Enki & Ptah

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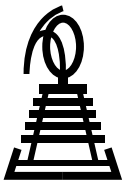

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Cover illustration
The workshop area of Level 3b at Logardan, ©FArMQaD, French Archaeological Mission in the Qara Dagh

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ENKI & PTAH
Journal of Technology and Trade in Ancient Egypt and Western Asia

Editorial

Alessandro Cavagna[1], *Luca Peyronel*[2]

AC 0000-0003-2367-4457, LP 0000-0002-4952-5401

[1]Università degli Studi di Milano (00wjc7c48)

It is with great pleasure that we introduce the first issue of *Enki & Ptah. Journal of Technology and Trade in Ancient Egypt and Western Asia*, a new peer-reviewed scientific publication dedicated to the study of technology, scientific knowledge, crafts, exchange in the ancient societies of Egypt, Nubia, the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Asia. Ranging from prehistory to the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the journal offers an interdisciplinary platform for exploring the material foundations of ancient economies and the cultural dynamics that shaped them. *Enki & Ptah* was conceived with the ambition to bring together complementary perspectives from archaeology, history, and philology, and to foster a cross-regional and diachronic approach to the study of ancient technologies and exchange interactions. By placing Egypt, the Eastern Mediterranean and South-Western Asia within a shared analytical framework, the journal highlights the interconnected worlds of technological innovation, craft specialisation and long-distance trade, and the many ways in which these shaped social and economic structures over time. Rooted in the long-standing Italian tradition of Egyptology and Near Eastern studies, the journal aims to serve as an intellectual meeting ground for scholars investigating the technological, economic and social dynamics of pre-modern cultures, while also fostering methodological innovation and new interpretative frameworks. Its scope embraces a broad thematic and chronological range, inviting contributions on raw-material procurement and processing, production and distribution systems, archaeometric and scientific analyses, as well as textual and iconographic sources on technology and know-how. Particular value is placed on studies that illuminate the transmission of technical knowledge across regions or periods, or that explore the relationship between innovation, environment, agency and local traditions. A defining feature of *Enki & Ptah* is its commitment to interdisciplinary dialogue. The journal encourages the integration of archaeological, scientific and textual evidence, offering a space in which methodological reflection and theoretical perspectives can inform new understandings of ancient technologies and economies. We especially welcome research that challenges disciplinary boundaries or proposes innovative approaches to the study of craft practices and exchange networks. Co-directed by its editors together with a dynamic board of early-career researchers from the University of Milan, *Enki & Ptah* adopts a double-blind peer-review

system and benefits from the guidance of an international scientific committee composed of leading specialists in Egyptology, Assyriology, and the history and archaeology of ancient Western Asia. The journal consists of a section of research articles and a section dedicated to reviews of recent volumes relevant to its areas of interest. Published by the Milano University Press in open access, with print-on-demand options, *Enki & Ptah* reflects the University of Milan's commitment to fostering high-quality, accessible and interdisciplinary research, according to the FAIR principles. This first issue opens with a substantial collaborative article by a team of scholars from the Centre of Excellence in Ancient Near Eastern Empires at the University of Helsinki. Their contribution offers a far-reaching comparative analysis of the relationship between kingship and economic structures in ancient Western Asia, a field of research that has recently experienced a notable revival, enriched by new methodological perspectives. The article presents a systematic diachronic comparison spanning more than a millennium, examining the economic foundations of kingship and, to a lesser extent, queenship, across seven major empires (Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, Teispid-Achaemenid, Seleucid, Ptolemaic, Arsacid and Roman). Particular attention is given to the distinction between "state" and "royal" assets and expenditures, explored here to an unprecedented degree. Massimo Maiocchi's article addresses the methodological and historiographical challenges surrounding the study of the earliest writing systems of southwestern Asia and northern Africa: proto-cuneiform, proto-hieroglyphic and proto-Elamite. A reassessment of the scholarly debate reveals persistent disciplinary biases and the modern prestige attributed to literacy, which have long shaped narratives that overstate writing as the primary marker of civilisation. By exposing these ideological assumptions, the study advocates for a more balanced interpretive framework that situates the origins of writing within the broader cultural, technological and social dynamics of the late 4th millennium BCE. The contribution by Padovani and Zingarello examines the mechanisms of control and management of ceramic production during the late Early Bronze Age in northern Mesopotamia, adopting an explicitly archaeological perspective grounded in the analysis of manufacturing contexts, particularly in light of recent discoveries in Iraqi Kurdistan. Focusing on the site of Logardan, the authors present newly uncovered workshops equipped with large and technically sophisticated firing installations. Drawing on fresh spatial, architectural and technological data from ongoing excavations, the study reassesses longstanding assumptions about the political, technical and socio-economic dimensions of pottery manufacture under the first empires of the 3rd millennium BCE, highlighting an incipient trajectory towards proto-industrialisation. Ilaria Sieli's article investigates the relationships between Lower Nubia and Egypt through the analysis of three cemeteries belonging to different phases of the A-Horizon, the earliest cultural horizon of the region. By tracing changes in funerary customs and their implications for Nubian society, and by emphasising regional distinctions within Lower Nubia, the study highlights episodes of contact, tension and divergence with Egypt, as well as instances of creolisation that made Lower Nubia a key interface between distinct cultural spheres. The final contribution, by Ahmed Mansour, turns to the emerging field of ancient Egyptian metallurgy. Despite numerous scientific analyses on metal

composition and technology, our understanding of early manufacturing processes and working conditions remains fragmentary. By examining the written evidence that accompanies Old Kingdom metallurgical scenes, the article integrates textual and visual data to clarify technical procedures, operational stages and the demanding working environment of ancient metalworkers. Together, these sources offer a more accurate and coherent reconstruction of one of Egypt's most specialised industries.

As this inaugural issue brings together diverse perspectives on handicraft production, exchange, and economic systems across ancient societies, we invite our readers and contributors to join us in a shared space where new findings, approaches and ideas may converge, shedding fresh light on the complex interactions and cultural meanings that shaped the procurement, transformation and circulation of materials and products in ancient Egypt and Western Asia.

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ENKI & PTAH
Journal of Technology and Trade in Ancient Egypt and Western Asia

Kingship and Queenship in the Ancient Near Eastern Empires of the 1st Millennium BCE: The Economic Basis

Melanie Wasmuth[1,2], Tero Alstola[1], Ellie Bennett[1], Amy Rebecca Gansell[3], Yaser Malek Zadeh[4], Jessica Nitschke[5], Gillian Ramsey Neugebauer[6], Jason Silverman[1], Joonas Sipilä[7], Joanna Töyräänvuori[1], Caroline Wallis[1]

MW 0000-0003-4206-9367, TA 0000-0003-4382-1733, EB 0000-0002-6325-5911, ARG 0009-0002-9048-344X, YM 0009-0005-5949-2753, JN 0000-0002-2721-7563, RN 0000-0003-4011-4734, JS 0000-0002-0240-9219,JS 0000-0001-9695-8296, JT 0000-0003-4932-8755, CW 0000-0002-7005-0463

[1]University of Helsinki (Finland)(040af2s02), [2]Universität Basel (Switzerland)(02s6k3f65), [3]St. John's University, New York (USA)(00wyq5s37),[4]Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (Iran)(00g6ka752), [5]University of Stellenbosch (South Africa)(05bk57929), [6]University of Regina (Canada)(03dzc0485), [7]Finnish National Defence University(01js4x705)

Corresponding author: m.wasmuth@gmx.net

Abstract

The institution of kingship, and to a much lesser degree of queenship, has long been of major interest to ancient historians. However, the focus is usually on a single empire or on a comparison between two or three empires, e.g., the Neo-Assyrian and the Roman ones. This paper provides a consistent diachronical comparison over a millennium on the economic basis of the social institution across seven major empires (Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, Teispid-Achaemenid, Seleukid, Ptolemaic, Arsacid, and Roman) with geographical as well as chronological overlap. It further includes systematically kingship as well as queenship, explicates the scope of available sources, and explores the distinction between 'state' and 'royal' assets (and expenses) to a hitherto unprecedented degree. This elicits important insights into the long-durée dynamics regarding the roles of the 'head-of-state' and the 'leading lady' within the economic systems of the ancient Near Eastern empires of the 1st millennium BCE.

Keywords: West Asia, Egypt, Royal economy, Social history, *Longue-durée*

1. Introduction

The paper aims to fill a long overdue research gap in Ancient Near Eastern Studies, and Ancient World Studies in general, namely a systematic diachronic comparison of the economic basis of two closely interlinked political offices, the social institutions of kingship and queenship, across seven major political entities spanning nearly a thousand years: the Neo-Assyrian Empire (911-609 BCE), the Neo-Babylonian Empire (626-539 BCE), the Teispid-Achaemenid Persian Empire (550-330 BCE), the Seleukid Empire (312-63 BCE), the Ptolemaic Empire (305-30 BCE), the Parthian or Arsacid Empire (247 BCE-ca. 70 CE), and the early Roman Empire (in the East; 63 BCE-ca. 70 CE). The end dates for the Arsacid and Roman Empires are artificial; they mark the traditional end of Second

Temple Judaism with the Roman conquest of Jerusalem in 70 CE and the last attested cuneiform tablet (ca. 75 CE; Geller 1997).[1]

1.1. *Research background and collaboration*

The project originates in an internal cross-team collaboration exercise for the second Annual Meeting of the overarching research institution (see fn. 2) in 2019,[2] which developed into a publication experiment on creating a collaborative paper on king-/queenship ideology with a bottom-up approach.[3] Instead of starting from a pre-determined set of questions and structures typical for a first-author publication, the content and structure was developed from scratch and throughout at least the first major stages by an author collective that specialised in the relevant scope of empires, but not necessarily in kingship and/or queenship. This proved content-wise highly rewarding, as significantly different aspects of king-/queenship came to the fore as most doable or pertinent across the empires than would have been the case when starting from any single first author perspective (see also Wasmuth et al. forthcoming a-d). The outcome are four publications in article format with full diachronic comparison across the seven empires (the paper at hand and Wasmuth et al. forthcoming a-c on the royal presentation to the public as builder, as embodying piety, and as caretaker). A fifth publication is designed as a multi-author book that dispenses with the rigorous full diachronic comparison in favour of in-depth case studies on the question of maintaining relations with the power base (Wasmuth et al. forthcoming d). While the other three articles of the venture are much more selective in topic (see above), the paper at hand presents a condensed, but topically comprehensive macro-level view on the economic basis of king-/queenship across the seven empires. As expected, implementing the comparative analysis required the inclusion of much more particularly specialised experts. In consequence, one of the key challenges of the paper has been to create a succinct narrative out of very heterogeneous input: due to highly divergent source availability (see section 2.1), different states of research on the topic(s) at hand, and due to the scope of perspectives and approaches by the various authors. The outcome is a compromise between readability, showcasing the underlying source base and expertise, and lifting lesser known empires to a similar place of prominence in the study.

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[1] The chronological framework is set by the institutional framework, in which the study has been conducted: the Centre of Excellence in Ancient Near Eastern Empires hosted by the University of Helsinki (2018-2025; Academy of Finland grant decision numbers 298647, 312051, and 330727). For the Roman Empire sections, this means a focus on the Julio-Claudian period. For the Parthian/Arsacid empire, the end date is more arbitrary. A more poignant *caesura* from a Parthian perspective is the establishment of a new Arsacid dynasty in 10 or 11 CE, which led to a new series of wars between the Parthians and the Romans until 63 CE.

[2] The research centre assembles c. 40 specialists on various aspects of Ancient Near Eastern Studies concerning the 1st millennium BCE.

[3] Originally under the aegis of Jason M. Silverman, since 2022 under the aegis of Melanie Wasmuth. We would like to thank especially Andrea Berlin, Philip Esler, and Katrien De Graef, the international scientific advisory board members of the Academy of Finland Centre of Excellence in Ancient Near Eastern Empires (ANEE, University of Helsinki), for their continued encouragement and feedback; Rotem Avneri Meir, Johannes Bach, Rick Bonnie, Céline Debourse, Marta Lorenzon, and Saana Svärd for their input and comments throughout various stages of the overall ANEE King-/Queenship project; and all ANEE members who participated in the various presentation sessions at the ANEE Annual Meetings and beyond. Without them, the project would not have made it to publication state.

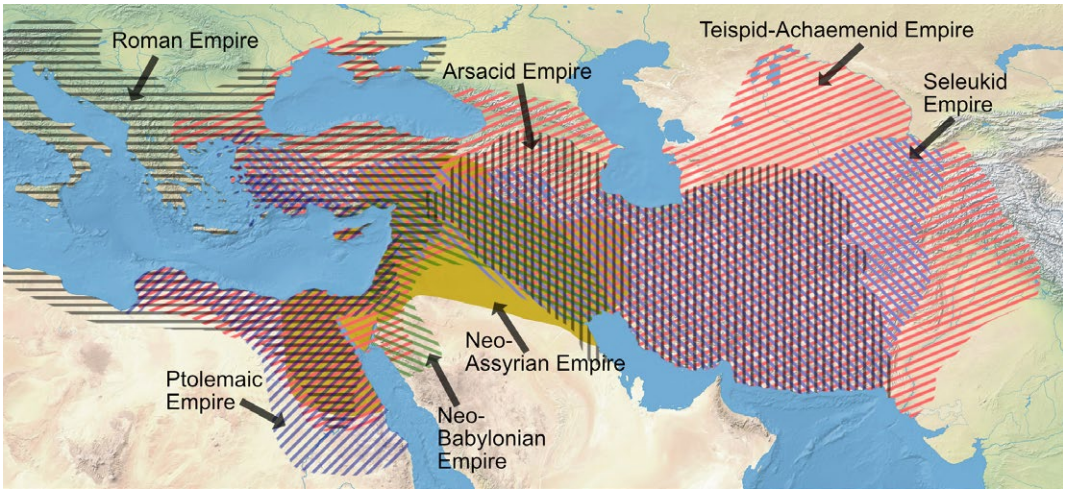

Fig. 1. Map showing the maximum extents of the empires under discussion.

1.2. *Aims and research question*

Accordingly, the aim of this paper is to provide a synopsis on the available sources and state of research on core aspects of the royal economy across the major empires ruling (major) parts of ancient Western Asia in the 1st millennium BCE. The ultimate goal is to identify which sub-topics and research questions would be best suited for future diachronic comparative analysis based on the current availability of data. A fundamental discussion of the term 'empire' is not part of the paper. As is common in ancient world studies, 'empire' is used as a code for the major cross-regional polities under discussion here. Instead, the aim is to grasp the tension between the 'state' / 'imperial' / 'crown' level and the specific roles (and/or person) of the head of the polity ('king') and his official (main) wife or most influential female figure of the polity. As the seven chosen empires consecutively overlap with each other chronologically as well as geographically in the Levant and/or Mesopotamia, they offer an excellent venue for *longue-durée* historical analyses. Key questions that we attempt to answer – or at least elucidate concerning their answerability – are: how were royal and state assets/revenue distinct from and interwoven with each other? Which natural, direct financial, and labour resources could the king/queen extract for their personal and institutional *personae*? What constituted their most prominent expenses? To what extent were income and expenses shared or separate between king and queen? And finally, what significant similarities and contrasts come to the fore when comparing the answers across the seven empires under discussion?

1.3. *Geographical and chronological frame*

The geographical focus of the institutional framework, in which this study is situated, is on Mesopotamia and the Southern Levant. This proves to be of limited suitability for this macro-historical study, as the imperial centre typically plays an essential part in royal (as distinct from 'state' or central administrative) economic agency. The imperial heartlands of various of the empires under discussion are situated outside Mesopotamia and/or the Levant (see Fig. 1 for a condensed overview of the maximum extents of the empires under discussion), and Mesopotamia and the Southern Levant constitute not

always the most insightful case studies due to the available source base. Thus, for the Teispid-Achaemenid Empire, the focus on Persia and Babylonia is complemented by occasional comparisons to Egypt. For the Roman Empire, the decision was made to dedicate the main part to the imperial centre as main seat of economic agency of the Roman emperor followed by a brief outlook on the evidence from or impact on the so-called Roman East. For the Ptolemaic Empire, but also for understanding some of the core dynamics within the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires, a look to the Kushite and Saite Empires would have been valuable, as both ruled parts of the Levant (and the Eastern Mediterranean) and are essential for understanding the Egyptian aspects of Ptolemaic rulership. This would, however, substantially shift the focus of the study, which by design of the overarching institutional framework centres on Western Asia. Accordingly, the Ptolemies are included primarily as essential counter-players of the Seleukids, and the Romans (in the East) as opponents of the Parthians/Arsacids. The chronological frame is essentially the 1st millennium BCE. While several of the empires are fully included in that time range, the beginning and end are arbitrary, but necessary for feasibility concerns (see above including fn. 2). For the earliest empire under discussion, the Neo-Assyrian, a comparison to its regional predecessors would be highly desirable; this has been decided against in favour of a comparison to the succeeding empires. Even more problematic is the end date of the study in ca. 70 CE. Due to the rather extensive body of sources available for studying the Roman Empire, the focus on the Julio-Claudian rulers provides, nonetheless, a suitable framework. Given the overall scarcity of relevant sources on the Arsacid Empire (see section 2.1), and the subsequent need for interpolating many issues from earlier, later, and contemporary but empire-external sources, this concern is not suitably solvable for the Arsacids. As this can only change by promoting Arsacid studies, we opted here for a more inclusive approach, while attempting to qualify the source base in each case.

1.4. *Paper structure*

Given the length of this paper, a brief overview of the underlying structure is provided here. Following the introduction we first highlight some conceptual and methodological concerns regarding the available sources (section 2.1), background information on the intertwined dimensions of 'state' or 'crown' versus (personally) royal (section 2.2) as well as of palace, estate, and household (section 2.3), and a terminological clarification on the handling of 'queenship' per empire (section 2.4). The following four main sections deal with the specifically royal economic assets and major expenses first for the king (sections 3-4), then for the queen (sections 5-6). Each of these sections are subdivided into major topics explored diachronically. For the king these include access to natural resources (3.2), direct financial resources (3.3), labour (3.4), estate produce (3.5), and production facilities (3.6) as well as the expenses for public relations events (4.2), travel and travel-including activities (4.3), for accessing information (4.4), and some more (diachronically) eclectic activities like compiling ancient data and specifically royal involvement in infrastructure projects (4.5). For the queens we compiled the evidence on access to personnel and specialised knowledge (5.2), to produce and production facilities (5.3), to direct financial resources (5.4), and to special places (5.5); further, as with the kings, we mapped the expenditure on public relations activities (6.2), travel (6.3), and information access (6.4). Section 7 provides a brief gender comparison per empire

regarding the aspects of portfolio comparison, couple activities and perceptions, and complementing aspects in the economic activities of the kings and queens. Finally, section 8 highlights some of the most pertinent diachronic results and an outlook on potential future research.

2. Conceptual and methodological concerns

In order to assess the diachronic comparison of key aspects of the kings' and queens' economic resources and expenses, some methodological and conceptual concerns require discussion. On a very fundamental level, this concerns the availability of sources for the empire, role, and topic in question, which has major implications on the research presentation and on the question of whether the evidence is likely representative or situative for the empire in question. Further, the issues of 'state' versus 'royal' assets, of 'state'/crown versus royal domains, and of palace versus royal households need an introductory exploration. The section finally includes a comment on who is subsumed in the term 'queen' in the following discussion.

2.1. *Source issues*

The Neo-Assyrian Empire featured a complex bureaucratic apparatus that left a lot of primary evidence for the study of the economic basis of kingship (and to a much lesser degree on queenship), deriving from various excavated palatial archives. The available textual sources include royal inscriptions, letters, deeds, records, and legal documents. Most of the direct primary evidence concerns the relationship of the king with governors outside of the capital but concerning matters of state and state officials in the heartland, inferences must sometimes be made. The available textual evidence chiefly concentrates in the second half of the 8th and the 7th century, predominately from Kalhu and Nineveh. It is complemented by iconographic evidence: depictions of economic activities on the palace reliefs as well as on ivory plaques and metal slabs of wooden gates of the palaces (Groß and Kertai 2018: 6) and visual administrative tools in the form of cylinder and stamp seals and their impressions. The latter comprise personal and office seals, including those identifying crown property (Buchanan and Moorey 1988: 55). Most evidence for the economic basis of Neo-Assyrian queenship is found in textual sources that refer to queens' activities, property, and household personnel (Kinnier-Wilson 1972; Ahmad and Postgate 2007; Svärd 2015: Appendix A, 177-221, Appendix D, 240-242). In addition, seals and seal impressions attest to the agency and undertakings of queens and their representatives. Some seal impressions bearing the scorpion emblem of the queen's household were associated with inventory records relating to the textile industry (Radner 2008: 494-502; Gaspa 2013: 29-30;). Balance-scale weights (including one incised with the scorpion emblem) were also found in archaeological contexts associating queens with the economic procedure of quantifying commodities (Peyronel 2015: 105-106; Hussein 2016: 22-23, pls. 82d-f). Rich artefact assemblages excavated from the royal tombs at Kalhu's Northwest Palace demonstrate that queens embodied imperial wealth by wearing and using items made of precious materials, especially gold (Gansell 2018a; Hussein 2016). In art, a queen's wealth was displayed in depictions of her dress, but the few known visual representations of Neo-Assyrian queens illustrate their ritual and ceremonial (not immediately economic) activities (Ornan 2002). Like the evidence for Neo-Assyrian kings, evidence for the economic roles of Neo-Assyrian queens dates predominantly to the 8th and 7th centuries BCE and mostly derives from excavated palaces at Kalhu and Nineveh.

The written, visual, and archaeological evidence for queens, however, is very limited compared to what is preserved for kings (Gansell 2018b). Comprehensive catalogues of primary source texts relating to queens (their names are rarely stated) can be found in Svärd 2015; only a sampling is cited here. Note that historical sources relating to King Esarhaddon's mother Naqi'a (who carried out the duties of queenship but was not titled 'queen' during his reign) are treated here as evidence for the economic basis of queenship (Melville 1999; Svärd 2015: 41-46). In contrast to the Neo-Assyrian empire, the state archives of the Neo-Babylonian Empire have not survived except for a group of tablets recording the delivery and distribution of commodities in Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon (Pedersén 2005: 110-132). Therefore, practical information about the royal economy needs to be gleaned from tens of thousands of legal and administrative texts from temple and private archives (Jursa 2005). Accordingly, we are relatively well informed about the aspects of royal income and expenditure that touched other parts of Babylonian society, but we know little about the inner workings of the royal economy (Jursa 2010a). Archaeology has confirmed the extensive royal building projects in the Babylonian heartland (Czichon 1999; Pedersén 2021). For the Teispid-Achaemenid Empire, we are in the lucky situation to have access to two large central administrative archives from Persepolis (the *Persepolis Fortification Texts*, PFT, and the *Persepolis Treasury Texts*, PTT), which allow direct insights into the workings of the royal and 'state' administration and economy, at least for part of the reign of Darius I. In addition, we have a large corpus of sealings associate with or depicting various Persian elite women, including the queens (Garrison and Root 2001; Lerner 2010; Root 2021). This strongly contrasts with the preserved reliefs and tiles of the royal palaces, where depiction of royal women is conspicuously absent. It has been suggested that the palaces were originally adorned with rich tapestries and humanoid statues (Schmidt 1953: 78-79; Henkelman 1995/1996: 289, Fig. 3), both of which could have depicted royal women, making the lack more apparent than real – but the evidence is debatable, as is who paid for the items. Further, various topics dealt with below (particularly travel and the queen's table) show queens did have an important public role, even if the details often escape us. Narrative sources for Persian queens currently are known only from classical authors, featuring in scandalous stories and presenting Greek preconceptions of a feminine orient (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1983a). Introduced by classical authors (Plut. *Art.* 27.2; Heracleides, *Deinon*) and drawing on modern orientalist conceptions scholarship produced (and by now refuted) the idea of Persian kings having large 'harems' of 'concubines' (Brosius 1998: 1-5, 31, 105-122; Allen 2005: 97; Safaee 2016; Lenfant 2020). Another key challenge concerning the Teispid-Achaemenid empire sections is that in contrast to most other empires the economic basis of the empire, the king, and the queen are only very selectively studied; in consequence, the *Blackwell Companion of the Achaemenid Empire* features only sections on taxes and tributes (Hackl and Ruffing 2021), on the temple economy (Wunsch 2021), and on Babylonian entrepreneurs (Waerzeggers 2021). A key concern of each of these is the highly area-specific information, which often does not allow to determine more generic imperial traits (cf. Hackl and Ruffing 2021: 967). Thus, many of the results presented below remain preliminary and are based on (selective) readings of the available primary sources rather than summary research. The main sources of evidence for the economic basis of Seleukid kingship are

epigraphic and numismatic (Aperghis 2004: 8-18). Unlike for their contemporaries, the Ptolemies, the documentary papyri with detailed records of taxation, royal estates and their incomes and expenditures, and the people in royal service do not survive in the archaeological record, although the clay sealings which once attached to such papers in the royal archives do survive to prove they did once exist (cf. Invernizzi 1996; Ariel and Naveh 2003). Cuneiform documents do survive and provide excellent information on the economic life of Babylonia and the activities of its Akkadian-using inhabitants, some of whom were connected to the royal economy. Only a few sources give any information about the economic activities of Seleukid queens, and, as for the kings, they are epigraphic; some numismatic evidence can also be considered. In the latter case, information is obtained from surmise, but with the former we have direct input on the properties and monetary resources belonging to queens. The principal sources for the economic basis of Ptolemaic kingship include Greek and Roman literature, papyri and ostraca in Greek and Demotic Egyptian, multilingual stone inscriptions, coins, and archaeological evidence. The Greek and Roman literary sources provide general figures for wealth and revenue of the Ptolemies/Ptolemaic state (Fischer-Bovet 2014: 67-68), and details useful for reconstructing certain expenditures, e.g., the size of military forces and royal displays of wealth. The papyrological evidence from Egypt is extensive, and supplemented by ostraca, but coverage is incomplete both chronologically and geographically. Most concern taxation, regulation, and landownership and pertain to the Fayyum and Upper Egypt (Vandorpe 2000; Muhs 2005; Monson 2012; Christensen et al. 2017). Alexandria and the delta region are poorly represented in this material, as is the 1st century BCE. Stone inscriptions, such as the joint royal-priestly decrees offer information on the extent of royal expenditure in terms of benefaction and tax relief; inscriptions from Greek cities outside of Egypt provide insights on the transactional nature of the Ptolemies' relationship with their Mediterranean possessions. Coins provide data on royal monetary policy and economic health (von Reden 2007; Lorber 2012). Finally, material evidence from archaeological excavations provides information on mining activities and expenditure on city foundation, infrastructure, and building (esp. temples). In parallel to the Seleukid empire and in stark contrast to the Ptolemaic and the Teispid-Achaemenid Empire, the most important sources for the Arsacid Šāhanšāhī, and thus also the Šāhanšāh, are found in classical texts. These are complemented by some documentary evidence from Nisa, Shahr-i Qumis, Avroman, and Dura, some royal inscriptions, occasional Akkadian administrative texts, coinage, and later Zoroastrian traditions. While the primary kingship evidence is already sparse, independent evidence to determine the economic sectors specifically under the authority of the queen is not available at all. Only when the Šāhanšāh has passed away and the crown prince has not reached legal age, the evidence about the queen in the position of viceroy becomes clearer (see sections 5.3 and 7 for the cases of Rinnu, mother of Phraates II, and Musa, mother of Phraates V). One way to overcome this is to compare Achaemenid, Seleukid and Sasanian evidence, allowing in certain aspects the inference of continuity regarding the personal and public properties of the royal families within the Šāhanšāhī system. Another track is to consider the reception history of the Arsacid period in the (pre-)Sasanian period, though this is even more fraught with potential misrepresentations regarding historiographical accuracy. The most pertinent of these secondary sources are the

Sasanian legends pertaining to the mythical queen Homāy Čehrzād, who is presented as sole ruler over Persia. Renowned for her generosity and diligent charity, she communicated with elders from behind a thin silk curtain, issuing final administrative orders (Khaleghi-Motlagh 1971: 74-77; Doostkhah 2004; Mirʿābedīnī and Ṣedīqīān 2007: 364-369). Given that these directives required financing, it is inferred that powerful queens at the Arsacid the court had more or less unrestricted access to the royal treasury, at least in periods, when she acted as regent for her son in cases of the Šāhanšāh's death before the crown prince reaching majority. The sources for the economic basis of Roman emperors and 'queens' during the Julio-Claudian period are comparatively rich, covering textual sources such as histories and documents, law codes, epigraphic sources, archaeological finds and architectural remains. Much of the interpretation of the period is based on surviving narrative histories such as those by Tacitus and Suetonius. Queens are much less visible in the sources. However, central issues of the economic sphere, like the size of the Roman economy are only rough approximations and remain matters of conjecture (cf. Scheidel and Friesen 2009).

2.2. *Royal vs 'state' assets*[4]

The differentiation between royal and 'state' assets and revenue during the Neo-Assyrian period changed over the centuries, and a single dichotomy between the two is difficult to establish. Neo-Assyrian state ideology purposefully confused the separation between the person of the king and the king as representative of a heavenly mandate to rule and hence the economic basis of kingship cannot be easily separated from the imperial economy at large. An important facet in the economic dominance specifically of the king during this period was the power to institute weights and measures, systems of registration, and notarising techniques. While distinction between royal and state assets can sometimes be made, for the most part they were heavily interwoven with each other during the Neo-Assyrian period because the provincial system represented a direct political, administrative, and socio-economic extension of the central power structure (Fales 2017: 273). The economic (and political) power of the king was in fact often restricted by the seven magnates (*rabbūti*), constituting the upper tier of government hierarchy, who held in certain times more power even than the king (Mattila 2000). The queens' role in the tension of 'state' versus royal assets is even more difficult to assess. While queens may have had some personal (material) wealth, most of the Neo-Assyrian queens' economic assets can be attributed to the household of her office of queenship (Svärd 2015: 74). Ultimately her household revenue was derived from, generated within, and absorbed by the state economy. Like the Neo-Assyrian king, the Neo-Assyrian queen was viewed as an embodiment of empire; thus, her assets – personal, household, and imperial, as a whole – would have been viewed as a manifestation of the eternal prosperity of the empire. Also in ancient Babylonia, 'royal' and 'state' were not distinct categories, perhaps even less than in Assyria. There was no emic terminology to differentiate between these two concepts, and there was no 'Babylonian state' that existed independently from the king (von Dassow 1999: 241-245l; Jursa 2017; Richardson 2020: 169-170). The basic social and political

[4] Though none of the polities under discussion are 'states' in the sense of modern nation states, 'state' asset is used here as shorthand for assets of the official central administration of these polities.

organisation in Babylonia was fragmented in various kinship groups and cities that exerted significant power on a local and regional scale. Political unity to the region was brought by the king and his administration who strived to extend their authority over and extract resources from these different groups. The income and property of the king (*ša šarri*) were distinct from those of private persons and temples, but as there was no state that can be separated from the king, there was no meaningful dichotomy between royal and state assets. The same corvée labour, tribute, and tax income were used to build royal palaces and improve infrastructure in the Babylonian heartland. There was no state monopoly of land ownership, and temples and private persons also owned land. In contrast to those earlier empires, an Achaemenid royal household that is delimited from the overall state assets is visible in the *Persepolis Fortification Texts* (e.g., Briant 2002: 463-466, 469-471; Henkelman 2010: 669, cf. 712, 732). The administrators of the corpus were careful to note when commodities were received or dispensed to or from the royal household. The question this raises is the line – whether conceptual or practical – between the two, or, in other words, if the kings disposed of 'state' assets differently from those of his household. It is fairly certain that the king did not 'own' all land in the empire. He was free, however, to grant land rights to 'unused' land in return for remuneration of various kinds (Guillaume 2012). Whether such remuneration went to the 'state' or the royal house is uncertain. A similar fuzziness between satrapal estates and imperial administration is visible in the documents from one of the satraps of Egypt, namely Aršama (Tuplin 1987: 111, 116, 133-137; 2017: 622). The royal granting of land rights was a mechanism which both financially and practically tied elites to the king, even if the precise legal mechanisms are opaque (Tuplin 1987: 133-137; Henkelman et al. 2017: xxv). A currently rather singular, but potentially relevant distinction in the context of 'state' vs 'royal' asset stems from a Babylonian slave sale (VS V, 128, late 5th century; Kuhrt 2007: 725), in which a 'domain of the throne' (Akk. *bīt kussi*), arguably a crown, and thus imperial office, estate, is distinguished from the 'domain of the table' (Akk. *bīt paššuri*), arguably a personal royal estate. Though the attestations are sporadic, they show that at least certain royal women were major economic actors in their own right, with households separate from the king's over which they had control (see sections 5.3 and 6.2). These households operated in a similar way to the king's household: while apparently kept administratively separate from the 'state' resources, the queens were able to utilise the larger administrative system for their own purposes. The Seleukid kings possessed the entire territory of their empire by right of conquest, the 'spear won land,' arguably inherited from Makedonian kingship (Ma 1999: 29; Hammond 2000; Aperghis 2004: 88). The king was 'the state,' and while he maintained nominal ownership on all land, large tracts of it were gifted to private individuals, cities, and temple communities. These lands were released for usufruct, and taxes were collected based on production and fixed sums. A particular entanglement occurred between royal estates and city lands, since gift estate owners were often permitted to 'attach' their properties to city territories, giving them rights and privileges of citizens (Aperghis 2004: 100-107); to what extent these remained with the king once estates reverted to him is unclear. The king might also endow sanctuaries and cities with specific reliefs from tax burdens and other economic benefactions (see section 4.2). While a release from certain forms of taxation was common, it did not mean freedom from all royal tribute. This

was often enforced by increased royal involvement in local economic institutions, whereby the king imposed his own official on the existing hierarchies (cf. Boiy 2004: 208; Clancier and Monerie 2014: 212-213), further complexifying the relationships between the king, his state, and the independent civic and sacred communities. Similar to the Seleukid monarchy, Ptolemaic (and generally Macedonian) kingship was ideologically perceived as a 'personal monarchy', whereby the king is essentially equivalent to the state; the personal matters of the king and the affairs of the state were collectively referred to as *ta pragmata* (Mooren 1983). Similarly, in Egypt, the Ptolemies inherited earlier pharaonic ideology whereby in principle all land belongs to the king (Monson 2007a; von Reden 2020: 32). In the scholarship, the economy of the state and of the Ptolemaic king (and queen) have traditionally been treated as a single entity, '*l'économie royale*', as coined by Préaux (1939). However, this model has been challenged in recent decades based on new documentary evidence showing the existence of private markets and land rights (Dogaer 2023: 120-123 with references). Manning (2010: 124) has suggested that personal revenue of the king was separate from that of the state. However, also the ancient historians did not distinguish between Ptolemaic wealth and state wealth (e.g., Suet. *Aug.* 41.1) and it is difficult to distinguish between wealth of the sovereign and that of the state in the extant documentary evidence, especially in view of the lack of evidence from Alexandria. The Arsacid system of governance was characterised by a Šāhanšāhī structure. This modern political term, which originates from the Qājār period (1786-1925),[5] encapsulates the typical and traditional mode of governance in Iran/Persia, often likened to a confederation, network, or commonwealth state. In the Arsacid Šāhanšāhī, three primary economic sectors prevailed: the royal sector overseen by the chancellery of the Šāhanšāh, the temple sector, and the private sector. The Šāhanšāh fulfilled dual roles in the sources: as the proprietor of individual assets and household head and as the chief of the Šāhanšāhī administration. While possessing the authority to distribute treasury wealth, such revenues were deemed governmental rather than personal assets. The extent of the Šāhanšāh and their family's share of public property remains uncertain as is the question of whether they were dictated by law or tradition (Dandamayev 1997; Dandamayev and Lukonin 1989: 130). Most expenses incurred by queens and other members of the Šapistān (Parth. Špstʾn 'harem') were covered by the court. A portion of income, likely in the form of gifts or fixed salaries, particularly from dedicated temple revenue, was directly provided to the queens by the Šāhanšāh and indirectly through the pat-Šapistān (Parth. PWN Špstʾn) 'the chief of the harem,' typically a Šāpistān (Parth. š'pstʾn, a *vṛddhi* derivative of Špstʾn, 'the eunuch') (Lukonin 1983: 712-713; Lerner and Skjærvø 2006: 115). Probably, the queens received the majority of the Šapistān's revenue. The Roman emperor had several complementary methods of raising the funds necessary for enabling his rule. The funds of the empire were administered in two distinct sections: the fiscus of the state itself and the private properties of the emperor. In practice the division was more for appearance's sake (cf. Millar 1977: 189-201; Brunt 1990b; 1990c). The relation of income between the categories of private and public wealth was, however,

[5] The term 'Šāhanšāhī' has been used in pre-modern times in various forms. In modern times, Iranian scholars recognised this term as equivalent to the terms 'empire/imperial'.

mostly an issue of financial administration rather than anything else – ideologically, and largely practically, all income and expenditure was in the hands of the emperor. Thus, the emperor was the personification of Roman power and thus the ultimate powerbroker, judge and granter of favours. For example, money and taxes were perceived as belonging and being due to the emperor as in 'render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's' (Matthew 22.15-22). The client-kings in the Roman East held their positions by imperial favour and imperial officials looked after Emperor's interest in their courts. Royal lands of the client-kings were deemed fundamentally to be imperial possessions that were in the end for the emperor to give at his discretion. That is why Herod's sons rushed to Rome to plead their case before Augustus after the death of their father (Sartre 2005: 57-58, 77-80, 93-97).

2.3. *Royal palaces, household(s), estates*

The Neo-Assyrian empire boasted four capitals: the traditional capital Assur followed by Kalhu, founded under Ashurnasirpal II, Dur-Sharrukin under Sargon II, and Nineveh under Sennacherib (Groß and Kertai 2018: 2). Each capital contained a primary and a military royal palace, albeit state administration was conducted in both (Otto 2015: 469-490; Groß and Kertai 2018: 5). The best-known of these are the Old Palace in Assur, the Northwest Palace at Kalhu, the Dur-Sharrukin Palace, and the Southwest and North Palaces at Nineveh. The Neo-Assyrian king and queen reigned from the primary palace where they also lived along with a relatively small number of unidentified additional residents (Kertai 2015; Groß 2020; Portuese 2020). A large, non-residential staff must have worked at the palace, which also accommodated a vast flow of visitors. The empire operated through a multiplicity of palaces, including sites that served specialised ceremonial, military, economic, and provincial purposes (Kertai 2013). In theory, the Neo-Assyrian king exercised ownership over the whole land, although in practice, the economic system functioned through a patrimonialist vein of rulership consisting of 'households' (*bitu*) that held economic, administrative, and military authority over their own domains with the household of the kingship being the mightiest among many (Fales 2017: 276). The Neo-Assyrian royal household consisted of the king and queen (whose royal estates are often seen as having been separate from one another), other members of the royal family, the king's magnates (among them the commander-in-chief *turtanu*, the palace manager *rab ekalli*, and chief treasurer *mašennu rabiu*), a host of other officials (chief musician, chief confectioner, wine master, etc.), as well as servants and security personnel. Especially during the 7th century, the households of the crown prince and of the king's mother (*ummi šarri*) were – or could be – separate economic entities, albeit smaller in scale (Groß 2020: 505-506). Depending on the king, the royal entourage could favour one capital or palace, or move court periodically depending e.g., on natural conditions, time of year, or the political situation in the heartland or the hinterlands. The separation of the office of king from the royal estate depends on the period and the political power of individual magnates, but at least symbolically the king and the state were considered as one and the same. Also, for the Neo-Assyrian queens an impressive number of palaces is known. Atalia, the queen of Sargon II, probably had a palace in Assur, Libbali-šarrat had a palace built for her in Kilizi, and royal letters indicate a possible further queen's palace at Arbail (CTN 3 87; SAA 1 99; SAA 16 111; Svärd 2015: 52, 63, 65-66, 71, 110). The queen's household probably conducted economic operations at these satellite locations under the

supervision of on-site administrators and staff. Royal texts also mention queens' village managers, suggesting that Neo-Assyrian queens ran a geographically distributed network of estates (Edubba 10 28; Edubba 10 30; Edubba 10 38; SAA 6 90). The Neo-Babylonian kings resided in the palaces of Babylon, with the noteworthy exception of Nabonidus's decade-long stay in Tayma. Using the tribute from conquered regions and resources from the Babylonian heartland, Nebuchadnezzar II (re)built the South, North, and Summer Palaces in Babylon, and his inscriptions emphasise the role of Babylon as the seat of kingship (Heinrich 1984: 198-229; Beaulieu 2017: 9-11; Pedersén 2021: 89-137). The structure and functions of the South Palace are best known. It was organised around five courts and contained dedicated spaces for administration, production, and king's public and private life (Jursa 2010b). The palace had a specific women's quarter (é $^{\text{mí}}$šà.é.gal; see Cousin 2023: 178-181), but it remains unclear who lived there and where the queen herself resided. The crown prince's residence (*bīt redûti*) may have been a separate building in Babylon or a part of a royal palace. In addition to the members of the royal family, a large number of officials, craftsmen, and other professionals were provided by and worked at royal palaces (Jursa 2010b; Da Riva 2013). Even if the king's high officials belonged to the royal household, the leaders of the Chaldean and Aramean populations did not, significantly reducing the king's ability to supervise them (Jursa 2014a: 126-133). Palaces in other Babylonian cities were not permanent royal residences but were intended for the use of governors and royal administration and could house the king during his travels (Jursa 2004; Miglus 2004; Beaulieu 2017: 10-11). Princes and princesses did not only reside in Babylon, and two daughters of Nebuchadnezzar probably lived in Uruk from where his family originated, and Nabonidus's daughter(s) were active in Sippar (Beaulieu 1998; Cousin 2023: 186-187). Royal estates are not well attested in our sources, and it seems that they were not the dominant source of royal income (Jursa 2010a: 442). A part of royal lands was cultivated by dependent population within the so-called land-for-service system (section 3.4). In the Teispid-Achaemenid empire, both the kings and queens are attested as having a peripatetic lifestyle (Briant 1988; Boucharlat 1997: 217-219; Tuplin 1998), inter alia travelling between the residences of Pasargadae, Persepolis, Susa, Babylon, and Ecbatana, which were continually added to by the various kings (Schmidt 1953; Perrot 2013; Canepa 2018: 297-305). Debate remains over the nature of these sites, as few of them appear to be suitably residential in nature (Boucharlat 1997; Bahadori and Miri 2021); newer archaeological work has begun to show conurbations around at least Persepolis (Boucharlat 2020); in some cases royal 'tent cities' have been argued (Bahadori and Miri 2021). Due to the find sites of the Persepolis Fortification Tablets (Stolper 1953: 3, 40-41; 2017; Hallock 1969; 1978;) and Persepolis Treasury Tablets (PTT; Cameron 1948; Schmidt 1953: 173-175; 1957: 4) in the fortifications and treasury, respectively, it is likely the palatial complexes played a central role in imperial financial administration. Notably, pre-Persian royal institutions in the subject areas were absorbed into the royal households, such as the Neo-Babylonian estate of the crown prince, attested for Cambyses (Wunsch 2000: 103-104). The queens could travel on their own or with the king (Brosius 1998: 87-90; Henkelman 2010: 696; Stolper 2018). The size and complexity of the royal households can be hinted at by reference to the institutions of the royal tables (Brosius 1998; 2021; Henkelman 2010). The large quantities of food and drink provide a glimpse of the sheer number of guests staff involved in

the households. While it is clear that royal women were not kept segregated (Lenfant 2020, cf. Lenfant 2021; against the identification of the 'southeast building' on the Persepolis terrace as 'Xerxes' Harem' see also Root 1979: 101; Brosius 1998: 31; Razmjou 2010: 243-244), the exact nature of royal family life remains poorly known. Also the Seleukid royals had several 'capitals', and other cities served as temporary royal headquarters; some of these cities had royal or governors' palaces, while others had large municipal buildings which could be repurposed as palaces. Seleukeia on the Tigris and Antioch on the Orontes were new foundations by the dynasty, and Sardis, Kelainai-Apamea, Tarsos-Antioch on the Kydnos, Mopsuestia, Antioch in Persis, and Susa-Seleukeia on the Eulaios served as royal homes for briefer intervals. The palaces excavated at Ai Khanoum, Dura Europos, Jebel Khalid, and Kedesh in Galilee also reveal the apparatus of royal economic control. These were all multi-purpose buildings, providing space for gathering and royal audiences, clerical work, archives, storage for taxes collected in both cash and kind, plus living quarters (Bernard 1974: 289-293; Downey 1986; Clarke 2002: 25-48; Herbert and Berlin 2003; Messina 2006). The evidence for royal rural estates is scarce, and there is, as yet, no evidence for Seleukid 'pleasure' palaces. In contrast to their Teispid-Achaemenid and Seleukid and more comparable to their Neo-Babylonian counterparts, the Ptolemaic kings and queens primarily resided in Alexandria, the central city of the Ptolemaic empire (Fraser 1972; Weber 2007; Strootman 2014: 76-78). They had also other palaces in Egypt, including Memphis, Siwah, and Pelousion, the most significant of which was Memphis (Thompson 1988; Nielsen 1994: 130). As for the royal household, ideologically, the entire empire belonged to the royal household. The Egyptian state operated on a patrimonial household model, whereby the king is the ultimate head of an extended household (Lehner 2000; von Reden 2020: 32). In terms of the more limited definition of 'royal household', this included the royal family, namely the king, queen, consorts, offspring, other relatives, as well as members of the court (*aule*): non-kin friends (*philoi*), guards, servants, and other advisors (Strootman 2014: 95-96, 166). As for 'royal estates', there was a fiscal category of land known as royal land (*basilikê gê*). Some of this was leased out to 'royal tenants' and some was privately owned/managed, with the king claiming fiscal rights. The Arsacid royal residence, encircled by high outer walls, consisted of interconnected palaces linked to the central main palace by corridors (Azarpay 1983: 1135-1139). This central palace served as the administrative hub of Šāhanšāhī, where the Šāhānšāh held bār ('the royal audience'), accessible to both men and women who obtained permission from the head of protocol. Queens and some other royal women had the right to seek and attend audience (Khaleghi-Motlagh and Farhūdī: 1988). As head of the household, the Šāhanšāh also possessed a 'major estate' (*dstkrty*), administered by 'stewards' (*framatārs*) (Lukonin 1983: 702). The household of the Šāhanšāh encompassed a separate area adjacent to the central palace, where his wives, children, and privileged courtiers' families resided in their Šapistān. These Šapistān areas were likely bustling with children, maidens, women, old women, and Šāpistāns. Boys were probably permitted access to most parts of the Šapistān except for women's private quarters, likely until the age of fifteen, representing adulthood initiation in Persia (ps.-al-Jāḥiẓ 1914: 125-126; Widengren 1969). The Šāpistāns (i.e., head eunuchs) served as a network system connecting various parts of the court, temples, bazaars, and gardens. They played a crucial role in facilitating interactions between the internal and external

environments to address the religious, economic, and entertainment needs of queens and other women (Harmatta-Pékáry 1971; Kolesnikov 1998; cf. Lenfant 2021 for the Achaemenid period). The Roman emperor had multiple estates and villas whereas his primary residence was in Rome. Even so, the emperor could spend considerable time away, like Tiberius who for the last decade of his reign ruled from his palace on the island of Capri. In the Roman East emperors also held vast estates in the royal tradition and got more as bequests and confiscations (Sartre 2005: 207-211). A key characteristic of the imperial household was that it was not, in a Republican manner, primarily defined as *familia*, a family underlining paternal links, but as *Domus Augusta*, household, a wider concept that included also maternal relations (Fertik 2019: 39-41). The household also included slaves, freedmen and clients. The importance of the *domus* in part reflected early imperial realities as the first emperor, Augustus, only had one child – a daughter. Membership in the imperial family and one's standing in it was thus in a sense open to negotiation and renegotiation.

2.4. *Terminology and practicalities regarding 'queenship'*

While the evidence on the male head-of-state is sufficient (and sufficiently clear) for all empires under discussion, this is not the case concerning 'queenship'. On the one hand, the various empires have different policies on who was the most influential royal female, on the other hand, the institution of queenship (however connotated) was not necessarily fix, neither ideologically, nor in practice. Thirdly, and in many ways most significant for the following sections, some empires, like the Neo-Assyrian, the Seleukid, and the Ptolemaic, are well enough attested to allow focusing on a clearly circumscribed queenship role, while others, especially the Neo-Babylonian, Teispid-Achaemenid, and Arsacid empires, require a less strict focus in order to make meaningful statements on the economic basis of the office of queenship. Arguably, this is not only due to the lack of sources, but also intrinsic to the less determined office, as is certainly the case for the Roman empire.[6] The focus of the Neo-Assyrian queenship section is on the wife of the reigning king, and, occasionally, on the mother of the king (as a regent-like figure for an under-age son, or when she continued to reign after her son has gained the throne). This reflects ancient Neo-Assyrian realities, evident also in the queen's royal title (cum administrative office): she was called *sēgallu* (MÍ.É.GAL), literally 'woman of the palace' (Parpola 1988; Svärd 2015: 39, esp. n. 213). This term differentiated her from Assyrian goddess-queens and independently ruling foreign queens, who were identified by the term *šarratu* (the feminine form of *šarru*, i.e., 'female king'), which are not included in the following discussion. The wives of the Neo-Babylonian kings are not attested in primary sources, and there is only little evidence of kings' daughters and mothers (see Cousin 2023). Therefore, the following discussion of Neo-Babylonian

[6] A full diachronic comparison of the main kingship and queenship titles across the seven empires is a major desideratum, though exceedingly challenging to accomplish due to the highly unconsistent scope of available evidence across the empires. As the evidence for the Teispid-Achaemenid empire is exceedingly pertinent to the discussion of the economic basis, the essentials are provided in two footnotes, as is the scope of relevant terms for the Parthian/Arsacid Šāhanšāhī, which are, however, not directly matched in the sources revealing insights into the economic basis of queenship (see fn. 8 for the Teispid/Achaemenid, fn. 9 for the Arsacid ruling house).

royal women is very limited and primarily focuses on Nebuchadnezzar's and Nabonidus's daughters and Adad-guppi, the mother of Nabonidus. Due to the relative overall scarcity of sources and the arguably fluid queenship conception (and/or office), the discussion focus for the Teispid-Achaemenid empire is on major female royals attested in the primary economic-administrative sources under various titles.[7] Most of the included royal females have been wives of the reigning, former, or next king at some point in their life, though they were not necessarily 'in office', when the respective document was written. For the Seleukid queens, the direct evidence for economic activities is limited and concerns mainly those queens who were wives of kings and then the mothers of their successors. Otherwise, descriptions of the economic basis for Seleukid queenship are based on comparisons and guesswork (e.g., Ramsey 2016: 91-93). For the Ptolemaic Empire, we refer by queen to the female counterpart of the Ptolemaic king. She is typically the wife of the king, and also usually (but not always) his blood relative, i.e., sister (most frequently), mother, daughter, or niece. In the Ptolemaic empire, the queen is often a co-ruler (officially or unofficially) with the king, who manage the affairs as political partners, although the extent of the involvement of the queens varied from time to time. A system of official joint rulership between male and female sovereigns emerges in the 2nd century BCE according to the Egyptian documentation (Bielman Sanchez and Lenzo 2021: 76). As showcased above (section 2.1), the Parthian sources do not allow to assess the financial assets and costs of individual female royals, but largely only – and this indirectly – on the palace/court institution of the Šapistān ('harem').[8] Thus, for the Arsacid

[7] Several terms are used for royal Achaemenid women, though none are yet extant in Old Persian (attested only in the Elamite, Babylonian, and Greek records). As they do occur in the main documents available for discussing the economic basis of the queen and are not yet studied comprehensively elsewhere, they are listed here. PF 1078 mentions the title 'lady, queen' (*bānūkā, ba-nu-ka4) without name (Hallock 1969: 312; Tavernier 2007: 417 [4.4.7.16]). PF 1795 and Fort. 6764 give Irtašduna (Artystone) the title dukšiš/*duxçīš, variously glossed as 'princess' or 'royal woman' (Hallock 1969: 490; Tavernier 2007: 420 [4.4.7.34]). It is also used for Ištin (PF 823; Hallock 1969: 239), Irrakpirda (PF-NN 812; Brosius 1998: 28), and daughters of Hystaspes (i.e., Darius I's sisters or half-sisters, PFa 31; Hallock 1978: 131-134). A woman possibly named 'mrdt is given this title in PFAT 272 (Azzoni 2017: 460. *Amardata? Cf. Tavernier 2007: 103, 603). Darius I's daughter, wife of Mardonius, Artazostre, is called 'daughter of the king' (sunki pakri) in PFa 5, but possibly was called dukšiš in Fort. 1017 (Brosius 1998: 25; Hallock 1978: 118; Kuhrt 2007: 598-599). A 'daughter of the king (Xerxes)', Rātāxšaθra-, is mentioned in rations for a wet-nurse (dated accession year of Xerxes; Brosius 2000: no. 162; Kuhrt 2007: 601; Tavernier 2007: 283). A further term that might have been used is du-iš-da ('wife'), attested for Pandušašša, wife of Bakanšakka (PF 784; Hallock 1969: 232; according to Tavernier 2007: 146 this name reflects OP *Bandu-xšaça, 'ruling over her kin'). A special case is the term 'Abbamuš/*Apamā' used for Irdabama, which has been interpreted as a second name, a throne name, or a title (Brosius 1998: 132-141; Zadok 2002: 65; 2007: 260-261; Kuhrt 2007: 597; Tavernier 2007: 474 [5.3.2.1-2]; Henkelman 2010: 697), which potentially significantly changes the reading of the relevant texts and its socio-cultural implications for Teispid/Achaemenid queenship, which is however beyond the scope of this paper.

[8] Note the following terms mostly mentioned in ŠKZ: Pahl. Šabistān /Parth. Šapistān 'harem'; Pahl. pad-Šabistān / Parth. pat-Šapistān 'the chief of the harem'; Pahl.-Parth. Duxš/Duxt, Gk. κόρης "girl, daughter, including: 'princesses', 'female rulers', 'queens', 'ladies', 'Queen of Queens', etc.; Pahl. Parth. Wisduxš/Wisduxt, Gk. κόρης 'royal girl/daughter, princess, a female member of a house'; Pahl.- Parth. Bānūg/k /Gk. Κυρίας/in Babylonian documents. bēltu, 'Lady'; Pahl.-Parth. Bānbišn, Gk. βασιλίσσης, in Babylonian documents *šarratu* 'Queen'; Pahl.-Parth. BānbišnānBānbišn, Gk. βασιλίσσης των βασιλισσων 'Queen of Queens'; Pahl.-Parth. ŠahrBānbišn, cf. Šahrbānū in later times, Gk. έθνους βασιλίσσης 'Queen of the Šāhanšāhī/land'.

Šāhanšāhī, the evidence is collated pertaining to royal women in general, with focus on those of major influence in the Šapistān. The Roman 'ideology of rulership' did not require an empress ('queen') as such, nor did it automatically attach special meaning to the wife of the emperor. There was no 'office of queenship.' The state of affairs thus allowed the role of the leading or most prominent and influential imperial woman to be held by other women than the 'female royal consort'. Consequently, in relation to Roman Empire the term 'queen' is used in this article to refer to the most influential female member of the imperial family, be that, e.g., the wife or the mother of the emperor (for leading ladies see Cenerini 2021).

3. The kings' access to resources

In this section, we explore the kings' access to resources across the empires. Following an overall assessment of which resources were most significant for the royal economy (and to which degree this can be explored based on the current state of research), we take a look at five core categories of resources: the extraction of natural resources, of (direct) financial resources, and of labour as well as the access to estate produce and to production facilities.

3.1. *Overall assessment per empire*

The economic basis of Neo-Assyrian kingship consisted of resources attained through taxation (on land, agricultural products, cattle, movement of population across the territory, etc.) and labour extraction. Countering the empire's poverty in natural resources, dramatic efforts were undertaken to reconfigure the social landscape in order to ensure that the land was agriculturally productive (Wilkinson et al. 2005: 25). The Neo-Assyrian state dominated ownership over the means of production. In addition, there was a vibrant private sector in the imperial economy (Bedford 2010: 37). For the purposes of maintaining a grip on the lands and people, in the towns and in the countryside, in the heartland and beyond, the Neo-Assyrian king wielded a variety of fiscal instruments that could – alternatively and when needed – reinforce or diminish the economic capital of high officials and other elites. In the imperial heartland, agriculture was the backbone of Neo-Babylonian economy, and the royal administration aimed to increase agricultural production by bringing new land under cultivation. The crown extracted resources primarily through taxation and labour service, royal estates and landholding were of lesser importance. Another significant source of royal income was tribute from the conquered regions outside southern Mesopotamia (Jursa 2011; 2017). The abundance of textual sources from temples and private archives and the lack of state archives may skew this assessment to some extent. Based on the current (still rather fragmentary) state of research, for the Teispid-Achaemenid royal economy we are best informed about the royal access to estate produce and labour. For tribute and gift-giving, the distinction between royal and imperial assets is likely to be blurred, the textual and visual presentation indicates the king as recipient (Descat 1997). The evidence for taxation is also challenging to assess, though here because the available source complexes do not provide a consistent picture (cf. Jursa 2011; Hackl and Ruffing 2021). This also applies to the evidence for taxation and access to estate produce, which both provide income for the royal table, but are not explicated in the expense documents for these (see section 4.2). The Seleukid royal economy was dependent on tax revenue collected in both kind and coin. The Seleukids oversaw a process of monetisation throughout

their empire (encompassing royal issues in gold, silver, and bronze as well as silver and bronze issues by city-controlled mints) which used iconography to visually identify all the metal wealth in the empire as ultimately belonging to the king. Taxation of land (in grain and coin) was also the greatest source of revenue for the Ptolemies (Monson 2007b: 259). Agricultural abundance was a major foundation for their power and influence (Buraselis 2013), something they advertised on their coins with the image of the *cornucopia*. Other sources include various capitation, trade, and production taxes as well as natural resources, war booty, and currency manipulation. The three basic economic sectors of the Arsacid Šāhanšāhī were the royal sector managed by the Šāhanšāh's chancellery, the sector owned and operated by temples, and the private sector. In all likelihood, the king had a share in all major revenues of the Šāhanšāhī. A distinct form of Arsacid royal revenue is linked to military expansion. Beginning with Arsaces I and continuing under Phraates I, the acquisition of new territories involved the establishment of cities through the renaming of existing towns with names incorporating that of the sovereign (Gyselen 1997; Brosius 2006: 110-113; Ellerbrock 2021: 176). These 'new' cities and their surrounding districts fell directly under the authority of the crown, enabling comprehensive control over the economic activities of the region, including agriculture, craftsmanship, mining, trade, and transportation. In the Roman Empire (in the East), the difference between private wealth of the emperor and public wealth of the Roman state was, to a large extent, a matter of political expediency and custom. The emperor had his private wealth, separated from the state, but in actual fact held control over both. Central to the accumulation of personal wealth was the province of Egypt which was tightly controlled by the emperor.

3.2. *Extraction of natural resources*

Beyond agriculture and animal husbandry (see section 3.5), the Assyrians extracted natural resources in the form of quarrying, mining of metals (from the Zagros, the Anatolian mountains, and Afghanistan), exploitation of forests (e.g., Lebanese timber), and the diversion of waterways through the construction of canals. For the most part, these resources had to be extracted and transported from outside of the core area of the empire, especially by prisoners of war (see section 3.5). The Neo-Assyrian state held a monopoly in the exploitation of minerals under special control of the king (Muhly 1998), and the economy was structured in a way that forced surpluses to flow to the imperial heartland (Bedford 2010: 38). Also, the Babylonian heartland was poor in natural resources except for agricultural produce. Stone, metal, and wood had to be imported from areas in the empire's periphery and outside its borders. It seems that these resources were primarily obtained through trade, in which the king and his administration were involved via their own merchants (*tamkār* (*ša*) *šarri*; Alstola 2017: 27-29), and through tribute, which flowed into the coffers of the king and was invested particularly in building projects – including the construction of canals – in the Babylonian heartland (Jursa 2010a: 750-751). The exploitation of Lebanon's cedars was a special case, as the acquisition of cedars for building temples and palaces was a feat expected from all Mesopotamian kings, celebrated, e.g., in Nebuchadnezzar's royal inscriptions (Da Riva 2012). Briant (2002: 400) appeals to (Ps-) Aristotle (Oec. II. 1345b) for the control of mineral rights belonging to satraps rather than the royal Teispid-Achaemenid

administration, but Briant emphasises the lack of the data to corroborate this. In the foundations of the palace at Susa, Darius boasts of his use of precious materials from around the empire (DSf), but this does not clarify whether these materials were part of regular imperial tribute or a special royal asset. Neither is it clear for the large number of natural materials mentioned in the Persepolis Fortification and Treaury Tablets which if any of these should be understood as distinctly royal rather than belonging to the larger 'state' apparatus. For Egypt, the primary sources indicate that quarrying remained a royal prerogative, or it was at least still executed explicitly in the name of the king (on quarry inscriptions in the Eastern Desert cf. Posener 1936: 88-130); whether it generated royal income is to be questioned. In this context, also the question of royal control of irrigation, and especially the instigation of major infrastructure projects for water access (especially qanat systems; Briant 1994; 2017: 354-355), is to be raised. For the qanat system in the Khargah oasis, this has by now to be refuted (Agut-Larbordère 2018). Through the ideology of spear-won land, the Seleukid kings, as conquerors themselves or through their patrimony, laid claim to all natural resources in their empire, including ores and timber (Aperghis 2004: 148, 153). The rise in numbers of coins circulating in the empire attests to mining activity, but there also was a significant recycling of metal from pre-existing and foreign coinages for this supply (Houghton et al. 2008). The greatest natural resource for the Ptolemies was the Nile River which facilitated their agricultural wealth (Adams 2019: 234-243). Another important resource was gold, mined in the Eastern Desert of Egypt (Faucher 2018; Redon 2018). Evidence suggests that these mines were directly managed by Ptolemaic officials (Redon 2018: §11). Gold was required by the Ptolemaic dynasts for official coinage and gifts (Fischer-Bovet 2022: 132). Papyrus documentation also mentions copper mines in the Fayuum and in Middle Egypt (Redon 2018: n. 20), important for monetisation. Stone quarrying was a significant resource for the lavish Ptolemaic building projects (Adams 2019: 234-243). Royal extraction of natural resources by the Arsacids centred around metal mining. Iron ores were indispensable for the production of weapons and armour. Other metals found in the ore deposits include copper, zinc, nickel, arsenic, cobalt, tungsten, lead, and tin. Pliny the Elder refers to the gold mines of Arsacid Šāhanšāhī. Of utmost importance was silver, predominantly utilised for coin minting. The significance of silver extraction was underscored by the founder of the Arsacid royal dynasty, who prioritised capturing territories with Seleukid mints (Olbrycht 2021c: 169). Another sought-after mined commodity in Parthia was salt (Ellerbrock 2021: 175). While the finest mineral and metal products were likely utilised in the crafting of royal ornaments, it is worth noting the absence of reports indicating direct court use for daily purposes. This suggests that this portion of Šāhanšāhī revenue was allocated towards government to control the economy of Šāhanšāhī, rather than for the economy of the courts or Šāhanšāh's personal treasure. Mines were of special interest for the Roman emperors. The empire needed metals, especially gold, silver, copper and tin, which were available only in certain areas of the empire. Thus, they were important sources of revenue, as emperors took immediate possession of all gold mines and a majority of the silver mines. Extraction of metal resources was often overseen by specially appointed officials, especially in the case of gold mines by imperial freedmen. Major mining operations were often protected by the military (Edmondson 1989; 2014: 689-690; Wilson 2002;). In

the East, a special resource of imperial interest was the Lebanese forests with their precious timber (Sartre 2005: 208).

3.3. *Extraction of financial resources*

In the Neo-Assyrian Empire, tax from the 'Land of Aššur' was paid in the form of annual gifts to temples consisting of foodstuffs, grain, and livestock paid either directly by the people or via the governor. The palace manager (*rab ekalli*) was responsible for the handling of tax payments in kind (Groß and Kertai 2018: 9), although this type of revenue might have passed the palace entirely by, going from the temples to the army. Tax under the 'Yoke of Aššur' (i.e., from areas ruled by a vassal king or other type of native regime) was collected in the form of tribute consisting of precious metals and finished products directly paid to the king (e.g., for Sam'al under Shalmaneser III cf. Maxwell-Hyslop 1974: 149). In addition, smaller taxes or fees could be levied e.g., by port officials, gate keepers, and thoroughfare operators both in the imperial heartland and in the hinterlands (Postgate 1992: 247-263). Specific individuals and groups enjoyed (divinely justified) tax and labour exemptions that protected their economic capital, ruled by the king (von Dassow 2011: 209), but typically presented as divine intervention (Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 207, 211). Tribute and taxation were important sources of Neo-Babylonian royal income, but it has to be noted that this income was quickly returned to circulation by hiring workforce in the Babylonian heartland (Jursa 2011). The conquest of Assyria and the Levant provided the Babylonian king with significant tributes that were largely invested in the salaries of people working in royal building projects (Jursa 2010a: 750-751). In the same vein, taxation aimed at extraction of labour: if taxpayers were not able or willing to perform their work obligations, a payment could be made to hire a substitute (see section 3.4). Nevertheless, there were also forms of taxation that were not directly linked to service obligations. These include the taxation of temples' agricultural produce, tax payments in the land-for-service sector, payments for using bridges and gates, taxes for selling land, and the king's share of regular offerings and his prebendary income from temples (Kleber 2008: 287-296; Jursa 2011: 433-434, 443). The Teispid-Achaemenid Empire was most interested in taxes in kind (staples) and labour, but also collected precious metals (Jursa 2011; Jursa and Schmidl 2017). The role of the king in this is difficult to assess, as the currently available sources are specific to their area of origin (especially Persia, Babylonia, 'Greek World', Egypt) with either no overlap or conflicting information (cf. Jacobs et al. 2017; Hackl and Ruffing 2021; Kleber 2021). Also, e.g., how widely the Persians expanded the land-for-service system (see section 3.4) for military service, which they inherited from the Neo-Babylonian polity, remains uncertain (Tuplin 1987: 145; Briant 2002: 75; Matarese 2021: 120-121). A noteworthy primary source specifying the king as recipient of monetary taxes is preserved in palimpsest. The written-over customs account (in Aramaic) from the 5th century. BCE lists custom duties and taxes for ships entering Egypt from the Levant and Asia minor to be paid to 'the house of the king;' however, even this explicit specification is likely to be read as going to a local treasury and storehouse (Kuhrt 2007: 670, 681-703; Folmer 2021). Historians have long laboured in the shadow of Herodotus's so-called tribute list (Hdt. III 89-97), the reliability of which is to be seriously doubted (Tuplin 1997: 373-392; Briant 2002: 399-410). In his list, Herodotus describes tribute both in silver and in kind but claims that some regions only offered 'gifts.' Few of his gifts, however, match the objects depicted on the Apadana being presented

to the king (see Root 1979: 227-284). That high-status objects were brought to the centre from the provinces is demonstrated by the finds of chert mortars and pestles in the treasury (Schmidt 1939: 61; Bowman 1970; Henkelman 2017: 102-106). In comparison, our knowledge of Seleukid extraction of financial resources is more varied. In addition to what the numismatic evidence tells us about the scale of Seleukid monetary activities, several of the Seleukid kings are famous for episodes of (attempted) temple robbery as a means to obtain financial resources (Taylor 2014); these likely need to be relativised in view of potential official royal access via financial officers, comparable to the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid evidence. The discoveries in the storage rooms at regional palaces like Kedesh or Seleukeia on the Tigris included jars full of coins, labelled storage vessels, and clay sealings from the papyrus receipts for collections of regular taxes and tribute, including a royal monopoly on salt tax (Invernizzi 1996; Ariel and Naveh 2003). Further, the Babylonian astronomical diary for 274 BCE refers to satraps sending supplies to the king and his army, in what seems to be an exceptional case of extra provisioning during the First Syrian War (ADART I, -273 B rev. 30-32). Under the Ptolemies, in contrast, the primary source of revenue for the monarchy/state was (once more) through the taxation/lease of land, specifically its agricultural production, which was paid either in kind (grain) or coin (see generally Manning 2003; Le Rider and de Callataÿ 2006). Such revenue (e.g., *ekphorion*, 'harvest tax') was levied on different categories of land (e.g., royal, temple, cleruchic, private) at varying rates depending on productivity and privilege/status awarded the holder/lessor/owner (Manning 2003: 54-56; Monson 2012: 75-79). Taxes on temple land were sometimes reduced or abolished (Monson 2019: 153). As to the question of whether this revenue relates more to the 'state' vs the monarchy, the distribution of large gifts of grain by Ptolemaic rulers (see also section 4.2) suggests that they had full control of this revenue and could deploy this to increase their prestige and the dependencies of others. There was also a wide range of other taxes, e.g., capitation taxes, the wool tax, special levies for the military (Huss 2011: 189-236; Monson 2019; Dogaer 2023: 122 with references). Customs duties and taxes were levied on imports; these could reach as high as 50% for luxury items (Bresson 2015: 118-119). Another source of income was war booty, used by the Ptolemies to reward ruling elite and soldiers (Fischer-Bovet 2014: 70). Finally, Ptolemaic rulers controlled the mints and accelerated the monetisation of the economy to facilitate the accumulation of wealth and centralise the country's resources (von Reden 2007). Ptolemy I introduced a closed currency system applicable to all the monarchy's territories, forcing visitors to exchange their silver and gold coins into the local standard which was of a lower weight (de Callataÿ 2005; Bresson 2015); this was a major source of silver for the regime (von Reden 2019: 220). Due to the fragmentary nature of the sources for the Arsacid period, the taxation system of that time remains largely unknown, albeit the boundaries between land obligations, tithes, tribute, and gifts were likely fluid. The primary tax was the land tax, which was paid partially to the treasury of the Šāhanšāh and partially to the royal court and could be collected in money or in kind (Diakonov and Livshits 1960: 1; Lukonin 1983: 744; cf. Allen 2005: 120; Llewellyn-Jones 2013: 78; Malek Zadeh 2020: 238). In addition, there was a poll tax imposed upon the urban inhabitants of Mesopotamia (Lukonin 1983: 745; Malek Zadeh 2020: 238). Satrapies likely had to pay silver taxes, strictly set for each province based on cultivated land and fertility, as determined by average harvest yields over several

years. Nobles exempt from direct taxation were required to deliver gifts to the kings and the Šāhanšāh (Leuze 1935: 206; Dandamayev 2000). Two other significant sources of revenue for the Parthian dynasty were booty (Gyselen 1997) and court fines. Members of the Šāhanšāh's court of justice, along with a designated financial official, were obligated to contribute to the Šāhanšāh's treasury amounts equivalent to those awarded to victims by court decisions. This practice resulted in substantial revenue for the cities and the Arsacid ruling house (Lukonin 1983: 722). The most important way of securing imperial finances and generating revenue for the Roman emperor were various taxes, levied on imperial subjects, trade and land. Indirect taxes, *vectigalia*, included tolls, customs duties, poll-taxes, and taxes imposed on citizens' inheritances and manumission of slaves. However, taxation on land provided the majority of the state's revenue (Rathbone 1996; Lo Cascio 2008). It is also important to note that a part of the taxes was exacted through the social system (as opposed to fiscal arrangements) in the form of compulsory duties. The actual collecting of taxes was the responsibility of individual cities and their curial elites, although imperial procuratores exercised oversight in the overall process alongside the provincial governor, and the emperor's army was the final guarantee of tax exaction. The procuratorial system of revenue extraction was extremely flexible. Procurators of different status operated in different areas, often covering multiple provinces or only portions of a province (Brunt 1990a; Mitchell 1993: 67 n. 57; Sartre 2005: 57-58). Further, the imperial desire for plunder and financial gain could motivate wars and annexations (see, e.g., Velleius 2.39.2; Festus Brev. 13). Plunder acquired under the auspices of the emperor as the commander-in-chief of all the Roman armies was his to distribute.

3.4. *Extraction of labour*

Labour extraction in the Neo-Assyrian Empire could take the form of military service, participation in the maintenance of irrigation systems, participation in harvesting royal fields, and participation in building projects, all of which could be described as corvée labour and were undertaken by the crown (Bedford 2010: 37). An individual with sufficient economic capital could hire someone else to perform labour obligations in their place. To justify taxes or corvée, the kings could refer to the mythological sub-strata in which the human being was created to work for the gods. The Neo-Assyrian Empire also followed a policy of forced deportations that were used, among other things, for military conscription, aggrandisement of the army, and as a source of skilled craftsmen and common labourers using the labour resources extracted from conquered areas (Postgate 1992; Liverani 2017: 539; for visual sources see, e.g., the quarry workers from the South-West Palace of Sennacherib in Nineveh, British Museum ME 124820; or the timber transportation relief from Dur-Sharrukin from the time of Sargon II, Louvre AO 19888, 19889, 19890, 19891). A further labour category were pledges, or debt slaves, who were placed to work with a creditor until the sum of their debt was covered by their (involuntary) labour (Radner 2007: 333); however, this type of labour was more typically for the private than the royal sector. A related relevant concern is the monitoring of the slave trade to restrict the drain of manpower outside of the empire (Parpas 2018: 65, 81). To which extent this was specifically a royal or a state concern is difficult to assess. The Neo-Babylonian crown was primarily interested in extracting labour. Tribute was used to hire workforce, and temples had to provide the king with soldiers and workers for royal building projects

(Beaulieu 2005; Kleber 2008: 133-235; MacGinnis 2012). The land-for-service system was also geared towards this purpose: the state reclaimed land in marginal regions by giving plots for people to cultivate, and the farmers were required to pay taxes and perform work and military service in return (van Driel 2002: 226-273; Jursa 2011: 435-437; Alstola 2020: 102-222). The taxation of urban population worked similarly, and taxpayers were supposed to provide a worker or soldier for the king, usually by means of hiring a substitute (Jursa 2011: 437-440). Deportation of skilled and unskilled labour to the imperial heartland supplied the state with additional workforce (Alstola 2020). In the Teispid-Achaemenid Empire, corvée labour was one of the main forms of taxation, inherited and continued from the Neo-Babylonian Empire (Jursa 2011; Kleber 2021). This could take the form of service obligations on land, military service, and transport duties for taxes-in-kind. Both individuals and institutions could owe labour. Owners of estates, including the king and the queen, had at their personal disposal the labour forces attached to those estates. In contrast, the Seleukid evidence on labour extraction is scarce, though it is difficult to assess whether the lack of sources is representative for ancient realities. For instance, an inscription recording the sale of a royal estate to queen Laodike in 253 BCE tells us that there was a class of 'royal peasant' (*basilikoi laoi*), who probably owed their royal landlords a certain amount of obligatory labour in addition to percentages of their harvests (*I.Didyma* 492 B, C). We might assume that this situation in Asia Minor was analogous to royal estates elsewhere in the empire. Under the Ptolemies, corvée labour was certainly in use, primarily for irrigation infrastructure (Monson 2019: 150). However, it does not seem to have been a major contributor to the Ptolemaic king's economic agency. Within Parthian society, labourers served under the direct command of the royal family (typically managing affairs related to the personal property of the Šāhanšāh and the royal household), were employed by the government for public estates and projects, and worked for local kings, nobles, and other affluent individuals within the community. The delineation of borders and the extent of the first two categories often remain uncertain. Craftsmen in Parthian royal cities were often organised into companies or affiliated with royal workshops, mirroring practices observed in Sasanian royal cities (Pigulevskaya 1963: 160; Tafażżolī 1974; Gyselen 1997). Portions of land designated as Šāhanšāhī property were likely leased by the Parthian royal family, major canals, probably under Šāhanšāhī ownership, by imperial administrators (Dandamayev and Lukonin 1989: 142-143; Dandamayev 1997). Labourers employed on these lands likely received substantial compensation paid by employers who conducted business with the royal family. In the Roman Empire, taxes could also be exacted in the form of labour, compulsory duties or *munera sordida*. A prominent example of a labour tax is in recruits for the Roman army, practiced, e.g., in the case of the Batavi, a famously warlike Germanic tribe inhabiting regions in the northern Rhine delta (Tac. *Hist.* 5.25). On the other hand, exemption from liability to military service could be also given as a favour (Josephus AJ 14.223-229).

3.5. *Estate produce*

The Neo-Assyrian Empire attempted to reconfigure its social landscape in order to maintain some degree of control over the large areas involved. The morphology of this system changed throughout the Neo-Assyrian period, but in all configurations its maintenance required resources

that were directly linked to the exploitation of the land (Wilkinson et al. 2005: 25). The distribution of so-called 'crown land' to imperial agents guaranteed their self-maintenance or covered at least some of their household needs. The exploitation of this 'crown land' by locally hired or displaced labour ensured the production of food rations then (re)distributed to the imperial agents, mostly of barley but also other goods (Fales and Postgate 1995: xxxiv). The Neo-Assyrian royal domains were involved in various economic activities, from primary production to secondary transformation, and even commercial activities (Fales 2017: 272-274). Political dominance was impossible without control especially of agrarian production, which had two separate faces, cultivation and animal husbandry (van Driel 2002: 266). The royal estate produced all manner of goods (wine, wool, grain, etc.) and finished products (clothing, metalwork, pottery, etc.) primarily for the use of the multi-tiered palace economy with personnel enough to fill a medium-sized village, and it seems to have functioned as a self-sufficient economic entity (cf. Groß 2020). Where the palace sector was dependent on outside forces was in the extraction of materials that did not exist in the heartland. Due to the absence of state archives, the evidence of Babylonian royal estates is scarce. Nevertheless, it seems that the estates could not satisfy the crown's demands, and tribute and taxation were more important sources of royal income (Jursa 2010a: 771; 2017: 46-49). Some of the estates were cultivated directly by the crown, but they were also regularly leased out to private rent farmers (Jursa 2010a: 196-197). The land-for-service sector (see section 3.4) was also a form of royal landholding, and it provided the king with tax payments in addition to work and military service. The main crops of Babylonian agriculture were dates and barley, but royal lands were primarily located in more marginal areas beyond the zones of intensive date palm cultivation around the Babylonian cities (Jursa 2010a: 756-760). Princes also had estates and land property of their own (Jursa 2010a: 423). Lacking any clear distinction between the office and person, the private estates of the former king could be taken over by the family of the usurper at the event of a coup: Before becoming the king, Neriglissar was a wealthy landowner, but after Nabonidus's usurpation of the throne, Neriglissar's former landholdings came into possession of Nabonidus's son Belshazzar (Beaulieu 1989: 85-86, 90-98; Popova 2015: 406-407). Also in the Teispid-Achaemenid royal house, the king and other household members (queens, sons, brothers) had their own estates, seemingly throughout the empire, which covered the majority of the king's and queen's expenses (and generating surplus). As the available sources on these estates are largely concerned with the royal table, they are discussed below (section 4.2). A special feature in this context is the so-called 'paradise,' a Persian word for royal walled gardens. The word already appears as a loanword in Akkadian in the fifth year of Cyrus (535 BCE; Cyr 212), implying it was already part of Cyrus's ideas around kingship. So far, Henkelman has counted 22 *paradises* within the *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, playing a large role in the region's economy (Henkelman 2008: 430). The expansive variety of these gardens can be seen by PFa 33, which lists 6.166 seedlings for fruit trees for several *paradises* (Hallock 1978: 116, 135-6; Kuhrt 2007: 510-511; Henkelman 2021). While this institution clearly played a practical role in providing materials for the royal tables, it had several ideological functions as well. Henkelman has shown that they hosted both royally sponsored religious rituals and royally sponsored feasts (Henkelman 2008; 2011b). Ideologically, the *paradise*

presented a microcosm of the Persian Empire, one that was good, fecund, fertile, and varied, and tied all of this to the reign of the king. This ideology deepens earlier precedents of the king as gardener. Unfortunately, there is no direct evidence for what kinds of revenues the Seleukid kings collected from their royal estates, or the administrative systems they used to manage this. The idea of spear-won land meant that, in a sense, the king and his army had the right to take whatever they needed from subjects in the empire without any bureaucratic moderation (Aperghis 2004: 148). This is why tax exemptions and recognition of territorial inviolability (*asylia*) were so important to the economies of Seleukid cities and sanctuaries (Ma 1999: 179-205). Also for the Ptolemies the evidence is scarce. Because 'royal land' was leased out, rent was paid in the form of a 'harvest tax' (see section 3.3.) which made up part of the complex Ptolemaic tax system. If the Ptolemies had royal domains set aside specifically for the use and consumption of the court, we lack concrete data about any such estates. This is in contrast to the Arsacid Šāhanšāhī, which again feature personal lands of the Šāhanšāh functioning similarly to those of other Parthian nobles but on a larger scale. However, distinguishing between income from state receipts and income from the Šāhanšāh's lands and properties can be challenging. In the inscription of Kartīr at Naqš-e Rostam, the Šāhanšāh's lands are referred to as 'relating to the lands of *wispuhrs* (the house of the Šāhanšāh),' indicating their association with royal property (cf. Lukonin 1983: 702). Additionally, the Arsacid Šāhanšāh possessed irrigation facilities, forests, pleasure gardens, and palaces across various regions of the Šāhanšāhī (cf. *Vit. Apoll.* i. 38). It is likely that selected portions of the Šāhanšāh's property were leased out, including various large canals in Babylonia, which likely belonged to the Šāhanšāh (Dandamayev 1997; Dandamayev and Lukonin 1989: 142-143). Further, a significant portion of temple revenue derived from estate produce, originating from the temple estates of the Šāhanšāhī. Babylonian documents indicate that royal fiscal agents oversaw state tax payments in the temples to ensure prompt and accurate payments (Dandamayev 1979: 590-592; Dandamayev and Gyselen 1999). In the Roman Empire, the royal estates, i.e. the emperor's private property, were an important source of revenue (Crawford 1976; see also Millar 1977: 175-189; for imperial estates, see FIRA 3.100-3). Imperial interest provided predictable and constant revenues. The emperor owned directly considerable amounts of land and although emperors could donate holdings, the number of estates kept growing. The emperor further received income from the leases and rents of public property (Duncan-Jones 1990: 188-198). A central source of new imperial estates and funds were testamentary bequests and confiscation of estates and fortunes of the wealthy. This could be done as a punishment; but also remembering the emperor in wills became a standard practice amongst the elite. These wills were interpreted in the light of the conduct of the ruler, bad emperors forced the wealthy to remember them and good emperors were worthy of it (Millar 1977: 163-174; Delmaire 1989: 597-610; Sidebottom 2005: 319-330). This also held true in the Roman East with its vast imperial properties (cf. Sartre 2005: 208-209).

3.6. *Access to production facilities*

While the Neo-Assyrian palace economy did not necessarily hold monopolies over the production of goods or services, it did dominate many fields of production due to its sheer size, e.g., in agriculture, manufacture, and the exploitation of minerals,

the extraction of which was one of the few proper royal monopolies (Bedford 2010). The palace was thus an important economic agent within the system and frequently produced surplus that was distributed outside of the palace sector, which was especially the case with the profit-oriented textile industry (Groß 2020: 531). The centralisation of production was even less in Babylonia, where it was generally neither dependent on temple nor on palace institutions. The single sector in which the crown probably played an important role was the textile industry (Kleber 2008: 246-249; Jursa 2017: 48-49). Evidence on Teispid-Achaemenid royal access to produce and production facilities concentrates on estate produce (see section 3.5.), which was exchanged (at least) at Persepolis for more durable goods (i.e., cattle, kleinvieh) with local tribes (Henkelman 2005; 2011a: 10). It is likely that there have been royal monopolies, e.g., possibly on the production, filling, and/or distribution of vessels with quadrilingual royal inscriptions (Wasmuth 2017: 207-214). It is also likely that the kings had a say in the coin minting process, in seal production, or in the parchment manufacture for the royal administration at Persepolis (Kuhrt 2007: 793), but there is currently no direct evidence extant specifying royal involvement (on the coinage issue see, e.g., Tuplin 2022). For the Seleukid Empire, the most noteworthy (royal) production branch was coinage. It is, however, noteworthy that the Seleukids encouraged cities to issue their own coinages for regional circulation. To what extent royal officials had the final say over these operations is challenging to assess, but a fair degree of local idiom was tolerated in terms of the iconography (Houghton et al. 2008; Trundle and de Lisle 2022: 66-70). Ptolemaic kings controlled all aspects of minting (see section 3.3.) and of the production and trade of oil, as attested in the so-called Revenue Laws of Ptolemy II (Austin 2006: no. 207; Dogaer 2021: 316-321). Similar monopolisation of production has been suggested for other areas such as textiles and beer, but this is a matter of debate as the extant evidence is less clear (Dogaer 2023: 124-125). While the Arsacid royal household had certain monopolies, including the extension of the royal demesne and the crown lands (Lukonin 1983: 702, 713, 726; Ellerbrock 2021: 176), it appears that most economic production was controlled by private entrepreneurs. Only the minting of coins in Aryānšahr ('Iranian lands of Parthia') was entirely under the Šāhanšāh's control, while in Anaryānšahr ('non-Iranian lands of Parthia') coins were also issued by local rulers (Lukonin 1983: 702; Malek Zadeh 2023/1402sh). Whether the latter was supervised by the Šāhanšāh or if the kings in Anaryānšahr had autonomy in determining the weight and issuance of coins remains uncertain. The Roman emperor had access, in principle, to production facilities of all kinds either through direct possessions or the state. Consequently, it was not an issue of great relevance from the point of view of the formation of resource base.

4. The kings' major expenses and role in the royal economic circulation

As has been touched upon already in various sections on access (section 3), many of the financial and material resources available to the king have been collected for specific expenses and direct redistribution. Across the empires, the most pertinent expenses of the king have been for means to maintain relations with the power base, for individual and court travel, and for accessing information. Especially the latter substantially varied from empire to empire, both in scope and regarding 'state' or 'crown' funding.

4.1. *Overall assessment per empire*

Direct costs to Neo-Assyrian kingship included expenditures covering the subsistence of palace personnel and residents, luxury items like special foods, wine, jewellery, and clothing, gifts to high officers and visiting dignitaries, temple offerings, and building operations (Fales 2017: 277). Major infrastructural, administrative, and military expenses were incurred for the provincialisation of the empire, which ultimately served the king. Spoils of war flowed to Babylonia after the fall of Assyria, and the kings invested these funds in massive building and infrastructure projects that also benefited the economy and population at large (Jursa 2014c). Royal expenditure was state expenditure in the Neo-Babylonian period, and these two cannot be analysed separately in a meaningful way. It is difficult to assess what has been the highest expenditure item in the portfolio of the Teispid-Achaemenid king. Most prominent in the primary sources from the royal archives are the expenses for maintaining the 'King's Table.' However, whether this is due to the special scope of the Persepolis archives or because the distinction between 'royal' and 'state' assets is best explicated for this institution, remains uncertain. They certainly gave very valuable gifts, as well as land-rights in the form of estates to officials and elites and spent a lot of labour taxation on building projects (palaces, canals, roads, presumably way stations), military campaigns, and (state-)sponsored sacrifices (at least in the heartland; cf. Henkelman 2008). However, to which degree, these were funded from specifically royal income or were 'state' funded (in the name of the king), is again difficult to assess. The key cost for the Seleukid kings (and, at the same time, the state) was their military, and it is commonly understood that the royal coin issues were intended primarily for paying soldiers. This helped encourage the monetisation process, since wherever the armies went, a local cash economy followed (Trundle and de Lisle 2022: 57-58; Van Regenmortel 2024). The key costs of the Ptolemaic kings were directed toward maintaining relations with the power base, military expenditure, and preserving their status and image as wealthy and generous (e.g., Theok. *Id.* 17.124-125). The notion of 'abundance' was one which the Ptolemies went to great lengths to demonstrate through public displays of wealth and largess (known as *tryphe* in Greek; Strootman 2014). The key expenses of the Arsacid Šāhanšāh and local kings went into the military and into the maintenance and security of trade routes including fortress construction (Lukonin 1983: 719, 735, 740-741; Brosius 2006: 122-125; Ellerbrock 2021: 158-160), as the caravan trade served as the backbone of the Arsacid state's economy. The Roman emperor used his private wealth as well the resources of the state to advance his various goals. While the emperor had effective control over both his personal, private wealth and state funds the more important question was what the public perceived to be his personal responsibility as separated from the 'state' itself (Lo Cascio 2008).

4.2. *For maintaining relations with the power base*

The Neo-Assyrian kings used various strategies in maintaining relations with their power base. The king's entourage and the palace personnel formed a complex economy around the king, different factions constantly vying for his favour. One of the most central means of maintaining relations with dignitaries both internal and external to the empire was the banquet or royal feast (cf. Ermidoro 2015). These feasts are typically recounted in texts in an exaggerated fashion (e.g.,

the Banquet Stele from the North-West Palace at Kalhu which recounts the attendance of nearly 70,000 subjects at the feast celebrating the inauguration of the palace), but were also displayed visually in the palace reliefs (cf. the banquet scene of Ashurbanipal from the North Palace of Nineveh, BM 124920, or the ivory plaque Met 59.107.22 from Nimrud). The latter likely originally belonged to a piece of furniture, which could well have been used in an actual royal feast. The palace had a sizeable staff for the preparation of all manner of food which testifies to the importance of feeding the king's court (Groß 2020). Furthermore, the king's table was used for the redistribution of possible surplus accumulated over the season. While great feasts could accommodate hundreds or thousands of people with whom the king shared a meal, the king's table corresponded more often to his most secluded council, the place where he could talk in private with his associates. While such feasts were also lavish, their expenses were lesser. In fact, the smaller the circle was, and the more private the circumstance of the meal, the greater the trust that the king placed in those partaking in his meal (Ermidoro 2015: 98). The feasts featured domestic livestock (including hundreds of oxen and sheep), game, birds, fish, small rodents, and poultry. The greens included cereals, especially in the form of bread, legumes, *alliaceae*, vegetables, fruits, spices, and oil. The beverages included beer and wine; indeed, the presence of wine marked the difference between royal and common people's tables (Ermidoro 2015: 204). In the Neo-Babylonian Empire, three groups held significant political power: the king and royal administration, the old cities of the Babylonian heartland, and the Aramean and Chaldean population (Jursa 2014a). We know only little about the inner workings of the royal household, but the so-called Palace Archive from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar shows that a significant amount of agricultural produce was delivered to Babylon and distributed as rations to palace personnel (Pedersén 2005: 110-132; Jursa 2010b: 74-78). High officials were given estates, and the king's power was exemplified by huge palaces (Jursa 1998: 93-94; 2010a: 197; Wasmuth et al. forthcoming a). When it comes to Babylonian cities, the sponsorship of their cults was seen as one of the main duties of the Babylonian kings, and they invested significant resources in building and renovating temples and providing them with lavish gifts. The king's efforts in providing the urban population with safety and abundance resulted in the building of walls and developing the irrigation infrastructure (Wasmuth et al. forthcoming a-b). Naturally, the investments in irrigation did not only lead to increased agricultural productivity but also to increased tax income (Jursa 2017: 49-50). It is less clear how kings invested their resources in maintaining their power base among the Chaldean and Aramean populations. However, keeping them in check turned out to be difficult for the kings of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, resulting in instability and coups d'état (Jursa 2014a: 131-133). A major component of Teispid-Achaemenid royal economics was the institution known as the King's Table (Briant 2002: 200-203, 286-297, 314-315, 921-922; Henkelman 2010: 684-689; 2011b; Jursa 2011; cf. Fried 2018). This system included special taxes for commodities, their transportation to the royal palaces, and the processing of foodstuffs. Some of the vast quantities of food also derived from royal estates and *paradises* (see section 3.5). The system not only fed the king himself and his family, but it functioned as a massive redistributive mechanism for the king's loyal supporters. These included high-status elites who had the privilege to eat with the king at banquets and a wider array of guards, servants, soldiers, and animals (Briant 2002: 314-315). The numbers

of people involved in both the supply and consumption of the King's Table were vast – Athenaeus reports 15000 people fed by it (Ath. 4.146c [4.27]; Briant 2002: 315). Henkelman (2010: 680-682) has tabulated total numbers of attested quantities dispersed before the king, the grains alone totalling roughly 290,000 litres.[9] This institution therefore was an economic engine enabling the maintenance of a vast and mobile royal court. The ameliorating balance to the potential for pillaging and rapaciousness under the Seleukid regime was a practice of royal gift-giving. As already noted above, kings gave estates to their noble supporters and courtiers, and promises of security to cities and sanctuaries regarding their own traditional territories. Kings sometimes also paid for the sacrifices at individual temples, such as in Jerusalem during the early 2nd century (2 Maccabees 3.3). Gifts of land and sums of money to the local temple communities are attested in the Astronomical Diaries and chronicles (Aperghis 2004: 109). These actions, however, did not stem from mere benevolence, since they were often swiftly followed by acts of exploitation (van der Spek 1994; 2004). Some have spoken of Seleukid policies as 'predatory rule', which means that their careful fostering of king-city/temple relationships through acts of euergetism created a sense of indebtedness and obligation, and it justified their seizure of resources whenever they deemed it necessary (Taylor 2014). Sometimes we see a more formal organisation of royal control over local assets and economic systems: e.g., from the 170s onwards, the Seleukids recycled the old office of *zazakku* to supervise the Esagil temple in Babylon (Clancier and Monerie 2014: 212-213). Also, for the Ptolemaic kings, the biggest cost was maintaining relations with their various dependencies and satisfying their expectations through gift-giving, patronage, and benefactions. Amongst the elite, persons in the military and the civil administration, Greek leaders and allies in possessions outside Egypt, and the priests of the main Egyptian temples all 'expected redistributive benefits in exchange for supporting Macedonian rule' (Monson 2012: 26). This included, for example, gifts and rewards to the *philoi* ('friends'): the advisors and agents of the kings who served as liaisons between dynasty and cities, ambassadors at foreign courts as well as generals in and financiers of the army (Strootman 2014: 152-159). These rewards could take the form of land, money, war plunder, or precious objects. The Ptolemaic dynasts also incurred expenses for hosting large numbers of visitors to the palace such as the governing elites and priests who were required to visit the capital regularly (Manning 2019: 106). Hosting of dignitaries like ambassadors included the ritual of gift-exchange in addition to lodging and banquets, whereby the king would be expected to provide the more costly gift (Strootman 2014: 195). In addition to daily ceremonial rituals and holding court, the Ptolemies sponsored various special celebrations and festivals on sacred days, weddings, royal births, and anniversaries of coronations. Costs included various aspects of the spectacle itself (e.g., royal procession, sacrifices, ceremonial rituals, and banqueting/feasting), as well as the giving of generous gifts to the guests (Josephus AJ 12.2.13). Literary accounts indicate that these celebrations were lavish and theatrical, intended to wow attendees with the luxury and wealth

[9] These are partial numbers for years at a time, and only cover certain years under Darius I. With typical daily grain rations being 1-1.5 liters a day, on a conservative estimate the grain alone could have fed 190,000 people. Henkelman (2010: 687) calculates a hypothetical amount per day that reduces down to ca. 14-90,000 people a day.

of the dynasty (Rice 1983; Strootman 2014: 254-261). The Ptolemaic kings further sponsored extensive building projects (typically religious) both in Egypt and in the Greek cities elsewhere (Wasmuth et al. forthcoming a). As for the non-elite constituencies, soldiers were given land grants, especially in the Fayuum (Manning 2003: 56). The Ptolemaic monarchs also provided economic assistance in times of low flood through the disbursement of grain, for example in 239/8 BCE (Canopus Decree, see Austin 2006: no. 271). Ptolemaic euergetism also extended to its allies; they provided land, grain, money, military protection, and gifts for local cults and festivals (Gabrielsen 2013; Habicht 1992). For example, Ptolemy III Euergetes provided some 30 million litres of grain after a devastating earthquake at Rhodes (Gabrielsen 2013: 68). Throughout the Arsacid period, economic life at court was marked by the struggle between the royal house and the vassals for political and economic power. The Šāhanšāh, claimant kings, and vassals required reliable financial support not only for the army but also for the administration of court affairs. The aristocracy was hierarchically structured, including noble Parthians as well as members of the local nobility who held high positions at court, in the empire's administration, and in the military. The aristocracy were known as 'the Greatest' (Gr. *megistanes*). The 'King's Friends' formed an intimate circle surrounding the king, yet even within this group, there existed a hierarchy. Through the rank of 'First Friend,' a noble could ascend to become an 'Honoured Friend' and finally to a 'First and Most Honoured Friend.' Undoubtedly, these different grades of the King's Friend were expressed in the bestowing of royal privileges and were physically discernible in the Friend's appearance. Items of clothing, the quality of fabric, its colour and design, dress ornamentation, as well as weapons and jewellery, could all signify royal gifts expressing the wearer's status (Xen. Cyr. 8.2.8). Those nobles referred to as 'kinsmen of the king' (Gr. *syngeneis*) may indeed have been relatives of the king, but the term could also have been figurative for those acting in the king's interest. These groups, along with additional advisers known as sages (Gr. *sophoi*) and magi (Gr. *magoi*), constituted the King's Council (Gr. *synhedrion*, Lat. *senatus*). Courtiers designated as 'relatives' and 'friends' of the Šāhanšāh enjoyed privileges such as dining at the royal table or serving as body servants to the Šāhanšāh. These privileges were highly esteemed and closely monitored (discussed by Briant 2002: 308; cf. Llewellyn-Jones 2013: 31-34). For instance, they received bones from the Šāhanšāh's table, were required to prostrate themselves before the Šāhanšāh, and to bow to his statue (cf. Ath. 6.26-28; Lukonin 1983: 690). References to the benefactors of the king and the existence of a book to record their good deeds are found in texts related to the Achaemenid (Hdt. VIII 85) and Sasanian periods (ps.-al-Jāḥiẓ: 146, 158-160; Christensen 1944: 407-410) argue for the continuation of such practices also throughout the Arsacid period (cf. Briant 2002: 303-304, 333, 398-399). Stories such as the donation of a few drops of water to Artaxerxes II and the promotion of a simple soldier to the rank of benefactor (Ael. VH 1.31; 12.40) suggest a special rule and restriction to join the benefactors of the king, although these may be allegorical tales. A central expense for the Roman emperor was the free distribution of corn in the city of Rome. The *annona*, as it was called, was a core duty of the emperor, made possible by wheat transported especially from Egypt (Erdkamp 2016). The emperor could also distribute wealth such as imperial estates to his supporters as he thought necessary. Similarly essential for the power of the emperor was the army, tied to the

person of the ruler. The emperor was not only the Commander-in-Chief of the army but had a central role in guaranteeing the pensions of the veterans through the *aerarium militare*. Through this control, he was personally guaranteeing the retirement of his soldiers (see e.g., RG 17; Dio 55.25.1-6; Tac. *Ann.* 1.78; cf. Gilliver 2011: 188). This also applied in the Roman East, where colonies were established for settling veterans (Sartre 2005: 155). Soldiers expected to be remembered in the will of an emperor and donatives, especially on imperial accession, were prudent from the imperial point of view. Imperial gifts and donations by the emperor directly to the inhabitants of Rome and citizens in the provinces could be substantial (e.g., RG 15-16).

4.3. *For travel*

The Neo-Assyrian royal estate changed location periodically and (members of) the royal family could occupy different palaces or even capitals at the same time. The Neo-Assyrian court was expensive to move due to its sheer size. As the king travelled quite extensively throughout the year, a mobile staff (*zarīqī ša ḫūli*) was at his perusal. This consisted of palace officials situated throughout the empire and of personnel that accompanied the king when he was travelling or campaigning (Groß 2020: 264, 504). One of the major expenditures relating to travel came from the frequent military campaigns that were performed by most Neo-Assyrian kings on a nearly yearly basis. The financing and preparation of the military campaigns seems to have derived from the complex of taxes and personal obligations drawn upon via the system of governorships. The palatial economic structure took charge of the mustering, training, and parading of chariotry, cavalry, and infantry as well as of feeding the animals and the troops (Fales 2017: 289). While there were various expenses related to the campaigns, they were also necessary for retaining control over areas from which tribute, taxes, and natural resources were levied. From Nabopolassar to Lâbâši-Marduk, Babylon remained the cherished residence of the Neo-Babylonian kings. Nabonidus's long stay in the desert oasis of Tayma must have been an expensive endeavour – a revealing detail about the complications it brought is the fact that the leftovers of divine meals were sent from Babylonian temples to the king in Tayma (Kleber 2008: 293). In the reign of Nabopolassar, the war against the Assyrian Empire must have consumed enormous resources, but after the fall of Nineveh and the subsequent conquest of the Levant, booty and tribute turned military campaigns into a source of royal income. The king and the crownprince personally participated in the campaigns, travelling to distant regions such as the Southern Levant (Grayson 1975: 87-104; 2 Kings 24-25). Travelling has been intrinsic to Teispid-Achaemenid royal and court life, as the royal house favoured a peripatetic lifestyle keeping the court largely on the move (see also above: section 2.3; see especially Briant 1988; Boucharlat 1997: 217-219; Tuplin 1998; Waerzeggers 2010; Bahadori and Miri 2021). It probably served a practical function in feeding the large court, a cultural function in continuing as well as demonstrating inherited Persian lifeways, and an ideological function in expanding the reach of the king (and queen). To which degree the royal travel expenses were included within the household budget, from which royal resources they were funded, and what the expenses amounted to, is difficult to assess. It is likely that a substantial amount of the costs was covered by the local and regional communities temporarily housing the court. The royal coffers certainly also contributed to military campaigns, though these were arguably primarily a 'state' expense, and also substantially funded indirectly via

service obligations, which included providing one's own military equipment. According to Greek reception history, the Achaemenid king personally funded the travels of the queen and her retinue (Diod. XVII, 38.1; Kuhrt 2007: 600-601). Whether this was the exception or the rule, or only a Greek attempt to make sense of a phenomenon beyond their cultural expectations, is currently beyond the sources; however, the Achaemenid queens certainly contributed to their travels from their own funds (see section 6.3). We know that also the Seleukid royals travelled extensively, both as part of the regular consolidation of their imperial power and for specific military campaigns to rebellion regions and to face external foes, but no direct evidence survives for the expenditures they incurred while doing this. Also for the Ptolemies, the military was a considerable expense especially due to the continual state of conflict with the Seleukid Empire (Fischer-Bovet 2014: 66-83). This includes not just open war but also safeguarding sea trade against piracy (Buraselis 2013: 105). The Ptolemies had a standing army/navy (see Fischer-Bovet 2014: 71-75 for the costs of maintaining this), but also relied on mercenaries and troop levies. Although financed through taxation and spoils of war, anecdotal evidence suggests that the kings also depended on the *philoi* to help fund military campaigns abroad (Diod. 29.29). As for other forms and reasons for travel, most notable are the royal barges, based on warships but converted for pleasure-cruising (Thompson 2013). The royal barge of Ptolemy IV Philopator as described by Athenaeus was sumptuous, akin to a giant floating palace (Ath. 5.196a-204d). In the Arsacid Šāhanšāhi, expenditure allocated to travel-related ventures, especially military campaigns and securing (the monopoly on) trade routes, was primarily drawn from the general treasury rather than specifically from the Šāhanšāh (cf. Plut. *Crass.* 33). Conversely, the Šāhanšāh, in addition to the court, bore the financial responsibility for a significant portion of the major direct and indirect travel expenses of the queen and the Šāpistāns (see section 6.3). In contrast to the earlier ancient Near Eastern empires, the Roman imperial court while travelling was supported by the cities and localities the court travelled through. Imperial travel was facilitated by advance orders for preparations and gathering of supplies along the route to be travelled by the imperial court (e.g., Suet. *Tib.* 38). However, the emperor while travelling was expected not only to adjudicate but also to receive embassies and, if needed, use his resources for the benefit of the localities he visited (cf. e.g., Goldsworthy 2014: 298-300). An example is the embassy from Rhosus in Syria that the emperor received in Ephesos promising benefits for the city (*IGLS* iii, no. 718).

4.4. *For accessing information*

The Neo-Assyrian king employed a network of spies (*daiālu*) and informants (*qurbūtū*), especially following the assassination of Sennacherib. The potential of uprisings, especially instigated by the neighbouring Babylon, were a cause of concern for the kings. Thus, the crown prince, the magnates of the empire, vassal kings, and the provincial governors reported directly to the king (Dezső 2014: 222) bequeathing to us a wealth of epistolatory evidence. However, due to the baroque bureaucracy of the empire, it was difficult for the king to access unfiltered information about the conditions of the empire. Special agents reporting to the king personally and the science of divination were used to undercut this barrier between the king and information (Parker 2011: 370-371). Given the clandestine nature of the information network, the cost of the king obtaining information is not known.

Like the rulers of other Mesopotamian empires, the Neo-Babylonian king must have been well informed through the means of extensive royal correspondence, but the limited sources do not allow an assessment of the related expenditure (Jursa 2014b). The same is true for the Teispid-Achaemenid, Seleukid, and Ptolemaic Empires. Also, for the Parthian court and the Šāhanšāh's Šapistān direct evidence on the existence of a royal espionage and private spy networks is lacking. However, Demetrius II, while held hostage at the court of Mithridates I, is said to have attempted to escape twice from his palace in Hyrcania but was thwarted on both occasions and subsequently apprehended and returned to the palace (Dąbrowa 1999; Lerouge-Cohen 2005: 244). Further, the usage of the terms 'eye' and 'ear' in reference to royal spies is (secondarily) attested for the Achaemenid (Hdt. 1.100) and the Sasanian era (Christensen 1944: 129-130, no. 6). Both indications argue for a significant espionage apparatus also during the Parthian period, particularly within the circles of nobles, local kings, and the Šāhanšāh. As with the Neo-Assyrian Empire, the evidence from the Roman Empire indicates that elite interests substantially influenced the information reaching the emperor. The slowness of communication and the limited and selective information transmission meant that problems of any complexity and imperial importance required a special representative to be dispatched to the area. The emperor used his resources to gather information not otherwise available and to reward trusted advisors for information perceived as good and valid (Sipilä 2009: 39-46).

4.5. *Other*

In the context of royal expenditure, the antiquarian interests of the Neo-Babylonian kings – especially those of Nabonidus – are noteworthy including the related efforts and expenses for excavating the foundations of ancient buildings and collecting and studying objects of the distant past (Winter 2000; Beaulieu 2013). See also the major compilation requests by the Neo-Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (regarding earlier literature; cf. the Royal Library of Ashurbanipal, Robson 2010) and the Achaemenid king Darius (compilation of Egyptian laws; on the obverse of the so-called Demotic Chronicle; see Wasmuth 2017: 249, 269-270 with references), or the latter commodities collection at Susa (Silverman 2019: 262-263). In this context, also the substantial scope of patronage and benefactions for artistic and scientific efforts, especially by the first two Ptolemies, are noteworthy; they institutionalised patronage in the form of the Museum and Library (Strootman 2017). For the Achaemenians and Ptolemies, highly special major construction works ordered and supervised by, or at least explicitly in the name of, the king need to be noted, which go beyond the typical building activities like palace, temple, fortification, road, or irrigation infrastructure construction. For the Achaemenians, this concerns, e.g., the forerunner of the modern Suez Canal, a major artificial water way connecting the Red Sea with the Nile valley via the Bitter Lakes and the Wadi Tumilat. This venture, which certainly built on previous efforts from the 26th (7th century BCE) and arguably even from the 12th dynasty (19th century BCE), was completed under Darius I (see especially Wasmuth 2017: 125-200, 263-269; also Tuplin 1991; Mahlich 2020). Similar ventures are the major efforts of rock-cut paths in Fars (Kleiss 1981) or the so-called Chebar Canal of Ezekiel as access to Susa from Tigris (Waerzeggers 2010: 804). The early Ptolemies undertook an extensive land reclamation project in the Fayyum in order to provide land to (military) settlers and establish

political control over people and production (Manning 2003: 103-110). They also founded cities and military outposts throughout their empire (Mueller 2006; Fischer-Bovet 2022: 128-129).

5. The queens' access to resources

As the scope of sources for assessing the queens' access to resources is generally much smaller than for the kings and more disparate across the empires, a slightly different categorisation proves more fruitful: i.e., access to personnel and specialised knowledge, to produce and production facilities, to direct financial resources, and to special places. Though the latter did not (necessarily) generate direct economic income, they are potentially of major indirect relevance for gaining and circulating knowledge and commodities beyond (or within) the official channels.

5.1. *Overall assessment per empire*

The Neo-Assyrian queens directed a large, broadly networked, bureaucratic household that was a "permanent fixture of the Neo-Assyrian Empire" (Svärd 2015: 61-74). The queen's household was a multifaceted domain including political, military, religious, and significant economic responsibilities. The impressive wealth of the Neo-Assyrian queen's household had multiple sources, but the queen's primary economic responsibility seems to have been to direct the imperial textile industry, or at least a substantial branch of it (Gaspa 2018). There are very few sources pertaining to Neo-Babylonian royal women (Cousin 2023). Although the lack of sources may distort our view of Neo-Babylonian royal women, it seems that they possessed significant landholdings. They also owned servants and had palace and temple staff at their disposal. Finally, they had access to special places such as temples and palace areas that were closed to outsiders. As already highlighted by Kuhrt (2007: 578), the administrative documents from Achaemenid-period Persepolis "show us female members of the royal family on long journeys, in control of large estates and workforces, served by extensive retinues and using personal seals." Nonetheless, it remains impossible to assess many of the specific practices, and also how much of this was bound to the office of queenship or to the individual fulfilling this role in practice (on the fluidity of the ancient terminology see section 2.4). Whether or not Seleukid queens had access to state or royal resources is an important, albeit difficult question. Research shows the potential for Seleukid queens to have a significant hand in shaping the political culture of the dynasty and its management of empire (e.g., Coşkun and McAuley 2016). Access to material resources must have come with this political influence, but research targeted on the economics of Seleukid queenship remains to be done. The areas about which we can hypothesise the most are access to coinage and mints, military resources, and landed properties. Much better documented and in all likelihood much more prominent was the economic role of the Ptolemaic queens who wielded an extraordinary amount of power over monarchic affairs from the time of Arsinoë II, especially when they reigned as co-rulers or on their own (Carney 2013; Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2021; Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023). Whether the Ptolemaic queens typically had the same access to royal economic resources as their male counterparts or any sort of financial independence is not entirely clear from the extant sources and likely varied in different periods (in instances of a mother-son ruling couple she may have had more access). The sources of revenue involved are similar to that of the kings: especially taxation/rent on agricultural land, other taxes, mining of metals (esp. gold), and war spoils. These were

complemented by additional taxes, such as the *apomoira*, that were earmarked for the maintenance of the queen's cult, evidenced at least for Arsinoë II (Monson 2019: 153). As previously emphasised (section 2.1.), reconstructing the Arsacid queens' access to resources primarily relies on examining expenses (see section 6) and often necessitates drawing analogies to evidence from the Achaemenid, Seleukid, and early Sasanian periods. As far as the state of evidence allows, the queen, possibly along with other members of the Šapistān, received various direct payments for their upkeep and political endeavors from the Šāhanšāh, the court, and the temples. The responsibility of balancing income and expenditure remained with the Šapistān administrators. As a member of one of the major Arsacid families, and later of the Šāhanšāh's household, the queen likely held the status of a princess and possessed personal assets ranging from jewellery and valuable clothes to land, servants, horses, and maidservants. Following marriage, her status elevated, granting her greater real and personal rights and benefits. With the birth of the crown prince, her position ascended further. The Roman evidence is again more forthcoming. As members of the imperial household, the Roman Empresses ('queens') had access to the wealth of the *Domus Augusta*. Imperial women, especially those accorded with *ius trium liberorum*, had also considerable wealth of their own that they could use to further their ambitions and fulfil their roles as primary women of the empire.

5.2. *Access to personnel and specialised knowledge*

Neo-Assyrian queens conventionally delegated top managerial responsibilities to a type of female supervisor called *šakintu* (Teppo 2007; Svärd 2015: 91-105). *Šakintu* women were elite members of the imperial administration with their own households and financial means. In service to the queen, they evidently oversaw bevies of lesser ranking *sekretu* women (Svärd 2015: 105-109). Some *šakintu* and *sekretu* women must have worked in the main palace, while others were stationed across the empire, including at the queen's satellite palaces and villages (Svärd 2015: 92, Fig. 4). A variety of additional male, eunuch, and female professionals and servants supported Neo-Assyrian queens and their household. Evincing the imperial distribution of the queen's personnel, several members of Naqiʾa's staff are included in a list assigning lodgings to royal officials who were probably invited to visit the main palace from outside of the capital (SAA 7 9; Svärd 2015: 65). There are further textual indications that the office of queenship employed treasurers, village managers, a merchant, a deputy chief of quays, and a deputy of the chief of trade (Edubba 10 1; SAA 6 90; SAA 6 140; SAA 7 9). References to shepherds, weavers, a tailor, and a chief fuller, as well as to sheep, point to the involvement of queens in the textile industry (see section 5.3). Queens also retained military staff, along with individuals holding positions such as cupbearer, bodyguard, cook, leatherworker, confectioner, and goldsmith (CTN 2 44; CTN 3 87; Edubba 10 20; SAA 6 165; SAA 6 253; SAA 6 329; SAA 7 6; SAA 7 9; SAA 16 65; SAA 16 81; Svärd 2015: 57-58, 63, 73, and 84). Queens of course had scribes, but this does not mean they themselves were illiterate (SAA 6 310; SAA 6 325; SAA 14 29; Svärd 2015: 72, 124-125). In fact, we know that at least one Neo-Assyrian queen studied cuneiform. A letter survives in which a daughter of the King Esarhaddon encourages Libbalisharrat (future queen of Ashurbanipal) to do her writing homework (SAA 16 28; Svärd 2015: 71, 88, 90, 228, 230). Neo-Babylonian royal women must have had a large entourage, and their servants and slaves appear occasionally in

our sources (Beaulieu 1998; MacGinnis 1993; Waerzeggers 2004). According to the so-called Adad-guppi stele (RINBE 2 Nabonidus 2001), Nabonidus's mother Adad-guppi, a woman of high standing at the courts of Nebuchadnezzar and Neriglissar, used her personal relations to help her son enter the service of these kings, and, according to the stele, it was her piety towards Sîn that facilitated Nabonidus's accession to the throne. After becoming the king, Nabonidus made her daughter the *entu* priestess at Ur and renamed her En-nigaldi-Nanna (RINBE 2 Nabonidus 34). As the *entu*, she had significant resources at her disposal, including the religious knowledge of a high priestess and the temple's cultic and lay personnel. Details on her resources and managing practices are currently not known. How widespread the Teispid-Achaemenid queens' access to personnel is difficult to assess. They certainly commanded a large array of *kurtaš* to work on their estates (see section 5.3) and could give orders to administrative officials as attested in at least nine letter-orders from royal women (Henkelman 2010: 702; Stolper 2018). From the Greek historiographical sources, we further glean that they had a large retinue accompanying them on military campaigns. At least, that is what Diodorus Siculus claims, when he recounts that Alexander restored to Sisygambis the retinue that her son Darius III had bestowed on her (Diod. XVII, 38.1; Kuhrt 2007: 600-601). For the Seleukid queens, we have literary sources reference handmaidens, bodyguards, and sometimes military officers in service to the queens, but their focus is not economic. We might presume that these queens had artists, clothiers, tutors, and entertainers in their employ, but that is pure guesswork. As essentially co-monarchs and members of the same family, most of the Ptolemaic queens likely had similar access to personnel as kings. Due to a lack of sources from Alexandria, precise evidence is limited, but a statue depicting the courtier Senenshepsu from the reign of Ptolemy identifies him as "overseer of the royal harîm of the Great King's Wife of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt" (Lloyd 2002: 123), indicating the queen did have her own staff. Different potential claimants to the throne – whether male or female – had different factions at court, especially from the 2nd century onwards when dynastic disputes were more common (Strootman 2014: 93). Kleopatra I, a Seleukid princess, brought her own servants and ministers which provided her some separation from the established courtiers in Alexandria (Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 77-78). Access to personnel and specialised knowledge was crucial for the queens and princesses of the Arsacid Šapistān in fulfilling their pivotal political roles of fostering and upholding political and social connections (further elaborated in the 'expenses' section below). Though assessing the extent of their agency in recruiting personnel is challenging, they certainly had access to personal servants, guards, accountants, treasurers, counsellors, priests, maids, doctors, barbers, chefs, bearers, cupbearers, tailors, pets, gardeners, handymen, jewellers, musicians, dancers, gamekeepers, managers, trainers, tutors, teachers, heads of protocols, keepers of the curtains, head chamberlains, and indirectly, merchants, espionage personnel, and likely artisans (Lukonin 1983).[10] When moving

[10] We further have evidence of the courtiers' occupation titles and epithets in Parthian in ŠKZ such as: pat-Šapistān, Šāpistān, pat-Šāpistān, Ganzβar, pat-Ganzβar, Wāžārbed, Dibīr, Dibīrbed, Zēnbed, Aspbed, Naxčīrbed, Āxwarrbed, Dādβar, Ēhrbed, Bāmbišnān Handarzbed, Grastbed, Maδugdār, Framadār, Dizbed, Niwēδbed, Darbed, Hazāruft, Parištagbed, Darīgān Sārār, Zēndānīg.

or travelling, the nobles' Šapistān (including the 'queens') were accompanied by a retinue of guards and attendants (Plut. *Crass.* 33). Formal visits probably involved larger and better-equipped caravans. Membership of the Roman imperial household, the *Domus Augusta*, brought the queen into direct contact not only with the emperor but also to key courtiers and officers. This access, when exploited skilfully to regulate especially the access to the emperor could produce potential for gains (cf. de la Bédoyère 2021: 188). It is noteworthy that the pre-eminent lady of the Roman Empire was not necessarily the empress. This reflected on 'queenship' broadening the possible role of the queen, but also making the queen's role more precarious.

5.3. *Access to produce and production facilities*

In the Neo-Assyrian economy, entire villages were bought and sold (SAA 7 115). Texts refer to queens having 'village managers,' which suggests that queens owned and (through local managers) operated various locales (see also section 2.3). Presumably owning a village entailed controlling and consuming its resources, industry, products, and/or revenue. At least some of the queens' estates and staff (including shepherds) could have played a role in the textile industry (Edubba 10 28; SAA 7 12; SAA 12 94; SAA 19 176; Gaspa 2013: 230; Svärd 2015: 62-63, 80). A list of flax and wool allotments for various royal households, palaces, and villages indicates that the queen's household received roughly 600 kilograms of fiber (SAA 7 115). Only the capital city of Nineveh received more. Such a large allocation would have supported the production of far more textiles than the queen herself (or her immediate, residential household) could use. The queen's allotment was suited for a commercial enterprise; however, we do not know who (such as the royal family, palace officials, the military, temples, etc.) consumed and/or purchased the products.[11] Neo-Babylonian princesses also owned land and thus had access to agricultural produce. At least two daughters of Nebuchadnezzar, Kaššāya and Baʾu-asītu, held real estate in Uruk or its surroundings (Beaulieu 1998). In the same vein, one or more daughters of Nabonidus or their representatives were active in Sippar, having access to agricultural produce (Beaulieu 1989: 136-137; Waerzeggers 2004), though it remains unclear where their estates were located. Nabonidus's daughter En-nigaldi-Nanna did not only enjoy a high cultic status in Ur, but also had the temple's economic resources at her disposal (RINBE 2 Nabonidus 34; Popova 2015: 407-408). For the Achaemenid period, archival sources from Persia and Babylonia evince royal women controlling their own households and estates, much like the Great King himself. The queens also possessed their own personal seals, by which they authorised commodity distributions to and from these estates. As for the king, these were finely carved with heroic and warlike motifs (see Kuhrt 2007: 578, also 596-597, Figs. 12.4-12.5). At least three estates are attested for Irtašduna (Artystone; daughter of Cyrus, sister of Cambyses and wife of Darius I) in Fars: at Uranduš, Kuknakkan, and Matannan (Brosius 1998: 126; Henkelman 2010: 698, n. 111). For example, Irdabama had multiple *kurtaš* working for her near Tirazziš (Shiraz), Tamukkan (Borazjan), and Kurra (see Brosius 1998: 141-143). This phenomenon was not limited to the Persian heartland. Estates of queens in Babylonia are

[11] An in-depth, interdisciplinary study that analyses the involvement of queens in the textile industry and integrates the results into the bigger picture of Neo-Assyrian textile production and the overall imperial economy has potential but has not yet been attempted.

attested in the Murašû archive (Stolper 1985: 62-64), where two texts mention estates "of the lady of the Palace" (BE 9 28, BE 9 50) and ten texts estates specifically of Parysatis (Parušiyati), wife of Darius II, in the vicinity of Nippur and Babylon (Stolper 1985: 63-4; 2006: 466). Stolper argues the former included both 'crown land' and so-called bow lands (Stolper 1985: 62), and the queen had an *ustarbaru* (*vaçabara*) as an estate administrator (Stolper 1985: 63; 2006: 465). Parysatis's estate had landholdings, managers, servants, and judges. For Parysatis's estate in the vicinity of Nippur, the records on the yield 420 BCE are preserved: ca. 57,000 liters (317 kur 2 pi 3 sutu) of barley and ca. 900 liters (5 kur 2 pi 3 sutu) of wheat (TuM II/III 185; Kuhrt 2007: 820-821). If Xenophon is to be believed, Parysatis also held estates near Aleppo and along the Tigris that included multiple villages (Xen. *Anabasis* 1.4.9, 2.4.27; Stolper 2006: 464; Kuhrt 2007: 820-821). Another woman named Amisiri' also appears as an estate owner in several texts (BE 9 39; CBS 5199; BE 10 45), which is why Brosius believes she was likely related to Artaremu, satrap of Babylon, and thus a member of the royal family (1998: 128). Further, Plato claimed Amestris held vast estates (Plat. *Alc.* I 121c-123cd; Brosius 1998: 123). A noteworthy instance noted by Tuplin is that Lahiru, an estate of the Egyptian satrap Aršama (TAD 6.9), had previously hosted estates of the Neo-Assyrian Queen Mother Naqi'a and Šamaš-šumu-ukin as a crown prince (SAA 6.225; NALK 173-174; see Tuplin 2020). This raises the question whether some queenly estates were 'inherited' by Achaemenid queens from earlier empires, similar to the institution of the crown prince in Babylon. Especially in lieu of the Seleukid evidence, also 'inheritance' (or military revenue shares) of whole villages including their production facilities comes into view also for the Achaemenid queens. At least, this is a possible reading of the Greek account that the Egyptian village of Anthylla produced shoes for the queen-consort (Hdt. 2.98; Kuhrt 2007: 725). Also for the Seleukids, queenly ownership of estates and villages is attested. In 254 BCE, Laodike the wife of Antiochos II paid thirty talents of silver for a royal estate located in Hellespontine Phrygia. The purchase gave her ownership of the land, a manor-house, villages located on the land, and the peasant inhabitants, plus their annual incomes. She paid for it all in three instalments over the course of one year, presumably allowing her time to assemble other assets for the payments (*I.Didyma* 492 B, C). This purchase gives insights into Laodike's personal wealth and the type of income-generating estates she may have had at her disposal. For example, the 'Lehmann text' from 236 BCE includes Laodike and her sons as joint owners of a parcel of royal estates on the banks of the Euphrates, including the arable lands and their annual incomes (van der Spek and Wallenfels 2014). Numismatic evidence further informs us that some Seleukid queens had control over royal mints. In 175 BCE, Laodike, the widow of Seleukos IV, took over control of royal coin issues on behalf of her young son, the new king, and included her own image as the primary ruler of the empire. Similarly, in 126/5 BCE Kleopatra Thea issued coins in her own name from the mint at Ptolemais-Akko (Houghton et al. 2008: i, 35-39, 465-467). In these instances, both queens had (briefly) taken control over the Seleukid state. What is an exception in the Seleukid Empire, is the rule under the Ptolemies. Royal land belonged to the Ptolemaic monarchy jointly. As for the state monopolies in production (e.g., oil) mentioned above in the kings' section, it is not clear from the extant evidence how much the queens were involved; it likely varied depending on the relative power of the particular queen. As for coins, some Ptolemaic queens are prominent

on minted coins of the dynasty, although whether such minting is in their honour or at their behest is sometimes open to interpretation. The first coins bearing images of Ptolemaic queens were minted during the reign of Ptolemy II, showing Arsinoë II with her husband. After her death in ca. 270 BCE and the establishment of a cult, dekadrachms were issued in her name alone. Coins in the name and image of Arsinoë Philadelphus continue to be minted until the end of the dynasty; sometimes her features are portrayed as those of the current ruling queen (Lorber 2012; Carney 2013: 121). Coins were produced also in the names of other ruling queens, e.g., Berenice II and Kleopatra I (Lorber 2012; Müller 2021: 86-87). Issues by Kleopatra I (wife of Ptolemy V and joint ruler with her son Ptolemy VI) bore the queen's mint mark on the coins (Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015: 425-430). Kleopatra VII, in addition to issuing her own coins, also reformed the currency by minting new denominations of bronze coins (Monson 2019: 155). In contrast, there is no independent evidence available to determine the economic sectors specifically under the authority of the queen in the Arsacid period sources. Regarding the queen's personal assets, it is important to recognise them as part of the royal family's assets, likely bestowed upon her as gifts by the Šāhanšāh or with his consent. These assets could encompass farmland, vineyards, wineries, and other properties. Particularly in cases where the Šāhanšāh died, when the crown prince had not yet reached legal age, the queen, acting as the deputy of the Šāhanšāh, assumed the duties of the Šāhanšāh until the crown prince matured, effectively occupying the Šāhanšāh's role. This exceptional situation occurred at least twice in the Arsacid period: for Rinnu, mother of Phraates II (Āssar 2003 [unpublished]; Olbricht 2021c: 233), and Musa, spouse of Phraates IV and mother of Phraates V (Phraataces; Olbrycht 2021a; 2021b). It allowed the Arsacid queen to mint coins bearing her and her child's image as a symbol of joint rule. The Roman queens had access to produce and production facilities as a member of the imperial household and could also have their own substantial private holdings. Queens could appear on imperial gold coins, as testified, e.g., by the individualised portrait of Livia, mother of the emperor (Kunst 2021: 389).

5.4. *Access to direct financial resources*

Neo-Assyrian queens had direct access to financial resources from the time they became queen into eternity. Although no marriage documents relating to Neo-Assyrian queens are known, written sources refer to elite dowries and bridal provisions during the Neo-Assyrian period (Radner 1997: 163-164; Svärd 2015: 128-129). Based on comparative sources, we can thus assume that newly-wed queen consorts would have infused the imperial economy with rich dowries. They must also have arrived with a wealth of personal assets, including luxury goods and servants. During their reigns, queens (and/or their household) profited from wealth generated through their estates and industry. Further, they received shares of palace resources, such as enormous provisions of wine (Kinnier-Wilson 1972; Fales 1994: 368-369). Queens also received substantial shares of tribute and audience gifts. The queen's second position in these allocations suggests that her household was the second-most endowed (SAA 1 34; Svärd 2015: 62). A Neo-Assyrian queen (and/or her household) also "had her own revenue from taxes or tribute which came to her directly instead of being channelled through the chief of trade of the king" (Mattila 2014: 407; Svärd 2015: 64). In death, queens took a bounty of movable assets with them. Excavations of the tombs at Kalhu reveal that the 8th-century queens Hama, Yaba/

Banitu, and Atalia were buried with troves of precious adornment and artefacts, including personally inscribed objects exemplifying personal property (Al-Rawi 2008: 136-138; Hussein 2016; Gansell 2018a). After death, queens continued to directly receive resources through libations and offerings of wine, beer, and food (Postgate 2008: 180). A cuneiform tablet from the Kalhu tomb of Mullissu-mukannišat-Ninua (queen of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III) further instructs the living: "May someone later clothe (me) with a shroud, anoint (me) with oil and sacrifice a lamb" (Al-Rawi 2008: 123-124). Concerning the dowries of Neo-Babylonian princesses, we possess the marriage agreement of Neriglissar's daughter Gigītu and Nabû-šumu-ukīn, the *šatammu* of the Ezida temple of Borsippa. Unfortunately, the tablet is badly broken, and no information about the dowry survives (Roth 1989 no. 7; see also Cousin 2023: 186). The high status of royal women was expressed by their attire. Nabonidus reports how he studied the past descriptions of *entu* priestesses to dress her daughter accordingly, and the Adad-guppi stele narrates how he clothed and adorned his mother's corpse for burial (RINBE 2 Nabonidus 34; 2001). If the tomb discovered in the South Palace was indeed Adad-guppi's (see section 5.5), the jewellery found therein gives an impression of how the Babylonian royal women adorned themselves.[12] Cuneiform texts suggest that some queens of the Teispid-Achaemenid dynasty had the rights to prebends from some Babylonian temples (e.g., BM 29447, BM 85009, BM 28899); the income from the prebends were presumably given to members of the queen's household when she was not present (Zadok 2002; 2003; 2007; Henkelman 2010: 697). As already highlighted above, the queens certainly also possessed valuable mobile property (see especially their seals; see section 5.3). On the other hand, primary sources on their dowries are conspicuously absent, secondary ones sparse. The only currently known references stylise diplomatic marriages as dowries brought in by 'foreign' wives; thus, Media is said to be brought in as dowry of Cyaxares' daughter her marriage with Cyrus (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.5.19; Kuhrt 2007: 60), similarly, Darius III is reported to have given the territory west of the Euphrates as dowry for his daughter's marriage with Alexander of Macedonia (Diod. XVII, 54; Kuhrt 2007: 447). For the Seleukid queens, the available evidence is once more eclectic. We presume that all Seleukid queens had dowries, though we only have (literary) references to large dowries for Berenice Phernophoros 'the Dowry-bringer' and Kleopatra Thea (Jer. *In Dan.* 11.6; Josephus AJ 13.82). Stratonike dedicated at least 50 valuable collections of jewellery and other objects at Delos, some of which were inherited from her parents and must have come from her dowry (Constantakopoulou 2017: 198, 207, 288 n. 91). Access to other kinds of direct financial resources is currently not known for the Seleukid queens. As most Ptolemaic queens were members of the same family as the kings, dowries were not a significant part of their personal financial assets. However, Macedonian noblewomen could inherit and transfer their inheritance (Strootman 2014: 94). This tradition seems to have been upheld for the Ptolemaic Dynasty, and it has been argued that the main rationale behind Ptolemaic full-sibling marriage was perhaps a desire to combine two lines of inheritance (Strootman 2014: 104). That

[12] For the jewellery, see Moortgat-Correns 1996 and the corrections by Pedersén 2021: 49. The grave had been robbed, and the jewellery that remains gives a faint idea of its original splendour. The grave goods of Assyrian queens offer a point of comparison (Hussein 2016).

Ptolemaic queens had independent access to financial resources (perhaps wealth built on their personal inheritance?) is suggested by the report of Kleopatra III depositing wealth and possessions in Kos for safekeeping during the period of dynastic tension with her father (and co-ruler) Ptolemy IX (App. *Mith.* 12.23; Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 203). As sole rulers and regents, queens presumably had the same access to / control over state revenue as their male counterpart, and there is some documentary evidence to support this. For example, papyrological evidence suggests that Kleopatra III was closely involved with temple revenues and tax concessions (Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 204). As mentioned above, Kleopatra VII issued new denominations of bronze coins (Monson 2019: 155). It seems that the Arsacid queen's control over her movable assets, such as clothing, jewellery, coins, furniture, curtains, carpets, etc., surpassed her control over other assets like land, vineyards, buildings (such as palaces, pavilions, gardens, personal paradises), etc. Statues and sculptures portray wealthy women adorned in Parthian attire, such as long-sleeved floating robes over a long underdress, made from richly adorned and embroidered textiles. They wore elaborate headdresses adorned with jewellery, including necklaces made of pearls and precious stones, as well as earrings and bracelets. The attire depicted on female statues in Hatra undoubtedly reflects Arsacid fashion influenced by central authority (Brosius 2006: 107-108). Ownership of immovable property during the Arsacid and Sasanian periods was subject to restrictions, especially regarding sale, by family members, including both men and women. Originally, real property, cattle, and tools of production were collectively owned by the agnatic group, with families within the group serving as co-possessors, granting access to every family based on co-partnership and membership in the agnatic group. Real property could only be transferred within the group (to an agnate), with the consensus of the agnates necessary for any alienation outside the group (Perikhanian 1983: 643). Selling ancestral land and property was deemed dishonourable, and such transactions likely faced constraints during both the Arsacid and Sasanian eras. If these properties, bestowed by the Šāhanšāh, were lost for any reason, individuals would likely face repercussions, experiencing a sense of humiliation and accountability. The Šāhanšāh could further direct surplus disposal, typically allocated to his family including women; in one case, this amounted to a yearly offering of a thousand lambs (Perikhanian 1983: 643, 656-661). A key part of the Roman queen's economic independence, such as existed, were inheritances and bequests. The emperor could allow imperial women to inherit more widely than was strictly the norm, and with inheritances came connections (Dio 51.13.7). The amount of wealth possessed by imperial women could be considerable (Kokkinos 1992: 164). Powerful first ladies were in the position to ensure granting of imperial favours and could capitalise on that ability (Kunst 2021: 392-393). This could also take the form of illicit selling of imperial privileges (de la Bédoyère 2021: 188). Empresses could amass further riches by profiting from the elimination of wealthy elite individuals. Some empresses were blamed for just that and political removals of individuals were attributed to financial greed of the queen (e.g., Tac. *Ann.* 12.59). Wealth and the social gulf between members of the elite and the people at large could be enormous. Tacitus (*Ann.* 12.22) pities a senatorial lady, forced into exile by the machinations of the empress, who had to leave with the sum of only 5 million sestertii – equal to the annual pay of some 16 600 legionaries. The anecdote gives some scope of the wealth that could be in use of the more affluent empresses.

5.5. *Access to special places*

Neo-Assyrian queens must have conducted the duties of their office from special palace spaces, where they might have resided as well. An inscription carved on a sculpture at the entrance to a suite in Nineveh's Southwest Palace states in King Sennacherib's voice: "For Tashmetu-sharrat, the queen, my beloved spouse … I had a palatial hall of loveliness, delight, and joy built." (RINAP 3 Sennacherib 40: 44"b-46"b; Galter et al. 1986: 27-32). A queen's suite may also have been built into Nineveh's North Palace, where a large-scale bas-relief on the wall depicted the royal couple sharing a victory banquet (Kertai 2020: 211). At Kalhu, archaeologists have proposed the locations of possible queens' suites in both Fort Shalmaneser and the Northwest Palace (Oates and Oates 2001: 65, 186-192; Kertai 2015: 42-43). In fact, much of the southern sector of the Northwest Palace may have been the domain of the queen (Kertai 2015: 44-46). This interpretation is based on its architectural layout, the location of an archive associated with the queen's household, and burials of queens beneath its floors. It is notable that the 9th- and 8th-century Northwest Palace queens were buried beneath their royal abode, while Neo-Assyrian kings were entombed below the old, ceremonial palace at Assur (Postgate 2008: 177-178; Lundström 2009; Hussein 2016). Perhaps the Northwest Palace queens were interred at their residence because of their close relationship to the palace (given that their title *sēgallu* literally meant 'woman of the palace'; see section 2.4.; see also Wasmuth et al. forthcoming a). Indicating a possible shift in burial traditions, textual evidence suggests that Esarhaddon's 7th-century queen Esharra-hammat was buried at Assur (RINAP 4 2002; SAA 12 81; Postgate 2008: 177). Neo-Assyrian queens (formerly reigning and/or future) may have had access to the burial site of a just-deceased queen, as a ritual text refers to the presence of 'queens' at a queen's (probably Esharra-hammat's) funeral (SAA 20 34; Svärd 2015: 45-46). Queens may have had privileged access to temples, too. Royal images consistently portray queens engaging in ritual activities (Ornan 2002). Supporting this visual corpus with reference to a specific event, a letter to King Ashurbanipal states that circumstances are favourable for the queen to go into the temple and enter the sanctum of the state god Aššur (SAA 20 52). This text "suggests that although the queen's access to one of the most sacred spaces of the realm was not self-evident, it was granted" (Svärd 2018: 127). Neo-Babylonian royal tombs were typically located in palaces and were thus accessible only to a limited group of people (Jursa 2010b: 71). In the Adad-guppi stele (RINBE 2 Nabonidus 2001), Nabonidus's mother is depicted as a loyal servant of Nebuchadnezzar and Neriglissar also after their death, taking care of their luxurious, monthly funerary offerings while no one else did. It remains unclear whether these offerings were delivered at the tombs or at royal statues located somewhere else (Kuhrt 2001: 83-84). When Adad-guppi died at a high age, Nabonidus claims that he made the elite of his empire come together and organised an elaborated funeral for his mother. Joannès (2022: 199) has recently suggested that a tomb excavated at the South Palace of Babylon was that of Adad-guppi, but the evidence remains inconclusive (cf. Moortgat-Correns 1996; Jursa 2010b: 71). Royal women also had access to other special places. As the *entu* priestess, En-nigaldi-Nanna must have been able to enter the sacred temple precincts inaccessible to non-priestly people (see Waerzeggers 2011: 64-66). The women's quarter at the South Palace need not be an enclosed unit, but its existence suggests segregation at least on an administrative level (Jursa 2010b: 70-71; Cousin

2023: 178-181). Finally, Berossus tells that Nebuchadnezzar built the Hanging Gardens for his wife Amytis who longed for the hills of his native Media (BNJ 680). Even if the story is most likely fictional (van der Spek 2008: 302-313; Rollinger 2013: 147-155), the motif of the king's lavish gift-giving to his wife is believable. The question of special access to certain areas of the palaces, temples, or elsewhere reserved for the Teispid-Achaemenid queen(s) is currently beyond the sources. Separate 'harems' are to be rejected for the Achaemenid court (Lenfant 2020). Since the queens could travel independently, they probably owned tents. It has been debated (and refuted) whether the tower-like structures of uncertain function at Naqsh-e Rustam and Pasargadae were tombs of royal woman (e.g., Boyce 1984), though a non-funerary function is more likely (Sancisi-Weerdeburg 1983b; Callieri 2021: 1280), or if they were interred with their husbands in the royal tombs, most of which had multiple *astodans*, i.e., rock-cut cavities functioning as ossuaries. Henkelman (2003) has argued that sacrifices were made for Cambyses and his wife at their tombs under Darius. Other than the example of Laodike personally owning sections of royal estates, little is known about Seleukid queens' control over special economic resources or properties within the empire. The category is also of less relevance for the Ptolemaic queens. However, a separate space for the royal women is mentioned in Athenaeus' description of the royal barge in the time of Ptolemy IV Philopater (Ath. 4.204d-206d); these quarters are described as having their own symposium (dining room) with nine coaches, suggesting the queen could have her own private meetings/gatherings (Nielsen 1994: 136; Ath. 4.204d-206d). Regarding the interaction of the Arsacid queen and court women with other sections of society, it appears that there were more restrictions for men to access certain places than for women. The Šapistān and likely other areas of the court were probably inaccessible to the majority of men. Higher-ranking women, especially queens, had extensive access to the Šāhanšāh's estate and beyond. They travelled with guards and attendants, often in larger, well-equipped caravans for formal visits, and had more freedom to access male-dominated spaces. Roman empresses and other leading women had special access to some cults only allowed to women, such as Vesta and Bona Dea (de la Bédoyère 2021: 122). As highlighted above, this generated a potential for exclusive information gain and resources but did not, directly, generate economic resources. The queens could use resources for building projects in their own name, such as restoration of temples, and other benefactions for persons and activities.

6. The queens' major expenses and role in the royal economic circulation

While (our knowledge of) the queens' access to resources is much more limited than that of the kings, thus prompting a slightly different categorisation, the areas of main expenditure of the queen (and distinct from the disbursals by the king and/or the 'state' or 'crown') are similar to those of the king, though with substantially more variety across the empires. Whether these diachronic distinctions reflect ancient realities or whether they are the result of excavation traditions and preservation casualties, is currently impossible to assess, though the latter probably plays a major role in distorting the picture.

6.1. *Overall assessment per empire*

The main attested expense category of the Neo-Assyrian queen's economy is religious contributions, taking the form of temple donations and/or offerings to the

divine (Svärd 2018: 127). Diverse 8th- and 7th-century texts consistently report on resources given by the queen (or queen mother Naqi'a), not by her household. At least some of these expenses may relate to private, voluntary initiatives supported through personal resources, rather than mandated conventions of support paid through the queen's household budget. The sources on Neo-Babylonian royal women also originate almost exclusively from temple archives or are royal inscriptions that focus on royal sponsorship of temples. Therefore, the documented expenses of royal women primarily relate to the economic sphere of temples. For the Achaemenid period, there is also direct primary evidence from the palatial archives showing that (at least some of) the Teispid-Achaemenid queens could draw on tremendous economic resources. Whether these document the queens' own wealth, i.e. being produced by her estates, or derive from taxes etc. that she – as a person or qua office – had access to, is less certain. Probably, the queens drew on a mix of resources: their own estate funds, funds allocated by the king, and general treasury funds, for which ownership and access were blurred between the 'state' and individuals in official roles, whether these were the queens, the kings, the satraps, or other high-ranking officials. For the Seleukid Empire it is impossible to establish, with the present evidence, how far the financial resources and expenses of king and queen were separated. At least for the periods when the queens lived away from kings, separate travel and household budgets for queens are to be expected, but this is not explicated in the sources. Also, for the Ptolemaic monarchy it is difficult to isolate costs for the queen that were distinct from either the king or the state, though not for lack of sources, but for reasons of ideology. However, there is fragmentary evidence that Ptolemaic queens could spend in their own name in addition to jointly with the king (for example in building programs; see Wasmuth et al. forthcoming a). The most significant and perhaps the most substantial drain on the financial resources of the Arsacid queens, and/or their reallocation encompassed orchestrating banquets at the Šāhanšāhī court with courtiers from other Asian kingdoms, arranging lavish feasts, preparing gifts and dowries for courtiers, including ceremonial dresses and jewellery acquisition, as well as the procurement of slaves and their attire. Additionally, it entailed contributing to the furnishing of residences for daughters, granddaughters, brides, and distant relatives, presenting gifts with political motives during the grand court journeys, financing both non-secret and secret trips, providing resources, and extending financial support to allies of the queen and her successors for the complex political manoeuvrers of the Šāhanšāhī. Further costs were incurred for servants, guards, spies, and personnel of the 'secret service' and its associated organisations (see section 5.2). In the Roman Empire, leading imperial ladies had access to the resources of the imperial household and could have notable personal economic means that they also used to their benefit.

6.2. *For maintaining relations with the power base*

Among the religious contributions made by Neo-Assyrian queens and the queen mother Naqi'a, were provisions that potentially supported large-scale (possibly public) festivals and feasts. For example, a queen provided large quantities of beer on the seventeenth day of the wedding ritual of the goddess Mullissu (SAA 7 183). Another text, which appears to refer to a ceremonial banquet, lists a variety of meats, including a cut provided by the queen

(SAA 7 153). This menu could represent temple or ritual offerings that were consumed, food for a New Year's reception, or the spread for a secular feast (Svärd 2015: 206-207, n. 831). We do not have records of queens distributing wine, but, given the vast quantities allotted to them, they could have supplied lavish banquets (Kinnier-Wilson 1972; Fales 1994: 368-369). Neo-Babylonian kings invested considerable resources in the sponsorship of temples, and their daughters followed in their fathers' footsteps. Nebuchadnezzar's daughter Kaššāya donated jewellery, wine, dates, and land to the Eanna temple in Uruk, and Nabonidus's daughter Ina-Esagil-rīšat gave a silver bowl to the Ebabbar temple in Sippar (Beaulieu 1998; Jursa 1998: 66). These payments (*erbu*, *ešrû*) may not have been fully voluntary, but they arose from expectations of royal sponsorship and from obligations related to princesses' landholdings in the economic sphere of the temples (Jursa 1998: 87-89). Princesses had also other economic transactions with temples (Beaulieu 1989: 136-137; 1998; Cousin 2023). Sometimes the flow of financial resources was the opposite, and a text from the Eanna temple refers to rations of the king's daughter paid by the temple (Kleber 2008: 280). For expenditure on funerary rites and mortuary offerings, see section 5.5 above. The *Persepolis Fortification tablets* revealing the economic independence of at least some Teispid-Achaemenid royal women show that some had their own 'table'. Henkelman has highlighted that the same phrase used for state expenditures for the King's Table was used for Irdabama ("consumed before Irdabama", *irdabama tibba makka*; Henkelman 2010: 694). He has calculated the attested amount of commodities so used for Irdabama, with the amount of barley in five texts totalling 51,880 quarts (ca. 50,324 litres) – or 1/10th of the attested amount for the king's table – enough to feed nearly 60,000 people at average worker rations (1 litre of barley a day), not including the attested meat, wine, and beer (Henkelman 2010: 695). Texts also show Atossa had massive quantities of wine (11,300 quarts) and grain consumed before her, implying a similar queenly table (Fort 0328-101, Fort 0590-101). Such banquet expenditure is not known for the Seleukid queen. However, she could make a bequest from her personal funds. In 196/5 BCE Laodike, wife of Antiochos III, donated 1,000 *medimnoi* (nearly 60,000 litres) of grain per year for ten years to the people of Iasos, Caria (I.Iasos 4). This might suggest that she possessed an agricultural estate and was able to give from its revenues. The biggest cost for the Ptolemaic dynasts (male and female) was maintaining relations with their various dependencies and satisfying their expectations, together with the public display the Ptolemaic *tryphe* (magnificence) through lavish expenditure. The cornucopia symbol was especially associated with Ptolemaic queens. We have examples of queens engaging in euergetism, gift-giving, and patronage jointly with the king. For example, Berenike II and Ptolemy III Euergetes' imported grain at their personal expense for people across Egypt to make up for a catastrophic harvest ('Canopus' Decree: Austin 2006 no. 271, lines 13-19). Outside of Egypt, Ptolemy IV and Arsinoë III sponsored a festival and game in honour of the muses at Thespiai in Boiotia (Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 35 and fn. 19). Queens also engaged in patronage on their own, such as Arsinoë's sponsorship of the annual Adonia festival (Theok. *Id.* 15.23-24). According to an honorific decree, Kleopatra I gave gifts of silver, gold, precious stones, and sacrifices to the Egyptian temples (Pfeiffer 2021: 99). And Kleopatra VII famously brought an abundance of gifts with her when she went to meet Antony (Plut. *Dem.* 25.4). There is no evidence of a 'Queen's Table'

in the Arsacid era. Contact with the power base and contributions to the local circulation of financial assets were primarily indirect. Probably, queens and ladies facilitated the movement of their assets through the assistance of eunuchs and trusted merchants outside the Šapistān. They engaged in profitable trade, often with political backing from the court when necessary. A portion of the queens' income went towards financing costly missions within and beyond the Šapistān, maintaining the loyalty of subordinates, purchasing gifts, and providing loans to them. More direct and notable was the practice of royal gift-giving by the queens during their travels for celebrations and various ceremonies. These gifts typically included the bride's dowry, particularly when a wedding ceremony was utilised to solidify and ensure political agreements (Bivar 1983: 56; Dąbrowa 2018: 80). This necessitated access to significant direct financial resources for the furnishings, clothing, jewellery, pearls, as well as their transportation and storage. Additional indirect expenses were incurred for the training of Šāpistāns, maids, and servants for the ceremonies attended. Some of these events were meticulously planned in advance, while others were arranged spontaneously (Plut. *Crass.* 33; Bivar 1983: 55-56; Brosius 2000; 2006: 94-95; Curtis 2007: 12-13). Roman queens could perform major roles in public events as members of the imperial family and use resources, e.g., to restore temples (de la Bédoyère 2021: 122; Kunst 2021: 390). The queen could use her resources also in other ways fitting the role of the leading lady, e.g., by providing support for orphans or dowries for destitute women (Dio 58.2.3). Having wealth of their own, 'queens' could also act independently as benefactors of cities; the honours provincial cities bestowed on queens and other prominent imperial women also belied a belief that they mattered. Queens were however always prone to be accused of usurping male spheres of activity (e.g., Suet. *Tib.* 50.2-3 on Livia). For example, in the city coinages of the Roman East leading imperial women could be regularly described as goddesses (Burnett 2011: 19).

6.3. *For travel*

The position of 'chariot driver of the queen' is multiply attested, but it probably refers to a member of the Neo-Assyrian queen's military staff, not her personal chauffeur (SAA 6 329; SAA 7 5; SAA 19 158; Svärd 2015: 63, 73). There is no evidence to suggest that queens travelled routinely or visited their palaces or estates outside of the capital. Nonetheless, Neo-Assyrian queens at least travelled under special circumstances, including for military operations, as documented on the Pazarcık Stele, a monument erected on the Assyrian frontier in south-central Anatolia. The stele's inscription declares that Queen Sammuramat (while serving in a regent-like capacity) travelled 'across the Euphrates' with her son, King Adad-nerari III to win a battle here (RIMA 3 A.0.104.3). Ritual occasions could also have required travel. For example, Ashurbanipal's queen (who would have resided in the main palace at Nineveh) was to participate in a ritual at Assur (SAA 20 52; see also section 5.5.). In addition, ceremonial rites of passage, such as a queen's diplomatic marriage (motivating her relocation to the Assyrian capital) and a king's coronation and funeral (which took place at Assur) could have necessitated a queen's travel (Dalley 1998; Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 354). More mundanely, Queen Atalia may have moved to or at least visited Dur-Sharrukin, where her husband Sargon II established a new capital (Svärd 2015: 52). If she had relocated during the last years of their reign, in death, her body was returned to Kalhu for burial beneath the Northwest Palace (Hussein 2016: 14; Müller-Karpe et al. 2008: 144). Queen Esharra-hammat's

body was also probably transited from Nineveh (where she lived) to Assur for burial (see section 5.5. above; RINAP 4 2002; SAA 12 81; Postgate 2008: 177). It is noteworthy that in the Neo-Babylonian period royal women frequently appear outside Babylon, but this may relate to their permanent residence rather than travelling. The available sources shed hardly any light on how and how often Babylonian royal women travelled. Nabonidus's mother Adad-guppi died at an otherwise unknown place called Dūr-karāši, which may have been a military camp. If this was the case, the queen mother was probably travelling when she passed away (Grayson 1975: 107; Joannès 2022: 198). Though there is substantial indirect evidence for local, regional, and cross-regional travel of the Teispid-Achaemenid queen, especially to and from her various major estates and participating in military campaigns, there is currently no evidence available how much these cost and where the resources came from that paid for these expenses, though a mix of funds including revenue from the queen's estates and funds explicitly issued or covered by the king is likely (see section 5; Diod. XVII, 38.1; Kuhrt 2007: 600-601). Given the royal peripatetic lifestyle, it would be interesting to know, whether travel itself was a major additional cost or whether it was included within normal royal household maintenance. With few exceptions, this is also the case for the Seleukids. In 274 BCE, Stratonike was at the royal palace in Sardis partnering with military commanders in providing logistical support for her husband during the First Syrian War; in this instance we might presume that she drew upon state resources, not just her own (ADART I, -273 B rev. 29). In a similar situation a generation later, a regional governor attempted to ship 1,500 talents of silver (probably coin) to Laodike, widow of Antiochos II, as she prepared for war with the Ptolemies in 246 BCE ('Gurob Papyrus'; *Chrest. Wilck.* 1, col. i 23-col. ii 13). Laodike, wife of Antiochos III, accompanied him on several of his military campaigns (Ramsey Neugebauer forthcoming), but to what extent she paid for her own travel costs is impossible to say. As regents or sole rulers, some Ptolemaic queens (Kleopatra II, III, and VII) were responsible for military campaigns (van Minnen 2010) including the provision of funds. Kleopatra III sponsored exploration through the Arabian sea and beyond for the purposes of extending trade (Strabo 2.99-2.101). Kleopatra VII famously sailed up the Knydos river to meet Antony in a lavish royal barge (Plut. *Ant.* 26.1-3). A portion of the Arsacid Šapistān accompanied the Šāhanšāh during his campaigns and travels (Plut. *Crass.* 21), allegedly travelling in curtained carriages (*harmamaxae*). This provides insights into the significance of the public life of the queens and elite women, showcasing their prestige via travels (Oost 1977/1978: 228). While the court placed great importance on the security of women, it did not (directly) cover all their travel expenses. Probably, each male courtier with family members in the Šapistān had his own private group of guardians and treasurers responsible for the personal travel expenses of his wife and children. Given the substantial value of the queen's belongings transported in their caravans for political gift-giving during military campaigns (see section 6.2.), there was a considerable risk of capture by the enemy and even death (cf. Ael. Sp. Had. 13.8), prompting the Arsacid Šāhanšāhs to take extreme precautions (cf. *Parth. Stat.* 1; Tac. *Ann.* 12.44-47 and 51, 13.6; Josephus AJ 7.7.4). These include the cost of servants and guard personnel, especially the head eunuchs (Šāpistāns) in the palace and female quarters (Šapistān) and trained military guards for the queens and their treasures during travels

(similar practices are documented from the Armenian Arsacids; Buzand. Patmut. 5.7). Roman queens were not as itinerant as emperors. However, the queen could travel with the emperor on his journeys to the provinces as attested, e.g., for Livia, the consort of Augustus (Barrett 2002: 37-38; Goldsworthy 2014: 299). During such journeys the queens could confer benefactions and receive honours. Imperial women could also have their own contact networks, especially in the provinces (Kokkinos 1992: 11).

6.4. *For accessing information*

Oracle texts and a letter reveal that when King Esarhaddon's mother Naqi'a held the helm of queenship, she accessed information directly from divine sources through oracles and prophesies (SAA 9 1; SAA 9 2; SAA 9 5; SAA 10 109). There is no evidence to suggest that any other Neo-Assyrian queen had such privileged insight into the future. Rather than representing a prerogative of Neo-Assyrian queenship, Naqi'a's access to divine knowledge may have been exceptionally motivated by the crisis context of the empire as it fell into civil war following the murder of King Sennacherib (Svärd 2015: 54; 2018: 128). The Neo-Babylonian evidence also points to the sacral sphere regarding access to specialised knowledge. Note the number of diverse objects found in adjacent rooms in Egipar, the residence of the *entu* priestess in Ur. They were found in the Neo-Babylonian stratum but are much older and were clearly brought together for a purpose (Woolley 1962: 16-17). They are often referred to as the "museum of En-nigaldi-Nanna," and it is a logical assumption that they were of interest to the *entu* priestess residing in the building. However, it is well possible that the collection was put together by Nabonidus who rebuilt Egipar and was known for his antiquarian interests (see section 4.5).

The idea that Achaemenid, Seleukid, Ptolemaic queens might have paid for intelligence or logistical information is relevant, given what we know of their involvement in supporting military expeditions and other political ventures, but on the present (lack of primary) evidence the question of the queens investing funds into the acquisition of specialised knowledge is unexplorable. Arsacid royal women, particularly sisters and daughters of the king, played crucial roles in forging political alliances with local kings as well as Parthian and foreign nobles. By promoting and facilitating strategic marriages, they contributed to the expansion and consolidation of the network binding powerful nobles to the Arsacid dynasty (Brosius 2006: 106-107). To achieve this, the Arsacid queens must have relied on constant updates on the political landscape across subordinate lands such as Armenia, Georgia, Atropatene, Elymais, and their allies within these lands' courts. The establishment and maintenance of this intricate network, spanning nearly five centuries, must have required substantial financial resources. But also here, sources on the actual costs and operational mechanisms are missing. This changes with the Roman period, for which there is direct evidence that the leading ladies could use economic resources to gather information and to control it, for example via patronage of book production (Moore 2021: 379). Such patronage and benefactions were a subtle way of creating positive information and images in the relevant information space.

7. Gender comparison per empire

The following paragraphs highlight per empire, how the offices of kingship and queenship related to each other concerning their roles in the empires' economies. The aspects addressed are a brief overview of the king's and queen's portfolio

in comparison followed by the questions of whether there is evidence of explicitly joint activities and/or perceptions and in which way the king's and queen's economic activities complemented each other.

7.1. *Neo-Assyrian Empire*

King and queen in comparison: Within the Neo-Assyrian imperial hierarchy, the queen ranked second only to the king. While the king was head-of-state, his power did not necessarily trump all. Rather, it seems that the king executed his sovereignty within a heterarchical body of top officials that included the queen (Svärd 2012).

King and queen together as an entity: Some royal letters address the Neo-Assyrian king and queen together in greeting formulas and blessings (SAA 1 115; SAA 10 154) indicating that they were recognised cooperatively as the empire's top officials. Perhaps the fundamental ideological significance of the unit of king+queen is most graphically revealed by a substitution ritual in which proxies for the king and queen were killed and buried together as a means of deflecting the portended demise of King Esarhaddon and presumably his queen (SAA 10 352). The queen was a vital partner to the king, symbolically, societally, and imperially through the work – including the substantial economic contributions – of her office of queenship.

King and queen complementing each other: The Neo-Assyrian king and queen carried out complementary yet intersecting duties of their offices of kingship and queenship in a symbiotic partnership. Their complementary roles are most apparent in ritual and ceremonial imagery, where, for example, the king and queen were depicted in procession together but wearing different regalia and holding different equipment (Ornan 2002: 461-462, Figs. 1, 3). A letter to the king details a case in which the royal couple's religious collaboration entailed complementary economic donations (SAA 10 348): Esarhaddon contributed gemstones, and Naqi'a provided gold. Together, their resources were to be used to enhance a tiara for a cult statue of the god Nabu. We further glimpse a queen's contribution to the king's economy in a text tallying horses (possibly 'taxes of some kind') sent to the king by various provincial officials, including the treasurer (acting as the agent) of the queen (SAA 13 108; Svärd 2015: 64, 212).

7.2. *Neo-Babylonian Empire*

King and queen in comparison: The Babylonian king generated income especially from taxation and tribute, but also from royal estates. Significant economic resources were invested in building and infrastructure projects aimed at increasing agricultural output and royal tax income but also at presenting the king as a pious ruler and caretaker of his people. The meagre evidence of royal women may be distorted, but it seems that their income primarily originated from the land they owned. Their donations to temples are best attested in our sources, but this may not reflect the real patterns of their expenditure.

King and queen together as an entity: There is no evidence pertaining to joint economic activities of the Neo-Babylonian royal couple.

King and queen complementing each other: Kings and their children shared tasks in managing the property of the royal family, and women could also play a role in supporting their male relatives in power struggles. Daughters of Nebuchadnezzar and Nabonidus were primarily active outside Babylon, and this may be explained by the need to take care of the family's property and interests outside the capital (Beaulieu 1998: 198-201; Popova 2015; Cousin

2023). Another economy-related example of complementary activities of king and queen (mother) is once more provided by the Adad-guppi evidence. Adad-guppi supported her son's accession to the throne and (in turn) Nabonidus provided her with a sumptuous funeral after her death.

7.3. *Teispid-Achaemenid Persian Empire*

King and queen in comparison: For the (Teispid-)Achaemenid Empire, it is striking, how much of the economic activities of king and queen are similar: each having access to labour including specialised knowledge, to estate produce, to monetary tax income, to production facilities, etc. Most issues of uncertain female royal involvement, like access to natural resources or the funding procedure behind their travels, whether between their estate, as member of the itinerant court, or following military campaigns, are also uncertain for the king. In both cases, the fragmentary evidence argues for a mix of funding sources including 'state' treasury, personal, and locally resourced funds (the latter often in kind). Probably, the king had more direct access to the 'state' funds, while the queen could also draw on funds provided out of the king's property. Arguably, the queen(s) functioned much like the satraps: as representative of / replacement for the presence of the king in relation to his subjects.

King and queen together as an entity: None of the extant primary sources showcase the Teispid-Achaemenid king and queen acting explicitly together when drawing on or circulating economic resources. To which degree, this is too one-sided to fit ancient realities is difficult to assess. At least, Greek reception history maintains that the Achaemenid queens partook in parts of the banquets held by the king. According to Herodotus, Amestris, the wife of Xerxes, made a public request to her husband (and king) on the occasion of a major institutionalised banquet event (Hdt. IX.110.2-111.1; Kuhrt 2007: 569). In general, the salaciousness of many of the Greek (and Biblical) depictions of royal women in their relations with the Persian king and court is noteworthy. See in this context also the episode in Esther (1.9-24), according to which queen Vashti refused appearing in front of the court and was thus condemned and replaced by Esther.

King and queen complementing each other: As far as the sources permit assessing, the queen / influential royal women had a lesser scope of duties and resources to draw upon, but the activities more or less doubled those of the king. Assuming that the separate Royal Tables catered for different people, they may have been concerned with different segments of society. How these differed, what caused inclusion in the king's or queen's table, and whether participation in one or the other was exclusive or could be doubled, is beyond the sources.

7.4. *Seleukid Empire*

King and queen in comparison: The biggest difference between the Seleukid king and queen economically is the king's role as leader of the military, giving him the responsibility for collecting the resources and issuing the coins needed to pay his soldiers, while the queen (arguably?) collected a share of the revenue. At times, however, queens did operate as the sole or primary ruler of the empire (for example, during regencies) and thus also took on this office, as indicated by the numismatic evidence.

King and queen together as an entity: The main area where the Seleukid king and queen can be seen acting together concerns benefactions to subject communities; the preferred emphasis for the royal couple is more on the ceremonial and relationship-building aspects of these gifts, but they had an economic dimension too.

King and queen complementing each other: Generally, it was the Seleukid queen who worked to complement whatever her husband was doing, for example Laodike donating shipments of grain to a community the Antiochos III was in the process of helping after he had created problems for it with his military activities.

7.5. *Ptolemaic Empire*

King and queen in comparison: As the male head of the royal household, the king likely had more control and access to royal finances than the queen, especially earlier in the dynasty; as time progressed and the institution of co-regency became more common and entrenched, this changed. Starting with the regency of Kleopatra I, we see evidence of the potential for queens to have control over all royal finances. This is perhaps a natural result of the phenomenon of inheritance through the matrilineal line and the decision to keep the royal line within a single family.

King and queen together as an entity: The Ptolemaic monarchy was presented as a unified, conjugal couple in theory, even if that broke down in dynastic conflicts later. Practically speaking, since the king and queen had the same family origin, this meant that the dynastic wealth remained within the dynasty. The economic power of the couple as a couple was emphasised through the joint portraits on coin issues (Lorber 2012). The ideology of the conjugal couple deploying their wealth for the good of their subjects comes across especially in some of the joint decrees, such as the 'Canopus' decree of Ptolemy III and Berenike II, (Austin 2006: no. 271) and the 'Amnesty Decree' of Ptolemy VIII, Kleopatra II, and Kleopatra III (Austin 2006: no. 290), where the couple/trio is held jointly responsible for personal benefactions and tax relief.

King and queen complementing each other: Though there are aspects of Ptolemaic kingship and queenship in which they arguably complement each other regarding royal representation and the execution of specific ritual activities (see Wasmuth et al. forthcoming a), this concerns only details, not the macro level of royal economic activities.

7.6. *Arsacid/Parthian Empire*

King and queen in comparison: Given the essentially non-existent scope of direct sources on the economic basis of the Arsacid queen, a portfolio comparison between Arsacid king and queenship is precarious, at best. Accepting this caveat, it seems that the queen received (lesser) shares of most revenues of the Šāhanšāh as well as substantial shares, gifts, and allotments for special activities, both from the king's and the 'state' treasury. How much say they had in their administration in relation to the Šāpistān (i.e. the head treasurer of the 'harem'), is uncertain. As acting regents during the minority of their sons, the later Phraates II and V, Rinnu and Musa likely had full access to their own, the crown princes' and the 'state' treasury.

King and queen together as an entity: As independent individuals, the Šāhanšāh and the queen held ownership rights to a portion of their property. However, as a couple, they were considered partners in another portion of their property. They shared ownership with other royal families within the Arsacid clan, which in turn was considered a partner with other Parthian tribal families. It was incumbent upon them to safeguard these properties from external threats posed by other families, clans, tribes, and nations outside the Parthian tribe.

King and queen complementing each other: Regarding the alignment of the queen's gifts with the actions of the Šāhanšāh, these

were likely coordinated and complementary. In the Arsacid period, as in many premodern societies, certain activities were deemed exclusively feminine, while others, including economic endeavors, were considered masculine. For instance, men likely were not involved in the intricacies of funding haircuts, grooming, makeup, or selecting certain undergarments, which were traditionally within the purview of women.

7.7. *Roman Empire (in the East)*

King and queen in comparison: The Roman emperor had massive resources at his disposal as he controlled also state assets while the pre-eminent female member of the imperial household derived her means from the imperial household but could have also sizeable wealth of her own, depending on the person and circumstances. Queen's means were also more indirect, often building on capitalisation of access and information.

King and queen together as an entity: The emperor and the first lady of the empire appeared together in connection with major festivities to enhance the message broadcasted to the information domain. The queen's part used to amplify the desired message.

King and queen complementing each other: The queen could complement the support for imperial rule by fulfilling duties in the accepted female sphere like taking part in worship of deities that were restricted to females or supporting orphans. Similarly, they could, e.g., extend patronage for indirectly generating messages amenable to the imperial agenda.

8. Summary and outlook

Though many aspects discussed above yield only tentative results, some of these merits special attention and shall thus be highlighted here.

8.1. *Source base*

As has been highlighted above in the sources section (2.1) and has been permeating essentially all sections discussed above, the most major challenge for attempting a diachronic comparison on the economic basis, and essentially all topics concerning kingship and queenship across the seven empires studied here, is the discrepancy of the source base. Several of the empires are comparatively rich in primary sources, i.e. sources from their own period and socio-cultural context, though with only rather limited evidence providing an ancient outside perspective: this concerns especially the Neo-Assyrian, the Neo-Babylonian, and the Roman Empire. However, also within these three empires a significant difference is to be highlighted: while the Neo-Assyrian and Roman state administration and royal household are very well covered by the sources, the Neo-Babylonian material derives primarily from temples and private archives. The Teispid-Achaemenid and the Ptolemaic Empires are 'known' from a double or multiple set of sources with a strong base of ancient primary sources complemented by ancient secondary sources preserving their reception in the Graeco-Roman world (cf. the various quoted Classical writers). While there is substantial overlap of information, especially concerning the Ptolemies, the Teispid-Achaemenid and the Greek evidence are often in conflict or juxtaposition to each other, providing major caveats for the scholarly reception of Greek (and Latin) historiographical accounts of the Western Asian empires. In both cases, central primary evidence is, however, missing. For the Teispid-Achaemenid empire, the pertinent sources providing insights into economic specifics, especially regarding the distinction of 'royal' versus 'state' assets, are largely restricted to Persepolis during part of the

reign of Darius I; further, a lot of the evidence seems to be specific to the various regions of the empire, not necessarily representative for the empire, and its social institutions of kingship and queenship as a whole. For the Ptolemaic Empire, we are essentially lacking the evidence from the capital, Alexandria, which necessarily distorts our picture. The Seleukid and the Arsacid Empires face the other extreme. Though there is some primary evidence, especially for the kings, it is minor and often little forthcoming (coins, some royal inscriptions) regarding the topic under discussion here. Thus, the reconstruction of Seleukid and Arsacid affairs is predominantly based on ancient secondary sources: in case of the Seleukids primarily on the Classical writers, for the Arsacids also on later Iranian reception history as well as on interpolation between earlier and later evidence. While this source base has produced a rather cautious, tentative approach in Seleukid scholarship, Arsacid scholarship tends to be more positivist. This becomes evident especially in the instances, when the interpolation of Arsacid evidence inter alia from the Seleukids showcases more forthcoming results than for the Seleukids themselves (in the above, especially strong for the reconstruction of the queen's access to information, cf. section 6.4).

8.2. *Queenship*

The queenship concerns are most heavily affected by the source issues. As the Neo-Babylonian, the Seleukid, and the Arsacid Empires are exceedingly scarce on sources on the economic basis of their queens, whether as individuals or regarding the office, the distinctly diverse ideological conceptualisation of queenship in the other empires lacks important parts of comparison. Nonetheless, the following characteristics are noteworthy, and probably representative. The highest degree of institutionalised (economic) power was wielded by the Ptolemaic queens, who were fully acknowledged (co-)regents with full financial powers, at least from Kleopatra I onwards. Probably second-ranked in power within the diachronic comparison was the Roman queen, whose office, however, was not institutionalised. Most notably, in comparison to the earlier Western Asian empires, the imperial leading female and the royal consort were not necessarily identical. The role of queen, if such a role can be said to exist, was taken by the most influential royal woman of the time. Though this is highly problematic to assess based on the extant evidence, the latter may also have been the case for the Arsacid Šāhanšāhī. The Neo-Assyrian and Teispid-Achaemenid queens, on the other hand, typically were the wives of the reigning king. In case of the Assyrian and Persian empires, they seem to have largely doubled the economic role, though on a smaller and subordinate scale. In each of those two empires, exceptionally powerful queens tended also to retain major influence after the change of rule from their husbands to their sons (or in the case of the Neo-Babylonian Adad-guppi: once her son became king).

8.3. *Travel*

Another aspect of royal economics pointing to significant diachronic differences concerns the wider realm of travel, though many details remain uncertain. While in most, if not in all, empires the kings travelled substantially, the scope and reasons partially differed. For most empires, the king primarily travelled for military reasons, and to a much more regionally restricted degree for internal political *cum* religious reasons. How these travels were funded is impossible to determine for any of the studied polities, though the following partial components are noteworthy. While the Neo-Assyrian

and the Ptolemaic empires seem to have funded military campaigns including the specifically royal expenses primarily from the central treasury, the taxation system of the Neo-Babylonian empire aimed to extract labour and soldiers rather than silver. According to the evidence from Babylonia, the Achaemenid court strongly drew on the local and regional resources for their itinerant lifestyle and probably also the military campaigns. To which degree, the Achaemenid king was responsible for the travel expenses of the queen is debatable; possibly, the only available secondary sources rather reflect contemporary, i.e. Arsacid, rather than Achaemenid customs. Here, the evidence points to the male member of the court, including the king/Šāhanšāh, to provide for the travel of their female family members. Beyond military (and diplomatic?) campaigns, the scope of royal travel is rather characteristic to the various empires, especially regarding travels of the queens and the courts. The most outstanding empire in this respect is the Teispid-Achaemenid one, which did not feature a clear imperial capital and royal residence, but practiced a peripatetic, or at least seasonally migratory, lifestyle for the whole court. In addition, the imperial administrative sources preserve evidence for travels of both the king and the queen between their various estates. Whether the Seleukid court was similarly on the move, is currently impossible to assess, and has not yet been studied in detail. As members of the royal family can be traced in different places over the courses of their careers, it is at least certain that they travelled. Also, the Arsacid queens and their entourage (or the female segment of the court, the Šapistān) travelled extensively, largely following the Šāhanšāh's lead. However, they had a clear home base. Possibly to some degree similar were the travel practices of the Roman court, which accompanied the king for regional travel for maintaining relations with his power base in various localities and to dispense justice. In contrast, Neo-Assyrian and Ptolemaic royal travel was typically regional, especially for fulfilling religious obligations in the core area of their domain, Neo-Babylonian even predominantly local despite the evidence of Nabonidus's long stay in the desert oasis Tayma.

8.4. *Maintaining relations with the power base*

A significant amount of money, probably from the central administration, (whenever distinguishable) certainly from the royal coffers, went into various ways of maintaining relations with the power base. As evidence for this is likely to have been recorded and stored (also) locally, the specifics of these are prone to be heavily distorted for each empire, and in consequence also in the diachronic comparison. The current picture shows a focus on ritual offerings and sponsoring public festivals and feasts for the Neo-Assyrian (kings and) queens, sponsorship of temples for the Neo-Babylonian royals, feasts and banquets for substantial portions of local, regional or cross-regional segments of society by the Achaemenian kings and queens, respectively, and major subsistence commodities by the Seleukid queens, while the Seleukid kings gave promises of (political) security. All of the above are attested for the Ptolemaic dynasts. For the Arsacid and Roman female royals, on the other hand, much of their bounty was more individually directed, in the form of dowries, special training, or the support of orphans; though benefaction of cities is also attested. Essentially in all of the discussed empires, a typical gift at least nominally from the king, in practice probably centrally administered, was land, typically in a reciprocal land-for-service agreement (and/or invoking tax obligation).

8.5. *Exploitation of resources*

The exploitation of resources possibly gives the best insights into the differing strategies regarding 'state' versus 'royal' assets employed by the various empires. There is a strong tendency of collecting 'tax' locally and regionally in kind (typically in natural produce and livestock) and in the outer areas of the empire in durable, precious commodities (manufactured items, later especially coins). This is especially well visible in the Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid sources, but likely a rather general phenomenon. Similarly, all empires heavily relied on labour obligations, especially for military and major infrastructure enterprises. If the sources are representative and correctly interpreted, this was most pronounced in the Neo-Babylonian Empire and least extreme in the Arsacid one, which seems to have been relying strongly on its private sector and on a strong tendency of employment rather than corvée work, though the latter certainly also played a part. Note, however, that also under the Neo-Babylonians many taxpayers did not do the service themselves but hired someone to do it. The evidence for produce and manufacture on royal estates is once more a feature probably shared by all empires, though it shows especially clearly in the Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid empires also for the queens. For the moment, rather exceptional instances are the royal creation and maintenance of major walled gardens ('paradises') under the Teispids and Achaemenids, the high-profile status of the Neo-Assyrian queen in textile production, the official royal revenue of (alleged?) temple robbery (Seleukid) and plunder (Roman), the royal taxation of temple land and its produce by the Neo-Babylonian and Ptolemaic rulers (though this may equally be due to the discrepancies within the currently available source base), or the Seleukid royal monopoly on salt tax. Related to the latter, rather a strong tendency can be noted throughout the empires for royal monopolies or at least more direct royal involvement in mining, especially of minerals, though the source base is once more too scattered for a more detailed diachronic comparison. The same holds for minting and custom duties, where the distinction between 'royal' and 'state' tends to be heavily blurred.

8.6. *Outlook*

The most challenging question proves to be to identify which changes and continuities are specific to the region, ideology, general socio-cultural setting, or more specific political or individual circumstances. To a large extent, this is due to the fragmentary and highly diverging source base. However, it is to some extent also intrinsic to the paper's approach, which explicitly draws on a macro to structural approach. This requires condensing to the essentials. The dynamics of what is changing and why and on which level becomes typically tangible with an approach at the juncture of the macro and micro and/or the structural and micro level. To attempt this – even on a much smaller, but equally rigid diachronic scope – is beyond a single paper and even a single book project,[13] though each of the studied aspects would merit such a more in-depth study. We conclude here with an outlook, how three of them could be developed further for future research. The first sample issue is one that cannot be solved by such a more in-depth macro/micro approach, namely the distinction of explicitly royal and 'state' assets. This proves exceedingly challenging for most of the empires under discussion, even regarding the question of whether this is primarily a source issue

[13] See, e.g., the accordingly less diachronically rigid case-study focused approach of Wasmuth et al. forthcoming d on maintaining relations with the power base.

or whether it speaks to the complex relationship of king and 'state.' A comparison with more contemporary kingships featuring more complete source material might be useful in this regard. A topic with high potential for a more in-depth comparative analysis within a similar comparative scope as applied here concerns the extraction of financial resources. Though not all empires provide a good source base, most of them do. Thus, an in-depth comparison could help interpreting cases of more fragmentary or ambiguous record. It may also allow for investigating whether differences in the way the population was taxed reflected ideological differences (whether religious or imperial) or whether they were a result of differences inherent in the empire, such as geography/resources. Another aspect that would profit from including geographical concerns is the relationship between king/queenship and the landscape with regard to land ownership and exploitation *vis a vis* royal domains vs the 'state.' A similar set-up, but with different regional focus, will be needed for understanding, e.g., the derivation of exceptional economic features under the Ptolemies. This requires an in-depth contextualisation of the various practices at least in the Egyptian, Macedonian, and Western Asian traditions, which is beyond the set-up of the overarching institutional context and scope of this paper.

Abbreviations

(Ps-)Aristotle Oec.: *Oeconomica*, attributed to Aristotle.
ADART I: Sachs and Hunger 1988.
Ael. Sp. Had.: Scriptores Historiae Augustae, *De Vita Hadriani.*
Ael. VH: Aelian, *Varia historia, epistolae, fragmenta.*
AO: Louvre Middle East collection accession number.
App. *Mith.:* Appian, *Mithridatic Wars.*
Ath.: Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae.*
BE: The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania. Series A, Cuneiform texts (see 9: Hilprecht and Clay 1898; 10: Clay 1904).
BM: British Museum accession number.
BNJ: Brill's New Jacoby. https://scholarly-editions.brill.com/bnjo/.
Buzand. Patmut.: Buzandaran Patmutʿiwnkʿ, *The Epic Histories.*
CBS: Penn Museum inventory number.
Chrest. Wilck.: Mitteis and Wilcken 1912.
CTN: Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud (1: see Kinnier-Wilson 1972; 2: Postgate 1973; 3: Dalley and Postgate 1984).
Cyr: Strassmaier 1890.
Dio: Cassius Dio, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ ἱστορία* / *Roman History.*
Diod.: Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica.*
DSf: Achaemenid Royal Inscription: Darius Susa f (cf. Kuhrt 2007: 492-495 with further references).
Edubba: Edubba Studies in Ancient History (10: Ahmad and Postgate 2007).
Festus Brev.: Festus, *Breviarium.*
FIRA: Riccobono et al. 1940-1943.
Fort Siglum for unpublished or partially published Persepolis Fortification tablets.
Hdt.: Herodotus, *Histories.*
I.Iasos 4: Blümel 1985.
I.Didyma: Wiegand 1958.
IGLS iii: Jalabert & Mouterde 1950.
Jer. *In Dan.:* Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel.*
Josephus *AJ:* Flavius Josephus, *Ioudaike archaiologia* (*Antiquitates Judaicae*).
Just Epit.: Marcus Junianus Justinus, *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus.*
KNR: Kartīr at Naqš-e Rostam.
ME: British Museum Middle East inventory number.
Met.: Metropolitan Museum of Art inventory number.
NALK: Kwasman 1988.
Pahl.: Persian Pahlavi.
Parth.: Parthian.
Parth.: Stat. Isidore of Charax: *Parthian stations.*

PF: Siglum for Persepolis Fortification tablets published in PFT.
PF-NN: Siglum for Persepolis Fortification tablets transliterated, but not published, by Hallock.
PFa: Hallock 1978.
PFAT: Siglum for Persepolis Fortification tablets featuring an Aramaic inscription.
PFT: Hallock 1969.
Plat. *Alc.* I: Plato, *Alcibiades* I.
Plut. *Ant.*: Plutarch, *Life of Antony.*
Plut. *Crass.*: Plutarch, *Life of Crassus.*
Plut. *Dem.*: Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius.*
Plut. *Art.*: Plutarch, *Artaxerxes.*
ps.-al-Jāḥiẓ: pseudo al-Jāḥiẓ 1914. Kitāb al-Tāj. fī Akhlāq Al-Mulūk, contributed to Abu Othmān ʿAmr Ibn al-Jahiz.
PTT: Cameron 1948.
RG: Cooley 2009.
RIMA: The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods (3: Grayson 2002).
RINAP: The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period (3/1: Grayson & Novotny 2012; 3/2: Grayson & Novotny 2014; 4: Leichty 2011).
RINBE: The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (2: Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020).
SAA: State Archives of Assyria (print series: Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project; online: https://oracc.museum.upenn.edu//saao/corpus).
Sec.His.: Procopius of Caesarea, *Secret History (Apókryphe Historía, Historia Arcana).*
ŠKZ: Huyse 1999.
Strabo: Strabo, *Geography*.
Suet. *Aug.*: C. Suetonius Tranquillus, *Divus Augustus.*
Suet. T*ib.*: C. Suetonius Tranquillus, *Tiberius.*
Tac. *Ann.*: Cornelius Tacitus, *Annales.*
Tac. *Hist.*: Cornelius Tacitus, *Historiae*.
TAD: Yardeni and Porten 1986-1999.
Theok. *Id.*: Theokritos, *Idylls.*
TuM II/III: Krückmann 1933.
Velleius: Velleius Paterculus, *Historia Romana.*
Vit. Apoll.: Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii.*
VS: Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler (5: Ungnad 1908).
Xen. *Anabasis*: Xenophon, *Anabasis.*
Xen. *Cyr.*: Xenophon, *Cyropaedia.*

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