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Foreign Royal Nobles in the Neo Assyrian Empire¹

Yeni Asur İmparatorluğu'nda Yabancı Kraliyet Soyluları

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Abstract

The Assyrian kings, who reached the peak of their power in the Near East between 934-612 BC, implemented various practices that would help them maintain their military and political dominance. Assyria's policy towards foreign royal captives, hostages, and refugees can also be considered within these practices. Assyria's policy was expected to preserve peace and keep some lands under control without war. The Assyrian kings carried the enemy kings and their family members whom they defeated as a result of military campaigns to Assyrian centres and captivated them, aiming to break the resistance of those regions and intimidate their enemies. In addition, Assyria aimed to gain some binding advantages to make the agreements permanent by taking hostages from the kings with whom it made agreements or made them swear allegiance. For this purpose, noble captives and hostages were subjected to Assyrian education and were tried to turn into allies who could be appointed as rulers of their countries in the future. Assyrian kings also wanted to establish their relations with these kingdoms on a binding and permanent basis by including the daughters of enemy or allied kings in their harems. Finally, they protected the noble people who took refuge in them in Assyrian cities and even helped them to become kings in their countries, depending on the changes in the political situation. Thus, the Assyrian kings thought that they could create rulers loyal to themselves. Based on cuneiform documents, this study investigates the Assyrian practice of taking captives and hostages, the position and status of foreign princesses sent to the Assyrian court, and the place of refugees in Assyrian policy. The study aims to reveal all aspects of Assyria's policy and to draw a portrait of the lives of foreign royals in the Assyrian court and cities. The primary sources used in this study are the royal inscriptions and the Assyrian state archive.

Keywords: The Neo-Assyrian Empire, Noble Captives, Hostages, Refugees, Foreign Princesses.

Öz

MÖ 934-612 yılları arasında Yakındoğu'da gücünün zirvesine ulaşan Asur kralları askeri ve politik açıdan hakimiyetlerini sürdürmelerine fayda sağlayacak çeşitli uygulamaları hayata geçirmişlerdir. Asur'un yabancı kraliyet soylu esirlere, rehinelere ve sığınmacılara yönelik politikası da bu uygulamalar içerisinde değerlendirilebilir. Asur'un bu politikası hem barışın korunmasına hem de savaşmaksızın bazı bölgelerin kontrol altında tutulması amacıyla hizmet etmesi beklenmekteydi. Asur kralları askeri seferler sonucunda yenilgiye uğrattığı düşman kralları ve onların aile üyelerini Asur merkezlerine taşıyarak esir etmiş ve bunu yaparken hem o bölgelerin direncini kırmayı hem de düşmanlarına açık bir gözdağı vermeyi amaçlamıştır. Bunun yanında antlaşma yaptığı ya da biat ettirdiği krallardan da rehinelere alarak aradaki antlaşmaları kalıcı olmasına yönelik birtakım bağlayıcı avantajlar kazanmayı hedeflemiştir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda soylu esir ve rehinelere Asur eğitimine tabi tutulmuş ve ileride ülkelerine yönetici olarak atanabilecek müttefiklere dönüştürülmeye çalışılmıştır. Asur kralları ayrıca düşman ya da müttefik kralların kızlarını haremine dahil ederek de bu krallıklarla ilişkilerini bağlayıcı ve kalıcı bir düzleme oturtmak istemişlerdir. Son olarak kendilerine sığınan soylu kişileri Asur kentlerinde koruma altına alarak siyasi durumdaki değişikliklere göre bunların ülkelerinde kral olmalarına dahi yardımcı olmuştur. Böylece Asur kralları kendilerine sadık yöneticiler yaratabileceklerini düşünmüşlerdir. Bu çalışmada çivi yazılı belgelerden hareketle Asur esir ve rehin alma pratiği, Asur sarayına gönderilen yabancı prenseslerin konumları ve durumları ve sığınmacıların Asur politikası içerisindeki yeri araştırılmıştır. Çalışma ile Asur'un bu politikasının tüm yönlerinin ortaya konulması ve yabancı kraliyet soylularının Asur sarayındaki ve kentlerindeki hayatlarına dair bir portre çizilmesi hedeflenmektedir. Kraliyet yazıtları ve Asur devlet arşivi çalışmamızda kullanılan temel kaynaklardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yeni Asur İmparatorluğu, Soylu Esirler, Rehinelere, Sığınmacılar, Yabancı Prensesler.

Extended Abstract

The subject of this study is Assyria's policy towards foreign royal noble captives, hostages, and refugees between 734 and 612 BC. The problems of the study are to learn the primary motivations of the Assyrian Empire's policies towards foreign royal noble captives, hostages, and refugees, to determine the ways of implementation of this policy, to determine the effect of the policy on the targeted groups and to reveal how effective the practice is in practice from a political perspective.

Document analysis, which is best applied to historical research methods, was used in the study. For this purpose, this policy's aims, dimensions, and implementation methods have been tried to be understood by examining the royal inscriptions and state archives documents in detail. In addition, the goal is also to critically examine the documents in the royal inscriptions and state archives, which we call primary sources, and evaluate their reliability. Primary sources are supported by studies conducted by today's researchers, and the study is associated with the existing literature. In this way, an attempt has been made to reveal a comprehensive and in-depth perspective about this policy of Assyria.

As a result of the research, it was concluded that Assyria's policy towards foreign royal nobles consisted of foreign noble captives and captives, princesses who were generally sent to the Assyrian palace by their fathers, and those who took refuge in Assyria due to problems in their own country. Based on this information, the study was examined under three subheadings. The royal inscriptions make a distinction between noble hostages and their captives. Examples prove that hostages were in better conditions than captives in most cases. However, some noble captives had the opportunity to live in better conditions in the palace, like the hostages. However, there are more cases where captives encounter a terrible fate. It is clearly emphasized in the inscriptions that the captives were executed or faced humiliating punishments. However, these examples do not cover all noble captives in practice, and the inscriptions do not provide information on the fate of many instances of captivity. However, some letters or records in the state archives indicate that noble captives were treated as hostages and used for Assyrian interests. In SAA 11 156, which describes the school activities in the Nineveh palace, it is understood that Ninurta-gimil and Kudurru, who were understood to have foreign (?) noble blood among the students, were trained to be used for the benefit of Assyria. This example indeed points to a favourable situation that captives may encounter. In most cases, captives paid the price for their rebellion against Assyria or faced humiliating punishment. In another example, the punishment imposed upon the Arab king Uaite' (Yauta), who ascended to the throne with the support of the Assyrian king as a result of his rebellion, is one of the examples that best demonstrates this practice. He rebelled against Assyria by supporting the Šamaš-šuma-ukīn rebellion, but he realized that he could no longer escape from Ashurbanipal's military expedition and surrendered to the Assyrian king. It is written in the inscriptions that the Assyrian king did not take his life but sentenced him to a very humiliating punishment and made him guard the door of his palace like a dog.

Another group that should be emphasized in terms of nobles in the Assyrian palace is foreign princesses. Although some of them came to the Assyrian palace as captives as a result of wars, a significant part of them consisted of princesses gifted to the Assyrian king by rival or allied kings. It may be considered as a form of

loyalty to Assyria that rival and allied kings offered their daughters along with their dowries to the Assyrian king. Unfortunately, the documents do not contain information that would reveal the fate of these foreign princesses. However, the fact that the names of some queens are of West Semitic origin can be inferred that foreign princesses could enter the harem of the Assyrian king and rise to the position of queen.

Another group of foreigners from the royal lineage in the Assyrian court consisted of refugees. These people generally consisted of people who lost the struggle for the throne in their country and took refuge in Assyria. Assyria took on the protection of these people and pursued a policy of supporting them according to the political situation in their country in the future and enthroning them in the race to remain loyal to Assyria. One of the best examples of this situation is Urtaku's descendants who took refuge in Assyria to save their lives after Teumman took the throne of Elam. Assyria protected Urtaku's sons in the face of this situation and, after the elimination of Teumman, ensured that the eldest son, Ummanigaš, ascended to the throne of Elam.

All these examples reveal that Assyria's captives, hostages, refugees, and foreign princesses were used in line with Assyria's political, economic, and military goals.

Introduction

The Neo-Assyrian period typically begins in 934 BC with the reign of Ashur-dan II (934-912 BC) and ends with the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. (Baker, 2023, p. 257; Elayi, 2023, p. 41; Grayson, 1982, p. 248). The Assyrians, who entered a period of ascendancy with Ashur-dan's ascension to the throne, took significant steps towards becoming a mighty empire with Ashurnasirpal II and became one of the most powerful states of the Near East. Transformed into a world empire during the reign of the Sargonids, Assyria experienced its military and economic peak (Dezső, 2011, pp. 13-16; Groß, 2020, pp. 39-41; Gökçek, 2015, pp. 122-215; Akyüz and Toptaş, 2020, p. 195).

The effective realization of imperialist expansion was only possible through military conquest. However, military campaign was a costly way of imperialist expansion (Sinopoli, 1994, pp. 162-163). The high expenditures during the war and the complete fulfilment of the army's needs meant that the empire had to allocate large amounts of material resources to the army. In order to meet these expenses, the campaigns had to be successful (Toptaş, 2020, p. 982). However, this alone was not enough, as especially protracted wars caused disruptions in agricultural production and trade, thus causing the empire to experience economic difficulties. Military occupation also led to a major disruption of production activities in the defeated regions (Masetti-Rouault, 2014, p. 54.). Considering these aspects of the war, Assyria had to minimize the war situation and implement different policies to realize its imperialist ambitions without war (Fales, 2023, p. 467). Of course, it is not a correct approach to limit these policies to a specific area or practice, and Assyrian practices were often implemented with multiple objectives in mind. For example, the exile policy pursued by the Assyrian kings had the purpose of breaking the resistance of the annexed or subjugated regions, as well as providing the labour force of Assyrian society in different fields such as military, agriculture, and construction work (Oded, 1979, p. 43; Parpola, 2004, pp. 8-9; Nadali, 2004, p. 102; Akyüz, 2020, pp. 131-133). The practice of exile could be applied not only to the people of a region but also to its nobility. This practice was usually implemented after a war and was expected to reduce the likelihood of another war in the region. Another practice was to capture the daughters of the enemy captured during the war or to take the daughters of rival kings and incorporate them into the harem of the Assyrian king. Here, both captives and hostages were in question. Assyrian kings' policy of taking captives and hostages and establishing political marriages, especially for foreign nobles, can be considered as a result of Assyria's desire to find non-war solutions. In some cases, Assyria opened its doors to foreign kings or their children seeking asylum and protected them as refugees. The prevalence of these practices is evidenced by numerous documents in Assyrian royal inscriptions and state archives. In this study, the origins, status, and fate of the noble captives and hostages captured during the Neo-Assyrian period, the daughters of foreign nobles in the Assyrian harem, and finally the foreign nobles who sought refuge in Assyria will be analysed.

1. Hostage and Captive

The words hostage and captive have some differences in meaning and practice. To understand this distinction, it would be useful to look at the definitions of these two terms. A hostage is a person who is captured by a person or organization, and who may be killed or injured if he or she does not comply with the demands of that person or organization (Colins Dictionary, 2023). Hostage-taking refers to the detention of a person against his or her will and without legal authority for a specific reason (Alexander and Klein, 2010, p. 176). While some linguists believe that the term “*hostage*” is directly derived from the Latin word “*hospes*”, meaning

“*host*”, others argue that it is related to the term *obses*, the verb *obsidere* “to besiege”, and thus literally means “one who is held in custody” (Herrmann and Palmieri, 2005, pp. 136-137). Captive is defined as a person or animal whose ability to move or move freely is limited because he or she is held in a space; a prisoner, especially a person held by the enemy during war (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). It can be said that the concept of captive preserves its meaning in terms of ancient times and today. This is because in ancient times as well as in modern times, the concept usually refers to a person or persons captured during war. From a functional perspective, there appears to be little difference between hostage-taking and the captive of people in war. Both types of wartime incarceration offer a strategic advantage to the detaining forces. (Gross, 2015, pp. 102-126). While the most basic and, in principle, the least controversial purpose of permanently detaining captives of war was to prevent them from re-joining their comrades-in-arms (Hickman, 2011, p. 22), hostages provided a strategic advantage to their captors (Colonomos, 2017, pp. 185-186). Hostages were prisoners who required special attention and fulfilled an important political function. This practice of using hostages as a means of diplomacy and pacification has continued throughout the ages (Kosto, 2012, pp. 200-226).

In the ancient world, hostage-taking often involved political and military purposes. In addition, while in today’s world, hostage-taking can take place through the use of force, in the ancient world, it could take the form of the weaker handing over royal descendants to the stronger, either as a reciprocal means of establishing peace between states or as a sign of a state’s submission. Clearly, contemporary hostage situations differ significantly from those in the ancient world. The hostages taken by ancient kings were traditionally often the sons of foreign rulers (Colonomos, 2017, pp. 184-185). Many studies trace the history of hostage-taking back to the Romans and Greeks. However, the practice has its roots in ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt (Gelb, 1973, p. 77 and 90; Wilson, 2000, pp. 114-116). One of the earliest records of hostage diplomacy can be found in ancient Mesopotamia, where hostages were exchanged between warring city-states. These hostages were often members of the royal family who were taken hostage to ensure that the other side honoured peace agreements. The Assyrians frequently applied the practice of taking captives and hostages from the families of enemy kings. Inscriptions and state archives contain a rich corpus shedding light on these issues. In many documents, the identities of the captives and hostages are ambiguous. For this reason, if there is no clear indication of the royal lineage of the captives and hostages taken as a result of the campaign, they are excluded from the scope of this study.

There are also many examples of kings and family members who rebelled or disobeyed Assyria being taken to Assyria. In the Assyrian inscriptions, the verb *šalālu*, meaning “carry off” (CAD Š/I, p. 196), is usually used for this action. This word was generally preferred to refer to captives. In Assyrian royal inscriptions, the term for hostage is *līṭū* (CAD I/J, p. 223) or plural *līṭūtu* (CAD I/J, p. 224), which means “to be in a state of hostage”. This word is derived from the verb *lātu* (CAD L, p. 113), which means “to imprison, to keep under control, to restrain, to supervise” (Zawadzki, 1995, p. 449). *Līṭūtu* is often used together with the verb *šabātu* to mean “to take hostages” (CAD Š, p. 9). It can be traced this usage from the Middle Assyrian period in the inscriptions. In the inscriptions of the Middle Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser I, Šadi-Tešub, the king of Urrahinaš, states that he took his sons and family as hostages (*mārī nabbūt libbišu u kimitišu ana līṭūte ašbat*) (RIMA 2 A.0.87.1: ii 44-48). *Līṭū* is also used with the verb *maḥāru* (to face, confront; oppose; receive) in the sense of “taking the hostage(s)”. It seems that these verbs were not chosen by chance, but in each case to precisely describe a particular situation. The use of the verb *maḥāru* seems to suggest that the hostages were taken voluntarily, at least to some extent. *Līṭū*, when used in combination with *maḥāru*, may have been used to emphasize the purpose of the hostage, i.e. to “send away” with the booty (Zawadzki, 1995, pp. 449-450).

Grayson proposed that in exceptional cases in RIMA II and III the word *šallūtu* should also be translated as “hostages”. Zawadzki argues that this assertion is dubious and that the large number of captives (4000 and 3000 respectively), especially compared to the small number of hostages mentioned in other texts, weakens Grayson's proposal (Zawadzki, 1995, pp. 449-450). On this point we obviously have strong indications to agree with Zawadzki. For example, a roadstone of Ashurnasirpal II reads “*I burned with fire 3,000 captives (šallassunu) from them. I did not leave one of them alive as a hostage (līṭūte)*” (RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: i 108). The choice of *šallatu* for captive and *līṭūtu* for hostage in the passage may indicate the difference.

As can be seen, Assyria must have expected to gain maximum benefit from this policy, taking great care, even in the choice of words chosen to convey the situation. Assyria's policy of taking nobles as captives and hostages was designed to protect international agreements and guarantee peace. Through this practice, Assyria strengthened its political and military position in the area it dominated and put pressure on the families and citizens of these captives and hostages not to attempt any rebellion against Assyria (Oded, 1979, p. 44; Zawadzki, 1995, pp. 449-450).

The extent of this practice can be traced in royal inscriptions and state archives. Table 1 shows Assyria's frequent practice of taking foreign nobles as captives and hostages, as well as the regions from which the captives and hostages were taken and their identities. It should be noted, however, that the examples in the Assyrian inscriptions and state archives mostly correspond to prisoners of war (Ebeling, 1938, RIA II, pp. 195-96).

Table 1: Foreign Nobles Taken Hostage and Captive by Assyria

Ruler	Homeland	Identity	Situation	Document Number
Adad-nerari II	Na'iri lands	Uncertain	Hostage	RIMA 2 A.0.99.2: 30-33
Adad-nerari II	Temannu	Muquru, Temannite ruler, his brothers, his wives, his sons and his daughters	Hostage	RIMA 2 A.0.99.2: 57b-60a
Adad-nerari II	Temannu	Nūr-Adad of the land Temannu,	Captive	RIMA 2 A.0.99.2: 80 - 81
Tukulti-Ninurta II	Nairi lands	The wives and daughters of an unnamed ruler of the city Ki[...]	Captive	RIMA 2 A.0.100.5: 1-3
Ashurnasirpal II	Nirbu	The sons of land Nirbu	Hostage	RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 7b-12a
Ashurnasirpal II	Bit-Adini	Uncertain	Hostage	RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: iii 55-56
Ashurnasirpal II	Land of Hatti	Uncertain	Hostage	RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: iii 64b-70a
Ashurnasirpal II	The land Ḫabḫu	Uncertain	Hostage	RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: iii 103-104

Ashumasirpal II	Pattinu	Hostages from Lubama of the land Pattinu	Hostage	RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: iii 70b iii - 77a
Shalmaneser III	Que	Uncertain	Hostage	RIMA 3 A.0.102.14: 132-134
Shalmaneser III	(Bīt-)Adini	Ahunu of (Bīt-)Adini, his sons, his daughters.	Captive	RIMA 3 A.0.102.16: 20b – 24a
Shalmaneser III	Bīt-Adini	The sons and Daughters of of Aḫūnu of Bīt-Adini	Captive	RIMA 3 A.0.102.14:48b-50a
Shalmaneser III	Til-ša-turāḫ	Palace women of Gē-ammu, ruler of Til-ša-turāḫ	Captive	RIMA 3 A.0.102.16: 28-30
Shalmaneser III	Bīt-Ḫamban	Ianzû of (Bīt-)Ḫamban, his sons and daughters	Captive	RIMA 3 A.0.102.14: 125-126a
Šamši-Adad V	Na'iri lands	The sons and daughters of the Na'iri lands	Captive	RIMA 3 A.0.103.1: ii 16b-34a
Šamši-Adad V	the land Araziaš	The sons and daughters of the land Araziaš	Captive	RIMA 3 A.0.103.1: iii 37 – 44a
Šamši-Adad V	Dēr	The daughters and palace women of Marduk-balāssu-iqbi, king of Babylonia	Captive	RIMA 3 A.0.103.4: 6'-20'
Šamši-Adad V	Babylonia (Kalde)	The sons, daughters and palace women of Baba-aḫa-iddina, king of Babylonia.	Captive	RIMA 3 A.0.103.2: iv 11 - 29
Adad-nerari III	Bīt-Agusi	Ataršumki son of A(bī)-rāme/Arame, ruler of Bīt-Agusi.	Captive	RIMA 3 A.0.104.4: 8'-10'
Tiglath-pileser III	Bīt-Šilāni	The wife, sons and daughters of Nabû-ušabši, king of Bīt-Šilāni	Captive	RINAP 1 no. 39: 8 – 11a
Tiglath-pileser III	Gaza	The wife, sons and daughters, of Ḫanūnu of the city of Gaza	Captive	RINAP 1 no. 48: 14b - 16a
Sargon II	Aramean tribes (regions in southern or eastern Babylonia)	Uncertain	Hostage	RINAP 2 no. 2: 329-330
Sargon II	Kummuḫu	The wife, sons and daughters, of Mutallu, king of Kummuḫu	Captive	RINAP 2 no. 7: 112b – 117

Sargon II	Mušašir (Urartu)	The wife, sons and daughters, of Urzana, king of Mušašir	Captive	RINAP 2 no. 65: 343 – 349
Sargon II	Bit-Purutaš	Ambaris, king of the land Bit-Purutaš, together with the (other) offspring of his father's house (and) the nobles of his land	Captive	RINAP 2 no. 1: 198b – 204a
Sargon II	Melid	Tarḫun-azi, king of Melid, his wife, his sons, (and) his daughters,	Captive	RINAP 2 no. 1: 208b - 217a
Sargon II	Tabal	Ambaris and his family		RINAP 2 no. 1: 198b-204a)
Sargon II	Carchemish	Pisiris, king of Carchemish, his wife, his sons, his daughters, [(his) family], (and) the (other) offspring of his father's house	Captive	
Sennacherib	Bit-Yakīn (Kalde)	The brothers of Marduk-apla-iddina (II) (Merodach-baladan),	Captive	RINAP 3/1 no. 15: iv 24' – v 2a;
Sennacherib	Babylon	Šūzubu (Nergal-ušēzib), son of Gaḫul (Gaḫal)	Captive	RINAP 3/1 no. 22: iv 46b – iv 53; RINAP 3/1 no. 35: 13'b; Grayson, 1975, chr. 1: iii 4-6
Sennacherib	Babylon	Šūzubu (Mušēzib-Marduk) and his family	Captive	RINAP 3/2 no. 223: 43b – 46; Grayson, 1975, chr. 1: iii 22-23
Sennacherib	Babylon	Bel-ibni, King of Babylon,	Captive	Grayson, 1975, chr. 1: ii 28
Sennacherib	Judah	The daughters and palace women of Hezekiah, king of Judah	Captive	RINAP 3/1 no. 17: iii 66 – iii 81
Sennacherib(?)	Tabal	Ḫullī and his family	Captive	RINAP 2 no. 1: 194b-198a
Sennacherib	Ashkelon	The wife, sons, daughters and his brothers of Šidqā, king of the city Ashkelon and other offspring of his father's.	Captive	RINAP 3/1 no. 4: 39-41
Esarhaddon	Babylon	Kudurru, son of Šamaš-ibni	Captive	Grayson, 1975, chr. 1: iv 15; SAA 16 31; SAA 10

				179; SAA 11 156: 14; SAA 10 160:13
Esarhaddon	Arabs (Qedar Land)	Uabu, king of the Arabs	Captive	RINAP 4 no. 1: iv 17 – iv 31; RINAP 4 no. 6, iii 18b' – iii 24';
Esarhaddon	Babylon?	Sulaya (Sula)	Captive	SAA 11 156: r2
Esarhaddon	Nippur	Ninurta-gamil, the son of Nippur Governor	Captive	SAA 11 156: 8-12
Esarhaddon	Sidon	The wife, sons and daughters of Abdi-Milkūti, king of Sidon.		RINAP 4 no. 1: ii 65 - 82
Ashurbanipal	Tyre	Yāhi-Milki, son of Ba'alu, the king of the land Tyre	Hostage	RINAP 5/1 3: ii 38 – ii 57a; RINAP 5/1 11: ii 49-62
Ashurbanipal	Elam	Imbappi, Ummanaldašu's stepfather; sons and palace women of Teumman, king of Elam	Captive	RINAP 5/1 no 11: iv 123b – v 10
Ashurbanipal	Arabs (Qedar Land)	Abi-Yate', king of Arabs (Qedarite) and his brother Aya-ammu	Captive	RINAP 5/1 no. 11: viii 65 - ix 24.; RINAP 5 no. 11: x 1 - x 5
Ashurbanipal	Arabs (Qedar Land)	Uaite' (Yauta), son of Bir-Dāda', king of Arabs	Captive	RINAP 5 no. 11: ix 75 - ix78
Ashurbanipal	Babylon	Aplāya, son of Nabū-salim, grandson of Marduk-apla-iddina (II) (Merodach-baladan),	Captive	Ashurbanipal 6, vii 7' – vii 13'
Ashurbanipal	Elam	The daughters and sisters of Ummanaldašu (Ḫumban-ḫaltaš III), the king of the land Elam, along with earlier and later family of the kings of the land Elam	Captive	RINAP 5 no. 11: vi 81 - 95
Ashurbanipal	Nabatea	The wife, sons and daughters of Natnu, the king of the land of the Nabateans	Captive	RINAP 5/1 no. 23, 124b- 128
Ashurbanipal	Elam	The daughters and the sisters Ummanaldašu (Ḫumban-ḫaltaš III), the king of the land Elam, along with earlier and	Captive	RINAP 5/1 no. 11: vi 81 - 95

		later family of the kings of the land Elam		
Ashurbanipal	Tabal	The brothers, the seed of father's house of Mussi, son of Mugallu	Captive	RINAP 5 no. 23: 139b - 141b
Ashurbanipal	Media	Birishatri, a city ruler of the Medes, (and) Sarati (and) Parilhi, two sons of Gagi, a city ruler of the land Sahi	Captive	RINAP 5 no. 3: iii 92b - iv 5
Ashurbanipal	Elam	The sons and daughters of Urtaku, king of Elam.	Hostage	SAA 16 1
Ashurbanipal	Arabs (Qedar Land)	Uaite' (Yauta), son of Hazael, king of Arabs	Captive	RINAP 5 no. 11: vii 82 - viii 29

Reference: Prepared by the Author

Captives were usually captured in battle, while hostages were usually handed over by their families as part of a treaty with Assyria. Assyria hoped to gain various benefits by taking noble hostages and captives. In addition to swearing an oath of loyalty, subordinate rulers had to secure their deal with Assyria by surrendering immediate family members and sometimes other noble individuals when accepting imperial sovereignty. These hostages were then raised in the Assyrian royal court, where their presence served a twofold purpose. While in Assyria, they would guarantee with their lives the loyalty of their family and country to the Assyrian king. Moreover, if they were to return to their homeland, ideally as rulers or in some other position of influence, then their time at the Assyrian court was supposed to accustom them to Assyrian sensibilities and thus ensure their trustworthy behaviour at home (Radner, 2013; Parpola, 2007, pp. 260-261). This could also apply to captives. By subjecting noble hostages and captives to Assyrian education, Assyria sought to turn them into elites who would serve Assyria and, in the future, into loyal allies (Parpola, 2003, p. 101). Once they had assimilated Assyrian religion and ideology, they were sent back to their homeland as rulers or vassal rulers and were expected to serve Assyria (Berlejung, 2012, p. 24).

As seen in Table 1, most of the captured foreign nobles are characterized as captives. Some of those identified as hostages are unknown. It is interesting to note that although there are many examples of the taking of hostages (*līnūtu*), especially in the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II, their identities do not include definitions based on royal lineage. This is because, in the Assyrian world, hostages were usually taken from noble families, and such a practice provided Assyria with some political advantages against vassals or enemy rulers. Assyrian documents provide information about the way hostages were taken and their status in the Assyrian court. For example, letter SAA 11 1 indicates that hostages were taken as a guarantee of a peace treaty. Esarhaddon, in reference to Urtaku, says that his daughters and sons are doing well in Assyria (Parpola, 1972, fn. 66). In some cases, kings who were defeated by Assyria sent their own descendants to the Assyrian king in an effort to gain forgiveness or to become allies. In such cases, kings usually sent their daughters to the Assyrian king along with their dowries; therefore, the issue of giving daughters to the Assyrian king is discussed under the heading of marriage. However, there are also examples of kings sending their sons to the Assyrian court as hostages. One such example is when Ba'alu, the king of Tyre, rebelled against Assyria and was defeated, he sent his son Yāhi-

Milki and his daughter with her dowry as hostages to the Assyrian court to ask for forgiveness and make peace. Yāhi-Milki, king of Tyre, showed mercy and sent his son back, but his daughter was included in the Assyrian harem (RINAP 5/1 no. 11: ii 49-62.)

Another document in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions contributes to understanding the practice of hostage-taking. After the death of Yakīn-Lû, king of Arwad, his son Azi-Ba'al came to the Assyrian court, received Ashurbanipal's support, and succeeded his father. As a sign of his allegiance to Ashurbanipal, he left his two sons in the Assyrian palace. Ashurbanipal said to seated Abī-Ba'al (and) Adūnī-Ba'al before him. This example allows us to interpret that the hostages lived a good life in the king's custody. This event is described in the inscriptions of Ashurbanipal as follows:

“After Yakīn-Lû, the king of the land Arwad, had gone to (his) fate, Azi-Ba'al, Abī-Ba'al, (and) Adūnī-Ba'al, the sons of Yakīn-Lû who reside in the middle of the middle of the sea, came up from the middle of the sea, (ii 80) came with their substantial audience gift(s), and kissed my feet. I looked upon Azi-Ba'al with pleasure and installed (him) as king of the land Arwad. I clothed Abī-Ba'al (and) Adūnī-Ba'al in garment(s) with multi-colored trim (and) placed gold bracelets (around their wrists). I made them stand before me.” (RINAP 5/1 no. 3: ii 75-86a)

Although the terms hostage and captive are distinguished in the royal inscriptions, the difference in practice is not clear. Examples can sometimes clarify the distinction. It can be thought that especially the captives were captured as a result of the war and were treated accordingly in Assyria. Likewise, in some cases, captives were subjected to humiliating punishments and even executed. However, except for a limited number of examples, the fate of many nobles in captive status is uncertain. Some documents prove that these people were treated as hostages in practice. The Assyrian king's attitude towards this person was related to the fact that he had plans for that person and wanted to use him for the benefit of Assyria in the future. Examples can provide a better understanding of the situation. An example that makes the situation understandable is related to Hullî² and his son Ambaris, who were enthroned in place of Uassurme during the reign of Tiglath-pileser III. Hullî, who was placed on the throne of Tabal by Tiglath-pileser III, appears in the Assyrian court during the reign of Sargon II. What Sargon said in his inscriptions provides information about the continuation of the story. Hullî had probably rebelled during the reign of Sennacherib and was exiled to Assyria with his family. Sargon II thought that he could use Hullî for the benefit of Assyria and placed him on the throne of Tabal again. In order to strengthen the alliance between them, the Assyrian king gave one of his daughters to Hullî's son Ambaris, and after Hullî's death, Ambaris was placed on the throne of Tabal by the Assyrian king. However, Ambaris rebelled against Assyria in cooperation with Urartu and Phrygians and paid the price with a great defeat. His lands were annexed to Assyria and he was taken to Assyria with his family (RINAP 2 no. 1: 194b-204a). Since he was married to Sargon's daughter, he may have been held as a hostage in the Assyrian palace rather than a prisoner. Despite its negative outcome, this example shows that the hostages were intended to be used for the benefit of Assyria. In fact, this example shows that people who were held as hostages or captives in the Assyrian palace could be promoted to the rank of marrying even the daughter of the Assyrian king for the benefit of Assyria. Apart from the Ambaris example, such a situation can be observed from the documents in the state archives. In the SAA 6 142, a person witnessed as “Šusanqu, the king's brother-in-law (*ḫatna šarri*) (SAA 6

² “Uassurme of the land Tabal acted as if he were the equal of Assyria and he did not come before me. [I sent] an eunuch of mine, the chief [eunuch, to the land Tabal...]. I placed [Hullî], a commoner (lit. “son of a nobody”) on his royal throne. [I received] 10 talents of gold, 1,000 talents of silver, 2,000 horses, (and) [... mules as his audience gift]” (RINAP 1 no. 47: r 14'-15')

142: r. 12)” is mentioned. Šusanqu is the Assyrian equivalent of the name Shoshenq, a popular name among various royal families of Libyan origin who laid claim to the Nile Delta and Egypt in the early first millennium BC. A possible candidate for the royal wife of Shoshenq³ is Šadditu, daughter of Sennacherib (704-681 BC), attested in another legal document (SAA 6 251) from Nineveh during the reign of his brother Esarhaddon. What is important here is the policy pursued by the Assyrian king. The marriage of Delta princes to members of the Assyrian royal family gave them a status and role at court that went far beyond simple captives of war and gave Assyria diplomatic and political validity in its relations with Egypt and Kush (Radner, 2012, pp. 472-473, Radner, 2013).

One of the main bases of the Assyrian hostage and captive policy was to bring the children of foreign kings to the capital to keep them in Assyrian education and to ensure that they became individuals for the benefit of Assyria. These hostages and captives were educated in the royal palace until they became Assyrians and were placed on their fathers’ thrones at an appropriate time (Parpola and Watanabe, SAA 2, 1988, p. XXI). It was also thought that this practice would reduce the risk of rebellion in the region, thanks to administrators who received Assyrian training and followed Assyrian policies. (Bordreuil, Briquel-Chatonnet and Cecile, 2015; 252; Berlejung, 2012, p. 25; Gallagher, 1994, pp. 57-65). Documents in the Assyrian state archives provide some clues about the education of foreign nobles in Assyria. In SAA 11 156, which describes school activities (reading and copying literary texts) at the Nineveh palace, all the students mentioned have Babylonian names. Another striking feature of the text indicates that at least some of the students were subjected to forced education. “*Ninurta-gamil, the son of the šandabakku has completed the series and has been put in irons. He is assigned to Banunu in the Succession Palace and there is no work for him at present.*” (SAA 11 156: o 8-13), Ninurta-gamil being put in chains after completing his daily training reveals the nature of the training. It is clear that Ninurta-gamil and Kudurru⁴ mentioned in this document have noble blood. Sulāyu⁵ among the students in the document may also have noble blood. These Babylonian youths were educated in the Assyrian capital, learning the Assyrian way of life and being raised as Assyrians. Thus, they could later become loyal rulers to Assyria as their country (Parpola 1972, p. 33). This Assyrianization policy was not limited to education. The fact that Šarrulū-dāri (may the king live forever), who was placed on the throne of Ashkelon by Sennacherib instead of the rebel Ashkelon king Šidqā (RINAP 3/1 no. 4: 40), is an Akkadian name, reveals the dimensions of the Assyrianization policy (Parpola and Watanabe, SAA 2, 1988, p. XXI).

It is possible to observe this situation from an example from the period of Sennacherib. Tabū’a, the daughter of Te’elhunu, the queen of the Arabs, who was captured during the time of Sennacherib, was raised in Nineveh and later placed on the throne of the Arab king Hazael as the queen of the Arabs by Esarhaddon. (RINAP 3/1 no. 35: r 5; Eph’al, 1984, pp. 122-123).⁶ Esarhaddon describes this event in his inscriptions as “I

³ Shoshenq was captured and brought to Nineveh after the Assyrian army encountered Kushite and Egyptian troops from the battlefield of Eltekeh in southern Palestine in 701 BC. Sennacherib’s inscriptions recorded this event as follows: “*In the plain of the city Eltekeh, they sharpened their weapons while drawing up in battleline before me. With the support of the god Aššur, my lord, I fought with them and defeated them. In the thick of battle, I captured alive the Egyptian charioteers and princes (lit. “the sons of the Egyptian king / māri šar Mušuraya”), together with the charioteers of the king of the land Meluhha*” (RINAP 3/1 no. 15: iii 18’-25’). Shoshenq, confirmed as royal father-in-law in 692 BC, was most likely one of the Egyptian princes mentioned in the inscriptions of Sennacherib (Radner, 2013).

⁴ That Kudumu was a nobleman is confirmed by other letters. Grayson, 1975, chr. 1: iv 15; SAA 16 31; SAA 10 179; SAA 11 156: 14; SAA 10 160: 13.

⁵ Sulāyu could well be identical with Sulā (the Babylonian form of the name) whom Šamaš-šumu-ukin appointed the commandant of the Babylonian city of Dilbat (Parpola 1972, p. 33).

⁶ We see examples of this kind in later periods of history. We know that this Assyrian policy was followed a century later by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, who regularly trained Daniel and his friends in Mesopotamian scientific and religious knowledge (Daniel i: 3-7). A century later, the Ottoman Sultan Murat II took the Wallachian ruler Vlad II Dracul and his two sons Radu and Vlad

placed the lady Tabū`a, who was raised in the palace of my father; as ruler over them and returned her to her land with her gods” (RINAP 4 no. 1 iv 15). As in this case, it was a common practice for Assyria to raise nobles in exile and then appoint them as rulers. Another example of a man who grew up in the Assyrian court and became king of his country is attested during the reign of Sennacherib. Assyrian king recorded his appointment of Bel-ibni as king of Babylon in the inscriptions as *“I appointed over them Bēl-ibni, a son of a rab banī (and) a scion of Šuanna who had grown up like a young puppy (mirāni šahri) in my palace, [as king of the land of Sumer] and Akkad.”* (RINAP 3/1 1: 54). The phrase *“who had grown up like a young puppy (mirāni šahri) in my palace”* for Bēl-ibni's father in this annal was not chosen by chance. It may refer to the fact that he was a captive or a refugee.

The captive policy was also considered as an option, especially in the regions where Assyria had difficulty in establishing direct control and which were important for Assyria. By capturing the ruler of that region, Assyria may have wanted to break their resistance and intimidate them. For example, Ashurbanipal went on an expedition against the rejection of Assyrian hegemony by the local kings in the Median country, one of the regions where he supplied the horses needed by the Assyrian army (Reade, 2003, p. 150.) He captured Birishatri, a city ruler of the Medes, and the two sons of Gagī, a city ruler of the country of Saḫi, who rejected my sovereignty, and carried out them to Nineveh (RINAP 5/1 no. 3: iv 68 - iv 79).

The inscriptions also contain information that reveals the benefits of being taken as captives and hostages from the royal noble. Although Assyria's policy of using captives for its own benefit had positive results in keeping these people alive, some examples reveal that noble captives were executed and were subjected to the humiliation of the Assyrians. At this point, it is possible to say that another Assyrian policy of psychological warfare was put into practice. Thus, a clear message was intended to be sent to enemies and allies, and the cruel and humiliating practices that those who opposed Assyria would be subjected to were clearly recorded in the inscriptions and depicted in reliefs. The inscriptions and reliefs of the Ashurbanipal period in particular provide a wealth of material showing such practices. In one of these examples, when Abī-Yate`, who was declared the Qedarite king, rebelled against Ashurbanipal, he and his brother Aya-ammu were captured and brought to Nineveh and executed in the capital. The royal inscriptions recorded this event as *“(As for) Aya-ammu, son of Tē`ri, (who) had stood with Abī-Yate`, his brother; and did battle with my troops, I captured him alive in the thick of battle (and) flayed him in Nineveh, my capital city.”* (RINAP 5/1 no. 11: x 1 - 5).

In another example, the Arabian king Uaite` (Yauta), who ascended the throne with the support of the Assyrian king, rebelled against Assyria by supporting the Šamaš-šuma-ukīn rebellion (RINAP 5/1 no. 3: vii 77 - viii 42; no. 4 viii 27 - viii 47) however, realizing that he could no longer escape from Ashurbanipal's military campaign, he surrendered to the Assyrian king. The Assyrian king did not kill him but gave him a very humiliating punishment and made him guard the gate of his palace like a dog (RINAP 5/1 no. 11: vii 82 - viii 29). The same practice appears in the inscriptions of Sennacherib, Ashurbanipal's grandfather. Sennacherib brought Šūzubu (Nergal-ušēzib), who was hostile to Assyria by collaborating with Elam, to Nineveh and tied him to the city gate with a bear. (RINAP 3/1 no. 35: 13b-15')

Assyrian forms of captivity could be implemented in different ways, and this practice could sometimes turn into severe psychological violence. Dunanu, the king of Gambulu, who cooperated with the

Tepeş as hostages and subjected them to Ottoman education in order to use them for the benefit of the Ottoman Empire in the future (Gencer, 2018, p. 154).

Elam king Teumman, was captured and brought to Assyria is an example of this psychological punishment. In the inscriptions, the bringing of Dunanu to Nineveh is described as follows:

“I hung the head of Teumman, the king of the land Elam, around the neck of Dunanu. With the spoils of the land Elam (and) the booty of the land Gambulu, which I captured by the command of (the god) Aššur, with singers performing music, I entered Nineveh in (the midst of) celebration.” (RINAP 5 no. 3: vi 42 - vi 47)

The event in this passage was also the subject of the Nineveh Palace reliefs. In the relief, Dunanu is depicted entering Nineveh in a triumphal procession with Teumman’s severed head hanging around his neck (Figure 1). The scene creates a terrifying effect at first glance. This was an opportunity to reaffirm Assyria’s power in front of nobles, foreign allies, and those who tried to rebel against Assyria’s will (Nadali, 2018: p. 242).

Figure 1: Dunanu, King of Gambulu, Entering Nineveh with Teumman's Head Hanging Around His Neck.



Reference: British Museum BM 124802. (© The Trustees of the British Museum)

Assyrian kings also depicted the capture of enemy nobles on reliefs. The depiction of such a subject on reliefs, the most important propaganda tools of Assyrian ideology, conveyed the message that those who were hostile to Assyria could not escape Assyria's power. We come across a depiction that reveals this situation in the reliefs of Ashurbanipal. Ummanaldašu (Ḫumban-ḫaltaš III), the son of Atta-metu who ascended the throne with the support of the Assyrian king rebelled and troubled Assyria for the longest time. When the Elamite people finally revolted against Ummanaldašu, the Elamite king, who fled to the mountains, was captured by Assyrian soldiers and carried out to Assyria (RINAP 5/1 no. 11: x 6 - x 16). The details in this relief support each other with those described in the inscriptions (Figure 2). The relief depicts that Ummanaldašu, king of Elam, was carried to the capital on a chariot by Assyrian soldiers.

Figure 2: The Captive Ummanaldašu Being Carried to Assyria



Reference: British Museum BM 124793. (© The Trustees of the British Museum)

Not only the Assyrian royal inscriptions and state archives, but also the Babylonian and Assyrian chronicles provide information on the practice of captivity. The Chronicles state that Šamaš-ibni's son was taken captive (Grayson, 1975, chr. 1: iv. 15). Documents in the state archives provide interesting details about the background of this event. SAA 16 31 provides information about Kudurru⁷, the imprisoned son of Šamaš-ibni, who was captured and executed at Bīt-Dakkūri. In the document, Kudurru declares her loyalty to Esarhaddon and probably requests ration support for the duration of her captivity.⁸ It can follow how this event progressed from the letters in state archive. In SAA 10 179, which Kudurru wrote to the king, he mentioned a different situation and wrote his reservations about an event that took place. Probably, the *rab-šāqê* (chief eunuch) is making plans for the Assyrian throne and wants Kudurru to interrogate him about it. Kudurru, on the other hand, said that as a result of pressure, he told them “*rab-šāqê (chief eunuch) will take over the kingship*” and that these people wanted to put him on the throne in Babylon, in his father's house (SAA 10 179). It is obvious that Kudurru wrote this letter out of fear of the Assyrian king and to show that he was not in a betrayal.⁹ Unfortunately, this effort of Kudurru was not enough to save his life. The Babylonian chronicles record the execution of Kudurru of Dakkūri (Grayson, 1975, chr. 14: 19) Cole states that the reason for this execution is not clear (Cole, 1996, p. 53), but it may have been a consequence of the Sasi revolt.

The examples and situations above mostly revealed the situation of male captives. Information in Assyrian inscriptions also proves that a significant portion of the captured foreign nobles were women. However, the information here does not mention the names, ages, and numbers of any of these women from

⁷ Kudurru's name appears in the list of hostages in SAA 11 156:14, in a report in SAA 16 017 and among the twenty recommended scholars in SAA 10 160 (CT 54 057+). The Kudurru mentioned in these documents is almost certainly the son of Šamaš-ibni, the sheikh of Bīt-Dakkūri who was exiled to Assyria in 675 BCE. (Parpola 1972, p. 33; SAA 16: XXIV)

⁸ “To the king, my lord: your servant Kudurru, son of Šamaš-ibni, a dead man whom the king revived. Good health to the king, my lord! May Aššur, Šamaš, Bel and Nabû bless the king, my lord. (6) In the previous expedition the king, my lord, summoned me and raised me [from] the netherworld. (9) [What] have I given [...] ? At the king's order they have [bro]ught [...] to me. (r 1) May the king let me s[e]e light, and I will glorify the king, my lord! May I not die of distress and lack of food like a dog!” (SAA 16 031)

⁹ SAA 16 060 (CT 53 017+) and SAA 16 059 reveal the reality of this conspiracy. Based on the royal letters, Nissinen states that the rebellion was led by a person named Sasi, not *rab-šāqê*. (Nissinen, SAAS 7, 1998, pp. 133-135)

royal and noble families. It does not clearly state whether women of royal descent captured by the Assyrian ruler, especially from Neo-Hittite and Aramaic lands, were included in the Assyrian harem. However, the possibility of this action should be considered. Novotny suggests that at least some of the captured daughters and wives of the Muqurru, Temannite ruler, may have been included in the Adad-nerari II's harem (Novotny, 2001, p. 175. 177; RIMA 2 A.0.99.2: 57b - 60a). In addition, there were noble women who were given to the Assyrian king with their dowries by the kings themselves. Since their situation was different from that of the captives, it would be more understandable to consider these women under a different heading.

2. Foreign Princesses in the Assyrian Palace

The foreign nobility in the Assyrian court or cities did not only consist of captured or hostage kings and their children. Another important group in this status were the foreign princesses in the Assyrian court. They offered the daughters of rival or allied kings to the Assyrian kings. In such instances, the verb *wabālu* (CAD A/I, p. 10), meaning “to send, to bring”, is usually preferred to express the sending and offering of daughters to the Assyrian king. Such behaviour was a result of the enemy king's effort to avoid the Assyrian king's wrath and to establish good relations with him. Thus, foreign kings or rulers wanted to present a member of their own blood to the Assyrian king to show that they captivated allegiance to him and recognized his superiority. In addition, by sending one of his own descendants to the Assyrian king, he was offering a captive that he would not take any action against Assyria.

The inscriptions state that the kings sent their daughters to the Assyrian king as housekeepers (*abarakkātu*) with their dowries. Assyrian kings point out that foreign princesses were presented to them as housekeepers. At this point, of course, Assyrian royal ideology may be considered to come into play. By referring to the fact that foreign princesses were presented to him in this way, the Assyrian kings glorify themselves and their state in their inscriptions, while preferring a humiliating narrative for the other state or kingdom. Despite such a narrative, it would be unrealistic for these princesses to be kept in the Assyrian palace as housekeepers. There is no direct reference to marriages with foreign princesses, no matter how they took place. The fact that foreign princesses were presented to the Assyrian king with a dowry (*nuchunnū*) and marriage gifts (*terhatu*) in the inscriptions allows us to interpret that these princesses were included in the harem even if they were not one of the king's wives. Table 2 presents a list of the princesses sent to the Assyrian king with their dowries.

Table 2: Foreign Princesses Sent to Assyria

Ruler	Homeland	Identity	Document no
Tukulti-Ninurta II	Laqû (Bīt-Halupe)	Two sisters of Hamatāyu ruler of the city Laqû	RIMA 2 A.0.100.5: 100-101
Shalmanasser III	Gurgum	The daughter of Mutallu, king of the Gurgum	RIMA 3 A.0.102.2: i 40b-41a
Shalmaneser III	Pattinu	The daughter of Qalparunda of the land Pattinu	RIMA 3 A.0.102.2: ii 21-23a
Shalmaneser III	Bīt-Gabbāri	The daughter of Hayyānu of Bīt-Gabbāri	RIMA 3 A.0.102.2: ii 24b-27a

Shalmaneser III	Bīt-Agūsi	The daughter of Abi-rāmu of Bīt-Agūsi	RIMA 3 A.0.102.2: ii 27b-30a
Shalmaneser III	Que	The daughter of Kate, Que king	RIMA 3 A.0.102.40: iii 6b-8
Shalmaneser IV	Damascus	The daughter of Ḫadiānu of Damascus	RIMA 3 A.0.105.1: 4-10
Ashurnasirpal II	Bīt-Zamāni	The daughter of Ammi-Ba'al of Bīt-Zamāni and daughters of his nobles	RIMA 2 A.0.101.19: 85b – 90
Esarhaddon	Sidon	The daughters of Abdi-Milkūti, king of Sidon.	RINAP 4 1: ii 65 - 82
Ashurbanipal	Tyre	The daughter of Ba'al, the king of the land Tyre and daughter of brother of Ba'al.	RINAP 5/1 3: ii 38 – ii 57a
Ashurbanipal	Arwad	The daughter of Yakīn-Lû, the king of the land Arwad,	RINAP 5/1 3: ii 63 – 74.
Ashurbanipal	Tabal	The daughter of Mugallu, the king of the land Tabal	RINAP 5/1 3: ii 63 – 74.
Ashurbanipal	Ḫilakku (Cilicia),	The daughter of Sanda-šarme of the land Ḫilakku (Cilicia)	RINAP 5/1 3: ii 63 – 74.
Ashurbanipal	Mannea	The daughter of Uallī, the king of the land Mannea	RINAP 5/1 3: iii 80- 92a

Reference: Prepared by the Author

There is no direct reference in the Assyrian inscriptions to Assyrian kings marrying foreign princesses. The royal inscriptions record that many enemy or rival kings sent their daughters to the Assyrian court as a gesture of goodwill and to establish diplomatic relations. However, this did not always take the form of establishing a diplomatic relationship. Enemy or rival kings could offer their daughters to the Assyrian king in order to be forgiven after a war. The offering of the daughters of Yakīn-Lû, king of Arwad, and Mugallu, king of Tabal, to the Assyrian king is just one example (RINAP 5/1 no. 3: ii 63-74). Another example is Ba'al, king of Tyre, who sent his daughter with her dowry, to Ashurbanipal. When Ba'al, the king of Tyre, rebelled against Assyria, Ashurbanipal went on an expedition and besieged the city of Tyre by land and sea. The king of Tyre could not withstand the siege and surrendered. Ba'al was forced to surrender his crown prince as a hostage, and Tyre was subjugated to Assyria. (Van Der Brugge and Kleber, 2016, p. 195). As a result of this war, Ba'al sent his daughter and the daughter of his brothers to the Assyrian king to make a treaty with Assyria:

“[He brou]ght before me his daughter, his own offspring, and the daughter(s) of his brothers to serve as housekeepers. He b[ro]ught his son, who had [nev]er crossed the se[a], to do obeisance to me. (ii 55) I received from him [his] dau[ghter a]nd the daughters of his brothers,

together with a large marriage gift. I had mercy on him, and (then) I gave (his) son, his offspring, back to him.” (RINAP 5/1 no. 3: ii 50 - ii 57a)

As seen in Table 2, many foreign princesses were sent to the Assyrian king. In addition, there were foreign princesses living in the palace as captives. Unfortunately, we lack evidence to trace the life and future status of these princesses once they entered the Assyrian court. However, it is safe to assume that a significant number of them were included in the Assyrian king’s harem. The foreign origin of the names of the chief queens of the Assyrian kings indicates the rise of some of the foreign princesses who entered the court. At least three of the first queens of the new Assyrian kings were named West Semitic, Aramaic or Israelite. Yabâ, queen of Tiglath-pileser III, and Atalya, queen of Sargon, had foreign names (Damerji, 1999, pp. 13-17). Sammuramat (Semiramis), queen of Shamshi-Adad V, also had a foreign name. The name may be West Semitic (Sammu is glorified) (PNA 3/I, 1083; Novotny, 2001, pp. 182-183; Zadok 1977, pp. 66, 85, 249, 390). In addition, the Aramaic inscription unearthed from Nimrud queen tombs may also indicate the foreign origin of the queens (Hussein, 2016, p. 22 and plate 82). These evidences clearly allow us to infer the fate and status of foreign princesses who entered the Assyrian court. At least some of them succeeded in becoming favourites of the king and rose to the status of mother queen. However, it should be noted that there is no evidence of girls who were presented to Assyria with dowries during the reign of the kings who were the husbands of the queens whose names we have traced. In this case, they may have been princesses in captivity.

3. Noble Refugees

The noble refugees seen in Assyria constitute another group with the status of foreign nobles in Assyria. The exiled princes and nobles who wanted to take refuge in the Nineveh palace were viewed favourably by the Assyrian king, and their requests were welcomed. Assyrian kings took special care of these refugees and then supported them to take power in their own countries. Of course, a response was expected for these actions: unconditional and absolute obedience. The Assyrian king wanted to benefit his country with this practice. The presence of refugees in the Assyrian court is evidenced in documents from the reign of Sargon II, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal (Table 3).

Table 3: Refugees in the Assyrian Palace

Ruler	Homeland	Identity	Document no
Sargon II	Bīt-Dakkūri	Balāssu	SAA 17 1; SAA 17 73
Esarhaddon	Gambulu	Bēl-iqīša, son of Bunnannū, a Gambulian	RINAP 4 no. 1: iii 71 -83; SAA 21 111
Ashurbanipal	Tyre	Yāḥi-Milki, son the king of the land Tyre	RINAP 5/1 no. 11: ii 56 – ii 62
Ashurbanipal	Arwad	Abī-Ba’al (and) Adūni-Ba’al of Azi-Ba’al, king of the land Arwad	RINAP 5/1 no. 3: ii 75-86a
Ashurbanipal	Elam	Ummanigaš, Ummanappa, (and) Tammarītu — the sons of Urtaku, the king of the land Elam; Kuduru and Parrū the sons of	RINAP 5 no. 3: iv 68 – iv 79; RINAP 5/1 no. 4: vii 48–63.; RINAP 5 no. 3: vii 33b - vii 60.

		Ummanaldašu (Humban-ḫaltaš II), the brother of Urtaku	
Ashurbanipal	Elam	Tammarītu, the sons of Urtaku	RINAP 5 no. 3: vii 33b - vii 60.

Reference: Prepared by the Author

Assyria's attitude and policy towards refugees can be revealed in many ways through the detailed explanations in the inscriptions and letters of the incident of Elamite noble refugees during the reign of Ashurbanipal. After Urtaku's death in 664 BC, Teumman seized the throne of Elam and implemented the policy of eliminating Urtaku's descendants. (Parpola and Watanabe, SAA 2, 1988, p. XX-XXI). In the face of this, Urtaku's descendants sought refuge in Assyria to save their lives. Teumman's targeting of anyone who might claim the throne of Elam may be a sign that he was not of royal blood. Upon Teumman's accession to the throne of Elam, the children of Urtaku, fearing for their lives, sought refuge in Assyria. These children were probably in contact with the Assyrian Court. We know that Elamite princes and princesses were kept in the Assyrian court as a result of the treaty with Urtaku during the reign of Esarhaddon from the letter addressed to Urtaku, SAA 16 1. This connection of the Elamite princes with Assyria may have led them to seek refuge in Assyria as a means of salvation. As a result, Urtaku's children took refuge in the Assyrian palace. The inscriptions describe this event as follows:

“Afterwards, Teumman, the (very) image of a gallû-demon, sat on the throne of Urtaku. He constantly sought out evil (ways) to kill the children of Urtaku (and) the children of Ummanaldašu (Humban-ḫaltaš II), the brother of Urtaku. Ummanigaš, Ummanappa, (and) Tammarītu - the sons of Urtaku, the king of the land Elam - Kudurru (and) Parrû - the sons of Ummanaldašu (Humban-ḫaltaš II), (iv 75) the king who came before Urtaku - together with sixty members of the royal (family), countless archers, (and) nobles of the land Elam fled to me before Teumman's slaughtering and grasped the feet of my royal majesty.” (RINAP 5/1 no. 3: iv 68 - iv 79).

In SAA 21 109, Nabû-bel-šumati writes to the Assyrian king suggesting that he appoint one of his princes as ruler of Elam.¹⁰ The Assyrian king must have taken this suggestion into consideration, for after Teumman was killed (RINAP 5 no. 11: iii 34 - iii 43), Ashurbanipal appointed Ummanigaš, one of the sons of the former Elamite king Urtaku who had taken refuge in Assyria, to the throne of Elam and his brother Tammarītu to the throne of Hidalu (RINAP 5/1 no. 3: v 97 - vi 2). After the accession of Ummanigaš to the throne, there must have been voices of opposition in Elam against his takeover of the country together with Assyria. We learn this from Ashurbanipal's letter to the Elamite nobles, SAA 21 65 (BM 132980). In the letter, Ashurbanipal states that after supporting Ummanigaš against Teumman, the Assyrian army did not act like an invader when it entered Elam, and the Elamites were supported (SAA 21 065: 10-17). After the writing of this letter, Ummanigaš broke his oath of loyalty to Ashurbanipal, became hostile, and entered into an alliance with Ashurbanipal's rebellious brother Šamaš-šuma-ukīn (RINAP 5/1 no. 3: vi 86 - vii 24). Although Ashurbanipal made political attempts to improve relations in the face of this attitude of the king of Elam, he did not get any results. However, Ashurbanipal did not need to make any military intervention regarding Ummanigaš. Because Tammarītu, Ummanigaš's brother, took action as one of the legal heirs of the throne and eliminated his brother

¹⁰ “Let him place a prin[ce] from amongst his servants to the governors[hip of El]am (pāhatūte ša Elamti liškun)” SAA 21 109: r. 11'-15')

and his family with a successful coup in 652 BC. (RINAP 5/1 no. 3: vii 25 - vii 33a). The letter SAA 21 63 in the state archives indicates that Assyria supported Tammarītu in seizing the throne. In this letter, Ashurbanipal states that he expects Tammarītu to remain faithful to the oath (treaty) between them in return for his favors:

“I have [done] and given to you this fa[vor] which not (even) a father has done for a son. As for you, remember [this], unremittingly strive to pay me back these [many] favors, and [guard] and remember [the treaty] which I made you swear before [all] the gods of heaven and ea[rth]!” (SAA 21 63: r 19 - r 25)

Tammarītu also states in the letters SAA 21 119 and SAA 21 119 that he wrote to Ashurbanipal that he maintains his loyalty to him and takes care to fulfil his responsibilities towards him. The royal inscriptions prove that the allegiance-based relationship with Tammarītu did not last long. According to Ashurbanipal, Tammarītu took a more arrogant attitude than his brother and allied with Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, who started a rebellion in Babylon. However, Tammarītur’s reign lasted less than three years, internal conflicts in Elam brought the end of his reign, and a person named Indabibi made a coup and seized the throne of Elam. Faced with this situation, Tammarītu took refuge in Assyria again and asked for forgiveness from the Assyrian king (RINAP 5 no. 3: vii 33b - vii 60).

Another example that reveals the situation of the hostages and the subsequent seizure of power in his country with Assyrian support is Sargon II’s reign. When Merodach-baladan of Bīt-Yakin was declared the king of Babylon, Balāssu from the rival Chaldean tribe Bīt-Dakkūri fled with his family to Sargon II. This person and his family continued their lives under the protection of Sargon II and his son, Sennacherib. By the time of Esarhaddon, Balāssu was already dead, but his son and daughter were sent from the Assyrian palace to Borsippa, the castle of their dynasty.¹¹ Available evidence shows that Esarhaddon wanted to use Balāssu’s son Nabû-šallim, who had lived in the Assyrian capital for a long time, for the benefit of Assyria. Another document from the royal archive proves that Nabû-šallim arrived safely in Borsippa.¹² royal inscriptions also provide evidence and supporting information about this situation. According to the information in the inscriptions, Šamaš-ībni, who did not respect Assyria in Babylon, was dethroned, and Balāssu’s son Nabû-šallim was placed on the Babylonian throne (RINAP 4 no. 1: iii 62-70).

When Assyrian royal inscriptions and correspondence are evaluated together and matched, some exciting situations emerge regarding the hostages. For example, in the royal inscriptions of Esarhaddon, there is information that Bēl-iqīša, the son of Bunnannū of Gambulu, came to the Assyrian capital Nineveh of his own free will and swore allegiance to the Assyrian king. The information in the inscriptions says that Esarhaddon took pity on Bēl-iqīša, encouraged him, and strengthened Ša-pī-Bēl himself and put him there. (RINAP 4 1: iii 71 -83) However, a letter written by Bēl-iqīša among the royal letters (SAA 21 111) indicates that he was held hostage in Nineveh¹³ When the information in the inscriptions and the letter are evaluated

¹¹ “His son] did not as[ce]nd] his father’s throne [...] his words: “He was not captured. [NN] (and) his father’s house [...] His son is now held as my hostage in my presence, [and] Balassu has died here. Would you [not] keep the guard of the house of [your] lo[rd], until I sen[d you] the son of your lord?” (SAA 17 1:4-8).

¹² “Under the protection of the gods of the [king, our lord], we arrived safe and sound at Bīt-[Dakuri]. Ana-Na[bū-taklak] and the entire population of Bīt-Dakkūri rejoiced in our presence, and they keep blessing the king, our lord: “Now we know that [[the king]] our lord has rehabilitated Bīt-Dakuri and will put it to the lead, as he has sent us the son of our lord! And we shall forever live under the protection of the king, our lord.” (SAA 17 7: 4-r 4). [EVERY FOOTNOTE SHOULD END WITH A.]

¹³ “To the king, my lord: your servant Bēl-iqīša. Good health to the king, my lord! May Nabū and Marduk bless the king, my lord. From the beginning, since the king arrested me, what is my fault before the king? With respect to what the king, my lord, wrote me, saying, “Has your heart relented?” - there is no fault of mine before the king! I am sitting here (in Nineveh)” (SAA 21 111: 1-13)

together, it may indicate that the event did not happen suddenly and that Esarhaddon sent Bēl-iqīša back after keeping him hostage in the capital for a while.

4. Conclusion

Although the royal inscriptions distinguish between hostages and captives, it is not clear what the distinction is in practice. Of course, some examples provide information to show this distinction in practice. Especially in cases where captives faced a sad fate, it is clearly emphasized in the inscriptions that captives could be executed regardless of their current status. However, the fate of many nobles in captivity is either uncertain or, as some letters in the state archives suggest, they were treated like hostages and used for Assyrian benefit. Nevertheless, it can be seen that in some cases the captives were part of a policy of using them for the Assyrian benefit, sometimes in the Assyrian court or capital under the supervision of the king. In this way, some of the people who are emphasized as captives actually lead a hostage life rather than a captive life. In this respect, it is not clear from the documents how captivity and hostage-taking differed in practice.

Where the information in the documents is incomplete or insufficient is usually in the life and fate of the hostages and captives in the Assyrian court. The hostages were noble persons who continued their existence in the palace as a political tool in case of war, as people whose lives were in danger. However, the Assyrian documents provide scanty information about the life of the hostages in the palace and their subsequent repatriation. Noble captives were often treated in the same way as hostages held at the Assyrian court, and depending on the political situation in their country, they might be pardoned by the Assyrian king on the grounds that they could serve Assyria. One of the best examples of this is the example of Hullî, king of Tabal, and his son Ambaris, who rebelled during the time of Sennacherib and were captured with his family and carried to Assyria. Sargon II, thinking that he could use Hullî for the benefit of Assyria, placed him on the throne of Tabal again. In order to strengthen the alliance with the king of Tabal, the Assyrian king gave one of his daughters to Hullî's son Ambaris, and after Hullî's death, Ambaris was placed on the throne of Tabal by the Assyrian king. When the Assyrian kings thought that the noble captives and hostages, they brought to their capital could be used for Assyria's interests, they tried to transform them into rulers who would serve them by subjecting them to a strict ideological Assyrian education. When the appropriate conditions arose, the Assyrian king supported them and enabled to come to power in their country. The best example of this is the enthronement of Tabū'a, the princess of the Arabs, who grew up in the Assyrian palace, as the queen of his country by the Assyrian king. However, this example does not mean that all noble captives was used in accordance with the same policy. In some cases, captives might face violent death or humiliating punishment in order to serve the direct purpose of conveying the message on which Assyrian propaganda focused. At this point, the practice of psychological warfare, another policy of Assyria, was put into effect. Thus, a clear message was wanted to be given to the enemies and allies, and the cruel and humiliating practices in which those who were against Assyria would be involved were recorded in the inscriptions and depicted on the reliefs. In one of these examples, when Abī-Yate', the Qedarite king, rebelled against Ashurbanipal, he and his brother Aya-ammu were captured and brought to Nineveh. They were skinned and executed in the Assyria capital.

Assyria also adopted a policy of favouring the nobles who wanted to take refuge in Assyria. Of course, when foreign royal nobles risked their lives as a result of the struggle for the throne in their countries, it must be considered that there were ties that enabled them to seek refuge in Assyria, the most powerful state of the period. For example, Urtaku's children probably had been hostages in the Assyrian court during their father's

reign and had established a bond with the Assyrian court. Assyria, in turn, would have sought to protect them and send them back to Assyria as loyal allies in the future.

Another group that should be emphasized in terms of the nobles in the Assyrian court is the foreign princesses. While some of them came to the Assyrian court as captives as a result of the war, an essential part of them consisted of princesses presented to the Assyrian king by the rival or allied kings themselves. When rival and allied kings presented their daughters with their dowries to the Assyrian king, we can consider this as a form of allegiance to Assyria. Unfortunately, we cannot learn the fate of these foreign princesses from the documents. However, the West Semitic origins of the names of some of the queens indicate that foreign princesses could enter the harem of the Assyrian king and rise to the position of queen.

In conclusion, captives and hostages, refugees, and foreign princesses in Assyria were used in Assyrian politics in accordance with Assyria's political, economic, and military objectives.

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