



STUDIES ON THE CIVILIZATION  
AND CULTURE OF  
NUZI AND THE HURRIANS

In Honor Of  
ERNEST R. LACHEMAN

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## On Idrimi and Šarruwa, the Scribe

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Ever since its publication by Sidney Smith in 1949, the inscription of Idrimi, engraved on a human statue, has attracted the attention of scholars who sought to extract from it information on the history of a large segment of the Levant during the early second half of the second millennium B.C.<sup>1</sup> The following remarks, dedicated to Ernest Lacheman, arise from a reading of a 1977 University of Pennsylvania doctoral dissertation by Gary Oller, *The Autobiography of Idrimi. A New Text edition, with Philological and Historical Commentary*.<sup>2</sup> Proceeding from a collation of the original, Oller's work is not only the most complete and updated assessment since Smith's pioneering effort, but is also a repository for the philological contributions, literary interpretations, and historical reconstructions of recent scholarship.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, to lighten the burden of footnoting, this paper will cite Oller's work unless materials came in too late for inclusion within his thesis or previous opinions and approaches have either been slighted or ignored.

Of interest to this paper is Oller's third chapter on "The Literary Nature of the Text: The Correct Procedure for its Use as a Piece of Historical Evidence." There, Oller expands on the remarks made by previous cuneiformists, who saw Idrimi's work as belonging to a literary tradition, markedly different from that of the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions, but which is known to the coastal Mediterranean world.<sup>4</sup>

The narrative about Idrimi and his career is sandwiched between a brief section (lines 1-2), which introduces Idrimi to his readers, and another (lines 92-98a) which, in view of Ancient Near Eastern concern for the sanctity of

<sup>1</sup>Most easily accessible translation is that of Oppenheim in *ANET*<sup>3</sup>, 557-58.

<sup>2</sup>Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International. Order # 78-6628.

<sup>3</sup>See, in particular, his rich bibliography of pp. 250-66. Among the more noteworthy items which could not be adequately considered by Oller is the treatment of E. L. Greenstein and D. Marcus: "The Akkadian Inscription of Idrimi," *JANES* 8 (1976), pp. 59-96. A partial translation of the text is presented by M.-J. Seux in *Textes du proche-orient ancien et histoire d'Israël*, 1977, pp. 42-43.

<sup>4</sup>In addition to Oller's remarks of pp. 192-93 and 193 n. 1, cf. Greenstein and Marcus, article cited in n. 3, pp. 75-77, who compare with Jephthah and David.

human representation and for the posthumous word, contains powerful invocations against those who desecrate the finished product. As has been noted by a number of exegetes, lines 1-63 of the inscription build upon themes and motifs well-known to Near Eastern folklore: the successful younger/youngest brother and the questing hero.<sup>5</sup> Lines 64-91, which detail moments in Idrimi's rise, dwell upon his military and domestic achievements. These moments are easily paralleled by Phoenician and Aramaic (royal) inscriptions.<sup>6</sup> The inscription continues with two unusual items: an expanded colophon (lines 98b-101), and Idrimi's personal exhortation to his audience (lines 102-104).

In developing our arguments, we shall first consider these two items. By subjecting the events of Idrimi's life to content and folkloristic analyses, we hope next to justify the use of a different generic label than the one heretofore attached to the inscription: "autobiography." Finally, by rehearsing the archaeological evidence associated with the statue, we shall offer new hypotheses on the purpose of the inscription and the context in which it was fabricated.

Lines 98b-101 bristle with difficulties in deciphering specific cuneiform signs, in ascertaining the meaning of individual words, and in properly evaluating the morphology and syntax of specific phrases. For our purpose, however, we adopt Oller's reconstruction of the section, a reconstruction which is itself dependent on previous suggestions (cf. pp. 129-43), and present the following translation:

... Šarruwa (is) the scribe, a worshipper [? LÚ<sup>1</sup>IR?] of Tešub [X], Šimiga [XX], Kušuh [XXX], and AN.ŠUR [Šauška?].<sup>99</sup> Since Šarruwa, the scribe, was the one who inscribed this statue, may the gods of the Universe [DINGIR.MEŠ ša AN u KI]<sup>100</sup> keep him alive, protect, and favor him. May Šamaš, lord of the living<sup>101</sup> and dead, lord of spirits, take care of him.

The "colophon" of this inscription is restricted to l. 98b. It begins with the mention of the scribe's name. Rare, such an appendage to a statue is not unknown.<sup>7</sup> In determining the vocabulary behind the cryptogram of line 98b,

<sup>5</sup>Oller, p. 194 n. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Oller, pp. 195-200, gives two instances where literary considerations render suspect the historical worth of Idrimi's statements: In Idrimi's use of numbers and in his detailing of conquered territories. M. Miller, "The Moabite Stone as a Memorial Stela," *PEQ* 104 (1974), pp. 9-18, compares the structures of first millennium inscriptions: those of Barrakib, Azitawadda, and Mesha. Of interest is his passing reference to the Idrimi statue as a "statue-memorial" (p. 9 n. 3).

<sup>7</sup>Cf. the colophon to the copper tablet of Atal-šen of Urkiš and Nawar, *IRSA* #IIH1a (p. 128), which gives the name of the scribe, Šaum-šen. Regarding its appearance, the editors remark: "Cette signature est tout à fait étrangère aux traditions

Oller (pp. 132-40) advances his own reasons for espousing Dietrich and Loretz's suggestion, offered in *OLZ* 61(1966), 557, over Nougayrol's reading, lastly followed by Greenstein and Marcus, which would convert the cryptogram into a supposed GE<sub>14</sub> MAN BÀ ("written, copied, and inspected"). Not only is the translation of these symbols into such sumerograms too exotic and partially unattested elsewhere, but it would convey the impression that the inscription at least, if not the statue also, was a copy of an earlier prototype. No scholar has ever suggested this, or is likely to. Therefore, the second part of l. 98b merely imparts Šarruwa's attachments to a series of gods.

Lines 99-101 are not colophonic, but contain elaborate blessings for Šarruwa. Since scholarship has generally regarded these as unusual extensions of the colophon, explanations have been promoted to account for their inclusions. Kempinski and Na'aman think that Šarruwa, taking advantage of widespread illiteracy, placed his own name where Idrimi's ought to have been.<sup>8</sup> That this unique example of scribal *chutzpah* is highly unlikely need not be emphasized. Oller (pp. 140-41) does not offer anything more plausible: as friend, servant, or author, Šarruwa was singularly honored by being permitted to share his master's monument. But when it is noted that lines 99-101 do not repeat or supplement the passage which, at the conclusion of Idrimi's narrative (92-98a), invokes the god's curses against desecrators of Idrimi's monument, then the string of blessings for Šarruwa can only be equated to similar invocations written in behalf of patrons of votive texts.<sup>9</sup> Such an observation forces a radical change in our assessment of the nature of Idrimi's text. No longer can it be regarded as an 'autobiography' written at the behest of its author; it can now be better ranged among memorials, written to remember the activities of a past leader. In a sense, our inscription becomes a 'biography' cast by Šarruwa in the first person narrative mode. A less exotic terminology might be invoked, however, allowing us to place Idrimi's text firmly within the category of "simulated autobiographies" or, as has been more commonly employed in recent Ancient Near Eastern scholarship, within the genre of "pseudo-autobiographies." We shall turn to this topic as a potentially fruitful way to analyse the manner in which Šarruwa organized his materials concerning Idrimi's life.

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babyloniennes." The text is set within the Agade dynasty period, and is purely dedicatory.

<sup>8</sup>A. Kempinski and N. Na'aman, "The Idrimi Inscription Reconsidered [in Hebrew]," *Excavations and Studies: Essays in Honor of Prof. S. Yeivin*, 1973, p. 217.

<sup>9</sup>On the debate concerning the use and abuse of this terminology, see lastly, J. A. Brinkman, *Materials and Studies for Kassite History, I*, 1976, p. 56, n. 179: "'Votive' means not only dedicated in consequence of a (prior) vow, but also dedicated in the sense of expressing a (present) vow, desire, or wish (for future benefits)."

A. Kirk Grayson's recent monograph, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*<sup>10</sup> and B. Lewis's new edition of *The Sargon Legend*<sup>11</sup> treated a genre of literature, labelled *narû* by earlier cuneiform scholarship and "pseudo-autobiography" by more recent one, which share many characteristics. Lewis, pp. 87-88, arranges these under nine headings: #3-7, descriptive; #1-2, 8-9, interpretive:

1. The texts concern the figure of a great king and record either significant events or unusual experiences during his rule.
2. They are pseudepigraphical and purport to be genuine royal inscriptions.
3. They are written in the first person in the style of an autobiography.
4. Following the pattern of the royal inscription, they are constructed with a prologue, narrative, and epilogue.
5. The prologue begins with a self-presentation and may include information concerning the king's origin or the cause of the predicament he faces in the narrative section.
6. The narrative is devoted to a specific episode in the life of the king.
7. The narrative contains a message for future kings expressed in the form of a blessing oracle or curse formula.
8. The texts are didactic in nature; there is a moral to be learned from the personal experiences of the king that can be acquired by reading his "stela."
9. They are written in a poetic or semipoetic narrative style.

Proceeding backwards, we first take up the last point:

[Point #9.] Unless one stretches to the breaking point the definition of "poetry" or even that of "semipoetry," it is difficult to regard Idrimi's inscription as poetic in style. We might, however, note that Akkadian, or whatever one would label the language of the inscription, was but an acquired taste for a citizen of Alalah. And, although there is no way of proving it, the narrative may have been originally conceived in another language using a much more poetic idiom than is displayed in its translated form.

[Point #8.] As is the case of the Mesopotamian pseudo-autobiographies, the "didactic" dimension of the text is not easily identified. Lines 102-4 of our inscription read as follows: "For 30 years, I have been ruling. Having written my accomplishments upon my statue, let him (who cares to) inspect them thoroughly, and (thus) let (all of them) constantly bless me." These lines ought not to be regarded as an "epilogue" since such a statement had been made in

<sup>10</sup>Toronto, 1975. Note E. Reiner's remarks on this genre and her reservations regarding Grayson's typology in *Altorientalische Literaturen (NHLW, 1)*, 1978, pp. 177-81.

<sup>11</sup>(*ASOR*, Dissertation Series, 4), 1980.

lines 92-98a (see below, point #7). Furthermore, they are carved out of line with the rest of the inscription. Etched on the right cheek of Idrimi, and running down his beard to perpendicularly meet lines 1-23, these lines are made to issue from Idrimi's own mouth and therefore convey the impression that the lessons for posterity will reach those who hearken to Idrimi's exhortation, learn from his accomplishments, and pay homage to him. Functionally, these lines are comparable to the legends that are placed close to the bodies of protagonists, legends that are occasionally found in the ANE, become plentiful in Hellenistic mosaics, in medieval paintings, and even in contemporary cartoons.<sup>12</sup>

[Point #7.] The *narrative* message, as distinguished from the *didactic* one discussed in the preceding point, is to be found in the fragmentary section which warns of dire punishment to be meted out to desecrators (lines 92-98a).

[Points #5-6.] It should not be necessary to rehearse the manner in which lines 1-6 of our inscription fulfill the requirements of these two points. The hero is introduced ("I am Idrimi"), his paternal connection stated ("the son of Ilimilimma"), and, to use a Proppian function,<sup>13</sup> the "initial situation" is detailed in a manner that is left (purposely?) vague: "[Because] in Halab, my paternal home, there were ill-feelings, we fled and came to settle in Emar, whose citizens were my mother's relatives."

Two interesting moments can be discussed here. *a.* Idrimi does not claim actual relationship to Halab's rulers, and it may be that we are too easily accepting that Ilimilimma was actually dethroned from Aleppo's throne, a notion which is only slightly bolstered by *inūma mār bēlišunu anāku* of line 25, a line which occurs in connection with escapees and refugees from Halab, Mukiš, Niya, and Amae. As it is, the text never calls Halab Idrimi's city, and Ilimilimma's fate is not of much concern. A solution, no less conjectural, is that Ilimilimma may have failed in an attempt to usurp Halab's throne. *b.* Alalah, which should have been at this stage of the narrative but a twinkle in Idrimi's eye, is nevertheless paraded in line 2. Such an anticipation, while naturally jolting to our chronologically oriented perception, is nevertheless of literary importance. Together with lines 88-90, which likewise speak of the gods of Alalah, line 2 blocks out the narrative of Idrimi's rise, and permits the

<sup>12</sup>Egyptian tomb paintings, of course, are filled with such examples. The most striking item from the Levant is Barrakib's orthostat relief from Sam'al. Barrakib is seated on a throne, his hand raised almost to meet an Aramaic inscription which, moving toward his head, reads: "I am Barrakib, son of Panammu[wa]." A divine symbol, to the right of the inscription, is met by another legend: "My lord is Baal Harran." A scribe stands at the edge of the slab and faces the enthroned king. Orthostat: E. Akurgal, *The Art of the Hittites*, 1962, pl. 131; Text, *KAI*, #218; Gibson, *TSSI*, #17. Fuller citations and more on this king below.

<sup>13</sup>V. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 2nd revised English edition, 1968, pp. 25-26.

attention to focus on the episodes framed within. It may be that line 1 and 91, which speak to father-son relationships, are meant to further accentuate the parameters of the narrative.

This narrative is indeed, to restate Lewis's vocabulary for point #6, "devoted to a specific episode in the king's life." It opens with Idrimi as a young man, having made a decision to strike out on his own. We need not speculate on the relationship which obtained among the brothers, nor on that between the Emar community and Idrimi's family. Idrimi's account is very miserly with details since its only points are that the youngest son thought it useless to remain with his family (10-12); that Idrimi left with a paltry patrimony ("A horse, chariot, and groom"—line 13); that he took steps which irrevocably separated him, both spatially and psychologically, from his relatives ("and having crossed into the desert, and mixed with Sutū-nomads, I spent the night with him [groom?; the Sutu as one group?] in a [?]"—lines 14-17); that having entered Canaan, he established a compact with Hapirū-refugees (17-29); that in his seventh year since he began biding his time, the opportunity came for him to take over Niya, Amae, Mukiš, and, of course, Alalah (29-42); that no sooner was his legitimacy established that a mighty king, Barrattarna, stopped his hostilities and accepted him as vassal (43-58); that kings from all regions made peace with him (59-63).<sup>14</sup> It is most important to note that lines 29-42 and 43-58 report synchronous events. This observation, already made by Sidney Smith (p. 59), has been disregarded by many scholars. It implies that while Idrimi was with the Hapirū, he was opposed by Barrattarna. But in his seventh year, when he triumphed, Barrattarna accepted his legitimacy. We are encouraged to think of these passages as synchronous by the fact that the name "Alalah" blocks out the Barrattarna portion in lines 38 and 58 ["... Alalah, my city, turned to me/ And I became king of Alalah."] If this opinion is accepted, we can see how the narrative fulfills Lewis's 6th point: the rise of Idrimi occupied no more than a seven year span, a span which, as likely as not, was chosen for its symbolic implications.

By contrast, however, the next few lines, recounting Idrimi's military successes while ruling at Alalah (64-72), his efforts to confirm his dynastic claims (73-84), his domestic resettlement program (84-87), and his cultic activities (88-91) are not secured within a chronological texture. Rather, they are charted programmatically, with one set of activities providing the context, and making it possible, for the next group of actions: spoils from victory permit Idrimi to build his palace and throne; these practical embodiments of legitimacy excuse his reshuffle of Alalah's population and his allotments of privileged spaces for members of his family; the influx of Halabite/Emarite

<sup>14</sup>Whether one is to consider this obscure passage as reflecting on Idrimi's military or political prowess, remains to be ascertained. Bibliography and assessments are available in Oller, pp. 83-85 and Greenstein and Marcus, pp. 85-87.

population allows him to introduce foreign worship into Alalah's temples, and to have his son, *Adad-nirāri*, supervise the cult.<sup>15</sup>

Because of their programmatic structure, it is likely, therefore, that, whatever their historical merits, lines 64-91 of Idrimi's narrative are shaped by literary considerations no less than the previous passages which are manifestly folkloristic in inspiration. In consonance with Near Eastern literary tenets, considerations which guide any narrative concerned with the establishment of legitimacy—be they applied to mythological texts regarding the triumphs of the gods, to epical sagas regarding the heroes of dim pasts, or to so-called pseudo-(auto)biographies—such narratives rarely fail to inject historicizing features. They may include mention of authentic rulers, allusions to geographical features and foreign locales, and involvement of foreign armies drawn from the repertoire of traditional national enemies. It should not be surprising therefore that scholarship has been hard put to insert Idrimi into the known list of rulers at Halab or Alalah (Oller, pp. 148-55), to establish a convincing explanation for the involvement of Barrattarna in Alalah's affairs (Oller, pp. 165-67; 205-11), to fix the boundaries of Idrimi's kingdom (Oller, pp. 174-87), or to locate the places that were raided in his Hittite sortie (Oller, pp. 187-90). Even when our lack of information on North Syria of the XVIth and XVth centuries is taken into consideration, it is remarkable how preciously fragile are almost all the historical reconstructions that proceed from Idrimi's narrative.

This is not to say that an appreciation of the literary nature of the inscription should make us question the historicity of Idrimi himself or to doubt the authenticity of his rise from humbler beginnings to kingship over Alalah. We have far too many documents from Alalah IV to testify to the truth of the first proposition and to assert the likelihood of the second (cf. Oller, pp. 150-54). Rather it is to suggest that because of its contents—that is because of its selection of materials: folkloristic, legitimizing, and historicizing—because of its structure—that is because of its scheme of presentation—we are encouraged to regard Idrimi's inscription as a "simulated autobiography." This assessment, drawn from an investigation of its content, confirms and supplements the conclusion which we presented above after analysing the "colophon" of the text.

This conclusion, however, forces us to shift our focus from the subject of the "simulated autobiography," Idrimi, to the author of the narrative, Šarruwa. An inspection of his achievement allows us to understand the method he pursued in organizing his story. Even as we observe that he presented his audience with a product which collapsed the few historical events into a barely defined stretch of time, which selected but a few years in the life of its subject,

<sup>15</sup>I side with those who do not regard *Adad-nirāri* as a royal successor to Idrimi; discussion of the problem in Oller, pp. 154-55.



which appropriated folkloristic motifs with proven verisimilar hold, and which filled its canvas with touches authentically mimicking reality, we can also note that Šarruwa's final product was nevertheless a major literary achievement. For whatever were the losses experienced by a narrative which does not abide by the rules of historical exactitude, these were easily outweighed by the benefits gained by an imaginatively reshaped sequence of events which successfully infused the whole with a vivid aura of factuality. Despite the fact that Šarruwa's work is horribly abusive of language and script it employs, despite the irritating ignorance displayed by the carver of the inscription (Šarruwa himself?), the narrative succeeds, as do few of its contemporaries, in focusing the attention of the reader on the plight and success of its hero, Idrimi. And this, after all, must have been primary as a goal for its author.

But in turning our attention to Šarruwa, we are also impelled to devote some energy to establishing a context for him. If we ever hope not only to speculate on the purpose of the statue and its inscription, but also to understand the vision which inspired the work, we need to be better informed about the time in which Šarruwa lived and the circumstances that saw him accomplishing his task. To do so, we shall pursue two distinct avenues, one which depends primarily on textual evidence, the other on artistic and archaeological ones. Even as we do so, however, we are under no illusions that what is about to unfold can be anything but conjectures and hypothetical reconstructions.

A. Since Niqmepa, a well-documented king of level IV, calls himself "son of Idrimi" (*AT* 15:2), and uses his father's seal (D. Collon, *The Seal Impressions from Tell Atchana/Alalakh*, 1975, pp. 169-90), and since that level has furnished us mention of a scribe named Šarruwa, it is not surprising that scholarship has sought to locate the inscription during the reign of the early kings of Alalah IV. Two variations were advanced. The earliest, promoted by Sidney Smith and championed by Woolley, regards Šarruwa to have worked during the reign of Ilmilimma, son of Niqmepa, to have survived a palace revolt together with the latter's son, Idrimi, and to have written the account in the inscription which we are studying.<sup>16</sup> Present day scholarship, exemplified by the reconstruction in Oller's IVth chapter, however, has sided with another interpretation which, depending on the fact that Niqmepa was Idrimi's son, advanced the hypothesis that the narrative carved on the statue recounts the saga of a king who established the dynasty ruling throughout Alalah IV.

The name 'Šarruwa' is of Hurrian origin (cf. E. Laroche's *Glossaire de la langue Hourrite* [*RHA*, 35(1977) 217]. Level VII attestations include a LÚ.ZAG.HA (*AT* \*387 [= *JCS* 8, 28: #\*381]:4), a DUMU SANGA (*AT* \*274:19), and an archer (?), *AT* \*203:12) (last 2 references courtesy N. Na'aman). From

<sup>16</sup>L. Woolley, *A Forgotten Kingdom*, 1953, pp. 119-29; *Alalakh: An Account of the Excavations at Tell Atchana*, 1955, pp. 391-95.

level IV, we learn of a 'Šarruwa,' a carpenter who lived in Uniga (*AT* 220:7), of another who was an owner of a chariot (*AT* 422:8; 425:12), and of a scribe of the same name. The last occurs in a number of references: *AT* 15:20 (Niqmepa grants PN and his descendants *mariyannu*-status; cf. *CAD* M/1, 281-82); 17:23 (Abrogation of a marriage agreement; cf. *ANET*,<sup>3</sup> 546); 47:20 (Antichretic pledge transaction; cf. B. Eichler, *Indenture at Nuzi*, 1973, pp. 75-77); 72:16 (Purchase of an ox); 104:7 (fragment of a contract). In these texts, the last one of which is dated to Niqmepa's successor Ilimilimma, Šarruwa the scribe was acting as witness among well known Alalahian worthies. In *AT* 159, a list which records the dispensation of material goods [not clear which] to the high and lowly in the palace, a Šarruwa the scribe (line 5) receives twice the amount allotted to anyone else, but equal to the amount offered to the king's *šatammu* (line 16). Finally a possible reference to a Šarruwa of level II/I will be mentioned below.

These citations make it clear that, whatever his merits as a scribe, Šarruwa of level IV was certainly well established in the higher echelons of the palace bureaucracy. Indeed, it is not impossible that all of the references collected above may have referred to our scribe. If this Šarruwa, a dignitary in the courts of Niqmepa and Ilimilimma—"an older statesman" as Woolley, *Forgotten Kingdom*, p. 119, calls him—was indeed responsible for authoring and sponsoring our inscription, then we can offer the following scenario.

Šarruwa was a successful member of Alalah IV's community. Whether he or his parents were native to Alalah or whether they all belonged to the group Idrimi relocated when he came to power can never be ascertained. Apparently during his last years, Šarruwa decided to invoke the god's blessings and protection beyond his earthly life. To do so, he devised an approach which, as far as I can gather from current information, was totally original with him. He (has someone) fabricate(s) a statue which displays "a deliberate lack of interest in the details and (represents) an effort at schematisation (sic) which reaches the very limits where it barely preserves any relation to reality."<sup>17</sup> He then inscribes upon it his account of Idrimi's life, using the first person as subject throughout the narrative, but shifting dramatically to the third person when his own plea is attached. To make sure that the Idrimi segment is regarded as a true autobiography, Šarruwa, again rather uniquely, carves a three line exhortation as if emanating from Idrimi himself.

If the steps taken by Šarruwa in achieving his goals can be plausibly recreated, and the immediate benefits to Šarruwa can be conjectured, it is nevertheless not clear how the whole functioned as a monument for the kings of the level IV dynasty. If it can be shown that Šarruwa began his career during the last days of Idrimi's life—and our evidence on this is totally lacking—then we might think of an analogy in the *Life of Charlemagne*,

<sup>17</sup>M. Veyra, *Hittite Art, 2300-750 B.C.*, 1955, p. 84. Cf. Woolley in Smith, *Statue of Idri-mi*, 9.

written by his chamberlain Einhart during the reign of Louis the Pious. Feeling ill at ease with this son and successor of Charlemagne, Einhart wrote his "biography," preserving much historical truth in a narrative steeped in folkloristic and anecdotal idioms, in order to enhance his own reputation as a confidant of the great emperor. But such a conjecture would not fit well with what we know of Levantine courts of the second millennium and of the relative anonymity and limited visibility of court officials. If, on the other hand, we can be certain that Šarruwa was bidding Niqmepa's order to eternalize his own father, or that of Ilmilimma, who might have delighted in remembering the activity of his namesake's son (Idrimi), it becomes very difficult to explain the absence of any allusion to these reigning monarchs. Surely such a product, especially in view of the elaborate temple setting it ultimately received, could not be undertaken without palace's approval. Rejecting the opinions of Kempinski, Na'aman, and Oller, alluded to above, we are left with no adequate explanation for the statue's existence. We might, therefore, turn to our second avenue of inquiry, an avenue which, despite its heavy dependence on non-epigraphical evidence, could yield beneficial results.

B. Despite its heavy reliance on archaeological and artistic evidence, the second avenue, I believe, offers better grounds for responding to the queries posed above. This approach depends on reconstructing a context for a Šarruwa who lived during the last days of Alalah, at the tail end of a long period in which Alalah of level III-I was under Hittite domination. Of the few documents from this period (e.g., *AT* 105, 124, 125, 440), one (*AT* 124) is a level II/I letter written in Hittite, and exchanged between two private individuals.<sup>19</sup> One of the correspondents may have been named Šar[-ru-wa].<sup>20</sup>

But our second proposal, although it could be invigorated by the restoration of the personal name in *AT* 124, proceeds from the suspicion that the statue and its setting—and hence the inscription itself—need not have been heirlooms handed down for generations until their final resting spot in a temple of Alalah IB. Rather, these might be regarded as much more deeply attached to the archaeological context in which they are found. Having asked Dr. Marie-Henriette C. Gates, who has recently studied *Alalakh-Tell Atchana, Levels VI-V* [Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale, 1976], to investigate this proposal, she was kind enough to permit me to include the following report.

The statue of Idri-mi was found broken in several pieces in the bottom of a pit dug into the floor of the Level I temple's latest phase. It was clearly intended to sit on the broken basalt base uncovered in its original position on the floor of

<sup>18</sup>On this period, see H. Klengel *Geschichte Syriens im 2. Jahrtausend v. u.Z.*, I, 1965, 250-57.

<sup>19</sup>H. Otten, review of Wiseman's *Alalakh Tablets*, *ZDMG* 106 (1956), pp. 213-14.

<sup>20</sup>Klengel, book cited in n. 18, reads this same Šar[-ru-up-ši?] (p. 251).

the same room as the pit. According to Woolley's lively reconstruction of the events surrounding the statue base and pit, the looters who destroyed level I—and brought the Bronze Age at Alalakh to an end—wrenched the statue from its base, and abandoned it among the temple ruins. Later, a pious individual returned to bury the statue under the temple floor, thereby protecting the relic from further deprivations (C. L. Woolley in S. Smith, *The Statue of Idri-mi*, (London, 1949, p. 2).

The Idri-mi statue has become a standard handbook illustration for the supposedly clumsy provincial style of mid-second millennium Syria. The king wears a shapeless garment with the typical Syrian rolled border and a high domed cap. The statue does not, however, bear any stylistic features which characterize it chronologically, and has always been dated on the strength of its inscription to the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. Woolley noted that the only other sculptural item of dolomite—a ram's head—at Alalakh came from the Level IV palace, thus roughly contemporary with the historical Idri-mi, but admitted that dolomite is a very common stone (Woolley in Smith, p. 3). The statue is very poorly modelled, in striking contrast with the "Yarimlim" head and assorted pieces from Alalakh VII, or the very fine cylinder seal carving common in Middle and Late Bronze Age Syria.

The statue base, however, can be examined somewhat more profitably. It is a rectangular basalt block with sides carved in low relief to represent a throne, of which only the lion's paw feet are preserved (see Smith, Pl. I). Woolley completed the remainder of the throne with a standing lion on either side, the bodies in shallow relief, the heads projecting as protomes. Since the paws are stylistically similar to those on the crude stone lions which flanked the inner doorway of the Level I temple, Woolley patterned his reconstruction on them (Woolley in Smith, p. 7: fig. 2). Before the Syro-Hittite period, however, when lions occur regularly on the statue bases of kings (see the statue of a king from Zincirli, in Akurgal, *The Art of the Hittites*, 1962, pp. 96ff.), there exist no parallels for thrones such as Woolley's. Royalty and dignitaries throughout the Bronze Age in Mesopotamia sit on simple stools or chairs. This practice extends to Syria, if one can judge from a few apparently standard illustrations (see an ivory plaque from Mardikh—P. Matthiae, "Two Princely Tombs at Tell Mardikh-Ebla," *Archaeology* 33 (1980) 14; and a sculpted ritual basin from the same site—P. Matthiae, *MANE* 1, 6 ("Ebla in the time of the Amorite Dynasties") 1979 pl. IX). Only at the very end of the Late Bronze Age are dignitaries shown on elaborate thrones of the sort envisaged by Woolley. A famous ivory from Megiddo VII b (as in *ANEP* n. 332 and p. 228) shows a procession leading up to a king seated on a throne flanked by spinxes. An identical throne on the Ahiram sarcophagus—if it is indeed pre-first millennium (as in *ANEP*, n. 456 and p. 302)—and an actual stone throne from Byblos suggest that the spinx, not the lion, was the fashion in the thirteenth and twelfth centuries B.C. The inspiration was certainly Egyptian, with the finest example (albeit with lions) from Tuthankhamon's tomb (as in *ANEP*, n. 416). There is also, however, the possibility that the Idri-mi throne was not decorated beyond the lion's paws. This type with animal feet, again no doubt Egyptian, is illustrated in Syria on Late Bronze Age seals (E. Porada, *CANES* no. 937, with bull's hooves?) and by

the statuette of a seated figure from a Hazor I temple (thirteenth century B.C.) (Y. Yadin et al., *Hazor III-IV*, Jerusalem 1961, pl. 326:2). The Hazor statuette had also been buried in a pit below the last temple floor, but is not inscribed.

On the strength of the parallels for Idrimi's throne, therefore, it is more likely that the statue dates to the very end of the Late Bronze Age. It was not a relic treasured in the temple over the course of several centuries, but a piece contemporary with the temple in which it was recovered.

The report of Dr. Gates, printed above, can be supplemented by the following considerations:

1. *On the sculpted style of the statue of Idrimi.* The rarity of a rounded sculpture of a throne-seated ruler, indeed, the rarity of this manifestation in relief and painted artifacts even into the Neo-Hittite period has been demonstrated by W. Orthmann (*Untersuchungen zur spät-hittitischen Kunst* [SBA, 8], 1971, pp. 364-66). On the matter of Idrimi's garb, Vieyra, *Hittite Art*, p. 84, finds striking affinity with the heavy rolled edgings of the Late Bronze Age statues of Mishrife (H. Th. Bossert, *Altsyrien. Kunst und Handwerk . . .* [1951], #585-87, plate #180; H. Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 5th paperback ed., 1970, p. 258). This type of clothing, however, is known as early as Alalah VII (Collon, *Seal Impressions*, pl. XXIX) and into Late Bronze Ugarit (Frankfort, *Art*, #298, pp. 258-59). The treatment of facial features finds closest correspondences in the Neo-Hittite art of Carchemish (Vieyra, #58), and Zinjirli (Vieyra, #76; E. Akurgal, *The Art of the Hittites*, 1962, pl. #126-27 [cf. Frankfort, *Art*, p. 300—Kilamuwa?]).

2. *On generic correspondence and parallels: (auto)biography with sculpted figure of the subject.* A diligent, but probably not exhaustive inspection of first-person narratives and life-accounts which are linked to representations of the subject of the inscriptions, indicates that most comparable extant examples come from the first millennium B.C.

a. *Semitic inscriptions.* A biographical sketch inscribed in Aramaic on the subject's (?) statue is known to me only in Barrakib's presentation for/of his father, Panamuwa II (Statue: Orthmann, *Untersuchungen*, p. 354 [sub.: Tahtali Pinar; pl. 52,c]; Text: H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften*, II: Kommentar, 1964, #215; J. C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, II, 1975, #14. Second half of the 8th century B.C.). To be noted, however, is that the retelling of Panamuwa's life is but a rehearsal of Barrakib's own legitimacy. An autobiographical torso of Barrakib is sculpted on an orthostat, with the narrator's own relief sculpted alongside (Orthostat: Bossert, *Altsyrien*, #886; *ANEP*, #281; text: *KAI* #216-17; Gibson, *TSSI*, #15 I-II; *ANET*<sup>3</sup>, 655 [i]). The famous Hamath stela of Zakkur, slightly earlier in date than the last text, may also be ranged in the last category, for on the reverse it presents a human figure (for reading of the king's name, cf. J. Greenfield, *JNES* 37 [1978], p. 93, n. 9; A. R. Millard, *PEQ* 110 [1978],

p. 23. Text: *KAI*, #202; Gibson, *TSSI*, #5; *ANET*<sup>3</sup>, 655-56). Because of the arrangement and lack of direct attachment to a sculpted figure of a king, we avoid ranging here the famous "bilingual" inscriptions of Azitawadda of Adana (Karatepe) in this category. Only text C is inscribed on a statue, and this is labelled in the text as a "divine figure." Written in Phoenician and carved dwarfing the figure of the king on its left side, is the autobiographical sketch of Kilamuwa of Sam'al (Orthostat: Bossert, *Altsyrien*, #887; Text: *KAI* #24; *ANET*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 654-55; -9th cent.).

*b. Non-Semitic inscriptions.* The Carchemish inscriptions written in Luwian Hieroglyphics and placed alongside the figures of kings should be classified within our category. This is especially the case of the elaborate frieze of the usurper Araras (Reliefs: *Akurgal Art of the Hittites*, pl. 120-23; Text: cf. P. Meriggi, *Manuale di Eteo-Geroglifico* II/I [= *Incunabula Graeca*, 14], 1967, #9-11). We have evidence, however, that this genre of materials may have begun during the last days of the Hittite Empire, i.e., *N.B.*, around the time of Alalah I. A text of Suppiluliumas II, brought to my attention by J. Van Seters, contains the following: "... This image, [my father] Tudhaliya did not [(make it)]; I Suppiluliuma, ... made it. And just as my father, the great King Tudhaliya, was a true king, in the same way I inscribed (his) true manly deeds thereon ... I built an Everlasting Peak. I made the image and carried it into the (building called) Everlasting Peak; I installed and [consecrated (?)] it" (*KBO* XII:38:ii:4-21 as treated by H. G. Güterbock, "The Hittite Conquest of Cyprus Reconsidered," *JNES* 26 (1967), pp. 37-81). This text, it might also be noted, introduces the subject by means of a formula, "I am ...", better attested in Idrimi and in West Semitic inscription of the first millennium B.C.

Egyptian autobiographies inscribed on statues—as contrasted with those found in tomb inscriptions from the Vth dynasty on—become well known from the 22nd dynasty on (10th century). But these barely go beyond the conventional platitudes assigned to a dearly departed who praises his own virtues, and glories in the deserved esteem showered upon him. A sampling of these are to be found in M. Lichtheim's *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, III: *The Late Period*, 1980, pp. 13-41. A fuller study is available in E. Otto, *Die Biographischen Inschriften der Ägyptischen Spätzeit*, 1954. More worthy of bringing into comparison is the second of two stelae recounting Kamoses's war against the Hyksos (Text: Habachi, *ASAE* 53 [1956], 195-202; Translation: *ANET*<sup>3</sup>, 554-55). Carved by the chief courtier Neshi who, exceptionally, had his own figure represented on the stone, the narrative is full of grandiloquent claims, highly colorful scenery, and implausible achievements (cf. James, *CAH*<sup>3</sup> II/1, 291-94). It is not possible to establish the time lapse occurring between Kamoses's alleged command to have this stela erected and its completion by Neshi.

The famous Sumerian statues of Gudea cannot be placed in this category since the inscriptions are dedicatory rather than autobiographical.

3. *On literary parallels to the Idrimi statue.* As far as I can gather, (simulated) autobiographies which are either inscribed on the subject's statue or in proximity to his relief, and which display literary affinities with the form and structure of the Idrimi inscription are rather rare. The monuments of Zakkur of Hamath and Kilamuwa of Sam'al are among the few which sequence the segments of their narratives in a similar manner: Presentation of the subject; difficulty of the speakers against foreign elements; successes in stabilizing the home population; curses and/or blessings. The folkloristic elements in these examples, however, are at a minimum, but their function is taken to some extent by the involvement of deities (Zakkur) or of the uncanny (the ineffectiveness of Kilamuwa's predecessors).<sup>21</sup>

With Gates' suggestion as well as our own statements in mind, we might fulfill our promise and promote the thesis that the fabrication of Idrimi's statue occurred during the last days of Alalah.

At the end of Alalah IV, the city fell under Hittite hegemony. Itūr-addu, the last king of Idrimi's dynasty, was defeated by Suppiluliumas I, and his kingdom distributed between Ugarit and Aleppo, the last being a kingdom assigned to a Hittite prince. The city of Alalah was allotted to Aleppo, but, beginning with the reign of Mursilis, its orders came from Carchemish, where the Hittite viceroy resided.<sup>22</sup> We know very little of Alalah after this moment, but we can presume that it fared no better, and no worse than many of the city-states whose fortunes depended on the Hittite's ebb and flow of power. Woolley, whose reconstruction of events in the eighth chapter of his *Forgotten Kingdom* is marred by lack of distinctions among the kingdoms of Mukiš, Niya, and to a lesser extent Nuhašše, proposes, p. 141, that Alalah of level II was under a "milder regime" than the one which obtained in Alalah III. According to the archaeological evidence assembled in the ninth chapter of the same book, two separate periods distinguish Alalah I. Alalah IA, vaguely datable to the first half of the 13th century, saw a shift in social disposition: cremation becomes more common and a new pottery is introduced. But our focus is on Alalah IB, a level which began around 1250 B.C. and ended with the havoc wrought by the Sea Peoples, half a century later. A new temple, built upon the ruins of its predecessor, was established in IB, one which, however, differed in style from its predecessor. A slab with the relief of Tudhaliyas, in this case probably a prince, son of Mursilis II,<sup>23</sup> was used to tread the steps' masonry. This, as well as other details, have led Woolley to present the following assessment:

<sup>21</sup>See the analysis of Miller, cited in n. 6, and that of F. M. Fales, "Kilamuwa and the Foreign Kings: Propaganda vs. Power," *WdO* 10 (1979), pp. 6-22.

<sup>22</sup>On the historical setting, see M. Astour, "The Partition of the Confederacy of Mukiš. . . ." *Orientalia* 38 (1969), pp. 381-414; Klengel, *Gesch. Syr. I*, pp. 252-57.

<sup>23</sup>H. G. Güterbock, "Carchemish," *JNES* 13 (1954), p. 105 n. 15.

The mere burning of the temple of Alalakh [IA] might have been regarded as an accident, but when we find that it is rebuilt on different lines recalling the national buildings of a glorious past [Alalah IV palaces] and Tudkhalia's monument bearing the royal image is dishonoured and set to be trampled under foot, then we cannot but recognize the evidence of yet one more revolt against the Hittite suzerainty. The signal of revolt may well have been the fall of Babylon which was captured by the Assyrians about 1241 B.C., and by that time the Hittites were too exhausted to make any real effort to recover their position . . . (*Forgotten Kingdom*, pp. 162-63).

This picture of a weakened Hatti is clear from other archival materials concerned with the affairs of state under Arnuwandas IV and Suppiluliumas II.<sup>24</sup> It is during this period, we would like to suggest, that nascent "nationalistic" feelings at Alalah led a certain Šarruwa to sponsor the making of a statue and to inscribe it with his own version of the deeds of Idrimi, founder of the last independent dynasty to rule the city-state. In doing so, Šarruwa was at the vanguard of a literary style, probably originating somewhere in Northern Syria near Carchemish, which was apparently cultivated even in Hattusas of Suppiluliumas II's time. This style was to become much more commonly followed in that area during the Iron Age before, to judge from present evidence, finding appreciation in Mesopotamia. Šarruwa's simulated autobiography of Idrimi suffused the activities of the dynast with much partisan sentiment and embellished them with folkloristic details that were certain to please an audience. Set within a historical period, which might have been made familiar to Šarruwa by the monuments and archives of the fourth level, the result was a historiographical masterpiece which promoted an awareness of Alalah's glorious past even as it offered solace in detailing the manner in which that past was itself built upon inauspicious beginnings. It spoke of days when Alalah's leaders were able to muster control of territories, Amae and Niya, which—as far as can be gathered by inspection of the epigraphic evidence concerning Niya at least—never fell under the domination of Mukiš/Alalah. But more understandable in view of the strong anti-Hittite sentiments which must have festered during the long centuries of subjugation, Idrimi was made to gloat over successful forays into Hittite territory.

The inscribed statue was fashioned so as to sit upon a throne, and the whole was placed in the temple IB annex, a multichambered building attached to the main structure by means of a narrow causeway. The presence of an altar in the vicinity of the seated statue may indicate that Idrimi was venerated, if not worshipped. That this occurred in the annex rather than the temple proper may further suggest that the veneration may have been private in nature, perhaps on the part of Šarruwa and the city's leaders, rather than priestly and

<sup>24</sup>A. Goetze, "The Hittites and Syria (1300-1200 B.C.)," *CAH*<sup>3</sup>, 1965, II/2, pp. 291-94.



cultically official. There is evidence, however, that the statue and its throne were to be transported outside the temple, probably during important ceremonies.<sup>25</sup>

Idrimi's saga, with its recall of a past worthy of emulation by the present, did not end with the destruction of Alalah at the uncouth hands of the Sea Peoples. Even as the city was being razed, there were some who believed that Alalah would rise again. At some risks, it must have been, an Alalahian returned to the scene of devastation, piously collected the fragments of Idrimi's statue, and buried them not far from where the throne stood. He hoped, no doubt, that future generations of citizens would one day reestablish Idrimi on his proper stand, read his story, and be inspired to duplicate his valiant deeds. In doing so, we might note, these generations would not only heed Idrimi's command that his accomplishments be thoroughly inspected and his memory constantly blessed (lines 103-4), but they would surely not fail to intercede with the gods and to ask that Šarruwa, the scribe, be granted eternal life in the beyond.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup>Woolley in S. Smith, *Statue of Idri-mi*, p. 7.

<sup>26</sup>I am beholden to E. Reiner for her reading of this paper. She informs me that the *CAD* reads DUB.SAR TUR ARAD in line 98b.

[Two articles by N. Na'aman have appeared after I submitted this paper. The first concerns "The Ishtar Temple at Alalakh," *JNES* 39 (1980), pp. 209-14, and only passingly refers to our subject. The second, "A Royal Scribe and His Scribal Products in the Alalakh IV Court," *Or Ant.* 19 (1980), pp. 107-16 presumes that the mention of Šarruwa in level IV documents necessarily implies that he was their author. Na'aman, after collation, adds 91:22 (*not* followed by DUB.SAR!) as another occurrence of Šarruwa's name among witnesses. Note however that his transcriptions of the PN in pp. 108 and 111 do not match; the second of which seemingly confirms Wiseman's copy where the *wa* sign is not recorded. His analysis of these documents reveals a strong Hurrian influence in the matter of vocabulary and syntax. "These Hurrian traits," he adds (p. 109), "are somewhat in contrast to the text of Idrimi, where only a minor Hurrian influence can be shown."

H. Otten's "Zum Ende des Hethiterreiches aufgrund der Bogazköy-Texte," *Jahresbericht des Instituts für Vorgeschichte der Universität Frankfurt A.M.*, 1976 (pp. 23-35) came to my attention (courtesy G. Beckman) too late for profitable use.]