

Deportations

**An inquest into the mass-movements of conquered peoples
in the Neo-Assyrian Empire.**

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DECLARATION:

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Abstract

The Assyrian textual and iconographic sources, including the Bible, depict the deportations undertaken by the Assyrian kings during the Neo-Assyrian period (900–612 BCE), and their violent nature in moving and displacing the conquered peoples. The Assyrian Royal Inscriptions and the palace wall reliefs point to the uprooting of mass quantities of people from their homeland followed by settling them against their will in new lands. Evidence in other textual sources such as the letters of the Assyrian bureaucracy, known as the Administrative Letters, indicate a different treatment towards ‘deportees’, which appears to have been more friendly, favourable and sympathetic, where the ‘conqueror’ demonstrates consideration and concern for the wellbeing and fate of the deportees. The lenient treatment towards deportees may have been because of a need for the migration of people to places requiring development and enhancement. The deportation policy practised by the Assyrian Empire can also be considered under contemporary definitions of forced migration. A comparison against recent forced migrations and the displacement of people may indicate similar motivations and intentions.

This research will investigate and discuss the imperial motivations which possibly caused the mass-deportations as well as the exchange of population in the Neo-Assyrian Empire. These motivations are likely to have played a significant role behind the rationale for the treatment of the deportees during the different stages of the deportation process.

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List of Abbreviations

ADD	Assyrian Deed Documents
AL	Administrative Letters
ANET	Ancient Near Eastern Texts
ARI	Assyrian Royal Inscriptions
ND	Nimrod Documents
RINAP	Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period
SAA	The State Archives of Assyria
TP III	Tiglath-pileser III
DFM	Derivative Forced Migrations
RFM	Responsive Forced Migrations
PFM	Purposive Forced Migrations

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Chapter One — Introduction

The mass deportations carried by the Neo-Assyrian kings during the 8th century BC are evidenced in the Assyrian texts and in the Bible. Studies conducted on the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions (ARI),¹ the Assyrian iconographic material and the Hebrew Bible detail the destruction and devastation of the conquered cities by Neo-Assyrian kings who claimed responsibility for the forcible mass deportations and the uprooting of people from their homelands. In contrast to the texts in ARI, studies relating to a different genre of Assyrian texts, such as the Administrative Letters (AL),² indicate a moderate and gentle treatment of deportees, particularly during the transportation and the resettlement process.³

In this thesis, I will focus specifically on the deportations endured by the Israelite/Judean people, because the evidence contains shared events between them and the Assyrians. Since textual material and other sources concerning Israelites/Judaeans are limited, it is necessary to rely on evidence and examples of deportations undertaken by the Assyrian Empire against other nations. It is likely that the deportation process was standardised when applied to all conquered peoples.

This thesis will investigate deportations and their correlation to Assyrian expansion, with the aim of detecting the rationale behind the moderate treatment of the deported people. An additional factor is the possibility of identifying whether the Neo-Assyrian deportations were in fact less violent than has previously been assumed.

By analysing the Assyrian textual and iconographic materials, including Biblical literature, my research will investigate the reported moderate behaviour towards the deportees, with a focus on the motivations behind such behaviour. Further, comparison of the Neo-Assyrian mass

¹ The Assyrian Royal Inscriptions (ARI): The transliterations and translations of the texts, mention the achievements of the King during his reign, particularly his campaigns and building activities. They frequently present the king as a victorious and successful leader.

² Assyrian Administration Letters (AL): Administrative, business and legal texts concerning correspondence between the king and his officials. The texts demonstrate everyday aspects of life such as sales, complaints and official corruption. Several of these letters also mention the status and the fate of the captives and deportees.

³ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 1–17.

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movements with contemporary forced migrations may also reveal similarities in the motives behind population exchange and the displacement of people.

The thesis is structured in five chapters. Chapter One consists of the introduction, including the methodology and literature review. Chapter Two covers a comparison between the policies of mass movement and the displacement of peoples in the present time and the Neo-Assyrian period. Chapter Three discusses the motives behind the mass deportation and its correlation to the Assyrian imperial policies. Chapter Four investigates the process of deportation which consists of three stages: prisoners of war, transportation and resettlement. Chapter Five draws all of this together and offers some conclusions.

Historical Background

The Assyrian Empire stretched from its core⁴ towards four distant corners. It was the first empire in the Near East that extended as far as Urartu in the north, the Persian Gulf in the south, Elam to the east, and west in the Mediterranean as far as Egypt. Uncovering the ruins of Ancient Assyria in the mid nineteenth century triggered wider interest in exploring and excavating the region, particularly after the archaeological discoveries in the heartland of the empire (North of Modern Iraq).⁵ Our knowledge of the Assyrian Empire owes much to the work of early historians, archaeologists, and Biblical scholars, the latter of whom saw in Assyriology a source of evidence to prove events recorded in the Bible. Pioneers like Austen Henry Layard, P. E. Botta, Henry C. Rawlinson, George Smith, Hormuzd Rassam and many others,⁶ have become known as ‘the fathers of archaeology,’⁷ and the founders of Assyriology. This thesis belongs to the discipline of Assyriology, which is an important auxiliary discipline to many fields of study. For example, Biblical studies have for many decades heavily depended on the huge and

⁴ The area between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers at the northern part of modern Iraq.

⁵ Chavalas, *Mesopotamia and the Bible*, 21–23.

⁶ Other pioneers are to be acknowledged for devoting their work and effort in the study of Ancient Assyria, such as Ernest de Sarzec, Friedrich Grotefend, Edward Hincks, les Oppert and John Henry Haynes. For more concerning the work of such explorers and decipherers see ‘The civilisation of Babylonia and Assyria’ by Morris Jastrow, 1915.

⁷ Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria*.

constantly growing cuneiform source material that is at the centre of the discipline of Assyriology.

The deciphering and interpretation the ancient Assyrian texts, primarily the ARI and AL, and the study of iconographic material,⁸ has resulted in a better understanding of these sources; the same applied to their counterpart, the Hebrew bible. Earlier scholars considered the ARI more reliable than other texts since they were most likely inscribed at a time closer to the events,⁹ however other historians have viewed them as instruments of imperial propaganda.¹⁰ These works provide a significant body of scholarly literature, which is essential to study and research of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and its policies of dominion and expansion the mass deportation phenomenon and its correlation to imperial growth.¹¹

During the Neo-Assyrian Period (900–612 BCE), the Assyrian Empire became powerful by expanding and controlling the Ancient Near East (see map 1). Expanding the borders was crucial for the growing state in order to strengthen the empire against enemies and invaders. These external forces created chaos that was in opposition to peace and order that pleased *Aššur*.¹² The Assyrian land, '*Mat Aššur*', was the property of god *Aššur*,¹³ therefore working, maintaining and protecting it became the duty of the king and all his subjects.¹⁴

The expansion of Assyria was the result of the implementation of various policies which accelerated the growth and the advancement of the empire. These imperial policies covered defence, military, boarder expansion, building construction, land, agriculture and economic exploration.¹⁵ Modern scholarship is in agreement in considering that economic and security

⁸ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 6–17.

⁹ Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib*.

¹⁰ Laato, 'Assyrian Propaganda and the Falsification of History in the Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib'.

¹¹ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*; Younger et al., 'Give Us Our Daily Bread: Everyday Life for the Israelite Deportees'; Gallagher, 'Assyrian Deportation Propaganda'; Na'aman and Zadok, 'Assyrian Deportations to the Province of Samerina in the Light of Two Cuneiform Tablets from Tel Hadid'; Younger, 'The Deportations of the Israelites'; Becking, *The Fall of Samaria*; Postgate, 'The Land of Assur and the Yoke of Assur'.

¹² Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire*, 169.

¹³ Assur, the main and national God of the Assyrian empire.

¹⁴ Bedford, 'The Neo-Assyrian Empire', 47–50.

¹⁵ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 48–49.

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pressures as well as the ambitious aspirations of the Assyrian kings are most likely the key factors which motivated the expansion and growth of the Assyrian Empire.¹⁶ Imperial policies and other matters necessary for the advancement and prosperity of the empire necessarily required a working force in order to be achieved. Assyria, with its small population, was unable to fulfil this requirement. Therefore, to accomplish its goals, the empire is likely to have created the deportation policy that brought people from other places and settled them throughout the empire.¹⁷

Methodology and Approach

The data investigated in this thesis will involve the ARI, the AL and the Assyrian reliefs from the palace walls, in addition to passages from the Hebrew Bible which offer a counterpart to the investigated Assyrian accounts. The ARI used are those attributed to the Neo-Assyrian kings Tiglath-pileser III (TP III, 744–727),¹⁸ Sargon II (722–705 BC),¹⁹ and Sennacherib (704–681).²⁰ Textual sources do contain the occurrence of mass deportations before TP III, however, this research begins with TP III, because mass deportations became more regular and systematic from his reign onwards.²¹

Due to the limited scope of this thesis, the Assyrian primary sources used are existing transliterations and translations prepared by historians and reputable scholars such as: The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period (RINAP), the Ancient Near Eastern Texts (ANET) and the State Archives of Assyria (SAA). In addition, I rely on the translations of primary sources included in the body of scholarly literature, such as those in the work of Bustenay Oded, K. Lawson Younger, Pamela Barmash, Mordechai Cogan, Yifat Thareani and many others. Historical inquiry can be challenging because of limitations in the primary

¹⁶ Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire*, 2; Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*.

¹⁷ Nadali, 'The Impact of War on Civilians in the Neo-Assyrian Period', 105.

¹⁸ Tadmor, Yamada, and Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria*, RINAP.

¹⁹ Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, Third edition with supplement: 294–301.

²⁰ Grayson and Novotny, *The royal inscriptions of Sennacherib, king of Assyria (704–681 BC)*, RINAP.

²¹ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 2.

sources. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the limited sources by means of a variety of research methods in order to gain more insight and yield further results. This investigation focuses on the texts concerning Assyrian military campaigns, particularly the ones against the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah. I analyse the textual material in the discussion below, aiming to determine the fate of the deportees, who are commonly referred to as captives, peoples, prisoners, hostages and deportees.

Different cultures interpret the reality and truth of their historical situation in differing ways.²² It is important, therefore, to compare such differences in cultures. In this way, we can explain the ways in which people understood and interpreted the phenomenon of deportation, according to their individual social and religious ideologies and beliefs.

The investigation focuses on two aspects. The first is the deportations and their correlation to Assyrian imperial expansion and dominion policies. The second is the relationship between the conqueror and the conquered. The ARI are necessary for investigating the first aspect of the research, while analysis of the AL will help with the second aspect. The AL involve certain correspondence between the king and his officials, by which I can construct what most likely took place during the transportation of the deportees. Investigation of legal letters, sale deeds and business letters from the Assyrian bureaucracy is important in distinguishing the status and situation of the deportees as settlers. During the investigation, I also compare the Neo-Assyrian texts to modern definitions of forced migration, with the aim of detecting the rationales behind the ancient mass deportations and justifications given for the mass exchange and displacement of peoples.

John Ahn investigates the exile movements and their relationship to economic developments during the Babylonian era. He applies the features of contemporary immigration policies about the displacement and resettlement of people to the processes undertaken by the Babylonians in

²² McKee, *Textual Analysis*, 19–28.

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the 6th century BC. In his argument, he suggests that the Babylonians would have most likely practised similar deportation and displacement processes towards the Judean exiles.²³ Further, according to Peter Bedford, 'Assyria bequeathed modes of imperial organisation and legitimation to the ensuing Neo-Babylonian, Achaemenid and Persian Empires.'²⁴ Assyria is most likely have practised processes similar to those Babylon applied towards its deportees, such as: living in communities, running businesses and owning properties. If this can be shown through an investigation of the phenomenon of deportation and deportees it might reveal that the Assyrian movement of peoples was less violent than has previously been considered.

Literature review

Mass deportations in the Neo-Assyrian Empire and its correlation with widespread imperial expansion is a substantial area of scholarly interest and a point of critical discussion and criticism. The phenomenon of deportation and deportees has intrigued a large number of scholars who have investigated the deportation policy through analysis of Assyrian textual and iconographic materials.²⁵ Bustenay Oded conducts a comprehensive study concerning deportations and deportees, where he represents a complete picture of this well-known feature of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.²⁶ In his monograph *Mass deportations and deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, Oded presents and examines evidence which points to the status, fate and condition of the deportees. Despite the age of this monograph, Oded's work still contributes to the work of more modern scholars investigating the topic of deportations and deportees. For example, his influence is obvious in the scholarly tribute volume *Homeland and the Exile*.²⁷ This work contains thirty original contributions dealing with a wide range of topics that focus

²³ Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations*, 46.

²⁴ Bedford, 'The Neo-Assyrian Empire', 31.

²⁵ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*; Younger, 'The Deportations of the Israelites'; Gallagher, 'Assyrian Deportation Propaganda'; Na'aman and Zadok, 'Assyrian Deportations to the Province of Samerina in the Light of Two Cuneiform Tablets from Tel Hadid'; Barmash, 'At the Nexus of History and Memory: The Ten Lost Tribes'; Fales, 'Guerre et Paix En Assyria. Religion et Imperialism'; Dimant et al., 'Tobit in Galilee'; Becking, *The Fall of Samaria*; Postgate, 'The Land of Assur and the Yoke of Assur'; Younger et al., 'Give Us Our Daily Bread: Everyday Life for the Israelite Deportees'.

²⁶ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, preface.

²⁷ Galil, Geller, and Millard, *Homeland and Exile*.

on the Assyrian Empire, as well as the Hebrew Bible and other cultural content. Oded argues that while previous scholarship commonly discusses the deportation process as a typical policy of the Assyrian Empire it neglects to deal with the deportees and their status during the progression. In response to this he subjects the deportees to a comprehensive and systematic study in which he analyses their status and eventual fate.²⁸

Davide Nadali, similarly argues that the ancient sources parallel to contemporary studies on warfare also neglect to mention the role of civilians in warzones and their status as deportees.²⁹ He notes that the present studies commonly concentrate on the military aspect of the Assyrian sources ignoring the aftermath of war on civilians.³⁰ However, he does acknowledge the work of Ignace Gelb 1973;³¹ Oded 1979;³² Marco De Odorico 1995;³³ and Frederick Mario Fales 2006,³⁴ 2010,³⁵ with regard to their contribution towards the investigation of the position of civilians in warzones.³⁶

I agree with both Oded and Nadali when they argue that scholarly investigations have previously concentrated more on the ARI which primarily focus on warfare and the achievements of the kings. However, there are also scholars such as Ran Zadok,³⁷ Stephanie Dalley,³⁸ Simo Parpola,³⁹ and K. Lawson Younger,⁴⁰ who provide a more extensive treatment of civilians and their status in the post deported communities through examining of the AL.

²⁸ Ibid, 1.

²⁹ Nadali, 'The Impact of War on Civilians in the Neo-Assyrian Period', 101–2.

³⁰ Ibid., 101.

³¹ Ignace J. Gelb, 'Prisoners of War in Early Mesopotamia', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 32, no. 1/2 (1973): 70–98.

³² Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*.

³³ Odorico, *The Use of Numbers and Quantifications in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*.

³⁴ Fales, 'Cibare i Deportati: Una Lettera Al Re Assiro Tiglath-Pileser III Tra Orien-Te e Occidente. Studi in Onore Di Elena Di Filippo Balestrazzi.'

³⁵ Fales, 'Guerre et Paix En Assyria. Religion et Imperialism'.

³⁶ Nadali, 'The Impact of War on Civilians in the Neo-Assyrian Period', 101.

³⁷ Zadok, 'Israelites and Judeans in the Neo-Assyrian Documentation (732–602 B.C.E.): An Overview of the Sources and a Socio-Historical Assessment'; Zadok, 'Notes on the Early History of the Israelites and Judeans in Mesopotamia'.

³⁸ Dalley, 'Foreign Chariotry and Cavalry in the Armies of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II'; Dalley, 'Recent Evidence from Assyrian Sources for Judean History from Uzziah to Manasseh'.

³⁹ Parpola, 'Neo-Assyrian Treaties from the Royal Archives of Nineveh'; Parpola and Fuchs, *The Correspondence of Sargon II*.

⁴⁰ Younger, 'The Deportations of the Israelites'; Younger et al., 'Give Us Our Daily Bread: Everyday Life for the Israelite Deportees'.

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Other scholarship which has shown an interest in migrations in the ancient Near East includes Robert R. Stieglitz's discussion of the voluntary and involuntary migrations which took place in the region over a period of 3000 years. He brands the Neo-Assyrian deportations as 'involuntary migrations which incorporated the forcible removal of peoples'.⁴¹ Like Oded, Stieglitz draws a parallel between the deportation policy and the economic requirements of the Assyrian Empire.⁴² Similarly, Ahn also defines forced migration as 'an economic stimulus primarily for the host nation, while in the meantime it may give better opportunities to those forced into migration.' Ahn also compares past and present migration movements and their relationship to economic development, as he relates contemporary migration policies to those in place during the Babylonian era.⁴³

By analysing several Assyrian texts which deal with the Assyrian warfare and its aftermath, Oded argues that differing texts can offer different interpretations and assumptions including the suggestion in some cases that deportation may not have happened.⁴⁴ For example, he disagrees with J. V. Kinnier Wilson who suggests that the foreigners mentioned in the Nimrud wine list, and who received wine rations from the royal treasury, could have been deportees from various countries. In his argument, Oded suggests that the list cannot be regarded as an explicated evidence of deportations.⁴⁵ The foreigners depicted in the Assyrian documentation may therefore not be all deportees, but rather, according to Carlo Zaccagnini, most likely people who travelled for work across the borders of the empire.⁴⁶

Scholarship commonly links deportation to Assyrian imperialism as a topic of interest to scholars and researchers studying the expansion of the Assyrian Empire. Assyrian imperialism as Oded states 'may indeed have been shaped out of fear from the outside powers'.⁴⁷ However,

⁴¹ Stieglitz, 'Migrations in the Ancient Near East (3500–500 B.C.)', 269.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations*, 46.

⁴⁴ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 4.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁶ Zaccagnini, 'Patterns of Mobility among Ancient near Eastern Craftsmen'.

⁴⁷ Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire: Justifications for War in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, 57–59.

if fear created imperialism then does this necessarily brand Assyria with cruelty? Earlier scholarship usually identifies Assyria with cruelty, a policy of frightfulness and an ideology of terror.⁴⁸ Younger identifies this character branding of Assyria as linked to interpretation of ARI and reliefs by earlier scholars such as A. T. Olmstead 1918; 1921; A. Leo Oppenheim 1964 and H.W.F. Saggs 1963.⁴⁹ Meanwhile, he notes that modern scholars like Andreas Fuchs 2009,⁵⁰ and F. M. Fales 2008a⁵¹ and 2010⁵² question the cruelty of the Assyrian Empire. This is especially after recent studies of new resources such as the Administrative Letters of the Assyrian bureaucracy, which demonstrate a lenient and sympathetic treatment, especially towards the deportees. Younger argues that one should not just rely on royal documents and reliefs when studying the Assyrian imperial policies since they may in fact represent propaganda of power and dominion. Younger states that ‘there is a danger of falling victims to their (the Assyrian) propaganda’.⁵³ Therefore, he suggests that new investigations and studies into the Assyrian royal and non-royal accounts are necessary, to reveal the actual motivations and messages behind the imperial policies practised.⁵⁴ William Gallagher offers a similar opinion; he argues that the evidence in SAA V:210 indicates a passive treatment practised towards the deportees. In the letter SAA V:210, the deportees received plots of land to build their houses, cultivate their fields and prosper.⁵⁵

According to Gallagher, agriculture was essential to the establishment of the economic life of Assyria. Therefore, the Assyrian rulers assigned many deportees to work in agriculture.⁵⁶ These deportees obtained fields and settled as the king’s tenants, and the land eventually became their heritage and passed from father to son.⁵⁷ This giving fields to deportees is evidence of surplus

⁴⁸ Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria*, 2; Holloway, *Aššur Is King! Aššur Is King!*, 42.

⁴⁹ Younger, ‘Assyrian Economic Impact on the Southern Levant in the Light of Recent Studies’, 179.

⁵⁰ Fuchs, ‘Waren Die Assyryer Grausam?’

⁵¹ Fales, ‘On Pax Assyriaca in the 8th–7th Centuries BC and Its Implications. ‘Isaiah’s Vision of Peace in Biblical and Modern International Relations’.

⁵² Fales, ‘Guerre et Paix En Assyria. Religion et Imperialism’.

⁵³ Younger, ‘Assyrian Economic Impact on the Southern Levant in the Light of Recent Studies’, 181.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁵⁵ Gallagher, ‘Assyrian Deportation Propaganda’, 58–64.

⁵⁶ Oded, ‘Observations on the Israelite/Judaeon Exiles’, 205.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 206.

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land and a small native Assyrian population. Gershon Galil argues that ND2734 may indicate a dearth of workers and surplus of land, leading to abandoned and uncultivated fields.⁵⁸ Galil's assumption corresponds to Oded's argument concerning the significance of population increase in relation to the growth and expansion of the empire. Oded suggests that the empire required the labour force to fulfil its civil, military and religious needs such as working the land, conscription for the army, serving in the temples, and building and constructing the capital cities of the empire.⁵⁹ The necessity for these additional imperial administrative and military workforces is likely to have been what triggered the compulsion towards a deportation policy.

The deportations, according to Oded, were selective in nature, and the kings seemed to have selected the elites and skilled people of the cities.⁶⁰ For example, ND 2497 indicates the Assyrian requirement for such skilled people.⁶¹ Oded notes that it is most likely that the elites were members of the royal family and officials, while the skilled people were artisans, scholars, experts and businessmen.⁶² Younger similarly states that evidence in the administration letters points to the deployment of almost all kinds of skills in administration and that the Assyrians filtered people according to their skills. He suggests that two types of deportees existed, the ones who received favourite treatment such as the military personnel, soldiers, priests, administrative officials and skilled labourers, and other less fortunate deportees who received harsher treatment as agricultural workers, forced labourers and people in front line border towns and forts.⁶³

The ARI of Sargon II demonstrate that exiles from Israel and Judah were indeed part of the Assyrian army. According to Dalley, some exiles formed a special auxiliary unit.⁶⁴ In this

⁵⁸ Galil, 'Appropriation of Land by Officials in the Neo-Assyrian Period', in *Homeland and Exile*, 99.

⁵⁹ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 54.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶¹ Oded, 'Observations on Methods of Assyrian Rule in Transjordan after the Palestinian Campaign of Tiglath-Pileser III', 206.

⁶² Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 99–108.

⁶³ Younger et al., 'Give Us Our Daily Bread: Everyday Life for the Israelite Deportees', 272.

⁶⁴ Dalley, 'Foreign Chariotry and Cavalry in the Armies of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II', 31–36 The great sumery inscription (Prunkinchrift).

regard, Younger states that the onomastic evidence in the Assyrian administrative texts shows that at least one-fifth of Sargon's army bore western Semitic names; these were most likely deportees recruited in the military.⁶⁵

It is hard to distinguish the identity of the deportees, especially those of the second generation who were born in the diaspora and who most likely adopted Akkadian names.⁶⁶ According to Zadok, the Assyrian sources indicate that some Israelites and Judean individuals might have held high status in the Assyrian administration system, even as high as a governor of a city.⁶⁷ He suggest that Rab-shaqeh of Jerusalem in the Biblical accounts (2 Kgs. 18; Isa. 36 and 2 Chr. 32) could be of Judahite or Israelite origin.⁶⁸ Contrary to Zadok, Gary Beckman argues that the Israelite deportees carried to Assyria were treated harshly and forced into the hard labour of constructing the royal cities where they gradually shed their culture and assimilated among the locals.⁶⁹ Relevant to Beckman, John Malcolm Russel describes the working men, depicted in Sennacherib's palace reliefs (Figure. 2), as engaging in hard labour during the construction of a royal palace and moving a colossal stone bull. The workers here are assumed to be Judean deportees as indicated by their clothing. They resemble the deportees in the Lachish reliefs as both groups wear similar headdresses with ear flaps (Figure. 4).⁷⁰ The men in figure 2 are indeed depicted as conducting the hard work of pulling ropes and pushing massive stones.⁷¹ Despite all the machine-driven facilities today, this type of labour is still classified as hard labour. Therefore, the massive physical workforce would have been necessary to achieve such work in the ancient times.

⁶⁵ Younger, 'The Deportations of the Israelites', 220

⁶⁶ Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora*, 18.

⁶⁷ Zadok, 'Israelites and Judeans in the Neo-Assyrian Documentation (732–602 B.C.E.): An Overview of the Sources and a Socio-Historical Assessment', 163.

⁶⁸ Zadok, 'Notes on the Early History of the Israelites and Judeans in Mesopotamia', 392.

⁶⁹ Beckman, 'Foreigners in the Ancient Near East', 210.

⁷⁰ Russell, *Sennacherib's Palace without Rival: A Programmatic Study of Texts and Images in a Late Assyrian Palace.*, 183–84.

⁷¹ Ibid., 566.

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Deportation and exile are commonly identified as a devastating phenomenon where people lose their identity and freedom. Nevertheless, H.W.F. Saggs describes mass deportations as an important phenomenon that united nations and communities from being isolated and racially segregated.⁷² Younger comments that the Assyrian deportations were not ‘death marches’, but instead well-planned exercises that required filtration of people before deportation.⁷³

Oded argues that the deportees in Assyria proper, the provinces and vassal states most likely enjoyed the privileges of other Assyrian citizens. They appear to be ‘freemen’ who ‘come and go’ and ‘buy and sell properties’ as they please.⁷⁴ Likewise, Parpola describes the status of an Assyrian citizen who had the obligation of paying taxes and homage to the king and god of Assyria in return for the privilege of security and prosperity.⁷⁵

Assyria grew from a state to an empire through expanding and controlling the polities which fell in the path of its expansion. ‘Imperialism’ is a modern term commonly used among scholars when identifying and describing the expansion strategies practised by Assyria.⁷⁶ George Lichtheim defines imperialism as ‘the relationship of a hegemonic state, to peoples or nations under its control’.⁷⁷ Oded further defines it as a term that ‘describes the Assyrian policies of expansion, domination and the constant shift of wealth from the peripheries to the centre’.⁷⁸

Scholars agree that the expansion of the borders created vassal or client kingdoms who swore loyalty to the king and Assyria.⁷⁹ Consequently, textual evidence in the ARI shows that rebelling and breaking such treaties pushed Assyria towards waging war and attacking the rebellious. According to Oded, Assyria justified and legitimatised such attacks as a means of perusing

⁷² Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria*.

⁷³ Younger, ‘Assyrian Economic Impact on the Southern Levant in the Light of Recent Studies’, 188.

⁷⁴ Oded, ‘Observations on the Israelite/Judaean Exiles’, 208.

⁷⁵ Parpola, ‘National and Ethnic Identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire and Assyrian Identity in Post-Empire Times’, 14.

⁷⁶ Aberbach, ‘The Iron Age, Imperialism, and the Prophets’, 134.

⁷⁷ Lichtheim, *Imperialism*, 5.

⁷⁸ Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire*, 163–66.

⁷⁹ Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 97–103; Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire*, 87; Otzen, ‘Israel under the Assyrians’, 257.

imperialist objectives.⁸⁰ Deportations were therefore a just approach in terms of quelling rebellion which, according to the Assyrian ideology, was chaotic and necessarily had to be crushed in order to bring peace and order to the land of Assur.⁸¹

The Assyrian religion and the imposition of the worship of Assur is also a matter of interest to scholars. Oded argues that no information or evidence attests that people in the vassal states or even the deportees lived in conditions of oppression or were subject to religious pressure.⁸² Further, Mordechai Cogan states that ‘nowhere in the scripture, is the adoption of the Assyrian cult or the worship of Assur ever mentioned’.⁸³ However, Holloway notes, in relation to Cogan’s argument, that ‘either the Assyrian sources did not reveal enough information to reconstruct their foreign religious policy in reliable detail, or their foreign religious policy was sufficiently flexible that it cannot be with any certainty extrapolated since the sources are silent’.⁸⁴ According to Holloway, Assyria merely neglected to record the destruction of the temples and the imposition of the worship of Assur, as the issue would most likely have had no significance to the Assyrian king.

Seymour Gitin agrees with Cogan on the issue of non-intervention in the religious affairs of the vassal state. Gitin argues that the inscription recorded on a pottery sherd discovered in Ekron, which reads ‘for Ba’al and For Padi’ is possibly evidence for the non-intervention policy. He comments that the mentioning of Ba’al, a foreign god, and Padi, a vassal king, points to the independence that the vassal states enjoyed.⁸⁵ This could indicate freedom of worshiping by the people whether they were in vassal states, and probably in Assyria proper.

Foreign relations, specifically trade, was fundamental to the economic development of the empire. Younger argues that ‘whatever the Assyrian’s plan was toward the regions to the west

⁸⁰ Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire*, 178.

⁸¹ Bedford, ‘The Neo-Assyrian Empire’, 48; Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire*, 102–3.

⁸² Oded, ‘Observations on the Israelite/Judaean Exiles’, 209.

⁸³ Cogan, ‘Judah under Assyrian Hegemony: A Reexamination of Imperialism and Religion’, 411.

⁸⁴ Holloway, *Aššur Is King! Aššur Is King!*, 58.

⁸⁵ Gitin and Cogan, ‘A New Type of Dedicatory Inscription from Ekron’, 201.

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Egypt probably played an important role in it'.⁸⁶ He suggests that the clear path required by the Assyrian kings was essential for trade between the Mediterranean coast and Egypt. Access to these areas played a vital role in the economy of the empire and was essential for trade routes not to be encumbered or blocked in any way. This may have contributed to the deportation of people from strategic areas, such as the northern kingdom (Israel). Moving people from the northern kingdom may thus have served two goals, one to fill the shortage in the workforce and two to clear the trade path between Assyria and Egypt.⁸⁷

Modern scholars studying Assyrian imperialism, policies of expansion and dominion cannot avoid mentioning the deportation carried out by the Assyrians, particularly when they come to examine the archaeological evidence of human settlements. Yifat Thareani notes that since the Assyrian heartland had no coastal access, the expansion toward the Mediterranean coast would have been vital for the prosperity of the empire. The need to control the Mediterranean coast would have led to deportations from and to the region.⁸⁸ She states that 'direct archaeological evidence, for the presence of deportees in Palestine's coastal cities is limited.' She also states that 'it is clear that a certain policy of deportations was practiced by the Assyrians in the northern and central coastal plains. However, the fact that most sites continued to exist during the Neo-Assyrian period suggested that these deportations were limited in scope.'⁸⁹ Ben Shlomo also discusses the Assyrian presence in the architecture elements and pottery discovered in the cities of the Levant, such as Tel Jemmeh. He contradicts Courtois and Doray⁹⁰ and argues that, despite the Assyrian presence in the imitated Assyrian pottery ware, there is no evidence to prove that Assyria ware could have been produced by potters deported from Assyria under the two-way deportation policy. Therefore, he suggests that such ware most likely was

⁸⁶ Younger, 'The Deportations of the Israelites', 225.

⁸⁷ Aberbach, 'The Iron Age, Imperialism, and the Prophets', 134–36.

⁸⁸ Thareani, 'The Empire and the 'Upper Sea': Assyrian Control Strategies along the Southern Levantine Coast', 80–87.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 88.

⁹⁰ Courtois and Doray, 'Technologie et Céramiques Levantines Au Temps de La Domination Assyrienne', 129,131,135.

made by the locals for Assyrian elites.⁹¹ Bradley Parker also identifies the Assyrian presence and control of the northern frontiers of the upper Tigris river valley, through archaeological excavation, and suggests that according to Assyrian texts, people were deported and resettled in such a fertile region.⁹² He states that the Assyrian Empire ‘was an expansionist state that applied variety degrees of power over conquered lands’.⁹³ Bedford further emphasises the ideology of the Assyrian imperialism, which correlates with the imperial expansion.⁹⁴ He states that deportations were excuses for such ideology, which gave the subjugated people the right to independence when following the Assyria imperial ideology.⁹⁵ T. J. Wilkinson, similarly shows the significance of the deportees for agriculture, which seemed the backbone of the empire.⁹⁶

With the unveiling of new evidence and further research into the non-royal Assyrian accounts, current scholarship appears to be interested in re-examining and reinterpreting the Assyrian imperial ideology and policies of dominion and control. Like the scholars discussed above, in my investigation concerning the mass movement of the conquered peoples, I too will examine the evidence to come to new interpretation of the rationale behind the treatment of deportees.

⁹¹ Shlomo, ‘Tell Jemmeh, Philistia and the Neo-Assyrian Empire during the Late Iron Age’, 79.

⁹² Parker, *The Mechanics of Empire: The Northern Frontier of Assyria as a Case Study in Imperial Dynamics*, 457.

⁹³ Parker, ‘Geographies of Power: Territoriality and Empire during the Mesopotamian Iron Age’, 126–38.

⁹⁴ Bedford, ‘The Neo-Assyrian Empire’, 47–58.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁹⁶ Wilkinson et al., ‘Landscape and Settlement in the Neo-Assyrian Empire’, 27–32.

Chapter Two — The Categorisation of Forced Migrations

The mass movements of people and population exchanges carried out by the Neo-Assyrian kings in the eight century BC are considered to be ‘forced migrations’. Significantly, the phenomenon of migration and displacement of people is an issue that still troubles the world today.

In this chapter I will observe the forced movements of ancient populations which occurred under the Neo-Assyrian Empire, in particular, the ones inflicted the people of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. I will also aim to compare elements of the ancient forced movements to current, modern forced movements of people around the world.

Migrations come in two types. The first are voluntary movements which occur when people move out of their place of origin for personal reasons. Such desires could arise from certain circumstances like a harsh environment in the original place, catastrophes, economic hardship, or merely following the pattern of other migrants.¹ Involuntary movements are those which occur due to specific policies and the requirements of empires and governments.² Tyranny, military control and economic oppression commonly play significant roles in the involuntary movement of peoples which results in refugee flows, asylum seekers, internal displacement and development-induced displacements.³

Involuntary mass movements and population transfer were commonly thought to be a geopolitical policy practised by ancient empires with the aim of controlling and punishing the subjugated people. Due to the large corpus of Assyrian textual and iconographic material, Assyria consistently takes the leading role when it comes to discussing the issue of mass

¹ Petersen, ‘A General Typology of Migration’, 258–61.

² Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations*; Castles, ‘Towards a Sociology of Forced Migration and Social Transformation’; Stieglitz, ‘Migrations in the Ancient Near East (3500–500 B.C.)’.

³ Castles, ‘Towards a Sociology of Forced Migration and Social Transformation’, 13.

movements and deportations. Besides the Assyrian accounts, the Hebrew Bible also demonstrates the aggressive deportations and exile practices of the Assyrian Empire.

The mass movement of peoples and population exchange are more evident from the reign of TP III onwards, and they become a norm, practised by succeeding governments such as the Babylonian, Persian and the Roman empires. The phenomenon of population exchange has continued to occur throughout the centuries between then and now, together with two world wars and current conflicts around the world.⁴

Contemporary definitions of forced migrations classify involuntary population movement into three categories:⁵

- Derivative Forced Migrations (DFM)
- Responsive Forced Migrations (RFM)
- Purposive Forced Migrations (PFM).

1. Derivative Forced Migrations (DFM)

These are movements that occur due to geographical and cartographical rearrangements of regions with the aim of control and dominion.⁶ For example, after World War I (WWI) 1914–1915, many regions in the world saw the creation of new states, even though a physical movement of population may not have actually taken place. According to Ahn, Europe after WWI witnessed the creation of thirteen new states, which remapped the region and created new minorities of people.⁷ The victorious powers in WWI (Great Britain, France, Italy and others) agreed on partitioning the Ottoman Empire into new countries, creating new borders and states without rising any humanitarian concern for the existing nations and nationalities.⁸

⁴ Schechla, 'Ideological Roots of Population Transfer', 240–50.

⁵ Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations*, 40–41 See footnote 3. (Ahn describes the categories of forced migration as per the definitions of Alan James.)

⁶ Ibid., 40–41; Held et al., 'Global Transformations', 9–10.

⁷ Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations*, 41.

⁸ Helmreich, *From Paris to Sèvres*, 10–22.

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Examples from Assyrian accounts show that Assyria increased its imperial power by annexing foreign lands to its territory, TP III claims that ‘I increased the territory of Assyria by taking hold of (foreign) land (and) added countless people to its population. I constantly shepherd them in safe pastures’.⁹ This example most likely points to the action of increasing population not by movement and displacement of people but rather by annexing their countries to Assyria and counting them as Assyrians. These people would thereby have been granted a new nationality much like the situation that occurred after WWI.

Deportations of the Israelites by TP III can be considered a DFM since a large district was most likely remapped. Evidence shows that TP III claimed the demolition and evacuation of Bit-Ḥumrie when he states: ‘.... I utterly demolished...] of sixteen dis[tricts of the land Bit-Ḥumria (Israel). I carried off (to Assyria)].... Capti[ves from (5) 226 captives from..., captives from] captives [from ...], 400 [(and) captives from...], 656 cap[tives from] the city Sa.....], (altogether) 13,520 [people,...], with their belongings’.¹⁰ Here, it is obvious that an area which previously consisted of sixteen districts vanished from what would have been the map of the region. The archaeological excavations around the northern kingdom of Israel specify that the area underwent devastation and demographic change which could be related to the campaign of TP III. No evidence indicates the repopulation of the districts of Bit-Ḥumrie (Israel), and the excavation of several sites in the area shows total desertion after the Assyrian conquest.¹¹ TP III’s inscription mentions the deportation of 13,500 people, assumed to be carried off to Assyria. The fate of these people is unknown, however, the Biblical account concerning the same event mentions that some may have resettled in areas within Syria, around the Khabor River: ‘TP took the Reubenites, the Gadites and half of Manasseh into Exile (Halah, Habour, Hara and river of Gozan)’, (1 Chron. 5:26). Resettlement of the deported Israelites must have resulted in

⁹ Tadmor, Yamada, and Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria*, RINAP, 86, Text 35, line ii15’b–17’.

¹⁰ Ibid., 61, Text 21, line 1’–11’.

¹¹ Broshi and Finkelstein, ‘The Population of Palestine in Iron Age II’, 55.

the creation of new areas with diverse populations of settlers who became subjects of the Assyrian Empire.¹²

TP III describes the process by which he established and repaired the conquered lands, whose population he deported: 'I [re]organised those cities in their entirety (and) settled therein the people of (foreign) lands conquered by me. [I placed] a eunuch [of mine as provincial governor over them] (and thereby) I annexed those (areas) [to] Assyria'.¹³ The inscription indicates that TP III may have practised the two-way deportation system only in some cases when he repopulated conquered areas with new settlers. Concerning the northern kingdom, there is no evidence to demonstrate that TP III repopulated the district after devastating it, which most likely shows his intention in changing the topography and demography of the area.¹⁴ The above argument demonstrates that TP III probably preferred to leave the land around Samaria almost vacant, with a smaller population, in order to clear the trade routes and to keep them uncrowded.

Another inscription of TP III may explain the reason for not re-populating Bit-Ḥumrie, and points to the importance of this area between Assyria and Egypt: 'I appointed idibi'ilu as the ga[tekeeper]er facing [Egypt]t'.¹⁵ This line of the inscription may indicate the significance of the Southern Levant area in the diplomatic and political relations between Assyria and Egypt. Shlomo states that 'Philistia was an important region to Assyria because of its geographical location on the border with Egypt. Strengthening their hold in the region, both economically and military, enabled the Assyrians to limit the Egyptian influence in the Levant.'¹⁶ Manning and supervising what is depicted as a gate guarded by a keeper is therefore a metaphor for an area which was a buffer zone between Egypt and the Levant, and which would perhaps

¹² Oded, 'Observations on Methods of Assyrian Rule in Transjordan after the Palestinian Campaign of Tiglath-Pileser III', 183.

¹³ Tadmor, Yamada, and Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria*, RINAP, 92, Text 37, lines 34'b–45'a.

¹⁴ Na'aman, 'Population Changes in Palestine Following Assyrian Deportations', 106; Younger, 'The Deportations of the Israelites', 225.

¹⁵ Tadmor, Yamada, and Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria*, RINAP, 112, Text 44, line 16'b.

¹⁶ Shlomo, 'Tell Jemmeh, Philistia and the Neo-Assyrian Empire during the Late Iron Age', 80.

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minimise and even eliminate the Egyptian control and influence in the area. Likewise, Younger also argues that the movement of people, and the rearrangement of the area around Samaria, may indicate the significance of a clear trade path which would allow free trading between Assyria and Egypt.¹⁷

Sargon II's deportation of the Israelites and the repopulation of the land with new people most likely would have caused changes in the demography of the region. Sargon II states that 'I repopulated Samaria more than before. I brought into it, the people from the countries conquered by my hands. I appointed my commissioner as governor over them. I counted them as Assyrians.'¹⁸ Unlike TP III, Sargon claims to repopulate Samaria with more people whom he trained with new skills. Sargon may have repopulated Samaria so that it would not suffer dilapidation, which in turn would cause a decline in the contribution of taxes and tributes.¹⁹

However, these population movements and exchanges practised by the Neo-Assyrian kings can be placed under more than one category of forced migration. Therefore, the forced movements evaluated above as DFM can also be described as RFM.

2. Responsive Forced Migrations (RFM)

These are forced movements which occur due to political outcomes such as terrorism, tyranny and warfare, or due to domestic and natural causes such as famine, drought and natural catastrophes.²⁰

The violation of human rights has become an issue for the modern world. In recent times, the great powers of the world have justified war as an effort to bring democracy to deprived nations whose rights as humans being violated by a dictator.²¹ They justify these wars for the sake of

¹⁷ Younger, 'The Deportations of the Israelites', 225.

¹⁸ Younger, 'The Deportations of the Israelites', 216.

¹⁹ Ibid., 227.

²⁰ Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations*, 40–41.

²¹ The Universal Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1948. Motivated by the experiences of the preceding world wars, the Universal Declaration was the first time that countries agreed on a comprehensive statement of inalienable human rights. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>

global peace and security. For example, in 2003, the United States of America (USA) waged a war against Iraq to eliminate the ‘weapons of mass destruction’ which potentially threatened the peace and security of the world. The USA took a leading role, in conjunction with other nations, in an attempt to eliminate the potential threat and to bring democracy to Iraq.

Such wars in the modern era have forced millions of people to be displaced, to become refugees and asylum seekers, causing global devastation and chaos in many countries. In addition, terrorism has also become a global matter which has caused the forced movement of people from regions violated by such wars. Recent acts by terrorist groups have resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of individuals across the world, particularly in the Middle East. Terrorist groups have forced multitudes of people from Iraq and Syria to flee their places of origin with no possessions and thus to become displaced in their own countries.

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR), reports that in 2015 65.5 million forcibly displaced people existed worldwide.²² António Guterres, the High Commissioner for Refugees, notes that: ‘Forced displacement is now profoundly affecting our times. It touches the lives of millions of our fellow human beings, both those forced to flee and those who provide them with shelter and protection. Never has there been a greater need for tolerance, compassion, and solidarity with people who have lost everything.’²³

Deportations undertaken by the Neo-Assyrian kings can also be categorised under the RFM since they occurred under the influence of wars in the pursuit of dominion and control. The campaign against the northern kingdom most likely would have caused a wave of refugees and asylum seekers in the Judean cities, particularly the capital, Jerusalem. For example, scholars argue that archaeological excavations in Jerusalem show that the city seemed to have experienced a significant increase in infrastructure, particularly the fortification walls, which most likely points to growth in the city’s population. According to Magen Broshi, the two

²² Refugees, ‘Figures at a Glance’.

²³ Refugees, ‘UNHCR Report Confirms Worldwide Rise in Forced Displacement in First Half 2015’.

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influxes of mass migration, one from the northern kingdom and the other from Sennacherib's campaign, probably caused this growth in the population of Jerusalem.²⁴

Assyria's ideology of world order and dominion contributed to mass deportations and population exchanges across the empire. Assyrian kings called themselves the 'king of the four corners', 'king of the world' and 'king of the universe', who waged wars for the purpose of bringing peace and order to the land and people.²⁵ Sargon II claims to bring diverse people into Assyria and to make them all one nation. He states: 'The People of the four (quarters), of foreign tongue and divergent speech, inhabitants of mountain and plain, all whom the light of the god, the lord of all, shepherded, whom I carried off with my powerful sceptre by the command of Assur, my lord ---- I made them of one mouth and put them in its (Dur-Sarruken's) midst'.²⁶ In this inscription, the desire for world dominion and Assyrianisation is evident, especially when Sargon claims that he made the people all 'of one mouth'. This suggests he forced them to speak one language, which most likely was Aramaic, the 'lingua franca' of the Assyrian Empire.²⁷

No evidence of forced migrations due to natural catastrophes or famine are attested during the Neo-Assyrian period. However, text SAA 01:225, 9', points to a problems with river probably near Samaria: 'The river running past Samar[ia has dried up and] there is just one well in the whole region [.....]. I have set [to work ...] and they have filtered it(s water), but they have not yet finished [.....]'.²⁸ Drought in this area and the lack of water may have forced people to move to better places within the empire. However, fragmentation and damage to the clay tablets make it hard to read the inscription clearly. Therefore, it becomes difficult to construct the whole scenario of what took place during the drought.

²⁴ Broshi and Finkelstein, 'The Population of Palestine in Iron Age II', 52; Broshi, 'The Expansion of Jerusalem in the Reigns of Hezekiah and Manasseh', 25.

²⁵ Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire*, 169.

²⁶ Fuchs, 'Die Inschriften Sargon II', 44 (line 72'–73').

²⁷ Parpola, 'National and Ethnic Identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire and Assyrian Identity in Post-Empire Times', 9.

²⁸ Parpola and Luukko, 'The State Assyrian Archives'.

These Assyrian accounts point to a policy of forced resettlement for the aim of control and dominion, as well as profiting from the knowledge and skills required for the growth of the empire. Assyrian policy, as discussed above, leads us to investigation of the next category of forced movement.

3. Purposive Forced Migrations (PFM)

These are forced resettlements without choice. They could be profit driven, culturally oriented, religiously motivated or merely for domination, as in quelling a rebellion.²⁹

Modern governments do have the authority to evacuate lands for economic and political interests. These interests could involve the construction of roads, railways, airports, dams, energy plants, mines and other governmental projects.³⁰ The World Bank supports such projects and has helped with the growth of certain developing countries.³¹ Nevertheless, such projects have also caused the well-planned displacement of many hundreds of people. Ahn describes such displacement plans using the example of hydropower dam projects. These were accurately designed to accommodate the displacement and resettlement of tens of thousands of families, who became forced labourers on the proposed projects.³² For example, we know of the displacement of 100,000 people as a result of the construction of the Aswan Dam project in Egypt. Similarly, 383,000 persons were displaced because of the Danjiangkou Dam construction in China.³³

The World Bank projects cited above are comparable to Assyrian policies of resettlement since both used the displaced people as labourers for the construction of their projects. The Assyrians most likely used settlers in the building of the royal palaces, irrigation projects, fortresses,

²⁹ Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations*, 40–41.

³⁰ Castles, 'Towards a Sociology of Forced Migration and Social Transformation', 14.

³¹ The World Bank is an international financial institution that provides loans to developing countries for capital programs.

³² Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations*, 40.

³³ Ibid., 62.

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highways and roads.³⁴ For example, SAA 01:99, 5' demonstrates deportees building a palace for a queen.³⁵ Likewise ND 3406 points to deportees involved in building a royal palace. In addition, the requirement to settle these deported peoples most likely contributed to the development of the land distribution policy practised by the Assyrian administration, which provided settlers with plots of lands to build their houses and cultivate the fertile land.³⁶

In terms of modern population movement, several countries of the world acknowledge the benefits gained from allowing the resettlement of population. These migrants have proved useful in solving problems related to economic, social and political imbalances in the host countries.³⁷ For example, economic, demographic and political gaps between Europe and its neighbouring regions, stimulated the migration of the much poorer, less stable, but youthful and demographically growing societies in the adjoining world regions.³⁸

ND 3406 demonstrates the existence of foreign labourers beside captives engaged in a building activity. The distinction made between the foreign workers and the captives may indicate that some people sought work in the heartland of Assyria. Karen Radner claims that natives and foreigners worked as labour for hire in different trades such as military positions, artisans, sailors, caravan staff and harvesters.³⁹ The term 'labour hire' could apply to a temporary contract for the duration of few months, or could perhaps indicate a permanent form of employment as perhaps in the case of natives Assyrians and deportees. One example are the people known as Ḫundurāyē who were probably Median deportees who came to work permanently in Aššur.⁴⁰

³⁴ Wilkinson et al., 'Landscape and Settlement in the Neo-Assyrian Empire', 26–27; Ur, 'Sennacherib's Northern Assyrian Canals', 343.

³⁵ Parpola and Luukko, 'The State Assyrian Archives', SAA 01:099, 5', [As to] what the king, my lord, wrote to me: 'Let these [...]ians of Ekal[late] who are being deported build the queen's palace in [the city with the] Pal[ace Manager]'.

³⁶ Gallagher, 'Assyrian Deportation Propaganda', 58–64.

³⁷ Holzmann and Rainer, 'Challenges and Opportunities of International Migration for the EU, Its Member States, Neighboring Countries, and Regions: A Policy Note. No. 30160', 1.

³⁸ Ibid., 3.

³⁹ Radner, 'Hired labour in the Neo-Assyrian Empire', 189.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 196.

Governmental deals and agreements relating to military and economic interests have played a crucial role in the displacement of people in recent times. In 1968, the government of United Kingdom (UK) forcibly removed about fifteen hundred people from the Chagos Islands in the British Indian Ocean and settled them in the Mauritius Islands. This displacement occurred to allow for the creation of an American military base on Diego Garcia.⁴¹ As part of the deal the USA agreed to waive the UK's payment for joint missile development programmes in return for the establishment of the base.⁴² Here an economic interest is clearly seen as playing a crucial role in the displacement of people.

The Assyrian accounts indicate that most of the vassal kings around the empire agreed to treaties with the Assyrians in exchange for a level of independence and freedom of trade, and perhaps most of all for wealth and prosperity. However, if the agreement was breached then the vassal king and his people would most likely have faced deportation and displacement with their land detached and assigned to other kings.⁴³ For example, Sennacherib, on his campaign against Judah, took lands from king Hezekiah and gave them to the kings of other cities such as Padi of Ekron.⁴⁴

Forced migration for the purpose of domination can be attested in the Biblical account of 2 Kings 18:32. This account includes part of Rab-Shaqeh's speech, 'until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive-trees and of honey, that you may live, and not die... .' The speech points to a forced movement and expresses the dominating nature of Assyria in blackmailing and threatening subject people, despite offering good living conditions. Offering a choice between movement to a good foreign land or the prospect of death in their homeland, can be considered

⁴¹ Sand, *United States and Britain in Diego Garcia*, 1–4 Diego Garcia an Island in the Indian ocean that geographically belong to Chagos Archipelago., and which was part of the British Empire.

⁴² correspondent, 'Chagos Islanders Lose Supreme Court Bid to Return to Homeland'; Sand, *United States and Britain in Diego Garcia*, 6–8.

⁴³ Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire*, 83–86.

⁴⁴ Grayson and Novotny, *The royal inscriptions of Sennacherib, king of Assyria (704-681 BC)*, RINAP, 176, Text 22, line iii 31'–35'.

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a tactic that might force people to surrender without resistance. In this way, the Assyrian Empire could still expand but avoid war, which would have been costly and demanding. Moreover, it was considered a sin to begin a war and attack innocent and peaceful people.⁴⁵ The peaceful negotiations suggested by the quote above were likely to have been standard for Assyrian officials. Nevertheless, the threat of death is obvious in Rab-Shaqeh's speech. If a movement of people did indeed result from Rab-Shaqeh's negotiation tactics, then this action must be considered as a forced relocation.

No counterpart to Rab-shaqeh's speech of 2 Kings 18:32 has been attested in the Assyrian accounts. However, the Biblical scribe does seem to have followed the Assyrian attested style of negotiation. For example, we have the Assyrian inscription ND 2632= SAA 19:098, which is like Rab-Shaqeh's speech 'We went to Babylon on the 28th. We stood in front of the Marduk Gate and spoke with the Babylonian(s). Z[a]sinnu, a servent of Mukin-zeri and some Chaldeans with him came out and stood with the Babylonians before the city-gate. We spoke to the Babylonians as follows: "The k[in]g has s[en]t us to you, saying: [Let me speak] with the [Babylonians] th[rough] your mouths. I shall establish [the am]ne[sty o]f Babylon and your privileged status and shall come to Babylon".'⁴⁶ The text describes a peace negotiation with Babylon in which the king of Assyria offers to pardon Babylon for whatever wrongdoing and disobedience they attempted. Although the offer to relocate to a new land does not exist in this speech, it is nevertheless a useful comparison. Gallagher claims that 'the speech has several points of contacts with the Assyrian data'. The major points are the similarities with the epithets ascribed to Sennacherib as 'the great king of Assyria', and the dismissal of the epithets of Hezekiah, as well as calling him the Judean.⁴⁷

In terms of any modern comparisons, Assyria, with its small native population, must have seen the advantages of migration in much the same way as countries in post-WWI Europe. In the

⁴⁵ Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire*, 54.

⁴⁶ Parpola and Luukko, 'The State Assyrian Archives', SAA 19, 098, line 5'–18'.

⁴⁷ Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah*, 189.

modern context, the violent movement of people or the offer of voluntary relocation was deemed necessary for the protection of economic, political and social interests.

Comparisons of contemporary definitions of migration to examples from the Assyrian Royal Annals highlights the aggressive nature of the Assyrian deportations. In particular, the emphasises in the displacement of people against their will, which took place after the destruction and devastation of their cities. This is in contrast to the AL which point to an entirely different nature in which the movement of people is observed as being well planned, where the wellbeing of the deported people appears to be a concern of the Assyrian king. The welfare of the deported people will be discussed in more details in chapter three of this thesis.

What is obvious is that forced migration motives in the modern context appear to reflect similarities to the forced migration and the displacement of people in the Neo-Assyrian Empire. The three contemporary categories of forced migrations can be applied to Assyrian mass movements and displacement of people. Assyria's imperial requirements for population seem to have influenced the movement and population exchange. Other influences include the requirements of imperial dominion and control, as well as political factors such as terrorism, tyranny and warfare. In addition, domestic and natural causes such as famine, drought and natural catastrophes are all evident. Finally, the forced movements can also be seen to be profit driven, as well as culturally oriented, and indeed, religiously motivated.

Chapter Three — Deportations and the Assyrian Imperial Motivations

Border expansion, dominion and control of other nations are all factors which motivated the implementation of Assyrian imperial policy. During the Neo-Assyrian period, the Assyrian border expanded to its ultimate point, and many of the kingdoms in the Near East became client (vassal) states under imperial rule, while others were converted into Assyrian provinces and directly annexed to Assyria. The annexation of lands triggered the deportations and population exchanges under discussion.¹ Assyria expanded in all directions, including the western border that consists of the Mediterranean Sea, the Levant (including the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah) and further down to Egypt. Assyria's interference in the internal affairs of the client (vassal) states is sometimes hard to discern since they enjoyed their independence, as long as they stayed loyal and paid homage and tribute to the king and god of the empire.² However, we do have more information with regard to how the Assyrians justified warfare, which regularly ended with the mass deportation of the conquered population.³ This chapter will investigate the justifications offered, in order to detect the motives which caused the mass deportations and to examine how such motives may have been used as a tool for dominion and control.

The Assyrian textual accounts consistently validate the motivation for war by stating Assyria's imperial and religious ideologies and views. They can be categorised under the following headings:

- rebellion
- workforce
- economy and trade
- religion.

¹ Cogan, 'Judah under Assyrian Hegemony: A Reexamination of Imperialism and Religion', 406.

² Holloway, *Aššur Is King! Aššur Is King!*, 100; Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 55.

³ Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire*.

1. Rebellion

Rebellion by a vassal king appears to be one of the most important factors in triggering a military action against a vassal state. The ARI indicate that most of the military campaigns were carried out to quell rebellion. Military campaigns did not just occur to quell rebellions by lone kings or nations but also when it was necessary to put down a revolt by many nations and kingdoms united under a coalition against the empire.⁴ My investigation will focus on the western border of the empire during and after TP III. Therefore, the primary examples will come from the Syrio-Philistia and Israel alliance in the reign of TP III,⁵ the rebellion of the northern kingdom during Sargon II's reign, and the Syrio-Philistia, Egypt and Judah alliance in the reign of Sennacherib.⁶

Assyrian military campaigns against the rebellious rulers of the west, including the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah,⁷ resulted in the punishing of the rebellious people. The punishment usually took the form of either replacement of the king and the imposition of new taxes and tributes or by a partial or complete annexation of the land and the deportation and exchange of its population.⁸

The Assyrians viewed deportation as a tool for punishing rebellious people who sinned against the Assyrian king and his god.⁹ Yet, despite the view that 'rebellion' was a sin and crime against Aššur, there is only uncertain evidence regarding the imposition of the worship of Aššur on the people of the conquered cities or vassal states.¹⁰ Sennacherib's third campaign to the west

⁴ Shavitsky, *The Mystery of the Ten Lost Tribes*, 38–45.

⁵ Tadmor, Yamada, and Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria*, RINAP, 61, Text 21, line 1'–16'.

⁶ Grayson and Novotny, *The royal inscriptions of Sennacherib, king of Assyria (704–681 BC)*, RINAP, 175–76, Text 22, line ii, 73'–81'.

⁷ Tadmor, Yamada, and Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria*, RINAP, 105–7, Text 42; Fuchs, 'Die Inschriften Sargon II', 197; Grayson and Novotny, *The royal inscriptions of Sennacherib, king of Assyria (704–681 BC)*, RINAP, 175, Text 22.

⁸ Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 406; Na'aman, 'Population Changes in Palestine Following Assyrian Deportations', 104.

⁹ Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire*, 97.

¹⁰ Cogan, 'Judah under Assyrian Hegemony: A Re-examination of Imperialism and Religion', 412; Holloway, *Aššur Is King! Aššur Is King!*, 58.

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demonstrates a good example of crushing a rebellious people. Sennacherib states in his royal inscription that he approached Ekron (an Assyrian vassal kingdom) to crush a rebellion led by the governors, nobles and the people of that city. The inscription states:

I approached the city Ekron, and I killed the governors (and) nobles who had committed crimes(s) and hung their corpses on towers around the city; I counted the citizens who had committed the criminal acts as booty; (and) I com[manded] that the rest [of them], (those) who were not guilty of crimes or wrongdoing, (to) whom no penalty was due, be allowed to go free.¹¹

Sennacherib justifies his attack as an act of quelling a rebellion. He also claims to be saving Padi, the vassal king, who presumably had sworn obedience and loyalty in a treaty with the Assyrian king.¹² The text indicates that Sennacherib did not deport the entire citizenry of the town, but only the wrongdoers. In addition, there is no mention of carrying away of any people. However, the phrase: ‘I com[manded] that the rest [of them], (those) who were not guilty of crimes or wrongdoing, (to) whom no penalty was due, be allowed to go free’, does suggest that initially the Assyrians captured all the citizens and only afterwards let the innocent go free. This situation points to interrogations taking place, which distinguished between the guilty who received the punishment for supporting the rebellion and the innocent people.

The phrase also expresses the compassion of the Assyrian king who did not punish the entire citizenry but rather allowed the innocent to go free. There must be a rationale for Sennacherib’s behaviour towards the innocent people. Evidence from his other campaigns indicates his aggressive conduct including the slaughtering of the entire population of a city. In his first campaign against Babylon, he claims to put a city called Ḫirimmu to the sword and spares none of the people because he considers them to be a dangerous enemy.¹³ What is the reason for his

¹¹ Grayson and Novotny, *The royal inscriptions of Sennacherib, king of Assyria (704-681 BC)*, RINAP, 176, Text 22, line ii 7’a–14’a (Taylor Prism).

¹² Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire*, 83; Parpola, ‘Neo-Assyrian Treaties from the Royal Archives of Nineveh’, 161.

¹³ Grayson and Novotny, *The royal inscriptions of Sennacherib, king of Assyria (704-681 BC)*, RINAP, 112, Text 16, line i 81’–83’.

diverse behaviour towards the conquered peoples? Why slaughter the ones from Ḫirimmu and spare the others from Ekron?

Archaeological excavations at Ekron prove that the city grew dramatically during the Neo-Assyrian period to become the largest olive oil production centre in the ancient Near East.¹⁴ An oil production centre like Ekron would naturally require a considerable workforce to run it efficiently. Accordingly, the requirement for a workforce, particularly made up of skilled people, in order to keep Ekron wealthy and capable of paying its taxes and tributes, is presumably what motivated Sennacherib to leave some of the population without deportation. Some scholars argue that Assyria most likely did not import its produce (such as olive oil, wine and others agricultural products) from the western vassal states due to the economic viability of transportation.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Assyria's interest was in luxury goods and rich tributes which came from the peripheries to the core of the empire. Therefore, we can assume that Assyria probably understood the significance of sparing a vassal state like Ekron and leaving it independent and prosperous to provide the empire with such riches.¹⁶

Sennacherib was also reacting to the actions of 'Hezekiah of Judah', who himself was a vassal king. Hezekiah committed a crime by restraining Padi in Jerusalem and refusing to submit to the Assyrian yoke and pay his tributes.¹⁷ According to the ARI, the rebellion of Hezekiah was part of a planned anti-Assyrian coalition between the kings of Phoenicia and Egypt.¹⁸ Scholars argue that the anti-Assyrian coalition must have occurred during the unsettled period between the death of Sargon II and Sennacherib's succession to the throne.¹⁹ They claim that the mysterious death and the missing corpse of Sargon II probably encouraged Hezekiah to break

¹⁴ Faust, 'The Interests of the Assyrian Empire in the West', 68; Gitin and Cogan, 'A New Type of Dedicatory Inscription from Ekron', 199.

¹⁵ Faust, 'The Interests of the Assyrian Empire in the West', 72.

¹⁶ Bedford, 'The Neo-Assyrian Empire', 72–73; Faust, 'The Interests of the Assyrian Empire in the West', 76.

¹⁷ Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire*, 63–64.

¹⁸ Grayson and Novotny, *The royal inscriptions of Sennacherib, king of Assyria (704-681 BC)*, RINAP, 175–76, Text 22, line ii 73'–81' (the Taylor Prism).

¹⁹ Shavitsky, *The Mystery of the Ten Lost Tribes*, 66; Dalley, 'Recent Evidence from Assyrian Sources for Judean History from Uzziah to Manasseh', 391.

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his alliance with Assyria.²⁰ Hezekiah and the coalition forces most likely rebelled believing that the circumstances around Sargon's death made him unfavourable to god and thus illegitimate king. Therefore, any treaties established during his reign naturally became invalid.²¹

According to the ARI, Hezekiah's rebellion pushed Sennacherib towards attacking Judah and causing the mass movement of its population. Sennacherib further claims the deportation of 200,150 persons, all counted as booty and carried to Assyria.²² This statement regarding the 200,150 deportees, directly follows the mention of the forty-six Judean cities and villages conquered and devastated by Sennacherib's army. We can assume, therefore, that the 200,150 people deported would most likely be of Judahite origin.

Scholars argue that the number is an exaggeration and merely part of Assyrian propaganda.²³ Archaeological surveys of the area indicate that the population of Judah in 701 BC did not exceed 300,000.²⁴ Therefore, if the claim by Sennacherib were assumed to be accurate, he would have deported nearly the entire population of Judah. Thus, the number claimed by Sennacherib possibly is not correct and is probably actually much smaller. Scholars like A. Ungnad suggest the possibility of a lower number of deportees than what is claimed in the royal inscriptions since it is more reasonable in correspondence to the number claimed by transport officials in the AL.²⁵ Moving thousands of people would have been a mission which required great control in terms of caring and feeding the deportees.²⁶ Further, the hypothesis of a lower number makes Oded's argument about selective deportation more plausible. Oded suggests that deportations were selective in nature and consisted of elites and skilled workers, including their

²⁰ Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah*, 269.

²¹ Dalley, 'Recent Evidence from Assyrian Sources for Judean History from Uzziah to Manasseh', 391; Matty, *Sennacherib's Campaign against Judah and Jerusalem in 701 B.C.*, 6; Parker, *The Mechanics of Empire: The Northern Frontier of Assyria as a Case Study in Imperial Dynamics*, 123.

²² Grayson and Novotny, *The royal inscriptions of Sennacherib, king of Assyria (704-681 BC)*, RINAP, 167–77, Text 22, line iii 14'b–17' (the Taylor Prism).

²³ Odorico, *The Use of Numbers and Quantifications in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, 114.

²⁴ Ibid., 115.

²⁵ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 19, footnote 2.

²⁶ Ibid., 38–39.

families.²⁷ Relying on this assumption we can presume that the deported citizens of Ekron were elites who held prestige and high status in the military and the royal court. These would include people such as scribes, priests, landlords and other privileged persons.²⁸

The Assyrian accounts point to a significant number of deportees living in the main capitals cities of the empire. Zadok's new study, concerning the Israelites/Judeans in the Neo-Assyrian documents, has resulted in the identification of 101 individuals who lived in Assyria proper and who held high status in the empire. The individuals are assumed to be Israelites/Judeans from their names. These carry the theophoric element 'Yhw' which, according to Zadok, is the name of the god who the Israelites and Judeans only worshipped before the Hellenistic era.²⁹

It is hard to distinguish in the Akkadian script between an Israelite or a Judahite who lived in Assyria proper. Even though, as Shmuel Ahituv explains, the spelling of the theophoric element varies between the two kingdoms, evidence indicates that people from Samaria use the spelling 'yāw', while in the southern kingdom they use 'yāhu'.³⁰ The number of Israelite/Judeans recognised by Zadok seems small when compared to the number of people deported from the two kingdoms during the Neo-Assyrian conquest in the west.³¹ A further complication is that it is likely that the deportees are unidentifiable because they adopted Assyrian (Akkadian) names after settling down, which also points to their assimilation into the Assyrian culture.³²

Events recorded in the Assyrian accounts have their matching counterparts in the Hebrew Bible. Comparison of the RINAP text 42 (Summary Inscription 4)³³ of TP III with the event recorded in 2 Kings 15:29 may help in detecting the motives behind the phenomenon of deportation.

²⁷ Ibid., 47.

²⁸ Younger et al., 'Give Us Our Daily Bread: Everyday Life for the Israelite Deportees', 271–77.

²⁹ Zadok, 'Israelites and Judeans in the Neo-Assyrian Documentation (732–602 B.C.E.): An Overview of the Sources and a Socio-Historical Assessment', 159.

³⁰ Ahituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 264.

³¹ TP III, ca. 13,500; Sargon II, ca. 27,290/80; Sennacherib, ca. 200,150.

³² Zadok, 'Israelites and Judeans in the Neo-Assyrian Documentation (732–602 B.C.E.): An Overview of the Sources and a Socio-Historical Assessment', 174; Beckman, 'Foreigners in the Ancient Near East', 210.

³³ inscriptions 4, according to the method of labelling inscriptions used by H. Tadmor, TP III, 1994.

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Both texts point to deportations from the same region at the same time. TP III's inscription records the event as:

[...the cities of ...]nite³⁴, Gil[lead and] Able,...,³⁴which are border of Bit Ĥumri[a]__ I annexed to Assyria the en[tire] wide land of [bit-haza'i]li (Aram). I carried off [to] Assyria the land of Bīt- Ĥumrria (Israel), [...it] auxiliary [army,] [...] all of its people [...] [I/they killed]³⁵ Pekah, their king, and I installed Hoshea [as king] over them. I received from them 10 talents of gold, x talents of silver, [with] their [property] and [I car]ried them [to Assyria].³⁶

In contrast, 2 Kings 15:29–30 records:

In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maacah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he carried them captive to Assyria. And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.

The Assyrian text above points to a campaign against the Levant, including Bīt-Ĥumri. The text itself does not clarify the motivations behind the attack that led to the deportations of Bīt-Ĥumri (Israel). However, other texts indicate that TP III could have campaigned against Philistia in 734 BC, to crush an anti-Assyrian coalition between the kingdom of Israel under Pekah and Rezin, king of Aram.³⁷

³⁴ Younger, 'The Deportations of the Israelites', 206 see footnote 26 and 27 for suggested restorations for the names.

³⁵ Ibid., 207 see footnote 28.

³⁶ Tadmor, Yamada, and Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria*, RINAP, 106, Text 42, line 15'b–19'a.

³⁷ Ibid., 131, Text 49, line Rev. 1'–11'; Na'aman, 'Rezin of Damascus and the Land of Gilead', 109.

Ahaz king of Judah refused to join such a coalition and remained a loyal pro-Assyrian vassal king.³⁸ According to the Biblical account (2 Kings 15:5–11), the rejection of Ahaz pushed Pekah against Judah. Pekah's attack then forced Ahaz to appeal to the Assyrian king for safety and assistance, which gave TP III the opportunity to confine the kingdom of Israel around its capital Samaria.³⁹

RINAP, text 42, clearly indicates the deportation of the Israelite people to Assyria: 'I carried off [to] Assyria the land of Bīt-Ḫumrria (Israel), [...it] auxiliary [army,] [...] all of its people'.⁴⁰ The inscription mentions the destination as Assyria but does not specifically identify the location of their final settlement. The reference to Assyria could therefore mean anywhere in the heartland or the provinces.

As discussed in the previous chapter, TP III does not mention the repopulation of Bīt-Ḫumrria, even though he claims to do so in other areas conquered by him. In an inscription stating his campaign against Urartu (in the northern regions of the empire), he states that: 'I annexed their [...] to Assyria, rebuilt those cities, (and) settled therein the people of (foreign) lands conquered by me'.⁴¹ Thus we can see that TP III applied the two-way deportations to some areas and not to others.

The event described in 2 Kings 15:29–30 involves the same characters (TP III, Rezin, Pekah, Ahaz and Hoshea) as appearing in the Assyrian inscriptions discussed above. The Biblical account at 2 Kings 15:5–10 may point to an anti-Assyrian coalition led by Rezin, in which Pekah joined. Like the Assyrian account, the Biblical version mentions the assassination of Pekah and the deportation of people from the western region to Assyria, including the land of

³⁸ Na'aman, 'Rezin of Damascus and the Land of Gilead', 109.

³⁹ Shavitsky, *The Mystery of the Ten Lost Tribes*, 44' (The northern kingdom could have become under the Assyrian rule at the reign of Shalmaneser III (858–824), when he marched against several Aramean coalitions). ; Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 99.

⁴⁰ Tadmor, Yamada, and Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria*, RINAP, 106, Text 42, line 15'b–19'a.

⁴¹ Tadmor, Yamada, and Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria*, RINAP, 56, Text 18:3; Oates and Oates, *Nimrud*, 74.

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Naphtali (Bīt-Ḫumrria). This parallelism between the Assyrian account and the Bible may prove the authenticity of this event.

Captivities and deportations were not new phenomena to the people of Israel and Judah. The two kingdoms were occasionally in conflict and fought against each other several times until the destruction and annexation of the northern kingdom to Assyria. In 2 Chronicles 28:8, Pekah is said to have attacked and captured the people of Judah and carried them to Samaria: ‘The sons of Israel carried away captive of their brethren 200,000 women, sons and daughters; and they also took a great deal of spoil from them and brought the spoil to Samaria’. Pekah’s action against Judah, a client state, probably motivated TP III’s approach toward the northern kingdom of Israel.⁴² The number of captives recorded in this verse appears somewhat identical to the number claimed in Sennacherib’s inscription. The matching of the figures may point to the authenticity of Sennacherib’s claim, or perhaps to a Biblical scribal error that mixed the data of Pekah and Sennacherib.

An inscription of TP III (RINAP, text 44) concerns the same event against the northern kingdom and states: ‘[The land Bīt-Ḫumrria] (Israel), all [of whose] cities I [utterly devastated i]n former campaigns of mine, whose [...] livestock I carried off, and (whose capital) Samaria I isola[ted]-(now) [they overthrew Peqa]h their king’.⁴³ This inscription details the sparing of Samaria, the capital of Israel, with its newly elected king Hoshea, who ruled until the kingdom fell to Sargon II in 720 B.C. The phrase ‘All its people’ in the inscription, if taken literally, may mean the deportation of the entire population. However, we also know that TP III claims to have left part of the population of Samaria.

Similarly to his predecessors, Sargon II claims in his inscription (Nimrud Prism) to have been involved in the conquering and deporting of the inhabitants of Samaria as follows:

⁴² Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire*, 61–68.

⁴³ Tadmor, Yamada, and Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria*, RINAP, 110, Text 44, line 17’–18’.

[The inhabitants of Sa]merina, who agreed [and plotted] with a king [hostile to] me. Not to endure servitude and not to bring tribute to Assur and who did battle. I fought against them with the power of the great gods, my lords. I counted as spoils [2]7,280 people, together with their chariots, and gods, in which they trusted. I formed a unit with 200 of [their] chariots for my royal force. I settled the rest of them, in the midst of Assyria. I repopulated Samaria more than before. I brought into it, the people from the countries conquered by my hands. I appointed my commissioner as governor over them. I counted them as Assyrians.⁴⁴

This inscription clearly identifies the significant imperial policies, the need to crush the rebellion and bring peace and order to the land. Rebellion was the great sin and crime against Aššur which could be committed simply by withholding the payment of tributes. Interestingly, Sargon II also claims the forming of a unit of 200 chariots, which he required for the strengthening of his army.⁴⁵

The text above proves Sargon's two-way deportation policy regarding Samaria. He claims to have repopulated Samaria with people from conquered cities, whom he taught and trained in new skills essential for the maintenance of the city and to keep it prosperous.⁴⁶

Assyria's need to fill shortages in their military forces points to the small native Assyrian population, which was probably unable to deal with the increasing requirements of an expanding empire.⁴⁷ The Assyrian Empire had a duty to protect and secure its boundaries and borders, to strengthen its dominion and control over other nations, as well as to ensure the success of its foreign policies.⁴⁸ Thus, the conscription of people for these tasks, even though they were foreigners, became essential for the growth and development of Assyria. People were

⁴⁴ Younger, 'The Deportations of the Israelites', 216.

⁴⁵ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 52.

⁴⁶ Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 50.

⁴⁷ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 48–49.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

required not just for military purposes but also for other activities within the empire, which brings us to the second potential cause of deportations.

2. Workforce

Workforce is another issue for the Assyrian rulers who required labour for their construction activities. Importing populations from other regions became vital for the growing empire whose native citizens were unable to fulfil the demand for personnel in the military and other areas requiring skilled professionals. In a pavement inscription, Sargon II claims to build the new capital 'Dur-šarru-kin', using captives from the lands he conquered.⁴⁹ Younger notes that 'there is no doubt that some of these captives were Israelites skilled labourers'.⁵⁰ Text ND 3406, tells us that the labourers involved in the building activities of the new capital and other works within Assyria proper were native Assyrians who worked in conjunction with captives and other foreigners.⁵¹

It is evident from the texts that Sargon required people for the construction of his new capital city Dur-šarru-kin and thus this could represent another example of a motive for deporting people. The number given as 27,280 from Samaria can be considered a massive workforce. However, it is important to remember that this number could have been inflated in a similar way to Sennacherib's claim concerning his deportees.⁵²

Another example indicating the requirement for a massive workforce is evident in what is called the banquet stele of Assurnasirpal II (883–859 BC.) According to the stele, Assurnasirpal II prepared a banquet to celebrate the founding of the new capital Kalḫu (Nimrud). In the text, he mentions the invitation of Assyrian citizens, officials and foreign ambassadors. What is intriguing about this stele in the context of my thesis, is the supposed invitation of 47,074

⁴⁹ Fuchs, 'Die Inschriften Sargon II', 55–60; Parpola and Fuchs, *The Correspondence of Sargon II* part 1, letter 259.

⁵⁰ Younger, 'Israelites in Exile', 6.

⁵¹ Gadd, 'Inscribed Prisms of Sargon II from Nimrud', 198.

⁵² Odorico, *The Use of Numbers and Quantifications in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, 112–13.

working men and women.⁵³ This is a massive number of workers, who seemed to have come to Assyria voluntarily: ‘summoned from all the districts of my land’.⁵⁴ Assurnasirpal II, claims that he sent all his invited guests and potentially the workers as well, back to their homelands ‘For ten days I gave them food, I gave them drink, I had them bathed, I had them anointed. (Thus) did I honour them and send them back to their lands in peace and joy.’⁵⁵ This inscription, therefore, points to the movement of skilled people and labourers, as well as the ability to travel for work within the empire as per the requirements of the economic structure.⁵⁶

Sennacherib’s involvement in massive construction works, including the construction of palaces, digging water canals and water irrigation systems, most likely would have increased the demand for a larger workforce. Therefore, and to counteract shortages in his workforce, Sennacherib appears to have deported people from other regions to Assyria. In the inscription concerning his building activities in the capital city Nineveh, Sennacherib states that to perform his building work, he forcibly removed people from conquered cities and made them carry baskets of earth and make the bricks.⁵⁷ Significantly, his behaviour towards the conquered peoples seems different from other Assyrian kings whose attitude fluctuates between merciful and aggressive.

The Assyrian provinces also underwent extensive building activities. For example, the Assyrian account SAA 05:291 points to building activities in the provinces: ‘[Perhaps the ki]ng, my lord, will say: ‘[To who]m have [you] given bricks [...]?’ [40,000] to (the governor of) Arpad, [40,000 t]o (the governor of) Sama[ria, 40,000 to] (the governor of) Megid[do], in all [1]20,000 (bricks taken) from the king’s entourage’.⁵⁸ From this text, it is clear that the provincial governors required a significant workforce to undertake the construction work.

⁵³ Oates and Oates, *Nimrud*, 41.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 42.

⁵⁶ Zaccagnini, ‘Patterns of Mobility among Ancient near Eastern Craftsmen’, 246–47.

⁵⁷ Grayson and Novotny, *The royal inscriptions of Sennacherib, king of Assyria (704-681 BC)*, 119 RINAP, Text 16, v 65–70.

⁵⁸ Parpola and Luukko, ‘The State Assyrian Archives’.

Although rebellion against the imperial policies played an important role in starting a military attack, which usually ended by the deportation of people, the economic aspects also seem inevitable and cannot be ignored.

3. Economy and trade

Economy and trade both played an important role in the forcible relocation of conquered peoples. The geographic location of the Assyrian heartland placed it away from any access to the main seas of the Near Eastern region. Assyria's isolation from the sea shores was fundamental in the significance of its need to control the Mediterranean Sea and thereby gain the access that was essential for controlling maritime trade across the empire.⁵⁹

Assyria also saw the economic advantage of controlling the roads that reached the Mediterranean 'Way to the Sea (via Maris)', which were necessary for monitoring trade.⁶⁰ An administrative letter, ND 2715, (SAA 19:22), points to economic and trade control of the trading centres on the coast. The letter details the freedom of trade granted to the vassal kingdom of Tyre, stating: 'All the ports of trade have been released to him (King of Tyre); his servants go in and out of the trading posts and sell and buy as they wish. The Sidonites chased away the tax-collector whom I appointed to the ports of trade that had been added to me in Sidon. Subsequently, I sent the Itu'eans into Mount Lebanon, and they frightened the people'.⁶¹ From this text it appears that the empire controlled and ruled the independence of trade and that people were free to trade if they followed the instructions and requirements of the imperial bureaucracy, that is, determining with who they can trade and what.

⁵⁹ Thareani, 'The Empire and the 'Upper Sea': Assyrian Control Strategies along the Southern Levantine Coast', 77.

⁶⁰ Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah*, 113.

⁶¹ Parpola and Luukko, 'The State Assyrian Archives', AAS 19 022.

Controlling Philistia⁶² became increasingly significant to the empire as it gave Assyria the potential for wider mobility in terms of the coastal regions and beyond.⁶³ The kingdom of Israel's strategic location came from the cross roads connecting to main trade routes to Egypt, which also linked the port cities on the Levantine Coast. The strategic location of Israel is likely to have played a significant role in the evacuation and resettlement of its inhabitants. Controlling the Levantine cities was thus important to Assyrian control over the Mediterranean commerce system.⁶⁴ Therefore, the economic significance of the region probably caused the uprooting of the inhabitants in order to leave the route between Damascus, Megiddo and Egypt uncrowded.⁶⁵

TP III's inscriptions, discussed previously, indicate that deportations from the Syrio-Philistine region did not just occur to quell an anti-Assyrian coalition, such as the one between Rezin and Pekah, or to rescue a loyal vassal king like Ahaz, but rather to control the strategic area of the northern kingdom. There is no evidence of TP III populating the region around Samaria after deporting its inhabitants. However, other inscriptions do demonstrate that he did apply the two-way deportation policy in other areas by repopulating conquered areas.⁶⁶ In the case of Samaria, it appears that leaving the trade routes uncrowded and underpopulated granted the empire more significant and strategic economic benefits.⁶⁷

Assyrian mercantile interests also resulted in the growth and development of several areas in the western region. Ekron, as previously discussed, played a dramatic role in the growing economy during the Neo-Assyrian period.⁶⁸ The Assyrian interest in new resources from raw materials and the manufacturing of luxury goods increased the demand for the building of new

⁶² Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah*, 113 'Philistia is the name of the area extending from Dor in the north to Gaza in the south'.

⁶³ Thareani, 'The Empire and the 'Upper Sea': Assyrian Control Strategies along the Southern Levantine Coast', 85.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 80; Younger, 'The Deportations of the Israelites', 225; Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 97.

⁶⁵ Younger, 'The Deportations of the Israelites', 225.

⁶⁶ Tadmor, Yamada, and Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC)*, *Kings of Assyria*, RINAP, 56, Text 18:3.

⁶⁷ Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah*, 113; Younger, 'The Deportations of the Israelites', 225.

⁶⁸ Gitin and Cogan, 'A New Type of Dedicatory Inscription from Ekron', 199.

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urban commercial centres, as well as developing an international commercial network system in the western region and the Mediterranean coast.⁶⁹ The entire economic system in the Near Eastern region, including Philistia and Judah, became directed towards the maritime trade in the Mediterranean Sea (upper sea).⁷⁰ Ekron may therefore be considered to have played a strategic role in the economic system of the 7th century BC, as a result of being nearer to the centre of the economic system and also closer to the Mediterranean Sea. It is evident that the western region prospered under Neo-Assyrian rule, as the area enjoyed what is known to scholars as the ‘Assyrian Peace’, the seventy years of peace and prosperity which the Levant experienced.⁷¹ Examples can be found in the ARI, describing the tributes and riches collected from the region.⁷²

The Assyrian two-way deportations played a significant role in saving the conquered areas from falling into devastation and ruin. However, some scholars argue that Assyria had no economic interest in the regions they conquered, and that Assyria did not understand the economic benefit they could gain from a prosperous state.⁷³ There is no evidence that Assyria invested in the prosperity of the western region. However, the prosperity of the area is likely to have come from having semi-independent status, as did the burden to pay tributes and taxes required by the empire in return for this prosperity and security. Nevertheless, Avraham Faust sees this prosperity as a burden, for paying the dues was a ‘dubious prospective’.⁷⁴ T. J. Wilkinson argues that the demand for landholding, plunder or tribute were not the only factors behind Assyrian expansion, or indeed the conquering and repopulation of new lands, but rather it was the

⁶⁹ Faust, ‘The Interests of the Assyrian Empire in the West’, 63–64; Younger, ‘Assyrian Economic Impact on the Southern Levant in the Light of Recent Studies’, 179.

⁷⁰ Faust, ‘The Interests of the Assyrian Empire in the West’, 72.

⁷¹ Younger, ‘Assyrian Economic Impact on the Southern Levant in the Light of Recent Studies’, 179.

⁷² Tadmor, Yamada, and Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria*, RINAP, 70, Text 28:7; Grayson and Novotny, *The royal inscriptions of Sennacherib, king of Assyria (704–681 BC)*, RINAP, 177, Text 22, line iii 40’–49’.

⁷³ Schloen, *The House of the Father As Fact and Symbol*, 146.

⁷⁴ Faust, ‘The Interests of the Assyrian Empire in the West’, 76.

realisation that some conquered lands were more agriculturally productive if kept preserved and prosperous.⁷⁵

Younger sees a problem in assessing the Assyrian economic policy by relying solely on the royal documents. He argues that to investigate Assyrian foreign policies, studying the non-royal textual material or the administrative documents is also significant, as it provides a different view that is more comprehensive and balanced.⁷⁶

The land under the Assyrian hegemony was the land of Aššur, which stretched as far as Assyria could potentially expand. Maintaining the land of Aššur and its people was thus the duty and obligation of the Assyrian king who was ultimately responsible for the peace and order of the entire world. If the Assyrian king was perceived to not be invested in the wellbeing of the land and the people of Aššur then he must be working against the order of Aššur.⁷⁷

4. Religion

Religion also played an important role in how the Assyrians and the deported people (Israelite/Judeans) interpreted and justified deportations. From the Assyrian point of view, deportations were a tool for quelling of rebellious people. The Assyrians believed that by crushing rebellion, they would bring peace and order to the land of Aššur.⁷⁸ Aššur was the main god of Assyria, and he represented a city, the people and the land.⁷⁹ The Assyrian royal and administrative inscriptions demonstrate that, through the order and favour of Aššur, the Assyrian king administered his powers and acted in accordance with the instructions and demands of Aššur.⁸⁰

The Assyrian king is known to have counted the captives as Assyrians before deporting them. As Assyrians, they would have endured the privileges, tasks and dues of an Assyrian citizen.

⁷⁵ Wilkinson et al., 'Landscape and Settlement in the Neo-Assyrian Empire', 41.

⁷⁶ Younger, 'Assyrian Economic Impact on the Southern Levant in the Light of Recent Studies', 181–82.

⁷⁷ Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire*, 101–4.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 102–5.

⁷⁹ Holloway, *Aššur Is King! Aššur Is King!*, 65.

⁸⁰ Oded, *War, Peace, and Empire*, 9.

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Thus, they were required to pay reverence and loyalty to the king and Aššur, in addition to paying all the taxes imposed by the empire.⁸¹

TP III identifies the characters and acts of the rebellious citizens and clients in terms of the ones:

who planed sinful deeds in their hearts; who did not pull the yoke of the kings; who did not regularly done observance to the kings; who did not bring gifts; who do not recognise authority; over-confidant- they plan evil; spoke belligerently against Assyria; committed crime by making a coalition with others against Assyria.⁸²

The duties and tasks of the king were thus to expand the land and increase the people of Aššur.⁸³ This was potentially achievable by means of deporting and settling people from other regions. TP III states that: ‘I increased the territory of Assyria by taking hold of (foreign) land added countless people to its population, I constantly shepherded them in safe pastures’.⁸⁴ The king held the title of the shepherd, and he was expected to shepherd the people of Aššur along the right path in order to please the god. Here we can see that counting people as Assyrians would necessarily include them among the folks of the shepherd. This is perhaps the most likely reason for any concern of the king as expressed towards the wellbeing and safety of the deportees.

As for the people of Israel and Judah, there are limited written records from which we can obtain direct information. However, what we can derive from an interpretation of the Assyrian influence may in fact shed some light on the Israelites/Judean’s social and cultural life during the Neo-Assyrian period. The Hebrew Bible is also a source that provides detailed examples of the activities of Israel and Judah during the Neo-Assyrian period: 2 Chr. 6:36-39, 28:8; Hos.

⁸¹ Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 55.

⁸² Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III, King of Assyria*, RINAP, 91, Text 37, line 16’–22’.

⁸³ Postgate, ‘The Land of Assur and the Yoke of Assur’, 251.

⁸⁴ Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III, King of Assyria*, RINAP, 86, Text 35, line ii 15’–17’.

13:16; Isa. 8:4; Jer. 13:19; 2 Kgs. 15:5-11, 29, 16:5-1, 18:25. In addition, it could be the only source for the views of the subjugated peoples in the new Assyrian Empire.⁸⁵

It is obvious that oral tradition remained the way by which the word spread among the people of the ancient world. Therefore, the Bible as a written source would necessarily have become available much later than the actual of the time of the events. Accordingly, my argument below will consider whether what the prophets foresaw was what the people viewed as their predicted future.⁸⁶

If we take the Biblical texts literally, the Israelites and Judeans endured deportations due to an act of God ‘YHWH,’ and as a fulfilment of prophecies delivered by prophets from among themselves.

According to the Assyrian texts discussed previously, the inhabitants of a conquered land bore the punishment of deportation because of the rebellion and sin of their king. For example, the rebellion of Pekah, Hoshea and Hezekiah caused the deportation and displacement of the Israelites and Judeans. The Biblical records similarly indicate that the sin of the king against YHWH brought the deportation of the people. The Bible commonly uses a stereotyped phrase. This comes before statement of the punishment by God against the people whose king has sinned. For example, ‘And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done; he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat’(2 Chr.6:36; Hos. 13:16; Isa. 8:4). It is obvious here that the phrase was mainly aimed at the kings of Israel, while the Judean kings often did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

Isaiah warns and prophesies about an Assyrian invasion and discussed how the riches of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be carried off to Assyria (Isa. 8:4). Because of such prophecy, the people of Israel and Judah probably understood and accepted deportation as part

⁸⁵ Bedford, ‘The Neo-Assyrian Empire’, 33.

⁸⁶ Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 6-7.

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of their god's will and plan (Lam. 5:16).⁸⁷ They possibly accepted their fate as deportees and foreigners in a distant land because of their sins (Jer. 2:17, 17).⁸⁸ Indeed, 2 Chronicles. 6:37 mentions: 'If they sin against Thee—for there is no man that sinneth not—and Thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy so that they carry them away captive unto a land far off or near.' From the Biblical texts, sin against YHWH appears the apparent primary reason for delivery into captivity, although the hope of return was always possible through redemption (2 Chr.6:39).

Both the Assyrians and Israelites/Judeans interpreted deportation from a similar religious point of view. Assyria deported the sinners who sinned against their god Aššur, while citizens of Israel and Judah believed that they had been deported because they were sinners in the eyes of their god YHWH. This ideology can also be seen in Rab-Sheqeh's statement: 'Have I come to attack and destroy this place without word from the Lord (YHWH)? The Lord (YHWH) himself told me to march against this country and destroy it' (2 Kgs. 18:25). Is Rab-Sheqeh demonstrating an Assyrian superiority and belief in the propaganda, perhaps demonstrating the tip in terms of balance that made Assyria the favoured of YHWH? Perhaps because of this message the Assyrian government felt the people would surrender without resistance.

Deportation and Assyrian imperialism intertwined and correlated with each other since the latter caused the deportation. The Assyrian expansion and control led to the conquering of new lands and their nations who then fell under the yoke of Aššur. Later, the burden of paying tribute initiated rebellions which the Assyrians viewed as great crimes and sins against Aššur. Assyria justified her wars and military actions by reference to the rebellious people who ended up in captivity or being deported to foreign lands, where they became Assyrian citizens under *corvée* and were forced to pay new taxes.

⁸⁷ 'The crown has fallen from our head; Woe to us, for we have sinned!'

⁸⁸ 'Have you not done this to yourself By your forsaking the LORD your God When He led you in the way?'

Assyria clearly understood that controlling the strategic areas within the Near Eastern region would boost the economy of the empire. Therefore, evacuating the areas of their inhabitancy necessarily provided Assyria with the workforce required for the mammoth building project, and kept the strategic areas and trade routes uncrowded.

Chapter Four — The Conquered and the Conqueror

Mass deportations of people in the Neo-Assyrian wars are clearly attested and depicted in the ARI and the palace wall reliefs, there are also accounts in the Hebrew Bible. Yet, despite the evidence we have of these mass movements, specific information regarding the condition and fate of the deportees in war zones or during the deportation process are scarcely known.¹ The nature of the deportation process and the status of the deportees has become clearer with analysis of the AL, the non-royal and non-public correspondence between the king and his officials. The AL reveal much about the everyday aspects of life such as sales, complaints and corruption in the imperial administration sector.² The AL also suggest a level of compassion demonstrated by the Assyrian king towards the deportees during transportation and upon their arrival which is not found in other accounts.³

In this chapter, I will investigate the circumstances which faced the deportees from the point of deportation to their final resettlement, and how such processes affected the inhabitants of a conquered city. The texts used will include the ARI, the Nimrod Documents (ND), the AL and the Assyrian Deed Documents (ADD). Due to the word limit of the thesis, some textual evidence and other examples are incorporated within the footnotes of this chapter.

My investigation will focus primarily on the wars against the kingdoms of Israel and Judah under the Neo-Assyrian Empire. The inscriptions involved will focus on campaigns from the reign of various kings: TP III, Shalmaneser V, Sargon II and Sennacherib. However, as noted in the introduction (Chapter One), since the AL only includes limited evidence concerning the Israelite and Judean deportees, it is necessary to rely on examples of deportations of various other groups of people. From this evidence, we can assume that standard policy of deportation was practised towards all the conquered peoples.

¹ Nadali, 'The Impact of War on Civilians in the Neo-Assyrian Period', 101.

² Simo Parpola and Andreas Fuchs, *The Correspondence of Sargon II*, vol. 1, State Archives of Assyria (Helsinki University Press, 1987), 152–153, 167, 191.

³ Nadali, 'The Impact of War on Civilians in the Neo-Assyrian Period', 103.

It is likely that the deportees passed through three stages before reaching their final destination, where they were resettled in the new land. The ARI describes the first stage of the deportation clearly. It provides evidence of the inhabitants of the conquered cities as victims of invasion who consequently faced deportation. The ARI can also demonstrate the second and the third stages of the deportation process, although the AL does in fact describe the last two stages more efficiently.

First Stage

The first stage begins after the defeat of a besieged city and the subsequent surrender of its people. They then became prisoners of war (POWs).⁴ A POW is an individual (man, woman or child) taken captive because of a conflict (war). According to Ignace J. Gelb, a POW's fate depended on the stage of the economic advancement of the conqueror and his requirements in terms of labourers. For a POW to become necessary as a source of dependent labour the conquering power must have passed through three economic stages, which Gelb classifies as: primitive subsistence economy, limited-surplus economy and developed surplus economy.

In a primitive subsistence economy, or low economy, the conquering country/kingdom is unable to support the POW. Therefore, the POW becomes surplus and is usually killed.⁵ While a country is in a semi-developed stage, its limited-surplus economy enables the efficient utilisation of POW as laborers. In this stage, according to Gelb, men are killed at first while women and children are taken as labourers. However, this is a developing stage and through state development more men are then spared. Gelb later argues that in a developed surplus economy all POWs are taken captives and remain slaves throughout their lifetime.⁶ In a well-developed and literate society, such as the Assyrian society, POWs became vital for economic

⁴ Galil, 'Israelite Exiles in Media', 74.

⁵ Gelb, 'Prisoners of War in Early Mesopotamia', 71.

⁶ Ibid., 72.

and military success. In these types of economies there are therefore fully utilised for the benefit of the empire.⁷

At the very start of their journey most deportees would have experienced the besieging of their home city. Reliefs from the Assyrian palaces (Figure. 3) show what the people of a city would have endured and seen before they been captured.⁸ SAA 04:102 also describes the means utilised in the siege and conquering of a city.⁹ What is evident is that during a siege the inhabitants initially pull back inside their city and seek safety behind the fortified walls, while soldiers on towers attempt to defend the settlement. However, while the fortified walls do protect the city and its inhabitants from attack to varying degrees of success, they also can act as a tool of oppression against the inhabitants. Those trapped behind the walls are potentially victims of famine, thirst and finally death.¹⁰ It is commonly understood from depictions on the reliefs from the period, that the civilians in war zones did suffer the brutality of a battle and siege. In addition, the Biblical accounts of Jeremiah 14:18¹¹ and Lamentation 3:8–9,¹² 2:11–12¹³ both describe similar suffering to that which was probably endured by inhabitants under siege.

In many cases civilians are the ones who suffer the greatest impact of warfare, particularly when they are caught between the attacker (Assyrian army) and the attacked (rebellious king and his officials). When the city finally fell they faced deportation. Significantly, however, Oded argues

⁷ Ibid., 73.

⁸ Eph'al, *City Besieged*, 24.

⁹ Parpola and Luukko, 'The State Assyrian Archives', SAA 4:102 should he [go] and set up camp before that city, [...].ni, will they, [be it by means of w]ar, or through fri[endliness or peaceful negotiations], [or by means of a tunnel or bre]ach, (or scaling) ladders, or by means of ra[m]ps or battering-rams], [or through famine, or] by soaking with water, or by a strong weapon, or [.....], [or through ..., pr]essure, negligence, lack (of soldiers), or [...], or through any r]use of capturing a city whatever, [capture] that city, [enter that (whether) they will capture that city, [enter that city], and conquer [that city].city], conquer that city?

¹⁰ Eph'al, *City Besieged*, 57–68; Nadali, 'The Impact of War on Civilians in the Neo-Assyrian Period', 104–5.

¹¹ 'If I go forth into the field, then behold the slain with the sword! and if I enter into the city, then behold them that are sick with famine! yea, both the prophet and the priest go about into a land that they know not'.

¹² 'Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer. He hath inclosed my ways with hewn stone, he hath made my paths crooked.'

¹³ 'Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people; because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city. They say to their mothers, where is corn and wine? when they swooned as the wounded in the streets of the city, when their soul was poured out into their mothers' bosom'.

that the Assyrians did not deport the entire inhabitants of conquered towns, but rather selected from among the population the elites and the skilled people, including their innocent families.¹⁴ These people were likely to be literate, with a higher perceived status as qualified individuals and artisans.¹⁵ The people did not commit any crime, but nevertheless they became deportees because of their relationship to other rebellious people.

The ARI indicate that after the battle it was customary for people to become part of the sacked goods distributed among the officials.¹⁶ However, this was not always the case. Despite the description 'sacked goods' being used the Assyrian king appears to have counted and treated the deportees as Assyrian citizens and subjects of the empire.¹⁷

The bas reliefs which decorated the royal palaces and courts include visual depictions of civilians in war zones. Figures 3 and 4 represent two of the relief panels which detail the siege of the Judean town of Lachish by Sennacherib in 701 BC. Following the fall of this city, civilians of both genders and all ages were carried away by Assyrian officials. In some scenes women appear to be leaving after fall of the city, and who would probably have faced deportation. Interestingly, the relief portrays them as freely leaving the city, without any escort of soldiers. The relief also depicts a few men shown impaled on sticks while others are being flayed by soldiers. It is uncertain if the few tortured figures are civilians or military personnel because they are depicted unclothed.¹⁸ However, the tortured individuals are likely to be the leaders of the rebellion or perhaps their allies.

It is traumatic and depressing for any civilian to see his fellow citizens tortured and mutilated. Studies on present day civilians in war zones verify the existence of Post-Traumatic Stress

¹⁴ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 55.

¹⁵ Ibid., 24–25.

¹⁶ Nadali, 'The Impact of War on Civilians in the Neo-Assyrian Period', 109; Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III, King of Assyria*, 406'b–11'a, I counted(his) people, together with their possessions, [... (and) m]ules as (if they were) sheep and goats, (distributing them) among my army.

¹⁷ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 81–85; Tadmor, Yamada, and Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727 BC) and Shalmaneser V (726-722 BC), Kings of Assyria*, RINAP, 86, Text 35, Line ii 15'–17'.

¹⁸ Zorn, Nadali, and Vidal, 'War and Its Effect on Civilians in Ancient Israel and Its Neighbours', 85–88.

Disorder (PTSD) among those who have witnessed torture and abuse.¹⁹ This is a disorder which affects the mental health of the sufferer.²⁰ According to Assyrian and Biblical accounts, the inhabitants of Israel and Judah endured the viscousness of the Assyrian military campaigns. We can assume that they experienced the brutality of war. This was often followed by deportation, which meant long-distance travel under harsh and difficult circumstances.²¹ It is likely, therefore, that the Israelite and Judean civilians who were deported from war zones would most likely have suffered from PTSD.

Ahead of transportation, the deportees probably faced interrogation and filtration designed to sort them into groups and have them assigned to the care of a deportation official. For example, AAS 11:167 depicts the filtration of deportees from Cilicia, undertaken by gender and age. Interestingly, there seems to be some sorting done in terms of height measurements, which may suggest a form of sorting according to age, especially with children.²² SAA 01:195 6' contains an order from the king which requires the reviewing of deportees in order to select the abled bodied men.²³ The Assyrian army was made up of people from around the empire. In this way Assyrian native men were able to be reserved for important domestic tasks and were thus potentially spared from military duties.²⁴ For example, TP III and Sargon II conscript Samarian charioteers and auxiliary in their military units.²⁵ Assyria also required foreigners and captives to serve in the army to compensate for the relatively small Assyrian native population which was unable to fulfil the demands of a military machine for an expanding empire.

¹⁹ Services, 'Torture and Trauma'.

²⁰ Mels et al., 'The Psychological Impact of Forced Displacement and Related Risk Factors on Eastern Congolese Adolescents Affected by War', 1099–1101.

²¹ Nadali, 'The Impact of War on Civilians in the Neo-Assyrian Period', 106.

²² Parpola and Luukko, 'State Assyrian Archives on Line.', SAA 11:167, '334 able-bodied men; 38 children of 5 spans' height; 41 children of 4 spans' height; 40 children of 3 spans' height; 28 children, weaned; 6 months–5 years; 25 children, suckling-babies, Total 172 boys; 349 women; 8 females, of 5 spans' height; 22 females, of 4 spans' height; 22 females of 4 spans' height; 17 females, weaned; 25 females, sucklings; Total 121 girls; grand total 977 people, deportees, from Que'.

²³ Ibid., SAA 1:195 6', 'As to [the king my lo]rd's command: 'Review t[hese] persons whom the Commander-in-Chief b[rought forth] and ex[tract] men [from their mid]st'.

²⁴ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 50.

²⁵ Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III, King of Assyria*, RINAP, 106, Text 42, line 15'b–19'a. I carried off [to] Assyria the land of Bīt-Ḫumrria (Israel), [...it] auxili [army]; Younger, 'The Deportations of the Israelites', 216 I formed a unit with 200 of [their] chariots for my royal force.

ND 2443 points to the distribution of deportees among Assyrian officials. Two men with Hebrew names, Hilqī-Iāu and Gir-Iāu, are mentioned. They appear to have worked as agents and participated in escorting deportees. According to Gershon Galil, they most likely were Israelites deportees from the reign of TP III.²⁶ Yehuda Kaplan also claims that the Assyrians incorporated exiled troops into their army to strengthen the capacity of their military forces and to weaken the national and political entities from where these soldiers came. This had an additional aim in terms of reducing the ability of subject populations to rebel in future.²⁷ In terms of the Hebrew names, we know that the Assyrians recruited the Israelite officials to make the communication with the deportees quicker and more efficient. The Lachish relief offers evidence to support the existence of the mixed origins of soldiers, depicting military personnel each wearing native dress according to his origins.²⁸ For example, the Israelites/Judeans can be differentiated by their headdresses which have what looks like flaps covering the ears.²⁹

The first stage ends when the deportees have been sorted and prepared for the long journey, which we know to be under potentially harsh and severe conditions.

Second Stage

Textual evidence supports the carrying away of captives together with their possessions, although it fails to mention the exact procedure used in transportation. What we do know is that the transportation of captives occurred after a filtration procedure during which they were allocated into groups under the responsibility of an Assyrian official or a foreign agent. For example, see ND 2443.

In contrast, iconographic material depicts a much clearer representation of how the deportees were transferred. The Lachish relief (Figure. 4) shows the transportation of deportees by

²⁶ Galil, 'Israelite Exiles in Media', 73–74.

²⁷ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 48–54; Kaplan, 'Recrutiment of Foreign Soldiers into the Neo-Assyrian Army During the Reign of Tiglath-Pileser III', 138.

²⁸ Winter, 'Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Relief', 30.

²⁹ Dalley, 'Recent Evidence from Assyrian Sources for Judean History from Uzziah to Manasseh', 392.

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different means, such as: carriages, horses (more likely mules) and on foot. Families, especially women with young children are usually depicted as mounting carriages pulled by animals like horses, mules and even cattle. It is possible that the deportees possessed the wagons and the animals themselves since the evidence suggests that they were transported together with their personal possessions.³⁰ The reliefs also contain images of deportees on foot, carrying chests or equipment. The scene in figure. 4 shows children accompanied by their parents, while riding or on foot. Other scenes in figure. 5 depict captives (mainly men) on foot, under the supervision of an Assyrian official.

Families with such rich possessions were probably the wealthy citizens of the city who held the high status of elites, military and administration officials, skilled workers and perhaps even royals.³¹ Oded claims that the Assyrians often deported the elites according to their skills and significance to the empire. He also argues that Assyria did not transfer such important people alone, but rather transported them together with their entire household, which consisted of more than the standard nuclear family. He suggests that the Assyrians probably employed such policies to keep the skilled persons content and to stop them from thinking of deserting and running away.³²

So, who were the deportees of Israel and Judah? According to Faust, and based on archaeological evidence, the majority of the population in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah lived in rural settlements.³³ The Israelites and Judeans lived in basic social units called households (*bet av*) which contained several nuclear families all related to each other through a specific bloodline.³⁴ However, Faust states that ‘scholars like Lemche, Rogerson and Martin,

³⁰ H. Tadmor, S. Yamada, 2011, text no. 21, lines 1’–11’, p.61. ‘I utterly demolished...’ of sixteen dis[tricts of the land Bit-Ĥmnria (Israel). I carried off (to Assyria)].... Capti[ves from (5) 226 captives from..., captives from,...] captives [from ...], 400 [(and)captives from...], 656 cap[tives from] the city Sa.....], (altogether) 13,520 [people,...], with their belongings. [I The cities Arumâ (and) Marum, (...) which are sit[uated in] rugged mountain’

³¹ Faust, *The Archaeology of Israelite Society in Iron Age II*, 13–14.

³² Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 23–25.

³³ Faust, ‘Settlement, Economy, and Demography under Assyrian Rule in the West’, 3.

³⁴ Faust, *The Archaeology of Israelite Society in Iron Age II*, 11.

are divided regarding the degree of independence of the nuclear family on the framework of the extended family'. Further noting that 'according to Lemche, most families were nuclear and the expression (*bet av*) also denoted a nuclear family'.³⁵

During the Iron Age II, the citizenry of both kingdoms became divided into three classes. The first of these was the upper class, composed of the social, economic and political elites, such as senior administrative staff, high officials and the king's servants. The middle class consisted of people who perhaps held positions in the royal administration court such as military officers, artisans and wealthy farmers who were involved in agricultural activities. Finally, the lower class, which represented the bulk of the population, was the weakest and most marginal group. This group included peasants and people with weak economic conditions.³⁶ Scholars like de Vaux and Reviv argue that there was in fact only two classes: the rich and the poor. The poor were oppressed and weak, therefore they would be the group who most likely accept deportation following a peaceful negotiation such in Rab-shaqeh's speech.

The journey to Assyria would have been along a network of roads. According to results from satellite images and ancient textual evidence,³⁷ the Assyrian Empire's road system consisted of two types of roads. The 'royal roads' or the king's highway, are known to have been long distance routes used for communication between the Assyrian major cities. The second type of 'roads' are what is known as the hollow ways (ancient tracks traced on satellite images). These were shorter in distance and radiated out from settlements, connecting them to centres to agricultural fields or other small settlements.³⁸

A long-distance journey would have required some consideration of logistics. The captives needed plenty of food, water, shelter and rest. They may have rested at trade posts and fortress

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 16–17.

³⁷ SAA 06:335 5'; SAA 14:193 4'-5'; SAA 19:89 16'. The texts points to the royal roads and roads adjoining field, villages, cities and settlements.

³⁸ Wilkinson et al., 'Landscape and Settlement in the Neo-Assyrian Empire', 37; Fales, *The Rural Landscape of the Neo-Assyrian Empire: A Survey*, 98–99; Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 41–47.

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situated on the royal roads. Here they received rations of barley, water and the like. For example, SAA 19:81 talks about the barley rations required for feeding deportees under control of a transportation officer.³⁹ These barley and corn rations came from the heartland and therefore through the order of the king. In terms of accommodation along the way, SAA 15:41 3' indicates that the deportees required shelters to protect them from snow and other harsh weather.⁴⁰ SAA 05:80 4'-r5' mentions the building of forts and houses for deportees.⁴¹

The Assyrians are likely to have intended to transport deportees at specific times and during seasons tolerable for traveling, particularly the harvesting season. From the images on the Lachish relief (Figure. 5) we can see deportees walking beside plants carrying fruit which resembles grapes. Grapevines shoot in spring which starts around March/April of each year, while the produce becomes ready for harvesting around August–October. If we assume that the depictions of vegetation are accurate, then the transportation process of people possibly took place during the months of spring and summer. Evidence also suggests that the deportees were themselves involved in harvesting the produce which then sustained them during the journey. Interestingly, SAA 01:219 reveals that some deportees arrived at a town in the month of July where they harvested the fields and then privileged as Assyrian citizens (king's servants).⁴²

³⁹ Parpola and Luukko, 'State Assyrian Archives on Line.', SAA 19:81 'As to what I wrote to the king, my lord: 'I shall be late as I am assembling the people wherever they are.' I have (now) asked the sheikhs, and they told me: 'Not a single one is left. These are all there are. Now the sheikhs are coming; let the king, my lord, ask the[m]! Rema[n]ni-[Is]sar came up and met us along the stretch that leads to Ka[r]-Aššur. As to what the king, my l[o]rd, wrote to me: 'Feed the 6,000 captives in your presence. For how long? (They are) 6,000! Can I cut out one-third with all the magnates? Did I not write to the king, my lord, last year: 'There is no barley the king, my l[or]d, told me: 'If you had appealed to me, I would have given you 40,000 (homers) of barley. Now does the king know that I have no barley? How long still? Let 6,000–3,000 (homers) be given to me, and let 3,000 (homers) also be giv[en] to Šamaš-bunaya. This (is what) I am herewith appealing for to the king, [m]y l[or]d. As to what the king, my lord, wrote to me: 'I am giving them (= the other magnates) the later captives.' Let them share these (6,000 captives) with me, and I will (then) share the later (captives) with them. Perhaps the kin[g], my lord, will say: 'How are they to enter into the presence of Šamaš-bunaya? When are they to be stocked?' There are 150 walled towns of Šamaš-bunaya in Arrapha. Let them be brought in there.'

⁴⁰ Nadali, 'The Impact of War on Civilians in the Neo-Assyrian Period', 106; SAA 15:41 Parpola and Luukko, 'The State Assyrian Archives' Concern[ing the ... about wh]ich the king, my lord, wrote [to me]: 'The houses which are b[eing built] should be coate[d] with [bitumen] as in Ba[qarru]' — the king, my lord, knows that winters (lit. sn[ow] and ice) are very severe her[e]. Burnt bricks do not rem[ain] (whole) but disintegrate. Therefore [we] have built the house[s o]f mud-bricks.

⁴¹ Ibid., SAA 05:80 4'-r5' 'The forts and the [ga]rrison of the king, my lord, are well. The work on the fort [i]n the centre of the town [...]. Two men [.....].[..... the ... of] the king [ke]p [the watch]. The Chaldeans are building their houses. On the 20th of Elul (VI) I started working on bricks.'

⁴² Ibid., SAA 01:219. 'To the king, my lord: your servant(s) Aplaiu, Šarru-lu-dari and Išmanni-Aššur. Good health to the king, my lord! The deportees [arrived] on the 10th of Tammuz (IV); the horses [.....] fodder [.....]

Further, SAA 19:3 indicates that crops were cultivated to sustain deportees during transportation.⁴³

The Assyrian administrative texts clearly point to several problematic issues occurring while transporting deportees, such as harsh weather, food and episodes of disorder. The texts also reveal the concern of some Assyrian officials for the wellbeing of the deportees, as an example, the record of one official demanding barley rations be supplied to sustain the travellers during their journey to their new resettlement areas.⁴⁴

In the first stage of the deportation process captives were put into groups and assigned to transport officials who were part of the Assyrian army and may have even been from among the deportees themselves.⁴⁵ SAA 05:79 records an individual with the title of (*ša bīt kudine*) ‘mule stable attendant’ who appears responsible for transporting deportees. From his job title we can surmise that he probably had the responsibility of manning the royal stables and may have been involved in breeding mules. He seems to have responsibility for escorting the deportees and keep them from running away during transportation. He was required to accompany the army during the campaigns.⁴⁶

in our towns. The harvest of the deportee[s ...] had come out well; they brought along all the food they had. The deportees and the pack animals are eating stored grain [...] like the king’s servants.’

⁴³ Ibid., SAA 19:3 ‘They say that this cornfield that is under cultivation is for the deportees who are coming. When they come from Damascus, there are 100 (homers of) wheat and 20 (homers of) barley to send them from Orontes’.

⁴⁴ Nadali, ‘The Impact of War on Civilians in the Neo-Assyrian Period’, 105–6; Parpola and Luukko, ‘The State Assyrian Archives’, SAA 19:81 16’–r17’ As to what the king, my l[o]rd, wrote to me: ‘Feed the 6,000 captives in your presence.’ For how long? (They are) 6,000! Can I cut out one-third with all the magnates? Did I not write to the king, my lord, last year: ‘There is no barley.’ The king, my [l]or[d], told me: ‘If you had appealed to me, I would have given you 40,000 (homers) of barley.’ Now does the king know that I have no barley? How long still? Let 6,000–3,000 (homers) be given to me, and let 3,000 (homers) also be giv[en] to Šamaš-bunaya. This (is what) I am herewith appealing for to the king, [m]y l[or]d. As to what the king, my lord, wrote to me: ‘I am giving them (= the other magnates) the later captives.’ Let them share these (6,000 captives) with me, and I will (then) share the later (captives) with them.

⁴⁵ Refer to footnote no. 22.

⁴⁶ Gallagher, ‘Assyrian Deportation Propaganda’, 64–65; Parpola and Luukko, ‘State Assyrian Archives on Line.’, SAA 05:79 ‘To the king, my lord: your servant Aššur-belu-da’ in. Good health to the king, my lord! The mule stable attendant whom I brought forth in search of the runaway people of the country has brought forth men from my neighbourhood and given them to me. All Halziatbareans have run away in great numbers and are (scattered) all over the countries. The mule stable attendant is desperate, saying: ‘It is an impasse.’ Now Nabû’a, the mule stable attendant who was appointed in charge of the Chaldeans, has brought me 380 persons; a number of them remain in Yasumu and in Bit-Zamani. Let them send him a letter (telling him) how he is to bring forth the Chaldea[ns] compl[etely], and how he is to assemble the runaway people of the country and bring them to me’.

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From this evidence, we can see that the safety and wellbeing of deportees seems to be a matter of concern for the Assyrian king. SAA 19:6 further expresses the concern of the king towards the deportees, in that he makes the transportation official liable for their safety, security and wellbeing.⁴⁷ In line r 9' the king orders and directs the transport official to how care for the sick and weak among the deportees.⁴⁸ Figure 6 is a relief from the reign of Aššurbanipal which depicts deportees and their families resting at an army camp. It appears that the health and wellbeing of the deportees was indeed a matter of concern for the Assyrian king. According to SAA 05:156 an inspection ordered to examine the health and condition of the deportees in which they were described as suffering from the harsh weather and the fatigue of the journey.⁴⁹ Significantly, there is no mention of harsh treatment.

The stable attendant appears to deliver the deportees to another official or a governor who receives the group and prepares them for resettlement in the new land. In SAA 05:210 the deportation agent is described as bringing the captives to the governor who comforts them by calling them the 'king's subjects' or 'Assyrian citizens'.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid., SAA 19:6 'The king's word to Aššur-remanni and the scribe Nabû-bel-ahhešu. All the captives that I gave to you and whom you provisioned are people at your responsibility. Your [ox]en and sheep are at your disposal; [you] have received your provisions, having [re]quested it from the Palace. [Bring] all [the captives] that [I will send] you from [to]day on [... across] to the [other] side (of the river), [you shall provide] [for] them there. [...] to] them [.....].[...] from the Palace [...] You will give to the captives, [people of] your [province], from your [oxen] and sheep. (As for) the captives (to be) provisioned, don't be negligent over and over again (or) you will die because of it. If there is a sick person among the captives whom I send you from the empty-handed up to the needy, he is to be lifted up and placed in your care as long as he lives. If there is a sick person among the captives whom I send you from the empty-handed up to the needy, he is to be lifted up and placed in your care as long as he lives The clothes fo[r] the troops should be good but those [o]f the Itu'eans and the [...] should be different. The Itu']eans together with the shepherds [... cuts o]f shoulders [... the capt]ives. Should [there b]e exempts'.

⁴⁸ Ibid., SAA 19:6 r9' If there is a sick person among the captives whom I send you from the empty-handed up to the needy, he is to be lifted up and placed in your care as long as he lives.

⁴⁹ Ibid., SAA 05:156 'As to what the king, [our lord], wrote to us: 'When the gov[ernor] arrives, [...] th[e]re with the capti[ves]. NN arrived in Šu[...] on the 6th; we have [now] inspec[ted] the captiv[es] and are herewith writing to the king, [our lord]. The people are ve[ry] we[ak]; weather has eaten up [their] loo[ks] and the mountains have crushed them. They are coming ague-stricken. [The ki]ng, our lord, should know (this)'.

⁵⁰ Ibid., SAA 05:210 To the king, my lord: your servant Nabû-hamatu[a]. Good health to the king, my lord! The forts of the king, my lord, are well. A Mede forwarded me the (attached) letter from the governor, saying: 'Let your messenger bring it to the Palace.' I have spoken kindly with the countrymen of the son of Bel-iddina and encouraged them. The son of Bel-iddina (himself) is a criminal and a traitor; he does not obey [the king's orders]. [I said]: 'Do your work, each in [his house and] field, and be glad; you are now subjects of the king.' They are peaceful and do their work. I have brought them out from six forts, saying: 'Go! Each one of you should build (a house) in the field and stay there!' The king my lord's subjects have entered (the forts); the guard will be strong until the governor comes. I am doing everything the king, [my] l[ord], ordered him (to do).

The third stage of deportation commences at the arrival and resettlement of the deportees. It also concerns their engagement in everyday life in their new land.

Third Stage

The final stage of deportation is that in which the deportees resettle and become Assyrian citizens. Here we see the role assimilation as well as the impact of loss of identity.⁵¹

On arrival, and before resettlement, the deportees may have stayed at temporary stations such as forts. For example, SAA 05:210 r7' indicates that the deportees waited at six forts before receiving their fields, so they could settle and build their houses.⁵² The deportees were often settled in good places where they most likely enjoyed the comforts and privileges of a good life. According to SAA 01:247 Sargon II orders the resettlement of deportees in fortified places with good drinking waters.⁵³ Other texts also describe the state of the deportees at their arrival. In SAA 01:219 5'–16' the deportees are said to arrive with plenty of harvest produce and animals.⁵⁴ As mentioned above, they seem to have harvested the fields on their journey as a means of sustaining themselves during the trip and staying healthy and well.

⁵¹ Wilkinson et al., 'Landscape and Settlement in the Neo-Assyrian Empire', 26.

⁵² Parpola and Luukko, 'The State Assyrian Archives', SAA 05:210 r7' They are peaceful and do their work. I have brought them out from six forts, saying: 'Go! Each one of you should build (a house) in the field and stay there!'

⁵³ Ibid., SAA 01:247 [As to the ... whom the king my lord sent] to me with the captives, I have brought them [into the land of] the Chief Cupbearer and into [the cities of Ti]llê, Si'immê, Našibina and Isana; the exhausted ones I made enter Našibina on the 23rd. I impressed upon the deputies that it was a royal command that they should bring the people into fortified places where there is good water. [The]y said to me: '[.....

⁵⁴ Ibid., SAA 01:219 5'-16 "The deportees [arrived] on the 10th of Tammuz (IV); the horses [.....] fodder [.....] in our towns. The harvest of the deportee[s ...] had come out well; they brought along all the food they had. The deportees and the pack animals are eating stored grain [...] like the king's servants. The deportees and the pack animals are [well]; the king, my lord, [can be] pleased.'

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Evidence from SAA 01:10 indicates the process required before the resettlement of deportees.⁵⁵

In this example, the Urartian deportees are filtered and sorted before resettling in Urzuhina.⁵⁶

According to line r1' women captives received different treatment to other captives. Instead of moving them to Urzuhina, the Assyrian king ordered his officials to separate and relocate them to Arrapha⁵⁷ with other women there.⁵⁸ So, why were the women gathered at Arrapha until the arrival of the king? This may indicate that the selected women were to be transferred either to the harem house or even to temples. Women in the harem appear to have enjoyed a degree of freedom, certainly in terms of buying and selling people and properties. For example, SAA 06:91 speaks of a woman in the harem, who was probably a deportee, who held the status of concubine. She is described as someone who was able to buy people with their properties.⁵⁹ SAA 11:152, although it is very fragmented, points to female temple staff, who were possibly also deportees and who became stewardess and musicians.⁶⁰ Sennacherib himself reports receiving several male and female singers from Hezekiah as payment for obedience.⁶¹

Furthermore, evidence also indicates that many other deportees were occupied various administrative positions in the royal palaces and temples. For example, SAA 01:179 r13'-r18

⁵⁵ Ibid., SAA 01:10, The king's word to Nabu-duru-ušur: Right now I am sending the royal bodyguard Mannu-ki-Aššur to those Urartian emissaries: he will bring them to Urzuhina in advance of these captives who are eating bread in your charge. As for you, the day you see this letter, summon these captives; they should be on the alert, standing by, and the day Mannu-ki-Aššur the bodyguard writes to you: 'The emissaries have arrived in Urzuhina, set the captives in motion,' assemble the captives, go to Urzuhina, and entrust them [...] to the [city-over]seer of Urzuhina. [I am also sending] Aššur-balti-niše (with the following orders): 'Go [...] in the presence [of] and assi[st] them!' Indeed, the [Urartian] women who [are] in your charge with [these] captives in Arrapha, should not [go] with the captives! But now the women whom [he is see]king, taking out and bringing to [...], should live with these women in Arrapha, and should be given bread to eat and water to drink until I come. The palace chariots which are bringing these women are to provide the people with bread and the teams with fodder.

⁵⁶ Urzuhina is an Assyrian city province at the core of Assyria.

⁵⁷ Arrapha (Modern Karkuk) one of the major cities of Assyria.

⁵⁸ Parpola and Luukko, 'State Assyrian Archives on Line.', SAA 01:10 r1' 'But now the women whom [he is see]king, taking out and bringing to [...], should live with these women in Arrapha, and should be given bread to eat and water to drink until I come. The palace chariots which are bringing these women are to provide the people with bread and the teams with fodder'.

⁵⁹ Ibid., SAA 06:91 11' the palace concubine has contracted them; they are placed as a pledge in lieu of 20 minas of silver by the mina of Carchemish.

⁶⁰ Ibid., SAA 11:152.

⁶¹ Grayson and Novotny, *The royal inscriptions of Sennacherib, king of Assyria (704-681 BC)*, RINAP, 177, Text 22, line iii 45'-49'.

speaks of individuals who are most likely deportees working as artisans and performing in different trades such as: carpenters, chariot makers and smiths.⁶²

Moving and resettling thousands of people must have been an exhausting process for the Assyrian imperial administration. Therefore, carefully planned programs and policies would have been required to make the deportation process successful in terms of serving the Assyrian interests.⁶³

The Assyrian administration appears to have believed in, and practised, the ideology of land distribution. From this we can assume the significance of agricultural productivity. According to Gallagher, the Assyrians believed that ‘each household should have its plot of land from which it can sustain itself’.⁶⁴ The requirement to support an agricultural community may well have turned many deportees into land owners and farmers.⁶⁵ SAA 05:210 r2’-14,’ provides clear evidence that, on arrival, deportees received plots of land upon which they were then able to build their houses.⁶⁶ SAA 01:233 also talks about the distribution of land to deportees settling in Gozan.⁶⁷ Distributing land to deportees and encouraging them to build houses was one way

⁶² Parpola and Luukko, ‘State Assyrian Archives on Line.’, SAA 01:179, ‘My carpenters who worked in Šupat ran away from me. [The king, my lord], wrote that [they should re]turn to Dur-Šarruken, so I got hold of them and brought them down, but one of them got sick and died while the other ran away again. the king my lord knows that I have been losing artisans; I would not like to relinquish them either for repair work or for making ...s. Abatu, a chariot-maker, and Qanê, a smith, (both) servants of Bel-šarru-[u]šur, came to] me saying: ‘[.....’.

⁶³ Wilkinson et al., ‘Landscape and Settlement in the Neo-Assyrian Empire’, 32. Wilkinson stated that ‘the simultaneous creation of massive capital cities, deportation of conquered population, redistribution of rural labour in an agriculturally efficient manner, and installation of vast canal network could all be seen as the results of a carefully planned programs to remark the economy and demography of Assyria’.

⁶⁴ Gallagher, ‘Assyrian Deportation Propaganda’, 63.

⁶⁵ Parpola and Luukko, ‘The State Assyrian Archives’, SAA 05:210.

⁶⁶ Ibid., SAA 05:210 r2’-r14’ [I said]: ‘Do your work, each in [his house and] field, and be glad; you are now subjects of the king.’ They are peaceful and do their work. I have brought them out from six forts, saying: ‘Go! Each one of you should build (a house) in the field and stay there!’ The king my lord’s subjects have entered (the forts); the guard will be strong until the governor comes. I am doing everything the king, [my] l[ord], ordered him (to do)’.

⁶⁷ Ibid., SAA 01:233 ‘To the king, [my lo]rd: your servant Mannu-k[i-Aššur-le’i]. Good health to [the king, my lord]! As to what the king, my lord, w[rote to me]: ‘[Make a list of all] the natives of Kumme [who] hold [houses in your district, and resettle them]!’ I have enquired and investigated (and found that) the entire [.....] in the city of [Zarana]. I have written to every single place [.....] (and found that) just along the king’s road, [there is] one [.....]. It is unsuitable for passing [.....]. Perhaps the king, my lord, (now) says: ‘[Why] did you tarr[y] until now?’ [I ...ed] the area of the whole district [...], fetched the men [of Kumme] from Zarana [and settled them] in that place. Later on, I wrote (this letter). There is/are no [.....] here. As to what the ki[ng my lord wrote to me]: ‘Give Bel-duri the land that I ordered you (to give)!’ — the king, my lord, did not give me any (such) order previously, but now (that) the king my lord has written to me, I have done as it was written in the king my lord’s letter and given the land. I am herewith writing down the land Bel-duri holds in the district of Guzana and sending (the information) to the king, my lord: 60 hectares in the town of Aridu along the canal near Kubanaše;

to stimulate a sense of connection to the new land. This may have, in return, prevented the deportees from thinking of their past and homeland, and seeking to return.⁶⁸

Generations

According to Ahn's work on generations of Judean exiles in Babylon, we can classify the Israelite deportees to Assyria as first-generation deportees. These first-generation deportees would have consisted of people who had experienced the devastation and violence of war firsthand before being deported.⁶⁹ His analysis of Psalm 137 indicates that the first generation of Babylonian exiles lamented to their God that he had forsaken them. They are known as the lamenting generation.⁷⁰ Following them is the one and half (1.5) generation, who lived in the hope of a return to their homeland. This hope of returning perhaps helped with their integration in the foreign lands where they built their homes and lived their lives.⁷¹ Among the second generation we can observe the development of a new point of view that eventually sees the population assimilating into the hosting culture and tradition.⁷²

There is limited evidence concerning the first generations of the Israelite and Judean deportees who lived in the Assyrian heartland. All we have are scant records of a few individuals who are assumed to be Hebrews because of their names.⁷³ What we do know from the textual evidence of the Assyrian records is that deportees in general settled in the urban and capital cities such as Aššur, Kalḫu, Dur-šarru-kin and Nineveh. Others settled in cities such as Arbil, Arrapha,

200 in the village of Mar-jaba near Ilhini; 40 hecta[res in the town of ...]ritu near Guzana; 200 [in the village of] Amdanu near Bur-šarri: in all 500 (hectares of) land that Bel-duri holds in the district of Guzana. In addition to this, I have today given (him) the 80 hectares of l[and] about which the king my lord now wrote [to me]. Ever since the eunuchs of the king [my lord] came, land in Guzana [has been nonexistent]. The fields of [...], the land that the king my lord [...] to one among the cit[ies]. I have no [...] to give [...]; from (what I have), I can pa[r]cel out and give ... to Bel-duri only. The king, my lord, should kn[ow this]’.

⁶⁸ Ibid., SAA 05:210 r2’-r14’ ‘[I said]: ‘Do your work, each in [his house and] field, and be glad; you are now subjects of the king. They are peaceful and do their work. I have brought them out from six forts, saying: ‘Go! Each one of you should build (a house) in the field and stay there!. The king my lord’s subjects have entered (the forts); the guard will be strong until the governor comes. I am doing everything the king, [my] l[ord], ordered him (to do)’.

⁶⁹ Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations*, 98.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 73.

⁷¹ Ibid., 107.

⁷² Ibid., 15.

⁷³ Zadok, ‘Israelites and Judeans in the Neo-Assyrian Documentation (732–602 B.C.E.): An Overview of the Sources and a Socio-Historical Assessment’, 159–60.

Babylon, Nippur, while even more settled in rural periphery regions such as Gozan, Haran and Til-Barsip. In addition to the urban cities, the deportees also resettled in deserted, peripheral and ruined areas in order to enlarge the cultivated lands, develop and reconstruct the massive buildings and palaces and to dig the water canal system.⁷⁴

In terms of Israelite and Judean deportees, we have SAA 06:61. This records an individual who lived in Aššur and had the Hebrew name of *aḥi-ia-u*. In addition, ND 2443 and ND 2621 point to individuals carrying Hebrew names such as *Hi-il-qi-a/ia-u* and *Gir-ia-ū*, both of whom lived in Calḫu. Several other documents (CNT III, 121, 7–8) indicate the existence of other Israelites/Judeans in Calḫu. While TFS 121. 2-11 mentions the presence of three lamentation priests from Samaria, who most likely lived at Assyria proper received rations from the treasury equivalent to an Assyrian elite.⁷⁵ While Further, CNT III 99-118 identifies a military unit by use of the name of the city of their origin which was Samaria. This military unit possibly consisted of thirteen Samarian equestrian officers who served in the Assyrian army.⁷⁶ Another text, SAA 16:63, talks about Halbišu the Samarian, who is identified as ‘[a servant of] the king, my lord’ and who probably lived in Gozan. SAA 15:280 1’ similarly indicates that Samaritans lived in Ḫalahhu or Dur-Šarru-kin, which is where we know Sargon II deported people from Samaria.⁷⁷ Significantly, most of the individuals listed above held the high status of elites. They are recorded in their capacity as witnesses, the performance of which duty marks them out as free men.

Israelites/Judeans are also mentioned in documents from Nineveh. For example, SAA 06:34 refers to a chariot driver who acted as a witness on a deed document and who carries what we can assume to be the Hebrew name of Nadbi-Ya’u. SAA 06:61 4’ further mentions the name

⁷⁴ Oded, ‘Observations on the Israelite/Judean Exiles’, 91–103.

⁷⁵ Younger, ‘The Deportations of the Israelites’, 221.

⁷⁶ Dalley, ‘Foreign Chariotry and Cavalry in the Armies of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II’, 32.

⁷⁷ Parpola and Luukko, ‘The State Assyrian Archives’, SAA 15:280 [As to ... concerning which the king], my lo[rd], wrote to me: ‘[Provi]de [all the Sam]arians [in] your charge (with work) in Dur-Šarrukin’ — I subsequently [sent (word) to] the sheikhs, [say]ing: ‘Collect [all] the carpenters and potters; let them come and [direc]t the deportees [who are in D]ur-Šarrukin,’ but they did not agree to send them.

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‘Mannu-ki-Arbail son of Ahi-Yau’ which is a Hebrew name. The document also shows how the second generation or maybe even elements of the one and a half generation may have adapted Akkadian names different to their fathers who held what seem to be Hebrew names ending ‘Yau,’ which is the name of the Hebrew God YHWH.

Unlike the exiles to Babylon in 586, there is hardly any evidence pointing to the lamentation and sorrow of the deportees from Assyria. We do have a manuscript, entitled the book of Tobit, which concerns an individual who is supposed to be a deportee from the northern kingdom and who lived in Assyria. Tobit laments and remembers his original homeland and describes the hardship of his brethren, the Israelites/Judean deportees. The book of Tobit itself is a part of apocryphal literature, whose authority and veracity is doubted by many Biblical scholars. However, Devorah Dimant argues that the story is fictional although it is set in an authentic historical context.⁷⁸ Tobit, a deportee from the northern kingdom, lived in Nineveh where he served as the king’s purveyor.

This story also demonstrates the unification of an extended family of deportees even though they live in separation from each other. The story suggests that the deportees were free people, able to gain wealth and travel as they pleased.⁷⁹ As Assyrian citizens, the deportees most likely would have enjoyed the both privileges and civil rights of citizens. They would also have had an obligation to pay regular taxes and serving in the military or perhaps another form of labour commitment. At the same time, it is suggested that they enjoyed a measure of safety and prosperity, and were treated as equals before Assyrian law.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Dimant et al., ‘Tobit in Galilee’, 347.

⁷⁹ Dancy, ‘Tobit’, 16–23.

⁸⁰ Parpola, ‘National and Ethnic Identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire and Assyrian Identity in Post-Empire Times’, 14.

Settlements

The Assyrian Empire extended over a massive fertile area that required maintenance in order to achieve productive agriculture.⁸¹ Indeed, the requirements of the agricultural sector probably motivated the construction of the massive canal systems. In addition to the agricultural motivation mentioned, Wilkinson argues that building massive canal systems, especially in the remote rural areas, may have its ideological importance in demonstrating the might and power of the empire to the new settlers. Accordingly, he argues that because of the deportation policies, a substantial portion of rural inhabitants were born elsewhere. As a first-generation population, they perhaps did not have the same allegiance to the king as native Assyrians would have had.⁸² Nevertheless, despite the suggestion of an ideological value, Wilkinson still puts the economy as the primary value for building the canals.⁸³

Archaeological surveys indicate a dramatic increase in the settlements of Upper Mesopotamia during the Neo-Assyrian period. This increase in settlement is most likely related to a major program of repopulation.⁸⁴ The new settlements were usually established within the agricultural lands like former pasture lands or around reorganised small forts. SAA 01:247 points to the settlement of people in fortified places with good irrigation. Unfortunately, it is hard to understand the function of these Neo-Assyrian rural settlements since the archaeological knowledge concerning such settlements only developed from studying the surface remains of the sites and not from excavations. What we do know is that the landscape witnessed a considerable reorganisation during the Neo-Assyrian period because of the establishment of the massive system of irrigation and canals.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Oates and Oates, *Nimrud*, 13.

⁸² Wilkinson et al., 'Landscape and Settlement in the Neo-Assyrian Empire', 32.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 38–39.

⁸⁵ Ur, 'Sennacherib's Northern Assyrian Canals', 317; Ur, Jessica Giraud, James F. Osborne, and John MacGinnis. 'et al., 'Ancient Cities and Landscapes in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: The Erbil Plain Archaeological Survey 2012 Season', 101–8.

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Other knowledge concerning settlements can be obtained from evidence existing in other textual sources such as the Harran census lists. For example, SAA 11:201 indicates that many deportees lived in humble farmsteads or hamlets where they most likely owned their own fields.⁸⁶ According to Wilkinson, a study of the distinctive assemblage of ceramics collected from the northern Iron Age sites of Upper Mesopotamia, which can be dated to the eight century BC, demonstrates an increase in population which coincides with the mass deportations of people to the area.⁸⁷

The Assyrian Empire required people to be settled in areas across the empire for the benefit of its growth. We can clearly see how the prosperity and advancement of any state was somewhat dependant on its population. Evidence indicates that the population of Assyria proper was small when compared to its agricultural lands.⁸⁸ SAA 19:89 reports on a dearth of workforce in Assyria proper. This may have potentially caused the dispute described in the text that relates to abandoned fields.⁸⁹ Likewise SAA 01:176; 177 also points to a lack of people in Assyria proper. In the text, the official requests individuals and even families to come and perform different tasks such as harvesting fields. Other texts complain about the lack of native city gatekeepers and guards.⁹⁰ Here we can see that the policy of bringing people from various parts

⁸⁶ Parpola and Luukko, 'The State Assyrian Archives', SAA 11:201 il'-i10' Arnabâ, son of Se'-aplu-iddina, gardener; his mother: a total of 2. Ahabû, gardener; Sagibu, his son, adolescent; Il-abadi, his son, of 4 spans' height; 2 women: a total of 5 people. 10,000 stalks of vine; two houses; 10 hectares of arable land of their own. Total, in the town of Hananâ, in the district of the city of Sarugi.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 38-40 'The surveys in Upper Mesopotamia extended from the Upper Tigris valley as far as west as the Turkish Euphrates and as the Balikh in Syria and even further west. Surveys also done on Cizer, Iraqi North Jazira, Hamokar, Wadi Ajijj, Beydar, Jebel Abd al-Aziz, Wadi Hamar, and Balikh Valeys'

⁸⁸ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 54.

⁸⁹ Galil, 'Appropriation of Land by Officials in the Neo-Assyrian Period', 99; Younger, 'The Deportations of the Israelites', 219; Parpola and Luukko, 'The State Assyrian Archives', SAA 19:89 r9'-r22' Our servants, the elders of the country, said: 'They removed our brothers (and) their field was abandoned. Down came the (men) of Bel-aplu-iddina and seized the village there by force.' Now [I]et 2-3 elders of the country, local people, come and settle (the issue) whose field it is with the servants of Bel-aplu-iddina in the presence of the king, my lord. They are making unsubstantiated allegations in the king my lord's presence. If a field in the province of Urzuhina is abandoned is it without an owner? Can anyone who desires a field parcel it out?

⁹⁰ Parpola and Luukko, 'State Assyrian Archives on Line.', SAA 01:176 20' If it is acc[eptable, let me b]ring [500 men f]rom A[r]gite t[o] Š[upat] and let [...] in their presence. I harvest the sown fields of the city of Hi[...], and in addition to them I harvest an extra 1,000 (hectares of) the sown fields of the city of Laba'u. Now, let the king my lord give me Assyrian and Itu'e'an people (so) I can have (them) hold the [...]; there is no Assyrian city-overseer nor any Assyrian gate-guards in Šupat; SAA 01:177 4' The town of Hēsa, a road station of mine, lacks people; the postmaster and the commander of the recruits are there alone and cannot attend to it (properly). Now, let me get together 30 families and place them there. There are men of Nabû-šalla the prefect living in Hēsa, a cohort of craftsmen; let him move them out, settle them in the town of Argite, and give them fields and gardens.

of the empire and settling them in major capitals within Assyria proper was vital for the growth and prosperity of the expanding empire.⁹¹

Assimilation

These new settlers faced many cultural, religious and economic challenges which may well have influenced their assimilation in their host land. One of the major questions is: did the deportees of one origin (Israelite/Judean) lose their identity following deportation and potential assimilation? Were they instead perhaps grouped together to create an ethnicity. An ethnic group as defined by Geoff Emberling as ‘a group whose members view themselves as having common ancestry, share a common language, unified by the construction of their past by perception of injustice in the past or present, and often by hopes for a future reunification.’ He also argues that ‘a new ethnic group arise when people migrate or are forced to move from place to place’.⁹²

Application of Emberling’s definition of ethnicity to the Israelites and Judean deportees suggests that they possibly could have formed an ethnicity while in the heartland of Assyria. Textual evidence indicates that Israelites/Judeans were indeed carried to the core of the empire and it is likely that they lived together in communities. Yahwistic names among the records are evidence of the ethnicity since only the Israelites and Judaeans worshiped YHWH.

Zadok discusses a deed from Dur-Katlimmu (a city in the Khabur region) indicating that people from the same ethnic group intended to live near to one another. The deed also contains names of witnesses, among whom Zadok identifies some of Israelite/Judean origin, who formed a cohesive quintet.⁹³ Radner also studies individuals among the witnesses recorded in this deed and expresses the opinion that some may have belonged to Israelite/Judean origin.⁹⁴ In contrast,

⁹¹ Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 28; Wilkinson et al., ‘Landscape and Settlement in the Neo-Assyrian Empire’, 26.

⁹² Emberling, ‘Ethnicity in Complex Societies: Archaeological Perspectives’, 308.

⁹³ Zadok, ‘Israelites and Judeans in the Neo-Assyrian Documentation (732–602 B.C.E.): An Overview of the Sources and a Socio-Historical Assessment’, 172.

⁹⁴ Radner, ‘Neue Neuassyrische Texte Aus Dür-Katlimmu’, 185.

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Becking, basing assumptions on the lack of evidence to support the claim above, denies that the individuals are descendants of Israelites/Judeans.⁹⁵ The results from Zadok and Radner's studies on the Yahwistic names of individuals support the argument that they were most likely of Israelite and Judaeen origin.

Despite Zadok's discussion that 'the same ethnic group intended to live near one another,' Assyria is recognised to have become a melting pot where different people of different cultures came together to merge, mix and assimilate.⁹⁶ This 'Assyrianisation' is apparent in Sargon's Cylinder Inscription where he mentions the settling of people in the new capital Dur-Šarru-kin. He notes that they 'became one mouth'.⁹⁷ 'Becoming one mouth' indicates at least an awareness among the deportees to learn a common language. This is possibly Aramaic which became the lingua franca throughout the empire.⁹⁸

Here we can see how Assyria aimed at unifying people under one language,⁹⁹ possibly with the aim of having greater control over the population through communication. In this way, the government could work towards the goal that was peace and order in the empire. The deportees may have been required to learn the new language as a factor in becoming Assyrians or part of the people of Aššur.¹⁰⁰

Modern assimilationists, according to Stephen Castles, view the migrant as someone whose pre-migration culture is useless and even harmful in the new setting.¹⁰¹ In this context, we can see how important it was for the Assyrian government to require deportees to go through a process of re-socialisation or acculturation. From modern comparisons, we know this

⁹⁵ Becking, 'West Semites at Tell Šēḫ Ḥamad: Evidence for the Israelite Exile?', 162–63.

⁹⁶ Emberling, 'Ethnicity in Complex Societies: Archaeological Perspectives', 308–9.

⁹⁷ Fuchs, 'Die Inschriften Sargon II', 44 (line 72–73). 'The People of the four (quarters), of foreign tongue and divergent speech, inhabitants of mountain and plain, all whom the light of the god, the lord of all, shepherded, whom I carried off with my powerful sceptre by the command of Assur, my lord ----I made them of one mouth and put them in its (Dur-Sarruken's) midst.

⁹⁸ Parpola, 'National and Ethnic Identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire and Assyrian Identity in Post-Empire Times', 8–9; Younger, 'The Deportations of the Israelites', 224.

⁹⁹ Parpola, 'National and Ethnic Identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire and Assyrian Identity in Post-Empire Times', 13.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Castles, 'Towards a Sociology of Forced Migration and Social Transformation', 23.

potentially involves the renunciation of the original culture and the adoption of the values, norms and behaviour of the hosting society and, in many cases, leads to eventual assimilation.¹⁰²

The importance of assimilation is perhaps what encouraged Sargon II to make people all speak one language. As quote above: ‘I made them of one mouth and put them in its (Dur-Sarruken’s) midst.’ The Assyrian Empire here appears to have understood the danger having captured people maintaining their original languages. In the modern context, according to Castle, ‘Migrants who maintain their language, religion, and culture and who cluster together as a way of coping with racism and exclusion are seen as a threat to social cohesion.’¹⁰³ In contrast, Younger suggests that ‘the only way to survive the exile was to find a common language; to intermarry with one another; serve the Assyrian king loyally; do the labour which is required by the empire; adapt other religious deities; to be receptive to other cultural practices.’¹⁰⁴

Evidence from the Assyrian texts states that many of the deportees were counted as Assyrians. The Assyrians themselves were a group of people who took their name and identity from Aššur, their god.¹⁰⁵ Becoming an Assyrian would most likely have meant belonging to god Aššur. In terms of religious assimilation, counting deportees as Assyrians did mean that they belonged to Aššur. As new Assyrians, they may well have gained some of the privileges of everyday life which may have eventually impacted on their assimilation into Assyrian society.¹⁰⁶

According to K. van der Toorn, when people move away from their original lands they usually carry with them their gods and beliefs. In addition, the god of a family or group was not necessarily the national god of the land they were deported to.¹⁰⁷ In SAA 01:2 the name of the national god Aššur is mentioned with other foreign gods who seemed to have been worshiped

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 23–24.

¹⁰⁴ Younger, ‘The Deportations of the Israelites’, 224.

¹⁰⁵ Postgate, ‘The Land of Assur and the Yoke of Assur’, 251.

¹⁰⁶ Parpola, ‘National and Ethnic Identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire and Assyrian Identity in Post-Empire Times’, 12–13.

¹⁰⁷ van der Toorn, ‘Migration and the Spread of Local Cults’, 365–67.

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and identified as ‘my gods’.¹⁰⁸ In terms of Biblical narratives that support the role of religion in the lives of the deportees we do have some apocryphal literature.¹⁰⁹ However, there is no evidence of the worship of YHWH by deportees in Assyria. Indeed, from the text cited above we can assume that it is plausible that the Israelites (especially those identified as first generation) like other foreigners in Assyria could have continued to worship their god next to the national god, Aššur.

Deporting and mixing people together appears to be one aim of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in its search for peace and order in the world. The first generations, who witnessed the trauma of war and the desolation of being deported, are described as the ones who lament and remember. In contrast, by the second-generation individuals may have come to value the privilege of being Assyrian citizens living in prosperous capital cities or enjoying the fruits of productive fields. For example, it is likely that one of the witnesses in a sale document (discussed below) is from the second generation. He is described as having the Akkadian name Adad-milki-éřeš son of Me-na-se-e. We can assume him to be of an Israelite/Judahite origin because of his Hebrew name. Similarly, we also have Nabu-málik son of Ahi-iá-’ who acted as witness on the same deed.¹¹⁰

Deportees typically went through what seems to have been a long and exhausting process. It would have started with their experiences during the military attacks on their cities, in which they are likely to have witnessed the death and maiming of many. We know they then suffered famine, thirst and hardship as part of a long journey to a new and unfamiliar environment. However, after resettling it seems that they benefited from their new situation, particularly those fortunate enough to gain possession of fields, houses and even high status and positions. Comparisons with modern mass movements of people suggest that with time comes a gradual

¹⁰⁸ Parpola and Luukko, ‘State Assyrian Archives on Line.’, SAA 01:2 6’ *I adjure you by Aššur and my gods: you are not to send your [rab-mūg]i officer to me [under any circumstances!]*.

¹⁰⁹ Dancy, ‘Tobit’.

¹¹⁰ Zadok, ‘Israelites and Judeans in the Neo-Assyrian Documentation (732–602 B.C.E.): An Overview of the Sources and a Socio-Historical Assessment’, 169.

process of assimilation and integration into new ways of life, which may also include the adopt of new names, culture and possibly even religion.

Chapter Five — Conclusion

When we compare contemporary definitions of forced migrations to examples from the ARI we can see the aggressive nature of the Assyrian deportation programs and its displacement of people against their will. However, the AL represent the situation in an entirely different way. In those documents, the movement of people is observed as being well planned, and concern for the wellbeing of deported people even seems to have been a matter of concern for the Assyrian king.

Assyria's population requirements appear to be the main motivations for population movement and exchange. These population requirements stem from an urge towards expansion coupled with a desire to achieve greater imperial dominion and control. As discussed above, forced migrations can find their source in political situations such as tyranny and warfare. For example, we have the account of Sennacherib and Hezekiah in which the latter rebelled by not paying the taxes and tributes, and the king was forced to act. Significantly, the Assyrian forced movements also seem to be profit driven. For example, the importance of the Levantine coast to the Assyrian government and economic growth encouraged Assyria towards practising exchanges of population in order to have better control of the area.

Analysis of the different Assyrian texts from the ARI and the AL indicates that deportees passed through three stages during the deportation process. Stage one can be defined in terms of the individuals as 'captives and prisoners of war'. The people are then filtered in accordance with their status and skills. Stage two involves the transportation of deportees to new lands, usually escorted by Assyrian officials who are responsible for the wellbeing and safety of the deportees. In stage three they are resettled within Assyria proper or perhaps in the Assyrian provinces where they became Assyrian citizens. At this stage, some deportees can be considered free people working in the royal administration system, the royal palace and temples. Many of them also took on military service. Others become farmers who cultivate lands, build houses and contribute to the Assyrian economy in that way. The necessity for additional imperial

administrative and military workforces can be considered an important trigger for the deportation policy.

Many deportees seem to have adapted to the Assyrian culture, mixing with the locals and adopted new Akkadian names. However, in many cases they continue to live in local ethnic groups. In general terms, the deportees appear to have worked freely and, in most cases, they were not enslaved. Some even held high positions including freemen running their own businesses. The evidence indicates that the deported people were a significant economic resource for the empire, and this could be one of the reasons for the king's expressed concern for their wellbeing and safety during transportation.

All the imperial motivations discussed in chapter three — the need to quell rebellion, the need for a greater workforce, and economic growth — played significant roles in the development of a deportation process. However, I suggest that religious ideology is the key factor for population exchange in the Neo-Assyrian period.

Peace and order in the empire were commanded by Aššur. This order could only be achieved by expanding the land of Assur and stretching it to the four corners of the world. This necessitated increasing the population of Assur through adding people, by annexing their lands or by deporting them from different regions in the empire. If we accept that religious ideology is central to the deportation policy, then we can also see it as key rationale for the lenient treatment of the deported peoples. The migrants were to be added to the Assyrian flock under the protection of the king as shepherd.

I argue that many of the deported people appear to have accepted peaceful negotiation offered by Assyrian officials on behalf of the empire and willingly moved to better places. The visual evidence shows people being carefully transported by carriages, and sent to destinations where they receive land and houses to settle. This process resembles many modern immigration policies, which seek to settle people and provide them with shelter and work. Records of mass

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killings and punishment in the Assyrian accounts are primarily directed against the rebellious and other wrongdoers. Assyria offered peace and tranquillity to the kingdoms who obeyed the treaties, which in turn led to their prosperity and improvement.

Despite over a hundred and fifty years of work in the field of Assyriology, further work is required in the region of Ancient Assyria. Although the current region is politically unsettled, and war torn, more archaeological work and investigation are required to reveal more evidence about the mighty Assyrian Empire. There is also a necessity for new investigations to be conducted on the Assyrian royal and non-royal accounts, to further reveal the actual motivations behind the imperial policies.



Figure 1. The Neo-Assyrian Empire.

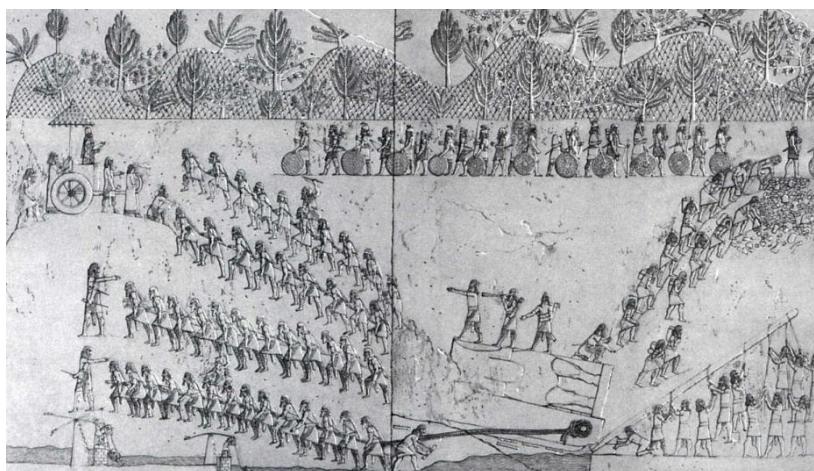


Figure 2: Moving the bull out of the quarry, drawing of slab 63 and 64 court VI, Southern place, Nineveh (OD, I, 57).

J.M. Russel, Sennacherib's 'Palace Without Rival' page 566



Figure 3: From Nineveh (modern-day Mosul Governorate, Iraq), Room XXXVI of the southwest palace, panel 7. The British Museum, London.

<http://etc.ancient.eu/photos/siege-lachish-reliefs-british-museum/>



Figure 4: From Nineveh (modern-day Mosul Governorate, Iraq), Room XXXVI of the South-West Palace, panels 8-9. The British Museum, London.

<http://etc.ancient.eu/photos/siege-lachish-reliefs-british-museum/>

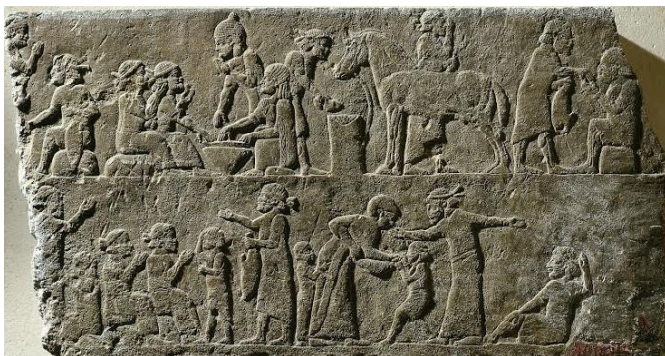


Figure 5: Military camp, Relief 7, Palace of Assurbanipal, The Louver Museum.

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