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From Acknowledgment to Legitimization. The Practice of Referencing Previous Kings in Royal Elamite Inscriptions

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Abstract: *A prominent characteristic of royal Elamite inscriptions, which readily stands out, is the references to predecessors. The majority of these figures appear as previous builder-kings who (re)constructed temples. Also, there are other cases where previous kings are mentioned in connection to other affairs, including the Mesopotamian rulers who were defeated by their Elamite counterparts. The references to previous kings occur in some certain patterns. The predecessors and their achievements are sometimes named and recognized – as their names were preserved in older inscriptions – by the reigning king. Additionally, there are other cases where the current king acknowledges he is not the first one in achieving specific goals, although he does not reveal the names of his predecessors. In such cases, he often refers to his predecessors collectively as “previous kings”. Furthermore, the king occasionally admits that he does not know who (re)built a certain structure before him. This paper studies the various ways in which predecessors are acknowledged in royal Elamite inscriptions.*

Key words: Iran, Elam, Royal Inscriptions, Elamite Kings, Legitimization, Temple Reconstruction

*Dedicated to Ms. Stela Francis,
my teacher, who lit the path...*

Introduction

One of the notable characteristics of royal Elamite inscriptions, as observed in modern scholarship, is that they frequently include the names and achievements of former rulers. In this way, the current king not only asserts his own legitimacy, but also acknowledges the effort of his predecessors. Often, these historical references relate to the reconstruction of temples across the kingdom, which are prominently featured in royal inscriptions. Additionally, some inscriptions mention the names of previous rulers in discussing other achievements. These rulers may include Mesopotamian opponents who were defeated by the Elamites, or former Elamite kings who were unable to acquire particular materials or accomplish a task.

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A study of royal Elamite inscriptions reveals the various ways in which previous kings are referenced by the current king: 1) they are named one by one; 2) they are referred to collectively as “previous kings”. A few subcategories for the latter are observed: the current king admits that he does not know their names; the current king does not provide their names, although he makes no statement about his ignorance; the king states that he found the names of previous rulers during reconstruction, though he refrains from sharing them with the audience.

A third category consists of the inscriptions in which the reconstruction of a temple is discussed in a passive voice. A subcategory may feature the cases in which there is no mention of any earlier stages of the temple. Instead, the current king is only credited with restoring a structure that had fallen into disrepair. While these cases could be excluded from this study since they do not provide information about former kings or earlier stages of reconstruction, some examples will still be presented as they represent “continuing” the tradition of rebuilding temples.

While filiation can be seen as a way of identifying a predecessor, it primarily serves in genealogy and not necessarily in identifying previous builder-kings. In other words, it is worth noting that not all the mentioned fathers in royal inscriptions were likewise kings. Furthermore, it is noteworthy to mention the use of the formula “*ruhu šak PN*” in mentioning a predecessor. This formula, which means “sister’s son of PN”, was probably used as a legitimizing title.¹ The most commonly mentioned name in this formula is Šilhaha, who was likely active in the first half of the 19th century BC. However, it remains uncertain whether Šilhaha actually ascended the Elamite throne or simply initiated a new era through socio-political reforms that served as a point of departure for subsequent periods. These reforms could have been used to judge the present circumstances of the society and account for various developments over time.²

There are inscriptions that include extensive lists of previous kings, emphasizing the importance of preserving names. One noteworthy example is EKI 48, a document by Šilhak-Inšušinak I (ca. 1150-1120 BC). This inscription provides a long list of former builders of the *hašdu*, “pit”, of Inšušinak.

The tradition of temple reconstruction in the corpus under study is significant as it often implies that the king is mainly continuing the tradition of restoring temples rather than building new ones from scratch. In some cases, the king constructs a different type of sanctuary, but emphasizes that it replaces an old temple that had fallen into ruin. Many royal inscriptions (mostly inscribed bricks) were used as building materials beneath the surface, making them hidden and unreadable to human audiences. It has been suggested that the primary audience for these inscriptions would be the gods, to

¹ The literature on this much-discussed formula and its implications is vast. For some relevant publications see, for instance, Glassner, 1994; De Graef, 2012: 541; Potts, 2018; De Graef, 2022: 114-115; Jahangirfar, Dadashi & Seyyed Ahmadi Zavieh, 2022a: 3-5.

² For such an ideal period in the past, see van Seters, 1983: 2.

whom the king reported his actions, and future kings, who would restore the temple.³ This could be one way of preserving a record of a king's involvement in restoring the temple, while referring to his predecessors who had carried out the same task before him could serve as a testament to the longevity of the royal line, which, in turn, could be used in political rhetoric against the forces that might threaten the throne.⁴ The listing of former builder-kings seems to have instilled a sense of vicarious pride in the current king, as if he was actively involved in the religious and political undertakings of his predecessors.

The following is a study of the various ways the names of previous builder-kings are mentioned in royal Elamite inscriptions.

Previous Kings with Known Names

One of the earliest inscriptions known so far of an Elamite ruler who mentions a predecessor is IRS 19, a Sumero-Akkadian inscription of Inšušinak-šar-ilani (probably to be dated in the late 15th or early 14th century BC).⁵ This text states that upon entering the temple of Inšušinak, Inšušinak-šar-ilani saw that the é.dù.a (= tomb (?)) of king Tep-halki (= Tepti-halki) was in ruins (*a-na zi-ia-a-ni šà^{AN} muš.eren i-ru-ub-ma é.dù.a^{DIS} te-ip-hal-ki eššana ta-bi-ik i-mu-úr-ma*). Therefore, Inšušinak-šar-ilani cleared and rebuilt the place and wished that a future king would take care of the sanctuary.⁶

Based on the available evidence, the practice of acknowledging past rulers seems to have entered a new stage during the reign of Šutruk-Nahhunte I (ca. 1190-1155 BC).

³ See Malbran-Labat, 2018: 464. For a general survey on “audience”, see Lenzi, 2019: 67-76, especially pp. 72-76 concerning royal inscriptions.

⁴ This is one of the *raison d'être* of king lists. These lists, which serve as tools for tracing the origins of the ruling houses back to the (mythical) past, were less common in Elam than in Mesopotamia. In fact, to date, only one document of the kind has been found from Elam (Scheil, 1931), which may be dated to the Old Babylonian period (Stolper, 1982: 43-44), or, more precisely, to around 1500 BC based on comparisons with Mesopotamian counterparts particularly the first section of the Khorsabad List and the so-called Sealand List (Grayson, 1983). The so-called Susa King List provides only two lists of twelve kings, and the only formula it contains is the dynasty total, that is, a concluding formula at the end of each list to give the total number of rulers of Awan and Simaški. The date of composition, tentatively suggested here as around the middle of the 2nd millennium BC may be explained aligned with some changes in the region during the first half of the 2nd millennium BC following the decline of Isin's power, which granted Elam influence in the kingdom of Larsa (Potts, 2016: 148). A comparable situation is observed in Mesopotamia, which urged the composition of the Assyrian King List at the time of Aššur-uballiṭ (see Valk, 2019: 6, n. 18). Confrontations between the Elamites and new migrant populations might be another reason behind composing such a list in Elam. However, the practice of composing king lists seems to have been soon abandoned by the Elamites. The Susa King List cannot be fully studied here as it deserves a detailed analysis, especially in its socio-political context.

⁵ Cameron (1936: 85-86) believed that Inšušinak-šar-ilani (meaning “Inšušinak, the king of the gods”) was an epithet of the god Inšušinak and not a king's name. This idea can be ruled out now because in a seal from Haft Tappeh, a certain Adad-eriš is mentioned as the servant of “Inšušinak-šar-ilani, king of Susa”. Although the time between Tepti-ahar and Inšušinak-šar-ilani is uncertain, their reigns were probably close in time (Glassner, 1991: 111, 115).

⁶ For the approximate date of Tepti-halki, sometime between 1570 and 1500 BC, see De Graef, 2011: 586.

His inscriptions not only shed light on the identities of previous Elamite kings who contributed to temple construction, but also provide insight into how he acquired steles (*su-uh-mu-tú*) of Mesopotamian rulers such as Narām-Sîn (EKI 22), Meli-Šiḫu (EKI 23) and Hammurabi⁷ after conquering Sippar and Karintaš.⁸ In addition, Šutruk-Nahhunte acquired the images (*sa-al-mu*) of Maništusu as war booty from Akkad and Ešnunna (EKI 24 a, b). The name of the king and the location where another image was seized are damaged (EKI 24 c). Furthermore, Šutruk-Nahhunte claims to have gathered similar monuments from earlier Elamite rulers. In one instance (EKI 20), he explains that he found a stele of an unknown previous ruler in Anzan (Tall-i Malyan in modern Fars province).⁹ In EKI 21, he provides the name of the previous Elamite king:

su-uh-mu-tú^{MES} i *DIŠ* *un-taš*-^{AN}GAL ^{AS}*si-ia-an-ku-uk ta-an-ra ú šu-ut-ru-uk*-^{AN}*nah-hu-un*
-te ^{AN}*in-šu-ši-na-ak na-pír-ú-ri ur tu₄-ru-un-ra hu-ma-ah a-ak* ^{AS}*šu-šu-un* ^{AN}*in-šu-ši-na*
-ak na-pír-ú-ri i si-ma ta-ah

“The stele that Untaš-Napiriša had placed in Siyan-kuk, I Šutruk-Nahhunte, Inšušinak, my god, spoke to me, [so] I took [it] and in Susa I placed it before Inšušinak, my god”.

In a few damaged inscriptions (EKI 28 C I; EKI 28 C Ia; EKI 28 C II), Šutruk-Nahhunte also describes his acquisition of booties and other endeavors outside of Elam. In EKI 28 C I, he mentions procuring 120 talents of gold (?), 54 talents of silver from Dur-Kurigalzu, an uncertain amount of a material from Sippar, Akkad, and a few other places. To these one should add the numerous *kudurrus* which have been recovered during excavations at Susa.¹⁰ These trophies gathered in Susa serve as evidence of extensive political and military achievements during the 12th century BC. They demonstrate the meticulousness with which the king documented the names and events associated with the acquisition of these objects.

In one, partly impenetrable, inscription (EKI 28 A) Šutruk-Nahhunte relates that some of his predecessors did not know the location of *hu-sa hi-te-ik* (probably a kind of stone¹¹). But Inšušinak helped him locate it, as a few kings before him, including

⁷ See MDP 7, p. 28; Potts, 2016: 226, tab. 7.9; A surface was prepared to receive a triumphal inscription but it was never engraved (Reiner, 1969: 60).

⁸ Additionally, it seems that EKI 51 yields information about capturing the family of a king of Karintaš by Šilhak-Inšušinak. See Tab. 4.

⁹ The suggested reading ^{AS}*an-za-an da-ěš-šup* for ^{AS}*an-za-an da-AB-RU* by, e.g. Hüsing (1916: 52) and König (EKI, p. 73), has been disputed. Since ^{AS}*an-za-an da-AB-RU* also occurs in a Tall-i Malyan text (86 §31), Stolper (1984: 125) has suggested that it is “perhaps referring to a part of the environs of Anzan, a precinct or quarter in Anzan, or something similar”.

¹⁰ See, for instance, Cameron, 1936: 109-110; Slanski, 2000.

¹¹ See Quintana & Abaslou, 2020. For some other interpretations, e.g. a kind of wood or marble, see, for instance, Cameron, 1936: 106, n. 26; MDP 53, p. 19.

Siwe-palar-huhpak, Pala-iššan, Pahir-iššan and Attar-kittah had managed to find its whereabouts.

Humpan-u-mena¹² (ca. 1300-1275 BC) is a prominent figure particularly regarding the construction of the temple of Kiririša in Liyan (modern-day Bushehr, north of the Persian Gulf), whose worship this king seems to have revitalized.¹³ IRS 21 begins with an invocation to “Napiriša, Kiririša, and Paha-hutip of Liyan”. Humpan-u-mena then states that *si-ia-an pu-ur-ki-me ru-ru-uk pi-it-te-im-ma ku-ku-un-nu-um pè-ep-ši-ia ku-ši-ih*, “the old temple was ruined, I built the *kukunnum* in its place”. Fortunately, we are not limited to this information about Humpan-u-mena. Indeed, his achievements are celebrated in a number of inscriptions by subsequent rulers, mostly in connection with the temple of the goddess Kiririša.¹⁴

IRS 34, 37 and 39, respectively by Šutruk-Nahhunte I, and his two sons and successors, Kutir-Nahhunte II (ca. 1155-1150 BC) and Šilhak-Inšušinak I, contain reports of restoring temples previously built by Humpan-u-mena [Tab. 1]. Šutruk-Nahhunte records that the temple of Kiririša of Liyan built with sun-dried brick by Humpan-u-mena was becoming dilapidated. Therefore, he restored and rebuilt and dedicated it to the goddess Kiririša. A similar report is given by Kutir-Nahhunte (IRS 37). Compared to Šutruk-Nahhunte’s text, Kutir-Nahhunte’s inscription yields an extra section expressing his intention of refurbishing the temple:

da-ak-ki-me-ú-mi-ni ^{SAL.AN}*nah-hu-un-te-ú-tú-me a-ak pu-hu-e-na in-ti-ik-ka₄ a-ak ir-ki*
-in-ti ni-ka₄-me-ma ^{AN}*ki-ri-ri-ša na-pír-ú-ri i du-ni-ih*

“For my life [and the life of] Nahhunte-utu and [the lives of] her children and our descendants, to Kiririša, my god, I dedicated it (= the temple).”

In the beginning of IRS 39, in addition to the “king of Anzan and Susa”, Šilhak-Inšušinak introduces himself as the “beloved servant of Kiririša and Inšušinak” (*li-ba-ak ha-ni-ik* ^{AN}*ki-ri-ri-ša a-ak* ^{AN}*in-šu-ši-na-ak-kí-ik*). Furthermore, IRS 34 and 37 use the same wording and maintain the order of the verbs for reconstruction (*sarrah*, *pepširmah*, *kuših*) and the material used (*erentum.na*). In IRS 39, however, one of

¹² For the names Hallutuš-Inšušinak, Hutelutuš-Inšušinak, Humpan-u-mena and Humpan-mena, see Tavernier, 2014; 2023. On Humban, see also Gorris (2020) who concludes that the hu-um-ba(n) attestations mostly belong to the Old Elamite period, the hu-ban orthography is the most common variant in the Neo-Elamite texts, while the Middle Elamite period seems to have been a transition phase.

¹³ The fact that Kiririša was venerated before the time of Humpan-u-mena is known from the votive offerings to this goddess by previous rulers. A cylindrical object from Liyan bears an inscription of Simut-wartaš (MDP 15, pp. 91-92) stating that ^{AN}*si-mu-ut wa-ar-ta-aš a-na ba-la-ti-šu wa-al-ša i-pu-uš-ma a-na* ^{AN}*ki-ri-ri-ša i-di-in*, “Simut-wartaš built a *walša* for his life and dedicated it to Kiririša” (see CAD, s.v. *walša*; Grillot-Susini, 1986: 176). Simut-wartaš was a co-ruler of Širukduh (Carter, 1979: 120), and the latter “is mentioned in a letter of Shemshara dated during the reign of Samsî-Addu (1710-1679 BCE)” (De Graef, 2012: 537).

¹⁴ In addition to the texts discussed here, there are two small round pendants, found in Susa, bearing the name of Humpan-u-mena in short dedicatory inscriptions (MDP 53 3 & 4).

the verbs is modified and the suffix of the material is different: *sarrah erentum.imma pepši.imma kuših*.¹⁵ Moreover, the final section in IRS 39 is considerably longer than IRS 37 as Šilhak-Inšušinak names the persons, for whose lives he dedicates the temple in question, one by one:

ta-ak-ki-me-ù-mi-ni ^{SAL,AN}*nah-hu-un-te-ù-tù-me* ^{DIŠ}*hu-te-lu-du-uš-* ^{AN}*in-šu-ši-na-ak-me*
^{DIŠ}*šil-hi-na-ha-am-ru-* ^{AN}*la-ka₄-ma-ar-me* ^{DIŠ}*ku-tir-* ^{AN}*hu-ban-me* ^{SAL,AN}*iš-ni-ka₄-ra-ab-*
bàd-me ^{SAL}*ù-ru-tuk-* ^{AN}*el-ha-la-hu-me a-ak* ^{SAL}*ù-tù-e-hi-ih-hi-* ^{AN}*pi-ni-gìr-me in-ti-ik-ka₄*
a-ak ir-ki-in-ti ni-ka₄-me-ma ^{AN}*ki-ri-ri-ša na-pír-ù-ri i du-ni-ih*

“For my life, [the life] of Nahhunte-utu, [the life] of Hutelutuš-Inšušinak, [the life] of Šilhina-hamru-Lakamar, [the life] of Kutir-Humpan, [the life] of Išnikarab-huhun, [the life] of Urutuk-Elhalahu and [the life] of Utu-ehihi-Pinigir, and our descendants, to Kiririša, my god, I dedicated it (= the temple)”.

In at least three other inscriptions, Šilhak-Inšušinak mentions the temples built by Humpan-u-mena. Additionally, in bricks no. 1838-1840 (IRS 39), the king gives an account of rebuilding a temple jointly dedicated to Napiriša and Kiririša:

^{DIŠ}*hu-ban-nu-me-na si-ia-an* ^{AN}*GAL a-ak* ^{AN}*ki-ri-ri-ša-me ú-pa-at-im-ma ku-ši-iš*
 “Humpan-u-mena built the temple of Napiriša and Kiririša in baked brick”.

In IRS 42, Šilhak-Inšušinak declares that “the temple of Kiririša, the lady hidden in Liyan, which Humpan-u-mena had built, was becoming dilapidated” (*si-ia-an* ^{AN}*ki-ri-ri-ša za-na* ^{AS}*li-ia-an la-ha-ak-ra-me hu-ban-nu-me-na ku-ši-iš-da mi-ši-ir-ma-na*), so he restored it.

In IRS 38 Šilhak-Inšušinak relates how he renovated a temple dedicated to Inšušinak that had previously been rebuilt by Siwe-palar-huhpak (ca. 18th century¹⁶). In a series of variants of this text, the name of Siwe-palar-huhpak is substituted with the names of Kindattu, Eparti, Šilhaha, Tan-Ruhurater, Idadu, Atta-hušu, Sirukduh, Humpan-u-mena (once as a son of Šilhaha, and once as a sister’s son of Šilhaha), Hutran-tepti, Kuk-našur, Tepti-halki, and Kuk-Kirwaš. In total, including Šilhak-Inšušinak himself, there is a list of at least fourteen individuals who contributed to this temple. In the same inscription, it is recounted that:

^{DIŠ}*si-me-ba-la-ar-hu-uh-ba-ak si-ia-an* ^{AN}*in-šu-ši-na-ak e-ri-en-tu₄-um-im-ma ku-ši-iš*
 “Siwe-palar-huhpak built the temple of Inšušinak in baked brick.”

¹⁵ More variations are also observed; e.g. note the penultimate sign in *li-ia-an-ir-ru-me*, (IRS 37) and *li-ia-an-ir-ra-me* in the other two texts; or *dakki.me*, “life” in IRS 37 instead of *takki.me* in IRS 39; Whether the inscriptions were created in Liyan or Susa, and the scribal tradition in Elam cannot be discussed here.

¹⁶ See Potts, 2016: 2.

Afterward, he says that since the temple was in ruins, he restored it and:

hi-ši-e e-ri-en-tu₄-um pè-ep-ši-ia-ma ta-al-lu-uh a-ak si-ia-an ^{AN}*in-šu-ši-na-ak na-pir-ú-ri-me a-ha ku-ši-ih*

“I inscribed his [= Siwe-palar-huhpak’s] name on a brick in renovation and (re)built the temple of Inšušinak, my god.”

Tab. 1. References to Humpan-u-mena by Šutruk-Nahhunte and his sons and successors

King	Inscription	Temple of
Šutruk-Nahhunte	IRS 34	Kiririša
Kutir-Nahhunte	IRS 37	Kiririša
Šilhak-Inšušinak	IRS 39	Kiririša
	IRS 42	Kiririša
	IRS 39 (bricks no. 1838-1840)	Napiriša and Kiririša
	IRS 38	Inšušinak

Considering the total regnal years of Šutruk-Nahhunte and his two sons and successors, which amount to approximately 70 years, one may question the true extent of the temple’s restoration. In other words, if we assume that Šutruk-Nahhunte refurbished the temple of Kiririša in his first year and Kutir-Nahhunte repeated this in his last year, it would imply that the temple had fallen into ruin in about 40 years. Similarly, if Kutir-Nahhunte took up this work in his first regnal year and Šilhak-Inšušinak repeated it in his last year, the time frame would be reduced to about 35 years. This may call into question the durability of the building materials. An alternative interpretation is that the reconstruction referred to in the inscriptions might actually mean partial restoration, limited to a part of the temple that perhaps had not required renovation at the time of the previous king, despite the state described with the term *miši-*, “dilapidation, ruin”. In another perspective, the construction efforts, particularly those undertaken by Kutir-Nahhunte and Šilhak-Inšušinak, might be understood as symbolic acts, where the king demonstrated his attentiveness to all the temples, even if it meant simply inscribing a few bricks to signal his presence. Similar cases can be found in other inscriptions. For instance, EKI 48, a notable document by Šilhak-Inšušinak, presents a few sequences of successive rulers that pose the same question.

In one case (IRS 41), Šilhak-Inšušinak recounts that he set out to complete an unfinished work of his brother Kutir-Nahhunte. He states that, Kutir-Nahhunte made images (*zalmu*: bas reliefs, statue), and “he said ‘I will build’ the temple of Inšušinak there” (*si-ia-an* ^{AN}*in-šu-ši-na-ak-me a-ha-an ku-ši-in-ki-mar*), but he did not, because “he died beforehand” (*pur-ku uz-zu-un-ra*). Therefore, after ascending the throne, Šilhak-Inšušinak finished this work and built a *kumpum kiduya* (a compound loanword from Akkadian meaning “the exterior chapel”) and dedicated it to

Inšušinak. The content of this text may find parallel in another damaged inscription where Šilhak-Inšušinak seems to claim that he has finished the work of Šutruk-Nahhunte and Kutir-Nahhunte on the Acropole.¹⁷

Malbran-Labat¹⁸, commenting on IRS 35, suggests that the *kumpum kiduya* in this text may be identified with the one in IRS 41, in part or in whole. In IRS 35, an unknown builder constructed a *kumpum kiduya* using kilned bricks (*upat*) but it fell into disrepair. Kutir-Nahhunte then rebuilt it using baked bricks (*erentum*).¹⁹ In IRS 41, Šilhak-Inšušinak explains that Kutir-Nahhunte intended to build the *siyan* (temple) for Inšušinak, but due to his untimely death, it was Šilhak-Inšušinak who completed the construction of the *kumpum kiduya*. This is not the only instance in the Elamite corpus where a *kumpum kiduya* replaces a *siyan*. This suggests that either some *siyans* were part of the *kumpum kiduyas* or the terms were used interchangeably, although the latter possibility may not be entirely convincing given that the king sometimes appears meticulous about distinguishing between different types of sanctuaries.

EKI 48 opens with an invocation to Inšušinak as the “great lord”, “lord of Acropole”, “the greatest god” and “guardian of the kings”, and concludes with the enumeration of a number of “grove temples” (*siyan husa.me*) restored by the king throughout the kingdom. After the initial invocation, the text proceeds with a list of previous builder-kings who contributed to the restoration of the *hašdu*, “pit”, of Inšušinak [Tab. 2 and 3]. Šilhak-Inšušinak provides detailed information beyond just listing names. The passage reads:

- 2) Idadu sister’s son of Hutran-tepti, Tan-Ruhurater son of Idadu, Kindattu son of Tan-Ruhurater, Eparti, Šilhaha beloved son of Eparti, Širukduh sister’s son of Šilhaha, Siwepalar-huhpak sister’s son of Širukduh, Kuk-kirwaš son of Lankuku, Atta-hušu sister’s son of Šilhaha, Temti-halki sister’s son of Šilhaha, Kuk-našur sister’s son of Tan-Uli, Pahir-iššan son of Igi-halki, Attar-kittah son of Igi-halki, Untaš-Napiriša son of Humpan-u-mena, Unpahaš-Napiriša son of Pahir-iššan, Kitin-Hutran son of Pahir-iššan, Šutruk-Nahhunte son of Hallutuš-Inšušinak, Kutir-Nahhunte son of Šutruk-Nahhunte
- 3) These previous kings (re)built/perfected²⁰ the *hašdu* of Inšušinak

¹⁷ DMA, no. 1-4. In another damaged inscription, Šilhak-Inšušinak refers to his father and his brother regarding *muhtu* (animals for sacrifice) to Inšušinak (DMA, no. 7). This text seems to be (partially) shared with a few other fragmentary inscriptions (DMA, no. 10). However, it is uncertain whether these fragmentary pieces would actually speak of temple reconstruction or finishing a work left unfinished by previous kings.

¹⁸ IRS, pp. 83-84

¹⁹ For the terminology of the construction materials see Potts, 2010: 50-51.

²⁰ For the verb *halihši* see Khachikjan, 1998: 23; IRS, p. 182. Tavernier (2018: 426) understands *hali* as “to perfect”.

Most of the individuals listed here were previous builders of the *hašdu*. Six of them are identified only as the fathers of some others. Notably, there is no information provided about Eparti’s filiation. By sharing this information about the familial relationships of some of these characters and those who identified themselves as “sister’s son of PN”, Šilhak-Inšušinak reveals his deep awareness of the *hašdu*’s past.

Tab. 2. Filiations as recorded in EKI 48

Previous Builder	Son of
Tan-Ruhurater	Idadu
Kindattu	Tan-Ruhurater
Šilhaha	Eparti
Kuk-Kirwaš	Lankuku
Pahir-iššan	Igi-halki
Attar-kittah	Igi-halki
Untaš-Napiriša	Humpan-u-mena
Unpahaš-Napiriša	Pahir-iššan
Kitin-Hutran	Pahir-iššan
Šutruk-Nahhunte	Hallutuš-Inšušinak
Kutir-Nahhunte	Šutruk-Nahhunte
<i>Šilhak-Inšušinak</i>	<i>Šutruk-Nahhunte</i>

Tab. 3. The term “sister’s son of PN” as occurred in EKI 48

Previous Builder	Sister’s Son of
Idadu	Hutran-tepti
Širukduh	Šilhaha
Siwe-palar-huhpak	Širukduh
Atta-hušu	Šilhaha
Temti-halki	Šilhaha
Kuk-našur	Tan-Uli

The tradition of referring to previous builder-kings was continued into the Neo-Elamite period (ca. 1000-539 BC). For instance, Šutruk-Nahhunte II (IRS 57) states:

su-gìr ^{DIŠ}*hu-te-lu-du-uš-^{AN}in-šu-uš-na-ak* *su-gìr* ^{DIŠ}*šil-ah-na-ha-am-ru-^{AN}la-ga-mar*
su-gìr ^{DIŠ.AN}*hu-ban-im-me-en-na* PAP 3 *su-un-kip sir-ma-pu pi-it-te-na*
 “After king Hutelutuš-Inšušinak, king Šilhina-hamru-Lagamr, king Humpan-mena, a total of three important kings, surrounded me”.²¹

²¹ Translation after Tavernier, 2011: 346.

Tab. 4. Named previous (builder-)kings and their achievements

Current King	Previous King(s)	Matter	Inscription
Inšušinak-šar-ilani	Tepti-halki	é.dù.a of Tepti-halki	IRS 19
<i>damaged</i>	Kutir-Nahhunte	<i>damaged</i>	EKI 70C ²²
	Temti-agun		
Šutruk-Nahhunte I	Narām-Sîn	seizure of Narām-Sîn's stele	EKI 22
Šutruk-Nahhunte I	Meli-šihu	seizure of Meli-šihu's stele	EKI 23
Šutruk-Nahhunte I	Maništušu	seizure of Maništušu's image	EKI 24a
Šutruk-Nahhunte I	Maništušu	seizure of Maništušu's image	EKI 24b
Šutruk-Nahhunte I	<i>damaged</i>	seizure of ...'s image	EKI 24c ²³
Šutruk-Nahhunte I	Humpan-u-mena	<i>siyan</i> of Kiririša	EKI 19
Šutruk-Nahhunte I	Unatš-Napiriša	collecting Untaš-Napiriša's stele	EKI 21
Šutruk-Nahhunte I	Siwe-palar-huppak	locating <i>husa hitek</i> (a kind of wood/stone?) for the temple of Inšušinak	EKI 28 A
	Pala-iššan		
	Pahir-iššan		
	Attar-kittah		
Kutir-Nahhunte II	Humpan-u-mena	<i>siyan</i> of Kiririša	EKI 31
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	Humpan-u-mena	<i>siyan</i> of Kiririša	EKI 59
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	Humpan-u-mena	<i>siyan</i> of Kiririša	EKI 57
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	Humpan-u-mena	<i>siyan</i> of Napiriša and Kiririša	IRS 39 (bricks no. 1838-1840)
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	Siwe-palar-huhpak	<i>siyan</i> of Inšušinak	IRS 38
	Kindattu		IRS 38 var. 1
	Eparti		IRS 38 var. 2
	Šilhaha		IRS 38 var. 3
	Tan-Ruhurater		IRS 38 var. 4
	Idadu		IRS 38 var. 5
	Atta-hušu		IRS 38 var. 6
	Širukduh		IRS 38 var. 7
	Humpan-u-mena		IRS 38 var. 8
	Hutran-tepti		IRS 38 var. 9
	Kuk-našur		IRS 38 var. 10
	Tepti-halki		IRS 38 var. 11
	Kuk-Kirwaš		IRS 38 var. 12
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	Kutir-Nahhunte II	<i>siyan</i> of Inšušinak/ <i>kumpum kiduya</i>	EKI 43
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	Šutruk-Nahhunte I	the restoration of a wall of sun-dried bricks erected on the Acropole which was not accomplished by Šutruk-Nahhunte and Kutir-Nahhunte	DMA, no. 1-4
	Kutir-Nahhunte II		

²² This inscription is included here with caution since it is too damaged to lend itself to a safe reading. It is likely dated to the Old Babylonian period (see Tavernier, 2007: 273, n. 53).

²³ Possibly, he also speaks of another stele he collected in an Elamite entity (EKI 28 A §2-3). Note that Šutruk-Nahhunte would send the booties to "Elam" when they were seized in Mesopotamia and to "Susa" when they were collected from Elamite entities.

Šilhak-Inšušinak I	Kuk-Kirwaš	<i>siyan</i> of Inšušinak (é and Ekikuanna in the Akkadian part of the inscription)	EKI 38
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	Temti-agun	<i>siyan</i> of Inšušinak	EKI 38b
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	Kuk-našur	<i>siyan</i> of Inšušinak	IRS 49 var. 1
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	Temti-ahar	<i>siyan</i> of Inšušinak	IRS 49 var. 2
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	Kutir-Nahhunte	<i>siyan</i> of Inšušinak	IRS 49 var. 3
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	Idadu	<i>hašdu</i> of Inšušinak	EKI 48 (a,b)
	*Hutran-tepti ²⁴		
	Tan-Ruhurater		
	Kindattu		
	Eparti		
	Šilhaha		
	Širukduh		
	Siwe-palar-huppak		
	Kuk-Kirwaš		
	*Lankuku		
	Atta-hušu		
	Temti-halki		
	Kuk-našur		
	*Tan-Uli		
	Pahir-iššan		
	*Igi-halki		
	Attar-kitah		
	Untaš-Napiriša		
*Humpan-u-mena			
Unpahaš-Napiriša			
Kitin-Hutran			
*Hallutuš-Inšušinak			
Šutruk-Nahhunte			
Kutir-Nahhunte			
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	<i>king of Karintaš</i>	capturing the royal family of Karintaš (?)	EKI 51
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	Šutruk-Nahhunte	temple of Pinigir	TBK 090+093 +109+147
Hutelutuš-Inšušinak	Šilhaha	in a curse formula, as an entity whose curse might befall any malefactor	EKI 61C
Šutruk-Nahhunte II	Hutelutuš-Inšušinak	<i>kukunnum</i> of Inšušinak	EKI 72
	Šilhina-hamru-Lagamar		
	Humpan-mena		
Atta-hamiti-Inšušinak	Halkataš ²⁵	building of the <i>hut</i>	EKI 86

²⁴ The names marked with an asterisk were not previous builders, but fathers of some of the mentioned kings.

²⁵ For some doubts concerning Halkataš, see, for instance, Tavernier, 2004: 26.

General References to Previous Kings

In some cases, the current king refers to his predecessors as “previous kings” (*sunkip urpuppa*), that is, in a general way without revealing their names. In some instances, the current king acknowledges that he is not the first to undertake (re)building a temple, but due to a lack of knowledge, he admits that he is uncertain of the identities of these previous builders.²⁶ This acknowledgment is noteworthy as it underscores the significance of preserving the tradition of *rebuilding* temples. Yet, in certain cases, the names of previous builders may be known to the current king, but he chooses not to disclose them. An example belongs to the time of Untaš-Napiriša (EKI 12 H+J+K+L § II-III) where he says about a construction called *kizum mušia*, which the previous kings had not built:

ki-zu-um mu-ši-a ap-pa su-un-ki-ip ú-ri-pu-pi um-me hu-uh-tah-ša ú hu-uh-tah ha-li-ih
“*kizum mušia* that the previous kings did not make, I made.”

In EKI 12 M+N § II-III, the same king boasts that his predecessors had not built the temple of Napiriša (*si-ia-an*^{AN}*GAL-me*), but he built it. Also, in EKI 13 B § V he claims that previous kings had not erected a certain *kukunum*, but he did. In IRS 23, Untaš-Napiriša asserts that he was the first to construct a temple for the goddess Upurkupak on the Acropole. After introducing himself as the king of Anzan and Susa, he adds:

si-ia-an^{AN}*ú-pur-ku-ba-ak-me su-un-ki-ip ú-ri-pu-pi šu-šu-un im-me ku-ši-ih-ši-ma ú*
a-lu-me-lu ku-ši-ih hi-še a-ha ta-ah
“The previous kings did not build the temple of Upurkupak in Susa. I built [it] on the Acropole and placed her name there.”

It was mentioned earlier that in EKI 28 A, a text of Šutruk-Nahhunte, the king discusses locating a specific type of stone or wood. In the same inscription, he also makes two general references to his predecessors; once to the former kings who did not know the location of the *husa hitek*, and once to those who managed to find it.

In MDP 53 9 (a number of fragments from Deh-e Now, and one from Chogha Pahn West), the king mentions restoring the temple of the goddess Manzat that was previously built by his predecessors.²⁷ During the reconstruction process, he finds the bricks that bear the names of previous builders and adds his own name to the list. However, he does not reveal the names of his predecessors.

²⁶ In these cases, the king states *imme durnah*, “I did not know”.

²⁷ Possibly, the same temple was restored by Kutir-Nahhunte; see MDP 53 14.

The tradition of referring to previous kings without disclosing their names (or knowing but choosing not to reveal them, or providing the names but perhaps on a different brick) continued during the reign of Šilhak-Inšušinak I. According to EKI 35 § 6-8, for instance, the king acknowledges knowing the names of his predecessors, but apparently provides them elsewhere:

su-un-ki-ip li-ku-up ur-pu-up-pá si-ia-an ku-ši-ih-iš-ta hi-iš a-pi-e e-ri-en-tum₈ pè-ep-ši-ia-ma ta-al-lu-uh a-ak sar-ra-ah a-ha ku-ši-ih e^{AN} in-šu-ši-na-ak na-pír-ú-ri hu-ut-tah ha-li-en-ka₄ li-ma nu te-la-ak-ni

“The previous contributing/authoritative (?) kings [who] had built the temple I inscribed their names on baked brick in renovation and restored and (re)built it. O Inšušinak, my god! May what I have made and perfected be accepted by you as offering.”

The same text recurs in EKI 36.²⁸ Obviously, the king knows the old names but inscribes them on different bricks. In EKI 40 §II, there is a general reference (*sunkip urpuppa*) concerning *sip huti*, “door sill (?)”.²⁹

In EKI 45 §3, Šilhak-Inšušinak talks about the previous kings who had made wooden columns and *kukki* (perhaps an emblem of Napiriša³⁰) and embellished them with gold. Then, as these elements needed restoration, Šilhak-Inšušinak replaced them with bronze (*sahia*) columns and *kukki* and embellished them with gold. Also, in the same inscription (§9), he makes a general reference to the former kings who had built the temple of Inšušinak.

Tab. 5. Previous kings referred to collectively and their achievements

Current King	Matter	Inscription
Untaš-Napiriša	<i>kizum</i> (?) <i>mušia</i> not built by previous kings	EKI 12 H+J+K+L
Untaš-Napiriša	<i>siyan</i> of Napiriša not built by previous kings	EKI 12 M+N
Untaš-Napiriša	<i>kukunum</i> not built by previous kings	EKI 13
Untaš-Napiriša	<i>kukunum</i> not built by previous kings	EKI 13 A
Untaš-Napiriša	<i>kukunum lansidiya</i> not built by previous kings	EKI 13 B ³¹
Untaš-Napiriša	<i>tuš pitteka</i> and <i>menpu</i> not built by previous kings ³²	EKI 13a

²⁸ In EKI 36 §8, *sunkip likup urpuppa* has a singular verb (*kuših*). See also EKI, p. 88, n. 1.

²⁹ The verb in EKI 40 §II is *kušinpa* (conjugation III) and not the more frequent *kušihiš(ta)*.

³⁰ See, for instance, Grillot-Susini, 1983: 10.

³¹ For the Elamite and Akkadian inscriptions regarding *kukunum* from Chogha Zanbil, see also MDP 41, pp. 11, 15, 16, 22, 64, 68, 72, 105, 106.

³² For *tuš pitteka*, probably “enclosed pathway, enclosed processional road”, and *menpu* (probably a structure related to the *tuš*), see Steve, 1967: 44, 45; for *men* meaning “authority”, see also Tavernier, 2023: 190. In the context of this discussion, Steve’s proposal that *menpu* may refer to previous rulers does not sound convincing as *menpu* appears to be an object in this sentence. One may argue that the literary genre of royal inscriptions required a variety of verbs denoting “creating” different structures, which may not only be related to the type of structure or object but also possibly to the originality and delicacy of the act. While the Elamite corpus is too limited to allow closer scrutiny, a good example is provided in Arabic

Untaš-Napiriša	<i>siyan</i> of Upurkupak not built by previous kings in Susa	EKI 14, 14a
Šutruk-Nahhunte I/II ⁷³³	glazed bricks (<i>upat akti</i>) ³⁴ not made by former kings	EKI 17
Šutruk-Nahhunte I	none of the previous kings knew the location of <i>husa hitek</i>	EKI 28 A §5
Šutruk-Nahhunte I	the previous kings who had found the location of <i>husa hitek</i> and sent it to Susa are not known	EKI 28 A §11
Šutruk-Nahhunte I	<i>siyan</i> of Manzat built by known previous kings	EKI 42
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	the previous builders of the <i>siyan husame</i> are not known	MDP 53 15
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	the previous builders of the <i>siyan</i> of Inšušinak and Lakamar are not known	IRS 45
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	<i>siyan</i> of Inšušinak built by known previous kings	EKI 35
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	<i>siyan</i> of Inšušinak built by known previous kings	EKI 36 ³⁵
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	door-sill (<i>si-ip hu-ti</i>) for Inšušinak	EKI 40
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	column (<i>tetin</i>) of wood, gilded (?) (<i>sisbahši</i> ³⁶) <i>kukki</i>	EKI 45 §3
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	<i>siyan</i> of Inšušinak	EKI 45 §9
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	the previous kings who built the <i>siyan</i> of “Great King” (^{AN} <i>sugir rišara</i>) are not known	TBK 211
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	fragmentary: images placed (<i>zalmu</i>) in Inšušinak’s temple (?)	DMA, no. 11

where different verbs are used to denote different types of creation such as *šon* ‘, *ebda* ‘, and *‘ijad*. Simply put, *šon* ‘ means to create something without any pre-existing model, *ebda* ‘ means “to make new” of something. *‘ijad* may be understood as a concept covering both *šon* ‘ and *ebda* ‘ (see Ibn Sina, 1953: 178 -193; my thanks to Prof. Iraj Dadashi (University of Art, Tehran) for sharing these notes with me). Although, especially in this regard, our knowledge of Elamite is limited, it is possible that a similar distinction existed in Elam (and in other ancient cultures) as well (for some preliminary notes on creation in Elam see Dadashi, Jahangirfar & Seyyed Ahmadi Zavieh, 2023). This note about different types of creation aside, the fact that this inscription belongs to the Chogha Zanbil corpus, the claim that no previous king built *tuš pitteka* and *menpu* implies that Untaš-Napiriša means a broader geographical context.

³³ The authorship of this text is uncertain due to the omission of the name of the king’s father. Steve pointed out that the excavated layer from which the inscription in question was recovered yields vestiges which are related to the time of Šutruk-Nahhunte I and Šilhak-Inšušinak I (*apud* IRS, p. 132). Indeed, the stratigraphic data could be reliable to determine the age of this text; however, at the same time, one should bear in mind that the layers at Susa were heavily distrusted by the first excavators. Tavernier (2018: 432) is of the opinion that this text was more likely commissioned by Šutruk-Nahhunte I. Based on an analogy between this text and a group of other fragments, Amiet was of the opinion that this inscription could be dated to the late 8th century BC (*apud* IRS, p. 132). Potts (2010: 507), too, following Malbran-Labat, has treated this text as a Neo-Elamite document.

³⁴ Tavernier (2018: 432) understands *upat aktippa* as “sandstone bricks”.

³⁵ König offered one translation for both EKI 35 and EKI 36, though they differ in the verb; i.e. in EKI 36 the verb is *kuših* (1st sg) while a 3rd pl verb is expected to accord with the plural subject *sunkip likup urpuppa*.

³⁶ For the reduplicated verb *sisba* and the verb *sibba*, in a text from Tall-i Malyan, see Stolper, 1984: 31.

References to Previously Built Temples in Passive Voice

In some texts, there is no reference to any previous builder-kings. Instead, the focus is solely on describing the structure itself, using the verb *kušik* “was built”. An example of this kind is EKI 33 §5-6:

mu-ur-ti^{AN} *ta-ab-mi-ki-ir-šu-me ha-la-at-ni ku-ši-ik-ni ù e-ri-en-tum₈-ia pè-ip-ši-ih ku-ši-ih*
 “The *murti*³⁷ of Tabmikiršu had been built with [sun-dried] brick. I restored and rebuilt with [baked] brick.”

Tab. 6. References to previously built temples in passive voice

Current King	Matter	Inscription
Igi-halki	the old <i>kukumum</i>	MDP 53 2
Kutir-Nahhunte II	<i>kumpum kiduya</i>	EKI 29
Kutir-Nahhunte II	gate (<i>hi-el</i>) of Lagamal	EKI 30
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	the old interior temple (<i>siyan appuka puduma</i>)	MDP 53 18
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	<i>kumpum kiduya</i>	EKI 32
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	<i>murti</i> of Tabmikiršu	EKI 33
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	<i>siyan</i> of Inšušinak	EKI 47
	<i>kumpum kiduya</i>	
	<i>murti</i> of Manzat and Simut (§19)	
	High <i>murti</i> (<i>murti huban.elu.me</i>) of Humpan (§20)	
	<i>murti</i> of Beltiya (§24)	
	grove temple (<i>siyan husa.me</i>) of ... (§33)	
	grove temple of Inšušinak (§34)	
	<i>murti</i> [?] ... (§35)	
	<i>siyan</i> of Išnikarab (§36)	
	grove temple of Inšušinak (§37)	
	grove [?] temple of Inšušinak (§38)	
grove [?] temple of Manzat and Simut (§39)		
grove [?] temple ... (§40)		
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	<i>ikkun</i> ³⁸ Lamašu	EKI 48 §19

³⁷ Steve believed that *murti* is a compound word consisting of *muru-* “earth” and *ta-* “to put”. According to his interpretation, *murti* was not a kind of temple or sanctuary, but perhaps a socle or the like (MDP 41, pp. 48-49). Malbran-Labat too expresses reservation as to whether *murti* was a place of worship or not. In her opinion, *murti* might have been a podium inside the temple of Inšušinak (IRS, pp. 101, 189, 197). In Henkelman’s (2008: 357, n. 833) opinion, the translation “residence” for *murti* is based on the assumption that this word is cognate with *murtinra* in Neo-Elamite, and *murdak*, *murtuk*, *mutukka*, etc. in Achaemenid Elamite.

³⁸ Grillot-Susini (1983: 9) has tentatively translated *ikkun* as “invocation, request”. It is stated in the inscription that *ikkun*^{AN} *lamašu* was built with [sun-dried] brick. Therefore, *ikkun* refers to an object

Šilhak-Inšušinak I	grove ⁷ temple of Inšušinak ⁷ (§22)	EKI 48 ³⁹
	temple ⁷ ... (§23)	
	grove ⁷ temple of Inšušinak ⁷ (§24)	
	grove temple of Inšušinak (§25)	
	grove temple of Inšušinak (§26)	
	grove temple of Inšušinak (§27)	
	grove temple of Lakamar (§28)	
	grove temple of Suhsipa (§29)	
	grove ⁷ temple of Inšušinak ⁷ (§30)	
	grove temple of Inšušinak (§31)	
	grove ⁷ temple of Inšušinak ⁷ (§33)	
	grove temple of Inšušinak (§34)	
	<i>aštam</i> ⁴⁰ of Pinigir (§35)	
	grove temple of Inšušinak (§36)	
	grove temple of Napiriša (§37)	
grove temple of Inšušinak (§38)		
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	<i>siyan</i> of Manzat and Šimut	EKI 53
Šilhak-Inšušinak I	dwelling place (<i>ulhu</i>) of Bahahutep in Liyan	Bashash Kanzaq 2000 ⁴¹
	<i>siyan</i> of Bahahutep in Zamul	
Šilhak-Inšušinak II	<i>siyan</i> of DIL.BAD	EKI 78

either representing Lamassu or perhaps supporting its image. For *ikku* as a metal object installed in sanctuaries, see Stolper, 1984: 49.

³⁹ This text is concluded with the total sum of the restored temples (EKI 48 §39): PAP 20 *si-ia-an hu-sa-me mi-šir₇-ma-ak a-ak pu-ut-ta-e zu-uk-ka₄-na ù* ^{D₁₈}*šil-ha-ak* ^{AN}*in-su-uš-na-ak e-ri-en-tim-ia pe-ip-ši-ih ku-ši-ih* “The total of 20 grove temples had been dilapidated and ruined. I, Šilhak-Inšušinak, restored and rebuilt them with [baked] brick.” Notwithstanding, this total number does not agree with the number of the grove temples enumerated in the inscription. Based on what König has published, at least sixteen places of worship can be recognized.

⁴⁰ A loanword from Akkadian, *ašammu* means “tavern, hostel” (CAD, s.v. *ašammu*).

⁴¹ Preserved in Tabriz Museum. No museum registration number is provided by Bashash Kanzaq. What Bashash Kanzaq has published gives rise to some questions concerning his transcription and translation. For instance, line 14 of this text has the 3rd singular verb *kušiš* where a passive form (*kušik*) is expected. Yet, Bashash Kanzaq has translated *kušiš* as “I had built”. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the omission of the final *h* (marking 1st sg in conjugation I) of *duni* in line 12 should be ascribed to typographical errors or it is an early instance of its omission (to become more frequent in Neo- and Achaemenid Elamite). Sadly, the quality of the published photograph by Bashash Kanzaq is too low to permit closer scrutiny. Nevertheless, one possibility is that this text is a later copy of an older inscription; however, in the absence of a new collation, this possibility can neither be verified nor ruled out. I could not access the original.

A potential sub-category may be tentatively assigned to this group. Some Sumero-Akkadian texts refer to the renovation of some structures; however, a few of them are included here with caution, as the relevant passages in them can be challenging to comprehend [Tab. 7]. IRS 6-7 state that Idadu did not rebuild the old wall, but instead built a new wall of baked brick behind the Ekikuanna. This category also includes an inscription from Toll-e Bard-e Karegar.⁴² However, this text does not specifically speak of earlier stages of the temple of Kamul prior to its disrepair and restoration by Šutruk-Nahhunte I. This inscription recounts that *si-ia-an* ^{AN}*ka-mu-ul-me mi-ši-ir-ma-am-ma pi-ip-ši-ir-ma-ah ku-ši-ih*, “the temple of Kamul was becoming dilapidated. I restored and rebuilt it”. Another inscription of this type is from Tappe Horreye⁴³ where Šutruk-Nahhunte I claims to have restored the temple of Manzat and NIN.DAR, which had fallen into ruin.

Tab. 7. Restoring previously built structures

Current King	Matter	Inscription
Šulgi	He restored the temple (é) of Inšušinak in its place.	IRS 2
Idadu	He did not repair the old wall, but built a new wall with baked brick.	IRS 6-7
Atta-hušu	He rebuilt the old sanctuary (<i>kizzum labīrum</i>).	IRS 11
Kuk-Kirwaš	He did not rebuild the old temple (é ur.ku) but restored the Ekikuanna with a new wall of baked brick.	IRS 18
Humpan-u-mena	The old temple (<i>siyan purkime</i>) was ruined, so he built <i>kukunnum</i> in its place.	IRS 21
Šutruk-Nahhunte I	He rebuilt the temple (<i>siyan</i>) of Kamul.	TBK 006 + 018 + 026 + 027 + 029 + 070 + 111 + 124 + 131 + 133 + 134 + 140 + 141 + 142 + 143 + 144
Šutruk-Nahhunte I	He rebuilt the temple (<i>siyan</i>) of Manzat and NIN.DAR.	Vallat, 1990

Conclusions

The practice of mentioning previous kings’ names and achievements holds a significant position in Middle and Neo-Elamite royal inscriptions. The instances can be divided into three main categories: 1) previous kings’ names are known and mentioned explicitly; 2) former kings are referred to in a general way as *sunkip urpuppa*, “previous kings”; 3) the achievement, usually renovating a temple, is referred to in passive voice.

⁴² Kozuh, 2014: 138-139.

⁴³ Vallat, 1990.

A few subcategories can be observed for the general references and passive voice as well:

- When the king admits that he did not know who achieved a goal in the past.
- When he admits he found the names of his predecessors during the reconstruction process but he refrains from revealing their names, or possibly provides the name but elsewhere.
- A sub-category for the passive voice consists of reconstruction reports without mentioning earlier phases of the work.

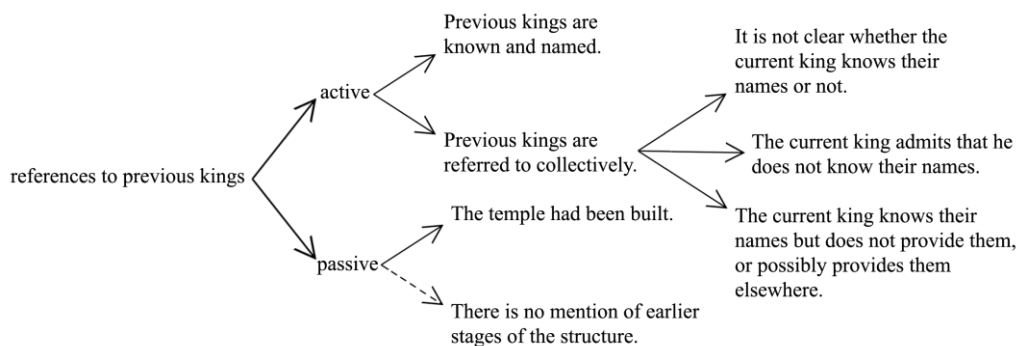


Fig. 1. A summary of the various ways in which previous kings are referenced

Additionally, it is worth noting that numerous variations and some fragmentary pieces, which are not discussed here, demonstrate this practice too. Although, at first glance, the passive voice may appear to omit the names of predecessors, they are by no means absent as the current king simultaneously admits that he is not the initial builder of a temple and is simply a link in a chain. Although the practice of mentioning predecessors' names is not unique to temple reconstruction, it is interwoven into the act of refurbishing temples. A temple (or any other structure) could serve as evidence of the presence and devotion of previous rulers. By adding one's name to the list of former builders, one would participate in the reconstruction process. The requests of some sovereigns for future kings to take care of their sanctuaries and names reveal their concerns about being destroyed and forgotten. This is the crux of curses.⁴⁴ Thus, acknowledging that somebody had previously built a structure, even if their name had been forgotten, can be understood as an attempt to celebrate their achievements, ensuring they were not completely erased from memories.

⁴⁴ For Elamite curses see Jahangirfar, Dadashi & Seyyed Ahmadi Zavieh, 2022b.

Addendum

Referencing previous kings and preserving their names can serve as a source for studying historical time. While royal Elamite inscriptions are notoriously lacking in dates, they can still provide insight into temporal matters. The events reflected in these inscriptions can help to compensate for the lack of dates.⁴⁵ Additionally, any stage in “building – falling into ruin (sometimes multiple times) – rebuilding (sometimes multi-ple times)” can be seen as a series of events. Each event has duration. “A filled (or full) interval is the length of time of a single event (such as a speech). An unfilled (or empty) interval is the length of time between two successive events (such as two knocks on a door)”.⁴⁶ Human perception of time involves both duration and succession. Here, “succession is defined as the fact that two or more events are perceived as different and occurring in a sequence. Duration is defined as the interval between the successive events”.⁴⁷

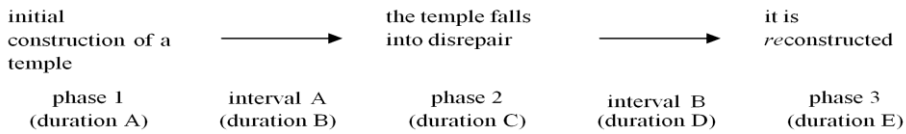


Fig. 2. A simple diagram of processes, intervals and their duration

While it is not easy to measure the intervals between, and duration of the events recorded in the inscriptions in question (e.g. construction works, expeditions, war campaigns, etc.), the matters discussed in them can still provide insights into successions. A single reconstruction report reveals a series of successive phases, each with its own length of time. These phases may represent different stages of a construction work, such as foundation laying and building erection. In this regard, we are better informed about the reconstruction phases during which the ruined part of the sanctuary is restored and new materials occasionally replace the old, less durable ones.⁴⁸ The duration of each phase may vary depending on various factors, such as the availability of resources, and the complexity of the work.

There are inscriptions that offer complex time frames. For instance, in EKI 28 A, Šutruk-Nahhunte refers to various distinct pasts: (1) kings in the past who did not know the location of *husa hitek*; (2) kings in the past who found *husa hitek*, but their names are not known to Šutruk-Nahhunte. Yet, he knows four of these kings, namely (3a) Siwe-palar-huppak, (3b) Pala-iššan, (3c) Pahir-iššan, and (3d) Attar-kittah; and (4a) the past when Šutruk-Nahhunte himself located the material, (4b) sent it to Susa and (4c) put it to use. The lengths of intervals between these events are not given in the inscription. However, Šutruk-Nahhunte appears to be distancing

⁴⁵ There seem to be some implicit clues in the inscriptions. For instance, in Šilhak-Inšušinak’s inscriptions, “The children are enumerated in chronological order” (Reiner, 1973: 58).

⁴⁶ McKewan, 2009: 349.

⁴⁷ McKewan, 2009: 350.

⁴⁸ This can be also viewed as “change” and its relation to “time”, especially in Aristotelian sense of the term. See Jahangirfar, forthcoming.

himself from those who failed to find *husa hitek* and bringing himself closer in time to those who did find it.

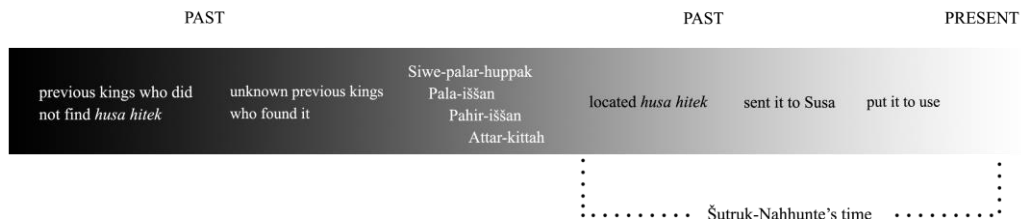


Fig. 3. The “pasts” in Šutruk-Nahhunte’s inscription

Abbreviations:

- DMA: Elamite inscriptions published in Lambert, 1978.
- EKI: Royal Elamite inscriptions published in König, 1965.
- IRS: Royal Elamite, and a few Sumero-Akkadian, inscriptions from Susa published in Malbran-Labat, 1995.
- MDP 7: Excavation reports of the French delegation published in de Morgan *et al.*, 1905.
- MDP 41: Elamite and Akkadian texts from Chogha Zanbil published in Steve, 1967.
- MDP 53: inscriptions of Elamite and Achaemenid kings from Susa published in Steve, 1987.
- PN: Personal Name
- TBK: Inscribed bricks from Toll-e Bard-e Karegar published in Kozuh, 2014.

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