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GIOVANNI B. LANFRANCHI

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GIOVANNI B. LANFRANCHI Padova

The Ideological and Political Impact of the Assyrian Imperial Expansion on the Greek World in the 8th and 7th Centuries BC*

This paper is devoted to the study of the earliest known relations between the Neo-Assyrian empire and the Greek world, which took place, as attested by various sources, at the end of the 8th and the very beginning of the 7th century BC. This study is aimed at trying to delineate an admittedly very preliminary sketch of the background to the relations between East and West which progressively tightened during the flourishing of Assyria and in the centuries following its final fall. It must be acknowledged, obviously, that the relations between the Greek and the Near Eastern world during the first millennium BC are much older than those between Greeks and Assyrians. The small southeastern Anatolian, Syrian, Phœnician, and Palestinian states probably had older relations with Greece than Assyria did, and proved perhaps more familiar to the Greek world formed of small polities. Thus, Assyria was not the first Near Eastern, "Oriental," entity with which the Greeks entered into con-

tact. However, the study of the relations between Assyria and Greece is extremely important, if not crucial and essential, due to the fact that Assyria unified for the first time in history the whole Near East in a single, structured empire. Because of its strict internal organization and of the policies which were coherently established by the governing elite for a long period, this imperial structure reached a degree of absolute solidity which could transcend both time and ethnic composition. As a matter of fact, the unification of the Near East lasted, and the subject territory was progressively enlarged, even after the fall of the prime governing centre and the bloody defeat of the elite which had achieved the unification of the area and then governed it.

The definitive consolidation of the Neo-Assyrian empire took place during the latter half of the 8th century. This phenomenon certainly interfered with the change and development of the Greek world and of Greek culture, which received a dramatic acceler-

* This paper is a revised version of the lecture I gave at the Tvärminne 1998 meeting. I have limited my analysis to the initial period of the relations between Assyria and Greece (until the reign of Sennacherib). Abbreviations: Bing 1969 = J. Bing, *A History of Cilicia during the Assyrian Period*, Ph.D. Diss. Indiana University 1969; Frahm 1997 = E. Frahm, *Einleitung in die Sanherib-Inschriften* (Archiv für Orientforschung Beiheft 26), Horn 1997; Fuchs 1994 = A. Fuchs, *Die Inschriften Sargons II. aus Khorsabad*, Göttingen 1994; Haider 1996 = P.W. Haider, "Griechen im Vorderen Orient und in Ägypten bis ca. 590 v. Chr.," in Ch. Ulf (Hrsg.), *Wege zur Genese*

griechischer Identität: die Bedeutung der früharchaischen Zeit, Berlin 1996, pp. 59-115; Jasink 1990 = A.M. Jasink, in P. Desideri - A.M. Jasink, *Cilicia. Dall'età di Kizzuwatna alla conquista macedone*, Torino 1990; Luckenbill 1924 = D.D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (Oriental Institute Publications 2), Chicago 1924; Matthäus 1993 = H. Matthäus, "Zur Rezeption orientalischer Kunst-, Kultur- und Lebensformen in Griechenland," in K. Raaflaub (Hrsg.), *Anfänge politischen Denkens in der Antike. Die nahöstlichen Kulturen und die Griechen* (Schriften des Historischen Kollegs, Kolloquien 24), München 1993, pp. 165-86.

ation just in this period, despite the apparently great distance between the two areas. The transformations which resulted from Assyrian expansion in the Near East dramatically touched upon the Levantine coast, the area in which the Greeks had been and were in direct contact with the “Oriental” world in this period. Such changes immediately affected the Greek economy, because Greek trade was to bear their consequences, whether positive or negative, as well as the commercial activity of the Levantine states and cities. Thus, the apparently distant Neo-Assyrian empire became immediately an element *internal* to the political, social, economic and cultural transformations in the Greek world.

Even if the sources concerning this period and this problematic area are extremely rare, it can be safely submitted that the political thinking, the diplomatic activity, and the cultural attitude of the Greeks had to be subject to a rather sudden reexamination, in order to fit, and to react to, the new situation in the East and the changes which it was introducing in their homeland. On another level, the spreading and consolidation of the Neo-Assyrian empire were certainly the first elements of the political and cultural attitude towards the problem of the “empire,” and of the “Eastern empire,” to crystallize in the Greek historical consciousness. Other imperial structures, like Urartu and Phrygia, certainly had some relations with the Greek world before Assyria. However, as regards Urartu, any contact was mediated by interposed independent states; the involving experience of direct contact was lacking, and certainly the obvious reactions in Greece were rather soft

and essentially unproductive. As for Phrygia, it is true that it expanded in a wide area of the Anatolian peninsula and competed with Assyria; however, its expansion was limited in the southeast by independent states (and by the Neo-Assyrian empire itself): thus the Greeks certainly realized in a short time that it was nothing more than a strong regional power.

Relations between empires, and relations between empire and its periphery (which progressively included Greece too) are the elements which influenced the Greek world in this period. As such, they must be thoroughly and carefully studied, in order to evaluate their contemporary impact and the influence which they exerted in the following centuries once they were elaborated by, and absorbed into, Greek thought. This paper will deal with the very beginnings of the relations between Assyria and Greece, which took place in the period in which Assyria took control of the coastal regions of northern Syria and southeastern Anatolia under the kings Tiglath-pileser III (743-725 BC), Sargon (721-705) and Sennacherib (705-689). What will be studied here is thus the first impact of the prevailing imperial structure upon the Greek world. However, the Assyrian empire continued to exert its influence upon the Greek world during the following decades, until the fall of Nineveh in 612 BC. A detailed study of this period is equally necessary, in order to evaluate the effects of the definitive consolidation of the Near Eastern imperial unification, and of the further expansion of its influence in the direction of Anatolia and of the Greek world.

Greek-Near Eastern Relations from the 10th to the 8th Century BC: The Archaeological Data

A picture of the relations between the Greek world and the Near East can be drawn on the basis of recent comprehensive studies of the spread of Near Eastern artefacts in the Greek world and of the diffusion of Greek pottery in the Levant¹ during the first four centuries of the first millennium BC.

Near Eastern Artefacts in the Greek World

Near Eastern imports in the Greek world (Asia Minor, the Ægean Sea, Crete, and mainland Greece) appear in the 10th century BC, and progressively increase during the 9th, the 8th and the 7th centuries. The area of provenance is very wide: it includes southeastern Anatolia, North Syria, Cyprus, Phœnicia and Egypt. As for the quality of the imports, they include pottery, metal-work (bronze and gold) and ivory items. No clear prevalence of a specific area of origin can be detected in specific periods. On the other hand, the debate about the identity of the trading vectors (Phœnicians or Syrians or Cypriotes or Greeks or all of them inextricably mixed together), has a long history and is still flourishing, no convincing solutions having been presented so far owing to the mixed character of the findings. It is generally agreed that in the 10th century the initiative was primarily in the hands of Syro-Phœnicians, who were soon joined by Greeks and Cypriotes; and it seems that, by the second half of the 7th century, a slow but progressive decline of the Phœnician trade took place in favour of the Greek.²

Greek Pottery and Settling in the Near East

The second part of the problem is represented by the penetration of Greek pottery in the Near East, which, as far as it is attested by excavations, means essentially the coastal area. The first point to be stressed is that the proportion of Greek pottery among Near Eastern pottery progressively increases to significant numbers only in the Syro-Phœnician coastal centres north of Byblos and in the maritime centres of south-eastern Anatolia (an area roughly corresponding to classical Cilicia). South of Byblos, only a few scattered Greek findings are attested throughout the whole period, both in the coastal and in the inland centres.³ In the background of a general development of international trade during this period, such divergent patterns should be given different interpretations. As for the southern Levant, the consistently scattered presence of Greek pottery should be ascribed exclusively to the flourishing of international trade in luxury items. In the northern Levant, however, the growing proportion of Greek pottery should be ascribed to different economic and social factors, involving Greece and the East in closer relations, including the creation of stable *emporía* and settling.

In the Syrian coastal centres, such as Ras el-Bassit, Sukas, Ras Ibn Hani, Al-Mina and Tabbat al-Hammam, a common pattern can easily be detected. Greek pottery appears at the beginning of the 9th or at the turn of the 8th century BC. It originates

¹ It must be stressed that no other kind of clearly Greek artefact has so far been detected in the Near East.

² Matthäus 1993, p. 169.

³ Haider 1996, pp. 60-62 (for Tyre), pp. 72-77 (for the Palestinian coast and the internal regions).

mainly from Eubœa, but also from the Ionian islands, Ionia proper and Rhodes, and invariably consists of items for table service (various drinking vessels, *skyphoi*, etc.). Up to the mid-8th century, the finds are generally few in number, and are outnumbered by pottery for table service imported from Cyprus and Phœnicia. Such a disproportion should suggest that they were acquired by the local *élites* as expensive exotic items, to be displayed on social occasions, exactly as they were in the southern Levant during the whole period. However, Greek pottery strongly increases during the 8th century, and prevails over other foreign pottery during the 7th. At Ras el-Bassit, Greek pottery appears beginning in the late 10th century, but strongly increases in the last quarter of the 8th century.⁴ In some houses Greek pottery is in the clear majority, and this has been attributed to the presence of Greek settlers.⁵ In 8th century Sukas, Greek pottery appears, progressively overwhelms and finally replaces other foreign (especially Phœnician) items; in the 7th century its numbers increase to the point that a Greek settlement may be almost safely envisaged.⁶ In Ras Ibn Hani, Greek pottery appears during the 8th century, and increases during the 7th.⁷ In Al-Mina, before ca. 750 Greek items are rare in comparison with other foreign products (Cypriote pottery with local imitations); after ca. 750, however, Greek items progressively prevail, and local high standard imitations appear.⁸ During the 7th century, a dramatic growth takes place, and Greek pottery reaches 50% of the total.⁹ In Tabbat al-

Hammam, Greek pottery appears ca. 850, and increases strongly during the 7th century. In general, with regard to the North-Syrian coastal region, the archaeological evidence shows that the increase of Greek items, the decline of other foreign items, and the installation of Greek settlers takes place during the second half of the 8th century BC, after a long period in which Greek items are represented in a percentage much smaller than other (Near Eastern) items.

On the Cilician coast, a similar pattern can easily be detected. For a long period Greek items are few; this is followed by a rapid strong increase associated with settling. At Tarsus, Greek pottery appears in the middle of the 9th century; between ca. 850 and 696 BC (the 696 year being marked by a destruction level which has been correctly attributed to Sennacherib's conquest of the city: for this conquest, see below in detail¹⁰), its percentage slowly increases to 10% of the total.¹¹ At Mersin, during the whole 8th century, Greek pottery is limited to 13 items.¹² From these data, it may be deduced that, during the 9th and the 8th centuries, in coastal Cilicia only luxury pottery was imported, in the same framework of international trade as in North-Syrian coastal centres. The picture radically changes from the beginning the 7th century onwards. At Tarsus, the number of Greek pottery items grows dramatically, to the point that a Greek settlement may be safely postulated;¹³ at Mersin, a strong growth of Greek pottery takes place, in the context of a complete rebuilding of the town which parallels exactly the phase of Tarsus which

⁴ Haider 1996, p. 63.

⁵ Haider 1996, p. 63.

⁶ Haider 1996, p. 64.

⁷ Haider 1996, p. 66.

⁸ Haider 1996, p. 66.

⁹ Haider 1996, p. 66-67.

¹⁰ Notwithstanding the cautious doubts put forward by S

Forsberg, *Near Eastern Destruction Dates* (Boreas. Uppsala Studies in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Civilizations, 19), Uppsala 1995, pp. 51-81, esp. 51-53. See Haider 1996, pp. 82-85.

¹¹ Haider 1996, p. 83.

¹² Haider 1996, p. 84.

¹³ Haider 1996, p. 83.

followed the destruction levels.¹⁴ For the Cilician coast, it may be concluded that both the strong increase in Greek pottery and Greek settling are consistently slightly later than in North Syria, both being datable to the beginning of the 7th century BC.

Historical Setting of Archaeological Data

The phenomenon of the increase of Greek pottery and of the beginning of Greek settling, which is datable to the second half of the 8th century in North Syria and to the beginning of the 7th century in Cilicia, must be studied in comparison with contemporary historical events. It cannot be avoided that in both areas such a phenomenon roughly parallels and follows the establishing of Assyrian political and administrative control. As regards North Syria, during the reign of Tiglath-pileser III the main states of the area were definitely defeated and annexed to the Assyrian provincial system.¹⁵ As regards the Cilician coast, the date of the Assyrian annexation of the local kingdom of Que is uncertain. It has been variously attributed to Shalmaneser V (725-721), whose inscriptions however are not preserved, or to Sargon; Sargon might have taken Que either at the beginning of his reign or in the year 715, or slightly before.¹⁶ However, firm Assyrian control of Cilicia

was established only by Sennacherib, who had to quell local revolts both at the beginning of his reign and, finally, in 696 (see below). In any case, it must be stressed that both in Tarsus and in Mersin the increase of Greek pottery takes place *after* the levels of destruction, which have been firmly attributed to Sennacherib's campaign.

From these premises, it is possible to draw a first general historical conclusion. The main historical event which determined and fostered the increase of Greek pottery and the Greek settling both in North Syria and Cilicia was the expansion of the Assyrian provincial administration, and especially its consolidation after the suppression of residual local resistance. In the background of this local phenomenon, there is a more general trend, which consists in the development of foreign trade in countries annexed by Assyria. This is not the place for a thorough discussion of the socio-political and economic factors which lay behind this trend; however, it must be recalled that a similar phenomenon can be observed in a totally different geographical context such as the Zagros region. Here, production and trade of Assyrian and locally imitated Assyrian luxury items (such as, e.g., cylinder seals) was fostered by the political pressure and the expansion of the Assyrian empire in the area.¹⁷ Admittedly, such an eastern phenomenon seems the opposite of the western one: looking from Assyria, the former is

¹⁴ Haider 1996, p. 84.

¹⁵ After crushing in battle an extremely dangerous alliance of many Syrian and Anatolian states headed by the king of Urartu in 743, Tiglath-pileser III annexed Arpad in 740, the coastal state of Patina/Unqi and the bordering Hatarikka in 738, and finally Damascus in 732. I follow the absolute dates as given in H. Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III King of Assyria* (Publications of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Section of Humanities), Jerusalem 1994, pp. 232-35.

¹⁶ The conquest of Cilicia and its reduction to an Assyrian province is not mentioned in Sargon's Annals, and this may hint at an earlier annexation (Fuchs 1994, p. 455). I have suggested a date of early 715 in "Sargon's

Letter to Aššur-šarru-ušur: An Interpretation," SAAB 2 (1988), pp. 59-64.

¹⁷ M. Marcus, "Centre, Province and Periphery: A New Paradigm from Iron-Age Iran," *Art History* 13/2 (1990), pp. 129-49. M. Marcus has established that a provincial production of Assyrian-style cylinder seals was fostered by the growing appreciation of the Assyrian way of life amidst the local Zagros elites contemporary with, and following the Assyrian imperial expansion in the Eastern mountain regions. Such a production obviously existed alongside the traditional production of purely Assyrian cylinder seals, and this implies the strengthening of pre-existing trade.

centrifugal, while the latter is centripetal. However, Greek pottery and Greek settling in the Near East represent only one side of the commercial network. The other side is the flourishing of the trade of Near Eastern artefacts in the Greek world, managed either by Phœnicians or Cypriotes or Syrians or Greeks or by all of them. In this perspective, the Assyrian expansion must be taken into account not only for the flourishing of the Greek exports and settling, but also for the flourishing of the whole network of commercial relations between East and West.¹⁸ Fostering commercial traffic after the conquest and annexation of a country was an Assyrian consolidated policy at the end of the 8th century. It is attested not only by archaeological findings, but also by a specific ideological statement to be found in Sargon's royal inscriptions, where he claims to have encouraged trade between Egypt and Assyria after his conquest of Samaria.¹⁹

Proceeding one step further, and considering all of the archaeological evidence of the East-West trade relations from the 10th to the 7th century (Greek pottery and settling in the Near East, and Near Eastern exports to Greece), a general trend may be seen in outline. In the aftermath of the Assyrian expansion in Syria and Cilicia, Greek trade (accompanied by local settling) constantly grew and expanded, while Phœni-

cian and Cypriote trade, which were the first agents of East-West relations, entered into a progressively recessive phase. The decline of the Phœnician and Cypriote exports on the Syrian Coast coincides with the growth of Greek pottery and settling in these areas at the end of the 7th century. The decline of Phœnician trade in the Ægean in favour of the Greek trade starts a few decades later, from the second half of the 7th century. In general, it seems that the Assyrian expansion favoured the diffusion of Greek products and Greek settling, while disfavoured the Phœnician trade first in the Levant, and subsequently in the Ægean area.

It is extremely difficult to detect the role of Assyrian dominion in the Levant in shaping or orienting the export of Near Eastern items towards the Greek world. The slow decline of the Phœnician initiative may be related with the expansion of the Assyrian empire in the Syro-Palestinian regions during the second half of the 8th century, but the reasons are not clear and written sources do not give decisive hints in specific directions. Many different reasons, such as an excessively strong economic effort required by the resistance to the expanding Eastern power, an Assyrian disfavour towards local economic elites, or a new orientation of trade in the direction of the Assyrian main centres may reasonably be taken into account.

¹⁸ A phenomenon already detected for the extension of the Phœnician trade network in the Western Mediterranean: S. Frankenstein, "The Phœnicians in the Far West: A Function of Neo-Assyrian Imperialism," in M.T. Larsen (ed.), *Power and Propaganda. A Symposium on Ancient Empires* (Mesopotamia 7), Copenhagen 1979, pp. 263-94.

¹⁹ Nimrud Prism (C.J. Gadd, "Inscribed Prisms of Sargon II from Nimrud," *Iraq* 16, p. 179), IV, 46-49:

(46) [ka]r/[k]a-ri KUR.mu-šur kan-gu ap-te-e-ma

(47) [UN.MEŠ] KUR—aš-šur.ki ù KUR.mu-šur

(48) [it-ti] a-ḥa-meš ab-lul-ma

(49) [ú-še-p]i-šá ma-ḥi-ru

"I opened the seal of the Egyptian fondaco, I mingled together Egyptians and Assyrians to make trade," paralleled by the fragmentary passage in Annals, 17-18 (Fuchs 1994, p. 88, 17-18). See my "Consensus to Empire: Some Aspects of Sargon II's Foreign Policy," in H. Waetzoldt - H. Hauptmann (Hrsg.), *Assyrien im Wandel der Zeiten. XXXIX Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Heidelberg 6.-10. July 1992* (Heidelberger Studien zum Alten Orient, 6), Heidelberg 1997, pp. 81-87.

Assyrians and Greeks in Cilicia in the late 8th and the beginning of the 7th centuryBC: A preliminary model for the interpretation of the complex of Assyro-Greek relations

The relation which has been traced so far between the Assyrian expansion in North Syria and Cilicia on the one hand, and the increase of Greek pottery and the settling of Greeks on the other, is admittedly very rough, and needs to be substantiated by specific written sources. As has been well known for a long time, Greeks are mentioned in some Assyrian texts of the late 8th

century, where they are given the gentilic name Yamnāiu/Yaunāiu, that is “Ionians.”²⁰ They are mentioned in a very fragmentary letter authored by an Assyrian official based in Phœnicia, who reports an attack by Yaunāiu, “Ionians”; in the royal inscriptions of Sargon, in connection with a military campaign of his in Cilicia in 715;²¹ and in a short fragmentary passage of a royal inscription

²⁰ For a thorough analysis of the gentilic, and its use as a general indication of the Greek world in Mesopotamian texts of the first millennium, see recently R. Rollinger, “Zur Bezeichnung von ‘Griechen’ in Keilschrifttexten,” *RA* 91 (1997), pp. 167-72. Rollinger rightly stresses that it is not possible to trace an opposition between the form Yamnāiu prevailing in Neo-Assyrian texts and the form Yaman(n)āiu prevailing in Neo-Babylonian texts (as suggested by J.A. Brinkman, “The Akkadian Words for ‘Ionia’ and ‘Ionian’,” in R.F. Sutton (ed.), *Daidalikon. Studies in memory of Raymond V. Schoder*, Wauconda, Ill., 1989, pp. 53-71), since a Neo-Assyrian form Yamanāiu is attested (p. 168). Yamnāiu is a form parallel to Yaunāiu, and both may be easily related with the form connected with the original Greek spelling Ἰάφοες (Rollinger, *op. cit.*, p. 170). Rollinger, *op. cit.*, p. 171, suggests that both forms may be interpreted as Babylonianisms, since in Neo-Assyrian intervocalic *-w-* should be rendered as *-b-*. The spelling of the name is consistently different from that of the Assyrian name of Cyprus, which was Yadnana; since the ethnonymic Yamnāiu appears in various of Sargon’s texts contemporarily with the geographical name Yadnana (Yamnāiu and Yadnana, respectively, in: *Annals*, 117 and 393; *Annals XIV*, 15 and 22; *S4*, 34 and 43; *Stier*, 25 and 28), it was evidently employed to designate a geographical area different from Cyprus/Yadnana. Many scholars have suggested that the usurper who took the throne of Ašdod and was repelled by Sargon in 711 was an “Ionian” solely on the basis of the assonance of his name (Yamani) with the gentilic Yamnāiu and with the name of the “Ionians” (following H. Winckler, *Die Keilschrifttexte Sargons*, Bd. I, Leipzig 1889; also Rollinger, *op. cit.*, p. 172). However, H. Tadmor, “The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assur: A Chronological-Historical Study,” *JCS* 12 (1958), p. 80 n. 217, has correctly suggested that Yamani is a proper name, probably of Semitic origin (he recalls the Biblical names Yamin and Imna’), and not an ethnonym (which should have had the normal ending *-a-a*, like, e.g., Tabalāiu, “Tabalian,” spelled *ta-bal-a-a*). The conventions of cuneiform writing cannot be ignored. On the other hand, some scholars, considering that in one single text the name of the usurper is written *Yadna* (^m*ia-ad-na*: Fuchs 1994, p. 133, *Annals*, 246), and bas-

ing on the assonance of such name with that of Cyprus (Yadnana), have suggested that this Yamani/Yadna was a Greek/Ionian from Cyprus, and that his true proper name was omitted, being replaced by a generic indication of his nationality (e.g. S. Smith, *CAH III*, Cambridge 1954, p. 58; S.A. Cook, *ibid.*, pp. 387f; recently, Haider 1996, p. 81). However, in this case too, the name should have been preceded by the appropriate gentilic determinative, LÚ, and not by the proper names indicator. As for the variant *Iadna*, which appears only in the *Annals*, which were engraved on stone, perhaps it was introduced simply through a mechanical slip in copying from the original: the cuneiform sign AD has the same number of wedges as AM, and differs from it only in the inclination of the concluding four right-hand wedges (the former’s being three horizontal wedges followed by a vertical one, the latter’s being four 45 degrees inclined wedges); when copying from the original and engraving the cuneiform sign on stone, the four oblique wedges were transformed into three horizontal and one vertical wedges. The *Annals*’ reading should thus be amended to *ia-am!!-na*, and the alleged Cypriote provenance of Yamani should be consequently discarded. P. Haider (Haider 1996, p. 82 n. 128) has further argued that the Assyrian scribes, trying to render in cuneiform a previously unknown toponym such as Yamn, “Ionia,” would have adopted the writing of a similar, familiar Semitic proper name, replacing the geographical/social determinatives KUR/URU/LÚ with the proper names’ determinative. Again, it must be stressed that the distinction between specific determinatives cannot be underestimated; and, in any case, that such an etymologizing rendering by Assyrian scribes remains only a faint hypothesis.

²¹ The exactness of this date has been definitively confirmed by the new thorough edition of Sargon’s *Annals* by A. Fuchs (Fuchs 1994, p. 108). In spite of the fragmentary status of the text of the *Annals*, the date of 715 for the clash with the Ionians had been previously suggested on the basis of geographical context (the battle is mentioned before the Assyrian campaign around Que) and of textual similarity (the fragmentary text of the *Annals* is paralleled by a cylinder inscription of Sargon): F. Bilabel, *Geschichte Vorderasiens und Ägyptens vom 16.-11. Jh. v. Chr.*, Heidelberg 1927, p. 401f; C.F.

of Sennacherib. As regards Greek sources, a battle between Ionians and Assyrians under Sennacherib, the son of Sargon, is mentioned by Berossus. This group of documents, in spite of its admittedly frustrating scantiness, can nevertheless shed some light on the historical events, and may be used, albeit very prudently, in order to build a sort of model for the development of the relations between the Greeks and the Assyrian empire at the end of the 8th century.

The Battle between Sargon and the Ionians in 715 BC

The account of the battle between Ionians and Assyrians appears in some royal inscriptions of Sargon. Many of them contain a short description, which is abridged from the version which appears in Sargon's Khorsabad royal Annals. This version, which is unfortunately fragmentary owing to damage to the original, has been recently re-edited and thoroughly reconstructed by A. Fuchs by means of a thoroughgoing comparison with parallel texts.

[ca. 17 signs, more than half a line, broken]
a-n[a ka-šad LÚ.ia-am-na-a-a ša šu-bat-sún / ina] M[URUB₄ ta]m-tim na-da-at ša ul-tu [UD.MEŠ] ru-ú-[qu-te] U[N.MEŠ URU.šur-ri]i [KUR].qu-e i-du-ku-ma ú-[xx] a a-lak x[x] / [ina GIŠ.MÁ].MEŠ [x¹ N]A²¹ ME²² a-na tam-di ú-ri-da-áš-šú-nu-ti-ma š[e¹]her ra-bi [i-n] GIŠ.TUKUL ú-šam-qit

[...] To sub[mit the Ionians, whose home-

land] lays [in] the m[idst of the s]ea, who since far-[off days] had been killing the inhab[itants of Ty]rus and Que, and [had blocked?] the roa[d?]²³, ... [with ship]s ... I went out to the sea against them, and I killed them with my weapon, [sm]all and large²⁴

In the cylinders found at Khorsabad, which bear the most expanded among the parallel versions, the description is the following:

ša ina MURUB₄ tam-tim KUR.ia-am-na-a-a sa-an-da-niš ki-ma nu-ú-ni i-ba-ru-ma ú-šap-ši-hu KUR.qu-e ù URU.šur-ri

Who (= Sargon), like a fisher, fished the Ionians in the midst of the sea like fishes, and gave rest to Que and Tyre.²⁵

The identification of the homeland of these Ionians is an open problem, since no specific hint is given in the Assyrian texts. The only indication is that of an island, and this might be interpreted as an allusion to Cyprus. However, both in the Annals and in other Sargon texts, Cyprus is consistently given a specific, different name, Yadanana. The name Yamnāiu might have been used for designating Ionian people originating from, or inhabiting, a part of Cyprus;²⁶ but other possibilities, such as some Greek island along the Anatolian coast, or even along the Greek mainland, cannot be excluded *a priori*. In any case, a differentiation is made between Cyprus and Ionians, which clearly shows that in Assyria these Ionians were perceived as a specific entity, to be distinguished neatly in the background

Lehmann-Haupt, "Zur Erwähnung der Ionier in altorientalischen Quellen," *Klio* 27 (1934), pp. 74-83, 286-94; H. Bengtson, "Die 'Ionier' in der Überlieferung des Alten Orients," *Philologus* 92 (1937), pp. 148-55; A. Erzen, *Kilikien bis zum Ende der Perserherrschaft*, Leipzig 1940, pp. 56, 60.

²² The text here is damaged. Fuchs 1994, *ibid.*, suggests "ships of Hatti," that is, ships built/owned by Westerners.

²³ Restoration and translation suggested by Fuchs 1994, *ibid.*

²⁴ Fuchs 1994, p. 109, Annals, 117-19.

²⁵ Fuchs 1994, p. 34, Zyl., 21. Other versions: Fuchs 1994, p. 76, XIV, 15: LÚ.ia-am-na-a-a ša MURUB₄ tam-tim e-reb^d UTU-ši GIM nu-ú-ni a-bar-ma, "I fished the Ionians of the western sea like fishes;" Fuchs 1994, p. 262, S4, 34-35, and p. 64, Stier, 25: ša KUR.ia-am-na-a-a ša MURUB₄ tam-tim / ki-ma nu-ú-ni i-ba-a-ru, "who fished the Ionians of the midst of the sea like fishes."

²⁶ As suggested, e.g., by J. Elayi - A. Cavigneaux, "Sargon II et les Ioniens," *Oriens Antiquus* 18 (1979), p. 65.

of the ethnic and political landscape of the area.²⁷

The recent edition of the Khorsabad texts allows the drawing of a new picture of the political developments along the Cilician and North-Syrian coast during the last quarter of the 8th century. The novelty is represented by the understanding of the reason that compelled Sargon to attack the Ionians: a previous, longstanding Ionian military pressure against Que and Tyre. This extremely important fact had not been properly grasped in past research, owing both to the fragmentariness of the text of the Annals and, above all, to an incorrect understanding of it, since the sentence was translated as if it had been Sargon attacking and pacifying Tyre and Que.²⁸

The correct translation makes it possible to offer, albeit tentatively, a historical reassessment of the previously mentioned letter which reports an attack by the Ionians.²⁹ The letter is authored by Qurdi-Aššur-lamur, who, as attested in another letter of

his,³⁰ was either an Assyrian governor or an Assyrian high-ranking dignitary in charge of the relations with the king of Tyre. His activity has been convincingly attributed to the reign of Tiglath-pileser III,³¹ and this allows a similar dating for the letter about the Ionians. The text of the letter about the Ionians is highly fragmentary, but from the preserved part it is possible to understand that Ionians have come to make battle in three cities, which however cannot be located, since their names are unfortunately badly broken and cannot be compared with confidence with any other known toponym:

KUR.ia-ú-na-a-a i-ta[l]-ku-n[i] / qa-ra-bu
ina URU.ú-x-[...] / ina URU.ḥa-ri-x-x ina UR[U.
...] / ú-tap-pi-šu

The Ionians have come, and made battle in the town ..., in the town Ḥari..., (and) in the to[wn ...].

In the rest of the text, a mobilization of troops is apparently described,³² and later on, however in a very fragmentary section,

²⁷ In the rest of the article, the ethnic “Ionian” must always be understood as implying a generic provenance from the Greek world, rather than a specific geographical indication of Classical Ionia.

²⁸ The form *ušapšihu* is translated as “Feinde pazifizieren” also in AHW., p. 841, s.v. *pašahu* Š 1c. However, Fuchs 1994, p. 290, n. 30, has correctly suggested that the verb should be translated “to pacify, to give back peace” (to a country/people in [political/social] turmoil). Fuchs aptly stresses 1) that, in two different versions of the same historical episode (Sargon’s pacification of Mannea) the verb *pašahu* (in the Š-form participle *mušapšihu*: Schwelieninschrift Typ IV, 21, p. 261) alternates with the expression (*šubat neḥti*) *wašābu* in its Š form (Kleine Prunkschrift des Saales XIV, 9, p. 76), to be translated “let, make someone live in a peaceful abode;” 2) that in Sargon’s inscriptions there is no indication at all of any political or military confrontation of Sargon with Tyre. For an example outside of the realm of royal inscriptions, see, e.g., SAA 8, 244, r.7-8: gir^{II}-ia / ina uḡu lu-šap-ši-iḥ, “(Let them give me a donkey) so that I can let my feet recover thereby.”

²⁹ Published by H.W.F. Saggs, “The Nimrud Letters, 1952 - Part VI,” *Iraq* 25 (1963), no. LXIX (ND 2370), pp. 76-78.

³⁰ The letter was published by H.W.F. Saggs, “The Nimrud Letters, 1952 - Part II,” *Iraq* 17 (1955), no. XII (ND 2715), pp. 127-30. A recent edition with Italian transla-

tion is in F.M. Fales, *Lettere dalla corte assira*, Venezia 1992, pp. 52ff (no. 3).

³¹ Saggs, *ibid.*, p. 150, assigned the letter to the reign of Tiglath-pileser III considering that Tyre appears to be independent, however under Assyrian protectorate, and that Philistia is out of reach for the Assyrian official, a situation which would coincide with the years 738-732. Fales, *ibid.*, p. 138, agrees with Saggs. Bing 1969, pp. 197f, assigns the letter to the year 715, when Sargon campaigned in Cilicia and fought against the Ionians, on the basis 1) of a perceived similarity of the names mentioned in the letter with the names of the Cilician fortresses taken by Sargon and 2) of the mention in the letter of a messenger who appears in another letter datable to 721 BC. However, had these fortresses been in Cilicia, it is very difficult that an official active in the Syrian coast might have sent information about events so far from his own sphere of competence; and we do not know how long messengers might have been in service.

³² The text may be tentatively reconstructed as follows:

(6) ša/ta! L[ú².x (x)]

(7) [i/a]-tal-ka a-na URU.ša²-x

(8) [LÚ.ER]IM.MEŠ zak-ku-ú ina š[U^{II}2-ia/šu]

(9) [i/a²-š]a¹-bat a-ta-[a-l]ak

“a man of the [...] -offi[cial] / with the [...] -offi[cial] came / I came, he took / I took the exempted [tro]ops and I went to the town Ša?...”

mention might have been made of ships.³³

Whatever the restorations of the fragmentary section, the letter may be related, albeit rather vaguely, with Sargon's statement that Ionians had been disturbing Tyre since far-off days. Sargon probably referred to Ionian incursions such as that mentioned in the letter of Qurdi-Aššur-lamur, which took place in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III. The military attack of the Ionians, as it happened with regard to the letter of Qurdi-Aššur-lamur, has been related to Greek sea-faring piracy.³⁴ However, the battle described in the letter is a land battle, fought in three different towns, which obviously should have followed Ionian naval actions. This would imply something more complicated than a mere isolated attack by a small group of pirates, and seems to suggest a conflict on a larger scale.

Turning back to Sargon's statement about the Ionians, it should be stressed that it does not mention any Ionian attack *against the Assyrian territory* along the North-Syrian coast. Instead, the Ionians are depicted as pressing against states like Que and Tyre, which were tributary to Assyria under Tiglath-pileser III.³⁵ This means that the Ionian pressure denounced by Sargon cannot be attributed to an attempt to stop or oppose, or even to hostility against, the Assyrian expansion in North Syria. Rather, it seems that the Ionians were ready to acknowledge the Assyrian dominion in that area, and consequently concentrated their efforts against

regions which were still independent. This hypothetical picture would agree with the archaeological data, which show a constant presence of Greek exports in North-Syrian coastal centres. The Ionian hostility against Tyre may be attributed to a bitter commercial competition, which is archaeologically implied by the decline of Phœnician exports in North Syria accompanied by a parallel increase in Greek exports in this area. It seems reasonable to propose that Ionians profited from the economic and political pressure which Assyria exerted against Que and Tyre once these states had submitted to tribute (which, with regard to Tyre, was exceptionally high in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III³⁶) for enhancing and extending their commercial network at the expense of the Cilician - Tyrian networks. Incidentally, it should be recalled that Phœnicia and Cilicia seem to have been closely linked for a long time, as is implied by the Phœnician artistic influences and the borrowing of the Phœnician language in the Karatepe reliefs and inscription³⁷ and by the presence in Cilicia of seals of Tyrian persons.³⁸ In this perspective, it would seem that Ionians acted as direct competitors with an established international cooperation between connected commercial networks.

The picture of past events which emerges from the correlation between the texts of Sargon and the letter of Qurdi-Aššur-lamur is that of an Ionian pressure against a country which was not an Assyrian territory, but

³³ If the damaged passage in l. 11 can be read, as the first editor did, *ina šā-bi giš.[M]Ā.MEŠ*, "by ships."

³⁴ Saggs, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

³⁵ Que is mentioned in all the four lists of tributary states which appear in the texts of Tiglath-pileser III; the same applies to Tyre, however under three distinct rulers. The previously generally accepted datings of these lists (738 and 734-732) has been seriously criticized by Tadmor, *Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III*, *op. cit.* (above, n. 15), pp. 265-68; for the problems of the chronology of the Tyrian kings, see *ibid.*, pp. 266-67.

³⁶ As stressed by Tadmor, *Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser*

III, *op. cit.* (above, n. 15), p. 171 (with previous bibliography), who suggests that the huge tribute is due to the fact that Metenna, the last Tyrian king mentioned in Tiglath-pileser's texts, was a usurper who had to buy Assyrian support.

³⁷ I.J. Winter, "On the Problems of Karatepe: the Reliefs and Their Context," *AnSt* 29 (1979), pp. 121-25.

³⁸ A. Dupont-Sommer, "Deux nouvelles inscriptions sémitiques trouvées en Cilicie," *Jahrbuch für kleinasiatische Forschung* 1 (1950-51), pp. 43-47; Winter, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

was tributary to Assyria. However, the picture changes when we consider the political situation in 715, the year in which the Ionians were defeated. In that year, Que was already an Assyrian territory, because it was annexed either in the reign of Shalmaneser V, or at the very beginning of Sargon's reign, or even at the beginning of that same year 715.³⁹ This should mean, albeit at first glance, that the Ionians changed their political attitude towards *Assyrian territory*, and tried to oppose Assyrian expansion in Cilicia, apparently through naval incursions.

The reasons for this abrupt shift depend on an important factor in international politics, which took place after the beginning of Sargon's reign: Phrygia's long and determined opposition against Assyrian expansion in northwest Syria and southeastern Anatolia. This opposition was solicited and fostered by the bold policy which Sargon inaugurated in this area, a policy which was aimed at definitely eliminating all local royal autonomous kingdoms, and at incorporating them in the Assyrian provincial system. Sargon's harsh policy depended on his need of eliminating external political influence in the bordering independent kingdoms; in his inscriptions, he stresses that some of these kingdoms had entered mutual alliance with Phrygia, and even with Urartu.⁴⁰ The kings of Karkemiš, Tabal and Meliddu are accused of an anti-Assyrian alliance with Midas of Phrygia (in Assyrian, Mita of Muški), and were accordingly

defeated and removed, Assyrian governorship being installed in their countries.

As a matter of fact, in northwestern Syria and southeastern Anatolia, Assyria and Phrygia competed for establishing their own political influence and dominion over the independent states, and the competition lasted from the beginning just to the very end of Sargon's reign. In his Annals, Sargon claims to have finally obtained Midas' surrender and homage in ca. 709;⁴¹ but since he died four years later fighting in Tabal, which he had previously annexed and transformed into an Assyrian province,⁴² his body not being recovered from the battlefield,⁴³ it may be safely concluded that the clash with Phrygia and its allies continued even after the alleged surrender of Midas.

The conflict between Phrygia and Assyria was not limited to diplomatic competition and to attempts to expand their respective spheres of influence. They also clashed directly in the military field. The main focus of their military competition was Cilicia, and the first struggle is attested just in 715, the very same year as Sargon's clash with the Ionians.⁴⁴ Following Sargon's Annals, some time before that year, Midas had conquered some fortresses of Que; in 715, the Assyrians reconquered them in two successive military campaigns. During the second campaign, the Assyrian army entered the very territory of Midas. An Assyrian intervention in Phrygian territory is attested in the Annals for the year 709, when the Assyrian governor took and pillaged some

³⁹ See above. In the Annals, the description of the events of year 715 is not complete, since the line which bears the text about the Ionians has a rather long break at the beginning, which might have contained a short description of the conquest and the annexation of Que. However, a *caveat* is represented by the fact that no other texts of Sargon mention such an event.

⁴⁰ Karkemiš in the 5th *palū* (letter of alliance to Midas), Fuchs 1994, p. 93, Annals, 72-73; Tabal in the 9th *palū* (reliance on Urartu and Phrygia), Fuchs 1994, p. 124, Annals, 198-200; p. 291, Zyl., 23; Meliddu in the 10th

palū (letter of alliance to Midas), Fuchs 1994, p. 126, Annals, 206-208; Mutallu of Kummuhu in the 11th *palū* (letter of alliance to Argišti of Urartu), Fuchs 1994, p. 222, Prunkinschrift 113.

⁴¹ Fuchs 1994, pp. 173-75, Annals, 389-93.

⁴² Fuchs 1994, p. 125, Annals, 203-204.

⁴³ Text in A. Livingstone, *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea* (SAA 3), no. 33, pp. 77-79; cf. H. Tadmor - B. Landsberger - S. Parpola, "The Sin of Sargon and Sennacherib's Last Will," SAAB 3 (1989), pp. 3-51.

⁴⁴ Fuchs 1994, pp. 109-10, Annals, 119-26.

of Midas' fortresses. It was allegedly this Assyrian victory that finally convinced the Phrygian king to send his message of surrender to Sargon – as far as the Annals present the events.

This long, direct political competition should make it quite clear that in the last quarter of the 8th century Phrygia was a fully developed empire, and had a structured territorial and military organization. Phrygia was capable not only of strong diplomatic opposition to the major power of that period, attracting Syrian and Anatolian states into its own sphere of influence, but also of direct territorial expansion at the expense of Assyria, and of a long military opposition. It is also important to stress that Assyria and Phrygia shared common borders in different geographical areas. On the one hand, Phrygia bordered with Que, from whence Assyrian campaigns were launched; on the other hand, Phrygia bordered with the territory of Til-Garimmu, a town lying in the Taurus area immediately west of Melid and south of the Halys river, where Sargon strengthened some fortresses “at the frontier with Muški (= Phrygia), (...) so that it would have been impossible to come out (again) against Assyria.”⁴⁵ Thus, the still rather widespread opinion that Phrygia in the 8th century was nothing more than an ephemeral state, or even a small-scale state in an extremely fractioned political scenario appears totally untenable.⁴⁶

In the preserved part of the text of Sargon's Annals for 715 there is no trace of a logical or ideological connection between

the battle against the Ionians and the first Assyrian campaign aimed at taking the Cilician fortresses previously conquered by Midas. However, it cannot be forgotten that a long section (more than the half of a line) is missing at the beginning, so that the existence of a connection cannot be discarded *a priori*. Following the logic of the surviving part of the description, it must be noted that the battle against the Ionians is described immediately before the campaign against the fortresses. Such an order suggests, in any case, that Sargon's battle against the Ionians was a tactical preparation for his first Cilician campaign against Phrygia. This impression is strengthened by the consideration that in the same text previous Phrygian pressure against Que (the taking of the three fortresses) is explicitly mentioned as the reason for Sargon's military intervention.⁴⁷ Thus, it seems that a parallel can be overtly traced between both the Phrygian and the Ionian previous pressure against Que.

From these premises, it is obvious to conclude that the confrontation with the Ionians and the campaign against Phrygia were two stages of a single, unitary Assyrian strategy, which involved the attempt to relieve both Phrygian and Greek pressure on Que. From the other side, Phrygian pressure by land and Ionian pressure by sea might have represented two different tactical aspects of a joint effort aimed at destabilizing the recently created Assyrian province, and more generally at containing Assyrian political pressure in southeastern

⁴⁵ Fuchs 1994, pp. 127-28, Annals, 217-19.

⁴⁶ E.g., G. Laminger-Pascher, *Lykaonien und die Phryger* (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte. 532. Band), Wien 1989, pp. 17-40, esp. pp. 24-25, who rejects the equation Muški = Phrygians, and tries to locate the Muški of the Assyrian inscriptions roughly in the area north of Karkemiš. Consequently, she denies both the equation Midas of Phrygia = Mita of Muški, and the

existence of a “mächtigen, großphrygischen Reiches” which could have competed with Assyria (p. 24). She is followed also by W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution* (English Translation), Harvard 1992, p. 13.

⁴⁷ In the context of the second part of Sargon's Cilician campaign: Fuchs 1994, p. 110, Annals, 126: (the fortresses) *ša ultu ūmī rūqūti ina danan ekimu*, “which (Midas) had taken by force since far-off days.”

Anatolia. A part of modern research considers the Phrygian pressure upon Que and the Greek intervention as logically and strategically separated episodes. The obvious conclusion was that the Greeks had been attacking Cilicia in the context of the already mentioned pattern of local coastal piracy presumed for the North-Syrian coast.⁴⁸ However, Sargon's attempt to eliminate such an alleged phenomenon *in the same context* of the repulse of the Phrygian land-based pressure against Cilicia should suggest that, at the strategic level, both the alleged Ionian piracy and Phrygian pressure were considered as inextricably connected. Thus, it seems unavoidable to consider that a cooperation between Phrygia and Ionian "pirates" existed, and was aimed at threatening the recently annexed Assyrian province of Que/Cilicia.⁴⁹

Faint, but in my opinion very significant traces of political friendship and cooperation between Phrygia and the Greeks are preserved in late Greek sources. Greek historical tradition concerning Midas of Phrygia tells of his marriage to a Greek princess, the daughter of Agamemnon of Cuma in Æolia.⁵⁰ Herodotus states that Midas of Phrygia was the first foreign king, before Gyges of Lydia, to send gifts to Delphi, when he dedicated his own throne to the Pythian Apollo.⁵¹ Both traditions, and especially the second, suggest that Midas intended to have strong ties with the Greek

world, in order to get support for his politics.⁵² His marriage to the Æolian princess was aimed at soliciting consensus among the ruling elites of the Anatolian Greeks. The ideologically crucial gift to Apollo of his throne, which was evidently the main symbol of his power, was made in order to stress his veneration of the Greek god, and was aimed at obtaining a diffusion of consensus towards his empire and his own person in the whole Greek world through the local clergy, which was the most respected moral and political authority in that period.

Midas' efforts to entertain good and close political relations with the Greek world were certainly accompanied by the development of a policy aimed at favouring trade relations between the Phrygian and Greek worlds. Archaeological sources, although rather inaccurately with regard to chronology, clearly attest both the beginning and a consequent strong increase of Phrygian exports to the West. During the last quarter of the 8th century typical Phrygian metalwork, consisting of garment accessories and precious-metal table service, are exported in quantity into Ionia. In Ionia, they are imitated, reworked and interpreted in a Greek way, and further exported to other parts of the Greek world.⁵³ In this very period of time, typical North-Syrian artefacts, such as various bronzeworks, including bronze horse trappings, and even Urartian bronzes, are imported to Phrygia, and from, or through,

⁴⁸ E.g., W. Röllig, *RIA* 3, Berlin - New York 1957-71, p. 645 s.v. *Griechen*; Haider 1996, pp. 80, 82; also Fuchs 1994, p. 440.

⁴⁹ As suggested by Bing 1969, pp. 206-207.

⁵⁰ Aristoteles, *frg.* 611, 37 Rose; Pollux, IX, 83 = *FGrHist* II, 216. For the ties between Phrygia and the Greek world, see my "Dinastie e tradizioni regie d'Anatolia: Frigia, Cimмери e Lidia nelle fonti neo-assire e nell'ottica erodotea," in A. Aloni - Lia de Finis (eds.), *Dall'Indo a Thule: i Greci, i Romani, gli altri. Atti del Convegno organizzato dall'Associazione Italiana di Cultura Classica (Delegazione di Trento), 23-25 febbraio 1995* (Labirinti. Collana del Dipartimento di Scienze Filologiche e Storiche dell'Università di Trento, 24),

Trento 1996, pp. 89-111. Cf. also M. Mellink, "The Native Kingdoms of Anatolia," in *CAH* III/2, Cambridge 1991, pp. 620-26.

⁵¹ Herodotus, I, 14, 2.

⁵² Matthäus 1993, p. 171, seems to suggest that Midas adopted an aggressive policy towards the Greek world, similar to his expansionism in Eastern Anatolia. But, very prudently, he only refers to an attempt to spread his political influence. For Midas' policies towards Delphi and Greece, see O.W. Muscarella, "King Midas of Phrygia and the Greeks," in K. Emre *et al.* (eds.), *Anatolia and the Ancient Near East. Studies in Honor of Tahsin Özgüç*, Ankara 1989, pp. 333-44.

⁵³ Matthäus 1993, p. 171.

Phrygia exported to the Greek world.⁵⁴ It seems that Phrygia in this period functioned as the intermediate station of a frequented Anatolian commercial overland route, which connected Armenian and North-Syrian markets with the Ægean and Greek world.⁵⁵

Summing up the various elements pointed out so far, the political and diplomatic relations of Midas with Æolia and Delphi, together with the intense commercial relations between Phrygia, Ionia and the Greek world, clearly show that during the last quarter of the 8th century Phrygia and the Greek world were politically and commercially strictly linked. In this perspective, the strategic cooperation between Ionians and Phrygians in Cilicia, as attested by the clash with Sargon, can be safely attributed to an effective political and economic alliance, rather than to a generic convergence of local interests. The Phrygian control of Cilicia, at the expense of the Assyrian dominion, would have implied for the Ionians the possibility of being directly involved in, if not directly controlling, the flow of trade from North Syria to the Ægean coast along the overland commercial road crossing Phrygia itself. Given the uncertainty about the identification of the Ionians' homeland, an exact geo-political picture obviously cannot be drawn; however, it must be stressed that the general background of an alliance between Phrygia and some Eastern Greek center (in Æolia as a minimum) cannot be refuted.

As anticipated, Midas' dedication of his throne to the Delphian Apollo was aimed at enhancing consensus for the Phrygian king and kingdom among the Greeks. However, it may be safely assumed that, with such a

gift, Midas was looking for consensus for his own foreign policy too. It is highly probable that Midas exerted a strong political and propagandistic pressure upon the Ionian West, and even upon mainland Greece, in order to obtain political support for his confrontation against Assyria and perhaps even military aid. Midas' political and ideological pressure upon the Greeks probably consisted in spreading the picture of an impending danger in the East, represented by Assyrian aggressive imperialism. It was certainly impossible for Midas to depict that danger as a direct Assyrian threat to the independence of Greek Anatolian cities (and obviously to continental Greek states). However, it was probably easy for Midas to depict the Assyrian annexations in south-eastern Anatolia and northern Syria – and especially the reduction of Cilicia to an Assyrian province – as economically very risky for the Greek trade in the Levant and in Anatolia.

On the other hand, it is certain that Sargon's policy was not at all unfavourable to international and local trade in the countries annexed to Assyria. On the contrary, the encouragement of trade appears as a policy peculiar to his reign, since it was ideologically stressed in his royal inscriptions. Secondly, archaeological evidence clearly shows that in the north Syrian coastal centres Greek trade was favoured by Assyrian expansion, since the increase in Greek exports and the beginning of Greek commercial settling were roughly contemporary with, and followed, the Assyrian conquest of North Syria. Sargon's policy and archaeological data seem to suggest that both the Greeks traders and the ruling *élites* of their

⁵⁴ R.S. Young, "The 1961 Campaign at Gordion," *AJA* 66 (1962), 166f. pl. 46 (horse trapping); *idem*, *The Gordion Excavation Reports I. Three Great Early Tumuli*, Philadelphia 1981, 219-23, pls. 50-57.

⁵⁵ J.M. Birmingham, "The Overland Route Across Anat-

olia in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries BC," *AnSt* 11 (1961), pp. 185-95. Urartian, Caucasian and Luristanian bronzes have been excavated in the Heraion of Samos: U. Jantzen, *Samos VIII. Ägyptische und orientalische Bronzen aus dem Heraion von Samos*, Bonn 1972, pp. 74-84.

homelands should have experienced a favourable Assyrian attitude towards their own commercial and settling activity. Judging from this experience, they should not have had any reason for opposing the Assyrian expansion in Cilicia.

However, the strategic situation of North Syria was different from that of Cilicia. In North Syria during Sargon's reign, no major power like Phrygia was opposing Assyria. Damascus had already been annexed by Tiglath-pileser III; the only opponent was Hamath, which however was defeated and annexed by Sargon already in his second regnal year, giving way to his annexation of the whole of North Syria. In Cilicia, a *clash between empires* took place, and Assyria had neither the possibility nor even the hope to destroy the opposing empire and its influence, owing to the totally different geographical situation. Thus, it seems that the confrontation between Ionians and Assyrians in Cilicia was provoked by reasons other than differences over Greek trade and settling.

Such an attitude was evidently suggested to the Greeks by their cooperation and their alliance with Phrygia. At the political level, they certainly considered that hostility toward Phrygia, or even neutrality, during the conflict in Cilicia might have seriously damaged Greek interests both in the East and, above all, in the very West. In the East, as anticipated, the passage into Assyrian hands of Cilicia, the terminus of the Anatolian mainland commercial route, might have provoked, albeit temporarily, commercial losses. In the West, the Phrygian empire might have turned against the Greek

cities in order to force them to participate in the alliance. At the economic level, opposing the Phrygian policy might have damaged the commercial relations with Phrygia, which involved the whole Greek Anatolian area and the Greek mainland, both as regards the flow of Greek exports and the lucrative management of oriental imports.

From the Assyrian side, it would have been risky to follow in Cilicia a policy favourable to Greek trade and, above all, settling, similar to that they had followed in North-Syrian coastal centres. The Phrygian pressure upon Que required extreme prudence in granting benefits to foreign groups, and even to potential local allies, since these might have easily shifted away in case of temporary Assyrian difficulties. Such an Assyrian attitude is clearly indicated in the famous epistolary answer of Sargon to his Cilician governor Aššur-šarru-ušur.⁵⁶ On the one hand, Sargon does not agree to the request of a local ruler, who asks to be given some districts in Que; on the other hand, the governor warns Sargon about the possibility that the king of Tyana might slip away from the Assyrian side. All this shows that Assyrian policy was oriented towards not allowing the weakening of the gubernatorial control in favour of local semi-autonomous power ("Should you (scil., the governor) give [these] four districts to NN, would he not become your equal, and what would you yourself be ruling over as governor then?"⁵⁷), and that this attitude depended on the impending danger of defections of local autonomous kingdoms.⁵⁸ In this framework, which may be generally understood as typical of a phase

⁵⁶ S. Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I. Letters from Assyria and the West* (SAA I), Helsinki 1987, 1. Both the editor (H.W.F. Saggs, *Iraq* 20 [1958], pp. 182-87) and J.N. Postgate, "Assyrian Texts and Fragments," *Iraq* 35 (1973), pp. 32-34, assigned the letter to ca. 709. I have argued for an earlier date, ca. 715 BC (above, n. 16).

⁵⁷ SAA I, 1, 32-35.

⁵⁸ Stressed by the same Aššur-šarru-ušur in the letter answered by Sargon: "Urpala'a [may slip away] from the king my lord" (SAA I, 1, 46, however a dubious integration); but in the same letter (48-49) Sargon declares himself not to be afraid of the political, diplomatic or military activity of the local Anatolian kings.

of consolidation of a recent conquest, it is highly improbable that Sargon might have granted important political benefits to foreigners, the Greeks being obviously included among them.

The conflict between Greeks and Assyrians can safely be related to the tactical necessities of a period of confrontation between the Phrygian and Assyrian empires, rather than to a preconceived Greek hostility towards Assyrian dominion (and obviously *vice versa*) based upon previous similar experiences. In this framework, intense Phrygian propaganda might have easily reached the scale of enhancing Greek resistance to the Assyrian expansion, even in spite of recent Greek good relations with Assyria on the North-Syrian coast. Obviously, it cannot be excluded *a priori* that only a part of the Greeks who were involved in trade and commercial settling backed the Phrygian anti-Assyrian policy, even if this must remain at the moment only a guess owing to the total lack of sources in this regard.

Sennacherib and the Greeks

As briefly mentioned above, at the beginning of his reign, in the framework of a temporary disaffection of the Levantine West which followed Sargon's death,⁵⁹ Sennacherib was faced with a short period of turbulence in Cilicia. In the earliest of his royal inscriptions (702 BC) – and in later parallel texts bearing the same passage – Sennacherib, in describing his building works, cursorily states that he had deported Cilician rebels (of the Assyrian province of Que and of the probably independent mountainous Hilakku⁶⁰), and employed them in brickwork in his capital.⁶¹ No other mention of this campaign, which probably was very short, is preserved in Sennacherib's other texts.

However, the situation in Cilicia was not completely pacified, and a military campaign was undertaken by Sennacherib's generals in 696 BC. Following Sennacherib's royal inscriptions, in that year, Kirua, an Assyrian official (*hazannu*, "mayor," of

⁵⁹ For an uprising in the Phœnician and Philistine towns after Sargon's death, see Frahm 1997, pp. 10-11.

⁶⁰ Hilakku was given as a marriage dowry to Ahat-abiša, the daughter of Sargon who married Ambaris, the son of Hullî, king of Tabal (Fuchs 1994, p. 124, *Annals*, 198). Nothing is known about Hilakku after the deportation of Ambaris (713 BC) and the alleged annexation of Tabal by Sargon. It is probable that Hilakku, described in the Assyrian Royal inscriptions as a rugged mountainous territory, regained independence or partial autonomy at the death of Sargon.

⁶¹ "I took away the population of Kaldu, Aramu, Mannea, Que and Hilakku, who did not submit to my yoke, had them carry the basket, and they performed brickwork" (Luckenbill 1924, p. 95, 71); Bing 1969, p. 95; Jasink 1990, p. 126. For the date of 702, see recently Frahm 1997, p. 8, and cf. p. 42, T1; p. 46, T2. Frahm (p. 8) suggests that these people were not necessarily deportees who had been removed after an Assyrian military campaign brought about by Sennacherib (or by his generals) at the beginning of his reign, but, instead, workers who had been previously enrolled by Sargon and put to work in Dūr-Šarruken; and that Sennacherib moved them to the building works of Nineveh. However, the state-

ment "who did not submit to my yoke" (*ša a-na ni-ri-ia la kit-nu-šu*) cannot refer to workers (even if deportees, and even if employed in the works of Dūr-Šarruken) who rebelled against Sennacherib: if this were the case, we would be faced with a situation otherwise unknown in the whole corpus of the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions, namely a kind of "political strike" against the new king. On the other hand, even if the sentence were understood as if the rebellion was brought about against Sennacherib when he was still Crown Prince, a military campaign against these regions would be nevertheless implied, brought about either by Sargon at the very end of his reign or by Sennacherib at the beginning of his. As it is found in the royal inscriptions, such a sentence cannot refer to anything other than to a rebellion of people residing in their own country, who were consequently deported after a punitive military campaign. Secondly, it should be noted that, at the beginning of his reign, Sennacherib attacked the Chaldaeans, who are mentioned first in the sentence (Frahm 1997, p. 9); thus, the mention of the Cilicians (and of other peoples) together with the Chaldaeans should be correctly intended as an allusion to the quelling of their resistance to Sennacherib's ascent to the throne.

the town Illubru⁶²), provoked a second rebellion of Hilakku; the inhabitants of Tarsus and of Ingirra (the latter usually identified with the later Greek town of Anchiæ mentioned in Classical sources⁶³) came to his aid, seized and blocked the “road of Que” (*i.e.*, the Assyrian province of Cilicia).⁶⁴ The Assyrian army crossed the mountains, took and despoiled Ingirra and Tarsus, and defeated the rebel. Sennacherib boasts of having rebuilt Illubru, of having erected there a monument and of having an inscription describing his own deeds engraved there.⁶⁵

In the inscriptions of Sennacherib, no specific reason is indicated for the revolt of Kirua. It can be interpreted as a limited local attempt to obtain some concessions (reduction of taxes, partial autonomy) rather than the independence of the Cilician region; and probably the towns of Tarsus and Ingirra had some interest in common with Kirua. In any case, the Assyrian province of Que seems not to have been involved in the events. First of all, it is not mentioned as such in the text. Secondly, the blockade

of the “road of Que” effected by the inhabitants of Tarsus and Ingirra and so duly stressed in the text (a fact otherwise rarely attested in royal inscriptions) was clearly aimed at hindering the Assyrian army in its march from the Cilician plain against the territory of Hilakku through the Taurus mountains (probably, through the Cilician *portae*): and this shows that the Cilician plain had remained firmly in Assyrian hands.⁶⁶

It is not known whether this rebellion was fomented, or enhanced, by an international competition between Assyria and an Anatolian power, as had happened during Sargon’s reign. In the inscriptions of Sennacherib no mention is made either of Phrygia or of any other Anatolian major power. However, the year following the Cilician campaign, a rebellion was quelled in another eastern Anatolian region, Til-garimmu, which had previously been annexed by Sargon. Here, another local person, Gurdî, had reached independence by establishing a kingdom of his own.⁶⁷ Highly probably, this Gurdî is the same Gurdî the “Kulummean”

⁶² He is mentioned as a “slave, servant” (LÜ.ARAD *da-gil pa-ni-ia*) of the Assyrian king. Illubru has been identified as modern Namrun, Byzantine Lampron, in the mountains northwest of Tarsus (Ph.J. Houwink Ten Cate, *The Luwian Population Groups of Lycia and Cilicia Aspera during the Hellenistic Period*, Leiden 1965, p. 25; Bing 1969, p. 101).

⁶³ F. Weissbach, RE II, 1, 2, Stuttgart 1920, s.v. *Sardannapal*, col. 2466.

⁶⁴ Three theoretical possibilities exist for this road: the most western road leading from the sea to the Anatolian Plateau through the Calycadnus valley; the road crossing the Taurus at the Cilician Gates and passing through Tarsus; the eastern road(s) which joins Cilicia with the Syrian region (through the *Portae Amanicae* or the Bahçe Pass). The involvement of the western Tarsus in the revolt clearly excludes the eastern road: to retake Tarsus, the Assyrian troops had to cross difficult mountains, as stated in the text, which is not the case of the eastern Cilician mountains. See n. 66, below.

⁶⁵ Luckenbill 1924, pp. 61-62, IV, 61-91; Frahm 1997 (T12), pp. 87-89

⁶⁶ The expression *girri mât Que işbatu iprusu alaktu* (Luckenbill 1924, p. 61, IV, 67f.) has often been trans-

lated as if the rebels had deliberately operated in order to block the (commercial) traffic along the Cilician road (Luckenbill 1924, p. 61). However, this may have been a secondary effect of the blockade; its primary purpose was essentially tactical, as is shown by the description of the Assyrian intervention given in the text. The Assyrian reaction followed four steps: 1) the sending of troops (*ibid.*, 69-71); 2) the defeat of the Hilakkians amidst the mountains (72-74); 3) the taking of Tarsus and Ingirra (75-76); 4) the siege and taking of Illubru (77-81). It is clear that the Assyrian troops moved from the Anatolian plateau (where Hilakku must be sought) in a southern direction towards Tarsus and Ingirra, which were both in the Cilician plain, and not *vice versa*, since in this case Tarsus and Ingirra would have been attacked before Hilakku. Evidently, the Assyrian generals avoided the possibility that the Hilakkian army might concentrate in Tarsus and Ingirra and from there invade the Cilician plain, and attacked the rebels from the rear and from the most difficult direction. As a matter of fact, Hilakku could have been reached either from the Anatolian Plateau or through the Tauric mountains east of Tarsus and north of the Cilician plain.

⁶⁷ Luckenbill 1924, pp. 62-63, V, 1-22.

against whom Sargon was killed in battle.⁶⁸ Thus, it would appear that the political situation in the Anatolian East was not at all pacified after Sargon's death (notwithstanding his claims of having finally subjugated Midas), and that another Anatolian power, albeit of local importance, was facing the Assyrian empire in the area. In conclusion, it seems that the Cilician campaign and the campaign against Til-garimmu were intended as an unitary Assyrian effort to subdue the Anatolian periphery and to secure the Assyrian provinces in the area from being involved in local rebellions or attempts to autonomy.

The well known episode of a military clash between Greeks and Assyrians in Cilicia during the reign of Sennacherib is known through the Armenian translation of the first book of Eusebius' *Chronica*. In this work, Eusebius extensively quoted, however amply abridging, the work of Alexander Polyhistor (1st century AD), who in his turn had produced a selective abridgement of the *Baby-*

loniaka of Berossus; and in some places he used the abridgements of Alexander Polyhistor's work which had been produced by Josephus (1st century BC) and by the Ionian Abydenus (2nd century AD).⁶⁹ The episode of the military clash in Cilicia is preserved both in Alexander's and Abydenus' versions.

When he (*scil.* Sennacherib) learned that Greeks had invaded the land of the Cilicians, he hastened against them, faced them, and after many of his own troops had been cut down by his enemies, gained the victory in the battle. As a memorial of his victory he left a statue of himself on the battlefield and ordered that an account of his courage and heroic deeds be inscribed in Chaldaean script for future times. And Sennacherib built (so he reports)⁷⁰ the city Tarson after the model of Babylon, and he gave it the name of Tharsin. (Berossus as quoted by Alexander Polyhistor⁷¹)

(...) On the coast of Cilicia he (*scil.* Sennacherib) defeated a group of Ionian warships and drove them into flight. He also built the temple "of the Athenians",⁷² erected

⁶⁸ The name of the killer (?) of Sargon has been read for a long time Ešpai. For the reading *gur¹-di¹-i* see S. Parpola, SAA 1, Helsinki 1987, p. 71, and cf. A.R. Millard, *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire 910-612 BC* (SAA 2), Helsinki 1994, p. 48 and Pl. 17. The identification of the two Gurdī has been cautiously put forward by Fuchs 1994, pp. 411-12, and is with similar caution accepted by Frahm 1997, p. 8 with n. 29. The same Gurdī (a good Anatolian name, cf. the Phrygian name Gordios) might be the Kurtī of Atuna who received a bordering town by Sargon (Fuchs, *ibid.*; Frahm, *ibid.*). Both Fuchs and especially Frahm hesitate in identifying the Gurdī who "killed" Sargon with the Gurdī of Til-garimmu mentioned by Sennacherib because the former is given the gentilic Kulummayu, "the Kulummean," a *hapax* which they do not reconcile with Til-garimmu. However, the sounds /r/, /l/, and /t/ are often interchangeable in the Anatolian languages (e.g., Labarna/Tabarna; -Tiwas/-Tiwaras; etc.); Kulummayu can thus very easily be considered an alternative graphic form of (Til-)Garimmu. R. Borger, *Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur*, I, Berlin 1967, p. 319 has ingeniously suggested that in the text of Sennacherib a scribal wordplay is in use between the name of Til-garimmu and the formula *ana tilli u karme (utirru)*, "they reduced to (deserted) heaps and mounds," used to describe the destruction of Til-garimmu (Luckenbill 1924, p. 63, V, 14; cf. A. Heidel, "The Octagonal

Sennacherib Prism in the Iraq Museum," *Iraq* 9 [1953], p. 250, V, 43); Frahm 1997, p. 88, accepts Borger's suggestion. Consequently, it may be assumed that the form of the toponym used in the texts of Sennacherib may have been influenced by the scribal pun. The Hittite name of the town was Tekarama, a form which might have been rendered both as Til-garimmu (with an assyrianization of the prefix, and on the basis of a scribal wordplay) and as Kulumma/u in the Eponym list. The Biblical form Bit Togarmah, generally considered as a rendering of Til-garimmu, should instead be amended in *Bit Tugdamme (E. Lipiński, *Studia Phoenicia* III, Leuven 1985, p. 218 n. 20).

⁶⁹ S.M. Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus (Sources and Monographs on the Ancient Near East, 1/5)*, Malibu 1978, p. 6.

⁷⁰ It is not totally clear whether the subject of the verb "reports" is Sennacherib (Abydenus quoting Berossus who quotes Sennacherib), or Berossus (Abydenus quoting Berossus): Burstein, *op. cit.*, p. 24 n. 79 inclines to the former solution.

⁷¹ FGrHist Nr. 680 F 7c (31). I quote the translation of Burstein, *op. cit.*, p. 34, D.2.a.

⁷² Burstein, *op. cit.*, n. 82 p. 34, with previous bibliography, amends "of the Athenians" with "Sandes who is Heracles," a sentence preserved in a list of equations between Greek and Iranian gods excerpted in antiquity

bronze pillars and caused, he said, his great deeds to be inscribed truthfully. He also built Tarsus according to the plan and model of Babylon, so that the river Cydnus flows through just as the Euphrates flows through Babylon. (Berossus as quoted by Abydenus⁷³)

The versions of Alexander and Abydenus have some points of disagreement, but coincide in some points, even if admittedly rather roughly. Both mention the engraving of an inscription of Sennacherib relating his own deeds and the (re)building of Tarsus.⁷⁴ However, they differ as regards the object (and its location) upon which the text was written (a statue on the battlefield for Alexander, a temple for Abydenus) and as regards some specific points in the description of the rebuilding of Tarsus. All these differences, stemming perhaps from misinterpretations in the work of abridgement and translation, do not affect the reconstruction of the historical framework. However, there are some striking differences which may deeply affect the problem of Greek-Assyrian relations, and which deserve a thorough analysis.

The first difference regards the type of battle which was fought: Alexander speaks of a land battle, Abydenus of a sea battle which involved Ionian warships. The second is about the attitude of the Greeks: Alexander speaks of a Greek invasion of the Cilician territory, Abydenus does not give any specific indication on the matter. Obviously, both differences have important consequences for the historical interpretation of the events.⁷⁵

The origin of these differences cannot be detected with any certainty, owing to the complex and almost completely unknown history of the preserved text. From a theoretical point of view, they may stem from the Armenian translator of Eusebius, from Eusebius himself, from Abydenus, or from Alexander – if it is admitted that both of them used the same edition of Berossus' work: it might also be suspected that different versions of the latter circulated in antiquity. Both the Armenian translator and Eusebius may be rather easily discarded, because the preservation of two different versions in the same text represents a *lectio difficilior*. More easily, the differences should stem from Abydenus' abridgement of Alexander's work.

Commenting upon the difference in the type of battle, Momigliano, although accepting that Abydenus depended on Alexander, pointed out that, in this instance, Abydenus did not use Alexander's text, but corrected it; however, since he was aware that Alexander was earlier than Abydenus, and that he was the first to abridge Berossus, he was, so to say, forced to admit that Abydenus in this instance did not follow Berossus' text either, but a "better source." Thus, he argued that the information about the sea battle was more reliable than that of the land battle (also stressing the similarity with Sargon's statement about the Ionians he had "fished" in the sea). He explained the intervention of the Ionians as an act of piracy, which was made possible by the temporary difficulties of Sennacherib.⁷⁶

from the surviving fragments of Berossus, and which does not appear in any other fragment of his. Sandes is a famous Cilician god. For another interpretation (and previous bibliography on the problem) see Jasink 1990, pp. 156-71.

⁷³ FGrHist Nr. 685 F 5. Translation following Burstein, *op. cit.*, p. 34, D.2.b.

⁷⁴ The building of Tarsus is not present in Sennacherib's text, which mentions instead the rebuilding of Illubru after the destruction caused by the Assyrian siege. A

good interpretation of the archaeological context at Tarsus in relation to the information of Alexander is given by Jasink 1990, pp. 159f.

⁷⁵ S. Forsberg, *op. cit.* (above, n. 10), p. 71, has noted (*contra* all previous scholars) that the different renderings "Griechen" and "Ionier" given by P. Schnabel, *Berossos und die babylonisch-ellenistische Literatur*, Berlin 1923, of the single Armenian term *yoyñ* have no solid basis.

⁷⁶ A. Momigliano, "Su una battaglia tra Assiri e Greci," *Athenaeum* NS 12 (1934), pp. 413 and 415.

Momigliano, however, did not suggest what “better source” might have been used by Abydenus. As a matter of fact, this “better source” might have been an edition of Berossus’ work different from that which was used by Alexander, or an edition of Alexander’s work different from that which was used by Eusebius, or even a different writer. The last hypothesis cannot be defended seriously. It must be noted that Berossus’ information about the clash between Greeks and Assyrians (either a sea or a land battle) remains in total isolation in the context of the Classical knowledge of Assyrian history. This shows that this episode was introduced into Hellenistic Greek historiography directly and exclusively by Berossus, and that no memory of the battle was preserved in any other Greek author or in local historiographic or mythographic tradition. Consequently, only different editions either of Alexander’s or of Berossus’ work (the latter being favoured by Momigliano’s theory) might be taken into account. However, it cannot be excluded that Abydenus inserted slight changes and variations into Alexander’s text, in order to better adapt the surviving fragments of Berossus’ text to his contemporary cultural, political and ideological milieu – but, unfortunately, this might have happened with Alexander too!

Of little effect is the suggestion put forward by some scholars since a long time that Berossus, as regards the information about the sea battle, conflated the descriptions of the campaigns of Sennacherib and Sargon.⁷⁷ As a matter of fact, this suggestion can be valid only if we consider that Abydenus’ version of a sea battle correctly

depends on Berossus’ text, thus distrusting Alexander’s version – and this is very doubtful. On the other hand, such a suggestion has led those scholars to the pessimistic conclusion that no military encounter between Greeks and Assyrians took place during Sennacherib’s reign.⁷⁸ However, this scepticism has no solid basis. The text of Sargon neither gives any hint for concluding that a terrestrial battle (that preserved in Alexander) was fought, nor mentions the building of a monument and the engraving of the cuneiform (“Chaldaean”) inscription. Thus, Alexander’s mention of a land battle between Assyrians and Greeks (even if quoted by Berossus) must stem from a source different from Sargon’s texts.

In conclusion, it seems that no cogent indications have been put forward so far either for denying, or for believing in, the historicity of the clash between Assyrians and Greeks. On the other hand, if such historicity is accepted, it is difficult to detect what was the correct version, either the sea battle or the land battle. However, there is an admittedly tiny indication, which has not been envisaged so far, that Alexander’s version may have been the closest to Berossus’ text. In this version, Sennacherib is said to have changed the name of Tarsus (in Greek, Tarson, in accusative) into “Tharsin” (a datum which is not to be found in Abydenus) after (re)building it. This information appears at a first glance frankly non-historical and totally unrelated to its context.⁷⁹ However, it cannot be forgotten that, with his *Babyloniaka*, Berossus aimed at giving the Hellenistic Greek historians new materials for the evaluation of Mesopotamian history, in the framework of his attempt to

⁷⁷ H. Winckler, *Altorientalische Forschungen* 1 (1893-97), pp. 364-69 (cf. OLZ 13 [1910], pp. 145-47); H. Bengtson, “Die ‘Ionier’ in der Überlieferung des Alten Orients,” *Philologus* 92 (1937), pp. 150f; A. Erzen, *Kilikien bis zum Ende der Perserherrschaft*, Leipzig 1940, pp. 65-66; with doubts, Frahm 1997, p. 14.

⁷⁸ Less skeptical is Frahm 1997, p. 14 (with n. 52), who correctly insists upon the coincidence of the Assyrian and Greek sources about the making of a monument and the engraving of an inscription.

⁷⁹ Only Bing 1969, p. 106 believes that this story has a historical background (see below).

re-evaluate the Mesopotamian cultural world.⁸⁰ From his attitude it can be deduced that, giving the information about the building of Tarsus by Sennacherib, Berossus was contesting or improving a contemporary tradition about this foundation. Such a tradition actually existed: it was certainly the widely acknowledged story, perhaps stemming directly from Hellanikos, that Tarsus (with the neighbouring Anchiāle) had been built by the Assyrian king Sardanapalos.⁸¹ Incidentally, it must be noted that, mentioning an inscribed “statue” of Sennacherib which bore the text about the building of Tarsus, Berossus was temporarily contesting the old and widespread idea that the famous statue and inscription “of Sardanapalos” (mentioned by many Classical authors perhaps depending on Hellanikos, and seen by Alexander the Great in his visit to Cilicia) was not of that king, but instead a monument of Sennacherib.⁸² Since Berossus had access to, and clearly used, original cuneiform texts to substantiate his theories, it is clear that, on this occasion too, he improved his version by referring to, and quoting, an original source against the legendary and/or mythographic ones which were used by his con-

temporaries. Now, in Sennacherib’s text the name of Tarsus appears on two occasions: in the first it is spelled “Tarzu,” (URU.ta-ar-zu), in the second “Tarzi” (URU.tar-zi), a form already attested in Shalmaneser III’s texts.⁸³ The latter form is practically identical to Berossus’ Tharsi(n) as regards its vocalism – and opposed to the vocalism of “Tarsos.”⁸⁴ It is clear that Berossus had access to, and duly quoted, the text of Sennacherib about his Cilician campaign, either directly from his “statue” in Cilicia (if ever Berossus was there), or from a manuscript which might have survived in Babylonian archives (either a copy of the original edition or a parallel edition), or, perhaps more probably, abridged or quoted in some Babylonian chronicle, now lost, about the Assyrian kings.⁸⁵ The story of the new name of Tarsus is not present in Abydenus’ abridgement; and we may rather safely conclude, at this point, that Abydenus, in his abridgement of Alexander, deeply modified the original text of Berossus, and that probably he modified in a similar way the original description of the battle between Assyrians and Greeks too.

Up to this point, it would seem that Alexander’s abridgement is the correct version,

⁸⁰ As stated by Burstein (*op. cit.*, p. 8), Berossus “intended that his book would change Greek ideas about Babylon.”

⁸¹ Burstein, *op. cit.*, p. 24 n. 80. For the story of Sardanapalos and the Cilician towns, see F. Weissbach, RE II, I, 2, Stuttgart 1920, s.v. *Sardanapal*, coll. 2441-44. With this story, Berossus did not deny the possibility that Tarsus might have been considered an originally Greek town, founded by mythical heroes like Bellerophon or Perseus (traditions attested by late authors who however might have reported much older sources: see P. Ruge, RE s.v. *Tarsos*, coll. 2414f), and bearing a name which was explainable (and was explained with popular etymologies) as a Greek word (ταρσός = “part of the wing” or “part of the foot:” Ruge, *ibid.*; Strubbe, *op. cit.* [below, n. 100], p. 272). In this way, he did not dispute the typical Greek attitude of taking possession of external territories and cultures and inserting them into their own mythical system. On the other hand, Berossus knew well the person of Sardanapalos (Burstein, *op. cit.*, fragments 6a, 6b, pp. 25f). Thus, it may be deduced that Berossus aimed

also at establishing a correct chronology of the building of Tarsus. Bing 1969, p. 106, believes that Sennacherib did really change the Assyrian name of Tarsus, which was Tarzi, and gave it a “Greek termination” (Tarsis) in order to render its name closer to the Greek language. Obviously, this theory is completely naive and totally unacceptable.

⁸² Both hypotheses have been put forward, albeit very cautiously, by S. Forsberg, *op. cit.* (above, n. 10), pp 70 and 81.

⁸³ See Parpola, NAT, p. 349. In Esarhaddon’s texts (*ibid.*) a form KUR.tar-si-si appears, which has variously been identified with Tarsus and with the Iberian Tartessus. For a full discussion and bibliography on this problem, see Haider 1996, pp. 86-88, n. 151.

⁸⁴ The spelling Tarsos is universally accepted in the Classical and Byzantine sources. A slight variation *Tersos is attested in some later texts (P. Ruge, RE s.v. *Tarsos*, col. 2413).

⁸⁵ S. Forsberg, *op. cit.* (above, n. 10), pp 73-75.

and that Berossus had described a land battle between “Greeks” and Assyrians. However, the matter is further complicated by a fragmentary passage in one of the Bull Inscriptions of Sennacherib. Here it is stated that, during his sixth campaign, Sennacherib moved to Nineveh Western people,⁸⁶ who built “powerful ships, product of their land;” and that on such ships he embarked sailors he had taken as captives.⁸⁷ The provenance of these sailors is indicated by three gentilics: after “Tyrians” and “Sidonians,” a fragmentary one appears, which has been rendered in the past alternatively as “Cypriotes” or “Ionians.”⁸⁸ Such alternative readings have been favoured, on the one hand, by the transliteration of the name given by Luckenbill in his edition of Sennacherib’s corpus (KUR.ia-ad-na-na-a-a⁸⁹), and on the other hand by his later remark that the name might have been read “Iamanai.”⁹⁰ However, in his new edition of Sennacherib’s texts, E. Frahm, who collated the text, has given the correct transliteration of the gentilic: it is formed by five signs, and he restores it as KUR.ia-[am!]-n[a]-a-a.⁹¹ This collation *per se* excludes the reading KUR.ia-ad-na-na-a-a, “Cypriotes,” given by Luckenbill, because it is formed by six signs, and shows that only the meaning “Ionians” can be taken into consideration.⁹²

This reading favours the assumption that in the sixth year of Sennacherib captive Ionians were enrolled as sailors in the Assyrian fluvial fleet. As often suggested in the past, these Ionian captives might have been taken either at the beginning of the reign of Sennacherib, when he quelled the first Cilician revolt, or during his campaign against Kirua. But at this point the coincidences with Berossus (in Abydenus’ text) become so striking that it may be safely inferred that Ionians were involved, in some way, in the revolt headed by Kirua, and fought against the Assyrians apparently in a sea battle. Further, it should be accepted that on this specific point Alexander’s text, which – as demonstrated above – is generally duly adherent to Berossus, has a divergence from its original.⁹³ Nevertheless, a final, unfortunately highly pessimistic, warning must be put forward at this point. It cannot be excluded that Berossus, when writing about the Cilician clash, followed a line of reasoning similar to that which had been followed previously. *I.e.*, that he noticed the connection between the information about the conquest (and building) of Tarsus which he had found in one text, and the information about the capture of the Ionian sailors which he had found in another text,⁹⁴ and put into writing the result of his historical reasoning rather than giv-

⁸⁶ As usual in royal inscriptions, the term used is “Hittites” (LÚ.MEŠ KUR.ḫa-at-ti: Luckenbill 1924, p. 73, 57), which implies the concept of “Westerners.”

⁸⁷ *ki-šit-ti šu^{II}-ia ibid.*, 60.

⁸⁸ In the past, Luckenbill’s opposing proposals caused some confusion. See recently, e.g., Haider 1996, p. 91, where he translates “ionischen (Seeleuten)” in the main text, and transliterates *Iadnanai*, which he interprets as Greeks coming from Cyprus, in n. 161.

⁸⁹ Luckenbill 1924, p. 73, 60.

⁹⁰ D.D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, Chicago 1926, 2, p. 145, n. 2. Luckenbill’s statement is however rather enigmatic: “Text, *Iadnanai*, but stone seems to have *Iamanai*. The two are, however, synonymous.” His translation is obviously “Cyprian.”

⁹¹ Frahm 1997, p. 117.

⁹² This reading was already suggested, by A. Salonen,

Wasserfahrzeuge, p. 183, albeit without inspection of the original. In his commentary, Frahm (Frahm 1997, p. 117) suggests that a reading KUR.ia-[ad]-n[a]-a-a, which he translates as “Zyprioten,” might be theoretically possible. However, this gentilic for “Cypriotes” did not exist, as it has been demonstrated above as regards the (alleged Ionian/Cypriote) usurper in Ašdod.

⁹³ The question about the time in which this divergence took place remains unsolved. Perhaps it was introduced by Alexander himself for some reasons, or by Eusebius in his excerpt of Alexander, or by the Armenian translator.

⁹⁴ The text about the Ionian sailors was engraved not only on the bull colossi originating from the South-West Palace of Nineveh (now in the British Museum), which certainly Berossus could not see, but also in a prism edition, a small fragment of which has survived (Frahm

ing an accurate transcription (or abridgement) of a single text which mentioned both the battle and the building activity.⁹⁵

This warning shows that, with the actual status of the sources, the discussion might still be brought forward; but it would be of little effect, so that the time seems now ripe for summing up, and for trying to draw some conclusions. First, Berossus' information appears to be reliable in general; the discrepancies between the abridgements of Alexander and Abydenus do not invalidate the possibility that, during the year 696, a clash between Ionians and Assyrians took place in the context of Sennacherib's quelling of the revolt of Kirua. As regards the clash, there are no clear indications favouring either the sea⁹⁶ or the land battle. Second, Ionian sailors were taken captive – either during the campaign of 696 or before – and subsequently enrolled in the Assyrian fluvial marine.

The problem of the involvement of the Ionians in Cilicia in this period has not yet been given a reasonable interpretation. Most scholars, since L.W. King, have believed that in this period in Cilicia there

were already Greek colonies, and particularly that Tarsus was an older, and then strong Ionian (or Rhodian) colony.⁹⁷ These colonies, inhabited mainly by Greeks, would have fought for independence or for enlarging their influence in the area. J.D. Bing, recently followed by A.M. Jasink, suggests that Greek colonies would have existed already in Sargon's time along the coast of Western Cilicia (*Cilicia aspera*).⁹⁸

However, the hypothesis that Greek colonies in Cilicia existed, and were strong enough to oppose to the Assyrian expansion, depends on an overvaluation of archaeological sources and on an imprudent usage of some late Classical authors. P. Haider has recently stressed that, before the works carried out by Sennacherib, both in Tarsus and in Mersin there were only small groups of settled traders; and further, that the Greek pottery found there was imported from various Greek locales, either Rhodian or Cycladic or Ionian, so that it is not possible to envisage the existence of a proper Greek colony but rather of a commercial *emporium*.⁹⁹ The existence of Greek colonies in *Cilicia aspera* during this period

1997, Sm. 2093 [T 15], p. 102). In the fragment, at the end of line 7', the ending of a gentilic]-na-a-a is preserved, which can be safely restored as [KUR.ia-am]-na-a-a (the gentilic "Tyrians" appears at the end of the preceding line).

⁹⁵ As a last theoretically possible hypothesis, it might be submitted that Berossus quoted a text of Sennacherib in which Sennacherib boasted of having carried out military enterprises of his father (that is, the sea battle described in the Annals). However, since Sennacherib in his inscriptions avoided any reference to his father because of the latter's untimely and almost sacrilegious death on the battlefield, this seems very difficult. It might be that it was a later text that mixed up the events, excerpting the sea battle of Sargon and quoting literally the text of Sennacherib's building activity in Tarsus. But at the moment this must remain only speculation.

⁹⁶ The abused idea that the Assyrians did not have a fleet, or a fleet designed for the Mediterranean Sea, because they had no interest in sea conquest, is easily invalidated by Sargon's conquest of Cyprus, by Sargon's sea victory against the Ionians, and by the simple consideration that, when needed, they were able to profit from the skill of subdued (or tributary) peoples, as Sennacherib did.

⁹⁷ L.W. King, "Sennacherib and the Ionians," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 30 (1910), pp. 332-35; Bing (Bing 1969, pp. 107-10), and "Tarsus: A Forgotten Colony of Lindos," *JNES* 30 [1971], pp. 99-109), has instead suggested that Tarsus was a Rhodian colony of Lindos. However, his theory is based on the combination of archaeological evidence like the Rhodian pottery found in Tarsus and Mersin, of late Classical sources like Strabo who tells of a Rhodian foundation of Soloi in Cilicia, and of his conviction that the temple "of the Athenians" mentioned in Abydenus' (see above) was a temple of the goddess Athena, who was worshipped in Lindos. The last consideration is vitiated by the realization that Athena was worshipped in other Greek states and not exclusively in Lindos, and by the good explanation of the corrupted text given by Burstein (see above, n. 72). As for the archaeological evidence, Haider 1996, pp. 89-90 has clearly shown that the amount and proportion of Rhodian pottery in Tarsus (and Mersin) cannot suggest the presence of a colony, but rather of a very small commercial entity.

⁹⁸ Bing 1969, pp. 110-12; Jasink 1990, pp. 153 and 156. Here too, however, late mythographic constructions are taken into account by Bing.

⁹⁹ Haider 1996, p. 89.

has not yet been proven with any certainty; rather, it has been deduced from late mythographic constructions which relate tales about mythical founders. However, it must be taken into account that in the Hellenistic and especially in the Roman age almost all important Anatolian cities claimed to have been founded by Greek gods or heroes, or also to be colonies which had been created by Greek nations (Spartans, Achæans, Ionians, etc.), in order to extol their antiquity, importance and fame.¹⁰⁰ Some of the local pretensions (which are attested by coins, statues, inscriptions etc.) were certainly known and reported by contemporary and later historiographers in their works. But the reliability of such claims, too often taken literally by modern scholars, is and must be strongly challenged. Suffice it to consider that some cities developed various parallel stories about their origins¹⁰¹ and that even historical persons were considered “founders” (κτισταί) and honoured with cultic status contemporarily with ancient heroes.¹⁰² In general, traditions about the most ancient history, or mythographic constructions, either related in literary texts or attested from other kinds of sources (such as, e.g., coins), should be considered the product of a specific cultural, political and social milieu, and studied in relation to it, rather than as survivals of fragments of historical memory.¹⁰³

The Ionian participation in the Cilician revolt during the reign of Sennacherib was very probably an external interference rather than the resistance of a locally settled population of Ionians (or more generally Greeks). This solution is favoured by the wording of

Alexander’s abridgement, which reports a Greek invasion of the Cilician territory (Abydenus is totally generic about this point). Thus, the episode should be interpreted in parallel with the Ionians’ involvement in Cilicia during the reign of Sargon, when their intervention had been favoured and fostered by a foreign power (Phrygia under Midas). The Ionians were probably asked for help by Kirua, and participated in limited military action in Cilicia during the revolt. Their intervention, although it is described exclusively as terrestrial by Abydenus, probably had a naval episode, which is in better accordance with Sennacherib’s impressment of captured sailors.¹⁰⁴ If settled colonists defending their own territory are excluded, we can consider either a Greek military corps sent to the help of Kirua from some place in Western Anatolia (or even from Cyprus), or Greek land and sea troops which were in some way active in the area. The most probable solution consists in imagining that in the Cilician area there was a continuous presence of groups of Ionian warships, which accompanied and defended the commercial ships on their routes to and from the western markets along the southern Anatolian coast. The rebel mayor probably profited from such forces, either enrolling them locally as mercenaries or obtaining them as a result of some official agreement with their homeland towns.

The archaeological evidence from Tarsus and Mersin, as mentioned above, clearly shows a dramatic increase of Greek pottery after the destruction levels, which has been correctly attributed to the effects of the quelling of the revolt of Kirua. The increase

¹⁰⁰ See in general the crucial article of J.H.M. Strubbe “Gründer kleinasiatische Städte: Fiktion und Realität,” *Ancient Society* 15/17 (1984); note especially p. 266, where he points out that it was almost a rule that the cities traced their origin back as far as possible in the past and, when possible, in Greece.

¹⁰¹ Strubbe, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

¹⁰² Strubbe, *op. cit.*, pp. 289-302.

¹⁰³ See the conclusions in T.S. Scheer, *Mythische Vorväter. Zur Bedeutung griechischer Heroenmythen im Selbstverständnis kleinasiatischer Städte* (Münchener Arbeiten zur Alten Geschichte, 7), München 1993, pp. 337-43

¹⁰⁴ Haider 1996, p. 86.

is so important, that it has been aptly suggested that this phenomenon is due to substantial Greek settling, which progressively increased during the rest of the century. The phenomenon attested by archaeological evidence is in perfect assonance with the enlistment of Tyrian, Sidonian and Ionian captive sailors which is described in the texts of Sennacherib. This episode shows clearly that, in the West, Sennacherib adopted a policy aimed at inserting subjugated rebels or foreign conquered enemies into the structures of the Assyrian empire – a policy followed by most of his predecessors – however respecting and exploiting their own peculiar skills. Thus, it can be safely submitted that in Cilicia he adopted a parallel policy, which allowed the foreign traders, among whom the most active seem to have been the Greeks, to enlarge their *emporion* and their commercial activity, and to settle in the area in increasing number. It cannot be excluded that Greek settlers were invited into Tarsus and Ingirra in order to partially replace the local population, which had been

diminished certainly by war losses and perhaps by deportations following the defeat.¹⁰⁵ This policy only apparently diverges from that which had been previously adopted in Cilicia by Sargon, who, as far as archaeological evidence attests, did not allow a substantial increase in Greek settling. However, it is in perfect accord with the policy which had been adopted earlier, by Sargon and his predecessors, along the Syrian coast. This policy consisted in allowing foreign (Greek) settling in recently annexed Assyrian territory *only after Assyrian control had been definitely consolidated*. As a matter of fact, Assyrian control over Cilician territory remained stable during the rest of the reign of Sennacherib and until the end of the empire, to be only once challenged by a local revolt twenty years after the campaign against Kirua.¹⁰⁶ Thus, it seems that Sennacherib considered the Cilician question closed, and adopted the same policy favourable to foreign settling in Assyrian territory which had been adopted by his father in other imperial territories.

Conclusions

The analysis brought forward so far may be summarized in the following points: 1) the Assyrian policy towards annexed countries in the West (as in other areas of the empire) was not unfavourable *a priori* to foreign trade and settling; 2) foreign trade was tolerated or even encouraged in annexed countries immediately after the conquest; 3) foreign trade was encouraged and foreign settling was allowed only after the

provincial administration had consolidated against the easily predictable subsequent efforts of resistance; 4) both in North Syria and in Cilicia, Greek settling dramatically begins, and Greek trade greatly grows, *after* the Assyrian conquest, and particularly after the consolidation of Assyrian territorial control; 5) clashes between Greeks and Assyrians should be understood as always mediated by a third party's intervention,

¹⁰⁵ In the text, it is stated that Tarsus and Ingirra were only sacked (Luckenbill 1924, p. 61, 76), but it is obvious that the taking of both towns implied human losses. Deported prisoners of war were installed in Illubru (*ibid.*, p.62, 88): among them there might have also been Ionians captured in the clash(es) with the Assyrians.

¹⁰⁶ The revolt was instigated under Esarhaddon by San-

duarri, king of Kundu and Sissu (usually identified with the Greek towns of Kyinda and Sision), apparently in agreement with Abdi-milkutti, king of Sidon, since they were executed together: R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Assarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien* (Archiv für Orientforschung Beiheft 9), Graz 1956, pp. 48-49 (Nin. A, II, 65 - III, 19) and 49-50 (Nin. A, III, 20-38).

either an empire like Phrygia, or a local authority like Kirua.

With these premises, the widespread concept of an opposition between Greeks and Assyrians along the Mediterranean coast, caused by a preconceived Assyrian hostility to Greek trade and settling, must be definitely abandoned.¹⁰⁷ The conflicts between Greeks and Assyrians attested in the written sources are, after all, relatively small episodes of an international struggle between empires or of minor local uprisings. Their tactical character should never be forgotten in favour of the concept of a generic large scale East-West conflict, or of a generic anti-commercial Assyrian attitude. Rather, Assyria opposed the Greeks only on very limited occasions, and was ready to enhance and encourage their trade, presence and settling after its dominion had definitely consolidated. But more, this happened, as attested by archaeological data, at the expense of other concurrent traders, like Cypriotes or Phœnicians: and this should show, instead, that Assyrians favoured Greeks over others in commercial and settling activities.

Moving now to the ideological level, it should be accepted that in this period the relations between Greeks and Assyrians, and their relative reciprocal attitude, passed through a deep change. The imperial conflict between Phrygia and Assyria probably favoured and enhanced in the Greeks a hostile attitude towards Assyria, because it was instilled and solicited by Phrygian propaganda (joined by the Delphian clergy, which was certainly favourable to the generous Midas) and probably was partially based on commercial preoccupation with regard to the Eastern markets. Obviously,

this attitude cannot be taken either as a generally widespread precise sentiment, or as a common political attitude shared by the whole Greek world. Rather, it should be understood as the locally variegated result of the ideological and political pressure effected by the joint effort of Midas and Delphi. Thus, probably only local political entities were involved in the military cooperation with the Phrygians, in the form of naval support to the land attacks, as attested by Sargon's texts. As regards Sennacherib's reign, the situation is less easily detectable, owing to the vagueness of the sources. Nevertheless, it may be surmised that the opposition between Greeks and Assyrians was again a local phenomenon, not necessarily shared in the Greek world at large; and that, if some western Greek political entity was involved in Kirua's rebellion, this was in any case an isolated episode.

After the quelling of the Cilician revolt, the situation abruptly changed. Greeks were impressed in the Assyrian marine, and Greek colonists were allowed to settle in high number in Cilicia. Trade between the Mediterranean ports (many of them under Assyrian control) and the Greek world increasingly flourished, favouring the enhancement of the Greek economy, and thus the diffusion of riches in larger strata of the population. It is obvious that in this period the Greek perception of Assyria had a rapid turn. There was no more Phrygian propaganda to solicit opposition to Assyria. The Assyrian control of the Eastern Mediterranean coast had to be acknowledged as a *fait accompli*, but the positive aspects of such control became immediately perceivable on solid financial grounds, perhaps

¹⁰⁷ Recently, Jasink 1990, p. 156, thinks that, both under Sargon and, particularly, under Sennacherib, the (local) Ionians fought against the Assyrians because they were afraid that the Assyrian expansion would have damaged

their trade owing to the limitations which unavoidably would have been imposed by the Assyrian government. Here too emerges a clearly preconceived image of an Assyrian empire hostile to foreign trade.

even more so because of a latent hostility between Assyria and the still independent Phœnician cities, which were commercial adversaries of the Greek traders. The consolidation of an unitary structure which controlled the whole Near East created for the Greeks an enormous market. Here, the ruling elites, which had been enormously enriched by the imperial expansion, represented an extremely interesting, and rewarding, commercial target. Clearly, the hostility toward Assyria, which had been enhanced by Phrygian (and Delphian) propaganda, totally disappeared, to be transformed at the least into a neutral, but, more easily, into a totally favourable attitude.

It is such a favourable attitude that was to remain a salient feature in the whole of Greek culture in the following centuries, in such a measure that no trace of hostility towards Assyria can be detected in the Greek sources, both historical and mythological. As regards Greek sources concerning Cilicia, it must be noted that it was a *Babylonian* – not a Greek! – scholar, Berosus, who disclosed to the Greek culture that a conflict between Assyrians and Greeks (Ionians) had occurred in the past in Cilicia. As a matter of fact, the whole of the Greek tradition about the tomb and the famous inscription of Sardanapalos in Cilicia, telling of his reconstruction of Tarsus and Anchiale, did not preserve any trace of the original context of Greek (Ionian) - Assyrian hostility in which they were produced. Both the ancient tradition, stemming perhaps from Hellanikos, and the more recent one, enhanced by the visit of Alexander the Great to the monument, coincide as regards a politically neutral attitude towards the Assyrian author of the monument and text.¹⁰⁸

It must be stressed that the neutral attitude of the tradition after Alexander the Great is much more important in this respect. It demonstrates that the Macedonian propaganda did not profit from Alexander's visit to the monument as an opportunity for recalling to memory an ancient, paradigmatic hostility between Greeks and "Orientals" (represented by the Assyrians), as Herodotus had done in the introduction of his *Stories* with the Phœnicians. On the other hand, it must be noted that the well-known moralistic negative depiction of Sardanapalos' dissolute life and unceasing search for material richness (already known to Herodotus)¹⁰⁹ clearly depends on the Greek generally negative judgement about Oriental monarchy (distributed across the Phrygian, Lydian and Persian monarchies as well), accused of excessive wealth and obsessive desire for accumulation, rather than on a specifically anti-Assyrian attitude.

As regards mythological constructions, both ancient and recent, about the Greek presence in Cilicia, it must be stressed that no myth at all presents an opposition between Assyrians and Greeks. Rather, the mythological tradition about Cilicia presents a strong opposition between Greeks and local culture, as attested by the widespread mythological complex about Mopsos.¹¹⁰ This seer, who was inserted in the Greek cultural world already at the beginning of the 7th century, cannot be separated from the dynasty which ruled Cilicia and is mentioned in the Karatepe bilingual, the "House of MPS" (Phœnician) or "Mukšaš" (Luwian). Thus, he may be taken to represent the Greek personification of the Cilician world and culture, although his personality was subject to changes in the course of

¹⁰⁸ F. Weissbach, RE II, I, 2, Stuttgart 1920, s.v. *Sardanapal*, coll. 2441-45.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 2441-48.

¹¹⁰ For this mythological complex, and its very extensive

bibliography, see recently Scheer, *op. cit.* (above, n. 103), pp. 153-266; R. Baldriga, "Mopso tra Oriente e Grecia. Storia di un personaggio di frontiera," *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 46 (1994), pp. 35-71.

the Greek tradition. In the Greek myth, Mopsos is invariably depicted as fighting against Greek mythological persons. He defeats the seer Kalchas in a divination contest, and fights against the hero and seer Amphilokhos, with whom, following one tradition, he was buried along the Cilician Coast.¹¹¹ Thus, it seems that in Greek culture a traditional contest between Greeks and Cilicians has been given space and preserved.

From these elements, it may be safely concluded that Greek culture did not preserve, at any level, any trace of a negative judgement about the Assyrian dominion in Cilicia and the North-Syrian coast. No trace of the oppositions between “Ionians” and Sargon, and between “Ionians” and Sennacherib, survived, and such memories had to be discovered and transmitted to the Greek world by a Babylonian scholar. In general, it must be concluded that the Assyrian imperial consolidation in the East was only temporarily and perhaps superficially opposed, and ideologically contrasted, by the Greek world. The material advantages stemming from the consolidation of the Assyrian empire (stable dominion, unified control and government, a progressively victorious competition against the local elites not yet incorporated in the empire, such as

the Phœnicians), evidently were good causes for the developing of a neutral, or perhaps even favourable, attitude towards it – and obviously towards Assyrian culture.

Finally, it can be safely inferred from the example studied so far that imperial expansion produces both strong resistance in the areas subject to pressure and attempts to involve external forces in the resistance before and during the period of clash. Once the imperial expansion is consolidated into a stable dominion, it tends to involve external forces in the management of the conquered economies, enhancing local development and trade connections, but obviously disfavours the sectors of the elites which had opposed the expansion. On the other hand, areas external to the expansion but involved in or affected by it may temporarily adopt a hostile attitude and policy, which, however, may rapidly develop into a favourable one once the imperial expansion has consolidated into stable dominion. From this general perspective, the period which has been studied here may represent a good paradigm for the well-known, but later, phenomenon of the *lydizontes*, those elites clearly favourable to empire which were the object of contemporary and late contempt in the whole Greek culture.

¹¹¹ Scheer, *op. cit.*; Baldriga, *op. cit.*