

Meat offerings and their preparation in the state cult of the Assyrian empire*

Salvatore Gaspa

University of Padua
gaspasal@libero.it

Abstract

This study examines the treatment of meat in Assyrian state cult of the first millennium BCE. To this aim, the administrative and cultic textual evidence about offerings of whole animals, meat cuts, and meat-based culinary preparations are considered here. After an overview of the meat offerings in the ritual action of a series of Assyrian cult ceremonies, the enquiry focuses on the culinary treatment, presentation, and manipulation of the sacrificial meat; the evidence discussed reveals that the culinary treatment of the meat offered differed according to the deity and the cultic occasion.

Keywords: Meat offering, Assyrian cult, God's banquet, Culinary treatment, Offering presentation, Distribution criteria

Assyriological studies on food offerings have shown that meat played an important role in the banquet for the gods, although it is not clear what the practical or cultic reasons were which determined the choice of the animal to be sacrificed.¹ What is clear is that a large variety of meat was a common element of the god's and the king's meal, and that the presence of oxen, sheep and birds at the divine table represented whole animals, meat cuts, and meat-based dishes the participation of a part of the living world to the act of feeding the gods.² A reconsideration of Assyrian attestations concerning the meat offerings may help complement our knowledge of Assyrian food practices in a cultic context. Although, as Lambert observed, no specific term is used for meat offerings in Akkadian,³ meat occurs in different ways in the ritual dynamics of Assyrian cultic ceremonies; accordingly, we shall study not only the types of meat offering employed in the rituals, but also the way in which they were prepared and presented to the Assyrian gods. In particular, we shall investigate the cooking procedure applied to meat offerings and the specific cultic occasions: culinary treatment is one of the most significant actions executed by the ritual performer

* This study is part of my research into "Foods and food practices in Assyria" at the University of Naples "L'Orientale", and the collaboration with the Italian multi-university research programme "Lexicon of food and food practices in the Ancient Near East" (2007–2010) for the Neo-Assyrian lexicon of food. I am indebted to the anonymous reviewer for comments, criticisms and suggestions.

1 Lambert 1993: 199.

2 Maul 2008: 79.

3 Lambert 1993: 197.

on the victim's body in the sacrificial procedure,⁴ although Mesopotamian thought was more interested in the act of presenting of the offering food to the god than in the actual processing of the victim's body.⁵ Problems concerning the management, preparation and consumption of meat in the context of the temple cult and the sacrificial economy in first-millennium BCE Mesopotamia have already been treated by scholars dealing with Neo- and Late Babylonian texts.⁶ The study which follows will try to evaluate meat offerings in the temple cult in the light of the Neo-Assyrian sources.

The management of large amounts of meat, especially ovine and bovine meat, for religious ceremonies celebrated in the Temple of Aššur in Assur (modern Qal'at Širqāt) was one of the main tasks for the central administration of the Assyrian State in its dealings with cultic affairs. Moreover, the territorial expansion and the administrative consolidation of the Assyrian State during the ninth–seventh centuries BCE corresponded to an increase in the political and religious relevance of the Aššur Temple, for it was the seat of the national god of Assyria and the place where Assyrian kingship was periodically reaffirmed during state cult ceremonies. In the administrative documents of the royal archives of Nineveh (modern Qūyunğiq) and in the Assur texts concerning royal rituals to be celebrated in the Aššur Temple, as well as in other sanctuaries, we find valuable information not only on the sacrificial animals destined for the temple ceremonies and the types of meat cuts, but also on the way meat entered the composition of the offerings and its culinary treatment for the gods' meal.

Meat offerings in the Middle Assyrian period: the Assur and Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta records of sacrificial animals

Sheep and calves were the animals regularly presented in Assyrian sacrifices.⁷ This can be seen if we enlarge our inquiry to the Middle Assyrian texts from Assur and Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta (modern Tulūl al-'Aqir). In Ninurta-tukul-Aššur's age (1133? BCE), for instance, rams and goats were allocated to the temple offerings⁸ and to various rituals,⁹ especially those involving purification.¹⁰ Rams and goats also occur in a list of offerings to be presented on given days from the seventh to the tenth day of the month of Muḫur-ilāni to various deities

4 Cooking procedure is one of the ritual actions that are to be performed on the sacrificial sheep according to an Old Babylonian manual of sacrificial procedure, see Foxvog 1989: 167–76. No analogous manual is known for the Neo-Assyrian period.

5 Cf. Abusch 2002: 39, 42–3.

6 See, e.g., Joannès 2000: 334–45; 2009: 431–5 with previous bibliography.

7 For the use of ovines as sacrificial animals in Middle Assyrian texts see, e.g., KAJ 192: 15–16; 201: 1–2; 216: 10; 291: 1–2 (sheep and goats); Weidner 1935–36: no. 50 r.26; for bovines see MARV II, 19 r.17; Meinhold 2009: 287, text no. 3B: 24.

8 Weidner 1935–36: nos. 50 r.26 (one ram for the temple of Šin); 76: 4–6 (one sheep for the *nugatipu*-ceremony(?)) of Ištar of Arbela); 103: 1–6 (rams for a ritual to be celebrated in the Gula temple).

9 Weidner 1935–36: no. 59: 1–5 (three rams and one she-goat for the ritual of the queen). Sheep for another type of ritual are mentioned in *ibid.* nos. 75: 1–5 and 80: 1–7.

10 Rams and goats for the purification ritual (*ana tēlilte*) of palace women, among whom are the king's wives, are attested in Weidner 1935–36: nos. 61: 1–3; 62: 1–5; 63: 1–2; 66: 1–5; 73: 1–5.

and sanctuaries:¹¹ among these, there are male lambs (*puḥādu*) for the extispicy (*ana bā'erūti*) of the eighth and tenth days (see Table 1).¹²

Another document records sheep allocated for the extispicy and as offerings to Ištar of the Heaven (*Ištar ša šamē*): for the diviner's activity of the 29th day of the month Ša-kēnāte is assigned one spring lamb (*ḥurāpu*),¹³ while for the offering of the goddess of the first day of Muḥur-ilāni we have two rams and two young she-goats.¹⁴ The same sacrificial animals, namely rams, goats and spring lambs (*ḥurāpu*), are attested in Table 2, referring to the offerings from the second to the sixth day of Muḥur-ilāni.¹⁵

Sheep and goats for a divine banquet, perhaps to be celebrated in the temple of Sîn, are also recorded in a text from Tell Šabī Abyaḍ.¹⁶ In documents coming from Urad-Šērū'a's archive and dealing with the assignment of sheep for various purposes there are also sheep for the cultic meal (*tākultu*) of Nineveh,¹⁷ for the sacrifices before Nabû,¹⁸ and for the *pandugāni*-ceremony.¹⁹ In texts of this period we find very few details about the anatomic characteristics of the animals destined to be slaughtered in cult. In a prayer of Aššurnaširpal I' to Ištar, for instance, we read about a calf with large horns which occurs in association

Table 1. Offerings from the seventh to the tenth days of Muḥur-ilāni

Rams	Lambs	Goats	Destination	Day
1	–	–	Ištar of Nineveh	7th
1	–	–	Ištar of Heaven	7th
1	–	–	Aššur	8th
–	1	–	extispicy	8th
1	–	–	Ištar	10th
1	–	–	Šamaš	10th
–	1	–	extispicy	10th
–	–	1 (male)	[...] ²⁰	10th
1	–	–	House of Aššur-muṣabši	10th
[1]	–	–	[...] ²¹	10th
[1]	–	–	Šērū'a(?) ²²	10th
1	–	–	Mullissu(?)	10th
1	–	–	House [of ...]	10th
1	–	2 (female)	Ištar of Heaven	10th (in the evening)

11 MARV III, 75: 1–r.15 (Meinhold 2009: 473, text no. 19).

12 MARV III, 75: 4, 7 (Meinhold 2009: 473, text no. 19).

13 MARV I, 2: 1–2 (Meinhold 2009: 467, text no. 17).

14 MARV I, 2: 3–6 (Meinhold 2009: 467, text no. 17).

15 MARV II, 29: 1–r.15 (Meinhold 2009: 471, text no. 18).

16 Wiggermann 2000: 200, text T93–9.

17 Postgate 1988: 161, no. 65: 1–5.

18 Postgate 1988: 166, no. 68 r.16.

19 Postgate 1988: 166, no. 68 r.21.

20 MARV III, 75: 8 (Meinhold 2009: 473, text no. 19) 1 MĀš a-na ma-x'-ḥi.

21 MARV III, 75: 10 (Meinhold 2009: 473, text no. 19) [1] UDU.NITÁ a-na LÚ.x' [x x (x x)].

22 MARV III, 75: 11 (Meinhold 2009: 473, text no. 19) [1] UDU.NITÁ a-na AN ŠE'²¹ [x x]. For the reading of the last signs of the line as the name of Šērū'a see Meinhold 2009: 474.

Table 2. Offerings from the second to the sixth day of Muḫur-ilāni

Rams	Lambs	Goats	Destination	Day
1	–	–	Ištar	2nd
1	–	–	Ištar	3rd
1	–	1 (m) + 2 (f)		4th
1	–	1 (f)	temple(?) of Amurru	4th
–	1	–	extispicy	4th
1	–	–	meal (of the god)	5th
1	–	–	Ištar	5th
1	–	–	<i>takmīsu</i> -offering	5th
1	–	–	Ištar	6th
1	–	–	Adad	6th
1	–	–	temple(?) of Amurru	6th
–	1	–	extispicy	6th

with sheep as a sacrificial animal.²³ A fragmentary section of what probably represented a long Middle Assyrian ritual text²⁴ from Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta lists a number of sacrificial animals which were destined for various deities of the pantheon of Assur. Since the offerings are presented by the king himself,²⁵ it must have been a royal ritual. The group of animals includes a calf, which was assigned to Aššur and another god, perhaps to be identified with Mullissu,²⁶ and seven rams, each of which was assigned to pairs and groups of gods:²⁷ the divine recipients of such rams, whose names are preserved in the text, are Anu,²⁸ Bēr,²⁹ Nusku and Ninurta,³⁰ and two manifestations of the goddess Ištar, namely the Assyrian Ištar (*Ištar aššurītu*) and Ištar of Heaven (*Ištar ša šamē*).³¹ Finally, the seventh ram is assigned to the gods, the divine Destinies (*dŠīmāti*), and the goddesses.³² From this overview of the Middle Assyrian administrative texts, we can see that information on meat offerings is limited to the quantification of whole animals and their respective destination, while indications on meat cuts are absent, except for a few occurrences in a fragmentary account from Ṭābētu (modern Tall Ṭābān)³³ and a reference

23 Meinhold 2009: 287, text no. 3B: 24–5 x x] *a-la-ap qa-ni šu-tu-ru-te* / [x x UD]U.SISKUR. MEŠ DÜ-uš ša nap-ḫa-ri.

24 Meinhold 2009: 345.

25 MARV IV, 95 i' 12' (Meinhold 2009: 345, text no. 8). The king is also mentioned in *ibid.*, ii' 5'.

26 MARV IV, 95 i' 2'–3' (Meinhold 2009: 345, text no. 8).

27 MARV IV, 95 i' 4'–12' (Meinhold 2009: 345, text no. 8).

28 MARV IV, 95 i' 4' (Meinhold 2009: 345, text no. 8).

29 MARV IV, 95 i' 7' (Meinhold 2009: 345, text no. 8).

30 MARV IV, 95 i' 8' (Meinhold 2009: 345, text no. 8).

31 MARV IV, 95 i' 9'–10' (Meinhold 2009: 345, text no. 8). Other divine pairs, mentioned in lines 5'–6', could have been formed by Sîn and Šamaš as well as by Ea and Damkina. See *ibid.*, 347.

32 MARV IV, 95 i' 11'–12' (Meinhold 2009: 345, text no. 8).

33 Shibata and Yamada 2009: 89, text Tab T07–2: 1–4 1 UZU.GABA [x x x / 2 UZU.TE x [x x x / 'UZU'.SA A x [x x x / [UZU.G]ú' x [x x x, “One (cut of) the breast [...]; two (cuts of) cheek (?) [...]; sinew ... [...]; [ne]ck(?) [...].”

contained in a list of foodstuffs for a royal meal from Assur.³⁴ As we shall see in detail below, a different picture emerges if we move to the textual evidence of the first millennium imperial archives.

Meat offerings in the Neo-Assyrian cultic ceremonies at the Aššur temple

Meat offerings during the Šabātu-Addāru festive cycle

For the Neo-Assyrian period, we are able to combine the data provided in the Nineveh offering lists with those recorded in texts describing royal rituals celebrated in Assur on particular occasions during the Assyrian religious year. A special religious occasion was constituted by the festive cycle of the months Šabātu and Addāru in the Aššur Temple at Assur, which also included the *quršu*-ceremony of Mullissu.³⁵ The same cultic period seems to be referred to in the offerings of varieties of foods and beverages which are recorded in a group of administrative lists from the royal archives of Nineveh. From what we read in texts describing rituals in which the Assyrian king takes part as the principal cultic performer, we can reconstruct various moments of such a period of intense religious activity in Assur. On the 18th day of this month, the king enters the Temple of Aššur. Here, after performing several types of offering and purification ritual, he makes a libation and a funerary offering.³⁶ Then, a sheep offering is performed.³⁷ The offering, however, is not limited to sheep. Two calves were conducted into the area where the offering was presented, but the sacrifice of these animals is not mentioned in the text.³⁸ After that, the text continues by mentioning the offering of a calf horn, tendons or muscles of sheep, and combustible substances on the censers, followed by the burning of oil and honey.³⁹ A second stage of the ritual is held in the palace and in the chapel of Dagan at Aššur on the days following: here the animals are ranked and presented for the offering.⁴⁰ A similar text describes the rituals for the same days and shows that sheep sacrifice also occurred on 19th⁴¹ and 20th days,⁴² while on the 21st day the sacrificial animal is a calf: in fact, a calf for the chapel of Dagan is presented and inspected by the king in order to be sacrificed the next day before the god Aššur in the main Assyrian temple.⁴³ Another text reports on the rituals to be celebrated from the 23rd to the 25th day of Šabātu: the offerings concern the “regular offerings” (*dariu*) and the libations. The offering of meat, performed each day before Aššur and Mullissu, includes both (whole and uncooked) sheep and boiled meat (*salqu*).⁴⁴ In a

34 MARV I, 29: 12 (Harrak 1990: 70) 4 UZU.ÚR.MEŠ ša UDU.NITÁ¹.

35 On this aspect, see Parpola 2004: 290.

36 Menzel 1981: no. 28: 19–20.

37 Menzel 1981: no. 28: 20.

38 Menzel 1981: no. 28: 21.

39 Menzel 1981: no. 28: 22–3.

40 Menzel 1981: no. 28 r.2–3. See also *ibid.*, r.16–17.

41 Menzel 1981: no. 32A: 10’.

42 Menzel 1981: no. 31 r. iii 4’.

43 Menzel 1981: no. 31 r. iv 6’–7’, 9’–10’.

44 Menzel 1981: no. 29: 4–5, 13–r.1, 5, 7.

fragmentary text, presumably related to Šabātu rituals, this type of offering is supplemented by the burning of a young she-goat (*unīqu*) and the opening of the *ħariu-vat*.⁴⁵ For a tentative reconstruction of the sequence of the several moments characterizing these royal rituals, a report on the rituals of Šabātu and Addāru is of some help. According to this report, on the 18th day, after the entry of (the divine statues of) Šērū'a, Kippat-māti, and Tašmētu into the chapel of Dagan on the 16th day took place, meat offerings are presented on the censers by the king.⁴⁶ After that, offerings of sheep are given to various deities: Ninurta and Nusku, the gods of the "House of the God" (*bēt ili*), that is to say, the Aššur Temple, and the "Conquerors" (*kāšidūti*).⁴⁷ In another text referring to the rituals of Šabātu, the list of gods who receive the offerings of the 18th day also includes the "Golden Chariot" (*mugirru ħurāši*), Bēl and Nabū.⁴⁸ Similar offerings must have been contemplated for other gods, too. We know, for instance, that such offerings were provided (on the 19th day?) in connection with the procession of the (statues of the) gods to the Anu temple;⁴⁹ on the 20th day, in the Aššur Temple in front of both Aššur and Mullissu and after Šērū'a and Kippat-māti have been seated at the "Gate of the Product of the Lands" (*bāb ħiṣib māṭāti*);⁵⁰ on the third day of Addāru, on the occasion of the installation of the god Aššur in his seat, after another divine procession to the sanctuary of Anu,⁵¹ and on the eighth of the same month, concurrently with libations.⁵² The offerings of the 20th and 23rd days of Šabātu and the third day of Addāru also include boiled meat.⁵³ The roasting of female goat-kids takes place on the third of Addāru and completes a similar offering of goats of the 23rd day of Šabātu,⁵⁴ as witnessed by a text cited above. On a day prior to the ninth of Addāru, which cannot be defined accurately because of a break in the text, the king's offering includes, as well as the sacrificial sheep, a bowl of soup (*itqūru ša akussi*).⁵⁵ In the Middle Assyrian coronation ritual, still in use in the Neo-Assyrian age, the regular offerings (*dariāte*) of meat concern one ox and six sheep for Aššur and four sheep to be distributed

45 Menzel 1981: 47* no. 591, lines 6, 9. The use of male goats (*urīšu*) as sacrificial animals in association with sheep is also documented in the Middle Assyrian age, see KAJ 291: 1–2, 7–8.

46 Menzel 1981: no. 26 i 3'–4'.

47 Menzel 1981: no. 26 i 11'–12'.

48 Menzel 1981: no. 27: 4–5.

49 Menzel 1981: no. 24 ii 9'–11'.

50 Menzel 1981: nos. 24 ii 19'–20'; 26 ii 9'–11'.

51 Menzel 1981: no. 24 r. v 9'–10'. Other sheep offerings for Aššur and Mullissu could have been mentioned in *ibid.*, iii 4'–5', r. iv 10'–11'.

52 Menzel 1981: no. 30: 13, r.22.

53 Menzel 1981: nos. 24 iii 10', iv 18'; 26 ii 6'. The offering of boiled meat on the 20th day is also registered in Menzel 1981: no. 27 r. 22, which is a report on the rituals of the 17th–21st days of Šabātu.

54 Menzel 1981: no. 24 r. iv 17', 19'. The offering of roasted young she-goats could have been mentioned in the broken part of this text at the beginning of the fourth column of the reverse, as suggested by the reference to the opening of the *ħariu-vat* in *ibid.*, r. iv 2'. Cf. Menzel 1981: 47* no. 591 line 9.

55 Menzel 1981: no. 24 r. v 11'.

among other gods (Šērū'a, Nusku, Kippat-māti and Mullissu).⁵⁶ The same number of sacrificial animals which were assigned to Aššur also characterizes the offering for Marduk, while other deities receive a sheep each.⁵⁷ In this Middle Assyrian text we may observe that the offerings are composed of whole animals, presumably uncooked, and boiled meat (cuts). In fact, at a certain point in the ceremony, the king presents the tiara to the gods, which is destined to the god Aššur, and *salqu*.⁵⁸ Later, after having raised and placed the tiara of Aššur and the weapons of Mullissu on the throne, another sheep offering is executed.⁵⁹

Other contexts for meat offerings in the Aššur Temple: brazier rituals, Nisannu celebrations, rituals of Ištar and other royal rituals

The cooking of meat on censers and braziers is not limited to the royal rituals of the Šabātu-Addāru festive cycle. In another ritual, unfortunately in a fragmentary condition, the context of the ritual action is still that of the Aššur Temple.⁶⁰ Here, on the night of the 16th day of a month whose name is not indicated, on a brazier lit in front of the god (*kanūnu ina pān Aššūr*)⁶¹ a ram is burned.⁶² In Assyrian theological speculation, sacrificed animals are often equated with mythological figures and events. Thus, in a theological commentary, the ram thrown on the brazier which is lit before the goddess Mullissu is equated with the monster Qingu, the consort of Tiamat, while being devoured by the flames.⁶³ Similarly, another commentary identifies an ox and sheep, roasted and thrown to the ground, with Qingu and his seven children at the time of their defeat.⁶⁴ Another context in which meat offerings are used in royal rituals is the ritual of Nisannu at the *bēt akīti*. On the seventh and eighth days of the month, in addition to the regular offerings of sheep,⁶⁵ there is the presentation of boiled meat⁶⁶ and the roasting of a female goat-kid.⁶⁷ In one case, the setting for the sacrifice is a spring; here, the offering involves the pouring of the sacrificed animals' blood into the spring, along with other liquids.⁶⁸ The blood as a libation liquid is also included later on in the ritual and is poured with water, beer, wine and milk on the heads of the offered sheep.⁶⁹ The presentation of an offering of sheep, boiled meat and roasted female goat-kids by the king is also required in the event of a dispatch from a military campaign arriving at Assur.⁷⁰ Instead, on the seventh day of

56 KAR 135+ i 42'-43', ii 6 (Müller 1937: 10).

57 KAR 135+ r. iv 1-3 (Müller 1937: 18).

58 KAR 135+ ii 14 (Müller 1937: 10).

59 KAR 135+ ii 14-16 (Müller 1937: 10).

60 Menzel 1981: no. 33: 4'-5'.

61 Menzel 1981: no. 33: 6', 10'.

62 Menzel 1981: no. 33: 7'. On the use of rams as sacrificial animals in the Middle Assyrian age, see, e.g., Weidner 1935-36: no. 50: 26.

63 SAA 3, 37: 9'.

64 SAA 3, 39 r.17-18.

65 Menzel 1981: nos. 37 i 9', 17'; 38 i 3', r. vi 5.

66 Menzel 1981: no. 38 i 3', r. vi 5.

67 Menzel 1981: nos. 37 ii 2', 9'; 38 i 5', ii 4', r. vi 6.

68 Menzel 1981: no. 37 i 9'.

69 Menzel 1981: no. 37 ii 11'-14'.

70 Menzel 1981: no. 38 r. vi 1-6.

Nisannu, the king sacrifices *kimru*-sheep both in front of the royal statue and in the temple of Adad.⁷¹ From a text describing the arrangement of a series of offerings for a ritual, we learn that the *kimru*-sheep were heaped on the offer-tory table (*ina muḫḫi paššūri*).⁷² It is interesting to observe that the Nineveh offering lists include this type of sheep among the offerings for the Aššur Temple.⁷³ The same kind of sheep offering is recorded in an account of sheep for the temple:⁷⁴ according to this document, the *kimru*-sheep were con-signed on the tenth day and were part of a total offering of 23 sheep. In addition, sheep for the *kimru*-offering (*immeru ana kimri*) are mentioned in a decree of Adad-nerari III (810–783 BCE) among contributions for regular offerings (*ginū*) in favour of the Aššur Temple from various cities of the country.⁷⁵ Therefore, it is clear that in the Neo-Assyrian period *kimru* refers to a type of offering and a sacrificial sheep. In this regard, it is interesting to draw attention to a Middle Assyrian list which mentions, among different kinds of raw foodstuffs and culinary preparations for offerings to the gods of Aššur, a culinary product called *kimirtu*. Like the Neo-Assyrian lists of offerings for the Aššur Temple, this list too mentions the *saplišḫu*-dish: both the *kimirtu* and the *saplišḫu* occur as the contents of *kallu*-bowls.⁷⁶ In admin-istrative documents from Nineveh,⁷⁷ the *saplišḫu* occurs as a designation poss-ibly referring to a type of offering to which the sheep were destined⁷⁸ as well as a dish served in *siḫḫāru*-platters.⁷⁹ In any case, in the above-mentioned Aššur Temple offering lists the *saplišḫu*-dish is recorded at the end of the sec-tion concerning ovine meat and before that of birds,⁸⁰ or it is included within it.⁸¹ The consumption of this dish, which we may define as a meat-based prep-eration,⁸² is a characteristic of the royal banquet. Evidence for this is given, for the Middle Assyrian period, by the occurrence of the “*saplišḫu* of the king” in a Tell Billa fragmentary document dealing with sheep,⁸³ and by the 60

71 Menzel 1981: no. 38 i 10³–12⁷.

72 Menzel 1981: no. 51 r.3.

73 SAA 7, 200: 3; 209: 6; 210: 6; 211: 9; 212: 8.

74 SAA 7, 164: 1.

75 SAA 12, 71: 6 1 UDU *a-na kim-ri a-na* IGI x[x x x x], “One sheep for the *kimru*-offering before [...]”, *ibid.*, 9 1 UDU *a-na kim-ri*, “one sheep for the *kimru*-offering”. See also *ibid.*, 17 2 UD[U.MEŠ *a-na kim-ri a-na* IGI x x x], “two she[ep for the *kimru*-offering before [...]”. The reconstruction of the last occurrence is mine.

76 MARV III, 16 i 20⁷ ʿx⁷ *kal-li* GIŠ.ŠE *ša sa-ap-liš-ḫe*, *ibid.*, r. iii 26 2 DUG.*kal-li* GIŠ.ŠE *ša ki-me-er-[e x]*, *ibid.*, r. iv 19 [x DU]G.*kal-li* GIŠ.ŠE ʿša *sap³-li-[iš-ḫe]*.

77 SAA 7, 154 ii³ 3⁷; 209: 7; 210: 7; 211: 10; 212: 9. Another possible attestation of this term can be found in a cultic text (Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. viii 15⁷, although Menzel trans-literates it *šap-ut-ḫu*).

78 SAA 7, 154 ii³ 3⁷.

79 SAA 7, 209: 7; 210: 7; 211: 10; 212: 9.

80 SAA 7, 209: 7; 212: 9.

81 SAA 7, 210: 7; 211: 10.

82 See CDA: 317a: “a designation of meat offerings”; AEAD: 98a: “a meat preparation”. No translation is given in CAD S: 165a.

83 Finkelstein 1953: 131, 160, text no. 38 r. 8 [x + ²]1 *sa-ap-liš²-ḫi* *ša* LUGAL (reconstruction of the line by the author). In this text too the *saplišḫu* shows a connection with ovine meat. In fact, a designation of sheep occurs in *ibid.*, 1 x x] UDU.*pa-[ra-tum x x x x* (recon-struction of the line by the author).

kallu-bowls of such a dish which, as we learn from an Assur list, were served on the occasion of an analogous palatine ceremony.⁸⁴ As regards the Middle Assyrian term *kimirtu*, it could reasonably refer to a meat-based preparation resulting from the sacrificial sheep which in Late Assyrian times were denoted by the term *kimru*.⁸⁵

Returning to the text of the rituals of the *akītu*-temple in Nisannu, we observe that the offering of boiled meat may be accompanied by the strewing of salt on it: this is required for the offering of the 20th day before Bēlat-dunāni.⁸⁶ The action of strewing salt on the *silqu*-meat before this goddess is also registered in a text containing ritual instructions for Assyrian temples.⁸⁷ Differently, a text for the ritual dedicated to the “Lady of the Mountain” (*Šarrat-šadê*), an aspect of the goddess Ištār, refers to the strewing of salt on a cut of rib (*šēlu*) to be presented in front of the god Sibitti.⁸⁸ In addition to salt, the meat offered could also be strewn with flour. This is documented in a Middle Assyrian ritual, according to which the king had to scatter the content of three *kallu*-bowls filled with *maṣḥatu*-flour on the sacrificial lamb (*ina muḥḥi puḥādi*).⁸⁹

Rituals of Ištār of the *bēt ēqi* also include the supply of meat for combustion offerings. Apart from goats,⁹⁰ the burning offering also includes cuts of meat (*nishu*) on the censers.⁹¹ The text also mentions a brazier,⁹² probably used for the combustion of the offered meat. The offering includes “hot boiled meat” (*silqu ḥantū*)⁹³ and two bulls.⁹⁴ It is evident that from these bulls were extracted the meat cuts needed for the offerings, but the text is unclear at this point.⁹⁵ To these rituals of the *bēt ēqi* were destined also the 26 *ēqūtu*-sheep mentioned in an administrative document from Nineveh relating to meat offerings entering the composition of dishes for royal banquets:⁹⁶ the 26 sheep in question derived from the burnt offerings which presumably took place in the *bēt ēqi*. We find additional evidence for hot boiled meat in a Nimrud report on cultic events which took place in the Aššur Temple during the eponymate of Issār-dūri, governor of Arrapha (modern Kirkuk) in 714 BCE.⁹⁷ According to this document, the sacrificial ram which was slaughtered on the altar (*iābilu naksu ša muḥḥi*

84 MARV I, 29: 7 (Harrak 1990: 70).

85 The Akkadian dictionaries list the entry *kimirtu* only with the meaning “sum, total”. See AHw: 478b; CAD K: 373a.

86 Menzel 1981: no. 37 r. v 11’–13’.

87 Menzel 1981: no. 53 r. 22.

88 Menzel 1981: no. 46: 19’–20’.

89 Köcher 1952: 194, text VAT 16435: 16’–17’.

90 Menzel 1981: no. 43 i 2’.

91 Menzel 1981: no. 43 r. iv 1.

92 Menzel 1981: no. 43 r. iv 3, 4, 5.

93 Menzel 1981: no. 43 r. iv 3.

94 Menzel 1981: no. 43 r. iv 5.

95 Menzel 1981: no. 43 r. iv 6–7.

96 SAA 7, 154 ii’ 4’ 26 UDU *e-qu-te* GIBIL¹. The term is not translated by the editors of this text. But see in the glossary of the same volume on p. 211a: “an offering”.

97 Menzel 1981: no. 44 r. 2’ [x x x x x UZU.sil-q]u¹ ḥa-an-tu ep-[pal], “[The . . .] shall pro-[vide] hot [boi]lled [meat]”. The transliteration of the line diverges from that given in van Driel 1969: 202, ND 1120 r.2’.

maškitte), once submitted to the god was to be thrown into the river.⁹⁸ At the beginning of the text there are references to animals, probably to be identified as rams, which were transported in large carts (*qirsī dannūti*) from the governor's residence to the place of sacrifice and slaughtered on the altar on the 21st day of a month whose name is not preserved in the text.⁹⁹ Interestingly, we are also informed about the transport of sacrificial animals through two Nineveh offering lists: these texts show that the transport of offerings for the temple in Assur was made by means of chariots (*mugirru*).¹⁰⁰ Of the meat presented in the ceremony, the boiled meat offered to Šamaš is assigned to the royal scribe,¹⁰¹ while the intestines constitute the cook's allowance.¹⁰² The practice of throwing previously offered meat cuts to bodies of water is also documented in iconography: one of the bronze bands of the gates of the temple of Imgur-Ellil (modern Balawāt) shows an offering scene which appears to be associated to the installation of a stele in one of the mountain regions reached by Shalmaneser III (858–824 BCE) during his campaigns.¹⁰³ The long procession of people taking part in the ceremony includes a priest who takes two calves and four rams to the place of sacrifice. The actual action of sacrifice is not illustrated,¹⁰⁴ but we see that two soldiers are depicted in the act of throwing some meat cuts resulting from the sacrifice of the calves and the sheep to the fish and a strange creature of Lake Urmia.

It is well known that the sacrifice of ovines was common practice in Assyrian royal rituals. To quote just a few additional instances, sheep offerings were performed before Nabû, Bēlat-šarri, Bēr, Uraš and Kutatāti in the temple of the Assyrian Ištar in Nisannu;¹⁰⁵ in a victory ritual involving the triumphal entry of the king into the camp and the *qirsu* place;¹⁰⁶ in the *nāṭu*-ritual for Ištar, during which the sheep offering for Aššur is accompanied by the feeding of the *šīpu* before the goddess or the bed (*maiālu*);¹⁰⁷ and in the *tākultu*-ritual performed by the king before the stars.¹⁰⁸ Sacrificial sheep were also presented on the occasion of ritual ablutions. In one text we find a description of a ritual bath

98 van Driel 1969: 202, ND 1120 r.10⁷–11⁷.

99 van Driel 1969: 202, ND 1120: 7.

100 SAA 7, 193 r. 2; 212 r. 14.

101 van Driel 1969: 202, ND 1120 r. 12⁷.

102 van Driel 1969: 202, ND 1120 r. 14⁷.

103 Schachner 2007: 293, pl. 1 (below) and 309, pl. 17a (BM 124662). See also Reade 2005: 14 and fig. 8.

104 The sacrifice of a calf is depicted in another bronze band of the temple gates. See Schachner 2007: 342, pl. 50b, Reade 2005: 14 and fig. 9 (BM 124656), and SAA 12: fig. 11 for details. The two registers of this band depict a ram and a calf being driven forward to the sacrificial place in mountain scenery. In the upper register the calf is on the ground while three soldiers hold its legs with ropes and a fourth man is going to slaughter it, or dissect its carcass.

105 Menzel 1981: no. 50: 3–5.

106 Menzel 1981: no. 41 r. 20⁷.

107 Menzel 1981: no. 45 ii 16 *pa-an*^d_{INNIN} *ši-pu* ^r*ú-šá*[-*kal*], *ibid.*, ii 18–9 *pa-an ma-a*[-*a-li*] / *ši-pu* ^r*ú-šá*[-*kal*].

108 Menzel 1981: no. 54 xii 12⁷–13⁷ (Meinhold 2009: 399, text no. 13k + 543–4). A Middle Assyrian document lists 15 sheep which were assigned for the *tākultu*-ritual of Nineveh. See Postgate 1988: 161, no. 65: 1–5.

(*rinku*),¹⁰⁹ once the ablution is performed, a sheep is sacrificed.¹¹⁰ Although this text designates the sacrificial sheep with the term *niqiu*, “sacrifice, offering”, it is reasonable to think that they are to be identified with the ablution sheep (*immeru rimku*) of the Aššur Temple offering lists.¹¹¹ However, no indications can be found concerning the sacrifice of pigs, if we exclude a reference in the composition called “the Marduk Ordeal”. According to this text, which would, however, reflect Babylonian religious practices,¹¹² a pig was slaughtered before the “Lady of Babylon” (*Bēlet Bābili*) on the eighth day of Nisannu.¹¹³ In the same text, marinated roasted meat (*šubê labakti*) was presented to Bēl.¹¹⁴

Culinary treatment, presentation, and manipulation of the sacrificial meat

The relationship between cooking procedures and recipients of the offerings: boiled and roasted meat cuts

Some attestations in Assyrian ritual texts show that a distinction between different ways of cooking sacrificial meat (*salāqu*, “to boil”,¹¹⁵ vs. *šamû*, “to roast”¹¹⁶) was at work in cultic practice. Further, this custom was deep-rooted in other religious traditions of the Ancient Near East. In Anatolia, for instance, sacrificial meat cuts were offered by boiling them in a pot or by roasting them with direct exposure to the fire.¹¹⁷ Unlike Assyrian texts, Hittite texts specify which meat cuts were usually boiled and which were roasted.¹¹⁸ In this regard, it has been suggested that the cooking procedure was probably determined by the anatomic nature of the meat cuts,¹¹⁹ but a look at Assyrian religious evidence shows that the destination of the meat offering was a decisive element in choosing the appropriate cooking procedure in the majority of cases. In rituals for Ištar, for example, the offering of meat differs according to the recipients: boiled meat (*silqu/salqu*) is presented to Aššur, while roasted meat (*šubê/šumê*) is placed in front of Ištar¹²⁰ or another female deity (e.g. Šarrat-šadê).¹²¹ In the *nāṭu*-ritual for Kulili (or Kulittu?),¹²² the king’s

109 ABL 864 + 82-5-22, 162: 4, 6. Cf. CAD N/II: 256b s.v. *niqû* b 9’b’; R: 357a s.v. *rimku* 2 b. The text is defined as a “cultic ritual” in Luukko 2004: 207 fn. 53.

110 ABL 864 + 82-5-22, 162: 6–9 TA* UGU *ri-in-ki*¹ / *ú-ša-a* / UDU.SISKUR.MEŠ / *i-na-saḫ*, “After the washing ritual he [= the king] goes out [and] makes sacrifices”. See CAD R: 357a.

111 SAA 7, 193: 6; 209: 6; 210: 8; 211: 11; 212: 8; 214: 2’.

112 See SAA 3: xxix.

113 SAA 3, 34: 44.

114 SAA 3, 35: 26. See also SAA 3, 34: 50.

115 CAD S: 92b.

116 CAD Š: 350a.

117 Mouton 2007: 86–7.

118 Mouton 2007: 87–8.

119 Mouton 2007: 87.

120 van Driel 1969: 194, A 127: 16’; Menzel 1981: no. 45 ii 21–2.

121 Menzel 1981: no. 46: 13’–14’.

122 See Menzel 1981: no. 45 ii 12, which transliterates the theonym ^d*ku-li-[ta-na-te]* on the basis of a comparison with KAR 214 ii 26’ ^d*ku-lit-ta-na-a-te*. Kulili occurs in Menzel 1981: no. 58 iii 4 (Meinhold 2009: 385, text no. 13: 119) and Menzel 1981: no. 64: 79

offering is executed in the “bedroom”¹²³ and consists not only of sheep, but also boiled and roasted meat cuts; the boiled meat is for Aššur, the roasted meat for Ištar and the bed.¹²⁴ In the preceding lines of the same passage, the bed is mentioned as the place in front of which the king feeds the *šīpu*, presumably through the meat of the sheep offered.¹²⁵ The bed as the place of rituals occurs in another text concerning the cult of Ištar,¹²⁶ as well as in a text describing a ritual for the “Daughter of the River” (*Mar’at nāri*).¹²⁷ It is not clear what was indicated by the word *šīpu*,¹²⁸ but we cannot rule out the possibility that it is a divinized object which needed to be fed and honoured by the presentation of offerings. From what we see from the rituals for Ištar, the feeding of the *šīpu* takes place before the goddess¹²⁹ or the bed.¹³⁰ In Mesopotamia, beds of the gods were considered divine entities themselves, since they form a part of the nature of the divine couple with which they are associated. Some temples had special rooms equipped with beds for divine couples, as in the case of the “bedroom” (*bēt erši*) of Nabû and Tašmētu in the Nabû temple at Kalḫu (modern Nimrud). An Urdu-Nabû’s letter reminds the king of the entry of Nabû and Tašmētu into the bedroom on the fourth day of Ayyāru, and the offerings to be performed in that place.¹³¹ It is possible that the food substances that the author of this letter intends to bring to the bedroom¹³² and present as offerings for the ritual of the sacred marriage for the benefit of members of the king’s family were destined not only for the divine couple, but also for the actual bed of the two gods. Moreover, during Middle and Neo-Assyrian times the Ancient Mesopotamian custom of the creation and donation of beds to the gods from the kings is well attested in Assyria, as witnessed by the donation of beds from Aššurnāširpal I to Ištar, Sennacherib to Aššur, and Assurbanipal to Marduk.¹³³ That the beds of the gods were considered to be divine in nature, and that they should be honoured with the food offerings which were commonly destined to the gods is also evident from a letter of Ṭāb-šār-Aššur to Sargon II, in which the state treasurer informs

(Meinhold 2009: 435, text no. 15); Kulittu in Menzel 1981: no. 54 vii 28’ (Meinhold 2009: 392, text no. 13e + 349).

123 Menzel 1981: no. 45 ii 11 LUGAL *a-na ma-a-a-li’ e’-[ra-ab]*.

124 Menzel 1981: no. 45 ii 21–5.

125 Menzel 1981: no. 45 ii 17–9.

126 van Driel 1969: 194, A 127: 3’, 4’, 5’. The offering of an ox (*alpu*) in connection with a bed is mentioned in a Middle Assyrian document from the reign of Ninurta-tukul-Aššur, see Weidner 1935–36: no. 89: 5–6.

127 KAR 141: 9–13, 15 (Ebeling 1931: 86–90). See also *ibid.*, r. 16.

128 In Akkadian there are two homophonous terms, but it is not clear whether the word attested in the Assyrian ritual text refers to one of these terms, or has a different meaning. The word *šīpu* designates both a fabric and a mineral (a salt variety?), see CAD S: 205a s.v. *šīpu* A 3: “a dyed fabric (or an article of clothing)”; *ibid.*, 205b s.v. *šīpu* B: “a mineral”.

129 van Driel 1969: 194, A 127: 7’; Menzel 1981: no. 45 i 5, ii 16.

130 Menzel 1981: no. 45 ii 18–19.

131 SAA 13, 56: 15–r. 2.

132 SAA 13, 56 r. 12–3 *ina* *pa-an* ^d_{PA} ^d*taš-me-[tum]* / *ina* É—GIŠ.[NÁ] *e-pa-á[š]*.

133 Porter 2006: 314–5.

the king of the execution of regular offerings (*dariu*) of sheep in front of a bed belonging to a Babylonian god which he was transporting by river in the direction of Assur.¹³⁴

Returning to the distinction of the meat offered according to the type of cooking, what we observed above about the offering of roasted meat to Ištar in the ritual for Ištar and Kulili is confirmed in an administrative text from Nineveh, where meat cuts destined for several deities are enumerated. From the preserved lines of the tablet, we see that the roasted meat was destined for Ištar, while the (raw or boiled?) breast was the part due to Aššur, Mullissu and another deity.¹³⁵ Instead, the data provided by the Nineveh lists of offerings for the Šabātu-Addāru cultic period show a different picture, since the *rēšāti* offerings also included breasts (*irtu*) of roasted sheep.¹³⁶ In the ritual for Ištar and Kulili, the opposition is not only between boiled meat and roasted meat, but also between boiled meat, presumably intended for Assur, and the rib cut (*šēlu*).¹³⁷ If the parallel with the *salqu* vs. *šubē* opposition is accepted, the rib cut too, which we suppose to have been the offering for the goddess, was probably treated through roasting procedure.

In a second moment of the ritual, we see another case of manipulation of the offering meat. The offering of roasted meat made by the king consists of the front part of a neck cut (*pānāt kišādi*), that the king pierces with an iron knife and offers to Lisikutu, while the singer intones the cultic song “Let them eat the roasted meat, the roasted meat, the roasted meat!”¹³⁸ The animal from which this cut derived is not stated in the text. From a schedule for the distribution of offered meat cuts, we see that the front part of the neck was a cut of bovine meat,¹³⁹ but a list enumerating *qinnītu*-offerings of the queen for the month of Du’ūzu informs us that the god (Li)sikutu received both calves and sheep.¹⁴⁰ After the feeding of Lisikutu, the king throws the pierced neck cut into a pit (*apu*),¹⁴¹ where he had previously poured blood, honey, oil, beer, and wine.¹⁴² The ritual also requires the presentation of a francolin (*tatidūtu*),¹⁴³ but it is not clear whether it entered the composition of the offerings or, alternatively, the meal which was served to the king on the occasion of this ritual.¹⁴⁴ The last offering of meat with which the king feeds Lisikutu, consists of a foreleg (*durā’u*), presumably of a sheep. This meat cut is presented to

134 SAA 1, 55: 13’-r.1 UD.MEŠ šá GIŠ.NÁ ina šā-bi-ni UDU.da-^rri¹-ú / ina IGI ^ri’-[n]a-su-ḫu.

135 SAA 7, 158: 4’-7’ [UZU.ŠU]-bē-e ša pa-an^d1[5 (x x)] / [(x) x U]ZU.GABA ša pa-an^daš-šur T[AR² (x x)] / [UZU.GAB]A¹ ša pa-an^dNIN.[LÍL] / [x x x x UZ]U¹.GABA ša IGI^d[x x x].

136 SAA 7, 190: 6-7; 194: 5-6; 195: 5; 201: 5-6; 206: 5-6.

137 Menzel 1981: no. 45 i 21-2 [pa-an aš-šur UZ]U.síl-qu ep-pal / [pa-an^dINNIN UZ]U.TI ep-pal.

138 Menzel 1981: no. 45 r. iii 13’-19’. See CAD Š/III: 297b.

139 SAA 12, 81 ii 6’.

140 SAA 7, 175: 5, 14, r.1, 9.

141 Menzel 1981: no. 45 r. iii 21’.

142 Menzel 1981: no. 45 r. iii 10’-12’.

143 Menzel 1981: no. 45 r. iv 12’ ki-i ta-ti-du-tu ú-še-ša-ni / LÚ.SANGA A.MEŠ a-na^dINNIN a-na LUGAL id-dan, “When the francolin is brought out, the priest gives water to Ištar and the king”.

144 See Menzel 1981: no. 45 r. iv 6’ zu-ma-ru i-ka-šá-da / LUGAL i-na nap-te-ni uš-šab / GIŠ. BANŠUR pa-an LUGAL i-šá-ku-nu / nap-ta-an-šu ú-ga-mar, “When the song reaches [its

the god upon the bread on the table.¹⁴⁵ In this case, the offering is accompanied by a song; when the song reaches its conclusion, the king lifts the meat cut, throws it into the pit, and pours libation liquids on it.¹⁴⁶ In another ritual for Ištar, the offering of meat to the goddess requires the presentation of specific meat cuts upon the *ḫuḫḫurtu*-bread, namely the head, the feet and the shoulder,¹⁴⁷ in all likelihood taken from the sacrificed sheep.¹⁴⁸ Other cuts offered derive from ribs,¹⁴⁹ nine of which are cut and placed upon the terrace,¹⁵⁰ roasted meat,¹⁵¹ and fetlocks (*kursinnu*).¹⁵² The practice of presenting meat upon bread characterizes other Assyrian rituals, as we shall see below. In the ritual for the “Lady of the Mountain”, two rams are sacrificed, one to Aššur(?), the other to the “Lady of the Mountain”.¹⁵³ Then, meat is distributed depending on the type of cooking: the boiled meat to Aššur, the roasted to the goddess.¹⁵⁴ In this case, however, the goddess also receives boiled meat.¹⁵⁵ As regards boiled meat, it is interesting to note that a text concerning a ritual for the singers mentions the offering of *salqāni*:¹⁵⁶ the plural form is never used with the term *silqu/salqu* and in this case the single cuts of the boiled meat were certainly intended by *salqāni*. In both the ritual for the Šarrat-šadê and that for Ištar discussed above, the meat offering consists of the presentation of ribs on the terrace: in fact, a rib is placed in this place before the god Sibitti.¹⁵⁷ It is useful to remind readers that in one of the prophetic texts relating to Aššur’s covenant with Esarhaddon, the offering for the gods consists of a cut or a slice placed on the terrace located immediately outside the cellar of Aššur.¹⁵⁸ Although the name of the substance appears broken on the tablet, the association of *ḫirṣu* with the terrace leads us to suppose that with the term *ḫirṣu* we mean a type of meat cut which was analogous to those reported in the rituals cited above. Other attestations about the offering of ribs along with other meat cuts may be found in the ritual for the “Daughter of the River”, in which the penitent(?) (*bēl palluḫi*)¹⁵⁹ presents boiled meat, a left shoulder (*šumēlu*), and a rib.¹⁶⁰

conclusion], the king sits down for the meal. The table is placed in front of the king and he finishes his meal”.

145 Menzel 1981: no. 45 r. iv 20’–22’.

146 Menzel 1981: no. 45 r. iv 24’–27’.

147 van Driel 1969: 194, A 127: 8’, 17’.

148 See van Driel 1969: 194, A 127: 6’.

149 van Driel 1969: 194, A 127: 12’, 13’.

150 van Driel 1969: 194, A 127: 13’.

151 van Driel 1969: 194, A 127: 16’.

152 van Driel 1969: 194, A 127: 20’.

153 Menzel 1981: no. 46: 8’–9’.

154 Menzel 1981: no. 46: 13’–14’.

155 Menzel 1981: no. 46: 23’.

156 BBR 61 r.(?)13.

157 Menzel 1981: no. 46: 19’.

158 SAA 9, 3 iii 2 *ina* UGU [*tam-l*]e-e *ḫi-ir*’-š[*u*¹ x x x].

159 On this term, whose reading is uncertain (EN SIPA-*ḫi* or EN *pa-lu-ḫi*?), see CAD P: 49a s. v. *palāḫu* and AEAD: 79b: “worshipper(?), penitent(?)”.

160 KAR 141 r. 5–7 (Ebeling 1931: 86–90).

A few texts mention another kind of meat offering called *qiršu*: this designation indicated a type of meat cut and an offering.¹⁶¹ According to a ritual text for singers, it was served in *kallu*-bowls.¹⁶² The offering of *qiršu*, a small amount corresponding to three litres, is mentioned along with sheep meat in Adad-nerari III's decree in favour of the Aššur Temple: the association with sheep seems to indicate that the *qiršu* was a cut of sheep meat.¹⁶³ Another occurrence of the word is attested in a fragmentary list of offerings which also mentions mutton.¹⁶⁴ For the offering of *qiršu*, *kallu*-containers were used as well as the *kappu*-bowls, as is evident from an inventory text from Nimrud listing vessels and utensils for cultic use.¹⁶⁵ It is interesting to observe that in this text the *kappu*-bowls are also associated with generic meat cuts (*nishāni*).¹⁶⁶

Another interesting example of the offering of roasted meat may be found in the ceremony for the banquet of Gula. The first meat offering of the ritual consists of a grilled ram (*iābilu gabbubu*), which was placed on a basket of oil-bread on an offertory table.¹⁶⁷ Unlike the other attestations of roasted meat, here the term used to qualify the ram is not *šubê*, but *gabbubu*. The word occurs only in association with sheep meat and is generally connected to the verb *gabbubu*, "to grill" (D), which is derived from *g/kabābu* "to burn" (G).¹⁶⁸ In the offering lists from Nineveh, the term used to designate the roasted meat of sheep is always *šubê*, not *gabbubu*. The attestations of the word *gabbubu* in administrative texts of the Neo-Assyrian age appear to be limited to three lists of foods, two of which concern dishes served in palatine banquets, while the third one lists food contributions delivered by state officials for temple offerings. In all of these attestations, the designation *gabbubu* occurs in sections dealing with ovine meat.¹⁶⁹ The animals slaughtered for the divine banquet are one ox and

- 161 For the meaning of the term, see AHw: 918a, s.v. *qeršu* 5: "ein Gebäck"; CAD Q: 270a, s.v. *qiršu* A: "a piece of trimmed meat or dough"; CDA: 288b, s.v. *qeršu* I: "strip of meat; a kind of bread or pastry"; AEAD: 88b, s.v. *qiršu*: "trimmings". The word is not translated either in SAA 12: 79, 139a, or in SAA 11: 39, although in the glossary of SAA 11, p. 166b, it is defined as "a type of bread".
- 162 BBR 66: 17. Cf. CAD Q: 270a.
- 163 SAA 12, 71: 9 1 UDU *a-na kim-ri* 1 UDU *ep-šu* 3 *qa qir-š[i² x x x]*, "One sheep for the *kimru*-offering, one prepared sheep, three litres of *qiršu*"; *ibid.*, 12 1 ¹UDU¹ *š[i¹ giš bar² du¹ a-na* IGI KUŠ.maš-[*ki-ri x*] ¹x x² *a-na qir-še* [*x x x x x*], "one sheep . . . before the win [skins, . . .]. for *qiršu* [. . .]."
- 164 SAA 11, 47: 2²-5⁷ [*x x x x x*] ¹UZU⁷ *ša* 2 UDU.N[ITÁ.MEŠ *x x x x*] / [*x x x ak-l*]i *dan-ni* 2 UDU [*x x x x*] / [*x x x zid.D*]A *hi-in-¹hi²-n*[*i x x x x*] / [*x x x x*] *qir-še* x[*x x x x x x*], "[. . .] meat of two r[ams . . . , . . . x] big [loav]es, two sheep [. . . , . . .] *hi¹hi²nu*-[flo]ur [. . . , . . .] *qiršu* .. [. . .]".
- 165 Parker 1961: 33 and pl. XVII, ND 2490 + 7, r. 3. Perhaps, another *kappu*-bowl for *qiršu* was mentioned in line 21 of this text.
- 166 Parker 1961: 33 and pl. XVII, ND 2490 + 22.
- 167 Menzel 1981: no. 49A: 14²-15⁷ (Meinhold 2009: 357, text no. 10) [(x) x]¹ *ina* IGI *i-tar-aš ak-li ša* ¹i².GIŠ⁷.MEŠ *ina* UGU GIŠ.sa-li *i-ra-[kas]* / [UDU.NITÁ]¹ *ga-bu-bu ina* UGU-*hi* GAR-an *ina* UGU-*hi* GIŠ.BANŠUR⁷ GAR-an. The grilled ram is also mentioned in *ibid.*, 18⁷ UDU.NITÁ *ga-bu-bu ina* UGU [GIŠ.BANŠUR⁷]. Meinhold's transliteration of these lines diverges from mine, which is adapted from that given by Menzel.
- 168 See AHw: 272b; CAD G: 117b; CDA: 87b; AEAD: 29a.
- 169 SAA 7, 151 ii⁷ 10-15 10 [UDU 10 NIM *kab-bur*] / 10 :. [10 NIM *šar-ḥu-te-šú*] / 10 :. [*tak-bar*] / 10 :. s[*i-sal-ḥi*] / 10 :. *gab-[bu-bu]* / [10⁷] :. *ḥal-[lam]*; SAA 7, 154 ii⁷ 6²-11⁷ 10

three rams,¹⁷⁰ but the entire meat offering comprises four spring lambs and five ducks (*iššūru rabiū*) which had to be presented along with bread, cakes and fruit in the Gula temple in the morning.¹⁷¹ Finally, another culinary preparation which is mentioned in the ritual consists of parched grain which had to be added to the bouillon (*mê-šīri*).¹⁷² In another text concerning the arrangement of a ritual, the offering consists of roasted meat¹⁷³ and one *kimru*-sheep.¹⁷⁴ The ceremony also requires a combustion offering, but the animal to be sacrificed varies according to the social status of the donor: in case of a prince, the offering consists of a turtledove (*sukanninu*), in case of a poor man it is limited to the heart of a ram (*libbi iābili*).¹⁷⁵

Birds in meat offerings

The evidence presented above clearly shows that the meat offerings for Assyrian cultic practice consisted principally of sheep and calves. However, birds (geese, ducks and turtledoves) are also recorded in the Nineveh lists of offerings for the Aššur Temple.¹⁷⁶ A further list of offerings, probably of Neo-Assyrian origin,¹⁷⁷ confirms this. The meat offering consists of birds, sheep and bulls;¹⁷⁸ these animals were assigned to various deities according to the schema shown in Table 3.

Unlike the divine couple Nabû and Tašmētu, all gods received birds as offerings; the gods Bēr, Bēl-šarri, Ištar of Arbela, Bēlet-balāti, Šamaš, Bēlet-paršē and Bānītu receive one bird each. The obverse of the tablet is only partly readable, but we presume that other birds were listed in this part of the text, since the

-
- UDU 10 NIM *kab-bur* / 10 UDU 10 NIM *šar-ḥu¹-te-šú* / 5 UDU *tak-bar* / 5 :. *si¹-sal¹-ḥi¹* / 5 :. *gab-bu-bu* / 5 :. *ḥal¹-lam¹*; SAA 7, 159 i 2–6 2 UDU. NIM¹ *kab-bur* / 1 UDU 1 UDU. NIM¹ 1 MUŠEN¹—GAL¹-u¹ 10 TU.GUR₄.MUŠEN *ḥal-lam* / 2 UDU *si-sal-ḥi* / 2 UDU *gab-bu-bu*.
- 170 Menzel 1981: no. 48: 6’.
- 171 Menzel 1981: no. 48: 15’–16’.
- 172 Menzel 1981: no. 49B: 9’ (Meinhold 2009: 356, text no. 10) [x x x x x] [x’ ša ŠE.SA.A ina A.MEŠUZU *i-ḥa-bi*. Perhaps, in the broken part at the beginning of the line, there was the name of the container in which the grain was placed, presumably *pāširtu*, which is mentioned in BBR 67: 10 and BBR 68: 15 as a container of barley and parched grain, or *kallu*, which occurs in the funerary ritual (von Soden 1939: 42 r.5) in association with parched grain. For a different proposal, see Menzel 1981: T107, who restores the line as *ak-lī¹ ša ŠE.SA.A ina A.MEŠ—UZU i-ḥa-bi-’u¹*, “Brote aus Röstkorn werden in Fleischbrühe aufgeweicht”. In Meinhold’s edition of the text, the line is now rendered as [x x] [x x’ [(x)] x-šī¹’ ša ŠE.SA.A ina A.MEŠ—UZU *i-ḥa-bi(-)’u¹*”, “[...] ... [(...)] ... aus¹ Röstkorn weicht er/weichen sie¹ in Fleischbrühe ein [...]”.
- 173 Menzel 1981: no. 51: 17’. Sacrifices of sheep are mentioned in *ibid.*, 15’, 16’.
- 174 Menzel 1981: no. 51 r. 3.
- 175 Menzel 1981: no. 51 r. 6–7.
- 176 SAA 7, 188: 9; 189: 6; 190: 8–10; 192: 9; 194: 9; 196: 2’–3’; 198: 9–10; 199: 5’; 200: 4’; 201: 7; 203: 6; 206: 9–10; 207: 5; 208: 5; 209: 7–8; 210: 9; 211: 12; 212: 10; 213: 5; 214: 5’; 216: 5; 218: 1’. A duck was also presented to the mausoleum (*bēt kimahḥi*) of Assur, see SAA 7, 197: 6.
- 177 In CAD N/II: 255b s.v. *niqū* b 8’ the text is attributed to the Middle Assyrian period, while in CAD Š/I: 478a s.v. *šappatu* b it is quoted among the Neo-Assyrian documents. In Menzel 1981: T22 the text is included in the section of Neo-Assyrian texts. For a Neo-Assyrian attribution, see most recently Meinhold 2009: 363.
- 178 Meinhold 2009: 363, text no. 11: 5–r. 8, 14. But note that in *ibid.* e.16 mention is made of U[z²².MEŠ], “g[oats(?)].”

Table 3. Distribution of various sacrificial animals among deities

Birds	Sheep	Bulls	Recipients
4 [?]	—	—	Mullissu
[...]	—	—	Aššur
[...]	—	—	Kutatāti
2	—	—	Bēr (and) Bēl-šarri
1	—	—	Ištar of Arbela
1	—	—	Bēlet-balāṭi
3	—	—	Šamaš, Bēlet-parṣē (and) Bānītu
—	3	1	Nabû
—	3	1	Tašmētu

total given on the reverse corresponds to fifteen birds.¹⁷⁹ This total includes the four(?) birds presumably destined for Mullissu.

Boiled and roasted cuts, meat with bread, and meat-based soups: types of cuts and occasions of ritual consumption

The picture concerning meat offerings of the Neo-Assyrian period may be completed by the data provided from a long record of ritual practices and offerings, possibly dating back to the reign of Assurbanipal (668–631? BCE).¹⁸⁰ On the 13th day of Ayyāru, the king performed sheep sacrifices, presented boiled meat and a fattened sheep (*takbāru*), and burned a young she-goat.¹⁸¹ After a ritual song, two neck cuts (of the sacrificed sheep) are placed on the bread offered.¹⁸² The mention of *takbāru*-sheep in the context of the *akītu*-celebrations shows that the sacrifice of such a category of ovines was not limited to the Šabātu-Addāru offerings.¹⁸³ The association of cooked meat and bread requires some consideration. The meat cuts which were presented along with bread in Assyrian ritual practice are: the forelegs;¹⁸⁴ the head and the feet;¹⁸⁵ the shoulder, the head and the feet;¹⁸⁶ neck cuts (of sheep);¹⁸⁷ and unspecified cuts of sheep.¹⁸⁸ The bread used in the case of the offering of head, feet, shoulder and for ovine

179 Meinhold 2009: 363, text no. 11 r. 6 PAB 15 MUŠEN.MEŠ.

180 For a discussion of the date of this text, see Menzel 1981: T69–70. An evaluation of the content of the text is given in van Driel 1969: 74–9.

181 Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. vi 23'–27'.

182 Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. vi 33'–34' 2 UZU.GÚ.MEŠ *ina* ŠÀ [x x x] / ŠA NINDA.MEŠ *i-šak-ku-nu*. The broken part at the end of the line 33' could be integrated by an occurrence of the term *sallu*, “basket”, *i.e.* [GIŠ.sa-li]. If this reconstruction is accepted, the meat cuts would have been placed into (*ina libbi*) the basket of bread. For a comparison, see Menzel 1981: no. 49A: 14'–15' (Meinhold 2009: 357, text no. 10), where a *sallu*-basket holding oil-bread on which a grilled ram was placed is mentioned.

183 For these offerings, see the lists in SAA 7, 189: 6; 196: 2'; 203: 4; 209: 5; 210: 7; 211: 9; 212: 8; 213: 5.

184 Menzel 1981: no. 45 r. iv 20'–21'.

185 van Driel 1969: 194, A 127: 8'.

186 van Driel 1969: 194, A 127: 17'.

187 Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. vi 33'–34'.

188 Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. x 37'.

meat in general is the *hulḫurtu* variety.¹⁸⁹ To these attestations we may also add one referring to a grilled ram placed in a basket containing loaves of oil-bread (*aklī ša šamni*).¹⁹⁰ This way of presenting cooked meat parts may also have characterized the secular meals commonly served in the palatine banquets.¹⁹¹ Evidence for the association of bread with cooked meat may also be found in Middle Assyrian texts: a document recording amounts of wheat bread, some of which appear to be associated to temple offerings, explicitly mentions a quantity of bread in connection with boiled meat (*ana salqi*).¹⁹² Further evidence may be found on the iconographical level. In a scene of the relief D, room S', of the North Palace in Nineveh we see Assurbanipal in the act of libating over some lions killed during a royal hunt.¹⁹³ The food offering requires the presentation of flat bread and meat cuts on a table. According to the interpretations of the scholars, the meat cuts, which are contained in a large flat-based bowl, are to be identified with a shoulder, fatty tissue and roasted meat,¹⁹⁴ or with the jaw and the leg of a ram.¹⁹⁵ The representation of a ram's meat cut on a bundle of flatbread may be observed in a relief from Nineveh from the age of Sennacherib.¹⁹⁶

Let us now return to our record of religious practices and offerings. This text records the queries addressed to the god and the relevant responses about the execution of given ritual actions. Regarding the offering of calves and sheep on the brazier of the Aššur Temple, to be performed along with the sheep offerings of the months of Šabātu and Addāru, the response to the query is not favourable and, consequently, this meat has to be presented in the offering of the evening with the boiled meat.¹⁹⁷ A different query, not preserved in the text, must be intended in a passage concerning the presentation to Aššur of an ox tail which had not been submerged (*lā šīpu*) in the bouillon, and which was presumably prepared in a temple cauldron.¹⁹⁸ Other queries concern various (meat-based?) culinary preparations, as well as the burnt offerings on the censers of Aššur, Mullissu, and Šērū'a.¹⁹⁹ Unlike what we observed above on boiled meat destined for Aššur, the goddess Šērū'a too could receive the offering of *salqu*.²⁰⁰ Another extispicy, whose response is favourable, concerns the omission of the offering of boiled meat from sacrifices made by the king.²⁰¹ A section of the text is devoted to

189 van Driel 1969: 194, A 127: 8', 17'; Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. x 37'.

190 Menzel 1981: no. 49A: 15' (Meinhold 2009: 357, testo n. 10). Cf. also *ibid.* 18'.

191 For a possible analogy between this way of presenting meat and the mutton-based dishes called *parcha* in the culinary tradition of present-day Iraq, see Ellison 1984: 93.

192 Aynard and Durand 1980: 46, no. 12: 11–2 1 *qa* NINDA.GIG *a-na pa-ni* / ¹U—MU *ša ú-ri a-na sa-al-qi*, "One litre of wheat bread at the disposal of Adad-iddin(?), of the stable, for the boiled meat".

193 Barnett 1976: pl. 59 (WA 124886).

194 Maul 1994: 58.

195 Reade 2005: 23. Reade's interpretation was previously offered by Lambert (1993: 201).

196 Reade 2005: 17 and fig. 13.

197 Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. vii 44'–48'.

198 van Driel 1969: 92, BM 121206 r. viii 1'–2' UZU.⁷KUN⁷ x x x x x [x] / ina A.MEŠ—UZU *la ši-pu ina* 1G1 *aš-šur i-ša'-[kan]*. But see Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. viii 1', where the occurrence of the term *zibbutu* is rendered as UZU.⁷x x x x x⁷.

199 Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. viii 15', 16', 19', 30'–38'.

200 Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. ix 55', x 53'.

201 Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. ix 60'–62'.

the treatment of the censers used in celebrations in the *akītu*-temple.²⁰² The censers in question are those of Aššur, Mullissu, Šērū'a, Sîn, Šamaš, Anu and Adad. The disposition of the censers is precisely regulated: the censer of Mullissu goes in front of that of Aššur, that of Šērū'a beside that of Mullissu, and those of the other gods behind the fumigation censer of Aššur.²⁰³ Only for the god Aššur are two censers used: one for roasting meat cuts (*nishāni*) and the other for burning aromatic substances.²⁰⁴ The final section of the text includes a list of foods used as offerings. As far as meat is concerned, the list mentions the intestines, the stomach, the liver, the *qarrurtu*-organ, the head of a bull, bull tail joints and other cuts.²⁰⁵ These meat parts are qualified at the end of the list as being “whole (offerings) of the king's sons”.²⁰⁶ Another meat offering, consisting of five cuts of ovine meat,²⁰⁷ follows the listing part dealing with the offerings for the *quršu* of Mullissu. The presence of the internal organs of a bull, e.g. stomach and liver, also characterizes the composition of the *rēšāti*-offerings recorded in the Nineveh offering lists.²⁰⁸ Further, both this record of religious practices and offerings and the Nineveh offering lists document the *quršu*-ceremony of the goddess Mullissu. At the end of the account of religious events, it mentions another important moment in the festive cycle of the eleventh and twelfth months of the Assyrian religious year: the entry of the god Aššur into the chapel of Dagan on the twenty-second day of Šabātu, and that of the chariot of the supreme Assyrian god on the following day.²⁰⁹ These two days are an integral part of the celebrations of the 22nd–26th days of Šabātu, during which the god Aššur visited the chapel of Dagan.²¹⁰ The 23rd day coincides with the event known as the “releasing of the feet” (*pašār ša šēpē*). Although the significance of this event in the frame of the Šabātu-Addāru celebrations is not understood, it is important to note that the same expression is used in Nergal-šarrāni's letter about the celebration of the sacred marriage of Nabû and Tašmētu. From the words of Nergal-šarrāni to the king we learn that on the eleventh day of Ayyāru the god Nabû left his bed-chamber and stretched his legs in order to go to the game park to hunt wild oxen.²¹¹ In all probability, this event corresponded to the “race of Nabû” (*lismu ša Nabû*) mentioned in a hymn of blessing for the city of Assur.²¹² A similar

202 Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. viii 22' *še-ḥa-a-ti šá ina a-ki-ti il-la-ka-ni*, “The censers that go to the *akītu*-temple”.

203 Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. viii 24'–29'.

204 Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. viii 23'–24' 2 *še-ḥa-a-te šá aš-šur 1 še-eh-tú nis'-ḥa'-ni' / 1 :: qu-ta-ri*. See *ibid.* T71: “eines dient für den Inzens, die Fumigationen, das andere als “Grill”, barbecue”.

205 Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. x 6'–12'.

206 van Driel 1969: 100, BM 121206 r. x 12' *šá NUMUN—MAN šal-mu*. Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. x 12', however, transliterates the line as 4 KUL MAN SAL MU, intended as an erroneous writing for *kursinnāti*, “fetlocks”.

207 Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. x 37' 5 UZU UDU.MEŠ.

208 SAA 7, 188: 4; 189: 4; 190: 3; 193: 4–5; 194: 3; 198: 2; 200: 1'; 201: 3; 203: 3; 206: 3; 207: 3; 208: 2; 209: 4; 210: 5; 211: 7; 212: 5–6; 213: 3; 219: 2'. The same cuts were presented at the mausoleum of Assur, see SAA 7, 197: 3.

209 Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. x 40'–43'.

210 Menzel 1981: T69.

211 SAA 13, 70 r. 1–4. See Nissinen 2001: 99.

212 SAA 3, 10 r.8.

exiting the bedchamber, with analogous stretching of the legs and subsequent royal hunt, must also have taken place in Šabātu: in fact, we know that the celebration of the *quršu* of Mullissu in Assur in the same month, and that of the sacred marriage of Nabû and his divine spouse in the Nabû temple of Kalḫu in Ayyāru were strictly connected. These two events served to establish the kingship and transfer the gods' favour and support to the Assyrian king.²¹³ A text similar to that discussed above²¹⁴ describes the entry of Aššur's chariot into the *akītu*-temple. The event takes place on the second day of Nisannu and comprises an offering of boiled meat to Aššur from the king and the entry of the chariot into the sanctuary, along with ritual songs, sacrifices and processions of (the statues of) the gods.²¹⁵ A second important moment described in the text concerns the *quršu* of Mullissu: more precisely, it mentions a bed and seven gods who visit the chapel of Dagan on the 22nd day of Šabātu.²¹⁶ It seems that for each of the days of this period of celebration a calf (*būru*) and a spring lamb (*ḫurāpu*) were sacrificed.²¹⁷ The sacrifice of an animal per day may be evaluated in the light of the Aššur Temple offerings of the Nineveh lists, according to which the offerings for the chapel of Dagan for the 4th, 22nd, 24th, and 25th days (of Šabātu) required the presentation of one ox per day; from this ox two cuts of shoulder were then taken.²¹⁸ On the same days the thigh (*pēmu*), the shoulder (*imittu*), and outer cuts (*nishāni*) of an unspecified number of other oxen were also presented.²¹⁹ On the occasion of the *quršu*-ceremony of Mullissu the offering also required one ox per day; this can be seen in the case of the 22nd and subsequent days of the month.²²⁰ On the same days, Mullissu also received the offering of a whole sheep (*immeru šalmu*) per day.²²¹ Finally, the duplicate of the above-mentioned record of cultic events and offerings includes the description of a series of sacrifices, regular offerings (*dariu*), and divine processions which were accompanied by kettledrums.²²² At the end of the singing part of the ceremony, an offering of boiled meat was made at the Aššur Temple.²²³ In addition, much of the meat destined for temple offerings was converted into culinary preparations of liquid consistency, such as soups and bouillons. We know, for example, that soups which were served at the divine meal on the occasion of the wedding night of Šarrat-nipḫa at Assur were prepared by adding boiled meat and the uncooked wings of an unknown

213 Nissinen 2001: 111–3.

214 Menzel 1981: T72.

215 Menzel 1981: no. 36A i 16'–ii 13'.

216 Menzel 1981: no. 36B ii 3'–17'.

217 Menzel 1981: no. 36B ii 21'–22'.

218 SAA 7, 189: 1–2; 209: 1–2; 210: 2; 211: 2; 212: 2. Two cuts of shoulder are also mentioned in the lists SAA 7, 188: 3; 190: 2; 194: 2; 198: 1; 201: 2; 203: 2; 206: 2; 207: 2; 213: 2; 219: 1', however, whether they belonged to an ox destined for the chapel of Dagan is not stated. The same number of shoulder cuts were also presented as offerings to the dead kings in the royal tombs of Assur, see SAA 7, 197: 2. Instead, in the case of the offering list SAA 7, 193: 3, the number of such cuts is unspecified.

219 SAA 7, 209: 1; 210: 1; 211: 2; 212: 1.

220 SAA 7, 210 r.2; 215: 9'; 216 r.1.

221 SAA 7, 209 e.20; 210 r.3; 215: 10'; 216 r.2.

222 Menzel 1981: no. 36B i 3'–13'.

223 Menzel 1981: no. 36B i 12'–13'.

bird (goose, duck, or turtledove?) to a cauldron.²²⁴ Soups and bouillons, which are documented in some of the royal rituals discussed above, were also peculiar to the temple offerings of the Middle Assyrian period. In fact, in an Assur list cited above, which enumerates various foods for the Assyrian gods, there are also *kallu*-bowls holding *ukultu*, the equivalent of the *akussu*-preparation of some centuries later.²²⁵ This substance is mentioned in sections of the text dealing with different culinary products, among which we also find the *saplišhu*-dish discussed above.²²⁶ The names of the gods who received the *saplišhu*-dish and the *ukultu*-soup are not preserved, except for that of the goddess Šērū'a.²²⁷ In any case, the association of the two substances, namely the soup and the *saplišhu*, must have been a peculiarity to the divine meal, since they also occur together in a cultic text of the Late Assyrian period.²²⁸

Conclusion

From our investigation of meat offerings in Assyrian state religion we observe that details of meat cuts are poorly represented in the Middle Assyrian evidence. However, from later texts we can form a more complete idea on the sacrificial animals and the various meat cuts which composed the god's meal. The most interesting element to emerge from the analysis concerns the differentiation in the cooking procedure (boiling vs. roasting) of the sacrificial meat in relationship to the divine recipient. After slaughter, the parts into which the sacrificial animal was cut were processed differently. Where more gods are involved, boiled meat is destined for Aššur (and other deities), while roasted parts go to Ištar (or to her manifestations). Roasting, carried out on braziers or censers, usually applied to young she-goats, rams, and various cuts, generally of ovine meat. However, we note that boiled meat was not presented exclusively to male deities, since it was also offered to Gula, Šērū'a and the "Lady of the Mountain". We do not know which religious concepts formed the basis of such a differentiation in cooking method, but it suffices here to say that the different treatment of the sacrificial meat was a factor in cases where there was the presence of a plurality of gods at the divine meal; in addition, it seems that the female character (of the goddess receiving the roasted offering and the animal which was roasted) seems to have played a role, albeit not in every ritual context: in the ritual of the *bēti ēqi* at least, we have observed that young she-goats for the goddess were regularly roasted on censers. Offerings of goat-kids are also attested in the royal rituals of Šabātu-Addāru and Nisannu, but the broken parts of the texts do not allow us to learn more about the divine recipients. Interestingly, elements which are peculiar to the goddess were associated with the offering of roasted meat, as witnessed by the offering performed in front of the bed. This differentiation of cooking method probably functioned also on a redistributive level: in light of

224 SAA 12, 68: 35–7.

225 MARV III, 16 i 22', ii 15', r. iv 20. For the word *ukultu/akussu*, see AHW: 30b, 1406a; CDA: 420a.

226 MARV III, 16 i 20', r. iv 19.

227 MARV III, 16 i 26'.

228 Menzel 1981: no. 35 r. viii 15'–16'.

roasted meats being mentioned among the cuts assigned as prebends to the priest of Šarrat-nipḫa and the priest of the *bēt ēqi* in an Assyrian decree for the temple of Šarrat-nipḫa,²²⁹ we may suppose that the difference in cooking procedure was strictly linked to the hierarchical system governing the redistribution of sacrificial meat cuts among the temple personnel and other people taking part in the ceremony. In addition, it is known that roasted meat deriving from the sheep offerings presented in Assur was then incorporated, in the form of “leftovers”, into the royal meals in Nineveh.²³⁰ The second point of interest concerns the presentation of the offering meat on bread: this way of presenting meat to the god included pieces of ovine meat (head, neck cuts, shoulder, forelegs, feet and unspecified cuts). Interestingly, no hint is given in the texts on the culinary treatment of these pieces, but it is clear that both types of offerings, i.e. the meat and the bread, consisted of products that required human activity in preparation for consumption; in fact, the slaughtering and butchering of the animal may be considered the equivalent of processing cereals into bread.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations not included in this list follow Wolfram von Soden. 1965. *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

AEAD = Simo Parpola and Robert M. Whiting. 2007. *Assyrian–English–Assyrian Dictionary*. Helsinki and Winona Lake: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.

CDA = Jeremy Black, Andrew George, and Nicholas Postgate. 2000². *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*. (Santag. Arbeiten und Untersuchungen zur Keilschriftkunde 5.) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

MARV I = Helmut Freydank. 1976. *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte*, I. Vorderasiatische Schrift Denkmäler der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin 19, Neue Folge 3. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

MARV II = Helmut Freydank. 1982. *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte*, II. Vorderasiatische Schrift Denkmäler der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin 21, Neue Folge 5. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

MARV III = Helmut Freydank. 1994. *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte*, III. Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 92. Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag.

MARV IV = Helmut Freydank and Claudia Fischer. 2001. *Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte*, IV: *Tafeln aus Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta*. Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 99. Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag.

SAA 3 = Alasdair Livingstone. 1989. *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea*. State Archives of Assyria 3. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.

SAA 7 = Frederick M. Fales and J. Nicholas Postgate. 1992. *Imperial Administrative Records, Part I: Palace and Temple Administration*. State Archives of Assyria 7. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.

229 SAA 12, 68: 10.

230 SAA 7, 190: 6–7; 194: 5–6; 198: 5–6; 201: 5–6; 203: 5; 206: 5–6.

- SAA 9 = Simo Parpola. 1997. *Assyrian Prophecies*. State Archives of Assyria 9. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
- SAA 11 = Frederick M. Fales and J. Nicholas Postgate. 1995. *Imperial Administrative Records, Part II: Provincial and Military Administration*. State Archives of Assyria 11. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
- SAA 12 = Laura Kataja and Robert Whiting. 1995. *Grants, Decrees and Gifts of the Neo-Assyrian Period*. State Archives of Assyria 12. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
- SAA 13 = Steven W. Cole and Peter Machinist. 1998. *Letters from Priests to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal*. State Archives of Assyria 13. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.

References

- Abusch, Tzvi. 2002. "Sacrifice in Mesopotamia", in Albert I. Baumgarten (ed.), *Sacrifice in Religious Experience*. (Studies in the History of Religions 93.) Leiden: Brill, 39–48.
- Aynard, Jeanne-Marie and Jean-Marie Durand. 1980. "Documents d'époque medio-assyrienne", *Assur* 3/1, 1–54.
- Barnett, Richard D. 1976. *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668–627 BC)*. London: British Museum Publications.
- van Driel, Govert. 1969. *The Cult of Aššur*. (Studia Semitica Neerlandica 13.) Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Ebeling, Erich. 1931. *Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellung der Babylonier*. Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter & Co.
- Ellison, Rosemary. 1984. "Methods of food preparation in Mesopotamia (c. 3000–600 BC)", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 27, 89–98.
- Finkelstein, Jacob J. 1953. "Cuneiform texts from Tell Billa", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 7, 112–76.
- Foxvog, Daniel A. 1989. "A manual of sacrificial procedure", in Hermann Behrens, Darlene Loding and Martha T. Roth (eds), *Dumu e₂-dub-ba-a. Studies in Honor of Åke W. Sjöberg*. (Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 11.) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum Publication, 167–76.
- Harrak, Amir. 1990. "La liste de vaisselle et de nourriture VAT 18046", *Altorientalische Forschungen* 17, 70–5.
- Joannès, Francis. 2000. "Le découpage de la viande en Mésopotamie", in Dominique Parayre and Marie-Françoise Boussac (eds), *Les animaux et les hommes dans le monde syro-mésopotamien aux époques historiques*. (Topoi Suppl. 2.) Lyon: Société des Amis de la Bibliothèque Salomon-Reinach, 333–45.
- Joannès, Francis. 2009. "Préparation et consommation de la viande à l'époque néo-babylonienne", in Cécile Michel (ed.), *L'alimentation dans l'Orient ancien, de la production à la consommation, Thème IX*. (Cahiers des thèmes transversaux d'ArScAn, vol. IX, 2007–2008.) Nanterre: Maison René-Ginouvès, 431–5.
- Köcher, Franz. 1952. "Ein mittelassyrisches Ritualfragment zum Neujahrsfest", *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 50, 192–202.
- Lambert, Wilfred G. 1993. "Donations of food and drink to the gods in Ancient Mesopotamia", in Jan Quaegebeur (ed.), *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the International Conference Organized by the Katholieke*

- Universiteit Leuven from the 17th to the 20th of April 1991*. (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 55.) Leuven: Peeters, 191–201.
- Luukko, Mikko. 2004. *Grammatical Variation in Neo-Assyrian*. (State Archives of Assyria 16.) Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.
- Maul, Stefan M. 1994. *Zukunftsbewältigung. Eine Untersuchung altorientalischen Denkens anhand der babylonisch-assyrischen Löserituale (Namburbi)*. (Baghdader Forschungen 18.) Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern.
- Maul, Stefan M. 2008. “Den Gott ernähren. Überlegungen zum regelmäßigen Opfer in altorientalischen Tempeln”, in Eftychia Stavrianopoulou, Axel Michaels and Claus Ambos (eds), *Transformations in Sacrificial Practices. From Antiquity to Modern Times. Proceedings of an International Colloquium, Heidelberg, 12–14 July 2006*. (Performenzen. Interkulturelle Studien zu Ritual, Spiel und Theater 15.) Berlin: LIT, 75–86.
- Meinhold, Wiebke. 2009. *Ištar in Aššur. Untersuchung eines Lokalkultes von ca. 2500 bis 614 v. Chr.* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 367.) Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.
- Menzel, Brigitte. 1981. *Assyrische Tempel*, I–II. *Studia Pohl*, Series Maior 10/1–2. Rome: Biblical Institute Press.
- Mouton, Alice. 2007. “Anatomie animale: le festin carné des dieux d’après les textes hittites III. Le traitement des viandes”, *Revue d’assyriologie et d’archéologie orientale* 101, 81–94.
- Müller, Karl F. 1937. *Das assyrische Ritual. Teil I: Texte zum assyrischen Königsritual*. (Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-Aegyptischen Gesellschaft 41/3.) Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs Verlag.
- Nissinen, Martti. 2001. “Akkadian rituals and poetry of divine love”, in Robert M. Whiting (ed.), *Mythology and Mythologies. Methodological Approaches to Intercultural Influences. Proceedings of the Second Annual Symposium of the Assyrian and Babylonian Intellectual Heritage Project. Held in Paris, France, October 4–7, 1999*. (Melammu Symposia 2.) Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 93–136.
- Parker, Barbara. 1961. “Administrative tablets from the north-west palace, Nimrud”, *Iraq* 23, 15–67.
- Parpola, Simo. 2004. “The leftovers of god and king. On the distribution of meat at the Assyrian and achaemenid courts”, in Cristiano Grottanelli and Lucio Milano (eds), *Food and Identity in the Ancient World*. (History of the Ancient Near East, Studies 9.) Padua: Sargon Editrice e Libreria, 281–312.
- Porter, Barbara N. 2006. “Feeding dinner to a bed: reflections on the nature of gods in Ancient Mesopotamia”, *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* 15, 307–31.
- Postgate, J. Nicholas. 1988. *The Archive of Urad-Šerūa and His Family. A Middle Assyrian Household in Government Service*. (Corpus Medio-Assiro 1.) Rome: Roberto De Nicola Editore.
- Reade, Julian. 2005. “Religious ritual in Assyrian sculpture”, in Barbara N. Porter (ed.), *Ritual and Politics in Ancient Mesopotamia*. (American Oriental Series 88.) New Haven: American Oriental Society, 7–61.
- Schachner, Andreas. 2007. *Bilder eines Weltreichs: kunst- und kulturgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu den Verzierungen eines Tores aus Balawat (Imgur-Enlil) aus der Zeit von Salmanassar III, König von Assyrien*. (Subartu 20.) Turnhout: Brepols Publishers.
- Shibata, Daisuke and Shigeo Yamada. 2009. “The cuneiform texts from the 2007 excavations at Tell Taban: a preliminary report”, in Hirotoshi Numoto (ed.), *Excavations at Tell Taban, Hassake, Syria. Preliminary Report on the 2007 Season of Excavations, and the Study of Cuneiform Texts*. Tokyo: Kokushikan University, 87–109.

- von Soden, Wolfram. 1939. "Aus einem Ersatzopferitual für den assyrischen Hof", *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 45, 42–61.
- Weidner, Ernst F. 1935–36. "Aus den Tagen eines assyrischen Schattenkönigs", *Archiv für Orientforschung* 10, 1–48.
- Wiggermann, Frans A.M. 2000. "Agriculture in the northern Balikh valley: the case of Middle Assyrian Tell Sabi Abyad", in Remko M. Jas (ed.), *Rainfall and Agriculture in Northern Mesopotamia (MOS Studies 3). Proceedings of the Third MOS Symposium (Leiden 1999)*. (Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul 88.) Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 171–231.