Al-Noor Journal for Digital Heritage and Cultural Preservation
Vol. 1, No. 2, 2026 (84 - 95)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.69513/jndh.v1.i2.a6

IRAQI Academic Scientific Journals

Al-Noor Journal for Digital Cultural Heritage

Naqīʾa/Zakūtu and Her Role in Managing the Succession Crisis and Constructing Legitimacy in the Neo-Assyrian Empire

A Historical-Analytical Study Based on Cuneiform Texts and Artistic Evidence

Eman Hani Salim

College of Archaeology, University of Mosul, Mosul, Iraq

Article information

Article history:
Received:12/4 / 2026
Accepted:19/6/2026
Published:29/7/2026

Keywords:
Naqīʾa/Zakūtu; Queen Mother; Esarhaddon; Ashurbanipal; royal legitimacy; Neo-Assyrian Empire; loyalty oaths; Queen's Household.

Correspondence:

Eman Hani Salim
eman.hani@uomosul.edu.iq

Abstract

This study examines Naqīʾa/Zakūtu, whose textual and political presence is attested approximately from the closing years of Sennacherib's reign to the beginning of Ashurbanipal's reign (c. 704–668 BCE), as one of the most prominent royal women of the Neo-Assyrian period. Her importance did not derive from family position alone. It also arose from her contribution to affirming royal descent and from her institutional and religious presence at two decisive moments in Sargonid history: Esarhaddon's accession after the assassination of Sennacherib, and the safeguarding of Ashurbanipal's succession after Esarhaddon's death.

The study begins with direct cuneiform evidence: the building inscription concerning Esarhaddon's palace at Nineveh; votive inscriptions recording objects presented to deities; the Zakūtu Treaty; the communication addressed to the Queen Mother among texts that record speech attributed to the gods; and correspondence sent by court scholars and priests. It then relates this textual dossier to the Louvre bronze plaque AO 20185, a rare sculpture that bears Naqīʾa's name and places her behind an Assyrian king in a scene of royal and religious significance (Figure 1).( )

The study neither presents Naqīʾa/Zakūtu as a ruling queen nor confines her to the private role of a mother within the palace. It argues instead that her authority was composite, formed through royal descent, the Queen's Household, votive acts, communications attributed to divine inspiration, oaths, and official sculpture. Her historical importance lies in the manner in which she operated within the structure of Assyrian government and made royal motherhood an instrument for producing legitimacy and protecting the succession.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.69513/jndh.v1.i2.a6, ©Authors, 2026, College of Art, Alnoor University.
This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Introduction

Naqīʾa/Zakūtu cannot be separated from the political system in which she emerged, or from the anxiety that accompanied transfers of power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire (911–612 BCE). From the ninth century BCE onward, Assyria developed into an imperial power extending across Mesopotamia and much of the ancient Near East. The royal household, the temple, the army, and

Al-Noor Journal for Digital Heritage and Cultural Preservation
Vol. 1, No. 2, 2026 (84 - 95)
IRAQI Academic Scientific Journals
DOI: https://doi.org/10.69513/jndh.v1.i2.a6

the administration formed interdependent elements, while divine approval supplied the ideological language through which the king's right to rule was expressed.(1)

Within such a system, royal kinship was never merely a private family relationship. During periods of instability it could become a political resource. The royal name, descent from the father, the position of the mother, and the favour of the gods were not separate elements; together they contributed to the representation of a rightful king chosen to govern the land.(2)

Naqīʾa/Zakūtu derives her importance from this setting. The texts do not present her as an anonymous woman within the palace, but as a link in royal descent connecting Sennacherib (704–681 BCE) with Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE), and extending that connection to Ashurbanipal (668–c. 631 BCE). Her position acquired particular weight because Esarhaddon came to the throne after Sennacherib's assassination and a conflict within the royal family, while Ashurbanipal's succession was arranged under the evident fear that such a crisis might recur.(3)

Research Problem and Method

The central problem of this study is to define the nature of Naqīʾa/Zakūtu's authority. Was it family influence within the palace, institutional presence within the Queen's Household, or a religious role in protecting the succession? The study addresses this question by reading the direct evidence before moving to historical interpretation. General statements such as "the texts mention" or "the inscriptions indicate" are not used without identifying the relevant evidence in the footnotes.(4)

The study follows a historical-analytical method in which the evidence is presented in the following order: the cuneiform text or artistic object, its meaning in English, and its interpretation within the relevant political and religious context. Source titles are not inserted into the main discussion except where methodologically necessary; references are given in the footnotes so that the argument remains analytical rather than becoming a catalogue of publications.

Section One: Name, Title, and the Limits of Identity

The sources preserve two forms of her name: Naqīʾa and Zakūtu. Etymology alone cannot establish her ethnic or linguistic origin, because Assyrian texts were generally more concerned with the place of royal women within networks of descent, title, and office than with providing an account of their origins. The proper point of departure is therefore not the origin of the name, but the manner in which the name was used in royal discourse.(5)

The formula in her inscriptions shows that her identification was deliberate rather than incidental. She appears within a continuous sequence of royal relationships: woman of the palace or consort of Sennacherib; daughter-in-law of Sargon II (721–705 BCE); and mother of Esarhaddon. Its meaning may be summarized as follows: "Zakūtu, woman of the palace/consort of Sennacherib, daughter-in-law of Sargon II, mother of Esarhaddon." The formula does not describe an isolated individual; it locates her between three Sargonid kings.(6)

The study therefore follows the relationship stated by the texts themselves: Naqīʾa/Zakūtu was the wife or consort of Sennacherib, the daughter-in-law of Sargon II, and the mother of Esarhaddon. Ešarra-ḫammat, the wife of Esarhaddon known from the sources, died in 672 BCE. Her death appears to have created conditions in which the Queen Mother became more visible within the institutional setting of the Queen's Household during the arrangements for succession.(7)

Al-Noor Journal for Digital Heritage and Cultural Preservation
Vol. 1, No. 2, 2026 (84 - 95)
IRAQI Academic Scientific Journals
DOI: https://doi.org/10.69513/jndh.v1.i2.a6

The title "Mother of the King" (ummi šarri) denotes a position that should not be reduced to an emotional description of motherhood. In the Neo-Assyrian setting, the title could acquire political weight when the king's legitimacy required support from royal descent and religion, as occurred after Esarhaddon's troubled accession.(8)

Section Two: The Succession Crisis after the Assassination of Sennacherib

Naqīʾa/Zakūtu's role cannot be understood without returning to the crisis that preceded Esarhaddon's accession. Sennacherib was killed at the end of his reign, and the transfer of power was not peaceful. The royal house entered into conflict among the king's sons. Esarhaddon's inscriptions preserve the official account of that struggle, referring to rivals within the family and to military events that ended in his accession.(9)

At this point Naqīʾa/Zakūtu does not appear as a military commander or a direct ruler. She appears instead as part of a structure of legitimacy that Esarhaddon needed to reinforce after internal conflict. Descent from Sennacherib and Sargon II, acceptance within the palace, and support expressed through the temple acquired greater importance after the rupture in succession.(10)

Although the texts do not grant her a royal title of government, they provide another form of power: the ability to operate within the memory of the royal house. She does not replace the king; she makes his accession intelligible as continuity rather than rupture. Her name therefore contributed to restoring confidence in a royal house that had emerged from a violent crisis.

Section Three: The Building Inscription for Esarhaddon's Palace at Nineveh

The building text considered here is Naqīʾa/Zakūtu's inscription concerning the construction of a palace for Esarhaddon at Nineveh. Its importance lies not only in its architectural subject, but in the way it places the act of building within a royal and political sequence. The inscription identifies her as the woman of the palace/consort of Sennacherib, daughter-in-law of Sargon II, and mother of Esarhaddon, and then connects the building project with her son, the king.(11)

The relevant formula may be translated: "Zakūtu, woman of the palace of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, daughter-in-law of Sargon, king of Assyria, mother of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria." This is not a neutral genealogical statement. It is a purposeful arrangement: Sennacherib is the father-king, Sargon II represents the immediate dynastic foundation, and Esarhaddon is the son whose position required renewed affirmation after the succession crisis.(12)

The construction of the palace should not be treated as an urban undertaking detached from politics. In Neo-Assyrian royal discourse, building signified patronage, order, and the capacity to restore and stabilize space. When the builder was the Queen Mother, the act connected royal motherhood with the physical setting of government: the palace, the city, and the king who was her son.(13)

The inscription further states that Esarhaddon gave her captives and enemies to manufacture bricks and to carry hoes and baskets. This detail moves the project beyond the private sphere. The resources of warfare and the submission of enemies were incorporated into a building enterprise led by the Queen Mother for the king's benefit.(14)

Al-Noor Journal for Digital Heritage and Cultural Preservation
Vol. 1, No. 2, 2026 (84 - 95)
IRAQI Academic Scientific Journals
DOI: https://doi.org/10.69513/jndh.v1.i2.a6

Section Four: Votive Inscriptions and Objects Presented to the Deities

The expression "votive inscriptions and objects" must be specified rather than used as a general label. Naqīʾa/Zakūtu's corpus includes short texts recording objects presented to particular deities, especially Bēlet-Ninua and Mullissu, as well as inscriptions on beads or precious stones. These texts must be read individually before conclusions are drawn from them.(15)

In inscription no. 2005, Naqīʾa/Zakūtu presents a pectoral of red gold to Bēlet-Ninua for the life of Esarhaddon, for her own life, and for the stability of the reign. Inscription no. 2006 associates her with Mullissu at Aššur and repeats her relationship to Sennacherib, Sargon II, and Esarhaddon. A further stone inscription records a dedication to Bēlet-Bābili. Its normalized transliteration reads: [ana dBēlet-Bābili bēltīša] fNaqīʾa MÍ.É.GAL ša mSîn-aḫḫē-erība šar māt Aššur, kallat mŠarru-kīn šar māt Aššur, ummi mAššur-aḫa-iddina šar māt Aššur, ana balāṭ napišti ša mārīša u šâša ana balāṭīša taqīš. It may be translated: "To Bēlet-Bābili, her lady, Naqīʾa, woman of the palace/consort of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, daughter-in-law of Sargon, king of Assyria, mother of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, gave this object for the life of her son and herself, for her own life." These inscriptions are not merely inventories of objects; they place the Queen Mother within the relationship between palace and temple.(16)

The significance of these offerings should be formulated with caution. A votive object is not necessarily a direct political act. Yet when it is presented by the Queen Mother for the life of the king and the stability of his line, it acquires a meaning that exceeds private devotion. It places the names of the Queen Mother and the king before the deities and makes the object a material link between the Queen's Household, the temple, and royal legitimacy.(17)

The distribution of these inscriptions among Nineveh, Aššur, and Babylon should not be treated as an ordinary geographical spread. These cities were politically and religiously charged places: Nineveh was a royal center; Aššur was the traditional religious and political center; and Babylon occupied a particularly sensitive position after Sennacherib's policy toward the city and Esarhaddon's subsequent program of restoration.(18)

Section Five: The Communication Addressed to the Queen Mother as Speech from the Gods

The expression "speech from the gods" is used here for texts that present their message as originating from a goddess or god and being delivered to a royal person. It is not intended to impose a modern religious category, but to describe an Assyrian textual genre that records divine speech, including the communication addressed to the Queen Mother.(19)

This communication is important because it addresses the Queen Mother in the context of Esarhaddon's accession after Sennacherib's assassination. The argument is not that Naqīʾa/Zakūtu composed or controlled the message; there is no direct evidence for such a claim. The significance lies in the text's treatment of the Queen Mother as an addressee at a time when royal authority required religious reinforcement after political instability.(20)

It is therefore insufficient to refer generally to "messages from the gods" without identifying the text. The evidence considered here is the communication addressed to the Queen Mother. It shows that the succession crisis was not addressed through political language alone, but also through

Al-Noor Journal for Digital Heritage and Cultural Preservation
Vol. 1, No. 2, 2026 (84 - 95)
IRAQI Academic Scientific Journals
DOI: https://doi.org/10.69513/jndh.v1.i2.a6

religious language that interpreted Esarhaddon's accession as supported by divine will and reduced the disruptive meaning of conflict within the royal family.(21)

Section Six: Correspondence of Court Scholars and Priests and the Presence of the Queen Mother

The study avoids a general designation that might suggest modern science. The more precise expression is "correspondence of Neo-Assyrian court scholars": letters written by scribes, astrologers, diviners, exorcists, and physicians working within the royal apparatus of knowledge. The relevant examples include letters concerning anti-witchcraft rites for the Queen Mother, reports on her treatment and recovery, and a letter connected with a ritual request during an eclipse.(22)

These letters made the Queen Mother's body an object of ritual and medical care. This was not simply a concern with the biological body. When illness, witchcraft, an eclipse, or ritual action affected a royal person, the matter entered the wider system by which the royal house was protected and its stability maintained.(23)

Priestly correspondence provides another perspective. It refers to gold, statues, the treasurers of the queen or Queen Mother, and resources sent to temples. Such texts do not present an isolated woman within the palace; they reveal an administrative sphere with officials, resources, and relations with the temple. The Queen's Household is therefore essential for understanding the nature of this presence.(24)

The categories must remain distinct. Communications presented as speech from the gods belong to a religious discourse of divine address; the correspondence of court scholars was produced by palace experts; and priestly letters originated among temple personnel. Combining these materials without distinction would blur different genres and weaken the analysis.(25)

Section Seven: The Queen's Household and Institutional Influence

The Queen's Household is a key to understanding Naqīʾa/Zakūtu. Without this framework, the evidence appears as a series of unrelated items: a building inscription, votive texts, a communication presented as speech from the gods, correspondence from scholars and priests, and an oath. Read within an institutional setting, however, these items reveal the capacity of a royal woman to act through an established household rather than through direct sovereignty.(26)

Texts concerning the institution of the queen attest personnel and female officials, including the office of šakintu, a female administrator or supervisor within the Queen's Household. The term does not by itself prove that Naqīʾa/Zakūtu personally directed every detail of the institution. It demonstrates, however, that the queen's establishment possessed an administrative structure through which resources, personnel, and responsibilities could be organized.(27)

Naqīʾa/Zakūtu's influence can thus be defined within proper limits. She did not occupy the throne, but neither was she a mother without public function. Her institutional position allowed her to participate in building activity, votive acts, divine communications, scholarly and priestly correspondence, and the protection of succession through oath.(28)

Al-Noor Journal for Digital Heritage and Cultural Preservation
Vol. 1, No. 2, 2026 (84 - 95)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.69513/jndh.v1.i2.a6

Section Eight: The Zakūtu Treaty and the Mechanism of the Oath

The Zakūtu Treaty marks the strongest political expression of Naqīʾa/Zakūtu's presence, because it places her within the act by which the royal house and elite were bound to protect Ashurbanipal. The Akkadian term adê in this setting denotes a binding loyalty oath under divine sanction, rather than an ordinary civil agreement.(29)

The document imposes specific obligations. If the oath-takers hear hostile speech, a conspiracy, or a plan directed against Ashurbanipal or against Zakūtu, his grandmother, they are required to report it, seize those involved, and bring them before Zakūtu and Ashurbanipal. The Queen Mother thus appears not as a symbolic name alone, but as a named participant in the procedure by which threats to the succession were to be detected and suppressed.(30)

The text does not, however, justify the claim that Naqīʾa/Zakūtu stood above Ashurbanipal or governed in his name. Its limits are clear: it inserts her into the oath and the protection of succession; it does not grant her independent sovereignty. The treaty should therefore be read as an instrument of dynastic continuity in which the Queen Mother held a supervisory and legitimating position.(31)

Section Nine: Louvre Plaque AO 20185 as Political and Religious Evidence

The bronze plaque preserved in the Louvre Museum under the number AO 20185 occupies a special place in the study of Naqīʾa/Zakūtu because it combines sculpture and inscription. A royal woman stands behind an Assyrian king, and a short label on her garment identifies her as ṣalam Naqīʾa, "the image of Naqīʾa." The identification makes the object direct evidence rather than a general artistic comparison.(32)



Figure 1. Bronze plaque AO 20185, showing Naqīʾa/Zakūtu behind an Assyrian king. Louvre Museum.(33)

Al-Noor Journal for Digital Heritage and Cultural Preservation
Vol. 1, No. 2, 2026 (84 - 95)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.69513/jndh.v1.i2.a6

The preserved text is connected with the rites of mouth-washing and mouth-opening (mīs pî / pīt pî), with a Babylonian setting in the Esagila complex, and with Ekarzagina, a location associated with the god Ea. The scene therefore does not place a royal woman in an ordinary gathering. The sculpture brings together the king, the temple, and the ritual establishment of a legitimate order.(34) The plaque is also significant in relation to Esarhaddon's policy toward Babylon. After the destruction and political trauma associated with Sennacherib's policy, Esarhaddon pursued the restoration of Babylon and its sanctuaries. The king remained the principal political actor in that program, but Naqīʾa/Zakūtu's presence behind him associates the Queen Mother with support for royal legitimacy in a Babylonian religious setting.(35)

Section Ten: Libbāli-šarrat, Comparative Sculptures, and the Limits of Inference

Libbāli-šarrat is introduced only as a limited comparison and not as direct evidence for Naqīʾa/Zakūtu. She was an Assyrian queen and the wife of Ashurbanipal, and is best known from the Garden Scene in Ashurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh, dated to about 643 BCE. In the sculpture she sits enthroned beside the reclining king, while attendants stand around the royal couple.(36)



Figure 2. The Garden Scene, showing Queen Libbāli-šarrat seated beside Ashurbanipal. North Palace, Nineveh, c. 643 BCE; gypsum relief; British Museum, BM 124922.(37)

The comparison is useful for one limited purpose: it shows that royal women were rarely represented in Assyrian palace sculpture, and that their appearance was governed by precise signs of status, including the throne, crown, garments, attendants, and objects carried. Nevertheless, AO 20185 is more directly relevant to Naqīʾa/Zakūtu because the inscription preserves her name.(38)

Section Eleven: The Limits of Influence between Institutional Authority and Direct Rule

Naqīʾa/Zakūtu's importance lies in her position between political absence and direct government. She was neither a silent figure in the palace nor a queen who occupied the throne. The texts grant her titles, resources, a place in the oath, an address in a communication presented as speech from

Al-Noor Journal for Digital Heritage and Cultural Preservation
Vol. 1, No. 2, 2026 (84 - 95)
IRAQI Academic Scientific Journals
DOI: https://doi.org/10.69513/jndh.v1.i2.a6

the gods, and a named sculpture; they do not grant her the title of king or describe her as exercising direct military or imperial administration.(39)

Institutional influence here means that her authority did not depend on an isolated intervention. It arose from a recognized place within the palace structure: Mother of the King, a prominent person within the Queen's Household, a named participant in the oath, a royal woman represented in an official sculpture, and a person whose health and ritual protection were monitored in court correspondence.(40)

Two opposite descriptions should therefore be avoided. To state that she ruled the empire gives the evidence more than it contains; to reduce her to a private mother ignores the treaty, the building inscription, the bronze plaque, and the correspondence concerning the Queen Mother. The more precise conclusion is that she worked within the mechanisms of government, not above them.

Section Twelve: A Synthetic Reading of the Construction of Legitimacy

Taken together, the evidence reveals an interconnected process. Royal descent links Esarhaddon with Sennacherib and Sargon II. Building activity connects the mother with the king-son and Nineveh. Votive texts place the lives of the king and Queen Mother before the deities. Divine communication reinterprets the crisis of accession through religious language. The oath binds the succession to sworn obligation. Finally, the sculpture presents the royal mother within a royal and religious setting.(41)

These elements did not operate in a simple sequence, but as a network of meanings. Descent required the temple; temple action required inscription; the oath responded to fear of rebellion; and the fear of rebellion increased the value of a royal mother who embodied continuity. Naqīʾa/Zakūtu was therefore not an exception detached from the Assyrian system, but a case through which the operation of that system during a succession crisis can be observed.

This reading also shows that Neo-Assyrian legitimacy was not military alone, despite the centrality of the army; it was not religious alone, despite the presence of the gods; and it did not rest solely on royal descent. Legitimacy arose from the interaction of these elements. Naqīʾa/Zakūtu stood at their point of contact: mother, palace, temple, oath, and sculpture.(42)

Index of Evidence and Interpretive Significance

Evidence	Direct textual or artistic witness	Interpretive significance
Building inscription for Esarhaddon's palace	Building inscription no. 2003	Royal descent, construction, and the stabilization of Esarhaddon's position.
Votive inscriptions and objects	Inscriptions nos. 2005–2009 and the Bēlet-Bābili dedication	Relations between the Queen's Household and temple; petitions for the lives of the king and Queen Mother.
Communication addressed to the Queen Mother	Communication no. 5	Religious interpretation of Esarhaddon's accession after the succession crisis.

Al-Noor Journal for Digital Heritage and Cultural Preservation
Vol. 1, No. 2, 2026 (84 - 95)
IRAQI Academic Scientific Journals
DOI: https://doi.org/10.69513/jndh.v1.i2.a6

Correspondence of court scholars	Letters nos. 200, 201, and 297	Ritual and medical care for the Queen Mother.
Priestly correspondence and resources	Letters nos. 56–58	Treasuries, resources, and relations between the Queen's Household and temples.
Zakūtu Treaty	Treaty no. 8	Oath, protection of Ashurbanipal, and the Queen Mother's place in the mechanism of loyalty.
Louvre plaque AO 20185	Inscription no. 2010 and the bronze plaque	A sculpture and text connecting Naqīʾa/Zakūtu with the king, temple, and Babylon.

Standard Akkadian and Cuneiform Terminology

Term	Meaning	Use in the study	Lexicographical reference
MÍ.É.GAL / sēgallu	Woman of the palace / queen	An institutional designation, not merely a domestic description.	CAD S, s.v. sēgallu; CDA, s.v. sēgallu.
ummi šarri	Mother of the King	A title of descent capable of acquiring political weight.	CAD U/W, s.v. ummu; CAD Š/2, s.v. šarru.
adê	Binding oath / loyalty oath	A political and religious instrument for protecting succession.	CAD A/1, s.v. adê; CDA, s.v. adû/adê.
šakintu	Female administrator / supervisor	An administrative office within the queen's institution.	CAD Š/1, s.v. šakintu; CDA, s.v. šakintu.
mīs pî / pīt pî	Mouth-washing / mouth-opening	Rites associated with the activation of a divine image or statue.	CAD M/2, s.v. mīsu; CAD P, s.v. pû.
ṣalmu	Image / statue / sculpture, according to context	Essential for interpreting the label ṣalam Naqīʾa on AO 20185.	CAD Ṣ, s.v. ṣalmu; CDA, s.v. ṣalmu.

Vol. 1, No. 2, 2026 (84 - 95)
IRAQI Academic Scientific Journals
DOI: https://doi.org/10.69513/jndh.v1.i2.a6

maḫḫû / raggimu	Religious intermediary / proclaimer of divine speech	Terms associated with texts that record speech attributed to deities.	CAD M/1, s.v. maḫḫû; CAD R, s.v. raggimu.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that Naqīʾa/Zakūtu should be read neither as a secondary figure in the Sargonid court nor as a ruling queen in the direct sense. Her historical importance lies in the exact distance between those two interpretations. She possessed institutional, symbolic, and religious influence that operated within Assyrian government, especially at moments of succession.

Her presence rests on several independent forms of evidence. The building inscription connects her with royal descent and construction; the votive texts connect her with the temple and prayers for the king's life; the communication presented as divine speech addresses the Queen Mother in the context of Esarhaddon's accession; scholarly and priestly correspondence reveals her place within systems of ritual, medical, and administrative protection; the Zakūtu Treaty makes her a participant in the protection of Ashurbanipal; and the Louvre plaque gives her a rare named presence in Assyrian sculpture.

Naqīʾa/Zakūtu thus shows that Assyrian legitimacy was not produced by royal inscription or military force alone. It was created through the interaction of royal descent, palace, temple, oath, and sculpture. Through that interaction, royal motherhood became a political and religious instrument for protecting succession without becoming direct rule.

References

1. Black, Jeremy, and Anthony Green. Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia. London: British Museum Press, 1992.
2. Frahm, Eckart. "Family Matters: Psychohistorical Reflections on Sennacherib and His Times." In Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem, edited by Isaac Kalimi and Seth Richardson, 163–222. Leiden: Brill, 2014.
3. Joannès, Francis. "Women and Palaces in the Neo-Assyrian Period." In La femme dans le Proche-Orient antique. Paris, 1987.
4. Kertai, David. "Libbali-sharrat in the Garden: An Assyrian Queen Holding Court." Source: Notes in the History of Art 39, no. 4 (2020): 209–217.
5. Leichty, Erle. The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680–669 BC). RINAP 4. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011.
6. May, Natalie N. "Neo-Assyrian Women, Their Visibility, and Their Representation in Written and Pictorial Sources." In Studying Gender in the Ancient Near East, edited by Saana Svärd and Agnès Garcia-Ventura, 249–288. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2018.
7. Melville, Sarah C. The Role of Naqia/Zakutu in Sargonid Politics. SAAS 9. Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1999.
8. Nissinen, Martti. Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East. SBLWAW 12. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.
9. Ornan, Tallay. "The Queen in Public: Royal Women in Neo-Assyrian Art." In Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East, edited by Simo Parpola and Robert M. Whiting, 461–477. Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002.

Vol. 1, No. 2, 2026 (84 - 95)
IRAQI Academic Scientific Journals
DOI: https://doi.org/10.69513/jndh.v1.i2.a6

10. Parpola, Simo. Assyrian Prophecies. SAA 9. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997.
11. Parpola, Simo. Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars. SAA 10. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1993.
12. Parpola, Simo. Letters from Priests to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal. SAA 13. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997.
13. Parpola, Simo, and Kazuko Watanabe. Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths. SAA 2. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988.
14. Parrot, André, and Jean Nougayrol. "Asarhaddon et Naqia sur un bronze du Louvre." Syria 33, nos. 1–2 (1956): 147–160.
15. Pongratz-Leisten, Beate. Herrschaftswissen in Mesopotamien. Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1999.
16. Radner, Karen. Ancient Assyria: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
17. Radner, Karen. "The Trials of Esarhaddon: The Conspiracy of 670 BC." Isimu 6 (2003): 165–183.
18. Svärd, Saana. "Changes in Neo-Assyrian Queenship." State Archives of Assyria Bulletin 21 (2015): 157–171.
19. Svärd, Saana. Women and Power in Neo-Assyrian Palaces. SAAS 23. Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2015.
20. The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (CAD). Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956–2010.
21. Walker, Christopher, and Michael Dick. The Induction of the Cult Image in Ancient Mesopotamia. SAALT 1. Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2001.
22. Watanabe, Kazuko. "Die adê-Vereidigung anlässlich der Thronfolgeregelung Asarhaddons." Baghdader Mitteilungen 18 (1987): 439–465.
23. Lambert, W. G. "Another Dedication Inscription of Naqia/Zakūtu." N.A.B.U. 2004/4, no. 85 (2004): 86–87.
24. Grayson, A. Kirk. Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II (858–745 BC). RIMA 3. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.
25. Novotny, Jamie, and Joshua Jeffers. The Royal Inscriptions of Ashurbanipal (668–631 BC), Aššur-etel-ilāni (630–627 BC), and Sîn-šarra-iškun (626–612 BC), Kings of Assyria, Part 1. RINAP 5/1. University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2018.
26. Radner, Karen, ed. The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, Vol. 1/II. Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1999.
27. Winter, Irene J. "Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs." Studies in Visual Communication 7, no. 2 (1981): 2–38.
28. Black, Jeremy, Andrew George, and Nicholas Postgate, eds. A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian. 2nd corrected printing. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000.

[1] For the chronology and extent of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, see Leichty, RINAP 4, 1–12; Radner, Ancient Assyria, 1–20.
[2] On Assyrian kingship, divine selection, and textual and artistic royal discourse, see Pongratz-Leisten, Herrschaftswissen, 145–180; Winter, "Royal Rhetoric," 2–38.
[3] The regnal dates follow Leichty, RINAP 4, 1–12, and Novotny and Jeffers, RINAP 5/1, 1–10.
[4] This method reflects the different character of the evidence: royal inscriptions, archival letters and oaths, and artistic objects must be distinguished before they are combined in historical interpretation.
[5] For the names Naqīʾa and Zakūtu, see Melville, Role of Naqia/Zakutu, 13–19. For Akkadian zakû, see CAD Z, s.v. zakû; CDA, s.v. zakû.
[6] See the building inscription of Naqīʾa/Zakūtu: Leichty, RINAP 4, no. 2003, 315–317; Melville, Role of Naqia/Zakutu, 20–26. For sēgallu and MÍ.É.GAL, see CAD S, s.v. sēgallu; CDA, s.v. sēgallu.
[7] On Ešarra-ḫammat, her death in 672 BCE, and Naqīʾa/Zakūtu's subsequent institutional visibility, see Svärd, "Changes in Neo-Assyrian Queenship," 161–165; Melville, Role of Naqia/Zakutu, 46–58; PNA 1/II, s.v. Ešarra-ḫammat.
[8] For ummu and šarru, see CAD U/W, s.v. ummu; CAD Š/2, s.v. šarru; CDA, s.vv. ummu, šarru.
[9] On Sennacherib's assassination and Esarhaddon's accession in the official account, see Leichty, RINAP 4, 11–18, 40–46; Radner, "Trials of Esarhaddon," 165–183.

Al-Noor Journal for Digital Heritage and Cultural Preservation
Vol. 1, No. 2, 2026 (84 - 95)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.69513/jndh.v1.i2.a6

[10] For Naqīʾa/Zakūtu's role after the accession crisis, see Melville, Role of Naqia/Zakutu, 29–45; Frahm, "Family Matters," 163–222.
[11] Leichty, RINAP 4, no. 2003, 315–317. The text was inscribed on two hexagonal prisms and concerns a palace for Esarhaddon in the citadel of Nineveh behind the temple of Sîn and Šamaš.
[12] For the Akkadian text and edition, see Leichty, RINAP 4, no. 2003, lines 1–8, 315–316; Melville, Role of Naqia/Zakutu, 20–23.
[13] On building in Neo-Assyrian royal discourse, see Pongratz-Leisten, Herrschaftswissen, 167–180; Radner, Ancient Assyria, 62–73.
[14] Leichty, RINAP 4, no. 2003, lines 20–28, 316–317; Melville, Role of Naqia/Zakutu, 23–26.
[15] Leichty, RINAP 4, nos. 2005–2009, 318–321. The group includes a gold pectoral presented to Bēlet-Ninua, a text addressed to Mullissu at Aššur, and short inscriptions on beads or stones.
[16] Leichty, RINAP 4, nos. 2005–2006, 318–320; Lambert, "Another Dedication Inscription," 86–87. For Bēlet-Ninua and Mullissu, see Black and Green, Gods, Demons and Symbols, 137–139.
[17] For royal female votive activity within palace-temple relations, see Melville, Role of Naqia/Zakutu, 58–71; Svärd, "Changes in Neo-Assyrian Queenship," 160–167.
[18] On Esarhaddon's Babylonian policy and rebuilding program, see Leichty, RINAP 4, 18–30; Parrot and Nougayrol, "Asarhaddon et Naqia," 153–160.
[19] Parpola, SAA 9, no. 5, 8–9, 22–23. For raggimu and maḫḫû, see CAD R, s.v. raggimu; CAD M/1, s.v. maḫḫû; Nissinen, Prophets and Prophecy, 105–122.
[20] Parpola, SAA 9, no. 5; Melville, Role of Naqia/Zakutu, 46–57; Pongratz-Leisten, Herrschaftswissen, 198–210.
[21] Parpola, SAA 9, no. 5. On divine speech and Esarhaddon's legitimacy, see Nissinen, Prophets and Prophecy, 118–121; Radner, "Trials of Esarhaddon," 165–183.
[22] Parpola, SAA 10, xiii–xxi, nos. 200, 201, and 297. For āšipu and bārû, see CAD A/2, s.v. āšipu; CAD B, s.v. bārû.
[23] Parpola, SAA 10, nos. 200, 201, and 297.
[24] Parpola, SAA 13, nos. 56–58. These texts concern gold for statues of the king and Queen Mother, treasurers of the queen or Queen Mother, and Kushite horses from the Queen Mother's treasurer.
[25] For the distinction among the textual corpora, see the introductions to SAA 9, xiii–lx; SAA 10, xiii–xxi; and SAA 13, xiii–xx.
[26] Svärd, "Changes in Neo-Assyrian Queenship," 157–171; Svärd, Women and Power, 40–70.
[27] For šakintu, see CAD Š/1, s.v. šakintu; CDA, s.v. šakintu. For the office in the Queen's Household, see Svärd, Women and Power, 55–64; Joannès, "Women and Palaces," 39–54.
[28] Melville, Role of Naqia/Zakutu, 71–95; Svärd, "Changes in Neo-Assyrian Queenship," 165–171.
[29] Parpola and Watanabe, SAA 2, no. 8, 28–30. For adê, see CAD A/1, s.v. adê; CDA, s.v. adû/adê.
[30] SAA 2, no. 8, lines 10–25, 28–29; Melville, Role of Naqia/Zakutu, 96–115.
[31] On the legal and political function of Neo-Assyrian loyalty oaths, see Watanabe, "Die adê-Vereidigung," 439–465; SAA 2, xxvii–xxxviii.
[32] Leichty, RINAP 4, no. 2010, 321–324; Parrot and Nougayrol, "Asarhaddon et Naqia," 147–160. For ṣalmu, see CAD Ṣ, s.v. ṣalmu; CDA, s.v. ṣalmu.
[33] Figure source: Parrot and Nougayrol, "Asarhaddon et Naqia," 147–160; Leichty, RINAP 4, no. 2010, 322–324.
[34] Leichty, RINAP 4, no. 2010, lines 1–18, 322–324; Parrot and Nougayrol, "Asarhaddon et Naqia," 153–158. For mīs pî and pīt pî, see CAD M/2, s.v. mīsu; CAD P, s.v. pû; Walker and Dick, Induction of the Cult Image, 55–70.
[35] On Esarhaddon's Babylonian policy, see Leichty, RINAP 4, 18–30; Parrot and Nougayrol, "Asarhaddon et Naqia," 158–160.
[36] Kertai, "Libbali-sharrat in the Garden," 209–217, especially 209–210. The relief is from Nineveh, c. 643 BCE, and is preserved in the British Museum as BM 124922.
[37] Figure source and object data: Kertai, "Libbali-sharrat in the Garden," 209–217, especially 209–210; British Museum, BM 124922.
[38] Ornan, "The Queen in Public," 461–477; May, "Neo-Assyrian Women," 249–288.
[39] Melville, Role of Naqia/Zakutu, 115–130; Svärd, "Changes in Neo-Assyrian Queenship," 165–171.
[40] The direct textual basis comprises the Zakūtu Treaty; the communication addressed to the Queen Mother; court scholarly and priestly correspondence; and Naqīʾa/Zakūtu's inscriptions and plaque.
[41] The synthetic reading is based on the direct corpus of Naqīʾa/Zakūtu's inscriptions, the loyalty oath, the divine communication, court and temple correspondence, and AO 20185.
[42] On the composite nature of Neo-Assyrian legitimacy, see Pongratz-Leisten, Herrschaftswissen, 145–210; Radner, Ancient Assyria, 62–89.