

**ASHURBANIPAL AGAINST ELAM  
FIGURATIVE PATTERNS AND ARCHITECTURAL LOCATION  
OF THE ELAMITE WARS**

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*to Maria Gabriella  
on her birthday*

*Abstract:* The present analysis reconsiders Ashurbanipal's representations of his Elamite campaigns in the North Palace at Nineveh. Starting from Ashurbanipal's accounts of the military deeds in Elam, identifications of the several sieges depicted in the rooms of the North Palace are suggested: other scenes are already known thanks to the common use of epigraphs and captions carved onto the slabs. Beside the military actions, Elamite characters can be also recognised in other situations: they document the different attitude of Ashurbanipal's policy in Elam with representations of Elamite refugees at the court of Nineveh serving and working for the Assyrian king. At the same time, considerations about the arrangement of the slabs showing the Elamite wars by Ashurbanipal in the North Palace are discussed: slabs with Elamite subjects are displayed in the rooms on the western side of the inner court J; other slabs are thought to have decorated the rooms on the upper floor of the palace. Finally, a common figurative pattern can be recognised: it will be argued that it helps in understanding the military strategy of the Assyrian army in Elam, since, as proved by the careful depictions of the Elamite centres and their landscape, the Assyrian army seems to confront very similar situations each time.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Elam, the south-east border of Assyria, began to be part of the Assyrian foreign politics beginning with the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, who, although he did not record any specific campaign against Elam, led some raids into Elamite regions as part of his campaign against the Arameans in southern Babylonia.<sup>1</sup>

Sargon II's reign represents the first real occasion of a military confrontation between Assyrians and Elamites that ended up in the pitched battle at Der (720 B.C.) that became an Assyrian strategic outpost on the road between Elam and the Zagros mountains:<sup>2</sup> Sargon's army confronted the Elamites who, allied with the Babylonian king in an anti-Assyrian coalition, started a tradition that lasted until the reign of Ashurbanipal. The most famous political and military alliances were between Shamash-shum-ukin, king of Babylon and Ashurbanipal's brother, and the Elamite kings.

In fact, the Assyrian military activities and expeditions increased considerably during Ashurbanipal's reign (668-627 B.C.), with at least two important and violent incursions into Elamite territory on the occasion of his second and fifth (the last one) campaign seasons.<sup>3</sup> Ashurbanipal led five campaigns (*girru*) against Elam: the third campaign, which should be dated 652-648 B.C., corresponds to Shamash-shum-ukin's rebellion against Assyria and involves battles and

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<sup>1</sup> For a recent analysis of Neo-Elamite history, see Waters, M.W. (2000): *A Survey of Neo-Elamite History* (SAAS 12), Helsinki.

<sup>2</sup> On the battle at Der, see Brinkman, J.A. (1965): "Elamite Military Aid to Merodah-Baladan", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 24: 161-166; Grayson, A.K. (1965): "Problematical Battles in Mesopotamian History", in: H.G. Güterbock and T. Jacobsen (eds.), *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on His Seventy-Five Birthday April 21, 1965*, Chicago, pp. 340-342; Levine, L.D. (1982): "Sennacherib's Southern Front: 704-698 B.C.", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 34: 50, fn. 70; Potts, D.T. (1999): *The Archaeology of Elam. Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State*, Cambridge, pp. 263-265.

<sup>3</sup> A close analysis of Ashurbanipal's Elamite campaigns has been carried out by Pamela Gerardi in her unpublished PhD dissertation. Gerardi, P. (1987): *Ashurbanipal's Elamite Campaigns: A Literary and Political Study*, Unpubl. PhD Diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. See also Potts, D.T. (1999): *The Archaeology of Elam. Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State*, Cambridge, pp. 275-288.

other activities against three Elamite kings, Ummanigash, Tammaritu II and Indabibi, who succeeded each other to the throne, following internal revolts and murders, probably with the support of the Assyrian king, over the succession to the throne of Elam; for example that of Ummanaldas, which concludes the event of Ashurbanipal's third campaign.

Ashurbanipal had to confront the Elamite problem soon enough. In 664 B.C., when Urtak, king of Elam, who had previously concluded a peace treaty with Esarhaddon,<sup>4</sup> decided to break the previous pact and march towards Babylon and encamp beside that city<sup>5</sup> - from that moment on, Ashurbanipal was involved in Elamite questions, trying to assure a peaceful border. He used with military force, on one hand, and political and strategic support for some of the Elamite kings, on the other. However, although the Elamite kings appeared at the beginning pro-Assyrian, they changed, adopting anti-Assyrian politics and thus forced Ashurbanipal to deal continuously with Elamite problems.

In the present study, I want to take into consideration the representations of the Elamite campaigns and events in Ashurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh, pointing to aspects of the foreign politics of the Assyrian king towards Elam: violent military activities against the Elamites armies in Elamite territory and the 'peaceful' attitude of the Assyrian king towards those Elamites, who recognize the mighty of Ashurbanipal and even come to Assyria as political refugees.

The bas-reliefs in the North Palace bearing the representations of Elamite events refer, in our opinion, to either the second campaign against Elam (the defeat of Te-Umman) or the last, the fifth campaign, which illustrates the defeat and capture of king Ummanaldas III, at the point in the historical narrative when Ashurbanipal enters Elam destroying many important political and Elamite cultic centres.

There are a few examples of narrative bas-relief, however, that show the 'pietistic' attitude of Ashurbanipal, who, after his first campaign

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<sup>4</sup> Borger, R. (1956): *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien*, Graz, pp. 58-59; Brinkman, J.A. (1984): *Prelude to Empire. Babylonian Society and Politics, 747-626 B.C.*, Philadelphia, p. 79; Fales, F.M. (2001): *L'impero assiro. Storia e amministrazione (IX-VII secolo a.C.)*, Roma-Bari, p. 238.

<sup>5</sup> Borger, R. (1996): *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals. Die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften*, Wiesbaden, pp. 222-223.

against Elam, received Urtak's relatives who became political fugitives from Elam after Te-Umman became king and, during his third campaign, when Tammaritu II, who first went to the aid of Shamash-shum-ukin, fled to Assyria after the inner revolt led by Indabibi. Together with these examples, Ashurbanipal's reliefs also document other representations of Elamites in 'peaceful' contexts as if they are part of the Assyrian entourage after they have been enlisted and captured.

## 2. ELAM AND ELAMITES IN THE NORTH PALACE: LOCATION AND SUBJECT OF THE RELIEFS

Several rooms of the North Palace are devoted to the representations of Ashurbanipal's deeds in Elam: some rooms bear depictions of Elamite events exclusively (rooms F, G, H, I and V<sup>1</sup>/T<sup>1</sup>). Others show Elamite episodes together with other subjects, for example as in the case of room S<sup>1</sup>, where the representation of a siege of an Elamite city and hunting scenes are depicted, and Throne Room M, where Elamite episodes appear together with the siege of the Egyptian city of Thebes (slab 17).<sup>6</sup>

Observing the plan of the North Palace and excluding Throne Room M<sup>7</sup> and the rooms of the hypothetical upper floor, the representations of Ashurbanipal's Elamite wars are located in the architectural complex on the western side of the inner court J (Fig. 1). Like in Sennacherib's South-West Palace, the Ashurbanipal's architects seem to have reformulated the jutting complex of rooms of Fort Shalmaneser at

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<sup>6</sup> Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. XXXVI.

<sup>7</sup> The Elamite wars are only a part of the throne room figurative programme, repeating the same pattern of the main reception rooms of other Assyrian residences. The narrative bas-reliefs in the throne rooms were usually devoted to a general summary of the royal deeds, focusing on the east-west pattern of control and territorial expansion. For the throne rooms of Ashurnasirpal II and Sargon II, see Winter, I.J. (1981): "Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs", *Studies in Visual Communication* 7/2: 2-38 (in particular pp. 19-20); for Sennacherib's throne room, see the reconstruction by Nadali, D. (in press): "The Role of the Image of the King in the Organizational and Compositional Principles of Sennacherib's Throne Room: A Guide to the Historical Narrative and Meaning of a Specified Message", in: H. Kühne (ed.), *Proceedings of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, Berlin.

Nimrud and Sargon's Royal Palace at Khorsabad and enclosed it in the main structure of the building on the sides of the inner court.<sup>8</sup> Although the exploration of the inner court J of Ashurbanipal's North Palace is incomplete, it can be assumed that also the other sides of the court were closed by complexes of rooms that were dedicated to particular and monothematic campaigns of the king.<sup>9</sup>

If we take into consideration the subjects of the reliefs of rooms F, G, H and I, we can see that the arrangement of the reliefs from room I to F is in chronological order, from the campaign conducted by Ashurbanipal against Te-Umman (room I: Ashurbanipal's second campaign in Elam) to the episodes depicting the flight of Tammartu II and other Elamites to Assyria (room H: Ashurbanipal's third campaign in Elam)<sup>10</sup> and then, finally, the fourth and fifth campaigns when Ashurbanipal destroyed many of the important cultic cities of Elam (rooms F and G).

As I describe below, the bas-reliefs depicting the Elamite episodes from the rooms on the so-called upper floor, although more fragmentary and less clear, repeat, and sometimes complete, the Elamite scenes represented in the main floor of the palace, which are better known. They focus, in particular, on the events of the last campaign of Ashurbanipal in Elam (rooms S<sup>1</sup> and V<sup>1</sup>/T1) and they also depict the Elamites, who fled to Assyria as refugees (the hunting reliefs in room S<sup>1</sup>).

### *The battles*

To repeat, the bas-reliefs with Elamite subjects mostly depict the last two campaigns of Ashurbanipal (fourth and fifth campaign), except room I that repeat the events of the battle of Til-Tuba against Te-Umman, which occurred during the second campaign to Elam and were already depicted

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<sup>8</sup> Matthiae, P. (1996): *L'arte degli Assiri. Cultura e forma del rilievo storico*, Roma-Bari, pp. 28-29; Nadali, D. (2002-2005): "Sennacherib's Siege, Assault, and Conquest of Alammu", *State Archives of Assyria. Bulletin* 14: 113, fn. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Margueron, J.-Cl. (2005): "Du bitanu, de l'étage et des salles hypostyles dans les palais néo-assyriens", *Syria* 82: 104-105, 117.

<sup>10</sup> Reade, J.E. (1976): "Elam and Elamites in Assyrian Sculptures", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 9: 102.

in room XXXIII of Sennacherib's South-West Palace.<sup>11</sup> These bas-reliefs were carved in a style that we attribute to the sculptors of Ashurbanipal. The latest Elamite events depicted in the North Palace record the capture of Ummanaldas III (Fig. 2) and the final sack of Susa, partially preserved in the action of the upper part of slab 13 in the throne room M (Fig. 3).<sup>12</sup>

As observed by Gerardi,<sup>13</sup> Ashurbanipal entered the territory of Elam in his last campaign and destroyed many urban centres. Although not always well preserved due to the bad condition of the sculptures, the reliefs of rooms F, G, S<sup>1</sup> and V<sup>1</sup>/T<sup>1</sup> represent the sack of cities and the consequent deportation of inhabitants together with the booty.

Some of the cities depicted are clearly recognisable due to the presence of short epigraphs that register the name of the Elamite centres attacked by the Assyrian army.<sup>14</sup> Also, thanks to the accounts in Ashurbanipal's annals, a possible identification of other cities will be suggested below taking into consideration the specific characteristics of the landscape observed and carved by the Assyrian artists.

Starting from the best preserved reliefs of room F, two distinct military actions against two Elamite cities are represented one in the upper and the other in the lower register. On slab 3 in the upper register, the presence of clearly legible epigraphs, carved on the walls of a city

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<sup>11</sup> Barnett, R.D.–Bleibtreu, E.–Turner, G. (1998): *Sculptures from the Southwest Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh*, London, pl. 286.

<sup>12</sup> The identification of the city with Susa, so far suggested by Reade (Reade, J.E. (1976): "Elam and Elamites in Assyrian Sculptures", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 9: 101), seems to be confirmed by the other representation of the city in room I in the North Palace. In both representations, the presence of arch gates by the city and the river is noteworthy. Moreover, on slab 13 in room M the Assyrian soldiers are carrying off an image of a bronze gate bull: bulls' heads adorn the upper part of the ziggurat depicted on slab 9 in room I and the account of the conquest of Susa refers to bronze horns of the ziggurat as well as the bronze gate bulls that have been sacked by the Assyrian army (Borger, R. (1996): *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals. Die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften*, Wiesbaden, pp. 240-241, F §32, IV 67-V 54).

<sup>13</sup> Gerardi, P. (1987): *Assurbanipal's Elamite Campaigns: A Literary and Political Study*, Unpubl. PhD Diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, pp. 253, 255.

<sup>14</sup> Gerardi, P. (1988): "Epigraphs and Assyrian Palace Reliefs", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 40: 1-35; Russell, J.M. (1999): *The Writing on the Wall. Studies in the Architectural Context of Late Assyrian Palace Inscriptions*, Winona Lake, pp. 199-205.

under siege by the Assyrian army,<sup>15</sup> allows us to identify Elamite Hamanu that was destroyed and sacked during Ashurbanipal's fourth campaign (Fig. 4a).<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, the epigraph applied above the royal chariot in the upper register of slab 15 is illegible (Fig. 4b).<sup>17</sup> However, I suggest that the inscription is a formulaic and coded pattern similar to the so-called *anāku* epigraphs:<sup>18</sup> the Assyrian king repeats his royal titles and resumes the conquest and sack of the city and the deportation of the inhabitants and booty represented on the previous slabs.

In the lower register, following a narrative that goes in the opposite direction, from right to left, another siege operation is represented (Fig. 4b). Part of this narrative is on slab 15, known only from the original drawing of W. Boutcher (Or. Dr. VII 6); no epigraphs are documented that describe the name of the city under siege. At the same time, on slab 2, no epigraph is carved above the chariot as it is above the chariot (illegible) on the upper register of slab 15 (Figs. 4b-c). However, I think that a possible relationship can exist between upper and lower registers: a hypothetically placed epigraph on the walls of the city under siege (slab 15) as well as another epigraph above the king in the chariot in the lower register of slab 2 can be suggested. If an epigraph above the royal chariot existed, the one written on a plaque, originally published by Böhl,<sup>19</sup> could be assigned: the text of the Böhl plaque describes the conquest of Bīt-Luppi and the deportation of people, chariots, carts, horses and mules that are counted as booty. They all could be

<sup>15</sup> Gerardi, P. (1988): "Epigraphs and Assyrian Palace Reliefs", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 40: 22.

<sup>16</sup> Gerardi, P. (1987): *Assurbanipal's Elamite Campaigns: A Literary and Political Study*, Unpubl. PhD Diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, pp. 190-191, 195, fn. 146.

<sup>17</sup> Gerardi, P. (1988): "Epigraphs and Assyrian Palace Reliefs", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 40: 22.

<sup>18</sup> See for example the epigraph inscribed above the royal chariot in the lower register of slab A in room V<sup>1</sup>/T<sup>1</sup>. Gerardi, P. (1988): "Epigraphs and Assyrian Palace Reliefs", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 40: 5, 28.

<sup>19</sup> Böhl, F. (1930): "Ein Steinplatten-Fragment Aššurbânâplis", *Archiv für Orientforschung* 6: 107-108; Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, p. 64; Gerardi, P. (1988): "Epigraphs and Assyrian Palace Reliefs", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 40: 33.

represented on the images of the entire lower register.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the anonymous city represented on slab 15 could be identified with Bīt-Luppi.

The siege of Hamanu is represented twice in the North Palace. The episode is, in fact, narrated in room S<sup>1</sup>, where the city, already conquered and set on fire, is being demolished by the Assyrian soldiers. Other Assyrian soldiers are marching out of the city carrying the booty (Fig. 5). Despite the different architectural features between the two depictions of Hamanu,<sup>21</sup> the epigraphs sculpted onto the slab clearly identify the Elamite centre. Besides the architectural differences that can also imply that different sculptors worked in rooms F and S<sup>1</sup>, the time during the narrative of the siege represented is different. The relief of room F depicts the city under siege with Assyrian soldiers climbing up on ladders to reach the top of the walls and tunnelling and mining the walls by the gate; the relief of room S<sup>1</sup> represents the city after the siege, once it has been already conquered and set on fire. The Assyrian soldiers are, in fact, on the top of the walls (inside the city) and they are destroying the structure of the walls: bricks and wooden beams are falling down. The time difference seems to be confirmed by the Assyrian annals, where Hamanu recurs twice: in the list of cities at the end of the account of the fourth campaign and at the beginning of the report of the fifth campaign<sup>22</sup> - the first time, the city suffers the siege of the Assyrian army

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<sup>20</sup> Based on the usual position of the *anāku* epigraphs before or above the image of the king in the chariot, J.M. Russell suggests that the epigraph of the plaque describing the conquest of Bīt-Luppi can be placed on slab 15 in the upper register, above the king in his chariot. However, since the upper register narrates the conquest of Hamanu, as documented by the epigraph applied on the walls of the city on slab 3 (already Reade, J.E. (1964): "More Drawings of Ashurbanipal Sculptures", *Iraq* 26: 4), it seems more probable that the inscription of the plaque refers to a different representation that we propose to identify with the lower register of room F. Russell, J.M. (1999): *The Writing on the Wall. Studies in the Architectural Context of Late Assyrian Palace Inscriptions*, Winona Lake, pp. 200-201.

<sup>21</sup> Reade, J.E. (1976): "Elam and Elamites in Assyrian Sculptures", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 9: 102-103.

<sup>22</sup> Gerardi, P. (1987): *Assurbanipal's Elamite Campaigns: A Literary and Political Study*, Unpubl. PhD Diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, pp. 190-191; de Miroshedji, P. (1990): "La fin de l'Elam: essai d'analyse et d'interprétation", *Iranica Antiqua* 25: 68; Borger, R. (1996): *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals. Die*



with the consequent procession of prisoners and booty; the second time, it is being demolished, with its last goods taken away as spoil.

The list of cities at the end of the account of Ashurbanipal's fourth campaign also contains the city of Dîn-Sharri.<sup>23</sup> The reliefs depicting the siege and conquest of Dîn-Sharri were originally located in room V<sup>1</sup>/T<sup>1</sup> in the upper floor of the palace. The identification of the Elamite centre is documented by the inscription, in the lower register, carved above the royal chariot on slab A (Fig. 6).<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, the reliefs, known thanks to the Original Drawings of W. Boutcher, do not show the moment of the Assyrian attack. Only the procession of prisoners, animals and booty marching towards the king in his chariot is preserved.<sup>25</sup>

Rooms G and S<sup>1</sup> depict episodes which also occurred during the fifth and last campaign of Ashurbanipal against Elam, when Susa is finally sacked and Ummadaldas III, king of Elam, is captured in the mountains.

The fragmentary relief, now in the Vatican Museum in Rome and originally in room G of the North Palace,<sup>26</sup> shows the actual moment when the siege of Bīt-Bunakki by the Assyrians was taking place (Fig. 7a).<sup>27</sup> The particular characterisation of the landscape helps hypothesize about the nature and location of Bīt-Bunakki: the drawing Or. Dr. VII 9 (Fig. 7b) shows, on the lower edge of slabs 3-5, a river, where boats transporting enemies and led by Elamite prisoners tied to a rope walking

*Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften*, Wiesbaden, pp. 238-239.

<sup>23</sup> Borger, R. (1996): *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals. Die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften*, Wiesbaden, p. 239. Like Hamanu, Dîn-Sharri is also cited in the account of the fifth campaign of Ashurbanipal against Elam.

<sup>24</sup> Gerardi, P. (1988): "Epigraphs and Assyrian Palace Reliefs", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 40: 28.

<sup>25</sup> Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. LXVII.

<sup>26</sup> See the reconstruction proposed by Nigro, L. (2000): "L'assedio di Bīt-Bunakki da Ninive ai Musei Vaticani. La sua collocazione originaria nel Palazzo Nord di Assurbanipal e gli scavi di Giovanni Bennis", *Vicino Oriente* 12: 254-257, fig. 6.

<sup>27</sup> The name of Bīt-Bunakki is also enclosed in the list of cities at the end of the account of Ashurbanipal's fourth campaign (Borger, R. (1996): *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals. Die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften*, Wiesbaden, p. 239).

along the river are represented. Like Hamanu, Bīt-Bunakki is situated on a river in the Rashi mountain region, a frontier area close to Assyria and the Assyrian outpost of Der.<sup>28</sup>

Slab A in room S<sup>1</sup> is poorly preserved (two fragments in the Louvre Museum), although Boutcher's drawing (Or. Dr. VI 24) mostly reconstructs the original shape of and representations on the relief (Fig. 8). Two inscriptions, one on the upper register probably above the royal chariot, the other on the middle register carved on the walls of the city under siege, are incomplete. The first follows the *anāku* typology and should probably refer to Ashurbanipal giving his titles and describing the scene (probably the surrender of Ummanaldas),<sup>29</sup> the second, unfortunately, does not preserve the name of the city.

However, considering the landscape features, a possible identification can be suggested. The city under siege by the Assyrian army could be identified with Dur-Undasi, the important cultic centre that was conquered by Ashurbanipal in his last fifth campaign.<sup>30</sup> Ummanaldas, king of Elam, after he knew that the Assyrian army captured Hamanu and other cities in the Rashi region, left his residence in Madaktu and fled to Dur-Undasi crossing the river Idide that became his last line of defence.<sup>31</sup> At first, the river blocked the Assyrian army, but after Ishtar

<sup>28</sup> On the localisation of Bīt-Bunakki, see Young, T.C. (1967): "The Iranian Migration into the Zagros", *Iran* 5: 13, who identifies the watercourse with Simareh river; Potts, D.T. (1999): *The Archaeology of Elam. Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State*, Cambridge, p. 285; Nigro, L. (2000): "L'assedio di Bīt-Bunakki da Ninive ai Musei Vaticani. La sua collocazione originaria nel Palazzo Nord di Assurbanipal e gli scavi di Giovanni Bennis", *Vicino Oriente* 12: 259; Parpola, S.–Porter, M. (2001): *The Helsinki Atlas of the Near East in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, Helsinki.

<sup>29</sup> Gerardi, P. (1988): "Epigraphs and Assyrian Palace Reliefs", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 40: 24.

<sup>30</sup> On the localisation of Dur-Undasi, see Gerardi, P. (1987): *Assurbanipal's Elamite Campaigns: A Literary and Political Study*, Unpubl. PhD Diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, fn. 151; Potts, D.T. (1999): *The Archaeology of Elam. Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State*, Cambridge, p. 284; Parpola, S.–Porter, M. (2001): *The Helsinki Atlas of the Near East in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, Helsinki.

<sup>31</sup> Gerardi, P. (1987): *Assurbanipal's Elamite Campaigns: A Literary and Political Study*, Unpubl. PhD Diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, p. 195; Borger, R. (1996): *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals. Die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften*, Wiesbaden, p. 239, F §26, IV 29-43.

appeared in dream, the Assyrian army crossed the river Idide and captured Dur-Undasi forcing Ummanaldas to escape to the mountains.<sup>32</sup>

The account of Ashurbanipal's annals seems to fit well with the representation of the city under siege on slab A of room S<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 8). The city lies next to a river that the prisoners and Assyrian soldiers seem to cross probably marching in the direction of the king in his chariot, who waited on the other bank of the watercourse.

Moreover, if we interpret the scene in the upper register as the surrender of Ummanaldas (Fig. 9),<sup>33</sup> the relief really seems to reproduce in images part of the account of the Ashurbanipal's annals that becomes part of the figurative programme of the throne room. After the capture of Dur-Undasi, Ummanaldas came back to Madaktu. On the command of the Assyrian king, he gave Ashurbanipal the body of the Babylonian rebel, Nabu-bel-shumate. Later on he revolted, after which, Ummanaldas was forced to take to the mountains, where he was finally captured and deported to Assyria.<sup>34</sup> The representation in the upper register of slab A, in fact, reproduces a mountainous landscape with conifers and thus illustrates the episode at the end of the story, the capture of Ummanaldas.<sup>35</sup>

Only room I represents an Elamite event that occurred during Ashurbanipal's second campaign. This is the campaign that ends with the famous battle against Te-Umma on the river Ulai. The episode was also represented in room XXXIII of Sennacherib's South-West Palace.

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<sup>32</sup> Borger, R. (1996): *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals. Die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften*, Wiesbaden, p. 240, A §53, V 95-103; Waters, M.W. (2000): *A Survey of Neo-Elamite History* (SAAS 12), Helsinki, pp. 76-77.

<sup>33</sup> Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, p. 54. The scene can also represent the surrender of Tammartu II, who, after Ashurbanipal appointed him as king of Elam for the second time, tried to revolt against Assyria (see below).

<sup>34</sup> Gerardi, P. (1987): *Assurbanipal's Elamite Campaigns: A Literary and Political Study*, Unpubl. PhD Diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, pp. 208-209; Potts, D.T. (1999): *The Archaeology of Elam. Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State*, Cambridge, p. 285; Waters, M.W. (2000): *A Survey of Neo-Elamite History* (SAAS 12), Helsinki, p. 79.

<sup>35</sup> Reade, J.E. (1976): "Elam and Elamites in Assyrian Sculptures", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 9: 104, Taf. 28, 1.

The style of the representation in the North Palace differs from the previous version. Specifically, the point of observation changes. In the South-West Palace, the battle runs toward the river with the Assyrian army pushing the Elamites into the water. Thus, the viewer really follows the advance of the Assyrian army. But, in the North Palace, the battle occurs along the river as if the sculptors observed the action on the other bank of the river - that is, frontally instead of laterally.<sup>36</sup> Also, another difference is that the subject of the upper half of slab 9 represents the triumph of Ashurbanipal in Arbela; but, the lower half does not depict the enthronement of the new king Ummanigash in Madaktu (slabs 5-6, room XXXIII, South-West Palace);<sup>37</sup> it represents the ziggurat of Susa that the Assyrians (the scene was carved in 645 B.C.), already knew since they destroyed it the previous year.<sup>38</sup>

*Out of the battle: hunting, the aftermath and refugees*

Elamites are also represented in 'peaceful' contexts and not a part of the actual, ongoing campaigns of Ashurbanipal. In particular, two representations in the room S<sup>1</sup> and H of the North Palace can be linked to the events of the first and third military expedition of the Assyrian king to Elam, when Elamites fled from Elam to Assyria as refugees.

The first occasion of Elamites fleeing to Assyria occurred at the end of Ashurbanipal's first campaign, after Te-Umman became king of Elam.<sup>39</sup> Urtak's sons and relatives fled to Ashurbanipal's court, together

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<sup>36</sup> Nadali, D. (2006): *Percezione dello spazio e scansione del tempo. Studio della composizione narrativa del rilievo assiro di VII secolo a.C.* (CMAO 12), Roma, pp. 198, 206-207, tav. LXVI, 1-2.

<sup>37</sup> Ummanigash was son of Urtak, the king of Elam who concluded a peace treaty with Esarhaddon and first rebelled against Ashurbanipal (first campaign against Elam); Ummanigash had fled, with other Elamites, to Assyria as refugee, after Te-Umman became king.

<sup>38</sup> Reade, J.E. (1976): "Elam and Elamites in Assyrian Sculptures", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 9: 100-101, Taf. 24, 1-2, Taf. 25.

<sup>39</sup> In the account of Ashurbanipal's first campaign, Te-Umman is described as a *gallû* demon, implying a negative judgement and consideration by Ashurbanipal from the beginning. See Gerardi, P. (1987): *Ashurbanipal's Elamite Campaigns: A Literary and Political Study*, Unpubl. PhD Diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, p. 130; Potts, D.T. (1999): *The Archaeology of Elam. Formation and Transformation of an*

with other members of the royal family, archers and other citizens of Elam. After the defeat and murder of Te-Umman, Ashurbanipal installed Ummanigash in Madaktu and Tammaritu I in Hidalu as kings. Both Ummanigash and Tammaritu were Urtak's sons, to whom Ashurbanipal had given refuge. Again, we still find a relative of Urtak around during the events of Ashurbanipal's third campaign to Elam. After Ummanigash was dethroned and killed, Tammaritu II seized power: he was probably the son of Ummanappa, another of Ummanigash's brothers and also one of the refugees accepted by Ashurbanipal.<sup>40</sup>

Also, a long inscription carved on slab A in room S<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 10), with a representation of Ashurbanipal hunting lions from his chariot, tells that Ashurbanipal saved "Ummanappa, son of Urtak, king of Elam, who fled and submitted to me" from the attack of a lion.<sup>41</sup> Other Elamites are represented on slab 10 in room S: they wear the typical Elamite tunic and headband and they are paying homage to the Assyrian king, who is testing his bow before the hunt.<sup>42</sup> Those Elamites probably belong to the refugees Ashurbanipal accepted and then invited as guests to view his heroic hunting activities.<sup>43</sup>

The second occasion of Elamites escaping from Elam occurred during Ashurbanipal's third campaign, when Tammaritu II, Ummanappa's son, fled to Assyria after Indabibi revolted against him and seized the throne. Moreover, Tammaritu II is still present during Ashurbanipal's fourth campaign to Elam, accompanying the Assyrian army. The accounts tell us that Tammaritu followed the Assyrian king on campaign, and Ashurbanipal appointed him as king of Elam in Susa replacing Ummanaldas III, who left Madaktu and fled to the mountains. On a second occasion, when Ashurbanipal acknowledged Tammaritu's

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*Ancient Iranian State*, Cambridge, p. 276; Waters, M.W. (2000): *A Survey of Neo-Elamite History* (SAAS 12), Helsinki, p. 49.

<sup>40</sup> Potts, D.T. (1999): *The Archaeology of Elam. Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State*, Cambridge, pp. 280-281; Waters, M.W. (2000): *A Survey of Neo-Elamite History* (SAAS 12), Helsinki, pp. 56, 62-63.

<sup>41</sup> Russell, J.M. (1999): *The Writing on the Wall. Studies in the Architectural Context of Late Assyrian Palace Inscriptions*, Winona Lake, p. 201.

<sup>42</sup> Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. XLVII.

<sup>43</sup> Reade, J.E. (1976): "Elam and Elamites in Assyrian Sculptures", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 9: 99.

importance to the Assyrian throne, was, however, betrayed by the Elamite king, who was finally captured, brought before Ashurbanipal in Nineveh and forced to pull Ashurbanipal's chariot, together with Ummanaldas III, Pa'e and the Arabian king Uaite', during an important celebration in Nineveh.<sup>44</sup> He also had to carry a fly-whisk and bring food to Ashurbanipal and his wife in the famous garden scene.<sup>45</sup>

J.E. Reade has suggested that the Elamites, who were represented in the lower register of slabs 7-9 in room H and were usually described as fleeing or going to the battle, can be seen as the refugees that came to Assyria together with Tammariu II.<sup>46</sup>

Tammariu himself can be identified as the Elamite wearing the characteristic bulbous crown on slab 13 in room M (Fig. 11).<sup>47</sup> The slab depicts Ashurbanipal in his chariot receiving the booty and royal insignia of his brother Shamash-shum-ukin, who perished during the fight and events of Ashurbanipal's third campaign to Elam (652-648 B.C.).<sup>48</sup> Thus,

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<sup>44</sup> Reade, J.E. (1976): "Elam and Elamites in Assyrian Sculptures", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 9: 105; Borger, R. (1996): *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals. Die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften*, Wiesbaden, pp. 249-250, A §85, X 17-39; Potts, D.T. (1999): *The Archaeology of Elam. Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State*, Cambridge, p. 285; Waters, M.W. (2000): *A Survey of Neo-Elamite History* (SAAS 12), Helsinki, pp. 71-72.

<sup>45</sup> Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. LXIV; Reade, J.E. (1976): "Elam and Elamites in Assyrian Sculptures", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 9: 104; Gerardi, P. (1988): "Epigraphs and Assyrian Palace Reliefs", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 40: 25.

<sup>46</sup> Reade, J.E. (1976): "Elam and Elamites in Assyrian Sculptures", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 9: 102; Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, p. 41, pl. XXIII; Matthiae, P. (1996): *L'arte degli Assiri. Cultura e forma del rilievo storico*, Roma-Bari, pp. 181-182, fig. 9.15.

<sup>47</sup> Reade, J.E. (1976): "Elam and Elamites in Assyrian Sculptures", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 9: 103; Bleibtreu, E. (1999): *Ein vergoldeter Silberbecher der Zeit Assurbanipals im Miho Museum. Historische Darstellung des 7. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, Wien, p. 13. The representation of slabs 12-13 of room M has been the subject of a paper presented by J. Novotny and C.E. Watanabe at the 52<sup>nd</sup> *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*, held in Münster in July 2006. I wish to thank J. Novotny and C.E. Watanabe for providing me with a copy of their paper.

<sup>48</sup> Thus, the bearded man in the upper row of slab 13 cannot be identified with Shamash-shum-ukin (Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at*

the scene seems to refer to the escape of Tammariṭu, who, at first, supported Shamash-shum-ukin before Indabibi revolted and seized the throne (about 650 B.C.). However, the annals tell us that Tammariṭu fled to Assyria, while the scene on slab 3 in room M depicts a Babylonian landscape, as if Tammariṭu and other three foreigners were present at the recapture of Babylon and at the moment of Shamash-shum-ukin's death (648 B.C.).<sup>49</sup> As suggested by J.E. Reade,<sup>50</sup> slabs 12-13 can be "a composite, notional, idealised representation of triumphs and acts of submission which did not happen simultaneously" - the review of the Babylonian booty and Shamash-shum-ukin's regalia in the upper part of the lower register and the submission of Tammariṭu and other foreigners in the lower part, the principal individual who took part, in different ways and at different times, in the Assyrian-Babylonian dispute.

At the same time, the scene can be interpreted as the final capture of Tammariṭu during Ashurbanipal's last campaign to Elam, with the presence of the Arabs, Abiyate' and Ayumu, and the Nabatean, Natnu, protagonists of Ashurbanipal's second campaign against the Arabs and initially supporters of Shamash-shum-ukin.<sup>51</sup> Again, however, the

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*Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pp. 46-47). As already suggested by Reade, I prefer instead that the bearded man should be an Assyrian official whom we propose to identify with the *rab kāširī* (Milki-rāmu). Milki-rāmu took part in Ashurbanipal's Elamite wars (Hämeen-Anttila, J. (1987): "A New Text Relating to Ashurbanipal's Elamite Wars", *State Archives of Assyria. Bulletin* 1: 13-16; Waters, M.W. (2000): *A Survey of Neo-Elamite History* (SAAS 12), Helsinki, p. 59; Baker, H.D. ed. (2001): *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Volume 2, Part II: L-N*, Helsinki, p. 752). I wish to thank R. Mattila for discussing this topic with me during the international workshop on "Administration and Ideology in the Ancient Near East", held in Verona, 29-30 March 2007.

<sup>49</sup> For the identification of the three foreigners behind Tammariṭu with the Arabs Abiyate' and Ayumu and the Nabatean Natnu, see Reade, J.E. (1998): "Assyrian Illustrations of Arabs", in: C.S. Phillips-D.T. Potts-S. Searight (eds.), *Arabia and its Neighbours. Essays on Prehistorical and Historical Developments Presented in Honour of Beatrice De Cardi*, Brepols, pp. 230-231, fig. 7.

<sup>50</sup> Reade, J.E. (1998): "Assyrian Illustrations of Arabs", in: C.S. Phillips-D.T. Potts-S. Searight (eds.), *Arabia and its Neighbours. Essays on Prehistorical and Historical Developments Presented in Honour of Beatrice De Cardi*, Brepols, p. 230.

<sup>51</sup> Ashurbanipal's second campaign against the Arabs took place after Shamash-shum-ukin's rebellion, about 646 B.C. See the philological reconstruction by Gerardi, P. (1992): "The Arab Campaigns of Aššurbanipal: Scribal Reconstruction of the Past", *State Archives of Assyria. Bulletin* 6: 67-103; Reade, J.E. (1998): "Assyrian Illustrations of

Babylonian setting of the representation contrasts with the account of the texts.

Considering the nature of Assyrian throne rooms as the space where either the summary or a selection of royal deeds are represented, a temporal shift can be supposed to explain the depictions. Thus, the throne room would have collected, in the same space, episodes chronologically distant: the representation of the defeat of Shamash-shum-ukin with the review of his booty and regalia; the submission of Tammartu II, the Arabs, Abiyate' and Ayumu, and the Nabatean, Natnu; the final sack of Susa (upper register of slab 13);<sup>52</sup> and the capture and submission of Ummanaldas III (if we consider the fragment WA 124793 as belonging to the throne room)<sup>53</sup>. At the same time, the throne room of the North Palace also recorded the Egyptian campaign of Ashurbanipal with the conquest of Thebes (slab 17),<sup>54</sup> and probably other Ashurbanipal's campaigns.

Finally, Elamite prisoners (or refugees) are often represented in temporary Assyrian camps.<sup>55</sup> Only fragments of reliefs are known showing Elamite men, women and children with Assyrian soldiers

Arabs", in: C.S. Phillips - D.T. Potts - S. Searight (eds.), *Arabia and its Neighbours. Essays on Prehistorical and Historical Developments Presented in Honour of Beatrice De Cardi*, Brepols, p. 229. The reliefs of the so-called 'Arab Room' L of the North Palace should refer to Ashurbanipal's first campaign against the Arabs, Reade, J.E. (1998): "Assyrian Illustrations of Arabs", in: C.S. Phillips-D.T. Potts-S. Searight (eds.), *Arabia and its Neighbours. Essays on Prehistorical and Historical Developments Presented in Honour of Beatrice De Cardi*, Brepols, pp. 229-230; Nadali, D. (2004): "La campagna di Assurbanipal contro gli Arabi: proposta di lettura delle dinamiche di una battaglia in campo aperto", *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici* 46: 62-64.

<sup>52</sup> Reade, J.E. (1976): "Elam and Elamites in Assyrian Sculptures", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 9: 103, and see our fn. 12.

<sup>53</sup> Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, p. 46, pl. XXXIV. See also the epigraph carved on the relief, Gerardi, P. (1988): "Epigraphs and Assyrian Palace Reliefs", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 40: 23. The episode of the surrender of Ummanaldas has been recognised by R.D. Barnett in room S<sup>1</sup> (upper register of slab A) and was also depicted on a silver vase (Bleibtreu, E. (1999): *Ein vergoldeter Silberbecher der Zeit Assurbanipals im Miho Museum. Historische Darstellungen des 7. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, Wien, p. 13, Taf. 1-4).

<sup>54</sup> Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. XXXVI.

<sup>55</sup> Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pls. LXVI, LXIX.



attending them that probably show the Elamite citizens captured by the Assyrian army<sup>56</sup> as well as those who fled to Assyria following Urtak's relatives and Tammariu. Usually, those scenes are placed behind the king in his chariot, clearly outside of the war activity.<sup>57</sup> Thus it seems plausible to think of Elamite citizens, spontaneously submitting to Ashurbanipal and therefore escaping a problematic and difficult situation in Elam, as an indication either of Te-Umman's rising power or of the revolt that dethroned Tammariu II.

Also, individuals wearing a peculiar feathered headgear are represented in Ashurbanipal's reliefs: they have been identified as either Elamites or Persians.<sup>58</sup> They seem to be present during the aftermath and triumphal parades as auxiliary bowmen and spearmen, part of the Assyrian king's entourage or as music players.<sup>59</sup> It is interesting to notice that singers were among the captives deported from Madaktu to Assyria.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> See in particular the account of the conquest of Bīt-Imbî with the deportation of Imbappi, a high Elamite official and Ummanaldas's relative, together with the woman of the palace (queen) and Te-Umman's sons. Borger, R. (1996): *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals. Die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften*, Wiesbaden, p. 237; Waters, M.W. (2000): *A Survey of Neo-Elamite History* (SAAS 12), Helsinki, p. 70.

<sup>57</sup> Reade, J.E. (1979): "Narrative Composition in Assyrian sculpture", *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 10: 106; Nadali, D. (2006): *Percezione dello spazio e scansione del tempo. Studio della composizione narrativa del rilievo assiro di VII secolo a.C.* (CMAO 12), Roma, pp. 160-161, tav. LIII, 1.

<sup>58</sup> Weidner, E.F. (1939): *Die Reliefs der assyrischen Könige*, Berlin, pp. 78-82; Reade, J.E. (1967): "Two Slabs from Sennacherib's Palace", *Iraq* 29: 43, fn. 47; Reade, J.E. (1976): "Elam and Elamites in Assyrian Sculptures", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 9: 100; Dolce, R.–Nota Santi, M. (eds.) (1995): *Dai palazzi assiri. Immagini di potere da Assurnasirpal II ad Assurbanipal (IX-VII secolo a.C.)*, p. 248.

<sup>59</sup> Calmeyer, P. (1970): "Federkränze und Musik", in: A. Finet (ed.), *Actes de la XVII<sup>e</sup> Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Bruxelles, 30 juin - 4 juillet 1969*, Ham-sur-Heure, pp. 184-192; Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. LXII; Barnett, R.D.–Bleibtreu, E.–Turner, G. (1998): *Sculptures from the Southwest Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh*, London, pls. 228, 320:415,416; Bleibtreu, E. (1999): *Ein vergoldeter Silberbecher der Zeit Assurbanipals im Miho Museum. Historische Darstellungen des 7. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, Wien, pp. 12-13, Taf. 24.

<sup>60</sup> Oded, B. (1979): *Mass Deportation and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, Wiesbaden, p. 58.

### 3. FIGURATIVE PATTERNS AND MILITARY STRATEGY OF THE ELAMITE WARS

The representation of Ashurbanipal's activities in Elam follows a similar figurative and compositional pattern: taking into consideration the reliefs of rooms F and V<sup>1</sup>/T<sup>1</sup>, in particular, a general scheme of composition and arrangement of the narrative is clearly recognisable. Moreover, such a principle seems to correspond to the military strategy usually employed by the Assyrian army in Elam and to the 'rapidity' of conquest of the numerous Elamite centres that have similar defensive structures and the same natural setting. Thus, Ashurbanipal's army that confronted Elam in five successive campaigns probably had no particular and hard difficulties in its siege operations, since the common architectural and natural features of Elamite cities were similar. The Elamite cities, as represented on the Assyrian reliefs, usually stand on a height, by a river or marshes, with defensive walls that can be easily reached by means of ladders.<sup>61</sup>

Except for the fight against Te-Umma on the river Ulai that, together with the reliefs of room L, documents the few examples of pitched battles,<sup>62</sup> reliefs depicting Ashurbanipal's Elamite campaigns usually represent sieges of fortified settlements that provide the Assyrians with large amounts of portable property, men and animals, as booty. In fact, after the siege, long processions of prisoners approaching the king in his chariot are represented. For example, there are bas-reliefs in rooms F and V<sup>1</sup>/T<sup>1</sup>, where Ashurbanipal's artists chose a particular narrative composition exploiting the older practice of subdividing slabs

<sup>61</sup> No use of battering rams, and consequently of artificial ramps, is known in Ashurbanipal's reliefs. The only representation of an artificial ramp is documented on slabs 19-20 in throne room M during the siege of an Egyptian city. Nadali, D. (2005): "Assyrians to War. Positions, Patterns and Canons in the Tactics of the Assyrian Armies in the VII Century B.C.", in: A. Di Ludovico-D. Nadali (eds.), *Studi in onore di Paolo Matthiae presentati in occasione del suo sessantacinquesimo compleanno* (CMAO 10), Roma, p. 183; Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. XXXVI.

<sup>62</sup> Nadali, D. (2005): "Assyrians to War. Positions, Patterns and Canons in the Tactics of the Assyrian Armies in the VII Century B.C.", in: A. Di Ludovico-D. Nadali (eds.), *Studi in onore di Paolo Matthiae presentati in occasione del suo sessantacinquesimo compleanno* (CMAO 10), Roma, p. 177.

into registers. Both registers are devoted to the narrative of a siege followed by the deportation of men, animals and booty. When the activities of the upper register flow from the left to the right, the lower register runs in reverse, thus creating double bands of figures that move in opposite directions.<sup>63</sup> As in the case of room F, the king in his chariot occupies the last slab in the upper register (slab 15) and in the case of slab 2 in the lower register, respectively above and below the city under siege by the Assyrian soldiers. Therefore, each register has its own space and temporal development. At the same time, registers are ideally linked through the figure of the king, who waits for the prisoners in his own register and is linked to the city in the other register by means of a vertical line.<sup>64</sup>

Observing the clearest representations of the sieges of Hamanu (upper register of room F and S<sup>1</sup>), Bīt-Luppi (lower register room F), Bīt-Bunakki (room G) and the supposed Dur-Undasi (slab A of room S<sup>1</sup>), the strategy of the Assyrian army can be singled out, from the approaching of the army to the conquest of the city.

Rooms F and V<sup>1</sup>/T<sup>1</sup> (Figs. 12 and 6) clearly show the arrangement of the army by the city under siege. Starting at the front, the Assyrian bowmen with high siege-shields are placed, followed by auxiliary bowmen, slingers and finally Assyrians on horses and chariots. Horses and chariots were probably used to reach the battle fields, although the archers on horse back and in the chariots are often represented shooting arrows. The slingers hurl stones from the rear over the front line and thus reaching the enemy on the top of the walls. At the same time, other Assyrian soldiers have already reached the foot of the enemy walls. While auxiliary spearmen and archers climb the ladders, other Assyrian soldiers, namely pioneers, mine the defensive structure of the city opening breaches and tunnelling with daggers. A detail of the siege of Bīt-Bunakki shows an Assyrian soldier, with a torch in his right hand, setting the characteristic corbelled lintel of the town-gate on fire. We

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<sup>63</sup> Nadali, D. (2006): *Percezione dello spazio e scansione del tempo. Studio della composizione narrativa del rilievo assiro di VII secolo a.C.* (CMAO 12), Roma, p. 157.

<sup>64</sup> Nadali, D. (2006): *Percezione dello spazio e scansione del tempo. Studio della composizione narrativa del rilievo assiro di VII secolo a.C.* (CMAO 12), Roma, p. 268-272.

find the same lintel also in the representation of Hamanu in room F (Fig. 7a).<sup>65</sup>

The repetition of a common tactic with the deployment of Assyrian archers, slingers, cavalry and chariotry before the city, and auxiliary spearmen, archers and pioneers at the foot of its walls and on ladders, indicates a well-applied strategy using an encircling attacking manoeuvre that was repeatedly used by the Assyrian army during the Elamite conflicts. (Bas-relief decoration can only show this by placing the attacking Assyrians on the left and right hand side of an enemy city.) Thus, the besieged enemy has no safety exit and they have to confront the Assyrian army wherever it has mounted the attack. Attacking at more than one point along the city wall (for example, at the gate and by the corner of a city wall) reduces the strength of the enemy splitting the defensive line into two fronts.<sup>66</sup>

Such a repetition of both tactical and strategic plans illustrates the recurring nature of the military action of Ashurbanipal in Elam. The repeated scheme of attack, with very similar figurative and compositional patterns in the palace rooms with Elamite subjects, reproduced the ‘endless’ activity of Ashurbanipal in Elam and seems to translate into stone the abrupt, even schematic words of Ashurbanipal’s accounts when he describes the capture of a city, “I surrounded, I conquered, I carried off its plunder”.

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<sup>65</sup> The detail is very visible in the drawing published in Nigro, L. (2000): “L’assedio di Bīt-Bunakki da Ninive ai Musei Vaticani. La sua collocazione originaria nel Palazzo Nord di Assurbanipal e gli scavi di Giovanni Benni”, *Vicino Oriente* 12: fig. 6. Reade, J.E. (1976): “Elam and Elamites in Assyrian Sculptures”, *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 9: 103. Moreover, as previously stated, Bīt-Bunnaki is situated in the same geographical region as Hamanu, that is in the mountain region of Rashi. See Gerardi, P. (1987): *Assurbanipal’s Elamite Campaigns: A Literary and Political Study*, Unpubl. PhD Diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, fn. 146; Young, T.C. (1967): “The Iranian Migration into the Zagros”, *Iran* 5: 13; Potts, D.T. (1999): *The Archaeology of Elam. Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State*, Cambridge, p. 285. Both cities lie on a river.

<sup>66</sup> Ussishkin, D. (1980): “The ‘Lakish Reliefs’ and the City of Lachisk”, *Israel Exploration Journal* 30: 189; Eph’al, I. (1984): “The Assyrian Siege Ramp at Lachish: Military and Lexical Aspects”, *Tel Aviv* 11: 60-61; Nadali, D. (2005): “Assyrians to War. Positions, Patterns and Canons in the Tactics of the Assyrian Armies in the VII Century B.C.”, in: A. Di Ludovico–D. Nadali (eds.), *Studi in onore di Paolo Matthiae presentati in occasione del suo sessantacinquesimo compleanno* (CMAO 10), Roma, p. 180.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Although the representations of Ashurbanipal's Elamite campaigns are not always clear and well legible, they show common figurative and compositional patterns that shed light on the tactics and strategies of the Assyrian army: reliefs do not only show military operations against Elamite centres, but they also document the 'peaceful' attitude of Ashurbanipal with the acceptance of the refugees that fled to Assyria.

Moreover, the location of the Elamite reliefs in a defined sector of the palace singles out the importance of the events that occupied most of Ashurbanipal foreign politics with regard to his wars, diplomatic treaties, asylum of refugees, and the sequential activity of the Assyrian king in Elam with repetitive military actions and conquests. It is interesting to notice that, as we have already mentioned, many cities were objects of Assyrian military action in more than one campaign. And, also, Ashurbanipal's artists depict the same subject –such as the conquest of Hamanu, for example– in more than one room. Probably, the presence of epigraphs carved on many of the bas-reliefs giving the name of the city under siege, is due to the similarity of the representations and the repetitive compositional arrangement of the narrative in order to distinguish both the space and time of Ashurbanipal's actions. Ashurbanipal and the people living at court could retrace, nearly chronologically, the Elamite events represented on the western side of the inner court J starting from room I, passing through room H to the last rooms, G and F.

Unfortunately, little is known about the organisation of the so-called upper floor of the palace. Were, for example, the reliefs illustrating the same subject grouped together? Do the bas-reliefs with Elamite events either repeat subjects represented in the rooms of the main floor of the building, or select particular episodes among the numerous sieges and actions: and, do they designate a special location in the supposed private sector of the palace, where the king lived? The upper floor seems to have focused, in particular, on the representations of the Elamite refugees (hunting scene in room S<sup>1</sup>) and the humiliation of the last Elamite kings attending the needs of the Assyrian king. Here, the capture of Ummanaldas, the last king of Elam, was represented (room S<sup>1</sup>) and the episode was thus related to the so-called 'garden scene' that summarizes

Ashurbanipal's operations in Elam: Ummanaldas and other Elamite kings (Pa'e and Tammaritu) wait on the banquet of the Assyrian king and his queen in a situation where Te-Umman's head hanging from a tree reminds the origin of a problematic situation Ashurbanipal put to an end.

Therefore, situation on the upper floors is probably different from the depiction in the throne room, where the representation of the capture and submission of the Elamite, Arabian and Nabatean kings together with the review of Shamash-shum-ukin's regalia involves a more serious part of the story, the war and, thereafter, a celebrative ceremony. The bas-reliefs on the upper floor allow Ashurbanipal to look at his deeds in a more intimate and less solemn way, in a real self-referential way.

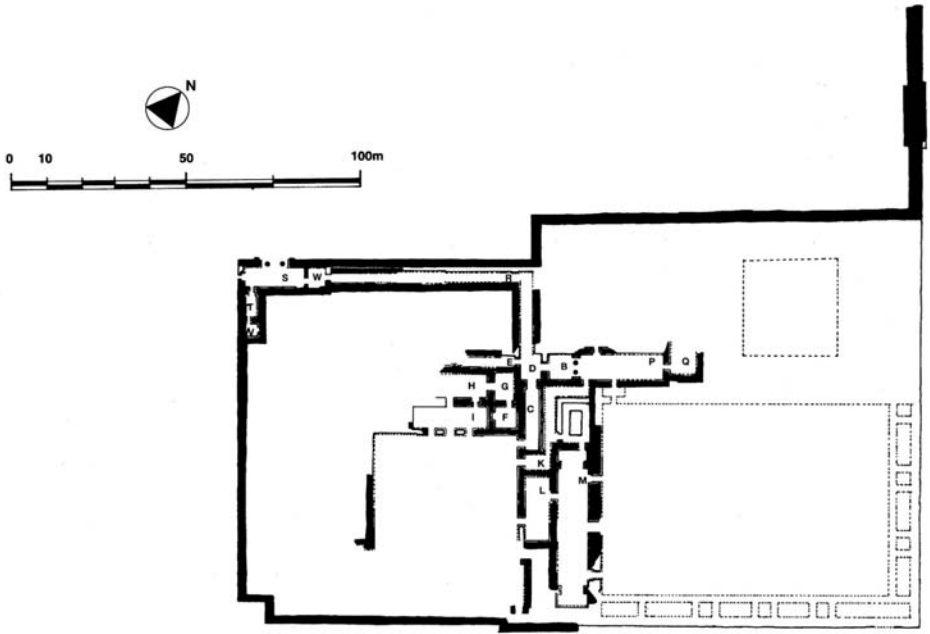


Fig. 1 – Plan of Ashurbanipal’s North Palace, Nineveh (after Matthiae, P. (1998): *Ninive*, Milano, p. 133).



Fig. 2 – Capture of Ummanaldas, Throne Room M (?), slabs 1-5 (?), British Museum WA 124793 (after Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. XXXIV).

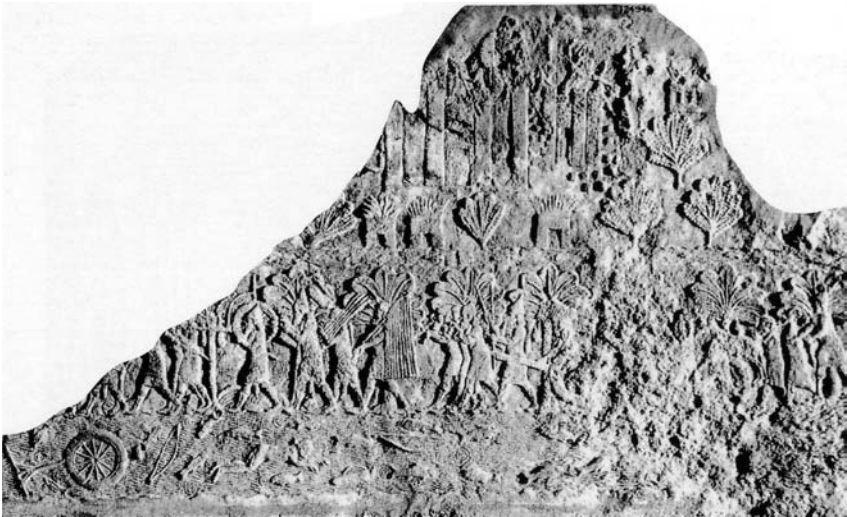


Fig. 3 – Sack of Susa, Throne Room M, detail of slab13, British Museum WA 124946 (after Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. XXXV).



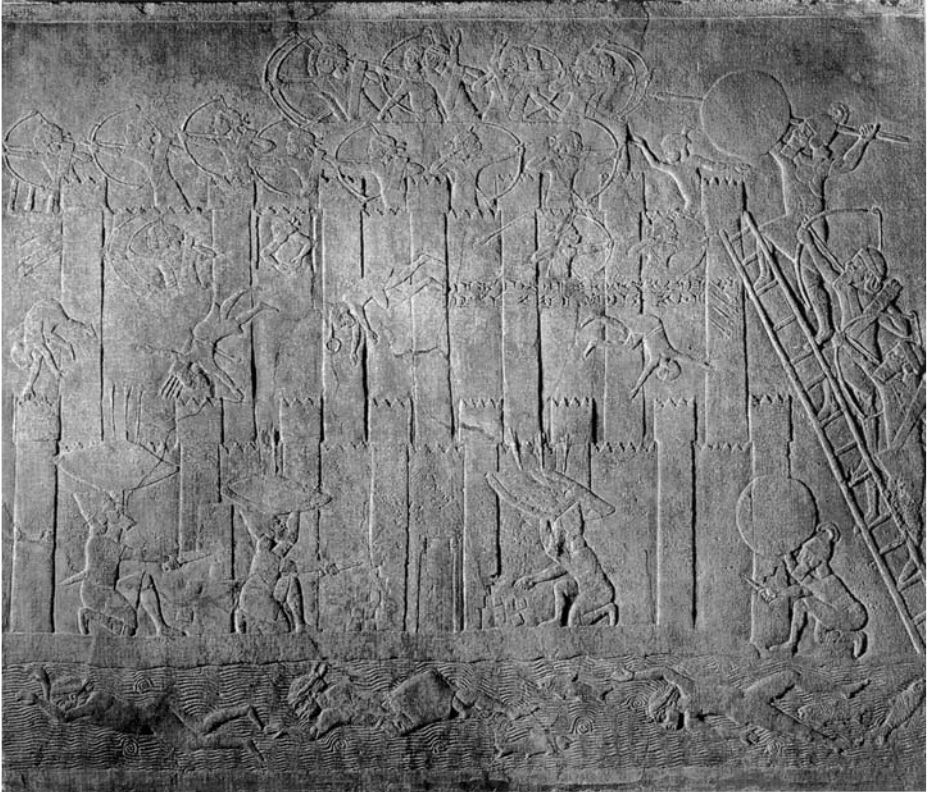


Fig. 4a – Siege of Hamanu, Room F, slab 3, British Museum WA 124931 (after Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. XVII).

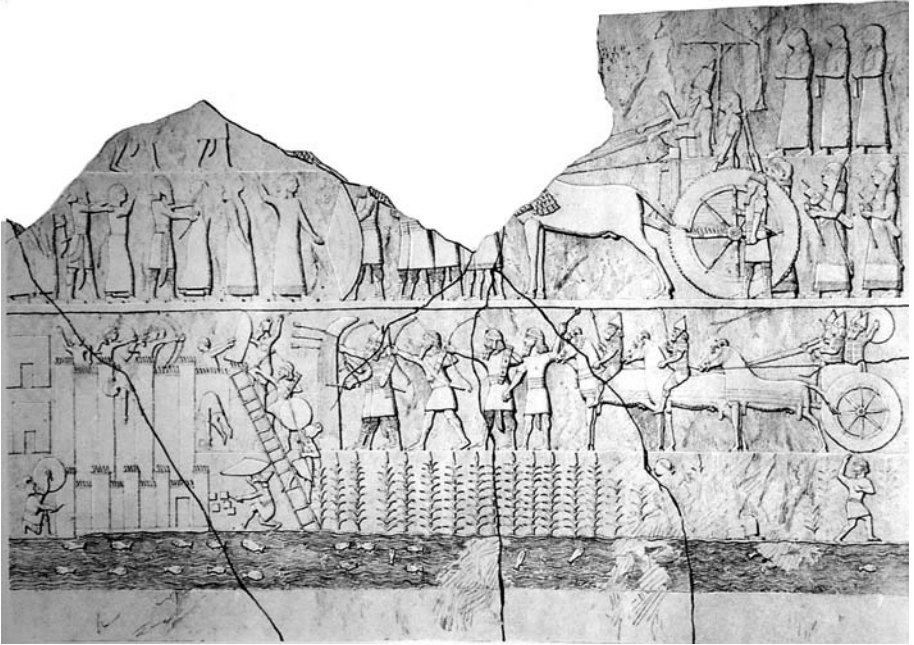


Fig. 4b – Room F, slab 15, Or. Dr. VII 6 (after Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. XXI).



Fig. 4c – Room F, slab 2, British Museum WA 124930 (after Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. XVI).



Fig. 5 – Sack of Hamanu, Room S<sup>1</sup>, slab A, British Museum WA 124919 (after Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. LXVI).

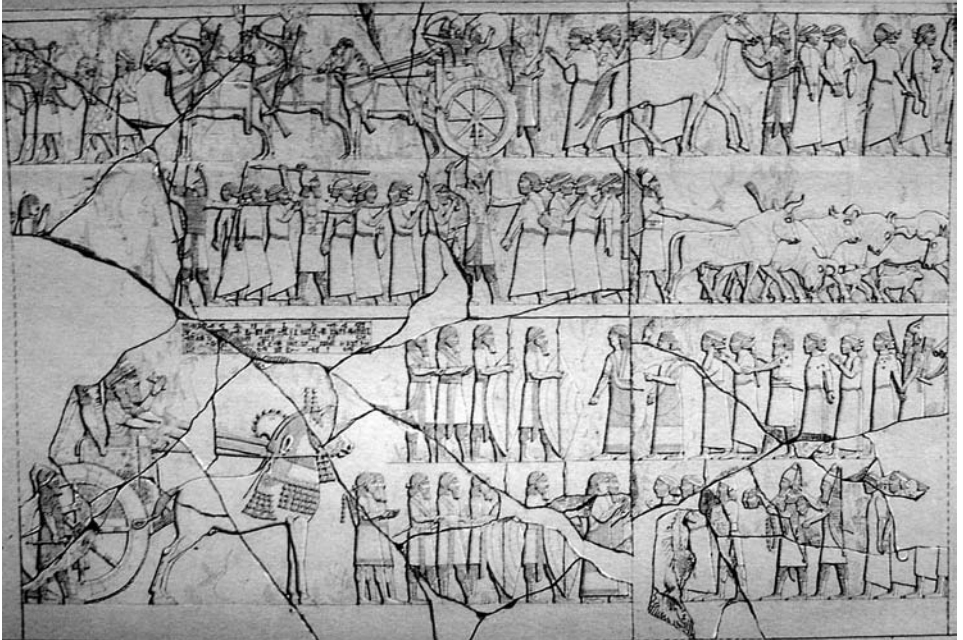


Fig. 6 – Room V<sup>1</sup>/T<sup>1</sup>, slabs A-B, Or. Dr. V 31 (after Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. LXVII).



Fig. 7a – Siege of Bīt-Bunakki, Room G, slab 4 (?), Vatican Museums AVO 14985+14996 (after Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. LXX).

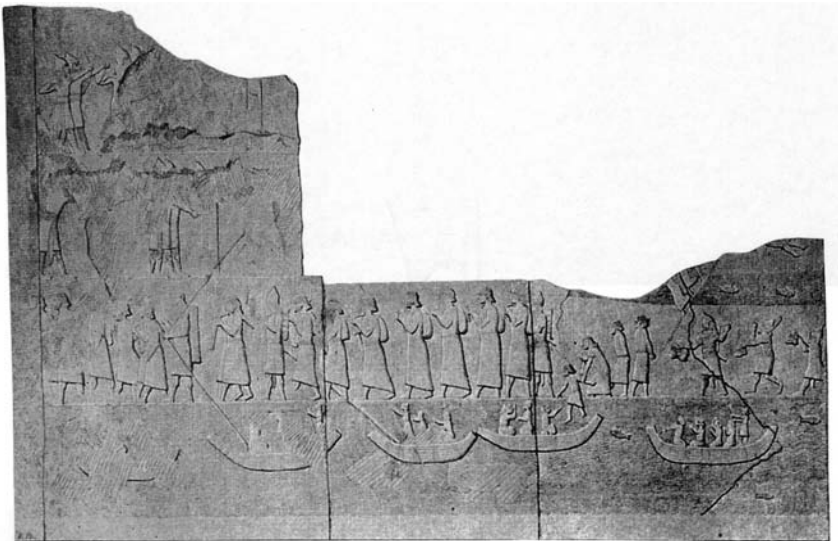


Fig. 7b – Siege of Bīt-Bunakki, Room G, slab 3-5, Or. Dr. VII 9 (after Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. XXII).

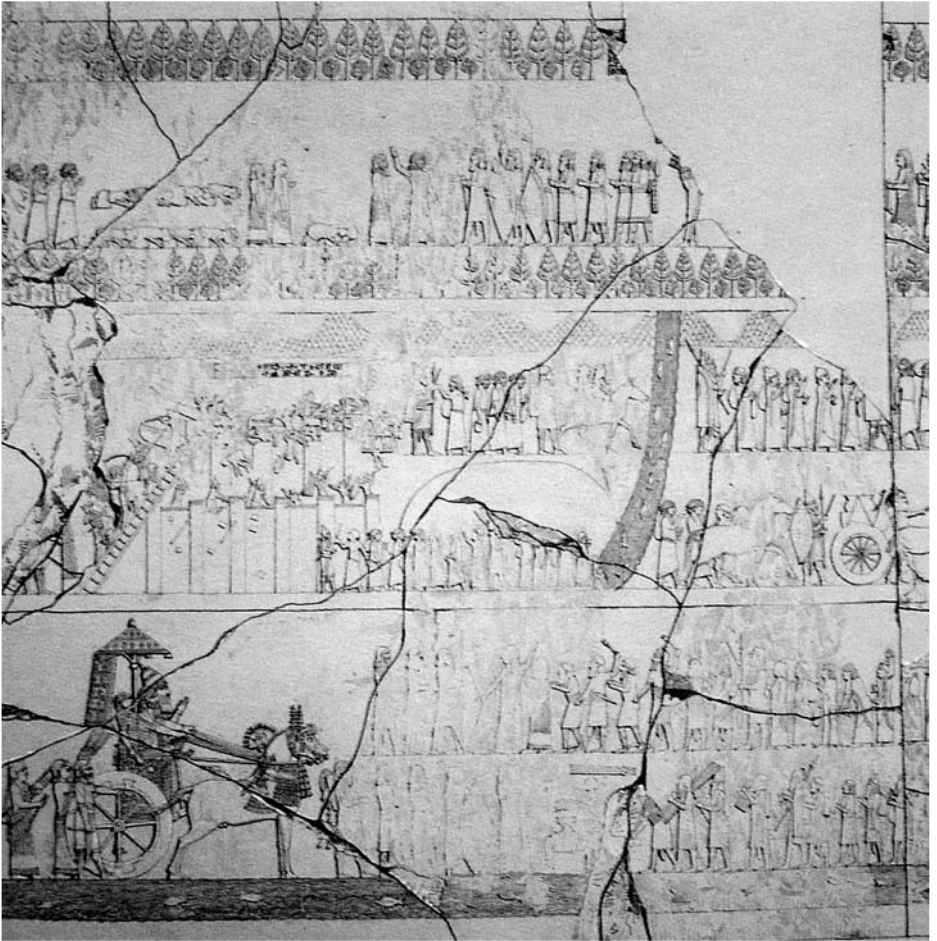


Fig. 8 – Siege of Dur-Undasi (?), Room S<sup>1</sup>, slab A, Or. Dr. VI 24 (after Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh* (668-627 B.C.), London, pl. LX).



Fig. 9 – Capture of Ummanaldas (?), detail of slab A, Musée du Louvre AO 19905 (after Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. LXI).



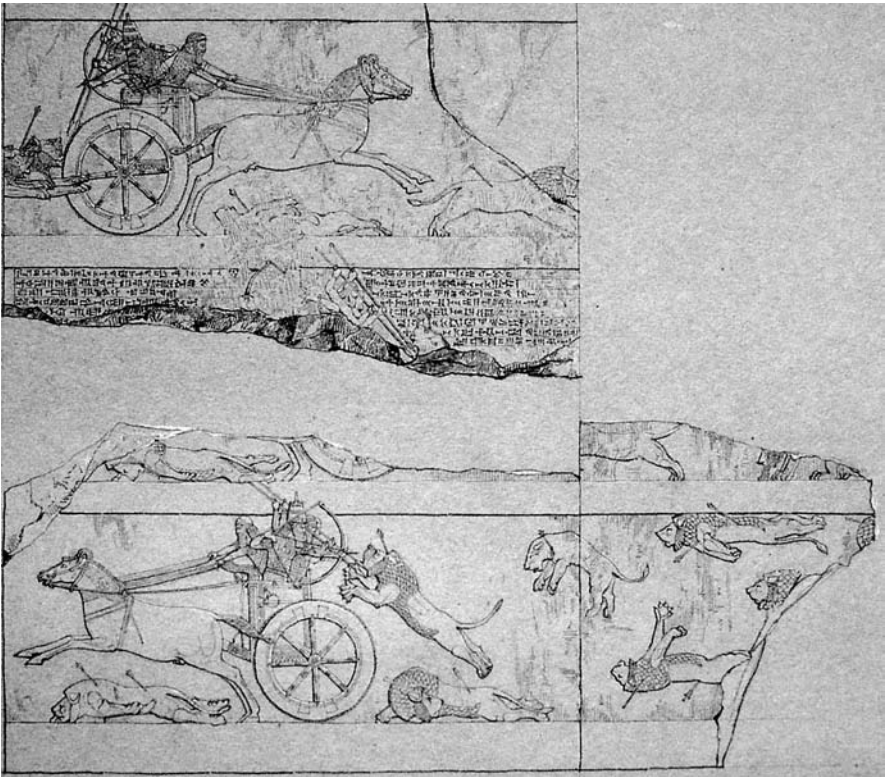


Fig. 10 –Ashurbanipal’s hunting, Room S<sup>1</sup>, slab A, Or. Dr. V 3 (after Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. LVI).



Fig. 11 – Throne Room M, slabs 12-13, British Museum WA 124945-6 (after Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)*, London, pl. XXXV).

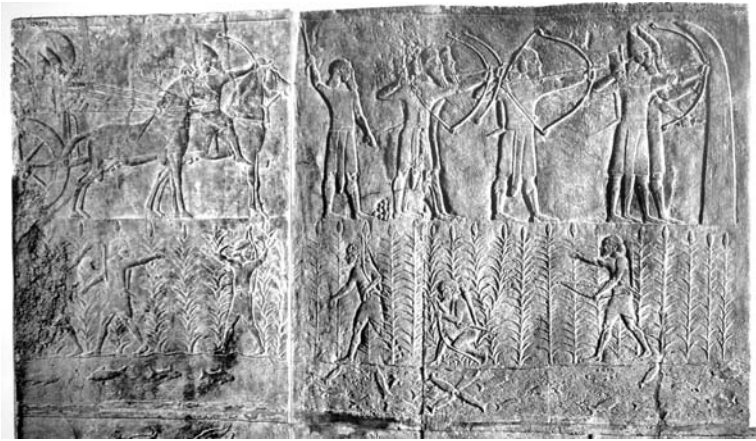


Fig. 12 – Tactic position of the Assyrian army, Room F, slab 2, British Museum WA 124930 (after Barnett, R.D. (1976): *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh* (668-627 B.C.), London, pl. XVI).