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Capturing the Exotic:
Royal Ivory Collecting and the Neo-Assyrian Imagining of North Syria

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

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ABSTRACT

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Allison Karmel Thomason

The subject of this dissertation is the role which a collection of ivory objects from North Syria played in the formation of royal identity during the Neo-Assyrian empire, the entity based in northern Mesopotamia in the ninth through seventh centuries B.C. This dissertation suggests that the North Syrian ivories were collected by the kings of Assyria because they were metonymic reminders of the land of their origins which was imagined as a lush and naturally diverse world. This fictive imagining engendered a desire of the Assyrian kings to recreate that fertile world in the Assyrian heartland.

A historiographic analysis in chapter one suggests that until recently, the study of a large number of ivories found at the Neo-Assyrian capital of Nimrud has concentrated on the meaning which the objects held in the context of production within North Syria. This study departs from its predecessors in that it seeks to examine the meaning which the ivory objects held within a very different context of consumption in Assyria. In chapter two, analysis of Assyrian royal inscriptions and documents demonstrates that Assyrians were cognizant, even appreciative of foreign objects. In chapter three, analysis of the careful manner in which the ivories were stored at Nimrud, as well as of the images and texts referring to the collection of ivory objects from abroad supports the contention that collecting was an important public act in Assyria. Chapter four demonstrates that

ivory collecting held relevance for two facets of Assyrian royal identity, involving acquisition and creation, and was therefore an important element of Assyrian ideology.

Images and texts analyzed in chapter five demonstrate that other types of objects, including flora, fauna, and architectural elements from North Syria were collected and recreated in the form of botanical gardens, zoos, and buildings in the Assyrian heartland. These images and texts suggest that North Syria was imagined as a lush, exotic, and diverse landscape and its reification at the center ultimately attested to the royal ability to order and make useful the chaotic periphery. Thus Assyrian royal identity was deliberately constructed through the imagining and collecting of all things North Syrian, which conversely served as metonymic reminders of their captured foreign origins.

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Abbreviations

ARAB	D.D. Luckenbill, <i>Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia</i> , Volumes I and II, Toronto, 1989.
CAD	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute in Chicago</i> , Chicago, 1956-.
CNI	R.D. Barnett, <i>Catalogue of Nimrud Ivories in the British Museum</i> , London, 1957.
IFN	Various authors, <i>Ivories from Nimrud</i> , Volumes I-V, London, 1970-92.
N&R	M.E.L. Mallowan, <i>Nimrud and Its Remains</i> , Volumes I-III, London, 1966.
RIMA	A.K. Grayson, <i>Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods: Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium B.C. 2 (1114-859 B.C.) and 3 (859-745 B.C.)</i> , Toronto, 1991 and 1996.
RIA	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie</i> , Berlin, 1936-.
SAA	Various authors, <i>State Archives of Assyria</i> , Vols. 1-12, Helsinki, 1987-.

For additional abbreviations, see “Bibliographical Abbreviations,” Grayson, RIMA 1, xv-xix.

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For Todd

Chapter One: Introduction

Part One: Definition of the Problem and Organization of the Study

Definition of the Problem

The North Syrian ivories, a group of carved furniture inlays and portable items excavated from the site of Nimrud in Iraq, are an anomaly. Nimrud was a capital of the Neo-Assyrian empire which controlled much of the Near East during the early first millennium B.C. During the ninth through seventh centuries B.C., these objects were transported from the region called North Syria where they were carved, which lay to the immediate west of Assyria, and placed in official buildings at Nimrud (see map, Figure 1). Unlike the highly centralized Neo-Assyrian empire based in northern Iraq, North Syria at this time consisted of a number of small cities that held dominion over the fertile plains, lush river valleys, and rugged mountains in which they were located. The city-states of North Syria had varying degrees of political and military alliance with Assyria, each other, and their neighbors to the south and north. Over the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., these small but strategically located city-states were slowly incorporated into the Assyrian empire at the hands of the formidable Assyrian army and their resources and products were funneled into royal Assyrian coffers as either plunder or tribute.¹

¹For a brief history of Assyria and an account of the incorporation of North Syria into the Neo-Assyrian empire during the early first millennium B.C., see Appendix One. The precise nature and configuration of North Syria were addressed in a dissertation by Winter (1973). For more on this precisely designated region and its geographic features, see chapter one, part two.

As a great concentration of foreign objects in a strange Assyrian land, the ivories from North Syria are for the most part an unexpected group of objects in an unexpected context. Their very anomalous character calls out for their interpretation and demands that we explain the reasons for our surprise and unexpectedness. The main objective of this study, therefore, is to discover the meaning of these 'unexpected' North Syrian ivories within the foreign Assyrian culture in which they are found. Their meaning is posited in this study to be bounded by their status as collected objects which metonymically suggested their imagined foreign origins. Their meaning is further bounded in this study by their ideological context, the ivories as collected foreign objects, performed within the Neo-Assyrian justification of territorial acquisition and the construction of royal identity. Therefore, this group of ivories, captive foreigners in a strange land, will be interpreted as objects of metaphorical and ideological value, objects which constitute the subject of the Assyrian king who collected them and brought them into their anomalous context. For this study, the singular meaning of the role that the North Syrian style of Nimrud ivories played in the context of Neo-Assyrian royal ideology will be examined.

This examination of the meaning of things holds relevance for our own contemporary world which is so intent on the consumption of material possessions. As such, this study brings a thoroughly modern framing of ideas to a distant context while at the same time, it demonstrates that the patterns and complexities of the past can still resonate in the present. A new understanding of the meaning of these ancient things which were created, viewed, collected and experienced in the very early Assyrian world

illuminates like a “distant mirror” cross-cultural and cross-chronological desires and imaginings which can communally link the past and the present.²

The desire to find the meaning of things also places this study squarely in the realm of a particular genre of contemporary archaeological thought called “contextual archaeology”.³ The methodological and theoretical foundations of contextual archaeology were established by British archaeologist Ian Hodder and to some extent American archaeologist James Deetz in the 1980's as reactions to processual or scientific archaeology. While scientific archaeology called for archaeologists to develop general laws of behavior which could be extracted from the artifactual record,⁴ Hodder's contextual archaeology emphasizes that objects have social meaning and that they gain meaning only within a specific context. In contextual archaeology, the object lends meaning to a context through its very presence as a tangible item with a certain form, decoration, use and origin. Moreover, differing contexts determine different meanings for objects. Bolstered by the idea of the plurality or polysemy of the object, contextual archaeology holds that objects can perform in social or political contexts like metaphors perform in a written text--symbolic of meanings exterior to their intrinsic materiality or

²For the idea that the past and present resonate in history, see Tuchman, 1978.

³Contextual archaeology is also identified as a form of post-processual archaeology. There are many forms of post-processual archaeology, including those which study material culture from the standpoint of gender relations, or critical theory. For a general discussion of post-processual archaeology, see Hodder, 1992 and Preucel and Hodder, 1996.

⁴The theories behind this branch of archaeological thought were concisely iterated by Binford, 1962.

utilitarian function.

The central problem for a contextual approach to the North Syrian style of Nimrud ivories is one that plagues contextual archaeology in general: how does the archaeologist feasibly handle the understanding of this structure or even of this single object if the choices of meanings are infinite? Hodder proposes to freeze some of the meanings by examining them in a single and particular social context, thus the term contextual archaeology.⁵ The other problem remains that on occasion, the different contexts into which an object finds itself are often not tangibly recognizable in the archaeological record--how does one pick a social context or ideological context off the ground and dump it in a bucket? These intangible contexts must be "read" from other tangible evidence, or material traces, articulating with the object, and primarily--especially with regard to the Neo-Assyrian ideological context--that evidence is documentary and pictorial. The central intention of this study is to analyze the ideological context which articulates a particular meaning for the Nimrud ivories. Hence, that associated ideological context, as gleaned from other documentary and pictorial evidence will be examined.

The context of an object as interpreted from documentary and other pictorial evidence is also a paramount concern of art historians. It is through the evaluation of the many different contexts in which a work of art is produced and received that we may understand the meaning of a work of art. Therefore, the discipline of art history, like the

⁵Hodder, 1992, p. 14.

discipline of archaeology, requires that objects be understood from the standpoint of meaning within their contexts of production or reception. Our ability to understand context, however, is an interpretive process requiring an understanding of what complex individual, social and political forces affect the creation and reception of an object.⁶ It is proposed in this study, that the meaning held by the North Syrian ivories in Assyria was inherently connected to specific artistic and textual signs, or “forms with socially constituted meanings”⁷ referring to North Syria which were produced in the Assyrian heartland. The entire landscape of North Syria was itself a form of representation, an arbitrary code based to some extent on direct observation, but which was nevertheless created in Assyria for certain ideological purposes relating to royal identity. In sum, the meaning that the ivories, as highly portable symbols of North Syria, held in Assyria is dependent upon and necessitates an interpretation of the native Assyrian representation of North Syria, as well as an evaluation of the ideological context in which this meaning was produced. Generally then, this study will move from an interpretation of the contexts which affected the North Syrian *ivories* towards an interpretation of the contexts which affected the representation of the *entire landscape* of North Syria within Assyria.

Organization of the Study:

The context of the ivories cannot be discussed without a full evaluation of how

⁶On the interpretation of contexts of production and reception in art history, see Bal and Bryson, 1991, pp. 175-7. I thank Professor Stephen Murray for reference to this article. Compare also Moxey’s very readable interpretation of semiotics. (1994, pp. 28-37)

⁷Culler, quoted in Bal and Bryson, 1992, p. 175.

they were excavated and made available for this type of study. Therefore, the initial chapter of this project will focus on the excavation and publication history of the ivories. The ivories have attracted a great deal of attention in the past due to their incredible number and preservation, and several articles and catalogues have been published with photographs and brief descriptions of each large piece upon which a cohesive design can be seen. Because the ivories have been adequately published, the opportunity for projects such as this are both open and inviting. Without these earlier formulations of style and catalogues, a project such as this one could not be completed because many of the published ivories still remain in Iraq, and at the time of this writing are unavailable for direct observation by an American.⁸ Therefore, it is from the launchpad of the primary publications that this study finds its own propelling motion and without this launchpad, the study could not exist.

An analysis of these catalogue presentations in the first chapter sheds light on the underlying concerns and assumptions which shaped the interpretation of the Nimrud ivories until now. This analysis suggests that the interpretations of the significance of the Nimrud ivories have been shaped by the concerns and assumptions of the ivory scholars acting in their theoretical and methodological *milieux*. Until recently, the primary concern has been to situate the *production* of the ivories in the context of (art) historical time and space. This concern was most likely driven by the “culture-historical” practice

⁸The second Persian Gulf War of 1990-91 between Iraq and the United States ended in a diplomatic situation which essentially made visits to Iraq impossible for most Americans.

of archaeology which maintained that the diversity of human activity must be adequately documented and related to other forms of human activity in time and space. A typological concern for the description of styles and their origins has resulted in a consensus of scholarly opinion which affirms that a certain number of ivories found at Nimrud may be grouped together on stylistic grounds and that they were produced in North Syria. Similarly, ivories carved in the native style of the Assyrian heartland have been identified as a discrete group found at Nimrud. Thus the North Syrian and Assyrian styles of Nimrud ivories have been defined, and their geographic origins and chronological limits have been assigned.

Though the differentiation of the North Syrian and Assyrian styles has been attempted with respect to modern viewers, the recognition of this visual difference in Assyrian historical and artistic production has not yet been demonstrated. Therefore, the second chapter of this study is devoted to describing and analyzing instances in the Assyrian culture which reflect a concern for stylistic difference. The task of chapter two is to “read between the lines” of formulaic and inexplicit textual references to foreign objects within the Assyrian records. The study of Assyrian textual references in chapter two will suggest that foreign objects were appreciated in Assyrian culture for, among other things, their ability to garner value as symbols of their specific foreign origins, whether a land or person. This ability to garner symbolic value that foreign products held in Assyria influenced the consumption and collecting practices of the Assyrians. Thus in chapter two, we begin our discussion of the Assyrian consumption of foreign objects.

With this new focus on consumption, the entire “history” or “social life”⁹ of the objects may be described, leaving off from their production and following the objects into their new contexts of appropriation and collection.

Once it is proven that the Assyrians were cognizant, even appreciative, of foreign goods and products and that those products garnered symbolic value, then the discussion in chapter three suggests that the North Syrian style of ivories were deliberately collected due to the appreciation of and desire for this difference. In chapter three, the central consideration is how do we define a deliberate collection, as differentiated from a random accumulation, and did the Nimrud ivories constitute such a collection based on this definition? This chapter draws upon collecting and consumption studies to elicit an applicable definition of collecting. A collection can be defined broadly as the gathering together of a group of objects by an individual or institution in any one time and place. While the precise date and nature of ivory collecting at Nimrud cannot necessarily be controlled, in general we will assume that at least in one relatively short amount of time--at the time of the destruction of the palaces between 614 and 612 B.C.--the ivories were kept together in the official buildings at Nimrud in a coherent group. It is especially significant that they were kept in elite buildings at Nimrud and not thrown off site.

A collection, defined in a narrow sense, must exhibit some degree of sorting behavior or curation on the part of the collector and must in some way be socially important, that is it must be a public entity. Our analysis in chapter three of the relative

⁹See Appadurai, 1986.

distribution of ivory styles at Nimrud shows that ivory objects were sorted and stored together by the royal apparatus according to characteristics which might have been recognizable to the Assyrians. A subsequent examination of texts and images in chapter three suggests that if the collections themselves were not directly public, the display of the kings' collecting behavior in images and texts was a central focus of Assyrian cultural production. No king could leave out the display of his collecting behavior, but the manifestations of that display changed with each reign. Throughout the Neo-Assyrian period, the ivory furniture and tusks depicted in those texts and images garnered rhetorical value as items plundered or gifted from politically significant foreign people and territories. The representation of this royal collecting behavior in texts and images reinforced the collected nature of the ivory furniture and products and demonstrated that ivory collecting was an important royal act symbolizing the acquisitional abilities of the kings. The final section of chapter three addresses the potential audience of the collection through a discussion of those segments of Assyrian society who witnessed the tangible collections or the collecting behaviors of the kings as displayed in texts and images. The analyses of archaeological find spots, texts and images in chapter three demonstrate that in keeping with the narrow definition of collecting, the Nimrud ivories may be defined as a deliberate collection because they were sorted according to similar characteristics and they garnered social value in a very public manner within Assyria.

Once a working definition of collecting is created, and having tested whether or not the ivories were in fact collected by the Assyrians, and that those collections or collecting behavior were purposefully put on display as public record, the focus turns to

why the ivories were collected. Therefore the central concern of the fourth chapter of the dissertation is the political circumstance, the ideology, of the Assyrian royal culture which caused the kings to collect. Here ideology is defined as a deliberate attempt to construct an identity for purposes of power maintenance and gain. A brief summary and analysis of Assyrian ideology in general as identified by previous scholars defines the context into which the royal collecting of the North Syrian ivories negotiated meaning. In particular, I suggest in chapter four that ivory collecting played a role in two aspects of Assyrian royal ideology, the construction of the acquisitional and creational “sub-identities” of the kings. The collecting of inanimate objects such as the North Syrian ivories clearly served to construct the acquisitional identity of the Neo-Assyrian kings and the references to ivory tribute and booty from texts and images discussed in chapter three are testaments to that aspect of identity construction in Assyria. Previous scholarship has demonstrated that the acquisitional and creational sub-identities of the kings were connected through an Assyrian cosmology which asserted that things from the chaotic “outside” of Assyria could be rendered useful and groomed into order only if brought “inside” to capitals of the heartland. Once brought within the confines of empire, those objects from the “outside” were in a sense recreated as newly ordered entities taking their rightful place within the Assyrian world view. This linkage is essential for it pushes us to determine the way in which the creational identity of kings of Assyrian performed within the ideology of conquest and expansion.

In chapter five, I contend that North Syrian ivory collections, the inanimate objects, performed within this royal identity construction as metonymies. As adjacent

parts standing in for the whole of North Syria, they were reminders of an imagined foreign landscape which served in the recreation of that entire landscape in the Assyrian heartland. Moreover, their appeal and value within Assyria--the reasons for their collection--were informed by their ability to represent not simply an acquired peripheral territory, but an abundant, diverse, and pleasure-giving peripheral territory. These ivories, both as collectively acquired objects and metonymic reminders of their origins served to construct and link the acquisitional and creational identities of the king.

Therefore, in the fifth chapter, an analysis of texts and images which refer to the collecting of the *living* landscape--the flora and fauna--of North Syria shows that the construction of royal creational identity was nuanced by the collection of its *animate* objects which also served as metonymic reminders of their origins. In this chapter, the textual and pictorial references to the floral and faunal landscape of North Syria, and in particular the site of Mount Amanus, demonstrate that the Assyrian royal apparatus imagined that the North Syrian natural landscape was wild, abundant and diverse. This imagined landscape was so desired as to cause the kings to recreate its floral and faunal abundance within the heartland in the guise of royal gardens, zoos and game parks. Textual and pictorial references indicate that these garden complexes were constructed as sites of relaxation and pleasure for the Assyrian kings. Equally as important, they served in the ideological construction of the royal creational identity since they represented the kings' ability to propagate, breed and re-order the entire diversity of the living landscape of the periphery in the capital cities. In chapter five, a fictional image of North Syria emerges which was created to serve an ideological purpose specific to Assyrian royal

identity construction. The Assyrian kings as collectors, like early explorers and anthropologists, were creating 'ethnographic fictions' of the North Syrian land that they had once visited in order to assert that such a diverse and prosperous land was both contained within the royal realm in the distance and re-created closer to home.¹⁰

My basis for suggesting that the Assyrian recreation of North Syria was a fictive imagining comes from studies in political geography. These studies have suggested that landscape descriptions and images are systems of signification used to construct identities. There is a vast general literature on landscape but only recently has the arbitrary nature of landscape been discussed. This discussion has risen largely as a result of the post-modern critique of rhetoric and representation, encapsulated in the term deconstruction.¹¹ Cosgrove and Daniels, two seminal landscape deconstructionists, compare landscape and the geographical knowledge which creates landscape to a cultural image or symbol.¹² The creation of space in word and image is not empirical fact, but a body of representation. The language of geography and landscape, the metaphors used to describe and depict places, are arbitrary constructions completely defined by and reliant

¹⁰Stocking explains that in the practice of observation, description and acquisition, ethnographers create fictions. (1985)

¹¹The literature on deconstruction itself is incredibly vast. The post-modernist who dealt most closely with the uses of space, therefore related to landscape, was Foucault. Foucault's analysis of the European prison system and the device of the all-seeing and seen panopticon, relates the control of space to political and social power and identity. (1979) It is through Foucault, therefore, that the connection between space and power became central in post-modern studies. On this aspect of Foucault, see Agnew and Duncan, 1989 and Mitchell, 1994.

¹²Cosgrove and Daniels, 1988, p. 1.

upon the cultural *milieu* in which they are issued, despite their appearance of being solidly “grounded” in physical fact. Paying homage to Clifford Geertz, Cosgrove and Daniels suggest that discussion of a landscape as a symbol-image requires “thick description”, the image must be read and cultural and political processes which led to its construction must be examined. Landscape, whether in map, textual or pictorial form, is an *imagining*, a fact more of the human mind than of physical reality.

A similar critique of the empirical standing of landscape has been achieved in feminist and Marxist geographies. In Marxist geography, landscapes and their recreation are seen as sites of class struggle.¹³ Landscapes and landscape paintings emerged in the nineteenth century as ideological tools, used by the working, bourgeois and dominant classes to implement political and social policies and to disseminate class identity. Landscape, as a way of seeing, implies a sense of power, an ordering of and over the place which is represented.¹⁴ When these landscapes are of foreign locales, the descriptions of foreign lands and people in texts and images are discourses of imperialism, attempts to present the chaotic peripheral world in the ordered terms of the center.¹⁵ In feminist geography, the imagining and reconstruction of landscape through maps, gardens and images becomes a tool in the construction of gender identity.¹⁶

¹³A great deal of Marxist geography has been concerned with landscapes in modern Europe and the United States. For example, see: Bermingham, 1986; Daniels, 1993; and Green, 1991.

¹⁴On this see Cosgrove, 1989, p. 105.

¹⁵Pratt, 1992, p. 33.

¹⁶See especially Rose, 1993.

Cosgrove, Daniels, and others have been primarily concerned with more modern constructions of landscape, however, the concept of the construction of place may be examined with regard to ancient Assyrian civilization.¹⁷ The construction of place in Mesopotamian cultural output, both historical and literary, must also be seen as an ideological act. Marcus has related the Neo-Assyrian construction of place to the ideology of gender and the creation of masculine identity in relief images and historical texts.¹⁸ Furthermore, this ideological practice has been described by Michalowski as the creation of “mental maps” for purposes of rhetorical discourse and national identity formation.¹⁹ The above studies, both for the modern and Assyrian worlds, have concurred that these societal imaginings of landscape are polysemic and polymorphic. The meanings and shapes of these permutations must be analyzed as they change through time and shift through differing contexts, which is the task of chapter five.²⁰ These imagined landscapes were required by a specific context for purposes of power and control. In sum, chapter five shows that the ivories were metonymies standing in for the very particular larger world of their origins, which was itself an imagined landscape.

This study is, above all, a process which documents a cohesive series of

¹⁷This topic is emerging with a swift pace in Assyriology. A recent *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (RAI) in Venice, 1997 had several sessions on mental maps, space, landscape and identity. Though the papers of this conference have not yet been published, I have been able to view their titles at the RAI website.

¹⁸Marcus, 1995b.

¹⁹Michalowski, 1986.

²⁰See Michalowski, 1986, p. 145.

arguments and thoughts about an important group of artifacts. As a process, the study builds upon itself and each chapter is based on the arguments and analyses put forward in the preceding chapter. Interwoven in the text are cross-cultural comparisons and theoretical points which hold relevance for the ancient as well as the modern world. This inquiry into the ideological workings of an ancient culture considers the thoroughly modern theoretical assumptions and methodologies of contextual archaeology, collecting studies and political geography. The study extends the meaning of the ivories found at Nimrud beyond the context of their production into the realm of their consumption. It examines the “intangibles” of imperial power and ideology as represented by material objects deposited seemingly randomly in the archaeological record. The implications of an investigation of these nexes--ideology, power, collecting, landscape--are far-reaching not just for an understanding of this ancient Assyrian culture, but for our own modern consumer culture.

Chapter One: Introduction

Part Two: Historiography and Definition of the North Syrian Style of Ivory

Introduction

The goal of this section is to trace the earlier studies of the Nimrud ivories and to discern what conclusions regarding the stylistic differentiation and cultural significance of the Nimrud ivories have previously appeared. The purpose in this chapter is not necessarily to question the definition of the North Syrian style which has been previously established nor to question the relationship of the ivories as decorative arts to the monumental stone sculptures from North Syria which they resemble. Rather our purpose is to discover how and why that definition was established and tweaked, then to use that definition of the North Syrian style in the remaining chapters of this study.

From the outset, the ivories from Nimrud have been recognized as luxury items, markers of status, whose possession would have been limited to royalty or elites in the ancient Near East.²¹ In addition, from the outset, the interest in the Nimrud ivories has focused on isolating them into related groups and defining different styles of ivory carving. This interest in style was clearly motivated by an interest in iconography. As a result, the ivory styles were predominantly defined according to iconography and subject matter. A concurrent interest in the circumstances of their production, and in the

²¹Winter discusses references to luxurious “houses of ivory” in the Old Testament. (1973, p. 258)

ethnicity of their craftsmen, was manifested in a search for individual workshops within styles and for the precise geographic origins of those workshops within the ancient Near East. Owing to the recognition of a shared *koine*, or repertoire of iconographic motifs, in the ancient Near East, the iconographic differentiation of styles was found wanting and attention turned to both their non-iconographic characteristics, and the techniques of their production. Finally, the role of the ivory production in cultural contact and economic relations has been a more recent preoccupation. It was not until the last decade that interest has turned slightly toward their significance within the Assyrian culture. Throughout this history of scholarship the interest in the ivories has remained squarely on their production, with little regard for or mention of their Assyrian context. The analysis below, which will utilize quotations and excerpts from articles and catalogues, will illustrate how until recently, scholars have been motivated by an interest in the iconography and production of the Nimrud ivories.

Phase One: Astonishment and Anomaly

I have identified four phases in the historiography of Nimrud ivories. Each of these phases was a reflection of the philosophical and scientific interests of its time. Each scholar working in a particular phase therefore would have fit squarely in the realm of a contemporaneous theoretical *milieu* which resulted in a set of assumptions about the material record. Rarely were these assumptions made explicit, however, and it is therefore the task of this historiography to excavate the assumptions by analyzing the organization and statements of previous treatises on the Nimrud ivories. The first phase revolved around the initial discovery of ivories at Nimrud when the palaces were first

excavated by Austen Henry Layard, a British traveler and archaeologist, in the mid-nineteenth century. This phase was grounded in the exoticism and antiquarianism of the nineteenth century, when the ivories struck a wondrous and anomalous cord in the hearts of the new Assyriologists. Initially, the ivories did not merit quite as much attention as did the bas-reliefs and tablets which were concurrently being excavated. Nevertheless, it was Layard who first realized that many of the ivory fragments which he had come upon during his excavations of the Northwest Palace at Nimrud were not of native Assyrian manufacture: "In the rubbish near the bottom of the chamber, I found several ivory ornaments upon which were traces of gilding; amongst them was the figure of a man in long robes, carrying in one hand the Egyptian *crux ansata*, part of a crouching sphinx and flowers designed with great taste and elegance."²² Layard recognized that the iconography of these ivories was distinctly Egyptian, exemplified by the "*crux ansata*", which later would become known as the *ankh* hieroglyph symbolizing life. The sphinx that he mentions was a well-known Egyptian icon which would have been recognized in Europe at least since Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798. Later, Layard's discovery of many more ivories in what are now known as rooms V and W of the same palace elicited this response: "The chamber V is remarkable for the discovery, near the entrance *a* of a number of ivory ornaments of considerable beauty and interest."²³

The ivories from the outset were considered prime examples of exotica and they

²²1849b/I, p. 47.

²³1849b/II, p. 14-15.

were consistently characterized as invoking “interest”.²⁴ Yet their interest lay in their anomaly, for they could not be placed into a proper known artistic category by Layard: “The forms, and style of art, have a purely Egyptian characters; although there are certain peculiarities in the execution and mode of treatment, that would seem to mark the work of foreign [sic], perhaps an Assyrian artist. The same peculiarities--the same anomalies--characterize all the other objects discovered...”²⁵ Their anomalous character was as important to Layard as their “design and delicacy of the workmanship.”²⁶ Layard’s “interest” in and championing of the unique and the exotic was entirely at home in the Romantic idealism of his era and he is known to have had Romantic motivations and associations.²⁷ His reaction to the peculiar and very un-Assyrian ivories which he found in an Assyrian context can be seen as a manifestation of this exoticism which caused him to remark on their curious appearance and anomalous nature. The preponderance of Egyptian iconography on these ivories tempted him to identify them as Egyptian in style, yet he recognized that they were not purely Egyptian, and that they were characterized by certain “anomalies”.

Shortly after Layard’s initial observations, another British archaeologist, W.K.

²⁴See also Layard’s description of the “most interesting” of the ivories. (1849b/II, p. 15)

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶1849b/II, p. 16.

²⁷On Layard’s exoticism and Romanticism, see Fales and Hickey, 1983. Compare Albrecht Dürer’s exoticism in relation to objects from Mesoamerica discussed in Pasztory, 1986.

Loftus returned to excavate several more elite precincts at Nimrud only to discover many more ivory fragments, including a large cache of ivory fragments in a burned building on the southeast corner of the main mound, which he called “The Southeast Palace”.²⁸ (See map of Nimrud, Figure 2) Loftus’ description of this find was entirely in keeping with Layard’s wonder. The Egyptianizing character of the ivories was noted, yet Loftus could not entirely accept that these objects, found in a so purely Assyrian context, were of foreign origin. Thus he ascribed an Assyrian provenance to the objects: “There is a decidedly Egypto-Assyrian character about the whole collection, perfect Egyptian heads being mixed with Assyrian bulls and lions. The heads were very fine indeed. Some of the articles were maces, dagger-handles or portions of chairs and tables (for we have undoubted evidence of the Assyrians using such)... The Assyrians were adepts [sic] at veneering the layers being highly ornamented with sacred emblems and lion-hunts.”²⁹ Loftus’ attribution to the Assyrians was not reiterated, for as we shall see in the second phase of this historiography, it was generally agreed soon after his excavations that the ivories were produced in areas to the west of Assyria proper.

Phase Two: The Urge for Origin

After these initial excavations, a second phase of interest on the “peculiar” and very un-Assyrian nature of these ivories led to an attempt to pinpoint the origins of the

²⁸Later, Mallowan dubbed this area of the mound the Burnt Palace on the basis of the great conflagration which destroyed the structure and its contents. (N&RI, 1966, p. 200)

²⁹Letter of Loftus dated 4 December 1854 originally published in *Athenaeum* 24 March 1855, p. 351 and quoted in Barnett, CNI, p. 23.

ivories, and to discuss their iconographic affinities with known fixed monuments and other portable objects from outside of Assyria. It was in this second phase of the early to mid-twentieth century that both the Phoenician and Syrian styles of ivory carving were identified by Richard Barnett, a curator at the British Museum, and his contemporaries. Attempts were made by Barnett especially to clearly define the difference between the several ivory styles found at Nimrud. In addition, a single geographic origin, the city of Hamath, was proposed by Barnett for the Syrian style of ivories.

Therefore, it was not the excavators who began this search for origins in the second phase, but museum curators and art historians who were assigned the task of publishing and making sense of the huge amounts of ivory from Nimrud and other sites in the Near East that had been excavated in the latter half of the nineteenth century and which were stored in western collections, especially in the Louvre and the British Museum. These art historians and curators saw it as their immediate task to identify the style of the ivories that were clearly not Assyrian and to discover their origins of production. In fact, the Nimrud ivories seemed to have played a major role in the larger art historical argument revolving around the establishment of a "Phoenician" style of art. The ivories carved in the Phoenician style were some of the first excavated by Layard at Nimrud, yet at the time, the Phoenician style of art had not been recognized and defined.

There were many scholars working on the problem of the nature of the Phoenician style, whose origins lay on the Lebanese and Syrian coast of the Mediterranean. In general, the Phoenician style was explained as an iconographic phenomenon, one which

mimicked the subjects and motifs of Egyptian art.³⁰ The most common subjects in the Phoenician style of ivories included Egyptian gods and goddesses and royal figures wearing Egyptian crowns and short kilts. In addition, the Phoenician style ivories discovered by Layard and Loftus at Nimrud were peppered with authentic Egyptian hieroglyphs such as the *ankh* sign mentioned above. Comparative objects of bronze, ceramic and stone created in the Phoenician style had been excavated at purely Phoenician sites such as Byblos on the coast of the Mediterranean, yet were also known from the wider Mediterranean world, when in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. they were exported by the Phoenicians to Cyprus, Greece, Etruria and as far west as Spain.³¹

Fewer scholars were working on the ivories from the Nimrud corpus which seemed neither Phoenician nor Assyrian and that was the task of Barnett at the British Museum. Drawing on the work of Poulsen,³² he suggested that some of the Nimrud ivories were originally created in the area between Phoenicia and Assyria, which he called Syria using the modern term for the region. He published his conclusions regarding the Syrian and Phoenician styles in three major works. The first two were articles which speculated on the origin of the Phoenician and Syrian ivories at Nimrud

³⁰Barnett, 1935, p. 199.

³¹For a complete recounting of the “discovery” and definition of Phoenician art, see Markoe, 1980.

³²1912. Winter notes that Poulsen identified the Syrian group based on parallels with excavated stone monuments from the sites of Carchemish, Zincirli, Marash and Tell Halaf. (1973, p. 259) These include iconographic elements such as trees and flowers, rows of musicians, musical processions and columns.

and the third was a catalogue, published much later, which followed Barnett's earlier work with more expanded and solidified conclusions.³³ Barnett summarized his era neatly in the foreword to his catalogue:

"Perrot and Chipiez considered that [the Loftus and Layard ivories] were of Egyptian, perhaps Phoenician, manufacture. Dieulafoy correctly recognized them as Phoenician. According to Ohnefalsch-Richter they were Cypriot. Sir Cecil Smith considered them to be the work of Ionian Greeks, while Hogarth thought them Lydian. H.R. Hall appeared to think them Syrian. Poulsen argued that they were Phoenician, but as has been explained in a previous study [by Barnett] he included under the title of Phoenician work which was also derived from Northern Syria."³⁴

Barnett separated his Syrian style from the Phoenician style due to the resemblance of many of the ivories from Nimrud to monumental stone sculpture from sites east of Phoenicia and west of Assyria. These sites were originally ascribed to the "Neo-Hittite" culture, as they were thought to be a first millennium B.C. derivation of the artistic style of the second millennium Hittite kingdom from the central Anatolian (Turkish) plateau. In his early articles, Barnett did not fully cite his Neo-Hittite comparisons; however, by the time his catalogue was published, he was fully acquainted with the stone monuments of the Neo-Hittite sites, many more of which had been excavated since the 1930's.³⁵

Barnett's argument for siphoning off the Syrian style was thoroughly the product

³³1935; 1939; and CNI.

³⁴CNI, p. 31.

³⁵In addition to Poulsen's comparanda from Carchemish, Zinjirli, Marash and Tell Halaf, Barnett used reliefs from Hamath for comparison with the Syrian ivories. It was not, however, until Irene Winter's dissertation in 1973 that a complete catalogue of these stone monuments and their dates was fully realized.

of its time. His argument indicated an incipient philhellenism by proscribing the schools to areas in the more occidental Greece. At the same time this argument fed an irrepressible late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century urge to characterize objects according to proscribed cultural areas. This urge has been collectively called “culture-history” and has been used to refer to anthropological and archaeological research of the turn of the century and first half of this century.³⁶ Culture-historical models of the past were rooted in the emphasis on race and the cultural evolutionism of nineteenth-century Europe. Basically, the culture-historical tenet held that cultures were discrete and individual units, each with their own characteristics, development and ecological or geographic origin.³⁷ Out of necessity of this belief the tools of seriation and typology, developed by Thomsen and Montelius respectively, arose.³⁸ The task of these sorting tools was to group together artifacts according to interrelated sets with shared characteristics. Each discrete artifact set, called a style, could therefore be representative of an entire discrete past culture. At this moment in time, the characteristics which evoked the highest degree of study were iconographic motifs. The milieu of culture-historical studies also gave rise in ivory studies to the concept that there were many motifs, or shared iconographic elements constituting a *koine*, or repertoire of shared

³⁶Trigger, 1989, pp. 148-206. For a fuller development of this era, see Jones, 1997.

³⁷Trigger writes: “Cultures in the Old and New Worlds were recognized to be stylistically distinct and were believed to have developed independently.” (1989, p. 154)

³⁸Trigger, 1989, p. 157.

motifs, within the ancient Near East.³⁹ These shared motifs, such as the Egyptianizing motifs found in the Phoenician style discussed in Barnett's statement above, could be explained as a result of the migration of races or the diffusion of ideas developed by discrete races.

Yet the urge to group objects into neatly packaged styles encountered difficulty with the Syrian style. Whereas Barnett defined Phoenician art clearly and succinctly as "a quasi-Egyptian style...a hybrid product incorporating a considerable amount of Egyptian influences combined with some of Aegean and Mesopotamian origin,"⁴⁰ the non-Assyrian, non-Phoenician ivories were enigmatic because of their inability to fit into any single style of art. Despite these difficulties, there was an irrepressible urge to sort them and discover their origins--to pinhole them and ground them to a region and "race" of people. This urge was stunted by their lack of restoration, improper storage and material deterioration which contributed to the enigmatic nature and difficulty of working with this body of material. Barnett's near frustration at the situation of the ivories clearly relegated them to an annoying enigma as he writes:

"When I joined the Department in 1932, I was assigned the task of publishing the 'Nimrud Ivories' and found them to consist of a collection far greater than anyone outside the Museum supposed, a collection in which the known ivories, found by Layard and published by him, were enormously outnumbered by those still unknown, which had been found and brought home also from Nimrud in 1854 by Loftus but remain unpublished. They still, in 1932, remained as first excavated, a vast pile of unsorted fragments, calcined and often barely recognizable, which had

³⁹Winter, 1981b, p. 130.

⁴⁰CNI, p. 31.

clearly intimidated all my predecessors. The labour of repairing, reconstructing, sorting and studying these works of art of a little-known school, which I suggested in 1935 was Syrian, necessarily took many years.”⁴¹

This statement is significant for it demonstrates four of Barnett’s motivations and assumptions. First it identifies Barnett’s motivation of sorting, which would place him squarely in the culture-historical school of archaeology prevalent in England at the time. Second, he made clear that he saw all of the ivories in the British Museum as products of a “school.” The identification of the style as a “school” brings with it connotations of an arena in which styles would be passed onto succeeding generations in a formalized training consisting of apprenticeships within workshops--hence the focus on production from the outset. Third, he implied that the ivories were created in a venue, a place--they therefore could be given a definitive geographic origin. And fourth, he maintained that the school was unique and singular, but also enigmatic, as is intimated in his choice of the words “little-known”.⁴² He himself admits that he had previously suggested that the ivories were of Syrian manufacture, yet despite this admission, the ivories of this style remained “little-known.” While Barnett’s interest in sorting and typology is clearly evident, nevertheless, it was Barnett who moved the discussion about styles into a broader arena, encompassing a consideration of both iconography *and* of the non-

⁴¹CNI, iii. Indeed it did take many years for the catalogue was not published until 1957 and many other publications relating to the British Museum collections were published in the interim by Barnett and his colleagues.

⁴²He in fact saw it as his task to “disentangle” the Phoenician style from the North Syrian style. (1935, p. 199)

iconographic, what I would identify as the “expressive” or “formal” characteristics of the Phoenician and Syrian styles.

The term “expressive” is derived here from Meyer Schapiro’s interpretation of style in which a style may be more precisely defined according to non-iconographic traits.⁴³ Schapiro distinguished between three aspects of style: “form elements or motifs, form relationships, and qualities [including an all-over quality which he terms ‘expression’].”⁴⁴ To Schapiro, the primary criteria through which styles could be defined were “formal and qualitative,”⁴⁵ rather than technical or iconographic, thus he ruled out his first aspect, “form elements or motifs” as markers of style, since many styles share these motifs, which are incapable of carrying the unique traits of a style. Instead he concentrated on the form relationships and qualities of expression as sites in which the unique characteristics of a style are deposited. The formal elements, he defined as “vehicles of a particular affect (apart from the subject matter).” Though he never defined precisely what he meant by “qualities of expression,” there is a sense that these unifying qualities contribute to a style their cultural uniqueness and are not related to content or subject matter. He writes: “Style then is the means of communication, a language not only as a system of devices for conveying a precise message by representing or symbolizing objects and actions but also as a qualitative whole which is capable of

⁴³1953.

⁴⁴1953, p. 54.

⁴⁵1953, p. 54. For a succinct discussion of Schapiro’s concept of style in another Near Eastern context, see Marcus, 1991, pp. 536-38.

suggesting the diffuse connotations as well as intensifying the associated or intrinsic affects.”⁴⁶ It is with these last two aspects, the form relationships and the qualities of expression, that Schapiro pushed away from thinking about style as a singly iconographic phenomenon. Barnett, writing in the 1930's, was himself pushing away from this conception, though he was still somewhat reliant on the iconographic approach. In this early period in archaeology, it was not as necessary to make explicit, as Schapiro did, the assumptions and definitions of style which motivated a body of work.

Despite his complaints, Barnett did manage to make sense of his numerous fragments and to confirm what he had concluded earlier regarding the Syrian origins of the “school.” Though he claimed in the quotation given above that Poulsen originally ignored the Syrian character of the non-Assyrian ivories, Winter has argued that it was in fact Poulsen who first differentiated the Syrian from the Phoenician styles and Barnett based his own division on this earlier work.⁴⁷ The bulk of Barnett’s later catalogue was subsumed under the very telling title: “Syrian and Phoenician Art: Their Origins and Development.” It is a constant search for “sources” and “points of contact” between the monumental and minor arts excavated from Syria and the Nimrud ivories. He argued for a combination of “Hittite” and “Hurrian” sources from the second millennium which ultimately produced the Syrian style found at Nimrud in the first millennium B.C.⁴⁸ The

⁴⁶1953, p. 289.

⁴⁷1973, p. 259.

⁴⁸Barnett, CNI, p. 33.

North Syrian style was epitomized in his catalogue by those from the Southeast Palace, the large elite structure which Loftus excavated on the southeast corner of Nimrud. In contrast, the Phoenician style was exemplified by the fragments found by Layard in the Northwest Palace.⁴⁹ Barnett presupposed some of Schapiro's work by attending to what one might call "expressive qualities" of the Syrian school. He wrote that the Syrian ivories are "energetic" and exhibit "inventiveness"; that they demonstrate a "rather startling independence which they exhibit in their ideals of human beauty, the sureness and exquisite dexterity of the carving and the feeling of power in the bodies."⁵⁰ In addition, he noted cryptically that in the Syrian ivories, "every desire sensuously to please seems to have been carefully obliterated."⁵¹ Barnett's defining analysis of the Syrian style still stands today, embellished and altered slightly by later scholars, especially Irene Winter, and it will be the basis of the definition of the (North)⁵² Syrian school in the following discussion.

The Syrian style defined by Barnett and Winter will be identified here according to iconographic, expressive, and material characteristics. By iconographic is meant the symbols and specific subjects which are used more frequently in the Syrian school than in other schools. By expressive is meant the form relationships and overall qualities, as

⁴⁹A feature of Barnett's catalogue discussed by Winter, 1973, p. 259.

⁵⁰1939, p. 96.

⁵¹1935, p. 194-5.

⁵²As I will describe shortly in this chapter, Winter replaced Barnett's term "Syrian" with her newly isolated term "North Syrian", though she continued to use the same criteria to define and isolate the style.

discussed above which, if given a single subject, are treated differently by the Syrian and other schools. By material is meant the utilitarian functions and techniques of manufacture.

A. Iconographic Elements:

1) In general, Syrian ivories lack Egyptian icons, decorative elements and subjects. The Egyptian iconographic elements which are common on other style of ivories, for example the Phoenician, include Egyptian hieroglyphs, gods and goddesses, royal figures and royal symbols such as crowns, scepters and crooks.⁵³

2) The Syrian school may be differentiated according to certain depictions of non-human figures or items. In particular flame-like markings are used to indicate muscles on animal haunches and pedestal bases which hold human figures are cushion-like.⁵⁴

3) Characteristic subjects include: nude female figures standing on pedestals, winged sphinxes, female heads with diadems, figures with long fringed robes carrying vegetation, hunting scenes, animal combats, musical processions of figures, females seated at tables, mistress of the animals, couchant and rampant lions.⁵⁵

B. Non-Iconographic or Expressive Elements: (See for example, Figure 3)

1) The figures on the Syrian ivories contain specific physiognomic characteristics which were also seen on stone monuments from Syria starting in the second millennium B.C.⁵⁶ These include:

- a. Oval face

⁵³Winter, 1973, p. 260.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵CNI, pp. 65-110.

⁵⁶Winter, 1973, p. 260; Barnett, 1935, p. 194, and CNI, p. 42. As a clear demonstration of the Neo-Darwinist evolutionism present in his thought he writes: "This queer physiognomy recurs in many of the ivories from Nimrud belonging to the Loftus Group. To suggest that a given anthropological type must be associated with a particular language is of course misleading, but there can be little doubt that the features presumably considered beautiful by the sculptor of Idrimi [the N.S. stone monument which he uses as an exemplar of the style] and the Loftus ivories had some counterpart in a living type." (CNI, p. 42.)

- b. Enormous, protruding eyes
- c. Small, pinched mouth
- d. High, receding forehead

2) Syrian figures have heavy proportions and short, stocky bodies which communicate a "sense of power."⁵⁷

3) Syrian plaques are characterized by a fear of empty space, termed *horror vacui*, and a lack of balance between "*plein et vide*."⁵⁸

4) Syrian plaques lack symmetry and antithetic arrangements.

5) There is a great deal of and variety in the poses of frontality on Syrian pieces.⁵⁹ (See for example, Figure 4)

C. Material Elements:

1) Syrian ivories exhibit more restricted techniques: carved in low relief rather than the openwork or inlay known in Phoenician art.⁶⁰

2) There is a prevalence of mortar and tenon construction to attach ivories to each other or a frame (See for example, Figure 5).

3) Phoenician and Assyrian ivories are mainly furniture plaques whereas the Syrian ivories comprise furniture plaques as well as small items such as pyxides, mirror handles and cosmetic bowls.⁶¹

Phase Three: Further Definition and Elaboration

The third phase of ivory studies commenced with the excavations of Max Mallowan at Nimrud in the 1950's. In this project, Mallowan re-excavated areas of the

⁵⁷Winter, 1973, p. 272 and Barnett, 1939, p. 96.

⁵⁸Winter, 1973, p. 273-4.

⁵⁹Winter, 1973, p. 275.

⁶⁰Barnett, CNI, p.155.

⁶¹Barnett, CNI, pp. 63-110.

Northwest Palace, and excavated for the first time other parts of the primary mound at Nimrud, principally the temple to the Assyrian god of writing, Nabu. In these excavations, he found several more ivory fragments. In addition, his excavations on the secondary mound of Nimrud, in the arsenal built by Shalmaneser III and called “Fort Shalmaneser”, brought to light thousands more ivory fragments which had been placed there before the sack of the city in 612 B.C. The vast number of Nimrud ivories which were unearthed by Mallowan created a much larger corpus, full of a greater variety of subjects and styles than the Loftus and Layard groups from the main acropolis. Mallowan’s new discovery instigated an interest in isolating groups of related ivories into individual workshops in recognition of this greater variety. These ivories were published by Mallowan and his students, both independently and in collaboration, in a series of fascicules entitled *Ivories from Nimrud (1949-1963)*, reflecting the dates of Mallowan’s excavations.⁶² The task of each fascicule was to group together the ivories according to several criteria, as indicated in the titles to the catalogues. The criteria included:

- 1) Utilitarian function: *Ivories From Nimrud* (IFNI), Part 2 by J. J. Orchard subtitled: “Equestrian Bridle Harness Ornaments”;⁶³
- 2) Style: IFNII by Mallowan and L. G. Davies, “Ivories in Assyrian Style”; or
- 3) Archaeological find spot: IFNIII, by Mallowan and Herrmann, “Ivories from room SW7 Fort Shalmaneser; IFNIV, 1 and 2 by Herrmann, “Ivories from room SW7, Fort

⁶²Published by the British School of Archaeology in Iraq which also funded Mallowan’s excavations.

⁶³Part 2 consists of a catalogue and photographs of these ivories. Mallowan noted in the foreword that Part 1 of this fascicule, which was never published, was originally intended to provide the commentary to the catalogue.

Shalmaneser”; and IFNV by Herrmann, “Ivories from Small Collections in Fort Shalmaneser”.⁶⁴

In the final three fascicules (III-V), the central task was to order the ivories first according to findspot, and second according to style within each findspot. The isolation of several different sub-sets of ivories, called workshops, within the greater Syrian and Phoenician styles occurred in these final three catalogues and was aimed at pinpointing more specifically the origins of production of these styles.

This new interest in isolating individual workshops located in single cities was influenced by Irene Winter’s dissertation and related articles by her in the early 1970’s.⁶⁵ In her dissertation, Winter suggested that there may have been several cities within Syria which produced ivories, as opposed to the singular center of Hamath proposed by Barnett. She subsequently suggested that Barnett’s “Syrian” school referred predominantly to what she termed a “North Syrian” school.⁶⁶ Her re-naming of the style came about less because she disagreed with Barnett’s criteria and more because she wished to explicitly define what was meant geographically by “Syrian.” It is Winter’s term, the “North Syrian style,” essentially a new name for Barnett’s Syrian style as described above, which will be used in this study.

⁶⁴In addition, Herrmann is preparing at least two more fascicules for publication, which will group together those ivories found in the Rooms SW11-12 and in the throne room suite, wing T, of Fort Shalmaneser (personal communication).

⁶⁵1973; 1976a; 1976b; and 1981b.

⁶⁶This was initially suggested in her dissertation (1973, p. 381) and later expanded in her 1981b article.

As a result of her explicit interest in identifying the precise geographic region which produced the ivories, early in her dissertation, Winter defined the geographic region of North Syria as distinct from a greater Syria or Phoenicia.⁶⁷ Winter's study and definition of the geographic features of North Syria are crucial for two reasons: 1) Winter was the first scholar to identify the region and the style as a distinct entity, separated from the region of greater Syria and Phoenicia; and 2) Winter specifically defined the geographic boundaries of this region during the first millennium B.C. and generally described its topographic features during this period as reconstructed from ancient sources and modern observations. These are the features of landscape which would have been witnessed and observed by the Assyrians, thus recreated in text and image. While it is important to describe and differentiate the entity of North Syria from surrounding regions, it is however critical to understand that the empirical description of the North Syrian landscape that Winter gives and that will be used here is less important than is the Assyrian *perception* of that landscape which will be discussed later in chapter five.

The term "North Syria" is a modern one, which was given to the region after World War I by European powers dividing up the Middle East.⁶⁸ The Assyrians for the most part, would name the individual city with which they were concerned; however, they referred to the area collectively as "Hatti". The term "Hatti" was ultimately derived

⁶⁷1973, p. 33ff.

⁶⁸In effect, the region between Anatolia and the Tigris/Euphrates river valleys was divided between France, which received control of Lebanon northwards, and Britain, which controlled from Lebanon south to Egypt.

from the word “Hittite” which was the Assyrianized name of the Anatolian kingdom that moved into North Syria during the second millennium B.C., and therefore it denoted the ancestral population, from the Assyrian standpoint, of the first millennium city-states.⁶⁹ Furthermore, “Hatti” was distinguished from the Assyrian term “Aram”, which referred predominantly to the people and cities of modern south Syria.⁷⁰

The region of North Syria, to ancient and modern people alike, is delimited by the Taurus mountains on the north, the Amanus mountains on the west, the Orontes River valley on the south, and the Euphrates river on the east (see Figure 1).⁷¹ The region was not a unified political entity as was Assyria, but consisted of a number of city-states which controlled their surrounding agricultural plains. The cities were generally governed by local dynasts who mustered their own troops, negotiated their own foreign policy, and collected their own taxes. During the ninth through eighth centuries B.C. the city-states of North Syria were slowly brought under the political and military authority of Assyria at which point, they would have lost all independent power to negotiate their own foreign or domestic affairs.⁷² When faced with the oncoming expansionist Assyrian army, the cities had two choices, they could either resist and attempt to fend off the larger and

⁶⁹Winter notes that the inhabitants of North Syria did not refer to their homeland as “Hatti”, and that a native collective term for the region did not exist, probably because the region was not politically organized into a single unit. (1973, fn 5, p. 34)

⁷⁰Winter notes that the term “Hatti” in Assyrian texts, “became increasingly vague [in Assyria] as time went on.” (1973, p. 92)

⁷¹Winter, 1973, p. 77, and map, p. 36A

⁷²For a fuller description of Assyrian history, see Appendix One.

better-equipped Assyrian army, or they could capitulate and become a vassal of the Assyrian king. In either situation, the city-states of North Syria yielded vast quantities of raw and finished goods to the Assyrians, whether collected as plunder after the battle, or given as tribute in order to avoid destruction. By the beginning of the seventh century B.C. and the reign of Sennacherib, all of North Syria was under the effective control of Assyria.⁷³

The core cities of North Syria that are mentioned in the Assyrian texts, and from which the Assyrians receive goods, are Carchemish, Arpad, P/Hattina=Unqi, Sam'al/Zincirli, Gurgum and Kummuh.⁷⁴ Winter also noted that certain cities which lay in the boundary areas during the early first millennium B.C. might also have been considered part of the region of North Syria by the Assyrians, though she refers to these as "peripheral" areas of North Syria.⁷⁵ They include: Guzana (modern Tell Halaf), Hadatu (Arslan Tash), Bit-Adini (Til Barsip), Milid (Malatya), Que (Cilicia) and Hamath (Hama).⁷⁶ Thus when any product is called "North Syrian" in this study, it will be assumed that it was originally produced by the cities lying at least within that core region

⁷³It should be noted that at various points in this two-hundred-year period, certain city-states or coalitions of North Syrians did effectively resist and rebel against the Assyrians through military force or refusal to deliver tribute. Though never admitted in the Neo-Assyrian texts, the very fact that the Assyrians had to return often and repeatedly to certain pesky cities such as Carchemish suggests that the Assyrians did not encounter easy foes in North Syria. For a complete account of North Syrian history during the first millennium B.C., see Klengel, 1992.

⁷⁴Winter, 1973, p. 77

⁷⁵Winter, 1973, p. 35

⁷⁶Winter, 1973, p. 35.

and probably also within the peripheral region. In sum, the term which will be used in this study, North Syria, is problematic since it is a modern phrase, yet suffices to pinpoint geographically for modern readers the region which the Assyrians referred to as Hatti, and the region which produced ivories in a particular style.

The landscape of North Syria and its major geological features were also discussed by Winter in her 1973 dissertation.⁷⁷ Winter demonstrated that North Syria during the first millennium B.C. was topographically diverse. The region included high mountainous areas with dense pine forests on its northern and western fringes, including the Amanus range. The region also contained wide and fertile open plains peppered with oak trees in which much of the rain-fed agriculture was practiced, such as the plain of Jerablus where the city of Carchemish was located.⁷⁸ The areas of North Syria closer to the Mediterranean coast were more humid and tropical and thus were able to produce abundant fruit trees. Additionally, parts of North Syria consisted of drier regions of steppe or desert with relatively little vegetation, especially the southern fringe. Above all, North Syria is today and was in ancient times inundated with rivers and their fertile valleys, including the Euphrates, the northern edge of the Orontes, and a number of other small rivers such as the Sajur, and the Kara Su. These rivers were important trade and transportation routes during the first millennium B.C.

Winter also systematically addressed the style of art that is found on the

⁷⁷1973, pp. 39-40.

⁷⁸1973, p. 41.

monumental architecture of North Syrian sites.⁷⁹ She identified a general consensus that a ‘local style’ of art existed in North Syria, meaning that there are several shared stylistic elements in monumental stone art found at various sites throughout the region.⁸⁰ Thus, it has been possible to identify a cohesive regional style of art in North Syria and in monumental as well as minor works. In the last few chapters of her dissertation, and in subsequent articles, Winter then identified which of the North Syrian cities were producing ivories based on iconographic and expressive parallels with their excavated stone monuments.⁸¹

Winter’s work on defining precisely what is meant by “North Syria” and the “North Syrian style” was the basis for later research by herself as well as other scholars. Her isolation of centers of production either influenced or occurred concurrently with work that Mallowan and Herrmann were conducting on a homogeneous group of ivories found in room SW7 of Fort Shalmaneser, *Ivories from Nimrud III*, published in 1974. While Winter’s focus was on both the iconographic and expressive qualities of these works, Mallowan and Herrmann focused entirely on iconography in order to isolate the origin of the SW7 ivories. The majority of their commentary was listed under the heading “Iconography” (pp. 9-35). This section was divided into discussions of the individual subjects on the SW7 panels, including sub-sections on: “Banquet Scenes”;

⁷⁹See especially Orthmann, 1971.

⁸⁰The local style can also be seen on non-monumental art, for example bronze bowls, many of which have been found outside of North Syria proper. See Winter, 1987.

⁸¹1973, pp. 154-378; 1976a; 1981b.

“The Winged Sun-Disc and Shepesh in the Sun-Disc”; “Identification of Trees and Flower, the Lotus”; “Men wearing cut away coats”; “Men wearing tunics and overskirts”; “Men wearing ‘vase-hat’ helmets and long coats”; “Men wearing dresses, variously sashed, shawled and belted”; “Dress with girdle and ‘sash’”; “Dress with an ‘Assyrian-style’ girdle and ‘shawl’”; “Belted dresses”; and “the Ladies”. The remainder of the catalogue was devoted to a comparison of these iconographic motifs with stone monuments from North Syrian sites. The main impetus for their discussion was to suggest which individual city, among a list of many, could have produced the SW7 ivories, though Mallowan and Herrmann never did actually choose a single location for their production. The commentary was capped off with a “Tabular Resumé of the Evidence Bearing on SW7” in which the “evidence” listed in the table was entirely iconographic.⁸² Mallowan and Herrmann’s *Ivories from Nimrud III*, therefore, was inspired by the culture-historical model of isolating individual styles based on iconography and subsequently equating the styles with a geographic origin.

At about the same time that Winter and Mallowan and Herrmann were trying to tweak out the definition and origins of the North Syrian style, there was also a corresponding discussion of the development of the Assyrian style of ivory carving with the publication of Mallowan’s *Ivories from Nimrud II* in 1970. This was spurred by Mallowan’s discovery of ivories carved in the Assyrian style in various rooms of the

⁸²IFNIII, p. 62.

Northwest Palace and in the Nabu Temple.⁸³ Though he wrote that “ivories of the Assyrian style form an obvious and well defined [sic] category,” the only definition of the Assyrian style which he gave was that the style consisted of “flat plaques carved with incised designs of subjects and persons familiar from the palace bas-reliefs and other stone monuments executed between the ninth and the end of the seventh century B.C.”⁸⁴ Mallowan also wrote decidedly: “It is clear that none of these ivories need to be described as Syrian or Phoenician.”⁸⁵ There was no list of attributes given to the style which paralleled Barnett’s and Winter’s discussion of the Syrian and Phoenician styles, as it was presumed that most readers would have been familiar with the native Assyrian style. In a later pamphlet on the ivories, Mallowan defined the Assyrian style more precisely, relying upon subject matter and iconography. The Assyrian ivories “depict scenes familiar from the Palace bas-reliefs: banquet scenes, and episodes of war; processions of tributaries presenting spoil to the king and his courtiers, and prophylactic figures often represented as winged genii.”⁸⁶ Since the central concern of the *Ivories from Nimrud II* catalogue was to distinguish between royal workshops within the Neo-Assyrian period by attributing certain ivories to either the ninth or eighth centuries B.C., it was not until his 1978 pamphlet that Mallowan canonized the characteristics of the native Assyrian style.

⁸³N&RI, pp. 93-164 and 231-288.

⁸⁴IFNII, p. 1.

⁸⁵IFNII, p. 1.

⁸⁶1978, p. 13.

These characteristics were later tweaked by Barnett in 1982.⁸⁷ The following list will summarize the characteristics of the Assyrian ivories:⁸⁸ (See example, Figure 6)

A. Iconographic Elements:

- 1) The Assyrian style ivories are characterized by a lack of Egyptian hieroglyphs or iconography.
- 2) There is a general similarity between the ivories and narrative and religious subjects in the reliefs. Characteristic subjects include: Tribute processions, banquets, battle narratives, religious figures such as genies and mythological battles, geometric motifs such as rosettes and palmettes, kneeling goats and bulls usually symmetrically opposed to one another, and schematic plants and trees.⁸⁹
- 3) There is a preponderance of narrative images on the Assyrian ivories.

B. Stylistic Elements:

- 1) There is a preponderance of figures in the characteristic twisted profile of the monumental reliefs and a corresponding lack of frontally-facing figures.
- 2) There is also a balance between “*plein et vide*” and a resulting lack of *horror vacui*.
- 3) The ivories are characterized by schematization of musculature on humans and animals where divisions of muscle groups are indicated with incised lines.
- 4) The figures have traditional Assyrian physiognomy including rounded noses, strong chins and olive-shaped eyes.

C. Material Elements:

⁸⁷1982, pp. 40-41.

⁸⁸There were in addition to those Assyrian ivories found at Nimrud a group of ivory plaques from the so-called Treasure of Ziwiye which resemble in style and subject matter the Assyrian style. (See Wilkinson, 1975) Since these ivories were not excavated properly, we can not be sure of their authenticity, date, or origin, and thus they will not be discussed here.

⁸⁹Barnett, 1982, p. 40 and Mallowan, 1978.

- 1) There is a preponderance of flat plaques that are either incised or, less often, in low relief.
- 2) The ivories were joined to the frame or each other through bitumen-glue or ivory, wood, or bronze pegs.
- 3) There is evidence for prolific use of the compass to draw circles.⁹⁰

Mallowan's catalogue was consumed with the chronological attribution of the Assyrian style ivories as each catalogue entry concludes with an *italicized* line reading either "9th century" or "8th century". Occasionally he even listed the name of the Neo-Assyrian king whose reign produced the ivories. Most of his assignments of date were based on Madhloom's discussion of chronology in the monumental reliefs found in the Neo-Assyrian palaces.⁹¹ He therefore relied on subtle iconographic details such as the number of spokes on a chariot wheel or the hairstyle of male figures. With its focus on chronological development and iconography, Mallowan's *Ivories from Nimrud II* fit squarely into the typological arguments and assumptions of the culture-historical archaeology. By this time, (and perhaps this is due to the great amount of time it takes to ready a catalogue for publication) his obsession with chronology seems slightly anachronistic since scholars such as Winter were working concurrently on other topics.⁹²

The greater variety of material which Mallowan and others had to work with after

⁹⁰Barnett, 1982, p. 41.

⁹¹1970.

⁹²To be sure, he writes in the Preface to this catalogue that he intended to publish a supplemental Commentary volume to IFNII to work out further the "minor details" referred to in the catalogue and to attend to the iconographic significance of the ivories. (p. v)

his excavations and the publication of Barnett's *Catalogue of Nimrud Ivories* and ivories from other sites in the Near East resulted in Winter's further positing of a South Syrian school of ivory carving. Winter's South Syrian style consisted of "traditional Phoenician iconography in squat 'un-Phoenician' proportions."⁹³ This South Syrian school was teased out of Barnett's Syrian grouping and was characterized by a "balance between the frontality, movement and fuller use of space of the North Syrian style, and the tendency toward Egyptianizing elements, attention to detail and technical skill of the Phoenician."⁹⁴ It was a hybrid subset branching off from both the Phoenician and North Syrian/Syrian styles. Its hybrid stylistic situation resulted in Winter's assigning a "hybrid" geographic origin to the South Syrian style. Whereas the North Syrian ivories were produced to the north of the Orontes river, the South Syrian ivories were produced in areas to its east and south, mainly around Damascus and Aleppo and in Israel.⁹⁵ Winter's main intention was again to pull the grouping strategy away from issues of iconography so prevalent in Mallowan's work and towards more expressive qualities of the objects. Thus, she suggested that ivories exhibiting purely Egyptian iconography need not be Phoenician if their formal characteristics, e.g. the proportion of figures, were un-Phoenician. She was especially interested in attributing geographic origins to a series

⁹³Winter, 1981b, p. 105.

⁹⁴1981b. Later, Herrmann would agree with Winter's grouping, but disagree with her terminology and her desire to locate origins of the school precisely in "South Syria". Herrmann therefore refers to this grouping as the "Intermediate" tradition (see 1992a and 1992b).

⁹⁵1981b, p. 101.

of ivories that had been found outside of Nimrud, in areas of Syria, but which were nevertheless seemingly identical to ivories found at Nimrud. Specifically, ivories found at the sites of Arslan Tash, Samaria, and Khorsabad were attributed by her to the South Syrian school. Several subjects were problematic to Winter based on a purely iconographic grouping because they exhibited characteristics of all three styles, the South Syrian, North Syrian, and Phoenician groups. These problematized subjects include the genres known as the “women-at-the-window” (Figure 7), “cow suckling calf” (Figure 68) and “grazing stag” groups which had been previously identified by Barnett as Phoenician.⁹⁶ An example of Winter’s argument will demonstrate how she had come to problematize certain motifs on the Nimrud ivories.

The “woman-at-window” motif depicts the heads of women wearing long hair or wigs and necklaces enclosed within architectural frames resembling windows. These ivories have been found at Nimrud as well as many other sites. Barnett classified these women-at-window ivories as Phoenician primarily on the basis of the “Egyptian wig” worn by the women and the “Tyrian” windows at which they appear that were mentioned in the Talmud.⁹⁷ However, Winter noticed the physiognomic variety found on these women. While some plaques exhibited broad faces and pinched mouths reminiscent of North Syrian physiognomy, others showed narrower faces, pointed chins and smiling mouths reminiscent of Phoenician physiognomy. She attributed these differences to the

⁹⁶CNI: woman-at-the-window, p. 145; cow and calf, p. 143; grazing stag, p. 152.

⁹⁷CNI, p. 145.

South Syrian and Phoenician schools respectively, thus siphoning off her South Syrian grouping from the Phoenician grouping.

These problem subjects, in which a single motif was represented in many styles, caused Winter to caution once more against attributing origin according to iconography and to suggest a *koine*: “divisions into groups cannot be done entirely on the basis of iconography as there seems to have been a common pool of motives and themes in the ninth-eighth centuries B.C. shared by most of the Levantine cultures, who similarly shared many cultural and religious traditions. Therefore, the means of distinguishing between art works would have to be not on the presence of motives so much as in aspects of style: the use of space and proportion, the repetition of certain details, etc.”⁹⁸ Yet the interest was still largely culture-historical and diffusionist, as Winter’s argument basically assumed that the farther away from a direct Egyptian influence, i.e., from a Phoenician source, the less Egyptianizing and the more “North Syrianizing” would be the style.

Winter’s interest in “isolating significant sub-groups within the major styles”⁹⁹ and in the production and exchange of motifs touched off a number of similar analyses and responses by Georgina Herrmann, Mallowan’s student who was assigned the enormous task of publishing the ivories after his retirement. She had first collaborated with her mentor on the initial catalogue which published ivories according to their

⁹⁸1981b, p. 105.

⁹⁹1981b, p. 130.

findspot, room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser.¹⁰⁰ The main intention of the commentary to her next large project, publication of the ivories from room SW37 of Fort Shalmaneser, was to support earlier hypotheses proffered by herself, Winter and Mallowan that “ivory production was not confined to a few centres but was a ‘major industry’.”¹⁰¹ A secondary intention of catalogue was to relate the heterogeneous group of ivories found in room SW37 to the three styles of ivory as defined previously. Thus her goals were similar to those of Barnett, Mallowan and Winter.

However, the means through which Herrmann accomplished these goals were somewhat different. Herrmann’s first bone of contention with earlier analyses revolved around not methodology but terminology. She was hesitant to assign specific modern terms such as Phoenician, South Syrian and North Syrian to the three styles and called for “a fresh start in the terms used to describe the various styles, terms trying to avoid too specific a geographical or ethnic basis until such time as the different schools of carving can be located with some reasonable degree of certainty.” She wrote: “The term ‘North Syrian’ has therefore been replaced by ‘northern tradition’ and ‘Phoenician’ by ‘southern tradition’, with ‘intermediate’ covering those ivories showing influences from both northern and southern traditions.”¹⁰² This danger exposed, she then went on to isolate no less than twenty-one subgroups found within room SW37 at Fort Shalmaneser, each with

¹⁰⁰IFNIII, 1974.

¹⁰¹IFNIV/1, 1986, p. 6.

¹⁰²Ibid.

varying degrees of correspondence to the northern, intermediate and southern traditions.

These groupings were not organized according to any consistent criteria, rather

Herrmann's grouping methodology differed from both her mentor, Mallowan's and

Winter's, in that her groupings combined elements of iconography, expression, and

functional and technical characteristics as the table below shows:

<u>Herrmann's Section Heading</u>	<u>Apparent Criteria for Grouping</u>
I: Plaques, nos. 1-257	Functional
II: Pyxides, 258-92	Functional
II: Panels with humans, 293-417	Functional, iconographic
IV: Mostly sphinxes and griffins, 418-641	Iconographic
V: Long Panels, 642-763	Functional
VI: Panels with floral motifs, 764-887	Functional, iconographic
VII: The 'round-cheeked and ringletted' group, 888-922	Iconographic or expressive
VIII: 'Provincial style' figures, 923-39	Expressive
IX: Panels with one curving side, 940-951	Functional or technical
X: Monochrome 'Egyptianizing' panels, 952- 73	Iconographic and technical
XI: Inlaid 'Egyptianizing' panels, 974-1048	Iconographic and technical
XII: Openwork panels with <i>cloisonné</i> decoration, 1049-105	Technical
XIII: <i>Cloisonné</i> panels, 1106-70	Technical
XIV: <i>Champ-levé</i> plaques, 1171-214	Technical
XV: Incised and stained, 1215-36	Technical
XVI: Geometric designs, 1237-50	Iconographic
XVII: Panels with outward-curving sides, 1251-70	Functional or technical

XVIII: Inscribed ivories, 1271-3	Functional or technical??
XIX: Human masks, statuettes and parts of statuettes, 1274-1340	Functional and iconographic
XX: Lions' masks and panels, statuettes and parts of statuettes of lions, sphinxes, etc., 1341-1450	Functional and iconographic
XXI: Miscellaneous fragments, 1471-572	No criteria

These groupings were further varied in the second chapter of her commentary in which she attempted to find iconographic, expressive and technical parallels across her sections. For example, within Sections IV-VI, all of which constitute panels, we find: "The 'triple flower group'"; "The 'pointed ear' group"; "The 'Scaley wing' group"; "The 'sharply curved collar' group"; "Sphinxes with heads represented frontally"; "The 'beaky nose' group"; "The 'flame and frond' group"¹⁰³; "Group with haunch-markings"; "The 'excised eye' and 'drilled eye' groups"; and "Flora".¹⁰⁴ The seemingly functional distribution which her sections set up were sub-grouped according to other qualities. In chapter four, these sub-groupings were then identified with a particular tradition, whether northern, southern, or intermediate, though she did not attempt to pinpoint exact centers of production or cities which could have produced the ivories, as she stated in the first place that she would not attempt such precise maneuvers. Boggled down in terminology and labels, Herrmann's ivory catalogue represented the epitome of the taxonomic urge so

¹⁰³This grouping alone was the focus of a short article published by Herrmann, 1989.

¹⁰⁴IFN IV/1, pp. 13-18.

prevalent in the culture-historical method. However, with its attention to techniques and function, it was also centrally situated within and therefore influenced by and influencing the next phase of ivory studies that I have identified, the functional-material phase.¹⁰⁵

Phase Four: Functionalism and Economics

With the building blocks of the culture-historical model, ivory scholars in the late 1970's and 1980's sought a socio-cultural explanation for the stylistic differences seen in the ivories. What emerged were several assumptions based on functionalist archaeology. This approach, which was championed by the archaeologists Childe and Binford, saw the material record as a means to explain and understand systemic human behavior.¹⁰⁶ The ivories were seen to take part in the entire social and cultural system of the Near East of the early first millennium B.C. The ivories were considered at this point less artistic style than *craft*. The organization, techniques and economic functions of the craft of ivory-carving and furniture-making became a focus of investigations. This socio-cultural functionalism was exemplified theoretically in Winter's dissertation, an early interpretation of the functionalist approach, which discussed the economic impact of Assyrian expansion on the workshops of North Syria, and in many of her later articles which examined the role of minor arts in cultural emulation and influence.¹⁰⁷ The functionalism was manifested in a more empirical way in Barnett's *Ancient Ivories in the*

¹⁰⁵In fact, chapter 7 of the catalogue commentary is devoted to "Tools and Techniques".

¹⁰⁶Another phase which Trigger has developed. (1987, pp. 244-288)

¹⁰⁷1977; 1987; and 1989b, pp. 322-32.

Middle East of 1982, which included chapters on raw material procurement, furniture assembly and workshop organization.¹⁰⁸ In addition, Herrmann was adamant about defining more precisely the “schools” of the ivory styles according to their techniques of manufacture. This was most clearly exemplified in *Ivories from Nimrud IV* where photographs of the backs of the ivories, showing their mortises and tenons, were placed alongside images of their frontal designs. It could also be seen in Herrmann’s statements regarding her precise groupings in the catalogue and other works. She wrote of her ‘Flame and Frond’ school, which she placed in the northern tradition: “While the musculature, physiognomy and foliage are the most obvious, these purely stylistic criteria can be reinforced by technical aspects, such as pegged inlays, the use of the centred bit, and the carved backs of openwork panels.”¹⁰⁹

In the 1990's the focus has remained on the socio-cultural significance of the Nimrud ivories. Irene Winter has turned to other aspects of Mesopotamian art and thus has written less recently that addresses the Nimrud ivories in detail.¹¹⁰ In the meantime, Herrmann’s most recent catalogue of Nimrud ivories, *Ivories from Nimrud V*, retains a focus on the technical aspects of the ivories. Her focus in this catalogue remained on identifying ivories which may be grouped into single centers of production. She used this

¹⁰⁸1982, Chapter 1: “The Elephant”; and Chapter 2: “Ivory Working and Ivory Workers”.

¹⁰⁹1989, p. 88.

¹¹⁰An exception is an article in a recent festschrift regarding the Phoenician style of art and its reception in Homeric Greece. (1995b)

catalogue to “reverse” earlier attributions she had made regarding certain sub-groups within the three stylistic traditions. She also pushed the scholarship, albeit briefly, into a new realm with a novel interest in the consumption and display of the ivories, rather than their production. This was achieved through her elaborate discussion of the function of each room in which “small collections” of ivories were found in Fort Shalmaneser and on the styles present within them. Her discussion was based on the functions of rooms ascribed by the excavator in charge of Fort Shalmaneser under Mallowan, David Oates, in the preliminary reports which were published in the journal *Iraq*.¹¹¹ This most recent catalogue contains the first comprehensive list of each major room in which the ivories were found and is therefore an excellent body of reference for chapter three of the present study which discusses the relative distribution of ivory styles within the entire city of Nimrud. Herrmann writes: “the distribution of different types and styles of ivories is significant because location may indicate both where pieces were used and which ones might have belonged together.”¹¹² Her goal in this exercise of elaborating archaeological context was to determine the “personal preferences” and “decorative schemes” of the people who used the main suites of the Fort.¹¹³ This interest was most likely influenced by studies in the 1980's which looked at the decorative programs of the monumental reliefs of the Assyrian palaces.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹D. Oates, 1961 and 1962.

¹¹²IFNV, p. 1.

¹¹³IFNV, p. 3.

¹¹⁴For example: Winter, 1981a; Russell, 1987; and Marcus, 1987. •

Herrmann's analysis of the distribution of ivory styles within Fort Shalmaneser determined that Assyrian style ivories dominated the corpus in official rooms of the building, and especially the T and S-wings, which represent respectively the king's residence and the administrator of the fort's residence. This allowed her to conclude that "the Assyrian king, when acting in an official capacity, chose to use furniture embellished with designs symbolizing the conquering power of Assyria, rather than that decorated with the art of the cities and states he had defeated."¹¹⁵ Herrmann suggests that the "royal workshops" which produced ivory in the non-Assyrian traditions would have utilized and displayed ivories in the same manner within their own cities. Thus the significance of the foreign styles of ivory within their native cultures is identified by her as one of "propagandistic" impact within the "processes of the formation of state art."¹¹⁶ To Herrmann, the ivories gained meaning as symbols of power produced within and displayed as a unique and very politically significant "visual language".¹¹⁷ The central issue with this statement lies however, in the fact that the art of the defeated cities states was kept in the palaces of Assyria, and this cannot be explained away as mere happenstance. While this reasoning is central to a discussion of the consumption and meaning of ivories, it nevertheless fails to address the significance and impact of the foreign styles of ivories within the *Assyrian milieu* that they were found, and this is where

¹¹⁵IFNV, p. 41.

¹¹⁶1992b, p. 76.

¹¹⁷IFNV, p. 42.

the present study is at once indebted to and departs from Herrmann's work.

Conclusion

This historiography has shown that the interest in the Nimrud ivories was first provoked by their exotic or anomalous nature in the mid-nineteenth century. Once excavated, the task of sorting out their anomalous nature and of pinning down their precise stylistic characteristics as well as the origins or their production came to the fore. This task was conditioned and driven by the typologizing urges prevalent in archaeology at the time, known as the culture-historical approach. This approach focused at first on the iconographic differences within the Nimrud ivories, secondly on their expressive, and then finally on their technical differences. The results of this focus in the late nineteenth and most of the twentieth century has been a definition of four different styles of ivory-carving, the North Syrian, South Syrian, Phoenician and Assyrian styles which are all found to some degree at Nimrud (as well as at other sites in the Near East). In the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's, the focus then turned to the economic and socio-cultural significance of the ivories within the cultures which produced them. In the early 1990's the focus finally turned towards the consumption of the ivories.

Like the socio-cultural studies of the 1980's and earlier in the 1990's, the present study uses as its building blocks the definitions of style set down in the first three phases of the study of the Nimrud ivories. That the North Syrian and Assyrian styles may be readily differentiated to modern art historians is clear. Each of these styles includes a differential treatment of iconography, expressive qualities, and technical or material characteristics. What is not clear from this modern stylistic differentiation is whether a

similar differentiation would be recognizable to the ancient Assyrians.

Chapter Two: Assyrian Recognition and Appreciation of Foreign Goods

Introduction

The previous chapter has demonstrated that the North Syrian style of ivory carving may be formally differentiated from the native Assyrian style at least from the standpoint of several modern archaeologists and art historians. The Assyrians too recognized the differences among the several styles of objects funneled into their royal coffers. This recognition, perhaps even appreciation, of stylistic difference ultimately caused the Assyrian kings to collect ivories carved in the foreign North Syrian style. It is reasonable to assume that the Assyrians recognized and appreciated their own style of ivory-carving, and as has been suggested by Herrmann, this appreciation may be witnessed archaeologically through the distribution of many Assyrian ivories throughout the official rooms of the royal buildings at Nimrud.¹¹⁸ But the evidence for the recognition and appreciation of non-native products, whether ivory or otherwise, is more rare and indirect. A relative paucity of lengthy passages regarding native or foreign ivory products in the textual corpus necessitates that our discussion be broadened to include Assyrian references to all foreign goods, including those of North Syria which are not made of ivory. With this broader data set, we will be able to suggest that if given a choice between acquiring products from foreign lands and acquiring those same goods produced in their native Assyria, at least the official sector of Assyrian society would

¹¹⁸For a discussion of Herrmann's suggestion of this royal decorative preference, see above, chapter one, part two.

frequently choose the foreign products. This preference for foreign goods was mitigated by several characteristics of those goods, including the location of their production, the identity of their previous owners, their rarity and their relative quality.

Nature of the Textual Evidence:

The types of texts which most frequently refer to foreign objects are the annals and royal building inscriptions which summarized both commemoratively and annually the events of the kings' reigns. Many versions of these historical texts have been excavated from the Assyrian capital cities of Ashur, Nimrud, Khorsabad, and Nineveh. The Assyrian written language used cuneiform characters which had been introduced into Mesopotamia in the much earlier Sumerian period (ca. 3200-2500 B.C.). The use of Sumerian words was a normal phenomenon throughout all of Mesopotamian history and they were incorporated into written documents well beyond the Sumerian period. The Assyrian royal scribes therefore combined Sumerian words, called sumerograms, with the native Assyrian words in their texts. The sumerograms often were used by the Assyrians as determinatives, which were ideograms placed before or after a word in order to mark certain classes of nouns, for example, "person" (*LÚ*), "geographic locale" (*KUR*), "type of wood" (*GIŠ*) and the plural marker (*MEŠ*). In transliterations, the sumerograms as determinatives are written with upper case letters and the native Assyrian words which the determinatives modify are written with lower case letters.

The historical texts described the individual battles encountered by the kings on their campaigns and listed exhaustively the objects of booty and tribute which they plundered or received from foreign enemies and vassals. These narrative texts were

arranged chronologically by the regnal years of each king. They were recorded on stone bas-reliefs and thresholds in the royal residences and on clay or stone tablets deposited in palace and temple archives or in pits under foundation walls. The texts were composed and recorded by professional scribes who trained throughout their lives in royal scribal schools. The kings were rarely literate and not able to compose the texts themselves, yet they would have been involved in the composition, content, style, and tone of the text which they directed their scribes to create.¹¹⁹ The texts are generally terse with little self-conscious reflection or extemporization--the main focus was on the military narrative and the formulaic enumeration of goods which were brought into the royal coffers.

Because the royal inscriptions were normally fairly terse, the references to booty and tribute within them were relegated to formulaic lists which punctuated the narratives of action. A few generalizations may be made about these lists, based on a studied perusal of the royal inscriptions. By formulaic, I mean that they were repetitive from one inscription to the next and from one reign to the next, and they rarely deviated from an accounting of standard items procured in any one lot of tribute or booty. The most

¹¹⁹It is not clear how involved the kings would have been in the creation of the texts. Many of the kings were illiterate. The exception was king Aššurbanipal (668-627 B.C.) who bragged of his literate abilities in his inscriptions. It is important to remember, however, that although themselves illiterate, the kings would have been interested for political purposes in the control of information recorded in those texts which were addressed to the elite literati as well as to the illiterate general public. In addition, the act of creating inscriptions on stone in Assyria was an expensive one commanding the resources to feed and support the scribal schools. Most likely, only the kings had enough power and resources to support these scribal schools and with their patronage, they may have influenced the scribes. For more on the relationship between scribes and kings, see Tadmor, 1986, and Russell, 1991, p. 9.

common items mentioned in the lists were everyday utilitarian items used for food or transportation, for example: oxen; mules; sheep; wine; barley; horses; and chariotry. In addition, the commonly listed items included imported metals such as silver, gold, tin and bronze. Many of the tribute lists also itemized classes of people given to the Neo-Assyrian kings as “diplomatic gifts,” for example members of the vassal’s family or harem. In addition, the booty lists included references to captive people who were forcibly deported, including members of the enemy’s royal family, members of the enemy court, artisans, soldiers, and unskilled people of all ages and both genders. Most often these more common items were listed in what I will call a generic form, with the plural marker *MEŠ* (if required by the noun), and without enumeration or further description. Less often, the precise number of a particular class of item taken or received was listed next to the item.¹²⁰

However, there were brief occasions when the Assyrians decidedly took time out from their lengthy battle narratives and formulaic lists to describe in detail a particular object or style of workmanship which was encountered during the campaigns of the army and king. It is in these pointed phrases, which I will call embedded descriptions, that a recognition and appreciation of foreign goods may survive. The embedded “asides” consisted of brief adjectival phrases within the context of the formulaic lists of booty or tribute in which the visual and material characteristics of a single object were described. These lengthy passages served two purposes. First, they demonstrated that the objects

¹²⁰For the significance of numbers in the Assyrian inscriptions, see De Odorico, 1995.

were taken from or given to the Assyrian kings--that they were the obvious consequence and result of Assyrian military prowess and might. Second, they brought a specificity to the formulaic lists by demonstrating that if such a piece could have been so intricately and uniquely described it must have truly existed, and it must have existed in the hands of the Assyrian king. The embedded descriptions rhetorically authenticated the existence of the objects which they described. Furthermore, an object that warranted such intricate and detailed description must have been a fitting possession for an Assyrian king to acquire.

The long, embedded descriptions therefore validated the existence of the plundered and gifted objects through their specificity while at the same time they described glorious items befitting only a king. These embedded descriptions might also be classified as a limited *ekphrasis* in that they were rare occasions of expository writing within the historically and militarily-focused annals. The term *ekphrasis* was first used by Hermogenes of Tarsus in the second century who writes simply that *ekphrasis* "is an account with detail; it is visible, so to speak and brings before the eyes that which is to be shown."¹²¹ I would argue that the brief asides should be considered examples of Assyrian *ekphrasis* based on this definition. For the inclusion of the adjectival phrases was not absolutely necessary within the context of the formulaic lists. This embedded *ekphrasis* was politically motivated, not mere description, and its inclusion was driven by the political and symbolic values attributed by the scribes and kings to the objects

¹²¹Hermogenes, from *Progymnasmata*, quoted by Holly, 1996, p. 9.

described. Thus the lengthy descriptions of certain foreign objects punctuated and highlighted the lists of acquired objects.

In general, the tribute and booty lists became increasingly longer and more descriptive as time progressed from the Middle to the Neo-Assyrian period. By the time of Aššurnasirpal II, the first king of the Neo-Assyrian period, the booty lists began to take on considerably more detail. Instead of the generic itemization of objects (for example a text might list “flocks, sheep, cattle, silver and gold I captured”), the later inscriptions began to incorporate into their lists descriptions of individual objects, for example: “silver, gold, cattle, one inlaid couch, one gold scepter, one gold bracelet inlaid with lapis lazuli, etc.”

By Sargon II’s reign, the descriptions of foreign objects reached their most detailed stage and may be described as “embedded description” or “embedded *ekphrasis*” as discussed above. A letter written for the king to the god Ashur¹²² gives the best example of an elaborate description of foreign products, and therefore deserves a full citation.¹²³ This letter describes the treasure of the Temple of the god Haldi of Urartu, a rival land to the immediate north of Assyria, which was captured by Sargon in his eighth

¹²²Ashur was the chief deity of the Assyrian pantheon. This deity handed down the powers and offices of rulership to the kings who were responsible for the maintenance of the land and the completion of the gods’ duties on earth. His primary shrine was located in the city of Ashur, but there were several other temples dedicated to him in each of the capital cities of Assyria.

¹²³The letter was first published by Thureau-Dangin (1912). The letter was translated in English by Luckenbill (ARAB II, 139-78) and most recently collated, transliterated and translated by Mayer (1983).

regnal year. The letter describes all of the military events leading up to the discovery of the temple treasure and then launches into an almost delectatious description of the goods which the king's army discovered in the temple:

My officials and officers I sent to the temple of Haldia. [The statues of] Haldia, his god and Bagbartu, his goddess, together with the great wealth of his temple, all there was, --X+4 talents, 3 minas of gold, 162 talents, 20 minas, less 6/36 of silver, 3,600 talents of rough copper, 6 shields of gold which hung right and left in his house and shone brilliantly, with the heads of snarling dogs projecting from their centers (lit. hearts), and containing 5 talents and 12 minas of shining red gold.....[fragment missing].....the *aštarti* [female goddesses] of its doors, which had been cast from 2 talents of fine gold; 1 bolt of gold, a human finger (in form), the fastening of the door-leaf--on top of it crouched a winged dragon, 1 peg of gold to secure the lock to strengthen the barring of the temple, to guard the heaped-up treasure and property, two keys of gold (shaped like) protecting goddesses wearing the tiara, and bearing maces and rings, their feet planted upon snarling dogs, the four of them (constituting) the lock of the door; ornaments of the shrine, which weighed 2 talents and 12 minas of gold, and secured (lit. held) the door-leaves; 1 great dagger of gold, the sword of his hand, which weighed 26 3/36 minas of gold; 96 lances of silver, *gurpisis* of silver, bows of silver, spears of silver, whose setting and inlay were of gold, 12 great shields of silver, whose edges were ornamented with heads of dragons, lions and wild-oxen....¹²⁴

This intricate description continues in the same manner for several lines. It demonstrates that the scribe (presumably commanded by the king) took the time to describe single objects acquired in one transaction. As discussed above, its detail renders a degree of ekphratic "truth" to the otherwise formulaic list of generic items. It also demonstrates that certain items required or deserved more description than others due to their pleasing

¹²⁴Luckenbill, ARAB II, 173

or interesting decoration.¹²⁵ This becomes most clear when in the phrase directly following Sargon's "embedded description" of single bronze objects in the temple treasure, mentioned very briefly are the generic "silver, gold, and bronze" which were taken from elsewhere in the besieged town; they do not warrant descriptive attention and are seemingly less important.¹²⁶ The juxtaposition of the two different classes of objects demonstrates that certain objects were held in higher esteem than others. The assumption here is that because certain items encountered abroad were described in more detail, they had more appeal than other items.

Sargon's letter to Ashur, arguably the most extensive embedded description in the royal inscriptions, is a rare glimpse into Assyrian *ekphrasis*. Yet there are shorter adjectival phrases which describe foreign objects that hint of some sort of recognition and appeal, both within the royal inscriptions and within other types of texts. A series of letters and administrative dockets found in the Neo-Assyrian palace archives further support the identification of an Assyrian recognition and appreciation of foreign goods. These administrative documents dwell on the logistical difficulties that the provincial officials encountered in the foreign territories under Assyrian control. The majority of

¹²⁵Zaccagnini has commented on several other passages in the Assyrian annals which include long descriptions of enemy "habitat", citing, for example the annals of Aššurbanipal which describe the palace of Susa invaded by his armies including "the temple tower of Susa, which was made of blue bricks, [and] its horns made of shining cast copper." (1982, p. 416)

¹²⁶See: Appendix Two; Luckenbill, ARAB II, 174; and Mayer, 1983, 406: "This does not include the objects of gold, silver, lead, copper, iron, ivory, maple, boxwood, and all other kinds of wood, which the soldiers of Assur and Marduk had carried off from city, palace and temple in countless quantities."

these texts describe the transport and receipt of booty and tribute from captured foreign territories. Like the annals they are frequently in inventory form, listing quantities of particular foreign items which were received by the palace administration. Analysis of these two types of textual evidence, chronologically ordered historical texts with their embedded descriptions, and administrative documents, will demonstrate that an Assyrian appreciation of foreign objects and art existed in the early first millennium B.C.

A Native Assyrian Sense of Value

When searching for an appreciation of foreign goods, it is helpful to first examine whether a native Assyrian sense of value was attached to locally made goods. Hence, the Assyrian ability to contemplate their own works deserves attention here. Several scholars have attempted to reconcile western notions of the term “aesthetics” with Assyrian conceptions of beauty.¹²⁷ They suggest that Mesopotamian phrases translated as “well-formed”, “vigorous”, “luscious” and “brilliant,” when describing objects of native manufacture, may be substituted for the singular western concept of “beauty.” The Assyrians were conscious of what appealed to them, yet they did not have a single, all-encompassing term for those appealing qualities that a work might furnish, rather they had several specific terms that referred to different affects.

Assyrian Recognition of Cultural Difference

Before a discussion of Assyrian recognition of specific foreign goods can begin, it is also important to show that the Assyrians recognized cultural difference in general.

¹²⁷See: Winter, 1989a; 1994; and 1995a. Compare Garelli, 1990.

The Assyrian recognition of cultural difference has been demonstrated frequently in studies which have focused on the “ethnographic”¹²⁸ differences displayed in the narrative battle images on the bas-reliefs. These differences were marked by iconographic details such as facial attributes, hairstyle, and costume. It is generally agreed that Assyrian artists and scribes often accompanied the army on campaign in order to record not only the details of battle, but these “ethnographic” characteristics of the enemy.¹²⁹ The “ethnographic” accounts of foreign people and things were not relegated to mere description. Rather, these intricate discussions and depictions of foreign people and territories in the texts and images served a rhetorical purpose within Assyrian ideology, asserting the “reality” of the narrative, thus the “truth” of the outcome of the narrative, i.e. Assyrian domination and superior abilities.¹³⁰ The more elaborate and detailed the description, the greater the apparent veracity of the depiction of people and events.¹³¹ Moreover, within this political context, the Assyrian recognition of cultural difference was manifested because these foreigners were represented as not merely different, but stooped, and slanted, thus amoral, and inhuman.¹³² In sum, the recognition of cultural

¹²⁸See: Zaccagnini, 1982; Cifarelli, 1995, pp. 271 ff.; and Cifarelli, 1998. Compare Wäfler, 1975. For a discussion of representations of foreigners on Assyrian ivories, see Mallowan, N&RI and II, and IFNII, 1970, *passim*.

¹²⁹For a discussion of Assyrian war artists taken on campaign, see Reade, 1981, p. 154. For images of artists found in Assyrian reliefs, see King, 1915, pl. LIX.

¹³⁰For a more detailed discussion of Assyrian ideology, see chapter four below.

¹³¹See Winter, 1981a and Marcus, 1995a.

¹³²Cifarelli, 1998.

difference in Assyria was inextricably linked to political ideology.¹³³

An Assyrian Recognition of Foreign Objects

It is also relevant that the Assyrians recognized *objects*, produced by cultures other than their own. In anthropological archaeology, the interest in foreign goods within a period or culture is explained in terms of influence or borrowing in a diffusionist manner.¹³⁴ A culture “influences” or is “influenced by” another through the incorporation into their native works of certain stylistic elements that are characteristic of another culture’s objects.¹³⁵ The assumption is that the artisans must first have recognized the difference in order to have incorporated it into their native works. A second assumption holds that “borrowed” stylistics must have been acquired either through direct contact, i.e. face-to-face exchange, or through indirect contact, i.e. long distance trade or down-the-line exchange. The presence of the North Syrian ivories in numerous buildings at Nimrud suggests that the Assyrians who had access to those buildings at least at some point had direct contact with these foreign goods. The mechanisms and nature of that contact and the composition of the “audience” of those goods will be discussed further in chapter three. But for now, we may assume that some component of Assyrian society had direct contact with the foreign ivory goods. The claims made within the historical texts by the kings further suggests that at least the kings, who were responsible for their

¹³³For this conclusion, see Zaccagnini, 1982, p. 417-8.

¹³⁴For more on diffusion in archaeology, see above, chapter one, part two.

¹³⁵For more on previous interpretations of stylistic influence, see Conkey and Hasdorf, 1990 and Carr and Neitzel, 1995.

acquisition, and the army, which was responsible for their transport, had direct contact with the foreign goods that reached Assyria.

The royal inscriptions and monumental narrative art tell us that foreign goods reached Assyria through military and diplomatic means, as booty or tribute respectively.¹³⁶ It is also possible that the ivories reached Assyria through trade, though this possibility is rarely admitted in Assyrian cultural production.¹³⁷ The question remains, however, once the goods reached Assyria, was there a conscious recognition of foreign goods and how was this acknowledgment expressed? Moreover, if there was an Assyrian appreciation of foreign goods, what qualities of those goods contributed to their appeal?

There are a few instances in the Assyrian annals where there is clear recognition of goods produced in different styles. The nouns *nepeštum* and *epištum* in Akkadian are derived from the verb *epēšum*, “to create, to build, construct or manufacture”.¹³⁸ As

¹³⁶These references and images will be discussed in detail in chapter three below.

¹³⁷The inscriptions and reliefs might have masked the fact that items were acquired more peacefully through trade by claiming that all foreign objects arrived in Assyria through military threat. For more on the ability of the inscriptions to mask economic policies, see Marcus, 1987, p. 89. The classic essay on trade in the first millennium B.C. was written by Oppenheim (1967). A more recent volume was devoted to trade in the ancient Near East for many time periods. (Lackenbacher, 1992) For the ivory trade, Winter used a variety of different sources and arguments to reconstruct the trade routes and logistics during the first millennium B.C. (1973, pp. 381-514 and 1987, pp. 209 ff) See also Barnett (1982, pp. 14-16) for a brief discussion of the mechanics of the distribution of ivories.

¹³⁸*nepeštum*: CAD N/2, p. 106; *epištum*: CAD E, p. 241; *epēšum*, CAD E, #2b, pp. 196-201.

nouns derived from the verb, they are translated as “handiwork, or workmanship typical of a region.” These two terms were used interchangeably as synonyms to refer to foreign objects. In the context of booty and tribute lists, these two words appear in adjectival phrases as references to the geographic origin of the handiwork, i.e. “handiwork of their land”, *(n)epeštum KUR-šunu*, or “handiwork of the land of Geographic Name”, *(n)epeštum KUR.GN*. I suggest that the Akkadian words *epištum* and *nepeštum*, “workmanship,” may be reconciled with a modern notion of “style” as discussed above in chapter one. “Style” encompasses all aspects of the work, including its expressive, material, and iconographic characteristics.¹³⁹ The references and contexts given for these words in the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* infer that an object which is deemed an *epištum*, or a *nepeštum* was a finished piece which exhibited skill and expertise in its manufacture.¹⁴⁰ Winter has argued that the value of a work in Mesopotamia was derived to some extent from the skill imparted in its manufacture.¹⁴¹ The appeal of an object would therefore have been directly linked to the processes and circumstances of its production. The adjectival phrases involving the words *epištum* and *nepeštum* in the booty lists linked the skill exhibited in the finished handiwork with the specific geographic name of the place where this skill and mastery occurred. The phrases emphasized that the objects were the end result of production processes, and that these

¹³⁹For this application of style, see above, chapter one, part two.

¹⁴⁰Other definitions of *epištum* given by CAD are, for example, “manufacture, finished structure” and “act, activity, achievement, accomplishment” (CAD E, p. 241).

¹⁴¹1995, p. 2571-72.

production processes occurred in foreign regions. From this I would argue that the Assyrians composing the tribute and booty lists recognized that the production of objects occurred in foreign regions, thus there was a recognition of foreign workmanship, or “style”.

The use of the words *epištum* and *nepeštum* in connection with foreign products contrasts with the corresponding use on occasion of the word *šiprum*¹⁴² in texts referring to works which were created by native Assyrians.¹⁴³ The word *šiprum* too has connotations of skill and completeness, but this skill was attributed not to foreign craftsmen, but to the gods and kings of Assyria. The use of *šiprum* has broad applications in the pet projects of the gods and kings. For example, Sennacherib “had [his] palace built with the skill of clever architects.”¹⁴⁴ *Šiprum*, as skill, is a quality which is not limited to manufactured objects: Aššurbanipal describes his literacy as a *šiprum*, or skill: “the highest level of the scribal art, a skill which none among the kings preceding me had learned.”¹⁴⁵

There are many references to the *šiprum* of the kings and gods which extol their skills and virtues at various projects within Assyria. In contrast, the references to foreign manufactured goods within the context of booty and tribute phrases are rare. Most often

¹⁴²CAD Š/3, pp. 72-84.

¹⁴³I do not mean to infer here that *nepeštum* and *šiprum* are used exclusively for foreign and native products respectively, rather that *nepeštum* could have been used for both, but *šiprum* was reserved for objects skillfully made by an Assyrian king or god.

¹⁴⁴*ina šipir*. Luckenbill, 1924, p. 129, 57.

¹⁴⁵Translation from CAD Š/3, p. 83.

these references involve a juxtaposition, in which two different types of foreign goods from two different regions are compared.¹⁴⁶ The clearest example of this juxtaposing recognition of foreign workmanship comes from the letter to the god Ashur which we have discussed above that was written under the direction of king Sargon II and discovered at the city of Ashur.¹⁴⁷ The letter refers to “[1]20 great and small bronze objects, in the workmanship of their [Uratian] land, whose names are not easy to write”¹⁴⁸ and “393 silver bowls, heavy and light, the workmanship of Assyria, Urartu and Habhu.”¹⁴⁹ These two brief passages clearly demonstrate that Urartian workmanship was recognized and that its differences were sharp enough to elicit juxtaposition, thus comparison, with the Assyrian and Habbian styles of workmanship.¹⁵⁰ The foreign nature

¹⁴⁶Pasztor has examined a similar situation of style juxtapositioning in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica. At Monte Albán in Oaxaca, two figures were carved in differing styles and placed adjacent to each other on a temple relief in order to indicate ethnicity. (1989, p. 19-20) This would be an interesting visual correspondence to the textual example I have given.

¹⁴⁷Winter (1981a, p. 34, fn 18) and Oppenheim (1960) suggest that this important “letter to a god”, of which there are other examples from the later Assyrian period, was meant to be read aloud to the elite literati as well as to the illiterate general public.

¹⁴⁸*epišti KUR.šunu*. Mayer, 1983, IV, 364.

¹⁴⁹*nepešti KUR.Aššur KUR. Urartu KUR.Habhi*. Mayer, 1983, IV 383. I thank Dr. Oscar Muscarella of the Metropolitan Museum of Art for this reference. In the case of the term *nepešti KUR.Aššur*, the word *nepeštum* was used for a native Assyrian object. I would argue that in this case, since the formulaic context did not require or allow a description praising the Assyrian objects, that the word *nepeštum* was used. Therefore, the term *šiprum*, with this explanation, can still be used to describe Assyrian objects skillfully wrought. Habhu is located north of Assyria and south of Urartu according to a map in SAA I, 1987, endpocket.

¹⁵⁰The events of Sargon’s eighth campaign to Urartu are also illustrated in lost slabs from Khorsabad (Botta and Flandin, 1849-50, pl. 140-1 and Reade, 1981, fig. 14-

of these objects was underscored by the inability of the scribes to produce a known Assyrian word for their form as indicated in the adjectival phrase, “whose names are not easy to write.”¹⁵¹ This passage is significant because it demonstrates that the Assyrians not only recognized their native style, but they recognized at least two other types of foreign workmanship, those of Urartu and Habhu. Another Sargon reference discusses objects from the island of Cyprus which the king had conquered during a campaign through North Syria. The objects include “gold, silver, utensils of maple and boxwood, of the workmanship of their land”¹⁵² which were brought to Babylon into the presence of the king. The exoticism of the objects from Cyprus is underscored through an adjectival phrase which describes the great distance of this realm from Assyria, “situated a seven days’ journey in the sea of the setting sun.”¹⁵³

There are two products from North Syria in particular that elicited recognition in the royal inscriptions. First, North Syrian (or Hittite) ships were recognized as a separate

15). Various articles of booty were depicted in the reliefs, including some specific pieces described in the letter; however, the depictions are Assyrianized. The subjects are Urartian, for example, cow-shaped bronze vessels, yet the style is Assyrian, as would be expected since the depictions occur on Assyrian reliefs created by royal artists. For more discussion of the Assyrianization of foreign objects in the reliefs, see chapter three, part three, below.

¹⁵¹My view is contra to Oppenheim, who has argued that the forms of the objects themselves were not “the aside of an impatient scribe, but should be understood as said with tongue in cheek in the hope of eliciting a mild guffaw from the audience.” (1960, p. 143)

¹⁵²*nipišti KUR-šunu* (my translation). Fuchs, 1994, Prunkinschrift 145-148. Originally published in Winckler, 1889, pl. 35, l. 148.

¹⁵³Fuchs, *ibid.*

genre of object and second, North Syrian architectural designs were remarked upon.

Sennacherib's inscriptions refer twice to "Hittite ships" which Sennacherib had procured in Nineveh and in Til Barsip and which were used in battle against the Babylonians.¹⁵⁴

In a related phrase, a Sennacherib inscription used the word *epištum* overtly when it referred to "Hittites, plunder of my bow, I settled in Nineveh. Tall ships, of the workmanship of their land they built dexterously".¹⁵⁵ It is not clear why Sennacherib preferred to use Hittite ships in these battles, or at least why he mentions that he does, but it is possible that the particular workmanship of the Hittite ships was considered superior for the purpose of crossing a wide river, as was done in that battle. The two versions of the phrase, either with or without the use of *epištum*, produce the same message: these were North Syrian goods used by the Assyrian king for a fitting and necessary purpose. Clearly it was not the appearance of the Hittite ships that rendered them superior, rather their design and their utilitarian function. But it is significant that the Assyrians decided to look outside their native land for boats, which were surely available there. This is the

¹⁵⁴*ellipātī KUR.Hatti*. Frahm, 1997, T173, 10'; Luckenbill, 1924, p. 38, 37 and ARAB II, 329. It is possible that inclusion of a specific reference to boats of Assyrian manufacture in a Sargonic letter (*elippātī Aššurate*) was necessary in order to distinguish those boats from the foreign (North Syrian?) boats. (Parpola, 1987, # 56, p. 52) These Assyrian boats were used to transport stone for the construction of Sargon's Khorsabad palace. While the Hittite boats may have had a specialized military function, i.e. the transport of troops, the Assyrian boats might have served for transportation of heavy materials.

¹⁵⁵*elippatī epišti KUR-šunu...ibnu nakliš*. Translation from Luckenbill, 1924, 73, 57-59. A commentary without full transliteration or translation is given in Frahm, 1997, T29 (Bull 4), p. 117. However, Frahm did transliterate and translate fully a duplicate of these lines found on a prism from Nineveh, T15. (1997, p. 102)

first hint of not just a recognition, but an appreciation of foreign finished products and this is intimated with the use of the word *nakliš* to describe the Hittite workmanship. *Nakliš* comes from the verb, *nakālum*, meaning “to act cleverly, to execute in an ingenious artistic, refined, sophisticated way,”¹⁵⁶ thus the positive connotations of this adverb are clear. Moreover, the admiration for the skill exhibited by the Hittite shipbuilders fits well with Mesopotamian concepts of beauty as discussed above.

An Assyrian appreciation for foreign goods is also recognizable in references to architectural elements which were borrowed from Hatti. In fact, the most explicit references to workmanship of North Syrian origin involve the Assyrian recognition of North Syrian *architectural* workmanship that occur especially in Sennacherib’s reign. These references to the architectural workmanship of North Syria suggest that the Assyrians were familiar with the style of North Syrian architecture. It is possible that this familiarity allowed the Assyrians to consciously incorporate re-configured North Syrian architectural designs into their native monumental architecture.¹⁵⁷ The most flagrant borrowing of an element of North Syrian architectural workmanship is the *bit-hilani*, translated “house of hilani.”¹⁵⁸ All Assyrian kings from the reign of Tiglath-pileser III

¹⁵⁶CAD N/1, p. 155.

¹⁵⁷See Winter, 1982, p. 370. Winter notes that the Assyrians consciously chose *not* to incorporate eastern or Iranian influences into their art. For North Syrian artistic influence on Assyria see also Reade, 1965, p. 129.

¹⁵⁸The term consists of two elements, *bit*, which is Akkadian for “house” and *hilani*. *Hilani* is a loan word from Neo-Hittite, the language of North Syria in the early first millennium B.C., and was either untranslatable in Assyrian or left in its native language in order to refer to a precise and singular North Syrian structure. For example,

onwards mention a building (or a part of a building) “which in the language of the West [North Syria] is called a *bit-hilani*.”¹⁵⁹ The identification of these *bit-hilanis* in the actual architectural record is problematic.¹⁶⁰ The frequent references to the *bit-hilanis*, which are often associated with porticos, gateways or entrances, document the Assyrian interest in North Syrian “workmanship,” perhaps here “architectural style.” It is clear in these phrases that the Assyrians were borrowing an element which was not originally their invention, and incorporating it, however differently, into their native architectural tradition.¹⁶¹ The borrowing of a North Syrian element, that is the creation of a foreign-inspired architectural element in the Assyrian style, is an act which must be differentiated from the simple capture of a North Syrian product. The *bit-hilani* structure, which was witnessed by the kings on campaign in North Syria was impossible to transport whole-scale to Assyria. Yet it was appreciated enough to cause the kings to imitate it and this may be due to its connections with pleasure and leisure. For the *bit-hilanis* were often

it would be similar to the use in modern English of several Greek or Latin words referring to architectural elements, such as *cella*, *metope*, *architrave*, etc.

¹⁵⁹For a list of references, including this one, to the *bit-hilani* in the Assyrian royal inscriptions see Appendix Five.

¹⁶⁰The initial work on the *bit-hilani* was done by Weidhaas, 1939. The seminal work, however, on both the textual references and archaeological discovery of the *bit-hilani* was completed by Meissner and Opitz, 1940. Since then, there have been general commentaries by Frankfort, 1952 and Hrouda and Renger, “Hilani, bit” in *RIA*, Bd. 4, 1975, pp. 406-9.

¹⁶¹Winter suggests that the Assyrians did not borrow the *bit-hilani* full-fledged (a free-standing building in North Syria), rather they adapted it differently to required circumstances: “although the Assyrian kings obviously had something specific in mind, the underlying principle might have had multiple applications in Neo-Assyrian architecture.” (1982, p. 363)

constructed in the midst of the royal pleasure gardens and leisure parks of the capital cities of Assyria.¹⁶² The inclusion of the *bit-hilani* within these pleasure gardens demonstrates not only an Assyrian *recognition* of a foreign style, but a rare hint of their *appreciation* of its pleasing--expressive, functional, or both--qualities.¹⁶³ Here, it is more difficult to determine why the Hittite architectural elements were borrowed by the kings of Assyria, but it is entirely possible that it was their appearance, and not necessarily their utilitarian function, e.g. as entrances to buildings, which elicited an appreciation. I will suggest in chapter five that the Assyrians borrowed this element of the North Syrian landscape due to its ability to elicit feelings of pleasure and relaxation. The source and reason for this feeling of pleasure which the Assyrian kings sought to recreate back in the heartland was related to the pleasant odors, visions, and experiences which the kings encountered in North Syria and they will be discussed in detail in chapter five. For now, the use of the phrases referring to the *bit-hilani* in the Hittite tongue within the royal inscriptions attests to the Assyrian recognition of this foreign architectural structure.

There is another reference in the inscriptions which demonstrates an Assyrian recognition and appreciation of architectural, and specifically North Syrian, difference. A

¹⁶²For more on the connection of the *bit-hilani* to royal pleasure gardens, see: Oppenheim, 1965; Winter, 1993, pp. 27-5; and chapter five below.

¹⁶³Reade (1979, p. 335) and Oppenheim (1960) have commented on the interested audience of the Assyrian annals, and especially of the letters to the gods. Oppenheim writes of Sargon's letter to Ashur: "The text addresses itself at an audience really interested in learning about foreign peoples, their way of life, their religion and customs...an audience deeply imbued with a conscious tradition of native origin, but at the same time aware of the existence of other traditions." (p. 146) For more on audience, see chapter three, part four below.

prism from the reign of Sennacherib refers to two wings (called “palaces”) which comprised the *ekal-kutallim*,¹⁶⁴ or rear palace, at Nineveh. The inscription discusses “a palace of limestone and cedar, of North Syrian workmanship, also a large palace of Assyrian workmanship...I had them build these for my royal residence.”¹⁶⁵ This crucial juxtaposition indicates an Assyrian recognition of architectural styles. The inscription goes on to describe the building materials which were used in the construction of the *ekal-kutallim*: “On sphinxes of *AN.ŠE.TIR* stone I stood cedar columns and set the lintels of that limestone suite (on them).”¹⁶⁶ This embedded description suggests that there was an Assyrian appreciation of the *appearance* of the borrowed “Hittite” architectural element. For the columns of the structure could have just as easily been made of stone, and one could argue they may have been more structurally sound if they had been stone. Yet Sennacherib chose to construct them in the cedar timber so familiar from North Syrian landscapes in keeping with the overall “Hittite” appearance of the palace. The Hittite workmanship of the *ekal-kutallim*, or rear palace, was distinguished by Sennacherib from the Hittite-style architecture found in his *bit-hilani*, which was

¹⁶⁴The *ekal-kutallim* is most likely a pet Sennacherib name for the *ekal-mašartim* of the secondary mound at Nineveh, Nebi Yunus, which was described later by Esarhaddon and Aššurbanipal. For further discussion of the *ekal-kutallim* at Nineveh and Sennacherib’s distinction between the two architectural styles, see Turner, 1970a.

¹⁶⁵*nipišti KUR.Hatti...ipšit KUR.Aššur*. Luckenbill, ARAB II, #425 and Luckenbill, 1924, p. 129, 53-56. For recent commentary on this inscription found on the Taylor Prism in Chicago, see Frahm, 1997, T16, p. 105 and pp. 274-5. Once again, we have a case in which *epišum* is used to describe a native Assyrian object.

¹⁶⁶Translated by Turner, 1970a, p. 75.

incorporated into his *bit-appatim*, another structure at Nineveh.¹⁶⁷ We have, therefore, potentially two separate structures of Sennacherib's at Nineveh which were recognized and admired for their "Hittite", or North Syrian appearance.

Without the use of adjectival phrases mentioning the specific geographic origin of an object or structure, it is more difficult to ascertain whether the Assyrians recognized the foreignness of an object in the royal inscriptions. In the Assyrian administrative documents, however, other devices were used to indicate that in some cases, substances from different lands were acknowledged as distinct and qualitatively different entities. A juxtaposition similar to that which appeared in the royal inscriptions mentioned above occurs in various administrative documents from Nineveh which record food distributions to officials and offerings to the Ashur temple. For example, in one letter both "Assyrian sweets" and "Aramaean sweets" are mentioned, indicating that the two were recognized as different in some manner.¹⁶⁸ Similarly, other documents list "*budê*-confections" from both Assyria and Carchemish which were given as offerings to the Ashur temple, probably at Ashur.¹⁶⁹ These juxtapositions and purposeful inclusions of

¹⁶⁷On the identification of the *bit-appatim* as a separate building from the *bit-hilani* at Nineveh, see Turner, 1970a, p. 76. Turner's view is contra to that of the CAD A/2, p. 183, which equates the *bit-hilani* and the *bit-appatim*. Frahm lists the references to the *bit-appatim* in Sennacherib's building inscriptions (1997, p. 15) and seems to equate the two structures as well.

¹⁶⁸Fales and Postgate, SAA VII, # 145, 7-8.

¹⁶⁹SAA VII, # 208, r. 2-3. Compare #210, 215, 216 and 217 for a similar listing of the two types of sweets. Van Driel suggests that the commodity *budê* might refer to some sort of beverage. He notes that a ritual text from Nimrud (K796) refers in a similar manner as the royal inscriptions to two different types of beverages, the Assyrian and

geographic names indicate that the Assyrians desired items from foreign lands even if the substance was also produced in their own native country. The implication is that the “Aramaean sweets” and “Carchemish confections” had a particular taste which was different from the local goods and thus these products were sought by palace personnel. I have suggested above that some foreign products, for example tall ships, may have been appreciated in Assyria due to their appropriate or superior design or utilitarian uses. I have also suggested that the reason for the appeal of North Syrian architectural elements may have something to do with the experiences which the kings had in their original context---the authentic North Syrian landscape--and this suggestion will be further discussed in chapter five. The question remains then, how and why did the more *portable* objects of another culture appeal to the Assyrians?

Assyrian Appreciation of Foreign Objects

I have isolated three ways in which foreign goods appealed to the Assyrians. Each of the distinct appealing qualities are marked in the Assyrian texts through certain key adjectival phrases or modifying words. First, items which belonged to a specific person or place merited more description, and I am assuming held more appeal than others. Secondly, items which were simply not available in the Assyrian heartland, marked by the phrase “not found in my land”, or which were rare or unique, marked by the word “rare” (*aqrūm*) and its synonyms or by the phrase “which no fathers before me had ever seen” were considered appealing in the texts. And third, items which were of

Carchemish varieties. Van Driel further notes that each variety was associated with a distinct container: Assyrian, *DUG₂*; Carchemish, *DUG.mašitum*. (1969, p. 215)

higher quality than could be obtained in Assyria merited value and appealed to the Assyrians. These may be marked by adjectives such as “first quality” or “choice” (from Akkadian *reštum* meaning “first”), or “fine” and “goodly,” taken from various forms of the Akkadian word *ṭabum*, meaning “good.”

Origin of the Object

The origin of the goods mentioned in the booty lists and administrative documents was an important factor which was included in their descriptions. This specific inclusion of the origins of an object contributed to its appeal since it authenticated and proved its existence. References in the booty and tribute lists to items from a specific person or place are by far the most common instance of the recognition of origins, and are entirely too numerous to cite. They pepper the inscriptions and lists of objects beginning in the Middle Assyrian period and continuing through the reigns of all kings of the Neo-Assyrian period. They were marked by the determinative for land and/or people, thus phrases such as “object type X from *KUR.GN* (Geographic Name)”, or “an object Y from the tribute of *LÚ. PN* (Proper Name) of the *KUR.GN*” serve as markers of specific locales and encounters which the tribute or item of booty records.¹⁷⁰ In these cases of appeal, an object was either generically plural, referring to several of a type, i.e. “trees” or “elephants” or specific, without the plural marker *MEŠ*, translated with the article “an” or “a”, hence denoting a single piece. Beginning as early as the Middle Assyrian period,

¹⁷⁰Proper names are clearly identifiable in Akkadian because they are preceded by a masculine or feminine determinative *LÚ*. Geographic names are also easily recognizable because they are preceded by determinatives for city or land, *URU* or *KUR*.

descriptions of objects were followed by these phrases marking their original owners or origins. For example, in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I of the Middle Assyrian period, there is a reference to obsidian, *haltu*-stone and hematite “from the mountains of the land of Nairi.”¹⁷¹ The inclusion of the marking phrase *KUR.GN* demonstrates that the origin of the particular species of stone was as important as its name. Thus a particular type of stone was appealing for some visual or utilitarian characteristics as well as for the fact that the stone came from a certain well-known mine source or exotic place.

In addition to the narrative accounts, the imperial administrative records from Nineveh indicate that the Assyrians prized certain products due to their well-known origins. Aside from juxtaposing Assyrian-made items with foreign items as mentioned above regarding the Aramaean *budê*-sweets, the palace inventories listed the original production locale of a certain item. For example, it was important to include the adjective “Phrygian” in a document listing “reinforced garments” that were given or received by Abdi-milki, chief tailor at Nineveh.¹⁷² The implication is that the Phrygians, who lived in western Anatolia, were excellent garment-makers, and were well-known for creating especially reinforced clothing which had a particular purpose (perhaps in

¹⁷¹...*KUR.Nairi*. Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.87.1, viii 11-13. An interesting related specific type of material is the Kanish oak, which is marked by the phrase *GIŠ.allakaniš* (for example in the reign of Aššurnasirpal II, see A.0.101.1, vii 18).

¹⁷²*hallupatī muški*. SAA VII, #126, 4. The Assyrians called Phrygia “Muški”. Compare also an Elamite (Iranian) item of unknown description (#126, 12) and an Urartian item with a base of gold (#129, 5).

war?).¹⁷³ The listing of an item in a booty list or administrative document might have invoked in the mind of an Assyrian an image of an object with a unique shape, decoration and/or purpose. Furthermore, when the foreign objects were juxtaposed with the same item from Assyria in these lists, that foreign item may have been deemed a better-suited object, useful for tasks for which the Assyrian “brand” would not have been effective. Thus the collection of that foreign item by the Assyrian king would have been a requisite part of any booty or tribute acquisition or diplomatic gift.

There is also an instance in which not a specific locale but a generic region was well-known for a certain product. For example, there are frequent references in imperial administrative records from Nineveh to textiles that were acquired both “from the port” and “from the country.”¹⁷⁴ Again, the modifying phrase “from the GN” was included in an instance that was not entirely necessary to the context. For some reason the scribe was purposefully discriminating between the two types of garments and presumably his audience would comprehend or even mentally picture the difference in the two items. It is possible that the scribe was differentiating between the manner in which the products arrived at Nineveh, i.e. overland, or via river at a dock. However, it is equally likely that the scribe was differentiating between some aspects inherent to the goods, whether that difference was qualitative, tactile or visual.

¹⁷³Phrygians wearing their “specially reinforced” garments may be seen in reliefs from Sargon’s palace at Khorsabad. For more on the appearance of Phrygians in the reliefs, see Wäfler, 1975, pp. 190-95.

¹⁷⁴*ŠA*, *KAR* and *KUR*. See for example: SAA VII, #119-120, 3' and 6'; #120, l. 3-4 and other examples, *passim*.

In addition, a particular single item may have been appealing and valuable because it came from a well-known individual, either an enemy king or tributary. In this case, the phrases “the tribute of PN, king of GN” or “from the palace of PN” were used, and once again such references are too numerous to cite in the royal inscriptions. Often the “royal paraphernalia” of the conquered enemy is described in detail, for example a text of Aššurnasirpal II lists “a gold ring, a gold bracelet..., many ornaments from his palace the weight of which could not be determined,...a chariot of polished (gold), a gold couch with trimming--(objects) befitting his royalty” taken from Sangara of Carchemish in North Syria.¹⁷⁵ In these cases the tribute/booty lists often went into minute detail, and instead of the generic “cattle, gold, silver”, the enemy king’s equipment was listed and described, item by item. The precisely described and singular objects appealed and accumulated value for the Assyrian king due to the symbolism of defeat and capture of the person who originally owned them. The notation of the captured set of objects was as relevant and necessary as the references in the texts to the captured ruler and his territory. It is in this guise that Sargon II’s letter to Ashur warrants so much detail--because the booty captured belonged to the king and chief god of Urartu, a very formidable Assyrian foe. This obsession for origins resulted in the authentication of the objects in much the same way that the embedded descriptions authenticated the existence of those elaborately detailed objects. This is one way in which their appeal led to their collection and this

¹⁷⁵Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.1, iii 65-70. This account of Sangara’s booty is extensive and is a good example of “embedded ekphrasis” in which each important item is separately accounted. The phrase royal “paraphernalia” is translated from the Akkadian *tamlite simat-belutīšu* which reads literally: “objects befitting his royalty.”

aspect of their appeal will be discussed further in chapter three with reference to the activity of collecting.¹⁷⁶

Rarity or Uniqueness of the Object

Other items garnered appeal because they were rare or unique. The adjectives “rare” (*aqrūm*) or “unique” (*gitmālum*) were used most frequently to mark these products. As early as Tiglath-pileser I, there is a reference to “rare orchard fruit which is not found in my land”.¹⁷⁷ Another literary marker for rarity and uniqueness can be found in the phrase “Product Y which no kings before me had ever seen.”¹⁷⁸ There were products mentioned in Sargon II’s letter to Ashur, which as we have noted above, were indescribable due to their incredible newness and unique appearances, indicated in his phrase “products of their land, whose names are not easy to write”.¹⁷⁹ In addition, there were products described by Sennacherib’s scribes which at one time were exceedingly rare, yet a new source discovered by the king resulted in their relative abundance. This change in the quantity of materials is implied in the phrase “Product A or B which in the time of the kings my fathers, was solely valued for necklaces [which is now used] for

¹⁷⁶Furthermore, the objects from a particular place, acknowledged as such, may serve as pleasant and nostalgic reminders of the place from where they were brought. For more on the nostalgic function of collected objects, see chapter five.

¹⁷⁷Luckenbill, ARAB I, #254 and Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.87.1, vii 25-27.

¹⁷⁸For example with Tiglath-pileser I: “such trees which none among previous kings, my forefathers, had ever planted.” (Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.87.1, vii 18-22)

¹⁷⁹Mayer, 1983, IV 364. Zaccagnini has suggested that the Assyrian scribe perhaps received bilingual help from a local Urartian in transcribing the list of booty from Urartu but at a certain point, gave up attempting to list items unfamiliar to his particular Assyrian technological terminology. (1982, p. 415)

cow-colossi at Nineveh.”¹⁸⁰

Further evidence that rare items appealed to the Assyrians comes from a non-historical text, the so-called “Gilgamesh Letter”, an exercise given to aspiring scribes in schools. The exercise, written from the epic king Gilgamesh to an imaginary foreign tributary humorously demands tribute and is intended to mock similar official letters from Neo-Assyrian kings.¹⁸¹ Gilgamesh requests “every sort of exotic stone” for a necklace. He also demands “something novel, anything precious, exotic, which I have never seen...so I can see for myself and be struck dumb with awe.”¹⁸² This letter, though written in jest, indicates that there were criteria for tribute required by the king. As long as the gifts were rare, exotic and awe-inspiring they were satisfactory, regardless of what specific goods were sent. The conception that a king will be the first of his land to lay eyes on something has been described by Liverani as “heroic priority.”¹⁸³ Heroic priority was an important manifestation of Assyrian ideology in that it allowed each king to affirm in front of the god Ashur (and the audience of the propaganda) that his exceptional abilities deemed him worthy of governing the realm.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, a celebration of the

¹⁸⁰Luckenbill, ARAB II, #425 and 1924, p. 132, l. 72-3. See also references to a dark and “ruddy” gold discovered by Esarhaddon which “no one had yet worked for ornamental work.” (ARAB II #672)

¹⁸¹Foster, 1995, p. 368.

¹⁸²Ibid.

¹⁸³1979 and Cifarelli, 1995, p. 188.

¹⁸⁴This aspect of Assyrian ideology will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

rarity or uniqueness of an item was entirely at home in Mesopotamian aesthetics. Winter notes that the word *gitmālum* which she translates as “unique, one of a kind” was frequently used to heighten the importance of native Assyrian gods, kings, and heroes.¹⁸⁵

Quality of the Object

Certain places were known for their “choice” or “fine” (*tābum* and *damāqum*) quality products. In these instances, a product may have been found in the Assyrian heartland but was finer in quality from places outside of Assyria. The mock letter from Gilgamesh mentioned above hints at the royal appreciation of choice and quality goods when the king demands “90,000 talents of iron: pure, excellent, choice, select, scrutinized, precious...”¹⁸⁶ In addition, annalistic evidence suggests that certain regions were celebrated in the annals for their quality products. These quality products warranted their inclusion in the annals and caused the kings to seek them out as booty or request them as tribute. The most frequent products which seem to have differential qualities are wines and oils. For example, Aššurnasirpal II’s inscriptions mention that he received “fine oil” from Bit-Adini, a city in North Syria, while generic “oil” was given to him from several other cities.¹⁸⁷ Sargon II’s descriptions of choice items are more elaborate, as they tell of “wine and honey products of the gleaming snow-capped mountains, the

¹⁸⁵1995a, p. 2575.

¹⁸⁶Foster, 1995, p, 368.

¹⁸⁷Grayson, RIMA 2, A.0.101.1, I 87, using *damāqum*.

best of the land which my hands conquered.”¹⁸⁸ Here, the use of the superlative “the best” implies that some wine and honey, not from the mountains, might not have been as tasty. To Sargon, a horseman from Urartu would have been the most appreciated in his army, and his text heaped rare superlative praise on foreigners: “these people who live in that district are without equal in all of Urartu in their knowledge of riding-horses.”¹⁸⁹ Babylon was known in Sennacherib’s day for its “choicest dates,”¹⁹⁰ and the king of Sab’a in Arabia sent Sennacherib “good herbs” for the anointing of the New Year’s Temple at Ashur.¹⁹¹ Esarhaddon’s annals hints at an appreciation of the quality of foreign goods when they include a list of “good oil, honey, red and white wine, wine of the shining mountains.”¹⁹² The separate references to red and white wines and wine of the mountains may have referred to the same substance. Contrarily, they may also have described several different substances recognized in Assyria in much the same way that we refer to red and white wines from California and France today.

¹⁸⁸Fuchs, 1994, Prunkinschrift, 170 and Luckenbill, ARAB II, #74. In this case, the word used for “best” was *rešet*, the construct of *reštum*.

¹⁸⁹Luckenbill, ARAB II, #158. Zaccagnini has also commented on this rare positive evaluation given by the Assyrian scribe in this passage, citing as another example the irrigation works of Urartu described in a praiseworthy tone by the Assyrians. (1982, p. 417)

¹⁹⁰Luckenbill, ARAB II, #266 and 1924, p. 55, l. 58: *suluppī rišetešu*, literally “its [Babylon’s] first dates.” See also Frahm, 1997, T1, p. 45 for a recent commentary on this cylinder.

¹⁹¹Luckenbill, ARAB II, #440 and 1924, p. 138, l. 49: *riqqē tābūtī*. See also, Frahm, 1997, T139, p. 173 for this inscription.

¹⁹²My translation. Luckenbill, ARAB II, #646 and Borger, 1967, Babylon D, episode 20.

A letter to Sargon which describes carnelian brought from the North Syrian city of Kummuh may have referred to two different recognized grades of the precious stone, evidenced by the words “good” (*damāqum*) and “second best” (*šihlum*).¹⁹³ A similar recognition of relative quality is indicated in another letter to Sargon from an official who refers to wooden beams which had been sent to him by the king to finish royal buildings at Khorsabad. The letter points out that had the logs, which were made of fir, been cedar, then the problems of construction which the official encountered would not have occurred.¹⁹⁴ The servant was clearly demonstrating that not just any wood would do for his project, but specific types of wood and possibly from specific locales.

My central point in analyzing these texts is that in these relatively terse annals and letters, the modifying adjectives and phrases which accompanied only *some* products from *some* lands were pointed inclusions which were not always necessary to the context. This analysis of the historical and administrative texts demonstrates that the Assyrians recorded their preferences for foreign objects in very subtle manners, often with just a few modifying adjectives. The manner in which products which differed in origin, rarity or quality were frequently juxtaposed indicates that the Assyrian scribes were obligated to record these relative characteristics. The formulaic booty and tribute lists in the historical texts and the inventories in the administrative texts would have served their information purposes well without the inclusion of the modifying phrases. These texts were generally

¹⁹³Parpola and Lanfranchi, SAA V, 1990, #284, 13-14.

¹⁹⁴Using *šihlum*. SAA V, #295, 20-r.2.

intended to record the number of items stolen or received by the king and to account for their whereabouts in the royal palaces.¹⁹⁵ Yet the fact remains that the modifying phrases were added to these terse and succinct records. Their inclusion suggests that it was as important to record the qualities of the objects as it was their quantities.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to demonstrate that the Assyrians recognized differences in the materials encountered by them at home and abroad, and furthermore, that they even appreciated foreign goods due to their utility, appearance, origin, rarity, or quality. This reconstruction of an Assyrian recognition and appreciation of foreign objects was built upon the suggestion of previous scholarship that the Assyrians had their own style of art, appreciated in their own culture, and that they recognized cultural difference in general. It was suggested that the term “workmanship” could be substituted for modern notions of “style” when encountered in certain Assyrian texts, most notably with regard to the Urartian and North Syrian styles of art and architecture. Further, several instances of the juxtaposition and therefore comparison of the “workmanship” of different lands were noted in the texts as evidence for a recognition of foreign products. It was also suggested that the architecture of North Syria which was not easily transported to the Assyrian heartland was appreciated in Assyria for its different qualities, such as the

¹⁹⁵Liverani has suggested that the activity of counting and numbering which is so often seen in the tribute and booty lists as well as in the palace inventories was related to Assyrian attempts to order the universe, to render the chaotic periphery both functional and registered, thus accounted for (1979, p. 307). For more on the relationship between ideology and cosmology in Assyria, see chapter four below.

appropriateness for certain utilitarian uses as well as its “North Syrian” appearance.

Finally, the royal inscriptions and administrative documents were used as general evidence to show that an appreciation of certain key portable products imported from foreign, captured lands garnered appeal and value in Assyria. It was suggested that these foreign objects had more appeal to the Assyrians due to their geographic or ownership origins, due to their rarity or uniqueness, and due to their relative quality. While there is no direct and detailed discussion in the Assyrian texts of the North Syrian ivories, there was nevertheless a recognition of the North Syrian style of art and architecture.

Furthermore, many products from North Syria and paraphernalia from specific kings of North Syria were described in great detail and with modifying phrases which indicate that they were held in esteem by the Assyrians.

Chapter Three: The Nimrud Ivories as a Collection

Part One: The Archaeology of Ivory Collecting at Nimrud

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I showed that foreign objects were recognized and appreciated because of certain qualities. In this chapter we will move from the general to the specific by focusing on one type of foreign object, furniture and other small portable objects carved in ivory. The present chapter will suggest that ivory appealed to the Assyrians for a variety of reasons and this appeal led to its deliberate collection. Therefore, one of the central goals of this chapter is to define what constitutes a collection and collecting behavior and to demonstrate that the Nimrud ivories are a collection based on such general definitions. The definition of collecting used in this chapter asserts that collections require a degree of sorting or curational activity on the part of the collector in order to be distinguished from random accumulation. The fundamental Assyrian conception of stylistic difference which was identified above in chapter two indicates that the ivory objects stored and used at Nimrud were sorted according to their differences. Modern collecting studies have suggested that with the act of sorting, collectors are imposing their personal choices or selective processes upon the collections, and these personal choices are both conditioned by and contribute to the social or political value of their collections. This idea that collections garner and inform social or political value is paramount to this chapter. Ivory in its raw form, i.e as tusks, was highly valued as a luxury commodity by the Neo-Assyrian kings. In addition, the textual and pictorial

references to ivory in its finished form, i.e. as furniture and other portable items, demonstrate that ivory was highly valued as a political symbol, a trophy of the defeat of foreign enemies and territories. The correspondence between the texts which describe ivory and the images which depict it is sometimes striking, at other times discontinuous. Both texts and images for instance attest to the fact that ivory was collected in raw form, and especially in the earlier part of the empire almost exclusively from North Syria. Ultimately, these texts and images contributed political value in Assyria as they reinforced and highlighted the collecting behaviors of the kings, subtly underscoring the receipt of foreign goods which might have occurred in the palaces directly in front of them.

Definition of Collecting

Defining a single, unified concept of collecting is problematic. Collecting, and especially collecting of non-western objects, has become a self-conscious obsession of a post-colonial West forced to defend representations of the Other.¹⁹⁶ As a result of this

¹⁹⁶It was perhaps Edward Said's influential tome *Orientalism* (1978) which indirectly touched off this self-critical post-colonial fervor, at least in the United States. Similarly, a number of anthropological treatises have critiqued the contention that an objective, independent ethnography can exist. See especially: Fabian, 1983; Marcus and Myers, 1986; and Clifford, 1988. This critique led to another avenue of post-colonial studies, in which the imperial collecting of objects from the colonial periphery was examined. (See: Stocking, 1985; Karp and Lavine, 1991; Thomas, 1991; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Elsner and Cardinal, 1994; Coombes, 1994; and Bennet, 1995). The world of the ancient Near Eastern studies has been most affected along these post-colonial lines by Martin Bernal's *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, 1987, which suggests that Greek culture, the traditional infant of the West, borrowed some of its basic tenets from the pre-Classical cultures of the Near East and Mediterranean.

recent self-critique and emphasis on collecting's role in colonialism, an inordinate amount of attention has been paid to collecting in the literature and a number of definitions and key elements of collecting have been put forward.¹⁹⁷ The broadest definition of a collection, which I posit here, is a group of objects which are stored together at any single time or place and are possessed by an individual or institution (whether familial, social or political). In the beginning, the primordial origins and history of specific collections were the focus of scholarly attention, and collecting was identified as a universal human characteristic psychoanalytically demonstrated in the gathering activities of children.¹⁹⁸ In 1967, the French sociologist Baudrillard sought to distinguish these basic accumulative tendencies from the purposeful act of collecting. Accumulation was a form of embryonic collecting in which the cells of the collection/organism were not yet differentiated.¹⁹⁹ In order for a group of objects to become a collection, Baudrillard contended that they must in some way be subjected to an ordering or seriation procedure by a collector.²⁰⁰ Along with the concept of ordering came the related concept of selectivity and choice--a collector must at some point choose how to order a collection and a collection therefore consists of any number of interrelated sets ordered by that

¹⁹⁷For a historiography of the literature on collecting and a discussion of the many definitions of collecting, see Pearce, 1994a, pp. 4 ff.

¹⁹⁸See especially Jones, 1950 and Muensterberger, 1994.

¹⁹⁹Baudrillard writes: "At the simplest level, matter of one kind or another is accumulated: old papers are piled up, or quantities of food are stored." (1968 and 1996, p. 103)

²⁰⁰True to its age, this was an inherently structuralist concept, maintaining that all humans not only needed to ingather, but they also needed to order that ingathering.

collector.²⁰¹ The introduction of this new element of human choice brought about a more narrow definition of collecting as the conscious, selective process of an individual or institution.

The definition of collecting was further narrowed through the notion of value. This argument, put forward by the anthropologist Appadurai, maintained that an object would gain value once taken out of utilitarian circulation and hoarded or “enclaved” by an elite apparatus.²⁰² A group of objects that were gathered together by the elite but not used as materially necessary items were considered collections and the elites who took the objects out of their utilitarian context were collectors. At this point, the collection was identified as something connected to power and prestige, as it was presumed that an object taken out of circulation or enclaved would in turn accumulate more value due to its rarity and its very attachment to the elite. This new conception of enclaving brought collecting into the interactive realm, demonstrating that the behavior was inherently social, and furthermore highly political. Appadurai’s work on enclaving essentially determined that collected objects may be defined as “incarnated signs” which hold social value within a society.²⁰³ Taking all of these elements into consideration, then by the

²⁰¹See Belk, 1994.

²⁰²1986, p. 22.

²⁰³1968, p. 38. Both Pomian and Baudrillard have arrived at similar conclusions, though their vocabulary differed slightly from Appadurai’s. Baudrillard discusses the social nature of collections and identifies the collected objects as “signs.” (1968, p. 200) Pomian terms collected objects “semiophores.” (1990 p. 165) For a similar interpretation of artifacts as signs with social value, see Miller, 1985 and Thomas, 1991.

narrowest definition, a collection is a group of objects that are in some way interrelated and curated and which have social, economic or political value. Collecting is the intentional possession and ordering of a group of objects for social purposes.

Therefore, a general collecting theory distinguished between the social or political value of the collected object and its original utilitarian function. Departing from utilitarian uses, the possession of an object within a collection sets up an entirely different narrative than its mere use as an implement implies. A possessed or collected object is essentially reified by its possessor, remade to signify something completely different than its producer originally intended. The subjective telling of a new story with objects allows collections to be described as personal narratives, and much study of collecting has focused on collections as structured textual narratives as well as on the relationship of these narratives to individual and institutional discourse.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, these collecting narratives constantly revolve around self and differentiation of the self from the Other, whether that other be object or another person or institution.²⁰⁵ Collections, as narratives differentiating the self from the outside world, have been motivated by the individual or institutional urge towards identity formation. It is here that collections can be seen as inherent to a system of social values, for without the collection, the individual and institutional messages of identity involving those collected objects might not go forth to

²⁰⁴Discourse is here defined as any rhetoric, whether behavior, utterance, image, or text which takes part in power relations. It is power-charged dialogue with social and political implications.

²⁰⁵Clifford, 1994, p. 259.

an audience. Equally important is the fact that the unique characteristics of the objects which make up a collection will determine which messages will be sent forth by the collector--those distinct messages would not be possible without the unique qualities of the objects.

To summarize, the following conclusions may be drawn and a more narrow definition of collecting may be put forward:

- 1) Collections require some degree of sorting or curating indicative of selection and choice on the part of the collector.
- 2) As the result of subjective choice, the collections gathered by the collector will hold social, political and ideological value.
- 3) Collections may be used to examine the subjective narratives of identity created by those individuals and institutions who collect.

These three statements are the backbone of collecting studies and the general theoretical assumptions to which this study holds. It remains, therefore, to elucidate whether the Nimrud ivories may constitute a collection in both these broad and narrow senses.

The Nimrud Ivories as a collection by the broadest definition

First, it is necessary to examine whether the Nimrud ivories may be called a collection by the broad definition stated above. The central problem of this analysis involves whether the Nimrud ivories were in fact gathered together at a single time and place. I suggest that the entirety of Nimrud may be considered an appropriately limited enough space for the storage of a collection, and especially those public buildings at Nimrud, the royal residences and temples. Nimrud of course was not the capital of the

empire during the final two centuries of its existence; however, it was still a very important city, and was attended to regularly by the Assyrian kings.²⁰⁶ Indeed, it may have turned into a special purpose city, used entirely for the storage of important objects which could not fit into the palaces at Nineveh.²⁰⁷ The point is that the ivories *were* stored in a great, albeit former, capital city, which was still used in some capacity until the end of the Empire. The ivories were not thrown away onto off-site trash heaps, nor presumably, were they burned or destroyed before the sack of the city in 612 B.C. Rather they remained protected and secure in official royal buildings and the discovery of the ivories in those very important and closely guarded public buildings suggests that they were deliberately placed there for protective purposes.

As for time, the central obstacle to answering this question is one of dating, when were the ivories collected by the kings of Assyria? There are two types of evidence that we can use to answer this question. First, we may rely upon the annals of the Assyrian kings, who declare to us when they collected the ivories. It turns out that the tribute/booty lists of every Neo-Assyrian king for which we have major annals from

²⁰⁶Witnessed by Esarhaddon's repair of many Nimrud buildings and especially Fort Shalmaneser, even though the capital had moved to Nineveh. Also, the archives of the Nabu Temple at Nimrud contain documents which date to the end of the empire. For a discussion of Esarhaddon's additions and renovations to Fort Shalmaneser, see Mallowan, N&RII, p. 386.

²⁰⁷A letter from the crown prince Sennacherib to his father Sargon II attests to the repositorial role of Nimrud well past its use as a capitol city. Sennacherib writes "The tribute of the Ashdodites was brought to Calah; I have received it, sealed it and deposited it in the palace." (Parpola, SAA1, 329, p. 29) This letter also suggests that tribute was indeed well-cared for and specially protected under royal seal.

Aššurnasirpal II to Aššurbanipal mentions ivory in some capacity, either tusks or finished products.²⁰⁸ Thus from this evidence it can be asserted that the ivories were possessed throughout the duration of the empire. The other type of evidence is the archaeological stratigraphy of the ivories at Nimrud. Although the microstratigraphy of Nimrud as determined by many of its excavators (especially Mallowan) is useful, we are interested in the body of ivories as a whole collection. The only stratigraphic date that we can assign for certain to the body of ivories as a whole at Nimrud is the end of the empire, 612 B.C. when the city of Nimrud was sacked and burned.²⁰⁹ This is the *terminus ante quem*, or the date before which the objects must have been created and used. The *terminus post quem* of the city would be 879 B.C., or the time at which Aššurnasirpal II completed his palace at Nimrud and moved the capital from Ashur to Nimrud. Thus we know that at some point after 879 B.C. and before 612 B.C., the ivories were placed into their various locations at Nimrud, but we do not know the circumstances of that placement, whether it occurred piecemeal over several decades or centuries or all at once during a relatively short interval. I would argue that the circumstances of that placement are not important because the very existence of the objects *en masse* attests to the fact that they were received and placed in most of the major public buildings at Nimrud at some

²⁰⁸See Appendix Three and part two of this chapter on collecting texts.

²⁰⁹Winter, however, has attempted to further refine the dates of the Phoenician and Syrian schools of ivory on the basis of their production and circulation. She suggests that the Syrian ivories were mainly in circulation during the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. and the Phoenician ivories circulated in the Near East during the seventh centuries, when relatively few Syrian ivories were moving around. (1973, pp. 512-14)

point during the empire. Furthermore, their status as stored and possibly used items was continued until the end of the empire, as they were found still *in situ* within the palaces as of 612 B.C. Therefore, while it is exceedingly difficult to *closely* control the parameters of time and space, a *generalization* may nevertheless be made about the Nimrud ivories as a collection in the broadest sense: the objects were important enough to have been retained, and not discarded, for they were placed at some point (or many points) during the empire in the various royal buildings at Nimrud. At the very least, we can assert that in 612 B.C. the Nimrud ivories comprised a collection of amassed products in a single time and relatively limited space. And at the most, we can project that this collection occurred backward in time and we may deduce that the Nimrud ivories were collected in a similar capacity and secured in the royal buildings throughout the period of the empire.

The Nimrud Ivories as a collection by a narrow definition

It is when we turn to the narrower definition of collecting, involving order and value, that a more detailed analysis of the locations of ivories within Nimrud becomes essential. The principal question of the narrow definition is: how was the collection stored and were the objects ordered into interrelated sets? In order to answer this question a discussion of the distribution of the ivories at Nimrud--how and where they were stored--is required. Barnett has created the most lucid and succinct account of the many find spots of the ivories at Nimrud.²¹⁰ This account is up-to-date with the two possible exceptions of the ivories discovered deep within wells of the Northwest Palace

²¹⁰1982, pp. 50-53.

and excavated by the Iraqis as well as the ivories excavated from a number of rooms in Fort Shalmaneser by Mallowan and published by Herrmann in *Ivories from Nimrud V, The Small Collections from Fort Shalmaneser*.²¹¹

To a large extent, our knowledge and interpretation of the storage of the ivories is limited to the order and manner in which they were discovered. For example, although Layard discovered a number of ivories from several different rooms and of several different styles within the Northwest Palace, they are all lumped under the title “the Layard Ivories” in the literature and the same situation occurs with “the Loftus Ivories” from the Southeast/Burnt Palace.²¹² Despite these cautions, it would still be useful to elucidate the different groups of ivories excavated and to characterize them generally according to the styles defined above in chapter one. In this case, we will focus on their expressive style and suggest that the ivories were sorted according primarily to the manner in which the motifs and formal elements are represented and combined on the plaques. It is difficult to warrant that the Assyrian texts which used the term *epištum* referred purely to the expressive characteristics of foreign goods. However, I will argue below that it was the expressive aspects of the ivories, above all other characteristics such as their material and iconographic traits, which allowed the greatest differentiation, hence their expressive style was the curational mechanism.

Although simple numerical and statistical analyses on the relative distribution of

²¹¹See Safar and al-Iraqi, 1976 and Herrmann, 1992a respectively.

²¹²See chapter 1, part 2 for a discussion of this lot of ivories.

ivories have been performed in the past,²¹³ and such analyses will be relied upon in this study, the methodology taken here is less quantitative. A rigidly quantitative exercise might prove futile, since I have not had access to all of the ivories excavated from Nimrud due to the fact that many of them remain unpublished and in Iraq, which as of this writing is off limits to travel and study by any American. In addition, a numerical study of this body of material which seeks to quantify the distribution of ivories would prove logistically difficult due to the physical and geographic fragmentation of the material. It is nearly impossible to know, with the exception of a group of very well-preserved chair backs (from room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser, to be discussed below) how many ivories fit together into one piece, or even which fragments may have once been joined together. Therefore, any conclusions related to quantity asserted here are based on both my own perusal of the published Nimrud material and the unpublished material remaining in the British Museum, as well as on previous scholarly assertions.

Distribution of Ivories at Nimrud

General Layout of Nimrud

The city of Nimrud, ancient Kalhu, had two mounds upon which royal structures were built, the main acropolis and an auxilliary mound which held an arsenal, called the *ekal-mašartim*. Both mounds were surrounded by a substantial mudbrick city wall. The main mound of Nimrud had several large palatial structures which were predominantly constructed from the reign of Aššurnasirpal II to the reign of Tiglath-pileser III. After

²¹³See Herrmann, IFNV, pp. 25-39.

Tiglath-pileser III, Sargon II moved the capital of Assyria to Khorsabad and built a new capital, though Nimrud remained an important royal city. The early kings of the Neo-Assyrian period built several official buildings, temples and palaces on the acropolis mound (Map of Nimrud, Figure 2). They are recognized as official buildings generally by their thick stone and mudbrick walls and foundations, their expensive decorations, and the presence of royal archives. A large palace in the northwest corner of the mound was built by Aššurnasirpal II and decorated with many monumental stone reliefs. The Northwest Palace, as it is called in the literature, was subsequently used by other kings, including Sargon II and Esarhaddon (Figure 8). The palace consists of two large open-air courtyards surrounded by a number of small, narrow rooms. The smaller rooms around the large outer courtyard included a chancery wing and a throne room with a reception suite. The function of the rooms around the smaller, inner courtyard is not fully known, though the decoration on their reliefs suggest that they were used as state apartments for banquets and ceremonies. Beyond the inner courtyard lies a domestic wing which housed the living quarters and kitchens of the palace.²¹⁴ A complete accounting of the archaeological distribution of ivories from each room of the two major palaces at Nimrud is given in Appendix Two. The following is a summary of this archaeological analysis.

The Northwest Palace

The style of the ivories in the domestic rooms and wells of the Northwest Palace included Assyrian, Syrian and Phoenician examples and there does not seem to be a large

²¹⁴All of this information is taken from Reade and Postgate, 1980 and Russell, "Nimrud", 1996.

concentration in one room of any single style. This situation differs from the more public rooms of the palace in that the rooms surrounding the outer courtyard had many Assyrian ivories and those closer to the inner courtyard contained Phoenician ivories. Thus there seems to have been a rudimentary sorting into the Phoenician (rooms V, W) and Assyrian styles (rooms EA, B) at least in the more public, outer wings of the palace. The occurrence of North Syrian ivories in the Northwest palace is more limited to the domestic wing and in particular, well AJ. This analysis is based on the assumption that the final depositional spot of each ivory at least in some cursory way reflects its location during the use of the palace.

Southeast/Burnt Palace

In 1855, W.K. Loftus began excavations in the southeast corner of the citadel mound at Nimrud. He quickly came upon a large concentration of ivory objects, which today are known in the literature as the Loftus ivories.²¹⁵ These objects comprise the bulk of the Nimrud ivory collection in the British Museum. The body of material from this building at Nimrud was enlarged in the 1950's when Mallowan resumed excavations in the southeast corner of the mound. He renamed the structure the Burnt Palace due to evidence of a great conflagration which destroyed the building and its contents. The building was a thick-walled (up to 3.5 meters wide) structure containing a courtyard and a long, narrow room (Room 8) with a dais similar to the throne rooms in the well-known

²¹⁵Loftus's ivory discoveries were originally mentioned in letters he wrote home to London. These letters have been excerpted by Barnett. (CNI, p. 22-3) A general account of Loftus experiences in Iraq can be found in his work published in 1857.

palaces. It was an important residence or storehouse, connected with the royal family or elite officials. Mallowan suggested on the basis of stratigraphic evidence that the building was originally a temporary residence for Sargon II used during the construction of Khorsabad.²¹⁶ The ivories from both Mallowan's and Loftus' excavation of this area were relatively homogeneous in style and subject. It is this group of ivories which most adequately and fully exemplifies the North Syrian style of carving on the main citadel mound at Nimrud which was defined by Barnett and Winter and discussed above in chapter one.

The ivories appear entirely different in style from the Phoenician ivories discovered by Layard in rooms V, W, and X of the Northwest Palace and as a result they are often held in contrast to each other.²¹⁷ The most common ivory represented in the collection are a series of nude female "caryatid" figures which wear crowns and stand with their hands to their sides. The women stand back to back on bulbous capitals in groups of two or four forming a long cylindrical column which was probably used as the handle of a fly-whisk or stave. In addition, Loftus and Mallowan found a number of heads of females wearing diadems, presumably belonging to whole nude figures; and several pyxis fragments (with lids) depicting processions and musical scenes. Barnett was the first to suggest that the great majority of ivories discovered in the Burnt Palace

²¹⁶N&RII, p. 387.

²¹⁷See especially Barnett, 1935.

by Loftus were not only homogeneous, but North Syrian in style.²¹⁸ Mallowan generally concurred with that assignation, though he noted that a few female heads show affinities more with the Phoenician women-at-the-window motifs than with North Syrian parallels.²¹⁹ As for the pyxides, there is little doubt that they are North Syrian in style, as many parallels with stone monuments may be cited.²²⁰ Thus the ivories from both Loftus' and Mallowan's excavations in the Southeast/Burnt Palace at Nimrud appear to have comprised a group of objects which were relatively homogeneous in subject matter, and were North Syrian in style. This picture is entirely different than the more haphazard arrangements and groupings in the Northwest Palace, with the exception of rooms V, W, and X, which contained mainly Phoenician ivories. If sorting into ivory styles did occur in the palaces and royal residences at Nimrud, the Southeast/Burnt Palace ivories clearly demonstrate that seriation activity.

Fort Shalmaneser

The suggestion that sorting of ivories occurred at Nimrud is further strengthened when the distribution of ivories in the *ekal-mašartim* on the secondary mound is examined. The *ekal-mašartim* was excavated by Mallowan, assisted by David Oates, in the late 1950's and early 1960's. The structure, which was used as an arsenal and/or

²¹⁸Barnett: 1935, p. 192; 1939, p. 16; and CNI, p. 46. The assignation is due to physiognomy and parallels to stone monuments in North Syria, and in particular to Hamath. (CNI, p. 47)

²¹⁹N&RI, p. 215. Again, we may be involved here in the difference between the North and South Syrian styles defined by Winter, 1981b.

²²⁰See Barnett, 1939, p. 14 and Winter, 1973, p. 368.

review palace, was originally constructed by Shalmaneser III, thus it is almost uniformly referred to as “Fort Shalmaneser” in the literature, as it will be here.²²¹ However, it is important to point out that the structure was repaired and reconfigured by subsequent Neo-Assyrian kings, especially Sargon II and Esarhaddon.²²² The existence of a reception suite with a throne room (T1) containing a carved dais allows this building to be classified as a royal residence. It is likely that at some point during military reviews and certain ceremonies, the king would have held court, if not resided in the Fort. In addition, the building served as a storage facility, exemplified by the thousands of portable objects and military equipment excavated from it. Towards the end of the empire, when another *ekal-mašartim* was constructed at Nineveh on the secondary mound of Nebi Yunus, Fort Shalmaneser was probably used less as a residence than as a secure storage facility or repository.²²³ Later inscriptions referring to this second arsenal are nevertheless useful in identifying the function of such structures in Assyria. Inscriptions from Nineveh describe the *ekal-kutallim* in that city (which is Sennacherib’s synonym for the *ekal-mašartim*) as “filled with gorgeous furnishings, to the astonishment of all the people” which was constructed “for the care of the camp, the stabling of the horses and the storing of things

²²¹For a discussion of the function of Fort Shalmaneser and other Neo-Assyrian arsenals, see: Turner, 1970a, Reade and Postgate, 1980; Russell, “Nimrud”, 1996; and *mašartum* in CAD M/1, p. 358-9.

²²²For a full account of the excavations, purpose and history of the arsenal, see Mallowan, N&RII, *passim*.

²²³For a discussion of the repositorial function of the Assyrian palace, see Winter, 1993, p. 37.

in general.”²²⁴ The suggestion that the *ekal-mašartī* were used for storage is further strengthened by the characterization of the *ekal-mašartim* of Nineveh in an Esarhaddon prism as a structure “for setting in order the camp, mustering the steeds, the mules, the chariots, the harness, the battle equipment and the spoil of the enemy, every type of thing which Ashur the king of the gods has granted me as my regal lot, for exercising the horses (and) for maneuvering the chariot.”²²⁵ Finally, the existence of numerous excavated texts dating to the end of the empire indicates that Fort Shalmaneser at Nimrud was still an important structure in the overall imperial administrative scheme even after the capital was moved to Khorsabad by Sargon II.²²⁶

The building was structured as a series of reception and storage suites, composed of long narrow rooms, around four large courtyards (See plan, Figure 9). While the courtyards were probably used for the mustering of equipment, troops and animals, the suites of rooms surrounding the courtyards had purposes more suited to their small areas. Each of the suites had a distinctive purpose, whether as a residency for court officials, the

²²⁴This is Luckenbill’s translation. (1924, p. 128, 38-41) However, the verb used in the phrase, *sanāqum*, can also mean “to inspect, to investigate”, thus a more accurate translation might be for the “review or inspection” of all things. (CAD S, p. 133) For recent commentaries, without full transliterations, of Sennacherib’s references to the *ekal-mašartim/kutallim*, see Frahm, 1997, T16, p. 105 and T61, p. 129.

²²⁵This translation is from Turner, 1970a. For a full publication of the text, see Borger, 1967, Nineveh A, V 42-46.

²²⁶See Dalley and Postgate, 1984, p. 4 ff. This view is contra to Herrmann, who feels that the overall importance of the Fort diminished after Sargon, thus she suggests a probable *terminus ante quem* of 710 B.C. when Sargon moved to Khorsabad, for the deposition of the ivories in the Fort. (IFNV, pp. 5, 42)

king or his harem, or as storage magazines; the configuration and function of each suite has been discussed by Herrmann.²²⁷

The excavators have divided the building into several large quadrants based on the cardinal points of the compass (NE, NW, SE, SW), and labeled each room or courtyard accordingly. For example, the rooms arranged around the Southwest Quadrant are labeled "SW1-37", etc. In addition, the excavators uncovered two more wings of the palace to the south: a residential suite, the living quarters of court officials, the king and the harem when "in town" (Rooms S1-76); and the throne block (Rooms T1-28).²²⁸ The ivories from all of the rooms in Fort Shalmaneser, with the exception of the heavy concentration in room SW11/12 and room T10, both storage areas, have been comprehensively published by the British School of Archaeology in Iraq.²²⁹ Herrmann

²²⁷Ibid. See also Turner (1970a, p. 72-3) for identification of the functions of each wing of Fort Shalmaneser.

²²⁸Identified as such due to the configuration, which resembles throne suites in other Neo-Assyrian palaces, traces of painted murals, and the discovery of a decorated throne dais of Shalmaneser III in room T1 (Mallowan, N&RII, p. 443-4). On the plan of Assyrian throne rooms in general, see Turner, 1970b.

²²⁹Mallowan has published several of the ivories from SW11/12 in N&RII *passim* and those in Assyrian style from T10 in IFNIII. However these groups of ivories remain to be published in a comprehensive catalogue. Meanwhile, many of the unpublished ivories remain in Iraq, though several are scattered throughout the world in museum collections. Publication of these last two rooms has been delayed by the disruption of contact caused by the Second Persian Gulf War of 1991-2 (Herrmann, personal communication). The British School of Archaeology in Iraq (BSAI) holds the most number of unpublished ivories outside of Iraq, which are housed for conservation purposes in the British Museum. The curators and staff of the BSAI and the British Museum kindly allowed me to view these unpublished ivories in March of 1996 when I traveled to London on a fellowship from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

has already examined the relative distribution of ivory styles in the arsenal, and her conclusions will be summarized here. The major concentration of ivories in Fort Shalmaneser has been found in the SW quadrant, though additional ivories have been found in all other quadrants. A complete accounting of the archaeological distribution of ivories and general assignments of the style of the ivories in each room in Fort Shalmaneser is given in Appendix Two. The following is a summary of that archaeological evidence.

There is no single room in Fort Shalmaneser which had an assemblage of exclusively one style of ivory furniture. Yet there were several rooms which were *dominated* by a particular style. The amassing into a single room of a large number of objects carved in one style would suggest conscious and deliberate sorting of the furniture collections within Fort Shalmaneser. The room which presents the strongest evidence of sorting was SW7, which contained a great majority of North Syrian furniture, including chairs, stacked neatly against the walls (Figure 10). Rooms SW11/12 and SW37 contained a majority of Phoenician and Intermediate/South Syrian ivories, and room T10 held predominantly Assyrian ivories. While the combination of quadrants within the palace exhibit a variety of different styles, there was some specialization of rooms within the individual quadrants and especially in the largest storage area of the Fort, the SW quadrant.

The Nabu Temple

The temple of Nabu was excavated by Mallowan and his team in the 1955-56 season. It was constructed in the southwest corner of the main citadel mound, adjacent to

the Burnt/Southeast palace by Shalmaneser III. The building was used predominantly for archival storage throughout the period, as texts dating to the latest years have been found within it.²³⁰ The building was arranged around four courtyards and contained the dual shrines of Nabu (room 4) and his consort Tashmetum (room 5) as well as a reception suite and throne room (room 8). This room, which contained a dais, would have been used by the king when he visited the temple for court ceremonies. A few ivories were scattered throughout the temple and found in several rooms including the Tashmetum sanctuary. However, the vast majority of ivories from the temple were found within the throne room, lying against the front and sides of the large mudbrick dais at the narrow end of the room. Like the ivories in the Southeast/Burnt palace, these fragments were burned and embedded in a layer of ash destruction. The ivories were formed into long thin strips of veneer, either incised or in low relief, and occasionally had curved ends, as if designed for chair arms. They depicted various religious, heraldic and narrative subjects in the Assyrian style.²³¹ The long strips might have adorned a single piece of wooden furniture, perhaps the throne itself, though it was impossible for the excavators to reconstruct the sequence of fragments due to the destruction and burning which ensued in the room.²³² In addition to the large number of Assyrian ivories found in the Nabu Temple, Mallowan found less than five fragments of ivory in other styles, namely female

²³⁰Mallowan, N&RI, p. 238.

²³¹See IFNII, appendix I, p. 56 for catalogue numbers.

²³²Mallowan, N&RI, p. 251.

heads in the round in the North Syrian style comparable to the Southeast/Burnt Palace heads.²³³ The wealth of Assyrian ivories and dearth of ivories in other styles in the Nabu Temple suggests that the building was outfitted almost exclusively with Assyrian furniture. Therefore, the ivories in that building serve as excellent evidence that sorting occurred among the pieces of ivory furniture at Nimrud.

Miscellaneous Finds

In addition to the public buildings a few ivories were found scattered around the mound in various less official buildings. Mallowan excavated a small number of ivories from the Area TW53, a group of "Private Houses" along the northern side of the city wall on the main acropolis. The only major concentration of ivories in this area was found in room 43 of House VI. Among the ivories were several openwork carved bulls which advance in circular fashion, perhaps to adorn a chair leg or other columnar object.²³⁴ Many similar bulls were found in rooms SW11/12 and SW37 of Fort Shalmaneser and they are either North or South Syrian/Intermediate in style (for example, see Figure 67). In these houses there were several fragments in the incised Assyrian style with typical Assyrian subjects.²³⁵ In addition there was a unique semi-curved piece with a winged goddess in a frontal position, whose torso is nude.²³⁶ A single fragment, clearly in

²³³Mallowan, N&RI, p. 224, figs. 224-5.

²³⁴Mallowan, N&RI, p. 192, fig. 125-6.

²³⁵Mallowan, N&RI, p. 194-5, fig. 129-30, 132-33.

²³⁶Mallowan, N&RI, p. 194-5, fig. 131. It is interesting to note that the single instance of Assyrian frontality on ivory occurs in a vernacular or unofficial context of a "private house". This observation may have important ramifications for the Assyrian

Phoenician style, was also discovered in this house.²³⁷ The ivories in the private houses did not seem to have been dominated by any one style, though there was a large repertoire of Assyrian ivories. There was certainly no evidence that the ivories within the houses, though few in number, were sorted by placing a single style in a single room, as we have seen in the official buildings at Nimrud. The negative evidence from the private houses suggests that if sorting did occur at Nimrud, it was within the official buildings only and it may have been primarily a royal or elite activity.

Conclusions on Archaeological Evidence for Collecting

While we could not stipulate based on textual evidence in chapter two that the Assyrians recognized foreign goods according to their expressive characteristics, we might argue for that differentiation here. There is ample evidence to suggest that ivories were sorted according to their expressive style at Nimrud. However, it is necessary to examine alternative ways in which the ivories may have been sorted in order to rule out their potential. I have argued above that the styles of the ivories are defined according to a combination of iconographic, expressive and material aspects. It is my contention here that the recognition of style, and ultimately the sorting by style, would have been based primarily on the *expressive* characteristics of the style.

As for the material characteristics of the ivories, we must rule out that the ivories were sorted according to either technique or utilitarian function. Certainly, the technique

treatment of frontality and nudity, a topic which is beyond the scope of this study but which deserves further investigation.

²³⁷Mallowan, N&RI, p. 192, fig. 127.

of the ivories was an important differentiation for their producers, but it is highly unlikely that the Assyrian royal apparatus sorting the ivories would have been acutely aware of such technical differences since many of them were concealed behind the backs of the ivories. As for utilitarian function, Herrmann has noted that the majority of the ivories in the Fort were flat plaques carved on a single side and were probably used to decorate wooden furniture. This contrasts sharply with the Southeast/Burnt Palace ivories which were carved in-the-round and apparently used for small portable objects.²³⁸ It is possible therefore that Fort Shalmaneser was large enough to house the main furniture collections of the Assyrian kings and was used mainly for this purpose.²³⁹ However, the fragmentary nature of the ivories prevents any final assertions as to what complete objects they comprised and whether those complete objects were organized within the buildings.

There is still less evidence to support a conclusion that the sorting which occurred at Nimrud was according to subject matter. The majority of the rooms were filled with any number of diverse and/or related religious and mystical, narrative or heraldic/geometric scenes. Furthermore, the analysis by subject matter of the ivories is a tenuous exercise due to the amount of shared and reinterpreted motifs which circulated in the ancient Near East during this time period. This problem is compounded by the fact

²³⁸IFNV, p. 41.

²³⁹The building also must have housed other large objects of official Nimrud, such as the military and cavalry equipment which was found in abundance throughout the Fort. In T10 Mallowan even found the long bones of an elephant suggesting that at least in 612 B.C. the Fort was used to house large animals. (N&RII, p. 452) For more on elephants kept at Nimrud, see below, chapter five, part two.

that we often do not have accompanying texts to interpret the subjects and motifs. To say that a winged sphinx in the Phoenician style represents the same creature in the Assyrian style is a risky assertion, and one which we have been warned against. The most relevant evidence for sorting according to subject matter are the ivories from room SW7 of Fort Shalmaneser, which were extremely homogeneous in their thematic content. However, their homogeneity is remarkable for a number of characteristics, including style (North Syrian) and function (chair backs/bed heads).

As for tribute lot, a few of the ivories found in various collections were inscribed with a single line, e.g. “belonging to Proper Name of Geographic Name”. Those names can and have been linked to historical personages mentioned as tributaries in the Assyrian annals. The most famous examples of these inscribed ivories bear the name of two historical figures, Irhuleni of Hamath and Hazael of Damascus. Both were found in room T10 of Fort Shalmaneser. Mallowan assumed that these ivories were the “tags” or “labels” of the entire lot of ivories found with the inscriptions.²⁴⁰ The primary difficulty with this assumption is that not all of the ivories in a single room exhibit the style which might be expected of the vassal sending the ivories. For example, the ivories found in room T10 along with the Hazael label were Assyrian in style²⁴¹ and it would be highly unlikely that the Assyrians’ own products or gifts would have been returned back to them

²⁴⁰A similar ivory inscribed with the name of Hazael was found at Arslan Tash (Thureau-Dangin, 1931, pl. XLVII, no. 112) The problems connecting inscriptions on portable objects to historical personages have been outlined by Winter. (1981b, p. 103)

²⁴¹Herrmann, IFNV, p. 25

as tribute or booty. Furthermore, the portability and fragmentary nature of the ivories prevents us once again from joining them together even if they were found in close proximity to each other. The inscribed “labels”, if that is what the inscriptions represent, could easily have become detached from their “bundles” at any point during their movement to and within Nimrud. While it is difficult to establish whether individual rooms at Nimrud contained tribute or booty organized according to lot, it is possible to suggest that the entire buildings may have been reserved for great quantities of tribute from a specific source, as the textual references to the *ekal-mašartim* discussed above suggest. These labels serve less as evidence of sorting than as evidence of the symbolic value of ivory “trophy” collections.

I have here argued against sorting according to any characteristic other than the expressive styles of the ivories. If the distributions are later re-examined and these objects were proven to have been sorted according to function, subject, or lot, this only *reinforces* and does not negate the fact that the Nimrud ivories were organized into interrelated sets. It is the primary contention of this study, however, that the Nimrud ivories were placed in their relative positions due to their expressive style. The strongest evidence for sorting according to these characteristics occur in the following areas of Nimrud: in rooms V/W of the Northwest Palace (Phoenician); in the reception rooms of the Northwest Palace (Assyrian); in the Southeast/Burnt Palace (North Syrian); and in the Nabu Temple (Assyrian). In addition single styles of ivory predominate in various rooms of Fort Shalmaneser: SW7 (North Syrian); SW11/12 and SW37 (Phoenician, Intermediate/South Syrian); and T10 (Assyrian).

In summary, every building which holds a major concentration of ivories at Nimrud contains at least a single room which was organized according to expressive style. As for the North Syrian ivories, the strongest evidence that this group of objects was kept separately and grouped together comes from the Southeast/Burnt Palace and from room SW7 of Fort Shalmaneser. While it was not the only style to be siphoned off and left in its own "precinct," it was certainly subject to those sorting activities. Moreover, when we consider that the Assyrians consciously recognized different types of workmanship and in some cases, North Syrian work, as discussed in chapter two above, then it is possible that the distribution pattern of the Nimrud ivories reflects tangibly that conscious differentiation of foreign objects. The Assyrian palace administrators were for some reason interested in keeping certain groups of ivories together, and it appears that they selected them in some cases according to expressive style.

In this way, then, the ivory collections at Nimrud comprise a deliberately ordered group of interrelated objects stored in a relatively limited area. Therefore, they can be described by even the narrowest definition as a deliberate collection. The fact that the ivories were deliberately stored, secured and preserved within major public buildings at Nimrud and they were further ordered within those secure contexts suggest that they were both consciously appreciated and deliberately collected as foreign objects exhibiting a particular style in the Assyrian culture. While the objects must have been collected for their material itself, which was luxurious and relatively rare, they may also have been appreciated for their difference.

Chapter Three: The Nimrud Ivories as a Collection

Part Two: Textual Evidence for Ivory Collecting in the Neo-Assyrian Period

Introduction

The distribution of ivories at Nimrud is not the only evidence that ivory was deliberately collected. The texts which display and acclaim the collecting behaviors of the kings support the conclusions drawn above that the Nimrud ivories comprise a deliberate collection and that the North Syrian ivories were an important component of that collection. The royal inscriptions and historical annals demonstrate that raw ivory tusks and furniture which would have been decorated with ivory were collected by each king for which we have substantial documents during the Neo-Assyrian period (Appendix Three). Ivory was collected both in Assyria proper and while the king was on campaign. It was collected only as tribute in the earlier half of the empire and as both tribute and booty in the latter half. The following analysis is intended to summarize and describe certain *general trends* seen in the textual references to ivory and to offer tentative explanations as to why the nature of these references may have changed over time. Ultimately, ivory collecting was a symbolically charged act commemorated in historical records throughout the Neo-Assyrian period.

As a luxury good in Assyria during the first millennium, ivory was a material to which a high degree of rhetorical and social value was attached. Ivory in its raw form, i.e. as elephant tusks may be classified as a luxury good because the elephant tusks were

relatively difficult to obtain due to the danger involved in hunting elephants.²⁴² In addition, the amount of skill and time which went into creating finished ivory items out of the raw material would have added to the expensive, or luxury status of the finished products.²⁴³ The ownership of a luxury item for the most part would have been confined to wealthy and powerful individuals such as kings and princes. The presence of a small collection of ivories in a so-called “private residence” in Area C at Til-Barsip, demonstrates that ivory was not found solely in elite or royal contexts.²⁴⁴ However, I suggest that the ownership of *large* quantities of ivory would have been limited to high officials, provincial governors and kings in the ancient Near East, thus ivory may be defined as a luxury item which was possessed primarily by the elite. There are two contexts in which ivory is mentioned in the Assyrian royal inscriptions: in the formulaic booty and tribute lists, discussed above in chapter two; and in the descriptions of building projects in which ivory was used like wallpaper to adorn the walls of the palaces. Our investigation of the textual references to ivory collecting will be limited to those

²⁴²It is generally accepted that there was a local population of elephants which roamed the region of North Syria during the second and early first millennia B.C. There is ample evidence to support this consensus, including a text from the reign of the Egyptian king, Tutmosis III (fifteenth century B.C.), which proclaims that he hunted elephants in Syria as well as evidence from the Neo-Assyrian period, including textual and pictorial references to hunting elephants, which will be discussed below in chapter five. It is disputed whether the Syrian elephant was a genetic offshoot of the African or Asiatic elephant. For summaries of these arguments and references, see Winter, 1973, pp. 263-8 and Barnett, 1982, pp. 3-8.

²⁴³For more on the distinction between luxury and common goods, see Winter, 1987, p. 195.

²⁴⁴Bunnens, 1997.

references within the booty and tribute lists, since it is these ivories which may be clearly identified as coming from a foreign context.

Textual References to Ivory Tribute and Booty

There have been several attempts to list the references to ivory tribute and booty in previous scholarship, and such analyses have already demonstrated that the west and in particular North Syria, were the regions which most frequently contributed ivory to the Assyrian realm.²⁴⁵ However, rarely is the distinction made between whether ivory was collected as booty or tribute. It is essential to tease out these differences in the Neo-Assyrian royal texts, for they may translate into a corresponding difference in the type and amount of value which was accorded to collected ivory. These differences demonstrate that the royal collecting of ivory was consistent and persistent, but was not a monolithic, unchanging activity.

Aššurnasirpal II to Tiglath-pileser III

The central emphasis in the inscriptions from the early part of the Neo-Assyrian period seemed to be on the quantity of ivory products received as tribute. The objects were often listed generically in plural form and rarely was any great degree of description given for these objects. On numerous occasions, the precise nature and appearance of the ivory goods were not noted and the tribute was described only as “ivory” (*šinni-piri*),

²⁴⁵ For the most comprehensive and detailed list to date see Winter, 1973, p. 409-10. Winter’s work, however, was based on Luckenbill’s English translations (ARAB I and II) and since a great deal of inscriptions have been re-published since Luckenbill, her list is due for updating. For a very recent and full discussion of the textual references to ivory as *tribute* only, see Bär, 1996, pp. 30-56. See also Moorey, 1994, p. 117-118 and Ebeling, “Elfenbein” in RIA, Bd. 2, 1938, p. 355.

meaning literally, “tusk” or “tooth of the elephant.”²⁴⁶ In tusk form, ivory’s greatest advantage would have been economic—an ivory tusk was essentially an ivory “ingot” which had no value on its own, but which could be exchanged for other goods, and subsequently given value through its finishing. It has been suggested that the diplomatic and military policies of the early reigns, especially those of Aššurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, were partially driven by economic, as opposed to strictly territorial, gains.²⁴⁷ The booty and tribute lists may have been masking the fact that the control of ivory goods in the Assyrian empire during the ninth and early eighth centuries was achieved primarily through trade and diplomacy, despite the fact that they claimed this ivory was obtained as tribute through sheer conquest and military threat.²⁴⁸ Thus the references to generic ivory objects and ivory in tusk form which are common in these early reigns may reflect an Assyrian recognition of the economic value of raw and finished ivory products in the system of long-distance trade with North Syria and other western states.²⁴⁹ It is important, however, that the texts clearly intended to *represent* this ivory as not traded, but acquired through military threat.

Sargon II to Aššurbanipal

In the latter part of the empire, ivory objects garnered not only economic value as items of trade controlled by the Assyrians, but political value as well. As booty, they

²⁴⁶CAD Š/3, p. 51.

²⁴⁷See Tadmor, 1975, pp. 36-40 and Lambert, 1974, pp. 103-9.

²⁴⁸Marcus, 1987.

²⁴⁹Winter, 1973, pp. 469 ff.

figuratively symbolized the capture of the enemy and his territory. The figurative symbolism of the ivory booty was enhanced in this latter part of the empire through the increasingly lengthy phrases which described individual objects and the increasing variety of ivory objects included in the formulaic lists. The epitome of this great attention to detail can be seen in Sargon's letter to Ashur described above in chapter two.²⁵⁰ This ekphratic interest was discussed above in relation to the Assyrian description of all types of foreign goods. It can be related to aspects of Neo-Assyrian ideology that have been previously identified--the more detailed the description, the more likely the veracity of the events and the more likely the existence of the objects. Once again, these embedded descriptions served in creating symbolic value as they demonstrated the foreign objects were attained from certain important and worthy opponents of the king. I would argue that the symbolic value of ivory booty was enhanced in the later part of the empire with the use of the pronoun of ownership, "his." The increasing use of "his" in references to ivory booty in the latter part of the empire refer to the ivory collected which was closest to "him", e.g. "his personal property," "the property of his palace" and "his royal paraphernalia." The social or rhetorical value attached to the ivory in the booty lists from the latter half of the empire demonstrated not just the possession of generic ivory

²⁵⁰This increasing attention to visual and technological detail can be seen in descriptions of royal building projects as well. For example, a Sennacherib building inscription which refers to the bronze doors of the *Bit-Akitu* of Ashur describes in full detail the narrative images in repoussé which were created on the monument. (Luckenbill, ARAB II, #444-7) As another example, in Esarhaddon's building inscriptions, the accoutrements of his temples are described fully (Borger, 1967, AsBpA, 27-44 and Luckenbill, ARAB II, # 671-4). As a final example, in Aššurbanipal's reign, texts describe his restoration of temples and their furniture. (Luckenbill, ARAB II, # 1012-16)

goods but the royal possession of the specific ivory paraphernalia of enemy rulers.

Ultimately the control of these specific ivory goods translated into the symbolic control of the former owners of the objects.

In this brief section, we have noted that there is a general trend in the Assyrian royal inscriptions away from references to ivory tribute from North Syria and towards inclusion of references of ivory booty from major Assyrian enemies. This also can be seen as a trend away from emphasis on the economic value of generic ivory goods towards an emphasis on the symbolic political value of specific finished ivory products and their previous owners. While we have described and identified these trends and the differential treatment of ivory in the booty and tribute lists, we have not adequately explained why these trends may have occurred.

Explanations for the Differential Treatment of Ivory in Texts

Owing to a lack of self-consciousness²⁵¹ in the Assyrian texts of economic or symbolic value, I can offer only tentative suggestions for this differential treatment of ivory in the royal inscriptions, which are given below.

Material Explanation

It is possible that ivory was not given as tribute in the later period by vassals from the west because fewer of these deposed city-states *could* give large quantities of ivory as tribute. This may have been as a result, as Winter has suggested, of their political and

²⁵¹While there was little self-conscious extemporization about *policy* in Assyria, Machinist has argued that there was a certain self-consciousness in Mesopotamian texts (1986). This self-consciousness was textually manifested, however, in terms of group identity, not explicit political policy.

economic absorption into the empire which in turn resulted in a loss of autonomous ability to procure their own resources or maintain their own workshops.²⁵² It may also be due to languishing reserves of raw material, as it has been suggested that excessive deforestation or hunting by the kings of Assyria caused the Syrian elephant population to become extinct.²⁵³ The kings from the later period received most of their ivory objects not from the west, but from Babylonia or Elam. Therefore, this change in the texts may reflect a lack of production of ivory from North Syria and the west which was the consequence of the Assyrian destruction and depletion of the area's resources. Since there are no texts which attest outright that ivory was withheld as tribute because of the destruction of the local industry, the material explanation, like the following two, remains circumstantial and tentative.

Political Explanation

The second suggestion involves the political policies of the later kings of Assyria. By Sennacherib's reign, Assyria had incorporated much of the west into its provincial administration and these areas were under a fair degree of military and political control. To the east and south, however, Assyria was faced with certain very persistent rebellious enemies, including in Sennacherib's and Esarhaddon's reign, the rulers of Babylonia, and

²⁵²See Winter, 1973, pp. 500 ff.

²⁵³Moorey, 1996, p. 118. Not all of the ivory used in North Syrian tribute or booty would have come from Syrian elephants, some of it may have been acquired from Africa through Egypt and the Levant. It is possible that a material factor which could explain the lack of tribute could be related to a loss of Syrian contact with these more southerly regions due to the Assyrian take-over of the Levant in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III.

in Aššurbanipal's reign, the rulers of Elam who were allied with his brother Šamaš-šum-ukin. These rebel rulers had managed to maintain some autonomous power even at height of the empire.²⁵⁴ Because of their persistence, their downfall would have been even more important to display in texts and images and the policies of the later kings regarding them would have been some of the central themes of Assyrian cultural production from these later years. It is in this political context that an explanation for the shift from the collection of tribute to booty may be given.²⁵⁵ Fewer rebels *would* give what ivory they had as tribute willingly because they knew they could get away with rebellion and their goods could remain in their hands. Once again, a political explanation suggests tentatively that the symbolic value of the personal furniture of the defeated nemeses caused the emphasis to change through references to captured furniture as booty in the latter half of the empire.

Ideological Explanation

The final explanation that I suggest regards the ideological devices used by the Neo-Assyrian kings as discussed briefly in chapter two. Liverani has suggested that an

²⁵⁴The reasons for this are beyond the scope of this paper, but may have been a result of the Assyrian reverence towards the older, more established culture of Babylonia and the effect which that reverence had on Assyrian policy. On this, see Porter, 1993.

²⁵⁵The areas of Babylonia and Elam, to the south and east of Assyria respectively, did not have local traditions of ivory-carving, but probably amassed their own collections of ivory furniture. Professor Marc Van de Mieroop has pointed out to me that with the receipt of ivory from areas other than the west, the composition of the Nimrud collections must have been directly influenced by the collecting practices of the eastern kings of Babylonia and Elam. While this complicates the matter of how the Neo-Assyrian kings acquired their North Syrian ivory, it would be difficult to tell from the ivories themselves whether any of them were acquired indirectly through Babylonia or Elam.

ideological trend which gained popularity as far back as the Middle Assyrian period is that of heroic priority.²⁵⁶ In order to justify and legitimate his own reign, each king had to constantly display his actions as innovative and far surpassing those of his predecessors. The increasing variety of furniture and other ivory objects which are described in the texts might reflect each king's desire to surpass his predecessors by demonstrating that the objects which he had acquired as booty were far more appealing, numerous and novel than theirs.²⁵⁷ My ideological explanation suggests that each king had to demonstrate that the objects which he brought home to his heartland were even more fantastic and more politically significant than those plundered or discovered by his predecessors.

Conclusion

To conclude, the texts most clearly demonstrate that ivory, in raw or finished form, was an important component of the booty and tribute received by the Assyrian kings. The context and characteristics of the ivory-collecting activities of the kings changed during the empire, as references to ivory became less frequent but more detailed and specific with time. In general, however, no king could have risked leaving ivory or furniture out of his formulaic lists. Nearly every king received ivory from a western state and the earliest kings received their ivory almost exclusively from North Syrian states. In situations where tribute was demanded or offered, no king could have risked dropping

²⁵⁶1979, p. 308.

²⁵⁷This concern for the observation and acquisition of novel items in the royal inscriptions can also be seen in textual references to North Syrian plants and animals which were acquired by the Assyrians. These textual references will be discussed below in chapter five, parts one and two.

demands for the valuable ivory goods from the tributary state. In more violent situations during the taking of booty, no king would have left the precious and symbolically significant ivory furniture of his enemy behind. In the early years of the empire, the receipt of generic lots of furniture described in the texts might have masked the fact that much of the raw ivory was acquired through trade. The economic control of the “traded” ivory served to reinforce the image of the king as a collector of large quantities of ivory. Ivory collected as booty in the later period symbolized the political capitulation of certain formidable enemies as well as the ideological role of the king as an acquirer of novel and unique items.

While I offered three tentative explanations for this shifting treatment of ivory in the inscriptions, I could not definitively account for the policies behind the changes. The discursive treatment of ivory in the texts may be a result of internal literary and compositional practices intrinsic to the changing nature of historical narrative. However, when this dichotomy is correlated with a similar dichotomy in the pictorial images which will be discussed below, then the difference must be more than random and more than literary. Rather, the differential representation in text and as we shall see, in images of ivory as tribute and subsequently booty must have been a planned and deliberate treatment. The collection of ivory goods, as described in the historical texts was therefore a significant royal activity. This collecting behavior, however, was not a simplistic and monolithic act, but changed its manifestations according to the individual policies of each king. In sum, throughout the royal inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian period, ivory acquired rhetorical value as a significant economic and political item, through the verbal

“display” of its collection.

Chapter Three: The Nimrud Ivories as a Collection

Part Three: Images of Ivory Collecting in Neo-Assyrian Art

Introduction

The archaeological and textual proof of the collection of foreign ivory tribute and booty in the palaces at Nimrud corresponds to the depiction of foreign tributaries and prisoners, and native Assyrian soldiers carrying raw ivory tusks and finished ivory furniture towards the Assyrian king in relief images that decorated those same palaces. Ivory collecting in Assyria was a very public act, one which was displayed in the monumental art and witnessed in the tangible collections. Items of tribute and booty, whether in raw or finished form, would have been coded with value in the Assyrian culture since they symbolized the defeat of the enemy or capitulation of the vassal. The tusks which were brought to the king could have demonstrated that the king controlled the circulation of an important raw material. At the same time the heightened attention to decorative detail which is so prevalent on the images of *finished* furniture in the reliefs would have demonstrated to a native Assyrian audience that these were items of high luxury, both in material and skillfull creation. With these depictions of the receipt of ivory tribute and booty, the identity of the king as an acquirer and collector was constructed as part of the ideology in the palace reliefs. As with the royal inscriptions, however, this display had many different permutations within and between the reigns of each king. Our diachronic analysis below will show that the display of collecting was a consistent and complex phenomenon. In order to demonstrate that ivory collecting was a

public act, the audience of both the collections and the images which show collecting behavior will need to be defined and addressed, hence a discussion of audience follows this discussion of images.

Assyrian Palace Reliefs: General Remarks about Form and Content

The pictorial evidence which is used to demonstrate that ivory collecting was a symbolic public act in Assyria are the images carved in low relief on large stone orthostats. The reliefs were carved by artisans, who like scribes, would have been responsible to the king and his court. Consequently, the king and his court would have been involved to some extent in the composition and appearance of the reliefs. These orthostats were set into the mudbrick walls of the palaces in most public rooms, that is in courtyards and in state apartments and reception suites. The images were for the most part narrative in content, though apotropaic and other hieractic images existed as well.²⁵⁸ The narrative scenes generally included military battles showing the collection of booty and ceremonial scenes, including court ceremonies which showed the receipt of tribute.²⁵⁹ As narratives, these booty and tribute collecting scenes comprised a large percentage of the subjects of the reliefs.

Before we begin our discussion of the collecting scenes, I have a general word

²⁵⁸On the subjects of the Assyrian reliefs, see Reade, 1979a. On the narrative content of the reliefs, see Reade, 1979b.

²⁵⁹Hrouda (1965) has catalogued the different types of products and tribute displayed in the Assyrian reliefs. Bär complements this account with his catalogue of the types of tribute depicted in the reliefs for each king's reign. (1996, pp. 69-221 and Appendix V) For a related general discussion of tribute procession reliefs (displaying all types of products) throughout the Assyrian period, see Russell, 1991, pp. 236-8.

about the composition of the furniture that is shown on the reliefs and which will be used as pictorial evidence of the collecting behaviors of the kings. When an item of furniture was carved in low relief, there is no possible manner to identify the material of that furniture. For example, it would be impossible to tell from the reliefs that a stool was made out of wood, ivory, metal, or some combination of those three elements. Since it is difficult to differentiate between the depictions of these three types of material, it is assumed that most, if not all items of furniture shown on the reliefs contained some amount of ivory veneer in combination with the other decorative materials. Therefore, if the word “furniture” is used, it refers to furniture decorated in wood, ivory and metal.

Aššurnasirpal II

We will begin with a relief from the throne room of Aššurnasirpal II’s Northwest Palace at Nimrud (Room B), where Assyrian soldiers or courtiers bring foreign prisoners to face the king (Figure 11).²⁶⁰ This scene occurs at the end of a long series of battle narratives depicting military initiatives in North Syria, specifically near Carchemish, and is bookended on its other side by a life-sized genie which flanks the entrance to the room. Its placement and subject seem like punctuation ending the narrative sentence.²⁶¹ Prominently displayed above the head of one of the Assyrian soldiers who brings the captives into the presence of the king are two large curved elephant tusks, presumably

²⁶⁰Budge, 1914, pl. XX, 2. Originally published in this position by Meuszynski, 1981, slab 17b.

²⁶¹For a discussion of the visual syntax of the entire room, see Winter, 1981a.

meant to signify the booty which was captured by the king from these western captives.²⁶² Cifarelli has suggested that this scene, an example of a triumphal procession, was an important trope with which the kings could communicate the ideology of conquest to a broad audience.²⁶³ This image is a visual correlation to the royal inscriptions of Aššurnasirpal II which list “elephant’s tusks” as tribute from king Sangara of Carchemish.²⁶⁴ This image and the text from the royal inscriptions differ, however, on the manner in which the tusks were delivered. While the image implies the tusks were directly captured by the Assyrian army as booty, the text indicates that tusks were received from Carchemish as tribute. Yet the central message of both the texts and images is clear: the ideological control and domination of North Syria was visually encapsulated in these depictions through the physical survey and parading of its people and goods.

The receipt of unfinished ivory tusks from North Syria was a central theme in other monuments from the reign of Aššurnasirpal II. In the previous example, there are

²⁶²On the basis of the inclusion of the tusk as booty, Winter has suggested that the captives were from Carchemish (1981, p. 15). However, Cifarelli notes that the headbands worn by the captives necessitates that they were from the near western land of Suhi. She uses the depiction of head-band wearing tusk-carrying tributaries identified in captions as Suhians on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III to support her conclusions. Whether near or far western, the association with ivory tribute and campaigns to the west is clear. The tribute from Suhi might have been extracted upon Aššurnasirpal II’s *return* from campaigns further to the west in North Syria, and thus the tribute from those campaigns may have been associated with the land of North Syria through its adjacent position.

²⁶³1995, p. 267.

²⁶⁴See Appendix Three and Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.1.

no precise captions to suggest from where the prisoners originally came. Their homeland is implied from the position of the slab adjacent to battles taking place in North Syria. The situation is more clear in the case of several bronze bands decorated with *repoussé* narratives from the gates of Aššurnasirpal found at the site of Balawat. These bronze bands originally decorated the heavy cedar doors of the palaces and temples of that city. Unlike the throne room reliefs, these *repoussé* gates had brief epigraphs identifying the person or city which sent the tribute. In the absence of such precise epigraphs, certain details termed “ethnographic cues” have been used to identify the “ethnicity” and origin of the tributaries on both the gates and reliefs.²⁶⁵ These details include garments, hairstyles, and items carried by the tributaries.

Excavators have found two sets of gates at Balawat dating to the reign of Aššurnasirpal II, one which adorned a provincial palace and one which adorned the temple to the Assyrian god Mamu.²⁶⁶ On the palace gates, there are two bands which depict the receipt of ivory tribute in tusk form by the king.²⁶⁷ In both the palace bands, the tributaries have been identified as coming from the land of Suhi on the middle

²⁶⁵See Zaccagnini, 1982 and Wäfler, 1975.

²⁶⁶They date to approximately the same period as the Northwest Palace reliefs, between the years 882 and 878 B.C. These gates and their bands have yet to be fully published. Certain bands have been partially published in various short articles. For a discussion of the location of the gates at Balawat, see D. Oates, 1973 and Curtis, 1982.

²⁶⁷Unpublished bands, BM 124689 and BM 124693 described by Cifarelli, 1995, pp. 396 and 407.

Euphrates, or an area which is called the “near west” in relation to Assyria.²⁶⁸ In the typical triumphal review, Aššurnasirpal II awaits the tributaries on the left of the scene under his royal palanquin. On the gates from the Mamu Temple, the receipt of tusks from Suhi is repeated (Figure 12).²⁶⁹ On these bands, however, the foreign ruler who contributes tusks from Suhi is named “Kudurru”. The Assyrian king receives these tusks in front of the royal city of Balawat itself, which is identified on the gate by its facade and by an epigraph.²⁷⁰ We therefore have images which show that ivory tribute was paraded emphatically before a *native* Assyrian audience.²⁷¹

Aššurnasirpal also received tusks as tribute from the city of Carchemish, the same city which was perhaps represented on the battle narratives in room B of the Northwest Palace at Nimrud.²⁷² In another scene from the Mamu Temple gates, the tributaries actually issue forth from their own city, as in the background is depicted the crenellated

²⁶⁸In the case of BM 124693, this identification is unequivocal as the epigraph gives the name of the city. In the case of BM 124689, Cifarelli matched the garments of the tributaries and the composition of their tribute to the Suhi band. The epigraph is damaged and only preserves the name of the king of the city, “Sanguru”. The tributaries from Suhi also bring elephant tusks in the 4th register of the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, as will be discussed below.

²⁶⁹J. Oates, 1983, figs. 4 and 5; and Curtis, 1982, fig. 88.

²⁷⁰Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.96-7. Another band from the Mamu temple described by Cifarelli also depicts the receipt of ivory tusks as tribute before an Assyrian city, which she suggests is Nimrud. (1995, p. 422)

²⁷¹For more on these and other displays of ivory, see part three of this chapter.

²⁷²This band has not been published and has only been described thus far by Cifarelli (1995, p. 412-13).

walls of Carchemish located on a low hill.²⁷³ They head towards the Assyrian king, who awaits their audience on his chariot. This depiction suggests that the receipt of tribute occurred not only in front of native Assyrian audiences, but in front of foreign audiences as well.²⁷⁴

When the free-standing monuments of Aššurnasirpal II's reign are considered, ivory from North Syria arrives in the form of finished furniture. Correspondingly, there are references in the royal inscriptions of Aššurnasirpal II to the receipt of finished ivory furniture from many North Syrian vassals, most notably Bit-Adini, Carchemish, and Unqi.²⁷⁵ The receipt of ivory furniture is particularly evidenced on the monument known as the Rassam Obelisk which was excavated by Hormuzd Rassam in the center of the acropolis at Nimrud (Figure 13).²⁷⁶ Band C2 of the obelisk depicts bearded North Syrian

²⁷³Published in Barnett, 1973, fig. 88, third band from top.

²⁷⁴It is interesting that while the reliefs depict the tusks as tribute from both Suhi and Carchemish, in the inscriptions of Aššurnasirpal, ivory was received in the form of tusks only from Carchemish. According to the texts, Suhi did not contribute elephant tusks but live elephants (see Appendix Three). Therefore, the texts claims that elephant tusks were received only from the region of North Syria proper, whereas the images attest to a wider region from which raw tusks were given to the king. This suggests that the information source for the tribute used by the scribes may have been different than that used by the relief artists. Alternatively, if it was not necessary to accurately portray what was taken as tribute either in reliefs or texts, then both the scribes and the artists would have had somewhat free reign to choose what to list or depict. This secondary explanation is less likely, since many of the tribute lists in the annals *are* so specific. Reade suggests that the depiction of ivory furniture on the reliefs is highly detailed and the individual pieces were distinctively composed indicating a high degree of artisan interest in the accurate depiction of ivory booty and tribute (1994, p. 303).

²⁷⁵See Appendix Three.

²⁷⁶The obelisk may have originally stood opposite an entrance in a "piazza" before the so-called "Central Building" which was built by Aššurnasirpal II and restored by

tributaries wearing headbands proceeding towards the left (Figure 14).²⁷⁷ There are four captions on this monument, but they are poorly preserved, each beginning with the phrase “tribute of (*maddatum ša*)...”²⁷⁸ In general, Reade has compared the nature of the tribute mentioned in these captions and depicted in all of the images on the obelisk to Aššurnasirpal’s inscriptions and has determined that they represent foes from Aššurnasirpal’s western campaigns, possibly Patina/Unqi, in the years 873-867.²⁷⁹

The tributaries from Unqi on Band C2 carry pieces of furniture which are supported by poles slung over their shoulders. The furniture consists of a variety of items, including a table or stool with bull’s legs and hooves and a large chair or throne with a fringed seat cushion. Similar pieces of furniture are depicted as tribute elsewhere on this monument, though the details of their depiction are less clear. For example in Band A5, headbanded tributaries carry a chair with a fringed cushion on the left side of

Shalmaneser III. For a complete account of the original position, excavation and a recent reconstruction of the obelisk, see Reade, 1980c. For a discussion of the Central Building at Nimrud, see Meuszynski, 1976. The band numbers given here correspond to those proposed by Reade, 1980c, pl. I.

²⁷⁷While Reade maintains that these are North Syrian tributaries based on their garments and the nature of their tribute, Cifarelli argues that they may represent tributaries from the near West. (Reade: 1980c, p. 10; Cifarelli: 1995, p. 273) I would follow Reade for the peculiar suspended jars and oxhide ingots which the tributaries carry are associated on images from the reign of Shalmaneser III with the North Syrian city of Unqi. For representations of the jar, see King, 1915, pl. XXVI. For the ingot on the Throne Base, see Mallowan, N&RII, fig. 371a.

²⁷⁸Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.771-8.

²⁷⁹Reade, 1980c, p. 20. His suggestion was based on the observation that female musicians mentioned as tribute on an epigraph are only received from Patina in the royal inscriptions.

the composition and a table with hooved feet which is barely visible on the right side of the scene (Figure 15).²⁸⁰ On Band C7, the tributaries carry a table with hooved feet (Figure 16) and in Band C4, they carry two undecorated beds or long tables (Figure 17).

From these images, we may suggest that the Assyrian artists were attempting to depict ivory and wood furniture carved in a foreign style. It might be possible to relate the Assyrian depictions of foreign furniture to the actual pieces of furniture which have been found at Nimrud. For example, the seat from band C2 has a fringed cushion. Fringed chair cushions can also be seen on reliefs found at sites such as Tell Halaf in North Syria and North Syrian ivories which were found in room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser.²⁸¹ This type of upholstery was probably not exclusively North Syrian, but it may have been identified with that style of furniture by the Assyrians. Hence, the foreign nature of the furniture may have been signaled by certain detailed “decorative cues” to an Assyrian audience, for example the fringed seat cushion. The decorative cues would have served the same purpose for furniture that the “ethnographic cues” such as dress and hairstyle served to signal the foreign nationality of people.

Ivory Tribute on Ivories

The receipt of ivory furniture as tribute is almost redundantly attested on some of the carved ivories themselves. Several of the ivories carved in the Assyrian style which

²⁸⁰Reade, 1980c, pl. VI.

²⁸¹See Winter, 1976b, figs. 16 (Iraq Museum 60553) and 17 (Vorderasiatisches Museum 2995) which depict North Syria women seated on chairs with fringed seat cushions in ivory and stone respectively. Figure 16 is an ivory from Fort Shalmaneser, figure 17 is a relief from the North Syrian city of Zincirli.

show tribute scenes were found in Fort Shalmaneser (wing S) and the Nabu Temple. The dating of these Assyrian ivories is problematic, for it relies on comparison with the chronology of the monumental stone reliefs, but they are thought to have been made in the ninth century, either in the reign of Aššurnasirpal II or Shalmaneser III.²⁸² In general, the furniture shown on the ivories was non-descript with little decorative detail, and this is perhaps due to the miniature and fragmentary nature of the medium.

However, one ivory from Fort Shalmaneser has enough decorative detail to warrant a close study of the style of the furniture pieces depicted. An ivory from room S4 of Fort Shalmaneser shows tributaries carrying a large piece of undecorated furniture, either a chair or a short couch/bed on a pole slung over their shoulders, in a similar manner to those on the Rassam Obelisk of Aššurnasirpal II (Figure 18).²⁸³ The tributaries may be identified as North Syrians, possibly from Bit-Adini due to their upturned boots and floppy caps.²⁸⁴ The chair which they carry has been elaborately detailed by the Assyrian artists, and thus demonstrates an Assyrian interest in non-Assyrian products. The piece has a rounded cushion (without fringes), conical feet and a voluted crossbar. This chair is remarkably similar in appearance to the one which Aššurnasirpal II sits on in a relief in Room G of the Northwest Palace (Figure 19).²⁸⁵ The only detail which the

²⁸²See Mallowan, IFNII, p. 1. They certainly date no later than the reign of Sargon II.

²⁸³ND 7744, see Mallowan, N&RII, fig. 569 and IFN II, no. 84.

²⁸⁴See Wäfler, 1975, p. 215.

²⁸⁵Budge, 1914, pl. XXXI. Mallowan has already noted this similarity, see IFNII p. 33.

chair on the ivory fragment lacks is the rams' heads at the corner of the seat. The chair in room G has traditionally been interpreted as an item of Assyrian manufacture.²⁸⁶ Since this type of chair is brought by North Syrian tributaries on the small ivory from Fort Shalmaneser, it is possible that the chair on the monumental Aššurnasirpal II relief from room G was a North Syrian chair shown with its characteristic fringed seat cushion. The ram's heads drawn at the corners of the seat in the Room G relief have not been found in the corpus of ivory objects excavated from Nimrud.²⁸⁷ In a remarkable correspondence the annals of Aššurnasirpal II refer to "ivory thrones decorated with silver and gold" received as tribute from Bit-Adini.²⁸⁸ I would argue that the elaborately fringed cushion and voluted crossbars may have been details purposefully included by the stone artisans to indicate that the chair in room G was of foreign or North Syrian manufacture. If this is the case, then the foreign furniture received by the king may have been used in domestic court ceremonies, the subject of the room G relief.²⁸⁹ The relief in room G of the Northwest palace, despite its domestic and religious subject, must therefore be seen as an

²⁸⁶Baker, 1966, p. 183.

²⁸⁷Carved ivory lions' heads in the round which might have served this purpose have been found. See Herrmann, IFNIV/2 #1377-1383. In addition, Layard records the discovery in the Room of the Bronzes (AB) of the Northwest palace at Nimrud among other things, bull's and ram's heads in bronze. (1853b, p. 199) The bull's head has been published, both in a drawing in Layard's book and in Curtis and Reade, 1995 (no. 83, p. 124). I have not seen a photograph of any bronze ram's heads from Nimrud. There are several ram's heads on foreign furniture shown on the reliefs from Sennacherib's reign, which will be discussed below.

²⁸⁸Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.1, 62.

²⁸⁹Brandes has suggested that this relief in room G depicts some sort of libation ceremony. (1969, pp. 147ff.)

expression of Assyrian ideology: the king is literally and figuratively sitting on and therefore controlling the products of the enemy.

This ideological idiom finds linguistic expression in the Assyrian word for throne, *kussûm*, which can also mean “rule, dominion, royal property and service.”²⁹⁰ The idea that the seat of the enemy may stand symbolically for the entire enemy land and its people is also encapsulated in the propensity within the annals as discussed above to list the capture of the throne of the enemy king as an element of the tribute and booty recovered.²⁹¹ For example, Aššurnasirpal II received “many ornaments from the palace [of Sangara of Carchemish]”, including thrones of boxwood.²⁹² In English, the linkage between the idea of kingship and royal property can be seen when the expression “the throne” is used to symbolize the institution of kingship. This idea is supported by a scene from the reign of Tiglath-pileser III found in the Central Palace at Nimrud and drawn by Layard, now lost.²⁹³ The image is of a typical Assyrian camp scene in which Assyrian personnel attend to the needs of the king’s camp while he is away in battle, in this case in Anatolia. In the scene, an unbearded Assyrian figure, possibly a eunuch,²⁹⁴ kneels before

²⁹⁰*kussûm* (*GIŠ.GU.ZA*), see CAD K, p. 591.

²⁹¹See Appendix Three and chapter two above for more discussion of the significance of certain symbolic or commemorative pieces of foreign tribute and booty and their appeal in Assyria.

²⁹²Grayson, RIMA2, A.O.101.1, iii 67.

²⁹³Barnett and Faulkner, 1962, pl. LIII.

²⁹⁴Barnett has identified the figure as a *rab-šaḳim*, though he gave no apparent reason for such an identification. (1962, p. xxiii) For a fuller discussion of the various types and Assyrian words for these camp eunuchs, see Reade, 1972, p. 100.

the empty throne of the king. It has been suggested that the figure was either showing reverence to the empty throne of the king or delivering a report to the king. In either case, the scene clearly demonstrates that the throne of the king stood as a symbol for the actual royal personage in Assyria. The seat that Aššurnasirpal II sits on in room G, if it is foreign, may therefore symbolically represent the capture of not just a generic enemy, but a specific enemy who once himself controlled “the throne.”

Shalmaneser III

There are several monuments from the reign of Shalmaneser III which depict ivory tusks and furniture as tribute. There are no large-scale historical narratives in stone extant from the reign of Shalmaneser III and we must rely on free-standing monuments and small-scale narratives to document the collection of the ivory products in the art of Shalmaneser III.²⁹⁵ The monuments will be discussed in order according to their suggested dates of creation, beginning with the earliest, the Bronze Gates of Balawat (848 B.C.),²⁹⁶ continuing to the Throne Base from Fort Shalmaneser (846 B.C.)²⁹⁷ and the

²⁹⁵A concise summary of the organization and decorative program of Shalmaneser III's major extant monuments, including the Balawat Gates, the throne base from Fort Shalmaneser and the Black Obelisk, is given by Marcus, 1987.

²⁹⁶11th year of reign. Marcus cites full references for publication and dating. (1987, p. 78, fn 3) For the most recent transliteration and translation of the inscriptions and epigraphs, see Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.5

²⁹⁷13th year of Shalmaneser's reign. Marcus brings attention to the fact that Mallowan incorrectly dated the throne base to before the Balawat gates. (1987, p. 84, fn 37, citing Mallowan, N&RII, p. 450)

Black Obelisk from Nimrud (after 841 B.C.).²⁹⁸

Several bronze bands with narrative decoration in *repoussé* were excavated from the site of Balawat in 1876-8 by Rassam. They originally adorned a palace of Shalmaneser III at the site. The gates have been restored in the British Museum and the position of each band has been reconstructed according to excavation records and the narratives on the reliefs.²⁹⁹ The bands of the gates were published by King, whose band numbers will be followed here.³⁰⁰ Ivory tusks are brought frequently by tributaries to Shalmaneser III in the Balawat Gates. The epigraphs and ethnographic cues on the reliefs allow the nationality of the tributaries to be identified.³⁰¹ In general the tributaries identified correspond well to those listed in the texts who sent ivory tribute. In the lower register of Band V, a group of tributaries identified as Unqians proceed towards the right and are introduced to the king by an Assyrian “waver” courtier (Figure 20).³⁰² Two of the tributaries hold elephant tusks over their shoulders. In Band VI, the receipt of elephant

²⁹⁸See Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.14 and A.0.102.87-91 for dating and translations of the main text and inscriptions on the Black Obelisk. Grayson dates the text to 828-7 B.C.

²⁹⁹The earliest reconstruction of all of the bands of the gates was done by Unger, 1920.

³⁰⁰1915.

³⁰¹The epigraphs have been most recently published in transliteration and translation by Grayson. (RIMA3, A.0.102.63-86)

³⁰²King, 1915, pl. XXVIII. The tributaries wear upturned boots and fringed garments. See Marcus (1987, fig. 1a) for the most recent identification of the tributaries in this band as Unqians. For the textual reference to tribute from Unqi, see Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.1, 93: *ZÚ AM.SI*. The form of the phrase reads literally “tooth (*ZÚ/šinni*) of the elephant (*AM.SI/piri*),” thus probably refers to the tusks.

tusks from Carchemish is recorded (Figure 21).³⁰³

The choice of showing ivory as tribute on the gates might be used to support the earlier suggestion that the *economic* policies of Shalmaneser's reign were highlighted in his art. As discussed earlier, there is generally a lack of explicit acknowledgement in the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions that goods were procured through trade, though the control of trade must have been a major motivation for Assyrian expansion.³⁰⁴ However, the illustration of tribute, goods procured through relatively peaceful means, would be an appropriate way to highlight the economic gains of the empire that Shalmaneser seemed to focus on in his texts.³⁰⁵ The scenes which show the receipt of raw ivory from Carchemish may have been especially economically significant, since Carchemish was a major player in international long-distance trade during this period.³⁰⁶ The mercantile

³⁰³King, 1915, pl. XXXIII. Epigraph: Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.70. Identification: Marcus, *ibid.* These tributaries wear upturned boots, but their garments are not elaborately fringed. There are many occasions in Shalmaneser III's annals when Carchemish rendered booty or sent tribute of products other than ivory. The city was attacked in years one (A.0.102.2, i 43: booty), two (A.0.102.2, ii 19: booty), six (A.0.102.2, ii 83: tribute), ten (A.0.102.6, ii 56: booty), and eleven (A.0.102.8, 35': booty) of Shalmaneser III's reign. Grayson lists other references to these events in A.0.102.70. However on no occasion in the inscriptions is elephant ivory mentioned as an item of booty or tribute from Carchemish. This could have something to do with the fact that the royal inscriptions and the visual depictions on the gates had different conscious programs--they are complementary, not exactly repetitive. Marcus suggests that while the main goal of Shalmaneser's inscriptions was to illustrate the chronological order of events, the main premise of the gates was to summarize the realm geographically and to illustrate the geographic order of events. (1987, p. 90)

³⁰⁴See: Lambert, 1974; Tadmor, 1975; and chapter two, part two above.

³⁰⁵Marcus suggests that "the receipt of tribute and the practice of trade are not mutually exclusive." (1987, p. 88 fn 70). See also Winter, 1973, pp. 432-7.

³⁰⁶Winter, 1983.

value of unfinished ivory depicted in the gates of Shalmaneser's reign signified an economic gain, rather than a military gain. It is important, then, to see if similar messages about ivory tribute occur in Shalmaneser's later monuments.

A large stone throne base was discovered in the throne room of Fort Shalmaneser (T1) and published by the excavator Mallowan.³⁰⁷ It records in narrative relief an historic diplomatic meeting between Shalmaneser III and his counterpart from Babylon, Marduk-zakir-šumi, signified by the image of the two kings shaking hands at the center of the dais (Figure 22).³⁰⁸ The miniature stone reliefs are accompanied by a summary or display inscription above the figures, which records snippets from several of the king's western campaigns.³⁰⁹ On these reliefs, tributaries dressed in foreign garments approach the two kings from either side of the dais, carrying items and preparing to deposit them with the king. Elephant products comprise tribute on half the panels of the composition. On two of the eight panels (a and e), tributaries carry elephant tusks; on another two panels (f and g), the figures carry square objects which have been identified as elephant hides.³¹⁰ The epigraphs indicate that the elephant tribute on the throne dais came from either Babylonia or the North Syrian city of Unqi.³¹¹ The throne base from Fort Shalmaneser was a

³⁰⁷Mallowan, N&RII, p. 374ff.

³⁰⁸Mallowan, N&RII, fig. 371. Text and epigraphs: Grayson (RIMA3, A.O.102.28, 59, 57, 60-1).

³⁰⁹Grayson, RIMA3, A.O.102.28.

³¹⁰For identification of square objects as elephant hides, see Mallowan, N&RII, p. 447.

³¹¹See Appendix Three.

restatement of the lot of tribute from Unqi which was shown on the Balawat gates, a lot which warranted much commemoration. I would argue that because the depictions on the throne base were *limited* to the illustration of the receipt of an important tribute lot then this receipt was one of the central purposes of the monument. In this sense, then the throne base must be seen as a commemorative monument, commissioned as much to demonstrate and celebrate the receipt of that tribute as to celebrate the diplomatic treaty with the Babylonians.

The latest extant monument from Shalmaneser's reign is the Black Obelisk, which was discovered in the area of the Central Palace at Nimrud by Layard.³¹² This obelisk was found near to the Rassam Obelisk from Aššurnasirpal II's reign, and both free-standing sculptures flanked the entrance to the "Central Building."³¹³ It consists of four sides (Bands A-D left to right), each carved with five small panels (Registers 1-5, top to bottom, Figure 23).³¹⁴ The narrative progresses from right to left horizontally along all four sides of the monument. The illustrations are accompanied with a continuous yet unfinished inscription at the top and bottom of the monument which summarizes events up to and including Shalmaneser's thirty-first year.³¹⁵ In addition, epigraphs placed between the registers of the panels identify the people and tribute in the illustrations

³¹²Layard, 1849b/I, p. 345ff. See Marcus, 1987 and Sobolewski, 1982 for the most recent account of the discovery and the interpretation of the findspot of the obelisk.

³¹³Bär, 1996, p. 149.

³¹⁴Marcus, 1987, pl. XXII.

³¹⁵Main inscription: Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.14.

below.³¹⁶ With the Black Obelisk, we have once again an instance in which the receipt of foreign ivory is recorded only as tribute, not as booty, and furthermore, the type of ivory depicted is only in the form of the elephant tusk. The entities which give ivory tribute to Shalmaneser III are both near and far western cities familiar from other monuments in Shalmaneser III's reign.

The narrative consists of files of tributaries leading live animals and other forms of tribute, who proceed to the left.³¹⁷ Ivory tusks are depicted in panels C4 and D4, accompanied by an epigraph mentioning tribute from Suhi.³¹⁸ The identification and location of Suhi in this period is problematic since the region is not referred to in any known text from Shalmaneser's reign.³¹⁹ Suhi is generally thought to lie to the near west of Assyria on the middle Euphrates.³²⁰ In A5 and possibly B5, emissaries from Unqi

³¹⁶Epigraphs: Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.87-91.

³¹⁷There is one curious scene (A4) which depicts a wild animal combat between deer and lions occurring in a wooded landscape. The significance and placement of this scene will be discussed in reference to the Assyrian encounters with North Syrian animals in chapter five, part two below. The tributaries are met only in the top two registers by the king and his retinue. Reade has suggested that in the bottom three registers the presence of the king is implied to exist either "off" the register to the far left, or the tributaries in the bottom three registers are meant to be following those in the top two, thus winding their way up the monument to greet the king. (1979b, p. 72)

³¹⁸Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.90: "I received tribute from Marduk-apla-usur, the Suhian: silver, gold, gold pails, ivory spears, byssus, garments with multi-colored trim and linen."

³¹⁹Grayson, RIMA3, p. 150 and Marcus, 1987, p. 89.

³²⁰In contrast to Shalmaneser's reign, Suhi is mentioned and its tribute was frequently depicted in the reign of Aššurnasirpal II, particularly on his Balawat gates (see above). It is possible given this fact that Shalmaneser never actually received tribute from Suhi, but felt it necessary to claim at least in one visual instance that he had, since

bring their ivory tusks towards the left.³²¹ On the Black Obelisk, therefore, we have the receipt of ivory tribute in tusk form from potentially two areas around North Syria: Suhi and Unqi.

Tiglath-pileser III

Compared to Aššurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, there are few extant monuments which can be securely dated to the reign of Tiglath-pileser III. These consist of a small number of reliefs which were excavated from his Central Palace at Nimrud,³²² a few orthostats found in the southwest corner of Nimrud which were removed from the Central Palace and re-used by a later king, Esarhaddon,³²³ and some of the paintings from the Assyrian outpost in North Syria, Til Barsip.³²⁴ The order in which the reliefs from Nimrud were originally organized is now lost due to ancient as well as modern removal. There have been several attempts to re-order the *ex situ* reliefs from both areas of Nimrud into a coherent sequence which presumably would have constituted a decorative program

his father had previously.

³²¹The epigraph actually refers to Qarparunda of Unqi, who is the same king as Qalparunda mentioned on Shalmaneser's other monuments. For this correlation, see Grayson, RIMA3, p. 91 and relevant sources cited by him.

³²²See Reade, 1968.

³²³Both sets of reliefs are published in Barnett and Faulkner, 1962. For a discussion of the find spots and dating of Tiglath-pileser III's orthostats, see Reade, 1979b, pp. 72-78.

³²⁴Thureau-Dangin and Dunand, 1936.

of Tiglath-pileser III's Central Palace at Nimrud.³²⁵

There are several instances which display the receipt of finished ivory furniture as *booty* by the king. This striking contrast in the visual representation of the receipt of ivory may be correlated, in a more general way, to the increasing number of references in Tiglath-pileser's III's texts to ivory furniture as booty discussed earlier in this chapter. The images of booty show the soldiers carrying in one instance the seats for the statues of the gods of a defeated enemy (Figures 24 and 25).³²⁶ The plunder of the statue of an enemy's god was a highly symbolic political act in Mesopotamia, since the statues were the living representations on earth of the gods.³²⁷ The symbolic significance of this scene and the furniture depicted in it deserves further discussion for the scene is rare among Assyrian reliefs.³²⁸ In order to discover from which region these gods were plundered,

³²⁵For the order of the orthostats, see: Gadd, 1936; Barnett and Faulkner, 1962, pl. CXXIX; and Reade, 1979b, abb. 5. For discussion of Tiglath-pileser III's decorative program, see Auerbach, 1989.

³²⁶Barnett and Faulkner, 1962, pl. XCII and XCIII. The piece is badly damaged and Layard's drawings are extremely reliable, thus the drawing will be relied on here. For the original publication of Layard's drawing, see 1849a, pl. 65.

³²⁷Statues of gods were imbued with magical charisma and spirit and were literally considered to be alive. A god who was dragged out of his house (i.e. the temple in his city) was essentially orphaned and could not be cared for properly. It was believed in Mesopotamia, that a god who was not cared for properly would wreak havoc and revenge on his subjects by bringing natural disasters and catastrophe. An army wishing to bring this catastrophe upon its defeated enemy would therefore remove the gods from their homes in order to inspire their wrath and to fly in the face of the vanquished city. All of this information regarding the treatment of deity statues in Mesopotamia is taken from Oppenheim, "The Care and Feeding of the Gods", 1964.

³²⁸The deportation of enemy gods may also be seen on a relief from Sennacherib's reign (slab 11, Room X of Southwest Palace at Nineveh: see Russell, 1991, fig. 35). However, the pose of the gods and existence of the thrones makes Tiglath-pileser's

the original position of the slab within the Central Palace of Tiglath-pileser III must be located. This was one of the slabs found re-used by Esarhaddon on the southwest corner of the mound. The gods that we see may have been from the city of Gezer in the Levant.³²⁹ Though Gezer lies to the south of the region which we are calling North Syria, the images of this furniture can nevertheless give us insight into the Assyrian collection of ivory and wood furniture from areas to the far west.

The chairs of the gods are all high-backed, high legged and have crossbars, but it is significant that not one chair is exactly like its neighbor. The extant relief itself in London and the photograph are both very difficult to read since the relief is terribly preserved. However, we may rely on Layard's drawing and assume that at the time of the excavation of the relief, more detail may have been preserved upon it. According to Layard's drawing, the feet of all three chairs are different: the chair to the far right has lion's claws; the second chair has disk-shaped feet and the last chair has straight feet. In comparison, on the photograph the feet of the first chair are not identifiable, but the feet of the last two chairs are different, if not exactly as Layard reconstructed them in the drawing. The middle chair seems to have hoofed or triangular feet, as the legs clearly

composition unique. (Reade, 1979c, p. 31)

³²⁹It was common on Tiglath-pileser III's double-register slabs that the inscription between the two registers did not necessarily refer to the images depicted in the reliefs above it, and in fact, the inscription which lies above the procession of gods deals with Tiglath-pileser III's campaign to Babylonia. However, the inscription on this slab can be joined with another slab found elsewhere in Esarhaddon's Southwest Palace at Nimrud which has an epigraph labeling the defeated city in the accompanying relief as Gezer in the southern Levant. (Barnett and Faulkner, 1962, p. 30)

gets narrower, then spread out again at the bottom. The legs of the third chair are straight and they lack the same narrowing and then widening which was seen in the middle chair. I suggest that the tiny details which were depicted differently by the Assyrian artists attempting to recreate these pieces of furniture in the reliefs indicate an Assyrian attention to and interest in foreign furniture. For the native audience this artisan attention to subtle differences might have translated into the “decorative cues” with which they could read the foreign nature of the furniture. This interest may be related to the suggestion that the inclusion of highly specific details in the Assyrian reliefs is a way of asserting the truth of the events occurring in the scenes and thus becomes part of the Assyrian royal ideology.³³⁰ Ultimately this relief, which depicts the plundering of the western gods *and* their thrones by Assyrian soldiers demonstrates that the furniture of the gods may have been as significant objects of plunder as the statues themselves.³³¹

The corpus of paintings which dates to Tiglath-pileser III's reign at Til Barsip contains very few narratives with military subjects.³³² Most of these paintings are large-

³³⁰See Winter, 1981a and Marcus, 1995a.

³³¹I realize that the statues of the gods were sitting and that their position may have necessitated the removal of the chairs along with them to Assyria, but I am not convinced that such was the case. I would argue that the *western* furniture was a highly sought after item. In a comparable relief from Tiglath-pileser III's reign which depicts the removal of gods from a Babylonian town, they are *not* shown on thrones. (Barnett and Faulkner, 1962, pl. VII)

³³²For the dating of these paintings, see Thureau-Dangin and Dunand, 1936. Generally, those paintings in rooms XXIV, XXV, XXVI, XXVIII, XLIV and XLV and some friezes in XLVII represent the “premier style”, which dates to Tiglath-pileser III's reign. For a re-dating and discussion of the narratives, see Reade, 1979b, p. 76-8.

scale formal reviews of tribute or have apotropaic subjects. In the only ivory tribute scene from Tiglath-pileser III's reign from room XLVII,³³³ Syrians wearing headbands, long fringed garments, and sandals on the far right hand side of the frieze carry ivory tusks over their shoulders and advance to the left towards the waiting king (Figure 26).³³⁴ This is the last vestige of the familiar "tusks as tribute" scenes and it serves to underscore the events which must have occurred in the palace itself, which was located in the heart of North Syria. Since there is not an abundance of these depictions of the receipt of tusks as tribute, it would be overreaching to suggest that the tusks in Tiglath-pileser III's reign had an economic import or value, as they may have in earlier reigns. Rather this ivory tribute from Til Barsip served more as a symbolic proof of the king's conquest of the tributary regions. It corresponds exactly with references in his texts to tribute, including "elephant ivory" received from a coalition of westerners in the seventh or eighth year of his reign.³³⁵

Sargon II

In the reign of Sargon II, the formal review scene³³⁶ with which Sargon's decorators seemed to have been so preoccupied contribute to our understanding of the Assyrian collection of ivory furniture. Several large-scale reliefs from Sargon's palace at Khorsabad depict Assyrian courtiers or foreign officials carrying furniture. The main

³³³Thureau-Dangin and Dunand, 1936, pl. LII, panels XLVIIabc.

³³⁴For this identification, see Thureau-Dangin and Dunand, 1936, pp. 51 and 64.

³³⁵See Appendix Three.

³³⁶Reade has suggested that the scenes in which the king is shown "standing or sitting in a thoroughly dignified pose" be termed "Formal," (1979a, p. 32). He also noted the preponderance of formal review scenes in Sargon's reign. (1979b, p. 78)

review scenes occur on two large courtyard walls, Facades n and L.

On the large scale procession reliefs from Facade n, the northern wall of Court VIII which led into the throne room (VII) of the palace, Assyrians wearing their characteristic native dress carry what have been identified as audience gifts (*namurtum*)³³⁷ and advance towards the waiting king (Figure 27).³³⁸ Two of the Assyrian figures carry a table resting on their shoulders. The relatively plain table has a flat top, a decorated crossbar and lion's claw feet. Since Assyrians bring the furniture, these foreign items must be differentiated from the standard tribute (*maddattum*) brought by foreigners. Bär further suggests that these figures were provincial governors, Assyrian officials in charge of foreign territories which were annexed to the empire. It is probable given this interpretation that the furniture was brought from a distant area, one outside of the Assyrian heartland. We know that in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III and by the time of Sargon II, many areas formerly known as independent North Syrian city-states were annexed into the Assyrian provincial system.³³⁹ Thus, we might suppose that if these figures are provincial governors, then they resided over formerly North Syrian cities.

³³⁷Bär, 1996, pp. 206 and 229. The *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* defines *namurtum* as "audience gifts" or "gifts given to or by the king at the Neo-Assyrian royal court." (N/1, p. 254-5)

³³⁸Albenda, 1986, pl. 16. Only the feet of the courtiers were actually preserved, and the rest of the orthostats were broken away when moved. Therefore, their upper halves, including the tribute which they carry, were reconstructed by Botta and Flandin. While they are reconstructions, they are nevertheless learned ones because the two excavators did witness them in their original state. See Botta and Flandin, 1849-50, pl. 29.

³³⁹Smith, CAH, 1965, pp. 32-42 and 94.

However, North Syria was not the only region which was annexed into Assyria by this time, and we must look for other clues to ascertain the identity of these figures who bring furniture. The figures are followed and preceded by other Assyrian-dressed figures who bring different gifts, among them lion-headed *situlae*. Lion-headed *situlae* were typically brought (in both texts and images) from western areas, namely either Phrygia in Anatolia or North Syria.³⁴⁰ Thus it is likely that the furniture depicted here came from the west, and potentially from North Syria.

There is another courtyard wall in Sargon's palace which depicts Assyrian courtiers bringing furniture towards the king. On Facade L, the eastern wall of Court I, several unbearded Assyrian officials with long fringed robes proceed to the left carrying a throne on a wheeled cart and pieces of furniture on their shoulders (Figure 28).³⁴¹ They move towards the king who faces them to receive their objects across doorway G. The attention to detail on these reliefs is as close as on any other reliefs in the Neo-Assyrian period depicting furniture. The high-backed chair carried on its wheeled cart is fitted with openwork figures wearing round, horned helmets and short kilts under long fringed robes which are open in front. Although the figures on the chair are wingless, similar figures with one or two wings occur on the monumental reliefs. The monumental figures

³⁴⁰Bär, 1996, p. 201. Room 6 of Sargon's palace depicts foreign tributaries wearing so-called "Phrygian fibulae" and carrying lion-headed *situlae*. The identification of their fibulae as Phrygian was suggested by Muscarella, 1967, p. 84. However, Bär notes that other figures on the reliefs wear "Phrygian fibulae," including figures from the North Syrian cities of Marash, Zincirli and Carchemish. (1996, p. 199)

³⁴¹Albenda, 1986, pl. 47-8.

have been identified as apotropaic *lamassu* genies due to their horned helmets and composite character.³⁴² These figures with long open robes and short kilts, some with hands clasped, others with arms aloft, are shown a number of other times on the other pieces in the procession and it seems that they adorn a matching suite of royal furniture.³⁴³ Three courtiers later, another item of furniture is carried to the king. This is a footstool with a voluted crossbar and lion's claw feet sitting on inverted pine cones.³⁴⁴ To the right, two more courtiers carry on their shoulders a much wider table or backless chair with identical crossbar and feet, but with the added details of lion's heads at the corners of the seat/top.

The depiction of this furniture is highly detailed and demonstrates once again a clear Assyrian interest and attention to furniture. The formal nature of this review scene has led some scholars to conclude that it represents the receipt of foreign tribute by the king.³⁴⁵ However, the figural decoration of the thrones and other pieces of furniture in Facade L are clearly genies, carved in the native style and wearing all of the accoutrements of Assyrian-ness, including their garments and helmets. It is entirely likely that these items of furniture were of native Assyrian manufacture and that the

³⁴²Reade, 1979a, p. 36.

³⁴³Curtis has called the figures with arms raised "Atlas-like". (1995, p. 123)

³⁴⁴Curtis and Reade, *ibid.*

³⁴⁵Baker, 1966, p. 184. Reade avoids the issue and does not label the furniture carried in these "formal" review scenes as either tribute or some other type of item. (1979b, p. 84) It is significant that Bär does *not* include the furniture from Facade L in his catalogue of tribute and therefore presumes that it was Assyrian. (1996, p. 236)

procession represented preparation for a feast or banquet which required the local “Assyrian Empire style” of furniture.³⁴⁶ The picture is further muddled by the archaeological data. Layard excavated a number of fragments of wooden and metal furniture with figural decoration from the Northwest Palace at Nimrud.³⁴⁷ He immediately recognized that the figural style on these fragments of furniture was “so purely Assyrian that there can be little doubt of their having been expressly made for the Assyrian king, and not having been the spoil of some foreign nation.”³⁴⁸ On one of the metal pieces, winged genies with horned rounded helmets, short kilts and long robes stand opposed and in combat with another composite creature.³⁴⁹ Unlike the depictions on the Facade L reliefs, these genies both have wings and stand with their far legs raised and bent at the knee. The similarities are striking, yet there are still enough differences to merit a consideration of the style of the figures on the relief. I would argue that the Assyrian relief carvers, when commissioned to produce a scene showing foreign furniture with figural decoration could *only* depict the foreign motif according to their own “period eye,” thus the figures appear “Assyrianized” in dress and proportions. However, the furniture on Facade L may have been foreign in manufacture and this scene is a proper

³⁴⁶Curtis coined this phrase drawing parallels with the “French Empire style” of furniture known in decorative arts of the 18th and 19th century A.D. (Curtis and Reade, 1995, p. 123) For a similar attribution, see Baker, 1966, p. 184.

³⁴⁷1853b, p. 198-200. For photographs of some of these items which are now in the British museum, see Curtis and Reade, 1995, fig. 83 and 84.

³⁴⁸Layard, 1853b, p. 200.

³⁴⁹Curtis and Reade, 1995, fig. 84.

review scene where the king demonstrates his collection of foreign ivory furniture.

Support for this contention comes from the Nimrud ivories discovered in room SW7 at Fort Shalmaneser.³⁵⁰ These ivories show that the figures wearing short kilts under long fringed robes were not exclusively limited to the Assyrian repertoire and were perfectly at home in the North Syrian style of ivory-carving. The most striking similarity between the Facade L furniture and the SW7 furniture is the dress of the figures. Each SW7 figure wears a short kilt underneath a long fringed robe (Figure 29).³⁵¹ Thus it seems that the subject of the ivories and the reliefs, men wearing “cut-away” coats and holding their arms aloft, are similar. The furniture depicted on the Facade L reliefs may indeed have been North Syrian in style, and need not have been exclusively Assyrian, since the motif was at home in both styles of furniture either in bronze or ivory.³⁵² Unfortunately, Sargon’s texts on the matter of tribute from North Syria are relatively silent as he received only generic “ivory” as tribute from Kummuh. Contrarily, even if the furniture on Facade L was intended to be Assyrian in manufacture, than the Assyrian

³⁵⁰IFNIII, #1-29, some of which are fragments of panels whose subject has been reconstructed.

³⁵¹They have been called “cut-away” coats by Mallowan and Herrmann. (IFNIII, no. 2 and p. 19)

³⁵²This suggestion has implications for a large number of images which show the Assyrian king on thrones with figural decoration from several reigns, for example, in the reigns of Tiglath-pileser III and Sennacherib. If the thrones with “Atlas-like” figures in Sargon’s formal review scenes were foreign in manufacture, then one could suggest that the thrones which the Assyrian kings sit on in other genres of scenes were also foreign. The analysis of the thrones in these informal review scenes deserves more attention but is currently beyond the scope of this paper.

furniture craftsmen may have borrowed a characteristically North Syrian subject for their furniture.³⁵³

The use of suites of furniture in ceremonial banquets is indeed most explicitly depicted on other reliefs from Sargon's palace. In room 7, a small room at the back of the palace, double register reliefs show what appears to be a royal banquet with many Assyrian figures sitting on chairs or stools and eating off of tables (Figure 30).³⁵⁴ A similar scene is depicted in the upper register of room 2. The furniture in these reliefs resembles closely those items brought by Assyrian courtiers to the king in the court facades (L and n). Many of them have voluted crossbars, lion's claw and inverted pine cone feet, and ram's head or lion's heads at their corners. The origin of the style of these pieces of furniture which are utilized by native Assyrians is unclear. It is likely that these items were of native manufacture, but it is also possible given the Assyrian tendency to depict foreign furniture with traditional Assyrian proportions and other details, that they were foreign. Sargon therefore may have carried on the traditions set in earlier reigns which displayed the collection of foreign furniture. He added his own twist to the *topos*, receiving the furniture as audience gifts from native Assyrians, rather than as tribute from foreign emissaries.

³⁵³While the North Syrian *manufacture* of the SW7 ivories is indisputable, the precise origin, whether Assyria or North Syria, of the *motifs* on the SW7 ivories has been disputed by Mallowan and Herrmann. (IFN III, p. 19-31) Once again, the existence of a shared *koine*, or group of iconographic motifs, in the ancient Near East during this period muddles the picture of who first created the motif in ivory or metal. This muddle exemplifies the problems involved in identifying styles purely by their iconography.

³⁵⁴Albenda, 1986, pl. 88.

Sennacherib

The visual sources which we have for Sennacherib's reign include numerous extant bas-reliefs and drawings of lost reliefs which were excavated from his Southwest Palace at Nineveh. This palace, like its predecessors, consisted of a number of rooms grouped around large courtyards and decorated with narratives in low relief. The images of the collection of ivory, wood and metal furniture in the reign of Sennacherib and his successors contrasts sharply with the reign of Sargon and his predecessors. Whereas in the earlier period, ivory furniture (and tusks) were collected as tribute, from Sennacherib's reign on, furniture was shown only as an item of booty. No longer do we have large-scale formal review scenes with native courtiers and foreign tributaries carrying furniture on their shoulders in a regimented and stately manner towards the figure of the waiting king. Rather, furniture is dragged out of defeated cities either by Assyrian soldiers or the defeated enemies themselves.

The most detailed and full presentation of the booty scene is found on slabs 11-13 of room XLVIII of Sennacherib's Southwest Palace at Nineveh (Figure 31).³⁵⁵ The slabs show twelve Assyrian soldiers wearing their characteristic pointed helmets and carrying eleven pieces of furniture out of a defeated city.³⁵⁶ At the end of the file, the soldiers

³⁵⁵Paterson, 1915, pl. 83-84 and Russell, 1991, fig. 39. The slabs are for the most part no longer extant, but a fragment of these slabs is housed in the collections of the Vatican. The extant relief contains the second and third soldiers in the file, see Weidner and Furlani, 1939, fig. 16.

³⁵⁶The sixth soldier from the left carries a large crescent-shaped object over his shoulder by its shaft. The identification of this object is unknown, but it may be metal, and not a piece of furniture.

present their booty to the king, who sits on his throne in his camp. The city is unidentified, but was located in a wooded and mountainous region by the side of a river. Russell has argued that the reliefs in this room depicted events which occurred during Sennacherib's third campaign to the west.³⁵⁷ The recessed windows within the city walls suggest further that this city was either Phoenician or North Syrian since they compare with window balustrades seen on western-style ivories found at Nimrud and Arslan Tash.³⁵⁸ Thus the city was certainly located in either Phoenicia or North Syria, both prime furniture-producing regions in the Neo-Assyrian period.

It is significant that the items of furniture share the same types of elements, but not one has exactly the same configuration of elements. Rather, each piece of furniture in this image is unique. In the following discussion, the individual pieces of furniture will be numbered "1-10," leaving out the crescent-shaped object and proceeding from left to right. The following table will illustrate this variety:

³⁵⁷Russell, 1991, p. 161.

³⁵⁸Especially in the "women-at-the-window" ivories. See Reade, 1979b, p. 92 and Barnett, CNI, p. 145 for this comparison. See chapter one, part two for a discussion of this genre of ivory.

**Table of Furniture depicted in Room XLVIII, slabs 11-13,
Sennacherib's Southwest Palace at Nineveh**

<u>Item (from left to right)</u>	<u>Legs and Feet</u>	<u>Top</u>	<u>Other</u>
1 Backless chair/table	hoof and cone	plain	
2 Backless chair/table	straight	ram's head finials	thick joins under top
3 Backless chair/table	flared	ram's head finials	thick joins under top
4 Backless chair/table	flared	plain	thick joins under top
5 Backless chair/table	flared	plain	wider than #4
6 Couch/bed	cone	curved headboard	thick joins under top
7 High-backed chair	claw and cone	plain	decorated crossbar
8 Tripod/folding stool	3 straight legs ³⁵⁹	round, convex	legs are pinned
9 Table	hoof and cone	round, convex	two crossbars
10 Backless chair/table	hoof and cone	ram's head finials	thick joins under top

Certainly, the many and varied details recorded on the furniture demonstrates a heightened Assyrian interest in the decoration of foreign furniture. The inclusion of these details also lends them a particular truthfulness and uniqueness which asserts the reality of the reliefs and therefore plays a role in Neo-Assyrian ideology.³⁶⁰ The decorative details may not have been *authentically* foreign, but I would argue that the value of these items of furniture that would have been recognized by a native Assyrian audience was two-fold. First, the Assyrian beholder would have most likely interpreted the material of the furniture as highly luxurious, since it came from western provinces where ivory, cedar-wood and metal furniture was skillfully produced. Second, the furniture would have been imbued with political value, as in earlier reigns, since it symbolized the defeat of an enemy. The furniture therefore was coded with a complex set of values which were

³⁵⁹Baker, 1966, p. 203.

³⁶⁰For more on this, see: Winter, 1981a; Marcus, 1995a; and chapter four below.

both produced and received within the Assyrian culture.

There is another scene from Sennacherib's reign of the transport of furniture as booty plundered from conquered territories and brought into the waiting arms of the king (Figure 32).³⁶¹ In this instance, furniture is captured from the city of Lachish in Judea which is south of North Syria proper but is associated with Sennacherib's third campaign to the west. The reliefs in this room comprise a narrative cycle which progresses from right to left. In the center of the cycle, we see the besieging of Lachish, in which Assyrian soldiers attack its walls with battering rams while its inhabitants attempt their defense. To the right of the city, Assyrian soldiers escort Lachishites and their booty out of their defeated city towards the person of the seated king.³⁶² A close look at the details of the relief reveals that furniture was among the many items of booty brought to the king. One of the Assyrian soldiers who files out of the city carries a long-legged high-backed chair.³⁶³ The figures just before and after the soldier carrying the chair hold some sort of royal or cultic equipment, including a chariot with a serpentine yolk pole, and two large footed vessels. It is reasonable to assume that these items, which are pointedly carried by the Assyrian soldiers and not by the native inhabitants, represent either

³⁶¹Room XXXVI, slab 8: Paterson, 1915, pl. 69-70 and Russell, 1991, fig. 110.

³⁶²Sennacherib's throne here resembles the furniture with "Atlas-like" figures from Tiglath-pileser III's reign and therefore was potentially of foreign manufacture. See above in this chapter for discussion of this and similar thrones.

³⁶³The presence of a large collection of ivory furniture plaques excavated from the nearby site of Megiddo in Israel suggests that this more southerly area was also a furniture-producing region. For a discussion of the Megiddo ivories, see Loud, 1939 and Barnett, 1982, pp. 25-8.

equipment from the palace of the local ruler or from the temple of one of the local gods--all items of high symbolism and value. The transport of these special items seems to be reserved for the Assyrian army and we can therefore understand the relief from room XLVIII with the ten items of furniture in this analogical context--they may represent personal items of the king or god of the besieged Syrian/Phoenician city which were coded with value.³⁶⁴ In sum, the decorative detail present on Sennacherib's reliefs takes on almost personal import since some items of furniture may have symbolized the specific royal equipment of not just a city as collective, but of individual deposed rulers and their gods.

Aššurbanipal

Since there are few extant pictorial sources from Esarhaddon's reign, and none which depict ivory tusks or furniture as booty or tribute, we will now discuss the pictorial sources for ivory collecting in the reign of Aššurbanipal, the final king who produced monumental reliefs in the Neo-Assyrian period. Aššurbanipal's reliefs adorned the courtyard and palace walls of both his grandfather, Sennacherib's, palace and his own new North Palace at Nineveh. Aššurbanipal probably lived in and re-decorated parts of his father's Southwest Palace before constructing his own to the north on the same mound of Kuyunjik.³⁶⁵ The pictorial *topos* which shows the capture of furniture as booty

³⁶⁴This view is contra Baker, who identified these relatively simple forms as "ordinary" and non-royal items. (1966, p. 201)

³⁶⁵For the most recent discussion of the dating of reliefs from the Southwest Palace and a reconstruction of which rooms were decoratively "usurped" by Aššurbanipal, see Russell, 1991, pp. 117-51 and citation of earlier published discussions

is continued in the reliefs from the reign of Aššurbanipal. As in the reign of his grandfather, there is a lack of the depiction of tribute in Aššurbanipal's reign and this corresponds exceedingly well with a similar treatment of ivory in his texts. Since there are several images from Aššurbanipal's reign which show foreign furniture, we will discuss them not according to findspot, but according to genre.

There are several reliefs from the Southwest Palace carved in Aššurbanipal's reign which show the capture of furniture from Babylonia and Elam. This *topos* stands as a visual reminder that not all furniture was collected from the west, but that the Assyrians were interested in the collection of furniture from all regions under their sway. In a new twist on the old booty theme, however, the furniture taken by Aššurbanipal is carried away not by Assyrian soldiers, but by the native captives themselves, who pile and tie the furniture onto lightweight carts. They are ushered out of the cities by Assyrian soldiers who ultimately present them to the waiting king. Baker has described the furniture carried by the captives as "ordinary furniture", implying that this furniture was both undecorated and not as luxurious as other items from other images.³⁶⁶ However, a closer look at the objects in these reliefs shows that some of the items did have decoration similar to that seen on the "royal furniture" used by the kings.

Two reliefs show the capture of furniture from another important Assyrian foe,

in fn 2, p. 304. I should note that Reade is not averse to assigning these "re-sculptured" Southwest Palace slabs to the reign of Sin-Šar-iškin, the successor of Aššurbanipal. (1979b, p. 109-10)

³⁶⁶1966, p. 201.

the land of Elam (the ancient name for southwestern Iran). In a fragment of a relief now in the Louvre and originally fallen from the upper floors of Room V of the North Palace is recorded the capitulation of the Elamite city of Din-Sharri (Figure 33).³⁶⁷ Assyrian soldiers escort a procession of captives and together they carry two large pieces of furniture: a bed with a rounded headboard and flaring feet, and a backless chair or stool with curved finials and flaring feet. Another booty scene depicts more Elamite furniture from the town of Hamanu (Figure 34).³⁶⁸ In a file which sweeps down the hill and out of the city, one Assyrian soldier carries on his shoulder a chair with a curved armrest or seat and curved headrest.³⁶⁹ It is likely that these pieces from Elam held symbolic value as the captured “royal paraphernalia on which [the enemy] sat and lay down” mentioned in Aššurbanipal’s texts dealing with his Iranian wars.³⁷⁰

A very different *topos*, which I will call a “booty-counting” *topos*, demonstrates most clearly what happened to the furniture once it landed in Assyrian coffers: it was counted and recorded by royal scribes. A relief from Court XIX of the Southwest Palace shows a small table and a bed with an S-shaped headboard which have been placed on a cart. The finials at the top of the table are in the form of ram’s heads. As one follows the

³⁶⁷Gadd, 1936, pl. 35.

³⁶⁸Gadd, 1936, pl. 43.

³⁶⁹This scene is strikingly reminiscent of Sennacherib’s Lachish relief discussed above (Room XXXVI, slab 8) where the soldiers carry out a tall chair with a curved armrest and it is possible that it was in fact modeled to some extent on the Sennacherib relief.

³⁷⁰See Appendix Three.

procession of captives and booty to the right, it appears that the very same items of furniture come to rest on the lower register of the composition in a tent or canopy reserved for the storage of booty. I suggest that it is more than coincidence that the exact types of furniture shown on the cart, a table with ram's head finials and a bed with an S-shaped headboard, are shown under the Assyrian tent (Figure 35).³⁷¹ The items in Court XIX *must* represent the very same pieces of furniture and the scene could therefore be interpreted as a type of "cartoon-strip" vignette, a form of narrative which is familiar in the reign of Aššurbanipal.³⁷² To the right of the tent, an Assyrian soldier piles up the decapitated heads of the captives and throws them under the tent. To the left of the tent, two scribes count and record the booty and the severed heads.

The treatment of space in the depiction of these pieces of furniture under the Assyrian tent differs from when they were on the cart. On the cart, many details of the table were obscured by the large vessel on the cart which would have stood between the viewer and the furniture. The treatment of the furniture in space on the cart was more akin to our western notion of perspective and the items appear to recede into the space of the relief. In contrast, the items of booty were placed in the space of the tent in a bird's eye view, as if floating in the space, thus every detail is shown, with none obscured due to

³⁷¹Gadd, 1936, pl. 13-14; Russell, 1991, fig. 77.

³⁷²For example in a lion hunt relief with the lion springing out of the cage from room S of the North Palace and the famous relief cycle which depicts the Battle at Til-Tuba in Iran from room I of the North Palace. If I pushed this line of reasoning further, I might suggest that the people depicted on the upper register are the very same ones depicted in the lower register and in the same general order. For a discussion of this treatment of narrative in Aššurbanipal's reign, see Reade, 1979b, p. 107.

blocked or impossible viewpoint. The intention was clearly to show the items stacked, but the realization of that intention is entirely different in the counting scene. A similar treatment of items which are meant to be stacked on a flat surface occurs in Egyptian tomb painting.³⁷³ Since Egypt was incorporated into the Assyrian empire during the reign of Aššurbanipal's father, Esarhaddon, I would tentatively suggest that this treatment of space on a two-dimensional surface was borrowed directly from Egypt. In the "Egyptian-like" counting scene from Aššurbanipal's relief, the details of the furniture became important and significant because they were at last in the hands of the Assyrians and every exact detail had to be recorded, both by the scribes and by the relief artists. In turn, the recording of every visual detail in the relief lent the images their veracity.

A similar scene is shown in a series of reliefs dated to the reign of Aššurbanipal from room XXVIII of the Southwest Palace at Nineveh (Figure 36).³⁷⁴ This scene depicts the aftermath of a battle in Babylonia organized into three registers. There are various pieces of furniture, including two beds with pine cone feet,³⁷⁵ a table with hoof and cone feet, a table with pine cone feet, and a couple of small footstools strapped to a cart leading out of the defeated city. Either another procession or the same group of captives winds its way down to the bottom register where at the right hand side of the

³⁷³A feature noted by Groenewegen-Frankfort, 1972, pp. 30-32. I would not suggest, however, that the floating items represented in the Mesopotamian reliefs had the same magical presence for the Assyrians as did the images in Egypt.

³⁷⁴Paterson, 1915, pl. 53; Russell, 1991, fig. 77.

³⁷⁵The headboard of the left-hand bed is presumed, since the fragment is broken and prohibits a certain reconstruction.

composition, another booty-recording session occurs. In this booty-counting scene, the items of furniture are once again stacked upon each other in the same Egyptian-like manner as in Court XIX.³⁷⁶ In general, the furniture in the booty scene differs from that strapped to the carts: there is a single bed illustrated, and it lacks pine cone feet and the folding stool is not seen on the carts. However, the peculiar Egyptianized representation of the stacked furniture does not change, nor does its central message: these were important pieces of Babylonian booty which must be recorded and accounted precisely and individually.

A third *topos*, which is perhaps the most effective image of the collecting of foreign ivory furniture, occurs in room S of Aššurbanipal's North Palace. It follows the path of the royal plundering machine from the battlefield to the field station and finally to the palace of the king. In a relief which fell from the upper stories of the room, the king reclines on a couch (or bed) while his queen sits on a high chair (Figure 37).³⁷⁷ The couch and chair both have figural decoration on their various components, and the Assyrian relief artist has portrayed this minute detail clearly. The queen's chair is high-

³⁷⁶The furniture consists of a bed supporting a table with straight legs and a unique folding stool with curved legs. A small footstool rests below the bed, turned on its top. Above the furniture float bows, quivers, a bronze cauldron and various other vessels and weapons. On the far right of the composition a footed stool with a flat top holds either a crenellated "city model". Such models of cities were made of ceramic or stone. They are frequent on formal review scenes from Sargon's palace and were intended to represent the capitulation of a city. For more on city models, see Bär, 1996, p. 237. For an excavated example from Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud, see Curtis and Reade, 1995, fig. 57.

³⁷⁷British Museum, WA 124920. Hall, 1928, pl. XLI and Barnett, 1976, pl. LXIV. For more discussion on the images and significance of this wing of the North Palace, see chapter five, part three below.

backed and long-legged with inverted cone feet and voluted crossbars.³⁷⁸ The king's couch is adorned with images of long-haired, beardless figures, presumably female directly beneath the seat. Each figure stands with her right arm braced against the architectural frame of a window and her left arm bent at the elbow. On the feet of the king's bed are depicted two couchant lions, perhaps in openwork, and on the crossbar of the bed, several groups of opposed lions spring out in a series of symmetric pairs. The king and queen share a snack on a table which sits between them. This table has familiar claw and cone feet, but an object which sits upon it is unique in the reliefs. The object is probably a round or square pyxis, or "cosmetic box", which would have held either some small item of food or more durable goods. The box is decorated with two opposed winged sphinxes, a theme which is also common on pyxides carved in the North Syrian style and found at Nimrud.³⁷⁹

The figures on the couch legs are carved with Assyrian-style hair and proportions, as would be expected on the Assyrianizing imperial reliefs, but their stance and architectural setting--the windows are supported with a columned balustrade--are

³⁷⁸In a very clever and efficient maneuver, the Assyrian artist has placed the figural decoration of the couch's leg directly beneath the seat of the queen's chair. The decoration appears to ornament at the same time the couch and the chair, in a matching suite. On closer inspection, however, one can see that the figural decoration is really reserved for the king's couch which is altogether much more elaborately depicted.

³⁷⁹Many such pyxides were found in ivory by Loftus at Nimrud (see Barnett, CNI, pp. 63-90). In addition, Herrmann has published what she identifies as numerous fragments of pyxides which were found in room SW37 of Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud.(IFN IV, #258-92). Though winged sphinxes are not exclusively North Syrian, the pyxis shape in general was preferred far more by the North Syrian ivory craftsmen than by the Phoenicians or Assyrians. (see Barnett, 1982, p. 44)

unknown in excavated Assyrian-style ivories. Rather, they are strikingly reminiscent of the women-at-the-window ivories which have been found not only at Nimrud, but at Khorsabad and other sites in the ancient Near East such as Arslan Tash.³⁸⁰ The king's couch has therefore been identified as foreign since that motif is only known in the Phoenician, South Syrian and North Syrian styles.³⁸¹ Of course the circumstances of how the couch arrived at Nineveh to rest literally under Aššurbanipal's thumb are not known, but it is reasonable to assume that this couch may indeed be a representation of booty or tribute from North Syria gathered by the king and army while on campaign.³⁸² Although these figures were carved with Assyrian style hair and proportions, their subjects would have been decorative cues which would have highlighted the foreign nature of the furniture. The little figures on the couch therefore stand out as demonstrative punctuation that the couch was acquired by the king from a foreign source and that it was at his disposal. Unfortunately, once again, Aššurbanipal's texts are silent on the matter of whether ivory was received from North Syria or Phoenicia, the only

³⁸⁰For the debate over whether the ivories carved in the woman-at-window motif are Phoenician or Syrian in style, see chapter one above. Most likely, both Phoenician and Syrian artists carved this motif in their respective styles.

³⁸¹This feature of the couch has been noted by several scholars of the reliefs and ivories; the citations are too numerous to cite. For a recent discussion, see Curtis and Reade, 1995, pp. 122.

³⁸²It is possible that the couch was actually acquired as booty from the Elamites, as the banquet may be a celebration of that victory (hence Teumann's head). Thus, if the couch depicted is North Syrian style, this is further evidence of the idea initially advanced by Winter of the contact, perhaps by trade, between Iran and North Syria during this period (1973, p. 414).

suggestion which I might offer is that this couch represents an heirloom collected from that region by an earlier Neo-Assyrian king which was subsequently used by Aššurbanipal.

Conclusion of Part Three

This scene from Aššurbanipal's reign is also fitting final punctuation for our discussion of the pictorial evidence supporting the royal collecting of foreign ivory furniture for it demonstrates both the foreign nature of furniture depicted on the reliefs and the symbolic nature of the collected item. In sum, a few generalizations may be made about the depictions of ivory booty and tribute. First and foremost, the majority of the representations of ivory in the earlier reigns of the empire (through the reign of Tiglath-pileser III) depict ivory tusks and furniture as tribute. Ivory tusks and the display of their collections on these images might have garnered economic value in the reigns of Aššurnasirpal II and especially Shalmaneser III, demonstrating the royal possession of an important mercantile product, the ingot-like raw elephant tusk. In fact, the major theme of both extant obelisks from the early half of the empire, the Rassam and Black Obelisks, is the receipt of ivory tusks as tribute from the areas to the west of Assyria, to the neglect of other themes and regions known from the monumental reliefs. In each composition which depicts the receipt of ivory tribute, the king stands at the end of the line of tributaries ready to receive his lot. It is significant that the collecting of ivory by the kings of Assyria was portrayed on the obelisks because these monuments were placed in

very public spaces, in open courtyards outside the gates of the palaces.³⁸³ The messages of the obelisks would therefore have the potential to be disseminated to a larger and more diverse audience.³⁸⁴ The obelisks were *commemorative* monuments, rather than all-inclusive summaries, celebrating the victory and receipt of certain important lots of tribute and commodities from major Assyrian rivals.³⁸⁵ So too, the throne dais of Shalmaneser III from the Nimrud arsenal, clearly a monument commemorating a diplomatic treaty with Babylon, could also have commemorated the receipt of important lots of ivory tribute from both Babylon and the city of Unqi in North Syria.

The second major conclusion that can be reached is that throughout the Neo-Assyrian period, great attention to the decorative detail of furniture is shown on the monumental artworks. Through circumstantial evidence, it was possible to suggest that some of the furniture depicted on the large-scale formal review scenes from the reigns of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II was foreign in style. I have suggested that the Assyrianization which occurs within the imperial art might have masked the true foreign style of furniture in the reliefs. Yet at the same time the relief artists in other contexts utilized certain decorative cues, very un-Assyrian motifs, which would have served to

³⁸³See Reade, 1985 for a discussion of the findspots of the Rassam Obelisk and Black Obelisk. See also Marcus, 1987.

³⁸⁴For more on audience, see part four of this chapter.

³⁸⁵The commemorative value of the obelisks may stand in contrast to the reliefs, as in the case of the tributary processions from Sargon's palace at Khorsabad (corridor 10). Russell suggests that these reliefs were depicting the repetitive event of the delivery of *annual* tribute to Khorsabad in celebration of the New Year's festival. (1991, p. 238)

highlight the glaring foreign nature of the furniture. This occurred in reliefs from the reign of Aššurnasirpal II showing fringed seat cushions which are thoroughly at home in North Syria and in the reign of Aššurbanipal when the king sits on a couch decorated with women-at-the-window plaques. Finally, this extreme attention to decorative detail in the images of furniture on the reliefs throughout the Neo-Assyrian period paintings indicates a heightened Assyrian interest in furniture and its decoration. I suggested above that this interest in detail both proved the veracity of the events occurring in the reliefs and at the same time it demonstrated the luxurious and skillfully-produced quality of the foreign furniture.

A third major conclusion is that after the reign of Sargon II, depictions of ivory *tribute* in formal review scenes became infrequent and the capture and transport of *booty* from besieged towns became the most frequent contexts in which ivory products were depicted. In these instances the ivory products were carried not by foreign tributaries who advance towards the king of their own free will but by either Assyrian soldiers or foreign captives, male or female. Matching the royal inscriptions, the ivory in Sennacherib and Aššurbanipal's reign is obtained strictly from Babylonia and Elam. There are three *topoi* regarding the depiction of foreign furniture as booty which were common in this latter part of the empire. The first *topos* shows files of Assyrian soldiers or defeated enemies carrying the booty on their shoulders out of the besieged city and towards the waiting king. This scene is familiar from all booty scenes from Sennacherib's reign and many from Aššurbanipal's reign. In Aššurbanipal's reign a second *topos* appears, the booty counting scene, in which the Assyrian officials record the

number and description of the booty in some sort of remote field station near the enemy city. In these counting scenes, the furniture was often represented in an Egyptian-like manner, where the objects float in mid-air so that all of their details are attested in the monumental reliefs. And finally, the third *topos* showed the foreign objects placed directly into the lap of the waiting king who rests peacefully away from the battlefield in his palace at Nineveh.

While the ivory products that we have discussed do not always arrive in Assyria from North Syria, the prevalence of these objects in the monumental reliefs suggests that these examples of “minor arts” were significant symbols laden with value in Assyrian cultural production. Ivory was depicted in each reign for which we have a great deal of extant or recorded monuments as an item of tribute or booty which was, most importantly, brought to and controlled by the king. The existence of ivory tusks and ivory furniture in these vast tribute and booty lots on the reliefs is both steady and frequent, and it seems that no king could have dropped ivory products from the texts or images. Above all, the king stands as the inevitable collector of the tribute and booty and the message of this royal ability, indeed one might argue *obsession*, to collect ivory and furniture in steady and frequent references, is therefore disseminated in the free-standing obelisks, bronze gates and monumental reliefs.

Chapter Three: The Nimrud Ivories as a Collection

Part Four: Audience and Display of the Collections and Collecting Behavior

Introduction

The central question which arises once we have defined the Nimrud ivories as a collection is who was doing the collecting and who was witnessing both the collections themselves in tangible totality and the collecting behaviors of the king? This question essentially begs the issue of who were the creators and audience of the collections and reliefs which highlighted the collecting behavior. As for the creators, the royal inscriptions asserted incontestably that the kings were the collectors of the ivory furniture and other objects in what Tadmor has called a “regicentric” manner.³⁸⁶ This was achieved through the use of the personal pronoun “I.” This “I” referred to the person of the king in the booty and tribute lists, as in the phrases “I received/collected X as tribute”³⁸⁷ or “I took/carried off X as booty”.³⁸⁸ Alternately, a text may have used the pronoun “he” if the

³⁸⁶1986, p. 205.

³⁸⁷*amhur*, from *mahārum*. CAD M/1, gives the definition of *mahārum*: “to accept valuables, to take in, to collect, to receive.”, p. 50.

³⁸⁸*ašlul*, from *šalālum* CAD Š/1, gives the definition of *šalālum* as “to take as booty, to plunder, despoil, loot.” While *mahārum* is the standard choice of word for the receipt of tribute, there are many different synonyms and verbs which could have been used for the capture of booty. For more on the distinction between tribute and booty, see above, chapter three, part two, collecting texts and Bär, 1996. The references to phrases regarding the receipt of both booty and tribute of all types of materials throughout the Neo-Assyrian period are entirely too numerous to cite.

passage was written in the third person describing in a more “detached” manner the actions of the king.³⁸⁹ In spite of these assertions, however, it is important to remember that the kings may not have been the sole agents responsible for the physical collection of tribute and the capture of booty. Rather, their sub-officials and governors as well as their army may have been the individuals which actually collected the foreign goods. For example, on the relief from the Lachish room of Sennacherib’s palace, as discussed above, Assyrian soldiers carry the booty out of the city into the presence of the waiting king. It is presumed here that whether the kings physically did the collecting or not, the central purpose of these phrases in the annals and images of the king receiving the objects was to demonstrate that the kings were ultimately responsible for the collection of the objects. Hence, it was the *intention* of the creators of the royal inscriptions and reliefs to show that the kings were the collectors. The intentions of the collectors as displayed in reliefs and inscriptions were as essential as their actual physical accomplishments for they suggest what public identities, or ideologies, were deliberately constructed.

However, this fact does not necessarily demonstrate that the kings were responsible for the sorting of the collections once they arrived at Nimrud. It is difficult to determine who would have controlled the movement of goods within the palaces. Certainly the administrative documents suggest that at times the kings were intensely interested in the movement of certain items within and between palaces and cities. For

³⁸⁹Occasionally the use of both pronouns “I” and “he” may be used in a single text to refer to the king. For example, in Grayson, RIMA3, A.O.102.5, an inscription of Shalmaneser III’s from the Balawat Gates, columns i-iv use the pronoun “I” and columns v-vi use “he”.

example, a letter from the crown-prince Sennacherib to his father Sargon II reassures the king that western tribute was well looked-after.³⁹⁰ In general, though, the kings delegated the minute tasks of the maintenance of the palace and transport of goods to their officials and administrators. These individuals would have served as advisors and have been directly accountable to the king, hence we may refer to them as the “royal apparatus.”³⁹¹ The royal apparatus includes those power elite who were members of the palace personnel such as the royal family, eunuchs, body guards, governors and advisors close to the king and who either lived in the palace or visited it often.³⁹² These titled individuals would most likely have been responsible for the storage and movement of goods within Nimrud. These same officials were also responsible for the decoration and daily operation of the palaces, as well as the management of the royal scribal schools. I will therefore use the terms “king” and “royal apparatus” interchangeably as an interrelated body which created the collections and, as we shall see in the following chapters, the ideology which both motivated and informed royal collecting behavior.

Essentially the question concerning the audience, i.e. who witnessed the

³⁹⁰“The tribute of the Ashdodites was brought to Calah; I have received it, sealed it and deposited it in the...palace. I am sending this letter to the king my lord.” (Parpola, SAA1, #30, l. 22)

³⁹¹Tadmor writes: “Although originally *primus inter pares* and theoretically reappointed each year, the Assyrian king exercised sole authority and did not share his prerogatives with any assembly of elders or traders.” (1986, p. 205)

³⁹²See Tadmor, 1986, pp. 206-211 and 1997, p. 325. For a full accounting of the dependents of the palace, see Postgate, 1979, pp. 200-202. For a listing of the professions of the palace personnel and power elite in Sennacherib’s day, see Russell, 1991, p. 238.

collections and collecting behavior, ultimately revolves around the *display* of those collections and of the collecting behavior.³⁹³ Pomian has suggested that one of the criteria for defining a collection is that the objects must be put on display at some point in time.³⁹⁴ I will demonstrate below by using texts that refer to the movement of furniture around the capital cities, that this display could have occurred both within the elite structures and outside of their walls.

There have been many discussions in recent years of the audiences of Neo-Assyrian palaces and who would have gained access to the outermost or innermost rooms and courtyards.³⁹⁵ These analyses have revolved around the size, diversity, rank and even gender of the individuals who would have had *actual* physical access to both the reliefs and the collections within the palaces. The view taken here is that access to the palace collections would have been experienced in two ways: first, an individual might indeed have had actual physical access to the collections through the direct eyewitness of ivory furniture stored in rooms within the palace; and second, the collections might have been witnessed through glimpses at the palace reliefs which demonstrate the collecting behaviors of the king.

³⁹³I am principally concerned here with the audience of the collections at Nimrud. However, I have argued above in this chapter that ivory collecting was a cross-chronological phenomenon in Assyria, and further, that it is impossible to restrict the “use-period” of the buildings at Nimrud to only the ninth century B.C. Therefore, it is with this assumption in mind that our evidence for reconstructing the audience of the collections comes from all reigns and all capital cities of the Neo-Assyrian period.

³⁹⁴1990, p. 163.

³⁹⁵Reade, 1979c; Russell, 1991, pp. 223-240; and Cifarelli, 1995, p. 46-7.

Elite Palace Personnel

Owing to the archaeological evidence that most of the foreign ivories were stored within inner rooms of the palace, then the category of beholder which had both direct physical access would have been limited to either the Assyrians living within the palace and very close to the king, i.e. the household staff and the royal apparatus, or foreigners, whether diplomatic or skilled labor, who were brought into the interior of the palace. Cifarelli has argued that the royal apparatus, including the king, was at once the primary creator and audience of the Assyrian texts and reliefs, hence of Assyrian ideology.³⁹⁶ It is significant that the royal apparatus, the inner circle, would have been closest physically to the collections since many scholars have proposed that they were in fact the people most responsible for the maintenance of the king's power.³⁹⁷ The palace and administrative texts, including for example a series of wine ration lists from Nimrud and a group of harem edicts,³⁹⁸ indicate that these courtiers and officials lived within the palace walls and therefore had a great deal of direct access to many parts of the palace. It can be presumed, therefore that the individuals closest to the Assyrian king, his family and the courtiers whom he relied upon for all royal tasks, would have directly witnessed the display of the collections of foreign ivory furniture themselves as well as the collecting behavior in the reliefs. This is not to say that every member of the palace

³⁹⁶1995, p. 11.

³⁹⁷See Reade, 1979c, pp. 335-40 and Cifarelli, 1995, p. 47.

³⁹⁸Reviewed in Russell, 1991, p. 230-2 and Cifarelli, 1995, p. 102 respectively.

personnel would have had access to every piece of ivory furniture at Nimrud. Rather, this category of beholder would have more *directly* experienced the collections as a *whole* in comparison to other audiences.

One manner in which the palace personnel might have witnessed the collections on display was through the royal banquets which took place in the palace. A tablet from Nineveh describes the preparations needed for a ritual feast during the winter month Tebet.³⁹⁹ The tablet describes a banquet involving the king and his high officials (*rabānim*) which probably took place within a palace. The scribes list specific pieces of furniture, tables and chairs, which were brought in for the king and his high officials. When coupled, as Russell has noted,⁴⁰⁰ with the imagery of the banquet from rooms 7 and 2 at Khorsabad, a picture emerges of a palace with a steady and regular number of religious and diplomatic banquets which would have used stock pieces of furniture, foreign or domestic, as appropriate and when needed.

Foreigners

The foreigners present in the capital cities of Assyria and especially at Nimrud included both high officials and tributaries as well as workers, skilled craftsmen, traders

³⁹⁹K8669. Kinnier-Wilson, 1972, pp. 32-43. Originally published by Müller ("Das assyrische Ritual," *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen-Ägyptischen Gesellschaft* 41, no. 3, 1937, 59-89, pl. I-III) and discussed by Russell (1991, p. 231). This feast might have been a yearly event commemorating the end of the king's summertime military campaign.

⁴⁰⁰1991, p. 231.

and deportees who helped to build the palaces.⁴⁰¹ Foreign diplomats, whether tributary or independent, who paid visits or brought their gifts to the king were direct witnesses to both the king's actual collections of foreign furniture as well as to the images on the reliefs displaying the king's collecting behavior. Some foreigners would have had access at least as far into the palaces as the throne rooms,⁴⁰² where ivory furniture was both received and used at Nimrud.⁴⁰³ The administrative documents from Assyria suggest that some of the booty or tribute received by the Assyrian kings was re-gifted to foreign diplomatic delegations. A few inventories refer to precious items which were issued to the visiting foreign delegations, and it is possible that many of these dispersed items were not of native Assyrian manufacture, but themselves the result of booty, tribute or trade between Assyria and other foreign entities.⁴⁰⁴ These inventories, like the booty and tribute lists in the annals are exceedingly detailed in their description and bely the taxonomic purpose of the imperial administrative records. At the same time, they indicate who might have seen the foreign objects flowing into the capital cities of Assyria from abroad. Archaeological testament to such Assyrian gift-giving practices comes from Hasanlu in Iran, where numerous ivories and cylinder seals carved in the Assyrian

⁴⁰¹For a discussion of the Assyrian annals mentioning the foreign labor used to build the palaces, see Russell, 1991, pp. 225-230. For a discussion of the international population of Nineveh, see Postgate, 1989.

⁴⁰²Reade, 1979c, p. 338; and Russell, 1991, p. 233.

⁴⁰³Ivories were found in the throne rooms of both the Northwest Palace and Fort Shalmaneser at Nimrud. See above chapter three, part one for this evidence.

⁴⁰⁴See for example Fales and Postgate, SAA VII, # 57, 58

and North Syrian styles have been excavated from the central Burned Building II.

Marcus and Winter have both suggested that these objects were received directly from Assyria, possibly as diplomatic gifts.⁴⁰⁵ The gifting of these North Syrian ivories, would have therefore allowed the foreign beholders of the Assyrian royal collections to extend beyond the capital cities to the far reaches of the empire and beyond.

Assyrian Commoners

Reade has suggested that the commoners, the majority of native Assyrians and low-ranking foreigners not directly involved with the palace, were prevented from penetrating past the outer courtyards of the palaces. Therefore, the images on these outermost public monuments which are rife with references to the collecting of tribute, were specifically aimed at the “ordinary subject.”⁴⁰⁶ Russell, however, suggests that it was possible that the commoners could have had direct access to the more inner parts of the palace. He cites Aššurnasirpal’s Banquet Stele⁴⁰⁷ as evidence that “many, if not all of the guests [at the banquet] saw at least the most public areas [of the Northwest Palace at Nimrud], namely the outer court (D/E) and the throne room(B).”⁴⁰⁸ Russell lists similar royal inscriptions from Sargon’s and Sennacherib’s reigns that describe dedication

⁴⁰⁵See Muscarella, 1980, nos. 280-293. However, the nature of this contact is not fully known. Assyrian annals indicate that the Assyrians and the people of the Zagros mountains had diplomatic relations, and they frequently exchanged horses. See Winter, 1977, p. 375; and Marcus, 1990, p. 135.

⁴⁰⁶Reade, 1979c, p. 336.

⁴⁰⁷For a full publication of this stele, see Wiseman, 1952, 24-39. For a more recent transliteration and translation, see Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.30.

⁴⁰⁸Russell, 1991, p. 224.

ceremonies for the palaces, in which the kings invited “the people of my land” into their new palaces.⁴⁰⁹ Given the fact that indeed some ivory fragments were found in the outer courtyard (actually at the foot of the Banquet Stele) and the throne room of the Northwest Palace at Nimrud, then it is possible that the Assyrian commoners directly witnessed ivory furniture present in the palace. In addition, obelisks with narrative reliefs which were set up in public courtyards outside the palaces could have displayed the collecting behavior of the king, with all of its ideological implications.⁴¹⁰ Therefore, the mass population in the Assyrian capital cities could have experienced the Nimrud collections in any number of possible degrees based on their access to the palace and the public monuments commemorating the receipt of tribute.

There is an abundance of textual evidence for religious festivals involving the public display of furniture to the Assyrian “masses”.⁴¹¹ The most prominent festival, especially after Sennacherib’s reign, was the *Akitu*, or New Year’s Festival, celebrated primarily in Babylon for the god Marduk, but involving gods and citizens from other cities.⁴¹² During the first seven days of the festival, rituals and banquets would take place within the temples and palaces, accessible to only the high officials and priests close to

⁴⁰⁹Russell, 1991, p. 226

⁴¹⁰Reade, 1979c, p. 336.

⁴¹¹For a discussion of the audience of Neo-Assyrian festivals relating to the god Ashur, see van Driel, 1969, pp. 139-169.

⁴¹²Van Driel discusses the *Akitu* festival in Assyria which was celebrated under the auspices of the god Ashur. (1969, pp. 162-5)

the king.⁴¹³ However, for the last few days of the festival, the enthroned statues of the gods were led around the city accompanied by the king and his retinue “in full view of the populace.”⁴¹⁴ Often the gods and king would be followed in the Babylonian procession by prisoners of war, and tribute and booty from military campaigns.⁴¹⁵ Oppenheim has noted that many pieces of ivory furniture passed in review in front of the citizens of the ancient city of Ashur at the conclusion of a military campaign when the king triumphally returned, goods in tow, to the gates of the city.⁴¹⁶

As another example of the religious context for furniture display, a letter from an Assyrian official to Sargon describes a ritual bed which was made for the god Ashur and presumably carried around the city of Khorsabad on procession. The letter mentions that ultimately the bed would be brought to the temple of Ashur at Khorsabad and rituals

⁴¹³Kuhrt, 1987.

⁴¹⁴Kuhrt, 1987, p. 35. Van Driel agrees: “The sight of a traveling god must have been fairly common.” (1969, p. 167)

⁴¹⁵Kuhrt, 1987, p. 35. The strongest evidence for this public review of booty, as Kuhrt points out, is from a text which describes a New Year’s procession of Esarhaddon’s through the city of Nineveh which corresponds with the dedication of a palace: “At the New Year’s Feast of the first month, may I pass in review therein, yearly, without cessation, all the steeds, mules, asses (and) camels, arms and (other) implements of warfare, of all the hosts of the conquered enemy.” (Luckenbill, ARAB II, #693) There are also images from the Bronze gates of both Aššurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III from Balawat which depict the review of tribute in Assyria. For more on these images, see above, chapter three, part three.

⁴¹⁶See Oppenheim, 1964, p. 145 and 1960, p. 144. For the connection between the royal tribute procession and the *Akitu* Festival, see also, Russell, 1991, p. 231. I suggest that the files of tributaries depicted on the reliefs, for example on the Rassam or Black obelisks, were actually taking part religious festivals within the major cities of Assyria. This would be entirely in keeping with the Assyrian penchant for intertwining religion and imperialism.

would be performed upon it; however temporarily, the bed was kept “on the river and will stay in the boat for tonight.”⁴¹⁷ Another letter from Sargon’s reign gives further details regarding the public location of this or similar ritual beds. The letter mentions “the inhabitants of the Inner City” of Ashur who were making sacrifices before the bed of the god in its temporary position on the river.⁴¹⁸

These important sacred beds were mentioned in court love incantations and poetry where they served divine couples in their marriage rites.⁴¹⁹ It is possible that some of these marriage beds were fashioned out of ivory. While certainly the divine love-making took place within the temple sanctuaries, as the incantation texts point out, following the marriage ceremonies, the beds might have been paraded in front of the general public.⁴²⁰ Clearly, the royal furniture collections, which could have included the special beds of deities, whether they were manufactured within Assyria or were imported from

⁴¹⁷Parpola, SAA1, #54, p. 51.

⁴¹⁸Parpola, SAA1, #55, p. 51. The phrase used for Inner City is *libbi-ālim*, which means literally “heart of the city.” *Libbi-ālim* normally referred to the area within the walls of a city and it was distinguished from *libbi-māim*, meaning “the heart of the open country.” For both of these phrases, see CAD L, p. 168.

⁴¹⁹For a discussion of the use of special beds in the “rites of divine love”, see Leick, 1994, pp. 130-138. For example, a Sennacherib text describes the marriage bed of *mušukkanum* wood which he fashioned for Marduk and his consort Sarpanitu as “covered with gold and precious stones”. (ibid., p. 136) For a description dating to the Middle Assyrian period (reign of Aššurnasirpal I) of a similar bed built for the goddess Ishtar, see Foster, 1995, p.274: “It was I who had made a couch of boxwood, a well-appointed bed for your divine repose, the interior of which I overlaid with the finest gold cunningly wrought, which I adorned with the choicest precious stones from the mountain(s) like a [].”

⁴²⁰Kuhrt notes that this procession might have ended the New Year’s Festival at Babylon, (1987, p. 36).

elsewhere, were important aspects of public ceremony and ritual in Assyria.⁴²¹

Furthermore, special pieces of furniture were undoubtedly connected with fertility rites and sexuality, thus their display to the “commoners” in rituals and processions would have been situated (by the priests and king) in a context of fertility, sexual duty and natural divine abundance.

It is also possible that some official state banquets and feasts utilizing the foreign furniture collections took place in full public view. A relief dating to the reign of Aššurbanipal from Nineveh supports this idea that commoners had access, or were even forced to directly witness such royal spectacles (Figure 66). In the relief, the king is shown hunting lions within a royal enclosure covered by a large canopy. On the Ninevite hillsides surrounding the enclosure, individual Assyrians scramble to get a view of the quasi-secretive royal hunts. Another Aššurbanipal relief, the famous garden scene with the Queen in which the king reclines on a foreign ivory couch during a banquet (Figure 37), is at first glance a seemingly private affair, yet we cannot rule out the possibility that such feasts took place in full public view. Finally a text from the reign of Esarhaddon which describes the new *ekal-mašartim* at Nineveh supports the idea that secular banquets served upon tables would have been performed in front of a large audience: “all the nobles and commoners of my country I caused to sit down within it at a luxurious

⁴²¹For a comparative use of ivory within Byzantine religious ritual, see Corrigan, 1978.

table, of eating and drinking.”⁴²² Clifford Geertz relates such fully public celebrations to the ideological exhibition of the king’s charisma.⁴²³ Within these *fêtes* discussed in inscriptions and tablets and displayed in reliefs, exquisitely crafted furniture from the far reaches of the empire played an important role as royal paraphernalia and tangible emblems of authority. At the same time, these public ceremonies and banquets allowed the common people to take part in the celebration of charismatic authority by engaging in the display of royal pageantry.

Military Personnel

Undoubtedly, the category of beholder which had access to the outermost and innermost sanctums of the military arsenal, Fort Shalmaneser, which contained much of the royal collections were similar in composition to that of the main palaces. This is supported by the evidence from the administrative tablets from Fort Shalmaneser which list numerous Assyrian and foreign courtiers, officials, skilled workers and servants who received wine rations from the king’s coffers.⁴²⁴ Because the function of Fort Shalmaneser differed from that of the main palaces at Nimrud, it is likely that there was a

⁴²²van Driel, 1969, p. 160. From the Addressbook of the gods, reign of Sennacherib, first published by Frankena, *Takultu: De Sacrale Maltijd in de assyrische Rituel*, 1954.

⁴²³“When kings journey around the countryside, making appearances, attending fetes, conferring honors, exchanging gifts, or defying rivals, they mark it, like some wolf or tiger spreading his scent through his territory, as almost physically part of them.” (1983, p. 124)

⁴²⁴See Postgate and Dalley, 1984. Russell discusses this textual evidence in detail. (1991, pp. 230-232)

new category of beholder of the ivory collections within the Fort.⁴²⁵ Fort Shalmaneser, which functioned as a military arsenal and mustering point, probably received hundreds of “common” Assyrian soldiers as well as officers and foreign enlistees or mercenaries.⁴²⁶ The military personnel witnessing the royal ivory collections in Fort Shalmaneser would have been an important component of the king’s audience because the king relied upon them to maintain his empire and power.

Temple Personnel

The ivories found in the Nabu Temple at Nimrud by Mallowan necessitate a discussion of the access to the collections via the temple. As in the palaces, access to the innermost sanctums of the temples, i.e the shrine rooms of Nabu and Tašmetum, was probably limited to important priests and temple servants, as well as to the king and very high officials.⁴²⁷ The majority of the ivories within the Nabu Temple were found in rooms used by the scribes as well as in the throne room, which was used by the king during his visits for important rituals as well as ordinary worship.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁵For a discussion of the function of the *ekal-mašartim* see above, chapter three, part one.

⁴²⁶Though it would be difficult to determine which parts of the palace allowed access to these soldiers. Most likely, they were sequestered within the very unofficial parts of the palace or were limited to the courtyards themselves. Thus the ivory collections which they may have witnessed would have been exactly those stored in the suites not used for state apartments, i.e. the SW quadrant.

⁴²⁷Oppenheim, 1964, pp. 186-7. For a discussion of temple personnel within the Neo-Assyrian Ashur temple, see also, Van Driel, 1969, pp. 170-185

⁴²⁸The furniture contained within the Nabu Temple must have been donated by the king, either as a tax-like portion of the booty and tribute extracted from vassals or as a direct donation by the king from his own collections of booty and tribute.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the differential access to the ivory furniture translates into whether the collection was seen as a whole, whether each piece of furniture experienced as an individual element, or whether the collecting behavior was witnessed. That is, those people who had full and direct access on a regular basis to the pieces of furniture, as they were stored ensemble and in a sorted manner, were probably only those who had full access to the innermost sanctums of the palaces, Fort Shalmaneser, and the temples. The ivory furniture collections might only have been witnessed as full, sorted collections by the royal family, high officials, temple and palace personnel, some members of the military (in the case of Fort Shalmaneser), and the kings. Since this was possibly the most important intended category of beholder of the collections--those who had the power to usurp the king were most likely those who were closest to him or who controlled the military--then the collections served an exceedingly important ideological and propagandistic purpose. Moreover, this limited audience not only had the opportunity to experience the different styles of ivory furniture collected by the realm, but were perhaps most aware and interested in foreign goods, or as Reade suggests, they might have had a more "a receptive attitude".⁴²⁹

The "commoners" or masses of people most likely experienced the king's

⁴²⁹1979c, p. 335. Oppenheim has come to a similar conclusion regarding the elite audience of royal letters to gods which was "deeply imbued with a conscious tradition of native origin but, at the same time, aware of the existence of other traditions without reacting to them so intensely as to evolve patterns of either aggression or of fossilizing self-isolation," and which "listened with appreciation to the description of foreign mores, to the praise of another sacred city, etc." (1960, p. 146)

collections and collecting behavior either during religious and triumphal reviews or during celebratory banquets. In these cases, when the furniture collections would have been symbolized by selected individual pieces seen at a distance, then the entire collection as a whole might not have been witnessed to the same degree as if access to the palace were granted. Furthermore, the individual styles of ivory furniture would not have been as evident to the vast common audience. These occasions, however, would have been symbolically charged and emblematic contexts that were engineered by the royal apparatus and couched in terms of religious sanctity and divine legitimacy. Thus the display of aspects of the royal furniture collections took part in the legitimization of authority and maintenance of the *status quo*. The king was able to target different audiences for his messages about his behavior and abilities, and in turn, those messages which the royal collections and their display conveyed could be properly “spun” according to which audience the king wished to address.⁴³⁰

Regardless of the intended audience or deliberately constructed messages, it is clear from the evidence cited above that furniture collections and the behavior associated with the collecting of foreign booty and tribute were frequently displayed by the kings of Assyria to a number of audiences, high and common, foreign and native. The collection of ivory furniture was a deliberately public act in Assyria, and as such, the collections

⁴³⁰Oppenheim has commented on the ability of certain kings in Assyria to “spin” their propagandistic messages according to specific audiences and events. He suggests, for example, that Sargon’s letter to the god Ashur, which uncustomarily highlights the many moral and technical achievements of the enemy Urartians, sets up the enemy as an ideal model, perhaps to be emulated by the native Assyrians. (1960, p. 142)

garnered social and political value. Their value was attached to the collector, the person of the king, and therefore served to construct his public persona, or identity, as an ideal acquirer of foreign goods.

Chapter Four: Neo-Assyrian Ideology and the Role of Collecting Within It

Introduction

The task of this chapter is to define ideology, and to describe some general aspects of Assyrian ideology. As a general discussion, this brief chapter will therefore not draw extensively on empirical evidence from Neo-Assyrian texts and images but instead will rely on previous syntheses of Assyrian ideology. Ideology will be defined in this chapter as the deliberate and arbitrary construction of identity within a subjective world view. Therefore, the terms “identity construction” and “ideology” will be used interchangeably. In the case of this study, the focus will be on Assyrian royal identity and in particular, two aspects of royal identity: the ability of the king to acquire foreign goods, territories, and people, which will be called the acquisitional identity; and the ability of the king to create order and maintain the fertility of the land of Assyria, which will be called the creational identity. The reason for the focus on acquisitional identity follows naturally from the discussion in the previous chapter and situates the symbolic value which foreign ivory objects garnered in Assyria within a context of acquisitive royal identity. The implications of the second aspect of royal identity, however, will serve more importantly for the following chapter five, in which the ability of the king to recreate a foreign land in the heartland of Assyria through the collection of its *living* objects will be examined. An examination of these two aspects of Assyrian royal identity--acquisition and creation--will serve as a bridge which links the collecting of inanimate objects, i.e. the ivory products of North Syria, discussed in chapter three to the

collecting of living objects, i.e. the flora and fauna of North Syria, which will be discussed in chapter five.

Our discussion will be limited to political ideology, that is the ideology which is concerned with the maintenance, gain and legitimation of power in Assyria. It is a state ideology which has its place in the expansionist mechanisms of imperial power.⁴³¹ Since the focus will be on the structures of political power in Assyria, then only the royal ideology of Assyria will be examined as a top-down phenomenon. However, it is important to acknowledge that there were less elite strata of Assyrian society which may have had their own potentially resistant ideologies that may or may not be gleaned from other types of data.⁴³² Much of the textual and pictorial data that is the concern of this study and which in fact dominates the extant corpus of texts and images from Assyria was commissioned by and written for the elite. This is a consequence of the high cost of maintaining scribal and artistic schools and workshops which resulted in a high degree of control over these institutions by the elite.⁴³³ Thus, it is my contention that the only “ideology” which we may investigate in Assyria when we are looking at royal texts,

⁴³¹Marcus has referred to this type of ideology simply as “state” ideology. (1995a, p. 2487) On the history, structure and organization of empires in Mesopotamia, see Larsen, 1979. Larsen points out that Mesopotamian empires are, above all, expansionist regimes (pp. 91-2).

⁴³²For example records of temple personnel, and legal and economic texts which refer to matters outside the royal realm. This shortage of evidence has been briefly addressed by Liverani. (1979, p. 299)

⁴³³Though this control was not unilateral. Tadmor notes that the scribes and “literati” would have had reciprocal impact on the kings. (1986, pp. 203-224)

inscriptions and artistic ventures, is a top-down one, a royal ideology.

This study will treat Assyrian ideology as a general cross-reign phenomenon. The peculiar depositional situation of the Nimrud ivories--it is truly difficult to know when and where each ivory was collected and by which king--permits and necessitates a cross-reign analysis. I will therefore seek *commonalities* within the construction of royal identity across Neo-Assyrian reigns, while at the same time acknowledging the differing permutations that this identity construction endured throughout the Neo-Assyrian period. It is important to acknowledge, however, that many aspects of royal identity which were constructed in the Neo-Assyrian period were predicated on earlier constructions in the Middle Assyrian period and the period just before the reign of Aššurnasirpal II, when Nimrud first became a royal capital. However, the construction of identity within these earlier reigns will for the most part not be examined in depth owing to limitations of time and space as well as to the fact that the collecting of foreign ivory was a behavior practiced only from the "Nimrud" days and on.

General Definition of Ideology

Two recent studies of the definition of ideology in general as well as in the specific context of the ancient Near East have been conducted by Cifarelli and Marcus, who gained their insight from the writings of Althusser and Eagleton.⁴³⁴ Althusser suggested that ideology is a "system of representation" or "social practice" which allows individuals to subjectively conduct "imaginary relations to the real conditions of

⁴³⁴Cifarelli, 1995, 1998; Marcus, 1995a.

existence.”⁴³⁵ As Cifarelli has remarked, ideology “finds its roots” in the ideas of linguistic structuralism and semiotics which holds that all systems of communication--both visual and verbal--are arbitrary, and therefore not objective or empirical.⁴³⁶ As arbitrary or “imaginary” constructions, all textual and visual imagery is created within a particular world view and from a particular *subjective* experience. The subjective and arbitrary world view which emerges in verbal and visual production is the driving force behind all ideology, or identity construction. In turn, this verbal and visual production becomes not only the receptacle into which ideology is “deposited”, but the source for disseminating the dominant ideology. Thus images and texts are at the same time sites of ideology formation *and* transmission.⁴³⁷

Cifarelli and Marcus also derived their work from earlier studies of Assyrian ideology, notably the work of Liverani and Reade, and before them, the work of Oppenheim. Liverani distinguished between the utility of written and visual messages in disseminating the Assyrian ideology to elite as well as general audiences.⁴³⁸ While he acknowledged that most of the Assyrian population could not read, this did not

⁴³⁵Althusser: 1971, p. 162, also described in Makaryk, I., ed. *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory*, Toronto: University Press, 1993, pp. 558-9. I thank Professor Zöe Strother for this insight. See also Eagleton, 1991.

⁴³⁶1995, p. 7. Cifarelli drew on the writings of the French semioticians Ferdinand de Saussure for her discussion of verbal imagery and Roland Barthes for her discussion of visual imagery.

⁴³⁷Cifarelli, 1995, p. 12.

⁴³⁸By visual is meant here the images in Assyrian reliefs and other material output as well as messages of performance, for example triumphal processions, and other religious or celebratory festivals and parades.

necessarily preclude that visual messages took precedence over written ones.⁴³⁹ Rather, the relationship between written and visual messages was a complementary one as many of the written messages would have been read aloud in ceremonial--i.e. visual--situations. The two facets of ideology, text and image, therefore worked *in tandem* to disseminate messages regarding royal identity. Many scholars have since applied Liverani's general ideas to specific Assyrian contexts and they have come to the consensus that the visual and verbal messages complemented each other within royal ideology.⁴⁴⁰

As discussed earlier, another consensus which has been reached regarding Assyrian ideology is that the royal inscriptions and reliefs which create and disseminate state ideology were effective because they incorporated many typological, ethnographic, and geographic cues which rendered a degree of "truth" to the images and narratives recorded within them.⁴⁴¹ The veracity of the events described in visual and verbal production could therefore be "proven" by the inclusion of very minute and specific details and vignettes. This was especially effective when the narrative content of the images and texts was military and described the defeat of enemy territories and people. There was no doubt that the Assyrians always won their battles because there was no doubt that the events actually occurred as described in and corroborated by both image and text. The target of this ideology was both high and low--it was as necessary to

⁴³⁹1979, p. 303.

⁴⁴⁰Winter, 1981a (Aššurnasirpal II); Marcus, 1987 (Shalmaneser III); Russell, 1987 (Sennacherib); Porter, 1993 (Esarhaddon); Cifarelli, 1998 (Aššurnasirpal II).

⁴⁴¹Winter, 1981a; Marcus, 1995a.

disseminate messages of victory to the lower levels of society as it was to the upper echelon.⁴⁴² The lower levels of Assyrian society were, after all, responsible for providing the necessary manpower and supplies for the massive military and civic efforts.⁴⁴³ Furthermore, the upper levels of society were ultimately responsible for palace *coups-d'état* and changes of royal authority.⁴⁴⁴ The royal ideology which sought to justify territorial expansion was therefore cloaked or naturalized within a framework of historical "truth."⁴⁴⁵ Cifarelli suggests that this interpretation of Assyrian texts and images as ideology allows us to "relinquish" any desire to get at the "objective truths" behind the events described and to move beyond this empirical approach to a more critical one.⁴⁴⁶

To summarize, it is generally agreed that the elaboration of ideology may be either verbal or visual and furthermore that this ideology was effectively disseminated through the device of historical narrative with an incessant inclusion of details. Thirdly, it is generally agreed that the Assyrian texts and images are not empirical fact, but deliberate construction, and any attempt to understand them must be conditioned by an understanding of the purposes and circumstances of their production. However, no consensus has been reached regarding the nature of the structure which created or ordered

⁴⁴²Oppenheim, 1986.

⁴⁴³Postgate, 1979, pp. 207-14.

⁴⁴⁴Cifarelli, 1995, p. 11.

⁴⁴⁵This particular view of ideology as a "duping" of the masses, or a false consciousness, is a Marxist view. See Eagleton, 1991, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁶Cifarelli, 1995, p. 11.

this royal Assyrian ideology--and this has bearing on our definition of ideology as the deliberate construction of royal identity. There seem to have been two differing views of this structure, the "systemic" view and the "individualist" view. Liverani defined ideology as articulating a "value system,"⁴⁴⁷; Winter suggested that the ideology of the Neo-Assyrian state was a "theory."⁴⁴⁸ Similarly, Cifarelli defined ideology as a "system of beliefs"⁴⁴⁹ and Marcus called ideology an "intersection between belief systems and political power."⁴⁵⁰ Thus ideology emerges from these works as a "system," an anonymous big-brother-like "royal apparatus" which orders the world. The kings, while the primary "beneficiaries" of this system were nevertheless subordinated to its larger machinations--they were not the sole authors of the system, but were themselves subject to the receipt of its messages. The "system" could be described more as a series of state institutions, including the king, courtiers, eunuchs, artisans, scribes and other elite palace personnel. In contrast, Reade, Russell and Grayson saw ideology as an extension of the whims and desires of individual kings, or as "personal propaganda."⁴⁵¹ Reade described the creation and decoration of the Assyrian palaces as "the personal achievement of the king responsible."⁴⁵² And Russell concluded that the "character of Sennacherib's

⁴⁴⁷Liverani, 1979, p. 301.

⁴⁴⁸1981a, p. 22, quoting Culler.

⁴⁴⁹1995, p. 9.

⁴⁵⁰1995a, p. 2487.

⁴⁵¹A feature of these authors noted by Cifarelli, 1995. See also Grayson, 1981.

⁴⁵²1979, p. 330.

decoration [was] uniquely expressive of his goals and ideals."⁴⁵³

A way to reconcile these two differing views of ideology is to define ideology as a system of beliefs or value *inscribed* onto the individual figure or "personality" of the king. This inscription process is identified as "an indispensable medium for the production of human subjects."⁴⁵⁴ Ideology is therefore the deliberate construction of royal identity since the value "system" sets down its tenets and focuses its energy upon the identity of an individual royal persona. Conversely, the individual activities of the king--the sum of which create his royal identity--may therefore define and elaborate the entire ideological system of the Assyrian state. Ultimately, a general Assyrian elite identity emerges that is embodied in the singular person of the king.⁴⁵⁵ This inscripting process also explains why the king is always the focus of the visual and verbal forms of communication within the ideological system.⁴⁵⁶ Finally, this inscripting process explains why there are some general common messages, yet at the same time, there are many differences in the construction of individual royal identities between realms. It is through this inscripting process that ideology may be defined in this study as the deliberate and arbitrary construction of royal identity within a particular world view.

In general, Assyrian royal identity was bound up in imperialism: it was a top-

⁴⁵³1991, p. 266.

⁴⁵⁴Eagleton notes that this is an Althusserian view of ideology. (1991, p. 148)

⁴⁵⁵On this suggestion I am indebted to the work of Marc van de Mieroop who presented this idea in an as yet unpublished paper to the 1997 Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Venice, Italy and through personal communication.

⁴⁵⁶A "regicentric" feature noted by Tadmor, 1986, p. 205.

down phenomenon which sought to justify and legitimate territorial expansion. The kings of Assyria were commissioned, or inscribed, with the duty of expansion. But there were many sub-identities within the grand Assyrian royal identity which were iterated in the Assyrian texts and images and which have been addressed previously. For example, the identity of the ferocious and powerful king may account for what has been called the “calculated frightfulness” of the king and empire. This ferocious identity was constructed through the inclusion of vignettes of brutality and violence which are so prevalent in Assyrian verbal and visual production.⁴⁵⁷ Or as another example, the royal identity of the “pious ruler” may account for the Assyrian epithets which proclaim the king as “priest of deity PN” and the many images in Assyrian palaces which show the king in religious garments and poses performing rituals. However, because we are interested in how the acquisition of inanimate and animate objects in Assyria took part in ideology, the focus here will be on two distinct sub-identities which can be siphoned out of a greater royal identity. Specifically, we are interested in the identity of the acquisitive king and the creator king.

Acquisitional Identity

We have already acknowledged in the preceding chapter that collected objects take part in personal or insitutional narratives and the construction of identity. Now we may place the collected ivory objects found at Nimrud into the specific locus of Assyrian ideology and this occurs when the acquisitive identity of the king is considered. There is

⁴⁵⁷Olmstead, 1918.

little doubt that one of the mandates through which the ideological system inscribed itself onto the body of the king was through the activity of territorial expansion.⁴⁵⁸ Ivory objects collected as tribute or booty in both raw and finished form, as symbols of the defeated territories, constructed the expansionist and acquisitive identities of the Assyrian kings. Acquisition also played a very practical role in the maintenance and growth of royal power. Grayson has argued that the plundering of enemy territories served in the maintenance and justification of the royal expansion because those who were ultimately responsible for the expansion, the army, took the booty from the conquered territories as pay for their exertions.⁴⁵⁹ It is in the construction of acquisitional and expansionist royal identity that the ivory collections of Nimrud contributed social and political value.

The crux of my argument on acquisitional identity is that acquisition was not merely a material practicality, but it also played an important role in Assyrian cosmology, or ordering of the world. This world view saw the peripheral “outside” world as chaotic and the central “inside” Assyrian heartland as ordered. The periphery was what Liverani terms “a failed cosmos,” one which had the potential to become ordered, but which owing to lack of incorporation into the center, had not yet achieved such order.⁴⁶⁰ Therefore, an Assyrian king could justify his territorial acquisition by bringing the “outside” chaotic

⁴⁵⁸On the role of expansion and territorial acquisition and the development of this topos within Middle and Neo-Assyrian ideology, see Grayson, 1995 and Larsen, 1986, pp. 91-2. Garelli has argued that the epithets of the kings from the royal inscriptions were essential aspects of this expansionist ideology. (1979)

⁴⁵⁹Grayson, 1995, p. 962.

⁴⁶⁰1979, p. 306.

world into the center, hence ordering and maintaining the cosmos. All of this ordering would be couched in religious terms as a fulfillment of duty to the god Ashur.⁴⁶¹ A king who had ordered the world, or brought the chaotic outside into the ordered center in a better manner or to a larger degree than any of his predecessors could further justify his own individual reign, much less that of the entire Assyrian state. Liverani has termed this desire of the kings to surpass their predecessors as “heroic priority.”⁴⁶² Liverani and Cifarelli have carried this reasoning further by suggesting that heroic priority, expressed through territorial expansion and other royal activities, was a way for the kings of Assyria to construct their royal identities as “founder-heroes” who “appropriated the creative prerogative of the gods.”⁴⁶³ Ordering through conquest and acquisition was creating.

Creational Identity

The Assyrian conception of heroic priority which placed emphasis on cosmological ordering through expansion and acquisition was therefore inextricably linked in Assyrian ideology to the creational identity of the king. It was not the acquisition alone that was ideologically significant but the fact that the periphery was then *brought back* to the center, as if it were a wayward sheep, and placed into proper cosmological order, for example as a collection of ivory objects. This “return” of the periphery was an attempt to Assyrianize the periphery, that is to make the periphery

⁴⁶¹On the religious aspect of Assyrian ideology, see: Reade, 1979, p. 344; Liverani, 1979, p. 301; Garelli, 1979, p. 323; and Tadmor, 1986, p. 211.

⁴⁶²1979, p. 309.

⁴⁶³Cifarelli, 1995, p. 63.

literally and figuratively become a proper and fully functioning part of the heartland. By doing so, the kings could rid the center of incongruity and at the same time assert the Assyrian “reform” of the backward periphery.⁴⁶⁴ Cifarelli has argued that a negative impression of foreign people in Aššurnasirpal’s texts served to disparage nonconformity and normalize or remind the natives of what it meant to be a proper Assyrian.⁴⁶⁵ I would argue that the Assyrian domination of places non-Assyrian was as much an insertion of Assyrianness and a disparagement of non-Assyrianness as it was a *celebration* of the diversity of the new world brought within the confines of empire. Ultimately, it was a celebration of difference. Therefore, the function of the bringing to the center of the periphery was symbolic: the kings were essentially crafting microcosms of the entire world within the easily reachable and conveniently limited venues of the Assyrian capital cities.⁴⁶⁶ Pomian has recognized a similar tendency of collections in the European world to demonstrate the collectors’ ordering of the cosmos. Specifically, he contends that

⁴⁶⁴1979, p. 307. Professor Stephen Murray has suggested to me that this cosmological return of the periphery to the center would not only Assyrianize the periphery, but it might also have changed the center. This is treated to some extent in the following chapter five, yet poses an interesting problem which is beyond the scope of this study. Certainly there were instances in which the Assyrian heartland seemed have been culturally influenced by the periphery, perhaps as a result of the deportation of foreign craftsmen to the Assyrian capitals. This change in the center might have been witnessed, for example, in the adoption of certain North Syrian artistic motifs or stylistic tendencies in the monumental art. For more on the North Syrian influence or provincial “anomalies” in Assyrian art, see Winter, 1982 and Reade, 1979a, pp. 26-8.

⁴⁶⁵1995. This suggestion regarding foreign *people* essentially follows upon Liverani’s earlier remarks regarding foreign *territory*.

⁴⁶⁶This thought has also been suggested by: Liverani, 1979; and Winter, 1981a and 1993.

collections in pre-modern Europe brought the “invisible” outside world into “visible” usefulness for the realm.⁴⁶⁷

The work of anthropologist Mary Helms bears heavily on this idea. Helms has argued that in traditional societies, the individual upon whom this cosmology and ordering is inscribed is the traveler or long-distance acquirer.⁴⁶⁸ She connects the cosmological system with the skill of a single individual which in the case of Assyria would be the king. The kings could be likened to not only traveler-acquirers, but also skilled craftsmen who were responsible for the transformation of “raw” peripheral territories into “finished” usable goods at the center of empire. The acquirer/craftsman king could construct an *ideal* identity as a skilled creator king, one who created the periphery in the heart of the center through the amassing and re-creating of foreign objects. Conversely, the kings as ideal symbols of order and creation were the “fountainhead of society’s prosperity.”⁴⁶⁹ To summarize the arguments put forward, through the craft of collecting, the kings of Assyria were constructing their identities as ideal acquirers and creators. Most importantly, this acquisition was symbolized tangibly through the collecting of foreign products, such as ivory furniture, which were figuratively “crafted” by the kings, or brought within the inside world from the realm of the outside.

⁴⁶⁷Pomian, 1990, p. 9.

⁴⁶⁸1993, pp. 160-170.

⁴⁶⁹Helms, 1993, p. 165.

Conclusion

It is the contention of this study that the creational and acquisitive identities were linked in Assyrian ideology through the amassing at the center of all things North Syrian-inanimate and animate. The previous chapters, two and three have demonstrated that the Assyrian acquisition of North Syrian ivory was deliberate and purposeful and this acquisition may be clearly linked to the acquisitional identity of the king. In the following chapter, the way in which these objects may have also played a part in the creational abilities of the kings will be examined.

Chapter Five: The Neo-Assyrian Imagining of North Syria

Introduction

The following chapter examines the ways in which the creational identities of the kings of Assyria were constructed in both royal texts and images. The creational identities, as asserted in chapter four, were both drivers of and manifestations of Assyrian ideology. This facet of Assyrian cosmology and ideology manifested itself as the ordering of the flora and fauna of the periphery. The ideological drive to construct identity invoked an urge to recreate in living flesh and stem the floral and faunal landscapes of North Syria in the heartland. I will treat the recreation of the North Syrian floral and faunal landscapes separately for the two different types of sources, texts and images. Moreover, these sources will be analyzed diachronically in a form of “thick description.”⁴⁷⁰ “Thick description”, a term offered by Clifford Geertz, suggests that the fullest understanding of culture as a complex whole requires a description of the “webs”, the changeability of events through time and space, seeking commonalities and differences along the way.⁴⁷¹ Rather than treat the Neo-Assyrian period as a monolithic identity, this thick description will provide a more complex understanding of the workings of Assyrian ideology. At the same time, this search for commonality is necessitated by the suggestion that the imagining and recreation of the North Syrian

⁴⁷⁰1973, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁷¹Ibid.

landscape was a consistent and central aspect of the creation of royal identity *throughout* the Neo-Assyrian period. In turn, this search for commonalities will supply a number of common *topoi*, or themes of identity creation, which ran throughout Neo-Assyrian cultural production.

The evocation and recreation of the North Syrian landscape in the Neo-Assyrian period was an imagining. It was a fictive narrative, which like the act of collecting, took part in identity creation through the process of ordering. My intention in describing the Neo-Assyrian imagining of North Syria is to elucidate how objects that were collected from those landscapes, whether animate such as flora and fauna, or inanimate such as ivory furniture may have served as metonymies signifying the landscape from which they were collected. A metonymy occurs when “one thing stands for another adjacent to it in place, time or logic.”⁴⁷² Metonymies are narrative devices normally identified in literary works. If we accept that objects take part in narratives, than it is possible to think of the collecting of objects as the formation of metonymies. As metonymies, the North Syrian ivories stood as nostalgic reminders within Assyria of the entire landscape and territory of North Syria. Elsner has suggested that collections serve their collectors as a “cult of fragments” which harken back to a complete other world.⁴⁷³ A collection is ultimately a way of making concrete a desire to evoke and reconstitute via its metonymic fragments that complete other world. As metonymies, the ivories were endowed with a certain

⁴⁷²Bal, 1994, p. 106.

⁴⁷³Elsner and Cardinal, 1994, p. 155-6. For the idea that collections serve as nostalgia, see also Stewart, 1984, pp. 23-4.

“resonance”, that is they had an ability to reach out beyond their context of consumption to the land of their production and origins.⁴⁷⁴

Yet the ivory objects from North Syria served as reminders of an imagined Other world which had to be properly situated within an Assyrian world view. Shelton has described a similar phenomenon that resulted in the creation of the Spanish curiosity cabinets full of New World objects in the sixteenth century A.D. The exotic and pagan items brought back from the New World by the Spaniard conquistadors to their royal court were not merely random accumulations or “curiosities.” Rather, they represented “the inclusiveness of the European view of the world and its facile ability to incorporate and domesticate potentially transgressive worlds and customs.”⁴⁷⁵ In the European Renaissance, the pagan objects from the New World confirmed the righteousness of a world view that distinguished between paganism and Christianity. So too, in the Neo-Assyrian period, the ivory objects from North Syria confirmed the righteousness of a world view which distinguished between Assyria and its periphery. The distinction could be made clear by bringing the periphery to the center hence juxtaposing and making ideologically useful the Other in the heart of the Us. The metonymic objects

⁴⁷⁴For the use of the term resonance with respect to collected objects, see Greenblatt, 1991.

⁴⁷⁵Shelton, 1994, p. 203. Pasztory (1990/1) argues that the pre-Columbian objects were not easily incorporated into the domestic worlds, but remained enigmatic curiosities, left alone and “too alien to have any significance” in the schema of European art history. The only way in which the Europeans of this era could consider the foreign art was to fit it into their own existing categories of art, by either classicizing it or praising its inventiveness.

collected from North Syria may be compared to the curiosity cabinets and *kunstkammers* of the European Renaissance and Enlightenment in that they represented a world in microcosm, and most importantly, an appropriated, controlled and beneficial microcosm.⁴⁷⁶ It is in this manner, as Other brought into order, that the ivories and other “chunks” of the North Syrian landscape helped to construct the creational identities of the kings within Assyrian ideology and cosmology.

⁴⁷⁶For a discussion of the function of *kunstkammers*, see Kaufmann, 1988 and Pomian, 1990.

Chapter Five: The Neo-Assyrian Imagining of North Syria

Part One: Textual References to the Floral Landscape of North Syria

Introduction

The floral landscape of North Syria was constructed as a diverse and abundant locale in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. In particular, the western mountainous fringe associated with Mount Amanus, was also a liminal site which provided otherworldly, mythical experiences for the kings. The mythical Mount Amanus and its diverse floral landscape stood as a microcosm of the entire North Syrian world and was imbued with connotations of sensory pleasure and leisure. These positive experiences within the North Syrian landscape ultimately caused the kings of Assyria to mimic its characteristics in the form of living gardens chock full of foreign plants that were brought from North Syria to their capital cities.

The Mythical Mount Amanus

Mount Amanus, which is located on the western edge of North Syria, served as a cosmological and physical border for the Neo-Assyrian kings (See map, Figure 1).⁴⁷⁷ Its ruggedness entreated them to conquer it by penetrating into its deep forest and traversing its “difficult paths.” Once into the mountain, the kings discovered wonderful things and had memorable sensory experiences. These experiences upon the mountain had a deep enough impact upon the kings that they wished to mimic the characteristics of the

⁴⁷⁷For discussion of the cosmology of Mesopotamia, see Foster, 1993, pp. 29-30 and Lambert, 1975. See also chapter four above.

mountain back at home in the form of parks and gardens which contained its numerous and diverse plant and animal species. Though the specific name of Amanus is significant only in Neo-Assyrian times, the mountains on the edge of North Syria were a traditional source of enchantment in Mesopotamia.⁴⁷⁸ It is worth tracing these earlier royal visions of the North Syrian landscape in order to understand how the Neo-Assyrian kings were in a sense continuing upon the idea of the mythical mountain regions in North Syria, yet embellishing and spinning its image in their own way and for their own ideological purposes.

Cifarelli has commented on the politically-charged value taken on by mountainous areas encountered by the Neo-Assyrian kings. She has identified a motif known as “‘the difficult path’ in which the inaccessibility of foreign territory was used as a metaphor for strangeness.”⁴⁷⁹ This term was first used in the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I to refer to rugged regions in “Nairi-land” and continued to be used throughout the Neo-Assyrian period to refer to foreign mountainous terrain.⁴⁸⁰ The use of this term has been linked by both Cifarelli and Liverani to Assyrian ideology, because these difficult foreign

⁴⁷⁸Mountains in general wielded great power and were heavily integrated into literary imagery. See Kramer, 1969, p. 43 and 1961, pp. 76-103.

⁴⁷⁹1995, pp. 205-8. She was drawing from the work of Liverani, who also notes the ideological significance of the difficult path. (1979, p. 307) Liverani notes specifically that the term is formed by qualifying topographical nouns such as mountains, rivers, etc. with adverbs and adjectives, such as *maršum* which comes from the verb *marāšum*, “to be ill or difficult.” (CAD M/1, p. 269)

⁴⁸⁰Cifarelli has noted that Nairi was located in this period to the northwest of Assyria, near Mount Kashiari and north of the Euphrates, thus placing it in the general direction of North Syria. (1995, p. 83)

terrains were nevertheless always “penetrated”⁴⁸¹, subdued or conquered through the physical stamina, dexterity and ingenuity of the Assyrian kings. Both Cifarelli and Liverani have therefore suggested the conquest of the mountains was essential to the display of heroic priority in that it was the king and only the king who was represented in the annalistic texts as “opening” or “straightening” the difficult path.⁴⁸²

Furthermore, the king’s path into the impenetrable mountains of the west could have been intended to mimic the east to west path of the ultimate life-source, the sun, thus royal heroism took on a cosmological nuance.⁴⁸³ This suggestion is supported by the use in Assyrian royal epithets of several phrases relating to the sun and its path across the sky. For instance, Aššurnasirpal II calls himself “sun(god) of all people.”⁴⁸⁴ Similarly, Shalmaneser III declares “I, Shalmaneser, strong king, (sun)god of all people: I overwhelmed like the Deluge the entire (territory stretching) from the sea of Nairi and the sea of the interior of the land of Zamua, and the great western sea of the land of Hatti.”⁴⁸⁵ Through the reign of Aššurnasirpal II and early in the reign of Shalmaneser III, Mount

⁴⁸¹Marcus has commented on the masculine-centered nature of the term and the narrative reliefs which depict the Neo-Assyrian encounter with foreign landscapes as a penetrating act. She also relates the Assyrian entrance into “virgin” territory to Assyrian moral codes regarding female sexuality and virginity. (1995b, pp. 201-2)

⁴⁸²Liverani, 1979, p. 307 and Cifarelli, 1995, p. 181.

⁴⁸³Helms, 1993, p. 114.

⁴⁸⁴*DINGIR..šamšu kiššat UN.MEŠ*. Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.1, I 10. For this and other royal epithets relating to the sun, see Seux, 1967, pp. 283-4.

⁴⁸⁵*DINGIR..šamšu kiššat UN.MEŠ*. Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.5, ii 2-3: from the Balawat gates.

Amanus seems to mark a definite boundary, the mysterious and dangerous edge beyond which lies the limitless western sea and the unknown. Texts refer to the carving of stele in the mountains that were intended to set the physical boundary of the limits of Assyrian rule. However, later in the reign of Shalmaneser III, with the expansion of the empire into southern Syria and Palestine, Amanus and other mountains in North Syria were redefined from forboding and impenetrable borders into beneficial entities and sources of important timber and other products.

Mount Amanus as a Source of Timber

As negatively and impenetrable as Mount Amanus was portrayed, the Assyrian inscriptions also presented Mount Amanus in a positive light. This positive aspect of Amanus was directly related to its ability to provide high-quality goods for construction projects in the capital cities. The specific type of timber varies in the inscriptions, but the most common trees harvested were cypress, juniper, cedar, and boxwood. The kings acquired the timber for their straight, tall trunks which were used as roof beams and gates in the palaces and temples of the capital cities. In fact, in the royal building inscriptions, each king mentions the celebrated timber of the Amanus range, and the mountains seem never to have become deforested.⁴⁸⁶ Harvesting the timber of Mount Amanus is often *the* point of many of their expeditions to the mountain, perhaps a more important task than

⁴⁸⁶For diachronic discussions of the Assyrian expeditions to attain wood from this region, see: "Gebirge" and "Holz" (RIA, Bd. 4); "Amanos" (RIA, Bd. 1); and "Libanon" (RIA, Bd. 6, 1983).

the conquest of the cities surrounding the mountain.⁴⁸⁷ This fact is reiterated in the royal correspondence and administrative texts from the Neo-Assyrian period, which frequently refer to the logistical organization and transportation of the harvested timber.⁴⁸⁸ Liverani has suggested that the products of the peripheral regions of the empire had no real function until they were harvested by the Assyrian kings.⁴⁸⁹ It was *only* through this transforming activity of the Assyrian kings, that they gained any sort of function or value. The Amanus timbers gained not only value as important raw materials, but phenomenological existence only through the activity performed upon them by the Assyrian king. At the same time, the kings were recreating the forests of North Syria through the installation of tall beams of cedar in their palaces.

Parpola has noted that although timber was harvested in Assyria proper from small native forests, this was a rare occurrence effected only by special royal decree.⁴⁹⁰ The Assyrians preferred to deforest the lands of their tributaries and vassals on the

⁴⁸⁷For example: Aššurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, (see above); Tiglath-Pileser III, Tadmor, 1994, Summ. 7, r 26' (reference to cut timbers); Sargon II, Fuchs, 1994, Ann 324 (reference to cut timbers); Sennacherib, Frahm, 1997, T10-11, 101; Esarhaddon, Borger, 1967, K1chA, 53 (cut timbers); Aššurbanipal, Luckenbill, ARAB II, #979 (cut timbers).

⁴⁸⁸On this point, see Parpola, 1995, pp. 59-61. For specific texts that refer to the harvesting and transportation of timber in the region of North Syria, see Parpola, SAA 1, for example #248, and many other letters published there. The most idiomatic expression of timber harvest in visual form is the famous "Seascape" from Court VIII of his palace at Khorsabad (my Figure 42). For discussions of the use of space and landscape elements in this sculpture, see Albenda, 1983 and Russell, 1991, pp. 198-9. Compare Parpola's interpretation of the scene as taking place in a wide river, not the ocean in 1995, fn 78.

⁴⁸⁹1979, p. 312-313.

⁴⁹⁰1995, p. 60.

borders of the empire, most likely because the evergreen trees of these regions produced qualitatively superior timbers for roof beams. This acquisition of timber often necessitated diplomatic negotiation and maneuvering, or on occasion brute military force.⁴⁹¹ Though the Assyrians seem to have risked a great deal to obtain the foreign timber, at the same time the texts indicate that this timber was in good supply. In fact, Amanus and this region were constructed in the annals and letter as *inexhaustible* sources of wood for building and other projects. Letters from Sargon's reign in particular give the impression that the rivers of Assyria were constantly jammed with logs from "distant" places, presumably from upstream on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and including the area of Amanus and North Syria. For instance, a letter from a treasurer to Sargon II declares that a group of logs sitting in the river Zab, presumably from western provinces, were "many, [as many] as we could possibly desire."⁴⁹² Another letter from Sargon's reign was written by a provincial official to complain about the difficulty of moving the large amounts of timber harvested up the Euphrates from North Syria to Assyria: "As to the logs which the king wr[ote me about...] [...are] very ... im[possible] to count. There are many logs! The king my lord can be glad."⁴⁹³ Other letters refer to "distant logs", which were stacked up on the riverbank outside Nineveh and jammed in the narrow river.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹¹Parpola, 1995, p. 61.

⁴⁹²Parpola, SAA I, #62, 5-6.

⁴⁹³SAA 1, #101.

⁴⁹⁴SAA 1, #63.

More letters from North Syrian vassal cities discuss the precise measurement of beams needed for palace doors at Khorsabad.⁴⁹⁵ These precise measurements were recorded in the letters for the purpose of fitting them into existing palatial structures, but their inclusion in the royal inscriptions suggests that the scribes were marveling at the size attained by these cedars. More importantly, by including the precise measurements and qualifying adjectives, the inscriptions demonstrated the kings' abilities to obtain and proved the existence of such huge logs from Mount Amanus. Thus the forests of Mount Amanus were imagined as not only abundant and inexhaustible, but full of *quality* logs fitting for a royal palace.

Mount Amanus as a Site of Sensory Pleasure

Doors and roof beams made of cedar such as the ones mentioned in the letters above were obtained from North Syria for qualities other than their height and girth. In the Neo-Assyrian period, the timber of Mount Amanus was valued for its pleasant odor⁴⁹⁶ which emanated from the roof beams and doors and wafted through the palace corridors. The resin and wood of the cedar tree were valuable and luxurious aromatic substances in Mesopotamia, and were often used in rituals.⁴⁹⁷ In addition, cedar oil had erotic connotations, as poetry frequently refers to lovers and their beds anointed with cedar

⁴⁹⁵SAA 1, #202-3.

⁴⁹⁶*ereš-ṭabim*. The Akkadian word *erešum*, translated "scent, smell, fragrance," usually has pleasant and good overtones, as opposed to odiferous pungency. For a discussion of the term, see CAD E, pp. 280-1.

⁴⁹⁷See for example, a diviner prayer entitled "The Cedar" in Foster, 1995, pp. 288-9.

oil.⁴⁹⁸ The theme of the pleasure-giving aromatic Mount Amanus is first prevalent in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III in which timbers of cypress and cedar from Amanus which he cut down and transported to Assyria to be fashioned into door leaves for his palace were described: “With long beams of cedar, a product of Am[anus], Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, which are as sweet to smell as the scent of *hašurru* wood, I roofed [the palaces of Nimrud]... Double doors of cedar and pine, which bestow (great) pleasure on those who enter them (and) whose fragrance wafts into the heart... I set them up in the gateways.”⁴⁹⁹ In this new *topos* in the Assyrian inscriptions, the mountains of North Syria and their products incited a sensory experience and furthermore, that sensory experience evoked an emotional sentiment connected with pleasure.

Tiglath-pileser III was perhaps revisiting a theme of Aššurnasirpal II.

Aššurnasirpal II’s annals describe a temple which will be constructed with the Amanus cedar beams as a “house of joy”, implying perhaps that the beams were the cause and

⁴⁹⁸For discussion of the ritual use of cedar oil, see CAD, vol. E/4, *erēnum*, pp. 276-7. For specific examples, see Leick, 1994, p. 70, 101 and Foster, 1995, pp. 331-2. Of course, cedar trees and oil are available in many parts of the Neo-Assyrian empire, including areas of southern Syria and Phoenicia. Yet cedar trees are consistently mentioned as the products which are brought from Mount Amanus to Assyria in the royal inscriptions.

⁴⁹⁹Tadmor, 1994, Summ. 7, 26'-29'. The word used in the phrase “with great pleasure”, *munahhim*, is the participle of the verb *nāhum*, which means “to appease, to reassure, to satisfy”. (See CAD N/1, p. 148) Tiglath-pileser III deliberately named the gates whose doors are made of the imported timbers “Bringing in the Products of the Towns Before the Thing”, thus at the same time referring to the products brought through the doors of the palace and the doors themselves.

supply of the positive sentiments.⁵⁰⁰ But the linkage between sensory experiences, pleasure and Mount Amanus/North Syria does not occur in the royal inscriptions until Tiglath-pileser III's reign. To carry this linkage further, one could look closely at the words used to describe the fragrance of the Amanus cedars. In Akkadian, the word *erēšum* (long e), translated as "a desire or wish", bears striking lexical resemblance to the word *erešum* (short e), "fragrance, pleasant smell". In some cases *erēšum* (long e) is also used to describe sexual desire and intercourse.⁵⁰¹ Thus the authors of the inscriptions and verses using *erešum* might have been punning, playing with the many Akkadian meanings and connotations of the word and deliberately attempting to link the word to ideas of physical or emotional pleasure.⁵⁰²

Mount Amanus as a Site of Diversity

In the inscriptions of Sargon II, Mount Amanus was constructed as a site of not only incredible timber bounty but also biological diversity. Sargon's inscriptions introduce a number of innovations into the treatment of Mount Amanus and its surrounding region. Sargon certainly reiterated the *topoi* of his predecessors. For example, the mountain in his inscriptions was constructed as a site of sensory experience: "Boxwood, cedar, cypress, all kinds of shrubs, the product of Mount Amanus, whose

⁵⁰⁰Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.1 iii 90.

⁵⁰¹See *erēšum*, CAD E, B/2b, p. 285. To take this line of reasoning even further, another meaning for *erēšum* given in the dictionary is "to seed by drilling seed into a furrow".

⁵⁰²See *erešum*, CAD E, A/2, p. 281. For more on the use of descriptive puns in Assyria, see Marcus, 1995b, p. 201.

odor is pleasant I gave as gifts to Bel Sarpanit, Nabu, Tashmet and the gods who dwell in the metropolises of Sumer and Akkad.”⁵⁰³ The products of Mount Amanus therefore were worthy of harvesting because they were used in religious ceremonies and rituals to invoke sensory pleasure.

Yet the treatment of Mount Amanus in Sargon’s inscriptions was innovative. For instead of simply harvesting the felled cedars and resins from Mount Amanus, he recreated the *entire animate*, or living landscape, of that mystical region in the heartland. From Sargon’s reign on Amanus and its surrounding North Syrian region therefore became symbols of the creational abilities of the Neo-Assyrian king. This linkage between the beneficial experiences encountered on Mount Amanus and the *ex situ* recreation of its diverse landscape was effected in the royal inscriptions through the *topos* of the creation of a royal pleasure garden, or *kirimahhu*, which was “modeled after” or “the likeness of” Mount Amanus.

Sargon was the first king to describe a royal park or pleasure garden which he stocked full of live saplings and plants excavated from the slopes of Mount Amanus and propagated in the city of Khorsabad: “A park the likeness of Mount Amanus [*kirimahhu tamšil KUR.Hamanim*] in which all the aromatic plants of Hatti and fruit trees of the mountains were planted, I set by the palace [at Khorsabad’s] side.”⁵⁰⁴ It is significant that while the mountains of Urartu seem to have the same qualities as the Amanus range for

⁵⁰³Fuchs, 1994, Ann. 324.

⁵⁰⁴See Appendix Four.

Sargon,⁵⁰⁵ he does not recreate a great park as a likeness of any mountain in Urartu. It was Amanus and only Amanus that was recreated in the heartland in Sargon's reign. This is one of the most crucial phrases for this study, as it reveals many underlying motivations, cloaked desires, which caused the Assyrians to collect North Syrian products, including its cedar and I suggest, its ivory objects. Reading through the lines of this phrase and others like it will therefore reveal how North Syria was imagined and reconstructed in the heartland of Assyria and how central the construction of the pleasure garden modeled on Mount Amanus became to Assyrian ideology.⁵⁰⁶

The Royal Park or Garden: *kiru* and *kirimahhu*

The theme of the great royal park was subsequently reiterated in royal inscriptions until the end of the empire. Like ivory collecting, no Assyrian king could afford to neglect or refuse to build a *kirimahhu* after Sargon's innovative announcement. Stronach has already commented on the ideological necessity of royal gardens in Assyria after the

⁵⁰⁵For example, in the letter to Ashur, (Mayer, 1983, 15 and Luckenbill, ARAB II, #142) the mountainous region in northwestern Iran between "Mount Nikippa and Mount Upa" is full of difficulty, darkness and mystery, "whose surface was a jungle, whose passes were frightful, over whose area shadows stretch as in a cedar forest, whose paths never sees the light of the sun." This region is also a site of biological diversity which is "covered with all kinds of trees". In the same text, the mountains in the same area, Sinahulzi and Biruatti, offer pleasant aromatic woods: "whose vegetation consisted of sweet smelling *karšu* (cherry) and *sumlalu*."

⁵⁰⁶The royal garden was still an important aspect of palatial constructions after the fall of Assyria during the Neo-Babylonian, Persian, Sasanian and Islamic periods. For more on the post-Assyrian construction of royal gardens, see Stronach (1990) who has written a concise article on the garden as political statement in the ancient Near East during the first millennium B.C. He has commented on the garden as a connotation of dominated foreign territory as well as fruitfulness, fertility and pleasure in Mesopotamia and Iran.

reign of Sargon, but the precise way in which they served their ideological purposes in different reigns deserves further attention.⁵⁰⁷ The locations of such parks as reconstructed from geographic and archaeological evidence are subject to debate and will be discussed in further detail when we consider the images of the *kirimahhu* in a following section of this chapter.⁵⁰⁸ It is clear through their extensive descriptions in the royal inscriptions that the royal parks or gardens were *fulcra* of royal attention.⁵⁰⁹ In addition, the royal correspondence of the Assyrian empire show that on a more logistical level, the creation of royal gardens was a primary activity of the royal apparatus. Letters refer to the transportation of live fruit-tree and fir-tree saplings to Khorsabad from the near West (Nemed-Ishtar, Laqe and Suhu).⁵¹⁰ Parpola refers to a text from the governor of Nimrud to Sargon II at Khorsabad which mentions a sketch of a royal park and demonstrates that the parks were “efficiently and methodically put together.”⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁷1990, p. 172: “The very repetition of Sargon’s initiative is instructive. Sennacherib may have felt bound for various reasons to relocate the capital, but this second member of the Sargonid line apparently still found it politic to recreate—with the very same name—this widely visible symbol of foreign conquest.”

⁵⁰⁸For example, using ancient and more modern maps, Reade has placed some of Sennacherib’s orchards at the north-western corner of Nineveh, where irrigation channels were still topographically identifiable into the nineteenth century A.D. (1978, p. 66)

⁵⁰⁹See Appendix Four.

⁵¹⁰SAA I, # 226-7.

⁵¹¹1995, p. 59. The letter is published in SAA 1, #110, 29-3'. The governor writes: “Let them draw and s[end me] the plan of the [...] of which I spoke] to the king, my lord, and [I will plant] saplings according to it.” Parpola notes that it is not clear whether the sketch refers to a park in Khorsabad or some other city.

Royal Gardens Before Sargon II

Tiglath-pileser I

The question remains as to why the *kirimahhu*, the likeness of Mount Amanus, became such a prevalent theme in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions. Oppenheim has noted that the term *kirimahhu* introduced in Sargon II's reign must be differentiated from its predecessor, *kiru*, which also means "garden."⁵¹² The idea of a garden pervaded with aromatic pleasures and chock full of a variety of plants and trees was a common one in Assyria, beginning with the reign of Tiglath-pileser I. It is important however, that until Sargon's use of *kirimahhu*, a royal garden was described as pleasurable through qualifying phrases and adjectives, and furthermore, the floral landscape of the royal garden was not *explicitly* designated as originating from North Syria. For example, Tiglath-pileser I describes a garden which he planted beside a terrace at Nineveh "for my lordly leisure."⁵¹³ His inscription declares that he "took cedar, box-tree, Kanish oak from the lands over which I had gained dominion and filled the orchards of Assyria".⁵¹⁴ The citation of a number and variety of specific species of trees from foreign territories could have been intended to ideologically prove the veracity of the royal collecting activities. The collecting of these plants also translated into gaining physical dominion over the

⁵¹²1965, p. 331. See Appendix Four for references to *kiru* in the reigns of Aššurnasirpal II through Tiglath-pileser III. For a discussion of the term *kiru*, compare Wiseman, 1983, p. 137.

⁵¹³*KIRI₆.MEŠ ana multa 'it.* Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.87.10, 71-88.

⁵¹⁴*KIRI₆.MEŠ KUR.Assur lu usmeli.* Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.87.1, vii, 17-27

conquered lands in which they originally grew. In the case of Tiglath-pileser I's garden, all of the species in the list were at home in North Syria, the region towards which he directed his expansionist efforts in the twelfth century B.C.

Tiglath-pileser I's inscriptions also claim that he was looking for rare and unique plants: he took "such trees which none among previous kings, my forefathers, had ever planted" and "rare orchard fruit which is not found in my land." The significance of the term *aqrum*, meaning rare, has already been noted with respect to the Assyrian appreciation of foreign goods discussed above in chapter two.⁵¹⁵ The inscriptions assert that the rarity of the plants was an equally or more important characteristic than their natural beauty, pleasant taste, or other positive qualities. It is clear that rare items, including living plants, which were not normally found or had never previously been found in Assyria, were prized enough to warrant their careful extraction, maintenance during transport and replanting in Assyria.

The listing of the species in the text also demonstrates interest in the *diversity* of the western floral landscape. Stronach has suggested that the prevalence in the inscriptions to discuss both the fertility and diversity of the royal gardens served to "underline" the king's role in maintaining the fruitfulness of Assyria.⁵¹⁶ I would argue that the ideological significance of the royal gardens containing the diversity of the west was significant as well in the construction of the creational identity of the king. By

⁵¹⁵For translations and discussion of this term, see CAD A/2, p. 207-8.

⁵¹⁶1990, p. 172.

bringing this diversity to Assyria, Tiglath-pileser I was constituted as the discoverer and propagator of the world's plants--he was "crafting" them or becoming their creator back in Assyria. We shall see that the collecting of the floral diversity of North Syria in general, and from Mount Amanus in particular, was also a consistent theme throughout the Neo-Assyrian period which constantly reiterated the creational aspect of royal identity.

Aššurnasirpal II

From the reign of Tiglath-pileser I through the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta II reference was not made to the royal gardens or the landscape of either Mount Amanus or North Syria though there are numerous references to the faunal landscape of North Syria and to royal game parks and zoological gardens, which will be discussed below.⁵¹⁷ It was not until the reign of Aššurnasirpal II that the royal botanical garden was described again in the Assyrian inscriptions. The earliest inscriptions from Aššurnasirpal II's reign do not elaborate to a great extent on the nature of the royal gardens which he constructed, except to pinpoint its location: "I dug out a canal from the Upper Zab and called it Patti-hegalli. I planted gardens in its environs. I offered fruit and wine to Ashur."⁵¹⁸ The inscriptions

⁵¹⁷There is a singular, and fragmentary exception. Grayson suggests that a fragment of a text from the reign of Ashur Bel Kala possibly refers to planting of trees or the erecting of statues in an Assyrian city. The text describes a hunting expedition and in an interrupted segment reads "...I planted/erected them (*azqup-šunuti*).” (RIMA2, A.0.89.1, rev 4')

⁵¹⁸See Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.1, iii 35 and Appendix Four. The verb used is *azqup* from *zaqāpum*, "to plant". Compare: A.0.101.30, l. 36-7; A.0.101.1, iii 135; A.0.101.17, v 9; A.0.101.26, 54; A.0.101.33, 25'.

get increasingly elaborate in his later years as the texts explain that a variety of trees were planted in the royal *kirum*: “I planted orchards with all kinds of fruit trees”,⁵¹⁹ though it does not list specific species. Regardless, with the addition of the phrase “all kinds of”, Tiglath-Pileser I’s theme of the diversity of the garden was reiterated in the inscriptions of Aššurnasirpal II.

The inscription on the Banquet Stele of Aššurnasirpal II, discovered at Nimrud by Mallowan, describes the royal building projects at Nimrud and the celebratory banquet which the king held upon their completion. The Banquet Stele, the latest complete inscription from Aššurnasirpal’s reign, contains perhaps the longest and most poetic description of a royal garden in the Assyrian royal inscriptions, though it does not explicitly mention that the royal garden was modeled after Mount Amanus. There are also several aspects of the stele which relate to the theme of the garden as microcosm of the captured other worlds introduced in the reign of Tiglath-pileser I. The inscription begins with a now-standard description of a royal garden that was created during construction of the Patti-hegalli canal next to Nimrud: “I dug out a canal from the Upper Zab, cutting through a mountain at its peak, and called it Patti-hegalli. I irrigated the meadows of the Tigris and planted orchards with all kinds of fruit trees in its environs.” The inscription describes the palatial garden as both a “pleasure garden” (*KIRI₆.MEŠ*

⁵¹⁹*KIRI₆.MEŠ DÚ.A.BI (gimir) inbi*. See Appendix Four and Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.17, v 8-9. I assume that Grayson arrived at the translation of *KIRI₆.MEŠ* as “orchards” based on parallels from later inscriptions and on the mention of fruit in the following sentence. However, the sumerograms do not necessarily obviate such a specific translation and “gardens” might be more appropriate.

šihate) and a “delightful garden,” or “garden of delights” (*KIRI₆MES⁵ rišate*).⁵²⁰ As with the pleasure-giving timbers from Mount Amanus, the text connects a *living* floral landscape with pleasure and joyful emotions through use of the adjectives *šihate*, derived from the verb *šihum*, “to laugh, to smile, to be alluring”⁵²¹ and *rišate* which is derived from the Akkadian verb *rišum*, “to rejoice.”⁵²² According to the stele, Aššurnasirpal’s garden was pervaded with fragrance and cascading mist. It was exceedingly fruitful, bedecked with aromatic cedars and pomegranate trees.

In addition, the reiteration of the theme of the royal botanical excursion as portrayed in Tiglath-pileser I’s inscriptions occurs in the following phrase of the Banquet Stele: “In the lands through which I marched and the highlands which I traversed, the trees and plants which I saw were...”⁵²³ Like his predecessor, Aššurnasirpal II did not specifically indicate that the plants he collected came from the west, North Syria, or Mount Amanus, but the different species listed were traditionally collected from the Amanus range (e.g. cedar and cypress trees) or were transported from points further west, such as Anatolia or Egypt, via the Euphrates and North Syria.⁵²⁴ The *topos* of the

⁵²⁰Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.30, 50-52. See also Wiseman, 1952, p. 33 for a similar transliteration and translation.

⁵²¹CAD Š, p. 64.

⁵²²Von Soden, AHw, 1972, pp. 979-80.

⁵²³See Appendix Four for the list of plants. Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.30, 38 and Wiseman, 1952.

⁵²⁴For example, the Kanish oak (Anatolia), ebony (Africa and Egypt), olive (Palestine). Winter comments on the role that the North Syrian city Carchemish must have played as a central clearing house and market city for the west-east international

acquisition of the diversity of the west was reiterated in the latter part of the stele which lists extensively many different types of vegetables, fruits and game acquired and served by the king at his great inaugural feast.⁵²⁵

Shalmaneser III

In the reign of Shalmaneser III, there is no published inscription of which I am aware that describes a royal garden at Nimrud, and for that matter, a royal garden *tamšil KUR.Hamanim*. The only gardens that Shalmaneser III mentions are those of his enemies which he cuts down in the course of his campaigns. There is no mention in his royal inscriptions of the planting of *live* trees orchards or botanical gardens in his capital cities, nor any link between gardens and Mount Amanus that we see in the reign of Sargon. If there was interest on Shalmaneser's part in recreating the biological diversity of North Syria, it was in the diversity of the *fauna* of the region, not the flora, and this will be discussed separately below.

Tiglath-pileser III

The documentation for the reigns of the weak series of kings following Shalmaneser III is meager, and while there are a few references to cutting timbers and hunting, there are none to gardens or the harvesting of live plant specimens from Mount Amanus. The documentation for the reign of Tiglath-pileser III is also scant, but

trade of ivory, metals and other goods. (See 1973, chapter 4 and 1983)

⁵²⁵Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.30, 102-154.

somewhat more extensive. Specific references to Mount Amanus are rare in the royal inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III. The most extensive is the reference to the timbers of Mount Amanus and its range which brought pleasant aroma and pleasure to the heart, as discussed above. References to the biological diversity of the North Syria in his inscriptions are limited to descriptions of the tribute that he received from the kings of this region, or from kings of more distant regions that he received while campaigning in North Syria. In these instances, Tiglath-pileser III received “all kinds of herbs” from the king of Unqi,⁵²⁶ which demonstrates an underlying interest in floral diversity, but there is no indication that he received live herb plants and then propagated them in Assyria. His inscriptions also list many different types of live animals which he received as tribute from North Syria and beyond, as will be discussed in the following section of this chapter. While the royal inscriptions give little information about the importance of the North Syrian floral landscape to Tiglath-pileser III, a receipt from the room S of the Governor’s Palace can shed light on the king’s botanical interests. The administrative tablet lists “A total of 1200 saplings in the charge of Šamaš-inanni in Kalhu, 5th day of month of Addaru (XII). 350 pomegranate saplings, 400 fig saplings and 450 medlar saplings.”⁵²⁷ The origin of these saplings is not noted, but the tablet may still be used cautiously to attest to some sort of official palatial interest in collecting and propagating

⁵²⁶See Appendix Four.

⁵²⁷Postgate, 1973, #139, 5-8. Postgate dates the administrative tablets found in Room S of the Governor’s Palace, a structure on the main acropolis of Nmrud, generally to the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (p. 20).

live saplings for royal gardens from abroad.

The central aspect of the landscape of North Syria which Tiglath-pileser III introduced into his homeland was cultural, not ecological. Specifically, he was the first to incorporate a North Syrian architectural element, the *bit-hilani* “patterned after a Hittite (Syrian) palace” into his own constructions at Nimrud, which we have mentioned briefly above in chapter two.⁵²⁸ The *bit-hilani*s were probably set up within the royal gardens and parks. They were pieces of architecture appropriately situated within the *faux* natural North Syrian landscapes which the parks intended to emulate. They may have played an important role in recreating the *entire* landscape of North Syria. The implications of the construction of the *bit-hilani* and its role in emulating the landscape of North Syria will be discussed below, but for now, the central topic is the recreation of biological diversity of North Syria within the Assyrian heartland.

Sargon II

With the reign of Sargon II, the royal gardens containing the floral reconstruction of North Syria was described not simply as a *kiru*, but as a *kirimahhu*, which is written with the signs *KIRI₆.MAH-hu*.⁵²⁹ The precise connotations and translation of this term is important for our discussion of royal pleasure gardens. Luckenbill has translated Sargon’s term, as “a great park” taking the *MAH-hu* as an Akkadianization of the sumerogram, which is a synonym for the Akkadian word *širum*. *Širum* implies elevated

⁵²⁸See references to the *bit-hilani* in Appendix Five.

⁵²⁹See Appendix Four.

status or extra greatness.⁵³⁰ However, the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* suggests that the term should be translated as “pleasure garden” and I assume that they derived this translation from references in Assyrian inscriptions to other royal gardens which we have discussed above (*kiru*, not *kirimahhu*) that were described as “joyful” (*rišate*) or gardens for the “lordly leisure” (*ana muta 'lit belūti*) of the king.⁵³¹

I would argue that the addition of the sumerogram *MAH* to the word used earlier, *kiru*, adds resonance to the term by implying more than just “elevation” or “nobility”. Rather, this sumerogram could have added two nuanced meanings besides that of “greatness, loftiness, or elevated status.” First, the *MAH* could have been added deliberately to further connect the royal park to the high Mount Amanus in North Syria-- to demonstrate even in the choice of signs that this garden ought to be connected with the vegetation of the mountainous regions in North Syria. Second, the nuance of height implied with the addition of the Sumerogram *MAH* could imply that the gardens were elevated (perhaps even “hanging”) at Khorsabad, since there is tentative evidence for such elevated parks at Nineveh.⁵³²

⁵³⁰See Luckenbill, ARAB II, #83 and CAD S, *širum*, p. 210.

⁵³¹The CAD translation is utilized by Oppenheim (1964), Wiseman (1983) and Winter (1982).

⁵³²See Dalley, 1994, pp. 51-54. Dalley proposes that these royal gardens would have been irrigated through a system similar to Archimedian screws which would lift the water. Compare Stronach, (1990, p. 172) who points out that the depiction in a Sargonic relief of a royal pavilion on a hillside does not correspond with the known topography of Khorsabad. Therefore, Stronach concludes that the pavilion must have been built on an artificially elevated point, a constructed hillock. While neither Dalley or Stronach connect Sargon's use of the sumerogram *MAH* (Akkadian *širum*) directly with their

Sargon's texts describe his *kirimahhu* in some detail. The inscriptions indicate that the entire land of North Syria, called Hatti by Sargon, was conceived as a microcosm growing on the flanks of Mount Amanus with the phrase: "the likeness of Mount Amanus in which all the aromatic plants and fruit trees of the mountains were planted."⁵³³ Sargon's statement *deliberately* equates Mount Amanus with all of North Syria despite the physical reality that the mountain was just a tiny fragment of Hatti-land. Through this deliberate equation, the control of Mount Amanus could ideologically represent the control of the entire land of North Syria. Mount Amanus therefore was constructed in Sargon's texts as the site of the botanical diversity of the *entire* North Syrian region. Based on the association of Mount Amanus with the botanical diversity of North Syria, I suggest that the *kirimahhu*, the reconstruction of this diversity in the Assyrian heartland, were akin to the botanical gardens known from Europe during the 19th and 20th centuries A.D., and in royal contexts from all over the Western and non-Western world.⁵³⁴

The term "botanical garden", like "pleasure garden" has been used frequently to describe the royal gardens of Mesopotamia.⁵³⁵ However, rarely are the implications of this term discussed explicitly. One must be entirely careful when making cross-

reconstructions of elevated gardens, I suggest that this philological evidence might further support their contentions.

⁵³³See Appendix Four.

⁵³⁴Pasztor has described similar royal botanical gardens from the Tetzcotzingo in the Aztec world that represented "miniature replicas of the universe." (1983, p. 131) See also Castillo, 1562, pp. 223-231.

⁵³⁵Oppenheim, 1964, p. 333; Wiseman, 1983, p. 137.

chronological and cross-cultural comparisons, but if the *contexts* of both the modern botanical gardens and the ancient Assyrian gardens are considered together, one can see certain similarities in the purposes and political connotations of both genres of royal garden. There are two reasons for suggesting that the royal gardens of Assyria could be compared in a very general manner to more o botanical gardens. First, botanical gardens in the modern era were also associated with feelings of leisure and pleasure. And second, these botanical gardens were sites in which the floral diversity of an appropriated colonial landscape could purvey a sense of imperial power.

The translation of the term *kirimahhu* as a “pleasure garden” which I and the editors of the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* have espoused has romantic connotations. The adjective “romantic” sprang from the Romantic movement and is often connected with emotions of pleasure and beneficial sensory experiences. The term “Romantic” was first used to describe a literary and artistic movement in England during the nineteenth century. The Romantics sanctioned the use of gardens in England to escape worldly sins and pressures and to return to nature.⁵³⁶ The idea of the romantic pleasure garden was at home in nineteenth-century England, and clearly the use of such a term for eighth-century B.C. Iraq is potentially anachronistic. However, when the connotations of pleasure and sensory experience which have arisen out of this discussion of the royal gardens are taken into account, the royal gardens of Mesopotamia, whether termed *kiru* or *kirimahhu* might be envisioned as the world’s first “romantic” gardens. The Romantics of nineteenth-

⁵³⁶The main literary proponent was Ruskin. See Bermingham, 1986, pp. 11-15.

century England were in fact revisiting an ancient tradition linking pleasure, diversity and gardens which began in Mesopotamia.⁵³⁷

Beyond connotations of pleasure, the term “botanical garden” refers specifically to a type of artificially segregated and constructed garden which incorporates a geographically diverse array of plant species into a single locale. The introduction of botanical gardens onto the world stage is traditionally affiliated with the Enlightenment and the Victorian eras, when such institutions cropped up all over the European world, and eventually in America.⁵³⁸ The botanical gardens in Europe of the late eighteenth and nineteenth-century evolved from the herbal gardens of Renaissance Italy which contained diverse species of plants within household gardens for medicinal purposes.⁵³⁹ Like today, the European botanical gardens were originally funded through royal and/or governmental patronage, and they were supplied with specimens from royally-sanctioned and funded exploratory voyages and studies.⁵⁴⁰ Furthermore, though their initial

⁵³⁷This view is contra to Oppenheim, who concluded that the Assyrian gardens “do not express any sentimental and romantic attachment to nature as was the mainspring of the development of the same type of garden in Europe in the eighteenth century.” (1964, p. 333). Stronach (1990) has given the most complete analysis to date of the ideological significance of gardens in the ancient Near East through to the Sasanian period, but he did not carry the linkage further in time.

⁵³⁸See Brockaway, 1979. Examples of botanical gardens established in this period (and shortly thereafter) are the Kew Gardens outside of London, and the many botanical gardens in the United States, including the New York Botanical Garden and the Missouri Botanical Garden.

⁵³⁹For the definition, history, geographic location and description of the world’s first modern botanical gardens, see Brockaway, 1979, pp. 72ff.. and Morton, 1981, pp. 121ff..

⁵⁴⁰Brockaway, 1979, p. 74.

specimens may have been donated from private royal “medicinal” gardens, they were from the start institutions open to the public, from prince to pauper.⁵⁴¹ Botanical gardens may therefore be seen as a form of *noblesse oblige*--royally patronized institutions created for the comfort, pleasure, leisure or “enlightenment” of the subjects.

European botanical gardens also arose as a direct result of Enlightenment interest in the collecting and classification of all species of the world, and the new science of botany. The term “botanical” is in fact derived from Medieval Latin and Classical Greek, originally meaning “grass or fodder”,⁵⁴² but it has significant implications for discussions of ideology. Botany arose as a “science” and in this manner, it must be considered as a product of the cultural and philosophical tendencies of its day--tendencies which were dominated by the rational philosophies of Descartes, Hobbes and Bacon.⁵⁴³ The earliest botanists thought that the world was knowable, and if it was knowable, it must be describable in precise and interrelated terms. The central intention of this

⁵⁴¹The literature on royal and private gardens is too extensive to cite. The Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture, a published series of manuscripts, is extremely useful for tracing the development and significance of gardens through history. For example, see MacDougall and Ettinghausen, 1976.

⁵⁴²See Morton, 1981, p. 49, fn 30.

⁵⁴³Brockaway, 1979, p. 62. There is a tremendous amount of literature on the philosophy of science and its history as well as on the development of rationalism in the philosophical thought of the Enlightenment. I have used Brockaway as a central reference because she deals in a more restricted manner with the history and philosophy of botanical rationalism. Another historiography of “scientific knowledge” may be seen in Michel Foucault’s critique of “the disciplines” in *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, 1972. As Marcus points out, Foucault has argued that “knowledge equals power.” (1995b, p. 199).

rationalist, scientific discipline was to collect, classify and catalogue every living species in the world through the practice of taxonomy. The new classificatory tool of taxonomy as developed by the Swedish scientist Carl Linnaeus in the mid-eighteenth century was the methodological linchpin of the rational science of botany.⁵⁴⁴ It has been suggested that the development of botany and other taxonomic sciences (such as zoology) were extensions of a new world system in which European colonial powers sought to ideologically and symbolically control distant lands through this process of classification and collection.⁵⁴⁵ If the world was knowable, that is if it existed, it was knowable only to the person who could describe it--the European. Thus the science of botany, and ultimately the botanical gardens of the world, were inextricably bound to imperial conceptions of the Other and discourses of power. It is for this reason that I propose to use the term botanical garden with respect to the ancient Assyrian culture. While certainly not intended as any sort of scientific tool meant for education, the recreation of the floral diversity of North Syria within the royal gardens was first of all sanctioned, supplied and patronized (or at least deliberately construed as such) by the kings of Assyria, as their annals indicate. Not simply for personal pleasure, they were also created

⁵⁴⁴For a history of the science of botany, see Morton, 1981. Compare Shteir, 1996, who develops a feminist critique of the Linnaean classificatory system. In addition, she explores the contributions and interests of women in the development of scientific botany.

⁵⁴⁵Pratt identifies the introduction of Linnaean taxonomy in the eighteenth century as a "new planetary consciousness" which allowed the "construction of global-scale meaning through the descriptive apparatuses of natural history." (1992, p. 15) See also Crosby (1991), who comments on the impact that European expansion had on the physical health and "racial" diversity of its colonial subjects.

as public displays for the subjects of the kings, as the annals frequently claim that the gardens and other royal constructions were created “for the wonder of all the people.”⁵⁴⁶ Finally, these botanical gardens were collections of live specimens that recreated the landscape of a “colonial” territory. North Syria and its landscape were acquired by force in order to be subsequently encompassed within a wider Neo-Assyrian system of provincial administration for the extraction of resources. In sum, there are many similarities in the historical, cultural, political and economic circumstances which led to the creation of botanical gardens in nineteenth-century Europe and ancient Assyria. For these reasons, I will refer to the *kiru* and *kirimahhu* containing all the plants of North Syria that are described in the annals as “botanical gardens”. I may also refer to these same institutions as “royal gardens” or “pleasure gardens,” for the obvious reasons stated above. Both the royal gardens of nineteenth-century England and Assyria had ideological significance as microcosms of empire.⁵⁴⁷ The description of the gardens as “for my lordly leisure” or “pleasureful, joyful” must be considered in tandem with the ideological impetus for the construction and discussion of the gardens--they were created to demonstrate the king’s territorial acquisitions and supreme dominance over the diversity of the world.

To return to Sargon, the use of the term *kirimahhu* in his texts was an ideologically important tool asserting the dominance of the king over Mount Amanus-

⁵⁴⁶Winter, 1993, p. 37.

⁵⁴⁷As did the Aztec gardens known from the New World, see footnote 533 above.

cum-North Syria. I would argue that this interest in botanical recreations might also have had ideological significance in relation to another prominent Assyrian foe, the land of Urartu. Oppenheim has suggested that Sargon held another king with a “green thumb” in high regard, his worthy arch rival Ursa of Urartu.⁵⁴⁸ In his letter to the god Ashur, Sargon marvels at Ursa’s ability to create orchards and forests in his homeland: “Its wasteland, which from days of old....and made fruit and grapes as abundant as the rain. Plane trees, exceedingly high, of the riches of his palace....like a forest he made them cast their shadows over its plain.”⁵⁴⁹ His desire to emulate Ursa, therefore may have driven him to focus his creative powers on botanical accomplishments in his heartland and on the recreation of captured landscapes. However, the manifestation and outcome of that focus was entirely a Sargonic and Assyrian idiom, it was a park like unto the perennially recognizable (to Assyrians) and captured Mount Amanus in North Syria, not like that of the relatively novel landscape of Urartu.

Sennacherib

Sennacherib’s references to the diversity of the *kirimahhu* are both less specific and more geographically encompassing. The connection between the *kirimahhu* and the diversity of plant life of the entire world is drawn through the word choice in the description of Sennacherib’s royal garden. A text states that his royal park contained

⁵⁴⁸1960, pp. 133-47. Sargon may have been holding up Ursa as a princely example of how an Assyrian king ought to act.

⁵⁴⁹Translation is from Luckenbill, ARAB II, #160. For a more recent commentary, see Mayer, 1983, 220-227.

“every kind of fruit tree from every part of the world, even spice and olive trees.”⁵⁵⁰ The Akkadian word for “every kind”, *adnatum*, is normally used in the Neo-Assyrian period to refer to the world as an all-encompassing term. It is specifically used in contexts which connect it to ideas of totality and immensity; yet it also refers to the collective entirety of the landscapes and inhabitants of the world.⁵⁵¹ Used collectively, it was a way to express the diversity within the unity of the world.

The individual and diverse components of that collective microcosm were enumerated in other Sennacherib texts. Sennacherib links the plants from the mountains of North Syria to those from the plains and marshes of Babylonia: “By the side of the city, I laid out a park and a game park. All the aromatic plants of Hatti and the garden fruits of all the trees in the woods, products of the mountains and of Chaldaea.”⁵⁵² Despite the apparent impossibility of placing geographically distant regions into one small area, Sennacherib deliberately juxtaposed and linked both central targets of his military campaigns, North Syria and Babylonia.⁵⁵³ In so doing he was symbolically

⁵⁵⁰See Appendix Four.

⁵⁵¹See CAD A/I, pp. 128-9.

⁵⁵²See Appendix Four.

⁵⁵³An interesting similar juxtaposition between Babylon and Amanus occurs earlier in the reign of Sargon II, though the attempts to link the two were not as direct as in Sennacherib’s reign. Sargon describes the offerings which he acquired on the slopes of Mount Amanus and brought to the *Bit-Akitu*, or Temple of the New Year’s Festival, in Babylon: “Boxwood, cedar, cypress, all kinds of shrubs (evergreens), the product of Mount Amanus whose odor is pleasant, I gave as gifts to Bel, Sarpanit, Nabu, Tashmet and the gods who dwell in the metropolises of Sumer and Akkad.” (Luckenbill, ARAB II, #70 and Fuchs, 1994, Prunkinschrift, 140-141)

incorporating the extent of his empire into the *kirimahhu*.⁵⁵⁴ The new emphasis on recreating the landscapes of *both* North Syria *and* Babylonia can be seen in passages that describe the swamps of Babylonia which Sennacherib recreated at Nineveh:

“By the watercourse of the garden I let a swamp grow. Therein, I planted reeds. Herons, wild pigs and wild deer, I let go free. Splendidly, they thrived at the command of the gods in the garden on the plain--vines, all possible fruits, olive trees and aromatic plants. Cypress, Sisso and all other types of trees, growing their branches here and there. Birds of the heavens, herons, whose homeland is far away built their nests. The wild swine and deer brought countless offspring into the world...”⁵⁵⁵

The North Syrian landscape was still a necessary part of the royal gardens, but the Babylonian landscape took on a new importance that was mitigated by historical context. Sennacherib’s brutal treatment and annexation of Babylonia were emphasized in his annals and reliefs as Babylonia became the site of the most intense and frequent rebellion against his rule, thus his central military and political focus.⁵⁵⁶ I would argue that Sennacherib’s inclusion of the landscape of both North Syria and Babylonia into his royal gardens may also have played a role in his establishment of heroic priority. The references to the recreation of the Babylonian landscape were intended to suggest that he

⁵⁵⁴Russell has noted this encompassing feature of Sennacherib’s military narratives in texts and reliefs. (1991, pp. 251-62)

⁵⁵⁵See Appendix Four. It is interesting that in Esarhaddon’s reign, the abundant growth of reeds and habitation of birds in the midst of the temples of Babylon had negative connotations. The growth of reeds and birds in Babylon signifies the chaos which had reigned in the city during a lapse of its maintenance. Esarhaddon brags that he cuts down this wild growth to restore the temples of Babylon. (See: Borger, 1967, Bab. G, ep. 18; Luckenbill, ARAB II, #681; and Porter, 1993, p. 57).

⁵⁵⁶For the role of Babylon in Sennacherib’s military and political policies, see Porter, 1993, p. 29-30 and Brinkman, 1973.

had surpassed the abilities of his predecessors by recreating a *variety* of growth in his royal gardens and parks which mimicked the variety of different landscapes from his realm.⁵⁵⁷

Sennacherib's texts also focused extensively on the *amount* of growth within the royal parks. The texts connected the *kirimahhu* to ideas of abundance with the simple addition of the phrases describing the floral propagations: "Splendidly, they thrived," and with regard to the faunal inhabitants: "they brought countless offspring into the world."⁵⁵⁸ With these other phrases then Sennacherib's inscriptions suggest that his recreation(s) of the forests of Syria and the swamps of Babylonia within the royal gardens of Nineveh were "wildly" successful, and exceedingly beneficial.

Esarhaddon

In the inscriptions of Esarhaddon, Mount Amanus and the *kirimahhu* were mentioned to a lesser degree. There are several (by then) standard references to wooden logs dragged out of the Amanus, Sirara and Lebanon mountains to construct roofs and doors for Esarhaddon's various building projects in the Assyrian heartland.⁵⁵⁹ Yet there is only a single reference to a royal garden from a Nineveh text. The inscription describes

⁵⁵⁷This facet of Sennacherib's ideology, his desire to outdo his predecessors, can also be seen in his frequent references to the acquisition of materials "which my fathers before me had never seen" in his tribute lists. See above, chapter two, on the description and appeal of novel tribute.

⁵⁵⁸See Appendix Four, especially Frahm, 1997, T10-11, 242-260.

⁵⁵⁹See for example: Luckenbill, ARAB II, #653, 659, and 697; Borger, 1967, Klch. A, ep. 21, 53-4 and Bab. A and C, ep. 28.

a park (*KIRI₆MAH*) in which were “set out with all kinds of herbs and fruit(-trees)” alongside the *ekal-mašartim* at Nineveh.⁵⁶⁰ For some reason, the phonetic component *hu* was not added to the sumerograms for garden, and the transliteration of these signs as *kirimahhu* is implied from earlier reigns. Sennacherib’s recreation of the Babylonian landscape dropped out of the inscriptions, and the great park was constructed as a model of only the North Syrian landscape once again.⁵⁶¹ Esarhaddon’s park was located on the secondary mound at Nineveh, Nebi Yunus. Thus we are led to believe that there were two *kirimahhu* at Nineveh, each stationed within the two major precincts of the city, Kuyunjik and Nebi Yunus. Alternatively, there was a single large royal garden set outside of the Nineveh’s wall that encompassed both Kuyunjik and Nebi Yunus.⁵⁶²

In general, Esarhaddon’s inscriptions did not focus on botanical diversity but geological diversity--specifically the many different types of stones which he encountered during his travels and which he brought back to Nineveh for the construction of his palaces. It is rare stones, in addition to the familiar wooden beams, which Esarhaddon commands the vassal Hittite kings to drag out of their regions: “Great beams and tall

⁵⁶⁰Luckenbill, ARAB II, #698 and Borger, 1967, Nin. A VI, 30-1. In his transliteration, Borger has “*kirimahhu*,” thus he must have derived the phonetic complement from other contexts (i.e. the Sennacherib inscriptions). See also CAD K, p. 406 for the transliteration without the *-hu*.

⁵⁶¹This could have been due to a change in Babylonian policy from Sennacherib’s to Esarhaddon’s reign. Esarhaddon was certainly more sympathetic to the fate of Babylonia, thus his treatment of the region was represented as less brutally acquisitive in his inscriptions. For more on this change in policy, see Porter, 1993.

⁵⁶²The location of the royal gardens at Nineveh will be discussed below with reference to images.

trunks, logs of cedar cypress, from Mount Sirara and Mount Lebanon, cow-colossi, facing slabs of marble, “wheat”-stone, breccias, stone from out of the mountains, the place of their origin, for the needs of my palace, I had them drag to Nineveh with difficulty and pain.”⁵⁶³ This analysis suggests that the will to imitate the North Syrian landscape in all of its botanical and *geological* diversity was present in the Neo-Assyrian period through to the reign of Esarhaddon.

Aššurbanipal

In the reign of Aššurbanipal, there are a few references to the acquisition of timbers for the construction of palaces in Assyria from the North Syrian mountains, including Amanus, Sirara and Lebanon.⁵⁶⁴ Like Esarhaddon, there is a single very terse reference to the royal garden which describes it as “A park of all kinds of fruit trees of... I planted at its sides.”⁵⁶⁵ However, the specific reference to Mount Amanus as the source of the recreation has dropped out of the textual phrasing and I have at present no explanation for this omission. In the reign of Aššurbanipal, the *kirimahhu* was planted by

⁵⁶³Luckenbill, ARAB II, #697 and Borger, 1967, Nin.A, V, ep. 21, 72-82. Elsewhere, Esarhaddon mentions “precious stones (never yet) put into a setting, without number, the product of the mountains” which he donates to the temples of the gods. (Luckenbill, ARAB II, #672 and Borger, 1967, AsBbA1+)

⁵⁶⁴ See Luckenbill, ARAB II: #837 for the *bit-redutim* (North Palace) of Nineveh; #914 for temple of Sin at Harran; possibly #928 a broken fragment describing cedar beams for the “Emeslam”; and #979 for the Esagila of Babylon.

⁵⁶⁵*KIRI₆MAH*. Luckenbill, ARAB II, #837 and Streck, 1916, 88, x 104.

the sides of his *bit-redutim*, also known as the North Palace on Kuyunjik.⁵⁶⁶ It is not clear from Aššurbanipal's inscription whether the park that he constructed next to the North Palace at Nineveh was a *separate* park than those created by his father Esarhaddon or his grandfather Sennacherib, or whether his claim was to simply embellish those older royal gardens. However, it is clear that each king found it necessary to *claim* that he constructed an entirely new *kirimahhu* next to the structure at Nineveh to which he had devoted the most of his restorational efforts.

Conclusion of Part One

Our analysis of the Assyrian texts has demonstrated that Mount Amanus served as a dualistic site, emanating both evil and good in Mesopotamia. As the source of evil, the mountain ranges of North Syria were envisioned as impenetrable and foreboding. Yet the mountains were also connected in Mesopotamia with sensory pleasure. The pleasurable feelings produced in the Neo-Assyrian period a physical and perhaps emotional desire for this other world of Mount Amanus. This desire ultimately caused the collection of products and recreation of the pleasant mountain in North Syria as a living entity in the Assyrian heartland. Whether the gardens were actually created in the capitals of Assyria is not as important as the fact that the kings deemed it necessary to discuss these gardens in their inscriptions. Similarly, it is not as significant to discern whether the landscape of North Syria was physically filled with biological diversity, though it could very well have been as lush as the Assyrians described it. Rather, it was *constructed* as such in the

⁵⁶⁶For the identification of the *bit-redutim* as the North Palace at Nineveh, see Russell, 1991, pp. 135 and 320, fn. 29.

inscriptions of the kings. These textual phrases therefore were themselves creating a context of interpretation, forming a code of signs referring to Mount Amanus and North Syria, the larger worlds evoked by the collection of its objects. The texts which describe both the North Syrian landscape and its physical reconstruction in Assyria were imaginings, partially based in reality, and partially intended to represent the *Assyrian conception* of a lush, bountiful and diverse North Syrian botanical landscape. As early as the Middle Assyrian period, the desire to recreate the botanical landscape encountered by the kings in North Syria was present. Ultimately, the landscape of North Syria was textually re-constructed two times over: once in textual references to the landscape of Mount Amanus and North Syria as “observed” by the kings while on campaign (what I will call the *in situ* reconstruction) and a second time in textual references to the royal gardens “like unto Mount Amanus” built by the kings in the Assyrian heartland (what I will call the *ex situ* reconstruction).

The textual references to the imagined and reconstructed North Syrian landscape were necessary for the display of the heroic priority as well as the acquisitional and creational identities of the kings. Each king wished to prove that he could at least equal and possibly surpass his predecessor by constructing a new personal *kirimahhu*. Most importantly, each king found it necessary to link his *kirimahhu* with North Syria and its botanical diversity. The floral landscape of North Syria therefore provided a valuable tool for the construction of acquisitional and creational identity in the Assyrian heartland. In the Assyrian inscriptions Mount Amanus-*cum*-North Syria was constructed as a thriving and abundant microcosm of the world. More important, it was constructed as an

appropriated microcosm--one literally stolen and then recreated at the heart of the empire where it did not naturally exist. If Amanus-in-Assyria was not natural, it was nevertheless naturalized--literally made to emigrate and thrive within a new environment, and ultimately turned into something wonderful *and* thoroughly Assyrian. The sole person capable of naturalizing, of creating a microcosm of the world, or rather of making Assyria into a microcosm of the world, was the king of Assyria. Thus the recreation of North Syria's floral landscape played a significant part in the construction of the creational identities of the kings as they demonstrated the royal ability to spawn life acquired from exotic locales.

Chapter Five: The Neo-Assyrian Imagining of North Syria

Part Two: Textual References to the Faunal Landscape of North Syria

Introduction

Just as the botanical diversity of Mount Amanus-*cum*-North Syria was recreated at the center of the empire, its faunal diversity was admired and collected alive to engender its reminder through recreation in the heartland. This tradition began in the Middle Assyrian period with Tiglath-pileser I and was carried on in varying degrees and ways through to the end of the Neo-Assyrian empire. Wild animals were frequently mentioned in the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions and occasionally in administrative documents.⁵⁶⁷ These animals were the targets of hunting expeditions, corralling maneuvers, breeding programs, zoological acquisitions and tribute requests. In addition the faunal diversity of captured territory was recreated in the form of statues and column-bases which adorned the palaces of the capital cities and in particular, those wings of palaces which also contained the *bit-hilanis*. In general, it is my contention that the references to wild animals in texts were themselves imaginings and were only potentially, but not actually, based on observation of these wild animals in their natural North Syrian environment. The precise attention paid to wild animals, witnessed as lengthy descriptions of animal encounters, therefore served to create merely an intentional and

⁵⁶⁷This section will deal exclusively with wild animals, meaning those animals which were neither genetically domesticated nor used for purposes of subsistence, agriculture or transportation. Encounters with animals such as livestock, milk cattle, sheep, goats, horses, camels or mules will not be treated here.

deliberate *image* of the North Syrian faunal landscape in Assyria.

Though our discussion here will focus on the animal encounters in North Syrian contexts, we may occasionally describe similar events in near western or other peripheral contexts. The intention in including these passages from the texts is to fill out the understanding of the ideological purposes and connotations of the animal encounters of North Syria. In addition, in order to discuss the phenomenon of the animal encounter in texts dating to the Neo-Assyrian period, the relevant textual passages from the Middle Assyrian period will be included in our discussion. The assumption here is that the Neo-Assyrian texts reiterated in brief form some themes from earlier times.

The encounters with animals usually commenced after lengthy military battles and ended with the suggestion that the animals were paraded back to the Assyrian heartland and placed on display for all of the people. These encounters must therefore be considered within the context of ideology. They are not mere asides, despite the abrupt transitions from military narrative to hunting description which occur in the texts. They are deliberate and pointed; they stand out because they are purposefully juxtaposed with unrelenting military narratives of the annual campaigns. In their juxtapositions, they are at once manifestations, or extensions of the military campaigns, and uniquely separate and different events. Together with the narratives of territorial conquest and the formulaic booty and tribute lists they demonstrate the kings' acquisitional abilities. But even more than that, they demonstrate the kings' creational abilities for there are numerous references to breeding programs which the kings instituted.

Tiglath-pileser I

The first major animal encounters which occurred in the west were recorded in the royal inscriptions from the reign of Tiglath-pileser I during the Middle Assyrian period. Hence, the tradition of describing animals encountered while on campaign in western territories was established at about the same time as the entire historical tradition of narrative description was introduced. Encounters with animals were centrally important to these narratives from the onset and the tradition was maintained until the end of the Neo-Assyrian empire and the reign of Aššurbanipal.

From the outset, a *topos* describing a royal bull hunt which took place either in North Syria or while returning from triumphal campaigns in that region was described in Tiglath-pileser I's texts.⁵⁶⁸ As a second *topos*, Tiglath-pileser I's hunt was divinely sanctioned, offered to the king by the gods as an expression of their love for him.⁵⁶⁹ Tiglath-pileser I's bull-hunting narrative ends with the declaration that the king "brought their hides and horns to my city Assur." I would argue that the hunting trophies served the same metonymic purpose as tribute or booty in that they were brought back to the

⁵⁶⁸In his annals, a military campaign to the west was summarized briefly and then the narrative launched into a discussion of the king's hunting expedition which took place near the city of Araziqu. This city, we are told, lies within the land of Mitanni and before the land of Hatti. (Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.87.1 vi 58-69) This text is Grayson's compilation of fragments of Tiglath-pileser I's annals found on clay prisms from Ashur. The passage is repeated "often with verbatim agreement" in many other fragmentary texts from the reign of Tiglath-pileser I as cited by Grayson. (RIMA2, p. 7) On the connection between the royal lion hunts and the triumphal return to Assyria in the later reign of Aššurbanipal, see Weissert, 1997.

⁵⁶⁹The annals read: "the gods Ninurta and Nergal gave me their fierce weapons and their exalted bow for my lordly arms. By the command of the god Ninurta who loves me, with my strong bow, iron arrowheads, and sharp arrows, I slew four extraordinarily strong wild virile bulls in the desert." (Grayson, RIMA2, *ibid.*)

heartland as celebratory proof of the acquisition of the territories in which the hunt took place. A third *topos*, the display of hunting trophies within the heartland, therefore played an important role in the context of political propaganda and ideology.

A fourth *topos* that Tiglath-pileser I established concerns the capture of live animals. In these instances, the animals themselves, rather than their mutilated body parts served as tangible reminders of the acquisitional identity of the king. Tiglath-pileser I declares that he “killed ten strong bull elephants in the land Harran and the region of the River Habur and four live elephants I captured. I brought heads and tusks (of the dead elephants) with the live elephants to my city Assur.” The connection between the hunting of virile animals and the royal identity of the king was an important facet of Assyrian ideology, expressed in the choice of the epithet “virile king” which was so often included in the Assyrian royal inscriptions.⁵⁷⁰ The hunting and capture of live bulls and bull elephants and the introduction of these species into Assyria constructs within the historical inscriptions a symbolic association between the kings, their virility and their progenic abilities.

Nowhere is the connection between the acquisition of animals and the virility made more concrete than in a fifth *topos* described in the annals of the Tiglath-pileser I. The annals declare that Tiglath-pileser I:

Formed herds of horses, oxen, and asses from the booty I took when I gained dominion over lands with the support of the god Assur, my lord. In

⁵⁷⁰*zikārum*. Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.87.1, vi 70-75. See also Seux, 1967, pp. 377-8. It should be noted, however, that the use of this epithet did not begin until the reign of Adad-nirari II.

addition, I got control of (and) formed herds of *naialu*-deer, *aialu*-deer, gazelles, and ibex which the gods Assur and Ninurta, the gods who love me had given me in the course of the hunt in high mountain ranges. I numbered them like flocks of sheep.⁵⁷¹

The *topos* of the creation of herds, like the capture of live animals, was intended to represent the creational abilities of the king. In all five of these *topoi*, two identities are essentially constructed: first, the royal identity is artfully created; and second the mountainous region to the west of Assyria emerges as a site where the king acquired his virility and creational abilities through the act of hunting and capturing live animals.

In the sixth *topos* with regard to animal encounters, Tiglath-pileser I's annals declare that he:

made replicas in basalt of a *nahiru*, which is called a sea-horse (and) which by the command of the gods Ninurta and Nergal, the great gods, my lords, I had killed with a harpoon of my own making in the Great Sea (of the land of Ammuru), (and) of a live *burhiš* (yak?) which was brought from the mountain/land Lumash on the other side of the land Habhu. I stationed them on the left and right of my [royal entrance].⁵⁷²

In this passage, two exotic species of animals not native to Assyria, the sea-horse (*nahirum*) and the *burhiš* were brought to Ashur from the west. By installing replicas of them in front of his palace, he was affirming to his people that he had at least witnessed such exotic species of animals. More importantly, by "creating" them in stone, he was in a symbolic sense creating them for the Assyrians at home who would not otherwise have encountered these species from the far-flung sea and western mountains. A fragmentary

⁵⁷¹Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.87.1, vii 1-11.

⁵⁷²Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.87.4, 67-71 (with related passages in other texts cited by Grayson, on p. 39). For a discussion of the term *burhiš*, see CAD B, p. 329.

text hints that these replicas were set up within a “cedar palace,” thus the animal replicas were situated properly within a palace constructed of western timber which Tiglath-pileser I set up at Ashur.⁵⁷³ As a seventh and final *topos*, Tiglath-pileser I also received live exotic animals as tribute, including a crocodile and a large female monkey, which were given to him by the kings of the Phoenician sea coast.⁵⁷⁴ Brigitte Lion has suggested that the types of animals received as tribute were the personal choices of the kings.⁵⁷⁵ Yet I would argue that the acquisition of these exotic animals was more politically charged and represent once again the creational identity of the king.

Aside from establishing the several different manners in which the animal diversity of the west was encountered and re-created, Tiglath-pileser I also set precedent for the *types* of animals that could be hunted, including the wild bulls, lions, elephants and herds of deer. These themes were reiterated constantly in the Assyrian inscriptions which followed him, to varying degrees and with some additional innovations. The following diachronic analysis will trace the subsequent development and variations on the *topoi* of animal encounters established in the annals of Tiglath-pileser I.

⁵⁷³The inscribed fragments of these figurines found at Assur mention a “cedar palace”. (Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.87.17)

⁵⁷⁴Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.87.4, 24-30. Dunham has commented extensively on the treatment of monkeys in ancient Near Eastern texts and images and she cites fully all Assyrian references to monkeys. She notes that in the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods, the Assyrian kings received their monkeys exclusively from the west and the monkey “is an exotic animal whose presence emphasizes the wealth and wide influence of the king’s empire.” (1985, p. 236)

⁵⁷⁵1992, p. 361.

Aššur-bēl-kala

In the inscriptions of Aššur-bēl-kala, the theme of the wild bull or lion hunt completed at the bidding of the gods was repeated.⁵⁷⁶ There are several fragmentary versions of his annals which briefly describe the hunt.⁵⁷⁷ But it is in the very distinct “Broken Obelisk” inscription where the longest, most complete and most innovative imaginings of the wildlife of the west occur.⁵⁷⁸ After a battle against the Aramaeans, residents of the west, Aššur-bēl-kala killed a *nahiru*, then wild bulls and cows in the same territory as did Tiglath-pileser I.⁵⁷⁹ Then the inscription discusses the capture and herd formation of “live calves of wild bulls.” Next the hunting and capture of live elephants is described, and as in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I, these elephants were “brought to his city Assur.”⁵⁸⁰ Subsequently, the inscription informs us that lions were killed and that the hunt took place “in the high mountains.”⁵⁸¹ Up to this point, the ordering of events,

⁵⁷⁶Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.89.2, iii 29'-35'.

⁵⁷⁷Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.89.1 rev 7'-11'; A.0.89.3, 9'.

⁵⁷⁸Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.89.7, iv 1-34. The obelisk was found at Nineveh and depicts in relief a scene on the front where the king leads prisoners with nose rings while divine symbols float over his head. The unfinished inscription on the monument appears on either side of the relief. Grayson comments that the text is essentially chronologically ordered, or ‘annalistic’, but that the author “took little trouble to blend his various sources together.” (RIMA2, p. 99-100) He also notes that the object must have originally come from Ashur, since many passages refer to construction projects in that city.

⁵⁷⁹The territory was referred to as Araziqu, “which is before the land of Hatti and at the foot of Mount Lebanon,” the range just south of the Amanus. (Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.89.7, line iv 5)

⁵⁸⁰iv 9.

⁵⁸¹iv 14.

the species of animals, and the activities performed upon the animals mimic those in the annals of Tiglath-pileser I.

Then, however, the venue changes and the animal encounters take place in areas other than the North Syrian periphery. Every mountain which the king visited discloses some sort of animal encounter. The king formed “herds of gazelles, ibex...*naialu* deer, *aialu* deer in Mount Ebih, Uraše, Azameru, Ankurna, Pizitta, Udzagiš, Kašiiari,” all we are told were “mountains of Assyria.”⁵⁸² The king also “bred and numbered their offspring like the offspring of sheep.”⁵⁸³ The inscription then launches into a list of several novel species that the king killed, many of which have not been correlated with modern English names since this is their only known textual context.⁵⁸⁴ In the high mountains within and without Assyria, Aššur-bēl-kala killed “panthers, tigers (*midinu*)... bears, two wild boars of the marshes, and....ostriches. He felled wild asses and deer,wolves, and *simkurru*.”⁵⁸⁵ The inscription continues by indicating that the king “despatched [sic] merchants and they acquired *burhiš*, dromedaries, and *tešenum*.”⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸²iv 15-17.

⁵⁸³Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.89.7, iv 19-22.

⁵⁸⁴On the obelisk, there are gaps between the names of animals and Grayson has suggested that the author intended to fill in the numbers of animals killed at a later time, but never got around to it. (Grayson, RIMA2, p. 99) Since these species had not been listed previously by Tiglath-pileser I, we may be witnessing an instance of heroic priority in which Aššur-bēl-kala tried to textually surpass the type and quantity of animal species encountered by his predecessor.

⁵⁸⁵Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.89.7, iv 23-5.

⁵⁸⁶I would read this introduction of merchants into the picture as a rare admission on the king's part that he did not actually control, therefore symbolically create the

The number of different species listed in this inscription suggests a fascination, or at least a fascinated *imagining* of the animal diversity of North Syria which was not present in the texts of Tiglath-pileser I. These animals brought from the west were then herded and bred. Finally these herds of animals were “displayed to the people of the land.”⁵⁸⁷ I would at this point argue that a true zoological garden was formed by Aššur-bēl-kala in Ashur. This zoo was stocked with animals which were captured alive by the king while on campaign as well as with animals received as tribute from the king of Egypt.⁵⁸⁸ The king put these singular specimens “on display” along with the live herds of other animals which he had formed in his zoological park. Finally, he completed his zoo with all of the diverse and novel species of the entire world as the text reads: “The remainder of the

animals himself. However, the text makes it clear that the king was ultimately responsible for the retrieval of these species by using a G-stem third person singular form of the verb rather than a passive form (i.e. “He dispatched” rather than “merchants were dispatched”). See line 27: *išpur*, from *šapārum*: “to send a person, to convey goods, animals.” (CAD Š/1, p. 431) Interestingly, this is also a rare admission in the Assyrian inscriptions that these species of animals were acquired not as tribute, but by merchants, in some type of trading system. The passage demonstrates that foreign animals were in some sense regarded as commodities, with a certain market or exchange value. For a discussion of this passage and others which indicate a commercial interest in exotic animals, see Lion, 1992, p. 362. For more on the circulation of goods under the control of merchants, see Fales, 1984.

⁵⁸⁷Lines 26-30. *UN.MEŠ matišu ušebri. Ušebri* is the Š-stem of the verb *barûm*: G-stem “to look upon, to keep an eye on,...to observe”; Š-stem: “to cause to see,” also translated as “to show, to exhibit, to divulge, to reveal.” See CAD B, p. 118.

⁵⁸⁸These animals included: “a female monkey, a crocodile, (and) a ‘river-man’, beasts of the Great Sea.” Grayson has translated *KUR.Mu-uš-re-e* as Egypt. However, it should be noted that the identification of *Mušri* with Egypt is controversial. For example, Marcus affirms that *Mušri* was more likely located to the northeast of Assyria. (1987, p. 89) The arguments have been summarized in Wafler, 1975, p. 171 ff. For a complete listing of references to *Mušri*, see Parpola, 1970, p. 251.

numerous animals and the winged birds of the sky, wild game, which he acquired, their names are not written with these animals, their numbers are not written with these number.”⁵⁸⁹ The king goes on to name some other of his creations or handiwork, when he reiterates the familiar Tiglath-pileser I theme regarding the construction and decoration of his palace later in the Broken Obelisk inscription. The king declares that he “made (replicas) of two *nahiru*, four *burhiš*, and four lions in basalt, two genii in *parutu*-alabaster and two *burhiš* in white limestone and stationed them at [the doors of the gates].”⁵⁹⁰ In sum, the Broken Obelisk inscription of Aššur-bēl-kala neatly summarized all genres of animal encounter including the hunt, the forming of herds, the capture and return of live animals to Ashur, the receipt of animal tribute from diplomatic entities or merchants, and the creation of statue zoos. Many of these themes were reiterations of *topoi* established in the annals of Tiglath-pileser I. However, many of these themes were innovations, introduced for the first time in this unique summary inscription.

It is possible that the king might have formed at this point a real menagerie and if

⁵⁸⁹31-34. It is significant that the passage does not indicate how these other un-namable un-countable animals were acquired, but the instrumental role of the king is implied in the choice of words which Grayson has translated as “acquired.” The Akkadian reads literally “the work of his hand,” *epšet-qatīšu*. The word *epšet*, derived from the verb *epēšum*, is the same term used for handiwork with regard to inanimate objects, as discussed above in chapter two. If this phrase is taken literally, it suggests that the animals were literally formed by the king’s hand. In this case, though the animals were not yet counted or named by the king, itself an important royal exercise, they were nevertheless created by his hand in the capital city.

⁵⁹⁰v 16-19, *ušēziz* is the verb used, which Grayson has translated as “made”. Perhaps this should be translated “I made fierce” since it is the Š-stem of *ezēzum*: “to be fierce.”

on display for a wide audience, a zoological garden. The central differentiation between the two was the degree of access which each provided. Veltre has identified several different stages in the development of the animal collections from proto-menagerie to menagerie to zoo in history.⁵⁹¹ Menageries, he contends, were primarily private institutions, intended for the enjoyment of a king and his inner circle. Zoos were more public institutions which did not exist until the nineteenth century A.D.⁵⁹² Therefore, just as in the case of the botanical gardens, the term zoological garden is a modern term which may seem anachronistic in the context of ancient Assyrian civilization. However, when the ideological underpinnings of zoos are considered, some cross-cultural similarities come to the fore. Veltre has argued that zoos reflect “a culture’s ideas about political power and ultimately the place of animals and human beings in the universe.”⁵⁹³ It is for this reason that I am utilizing the word zoological garden in the context of a pre-modern culture. Zoos are venues in which the natural world of animals is contained within a human system. Very often these modern zoos contain animals acquired from exotic and distant places and in many cases, colonial peripheries. As containers of the exotic fauna

⁵⁹¹1996. The term “menagerie” comes from the french root *ménage* “management” and the suffix *rie* “place” (p. 9) thus it has connotations of control of animals by humans within a singular location. Compare another article in the same volume, “Menageries and Zoos to 1900” by Hoage, Roskell and Mansour (pp. 8-18), in which the development of the keeping of live animals is traced from 2500 B.C. to 1900 A.D. These authors do not precisely define the terms, but give a general history of the practice of holding live and exotic animals.

⁵⁹²1996, p. 27.

⁵⁹³1996, p 19.

of the colonial Other, the zoos must also be seen as manifestations of imperial control.⁵⁹⁴

Similarly, the royal inscriptions from Assyria claim that the Assyrian capital cities contained live animals captured or received as tribute from the peripheral west. The inscriptions declare that these zoological gardens, like modern ones, were supplied from royal coffers and travels and intended for display to an audience.⁵⁹⁵

When we consider the overall structure of the Broken Obelisk inscription the similarities between Assyrian descriptions of animal collections and modern zoos become even more apparent. The king's voyage through the animal kingdom encountered abroad follows a precise vertical and horizontal order. It progresses through different topographical environments from sea to high mountains and back down to sea again. It also progresses from west to east and back to west again. I would argue that this deliberate progression from sea to mountain, from west to Assyria may be seen as ideological expressions of the royal ordering of the world. By bringing order into the world through hunting, capture, replicating in stone, and of course naming in the

⁵⁹⁴Interestingly, Veltre suggests that the Assyrians and Babylonians had proto-menageries. This assumption was based on a Persian model in which beasts were kept for the "exclusive enjoyment of the monarch." (op. cit.) It was not until the nineteenth century A.D. that true zoos developed which would allow open access to a wide public. I would argue that his understanding of the Assyrian and Babylonian animal collections was somewhat limited and that those early parks certainly qualify as menageries and zoos according to the definition which he uses for the modern era.

⁵⁹⁵Despite these strong similarities, it is important to point out that zoos in the nineteenth century A.D. had both a propagandistic component, demonstrating the extent of empire, as well as a moralizing or educational component, meant to edify the masses and alert them to the diversity and beauty of nature. I do not suggest that the educational goal of the nineteenth century existed in the Assyrian periods, but that only the propagandistic component holds true for Assyria.

inscriptions, the king was also creating the world in the manner which the gods sanctioned him to create it.

This tendency to order the wildness of the periphery allows the Assyrian animal collection described in the Broken Obelisk to be described as a zoological garden, in a more precise manner than we have previously inferred. Ritvo has linked the creation of national zoological gardens in England during the nineteenth century B.C. to the taxonomic revolution in science.⁵⁹⁶ I would argue that in Assyria, the animals of the western landscape were demonstrably construed, and perhaps displayed in a purposefully curated order, though the logistics of the display were not described in the texts. This order established for the audience⁵⁹⁷ the relationships amongst the different species of animals (i.e. beasts of mountain and plain) as well as the relationship between the animals (dominated) and humans (dominators). The animals acquired from the west by Aššur-bēl-kala therefore must be seen as curated collections of live objects. As collections, the narratives created through their selectivity and ordering took part in the construction of royal creational identity.

Aššur-bēl-kala to Tukulti-Ninurta II

The innovative treatment of the animal diversity of the west seen in Aššur-bēl-kala's texts does not last. For in the next reigns leading into the Neo-Assyrian

⁵⁹⁶Ritvo, 1996.

⁵⁹⁷The audience of the texts would have been similar to that of the reliefs and collections which we have discussed above in chapter three. The primary intended audience was the court advisors and royal family closest to the king. Occasionally, texts were read aloud to the general public. On this, see Oppenheim, 1960.

period for which inscriptions are extant, there was a return to the by then formulaic hunting passages established by Tiglath-pileser I and maintained in the inscriptions of Aššur-bēl-kala. Many of the hunts from this period occurred “on the opposite bank” of the Middle Euphrates while on return from campaigns further to the north and west. For example, Ashur-dan II was commanded by the gods Ninurta and Nergal to hunt wild bulls and elephants perhaps while returning from a campaign in the area just west of Assyria near Suhu.⁵⁹⁸ Similarly, Adad-nirari II hunted lions, captured live elephants, formed herds of *aialu* deer, ostriches, bulls and lions after a campaign to the Middle Euphrates, and displayed them in the “Inner City” of Ashur.⁵⁹⁹ For the first time, a North Syrian city contributed live animal tribute, as Adad-nirari II received large and small female monkeys from Bit-Adini and not directly from Egypt.⁶⁰⁰ After campaigning in the “high mountains” to the northwest of Assyria, Tukulti-Ninurta II’s inscriptions mention that he killed 360 lions.⁶⁰¹ Like Aššur-bēl-kala, Tukulti-Ninurta II also hunted

⁵⁹⁸Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.98.1, 68-72. The hunting passage does not occur directly after the campaign. Rather, it is preceded by a reference to the settling of people and the construction of palaces “in the various districts of [Assyria].” Thus the venue of the hunt is not clearly known but based on hunts of bulls, lions, and elephants, it is presumed that it took place to the west of Assyria.

⁵⁹⁹Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.99.2, 122-127. The special mention of “Inner City” (ŠA) of Ashur is novel and suggests that the herds were contained within a very restricted area, i.e. in some sort of game park or zoo enclosure, perhaps attached to various temples. For a discussion of this precinct of the city, see above, chapter three, part four and *libbum*, CAD L, p. 168.

⁶⁰⁰Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.99.2, 48.

⁶⁰¹Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.100.5, 134-135. For another version, see A.0.100.3, rev. 5'-6'.

and captured live *aialu* deer and ostriches “on the banks of the [Middle] Euphrates.”⁶⁰²

Aššurnasirpal II

With Aššurnasirpal II, the amount of extant inscriptions increases manifold. The first hunting passages do not occur until well into Aššurnasirpal II’s “annals.”⁶⁰³ Not surprisingly, the familiar bull hunt, in this case accompanied by an ostrich hunt, took place “on the other bank of the [Middle] Euphrates.”⁶⁰⁴ Aššurnasirpal II’s texts also record that he captured bulls and ostriches alive in this spot, presumably to bring back to Assyria. Like his predecessors, Aššurnasirpal II received exotic tribute from North Syria.⁶⁰⁵ After climbing the slopes of Mount Lebanon, the king received tribute of more exotic animals including a large and small female monkey and the ivory of *nahirus*, which the text calls “sea creatures” from the cities of the Phoenician seacoast.⁶⁰⁶ This is fairly standard treatment of the receipt of tribute, though it is important to note that there has been some sort of shift in the origin of the animal tribute. In the reign of

⁶⁰²Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.100.5, 80-85. Tukulti-Ninurta invented a specific name for his hunting expeditions, *daialatu*, from the verb *dâlum*, which means to “wander around aimlessly, to prowl.” See *dâlum*, CAD D, p. 58, A. According to the dictionary, the word is singularly attested in the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta II.

⁶⁰³These are the inscriptions from the Ninurta temple slabs from Nimrud. (Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.1) Grayson notes that they are not annals proper, since the inscription “is really a mixture of various kinds of texts, some annalistic and some display.” (p. 191)

⁶⁰⁴Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.1, iii 48b-50.

⁶⁰⁵*paguta*, iii 76. Specifically he received a live female monkey from the city of Unqi.

⁶⁰⁶*binut-tamdi*, iii 87-8. See also, Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.2, 25-31.

Aššur-bēl-kala, monkeys and creatures of the Great Sea (Mediterranean) were received from Egypt directly. With Tukulti-Ninurta II and Aššurnasirpal II, the exotic animal tribute was received from the North Syrians and the Phoenicians. Thus by the beginning of the Neo-Assyrian period, the region of North Syria became a major source of animal diversity, a virtual clearing house for exotic animal tribute.

In a later version of Aššurnasirpal II's annals, the text expands upon this encounter with the monkeys from the west.⁶⁰⁷ The text repeats that the king received the monkeys as tribute while on campaign. They were then brought to Nimrud where they were bred into "herds," and displayed to all the people of the land in what must clearly have been some sort of enclosed area, or zoo, within the city.⁶⁰⁸ This suggestion is supported by the fact that in the next few lines of the inscription, the kings captured live lions and their cubs "from the mountains and forests," perhaps in North Syria.⁶⁰⁹ Once at Nimrud, the lions were bred, "herded" and placed into "cages" within the city and its palaces.⁶¹⁰ This is the first instance which describes the placement of wild animals into

⁶⁰⁷Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.2, 31-2. The text is inscribed on animal colossi from the Northwest Palace at Nimrud.

⁶⁰⁸Dunham notes that in the Neo-Babylonian period there were special personnel for the maintenance of the royal monkey "herds." Ration lists from Nebuchadnezzar's palace refer specifically to a "keeper of the monkeys" named "Pusamiski," possibly an Egyptian. (1985, p. 240, citing a text published in Weidner, "Jojachin, König von Juda" in *Babylonischen Keilschrifttexten, Melanges R. Dussaud*, 1939, 931 and pl. 2, line 24)

⁶⁰⁹Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.2, 34.

⁶¹⁰*ibid.*

cages.⁶¹¹ The display of the lions in the cages served to highlight the ironic situation of the lions since their strength and ferocity was held in check by the weaker humans.

Furthermore, the containment and display of the captured lions within the Assyrian cities may have allowed a visual association between the powerful properties of the hunted animals and the person of the hunter-kings. There are many instances within contemporary African cultures in which the strength, power, even longevity of hunted elephants, for example, were associated both visually and cosmologically with the body of the king.⁶¹² In Mesopotamia, the association between the hunter-king and their hunted prey is a long-standing tradition, beginning in the Old Akkadian period.⁶¹³ Once again, we must be cautious when drawing a cross-cultural comparison, but the metaphorical association between the caged lions and kings is strongly supported in Assyrian civilization through an epithet from Aššurnasirpal's reign: "I am a warrior, I am a lion, and I am virile."⁶¹⁴

Aššurnasirpal II's texts describe the other animals which were hunted by the king

⁶¹¹The word for cage, *esirum* is derived from the verb *esērum*, translated to "shut in, to enclose, to confine" and thus unequivocally refers to a zoo-like enclosure. (CAD E, p. 101)

⁶¹²For many examples of this phenomenon across several African cultures, see Ross, 1992.

⁶¹³Barnett, 1974, pp. 441-6. Also, see Sollberger, 1970, pp. 173-4.

⁶¹⁴Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.1, I 32. For the use of the lion epithet in other reigns, see Seux, 1967, pp. 147-8.

and brought into the city of Nimrud for the purposes of display:⁶¹⁵ "I formed herds of wild bulls, elephants,⁶¹⁶ lions, ostriches, male monkeys, female monkeys, wild asses, deer, *aialu*-deer, female bears, panthers, *senkurru*, beasts of the mountain and plain all of them in my city of Calah (Nimrud). I displayed them to all the people."⁶¹⁷ Like Aššur-bēl-kala and Tiglath-pileser I, Aššurnasirpal II also created "statue zoos" consisting of replicas of the beasts of the mountain and seas next to his palace at Nimrud.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁵These include many of the animals found in Aššur-bēl-kala's Broken Obelisk inscription. This suggests that this inscription was a direct copy of that older passage or was taken from some similar no longer extant source.

⁶¹⁶In Aššurnasirpal II's Banquet Stele, the king's encounters with elephants differ from those of previous kings. His text claims that he received five live elephants as tribute from the governor of the near western lands of Suhi and Lubdu located in the region of the Middle Euphrates, where elephants had been hunted and where they presumably roamed wild. These elephants were then brought back to the west where they "went about with me on campaign" (*ina gerri itti-ia ittanalaka*, Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.30, 96-7). It is not clear from the context which campaign he was referring to nor whether the king brought the elephants as beasts of burden for the equipment of the army or for other less practical reasons. The choice of verb used, *ittanalaka*, is a form of the verb *alākum*, and is translated as "to go through or to roam" (CAD A/1, p. 300) thus it does not necessarily indicate that the beasts were brought to carry things for the king for presumably a verb for carrying would have been used. I can think of two reasons why this curious return of the elephants might have been described: it is possible that he went to restore them to their natural habitat or it is possible that the pleasure which he derived from observing and riding upon them was one which he wished to experience while on campaign--in other words, they were like domestic pets. Dunham suggests that monkeys received from North Syrian city of Kunulua might also have been kept as pets by Aššurnasirpal II. She bases this suggestion on the fact that these monkeys were not listed with the other tribute, but were kept alone in the text. She further suggests that the Assyrian tradition of keeping monkeys at court was borrowed from Syria, whose own tradition stretched back into the second millennium B.C. (1985, p. 239)

⁶¹⁷Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.2, 31-38.

⁶¹⁸Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.23, 19-20. This event is found in the Standard Inscription of Aššurnasirpal II, thus written on many slabs from Nimrud. For a complete listing of the occurrence and publication of the Standard Inscription on Nimrud

Archaeologically, these statue zoos may be represented by the numerous human-headed bull and lion sculptures which were found in the entrances to Aššurnasirpal's structures at Nimrud, including the Northwest Palace and the Ninurta Temple.⁶¹⁹ Barnett has suggested that the lions and bulls in Aššurnasirpal's palace and temples, and indeed in all Assyrian palaces represented the tamed natural world and therefore illustrated the Assyrian "pacification" of such wild animals from the west.⁶²⁰ Moreover, these statue replicas of animals hunted in the west were most likely constructed to emulate similar entrance statues found in the cities of Hatti.⁶²¹ They therefore served to reconstruct the entire North Syrian landscape within Assyria, including its fauna and architectural features.

Shalmaneser III

In the reign of Shalmaneser III, there is considerably less attention to western encounters with wild animals in the inscriptions, a situation which is in stark contrast to the depictions in relief of animals, as will be seen below in our discussion of images of the North Syrian faunal landscape. Many of the previous *topoi* of animal encounters were omitted in his inscriptions. For example, although Shalmaneser traveled to the

orthostats, see Grayson, RIMA2, pp. 268-74.

⁶¹⁹In Strommenger, 1964: Bull-colossi, pl. 198; and Lion, pl. 200. For the original locations of these figures in the entrances in the Northwest Palace at Nimrud, see Paley and Sobolewski, 1992.

⁶²⁰1974, p. 445.

⁶²¹This is a feature of Neo-Assyrian palaces which has long been recognized in the literature. See Guterbock, 1957, p. 66 and Winter, 1982, p. 356.

Great Sea (Mediterranean) and washed his weapons there in his first regnal year, the text does not record that he harpooned a *burhiš* or *tešenu* as did Tiglath-pileser I, Aššur-bēl-kala, and Aššurnasirpal II.⁶²² The most common animal encounters that Shalmaneser III's inscriptions record are the hunts. A wild bull, lion and elephant hunt was recorded on clay fragments from Ashur.⁶²³ In a more complete version of his annals, the location of the hunt was precisely specified as in his sixteenth regnal year, Shalmaneser III "slew sixty-three perfect specimens of strong horned, wild bulls by the city Zuqarru on the opposite bank of the Euphrates and captured four alive."⁶²⁴ In the reign of Aššur-bēl-kala, the hunts took place at the foot of Mount Lebanon but in Shalmaneser's inscriptions the hunts were directly linked to the acquisition of tribute and cedar from Hatti/North Syria and Mount Amanus, since they took place immediately following these activities. Therefore in Shalmaneser's reign, Mount Amanus was specifically identified as a hunting locale. However, the attention to the animal hunts of

⁶²²Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.14, 26b-29. The texts do not specify where the hunt took place and was added as a quasi-colophon to the description of the campaign in his sixteenth year along with a geographic summary of his accomplishments. It is possible given previous kings' inscriptions that these hunts took place while on return from the north or west in the region of the Middle Euphrates, but this is conjectural.

⁶²³Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.6, iv 40-44.

⁶²⁴Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.10, iii 37b-45a. The text does not specify whether the live bulls were brought to Ashur, though in the previous sentence, it does mention that the cedar timbers from Mount Amanus were brought there. The king also hunted another "ten perfect specimens of strong, horned, wild bulls and two calves by the city Zuqarru on the opposite bank of the Euphrates" in his nineteenth regnal year (iv 15-22). The hunt of the seventeenth year is repeated in A.0.102.13, 4'-9'. The hunt of the nineteenth year is repeated in a passage from A.0.102.11, rev. 1'-2'.

the king was fleeing for they were left out of some annalistic accounts dated to the final years of Shalmaneser's reign.⁶²⁵

In the only text which documents the king's receipt of exotic animal tribute from the west, the Black Obelisk inscription, the recording of royal hunting exploits is omitted.⁶²⁶ However, Shalmaneser III's receipt of exotic species of animals from Egypt is recorded in the epigraphs and images on the Black Obelisk. An epigraph declares that Shalmaneser received "two-humped camels, a *rhinoceros*, a water buffalo (lit. a 'river ox'), an antelope, female elephants, female monkeys, and apes."⁶²⁷ This epigraph and the accompanying pictorial depiction of primates, suggests that the king was indeed interested in acquiring singular specimens of animals from far western lands in order to create a zoo at home. Rarely in Shalmaneser III's inscriptions is there reference to the *display* of the animals captured in the hunt or received as tribute. I would argue that the

⁶²⁵A final hunting passage was added to Shalmaneser's annals when after the thirty-first regnal year, the king slew bulls, lions and elephants and captured female bears, *aialu* deer, marsh pigs, panthers and a *senkurru*. (Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.16, 341'-347') However, the location of this hunt is not specified. It occurs as the final passage in this version of the annals, so it is possible that it capped off Shalmaneser's campaign in his thirty-first year.

⁶²⁶Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.14, 96-100, seventeenth to nineteenth regnal years. The brevity of the version of the annals on the obelisk and the omission of the hunts could have been caused by the lack of space on the monument, as demonstrated especially by the relatively short entries for the regnal years 17-31. Grayson has suggested that the lack of building inscriptions and concluding formulae on the obelisk is attributed to the inclusiveness of the text (it is the fullest account of the events of Shalmaneser's reign) caused the engraver to run out of room. Though the building accounts and the hunting passages were left out of this particular text for reasons of space, they must not be considered less important.

⁶²⁷Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.90.

images *alone* on the Black Obelisk were meant to “display” the animals to the people of Nimrud, thus only symbolically demonstrating the capture of specimens (and therefore creation) of the exotic species. Whatever the mechanisms of display, the construction of faunal diversity experienced in regions to the west of Assyria were essential aspects of the textual and pictorial program on the Black Obelisk and, by extension, in the reign of Shalmaneser III.

Tiglath-pileser III

In the reigns of Šamši-Adad V to Aššur-nirari V, there are no extant references to animals of the west, hunted or otherwise. This is primarily due to the relative paucity of textual evidence that exists for this weak period of Assyrian history. The inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III are somewhat more extensive, though animal encounters in them are relatively rare when compared to the reigns of the Middle Assyrian and early Neo-Assyrian kings. While on campaign in North Syria during his third regnal year, Tiglath-pileser III received from a coalition of North Syrian,⁶²⁸ Phoenician, and Arabian kings: “live sheep, whose wool is dyed red-purple, flying birds of the sky whose wings are dyed blue-purple.”⁶²⁹ These exotically-colored animals must have been novelties since they

⁶²⁸i.e., the kings of Kummuh, Que, Carchemish, Hamath, Sam'al, Gurgum, and Tabal among others.

⁶²⁹Tadmor, 1994, Ann. 14, 3-4. The animals' noteworthy colors were most likely created by humans who physically dyed the wool and feathers. Dyed wool is mentioned in the royal inscriptions, but never dyed sheep before this reign. For the references to red-dyed wool, see CAD S, *ṣarāpum* B, p. 104-5. However, it is also possible that at least the birds might have had naturally-colored feathers. The text therefore could have been referring to exotic birds who normally habitate the rainforests or jungles of Africa but were somehow acquired via Egypt by these western kings as tribute.

had not been described by previous kings as tribute. Their novelty was associated with the west, which emerges once again as a site in which diverse species of animals were encountered in Tiglath-pileser III's inscriptions.

Sargon II

The texts of Sargon II exhibit an interest in the creation of statue zoos with a corresponding lack of interest in hunting exploits or the capture of live animals. Sargon created lions and mountain sheep in bronze and mountain stone and set them up on either side of the cedar-columned portico of his *bit-hilani* at Khorsabad.⁶³⁰ Yet in other texts, the variety of these animal replicas increases, as the king claims that he created "animals resembling the creatures of mountains and seas, (made of) white stone" by the entrance of his *bit-hilani*.⁶³¹ In the context of the building inscription, the phrase asserts that the entire fauna of the Assyrian world and all of its habitats were created by the king "in stone" and incorporated into the building program of the western-style *bit-hilani*. Moreover, in Sargon's reign, this statue zoo was placed quite literally within the context of the North Syrian architectural landscape and therefore shows a desire to recreate the entire North Syrian landscape as a discrete and whole unit within Khorsabad. Therefore, these statues might have evoked the larger world of their origins in two distinct manners: 1) the animals were originally observed in their native western habitats; and 2) statues at

⁶³⁰Fuchs, 1994, Prunk, 162-164. Only human-headed bull colossi have been found at Khorsabad.

⁶³¹From inscriptions on the back of Khorsabad reliefs. Fuchs, 1994, Plattenruckseiten, 22-23.

entrances were traditional features of Neo-Hittite architecture.

Sennacherib

Sennacherib's texts borrowed directly from those of his father as they claimed that he set up lion and mountain sheep colossi composed of precious metals within the doors of his North Syrian style *bit-appatim* at Nineveh.⁶³² Nowhere is the direct link between the statue zoos and the creational abilities of the king drawn more thickly than in Sennacherib's description of the "statue-zoos" which he created in his palace at Nineveh. These included human-headed bull and sphinx-colossi made out of *gišnugallu* alabaster which he dragged from Mount Ammanana on the southern fringes of the North Syria.⁶³³ The buildings also contained bull-colossi which were quarried nearer to Nineveh, and which Sennacherib "devised and executed".⁶³⁴ The *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* notes that the choice of the causative stem of the verb *alādum* in this text is a departure from the verb which is usually used in this context, *epēšum*, "to fashion." *Alādum* means "to give birth or bear," thus Sennacherib was here claiming that he actually fathered the lion and bull-colossi himself by transforming the stone landscape into apotropaic beings

⁶³²Frahm, 1997, T10/11, 114-116 and p. 268. See also, Luckenbill, 1924, p. 97, 85.

⁶³³The un-translated stone came from Mt. Kapridargila "which is on the border of Til Barsip." For commentaries on this phrase, see Frahm, 1997, T12 and p. 268 and Russell, 1991, p. 100. For a full transliteration and translation, see Luckenbill, 1924, p. 108, 59-60.

⁶³⁴*ušalidma ušaklila gatta-šun.* (Frahm, 1997, T12 and Luckenbill, 1924, p. 108, l. 78-9) Luckenbill's translation of *gattum* as "members" is not to be trusted, thus the CAD translation is used here (CAD G, p. 58).

resembling hunted bulls.⁶³⁵ Though his creational abilities are subtly implied here with the choice of verbs, Sennacherib's other textual phrases attest blatantly to his progenital abilities when they claim that he recreated the marshes of Babylonia in his *kirimahhu* at Nineveh.⁶³⁶ Under Sennacherib's auspices, the wild animals which lived in the swamp multiplied in their captivity: "the wild swine and buffalo/deer brought countless offspring into the world."⁶³⁷ The king was represented in this passage as not only the father of all beasts, but the grandfather as well.

Sennacherib was also the first king to name and locate an *ambassu* in his city of Nineveh. The word *ambassu* is translated as "game preserve,"⁶³⁸ and refers to a piece of land which contained animals and was reserved strictly for the hunt (royal or divine).⁶³⁹

⁶³⁵The choice of verb used in the text is *ušalid*, or the Š-stem (causative) form of the verb *alādum*.

⁶³⁶See Appendix Four for a full translation of the passage referring to the *kirimahhu*.

⁶³⁷Frahm, 1997, T10/11, 257 and Luckenbill, 1924, p. 125, l. 47. For a translation of *alap-kiši* as "buffalo", see CAD A/1, pp. 334-5. However, the dictionary notes that this phrase may be translated as "stag," which Frahm follows.

⁶³⁸CAD A/1, p. 44.

⁶³⁹This translation has been derived from Neo-Assyrian letters. The letters describe the hunting activities of the gods Nabu and Adad-of-Abundance. Nabu takes a walk in the game preserve and kills wild oxen and Adad walks in the game preserve where sacrifices were made by a Neo-Babylonian king. (Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, 366, 3, and 427, r.7, respectively, both cited in CAD, *ibid.*) In the historical inscriptions, Luckenbill has produced several transliterations of this word, however, he never translated the word as "game preserve." This is probably due to the fact that he read the signs incorrectly in his collation. CAD notes that in all but one case, the signs should be emended to create the word *qar-ba-te*. (CAD A/1, p. 44) For example, Luckenbill transliterates *an-bas-su* when according to the dictionary, the signs read *qar-ba-su*, though the text is very fragmentary. (1924, p. 80, 21) Thus the

According to the dictionary entry, the *ambassu* was precisely located at Nineveh across from the Adad Gate and within a royal garden at Nineveh.⁶⁴⁰ It was described fully by Sennacherib: “By the side of the city, I laid out a park and a game preserve. All the aromatic plants of Hatti and the garden fruits of all the trees in the woods, products of the mountains and of Chaldaea, I set out.” Sennacherib’s citation is the first to imply that the royal hunts might not have taken place in the actual North Syrian landscape, but in the recreated North Syrian landscape at Nineveh. When coupled with the references to wild pigs and other animals in the swamps that Sennacherib created, I would argue that there were several venues in which wild animals from North Syria and Babylonia could have been viewed in their quasi-natural, albeit artificially constructed, habitats.

Esarhaddon and Aššurbanipal

Both Esarhaddon and Aššurbanipal encountered and described exotic fauna while on campaign. This is a familiar *topos* which we have seen in many previous reigns. For example, a fragmentary inscription from Esarhaddon’s reign records the observation of snakes with two heads and green snakes with wings near Egypt or Arabia.⁶⁴¹

Aššurbanipal received exotic tribute from Egypt, including primates and “okapis.”⁶⁴²

occurrence of this word in Neo-Assyrian historical inscriptions has been whittled down to two instances. One instance was in fact emended into existence by the dictionary and was not originally transliterated correctly by Luckenbill.

⁶⁴⁰ The inscription reads: “The Adad Gate (which faces toward) the game preserve (*ambassu*) of the garden (*kiru*).” Luckenbill, 1924, p. 112, 88 and CAD, A/1, p. 44.

⁶⁴¹ Borger, 1967, Frt. F, rev. 4-7 and Luckenbill, ARAB II, #548.

⁶⁴² Luckenbill, ARAB II, #907.

However, in other texts from the reigns of Esarhaddon and Aššurbanipal, the overpopulated animals of the west took on a negative connotation. Both Esarhaddon's and Aššurbanipal's texts imply that the overabundance of animal life was indicative of nature gone uncontrolled. The demonstration in the inscriptions of the king's efforts to control nature and its chaos were manifested as the tangible destruction of nature's wild growth. Esarhaddon accomplished this control by destroying the swamps of reeds filled with fish and birds which had overcome and thus corrupted the sacred precinct, Esagila, in Babylon.⁶⁴³ Weissert has noted that the same control of nature was exemplified in Aššurbanipal's reign through the hunting of lions.⁶⁴⁴ Unlike his predecessors, who attributed the hunting impetus to the gods, Aššurbanipal claimed that he hunted lions "as if for pleasure."⁶⁴⁵ This literate king wistfully described his "school days" when as a young boy, he learned the art of writing and discovered the hunt: "This is what was done all my days: I mounted my steed, I rode joyfully, I went up to the (hunting lodge). I held the bow, I shot the arrow, the sign of my valor."⁶⁴⁶ Aššurbanipal's phrasing in the texts

⁶⁴³ Luckenbill, ARAB II, #681 and Borger, 1967, Bab. G, episode 7.

⁶⁴⁴ 1997, p. 339. In this article, Weissert has compiled and collated a number of Aššurbanipal's hunting passages, his translations and transliterations will be used here when appropriate.

⁶⁴⁵ *kima multa 'uti*, Weissert, 1997, fig. 1, topos A, p. 344. Weissert compares this phrasing to his epigraphs, which reiterate the pleasurable feelings ascribed to the hunt, but lack the preposition *kima*. See also Gerardi, 1988, pp. 25-28.

⁶⁴⁶ Luckenbill, ARAB II, #986. Luckenbill tentatively translates the word *šubtum* as "hunting lodge." He notes that previously, he had translated this word as "ambush." The word is translated in other contexts as "seat or dwelling", thus referring to a distinctive architectural structure. It must refer to some sort of enclosure or blind, whether temporary or permanent, which the kings used as strategic hunting aids and

that refer to the hunting on the plain is subtly ambiguous, for instead of reading simply “for my pleasure”, the passage reads “as if” (*kima*) for pleasure. The inclusion of this small preposition, Weissert argues, essentially “detaches the act of hunting from actual pleasure.”⁶⁴⁷ Rather, the purpose of the hunt was to enact the victory of order over chaos, the dominion over nature and over foreign territories which the hunt represents. The descriptions of the lion hunt on the open plain confirm Weissert’s analysis of the main purpose of Aššurbanipal’s hunt. This passage is found in a fragment called the “Great Hunting Text”, found at Nineveh. A group of lions had infested the Ninevite countryside and wreaked havoc on the citizens of Assyria and Aššurbanipal brags of the action that he took to save the countryside:

Since I took my seat upon the throne of the father who begot me, Adad has sent his rains Ea has opened up his fountains, the forests have been thriving exceedingly, the reeds of the marshes have shot up so high there is no getting through them. The young of the lions grew up (lit. throve) therein, in countless numbers. They became fierce and terrible through their devouring of herds, flocks and people. With their roaring the hills resound, the beasts of the plain are terrified. They keep bringing down the cattle of the plain, they (keep) shedding the blood of men. As if the plague had broken loose, there were heaped up the corpses of dead men, cattle and [sheep]. The shepherds and herdsmen weep at the lions’....The villages are in mourning day and night. Of the deeds of these lions they told me. In the course of my march into....their lairs I broke up and the people, who dwell in the cities....⁶⁴⁸

which concealed him and his entourage. The *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* translates the term used in these hunting contexts as “military position, outpost, ambush” as well (see CAD S/3, p. 184).

⁶⁴⁷1997, p. 342.

⁶⁴⁸Weissert, 1997, fig. 1, topos C, p. 342 and Luckenbill, ARAB II, #935.

In these phrases, the text at once extols the virtues of nature which the gods had allowed to thrive (and which he had fostered) during his reign while at the same time, it denigrates that abundance as the cause of chaos in the countryside.⁶⁴⁹ The hunt was painted as a necessary undertaking for the culling of the lion herds, and ultimately for the protection of the people of Assyria, and the maintenance of the empire. Aššurbanipal's text was the first to make explicit the ideological purpose and reasoning behind the hunt, despite the fact that the activity was a popular royal activity from the beginning that such activities were recorded in Assyria.

In order to demonstrate their valor and good deeds to a home audience, the Assyrian kings also hunted within the urban environment at Nineveh. This is demonstrated in both the texts and images which depict the lion hunts from Aššurbanipal's reign.⁶⁵⁰ The texts do not state outright that Aššurbanipal hunted lions which had been captured from the open plain and placed in a game park at Nineveh, and there is no occurrence of the word *ambassu* in his historical texts. Yet it has been suggested that a peculiar phraseology in some of his hunting passages signify that some royal hunts occurred in enclosures within Nineveh. Weissert argues that in one text, K6085, after a lion hunt, the field upon which the hunt had taken place was dedicated to

⁶⁴⁹The hunts may also have played a role in the justification of military expansion, for Weissert has suggested that the motif of the lion hunt in the Neo-Assyrian period was connected through juxtaposition in both texts and images with the New Year's processions and royal military triumphal parades, thus underscoring the ideological importance of the royal hunt. (1997, p. 342)

⁶⁵⁰For a discussion of these images, see the following section of this chapter.

Ishtar of Nineveh, and the eighteen lions killed there were consecrated by the king with a visit to the eighteen gates of the city of Nineveh.⁶⁵¹ This text describes a hunt that could *only* have taken place within or near the city of Nineveh itself. I would argue that it is entirely likely that this royal hunt took place within Sennacherib's *ambassu* at Nineveh, and this will be corroborated shortly with a discussion of the depictions of such an enclosure in the reliefs from Aššurbanipal's North Palace. Thus in Aššurbanipal's reign, the abundant life of the western periphery which was so celebrated in previous reigns was the ultimate source of disruption at the end of the empire.

A Dualistic Treatment of North Syria

Recently, political geographers have recognized a similar ambiguity associated with colonial landscapes within more modern empires. The world of the Other has been described as a landscape which "haunts the imagination of the master subject and is both desired and feared for its difference."⁶⁵² I suggest that the recreation of the outside, lion-infested landscape within the *ambassu* of Nineveh in Aššurbanipal's reign was tinged with this same ambiguity. It is possible that North Syria was imagined in Assyria as the equivalent of what Europeans have labeled a "noble savage" within their own culture. The noble savage concept in Europe basically encapsulated a dualistic conception of the Other, an Other which contained both positive and negative aspects. The term "noble

⁶⁵¹1997, p. 350. Weissert argues that the hunt took place "on a field within the walls of Nineveh." This is contra Reade, who placed the *ambassu* outside of the city (1978, fig. 3).

⁶⁵²Blunt and Rose, 1994, p. 16.

savage” has three layers of meaning, two of which were developed in the eighteenth century by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others. As I understand the concept, the savage was noble because he represented man in a natural state, unencumbered by the constraints of civilization.⁶⁵³ On the second level, his entry into civilization through the social contract, strengthened his nobility through the promises of community.⁶⁵⁴ And the third layer concerns anthropological discourse in the era of European imperialism. Johannes Fabian has suggested that the noble savage was given his nobility precisely because he could be used to prove the European rationalistic ordering of life and civilization.⁶⁵⁵ Therefore, on a meta-historical level the savage Other was noble for contributing to and corroborating the European world view. It is this last construction of the noble savage which holds the most relevance for Assyria. For the products and territory of North Syria, the savages, were only imagined positively, were only turned into *noble* savages, in

⁶⁵³The famous first phrase “Man is born free and everywhere is in chains” from *The Social Contract* iterates this idea. (1762, translated in Gourevitch, 1997, p. 41) Rousseau’s description of man in nature paints the European image of the noble savage: “Man, savage and without culture, who has not yet made use of his reason, who, being governed by solely by his appetites, needs no other guide, and following only the instinct of nature, always proceeds in an upright fashion.” (Excerpt from Letter to de Franquières, 1762, translated in Gourevitch, 1997, pp. 275-6).

⁶⁵⁴In *The Social Contract*, Rousseau writes: “This transition from the state of nature to the civil state produces a most remarkable change in man by substituting justice for instinct in his conduct and endowing his actions with the morality they previously lacked.” (Gourevitch, 1997, Book I, chapter 8/1) For a discussion of these two characteristics of the noble savage in Rousseau, see also Cro, 1990, pp. 134-51.

⁶⁵⁵Fabian, 1983, p. 95. Compare also Pearce, who writes: “The collections from the world’s cultural traditions represent, in European eyes, a coherent material cosmology or ideology in which the dark twins of the Other support and sustain the light twins of classic values.” (1994a, pp. 350-1)

a context of usefulness to the Assyrian empire. As a site of pleasure, relaxation and natural diversity, North Syria represented an Other world which was made useful through its reconstruction at the center. In this dualistic conception, the Other was at once what Homi Bhabha calls “an object of desire and derision.”⁶⁵⁶

In order to suggest that there was a dualistic imagining of North Syria in Assyria, both the positive and negative attitudes towards this area must be demonstrated. There is ample evidence to suggest that North Syria was imagined as a negative and base entity by the Assyrians. As discussed in the first part of chapter five, in Assyrian texts, North Syria’s forests and mountains were occasionally described as entangling and ensnaring and this negative conception was linked to the motif of the “difficult path.” In addition, Cifarelli has demonstrated that in the reign of Aššurnasirpal II, foreigners, especially western foreigners, were imagined as base, immoral, almost animalistic and inhuman in Assyrian texts and images.⁶⁵⁷ Zaccagnini and Fales have traced briefly a similar treatment of foreign people in later reigns.⁶⁵⁸ In fact, the North Syrians in Assyrian images and texts, as all other enemies of the realm, never win their battles, but are always humiliated on the battlefield, literally stripped of their dignity, headless, lifeless, weak and unable to effectively resist the onslaught of the Assyrian king and his army. Olmstead has suggested that the trope of the defeated city and enemy was meant to

⁶⁵⁶Bhabha, 1990, p. 67.

⁶⁵⁷1995, pp 331-2.

⁶⁵⁸Both: 1982.

induce a “calculated frightfulness” in any potential rebel, whether foreign or native.⁶⁵⁹

The utter defeat and humiliation was continued even after the battle was over, when enemy goods, people, animals and rulers were paraded out of their helplessly empty cities and into the waiting arms of the king. In the reliefs and texts the consequence of rebellion and defeat was the literal collection of the weak enemy and his “royal paraphernalia” by the Assyrian royal apparatus. There is a clear negative treatment of land and people in the Assyrian reliefs, but what of the negative aspect of North Syrian objects, and specifically the ivory objects found at Nimrud? Certainly, the ivories in their context as consumed objects served to further develop the negative trope of the weak, defeated North Syria for the Assyrian heartland. Mieke Bal has suggested that collecting may be linked to personal narratives of power which require a denudation, a rape of the collected object.⁶⁶⁰ To Bal, this is a violent act and she uses the terms abduction and denudation purposefully, as do I here.⁶⁶¹ Bal suggests that a collector inserts the object as a sign into the narrative of collecting and abducts the object from its original context and meaning.⁶⁶²

⁶⁵⁹1918.

⁶⁶⁰Bal, 1994, p. 111.

⁶⁶¹The implications for the narrative of rape in Assyria are far-reaching for constructions of gender ideology and the masculine identity of the king. On the motif of rape of women and the implications for gender ideology in Assyria, see Cifarelli, 1995, pp. 308-10 and Marcus, 1995b. An image from room I of Aššurbanipal’s North Palace at Nineveh which possibly depicts the rape of an Arab woman within her tent is the most striking visual corollary of the metaphor which I present here.

⁶⁶²1994, p. 111.

The seemingly insignificant pieces of foreign furniture, the botanical gardens, and the zoos were deliberately constructed and complexly imagined symbols of the utter denudation and abduction of the entire peripheral territory. Yet they were also symbols of the captured fertility of this region. This fertility which was inevitably and fittingly harnessed for the benefit of the empire, the king and the Assyrian populace. The North Syria imagined--or re-created--in the Assyrian texts and metonymically signified in the ivory collections was abundantly teeming with life, it was a center and source of diverse and natural life in the Assyrian world view. Its natural habitat was imagined as more wild, more diverse and more abundant than the Assyrian heartland and therefore its bounty was reconstructed as a grand spectacle of creation--a result of the abilities of the kings--in the capital cities. The captured periphery gave birth to the bounty of the world. The textual and if we are to believe the inscriptions, tangible reconstruction of North Syria therefore served a dual purpose in Neo-Assyrian ideology: it was at once an object of "desire and derision."

Conclusion of Part Two

The above discussion has shown that the Assyrian kings frequently depicted their encounters with animals in their texts. These encounters took the form of the hunting, capturing, and breeding of wild animals. The majority of the encounters took place in the lands to the west of Assyria, and especially in North Syria which was constructed in the texts as a clearinghouse for animal diversity. These tamed animals were brought back to the capital cities for display. In the reign of Aššurnasirpal II, the animals were displayed in cages. I argued that the acquisitional and creational identities of the kings were

therefore constructed in the textual discussion of the royal breeding programs. This constructed link to the creational abilities of the king was most emphatically exemplified in both the structure and activities described in Aššur-bēl-kala's Broken Obelisk inscription but was a consistent tradition in the historical texts from before and after his reign.

The creation of this faunal landscape in the heartland was the animal equivalent of the *kirimahhu* which we have suggested above were recreations of the botanical landscape of North Syria. Sennacherib was the only king to precisely locate and name an *ambassu*, or royal game preserve, in which wild animals were captured and prepared for the hunt within an urban enclosure. The treatment of the royal hunt in the texts indicate that, whether on the riverbanks of North Syria or within the urban *ambassu*, this activity symbolized the kings' ability to control chaos and the forces of nature. Aššurbanipal's treatment of the lions in his texts as formidable equals demonstrated simultaneously the Assyrian celebration and control of the chaotic wildlife of the outside world.

Finally, I argued in this section that the Assyrians created zoological gardens, comparable in some ways to modern institutions. These zoological gardens must be seen as manifestations of the imperial desire to acquire and control the natural world through its capture and naming. The creation of zoos was as an attempt to "create" the natural world in an ordered and imperially desirable manner. Hence, the zoos of the modern world and in Assyria were ideological attestations to the creational abilities of the imperial powers. By the time of Aššurbanipal, these zoos signified both the positive aspects of the colonial periphery, i.e. its abundance and diversity, while at the same time,

they served as tangible reminders of the chaotic outside world which was brought into the ordered center. They were constructed as sites which dualistically imagined and constructed the periphery as an object of “desire and derision”.

Chapter Five: The Neo-Assyrian Imagining of North Syria

Part Three: Images of the North Syrian Landscape in Neo-Assyrian Art

Introduction

The Assyrian imagining and reconstruction of North Syria can also be traced in the images which depict that landscape. The task of this section is to fill out the information learned from the texts discussed above which construct North Syria as a site of floral and faunal diversity with an analysis of these images. Our discussion will be diachronic, again following the assumption that the image of the North Syrian landscape in Neo-Assyrian reliefs was both a consistent phenomenon and a complex, changing entity throughout the Neo-Assyrian period. Whereas in the texts, the floral and faunal landscapes of North Syria were alluded to in separate passages, in the images they were often shown in conjunction with each other. Therefore, this discussion will treat the images of the floral and faunal elements together as we proceed through the Neo-Assyrian period.

The central problem with the identification of landscapes in these narratives is to identify where the action took place. Occasionally, the Assyrian monuments included short captions, or epigraphs, in the field of the relief or just above.⁶⁶³ In the absence of

⁶⁶³Epigraphs were not used on the reliefs before the reign of Tiglath-pileser III. They do however appear on the Bronze Gates from both Aššurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III's reign.

For publication of these inscriptions, see Grayson, RIMA2 and 3 *passim*. For the function of epigraphs on the Assyrian reliefs, see: Reade, 1981, pp. 153-4; Gerardi, 1988; and Russell, 1991, pp. 21 ff.

epigraphs on the reliefs which specifically identify the locale beneath them, scholars have used the dress and accoutrements of the foreigners depicted to locate the events in the reliefs.⁶⁶⁴ In addition, isolated landscape elements, such as pine or palm trees have been used to identify the location of a particular event.⁶⁶⁵ It is with this method in mind that I have attempted in the following pages to describe the Assyrian image of the North Syrian landscape as constructed in the Assyrian reliefs and gates. In general, Mount Amanus was not identified as a distinct entity by the epigraphs in the Assyrian reliefs. However, this lack of pictorial reference to the landscape of Mount Amanus which was so clearly evoked in the texts does not prevent us from drawing a full picture of the Assyrian imagining of the entire North Syrian region.

Neo-Assyrian Treatment of Landscape

Before entering into a discussion of the Assyrian depiction of the North Syrian landscape, I would like to reiterate from chapter one that the Assyrian “depiction” of the North Syrian landscape was itself a reconstructive imagining. While the landscape of North Syria may indeed have resembled that shown by the Assyrians in their images, the degree of mimesis to the “real” North Syria is less important to our discussion than the image which emerges as represented by the Assyrian royal apparatus. The view taken here is based firmly in semiotics and sees the depiction of nature in Assyrian art less as an

⁶⁶⁴For a general discussion of the species of flora on the reliefs, see Bleibtreu, 1980. On the identification of foreign people according to their dress and other accoutrements such as hairstyle, see Wäfler, 1975.

⁶⁶⁵See: Winter, 1981a, p. 15; Russell, 1991, p. 155; and Marcus, 1995b, p. 199.

urge to mimesis than as a culturally-conditioned product created from societal imaginings.⁶⁶⁶

Many scholars have commented that the depiction of landscape in the Neo-Assyrian period was minimal in the early periods of the empire and became more detailed and complex towards the end, especially in the reign of Sennacherib.⁶⁶⁷ This lack of landscape details in the earlier reigns might have been due to the composition and size of the reliefs. In the reigns of Aššurnasirpal II through Tiglath-pileser III, the narratives occurred in either single, life-sized registers, double registers separated by inscriptions, or miniature bands on gates. Figures occupied the entire height of the registers and landscape elements were placed in isolated and discrete blocks of space interspersed between, above, or below these figures and cities. In order to represent recession into space, the figures while landscape either overlapped each other or were stacked above one another with the upper figures left “floating” or unanchored to the lower ground line. Russell has argued that the effect of this placement of the figures and landscape elements was to present the viewer with a “worm’s eye” view, tied to a single ground line, which gave precedence to the foreground and those elements which rested properly on the

⁶⁶⁶This view is in general contra to Gombrich (1980), who sees all artworks as attempts to mimic with the forms and conventions of a specific time and place, the authentic, natural landscape. For a discussion of Gombrich’s view of art history, see also Moxey, 1994, pp. 30-31.

⁶⁶⁷See: Reade, 1980a, p. 73; Groenewegen-Frankfort, 1972, p. 176; and Russell, 1991, p. 192. “The Landscape in Assyrian Art and Ideology” was the subject of a session at the 44th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, 1997, but the papers from that session have not yet been published as of this writing.

ground line.⁶⁶⁸ This spatial arrangement therefore did not allow the field behind the figures of the narrative to be represented in full.

In the reign of Sargon II, the use of a single register which spanned the entire height of the stone blocks and the lack of adherence to a single ground line in the front of the composition allowed an expanded field of vision. This new configuration is best exemplified in Sargon's "seascape" relief from Court VI of his palace at Khorsabad (Figure 38).⁶⁶⁹ In addition to dispensing with the rigid lower ground line of previous reigns, Sargon II's artists experimented with both the treatment of landscape within the larger register and the size and placement of figures within the composition. In Sargon's seascape, the ground line was raised and the figures appeared stacked above each other, yet they did not appear to float as in previous reigns. Sargon's artists played with scale by showing the figures as consistently smaller than their background, which presented a "bird's eye view" to the observer who looked "down" at the scene from on high. The movement of the ground line and reduction in the scale of the figures essentially freed up more space for the depiction of isolated landscape elements such as trees and animals. In addition, the expanded field of the seascape was filled in with an overall pattern of spirals representing ocean waves which further anchored the figures into their background. This treatment of the landscape elements (later scales were used to represent mountain peaks in a similar manner to the watery spirals) did not interfere with the events of the narrative

⁶⁶⁸Russell, 1991, pp. 193-5.

⁶⁶⁹Albenda, 1986, pl. 23. Parpola has argued that this scene in fact took place in a wide river and not a sea. (1995, p. 74, fn 78)

by obscuring the actors. Nor did the landscape elements break the narrative as floating blocks scattered randomly between figures as in earlier reigns. In addition, the spirals served as a watery background for the figures to properly situate them in the appropriate and specific landscape of the narrative events. Thus, the overall landscape patterns and treatment of space and scale at the same time united the figures in one spatial perspective and allowed for increased attention to geographic specificity.

In Sennacherib's reign, the new freedom with ground line and the size of the figures essentially created a deeper focus on representing the landscapes accurately by experimenting with perspective. The result of this new focus and freedom was a high amount of detail in the representations of landscapes.⁶⁷⁰ There are several more innovations regarding these two concepts, the treatment of space and the depiction of detail in the landscapes, which occurred in the reigns of Sennacherib, and to some extent his grandson Aššurbanipal.⁶⁷¹ However, the *amount* of detail included in the landscapes did not change significantly from Sennacherib's reign on. Thus we gain no more information about landscape elements in the reign of Aššurbanipal than we did in the reign of Sennacherib. Nevertheless, this added detail in the latter half of the empire contributes perhaps the most to an understanding of the image of the North Syrian landscape.

In the above general discussion, I have included references to mountainous and

⁶⁷⁰Russell, 1991, p. 209.

⁶⁷¹On this, see Groenewegen-Frankfort, 1972, pp. 174-8 and Russell, 1991, pp. 129-35.

watery landscapes. The term “landscape elements” has therefore referred to architectural features such as buildings and cities, and geological features such as bodies of water and mountains. Because I am interested in the recreation of the floral and faunal landscape in the heartland of Assyria, my discussion of landscape from here on will be limited to the treatment of vegetative and animal elements in the reliefs, with less attention to geological elements. My focus is limited to the *portable* landscape of North Syria--those elements which could conceivably have been moved and easily recreated in the Assyrian heartland.

Aššurnasirpal II

In the reign of Aššurnasirpal II, the floral landscape of North Syria was depicted rarely on the large scale stone reliefs from Nimrud and somewhat more frequently on the miniature bronze gates from Balawat. There are an abundance of images which show the diversity of plant life that was an imagined characteristic of the North Syrian landscape. Plants or trees appear as isolated single entities sometimes haphazardly or randomly placed in the compositions. In general, the trees in Aššurnasirpal's reliefs are subordinate to the action, they bend and are trampled under the feet of the soldiers, yet they are not generic representations of trees. Aššurnasirpal's artists depicted a variety of species of trees and plants encountered in North Syria and other western regions by showing four clearly different types of trees in the reliefs from his Northwest Palace at Nimrud, including room B, the main throne room (with prefix B) and several rooms in the West

Wing (with prefix WFL), perhaps a secondary reception suite.⁶⁷² These species include: baobobs and date palms (Panel B17a, Figure 39); conifers with pockmarked trunks (Panel WFL 15, Figure 40);⁶⁷³ and tall fruit trees with rounded fruits (Panel B4-3a, Figures 41, 42). The reliefs also show two varieties of vines or shrubs (Figures 41, 42; and Panel WFL 20-21b, Figure 43).⁶⁷⁴ These trees are compositionally subordinate, but the detail and specificity which they add to the scene demonstrate an Assyrian interest in the western landscape. They were observed in all their variety as different and therein lies their significance for this discussion. We will see that this interest in depicting the diversity of plants from North Syria continued in subsequent reigns.⁶⁷⁵

In Aššurnasirpal II's bronze gates, there is even more incorporation of specific

⁶⁷²The relative positions of these reliefs in the Northwest Palace have been reconstructed by Meuszynski for the throne room B (1981), and Paley and Sobolewski for the West Wing, WFL (1987). The positions and numbers of the slabs given by the above three authors will be used here. The locations of the events in Aššurnasirpal's monumental art are often difficult to identify due to a lack of accompanying epigraphs. Winter has argued that panels B17a-b from the throne room represent events occurring near Carchemish. She has also suggested that B4-3a show events occurring near the North Syrian city of Damdammusa. (1983b, p. 22) In addition, Cifarelli has argued that panels WFL 15 and WFL 20-21b from the West Wing represent events occurring in the region west of Assyria, perhaps North Syria. (1995, pp. 273-80)

⁶⁷³For the identification of these trees with pockmarked trunks as conifers, see Bleibtreu, 1980, p. 31.

⁶⁷⁴It is clear that the vines with lobed leaves on B4-3a and WFL 20-21b are grapevines. For the identification of the vines without lobes from WFL 20-21b as grapevines, see Albenda, 1974, p. 6.

⁶⁷⁵Bleibtreu has also noted a variety of different species of trees on the tiny incised compositions which can be found on the embroidered robes of the king from various rooms in his palace. The plants on these small compositions include conifers and reeds. See Bleibtreu, 1980, p. 33-5 and Canby, 1971, p. 31.

landscape elements into the narrative compositions.⁶⁷⁶ In general, Cifarelli notes that attention to architectural vistas is heightened in his gate compositions. For example, on one band⁶⁷⁷ of the Mamu Temple Gates, the king is seen receiving tribute before a city with crenellations, identified in the epigraph as Balawat itself.⁶⁷⁸ Most significantly, Cifarelli notes that four panels from the Palace Gates, which she has ordered L3, R3, L8 and R8, depict the king's hunting exploits.⁶⁷⁹ Conveniently, these scenes have epigraphs locating the venue of the hunt and this contrasts sharply with the scenes of the hunt which occur in relief in Room B of the Northwest Palace at Nimrud.⁶⁸⁰ The epigraphs indicate that the hunts took place either "by the River Euphrates", presumably the Middle or Upper Euphrates where the king's annals record the hunt, or "by the River Balikh" in

⁶⁷⁶Cifarelli, 1995, p. 273.

⁶⁷⁷J. Oates, 1983, fig. 4.

⁶⁷⁸Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.96-7. For a description, see Cifarelli, 1995, p. 418.

⁶⁷⁹A full publication of Aššurnasirpal II's Balawat gates is being readied by the staff of the British Museum as of this writing. Partial drawings of these bands of the gate have been published in two different articles by Barnett: BM 124697 and BM 124698 in 1973, after p. 22 and BM124699 and BM124700 in 1974, pl. VI. In April, 1998, Keepers John Curtis and Christopher Walker of the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities kindly allowed me a chance to view and roughly sketch the complete drawings and photographs of these four bands. I will thus describe verbally the segments of the bands which have not yet been fully published either in photographs or drawings.

⁶⁸⁰I have not included a discussion of the lion hunts from Aššurnasirpal II's throne room because they show no landscape elements. We can presume from his inscriptions and the Balawat gates that they would have occurred in the region of North Syria or the Middle Euphrates, but there is no internal evidence from the reliefs themselves to suggest this.

North Syria.⁶⁸¹ Cifarelli infers that these hunting scenes are some of the most prolifically “landscaped” of Aššurnasirpal’s reign--meaning their inclusion of the details of the vegetal landscape of the hunts is abundant in comparison to other hunting images or other scenes on the bronze gates.⁶⁸² In the bands, the king pursues wild lions and bulls both on foot and from his chariot through riverside landscapes. In all four of the bronze gates, distinct varieties of vegetation may be seen which were clearly associated with the royal hunts by the side of rivers in North Syria. Specifically, there are three different species of plants depicted, though the precise species of the plants are not easy to identify.⁶⁸³ The images on the hunting bands show a long, arching cattail-like plant growing beside the river (Figure 44), a taller, gangly baobob-like tree (Figure 45), and a short, spiked riverside plant (Figure 46). The variety and attention to detail displayed on these hunting bands from the Aššurnasirpal’s gates at Balawat fill out the information which is lacking in the hunting reliefs from his throne room at Nimrud. They indicate that the royal hunt took place in an environment in North Syria which had a variety of riverside vegetation, and distinctly recognizable trees. The natural behavior of the lions and bulls within this marshy environment is also shown as the animals dash in and out of the tall plants in

⁶⁸¹BM 124699, R3: lion hunt on the River Balikh (RIMA2, A.0.101.94); BM 124698, L3: lion hunt on the River Balikh, (RIMA2, A.0.101.93); BM 124700, R8, bull hunt on the River Euphrates (RIMA2, A.0.101.95). Grayson translates the sumerograms *GU₄.AM.MEŠ* as “wild oxen”.

⁶⁸²1995, p. 273.

⁶⁸³Bleibtreu does not comment on the identification of plants in these gates. Their compositions resemble most closely the miniature hunts seen on the embroidered robes of Aššurnasirpal in reliefs from his palace.

order to hide from the king, only to be surprised by his ambush.

Like the geographic locations named in the annalistic accounts of the hunt, the inclusion of landscape elements in the visual depictions of the hunt on Aššurnasirpal's bronze gates suggest that the hunts had to be *properly situated* in a natural western or North Syrian venue. In addition, the depiction of the animals' actions during the hunt were keenly observed on the gates and demonstrate an Assyrian interest in the behaviors of wild animals within their natural habitats. I would argue that this correlation between the texts and images along with the extreme attention to the details of the natural landscape in the images demonstrate that there was a deliberate and heightened Assyrian focus on the pictorial recreation of the North Syrian landscape.

Clearly, Aššurnasirpal's depictions represent at the most a direct observation and at the least a consideration of how wild animals reacted in their natural western environment. But what of tame animals--was there also an interest in Aššurnasirpal's reign in depicting images of tame animals acquired from the west? We know from Aššurnasirpal's inscriptions that he did receive tame animals as tribute from western entities. In particular, he received "a large female monkey" from Unqi.⁶⁸⁴ He also bragged that he formed herds of male and female apes and displayed them in Nimrud.⁶⁸⁵ Indeed, images on monumental reliefs as well as the bronze gates from his reign depict the receipt of live animals as tribute from western entities. The most prevalent example

⁶⁸⁴Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.1, iii 48b-50.

⁶⁸⁵Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.2, 31-8.

of this *topos*, the collection of tame animals as tribute, comes from a courtyard wall outside of Aššurnasirpal II's throne room, Court D of the Northwest Palace at Nimrud. On the single register, large-scale reliefs, a group of tributaries wearing garments associated in his bronze gates with cities in North Syria, advance to the left towards the waiting king (Figure 47).⁶⁸⁶ A small monkey sits on the shoulders of one of the western tributaries while another monkey is tied to a leash held in the tributary's hand.⁶⁸⁷

The connection between the texts describing the receipt of primates from North Syria and the depiction of those animals in Court D can be easily drawn. Clearly both the images and texts were attesting to two important and crucial messages: 1) these exotic creatures were acquired from the tributary states of North Syria and 2) they were brought by the king and/or received by the king and placed on display in his city of Nimrud. The images themselves may have even served as the "display" of the animals, standing in for the exotic monkeys like the sculptures adorning the palace entrances, as statue zoos.

Shalmaneser III

There are many instances on the bronze gates of Shalmaneser III from Balawat which depict the floral landscapes of enemy territories. In general, the expense of bronze, the construction of the gates, and the physical characteristics of the flattened bronze

⁶⁸⁶Budge, 1914, pl. 28. The figures wear up-turned boots, fringed garments and turbans, specifically identified with the inhabitants of Hatti on the bronze gates from Balawat. On this, see Cifarelli, 1995, p. 282.

⁶⁸⁷Other live animals were received by Aššurnasirpal as tribute. On the Bronze gates from the Mamu temple at Balawat, panels ML4 and 5 depict tributaries from a seaside or riverside city carrying "seabirds" to the king and his retinue. (Cifarelli, 1995, p. 415)

sheets dictated that the images be relegated to narrow registers. Thus, there was little room for extensive development of landscape in the narratives. Yet there are scenes on the gates which include a great deal of geographic detail. As a consequence of the abundance of these images, there are several species of trees represented in the region of North Syria. The identification of the location of the narratives in the gates is relatively simple in comparison to the reliefs of Aššurnasirpal II for many epigraphs accompanied the scenes on the gates.

As in the reign of his father, Shalmaneser's gates show Assyrian soldiers traipsing through forested areas in which the local species of trees were depicted. Beside the city of Carchemish, short, spiky reeds grow beside a river (Figure 48).⁶⁸⁸ The spiky reeds near Carchemish contrast sharply with the vegetation near Qarqar shown as a series of neatly aligned trees with tall trunks, radial branches, and rounded fruits (Figure 49). Near Hamath, the Assyrian soldiers trample over a bedraggled low, scrubby tree or plant with serpentine branches growing by a river (Figure 50).⁶⁸⁹ Finally, near the North Syrian city of Bit-Adini,⁶⁹⁰ tall trees with branches that terminate in short spikes or leaves are depicted (Figure 51).⁶⁹¹ In sum, a total of four distinct varieties of vegetation are

⁶⁸⁸King, 1915, pl. XXXVI. For the identification of these plants as reeds, see Bleibtreu, 1980, p. 75.

⁶⁸⁹King, 1915, Bd. XIII, 4-6, pl. LXXV. Bleibtreu does not identify the species of plant. (1980, p. 74)

⁶⁹⁰Identified as such by Marcus, 1987, p. 80.

⁶⁹¹Unger, 1920, tf. 2, de Clerq 15-16 (Constantinople). There is some dispute as to the location of this scene, which is missing its epigraph. While Reade identifies this locale as southern (1979b, p. 71), Marcus suggests this is Bit-Adini (1987, p. 79) based

represented as part of the North Syrian landscape. This attribution of vegetal diversity to North Syria suggests that the Assyrians envisioned this region as bursting with an abundance and variety of life.

There are also instances in Shalmaneser's gates which depict the activities of animals in the wild. One scene on Band V6 depicts the siege of Unqi in North Syria which is located on an island in a river, presumably the Euphrates (Figure 52). While a boat of foreigners plies the river in escape, three wild birds fly overhead. The motif of wild birds flying away from their roosts which were located near a besieged or abandoned enemy city can be seen as a symbol of defeat. Furthermore, the motif of the flying birds serves to reconstruct the *entire* landscape of North Syria, including the faunal landscape, and is similar to the hunting scenes with vegetation encountered in Aššurnasirpal's bronze gates from Balawat

The interest in Shalmaneser's reign in depicting wild animals in their natural habitat is not limited to the bronze gates. The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III depicts many live animals (Figure 23). The animals are represented as either captured and brought as tribute or as attacking one another in the wild. The obelisk shows the receipt of horses and two-humped camels from Gilzanu, as identified in the epigraph. The images also depict the receipt of two-humped camels, a river-ox (water buffalo?), a rhinoceros, a *sissu*-antelope, female elephants (of which only one is depicted), female

on correspondence with Shalmaneser's annals.

monkeys and apes from the land of Mušri, or Egypt.⁶⁹² In her discussion of the animals on the Black Obelisk, Brigitte Lion has suggested that the animals from Mušri were curiosities or exotica because they were rare and had no utilitarian or labor value.⁶⁹³

The land of Mušri must have been considered by this point in the period as an exotic locale, a distant place which few Assyrians from the heartland would have visited. I would suggest here that these images would have played an important role in demonstrating the royal collection of faunal exotica. The existence of the images on the obelisk alone asserted that foreign and exotic animals were collected by Shalmaneser III. Coupled with the fact that the obelisk was probably set up in a very public courtyard, as were most obelisks, than the *public* nature of the collection of these animals is intended through the relief depictions.⁶⁹⁴ These images also support the implication in the texts that the king was the breeder or creator of herds of wild animals. In most cases, a single specimen of each species is represented on the obelisks: a “river-ox”, a

⁶⁹²The epigraph mentioning Mušri above the register is published in Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.89. As mentioned above in chapter three, part three, the identification of Mušri is problematic, and the term could refer to Egypt, Cappadocia, or the area to the Northwest of Assyria near Gilzanu. While Grayson and Reade identify Mušri with Egypt, Marcus identifies it with the area near Gilzanu. (Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.89; Reade, 1979b, p. 72; Marcus, 1987, p. 80) Lacking a firm geographical placement for Mušri in the texts, there are other means with which the general location of Mušri may be identified. According to the inscriptions monkeys were only received in Assyria as tribute from western lands including the Phoenician coast, North Syria, and Egypt, and not from Cappadocia or Gilzanu. (See Dunham, 1985, p. 239) This piece of evidence alone contributes to a solid identification for Mušri as Egypt.

⁶⁹³Lion, 1992, p. esp. 360 in reference the Black Obelisk.

⁶⁹⁴For more on the placement of obelisks, see the discussion in above, chapter three, part three.

rhinoceros/unicorn, an antelope-like creature, and an elephant. However, there are two specimens each of the apes on IIIId, the monkeys on IIIc and the camels on IIIa. I suggest that when two specimens are shown, that the two animals represented the male and female of the species.⁶⁹⁵ The paired animals on the Black Obelisk may have been subtly attesting to the breeding programs of the king and therefore they were symbolic of his creational abilities. In fact, the images on the ivories from North Syria may also have contributed to this sense that North Syria was a prolific place. Many of the images depict fat, virile bulls with prominent genitalia (for example, Figure 67) and gentle cows suckling their newborn calves (Figure 68). The images on these portable pieces could have evoked the sense of abundance attributed to their North Syrian origins.

Furthermore, the identification of Egypt as the Mušri of band III has direct bearing on an understanding of a scene on the obelisk which shows animals in their natural habitat. There is an animal combat scene located in the fourth register of the obelisk which has no epigraph identifying its location. The position of the scene within the obelisk registers suggests that the animal combat could have taken place either within the land of North Syria or upon return from a campaign to North Syria on the Middle Euphrates.⁶⁹⁶ The combat between lions and deer occurs in a forested and mountainous

⁶⁹⁵This would correlate with references in Shalmaneser III's annals to gendered "female monkeys and apes", for example, see Grayson, RIMA3, A.0.102.90.

⁶⁹⁶In this same register, which is located just below the Mušri band, is shown the receipt of tribute from Suhi on the middle Euphrates. I would agree with Marcus (1987, p. 88) that this combat scene, like all others in the obelisk, was purposefully placed according to principles of geographic order and therefore occurred in the precise geographic order in which it is represented. The combat could have been witnessed by

environment as indicated by the trees⁶⁹⁷ and the scales. This scene of animals in combat in western landscapes is significant for it demonstrates that the area was envisioned pictorially as a site of encounters with diverse species of wild animals. Conversely, it was necessary once again to properly situate a North Syrian scene in a North Syrian environment.

To summarize, the animal combat scene on the Black Obelisk essentially reconstructed the *entire* North Syrian landscape, coupling the vegetation of the region with its wild fauna. North Syria was imagined by Shalmaneser III's royal apparatus as a site where the chaotic forces of nature ran wild and went unchecked if not attended to, symbolized by the ferocity of the lion's attack and the swift movement of the animals' splayed legs in the combat scene. The predatorial lions from Shalmaneser's Black Obelisk combat scene were the pictorial successors of the savage beasts hunted by Aššurnasirpal II in the reliefs from his palace at Nimrud and in his bronze gates from Balawat. This depiction may have symbolized the chaotic unknown of North Syria, an unknown which was both wildly natural and at the same time unquestionably controlled by the king who witnessed the combat yet managed to bring the chaos between the lines

the king in any of three actual locales: either the scene took place "within the register," that is near Suhi itself on the Middle Euphrates; between Suhi and the city of tribute on the bottom (fifth) register which is identified in the epigraph as the city of Unqi in North Syria, or between Suhi and the city of tribute on the third register, Mušri, probably Egypt.

⁶⁹⁷The trees are unknown from the Balawat gates of Shalmaneser, with tall trunks and radial branches festooned with many leaves. They resemble neither the fruit trees, palm trees, nor various river plants from the images in the bronze gates. Bleibtreu has concluded that they are palm trees (1980, p. 74), but I do not necessarily concur because their leaves are so different from other palm trees on Shalmaneser's gates.

of the register; therefore, “under control.” Again, if we turn to the ivories taken from North Syria, we find that they are rife with images of animals combats (see, for example, Figure 7). Many ivories from the wells in the Northwest Palace in particular exhibit scenes which give a chaotic sense of nature run wild which must have evoked the entire landscape of North Syria for the Assyrians in the heartland.

Tiglath-pileser III

Elements of landscape in the reliefs from the Central Palace of Tiglath-pileser III at Nimrud are less abundant than in earlier reigns.⁶⁹⁸ In general, his reliefs demonstrate a similar use of trees—they are usually depicted as single specimens randomly filling the space of the narratives between figures or architectural facades. There is a general lack of reference to the North Syrian landscape; rather the landscape of Phoenicia seems to hold more interest for the Assyrian artists.⁶⁹⁹ However, the paintings from Til Barsip unmistakably record events occurring near the palace itself, which is situated not in the Assyrian heartland but within North Syria proper. The paintings from rooms XXII and

⁶⁹⁸For a general discussion of the reliefs in this palace, see above, chapter three, part three.

⁶⁹⁹In one case, two different types of trees, a palm tree and two specimens of a single species of tree with vertical branches, perhaps pine trees, grow atop the walls of a Phoenician city. (Barnett and Faulkner, 1962, pl. LVII) The placement of the city by a sea and the use of distinct boats allow this city to be identified as Phoenician. For the identification of the pine trees, see Bleibtreu, 1980, p. 89. Beneath the walls of the city, the waters of the sea are teeming with life, including several fish, two sea turtles, two creatures with flippers and long tails (whale, shark or dolphin?), some sea birds and a long sea snake or eel. The diversity of sea life in this scene demonstrates an interest in the Mediterranean and its varied and abundant species.

XXIV show the king on horseback and chariot hunting lions (Figure 53).⁷⁰⁰ It is reasonable to assume that such lion hunts would have occurred just outside of the palace doors.⁷⁰¹ The effect of this display in the paintings is equivalent to the display of the landscape elements and lion hunts in the monuments back at the heartland. The landscape was physically brought inside and symbolically brought under control by the Assyrian king.

The theme of the control of the North Syrian landscape is reiterated in Tiglath-pileser III's paintings in another room, XXIVgh (Figure 54).⁷⁰² As the king awaits an audience of western tributaries in their characteristically colorful dress, a lion sits patiently at his feet. At first glance, the lion appears to be dead;⁷⁰³ however, on second glance, the lion clearly is alive as his head is lifted, his eyes are alert and his mouth is open. I suggest that this is the first instance in the visual repertoire of Neo-Assyrian art in which a tame lion was represented. The image of this tame lion was perhaps a fanciful and false *representation*, but nevertheless stands as a symbol of the king's ability to tame

⁷⁰⁰Thureau-Dangin and Dunand, 1936, pl LI, panels XXIIa-f., XXVIIc, e. Reade suggests that these lion hunts may date to the reign of Esarhaddon. (1979b, p. 95)

⁷⁰¹There are no texts from Tiglath-pileser III's reign which discuss lion hunts nor are there any elements of the North Syrian vegetal landscape displayed in the lion hunt paintings at Til Barsip. However, hunts from previous reigns occurred exactly in this region, where the palace itself is located, and we may therefore assume the painted hunts occurred in a North Syrian venue.

⁷⁰²Thureau-Dangin and Dunand, 1936, pl. L.

⁷⁰³The feature of a dead lion at the feet of the king is a motif seen in Aššurnasirpal II's throne room in celebration after the lion hunt. For example, see Meuszynski, 1981, B19b, tf. 1.

the chaos of nature, in this case the natural fauna of the North Syrian landscape which lay just outside the palace doors at Til Barsip.⁷⁰⁴

Before Sargon II

Thus far, the reconstruction of the diverse and varied North Syrian faunal and floral landscape has been effected through the display of its landscape *in situ*, in other words, as observed while on campaign in that region. The three principal *topoi* of this phenomenon include the diverse floral landscape through the depiction of a variety of North Syrian vegetation, the depiction of North Syrian wild animals in their natural habitat, and the depiction of the receipt of exotic animal tribute from North Syrian or points further west. In these earlier reigns, the images alone constructed the North Syrian landscape in the heartland within the reliefs. Yet the landscapes themselves remained *in situ*, placed within narratives which took place in North Syria. However, from the reign of Sargon II on, there are images which represent the tangible reconstruction of the North Syrian landscape *ex situ*, that is within the Assyrian capital cities. These images correspond to the textual descriptions of the *kirimahhu* and the *ambassu*. Ultimately, the images of the royal gardens and game parks in the cities were redundant. They were “displays of the display” of the transplanted North Syrian floral and faunal landscape.

Sargon II

In the inscriptions from the reign of Sargon II, the term *kirimahhu* was used for the first time to describe the royal gardens at Khorsabad. Pictorially as well, for the first

⁷⁰⁴This characteristic of the Til Barsip paintings has also been discussed by Barnett. (1974, p. 443)

time in the Neo-Assyrian reliefs, it appears that the *kirimahhu* was depicted as a specific entity built within the Assyrian heartland. This depiction occurs on the lower register of the double-registered orthostats in room 7 (Figure 55a).⁷⁰⁵ This room, which looks out towards the back of the palace at Khorsabad, is decorated with images depicting a hare and fowl hunt in a forested landscape. The venue of the hunt is not specifically labeled, but it is likely that the events in room 7 were meant to take place in the Assyrian heartland.⁷⁰⁶ Several species of birds are shown either flying away as the king's retinue approaches or resting within the landscape. The vegetal landscape of the hunts is full of conifers, most likely cedar or cypress trees, arranged neatly in rows.⁷⁰⁷ In addition, the landscape contains a long stemmed plant surmounted by a rosette-like flower resembling a poppy or sunflower.⁷⁰⁸ This dense pine-and-poppy landscape was foreign to Assyria, but we know from Sargon's inscriptions and letters that by this time, live saplings were transported whole scale and re-grown in Khorsabad.⁷⁰⁹ Therefore, it is entirely possible

⁷⁰⁵ Albenda, 1986, pl. 89-90.

⁷⁰⁶ The reasons for this are not entirely clear but the generally peaceful nature of the narrative suggests that the scene is relating domestic events. (Reade, 1979b, p. 83 on the peaceful nature of the reliefs from room 7) The upper register depicts a banquet attended by many Assyrians, thus it is possible that the banquet was held in the Assyrian palace, perhaps in that very room 7, in anticipation or celebration of the hunt depicted below. (Reade, 1979a, p. 30)

⁷⁰⁷ Bleibtreu, 1980, p. 106.

⁷⁰⁸ Bleibtreu has argued that this element represents a shooting target, not a flower. (1980, p. 104) However, I argue it resembles petalled flowers which grow in a garden on a later relief from room E of the North Palace of Aššurbanipal that will be discussed below.

⁷⁰⁹ See above in this chapter.

that this hunt occurred in Assyria proper and not in North Syria where the conifers grew naturally.

This suggestion is further reinforced when the images on slabs 12-13 in the narrative are considered. The Assyrian king and his foot soldiers approach from the left a small body of water, perhaps a pond or a stream. In the center of the pond sits a building on a platform fronted by two columns with curved capitals and topped with crenellations. Above, in this case representing behind the structure, grow three plants with alternating clumps and spade-shaped leaves which have been identified as pear trees due to their S-shaped branches.⁷¹⁰ To the right of the structure, a hill arises and is covered neatly with rows of conifer. On the slopes of the hill three different birds walk amidst the trees (Figure 55b).⁷¹¹ The slopes of the hill ascend to a pinnacle on which sits another architectural structure, a solid building lacking a portico with a square base and crenellated top.⁷¹²

Winter has suggested that the composition in slabs 12-13 corresponds to Sargon's description of his *kirimahhu* which contained all the trees of Hatti. Hence, the

⁷¹⁰Bleibtreu, 1980, p. 101.

⁷¹¹I would argue that the birds represent three different species, and in keeping with prior tradition, their diverse behaviors are exemplified in a natural habitat. The bird on the left is squat and has small wings, perhaps a duck or other sea bird, and walks down the hill. The bird in the center has larger wings, and walks up the hill. And finally the bird on the right which also continues up the hill is the smallest, walks more upright than the other two, has a shorter neck and small wings.

⁷¹²Reade has suggested that this structure is an open-air stela. (1979b, p. 83)

porticoed building in the lake represents a *bit-hilani*.⁷¹³ This architectural structure was first described in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III, which declare that he constructed at Nimrud a “*bit-hilani* modeled after a palace of the land of Hatti” which he built for his “pleasure”.⁷¹⁴ A tabulation of references to the *bit-hilani*s in Appendix Five demonstrates that each king from Tiglath-pileser III to Aššurbanipal, with the exception of Esarhaddon, referred in some manner to a *bit-hilani* which was constructed in the capitals of Assyria. We have argued in chapter two that the incorporation of these structures into the Assyrian palaces reflects a definitive appreciation of foreign workmanship. Now we are able to elucidate the precise context in which the Assyrian appreciation of the *bit-hilani* was situated: the images which depict the *bit-hilani*s suggest that they were borrowed because they served in the reconstruction of the *entire* North Syrian landscape.

With this suggestion in mind, it is necessary to ascertain how a *bit-hilani* might be identified pictorially. According to the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, the term *bit-hilani* refers to “a room or section of a palace provided with a portico, or the portico itself”.⁷¹⁵ Both the term and structure seem to have been borrowed from the Hittites. There have been several attempts to identify *bit-hilani*s in the architectural record.⁷¹⁶ Winter has

⁷¹³1982, p. 362.

⁷¹⁴*bit-hilani tamšil ekal-KUR.Hatti ana multa 'uti-ia ina qirib URU.Kalhi epuš.* Tadmor, 1994, Summ. 7, 18'.

⁷¹⁵ *hilanum*, CAD H, p. 184. There is extensive literature on the term *hilani* and its origins. For further discussion, see: Weidhaas, 1939; Meissner and Opitz, 1939; Frankfort, 1952; and Renger, “Hilani, bit” in *RIA* Bd. 4, pp. 406-8.

⁷¹⁶Winter, 1982, p. 363.

argued that the *bit-hilani* was not imported wholesale and unchanged in Assyria. If this were the case, it would represent a free-standing complex of rooms, and not a single portico or section of a palace.⁷¹⁷ Rather, the free-standing North Syrian structure was translated into an Assyrian idiom and the *bit-hilani* came to mean a portico or entrance-way with columns that was appended onto a wing of the royal palace. In the texts from Sargon's reign, the *bit-hilani* was always described as either "in" or "before" the doors of the palaces at Khorsabad (see Appendix Five).⁷¹⁸ If we assume that the *bit-hilani* actually stood before the doors of the palaces and not within them, which is the more common preposition used in the texts, then the *bit-hilani*s need not have been wings of the palaces. They could have stood adjacent to them or at a distance from them, but in some way they were reached "before" the doors were reached. Thus the preferred use of the preposition *mehret* in Sargon's texts could describe the placement of a free-standing building in the North Syrian architectural style, such as depicted in the relief from room 7.⁷¹⁹

There is another connection between the North Syrian architectural structure called the *bit-hilani* by the Assyrians, and the hunt within a wooded landscape from

⁷¹⁷Frankfort describes the Syrian *bit-hilani* as "a self-contained structure incapable of extension...Each *bit-hilani* retains its clear cut-plan and is not absorbed or even modified by the architectural complex of which it forms part." (1952, pp. 121-3 and Winter, 1982, p. 358)

⁷¹⁸The central difference in the phrases involves the choice of prepositions. Sargon's scribes used *ina*, meaning "in" the doors of the palace only once to describe the location of the *bit-hilani*, otherwise, the structure is located *mihret* or "before" the doors. For the translation of *mihret*, see *mahrûm*, CAD M/1, p. 107.

⁷¹⁹For further discussion of the prepositions used in phrases referring to the *bit-hilani*, see Weidhaas, 1939, pp. 133-5.

Sargon's reign. The structure on a platform labeled "Monument X" by Botta, which stands just outside of room 7 at Khorsabad may itself have been an example of a free-standing *bit-hilani*.⁷²⁰ Indeed there are two extant reliefs which may have originally come from this structure whose content informs a discussion of the function and symbolism of the *bit-hilani* in Assyria.⁷²¹ The reliefs of Monument X depict a fowl and hare hunt which takes place in a wooded landscape with conifer trees; the composition and subject matter are nearly identical to those in room 7 (Figure 56). I would argue that Monument X itself represented a *bit-hilani*,⁷²² and that the subject matter of its decoration, the royal hunt in a wooded landscape, was deliberately chosen in an attempt to re-situate the *bit-hilani* in its proper North Syrian *milieu*. Hence there is strong evidence for a deliberate connection in Sargon's reliefs between a porticoed structure, a wooded landscape with animals in their natural habitat, and the hunt. When we remember that these same motifs were connected in the royal inscriptions from this and previous reigns with the landscape of North Syria and the *kirimahhu*, then it is likely that the images from room 7 and Monument X depict events which occurred in an artificially constructed North Syrian landscape, namely the *kirimahhu tamšil KUR.Hamanim* at Khorsabad. Therefore, we have the first *ex situ* depiction of the reconstruction of the North Syrian floral, faunal, and possibly

⁷²⁰Albenda, 1986, pl. 84-90 and Reade, 1979a, p. 22.

⁷²¹Louvre #41: Parrot, 1961, fig. 66; British Museum: BM 118829, Smith, 1938, pl. 31 (my Figure 60) . The original location of the slabs in the general area of Monument X has been described recently in Reade, 1979b, p. 84 and Gadd, 1936, p. 162.

⁷²²For the identification of this structure as a *bit-hilani*, see Reade, 1979a, p. 22 and 1979b p. 84.

architectural landscape in the heartland.

Sennacherib

The remarkable pictorial adjacency of the royal hunt, the *kirimahhu* and the *bit-hilani* does not crop up again in the Assyrian reliefs until much later, in the reign of Aššurbanipal. However, in the intervening reign of Sennacherib, there is circumstantial evidence that the botanical and zoological aspects of the *kirimahhu* were displayed in reliefs from the Southwest Palace. In addition, there is ample evidence showing a sustained interest or imagining of the diverse floral and faunal landscape of the west, and in wild animals as they behave in their natural environment. A few generalizations about Sennacherib's treatment of the landscape of the west are necessary. In his Southwest Palace at Nineveh, the military narratives can all be related to events which occurred in Sennacherib's first three campaigns as described in his texts.⁷²³ There are other subjects within the palace which include landscape elements, most notably the transport of stone sculpture for the construction of the palace, yet the events in this series occurred in the Assyrian heartland close to Nineveh itself.⁷²⁴ Thus our discussion of landscape elements in Sennacherib's reign will be limited to the military narratives and the transport scenes.

Russell has suggested that those scenes which contained a wooded landscape "dotted with shrubs and vines" and divided by rivers may be identified with

⁷²³Russell, 1991, p. 164

⁷²⁴On this see Russell, 1991, pp. 94-116.

Sennacherib's third and only campaign to the west.⁷²⁵ In addition, those cities in the reliefs which have many balconies with shields beneath them may be located in the west. There has been a tendency to view the importance and main goal of Sennacherib's third campaign strictly in relation to the famous siege of the Biblical city of Lachish depicted on the images from room XXXVI (Figure 32).⁷²⁶ Indeed, the main action of this third campaign occurred in areas to the south of North Syria when the cities of Israel and Judah became the king's main targets. However, it is important to note that Sennacherib's third campaign, according to his texts, occurred in three distinguishable phases.⁷²⁷ Before heading to Judah, Sennacherib first marched up the Euphrates and across North Syria to subdue the kings of Hatti.⁷²⁸ Therefore, it was only after subduing Hatti that Sennacherib went to Phoenicia and then south to Judah.⁷²⁹

⁷²⁵He used details of costume, landscape and architecture in addition to the epigraphs to identify the locale of these images. (1991, p. 161) These landscapes can be found in rooms I, VIII(w), X, XII, XXIV, XXXIV, XXXVI, XXXVIII, XLI, XLVIII and LXVII and in occasional reliefs from XLIII and LXIV. (Russell, 1991, p. 164)

⁷²⁶See for example, Ussishkin, 1982.

⁷²⁷See Na'aman, 1979 and Russell, 1991, p. 160.

⁷²⁸From the latest edition of his annals on the Taylor Prism. (Luckenbill, ARAB II, # 239) For the latest translation and transliteration of this prism, see Frahm, 1997, T4, 32-55. On the first part of this campaign to Hatti, Frahm transliterates: *ina šalši gerri-ia ana KUR.Hatti lu allik* (line 32)/"On my third campaign I went to the land of Hatti."

⁷²⁹Therefore, when the city or area of the reliefs from the palace are not labeled with an epigraph, as is the case in all but the Lachish reliefs, the images of this western campaign could illustrate events which occurred not in Judah, but also in North Syria or Phoenicia. Reade suggests that the third campaign "was directed at Greater Syria". (1979b, p. 92) He persists in calling the cities "Syrian" and this contrasts with Russell's later suggestion that most of the cities illustrating the third campaign depict events occurring in the more southerly regions of Judah and Phoenicia. (1991, p.162) Indeed

Whether Phoenician, Judean or North Syrian, the landscapes which characterize the western campaigns include many different species of trees. All of these species may be seen on the Lachish reliefs, but occur frequently and in the same number on reliefs from other rooms. For the sake of convenience and due to their completeness, the Lachish reliefs will be used to exemplify Sennacherib's attention to the western floral landscape encountered on his third campaign. There are two types of western trees with leaves: those with branches that strike out radially; and those with relatively vertical branches (Figure 57).⁷³⁰ The spiky nature of the appendages on the branches suggests that these may be deciduous trees.⁷³¹ The western landscapes are also filled with entangling grape vines which are absolutely bedecked, in fact, dripping with grapes. Sennacherib's grapevines are exceedingly detailed and lively; their creeping vines sprawl across the hillside, effectively framing the actors of the scene (Figure 58).⁷³² The plants have long tendrils which strike out from the tips of the vine as they pull down the

many of the garments and architectural details included in the reliefs from rooms I, VIII(w), XXIV, XXXIV and XLI can be identified as Phoenician based on parallels with named cities in reliefs from previous reigns. These include, for example, turbans with several folds for males and females with long hooded garments. On Phoenician garments in the Assyrian reliefs, see Russell, 1991, p. 161 and Wäfler, 1975, p. 56.

⁷³⁰For the difference between the two, see Bleibtreu, 1980, p. 161, abb. 73 (my Figure 62).

⁷³¹Both are identified by Bleibtreu as deciduous trees, specifically the *Fagaceae*, *Oleaceae* and *Moraceae* species. (1980, pp. 150-157)

⁷³²The grapevines in Sennacherib's reliefs could have symbolized the importance of this fruit in the ancient Near East. Grapes and their vines symbolized fertility and luxury, and their wine was a luxury commodity in Assyria. On these symbolic attributes of grapes and wine, see Stronach, 1996. For discussions of Sennacherib's grapes and vines, see also Bleibtreu (1980, pp. 131-139) and Albenda (1974, p. 6).

branches of the trees with their weight.

The western floral landscape contrasts sharply with the Babylonian landscapes on reliefs which depict events from Sennacherib's first campaign to the south.⁷³³ The southern reliefs are rife with palm trees and tall marsh reeds and lack the ubiquitous windows on the cityscapes.⁷³⁴ The result of these differences is a clear distinction in Sennacherib's reliefs between the landscape of the west and that of the south.⁷³⁵ Gone are the palm trees in western terrain associated with earlier reigns, rather the palm tree in Sennacherib's reign was associated only with Babylonia. This pictorial distinction corresponds well with the recognition in Sennacherib's inscriptions of two distinct landscapes--the forests of Hatti and the marshes of Babylonia--which he recreated at Nineveh.⁷³⁶

The landscape elements from the west and Babylonia described thus far constituted the image of the foreign landscape *in situ*, or as imagined in its authentic location. However, there is also evidence for the display of the display, images of the *ex situ* recreation of foreign landscapes in Sennacherib's reliefs. The images in Court VI of

⁷³³Rooms V, VI, XIV, XXXI, XXXII, XLIII(e), XLIV, XLV, XLVII and LX. (Bleibtreu, 1980, p. 127 and Russell, 1991, p. 160)

⁷³⁴See Reade, 1979b, p. 91 and Russell, 1991, p. 153.

⁷³⁵I should note here that there is less distinction between the floral landscape elements of the west encountered on the third campaign and those of the east, encountered on his second campaign. On this I have no further thoughts except to suggest that the floral landscapes were similar enough to merit no distinction or interest by the Assyrian artists. The distinction then between west and east falls in the garments of the figures and the architectural features of the cities. See Russell, 1991, pp. 158-9.

⁷³⁶On this textual recreation, see above, chapter five, part one.

the Southwest Palace are useful in attempting to find the *kirimahhu* in Sennacherib's narratives.⁷³⁷ They show the transport of huge stone colossi, roughly shaped into human-headed bulls, by Assyrian soldiers while their king looks on.⁷³⁸ The quarry where the scene takes place was identified as Balatai in the epigraphs accompanying the transport scenes, therefore, the images in Court VI were set within Assyria proper.⁷³⁹ Russell has suggested that since there is no river-crossing in the scenes, the quarry was located on the same side of the river as Nineveh, less than fifty kilometers north of the capital city.⁷⁴⁰ The action proceeds across the slabs from right to left, and the figures proceed from slab 68, which depicts the Balatai quarry head, leftwards and "southwards" toward slab 45, which must represent the landscape closer to Nineveh.⁷⁴¹ The area around the quarry is rife with landscape elements and contains four distinct varieties of trees: grapevines,⁷⁴²

⁷³⁷Slabs 45-68. Most slabs are either extant or are known only from Layard's drawings published in 1853a, pl. 12-17, slabs 48-52, 55, 57, 59, 61 and 65. Originally, it was assumed that these slabs portrayed the construction of the city of Nineveh, however Strommenger pointed out that they depicted the transport of colossi from a quarry. (1966, pp. 111-114)

⁷³⁸The most extensive and recent analyses of these scenes were conducted by Reade (1978) and Russell (1991) and it is their suggestions which will be relied upon here.

⁷³⁹Sennacherib's texts list five sources of stone for his palace reliefs: Tastiate and Balatai, both near Nineveh; Mount Nipur in Turkey, Kapridargila near Til Barsip in North Syria; and Mount Ammanana in the Anti-Lebanon on the fringes of North Syria. (Russell, 1991, pp. 96-100)

⁷⁴⁰1991, p. 98. For the location of Balatai near the modern city of Mosul and north of Nineveh, see "Balata" in RIA, Bd. 1, p. 394.

⁷⁴¹Russell, 1991, p. 97.

⁷⁴²Bleibtreu, 1980, p. 146.

conifers,⁷⁴³ fruit-trees with pomegranates,⁷⁴⁴ and oak trees with both radially and vertically sprawling branches (Figure 59).⁷⁴⁵ From the quarry, the transport party continues southwards along a stream. As the party approaches Nineveh at the end of its journey, the landscape changes dramatically. Though the bottom of slab 60 is not preserved, the top band of landscape depicts not a forest, but a scene with marsh reeds and wild animals (Figure 60).⁷⁴⁶

This scene is important for our discussion for two reasons. First, within the tall reeds of the marshes hide wild animals, including deer and a sow with six piglets on her trail. The scene shows the behavior of wild animals in their natural habitat. This motif was familiar from earlier reigns and is repeated on other Sennacherib reliefs.⁷⁴⁷ It can also be seen in the actions of the animals amongst the reeds, which effectively retain the pastoral quality of the scene by buffering the commotion of the transport party. The

⁷⁴³Bleibtreu, 1980, p. 173.

⁷⁴⁴Russell, 1991, fig. 54. For the identification of the foliage, see Bleibtreu, 1980, p. 140.

⁷⁴⁵Bleibtreu, 1980, p. 147-59.

⁷⁴⁶Russell, 1991, fig. 57. For the identification of the foliage, see Bleibtreu, 1980, p. 177.

⁷⁴⁷For example, on a relief from Room XLVIII, which illustrates events from the third campaign to the west, a large oak tree sits by the walls of a besieged city. Bleibtreu identifies this tree as a member of the *Quercus* species. (1980, p. 157) The oak tree is larger than the scrubby variety common on Sennacherib's western scenes and it is the setting of a small vignette within the greater siege scene. Sitting in the oak tree are a number of birds and their nests. While some birds remain roosting in the tree, other individuals fly out from its branches reacting naturally at the approach and devastation of the Assyrian army. As we have discussed above, this motif also symbolizes the chaotic effects of Assyrian attack.

animals hidden amongst the reeds remain naturally wild and are unaffected by the many people traipsing through their habitat. Their calm is in stark contrast to the activity below. Once again, the keen awareness, one would venture to say naturalism, of the Assyrian artists comes through in their portrayals of the many different behaviors which animals exhibit in the wild. While the animals in this instance are not familiar from North Syrian landscapes, they still represent a recreation of the faunal landscape of that other important defeated area, Babylonia.

The second observation which I have concerns the dramatic shift in landscape between the slabs which depict the more northerly part of the transport route (68-61) and those which show the southerly half of the journey (60-45). This dramatic shift in landscape occurs especially within slab 60, as has been noted by Russell. He describes it as a visual “aid” which helped the “viewer’s own identification of the setting.”⁷⁴⁸ The viewer familiar with the Ninevite countryside would understand that a dramatic shift in landscape did not correspond to a dramatic shift in distance as in the military narratives from Sennacherib’s reign. Rather a changeable setting in the peaceful transport narrative would be visually comprehensible to Ninevites because it represented a landscape occurring near to their capital city. I would suggest that this dramatic shift was not mere visual device used in service of precise location, but an important and deliberate emphasis on the diverse nature of the landscape that was recreated outside Nineveh. The central importance of the reliefs from Court VI is that they pictorially display the

⁷⁴⁸1991, p. 221.

creational identity of the king. The images from Court VI of this watery environment in the environs of Nineveh corresponds directly with Sennacherib's description of the "double-duty" *kirimahhu* which he laid out at Nineveh, in which the landscapes of *both* Babylonia and North Syria were reconstructed. In slab 60 is illustrated the Babylonian aspect of the *kirimahhu*, which contained "wild swine and deer who brought countless offspring into the world." In the same composition, the images from the slabs just to the "north" or right of slab 60 which depict a forested landscape between Balatai and Nineveh can be seen as the northern extension of the *kirimahhu* which contained the conifers, fruit trees and grape vines or "all the aromatic plants of Hatti and the garden fruits of all the trees in the woods, products of the mountains."⁷⁴⁹ Thus the entire action of Court VI may have taken place within a whole system of an extended *kirimahhu* at Nineveh, which was large enough to include in its structure the entire area north of Nineveh up to Balatai. Reade's suggestion that the conifers, grape vines and fruit trees in the Balatai section of the relief depict "Assyrian orchards"⁷⁵⁰ is therefore grounded in the textual descriptions of the *kirimahhu*.

The central fact which would bear on this suggestion that the region outside of the Nineveh proper and extending up to Balatai was part of the *kirimahhu* is to determine from the texts where the *kirimahhu* was located at Nineveh. Traditionally, it has been assumed that the *kirimahhu* was located within the city walls at Nineveh, and as the

⁷⁴⁹See Appendix Four.

⁷⁵⁰See 1983, caption for fig. 53.

inscriptions read “at it (the palace’s) side”.⁷⁵¹ This idea has been perpetuated by the literature which linked the royal gardens of Mesopotamia to the *bitanum*, or inner sanctums of the palaces.⁷⁵² In Frahm’s recent edition of this Sennacherib text, it is clear that the park was laid out “by the side of the city” (*itê URU*), not within the city next to the palace.⁷⁵³ In a very literal translation of the texts, if the scribes had wanted to demonstrate that the *kirimahhu* was within the walls of Nineveh, they might have used the prepositions *ina* or *qereb*. The expression “by side of the city” (*itê URU*) could refer to an extended area outside the city walls even flowing as far north as Balatai. Therefore, the *kirimahhu* might not have been a single specific entity in one locale, but rather a large body of floral and faunal reconstructions just north of Nineveh.⁷⁵⁴

There is also evidence that Sennacherib created a zoo, with single specimens of tame, exotic animals that did not roam as freely within the *kirimahhu* as the reliefs and

⁷⁵¹Luckenbill, ARAB II, #395.

⁷⁵²As evidenced in both the Old Testament (see Oppenheim, 1964, p. 328 and after him Wiseman, 1983, p. 139). The book of Esther in the Old Testament refers to the *bitan* within the royal palaces of Iran. The *bitanum* and *kirimahhu* however, were only linked textually in the inscriptions of Esarhaddon, and not those of Sargon, Sennacherib or Aššurbanipal.

⁷⁵³There are several reasons for this. First, the sumerogram for “city”, *URU* was used in the phrase. Second, the two signs in the phrase “by the side of the city” consist of the signs for “border or flank”, *itûm* and the sumerogram for “city”, *URU* (see Appendix Four and Frahm, 1997, T10 or T11, 216: *I-te-e URU*). The *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*’s translation of *itûm* supports the idea that the *kirimahhu* was placed next to and not within Nineveh, for it is often used as a preposition to denote “adjacent to or alongside” and not “belonging to” or “within” (see CAD I, p. 312).

⁷⁵⁴For a similar idea of a whole complex of botanical gardens and orchards at Nineveh, see Wisemen, 1983, p. 138-9.

texts would suggest. Sennacherib was the first to mention an *ambassu*, or game park, in his inscriptions in which the royal hunts would have taken place.⁷⁵⁵ The text declares that this *ambassu* was located outside of the walls of Nineveh north of the Adad gate.⁷⁵⁶ However, Sennacherib's texts lack any explicit hunting passages and his reliefs lack any hunting narratives.⁷⁵⁷ Nor are there any depictions of exotic animals brought to the king as tribute in his large-scale procession scenes.⁷⁵⁸ Therefore, while there is ample pictorial evidence in Sennacherib's reign for the *kirimahhu*, the reconstruction of the North Syrian floral landscape, there is a corresponding lack of evidence for the *ambassu*, the reconstruction of the faunal landscape.⁷⁵⁹

Aššurbanipal

The images from the reign of Aššurbanipal include more details regarding the complex of landscape reconstructions in the environs of Nineveh. Specifically,

⁷⁵⁵As discussed above in this chapter.

⁷⁵⁶See Wiseman, 1983, p. 139 and Reade, 1978, p. 53

⁷⁵⁷A feature which Russell attributes to personal preference on the part of the king. (1991, p. 267)

⁷⁵⁸On the placement and description of these procession reliefs, see Reade, 1979b, p. 93 and Russell, 1991, p. 168-9. These processions might represent a single reference to royal hunting in Sennacherib's reliefs for Reade suggests that the processions record servants moving "to and from the hunt."

⁷⁵⁹The single piece of evidence that we have for animals kept in captivity in Sennacherib's reign, aside from the possibility that the wild pigs and deer in the marshes outside Nineveh were somehow contained, comes from a relief which is no longer extant and which has never been published. Russell refers to a relief from Court H described by Layard as containing a "chained lion" taken away as booty from a southern district (slabs 8-14 of the west wall). Since many of the reliefs in this court were re-cut in Aššurbanipal's reign, it is possible that this relief is later in date. (Russell, 1991, p. 46)

Aššurbanipal's reliefs from the North Palace depict images which could pertain to both the *kirimahhu* and the *ambassu* or royal game park. In addition, Aššurbanipal's reliefs attest to the existence of tame lions while at the same time they depict wild animals as they would behave in a more open habitat, either their own native one or the one outside Nineveh in the *ambassu/kirimahhu* complex. Finally, Aššurbanipal's reliefs contain many images of the royal hunt. As with Sargon, the hunt occurred in a part of the Assyrian heartland whose landscape was reminiscent of that of North Syria, likely the *ambassu/kirimahhu* complex.

There is an abundance of evidence in Aššurbanipal's reign which might depict the *kirimahhu/ambassu* complex outside of Nineveh. Within this complex was reconstructed not only the flora and fauna of North Syria, but also the architectural element of the *bit-hilani*. The most important image which creates these associations comes from room H of Aššurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh. The reliefs in this room are generally concerned with battles against the Elamites from Iran.⁷⁶⁰ The lower register⁷⁶¹ depicts the figures moving to the right whereas in the upper register the Assyrian figures move to the left. Barnett and Reade have suggested that the upper register of this room therefore depicts a triumphal return of Aššurbanipal's troops into Assyria.⁷⁶² On the upper register

⁷⁶⁰Reade, 1979b, p. 104.

⁷⁶¹There is some dispute as to whether this room consisted of single or double-registered reliefs (see Reade, *ibid.*).

⁷⁶²Barnett, 1976, p. 41; Reade, 1979b, p. 104.

of slab 8-10 is depicted a triple-walled city sitting on a hillside.⁷⁶³ The city has crenellated towers and a structure with lion-shaped column bases in its inner sanctums. There is little doubt that this city represents Nineveh itself, and the lion bases adorn either the palace of Aššurbanipal or the palace of his grandfather, Sennacherib, who texts describe just such decoration for his palace.⁷⁶⁴ To the right of the city, on slabs 8 and 9 is depicted a hill with many different species of trees growing between streams that criss-cross the hillside (Figure 61).⁷⁶⁵ A straight path with a wayside crenellated monument ascends up the hill towards a porticoed building.⁷⁶⁶ Unfortunately, there are no battle narratives from Aššurbanipal's reign which depict campaigns in western territories other than Egypt, therefore, we must rely on Sennacherib's reliefs to identify elements of a western landscape in this relief.⁷⁶⁷ The floral species include conifers, deciduous trees

⁷⁶³Hall, 1928, pl. XLII and Barnett, 1976, pl. XXIII.

⁷⁶⁴See Reade, 1979b, p. 104 and Barnett, 1976, p. 41. Barnett leaves open the possibility that this city is Arbela.

⁷⁶⁵Hall, 1928, pl. XLIII and Barnett, 1976, pl. XXIII. Reade has suggested that the streams are actually artificially constructed canals, and therefore part of the larger Ninevite irrigation system which Sennacherib created. (1978, p. 165)

⁷⁶⁶This building consists of a portico with curved columns supporting a crenellated architrave. Attached to the front of the porticoed building stands a wing containing or decorated with a round-topped stele of an Assyrian king. Many such stelae, both free-standing and embedded in rock have been found in various parts of the Assyrian empire. (See Borker-Klahn, 1982) The image on the stele depicts the king facing to the left and standing in a religious pose with his hands raised in a gesture of supplication or prayer. For a discussion of the religious pose, robe and iconography of this genre of stele, see Reade, 1981, pp. 146-7.

⁷⁶⁷On the subjects and locations of Aššurbanipal's military narratives, see Reade, 1979b, p. 102 ff.

with radial branches, and palm trees.⁷⁶⁸ Summarized generally, this relief depicts a porticoed building sitting in a landscape composed of western-style forests with well-planned streams and aqueducts on a hillside. The entire complex sits adjacent to or near to a palace at Nineveh. It is not hard, then to imagine that this image represents the *kirimahhu* of Sennacherib or Aššurbanipal containing “all the trees of Hatti and Chaldaea.”⁷⁶⁹

The reliefs from room H display the floral and architectural reconstruction of North Syria near Nineveh. There is additional evidence from Aššurbanipal’s palace which demonstrate that the faunal elements of that peripheral landscape were reconstructed in the heartland. Specifically there are images which might depict the royal *ambassu* or game park that contained wild animals imported from the west. First, Aššurbanipal certainly had tamed lions, witnessed in a relief from room E of his palace which depicts beardless priests or harpists wearing foreign headgear escorting a male lion on a chain through a forested landscape.⁷⁷⁰ This image can be compared with the image of a paired leonine couple, a lion and lioness resting quietly in a similar landscape from

⁷⁶⁸ Bleibtreu, 1980, p. 219. The trees appear to be arranged in some degree of order, with palm trees alternating with short deciduous trees and conifers on the top of the hill. The trees at the top of the hill are watered by a stone aqueduct located to their right. Further down the hill, conifers are planted by the banks of the streams, with some deciduous trees in between and at the lowest part of the hill, the forest is dominated by deciduous trees.

⁷⁶⁹ As has been noted by Barnett (1976, p. 41) and Reade (1978, p. 165-167). See Appendix Four for textual references containing these phrases.

⁷⁷⁰ Barnett, 1976, pl. XIV; and Gadd, 1936, pl. 25.

elsewhere in room E (Figure 62).⁷⁷¹ Several observations can be made of these two images. First, it is possible that the lions were captured in some sort of staged royal hunt, as elsewhere in the room, grooms bring hunting mastiffs on leashes through a similar landscape.⁷⁷² The landscape behind both the chained lion and the leonine couple is one of grape vines, conifers and palm trees--in other words, the elements familiar from the combined western and southern landscapes of the *kirimahhu*. I would argue that the reliefs in room E display hunting-related events which occurred within an artificially constructed botanical landscape at Nineveh. There is certainly no direct evidence that this scene occurred within Assyria itself. However, a close look at the conifer tree shows that the two lower branches of the tree have been pruned.⁷⁷³ Therefore this scene probably occurred in the vast *kirimahhu/ambasssu* complex maintained by the Assyrians near Nineveh from Sennacherib's reign on.

The precise details of this botanical landscape are significant for they constitute the creational abilities of the king through the symbolism of fertility. The fertility of the

⁷⁷¹Barnett, 1976, pl. XV and Hall, 1928, pl. LV. For the most recent color photo of the entirety of this slab, see Curtis and Reade, 1995, fig. 26. The representation of the male and female of the species supports my idea that the pairs of animals depicted on Shalmaneser III's Black Obelisk represent the male and female of each species, thus the Obelisk proclaims figuratively the king's breeding and progenital abilities.

⁷⁷²Reade has suggested that the dogs were heading out toward the hunt and the chained lion and leonine pair on the opposite wall of the room represent the consequences of the hunt. (1979b, pp. 102-3) This leaves open the idea that the lion was taken as a pet for the king, and that the chained lions in both the palace at Til Barsip and Sennacherib's Southwest Palace represent royal pets taken during the hunt or bred and raised as pet from infancy. For breeding lions in Assyria, see above, section two of this chapter.

⁷⁷³Albenda, 1974, p. 6.

landscape is especially apparent in the leonine couple relief from room E. This scene is a prime example of Assyrian “naturalism”, or the tendency to depict the behavior of animals in their natural or quasi-natural habitat. But more important, the scene gives important clues regarding the Assyrian recreation of this habitat. The grape vines that were so detailed in Sennacherib’s reign take on a new persona in Aššurbanipal’s relief. In room E, the vines entangle themselves around a conifer tree. The grape bunches are exceedingly large, they drip off their vines which terminate in flowers with curly volutes and tall stamens--an added detail not present prior to this time. The fertility of these vines becomes even more evident through the presence of the stamen, the visible “sex organs” of the grape blossoms. One could say that the stamens of the grape blossoms reach down and “fertilize” the lioness as they touch her back, leaving a trail of potent pollen. In addition, the fertility of this landscape is suggested by the presence of three unique plants. To the right of the lioness grows a three-pronged flower with rosette-like blossoms which probably represents a poppy or sunflower.⁷⁷⁴ Framing the lion and lioness on the far right and left of the image grow two lily plants, their blossoms arching toward the sun.⁷⁷⁵ And behind the lioness grows a short plant laden with broad leaves and round fruits, possibly a mandragora or mandrake plant.⁷⁷⁶ The mandragora was known in

⁷⁷⁴This flower is reminiscent of a similar single specimen which appeared in the wooded landscape of Sargon’s room 7 reliefs. See above in this section for identification of this plant. This view is contra Bleibtreu, who identifies these flowers as asters (1980, p. 240) and Albenda identifies these plants as ox-eye sunflowers (1974, p. 5).

⁷⁷⁵Bleibtreu, 1980, p. 241.

⁷⁷⁶Bleibtreu, 1980, p. 239.

the Old Testament as an aphrodisiac.⁷⁷⁷ In room E, the peaceful and natural poses of the lion and lioness contrast sharply with the twisted, excited and contorted images of lions that are hunted on reliefs from elsewhere in the North Palace of Aššurbanipal.⁷⁷⁸ This unique landscape with all of its floral diversity and blossoming fertility represents an idyllic scene, a pastoral experiment showing an Assyrian imagining of peacefulness and fertility that was inextricably connected with a western landscape.⁷⁷⁹

There is another, very famous relief from the North Palace of Aššurbanipal called “the garden scene” which connects a fertile fruit-laden landscape mimicking that of the west with rest and relaxation. In this relief from room S of the North Palace, the recipients of the “R-n-R” are not animals, but the king and queen themselves who recline in a landscape full of wild animals and vegetation familiar from the west and Babylonia (Figure 63).⁷⁸⁰ The garden scene is actually part of a larger composition of slabs which was originally placed in the walls of an upper chamber that fell into room S; the upper chambers of room S have been labeled room S₁ in the literature.⁷⁸¹ In the lower story, the reliefs narrate a royal hunt of lions, onagers and gazelles. In the upper story, the reliefs

⁷⁷⁷Ibid., citing Genesis 30: 14-16.

⁷⁷⁸I am thinking here specifically of the lion hunts from rooms C and S.

⁷⁷⁹After writing this, I realize that Stronach too has come to the same conclusion regarding the charged imagery of this relief. (1996, p. 190) In addition, Albenda referred to landscape reliefs from Aššurbanipal’s reign as “idyllic”. (1976, p. 45)

⁷⁸⁰Gadd, 1936, pl. 40 and Barnett, 1976, pl. LXIII, slab C.

⁷⁸¹See Barnett, 1976, p. 20.

include preparations for a banquet and the famous garden scene itself.⁷⁸² The composition which contains the garden scene consists of three registers with particular landscape elements limited and confined to each of the registers (Figure 64).⁷⁸³ For example: the top register has alternating conifer trees, palm trees, deciduous trees and grape vines; the middle register includes conifer trees, lotus plants, deciduous trees, and a small grape vine; and the bottom register includes only tall marsh reeds.⁷⁸⁴ Thus all three registers exhibit diverse landscapes. The top two registers seem to depict a landscape familiar from areas to the west of Assyria and the bottom register depicts the landscape of Babylonia to the south. I would argue that the images in S₁ depict a dual-purpose *kirimahhu* complex similar to the one described and depicted by Sennacherib.⁷⁸⁵ These images may indeed depict the *same* marshes and forests of the area to the north of Nineveh which Sennacherib's reliefs pictured, hence Aššurbanipal reclined in his father's *kirimahhu*.

In all three registers the faunal landscape of the two distinct facets of the

⁷⁸²The action in the upper story, S₁, proceeds from left to right. For a detailed discussion of the organization and program of this wing of the palace, see Meissner and Opitz, 1939 and Albenda, 1976, p. 58.

⁷⁸³Reconstructed by Albenda, 1976, pl. 1.

⁷⁸⁴For a full discussion of the flora in these slabs, see Albenda, 1974, pp. 5-17.

⁷⁸⁵Albenda has suggested that the spatial relationships in the reliefs correspond to actual distances of these two distinct landscapes from the king at Nineveh. She describes an "inner zone" filled with fruit trees and flowers and an "outer zone" with marshes. She implies that the inner zone would have been located directly adjacent to the king's palace, next to the royal harem quarters at Nineveh. (1976, pp. 61-2) Though her suggestion is intriguing, her location of the different "zones" of the garden is not necessarily supported by the pictorial or textual evidence.

kirimahhu are also depicted. In the top two registers, wild birds cavort and nest in the conifer trees in much the same manner as they did in Sargon's room 7 at Khorsabad. In the bottom register, a wild pig roots through the reeds in much the same manner as did the pig in Sennacherib's reliefs from Court VI the Southwest Palace at Nineveh (Figure 65). To summarize, these representations of a "two-toned" landscape around Nineveh contain already established *topoi* for the depiction of wild animals in their quasi-natural habitats. In addition, they represent similar varieties of species as were seen in Sennacherib's *kirimahhu* complex.

But this series of reliefs in S₁ is important for our discussion not for the diversity of landscape elements alone. The image of the king and queen as they recline on their furniture in Slab C is essential to this discussion because the scene shows the royal figures in a state of relaxation in leisure, and they are accompanied by musicians and attendants who imbue the environment with an air of celebration and pleasure (Figure 37). The scene represents the mood of the royal couple after a hefty military victory for Assyria, as the epigraph and images just to the left of the relaxing royal couple inform us that the new king of the Iranians, a puppet of Aššurbanipal, was ushered in to greet the king in slab A.⁷⁸⁶ The relaxed nature of the king and queen is connected in slab C with the laden fruitfulness and fertility of the grape vines which hang above their heads. I

⁷⁸⁶Stronach has also commented on the many different associations which this scene enlists. As a victory celebration, he notes that this scene served as a "visual complement" to Sennacherib enthroned above Lachish in room XXXVI of his palace. (1996, p. 190) On another level, Stronach suggests that Aššurbanipal had "settled the disputes of his time" and therefore this scene must be interpreted as the king in a restful and relaxed state after his victories.

suggest that the laden fruit of the grape bunches which frame *only* the figures of the king and queen are symbols of the latent fertility apparent in the union between the two royal personages. Thus, we have in room S₁ the human correspondence to the relaxed, peaceful and fertile leonine couple from room E, and the indication that the gardens were “for my royal leisure”.

Moreover, the figures recline on items of furniture which we have identified as coming from western territories and perhaps from North Syria.⁷⁸⁷ The symbolic significance of these items of furniture has already been discussed in chapter three above. If they are foreign items made out of ivory, then they stand as proof of the collecting abilities of the king. I suggested above that they may represent the royal paraphernalia of a certain specific and pesky rebellious enemy king. They would function symbolically as an ultimate trophy of the defeat of that hated individual. Yet the landscape which they are placed in also informs how we are to read this symbolic significance. I would argue that the symbolic significance of these pieces of furniture lies in the fact that they served both literally and figuratively in a complete and entire reconstruction of the North Syrian landscape and we now have another element which was displayed within the *kirimahhu* and its pictorial representations--the inclusion of the *decorative* landscape of North Syria.

But what of another element of reconstruction that we have mentioned, the architectural element of the *bit-hilani*? As with his predecessors, this architectural element of the North Syrian landscape was tangibly evoked and reconstructed by

⁷⁸⁷See chapter three, part three.

Aššurbanipal. In front of the walls containing these reliefs from room S were found two column bases. This fact combined with the fact that this back entrance to the palace had two stories of room S has led some to conclude that Rooms S and S₁ and the accompanying smaller rooms T, U, V, and W may be identified as a complex of rooms comprising a *bit-hilani* within Aššurbanipal's North Palace.⁷⁸⁸ This identification is based on the broadest definition of a *bit-hilani*, one which distinguishes the structure adapted in Assyria as a columned entrance to a palace with an upper and lower story from the free-standing structures of North Syria proper. The problems of this broad definition have been discussed above with respect to the images of *bit-hilanis* in Sargon's reign and in Room H from elsewhere in Aššurbanipal's palace. If we accept that a *bit-hilani* need not have been, but certainly could have been part of a palace in Assyria, then we can understand that *both* the free-standing *bit-hilanis* displayed in the reliefs from Sargon's palace and room H of the Southwest Palace at Nimrud and this part of Aššurbanipal's North Palace could represent examples of Assyrianized *bit-hilanis*.⁷⁸⁹ Hence the garden scene of Aššurbanipal and his queen banqueting in the royal *kirimahhu* from the upper story of room S is appropriately and deliberately situated within a North Syrian-inspired architectural vista. I would argue further that this back portal of the palace looked out

⁷⁸⁸See Barnett, 1976, p. 49 and Albenda, 1976 and 1977.

⁷⁸⁹By Assyrianized, I mean that they were created in a very different Assyrian idiom, as discussed by Winter, 1982.

upon the plains beyond Nineveh which contained the *kirimahhu/ambaassu* complex.⁷⁹⁰ Indeed, the entrance to room S faces in the direction of the northwest, the precise area where the *ambassu* was located in Sennacherib's inscriptions, and the general direction of North Syria.⁷⁹¹ Room S of the North Palace served in essence as a "Hall of Mirrors" reflecting the reconstruction of North Syria within the Ninevite landscape in every direction. Hypothetically, an individual standing outside of room S could see the garden reliefs in the palace framed by the columns, and turn to envision the actual event taking place in the Nineveh countryside. Therefore, the hunt and garden reliefs of room S actually become part of the panoramic view of the royal *kirimahhu* complex that could be seen in the distance.

There is other evidence that the reliefs from Aššurbanipal's North Palace took part in a great envisioning and pictorial reconstruction of the North Syrian landscape, an envisioning which repeatedly linked the faunal landscape of North Syria with its architectural counterpart, the *bit-hilani*. As in the lower story of room S, a series of reliefs from room C in the main part of the palace depicts another royal hunt.⁷⁹² The

⁷⁹⁰Turner has noted that the upper story in room S would have provided a "panoramic view" to the northwest. (Barnett, 1976, p. 29 and 33) He argues that the *ambassu* and *kirimahhu* would have been placed directly by the side of the palace, and this is contrary to my suggestion that this complex was located to the north of the city wall.

⁷⁹¹See the plan of Kuyunjik by King and the reconstructed plan of the North Palace after Boutcher, both published by Barnett. (1976, fig. 6, p. 25 and fig. 7, p. 28 respectively)

⁷⁹²Slabs 4-17 of the Northeast wall, Barnett, 1976, pl. IV-VI.

action proceeds from left to right along the northeast wall of the room. Above and below the king's chariot, files of Assyrian soldiers stand guard with shields. The presence of their shields indicates that their duties must have included "beating" the lions, that is herding them and retaining them in the hunting area for the king. The hunt, therefore, did not take place entirely in the "wild", but rather in an artificially enclosed area. Other soldiers hold up a royal tent or pavilion that screens the preparation from the hunting arena to the left.⁷⁹³ The preparation of the royal hunting entourage is visually separated from the actual hunting arena by the image on slab 9 of a hillside festooned with conifer trees and covered with Assyrians moving through the trees (Figure 66).⁷⁹⁴ At the far right of the hunting scene, in slab 16, a lion is released from a cage. Behind the lion's cage stand still more soldiers with long shields who face away from the hunting action to ensure that no spectators entered the arena and that no lion escaped. Clearly then, we have the pictorial representation of a hunt which took place in a controlled arena. We may tentatively describe the arena in room C as an *ambassu*, or royal game preserve. Hence, the hunt depicted in room C represents an example of the "urban hunt" identified as a *topos* within the inscriptions of Aššurbanipal by Weissert.⁷⁹⁵

I would argue that the royal hunt took place within a larger landscaped arena, that

⁷⁹³For the suggestion that the hunts from room C took place within an enclosure, see Barnett, 1976, p. 37 and Reade, 1979b, pp. 107-8.

⁷⁹⁴Barnett, 1976, pl. VI. The figures' short kilts, hairstyle and laced boots clearly indicate that they are native Assyrians. Reade has suggested that these "civilians" represent members of the palace staff. (1972, p. 107)

⁷⁹⁵1997, p. 351.

is a combined *ambassu* and *kirimahhu* complex. To demonstrate this connection between the reconstruction of the floral, faunal and architectural landscape of North Syria within Assyria, the landscape depicted in room C would have to correspond with the landscape of the *kirimahhu* known from other reliefs. The only landscape elements which occur in the hunting series are on slab 9, which depicts the hillock separating the preparatory area from the hunting “arena” (Figure 66).⁷⁹⁶ This hillside is covered with conifer trees alternating with scrub oaks, a common feature of the western landscapes.⁷⁹⁷ The structure which sits at the top of the hillside is vaguely reminiscent of the structure shown in room H and potentially represents a *bit-hilani*.⁷⁹⁸ In sum, we have a free-standing outdoor structure with engaged columns or pilasters and a relief, we have a hunt occurring in an artificial enclosure, we have native Assyrians clamoring to watch the hunt and we have

⁷⁹⁶Barnett, 1976, pl. VI.

⁷⁹⁷The presence of the hillside itself might support the idea that the hunt occurred within the *kirimahhu*, for it could have stood as a symbol of the mountainous landscape of North Syria so often evoked in the textual references to the “*kirimahhu* like unto Mount Amanus” that we have discussed above.

⁷⁹⁸At first glance, the structure on the hillock in room C appears to have no columned facade or upper story, the prominent characteristics of both the free-standing *bit-hilani*s and attached structures suggested to have been built in Assyria. However, it is possible that the square supports on either side of the structure were pilasters or engaged columns. Inside the room C structure may be seen an image which represents either a bas-relief or a painting. Albenda argues that this image must represent a relief on the back wall of the building. (1976, p. 53) The relief was either inscribed on a royal stele with a rounded top or placed on a back wall of the structure behind the arched entrance. The image shows the king in his chariot pursued by a lion from behind. For a discussion of this relief within a relief, see Borker-Klahn, 1982, p. 218. Weissert has provided an intriguing suggestion that the prism fragment K6085, now in the British Museum, was an archival copy of the inscription which was written on this stele from the *kirimahhu/ambassu* complex. (1997, p. 351)

the whole scene placed loosely within a hilly and wooded landscape. Taking all of this evidence into account, it is possible that we have a second representation of a *bit-hilani* within a *kirimahhu/ambassu* complex modeled after the North Syrian landscape in the North Palace of Aššurbanipal.⁷⁹⁹ Therefore, in the reliefs from the reign of Aššurbanipal we have the fullest pictorial conception of the Neo-Assyrian reconstruction of the North Syrian floral, faunal, decorative and architectural landscape in the heartland. Arising from images familiar in earlier reigns, they record in great detail how the landscape of North Syria was imagined and reconstructed *ex situ* in the Assyrian heartland.

Conclusion of Part Three

In the above analyses of images from the Neo-Assyrian empire, we have attempted to gain a full understanding of the pictorial construction of the North Syrian landscape. We have demonstrated a sustained interest in and continuing effort to reconstruct this landscape, in many varying forms and permutations, from the reign of every king for which we have extensive imagistic evidence, that is Aššurnasirpal II through to Aššurbanipal. The themes of this reconstruction constantly recurred but were also gradually added to over the years. In the reigns of Aššurnasirpal II to Tiglath-pileser

⁷⁹⁹Weissert has suggested that the hunting arena in room C was most certainly located within the walls of the city of Nineveh. (1997, p. 355) However, I would argue that the urban hunt known from the texts and images did not necessarily take place within the city walls, but could have occurred just outside the walls of the city where there would have been ample room within the reconstructed floral and architectural landscape of the *kirimahhu*.

III, three *topoi* were consistently reiterated.⁸⁰⁰

Topos #1: There was an imaginative reconstruction of the diversity of the North Syrian floral landscape which consistently depicted a variety of trees and vegetation growing wild in North Syrian environments.

Topos #2: The exotic yet tamed faunal landscape of North Syria and points further west were symbolically incorporated into the empire through the pictorial representations of these animals as tribute.

Topos #3: The representations of the behaviors of wild animals in their natural North Syrian habitats hint at a nascent Assyrian naturalism and indicate that North Syria was imagined as a site where the wildness of nature reigned.

Topos #3 is significant when the images on the North Syrian ivories themselves are considered. Many of the North Syrian ivories show animal combat scenes full of writhing animal throngs (for example, see Figure 4). The chaotic essence of nature and the representation of animals as they behaved in nature which was communicated through the *horror vacui* technique exhibited on ivories brought from North Syria might have served in tandem with the images on the reliefs to evoke for the Assyrians that lush and chaotic peripheral landscape. This landscape was fully imagined by the Assyrian artists in their native monumental decoration and metonymically cued in the foreign furniture stored and used in the palace.

Until the reign of Sargon II, most of the observations of the floral and faunal landscape of North Syria were experienced *in situ*--that is they showed encounters which

⁸⁰⁰I realize that Aššurnasirpal II's relief were innovative but also dependent themselves on earlier Middle Assyrian pictorial developments. The development of these *topoi* prior to the Neo-Assyrian period is predominantly beyond the scope of this discussion. For more on tradition and innovation in Aššurnasirpal's monumental art, see Cifarelli, 1995, chapter 7.

took place within the actual foreign landscape.⁸⁰¹ In these early reigns, the reliefs, paintings, and bronze gate bands in the heartland *alone* served as the reconstruction of this peripheral and diverse landscape. With the reign of Sargon II, the situation changes, as we encounter the first depictions of the North Syrian landscape *ex situ*, that is as reconstructed within the *kirimahhus* in Assyria. In Sargon's palace at Khorsabad, direct connections were made in the reliefs from room 7 between hunting, the North Syrian conifer forest, and the new architectural element imported from North Syria, the *bit-hilani*, all of which pictorially displayed the artificial complex, the *kirimahhu*. We may therefore introduce a new *topos* prevalent in Sargon's and his successors' reigns:

Topos #4: The depiction of the *kirimahhu* which connects the floral (wooded), faunal (hunting and wild animals) and architectural (*bit-hilani*) aspects of the North Syrian landscape.

In Sennacherib's reign, the intensely cultivated, diverse and fertile floral landscape of the western regions of the empire (*topos* #1) was seen in the Lachish reliefs as well as in many other reliefs showing images from Sennacherib's third campaign.⁸⁰² In addition, *topos* #4 was reiterated in the reign of Sennacherib, though in slightly different and more fragmented form, and not all in one neat package as in room 7 at Khorsabad. In Court VI of the Southwest Palace, a relief cycle depicts a unique combination of different

⁸⁰¹With the exception of the tribute processions with exotic animals from room D in Aššurnasirpal II's Northwest Palace at Nimrud, which most likely represented events occurring in Nimrud itself.

⁸⁰²The only *topos* which is missing in Sennacherib's reign, #2, the depiction of tame western animals, may have been represented in the no longer extant relief from the southwest palace which reportedly depicts "a chained lion", as discussed above.

landscapes through which Sennacherib and his troops transported a bull colossus from a quarry near Balātai southwards to Nineveh. The landscape includes a forested and grapevine-laden area, and, closer to Nineveh, a marshy environment with wild pigs and deer. I have suggested that these images from Court VI represented Sennacherib's two-tiered reconstruction of landscapes—including both the North Syrian forest and the Babylonian marshes within the confines of the *kirimahhu*. I argued that these images do not necessarily preclude that the *kirimahhu* complex was located within the city walls of Nineveh, but that it may have originated just north of the city walls and stretched quite far to the north. Another representation of the *kirimahhu* complex, *topos* #4, dates to the reign of Aššurbanipal. There is an image of a *bit-hilani*-like structure within a conifer and grape-vine laden landscape from room H of the North Palace. As in the *kirimahhu* from Court VI of Sennacherib's palace, this image is not directly connected with the royal hunt, but with the triumphant return to Nineveh after victory over the enemy. If we take Weissert's suggestion that the royal hunt and the triumphal return to Assyria were inextricably linked in texts and images,⁸⁰³ at least in the reign of Aššurbanipal, then we may accept the symbolic association of the *kirimahhu* and its *bit-hilani* with leisure, fertility, and the triumph of territorial acquisition.⁸⁰⁴ This would add a fifth *topos* to the mix:

⁸⁰³1997, p. 349.

⁸⁰⁴It is possible that this connection was also foreshadowed in Sargon's room 7 for above the fowl and hare hunt in the top register is recorded some sort of banquet for Assyrian officials and courtiers. It is generally agreed that these images show a victory celebration, thus linking the *kirimahhu*, the hunt and the triumphal return or victory.

Topos #5: The *kirimahhu*, with its reconstructed North Syrian landscape, was symbolic of leisure, pleasure, fertility, and triumphant celebration.

The garden scene from room S₁ in Aššurbanipal's North Palace is a strong exemplar of *topos* #5, which links the *kirimahhu* with leisure and triumphal return. In this relief, the king and queen relax peacefully in the midst of their *kirimahhu* as a puppet Elamite king carries their lunch and the severed head of another deposed king rests in the tree. *Topos* #5 holds important connotations for it reconstructed the North Syrian landscape as a world which was altogether diverse, fertile, and most importantly, appropriated. The appropriated fertile landscape which was imagined and constructed in the Assyrian reliefs may have been evoked with a concurrent glance at the ivories brought from that region and installed in the Assyrian palace, for example in the series of fat bulls and suckling cows found at Nimrud. These ivories might have served as subtle reminders of the latent fertility and fecundity of the North Syrian landscape from which they came. In sum, North Syria and its recreation within Assyria were imagined in the reliefs and evoked in the images on the ivories which helped decorate the palace as beneficial and prolific landscapes whose reconstruction constituted the creational and acquisitional identities of the Assyrian kings.

Conclusion of Chapter Five:

To summarize the arguments in this chapter, I have demonstrated that the North Syrian landscape was reconstructed in the Assyrian heartland in the texts and images. I have demonstrated that the floral diversity of North Syria was recreated within the royal gardens, as tree saplings and indigenous plants were uprooted wholesale and

repropagated in the Assyrian heartland and placed into royal *kirimahhus* modeled after Mount Amanus. In addition, the frequent discussions of animal encounters in the royal inscriptions implied a heightened Assyrian interest, even “fascinated imagining” or naturalism, regarding the faunal diversity of the west. These animal encounters linked the faunal landscape of North Syria to several aspects of Assyrian ideology, especially the creational identity of the king.

Finally, I have shown in this chapter that the interest in and reconstruction of the diverse and fertile North Syrian landscape was documented in images on monumental reliefs, free-standing obelisks, and bronze gate bands from the Assyrian palaces. The reconstruction of the North Syrian landscape was effected in the images through what I have termed *in situ* and *ex situ* means in the earlier and later halves of the empire, respectively. In the images, the imagined diversity and abundance of the entire North Syrian landscape were fully conceived as this landscape was reconstructed through the use of five pictorial *topoi*. These included the depiction of numerous species of plants, the receipt of diverse species of tamed animals as tribute, the situating of wild animals in their native habitats, the inclusion of the *bit-hilani* in the *kirimahhu/ambassu* landscape. Most importantly, the reasons for the collecting of the entire inanimate and animate North Syrian landscape emerged as a quest to invoke a sense of fertility, leisure and triumphant celebration. All of these crucial characteristics were embodied by and inscribed onto the person of the king thus creating his acquisitional and creational identity.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

From the outset, I have stated that my goal in this study was to discover the meaning of the North Syrian ivories found at Nimrud. I wished to explain why such a large corpus of foreign objects were found in Assyria. I suggested in the beginning that their meaning could be informed by an examination of their role in Assyrian ideology. The goal of this study was to therefore examine the role that the collecting of North Syrian ivories played in the creation of Neo-Assyrian ideology and royal identity. At a fundamental level, this study has also been concerned with the Assyrian confrontation with and subsequent representation of the Other, its imperial periphery. The goal was therefore to demonstrate that the ideological meaning and role of the North Syrian ivories within Neo-Assyrian ideology was informed by the meaning of the imagining, collecting and recreation of the *entire* portable landscape of North Syria, inanimate and animate. The analyses of both the ivory collections and the texts and images representing collection of the animate landscape of North Syria were presented in order to demonstrate that the royal imagining and desire for all things North Syrian functioned within a greater context of royal identity creation. These images and texts demonstrated that the North Syria which was presented in Assyrian texts and images gave birth to the bounty and diversity of the world. This landscape, imagined by the Assyrians to be full of necessary and exotic flora, fauna, and finished products, was ultimately a landscape which was presented as collected, and therefore appropriated and ordered.

This new consideration of the meaning of the North Syrian ivories found at

Nimrud places this study of these objects into an entirely new light by examining them from the standpoint of their consumption, rather than their production. A historiographic analysis presented in the second part of chapter one was intended to show that the goal of finding the meaning of these ivories in the context of consumption differed from previous ivory scholarship. I suggested that the goal of the archaeologists and art historians who studied the ivories in the latter half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century was to pinpoint the exact geographic origin of the ivories from Nimrud and to relate them to other aspects of cultural production, namely monumental art carved in stone from the ancient Near East. This will to identify their origins and compare them to other monuments was spurred on in large part by the culture-historical practice of archaeology which attempted to define the cultures of the world and to determine the relationship of each culture to one another. Three facets of the North Syrian ivories were addressed in varying degrees by ivory scholars in the past: the iconographic, expressive and material characteristics. The focus early seemed to be on their iconographic and expressive qualities and later on their technological aspects. A complete definition of the North Syrian style of previous scholarship was presented in chapter one, part two not to dispute those past conclusions and assumptions, but rather to accept them and utilize them as the basis for the definition of the North Syrian style used later in the study.

This historiographic analysis also determined that once the North Syrian style was appropriately defined according to iconographic, expressive and stylistic characteristics and acknowledged as different from the Phoenician, South Syrian/Intermediate and Assyrian styles, it then became the goal of ivory scholarship to look for the mechanisms

and logistics of their production as a characteristic of North Syrian society. The focus on technology spurred certain scholars to examine the circumstances and methods of production and to propose that the ivories were created in organized workshops. In the 1960's-70's, the economic factors affecting the production of the ivory workshops were then examined in an effort to determine why ivories were not found at the capitals of Assyria which followed Nimrud. In the 1980's, the interest in decorative programs in Assyrian palace reliefs turned the attention to the role that the Nimrud ivories may have played in those decorative schemes. The focus at this point turned to the consumption and display of ivory furniture rather than their production. However, attention remained on the meaning of the consumption of the ivories within their native North Syrian (or Assyrian) culture, rather than on the significance of their consumption within the foreign cultures that they were found. Aside from demonstrating how this study differed from its predecessors in its goals and assertions, the historiography presented in chapter one, part two resulted in a demonstration of how *modern* scholars differentiated the ivory styles from one another and why they wished to do so.

In chapter two, the task was to show that the Assyrians too recognized products which were not of their own native imperial style. This analysis was based on the assumption that the differentiation of the North Syrian style of ivory carving should not occur in a modern vacuum, but rather must be re-placed into a proper Assyrian context. In order to demonstrate that the Assyrians recognized goods and products of foreign manufacture, Assyrian textual references to foreign objects that occur in tribute and booty lists as well as in administrative documents and inventories were examined. I suggested

that in phrases in which the term *epištum* was modified by adjectives of geographic origin, the Assyrians were textually juxtaposing and therefore differentiating between two different types of workmanship. This juxtaposition, was seen for example, in Sargon's letter to Ashur, in which he compared objects of Urartian, Assyrian and Habbian manufacture and in references to the architectural element of the *bit-hilani*, which was a building in the Hittite style and was compared to Assyrian-style buildings by Sennacherib.

At that point, it was necessary to explain why some foreign objects garnered more attention in the formulaic lists than others, that is why some objects had numerous adjectival phrases, which I called embedded *ekphrasis*, attached to them. Chapter two therefore examined how the Assyrians not only recognized foreign objects, but appreciated them. Based on an analysis of these embedded adjectival phrases, I argued that foreign objects, appealed to the Assyrians for three specific reasons. First, the attachment of certain geographic or proper names to them in adjectival phrases, i.e. "product X of Geographic Name or "Product Y of Personal Name," demonstrated that the original location and owners of the products were important factors noticed by the Assyrians. It was further suggested that a second reason for the appeal of certain foreign products over others was due to the quality of the product, which was signified in the Assyrian texts through the use of adjectives related to quality, such as "first-quality," (*reštum*) or "good" (*tiabum*). The third type of appeal that was identified in chapter two from the embedded *ekphrasis* was the rarity or uniqueness of the item. These embedded descriptions, short adjectival phrases, therefore distinguished certain rare or quality

products from others and foreign products from native Assyrian ones.

Armed with the evidence that foreign goods were recognized and appreciated in Assyria, the task of chapter three was to narrow the focus to one particular type of object, hence to determine whether ivory objects from North Syria were deliberately acquired as a result of this general recognition and appreciation of foreign and North Syrian products. The central goal of this chapter was to assert that the ivories found at Nimrud comprised a deliberate collection, rather than a random accumulation, and that their collection was an important symbolic and very public royal act in Assyria. Modern studies of collecting and consumption served to demonstrate that a collection may be defined in a broad sense as the possession in any one time and place of a number of objects by an individual or institution. I argued in this chapter that the entire city of Nimrud, with all of its official building could be considered an appropriately limited enough venue for a collection. Though it was difficult to pinpoint exactly when all of the objects were collected at Nimrud, most likely the placement of ivories within the public buildings at Nimrud occurred haphazardly over the entire occupational history of the city. Based on the knowledge that Nimrud was used throughout the Neo-Assyrian period, it was not necessary to precisely pinpoint the exact time when each ivory was placed in its position at Nimrud since their very presence on site attests to their importance. At the very least, one could say that these objects were stored together at Nimrud at the moment that they were sealed in the ground when the city was abandoned by the royal apparatus, that is in 612 B.C.

The studies of collecting in more modern periods have also determined that

collecting involves the human element of choice and the urge to curate or order certain classes of objects into interrelated sets. It is with these aspects of choice and selection that a collection may be defined more narrowly as different from random accumulation. Collected objects, if they were ordered and public, were defined as signs of value within a social system. The act of collecting therefore was an inherently rhetorical act which constituted and displayed the identity of the collector. In order to demonstrate that the ivories from Nimrud could be considered a collection which was deliberately acquired and curated, and not randomly accumulated, the distribution of the ivories was examined in chapter three. This examination looked at the depositional situation of ivory styles, as defined in chapter one, at Nimrud and determined through analysis of archaeological evidence that the Nimrud ivories may have been placed in isolated rooms because they shared similar stylistic characteristics. In particular the expressive qualities of the ivories, those aspects which were independent of iconography, function, or technique were held as the most clearly differentiable aspects--the main criterion on which they were sorted. Chapter three, part one therefore showed that while the Assyrian and Phoenician/South Syrian styles were also grouped together in various rooms at Nimrud, the strongest evidence for sorting of the North Syrian style was found in the Southeast/Burnt Palace on the main mound and in Room SW7 of Fort Shalmaneser.

Once it was determined through archaeological analysis that the Nimrud ivories may be defined as a deliberate collection due to their sorted nature, it was then necessary to determine whether the collections were public, therefore garnering social or rhetorical value. In general, my analysis of textual references to collected ivory led to two

important conclusions about ivory collecting: 1) ivory was frequently collected from North Syria, almost exclusively in the earlier reigns and 2) no king could afford to drop the mention of ivory from his booty and tribute lists. The most significant characteristic of the textual references to ivory was that in the first part of the empire, the royal texts referred to ivory acquired predominantly as tribute from North Syria. In comparison, in the second half of the empire, references to ivory taken as booty from eastern and southern foes of Assyria were more commonplace. In the images of ivory collecting analyzed in the third part of this chapter, the king was always shown as the ultimate recipient of ivory tribute and booty. From the reigns of Aššurnasirpal II through Tiglath-pileser III, most images showed ivory collected as tribute in its raw, or tusk, form. In addition, finished ivory furniture products were collected as tribute by the kings. In the reign of Sargon II, images from the large-scale reliefs from facades of his palace suggested that he continued the *topoi* of his predecessors by displaying the collection of foreign ivory furniture as tribute. It was suggested that we can no longer assume that all furniture used by the Assyrian kings in the reliefs was Assyrian in style, nor can we assume that it was all foreign in manufacture. Rather these detailed images of “royal” furniture probably represented an admixture of foreign and native objects used within the Assyrian palaces for different occasions.

In the reigns of Sennacherib and Aššurbanipal, the collecting of ivory was exclusively shown through the capture of foreign furniture as booty. The items carried out of the foreign cities were highly symbolic objects, representing the specific “royal paraphernalia” of the defeated enemy city, its rulers, and its gods. In the cases where

foreign captives load their furniture onto carts which were counted by Assyrian scribes, the peculiar “Egyptian-like” manner in which the furniture was displayed in the reliefs allowed each and every item to be fully represented. In this way, the scenes of booty counts effectively proved their veracity and attested to the great number and variety of items collected.

The ultimate conclusion of chapter three was that as either booty or tribute, ivory had social, political, even economic value in Assyria. Most importantly, the royal collecting--or at least the representation of collecting--of ivory was a common and consistent trope within the Assyrian texts and images, though not a monolithic and unchanging activity. Hence, the collecting behavior, and possibly the collections themselves, were very public royal entities in Assyria. This suggestion was supported by the discussion at the end of chapter three of the many different categories of beholder of both the collections and the collecting behavior of the kings. The royal apparatus, who would have been most directly responsible for the maintenance of the king’s power, would also have had the most direct access to the collections themselves and to the images and texts acclaiming the royal collecting behavior. In addition, foreigners of all ranks, and the “masses” or ordinary citizens of Assyria would have had occasion to view both the collections and the images of collecting in very limited and indirect contexts. Curated, displayed in varying degrees, and loaded with social value, the accumulation of North Syrian ivories at Nimrud could therefore be defined as a deliberate collection.

Chapter four explored how collections and collecting behavior played a part in royal ideology in Assyria. The general discussion of collecting in chapter three suggested

that collections and collecting are used by collectors as narratives in which they could give new meanings aside from utility to objects and therefore, they could construct their social identities. The way to examine Assyrian royal ideology was therefore through an analysis of the construction of Assyrian royal identity. Drawing on previous interpretations of Assyrian ideology, I argued in this chapter that Assyrian ideology was created and enacted through a process which “inscribed” the system of values onto the figure of the king. In this way, both the characteristics common to Assyrian ideology throughout the period and the differences between reigns of the manifestation of that ideology could be accounted for. The term “inscription” also allowed ideology to be defined as the deliberate construction of royal identity, thus relating the ideology to the activities effected and embodied by the king.

Having argued that the way to examine Assyrian ideology would be to examine the unique identity of the king as constructed within each reign, the discussion then focused on the construction of royal identity in Assyria. Assyrian royal identity was a complex phenomenon with many different facets, including, for example, the “ferocious king” or “pious king.” Two particular aspects of royal identity, which I called “sub-identities”, held relevance for the collecting of the all things North Syrian: the acquisitive and creational identities of the king. The acquisitive identity of the king was essentially derived from the expansionist nature and mandate of the Assyrian empire. This expansionist nature necessitated the acquisition of territory, people and, of course, objects. The acquisitive sub-identity was constructed through the references to the collecting of foreign objects in texts and images which were discussed in chapter three.

Thus the royal collecting behavior, and the collecting of foreign ivory objects in particular could be explained as manifestations of the construction of acquisitive identity.

The creational sub-identity of the king, however, was manifested and constructed in a different manner. An understanding of Assyrian cosmology given in chapter four showed that the Assyrian world view set up a dichotomy between those territories peripheral to the Assyrian heartland in northern Iraq, which were considered as “outside” and chaotic, and the heartland itself, which was identified as “inside” and ordered. The acquisition of a chaotic outside territory could be seen as not simply practical acquisition of its utilitarian products, but as the re-creation and ordering of that territory in the terms and context of the inside. Therefore, the acquisition of territory, demonstrated in chapter three through the collections of its portable inanimate products, also served to establish the creational identities of the kings. The importance and construction of creational identity could demonstrate how not just the inanimate objects such as ivory, but the *animate* objects of North Syria were collected by the kings. The collection of animate objects, the flora and fauna of North Syria, directly attested to the creational abilities since this acquisition led to the propagation and breeding, or re-creation of these living things in the heartland.

The task of chapter five, then, was to discover how the creational identities of the kings were constructed through the treatment of the living landscape of North Syria as seen in texts and images. This aim of this chapter was to show how North Syria was constructed in this cultural production as a distinct identity with distinctive characteristics, and most importantly, an acquired and re-ordered entity. A concurrent

aim was to demonstrate that the landscape reconstructed in the Assyrian images and texts which refer to North Syria was one containing diversity, abundance, lushness, wild nature, and tame exotica. Ultimately, the textual references and images of North Syrian landscapes took part in an *imagining* of that foreign territory. As an imagining, it was a fictive narrative, which whether based in empirical fact or not was nevertheless conditioned by, filtered through, and essentially creating an Assyrian view of the world. The reconstruction of the landscape and the display in texts and images of that reconstruction served as a re-ification, a true remaking of a new world in the heart of the old world. More importantly, the ivory objects acquired from that periphery and brought to the center served as metonymic reminders of their imagined foreign origins.

The Assyrian royal texts devoted a great deal of energy to constructing the image of a lush and diverse mountainous and forested North Syria. As early as the Middle Assyrian period, the landscape of North Syria was imagined as a place in which pleasant and joyful experiences occurred. In the Neo-Assyrian period, the landscape of the specific locale of Mt. Amanus in North Syria was also appreciated for the diversity of flora which could be found on its slopes. The texts indicate that all of these qualities of the forested mountain caused the kings to collect its flora and to re-plant the diverse species back in the Assyrian heartland so that the landscape could be experienced without ever leaving the capital city. These planting projects turned into royal gardens attesting to the king's ability to create the diversity of life from the periphery within the center. The texts showed that the North Syrian landscape was imagined as a lush periphery when encountered in its naturally occurring locale, that is *in situ*. That imagining created a

desire amongst the kings to reconstruct it in their heartland, that is *ex situ*, in the form of royal botanical gardens. The royal gardens of Assyria full of the diverse floral life of the empire, would have been similar to the botanical gardens known from more modern times. The Assyrian gardens, like the ivory furniture collections, were therefore symbols of empire, attesting to the ability of the rulers to acquire the periphery. In addition, the gardens attested to the creational identity of the king by literally and figuratively representing a newly-created Other at the center of Us.

In the reign of Sargon II, the *ex situ* reconstruction of the royal gardens modeled on a North Syrian landscape took on a new all-encompassing description, the “royal garden like unto Mount Amanus” (*kirimahhu tamšil KUR.Hamanim*). Sargon’s textual term, *kirimahhu*, was a convenient literary *topos* which encapsulated the imagined diverse and lush landscape of the periphery at the center of the empire. Moreover, like modern botanical gardens, that periphery was re-ordered as a beneficial entity, bestowing pleasure on the king and his subjects. This textual treatment of the North Syrian landscape and the royal garden, or *kirimahhu*, once established by Sargon II, continued into the reigns of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Aššurbanipal. With Sennacherib especially, the botanical gardens took on new ideological resonance as they incorporated not only the living landscape of North Syria, but that of the other perennial foe of Assyria, Babylonia. Hence, they stood for the recreation at the center of two great peripheries from both the western and southern corners of the world.

A similar imagining of diversity and abundance coupled with a representation of its acquisition and recreation appeared in the textual treatment of the *faunal* landscape of

North Syria. North Syria emerged in the inscriptions as the place where much of the animal diversity of the world could be encountered and acquired. I described the textual passages which referred to the faunal landscape of North Syria as “animal encounters.” There were several different types of animals encounters which occurred in the Assyrian texts. The animal encounters involving the capture and breeding of live animals were important aspects of creational identity in that they essentially attested to the ability of the king to inspire and directly produce life. Like the furniture collections and the botanical gardens, the animals collections, which I called zoos, were not only expressions of imperial power but also of royal identity because they represented the peripheral Other world as re-created at the center.

I argued that zoos and other enclosures of wild animals must have existed in Assyria prior to the reign of Sennacherib, though he was the first king to specifically name this institution that recreated the faunal landscape of North Syria, which he called the *ambassu*, and to give its location at Nineveh (just north of the city). The *ambassu* organized by Sennacherib must have been the site of many lion hunts which Aššurbanipal discussed in his texts. In order to drive his heroic deeds home and to attest to his ability to maintain the ordered life of the heartland by getting rid of the chaotic life of the natural “outside” world, Aššurbanipal staged some of his lion hunts within the city of Nineveh itself. In this way, the North Syrian periphery took on a dualistic character, at once “an object of desire and derision.”

The collection and re-creation of the animate landscape of North Syria was clearly a central feature of the Assyrian textual production. The task of the remainder of chapter

five was to show that there was a corresponding imagining of this peripheral landscape in the pictorial production of the empire. In general, the images of the North Syrian landscape which emerge from the reigns of Aššurnasirpal through Tiglath-pileser III, showed that as with the inscriptions, North Syria was imagined as a lush and naturally diverse locale. For example, in the reign of Aššurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, the diversity of the floral landscape was exemplified through the several different trees and plants which peppered the military and hunting narratives occurring in western territories. In the images from Aššurnasirpal II's and Shalmaneser III's reigns North Syria also emerged as a virtual clearinghouse of live exotic animals. The representations of these exotic animals literally and figuratively "captured" them within the registers of the reliefs, hence the narratives represented the royal "ordering" of the unknown periphery. This was achieved also in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, in which a chained lion was represented at the foot of the king in the paintings from Til Barsip.

Assyrian artists also imagined North Syria as a venue in which the behavior of wild animals in their natural habitat could be witnessed. These images, for example, the hunts from Aššurnasirpal's gates, or the animal combat scene from Shalmaneser's Black Obelisk suggested that the Assyrian artists and their patrons attended to the representation of the *entire* animate life of North Syria by coupling its floral and faunal elements. I suggested that the ivories themselves, with their representations of fat bulls and animal families would have invoked this fecund aspect of North Syria for the Assyrians. With Sargon II, the North Syrian landscape that was recreated in his *kirimahhu* was imagined and therefore represented as a festive amalgam which incorporated the royal hunt of wild

animals, the wooded and hillocked forest, and the North Syrian-styled *bit-hilani*.

As in earlier reigns, the landscapes of the west as witnessed *in situ* were represented as full of the abundance and diversity, evoked effectively in the portrayal of wild grapevines which dotted the countryside. Reliefs from Sennacherib's reign showed that the imagined lush periphery was also collected and recreated in the *kirimahhu* of the heartland. In fact, the two aspects of the *kirimahhu* which were mentioned in Sennacherib's texts, the forests of the mountains and the marshes of Babylonia, were also represented pictorially in the narratives from Court VI of the Southwest Palace. Though the landscapes in Sennacherib's reliefs were rife with detail, the fullest pictorial conception of the North Syrian landscape that was reconstructed within Assyria occurred in the reign of Aššurbanipal. As in Sargon's reign, there were several visual linkages between the hunt, the *bit-hilani* and a wooded and hilly landscape from Aššurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh. Reliefs showing the royal gardens served as what I have called the "display of the display" of the North Syrian landscape. In previous reigns, the visual association between the fertility and abundance of this foreign landscape and the ability of the king to create it was not directly asserted. In the images from room S₁, however, the image of the royal couple sitting under the grape arbor laden with fruit and awaiting the audience of a captive Iranian king directly linked the king's acquisitional and creational identities.

The lengthy and detailed analysis of texts and images in chapter five demonstrated that the imagining of an imperial periphery in Assyria was a massively intricate yet at the same time subtly deliberate facet of Assyrian ideology. The texts and images which

attested to the collecting of the animate North Syrian landscape also represented this landscape as full of diversity, abundance and the wildness of nature. The images and descriptions of the animate collections of North Syria in Assyrian texts and reliefs therefore served alongside with the inanimate furniture stationed in the palaces to construct royal identity. The ivory objects danced in tandem with the narratives in the reliefs which surrounded them in one great decorative spectacle.

By relinquishing the notion that the landscape of North Syria, as reconstructed in Assyria both tangibly and in texts and images, was an empirical entity, we are able to examine how the imagining of the North Syrian landscape would have played a role in the construction of both the acquisitive and creational identities of the kings. The abducted features of the landscape--its plants, animals, furniture, stones, etc.--were attestations to the king's acquisitive abilities. They were acquired from abroad from a weak and dependent area by the sole person capable of their acquisition, the king of Assyria. Many of the items, however, were not native to Assyria and were therefore essentially brought into the Assyrian world for the first time, that is they were metaphorically created and at times precisely ordered by the king. The collection of objects from North Syria took part in the reconstruction of royal identity by "proving" the acquisitional and creational abilities of the king. The value which the ivory objects in particular garnered from this imperial practice was more than symbolic or monetary. These objects garnered and contributed metonymic value to the Assyrian heartland through their ability to evoke and reach out to the beneficial land of their origins, a lush and diverse Other world.

In conclusion, the royal collecting of the entire animate and inanimate landscape of North Syria, an extremely complex and oft-changing phenomenon of texts and images, served as an imaginative narrative which constituted and disseminated Assyrian ideology. It is in this context of re-ordering, recreation and reification that the Nimrud ivories carved in the North Syrian style gained their ideological significance and meaning in the foreign context in which they were found. The ivories were nostalgic reminders of their origins, resonating with the life of that lush, diverse, and beneficial territory. The collections of North Syrian ivory objects performed within the Assyrian ideology of conquest, capture and recreation.

My intention in this study was to show that the Nimrud ivories carved in the North Syrian style were abducted symbols of a lush, pleasure-filled hinterland. I have attempted this venture using many cross-cultural and cross-chronological comparisons. A risky stance by some measures, I stated at the outset that these comparisons are essential tools which make the past relevant to the present and the present relevant to the past. As long as they are not applied whole scale with little concern for context or with little understanding of the nuances of each civilization and its language, they are a useful venue in which our understanding of ancient Assyria may be enriched. There are certain similarities between the past and the present which *must* be acknowledged explicitly and not implied tacitly. An examination of the relevance of these ancient objects for royal identity construction can ultimately lead to a greater understanding of our own consumer culture which is so enthralled with material possessions.

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Appendix One: Brief History of the Neo-Assyrian Empire

As with most empires, the Neo-Assyrian empire grew out of the efforts of its predecessors. The major sources for Assyrian history include the year-by-year annals, and stone inscriptions found throughout the empire, most prominently in the capital cities of the heartland. While these sources give us an Assyrian-centered view of events, the events within them nevertheless can be corroborated by outside sources, namely the Old Testament and other documents from regions outside of Assyria such as Babylonia. In addition to the annals, the order of the predecessors of the Neo-Assyrian empire were recorded in a series of king lists from the royal city of Ashur, the traditional cult city and capitol of the empire. These lists suggest that the Neo-Assyrian kings, who governed for two hundred and fifty years during the first millennium B.C., were the final rulers in a long line of earlier Assyrian kings. Hence, the period from ca. 1300-1000 B.C. is known as the Middle Assyrian period, which is followed from ca. 900-600 B.C. by the Neo-Assyrian period.⁸⁰⁵ Above all, the Neo-Assyrian kings, like their Middle Assyrian predecessors, were expansionist as they were commanded by the gods during their coronation to “Enlarge your land!”⁸⁰⁶

⁸⁰⁵The history that I give here is a normative history as gleaned from a number of sources, including Hallo and Simpson, 1971; Kuhrt, 1995; and the *Cambridge Ancient History*, volume III, ed. Smith, 1965. It is reduced and simplified in order to allow the reader to get a general picture of the construction and extent of the empire. It is however by no means intended to be a complete or detailed account.

⁸⁰⁶Kuhrt, 1995, p. 508.

The Neo-Assyrian period can be further divided into three main historical phases. The earliest phase began with the reassertion of Assyrian control over areas to the west of the heartland which were dominated by the Middle Assyrian kings. This first phase ended in a period of relative weakness and fragmentation. The middle phase included the subsequent extension and re-organization of Assyrian control over foreign lands to the southwest of the heartland. And the third phase was marked by even more territorial expansion and consolidation of power, especially aimed at lands to the east and south of Assyria.

The Neo-Assyrian period is said to begin with the king Aššurnasirpal II, who moved the capital of Assyria to a new site, Nimrud (ancient Kalhu) and built a large palace there.⁸⁰⁷ This king also re-asserted Assyrian dominance in the regions immediately to the west of Assyria as far as the great bend in the Euphrates river near the city of Carchemish (see map, Figure 1). Thus Aššurnasirpal II campaigned and effectively extended Assyrian hegemony over the heart of North Syria. Aššurnasirpal II was succeeded by his son Shalmaneser III, who continued the westward expansion of the empire. Shalmaneser III either directly controlled or gained the loyalty of vassal states as far south as Hamath and Damascus in the area known as South Syria. He also concluded a diplomatic treaty with the important state of Babylonia in southern Mesopotamia. The end of Shalmaneser III's reign was characterized by a period of weakness in which his

⁸⁰⁷Occasionally, the Neo-Assyrian period is said to also encompass the reigns of Ashur-dan II through to Tukulti-Ninurta II. (See for example, Kurht, 1995, p. 375) However, we will begin our discussion with the first king who built a royal palace outside of the ancient city of Ashur, thus launching a new architectural era.

sons jockeyed for power. This fragmentation within the king's reign was followed by the weakest period in Assyria, politically speaking, in which the officials living in areas outside of the Assyrian heartland seemed to have acquired a fair degree of autonomous power. The unity of the empire to the west was nevertheless maintained for the next strong king.

Tiglath-pileser III managed to pull the Assyrian heartland out of its period of relative political weakness as he reasserted direct royal control over the western periphery. He re-organized the conquered territories of North and South Syria at this point by appointing purely Assyrian officials over them. He also managed to extend Assyrian hegemony farther to the south by demanding the vassalage of the kings of the Levant and eastern Turkey. Finally, he ventured militarily into the regions to the north of Assyria known as Urartu and to the southwest, known as Elam. He was succeeded, perhaps illegitimately,⁸⁰⁸ by his son Sargon II. Sargon II continued the military successes of his father but was not content to live in the old city of Nimrud, therefore, he moved the capital of the heartland to a new city, Khorsabad (ancient Dur-Šarrukin). Sargon's reign was marked by more military expansion, especially into western Anatolia, and to the north further into Urartu. Sargon also consolidated Assyrian power over Babylonia to the south and southern Syria and Palestine.

Sargon was succeeded by his son Sennacherib, who moved the capital of Assyria once again to the city of Nineveh (ancient Ninua) and thus inaugurated the final phase of

⁸⁰⁸Sargon II was probably a usurper. As Tiglath-pileser III's second son whose older brother was promised the throne and was alive, he had no legitimate right to rule.

Neo-Assyrian history. Sennacherib's reign is characterized by a focus on the relationship between Assyria and Babylonia and expansion into southwestern Iran to consolidate power over the Elamites. Sennacherib treated Babylonia with particular brutality due to its constant rebellion against Assyrian hegemony. In the west, Sennacherib maintained the empire created by his predecessors by putting down the occasional rebellion. By Sennacherib's reign, the Assyrian empire was nearly at its territorial height as it controlled as far west as the Egyptian border and western Anatolia to as far east as Susa in southwestern Iran.

Sennacherib was followed by his son Esarhaddon, who extended the southern border of the empire to include most of northern Egypt. Esarhaddon reversed his father's policy of brutality against Babylonia by rebuilding the temples of that ancient city which Sennacherib had razed.⁸⁰⁹ Esarhaddon was succeeded by his son Aššurbanipal who extended Assyrian hegemony over southern Egypt and was forced to deal with rebellion and reassert control of Elam in Iran. Aššurbanipal encountered strict opposition to his rule in the form of his brother Šamaš-šum-ukin, who battled the king in an Assyrian civil war. The civil war at the end of Aššurbanipal's reign along with the vast nature of the empire and overextension of the army effectively weakened both the king and the empire, so that the Assyrian heartland was ripe for destruction by the end of the seventh century B.C. The fall of Assyria between the years of 612-610 B.C. is traditionally ascribed to a coalition of Iranians and Babylonians, perennial Assyrian enemies, who banded together

⁸⁰⁹For more on Esarhaddon's political policies, see Porter, 1993.

and were finally able to destroy and burn the capitals of Assyria.

Assyrian Kings and the Dates of Their Reigns (B.C.):⁸¹⁰

Aššur-dan II	934-912
Adad-nirari II	911-891
Tukulti-Ninurta II	890-884
Aššurnasirpal II	883-859
Shalmaneser III	858-824
Šamši-Adad V	823-811
Adad-nirari III	810-783
Shalmaneser IV	782-773
Aššur-dan III	772-755
Aššur-nirari V	754-745
Tiglath-pileser III	744-727
Shalmaneser V	726-722
Sargon II	721-705
Sennacherib	704-681
Esarhaddon	680-669
Aššurbanipal	668-627
Aššur-etel-ilani	
Sin-šumu-lišir	
Sin-šar-iškun	-612
Aššur-uballit II	611-609

⁸¹⁰From the chronology of J.A. Brinkman published in Oppenheim, 1964, p. 346.

Appendix Two: Discussion of the Distribution of Ivory Styles at Nimrud

This appendix contains a fuller description of the archaeological distribution of ivory styles in the two large, intact and for the most part fully excavated palaces at Nimrud, the Northwest Palace and Fort Shalmaneser. The conclusions of these analyses are presented for the sake of brevity in chapter three, part one. In addition, the discussion of the distribution of ivory styles from the remainder of the royal buildings at Nimrud, including the Burnt/Southeast Palace and the Nabu Temple, are presented in brief form in chapter three, part one .

Northwest Palace

The first ivories were discovered at Nimrud by Layard in the 1840's. A complete account of this discovery is provided by Layard in *Nineveh and Its Remains*.⁸¹¹ The largest collection of ivories discovered by Layard, numbering sixty-three in total, were found in rooms V, and W (extending into X) in the Northwest Palace (Plan of Northwest Palace, Figure 8).⁸¹² These three rooms formed a part of the more private quarters of the palace, between the secondary courtyard and the domestic wing. For the most part, these ivories were exceedingly Egyptianizing in style, thus the majority of them have been

⁸¹¹For a summary of these discoveries, see Barnett, 1935 and CNI, 1957, pp. 15-29.

⁸¹²Layard, 1849b/1, p. 62 and 1849b/2, p. 8. The ivories are partially illustrated in Layard, 1849a, pl. 88-9.

characterized as Phoenician.⁸¹³ In addition, Layard discovered incidental ivory pieces, many of them in the Assyrian style, scattered in rooms throughout the Northwest Palace and to its south. While their relatively small concentration suggests that they were not purposefully stored or gathered together, the majority of incidental ivory finds within the Northwest Palace were Assyrian in style and it is possible that these small concentrations indicate single pieces of furniture which were in use as opposed to in storage.⁸¹⁴

Another major concentration of ivories from the Northwest Palace was excavated by Mallowan when he returned to the site more than one hundred years later in the 1950's. Mallowan re-excavated much of the Northwest Palace and encountered the excavation debris of Layard's workmen. He found an additional thirty pieces, in Phoenician style, in rooms V, W and X⁸¹⁵ and found other small amounts of ivory in several rooms in the different wings of the palace, including a few Assyrian-style ivories in gate E and room EA, next to the outer courtyard. Again, the small concentration of

⁸¹³For a complete listing of the particular types and subjects of Phoenician ivories found in these rooms, see Barnett, 1935, p. 182. As discussed above in chapter one, Winter takes exception to the Phoenician identification, suggesting that some of the Layard ivories, including the woman-at-the-window plaques should be considered South Syrian in style. (1981b, p. 111) The important point is that they are *not* considered North Syrian in style by any scholars.

⁸¹⁴However, there are not enough complete plaques to compose single pieces of furniture to support this. Furthermore, there are many other reasons which could account, including post-depositional or natural events, for a small scatter of ivories. (See Schiffer, 1987) It is harder, however, to explain away a large concentration of ivories as in rooms V and W as anything but purposeful storage. For illustrations of these pieces, some of which have not been accurately provenanced at Nimrud, see Barnett, CNI, series D-O.

⁸¹⁵Mallowan, 1951, pp. 1-2.

these ivories in the more public rooms of the palace does not indicate a purposeful storage, but may indicate their actual use. Finally, Mallowan excavated hundreds of fragments of ivories, in many different styles, from three wells in the domestic wing of the palace of rooms NN, AB, and AJ.⁸¹⁶ Many of the ivories were stripped from their wooden frames and thrown haphazardly down the wells, thus their original depositional situation is not known. However, it is possible that they were stored nearby in the domestic wings of the palace since Mallowan also discovered a scatter of ivories in these rooms.⁸¹⁷ The styles of these ivories varies, but they are predominantly Phoenician, including the two most famous ivories, the “Mona Lisa” and two examples of the “Lioness mauling a Nubian”.⁸¹⁸ The excavations in the 1970's by the Iraqis added to the Northwest palace ivories, as they excavated deeper in well AJ.⁸¹⁹ In the well were found many Phoenician and a few Assyrian pieces, however, the majority of the finds were North Syrian, including some unique pieces for which no known parallels from Nimrud or other Near Eastern sites exist.

Fort Shalmaneser

The NE, NW, SE and S Quadrants

Though the ivories in the NE, NW and SE quadrants were few in number and

⁸¹⁶See Mallowan, 1953 and N&RI, pp. 122-163, *passim*.

⁸¹⁷Mallowan, N&RI, pp. 128-143.

⁸¹⁸Mallowan, N&RI, color plate II and figs. 81-2. Some exceptions include the “Ugly Sister” mask, identified as Syrian by Mallowan (1978, p. 53) and two lions, perhaps Assyrian in style (Mallowan, N&RI, fig. 74-5, p. 136).

⁸¹⁹Safar and al-Iraqi, 1976.

intermixed, Herrmann has remarked that they were predominantly Assyrian in style with additional Phoenician and Intermediate examples.⁸²⁰ There were few single rooms in these quadrants with large concentrations of any one style, though Herrmann has stated that there were only Assyrian ivories in S5 and predominantly Phoenician ivories in S10.⁸²¹ Similarly, she notes a “dearth” of North Syrian ivories in the SE Quadrant.⁸²² The NE quadrant is characterized by an admixture of North Syrian, Intermediate and Phoenician ivories, with relatively few Assyrian fragments. Finally, the NW quadrant contained a similar admixture of ivories, representing the North Syrian, Phoenician, Assyrian and Intermediate styles.⁸²³ To summarize, it appears that three of the six major areas of Fort Shalmaneser exhibit a varied degree of ivories which have been sorted according to their expressive style. A strong amount of evidence that the ivories were sorted by style comes from the Residency (S Quadrant), in which a major collection of Assyrian ivories were found. Otherwise, the ivories, which were heavily fragmented, display no overwhelmingly clear distributional patterns, though certain overall tendencies have been identified by Herrmann. Of course this could be due in some part to the violent sack which befell the palace, thus disrupting its contents in 612 B.C. If we are to use the ivories from the S, NE, NW, and SE quadrants as evidence of sorting activities,

⁸²⁰IFNV, p. xi-xii.

⁸²¹ibid. Herrmann notes that a few woman-at-the-window ivories which were found in S10 exhibit North Syrian, rather than Phoenician physiognomy.

⁸²²IFNV, p. 15.

⁸²³IFNV, pp. 15-21.

we must do so with caution.

The SW Quadrant

It is in the SW quadrant that we find the strongest evidence in the entire city of Nimrud that the ivories were arranged according to their homogeneous characteristics. Rooms SW11/12 and SW37 were vast storage magazines that contained hundreds of ivory fragments which had been smashed but not burned. These two rooms held the largest concentration of ivories ever discovered from this period.⁸²⁴ The excavators noted that the ivories were strewn haphazardly around the room so that it was very difficult to match fragments together in order to assemble whole pieces.⁸²⁵ The fragments originally comprised a variety of items, including pieces of furniture, pyxides and other portable items. Since the ivories were found throughout the thick destruction layer, in some cases several inches off the floor of the room, the excavators have suggested that they were “arranged on racks around the wall, which would indeed have been the natural method of storing such a collection of bric-a-brac.”⁸²⁶ In terms of subject, the assemblages of rooms SW11/12 and 37 were similar for they were dominated by large groups of openwork bulls which are difficult to assign to any one style.⁸²⁷ There were also a large number of

⁸²⁴Barnett, 1982, p. 53.

⁸²⁵D. Oates, 1961, p. 3.

⁸²⁶*ibid.*

⁸²⁷For example, Herrmann suggests that many of the openwork and low relief bulls are North Syrian in style due to their “bulky proportions”. (IFNIV/1, p. 50) This is contrary to Winter, who suggests that they resemble the collection found at Arslan Tash and are therefore of South Syrian manufacture. (1981b, p. 119)

plaques depicting sphinxes and griffins which are entirely Phoenician in style. Finally, there was a large component of Phoenician scenes depicting various elements of Egyptian iconography such as the infant god Horus. In sum, there was a general lack of cohesion in style and subject matter in these two rooms of the SW quadrant. However, if a relative assessment must be made, these rooms were dominated by the Phoenician and South Syrian/Intermediate groups.⁸²⁸

Room SW7 presents an entirely different picture. In this large storage magazine were found a number of nearly complete pieces of furniture composed of several homogeneously decorated large panels of ivory in low relief. The remarkable cohesion in both style and subject matter of the SW7 group has been noted frequently by the excavators and subsequent analysts.⁸²⁹ The panels, which comprised either chair backs or bed heads with wooden frames, were found neatly stacked against each other in five rows leaning against the southern wall of the room.⁸³⁰ In most cases, an entire piece of furniture could be reconstructed due to this archaeological preservation, and this contrasts

⁸²⁸Herrmann notes that the principal contribution of the SW37 ivories has been to expand “the volume and range of the ‘southern tradition’ of ivory carving.” (IFNIV/1, p. 6)

⁸²⁹Mallowan, N&RII, p. 414; Winter, 1973, p. 316 and 1976b, p. 52; Mallowan and Herrmann, IFNIII, p. 35; and Barnett, 1982, p. 53. This homogeneity has led several scholars to conclude that the SW7 ivories were produced in a single center, either Hamath (Barnett); or Samal/Zincirli (Winter).

⁸³⁰There has been a limited debate over whether the panels functioned as bed heads or chair backs. After Mallowan initially suggested that they were bed heads (N&RII, p. 411), Mallowan and Herrmann later confirmed that they were chair backs (IFNIII, p. 3-9).

with the situation of the other rooms in the SW quadrant in which the ivories were found detached from their wooden frames and disarranged. Room SW7 was for some unknown reason spared the violent and purposeful destruction experienced by the rest of the quadrant. As a result, the amount of attention that was given to the organization of the ivories in this room suggests that it was necessary for some reason to preserve the integrity of this assemblage of furniture.⁸³¹ It further suggests that had the ivories of the other rooms not been subject to a violent destruction, they too might have at some point been arranged in a similar neat manner.

The subjects of the SW7 panels consist of seated and standing figures, occasionally with wings, holding either plants or blossoms (See for example, Figure 10). The figures face each other in bilaterally symmetric arrangements along the center axis of the chair back. The figures display some degree of variation in execution, indicating that they were carved by different hands within the same center of production or workshop.⁸³² Many of the figures wear peculiar garments with fringes, tassels and loops which are unique to these panels and which have parallels on stone monuments from North Syrian sites.⁸³³ The facial features of all of the figures are characteristically North Syrian, as

⁸³¹Mallowan suggests on the basis of archaeological stratigraphy that this neat stacking took place in 613 B.C. between the first sack of the Fort in 614 B.C. and the final destruction in 612 B.C. He notes that this was a "collection of furniture which had escaped the general conflagration and was selected as capable of repair and restoration." (N&RII, p. 413)

⁸³²Winter, 1976b.

⁸³³Mallowan and Herrmann, IFNIII, *passim*.

originally defined by Barnett, with large eyes, beaky noses, receding chins, and high foreheads.⁸³⁴ In addition there are several panels which depict characteristically North Syrian subjects, most specifically a bull hunt on chariot, and voluted winged disks. Winter has listed several other elements which place these panels in the North Syrian realm, namely “extremely curvilinear” plant forms; “awkwardly articulated” human limbs, and figures which are “larger in scale, crowding the plaques.”⁸³⁵ There are fewer than twenty fragments in either ivory or glass in the Phoenician style from this room, none of which can be joined in the same manner as the chair backs.⁸³⁶ In addition, I can identify only a single fragment in the Assyrian style which has been published from SW7.⁸³⁷ Thus the collection is remarkably homogeneous in subject and remarkably North Syrian in style. Furthermore, care was taken in the arrangement and placement of the furniture in the room. These three factors all contribute to a conclusion that the ivories from room SW7 were subject to a high degree of organization and were gathered together according to their homogeneous characteristics, whether due to their function as furniture, due to their subject matter or due to their expressive stylistic features. The SW7 ivories are the most convincing evidence from Fort Shalmaneser of the sorting activities required by our narrow definition of a collection, and it could be argued that they are possibly the

⁸³⁴See chapter one, part two for a discussion of this physiognomic classification.

⁸³⁵1976b, p. 29.

⁸³⁶Mallowan, N&RII, figs. 412-412 and Mallowan and Herrmann, IFNIII, nos. 108-110e.

⁸³⁷Mallowan, N&RII, p. 590, fig. 565.

strongest evidence in the entire city of Nimrud for the deliberate collecting of ivories by the elite apparatus of Assyria.

The Throne Block and Room T10

The material from the principal royal reception suite in Fort Shalmaneser remains to be published thoroughly, however in addition to select pieces published by Mallowan, a few pieces from these rooms have been made available for study in London. In addition, Herrmann, who had access to those ivories from the throne block still in Iraq prior to the Gulf War, has published several brief remarks on the style of the pieces.⁸³⁸ While the ivories were found throughout the throne suite, including the throne room itself, T1, the heaviest concentration of them was found in a related storage magazine, room T10.⁸³⁹ The ivories in T10 were overwhelmingly Assyrian in style, both in incised form and in low relief. The subjects include various thin strips with magical figures and heraldic designs,⁸⁴⁰ as well as rows of courtiers and tributaries.⁸⁴¹ This predominance of the Assyrian style in T10 has led Herrmann to conclude that the majority of Assyrian style ivories from Fort Shalmaneser were found in the official reception suite of the palace.⁸⁴²

⁸³⁸For example, Herrmann, IFNV, p. 24.

⁸³⁹It should be noted however that the throne block remains to a large extent unexplored and T10 was the only room that was excavated entirely to floor level according to Mallowan. (N&RII, p. 451)

⁸⁴⁰IFNII, nos. 160, 163-8.

⁸⁴¹IFNII, nos. 36-42, 43-9, 52-4, 110-11.

⁸⁴²IFNV, p. 41.

When the evidence from T10 is combined with the evidence from the Residency (S quadrant), it appears that the Assyrian style of ivories were grouped together, especially in official public rooms. This same distribution of Assyrian ivories within the more public sectors of the royal residence occurred within the Northwest Palace. Once again, this distribution pattern emerges as evidence of conscious and deliberate sorting activities by the persons in charge of the palaces of Assyria. As discussed in chapter one, Herrmann used this distribution pattern to suggest that the Assyrian style of ivory carving “may have been *de rigueur* for state furniture.”⁸⁴³ She mentions however, that while the majority of official suites were decorated with Assyrian furniture, there were ivory pieces from “all over the Empire” within the official rooms of the Fort.⁸⁴⁴

⁸⁴³IFNV, p. 42.

⁸⁴⁴*ibid.*

Appendix Three: References to Ivory Tribute and Booty in Royal Inscriptions

KING	ENGLISH TRANSLATION: ivory and furniture (direct quotations)	PUBLICATION INFORMATION	BOOTY or TRIBUTE?	ENEMY and LOCATION
Aššurnasirpal II	couches of ivory decorated with gold	Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.1, ii 123	tribute	Amme-ba'li of Bit Zamani (Uratu) ¹
	ivory dishes, ivory couches, ivory chests, ivory thrones decorated with silver and gold	RIMA2, A.0.101.1, iii 61-2	tribute	Ahunu of Bit Adini (North Syria)
	beds of boxwood, thrones of boxwood, dishes of boxwood decorated with ivory... elephants' tusks, a gold couch with trimming, objects befitting his royalty	ibid., iii 67-8	tribute	Sangara of Carchemish (North Syria)
	decorated couches of boxwood with trimming, beds of boxwood, decorated beds with trimming, many dishes of ivory and boxwood	ibid., iii 75	tribute	Lubarna of Unqi and Kunulua (North Syria)
	ivory of <i>nahirus</i> , which are sea creatures	ibid., iii 88	tribute	Kings of Sea Coast, Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, Mahallatu, Maizu, Kaizu, Amurru and Arvad (Phoenicia)
	ivory of <i>nahirus</i>	RIMA2, A.0.101.2, 30	tribute	Kings of Sea Coast

Aššurnasirpal II, ct'd	decorated ivory beds with inlay	RIMA2, A.O.101.2, 51	tribute	Lubarna of Unqi and Kunulua (repeated)
	couches of ivory and decorated with gold--the treasure of his palace	RIMA2, A.O.101.17, iv 119-20 (restored)	tribute	Amme-bali of Bit Zamani (repeated)
	thrones of ebony and boxwood, dishes decorated with ivory	RIMA2, A.O.101.17, v 20-21	booty from the lands over which I gained dominion	?
	chests, couches of ivory and decorated with gold, the treasure of his palace	RIMA2, A.O.101.19, 89	tribute	Amme'bali of Bit Zamani (repeats)
	five live elephants	Wiseman, 1952, iii 95	tribute	Governors of Suhi and Lubda (near west)
Shalmaneser III	thrones of ebony and boxwood, dishes decorated with ivory	RIMA2, A.O.101.27, 65	booty from the lands over which I gained dominion	?
	decorated couches	RIMA2, A.O.101.74	tribute	Western area, possibly Unqi ² (North Syria)
	elephant ivory (<i>ZU AM.SI</i>)	Grayson, RIMA3, A.O.102.1, 95'	tribute	Qalparunda of Unqi, Mutallu of Gurgum, Haiianu of Sam'al, Aramu of Bit Agusi (North Syrian coalition)
	a silver bed	RIMA3, A.O.102.2, ii 13a	tribute	Aramu of Bit Agusi (North Syria)

Shalmaneser III, ct'd	a bed of gold, ivory and boxwood	RIMA3, A.0.102.3, 97-8	tribute	Aramu of Bit Agusi (repeated)
	ivory and elephant hides	RIMA3, A.0.102.5, vi 7	tribute	Adinu of Bit Dakkuri (Babylonia)
	ivory and elephant hides	RIMA3, A.0.102.5, vi 8	tribute	Musallim-Marduk of Bit-Amukkani (Babylonia)
	ebony and elephant ivory	RIMA3, A.0.102.6, ii 54	tribute	Adinu and Musallim-Marduk, Babylonians (repeated)
	ebony and elephant ivory	RIMA3, A.0.102.8, 29'	tribute	Adinu and Musallim-Marduk (repeated)
	elephant ivory without measure	RIMA3, A.0.102.14, 155	tribute	Sasi of Kurussa, Surri of Unqi and Kunulua (North Syria)
	elephant ivory without measure	RIMA3, A.0.102.16, 284'	tribute	Kurussa, Unqi and Kunulua (repeated)
	elephant ivory	RIMA3, A.0.102.60	tribute	Qalparunda of Unqi (North Syria)
	elephant ivory, elephant hides	RIMA3, A.0.102.61	tribute	Musallim-Marduk of Bit Amukkani and Adinu of Bit Dakkuri (Babylonia, repeated)
	ivory (ZÚ.MEŠ AM.SI.MEŠ)	RIMA3, A.0.102.90	tribute	Mardu-apla-usur of Suhi (near West)
	ivory and ebony	RIMA3, A.0.102.92	tribute	Qarparunda of Unqi (North Syria)

Šalmaneser III, ct'd	elephants	RIMA3, A.O.102.89	tribute	Mušri (Egypt)
Šamši-Adad V	his camp bed	RIMA3, A.O.103.1, iv 45	booty	Marduk-balaṣu-iqbi (Babylonia)
	elephant hides, elephant tusks, [exotic] woods, a bed made of ibory and ebony, ...royal accoutrements	RIMA3, A.O.103.2, iv 25'-29'	booty	Baba-ahha-iddina (Babylonia)
	his royal couch	RIMA3, A.O.103.4, 10' and 17'	booty	Marduk-balaṣu-iqbi (repeated)
Adad-nirari III	an ivory bed, a couch with inlaid ivory	RIMA3, A.O.104.8, 20	tribute	Mari of Damascus (South Syria)
Tiglath-pileser III	his bed...his processional chariot, the cylinder-seal around his neck, as well as his necklace	Tadmor, 1994, Ann. 17, 11'-16'	booty	Sarduri of Uraṣu
	elephant hides, ivory	Tadmor, 1994, Ann. 21, 7'-10'	tribute	Kuštašpi of Kummuh, ...of Tyre, Urikki of Que... Pisiris of Carchemish, Tarhulara of Gurgum (North Syria)
	elephant hides, ivory	Tadmor, 1994, Ann. 25, 1'	tribute	"within the city of Arpad" (Phoenicians or Syrians?)

Tiglath-pileser III, ct'd	elephant hides, ivory...all kinds of precious things from the royal treasure...	Tadmor, 1994, Ann. 14, 1-9 (restored from Ann. 3, 4, and 27)	tribute	Coalition including Kummuh, Damascus, Samaria, Tyre, Byblos, Que, Carchemish, Hamath, Samal Gurgum, Melid, Kaska, Tabal, Tuna, Tuhana, Iштunda, Hubishna, Arabs (North Syria, Anatolia, Deserts)
	his royal bed	Tadmor, 1994, Summary 7, reverse 50	booty	Cities between Urartu and Kummuh (North Syria or Urartu)
	... of ivory, ebony, inlaid with precious stones and gold, together with...ivory...	Tadmor, 1994, Summary 8, 6'-7'	tribute	City in the sea, either Arwad or Tyre (Phoenicia)
Sargon II, from Khorsabad	I opened his palace, his treasure house and took...elephant hides and ivory	Fuchs, 1994, Ann. 717, 72a	booty	Pisiris of Carchemisha and Mita of Muški (North Syria and Phrygia)
	ivory	Fuchs, 1994, Ann. 713, 125-6	tribute	Piru of Muşri (Egypt), Samsi of Arabs, Itamra of Sabaeans (Desert)
	a silver bed, a silver throne and a silver seat	Fuchs, 1994, Ann. 710, rooms II and V, 308	booty	Marduk-apla-idinna (Babylonia)
	his golden bed, his golden seat	Fuchs, 1994, Ann. 709-707, 350-1	booty	Bit Iakin (Babylonia)
	elephant hides....	Fuchs, 1994, Ann. 709-707, Saal?, 359a	booty	Bit Iakin (repeated, Babylonia)

Sargon II, ct'd	silver throne	ibid., 363	booty	Bit Iakin (repeated, Babylonia)
	elephant hides, ivory	Fuchs, 1994, Ann. 405-6	tribute	Muttallu of Kummuh (North Syria)
	golden bed, the golden throne, the golden seat	Fuchs, 1994, Prunkinschrift, 129-30 (Display inscription)	booty?	in Babylonia
	elephant hides and ivory	Fuchs, 1994, Prunkinschrift, 180-6	tribute	kings of the lands and provincial rulers brought to Babylonia for a festival
Sargon II, from Ashur	chairs of ivory, ebony and boxwood; X great tables of ivory, ebony and boxwood, befitting royalty which were inlaid with gold and silver; 8 strong cupboard-plates and fruit baskets of ivory, ebony and boxwood with inlays of gold and silver; 6 vessel stands, pots, wall shades, stools and a stand for the cup-bearer of ivory, ebony and boxwood with inlays of gold and silver; lid and silver...	Mayer, 1983, IV 353-356.	booty	Temple of Haldi, god of King Urzana of Mušasir (Uratu)

Sargon II, ct'd	1 ivory bed, whose surface was silver--the resting place of the god; 139 staves of ivory, tables of ivory, fruitbaskets of ivory, knives of ivory, small knives of ivory and ebony with golden inlays. Objects of gold, silver, lead, copper, iron, ivory, maple, boxwood and all other kinds of wood	Mayer, 1983, IV 388-9	booty	ibid.
Sargon II, from Nimrud	Staves of ivory,... whose inlay was of copper and silver,...royal insignia, 8 great <i>mahrists</i> of ivory and boxwood,...drinking cups of ivory	Mayer, 1983, IV 406	booty	from city, palace and temple in countless quantities (Urartu)
Sennacherib	couches of ivory, house-chairs of ivory, elephant hide, ivory (lit. elephant's teeth) ebony... Beds, couches, palanquins, his royal standards, whose inlay was of gold and silver... his artisans... ivory beds, house chairs of ivory, elephant hides, ivory (elephant's teeth), ebony, boxwood... ivory beds, house chairs of ivory, elephant's hide, ivory, maple (ebony?), boxwood....	Luckenbill, ARAB II, #213 Luckenbill, 1924, p. 34, 43-4; Frahm, 1997, T16, p. 104. Luckenbill, 1924, p. 52, 31; Luckenbill, ARAB II # 260; Frahm, 1997, T1, p. 43-5 Luckenbill, 1924, p. 60, 56; Frahm, 1997, T4, 55-56 Luckenbill, ARAB II, # 240; Frahm, 1997, T16, p. 103	booty tribute booty tribute tribute	Urartian Temple of Haldi treasure (repeated almost <i>verbatim</i>) Hezekiah of Jerusalem (Judah) Merodach-Baladan of Babylon (Babylonia) Hezekiah of Jerusalem (Judah) Hezekiah of Jerusalem (repeated)

Esarhaddon	elephant hides, and ivory, maple and boxwood	Borger, 1967, Nin. B, episode 5, I 10-35; Luckenbill, ARAB II #527	booty	Abdi-Milkutti of Sidon (Phoenicia)
	ivory	Borger, Monument C- on cliff north of Beirut, at river nahr-el Kelb, 14 and 22; Luckenbill, ARAB II, #585	booty	Taharqa, king of Egypt (booty from Memphis)
Aššurbanipal	royal paraphernalia which the former kings of Akkad and Šamaš-šum-ukin had squandered in Elam to (secure) their assistance ...all movable furniture of his palaces, on which he sat and lay down, from which he ate and drank, in which he bathed and was anointed...	Luckenbill, ARAB II, #809	booty	Susa ³ (Iran)
	the royal paraphernalia of Šamaš-šum-ukin...all sorts of palace furniture (lit. needed or desired things of his palace), all there was...they passed in review before me	Luckenbill, ARAB II, #1036	booty	Madaktu in Elam (Iran) ⁴
	The royal equipment of every sort, belonging to Šamaš-šum-ukin, the faithless brother...his chariots, the coach of his royal riding,... all kinds of fine furnishings of his palace...	Luckenbill, ARAB II, #1092	booty	Madaktu in Elam (repeated)

1. The location of each city is according to Parpola, 1970.
2. Reade has suggested Patina/Unqi on the basis of the discussion of female musicians elsewhere on the monument. These musicians have only been received from patina in other Aššurnasirpal texts. (1980c, p. 20) In addition, Aššurnasirpal received decorated couches from Unqi, according to his annals.
3. The original owner of the furniture is Aššurbanipal's brother Šamaš-šum-ukin, who gave the furniture to Susa in return for their compliance in his civil war vs. Aššurbanipal.
4. Once again, the original owner of these items was Šamaš-šum-ukin, according to Russell. (1991, p. 63)

Appendix Four: References to Gardens in the Royal Inscriptions

KING	ENGLISH TRANSLATION	RELEVANT AKKADIAN WORDS	PUBLICATION INFORMATION
Aššurnasirpal II	I dug out a canal from the Upper Zab (and) called it Patti-hegalli. I planted orchards in its environs. I offered fruit (and) wine to Ashur, my lord and the temples of my land.	orchards= <i>KIRI₆.MEŠ</i> ¹	Grayson, RIMA2, A.0.101.1, iii 135-7.
	I rebuilt this city. I dug out a canal from the Upper Zab (and) called it Babelat-hegalli ('Bearer of Abundance'). I planted orchards with all kinds of fruit trees in its environs. I pressed wine (and) gave the best to Ashur, my lord and the temples of my land.	orchards= <i>KIRI₆.MEŠ</i> all kinds of fruit trees= <i>GIŠ.GUB.MEŠ DÙ.A.BI GEŠTIN.MEŠ</i>	RIMA2, A.0.101.17, v 8-9.
	I dug out a canal from the Upper Zab (and) called it Patti-hegalli. I planted orchards in its environs. I offered fruit of every kind (and) wine to Assur, my lord, and the temples of my land.	orchards= <i>KIRI₆.MEŠ</i>	RIMA2, A.0.101.26, 54-55. (Repeated)

¹The sumerograms for *KIRI₆* actually read *GIŠ.SÁR*. These two sumerograms have been equated with *KIRI₆* by Powell, 1972, pp. 189-91.

I dug out a canal from the Upper Zab, cutting through a mountain at its peak, (and) called it Patti-hegalli. I irrigated the meadows of the Tigris (and) planted orchards with all kinds of fruit trees in its environs. I pressed wine (and) offered first-fruit offerings to Ashur, my lord, and the temples of my land. I dedicated this city to Ashur, my lord. In the lands through which I traversed, the trees (and) plants (lit. 'seeds') which I saw were: cedar, cypress, *šiniššahu*, *burašu*-juniper,....*dapranu*-juniper, almond, date, ebony, *meskanu*, olive, *s.us.unu*, oak, tamarisk, *duḫdu*, terebinth, and *murrānu*, *mehru*...., *tiātu*, Kanish-oak, *haluppu*, *s.adanu*, pomegranate, *šalluru*, fir, *ingriāšu*, pear, quince, fig, grapevines, *angašu*-pear, *s.unlalu*, *tiipū*, *s.ippūu*, *zanzaliqū*, 'swamp-apple', *hambuququ*, *nuhurtu*, *urzinu* and *kanaktu*. The canal cascades from above into the gardens.

Fragrance pervades the walkways.

Streams of water (as numerous) as the stars of heaven flow in the pleasure garden. Pomegranates which are bedecked with clusters like grape vines... in the garden... [I,] Ašumasirpal, in the delightful garden pick fruit like...

[I dug out] a canal from the Upper Zab (and) called it Patti-hegalli. [I planted] gardens in its environs. I offered...

orchards=*KIRI₆.MEŠ*

trees (and) plants=*GIŠ.MEŠ NUMUN.MEŠ-ni*

=*KIRI₆ šihale*

=*KIRI₆ rišate*

=*KIRI₆.MEŠ*

Shalmaneser III

I moved out from Nineveh and besieged the city Til-Barsip, [Ahunu of Bit-Adini's] fortified city. I surrounded him with my warriors (and) did battle against him. I cut down his gardens and rained flaming arrows upon him.

gardens=*KIRI₆MEŠ*

Grayson, RIMA3, A.O.102.2, ii 68

Tiglath-pileser III

[from Tutammu, king of Unqi:] I captured ...all types of herbs

Tadmor, 1994, Ann 25, 10'

[Rezin of Damascus]: His gardens, orchards without number I cut down

gardens=*kirati.MEŠ*
orchards without number= *šippate ša niba la išu*

Tadmor, 1994, Ann 23, 12'

Sargon II

A park, the likeness of Mount Amanus in which all the aromatic plants of Hatti and fruit trees of the mountains were planted, I set by the [Khorsabad] palace's side.

kirimalihu tamšil KUR.Hamanim gimir hibište KUR.Hatti inbi (GURUN) šade kali-šun qereb-šu hurrušu abtani itattuš.

Fuchs, 1994, Stier, 41-42

A park, the likeness of Mount Amanus in which all the aromatic herbs of Hatti and fruit trees of the mountains were planted, I set but the [Khorsabad] palace's side.

kirimalihu tamšil KUR.Hamanim gimir riqqe KUR.Hatti inbi (GURUN) šade kali-šun qereb-šu hurrušu abtani itattuš.

Fuchs, 1994, XIV, 28-9

Sennacherib

The wealth of mountain and all lands, all the herbs of the land of Hatti, myrrh plants....all kinds of mountain vines, all the fruits of all lands, I set out for my subjects.

Luckenbill, 1924, 114, 19-21.

Gardens, vineyards, all kinds of ... products of all the mountains, the fruits of all lands... I planted...

gardens=*KIRI₆MEŠ*
vineyards=*karāni*

Luckenbill, 1924, 80, 19-20; Frahm, 1987, T122

Sennacherib, ct'd.	A park, a likeness of Mt. Amanus, where in were set out all kinds of aromatic plants and fruits of the orchards and woods, products of the mountains and of Chaldea, I planted by the [Southwest] Palace's side.	<i>kirimahhu tamšil KUR-Hamanim ša gimir šimhia GURUN šippati GIŠ.MEŠ tuklat KUR-i u Kaldi qirib šu hurrušu itaša azqup</i>	Luckenbill 1924, 97, 87; Frahm, 1997, T4, 85
	repeated <i>verbatim</i>	repeated <i>verbatim</i>	Luckenbill, 1924, 101, 57; Frahm, 1997, T 4, 85
	A park, the likeness of Mount Amanus in which all the aromatic plants and fruit of the orchards and woods, products of the mountains and Chaldea along with trees of wool [cotton], I planted by its side.	<i>kiri-mah-hu tamšil KUR.Hamanim ša gimir šimhi-a GURUN šippati GIŠ.MEŠ tuklat KUR-i u KUR.Kaldi adi iššu na-aš šipati qereb-šu hurrušu itaša azqup</i>	Luckenbill, 1924, 111, 55; Frahm, 1997, T10 and T11, 146
	By the side of the city, I laid out a park and a game park. All the aromatic plants of Hatti and the garden fruits of all the trees in the woods, products of the mountains and of Chaldea. Above the city on the open plain I planted vines, all the fruits and olive trees.	<i>ite URU kirimahhu kiri ambasi kullat šimhia KUR.Hatti mulhummu GIŠ.MEŠ tuklat KUR-i u KUR.Kaldi uharriša qereb-šun elen URU EDIN šaburii GIŠ.GEŠTIN gimir GURUN u GIŠ serdi azqup.</i>	Frahm, 1997, T10 and 11, 216-224

Sennacherib, ct'd	By the watercourse of the garden, I let a swamp grow. Therein, I planted reeds. Herons, wild pigs and wild deer, I let go free. Splendidly, they thrived at the command of the gods in the garden on the plain--vines, all possible fruits, olive trees and aromatic plants. Cypress, Sisso and all other types of trees, growing their branches here and there. Birds of the heavens, herons, whose homeland is far away built their nests. The wild swine and deer brought countless offspring into the world.	(Lengthy passage)	Translation: Frahm, 1997, T10 and T11, 242-260=Luckenbill, 1924, 115, 47-60 and 125, 45-48.
	[I] encircled [the temple of the New Year's Fest] with a garden of abundance and orchards of fruit, with luxurious plantations I surrounded its sides.	<i>ana itatišu ušahri-ma kiru nušši šippat muthummu ušaširhsu-ma musari kuzbi itatišu ušalme</i>	Luckenbill, 1924, 137, 34-5=Frahm T136
Esarhaddon	A park the likeness of Mt. Amanus, set out in all kinds of shrubs and aromatic plants and fruit trees, I planted by the palace [at Nineveh's] side.	<i>KIRI₆ MAH tamšil kur-hamanim a kala riqqe u inbi hurrušu itatiša ušalme</i>	Borger, 1967, Nin. A VI, 30-31
Aššurbanipal	A great park of all kinds of fruit trees I planted for my lordly leisure by [the North palace's] sides.	<i>KIRI₆ MAH ša gimir is.s.e GURUN muthummu kalamu ana multa 'uti šarruti-ia azqupa itatešu.</i>	Luckenbill, ARAB II, # 837=Sireck, 1916, 88, x 104

Appendix Five: References and Locations of *bit-hilani*s in Royal Inscriptions

KING	ENGLISH TRANSLATION	PUBLICATION INFORMATION	LOCATION (English)	LOCATION (Akkadian)
Tiglath-pileser III	a <i>bit-hilani</i> (<i>bit-hilanni</i>) modeled after a palace of the land of Hatti, I built for my pleasure in Calah.	Tadmor, 1994, Summ. 7, 18'	in the midst of Nimrud	<i>ina qirib URU.Kalhi</i>
Sargon II, from Khorsabad	a <i>bit-hilani</i> modeled after a palace of the land of Hatti, I set up before its (the palace at Khorsabad's) doors	Fuchs, 1994, Zyl. 64	before the doors of the palace	<i>mihret babi-šin</i>
	a <i>bit-hilani</i> modeled after a palace of the land of Hatti I set up before their doors	Fuchs, 1994, Bronzetafel, 36-39	before the doors of the palaces (at Khorsabad)	<i>mīhret babi-šin?</i>
	With a <i>bit-hilani</i> , modeled after a palace of the land of Hatti, I adorned the doors in a fitting manner	Fuchs, 1994, Silbertafel, 23-24	?? The palace of Khorsabad	<i>ina bit hilani ...ussi-ma babi-šin</i>
	a <i>bit-hilani</i> , modeled after a palace of the land of Hatti I set up before their doors	Fuchs, 1994, Goldtafel, 27-30	before the doors of the palaces of Khorsabad	<i>mehret babi-šin</i>
	a <i>bit-hilani</i> modeled after a palace of the land of Hatti I placed in its doors	Fuchs, 1994, Plattenruckseiten, 20-21	in the doors of the palace of Khorsabad	<i>ina babi-šin</i>

Sargon II, ct'd	a <i>bit-appati</i> modeled after a palace of the land of Hatti which in the language of Amurru is called a <i>bit-hilani</i> I set before their doors	Fuchs, 1994, Stierkolossen, 67-9	before the doors of the palaces of Khorsabad	<i>mihret or ina babi-šin</i>
	a <i>bit-appati</i> modeled after a palace of the land of Hatti which in the language of Amurru is called a <i>bit-hilani</i> , I set up before their doors	Fuchs, 1004, Saal XIV, 36-37	before the doors of the palaces at Khorsabad	[<i>mihret</i>] <i>babi-šin</i>
	a <i>bit-appati</i>[unpreserved] I set up before its doors	Fuchs, 1994, Ann. 433-34	before the doors of the palace at Khorsabad	<i>mihret babi-šin</i>
	a <i>bit-appati</i> modeled after a palace of the land of Hatti which in the languages of Amurru is called a <i>bit-hilani</i> I set up before its doors	Fuchs, 1994, Prunkinschrift, 161-162	before the doors of the palace at Khorsabad	<i>mihret babi-šin</i>
	a <i>bit-appati</i> modeled after a palace of the land of Hatti which in the language of Amurru is called a <i>bit-hilani</i> I set up before its doors	Fuchs, 1994, SII, 28-30	before the doors	<i>mihret babi-šin</i>
	a <i>bit-appati</i> modeled after a palace of the land of Hatti which in the language of Amurru is called a <i>bit-hilani</i> I set up before their doors	Fuchs, 1994, SIV, 105-108	before the doors of the palaces at Khorsabad	<i>mihret</i>
	a <i>bit-appati</i> before their doors	Fuchs, 1994, SV, 38-40	before their doors (plural)	<i>mihret</i>

Sargon II, letter	Discusses the casting of bronze lion columns for the two <i>hilanu</i> palaces	Parpola, 1987, #66, 9	Separate buildings at Khorsabad?	<i>bit-hilani</i>
Sargon II, letter	gate of the bathroom of the big <i>hilanu</i> palace	Parpola, 1987, #67, 4	separate building at Khors.?	<i>bit-hilani dannu</i>
Sennacherib	a <i>bit-appati</i> modeled after a palace of the land of Hatti which in the language of Amurru is called a <i>bit-hilani</i> , I built therein (the palace at Nineveh) for my lordly leisure	Frahm, 1997, T10 and T11, 110-113	within the palace	<i>qereb-šin</i>
	a <i>bit-appati</i> , modeled after a palace of the land of Hatti which in the language of Amurru is called a <i>bit-hilani</i> I constructed inside the doors (of the palace without rival)	Frahm, 1997, T25; Luckenbill, ARAB II, # 410 and 1924, 97, l. 82	inside the doors	<i>qirib-šin</i>
	a <i>bit-mutirrite</i> (house with double doors) ¹ modeled after a palace of the land of Hatti I constructed before the palace doors	Luckenbill, 1924, 106, l. 21-2	before the doors	<i>milhrit</i>
Esarhaddon	no mention of <i>bit-hilani</i>			
Ashurbanipal	I coated great pillars with shining bronze and stood them under the architrave of its (the North Palace at Nineveh's) <i>bit-hilani</i>	Streck, 1916, p. 88, 102 and CAD H/I, p. 185	within the palace ??	???

¹*mutirrite* is from *mutirtum*, meaning double door, see CAD M/II, p. 300.

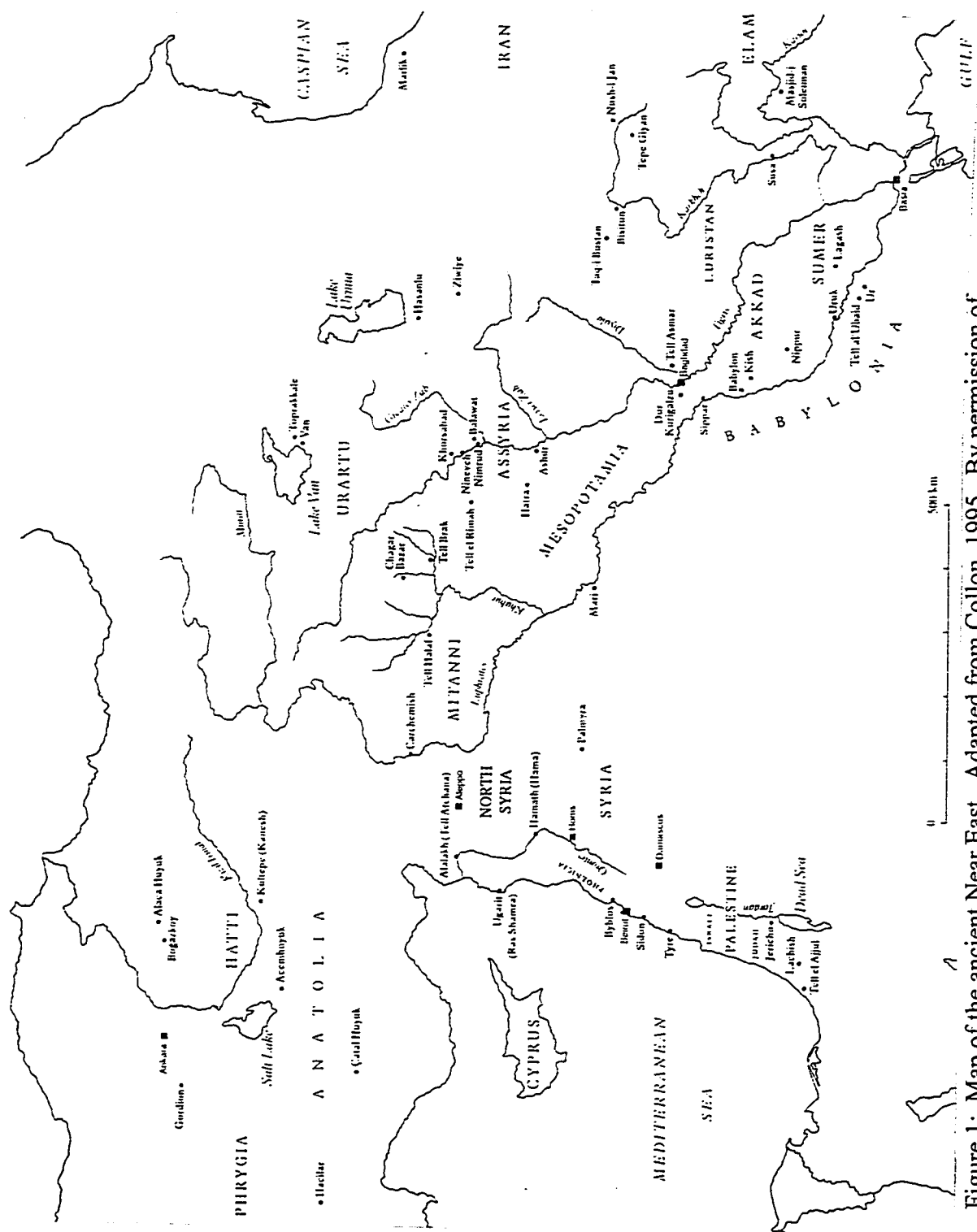


Figure 1: Map of the ancient Near East. Adapted from Collon, 1995. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

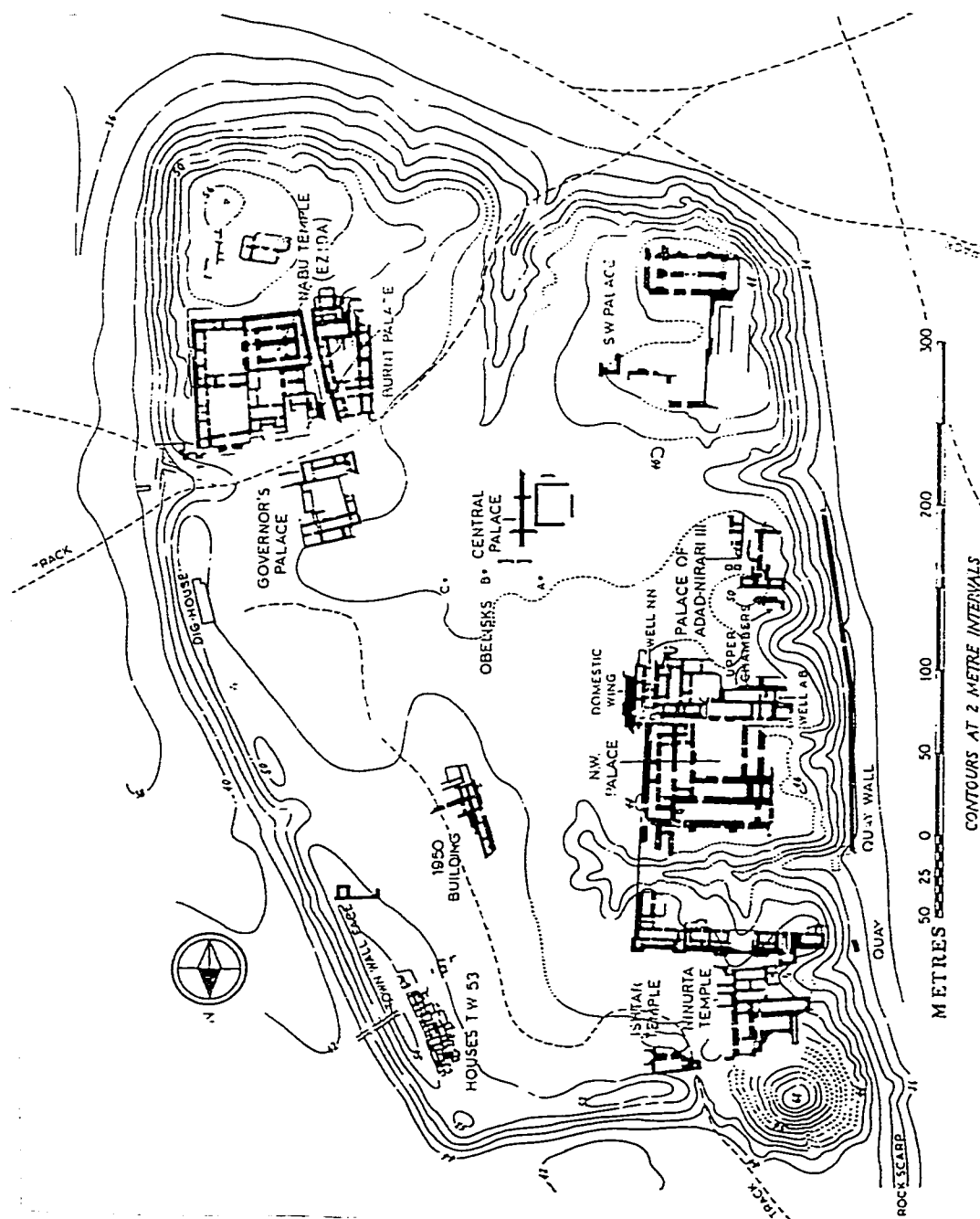


Figure 2: Plan of Nimrud. Mallowan, 1966, fig. 1. By permission of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq.



Figure 3: Example of a North Syrian ivory from room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud. Mallowan and Herrmann, 1974, pl. XIII. By permission of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq.



Figure 4: Example of a North Syrian ivory from well AJ, Northwest Palace, Nimrud. Safar and al-Iraqi, 1976, fig. 21.

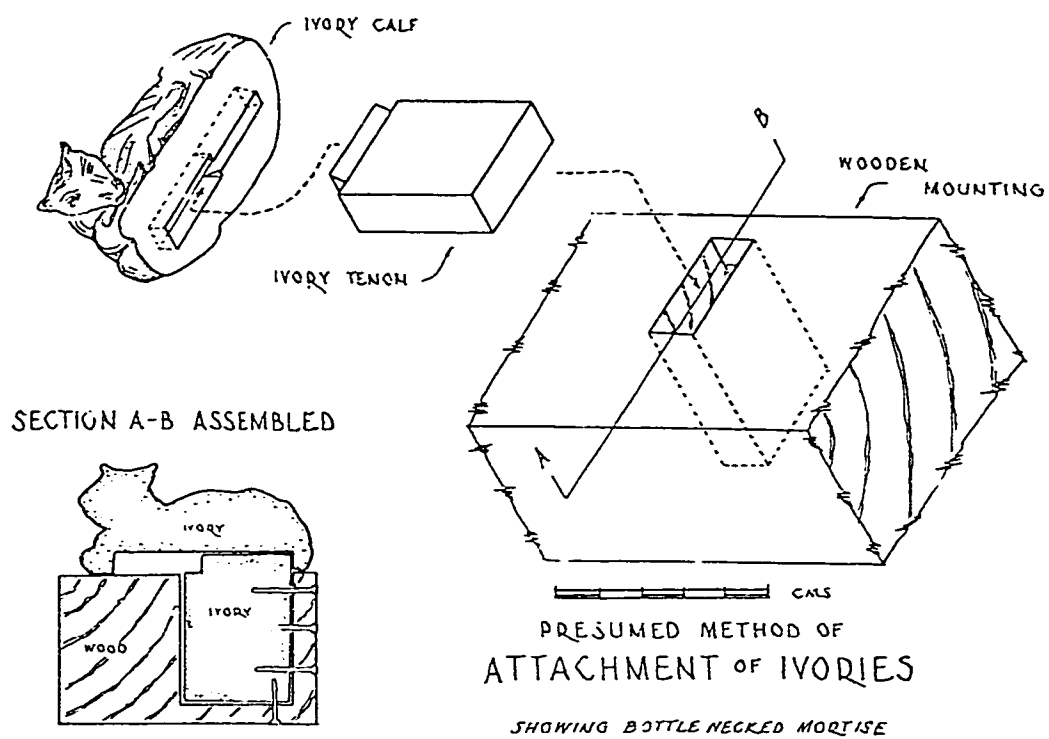


Figure 5: Diagram of method of attachment of ivories. Barnett, 1982, fig. 5.

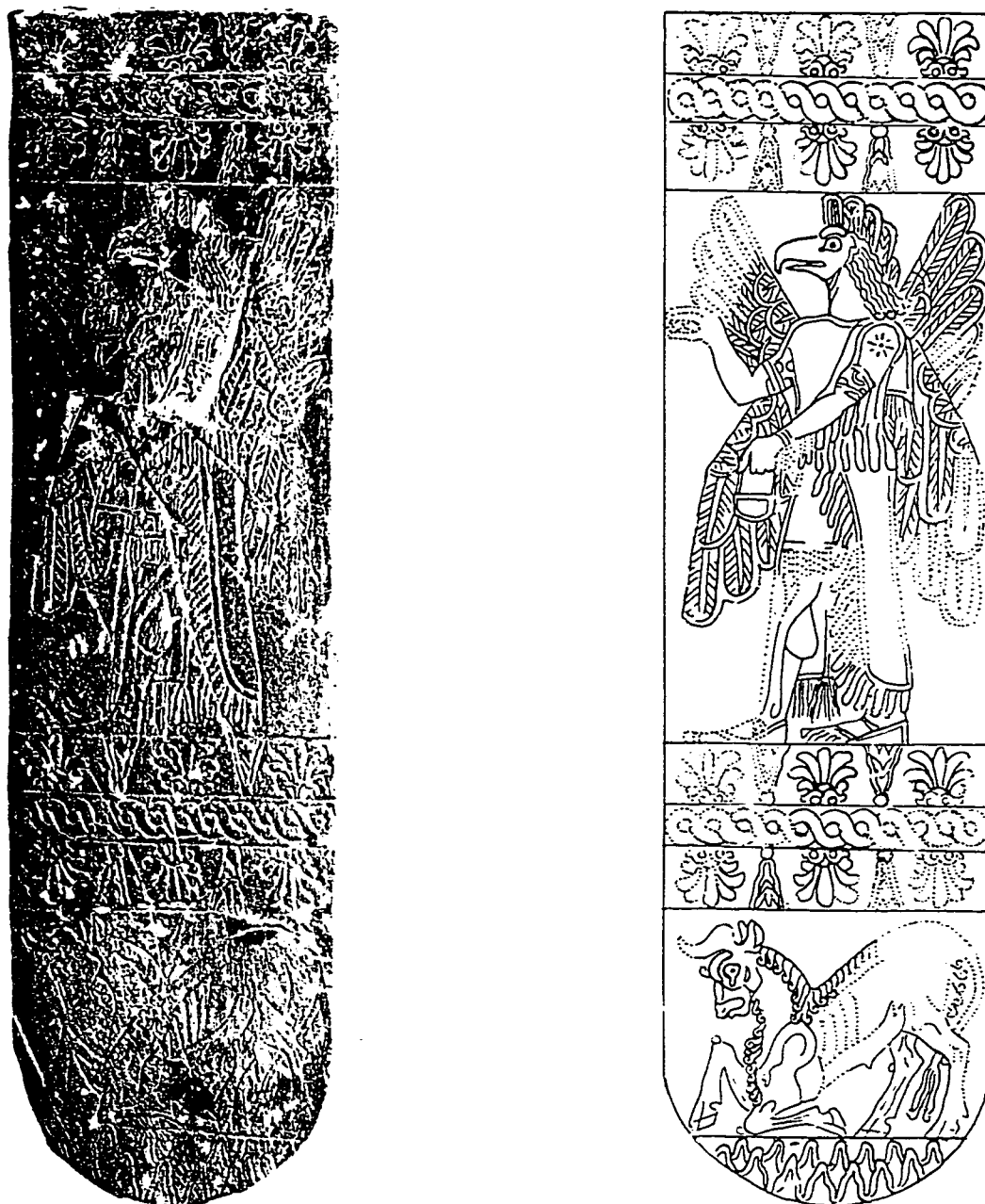


Figure 6: Example of an Assyrian ivory. Mallowan and Davies, 1970, no. 202-2.
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Figure 7: Example of a woman-at-the-window ivory in Phoenician or South Syrian style. Barnett, 1982, pl. 50b.

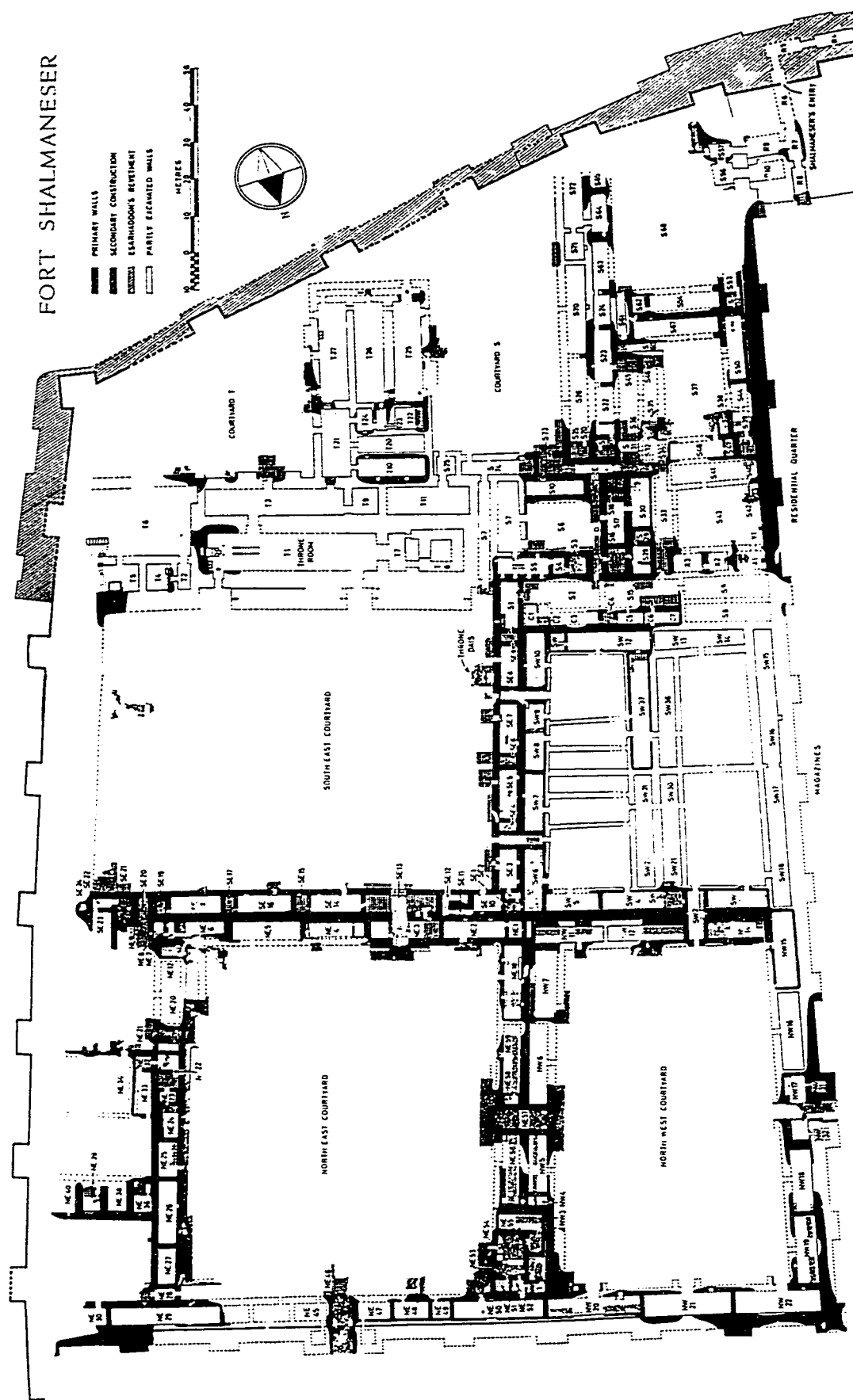


Figure 9: Plan of Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud. Mallowan, 1966, pl. VIII. By permission of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq.

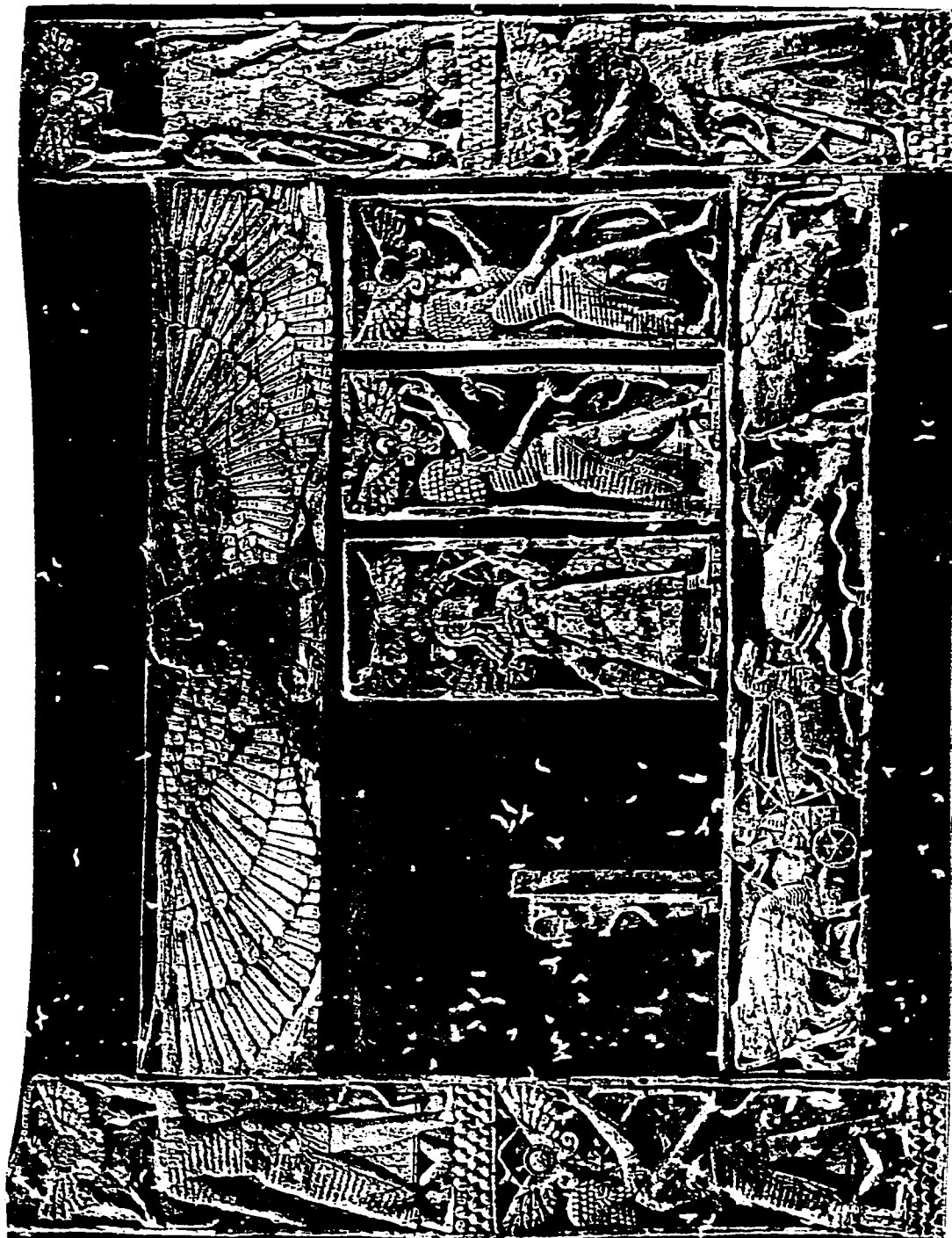


Figure 10: Example of chairback from room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud. Mallowan and Herrmann, 1974, pl. I. By permission of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq.



Figure 11: Relief from room B of Aššurnasirpal II's Northwest Palace showing tusks as booty from Carchemish, Nimrud. Budge, 1914, pl. 20. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 12: Drawings of Balawat Gates of Aššurnasirpal II showing tusks as tribute from Suhi and Carhemish, Balawat. Curtis, 1982, fig. 86. By permission of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq and the Trustees of the British Museum.

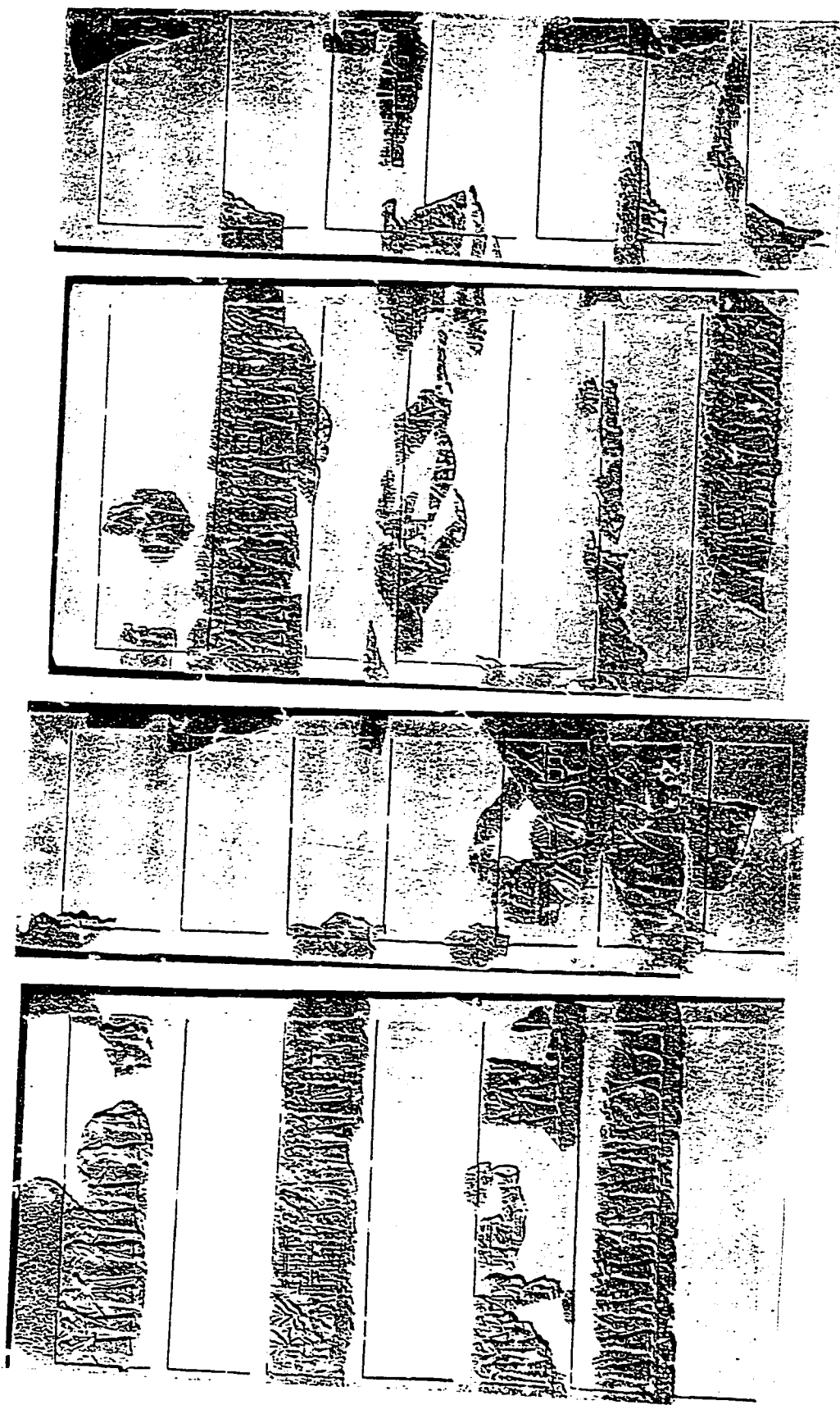


Figure 13: Rassam Obelisk of Aššurnasirpal II, reconstructed, Nimrud. Reade, 1980c, pl. 1.
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Figure 14: Band C2, Rassam Obelisk of Aššurnasirpal II, Nimrud. Reade, 1980c, pl. III.
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Figure 15: Band A5, Rassam Obelisk, Nimrud. Reade, 1980c, pl. VI. By permission of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq and the Trustees of the British Museum.

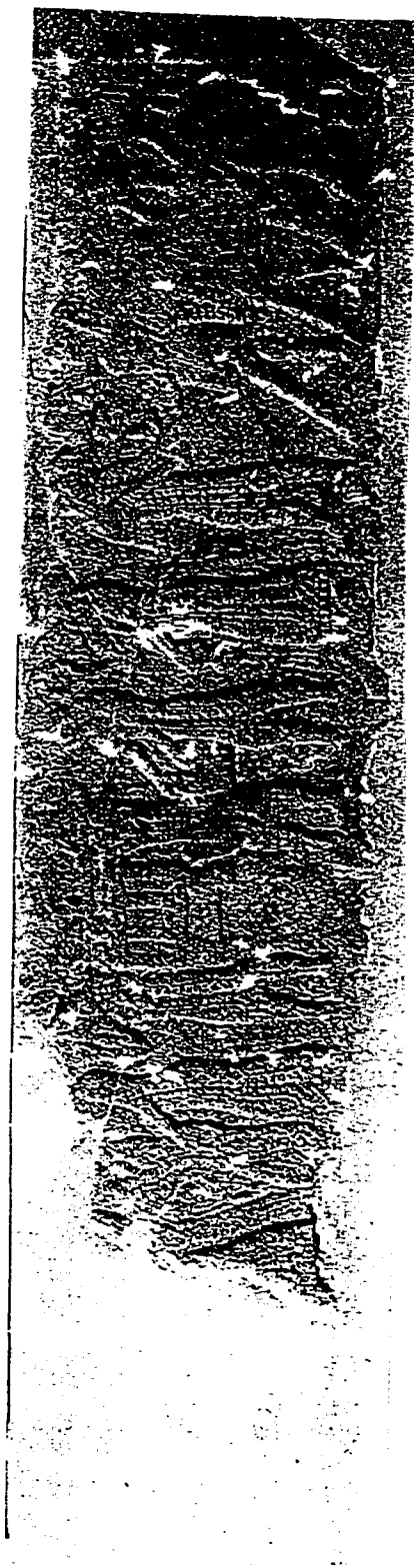


Figure 16: Band C7, Rassam Obelisk, Nimrud. Reade, 1980c, pl. VIII. By permission of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq and the Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 17: Band C4, Rassam Obelisk, Nimrud. Reade, 1980c, pl. V. By permission of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq and the Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 18: Ivory plaque showing furniture as tribute, Nabu Temple, Nimrud. Mallowan and Davies, 1970, pl. XXV. By permission of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq.



Figure 19: Relief showing Aššurnasirpal II on chair with fringed cushion from room G, Northwest Palace, Nimrud. Budge, 1914, pl. 31. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

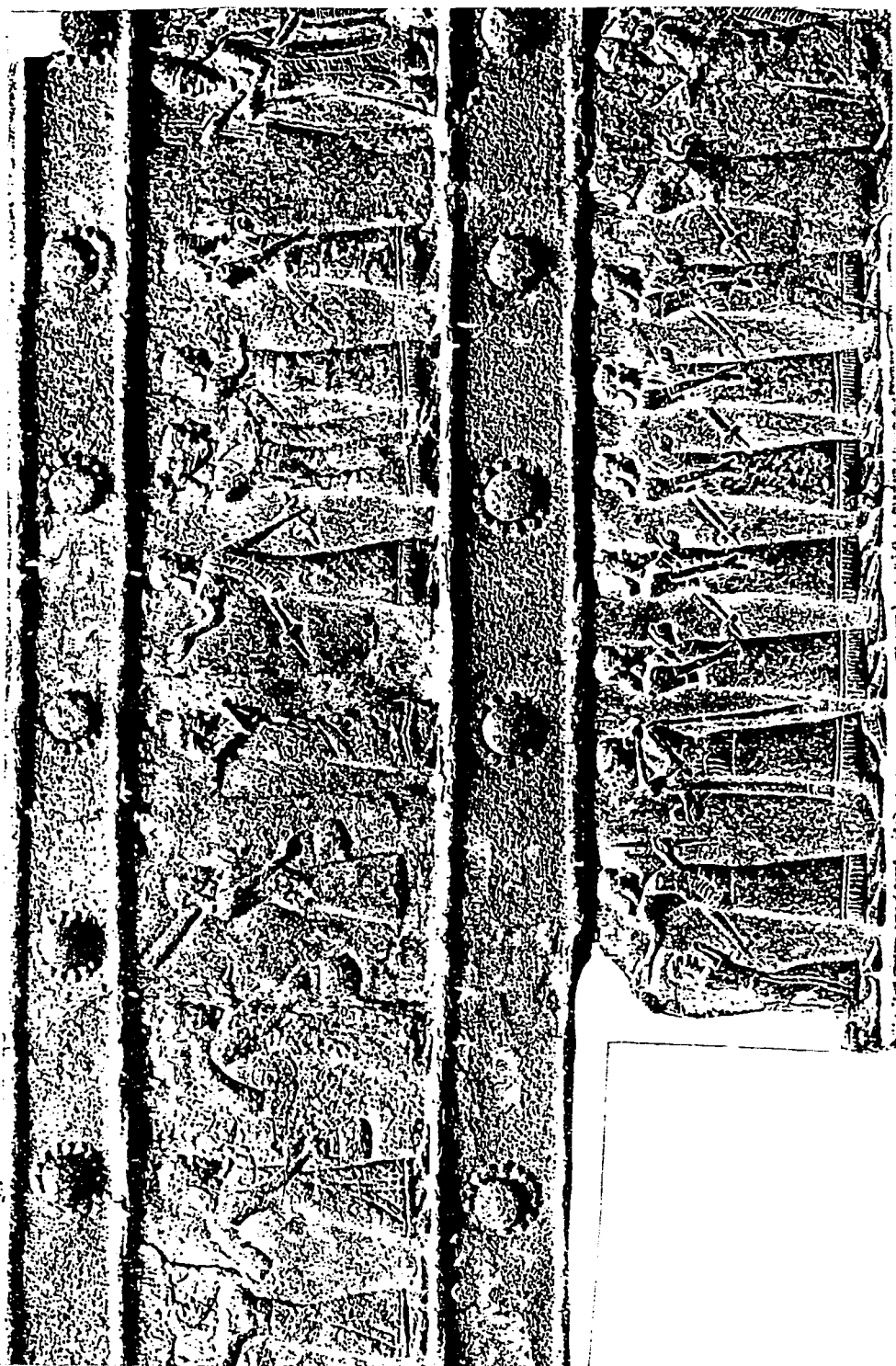


Figure 20: Bronze gates of Shalmaneser III showing tusks as tribute from Unqi, Balawat. King, 1915, pl. XXVIII. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 21: Bronze gates of Shalmaneser III showing tusks as tribute from Carchemish, Balawat. King, 1915, pl. XXXIII. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

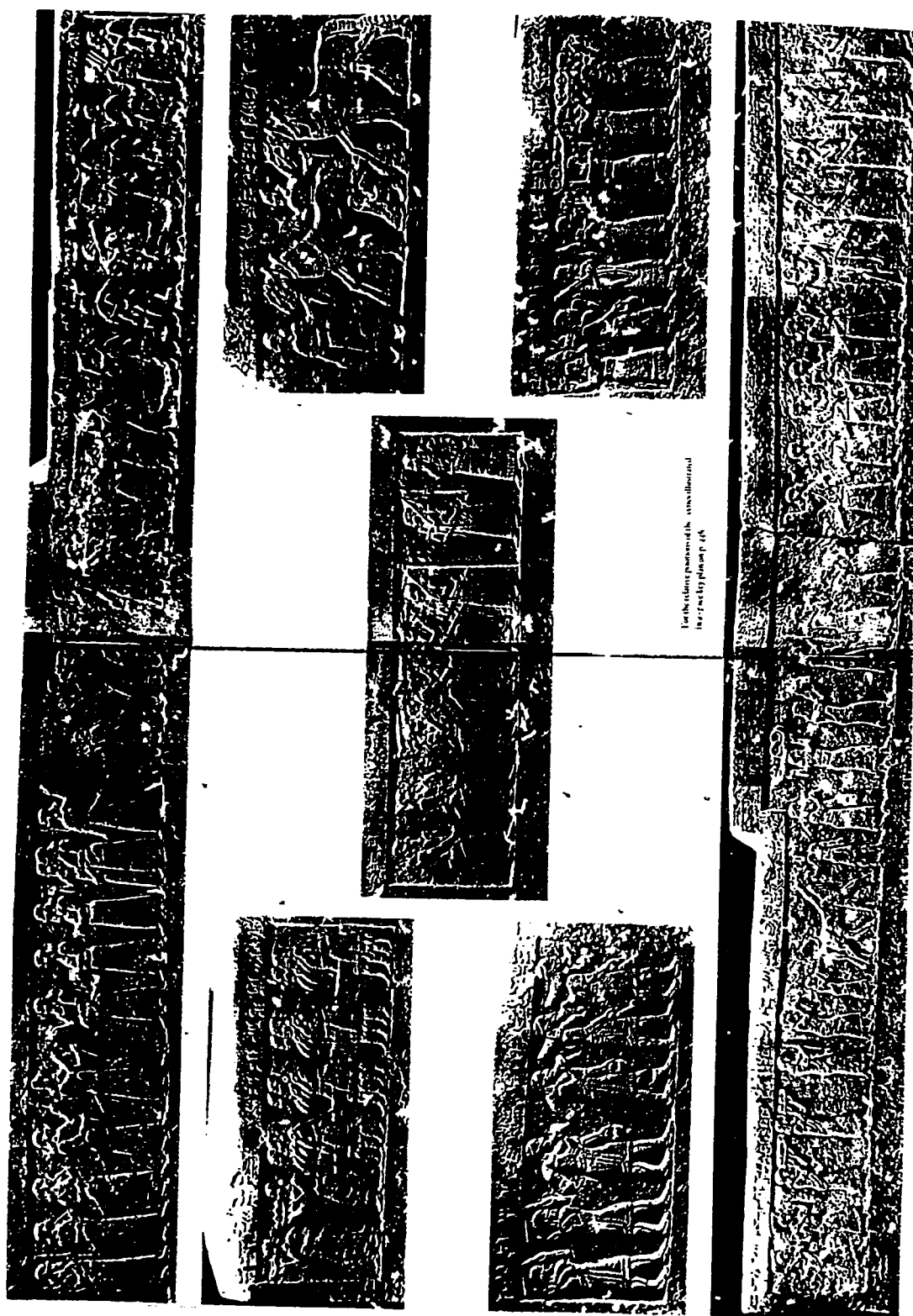


Figure 22: Throne base of Shalmaneser III, Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud. Mallowan, 1966, fig. 371.
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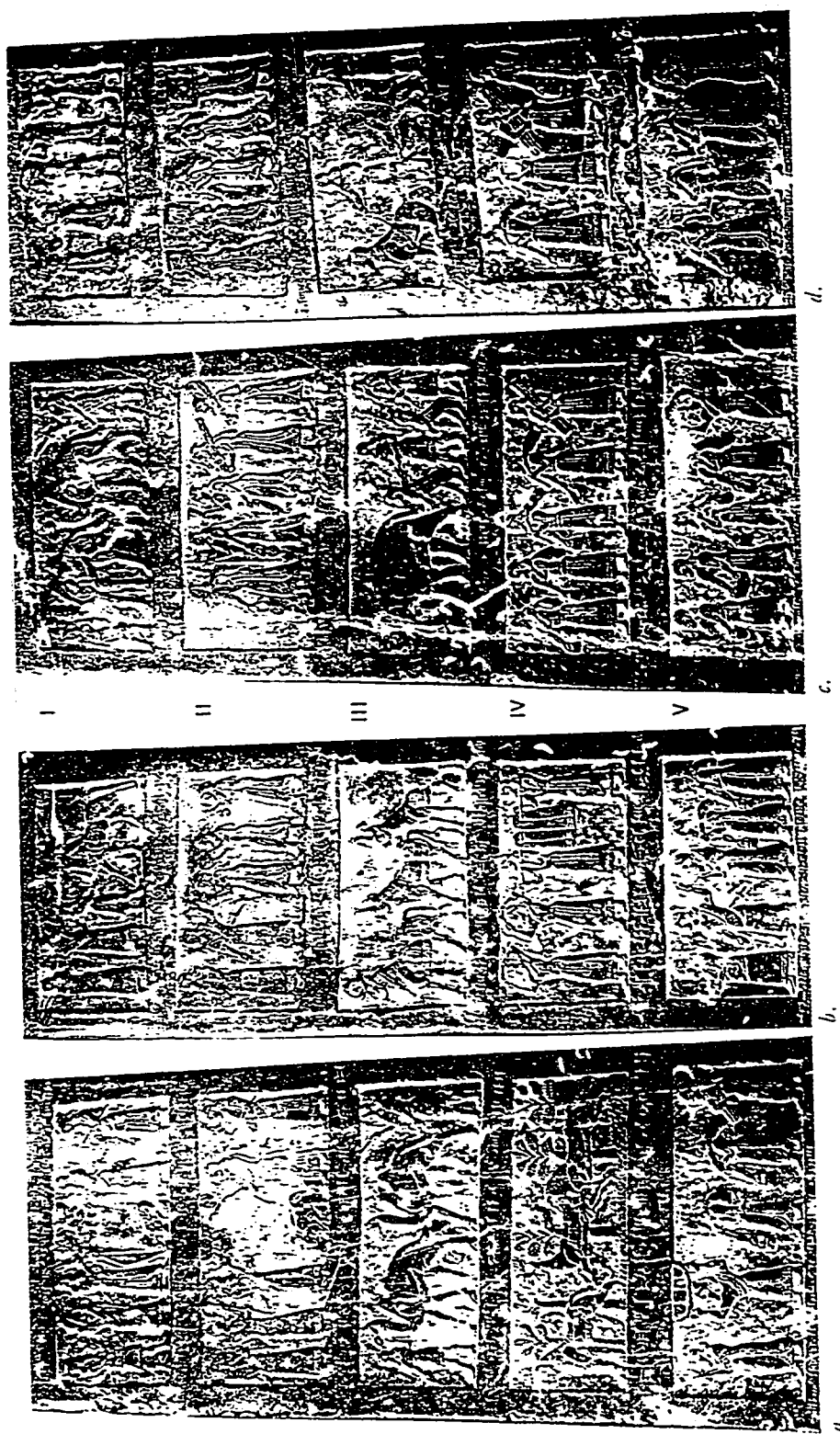


Figure 23: Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, Nimrud. Marcus, 1987, pl. XXII.
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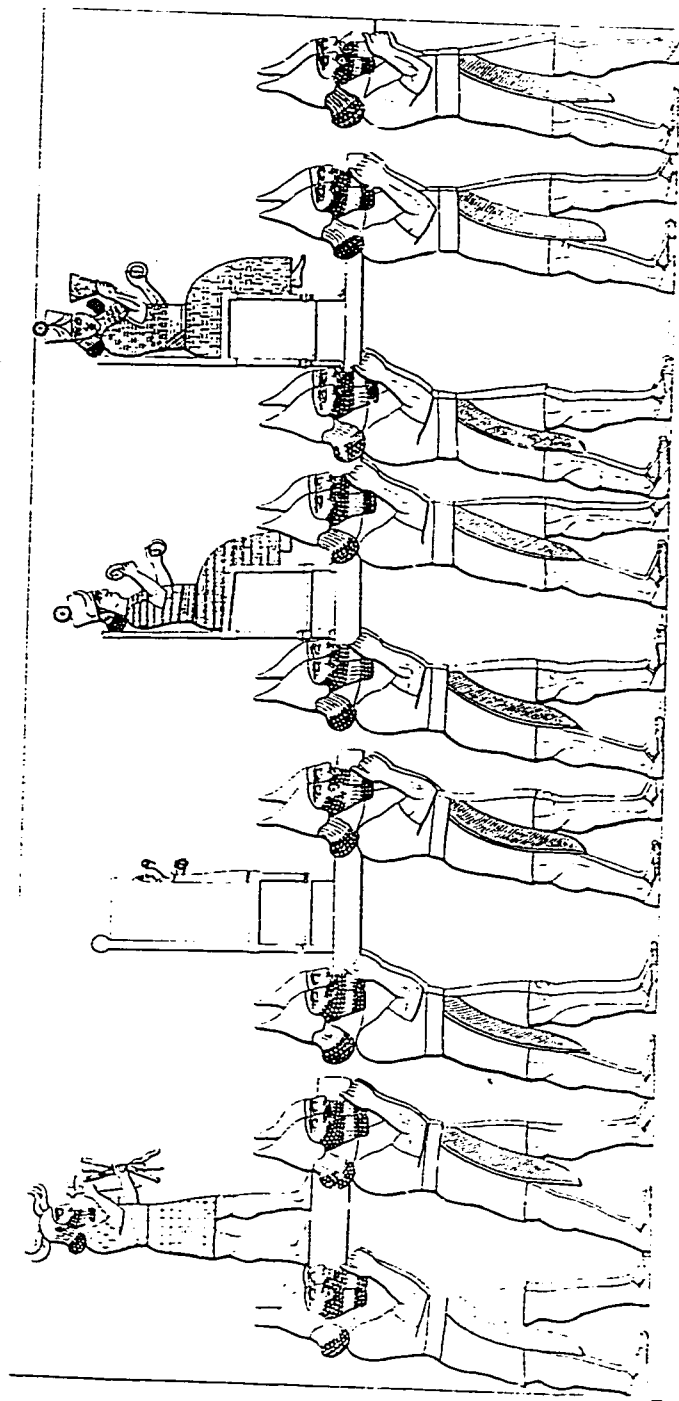


Figure 24: Drawing of relief of Tiglath-pileser III showing thrones of gods, Nimrud. Barnett and Faulkner, 1962, pl. XCII. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 25: Relief of Tiglath-pileser III showing thrones of enemy gods, Nimrud. Barnett and Faulkner, 1962, pl. XCII. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 26: Painting of Tiglath-pileser III, Til-Barsip. Thureau-Dangin and Dunand, 1932, pl. LII.

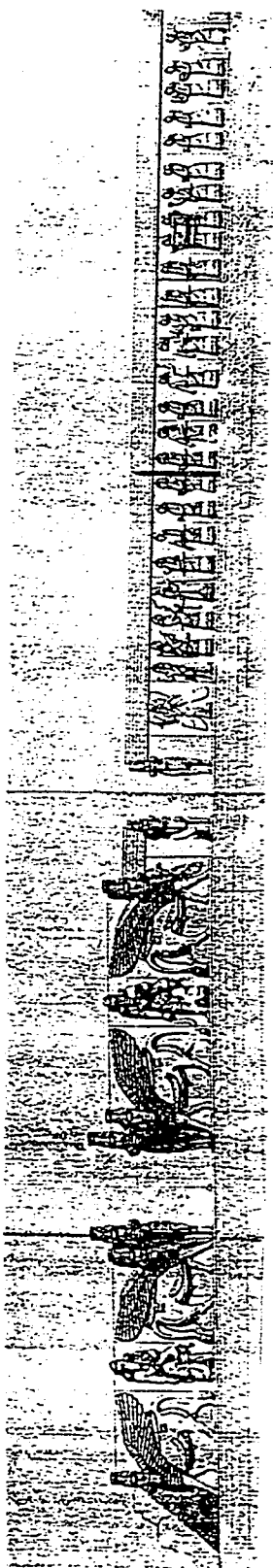


Figure 27: Drawing of facade N, Palace of Sargon II, Khorsabad. Albenda, 1986, pl. 16.
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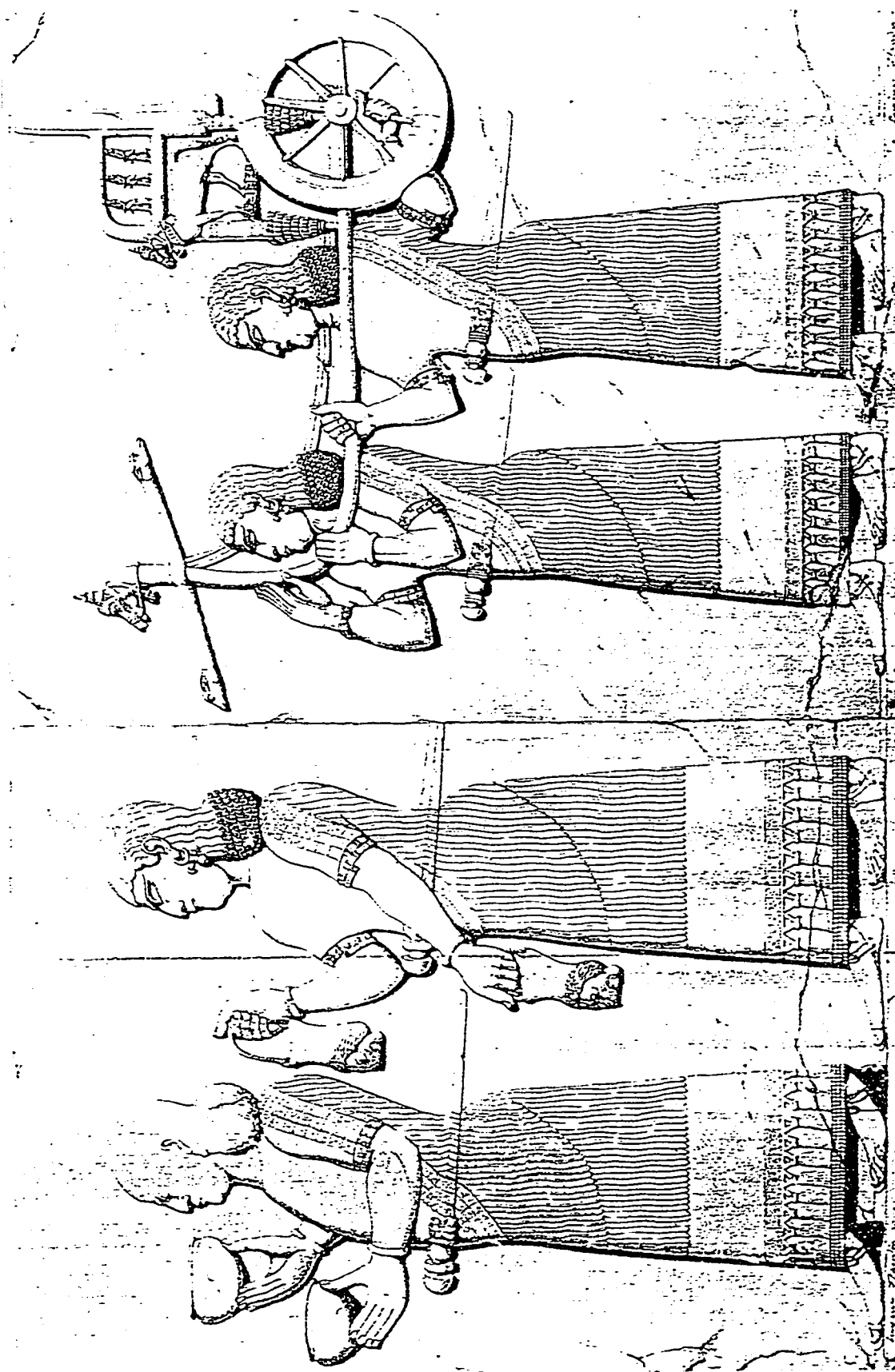


Figure 28a: Drawing of a relief from facade L, Khorsabad. Albenda, 1986, pl. 47.
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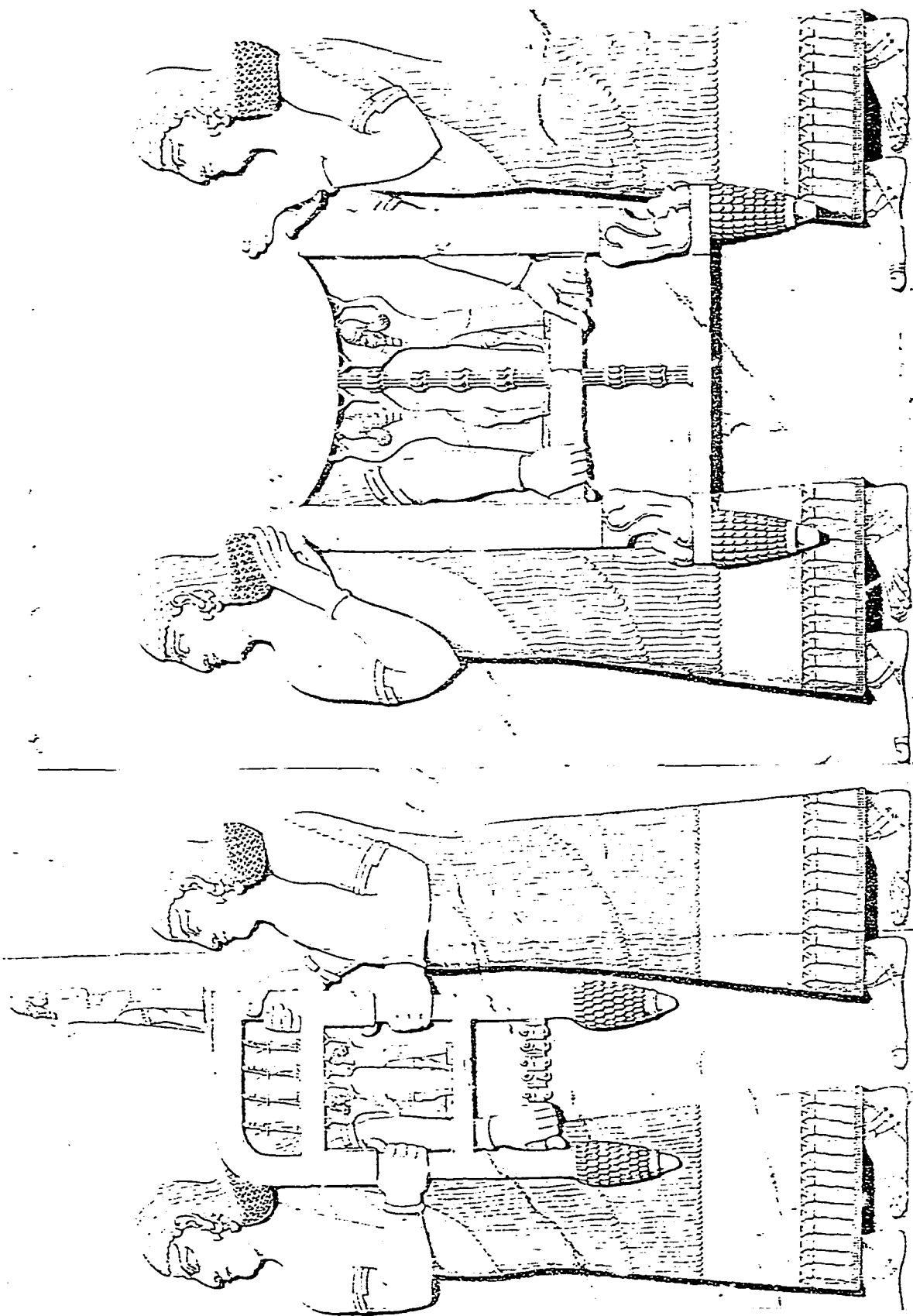


Figure 28b: Drawing of a relief from facade L, Khorasabad. Albenda, 1986, pl. 48.
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Figure 29: Example of North Syrian ivory with figure wearing "cut-away coat" from room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud. Mallowan and Herrmann, 1974, pl. XV. By permission of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq.

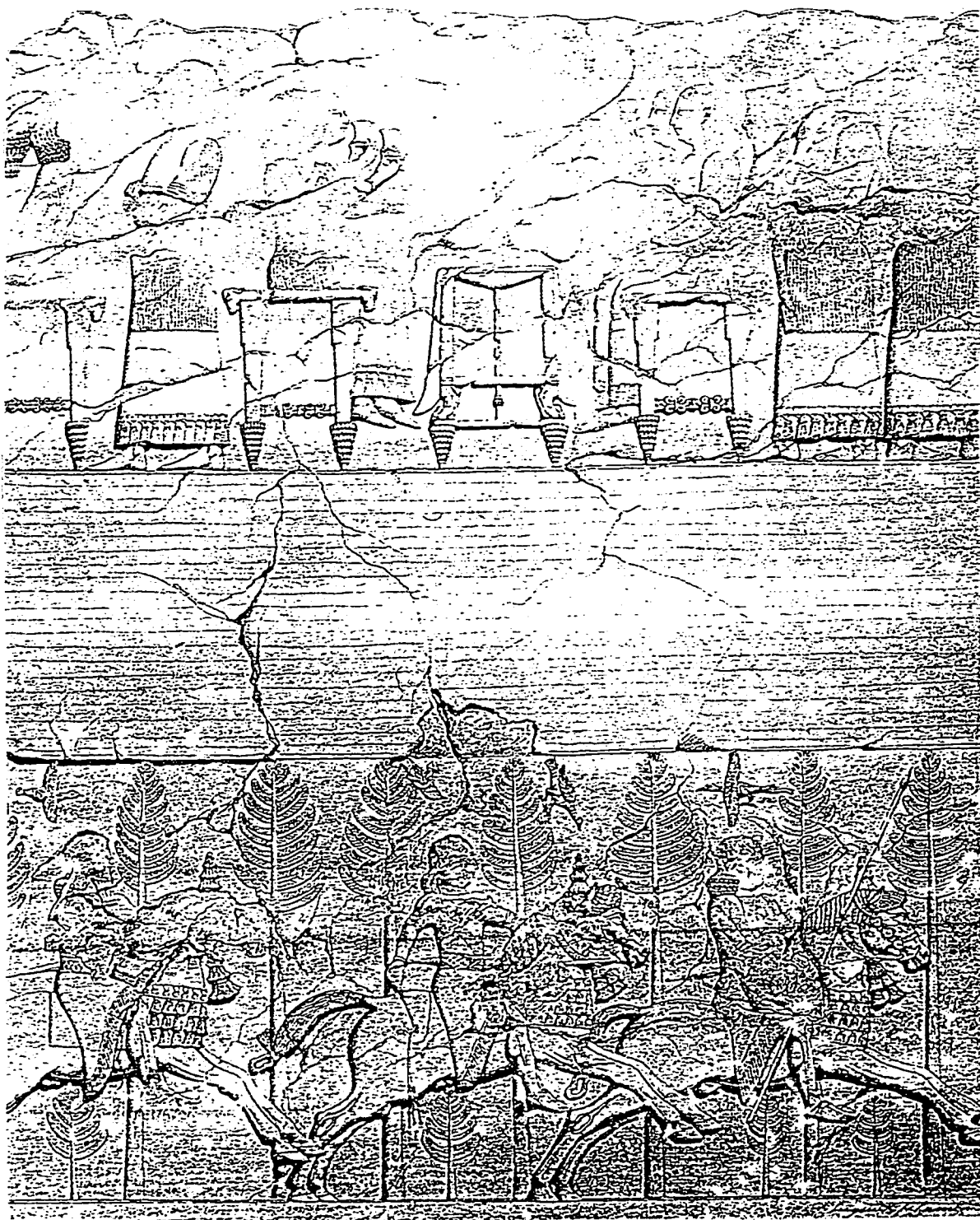


Figure 30: Drawing of relief from room 7, Khorsabad. Albenda, 1986, pl. 88.
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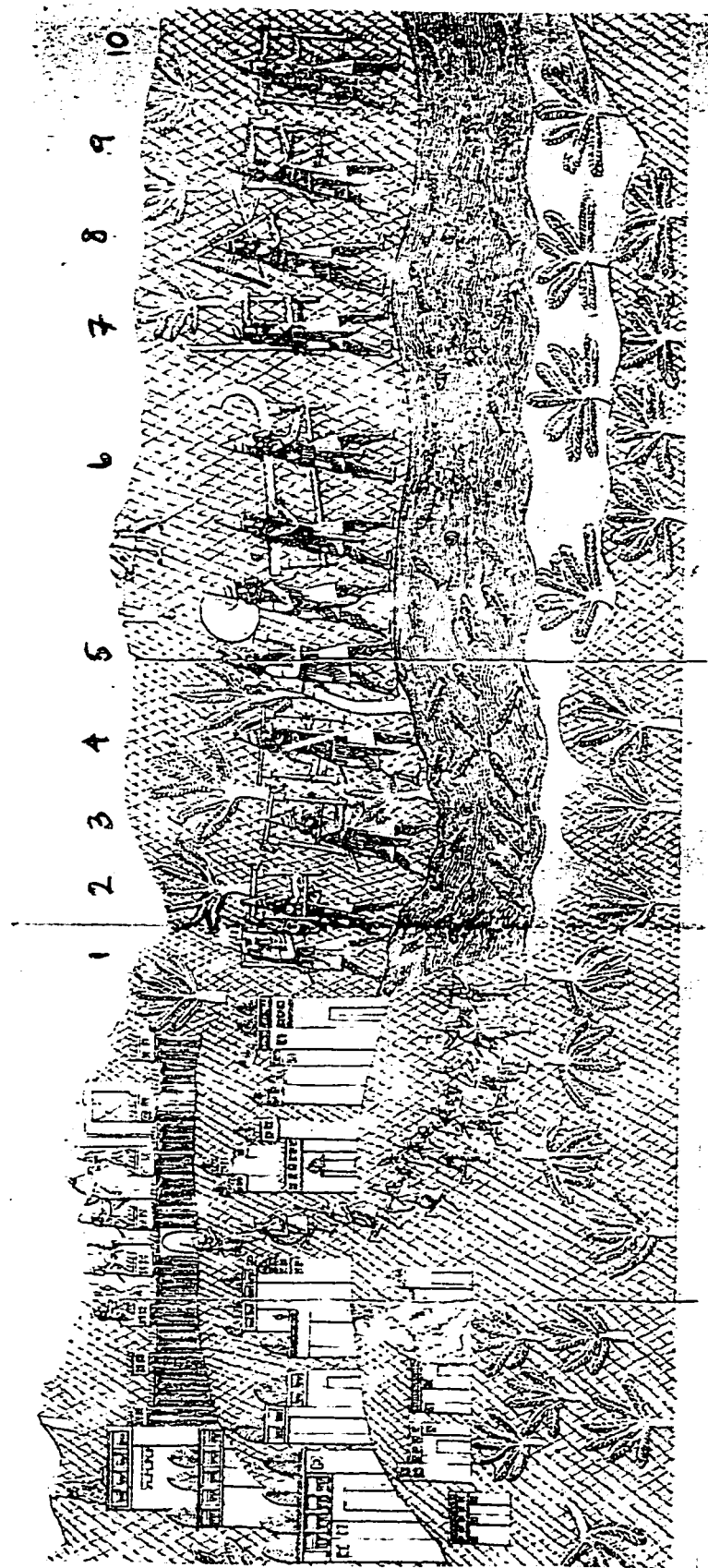


Figure 31: Drawing of relief from room XLVIII, Southwest Palace of Sennacherib, Nineveh. Russell, 1991, fig. 39. By permission of the author and the Trustees of the British Museum.

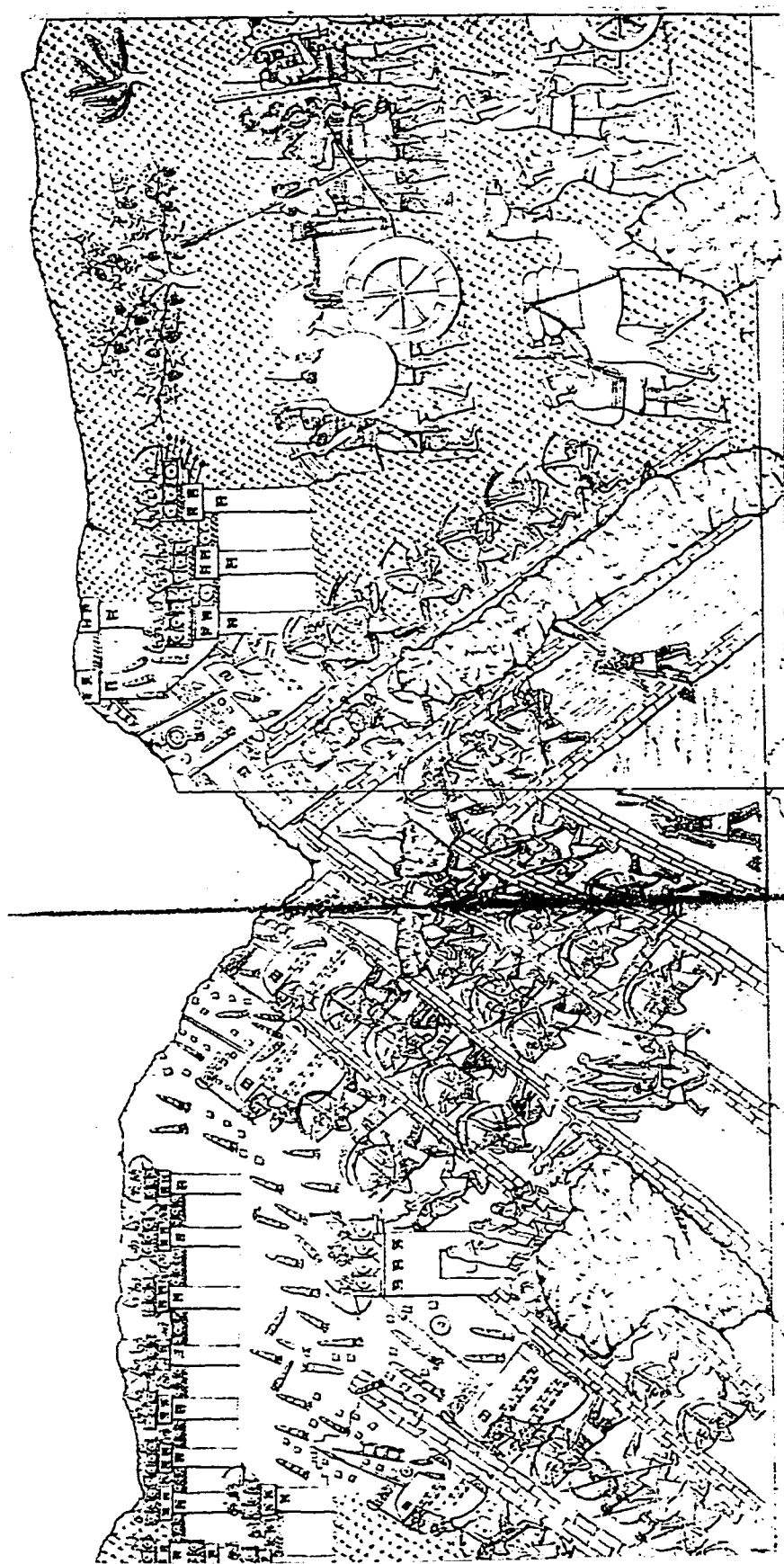


Figure 32: Drawing of relief from the "Lachish room" XXXVI, Southwest Palace of Sennacherib, Nineveh. Russell, 1991, fig. 110. By permission of the author and the Trustees of the British Museum.

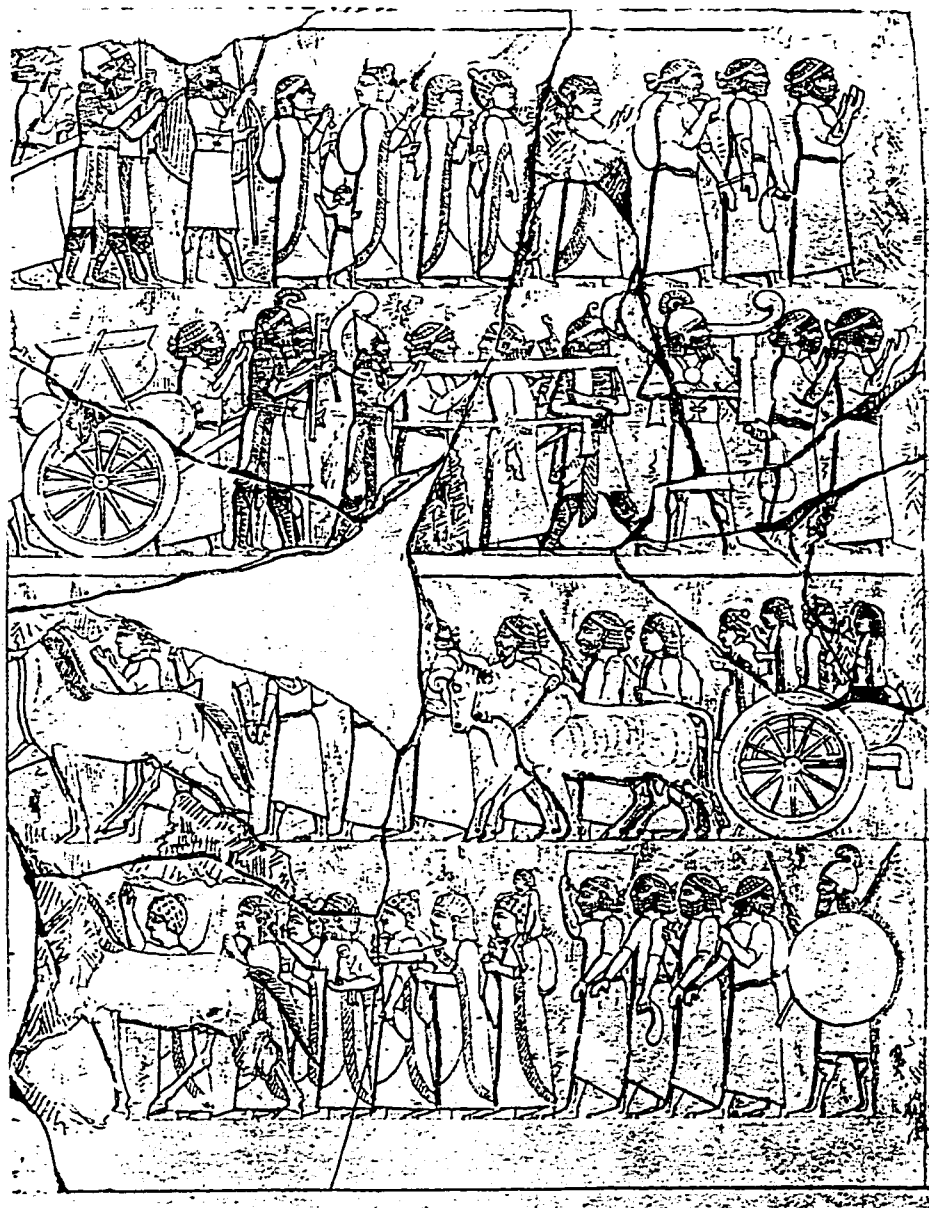


Figure 33: Drawing of relief showing booty from Din-sharri, reign of Aššurbanipal, Southwest Palace, Nineveh. Gadd, 1936, pl. 35. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

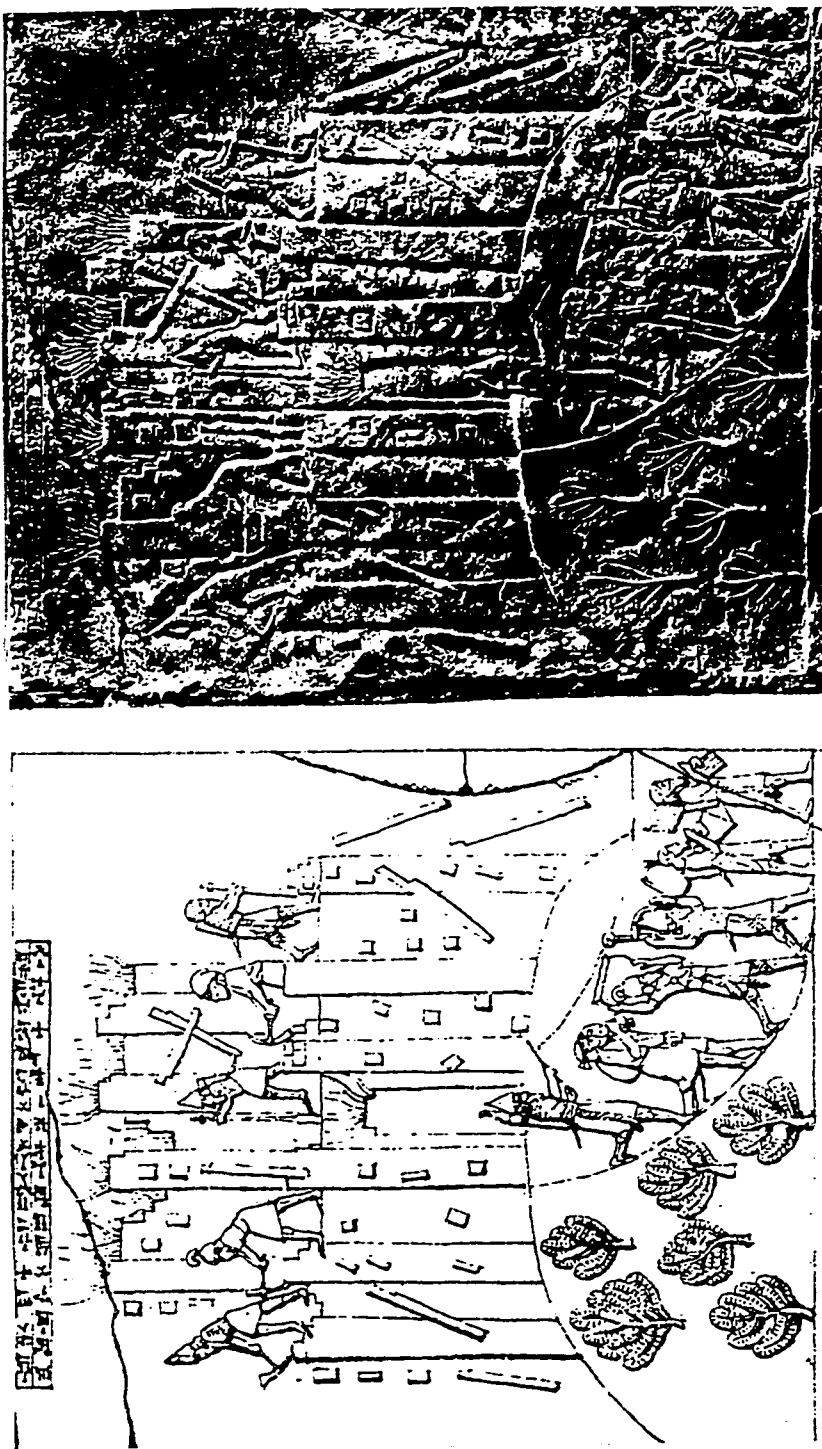


Figure 34: Relief and drawing showing booty from Hamanu, reign of Aššurbanipal, Southwest Palace, Nineveh. Paterson, 1915, pl. 40. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

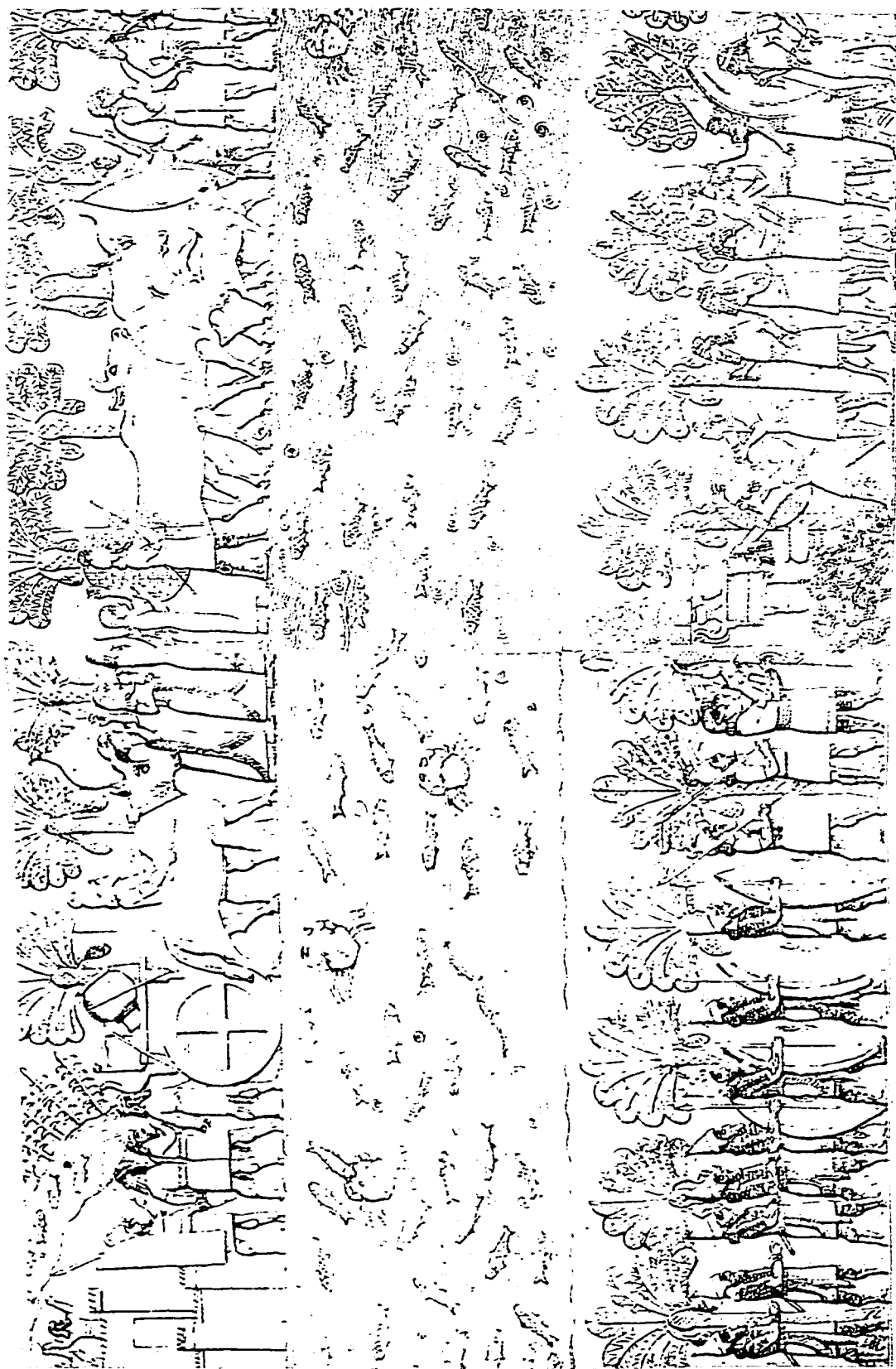


Figure 35: Drawing of relief showing booty from Babylonia, reign of Aššurbanipal, Southwest Palace, Nineveh. Gadd, 1936, pl. 13. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

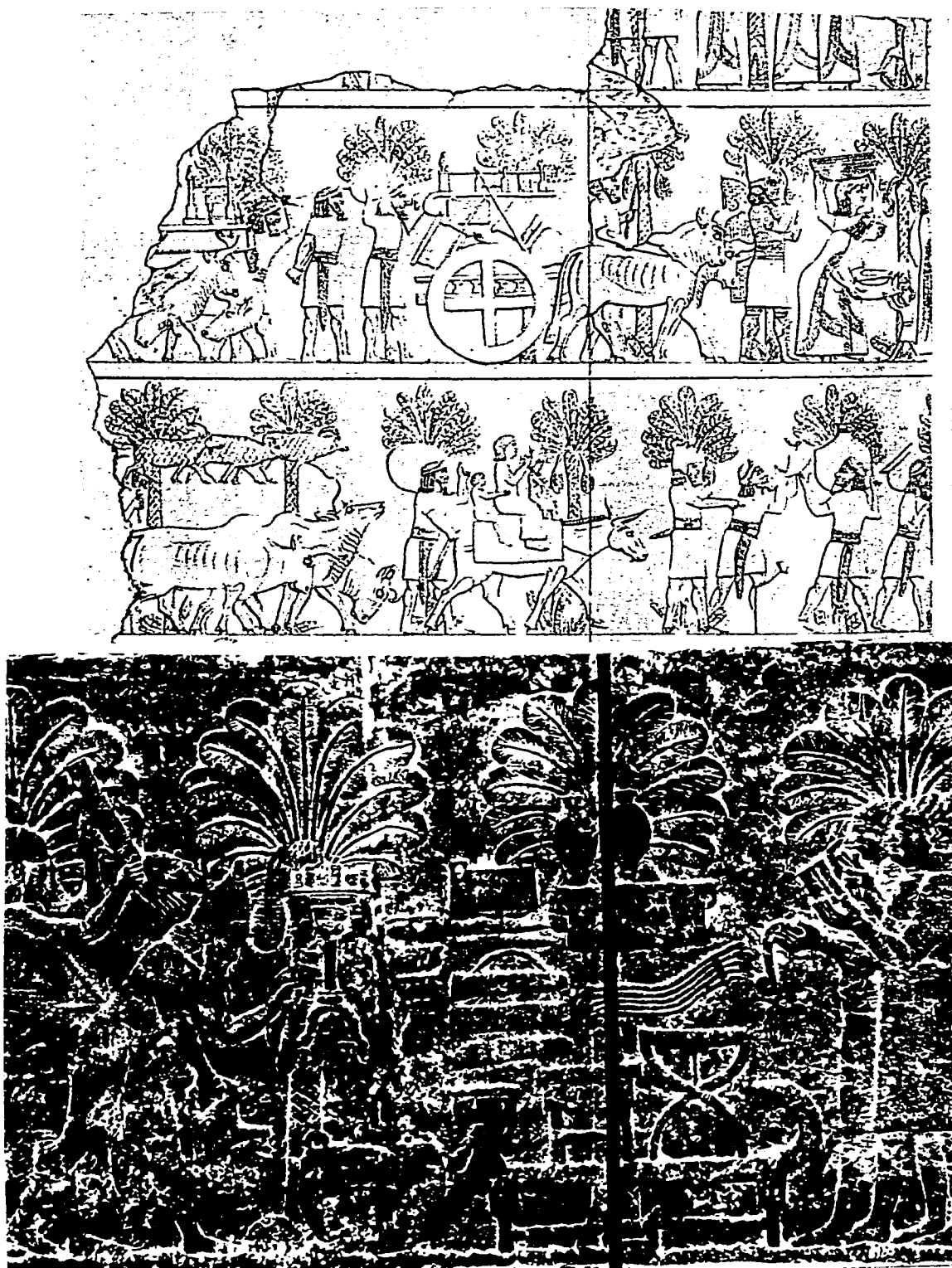


Figure 36: Drawing of relief from Babylonia, reign of Aššurbanipal, Southwest Palace, Nineveh. Upper register: Russell, 1991, fig. 77, by permission of the author. Lower Register: Paterson, 1915, pl. 53, by permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

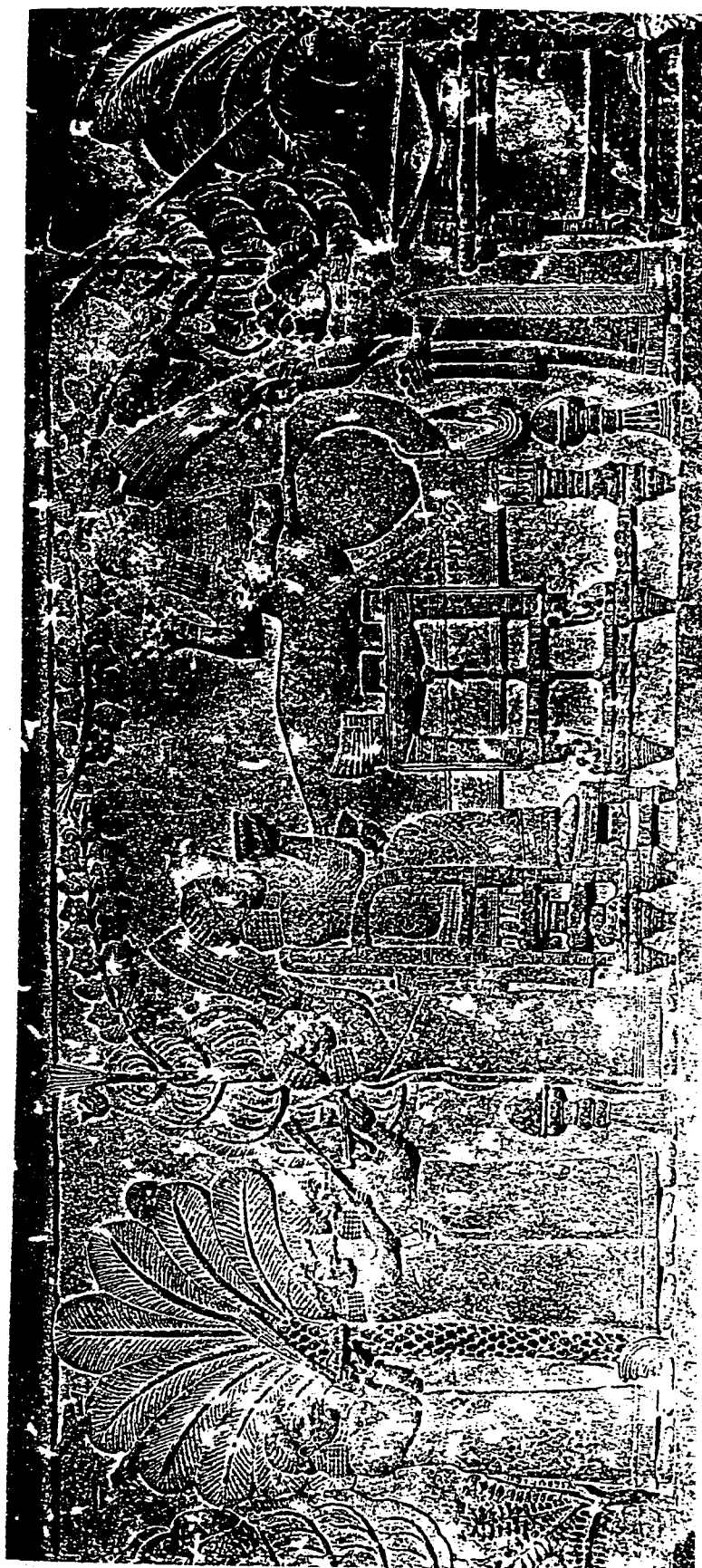


Figure 37: "Garden Scene" of Aššurbanipal and Queen, room S₁, North Palace of Aššurbanipal, Nineveh. Hall, 1928, pl. XLI. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

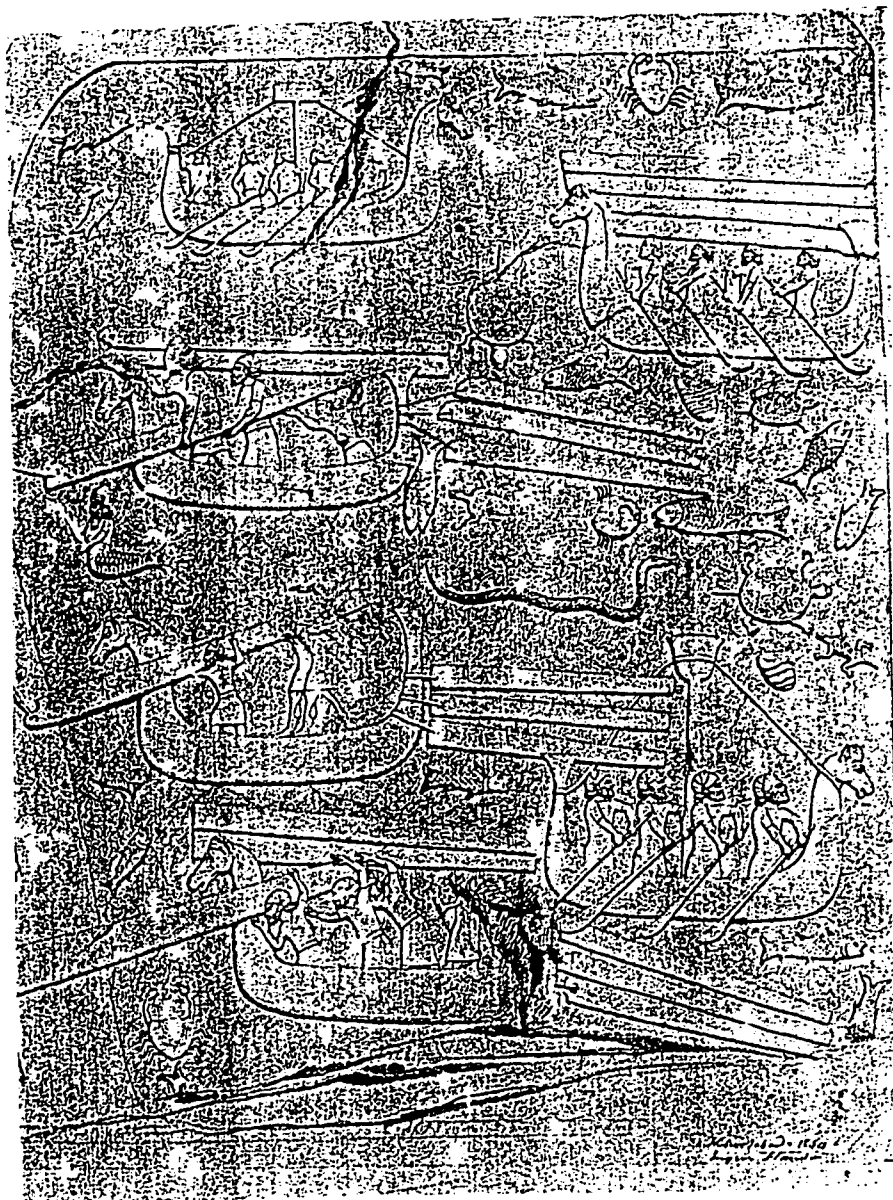


Figure 38: Drawing of Sargon II's "seascape" relief from facade n of Sargon II's palace, Khorsabad. Albenda, 1986, pl. 23. By permission of the author.



Figure 39: Relief of Aššurnasirpal II showing baobab and palm trees in North Syria, Northwest Palace, Nimrud. Budge, 1914, pl. 13. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

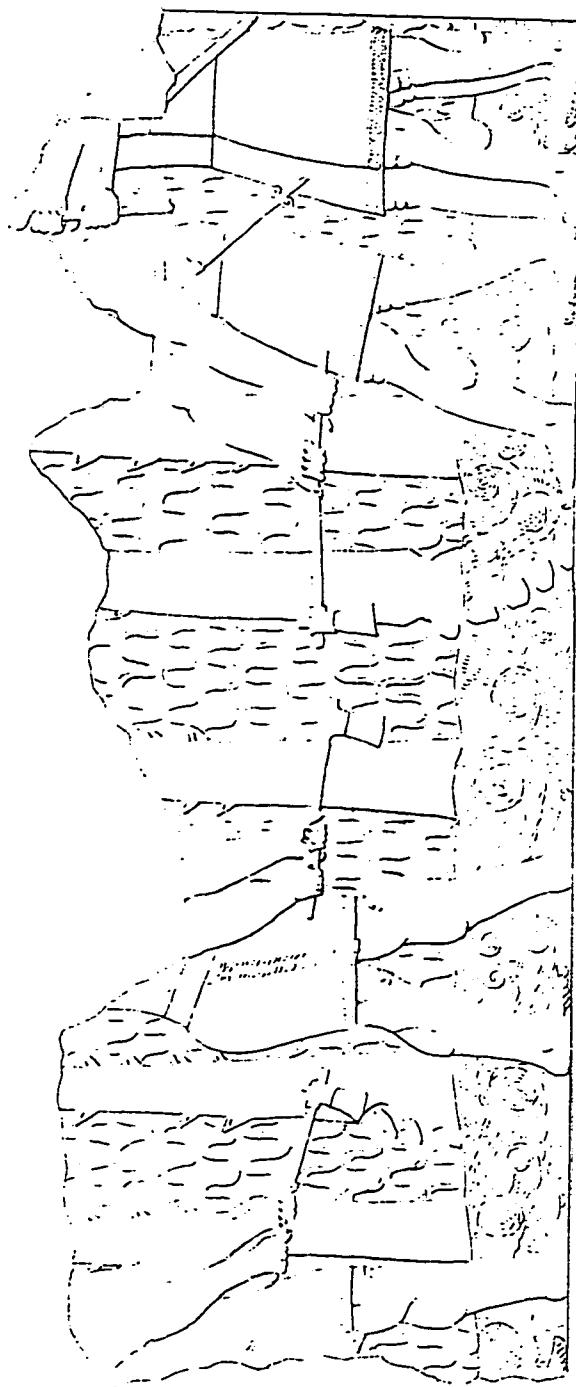


Figure 40: Drawing of relief of Ashurnasirpal II showing conifer trees being chopped down by Assyrians, Northwest Palace, Nimrud. Barnett and Falkner, 1962, pl. CXIV. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 41: Relief of Aššurnasirpal II showing fruit trees and grapevines, Northwest Palace, Nimrud. Budge, 1914, pl. 18. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

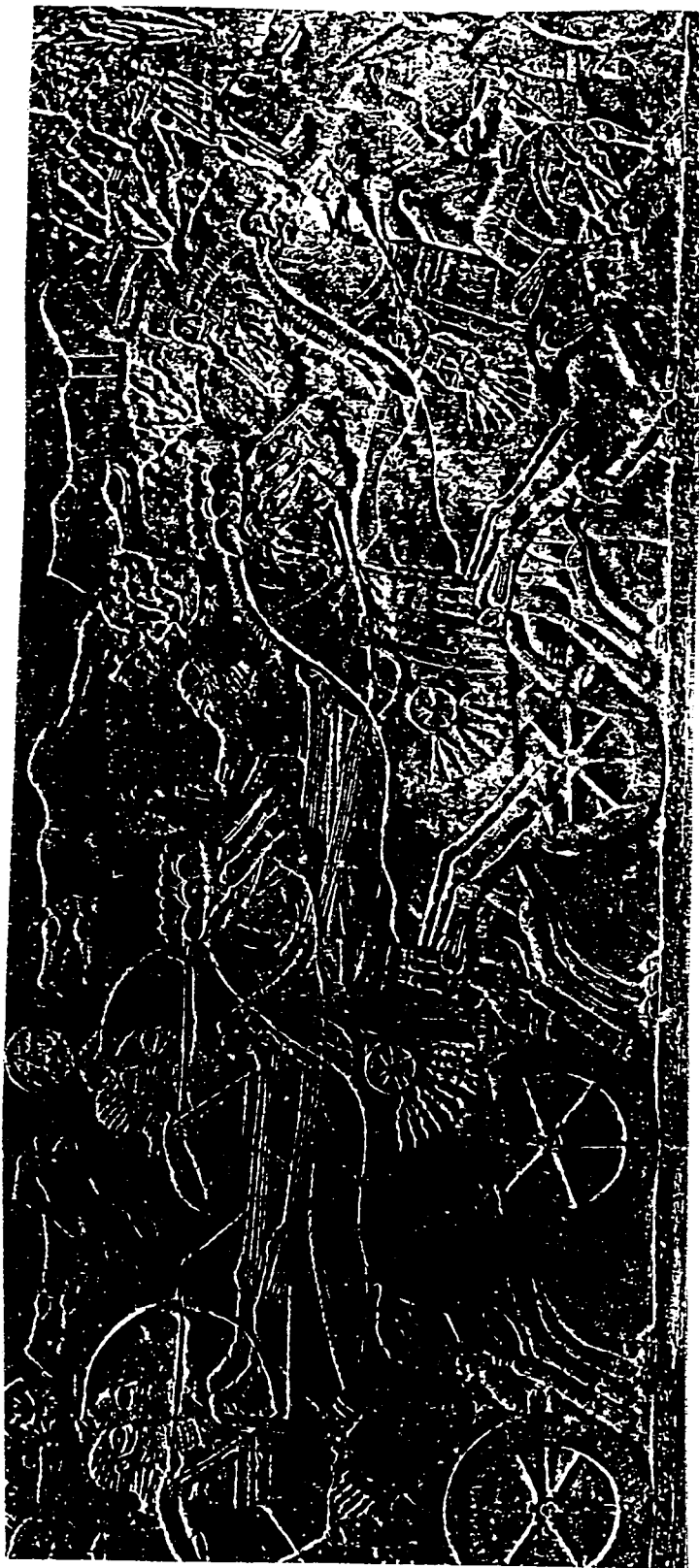


Figure 42: Relief of Aššurnasirpal II showing grapevines, Northwest Palace, Nimrud. Budge, 1914, pl. 17. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

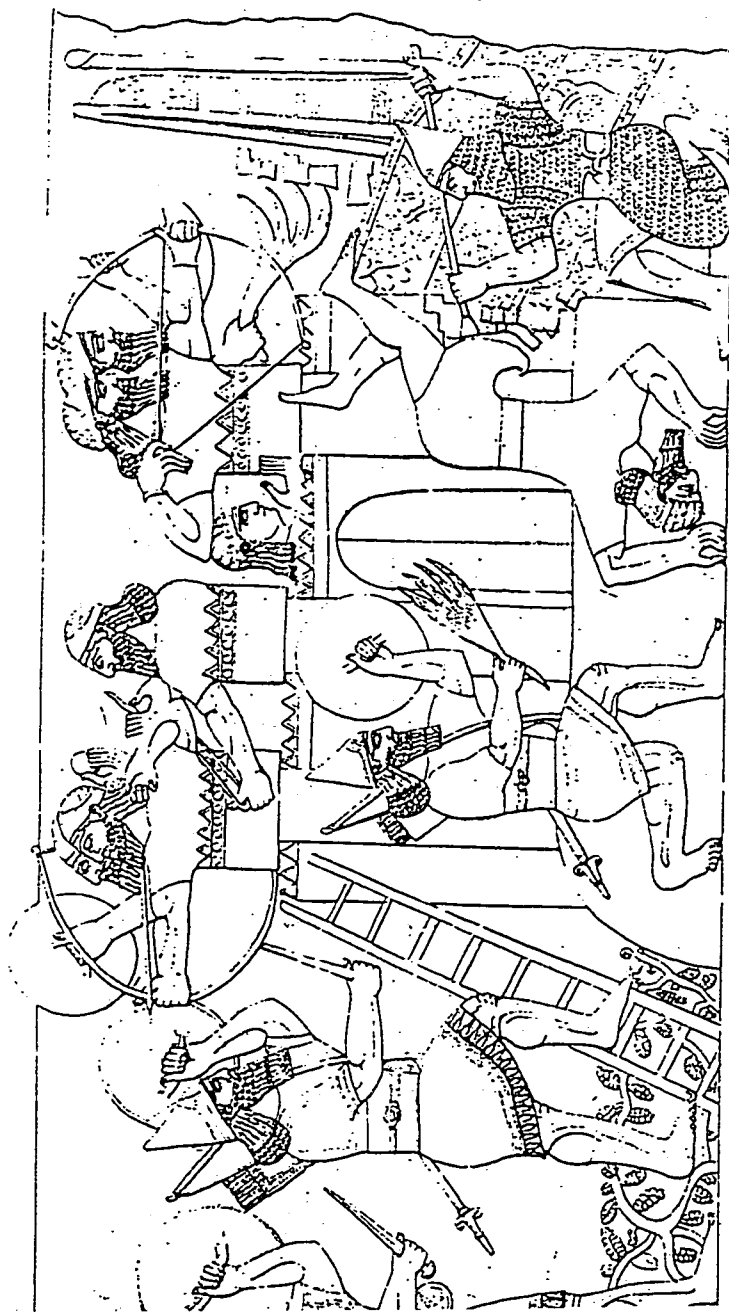


Figure 43: Drawing of relief from Ašurnasirpal II showing shrubs, Northwest Palace, Nimrud. Barnett and Falkner, 1962, pl. CXVIII. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

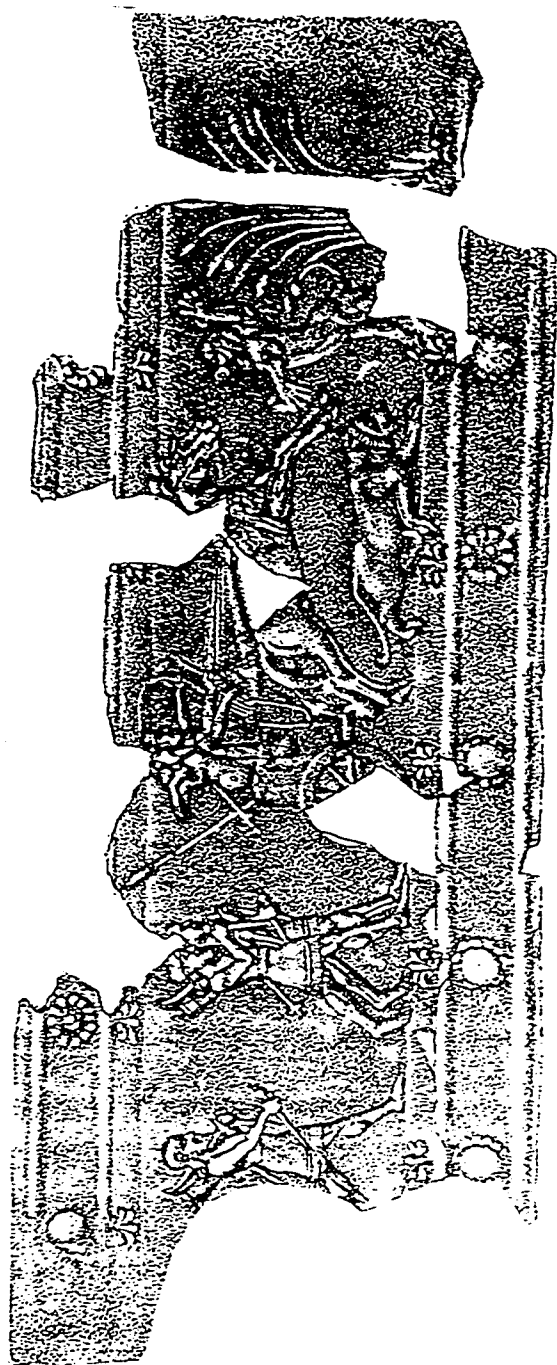


Figure 44: Drawing of bronze gates of Aššurnasirpal II showing lion hunt with cattail, Balawat. Barnett, 1973. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

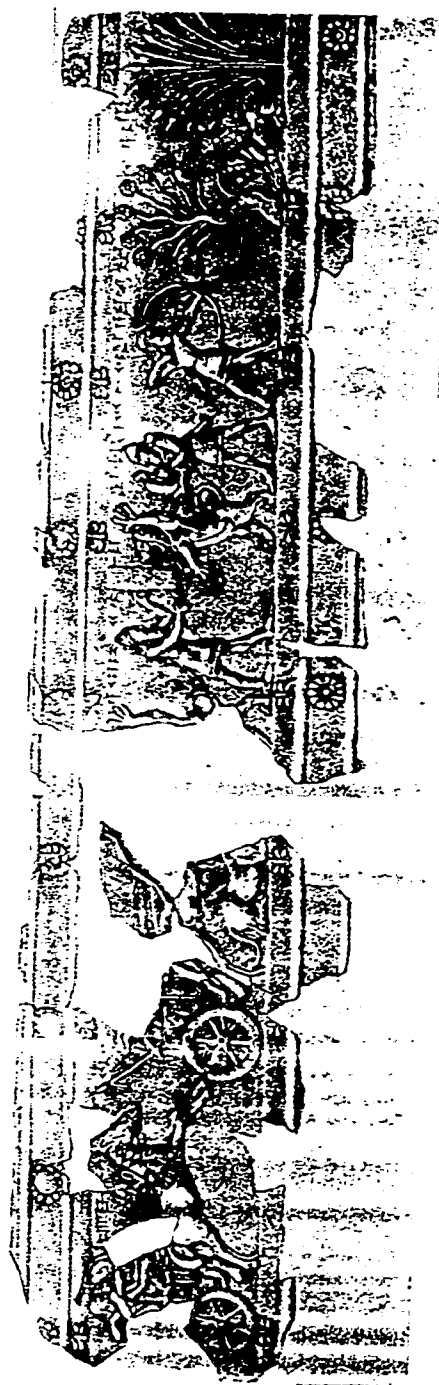


Figure 45: Drawing of bronze gates of Aššurnasirpal II showing baobob trees and cattails, Balawat. Barnett, 1974, pl. VI. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 46: Drawing of bronze gates of Aššurnasirpal II showing other vegetation, Balawat. Barnett, 1974, pl. VI. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 47: Relief of Aššurnasirpal II showing monkeys as tribute from room D, Northwest Palace, Nimrud. Budge, 1914, pl. XXVIII. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

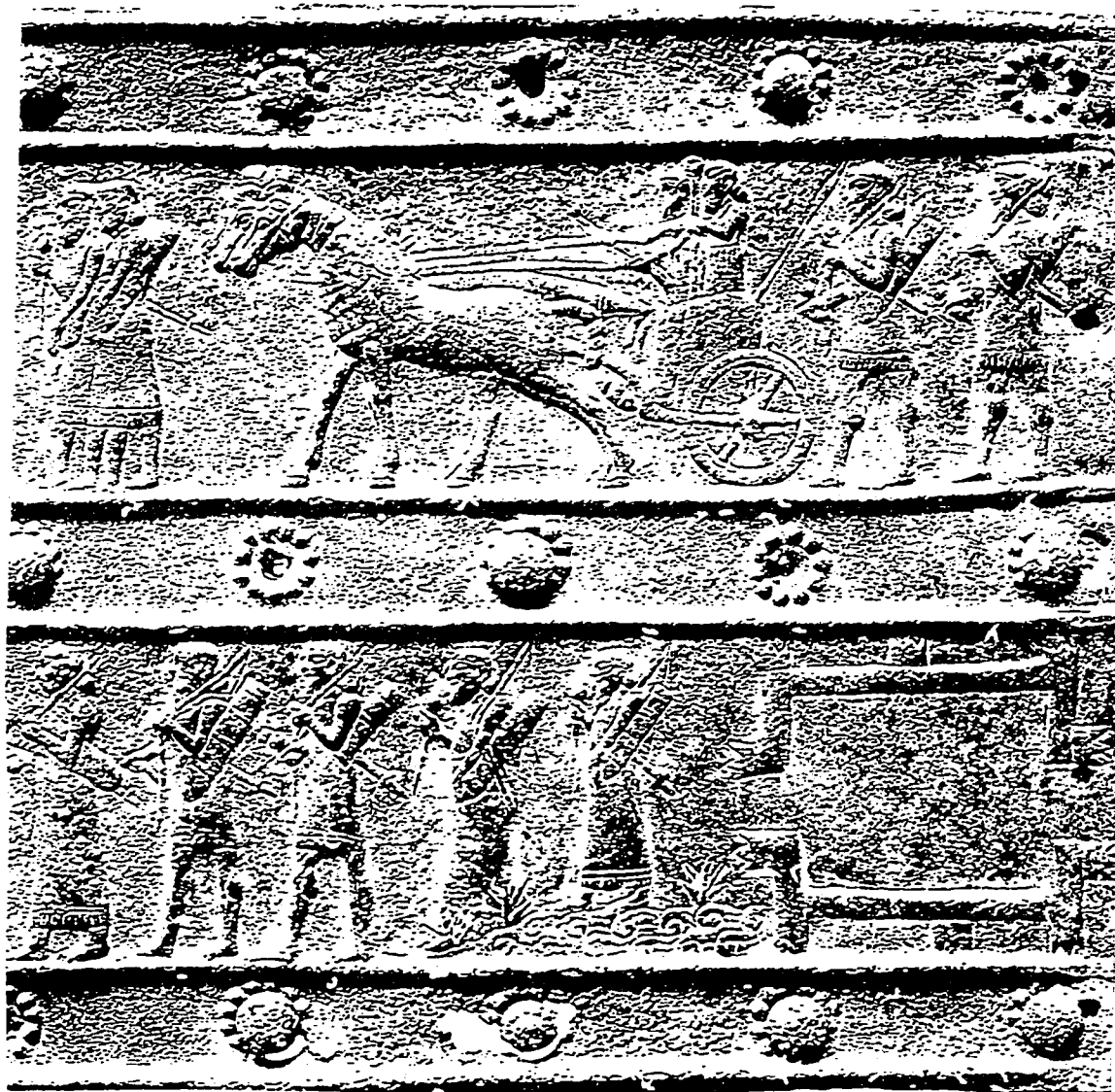


Figure 48: Bronze gates of Shalmaneser III showing riverside plants on campaign in North Syria, Balawat. King, 1915, pl. XXXVI. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

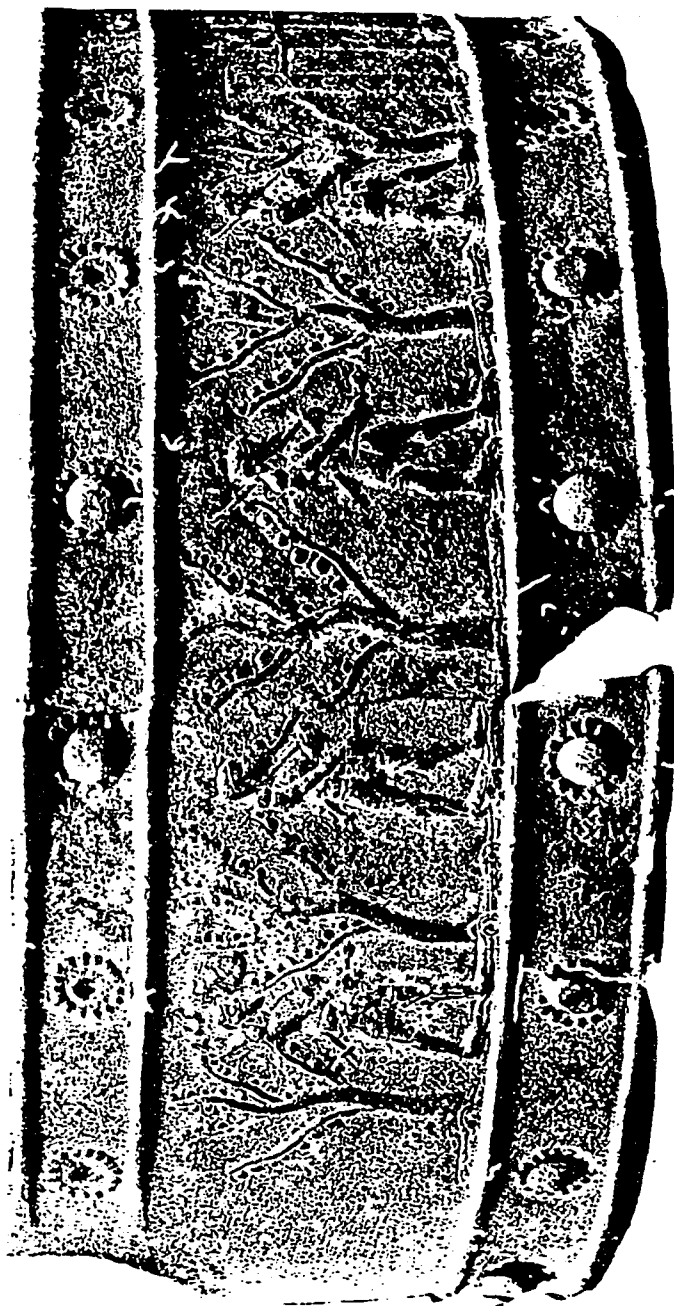


Figure 49: Bronze gates of Shalmaneser III showing fruit trees near Hamath, Balawat. King, 1915, pl. XLVIII. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

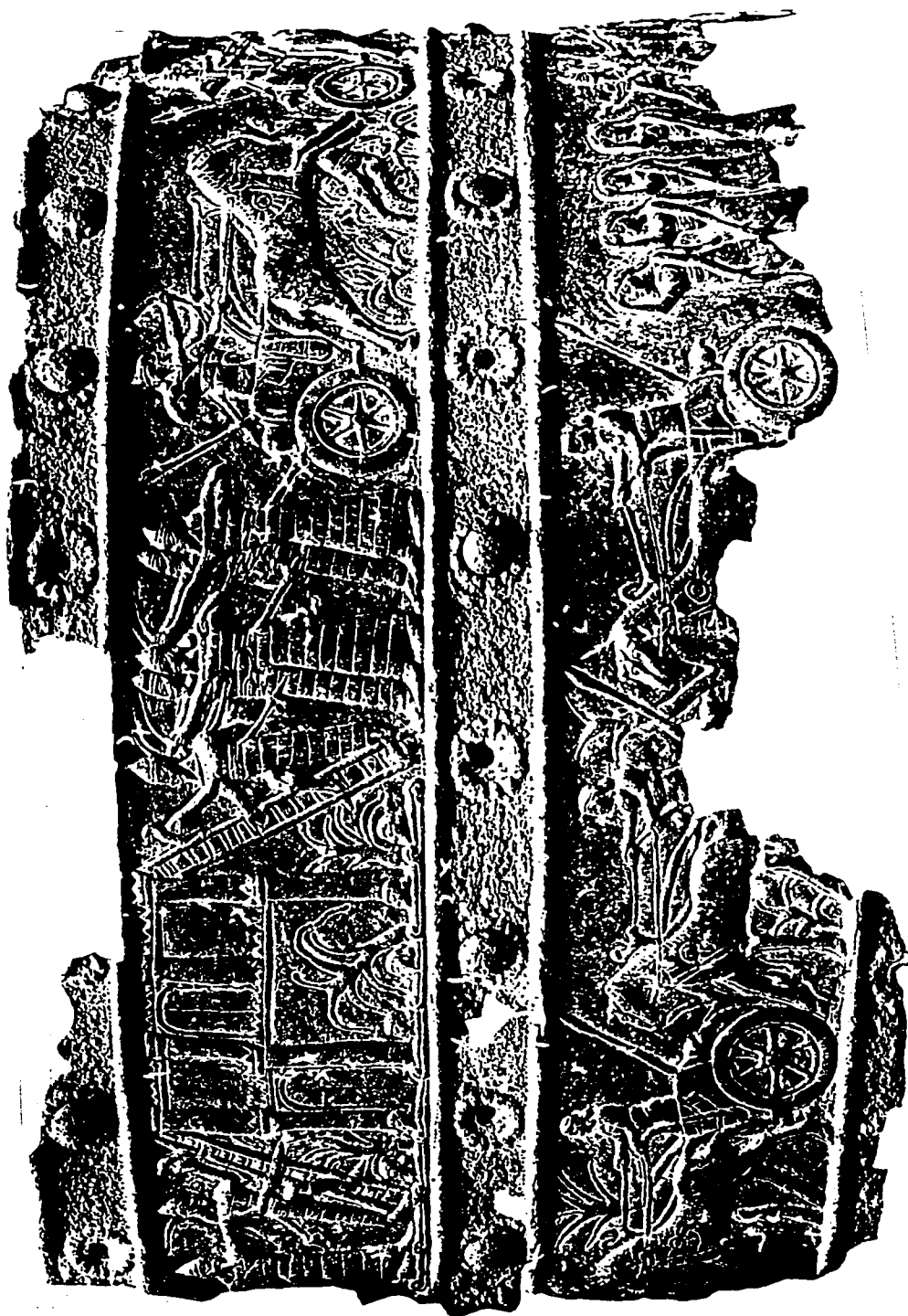


Figure 50: Bronze gates of Shalmaneser III showing trees near Hamath, Balawat. King, 1915, pl. LXXV. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

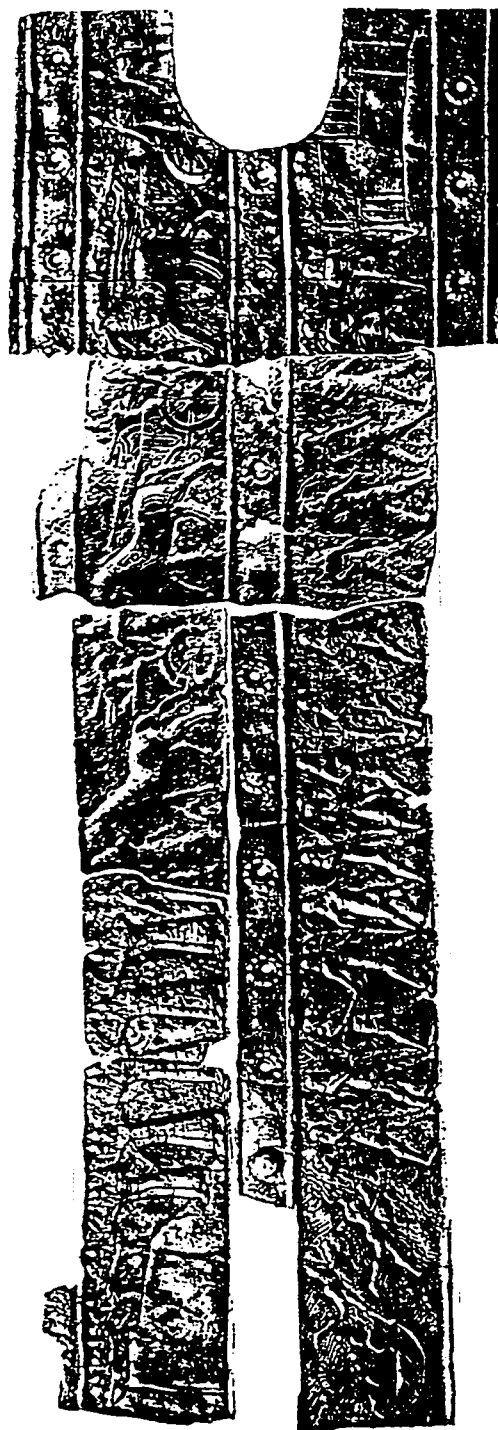


Figure 51: Bronze gates of Shalmaneser III showing trees near Qarqar, Balawat. Unger, 1920, tf. II.

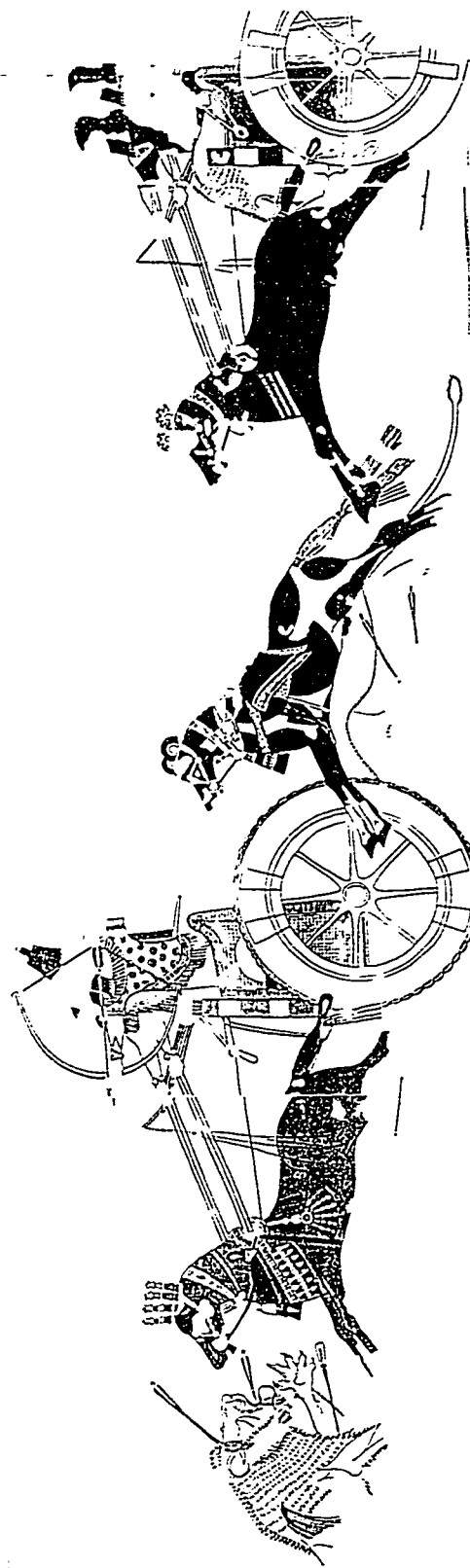
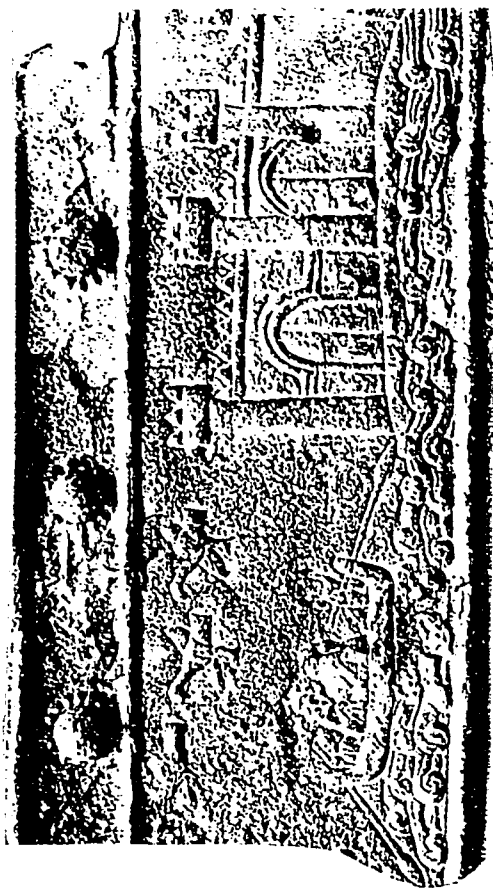


Figure 52: Bronze gates of Shalmaneser III showing birds flying away from North Syrian city, Balawat.

King, 1915, pl. XXX. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 53: Paintings of Tiglath-pileser III showing lion hunts, Til-Barsip. Thureau-Dangin and Dunand, 1936, pl. LI.



Figure 54: Painting of Tiglath-pileser III showing tamed lion, Til-Barsip.
Thureau-Dangin and Dunand, pl. L.



Figure 55a: Drawing of relief from room 7 of Sargon II's palace showing hunt in wooded landscape and *bit-hilani*, Khorsabad. Albenda, 1986, pl. 89. By permission of the author.

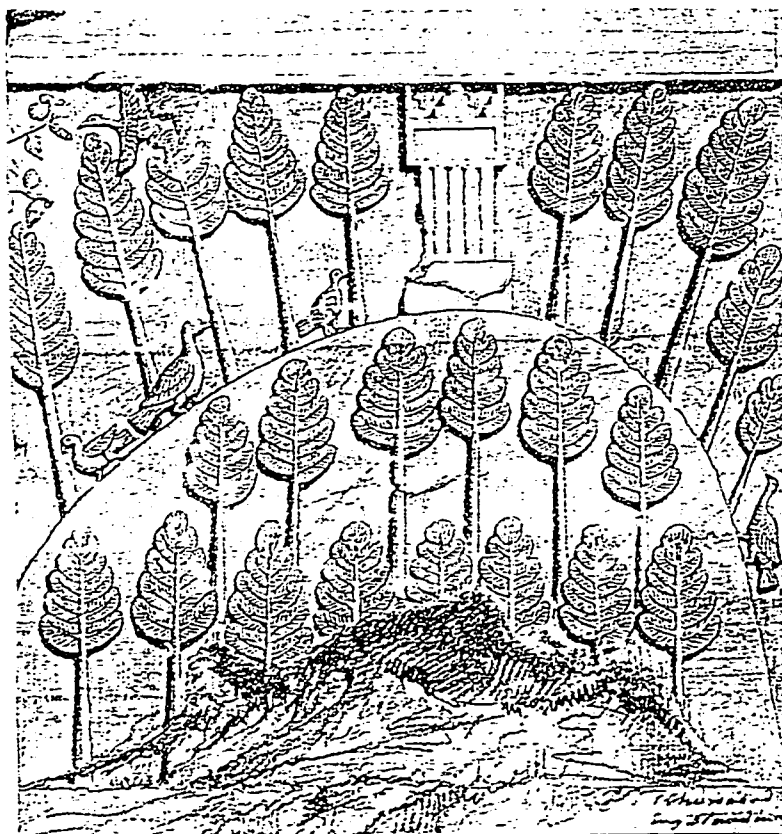


Figure 55b: Drawing of relief from room 7 of Sargon II's palace showing wooded hillock, Khorsabad. Albenda, 1986, pl. 90. By permission of the author.

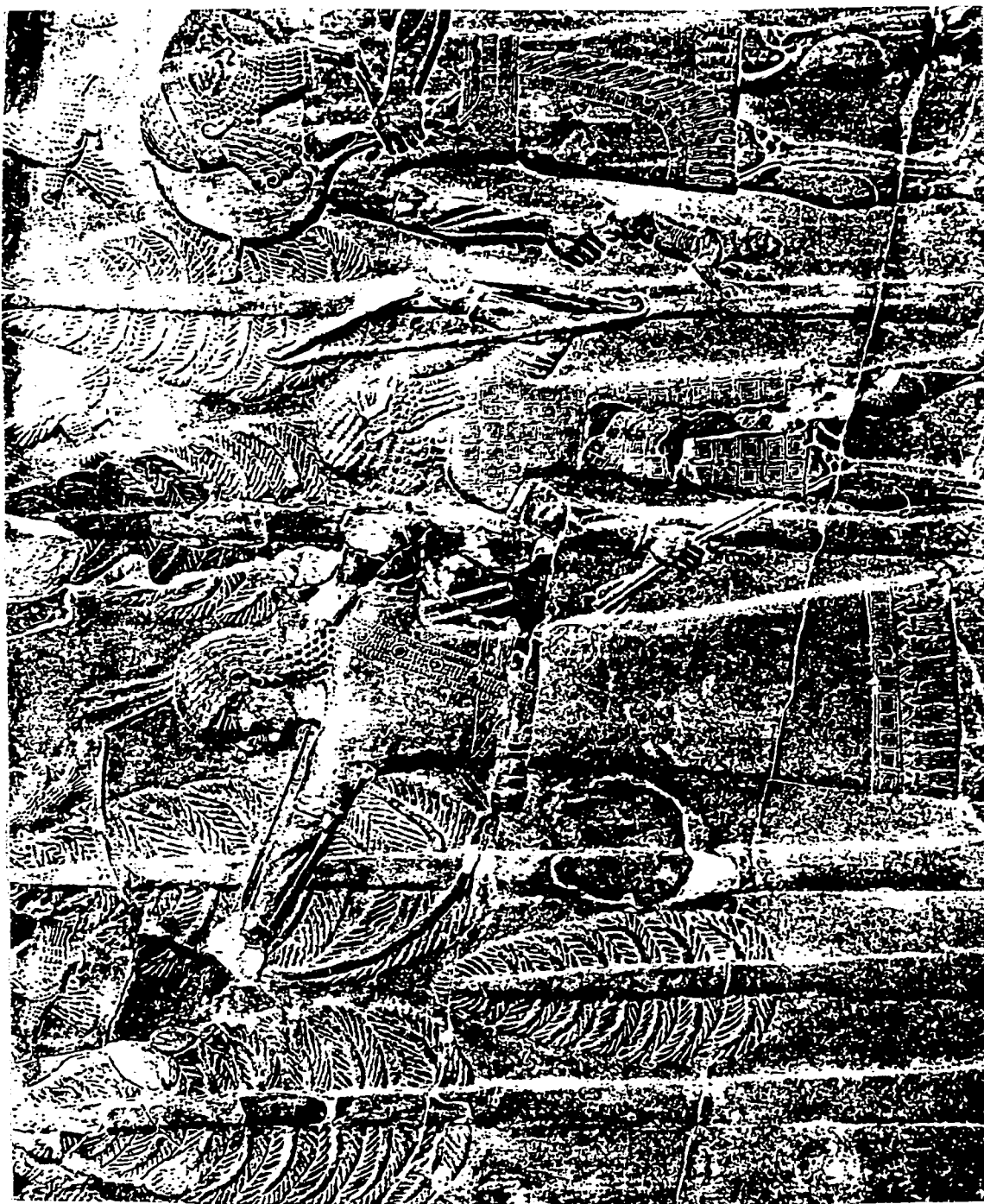


Figure 56: Relief from Monument X of Sargon II's palace showing fowl hunt in wooded landscape, Khorsabad. Smith, 1938, pl. 31. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

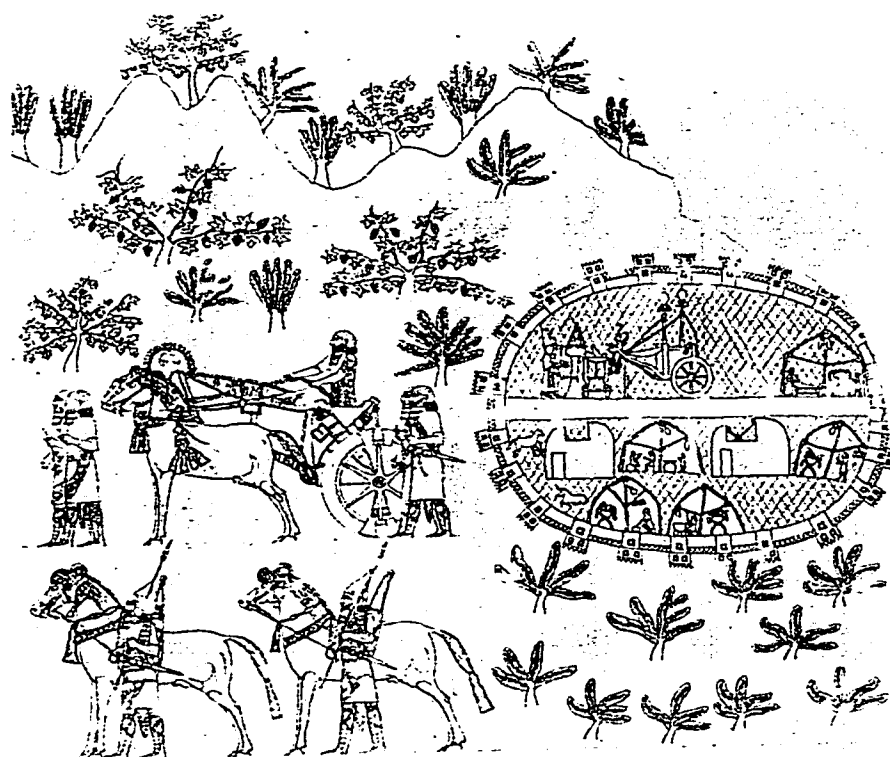


Figure 57: Drawings of reliefs from Sennacherib's Southwest Palace showing two different types of deciduous trees, Nineveh. Bleibtreu, 1980, fig. 72-3.

Figure 58: Drawing of relief from room XXXVI of Sennacherib's Southwest Palace showing grapevines, Nineveh. Russell, 1991, fig. 113. By permission of the author and the Trustees of the British Museum.

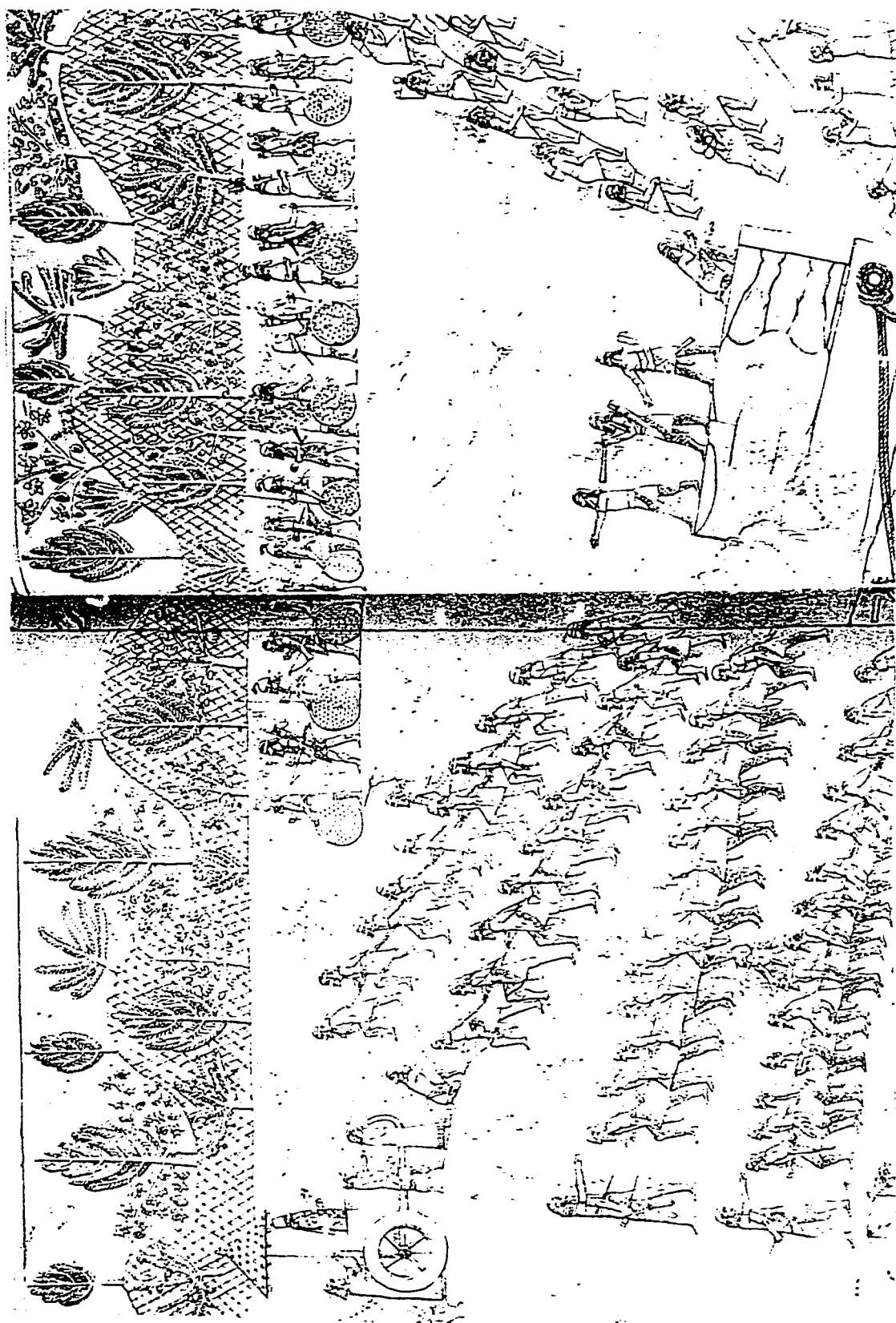


Figure 59: Drawing of relief from Court VI of Sennacherib's Southwest Palace showing forests near Balatai, Nineveh. Russell, 1991, fig. 54. By permission of the author and the Trustees of the British Museum.

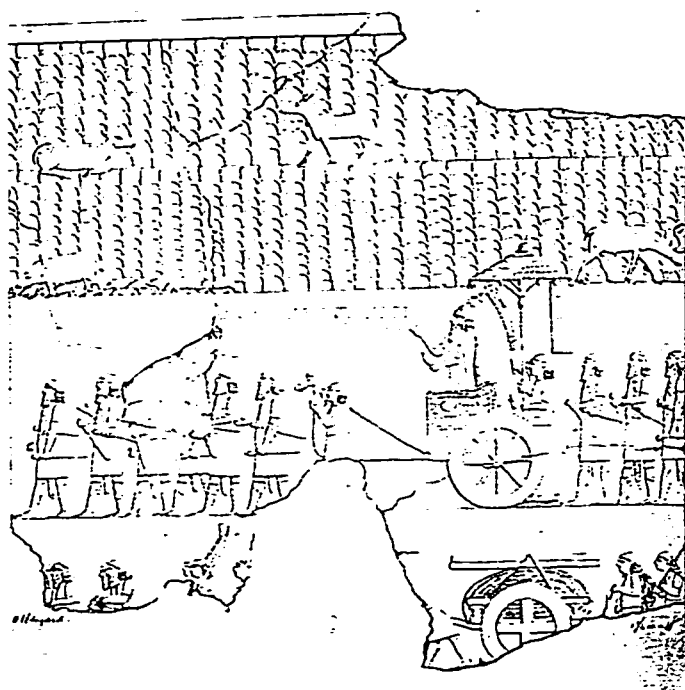


Figure 60: Drawing of relief from Court VI of Sennacherib's Southwest Palace showing wild pigs and deer in marsh, Nineveh. Russell, 1991, fig. 57. By permission of the author and the Trustees of the British Museum.

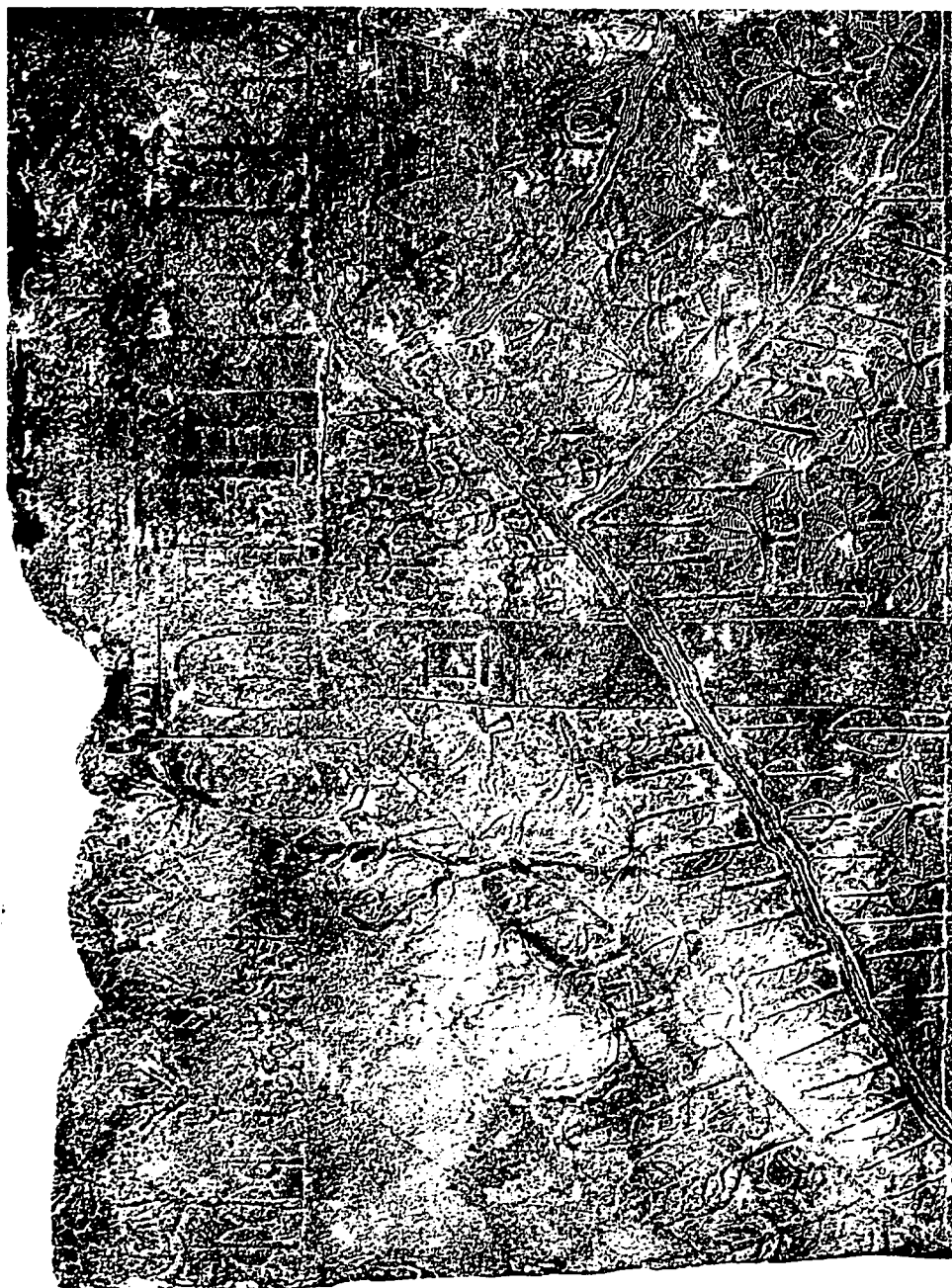


Figure 61: Relief from Room H of Aššurbanipal's North Palace, Nineveh. Hall, 1928, pl. XLIII.
By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 62: Relief from room E of Aššurbanipal's North Palace, Nineveh.
Curtis and Reade, 1995, no. 26. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

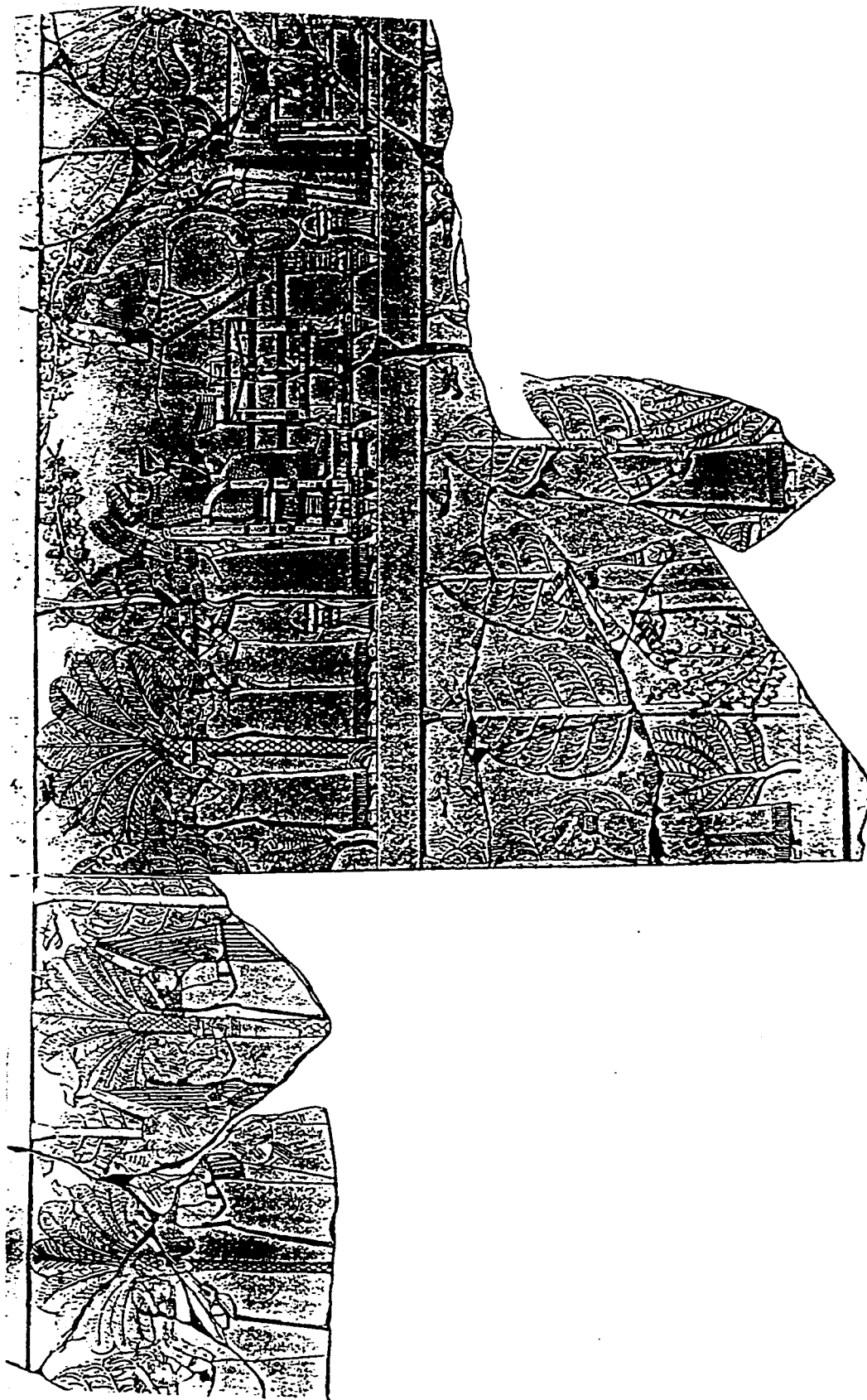


Figure 63: Drawing of relief from room S₁ of Aššurbanipal's North Palace, Nineveh, Gadd, 1936, pl. 40. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

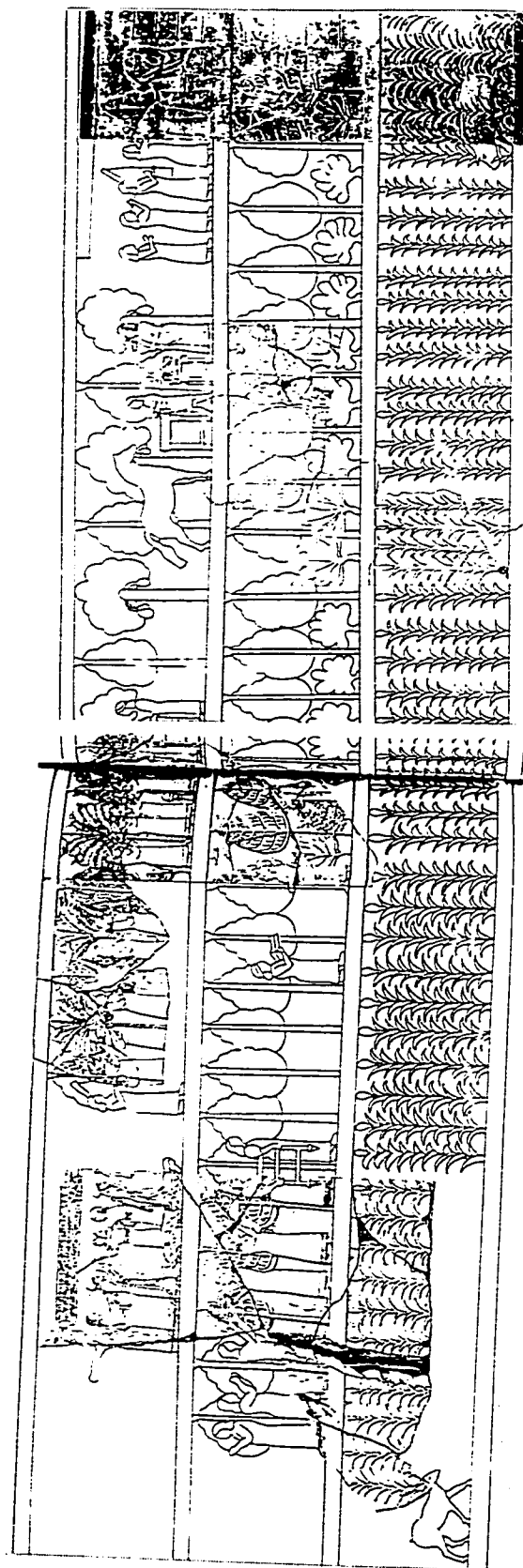


Figure 64: Schematic drawing of reliefs from room S₁ of Aššurbanipal's North Palace, Nineveh. Albenda, 1974, pl. 1. By permission of the author.



Figure 65: Relief from room S₁ of Aššurbanipal's North Palace, Nineveh. Gadd, 1936, pl. 42. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

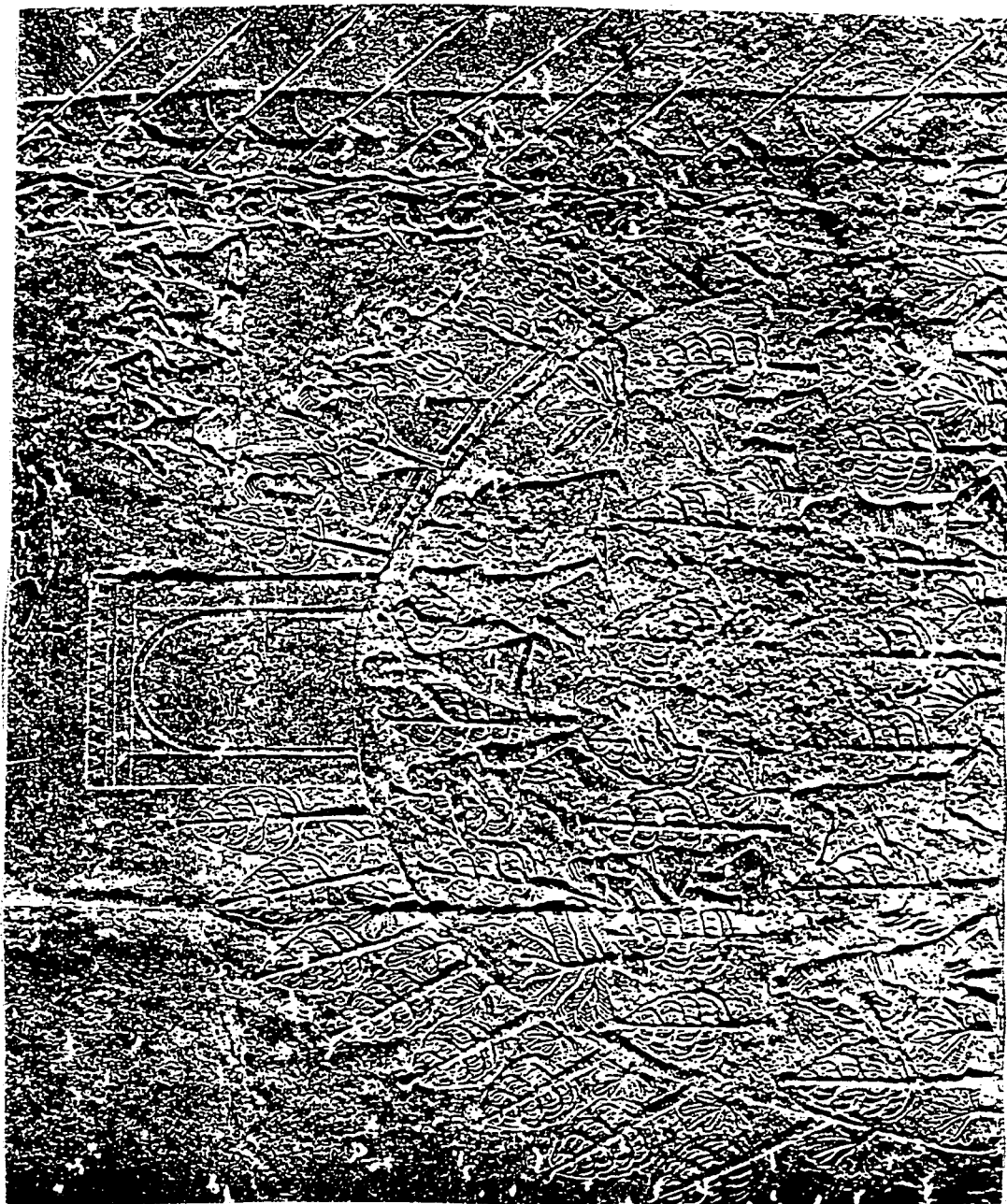


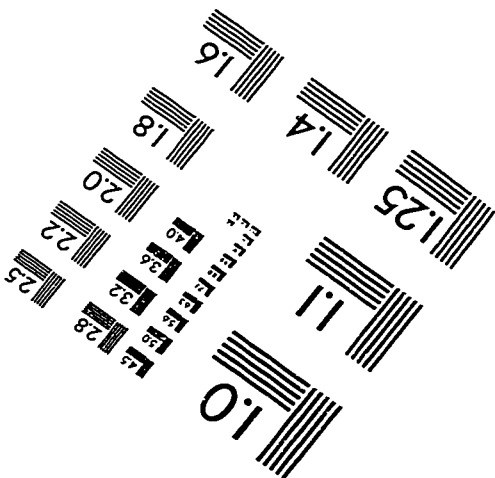
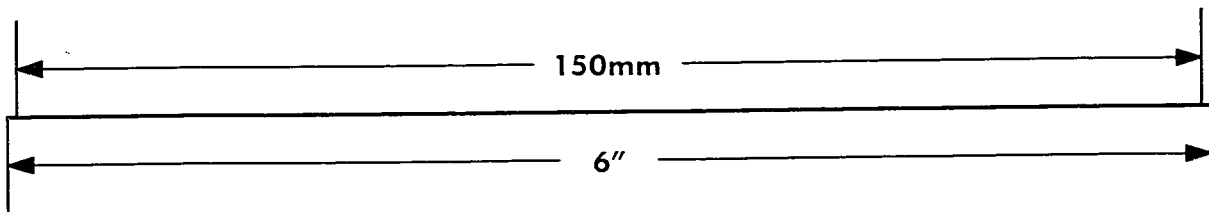
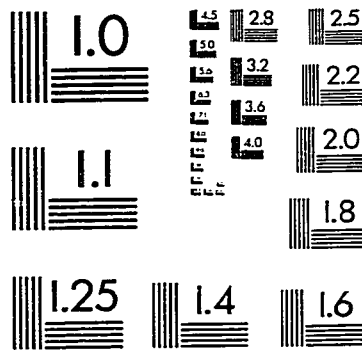
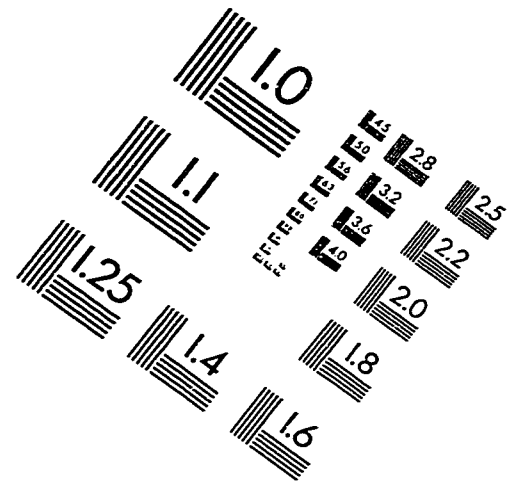
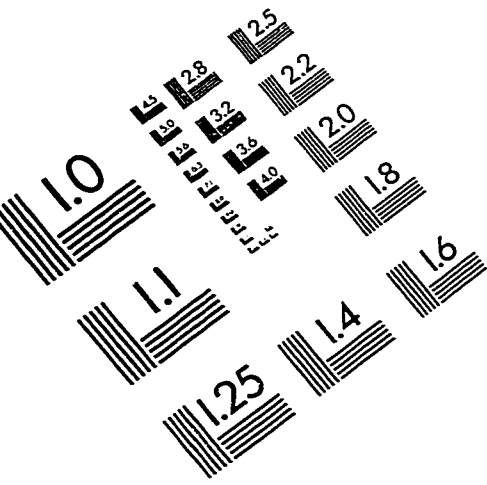
Figure 66: Relief from room C of Aššurbanipal's North Palace, Nineveh. Barnett, 1976, pl. VI.
By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 67: North Syrian ivories from room SW37, Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud. Herrmann, 1989, no. 719. By permission of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq.

Figure 68. North Syrian ivory from room SW37, Nimrud. Herrmann, 1989, no. 701. By permission of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq.

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