (flow) gore (*[šbt dq]nk mm'm*)” (*CAT* 1.18 i 11-12). Anat, seeking El's permission to carry out her bloodlust, is granted her request, for El capitulates (*CAT* 1.18 i 17-19). Even if Anat's threat motivated El to grant permission, El is still complicit in Anat's plan to slay Aqhatu. In what follows, Anat is certainly the primary actor, but it must not be forgotten that El provided the stamp of approval for Anat's actions.

After another break, Anat's plan unfolds. The goddess enlists a certain YṬPN, a Sutean warrior¹⁰¹ according to the text (*CAT* 1.18 iv 6). Anat, flying among the birds of prey above the unsuspecting Aqhatu with YṬPN in tow, takes aim at Aqhatu and apparently launches YṬPN at Aqhatu (*CAT* 1.18 iv 27-34). YṬPN struck Aqhatu, Aqhatu's blood poured out to his knees, and his life was gone (*CAT* 1.18 i 34-37).

Anat, then, is the main actor in Aqhatu's murder, but YṬPN played a distinctive role as well. Anat, responsible for the plan and endorsed (unwittingly?) by El, utilizes YṬPN as the instrument through which Aqhatu would die. YṬPN is physically responsible for the act, whereas Anat designed, initiated, and guided the ambush. Anat's ultimate responsibility is best captured later in the text, which reads, “Anat, the virgin, caused his life to go out (*šš'at*) like wind (*krḥ*)” (*CAT* 1.19 ii 42).

101 Alternatively, the phrase *yṭpn mhr št* may be understood as “YṬPN, the soldier of the Lady” (e.g., Pardee, *COS* 1.103, 349 and cf. note 64).

Table 11. Violent Death

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Consequence
Utu-ḫegal	Meso – Weidner	Drowning death
Amar-Su'en	Meso – Weidner	Death (“goring of an ox,” “the bite of his shoe”)
Atamrum	Meso – <i>ARM</i> 26 285-bis Meso – <i>ARM</i> 13 97	Death (presumably – <i>ištālšu</i>) Death (presumably – <i>ištālu</i>)
Unnamed ruler	Meso – MS 3210	Death (<i>napištašu kīma mē itbuk</i>)
Sargon II	Meso – Sin of Sargon	Death in enemy land without proper burial
Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir	Meso – Nin. A ii 55-56	Execution in Elam
Aḫšēri	Meso – Ashurbanipal	Death in divinely incited rebellion
Šamaš-šuma-ukīn	Meso – Ashurbanipal	Death by fire
David	HB – Samuel 12	Death sentence (relegated)
Ahab	HB – 1 Kings 20-22	Death in battle
Saul	HB – 1 Chr 10:13-14	Battlefield suicide, equated with Yahweh's agency
Jeroboam	HB – 2 Chronicles 13	Struck down by Yahweh
Amaziah	HB – 2 Chronicles 25	Assassinated by conspirators
Josiah	HB – 2 Chronicles 35	Death from combat wounds
Sennacherib	HB – 2 Kings 18-19 // Isaiah 37-38	Patricide
King of Babylon	HB – Isaiah 14	Violent death likely on the battlefield without proper burial
Leader of Tyre	HB – Ezekiel 28	Degrading death in “divine dwelling”

continued

Table 11. Violent Death: continued

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Consequence
Pharaoh	HB – Ezekiel 29, 31	Killed by sword, will lay among the uncircumcised
Abimelech of Gerar	HB – Gen 20:3	Death penalty (released)
Aqhatu	Ugaritic – Danilu	Killed by Anat and YTPN

10.1.4 Rejection of Kingship

An individual's kingship may be affected because of offenses. The kingship may suffer in various ways. For example, kingship may be rejected, land could be lost, or the ruler could be handed over to another power. In these cases, it is an individual's dominion alone that is affected – not that individual's dynastic line or a member of that line.¹⁰²

10.1.4.1 Mesopotamian literature

On a conceptual level, the rejection of kingship appears in Weidner Chronicle.

The pertinent lines have appeared earlier in this study, but will be repeated here:

Whoever sins (*ugallalu*) against the gods of this¹⁰³ city, his star will not stand (*ul iazzazi*) in the heavens [...] the king(ship?)¹⁰⁴ will come to an end (*iqattâ*). His scepter (*ḥaṭṭašu*) will be taken away (*innaṭir*). His treasury/foundation (*išittašu*) will be turned into a heap and ruin.¹⁰⁵

Though rejection of kingship is not overtly mentioned in the chronicle-like portion of the text, that this retributive principle governs the text suggests that divine rejection of the

102 For these, see 11.1.2.

103 On “this,” see note 94 on 185 (chapter 8).

104 On “king(ship?),” see note 34 on 128 (chapter 7).

105 This is a composite text taken from A and S.

king was built into those punishments that ended each respective king's reign. Whereas two of the formulations are fairly neutral regarding the manner of rejection (“his star will not stand” and “the king[ship?] will come to an end”), another is more sinister (“His scepter will be taken away”) and one has overtly negative connotations (“His treasury/foundation will be turned into a heap and ruin”).

It will be recalled that Abīya, an *āpilum* of Addu, provided a message to Zimri-Lim (A.1968) where it was reported that Yaḥdun-Lim committed a general offense of “abandoning” Addu's cause (8.5.1). In consequence, Addu said, “I gave the land which I had given to him to Šamši-Adad.” The text lacks specific details, but it is at least discernible that Addu himself acted to remove the physical kingdom from Yaḥdun-Lim and then bestowed it on another – namely Šamši-Adad. The general offense committed by Yaḥdun-Lim, whatever it may have been, led to his loss of the kingdom – a rejection of kingship.¹⁰⁶

In three other cases, deities overthrow the rule of Mesopotamian kings. Two of these instances revolve around the god Aššur. Aššur dispelled of Shalmaneser's rule (V) after he violated the *kidinnūtu* status of Assur (8.3.1) according to Sargon's words in K 1349: “The Enlil of the gods, in the rage of his heart, overthrew his reign (*palāšu i[škip*¹⁰⁷...). Me, Sargon, he decreed¹⁰⁸ king of the land of Aššur.” Aššur rejects and replaces Shalmaneser – not without anger. Šamaš-šuma-ukīn experiences a similar rejection from Aššur in *SAA* 3 44 for his multiple violations (7.2.1, 7.3.1, 8.3.1):

106 Malamat 1998, 157 states that the rejection of kingship “...is unique in the Old Babylonian period and seems to bear an Amorite stamp.” Cf. the following.

107 On the reading and *iškip* for expected *iskip*, see note 20 and references in Chamaza 1992, 23.

108 This reading follows Chamaza: *šá-[i-im]*, though this is not entirely certain (Chamaza 1992, 23 note 21).

“Because of these evil deeds which Šamaš-šuma-ukīn committed against you, I tore out the foundation of his royal throne (*išdi kussī šarrūtīšu ʿassuḥ*). I overthrew his reign (*palēšu ʿaš ʿkip*).”¹⁰⁹ To this it should be added that Aššur says, “I decreed his fate as evil (¹⁹[x x x x *aš*]m *šīmatsu ana lemuttim*).” Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, then, receives similar treatment from Aššur as did Shalmaneser – both kings are rejected by Aššur who overthrows (*sakāpu*) each king's reign (*palû*). In the case of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, it is added that Aššur tore out the king's royal throne.

Marduk similarly deals with Nabonidus in the Cyrus Cylinder. In this text, the focus is primarily on Marduk's benevolence towards Babylon and his selection of Cyrus as her king rather than the rejection of Nabonidus. Marduk's repudiation of Nabonidus' rule is nevertheless mentioned: “Nabonidus, the king who did not fear him, he placed (*umallâ*) in his [Cyrus'] hands” (17). Nabonidus' reign culminated in this replacement with Cyrus. Marduk, after endorsing Cyrus, terminated Nabonidus' kingship by delivering the king into the hands of Cyrus, an end which differs from the more direct formulations above.

10.1.4.2 Hebrew Bible

A few kings have their regnal duties revoked by Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible. Rejection of kingship occurs in the case of Saul according to 1 Samuel 15, for Saul is personally rejected after failing to heed the prophetic word on a second occasion according to Samuel: “Because you rejected the word of Yahweh, he has rejected you as king” (1 Sam 15:23b). This rejection, however, took place on a theological plane, and it's

¹⁰⁹ See the note on *iškip* above.

physical manifestation resulted from a number of complicated factors (discussed in 5.1.1). Yet Samuel's words are direct and unequivocal concerning Saul's status before Yahweh. It should be pointed out that the manner in which Saul would be removed remains unmentioned, and this is in accord with the rejections complicated development.¹¹⁰

Three more examples come from from the book of Daniel. In addition to his expulsion from society and the onset of his madness (10.1.2.2), Nebuchadrezzar received a degree of divine rejection according to the voice from heaven in Dan 4:31 (Aram 4:28): “the kingdom (*malkûtâ*) has departed (*’ădāt*) from you.” More explicit is the reverberation in Dan 5:20, where Daniel informs Belshazzar that “he (Nebuchadrezzar) was deposed (*honḥat*) from the throne of his kingdom (*kuršē’ malkûtēh*).” This last excerpt clarifies the former, demonstrating that Nebuchadrezzar's individual rule was in view – not the existence of his kingdom. The noun *malkû* more accurately indicates “reign” rather than “kingdom.” The loss of kingship, then, accompanied Nebuchadrezzar's madness – both consequences of the king's hubris (8.2).

The consequences of Belshazzar's cultic crimes and pride (7.2.2 and 8.2) are described by Daniel in his explanation of the meaning of the words which were inscribed by a mysterious hand on the palace wall (Dan 5:24; cf. 5ff). When Daniel provides the meaning of *mānē’* and *pārēs*, he explains that “God has numbered (*mānâ*) your kingdom (*malkûtāk*) and he has ended it (*wəhašlāmah*),” and that “Your kingdom (*malkûtāk*) has been divided (*pārīsat*), and it has been given (*wihībat*) to the Medes and the Persians” (Dan 5:26, 28). The notion that Belshazzar's kingdom (*malkûtāk*) “has ended” references

¹¹⁰ Cf. the more blatant Mesopotamian accounts above.

Belshazzar's individual rule, for the actual kingdom was “given (*wihibat*) to the Medes and the Persians” in addition to the statement that it continued to exist under “Darius the Mede” (Dan 5:32 [Aram 6:1]). Belshazzar, then, will lose his kingship in a way similar to Nebuchadrezzar. Differently, however, the kingdom over which Belshazzar ruled would be transferred over to another power. These announcements, curiously portrayed by perfect verb forms, came to fruition the very night Daniel announced them: Belshazzar lost his kingship through his own death¹¹¹ and “Darius the Mede” gained control of the kingdom (Dan 5:30-31 [Aram 5:30-6:1]).

The consequence of the “horn's” (i.e., Antiochus IV Epiphanes) sacrilege (7.2.2, 8.2, and 8.3.2) in Daniel 7 also entails the rejection of kingship. The (divine) court, headed by God himself (Dan 7:9), will decide the ruler's fate, as the interpreter of Daniel's dream explains: “And the court will sit, and his dominion (*wəšoltānēh*) will be taken away (*wəha 'dôn*) for destruction and ruination to the end” (Dan 7:26). The object of destruction, Antiochus' rule, is lexically indicated in this passage: *šoltān* denotes the extent of one's power. The loss of kingship, then, is the consequence which is associated with Antiochus. Though the fact that God, here the “Ancient of Days” (*'attīq yômīn*), presides over the divine council is sufficient to demonstrate the divine origin of Antiochus' punishment, a further indicator appears in Daniel 8. Gabriel, in his explanation of Daniel's dream, states the following about Antiochus: “And not with a hand will he be broken” (*ūbā 'epes yād yiššābēr*),¹¹² a reference to the divine nature of his coming punishment (Dan 8:25b). Admittedly, the excerpt from Dan 8:25 references some

111 Though Dan 5:27 demonstrates that Belshazzar has failed as ruler, his death as recorded in 5:30 does not have clear enough ties to the offenses to be considered consequences of Belshazzar's actions. Cf. chapters 2 and 3.

112 Cf. the similar phrase with the same significance in Dan 2:34 (*dī lā' bīdayin*).

sort of obscure consequence that may not be precisely what is in view on Dan 7:26. However, Dan 8:25 reinforces the idea that Antiochus' fate will stem from the divine realm, and therefore is theologically analogous to Antiochus' fate in Dan 7:26. Put simply, both passages understand Antiochus' impending fate as divinely orchestrated.

Table 12. Rejection of Kingship

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Consequence
Qualifying kings	Meso – Weidner	Rejection of kingship
Yaḥdun-Lim	Meso – A.1968	Loss of land
Shalmaneser	Meso – K 1349	Aššur overthrew his reign (<i>palâšu i[škip]</i>)
Šamaš-šuma-ukīn	Meso – <i>SAA</i> 3 44	Aššur claims to have “tore out the foundation of his royal throne (<i>išdi kussî šarrūtīšu ʿassuh</i> ”). I overthrew his reign (<i>palēšu ʿaš ʾ[kip]</i>)
Nabonidus	Meso – Cyrus Cylinder	Marduk placed (<i>umallâ</i>) Nabonidus in Cyrus' hands
Saul	HB – 1 Sam 15:23b	Divine rejection
Nebuchadrezzar	HB – Daniel 4, 5	Kingdom is removed from him, deposed from his throne
Belshazzar	HB – Daniel 5	Rule terminated and kingdom turned over
Antiochus IV Epiphanes	HB – Daniel 7	Dominion (<i>šolṭān</i>) taken away and destroyed

10.1.5 Capture and Imprisonment

The following section contains examples of the capture/imprisonment of an

offending ruler in response to violation(s). In each case, a king is specifically said to have been apprehended. These penalties, then, are individualized in order to underscore that the offending king personally suffered.

10.1.5.1 Mesopotamian literature

Šamaš-šuma-ukīn experienced imprisonment as part of his punishment for his offenses (7.2.1, 7.3.1, 8.3.1). Aššur claims to have placed Šamaš-šuma-ukīn into prison (SAA 3 44): “I confined him in harsh imprisonment and then I bound...” (9: *ina mēsirī danni ēsiršūma arkus*). Though this text witnesses to other repercussions that resulted from Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's offenses (10.1.4.1, 11.2.1.1, 11.2.3.1, 11.2.4.1, 11.2.5.1), this particular consequence is the only other individualized ramification directed at the king besides Aššur's rejection of his kingship (10.1.4.1).

10.1.5.2 Hebrew Bible

A number of kings are captured and/or imprisoned in response to their crimes in the Hebrew Bible. Two of these kings come from the book of Chronicles. Amaziah's crimes (7.1.2 and 7.2.2) led to a confrontation with Joash of Israel, a divinely triggered event (1 Chr 25:20). This conflict directly led to Amaziah's capture: “And Joash, king of Israel, captured (*tāpās*) Amaziah, king of Judah...and brought him to Jerusalem” (2 Chr 25:23). Likewise, the Chronicler's Manasseh receives individual imprisonment as punishment for the multitude of offenses which he carried out (7.2.2). Yahweh brought (*wayyābē*) the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria (*'et sārēy haššābā' 'āšer lamelek 'aššūr*), who captured (*wayyilkādū*) Manasseh and brought him to Babylon (2

Chr 33:11).

Regarding these two imprisoned kings, the place of offense is also a geographic center for their respective fates. The Chronicler explicitly mentioned that Joash brought Amaziah back to Jerusalem. Presumably, Jerusalem was the location where Amaziah installed the Edomite gods recovered from Seir (2 Chr 25:14). Moreover, those who conspired to assassinate Amaziah – this king's ultimate fate – did so in Jerusalem (10.1.3.2). Jerusalem formed the epicenter for both offense and punishment. Manasseh's religious reforms emanated from Jerusalem, in particular the temple (2 Chr 33:4). Differently, however, Manasseh's geographic tie with Jerusalem hinged on his restoration based on his repentance (2 Chr 33:12-13). Whereas Jerusalem served as the epicenter for Manasseh's offense, it was also the place of his restoration – contra Amaziah. The geographical markers concerning these two kings, then, stress the opposing fates that an offending king may experience.

A final example from the Hebrew Bible concerns the consequences of Zedekiah's violation of the loyalty oath he made with Nebuchadrezzar (7.3.4). Yahweh hints that Zedekiah's violation will lead to inescapable punishment (Ezek 17:15b) and that Zedekiah will die in Babylon, the very nation which he betrayed (Ezek 17:16). Yahweh's words in Ezek 17:18-20 make the punishment awaiting the king more precise:

He despised the oath to break the covenant, and behold he gave his hand and he has done all these, he will not escape. Therefore thus said the Lord Yahweh: “As I live, surely it was my oath which he despised and my covenant which he broke. I will place it on his head. I will spread (*ûpāraštî*) my net upon him, and he will be captured (*wənitpaś*) with my snare. I will bring him (*wahăbî’ôîhû*) to Babylon, and I will judge him (*wənišpattî*) there (for) his unfaithfulness which he committed against me.”

Because of his treaty violation and alliance with Psammetichus II of Egypt, Zedekiah will be captured and brought to Babylon, where he will remain until his death. Yahweh's net and snare is none other than the Babylonian army who will destroy Jerusalem, seize her king, and bring him into exile along with the Judah's population. Underlying this announcement is the presupposition that the Egyptian king on which Zedekiah leaned for support against Babylon will not live up to expectation (Ezek 17:17), a realization ironically similar to the way Zedekiah himself did not maintain his obligations to Nebuchadrezzar. Once again, there exists a connection between place of offense and punishment: Zedekiah's kingship began in Babylon with the very Babylonian king against whom he rebelled, and so Zedekiah will face punishment in Babylon. The text brings this out in clear fashion: “in the place of the king who caused him to rule, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant he broke, with him he will die in the midst of Babylon” (Ezek 17:16).¹¹³

Table 13. Imprisonment

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Consequence
Šamaš-šuma-ukīn	Meso – <i>SAA</i> 3 44	Aššur place him in “harsh imprisonment” (<i>ina mēsiri danni</i>)
Amaziah	HB – 2 Chronicles 21	Captured by Joash
Manasseh	HB – 2 Chronicles 33	Captured and conveyed to Babylon
Zedekiah	HB – Ezekiel 17	Will be captured and conveyed to Babylon

¹¹³ That “he will die” in Babylon is not the punishment itself, but the result of a life-sentence in prison.

10.1.6 Varia (Mesopotamia)

The Verse Account of Nabonidus does not explicitly connect this king's crimes (7.2.1 and 8.1.2) with consequences. Yet given the obvious anti-Nabonidus tenor of the text, one can with a deal of confidence surmise that the misfortunes in I 18'-19' result from Nabonidus' impiety. These lines state that "...a protective deity became hostile with him...he was seized by misfortune" (18'-19': [x x x]-*šu ittekiršu šēdu* [x x DING]GIR *šabit aḫīti*). It would appear, despite the breaks in the text, that the hostility from the *šēdu* comes in response to Nabonidus's offenses.¹¹⁴ In addition to the *šēdu*'s hostility and the king's misfortunes, the reader later learns that the gods had been enraged because of Nabonidus, for Cyrus "pacified their heart, he eased their mind" (vi 14': [*libbāšun up*]tašših kabattāšunu uṭṭīb). In the end it must be admitted that the consequences are not central to the text (as preserved). Rather, the text was satisfied to primarily paint Nabonidus an undesirable impious king, in contrast to the desirable Cyrus (iv 20ff). At any rate, the connection between the general calamities which the ruler experienced and divine hostility and rage, however vague it may be, is nonetheless noteworthy.

In two instances, the Advice to a Prince declares individual punishment will fall upon the offending king. For his failure to heed a "justified claim of his land (*dīn*

¹¹⁴ I am assuming that *šēdu* designates a "protective deity" rather than a malevolent *šēdu*-demon. For the latter, see the references in Wiggermann 1992. It should be noted that Kuhrt's perspective is at variance with that proposed here. She states "Nabonidus was abandoned by his *šēdu*, his protective deity, thus causing his own downfall through a series of blasphemous acts and bringing the country to ruination," (Kuhrt 1990, 141). I don't doubt the possibility that the *šēdu*'s abandonment may have led to impious acts, perhaps a notion similar to the "evil spirit" from Yahweh that descended upon Saul. However, I maintain that the acts preceding the *šēdu*'s abandonment were the cause of that abandonment. Moreover, it is not impossible that all the offenses together caused the *šēdu*'s abandonment, for the text does not have to unfold in a linear fashion. I have assumed this scenario in my analysis, and so the position here is opposite that suggested by Kuhrt: the *šēdu*'s abandonment followed the offenses of Nabonidus.

mātišu)” (8.1.2), lines 2-3 recite that “Ea, king of destinies, will change his destiny and then he will continuously pursue him with hostility.” Another individual punishment follows in the wake of the military defeat (according to IM 77087 7 [11.1.1.1]) which results from the king following the plan of Ea (8.5.1). Concerning the king, the text relates that “the great gods will continuously pursue him in deliberation and the paths of justice (*ina šitūlti u tudāt mišari*)” (8).

Table 14. Various individual punishments

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Consequence
Nabonidus	Meso – Verse Account of Nabonidus	A <i>šēdu</i> became hostile, misfortune seized him, deities angered
Hypothetical king	Meso – Advice to a Prince	Ea will change his destiny, pursue him with hostility
Hypothetical king	Meso – Advice to a Prince	“the great gods will continuously pursue him in deliberation and the paths of justice”

Chapter 11: The Consequences of Royal Sacrilege – Corporate Punishment

11.1 Corporate punishment

In some ancient near eastern texts, a ruler's offense may bring divine punishment upon the populace or particular groups. This “corporate” punishment is particularly striking, for it shows that a ruler's transgressions could have ramifications which extend beyond that ruler's own person. The effects of corporate punishment may fall upon the ruling dynasty or extend as far as the entire nation. The remainder of this chapter is concerned with the various forms of corporate punishment and those affected by it.

11.1.1 Military disaster

A reoccurring corporate consequence is that which comes in the form of “military disaster.” “Military disaster” is used here to describe various forms of large-scale battlefield defeats, including offensive failures, defensive losses, invasions, and destruction. These consequences are naturally corporate, for they involve military forces, and at times, an entire nation.

11.1.1.1 Mesopotamian literature

Military disaster in the form of invasions or defeats appears as a prevalent form of retribution for offending the gods in Mesopotamian literature. After Narām-Sîn provoked the wrath of Enlil by attacking the Ekur in the Curse of Agade (7.2.1), Enlil retaliated by

bringing the Gutians against the land (149ff). The text is clear about Enlil's intentions: “Enlil, because his beloved Ekur was destroyed, what should he destroy (in revenge) for it?” (151). Enlil sought to destroy Agade because Narām-Sîn destroyed the Ekur. After considering the Gutium, “Enlil brought them out of the mountains” (157).

This invasion, guided by Enlil, had devastating effects on the entire population, including famine and death:

(For the first time) since cities were built and founded,
The great agricultural tracts were produced no grain,
The inundated tracts produced no fish,
The irrigated orchards produced neither syrup nor wine,
The gathered clouds did not rain, the *mašgurum* did not grow (171-175)

He who slept on the roof, died on the roof,
He who slept in the house, had no burial,
People were flailing at themselves from hunger. (181-183)

Agade, as a whole, suffered tremendously from Enlil's Guitian invasion. Yet Enlil's invasion failed to achieve Enlil's goal – the destruction of Agade. Though Agade suffered, it did not experience destruction as did the Ekur.

After the destruction had set in, one can see that Enlil had not been appeased. An attempt at intercession by the people did seem to calm Enlil to a degree, for he entered his “holy bedchamber” in a makeshift reed sanctuary (cf. 193-194):

The old women did not restrain (the cry) “Alas my city!”
The old men did not restrain (the cry) “Alas its people!”
The lamentation singer did not restrain (the cry) “Alas the Ekur!”
Its young women did not restrain from tearing their hair,
Its young men did not restrain their sharp knives.
Their laments were (like) laments which Enlil's ancestors
Perform in the awe-inspiring *duku*, the holy lap of Enlil.
Because of this, Enlil entered his holy bedchamber, and lay down fasting. (202-209)

Yet the deity refrained from food, demonstrating that he was not fully appeased.¹ The Ekur's destruction had not yet been avenged, and so Enlil remained distraught.

Only the two lengthy curses uttered by Suen, Enki, Inanna, Ninurta, Ishkur, Utu, Nusku, Nidaba and the great gods quenched Enlil's wrath. The curses, which called for the downfall of Agade (212-221, 225-271), demonstrate well the corporate nature of Narām-Sîn's crime. The second curse in particular, much like the Gutian invasion, completely overlooks the personality of Narām-Sîn and instead blames Agade for the Ekur destruction: "City that attacked Ekur – it was Enlil! Agade that attacked Ekur – it was Enlil! (225-226)." The curses are effective, for the text closes with the line "Agade is destroyed – hail Inanna!" (281).

The combination of Enlil's actions and the divine curses are curious, for together they pacify Enlil. The curses uttered by the gods attempted to ease the wrath of Enlil by annihilating Agade – something Enlil's Gutian invasion did not wholly accomplish. The invasion and curses work in tandem to bring about punishment on a corporate scale. Considering the severe nature Narām-Sîn's offense (the destruction of the Ekur), it is somewhat remarkable that the king appears to have escaped any personalized punishment. Regardless, Narām-Sîn's sacrilege resulted in the suffering of his people and the destruction of his city.

Narām-Sîn is remembered as having caused military defeat in two other texts. On the heels of Narām-Sîn's failure to heed extispicies in the Cuthean Legend (7.1.1) came the total annihilation (lit. *ištēn balṭu ul itūra*) of the three companies of troops

¹ Evans 1983, 101 misses this observation when he says, "Although the people in their suffering pleaded to Enlil, he would not listen." Cf. Jacobsen 1987, 359–360 who notes that the actions of the people had calmed Enlil, but that to god was still distressed.

which he sent out over three years: 120,000 the first year, 90,000 the second, and 60,700 the third year (84-87). Narām-Sîn reacted to his defeats in bewilderment:

I fell into confusion,² I was uncertain, I was frightened, I was distressed, I was depressed. Thus I said to my heart, surely I myself, saying,³ “What have I left for the dynasty? I am a king who does not look after his land, and a shepherd who does not look after his population”

Like the Gutian invasion in the Curse of Agade, accompanying the destructions in the Cuthean Legend are a number of calamities (94-96): “Radiance of lions (*šalummat nēšī*), death (*mūtu*), fate (*namtaru*), famine (*arurtu*), awe-inspiring radiance (*namurratu*), chills (*ḥurbāšu*), loss (*ibissū*), fodder (*nebrītu*), scarcity ([*ḥušaḥ*]ḥu), sleepless (*diliptu*), as much as existed, came down with them” (*mala bašū [itt]išunu ittarda*).” Not only did Narām-Sîn's foes completely vanquish his forces on three occasions, but the land itself suffers tremendously for the king's sacrilege. Like the Curse of Agade, the consequences are two pronged: military defeat and accompanying misfortune.

Narām-Sîn's initial failure to obey the omens result in remarkably devastating losses to his military forces. However, Narām-Sîn himself remains physically untouched by the consequences of his actions, similar to the Cuthean Legend. His words do display a personal price which he suffered: he has not properly guided his country. Nevertheless, it is his forces and land who bear the burden of the consequences resulting from Narām-Sîn's actions. Again, one is reminded of the Curse of Agade, where Narām-Sîn experiences no personal suffering for his crime.

A third text in which a tradition portrays Narām-Sîn as a chastised king (8.3.1)

2 Taking *akkad* from *nakādu* with *a* for expected *u*, as suggested by Westenholz *Akkade*, 318, note to line 88.

3 See note 9 on p. 118 (chapter 7) for this construction.

who causes military destruction is the Weidner Chronicle, but the king's punishment in this particular text requires a close look. The text reads as follows:

Narām-Sîn ruined the population (*nammaššê*)⁴ of Babylon, and so twice he levied (*idkâššumma*) the army of the Gutium against him, then it (the army of the Gutium) put the people to pasture (*ittadi*)⁵ as with a donkey-goad.⁶

A point of ambiguity lies in the the verb *idkâššumma*, for it is not entirely clear who levies the army of Gutium against whom.⁷ It is possible to translate as Al-Rawi does, “Twice he called up the horde of Gutium against it.”⁸ In this case, either Marduk or Narām-Sîn called up the army of the Gutium against *Babylon*.⁹ If the latter, then this action would further explain the impiety of Narām-Sîn, and thus be an act of sacrilege, and not a punishment. If Marduk is the subject of the verb, then Marduk brought about the enemy horde against Babylon because of antecedent actions of Narām-Sîn. Yet both of these options are objectionable on the grounds that they break away from the central theme of the text. First, the Weidner Chronicle is about Marduk avenging those who mistreat his cult and city, not about Marduk mistreating his city. Secondly, the consequences of such mistreatment are aimed directly at individual rulers (the Gutium being the exception), and if Narām-Sîn had levied the army against Babylon, he would have been left unpunished.¹⁰ It is best to take the subject of the verb *idkâššumma* to be

4 For *nammaštû* referring here to humans instead of “animals,” see *ABC* 147, the comment to line 32.

5 Glassner reads *it-ta-di* with an unpublished manuscript from the British Museum (Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 266 and 291 note 5).

6 The verb *nadû* has the nuance “to put animals out to pasture” (*CAD* N1 *nadû* 1c 7' [p.79]). Though people, and not animals, are the subject in the instance at hand, the appearance of *makkarāniš* “as (with) the goad of a donkey driver” (*CAD* M1, 131) suggests such a use in this instance. Cf. the use of *nammaštû* for “people” in the previous note.

7 Thus the issue is twofold: who is the subject of the verb (Marduk or Narām-Sîn), and who/what is the antecedent of the pronoun (Babylon or Narām-Sîn)?

8 Al-Rawi 1990, 10.

9 Importantly, it seems that the two actions are distinct, due to the coordinating *-ma* on *ušalpitma*. Cf. note 12 below.

10 Other than the fairly benign statement “He gave his kingship to the army of the Gutium” (63: *šarrūssu*

Marduk, with the antecedent of the pronominal suffix to be Narām-Sîn – the grammar then dovetails with the Weidner Chronicle's overarching focus on Marduk's discipline of individual chastised rulers.¹¹

The text, then, conveys that Narām-Sîn's actions constituted an act of sacrilege, and so Marduk twice levied the army against Narām-Sîn. Narām-Sîn alone was targeted for divine punishment which was initiated through Narām-Sîn's unspecified action (i.e., “ruined”) against the people of Babylon.¹² However, though Narām-Sîn is highlighted by the text as the target of divine wrath, the offense itself is corporate by its very nature – naturally, invasions encompass the entire nation. However, the last line of the text explicitly brings out the corporate nature of the consequences: “then it (the army of the Gutium) put the people to pasture (*ittadi*¹³) as with a donkey-goad.” The precise nature of this last line remains elusive, but it does conjure up negative connotations of some sort – perhaps akin to the suffering that followed the invasion of the Gutium in the Curse of Agade. Whatever was intended, the people were affected, and in this way the text overtly connects the population to the consequences of Narām-Sîn's sacrilege.

The oath broken by Kaštiliaš (7.3.1) brought multifaceted consequences according to the Tukultī-Ninurta Epic. The behavior of Kaštiliaš inflamed the anger of the gods (11.1.4.1), but it was not only directed at the the king, but also the land and people (i B

ana ummān Gutium ittadin). Notably, the word preceding this phrase does not have *-ma* (*ittadi*), weakening the connection between the last phrase as a consequence of Narām-Sîn's behavior.

11 Cf. *ABC* 19 line 55; Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles* no. 38 (p. 267); Arnold 1994, 136; Arnold 2006, 167.

12 Again, the *-ma* on *ušalpitma* shows logical coordination, so that what follows arises as a result of Narām-Sîn's action.

13 See note 5 above. Again, ambiguity lies in the verb. Is the subject of *ittadi* Marduk or the army of the Gutium?

obv 33'b-34' *ilānu šūt šamê eršiti ʿra šūma*¹⁴ *ana šarri māti u niš[ī]*). One can already see that the fate of the subjects of Kaštiliaš are wrapped up with the king, for the divine wrath transcended the offender and encompassed his land as a whole.¹⁵ Divine abandonment soon followed (11.1.4.1), as (the) Enlil(ship of the lord of the lands), Marduk, Sîn, Šamaš, Ea, Ištaran, Annunitu, and the “Lady of Uruk” left their respective cult centers (i B obv 36'-45').

Divine anger and abandonment are precursors to a physical consequence of the broken oath that surfaces in the final battle between Kaštiliaš and Tukultī-Ninurta. After Tukultī-Ninurta asks Šamaš for victory in light of his fidelity to the oath (iii = A/E obv 21'-23'), Kaštiliaš realizes he is doomed (iii = A/E obv 25'-56'). Battles ensue, and eventually Kaštiliaš flees from Tukultī-Ninurta (iv = A rev 44'). The text makes clear that the gods are fighting on Tukultī-Ninurta's behalf against Kaštiliaš (A rev V 33'-41'):

Aššur advanced in front. On the enemy the fire of devastation burned. Enlil [], in the midst of the enemy he makes the blaze flame. Anu placed an unsparing mace on the evildoer. Sîn, the luminary, established upon them the paralysis of battle. Adad, the hero, made wind (and) flood flow on their battle. Šamaš, lord of judgment, darkened the eye of the armies of the land of Sumer and Akkad. Valiant Ninurta, pre-eminent of the gods, shattered their weapons, and Ištar struck (with) her skipping rope, driving their warriors mad. Behind the gods, his helpers, the king in front of his army, began battle.

Additionally, the gods are portrayed as Tukultī-Ninurta's “helpers” (*tiklīšu*),¹⁶ and as a group they preceded the Assyrian king into combat, evident from the line which describes the battle formation: “Behind (*arki*) the gods, his helpers, the king in front of his army,

14 Machinist 1978, 162 argues that this must be a third masculine plural G stative used in the active voice, with the object originally located in the break. Machinist suggest the object may have been *kimiltu* “(divine) wrath,” directing the reader to *CAD* K, 372. Additionally, note *CAD* R 199 (*rašû* A 3f).

15 Note that the “crimes of his land” (*gellēt mātišu*) are invoked on i A obv 33'. Similar statements indicting the land occur elsewhere (e.g., ii A 4'; iii A obv/E obv 27').

16 A rev V 41'.

began battle.”¹⁷ Even if the text has in view the deities' deified weapons,¹⁸ one cannot help but noticed that the text's particular formulation paints a seemingly physical divine presence, as the gods lead and fight on behalf of the king.

With the amount of divine support that resulted from his piety, it is not surprising that Tukultī-Ninurta emerges as the victor. From the available text, one can discern that Tukultī-Ninurta won the final battle and plundered Babylon. The fate of Kaštiliaš, however, is not mentioned before the text breaks off. Despite the unfortunate break at the end of the text, the epic sufficiently demonstrates that the sacrilege of Kaštiliaš led to corporate punishment. Because of his impiety (and Tukultī-Ninurta's peity), the forces of Kaštiliaš suffered military defeat before Tukultī-Ninurta and his helpers, the gods, and Babylon was subsequently plundered.

In Aššur's Response to Ashurbanipal's Report on the Šamaš-šuma-ukīn War (*SAA* 3 44), Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's sins against Ashurbanipal and Aššur (7.2.1, 7.3.1, 8.3.1) have widespread consequences. Not only did the rebel king personally pay by losing his throne (10.1.4.1) and experiencing imprisonment (10.1.5.1) but his land paid a steep price as well. In the text Aššur says, “I commanded the scattering of the whole land of Akkad” (4), a comment taken here as a veiled allusion to military defeat.¹⁹ That the “scattering of the whole land of Akkad” refers to the costs of war is supported by another part of this same text where Aššur claims to have captured and led Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's officers to Ashurbanipal: “...I placed nose-ropes (on) his officers, and then I led them before you.”

17 A rev V 41': *arki ilāni tiklīšu šarru ina pāni ummāni ušarri qabla*. Cf. Machinist 1978, 349: “...the action itself starts with the gods in vanguard of the Assyrian procession (33'-40').”

18 Ibid.

19 Cf. Livingstone's translation in *SAA* 3 44 (110): “(I)...[comma]nded the destruction of the entire land of Akkad” (*aqb]i sapāh māt Akkadī kalīša*).

(x[x x x]x 'x x' [x x]'x'-ti ¹⁰[r]abûtišu širretī aškun!ma ana maḥrī[ka ušardīšun]ūti).

Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's crimes – his cultic violation, broken oath, and opposition against Ashurbanipal – culminated in military defeat as well as his personalized punishment.

The text published by Gerardi (BM 55467)²⁰ contains a number of factors which complicate the nature of the divine consequences that result from the misdeeds carried out against the land of Babylon (7.2.1 and 8.3.1). First, it should be remembered that Gerardi's very plausible suggestion is followed here, namely that the intended addressee in the text is Sîn-šar-iškun. Secondly, as explained in section 8.3.1, the primary event which brought about divine punishment was Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon in 689, but the Assyrian rulers who followed Sennacherib up through Sîn-šar-iškun are also implicated in the divine punishment. Since the latter ruled between c.627 and 612 B.C.E., a time gap of some 70 or so years transpired between Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon in 689 B.C.E. and the threat issued by Nabopolassar.

Because of Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon and the the subsequent guilt accrued by the Assyrian rulers who reigned up to the date of the document's composition, Nabopolassar (as suggested by Gerardi) warns that Marduk and the great gods will punish Sîn-šar-iškun and his predecessors: “Because of the evil deeds (*lemnētu*) you (plural) committed against the land of Akkad, Marduk, the great lord, and the great gods will call you (plural) to account (*išallū'ku' [nūti]*)” (†10). This punishment will manifest itself in the form of Nabopolassar's military victory over the Assyrian king. As for Nabopolassar, he announces that Marduk specifically selected him as the instrument for the deity's retaliation for the Assyrian crimes:

²⁰ Gerardi 1986.

From the midst of the land of the lower sea²¹ Marduk, the great lord, looked to me in his glance of favor and then, to avenge the land of Akkad ([a]’na’ turru gimil māt Akkadī), he investigated my omens, he examined my true heart, for the lordship of the lands he selected me, and then he caused my hands to grasp all the people of the lands (°10-15).

The combination of these two passages merge the punishment which the gods will execute on Assyria with Marduk's selection of Nabopolassar for executing revenge for the mistreatment of Babylonia by Assyrian kings.²²

The imminent punishment of the gods and Nabopolassar's military threats, both one and the same, are directed specifically at Nineveh. Nabopolassar warns that he, as Marduk's instrument of vengeance, will destroy Nineveh and retrieve the property of Esagil and Babylon plundered long ago (°6-11):

By the mouth of Marduk, the great lord, like a heap of sand I will pile up the city of Sennacherib, son of Sargon, offspring of a household slave, plunderer of the land of Akkad, its foundation I will tear out (*išidsu anassahma*) and then I will destroy the foundations of the land (*išdī māti u[sahḥa]*). [...] from his family for all days from Assyria I will remove.²³ Because of the evil deeds (*lemnētu*) you committed against the land of Akkad, Marduk, the great lord, and the great gods will call you to account (*išallū’ku [nūti]*)²⁴

The entire city of Nineveh faces military destruction as divine retaliation for the crimes

21 Following Gerardi who notes the unusual writing KUR *ti-amat* for expected KUR *tam-tim* (Gerardi 1986, 37).

22 Text no.44 in Lambert-Spar 2005, a tablet edited by Lambert (MMA 86.11.370A+), may very well have been Sîn-šar-iškun's reply to Gerardi's text (BM 55467). For the issues involved in this possibility and problems involving this letter, see Lambert's discussion in *ibid.*, 203ff. Note that the text portrays Sîn-šar-iškun as seemingly admitting that Marduk enlisted Nabopolassar to avenge Akkad: “He (Marduk) commissioned him and then he entrusted him to avenge the land of Akkad (°2: [...u]ma’iršūma turru gi[milli māt] Akkadī umallâ qātūššu). Such an admission, that divine punishment will be realized through Nabopolassar, may find further support a few lines later in the same text: “May Marduk and Zarpanitum impose [] your severe punishment [...]” (°4-5: *Marduk u Zarpanitum mu-x šēretka dannat [...]* [(l)ī]midū). Though quite tentative in light of the break, that the subjects of the verb are apparently deities suggests the gods' involvement in the punishment delivered by Nabopolassar.

23 Cf. Gerardi's “exile.”

24 The verb, written *i-šá-a-lu-’ku’-[nu-ti]* may be understood as a preterite in light of the extra *a*: *išālūkunūti*. However, this does not fit Nabopolassar's threats that he will soon enact revenge for Babylon. For this nuance, see *CAD* volume Š1 *šālu* A 2 (p. 280), and cf. *ARM* 1 3 (immediately below) and notes 48 (*ARM* 26 185-bis) and 50 (*ARM* 13 97) on p. 235 (chapter 10).

against Babylon attributed to Sargonid kings from Sennacherib to Sîn-šar-iškun. These threats are prefaced with the assertion that Nabopolassar will retrieve and return the property of Esagil and Babylon (ʿ4), a remedy to the violation of those items (7.2.1), as well as some sort of punishment that targeted Sennacherib's family (11.1.2.1).²⁵ Both of these latter two items will stem from the military confrontation that Nabopolassar will lead against Nineveh at Marduk's mandate.

Shorter accounts of military disaster are preserved elsewhere. Military defeat befell Yagid-Lim for his crimes (7.3.1 and 8.3.1) according to *ARM* 1 3:

“You (Nergal) learned (this) and then you called him to account (*tašālšu*). And you went at the side of Ila-kabkabu, and then Ila-kabkabu tore down his wall and captured his son Yagīd-Lîm” (14-17).

With the divine support of Nergal, Ila-kabkabu destroyed Yagid-Lim's wall – a sign of military defeat, in addition to capturing Yagid-Lim's son, Yaḥdun-Lim (11.1.2.1).

A different relationship between royal offense and divine consequence surfaces in *ARM* 26 233. Zimri-Lim withheld his messengers and reports from Dagan (8.5.1), so Dagan responded in kind by withholding victory from Zimri-Lim: “Otherwise, I would have handed over the kings of the Yamina into the hand of Zimri-lim many days ago” (29-31). Zimri-Lim's neglect, according to this text, displeased Dagan, impelling the deity to stay victory until the king correct his ways.²⁶ One gets the feeling that Zimri-Lim's offense was not too grievous, for it did not result in a degree of military disaster which rivals the other episodes above. However, Zimri-Lim's offense against Dagan prevented military victory, and so Zimri-Lim's military felt the affects of divine

25 The beginning of '9 is broken, so one cannot be specific about Nabopolassar's threat against Sennacherib's family line.

26 The answer to correcting the divine disfavor is, of course, for Zimri-Lim to send his messengers and place his full report before Dagan (34-39).

punishment.

The text known as Erra and Išum further demonstrates the concept that a ruler can be a conduit for military disaster. Išum's speech relates how the violations of the governor that Erra placed over Uruk (7.2.1 and 8.3.1) caused Ištar to bring corporate destruction on the land: "Ištar became furious (*igugma*), and then she was angry (*issabus*) with Uruk. She called up the enemy (*nakra idkâmma*) and then like grain before water,²⁷ it plundered (*imašša'*)²⁸ the land" (IV 61-62).²⁹ Uruk's plundering – the result of military defeat – transpired because of a single ruler. The city suffers because of its sovereign.

The Advice to a Prince warns that military defeat will follow in the wake of several different offenses. If a king heeds "the plan of Ea," "[it means] the defeat of the armies of the land" (IM 77087 7-8). This penalty is contained only in IM 77087, and is coupled with the king's individual punishment found in both D.T. 1 and IM 77087 (10.1.6). Military defeat is thus part of the divine punishment which would follow a king who succumbed to "the plan of Ea" (8.5.1).

Military disaster is also a repercussion of the royal perversion of injustice in this text. Upon accepting a bribe and subsequently perverting justice (8.1.2), Enlil will repay a guilty king by bringing against him an enemy force who will decimate the offender's forces:

27 With Dalley 1989, 304 which has "like (standing) corn before (flood-) water." Cf. Cagni 1977, 52 "like grain on the surface of water"; Streck 1995, 71 "wie Korn auf dem Wasser (fortgeschwemmt wird); Foster 2005, 904 "like grain on the surface of water"; Beaulieu 2001, 30 "like grain (is carried off) by water."

28 For the durative form used for past constructions, see Streck 1995. Streck lists this particular example under "Pädikat des Hauptsatzes Präteritum oder Perfect" on p. 71, and translates: "Ishtar wurde wütend und zürnte gegen Uruk. Den Feind bot sie auf, daß er das Land plündere, wie Korn auf dem Wasser (fortgeschwemmt wird)."

29 Beaulieu has argued that lying behind Ištar's anger is Ištar's abduction from Eanna in the eight century (Beaulieu 2001, 30–31, and see 36ff for Beaulieu's historical reconstruction).

Enlil, lord of the lands, will levy a hostile foreigner³⁰ against him and then (IM 77087: he will turn his army into corpses³¹) (D.T. 1: he will cause his army to fall), (and) the prince and his general will continually roam in the streets like vagrants (12-14).

It is the army, in addition to the prince and general (11.1.2.1 and 11.1.3.1) who will bear the punishment of the chastised king.

Elsewhere in this same text, two different violations (improper taxation and failure to carry out justice [8.1.2]) both lead to the same consequence. If a king commits one of these crimes, then,

Marduk, lord of the heavens and earth will set his enemies upon him and then he will give his goods (and) his property to his enemy (17-18).

In this instance, military defeat results in the plundering of the king's property.

Marduk appears again in the Advice to a Prince as the deity who lays down a militaristic penalty on an offending king. For the crime of imposing forced labor upon Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon, Marduk will exact a penalty similar to that seen above:

Marduk, the sage of the gods, the prince, the adviser, will send his land to an enemy, and then the army (IM 77087: people) of his land will bear forced labor for his enemy, (for) An, Enlil, and Ea, the great gods, the ones who dwell in the heavens and earth, in their assembly established their exemption (26-30).

In this case the penalty is quite similar to the crime on a practical level. The king's crime consists of imposing *tupšikka/ilki* on the people of Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon, and the penalty is that the king's people/army will bear *tupšikka* by the hand of Marduk. The difference is that Marduk will achieve this by sending the king's people into a foreign land, and it is there that they will perform forced labor in the service of the king's enemy.

30 Lambert *BWL* 113 literature translates "foreign army" for *nakra ahâm*, and Cole *Nippur* 273 translates "foreign enemy."

31 This translation of *ana miqitti usahhar* follows Cole's translation which reads "and turn his men into(?) corpses." Cole reads LÚ.DE_s as *miqittu* with a degree of confidence based on the lexical series Syllabary A Vocabulary. See the comment to line 14 in Cole *Nippur* 274 for details.

In a final case of military disaster from the Advice to a Prince, Erra joins Enlil and Marduk as a retributive deity. In this particular example, a king who is guilty of drafting the citizens of Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon is in view (8.3.1). The text claims that should a king do so, “...powerful Erra who goes at the front of his army will strike the front of his army (*pān ummānīšu*³² *imahḥaṣma*) and then go at the side of his enemy” (36-37). Not only would Erra support the king's enemy, but the deity would first directly strike the front lines of the offending ruler's military force.

11.1.1.2 Hittite literature

In the Song of Release, Tessub announced to Mēgi that the failure of Ebla to release debts would result in the city's destruction. Specifically, Tessub warned that he would destroy the city in seven days time should this failure continue, stating that “I will come upon you...” and “I will destroy [the city of] Ebla...” and “I will break the surrounding wall of Ebla's lower city like a cup. I will trample down the surrounding wall of the upper (city) like a clay pit.”³³ Tessub's threats continue before the text breaks off, warning that he will carry off plunder and break down the city's walls (section 61-613). Though the resolution of the text is lost, it has been suggested that it narrated the failure to comply to the god's demands, resulting in the destruction of Ebla and thus explaining the fate which befell the city in the seventeenth century.³⁴

Though one can deduce that military defeat lies behind Tessub's threat of destruction, the Song of Release does make such a connection explicit. The initial

32 ÉRIN-*ni*.

33 Translations from Hoffner *Hittite Myths* 18a sections 58-60.

34 Beckman 2005, 262. See also Hoffner's reference found in Hoffner *Hittite Myths*, 74.

portion of the text reads as follows: “I will speak of (the man) Pizikarra, who will bring [...] to Ebla. Pizikarra [...] destroy (the cities) Nuhasse and Ebla.”³⁵ Tessub's threats, then, would be realized in Pizikarra's actions. One can further see that military defeat is in view when Tessub announces that the debt remission, once carried out, would lead to military success:

If [you make] a debt remission in Ebla, [the city of the throne,] if you [make] a debt [remission], I will exalt your weapon[s] like [a...].³⁶

Your weapons will begin [to conquer] (your) enemies. [Your] plowed land [will prosper] in glory.³⁷

Military success is the positive outcome of enacting the debt remission. It follows that military defeat is the consequence of failing to enforce the remission.

11.1.1.3 Hebrew Bible

As discussed in 5.3, the ramifications of Solomon's impiety are two-fold according to the book of Kings. On one hand, Yahweh warned that he would tear Solomon's kingdom from him and give it to his servant. Rehoboam would feel the reverberations of this punishment by means of Jeroboam's revolt. The rebellion and secession of the northern tribes – led by Solomon's servant Jeroboam – was a civil war triggered by Solomon's crimes. Though the text states that Shemiah's words prevented actual combat (1 Kgs 12:21-24),³⁸ the fact remains that the repercussions would have been war had it not been for the prophetic word.

35 Translations from Hoffner *Hittite Myths* 18a sections 7-9.

36 Translations from Hoffner *Hittite Myths* 18a sections 56. Hoffner notes that the the second person verbs are plural in this line.

37 Translations from Hoffner *Hittite Myths* 18a sections 57.

38 That Yahweh was involved in the split of the kingdom is explicit in 1 Kgs 12:15, 24; 14:8. At the same time, Israel's break from Judah was understood as rebellion (1 Kgs 12:19).

On the other hand, Solomon himself suffered militarily for his crimes. Yahweh raised up military adversaries (Hadad the Edomite and Rezon son of Eliada) who tormented Solomon for the duration of his reign. Solomon, then, was responsible for multiple military confrontations.

Elsewhere in the book of Kings, Jeroboam is held responsible for the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C.E. to the Assyrians. The siege of Samaria and its subsequent destruction had its origin in Jeroboam's offenses (5.4). Similarly, the book of Kings traces the destruction of Judah in 597 B.C.E. by Babylon to Manasseh's sinful activity (5.6). Manasseh's responsibility for the devastation of Judah is echoed elsewhere only in Jer 15:4 (7.2.2), a text which succinctly demonstrates the severe repercussion of this kings' behavior: "And I will make them a terror³⁹ to all the kingdoms of the land on account of Manasseh son of Hezekiah king of Judah concerning that which he did in Jerusalem." These cases are corporate in the full sense of the term, for it is the entire nation as a whole that suffers from consequences for offenses which originated with a single ruler.

The book of Chronicles also explains that military disaster resulted from a king's behavior in several instances. Among these kings is Rehoboam. Judah suffered military defeat and occupation because of the unfaithfulness of both Rehoboam and the people (7.2.2) according to the words of Yahweh through Shemaiah the prophet: "You (pl) abandoned me (*'āzabtem 'ōtī*), and so I have abandoned you (*'āzabī 'etākem*) into the hand of Shishaq" (2 Chr 12:5). 2 Chr 12:2 corroborates the words of Shemaiah, for it was "because they were unfaithful to Yahweh" (*kī mā 'ālū baYHWH*) that Shishaq had

³⁹ Reading *lāza 'āwā* with the *qārē* for *lizwā 'ā*.

invaded. The consequences included the Egyptian occupation of cities in Judah and the plundering of both the temple and palace (2 Chr 12:4-9). Importantly, the unfaithfulness of Rehoboam and the people merited destruction (2 Chr 12:7, 12), a consequence which did not reach fruition because of the behavior of Rehoboam and the officials subsequent to the invasion.

It will be recalled that in Chronicles, Asa relied upon the king of Aram instead of relying on Yahweh (8.4). In exchange for this Hanani the seer tells the king that his rule will suffer: “from now you (*'immākā*) will have wars” (2 Chronicles 16:9). As indicated by the pronominal suffix, the punishment is directed at Asa, but the prospect of continuous warfare is a calamity on a corporate scale.

Jehoram was similarly responsible for bringing corporate punishment in Chronicles. This king was warned that his cultic crimes (7.2.2) and the murder of his brothers (8.1.3.2) would affect the entire nation, for Yahweh threatened to strike the nation (2 Chr 21:14). Jehoram was specifically informed that he would be racked with a tortuous disease, a detail which came about and caused the king a long period of suffering before he died (10.1.1.2). But before Jehoram's disease surfaces, “Yahweh stirred up (*wayyā'ar*) against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabs...” (2 Chr 21:16). This coalition invaded and plundered Judah (2 Chr 21:17) – an invasion on a national scale – in addition to taking all Jehoram's wives and sons save Jehoahaz (11.1.2.2).⁴⁰

According to the Chronicler, the cultic violations led by Joash (7.2.2) caused a military defeat in which Yahweh played a role. Yahweh delivered (*nātan bəyādām*) Joash's more numerous army into the hands the smaller army of Aram, a consequence

⁴⁰ Cf. 2 Chr 21:10, where Libnah rebelled against Jehoram because he had forsaken (*'āzab*) Yahweh.

that resulted because “they abandoned Yahweh, the God of their fathers” (2 Chr 24:24; cf. 24:17-18). The Arameans subsequently plundered the land (2 Chr 24:23). Both Jerusalem and Judah had incurred guilt – literally “wrath” (*qesep*) was against them – for the worship of Asherim and idols (2 Chr 24:18; cf. 20). Joash's particular role in this illicit worship consisted of being influenced by high officials after the passing of Jehoiada (2 Chr 24:17). The implication is that Joash had approved of such worship, in addition to being a participant. As the king, he held a particular theological responsibility for the cultic practices of the people. The text highlights this responsibility, for Joash is singled out for punishment (2 Chr 24:24): “they [the Aramean army] executed judgments on Joash” (*wə’et yô’āš ‘āšû šapā’im*). Thus, the military defeat was the result of Joash's role in allowing the people to partake in illicit worship.⁴¹

The book of Chronicles also explains that military disaster resulted from Amaziah's behavior. The nameless prophet, who confronted and condemned Amaziah for both his idolatry (7.2.2) and his failure to heed the prophetic word (7.1.1), announced that God determined to destroy (*lahašhitekā*) the king in return for his offenses (2 Chr 25:16). Yet after this announcement, divine activity recedes to the background and does not directly surface in the events that follow. However, the text does connect Yahweh to Amaziah's military ambition against Joash. Amaziah's refusal to heed Joash's attempt to thwart the former's military ambition was from God (*kî mēhā’ēlōhîm hî’*) according to 2 Chr 25:20, and so Israel subsequently defeated Judah in battle (2 Chr 25:22). The invaders partially destroyed the wall of Jerusalem and plundered the city (2 Chr 25:23-

41 This military defeat was a contributing factor to Joash's ultimate demise, for the battle left him wounded and susceptible to those who eventually assassinated him (2 Chr 24:23-27), though there is no explicit divine role in his death mentioned in the text.

24).

Amaziah's introduction of Edomite gods served as the ultimate cause of this defeat. However, the text is clear that Amaziah is not alone in his guilt, for “they sought (*dārāšû*) the gods of Edom” (2 Chr 25:20). All those who worshiped the Edomite deities, then, played a role in Judah's battlefield loss. Yet Amaziah first introduced the worship of these gods, and in this way Amaziah's violation spread to the nation, and the corporate guilt brought about military defeat.

Likewise, the idolatrous behavior of Ahaz (7.2.2) brought with it dire consequences for Judah. Because of Ahaz's sins, “Yahweh his God gave him (*wayyittānēhû*) into the hand of the king of Aram,” and the Aramean king exiled numerous people from Judah (2 Chr 28:5). The punishment did not end there, for “he (Ahaz) was also given (*nittān*) into the hand of the king of Israel” who executed a great slaughter (*wayyak bô makkâ gādôlâ*) which resulted in the death of 120,000 in Judah, including the king's son Maaseiah and two officials (2 Chr 28:5-7).

The book of Isaiah similarly announces military disaster as a result of royal ambition. The military ambitions through which Rezin and Pekah hoped to force Judah into their anti-Assyrian alliance (8.3.2) brought with it the potential for divine retribution. The relationship between the kings' actions and divine intervention is conveyed through the grammar: “Because (*ya’an kî*) Aram has planned calamity against you, with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah...thus said the Lord Yahweh...” (Isa 7:5-6). This text opens with a causal clause (introduced by *ya’an kî*), forming the basis for the following clause containing the words of Yahweh.⁴² The words of Yahweh, which state that the plan of

⁴² See Waltke-O'Connor 1990, 640 for the casual clause. The intervening clause in v.5 marked by

Rezin and Pekah will not come to fruition, are the result of the two kings intentions of attacking Jerusalem and placing a king upon it's throne.

In addition to expressions of assurance, Isaiah 7 articulates precisely how Yahweh intends to punish the enemy forces headed by Pekah and Rezin. Yahweh will “whistle for the fly which is at the end of the rivers of Egypt and for the bee which is in the land of Assyria” (*yīšrōq YHWH lazzābûb ’āšer biqšēh yā’ōrê mišrāyim wəladābôrâ ’āšer bā’ereš ’aššûr*), both which will come and settle in the land (Isa 7:18-19). The “fly” and “bee,” metaphors for Egypt and Assyria, are the instruments exploited by Yahweh for punishment. The king of Assyria is especially highlighted as Yahweh's vessel for carrying out discipline, for “...the Lord will shave (*yəgallah ’ādōnāy*) with a razor the one hired from the areas beyond the river – with the king of Assyria – the head and the hair of the (two) feet, and he will also snatch away the beard” (Isa 7:20).⁴³ Thus, Yahweh will enlist the armies from Egypt and Assyria in order to eliminate the forces of Pekah and Rezin.

Following the accusations leveled against the king of Assyria for his pride in Isa 10:12-14 (8.2) are rhetorical questions which demonstrate the futility of an instrument exalting itself over the one who wields it (Isa 10:15). Then follows the consequences of the Assyrian king's audacity (Isa 10:16): “Therefore, the Lord⁴⁴ Yahweh of hosts will send emaciation (*rāzôn*) among his fat ones (*bəmišmannâw*), and under his glory a blaze (*yəqōd*) will ignite, like the blaze of a fire (*kīqōd ’ēš*).”⁴⁵ This metaphorical language is

“saying” is subordinate to the casual clause. The clause containing the word's of Yahweh is asyndetically joined to the casual clause.

43 Cf. Isa 8:4.

44 MT *hā’ādôn*.

45 Literally, “a burning will burn like the burning of fire” (*yēqad yəqōd kīqōd ’ēš*).

carried through to the end of the passage, for the text mentions the destruction of “his briers” (*šīḥô*), “his thorns” (*šamîrô*), “his forest” (*ya'rô*), “his garden” (*wakarmillô*), and “the rest of the trees of his forest (*ya'rô*)” (Isa 10:16-19). Concerning his forest and garden, the soul and body will be destroyed similar to wasting away of a sick man (*kimšôs nōšēs*).

Since the passage is metaphorical, the disease and fire are not literal forms of punishment, but rather represent general destruction. In particular, it is Assyria at large that seems to suffer for the king's hubris. The pronominal suffixes reference the king of Assyrian mentioned in Isa 10:12, and thus refer to his subjects. Though the prideful Assyrian king will not be personally punished, those under his dominion will suffer for his hubris.

Likewise, the punishment which threatened Nebuchadrezzar in Jer 50:18 for opposing Israel (8.3.2) was identical to that which Yahweh imposed upon the king of Assyria, for the text reads,

Therefore thus said Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Behold I am about to punish (*hinənî pōqēd*) the king of Babylon and his land just as I punished (*pāqadî*) the king of Assyria.

The punishment which fell upon the king of Assyria is assumed, and may very well have been the fate of Shalmaneser V or Sargon II.⁴⁶ In any case, both the king of Babylon and his land will be punished for the Babylonian king's treatment of Israel, and the connection with Assyria suggests that it will be in the form of military disaster.⁴⁷

46 Cf. Foreman 2011, 86. Given the biblical traditions which laud the fate of Sennacherib, one is tempted to assert with confidence that the same king is in view here. However, other biblical traditions which chastise the “king of Assyria” cautions against such absolute certainty (cf. Nahum 3:18).

47 Reimer 1993, 43 maintains that the mention of the Babylonian king's land makes this punishment more severe than that which was against the king of Assyria.

The penalty which Zedekiah faced for breaching his loyalty oath with Nebuchadnezzar (7.3.4) is quite personal according to Ezekiel 17. Yahweh's announcement of punishment specifically targets the king who will be captured and brought to Babylon where he will remain until his death (10.1.5.2). In the wake of punishment, however, are the king's troops, for Zedekiah's capture is part of a larger military procedure which victimizes the king's army. In addition to the claim that Pharaoh will not assist Zedekiah in war (Ezek 17:17), the text makes clear that the defeat which will result in Zedekiah's capture will leave the Judean military force in a state of chaos: "And all his select troops⁴⁸ among all his forces will fall by the sword, and those which remain will be scattered to every wind" (Ezek 17:21). Thus Zedekiah's decision to violate his treaty with Nebuchadnezzar affected his military forces, for they would either be killed or forced to flee.⁴⁹

The pride of the leader of Tyre was to be answered with a particular degrading death (10.1.3.2). Yet part of the response to the hubris (8.2) exhibited by the leader of Tyre in Ezekiel 28 is corporate. Yahweh said, "I am about to bring strangers against you..." (Ezek 28:7). Though the focus of this invasion is on the ruler, it is understood that any such invasion by default affects the entire land which is under attack. Thus, the leader's country will suffer for his pride.

The disaster which would fall upon Pharaoh for his offenses (8.2 and 8.4) in Ezekiel 29 singles out the king for punishment (10.1.3.2). At the same time, the text is adamant that Pharaoh's subjects will also feel the consequences of the king's crimes.

48 Reading *mibhārāw* for MT *mibrāhāw*.

49 It cannot go unnoticed that Zedekiah's punishment – his capture and the defeat of his forces – comes to fruition in the Babylonian destruction of Judah. In this way Ezekiel 17 connects the destruction of Judah to Zedekiah's sacrilege.

Pharaoh's subjects, that is the “fish” which cling to his scales, will be caught up and thrown out into the field along with Pharaoh where they will become food for both animals and birds (Ezek 29:4-5). More explicit repercussions for Egypt itself occur later in the text, for it reads:

Therefore, thus said the Lord Yahweh, 'Behold, I am about to bring the sword upon you (*'ālayik*), and I will cut off from you man and animal, and the land of Egypt will be a desolation and a waste, and they will know that I am Yahweh.' (Ezek 29:8-9).

A few lines later, the text specifically connects Pharaoh's boasting with the destruction which it brings upon Egypt:

Because you⁵⁰ said, 'The Nile (*yā 'ōr*) is mine and I have made it,' therefore I am against you and your rivers (*yā 'ōrēkā*), and I will make (*wānātattī*) the land of Egypt a dry waste, a desolation (Ezek 29:9b-10a).

The destruction will range from “from Migdol (to) Syene,” a statement indicating the whole of Egypt in the same way “from Dan to Beersheba” expresses all of Israel (Ezek 29:10).⁵¹ If this were not enough, Egypt will be uninhabited for a forty year period, without any human or animal to passing through (Ezek 29:11-12), and the Egyptians themselves will be scattered away from their land (Ezek 29:12). Even after this forty year period, when Yahweh himself will gather the Egyptians back to their land (Ezek 29:12-15), they will be a lowly and insignificant nation. The land of Egypt, therefore, will suffer destruction on a national level because of the king of Egypt.

Like Ezekiel 29, Ezek 31:1-18 focuses on Pharaoh himself (10.1.3.2), but the last phrase of the text shows that Pharaoh's men (“horde”) will also suffer defeat and death because of Pharaoh's pride. After describing Pharaoh's death in which he will lay with

⁵⁰ On this reading, see note 40 on p. 166 (chapter 8).

⁵¹ Zimmerli 1983, 113.

those “slain by the sword” (*ḥalālē ḥereb*), Ezek 31:18 concludes by stating “This is Pharaoh and all his horde” (*ḥū’ par’ōh wəkol ḥāmōnō[h]*).⁵² This, the consequence of Pharaoh's hubris, will be felt by not only Pharaoh himself, but also by his men, for they too will die in battle because of Pharaoh's pride (8.2).

For the slaughter king Joram of Israel, Ahaziah of Judah, and the descendants of Ahab in Jezreel (2 Kings 9-10, see 8.1.3.2), consequences will fall upon Jehu's dynasty and nation according to Hosea. Concerning the first son of Hosea and Gomer, Yahweh says the following:

Name him Jezreel! For in a little while I will avenge (*ūpāqadtī*) the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu and I will end (*wəhišbattī*) the kingdom of the house of Israel. And in that day that day I will break (*wəšābartī*) the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel (Hos 1:4-5).

The text does not highlight Jehu as receiving any punishment for his actions. Instead, two parties will suffer, namely Jehu's dynasty (11.1.2.2) and Israel at large. Though the punishment concerning Jehu's dynasty, represented by Jeroboam II in Hosea's time, is seemingly unspecific (*ūpāqadtī*), Israel's suffering is not, for the “breaking of the bow” signifies military destruction.⁵³ Taken together, Yahweh's words suggest that Jehu's crimes are so serious that they will both end the political rule of Israel and bring military defeat, in addition to ending Jehu's dynasty.

52 Some translate *ḥāmōn* as “pomp” (e.g., Zimmerli 1983, 148), for the following oracle addressed Pharaoh's pride. While this is a distinct possibility, I translate “horde” as Pharaoh's *ḥāmōn* is directly addressed in Ezek 32:1: “Say to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to his *ḥāmōn* . . .”

53 See King 1988, 80 and see 81 for an illustration from the palace relief of Ashurbanipal.

Table 15. Military Disaster

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Consequence
Narām-Sîn	Meso – Curse of Agade	Suffering and destruction of Agade
	Meso – Cuthean Legend	Three total military defeats and suffering
	Meso – Weidner	Two military encounters
Kaštiliaš	Meso – Tukultī-Ninurta	Defeat in battle
	Epic	
Šamaš-šuma-ukīn	Meso – <i>SAA</i> 3 44	Scattering of Akkad
Sennacherib to Sîn-šar-iškun	Meso – BM 55467	Nabopolassar's coming military victory
Yagid-Lim	Meso – <i>ARM</i> 1 3	Destroyed city wall
Zimri-Lim	Meso – <i>ARM</i> 26 233	Military failure
Governor of Uruk	Meso – Erra and Išum	Uruk plundered
Hypothetical king	Meso – Advice to a Prince	Military defeat
Mēgi	Hittite (Hurrian-Hittite) – Song of Release	Destruction
Solomon	HB – 1 Kings 11-12	Military conflicts
Jeroboam	HB – 1 Kings 14	Exile of Israel
Manasseh	HB – 2 Kings 21	Exile of Judah
Manasseh	HB – Jer 15:4	Exile of Judah
Rehoboam	HB – 2 Chronicles 12	Invasion and occupation
Asa	HB – 2 Chronicles 16	Continuous warfare
Jehoram	HB – 2 Chronicles 21	Invasion
Joash	HB – 2 Chronicles 24	Defeat by a smaller Aramean force
Amaziah	HB – 2 Chronicles 25	Military defeat
Ahaz	HB – 2 Chronicles 28	Military defeats and partial exile
Rezin and Pekah	HB – Isaiah 7	Military confrontation

continued

Table 15. Military Disaster: continued

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Consequence
King of Assyria	HB – Isaiah 10	Destruction of Assyria
King of Babylon	HB – Jeremiah 50	Military disaster
Zedekiah	HB – Ezekiel 17	Military defeat
Leader of Tyre	HB – Ezekiel 28	Invasion
Pharaoh	HB – Ezekiel 29	National destruction
Pharaoh	HB – Ezekiel 31	Military disaster
Jehu	HB – Hos 1:4-5	National defeat

11.1.2 Royal Family

Corporate punishment for crimes can take a more personal note in both Mesopotamian literature and the Hebrew Bible. The consequences of a ruler's crimes may be felt by that ruler's family. These consequences – which strike the royal family – can affect a ruler's potential heir(s), the immediate family, or the ruler's dynastic line.

11.1.2.1 Mesopotamian literature

Though Aḫšēri's death is singled out as the consequence of his failure to submit to Ashurbanipal's supremacy (10.1.3.1), in another instance his family is victimized as well (A §28 III 10):⁵⁴ “His brothers, his family (*qinnūšu*), the seed of his father's house, they felled by sword (*ušamqitū ina kakkē*).” It is not only the king who dies, but the entire royal line is slaughtered for the king's actions.

Though an unfortunate break occurs in BM 55467, the remainder of line '9 provides enough information for one to observe that the consequences which come from

⁵⁴ For the text, see Borger 1996, 35 (transliteration), 221 (translation).

Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon (8.3.1) will include his dynasty (in addition to the destruction of Nineveh). The text reads, “[...] from his family (*ina qinnīšu*) for all days from Assyria I will remove.”⁵⁵ Concerning the broken portion ([X]’X’.MEŠ), Gerardi states, “I expect that the missing noun refers to the members or descendants of Sennacherib's family.”⁵⁶ Because of the break, one cannot be more specific about the particular punishment aimed at the family. However, one can see that Sennacherib's family is negatively affected by the crimes he committed many years before the composition of the document.

In two cases, the Advice to a Prince specifically highlights that a prince will be affected by the king's behavior (8.1.2). In one instance, the text warns that Enlil will bring an enemy invasion if a king accepts a bribe and then treats the citizens of Nippur unjustly (9-13/14). In the fallout of the divinely orchestrated defeat, “the prince (*rubû*) and his general will continually roam in the streets like vagrants” (14). The addition of this detail underscores the fact that, in this case, the king's heir will be affected by the king's actions.

In the other example from the Advice to a Prince, the princes (along with judges) will pervert justice if the king himself fails to uphold justice (8.1.2): “Šamaš, judge of the heavens and earth, will place a foreign judgment (*dīna aḥâm*) in his land, and then princes (*rubê*) and judges will not pay attention to judgment” (9-10). Though the princes do not suffer physically, they are affected negatively by Šamaš – a repercussion of the king's unjust behavior. The consequence is appropriate, for the princes (and officials)

55 Cf. Gerardi's “exile.”

56 Gerardi 1986, 37.

imitate their king.

In a final example, Yagid-Lim's heir also suffered in the wake of his violations (*ARM* 1 3). With divine support, “Ila-kabkabu tore down his wall and captured his son Yaḥḏun-Lim” (16-17). The royal heir was imprisoned for his father's actions (7.3.1 and 8.3.1).

11.1.2.2 Hebrew Bible

Instances where the consequences of a ruler's impiety fall upon the family occur several times in the Hebrew Bible. Several of these have been discussed earlier in this study. One of the consequences for Saul's failure to heed the prophetic word and properly seek Yahweh (7.1.2) was that Saul's dynasty received divine rejection from the hand of Yahweh according to both Samuel and Chronicles (5.1.1 and 5.1.2). If this were not enough, surviving members of Saul's royal line died because of Saul's failure to uphold the oath made to the Gibeonites as reported in 2 Samuel 21 (5.1.1).⁵⁷ David's family suffers much violence and death (particularly fratricide) as a result of David's affair with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah according to 2 Sam (5.2.1). The immediate victim of David's crime, however, was the son conceived out of David's illicit union with Bathsheba (2 Sam 12:14-15, 18). It will be recalled that Solomon's crimes were severe enough to theoretically end the Davidic line (5.3). Jeroboam's dynasty is wiped out of existence because of his continual cultic violations (5.4). Likewise, in a convoluted mess of human failures, Ahab's actions end up bringing devastating consequences on his dynastic house (5.5).

⁵⁷ This is in addition to the land's suffering through famine.

Though Baasha was discussed earlier in regard to Jeroboam (5.4), the divine punishment that he suffered was not addressed. Baasha's cultic violations (7.2.2) and his extermination of Jeroboam's house (8.1.3.2) resulted in Yahweh's declaration that both Baasha and his house will be consumed (1 Kgs 16:3-4, 7). Baasha's house is indeed destroyed, for Zimri brings this punishment to fruition. Zimri killed Baasha's son Elah and the rest of Baasha's house (1 Kgs 16:8-13). However, Baasha himself was unaffected by the punishment, for he died a natural death (1 Kgs 16:6). Despite Baasha's peaceful death, his dynastic line suffered severely for his crimes.

Jehu similarly causes the extermination of his dynasty according to Hosea. In addition to Israel's suffering (11.1.1.3) for Jehu's violence in Jezreel (8.1.3.2), Jehu brings the threat of destruction upon his dynasty, for Yahweh says "I will avenge (*ûpāqadî*) the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu" (Hos 1:4). The "house of Jehu" – Jehu's dynastic line – was represented by Jeroboam II at the time of the Hosea's activity, and only one more member of the line would sit on the throne – Zechariah. Jehu's line would end with Zechariah's assassination by Shallum (2 Kgs 15:10), an appropriate ending for Hosea's proclamation against Jehu's line.

Jehoram's cultic crimes (7.2.2) and his violence (8.1.3.2) affect his immediate family. According to 2 Chr 21:16, "Yahweh stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabs who were near Cushites." This coalition invaded Judah and "they took captive all the possessions found in the house of the king, and also his sons and his wives, and no son was left to him except Jehoahaz, his youngest son" (2 Chr 21:17). Jehoram's royal line was all but severed according to the text – a consequence of

the king's behavior.

The military defeats which resulted from Ahaz's cultic crimes (7.2.2) directly affected Ahaz's son Maaseiah. A certain warrior, Zichri of Ephraim, killed Maaseiah, along with a high official (2 Chr 28:7). Thus, a member of Ahaz's house, a potential heir, died because of the divine discipline brought about by the king's offenses.

Isaiah 14 understood the consequences of the behavior of “king of Babylon” as his violent death and disgraceful burial (10.1.3.2). However, these were not the only consequences of his action, for the king's son's were also said to face a penalty for their father's offenses (Isa 14:21):

Prepare for his sons a slaughter house
because of the sin of their father.⁵⁸
They must not rise and inherit the land,
or fill the world with cities.

Here it is quite explicit that the dynasty is directly affected by the offense of the king, for they face death and extinction. The prose conclusion to the song contained in Isa 14:3-21 carries out this consequence further, as it reads, “I will rise against them, declares Yahweh of hosts, and I will cut off from Babylon name and remnant, descendant and offspring, declares Yahweh.” The text stresses that Yahweh will not only act against the king of Babylon, but that he will directly rise up against this king's dynasty so as to destroy it.

⁵⁸ Reading *'ābīhem* for MT *'ābôtām*. See *BHS* note.

Table 16. Punishment inflicted on the royal family

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Consequence
Aḫšēri	Meso – Ashurbanipal	Death of royal family
Sennacherib	Meso – BM 55467	Removal of ? from royal family
Hypothetical king	Meso – Advice to a Prince	Prince wanders streets
Hypothetical king	Meso – Advice to a Prince	Princes pervert justice
Yagid-Lim	Meso – <i>ARM</i> 1 3	Capture of heir (Yaḫdun-Lim)
Saul	HB – 1 Samuel	Dynastic rejection
	HB – 1 Chronicles 10	Dynastic rejection
	HB – 2 Samuel 21	Seven sons slaughtered
David	HB – 2 Samuel	Fratricide
	HB – 2 Samuel 12	Death of son (relegated)
Solomon	HB – 1 Kings 11	Termination of dynastic rule
Jeroboam	HB – 1 Kings 14-15	Extermination of dynasty
Ahab	HB – 1 Kings-2 Kings	Extermination of dynasty
Baasha	HB – 1 Kings 16	Extermination of dynasty
Jehu	HB – Hos 1:4	Punishment on dynastic line
Jehoram	HB – 2 Chronicles 21	Sons and wives taken captive
Ahaz	HB – 2 Chronicles 28	Son killed
King of Babylon	HB – Isaiah 14	Extermination of dynasty

11.1.3 Administration

Those affected by corporate punishment have thus far fallen into two categories. One category includes a large group affected by military defeat. The other category is limited to those instances where members of the royal family are specifically mentioned

as being punished. Another small-scale group that may suffer from a ruler's crimes includes that ruler's administration – broadly understood.

11.1.3.1 Mesopotamian literature

In *SAA* 3 44, Aššur claims to have captured and led Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's officers to Ashurbanipal: “...I (*aškun*) placed nose-ropes (on) his officers (*[r]abūtīšu*), and then I led them before you (*[...ušardīšun]ūti*)” (10). The imprisonment of these officials are specified as a part of the consequences of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's crimes (7.2.1, 7.3.1, 8.3.1).

In response to the king's failure to uphold justice (8.1.2) by treating a citizen of Sippar unfairly, yet hearing the case of a foreigner (*aḥām*), the Advice to a Prince provides an appropriate repercussion: “Šamaš, judge of the heavens and earth, will place a foreign judgment (*dīna aḥām*) in his land, and then princes and judges will not pay attention to judgment” (9-10). In this case, the king's officials will reflect the perversion of justice modeled by their king.

Elsewhere in this same text, a member of the king's administration will suffer for the king's perversion of justice (8.1.2). Should the king accept a bribe and then treat Nippureans unjustly, Enlil will bring an army against the king. In the wake of this invasion, “the prince and his general (*šūt rēšīšu*) will continually roam in the streets like vagrants” (14). In this case, a high ranking official (along with the prince) both feel the consequences of the king's injustice.

11.1.3.2 Hebrew Bible

Officials are indicted for the crimes of their leaders in a few places in the Hebrew

Bible. Jeroboam's cultic violations – specifically the altar which he constructed – brought the potential for consequence not upon Jeroboam but upon the priests who offer incense upon it (see 5.4). Similarly, the complicated relations between Ahab and Jehu led the later to kill not only all of Ahab's house in Jezreel, but also his officials, friends, and priests according to 2 Kgs 10:11 (5.5). The Aramean invasion that resulted because of the crimes of Joash led to the destruction of all the “princes (*šārē*) of the people” (2 Chr 24:23). The cultic infractions committed by Ahaz brought about a military defeat in which two of the kings officials – Azrikam (“leader of the house”) and Elkanah (“second of the king”) – were killed by Zichri of Ephraim (2 Chr 28:7).

Table 17. Punishment inflicted on the royal administration

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Consequence
Šamaš-šuma-ukīn	Meso – <i>SAA</i> 3 44	Officers captured
Hypothetical king	Meso – Advice to a Prince	Officials will not uphold justice
Hypothetical king	Meso – Advice to a Prince	General will “roam in the streets”
Jeroboam	HB – 1 Kings 13	Priests threatened
Ahab	HB – 2 Kings 10	Officials killed
Joash	HB – 2 Chr 24:23	Officials killed
Ahaz	HB – 2 Chr 28:7	Azrikam and Elkanah killed

11.1.4 Divine abandonment and wrath

Several of the texts above witness to two different intangible divine responses: divine abandonment and wrath. These two are not unrelated – they often work together

in anticipation of widespread physical disaster. However, divine wrath and abandonment stand alone as punishments in some cases.

11.1.4.1 Mesopotamian literature

Divine abandonment, a precursor to large scale disaster, is an intangible part of punishments encountered elsewhere in this study. Such is the case in the Curse of Agade, when Inanna leads several gods in abandoning the city before disaster ensues (7.2.1). Likewise, Nabonidus' cultic sins had ramifications on his land in the Cyrus Cylinder, for the lord of gods left the land in anger, as did the other gods who resided in the land (9-10). The anger of the gods resulted in the divine abandonment of their cult centers in the Tukultī-Ninurta Epic, thus preceding the following military confrontations (11.1.1.1). Aššur, in *SAA* 3 44, declares that the gods of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn abandoned him because of his repeated evil deeds (20-21).⁵⁹

However, in one of the hypothetical scenarios in the Advice to a Prince, divine abandonment is a punishment on its own. Lines 58-59 state that if a ruler of varying rank “imposes forced labor of the houses of the great god” upon the people, “the great gods will be furious (*’iggu’gūma*⁶⁰ [IM 77087 line 59: *iggagūma*]) and then withdraw from

59 Note that Nabonidus's *šēdu* abandoned him in response to his offenses according to the Verse Account (10.1.6).

60 The normalization of this particular verb occurs in two different forms in *CAD*. In the first, the durative *igguguma* (better: *iggugūma*), which occurs in *CAD* N2 under the entry *nesū* (p. 186) appears to understand the /u/ for expected /a/ (**iggagūma*) to have assimilated into the /ū/ in the following syllable. The second normalization, found in *CAD* A2 under the entry *atmanu* (p. 496) reads the verb as a preterite: *īguguma* (better: *īgugūma*). The parallel occurring in IM 77087 is *iggagūma* (Cole *Nippur*, 272, l. 59). Additionally, both *CAD* normalizations read DINGIR.DINGER GAL.GAL as *ilū rabūtu* against Lambert's *ilī rabūti* (Lambert *BWL* 114), and note *ilū rabūti* (!) in *CAD* A1 under *agāgu* (p. 140). The translation above takes the verb as a durative, as suggested by IM 77087, with the gods as the subject of the verb. The possibility that the /u/ for expected /a/ could have arisen through a scribal error of some sort should also be kept in mind.

their cellas (*inessû atmanšun*), they will not enter their shrines (*ul*⁶¹ *irrubū ana kiššīšun*).” In this case, wide-scale divine abandonment is the result of sacrilege. By its very nature, this consequence affects all those connected to the cult system, and is therefore a corporate consequence.

It should be no surprise that divine anger often accompanies divine abandonment. Such is the case in many of the texts above – the Cyrus Cylinder, Tukultī-Ninurta Epic, the Advice to a Prince, and Erra and Išum. Relatedly, one can note that Erra's plan to destroy Uruk succeed because the goddess first became angered (*Ištar īgugma*) by the governor Erra appointed over the city (11.1.1.1).

Yet divine anger, like divine abandonment, can be a punishment on its own. Such is the case in KAL 3 76 (11.1.4.1), where Išme-Dagan, questions (Aššur-)Enlil about the deity's anger. Išme-Dagan perceived that divine wrath had followed previous cultic violations (7.2.1) and ask the god “Why, our lord, are you angry?” (°7'). The deity responds quite clearly that he is furious because the great offering has ceased and his dilapidated shrine (°10'-12'): “[...] with my city, my palace, my house, I am enraged. There I am enraged with Nippur (and) here I (am angry with)/(hate)⁶² Ashur, with (A: my

61 Where Lambert *BWL* 115 reads *lā* in D.T. 1, Cole *Nippur* 272 reads NU, which can be either *lā* or *ul*. Since a prohibitive (*lā* + durative) is not preferable given the context, NU is read here (as *ul*) instead of *lā*. This is quite possible in light the fact that NU and *lā* are the same sign. Additionally, IM 77087 reads *ul* (Cole *Nippur*, 272, l. 60), further suggesting *ul*.

62 The reading *ze²-ru-ku* is not what one would expect for a stative. Frahm suggests *ze-na-ku* as an alternative (in addition to *ge-ru-ku*) to the problematic reading *ze²-ru-ku* (KAL 3, p 149), noting that *zēnu* occurs also in 7'. The use of *zenû* fits the context well, for when the deity says that he is angry (*zenâku*), he is answering precisely the king's original inquiry in 7': *ammēni bēlāni zenâta*. Additionally, it may not be insignificant that *zēnu* would then occur twice in the text as does its synonymous counterpart *ra'ābu*. On the other hand, Andrew J. Riley (personal communication) maintains that the reading *ze-ru-ku* is in fact a stative (*zērūku*) by noting that in Assyrian vowel harmony, an accented long *a* may assimilate to the vowel of the final syllable (Ungnad-Matouš 1992, §5b-d, p.15-16). Riley further notes that Luukko maintains /a/ > /u/ in long, open syllables (Luukko 2004, 85).

city [and]) (B: both of) my cultic centers.”⁶³

Presumably, Išme-Dagan detected the god's anger in some way, though one cannot be specific about the way it manifested itself. What one can say is that it resulted from the cultic violation(s?) committed by an unnamed king (7.2.1). The divine anger is not only felt by Išme-Dagan, but it is specifically directed at Nippur and Ashur. Thus, the original offender, whoever he might have been, caused the divine anger felt by Išme-Dagan, Nippur, and Ashur.

11.1.4.2 Hebrew Bible

Divine abandonment surfaces in relation to sacrilege in 2 Chr 24:20. Joash and his officials had previously committed cultic crimes (7.2.2) and therefore brought wrath (*qeṣep*) upon Judah and Jerusalem (2 Chr 24:18). The priest, Zechariah son of Jehoiada, warned Joash and his company, saying, “because you abandoned (‘*āzabtem*) Yahweh, he has abandoned (*wayya ‘āzōb*) you.” This is not the entire punishment, however, for Yahweh later delivered Judah into the hands of an Aramean force (11.1.1.3 and 11.1.3.2). Yet this particular example stands on its own,⁶⁴ as it represents a single aspect of a multi-tiered punishment. Yahweh has abandoned Joash and his constituents, just as they abandoned him. This example, then, is analogous to the case in the Advice to a Prince discussed above.

Divine wrath occurs a few times in the Hebrew Bible in response to royal sacrilege. As mentioned above, divine wrath (*qeṣep*) explicitly preceded Zechariah's

63 (A: *ālīya*) (B: *kilallē māḥāzīya*)

64 Cf. the different scenario in 2 Chr 12:5, where Shemaiah states, “Thus said Yahweh, ‘You have abandoned (‘*āzabtem*) me, and I also have abandoned (‘*āzabtī*) you into the hand of Shishak.’”

warning that Yahweh had abandoned Joash and his audience (2 Chr 24:17). It will be recalled that Jehoshaphat incurred divine wrath (*qešep millipnê* YHWH) from his support of Ahab (11.1.7.2) – albeit mitigated because of Jehoshaphat's cultic reforms (2 Chr 19:2-3).

The son and successor of Ahaz, Hezekiah, brought divine wrath upon himself, Judah, and Jerusalem for his act of hubris according to 2 Chr 32:25 (8.2). Though this is not the end of the story (cf. 2 Chr 35:26), it should be noted that the wrath stemmed directly from Yahweh (*qešep* YHWH) according to 2 Chr 32:26. Importantly, the wrath – whatever it may have been – was directed at Judah and Jerusalem. Thus, Hezekiah's pride brought consequences upon his kingdom – a situation reminiscent of KAL 3 76 discussed above.

Table 18. Divine abandonment and wrath

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Consequence
Narām-Sîn	Meso – Curse of Agade	Several gods leave
Nabonidus	Meso – Cyrus Cylinder	Several gods angry, leave
Kaštiliaš	Meso – Tukultī-Ninurta Epic	Several gods angry, leave cult centers
Šamaš-šuma-ukīn	Meso – <i>SAA</i> 3 44	Gods abandoned Šamaš-šuma-ukīn
Hypothetical king	Meso – Advice to a Prince	Gods leave cellas
Governor of Uruk	Meso – Erra and Išum	Divine anger
“Offspring of a foreigner”	Meso – <i>KAL</i> 3 76	Divine anger
Joash	HB – 2 Chronicles 24	Yahweh, angered, abandons Joash and his company
Jehoshaphat	HB – 2 Chronicles 19	Divine wrath
Hezekiah	HB – 2 Chronicles 35	Divine wrath

11.1.5 Famine and drought

Divine punishment for a ruler’s sins can be made manifest in the environment as famine and/or drought. In these cases, large portions of the offender's subjects are affected. The following examples, famine/drought are highlighted in each text as coming from a god because of a ruler's impiety.

11.1.5.1 Mesopotamian literature

Famine may result from royal offense in Mesopotamian literature. Above it was mentioned that famine followed in the wake of military defeat in both the Curse of Agade and the Cuthean Legend (11.1.1.1). In these cases, the food shortage is tied to military

confrontations. However, in three other Mesopotamian texts, famine stands out as a punishment for violations.

Sargon is responsible for a devastating famine according to one tradition. Though not mentioned in the Weidner Chronicle, the closely related Chronicle of Early Kings (*ABC 20A*)⁶⁵ connects Sargon's behavior with national calamity, for Marduk struck the people with famine in response to Sargon's sacrilege:

The great lord Marduk became furious concerning the taboo which he did, and so he destroyed his people with a famine (*hušaḥḥu*). From the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun they revolted against him, and then he imposed sleeplessness⁶⁶ on him” (20-21).

Thus, one of the consequences for Sargon's crime against Marduk's city (8.3.1) directly affected Sargon's people. They suffered for the king's crimes, being destroyed by Marduk's divinely initiated famine.

According to Aššur's Response to Ashurbanipal's Report on the Šamaš-šuma-ukīn War (*SAA 3 44*), after Šamaš-šuma-ukīn committed a number of offenses which roused the retaliation of Aššur (7.2.1, 7.3.1, 8.3.1), one of the consequences which fell upon the land was a severe famine. In the text Aššur claims the following:

I decreed the fate of Išdu-kīn⁶⁷ king of Babylon, his predecessor, for him, and then during his reign famine (*[su]nqu*) seized his people. They chewed straps (*iksusū kurussī*). [...] I made seize the people of Akkad, and then I made them eat each other's flesh (*[...uša]kilšunūti šīra aḥameš*)” (‘7-10)

The dismal plight of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's people is a direct result of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's offenses, for Aššur decreed a fate “for him” – that is Šamaš-šuma-ukīn – that resulted in widespread famine for the king's subjects. The people resorted to chewing straps in an

65 See note 99 on p. 186 (chapter 8).

66 For *lā šalālu* “sleeplessness,” see *CAD* § 67.

67 Išdu-kīn is otherwise unknown (Frame 1992, 154).

effort to relieve their hunger before being driven to cannibalism. It is this latter detail that especially highlights the fact that Aššur himself targeted the people, for the god says, “I made them eat each other's flesh ([...*ušā*] *kilšunūti šīra aḥameš*).”

A final example of divinely initiated famine as a consequence of royal sacrilege comes from the Advice to a Prince. According to lines 42-44, Adad will impose a famine upon a king's land if the king improperly levies an animal tax: “Adad, the canal inspector of the heavens and earth, will cause the animals of his open country to fall by famine (*ina hušahhi*), and then he will amass⁶⁸ offerings for Šamaš” (42-44). This particular example is different than the preceding in that the casualties of the famine are animals rather than people. Nonetheless, the loss of an animal population on a massive scale, as is implied in the text, would be an agricultural and economic disaster that would certainly affect many people. In any case, these lines from the Advice to a Prince serve as a third example of famine as consequence for impious actions in Mesopotamian literature.

11.1.5.2 Ugaritic literature

Ugaritic literature has similar attestations as those in Mesopotamia. Kirta's unfulfilled vow (7.3.3) not only affected him personally (10.1.1.3), but it also affected his land. In *CAT* 1.16 iii 1-17, it is narrated that the land was stricken with drought – food stores were emptied, wine skins dried, and oil vanquished. Likewise, the consequences of Aqhatu's refusal to handover his bow to Anat extend beyond his death, for drought

68 The meaning of *nagāršū* is not entirely clear. *CAD* N1 (p. 107) translates *ú-šá-gar-šá* “put an end(?) to,” whereas Lambert *BWL* 115 has “amass,” followed by Cole *Nippur* 273, “amass(?)” *CDA*'s entry for the Š-stem use of *nagāršū* (p. 231) reads “‘confuse, upset’ offerings?” This translation follows Lambert and Cole.

followed as a consequence of his passing (*CAT* 1.19 i 42-46).

11.1.5.3 Hebrew Bible

As discussed in 5.1.1, famine occurs as a consequence after Saul violated the alliance made with the Gibeonites. Though the slaughter of the Gibeonites is not provided in the text, it is assumed in 2 Sam 21:1ff. In response to David's inquiry into the three year famine, Yahweh responded that it was this particular event which brought bloodguilt upon Saul and his house. The bloodguilt was tied directly to the famine, for it was only after Saul's seven sons were slaughtered that "God was moved by entreaties for the land afterwards" (2 Sam 21:14).

The precise relation of Saul's bloodguilt to the famine is not described in the text. Was the bloodguilt the *cause* of the famine? 2 Sam 21:1 does not necessarily suggest so, as it only indicates that the *presence* of the famine was related to the bloodguilt. The famine itself could have arisen for many different reasons, but its continued *presence* suggests that the issue is that Yahweh did not heed the people's supplications for famine relief. It must be admitted that the text does not explicitly state that this is the issue, but support may be drawn from 2 Sam 21:14. It was after the bloodguilt was removed that Yahweh was moved by supplications for the land. This suggests that Yahweh was not moved by (those same) prayers before the bloodguilt was wiped out. This, in combination with the fact that the source of the famine is not mentioned, supports the notion that the famine's continued presence in the land was in view in the text at hand.

The famine's presence in the land is inextricably linked to Saul's violation of the Gibeonite alliance. The nation suffers for this crime, as famine relief is withheld until the

bloodguilt is wiped out at the expense of Saul's dynasty. The three year famine occurred some time after Saul had died in battle, demonstrating that nationwide ramifications may arise long after a chastised king had committed his crime(s).

Table 19. Famine and drought

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Consequence
Narām-Sîn	Meso – Curse of Agade	Famine (related to military defeat)
Narām-Sîn	Meso – Cuthean Legend	Famine (related to military defeat)
Sargon of Akkad	Meso – <i>ABC 20A</i>	Marduk destroyed people with famine
Šamaš-šuma-ukīn	Meso – <i>SAA 3 44</i>	Aššur decreed famine, made people eat each other
Hypothetical king	Meso – Advice to a Prince	Adad will kill animals via famine
Kirta	Ugaritic – Kirta	Drought
Aqhatu	Ugaritic – Danilu	Drought
Saul	HB – 2 Samuel 21	Famine

11.1.6 Plague and epidemic

Plague outbreaks and epidemics are directly tied to royal sacrilege in a number of instances. These examples differ from similar cases in 10.1.1 in that they are expressly corporate. Numerous people, not just the offending ruler, are affected.

11.1.6.1 Mesopotamian literature

An epidemic originated from a royal violation according to *ARM 26 84*. According to this letter from Ašqudum to Yasmaḥ-Addu, extispices had indicated that an

outbreak (“hand of divinity”) stemmed from either Yasmaḥ-Addu's or Šamši-Adad's failure to uphold a vow to Sîn (7.3.1): “And concerning the hand of divinity (*qāt ilūtim*), I made (extispicies), and then (it showed) a promise to Sîn” (10-13). Notably, the “hand of divinity” is ambiguous as to whether it afflicted an individual or a population. This detail is important, for it shows the magnitude of punishment. In what follows, it will be explained why this particular incident has been understood to represent a widespread epidemic rather than an individual case of disease.

A significant difficulty is that line 5 is broken, and how one restores the text has a significant impact on the afflicted party. Durand reads DUMU *bi-ni-im im-[ḥu-ra-ni]*, favoring *im-[ḥu-ra-ni]* over *im-[ra-aṣ]* and translates “est venu me trouver.”⁶⁹ If the latter was the case (i.e., *im-[ḥu-ra-ni]*), then the son of Binum may very well had been the individual in view. However, if one follows Durand's suggestion, then the fact that the son of Binum met Ašqudum eliminates him as the stricken victim. Similarly, Sasson translates “The son of Binum has met with me,” and suggests that “The omens were probably not concerned with the son of Binum...”⁷⁰ Charpin, on the other hand, understands the affliction to be upon an individual, stating “after the son of an important man fell ill, Asqudum consulted an oracle regarding the cause of the ailment...”⁷¹ Presumably this is based on the reconstruction *im-[ra-aṣ]*, making the son of Binum the victim of divine punishment. Heimpel, in his translation of the text, does not translate the broken verb. Instead, he provides a footnote explaining Durand's preference for *im-[ḥu-ra-ni]* over *im-[ra-aṣ]*, and then adds another possible reconstruction: *im-[tu-ut]*.⁷² If one

69 *ARM* 26 84, p. 233.

70 Sasson 1993, 43-44.

71 Charpin 2010, 218. For the spelling of Ašqudum against Asqudum, see note 69 on p. 144 (chapter 7).

72 Heimpel does say, in his entry under “Dur-Yasmah-Addu,” that the “death of person there triggers

follows this last reconstruction, then the death of Binum's son triggered the extispicies which are then reported in the text.⁷³

The reconstructions *im-[ra-aš]* and *im-[tu-ut]* may indicate that the son of Binum was individually punished by being afflicted with the hand of a god because of a broken vow, whether the infraction was committed by Yasmaḥ-Addu or Šamši-Adad. However, as will be seen in the following paragraph, historical circumstances suggest that *ARM 26 84* refers to the same widespread epidemic mentioned in other Mari texts. Therefore, the reconstruction followed here is that of Durand (*im-[hu-ra-ni]*), and thus it is assumed that the son of Binum was alive and well. The question still remains: what is the nature of the hand of divinity for which extispicies were performed? To answer this question, one can turn to other texts that refer to a widespread epidemic in Mari's vicinity.

Historical circumstances lend support to the contention that a widespread plague is the issue at hand in *ARM 26 84*. Several texts report that plague broke out in the kingdom of Mari while Yasmaḥ-Addu was in Šubat-Šamaš and Zalmaqum.⁷⁴ The sources for this plague are letters written by La'um⁷⁵ (*ARM 5 87; 26 259, 260, 262, 263*), Ikšud-Appašu (*ARM 26 261*), and Mašiya (*ARM 26 264*).⁷⁶ A final letter (M 8002), which was possibly written by La'um,⁷⁷ reports the death of Yasmaḥ-Addu's trusted official Ušur-awassu. These letters indicate that an epidemic sweeping Mari and its vicinity was severe enough to be mentioned on eight occasions by at least three individuals. Furthermore,

extispicies (26 84)" (Heimpel 2003, 609).

⁷³ See Heimpel's comment in the note immediately above.

⁷⁴ Wu 1994, 334.

⁷⁵ La'um and Ašqudum were contemporaries, as indicated in *ARM 26 4*, where the former complains to Yasmaḥ-Addu about Ašqudum's behavior.

⁷⁶ See Wu 1994, 147–152 for details.

⁷⁷ Wu 1994, 148.

Ikšud-Appašu explains that the plague had spread to Zapad in the Saggaratum region.⁷⁸ Importantly, inquiry for extispicy came from Dur-Yasmaḥ-Addu, located in Saggaratum, according to *ARM 26 84*. It may be, then, that the incident behind the broken vow to Sîn indicated in *ARM 26 84* is the same plague referenced in the above letters. Furthermore, in *ARM 26 17*, Ašqudum reports serious disease in this district (Saggaratum), perhaps a progression of the same plague.⁷⁹

In any case, whether *ARM 26 84* refers to the Mari plague cited elsewhere or reports a separate incident, the results are the same. Based on Durand's reconstruction, an epidemic occurred because of a broken vow to Sîn. By its very nature, the epidemic affected many. Incidentally, it may be noted that the reconstructions *im-[ra-aš]* and *im-[tu-ut]* would similarly indicate that the failure to keep the vow to Sîn affected another (the son of Binum) besides the offenders themselves – a type of corporate punishment.

11.1.6.2 Hittite literature

The Hittite Plague Prayers of Muršili II exhibit the principle that royal sacrilege may affect whole populations in a number of confessions made by the king. In the first of the plague prayers,⁸⁰ Muršili II states that though Šuppiluliuma and Muršili preformed expiation, no one did so on the land's behalf (A rev 8'-12'), and Muršili stresses he will act on behalf of the land and make restitution (A rev. 13'-40'). Notably, Muršili maintains his innocence, and states plainly that the guilty ones were no longer alive (A rev. 21'-40'; cf. innocence in 2 A obv. 35'-46'; C iii 3'-7', A rev. 10'-19', A rev. 20'-36').

78 Wu 1994, 151.

79 N.B. Ašqudum was active until year eight of Zimri-Lim (Heimpel 2003, 529).

80 See COS 1.60, 156-157.

By implication, the inhabitants of the land were also innocent, as the offenders had died. The first prayer, then, stressed that the nation at large accrued guilt – hence the need for restitution – for the crimes of its rulers (7.2.3 and 7.3.2). Incidentally, Muršili stresses that if the plague continues, the gods will lose those who supply offerings (A rev. 21'-40'; cf. 3 rev. 2'-14'), demonstrating that the potential victims extend beyond the palace.

Thus, the Plague Prayers of Muršili exhibit the notion that an offense committed by a royal predecessor may cause both the land and his heir to suffer consequences for that offense. Muršili maintains his innocence, and is adamant that both he and his land suffer because of Šuppiluliuma's failure to keep oaths. The broken oaths were obviously a serious matter, causing the death of Šuppiluliuma, twenty years of plague, and Muršili's own suffering. Of interest is that the ritual remedies did not check the plague. The prayers, as they stand, contain no resolution.

11.1.6.3 Hebrew Bible

That pestilence might result from a ruler's crimes surfaces three times in the Hebrew Bible. Two of these instances derive from David and have been examined earlier in this study. Both Samuel (5.2.1) and Chronicles (5.2.2) record that the pestilence which killed seventy thousand in Israel derived from David's decisions to conduct a census.⁸¹ Similarly, Pharaoh's house suffered from plague (Gen 12:17) because Pharaoh took Sarai, Abram's wife.

⁸¹ Elijah's letter in 2 Chr 21:12-15 appears to threaten widespread plague – if it is taken on its own. However, 2 Chr 21:16-19 suggest otherwise.

Table 20. Plague and epidemic

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Consequence
Yasmaḥ-Addu	Meso – ARM 26 84	Epidemic
Šuppiluliuma	Hittite – Plague Prayers of Muršili	Plague
David	HB – 2 Samuel 24	Pestilence
	HB – 1 Chronicles 21	Pestilence
Pharaoh	HB – Gen 12:17	Plague

11.1.7 Varia (corporate)

Two cases of corporate consequences for royal actions do not easily fit into the categories above. They are listed here in a “varia” section. Though they are unlike the penalties encountered earlier, they are alike in that the affected parties go beyond the ruler himself.

11.1.7.1 Mesopotamian literature

In one case the punishment issued for a royal crime is vague enough that it cannot comfortably be placed in any of the above categories. The offense, as recorded in the Advice to a Prince, involves the king's mistreatment of his subjects by sending them on a campaign or by imposing corvée on them. In response to this misdeed, Nabu will act according to lines 53-54: “Nabu scribe of Esagil, controller of all the heavens and earth, commander of everything, the one who assigns kingship, will void the treaties of his land then decree misfortune” (*riksāt mātišu upaṭṭarma⁸² a’ ḥīta’ išām*).

⁸² Following Lambert's emendation of *ú-paṭ-ṭar-GIŠ* (Lambert *BWL* 114). The emendation is supported by IM 77087: *ú-paṭ-ṭar-ma* (Cole *Nippur*, 272, l. 55).

11.1.7.2 Hebrew Bible

Jehoshaphat suffers an unparalleled form of corporate punishment according to the Chronicler. Though Jehu son of Hanani explains to Jehoshaphat that “wrath from Yahweh” (*qešep millipnê YHWH*) against him resulted from his support of Ahab and his marriage to his daughter (2 Chr 19:2), Jehoshaphat's cultic reforms mitigated this divine wrath. However, after allying with Ahaziah in building ships destined for Tarshish, Eliezer son of Dodavahu prophesied “against Jehoshaphat” that Yahweh would destroy (*pāraš YHWH*) that which the king made (2 Chr 20:37). The text then immediately reports that the ships were destroyed (*wayyiššābərû*). Though his good deeds mitigated his alliance with Ahab, they did not mitigate his business alliance with Ahaziah, and thus the ships were destroyed. The punishment, indicated in the prophecy as being directed at Jehoshaphat, did not directly affect the king, but had economic ramifications on his rule.⁸³

When Abimelech of Gerar defended his integrity before Yahweh for taking Sarah, he assumed that his death penalty announced by dream would also engulf his people (Gen 20:4). Yahweh then confirmed the corporate nature of the penalty, for he warned the king that if he did not restore Sarah, that he would die, as well as all that belonged to him (Gen 20:7).⁸⁴ Though it is not clear how the deaths would have transpired, it is obvious that many would have died. Additionally, the text states that Yahweh had caused barrenness in Abimelech's house (Gen 20:18), another corporate consequence of Abimelech's crime.

⁸³ The significance of these lost ships should not be underestimated. The loss of the ships alone would have a serious economic impact. Any additional cargo would have been added to that cost – and one can assume that the destroyed ships were full of cargo. One can compare text no. 119 in Parpola 1987, where the cargo from lost boats (bull colossi) was retrieved with much trouble – presumably because of its value (bull colossi were to be transported in low water and were not to be left unguarded [see Lanfranchi-Parpola 1990 text 298]). (The colossi were likely under the responsibility of the overseer – cf. no. 56 in Parpola 1987).

⁸⁴ Cf. Gen 26:10.

Many corporate consequences result from Pharaoh's refusal to heed Yahweh's word through Moses to release the Israelites. Most of these are corporate because they are environmental, naturally affecting those who live in the vicinity of the punishments. These punishments include the plagues that involve the Nile (Exod 7:20-21), frogs (8:5-6), gnats (8:16-17), flies (8:24), livestock (9:6), boils (9:10), hail (9:23-25), locusts (10:12-15), and darkness (10:22-23). The plague of firstborn (12:29-31), however, is unique, in that it specifically targets a select group of victims. In any case, these various punishments demonstrate well the concept of corporate punishment.

Table 21. Various corporate punishments

Ruler	Corpus and Text	Consequence
Hypothetical king	Meso – Advice to a Prince	Nabu will void treaties and decree misfortune
Jehoshaphat	HB – 2 Chronicles 19	Ships destroyed
Abimelech of Gerar	HB – Gen 20:4, 7, 18	Corporate death penalty, barrenness
Pharaoh	HB – Exodus 7-12	Exodus plagues

Chapter 12: Conclusions – Punishments from the Gods

The texts above have demonstrated that the consequences of royal offenses take on many varied forms across several ancient near eastern corpora. The consequences fall into two general divisions. The first of these divisions are those consequences that focus on the offender himself – “individual consequences.” The second division contains those consequences that are “corporate” – repercussions that affect parties outside of the offending ruler. In some cases, a ruler may be singled out as receiving individual consequences, but those individual consequences may also be accompanied by corporate consequences.

In chapter 10, the individual consequences were allocated in the following groups: physical affliction, mental affliction, violent death, rejection of kingship, capture and imprisonment – in addition to a *varia* category. The dispersion and frequency of these consequences reveal several distinctive trends.

Though physical affliction is not the most widely occurring individual punishment suffered by kings, it does appear in nine texts across four corpora (Mesopotamia, Hebrew Bible, Ugaritic, and Hittite). The particular type of affliction may vary – it may be life-threatening or non-life-threatening.

Eight rulers are struck with various types of physical affliction. Of these, only two are terminal – the cases of Jehoram and Šuppiliuma. In this regard it should be observed that Kirta's illness brought him close to death. One can conclude, then, that

whatever malady afflicted Kirta, it had the potential to end his life. Ahaziah died from his ailment (2 Kgs 1:17), but his death transpired because Yahweh prohibited his recovery. It was the proscription of recovery, rather than the ailment itself, that served as this king's punishment. Taken together, these four examples demonstrate that afflictions of a life-threatening nature may be connected to the gods as a theological response to royal impiety.

Four cases of physical affliction do not appear life-threatening. Such is the case with Jeroboam's withered hand. Likewise, no reason exists to believe that Rib-Addi's disease, whatever it may have been, was life-threatening. Similarly, the lives of Šulgi and Uzziah are not threatened by their skin afflictions. One can conclude, then, that a disease need not bring a ruler close to death in order to be a reverberation of royal sacrilege. Non-terminal afflictions may be understood as divine retribution for criminal acts.

A further word must be said about Šulgi and Uzziah. These two kings are the only rulers who are explicitly connected with skin disease – a surprise given the fact that such an ailment was particularly abhorrent in the ancient Near East. In these two cases, the afflictions negate a particular aspect of the each king's image. The skin disease suffered by Šulgi critiqued his divinity. Similarly, Uzziah's ailment prohibited him from serving as priest for the duration of his life. In this regard, it should be noticed that Rib-Addi's disease also serves a purpose: it is the king's alibi for his failure to visit the king of Egypt.

Mental affliction – a punishment where a ruler suffers psychologically in some way – is rarely inflicted upon rulers for their crimes in the ancient Near East. In

Mesopotamia, mental affliction primarily occurs as insomnia. Two text traditions tie this punishment with Sargon of Akkad (Weidner Chronicle text A and B and *ABC* 20A), but the ruler of Malgium similarly suffers for his offenses. Besides these two rulers, the only other example encountered in this study is Nebuchadnezzar's punishment found in the Hebrew Bible. Nebuchadnezzar's case, however, differs from both Sargon and the ruler of Malgium in that Nebuchadnezzar suffers from what appears to be a divinely decreed psychological breakdown.

Of the individual consequences examined in chapter 10, violent death occurs the most frequently, with a total of nineteen occurrences. The violent deaths of rulers is almost evenly split between Mesopotamian literature and the Hebrew Bible, with nine and ten occurrences, respectively. The Ugaritic account of Danilu's death adds another example. This distribution suggests that the violent death of a ruler transcended cultural boundaries, and that such a death was widely considered demeritorious.

Some of these deaths are unusual – the drowning of Utu-ḫegal, the “goring of an ox” or “the bite of his shoe” suffered by Amar-Su'en, and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's death by fire. In a few cases, the deaths clearly result from a deity's involvement. Such is the case in Saul's suicide and Jeroboam's death in Chronicles. Aqhatu's death at the hands of Anat and YṯPN is similar in this regard, for they directly bring Aqhatu to the grave. The mode of death is not elaborated in some case (David, Atamrum), or simply described as violent (the unnamed ruler in MS 3210).

Deaths resulting from military conflicts and conspiracies, however, represent the most common of the violent deaths, for at least nine rulers fall in such circumstances

(Sargon II, Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir, Aḥšēri, Ahab, Amaziah, Josiah, Sennacherib [Hebrew Bible], the King of Babylon, the leader of Tyre, and Pharaoh). Many of these deaths are heightened by the purposeful inclusion of details that make the fate particularly abhorrent. These details include geographical markers that accentuate a ruler's fate. For instance, both Sargon II and Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir are said to have died in a foreign land. Some rulers are said to have died in their own land: Aḥšēri (rebellion), Sennacherib (patricide – Hebrew Bible), and leader of Tyre (by an enemy force). Similarly, the conspiracy against Amaziah originated in Jerusalem. Pharaoh's death is likewise associated with the very source of his arrogance: the Nile.

Besides geographical features, details about a ruler's improper burial, which may included the desecration of the royal corpse, are elements that make a violent death especially grievous. An improper burial stressed the ignoble fates of Sargon II, Aḥšēri, the king of Babylon (Hebrew Bible), and Pharaoh (Ezekiel 29, 31). Similarly, Saul's body was likewise desecrated, though his remains were later rescued from this fate.¹

Take together, these details suggest that there were aggravating factors that made the violent death of a ruler – particularly on the battlefield – more egregious. Aggravating circumstances include the location of death. A location in a foreign land or in the heart of a king's territory are equally humiliating. Likewise, the desecration of a royal corpse is an aggravating factor. Such desecration includes improper burial, corpse exposure, and death among those of inferior status. These details are purposely highlighted in their respective contexts, increasing the gravity of the issued death penalty.

¹ Relatedly, both Ahab and Josiah are said to have returned to their homeland for burial – a detail that mitigates the severity of their deaths. Note that Josiah is struck in battle, but died in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 35:24).

Put another way, the inclusion of these details suggest that the gods could go beyond simple death sentences, and could degrade an offending ruler by the circumstance surrounding his death.

In addition to penalties that affect a ruler's personal health (mental or physical affliction, violent death), a ruler's supremacy could be affected by divine punishment. Specifically, the gods may revoke a ruler's individual kingship in response to that king's criminal acts in both Mesopotamian literature and the Hebrew Bible. This rejection of kingship may involve the physical kingdom itself – as in the loss of land suffered by Yaḥdun-Lim. However, the rejection of kingship is typically understood to be a theological notion where a deity removes an individual king's authority. Though a theological concept, texts may emphasize the physical means by which the rejection is achieved. Such is the case when Marduk placed Nabonidus in the hands of Cyrus, as well as the complicated unfolding of Saul's rejection (5.1.1).

Only a few kings are said to have been captured by an enemy force as a penalty for offending the gods. The single Mesopotamian example is Aššur's declaration that he directly imprisoned Šamaš-šuma-ukīn. Three examples from the Hebrew Bible differ from the Mesopotamian case in that the place of offense plays a direct role in each king's fate. Amaziah and Zedekiah are confined to the place which served as the epicenter of their respective offenses. Amaziah was brought to Jerusalem – the place of his offense and death. Zedekiah was confined to Babylon, the nation that he rebelled against. Differently, however, was Manasseh's restoration to Jerusalem – the place of his offense – a detail highlighting this ruler's repentance. Like the geographical details that accentuate

the violent deaths of rulers, the inclusion of the geographical points mentioned in these cases accentuate the divine nature of the events.

In addition to all of these individual consequences, three individual consequences were labeled “*varia*.” These include a *šēdu*'s hostility aimed at Nabonidus, Ea's hostility directed at a hypothetical king, as well as the great gods seeking justice against an offending king. Though these offenses do not easily fit elsewhere in this study, they do exhibit individual repercussions that an offending ruler may experience.

Taken together, these individual punishments demonstrate that the gods of the ancient Near East exacted personal punishment on those rulers who violated their sensibilities. In many cases, deities kill rulers (or enact their deaths) with various sorts of violent deaths or terminal physical affliction. If the gods choose not to kill a ruler, they may make him suffer – physically or (less often) mentally. The gods, if they so choose, may leave the offender physically intact and instead reject his right to rule. Between these two options is royal imprisonment – a rare penalty that deities dealt to only a few kings.

Chapter 11 focuses on corporate consequences that are brought about by chastised rulers. These consequences transcend the royal offender and affect others. Those affected can be as few in number as members of the royal family, or as numerous as the ruler's entire nation.

The most frequent form of corporate punishment comes in the form of military disasters in which the gods play a role. Twenty-seven rulers are credited with twenty-nine instances of military disaster instigated by their actions. Eight of these disasters are

found in Mesopotamian literature, eighteen with the Hebrew Bible, and one in the Song of Release. Military disaster is by default corporate, for it involves the suffering of the defeated force at the very least. It may also have consequences that reach far beyond the military forces themselves.

Military disaster can come in the form of battlefield conflicts in both Mesopotamia and the Hebrew Bible. In these cases, the military forces suffer for the ruler's crimes. A prime example from Mesopotamia is the three total defeats brought about because of Narām-Sîn in the Cuthean legend. (It should be parenthetically noted that these defeats are accompanied by several other adverse circumstances). Similarly, The Advice to a Prince posits several scenarios where military defeat will result from a king's crimes. Zimri-Lim's neglect inhibited his ability to gain victory over his enemies. In the Hebrew Bible, military defeat is predicted for the crimes of Zedekiah in the book of Ezekiel – a prediction that specifically targets his military forces. Solomon's military adversaries, Hadad the Edomite and Rezon son of Eliada, were consequences of Solomon's crimes. Asa likewise faced continuous warfare for his offenses according to the Chronicler. It was also argued that Pharaoh's forces would suffer for his pride according to Ezekiel 31.

Though military disaster may target the offender's military forces alone, such disaster is more often accompanied by the suffering of the ruler's subjects in both Mesopotamian literature and the Hebrew Bible. In Mesopotamian literature, invasion followed the crimes of Narām-Sîn in both the Curse of Agade and the Weidner Chronicle. In the former, the end result is the complete destruction of Agade – but not before the

inhabitants suffered from food shortage. In this regard, it should be remembered that a number of calamities accompanied the three total annihilations of Narām-Sîn's forces in the Cuthean Legend. After the forces of Kaštiliaš are defeated, Babylon suffers, for it is plundered. Nineveh is specifically targeted for the consequences of royal sacrilege in BM 55467. The plundering of Uruk came about because of the crimes of its governor (Erra and Išum). Similarly, the plundering of goods is forewarned as a consequence of a king's actions in the Advice to a Prince. Akkad itself was scattered because of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn (*SAA* 3 44), and the destruction of the wall of Yagid-Lim's city represented that city's defeat.

In the Hebrew Bible, the most well-known military disasters that affect the nations as a whole are those that resulted from the offenses of Jeroboam and Manasseh. Both of these kings are held responsible for the destruction of their nations in Kings (and Manasseh in Jeremiah as well). The books of Kings also suggests that civil war would have ensued from Solomon's crimes if had not been for prophetic intervention.

Prophetic literature in the Hebrew Bible contains several examples where a nation suffers from royally induced military disaster. The threat of Rezin and Pekah will be wiped out by an invasion of the “fly” and “bee” (Isaiah 7). Assyria will suffer for its king's pride (Isaiah 10), as will Babylon for Nebuchanezzar's hubris (Jeremiah 50). Tyre will be invaded because of its leader's pride (Ezekiel 28), and the destruction of Egypt will likewise result from the same crime (Ezekiel 29). According to Hosea, Jehu's violence would result in the destruction of Israel.

In the Hebrew Bible, however, most examples of military disaster that affected the

nation as a whole occur in the book of Chronicles. One example is Shishaq's invasion of Judah and the subsequent plundering and occupation of its cities – consequences of Rehoboam's leadership. The Philistine and Arabian coalition that invaded and plundered Judah was a response to Jehoram's actions. Similarly, because of Joash, Judah suffered defeat and was plundered by an inferior Aramean force. Amaziah's sacrilege led to the partial destruction of the wall of Jerusalem and the subsequent plundering of the city by Joash of Israel. Ahaz's idolatry brought about two military defeats, a partial exile, and the deaths of 120,000.

Outside of Mesopotamian literature and the Hebrew Bible, the Song of Release also witnessed to the notion that destruction of a city may result from royal crimes. The city of Ebla would be destroyed if it did not follow the prescribed debt release. It is also noteworthy that, in this case, the fate of the city is a combination of the ruler's leadership and the inhabitants' actions – a combination appearing in biblical literature as well.²

A different form of corporate punishment is more narrowly focused, for it affects an offending ruler's family. This offense occurs minimally in Mesopotamian literature, and the affected party suffers in various ways. For instance, Aḫšēri's family is killed, whereas Yagid-Lim's heir (Yaḥdun-Lim) is captured. In the Advice to a Prince, one reads that an offending king's prince may wander the streets after a military defeat. In another instance in this same text, the offending ruler's princes reflect that king's perversion of justice. It was mentioned that Sennacherib's family also paid for his crimes – but one cannot be specific due to the broken text.

The Hebrew Bible contains more examples of a royal family suffering from royal

² Cf. the anger of the gods that is directed at the people in the Tukultī-Ninurta Epic (11.1.1.1).

offenses than does Mesopotamian literature. Saul's dynasty received divine rejection for his crimes in both Samuel and Chronicles. Likewise, Solomon's crimes had the potential to end the reign of the Davidic dynasty. According to Hosea, Jehu's dynasty will be punished for Jehu's violence – though the punishment is not described. In the case of Jehoram, royal family members (sons and wives) were captured (2 Chronicles 28).

All other examples from the Hebrew Bible involve the death of family members. Saul's seven sons were slaughtered (1 Samuel 21) for his actions. David's son, born out of his affair with Bathsheba, died because of David's crimes. The cases of fratricide that led up to Solomon's coronation were likewise tied to David's offenses. Maaseiah, son of Ahaz, died because of the offenses of his father (2 Chronicles 28). The dynasties of Jeroboam, Ahab, and Baasha are exterminated because of their founder's crimes in the book of Kings. Likewise, the dynasty of the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14 is exterminated for the king's violence and hubris.

Occasionally, members of an offender's administration are affected – in various ways – by the consequences resulting from royal offenses. In Mesopotamian literature, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's officials were captured according to *SAA* 3 44. The Advice to the Prince states that among the consequences of a king's crimes, a king's general will roam the street after a military defeat. Elsewhere, officials will fail to carry out justice if their king does the same. Jeroboam's priests are threatened by the king's actions in the Hebrew Bible. Elsewhere, the officials of Ahab and Joash are killed, as are Azrikam and Elkanah – members of Ahaz's administration.

Not all corporate consequences in Mesopotamian literature and the Hebrew Bible

are described in concrete terms. Though divine wrath and abandonment are features of several repercussions of royal crimes, they occasionally stand alone as punishments.

Divine abandonment appears as a consequence in the Advice to a Prince, for the great gods will be abandoned their cult places in response to a ruler's misdeeds. It also appears in 2 Chronicles 24, for Yahweh abandoned Joash and his compatriots in response to their behavior. Similarly, divine wrath – a part of many offenses – may itself be a punishment in its own right. Such is the case in KAL 3 27, as well as 2 Chronicles 32.

A ruler's subjects may be punished for his offenses through the environment in Mesopotamian and Ugaritic literature, as well as in the Hebrew Bible. In Mesopotamian literature, this consequence may be tied to warfare (Curse of Agade, Cuthean Legend). At other times, it stands on its own as a consequence (*ABC 20A*, *SAA 3 44* [but cf. 11.1.1.1], Advice to a Prince). Drought accompanies the individual consequences of both Kirta and Aqhatu in Ugaritic literature. Similarly, famine relief is withheld from Israel in David's time, a result of Saul's crimes.

Plague and epidemic are also attested as originating from royal sacrilege in Mesopotamian literature, Hittite literature, and the Hebrew Bible. Three examples from three different cultures witness to the belief that these widespread pandemics could have their origin in a king's impiety. The outbreak at Mari (*ARM 26 84*), the plague in the Hittite empire (Plague Prayers of Muršili), and the pestilence in Israel (2 Samuel 24 // 2 Chronicles 19) were all connected to kings and their crimes.

It was also observed that corporate punishment can also surface in various ways – such as the voided treaties in the Advice to a Prince. In the case of Jehoshaphat, Yahweh

destroyed his ships – a punishment with economic ramifications.

When viewed together, the corporate offenses stress that the crimes committed by rulers could affect other parties. When put into a religious context, this observation suggests that the fate of a nation or group is tied to its ruler in such a way that the crimes of that ruler could fall on that nation or group. The dispersion of these consequences witnesses to the fact that this notion was widely held – even if kingship ideology differed across cultural boundaries. A violation committed by a ruler could impact the masses across the ancient Near East.³

In sum, the consequences for royal sacrilege fall into two general groups. The first group focuses on the person of the king. The gods may individually strike the king with some sort of physical affliction (terminal or non-life threatening), or rarely with some sort of mental affliction. More often, however, the gods may decree the death of the king in some way, whether through unusual means or via conflicts and conspiracies. Alternatively, the gods may revoke a ruler's kingship or have him captured, in addition to other various manifestations of individual punishment. Importantly, the individual penalties issued to a king may negate that king's image in some way, or denigrate the king's legacy (skin afflictions; death in a foreign land, at home, or on the battlefield; an improper burial; the desecration of the corpse).

The second group contains punishments that affect large groups of people. Royal sacrilege could result in the defeat of royal military forces, the destruction of a king's territory, the plundering of a city, or the exile of a nation. Similarly, members of the royal administration and family may suffer in various ways, including death. A king's

³ Even beyond the ancient Near East – see the analysis in López-Ruiz 2013.

misdeeds could also be tied to environmental phenomena, including drought, famine, plague, and epidemic – all naturally affecting large populations.

Part V: Synthesis and Conclusions

The accumulation of data in this dissertation sheds light on an important aspect of ancient near eastern kingship ideology. The chastised ruler concept demonstrates the position of the king before the gods, stresses the responsibility of the king, and underscores the belief that the fate of the land is tied to the behavior of its king. In what follows (chapter 13), these facets of kingship will be addressed under section I. In section II, matters of frequency, plausibility, and genre will be discussed. Finally, section III will conclude this study as a whole.

Chapter 13: Gods and Kings

I. Rulers before the gods, royal responsibility, punishment and fate of the land

In order to fully appreciate how the chastised ruler concept reinforces the king's position before the gods, chastised rulers need to be viewed against the background of the overarching kingship ideology detectable in the ancient Near East.¹ The following discussion on the position of kings and kingship will clarify the background from which the chastised ruler concept emerges.

The combination of two aspects of kingship distinguished this institution from all ancient counterparts. The king stood at the intersection of his sociohistorical circumstances and his relationship to the gods. It is the king's location at this intersection that makes a king and kingship distinct from any other person or institution. His political, economic, and social standing provided a king with the power to carry out deeds and enterprises on a level unparalleled by any commoner. At the same time, the king had exclusive standing before the gods, and though this standing differed between cultures,² the king related to the divine realm in ways that other humans in his kingdom did not.³

1 Because of the sparseness of source material, this discussion will focus primarily on the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamian sources.

2 This is most notable in Mesopotamian and Hebrew conceptions of kingship. See, generally, Frankfort 1978, 337-344 and Hallo 1988, 63-65.

3 Functionally, the Mesopotamian king mediated between the human and divine realms, a fact noticeable in their titles (Machinst 2006, Frankfort 226-230, Lambert 1998). The Assyrian king was a priest (*šangû*, see Machinst 2006, 156), as were both Hittite kings (Beckman 2002, 19) and Canaanite kings (see the title *khn 'štrt* in *KAI* 13, 1, 2). Though some argue that the Hebrew king was a priest (e.g., Day 1998 argues that the kings who reigned from Jerusalem were priests), others deny this contention (Frankfort 1978, 341). I stand with the latter, for the evidence for the Hebrew king as priest is not convincing. Not only does the Hebrew king not bear the title "priest," but the Chronicler condemns Uzziah for his efforts to usurp the priesthood. However, the Hebrew king does have a special relationship with Yahweh, for he is the "son of God" (see note 10 on p. 211 [chapter 9]). Relatedly, Ugaritic kings were considered to be gods (Day 1998, 81-82), Hittite kings became gods after death (rarely in life, see Beckman 2002, 19; cf. the deification of Narām-Sîn in the Mesopotamian tradition), Ur III kings (save Ur-Namma) were deified (Michalowski 2008, especially 36-37; cf. Lambert 1998,

Thus, religious responsibility and accountability permeated kingship, and these were inextricably intertwined with the king's sociohistorical circumstances. Only the king stood at this intersection of history and religion, and so he held a position shared by no other single individual in ancient society.

The king's unparalleled position elevated his responsibility, for the gods would hold the king accountable for the appropriation of his unmatched combination of resources, power, and religious standing. Moreover, the king's position exponentially increases the magnitude of the king's actions (positive or negative) vis-à-vis the gods (at least theoretically), as well as the divine reaction to those actions. In other words, a king's deeds were qualitatively more potent on a religious level than those of any other individual because of the king's worldly power and religious responsibilities. Put simply, the king's position amplified the significance of his actions before the gods, and consequently, the impact of the repercussions (and divine reactions) subsequently increased.

The magnification of the import of the king's actions, directly tied to his societal and religious position, made it possible for the king to be understood as an instrument of salvation or destruction. In fact, no regal enterprise was truly benign, for every act of royal governance carried religious ramifications because of the distinctive nature of kingship. Therefore, both royal misdeeds and a king's pious actions were perceived to attract the attention of the gods, who in turn could respond favorably or unfavorably to the king's deeds. A king, then, had the potential to be understood as a *Heilsherrscher* as

60), Assyrian kings approach divinity (Machinist 2006, 160ff), and the Neo-Assyrian king was portrayed as a “perfect man” (Parpola 2010, 36). Cf. the divine right to kingship in Babylonia (Lambert 1998, 61ff).

much as an *Unheilsherrscher* (to use the more general nomenclature that initially launched this study).⁴

The increased religious import of royal actions is the background for understanding the chastised ruler concept. A king became a chastised ruler because he did not properly carry out his royal responsibility before of the gods. The gods, in turn, issued an appropriately severe divine retribution, the hallmark of the chastised ruler,⁵ because they considered the king's violation of his duty to be exceptionally egregious.

It is not just the abstract notion of the king's position that underscores the king's distinctive responsibility, however. In many cases, the nature of the royal offenses stresses that such violations could be carried out by no one other than the king. Chastised kings often committed, or were believed to have committed, violations that were only possible because of the offending king's position in combination with his sociohistorical circumstances. These offenses highlight the position of the king. For example, most of those kings punished for failing to heed divine communication committed this infraction in the face of battle. No individual outside the royal persona had the responsibility of balancing the pressure of military action in the face of divine communication. Likewise, crimes such as the destruction of cult centers, construction of temple counterparts, alteration of cultic procedures, and the introduction of cultic elements all required

4 Though the subject of *Heilsherrscher* is beyond the scope of this study, a brief example will illustrate this point: disaster was prevented or mitigated on several occasions because of David (1 Kings 11:12-13, 34; 2 Kings 8:19; 19:34 // Isaiah 37:35; 20:6). The example of David is particularly insightful, for it demonstrates that these two categories are not diametrically opposed. David was both a chastised ruler (a subset of the *Unheilsherrscher*, [see chs. 1-3]), and a *Heilsherrscher*. That a king could potentially fit into either of these categories, or both simultaneously, highlights the amplification of the king's actions and their consequences. This fact demonstrates that a king's standing is dynamic, not static, and that the perception of a given king in one tradition was subject to change based on the availability of new evidence or the reanalysis of data by ancient scribes. A king's deeds could be beneficial or detrimental, and both options existed because of the king's unique position.

5 See chapters 1-4.

resources and labor resources available only to the king. Violations of political oaths belonged to the realm of international relations, and thus could not be committed by anyone other than a ruler. Naturally, any perversion of royal duty (e.g., injustice, economic violation) was a function of the institution of kingship alone. A ruler's decision to oppose the gods' elect ruler or city constituted yet another crime that could only be carried out by political leaders. Even the cases of royal hubris in the Hebrew Bible were often made possible because of the king's circumstances. Military success gave rise to royal pride (e.g., Isaiah 10, 2 Kings 18-19) as well as the king's lofty position (e.g., Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28, 29, 31; Daniel 3 [Aram 3-4]). Though there are instances of crimes that could be committed by any person in ancient society (e.g., violence), in the majority of cases, royal misdeeds were feasibly portrayed as susceptible to divine punishment only because of the king's historical circumstances and his economic, political, and military power. The crimes of chastised rulers, then, represented the "historical" side of the chastised ruler concept, stressing the king's worldly position and his (ir)responsibility to adhere to the will of the gods in that position.

It is, however, the divine response to the king's offenses that firmly places the royal offenders above and beyond the typical citizen, while underscoring the distinctive nature of kingship, and in particular, chastised kings.⁶ These response(s) from the gods

⁶ Two brief examples lend support to this claim. Leviticus 20:10 states that in the case of adultery, both the adulterer and adulteress will be killed. In the case of David's affair with Bathsheba – neither the adulterer nor the adulteress was killed. This is not surprising, for David was the king, holding the most powerful political and military position in the nation. However, a divinely decreed punishment results in more deaths than Lev 20:10 called for. Many deaths – beginning with the son conceived by Bathsheba and ending with the slaughter of Adonijah – are the penalty for David's crimes. These far exceed the deaths of the perpetrators called for in Leviticus. Concerning Mesopotamia, it was pointed out that the line of Assyrian kings from Sennacherib to Sîn-šar-iškun was assumed to accumulate guilt because of Sennacherib's exposure and removal of the [*makkūr*] *Esaggil u Bābili* according to BM 55467. The consequences of this crime (and others) threatened Sennacherib's family line and Assyria (Nineveh) as a whole. It will be admitted here that Sennacherib's crime was carried out on a much

should be understood in the light of the king's position before the gods. In particular, divine retribution must first be viewed in light of the special support that the gods offered to kings.

Kings generally enjoyed the support of the gods, a fact that differentiated them from their civilian counterparts. Concerning the Mesopotamian king, Frankfort states, “But his person was immensely precious because his election by the gods constituted a pledge of their support.”⁷ One can detect such divine support in many instances, and a few examples will be related here. It will be recalled that several Mesopotamian kings opposed other rulers (8.3), and the opposition to these elect kings resulted in retribution. When looked at from the (opposed) elect ruler's perspective, the gods support the ruler against their impious foe. Thus, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn (*SAA* 3 44, inscriptions of Ashurbanipal) and Aḥšēri (inscriptions of Ashurbanipal) both opposed Ashurbanipal, and so the gods came against them in support of Ashurbanipal. Likewise, Yagid-Lim opposed Ila-Kabkabu (*ARM* 1 3), and so Ila-Kabkabu enjoyed divine support against their opponents in the form of retribution. More explicit are the numerous cases of Mesopotamian kings' boasting of divine support in their military campaigns. For instance, Tiglath-pileser is described as “[valiant man who, with the hel]p of (the god) Aššur, his lord, smashed like pots all who were unsubmitive to him.”⁸ Similarly,

larger scale than that which an ordinary person would be able to do. However, in small-scale violations of the *makkūru* of a temple, the penalty for such a crime is simply economic. After Bēliqīša stole five sheep from the “property (*makkūr*) of Ištar of Uruk and Nanaya,” a court decided that he must pay thirtyfold for his crime (150 sheep), in addition to five unbranded lambs (Holtz 2014, no. 43). This serves as repayment to Ištar of Uruk, and they were turned over to the Eanna. These two “practical” penalties from the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamia differ from the consequences issued by the gods examined in 5.2.1 and 8.3.1.

7 Frankfort 1978, 264.

8 Translation from Tadmor-Yamada 2011, no. 51, l-2.

Sennacherib claims, “With the support of the god Aššur, my lord, I fought with them and defeated them.”⁹ Esarhaddon is described as “the king who with the help of the gods Aššur, Sîn, Šamaš, Nabû, Marduk, Ištar of Nineveh, (and) Ištar of Arbela, (i 10) the great gods, his lords, marched from the rising sun to the setting sun and had no equal (therein).”¹⁰ In this regard, it may be recalled that the gods were Tukultī-Ninurta's “helpers” in their support of this king against Kaštiliaš in the Tukultī-Ninurta Epic (11.1.1.1).

Like these Mesopotamian examples, the king also enjoyed Yahweh's general support in the Hebrew Bible. Psalm 2 warns that those rulers who rebel against Yahweh's anointed, his appointed king, will anger Yahweh and suffer destruction. Yahweh grants salvation (*yāšû 'ôt*) to his king and shows *ḥešed* to his anointed (Ps 18:50 [Heb. 51]), and the Psalmist knows that Yahweh will save (*hōšīa* ') him (Ps. 20:6 [Heb. 7]). It comes as no surprise, then, that Yahweh is described as “a fortress of salvation (*mā 'ôz yāšû 'ôt*)” for his anointed (Ps 28:8). Yahweh's support of the king extended into the domain of human relations, for Yahweh's anointed could not be struck down as other humans could be (1 Sam 24:6, 26:9, 11, 23). This privileged status for Yahweh's anointed meant that a failure to protect him merited death (1 Samuel 26:16; 2 Sam 1:14-16). Even cursing him endangered one's life (2 Sam 19:21). If not divine support proper, this elevated status indirectly witnessed to the divine support enjoyed by the king, for only Yahweh could legitimately take his life (1 Sam 26:10). In this regard, note Lanfranchi's statement on the general ancient background of Neo-Assyrian kingship:

9 Translation from Grayson-Novotny 2012, no. 15, iii 21'-22'.

10 RINAP 4 no. 2 i 7-13.

He invariably sits on the throne until his death; resignation is unthinkable, and the dislodging of a king from his throne can be accomplished only through his death, be it in the battlefield or by assassination. Dislodging is impossible because the king is always protected by all the cultic operations which, as already seen, are obsessively performed throughout his reign.¹¹

These data from Mesopotamia and the Hebrew Bible witness to the widely believed idea that the gods supported their kings. It is with this background in mind that the punishments suffered by kings should be viewed. Kings were not only differentiated from commoners by virtue of their position only, but also by the fact that they were supported by gods in ways that commoners were not. For a king to lose this support was tantamount to losing his royal status.¹² The king would become a *de facto* commoner at best; at worst, he would find himself working as adversary against the gods.¹³

The fact that royal crimes involve divine punishment implies that the king had lost the favor and support of the gods. The loss of divine support, then, was a penalty in and of itself. Such is the case when a ruler's crimes angered the deities, for this intangible consequence strips the king of his divine allies and severs his relationship with the gods. That divine wrath could be a punishment on its own attests to the gravity of this fracture. Yet it should be kept in mind that divine wrath was not aimed solely at the king: the land of the chastised king could succumb to the divine wrath as well (e.g., the wrath that originated from both the "Offspring of a foreigner" [11.1.4.1] and Hezekiah [11.1.4.2] affected the land).

More often, though, other consequences accompanied divine wrath. One of these,

11 Lanfranchi 2003, 107*.

12 Cf. 1 Sam 18:12.

13 Such is the case, e.g., with Kaštiliaš in the Tukulī-Ninurta Epic.

divine abandonment, is another intangible consequence. Divine abandonment illustrates well the king's loss of divine support, for the gods were understood to actually leave their sanctuaries, cities, and land – the deities “physically” leave the king. Yet this particular punishment goes further than alienating the king from the gods. The king has lost his divine support, but the deities have also left the king's people, the very gods who would protect them by virtue of their presence in the king's domain. Divine abandonment that resulted from royal crimes, then, compromises the king's subjects in addition to fracturing his relationship with the gods.

However, the loss of divine support often resulted in tangible distress. In these cases, the king's disfavor with the gods opened him up to personal forms of suffering that a king should not endure. The king suffered in these ways for two reasons: 1) he no longer had divine support and 2) the gods subsequently imposed a penalty unfit for a king. Thus, these punishments go beyond the loss of divine support and manifest themselves in the physical world.

For example, a god causing the imprisonment of a king (e.g., Šamaš-šuma-ukīn by Aššur, Zedekiah by Yahweh) subjected the king to a penalty that the king would normally issue himself.¹⁴ These two kings lost the support of Aššur and Yahweh, a fact attested by their penalty: imprisonment. The penalty itself was a demotion, for once of royal status, both Šamaš-šuma-ukīn and Zedekiah would be counted among the lowest social class.

A similar idea lies behind the loss of kingship. Several rulers, in both the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamia lose their dominion as a result of their crimes. Though a king

¹⁴ E.g., Tadmor-Yamada 2011 no. 20 l. 14'-17', 1 Kings 22:27, Isa 14:17.

may suffer rejection in different ways (e.g, Aššur overthrowing Shalmaneser's rule, Marduk delivering Nabonidus into the hands of Cyrus, Yahweh's rejection of Saul), the results are the same. The gods have turned against the king and removed his special status, standing, and power, and so the offending king suffers a demotion of the highest order.

The forfeiture of the king's standing with the gods is often accompanied with divine punishments that target the ruler's bodily well-being, be these mental or physical. Though these sorts of afflictions were part of daily life, the fact that they were placed within a theological context that involved divine punishment heightened their significance. What once may have been considered normal was no longer so for the chastised king, for these afflictions signaled the displeasure of the gods directed at a ruler who was once favored. These afflictions signal the broken relationship with the gods (i.e., the loss of divine support). However, the king is not necessarily demoted, as in the loss of kingship or imprisonment. Instead his well-being alone suffers.

There is no individual fate, however, considered more deplorable than the untimely death of a king. A king's premature death was a cause for mourning, as can be seen in David's lament over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam 1:19-27), Jeremiah's lament concerning Josiah's fall (2 Chr 35:25), and the bemoaning of Ur-namma's death (Ur-namma A).¹⁵ It was simply not acceptable for a king to die before his time,¹⁶ particularly in light of the king's position and relationship to the gods. 'Iluḥa'u's bewilderment

15 Flückiger-Hawker 1999, 93-142

16 For example, notice the fate of Kudur-Nahundu according to one of Sennacerib's inscriptions: "and (he) suddenly died a premature death" (*i-na u,-me la ši-im-ti-šú ur-ru-hi-iš im-tu-ut*). For translation and transliteration, see Grayson-Novotny 2012, no. 22 v 12-13. Cf. the fate of Urtaku in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions (B §29 IV 54-58 in Borger 1996, 96 and 223).

concerning Kirta's encounter with death captures well the notion that kings have higher standing than commoners and therefore should not die as commoners do: "Oh, like men you die also, father?" (*CAT* 1.16 i 3-4).¹⁷ Similarly, Sennacherib's inquiry into Sargon II's battlefield death (7.3.1) testifies to the belief that a king should not fall in battle as do regular soldiers. Kings were not to die as did other humans by virtue of their status.

The execution of the king by the gods, then, is the most severe individual punishment a king could suffer. This is not because the king died, *per se* – all rulers died, and every member of ancient society was aware of this truism. Nor was it simply that the king died prematurely, for on its own a premature death was simply an unfortunate fate.¹⁸ Rather, it is the fact that the gods themselves issued such a miserable end, one that enemies deserved, that makes this consequence the most horrifying personal punishment for a king. The divine death sentence signaled that the king, once favored by the gods, became the enemy of the deities.¹⁹ Put another way, the king, deprived of all divine favor, fully embodied those characteristics of his gods' enemies and would be punished as would an adversary of the gods.

A close look at some of the consequences issued by the gods shows that deities were not always content to simply punish individual rulers. Instead, the gods seemed to have formulated punishments in such a way that aspects of the punishments increased the perception of the penalty suffered by the king. These aspects could customize the punishment so that it fit the ruler's crime, or they could make the king's punishment more

17 See note 26 on p. 225 (chapter 10).

18 Cf. the example of Tukulti-Ninurta's assassination in ch. 2 (*ABC* 22 iv 10-11).

19 Some texts overly make this claim. Thus, for example, Josiah's attempt to face Necho constituted "opposing God," and the unnamed leader in MS 3210 acted "against Ninurta." By their actions, these two kings are enemies of the respective deities.

heinous.

Cases of punishments which fit the crime occur in the instances of those prideful rulers accused of making claims of divinity in the Hebrew Bible. The king of Babylon in Isaiah 14 is essentially guilty of an attempt to usurp the kingship of Yahweh, and both the leader of Tyre (Ezekiel 28) and Pharaoh (Ezekiel 29) claim divinity. Yahweh decrees punishments for these crimes that will make clear that these rulers are not divine at all.²⁰ Not only would the king of Babylon die, but he would lie among those slaughtered in battle far from home, and he would never receive a proper burial. Similarly, the leader of Tyre would die a soldier's death in the very place which served as a source of his divine claim, “the dwelling place of the gods, in the heart of the seas” (Ezek 28:2, cf. 8). Likewise, Pharaoh's divine claims would be countered by his degrading death, for he will not have the good fortune of a proper burial. Instead, scavengers will consume his corpse. Pharaoh's death is also linked to the source of his divine claim – the Nile. He uses the Nile to claim his divinity, but by it Yahweh will (poetically) punish his arrogant claim.

Other examples of punishments fitting the crime include the skin diseases suffered by Šulgi and Uzziah. In both cases, these punishments appear to be designed by the gods with a specific purpose in mind. Šulgi's skin affliction tarnished his divinity, just as Uzziah's condition prohibited his desire to function as priest. Thus, the skin afflictions are punishments that counter each king's desired image. Similarly, the Advice to a Prince contains several cases where the punishments issued by the gods fit the crime, for the hypothetical king's failure to properly execute justice will be answered in kind (11.1.3.1).

²⁰ Cf. Ps 82:6-7, and 'Iluḥa'u's words above.

Likewise, Utu-ḫegal's drowning death is appropriate to his crime (10.1.3.1), and Saul's rejection transpired because Saul rejected Yahweh's word (5.1.1). The penalties which issued from David's affair and murder matched his offenses (5.2.1). Additionally, because "his heart rose up" (*rim libābēh*), Nebuchadrezzar's heart would be changed to the heart of an animal, yet another example of a punishment fitting the crime (10.1.2.2). One should also note Ninurta's vengeance on the unnamed ruler who slaughtered the sons of Nippur, for the god killed that ruler in the very same way (10.1.3.1).

Gods could make a king's punishment more heinous by the circumstances surrounding that punishment. Sargon II's death in a foreign land was specifically mentioned as a problematic detail in the Sin of Sargon text, for it indicted that gods punished the king. This detail subsequently sheds light on the gravity of the god's deliberate slaughter of Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir in Elam (cf. the king of Babylon above). At the same time, the gods could punish kings in a king's own domain (Aḫšēri, Sennacherib, Amaziah; cf. the leader of Tyre), a demeaning detail that highlights the powerlessness of the the king. Because of their respective punishments, both Sargon II and Aḫšēri did not receive proper burials – a degrading detail seen in the Hebrew Bible as well (above). Similarly, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn died a degrading death, one typically associated with witches and warlocks (10.1.3.1). All of these factors, then, increase the perception of the divine punishments suffered by chastised rulers, serving to degrade the offender.

A word must be said about the geographic indicators of a ruler's punishment for violent crimes in particular, individual or corporate, especially as it pertains to the place of offense. For comparative purposes, it will be useful to note that regicides appear to

have been killed in order to appease the angry ghosts of rulers who died violent deaths.²¹ Ashurbanipal executed those who killed Sennacherib on the very spot where Sennacherib was killed.²² Similarly, Alexander the Great killed his father's assassins at his father's tomb.²³ Though these two examples deal with a human appeasing a ghost, the geographical connection between the place of offense and appeasement is striking, suggesting that retribution for the crime committed be justly associated with the location of that crime.

Does this idea, that the place of retribution for violent crimes be at the same location where the offenses occurred, apply to deities, at least in Mesopotamian thought? The contents of an astrological report suggests that it does: “as for the king of Ur, his son will wrong him, but Šamaš will catch the son who wronged his father, and he will die in the mourning-place of his father.”²⁴ In this example, the god Šamaš (instead of a human) will avenge the wronged king, and the god's act of retribution is geographically tied to the dead king.

In light of these examples that stress geographic connections, it is no accident that the Hebrew Bible specifically mentions similar connections between violent crimes committed by kings and their subsequent divine punishments. Both the crimes of Jehu and Ahab are to be avenged at the place where they were perpetrated. Because of the wrong done to Naboth in Jezreel, Yahweh would punish Ahab and his house in that same place (5.5).²⁵ Similarly, because Jehu slaughtered the house of Ahab in Jezreel,

21 Scurlock 2014, 152-153.

22 Scurlock 2014, 153, citing Tsukimoto 1985, 112-114.

23 Scurlock 2014, 153. Cf. the similar examples in López-Ruiz 2013, 78.

24 Translation from Hunger 1992, no. 4 Hunger 1992 5-7.

25 Note the complicated nature of this episode in 5.5.

punishment will come upon Israel, and this disaster will be carried out in Jezreel (Hos 1:4-5).²⁶

This phenomenon, where the places of violent offense and divine vengeance are the same, extends beyond violent crimes in the Hebrew Bible. The capture and conspiracy against Amaziah are both specifically tied to Jerusalem, the very place where he introduced Edomite gods. Similarly, as discussed above, the punishments of both the leader of Tyre and Pharaoh were tied to the geographic center of their respective claims of divinity. So also would Zedekiah's imprisonment come to fruition in the very country he betrayed: Babylon.

Those responsible for these biblical texts, then, were sure to include details that geographically tie offenses and punishments. When viewed in light of the geographical details of the executions carried out by Ashurbanipal and Alexander, and the divine vengeance of Šamaš, the inclusion of the geographic details of Yahweh's punishments are far from coincidental. Instead, these topographical connections come from a wider background that associates a place of offense with its punishment. These customized punishments issued by Yahweh, then, are fitting retributions for the crimes that they answer. They tie the ruler's violations to his punishment, stressing the retributive nature of the consequences.

Personal punishments, however, may be accompanied by other repercussions that affect other people or groups. The king himself may not necessarily suffer from the consequences of his crimes. Instead, he may bring corporate consequences that only

²⁶ N.B., if one follows the LXX's Γαβαων against the MT's *bagib 'at* in 2 Sam 21:6, then the slaughter of Saul's sons would have been associated with a city in which Saul's victims resided.

affect others. These corporate consequences, more than anything, demonstrate the distinctive nature of kingship, for these repercussions cannot be matched by any other individual. Only the king, because of his position before the gods, could lead the gods to bring mass destruction.

The king's special position is highlighted most clearly by those corporate consequences that result in large-scale destruction. The defeat of military forces, invasion, or the plundering of a city, discussed in chapter 11, cannot be enacted by a single individual other than the king. However, large populations may accumulate guilt over a period of time, bringing large-scale divine punishment. For instance, in the Hebrew Bible, the collective guilt of Judah and Israel will result in their destructions according to Amos 2:4-5 and 6-16. Edom (according to Obadiah) and Nineveh (according to Nahum) will face destruction for their consolidated iniquity. The same concept is true in Mesopotamian texts, for the gods enlisted Utu-ḫegal to destroy the Gutium because of their crimes.²⁷ Similarly, Esarhaddon claims that the gods handed over to him those lands who sinned against Aššur.²⁸

These examples demonstrate that the quantitative crimes of a nation can be qualitatively matched by the offenses of a single individual: the king. In these cases, the similar consequences show that a king's crimes were perceived to be equivalent to the mass rebellion of a nation. This imbalance underscores the gods' perception of a king's crimes. It should be emphasized that this imbalance encompassed both the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamian literature, demonstrating that both cultures shared the same

²⁷ Frayne 1993, 284-285 (E2.13.6.4:1-23).

²⁸ RINAP 4, no.1 ii 29.

perspective on the increased magnitude of royal crimes.

As discussed in chapter 11, corporate consequences can entail other forms of punishment apart from military disaster. A ruler's crimes can have cosmic effects, for the gods may punish the king's land with various forms of environmental disasters, such as plague, epidemic, famine, and drought.²⁹ As mentioned above, intangible consequences, such as divine abandonment and wrath, also affect the king's subjects. One can see, then, that royal sacrilege could have political and cosmic ramifications that transcend the king's individual person to affect his land. Though this notion has received some isolated mention in certain studies in various ways,³⁰ the material in chapter 11 demonstrates that it was a crucial principle that was widely held across the ancient Near East, constituting an important way to account for various forms of disaster.

There remains yet one final observation on royal responsibility. Lanfranchi has demonstrated that the royal ideology of the Neo-Assyrian period did not allow a king to be excused for his impermissible actions.³¹ Using the example of the Šubrian king in Esarhaddon's "Letter to God,"³² Lanfranchi showed that the king's excuses did not exonerate him of his royal responsibility for his actions. Though the king sinned against Esarhaddon, he initially tried to blame his country, claiming that it was the guilty party. Then the king admitted his crime, and asked Esarhaddon to spare his life and fine him instead. Finally, the king stated that his officials lied to him, leading him to sin against

29 Again, these penalties demonstrates the qualitative nature of royal offense, at least in the Hebrew Bible. Penalties such as these can be brought on by mass rebellion according to Leviticus 26, Numbers 11, and Deuteronomy 28.

30 E.g., Güterbock 1934; Johnson 1958, 211; Frankfort 1972, 324; von Rad 1962, 325; Evans 1983; Lanfranchi 2003, 102*; Boda 2009 (see 5.2.1, note 68).

31 Lanfranchi, 2003.

32 For a recent edition of this text, see RINAP 4, no. 33.

Aššur. Lanfranchi deduces that this episode demonstrates the following:

The king cannot deflect the consequences of his own political and moral choices towards anyone other than himself. The king has the sole, final and total responsibility for his political behavior. The only correct order of responsibility is that which is prescribed in the Assyrian international treaties and the “Loyalty Oaths”: first the king, then the king's family and entourage, and only at the end the king's people. This order cannot be reversed in order to protect the king from punishment from disloyal behavior. Conversely, if the king makes a political mistake, all other political and social levels of his state will be involved; the consequences of any royal mistake will inevitably be borne by all his subjects. The basic political concept which clearly emerges from this episode of Esarhaddon's “Letter to the God” is that of the full personal responsibility of the king.³³

The Šubrian king is not a chastised ruler, for his sin is answered by Esarhaddon.

However, the principle of royal responsibility in human affairs extends to the divine realm as well, for Lanfranchi demonstrates that this principle appears in the Sin of Sargon text.³⁴ Moreover, Lanfranchi states that the combination of the Letter to the God and the Sin of Sargon shows that both the enemy king and the Assyrian king bear full responsibility for their actions.³⁵ Lanfranchi continues, noting that though this concept is not attested in Assyria before the reign of Esarhaddon, one can detect indirect hints of its presence, particularly in those cases where efforts are made to protect the king from his inevitable mistakes.³⁶

That the king held a special responsibility before the gods because of his position in the ancient Near East has already been discussed. Because this responsibility serves as the background for the chastised ruler, the dispersion of chastised ruler accounts across the ancient world affirms that royal responsibility was a shared perception across the

33 Lanfranchi 2003, 102.*

34 Lanfranchi 2003, 102-103.*

35 Lanfranchi 2003, 103.*

36 Lanfranchi 2003, 103ff.*

ancient Near East.³⁷ Thus, Lanfranchi's observations on the concept of royal responsibility appearing in the Neo-Assyrian period, such as that exhibited in the Sin of Sargon text, were part of a larger ancient near eastern ideological perspective that surfaced on occasion in ancient Near Eastern literature.³⁸

Particularly insightful is Lanfranchi's assertion that the Neo-Assyrian concept of kingship entailed “full responsibility” for the actions of both native and enemy kings. Several cases of chastised rulers support the idea that a ruler cannot be excused for his actions despite the existence of extenuating circumstances in a manner similar to Lanfranchi's example of the Šubrian king.

David's role in the census plague is the paragon of royal responsibility in the Hebrew Bible, for Yahweh, the very deity to whom David is accountable, incited David to commit the crime. Yahweh used David as a means to punish Israel, but this fact did not absolve David in any way. Likewise, David maintained full guilt for this crime in Chronicles, despite the fact that an unnamed “adversary” led him to do so.

It will be recalled that as part of Saul's rejection, Yahweh afflicted him with a deranged mind (“evil spirit”) which served as a mechanism to set in motion Saul's rejection. Saul's deranged mind prodded him to act against David (and Saul's own dynasty). Nevertheless, Saul's actions against David were inexcusable.³⁹ Saul plainly admitted this on the occasion when David confronted him. David said to Saul, “If Yahweh incited (*hěšítakā*) you against me, may he smell an offering. But if the sons of

37 Note that EA 137, a text meant to communicate important information between the king of Byblos and Egypt, directly attests to this shared idea. Rib-Addi uses the chastised ruler concept to explain his absence to the Egyptian king.

38 Though it may have surfaced in the Neo-Assyrian period for the reasons explained by Lanfranchi (Lanfranchi 2003, 104*ff).

39 See 1 Sam 26:10 and note 38 in 5.1.1.

humankind, cursed are they before Yahweh” (1 Sam 26:19). Saul responded to David by saying “I sinned (*hāṭā’ī*)” (1 Sam 26:21), revealing his responsibility for his actions regardless of the circumstances that may have led him to do so. One can confidently state that even if Yahweh incited Saul, Saul would be left no excuse for his actions, just as David was in no way pardoned when Yahweh incited him.⁴⁰

The accounts of Ahab and Solomon in the books of Kings demonstrate the full responsibility of the king as well. Though Solomon's wives led him into his cultic crimes, those wives received no condemnation for their part. Instead, Yahweh directed his anger at Solomon alone (1 Kgs 11:9), even though his wives “inclined his heart” (*hiṭṭū ’et lābābô*) after other gods (1 Kgs 11:4). Similarly, though Jezebel orchestrated and executed Naboth's murder, Yahweh held Ahab guilty of this crime (1 Kgs 21:19).

Turning to David yet again, one can see that the murder of Uriah and the census plague highlight royal responsibility in another way. Joab, David's general, played an instrumental role in both of these crimes. At David's instruction, Joab strategically arrayed his forces in such a way as to cause Uriah to die in combat (2 Sam 14-17), yet Joab received no condemnation from Yahweh through Nathan. Similarly, Joab was the primary leader who carried out the census that brought the plague upon Israel (2 Sam 24:2-9). There is no indication that Joab incurred guilt for his role in this crime, an important detail in light of the fact that Joab knew the census should not have been conducted (2 Sam 24:3).⁴¹

Admittedly, examples of a king's full responsibility before the gods are more

40 Note that the same verb (*śūf*) is used in both texts, and both kings answer “I have sinned” (*hāṭā’ī*).

41 That David's word prevailed against Joab's (2 Sam 24:4) should not be taken as indicator that David forced Joab to fall in line with the king's plan. Joab did not hesitate to resist and defy David's wishes (e.g., 2 Sam 3:24-39; 18:5-15).

difficult to detect in other ancient texts outside of the Hebrew Bible. This is largely an issue of genre in combination with the uniquely critical view of kingship exhibited in the Hebrew Bible. However, one can detect some enlightening examples where such responsibility is implied. For example, though Mēgi, ruler of Ebla, had complied with Tessub's orders to remit debt, he was not excused when his city failed to do likewise. This example is especially intriguing since the relationship is inverted from that seen above: Mēgi, the king, did what was right, but his failure to lead his subjects to do the same resulted in guilt. Another text, the Cuthean Legend, suggests that Narām-Sîn found himself in an impossible situation. The gods had created a devastating force, for no apparent reason, and when this force closed in on Narām-Sîn's territory, he sought omens before attacking.⁴² Why did the gods create this mighty force, seemingly to threaten Narām-Sîn, and then not permit the king to do his duty to defend his territory? Despite these circumstances, Narām-Sîn's behavior was nevertheless impermissible. The Curse of Agade puts forth a similar scenario. Narām-Sîn, in an effort to gain divine favor, showed penance for seven years in order to divert the doom forecasted by Enlil and Inanna's inexplicable disgruntlement (55-94).⁴³ The fact that the deities were displeased for no apparent reason, in conjunction with the negative response to Narām-Sîn's extreme piety, suggests that the gods manipulated the events to Narām-Sîn's disadvantage.

The example of the governor of Uruk in Erra and Išum is not altogether different from David in the census plague. Whereas Yahweh used David to punish Israel, Erra used the governor of Uruk to cause Ištar to destroy Uruk. Though Erra orchestrated the

42 Note the comment from Westenholz: "His pious solicitude to obtain a correct omen is shown in his inquiring of not one but seven gods" (J. Westenholz *Akkade*, 295).

43 Cooper 1983, 30 suggests that Inanna and Enlil's disposition may have simply been arbitrary.

events, the text does not blame the deity in any way. Instead, the text indicts the governor alone, for he is described as “a brazen, unforgiving governor.”⁴⁴

However, what is implied in these Mesopotamian examples above is made explicit in one example from the Advice to a Prince. As discussed in 8.5.1, line 7 of the text states that a ruler may not succumb to a plan of Ea (*šipir Ea*). The king then, would still be responsible even if Ea, a deity known to have tricked gods and humans, deceived him.

These examples demonstrate that the concept of full responsibility was built into kingship ideology across the ancient Near East. This widely attested perspective suggests that under no conditions could an ancient near eastern ruler be excused before the gods by any extenuating circumstances to which one might appeal for his decisions.⁴⁵ This responsibility, along with the king's position, put him in a precarious position, for he was always a misdeed away from becoming a chastised ruler.

In sum, kings were no ordinary individuals, historically and religiously, and so kings could compromise any aspect of kingship because of their responsibility and position. Royal impiety severed the bond between king and god(s), a concept often indicated by a king's personal punishment. The loss of divine support, and worse, the

44 A comparison with Aqhatu's death will illustrate this point. Anat, with El's approval, used YTPN (a Sutean warrior) to kill Aqhatu. However, Anat is credited with the kill (10.1.3.3). Contrary to this, Erra is not credited with the destruction of Uruk, even though he used an instrument, the governor, in the same way Anat used YTPN. Instead, the governor is credited with the destruction by means of his impious behavior.

45 That is, outside of two special conditions. First, a few crimes could be rectified by the king's actions (e.g. Zimri-Lim, see note 26 on p. 278 [chapter 11]). Secondly, several cases in the Hebrew Bible show that Yahweh reserved the right to shift punishments (to various degrees) in the face of repentant kings (e.g., David, Ahab, Hezekiah, Manasseh). This latter condition is a remarkable anomaly, and it is related to the concept espoused in the Hebrew Bible that Yahweh tended to postpone mass destruction (e.g., Gen 15:16; 2 Kgs 17 [especially v.13]; 2 Chr 32:26, 36:15-16). This characteristic is not seen elsewhere, for the appearance of immediate retribution is normal. In some cases the consequences of royal sacrilege may have been telescoped backwards towards the offender (Evans 1983), and so the tendency seen in the Hebrew Bible to craft the text in the opposite manner is a curiosity.

turning of the gods against the king, made the penalties suffered by kings more egregious than if they had been suffered by a commoner. The king, losing the support of the gods and stripped of his status and rank, often suffered personally and could become an enemy of the gods. The gods would subsequently punish the king, be it rejection, imprisonment, affliction, or death. It is a mistake, however, to focus only on the king's personal suffering. The king's dominion, heir(s), dynasty, family, administration, military, and nation were all vulnerable to the repercussions of the king's sacrilege. Put simply, a people's fate was tied to their king's behavior. Personal punishment and corporate consequences of a king's sacrilege both attest to the king's unique position and his responsibility before the gods. Those texts that demonstrate that a king may not be excused for his misdeeds despite extenuating conditions corroborate the responsibility and position of the king.

II. Frequency, plausibility, and genre

The material in this dissertation has demonstrated that the chastised ruler concept is attested in a variety of cultures in the ancient Near East. However, the actions and/or fates of rulers are not often portrayed in such terms, though the focus of this study may give such an impression. In fact, chastised rulers are not altogether common in the ancient Near East, particularly when one considers the total number of texts available. If ancient scribes had a natural inclination to formulate the fates of kings as susceptible to divine punishment, then one would not expect, for example, the preponderance of reported military victories in Mesopotamian royal inscriptions to be simply recorded as

simple facts.⁴⁶ This is especially true since royal inscriptions were composed from a victor's stand point, a perspective that would allow scribes to vilify the defeated king as one chastised by god. From a similar perspective, the relative infrequency with which scribes connect a ruler's deed(s) and fate in an explicit manner is underscored by the distinction in the texts between the numerous merely unfortunate kings on the one hand and the less common overtly sinful king. Consequently, one can conclude that cases of chastised kings were crafted with pointed deliberation. The cases in this study, then, represent the compiler's calculated intentions to tie royal acts of impiety to consequences with the agency of the gods, and as such they represent exceptional cases and not the rule.

These calculated portrayals of chastised kings were, in the most general sense, dictated by the king's general position before the gods in the ancient Near East. Egyptian kingship has already been briefly contrasted with those royal ideologies that permit chastised kings, for Egyptian royal ideology rendered the chastised ruler concept improbable.⁴⁷ In the first place, then, kingship ideology must allow in some fashion for the criticism of its kings.

Undoubtedly, kingship ideology positively affected the general portrayal of rulers in Mesopotamia. Kingship had divine origins in the Mesopotamian perspective, and thus kingship enjoyed an elevated position within the Mesopotamian institutional framework.⁴⁸ It is for this reason that most of the Mesopotamian texts in this study

46 See, e.g., the earliest known version of the annals of Shalmaneser III, where this king's victories over enemy kings are said to have been achieved by Shalmaneser alone (Grayson 1996, A.0.102.1, pp.7-11).

47 See note 1 on p. 203 (chapter 9).

48 According to the Eridu Genesis (Jacobsen 1987, 146) and the Sumerian King list (ETCSL 2.1.1: <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.2.1.1#>), kingship came from heaven. The king is specially created by Belet-ili before the gods gifted him in The Creation of the King (Foster 2005, 495-497). Similarly, the gods institute kingship in Etana (Foster 2005, 533-354).

criticize rulers outside of the writer's native domain, that is, enemy kings. This is not to suggest that Mesopotamian scribes did not portray native kings as chastised rulers. It is clear that they did in the light of texts such as those that deal with the kings of Akkad (e.g., Sargon, Narām-Sîn), kings from the Mari period (e.g., Zimri-Lim, Yasmaḥ-Addu), the Ur III kings (e.g., Šulgi), Shalmaneser V, Sargon II, Nabonidus (Verse Account). However, when scribes utilized the chastised ruler concept in the composition of literature, they most often appropriated it in relation to enemy kings (such as the inscriptions of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal).⁴⁹ They sparingly used the concept in regard to native rulers, for the positive view of kingship limited the applicability of the chastised ruler concept to the most scandalous circumstances.

The Hebrew Bible represents a different perspective on kingship than its Mesopotamian counterpart. Kingship had clear negative connotations in the perspective of much of the Hebrew Bible, for instead of being a divine gift, kingship could instead be considered a rejection of Yahweh's kingship (1 Samuel 8). Moreover, Deuteronomy witnesses to a desire to limit royal power (Deuteronomy 17), and in this regard it should be remembered that, at least from a prophetic perspective, the institution of kingship was

49 It should be kept in mind that even these instances represent exceptional cases. Even in the case of royal inscriptions, the number of chastised rulers is comparably small in relation to sinful and unfortunate kings. For example, cf. the defeat of Kaštiliaš in the Tukultī-Ninurta Epic (11.1.1.1) with Tukultī-Ninurta's royal inscriptions (A.0.78.5 [lines 48ff] and A.0.78.23 [lines 56ff]): “With the support of Aššur, Enlil, and Šamaš, the great gods, my lords, with the help of Ištar, mistress of heaven (and) earth, (who) goes in front of my army, I approached Kaštiliaš, king of the land of Karduniaš, to do battle. I inflicted a defeat on his armies” (translated from the transliterations in Grayson 1987, 244-245, 272-273; cf. also A.0.78.6 [23-14], A.0.78.24 [34-38], and A.0.78.25 [4-6]). Also, cf. the death of Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir in Esarhaddon's inscriptions (10.1.3.1) with Esarhaddon's (supposed) description of himself as “the one who drove away Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir son of Marduk-apla-iddina, who trusted in the king of Elam, but who could not save his life” (translated from RINAP 4 no. 2 ii 24-26. p.30) and “the one who drove away Nabû-zēr-kitti-līšir son of Marduk-apla-iddina” (translated from RINAP 4 no. 77 21, p. 155). Similarly, note *ABC* 1 iii 42: “In Elam the king of Elam seized him and then he killed him with a weapon.”

subordinate to the prophetic office.⁵⁰ In addition to the king's legislated limitations, the Hebrew text does not hide the conviction that the king could experience divine punishment. In Yahweh's promise to David, it is clear that Yahweh would punish David's successor if he would commit iniquities (2 Sam 7:14). Kingship, according to the Hebrew Bible, originated from a revolt against Yahweh, was limited in regards to power, and subject to divine discipline.⁵¹

This negative perspective on kingship in the Hebrew Bible is reflected in its penchant for criticizing native kings: in the DtrH, thirty-two of Israel's and Judah's forty kings are said to do what is evil in the eyes of Yahweh. This pessimistic view of kingship was taken seriously, for it led the biblical writers to criticize their own kings on a level unmatched in Mesopotamia. Consequently, it is not unexpected to find that biblical writers produced a greater proportion of native chastised rulers in Israel's shorter existence than those produced in the significantly longer existence of Mesopotamian civilization.⁵² Moreover, those writing in the biblical tradition appear to have been more prone to reanalyze their traditional material in order to recast kings in the light of divine punishment, a fact attested by the significant increase in the quantity of chastised kings from Samuel-Kings to Chronicles.

Genre is certainly part of this situation, for Mesopotamian texts (such as royal inscriptions) were by and large compiled under the auspices of native kings, and so one

50 See note 11 on p. 38 (chapter 5).

51 In addition, kingship was historically a late arrival in ancient Israel. This issue is complex, and beyond the scope of this study. One should note, however, that the negative perspective on kingship in the Hebrew Bible need not be formed after Israel had emerged as a political entity. It may very well have had antecedents in the ancient world, where those who would later be connected to ancient Israel had contact with kings in the cosmopolitan world of the ancient Near East.

52 These differences are hardly surprising, for they are complemented by idiosyncrasies detected and explained in chapters 6, 9, and 12.

would not expect those kings to permit their own criticism. The genres in the Hebrew Bible (prophetic literature, historical narrative) did not receive the degree of royal censorship that Mesopotamian royal inscriptions procured. However, genres in which native kings could be depicted as divinely chastised did exist in the Mesopotamian literary arsenal.⁵³ In this regard, the most enlightening genre may be the Mesopotamian chronicles. This genre displays dexterity in its presentation of rulers, for it depicted kings in several ways: unfortunate (chapter 2), sinful (chapter 3), and chastised (*ABC 20A*, Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles* no. 48). That one does not find the same quantity of native chastised rulers in Mesopotamian chronicles as one finds in the Hebrew Bible testifies to the fact that kingship ideology was the ultimate factor in permitting such depictions. The ideology espoused in Hebrew texts now at our disposal allowed the chastised ruler concept to be widely applied to native kings, but the Mesopotamian perspective allowed it in only exceptional cases.

The issue of genre relates to another important issue, namely, the simple plausibility of the chastised ruler concept. Many of the texts examined in this study were written with a palpable bias. One may wonder, for example, if an ancient Mesopotamian would have believed the Cyrus Cylinder's portrayal of Nabonidus, especially since this text was written from the victor's perspective. For the same reasons, one might ask to what degree the ancients would have believed the reports of the king's enemies in Esarhaddon's and Ashurbanipal's royal inscriptions. In this regard, one may look to the epistolary genre. This genre is devoid of the *Tendenz* one finds in royal inscriptions and

53 E.g., the Weidner Chronicle (i.e., a fictional letter), the Cuthean Legend of Narām-Sîn, the Curse of Agade, the Sin of Sargon text, the Verse Account, K 1349, Mari letters (ARM 26 84; 26 233; A.1968), and chronicles (*ABC 20A*, Glassner *Mesopotamian Chronicles* no. 48). Note also the Song of Release, the Plague Prayers of Muršili, and EA 137.

propagandistic texts. Letters were written to be clear and serious communication, and thus they contain a religious vernacular that would be shared by both the sender and the recipient. Importantly, they were private communications, for the most part not for public consumption, and so they lack any propagandistic function. That the notion of the chastised ruler was taken very seriously in the ancient mind can be deduced from the very fact that the contents of epistolary communication include examples of chastised rulers, including both native and enemy kings.⁵⁴ The Plague Prayers of Muršili further demonstrate this point, for they attest to Muršili's desperate attempts to make amends for his father's crimes in order to curb the devastating consequences upon his land. Here was a king who feared that royal sacrilege was present in his own household. The Plague Prayers, like the letters, demonstrate that the religious ruler notion was a very real concept in the ancient mind.⁵⁵

III. Conclusion

These data, taken together, demonstrate that the chastised ruler notion was an integral part of the culture in the ancient Near East. Though differences are detectable between various corpora, they all share the elemental features of the chastised ruler: royal offense(s) resulting in consequences that are bridged by the agency of the gods. The juxtaposing of offense and punishment made the chastised ruler concept the apex of

⁵⁴ *ARM* 26 84; *ARM* 1 3; *ARM* 26 185-bis; *ARM* 13 97; *ARM* 26 233; BM 55467; EA 137.

⁵⁵ That the Chronicler recast kings who appear in Samuel-Kings as chastised kings suggests that the notion of the chastised ruler was both believable and meaningful for those in the Chronicler's ancient context. Similarly, prophetic texts that include chastised rulers must have been believable for the recipients in order for them to have an impact.

negative royal depictions, and for this reason its appropriation was calculated and deliberate. Because it was taken seriously, it was not haphazardly deployed in literature, but rather it remained a dormant concept reserved for those cases where circumstances merited its application.

The king's position before the gods lent plausibility to the concept. The king held a precarious position before the gods, a position that was unmatched by any single individual, and so their misdeeds could result in disaster. Ancients perceived that divine discipline for a king's crime(s) could include aggravating factors that degrade the king on a personal level. Moreover, ancients believed that a king's crimes could explain large scale disaster, both political and cosmic. The conviction that the gods would hold the king to the highest standard left royal offenders without any excuse or alibi for their crimes. In the end, the various ancient near eastern cultures in this study, despite their ideological differences, held the common conception that kings were potentates for disaster, and that the fate of humans was, to some degree, dependent on their king.

Finally, this study has drawn attention to a curious phenomenon particular to the biblical corpus: in some cases “good” kings could be chastised rulers. Both Hezekiah and Josiah are considered good kings, yet they are punished by Yahweh in Chronicles. However, most striking is the fact that King David is a chastised ruler in the books of Samuel. It is stunning that David, the model Hebrew king⁵⁶ and a source of salvation,⁵⁷ should be portrayed simultaneously as a chastised ruler. This phenomenon is complemented by the fact that the Hebrew Bible depicts Yahweh as willing to modify

56 E.g., 2 Sam 7:16; 1 Kgs 3:6, 14; 9:4; 11:38; 14:8; 15:3, 5, 11; 2 Kgs 14:3; 18:3; 22:2.

57 E.g., 1 Kgs 11:12, 32, 34, 36; 15:4; 2 Kgs 8:19; 19:34; 20:6.

punishments based on an offending king's repentance – another phenomenon occurring in the Hebrew Bible alone.

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