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# Learned Viziers and the Role of Multilingualism in Fashioning New Images of Power in Syro-Anatolian Polities in the Late 9th-8th Centuries BC

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## Abstract

This article aims to analyse the role of multilingualism to shore up the legitimacy of a number of Assyrian and Syro-Anatolian governors and regents who rose to power between the end of the ninth and the beginning of the eighth century BC. Interestingly, the royal inscriptions composed by the four rulers under analysis deal with the use of multiple languages. While Yarri of Karkemish states to know 12 languages, Azatiwada of Karatepe, Ninurta-bēlu-ušur of Kar-Shalmaneser and Adad-it-'I of Guzana produced multilingual inscriptions. Within the unstable political frame and the multiethnic composition of the Syro-Anatolian Iron Age polities, the choice of the languages for the inscriptions is interpreted as a tool to reaching out different elites with reassuring messages. At a methodological level, in this article, I attempt to offer an interpretation of the purposes of the epigraphic inscriptions under analysis taking into consideration not only their content, but also their relationship with the monuments and their location. As a result, it is argued that multilingualism was strategically used by these rulers for gaining internal and international political consensus.

## Introduction

From approximately the end of the ninth to the beginning of the eighth century BC, a number of very influential figures, who have been scholarly referred to as 'learned viziers',<sup>1</sup> are testified in royal inscriptions from the Assyrian and Syro-Anatolian courts. Although they were very powerful governors, dignitaries, high officials, or appointed regents, they did not

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<sup>1</sup> Gilibert 2022: 4.

aim to usurp the legitimate royal authority, instead solidifying their power through the exaltation of their erudition.<sup>2</sup>

In this article, I propose an in-depth analysis of the ideology conveyed by these regents' propaganda, with a particular focus on the role played by multilingualism in their innovative strategies for gaining internal and international recognition. In fact, at least three of the 'prime ministers'<sup>3</sup> who rose to positions of power within the Neo-Assyrian empire or acted as regents of Syro-Anatolian kingdoms during the late ninth and eighth centuries BC chose to describe their enterprises in multilingual inscriptions. Azatiwada, one of these rulers, does so in the hieroglyphic Luwian/Phoenician bilingual inscription KARATEPE 1. Another learned vizier, Ninurta-bēlu-ušur, applies this tactic in the hieroglyphic Luwian/Akkadian/Aramaic trilingual inscription ARSLANTAŞ 1, while Adad-it-'i does that in the Akkadian/Aramaic bilingual TELL FEKHERYE. Similarly, Yarri<sup>4</sup> of Karkemish (eighth century BC) boasts of his international fame in his inscription KARKAMIŞ A6, further noting his knowledge of many different languages in the inscription KARKAMIŞ A15*b*.

According to Marco Santini, 'The *topos* of the cultivated, skilled ruler as well as that of the ruler's name (i.e. fame) reaching the four quarters of the world are profoundly interconnected, and one complements the other [...] Each inscription is, indeed, a piece of its own, but forms part of a coherent political discourse. [...] [The ruler's] linguistic skills are a proof of his sagacity and, at the same time, a signal of his importance on the international scene'.<sup>5</sup> Yarri's statements about his linguistic competence in foreign languages are commonly understood as claims to erudition.<sup>6</sup> In fact, in the inscription KARKAMIŞ A15*b* §21 Yarri acknowledges his lord's<sup>7</sup> efforts in providing him with multilingual training. According to Santini, the ideological perspective of such a claim needs to be contextualised within a framework of international relations, highlighting Yarri's international role and diplomatic importance.<sup>8</sup> This must have been even more true within the political framework of Syro-Anatolian Iron Age states, which were highly multicultural and multilingual polities.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Gilibert 2022: 4.

<sup>3</sup> Gilibert 2022: 4.

<sup>4</sup> The name of this regent is traditionally referred to as "Yariri"; in this paper, the form Yarri is preferred because, as Melchert has kindly pointed out to me (pers. comm., March 2019), this theophoric name, also attested in other sources, is fully compatible with the writing of the name in hieroglyphic Luwian.

<sup>5</sup> Santini 2021: 11.

<sup>6</sup> Gilibert 2022: 4.

<sup>7</sup> The Karkamishean king Astiruwa.

<sup>8</sup> Santini 2021: 8-9.

<sup>9</sup> Yakubovich 2015.

Since we are assessing the use of multilingualism in Assyrian<sup>10</sup> and Syro-Anatolian royal inscriptions, it must be considered that these kinds of texts were powerful tools of royal propaganda. As highlighted by Frahm, in Assyrian royal inscriptions the roles of 'author', 'narrator', and 'protagonist' are implicitly or explicitly assigned to the king.<sup>11</sup> The same can be said of Syro-Anatolian royal inscriptions, even if they are often very poorly preserved, and most texts are much shorter than Assyrian annals. Since royal inscriptions are a literary genre focused exclusively on the figure of the king,<sup>12</sup> the production of royal inscriptions in multiple languages has to be connected, in my opinion, to the promotion of a specific image of power. This issue involves the broader topic of the reception of multilingualism among the Assyrian and Syro-Anatolian Iron Age cultures. According to Santini,<sup>13</sup> who addresses the theme of multilingualism and linguistic diversity from an emic perspective by analysing three different case studies,<sup>14</sup> the purpose of these themes within the political discourse is strictly connected to the imagery of the world order and the reception of otherness.<sup>15</sup>

In this article, I argue that the promotion of multilingualism in the royal inscriptions of the abovementioned Assyrian and Syro-Anatolian learned viziers was functional to a depiction of a ruler aiming to convey openness and erudition. Given the Assyrian conquering policy and its consequences on the political scenarios of the Syro-Anatolian polities, the use of multilingualism in these inscriptions may also, or even more so, be interpreted as a tool for linking local memory and acknowledgement of a new political situation. Accordingly, at a methodological level, in this article, the choice to record royal enterprises in multiple languages is considered not only as a code for conveying a message, but also as constituting a message in itself connected with the underlying royal imagery and propaganda.

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<sup>10</sup> Fales 1999; Frahm 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Frahm 2019: 142.

<sup>12</sup> Fales 1999; see Galter 2022 for an innovative approach to Assyrian royal inscriptions and their possible audiences.

<sup>13</sup> Santini 2021.

<sup>14</sup> In his contribution, Santini analyses some crucial passages in royal inscriptions of Yarri of Karkemish (early eighth century BC), Sargon II of Assyria (late eighth century BC), and Assurbanipal of Assyria (seventh century BC) that are relevant to the theme of linguistic diversity.

<sup>15</sup> For instance, as is testified by the inscription on a cylinder of Sargon II (*Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period (RINAP) 2: Sargon II 43, 72-74*), the theme of linguistic diversity within the Assyrian royal propaganda serves as a metaphor for disagreement, dissent, and the lack of unification (and thus of order) at least up to Sargon II's reign, Santini 2021: 13.

The article addresses the so-called learned viziers individually, providing the reader with a historical introduction to their reign that is useful for contextualising the analysed inscriptions. It also offers a detailed description of the inscriptions and their archaeological context, when such data is available.

## Yarri

Yarri of Karkemish (ca. early to mid-eighth century BC) is probably the most well-known figure among these regents. Karkemish, located in South-Eastern Anatolia on the west bank of the Euphrates river, was one of the most powerful Neo-Hittite kingdoms and was considered by the Assyrians to be the political heritage of the Hittite empire of the Bronze Age.<sup>16</sup> Yarri was a high-ranking dignitary who exercised his sovereignty over Karkemish after the death of Astiruwa, in place of the legitimate heir to the throne, Kamani, who was still too young to reign. The regent did not belong to the royal family and was probably a eunuch.<sup>17</sup> Yarri is the author of three hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions: KARKAMIŠ A6, KARKAMIŠ A7, and KARKAMIŠ A15b.

KARKAMIŠ A6<sup>18</sup> is carved in relief on a corner orthostat basalt slab found *in situ* as part of the figurative cycle at the Royal Buttress at Karkemish.<sup>19</sup> The inscription celebrates the dedication of a structure described as (“MENSA.SOLIUM”)asa-, a ‘seat’ for the young prince Kamani. In this inscription, Yarri boasts about his fame and foreign connections:<sup>20</sup>

§1 |EGO-wa/i-mi-i 'i-a+ra/i-ri+i-i-sa |IUDEX-ni-sa DEUS.AVIS-ta-ni-sà-mi-i-sa  
LITUUS+ta-sa-pa-CERVUS-wa/i-ti-i-sa CAPUT-ti-i-sá (“OCCIDENS”)i-pa-ma-

<sup>16</sup> The Karkemish-Hatti equation in the Assyrian documentation is established, Hawkins 1980: 434. For a historical introduction to the Neo-Hittite kingdom of Karkemish see Posani 2021: 19-24 with further bibliography. For recent archaeological reports, see Marchetti *et al.* 2019-2020.

<sup>17</sup> Denel 2007: 195, following Reade 1972: 91, 108, argues that, according to the Assyrian model, beardless sculptures represent eunuchs. Since Yarri, in the orthostatic cycle at the Royal Buttress at Karkemish, is represented as a beardless figure, he is believed to have been a eunuch as well. See also Posani 2021: 53, footnote 161.

<sup>18</sup> Hawkins 2000: 123-128 and plates 31-33.

<sup>19</sup> The orthostatic cycle at the Royal Buttress is part of the decoration of the façade of the King’s Gate complex at the foot of the main mound of Karkemish. In this orthostatic sequence, Yarri is depicted as the protector of Kamani, the young heir to the throne. In particular, orthostat Carchemish 79 (located in the Ankara Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi, Inv. 91) represents the regent presenting Kamani on his way to the temple, namely on the occasion of his enthronement. For a detailed analysis of the Royal Buttress orthostatic circle, see Gilibert 2011: 47-50; for an interpretation of the portray of Yarri and Kamani as the ceremony for Kamani’s enthronement, see Gilibert 2022: 5-7.

<sup>20</sup> According to Anatolian hieroglyphs’ principles of transliteration, logograms are transliterated in Latin in capital letters. Determinatives (i.e. logograms that specify what category a word belongs to) are transliterated in parentheses. Signs with phonetic value are transliterated in Italics.

- ti-i* (DEUS.ORIENS)*ki-sà-ta-ma-ti-i* |PRAE-*ia* |AUDIRE+*MI-ma-ti-mi-i-sa*  
 DEUS-*na-ti-i* (LITUUS)*á-za-mi-sa* <sup>1</sup>CAPUT<sup>2</sup>-*ti-i-sa*  
 §2 *a-wa/i* [x]-<sup>r</sup>x<sup>-</sup>-*zi* [á]-*ma-[za]* [á-*lá/i*]-*ma-[z]a* *á-mi-ia-ti-i* |IUDEX-*na-ti*  
 (DEUS)TONITRUS-*hu-za-sa* (DEUS)SOL-*wa/i-za-sa-ha* (“CAELUM”) *ti-pa-si*  
 |“PES<sub>2</sub>”(-)*hi-nu-wa/i-ta-a*  
 §3 *á-ma-za-ha-wa/i-ta* *á-lá/i-ma-za* DEUS-*ni-zi* FINES+*HI-ti-i-na* |“PES<sub>2</sub>”(-)*hi-i*  
*nu-wa/i-tá*  
 §4 *wa/i-ma-lá/i* |*zi-i-na* (“MÍ.REGIO”) *mi-za+ra/i*(URBS) |AUDIRE.*MI-ti-i-ta*  
 §5 *zi-pa-wa/i+ra/i* |L475-*la*(URBS)-<sup>3</sup> |AUDIRE+*MI-ti-i-ta*  
 §6 *zi-i-pa-wa/i-a* *mu-sá-za*(URBS) *mu-sà-ka-za*(URBS) *su+ra/i-za-ha*(URBS)  
 AUDIRE+*MI-ti-i-ta*  
 §7 *wa/i-ta ta-ni-mi* REX-*ti* SERVUS-*la/i-ti-i-zi* |*a-ta* (BONUS)*wa/i-sa<sub>5</sub>+ra/i-nu-ha*<sup>21</sup>

I (am) Yarri, the Ruler, the ... .. (noble) man, the (noble)man far reputed towards the West and the East, beloved by the gods.

... my name on account of my justice Tarhunzas and the Sun cause to *pass* to heaven, and my name the gods caused to *pass* abroad, and men heard it for me on the one hand in Egypt (*Mizra*), and on the other hand they heard it (for me) in *Babylon*(?), and on the other hand they heard (it for me) among the Musa, the Muska and the Sura, and for every king I caused to *benefit*(?) the *subjects*(?).

(Hawkins 2000, 124)<sup>22</sup>

The regent’s name is said to have *passed* to heaven and abroad, thanks to the gods (§§2-3). Then, Yarri mentions two countries and three groups of people who would have heard his name: Egypt, Babylon(?), and the Musa, the Muska, and the Sura. The Musa have been identified as the Mysians or the Lydians, and the Muska as the Phrygians, while the last reference is still unclear.<sup>23</sup>

The inscription is positioned within an orthostatic cycle that satisfies a precise figurative programme.<sup>24</sup> Accompanying the inscription are three masterfully placed slabs with images of Yarri and Kamani, of Kamani accompanied by his young brothers, and of a child held in the arms of an adult figure. The three scenes probably depict Kamani in different ages, in accord with the conventions of ancient Near Eastern visual narratives.<sup>25</sup> Inscription

<sup>21</sup> Text revised according to the Digital Philological-Etymological Dictionary of the Minor Ancient Anatolian Corpus Languages (eDiAna); for the new reading of *ta<sub>4</sub>* and *ta<sub>5</sub>*, respectively, as *la/i* and *lá/i*, see Rieken and Yakubovich 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Hawkins’ translation partially modified according to eDiAna; for the new spelling of the name “Yarri”, see above; ‘[t]owards the West and the East’ instead of ‘from the West and the East’ was kindly suggested to me by Melchert (pers. comm., March 2019). For alternative translations of the last clause (§7), see Yakubovich 2002, 201 and Santini 2021, 10.

<sup>23</sup> For a detailed discussion of rhetorical patterns in this passage, see Posani 2021: 53-54, with further bibliography.

<sup>24</sup> Gilibert 2011: 47-49.

<sup>25</sup> Gilibert 2022: 9.

KARKAMIŠ A7,<sup>26</sup> which is formed by a series of epigraphs positioned around the sculptures, is distributed on these three slabs.

The inscription KARKAMIŠ A15*b* does not belong to the same orthostatic cycle.<sup>27</sup> It was found out of position and is distributed over four lines along a cylindrical basalt drum, which most probably constituted the base of a statue or a stele (although the text did not completely circle the drum).<sup>28</sup> Only half of the monument has been discovered; a carved line is preserved on the top of the object, which probably completely circled the entire circumference. The content of the inscription at the top of the drum remains very uncertain.<sup>29</sup> In the inscription KARKAMIŠ A15*b* Yarri exalts his goodness to Kamani and the royal children and boasts about his knowledge of different languages and writing systems.<sup>30</sup> Because he was unable to leverage dynastic legitimacy, the regent enhanced his level of knowledge as much as possible.<sup>31</sup> As is well known,<sup>32</sup> a famous passage of this inscription includes references to his knowledge of four different writing systems (KARKAMIŠ A15*b*, §19) and 12 (unfortunately unspecified) languages (§20).

§19	[...] URBS- <i>si-ia-ti</i>  SCRIBA- <i>li-ia-ti</i> <i>zú+ra/i-wa/i-ni-ti</i> (URBS)  SCRIBA- <i>li-ia-ti-i a-sú+ra/i</i> (REGIO)- <i>wa/i-na-ti</i> (URBS)  SCRIBA- <i>li-ia-ti-i ta-i-ma-ni-ti-ha</i> (URBS) SCRIBA- <i>li-ti</i>
§20	12- <i>ha-wa/i-a</i>  “LINGUA”- <i>la-ti-i-na</i> (LITUUS) <i>u-ni-ha</i>
§21	<i>wa/i-mu-u ta-ni-ma-si-na</i> REGIO- <i>ni-si-i-na</i> ’  INFANS- <i>ni-na</i>   (“VIA”) <i>ha+ra/i-wa/i-ta-hi-lá/i-ti-i</i> CUM- <i>na ARHA-sa-ta</i> DOMINUS- <i>na-ni-i-sa á-mi-i-sa</i>  “LINGUA”- <i>la-ti</i> SUPER+ <i>ra/i-a</i>
§22	<i>ta-ni-mi-ha-wa/i-mu</i> (L273) <i>wa/i+ra/i-pi-na</i> (LITUUS) <i>u-na-nu-ta</i> <sup>33</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Hawkins 2000: 128-129 and plates 31-35.

<sup>27</sup> Hawkins 2000: 130-133 and plates 36-37.

<sup>28</sup> Hawkins 2000: 130.

<sup>29</sup> Hawkins 2000: 131, 133.

<sup>30</sup> Posani 2017, 2021: 52-72; Santini 2021: 7-12.

<sup>31</sup> As noted by Novák (Novák and Fuchs 2021: 444), the position of Yarri of Karkemish is similar to that of Azatiwada of Karatepe (on whom see below): both rulers had been appointed regents by the previous king and faced the problem of legitimising their power, especially since, in both cases, the son of the previous king, who would have been the legitimate successor, did not directly succeed his father. As is easily understandable, both rulers underline in their inscriptions their role as the protectors of the legitimate royal house. In the case of Yarri, this is also highlighted in monumental art in the reliefs of the Royal Buttress (see below). Furthermore, both regents adopt ideologically oriented rhetoric patterns in their inscriptions to legitimise their power: Azatiwada, in his famous bilingual inscription KARATEPE 1, metaphorically stresses his parental relationship with his own country and the manifestation of divine favour towards him, Lanfranchi 2007: 206-207, 211, while Yarri extensively uses rhetoric devices aimed at emphasizing his high level of knowledge and international reputation. For a detailed rhetorical analysis of the inscriptions KARKAMIŠ A6, KARKAMIŠ A7, and KARKAMIŠ 15*b*, see Posani 2017, 2021: 52-72.

<sup>32</sup> Payne 2012, 84-85, 2015: 137; Hawkins and Weeden 2016: 14; Posani 2021: 66-72; Santini 2021: 7-12.

<sup>33</sup> Text revised according to eDiAna.

[...] in the City's writing, in the Suraeen writing, in the Assyrian writing and in the Taimani writing, and I knew 12 languages. My lord *gathered* every country's son to me by wayfaring concerning language, and he caused me to know every skill.<sup>34</sup> (Hawkins 2000, 131).<sup>35</sup>

The interpretation of §19 has traditionally been read as referring to multiple writing systems:<sup>36</sup> the writing of 'the City' (Karkemish?), namely hieroglyphic Luwian, the writing of Tyre (the Phoenician script), Assyrian cuneiform, and the script of Tayma, alternatively interpreted as the Aramaean script or as a South-Arabic one.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the text (§§21-22) hints at language training involving foreign people who would have reached Yarri from 'every country', in order to provide him with such training.<sup>38</sup>

The statements contained in §§19-22 can be related to the multilingual *milieu* of the Syro-Anatolian polities.<sup>39</sup> In this socio-cultural context, the learned elite must have been trained

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<sup>34</sup> For a detailed analysis of rhetorical patterns in this passage, see Posani 2021: 66-72, with further bibliography.

<sup>35</sup> For different translations of the clause at §21 see Posani 2021, 66-67 with further bibliography.

<sup>36</sup> Hawkins 2000: 133 §19; Simon 2012: 170-172, 177; Osborne 2021: 73-83; Posani 2021: 66-67.

<sup>37</sup> The traditional interpretation of §19 was recently revised by van den Hout 2020: 341-374, who proposes a new reading of the sign \*326 SCRIBA. He identifies a chair or a stool in the pictorial character of the sign and suggests transliterating it as SELLA. According to van den Hout, this sign should be connected to the concept of a higher officer with royal affiliation. This leads to a reinterpretation of the meaning of §19, which should be translated as follows: '[I mingled with/received gifts from *vel sim.*] royal representatives from the City, royal representatives from Tyre(?), royal representatives from Assur, and royal representatives from Taiman' (van den Hout 2020: 365). The arguments supporting this reinterpretation are very compelling. Yet, regardless of what could then be the correct interpretation of Yarri's statement at §19, it is clear that the cultural background of this text highlights a positive attitude towards multilingualism, considered to be an indicator of international prestige, as acknowledged by van den Hout himself: 'Even though we lose an ancient champion of literacy in Yarri, his inscription (KARKAMIŠ A15b) still makes sense and he may get to keep his polyglot reputation' (van den Hout 2020: 371). In fact, even when accepting the new reading of the sign \*326, which is too recent to be considered established by the scientific community, the reinterpretation does not affect §20, in which Yarri boasts of his knowledge of 12 languages. As also acknowledged by Santini, 'Should his new interpretation of \*326 be accepted, the revised meaning of KARKAMIŠ A15b, §19 would still be consistent with the significance of §§19-22 and of Yarri's self-presentation as has been detailed in this paper', Santini 2021: 35.

<sup>38</sup> Posani 2021: 68-72; Santini 2021: 7-12.

<sup>39</sup> The socio-linguistic situation of these polities was exceptionally complex. Several polities produced inscriptions in more than one language (mostly in hieroglyphic Luwian and Aramaic, but Phoenician and cuneiform Assyrian are also testified). The question of the relationship between ethnicity and language is beyond the scope of this contribution. For comprehensive discussions on the topic, see Yakubovich 2015, Osborne 2021: 45-47. Evidence shows that even the Assyrian administration by the eighth century used the Aramaic language, Santini 2021: 23-24 with further bibliography. At a figurative level, we should consider that different Neo-Assyrian reliefs testify to the existence of two scribes recording the spoils of the victory, one in cuneiform on a clay tablet and the other in Aramaic with a pen and scroll. See, among others, the slab from the Palace of Tiglath-Pileser III at Kalḫu (British Museum (BM) 118882). According to Collins 2008, the latter scribe on this slab may also be interpreted as sketching the scene. Still, the traditional interpretation is strengthened by Biblical sources, which testify to the existence of an officer of Sennacherib who switched back and forth from Aramaic to Hebrew during the siege of Jerusalem: II Kings 18: 26, 28 (I am indebted to Brian K. Garnand for drawing my attention to this passage); see also the slab from the South-West Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh (BM 124955).



in different languages and writing systems.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, from an epistemological point of view, learning to write (in different languages/scripts) and speak foreign languages must have been two cornerstones on which society organised its education system for the cultural elite.<sup>41</sup> From a socio-cultural viewpoint, such as education, including multilingual training, must have been a requirement for the regent's role.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, as argued by Santini,<sup>43</sup> Yarri's statements at §§19-22 are not only meant to display his skilfulness, but should be read as a metaphor expressing the ruler's ability to engage in international relations. Thus, in my opinion, Yarri's statements offer us an exceptional glimpse into the cultural education of the high dignitaries and members of the intellectual elite, who acted as advisers to the king and whose agency is usually obscured by the predominant focus placed exclusively on the figure of the king in royal inscriptions.<sup>44</sup>

## Azatiwada

Azatiwada is the author of the bilingual inscription KARATEPE 1.<sup>45</sup> It consists of the duplicated inscriptions placed on two city gates in the fortifications surrounding the hilltop of Karatepe-Aslantaş in Cilicia: the Lower (or North) Gate and the Upper (or South) Gate. The Lower Gate inscription (commonly referred to as 'Hu', i.e. '*Hieroglyphisch unten*') is well preserved, while the Upper Gate one ('Ho', '*Hieroglyphisch oben*') is more fragmentary. Each gate has one hieroglyphic Luwian and one Phoenician inscription. The Luwian and the Phoenician texts are roughly the same, with only a few minor divergences. The reconstruction of the Luwian textual sequence is based on the Phoenician Lower Gate inscription. A third Phoenician text is preserved on the skirt of a colossal statue of the Storm God found inside the Upper Gate.

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<sup>40</sup> Yarri has been traditionally regarded as a member of the 'scribal class': Payne 2012: 137, 2015: 84-85; Posani 2017: 108, 2021: 69-70. The question of the 'scribal identity' and the notion of a 'scribal class' within the ancient Near Eastern world have undergone a deep reconsideration over the last years (see, among others, van den Hout 2020: 287-340 and Boyes 2021: 19-22, with further bibliography). Consequently, in this contribution, Yarri is referred to as a member of the cultural elite rather than a 'scribe'.

<sup>41</sup> Posani 2017: 108.

<sup>42</sup> Posani 2017: 108-109; Santini 2021: 9.

<sup>43</sup> Santini 2021: 9-11.

<sup>44</sup> Frahm 2019: 142-144.

<sup>45</sup> Hawkins 2000: 45-68.

The author of the text, Azatiwada, was probably appointed by the previous king, Awarkus (II),<sup>46</sup> to rule Que/Hiyawa as the regent, since the son of the previous king was still too young to rule. The dating of the KARATEPE 1 inscription has long been debated. It was traditionally dated to the eighth century BC.<sup>47</sup> In recent studies, though, an approximate dating to the late eighth or even early seventh century BC has also been proposed.<sup>48</sup> While admitting the high complexity of the question, I consider the early dating to be more correct since it fits better with historical considerations and archaeological evidence.<sup>49</sup>

The inscriptions on the Karatepe Gates aim to celebrate the erection of the fortifications and the city gates.<sup>50</sup> In the lengthy inscription,<sup>51</sup> Azatiwada, as he is unable to leverage dynastic lineage, boasts about his wisdom and skills to the maximum degree.<sup>52</sup> The following passage is emblematic:

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<sup>46</sup> For the mostly debated and still open question of the identification of Awarkus, see recently Novák and Fuchs 2021 with further bibliography.

<sup>47</sup> For a recent assessment of all relevant historical and archaeological evidence for the dating of KARATEPE 1, see Novák and Fuchs 2021.

<sup>48</sup> DeGrado 2021-2022.

<sup>49</sup> Novák and Fuchs 202: 448.

<sup>50</sup> In recent years, the role of the city gates as highly symbolic places has been thoroughly investigated. Besides being strategic structures with respect to the defence of the city, they were multi-functional public spaces where different social activities took place (commercial, legal, and cultic). They were also a special space for diffusing propagandistic messages and recording memories of military undertakings. On the role of city gates in ancient Israel and neighbouring countries, see Frese 2020. On the erection of royal monuments in city gates at Tell Mardikh, Alaca Höyük, Karkemish, Malatya, Zincirli, Til Barsib (Tell Ahmar), Samaria, and possibly also Boğazköy and Tell Tayinat, see Ussishkin 1989. The decoration of the gate complex of Karatepe is extremely rich, including banquet, hunting, and sailing scenes, as well as musicians, warriors with round shields, mythological figures, lions, sphinxes, representations of royal ancestors, and many other subjects. Bachvarova (2016: 383-392 with further bibliography) connects some of the scenes that are represented at the Gates to the cult of the ancestors. In her opinion, although the reliefs do not seem to be aimed at depicting a narrative, one can recognise cultic scenes of the royal ancestor (Muksas/Mopso) among them, such as the offering of sacrifices accompanied by music and songs. Moreover, according to Shade 2019, who analyses the Phoenician version of the KARATEPE 1 inscription, the blessings section of the text includes volitive (votive?) expressions that, together with the scenes featuring banquets and musicians, would offer a point of contact between contemporary ceremonies and the hope of a prosperous future, which would be achieved by performing rituals for the deities. These volitive (votive?) expressions, together with scenes of banquets and musicians, would offer a point of contact between the present and future, between contemporary ceremonies and the hope of a prosperous future, which will be achieved by performing rituals for the deities. Accordingly, Shade argues that the inscription was aimed at increasing ritual prescriptions (I am not sure what that means? Procedures, perhaps?) and perpetuating the cultic performances.

<sup>51</sup> The two hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions are formed by 412 words (75 syntactical clauses) arranged over a rich variety of sculptured orthostats and statues (the overall number of words includes all the words forming the text, as it can be reconstructed by integrating the Lower Gate and Upper Gate inscriptions, with the latter generally the more fragmentary one). The Phoenician text at the Lower Gate is formed by 62 lines engraved over a sequence of orthostats, some bases placed under the orthostats, and a portal lion. The Phoenician text at the Upper Gate consists of 30 lines engraved over one portal lion and one orthostat; a third 85 lines Phoenician text is incised on the statue of the Storm-God at the Upper Gate. For a detailed description of the monumental Gates complex with all the sculptures, see Çambel and Özyar 2003. For the edition of the Phoenician text, see Çambel 1999.

<sup>52</sup> Lanfranchi 2007.

§18Hu      [[i-zí]-i-[ta] |á-[mí]-ia-ti |IUDEX-na-ti |á-mi-ia+ra/i-ha |("COR")á-ta-na-sa-  
ma-ti |á-mi-ia+ra/i-há |("BONUS")sa-na-wa/i-sa-tara/i-ti  
§18Ho      |OMNIS-MI-sa-ha-wa/i-mu-ti-i REX-ti-sa |tá-ti-na |i-zi-tà |á-mi-tí |IUDEX-  
na-ri+i |á-mi-ia+ra/i-há |("COR<">-ta-na-sa-ma-ri+i |á-mi+ra/i-ha  
|("BONUS")sa-na-wa/i-sa-tara/i-tí<sup>53</sup>

And every king made me father to himself because of my *justice* and my *wisdom* and my goodness.  
(Hawkins 2000, 51)

As DeGrado has recently argued, the text borrows extensively from the phraseology of Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, thus adapting Assyrian imagery to create an imperial vision for Azatiwada's power over Karatepe, identifying an Assyrian influence in the description of the regent's military triumphs. The Phoenician formulation of the idiom 'from the rising of the sun to its setting', expressing Azatiwada's territorial expansion, immediately recalls the Akkadian idiom 'from the Upper Sea of the setting sun to the Lower Sea of the rising sun'.<sup>54</sup> In addition, this figure of speech has parallels in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions as well (for instance, in Tiglath-Pileser III RINAP 1 35: ii 18'-21'). Although similar forms of discourse are disseminated throughout Syro-Anatolian and Assyrian inscriptions, according to DeGrado, we can see an increased focus on territorial expansion expressed by the metaphor 'from sunrise to sunset' in the period of intense contact between Syro-Anatolian polities and Assyria.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the association of the idiom with a description of the cross-deportation of people in conquered areas is especially significant, inasmuch as Azatiwada seems to borrow the pattern from Assyrian propaganda, decontextualizing it from its value as a warning to potential rebels and transforming it into a claim of his military accomplishment.<sup>56</sup> Thus, to stress his own independent rule, Azatiwada resorted to adapting the Assyrian phraseology of power in his propaganda.

Furthermore, the idiom concerning the seating of the heir on his father's throne, in turn participating in a broader rhetorical tradition, is expressed by Azatiwada as an accomplishment otherwise attributed only to deities in the corpus of Syro-Anatolian traditions.<sup>57</sup> While Yarri clearly subordinated his role as the regent to the dynastic heir

<sup>53</sup> Text revised according to eDiAna.

<sup>54</sup> DeGrado 2021-2022: 27 with further bibliography.

<sup>55</sup> DeGrado 2021-2022: 28.

<sup>56</sup> DeGrado 2021-2022: 29.

<sup>57</sup> DeGrado 2021-2022: 30-33.

Kamani, Azatiwada borrows from Assyrian phraseology<sup>58</sup> to present himself as an imperial suzerain, never even mentioning the new king's name.<sup>59</sup> Obviously, the extensive borrowing from the Assyrian rhetoric of power is consistent with the dating of the KARATEPE 1 inscription to a period after prolonged contact between the Assyrian empire and the Syro-Anatolian polities, as well as after considerable Assyrian penetration into the region of Que/Hiyawa.<sup>60</sup> As stated above, despite the accuracy of DeGrado's analysis, I still tend to give more credit to the dating proposed by Novák since, in my opinion, chronological attribution based on archaeological evidence is harder to dispute. Nevertheless, the question of the dating of KARATEPE 1 is extremely complex, and this topic is beyond the scope of this contribution. Regardless, I find the rhetorical/ideological analysis carried out by DeGrado to be exceptionally well argued, and it offers many insights for the studies focused on cultural interactions between Assyria and Syro-Anatolian kingdoms.

Traditionally, it was broadly assumed that the Luwian text was the primary version of the bilingual inscription, with the Phoenician version being a translation thereof. In contrast, Yakubovich argued that the Phoenician version represents the primary character of the text.<sup>61</sup> According to Yakubovich, the rulers of Que claimed Greek descent and adopted the Phoenician language as a statement of identity, in opposition to the indigenous Luwian population. This would have been the first step towards the creation of the Greek alphabet. Recently, Melchert has argued for the existence of two independent compositions, whose content was expounded by the commissioner to those responsible for the textual compositions, who were fluent in the respective language. Nevertheless, in Melchert's opinion, mutual consultations between the Luwian author and the Phoenician author cannot be ruled out.<sup>62</sup>

Beyond the discussion on the primary version of the text, in this paper, I will focus on the connection between multilingualism and the construction of identity. As proposed by Yakubovich, the written use of Phoenician in Que/Hiyawa may have been chosen as a

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<sup>58</sup> For a list of the occurrences of the expression *ina kussî abīšu ušēšibšu*, 'I seated him on the throne of his father', see DeGrado 2021-2022: 32, footnote 46.

<sup>59</sup> DeGrado 2021-2022: 30.

<sup>60</sup> For a detailed discussion of the dating of KARATEPE 1 and the reasons supporting a late chronological attribution thereof, see DeGrado 2021-2022: 33-40.

<sup>61</sup> Yakubovich 2015.

<sup>62</sup> Melchert 2021.

statement of identity in relation to that part of the population that claimed Greek descent.<sup>63</sup> Concerning the employment of hieroglyphic script, in turn, Payne argues that it must have been considered a strong identity marker due to its connection with the Hittite Empire.<sup>64</sup> As highlighted by Payne in relation to the utilisation of the hieroglyphic script at the Karatepe city gates complex, this writing system ‘may have been part of a collective memory in Cilicia and may have held strong symbolic character as both indigenous script invention and as status symbol of a mighty empire and a glorious past’.<sup>65</sup> Consequently, the hieroglyphic script may have been used for its connection with the glorious Hittite past claimed by the Luwian-speaking part of the population.

In my opinion, the use of both languages in the inscriptions fits well with a propagandistic programme aimed at emphasising the role of the learned ruler who commissioned the inscription. In fact, from the perspective of this ruler, multilingualism may have been considered a strong cultural tool for gaining recognition and ensuring peace and stability in a highly multicultural polity, such as Neo-Hittite Cilicia. This may be considered even more true if we take into account that Azatiwada was an appointed ruler. In fact, maintaining consensus among the elites of both population groups was, for him, highly necessary.

### **Ninurta-bēlu-uşur**

An analysis of Ninurta-bēlu-uşur’s multilingual inscriptions and a comparison with the observations made on the KARATEPE 1 inscription suggest that, in certain cases, the content of the text may not have been as important as its placement on a specific monument and as its written presence in multiple languages.

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<sup>63</sup> Yakubovich 2015. As this scholar specifies, page 50, the outcome of a reconstruction in interdisciplinary research mostly consists of weighing up the relative compatibilities of various scenarios with all the heterogeneous data at our disposal.

<sup>64</sup> Payne 2007: 130-131, 138. According to this scholar, Phoenician must have been easier to read than the complex hieroglyphic script. I am grateful to one anonymous reviewer of this contribution for drawing my attention to the concealed Western bias that may connote such an approach to the ancient perspective on script complexity.

<sup>65</sup> Payne 2007: 129.

The two Ninurta-bēlu-ušur trilingual inscriptions, ARSLANTAŞ 1<sup>66</sup> and ARSLANTAŞ 2,<sup>67</sup> were inscribed on the back of a pair of orthostats, A1 and A2<sup>68</sup> in the form of portal lions at the East Gate of Arslan Tash (ancient Ḫadattu), approximately 30 km to the east of Tell Ahmar on the Euphrates River. Tell Ahmar is identified with the ancient Til Barsip, the capital of the small kingdom of Masuwari,<sup>69</sup> which was included in the broader state of Bit-Adini; Til Barsip was renamed Kar-Shalmaneser after the Assyrian conquest in 856 BC.

The monuments and inscriptions ARSLANTAŞ 1 and ARSLANTAŞ 2 are dated to the first half of the 8th century BC (ca. 780 BC).<sup>70</sup> On the flat side of the southern lion (A2) that once stood against the wall and therefore would have been hidden from view, there were three inscriptions: on the top, a nine-line Aramaic inscription in Aramaic script; at the bottom, a nine-line Assyrian cuneiform inscription; and at the bottom right, a four-line hieroglyphic Luwian inscription.<sup>71</sup> Only the hieroglyphic Luwian text was published by Hawkins as the ARSLANTAŞ 1 inscription. Provisional descriptions of the content of the Akkadian and Aramaic texts were provided by Röllig<sup>72</sup> and Galter.<sup>73</sup> The Aramaic version is probably a translation of the Assyrian text.<sup>74</sup> Ninurta-bēlu-ušur presents himself as the governor of Kar-Shalmaneser, as well as a eunuch and servant of the *turtānu* Šamši-ilu.<sup>75</sup> He boasts about having the city gates erected with the lions. The text ends with a protective curse against the future prince who would destroy the inscription.

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<sup>66</sup> Hawkins 2000: 246-248 and plates 103-105. Since the Aramaic and Akkadian inscriptions have not been published, I refer to this inscription using the title of its hieroglyphic Luwian version published in Hawkins' *Corpus*.

<sup>67</sup> The text has not been published yet. For information on its discovery, see Hawkins 2000: 246.

<sup>68</sup> Abbreviations A1, A2, B1, and B2 after Galter 2007, Röllig 2009, Fales and Grassi 2016.

<sup>69</sup> On the impossibility, at the moment, of establishing the exact geographical extension of Masuwari see Simon 2019: 133-134.

<sup>70</sup> Fales and Grassi 2016: 83.

<sup>71</sup> This lion was placed in the central park in Raqqā. It seems that during the Syrian civil war in 2015, it was bulldozed into pieces (Tayfun Bilgin, [www.hittitemonuments.com](http://www.hittitemonuments.com), v. 2.00 accessed 28/05/2024). Three corresponding inscriptions were placed on the back of the other (north) lion orthostat (A1) that was taken to the Aleppo Museum (Hawkins 2000: 246).

<sup>72</sup> Röllig 2000: 182-183.

<sup>73</sup> Galter 2004a, 2004b.

<sup>74</sup> Röllig 2000: 183.

<sup>75</sup> This reference allows us to approximate the inscription's date to 780 BC (Fales and Grassi 2016: 83, with further bibliography). The *turtānu* Šamši-ilu was commander-in-chief during the reigns of Adadnirāri III, Salmanassar IV, Aššurdān III, and Aššurnirāri V, namely from 800 to 752 or 745 BC (Baker 2006-2008). He was the eponymous official of the years 780, 770, and 752 (Millard 1994: 38, 40, 42). For an in-depth discussion on Šamši-ilu and the other high-level courtiers who acted similarly during the 'reign of the magnates', see Siddal 2013: 100-128 (on Šamši-ilu see especially 118-127).

In the Luwian text, the name of the author is lost, but he has the title of ‘Masuwarean Country-Lord’ and boasts about the foundation of the city of Hattatta (Ḫadāttu).

§1 ...]x [...] -tâ-sá ma-su-wa/i+ra/i-za-sa(URBS) REGIO-ni(-) DOMINUS-ia-sá  
§2 a-wa/i ha-ta-ta-na(URBS) URBS-MI-ni-na “1”-ti-i (“ANNUS”)u-si-i  
 (“AEDIFICIUM”)u-pa-ha-a<sup>76</sup>

... -tas, Masuwarean Country-Lord. The city Hattatta in one year I founded.  
(Hawkins 2000, 246)<sup>77</sup>

Moreover, the other two lions (B1 and B2) from the West Gate also have an Assyrian and Aramaic<sup>78</sup> inscription on their backs,<sup>79</sup> but a Luwian text is missing. The bilingual text seems to be different from the trilingual one but still ascribable to Ninurta-bēlu-ušur.<sup>80</sup> The south-side lion of the West Gate was also placed in the central park in the city of Raqqa, and it seems to have been destroyed, as well.<sup>81</sup>

In terms of the ARSLANTAŞ 1 inscription, according to Bunnens,<sup>82</sup> the very use of Luwian was quite surprising for a text composed more than sixty years after the Assyrian conquest. Moreover, while Ninurta-bēlu-ušur is referred to as the governor of Kar-Shalmaneser in the Akkadian and Aramaic texts, the name of the kingdom utilised in the hieroglyphic text is ‘Masuwari’, a term which was used in Luwian inscriptions preceding the Assyrian conquest referring to Til Barsip. According to some scholars, this makes it unclear whether the Luwian text corresponds with the Assyrian one. In Bunnens’s opinion, this element testifies that Luwian tradition at Tell Ahmar/Kar-Shalmaneser ‘[d]id not come to a halt with the Assyrian conquest’ by Salmanassar III in 856 BC.<sup>83</sup>

With respect to the challenging question of the engraving of text on the hidden sides of the statues,<sup>84</sup> Russel extensively addresses the issue of texts carved on the backs of the slabs

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<sup>76</sup> Text revised according to eDiAna.

<sup>77</sup> Spelling of the city’s name according to eDiAna.

<sup>78</sup> For the edition of the fragmentary Aramaic inscription on the B2 lion, see Röllig 2009, Fales and Grassi 2016: 84-88 (in the latter edition, the first two lines of the inscription are omitted).

<sup>79</sup> Thureau-Dangin *et al.* 1931: 74-75, 85-89; Albenda 1988: 23-24; Fales and Grassi 2016: 83-88.

<sup>80</sup> Fales and Grassi 2016: 84.

<sup>81</sup> Tayfun Bilgin, [www.hittitemonuments.com](http://www.hittitemonuments.com), v. 2.00 accessed 28/05/2024.

<sup>82</sup> Bunnens 2009: 78.

<sup>83</sup> Bunnens 2009: 78.

<sup>84</sup> One may imagine a ritual purpose for some inscriptions, which were probably intended to be addressed to the deities. I wish to thank Ryan Schnell for reminding me of the cuneiform inscription on the rear side of the lamassu at Dur Sharrukin/Khorsabad (Oriental Institute Museum (OIM), Chicago, OIM A7369), which was also intentionally hidden, probably for ritual and cultic purposes.

and colossi in Assurnasirpal II's Northwest Palace at Kalḫu and in Sargon II's Palace at Dur-Sharrukin.<sup>85</sup> He stresses the variants between the extant exemplars of Assurnasirpal's II 'Slab Back Text' and 'Palace Wall Foundation Text'. Although the inscriptions are very similar to one another, some exemplars of the Slab Back Text include three royal epithets ('marvellous shepherd', 'fearless in battle', 'mighty flood-tide which has no opponent') that are absent from the Palace Wall Foundation Text. Furthermore, substantial differences are found in the concluding passages describing the building of the new palace, including a hint at the eternal admiration of rulers and princes, which is found only in the Slab Back Text.

Russel discusses the variants between the Palace Wall Foundation Text, the Slab Back Text, and the Standard Inscription, with the latter inscribed on the fronts of the wall relief slabs and in its expanded form on the colossi. In his opinion, the presence or absence of variants may provide evidence for the sequence of the construction of the palace's rooms and the order in which they were furnished with wall slabs. Regarding the text on the backs of the relief slabs from Sargon II's Palace at Dur-Sharrukin, Russel<sup>86</sup> (following Botta 1849-50) reports that the same text was carved on the back of every relief slab in the palace, one of which was on the back of the colossus n. 2 forming part of door *k*. He considers it probable that every colossus in the palace originally had this text on its reverse. According to Russel, since the text 'would only be visible in the future, after the slabs had fallen from the walls, its purpose was evidently to identify Sargon for posterity as a benevolent and wise ruler, a ruler whose works deserved restoration'.<sup>87</sup>

Russel's observations on Assyrian inscriptions on the back of palace slabs invite discussion concerning the ARSLANTAŞ 1 trilingual inscription. There is particular interest in the supposition that the concealed inscriptions were addressed to posterity, to preserve the memory of the ruler in the future and avoid oblivion even when the monuments he erected fell down. In addition, the multilingual character unique to the ARSLANTAŞ 1 inscription must be fully taken into consideration. Galter connects the multiple languages of the inscriptions from Arslan Tash to the multicultural and multilingual situation of the state of Bit-Adini and to the uncertainty about which party would hold political power in the future.<sup>88</sup> This view fits well with an interpretation of concealed texts as future-oriented.

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<sup>85</sup> Russel 1999: 19-30, 101-108.

<sup>86</sup> Russel 1999, 101 with footnote 3.

<sup>87</sup> Russel 1999: 103.

<sup>88</sup> Galter 2004b.



Although I agree with Galter's perspective, other reasons for using multiple languages may be speculatively proposed. In fact, as highlighted with respect to the Karatepe City Gates,<sup>89</sup> their symbolic value consists of the way they connect the present, past, and future. In other words, they are meant to emanate strong performative messages, but at the same time, they have the function of keeping elements of the local memory alive. In my opinion, the variants in the names of the kingdom, with the Luwian text preserving its old definition as 'Masuwari', are not due to mere chance, but reflect the willingness to preserve the memory of the Masuwaraean kingdom before the Assyrians conquest.

Furthermore, it can be argued that one cannot fail to connect the use of multiple languages to the political status unique to the Syro-Anatolian appointed regents in the ninth and eighth centuries BC. Both Azatiwada and Ninurta-bēlu-ušur chose to compose their propagandistic city gate inscriptions in multiple languages. The history of Syro-Anatolian polities broadly involved variable attempts towards the expansionism of the Neo-Assyrian empire and alternating phases of alliance and conflict with Assyria and other polities. One can easily imagine how, in such a political scenario, different elite groups competed against one another, with their loyalties being aligned with the polity which would benefit them the most. In addition, Syro-Anatolian polities were highly multiethnic and multilingual political entities, where various languages were connected to different ethnic identities. For a ruler lacking in dynastic legitimation, reaching out to all these groups with reassuring messages, using the differing languages which corresponded to their identities, must have been a powerful tool to make them feel part of the ruler's political activities and avoid dissent.

For this reason, I think that, at least in the case of the lion inscriptions from Arslan Tash, the message conveyed by the use of multiple languages may have been even stronger than the content of the text itself. Considering the high communicative value of royal inscriptions in emanating images of power and the ideological characterisation of multilingualism as connotated by openness and erudition, especially in the absence of dynastic legitimation, I believe that the author of a multilingual inscription aimed to present himself in the positive light of a highly educated ruler, well engaged in international relations, and most of all able to represent all the various groups of power among the national elites. This may apply to the Karatepe city gates complex, where the choice of bilingualism as a code may have had the

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<sup>89</sup> See above, footnote 48.

purpose of maintaining the memory of both the Greek-<sup>90</sup> and the Luwian-speaking groups of the population.<sup>91</sup> The same may also apply to the employment of the traditional term ‘Masuwari’ found in the ARSLANTAŞ 1 hieroglyphic inscription, which differs from the Aramaic and Assyrian versions of the text, in both of which ‘Kar-Shalmaneser’ is found. In fact, the author of the multilingual inscriptions from Arslan Tash, Ninurta-bēlu-uşur, was likely to have been a local ruler who was appointed governor of Kar-Shalmaneser.<sup>92</sup> Besides the Assyrian (the language of the conqueror) and the Aramaic (which was utilised as an international *lingua franca*),<sup>93</sup> he may have included the Luwian language to keep alive the memory of Luwian identity, which he himself may have shared.<sup>94</sup>

### **Adad-it-'i/hdys'y**

Moreover, as Bunnens has highlighted,<sup>95</sup> a situation similar to that of Ninurta-bēlu-uşur may have concerned Adad-it-'i/hdys'y,<sup>96</sup> who is referred to as ‘governor’ in the Akkadian version of the TELL FEKHERYE inscription and as ‘king’ in the Aramaic version. TELL FEKHERYE<sup>97</sup> is an Assyrian-Aramaic bilingual inscription from Guzana (Tell Halaf), engraved on a statue of a king. It was found by chance in 1979 during ploughing work in a field on the border between Syria and Turkey, in the region of the Habur river, not in its archaeological context.<sup>98</sup> The statue was a votive object for the god Adad/Hadad. The text can be approximately dated to the middle of the ninth century BC. The inscription is placed at the bottom of the tunic worn by the king and bears the Akkadian text on the front and the Aramaic text on the back.

More specifically, here we deal with two texts: the first, (lines 1-18 of the Akkadian version, lines 1-12 of the Aramaic version), is a dedication to the god Adad/Hadad of the city of Guzanu/Sikkan by Adad-it-'i/hdys'y. He bears the title ‘governor’ (*šākin māti*) of the city of Guzanu in the Assyrian version, and the title ‘king’ (*mlk*) of the city of Guzana in the Aramaic one. In the second text (lines 19-38 of the Akkadian version, lines 12-23 of the Aramaic

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<sup>90</sup> See Yakubovich 2015 for the connection between the use of Phoenician and Greek identity.

<sup>91</sup> See Payne 2007 for the connection between the use of the hieroglyphic Luwian and Hittite identity.

<sup>92</sup> On this hypothesis, see Bunnens 2009: 79.

<sup>93</sup> Folmer 2020.

<sup>94</sup> For a similar hypothesis, applied to the mention of the ‘paternal gods’ at §3 of the ÇINEKÖY bilingual inscription, see Posani 2021: 209-210.

<sup>95</sup> See Bunnens 2009: 79.

<sup>96</sup> Adad-it-'i in the Akkadian version, *hdys'y* in the Aramaic version of the text.

<sup>97</sup> See Fales and Grassi 2016: 69-81 for the Aramaic version, Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods (RIMA) 2 A.O.101.2004 for the Akkadian version of the text.

<sup>98</sup> Fales and Grassi 2016: 69.

version), the author is called governor/king of the cities Guzanu/Guzana, Sikanu/Sikkan, and Zaranu/Azran. This king is not attested elsewhere other than in this inscription. According to Grayson, the second text was clearly composed when the king ruled over a more extensive territory than he did when the first was written.<sup>99</sup> According to Baranowski, the inscription, besides being bilingual, also has a double nature: the first inscription was originally written in Akkadian and follows the model of Assyrian royal inscriptions; the second inscription was probably originally composed in Aramaic and follows a West Semitic literary model.<sup>100</sup> According to Galter, the bilingual form of the inscription clearly aims at different audiences.<sup>101</sup> He argues that the language and content of the text combine the model of a traditional Assyrian dedicatory inscription (first inscription) with that of a local commemorative inscription (second inscription). The differences in phraseology and the variants of titles bore by Adad-it-'i/hdys'y show, in Galter's opinion, that readers were rarely able to read both languages and scripts.

The TELL FEKHERYE inscription offers more evidence for investigating the role and ideology of power of the regents under discussion. Adad-it-'i/hdys'y, and similarly Ninurta-bēlu-ušur, were probably local rulers who were allowed to keep their power under the condition that they acknowledged Assyrian sovereignty. Their power must be analysed in the context of the broader interaction between Assyria and Syro-Anatolian local rulers. Assyrian inscriptions, and especially Assyrian annals, offer an overwhelming portrayal of the interaction between Syro-Anatolian polities and Assyria. This depiction is obviously biased by the Assyro-centric perspective of these sources.<sup>102</sup> The passages of Assyrian royal inscriptions describing the acquisition of booty from Syro-Anatolian states ironically testify to how prosperous those reigns were.<sup>103</sup> Osborne stresses that the dynamics of cultural interaction held by these two entities were not unidirectional (in terms of a forced 'Assyrianization' of the conquered polities). Rather, their interaction should be viewed as a 'middle ground', where bidirectional interaction shaped new hybridised forms of culture at all levels. The material and visual record, in particular, proves the existence of this hybrid middle ground. Osborne mentions exactly the statute of TELL FEKHERYE in this regard.<sup>104</sup> In my opinion, for these individuals, the use of multiple languages could have had a specific

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<sup>99</sup> RIMA 2: 390.

<sup>100</sup> Baranowski 2012: 174-175.

<sup>101</sup> Galter 2022: 104.

<sup>102</sup> Osborne 2021: 148.

<sup>103</sup> Osborne 2021:148-149, 163.

<sup>104</sup> Osborne 2021: 164.

coding connotation that went beyond the denotative meaning of the text, and needs to be interpreted as a tool for keeping elements of the local memory and identity alive.

## Conclusion

The presented overview of the regents and inscriptions under discussion strengthens the hypothesis that these learned viziers used multilingualism as a specific tool for promoting a new ideology of power. The need to create new images of authority was connected with their role as hybrid figures appointed as governors or regents. Those regents who exercised their sovereignty in place of the legitimate heirs to the throne had to face the lack of legitimacy. Maintaining consensus must have been particularly problematic in these political frameworks. The use of multilingualism should then be viewed analogously to the boasting of wisdom by Azatiwada, as it has been ideologically interpreted by Lanfranchi, as a tool functioning to enhance the regent's role,<sup>105</sup> despite his lack of legitimate royal lineage.

At the same time, it is my view that the utilisation of multiple languages might have had another purpose, connected with the conservation of memory, especially for those polities that had been recently subdued by an external hegemonistic policy or were particularly exposed to changes. Local rulers who were appointed governors after the Assyrian conquer were always compelled to compromise with the higher, unquestionable Assyrian power. In this case, using multiple languages could have had a specific coding connotation that went beyond the denotative meaning of the text and was mostly connected with keeping alive the memory of cultural identity even in case of a loss of political power. This symbolic use of language and writing systems is especially evident in the case of the trilingual inscription from Arslan Tash, which was located on the hidden side of the monumental lion, committing its message to the future.

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<sup>105</sup> Lanfranchi 2007.

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