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**The Assyrian Empire:
Terror Tactics as a Tool of Empire-building**

MA Dissertation

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Summary

The Assyrian empire developed and employed various terror tactics for the empire-building. The terror tactics are understood as the policies causing damage and destruction to lives, properties, cultures, and all other types of interests. However, such intentional tactics indeed contributed to the stability and expansion of Assyria. There were historic events documented on the palatial products like the inscriptions and the annals of the Assyrian kings to reveal what practices had been conducted against the Assyrian existing and potential enemies and rebels at that time. The terror tactics of the Assyrian empire listed in the paper include control of agricultural sources, enemy torturing, mass deportations, the use and abuse of religion, and vassal and province system.

Keywords: Assyria, terror, tactics, agriculture, tortures, deportation, religion, vassal, province

The Assyrian Empire: Terror Tactics as a Tool of Empire-building

Introduction

There is no doubt that the Assyrians are famous for their sophisticated terror tactics. The Assyrian royal inscriptions and annals of different reigns, artistic records like reliefs, documented official words like letters written by kings, as well as other non-Assyrian foreign documents and literatures revealed the terror tactics that Assyria employed during the empire-building process. Although the Assyrian official and royal descriptions may hide and exaggerate certain facts, proven by other historical and archaeological remains, the Assyrian empire undoubtedly spread terror and fear throughout Mesopotamia in centuries.

The inscriptions and annals of other states as well as literature works play an important role. For example, the Hebrew Bible reveals the policies of the Assyrian administrations, offering the information from the perspectives of one of the vanquished states. The prophets describe that people were aware of and afraid of the Assyrian aggression (cf., e.g., Isaiah 10:5–14) because of the Assyrian cruel practices of ruining towns and religious institutions, the deportation and destruction of the masses and divine manifestations, and the tortures applied on the conquered cities (Van der Spek 2014, 237).

The Assyrians employed terror tactics intentionally to acquire a destructive reputation through the brutal military strategies and deportation policies elsewhere in the Near East, and the Assyrians made themselves deserve and known for that. When the Assyrians acted out the sadistic tactics, they displayed their overwhelming military powers with the fear-inducing qualities, and demonstrated the religious beliefs that the Assyrian kings protected the order of the universe (Thomason 2016, 145).

In this paper, the Assyrian major terror tactics will be analyzed with the focus on their impacts on the empire-building. The Assyrian control of agricultural sources, enemy torturing, mass deportations, the use and abuse of religion, as well as vassal and province system will be discussed.

Chapter 1: Control of Agricultural Sources

Agriculture resources were an essential element in the empire-building. The control of agricultural sources was regarded as one of the priorities for deciding tactics, especially for the Assyrian empire. On one hand, the empire expanded and governed its territories through continuous military campaigns. Troops, including armies and war animals, required to be fed to sustain, which needed plenty of agricultural sources. On the other hand, because parts of the Assyrian population grew up to become soldiers and to be occupied with military related occupations, the agricultural productions could hardly merely rely on the Assyrian native suppliers.

Therefore, for several centuries, the Assyrians conducted military campaigns to acquire agricultural products, to incorporate other states, in order to own more land and labor force for production, to turn other kingdoms into its vassals and satellite states for their contributions of tributes, etc. Generally speaking, the seeking for agricultural sources by the Assyrians for the main purpose of feeding troops and expressing terror tactics was conducted in ways of conquests through confiscation, blockage, and destruction of various agricultural sources in other states.

During the Assyrian military campaigns, especially sieges the large number of armies, given the limited transportation means of the time, traveled to other regions for battles and sieges. Therefore it was almost impossible to deliver and sustain enough food for the large number of armies.

Due to the high demands of the troops for the agriculture products, the Assyrian empire often conducted military campaigns during the harvest seasons of Iyyar (April/May) and Sivan (May/June). Therefore, during and after the sieges and invasions, the Assyrian troops could enjoy reaping the harvests. Such events were also clearly documented in the annals and inscriptions of the different Assyrian kings.

For example, regarding how the Assyrian army dealt with the agricultural products in the reign of Assur-nasirpal II (883-859 BCE) during the harvest periods, there were stone reliefs in the Ninurta temple at Calah indicating their practices as the following (Abernethy 2013, 40):

I reaped the barley and straw of luḥutu (and) stored it inside [the city of lubarna].

I reaped the harvest of their land (and) stored the barley and straw in the city of Tušḫa.

The harvest crops were grabbed and stored in the cities in the north-western part of Syria and the upper part of Tigris.

The Assyrians used to directly occupy the ripe agriculture sources and to control the conquered cities for storage. They did not employ any power or other resources in the agricultural production, but they only seized the harvest yield through military campaigns. To reap the foreign harvests directly and completely was the terror tactic that the Assyrians designed to enjoy the final fruits but with much less inputs, which seemed to have become a norm in the Assyrian empire. The inhabitants lost what they worked for long time, and this reveals the aggressive and brutal strategies that the Assyrians applied.

Such events constantly and continuously happened in Assyria. Another case was in the reign of Sargon II (722-705 BCE), the king also left words about his tactics towards the agricultural products of the attacked states. What he mentioned about his practices on the conquered cities during the harvest time were that “I opened up their well-filled granaries. And food beyond counting I let my army devour (u-sa-a-kil).” (Abernethy 2013, 40) After the conquest, the agricultural products were gathered and confiscated with the army fed after.

In fact, the Assyrian troops not only harvested food from the enemy fields, but also destroyed the agriculture sources in order to control them and to employ terror tactics. From the reign of Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 BCE) to the reign of Sennacherib (704-681 BCE), there were certain written descriptions as well as the iconographic portraits revealing how the Assyrian armies destroyed grain fields and orchards during their invasion and siege processes (Abernethy 2013, 41).

In the eighth century BCE, the Assyrians confiscated agricultural products and managed to destroy the life subsistence economies of other states. In the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727 BCE), according to a letter from Assur-sallimanni to Tiglath-Pileser III, during one regional campaign against Babylonia, the royal orders guided not only the military tactics such as the directions of the march and the assemblies of the troops, but also the detail instructions on the supplies of the army. The troops were commanded to “Exact the dried corn [from the houses of Bi]t Amukāni!” (Dezso 2016, 90). Viewed from such military strategies, the plunders

of the agricultural sources from other states were the planned and constant practices utilized by the Assyrian rulers.

Another documented case in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III regarding the destruction of agriculture sources was one military attack against the land of Mukania, which was recorded on the annals of the king. The descriptive parts about how the Assyrians damaged the agricultural sources were “His gardens plantations, which were without number, I cut down, not one escaped.” (Hasel 2008, 73) The were severe destructions of the important agriculture sources without leaving any remaining plants for the further usage, which indicated how cruel and terroristic the agriculture strategies were towards the enemy states.

For the successors like Sargon II (722 to 705 BCE), in the annals at Dur-Sharrukin, year 12, there was a documentation that “I let my army eat (the fruit) of their orchards; the date palms, their mainstay, the orchards, the wealth of their province, I cut down.” In year 13, the king left the words of “the palms I cut down...” (Hasel 2008, 73). Not only did the king destroy the agricultural sources, but also other properties, revealing the violent and cruel tactics made in order to threaten enemies and rebels.

More specifically, Sargon II recounted the details about the treatments of agriculture sources during the eighth campaign in his letter to the Assyrian great state deity Ashur. He wrote (Hasel 2008, 74):

Their crops (and) their stubble I burned, their filled up granaries I opened and let my army devour the unmeasured grain. Like swarming locusts I turned the beasts of my camps into its meadows, and they tore up the vegetation on which it (the city) depended, they devastated its plain. Their bounteous crops I burned up, [their filled up granaries I opened] and let my army devour the unmeasured grain.

What Sargon II had done were to destroy food of people and animals completely through fire, with the intentions to confiscate grains, to feed troops, to occupy and damage the fields, and to terminate the sustainability of the city. As a consequence, the Assyrian armies were well treated with plenty of food and then became full of energy, while the attacked city lost its subsistence.

Since the deprivation and damage of foreign agriculture sources developed as the Assyrian powerful terror tactics, during the reign of Sennacherib (704-681 BCE), when Sennacherib started his campaign against Merodoch-baladan from 703 to 702 BCE, he described his orders

regarding his intentional control of agricultural sources as the followings (Abernethy 2013, 40):

I provisioned my troops with barley and the dates of their groves, (and) their produce from outlying regions. I destroyed, devastated and burned (their towns) and turned them into forgotten tells. I took out the Aramean and Chaldean elite forces who were in Uruk, Nippur, Kish and Hursagkalamma, together with their rebel inhabitants and counted (them) as spoil. I provisioned my troops with barley and dates of their groves, from the field which they had worked, (and) the produce.

The king guaranteed his troops with the predatory agricultural products. The conquered towns experienced brutalities with the end of destruction, losing material goods and inhabitants.

What the king Sennacherib had done to the conquered states in Mesopotamia were similar to what he stated above, indicating the norm of gathering and eating the agricultural products of which they campaigned against. To conquer the regions with the ready harvest products could be viewed as one of the stimuli and intentions for the military campaigns. In other words, the campaigns were design during the harvest time mostly because the Assyrians expected the results of ready and plenty of agricultural resources as well as the possible food storage in the attacked cities.

For the destruction of the agricultural sources, in fact, the damage of orchards practiced by the Assyrians was found to begin as early as the twelfth century BCE, probably from the reign of Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 BCE), and became predominant by the ninth century (Hasel 2008, 73). The Assyrians consumed everything they could on the foreign lands and then destroyed the remaining sources. The crops were enjoyed by the armies and then were pastured to utilize the lands to feed the war animals. After the Assyrian troops devoured, the remains of areas were scorched.

In fact, the confiscation and destruction tactics required careful planning at a very quick pace with a short reaction time in order to succeed, which meant that what the Assyrians conducted were complicated and not irrational (Dezso 2016, 148). Therefore, the destruction of agriculture sources were well planned practices with efforts put in. Since the food were precious and extremely important during the battles, there were several possible reasons to explain the formation of the norm with the implication of further strategic vital impacts which could balance the loss of food and benefit the Assyrians more.

Scholars analyzed several major possible motivations based on the documented Assyrian

historic events. Since the destruction practices were not quite rational, the scholars managed to explain through other political and psychological perspectives, including the obvious destruction of the life subsistence system of the inhabitants as a part of military tactics, the punishments for the rebellions against Assyria, and the reprisals for the unconquered cities (Hasel 2008, 72).

For the explanation on the destruction of food and the damage of agricultural fields as the siege psychological tactics, such practices could possibly bait armies in the cities to come out from their walls to battle. When the besieged troops and inhabitants witnessed how their painstaking work and lands were destroyed, they lost their necessities as well as hope to some extent. Desperation, eagerness for battles, and other irrational emotions were easily generated, which met the purposes of the Assyrian troops in terms of the psychological strikes with the final goal of the conquest of the towns.

To be specific, when the towns were surrounded by the Assyrian troops, people inside the towns could see how the Assyrian troops gathered their agricultural products which were then consumed or destroyed. With the worries and threats of the hardly sustained food for the towns themselves, people stuck in the towns bore starvation and thirst but witnessed how their laborious agricultural works disappeared and were damaged. There were considerable psychological pressures for the cities in siege, and the besieged towns could foresee their destinies of submission as they probably lacked food and hope of the long-term resistance.

Concerning another deduced cause that the destruction was designed for punishments for the rebellions against Assyria, the purpose of penalty could be reasonable to explain certain historic activities which seemed to be illogical and unmeaningful substantially. Still the case of Sargon II (722-705 BCE), thanks to the extensive description in the inscriptions about his attacks and destructions, during his invasion towards Ulhu, the store city of Ursa, he conducted the massive destructions to the city after the Assyrian troops conquered the city, which meant that the king ordered to destroy what he had owned already, the newly transformed Assyrian territory (Hasel 2008, 74).

For the details, what Sargon II did after the Assyrian troops entering the city Ulhu were devouring the granaries and gathering trees into a pile in order to burn them. It was reasonable

to confiscate agricultural sources for the armies to enjoy food. However, the intentional burning of trees without proper measures to put out fire resulted in the massive conflagration of the orchards and forests, resulting in the wanton damage of the life support system in that region (Hasel 2008, 74).

The damage of the already grown up fruit trees meant the loss of future agricultural sources in certain years as the productivity in the ancient time was relatively low, and fruit trees needed years to bear fruits. Especially, the usage of fire implied the complete destruction with the difficulty to recover and reestablish. As the burning strategies and practices were conducted after the conquest of the city, which referred to the total waste of the resources, the purposes of such orders were for more strategic and spiritual purposes rather than the material aims. Therefore, considering the historical background, the intentional creation of the conflagration belonged to the Assyrian terror tactics aiming at the punishment for rebellion to alarm the existing and potential enemies and rebels.

When it comes to the possible suggestion of the reason as the reprisal for the unconquered cities, such explanation was logical and rational. When the Assyrian armies made great efforts to battle and siege but ended with failures, the troops would become frustrated and needed to find ways to express their rages and sadness. Therefore, the Assyrians destroyed what their enemies had since they could not own these orchards and fields now by cutting down the fruit trees. In other words, because the Assyrians thought they could not enjoy the benefits brought by the trees, they would not let their enemies to enjoy the future food either (Hasel 2008, 73).

In fact, harvesting agricultural products of other states was recognized to be battle tactics which brought terrors and threats. Feeding troops through the conquests not only accomplished food supports and storages but also generated psychological impacts on people with different roles. The Assyrian empire continuously applied such tactics with enjoyment and motivation. The Assyrian armies were encouraged and inspired by the feasts with plenty of food when they were in battle. At the same time, the non-Assyrian states lived in the terror of insecurity as they did not know the crops they grew or owned currently would be grabbed now or in future.

To conclude, the Assyrians managed to control agriculture sources through the conquests of other towns to achieve food during the harvest time among different reigns. Not only did the

Assyrian armies consume and confiscate agriculture sources, they also destroyed the remains as military psychological tactics, the punishments for the rebellions, and the reprisals for the unconquered cities. The Assyrian plunders and destructions of agriculture sources belonged to the terror tactics with the brutalities and threats enforced on other states materially and psychologically, which contributed to the establishment of the Assyrian agriculture base for the troops and the empire-building further.

Chapter 2: Enemy Torturing

Tortures against enemies including armies and inhabitants were conducted by the Assyrian armies as a norm to force enemies to submit and to stabilize the conquered societies. During the Neo-Assyrian period (935-612 BCE), an excess of violence was applied to enemies. Tortures against enemies were categorized as terror tactics to threaten and terrify the existing and further foes. As cruelty was always a meaningful method to compel the reluctant enemy states to consider submission, the Assyrian empire enlarged its territories by applying the terror tactics during the empire-building.

The governors that established themselves after the conquest of their cities by the Assyrians also benefited from the former tortures against enemies as the non-Assyrian inhabitants were terrified and learnt lessons from tortures. For the non-Assyrian inhabitants whether they were transported to other towns or not, they lived under regulations to follow the Assyrian orders with the respects towards the Assyrian kings and deities, which resulted in the wide spread of the Assyrian religious, political, and psychological control over the conquered regions. The inhabitants lived under the threats and terrors of various penalties and tortures, which contributed to the stabilization of the societies.

In the newly conquered territories, the Neo-Assyrians performed tortures against the vanquished enemies. According to the surviving monumental scenes on the iconographic repertoires during the reign of Assurnasirpal II (883-859 BCE), representative practices of tortures against the enemies were illustrated, including cutting the throats, using the scraping knife for decapitation, and letting vultures eating the eyes and entrails of enemies who were fallen but still alive. In addition, the massacres were conducted in a more intensive way with the bodies piled up in the cities, in the mountains, in the ravines, and in the fields, in order to punish the reluctant cities and to threaten the conquered towns as well as other potential enemy states (Backer 2008, 395).

To be specific, the texts of Assurnasirpal II described the constructions of pyramids with heads and the impalements of people who were put opposite to the gates of the cities or in the fields. Such piles contained the still alive people and the already dead together. To threaten enemies, the decapitated heads were hung up around the cities for post, often on the trees, in

the palaces of the defeated enemies, in the mountains, and other obvious and meaningful locations (Backer 2008, 395).

The texts also indicated other violence like burning adults regardless of gender and pulling out eyes of the prisoners. For the prisoners, they were flayed, amputated parts of bodies, like hands, fingers, noses, ears, and immured alive in the walls of the palaces of the defeated cities. The peeled skins from prisoners were hung up on the walls of the conquered cities, for instance, the city of Nineveh (Backer 2008, 396).

When counting the fallen enemies, as illustrated on the palatial reliefs, during the reign of Assurnasirpal II, the Assyrian musicians and soldiers played with the enemy heads, while birds brought heads held in their claws to the scribes. Huge disrespects and humiliations were revealed to the dead soldiers with the incomplete bodies, which was considerably immoral and terroristic. In addition, in the inscriptions of Assurnasirpal II, the king conducted the massacres of a huge number of civilians and warriors with tortures employed (Backer 2008, 395).

Salmanezar III was a successive figure with the reign from 859 to 824 BCE. Shown in the reliefs and the annals of Salmanezar III, the king continued to conduct terror tactics of tortures like the former kings and developed more. During his reign, the torture methods contained washing the heads, piling the heads, making heads like tents to cover the alive prisoners, laying out the heads on the ramparts, amputating, and so on. The tortures were developed to be crueler and more various, like the more complete impalements of the whole or dismembered bodies, and the mass pyres (Backer 2008, 396).

Salmanezar III conducted the massacres of civilians and warriors as well, indicated by the annals of Salmanezar III. There were a significant number of people amputated as well as the impalements. Sometimes, due to a large number of the dead bodies, the whole countryside was used to bury enemies. The Assyrian troops contributed to the massive dead bodies, for example, the river Orontes was spanned by the bodies with a bridge formed (Backer 2008, 396).

During the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727 BCE), following the norm of tortures against enemies, as stated in the annals and on the bas-reliefs, several massacres of warriors and civilians happened with the practices of impalements, decapitations, executions, and other Assyrian terroristic approaches. The king developed more practical and crueler skills on the

impalements and dismemberments of the bodies. For instance, when piling up the bodies, the Assyrians impaled enemies through the chests, and applied the similar method to the heads, which made it easy for accumulation and count (Backer 2008, 397).

When it comes to the reign of Sargon II (722-705 BCE), the king employed massacres like former kings with the tactics of decapitations, impalements, and dismemberments following the norm of tortures. The newly developed mistreatments contained putting people in irons, thrusting spears into eyes of enemies, and attaching prisoners with leashes which were connected to their pierced lips (Backer 2008, 398).

After the sieges and warfare, the Assyrians as the conquerors would usually execute a number of the survivors, especially the original governors, the royal families, the military commanders, the leading inhabitants who showed strong reluctance and rebellion, and other important figures. The reliefs from the palace of Sennacherib (704-681 BCE) in Nineveh depicted such scenes on the conquest of Lachish (Faust 2011, 97).

As for how macabre and savage the king was, shown in the annals of Sennacherib, he complained that the blood and the filth from the enemies stained the wheels of his chariot. The king designed an extra form of horror to cut off the testicles of the prisoners and twisted what remained. For the troops of Sennacherib, as brutal and aggressive as their leader, in order to utilize the jewelries on the enemies, as documented during the conquest of the Elamites, like rings and bracelets, the hands of enemies were cut off (Backer 2008, 398).

In order to demonstrate the great power of Assyria and to threaten other states further, there were particular tortures towards these heroic enemies (Backer 2008, 403). The Assyrian people rejoiced the dismemberments and slaughters of valiant enemies. Undoubtedly, the extremely violent tortures towards the heroic figures could cause a shock to the remaining enemies.

For example, as recorded in the annals of Sennacherib, for the heroic figures and enemies who would risk particular dangers to fight and assassinate the enemy king, the testicles of such heroes and prisoners were cut off sometimes. Their privates would be torn from their bodies with their entrails and guts covering the grounds (Backer 2008, 403).

In fact, the tortures against enemies played an important role to inform other states, while the degree of terror decided the extent of the impacts. The terror tactics were extremely

effective in building a long-term ideology of the Assyrian brutality.

With such logics, the extent of the impacts brought by the Assyrian destructions could be considerable and significant for centuries and spread widely. People of other autonomous states and subjugated states would form conditioned reflexes that if violating the Assyrian orders, they would bear various terroristic punishments and even the destructions of the whole cities, thanks to the continuously strengthened fearsome reputations of the Assyrian empire.

The Assyrian king Esarhaddon (681-668 BCE) described his military campaigns as the process of “before me cities, behind me tells” (Liverani 2017, 540). The tells referred to the heaps of ruins after the Assyrian destructions. The constant and continuous destructions conducted by several Assyrian kings implied that the terror tactics were super effective with the successfully strengthened Assyrian sadistic images, which smoothed the empire-building process as other states were scared and would hardly dare to have conflicts with Assyria in most cases.

When towns were conquered and governed by the Assyrian power, there were principles set for the non-Assyrian inhabitants of the towns to follow. If the original or migrated inhabitants showed reluctances and violations, the penalties would wait for them. For example, during the reign of Assurbanipal (668-631 BCE), if the inhabitants refused to acknowledge his supremacy, the lips of such people would be cut off. Assurbanipal also made orders to tear out the tongues of people who insulted the deity Assur, the mighty god of the Assyrian empire (Backer 2008, 395).

Assurbanipal employed similar terror tactics of tortures against enemies with more violence taken in treating human bodies. The bones of the defeated enemies were crushed and thrown out. For example, the defeated kings of Elam experienced the crushing of the bones and then deported to Assyria. The nobles were controlled with humiliation that they were likened to dogs by the Assyrians. For the dead royal families, their offerings of food and water were deprived with nothing given to the souls (Backer 2008, 399).

For the cruelty and savageness of Assurbanipal, indicated in his annals, the corpses and parts of the bodies were not allowed to be buried but just left on the roads, in the waters, and in the fields, letting dogs, birds, fish, swine, and all kinds of creatures enjoy the meats. In

addition, there was a special case of Elamites. Assurbanipal forced them to mill the bones of their relatives, and they were attached to leashes like animals with the threat of the wielding maces by the Assyrians. The intention of the king was to humiliate, to retaliate, and to threaten the existing and potential enemies and rebels as the Assyrian troops were able to make the enemies “die deader than dead” (Backer 2008, 399).

Although Assurbanipal rarely attended the military campaigns in person, the king offered terroristic and sadistic guidance to destruct other states and required the armies to bring the caught enemies to Nineveh where he stayed. In the inscriptions, Assurbanipal invented various tortures with choreographies enthusiastically to humiliate the prisoners (Frahm 2017, 190). Compared with the direct killing on the battlefields, the transportation of enemies and enforced tortures later time brought more shame and terror.

The Assyrian tortures against enemies were significantly useful and deeply rooted among the enemies. Especially, the Assyrians conducted several battles during which the troops would not terminate until the complete annihilation of the opponent powers and spirits with massacres and conflagrations employed. As a consequence, the opposite powers were aware of their endings and then would take actions to avoid tortures. On occasion, some opposed royal families and high officials would commit suicides, and ask for mercy or to be killed before the beginning of the battles with Assyria, like what the Urartean king Rusa did when he knew the approaching Sargon II armies to his lands, and what Urtaku the Elamite did at Til Tuba (Backer 2008, 405).

In certain cases, the targets of the Assyrian tortures were not only current enemies, but also enemies’ ancestors who had already died and well buried in tombs, especially for the royal families of the states. Since the Assyrians intended to impose the tortures on the dead bodies, the corpses would be killed again by the Assyrians physically and spiritually with the destructions of their tombs, with the examples of the ancient kings of Elam. The offerings for the dead would be deprived together with their eternal resting places (Backer 2008, 406). Extreme humiliations and terrors were brought with the guilts put on the alive people at that time.

The ideology of terror and torture tactics was well utilized by the Assyrian kings to threaten

and argue with the besieged enemies. There were specially set occupations to convey messages for communications, alarms, and propagandas. The Assyrian rulers would communicate directly with the foreign leaders through messages or in person. With the development of such tactics, during the Neo-Assyrian period (935-612 BCE), the royal heralds were assigned with the tasks to deliver the words of the Assyrian kings to the target audience like the enemy rulers and the besieged populations (Miller 2009, 134).

With communications among opposite powers of leaders and civilians, the Assyrians managed to inform them of the terror tactics that they would employ during and after the military campaigns. People would be aware of to a great extent how Assyria would do if the rebellions happened. For example, if the satellite and client states attempted to throw off the yoke, there would be massacres with significant violence and tortures involved (Miller 2009, 135).

What the Assyrians targeted to inform were both the leaders and the civilians as the Assyrians managed to eliminate the possibilities of the unilateral decisions of rebellions and battles. It meant that the desires to fight against Assyria from both sides could be discouraged and loss support by the other side with the awareness of the Assyrian tactics towards the royal families and the masses. Such terror psychology of the Assyrian statecraft aimed at the propagandas among the ruling classes as well as the ordinary people for the possible massive influences (Miller 2009, 135). The unwillingness of the either side would contribute to the stability of the subordinate states and the submission of the besieged cities if they were well informed of the advantages of surrenders and the punishments of confrontations.

If the Assyrian heralds were not persuasive enough, and the enemies insisted their practices of rebellions and battles, then the Assyrians would enforce their ideology of terror shown as what the Assyrians did to other conquered cities. To broadcast the cruelty and violence, the Assyrians created stelae and rock reliefs in the subordinate states and provinces in order to remind the inhabitants of their subservience and the probable destructive consequences if any contravention occurred. To be specific, such stele reliefs illustrated the Assyrian sieges and tortures of foes. For the subordinate leaders that the Assyrian kings would meet in person, the walls of the audience chambers of the Neo-Assyrian kings were decorated with the graphic and

grandiose scenes of mass deportations for the alarm purposes (Miller 2009, 135).

What the Assyrian kings had done to the conquered cities with extreme violence and cruelty should be explained as deliberate and calculated policies since they were not single or isolated events or exaggerations by the politicians and artists. For the stability of the already defeated regions, the surrounding states, and the target potential conquest regions, the Assyrian empire conducted terror tactics to maintain what they had owned and managed to explore more new territories.

The tortures the Assyrians had performed throughout the reigns were vivid examples that showed to all of their potential foes and rebels to inform them that it would be futile to oppose Assyria. Otherwise, the horrible consequences waited for them. In fact, the Assyrians took advantage in the psychological warfare by the demonstration of power and the unusual cruelty, targeting at not only enemies who countered with the Assyrians directly, but also the potential foes who would hear of at a distance. The perpetration, sometimes atrocities, put the people who stood opposite to the interests of the Assyrians into panic, which was the conscious tactics for terrorism in order to win for the psychological warfare instead of the pure sadistic purposes.

After obtaining the victories, the Assyrians heightened and perpetuated the perception of the empire power through the textual and visual records like inscriptions and annals. The events of the Assyrian extreme and brutal practices were well documented and preserved as the necessary procedures in the aftermaths of military campaigns. In addition, the Assyrian rule was depicted to be legitimized as the Assyrian kings were reinforced as the proteges of the great deity Assur with the inevitable superiority and the invincibility of the Assyrian military troops (Parker 2015, 286).

Therefore, the Assyrians would win the psychological warfare with the intimidations against potential rivals to force them to capitulate. The tortures against enemies were proper and justified as the rational practices for the Assyrians in order to achieve successes. The dissemination of Assyrian power traveled far and widely with the amplified terror and fear well installed among the surviving populations, which contributed to the establishment of the Assyrian hegemonic rule (Parker 2015, 286).

In summary, the Assyrians conducted and developed tortures against enemies in centuries,

especially during the Neo-Assyrian period (935-612 BCE). Specifically, the tortures mainly included decapitations, impalements, and dismemberments against enemies and rebels. For the special types of enemies like heroic figures and ancestors, they would bear sadistic mistreatments. Regarding the purposes of tortures, the Assyrians managed to employ such terror tactics and broadcasted widely in order to win the psychological warfare, to maintain the stability of the conquered areas, to suppress potential rebellions, to force other states to surrender, and to contribute to the further empire-building in general.

Chapter 3: Mass Deportations

In the ancient Near East history, a number of states carried out the deportation and forced migration policies when they achieved military successes in conquests in order to deal with the after-warfare complicated circumstances. Inhabitants of the conquered cities were forced to move to totally new places where they would not be able to accommodate soon and get used to climates, cultures, lifestyles, and so on. In addition, diseases and deaths always occurred during the transportation process regardless of the distances from departures to destinations. As the scales of deportations were probably massive, a great number of people in different ages were forced to suffer from traveling thousands of miles in most cases.

There is no doubt that the deportation policy itself was cruel but effective. In general cases, the victorious empires arranged and allocated the deportees with the special attentions of the elites and skilled labors. When conducting deportations, there were specific arrangements for the important and useful people. At the same time, the absences of such well-educated, technical, and leading figures would contribute to decentralization, demoralization, and the demises of organizations, which met the purposes of the conquest powers regarding further reestablishment and elimination of the existing and possible rebellions.

Deportation was conducted by many empires but the Assyrian empire was special and representative because several Assyrian kings applied the mass deportation policies. Instead of transporting a certain number of inhabitants with higher values, in the Assyrian history, several kings tried to let almost the whole population of the towns to move and exchange, which was called as mass deportation.

Several Assyrian kings enforced such terror tactics of mass deportation after the conquests of states. Their main aims were to stabilize the civilians and utilize labors in order to further develop the empire. In addition, for the rebelled vassal states, punishments included deportation and executions. The revolted leaders would probably be tortured in front of the Assyrian rulers as the demonstration to threaten the potential foes as well as to build the brutal reputation of Assyria. The rest populations would be deported depending on the decisions of the Assyrian kings.

The Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III, who started his reign from 745 to 727 BCE, was a

notable figure in designing and conducting mass deportations. What Tiglath-Pileser III had done were impressive because he was one of the kings who conducted the greatest and most numerous deportations during his reign. In fact, the mass deportation was to be expected as it was especially effective in structuring and stabilizing an empire, and the deportation would be no longer needed later when the empire was solidly founded (Van der Spek 2014, 259).

During the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III, after defeats of other states, the failed rulers and their courts were captured, taken away to prisons, and sometimes brought to the king to render obeisance. For the ordinary, men, women, children and livestock were put in carts for the mass deportations. Tiglath-Pileser III conducted mass deportations to directly arrange and control the foreign populations who were difficult to govern and possible to rebel (Gopnik 1992, 67).

Accordingly, with the continuous expansion and development of the Neo-Assyrian empire (935-612 BCE), as more states were defeated, the practices of mass deportations became increasingly important. Thanks to the inscriptions and annals of different Assyrian kings, the historical events proved the appropriateness and effectiveness of such political implementations.

According to the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III, although the numbers may be exaggerated, there is almost no doubt that tens of hundreds of and probably even thousands of original citizens were exiled and replaced with the ethnic groups of other regions which were under the control of Assyria. The mass deportations with the ethnic exchanges aimed to eliminate the identities of the defeated entities. Therefore, the possibilities of further resistances declined (Frahm 2017, 177).

After conquests, what the Assyrian empire achieved were not only the territories, but also inhabitants of the defeated states. Therefore, in order to utilize a large number of populations, the Assyrians employed deportation tactics. The labor force would be sent to wherever needed, such as the less developed provinces for agriculture cultivations, and the Assyrian major cities for construction work. With movements to other places, the adjustment to new environments and the imposition of labor tasks would occupy the life of the deported civilians, which made them busy with the daily work without considering or practicing rebellions, bringing stability to the Assyrian societies consequently. With the significant benefits presented by the successful

mass deportation cases, the successive Assyrian kings adopted such practices in the Neo-Assyrian empire (Frahm 2017, 177).

Another interpretation why Tiglath-Pileser III implemented mass deportation is that the deportation was considered as a threatening method for the Assyrian satellite and client states. With the heavy tribute tasks imposed on the subordinate kingdoms, as well as the deprivation of certain sovereignties and state powers, the states may rebel under the circumstances. However, when the mass deportations were proceeded in other lands, people were well informed of the prices of rebellions.

In other words, the entire population of the vassal states would probably go into exile instead of the pure punishments of butchering or imprisoning the kings and their courts. The problem that whether the civilians would give up what they had owned and support rebellions with the clear understanding of the failure consequences as deaths, tortures, and mass deportations or not came out, which indeed threatened the civilians and discouraged the possibilities of rebellions against Assyria. Therefore, other countries were intimidated by the extreme prices of rebellions, which made the kings of vassal states feel difficult to deny what Assyria required and to fight against the empire (Miller 2009, 127).

As mentioned above, the deportation itself meant the hardship with long distance travels. With the limited sources of transportations and medical techniques, even if the deportees were fortunate and healthy enough to survive and arrive at the destinations, the life waiting for them was tough and tragic. The deportees were forced to serve as the working labors. Some of them were sent to the desolate areas for cultivation to utilize the labors and lands. What the Assyrian kings considered was to revitalize agriculture and strengthen the power of the empire.

Regarding the utilization of the deportees, there were royal letters written by Sennacherib (704-681 BCE) to order his official in order to assign the deportees for the cultivation of the desolate lands (Abernethy 2013, 44):

Insofar as you are a servant of the king, I will assign fields and gardens in the land of Iasubuqu to you. Let him move them out, settle them in the town of Argitu, and give them fields and orchards.

The deportees would receive provisions, plots of lands, and even vineyards if they submitted to Assyria and followed the instructions.

However, as revealed by the historical records, the provisions that the deportees received were usually meager and could hardly support their necessities, which indicated the perishing treatments of the deportees to some extent. For example, one text described that the deportees were given only 1–2 qas of grain per day. At the same time, they were forced to serve as the working labors conducting heavy agricultural cultivations. Food was restricted and the deportees had to bear starvation (Abernethy 2013, 45).

Furthermore, although there were lands allotted to the deportees, these lands were typically under control of the Assyrian states and usually on the desert margins which were considerably desolate. As a consequence, even great efforts were put in, what the deportees produced could only meet the bare minimum for survival. For better cases, even if the deportees were fortunate enough to be sent to the cultivatable lands, what they received were still the fields with the lowest qualities (Abernethy 2013, 45).

Viewed from the allocations of the fields to the deportees, the Assyrians sought to achieve the maximum profits through military campaigns with the minimum investments put into. The mass deported labors were not well and scientifically utilized, stimulated or rewarded but purely with enforcement and punishment. Ideologically, the Assyrian tactics on the massive deportees who were adequate labor resources were aggressive and brutal (Frahm 2017, 193).

During the Assyrian empire-building, the tactics the empire employed were more about violence and terror without proper utilization of available resources. The sustainable development could not be achieved as the Assyrians implemented the terror tactics. For instance, there were practices of wasting trees and lands caused by the conflagrations raised by the Assyrian troops, and imposing high pressures on the deported labors without proper treatments. Accordingly, the empire was able to expand its territories through terror tactics with its great military and material powers, but the ways to maintain the empire were not logical and scientific, which resulted in the more aggressive and crueler tactics developed by the successors.

To sum up, there is no doubt that mass deportation was effective and successfully consolidated the Assyrian empire-building by eliminating potential possibilities of rebellions, threatening other states, and increasing the working labors significantly, which benefited the social stability and created the Assyrian terroristic reputations. However, the deportation

activity itself in the ancient time with the extremely limited transportation and medical resources, the deportees suffered a lot and even lost their lives during their movements. In addition, inhabitants who survived from the transportation procedure had to bear the new environments. The deportees were utilized with the enforcements of various labor tasks but with little supports, and were faced with the loss of home lands, which led to both physical and psychological harm.

Chapter 4: The Use and Abuse of Religion

In ancient Mesopotamia, religion played an important role in various aspects. Governors and inhabitants in different states had their own religious beliefs. Politically, religious figures were usually used to justify and benefit the control of powers by kings, in order to moralize and stabilize the societies with the warnings of divine punishments, to instruct citizens performed as ordered by deities, to comfort civilians in psychological and emotional perspectives, and all other vital purposes. Since the religions were of great importance, the ancient leaders developed certain religious tactics to utilize them .

For the religious tactics, the textual evidences indicated that the reasons and victories of the Assyrian military campaigns and empire expansion were the wills of the great gods, including Assur, Ishtar, Marduk, etc. The divine instructions were delivered from the deities to the Assyrian kings and attendants through prophetic dreams and omens (Backer 2008, 400). There is no doubt that the Assyrian kings expressed their beliefs in deities, which offered the religious reasons for their tactics. As the kings trusted prophetic dreams and omens, they would follow the instructions given by the deities.

Additionally, in the course of history, religious beliefs were constantly utilized and manipulated by people who had the powers to explain and justify their actions. Since religious beliefs were traditional, essential, and very real parts of human life, as the majority of people could hardly free from them, there were tremendous impacts and significances that the religious tactics could bring (Van der Spek 2014, 247).

The justifications of divine orders offered excuses for the Assyrian military campaigns. As the civilians of Mesopotamia believed in various deities in general, armies in battles would be psychologically attacked as the confrontational Assyrian parts were supported by the gods. Especially, as the Assyrian empire conquered increasing territories with the continuous expansion and development, the enemies and rebels would to some extent trust the religious idea that the gods blessed and guided Assyria, which turned out to be significant pressure on the enemies.

What the Assyrians conducted were to follow the orders of the Assyrian deities and to create a new world which would form suitable spaces for the Assyrian divines to benefit all the

citizens. There were always two steps for the construction of the new religious orders. The Assyrians planned to transform the world from the chaos situations at that time to the eternal cosmos ending. In other words, the targets were to eliminate the old disorder in the first phase and then to create a new order (Liverani 2017, 540).

The Assyrians were inspired and given such tasks by the deities. Therefore, they needed to conduct terror tactics to completely eliminate the impacts of the existing enemies through destruction. Like what the Assyrian royal inscriptions described, for the Assyrian kings, they usually mentioned “I razed, I destroyed, I burnt” (Liverani 2017, 540). The kings ordered destructions with the religious purposes to remove barriers thoroughly and to construct a new world for the Assyrian deities to enjoy with the expansion of the empire powers.

In addition, the Assyrians employed the religious tactics to justify their behaviors, especially the violent and terroristic actions. The Assyrian troops conducted tortures against enemies like decapitations and dismemberments. As a result, the fallen enemies were cut into pieces. The Assyrians explained that what they did were following the orders from the deities because the Assyrian kings were the heroes who were assigned with the tasks to create the new world based on the dark forces. And one of the methods to achieve such ultimate and sacred goal was to use the pieces of the bodies from the enemies (Backer 2008, 401). Following the divine guidance, the outcomes of the military campaigns turned out to be destructions, slaughters, and sadistic cruelty, which partly resulted from the religious terror tactics.

Such religious tactics threatened the enemy states to a great extent as they could foresee their future of the inevitable defeats as the Assyrians were the blessed and assigned troops by the deities, and they could infer their destinies of destruction by massacres as the Assyrians needed to dismember enemies in order to meet the divine requirements. Under such religious tactics, the enemies would regard the success of the Assyrian troops as overwhelming and lose their confidences. For the potential rebels, they fully understood what kinds of strategies that the Assyrians would take if they fought against the empire, which forced them to give up the possible rebellions to a certain degree.

For the Assyrian side, the enemies were considered as the dark forces against the Assyrian deities. Therefore, the enemies were wicked, and the Assyrians were the appointed ones with

the duties to eliminate the evil powers and to establish a new religious world order under Assyrian control, which stimulated and motivated the Assyrian troops to conduct the military campaigns to fulfill the needs of the deities and to expand the Assyrian powers.

Like what the Assyrian royal inscriptions stated, the reasons to conquer other states and to employ terror tactics were the stubborn resistances of enemies who refused to accept the beneficial lordship of the sacred and great Assyrian deities. Therefore, they ought to receive punishments brought by the Assyrian armies. The destinies of death, dismemberment, and destruction resulted from the faults of enemies themselves while what the Assyrians had done were rightful and accurate (Liverani 2017, 540).

In fact, Assyria showed certain religious tolerances as the polytheistic beliefs were common in ancient empires. As for the polytheistic Assyrian rulers, they were often pragmatic in the religious matters, however, the repressions of the foreign cults would occur when the Assyrian kings regarded the foreign elements to be hostile to the states which were under Assyrian control (Van der Spek 2014, 239). The manipulation and utilization of the religious beliefs in controlling their subjects as well as the threats and fears imposed on the foreigners were adjusted depending on the continuously changing situations with different and various religious tactics to be applied.

The Assyrian kings recognized the foreign deities politically to enforce the constraints and fears on the treaty partners. Such religious tactics were meaningful and would offer justifications for Assyrian military campaigns if the binding states violated the treaties. In the treaties, tributes and other requirements were regulated. The treaties invoked deities from the both sides to regulate the tasks of the states with the punishments of the divine curses to penalize the treaty-breaking party, which usually signed between the superior Assyrian kings and the kings of vassal states. Therefore, the religious tactics of vassal treaties facilitated the strengthened enforcements and pressures given by the Assyrian empire (Van der Spek 2014, 239).

With the heavy tribute requirements, the vassal states were restricted by the religious punishments of the treaties as the ancient Mesopotamians respected and believed in the supernatural forces firmly. The terror religious tactics threatened the leaders of the subordinate

entities in order to control them as well as to facilitate the collection of the wealth in form of tributes. The Assyrian kings constructed emporiums and the representative governments near the capitals of vassal states with the establishments and arrangements of the officials and troops (Na'aman 2001, 270). The Assyrian control over the vassal states were insatiable, however, with the implementation of the religious constraints, the fragile balances were formed.

One example about the threatening and terrifying power of the religious treaties was the case of Judah. After the king Hezekiah of Judah violated the treaty of vassalage with Assyria through the rebellion in 705 BCE, Hezekiah mentioned that “I have sinned; withdraw from me. Whatever you impose on me I will bear.” Hezekiah conspired against the deities with whom the oaths had been sworn, including the Assyrian and his own gods (Van der Spek 2014, 239). Hezekiah had to bear the senses of shames and the punishments from the divine forces as well as Assyria which would obviously utilize his violation of the treaty.

On the other hand, faced with the rebellions of the vassal states, the Assyrian kings had the justified reasons to conduct the military campaigns to act as the executors of the divine punishments religiously and to fight for the Assyrian rights and reputations as the superior entity to penalize the betrayers politically. As what the Assyrian king Sennacherib (704-681 BCE) informed the civilians in Jerusalem, “Moreover, is it without the lord that I have come up against this place to destroy it? The lord said to me, go up against this land, and destroy it.” (Van der Spek 2014, 239).

Sennacherib decided to destroy the rebelled vassal state with the direct guidance from the deity, showing his communications with the religious power who chose the Assyrian king and assigned the tasks. The Assyrian troops were inspired by the religious forces as what they conducted were rightful with the fulfillments of the divine instructions with the blessings and supports from the gods. As a consequence, Judah was transferred from the vassal state into the Assyrian province. Such religious tactics of the treaties between the vassal states and the Assyrian empire offered chances for the Assyrian brutal conquests and enforced the religious burdens on the subordinate kings.

To present the violence against the enemies and to demonstrate the ones who needed to be punished, the Assyrians developed religious ritual activities. Especially, in order to inform and

to present decapitations and dismemberments of important figures of the conquered cities as well as to strengthen the impacts, the Assyrian kings played ritual activities. For example, the king Assurbanipal (668-631 BCE) suspended the head of Te-Umman, the king of Elam, on a tree in the garden party in front of the gate of Nineveh to celebrate the conquest of Til Tuba. The head was poured over with wine at the top of a battlement by Assurbanipal as well with the intention to protect the city of Arbela, documented on the palatial reliefs (Backer 2008, 403).

What the king did belonged to the ancient ritual traditions of exposure and libation of the body parts of enemies. In the ritual activities, the Assyrian kings dedicated their trophies which were the enemies to the great gods who were regarded as the helpers and fighters for Assyria. Through such ceremonies, the powers of the deities and kings were broadcasted, memorized, and rewarded with the offerings. The ritual locations were usually set to be the walls of the conquered cities probably for humiliation and propaganda as the religious terror tactics (Backer 2008, 403).

For other body parts of enemies, during the Neo-Assyrian period (935-612 BCE), in some cases, the flayed skins of enemies were reserved and filled with straws and ashes by the Assyrians. The filled-up skins were put in the Assyrian temples for the symbolic, magical and religious values. As the parts of enemies were gathered as the offerings to the Assyrian deities, the religious tactics were designed to present the representative and bloody cases with the threatening purposes as others would not be willing to be treated as goods shown to humans and deities who they did not believe in (Backer 2008, 406).

Another religious tactic is called godnapping, like the kidnapping, but the targets were gods. The word godnapping was created in secondary literatures to describe the acts of divine deportation by the invading forces. The godnapping originated from second millennium BCE and developed until the last centuries BCE in ancient Mesopotamian history. Cult statues were constructed for beliefs, and the attacking powers targeted on such religious representations. For the Assyrian kings, after the conquests of towns, cult statues would sometimes be listed as spoils of wars together with other precious goods for deportation (Zaia 2015, 19).

In religious beliefs, cult statues were treated as manifestations of the deities. Therefore, the

divine deportation meant the deprivation of the gods and their protection, which was considered as a strategic and powerful tool to demoralize the subjugated inhabitants for the ultimate hegemonic and imperial purposes. The Assyrians conducted godnapping to humiliate the conquered people and to state the mighty power of the Assyrian empire, which was intentional and calculated. Godnapping functioned as a fear and terror tactic to show the punishments if states defied the Assyrian rule (Zaia 2015, 20).

The Assyrian historical godnapping issues mainly documented by inscriptions, also revealed by other records in chronicles, palace reliefs, royal correspondences, and so on. The practices started from the reign of Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 BCE) and continued through the reign of Assurbanipal (668-631 BCE), showed by the attested Assyrian royal inscriptions (Zaia 2015, 28).

In the reign of Shalmaneser III (858-824 BCE), on the black obelisk, it described what the king had done to the conquered city. “Ahunu, together with his gods (ilanusu), his chariots, his horses, his sons, his daughters, (and) his troops I uprooted (nasahu) (and) brought to my city Assur.” (Zaia 2015, 29) Religious manifestations and precious military equipment as well as important human beings were deported to the Assyrian cities as the spoils.

For the successive reign of Shamshi-Adad V (824-811 BCE), the king deported the patron gods from Der (Anu-rabu/Ishtaran and Sharrat-Deri) and Dur-Sharruku (Humhumya and Shimaliya). Specifically, during the fifth military campaign of Shamshi-Adad V, the king carried off eleven deities, with each name listed in a carved stele around 812 BCE. The godnapping occurred to the same gods in different cities as the Assyrian king reportedly took Anu-rabu/Ishtaran and Sharrat-Deri from Dur-Sharruku as well, which resulted in the decline of the divine geographic affiliation (Zaia 2015, 30).

For one case during the reign of Sargon II (722 to 705 BCE), the king deported Haldi and Bagbartu, the chief gods of Urartu, also the highest gods of the Urartian pantheon. Additionally, the deities were considered as the specific Urzana of Musasir's gods (ilanusu). The deportations of the gods were conducted together with other spoils such as the palace properties, the royal families, and a large number of civilians, following the Assyrian norm. When the king of Musasir heard about the destruction of his city and the deportation of deity Haldi, he committed

suicide (Zaia 2015, 30).

There were great psychological and mental pressures when the Assyrian enemies heard that the divine manifestations disappeared in their own cities and were controlled by the attacking power. Like what the king Musasir did, there was no hope when he lost his city and the city theological protectors. The severe humiliation was brought as the defeated people lost their physical homeland and spiritual entities.

When it comes to the successive reign of Sennacherib (704-681 BCE), as the godnapping developed as the norm, the Assyrians conducted divine deportations after conquests, shown as the following words from Sennacherib (Zaia 2015, 31):

I ordered archers, chariots, (and) horses of my royal contingent to confront the king of the land Elam ... they marched to Uruk (and) carried off the deities Shamash of Larsa, the Lady of the Res-Temple, the Lady of Uruk, Nanaia, Ušur-amassa, Belet-balaṭi, Kurunam, Kassitu, (and) Palil, the gods who live in Uruk.

The king deported the Lady of Uruk (Ishtar of Uruk) from the patron city. Other goddesses who were important to the Uruk local pantheons were also taken away, including the Lady of the Res-Temple, Nanaia, Usuramassa, etc. Even minor goddesses were not missing, such as Belet-balati, Kurunam, and Kassitu (Zaia 2015, 30).

As the godnapping tactics were the norm, Sennacherib practiced after several conquests. For the deportation of the Babylonian deities by Sennacherib, proved by the later correspondence to Assurbanipal (668-631 BCE), there were a list of gods deported, including Marat-Sin of Eridu, Marat-Sin of Nemed-Laguda, Marat-Eridu, Nergal, Amurru, and Lugalbanda (Zaia 2015, 31).

The godnapping strategies enforced the deities to leave their cities, which could lead to the divine anger at the original inhabitants as they did not well protect the deities and could not provide offerings in future. The Assyrians imposed the psychological burdens on the enemy civilians as they betrayed their gods, which resulted in the thoughts that the deported deities would abandon them and then turn to the Assyrian side. It was the fault of the conquered states as they were not powerful enough to protect their deities. The subjugated people felt guilty and lost their religious beliefs as the gods left their countries (Van der Spek 2014, 239).

At the same time, as the Assyrians put the deported deities in the Assyrian religious

institutions sometimes, the enemy divines would be possibly respected and provided with offerings depending on the different cases. If the Assyrian rituals and prayers devoted to the deported gods, the deities would probably abandon the original states and stand with the Assyrian side as the gods could be attracted by the Assyrian promises like the construction of temples (Van der Spek 2014, 239).

When the Assyrians utilized the psychological beliefs as propagandas, the defeated people would confirm that their deported gods had abandoned them and supported their enemy Assyria to some extent. It led to the Assyrian complete deprivation of the enemy religious beliefs not only materially but also mentally, resulting in the significant terror and fear of the enemy surviving inhabitants.

Still the example of how Sennacherib (704-681 BCE) handled the rebellious vassal state and the conquest of Jerusalem. The king Hezekiah of Judah betrayed his oaths and treaties sworn in front of the native and Assyrian deities, and then Hezekiah was punished by the gods with the practices conducted by the Assyrians. The civilians suffered from the punishments as well due to the faults and betrayal of their king.

In the Bible, there was one speculation regarding the deity Yahweh who deserted Jerusalem and joined the Assyrians in the story of the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem. The king Hezekiah made Yahweh angry. Therefore, the god of Israel probably abandoned his people (Van der Spek 2014, 240). The deities would abandon the kings and citizens when they violated their oaths and then would stand for the Assyrians who were rightful. Such religious tactics not only justified the Assyrian actions, but also caused mental and psychological harms because the people in the vassal states actively betrayed their deities.

During the reign of Esarhaddon (681-668 BCE), in the inscriptions of the king, there were repeated justifications for the tactics of the former king about the sacks of Babylon. Esarhaddon insisted that the Babylonian deities became angry as their citizens had seized the temple treasures to hire Elamites for the confrontations with Assyria (Van der Spek 2014, 239). The ancient people believed that the deities valued the offerings that the citizens provided. If there were violations and terminations, the gods would express negative emotions and abandoned the disqualified believers.

One similar case is the text written by Assurbanipal (668-631 BCE), Assurbanipal offered an emblem to an Arabian goddess to show his gratitude as the king considered that the goddess assisted Assyria in the campaigns against an Arab ruler (Van der Spek 2014, 239). The Assyrians enshrined and worshiped certain foreign deities who were regarded to be beneficial for the Assyrian empire-building. Such foreign divines would bless and support the Assyrians thanks to the offerings instead of the desperate original citizens as they betrayed and lost what they believed in.

Not only did the Assyrian kings deport the deities, they even conducted the destructions of the cult statues although such practices were relatively rare. Compared with godnapping, the destructions of divine manifestations were unequivocal behaviors against the polytheistic thoughts and other religious beliefs, which brought tremendous humiliation and psychological damage to the defeated people as well as the threats and alarms for other potential enemies and rebels as religions were common and vital in the Mesopotamian regions in the ancient time.

During the reign of Sargon II (722 to 705 BCE), there were destructions of the divine statues which were worshipped by the enemies (Backer 2008, 398). Stated by the Assyrian king, the intentional terrors were produced to control civilians of the enemy states with the words “I established the power of Assur for all days to come; I left for the future a fear of him (= Assur), never to be forgotten.” (Liverani 2017, 540)

With the destructions of other original divines, the new religious orders for the conquered states were the Assyrian divine orders. The Assyrian main deity Assur became the prominent power of the new religious rule with the support from the empire, while the deeply rooted terrors of the Assyrians and Assur were well installed in the minds of inhabitants whose states were conquered and destroyed.

As stated in the royal inscriptions, the military conquests were performed by the kings on behalf of and following the instructions of the supreme Assyrian god Assur. The kings explained their policies to the deity as the religious practices like the compositions of letters to the certain gods. For instance, after the eighth campaign conducted by Sargon II against Urartu, the king’s letter offered to Assur indicated that all deities on earth ought to pay homage to Assur and come to the temples of Assur with all the riches (Van der Spek 2014, 237).

After the eighth campaign, Sargon II described the deportation of the statue of the Urartian god Haldia and temple goods in detail. With the ideology of the superior deity Assur, the Assyrian kings practiced the deportation of the foreign divine manifestations of statues together with the collections of treasures as the norm. The temples of the conquered states were looted with the divine statues seized, and the wealth and religious representations were brought to the temple of Assur (Van der Spek 2014, 237).

The foreign deities were grabbed and placed in the Assyrian temples to meet the goal to regard Assur as the superior god. The religious beliefs of the conquered cities were struck heavily with the losses of their own religious manifestations. Their divines were captured and humiliated with the decreases in statuses. Such terror religious tactics contributed to the long-term psychological impacts on the defeated people and potential enemies. If the enemy inhabitants were fortunate enough to survive from the Assyrian conquests, since their religious beliefs were overrode, they lost their spiritual supports and dignities. For the potential enemies and rebels, they were threatened by the possible consequence of losing their own gods and Assyrian humiliation of their deities.

As for the successor Sennacherib (704-681 BCE), there were sources indicating the Assyrian destruction of the Babylonian cult manifestations during his reign. The cult images were destroyed, with the typical example of the Marduk statue. In the Bavian inscription, it stated that “my people seized and smashed the gods living inside Babylon.” In the bit akiti inscription, similar descriptions appeared regarding the military campaign, “after I destroyed Babylon, smashed its gods, (and) put its people to the sword, I removed its earth in order to make the site of that city unrecognizable and I had (it) carried to the sea by the Euphrates River.” (Zaia 2015, 40)

To be specific, what Sennacherib had done to Babylonia could be considered as the complete terror tactics which the king managed to justify through the religious perspective. The plunder of the city, the massacre of civilians, and the defilement of the temples as well as divine manifestations were to accomplish the retribution that the Assyrian gods required. The Assyrians were assigned with the tasks to create the deluge which was the mythical weapon of the deities to destruct Babylonia (Maul 2017, 349).

As a consequence, commanded by the Assyrian king, Babylon was obliterated once and for all. Imitating the flood myth, Babylonia was annihilated by the Assyrians who dammed the Euphrates, cut ditches through the metropolitan area, and brought the floodwater to Babylon. The scare of deluge was significant, and the debris were even washed up to the Gulf island of Bahrain (Dilmun) allegedly (Maul 2017, 349).

The gods were destroyed completely and smashed by the Assyrian troops, which was no doubt the aggressive and terroristic actions against the deities of other polities. Compared to the deportation, much less respects were given to the divines. On the other hand, the influences of religious destruction tactics would be much more impressive for everyone who heard of such practices, which significantly increased and broadcast the terroristic degree of the Assyrian empire.

In the reign of Assurbanipal (668-631 BCE), the destruction of the divine manifestations occurred as well. The Assyrian king claimed to have destroyed the deities of the Elamite cities during his eighth campaign in 647 or 646 BCE. Assurbanipal described his behaviors as "I desecrated the sanctuaries of Elam until they did not exist, its gods and goddesses I counted as *zaqiqu*-ghosts." in the Rassam Cylinder (Zaia 2015, 47).

After the deportation and destruction of the foreign deities, the Assyrians managed to politically and religiously control the newly conquered areas which transferred to be the subordinate states and the Assyrian provinces. Various religious tactics were developed and implemented on different targets in centuries with the ultimate goal of the Assyrian hegemonic empire-building.

During the Neo-Assyrian period (935-612 BCE), with the aggressive expansion, the newly integrated provinces were forced to participate in the offerings for the Assyrian imperial gods regularly, which undoubtedly caused certain problems. To be specific, when other lands were conquered and under the Assyrian control, the tasks of offerings were imposed. The newly transferred Assyrian inhabitants had to follow the Assyrian instructions and religious traditions to show respects to the Assyrian transcendent deities who were in fact the foreign and hostile gods for them (Maul 2017, 346).

Additionally, the newly Assyrian provincial inhabitants who were civilians of the

conquered states, with the enforcement of the Assyrian leaders, were forced to ask for the divine benevolence from the Assyrian deities. Their religious practices were unwilling as they were compelled to respect and offer gifts to the deities who disempowered them and gave instructions to eliminate them as the dark forces during the former battles (Maul 2017, 346).

One well documented and preserved example was the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon. There were inscriptions describing the reorganization of Egypt by Esarhaddon (681-668 BCE) and the successive signed Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon. In the 35th chapter of the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon, the line 409 demanded that the treaty was set up in cultic space “like your god”. Combined with other references, scholars analyzed that the Neo-Assyrian treaties with the vassal states regulated that the worship of Assyrian gods was mandated for client states (Morrow 2013, 57).

To be specific, after Esarhaddon conquered Egypt, the governor was assigned with the tasks of the offerings with the words “in perpetuity regular offerings for Assur and the great gods” (Maul 2017, 346). The religious practices were enforced with the guidance by the Assyrian governor. The defeated states had to produce and gather offerings for the Assyrian deities, which brought heavy work and humiliation.

Such religious tactics imposed on the Assyrian provinces and vassal states developed well and were employed by the later Neo-Assyrian kings. If the inhabitants in the provinces showed resistance to the regulated offerings, they would not be tolerated and would be punished severely (Maul 2017, 346). With the increasing expansion of territories, the Assyrians applied terror tactics to make newly transferred citizens respect and devote to the Assyrian deities, which restricted and limited the thoughts and religious beliefs of the civilians with great misery.

As the deities of the conquered states were deported and/or destroyed, the Assyrians managed to develop communication channels to inform the inhabitants who lost their gods. The conveyed messages were that their own deities had abandoned them because of their inabilities to protect the deities and their sins as the dark forces. The future living environments of these non-Assyrian religious believers were the constant and numerous propagandas of the Assyrian divines, especially Ashur, with the goal to make the conquered people in deference to the Assyrian deities (Miller 2009, 134).

In conclusion, regarding the Assyrian terror religious tactics, performed as the cruel and sadistic rulers, the Assyrian kings oppressed the subdued nations, destroyed the sanctuaries, deported and damaged the religious manifestations, and forced the suffering non-Assyrian religious believers to subject to worships of Assyrian deities to some extent. With the continuous victories and expansions, the Assyrians believed that they were blessed and supported by the deities who required them to create a new world order with the elimination of other state powers. In order to manipulate and utilize the religious beliefs, the Assyrians created vassal treaties and rituals for the Assyrian benefits. In general, the Assyrian brutal and violent religious practices in centuries led to the irreversible damage to the foreign religious values and cultures as well as the psychological and spiritual conditions of the civilians at that time.

Chapter 5: Vassal and Province System

The Assyrian empire applied the vassal and province system with several purposes, including the economic guarantee of the annual revenues through tributes and taxes, the military governance over the vast territories, the maintaining and the potential further expansion of impacts, etc. Depending on different cases, in the realm of administration, the lands under the Assyrian control were divided into provinces and vassal states (Tyson 2014, 484).

The concept of province in Assyria was similar to the current one to some extent. Provinces referred to the lands which belonged to the Assyrian empire as a part of the Assyrian territories. Religiously, provinces were considered as parts of the lands of Assur, which meant that provinces were owned by the Assyrian great state god Assur (Tyson 2014, 484). Since provinces were under the Assyrian governance, the Assyrian kings, who were the appointed executors of the Assyrian deities, were legitimized to employ various policies on provinces, such as the tax collections and conscriptions.

For vassal states, in contrast, religiously, the circumscription referred to the yoke of Assur, which meant that the Assyrian vassal states were subject to the control of Assur. Instead of the deprivation of sovereignties completely, vassal states retained certain degree of autonomies which allowed the local rulers of vassal states to be able to govern their lands under the supervision of the assigned Assyrian officials (Tyson 2014, 484).

The relative autonomies that the kings of vassal states could obtain and maintain were under the condition of their submissions and faithful remittances as tributes. For the understanding of submission, the rulers of vassal states were required to swear oaths which regulated their loyalty towards the Assyrian kings. The Assyrian empire was regarded as the superior level with the contrast of the inferior degree of vassals (Tyson 2014, 484).

To be specific, the mandatory practices indicating loyalty for vassal states covered various aspects politically, militarily, economically, and culturally, including the coordination of foreign policies which revealed the deprivation of the autonomous diplomatic rights, the necessary approvals of the political transfers of the thrones, the provisioning of laborers, the preparations of necessities and supplies for building Assyrian imposed projects, the assistances

to the Assyrian troops in the form of intelligence, supplies, and conscriptions, and so on (Tyson 2014, 484).

Regarding the tribute system for vassal kingdoms, probably on an annual basis, vassals were enforced to transport several types of tributes and gifts to Assyria. The goods were mostly delivered to the imperial palaces in the Assyrian capital cities where the vassal oaths would be renewed. The renewal of the vassal oaths would guarantee and increase the trusts among Assyria and vassal states because what they conducted were the centralized practices and performances of the ongoing loyalty (Tyson 2014, 484).

Especially during the Neo-Assyrian period (935-612 BCE), the Assyrian kings managed to coerce and control the vassal kingdoms through the hegemonic tactics. The Assyrian kings utilized their impacts on the vassals to facilitate the development of the military forces, the arrangements of deportees, the conscriptions of personnel from vassals, and the use of garrisons in peripheral lands (Tyson 2014, 484).

In terms of how the Assyrian empire controlled the subjugated states, the main strategies were orders with fear and terror. Little had been given to the dependent states but only freedom from strife. The Assyrians put minimal investments on the annexed and subjugated polities but achieved maximal profits utilizing the tribute and tax system, both logistically and ideologically (Frahm 2017, 193).

Through the province and vassal system, the Assyrians indeed achieved benefits significantly and contributed a lot to the empire-building. However, compared with the win-win situations, what Assyria had done could be considered as cruelty and exploitation, purely the utilization of other states with almost nothing given, which resulted in the tensions and possible rebellions among the vassal states and provinces even though the vassals were restricted by the divine treaties and threatened by the terror tactics of tortures.

In fact, the Assyrian empire employed terror tribute and tax tactics on the subjugated states for resources and powers in centuries. In order to increase what the empire could achieve and gather, the Assyrian kings continuously and constantly annexed other states to form provinces with the conquests for spoils, transferred other states into dependent states, enforced and strengthened heavy tributes and taxes, managed to control the transportations of resources

together with the trade roads, and applied other violent and aggressive tactics.

With the aggressive expansion of the territories, the Assyrian kings were depicted as notorious with terror by the subdued states. Like Israel and Judah, they were ranked as the vassal states for certain years, which referred that the kings of the inferior nations were only allowed to maintain their thrones if they met the requirement that the Assyrian kings were recognized as their lords. Other impositions included the tributes and deprivation of the diplomatic rights of their own as the kings of the vassal states needed to refrain from foreign politics (Van der Spek 2014, 237).

When Assyria won the military campaigns, the defeated states would pay gifts and tributes as subordinate states, or pay taxes as the Assyrian provinces after annexations. For the rebellious vassal states and the intentional annexation purposes of the Assyrian kings, the inferior states would be annexed and transferred into the Assyrian provinces sometimes. For example, in 722 BCE, the punishment for the Israel rebellion was the conversion into one province under the Assyrian governance as a consequence (Van der Spek 2014, 237).

From the economic perspectives, the booties and tributes were the vital sources of the empire revenues for usage, which were recognized as the essential parts in the Assyrian economy system, especially playing an important role in supporting the constant and aggressive military campaigns. While from the ideological perspectives, when other states contributed goods to the empire, it represented that the Assyrian kings ruled all the nations of the known cosmos and spread the Assyrian deities widely (Dezso 2016, 125). Therefore, the Assyrians continuously conducted military campaigns to expand the influences on other states for the economic and religious benefits in centuries.

Generally, considering the motivations of the Assyrian conquests, the economic considerations played a major role. Thanks to the coordination of the vassal states and the pastoral groups, the Assyrians gained revenues from booties and tributes. In addition, with the interventions among the vassal kingdoms, the Assyrian empire successfully and increasingly extended its impacts on the maritime and continental commercial activities (Na'aman 2001, 275).

For the categories of the booties and tributes, what the Assyrians required were mainly

agricultural sources and military sources. As mentioned in the former sections, the agricultural sources were partially achieved through the military campaigns with confiscations and the enforcements for the products on the massive deportees. The tribute and tax revenues were essential as they took up significant percentages of the total revenues and maintained constant as long as the vassalage relations retained.

To be specific, during the Assyrian military campaigns, in order to feed troops, the first main kind of the exploited agriculture and military sources was the used items like horses, mules, donkeys and camels as well as the consumed items such as grains, wine, sheep, and cattle. The second type was the items to be taken back, including horses and livestock, raw materials like metals, valuable treasures like precious metals and religious products (Dezso 2016, 125).

The Assyrian armies could be well treated with the consumed goods during the campaigns, while the collected items for use like horses could strengthen their military powers. The taken away items could contribute to the further prosperities of Assyria with the animal breeding, the construction of military equipment, the wealth accumulation, and the religious control over the conquered states, which contributed to the Assyrian empire-building in principle.

To maintain and strengthen the Assyrian troops, military sources were necessary to equip the armies with considerable loss after each conquest. For the Assyrian military sources, as the empire owned a large scale of troops with constant military campaigns, the loss of sources was significant. Metal sources like irons and bronzes were essential as raw materials required by Assyria as the tributes from the conquered states annually.

As for the precious metals of gold and silver, in order to maintain the Assyrian imperial economic system and increase dynamics, silver and gold became the mandatory tasks in the booties and tributes with different quantities requested frequently. In the ancient time, silver was a type of general measure standard of value, playing a direct role in the Assyrian market economy. Compared with silver, gold did not function directly in trading but the gold objects were stored and employed for preservation, like religious purposes (Dezso 2016, 127).

Based on the historic evidences, scholars concluded that the looted treasures were mainly distributed and utilized in the following aspects: the soldiers, the royal administration like high

officials, the religious institutions like temples, and the royal treasury storages. During the military campaigns, as a tool of motivation, the leaders allocated the booties to the soldiers on the battlefields to praise for bravery and to encourage the troops materially and spiritually with the precious metals. As a consequence, the troops were incentivized by the booties, which led to the more intensive involvement and devotion to the further campaigns (Dezso 2016, 127).

The distribution of the precious metals to the royal administration could be understood in the same way. The Assyrian kings used the booty and tribute system to gather wealth and to reward people who contributed to the Assyrian development, which formed a virtuous cycle for the empire-building, although there were heavy pressures on the subordinate states with the strengthened exploitation of tributes.

During the reign of Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 BCE), as documented in the prism inscriptions, the king concluded about his life at different stages. He was proud of his contributions as the following (Jakob 2017, 135):

Altogether, I conquered 42 lands and their rulers from the other side of the Lower Zab in distant mountainous regions to the other side of the Euphrates River, people of Hatti, and the Upper Sea in the west – from my accession year to my fifth regnal year. I subdued them to one authority, took hostages from them, (and) imposed upon them tribute and impost.

Considerable military campaigns were conducted to expand territories to the areas full of resources only within five years, with the gains of the subordinated and annexed lands. The frequent military campaigns could be viewed as the constant practiced tactics in order to obtain goods from other lands by military. Hostages were taken from the defeated adversaries to be utilized as the instruments to threaten the conquered and subordinated states for the declaration of the Assyrian control and superiority over others.

The Assyrian troops would attack cities and towns which surrounded the Assyrian heartland in summer almost annually. The Assyrian intentions were to grab the possessions, to impose regular and probably strengthened tributes on other state rulers, and to annex the lands eventually to obtain the taxes. For what they grabbed from other states and delivered to Assyria, regardless of the far distances, there were various kinds of categories, including raw materials like plants and animals, finished products like agricultural and military equipment, people, animals, etc. (Frahm 2017, 162).

For example, Tiglath-pileser I managed to conquer the Nairi lands because the king was interested in its realm, and the inhabitants were skilled at the horse breeding which were the essential techniques in strengthening the armies. The aggressions were conducted to deter and threaten the lands, which let the Assyrians successfully impose the tributes as the end. Annually, the Assyrians set the tasks for Nairi to offer 2,000 sheep and goats as well as 1,200 horses, according to the illustrations in the inscriptions (Jakob 2017, 135).

As the horses were used for transportation mostly instead of the farming system in Assyria, the looted and bred horses were exclusive for the military. Because the horses were the immediate and costly needs, the Assyrians captured a large number of horses during campaigns and after battles and sieges. In the wake of victories, the Assyrian kings would immediately impose tribute and tax requirements on the conquered and submissive states with the most important sources of horses, especially for the horse breeding areas in the Near East (Dezso 2016, 168).

The cycle of the Assyrian lack of sources, the implementation of military campaigns, the transformation of individual states into subordinate states and annexation, the enforcement of tribute and tax, the manipulation and utilization of sources in Assyria, the using up of available sources, was well formed and developed in centuries. The terror and aggressive tactics together with the strengthened tribute and tax system guaranteed the resources that the Assyrians needed to build and enlarge its armies for more military practices, which contributed to the Assyrian empire-building as a whole based on the loss and suffering of other states.

During the Neo-Assyrian period (935-612 BCE), the mindsets to acquire sources through various terror tactics were well developed. In centuries, the Assyrians strived for the greater material prosperities with more aggressive and violent practices. Compared with the traditional methods of obtaining goods through commercial interactions with foreign lands, the Assyrians increasingly resorted to the employments of terror tactics to achieve sources (Frahm 2017, 162).

The Neo-Assyrian kings developed the imperial system with the exploitation on other subjugated states, transforming the mode of production from the commercial system to the tributary system, although the commercial system did not disappear completely but was replaced significantly. The merchants could hardly deal with their foreign trading partners with

the equal stance due to the great Assyrian powers with the terror tactics (Frahm 2017, 162).

During the reign of Shalmaneser III (858-824 BCE), after the king successful defeat of the coalition of the 12 kings in 841 BCE, there were 1,121 chariots and 470 cavalries of Hazael of Damascus captured as the booties. In 832 BCE, after the victory over Seduru the Urartian, numerous cavalries were taken away. According to the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III, during the first 20 regnal years which was from 858 to 838 BCE, 9,920 horses and mules together with 19,690 donkeys were counted to be obtained through tribute and tax system (Dezso 2016, 169).

The conquered cities and states facilitated financing the Assyrian empire and sometimes directly provisioning its further military campaigns. One of the most important sources of military equipment like chariots and cavalries as well as horses were the booties and tributes. With the development of the Assyrian military techniques, in the 9th century BCE, there were increasing popularities in the employment of the cavalry armies and horses in the battlefields. Therefore, the Assyrians assigned the horses and military equipment tasks on tributes and booties in various campaigns (Dezso 2016, 167).

The subjugated states were forced to offer what they could to Assyria with the deprivation of the possibilities in developing their military sources. Even there were thoughts of the potential rebellions, there was no material for any struggle. At the same time, when receiving considerable military sources, the Assyrians were able to continuously explore more areas for exploitation with the overwhelming military powers, which formed the virtuous cycle and contributed to the empire-building gradually.

During the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (744-727 BCE), with the ongoing tribute and tax system, the Assyrians managed to explore the further commercial regions and guaranteed the trade routes through military campaigns. It is generally recognized that the Assyrian frontiers pushing towards the west direction beyond the Euphrates was to seek a stranglehold on all the trade routes in western Asia. For approaching further westward to the Mediterranean, the intention was to obtain the accesses of the Phoenician seaports. Regarding other directions, the Assyrian army marching north towards the eastern Anatolia and east towards the Zagros were for the mineral resources (Bedford 2009, 44).

One example is that, about the trades in the west, the goods which produced in the Aegean

or the further west the Mediterranean or the southwest Arabia, needed to pass through Syria-Palestine in order to deliver to Assyria. Under the circumstances, the Assyrians had to depend on other states for trade without implicit guarantee. Analyzed from the former cases, Tiglath-pileser III was interpreted with the motivations to expand territories for trade routes and resources (Bedford 2009, 44).

When the subordinate states and the Assyrian already transformed provinces refused to accept the instructions and declined to pay the required tributes and taxes, the severe punishments would be imposed. One case was how Tiglath-pileser III treated the governor who offended the Assyrian regulated tribute instructions. When Wasusarmas refused to pay the tributes to Assyria around 730 BCE, he was deposed by Tiglath-pileser III and arrested by just one eunuch (Fuchs 2017, 254).

Documented in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III, the king ridiculed the presumptuousness of the governor as “Wassurme, the Tabalean, who acted as if he were the equal of Assyria”. After the dismissal of Wassurme, with the intention of further humiliation, Tiglath-pileser III appointed Hulli to be the new governor. Hulli was the “son of a nobody”, which meant that the new ruler was not with any royal descent (Fuchs 2017, 254).

Tiglath-pileser III clearly showed the attitudes that the Assyrian kings would seriously punish the betrayers and would not bear people who stood opposite to Assyria, thanks to the great imperial powers. The Assyrian kings were able to control subordinate states as well as provinces with the plenty of rights to make decisions in recall, appointment, tribute and tax system, and so on. There were alternatives for governors when disobedience occurred, with the violators executed and substituted.

In the ancient time, around the Mesopotamian areas, there were significant hierarchies among the ordinary people and the royal elites. Occupation and marriage were highly restricted depending on the social status. For the highest official and governor of the states, it was descendent with the belief in blood and royalty. The practice of the designation of a governor with no royal descent was intentional to terminate the royal transition which existed for centuries and closely related to the destiny of the whole state. Therefore, such practice was extremely aggressive and terroristic with the terrifying influences on other states as it violated

the hierarchy and rule at that time but others could not reject due to the Assyrian overwhelming power.

With the appointment of Hulli, the tribute system for Assyria in that state was well obeyed. Additionally, in order to show his gratefulness to the empire, Hulli delivered 10 talents of gold, 1000 talents (32 tons) of silver and 2000 horses to Assyria (Fuchs 2017, 254). The assigned official was under the Assyrian control like puppet who would follow the Assyrian orders and gather wealth for the empire. Especially in this case, as what Hulli achieved with his descent were given by Assyria, and the empire could take away everything if the king wanted. Therefore, Assyria could better control the state as the governor was loyal and threatened.

In the reign of Sargon II (722-705 BCE), based on the historical evidences, for the precious metals that the king collected as booties and tributes, just in 710 BCE for one year, for the amount of gold, there were variations in the quantities from different subjugated states. The range was from a few kilograms to 4.5 tons (154 talents 26 minas 10 sheqels of red gold) from areas like Babylon and Borsippa, offered by the Assyrian central with the explanations like the needs for the Akitu festival. While for the silver sources, the amount varied between a few kilograms and 48 tons (1,604 talents 20 minas of shining silver) from the subordinate entities (Dezso 2016, 127).

For the collection of heavy tributes, the tasks were enforced on civilians. For example, Sargon II was reported by the servant Adda-hati on the result of the progress in gathering the silver dues. The referred silver was a type of tribute paid by the local population of the Damascus region as a redemption of the ilku. The tributary tasks were imposed on the civilians by the prefects and village managers in order to collect 18 minas of silver altogether for the Assyrian tasks (Dezso 2016, 128). The inhabitants of the conquered and subordinate states had to suffer from the heavy and strengthened tributary enforcements, which eventually contributed to the Assyrian prosperity and empire-building.

For the successive reign of Sennacherib (704-681 BCE), as discussed before about the religious tactics that Sennacherib employed on the rebellion of the vassal state Judah in 705 BCE, the reasons why Judah broke out the anti-Assyrian campaign after its long-time vassalage were the increasingly strengthened Assyrian interventions and humiliations brought by the

vassal and tribute system. Before the rebellion, probably in the early years during the reign of Sargon II (722-705 BCE), the Assyrians ordered to construct an edifice at Ramat Rahel (Stratum VB) for the appointed Assyrian official (Na'aman 2001, 273).

Same as other appointed officials, the one in Judah aimed at the supervision on the affairs of the kingdom of Judah, especially the central city Jerusalem. The sovereignties and autonomies were severely challenged in the vassal states. The Assyrian institutions were located near the capitals and ports of the vassal kingdoms, accelerating the anti-Assyrian emotions. The humiliations brought by the intensive monitoring together with the increases in the interventions of the domestic affairs motivated the bursts of rebellions (Na'aman 2001, 273).

Combined with the various factors, Hezekiah, the king of Judah, conducted the rebellion against Assyria in 705 BCE after the death of the Assyrian king Sargon II. During the rebellion, the early edifice built in Ramat Rahel was either destroyed or abandoned. However, with the overwhelming Assyrian military powers, the rebellion was suppressed in 701 BCE and the Assyrians decided to rebuild a new institution for supervision with a larger scale with more elaboration and extravagance in Judah (Na'aman 2001, 273).

With the Assyrian suppressive practices, the anti-Assyrian rebellions broke out in centuries as other kingdoms suffered from the destructions brought by the relentless imperialism of Assyria severely and even completely, regardless of the divine treaties and sadistic lessons from the defeated entities. However, since the Assyrian empire was powerful enough to curb other states, the imperial policies were triumphantly employed and spread for many years (Na'aman 2001, 275).

Therefore, taking the case of Judah as a representative example, within the vassal and tribute structure, the subordinate states suffered intensively with burdens and pressures. At the same time, they were threatened by various brutal and sadistic Assyrian torture cases as well as the religious restrictions. Even they were driven desperately to conduct possible rebellions, because of the Assyrian great powers, the results of rebellions were failures. Eventually, the rebellious practices led to the strengthened Assyrian exploitations to a great extent together with the brutal executions of the rebels. The virtuous cycle was therefore formed for the Assyrian empire-building as the empire benefited from the vassal system in general.

As for the event indicating the Assyrian control over the trade routes was the rebellion in Arza. There were increasing Assyrian interventions among the overland trades and the regional economies during the reign of Sennacherib, which seriously endangered the subsistence of the local population in Arza. The growing tensions and unrests accumulated, and the anti-Assyrian rebellion broke out upon the death of Sennacherib. The rebellion was led by Asuhili, king of Arza, who was the leader of the pastoral groups in the Nahal Besor area (Na'aman 2001, 265).

Due to the overwhelming Assyrian military power and terror threat, what Asuhili could conduct were probably no more than the struggles with the local Assyrian supervision officials and the refusals to pay the assigned tributes, or the raids on Arab caravans protected by the Assyrians. Consequently, the so-called rebellion was crushed in 679 BCE soon. The Assyrian troops plundered the possessions of the rebels with the deportation of Asuhili and the followers (Na'aman 2001, 265).

The cases regarding the Assyrian grabbing and maintaining trade routes with military forces revealed the Assyrian economic dynamics and models. Interregional and international trades were important for the establishment of the Assyrian prosperities with the exploitations on the vassal countries politically and economically, with the further developed tendency in the transformation from the commercial system to the imperial system. In general, the Assyrian empire employed the imperial policies with the arrangements of the economic objectives in the vassal states and provinces (Na'aman 2001, 265).

To sum up, the Assyrian empire benefited significantly from the vassal and tribute system with booties, tributes, and taxes collected. The tribute and tax system were well developed and utilized by the Assyrians in controlling and threatening other states politically and religiously. With the Assyrian terroristic tactics, under the imperial control, the subjugated states suffered from the destruction of the commercial system, the loss of economic and military resources, the deprivation of sovereignty, and the potential brutal punishments if rebellions appeared.

Conclusions

The Assyrian empire implemented and developed all kinds of terror tactics in order to expand its empire. The strategies that the Assyrians managed to employ in centuries concentrated in five aspects, which are the control of agricultural sources, enemy torturing, mass deportations, the use and abuse of religion, and vassal and province system.

Specifically, the Assyrians managed to control agriculture sources through the conquests of other towns to achieve food during the harvest time among different reigns with consumption, confiscation, and destruction of agriculture sources. For enemy torturing, the Assyrians conducted and developed various types of tortures against enemies in centuries, including decapitations, impalements, and dismemberments.

As for other aspects, mass deportations eliminated potential possibilities of rebellions, threatened other states, and increased working labors significantly. About the use and abuse of religion, the Assyrian kings oppressed the subdued nations, destroyed the sanctuaries, deported and damaged the religious manifestations, and forced the suffering non-Assyrian religious believers to subject to worships of Assyrian deities to some extent. Lastly, the vassal and tribute system brought booties, tributes, and taxes to Assyria.

Through the brutal and aggressive tactics, the Assyrians managed to employ such terror tactics and broadcasted widely in order to win both physical and psychological warfare, to maintain the stability of the conquered areas, to suppress potential rebellions, to force other states to surrender, and to contribute to the further empire-building in general. As a consequence, the Assyrians enlarged territories, increased revenues, imposed political and religious governance, and created prosperous civilizations.

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