IMAGES OF TIME: ANALYSIS OF STELE OF VULTURES AND VICTORY STELE OF NARAM-SIN

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IMAGES OF TIME: ANALYSIS OF STELE OF VULTURES AND VICTORY STELE OF NARAM-SIN

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Images Of Time: Analysis of Stele of Vultures and

Victory Stele of Naram-Sin

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ABSTRACT

Images of Time: Analysis of Stele of Vultures

And Victory Stele of Naram-Sin

Commemorative monuments were created in Mesopotamia for the first time. They were carved in relief and inscribed withs texts and recorded historical events with name of the ruler. This thesis investigates the connections between the image and text on the Stele of Vultures from the Early Dynastic Period and the Victory Stele of Naram-Sin from the Akkadian Period to understand the use of the text to complement and strengthen the layers of meaning through its relation to the image. This study aims to explore the multiple layers of meaning that are present on the plane of composition of the steles through an understanding of polysemic nature of the cuneiform script and its role in creating Deleuzian time-images on the world of imagery on the steles. Because cuneiform scripts are not meant for the spoken language but rather reflects a visual mode of expression, its relation to the image necessitates a visual analysis that also accounts for the materiality of writing. For this reason, Deleuzian analysis of the images concerning relations of images to the time will be used for uncovering the layers of meaning that concerns the epistemological and ontological aspects of the writing. Through this understanding, this thesis will argue the change in the royal ideology and how its representation through the monuments of war was changed through time. This analysis will present the close relationship of the political ideals and ontological placement of the ruler is affected by the visual representation.

ÖZET

Zaman İmgeleri: Akbaba Steli ve Naram-Sin

Zafer Steli'nin İncelemesi

Zafer anıtları ilk defa Mezopotamya'da yapılmaya başladı. Üzerlerinde kabartmalar ve yazıt bulunan bu anıtlar tarihi olayları dönemin kralları ile beraber kaydetmişlerdir. Bu tez, bu objelerin örneklerinden olan Erken Hanedanlık Dönemi'ne tarihlenen Akbaba Steli ile Akkad İmparatorluk Dönemi'ne tarihlenen Naram-Sin Zafer Steli üzerindeki yazı ve imgeler arasındaki ilişkiyi, yazının imgeyi tamamlayan ve anlam katmanlarını güçlendirici bir biçimde kullanımını incelemektedir. Bu bakımdan, stellerin üzerindeki kompozisyon düzleminde oluşan anlam katmanları, çivi yazısının çok-anlamlı (polisemik) ve Deleuze'ün zaman-imge analizi üzerinden çözümlenecektir. Çivi yazısı konuşulan dilin aktarımdan ziyade bir görsel aktarım ve ifade biçimi olduğu için, imge ile ilişkisi maddeselliği de hesaba katan bir görsel analiz ile incelemeyi gerektirmektedir. Bu yüzden de yazının epistemolojik ve ontolojik yanlarını ilgilendiren anlam katmanlarını anlamak amacıyla, Deleuze'ün imgelerin zaman ile ilişkisine odaklanan imge analizi kullanılacaktır. Tüm bunlara binaen, bu çalışma yönetim ideolojilerinin değişiminin imgeler dünyasında nasıl yankıladığını bu stelleri merkeze alarak inceleyecektir. Böylece, politik idealler ve kralın ontolojik konumlanmasının görsel betimlemelerde nasıl yansıtıldığı tartışılacaktır.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It all begins with the material. The material is the foundation of the discussion of this thesis in the sense that the material creates a plane for expression in Deleuzian sense, and this plane of material determines irresistibly the plane of composition. The plane of material consists of all the choices that were made during the execution of an object. In my examination, I will use writing's polysemic properties and its power for founding a new plane of composition through the materiality and visuality of cuneiform script.

In this thesis, I aim to explore the materiality of the two objects – Victory Stele of Naram-Sin and Stele of Vultures and through their imagery and how their materiality played an important role for us to understand the plane of existence they stood on. For this I will discuss, the concepts as being the tools of the thinking; ergo philosophy and how the imagery could be means to understand these concepts that were embodied in the cosmological understanding. To analyze the relationship between the image and writing, I will use the concept of time-image introduced by Deleuze. I will discuss how crystal image is presented and how it incorporates the formerly recollection-image and dream-image into the present through crystallization and examine the parallels between the time-image and Mesopotamian grammatology which requires a coupling with image and its properties in terms of visuality and materiality. In this light, I will discuss the strife of chaos versus cosmos that plays an important role in Early Dynastic and Akkadian imagery and the royal ideology as a concept that is common for these

two objects and as a concept that reflects the pre-philosophical understanding that the plane of composition was shaped.

For this purpose, I will discuss the nature of cuneiform script and how it relates to the image in the second chapter. This examination will focus on the cuneiform script's idiosyncratic characteristics that places the writing in the world of creation and existence through its visual and material properties that associates it with the reality and the ominous world that is mantic in nature.

In the third chapter, I will foreground the Deleuzian conceptualization of time-image as the theoretical approach to analyze the two steles. This approach carries parallels with the Mesopotamian understanding of writing and grammatological understanding which is useful to understand the two objects by putting the writing in the center. Deleuze distinguishes the time-image as a tool for reaching enigmatic structure of time, of uniting image, thought and action of seeing, just like the polysemic nature of the cuneiform script's association to the universe and cosmological existence.

In the fourth chapter, I will examine the Stele of Vultures as a time-image by putting the form of the inscription on the stele at the center. I will examine the text and image as two modes of existence that relate to each other and create new layers of meanings through the crystalline regime that was created on the stele. This polysemy was possible due to the crystallization of the instances of the imagery and the peaks that associate them with each other. I will also look into the signification of this imagery in the royal ideology in the Early Dynastic Period and how it related to the political and ontological placement of the ruler.

In the fifth chapter, I will discuss the Victory Stele of Naram-Sin as another example of the crystalline regime. I will again consider the text on the

stele to be central to steer the discussion to the different ways in which the ruler was depicted and how writing was the indicator of the change in the expression of the same subject matter, victory. Similarly, I will try to contextualize this monument in the changing understanding during Akkadian period.

In the sixth chapter, I will present a comparison that will focus especially on the repeating elements, procurement of crystallization and bodies of the ruler. Through this visual analysis, the comparison of the forms in which the texts of the two steles were presented will be central to understanding the change in the specific elements in the imagery and the changing ideals concerning political and ideological understanding along with the cosmological and ontological change concerning the ruler.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO WRITING AS IMAGE

> "And indeed, it is a question of the imaginary. The supplement that "cheats" maternal "nature" operates as writing, and as writing it is dangerous to life. This danger is that of the image. Just as writing opens the crisis of the living speech in terms of its "image," its painting or its representation, so onanism announces the ruin of vitality in terms of imaginary seductions."[1]

Writing is conventionally thought to be corollary of the spoken language. In this sense, writing transmits the speech through a graphic rendering. Even though, occasions that affirms this idea overwhelms us in the modern world, the place of writing as an independent signifier is undeniable. In this sense, this chapter aims to discuss writing from the perspective of cuneiform script and discover visual and material dimensions of the writing. Hence, this study requires us to the look into this alien world of cuneiform and use an inter-disciplinary approach to understand coexistence of textual and visual aspects of writing.

In this chapter, organized under three subsections, I will give an account of epistemological meaning of the cuneiform writing and how it defies the modern understanding of the writing as an economic tool for the transmission of speech that obtains no vitality by itself. For this reason, I will examine the characteristics of the signs in the cuneiform writing and the potentialities it opens due to its very particular nature. In this respect, I will investigate lexical tradition and how they demonstrate different aspects of cuneiform script.

In the second part, I discuss the relationship between the image and writing as signs and their places in the universe and how image and writing endowed with possibilities that is always open to new acts of creation and keeps multiple layers of

[1] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 151.

meanings inside. This conception is embedded in the indiscernible natures of writing and images. These different forms of signification and their intertwinement as mantic signs are encountered in practices of dream interpretation, divination and the reading of astral signs as result of determination of fate in the divine realm.

Consequently, in the third section, I will investigate through the human creation and the ways in which the signs as image and writing were brought together to designate multiple layers of meanings in cases of some objects.

2.1 Cuneiform writing as a crisis

Sumerian cuneiform writing used signs to indicate concrete objects which were of three types linked to whether they "reproduce and entire object, a part of it or an abbreviated form", as examined by Glassner in detail[2]. Most of the objects were indicated by the signs relying on simplifications and schematizations whereas so few of them were designated objects with great detail. Then, another group of signs were products of mere abstractions. The signs were multiplied by changing the position (Figure 1) of signs or through mirror image (Figure 2).

[2] Glassner, *The Invention of Cuneiform: Writing in Sumer*, 127.

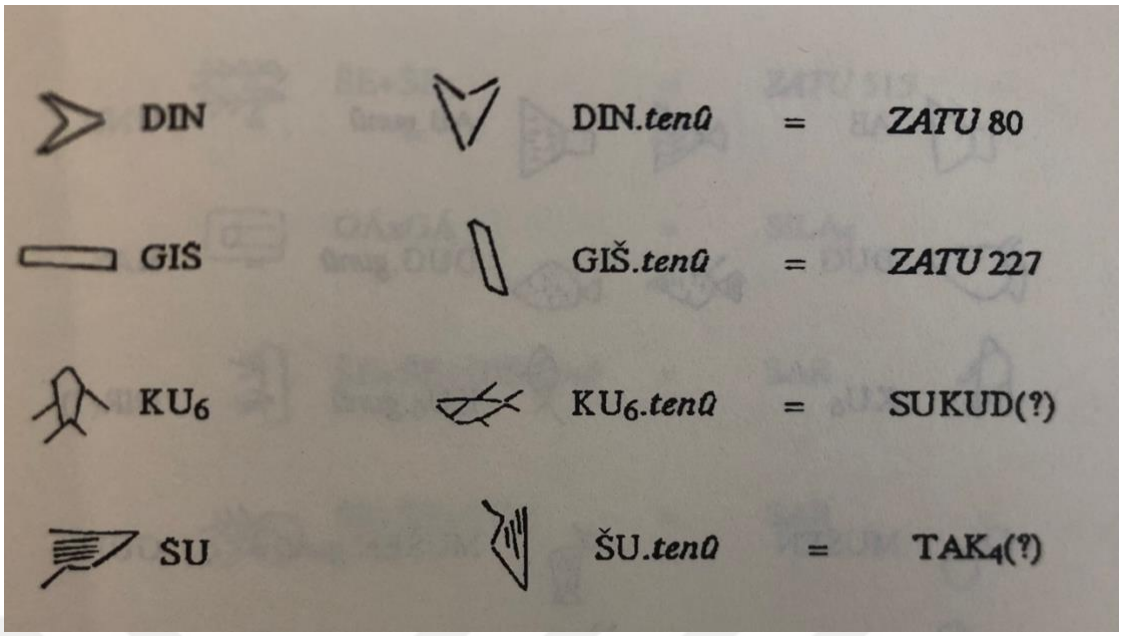


Figure 1. Examples of slanted signs (From Glassner, *The Invention of Cuneiform: Writing in Sumer*, fig.7.5)

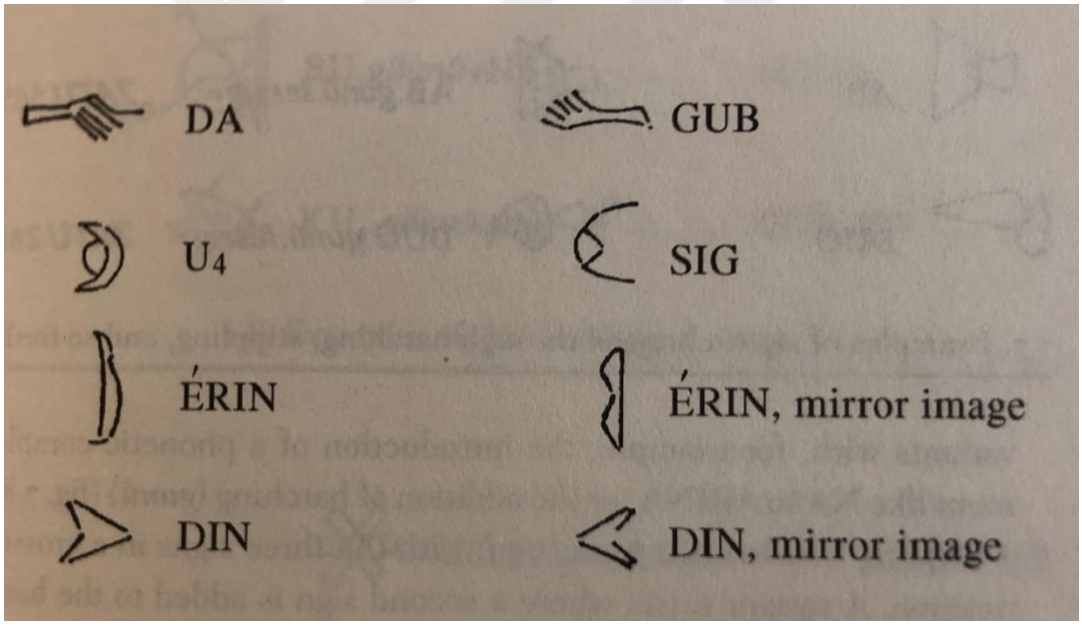


Figure 2. Examples of signs with their mirror image form (From Glassner, *The Invention of Cuneiform: Writing in Sumer*, fig.7.6

Signs came together to indicate a totally different object, or the derivation was procured through hatching or stippling (Figure 3). Doubling of a sign also created completely different signs or juxtaposition of different signs contributed to

new conceptualizations (Figure 4). On the other hand, the relationship between the object and its notation was not present in case of representing numbers[3]. Hence, in the beginning, signs were linked to their referents except for the numerical signs[4]. However, signs with the pictographic origin were really low number whereas in case of most of the signs, the association made with the referents are not quite clear[5] .

Moreover, the monosyllabic signs were used with their phonetic values to refer to words that have no associations with the signs that come together. The phonetization Is also encountered at the end of some words as a complement. Lastly, some signs were used for linguistic reference to designate a semantic integrity. Lastly, the use signs as determinatives to ensure the connection of the sign with its referent which had no reflection in the spoken word. Separation from reality increased through the analogical references to objects as in the case of the sign for woman represented with the pubic triangle or frontal image of some mammals for indicating the animal[6]. There are also some signs that are distinguished from each other only through minute details while some signs were used for totally different words due to their phonetic values in cases of homophonic words. Moreover, signs with polysemic values which were not also used as part of words with multiple signs.

[3] Glassner, *The Invention of Cuneiform: Writing in Sumer*, 134-138.
[4] Englund, "Smell of the Cage", 81.
[5] Glassner, *The Invention of Cuneiform: Writing in Sumer*, 143.
[6] Glassner, *The Invention of Cuneiform: Writing in Sumer*, 146-147.

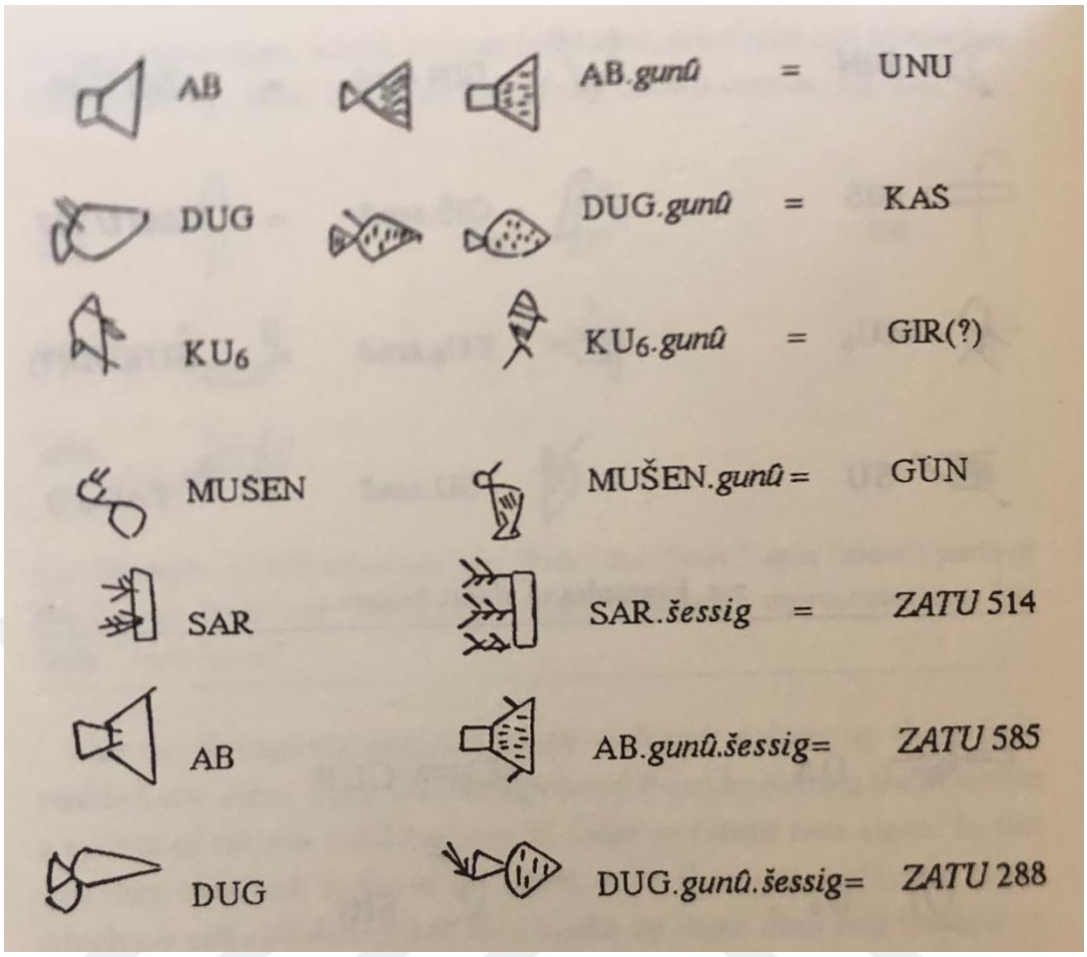


Figure 3. Examples of signs changed through hatching, stippling (From Glassner, *The Invention of Cuneiform: Writing in Sumer*, fig.7.6)

Hence, the writing has come to be having its own world, a microcosm in which words had associations that cannot be formed or understood in the reality or the spoken language as in the case of the sign "É" representing a weaving loom which referred to "house", "temple", and the social group to which one belongs or lil "breath", "spirit". The sign was also used for writing the name of Enlil "Lord Lil". These relations were reflected in the referents and their relations to other subjects. For example, Enlil was praised for building social ties[7]. But we cannot grip nature of this connection as to whether Enlil's attribute of forming social integrity gave way to this connection or the connection between the house and the

[7] Glassner, *The Invention of Cuneiform: Writing in Sumer*, 164.

social group established a second layer of association with the sign lil that was part of the name of Enlil that occurred in the world of writing and was transmitted to world of the referents.

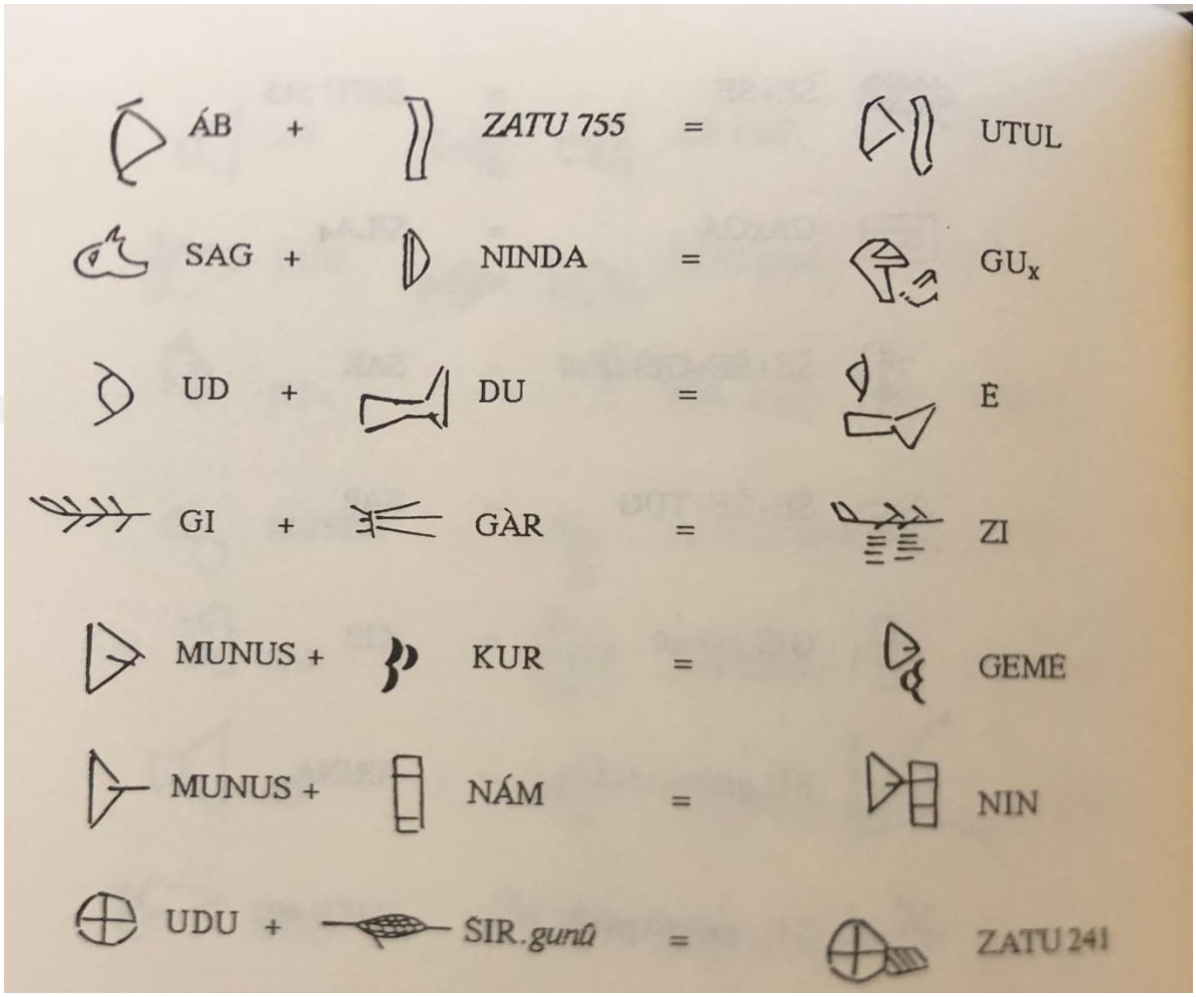


Figure 4. Examples of the juxtaposition of two different basic signs (From Glassner, *The Invention of Cuneiform: Writing in Sumer*, fig.7.6)

These multi-layered associations reached another level when the script was used by other groups such as Akkadians since the script was used in two different languages undertaking different tasks. According to Van de Mieroop, the connections immanent to the cuneiform writing was recognized by Akkadians and shaped their intellectual activities in such a way that writing itself became the tool

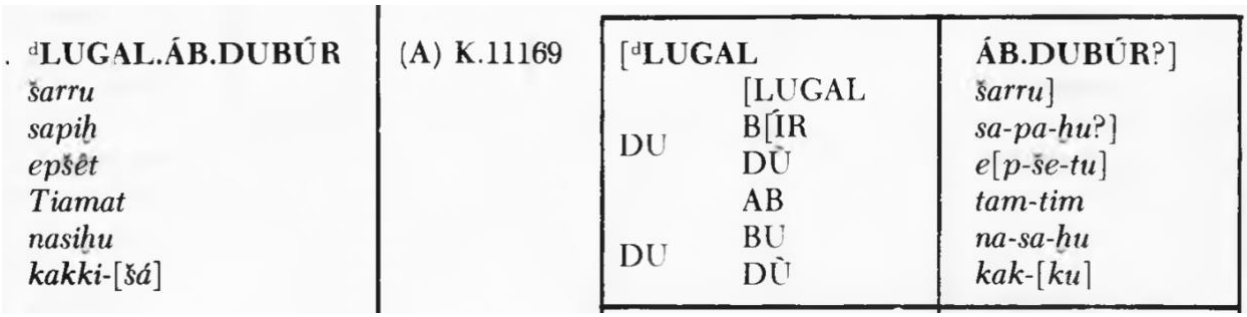
and the field that the philosophical discussions took place[8]. First example for this is the lexical lists which were thought to be empirical formulation and classifications of the things and concepts with the desire of order. However, their aim was not accomplished due to "incompetence", according to Von Soden, for the lists had unusual elements that were clearly distinct from the theme of the list[9]. However, these lists were not product of exercise of classifying animals, rather they were meaningful in the context of the schools and intellectual environment[10]. This does not reflect a crisis from our modern perspective, I believe, it also reflects a crisis that was the natural result of the cuneiform writing. What we see as a crisis -the so-called meaningless ordering of the words- reflect the crisis and the solution in the intellectual activity that centers the writing of polysemy. Hence, we can say that the answer to our crisis regarding this issue is also the key to understand the intricate processes that plays a role in ordering the words in the lexical lists. Van de Mieroop explained these choices with the paradigmatic value of the entries that was directly linked to where the list was composed and for what purpose it was useful. However, the choice of the words that did not match the theme but still involved in the list and the organization of the lists reveal the plays of intellectuals with the cuneiform script. For example, horse appears with the names of donkey, because the word has *anse* sign in it. Furthermore, physical resemblance of the animals is reason for succeeding one another along with the resemblance of the signs plays an important role for the succession of groups in the list. More interestingly, semantic resemblance was a factor for grouping words

[8] Van de Mieroop, *Philosophy Before Greeks,* 12-14.
[9] Von Soden, Leistung und Grenze sumerischer und babylonischer Wissenschaftec, 411-64.
[10] Veldhuis, *Religion, Literature, and Scholarship: The Sumerian Composition "Nanshe and the Birds",* 82-84.

together[11]. These attributes of the lexical texts reveal the direct relationship between the sign and the reality. A word can be associated with another completely different word, because of the resemblance in their first signs or more intriguingly, sign a word contains could affect its grouping as mentioned above. Writing, then, had its own world that was not the exact reproduction of the spoken language. Rather, different layers of meaning were manifest only to the reader. Even though there are many signs with the same phonetic value, some concepts were written only with a specific sign even if it means writing with more complex signs. Moreover, some signs were used in relation to the words they were part of to strengthen the meaning, even if it does not mean anything in the spoken form[12]. All those choices made during the writing process show that the cuneiform signs were chosen and used by the writer with regard to more than how it was spoken, the signs were pronounced. Rather, the signs were part of a different process of creation with the signs in form of a word.

This was not only a world of creation, but it was a world of discovery. The most impressive example of such instance is the section that comes after Enuma Elish, Fifty Names of Marduk. This section is a commentary that examined only some of the words, and it investigates through these words in two colons that reminds one of lexical lists. However, it is not the case that all the entries were translated mot-a-mot and the chosen words were given with their different values in Akkadian, relying on homophony and polyphony[13]. Some words are drawn from its context and examined in Sumerian and Akkadian separately (Figure 5).

[11] Van de Mieroop, *Philosophy Before Greeks*, 63-69.
[12] Van de Mieroop, *Philosophy Before Greeks*, 80.
[13] Bottero, "Les Noms de Marduk", 15-17.



. dLUGAL.ÁB.DUBÚR	(A) K.11169	[dLUGAL	ÁB.DUBÚR?]
šarru		[LUGAL	*šarru*]
sapiḫ		B[ÍR	*sa-pa-ḫu*?]
epšêt		DU DÙ	*e*[*p-še-tu*]
Tiamat		AB	*tam-tim*
nasiḫu		BU	*na-sa-ḫu*
kakki-[*šá*]		DU DÙ	*kak*-[*ku*]

Figure 5. Entry from Fifty Names of Marduk (From Bottero, "Les Noms de Marduk", 9)

dLUGAL.AB.DUBUR

The king who scattered the operations of Tiamat

uprooted her weapons whose support was firm in front and rear[14].

Van de Mieroop focuses on the plays in the signs and the words which were associated with each other using different tools. The name of Marduk, LUGAL.AB.DUBUR$_3$, was explained in the cited verses. In order to achieve that, the name is decomposed, and the five signs are examined through both their Sumerian and Akkadian equivalents. LUGAL is *sarru* "king" as placed on the other side of the colon. BUR$_3$ was turned to BIR which was done according to the secondary nature of the vowel and was translated as "scatter". DU$_{10}$ was taken as DU$_3$ meaning to "build". AB$_2$ also was taken as its homophone AB which is actually A.AB.BA in Sumerian meaning "sea". BUR$_3$ reduced to BU which translated as *nasahu* to Akkadian, meaning "to uproot". DU$_{10}$ which was already taken as DU$_3$ was taken once more as its homophone KAK meaning kakku, "weapon". Then two signs DU and BUR were examined together as Sumerian word DUBUR "foundation" and DU$_{10}$ was equated with its homophone GIN, "be firm"[15]. The most interesting part is that this exercise reveals so clearly that the signs were taken as units in themselves

[14] Laroche, *Catalogue des textes hittites*, 47-53.
[15] Van de Mieroop, *Philosophy Before Greeks*, 8-9.

whose interchangeable use can be noticed only through the world of writing. But they also are related to their spoken form and they also can be involved in this exercise through their spoken form which was placed in the world of writing in a more intricate way.

This effort was an effort to attain to the truth. For this reason, as Bottero firmly states, not all the words or expressions were examined in this manner[16]. Attaining the whole truth about Marduk was only possible through his name in writing. But this endeavor to truth can never be finalized because the signs can have many homophones as in the example of DU_{10} in LUGAL.DU.BUR[17]. Moreover, there are similar signs that can be likened to each other that can reveal different aspects of Marduk. Even, there can be metaphoric connections that can uncover completely new meanings through time. Because it is the writing itself that lives and is in constant process of change and expansion. However, writing did not have a life only in itself, but it was an active part of the reality through its relationship with the image.

2.2 Materiality of writing in relation to image

"Important one, hero, son of the Prince, Nabu,…
who has gained counsel that cannot be understood,
who has completely acquired wisdom of the unknown,
who has gathered scribal knowledge, the most intricate wisdom
At the breath of his mouth, the gods, his fathers, pay attention.
The competent one left the house of supreme wisdom,
and turns his sight to the dwelling of king An.
Where the (cosmic) designs are designed, where clever plans are forged,…"[18]

[16] Bottero, "Les noms de Marduk, l'écriture, et la 'logique' en Mésopotamie ancienne.", 5.
[17] Bahrani, *Graven Image*, 115.
[18] Hymn to Nabu, JRAS, 285.

Platonic conception of image has negative connotations that designates simulacrum as an imitation, illusion and fallacious. However, in Mesopotamian understanding, nothing can escape from the world of signs which encompasses everything, and reality becomes the aggregates of signs. Shamash is the god that illuminates and is also the decoder of the heaven and earth[19]. This depiction of Shamash does not only give information about the writing's place in Mesopotamian cosmological conception, but it also shows that the signs are obscure without the light and the sun decodes these signs that surround everything and are everything. Shamash, by illuminating and reading the signs, decrees the fate and unravels the truth as the actualization of the signs. For that reason, the universe is encountered as a manticly charged entity.

When Anzu-bird stole the Tablet of Destinies, he gained the power of controlling and organizing the universe, since Tablet of Destinies was the plane of existence that carried the encoded signs. The striking part about this narrative is that it does not only show the semiotic existence of the universe, but it also shows the relationship between the act of creation and decoding the signs. The signs were central to the creation in the way that naming was an act of creation as well as the name of the thing that was directly and constantly linked to each other to the extent that names were part of the destiny[20].

This conception was also the basis for the practices of divination and oneiromancy. The mantic signs could be found in dreams, and in entrails of the sacrificial animal. In this sense, dream interpretations reveal this direct relationship more clearly.

[19] Bahrani, *Graven Image*, 96.
[20] Bottero, "Les noms de Marduk, l'écriture, et la 'logique' en Mésopotamie ancienne.", 98.

"If a man in his dream eats a raven (arbu): income (irbu) will come in".[21] In this example, Bahrani demonstrates the intricate relationship of the writing and image which the image is manifested in the world of writing. The dream-image of raven is turned to its written form arbu and its homophony is interpreted as the result of the sign of raven. Then, writing was not a closed system that worked in itself. But it was also replaceable with the other signs/images like dreams, body parts of animals (divination) and humans (physiognomy). As emphasized by Bahrani, this is also a result of the pictographic nature of the writing which allows for "unmediated representation"[22]. Hence, the writing was already in the world of images, and it turned into being the key to the understand and expand the meaning of the image.

The universe is mantic, and the unknown can only be uncovered through the tools that cuneiform script offers. The writing is not only a key for unravelling the hidden, but it is also the complement of the images and reality. The destiny of the future is always embedded in the in the earth and sky waiting for the next sun. It also complements the present itself. The present is then in a rhizomatic relationship with its past and non-actualized future as the dreams show these signs in form of images.

2.3 Cases of resolution to crisis of writing

The crisis of writing is, then, that it is always in a mode of differentiation and always charged with multiple layers of meaning that increases through the effort of unravelling itself. But this crisis of truth does not mean there is no truth, rather

[21] Cited from Bahrani, *Graven Image*, 113.
[22] Bahrani, *Graven Image*, 112.

it means that the truth is always immanent to the existence that can never be decoded. Things are then in a crystalline state that gathers many different layers of meaning internal to itself.

Body of the ruler, as well as the entrails of sacrificial animals, or the astral elements in the sky surrounds the world with mantic signs. In this ominous world the act of artificial creation remains loyal to this conception. This is why I believe that the creation made by humans, the artistic creation, craves to penetrate into this hidden, ominous world through integrating text and image in a very particular manner that the links between the image and writing are reproduced and augmented in a way that the human creation almost approaches to cosmological creation.

In Early Dynastic Period, we see examples of this attempt of integration of image and text in such a manner that they produce constant signification of the object. The object is internalized through the embedded meanings as well as it penetrates into the reality through its materiality. Perforated plaque of Ur-Nanshe is a good example for such execution. The plaque is dated to Early Dynastic III Period, found in Tello. Relief consists of two registers one of which shows the ruler in kaunake dress carrying a basket that is known from imagery of building activities. Other figures smaller than the ruler, are aligned in front of him, with the exception of one figure behind him. I will not discuss this object in so much detail, but some features of the object support the relationship of text and image which will be my focus. Firstly, the name of the ruler is carved in the space that is in front of his face. Contrary to other figures, we do not see his name on his body. I believe that is because his dress referring to his position as ruler is another important sign that completes his identification so it would be unacceptable to

menace the integrity of the dress. Female figure in front of him also wears this ceremonial dress and her name is also written in the blank space. I do not believe that the carved names on the figures aim to give information to the viewer, rather it stands as a sign that emphasizes the body of the specific person and their identity "to conjure presence in representation"[23]. In this sense, the ruler is depicted as building temple for the patron deity Ningirsu, which was the center of the city and the seat of the ruler whose needs daily procurement was central to the ideal kingship in Mesopotamia[24].

Body of the ruler becomes the center of all the signs that creates his presence. His dedication to the god Ningirsu then becomes another sign that complements his image. his deed as building a temple is integrated through this imagery. As in simulacra, repetitions play upon repetitions, name of ruler, his large size, kaunake dress repeats his identity as the ruler. The act of building temple also repeats Ur-Nanshe's rulership with one alteration which is the action's signification to Ur Nanshe's place in relation to the divine realm. Because temple building is the sign of the connection of the ruler to the divine realm through his property as protector of the city which is the seat of god since the primordial time[25]. Hence, the ruler's body becomes the center of signs of the rulership.

The coalescence of the image and text has many examples in Early Dynastic Period. But this tradition and how it came to be traced back to earlier periods. Firstly, the close relationship between the cuneiform writing with pictographic beginnings and its correspondence to the objects through image can be observed clearly in the case of Warka Vase.

[23] Bahrani, *The Infinite Image*, 80.
[24] Jeremias, *Handbuch der altorientalischen Geisteskultur*, 184.
[25] Jeremias, *Handbuch der altorientalischen Geisteskultur*, 188.



Figure 6. Drawing of Warka Vase. Drawing by Jo Wood (From Michael Roaf, Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and Ancient Near East, 61)

The vase has three registers (See Figure 6). Bottom register depicts the cultivation and vegetation along with the procession of animals just above. The second register depicts yet another procession; procession of nude nude male figures carrying bowls and jars which refers to sacrificial activity. The top register is different in the sense that it does not reflect a continuous pattern, rather it depicts determinative moment. The striking aspect of the imagery on the vase is that many figures have parallels in the writing as cuneiform signs.

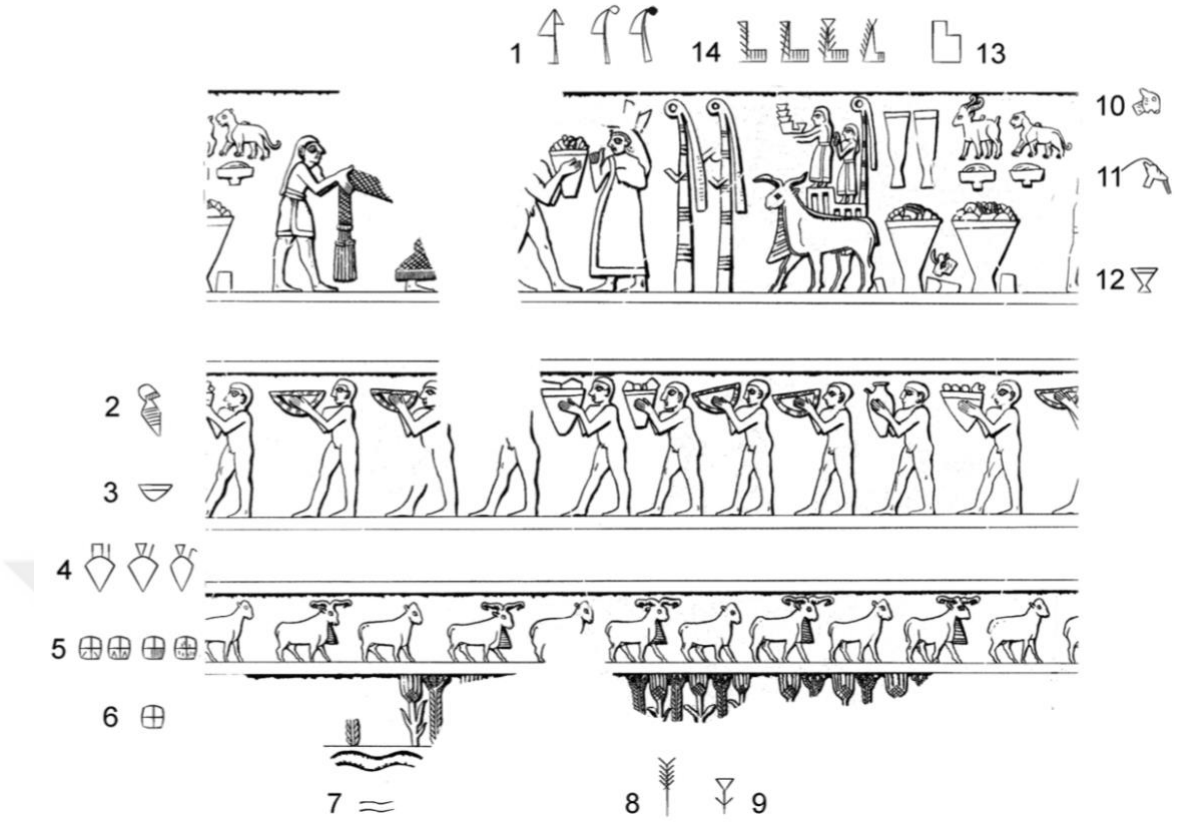


Figure 7. Index of the figures with archaic sign equivalents. (From J. S. Cooper, Incongruent Corpora: Writing and Art in Ancient Iraq, 87)

In his examination and the index (Figure 7), Cooper discusses that proto-cuneiform signs can be traced back as the pictographic referents on the vase[26]. In this sense, the reed bundle (1) just behind the female figure can be easily likened to the sign for goddess Inanna. The sign for "person" (2) does not need the vase to be clear along with different types of vessels. But still, it shows a long tradition of imagery which was directly at work in the process of creation of cuneiform signs. Vessels (3,4,12) are directly related to how they were drawn and used as cuneiform signs as well as the signs for water and barley and flax (7,8,9). However, we also see highly abstracted ewe and ram (5,6). These examples show

[26] Cooper, *Incongruent Corpora*, 72.

us some of the processes we already discussed in this chapter. But I believe, we also have to pay attention to the vessel on the upper register on the right side which were identical to the Warka Vase itself. In this sense, Bahrani's analysis of the "mimetic performative enactment" of the vase steps in[27]. Vase's performativity is reflected in the image on it which does not only confirms the imageness of the object through the existence of the direct referee and its relation to its referent, but it also opens up a clear way for image to the objects in the material world.

Another example would be Blau Monuments. The monuments are dated to Uruk III or Jemdet Nasr Period and deals with a field transaction. Krebernik claimed the content of the inscription was distributed in the obelisk shaped and pillar shaped objects in which the obelisk carried information about the field whereas the pillar dealt with quantified objects which were probably compensation for the land[28]. The content of the text reveals that the transaction was between stone cutters (as identified with the sign ZADIM) who could not be exactly identified since there are three personal names on the document[29]. What is striking is that the shapes of the monuments accompany the content of the monuments. Krebernik compares the shape of the obelisk to the sign KU/DAB$_6$ "to seize" (the payment) to which Boese proposes a corresponding interpretation of the pillar shape as the sign BA "to assign, to allot"[30]. As in the case of Warka Vase, the question of performativity and the materiality of the signs through their imagery referents plays a big role in Blau Monuments, too. In the case of Warka Vase, repetition of the image on the vase itself emphasize the recurring action of

[27] Bahrani, *Performativity and the Image*, 21.
[28] Krebernik, *Towards the Deciphering of the "Blau Monuments"*, 41.
[29] İbid., 46-54.
[30] İbid., 40.

the ritual whereas in the case of Blau Monuments the action is abstracted in the sign which was materialized as the monument. Hence, the action concerning the field transaction was repeated through, firstly, the shape of the monuments as discussed, and the content of the text accompanied the meaning. Both Warka Vase and Blau Monuments reflect a performativity through the materiality of the objects. However, the difference of the nature of the repetition reveals a new level of meaning through the writing since in the case of Warka Vase the repetition is through the image of the object on the object whereas in the case of Blau Monuments the content of the inscription is abstracted through writing which was reflected through the shape of the object. In this sense, Blau Monument shows the materialization of the content of the document which is not only through the relationship between the image and writing but it also plays with the limits between the representation and presence. The signs are embodied in the monument through their sign values in the writing.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the cuneiform script and the special properties of this script and discuss the cuneiform script in its close and special relation with the image. Idiosyncratic properties of cuneiform script and the place of writing in the ontological understanding in the ancient Mesopotamian context positioned writing as an important part of the cosmological understanding and creation. Polysemic nature of cuneiform reflected through the understanding of universe as an aggregate of signs. The act of creation depended on the writing and its visual properties or possibility of imagery repetition in divine realm whereas the traces of this constant creation could be recognized in the human realm through practices

such as divination, oneiromancy and astrology. All these activities were possible only through a comprehensive knowledge of writing.

Constantly signifying universe meant an object or concept could only be understood through thorough examination of its properties which were taken as signs that make up the identity of an object. Hence, this examination was possible only through a deep proficiency in cuneiform script. Writing, in this sense, meant the way to revealing different layers of meaning to reach to the truth which could never be attained due to the continuous process of creation in the sphere of signs. The act of creation was then possible in divine realm as well as the human realm. The artistic activities in Mesopotamian context meant human involvement in the creation process and the examples from this period show that they were loyal to the polysemic nature of creation in their activities. The objects from this period reflect an intricate relationship between the signs whether they are in form of writing or in form of image.

CHAPTER 3

DELEUZIAN TIME-IMAGE AND ACTS OF CREATION THROUGH IMAGE

In the previous chapter, the discussion concerning image and its relation to the text was only concerned with the image and writing in its pictographic aspect that extends to the actual world in Mesopotamian context. The endless effort of unravelling the mystery of writing, images and signs and its result of creating new connections to this mystery revokes the idea of Deleuzian images of time, for Deleuze distinguishes the time-image as a tool for reaching enigmatic structure of time, of uniting image, thought and action of seeing. Deleuzian conceptualization of time-image uses different signs that are embedded in the image and presents an understanding of time that is immanent to the circuit of multiple returns and reverses between the signs. These circuits are formed through the signs' specific unification that leads to the crystallization of specific signs. Crystallization is reflected through the crystals of time which can only penetrate into the present through memory and desire. Furthermore, memory and desire as past and future, or imaginary in comparison to the reality of the present create actual and virtual images that are the central factors forming the time image. Different types of signs and various natures these signs relate to each other creates the time in the image itself which makes it a time image.

In the first section of this chapter, I will present the dream-image and recollection-image that is embedded in the present and crystal-image which is the result of the crystallization of Bergsonian actual and virtual images continuously returning into each other. The field of the recollection-image is memory whereas the dream-image resides in the psychological causality in relation to the present.

Nevertheless, these images are both detached from the material, and rather are connected to the temporal and spiritual. Their temporality through the linear narration and spirituality through the mental processes will be examined in their relationship to the material and the present.

In the second section of this chapter, I will discuss how crystal image is presented and how it incorporates the formerly recollection-image and dream-image into the present through crystallization. In the process of crystallization, I will examine different types of crystalline structures. The second section will focus on the crystalline description which is the result of one type of crystallization that consolidates the virtual and actual, erases the linear narration and temporality. Also, the place of "Present" in the conceptualization of the time image and its resistance to the temporal designations will be examined to dive into the specifics of the crystalline description which entails the crystal as seed that is the formerly virtual image that becomes actual through constant returns and reverses from the present. In this section, I will also look into the parallels between the time-image and Mesopotamian grammatology which requires a coupling with image and its properties in terms of visuality and materiality.

The third section problematizes the crystalline narration that is another type of crystalline structure that was formed through image. Crystalline narration is the extension of the properties of crystalline description to the point that the returns between actual and virtual images start to become an overlap of two images that erases every possible recognition of true or false elements. From this crystalline narration, crisis of truth emerges which reflects the incompossible elements in the image. Hence, in this section we will also look into how both

conceptualizations of the image creates the crisis of truth and gives way to the multi-layered existence types and how it relates to creating time through image.

3.1 Three types of time-images: dream-image, recollection-image, and crystal-image

These three images reflect different types of relations to the present. They emerge from an archaeology of the present and its relation to the world in which it resides. For that reason, their relationship to the present remains virtual in relation to the actual image of present[31].

The first step of digging into the present reveals the recollection-image. Recollection is not preserved anywhere but in itself, hence the recollection-image creates a sense of subjectivity[32]. However, this subjectivity does not mean that recollection-image is preserved in the brain. Since past in general is not particular and it is an ontological element that is eternal and at all times, every present is the past in the process of passage of time[33]. Then, the past relates to the present through the circuits that is established and renewed at each moment. The multiplicity is created through the circuits of relations that were immanent to the present as a duration. The recollection-image, nevertheless, cannot be founded in the destiny, for destiny goes beyond determinism and causality. The recollection-image necessitates flashbacks whose existence is bound to a specific moment and a specific mental being. The recollection-image requires the causality and requires a place in the past, hence it can only be revealed after its occurrence[34].

[31] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 45-46.
[32] Deleuze, Bergsonism, 55.
[33] Deleuze, Bergsonism, 56.
[34] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 50.

But why is it so important that the image should not be preserved in a mental being but rather it should inhabit duration? This relates to the ontological classification of the image. Because becoming requires short-term memory or better anti-memory[35]. Anti-memory erases genealogies, hierarchies and stratifications. As opposed to the arborescent structure which insists on totalizing spaces, binarism or dualism in a way that hierarchies and genealogies become inevitable. Through memory, image cannot escape the totalization of the dualist understanding. However, anti-memory ensures space for cuts, variations, sudden ruptures that creates the rhizomatic connections between the images. For that reason, recollection-image exists as long as it is not totalized by the memory and only through this *becoming* of the image is possible[36].

However, we have to make it clear that anti-memory does not indicate lack of memory. Lack of memory would erase the recollection-image, memory that is ontological memory and non-psychological one harboring productive potentialities[37]. Memory residing in the time forms the layers of memory in which the recollection-image turns into sheets of time. These sheets of time forms plane for possibilities of recollection-image. Image gains a materiality in the sense that emerges through architectural ensembles. The spatiality and heterogenous links make the synchronicity and synthesis possible[38]. In this sense, we should keep in mind the discussions of the narrativity which is always related to a linear understanding of time. Instead of taking images as a narrative, anti-memory takes them in a coalescent state which gives the image a performative aspect. This also

[35] Deleuze, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 21.
[36] Deleuze, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 294.
[37] Boljkovac, "Memory", 264.
[38] Deleuze, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 329.

means that images do not create a line in relation to each other, but rather they perform through their relation to each other.

The past can be achieved, however, through the dream-images, fantasies. The difference between the recollection-image and the dream-image stems from the level of deterioration in the visual signs. The dream-image cannot be actualized without becoming something other than itself. Then, the signification of the dream image necessitates an examination due to the anomalies it comprises. The dream-image remains to be the expanded level of the recollection image in its relation to the past[39]. It already enjoys detachment from the memory and resolves the problem in relation to time in an arborescent scheme. However, the dream-image does not reside in the peaks of past, it creates the possibility of peaks. These peaks are in the present, even though dream-images present themselves in the past, the hallucinatory nature of dream-image places it in the peaks of present. However, dream-image is also threatened by arborescent structures through abstraction. Its simultaneity with present can be eliminated by classifying it inferior to the "real" and by denying its materiality in relation to the duration[40]. Hence, in the dream-image the relation between images is placed in the present and the present becomes the plane for revelation in which the images are deteriorated and has potential of anomalies and different interpretations. This makes the dream-image different layer of present which always encapsules various meanings.

In the crystal-image the circuit between the actual and virtual image reaches to such a level that the images become indiscernible, they return to each other and turn into a couple condensed onto each other. The crystal image forms

[39] Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 67.
[40] Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 107.

the indivisible unity between the actual and virtual images. The relationship between the actual and virtual in crystal-image does not indicate any hierarchies. The virtual image is actualized in a different actual image, hence the two always replace each other and form a circuit of relation that cannot be broken without abolishing the images themselves. This is how the time image is formed.

This relationship between the actual and virtual as a time-images creates an envelope of time that incorporates these images folded onto each other.[41] Then actualization does not happen through movement, rather it excludes movement. These circuits repeat themselves and the returns, ergo creates the synthesis of time[42]. Crystal image means coalescence of two polarities, actual and virtual. However, we need to distinguish this from recollection-image and dream-image. Recollection-image and dream-image are also types of time image, but, in the case of these images, the virtual and actual are not reversed and returned constantly. Their relationship to present is through sheets and peaks, in which the returns of actual and virtual images can be captured. However, in the case of crystal image the circuits cannot be traced in a way that one of the two images can specified as actual or virtual. There is a possibility of the crystallization of recollection-image and dream image in a way that their circuit to the present becomes constant.

At this point, I would like to point out that there are many parallels between Mesopotamian grammatology and Deleuzian conceptualization of time-image. Firstly, the indiscernibility of the two images in the case of time-image directly reminds us of the relationship between the writing and image in Mesopotamian context. We cannot distinguish the grammatological signs from image to the extent that they coalesce through indistinguishable way. Their

[41] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 8.
[42] Deleuze, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 342-344.

relation to the constant circuit is formed through internal relations between time through play of signs in its visuality and materiality. The simulacra are carved with signs and its identification leads to the creation that stems from the revelation of the different layers through signs. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the fate is decreed through writing on the Tablet of Destinies, which is actualized through the light of sun which reads and illuminates. The obscurity of distinction becomes clear in the heaven earth; the signs are drawn; the fate is written. Not only there is no hierarchy concerning writing and image, also the distinction between the signs in the "world" and for example in the dreams are abolished. The signs coming from the imagery world of dreams are only differentiated due to their place in the duration. But the writing on the "Tablet of Destinies" that awaits the point of illumination and actualization through reading is not different from the signs in the dreams that are encoded and awaits their moment of actualizations and are actualized during the dream, during the interpretation and the actualization of this dream. Actualization is then linked to reading and seeing just as the power is given to the "the visionary, the seer" that recognizes the crystals of time in the Deleuzian understanding[43].

Hence, the analysis of Mesopotamian circuits of time elicits the "Present" that involves "present of the past, present of the present and the present of the future" through the Tablet of Destinies or the reading of signs through divination. The linearity of time is abolished, rather the present is multiplied through dreams, through the signs on the sky, through duplicity of specific moments that encompasses the narrativity. The signs of the Tablet of Destinies provide the perfect example for this understanding. Firstly the "drawing" of the destinies is

[43] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 81

either in form of image or in form of writing, but it does not change its effect on the actualization. Secondly, its actualization and determination by sun/Shamash hints at the cruciality of the process of seeing. Thirdly and most importantly, these signs create, and this creation is always internalized by itself to the extent that manifestation of the signs can be found in the bodies, sky, dreams which are all part of expansions of the present. Thus, it is possible to say that recollection-images in relation to the present reside in the divine realm, in the Tablet of Destinies that establishes the peaks of present where the dream-images are simultaneous with the present and they expand the present by repetition of the signs in different forms and shapes. The crystal image, on the other hand, integrates these signs on its body. Materiality plays an important role in the emergence of crystal image for the crystal image is the crystal that incorporates different images through coalescence. This is why the Tablet of Destinies turns into the crystal image through being on a tablet. Corporeal existence of the tablet integrates all the signs making up the images together. However, it necessitates the multiplicities that interact with each other and more importantly, "the seer". The image is crystallized through the seer in the way that only one of many animal livers turns into object of divination depending on the existence of a reader of the liver. Exegesis, then, is the moment of crystallization which requires the potential of crystallization in the most material, corporeal form.

Finally, all these connections between the Deleuzian conceptualization of image and the Mesopotamian understanding of it stem from the ontological shift. Even though it seems like a big leap to examine the Mesopotamian image and its qualities through the Deleuzian investigation on the cinematographic image, Deleuzian time-image focuses on the image as "system of the relationships

between its elements, that is, a set of relationships of time from which the variable present only flows"[44]. Hence, the image is taken out of the connections created by the movement or its quality as being a "representation". Even with the succession of images, they were not examined as a part of narrative, rather they are grasped in terms of the temporal structures which encompasses the empirical succession of time. In this sense, the image is reconceptualized as an ontological entity which has the possibility of recapturing -or even creating different structures of- time[45]. For this reason, the question of audience also becomes an abstract one since in this understanding the audience is not conceptualized as a mass, but rather it is a reader of the image:

> …at the same time as the eye takes up a clairvoyant function, the sound as well as visual elements of the image enter into internal relations which means that the whole image has to be 'read', no less than seen, readable as well as visible. For the eye of the seer as of the soothsayer, it is the 'literalness' of the perceptible world which constitutes it like a book.

Hence, in this understanding, time-image also needs "clairvoyant function" or "exegetical reading" which is directly related to the ontological recontextualization of the image.

3.2 Crystalline description: timelessness and "Présent" in the crystals of time

In the crystalline description, crystals of time are brought together and incorporated to each other in a way that none of the images cannot escape this circuit internally and from each other. Crystallization of the images is the reflection of the most indiscernible state of the actual and virtual images that virtual image turns into actual image turns into the virtual image. The formerly

[44] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, xii.
[45] Ibid., xii.

actual image can be actualized only through the formerly virtual image. Hence, the virtual image turns into the actual image that is the requirement for the actual image which, in turn, is transformed into virtual image that always necessitates the other image for its actualization[46]. Hence, in the crystallization, time becomes visible in its virtuality and the temporality fades away.

The coalescence of the virtual and actual brings the past, present and future together in the sense that all these form "Présent" that is time itself, absorbs all the timelines and erases the temporality which is only possible with the linear conceptualization. The life itself is turned into a flow that is always present and always past waiting to pass, and always future awaiting its own happening yet[47]. The erasure of the temporality means "timelessness", though, according to the being with memory. For this reason, they can be part of the Present only through seeing and recognizing the crystals of time. Through their position as seer, the one can witness the Present.

Organic description presupposes a setting that is independent from the elements it involves whereas crystalline description constitutes its own object which detached from its extensions and becomes an object for the seer. The crystalline description, thereupon, stands for its object by both erasing it and creating it[48]. This double process depends on the distinction between the real and imaginary. The distinction between the real and imaginary can be recognized in the case of organic description. The present that holds its past, but the past is still reflected through its connections which justify their integration through logical, causal, legal associations[49]. In this structure, the relations are localizable even if it

[46] Ibid., 82.
[47] Boljkovac, "Time-Image", 279.
[48] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 126.
[49] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 127.

includes recollections and dreams. The recollections are distinguished from the present through the causal relations whereas the dreams are reflected in a hazy state as a contrast. Nevertheless, both recollection and dream exist as unreal and imaginary and is present only as mark of discontinuity in the reality[50].

On the other hand, in the case of crystalline description the virtual and actual cannot be distinguished. They are in the process of constant unification and coalescence. The modes of existence either as past and present, or real and imaginary are combined in a circuit. Then, the Whole is formed in a virtual sense that is present through the seer:

> Duration, Life, is in principle *(en droit)* memory, in principle consciousness, in principle freedom. "In principle" means virtually. The whole question (*quid facti?)* is knowing under what conditions duration becomes *in fact* consciousness of self, how life *actually* accedes to a memory and freedom of fact. Bergson's answer is that it is only on the line of Man that the *élan vital* successfully "gets through"; man in this sense *is* "the purpose of the entire process of evolution." It could be said that in man, and only in man, the actual becomes adequate to the virtual. It could be said that man is capable of rediscovering all the levels, all the degrees of expansion (*detente)* and contraction that coexist in the virtual Whole.[51]

The timelessness and the Present, then, can only penetrate into the life through expansion and contraction of different images that are always in the process of creating and they have their own life that emerges with the man who recognizes. As mentioned in the discussion concerning the parallels of time-image with Mesopotamian understanding can be also observed in terms of élan vital. Élan vital is a Bergsonian term that reflects movement of differentiation" in Deleuzian understanding. It accounts for habits that are intellectual and recognizing the "negative possibilities of life"[52]. According to this understanding, nature is

[50] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 128.
[51] Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 106.
[52] Khandker, *Life as Method: The Invention of Problems in Deleuze's Bergsonism, 30.*

expressed either in terms of differences in kind or differences in degree that never stops. Then nature becomes natura naturans (naturing nature) instead of natura naturata (natured nature). Hence, through elan vital nature is a *becoming*[53] that is recognized by man and the virtualization of the actual for this can only in man occurs, as stated by Bergson above.

The Mesopotamian understanding of the image alludes to this type of virtuality which is never lower in hierarchy than what is actual. Rather, in the image the distinction between the virtual and actual is broken and the virtual becomes a different manifestation of the actual. Bahrani's analysis on image "salmu" in Babylonian understanding demonstrates the crystallization process clearly. Bahrani conceptualizes "salmu" through the representation and Platonic thinking in the way that it defies the notion of real and virtual. In Babylonian and Assyrian thinking, image cannot be snatched from the realm of the real world[54]. Hence, what is called as imitation in Platonic understanding and deemed as lower in the ontological hierarchy is a different manifestation of the body in question in Babylonian thinking. The representation, then, becomes rather "making present" in which the virtual becomes the actual or the category of virtual is suspended[55]. Through this suspension, what is real becomes multi-faceted which is crystallized through the body of a person. The duality between the body and its representation loses its meaning and the representation turns into another manifestation of the presence. In this sense, not only the representation or the image of a certain body connote valid presence, but also the name of a person through utterance or writing adds up to the presence[56]. Then, the body is always in *becoming* and it becomes

[53] Ibid., *30.*
[54] Bahrani, *Graven Image*, 123-128.
[55] Ibid., 133.
[56] Ibid., 134.

the plane on which the distinction between the virtual and actual is abolished. The crystallization of all these images can be more clearly observed in the cases of the destruction and mutilation of the images. The image's life was considered to be part of the life of the person to the extent that any harm to the image was considered to be harm to the person. The defacement through mutilation of the eyes, nose and mouth of the image/salmu and the erasure of the name was equal to erasure of the identity of the person which threatened the existence of that person[57]. This attitude towards the image shows the level of dedication to the image and the importance of it in the real world as part of the entity of a person. The virtual in the Platonic understanding is equalized with the real/actual and the hierarchy between the two is abolished.

3.3 Crystalline narration as the claim of the truth as opposed to non-chronological coexistences

Crystalline narration is very similar to the crystalline description, and both are included in crystalline regime in which the actual and virtual becomes indiscernible and coalesce through erasure of temporality. However, in the case of crystalline narration, the vision stops being a requisite for the action, rather action becomes occupant of the whole space of the image. Then, the hodological space is lost and the relations become non-localizable as opposed to the crystalline inscription. The spatial aspect of this crystallization posits immobility and direct presentations of time through space which creates the crystallizable spaces[58].

Crystallizable spaces reflects abnormalities and cause a pause in the viewer. The landscapes become hallucinatory in a way that the circuits of the

[57] Bahrani, *Infinite Image*, 76.
[58] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 128.

virtual and actual cannot be recognized and do not need to be recognized. As mentioned above, the seer is detached from this crystallization process, the image is present by itself and assemble everything in hallucinatory spaces that breaks the opposition between the true and false[59]. The circuits of the actual and virtual image are replaced by the overlap of two. Then, the coalescence of these two images cannot be observed, the layers of meaning that flourishes does not need to be recognized, hence the claim of truthful narration ceases. Because the overlap of two images without the recognizable circuits creates a falsification of all elements of its own. The incompossible elements come together and their incompossibility falsifies other elements of the image themselves and the image as a whole.

For all these reasons, crystalline narration turns back to a temporal state, which loses the peaks of present and sheets of past which are created through the recollection-image and the dream-image. The overlap of the images forms this temporality since the two images are brought together not through their relation to each other but through force. Hence, there is an element of violence in this crystallization. It exists by itself in a constantly falsifying state with forcibly assembled incompossible elements. Hence, crystalline narration creates the crisis of truth which does not act on a resolution for crisis. For this reason, there is a sense of power in crystalline narration, power that always falsifies and does not necessitate anything but itself[60]. This power is Nietzschean in the sense that crystalline narration creates new narration through its constantly falsifying nature. The truth is then substituted by the power of the false, just like the

[59] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 128-129.
[60] Ibid., 132-133.

conceptualization of “Will to Power” since it is the “victorious concept of force” that subjugates everything[61].

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I laid out Deleuzian theoretical approach to the image and the concept of time-image and specified how the Mesopotamian context corresponds to imagery analysis that was developed for analysis of cinema. Time-image is formed through the different relations established in the image and between images. The semiotic analysis of the elements makes the time-image present which is the external relation of the time-image that stems from its materiality. Hence, in addition to its virtual elements time-image always plays with the limits of the materiality. This understanding can be encountered often in the Mesopotamian context due to the visual and material properties of the writing and image.

For this reason, in the next chapters, I will discuss two objects that exemplifies the different aspects of time images through different internal elements and external relations and how they differ through different elements of crystalline regime.

[61] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 50.

CHAPTER 4

STELE OF VULTURES:

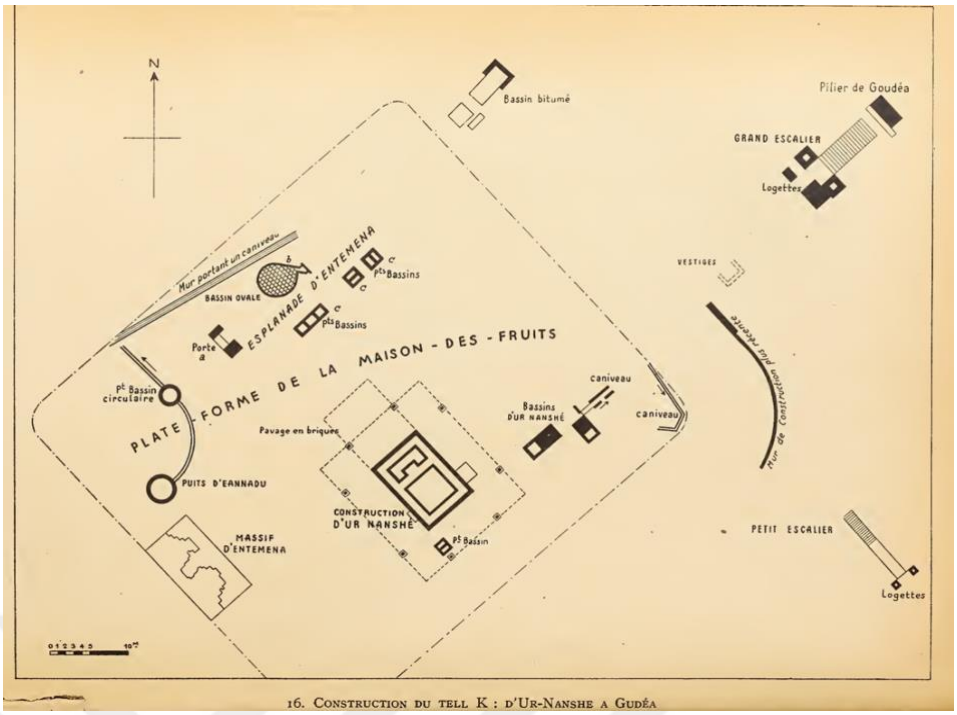
CRYSTALLINE DESCRIPTION

4.1 Visual Program

Eannatum's Stele of Vultures is the earliest known war document, dated to Early Dynastic III (ca. 2450 BC) which commemorates the victory of Lagash under the rule of Eannatum against Umma after long years of conflict[62]. There are six fragments that were found scattered around what was known as "Construction d'Ur-Nanshe" in Tell K in Tello, ancient Girsu, by Ernest de Sarzec during campaigns between 1881-1889 (Figure 8&9). Ernest de Sarzec was in French diplomatic service as vice-consul at Basra, this is why the objects were not discovered under excavations which could give us the means to discuss their contexts in detail.

The stele is reconstructed by the joining of several pieces (Figure 8). Fragments A and C were found on Tell K in a trench between Tells I and I'. Fragment B had been re-used in the "palace" of Adad-nadin-ahhe. Fragments D, E, and F were found in the vicinity of the "construction inférieure." Fragment G was acquired by the British Museum in 1898 and accessioned under the museum number BM 23580; in 1932 it was ceded to the Louvre and given the museum number AO 16109 [63].

[62] Bahrani, *Graven Image*, 147.
[63] Alster, "Images and Text on the Stele of the Vultures", 1.



16. Construction du tell K : d'Ur-Nanshe a Gudéa

Figure 8. Construction d'Ur Nanshe on Tell K (From Parrot, *Tello*, 64)

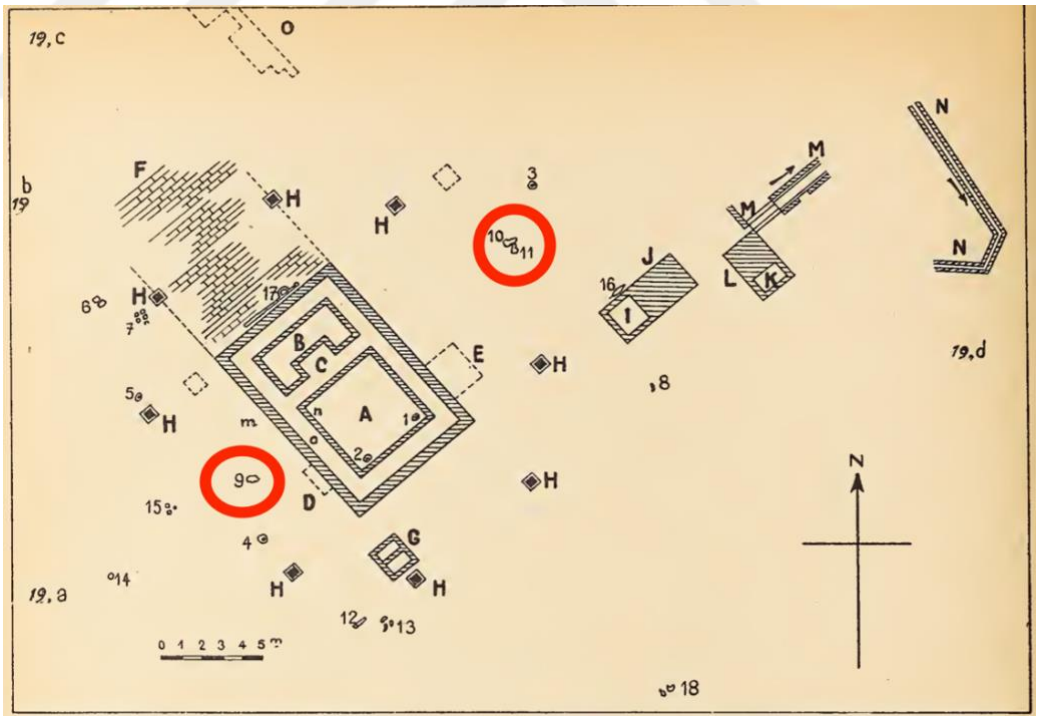


Figure 9. Finding places of the some of the fragments of the Stele of Vultures (From Parrot, *Tello*, 62)

The extant portion of the monument measures 180 cm in height and 130 cm in width, 11 cm in depth. The object is made of limestone with demi-circle shape at the top of the stele (Figure 10). Stele is decorated with bas-relief with imagery and text on both sides. Heuzey named the sides “mythological and “historical” due to the subject matter of the bas relief. For both sides were decorated, the obverse side of the stele was thought to be the “historical” side of the stele. However, after his epigraphic examination he stated that the obverse side was the mythological side of the stele[64].



Figure 10. The Stele of Vultures in Louvre Museum (image source: https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010121794)

[64] Heuzey, “La Stèle des Vautours, bas-relief découvert en Chaldée par M. de Sarzec ”, 439-440.

Both sides of the stele have registers containing images and text. Text is placed on the entire space where there is no image. Inscription continues from obverse to reverse side of the stele. Following the reconstructions of Barrelet[65], Romano[66] and Winter[67], we can understand many details concerning the figures and their relations to each other. But the same is not at all true for the text since the gaps cannot be reconstructed from another source. Nevertheless, the fragments we have from the inscriptions give invaluable information about the execution of the stele and the imagery on it. Thureau-Dangin examined the six fragments at Louvre and completed the works of Heuzey and Oppert, which revealed the period and the content of the inscription[68].

The stele was executed in the name of one Eannatum, *ensi* of Lagash, presenting the conflict between Lagash and Umma-neighboring Sumerian city-state, concerning the dispute over the water and land rights of Gu'edena, a fertile land between two states. This conflict is attested by other contemporary documents as well and it is apparent that the conflict is not limited to an ad-hoc affair but rather it was a continuous problem throughout the entire Early Dynastic Period which was the main issue of the ten documents surviving today[69]. Therefore, we can complete some of the blanks about the issue that are missing in the text and understand the pictorial narrative with the help of the other documents mentioned.

The obverse of the stele was divided into two registers; the top register is much larger than the bottom register. On the top register, there is a large figure

[65] Barrelet, "Peut-On Remettre en Question la "Restitution Matérielle de la Stèle des Vautours" ?".
[66] Romano, "La Stele Degli Avvoltoi, Una rilettura critica".
[67] Winter, "After the Battle is Over: The 'Stele of the Vultures' and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Ancient Near East".
[68] Thureau-Dangin, "L'inscription de la stèle des vautours", 245-6.
[69] Cooper, *Reconstructing History from Ancient Inscriptions: The Lagash-Umma Border Conflict*, vol.2, 13-17.

holding a mace in his right hand. The mace is just above a human head that protrudes from the net held by the large figure in his left hand. This large net has an emblematic figure on top packing the net, lion-headed eagle with its stretched wings and talons below (Figure 11). This iconography is encountered in different works coming from Tello such as Silver Vase of Enmetena and the mace head of Enannatum I[70]. It is also well known from the mythological texts as Imdugud or in its Akkadian form Anzu or Zu-bird [71]. The bird is associated with the god Ningirsu but most importantly, in the later sources bird is the antagonist in the narrative of stolen "Table of Destinies" which was retrieved by the god Ningirsu who became the symbol of the "victor". Therefore, even without examining the text, it is possible to deduce that the prominent male figure on the obverse side of the stele is the god Ningirsu. Even though the identity of the figure was debated to be Eannatum, the emblem of the lion-headed eagle was always associated with the god Ningirsu as in the cases of silver Vase of Enmetena, votive plaque of Dudu and there is no association made with a royal figure.

The identity of the smaller figure standing behind the god Ningirsu also much debated. The figure is female with her long hair and three maces around her shoulder which indicates the divine attributes in Mesopotamian imagery[72] (Figure 12). Her ostentatious headdress (Figure 14) is the most important part to identify her as the goddess Ninhursag who was depicted in one limestone votive plaque (Figure 13) and a cup in the same way, retrieved from Girsu[73]. Behind this smaller figure of Ninhursag, we see the emblem of Imdugud again as if it is on a pole.

[70] Parrot, *Tello*, 85-95.
[71] Annus, "Anzu", 300-301.
[72] Barrelet, "Peut-On Remettre en Question la "Restitution Matérielle de la Stèle des Vautours" ?", 244.
[73] Parrot, *Tello*, 85-86.

The repetition of the emblematic figure of Imdugud implicates the victory as a repeating theme and this emblem around the goddess refers her role in association with the victory of Ningirsu. Ninhursag is quite essential to the myth related to "Tablet of Destinies", for she gives strategic advice to her son Ningirsu. Hence, the register is clearly referring to the myth with Ningirsu holding the bird Imdugud defeated along with her mother and advisor, goddess Ninhursag behind him, accompanying him in his triumph.



Figure 11. Top register of the obverse side, lion-headed eagle attached to the net (image source: https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010121794)

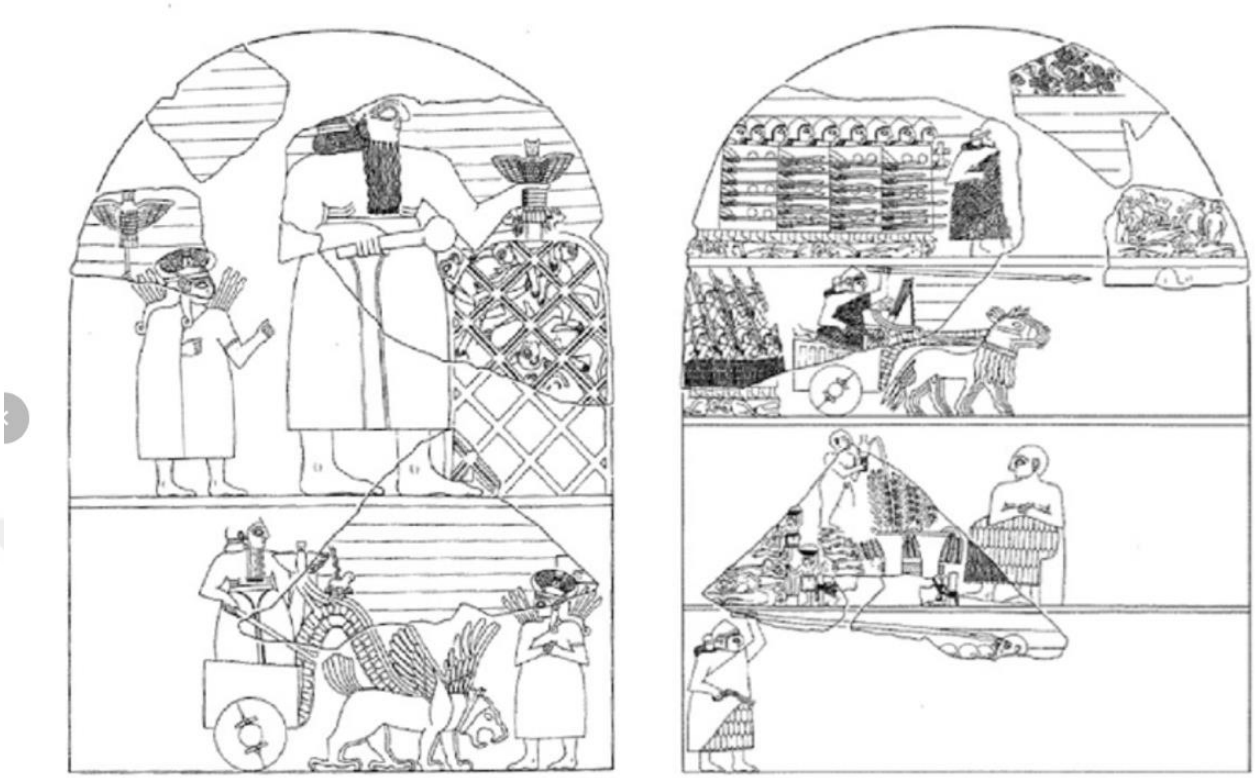


Figure 12. Reconstruction drawing of the obverse and reverse sides of Stele of Vultures (drawing by Elizabeth Simpson)



Figure 13. Votive plaque showing libation made to Ninhursag from Louvre Museum (image source: https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010121761)

Lower register is much less clear to understand compared to the upper register due to the poor preservation. Nevertheless, it is clear that there is a chariot moving towards the right side of the register. Also, according to Winter, a very small part of the skirt is visible which refers to the god Ningirsu standing on the chariot[74]. The animals drafting the chariot is not known, but Barrelet argues them to be mythological animals[75]. This assumption is favored since the chariot of the god Ningirsu needs to be different from the royal chariot seen on the reverse side and moreover, the chariot of Ningirsu -in later Neo-Assyrian sources chariot of Ninurta- was depicted as decorated with emblems of his victories [76].

The obverse side of the stele centers around Ningirsu and his battle against Imdugud. In Sumerian and Akkadian mythology Imdugud (Anzu bird) is momentously known for his deed of stealing the Tablet of Destinies from the head pantheon Enlil. Ningirsu is the only one who dared to face Imdugud contrary to all the other gods. Ningirsu takes vital advice from his mother Ninhursag and captures the wrongdoer in a net. This myth is substantial to the narrative of victory, and it is encountered in both written sources and the objects carrying imagery. the obverse side of the stele is the display of the actions of the myth mentioned above. On the top register, Ningirsu with his net and mace shown victorious along with his advisor Ninhursag carries the viewer to the point where the victory was obtained. This critical moment is supported by the lower register where probably Ningirsu embarks on his journey to fight Imdugud and once more Ninhursag is given an important place. Thus, the obverse side is almost wholly opening doors to the myth that is the

[74] Winter, “After the Battle is Over: The 'Stele of the Vultures' and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Ancient Near East”, 15.
[75] Barrelet, “Peut-On Remettre en Question la "Restitution Matérielle de la Stèle des Vautours” ?”, 254-6.
[76] Reiner, “Le char de Ninurta et le prologue de mythe de Zu”,109; Cooper, “The return of Ninurta to Nippur : An-gim dim-ma” 147-151.

undeniable victory and strategy. However, it is quite important to mention that the net Ningirsu carries contains the disorganized bodies of humans which cannot be linked to the myth. Human figures in the net opens a new door that should not be overlooked, because even though the entirety of the imagery is centered around the myth, the humans implicate a different association of the myth. In fact, the relation of the obverse side to the reverse side is established with this part that is directly in hands of the god Ningirsu.

On the reverse side, there are four registers which are almost at the same size. On the top register, there are the vultures which give the stele its name. Vultures carry some severed head on their beaks. Despite the small part that we have from the vultures, it is clear that the defeat of the enemy is reflected in a cataclysmic way. Overwhelming success of the victor is shown through the almost humiliating defeat of the enemy, heaped up, bald and naked (Figure 15). On the left part of the register, there is a very organized army with a commander. Shielded soldiers in attack position directing their spears towards the opposite side stand behind the king who also faces the enemy on the right side of the register. The group of soldiers stand on the fallen naked enemies. It seems like the capture of the moment of the military encounter as there is a heap of soldiers some fallen, some standing in deep disarray on the right side of the register. The enemy is always depicted naked fallen and disorganized whereas the army of Eannatum and the ruler emerge gloriously and organized. It must be mentioned that the level of detail shown is surprising such as the headgear of the ruler depicted as same as the helmet of Meskalamdug and the flounced garment known to be the ritualistic clothing of the ruler (Figure 16).

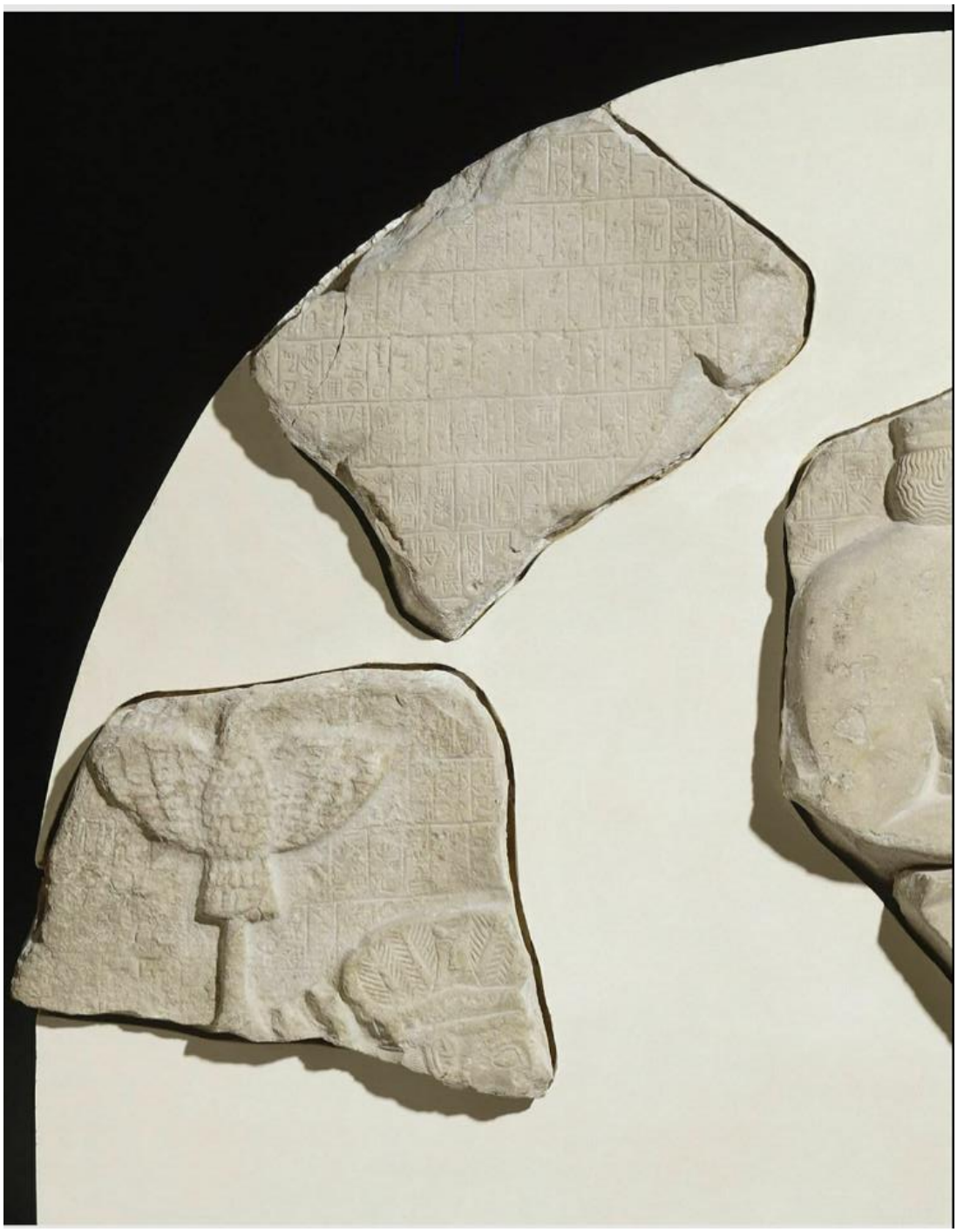


Figure 14. Detail of the headdress of goddess Ninhursag (image source: https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010121794)



Figure 15. Detail of heaped up soldiers (image source: https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010121794)



Figure 16. Helmet of Meskalamdug (image source: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/WC-278)

On the second register, soldiers and the ruler come in sight again at the left side. In this instance, however, the soldiers are not in attack position, but they are rather marching with their long spears. The ruler holds his spear from its shaft pointing to the right side of the register. But due to the lack of that part of the register, we do not know who or what was aimed. On the third register, the center was occupied by a large figure. Only the feet and the platform where the feet stands are visible. Therefore, Winter points out to the argument that the figure is probably seated[77]. There is a bull just in front of the large, seated figure, probably prepared to be sacrificed. Above the bull, there is a heap of bodies just like on the first register. Above that part, there is a libation scene with palm clusters, some overstretching down to the blank space above the bull. The naked figure who is probably the priest is charged with the libation. On the left part of the register, there is a different scene depicting building activity, just like the scene on the perforated relief of Ur-Nanshe (Figure 17). What is different is that the stacked bodies of naked humans are incorporated to the building scene as the heap used during the building. The builders with baskets on their heads climb on this mound of bodies. Hence, it is quite possible that there is a causality between the war activity and the building activity that was reflected through this imagery. It is even in a proverbial way that the building rises on the bodies of the enemies that were defeated.

[77] Winter, "After the Battle is Over: The 'Stele of the Vultures' and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Ancient Near East", 17.



Figure 17. Perforated relief of Ur-Nanshe (image source: https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010121762)

Third register demands more attention with the large, seated figure, libation scene and the building scene all enmeshed with the repetition of the stacks of bodies. The identity of the seated figure was much debated. Frankfort claimed that he was the god Ningirsu, Moortgat as well as Irene Winter would identify him as the ruler Eannatum overseeing the rituals[78]. Winter also claims that this depiction has a connection with the name of the ruler which means "the reclining one". Even though, reclining position is not a motive in Mesopotamian imagery, Winter claims that seated position could be associated with the ruler through his name[79]. Reliefs show that building activity is important this period as part of the city culture and city making. The imagery on the perforated relief of Ur-Nanshe shows him as the "main" builder in the sense that he is the provider of the order and the protector of the "sacred". The sacrificial ceremonies and libation rituals are held by the priests for the

[78] Frankfort, *Art and Architecture,* 71; Moortgat, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 43; Winter, "After the Battle is Over: The 'Stele of the Vultures' and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Ancient Near East", 17.
[79] Winter, "After the Battle is Over: The 'Stele of the Vultures' and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Ancient Near East", 18.

gods as well under the command of ruler. For ruler is the provider of the order, ruler undertakes the activities dedicated to gods. Here, Eannatum, as the dedicator, is detached from all the activities in a way. He is detached, because he is raised on a platform that separates him from all the others that are on the same base, he stands out as the supervisor of the activities.

There is not much preserved from the fourth register. Upper part shows that there is a very long spear held by an unknown figure extending to the bald head of the enemy. This head touched by the spear seems emerging from the other bald-headed figures from which only three are visible (Figure 18). The encounter is apparent but either the figure holding the long spear -probably the ruler- is fighting alone against a cluster of bald enemies or he is shown alone symbolically as discussed by Winter[80]. Therefore, this scene seems to be different from the other war scenes on the stele.



Figure 18. Detail showing the spear and three bald-headed enemy soldiers (image source: https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010121794)

[80] Winter, "After the Battle is Over: The 'Stele of the Vultures' and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Ancient Near East", 18

The reverse side of the stele looks clearly different from the obverse side. On the reverse side, there are battle engagements and ritualistic settings shown in four registers. Therefore, it becomes justified to call one side "mythological" and the other "historical". Reverse side is also very detailed that can almost be called realistic. As mentioned above, the headgear and the dress of the ruler is distinct, but even more, the phalanx of soldiers is depicted in such a meticulous manner in terms of their attire[81] and organization that it has been debated as if there is a truth that indicates the number of the soldiers in the battlefield[82]. Hence, the question of ordering the sequences arises since the "historical" side was read as a narrative that gives account of the battle between Umma and Lagash that put an end to the conflict and resulted in victory of Eannatum. Many scholars discussed that the pictorial narrative should be read from top to bottom[83]. However, recent examination of the stele opened discussion about this order and Winter claimed that the registers should be read from bottom to top, for if not, after the war and the celebration ritual, there would be another battle scene[84]. She puts forward the cases of Warka Vase and Standard of Ur as they must be ordered from bottom to top to make sense of the narrative. However, I believe there are some strong points made by Jerrold Cooper that there is a fixation about rendering an order that would show something that historians could call "narrative"[85]. This fixation is not only limited to archaeologists and historians, but it is very important to the art historians as well. Expectation of a

[81] For the shield see: Schrakamp, I. 2011. "Speer und Lanze", *RlA* 12: 630–33
[82] For the number of soldiers see: Nadali, D. 2014. "How many soldiers on the "Stele of the Vultures"? A hypothetical reconstruction. *Iraq*, 76: 141–148.
[83] Perkins, "Narration in Babylonian Art", 58; Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, 71.
[84] Winter, "After the Battle is Over: The 'Stele of the Vultures' and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Ancient Near East", 18.
[85] See note 43 in J. Cooper, 2008 - Incongruent corpora: Writing and art in ancient Iraq, in *Iconography Without Texts*, P. Taylor ed., Warburg Institute, London: 69-94.

narrative in the imagery of this stele hinders a holistic approach and directs the focus on ordering the registers in a certain way to constitute a narrative. Furthermore, narrativity also constrain the understanding the rich relationship of the imagery with the text. Therefore, I propose to examine the text and the image as two modes of existence that require one another to be whole and fully understood.

4.2 Imagery and text as two modes of existence

The visual program of the stele was analyzed by separating the text and the imagery. However, text and imagery complete each other in a way that they fulfil their place on the stele as two modes of existence that require one another. The materiality of the stele provides a plane of existence that ensures the relationship between two different modes of existence.

The text covers the area all around the text. It is unjust to say that the text is "scattered"; it is very meticulously placed on the stele, surrounding the image, intertwining with the image, capturing the image as if it has an oceanic presence that can no longer possibly be separated from the image. The text is not outright visible at the first look. It does not exhibit a different nature compared to the image. The text and image together make the imagery of the stele a "whole". A "whole" that is undeniably related to the image, and it nearly acts like the image as part of the imagery. The assumption of text as a background brings a hierarchy between the text and image which prioritizes the image over text. However, the text is not used as a tool for horror vacui. On the contrary, text and image complement each other in a way that the signs referring to the name of the ruler Eannatum is placed just in front of the ruler's face. Hence, the image of the ruler and the name of the ruler in writing

go together[86]. This type of conjunctions of the text and image are apparently deliberate, and they show us the inseparability of the two modes of existence and how they are thought to be a type of "repetition" that was brought together on the surface of the stele.

Even though it is a strong tendency to separate the text and image while analyzing, the materiality of the stele should not be ignored as an expanse of space, like an indivisible continuum. This continuum can only be achieved through the organization of the text on the stele. The oceanic presence mentioned earlier surrounds all imagery and sprawls like a flat surface of water. As if resisting to our understanding and perceptional categories, this stele places the text and the image together in an inseparable way. More importantly, despite analyzing the text and image separately, one is forced to see the text as part of image at first sight. In this way, the text seems almost like a flood drowning the image, intertwining with the image, and surrounding it in an unlimited, unending way. Hence, there is not a hierarchical structure between the text and the image, rather the text spreads like surface of a body of water, filling all the gaps and fissures, going downwards and upwards, sometimes creating new spaces. This type of surface can be moved and interrupted and on this stele the text is interrupted and shaped by the image, but not in a strict hierarchical sense. The organization itself is the non-hierarchical movement of the text and trickling all the space where it finds gap, blank or fissure. Because of this organization, the text inevitably becomes part of the imagery, acting as an image. Therefore, seeing the text as execution of horror vacui has a point that the text acts like part of the image like landscape but more than a landscape, it is like the surface of water which establishes new connections and interactions between

[86] Winter, "After the Battle is Over: The 'Stele of the Vultures' and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Ancient Near East", 21.

semiotic chains[87]. In this way, the imagery is enriched with new different levels of growth provided with the text. Emphasizing the image and text together does not only mean that we try to confirm the "unity" created on the stele. Unity is also created when the concerning text and the image were combined on the stele thanks to "stone-ness" (materiality) the stele that brings together these two parts (image&text). However, the unity discussed here does not mean that the text and image are the same. On the contrary, they are not the same, but they can emerge together and create a "multiplicity" of meanings with interacting all around the stele[88].

"Multiplicity" within the "unity" of these two parts of the stele could be possible because of the organization of the text on the stele as if the text effuses on the stele like a surface of water. Therefore, I believe that the text acts in a special way in this context. Even though we are used to the text with images in an explanatory role, here the text is integrated to the image. The text is not prominent, but it is almost hard to distinguish from the imagery. This is because the text is not put for the explanation or the interpretation of the image, contrariwise, it adds new layers of meaning that opens up new questions in terms of interpreting. Therefore, on this stele, text and image goes beyond the explanatory function for one another. They rely on each other for specific meaning and new layers of understanding to be possible. In one's absence, the other cannot be what it is, and in one's absence the whole meaning of the stele would be drastically different from what it is now. Because, the stele, by itself, constitutes new connections and chains of meanings. This is not only related to the organization of the text and image together, surely, or to the fact that specific parts of the text are put with the related part of the imagery; it is also related to the nature of cuneiform writing and its undeniably strong relation to

[87] Deleuze, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 7-9.
[88] Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 38-9.

the image. In this respect, the text in cuneiform writing becomes inseparable from the image and becomes part of the imagery just like the figures. As discussed in the previous chapters, the very nature of the cuneiform writing provides special opportunity for the text and the image to create a unity which adds new layers to meaning and makes the stele itself more than only a commemoration of a specific historical occurrence.

Due to what was discussed before, we can say that there is an aforethought intent of this specific organization in the execution. Therefore, the question of what this intent would be and for what purpose it was structured in this unique way forces itself at all times. Firstly, the text and image are organized in the same manner on both sides of the stele, so the text is not changed in form on different parts whereas the organization of the images change. Because, on the obverse side there are two registers, one of which becomes prominent and on the reverse side there are four registers which cover more or less equal space. Hence, even though the organization of the images change, text's relation to the images do not change on different sides. Even though the information of which side is the obverse is taken from content of the text, visually the text is not organized differently on the two sides[89]. Therefore, the text unites the two sides as it countervails them, it draws the two sides to the same plane of existence in a way. Even when there are figures in different sizes on different sides, the text does not change, just like the surface of water mentioned above. The text is the "thing" that does not change and that subjugates different subject matters, different narratives as if it is that one "thing" that never changes. The text on the stele thereupon undertakes the task of reuniting the registers and the different sides of the stele on the same plane and erasing the differences that could be

[89] When the Stele of Vultures was first uncovered, the reverse side was thought to be the obverse. But, when the text was deciphered, the obverse side was apprehended.

provided by assigning a landscape to different sceneries. Through this way, the text proves itself to be the ground that unites the space and time together even though the figures and their undertakings, actions change. The stele, as the material that combines the text and the image, also should be taken as the specific space that gives not only place for opportunity but also puts boundaries, limits what is executed, merely because of the limit of the space. However, as discussed above, writing on the stele shatters these boundaries with its specific design. It exceeds the registers and the sides. The text is everywhere even on the lines that marks the registers. Hence, the text on the Stele of Vultures gives the impression that it exceeds this stele, and it goes on, pervades the space as if it lives beyond where it was executed. At this point, it would be on the mark to remember the text as "everything" as in the case of Myth of Anzu since the Tablet of Destinies carries the writing that is everything in the written form. This myth is a very crucial part of the imagery and the content of the text, but its impact on the composition of the stele is not limited to these aspects. The "oceanic" presence of the text also reminds the viewer of the "becoming" that surrounds everything and expands through time. Hence, the text exceeds and builds bridges between what has become, is becoming, will become and turns into "becoming".

However, the prominence of one side is ensured by the images and their arrangement such as one part having larger images and less registers on the obverse side emphasizing the subject matter even more whereas the reverse side has smaller figures and more registers. This is why a close examination of the two sides and the registers is required for the arrangement of the sides will be essential to discuss the disseminating presence of the text that was compared to a body of water above.

4.3 Peaks of the present between two sides of the stele: crystals of time

This part of the examination focuses on the obverse and reverse sides of the stele in terms of their relation to each other. Because, even though the text in terms of its configuration of the stele unites the two sides, the different sides demarcate different territories in the most concrete way. As discussed above, obverse and reverse sides are united through the surface of text that surrounds time and being. However, this interpretation of the stele put forwards the question of narrativity of the images. The order of the images on the reverse was discussed thoroughly by Irene Winter as constructing a narrative of the Umma-Lagash conflict. However, I believe that this narrative that was claimed on the reverse side hinders the relationship between the obverse and reverse sides. If the stele is an account of merely the conflict and the imagery on the registers are reflecting the narrative of the conflict and the actions of the king, the imagery on the obverse side is only reminiscent of the battle between Ningirsu and Imdugud. Eannatum is likened to victorious god and the enemy is defeated as Imdugud was defeated. The "opposition of the respective sides" was referred as dualism between the divine and human realm by Moortgart[90] whereas Groenewegen-Frankfort explained the relationship between the sides as reflection of "actuality" and its "transcendent significance"[91]. Winter preferred to call these two "pictorial modes" as "iconic" and "narrative"[92].

However, I believe that the biggest problem with the narrative is the repetition of some of the figures as the fallen soldiers. The defeated soldiers are visible on the first and third registers on the obverse side. The second register is

[90] Winter, "Fixed, Transcended, and Recurrent Time in the Art of Ancient Mesopotamia", 327.
[91] Moortgart, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 43.
[92] Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement,* 158.

reconstructed as having dead soldiers lying under Eannatum's troops, but that piece is lost, and the fourth register is not preserved enough even to make guesses. Hence, even though there is a narrative on the obverse side, it is broken by the fallen soldiers that heralds the victory of Eannatum. The soldiers are seen on the register with the temple scene, and with the scene that marks the end of the battle as claimed by Winter whereas the sacrifice and dedication to the temple is thought to be made as preparation for the war which is somewhat inexplicable since the imagery of victory should not be seen before the battle[93]. Dead soldiers are also seen on the obverse side of the stele in the net held by Ningirsu where the emblematic representation of Imdugud as the head of the net can be called iconic, but the direct imagery of the dead soldiers in the net returns the "mythological representation" of the battle to the "actuality" of the soldiers not to say in the hand of Ningirsu. The discernibility of the so-called mythological and historical fades away around the common imagery of victory.

The supposition of the actuality and its transcendent significance or the dualism between human and divine depends on the victory of Ningirsu that was attributed to Eannatum when the dualism of the sides are accepted. However, as in the case of the net with the dead soldiers and the action of embarking on an expedition constitutes a "continual exchange" as the images become indiscernible. The timeline or consecutive events that make a narrative is broken, there are "virtual" and "real" images that are in reciprocal presupposition. This relationship can be understood as a circuit that reverses on different realms of images like actual and virtual, present and past or real and imaginary[94]. According to this idea, "actual

[93] Winter, "After the Battle is Over: The 'Stele of the Vultures' and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Ancient Near East", 18.
[94] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 69-70.

image is united by dream-images, recollection-images, world images with circuits"[95]. I believe that understanding the actual image that captures the Stele of Vultures can only be understood different types of images that are seen on the different sides and different registers, each relating to each other through different layers of reality. To understand these different layers, it is obligatory to examine the repeating imagery and examine the details that corresponds to the continual reversibility of the images.

Firstly, the dead soldiers that are seen on the different registers of the reverse side and in the net held by Ningirsu does not only stand for an emblem of the defeat of the enemies, but it also stands for the "Time" that is after the victory and therefore it appears as the herald of the victory in different occasions. Hence, the actuality of the presence of dead soldiers are turned into a repeating image that can be likened to an iconic representation. Not only narrativity is erased, but also the temporality is lost and time itself is united as a "Present", "a present of the future, a present of the present and a present of the past, all implicated in the event, rolled up in the event, and thus simultaneous"[96]. This unity comes with the repetition of the image of dead soldiers and moreover it is already assured through the material itself as the two realms -divine and mortal- brought together on the stele. The placement of the text and the composition of the text with the imagery strengthened the circuits in the way that the background of the events was made the same and they were put timeless, spaceless plane of existence as if the imagery float on the "oceanic" entity of the text. Temporality of the specific events such as the dedication or the dream is abolished and thereupon the spatiality is also lost. Therefore, Deleuzian understanding of the crystalline description makes the understanding and the interpretation of this stele possible.

[95] Ibid., 69.
[96] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 100.

The crystalline description reverses our understanding of the past and the present along with the actual and the virtual. Because it is the virtual image which "corresponds to a particular actual image"[97]. In the case of Stele of Vultures, we need to find what is the actual, what is the crystalline seed that the other images return to and unite in order to crystallize the actual image with new layers of meanings and new layers of existence are in the imagery on the obverse side. The reverse side of the stele shows us some scenes that are lined in an order that were construed as consecutive events that make up a narrative of an event. However, when we examine these scenes there is a sense of "timelessness" with the signs of victory on every register of the reverse side (the dead bodies) which is also reflected in the hands of Ningirsu. Moreover, the text itself as the whole surround everything that sets the plane of existence; brings together all the registers and both sides together. The landscape cannot be recognized, time cannot be distinguished. Hence, the text erases the distinctions between the registers and unites the two sides of the stele. Through this timelessness we need to understand the registers again in a way that they constitute internal relations by turning to each other, by forming one another as in small circuits that add new layers of meanings.

The lowermost register is interpreted as the dream of Eannatum by Winter since the dream itself has an important part in the content of the text[98]. I agree with this interpretation in the sense that even though the preserved part from this register does not allow us to make a comprehensive reading, one aspect of this imagery should be acknowledged and that is the possibility of anamorphosis that is revealed. The king cannot be recovered from the part we have, but the spear shaft he is holding

[97] Ibid., 80.
[98] Winter, "After the Battle is Over: The 'Stele of the Vultures' and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Ancient Near East", 19

reaches to the bald enemies directly in a way that the image gives one impression of a distortion. The spear is unusually long to reach to the enemy. This scene cannot be fully constructed, and Winter is right to suggest that it is not possible to understand if this action is suggesting a battle scene or a threat[99]. But the very long spear may be part of anamorphic technique that makes the king and the enemy closer as if the action is elongated through image. This would also be even more meaningful if we consider this scene as the dream image. Because then, the long spear does not represent a meaning or stand for a metaphor that relates the king to the enemy. Hence the dream as an image becomes part of the actuality and turns into a recollection image whilst preserving its distortions[100].

Third register is multi-faceted as discussed above. The imagery is organized as if different activities were brought together like shots on a collage. In the limited part, we have a building of probably a temple, libation of sacred palm-trees and animal sacrifice. Winter classifies all the activities of this register as the preparation for the battle. However, I insist on understanding these "shots" that were taken together as another way of showing the victory. Firstly, the building is raised on the dead soldiers that were shown as the building mound. Secondly, all the activities that were shown are similar in nature. If there should be a generalization, that should be made on the ground of the ritualistic nature of the activities. Thirdly, the activities that were brought together can be compared to the imagery on Stele of Ur-Nammu on which the activities of libation, building and sacrifice are shown. On the Stele of Ur-Nammu these activities were separated and shown different registers, and another register shows drums of war. The significance of imagery of the drums of war is important, because there is not a "shot" of drums on Stele of Vultures but still the

[99] Ibid., 18.
[100] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 56-57.

imagery on the Ur-Nammu Stele has a similarity to the Stele of Vultures which is the dominating theme of the ruler as the provider of the order through certain activities such as building, libation, sacrifice and with the drums of war we can say the duty to battle. Hence, I believe that the third register is directly related to the battle but not as a preparation, rather the ritualistic duties of the ruler are shown along with the battle which is required for ensuring the order. These ceremonial activities cannot be overlooked because they are part of the order and the victory of the ruler. That is why the building mound is raised with the dead bodies of the enemy.

The top two registers show different moments of battle which should be examined with the imagery on the obverse side. The victory of Lagash was concretized with the impressive scene of vultures preying on the dead bodies of the enemy. This event is repeated on the obverse side through the dead bodies of the soldiers that were held in the net of Ningirsu as if the victory is split in two different realms. Indiscernibility of these two distinct images forms the crystal image on the stele. The internal circuit between the two images are formed through the materiality of the stele. Deleuze explains the crystal image through the recollections and dreams[101] but what we see on this stele is the two distinct images from two different realms, one being the mortal and the other divine. The circuit between the uppermost registers of the two sides of the stele is expanded through other images of victory as the dream image also included in the crystalline seed of the victory which is the victory of Ningirsu in this case. Ningirsu's victory is the crystalline seed that crystallizes the universe around it since everything is included in a collection formed by the seed[102]. Then, the crystal image is constituted through the virtual image which is the victory of Eannatum that turns back constantly to the victory of Ningirsu. That

[101] Ibid., 81-82.
[102] Ibid., 81.

is why the dream of victory is as much related to this circuit as the actual battle image or the image of victory after battle. However, these images are not linked to each other that construct a narrative, they rather are linked through the operation of time. The crystalline seed that is the victory of Ningirsu is split time and again when the divine deed of victory, which provides the order and prevents the chaos, is repeated. Time consists of the split in the image of victory, it is the split in the victorious Eannatum and victorious Ningirsu. Hence, the time is seen through the crystal image[103]. Crystalline regime on the stele eliminates the possibility of a narrative. Time itself is revealed through the events and this regime "de-actualize" the victory of Eannatum by "treating the episodes and life as one single event which provides the basis for the implication of presents"[104]. Then, the victory of Eannatum is not a historical event, but it is rather referred back to the "present" victory that abolishes the linearity of time, that is the victory of Ningirsu. Eannatum's victory is not likened to the victory of Ningirsu, it necessitates its "actuality". Myth of Anzu does not stand as the mythological component of the historical event of Lagash's victory over Umma, it is the pure state of victory that works through "mirroring" that "relaunches the endless splitting"[105]. This endless splitting and turning back prevents the possibility of completion in the events that are in human realm and that is why the result of the battle as dead bodies of the enemy is seen in the net Ningirsu holds.

The obverse side and the reverse side are in a crystalline structure that makes the sides in a continual exchange. The virtuality and actuality, however, is totally different from our understanding in the case of Stele of Vultures. The obverse side is called the "mythological side" and given a virtual character that related to the reverse

[103] Ibid., 81-2.
[104] Ibid., 100.
[105] Ibid., 82.

side which was called the "historical side" since it depicted actual historical events. But in the crystalline structure, the virtual is the image that is actualized through its relation to the actual image. Eannatum's victory is based on its relation to the victory of Ningirsu that is the crystalline seed and the actual image where the virtual image always returns to be actual. These two sides become indiscernible and the end of the dead soldiers in the battle net of Eannatum is the strongest proof of this relationship. The obverse side is the one that "reveals infinite crystalline potentialities in itself"[106]. Nevertheless, victory in the human realm is not positioned as inferior but it was made mutual with the victory in the divine realm through the internal circuits that brings the two images together.

Content of the text also holds an important place to understand the stele as an entity since "text image relationship is complementary and not explanatory"[107]. Inscription is subdivided into eight sections whose first part (obv. i-iv 8) relates the historical account of the conflict between Lagash and Umma from the beginning that consists of a period that lasts until the birth of Eannatum[108]. This part refers to the rulers before Eannatum as Akurgal and Ur-Nanshe[109]. After this part Eannatum's birth is described (obv. iv 9-v 1) as "he was engendered in the heart of Ningirsu" according to Alster[110] or as "implanted in the womb by the semen of Ningirsu" according to Frayne[111]. He, then, was held by Inanna and suckled by the breasts of Ninhursag[112]. Jacobsen discusses that divine parentage in Mesopotamian context occurs through adoption rather than parentage in physical sense whereas Eannatum

[106] Ibid., 75.
[107] Cooper, "Mesopotamian Historical Consciousness and the Production of Monumental Art in the Third Millennium B.C.", 46.
[108] Alster, "Images and Text on the Stele of the Vultures", 5.
[109] Frayne, *Pre-Sargonic Period: Early Periods, Volume 1 (2700-2350 BC),* 128-9.
[110] Alster, "Images and Text on the Stele of the Vultures", 6.
[111] Frayne, *Pre-Sargonic Period: Early Periods, Volume 1 (2700-2350 BC),* 129.
[112] Alster, "Images and Text on the Stele of the Vultures", 6.

was the result of the seed of Ningirsu[113]. In the third section (obv. v 20 - vi 16), Eannatum claims the disputed area as his right which was followed by explanation of Eannatum's name as given by Inanna[114]. Inanna's part is probably related to her relation to the first city and the wisdom she took concerning the city and the requirements to build a city[115]. Then, lawlessness of Umma is emphasized firstly with the recruitment of foreign soldiers[116], then the repeated harassment of the disputed land Guedena[117].

The next part gives account of Eannatum's dream (obv. vi 22) and continues with the interpretation of the dream (obv. vii 12 - xvi 11). Dream's involvement in the inscription makes the relationship between Ningirsu and Eannatum tangled as in the case of line vi 16 Ningirsu is appealed to strike down the violators, thereafter Eannatum is appealed by Ningirsu by approaching the king during her sleep. I believe that the appeals made to Ningirsu and Eannatum united through the dream where the deeds of Ningirsu and deeds of Eannatum became interchangeable which require a return to each other. The part narrates the battle has many missing parts, but it is understood that leader of Umma is killed after which battle wound of Eannatum is mentioned. Another attack by Umma is also mentioned but these parts are very fragmentary. The erection of temples and the restoration of the fields come after the battle as the result the victory[118]. End of the battle is sealed by the treaty between Umma and Lagash after it was declared that "the day was settled, and the word was made present"[119]. The curse formula follows the treaty making six gods witnesses to

[113] Jacobsen, "Parerga Sumerologica", 119-121.
[114] Frayne, *Pre-Sargonic Period: Early Periods, Volume 1 (2700-2350 BC)*, 130.
[115] Farber-Flügge, The Myth 'Inanna and Enki' with special reference to the list of 'me'.
[116] Cooper, "Mesopotamian Historical Consciousness and the Production of Monumental Art in the Third Millennium B.C.", 34.
[117] Sollberger, "A technological study of beveled knives", 48-9.
[118] Alster, "Images and Text on the Stele of the Vultures", 6-9.
[119] Alster, "Images and Text on the Stele of the Vultures", 8.

the treaty. This part starts on the obverse side and continues the reverse side. All the gods, Enlil, Ninhursag, Enki, Suen, Utu, Ninki, witnessed were depicted with a battle net. Battle net is repeated as the possession of the six deities and Umma is sworn on the battle net of the gods repeatedly.

In the seventh section (Rev. v 42 - x 22) attributes of Eannatum is given such as his divine parentage, his relations to many other deities. The attributes of Eannatum are followed by his victories over many other enemies as Elam, Subartu, Arawa and so on. Then it is stated that the monument is erected for Ningirsu and the control of Ningirsu is restored. In the eighth section subscription, name of the stele and final curse formula is given.

Winter discussed that "text and image on the stele come from different traditions". Text reflects the antecedents and consequences whereas image reflects narrative of current events[120]. However, this claim ignores the account of battle undertaken by Eannatum in the text and the perpetual returns that make up a circuit between Ningirsu and Eannatum. Firstly, as mentioned above Eannatum was linked to Ningirsu directly through divine parentage. But this relation of human and divine realm is encountered in Mesopotamian context. The call made to Ningirsu for striking the violator was repeated in the case of dream, as Eannatum was called by Ningirsu to "slay the enemy" (obv. vii 12-20). "Corpses reaching to the base of heaven" is the striking image that shows Eannatum the victory in his dream (obv. vii 21-22). This imagery is repeated on the reverse side on three of the registers (maybe it was present also on the lowermost register, but there is not enough preserved part from this register). Even the beginning of the text exhibits the parallels between the two sides of the stele. This parallelism, however, is not an analogy made between the

[120] Winter, "After the Battle is Over: The 'Stele of the Vultures' and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Ancient Near East", 23.

victories of Eannatum and Ningirsu. On the contrary, Ningirsu is the prominent part of the victory of Eannatum that actually takes part in every step of the way; human and divine realms are indiscernible. This indiscernibility creates the crystalline regime in the text and the peaks of present become visible through the returns made to past, divine realm, and the dream. Victory of Eannatum is not merely a historical event but the events antecedent to the battle and the result of the battle always splits between the divine and human or present and past or dream and actual. This constant splitting erases the temporality in the text as it does in the imagery. In the text, the split was made even clearer as in the case of the conflict between Umma and Lagash. The long-continued conflict is not only accounted for during the reign of Eannatum but previous rulers of Lagash were also addressed tackling with the problem of Umma. In this respect, I believe a question about the relationship between the imagery of two upper registers emerges. The second register may very well show the battle march of Eannatum as suggested by Winter[121], but it can also be related to an intermittent battle during the reign of Eannatum as well as a depiction of the battles of previous rulers of the remote past. I believe that all these possibilities are valid. The second register shows this age-long conflict in which the register is split between the battles from the remote past and the battles that were undertaken by Eannatum. There is a multiplicity of the occasions which were united in one image[122]. Then, different moments of battle were contracted and condensed through this imagery where the rulers change or the moments of one ruler through the battle change. The ruler on the second register can be Akurgal or Eannatum during a previous battle that

[121] Winter, "After the Battle is Over: The 'Stele of the Vultures' and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Ancient Near East", 16-17.
[122] Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 44.

did not result in victory. This contracted moment of battle, however, is returned to the victory through the dead bodies that were lined at the bottom part of the register.

The dead bodies are encountered in the text two times; one in the account of dream (obv. vii 21–22) and the other as the result of the war (obv. xi 12–15). The dream comes right after the call for Ningirsu to strike the enemy and fulfills the call for Ningirsu through the actions of Eannatum. The deeds of Eannatum and Ningirsu are enmeshed together and further the victory of Eannatum characterized by the dead bodies are united through the image where dead bodies are held by Ningirsu himself. The image and text complement each other as forming many internal circuits.

In the light of this analysis, I object to the idea that text and image on the Stele of Vultures reflect different traditions. On the contrary, text and image come together, unite, and complement each other while creating "present" that is not chronological; but it is the time "to which everything is internal" [123]. When narrativity is rejected, function of giving account of the historical events is also rejected. Pictorial narrative and giving historical account render the stele a commemorative monument. However, fragments of the stele were found in the area of Tell K which is the temple precinct of Ningirsu in the city of Girsu. The stele, then, was not erected in a public place, it was erected in the sacred precinct to which the access is quite limited. Commemoration of the victory, propagandistic display of the stele and the ideological indications are invalidated due to the placement of the stele. Winter discusses that the stele was a "living testimonial witness" whose text "is intended not only as a record of events, but also as a (verbal) performance" that assumes an audience[124]. I agree with the comment of the stele being alive but I do not believe that the text was meant to be read as a verbal performance. Because firstly, the text is

[123] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 81.
[124] Ibid., 25.

not very easy to read, it is almost interfused with the imagery. Secondly, the verbal performance still assumes a commemorative activity and propagandistic function.

However, the question stands: what is the function of this stele that is based on the victory of the ruler? This question can only be answered through understanding the relationship between the images on the registers and text's relation to the image. Firstly, the stele serves as the plane of existence that brings two images of victory together, one in the human realm and one in the divine realm. These two images are not put in a hierarchy even though one stands as the actual image that is set as the crystalline seed for the virtual image to be actualized and that is the victory of Eannatum. Hence, deeds of Eannatum and Ningirsu are enmeshed and always in relation to each other. The victories of the king and the god are intertwined. The stele is in a perpetual process of forming the internal circuits of these two victories and the stele itself is in the act of creation. The crystal image of victory is created through the Stele of Vultures. As long as it stands erected, victory of Eannatum always returns to its seed, victory of Ningirsu. The victory in the human realm is created -and re-created- in relation to the divine realm and is moved into the divine realm itself. This is not a historical incident anymore, but it is the victory itself that is present at all times which is destined to be repeated and returned whenever another victory occurs.

What we see on the stele becomes crystallized image of victory that is present at all times which is the "Present" that involves and absorbs the past, the present and the future. That is exactly how text behaves on the stele. Text acts as erasing the temporality and makes the internal circuits possible where in a similar manner, Stele of Vultures erases the distinction between the human and divine realms and brings the victory of Eannatum and victory of Ningirsu together in the "Present". Hence, the "Present" is created firstly through the text in its function as an image and secondly

through Stele of Vultures as a material that creates the internal connections between human and divine realm by erasing distinctions. For this reason, I believe that the stele has more of a ritualistic meaning than a political meaning. As Jerrold Cooper puts it, it is lamented that not much is known about a king's reign and concerning the Stele of Vultures it is more exciting to consider it as a commemorative monument of a historical event. The preference of the "historical" in the case of historians and the preference of "narrative" in the case of art historians is related to modern idea of looking at these objects[125]. However, I believe that the significance of this stele has many more layers of meaning and its ontological nature is different from what can be discussed as a commemorative monument. Therefore, my interpretation also affects its political meaning which should also be discussed in detail.

4.4 Political implications of the crystalline description

We already discussed that Stele of Vultures is not erected as a political propaganda apparatus with regard to its location in the temple precinct of Ningirsu. Moreover, the stele was not commemorative in the modern sense that is directly linked to the public memory. Its ritual meaning overshadows its meaning concerning giving account of a historical event or serving as part of the royal propaganda machine. Its attestation to the victory of Eannatum over the city of Umma is reflected rather as an image of victory of Ningirsu. The stele is part of the temple precinct, and our conclusion is that its audience belongs rather to the divine realm than the mortal realm. However, this idea still needs further explanations as to the royal understanding of the victory and kingship in Sumerian context.

[125] Cooper, "Mesopotamian Historical Consciousness and the Production of Monumental Art in the Third Millennium B.C.", 48.

Stele of Vultures unites the divine and human realm as discussed in detail. But there is still a distinction between the two realms which is also clear from the composition of the obverse and the reverse sides of the stele. Eannatum and his deeds always return to the divine realm and becomes part of the divine realm. Even though he was presented with a divine parentage, only his deeds as ruler are the way to reach to the divine realm. Third register on the reverse side of the stele is actually quite curious since its role in the actual battle narrative is discussed either being part of the post-battle celebration or prewar dedications. However, I propose to see this imagery as the image of the ruler as the constructor and the protector of the city. He builds temples for gods, and he ensures the order of the temple. The libations and sacrifices are made; continuity and permanence of the order in the microcosmos of the temple district is provided by the hand of the king[126]. This idea is already prevalent in the case of Warka Vase which shows the king as the supervisor of the dedication made to Inanna (Figure 19). Moreover, during Early Dynastic Period, the king himself is the builder of the temple on the perforated relief of Ur-Nanshe (Figure 17). This iconography is encountered on the Ur-Nammu Stele as well. Gudea Cylinders presents the process of building Ningirsu's temple in form of a myth that testifies to the ritual significance of the temple building that links the ruler to the divine realm through his dream[127]. Temple is built with meticulous attention that was paid to every little detail as to the materials that were brought from all over "the world"[128]. Moreover, the plan of the temple was revealed to the ruler in the dream concerning

[126] Jeremias, *Handbuch der altorientalischen Geisteskultur*, 188.
[127] Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once...: Sumerian Poetry in Translation*, 386.
[128] All World is used here in reference to the Assyro-Babylonian idea which includes Susa, Elam, Magan Meluhha and Lebanon.

even the furnishings of the specific areas[129]. The building activity was praised to the point that plan of the temple was shown on Gudea's Statue B (Figure 20).

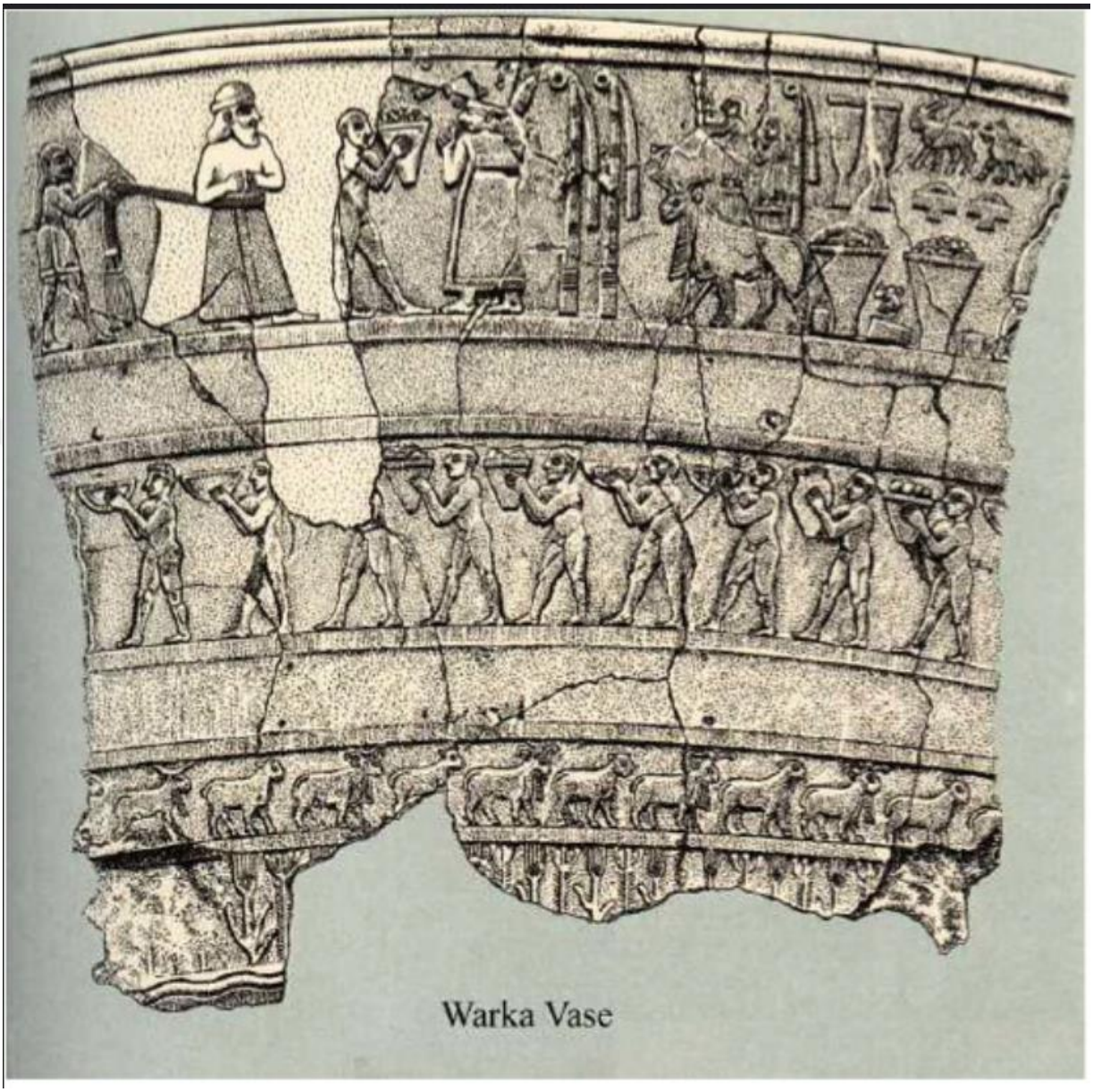


Figure 19. Warka vase, top register showing the ruler supervising dedications to Inanna

[129] Kramer, *The Sumerians,* 138.



Figure 20. Statue B of Gudea with the map of Ningirsu's Temple plan (image source: https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010119540)

In this respect, the temple building activity itself is an occasion that was celebrated as the attributes of being a ruler. After all, the city itself was built around the temple which is the first building to be built following only the divine celestial order of the city[130] and temple is the house of god which is built "in the image of Cosmos"[131]. The temple is the first to exist and it is the navel of the earth that is the way to unity with the sky/divine realm. City and the temple are and should be in the image of Cosmos, for they have to be in order as the seat of god. Hence, the activities shown on the third register on the Stele of Vultures was another expression of the ruler's role between the human and divine realms. Then, ritual activities of the rulers concerning the temple; either building it or making dedications to it are requirements to rule fittingly and provide the protection and prosperity of the city. What we call

[130] Jeremias, *Handbuch der altorientalischen Geisteskultur*, 191.
[131] Ibid., 184.

ritual activities are right at the center of the political sphere. The city stands firm and in order, depending on the ruler's commitment to the temple and its operation. Therefore, temple building, libation and sacrificial activities are part of the provision of the order which is the duty of the ruler. If the order is not ensured, then there would be threat of chaos, since the city itself is the cosmos as opposed to the chaos outside. The connection between the building and fostering the temples and waging war is through these activities' relation to the order.

City of Umma defied the agreements and violated the boundaries made under the supervision of Ningirsu (obv. iii 23-iv 3). Lack of structure or lack of demarcation is a problem that is encountered in the human realm as well as the divine realm. Ancient Mesopotamian cosmogonies start with unstructured entities from which the separation and organization led the way to the creation and thereby to "presence"[132]. The absence as opposed to the presence marks the unnamed unstructured entities[133]. Separation, demarcation, setting distinctions are the acts of creation itself. "Difference is made or made itself" in form of a "cruelty"[134] as in the case of Enuma Elish in which the undifferentiated body of Tiamat was slaughtered in the act of creation. Tiamat as the large body of water is referred as "mother noise"[135] which posits the undifferentiated body as the plane of chaos, disarray and disorganization. The bringing structure to the chaos itself can be seen as an act of creation. When we return to the conflict between Umma and Lagash, Eannatum is the one who corrects the maleficence and restores the border of disputed land Gu'edena (obv. x 12 – xi 4). He, consequently, restored the order under Ningirsu's

[132] George, "Cosmogony in Ancient Mesopotamia".
[133] Michalowski, "Presence at the Creation", 384-385.
[134] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 28-29.
[135] Michalowski deduced the word noise (*huburu*) was used in entangled wordplays such as *huburu=rigmu* as noise that can be referenced to *gimru* (anagram of *rigmu*) meaning "all". "Presence at the Creation", 386.

control (obv. xi 24 – xii 4). Hence, Eannatum's deed of establishing order is a divine act as well as protecting the order by the ritual activities as discussed above. But establishing order also refers to the act of creation which makes the ruler part of the creation of city that is the seat of the god and the order.

The strong connection between creation and setting boundaries to provide order is related to the execution of stele as well. The stele demarcates the actions of Eannatum, creates the Present through the materiality. Victory of Eannatum is no more a part of the collection of battles, it gains presence through its significance as a crystal of time that does not solely belong to the human realm or divine realm. It becomes the mere image of victory. Through crystalline regime, not only victory of Ningirsu and victory of Eannatum are united but they are also structured and re-created as a reflection of the order. We see Eannatum as being victorious, waging war, supervising ritual activities taking order from the god and receiving information in his dream. All these activities come across as his duties as the ruler. Furthermore, temple is the house of god and it is built "in the image of Cosmos"[136] whose building is described through a dream[137] just as the battle with Umma is ordained by Ningirsu. I believe the relationship between the ritual activities on the stele and the reliefs depicting battle is very close in respect to the idea of protecting order. Therefore, the ritual function that is directly linked to the ontological conception of Sumerian city-states is intertwined with the political understanding of the period.

Eannatum as the victor of the battle is united with the victor god Ningirsu. Their images as victors are brought together and crystallized. Their unity is created constantly and this unity along with the victory itself is created through the stele. The

[136] Jeremias, *Handbuch der altorientalischen Geisteskultur*, 184.
[137] In the case of Gudea receiving information about the temple is one of the foundational elements of the temple building.

ruler is brought to the divine realm not only due to his military achievements but due to his loyalty to the responsibility of ensuring order. However, the divine quality of the ruler is always in reference to the relationship between the ruler and the god. He is united with the divine when he is victor, he undertakes the divine function of protection of the Cosmos, but he is never divinized. Even though the two realms are united, through the internal circuits and brought together on the stele, divine realm and the human realm are still separated; divine figures are on the obverse side and ruler's activities on the reverse side. Moreover, Ningirsu's image is the actual image that is the present whereas the present-ness of Eannatum's activities are virtual images that is present and already past at the same time[138]. Reverse side concerning Eannatum's activities are present only as a mode or at a degree of actualization. Victory of Eannatum is part of the mobilization of the original image of victory or the seed of victory that is reflected in Ningirsu's victory. Hence, Eannatum's claim to divinity, if we can even assume that there is such a claim, is tacit and elusive. Eannatum does not belong entirely to the human realm, but he is not in divine realm. He is not venerated due to his military achievement and glory; he is venerated due to his loyalty to god and his execution of the commands of god. This is why the dream and its interpretation is crucial to the victory of the ruler. His dedication to the ritual responsibilities is also reflected along with the victory has a similar nature with the dream sequence. There is a hint of divine attribution of the ruler but there is no divine rulership. Hence, even though the ruler had expansionist policies, the epithets concerning domination and universalistic claims were always attributed to the god. The stele is the witness to this understanding. Ruler is elevated to the divine realm;

[138] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 79.

but he is not divinized, his place is demarcated to the affairs in the human realm but always returning to the divine realm and the affairs from the divine realm.

4.5 Conclusion

The relation between the image and text and the spatial arrangement of these two elements of the imagery renders Stele of Vultures as the crystal image of victory. In this way, stele becomes the plane of existence for the victory of Eannatum in relation to its constant return to divine realm. This constant return actualizes the victory as long as the stele stands erected. Therefore, not only Eannatum's relationship to divine realm is secured, but also the victory over Umma is made part of the "Present" just as the victory of Ningirsu is always "Present" and always repeated through actualizations of the virtual image in the human realm. Hence, the stele performs, it lives and it perpetuates the actualization of the rulership of Eannatum in the "House of Ningirsu" that is the temple.

Text's oceanic presence can only be understood as part of the imagery through the relationship between the cuneiform writing and the image. Text is not separate from the imagery, rather it is what adds new layers of understanding of the imagery and plays with the time. The linearity of the events is defeated and the "Present" is created through the text's ability to abolish the borders that were drawn between the past, present and future. All could be made internal to the stele through this oceanic presence.

Politically, if there is a propaganda, the audience is god and divine realm. Fulfilling responsibilities of the ruler is the only way to reach to the divine realm and these responsibilities are either directly dedicated to god or they are in relation to the actions carried out by god. The stele is, thereupon, totality that is constantly dividing

up. Stele of Vultures is the very material of differentiation of Eannatum's victory from the nebulous sequences of history and time through its materiality. Constant actualization of this victory is created through this stele, and it is turned to a primordial totality of the victory.

CHAPTER 5

VICTORY STELE OF NARAM-SIN:

CRYSTALLINE NARRATION

The Victory Stele of Naram-Sin is a stele commemorating the ruler Naram-Sin's victory over the mountain people Lullubi. The stele was found on the Grande Tranchée on the acropolis of Susa excavated by Jacques de Morgan. Stele was found on April 6th, 1898, and is dated to the 23rd century[139]. It is made of pink limestone and carried off to Susa by Shutruk Nakhunte, governor of Susa, as booty after his victorious campaign to Babylon (Figure 21). Now, it is in the Louvre Museum under number Sb4 in Near Eastern Department.

There are two different inscriptions on the stele: one above Naram-Sin and the other on the right side above one of the Lullubi soldier on the mountain. The original inscription is the one above Naram-Sin, and the second inscription was carved during the reign of Shutruk Nakhunte (12th century BCE) and gives us the most crucial information about the object. According to this second inscription the stele was erected in Sippar, then it was taken by Shutruk Nakhunte after his victory over Sippar and replaced in Susa as and offering to the god Inshushinak by Shutruk Nakhunte.

[139] See the Conservation Report in Musée du Louvre Prudence Oliver Harper Joan Aruz Tallon Françoise and Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Royal City of Susa: Ancient near Eastern Treasures in the Louvre*, 285-286.



Figure 21. Victory Stele of Naram-Sin in Louvre Museum (image source: image source: https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010123450)

5.1 The Visual Program

The stele is 2 m tall and 1.5 m wide at its present state, but it is quite damaged at the top. So, the exact shape of the stele can only be estimated. The bottom part is even more problematic, for there is no evidence how much of the stele is broken.

However, the curvy form at the top of the stele can be extrapolated due to the narrowing borders from bottom to top. The curve at the top was reconstructed like the curvy top of the Stele of Vultures by Börker- Klähn [140] (Figure 22), but because of the steep diagonality of the sides, Nigro's reconstruction with more pointed top seems more plausible[141] (Figure 23).



Figure 22. Reconstruction drawing of Victory Stele of Naram-Sin (From Börker-Klæhn, *Altvorderasiatische Bildstelen und vergleichbare Felsreliefs*, fig. 26k.)

[140] Börker-Klæhn, Altvorderasiatische Bildstelen und vergleichbare Felsreliefs.
[141] Nigro, Per una analisi formale dello schema compositivo della stele di Naram-Sin.



Figure 23. Reconstruction drawing of Victory Stele of Naram-Sin (From Nigro, Per una analisi formale dello schema compositivo della stele di Naram-Sin, fig. 15)

Starting from the bottom left, three lines of soldiers are visible. The bodies of the bottom line are half; we can only see their faces and torsos. Top two lines are preserved well, and the level of detail is impressive. Soldiers are shown moving upwards from the left side to the right as if they are climbing. Their movement is justified due to the mountainous terrain on the right side of the stele. Sloping territory leading to the mountain is shown with wavy lines and alignment of the trees on different levels. Their upward movement is also supported through their heads tilted up towards the larger figure of their leader. They carry weapons and standards while

one of their legs seem to be firmer on the ground while the other bent, strengthening the impression of the rising ground.

Above the wavy line, the ruler is depicted with a larger body, reaching to the upper part of the mountain. His body is depicted with heroic magnificence and triumphant gesture as he is ascending on the body of naked enemy soldier. He is larger than anybody on the stele. As he is holding his bow and arrow in his hands, Naram-Sin is directed to the right side with his whole body, and he is ascending towards what is thought to be the mountain where the Lullubi people inhabited. The most striking detail about Naram-Sin's figure is that he is wearing a horned helmet which is worn only by gods[142].

At the right side of the stele chaos is dominant with landscape elements. The upwardly sloped ground is replaced with the mountain itself. On the mountain, there are trees on different levels which are surrounded by the vanquished soldiers, some of whom are shown as falling, others begging for mercy. Bodies are trampled under the feet of the ruler while he is climbing up to the mountain. The mountain has a pointed summit and an inscription on, as if it is the utterance of the enemy leader Satuni on the mountain. Lullubi leader Satuni appears imploring to Naram-Sin with the later inscription above him (Figure 24). This inscription was carved later in medio-elamite giving information about the fate of the stele after Elamite conquest of Sippar duing the reign of Shutruk Nakhunte[143].

[142] Selz, "The Divine Prototypes", 15.
[143] Van de Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Near East*, 199.



Figure 24. Detail showing the leader of Lullubi imploring to Naram-Sin (image source: https://tr.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dosya:P1050575_Louvre_stèle_de_Naram-Sin_inscription_rwk.JPG)

Above the figure of Naram-Sin, at the same level of the top of the mountain, Akkadian inscription narrating the victory of Naram-Sin over the highlander Lullubi people is situated. This inscription is not preserved well, but the damage does not seem organic. It seems that the inscription recording the victory of Naram-Sin was scraped off by Elamites (Figure 25). When we think about the scraped off inscription along with the Elamite inscription carved on the mountain later, it is evident that the stele was repurposed. Stele celebrating the victory of Naram-Sin over Lullubi was

turned into the stele celebrating victory of Shutruk-Nakhunte who was descendant of Lullubi people over Akkadians[144].



Figure 25. Detail showing the Akkadian inscription scraped off by Elamites (image source: https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010123450)

In the uppermost field of the stele, there are two full circles from which rays emanate and a third one can also be detected from its fringes. Since these celestial symbols are situated on the less preserved part, their reconstructions and their meaning remained controversial[145]. Moreover, the damaged part causes another problem as to the shape of the stele. As mentioned above, I believe that the top of the stele was probably more pointed in form compared to the Stele of Vultures. In fact, it is plausible to presume the shape of the stele similar to the mountain on the right side which agrees with the estimate of 3m made by Winter[146]

[144] Winter, "Conquest of Time", 607.
[145] See figures 22 and 23.
[146] Winter, "How Tall Was Naram-Sîn's Victory Stele?", 306.

In the light of this general examination, dichotomies between two sides of the stele are apparent. The right side of the stele and the left side of the stele reflects two different worlds with Naram-Sin at the center. Naram Sin's body stands as if it is the point of change. On the right side, Akkadian soldiers appear well-equipped and organized climbing the mountainous terrain in order whereas on the left side, enemy soldiers are seen scattered, falling and even some trampled under the foot of Akkadians. Moreover, enemy soldiers are wearing animal skins and are with long braided hair emphasizing the savagery and chaos as opposed to civilization and order with the uniform military tunics and helmets worn by the Akkadian soldiers[147]. Direction of attention of the soldiers are also important. Akkadian soldiers' bodies and movement are directly linked their ruler Naram-Sin, whereas on the left side Lullubi leader Satuni appears imploring in despair while his soldiers do not have direction but being scattered all over the mountain.

The uncivilized state of the Lullubi is further emphasized through the landscape. The mountain is already depicted as their land, and this is supported with the inscription. The other interesting element of landscape is the detailed trees on the mountain[148]. The trees are identified as oak-trees due to their trunk and branches[149]. The significance of the oak-tree is related to the understanding of civilization, since oak-tree is an undomesticated tree which found in uncivilized landscape. Since the Uruk Period, image of palm-trees is used to refer to the fertility and abundance as in the case of Warka Vase[150]. Palm-tree is the domesticated garden tree, suggesting

[147] Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 109.
[148] See Figure 21.
[149] Winter, "Tree(s) on the Mountain: Landscape and Territory on the Victory Stele of Naram-Sîn of Agade", 69.
[150] See Bahrani, "Performativity and the Image: Narrative, Representation, and the Uruk Vase".

"production within a cosmic universe"[151]. The oak-tree, on the other hand, is seen in the wild nature, on mountain and is also out of the organized, orderly world where the trees are seen in gardens and in control of the civilization.

In the middle of these two opposite worlds, Naram-Sin stands larger than any figure with his muscular body, potent building and luxuriant beard. His heroic magnificence and triumphant gesture are concluded with his foot on the soldiers on the mountain. His body and his victory are integrated to each other. His stance does not only indicate a victorious body of a ruler, but it connotes a manly body with virile potence that is perfect and vigorous[152]. Perfection of Naram-Sin's body is elevated to another level with the divine horned helmet he is wearing. Horned helmet is actually directly linked to the physical strength and vigor of life that is already accentuated through the body of the ruler. As Selz discusses, "the horned crown shows in its earliest attestations a pictographic insertion of some vegetable symbols, perhaps ears of barley, and a kind of bull's mask depicted between the en face-turned horns of the crown. The horned crown therefore symbolizes the vigour of life and reproduction and links the concept of divinity specifically to agriculture and cattle breeding"[153]. Thus, the meaning of the symbol of divinity was also reflected through the body of the ruler which must have transformed into a divine entity.

5.2 Separation of the text from imagery

Akkadian text is situated above Naram-Sin and just below the celestial figures at the top. The position of the text places it above the ruler himself, and close to the

[151] Winter, "Tree(s) on the Mountain: Landscape and Territory on the Victory Stele of Naram-Sîn of Agade", 67.
[152] Winter, "Sex, Rhetoric and the Public Monument: The Alluring Body of the Male Ruler in Mesopotamia", 15.
[153] Selz, "The Divine Prototypes", 15.

celestial entities. But the text is not incorporated to the imagery, on the contrary, the text is framed. It is almost for the purpose of giving information on what is shown on the stele. It is even possible to take the text as an explanatory remark for the stele as if it is an object in a museum whose context is given on a label. Even though the text is highly damaged, it appears that inscription gives information about the specific event of domination over Lullubi by Naram-Sin[154]. Therefore, the form of the inscription is en rapport with the content since the inscription seems like a label and gives information about a specific event that is also framed and is disconnected from its past, future or its connections to different realms. Moreover, inscription is not incorporated to the stele in its materiality in the way the imagery of mountain is. It is striking that the involvement of the text in the image detaches it from the imagery and puts it on a different level that connects to the reader rather than the viewer. The text on this stele, then, breaks the interchangeability of the image and text, limits its use to a mere device of communication.

However, text and image relate to each other in form. Text give information about the specific occasion of Naram-Sin's domination over Lullubi just as the imagery reflects the same specific event. There is almost a symmetry to the relationship between the text and the image. Text is framed, aimed to establish the victory as the proclamation of a verdict that is above the ruler and at the level of sky, while the image also reflects the moment of the victory as the final verdict that captures the actuality of the event. I believe that the landscape elements play an undeniable role in providing the loyalty to the actuality and realistic

[154] See Appendix A.

representation. Therefore, we need to examine the elements of landscape in relation to their conformity with the specific moment of the victory over Lullubi.

Firstly, as discussed by Winter in a very detailed manner, the trees on the mountain were described in such a realistic manner that this execution was taken as an artistic development to render a "true landscape"[155]. However, as I emphasized before, reflecting the specificity of this campaign takes a precedence compared to an attempt to show the natural landscape in detail. Thus, the trees serve as a topological marker to specify the foreign land of Lullubi in a way that physical mapping of this foreign land supports the distinction of the historical event and emphasize the specificity[156]. The oak-tree of the Lullubi land accentuates the reality of the event and the actuality of the victory of Naram-Sin.

Secondly, the mountain comes into prominence in a way even at the first glance, conical shape of the mountain strikes the viewer after the attention-grabbing body of Naram-Sin. The mountain and its greatness are accentuated through the wavy, diagonal groundlines indicating the elevation. Naram-Sin is shown victorious at the moment that he reaches to the top of the mountain. His movement is focused on the top of the mountain while his soldiers are also concentrated to this part of the imagery indirectly as they follow their ruler. The mountain just like the trees serves as a territorial marker of the Lullubi land, but I believe that mountain plays another role that relates to the whole of the stele in its materiality. We already discussed the peculiar shape of the stele being more pointed at the top. What is very striking is that the shape of the mountain is repeated through the stele itself. Stele is executed as if it is the mountain in shape.

[155] Winter, "Tree(s) on the Mountain: Landscape and Territory on the Victory Stele of Naram-Sîn of Agade," 72.
[156] Michalowski, "Mental Maps and Ideology: Reflections on Subartu", 129-156.

Then, this moment of victory and domination is actualized on the mountain. The act of conquest of the Lullubi land which is the mountain is completed through the shape of the stele. This connection between the shape of the stele and the execution of the mountain can also be distinguished due to the greatness of the both -the mountain and the stele-. The size of the mountain acts as an invisible force that also supports the importance of this victory Naram-Sin achieved over Lullubi. Even though the body of Naram-Sin stands out as this invincible, able force, it is still smaller than the mountain. That is surely logical that human body is smaller than a mountain, but also Naram-Sin is not at the same level as the top of the mountain. I believe that this composition accentuates the greatness of the victory of Naram-Sin through the emphasis on the greatness of what is dominated and subjugated. This realationship between the ruler and the mountain as the subjugated entity is also created between the stele and its viewer. Colossal body of the stele is powerful in front of the viewer. But there is also a sense of subjugation in the sense that this colossal body is executed as the echo of the debellatio[157] of the war. The mountain is defeated totally without any questions, but also mountain is brought back as the plane of composition[158], preserves the greatness of the victory that is reflected on the stele through the colossal stone that stands with its own "life".

As Mitchell suggests, when we asked the question what the shape of the stele signify or represent and establish its relation to the form of the mountain, we

[157] Concept of "debellatio" is hereby used as "a situation in which a party to a conflict has been totally defeated in war, its national institutions have disintegrated, and none of its allies continue to challenge the enemy militarily on its behalf" (Benvenisti, Eyal (2012), The International Law of Occupation, OUP Oxford, p. 161).

[158] The plane of composition is the material passing into sensation instead of realization of sensation in the material. See Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy*, 193-194.

are answering the question of what it is that this stele does[159]. The shape of the stele as the mountain that was depicted on it constitutes "vitality" of the stele. The form of the stele becomes expressive in a way that it captures the moment of the victory through the subjugation of the mountain through the stone that was shaped as the subjugated land. Moreover, the stone does not precede the stele and the connections made on it[160], rather the stele with its form as mountain and the connections laid out on it is the ground that framing and de-framing is materialized[161]. Shape of this stele even without the imagery on it, works on two levels, the first being the frame for its content while the process of de-framing works on the deterritorialization that takes the land of Lullubi and reterritorialize it as the plane of composition for the victory of Naram-Sin.

The landscape, trees and mountain fulfill two functions. Firstly, the landscape makes the occasion of victory specific to one place and one time with the realistic overtone. The narration of this victory is stripped out of other factors, other events, and causes, it takes the moment of victory and loads all of other moments -the ones preceding and succeeding in the way of victory- into the one specific moment. Secondly, the stele is animated through its form which gives vitality to the moment reflected on it. The mountain is re-created and it was first deterritorialized as the mountain that was conquered and it was reterritorialized as the plane of composition that is the stele materialized as the victory itself. More importantly, mountain as the Lullubi land was the place of chaos but then it was the plane of composition for the victory over Lullubi and it was made part of the order as if a net was cast over chaos and the order was procured through the

[159] Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*, 28.
[160] Stagoll, "Plane", 205.
[161] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 187-188.

execution of the stele. The mountain was reterritorialized as part of the order, Cosmos, whereas it was the homeland of the chaos before.

Thus, it was not only the space that was conquered but also the moment of the conquest was captured on the stele. The mountain stops being the house of the chaos, it becomes expression of the specific moment of its recreation[162]. However, not only the spatial specificity is reflected on the stele. The temporal sequence should be discussed with the celestial elements that appear at the top part of the stele. There are many discussions as to how many elements there were and what they reflected. As mentioned above, Börker- Klähn [163] added four more celestial beings and Westenholz claimed that they were Pleiades whose manifestation were linked to the battle[164]. On the other hand, Brown and Groneberg identified them as Ishtar and different manifestations of the star Venus[165]. However, I believe that Winter's analysis would be more fitting to understand these three celestial elements in relation to the form and content of this stele. Even though the stars' emanation rays are used often were used to show Ishtar, there are also examples of the use of this star form for the sun-god Shamash as in the case of Hammurabi Stele. Still the question stands as to why there are three such symbols at the sky. Winter discusses that the number three would indicate the mid-day sun as opposed to the depiction of sun during sunrise and sunset[166]. Then the three suns would indicate the day, the whole day. A day as the length of time was used rhetorically in narratives of military activities as in the case of Naram-Sin's advancement in

[162] See the discussion on act of creation through battle and violence in chapter 4.
[163] Börker-Klæhn, Altvorderasiatische Bildstelen und vergleichbare Felsreliefs, 135-136.
[164] Westenholz, "The King, the Emperor, and the Empire: Continuity and Discontinuity of Royal Representation in Text and Image", 105.
[165] Groneberg, *Lob der Istar: Gebet und Ritual an die altbabylonische Venusgöttin*, passim.
[166] Winter, "Conquest of Time", 625.

Khabur region[167]. Moreover, this rhetoric was later used by Gutian leaders to indicate their conquests in different occasions[168]. This temporal marker is then used to specify the oneness of battle against Lullubi. Specificity of this event then supported with many elements on the stele. Firstly, the text, as I discussed, acts as a proclamation of final verdict, while the imagery reflects the specific moment of victory. Furthermore, the trees and the mountain were also the indicators of a specific space that the battle, ergo the victory took place. Along with the temporal marker, all these elements refer to the attempt to emphasize the exact moment of victory. Therefore, I am convinced that the imagery as the moment of victory needs further explanation as a narration.

5.3 Falsifying narration in pursuit of new narration

As mentioned before, the most striking part of the imagery on the stele is the body of the ruler and its relation to the elements that insists on the actuality of the specific event of victory over Lullubi. Then, we need to examine the body in its claim to being the "pure power". We already discussed Naram-Sin's body as the reflection of triumphant gesture and magnificence of the virile potency. This powerful image is also supported by his elevation to the divine status through the horned helmet and the determinative for deities that was used before his name. But before jumping to the conclusion of divine kingship, I believe we need to pay attention to the ruler as being detached from a deity, in the sense that he does not appeal to a god in respect to his victory, he does not take commands for defeating the enemy, his actions are not grounded with any sign of communication with the

[167] Frayne, *Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia: Sargonic and Gutian Periods*, 124-125.
[168] Winter, "Conquest of Time", 623-624.

divine realm. On the contrary, he becomes the body of the power, predominant figure that emblematize the victory.

The crystallization begins with the body of Naram-Sin and his body returns to the divine realm by itself. Victory of Naram-Sin does not return to an actual image that is actualized through the virtual; rather the image becomes actual and virtual by itself and creates the crystalline regime[169]. This constant overlapping of two distinct existences of divine and human is materialized on and through the body of Naram-Sin. Divine aspect of the victory is detached from its organic connections with the divine realm, and it was crystallized on the body of the ruler. Victory is, then, crystallized on the body of the ruler, reflecting a narration in which the divine and human aspects are brought together. This narration is put into the "hodological space which is defined by a field of forces, oppositions and tensions between these forces"[170] as in the case of the left and the right part of the stele. The opposition between the Lullubi in disarray and organized Akkadians ensures the shortest distance and minimal connections, and the body of the ruler stands at the center as the resolution of these tensions. Economy of narration is at work, but this is not an organic narration; we witness the moment of victory or even maybe the moment of divinization of the ruler.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the victory as an act that serves as the ground for the ruler's in-betweenness, not being totally part of human or divine realm. This in-betweenness is reflected through the body of Naram-Sin, as he is the human victor who stepped on the Lullubi land and dominated it, but also, he is the one carrying the divine horned helmet. Moreover, his depiction as the subjugator of the mountain is directly linked to the epithet of Ninurta who is

[169] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 127.
[170] Ibid., 127.

called “subduer of the mountain” in “An-gim dim-ma”, the myth concerning Ninurta’s return to Nippur[171]. His victory integrates the actual and actualization of the virtual through his body. This indiscernibility, on the other hand, goes one step further, and creates a narration that exceeds the crystalline description through the overlap of different irreconcilable reflections. This is why, there are inexplicable inconsistencies to his presentation as in the case of the neck bead that was supposed to be used for protection sought from a particular deity whereas the ruler stands out divinized both in terms of the reflection of his body (with the “divine” body and horned helmet) and in terms of the presentation of his name with the divine determinative in the text. Also, Naram Sin’s figure on the mountain evokes the epithet of Ninurta, in which Naram-Sin’s body and Ninurta’s body becomes inseparable. Then, this reflection of the body of the ruler poses simultaneity of irreconcilable elements and incompossible presents[172]. The neck-bead and the realistic presentation of the victory put Naram-Sin in the human realm. Meanwhile, his perfect, able triumphant body and wearing a horned helmet places him in the divine realm. But these two incompossible presentations do not cause a crisis, they rather bring forth a pause that pushes us to affirm these two different realms belong to the same universe. In this universe, every model of truth collapses, either Naram-Sin is the human ruler that wears protective neck-bead, or he is the divine power that dominates the land; and a new narration is created.

This integration of incompossible also proceeds in respect to the landscape. As I already discussed, shape of the stele and the subjugated Lullubi land are parallel in a way that the land is created through the stele and is subjugated again through the execution of the imagery. The claim of realism as to

[171] Cooper, The return of Ninurta to Nippur, an-gim dimma, 105.
[172] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 131.

the landscape is suspended through the plastic creation of the mountain as the stele. However, through this, we witness the act of creation which is also immanent to the subjugation of the land. The mountain becomes another center of this new narration; it becomes the locus of the simultaneity of incompossible elements: firstly, the narration that integrates the divinization of the ruler and his victory and secondly, the subjugation of the land of Lullubi and its transformation into plane of existence for its own creation (in the imagery). The mountain is, then, created as part of the order and its link to the chaos is abolished. Hence, the stele as the mountain becomes expressive and it expresses both the act of creation through the victory and the embodiment of the subjugation of chaos. The mountain is the crystallized space in a way that its nature cannot be explained by its spatial features. This non-localizable space does not reflect an image of time that is indirect, it becomes the image from which the movement derives and in which the temporality is not reversed through chronological tools. Rather, the realistic depiction of the landscape creates a chronic sequence which acts as if it reflects a specific temporal sequence whereas it is transformed into a non-chronological reflection that creates the movements. It is an indirect time image, since it does not work through different movements and the circuits constructed between them, but it decomposes these relations.

The narration of victory is crystallized in a specific moment and its actual and virtual images were overlapped which means that the claim of truth is transformed. Moreover, the inscription is also subjugated, it is framed just like the moment of the victory. The virtual image is not actualized through a crystalline seed. On the contrary, the distinction between the actual and virtual image is suspended, they are indiscernible as in the case of crystalline description, but

moreover the falsifying elements replace the ground for truth[173]. Then, the time appears in de-actualized peaks of presents, which are not actualized through crystals of time, but it creates a crystalline narration that encloses the virtual and actual[174]. The moment of victory and spatial elements where the victory eventuated is detailed in a way that there is claim for true reflection of the events as though a chronological sequence is reflected whereas the body of the stele abolishes this claim and replaces the truth through the recreation of the space which was supposed to be depicted in its natural stance. Hence, the space is disconnected from the possible connection with its reflection in the imagery, it was given a new form.

This new narration is a falsifying one, for it denies a decision between true and false. It sacrifices the truth for the sake of new narration. The incompossible elements in the imagery come together and the crisis of truth provides a ground for a new understanding of victory and the ruler. This new narration defines the victory differently in its relation to the ruler. The ruler acts both in divine and human realms indiscernibly, but he is also in action during the execution of the stele like the landscape. As discussed, he subjugates the mountain once more during its creation from the stone. He becomes the maker of the crystal image, and the narration continues through the execution of the stele from the stone. He abolishes the borders between the act of creation through the victory and the act of creation through the execution of the victory stele. All these falsifying elements are linked to the body of the ruler just as in the case of imagery where he stands out as the center of all tensions and overlap of different images that bring the narration together. This narration aspires to redefine victory and abolish all

[173] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 131.
[174] Ibid., 130.

mediations and mediators in the relationship between the ruler and implications of victory. In this respect, we will discuss the political reflections of this new narration and the ontological implications that pertains to the new conception of the ruler.

5.4 Political implications of the crystalline narration

As discussed in the previous section, Victory Stele of Naram-Sin stands as a time-image that exceeds the crystalline description and reaches to crystalline narration that dismantles the connections between the crystals of time, and instead, creates a new narration that encloses the circuits of connection on specific centers as in the cases of body of ruler and the Lullubi land, mountain. The difference between the form and content, human and divine, past and present is not even mediated, it is abolished. "All the degrees coexist in a single Time, which is nature in itself"[175]. Divine ruler and human ruler are not mediated through an event or assemblage of events, rather, they coexist in one moment. Mountain that is the homeland of the chaos is turned into the order that was designed as the stele and along with the imagery on it. The coexistence of the order and chaos coexist as all degrees of mountain's existence -uncivilized and then subjugated and civilized- just as all degrees of ruler's existence -human and divine- are contracted on his body. This coexistence is without actualization, they rather form a totality.

As mentioned, celestial entities on the sky allude to the one single day that the battle took place and victory was achieved. The totality in a single time, the day of the battle but also the moment that Naram-Sin stepped on the mountain. But this totality cannot be divided, it seeks for a division into its past and present

[175] Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 93.

whereas all the degrees are enclosed on the totality of the stele; body of mountain and the body of the ruler. Hence, the deterritorialization of these figures are complete in their differentiation to the point that the movement becomes absolute[176]. It is absolute but not in its creative power, it "relates "a" body considered as multiple to a smooth space that it and occupies in the manner of a vortex"[177]. This is why the time-image of this kind cannot achieve the constant dividing up that the Bergsonian idea "élan vital" comes into life.

Considering all these explanations, I believe that we can see the relationship between the Akkadian power consolidation during Naram-Sin's reign and the significance of the stele. Even though Winter states that the stele was probably erected in the courtyard of the Shamash Temple in Sippar, the stele has some parallels with the propagandistic representation in the Akkadian Period such as the inscription on the stele. The text is situated only for stating the events without mingling with the image and in turn, imagery serves to show the political dominion through victory without any other reference to the place of the ruler in the context of the city. Akkadian state organization transformed Mesopotamia, the conception of political unity was extended from city states to unified state organization that did not recognize a topographical, geographical, and conceptual boundaries[178]. Complex bureaucratic system and writing was spread wherever Akkadian domination went.

Just as the crystalline narration totalized "one day" that encompassed the time and landscape that was the foreign and to be subjugated[179], Akkadian state exceeded

[176] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 510.
[177] Ibid., 510.
[178] Michalowski, "Masters of the Four Corners of the Heavens: Views of the Universe in Early Mesopotamian Writings", 152.
[179] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 127-128.

the limits of the city-states. In this new conception, the mountain[180] as the foreign were incorporated to the Akkadian imagery as the "other" that should or would be subjected to the Akkadian state[181]. So, the new narration that aspires the total power of the ruler over all "others" was also the reflection of the new paradigm introduced by the Akkadian rule[182].

This allusion to universalistic claims were also embodied through the ruler. The rulers of Akkadian referred to themselves as šar kiššatim, "king of everything" which was the result of neologism that took the use of LUGAL KIŠ (king of city Kish) and reclaim the expression for their universalistic rulership and a centralized rule[183]. When this is the case, the importance of the city as being a microcosm is lost, the temple is then no longer center of the universe. The temple and the processions are lost, there is only one divine part that is immanent to the state is left and that is the ruler. So, the body of the ruler is reflected as the expression of perfection that emphasized his divine status. Moreover, the horned helmet and the determinative "DINGIR" leaves no question as to the divine status of the ruler who is no longer the ruler of the city and the protector of the Cosmos; but he is the one who expands the rule of order in the land of chaos. The chaos no longer indicates the disruption of the order that needs to be replaced by the ruler, but the land of chaos stands as disruption per se, that should and would be tamed.

[180] The Sumerian sign "KUR" as three mountains means foreign land, mountain, netherworld. However, in Akkadian it also came to be used the logogoram for kašādum (to conquer) and kašdum (successful). The sign that indicated the foreign lando r the land that is not the city in sumerian context started to refer to military action.
[181] Michalowski, Masters of the Four Corners of the Heavens: Views of the Universe in Early Mesopotamian Writings, 153.
[182] Cooper, "Paradigm and Propaganda: The Dynasty of Akkade in the 21st Century", 12.
[183] Michalowski, "Memory and Deed: The Historiography of the Political Expansion of the Akkad State", 87-89.

Thus, the creation does not take place through providing and ensuring order and preventing the chaos, but rather it is directly focused on the subjugation over a different land. The land is not discussed through the rightful domination, it is the center of the ruler's allusion to affirming his power which reaches to the divine realm, not through his relation to the divine but through his relation to the domination and creation. Hence, it falsifies the relationship between the human and divine realm that was constructed through the actions and body of the ruler. The body is approximated as if it is a divine entity while the actions of the ruler are reduced to his display of power. This power of the false, ipso facto, turns to the Nietzschean concept of "will to power" by substitution for a new "form of truth"[184]. Because it is the "victorious concept 'force'"[185]; force that is not expressed through quality but rather expressed as a "genealogical, differential and genetic" element[186]. This is why, Naram-Sin becomes the focus of the stele and the focus of the victorious action. His action is not mediated through his relation to any deity, ergo he becomes divine. Brisch explains:

> A possible reason for Naram-Sîn's deification may be seen in the king's success in putting down the rebellion of southernmost Mesopotamia that had probably taken place shortly before....[187]

Even though this explanation is reductive in the sense that Naram-Sin gained many victories and had successful military campaigns, extending kingdom from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea[188], Brisch's choice of a specific case of victory is quite to the point. This victory stele also reflects such a specific case that shows the deified ruler. Then, the ruler is not deified a priori, but his

[184] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 131.
[185] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 619.
[186] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 50.
[187] Brisch, "The Priestess and the King. The Divine Kingship of Šū-Sîn of Ur", 162.
[188] Sazonov, "Universalistic Ambitions, Deification and Claims of Divine Origin of Mesopotamian Rulers in Early Dynastic and Sargonic Periods", 50.

divinity is affirmed or even created through his victory and power over everything. This creative power emerges only through the action of the ruler; hence, the ruler is the focus of creation without any divine basis. He becomes the divine basis for the end of chaos and provision of the order, without any command, because the complement to his victorious force is internal[189]. This internal complement transforms his nature and carries him to the divine realm.

Hence, the victory and the victorious body of the ruler are the center of this new political paradigm. New narration of the political power does not base itself in the city, rather it expands and defines itself through the domination and subjugation of "other" and provides a universalistic account. This is why, the land of the "other" becomes the shape of the stele where the victory is crystallized, and the ruler is deified. This land of chaos is turned into the subjugated and civilized ground where the victory is perpetuated through the execution of the imagery. This time-image crystallizes a narration and reflects the change in the political and ontological place of the ruler. Ruler is not the mediator between the human and divine realm who ensures the order in the city which is the center of the universe. As many cities were under the Akkadian rule, the center is lost, while it was and needed to be even more concentrated. Then the center becomes the body of the ruler who carries the power that assembles all the parts of the universe.

5.5 Conclusion

Victory Stele of Naram-Sin shows us that the relationship between the text and the image is the key to understand the nature of the imagery. In this case, the image is crystallized at one moment which was turned into an encompassing entity that

[189] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 52.

surrounds the time itself without actualization of the virtual image. Rather, the image reflects the overlap of virtual and actual images which created its crystalline regime through the body of the ruler. This center becomes the source of the crystalline narration that creates the power of the false in which the model of truth is shattered. Instead, all the degrees of existence coexist in One time that is contracted in the body of the ruler as well as the mountain, which was subjugated twice, through the victory of Naram-Sin and secondly through the execution of it as the stele to re-create the victory. Just as the body of the ruler becomes the center for the new narration, mountain becomes the plane of creation.

This new conception of the ruler is surely justified due to the "imperial" nature of the Akkadian state. Since the city can no longer be the seat of the deity and the ruler, loses its privilege as the center of the universe, this more centralized political structure must be centralized in the body of the ruler. In this new political paradigm, the ruler ceases to be identified with the city, rather he is identified with the foreign land as in the case of mountain (Sumerian sign KUR)[190] and his victorious force that dominated this land. In tandem with the loss of the city, the direct relationship of the ruler with the god is obscured. The ruler's role of protector of the seat of the god is replaced with the ruler's creative force of domination. His victorious action provides and affirms his divine quality.

[190] See footnote 41.

CHAPTER 6

TWO REGIMES OF TIME-IMAGE:

AN ONTOLOGICAL SHIFT

In the previous chapters I discussed the Stele of Vultures and Victory Stele of Naram-Sin regarding the relationship between the text and image. The two steles were examined through their relation to the time and the crystallizable forms that transformed these steles into time-images. However, as discussed previously, these two steles reflect crystal-image in different modes which generate different crystalline regimes: crystalline description and crystalline narration. These two different modes lead to different ontological implications and political conceptions. I believe that the comparison of the two will show us the difference between the Sumerian Early Dynastic Period and Akkadian Period regarding understanding of creation, the ruler's place in the process of creation, ruler's position in the universe in relation to chaos, and his relation to the divine realm. Moreover, these subjects always tied to each other in political understanding that cannot be imagined without the territorial aspect of the state. Therefore, I believe that examining these two steles in comparison to each other will show us the change in the territory and the state organization along with change in the raison d'être of the state structure between two periods.

In the present chapter, I will compare these two steles and examine the differences in respect to the organization of the image and text and continue my analysis to understand the life of writing on these objects. Different modes of existences of the texts and how they relate to different reflections of the crystals of time are other distinctions that asks for our attention to understand the conception

of time and its juncture with the act of creation through image. Consequently, I will discuss how these steles can be contextualized with respect to the period they were executed. This discussion will entail understanding the change in political landscape with the Akkadian state formation and the change of the ruler's position in relation to the political structure.

6.1 Comparison of the image-text organization on the two steles

As discussed in the chapters 4 and 5, inscription on the Stele of Vultures fills the space in a way that it cannot be distinguished from the imagery whereas the text on the Victory Stele of Naram-Sin appears in a framed form. Inscription on the Stele of Vultures works on two different levels, the first is its encompassing existence and the second is its equalizing quality. The text brings two sides of the stele as well as it acts like a landscape; a landscape that does not change in different registers. The text brings all the registers to the same space and time, even more, it abolishes the spatiality and temporality. On the other hand, the restrained nature of the inscription on the Victory Stele of Naram-Sin is integrated to the whole as a separated element.

In this respect, I believe that a comparison between the content of the inscriptions is very much needed. Inscription on the Victory Stele of Naram-Sin gives information about the campaign against the Lullubi people who lived on the mountain. This type of description is quite different from what is encountered in the case of Stele of Vultures. Text on the Stele of Vultures gives us information about the historical context of the specific issue (concerning previous rulers), prior events and violations leading to the battle, god's command to the ruler in his mantic dream and its fulfillment through the victory in the battle, gods' witnessing

to the contractual agreement that resolves the issue. On the other hand, information in the inscription on the Victory Stele of Naram-Sin is really concise; it is concerned with who the ruler was, where and against whom the battle took place, and how it ended. Even though the main subject matter of the texts is the same -victory-, the references of the two texts are quite different. The victory in the Stele of Vultures is alluded through the actual and virtual, the divine realm and human realm. But these modes of existence are combined in a circuit[191], in which Ningirsu is attributed with the provision of the order and Eannatum acts on behalf of him. We need to be careful, though, about the expression "on behalf of him", for Eannatum does not act as "the hand" of Ningirsu, rather he repeats whatever the act Ningirsu undertook or would undertake. Indiscernibility of these two figures is clear from the content of the text. Furthermore, this indiscernibility can be observed in the imagery, too. Even though the divine realm and human realm was clearly separated as the obverse and reverse side of the stele, the two sides always return to each other, and they stand on the same plane of composition.

On the other hand, inscription on the Victory Stele of Naram-Sin takes the victory only in the context of the battle and turns it into a statement, just as the moment that Naram-Sin steps on the foreign land of Lullubi. This imagery also echoes the epithet of Ningirsu as the "subduer of the mountains" and erases the separation between the body of Naram-Sin and the body of Ningirsu. The connection with the divine realm is ruptured and the actual and virtual images cease to be visible, the movements collapses, as if every element of the image turns to be immobile[192] in a way that these elements work as iconic presentations. We can observe this in the imagery as the figures of the rulers, soldiers and the

[191] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 127.
[192] Ibid., 128.

enemy reflect movement whereas this movement is focused to be immobile as fixed shot of the moment of victory. Hence, the moment of victory is reflected through the detours, breaks, insertions in the case of Stele of Vultures whereas it is reflected through overlapping of different situations, conceptions, and even different existences[193]. Hence, all connections to the victory of Naram-Sin are lost in the way that all the elements of the imagery "symbolize" the overlap of the divine and human, while the only connection to this victory becomes the landscape itself. In the case of Stele of Vultures, the time-image is created through the crystalline seed of victory that is established with Ningirsu's victory and it is supported with the dream-images and recollection-images, as the resolution of these tensions were achieved with the unifying text. This is the crystalline description of the victory. The time-image is derived from the different movements that were inserted and integrated whereas Victory Stele of Naram-Sin extends the crystallization of the one moment through the non-localizable relations in which "landscapes become hallucinatory"[194] as in the case of the mountain, the land of Lullubi. Hence, what we have is chronic non-chronological time from which the movement emerges. The mountain becomes the stele itself, ergo plane of composition where the victorious act of the ruler emerges. Moreover, this act is also a reflection of an epithet, a statement of the ruler as the subduer of the mountain, subjugator of the foreign land[195].

In this respect, the clear reflection of the crystalline seed[196] in the Stele of Vultures creates the time-image in which the peaks of past and present, imaginary and real take place. The crystals of time are incorporated on the stele and the

[193] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 127-130.
[194] Ibid., 129.
[195] See Cooper, *An-gim dim-ma: Return of Ninurta to Nippur*, 105-106.
[196] Crystalline seed is the victory of Ningirsu over Anzu-bird, as discussed in detail in the Chapter 4.

"Present" becomes visible. However, the Victory Stele of Naram-Sin tells a whole different story. The crystal of time is one and becomes internal in the moment. Even though there is a specific reference to the time through the celestial bodies, the time was made internal to the exact moment of the victory of Naram-Sin. The time-image itself becomes the landscape just as the mountain becomes the stele. The text on the two steles was our starting point to understand the organization of the two steles in respect to text's relation to the imagery. The time-images are derived through this relationship, and it is directly related to how they were integrated to the imagery. This is why, the nature of the texts on the two steles needs to be examined in detail.

6.2 Different existences of the text: oceanic and subjugated

Deleuze states:

> Between the events-effects and language, or even the possibility of language, there is an essential relation. It is the characteristic of events to be expressed or expressible, uttered, or utterable…[197]

In our quest to get a glimpse of the layers of meaning immanent to the two steles, the text is central, but it is much more relevant through its composition with the imagery and its characteristic to be expressible instead of utterable. Due to the nature of cuneiform writing to be expressible, the text is intrinsically part of the expression rather than to be utterable. In this sense, the forms of the texts on Stele of Vultures and Victory Stele of Naram-Sin are quite distinctive.

We have two different writings in a sense. One reflects excess and the other restraint. In form, inscription of the Stele of Vultures is unfettered, it even exceeds the boundaries of the registries, or the different sides of the stele. It

[197] Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 12.

encompasses the stele and "everything" on it. This excessive form of presence determines the mode of existence and the mode of creation reflected on the stele. Moreover, it also sets the tone of the stele's position in relation to the subject matter of victory and its existence in time. The oceanic form of the inscription abolishes the linear time, and it situates the events in relation to their place in the "Present". Hence the inscription is the main factor that creates the time-image. But I believe, even more interestingly, this form relates to the content of the stele in a very indirect way. The writing that encompasses everything and is indiscernible from the imagery calls for the "Tablet of Destinies". Tablet of Destinies is the reason why Ningirsu battled with Imdugud/Anzu-bird, who stole the tablet from Enlil and frightened the gods since he became invincible with the tablet[198]. Because it was the Tablet of Destinies that worked as the tool for organization of the universe. Through writing and its interchangeability with image and the real[199], this tablet was the creative tool. It was not like the image, but it was in a state to be decoded through actualization. The parallel between the idea behind the Tablet of Destinies and the oceanic form of the inscription on the Stele of Vultures is undeniable. Text on the Stele of Vultures was assemblage of "mantic signs embedded into the real" just as the writing on the Tablet of Destinies whose signs became visible through actualization. We already discussed the virtual and actual image, but it is necessary to remember that the interconnectedness of each and every element of the stele works through both form and content. Moreover, what Enlil determines as destiny, it is cut, it is certain, and it cannot be changed[200] as in the case of the stele. The stele is set for

[198] Annus, *The Standard Babylonian Epic of Anzu*, xii.
[199] Bahrani, *Graven Image*, 116.
[200] The passage in the "Song of the Hoe" the finality of Enlil's decree is emphasized: "Not only did the lord make the world appear in its correct form—the lord who never changes the destinies which he

the victory of the ruler not to commemorate but to carry the ruler to the divine realm as discussed in chapter 4 in detail. Then, it is plausible to suggest that Stele of Vultures also acts like the Tablet of Destinies and this quality of the stele derives from the nature of the cuneiform writing but more importantly, from the organization of the text as an oceanic entity.

On the other hand, the text on the Victory Stele of Naram-Sin is executed in a totally different manner. The inscription is separated from the imagery, and it was framed. Contrary to excessive form of the former inscription, this inscription is subjugated. Regarding the creative power of the writing as in the case of Tablet of Destinies, this inscription appears as a manifestation of a specific decree. Instead of showing the assemblage of mantic signs, the inscription on the Victory Stele of Naram-Sin reflects a specific decree that is situated above the depiction of the battle and above the ruler, which suggests its higher status. This specific manifestation is also supported by the celestial entities as discussed in chapter 5. The entities alluding to the movement of sun, not only give reference to the specific day of the battle but they also evoke the Sun-god's property of determining the destiny. The territory of the sun-god is where the destiny is determined and the birth of sun (sunrise) is the moment of resolution for the uncertainties, since the decreed fate is put into motion[201]. The moment of sunrise is the time of judgment just as the moment of birth. The crisis of existence is resolved at the moment of birth and journey that begins in the unknown is finalized at the territory of sun-god, where the sun rises with the certainty, ergo

determines: Enlil, who will make the human seed of the Land come forth° from the earth°—and not only did he hasten to separate heaven from earth, and hasten to separate earth from heaven, but, in order to make it possible for humans to grow in Where Flesh Came Forth°, he first suspended° the axis of the world at Dur-an-ki." Black, *The Literature of Ancient Sumer*, 312.

[201] Polonsky, "The Mesopotamian Conceptualization of Birth And The Determination Of Destiny At Sunrise", 297-298.

with the decree. Thus, the celestial bodies refer to the determination of fate, while the framed inscription appear as the decree, manifestation of this determination. Then, the text on the Victory stele of Naram-Sin acts as utterable in comparison with the expressible nature of the text on the Stele of Vultures. One floats to be decoded and the other is manifested above the result of the manifestation. For this reason, the victory of Naram-Sin comes along a single crystal of time. The moment of victory is detached from all other moments and all of the other moments are overlapped in this one moment. There is no place for the reverses and returns at the exact moment that was decreed. That is why Naram-Sin himself becomes the "subduer of the mountain" and his actions are begotten through his triumphant subjugation.

Hence, I believe that two forms in which the inscriptions were executed reflect the two states of the destiny; one written and actualized through different images and the one manifested at one exact moment. For the first one, the god is the organizer and the protector of the destiny as in the case of Enlil in Myth of Anzu, in the other god decrees and illuminates the inscribed destiny revealing the actualization itself as in the case sun-god in the "Incantation to Utu":

[^{d}utu za-a-d]a nu-me-a [^{d}ni]n-mah˹nin níg-dím-dím-ma gi-li ku_5- ku_5-da n[am]-lú-ulu_3-{ke_4} nam-lú-ulu_3 nu-un-tar-re, "Utu, without you Ninmah˺, the lady who creates everything, who cuts the umbilical cord, could not decide the fate for mankind"[202]

On the stele of Vultures, we see connections, returns that makes the crystalline regime through different crystals of time and for that reason inscription is formed in the oceanic presence that surrounds and encompasses everything with the

[202] Alster, "Incantation to Utu,", 47, 73, 81.

illuminated part of this parts of the destiny that is actualized that came together to make the crystalline regime and the unilluminated parts that are there to be decoded through illumination and awaiting to be decreed. All the actualized and not yet actualized parts of the fate lie together on the stele on the same level, forming the "Present". This understanding was already there in the Mesopotamian world which made the divination possible, since the god's writing were open to the human realm through different sources as in the case of oneiromancy, hepatoscopy and astrological readings of the sky[203]. But this writing was encoded and stays ominous[204] just like the writing that encompasses all on the Stele of Vultures. Moreover, on the images this ominous world is referenced through the dream of the ruler in the text and the iconic presence of the heaped-up bodies on different registers and in the *Shushgal* net of Ningirsu. Thus, the signs decoded, signs repeated as corroborating the destiny of the ruler as victorious and the signs which turned real in the form of images are incorporated on the stele. The writing of the gods and its actualization along with the significations of this decree are considered to be the necessary elements to reflect properties of the ruler in its full scope.

On the other hand, Victory Stele of Naram-Sin is concerned with the moment of the reading of the signs, their decoding. Inscription on the stele in a restrained form suggests specific message that was above all, almost in the sky. In this sense, the presence of the sun in its three forms, as interpreted by Winter, and the execution of writing in more of utterable nature just as the "reader function"[205] of the sun-god reflects the moment of the truth. This moment of truth is also related with the codes

[203] Bottero, *Ancestors of the West: Writing, Reasoning and Gods*, 44-50.
[204] Bahrani, *Graven Image*, 110.
[205] Van de Mieroop, *Philosophy Before Greeks*, 185.

and laws for the reason that sun is the source for insight into truth and justice[206]. Hence, we can suggest that the decree or the message of the sun is reflected through the inscription in a way that it reflects the determination of the destiny that is a daily task for the sun-god[207]. He is *pasir same u erseti*, who is the "exegetical reader of the heaven and earth" [208] and determiner of the fate. Relationship that was constructed between the ruler and the sun-god through the inscription suggests ruler's direct agency that is linked to the decree. The inscription is, then, specific and separated from other signs in a way that the text refers to a specific decree that was read (exegetically) and it was to be rendered in the place of sun's rising (^{ki}-utu-è).

Hence, even though both the steles are concerned with the time and the conceptualization of destiny, in the Stele of Vultures, time was conceptualized in its "Present" state from which everything emerges, and everything is encompassed, whereas the Victory Stele of Naram-Sin reflects the time in its one crystal form in which the different moments of "Present" is erased in one moment. This difference was not only exhibited through the imagery, but the form of the inscriptions were also indicators of the difference in conceptualizing an event in the course of time. Inscriptions' relation to the depiction of time on the steles reflected the events in terms of their determination and execution. Writing was already directly linked to the understanding of destiny in the Mesopotamian context, but these distinctive presentations of the text change the nature of the two events even though they are both victories. One of the victories takes its place in the "Present" state of the destiny, relates to the different realms and time spans through returns and peaks whereas the other one is crystallized by itself and kernels all the instances related to

[206] Hammurabi Code, xlviii 95–98.
[207] Polonsky, Rise of Sun-god.
[208] Bahrani, *Graven Image*, 110.

this event through overlapping. Consequently, these differences in understanding of time refers to an ontological shift which can be grasped by the change in the political understanding.

6.3 Political implications of the different time-images

As discussed in the chapters 4 and 5, victories of Eannatum and Naram-Sin reflect different relations between the time and the aforementioned events. Both steles are examples of crystalline regime, but the Stele of Vultures creates the Whole of victory through the peaks of presents and the constant returns to the divine image, and its significations through dreams, historical accounts and the "Victory" on the divine realm that is the actual image that actualizes the virtual image of Eannatum's victory. Victory of Ningirsu and victory of Eannatum becomes indiscernible in a way that Eannatum is situated in the "Present" in which his victory is perpetuated through the victory of Ningirsu. Ningirsu's victory is the non-chronological foundation that is internal to time[209]. "Pure recollection" of the victory of Ningirsu is actualized through the victory of Eannatum, furthermore, it is materialized on the stele as the victory itself.

Victory Stele of Naram-Sin also reflects a time-image, but it is very much different from the Stele of Vultures. There are no two images that are not indiscernible, rather formerly irreconcilable elements come together and overlap in one image. Distinction between divine realm and human realm is obscured through the incompossible elements' assemblage on the body of the ruler. Naram-Sin's victory does not appear to be linked to the divine victory, but rather it reflects the "simultaneity of incompossible presents" that integrates the divine

[209] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 82.

victory and human victory without the peaks and returns between the two realms[210].

This difference designates different ontological standings of the two rulers. Eannatum is not reflected as a divine being directly, his link to the divine is clear but his being is divine is elusive. He is depicted in the inscription as "implanted in the womb by the semen of Ningirsu"[211] and "suckled by the breasts of Ninhursag"[212] that connects the ruler to the divine genealogy by physical connection[213]. But he is never proclaimed as a deity, and he is not depicted on the obverse side of the stele on which only divine elements are situated. Conversely, the text on the Victory Stele of Naram-Sin's name is attested with the DINGIR sign -determinative for the divinities- and he is shown with the horned crown that indicates his divine status[214]. Again, Eannatum's position in relation to the divine realm remains equivocal compared to Naram-Sin's indisputable deification. Bodies of the rulers also allude to this distinction, as body of Eannatum is distinguished only through his garment and headgear while Naram-Sin's body signifies supernatural perfection and triumphant vigor to the extent that his posture implicates iconicity that can only be compared to the figure of Ningirsu on the Stele of Vultures.

Another important distinction is the depicted scenes. As mentioned, Stele of Vultures is formed as assemblage of images that are in constant internal linkages that works like a perpetual circuit whereas Victory Stele of Naram-Sin reflects iconic elements that return to themselves and return to other elements in

[210] Ibid., 131.
[211] Frayne, *Pre-Sargonic Period: Early Periods, Volume 1 (2700-2350 BC),* 129.
[212] Alster, "Images and Text on the Stele of the Vultures", 6.
[213] Jeremias, Handbuch der altorientalischen Geisteskultur, 184.
[214] Selz, "The Divine Prototypes", 15.

the same image. Victory of Eannatum is linked to his duties of ceremonies of libation and sacrifice, building activities as well as his special position as receiver of commands of god. Different moments of his rulership and what links him to the divine realm is depicted as part of his victory. In comparison, Naram-Sin's position in divine world is clearer in the sense that his victory was not commanded but it was determined by the sun, in a way that its seed and actual image is internalized by itself. For that reason, chronic relations are not established with the dreams, or recollections linked to the specific moment, rather the moment is grasped in its temporality[215]. As Amiet states:

> This grandiose scene thus unites all the episodes expressing the mythological and historical conceptions of kingship – usually elaborated in a series of registers – into a single comprehensive vision.[216]

However, this temporality is overlap of incompossible elements that can even be called "true and false" that became indistinguishable. Consequently, a new regime is formed, and a new narration is created. New narration, crystallized, takes the force of time and the power of false together, defines new co-ordinates of the image that are no more conventional or ready-made. It takes its power from the new that gives pause, forcing the different layers of meaning through the incompossible features[217]. In this respect, it is the will or will to power that is firstly formed as will to take-over and is then established as will that "is identical to becoming and metamorphosis, bestowing virtue" in a Nietzschean sense[218].

The changes wrought by these depictions of the victory echoes the change in the idea of the ruler and the state. Even though, both steles refer to the victory of order over chaos. The scope of the order and chaos changed with the Akkadian

[215] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 132.
[216] Amiet, *Art of the ancient near east*, 166.
[217] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, 131-133.
[218] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: Time Image*, Note 27, 306.

state. Early Dynastic Period political institution can be characterized with the city states. City states were central to cosmological understanding as well as the ideological conceptions. City was the place of order which was the seat of god. Ruler was the protector of the city and the procurer of the order. The seat of god, temple, was central to this understanding. The ruler was obliged with the procurement of the needs of the temples which comprised of libations, sacrifices, festivals. This regional centralization also brought together the responsibility of the ruler as the war leader[219]. Hence, the victory and ensuring the order was concomitant to city state ideal which was ideologically dependent on the specific territory. Temple and the city were microcosmic structures whose permanence were central to the ruler' role. However, state of Akkad created a new paradigm of rule and centralization exceeding the limits of the city-state. Unification of Babylonia came with the unification in ideology, theological practices, and administration[220]. The unification was attained through military achievements and the control over various temples in different cities[221]. These developments changed the royal ideology drastically, for the city as the universe and temple as the center of the universe lost its meaning. The new territory was obtained through the military power which guaranteed the order whereas in Early Dynastic city-state, the military achievement was only meaningful in the event of outbreak of the chaos. These incidents of emergence of chaos requiring military operation were transient whereas the permanence of the order was provided with the maintenance of city and temple which needed to be consistent and continuous.

[219] Van de Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Near East*, 46-47.
[220] Sazonov, "Universalistic Ambitions, Deification and Claims of Divine Origin of Mesopotamian Rulers in Early Dynastic and Sargonic Periods", 47.
[221] Van de Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Near East*, 66.

Ruler's role as the patron of the local temples is replaced with the control of various temples and governing the cultural life as well.

In the light of this changes, difference between the two steles become clearer. Victory of Eannatum is one of the responsibilities of the ruler, that was accompanied by his responsibilities concerning the city and temple, such as building and cultic activities. Therefore, the instances reflected on the reverse side of the Stele of Vultures point to the ideal rulership in the city-state context. However, this understanding remains obsolete in the Akkadian context since there is not one city and temple that seats at the center of the Akkadian ideology. The central duty of the ruler is designated as procuring order through battles and overcoming chaos all over the "universe" which renders the Akkadian ruler "king of the four corners"[222] signaling the universalistic aspirations. Furthermore, instead the god of the city-state as the patron deity, god of decrees become the center of the imagery in the Victory Stele of Naram-Sin. In the Stele of Vultures, the relation to divine realm is implemented with the special relationship between the ruler and the patron deity of Lagash. Since the ruler is the king of the universe and his relationship to the divine realm is more direct due to his power over the "world", his triumph is decreed directly by the fate-determiner god Shamash who scanned "the totality of lands as if they were cuneiform signs"[223]. Shamash was the determiner of the whole land just as Naram-Sin was the one executor of the decree of fate on the totality of whole land.

[222] Maeda, "King of The Four Regions", in the Dynasty of Akkade, 68-69.
[223] Bahrani, *Graven Image*, 110.

6.4 Conclusion

Comparison of Stele of Vultures and Victory Stele of Naram-Sin demonstrates the change in the idea of kingship and what it entails. This change was the result of the change in the size of state territory. However, this did not cause in political and administrative practices, it also meant alteration in the theological and ideological ideals, for city was the center of the cosmological understanding. City as a microcosmic entity placed the ruler in-between the divine and human realms. The responsibilities of the ruler and the cosmological meaning of the king as the provider of order hinted his role in the creative process which stemmed from eradication of chaos. City was the place of order, and the procurement of the temple was central to ensure the order. Patron deity of the city and the temple was predominant element that constituted raison d'être of the state that linked the city to the primordial image of the universe as the seat of a specific deity. Hence, change in the territory brought along major repercussions in terms of cosmological placement of the ruler and the state, along with his stance in relation to the divine realm.

The steles expressed this change through the imagery. Since what was artistic or aesthetic in the Mesopotamian context was directly related to the ontological understanding, the steles reflected different ontic states concerning the ruler and his place in the realm of existence and creation. I claim that power of the image concerning ontological classifications was reiterated through the conceptualization and creation of the time-images. Therefore, representation of the ruler and his activities referred to the "ontic space of life… constructing the reality"[224]. The power of the image in Mesopotamian context and its relation to

[224] Bahrani, *Infinite Image*, 73.

the writing -as an image- enabled multi-layered universe of meanings which was at the edge of process of creation. Writing, in this sense, was key to execution of time-images that formed the plane of different modes of existence. Therefore, different forms of writing marked the change in different multiplicities and connections that reflected the layers of meaning comprising ontological as well as political notions. Consequently, the execution of the stele turned into an act of creation in materiality of the two steles.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION:

TIME-IMAGE IN MESOPOTAMIAN CONTEXT

Isolation of the concept of writing has many repercussions that entails the epistemological and ontological understandings as well as the life in general in cosmological, theological spheres. Alphabetical writing as the direct reflection of speech neglected the materiality of writing and made it secondary to the speech. Enlightenment ideas that undermine scripts that do not rely on alphabetical signs dominated the modern thinking until 20th century. Evolutionary approach that embraces alphabetical writing as the telos of the scripts regarded the phoneticized scripts superior as they are the most economic and efficient forms of representation of the speech.

However, in the cuneiform writing the signs of the script were not subjected to the ideas of efficiency or economization. As a matter of fact, speech was not even the first concern for the writing which was reflected through the use of writing in different contexts. Writing was rather central to a conceptualization that took the signs as constellation of meanings that were both actual and potential. the awareness towards the material and visual connections of the writing attached writing to the universe of possibilities that was only possible through the comprehensive knowledge of things. Apart from the spoken language, writing based its relation directly to the reality through imagery, symbols and signs. This is why the intellectual activities in the Mesopotamian context was grammatological rather than philological or linguistic. Even though this sounds

absurd, the relationship of writing with the spoken language was looser than its vitality in different forms.

This understanding shaped the epistemological classifications in the Mesopotamian context. The lexical texts were organized in a way that the structure of this organization makes sense only with an extensive understanding of the script and particularities that was reflected either through visual properties or material properties. In this sense, writing was strongly linked to image and they were intertwined to each other which was reflected through ontological understanding. This conception depended on the polysemic value of writing and its association with the reality. Therefore, cuneiform writing was the key to attain the new layers of meaning leading to truth as a key to decipher the mysteries and the hidden meanings in the universe. In this sense, writing was a value system for objects, concepts and images. A system that associates objects with their different layers of existence, foundation for the existence. Idea of destiny was directly related to this understanding, and it is relevant to the artistic activities. The act of creation belonged to both divine sphere and the human one with alterations.

Divine creation was not ex nihilo but rather was based on organization and order and writing was the central element for it. The destiny was written by gods and its traces could be found many different places as in sky or on bodies of animals or humans. The reality was actualization of these signs which is quite parallel to the Deleuzian time-image in which images, actual and virtual, coalesce and constantly returns to each other. This colascence was central to the Mesopotamian creation and existence. Earth was an image of sky in which encoded signs resided. The body was the vessels for signs that was both ominous and descriptive of one’s identity along with their place in the universe. This

coalescence of multiple images was always in constant circuit that formed the actualization, ergo, life. The human creation also aimed at the multiple layers of meanings which assembled image and writing together. First examples of this tendency can be observed in Early Dynastic artifices.

Early Dynastic objects brings image and text together in such a way that they work on a plane of composition that entails visual and material aspects of the object. The commemorative monuments on the other hand are thought to reflect historical events which brings the questions of narration and historicity of the objects. However, as I discussed in Mesopotamian context, historical events were always associated with their ritual and cosmological meaning. That is why these two steles show us the change in the understanding of the writing, time, and kingship with the Akkadian rule which did not only change the political and administrative understanding, but it gave way to a different ontological classification of the ruler.

This shift in the ontological field was reflected through via Stele of Vultures and the Victory stele of Naram-Sin. Ruler as the intermediary between the divine and human realms in Early Dynastic Period was elevated to the divine realm. This was result of political changes, but also it was a direct reflection of the territorial understanding. Early Dynastic Period political institution can be characterized with the city states. City states were central to cosmological understanding as well as the ideological conceptions. City was the place of order which was the seat of god. Ruler was the protector of the city and the procurer of the order. The seat of god, temple, was central to this understanding. Unification of Babylonia came with the unification in ideology, theological practices, and administration. The unification was attained through military achievements and

the control over various temples in different cities. These developments changed the royal ideology drastically, for the city as the universe and temple as the center of the universe lost its meaning. The new territory was obtained through military might which guaranteed the order whereas in Early Dynastic city-state, the military achievement was only meaningful in the event of outbreak of the chaos.

These changes were reflected through the bodies of the ruler, their standing in relation to divine realm and the placement of writing. The body of Naram-Sin becomes the signifier for his new position as deity whereas body of Eannatum can only be distinguished from other bodies through his dress. Moreover, victory of Eannatum cannot be distinguished from the victory of Ningirsu whereas victory of Naram-Sin is defined by itself. The form of writings as oceanic subdues also reflects the relationship of these two rulers to divine realm. In the case of Eannatum the writing reflects both decoded and encoded in form of image while in case of Naram-Sin writing even though more elevated than the ruler can be framed and subdued as the mountain.

Hence, the writing as the basis for the polysemic understanding in ancient Mesopotamia is central to understand the imagery and subjects like rulership that directly reflects the cosmological understanding.

APPENDIX

TRANSLATIONS OF THE TEXTS

ON THE STELE OF VULTURES AND THE VICTORY STELE OF NARAM-SIN

1. INSRIPTION ON THE STELE OF VULTURES[225]

Lacuna of 20 lines
i 21–24) He would pay it as an (interest-bearing) [lo]an, and grain rent was imposed on it.

i 25–26) The king of Lagaß Lacuna

Lacuna of 21 lines ii 22–23) ...

ii 24–29) The leader of Œißa (Umma) acted arrogantly with him, and defied Lagaß.

ii 30–33) A-kurgal, king of Lagaß, son of Ur-Nanße,

iii 1–2) [king of Lagaß]

Lacuna of 13 lines

iii 16–22) [the leader of Œißa (Umma) acted

arrogantly with him] and defied Lagaß regarding its (Lagaß's) own property.

iii 23–27) At/regarding Piriœ-... œirnun-ßage, the god Ninœirsu roared:

iii 28 – iv 3) "Œißa (Umma) has ... my forage, my own property, the fields of the G[uoede]na

... [Lag]aß"

iv 4–8) [Lor]d(?) [Ni]nœirsu, [war]rior of [the god En]lil says ... .

iv 9–12) [The god Ni]n[œir]su [imp]lanted the [semen] for E-[a]natum in the [wom]b

iv 13–14) [...]

iv 15–17) [...] rejoiced over [E-anatum].

[225] Taken from Frayne, *Pre-Sargonic Period: Early Periods, Volume 1 (2700-2350 BC)*.

iv 18–19) The goddess Inanna accompanied him,

iv 20–23) named him E-anna-Inanna-Ibgalakaka- tum (“Into[?]the E-anna of the goddess Inanna of the Great Oval I brought him),”

iv 24–26) and set him on the special knee of the goddess Nin ̓ursaœ.

iv 27–29) The goddess Nin ̓ursaœ [offered him] her wholesome breast.

v 1–5) The god Ninœirsu rejoiced over E-anatum, semen implanted in the womb by the god Ninœirsu.

v 6–12) The god Ninœirsu laid his span upon him, for (a length of) five forearms he set his forearm upon

him: (he measured) five forearms (cubits), one span!

v 13–17) The god Ninœirsu, with great joy, [gave him] the kin[gship of Lagaß].

v 18–19) ...art quotes

v 20–22) E-anatum, who has strength, declares, the foreign land belongs to him.

v 23–29) For E-anatum, the name which the goddess Inanna gave him, E-anna-InannaIbgalakaka-tum “(Into[?]) the E-anna of Inanna of the Great Oval I

I brought him)” I [have given(?)] him as a name.

v 30–31) [His(?)] name [in(?) heaven and] earth ...

v 32 – vi 7) [E-anatum], who has strength, ordained by the god Ninœirsu, E-anatum, [who declared] “Now then, Oh enemy!” proclaimed for evermore:

vi 8–10) The ruler of Œißa (Umma) — where did he (ever) stay appeased?

vi 11–15) With other men ... he is able to exploit the Guoedena, the beloved field of the god Ninœirsu.

vi 16) May he (Ninœirsu) strike him down!” vi 17) ...

Lacuna of 3 lines

vi 22–24) he followed after him.

vi 25–32) Him who lay (sleeping), him who lay (sleeping) — he approached his head. E-anatum who lay sleeping — [his] be[loved] ma[ster Ninœirsu approached his head].

Lacuna of 3 lines

vii 1–5) “Kiß itself must abandon Œißa (Umma), and,

xi 16–18) E-anatum, over whom the god Íul- MUÍ×PA cries sweet tears (of joy),

xi 19–20) ≠E±-[an]atu[m]

xi 21–23) E-[anatum] destroyed the foreign lands [for the god Ninœirsu];

xi 24 – xii 4) ≠E-an±[atum± restored to the god Ninœirsu’s control [his] belov[ed field], the Guoeden[a].

Lacuna of 6 lines

xii 11–13) The fields of his (Ninœirsu’s) side, the rent-bearing regions of Ninœirsu

Lacuna of 2 lines xii 16–20) ...

xii 21 – xiii 2) [E-a]natum erected (this)[monument] in the lofty temple.

Lacuna of 8 lines xiii 11–12) ...

xiii 13–17) ≠of the god Ninœirsu±, E-an[atum is the ...] of the god Ninœirsu. His personal god <is Íul- MUÍ×PA>.

xiv 1) The fields Bara

Lacuna of about 9 lines

xv 10–18) Too broken for coherent translation (various field names)

Lacuna of 24 lines

Lacuna of 7 lines

xvi 8–11) [E-anatum, nomi]nated by [the god Ni]nœirsu, restored to his (the god Ninœirsu’s) [control].

xvi 12–17) E-anatum gave the great battle net of

the god Enlil to the leader of Œiß[a] (Umm[a]), and made him swear to him by it.

xvi 18–20) The leader of Œißa (Umma) swore to E-anatum:

xvi 21–24) “By the life of the god Enlil, king of heaven and earth! I may exploit the field of the god Ninœirsu as a(n interest-bearing) loan.

xvi 25) A dyke was dug (lit.: made) to spring. xvi 26–29) F[orever and evermore, I shall not transgress the territory of the god Ninœirsu!].

xvi 30–31) I shall not shift (the course of) its irrigation channels and canals!

xvi 32–33) [I shall not rip out its monuments!].

xvi 34–40) [Whenever I do transgress, may the great battle net of Enlil, king of heaven and earth, by which I have sworn, descend upon Œißa (Umma)!"]

xvi 41–42) [E-anatum was very clever indeed and]

xvi 43–45) [he made up the eyes of two doves with kohl, and anointed their heads with cedar (resin).

xvii 1–5) [He released them to Enlil, king of heaven and earth, to the E-kur(?) in Nippur].

xvii 6–20) ["After what he has declare]d and has reiterated [to my master the god Enlil], if any leader in Œißa (Umma) reneges against the agreement, when he opposes or contests the agreement, whenever he violates this agreement, may the great battle net of Enlil, by which he has sworn, descend upon Œißa (Umma)!"

xvii 21–26) E-anatum gave the great battle net of

the goddess Nin ̓ursag to the leader of Œißa (Umma), and made him swear to him by it.

xvii 27–29) The leader of Œißa (Umma) [swore] to E-anatum:

xvii 30–32) ["By the life of the goddess Nin ̓ursaœ! I may exploit the field of the god Ninœirsu as an (interest-bearing) loan].

xvii 33) [I shall not ... the irrigation channel!].

xvii 34–37) [Forever and evermore, I shall not transgress the territory of the god Ninœirsu!]

xvii 38–39) [I shall not shift (the course of) its irrigation channels and canals!]

xvii 40–41) [I shall not rip out its monuments!]

xvii 42–47) [Whenever I do transgress, may the great battle net of the goddess Nin ̓ursaœ, by which I have sworn, descend upon Œißa (Umma)!"].

xvii 48 – xviii 1) [E-anatum] was very clever indeed and

xviii 2–4) he made up the eyes of two doves with kohl, and anointed their heads with cedar (resin).

xviii 5–7) He re[leased them] to the goddess Nin ̓ursaœ in Keß:

xviii 8–22) "After what he has declared and has reiterated to [my] mother the goddess Nin ̓ursaœ, if any leader [in] Œißa (Umma) re[neg]es against the agreement,

when [he violates this agreement], may the great [battle net] of the goddess Nin ̓ursaœ, by which he has sworn, descend upon Œißa (Umma)!”

xviii 23–29) E-anatum [gave the great battle net of the god Enki, king of the Abzu, to the leader of Œißa (Umma), and made him swear to him by it]:

xvii 30–32) [The leader of Œißa (Umma) (swore) to E-anatum:]

xviii 33–37) [“By the life of the god Enki, king of the Abzu! I may exploit the field of the god Ninœirsu as an (interest-bearing) loan].

xviii 38) [I shall not ... the irrigation channel!].

xviii 39–41) [Forever and evermore, I shall not transgress the territory of the god Ninœirsu!]

xviii 42–43) [I shall not shift (the course of) its irrigation channels and canals!]

xviii 44–45) [I shall not rip out its monuments!].

xix 1–7) Whenever I do transgress, may the great battle net of the god Enki, king of the Abzu, descend upon Œißa (Umma)!”

xix 8–9) ≠E-an±[natum was very clever indeed and]

xix) 10–12) [he made up the eyes of two doves with kohl, and anointed their heads with cedar (resin)]

xix 13–16) He released them [to the god Enki in the ...] of the god Ninœirsu.

xix 17–19) E-anatum swore by the carp set toward the Abzu:

xix 20–34) “After what he has declared [and has reiterated] to my master the god Enki, [if any leader in Œißa (Umma) reneges against the agreement, when he opposes or contests the agreement, whenever he violates this agreement, may the great battle net of the god Enki, by which he has sworn, descend upon Œißa (Umma)!”].

xix 35–xx 6) [E-anatum] gave [the great battle net] of the god Sîn, the impetuous calf of the god Enlil, to the leader of Œißa (Umma), and made him swear to him by it.

xx 7–9) The leader of Œiß[a (Um[ma]) swore to E-anatum]:

xx 10–14) [“By the life of the god Sîn, the impetuous calf of the god Enlil!] I may exploit [the field of the god Ninœirsu as a(n interest-bearing) loan].

xx 15) [I will not ... the irrigation channel!] xx 16–19) Forever and evermore, I shall not transgress the territory of the god Ninœirsu!

xx 20 – xxi 1) I shall not shift (the course of) its irrigation channels and canals!

xxi 2–3) I shall not rip out its monuments!

xxi 4–11) Whenever I do transgress, may the great battle net of the god Sîn, impetuous calf [of the god Enlil, by which I have sworn,] descend [upon Œißa (Umma)]!

xxi 12–13) E-anatum was very clever indeed and

xxi 14–16) he made up the eyes of four doves with kohl, and anointed their heads with cedar (resin).

xxi 17 – xxii 6) [He released] two of them towards [the Ekißnugal] in Ur, [and he released two toward ... the holy] dwel[ling] of the god S[în].

xxii 7–xxiii 8) "After what he has declared and has reiterated [to my master the god Sîn], impetuous calf of the god Enlil, if any leader in Œißa (Umma) reneges against the agreement, when he opposes or [contests the agreement, whenever he violates this agreement, may the great battle net of the god Sîn, impetuous calf of the god Enlil, by which he has sworn, descend upon Œißa (Umma)!"].

rev. i 1–7) E-anatum gave the great battle net of the god Utu, master of vegetation, to the leader of Œißa (Umma), and ... made him swear to him by it.

rev. i 8–10) The leader of Œißa (Umma) swore to E-anatum:

rev. i 11–14) "By the life of the god Utu, [master of vegetation, I may exploit the field of the god Ninœirsu as an (interest-bearing) loan].

rev. i 15) [I will not ... the irrigation channel!]. rev. i 16–19) [Forever and evermore], I shall [n]ot transgress the [terr]itory of the god [N]inœir[s]u!

rev. i 20–21) I shall not [sh]ift (the course of) its [irrigation channels] and canals!

rev. i 22–23) I shall not rip out its monuments!

rev. i 24–30) Whenever I do transgress, may the great battle net of the god Utu, master of vegetation, by which I have sworn, descend upon Œißa (Umma)!"

rev. i 31–32) E-anatum was very clever indeed and

rev. i 33–35) he made up the eyes of two doves with kohl, and adorned their heads with cedar (resin).

rev. i 36–40) For the god Utu, master of vegetation, in the E-babbar at Larsa, he had them offered as sacrificial bulls.

rev. ii 1 – iii 1) "After that which he has declared and reiterated to my m[aster the god Utu], if any leader in Œi[ßa] (U[mma]) reneges against the agreement, when he violates this agreement, opposes or contests the agreement, may the great battle net

of the god Utu, master of vegetation, by which he has sworn, descend upon] Œi[ßa] (Um[ma])!”

2. INSRIPTION ON THE VICTORY STELE OF NARAM-SIN[226]

i 1-2) [Nar]am-Sin, the mighty,

Lacuna

i1'-5') Sidu[r-x] (and) the highlanders of Lullubum assembled together ...

ii 1-3) ...bat[tle]. For/to

Lacuna

ii 1') the high[landers ...]

Lacuna

iii 1) [heap]ed up [a burial mound over them]. iii 2-5) ... (and) dedicated (this object) [to the god ...]

[226] Taken from Frayne, *Sargonic and Gutian Periods (2334-2113 BC).*

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