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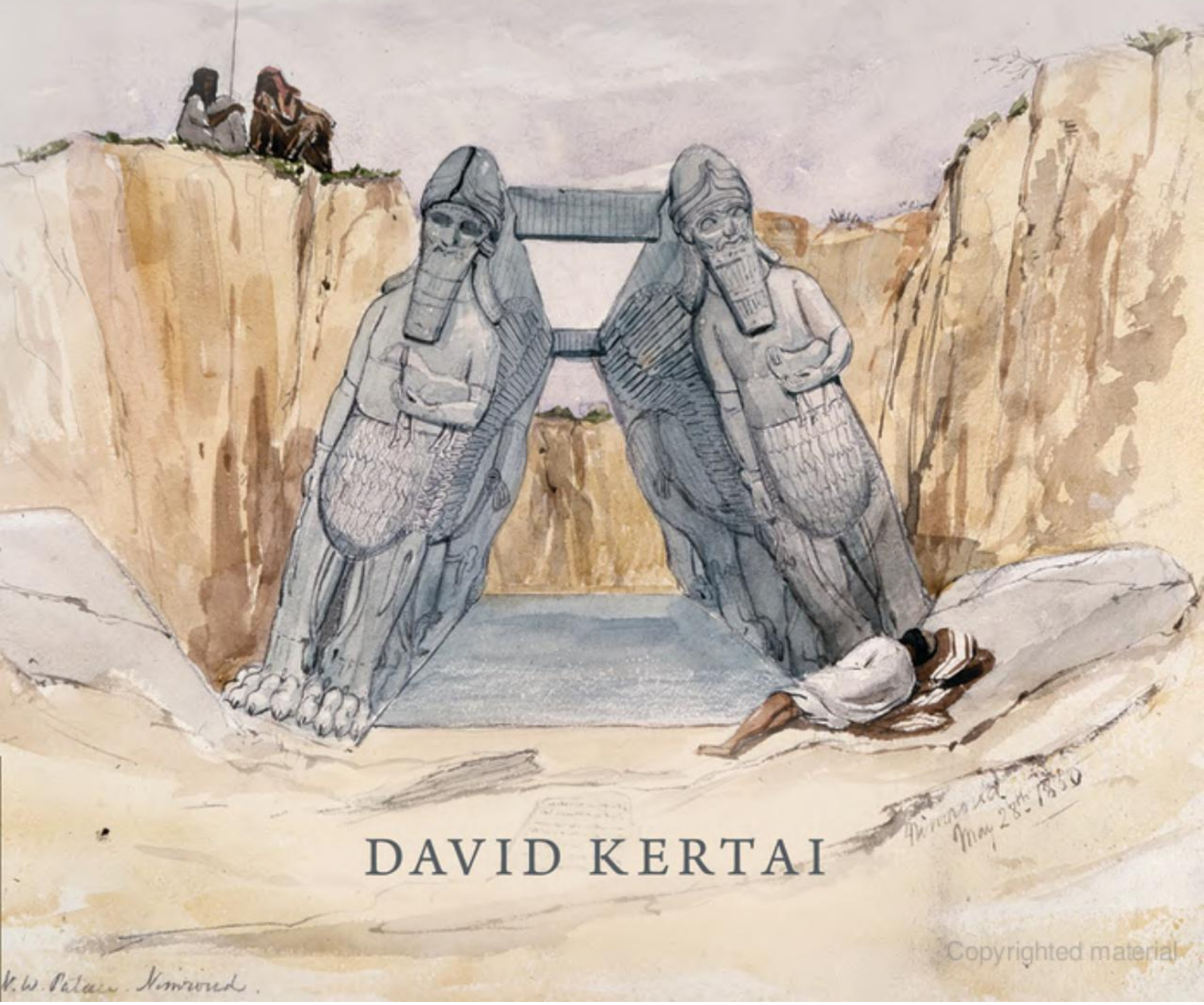
# THE ARCHITECTURE OF LATE ASSYRIAN ROYAL PALACES



DAVID KERTAI

# *The Architecture of Late Assyrian Royal Palaces*

DAVID KERTAI

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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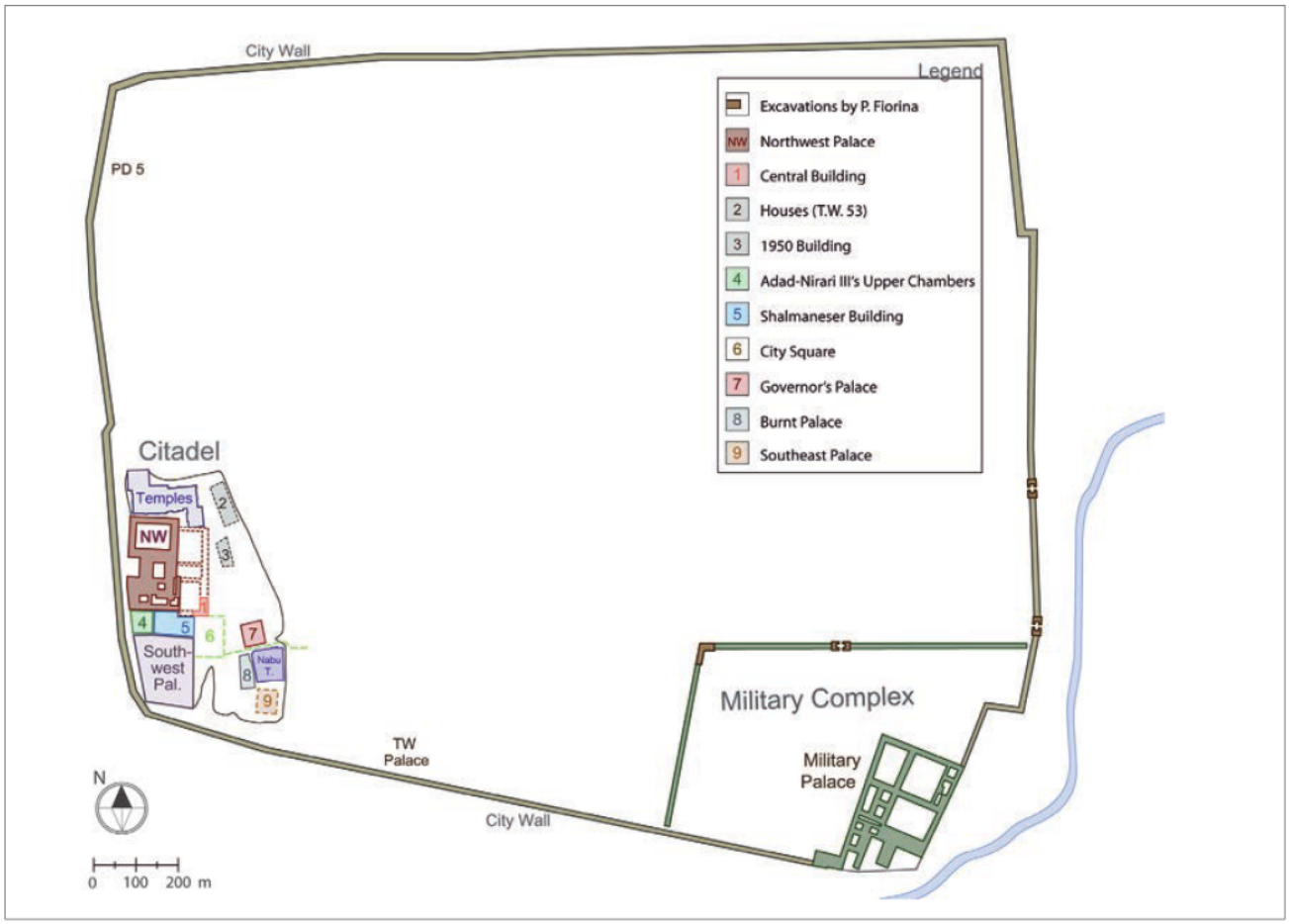
# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| AHw | von Soden and Meissner 1965 |
| BIWA | Borger 1996 |
| *CAD* | *Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Chicago, 1956–2010) |
| CTN 3 | Dalley and Postgate 1984 |
| RIMA 1 | Grayson 1987 |
| RIMA 2 | Grayson 1991d |
| RIMA 3 | Grayson 1996 |
| RINAP 1 | Tadmor and Yamada 2011 |
| RINAP 3 | Grayson and Novotny 2012 |
| RINAP 4 | Leichty 2011 |
| SAA 1 | Parpola 1987a |
| SAA 3 | Livingstone 1989 |
| SAA 4 | Starr 1990 |
| SAA 5 | Lanfranchi and Parpola 1990 |
| SAA 6 | Kwasman and Parpola 1991 |
| SAA 7 | Fales and Postgate 1992 |
| SAA 10 | Parpola 1993 |
| SAA 11 | Fales and Postgate 1995 |
| SAA 12 | Kataja and Whiting 1995 |
| SAA 13 | Cole and Machinist 1998 |
| SAA 14 | Mattila 2002 |
| SAA 15 | Fuchs and Parpola 2001 |
| SAA 16 | Luukko and Van Buylaere 2002 |
| SAA 19 | Luukko 2013 |

Excavated wall
Reconstructed wall
Throneroom Suite
Ramp / staircase
Double-Sided Reception Suite
Residential/Reception Suite
"Eastern Suite"
Dual-Core Suite
Corridor / gate
Service functions / office / residential space
Storage space (e.g. wine store) / treasury
Bathroom-like space
Workshop / office / storage space
Stable / storage space

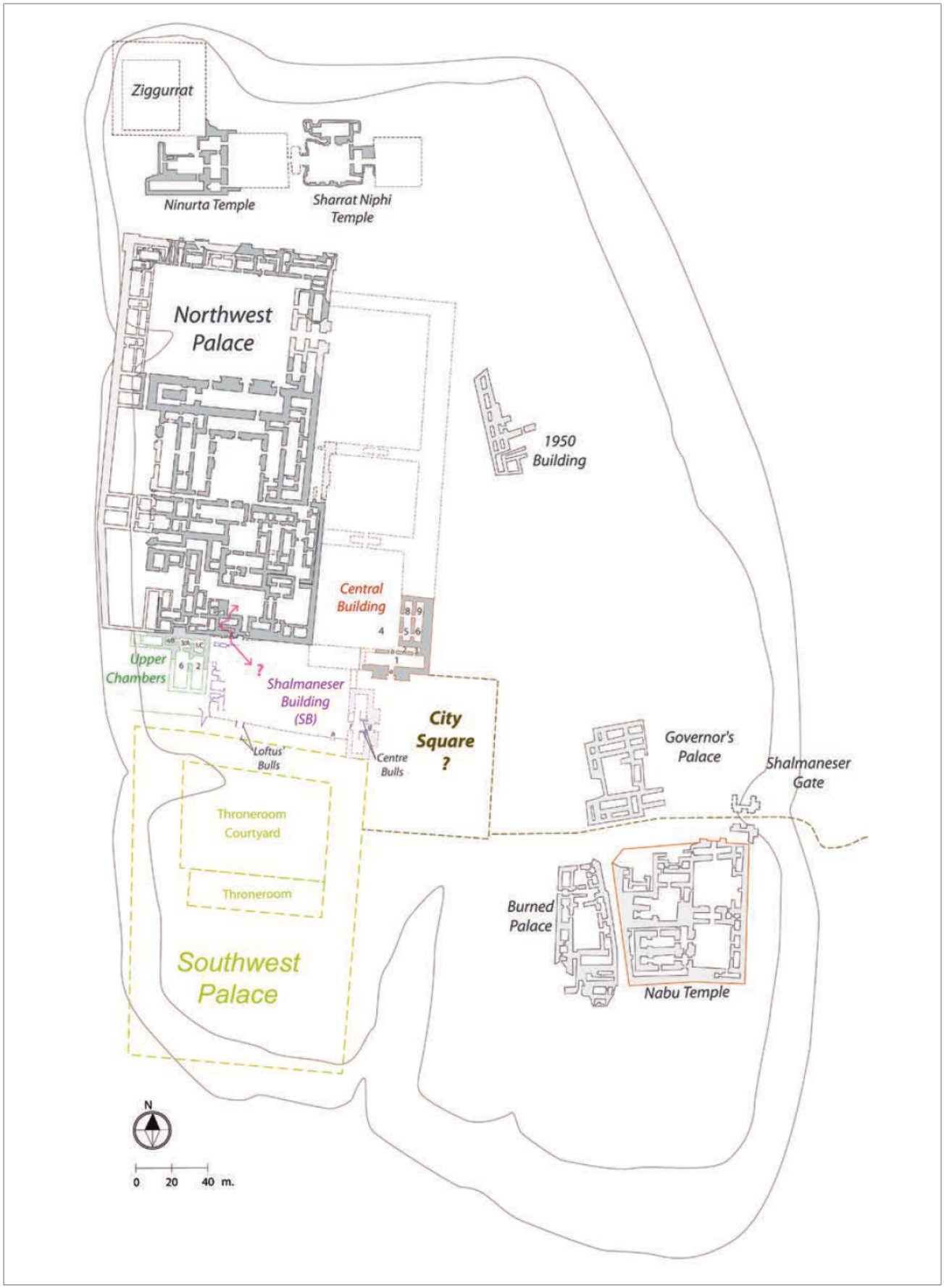
Pavement of burned mudbrick / stone plates
Threshold
Trone dais
Tram-rails
Ablution slab
Well
Well
Wall painting
Glazed brick
Decorative corbel
(Wall) peg
Wall reliefs
Wall reliefs reconstructed

1A Legend

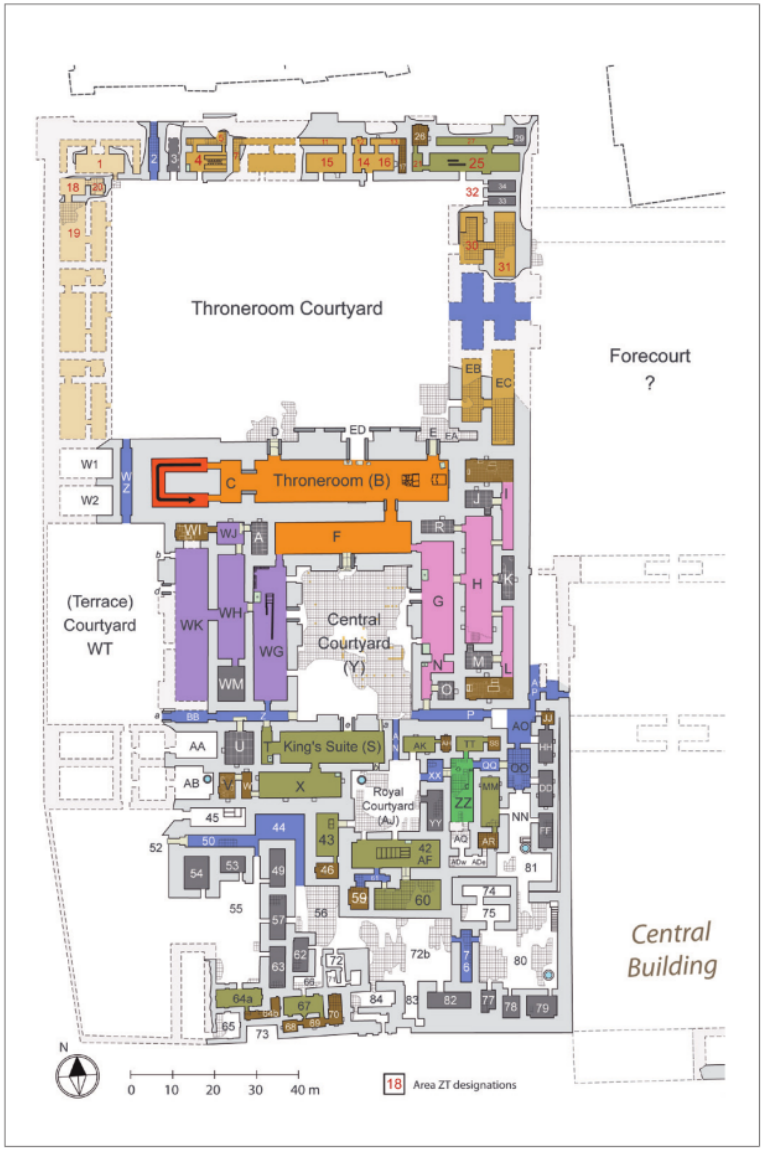



1B Kalḫu

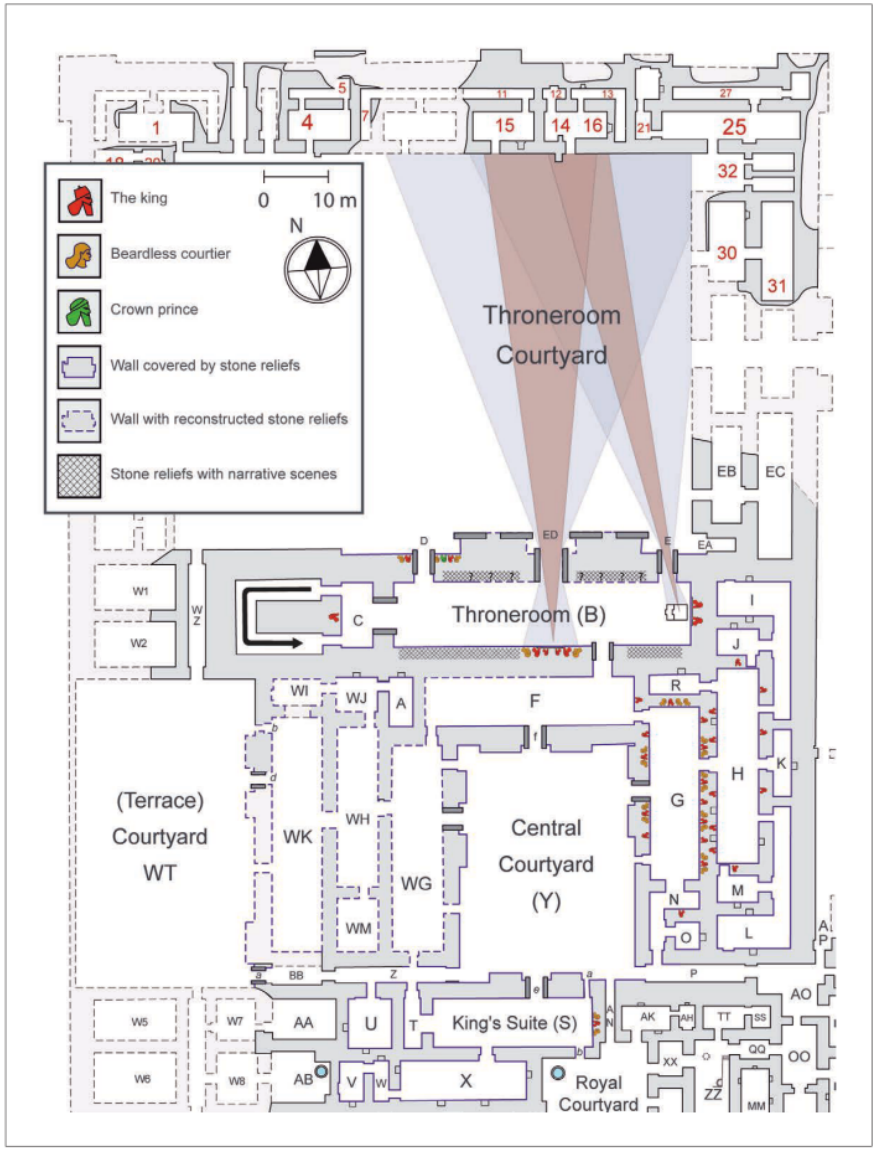

2 Map of Assyria



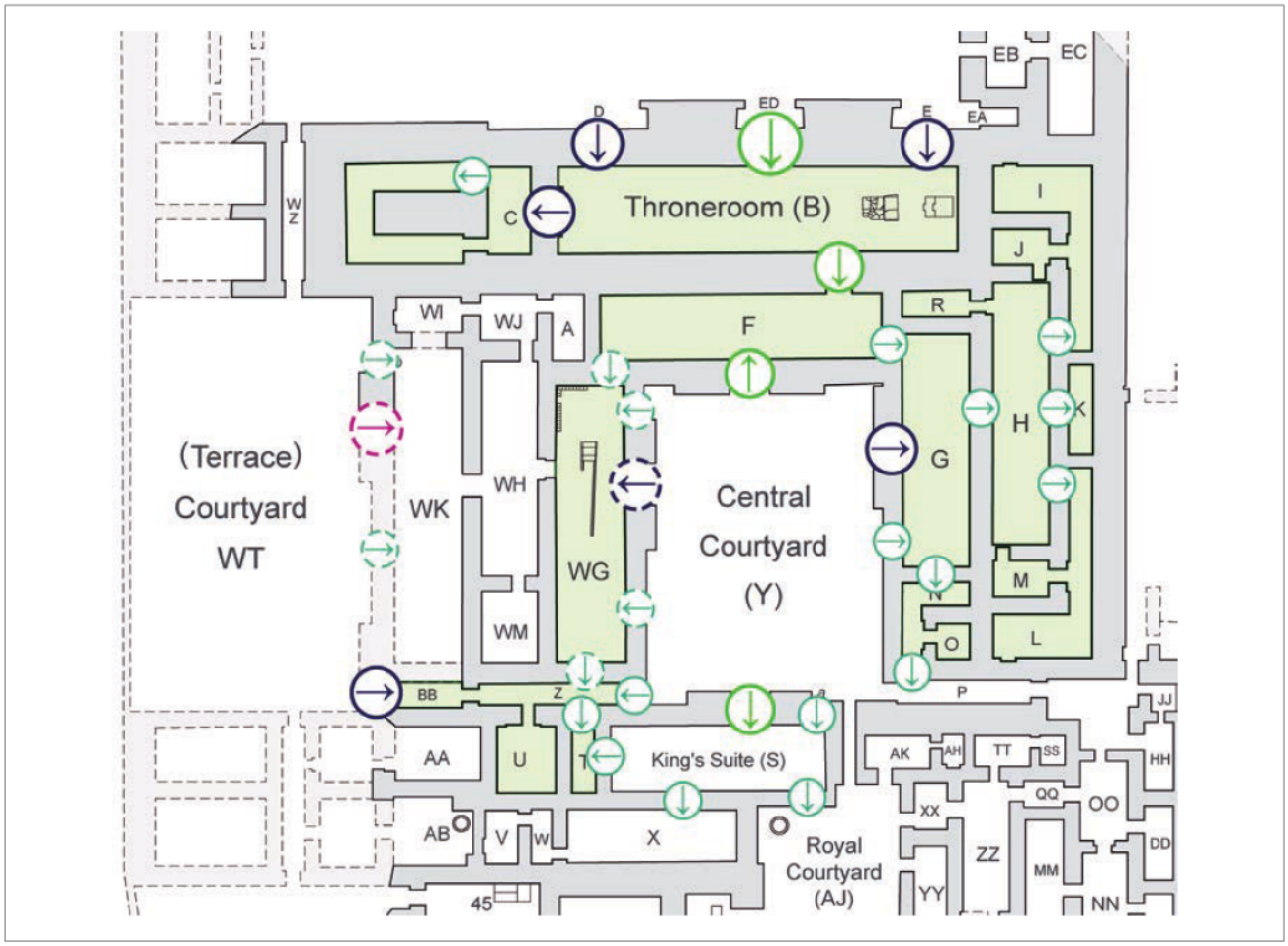

3 Kalḫu citadel



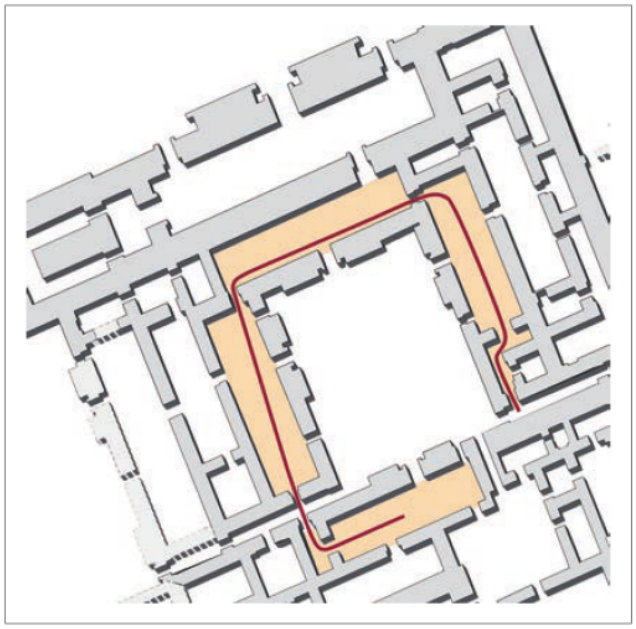

4 Northwest Palace (Kalḫu): floorplan



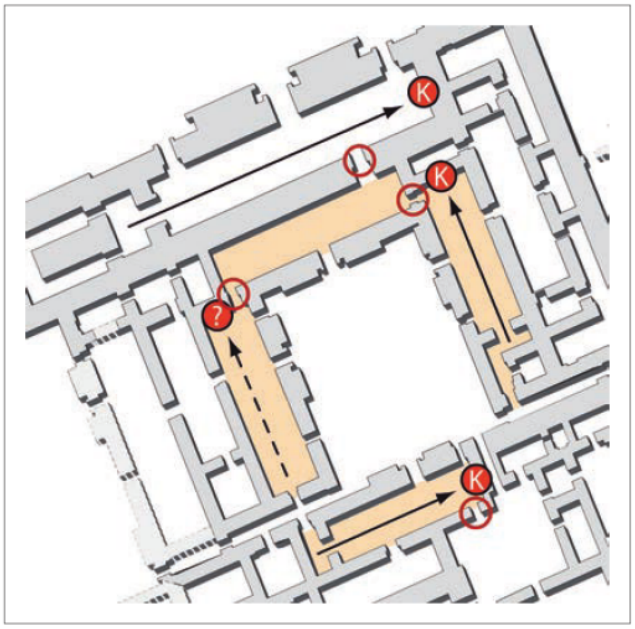

5 Northwest Palace (Kalḫu): central part showing the life-sized representations of humans



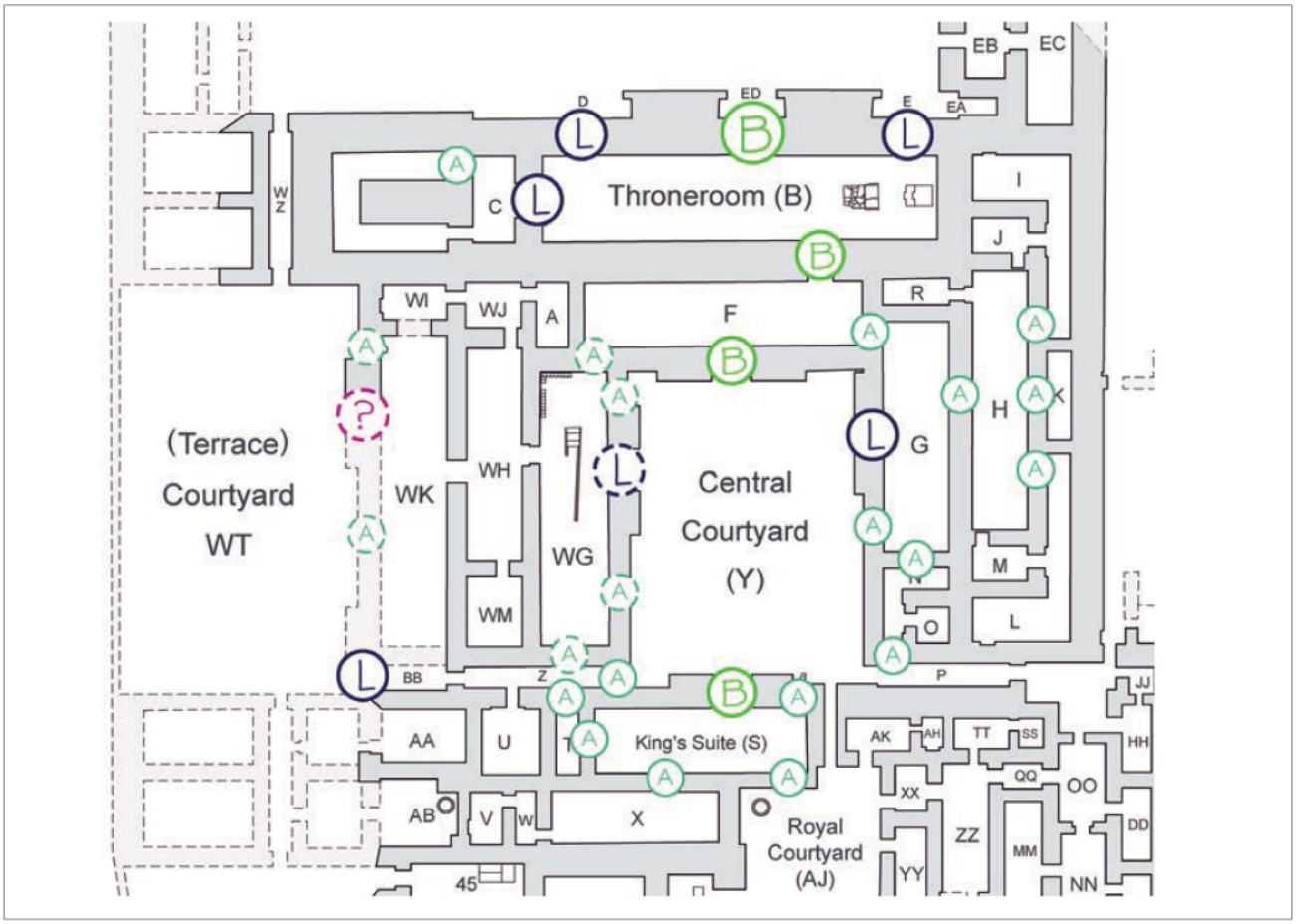

6A Northwest Palace (Kalḫu): the expected direction of movement as indicated by the direction in which the protective figures face in the respective doors. The green area indicates the zone in which movement is guided by apotropaic figures from the throneroom



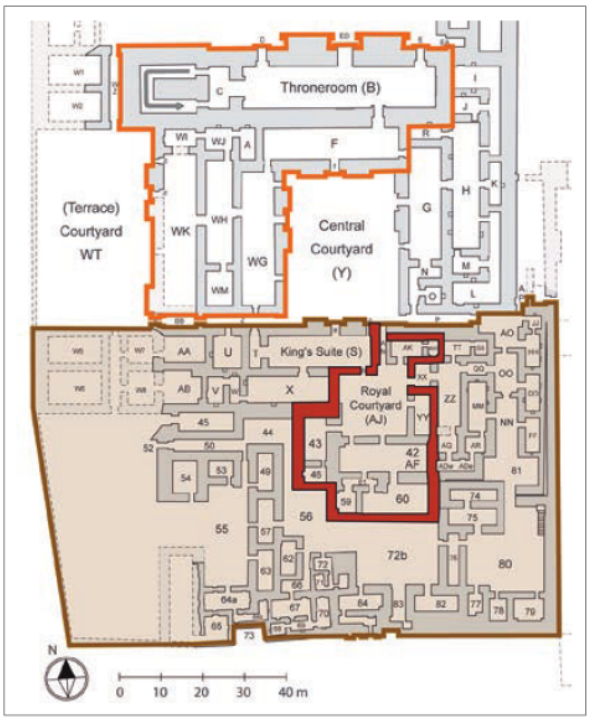
6B Northwest Palace (Kalḫu): internal route surrounding the Central Courtyard



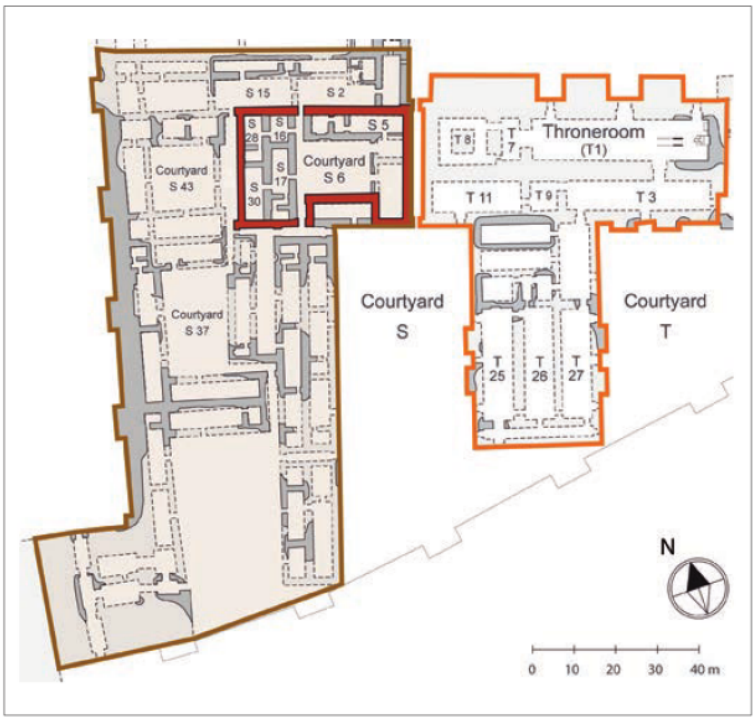

6C Northwest Palace (Kalḫu): architectural features that can be related to the king: the depiction of the king (K) on a short wall, an axis leading towards it, and the presence of a nearby backdoor



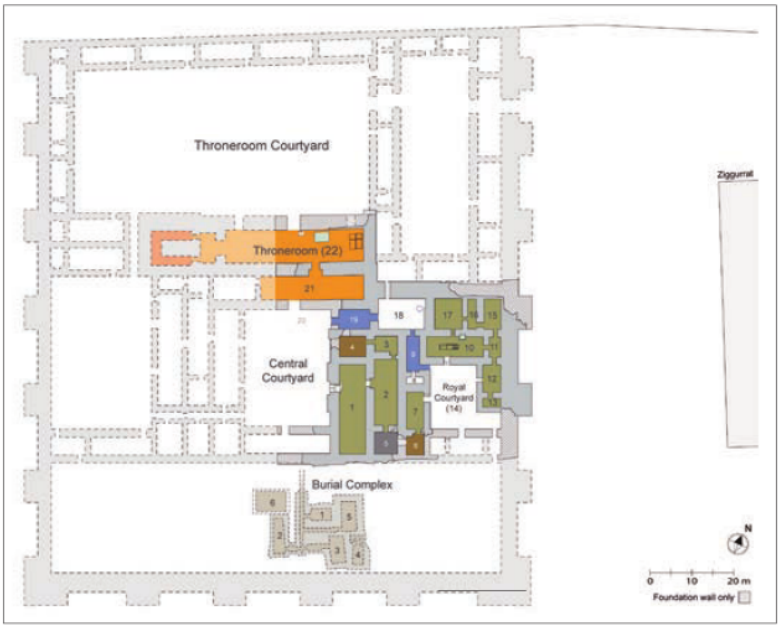

7A Northwest Palace (Kalḫu): the different types of apotropaic figures (B: bull colossus; L: lion colossus; A: apotropaic figure) in the respective doorways



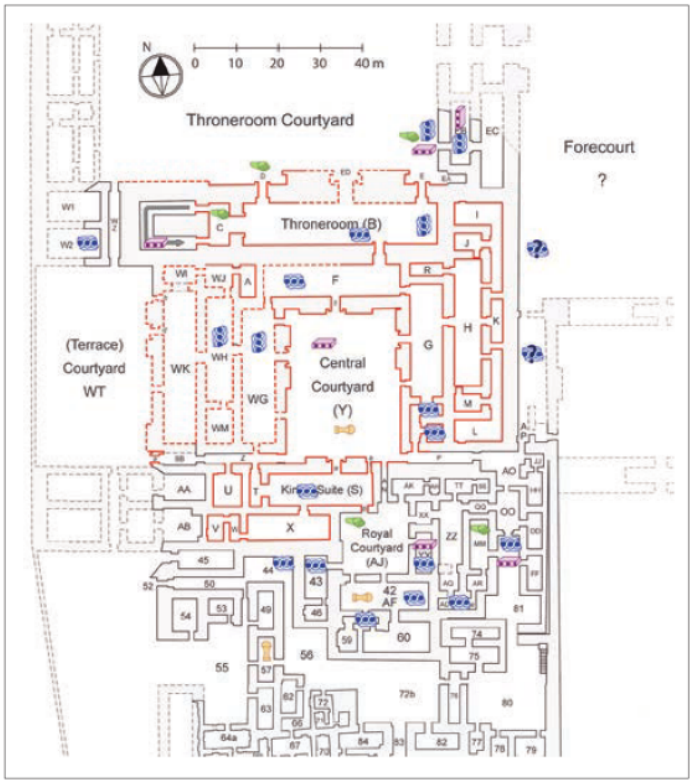

7B Northwest Palace (Kalḫu): the service and residential areas and their relation to the State Apartments



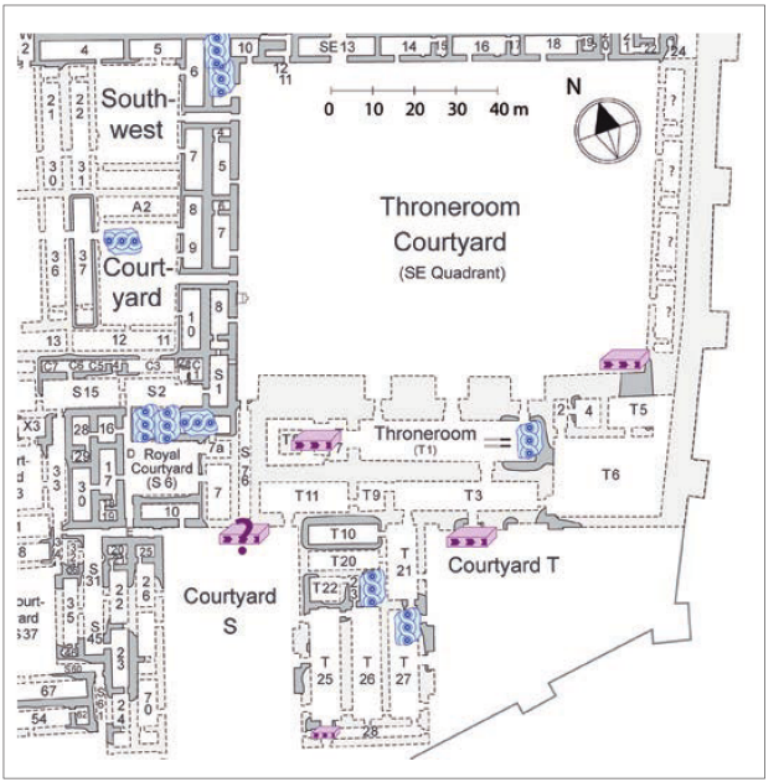

7C Military Palace (Kalḫu): the service and residential areas and their relation to the State Apartments



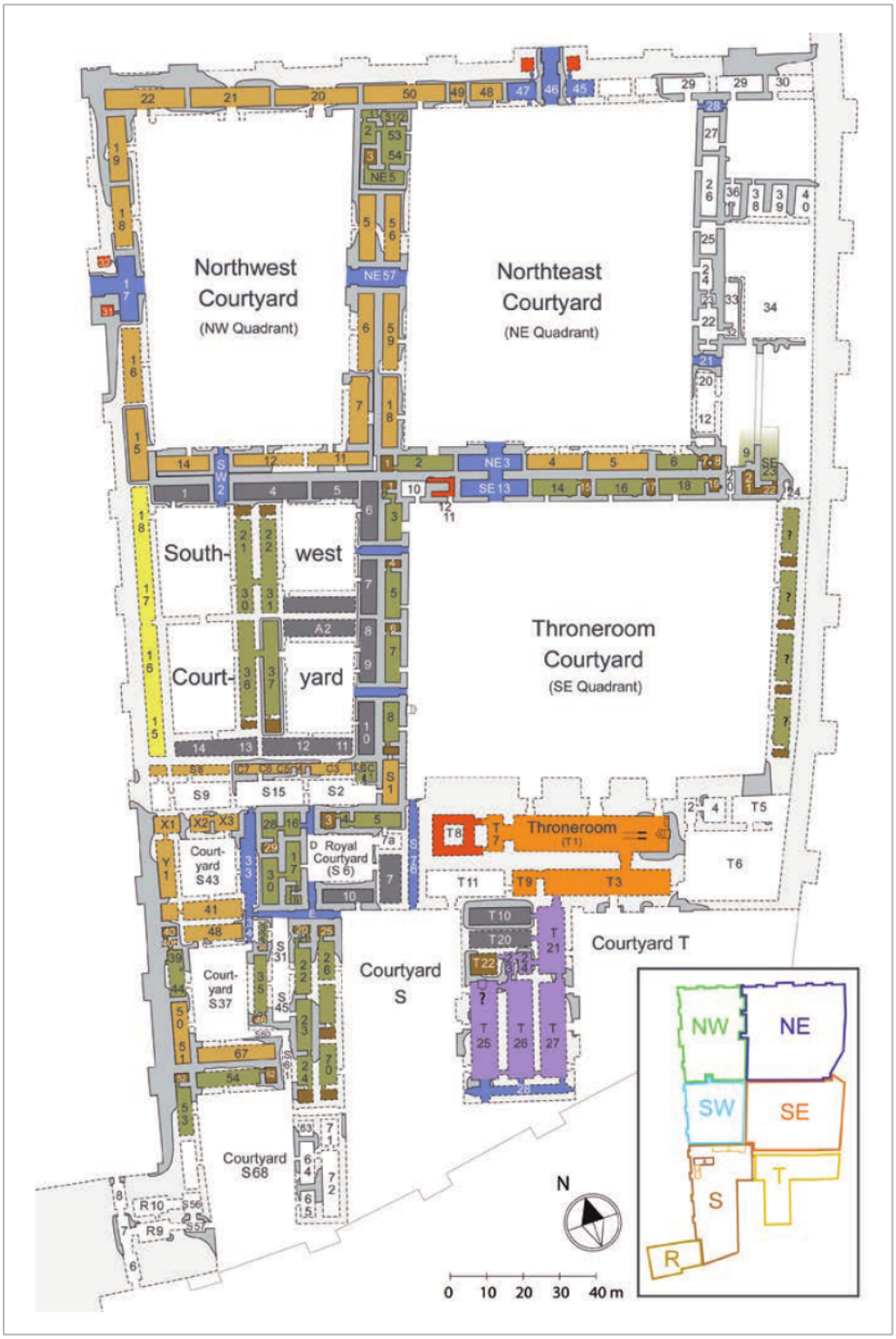

**8A** Old Palace (Assur): floorplan



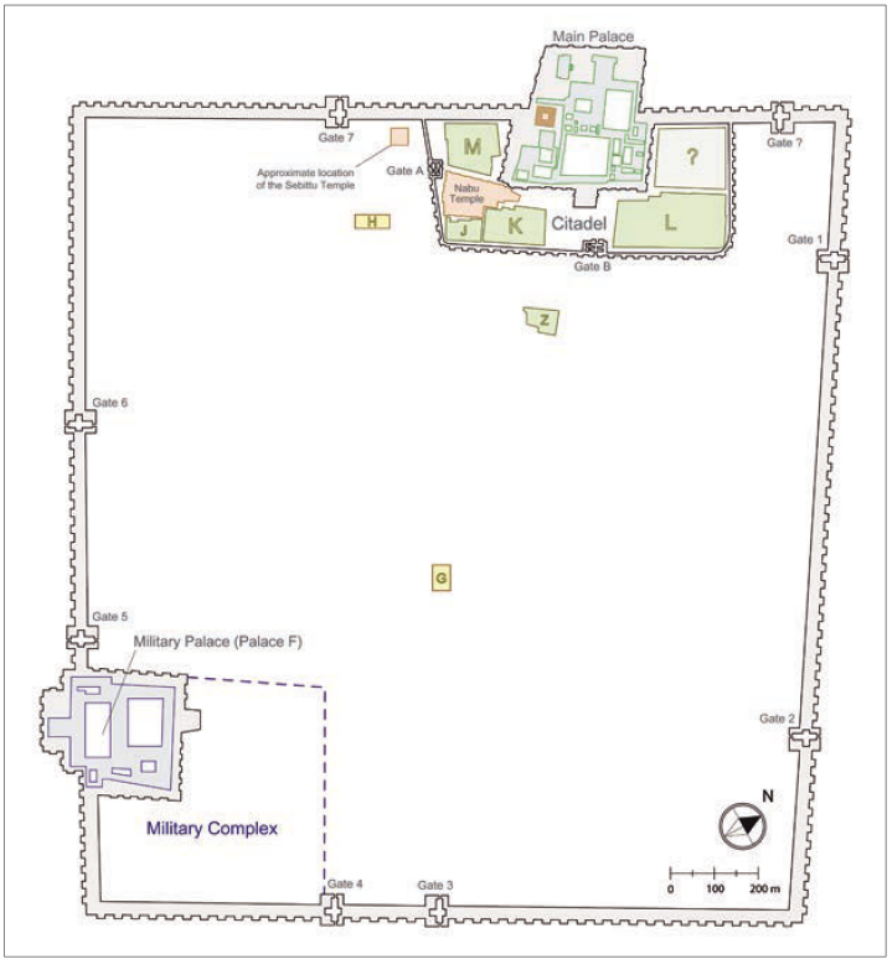

**8B** Northwest Palace (Kalḫu): different types of decoration and their attested locations



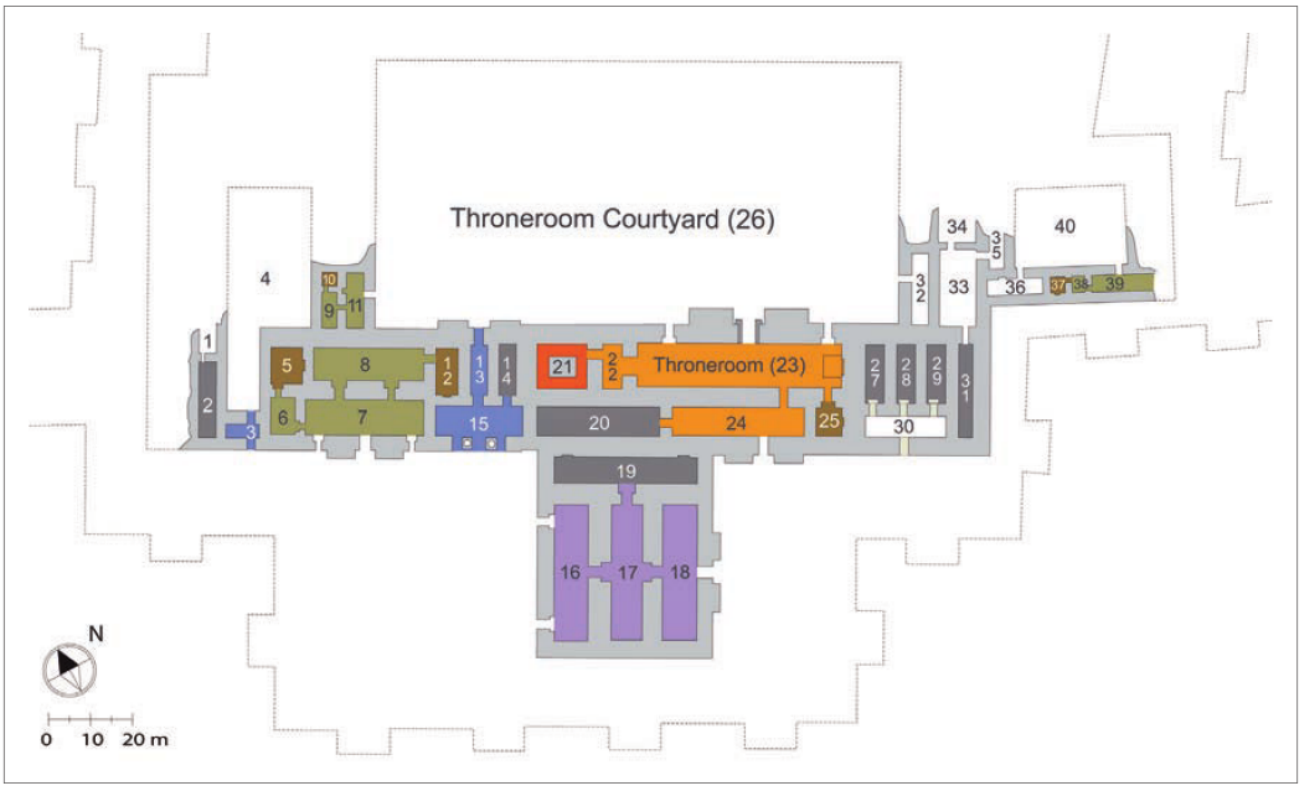

**8C** Military Palace (Kalḫu): different types of decoration and their attested locations




9 Military Palace (Kalḫu): floorplan, end of the Shalmaneser III's reign

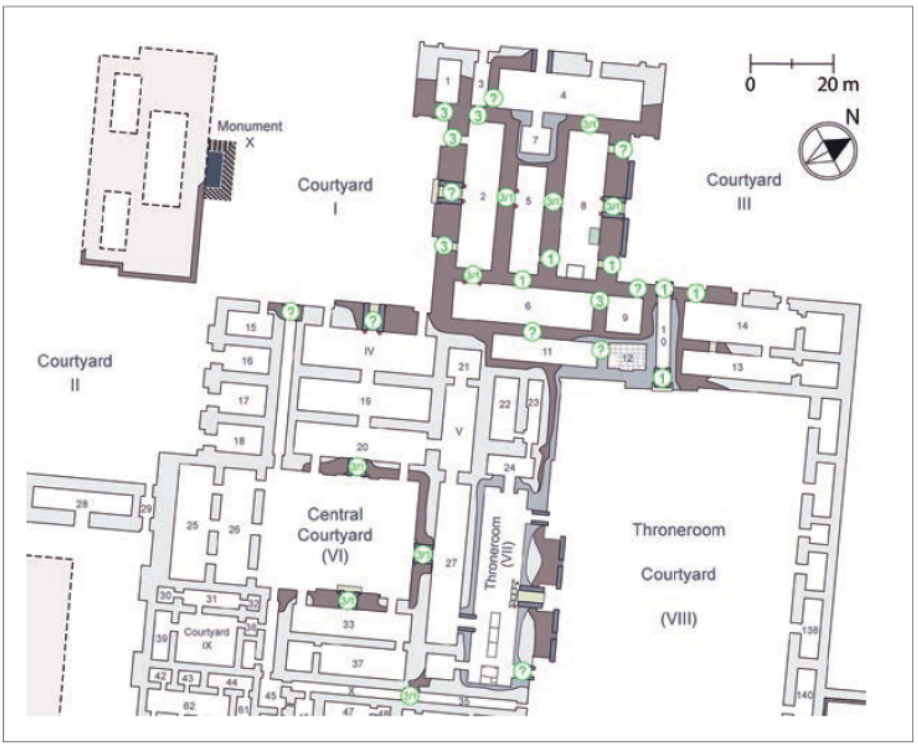



**10A** Dur-Sharruken

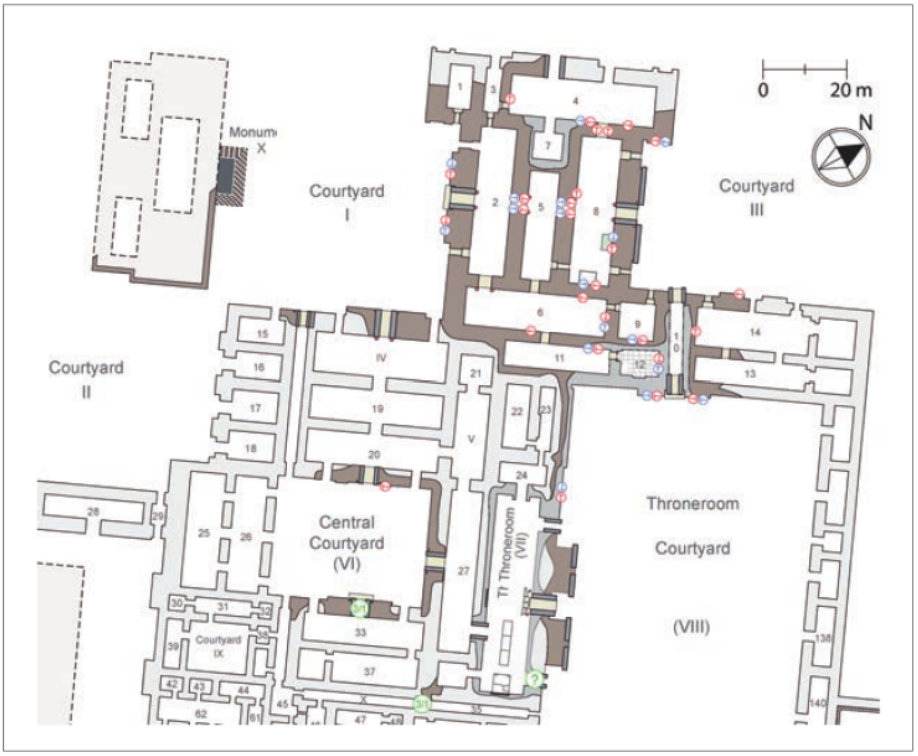



**10B** Military Palace (Dur-Sharruken): floorplan


**11** Royal Palace (Dur-Sharruken): floorplan

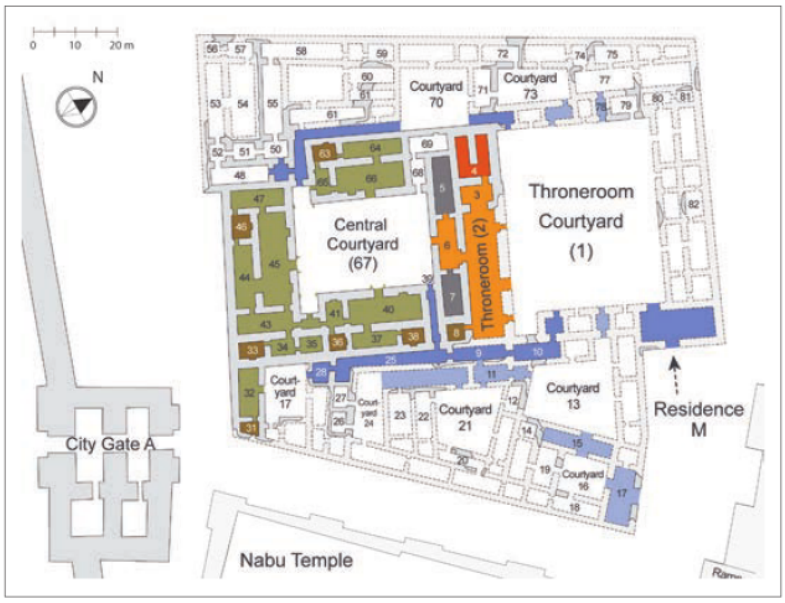



**12A** Royal Palace (Dur-Sharruken): known thresholds indicating whether the text is written in the first person, third person, or a combination of both

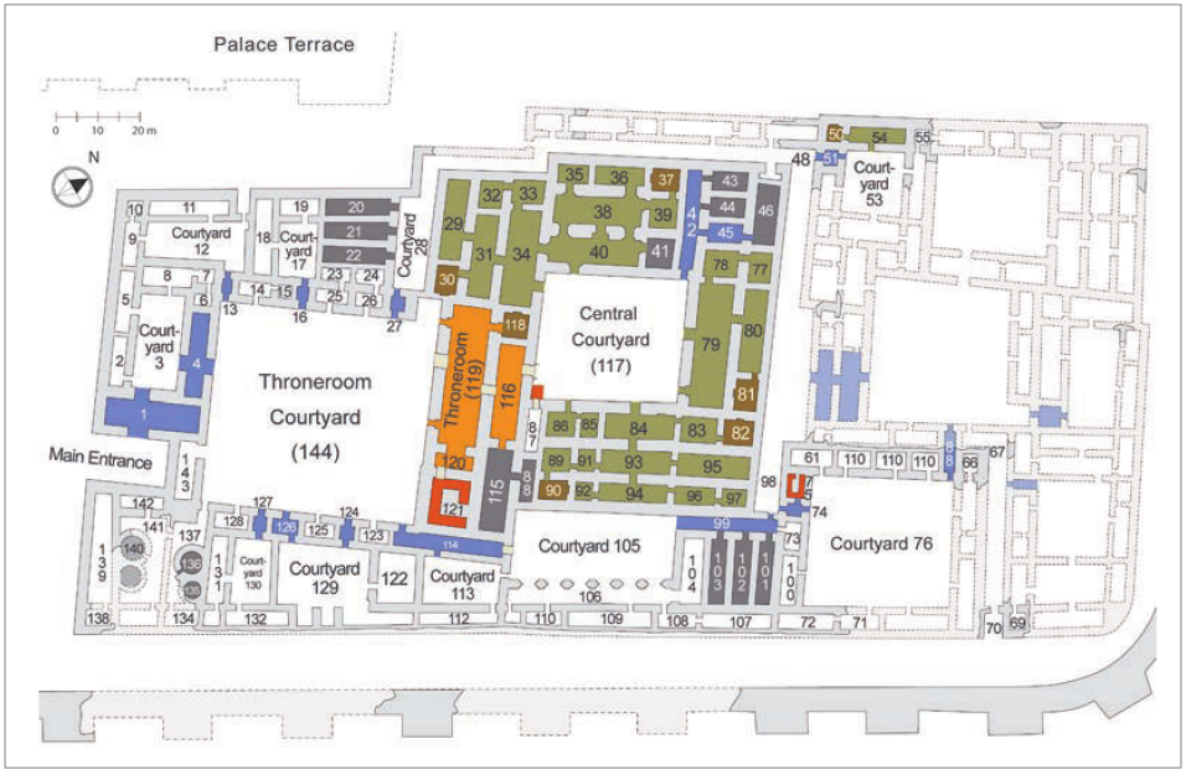



**12B** Royal Palace (Dur-Sharruken): the location of the king and crown prince on the known reliefs of the palace, indicating the direction in which they faced

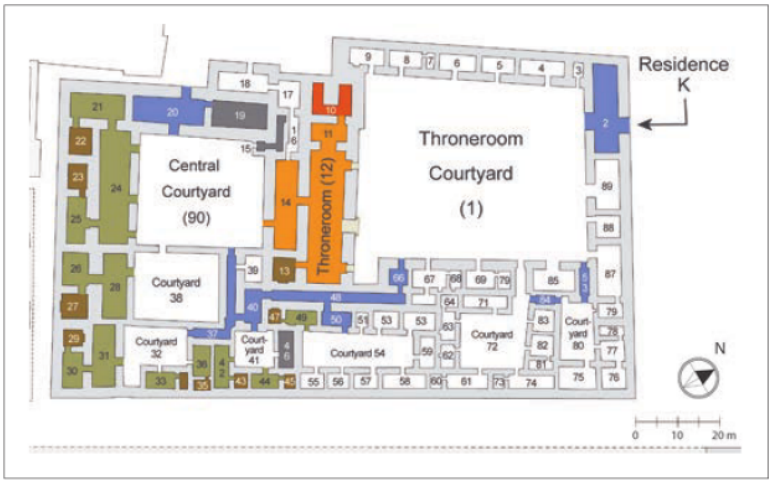
**13A** Citadel (Dur-Sharruken)



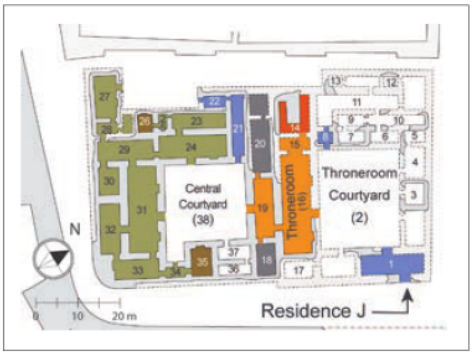

**13B** Residence M (Dur-Sharruken): floorplan




**14** Residence L (Dur-Sharruken): floorplan

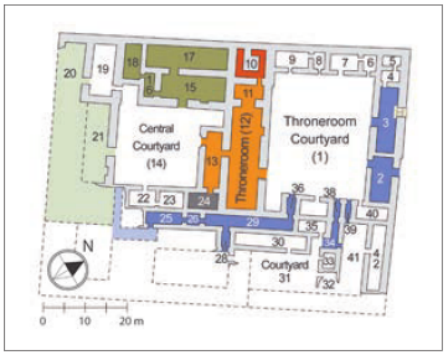



15A Residence K (Dur-Sharruken): floorplan



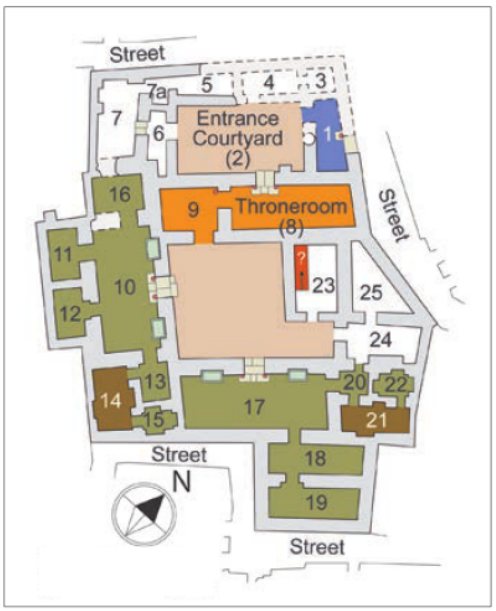

15B Residence J (Dur-Sharruken): floorplan

15C *Rotes Haus* (Assur): floorplan




15D Residence Z (Dur-Sharruken): floorplan

15E *Großes Haus* (Assur): floorplan

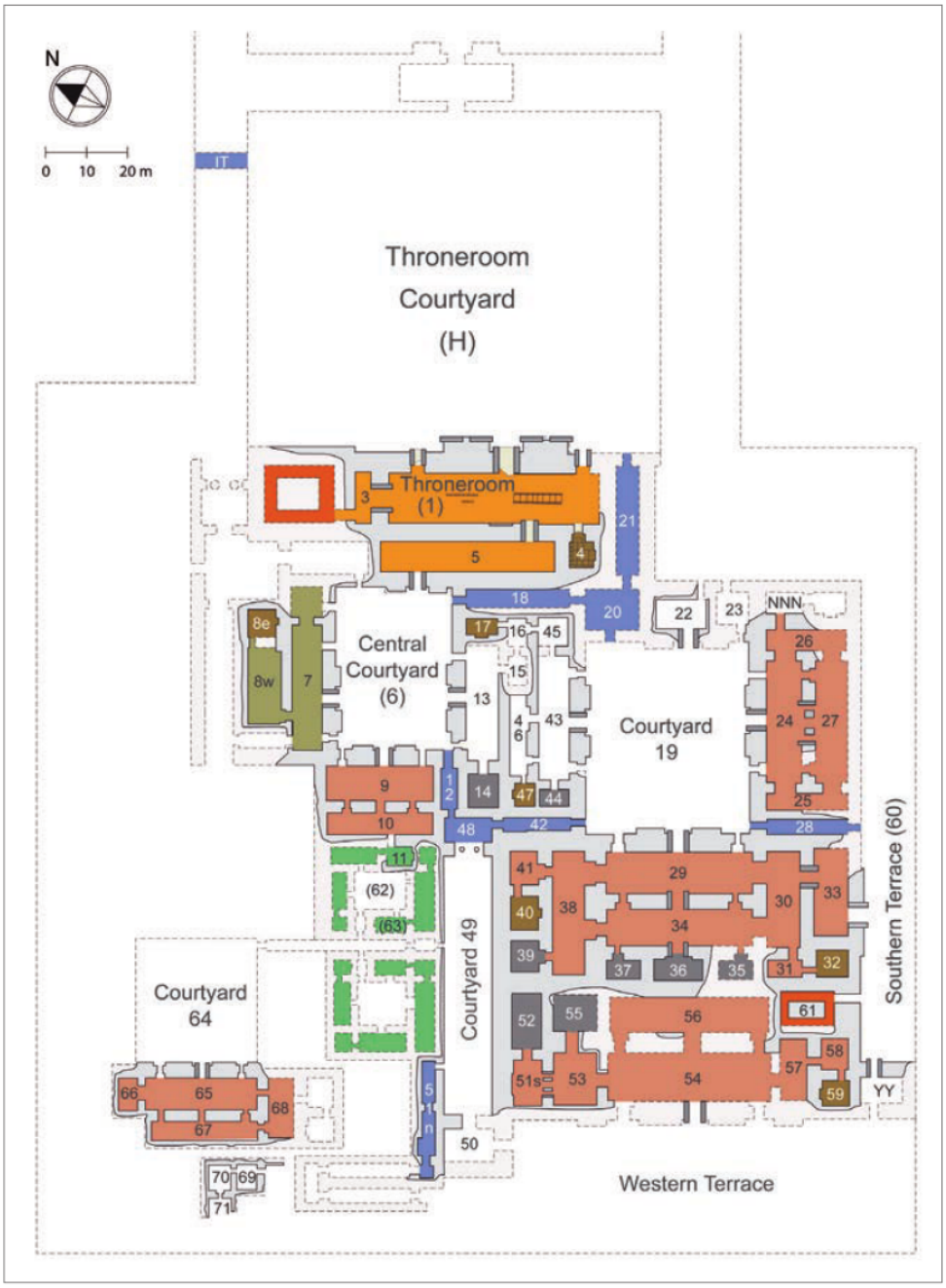



15C (*Enlarged*)

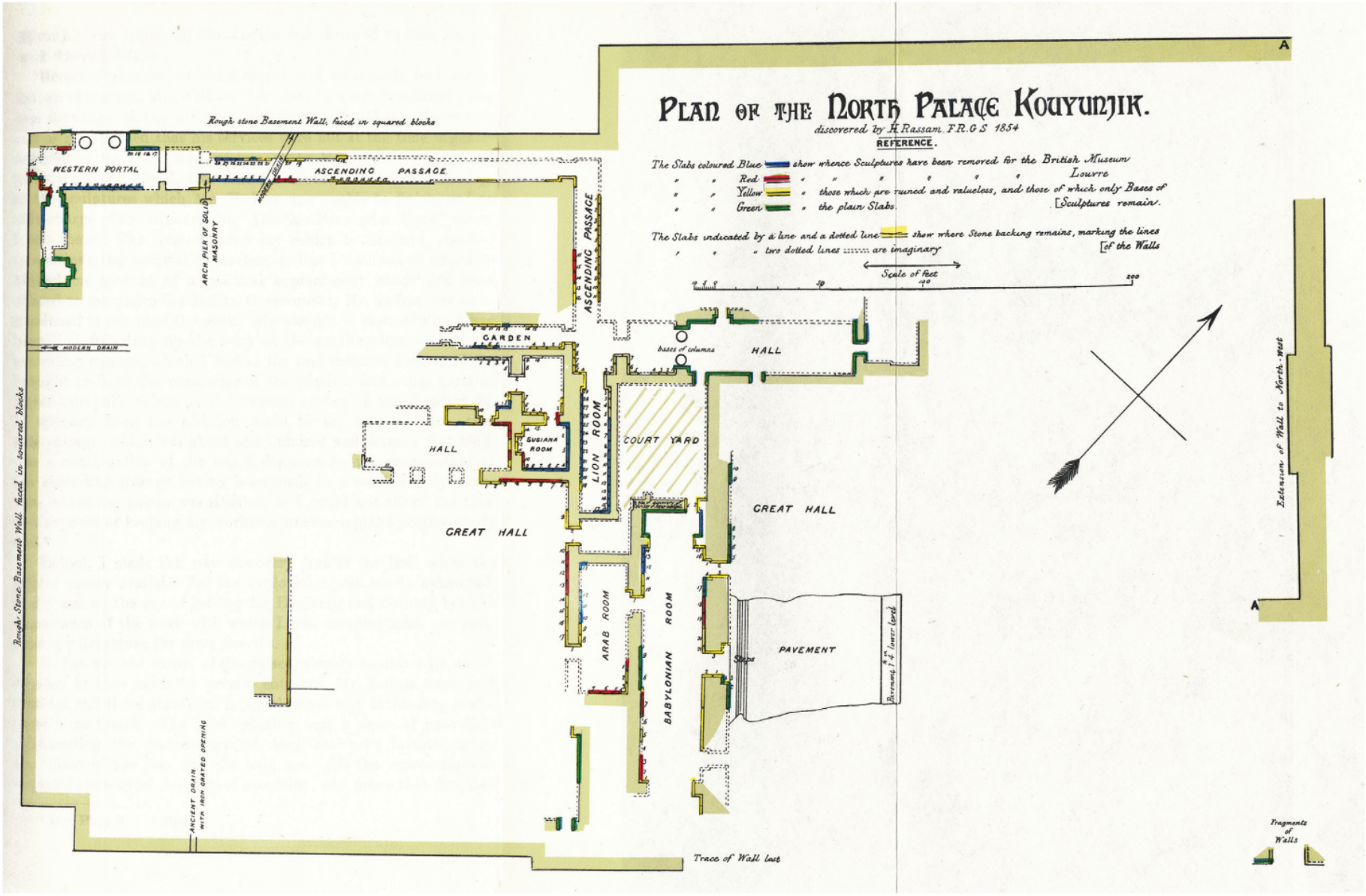

15E (*Enlarged*)


**16A** The citadel of Kujunjik (Nineveh)

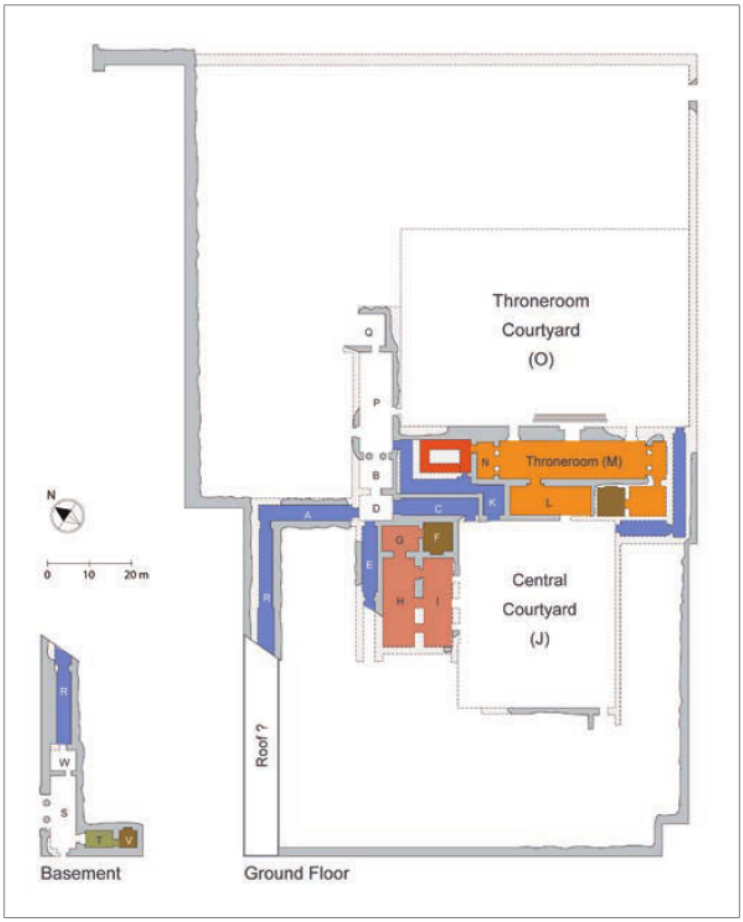

**16B** Nineveh



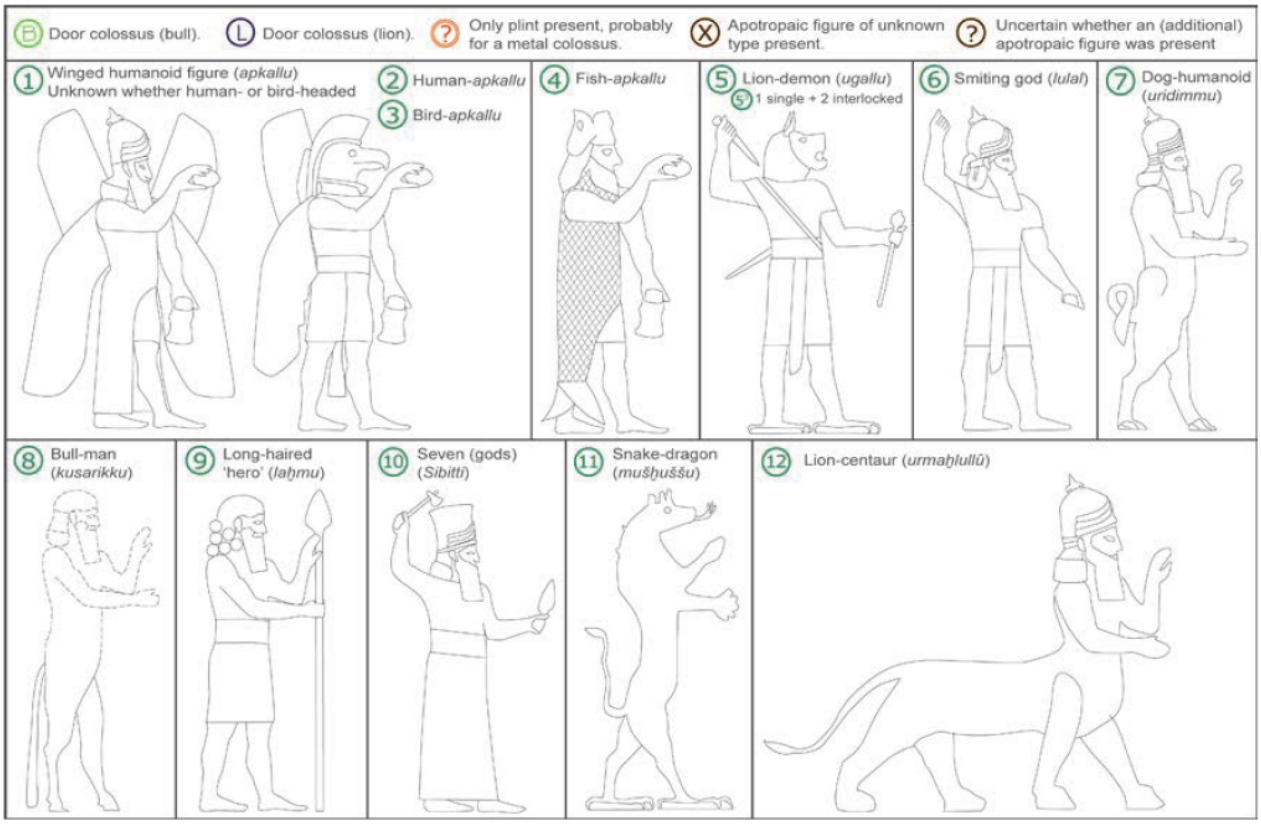

17 Southwest Palace (Nineveh): floorplan



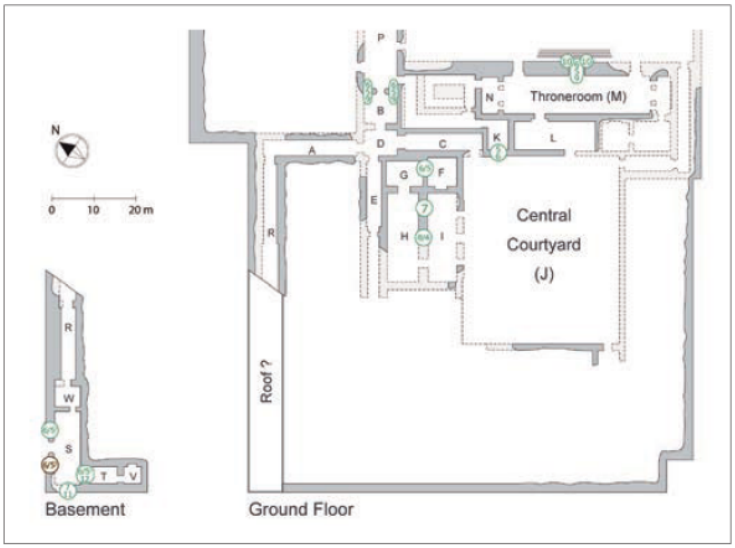

**18** Boutcher's plan of the North Palace



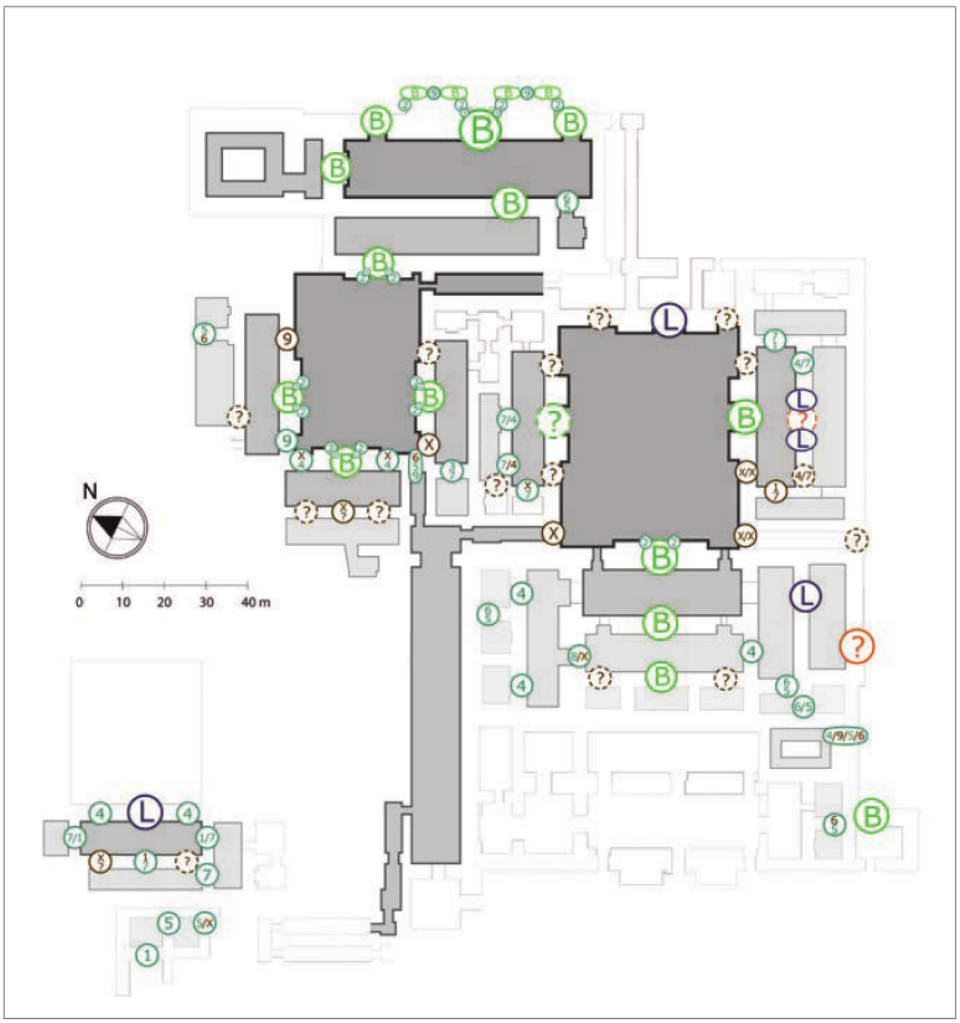

**19** North Palace (Nineveh): floorplan. The rooms on the lower level (basement) are shown detached.



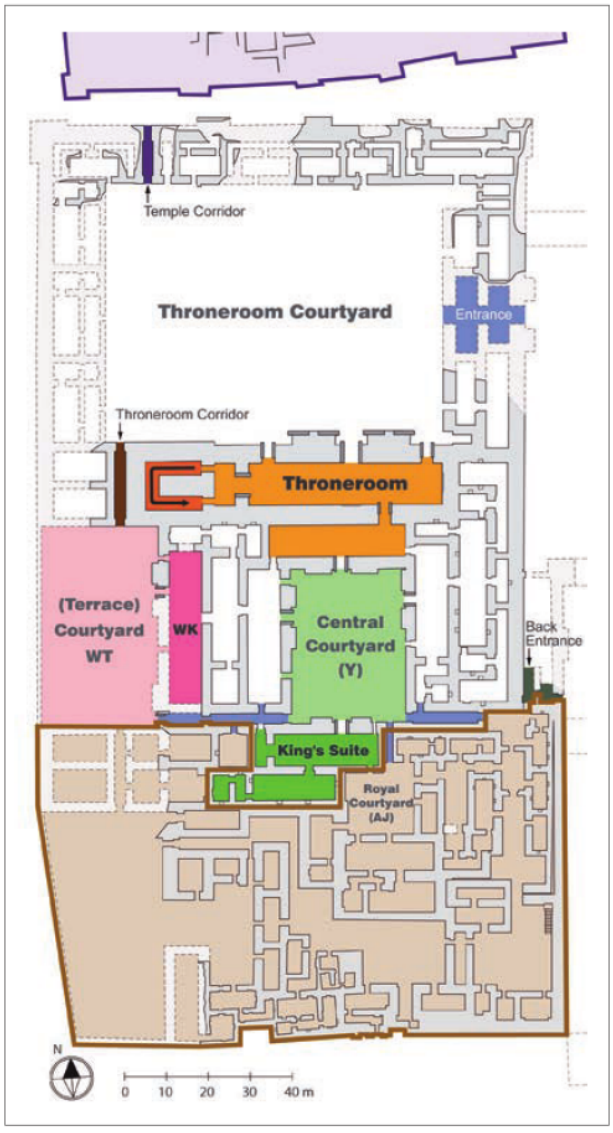

**20A** Typology of apotropaic figures



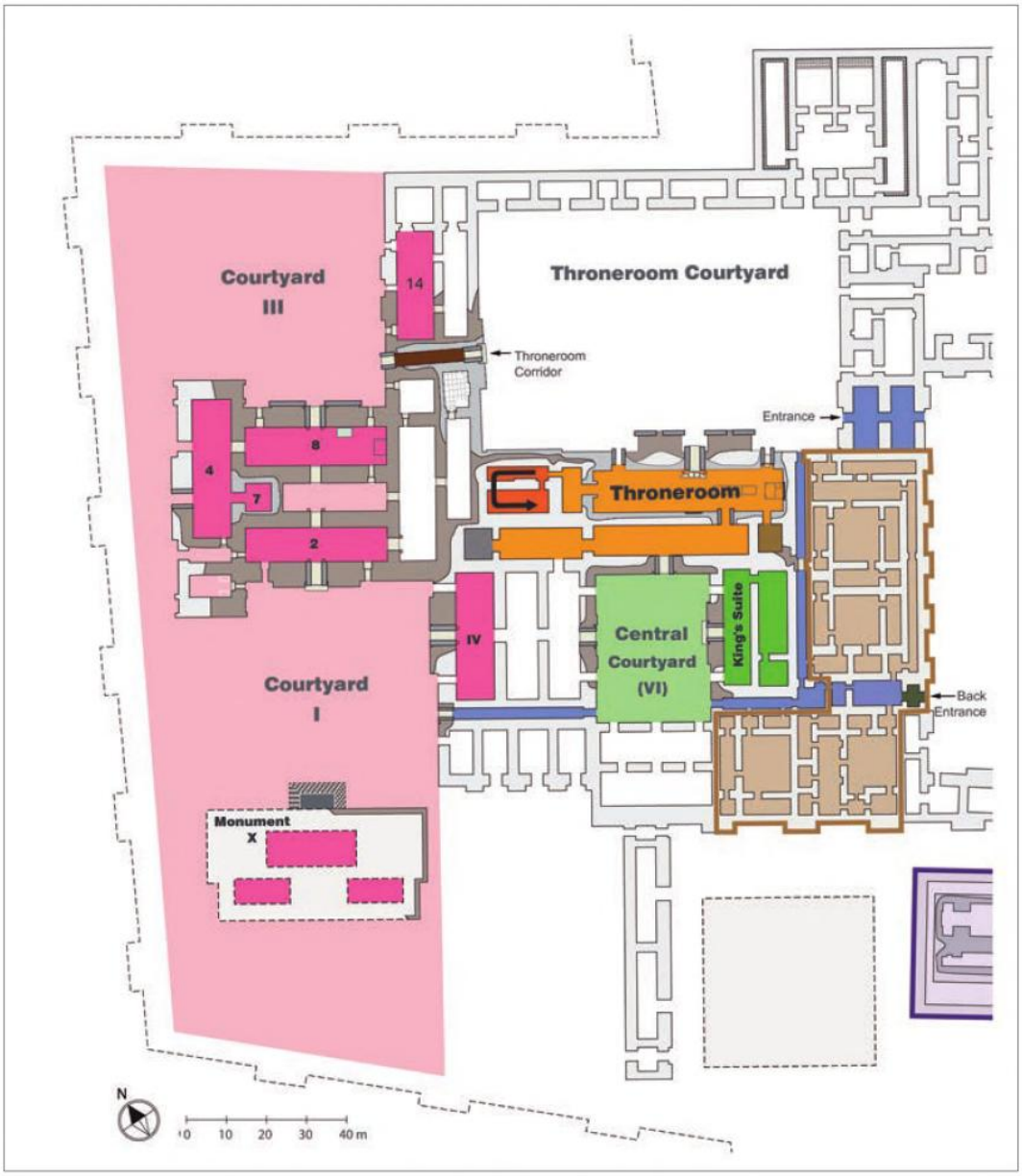

**20B** North Palace (Nineveh): reconstruction of the different types of apotropaic figures in their respective doorways



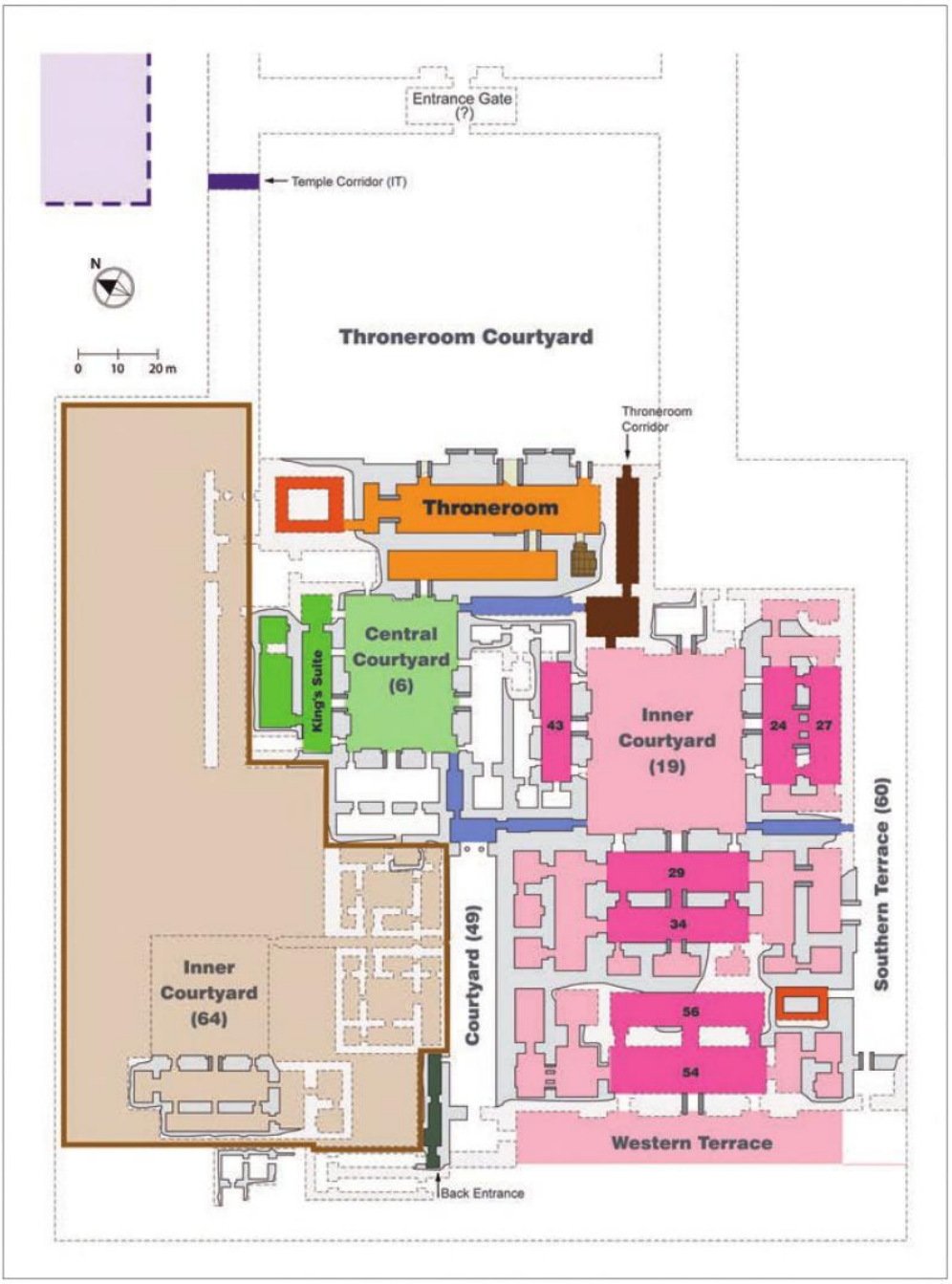

**21** Southwest Palace (Nineveh): reconstruction of the different types of apotropaic figures in their respective doorways




**22A** Northwest Palace (Kalḫu)




**22B** Royal Palace (Dur-Sharruken)

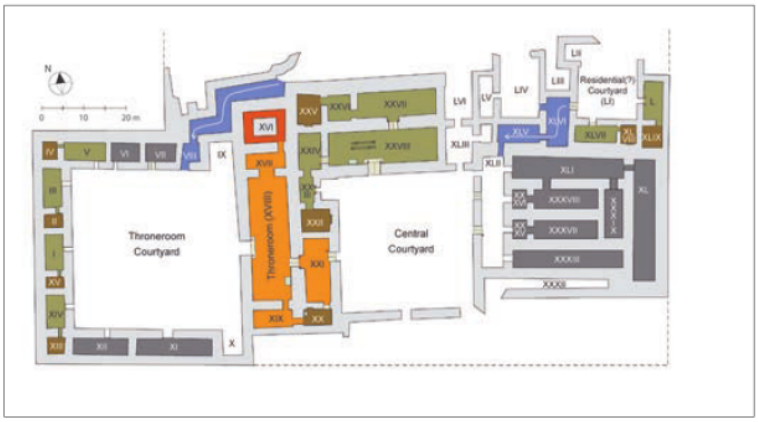



22c Southwest Palace (Nineveh)

**23A** Palace (Til-Barsip): floorplan


**23B** Palace (Tarbiṣu): floorplan


**23C** Bit-Hilani/Lower-Town Palace (Nineveh): floorplan; scale by approximation

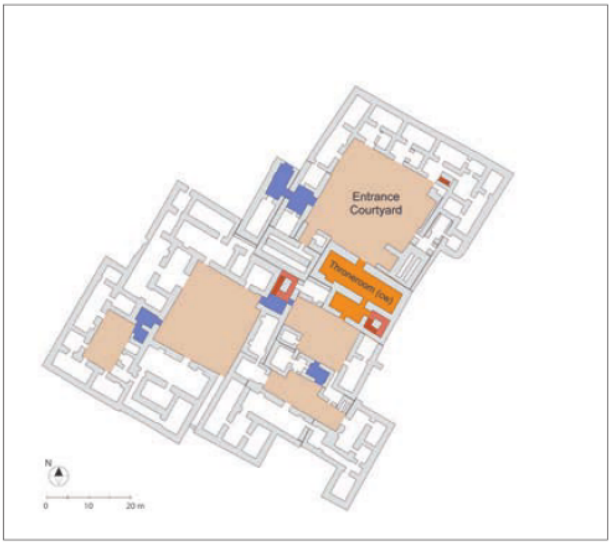



**24A** Palace (Ḫadattu): floorplan


**24B** Palace F/W (Dur-Katlimmu): floorplan


**24C** Town Wall Palace (Kalḫu): floorplan


**24D** *Bâtiment aux ivoires* (Ḫadattu): floorplan




**24E** *Rotes Haus* (Dur-Katlimmu): floorplan

ONE

# Introduction

On the 12th of an unknown month around the year 713[1] the emissaries from Egypt, Gaza, Judah, Moab, and Ammon entered the Assyrian city of Kalḫu with what the Assyrians called their tribute (*maddattu*).[2] They had travelled a long way to pay their respects to the Assyrian king. The emissaries came to Kalḫu at the end of the city's lifetime as primary royal city, a status it had achieved 150 years earlier during Ashurnasirpal II's (883–859)[3] reign. The construction of Sargon II's (722–705)[4] new capital, Dur-Sharruken, was well under way, but only twenty years later, during the reign of Sennacherib (704–681), Nineveh became the new, and even more monumental, primary royal city.

This book will concentrate on these three cities and the royal palaces that were constructed within them. After more than 150 years of research we still know excruciatingly little about how these palaces functioned and what happened within their confines. Most analyses of Assyrian kingship have focused on textual and art historical sources. A comprehensive overview of Assyrian kingship and the functioning of the Assyrian state is, however, still to be written. Some of the most basic issues, such as the size and nature of the court society, are still debated.

The royal palaces formed one of the primary spatial settings of Late Assyrian kingship. The architectural contexts they created represent a culturally specific way of organizing space. This book will be based on the assumption that architecture, like material culture in general, is correlated to the way societies organize and constitute themselves. The architectural setting in which the court acted has received relatively little attention, with most architectural studies ignoring the

[1] All dates are BCE unless otherwise noted.

[2] SAA 1, 110: r. 4–11. Postgate (1973b: 11 n. 29a) argued for a date of *c.*716 and a *terminus ante quem* of 712, based on the sender of the letter being Marduk-remanni, the governor of Kalḫu. As Sargon started the construction of Dur-Sharruken only in 717 it is very unlikely that colossi could have already been installed in its doors, as stated in the letter, in 716. The letter is, therefore, more likely to date shortly before 712.

[3] Ashurnasirpal II will mostly be referred to as Ashurnasirpal. Ashurnasirpal I reigned in the 11th century and plays a minor role in this book.

[4] Sargon II will generally be referred to as Sargon throughout this book as he is the only Assyrian king during this period by this name.

social implications of their analyses. More fruitful studies tend to focus on a few spaces only, such as the throneroom (§2.2.5)[5] and 'Eastern Suite' (§2.2.8)[6] of Ashurnasirpal II's Northwest Palace. Heinrich's 1984 book *Die Paläste im alten Mesopotamien* and to a lesser degree Turner's 1970 article *The State Apartments of Late Assyrian Palaces* represent the latest architectural overviews.[7] The research presented here will reconstruct the architectural principles that shaped these palaces and trace their development over time.

This book brings together the currently available sources and looks at all known royal palaces within the 'heartland' of the Assyrian realm, which is a modern designation for an area in northern Iraq, east of the Tigris and north of the Lower Zab, where the largest and most important Assyrian cities were located. The empire expanded far beyond this region, controlling most of the Near East towards the end of its lifetime. The Assyrian heartland contained several other important urban centres whose palaces are mostly unknown. The city of Assur will be discussed sporadically, but no palaces are currently known from other important cities such as Arbela and Kilizi. Unfortunately, we do not know the precise number of royal palaces at any given time. The known palaces can generally be separated into three types: the Primary Palace, the Military Palace, and secondary palaces. We know very little about the interaction between these palaces.[8]

Throughout this book the designation Primary Palace will be used to describe the largest and most monumental palace within the Assyrian realm at each moment of its history. This book will argue that the Late Assyrian period knew only three Primary Palaces, one in each subsequent primary royal city. The second type of monumental palace is usually called Arsenal or Review Palace.[9] This book will use the name Military Palace to stress its combined palatial and military nature. The larger establishments of which they were part will be described as the Military Complex. These palaces were intended 'for the proper running of the military camp, the care of horses, (and) the overseeing of everything'.[10] The general Akkadian designation, only attested from the reign of Sargon onwards, was *ekal māšarti*.

[5] See e.g. Lumsden 2004a; Porter 2003; Roaf 2008; Winter 1981; 1983.

[6] See e.g. Ataç 2010: 96–112; Brandes 1970; Brown 2010; Collins 2010; Richardson 1999–2001; Russell 1998b: 671–97.

[7] Turner 1970a. Over the past decades important contributions on specific aspects and palaces have been written by, amongst others, Margueron (1995; 2005), Reade (e.g. 2000b; 2002; 2008c), Russell (1991; 1998b), and Turner (1970a; 1976; 1998).

[8] Kertai 2013b.

[9] Dalley and Postgate 1984: 2.

[10] RINAP 3, 22: vi. 39–41; RINAP 3, 23: 32–3; RINAP 3, 34: 55–6.

## 1.1 SOURCES ON LATE ASSYRIAN PALACES

Everything we know about the royal palaces results from archaeological excavations, which commenced in the middle of the nineteenth century but have become more sporadic over the past decades.[11] Excavations provide information on the architecture and decoration of these palaces and objects used and stored within them. Such sources can provide information on Assyrian kingship, but their use is unfortunately hampered by methodological problems.

### *1.1.1 Archaeological Sources*

Archaeological methodology has changed considerably since the Late Assyrian palaces began to be excavated over 150 years ago. One cannot expect older excavations to have recorded all things that are of interest to modern scholars. Unsurprisingly, the oldest excavations were most patchy in their documentation, presenting a general overview of the excavated archaeology combined with some noteworthy objects. Unpublished material can sometimes add details, but the availability of these documents differs widely.

New excavations may provide valuable information in the future, but the size of the palaces poses serious problems for modern excavators. Mallowan was still able to work with 250 local workers in the 1950s,[12] but it is unlikely that such a scale will be feasible or preferable in the future. The days when Late Assyrian palaces could be excavated in their entirety can be assumed to be in the past.

A further hiatus concerns chronology. Most excavations did not identify different phases and even those that did were usually able to distinguish only between a main phase and post-Assyrian phases. Changes can be traced more frequently in the oldest palaces, which had the longest lifespans. Some were detected by their excavators, while others can only be argued for.

Architectural analyses require a sufficient amount of known architecture. Unfortunately, no palace has been preserved completely and several are only very fragmentarily known. A certain amount of reconstruction is always required. Regrettably, not all excavations, especially the earliest ones, were explicit in differentiating between excavated and reconstructed architecture. It is, therefore, not always clear whether the published floorplans represent the original architecture. Depending on the excavation in question, the method of work, and the problem at hand one can sometimes reconstruct errors. Many of the earlier mistakes were due to an unfamiliarity with mudbrick architecture and Late Assyrian palaces. One can now, for instance, easily recognize a throneroom in

[11] For the history of these earliest excavations see Larsen 1996.

[12] Oates and Oates 2001: 5.

what Place described as a courtyard (Fig. 5.1; Pl. 11). It became identifiable after later scholars were able to define the characteristics of a throneroom.

Most disagreements about how to reconstruct the palaces arise from different interpretations of what constitutes a Late Assyrian palace. Many results, such as identifying the main throneroom, are no longer contested, but new questions emerge constantly, especially when the architecture appears to differ from what is perceived to be the norm. It is tempting to blame such deviations on uncertainties resulting from their excavation. While this does often appear to be the case, it is clearly dangerous to explain all such differences this way.

### *1.1.2 Textual Sources*

Studies on the Late Assyrian period are blessed with a large number of textual sources covering a wide range of genres and topics. These texts provide a wealth of information on the Assyrian Empire and its people. Unfortunately, they are less helpful in reconstructing the use and function of spaces.[13] Texts rarely discuss the spatial setting of activities. The information provided about the visiting emissaries is typical of the nature of our sources. We know little beyond their arrival in Kalḫu. One may presume that they entered its royal palaces, but how such visits unfolded remains unclear.

Assyrian spatial terms are often ambiguous and most are rather uninformative. Assyrian designations consist of the general expression *bēt* followed by a more specific term. The term *bēt* is unhelpful in reconstructing spaces as it can refer to a room, building part, building, or even to villages, cities, the household, or groups of people. The Assyrian language is generally ambiguous about the scale involved. It is only from the textual context that one can hope to reconstruct the use and size of Assyrian spaces. The contexts are, however, often less informative than one would hope and different authors frequently reach different conclusions.

A second problem when trying to reconstruct the use of spaces is the very limited number of attestations we have at our disposal. This makes all arguments tentative. Most spaces are never mentioned and attested spaces occur only a few times. The number of excavated rooms greatly exceeds that of textually attested spaces. We are only infrequently able to correlate excavated spaces with Assyrian designations.

The reconstruction of the palace community is hindered by the fact that Late Assyrian sources rarely make explicit the distinction between the palace as building and as a household[14]—another consequence of the broad connotations of the designation *bēt*. Most officials and workers of the palace were probably part of its household, but did not necessarily work or live in the palace. In general, we do not

[13] Kertai 2013a. [14] Postgate 2007.

know who or how many people actually worked and/or lived inside the royal palaces (§11.6). Most texts do not describe activities inside the palace, but rather are concerned with the economic activities of its functionaries such as the purchase of land and people or the distribution of goods and people to different individuals and functionaries. Most functionaries will have possessed residences of their own. The palaces certainly had no space to accommodate the households of more than a few of its functionaries. It is difficult, and in many cases impossible, to reconstruct the organization of the palace from these kinds of text. This is an important reason why many discussions, such as the harem discourse, still remain inconclusive.

### *1.1.3 Art Historical Sources*

Among the aspects that typify a Late Assyrian palace, decoration is perhaps the most famous, especially the stone reliefs that covered their walls. Reliefs were essential in conveying meaning to the diverse audiences of the palaces.[15] It is this aspect that has received most attention over the years. These analyses have highlighted the use of Assyrian iconography in creating Assyrian identities,[16] but have mostly focused on royal propaganda.[17] This book's focus on architecture will result in decoration getting less attention than would be ideal.

## 1.2 SECLUSION VERSUS ACCESS

The lack of knowledge about the life in a Late Assyrian palace has partly been filled by comparisons with other Oriental courts, especially from the Ottoman period. Grayson described the logic behind such comparisons thus: 'The Ottoman court is a useful analogy for it, like several Oriental monarchies, had its historical foundations in Assyrian practice.'[18] It is, however, doubtful that such ahistorical Oriental kingship existed.[19]

The Oriental(ist) view on Assyrian kingship automatically places the notion of seclusion to the forefront. It can hardly be disputed that Assyrian palaces were inaccessible to the majority of Assyrians. This is, however, a general aspect of centres of power. Their general inaccessibility does not imply that only a few people visited these buildings. This deductive fallacy ignores the minority that did have access. Even if this group represented a small percentage of the population, it could still have been large in absolute terms. Furthermore, the general

[15] For an overview of the different audiences see Russell 1991: 223–40.
[16] Feldman 2011.
[17] See e.g. Reade 1979c; Porter 2003; Russell 1991: 241–67; Winter 1981; 1983.
[18] Grayson 1986: 10. For a slightly longer explanation see Grayson 1991c: 197.
[19] Bahrani 2001: 16.

inaccessibility of the royal palaces does not necessarily imply the remoteness of the king. The king does not need to have been inaccessible for those that entered his palaces.

One of the most common ways to describe Late Assyrian palaces is to divide them into a public and a private realm. This distinction is often made by using the Akkadian expressions *bābānu* and *bētānu*, which can be translated as 'outside' and 'inside'.[20] Postgate summarized this distinction as follows: 'A distinction was drawn between the private (bētānû) and public (bābānû) sectors of the p[alace]'.[21] It is noteworthy that Postgate used a Middle Assyrian reference, from the so-called Palace Decrees,[22] to substantiate his argument. While the text does include a doctor of the *bētānu*,[23] a *bābānu* is not mentioned.

The *bētānu* is frequently attested, but its presumed counterpart *bābānu* is largely absent. A *bābānu* does occur once in Sennacherib's description of the Military Palace in Nineveh (§6.3). However, within this text the *bābānu* is not contrasted with a *bētānu* nor does it represent an organizational principle. Instead, it is part of a name of a specific courtyard: the 'Outer Courtyard', i.e. *bābānû kisallu*[24] or alternatively the *kisallaša bābānû*,[25] which probably designated one of the outer courtyards of this specific palace. There is little to support the theory that the *bētānu* referred to a specific area within the palace, rather it seems to have designated the entire interior of the palace. An association with seclusion is even more hypothetical.[26]

In principal, the Assyrians could have distinguished between public and private realms by using other designations than *bābānu* and *bētānu*. There seems, however, little to support the presence of such duality in Late Assyrian times. Both public and private are complicated and modern concepts, which cannot be applied to ancient societies straightforwardly. Privateness is not a necessary aspect of palatial societies. The organization of access is more fundamental and represents a more fluid concept. There is no single space that separates people lucky enough to have access from those without. Access is temporal and situational. The internal parts of the palace could have provided some of the best opportunities to obtain access to the king and therefore to power. The concept of privateness has the connotation of being apolitical, but this is misguided in a palatial context.

[20] For the multiple meanings see CAD/B: 274–5 (*bētānu*).

[21] Postgate 2004: 222.

[22] Roth 1997: 200–1¶8.

[23] The same argument was made by Oppenheim 1965: 330. This interpretation was strengthened by the CAD, which translated the passage '*asû ša betānu*' as 'lit., the physicians confined to the inside of the harem' (CAD/Z: 68 (*zarīqu* in *rab zarīqī*)), which is not the most literal translation to be found in the CAD.

[24] RINAP 3, 34: 58. (Outer; äußerer) is an adjectival form of *bābānu* (outside; am Tor, außen), see AHw: 94 and CAD/B: 7.

[25] RINAP 3, 22: vi. 70–1; RINAP 3, 34: 67.

[26] Kertai 2013a.

Everything is political in ancient palaces. Palaces are much more than residences for the king; they formed the centres of state.[27]

## 1.3 THE LATE ASSYRIAN COURT SOCIETY

The older, but still present, notion of a despotic kingship is reflected in the Assyrian royal inscriptions, which emphasize the king's role as the earthly representative of the supreme god Assur and the accompanying tasks of expanding and maintaining the Assyrian realm. Administrative texts show a more nuanced image of the Assyrian Empire and the role of its officials and individuals. Postgate, mostly writing about the seventh century, argued that 'the kings played an integral role in the exercise of government, and that they played this role in person'.[28] It is helpful to cite two of Postgate's conclusions in full: 'the Neo-Assyrian administration was not bureaucratic, and depended on a sense of institutional loyalty and personal interaction up and down the system,' and 'the administrative ethos was nevertheless well-developed, with well formulated concepts of responsibility and authority, and of appointment to and dismissal from, offices'.[29]

A large portion of the Assyrian administration can be expected to have had access to the palace on certain occasions. This group can be divided into several categories. The most influential group is commonly described as the magnates (lit. 'the great ones') and consisted of the highest functionaries within the realm.[30] Radner argues that 'The magnates, it would appear, were able to approach the king on an almost equal footing, at least as far as this was possible while observing the necessary notions of appropriateness and politeness.'[31] The king's entourage also consisted of a diverse group of scholars,[32] who provided the king with advice,[33] but whose relationships were based more on patronage and whose hierarchical distance to the king was larger. The palace contained several officials in charge of its security[34] and others related to the daily functioning of the palace. Some of these officials were probably lower in the hierarchy, but could have had better access to the palace due to their tasks.

The final category was formed by the royal family. They represent the most contentious group within the Assyrian court as it relates to the possible existence of harems. Harems have formed an important, albeit often poorly understood, aspect of Near Eastern palaces throughout the past millennia. Whether they were part of the Late Assyrian court society is less clear. The discourse rarely goes beyond 'the common use of the term "harem" to refer to any mention of women

[27] Winter 1993: 28. [28] Postgate 2007: 8. [29] Postgate 2007: 28. [30] Mattila 2000.
[31] Radner 2011: 365. [32] Radner 2009. [33] See SAA 10. [34] Radner 2010.

in connection with a palace'.[35] Explicit discussions about the nature of such institutions are remarkably limited.[36] The discourse has been primarily philological, but has a spatial component in its assumption that parts of the palaces were intended for its occupants. Only rarely have people attempted to point out the location of such spaces in the respective palaces. This book will refrain from philological discussions and approach the harem discourse as an architectural problem. It will discuss the importance of seclusion and the presence of living quarters in each palace.

## 1.4 RECONSTRUCTING THE PALACES

The presence of second storeys would have had considerable repercussions for the functioning of the palaces discussed in this book. There can, however, be little doubt that none of the palaces possessed substantial upper floors (§10.1). Most of the original excavators came to similar conclusions, though Layard later changed his mind under the influence of architectural historian James Fergusson.[37] The only vertical connection that most palaces possessed is the throneroom ramp (§10.2.4). Other staircases or ramps are generally absent from the main parts of the palace.

Despite the lack of second storeys, these palaces were by any standard monumental. The palaces tend to shrink to more human proportions on floorplans that are cramped onto the page of a book such as this one. This diminishes the perceived size of individual rooms. Even the smallest rooms, such as bathrooms (§9.2), were generally between 25 and 50 $m^2$. The largest spaces, such as the main thronerooms (§10.2), reached sizes of 500 $m^2$.

Even without a second storey, the vertical dimensions of the palaces were staggering. Even though no room has been preserved up to the level of its roof, we have some clues about their original height. The most important information comes from the known minimum height of the throneroom of Residence K in Dur-Sharruken (Fig. 1.1; Pl. 15a). Wall paintings, which were found fallen onto the floor of the room, must have been at least 10 m high originally. Though its upper part was missing, Loud was able to reconstruct its original height as 12.80 m and concluded that the room must have been at least 14 m high.[38] Even though Residence K was by any standard palatial, it can be assumed that the walls of the royal palaces would reach even higher.

[35] Bahrani 2001: 16.
[36] Kertai 2013c; Macgregor 2012; Melville 2004; Parpola 2012; Svärd 2012; Teppo 2007.
[37] Kertai forthcoming a.
[38] Loud and Altman 1938: 90.

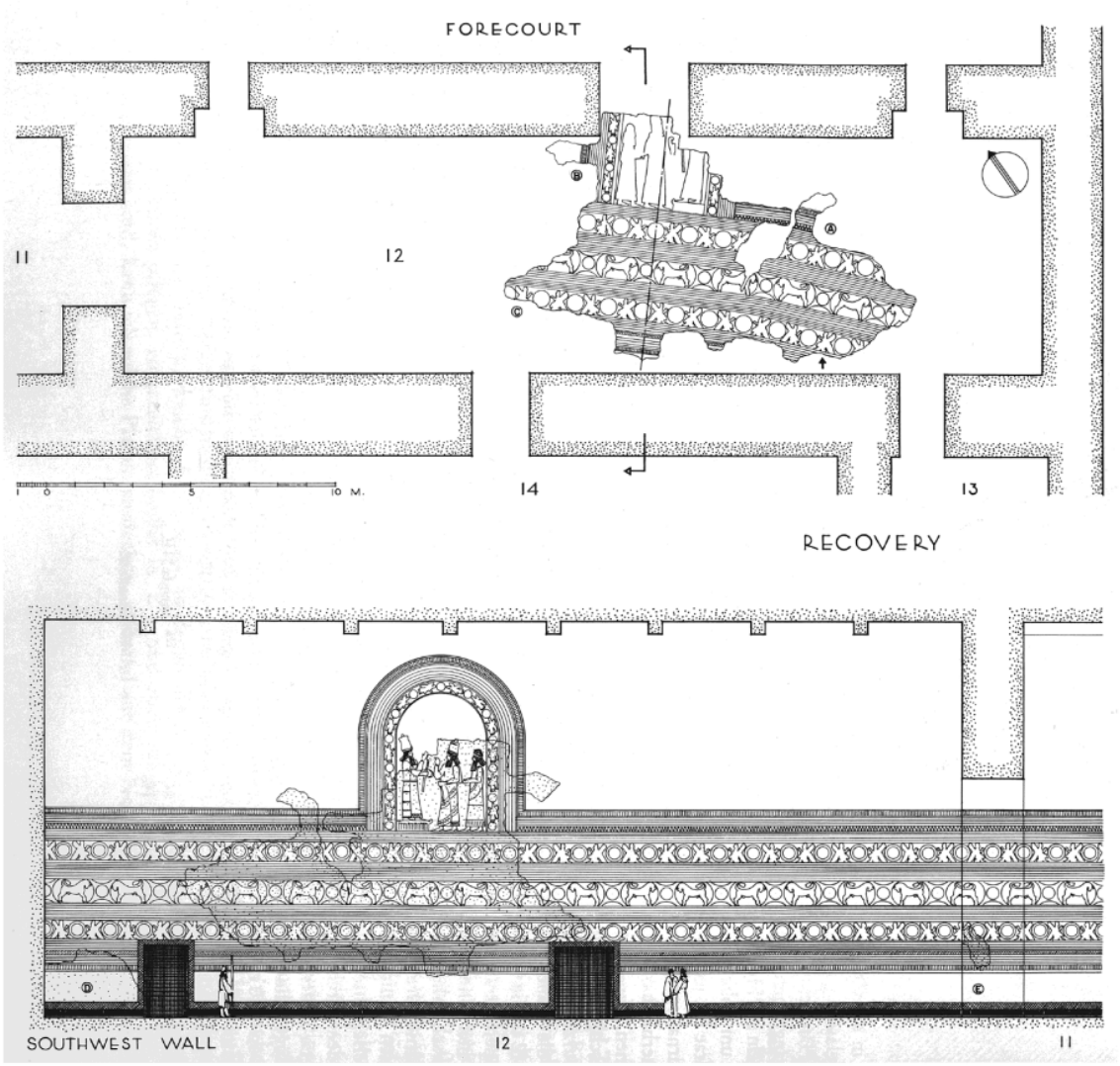



FIG. 1.1 Wall paintings as found in Residence K

Other known measurements support this hypothesis. The Military Palace in Kalḫu provides some of the best indications for the minimum heights of the original rooms. According to Oates, the throneroom had been *c.*12 m high originally.[39] Its side doors were at least 6 m high.[40] Even storage room T 20 was suggested to have been at least 8 m high,[41] with the door towards corridor T 21 being at least 4.60 m high.[42] One of the doors in the Descending Corridor (R 2) leading out from the palace was 4.80 m high,[43] whereas the outside entrance into the corridor was at least 4.50 m high.[44] The find of three sets of bronze bands

[39] Oates 1963: 9. [40] Oates and Oates 2001: 148. [41] Curtis, Collon, and Green 1993: 8.
[42] Curtis, Collon, and Green 1993: 5. [43] Mallowan 1966: 466, fig. 380.
[44] Mallowan 1966: 465, fig. 379.

in Imgur-Enlil (modern Balawat) from the reigns of Ashurnasirpal II[45] and Shalmaneser III,[46] provide further indications about the height of the accompanying doors. Reconstructing the height of the associated doors is based on the metal casings that originally covered the sides of the doors. Following these measurements, Ashurnasirpal's doors were 4.06 m high,[47] and those of Shalmaneser had a staggering height of 7.31 m.[48] These are gigantic measurements, but they seem proportional to the overall dimensions of these rooms.[49]

## 1.5 THE SPACES OF A LATE ASSYRIAN PALACE

Following Loud's 1936 work,[50] Late Assyrian palaces have been interpreted as consisting of different suites. This has been combined with a tendency to divide the palaces into different zones, such as the above-mentioned public/private duality. While this can have analytical merit, there is no indication that the Assyrians divided their palaces into zones. Zoning introduces an unnecessary layer of analysis and represents a rather crude way to describe their spatial organization. This book will argue that analyses are best performed on the level of the suites.

Most studies have discussed palatial suites by focusing on morphology and typology. This has been especially influential in what might be called the German school of architectural study, which defined several types of rooms and suites, each seen as having developed from an original prototype.[51] These types were largely defined by morphology, although informed by a much broader interpretation and knowledge of Mesopotamian archaeology.[52] They connected architecture both diachronically and synchronically. Identifying architectural types within buildings was the result of analysis as well as the starting point for further interpretations.

The interpretation of spaces was often decontextualized, placing more emphasis on typology than on the building in question. Some similarities between spaces seem artificial, existing mainly by cutting out parts of floorplans and ignoring their original context. Nonetheless, most typologies do seem to represent real differences and similarities. Typological inferences still form an important method and will be used throughout this book. This study differs mainly by reframing the basic aspects on which its typology is based and by following a more contextual approach. This reflects changing interests within archaeology with more emphasis being placed on the social implications of architectural similarities and differences.

[45] Curtis and Tallis 2008. [46] Schachner 2007. [47] Curtis and Tallis 2008: 24–5.
[48] Unger 1913: 17–23. [49] Loud, Frankfort, and Jacobsen 1936: 61.
[50] Loud 1936. See also Loud and Altman 1938: 10–13. [51] Miglus 1999: 245–50.
[52] Miglus 1994: 276.

### *1.5.1 The Types of Suites*

Late Assyrian royal palaces can be described as a combination of independent suites. These suites were autonomous in the sense that they did not depend on other suites or rooms for their accessibility. One did not need to pass through one suite to reach another suite.

The suites can be categorized into different types for heuristic purposes. The best-known typology was made by Turner in his 1970 article, 'The State Apartments of Late Assyrian Palaces'. Later typologies, such as those of Margueron[53] and Manuelli,[54] have added details and improved upon Turner, but they have mostly followed his methodology.

A basic question of any typology concerns the criteria by which differences are defined as significant. Typologies have the tendency to mix different selection criteria. Concerning palatial spaces the most obvious criteria are architectural and/or functional. Due to a lack of information on the function of rooms, most typologies have been architectural. Turner distinguished between the 'Principal Reception Suite', which represents his designation for the Throneroom Suite, and six other types. Only the function of the Throneroom Suite seemed beyond doubt. The uses of the other suites were less clear and were assigned letters by Turner. They were categorized mainly on the basis of morphological aspects with the range of rooms forming the main guiding principle. Reception Suite Type A was the catch-all category containing all suites made of two rows of rooms. Types B–F were populated by a few suites each. The differences between types B–D were negligible, whereas type E was represented by the fragmentarily known Town Wall Palace in Kalḫu only. Reception Suite Type F was also typified by its position within the palace. The morphological nature of Turner's typology makes it difficult to trace changes in architecture. Turner's typology is especially uninformative about the palace architecture of the seventh century. The range of rooms and thus the size of the suite is moreover unlikely to have coincided with functional distinctions.

Turner would probably have made a more functional typology if he could, but as we will see, the specific function of most suites is still not known precisely. It is nonetheless possible to replace morphological considerations for more functional ones. The typology presented in this book distinguishes suites according to the uses they were able to fulfil. This functional capacity will be argued to have been based on a spatial core, which could be expanded in certain, mostly predefined, ways, which allowed differences in monumentality to be created. The associated typology is based on the notion of agglutination rather than size.

[53] Margueron 2005. [54] Manuelli 2009.

Two of the resulting types replicate the typology of Turner: the Principal Reception Suite and Reception Suite Type F. This book will, where possible, divide the suites into four general groups. These can be subdivided, but we are rarely able to attach functional differences to these subdivisions. Some of these types were placed at specific locations within the palace.

1. The Throneroom Suite (§10.2) consisted of a throneroom, a ramp, and an internal room that connected to a courtyard behind the throneroom. Later Throneroom Suites also possessed a bathroom. All these spaces can be considered part of the suite's core. The architectural variation within this suite was minimal, making it one of the most conservative spaces of the Late Assyrian period.

2. The Double-sided Reception Suite (§10.3) was located behind the Throneroom Suite and represents Turner's Reception Suite Type F. The core of this suite consisted of two reception rooms, usually separated by a T-shaped group of rooms. The suite was defined by its two-sidedness, which allowed its two reception rooms to be accessed independently. Though its two sides were comparable, their place within the palace created differences in accessibility.

3. The third general suite type can be called the Dual-Core Suite (§10.4). Its core consisted of two large parallel reception rooms. This core could be enlarged by attaching different rooms and units to it. The agglutinating nature of Late Assyrian suites is especially pronounced in this suite, which appears for the first time in Sargon's Royal Palace in Dur-Sharruken and seems to have become the standard reception suite thereafter. This type is a catch-all category. It allows us to trace architectural changes, but does not provide many clues on possible functional differences between them.

4. The basic core of the Residential/Reception Suite (§10.5) is formed by a large room combined with a bathroom. The bathroom, whose exact functions remain unclear (§9.2), is typified by the presence of a shallow niche in one of the walls, a pavement consisting of baked bricks normally with a bitumen coating and installations for drainage. These two rooms represent the minimum requirements to qualify as a residential suite and will be called the 'Standard Apartment'. It is questionable if rooms without bathrooms were intended for residential purposes. The core could be expanded to create more monumental suites. These suites appear to have been reception rooms first, and places for sleeping only secondarily. Many suites do not seem to have been residential, but functioned as the offices of palace functionaries.

### *1.5.2 Giving Names to Connectivity*

The independent accessibility of suites was made possible by a series of courtyards and corridors. Many of these were at fixed locations within the palace. The largest

courtyard was located in front of the throneroom and will be designated as the 'Throneroom Courtyard'. This reflects the importance of the throneroom within these courtyards, whose façade formed the monumental background for all activity taking place in and around it. The courtyard behind the Throneroom Suite can be designated as the 'Central Courtyard'. The presence of these two courtyards is the result of the two-sidedness of the throneroom suite, which automatically resulted in the presence of two courtyards. The Central Courtyard is specific in its location, but it is neither constant in its importance nor in the organization of the suites surrounding it (§11.5.2). Some palaces have an internal courtyard that was more residential in nature. These will be described as the 'Royal Courtyard'. Other courtyards were more flexible in their position and will not be given a specific name.

Corridors formed the second main source of connectivity within the palaces. Although most corridors are generic, there are three types that are common enough to be given a standardized name: the Throneroom Corridor, the Temple Corridor, and the Descending Corridor. The Throneroom Corridor refers to the corridor located at one of the short ends of the Throneroom Suite. It is a standard feature and can be understood as part of the Throneroom Suite since it allowed movement to bypass the throneroom. Although less common, the Temple Corridor, which connected to a temple or temple area, formed a standard feature of the Primary Palaces. They were located in one of the forecourts of the palace. They highlight the close connection between the Primary Palaces and the temple complexes in their vicinity. The Descending Corridor connected the inner part of the palace with the outside through a long and sloping corridor. The corridor can also be called ascending, depending on which direction is emphasized. For convenience sake, it will be referred to as Descending Corridor throughout this book.

## 1.6 TWO ARCHITECTURAL HIATUSES

Reconstructing the development of Late Assyrian palace architecture is hampered by the limited amount of palace construction known from the centuries preceding the reign of Ashurnasirpal II. Only two royal palaces are sufficiently preserved and excavated to provide a glimpse of the architectural principles of the preceding Middle Assyrian period. The so-called Old Palace in Assur represents the best-known palace. Its date is uncertain,[55] but its architecture is more reminiscent of the traditions of the earlier second millennium. Tukulti-Ninurta I's (1233–1197) palace in Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta represents the second and final Middle Assyrian

[55] Pedde and Lundström 2008: 32.

royal palace from the Assyrian heartland whose architecture is known in some detail, albeit very fragmentarily.[56]

Though it is sometimes assumed that Assur formed the primary royal city until Ashurnasirpal's construction of the Northwest Palace in Kalḫu, it is not unlikely that the main palaces stood in Nineveh from at least Tiglath-pileser I's (1114–1076) reign onwards. The Nineveh palace could have retained this status until Ashurnasirpal II's reign. Tiglath-pileser I's inscriptions suggest that the palaces in Nineveh and Assur were comparable in monumentality.[57] The main military palace was probably also located in Nineveh. Ashur-resh-ishi I (1132–1115) mentioned restoring the *bēt kutalli*, or Rear Palace[58]—the name of Nineveh's Military Palace—which suggests that it was already in existence by then.

At least from around 1100 the Assyrian palace community can be described as a multiplicity. The information about the period between 1050 and 900 is extremely scarce. The first architectural remains to come to light after this long hiatus are those of Tukulti-Ninurta II (890–884). He founded a new city, named after himself, Nemed-Tukulti-Ninurta. It was located near the village of Qadhiah, only two kilometres north of Nineveh, where the remains of his palace have come to light.[59] The finds included the fragments of three small bull colossi inscribed with a short royal inscription. A similar inscription on a stone slab was found in Nineveh, where it was integrated into the Ishtar Temple constructed by his son Ashurnasirpal II.[60] Grayson argued that this indicated that the stone slabs were produced in Nineveh, but never transported. Russell, on the contrary, suggested that it was Nineveh itself that was being renamed Nemed-Tukulti-Ninurta,[61] although he was probably unaware of the finds in Qadhiah. The nature of Nemed-Tukulti-Ninurta remains uncertain, but its closeness to Nineveh suggests that it belonged to urban surroundings of Nineveh rather than representing an entirely new city. Tukulti-Ninurta II's royal inscriptions suggest that he resided in Nineveh at least occasionally and sent troops out from the city, though he started his two campaigns from Assur.[62]

From a modern perspective the architectural tradition of the Late Assyrian period appears unexpectedly with Ashurnasirpal II's Northwest Palace. Its novel quality is probably exaggerated by the archaeological hiatus. Many aspects of Late Assyrian palace architecture and art were probably already present in the eleventh century. The description of Tiglath-pileser I's (1114–1076) palace in Nineveh is quite reminiscent of the Late Assyrian period:

[56] Eickhoff 1985; Mühl and Sulaiman 2011: 380–3, pl. 29.

[57] RIMA 2, A.0.87.4: 52–94; RIMA 2, A.0.87.10: 63–77. [58] RIMA 1, A.0.86.4: 4.

[59] Ahmad 2000. See also the remains of his palace in Tell Barri (Assyrian Kaḫat) (Pecorella and Benoit 2004: 77–96). [60] Grayson 1991d: 179 (A.0.100.6).

[61] Russell 1999c: 222. [62] RIMA 2, A.0.100.5: 8–9, 30, 40.

I raised its walls and towers and made (them) fast, with a façade of bricks glazed (the colour of) obsidian, lapis lazuli, *pappardilû*-stone, (and) *parūtu*-alabaster. I installed on its towers replicas in obsidian of date palms (and) surrounded (them) with knobbed nails of bronze. I made high doors of fir, made (them) fast with bronze bands, (and) hung (them) in its gateways.

Beside this terrace I planted a garden for my lordly leisure. . . . Within this garden I built a palace . . . I portrayed therein the victory and *might* which the gods Assur and Ninurta, the gods who love my priesthood, had granted me.[63]

Door colossi[64] were constructed, which, though described differently, were probably similar in nature to the colossi known from the Late Assyrian period.[65] Similar statues were also mentioned by his son Ashur-bel-kala (1073–1056).[66] Small fragments that probably belonged to these sculptures have been found in Assur.[67]

Stone reliefs with pictorial decoration seem absent, but other modes of decoration existed. Slabs of basalt and white limestone decorated the lower parts of important rooms in Assur,[68] Nineveh,[69] and Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta.[70] Inscribed reliefs were found in Assur.[71] In an inscription, Tiglath-pileser I states about the Nineveh palace that 'I portrayed therein [i.e. the palace] the victory and *might* which the gods Assur and Ninurta, the gods who love my priesthood, had granted me.'[72] These decorations could have been executed as wall paintings, but also as tapestries. A Middle Assyrian text from the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I mentions the presence of decorated tapestries (*mardutu*),[73] which were probably used as wall hangings or curtains.[74] The text describes one example decorated with pomegranates(?), a goat, and rosettes, whereas the other showed cities, a 'farmstead' (*dunnu*), and two images of the king. Similar topics might have been shown on cloths, which were depicted by Ashurnasirpal II[75] and can be assumed to have existed before. The White Obelisk from the reign of Ashurnasirpal I[76] represents the clearest example of the close relations between Middle and Late Assyrian iconography.[77] Some, if not most, of these traditions are likely to have developed on perishable materials such as tapestries, cloths, and bronze door bands. Around 1050, the modes of decoration were not that different from those that will be discussed in this book. It would not be surprising if the palaces of Tiglath-pileser I, which have not been excavated, were already Late Assyrian in their architecture.

[63] RIMA 2, A.0.87.10: 63–77. [64] RIMA 2, A.0.87.11. [65] Maul 2000: 23–8.
[66] RIMA 2, A.0.89.7: v. 16–19. [67] Preusser 1955: Tf. 12d and 13; Weidner 1957–8: 357–8.
[68] RIMA 2, A.0.87.4: 63–5. [69] RIMA 2, A.0.87.10: 62.
[70] Mühl and Sulaiman 2011: 382, pl. 29.
[71] Orlamünde 2007; Pedde and Lundström 2008: 167–9. [72] RIMA 2, A.0.87.10: 76–7.
[73] Köcher 1958: 306–7 (col.III.27′–38′).
[74] CAD/M1: 278 (*mardatu* e/f); AHw: 611. See also SAA 13, 59: 9.
[75] Bartl 2005; Cohen and Kangas 2010: pls. 2.2–4, 3.2–13. [76] Reade 1975.
[77] Reade 1979b: 57–64.

A second hiatus occurs in the century following the reign of Shalmaneser III (858–824). Sufficient information surfaces again only with the reign of Sargon (722–705). It is, therefore, tempting to divide the corpus of Late Assyrian royal palaces into two distinct phases. The first would cover the reigns of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III with a second period representing the period from the reign of Sargon onwards up till the end of the Assyrian Empire in 612. There were indeed many differences between both periods that could warrant such division. While it is important to realize the divided nature of our corpus, establishing a true division would be counterproductive. The differences within the architecture of each period were many, as were the similarities between them. The following chapters will discuss the architecture of all known royal palaces from the Assyrian heartland that were constructed over the 250 years starting with the reign of Ashurnasirpal II.

TWO

# Ashurnasirpal II (883–859)

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the period after 1050, the Assyrian realm was mostly reduced to the Assyrian heartland and parts of the Habur valley to its west. The Assyrian kings started to reassert themselves in their former territories a century later.[1] A positive feedback loop seems to have allowed for ever greater victories. When Ashurnasirpal II came to throne the Assyrian realm had increased to include most of the territories possessed by Middle Assyrian kings. Ashurnasirpal expanded these territories, especially in the north(-east).[2] His western campaigns reached the Mediterranean, but were mostly about receiving tribute once they crossed the Euphrates.

The increased wealth and manpower resulting from these campaigns were set to work. The reign of Ashurnasirpal II experienced a level of building activity not seen since the days of Tukulti-Ninurta I (1233–1197) 300 years earlier. Most of the work went into turning the modest town of Kalḫu into the new royal centre of the Assyrian realm (Pl. 1b). The work included new walls for the city and citadel. On the citadel a temple complex and a new royal palace were constructed. This palace is nowadays known as the Northwest Palace (Pl. 4). Like most Late Assyrian palaces its modern name refers to its location on the citadel. All known buildings were located in the north-western part of the citadel (Pl. 3). We have no information on the rest of the citadel, which therefore appears empty in this period.

Up to 878 the Primary Palace of Assyria was probably located in Nineveh (§1.6). Aḫi-iababa of Bit-adini was flayed on its walls in 883,[3] Ili-ibni from the land of Suḫu brought his tribute to Nineveh in 882[4] and royal reports were brought there in 882 and 880.[5] Unfortunately nothing is known from the Nineveh palace, although it might still be the palace constructed by Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076).[6]

[1] Yamada 2000: 69–70. [2] Liverani 1992; Yamada 2000: 70–6. [3] RIMA 2, A.0.101.1: i. 93.

[4] RIMA 2, A.0.101.1: i. 100–1. This is the only mention of tribute being brought to Assyria during Ashurnasirpal's reign. In general tribute seems to have been collected by the Assyrian army during campaigns (Cifarelli 1995: 144).

[5] RIMA 2, A.0.101.1: i. 101 (date: 882); RIMA 2, A.0.101.1: ii. 49 (date: 880).

[6] Campbell Thompson believed to have found the remains of a palace constructed by Ashurnasirpal, but the inscribed bricks were found in a post-Assyrian context and probably originated from the Ishtar Temple (Reade 2000b: 416 §14.5).

Nineveh also formed the starting point of Ashurnasirpal's first campaign in 883.[7] The Military Palace of Nineveh is likely to have formed the most important military establishment during Ashurnasirpal's reign. With the possible exception of one inscribed brick,[8] nothing is known from this palace during this period. For Nineveh, Ashurnasirpal mentions only work on the temples of Adad and Ishtar.[9]

Construction in Kalḫu must have started early in Ashurnasirpal's reign. In 880 people from the region of Zamua were brought to Kalḫu to perform their corvée,[10] probably indicating that work had begun by then. All undated military campaigns after 878 set out from Kalḫu, which could indicate that the royal court had moved there by that time. The use of Kalḫu as military staging point is remarkable since no Military Palace is known there during this period.

In the city of Assur, Ashurnasirpal rebuilt the Old Palace (§2.3) and worked on the temple of Adad and the combined Sin and Shamash Temple. Other cities also played an important role during the early period of Ashurnasirpal's reign. The first campaign in 883 ended in the city of Arbela. Bubu, the son of the ruler of the city of Nishtun, was flayed on its city walls on this occasion.[11] Major royal buildings certainly existed in Arbela, but their architecture is unknown. Kilizi formed an important staging point for the Assyrian army in 881[12] and 880.[13]

## 2.2 THE NORTHWEST PALACE (KALḪU)

The Northwest Palace was intended to become the primary palace of the Assyrian Empire (Pl. 4). It was the most monumental and sumptuously decorated building of the empire and perhaps the entire Near East at the time of its inauguration. The tradition of Late Assyrian palace architecture appears to emerge out of nowhere with the construction of this palace. It is unlike the known architecture of the Middle Assyrian period and already archetypically Late Assyrian. The apparent breach in tradition should, however, be related to the hiatus in archaeological data. As the introduction argued, the Late Assyrian architectural tradition probably had its origins in the centuries preceding it.

The palace is primarily known for the introduction of decorated stone reliefs.[14] Their use was probably inspired by the states west of Assyria who had been using reliefs for some time.[15] Ashurnasirpal first had them made after his campaigns to the west.[16] Whether this formed the direct inspiration is not evident. The

[7] RIMA 2, A.0.101.1: i. 70. [8] Turner 1970b: 68. [9] RIMA 2, A.0.101.40: 28–37.
[10] RIMA 2, A.0.101.1: ii. 80. [11] RIMA 2, A.0.101.1: i. 67–8.
[12] RIMA 2, A.0.101.1: ii. 33. [13] RIMA 2, A.0.101.1: ii. 51.
[14] Now collected in three *Baghdader Forschungen* books: Meuszyński 1981; Paley and Sobolewski 1987; 1992. For a detailed bibliography of earlier works on the location of reliefs in the Northwest Palace see Russell 1998b: nn. 1–3. [15] Gilibert 2011. [16] Russell 1999c: 229.

Assyrians must have been aware of their existence before. The Assyrian use of reliefs was not a simple act of imitation. It followed a process of what can be called Assyrianization, described by Feldman as 'the making of something other into something Assyrian'.[17] In architectural contexts this was accompanied by a process of internalization. In the western palaces reliefs had mostly been placed in urban contexts and along the exterior walls of buildings. The Assyrians transferred them to the inside of their palaces and predominantly used them inside rooms.[18] A second aspect of this Assyrianization is to be found in the applied decorations, which used an Assyrian iconography. The omnipresence of inscriptions on the reliefs, which had arguably been less common in the west, probably represents the most striking innovation.[19]

Even though the reliefs have received most attention, they were only one type of decoration used in the palace. Other, older, modes of decoration were abundantly used, even if they have been poorly preserved. The palace formed a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (Pl. 8b) with painted walls and roofs, glazed brick panels, knob-plates,[20] decorative corbels,[21] doors with bronze decorations,[22] inlaid furniture, objects, and the clothes worn. Most of these means of decoration are proudly described by Ashurnasirpal:

> I fastened with bronze bands doors of cedar, cypress, *daprānu*-juniper, boxwood, (and) *meskannu*-wood (and) hung (them) in their doorways. I surrounded them with knobbed nails of bronze. I depicted in greenish glaze on their walls (30) my heroic praises, in that I had gone right across highlands, lands, (and) seas, (and) the conquest of all lands. I glazed bricks with lapis lazuli (and) laid (them) above their doorways.[23]

The earliest text mentioning the palace can be dated to around 879.[24] This text is still rather vague about the architectural details and is mostly concerned with the foundations and platform on which the palace was being built.[25] The precise inauguration date is unclear, but must have occurred after the last dated military campaign, which took place in 866.[26] It is only after this campaign that the Assyrian scribes seem to have switched to using the geographic term 'Urartu',[27] the name of an emerging empire north of Assyria. Some of the texts inscribed in the palace use the name Urartu and must thus postdate 866.[28]

The palace must have been based on some kind of general plan. This is implied by the wells found in the southern part of the palace. These were integrated into the platform[29] and their location must therefore have been

[17] Feldman 2011: 142–3. [18] Bonatz 2004: 399. [19] Russell 1999c: 229–30.
[20] Oates and Oates 2001: 65. [21] Frame 1991. [22] Curtis and Tallis 2008: 75–8, figs. 95–7.
[23] RIMA 2, A.0.101.30: 25–32. [24] The 'Nimrud Monolith'; RIMA 2, A.0.101.17: v. 1–24.
[25] Postgate and Reade 1976–80: 311. [26] RIMA 2, A.0.101.1: iii. 92. [27] Filippi 1977: 30.
[28] Russell 1999c: 14–55. [29] Mallowan 1966: 150.

decided during the construction of the platform. These wells created fixed points on top of the platform, placing constrains on the location of the surrounding walls. The strange form of room AB, with a well inside the room rather than within a courtyard, probably represents the accommodation around a pre-existing well.

### *2.2.1 A Short History of its Excavation*

Layard was the first to find the palace and gave it its name.[30] His excavations lasted for two campaigns during the years 1845–7 and 1849–51 (Fig. 2.1).[31] The palace was regularly revisited by excavators and adventurers in subsequent decades. Their main goal was to take away the reliefs that had been left by Layard. As a result, reliefs have ended up all over the world. Finding them and reconstructing their original location within the palace has been the primary scholarly challenge throughout the twentieth century.[32] Although some details are still debated, this elementary work can be considered finished with the publication of the books of Meuszyński, Paley, and Sobolewski in the Baghdader Forschungen series.[33] This book will follow their designations when referring to the reliefs.

Regular excavations did not commence again until Mallowan started his work in 1949 on behalf of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq. His excavations of the Northwest Palace continued until 1953. Shortly thereafter, in 1956, the Iraqi Department of Antiquities started with the protection, reconstruction, and excavation of the palace. This work lasted, with short interruptions, until 1975 and continued between 1985–93 and 2001–2.[34] It is now one of the most extensively excavated palaces of the Late Assyrian period. Except for the western part that has eroded away in the past millennia, the entire palace has been retraced.

### *2.2.2 Methodological Problems*

In spite of all the work done on reconstructing the plan of the palace, problems remain. The large number of excavations have resulted in a confusing and overlapping set of room designations that, taken together, make little sense. Layard

[30] For an almost complete list of excavations in the Northwest Palace see Postgate and Reade 1976–80: 304–7 (§4). To this should be added the later excavations under the supervision of Hussein between 1985–93 and 2001–2 (see Hussein, Kertai, and Altaweel 2013: 91–6).

[31] Layard 1849b; c; 1853a. Reade (1965: 120) argued that the removal of stone fragments around 1820, as described by Layard (1849b: 46) and Gadd (1936: 1, 9–10), constituted the first excavation.

[32] e.g. Gadd 1936: 123–252, Reade 1965, Stearns 1961, Weidner and Furlani 1939.

[33] See n. 14. [34] Jabr 2008.

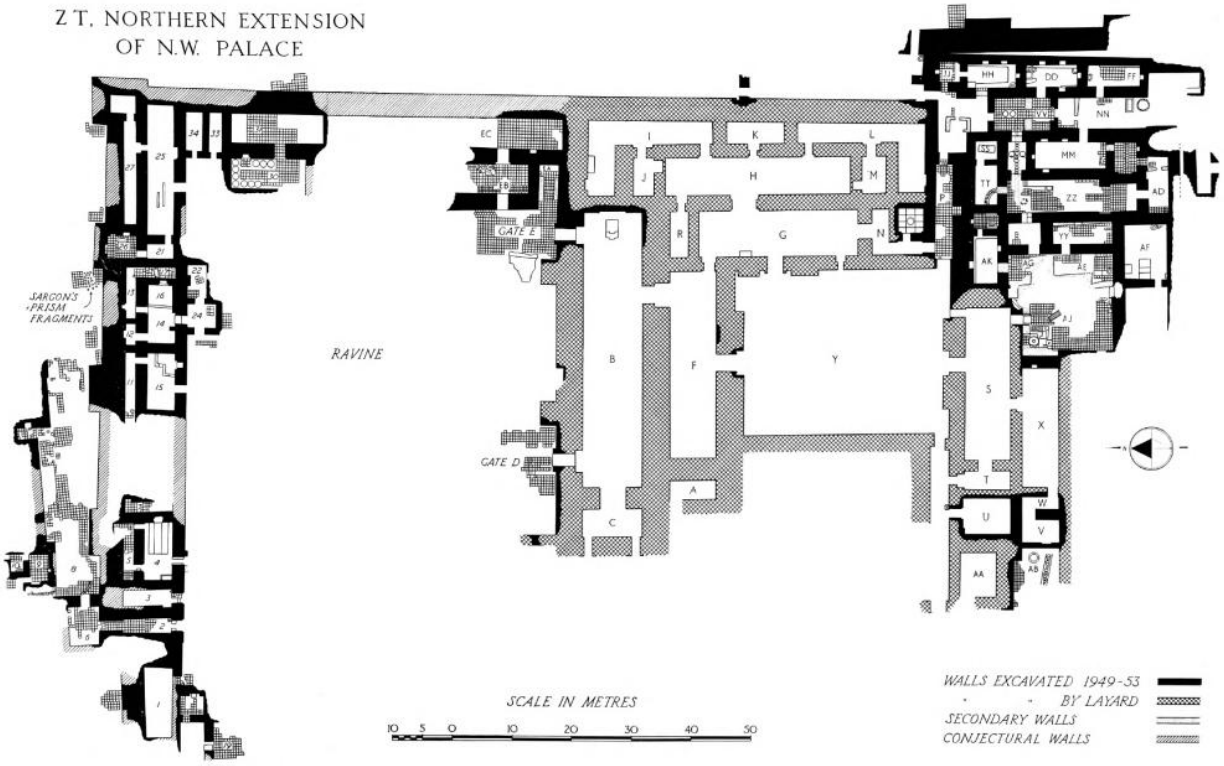



FIG. 2.1 Mallowan's plan of the Northwest Palace

started by using the letters of the alphabet and continued with double letters (AA and BB). Mallowan followed this system during the beginning of his excavations until he reached ZZ. This was followed by AB until his excavations ended at AM. The northern rooms surrounding the Throneroom Courtyard were designated with the letters ZT, an abbreviation of Ziggurrat Terrace to which these rooms were originally thought to belong, followed by a number. The throneroom façade has its own designations, based upon this system. Layard originally thought that he was excavating two separate rooms, which he named D and E. Even though these spaces form an integral part of the Throneroom Courtyard, their designation still follows Layard's names.[35] When Mallowan found spaces adjacent to area E, he used names starting with E, probably to show their association with the throneroom. This resulted in niche EA and rooms EB and EC. When it became clear that throneroom had a third, central, entrance a new designation was needed, which became ED.

The Iraqis assigned numbers to all existing and new rooms, although on most plans these only start with room 42[36] (which corresponds to Mallowan's room AF). The names of the rooms south-west of the throneroom were assigned names starting with W by Meuszyński. The W referred to their western location. The second letter mirrors the names given by Layard to the rooms in the Eastern Suite at the other side of the Central Courtyard. This symbolizes the symmetry envisaged between these two suites by Meuszyński.[37] To these designations WT (West Terrace) was later added by Paley and Sobolewski.[38] The corridor west of the throneroom was called WZ once,[39] but does not appear on any of the published plans.

[35] Paley and Sobolewski gave separate numbers to the reliefs in area D and E, rather than treating the entire throneroom façade as a single space.

[36] The nature of the first 41 numbers is unclear. They were assigned during the reconstruction and excavation work of the Iraqi archaeologist, but they seem to have no relation to the common designations of Layard and Mallowan. The descriptions provided in subsequent issues of the journal *Sumer* (starting with *Sumer* 25) allow a few numbers to be located. The correlation between the Iraqi numbers and the more common designations is only possible for rooms WG, WH, WJ, WI, and WK (Meuszyński 1981: 3 n. 7). The photo and description of room 7 (Salman 1970: d, fig. 3) can only refer to Layard's room H, which allows one tentatively to locate numbers 1–4 and 9 on the basis of Salman 1969. Different numbers appear on a plan drawn by Sobolewski (published in Russell 1998b: fig. 1). The reasons for this discrepancy are unclear.

[37] Meuszyński 1981: 3 n. 7.

[38] Two further designations were given for, at that time, hypothetical rooms south of rooms AB, V, W, and X. These introduced yet another system of designation, one whose logic remains unclear. The westerly located room was named SA by Meuszyński (1981: 3 n. 7). A second room (XA), to the east, appears only in Paley and Sobolewski 1987: map 1, but is left out on the more detailed map 2 of the same book. After the Iraqi archaeologists excavated this area the map changed and both designations were replaced by the Iraqi numbering.

[39] Paley and Sobolewski 1992: 26.

The complexity is increased by the existence of several rooms for which no name is known. These were either never assigned or, more often, left unpublished (Appendix 1).[40] While discussing these spaces it is helpful to have a name by which to designate them. There is no logical way of assigning new names. One risks giving new names to rooms that already have an, albeit unpublished, name. New names would certainly complicate the system of designations even further; some will nonetheless be introduced. These follow, as much as possible, the already existing methods of designation. In area ZT designation ZT 20 has been assigned to the room east of ZT 18.[41] The rooms excavated by es-Soof,[42] the hypothetical ones proposed by Sobolewski,[43] and others proposed in the same area by the author are designated with a W followed by a number. This follows the W designations in the western part of the palace without adding letters, which have no intrinsic value. The spaces excavated by Mallowan for which no name is known are numbered AN–AR, continuing where Mallowan finished.[44]

The published plans of the Northwest Palace are a palimpsest of different excavations.[45] Mallowan simply added his parts to the plan of Layard (Fig. 2.1). He published several plans,[46] showing the progress of his excavations. These show slight changes in the proposed reconstructions.[47] Mallowan's publications provide few architectural details and leave many questions unanswered. Later plans often include the areas excavated by the Iraqi archaeologists, but these are only schematically known. The three Baghdader Forschungen books on the palace reliefs contain the most detailed plans presently available.[48] These are mostly based on the measurements taken by the Polish expedition in

[40] Most of these designations concern the excavations of Mallowan. Several room names were not published and the spaces associated with some names remain unknown. Reconstructing room names is further hampered by Mallowan's reuse of designations. Superfluous names were often discarded and reused at other locations. Several rooms have two designations, while courtyards often have several.

[41] Room ZT 20 is not discussed in any of the excavation reports, nor is it present on any of the published maps. Considering the sequential nature of room designation ZT 20 seems the most likely original name.

[42] es-Soof 1963.

[43] These rooms surround terrace WT (Paley and Sobolewski 1987: pl. 2).

[44] New names have been given to these rooms even though the names of some rooms can be hypothesized (see Appendix). Their names cannot, however, be confirmed.

[45] The basic plans are: Mallowan 1966: fig. 42 and Oates and Oates 2001: figs. 15 and 33.

[46] Mallowan 1950: pl. 27; 1952: fig. 1; 1954a: pls. 12 and 14.

[47] Mallowan 1950: pl. 26; Sobolewski and Mierzejewski 1980: fig. 1. The plan of 1952 deviates slightly from the map of 1950. Room TT was narrowed, which seems to suggest that some walls were not yet clear in 1950. The niche in the southern wall of corridor P appears door-like in the 1950 plan, but with the widening of the wall between corridor P and room TT such a door became less likely. Its nature is not discussed within the publications. Later maps show a widened door between rooms X and W, while the northern buttress of the door between rooms V and W was lost.

[48] Paley and Sobolewski 1987: plan 2.

the seventies, but do not extend much beyond the central part of the palace where reliefs were found.

### *2.2.3 The Eastern Extension of the Palace*

Even though the Northwest Palace appears to be completely known, it is possible that a considerable part of it is still missing. Postgate and Reade already suggested that the palace extended further east with an additional forecourt east of the Throneroom Courtyard.[49] Many Late Assyrian palaces do indeed have a courtyard between the Throneroom Courtyard and the outside. No proper excavations have been conducted east of the palace, though Layard did find architectural remains here in his trenches *d* and *q*.[50] Little is known about these finds. While he did not find sculptured slabs, trench *d* did contain painted rooms and some pavements of baked bricks and alabaster slabs.[51] Their date is unknown.

The nature of additional forecourts will have depended on its relationship with the temples north of the palace.[52] In the later Royal Palace of Sargon at Dur-Sharruken (§5.3.4, Pl. 11) a similar forecourt united different areas into a larger palace ensemble. It contained the main entrances into the temple complex, the palace proper, and the service area. A secondary passage connected the forecourt with the main inner area of the palace.

An eastern extension of the Northwest Palace is related to the identity of a building that was constructed south-east of the palace. This building is now commonly referred to as the Central Building (Pl. 3; Fig. 3.1).[53] It abutted the Northwest Palace and bordered the central square of the citadel to its south. The structure is often interpreted as a temple,[54] but the few excavated spaces and reliefs are too generic for such a conclusion. The known architecture represents a monumental external entrance with two workshop/storage spaces.[55] The main part of the building is still to be excavated. The monumentality of its entrance and its location next to the central square of the citadel would be well suited for the main entrance into the Northwest Palace.

An eastern extension of the Northwest Palace would also provide protection to the secondary entrance (AP) into the Northwest Palace (Pl. 4; Fig. 2.10). This

[49] Postgate and Reade 1976–80: 311, Reade 2002: 196. See also Matthiae 1999: 37.

[50] Layard 1849a: pl. 99; 1849d: 17, 203. [51] Layard 1849b: 301–2.

[52] Hussein, Kertai, and Altaweel 2013: 104–8; Reade 2002.

[53] Hussein, Kertai, and Altaweel 2013: 96–8; Meuszyński 1976a; b; Sobolewski 1974–7. Its name was coined by Meuszyński (1976a: 37).

[54] e.g. Oates and Oates 2001: 71–3; Sobolewski 1982a: 256; Sobolewski and Mierzejewski 1980: 161.

[55] Kertai 2013b: 11–13.

entrance is likely to have been protected by additional buildings. Such extensions would suggest that Ashurnasirpal's constructions on the citadel formed a coherent urban ensemble, which integrated the temples into a larger palace ensemble, not unlike Sargon's later palace ensemble at Dur-Sharruken.

### *2.2.4 The Throneroom Courtyard*

The palace was entered through the Throneroom Courtyard, which occupied the northern part of the palace.[56] The courtyard formed the centre of the palace's administration. It must have been relatively easily accessible especially for the people working there and those who had business with them. People coming to visit the king will have waited in this courtyard before being allowed to continue to their final destination within the palace.

The Throneroom Courtyard was dominated by the façade of the throneroom. It was the largest and highest room of the palace and by far the most monumental space within this courtyard. The throneroom was the first main reception suite encountered after having entered the palace. Late Assyrian palaces are typified by the forward placement of the throneroom, rather than it being hidden within the complex. Its location placed the king to the fore in his own palace. It made him architecturally present in the most accessible part of the palace. The façade embodied a closeness to the king, regardless of his physical presence.

The king was made present also through two royal images incorporated into the throneroom façade. The first was part of a series of reliefs that covered the western part of the façade showing a procession of tributaries walking towards the king with their tribute.[57] Real time processions would probably have culminated inside the throneroom, but they were perpetuated for eternity on its outside. The king's position (relief D-2) is somewhat hidden behind the colossi flanking the façade, but the eyes are drawn to him by the movement shown on the preceding wall. The scene also made the crown prince present in his standard role of introducing tributaries to the king. Such correlation between the decoration of a façade and the room to which it gave access is uncommon and is generally limited to the

[56] Layard, and Mallowan in his earlier publications, thought that the throneroom façade was the outer façade of the palace. Reade (2008b: 7) suggested that such a situation could have occurred if one accepts that the northern area of this courtyard was built only by Shalmaneser III. It seems likely that, even if this chronology is correct, the external wall would have been among the earliest parts to have been constructed. A throneroom courtyard forms a standard part of Late Assyrian palaces and is therefore likely to have been conceived from the outset.

[57] Russell 1998b: fig. 28.

throneroom. Reliefs are not otherwise used on the outside in this palace. Other courtyards are decorated with inscribed slabs or have plain walls. West of the Throneroom Corridor (WZ) the walls seem to have been decorated with plain dados 75 cm high.[58]

A stela made the king present a second time at the other end of the throneroom façade. It was located east of entrance E in niche EA (Pl. 4; Fig. 2.4). The stela is a unique addition to a Throneroom Suite, but can be compared to the obelisks placed next to the main entrance of the Central Building.[59] The stela forms one of the most famous discoveries made in the palace, describing the big celebrations Ashurnasirpal organized to commemorate the inauguration of his palace.[60] A second, older, stela was found in the Ninurta Temple.[61] This stela must have originated from the palace,[62] but its intended location within it is unknown.[63]

Mallowan reconstructed a dividing wall within the Throneroom Courtyard, which was extrapolated from a wall that begins at the corner of the throneroom ramp (Fig. 2.1).[64] Paley and Sobolewski noted that this wall starts around the place where the western most relief (D-8) was found.[65] The north running wall would, therefore, explain the lack of reliefs further west. A wall separating the Throneroom Courtyard is, nonetheless, problematic. Its northern extension, which should have ended in the vicinity of room ZT 4, has not been found. More importantly, the throneroom, its ramp, and the Throneroom Corridor (WZ) formed a single ensemble. No other Throneroom Courtyard was divided by a wall.

The protruding wall is likely to have formed a later addition, perhaps representing the eastern wall of a room that was attached to the throneroom ramp. Rooms ZT 22–4 formed similar additions in the northern part of the courtyard. If the protruding wall is not original, one must find a new location for relief D-9, which was placed along this wall by Paley and Sobolewski, but found in Kalḫu's

[58] es-Soof 1963: pl. III.3. [59] Sobolewski 1982b: fig. 9.

[60] RIMA 2, A.0.101.30. The inscription mentions Urartu and is thus likely to postdate 866 (see n. 28), supporting the hypothesis that the palace was inaugurated after 866.

[61] RIMA 2, A.0.101.17. The inscription only describes the first five campaigns and is thus likely to date shortly after 878.

[62] Reade 2002: 142–3.

[63] No further niche has been found, although room 2 of the Central Building, i.e. the possible entrance into the palace, could have functioned as such. A niche is, however, not a prerequisite and several other original locations would be feasible. It is also possible that the stela was intended for niche EA, but was later superseded by an improved version, which led to its removal to the Ninurta Temple.

[64] The Oateses suggested that such a separating wall would have given the throneroom façade a more central position (Oates and Oates 2001: 43–4).

[65] Paley and Sobolewski 1987: 85; Russell 1998b: fig. 29.

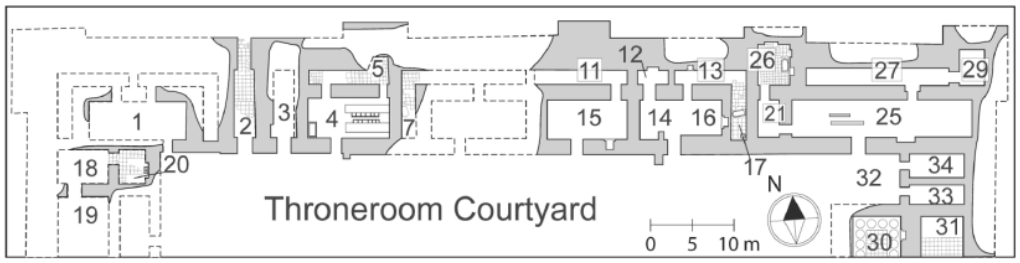



FIG. 2.2 Northern part of the Throneroom Courtyard

Southwest Palace.[66] The most likely location for such a relief is along the northern wall of the throneroom ramp.[67]

The northern part of the Throneroom Courtyard contained different suites. These centred on a main room to which different, quite narrow, rooms were attached. Similar suites have not been found in other palaces. The largest suite centred around room ZT 25 in the north-eastern corner of the courtyard. It represents a 'corner office' (§10.5.3), which probably belonged to a high palace official in charge of the comings and goings into the palace. His identity is unknown and might have changed over time. Room ZT 25 is a monumental reception room with tram-rails, installations for placing movable braziers upon, in its centre. The suite also contained a bathroom (ZT 26) and rooms ZT 27/9. The Oateses suggested that, based on modern examples, rooms ZT 32–4 belonged to a housekeeper in charge of admittance into room ZT 25.[68] Their architecture is more reminiscent of storage spaces.

Two suites were centred on rooms ZT 15 and ZT 14/16. They bear a slight resemblance to the Eastern Suite of the palace. Both contained unconventional L-shaped rooms, but there is no reason to presume a functional similarity. Rooms ZT 4–5 formed a scribal/archive office, containing the international correspondences from the eighth century.[69] Another large room (ZT 1) was located further west. Rooms ZT 18–20, located south of room ZT 1, formed a reception suite.

[66] Paley and Sobolewski 1992: 13. Relief D-9 was not found in situ, but in the Southwest Palace of Kalḫu (Fig. 7.1) and represents relief h-1 there. What Layard (1849d: 31) called relief h-1 (BM 118930) is called h-2 by Barnett and Faulkner (1962: 25, pl. CXVIII, CXIX, and CXXI). The placement of relief D-9 was based on Layard's remark (Layard 1849d: 31) that h-1 was a corner slab. It remains unclear whether the slab represented an internal or external corner. Paley and Sobolewski assumed that h-1 represented an inner corner. This would presuppose that the slab had a blank border on the left to accommodate relief D-8. Such space has not been preserved, but the slab might be incomplete. The inscription on relief h-1 suggests that the relief was wider originally.

[67] No remains have been found at its proposed location. Paley and Sobolewski assumed that relief h-1 formed the start of a series of reliefs lining the dividing wall. Other reliefs from this series have, however, not been found. Relief h-1 is more likely to have lined a different corner. The protrusion of the throneroom ramp creates two corners at this location.

[68] Oates and Oates 2001: 44.

[69] Mallowan 1966: fig. 106.

Mallowan believed that the view it provided over the Tigris indicated that it was occupied by an important official.[70] As Late Assyrian rooms did not have windows at eye level, such a view could have been available only from its roof. There is enough space to reconstruct a row of rooms running along the western edge of the palace. Such reconstruction seems supported by the alignment of the eastern walls of rooms ZT 20 and W1. In the absence of these rooms the Throneroom Courtyard could have offered a view over the plain below.

The eastern side of the Throneroom Courtyard is formed by two suites. Rooms ZT 30–1 served, at least in later times, as storage spaces for oil.[71] Wall paintings with geometric designs decorated room EB,[72] suggesting a representative function. This does not exclude the presence of stored products, but these could also represent a later use of the room. Mallowan believed it to have been an apartment for the guards protecting the throneroom,[73] but their size and decoration suggest that it was their boss, or another a high official, who held office here.

Based on the alignment of some pavements with the Ninurta Temple north of the palace, Mallowan argued that the northern part of the palace (area ZT) was built by Shalmaneser III, the son and successor of Ashurnasirpal (Fig. 2.1).[74] Mallowan suggested that Ashurnasirpal originally conceived the northern part of the palace as a part of the Ninurta Temple. Later, Shalmaneser would have decided to incorporate it into the Northwest Palace.[75] This hypothesis is unconvincing. Only the alignments of the pavements in rooms ZT 19, 22, and 31 deviate. The pavement of room ZT 19 deviates only slightly, the fragment in room ZT 22 represents the area where a wall must originally have stood dividing rooms ZT 22 and 23 and the pavement of ZT 31 is actually located east of the room and thus outside the Throneroom Courtyard area.[76] It is unlikely that the Throneroom Courtyard, certainly already in use during Ashurnasirpal's reign, would have been left unfinished. Mallowan claimed that 'many of the rooms' in area ZT contained brick pavements of Shalmaneser,[77] but did not provide further information.

Four different external entrances have been argued for within this courtyard (Fig. 2.3). Only two are likely to have existed. Even though no remains have been found, the main gate was almost certainly located east of the courtyard between

[70] Mallowan 1966: 170. [71] Mallowan 1966: 168–9. [72] Mallowan 1952: 10.
[73] Mallowan 1966: 167–8. [74] Mallowan 1966: 86–7, 167.
[75] Mallowan 1954b: 129. This hypothesis was strengthened by the similarities that Mallowan saw between the northern part of the Northwest Palace and the palace of Til-Barsip (Pl. 23a), which was dated to Shalmaneser's reign (Mallowan 1966: 167). This reconstruction seems to mirror Mallowan's own thought process. He originally believed area ZT belonged to the Ninurta temple, but later changed his mind and incorporated it into the palace.
[76] Mallowan's 'pavement orientated not by the palace but by the Ziggurrat and the Ninurta Temple' 'underlying room 31' (1966: 86–7, 167) can only refer to the area east of the room, that is outside the palace or in its possible forecourt. The pavement of room 31 itself seems orientated in accordance with its walls.
[77] Mallowan 1966: 167.

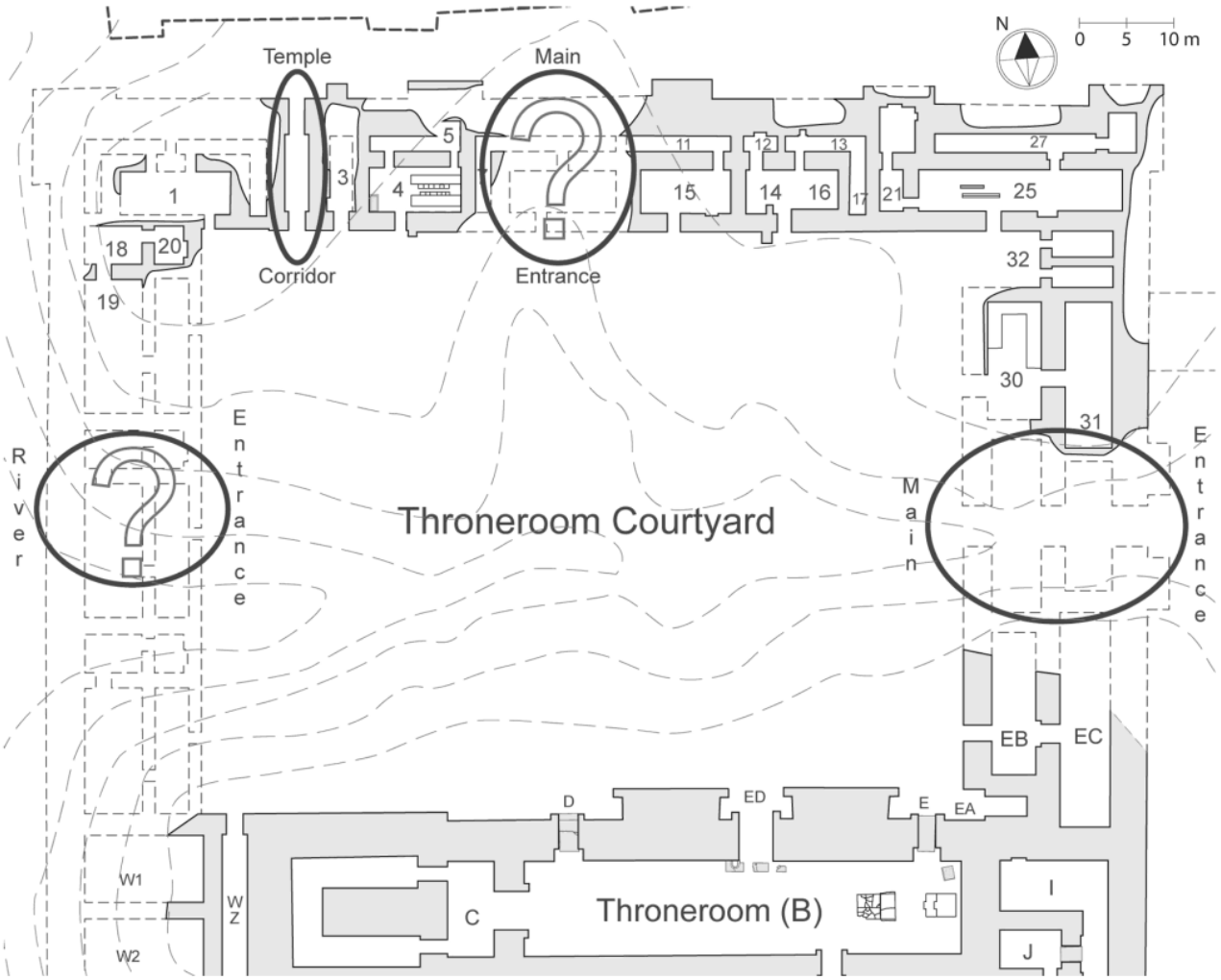



FIG. 2.3 Plan showing possible entrances into the Throneroom Courtyard

rooms EB/EC and ZT 30/31. A gully forms the only indication for its original presence. Such a gate represented the weakest point of the wall and was therefore the first to wash away. A second gate could have existed along the quay wall. This would have provided access to and from the river.[78] Nothing has been preserved from such a river entrance and there is little space for the route down to the river. The northern passage through room ZT 2 forms the only actually preserved external entrance into the Throneroom Courtyard.[79] It is a small, non-monumental

[78] e.g. Paley and Sobolewski 1987: plan 1, whose gate does not seem to have possessed a gate-chamber. This would be unconventional, but one could add such a chamber to their reconstruction. The reconstruction of a gate presupposes the presence of rooms along the western edge of the courtyard.

[79] On the plans of Mallowan (1966: fig. 42) and Oates and Oates (2001: figs. 15 and 33) corridor ZT 2 is connected through room ZT 6 to a small courtyard ZT 8. Reade (2002: fig. 2) leaves out room ZT 6, which he probably regarded as a later addition (2002: 135). This reconstruction is very plausible. Corridors are not normally connected to rooms and room ZT 6 seems rather haphazard.

passage connecting the palace with the temple area. It is an early version of the Temple Corridors as they were constructed in the Royal Palace of Dur-Sharruken (Pl. 22b) and the Southwest Palace in Nineveh (Pl. 22c). This connection lacks the monumentality of these later corridors.

Another gully east of corridor ZT 2, between rooms ZT 4/5 and ZT 11/15, could indicate the original presence of a second monumental gate. Mallowan[80] saw it as a well-protected entrance difficult to reach. The buttresses in the outer wall and the niche opposite it, which was deemed to resemble niche EA beside the throneroom, supported the reconstruction of this gate. Mallowan suggested that the gate would have served as the main entrance leading people straight to entrance D of the throneroom, continuing towards door E and leaving through the main eastern gate. The Oateses suggested that a wide entrance might have been needed for the magazines of area ZT.[81] None of these arguments are convincing. Late Assyrian palaces are not known to have separated between entrance and exit gates and goods could easily have passed through the eastern gate. Main gates do not tend to be difficult to reach, the buttresses are a general feature of exterior walls and a northern entrance, next to ZT 2 and not far from the eastern gate, seems redundant. Lastly, main gates tend to be located at an angle to the throneroom façade rather than opposite it. Only the Temple Corridor (ZT 2) and the eastern gate are likely to have existed originally.

### *2.2.5 Throneroom Suite*

The throneroom formed the largest roofed space in the palace, measuring 45.5 by 10.5 m (Fig. 2.4). This enormous space could have accommodated up to a thousand people, though getting such a crowd in and out of the room would have posed serious problems. The throneroom contained two main locations for a throne (Pl. 5). The most monumental setting was created at the eastern end of the room. A large throne dais raised the throne just enough to avoid people looking down on the king. A niche (B-23), showing the king twice,[82] was placed behind the dais further enhancing the setting. This throne was probably approached through entrance (D) at the other end of the room. This would lead the visitors along the entire length of the room, making optimal use of its monumentality. Their movement would have been guided by the reliefs along its walls.

[80] Mallowan 1966: 166. [81] Oates and Oates 2001: 42.

[82] Brentjes (1994: 50–4) argued that the two kings represented Ashurnasirpal's father and grandfather, citing differences between both depictions and using a seal of Mushezib-Ninurta as his main arguments. Both arguments are unconvincing. First, the differences are negligible and mostly related to the changed position of the king (Reade 1983: 26, see however Brown 2010: 25–7). Second, the seal merely mentions Mushezib-Ninurta's lineage. This forms a common element that is normally unrelated to the seal's motif.

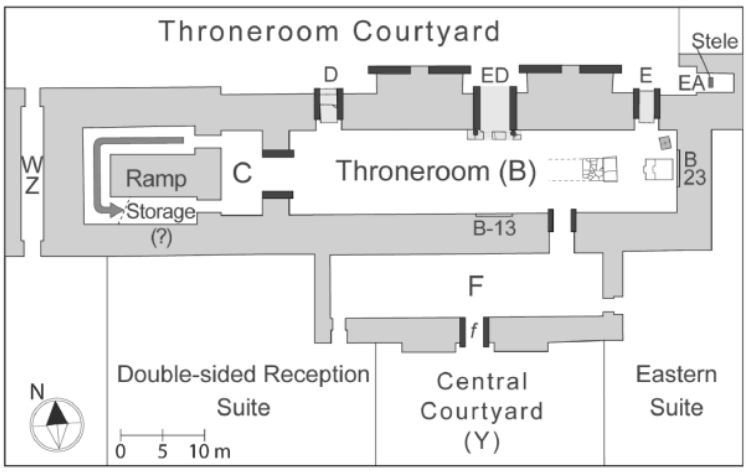



FIG. 2.4 Throneroom Suite

The scenes on the southern wall can be divided into thirteen episodes,[83] each containing the king except for one (No. B-17, upper register). Most scenes were military in nature, except for the four scenes at eastern end of the room. These scenes, closest to the throne, showed royal hunts and the associated libations. Our knowledge of these reliefs is incomplete due to the loss of most reliefs from the northern wall (Pl. 5)[84] and the disappearance of the original wall paintings. These paintings, both ornamental and figurative, must have formed another row of scenes. The scant traces that were found include the king in his chariot and a beardless courtier wearing a headband introducing captives.[85]

Paley suggested that glazed brick wall panels existed above the two niches, a suggestion partly based on a glazed brick found by Wiseman showing a chariot-wheel with associated person.[86] One single brick does not, however, indicate a complete panel. There is otherwise no evidence for the internal application of glazed brick panels in Late Assyrian palaces.

A second setting for a throne was created opposite the central door. This placement is indicated by a second niche (B-13), showing another duplicated king. Two further representations on both sides (B-12 and 14) produced a setting

[83] See also Reade 1979b: 57–64; Winter 1981.

[84] B-27 and 28 are the only narrative reliefs whose origin along this wall are certain. Paley and Sobolewski (1987: 76, 78–9) suggested that reliefs WFL-15, 20–2, 27, and 29 may not have originated from the Double-sided Reception Suite, in which case they must have originated from the northern wall of the throneroom as well.

[85] es-Soof 1963: 67; Layard 1849b: 121; Mallowan 1952: 10–11; 1953b: 26–7; Tomabechi 1986: 43–9. Mallowan mentioned the wall paintings to have consisted of an eight-spoked wheel, which would date it to the mid-8th century or later. Tomabechi (1986: 46) has demonstrated that this must have been a mistake, which was also noted by Reade (1979b: 59 n. 17). The clothes and chariot point to a 9th-century date. Field notebook 2 of the Nimrud expedition describes wall paintings in the south-east corner as follows: 'blue fresco in which a horse, chariot, and soldiers foot can be made out—cobalt blue, black, white, red'.

[86] Sketch by Wiseman, published in Paley 2003.

of four kings in the middle of the room. Both niches were centred on an apotropaic tree and were accompanied by apotropaic figures. Other apotropaic figures flanked the doors of the room, with additional apotropaic trees being placed in the corners of the room.

The closeness and distance to the king embodied by the throneroom is further played out within the room and is enhanced by the inwardness of Assyrian spaces. Entrances were few and relatively small compared to the size of the room. No façade had more than three doors and regardless of their monumentality these openings could have made only a small part of the room, and the activities taking place within them, visible from the outside. The throned king will have been visible from small areas of the courtyard only. Likewise, the king, or other people standing inside the throneroom, could have seen only small areas of the Throneroom Courtyard. The doors could have illuminated the thrones, but the northern orientation of the throneroom was clearly not aimed to maximize this potential. Assyrian rooms were foremost stages intended to be viewed from within. This internality must have been intentional. Views from the outside were further diminished by the asymmetrical placements of sequential doors.

Architecturally, one of the typical features of these early thronerooms is the lack of a bathroom besides the throne. This would become a standard feature of later throneroom suites. Remarkably, it is the only suite within the palace without its own bathroom. For a long time it seemed that the throneroom also lacked a central third door (Fig. 2.1), but subsequent excavations have now confirmed its existence.[87]

Room F connected the throneroom with the Central Courtyard (Y) and the two other State Apartments of the palace. This room was clearly focused on people coming from the throneroom and can therefore be considered to be located behind it. This directedness is most clearly visible in the placement of the apotropaic colossi at its doors. Except for the pair that were placed in door *f*, which connected to the Central Courtyard, all doors faced people moving away from the throneroom (Pl. 6a). While door *f* is directed towards the throneroom, its façade was much less monumental. The preserved reliefs that decorated the room show apotropaic figures. The room also contained geometric paintings above the reliefs.[88] It is unclear whether the room was used for any specific function other than being a connector. Its size could have accommodated many activities, but none have been suggested so far.

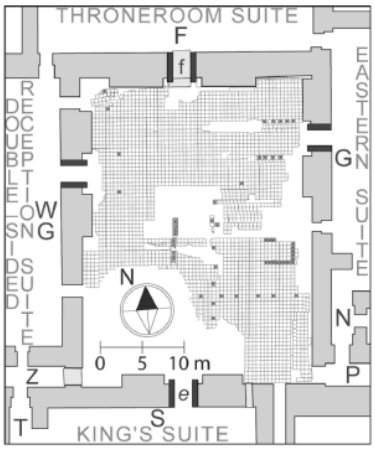
### *2.2.6 The Central Courtyard*

The main reception suites of the palace were located around the Central Courtyard (Fig. 2.5). A route surrounding the courtyard provided a secluded internal

[87] Paley and Sobolewski 1992: 21.

[88] Postgate 1973a: 193, Tomabechi 1986: 49–54.

FIG. 2.5 Central Courtyard




passage between them (Pl. 6b).[89] This route seems to have been intended for the king's use.[90] Though the route appears to be circular, it is better described as emanating from the throneroom. Its orientation is indicated by the apotropaic figures in the doors along this route (Pl. 7a), which accompanied people coming from the throneroom into each of the suites surrounding the Central Courtyard (Pl. 6a). The placement of the doors in the corners of the rooms gives the route a hidden quality (Pl. 6b). The presence of such a route is unique for Late Assyrian palatial architecture. The Assyrians were not otherwise concerned with hiding movement inside the palace. Suites were usually not connected internally and courtyards needed to be crossed to go from one suite to the next. The courtyard was also atypical due to the asymmetrical organization of its façades. Doors seem to have been placed where necessary, often resulting in a limited number of doors per façade. This asymmetry and the internal connections seem to represent the remnants of a Late Bronze Age tradition, which was characterized by a more permeable architecture.

The Central Courtyard is unique in being one of the few completely excavated palace courtyards. Its walls were decorated with inscribed slabs, which provided it with a coherence of its own. Courtyard decorations tended to continue over multiple walls and usually did not correlate to the nature and function of the surrounding suites. The homogeneity provided by these inscribed slabs was more subtle, but achieved a similar effect. The courtyard will have emphasized the entrances into the surrounding rooms. Their large wooden doors, potentially decorated with bronze bands, bull or lion colossi, and large piers must have formed the focal points within the courtyard.

[89] It should be noted that door *b* between room WG and corridor Z is reconstructed (Paley and Sobolewski 1981: 96). It was first proposed by Reade (1965: 128, pl.XXXII). Its existence was supported by the absence of reliefs at this location.

[90] Kertai 2014; Russell 1998b: 675, 677, 682, and 714.

The courtyard was completely covered by baked bricks. Some of these contained holes that were filled with 'mushroom-shaped pottery vessels covered with a thin coat of bitumen'[91] and inscribed with royal inscriptions.[92] The holes appear to form lines, perhaps aligned with certain doors, but a system is not traceable. Some might have been intended for ephemeral structures such as canopies (§9.4.1). Paley argued that they were meant for drainage,[93] but did not state whether they were connected to a drain. Glazed bricks were found in the north-east corner of the courtyard, perhaps originating from a panel above one of the doors.[94]

### *2.2.7 The Double-sided Reception Suite and its Surroundings*

Most Late Assyrian royal palaces had a Double-sided Reception Suite located south-west of the Throneroom Suite. Such a suite also existed in the Northwest Palace, although its preservation is poor (Fig 2.6). This is mostly due to the dismantling of its sculptures by later kings. Layard's trench, which was cut through this area to take away stone colossi that surrounded the Central Courtyard, certainly did not help.[95] The basic layout of the suite can be reconstructed on the basis of the excavated rooms and comparisons with similar suites. It contained two reception rooms, one on each side, with a room in between them, which gave access to a storage room (WM) to the south and a vestibule (WJ) to the north. The latter connected to a further storage space (A) and a bathroom (WI).

This suite was located between the Central Courtyard and courtyard WT. The latter probably overlooked the plain below.[96] The courtyards must have been comparable in size.[97] The suite mediated between both courtyards. Its double-sidedness resulted in the presence of an outwardly (WK) and an internally (WG) oriented reception room, creating different levels of accessibility between both sides. Room WK probably formed a secondary throneroom[98] and is primarily oriented towards the Throneroom Courtyard, to which it was directly connected

[91] Paley and Sobolewski 1992: 35 n. 7. These represent the later of the two phases and might thus post-date Ashurnasirpal (§3.3).

[92] Paley 1985: 15. [93] Paley 1985: 15.

[94] Postgate 1973a: 193. Their location 2 m above pavement level seems suspect. It is difficult to conceive of a process in which the walls behind the glazed bricks would have collapsed to such a degree that 2 m of debris was formed before the glazed bricks themselves fell down.

[95] Curtis 2010: pl. 12. [96] Paley and Sobolewski 1992: 46–8.

[97] Paley and Sobolewski 1992: 34.

[98] A stone slab was found in front of its northern wall, but it does not seem to have been in its original position; its inscriptions being oriented in a illogical way (Paley and Sobolewski 1987: 72). Most plans reconstruct room WI as a vestibule with a large opening towards WK. This passage is indicated by the presence of a stone slab, located within room WK, in front of this door. The slab and door are, however, not

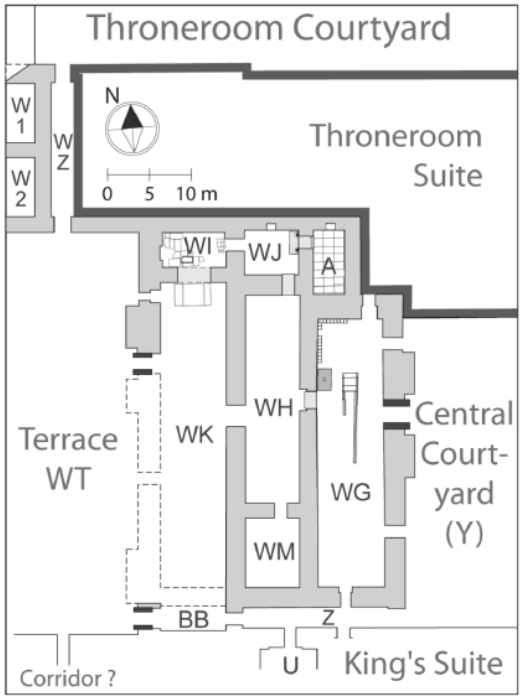



FIG. 2.6 Double-sided Reception Suite

through the Throneroom Corridor (WZ). It was only indirectly connected to the rest of the palace. This suggests that its audience was privileged enough to enter beyond the Throneroom Courtyard, but not necessarily entitled to enter the rest of the palace. Both room WK and the main throneroom were approached at an angle. The other side of the suite was formed by room WG, another major reception room with tram-rails.[99] Its location on the internal route surrounding the Central Courtyard connected it directly to the Throneroom Suite.

Corridor BB/Z ran south of the suite connecting the Central Courtyard with courtyard WT.[100] Its entrance from courtyard WT was flanked by lion colossi.[101]

perfectly aligned. Reade (1985: 208) convincingly argued that this door could not be an original feature, since WI was clearly intended to have functioned as a bathroom accessible only from vestibule WJ.

[99] Postgate 1973a: 193.

[100] Layard (1849b: 59–60) was only able to trace door *a*, which led into room BB. No associated walls were found, but Layard suspected that the northern side of the door would have made a corner to the north. This forms the basis for those reconstructions that have opted to combine rooms BB and WK into a single room. Such reconstruction is, however, problematic due to the length of the resulting façade, which would have had at least four entrances. It would also have made corridor Z start from inside room BB/WK rather than from a courtyard. Both aspects would be unique for Late Assyrian palatial architecture. The plan of Paley and Sobolewski (1987: plan 2), a reconstruction based on such a scheme, shows four doors flanked by colossi. This is even more unlikely since, except for the throneroom façade, only the central doors were flanked by colossi in the Northwest Palace. There seems no reason why this suite would have deviated from the other reception suites. Door *e*, which was reconstructed as the central door by Paley and Sobolewski, was probably a side door without colossi and therefore similar to door *b*. This would make the façade of room WK similar to that of room WG. Such a floorplan was already proposed by Reade (1985: 204).

[101] Reade 1985: pl. 38.

No other corridor is similarly protected in this palace. Their presence can probably be explained by the importance of the corridor, which formed the main entrance into the Central Courtyard coming from the Throneroom Courtyard. The colossi at the start of corridor BB/Z provided protection along this important route. Interestingly, the Throneroom Corridor itself was not flanked by such colossi. Its entrance was more hidden, allowing the monumental emphasis to be concentrated on the throneroom.

Unfortunately, little remains of the sculptures that once covered the walls of this suite. Many of the reliefs found in Kalḫu's Southwest Palace probably came from this suite, although the Throneroom Suite (rooms B and F; Fig 2.4) is also missing a considerable number of reliefs. Paley and Sobolewski counted thirty reliefs that could have belonged to this suite (designated as WFL), but their allocation to specific rooms is complicated and at least six might have originated from the northern wall of the throneroom.[102]

Most of these reliefs contained narrative scenes and probably decorated the two reception rooms.[103] The existence of these reliefs increases the number of rooms with narrative scenes within the palace, which are otherwise only known from the throneroom and its external façade. In the external reception room (WK) the Iraqi excavators found a fragment of an apotropaic figure.[104] Four reliefs showing lion and bull hunts probably also originated from this room.[105] Relief WFL-13 is interesting for it might show the crown prince rather than the king hunting the lion. A similar figure is also shown in a similar scene on WFL-14.[106] More likely,

[102] See n. 84. The nine reliefs with human-headed *apkallu* figures (WFL-1–9) must have originated from this suite. Room F seems to have possessed only bird-headed *apkallu*. The throneroom did probably contain two missing human-headed *apkallu* figures flanking the central door *e*, but the preserved WFL reliefs (1 and 3–5) are too narrow in comparison to similar reliefs known from the throneroom.

[103] Besides these reliefs a further thirty-one unsculptured reliefs, originating from the Northwest Palace, were found in Kalḫu's Southwest Palace. It is unclear whether these were originally sculptured or only decorated with the Standard Inscription. Even with these additional reliefs, many more are still missing. Most are probably still buried in the area of the Southwest Palace.

[104] WFL-30, not illustrated (Paley and Sobolewski 1987: 81, no. 90).

[105] WFL-10, 11, and 13 (Paley and Sobolewski 1987: 75–6). They were found by Rassam west of room A. Room WK is the only room west of room A where a hunting scene can be expected to have existed. WFL-16 (Paley and Sobolewski 1987: 77), WFL-29 (Paley and Sobolewski 1987: 76), and WFL-28 (Reade 1985: 210) might represent other fragments originally found by Rassam west of room A. Reade (1985: 210–11) placed these reliefs in room WI, but it seems unlikely that such topics would have decorated a bathroom (Paley and Sobolewski 1987: 72).

[106] Paley and Sobolewski (1987: 76–7; see also n. 105) argued that as the throneroom showed only one lion being killed, these two reliefs might have originated from different rooms. Room WG would be the most logical location for them if they did not belong to room WK. The crown prince would thus be shown hunting in yet another room of this suite, but the separation of these very similar scenes into two groups does not seem necessary. WFL-12 might also have shown a hunting scene involving the crown prince (Paley and Sobolewski 1987: 71). It was found near the eastern wall of room WM, but it is unlikely that this room was decorated with narrative scenes.

the scene shows the king without a crown, resembling the hunting scenes from Ashurbanipal's much later North Palace in Nineveh (§8.2.7).[107]

The reliefs of the internal reception room (WG) depicted military achievements in two registers. Corner relief WFL-19, showing the Assyrian king and his troops crossing mountainous terrain, might have originated from the north-western corner of this room.[108] Reliefs WFL-23 and 24, showing the capitulation of an enemy city, were found next to the eastern wall of the room.[109] The sequence of reliefs 19 and 23–4 is, however, problematic, as the army moves in opposite directions. WFL-18 formed another corner slab with a narrative scene.[110] These corner slabs form an exception to the apotropaic trees present in most room corners within the palace. The hunting scene on WFL-14 could also have originated from this room. Whether apotropaic trees and figures were present is unclear, but likely considering their omnipresence in other rooms.[111]

Two relief fragments found in the external reception room WK must have originated from vestibule WJ where their remains are still in situ.[112] Vestibule WJ seems to have been decorated with apotropaic trees and figures. Storage room A was decorated with inscribed slabs,[113] which represent the common form of decoration for storage rooms within this palace. Bathroom WI was probably decorated with similar inscribed slabs.[114]

Two rooms of some importance (W1 and W2) were found west of the Throneroom Corridor. Both rooms were decorated with a bitumen dado. On the eastern wall of room W2 paintings were preserved, of which only rosettes could be identified.[115] The accessibility of these rooms is unclear. The rooms could have formed a suite accessible from courtyard WT making them comparable to suite 6 of the Royal Palace and rooms 5–8/12 of the Military Palace, both in Dur-Sharruken. Rooms W1 and W2 might, however, also have formed independent units.[116] Further rooms were reconstructed south of these rooms, but these appear to be hypothetical and their original existence is questionable.[117]

[107] Barnett 1976: pls. 46–7. [108] Paley and Sobolewski 1987: 77.

[109] Paley and Sobolewski 1987: 78; Reade 1985: pl. XL.

[110] Paley and Sobolewski's suggestion (1987: 79) that this relief came from the throneroom is untenable, since there is no space for a missing corner slab in the throneroom.

[111] WFL-8, showing an apotropaic figure flanked by two apotropaic trees, was found in room WG, but Paley and Sobolewski (1987: 74) believed that it originally belonged to room WJ.

[112] Paley and Sobolewski 1987: 74. [113] Layard 1849b: 45.

[114] Reade 1985: 210. [115] es-Soof 1963: 68.

[116] The similar width of both rooms suggests that they formed separate suites. Inner rooms tended to be smaller, but exceptions are feasible. Their width suggests that their reconstructed length might be too short, as rooms tend to be longer in relation to their widths.

[117] This area was excavated by es-Soof, but these room do not appear on his plan (es-Soof 1963: pl. 1). It is, therefore, unclear whether there is archaeological evidence for their existence. No rooms appear outside similar Double-sided Reception Suites. It is also unlikely that such a row of rooms would continue towards the west, as this turns room W2 into an internal space.

The area south of the courtyard has not been preserved. Courtyard WT could have extended all the way to the southern external wall of the palace, but this seems unlikely. The area was probably separated into smaller sections.[118] A courtyard can be reconstructed west of corridor 50, but the known architecture of this area seems to represent later changes.[119]

### *2.2.8 The Eastern Suite (Rooms G–O and R)*

The Eastern Suite is unique both in its architecture and for the concentration of apotropaic figures depicted on its reliefs (Fig. 2.7). Room G is, architecturally speaking, a typical reception room, with room H functioning as its retiring room. The number of rooms attached to room H (I–M and R) is, however, exceptional. Based on their installations and decoration, rooms I and L can be identified as bathrooms. Rooms J, K, M, O, and R represent storage rooms or treasuries. They were paved with large stone slabs and lacked niches and drains. Their walls were decorated with slabs inscribed with the Standard Inscription.

It is possible that rooms J and M were originally intended to have been entered from room H, but both passages were blocked with reliefs.[120] These were contemporary with the other reliefs of room H, whose decoration requires their presence.[121] The niches they created could have been intentional, which would explain why they were not filled with mudbricks later.

Room G shared many features associated with thronerooms, even though its reliefs partook of the general apotropaic setting of the suite. It placed the king's image in the middle of the short wall and provided an axial approach from the opposite door through a vestibule (Pl. 6c). Apotropaic figures and colossi guided the movement from the throneroom into the rooms of the suite (Pls. 6a). The suite was probably decorated with geometric wall paintings, even though these have only been found in room N[122] and O.[123]

The human presence on the reliefs of the suite show a progression from room G inwards (Pl. 5). Room G contained twelve images of the king surrounded by

[118] Layard did not find much of the northern wall of room AA (pl. 6a). See plan published by Reade (1965: pl. 32).

[119] Indications for architectural changes can be seen in the extremely wide western wall of room 54, the large pier south-west of room 45, and the small room west of room 45. None of these features are typical for Late Assyrian architecture and might be the consequence of architectural changes.

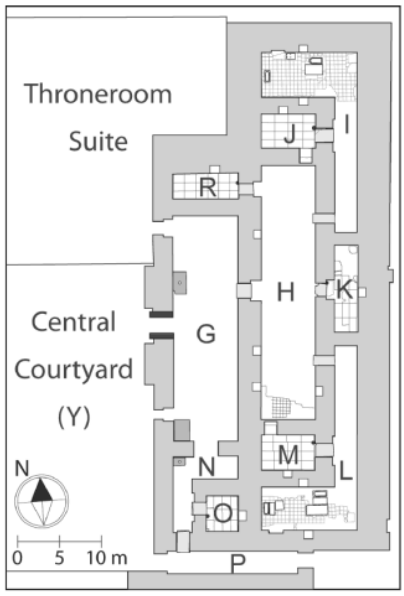
[120] Meuszyński 1981: 55. According to Meuszyński, it is the use of corner slabs of unequal length that indicates that these niches were originally intended as doors. In the rest of the palace this type of slab is only found adjacent to doors. Paley and Sobolewski (1987: 71) argued that such corner slabs were in general intended to support the ceilings, but it is unclear how they would do so as they did not reach the roof.

[121] Russell 1998b: 672 n. 48.

[122] Salman 1969: h.

[123] Field notebook 7 of the Nimrud expedition describes the find of bits of blue plaster above the mudbrick walls.

FIG. 2.7 Eastern Suite




sixteen beardless courtiers. These reliefs made only a very small group of people present in the room. The crown prince, foreigners, or bearded courtiers were all absent. Room H was even more restricted, showing only the king (ten times). No human was made present on the walls of the bathrooms. A simple correlation between reliefs and accessibility should not be made. The absence of people on the reliefs is not necessarily a reflection of the audience for which these rooms were intended. The absence of humans and the abundance of apotropaic figures are more likely to have been intended to create a protected landscape.

The intended use of the Eastern Suite is still unclear, but its architecture and decoration indicate that it was among the most important suites of the palace. Its direct connection to the Throneroom Suite, moreover, suggests that the suite was closely related to royal activity. Being located away from the main route into the Central Courtyard suggests that its audience was more restricted and internal.

The suite brought together a group of different, but comparable, apotropaic figures. The differences between these beings seem limited, suggesting that they performed similar tasks, however, they were certainly not random, as they were distributed in a coherent way with most rooms focusing on one specific type. The similarities and small differences might have been intended to have the different beings amplify each other by performing variations of the same apotropaic acts. The repetition and small differences made sure that all types of evil were averted and that good could enter easily.

Brandes and Russell have both argued that the two large bathrooms were primarily intended for liquid libations and purifications.[124] This seems to fit well

[124] Brandes 1970: 153–4; Russell 1998b: 671–97. Alternatively, Brown (2010) and Richardson (1999–2001), though each using different arguments, associated the suite with ancestral cults.

with the overall design of the suite. Libation slabs were found in rooms G and N. The king is shown pouring libations in several reliefs in this suite, with one libation slab being located exactly in front of such a relief (G-29).[125]

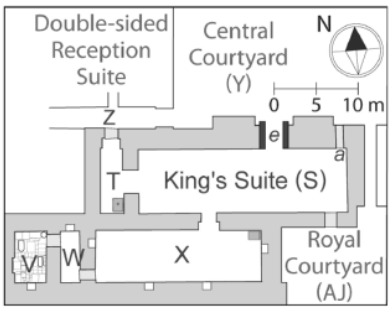
The exceptional number of storage rooms suggests that the suite was among the main, and most centrally located, storage facilities in the palace. The objects stored within these rooms must have been of especial importance. The large number of apotropaic beings created a protected landscape well suited for the storage of booty, tribute, weapons, cultic implements, and the king's personal items. Room K is one of the more special rooms in this suite. It is one of the few rooms within the palace that was placed on an axis, being the focal point when entering room H. It is also the only storage room whose entrance is protected by apotropaic figures. This could indicate that room K was used to store the most precious items.

### *2.2.9 The King's Suite*

The last monumental suite directly surrounding the Central Courtyard was identified by Reade and Russell as the King's Suite (§10.5.2; Fig. 2.8).[126] This identification is certainly correct, that is to say that this is the most monumental Residential/Reception Suite within the palace. Its monumentality alone makes its association with the king very likely. The suite was placed between the main reception suites of the palace and the Royal Courtyard (AJ; Pls. 7b, 22a), the main residential area. It is the only suite to be directly connected to both areas. The suite was the first Residential/Reception Suite encountered when moving through the palace. It possessed a threshold quality similar to that of the throneroom.

The suite was oriented towards the north. Only two other suites possessed this climatically favourable orientation: the throneroom and the main suite of the Royal Courtyard (§2.2.10). Its main entrance (door *e*) was aligned with door *f* of the Throneroom Suite (Fig. 2.5). Such axiality was very rare in this palace and was

FIG. 2.8 King's Suite




[125] Russell 1998b: 682–4, 697.

[126] Reade 1980: 84; Russell 1998b: 697–99.

therefore probably intended to highlight the King's Suite for those leaving the Throneroom Suite.

Room S was organized in a similar way to the other reception rooms surrounding the Central Courtyard. Each resembled the throneroom and placed the focus on one of its short walls (Pl. 6c), which formed the most probable location for a throne.[127] In room S, the focus lay on the eastern wall, whose central relief contained the only depiction of the king within this suite. He is accompanied by two attendants. The scene was approached from vestibule T at the other end of the room. This vestibule was part of the internal route that surrounded the Central Courtyard and allowed the king to enter his suite unnoticed. The eastern wall was also accessible through two small side entrances (*a* and *b*). Such a setting is similar to the other main reception rooms within the palace. Tram-rails and/or an libation slab do not seem to have existed in this room.[128]

Room S was decorated mainly with apotropaic trees and figures,[129] but also contained wall paintings whose designs have not been published so far.[130] The apotropaic nature of this room, further highlighted by the apotropaic figures in its doors, did not necessarily mean that the room was primarily intended for purifications and libations as argued for in the Eastern Suite. These reliefs created a protected space apparently felt appropriate for the king's reception room. The absence of narrative scenes could suggest that outside dignitaries were not expected to be entertained within this room. Palace functionaries, advisers, and members of the royal family formed the more likely audience. The King's Suite seems well suited as a location for briefings.

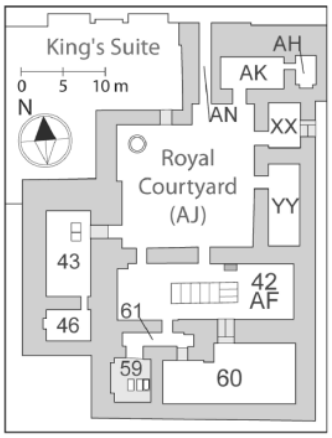
Room X was a retiring room.[131] In contrast to the similar rooms F, H, and WH in the surrounding suites, it was a secluded room that gave access only to a bathroom (V). Room X might be called the king's bedroom, although this is not necessarily its only function. It was decorated with stone slabs inscribed with the Standard Inscription. It was among the largest rooms decorated with such reliefs.

### *2.2.10 The Royal Courtyard*

To the south of the Central Courtyard and the King's Suite lay a further courtyard (AJ). It seems to represent the main residential area of the palace and can tentatively be described as the Royal Courtyard (Fig. 2.9).[132] The Royal Courtyard was surrounded by three Residential/Reception Suites of different monumentality. Together with the King's Suite (Fig 2.8), they represent most known

[127] Russell 1998b: 698–9.
[128] Libation slabs were found in adjacent rooms T and X.
[129] Russell 1998b: fig. 21.
[130] Tomabechi 1986: 54.
[131] Russell 1998b: 702, 705.
[132] Its residential nature has frequently been noted, e.g. Moortgat 1969: 127; Paley 1976: 67.

FIG. 2.9 Royal Courtyard




Residential/Reception Suites found in the palace. The courtyard was more secluded than the King's Suite, but nonetheless directed towards the Central Courtyard. These suites, and thus most Residential/Reception Suites within the palace, were not oriented towards, nor directly connected to, the southern service area of the palace.

The courtyard was centred on the suite consisting of rooms AF/42 and 59–61, which forms another monumental Residential/Reception Suite. Only the King's Suite was more elaborate. It represents the third large suite within the palace with a northern orientation. The suite was decorated with wall paintings showing humans as well as floral and geometric motifs and at least one bronze knob.[133] Room AF/42 formed a monumental reception room with tram-rails and an ablution slab.[134] Corridor 61 connected room AF/42 with the reclining room 60 and bathroom 59. This corridor allowed people to reach the bathroom independently from both large rooms. Such internal corridors seem specific to the earlier part of the Late Assyrian period and were also present in the palace of Til-Barsip (Pls. 2 and 23a; rooms 26 and 46).

Originally, the Royal Courtyard was probably connected to the Central Courtyard directly through corridor AN east of room S. This corridor formed the only direct connection between the Royal Courtyard and the rest of the palace and would therefore seem indispensable. It allowed the King's Suite to be circumvented. The corridor was later blocked by the only uninscribed relief found within the Central Courtyard.[135] This relief was probably of a later date and might have been placed there after the royal family had abandoned the palace. Room XX formed a secondary entrance, which passed through courtyard ZZ (Fig. 2.10), the main palace kitchen (§2.2.11). It is therefore unlikely to have functioned as the

[133] Oates and Oates 2001: 57. [134] Curtis 2008: plan 5.
[135] Paley and Sobolewski 1992: 32, 36.

main entrance into the Royal Courtyard. No connection with the southern part of the palace seems to have existed originally.

Room YY was probably a storage space. Suite 43/46 formed a large Standard Apartment consisting of a reception room and bathroom. It was probably within this area that Layard discovered the remains of two rooms with a pavement of baked bricks, whose door contained an ornamented threshold.[136] These rooms were decorated with ornamental and figurative paintings, the latter showing the king, courtiers, and prisoners with tribute.[137] Such depictions remind one of the wall paintings of room S 5 in the Military Palace of Kalḫu (Fig. 3.6). Layard returned to this area during his second campaign, describing it as 'to the south of Chamber X'.[138] Rooms AK and AH formed the second, less monumental, Standard Apartment surrounding the courtyard.

The occupants of the different suites cannot be established, but are likely to have been members of the royal family. At most times, there must have been more members than apartments. The most monumental suite of the Royal Courtyard probably belonged to the queen, if one assumes that she had her own suite, which is however completely hypothetical. The royal children can be expected to have left the palace after they married and might not have needed the same kind of monumental spaces during their youth. It is, however, also feasible that these monumental suites did not have primary occupants and were used as needed.

### *2.2.11 The Palace Kitchen*

The Royal Courtyard was connected to courtyard ZZ through room XX (Fig. 2.10). Mallowan believed ZZ to have originally formed an 'important reception room, perhaps even a banqueting hall',[139] that might have served reception room MM.[140] Mallowan argued that ZZ was later changed to accommodate a kitchen by the insertion of two ovens and a brick bench to place big water pots on.[141] Courtyards were, however, not normally created by removing the roof of a room. The presence of a baked brick floor and drainage is also more indicative of an open courtyard. ZZ is likely to have been an open courtyard and kitchen, at least from the time of Shalmaneser III whose inscribed bricks are said to have formed the oldest floor.[142] Besides such archaeological arguments, one can also note that courtyard ZZ is ideally located for a kitchen. It is placed close to both the

[136] Hussein, Kertai, and Altaweel 2013: fig. 2, pl. XXXVIa.

[137] Hussein, Kertai, and Altaweel 2013: 94; Layard 1849c: 16–17.

[138] Layard 1853a: 98.

[139] Mallowan 1952: 12–13.

[140] Mallowan 1966: 120.

[141] Mallowan 1952: 12–13. This 'apparently [happened] after 700 B.C.' (Mallowan 1966: 120). It is unclear on which arguments this dating is based, but one gets the impression that it was not based on archaeological evidence, but on the hypothesis that it was at this time that the palace lost its original function.

[142] Mallowan 1952: 12–13.

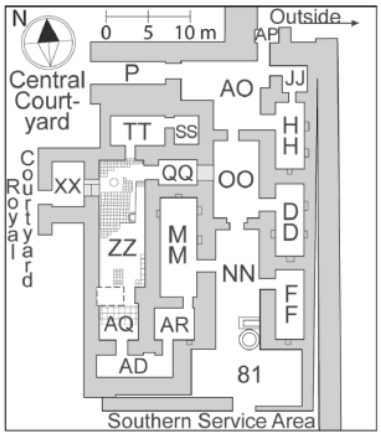



FIG. 2.10 Palace kitchen and service area

Royal Courtyard, and thus the King's Suite, as well as to external entrance AP, allowing for short supply lines. In such a scenario, Standard Apartment TT/SS could have functioned as the office of the cook.

While this area is likely to have functioned as a kitchen, and is currently the only kitchen known in the palace, it does not seem to have been big enough to produce large quantities of food. It is therefore unlikely to have been the sole kitchen of the palace. Additional kitchen areas could have been located in the forecourts to the east, which was easy to reach through the back entrance AP. The kitchen in ZZ is more likely to have focused on the food of the royal family and other more sensitive preparations.

The area south of ZZ is difficult to reconstruct due to later changes made in this area. AQ must have originally formed a separate room in the southern part of ZZ.[143] This room might originally have functioned as a storage space. Whether room AD formed an original feature is unclear.[144] The room was later split into rooms AD(w) and AD(e).[145] Both were decorated with geometric wall paintings.[146]

### *2.2.12 The Service Area of the Palace*

The southern part of the palace can be described as its service area, even though the exact use of most rooms cannot be reconstructed.[147] The area contained a few suites, storage spaces, and the burials of several Assyrian queens (Fig. 2.11).

[143] The original northern walls of room AQ are indicated by a buttress in the east and by what seems like a missing wall in the west, which is indicated by the changed alignment of the baked brick pavement where the wall would have stood.

[144] A later date is suggested by the alignment between the southern walls of rooms AQ, AR, and FF. Room AD appears to have been attached to these rooms at a later moment.

[145] Field notebook 2 of the Nimrud expedition.

[146] Field notebooks 1 and 2 of the Nimrud expedition.

[147] Curtis 2008: pl. 5.

Residential/Reception Suites were present, but their number is limited. Workshops have not been identified. The southern area lacked the monumentality of the central part of the palace. With the exception of a few rooms whose walls were lined with inscribed baked bricks, most rooms do not seem to have been decorated.

Two corridors, BB/Z in the west and P[148] in the east, separated the State Apartments from the southern part of the palace. These two corridors formed the main connectors inside the palace. They diverted all north–south traffic to the west and east. No direct connections existed between the main reception suites and the southern part of the palace. Corridor P also provided easy access from the outside through courtyard AO and room AP. Through this connection goods and people could easily reach the centre of the palace.

The southern part of the palace was organized around a big circular route that consisted of a series of courtyards in the south and corridors BB/Z and P in the north. Courtyard AO formed the northernmost courtyard of a series of courtyards running southwards (Fig. 2.10). These courtyards (AO, OO, VV, and NN[149]) were separated by walls, which compartmentalized the area. Each courtyard had one room to its east. These three rooms were similar in size and formed an eastern row adjoining the outer wall of the palace. The rooms were placed at a slight angle in order to align them with the rest of the palace and must therefore have been constructed after the outer wall was already finished. These three rooms have been interpreted as the harem quarters of the palace.[150] This hypothesis was supported by the find of beads, ivory discs, and a seal and shells with the queen's scorpion symbol. This interpretation is unconvincing. These objects must have been stored here after the royal family had left the palace and the location of these rooms seems ill-suited for residential purposes. The rooms were close to external entrance AP and were located along the main route into the southern part of the palace. These circumstances guaranteed a constant flow of people and goods. The rooms lacked

[148] Corridor P seems to have been constructed before the apartments to its south. Its southern wall contained a niche in the middle that was later blocked by a relief. The wall was unusually thick. One could tentatively reconstruct two building phases. Corridor P may originally have been intended to be similar to corridor Z/BB with an opening preserved for a room (similar to room U). After construction continued, perhaps in a later year, this plan was abandoned in favour of the constructed plan. The southern apartments apparently needed more spaces towards the east than originally envisioned. This could explain the western location of the entrance into corridor P, which is not aligned with the eastern wall of the apartments south of it. Apartments AK/AH and TT/SS must have been conceived together with courtyard ZZ and rooms YY and MM as their eastern walls are aligned. The width of AK/AH and TT/SS seems determined by the width needed for courtyard ZZ and rooms YY and MM. Their western edge was defined by the entrance into room AK. Their eastern edge extended beyond the original entrance to corridor P. This seems to have resulted in a slight extension of bathroom SS.

[149] Field notebook 7 of the Nimrud expedition describes the presence of pale green and white plaster in NN.

[150] Herbordt 1997: 282, Mallowan 1966: 120.

bathrooms, which formed a standard feature of most suites.[151] It is more likely that the three rooms functioned as storage spaces. Their location, close to entrance AP and not far from the central part of the palace and what could have been the kitchen, seems well suited for such use. Room HH certainly formed a storage space at one point in its history.[152]

Reception room MM lay to the west of these rooms. It is small in comparison to the monumental rooms of the palace, but is considerably larger than the other rooms in the southern part of the palace. Its position is well suited for an official in charge of the southern area of the palace. Room AR could originally have formed the associated bathroom. It contained a floor of baked bricks, but the expected bathroom niche seems to be missing.

The southern area of the palace is more haphazard and one cannot easily reconstruct its original layout. Coming from the north-east one would first enter courtyard 80. This contained a staircase, probably providing access to the outer wall, and three rooms (77–9), which could have been storage spaces. Passing through gate chamber 76 one entered courtyard 72b/56, which was lined with rooms in the south. The south-western area of the palace is too fragmentarily known to be reconstructed. An external entrance from the south could have existed in this area.[153]

### *2.2.13 The Palace Burials*

The southern part of the palace is most famous for the discovery of the burials of the Assyrian queens (Fig. 2.11). Rooms 49 and 57 are now known for the rich graves found underneath their floors. It is possible that this was the intended purpose of these rooms, but that would imply that they had to await the death of the queens for whom they were intended. There is no indication that burials took place during the reign of Ashurnasirpal. His only known queen Mullissu-mukan-nishat-Ninua outlived him and died during the reign of Shalmaneser III.[154]

The palace seems to offer enough space to presuppose that all Assyrian queens, up to the reign of Sargon, were buried within its confines. They could have been buried in tombs 1 (room MM), 3 (room 57), and 4 (room 71), perhaps even in the

[151] Room JJ, in the north, might originally have been a bathroom. If associated with room HH they would have formed a Standard Apartment. Such a suite could have formed the office of the official in charge of the external entrance AP. Room JJ could also have been accessed from courtyard AO, which could have made it a communal bathroom. Its location next to the exit might support such use, but an independent bathroom would otherwise be unique. It is unlikely that the bathroom serviced the three rooms south of it. Such shared use of one bathroom is not otherwise attested.

[152] Mallowan 1950: 179.

[153] The reliefs from the western suite were probably transported through this area towards the Southwest Palace.

[154] Kertai 2013c: 110–12.


FIG. 2.11 Royal graves in the southern area of the palace

catacomb below rooms 74–5. This catacomb was empty and it is unclear what their original function would have been.[155] Tombs 1 (two females aged 45–55 and 50–5) and 3 (four females aged 18–20, 20–9, 35–55, and over 55) contained six unidentified women.[156] Tomb 4 was empty and must originally also have contained burials. Of the four youngest women, two can be identified as queens. Whether the other women were queens is unknown, the youngest woman in tomb 3 carried a crown, but some could also have been princesses.

### *2.2.14 When was the Palace Finished?*

It is uncertain whether the palace was completely finished by the time that Shalmaneser came to the throne. The more monumental parts must have been

[155] For a discussion on these rooms see Reade 2008a.
[156] Müller-Karpe, Kunter, and Schultz 2008: 142–4.

finished during the reign of Ashurnasirpal. Some rooms in the southern part of the palace seem to form later additions.[157] Courtyard 55 and corridor 44 can be dated to the reign of Ashurnasirpal by the inscribed baked bricks that were placed along their walls.[158] The dates of the other spaces remain unclear. Nonetheless, the inscriptions indicate that most, if not all, of the southern part was finished as well. Even though the palace was still relatively young, some repairs were carried out by Shalmaneser. Niche EA, next to the throneroom, required several constructive improvements (Figs. 2.1 and 2.4). Two buttresses were constructed to reinforce the surrounding walls. A new pavement, inscribed with Shalmaneser's name, was laid 45 cm above the original floor.[159] Shalmaneser also laid a new pavement in corridor P[160] and room AB.[161] The Royal Courtyard (AJ) and courtyard ZZ[162] were paved with bricks inscribed with Shalmaneser's name and the three wells found in the palace, in rooms NN, AJ, and AB, were lined with his inscribed bricks.[163] The Central Courtyard (Y) was also repaved at one point. Paley and Sobolewski suggested that this occurred during the reign of Shalmaneser or Sargon II,[164] but no information on this level has so far been published. While the buttresses of niche EA have a constructive purpose, the need for the new pavements is less clear. Repairs are certainly to be expected during the lifetime of a building, but the palace survived the centuries of Assyrian occupation remarkably well. No inscribed bricks of later kings were found even though the palace remained in use throughout the empire's existence.

## 2.3 THE OLD PALACE (ASSUR)

The suites of the Old Palace in Assur (Pl. 8a) were less monumental and decorated more modestly than those of the Northwest Palace in Kalḫu. None of the rooms show the degree of ornamentation that was typical for the major reception suites of the Northwest Palace. Their decoration can best be compared to the less monumental southern part of the Northwest Palace. The construction of the

[157] The southern wall of Courtyard 81 does not align with any other wall. Rooms AD and 74/5 were probably added later and it is conceivable that Courtyard 81 originally extended west towards the eastern wall of rooms AF and 60. Room 76 seems to belong to the same construction phase as rooms 74 and 75 and is therefore probably of a later date. The rooms (62, 66, 71, and 72) that were built inside courtyard 72b/56 must also be of a later date.

[158] Oates and Oates 2001: 68. [159] Mallowan 1966: 62. [160] Mallowan 1966: 116.

[161] Field notebook 10 of the Nimrud expedition. [162] Mallowan 1952: 12–13.

[163] Mallowan 1966: 116. Inscribed bricks of Ashurnasirpal II were found throughout the well of room NN (Mallowan 1966: 122), but this comes as no surprise since the wells themselves were integral parts of the platform and must therefore have been constructed together with it. The presence of Ashurnasirpal's bricks cannot be used to establish the date when the this well was finished.

[164] Paley and Sobolewski 1992: 35. Earlier Paley (1985: 15) had dated it to Sargon II's reign.

Old Palace can be dated early in the reign of Ashurnasirpal. This is primarily based on the date of the Standard Inscription found throughout the palace.[165] Pedde argued that the lesser quality of the palace's construction could point to a hasty and cheaper construction.[166] The mudbricks contained stone and pottery inclusions, the plaster contained coarse straw, and the foundations of the walls consisted of alabaster, mudbrick fragments, and old debris used as fill material.[167]

The palace has been preserved only partially. The excavated spaces include part of the Throneroom Suite (rooms 21/22), the Central Courtyard surrounded by a Residential/Reception Suite (rooms 1–5), the Royal Courtyard with another Residential/Reception Suite (rooms 10–13, 15–17), part of the eastern outer wall, and several royal graves. These spaces allow some hypotheses to be made about the original floorplan. The northern perimeter is defined by the city wall. The distance between the throneroom and the city wall seems to have been approximately 42 m, although Heinrich stated that only 30 m would have been available.[168] This represents the maximum width of the Throneroom Courtyard if the northern perimeter was left empty. This would have afforded a view over the plain north of the palace. If the courtyard was lined with a row of rooms its width would have been between 24 and 36 m, which seems quite modest. Whichever reconstruction proves to be correct, both measurements indicate that the Throneroom Courtyard was considerably smaller than the one in the Northwest Palace.

The size of such courtyard is not unlike the Throneroom Courtyard of the palace at Til-Barsip (Pl. 23a). Even though this palace was constructed somewhat later, its forecourts provide a model that fits remarkably well with the remains of the Old Palace. Like the Til-Barsip palace, the Old Palace must have possessed two forecourts.[169] The main entrance into the palace would probably have been located in the north-eastern corner of the palace. The area east of the palace consisted of a large courtyard that extended to the ziggurat in the east.[170] Neither the southern nor the western external wall of the palace has been preserved. The size of the platform provides a rough estimate for the western perimeter and indicates that the southern wall must have run close to the southernmost grave.[171]

[165] Grayson 1991d: 325; see also Orlamünde 2004.
[166] Pedde and Lundström 2008: 38.
[167] Pedde and Lundström 2008: 38; Preusser 1955: 21.
[168] Heinrich 1984: 111.
[169] Heinrich 1984: 111. The length of a Throneroom Courtyard is defined by the Throneroom Suite and normally does not extend much beyond it. This suggests that the area east of the throneroom belonged to a different courtyard. Two archaeological arguments support this reconstruction. First, courtyard façades are normally straight. On the preserved plan one would need to reconstruct two further rows of rooms north of the easterly rooms to achieve a straight façade. Second, while badly preserved, a wall seems to run north from the eastern corner of the throneroom. This is the location where one would expect the two courtyards to have been separated.
[170] Miglus 1986: 202.
[171] Preusser 1955: 26.

The Throneroom Suite is often dated to the reign of Sennacherib, but its plan looks older.[172] In a Throneroom Suite from the seventh century one would expect a bathroom to have existed next to the throne. The preserved plan lacks such a bathroom and is therefore more typical of the earlier palaces. While only one entrance has been found, probably representing the central door, logic dictates that the throneroom originally possessed three entrances. Some of the doors were probably flanked by stone colossi,[173] some of which were remarkably small in size.[174] Similarly small colossi were found in the Ishtar Temple of Kalḫu[175] (date: Ashurnasirpal II) and in Qadhiah[176] (date: Tukulti-Ninurta II). Such small colossi seem associated with this early part of the Late Assyrian period.

An eastern entrance must have been located close to the throne. The preserved central door is normally placed in the middle of the room, which would give the entire room a length of *c.*33 m.[177] A throneroom ramp must have lain west of the throneroom. Room 21, located behind the throneroom, provided access to the Central Courtyard.[178] A Throneroom Corridor has not been preserved, but it is very unlikely that the throneroom could not have been circumvented. As such a corridor did not exist east of the throneroom, it is likely to have been located to its west.

The Central Courtyard was probably surrounded by suites on all four sides. The eastern suite is the only completely preserved one and represents a monumental Residential/Reception Suite. It contained all the typical elements of such a suite. It seems to have possessed only one entrance, a monumental door flanked by two buttresses. The main reception room (1) formed the largest room within the suite. From this room one could reach a retiring room (2). This was a secluded space

[172] Turner 1970a: 192.

[173] These colossi were not found in situ, but were part of 'Sennacherib's' foundation filling. More than one hundred colossi fragments were found in the foundations of rooms 21 and 22 (Pedde and Lundström 2008: 41, pl. 27; Orlamünde 2004: 209–11). The colossus fragments resemble those that flanked the inner door *b* of the throneroom of the Northwest Palace, especially in the presence of only one horn (BM 118894). Another colossus head fragment was found outside the palace (Orlamünde 2004: 211–13), but it does not date to the reign of Ashurnasirpal and its original placement is unknown.

[174] Fragments of a 70 cm-high colossus were found in the same foundations (Pedde and Lundström 2008: 41, fig. 67). If this smaller colossus belonged to the original palace of Ashurnasirpal, then it must have stood in one of the smaller doorways.

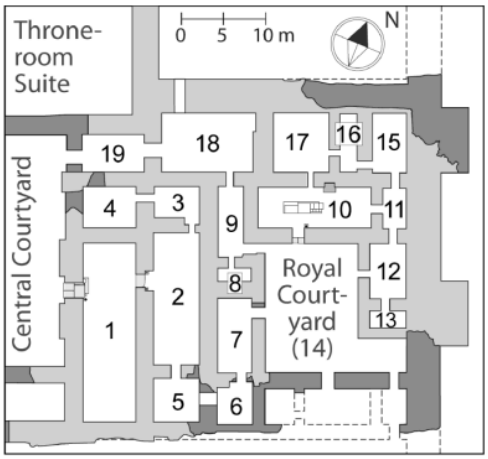
[175] Hussein, Kertai, and Altaweel 2013: 106–7, pls. XLV–XLVII.

[176] Ahmad 2000.

[177] Heinrich 1984: 111.

[178] The standard plans of the Old Palace show an additional room (20) south of room 21, but this seems rather problematic (Turner 1970a: 192). Throneroom Suites never have such triple sets of rooms. The archaeological basis for room 20 is meagre (Pedde and Lundström 2008: 55). Its existence was mostly based on the small piece of wall starting east between rooms 4 and 10. Reconstructing these mudbricks as a wall poses problems since the courtyard pavement continued west of it. This results in a rather strange stepped corner. The nature of these mudbricks remains unclear. They might have formed a buttress, but none would be expected at this location next to a corridor.

FIG. 2.12 Old Palace




that gave access to a bathroom (3) and vestibule (4) combination and what might have been a storage space (5).[179] Rooms 1 and 2 were decorated with series of glazed plaques with knobs in their middle. No wall paintings were found.[180] These rooms were also decorated with corbels.[181] The walls might have originally been lined with dados.[182] The location of this suite in the middle of the palace and its monumentality suggest that it formed the King's Suite.[183] It was, however, located more centrally than the corresponding suite in the Northwest Palace. The absence of major reception suites and the more central location of the King's Suite suggest that seclusion was less important in this palace. The Old Palace was probably less likely to receive foreign and/or Assyrian dignitaries, at least beyond its throneroom.

The suite south of the Central Courtyard is preserved only fragmentarily, but seems to have been less monumental than the King's Suite. This conclusion is based on the smaller width of its main room. The rooms south of it, which have not been found, must have given access to the main corridor leading down into the royal graves. Nothing remains of the suite to the west of the Central Courtyard. Considering the size of the palace, a Double-sided Reception Suite could

[179] The standard plan shows a door between rooms 5 and 6. A gap was found in the foundation and a wall corner was found at the same spot in room 6. While Pedde acknowledged that it remains unclear why Preusser thought such a door existed, he considered its existence as certain (Pedde and Lundström 2008: 47). This door is, nonetheless, highly unlikely, at least as an original feature. Rooms 1–5 and 6–7 form two distinct suites. Such suites were not normally connected. A different explanation for the corner in room 6 is that it is part of the bathroom niche, which one would expect at this location.

[180] Preusser (1955: 21) suggested that the knob-plates were intended to carry light tapestry, which would have formed the main decoration within the room.

[181] These decorative corbels were placed 25 cm apart (Pedde and Lundström 2008: 45), perhaps indicating the distance between the roof beams.

[182] Pedde and Lundström 2008: 21, 23.

[183] A correlation between rooms 1 and 2 with rooms X and S of the Northwest Palace was also made by Pedde (Pedde and Lundström 2008: 41).

have occupied this location, as it does in most royal palaces. Alternatively, a comparison with the Til-Barsip palace suggests that the Double-sided Reception Suite could have been located to the south where its southern reception room would have overlooked the courtyard covering the royal graves.

In the Northwest Palace, the residential and service areas were located south of the State Apartments. Both areas were separated by a series of corridors and courtyards. The main residential apartments were located between these two areas. The location of the royal graves in the south of the Old Palace required a somewhat different organization. The Old Palace does not seem to have contained a service area within the inner part of the palace. Such functions could, alternatively, have been located in the forecourts or in the missing south-eastern corner of the palace.

Courtyard (14) can be designated as the Royal Courtyard (Fig. 2.12). It contained an elaborate Residential/Reception Suite (rooms 10–13, 15–17). Its original layout is not entirely clear, but its general floorplan can be reconstructed nonetheless. The suite bears a striking resemblance to rooms 22–8 of the Ḫadattu palace (Pl. 24a).[184] The suite was centred on reception room 10, which contained tram-rails and what seems to have been a libation niche.[185] Room 10 connected to a series of smaller rooms.[186] At least one of these must have been a bathroom. Following the comparison with the Til-Barsip palace, one would expect room 15 to have formed a bathroom originally. Rooms 12 and 13 form a simple Standard Apartment with a large room and an attached bathroom.[187] They are semi-detached from, but also an integral part of, the larger suite. The Royal Courtyard also contained an independent Standard Apartment (rooms 6 and 7) and probably a further room to its south (east of room 6). An alcove-like space in the south-eastern corner of the palace suggests the existence of a door,[188] which would probably have connected with the area to its south. The suites found in this courtyard resemble those of the Royal Courtyard in the Northwest Palace.[189]

The connection between the main Residential/Reception Suites deviates from the Northwest Palace, as the Old Palace possessed no direct connection between

[184] Pedde and Lundström 2008: 39.

[185] Some parts of the tram-rails were not in their original position (Pedde and Lundström 2008: 50). It is nonetheless not unlikely that the room contained tram-rails originally.

[186] Preusser (1955: 25) believed that no door had originally existed between rooms 10 and 17, but comparisons to other suites make such a door likely (Pedde and Lundström 2008: 50). The door between rooms 11 and 15 is not certain (Pedde and Lundström 2008: 25), but is nonetheless probable.

[187] Preusser (1955: 26) argued that a door could have existed between room 13 and the Royal Courtyard. The bathroom function of room 13 would probably exclude such a door.

[188] Pedde and Lundström 2008: 40.

[189] A correlation between room 10 and room AF/42 of the Northwest Palace was also suggested by Pedde (Pedde and Lundström 2008: 41).

the Royal Courtyard and the King's Suite. The only preserved connection ran through corridor 19 and courtyards 18[190] and 9.[191]

### *2.3.1 The Royal Graves*

A group of monumental royal graves was located in the southern part of the palace. Seven graves have so far been found. Five of these formed part of a burial complex whose origin lay in the eleventh century.[192] The pre-existing location of this complex was taken into account by the builders of Ashurnasirpal's Old Palace. Between four and six of these graves could have existed during the reign of Ashurnasirpal, including grave chamber V, which belonged to the king himself.[193] Unfortunately, we do not know how these graves were connected to the palace. No above-ground architecture has been found associable with these graves. The main complex must have connected to the palace in a room south of the Central Courtyard.

One cannot reconstruct a convincing floorplan that avoids placing walls on top of the graves. Most graves are, therefore, likely to have been located beneath a courtyard.[194] This situation is different from most Late Assyrian graves, which were located inside rooms, e.g. the burials of the queens in the Northwest Palace (§2.2.13; Fig. 2.11). The presence of only one king per chamber implies that many burial chambers are still missing. It is possible that more burial complexes existed originally, for instance, to the east or west of this burial complex.[195] We know that other kings were buried somewhere in the Old Palace. The burial complex of the Old Palace was known by the name *bēt šarrāni* (lit. 'house of the kings'). It is first attested during the reign of Ninurta-tukulti-Ashur (*c.*1133).[196] This is almost a century prior to the oldest date of the burial complex in the Old Palace. The *bēt šarrāni* is still attested in Assur during the reigns of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal,[197] although one cannot exclude the possibility that its location changed in the meantime.

[190] A wall might have divided courtyard 18 in two (Pedde and Lundström 2008: 55). This wall would have formed a continuation of the separating wall between rooms 3 and 9.

[191] Pedde suggested that corridor 19 was connected with room 4 (Pedde and Lundström 2008: 55). This is unlikely as room 4 functioned as a bathroom. Suites very rarely have back entrances.

[192] Lundström 2009: 141–5.

[193] Pedde and Lundström 2008: 142–5. Graves 1, 3, 5, and 6 are likely to have existed during this period. The dates of graves 4 and 7 remain problematic.

[194] Pedde suggested that a northern row of rooms covered Ashurnasirpal's grave (Pedde and Lundström 2008: 57–8), but reconstructing a feasible floorplan seems problematic.

[195] Weidner 1939–40: 216 n. 74.

[196] Donbaz 1992: 121.

[197] MacGinnis 1987; SAA 12, 81: i.1, r. i.2.

Additional burial complexes would take up most of the southern part of the palace. Since most expected suites were found in the northern part of the palace, the southern part may have been exclusively occupied by burials. The thickness of the southern wall of room 1 and the room west of it could suggest that the main part of the palace ended here.[198]

[198] Also suggested by Pedde, who thought it nonetheless more likely that one or two further rows of rooms existed to the south of this wall (Pedde and Lundström 2008: 47).

THREE

# Shalmaneser III (858–824)

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Assyrian Empire continued expanding during Shalmaneser III's reign, reaching the Mediterranean Sea to the west and the Upper Tigris region to the north.[1] The integration of these territories into the empire was accompanied by the construction of several palaces in the provinces.[2] The royal inscriptions mention new palaces in the cities of Til-Barsip (renamed Kar-Shalmaneser), Nappigu (renamed Lita-Assur), Alligu (renamed Asbat-la-kunu), Rugulitu (renamed Qibit-Assur),[3] and Muru.[4] The palace of Til-Barsip is the only one to have been excavated. Shalmaneser is also known to have worked on the Ishtar temple in the city of Shibaniba.[5] A palace of Shalmaneser is mentioned on an undecorated terracotta knob-plate probably found in Tarbiṣu.[6]

Shalmaneser's main building activity was still centred on Kalḫu (Pls. 1b and 3). Ashurnasirpal's effort to turn the city into the empire's primary royal city was apparently not yet finished. The work of Ashurnasirpal and Shalmaneser formed a continuous whole. A precise chronology of the building activity during this period is unavailable, but at least the so-called 'Centre Bulls' of the Shalmaneser Building,[7] the Eastern Gate of the citadel,[8] and the Ziggurat[9] seem datable to his reign, even though it seems unlikely that an entrance into the citadel had not been finished earlier. The Northwest Palace remained the Primary Palace of the empire. Constructions in the palace dating to Shalmaneser's reign were all minor. A few repairs were made and some minor rooms could have been constructed in this period. While no burial belonging to a queen of Shalmaneser has so far been identified in the Northwest Palace, such a grave is likely to have existed originally. Shalmaneser's largest construction was the new Military Palace on the outskirts of the lower town of Kalḫu.

[1] Yamada 2000: 77–223. For a more general discussion of the expansion of the Assyrian Empire see Fuchs 2008b: 45–65; Liverani 1988; Postgate 1992. [2] Yamada 2000: 300–5.
[3] RIMA 3, A.0.102.2: ii. 33–4. [4] RIMA 3, A.0.102.14: 130–1.
[5] RIMA 3, A.0.102.58. [6] BM 55-12-5, 458 (Albenda 1991: 44, 53).
[7] Sobolewski 1982b. [8] Mallowan 1966: 38 (fig. 6), 83.
[9] Gadd 1957–8; Reade 2002: n. 2, 164–5; RIMA 3, A.0.102.56; RIMA 3, A.0.102.111.

Considerable work also took place in Assur. A new palace was built within the city, the so-called East Palace,[10] located close to the Old Palace. The relationship between the two palaces is unclear. In his royal inscriptions, Shalmaneser mentioned working on Assur's walls and gates[11] as well as on the temples of Assur,[12] Anu-Adad,[13] and Sharrat-niphi.[14]

## 3.2 THE SHALMANESER BUILDING/CENTRE BULLS (KALḪU)

South-east of the Northwest Palace, Layard found two bull colossi dating to the reign of Shalmaneser.[15] They were located next to the main square of the citadel. Layard described them as the Centre Bulls. The complex to which they belonged was later renamed Shalmaneser Building (SB) by Sobolewski (Fig. 3.1).[16] The area south of the Northwest Palace is an archaeological nightmare containing different complexes of the Late Assyrian period. It includes the Late Building (LB) of unknown date,[17] the Upper Chambers of Adad-nerari III (§4.3), the Central Palace of Tiglath-pileser III (§4.5), and the Southwest Palace of Esarhaddon (§7.2, Pl. 3). The relationships between these buildings are unclear and their names do not always reflect their location.

The Centre Bulls formed the eastern edge of a complex that lay south of the Northwest Palace along the citadel's western side. Its overall dimensions and nature remain unclear. The colossi formed part of the main entrance into the building. Some associated remains have been found, but only the bull colossi can be dated. A courtyard was located just west of the colossi with an entrance (*h*) to its south leading to an unknown room. Entrance *h* might have been decorated with glazed bricks, whose remains were found here.[18]

The fragmentary remains of the building are comparable to those of Ashurnasirpal's Central Building (§2.2.3). Both represent a monumental gate with a few attached rooms surrounding a large courtyard. The similarities extend to the reliefs within their main gate. Both show a combat scene between a winged

[10] Duri 2002; Duri, Rasheed, and Hamze 2013: 83–4; Miglus 2013.

[11] RIMA 3, A.0.102.25: 21–34a; RIMA 3, A.0.102.99; Lundström 2013.

[12] RIMA 3, A.0.102.18: 15′b–18′; RIMA 3, A.0.102.53: 4–8; RIMA 3, A.0.102.103.

[13] RIMA 3, A.0.102.39: 6b–10; RIMA 3, A.0.102.54; RIMA 3, A.0.102.93; RIMA 3, A.0.102.102.

[14] RIMA 3, A.0.102.49–52.

[15] Layard 1849b: 59; Sobolewski 1982a: fig. 4.

[16] Sobolewski 1982b: 337.

[17] Names given in Sobolewski 1982a: 260. The Late Building was first thought to belong to the Central Palace of Tiglath-pileser, but according to Sobolewski 'recent re-evaluation of the finds does not seem to confirm this theory'. The nature of this re-evaluation remains unclear.

[18] Sobolewski 1982b: 336.

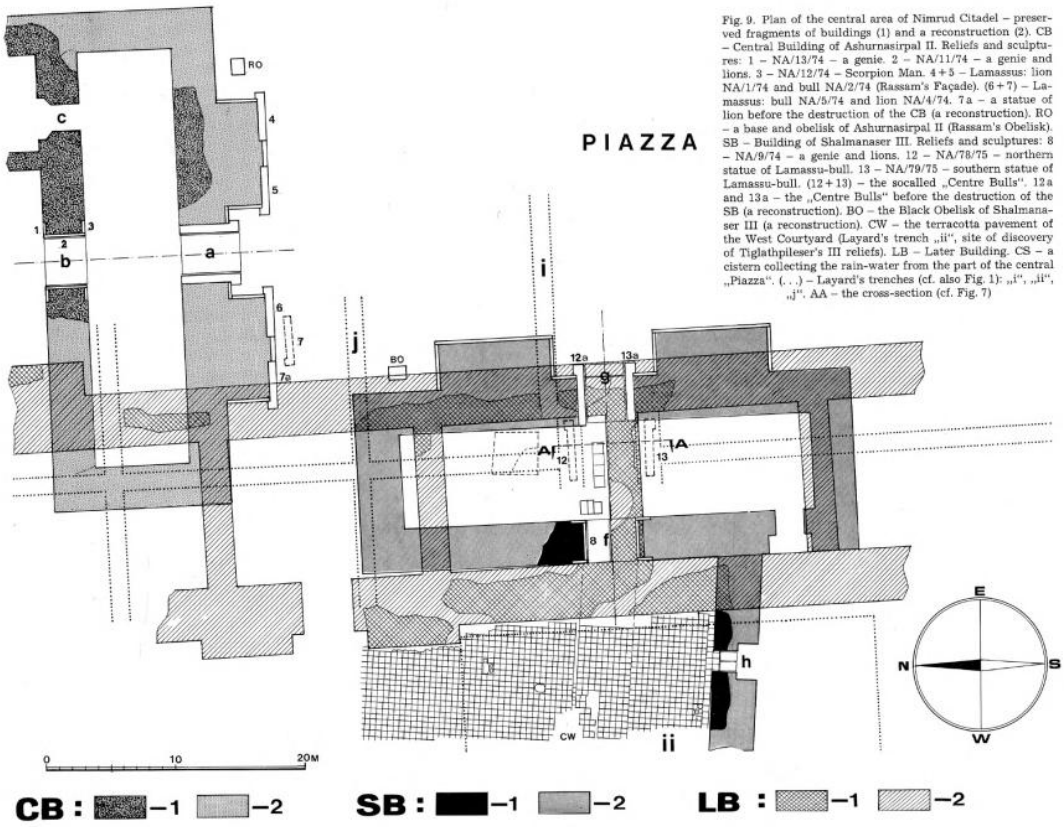



Fig. 9. Plan of the central area of Nimrud Citadel – preserved fragments of buildings (1) and a reconstruction (2). CB – Central Building of Ashurnasirpal II. Reliefs and sculptures: 1 – NA/13/74 – a genie. 2 – NA/11/74 – a genie and lions. 3 – NA/12/74 – Scorpion Man. 4+5 – Lamassus: lion NA/1/74 and bull NA/2/74 (Rassam's Façade). (6+7) – Lamassus: bull NA/5/74 and lion NA/4/74. 7a – a statue of lion before the destruction of the CB (a reconstruction). RO – a base and obelisk of Ashurnasirpal II (Rassam's Obelisk). SB – Building of Shalmanaser III. Reliefs and sculptures: 8 – NA/9/74 – a genie and lions. 12 – NA/78/75 – northern statue of Lamassu-bull. 13 – NA/79/75 – southern statue of Lamassu-bull. (12+13) – the socalled „Centre Bulls". 12a and 13a – the „Centre Bulls" before the destruction of the SB (a reconstruction). BO – the Black Obelisk of Shalmanaser III (a reconstruction). CW – the terracotta pavement of the West Courtyard (Layard's trench „ii", site of discovery of Tiglathpileser's III reliefs). LB – Later Building. CS – a cistern collecting the rain-water from the part of the central „Piazza". (. . .) – Layard's trenches (cf. also Fig. 1): „i", „ii", „j". AA – the cross-section (cf. Fig. 7)

FIG. 3.1 Plan of Polish excavation in the centre of Kalḫu's citadel

genie and two girdled lions.[19] These lions were probably winged, as girdled animals usually are. The scene is not otherwise known to have been used in buildings, but is common on sealings and can be found on the garments worn on the Northwest Palace reliefs.[20]

The western edge of the building was probably formed by the eastern edge of Adad-nerari III's Upper Chambers, which were to occupy the western area south of the Northwest Palace.[21] The Shalmaneser Building could have extended westward to include a set of colossi found by Loftus (§4.5.1).

The nature of the building is still unknown. Russell noted that the inscriptions on the bulls did not state that they belong to a palace, which could suggest a temple context,[22] but the inscriptions also lack a reference to a specific god to whom such a temple would have belonged. Alternatively, the Shalmaneser Building could have been associated with the Northwest Palace as corridors 84 and 85 of the Northwest Palace appear to have connected both complexes (Pl. 3). This passage is, however, rather less than monumental and hidden, and therefore unlikely to have functioned as an official entry into the Northwest Palace.

## 3.3 THE MILITARY COMPLEX AND PALACE (KALḪU)

Even though Ashurnasirpal started his later campaigns from Kalḫu, the city did not have a proper military establishment. Shalmaneser staged his campaigns from Nineveh until at least 847,[23] except for 855 when the second campaign left from Assur.[24] Assur is the only city mentioned as destination for the spoils of war in his royal inscriptions. A destination is, however, only mentioned for three of his campaigns.[25] Shalmaneser had meanwhile started constructing a military establishment in Kalḫu, which was finished around 844.[26] The Military Complex represents the biggest building project undertaken during his reign (Pl. 9). It completed the project of turning Kalḫu into the primary royal city of the empire. Nineveh, the probable primary city up to Ashurnasirpal's reign, had also possessed

[19] Meuszyński 1976: pl. 8; Sobolewski 1982a: fig. 8.

[20] Layard 1849a: pls. 6, 8, 43–4, 46, 48.

[21] Kertai 2013b: 13–14.

[22] Russell 1999c: 76.

[23] RIMA 3, A.0.102.2: i. 29 and ii. 67 (date: 858); RIMA 3, A.0.102.6: i. 49 (date: 857), i. 59 (date: 856), ii. 3 (date: 855), ii. 10 (date: 854), ii. 16 (date: 853), ii. 68 (date: 848), iii. 16 (date: 847). Staging points for the other campaigns are not mentioned.

[24] RIMA 3, A.0.102.6: ii. 10.

[25] RIMA 3, A.0.102.2 ii.74–75 (date: 856); RIMA 3, A.0.102.2 ii.78 (date: 855); RIMA 3, A.0.102.40: iii. l–2a (date: 835).

[26] This date is based on the inscribed doorsills and the throne dais within the main throneroom T 1 (Yamada 2000: 35–40). The doorsill inscriptions only mention that they were part of the building. Most of them were installed in the doors of the Throneroom Suite by Shamash-bela-uṣur the governor of Kalḫu (RIMA 3, A.0.102.30–7 and 62). One inscribed doorsill was found between rooms S 5 and S 4 (Laessøe 1959: 38–40) and another one may have been located in gate NE 3 (Oates 1961: 12).

a royal palace and military establishment from at least 1100 onwards. It is therefore not unlikely that a military establishment had been part of Ashurnasirpal's plan for Kalḫu, even though it was constructed only during the reign of his son.

### *3.3.1 A Short History of its Excavation*

Layard was the first to excavate the Military Palace of Kalḫu, but the results of the brief inspection did not satisfy him and he quickly moved on.[27] Most of the palace was excavated a century later, between 1957 and 1962, by the British School of Archaeology in Iraq under the direction of David Oates.[28] They coined the name 'Fort Shalmaneser', still commonly used to describe the palace.[29] A last campaign by the British School of Archaeology in Iraq was undertaken in 1963 under the direction of Orchard.[30] An Italian team under the direction of Fiorina excavated a small part of the palace as well as surrounding buildings between 1987 and 1989 (Fig. 3.2).[31] In 1989 the British Museum, under the direction of Curtis, excavated one room within the palace.[32]

### *3.3.2 Methodological Problems*

The methodological problems concerning the Military Palace are few, certainly compared to other Late Assyrian palaces. The palace has been excavated or traced almost in its entirety. Even though there is little reason to doubt the general trustworthiness of the published floorplans some uncertainties do emerge on closer inspection of the reconstructed parts, which were published in successive plans as work progressed.[33] These plans made a helpful distinction between (nearly) completely excavated rooms in black and reconstructed ones with dotted lines. A third, intermediate category, in outline, showed those rooms for which, paraphrasing Mallowan, 'only the tops of the walls have been traced for the purpose of ascertaining the general layout'.[34] This tracing was described as largely done by 'surface scraping'.[35] It is unclear whether the tracing excludes the additional presence of a door. Some caution is warranted as the Italian excavation

[27] Layard 1853a: 165. The palace is also recognizable on Felix Jones' survey map (1852) where it appears as the 'Eastern Suburbs'.

[28] Mallowan 1966: plan VIII.

[29] This name was given in 1957 after an inscribed brick of Shalmaneser III was found in what later turned out to be the outer bailey of the Military Palace.

[30] A summary was published by Mallowan 1966: 464–8, 648–9 (n. 124).

[31] Chiocchetti 2008: 418–19; Fiorina 2001; 2008; Pappalardo 2008: 495.

[32] Although published in several articles, the most extensive description is arguably Curtis, Collon, and Green 1993.

[33] Mallowan 1966: pl. 8, Oates 1959: pl. 23; 1962: pl. 1; 1963: pl. 2.

[34] Mallowan 1966: 375.

[35] Oates and Oates 2001: 165. For a discussion on this technique as used by Mallowan see Reade 2002: 203–4. For a photo showing this type of excavation see Curtis and Tallis 2008: pl. 40a.

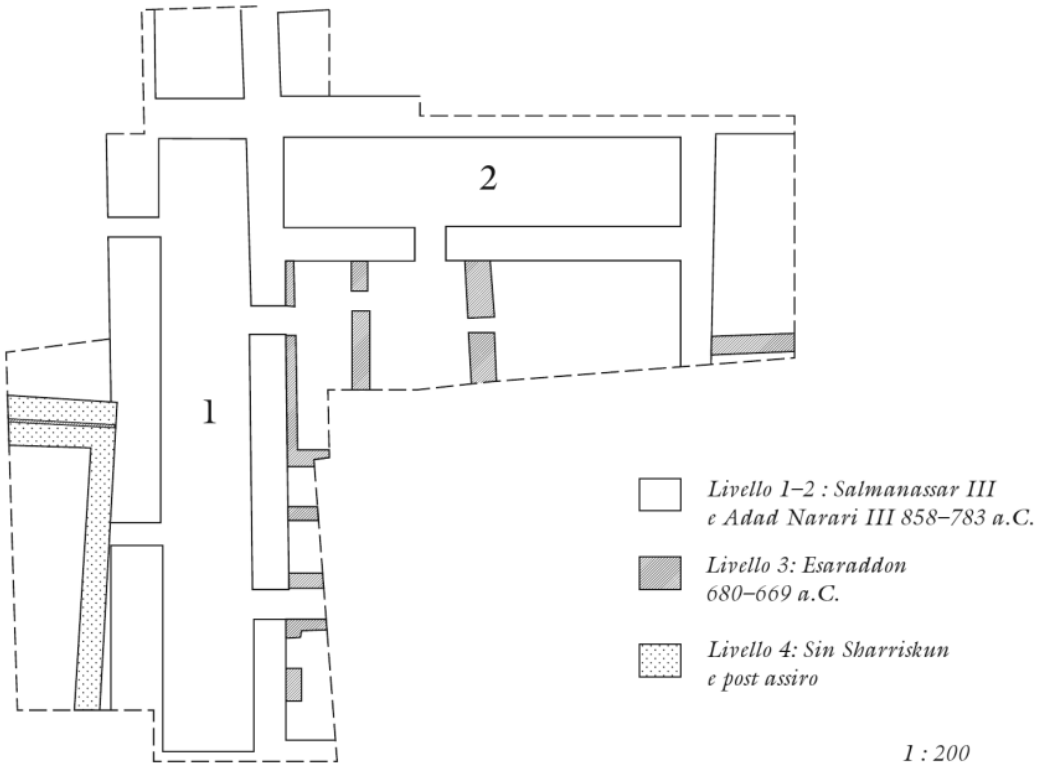



FIG. 3.2 Plan of the Italian excavations in area SW

of room SW 37 (Fig. 3.2)[36] showed considerable deviations from the plan of Oates even though its walls were indicated as having been 'completely or nearly completely excavated'. The preciseness of the Military Palace's floorplan is therefore hard to judge in its details.[37]

The palace was in use up to the end of the Late Assyrian Empire. This longevity has resulted in palimpsests of changes that cannot be dissected into proper chronological phases. Some rooms have double walls (e.g. NW 7 and 11, and S 39 and 50–5) suggesting two building phases. The excavators were probably right in arguing that these rooms were part of the original layout of the palace as their existence seems to have been presupposed.[38] The excavators often used the size of the pavement bricks for dating purposes, but reality seems to have been more

[36] Fiorina 2004: 80, fig. 7.

[37] The reconstructions often follow logically from those parts that have been preserved, but are also based on the kind of spaces that were expected or thought likely to have existed. In some cases doubts can be formulated on the proposed reconstructions. These doubts are mostly concentrated in area S, one of the more fragmentarily preserved areas of the palace. One must also keep in mind that excavations, at least in 1957, were carried out by 205 workmen under the supervision of just 12 staff members (Mallowan 1966: 369), of whom only 3 were full-time supervisors (Mallowan 1977: 270–1).

[38] Heinrich (1984: 114) argued that these double walls could suggest that the two northern courtyards formed a later addition, even though such doubling can be traced only in the Northwest Courtyard. Without these parts the palace seemed to be 'eines normalen spätassyrischen Palastes ähnlicher'.

complex.[39] The textual information is of limited help in reconstructing the earlier periods. The recovered texts mostly date to the late eighth century and the final, post-canonical, period of the empire. Objects were mostly found in debris contexts or as part of storage spaces that sometimes represent the situation in the final days of the Late Assyrian Empire.[40]

Each room name is a combination of a cardinal direction followed by a number, e.g. SW 10 indicates the tenth room in the south-west of the palace. Five cardinal directions were used (NW, NE, SW, SE, and S) together with a few other designations (Pl. 9). Rooms starting with a T were located in what was considered to be the throneroom area. All other designations (C–E, R, X, and Y) were located in area S, i.e. the south-western part of the palace.

### *3.3.3 The Military Complex*

The Military Palace was surrounded by a large, apparently empty, terrain, which will have formed the parade and exercise grounds.[41] Expected functions missing in the Military Palace were probably located in this area. These functions include large storage facilities for military equipment and provisions, forges, workshops, stables, and barracks. Most soldiers must have resided outside the Military Palace, either in barracks or in tents. The latter will have made the open area resemble an army camp at times.

The Military Complex has been briefly investigated by Fiorina, who excavated a northern gate[42] as well as the north-western corner.[43] The room functions in the north-west area are unclear and in only a few rooms were the levels dating to Shalmaneser reached.[44]

### *3.3.4 The Military Palace*

The Military Palace occupied a small part of the complex (Pl. 1b), functioning as 'the headquarters and nerve-centre of the whole complex'.[45] The northern part of

[39] Mudbricks belonging to Shalmaneser were said to have had length and width of 45–8 cm. This did not, however, always lead to the conclusion that the room belonged to this period (e.g. room S 35, whose 45–8 cm mudbricks were interpreted as a reuse (Oates 1961: 7–8) and in some cases this size was mentioned as belonging to the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (Mallowan 1966: 415), who was most probably not active in the construction of the Military Palace. Oates mentioned that the Sargonic period used 45–6 as well as 35–6 cm square mudbricks (Oates 1959: 102; 1963: 24–5). Mallowan (1966: n. 104) also indicated that 'the 9th and 7th century bricks are very similar in dimension and it is often difficult to distinguish between them', which seems to question the feasibility of dating on the basis of mudbrick size alone.

[40] Oates 1961: 14; 1962: 2–3.

[41] Oates and Oates 2001: 148.

[42] Fiorina 2008: 53–4, called trench 5 on Fiorina 2001: fig. 1.

[43] Called trench 6 on Fiorina 2001: fig. 1 and trench A1 on Fiorina, Bombardieri, and Chiocchetti 2005: fig. 1.

[44] Chiocchetti 2008: 418; Fiorina, Bombardieri, and Chiocchetti 2005: 81–2.

[45] Turner 1970a: 181.

the palace contained three large courtyards surrounded by rooms (areas NE, NW, and SE). A fourth quadrant (area SW) was subdivided into smaller units (Pl. 9). Most rooms functioned as workshops, apartments, barracks, or storage spaces. The Military Palace can be regarded as the elite part of the Military Complex. Its workshops focused on chariots and its storage spaces contained tribute and plunder, at least during the later periods. The palace might also have contained a few smaller, elite, units of the army. Besides such military functions there was also a fully equipped royal palace in its southern part (areas C, S, T, and X).[46] The inclusion of such suites seems redundant with the Northwest Palace being only a small distance away on the citadel, but was apparently necessary for its functioning.

The Military Palace used a more limited range of decoration techniques than did the Northwest Palace and was primarily decorated with wall paintings and glazed brick panels (Pl. 8c).[47] This can only have been a deliberate choice by Shalmaneser who not only had the means to install other types of decoration but did so in other buildings.

### *3.3.5 The Large Courtyards*

The Northwest and Northeast Courtyards seem to have functioned as workshop areas. Rooms NE 50, NE 58, and NW 19–22 were defined as workshops based on the presence of workbenches.[48] Judging from the plan, rooms NW 5, NW 11–12, and NE 56 also functioned as workshops at one point. The Oateses argued that the Northwest Courtyard 'seems to have been devoted specifically to the maintenance and repair, and ultimately the storage of military equipment and supplies, especially equipment associated with the use of chariots and horses'.[49] The Northeast Courtyard might have had a more mixed use. Rooms NE 50, 56, and 59 were workshops originally. An apartment (NW 1–3 and NE 50–5) existed in its north-west corner; originally consisting of a workshop, two reception rooms, a bathroom, and a courtyard with staircase. Its size and the painted walls of room NW 1[50] suggest that this apartment belonged to an important official. Its proximity to the main entrance suggests that it functioned as a 'corner office' of an official in charge of the daily activity in the palace.

A smaller Standard Apartment existed in the south-west corner of the courtyard (NE 1 and 2).[51] The eastern side of this courtyard is only fragmentarily known and

[46] Kertai 2011.

[47] For wall paintings see Fiorina 2008: 55; Oates 1959: 117–19; 1962: 18; 1963: 28–30. For glazed bricks see Curtis, Collon, and Green 1993; Oates 1959: 111; 1963: 26; Reade 1995: 230, 233, and field notebook 4 of the Nimrud expedition.

[48] Oates 1962: 14–15.

[49] Oates and Oates 2001: 156.

[50] Oates 1962: 18.

[51] Mallowan 1966: fig. 318.

its original layout is unclear.[52] Two apartments probably existed east of courtyard NE 9, judging from the two bathrooms that were found there. Room NE 29 was almost certainly divided originally.[53]

The Southwest quadrant was subdivided into smaller units from the outset.[54] This quadrant could have housed a small elite military unit. Its location between the inner and outer areas of the palace seems well suited for such a purpose. The extremely long room along the outer wall (room SW 15–18) seems more suited to be storage or stable. The rooms in the middle (SW 21–2, 30–1, and 36–7) were among the longest rooms in the palace. The presence of baked brick floors at their ends suggests that they contained bathrooms originally.[55] Their length would be uncommon for an apartment, but would make sense for barracks, accommodating more soldiers per bathroom. The courtyard east of room SW 37 'was entirely paved in grey stone, and on a portion of its North wall, traces of white and black geometric paintings have been recovered'.[56] This would suggest a representative function, which would fit well with the elite character suggested for this area.

### *3.3.6 Throneroom Courtyard*

What Oates called the Southeast Courtyard can also be described as the Throneroom Courtyard. The courtyard was centred on the throneroom along its southern side (Fig. 3.3); it was surrounded by at least seven Standard Apartments. Four additional Standard Apartments fitted along the eastern side of the courtyard.[57] These suites must have been of some importance due to their central location in the palace and close proximity to the throneroom. If barracks, they could have

[52] Mallowan (1966: 397) suggested that high officers of the guard could have been housed here.

[53] This room is twice as long as the surrounding rooms, having two entrances where other rooms have one, while also creating a secondary passage between the Northeast Courtyard and the courtyard to its east just next to the normal corridor.

[54] This is based on the assumption that the entrances leading into this courtyard are original features. The location of corridor SW 2 seems to presuppose the existence of the rooms in the middle of the Southwest Quadrant (e.g. SW 21 and 37). The presence of two passages from the Southeast Courtyard, rather than the usual single entrance, also makes more sense if the north–south division was already presupposed. Oates reconstructed four rooms between rooms SW 7–9 and SW 31 and 37, but probably only two existed. The southernmost room was not found during later excavations (Fiorina 2004). The same probably applies for the northernmost room as both block the entrances to surrounding rooms (SW 7–9, 31, and 37).

[55] Room SW 37 was completely excavated (Oates 1962: 3). Baked bricks were found only in its southern end. Room SW 21 was, judging from the plan, excavated only in its northern end. One cannot, therefore, know how far the baked brick floor originally extended.

[56] Pappalardo 2008: 495. It must be noted that wall paintings are not normally associated with courtyards; their presence in this courtyard is therefore somewhat puzzling.

[57] The original floorplan of this part of the palace is unknown, but the presence of a row of rooms is likely. External walls were normally flanked by rooms in Late Assyrian palaces, except at those locations where a terrace with parapet wall existed. The space between the Throneroom Courtyard and the external wall seems to correspond with the room width found in this courtyard.

housed *c.*275 soldiers.[58] They could also have been used as the reception suites of the military elite and their staff. A more monumental suite seems to have occupied the north-eastern corner of the courtyard (SE 21–3), but the exact organization of this suite is unclear. Its position is not unlike the suite of rooms ZT 21, 25–9 in the Throneroom Courtyard of the Northwest Palace and can thus be interpreted as a 'corner office', albeit a somewhat hidden one.

Oates reconstructed a large apartment in the north-west corner of the courtyard consisting of rooms SE 1–3, 6, and 10–12, NE 1–2, and SW 6.[59] This seems problematic. Most rooms were unconnected on the ground floor and cannot thus have formed a single apartment. The staircase in room SE 12 could have led to an upper storey where such an apartment could have been located, though it could also be associated with the gate next to it. There is no information about where this staircase led nor about the size of a possible upper storey. Oates associated the apartment with the palace manager (*rab ekalli*), but this remains hypothetical. The main group of texts associated with the palace manager was found in rooms SE 1[60] and 10.[61] Both appear to have been storerooms and are uninformative about the actual location of his office. Texts mentioning the palace manager were also found in rooms SE 8 (two texts[62]), SE 14 (one text[63]), and S 38 (one text[64]). Other texts found in these rooms could also have belonged to this archive. While probably not part of a larger apartment, the rooms in the north-west corner of the Throneroom Courtyard were more monumental than other similar rooms. Rooms SE 1–3 were decorated with wall paintings of unknown design.[65]

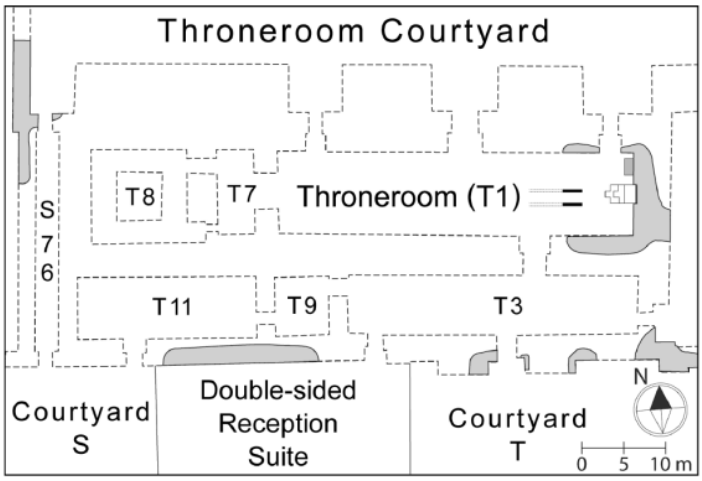
A throne dais was found along the western wall of the courtyard.[66] The dais was not as elaborate as the one found in the throneroom,[67] but was nonetheless 3.20 $m^2$.[68] The innermost metre towards the wall was narrowed although the niche in the wall was only 15 cm deep. The discrepancy led the excavators to suppose that the dais was not in its original position, but this argument does not seem to be conclusive by itself. A throne dais could have been located at this position from the outset and was well positioned to survey troops gathered in the courtyard and easily reached through the nearby Throneroom Corridor (S 76). If the dais had originally been located somewhere else, it could have originated from room T 25.

### *3.3.7 Throneroom Suite*

The Throneroom Suite was comparable in size with the one found in the Northwest Palace and can only be described as monumental (Fig. 3.3). This

[58] Based upon Neufert 1973: 259 (ex. 1), 261 (ex. 'Pritschenlager').
[59] Oates and Oates 2001: 164. Oates did not include rooms NE 1–2 and SE 11–12 in his description of this suite in Oates 2008: 35. [60] CTN 3, 3; 5–8; 24. [61] CTN 3, 2; 8–10.
[62] CTN 3, 4; 12. [63] CTN 3, 77. [64] CTN 3, 70. [65] Oates 1959: 108.
[66] Mallowan 1966: fig. 353. [67] Mallowan 1966: fig. 369. [68] Oates 1959: 113.

FIG. 3.3 Throneroom Suite




monumentality was not reflected in its decoration. Its doors were not protected by stone colossi nor were its walls covered by reliefs. The suite must nonetheless have been sumptuously decorated with wall paintings and a finely sculptured throne dais on the inside and glazed brick panels on the outside.[69] A single fragment of wall painting was found behind the throne dais along the eastern wall of the room.[70] It probably represents the king with an attendant.[71] Its topic and location is similar to the throneroom decoration in the Northwest Palace. Since several important doors of the palace were decorated with glazed brick panels on their outsides it is not unlikely that the same applied for the entrances of the throneroom.[72]

The Throneroom Suite contained the standard ramp to its west (T 8). Within the top levels of its fill further glazed bricks were found. Their location suggests that these bricks formed a panel inside the ramp itself or above the exit towards the roof.[73] As is typical for early Throneroom Suites, no bathroom existed next to the throne.

Behind the throneroom lay a large room (T 3) that connected to the areas behind the throneroom. A large glazed-brick panel was found on the outside of the door towards courtyard T.[74] Room T 3 also provided access to the Double-sided Reception Suite south of the Throneroom Suite and to a small room (T 9) in its western end. Room T 9 is not connected to room T 11 on the current plans. This means that the most direct route between the Throneroom Suite and area S ran through or around the Double-sided Reception Suite. In Late Assyrian

[69] Oates 1963: 10–22. See also Miglus 2000. [70] Oates 1963: 28–9; image in Reade 1979a: Tf. 11b.
[71] Kertai 2011: fig. 9. [72] Reade 1995: 230.
[73] Reade 1995: 230. If these bricks would originally have covered an outside wall, either facing towards the Throneroom Courtyard or vestibule T 7, they would certainly have fallen into these spaces and would not have been part of the fill of room T 8. [74] Reade 1963.

palaces, however, routes did not normally require passage through other suites.[75] A route through these rooms forms the only possible direct connection between area S and the Throneroom Suite.[76] As rooms T 9 and 11 were only traced, which is probably insufficient to find all doors, the original existence of such a route remains likely.

### *3.3.8 The Double-sided Reception Suite*

South of the Throneroom Suite lay the standard Double-sided Reception Suite (Fig. 3.4). Together they represent the only preserved major reception suites of the palace. The most striking difference with the Northwest Palace is that this suite was located on the edge of the palace rather than in the middle (Fig. 3.4). It was surrounded by two courtyards (S and T), which probably provided a view over the surrounding plain.[77] Its freestanding nature seems much more suitable for such a monumental suite.

The different location of the storage rooms (T 10 and 20) within the suite, as compared to the Northwest Palace's room WM, led to several small changes. The

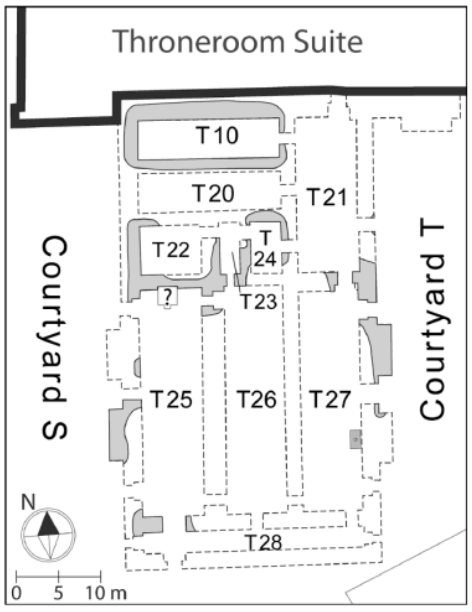



FIG 3.4 Double-sided Reception Suite

[75] It must, however, be noted that the Military Palace (Palace F) in Dur-Sharruken seems to have a similar layout.

[76] Mallowan (1966: 450) believed that room T 11 could have functioned as a treasury.

[77] The excavation reports are unclear on whether the southern edge of the palace consisted of a parapet or a wall. The drawing made by Sorrell with the assistance of Oates reconstructs a raised wall in the south (Oates and Oates 2001: frontispiece). This would indicate that Oates believed a wall to have existed in the south as well. No inner face of such a wall is, however, indicated on the published plans nor does there seem to have been enough space for it.

storage spaces were removed from the centre to a location between the reception rooms (T 27 and 25) and the Throneroom Suite. Their insertion at this location lengthened the suite, and the expanded capacity was probably intended to facilitate the Throneroom Suite as well.[78] This new arrangement necessitated the addition of an extra room (T 21), which connected the different parts. By removing the storage space from the centre and widening the central room (T 26), three similarly sized rooms emerged (T 25–7). This considerably expanded the capacity of the suite. The suite included only one bathroom (T 22). Through rooms T 23–4 a more direct connection emerged between the external reception room T 25 and the Throneroom Suite, which circumvented the internal reception room T 27.

Only small parts of the main reception rooms (T 25 and 27) have been excavated, but what is known is analogous to the Northwest Palace. The external reception room (T 25) was directly connected to the Throneroom Courtyard through the Throneroom Corridor (S 76). It contained a niche in its northern wall suggesting the original location of a throne.[79] Reception room T 27 was located more inwardly and was more closely connected to the throneroom. It contained an libation slab.[80] Of the decorations that must have existed in this suite only a few fragments in room T 27 have so far been uncovered.[81] These fragments show apotropaic trees and genii (Fish-*apkallu*),[82] and a standing bull (perhaps a Bull-man, i.e. a *kusarikku*[83]; Pl. 20a). Apotropaic topics were also present in the similarly located room WG in the Northwest Palace. Whether military narratives and hunting scenes decorated the rest of the suite, as in the Northwest Palace, remains unknown. Differences in expected audiences could have led to different topics being employed.

The area south of the suite is only fragmentarily known, but a further room (T 28) seems to have existed at one point.[84] Looking at the architecture of the Northwest Palace, where a corridor (Z/BB) ran south of the Double-sided Reception Suite, and in view of the limited space available, one can probably reconstruct a similar corridor in the Military Palace.[85] One must, however, note that with the closeness of the parapet and its deviating angle such a corridor would have created a strange dead-end corner to its south. Similar suites tend to be set apart from the parapet and do not possess additional rooms.

[78] Oates 1963: 26. [79] Heinrich 1984: 121; Mallowan 1966: 450.

[80] Mallowan 1966: 450. [81] Oates 1963: 29–30.

[82] Image in Reade 1982: pls. 7b–c. [83] Wiggermann 1992: 179.

[84] Other suggestions were offered by Turner (1970a: 205), who argued that room T 28 could have functioned as an ante-room to room T 25, but not extending along the entire southern length of rooms T 25–7 or, if running along the entire length, added by Esarhaddon after he widened the platform.

[85] A corridor can also be seen on Oates's map where it provides internal connections between the three rooms T 25–7. This was based on the Royal Palace of Dur-Sharruken (Oates 1963: 25–6).

Fragments of a second glazed-brick panel, although not enough to constitute an entire panel, were found in room T 20 as part of the fill used to create a new floor. Curtis suggested that they could have fallen into room T 20 from a nearby wall, most likely the door into room T 25,[86] but it is hard to see how the debris would have fallen through the walls into room T 20. Such a panel is more likely to have fallen into the courtyard where it was originally located, as the panel outside room T 3 did. There is no reason to presuppose that the fill must have originated from the room itself. The bricks were probably part of an already collapsed panel. A more likely location for such a panel is the southern entrance of the Throne-room Corridor (S 76).[87]

### *3.3.9 The Eastern Suite*

The area east of the throneroom is known only very fragmentarily. Room T 5 contained a large limestone slab set on a hard gypsum floor. A row of paving slabs, laid in the form of an arc, was found in the south-eastern end of the suite.[88] This feature was not included on the published map, but seems to have been part of room T 6, which also contained a row of limestone slabs in its north-east. Their purpose is unclear, but their position would suggest that they functioned in a manner analogous to the tram-rails. Within the rest of this suite only vestibule T 2 and the associated bathroom T 4 could be reconstructed.[89]

The original suite must have been substantial in size. No large suite was located at this position in the Northwest Palace. The location of the Eastern Suite comes closest. A similar suite could have existed here, since no comparable suite was found elsewhere in the Military Palace. The Eastern Suite of the Northwest Palace was, however, directly connected to the throneroom through room F. In the Military Palace such a connection could have existed between rooms T 3 and 6. The problem with that, and with the reconstruction of the eastern area in general, is the height differences between it and the surrounding areas. T 6 was said to be 2 m above the Throneroom Courtyard[90] and 1.50 m above courtyard T. Room T 4 was below room T 6 (by 35 cm according to Oates[91] and 55 cm according to Mallowan[92]). Such height differences are rare in Late Assyrian palace architecture. They were found only in Sennacherib's palace in Tarbiṣu (Pl. 23b),[93] in Assur's

[86] Curtis 2008: 61–2; Curtis, Collon, and Green 1993: 21.

[87] Any panel that would have decorated this entrance would have gone out of use after room S 74 was constructed in front of it, but might have already collapsed at an earlier date. Rooms S 73–5 must have been added later. Corridors, such as S 76 and E, usually open onto courtyards. Rooms S 73 and 74 were probably constructed on top of Courtyard S. This would explain why they contained baked bricks on their floors.

[88] Oates 1959: 111–12. [89] Oates 1963: 22–3. [90] Oates 1959: 111–12.

[91] Oates 1963: 23. [92] Mallowan 1966: 455. [93] Miglus 2012.

East Palace,[94] Sargon II's so-called Monument X in his Royal Palace at Dur-Sharruken (Pl. 11; Figs. 5.8–9), and in front of Ashurbanipal's throneroom in the North Palace of Nineveh (Pl. 19). Height differences within a single suite seem non-existent. Except for the East Palace, these examples represent an architecture that is typical for the seventh century. The height differences might therefore be interpreted as the consequence of later remodelling, hiding older levels that had been on the same level as the surrounding spaces. If correct, the suite as currently known most probably dates to the reign of Esarhaddon. The covering of lower floors by new structures is comparable to what happened in area R (§7.3.3), whose remodelling is dated to the reign of Esarhaddon, as were most later constructions in the southern part of the palace. The original Eastern Suite is likely to have been located on the same level as the surrounding Throneroom Suite, to which it was probably directly connected. Its original function is likely to have been similar to the Eastern Suite of the Northwest Palace.

### *3.3.10 The Royal Courtyard*

Courtyard S 6 (Pl. 9) formed the main residential courtyard of the palace and can be described as the Royal Courtyard (Fig. 3.5). It was surrounded by different Residential/Reception Suites (rooms S 3–5 and 7a[95]; S 16, 28–9; and S 17–19, 30) and a storage space (S 7). This set of rooms bears a striking resemblance to those of the Royal Courtyard in the Northwest Palace (Fig. 2.9; Pl. 4).

The largest Residential/Reception Suites were located west of courtyard S 6. Rooms S 17–19 and 30 formed the most elaborate Residential/Reception Suite within area S and perhaps the entire palace. It contained a reception room (S 17) with adjacent bathroom (S 18–19) and a retiring room (S 30). The second suite, consisting of rooms S 16 and 28–9, was slightly smaller. Room S 16 was paved with baked bricks, which is atypical for a reception room.

The suite surrounding reception room S 5 was smaller, but more elaborately decorated. Room S 5 contained tram-rails and was decorated with wall paintings showing a procession of dignitaries walking towards a bearded figure (Fig. 3.6).[96] Its topic is similar to those found in room 43 of the Northwest Palace. The dress of the courtiers dates the paintings to the reign of Sargon or later. The importance of this suite is also indicated by the inscribed threshold between rooms S 3 and 4.[97] It is one of the few inscribed thresholds found outside the major reception suites (area T).

[94] Duri 2002; Duri, Rasheed, and Hamze 2013: 83–4; Miglus 2013.

[95] Room S 7 should probably be divided into two separate rooms (Turner 1970a: 200), with room 7a forming a small vestibule to reception room S 5 with a single room 7b south of it.

[96] Oates 1959: 118–19. [97] RIMA 3, A.0.102.35.

FIG 3.5 Royal Courtyard

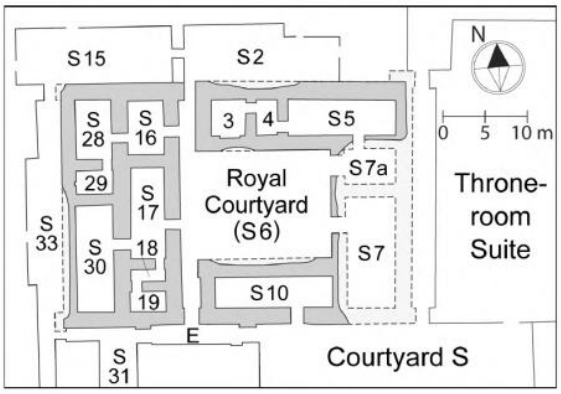
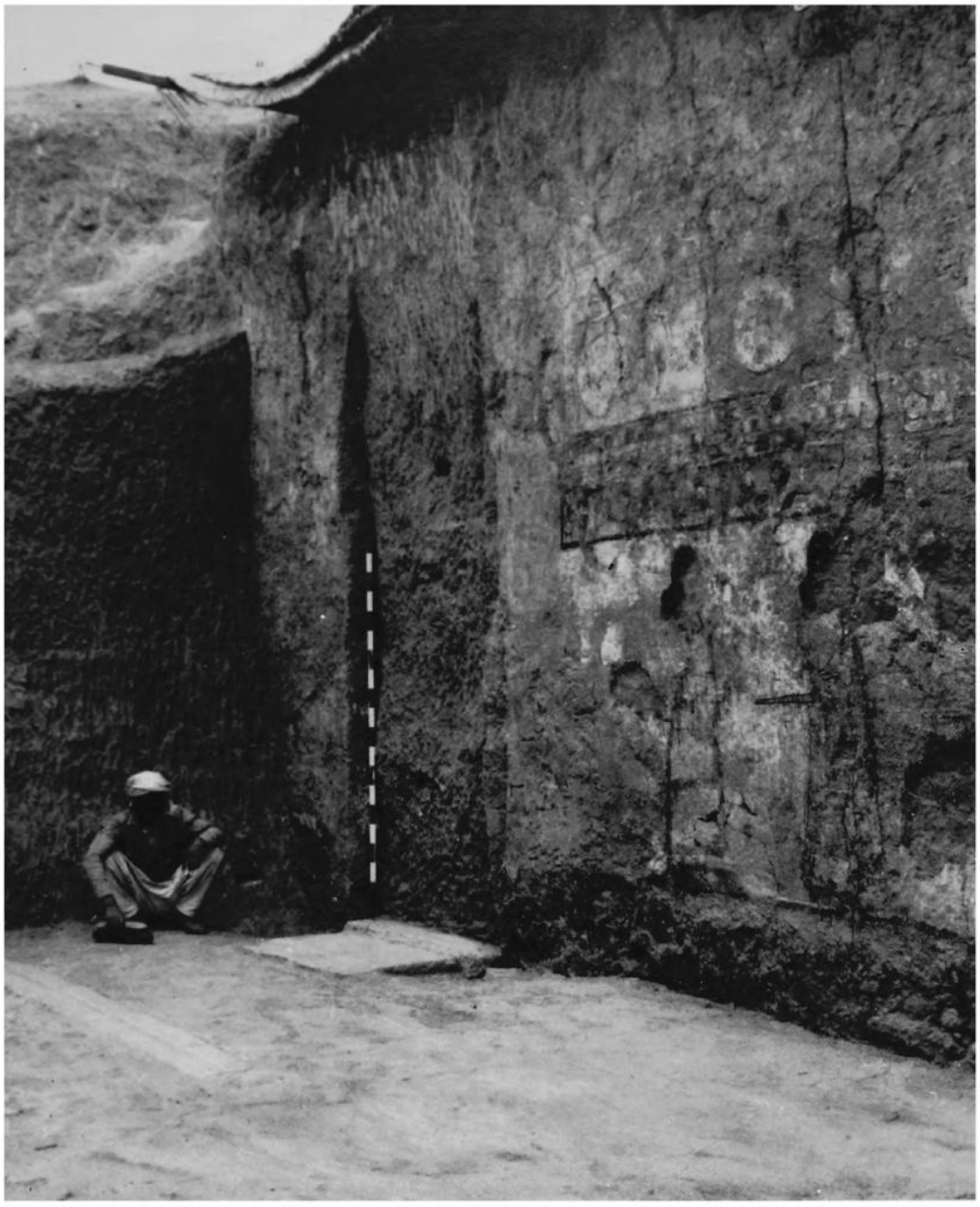



FIG 3.6 Photo of room S 5



The main Residential/Reception Suite of the Northwest Palace (i.e. the King's Suite) was located slightly to the north of the Royal Courtyard. A suite of comparable monumentality does not seem to have existed in the Military Palace. The most likely position for such a suite would have been the fragmentarily known area surrounding courtyard S, which is similarly located between the major reception suites and the residential and service area. The preserved rooms in this area, however, seem too small to have accommodated such a suite.

The Royal Courtyards of the Military and Northwest Palaces are comparable, but are also likely to reflect a difference in the use of both palaces. The two main Residential/Reception Suites of the Northwest Palace were much more monumental than their counterparts in the Military Palace. This suggests that the Northwest Palace functioned as the main residential palace. This would not be surprising, especially considering the closeness of both palaces. The Residential/Reception Suites of the Military Palace were, nonetheless, quite monumental in themselves. This might reflect the considerable requirements associated with the other functions these suites needed to fulfil. The Royal Courtyard of the Military Palace is likely to have stressed the reception qualities of the suites and could have allowed different members of the palace community to entertain and receive their staff and guests.

### *3.3.11 The Service Area*

The residential and service wing (area S) and its relationship to the State Apartments (area T) was organized differently from the Northwest Palace. The organization of the Military Palace seems much more flexible than its precursor. The placement of the service wing and the main residential suites forms the most striking difference. This area is moved to the west of the palace, turning the Double-sided Reception Suite into a freestanding unit. The residential and service area was organized in a more flexible way by compartmentalizing the area. It surrounded the Royal Courtyard with a series of corridors, which formed the spine of area S and controlled access into the different suites.[98]

The Royal Courtyard formed the centre around which area S was organized. It was easily accessible through doors in the north and south, but the courtyard could also be closed off without hampering the access to the other spaces within area S. The same is true for the other parts of area S. Each could be taken out of service without reducing the accessibility of the other parts.[99]

[98] Mallowan 1966: 382.

[99] This reconstruction presupposes a connection to have existed between courtyards S 2 and S 15. Even though no wall was found separating both courtyards, one almost certainly existed since the pavement is missing at this point and a foundation deposit was dug into the corner of courtyard S 2 (Oates 1959: 117 n. 29).

Originally only two entrances into area S seem to have existed. One, in area R (§3.3.12), is quite far removed from the Royal Courtyard, but might have been well placed for the delivery of goods. The other entrance was through corridor E.[100] Corridor E is a well-constructed and monumental corridor, which must have formed the most important entrance into area S. It created a direct connection between the Royal Courtyard, the rest of area S, and area T. Room S 1 also functioned as an entrance at some point, but this probably represents a later change, as room S 1 resembles a normal room rather than a corridor. It must, however, be noted that area S would have been rather poorly connected without an entrance through room S 1, which might be the reason why this entrance was added later. Poor connectivity was, however, also a feature of the Royal Courtyard in the Northwest Palace and thus seems to reflect a wish to curtail and control access.

From corridor E one could easily reach courtyard S 31/45. This courtyard was surrounded by several Standard Apartments. The first suite (S 32 and 36) was rather small, but two similarly small suites might have lain to its south.[101] The suite consisting of rooms S 20–2 was more substantial. Rooms S 23 and 24 could have formed a similarly sized suite.[102]

The rest of area S appears to have contained service functions, but the use of specific rooms remains unknown. Room C 6 was described as a kitchen, but the grounds for this designation are unknown.[103] Some of the rooms surrounding these courtyards were said to have contained kitchens and storage places, at least during the end of the Late Assyrian Empire,[104] but it is unclear which rooms were designated as such.

Much of the southern part of area S is hypothetical and only partially excavated.[105] The published plans show no connection between the area surrounding

[100] Mallowan 1966: fig. 358.

[101] The length of room S 35 seems too great, as compared to its width, to have formed a single room. Originally the width of room S 35 seems to have been similar to that of rooms S 32 and 36 (Oates 1961: 7). This suggests that rooms S 35 and 46 originally formed two separate small Standard Apartments. Such reconstruction would presuppose that bathroom S 46 was also widened later on, a change that is not mentioned by the excavators.

[102] The sequence of rooms (S 23, 24, and 63) is atypical. An additional wall separating room S 24 into smaller units seems likely to have existed. S 24 could have formed the bathroom of room S 23.

[103] Oates 1959: 115. [104] Mallowan 1966: 379.

[105] The excavators changed their reconstruction of the southern area twice during the excavations. In the plan from 1961 only the excavated northern part of area S was presented (Oates 1962: pl. 1). After excavations had continued an extended plan was presented in 1963 (Oates 1963: pl. II). This reconstructed a series of rooms surrounding the southernmost courtyard S 68. This block was not attached to the outer wall and thereby mirrored the extruding block of area T. In its south-west corner the western walls of rooms S 56 and S 57 both indicated that doors were traced giving access to a not yet excavated area.

courtyards S 37 and S 68 and the rest of the palace. Such separation would have made these courtyards inaccessible. Courtyard S could have been connected to room S 65 by a passage south of the room and to courtyard S 68 through a corridor.[106] Even if these connections had existed, area S would still have been split into two unconnected parts. A connection is, however, likely to have existed through S 34; an alcove whose form would otherwise be difficult to explain.[107] A foundation deposit[108] found in the corner of courtyard S 37 opposite the possible entry from S 34 also suggests that a door existed at this location.[109]

### *3.3.12 Area R*

Shalmaneser's palace must have extended into area R, but most of this area dates to the reign of Esarhaddon (§7.3.3). The floors of Esarhaddon's rooms were found on a higher level and might have covered those of Shalmaneser.[110] Neither Oates nor Mallowan mention whether lower floors belonging to Shalmaneser were found, or looked for, in this area.

That this area was in use during the reign of Shalmaneser is indicated by a door that was found within the original outer wall.[111] No associated spaces were reported. The presence of the door suggests that an outside connection existed from the outset. This connection could have taken the form of a Descending Corridor, similar to the one dated to Esarhaddon, but this seems unlikely since the door was found in the outer face of the old wall, restricting the space for an internal Descending Corridor.

[106] This would imply that some of the walls indicated by the excavators to have existed surrounding room S 63 were incorrectly traced. This is certainly feasible, but must remain hypothetical.

[107] The excavators were unable to find a door south of S 34 in this apparently badly preserved area. They therefore proposed a passage to what would later be called room S 48. Later excavations were, however, unable to find such door.

[108] Oates 1961: 9.

[109] The re-excavation of the area surrounding S 34 led to a different reconstruction of this area, even though there seems to have been no archaeological basis for these changes. The reasons for the disappearance of room Y 1 from later plans are unclear. The original reconstruction is certainly to be preferred for the empty space visible on the later plans. The entire outer wall was bordered by rooms and there seems no reason why this would have been different in Courtyard S 43.

[110] Mallowan 1966: 441; Oates and Oates 2001: 154.

[111] Oates and Oates 2001: 153.

FOUR

# Adad-nerari III (810–783), Tiglath-pileser III (744–727) and the Intervening Decades

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Shalmaneser III's reign ended in a war of succession between his sons Ashur-da''in-aplu and Shamshi-Adad. The upheaval lasted from 826 until 820 and was followed by a major revolt in the years 817 and 816.[1] The period that followed is generally considered to have been politically unstable, and several powerful officials emerged within the empire.[2] The exact political implications of these events are, however, difficult to reconstruct due to the limited sources at our disposal. The number of royal inscriptions is limited, which is in itself a sign of the times. The power of the emergent officials is reflected in the long duration of their careers and the monuments dedicated by them throughout the empire. Some officials led the Assyrian army in battle and were able to make their own foreign policy decisions.

Most scholars relate the presence of the officials to a weakened kingship,[3] but this view might be too negative.[4] An oligarchic system can be an efficient way to govern a state and no empire can function without powerful officials. History is not a zero-sum game. The increased influence of officials need not imply a loss of royal power or agency. Instability, especially concerning the succession, was endemic throughout the Late Assyrian period and cannot in itself be taken as a sign of times. Nonetheless, this period was probably more oligarchic. Whether this changed the use of the existing royal palaces is another question. From the later royal city of Dur-Sharruken we know that the high officials had palatial complexes of their own (Pl. 13a). Each possessed its own monumental throneroom (§10.2.6). If the power of high officials had indeed encroached upon the king's, one might expect that (some of) the activities of kingship would have been transferred to their homes.

[1] Fuchs 2008a: 66–71, 128–9; Siddall 2013: 84–6.

[2] Fuchs 2008a; Grayson 1993; Siddall 2013: 104–28.

[3] Blocher 2001: 38; Fuchs 2008a: 98–107.

[4] Bernbeck has argued that this was a period of consolidation, which required strong officials (Bernbeck 2008: 361–3). See also Dalley 2000: 81–4; Fuchs 2008a; Siddall 2013: 81–132.

It was Shamshi-Adad, known nowadays as Shamshi-Adad V (823–811), who succeeded his father and eventually won the war of succession against his brother. His reign has left few traces in our contemporary sources. He was relatively successful in his campaigns against the Babylonian kings, although the Assyrian power in the western provinces might have diminished during his reign.[5] There is no information on the use of the royal palaces during his time, which means that there is no indication that the status of the different palaces fundamentally changed in this period. The continued importance of Kalḫu comes to the fore during the war of succession in which, according to the royal inscriptions of Shamshi-Adad,[6] all major towns rebelled against Shalmaneser. The text suggests that Kalḫu was the only major city controlled by Shalmaneser during the revolt. While one should be cautious in taking the list of rebellious cities too literarily—its main aim was to show that the entire empire had rebelled—it does indicate the status of Kalḫu as main location of royal and military power.[7]

The reign of Shamshi-Adad was relatively short and with multiple internal troubles apparently left little time, need, and/or resources for major building activities. Royal projects are attested only in Assur and Nineveh. In both cities inscribed baked bricks refer to the construction of a palace.[8] Of the three examples found in Assur, two came from his grave (no. 2) in the Old Palace (Pl. 8a), one of the few identified royal graves of the Late Assyrian period.[9] It is likely that the other bricks also originated from the Old Palace rather than indicating the construction of an entirely new complex. The bricks from Nineveh might belong to a building he started constructing in that city, but which was finished by Adad-nerari III.[10]

## 4.2 ADAD-NERARI III (810–783)

Shamshi-Adad was succeeded by his son Adad-nerari III, whose reign has left more traces than that of his father. Most scholars have argued that Adad-nerari was overshadowed by others, either by his mother Sammu-ramat or his high officials.[11] Alternatively, the diffusion of power could represent a productive way of governing, which occurred with the consent of Adad-nerari.[12] Regardless of the evaluation of his reign, Adad-nerari's building activities show him to have been a prolific builder although not on the scale of his forebears Shalmaneser III and Ashurnasirpal II. This might be the result of his choice to continue using Kalḫu as

[5] Baker 2008b. [6] RIMA 3, A.0.103.1: i. 39–53a. [7] Fuchs 2005: 50.
[8] RIMA 3, A.0.103.9. [9] Lundström 2009: 160–7. [10] See n. 17.
[11] For an overview of opinions see Bernbeck 2008: 356–9.
[12] e.g. Bernbeck 2008: 362; Dalley 2000: 81–4.

the main capital. This city already contained the most monumental buildings of the empire and there might have been little incentive to replace them. Within the Military Palace some architectural modifications can be dated to his reign, but none have so far been identified in the Northwest Palace. Both palaces contained administrative archives dating to this period. In room 57 within the southern part of the Northwest Palace more than 150 texts dating to his reign and those of his successors were found.[13]

Adad-nerari's largest known construction in Kalḫu was the Nabu Temple, constructed in the south-eastern part of the citadel (§11.4.2; Pls. 1b and 3).[14] This reflects the increasing importance of Nabu within Assyria. A complex south of the Nabu Temple, alternatively known as the AB Building or Southeast Palace, might also date to this period,[15] but there is no indication that it was used by the king himself. PD5 Palace in the lower town contained inscribed bricks of Adad-nerari,[16] who was also active in Nineveh where he finished the complex started by Shamshi-Adad.[17] These constructions were probably part of the Ishtar Temple.[18] He also worked on Nineveh's Nabu Temple,[19] and at Assur inscribed baked bricks indicate his involvement in the Ashur Temple.[20]

## 4.3 THE 'UPPER CHAMBERS' (KALḪU)

The Upper Chambers represent Adad-nerari's most important palatial construction in Kalḫu. The known rooms form a monumental reception suite, but its extent and relationship with other buildings on the citadel are still unresolved. Our knowledge of the Upper Chambers is based on excavations by Layard, Loftus, and Hussein. Layard was the first to excavate at this location. He found the remains of four rooms on 'a considerable elevation',[21] which became known as the Upper Chambers.[22] Loftus subsequently found several rooms in the vicinity. These rooms are known only from Boutcher's plan of Kalḫu's citadel.[23] Some soundings were apparently made in 1977 and 1978,[24] but no information about these seems to be available. The last excavations were carried out by

[13] Ahmad and Postgate 2007. The most important corpus belonged to the palace scribe Nabu-tuklatua, whose texts can be dated to the period between 800 and 765 (Ahmad and Postgate 2007: v–vi).

[14] For a summary see Oates and Oates 2001: 111–22. [15] See e.g. Oates 1958.

[16] Mallowan 1954b: 154–64.

[17] RIMA 3, A.0.104.13, 15–16. Campbell Thompson and Hutchinson 1931: 100.

[18] RIMA 3, A.0.104.1002. [19] RIMA 3, A.0.104.14. [20] RIMA 3, A.0.104.12, 21.

[21] Layard 1849c: 18.

[22] Layard 1849a: plan 4. Layard's description of these rooms as upper chambers came later to be used as their name.

[23] Barnett and Falkner 1962: pl. 130. [24] Paley 1985: 19.

Hussein in 1993, who re-excavated Layard's Upper Chambers and discovered some new rooms.[25]

The Upper Chambers have been interpreted as a small part of a lost royal palace, which was later integrated into Tiglath-pileser III's so-called Central Palace.[26] Such larger palatial setting seems unlikely, due to the location of the Upper Chambers. A fully equipped royal palace must have at least contained a Throneroom Courtyard with a Throneroom Suite. Monumental suites such as the Upper Chambers would be expected to lie behind these. The Upper Chambers were, however, located where the Throneroom Courtyard would be expected if Adad-nerari's building had formed a standard palace.

The northern and western edges of the Upper Chambers are defined by the Northwest Palace and the citadel. The potential size of the complex surrounding the Upper Chambers depends on its eastern edge, where it probably bordered the Shalmaneser Building, and its southern edge, where the Southwest Palace would later emerge. The correlation between these three buildings is unclear, but they probably formed three independent complexes.[27] There is no reason to believe that kings demolished parts of earlier buildings to make room for their own complexes nor that they incorporated older structures into their own new buildings. The citadel seems to have possessed enough space for new constructions and the older buildings were probably still in use during the eighth century.

On the basis of current incomplete and fragmentary information the Upper Chambers can best be understood as an addition to the Northwest Palace.[28] The complex consisted of at least one courtyard surrounded by suites, one of which was the Upper Chambers. This courtyard could have been open towards the west, providing a view over the plain, but must have been surrounded by rooms on its southern side. This hypothetical complex seems to resemble the Royal Courtyards of the Northwest and Military Palaces of Kalḫu. The Northwest Palace possessed only a limited number of Residential/Reception Suites. It is possible that the Upper Chambers represent Adad-nerari's attempt to add a few more. Such suites would ideally be closely linked to the main reception suites of the Northwest Palace, while simultaneously keeping their distance from them. Considering the limited possibilities for new suites to achieve such aims within an already finished palace, the location of Adad-nerari's complex seems well chosen. It was probably relatively easily reached along the western side of the palace and was closely connected to the southern service area. The Upper Chambers could have possessed its own external entrance, allowing it to function independently from the Northwest Palace.

[25] Hussein, Kertai, and Altaweel 2013: 98–104.
[26] See e.g. Reade 1968: 70.
[27] Kertai 2013b: 11–17.
[28] Kertai 2013b: 17.

Such a reconstruction could provide credibility to a theory proposed by Reade,[29] who suggested that Adad-nerari's palace was intended for his famous mother Sammu-ramat.[30] It could, however, also belong to other members of the royal family such as the crown prince, or have represented the offices of one or more high official. His or her status must have been below that of the occupants of the two Residential/Reception Suites that were associated with the king and queen. While the Upper Chambers is comparable in its monumentality, its location is much less central. Its occupant seems close to, but removed from, the real centre of power.

## 4.4 TIGLATH-PILESER III (744–727)

The reign of Adad-nerari was followed by a period about which little is known. The length of the reigns of kings Shalmaneser IV (782–773), Assur-dan III (772–755), and Assur-nerari V (754–745), each a son of Adad-nerari, was not unlike that of other kings. Their reigns produced almost no royal inscriptions that we know of.[31] None of the preserved texts mentions palace constructions. Administrative texts dating to this period have been found in the corpus discovered in room 57 of the Northwest Palace. The years 763–758 saw new internal strife, with a revolt in either Kalḫu or Assur in the years 763–762.[32] The Assyrian court remained in Kalḫu during this period occupying the same buildings it had done before.

The year 746 saw a new revolt in Kalḫu.[33] The exact sequence of events is unclear, but it ended with Tiglath-pileser, yet another son of Adad-nerari,[34] taking the throne. Tiglath-pileser must have been born relatively late in Adad-nerari's reign and was probably at least 45 years old when he took the throne.[35] While Tiglath-pileser might have spent his early years in the Northwest Palace, he was only a child when his father died in 783. The court procedure in such a situation is unknown. He might have remained in the Northwest Palace until he started his own family, but if all children of former kings remained in the Northwest Palace, the number of residents would have grown considerably towards 770 as one must assume that children of Shalmaneser IV and Assur-dan III also existed at this time. It is difficult to imagine how so many people could have resided in the Northwest

[29] Referred to in Oates and Oates 2001: 70. [30] Fuchs 2008a: 74–5; Macgregor 2012: 82–5.

[31] RIMA 3, A.0.105–7.

[32] Fuchs 2008a: 86–9. A revolt took place in *libbi āli* (lit. 'city centre'), the name of Assur's citadel. Fuchs, however, believed it to have referred to Kalḫu during this period.

[33] Fuchs 2008a: 94–6. [34] For doubts about Tiglath-pileser's descent see Grayson 1991b: 73–4.

[35] His date of birth is based on the fact that his son Sargon II must have been born around 770 (Parpola 1983: 132 n. 390). For doubts about Sargon's descent see Grayson 1991b: 87–8.

Palace. Tiglath-pileser would certainly have left the palace when he started his own family, probably residing in one of the palatial complexes of Kalḫu. At this point in time, his family was destined to become a side branch of the royal family.

We are relatively well informed about Tiglath-pileser's reign, especially about the historical developments, but the information remains fragmentary.[36] The Assyrian kingdom expanded substantially to encompass new territories from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean;[37] arguably it is during this time that it became a true empire, for the first time expanding considerably beyond the old extent of the Middle Assyrian kingdom.

There is no indication that the status of the most important royal palaces changed during this period. The Military and Northwest Palaces of Kalḫu must have remained the main palaces of the empire. Parts of the diplomatic correspondence of Tiglath-pileser's reign was found in the scribal office (ZT 4) of the Northwest Palace (Pl. 4; Fig. 2.2).[38] Architecturally, nothing can be dated to his reign in these palaces. In the Old Palace in Assur one knobbed plate of Tiglath-pileser was found in room 2 (Pl. 8a).[39]

## 4.5 THE SOUTHWEST PALACE (KALḪU)

The biggest architectural project undertaken by Tiglath-pileser was probably the construction of a new palace on the citadel of Kalḫu. The palace is known as the Central Palace, but will be called the Southwest Palace here, which seems to represent its location on the citadel more precisely. The palace was never finished.

The palace is primarily known from royal inscriptions. Archaeologically, the only remains that are certain to have belonged to the palace are the reliefs found on the citadel. These, however, were not found in situ but in the process of being reused in Esarhaddon's Southwest Palace. Reliefs were found along and in front of the walls of Esarhaddon's palace, but also stacked up in the courtyard of the Shalmaneser Building awaiting transport (Fig. 3.1).[40] Their existence does suggest that the building they belonged to was in an advanced state of completion, since reliefs were normally carved after being placed in position. This must also have been the case with Tiglath-pileser's palace since the texts written on them continued over the slabs.[41] The process of inscribing the reliefs was, however, left unfinished and some were not completed.[42] This suggests that the palace was unfinished when Tiglath-pileser died. It was apparently not finished subsequently.

[36] Grayson 1991b: 74–83. [37] Tadmor 1994: 9–10. [38] Luukko 2013; Saggs 2001.
[39] Pedde and Lundström 2008: 182. [40] Sobolewski 1982a: fig. 7.
[41] Tadmor 1994: 27. [42] Layard 1849c: 24; Tadmor 1994: 258.

That supports the view that the Northwest Palace continued to function as the primary palace during this period.

### *4.5.1 The Location of Tiglath-pileser's Palace*

While Tiglath-pileser might have intended his new palace to replace the Northwest Palace, it did not physically infringe upon nor plunder it as Esarhaddon would later do. The statuses of the buildings surrounding the Northwest Palace remain unclear. If one interprets these buildings as associated with the Northwest Palace, if not belonging to it, as has been argued in this book, one would expect the buildings still to have been in use during the reign of Tiglath-pileser.

At one point in time, a monumental outer wall was constructed on top of the remains of the Shalmaneser and Central Buildings (Fig. 3.1). Sobolewski, who excavated this wall, argued that this new outer wall post-dated Tiglath-pileser.[43] It probably belonged to Esarhaddon's later palace.[44] With the Upper Chambers and the Shalmaneser Building still standing, Tiglath-pileser's palace must have been located further south. The northern limit of the palace must, therefore, have been defined by the southern limit of the Shalmaneser Building as represented by the three colossi found by Loftus.[45] The other limits of the palace were more or less defined by the citadel itself. The western limit of the palace was explicitly mentioned by Tiglath-pileser, who stated that he expanded the citadel facing the Tigris river by 60 cubits[46] (approx. 30 m[47]). It is unclear where such a large extension could have been reconstructed. Alternatively, it might represent the filling up of a gully rather than a full extension, similar to Esarhaddon's work at the Military Palace in Kalḫu (§7.4). To the east the palace probably ended close to where a large gully runs nowadays. Such reconstruction moves the Central Palace to a position almost identical to that of Esarhaddon's later Southwest Palace (Fig. 7.2). Its common designation as Central Palace had always been misleading. A designation as Southwest Palace seems more appropriate and highlights the assumed correlation between the palaces of Tiglath-pileser and Esarhaddon.

### *4.5.2 The Palace*

Any proper Late Assyrian royal palace must have contained a throneroom with associated courtyard. This courtyard must have formed the northern part of the

[43] Sobolewski 1982a: 261. [44] Kertai 2013b: 17.

[45] Loftus, 2nd Report of the Assyrian Excavation Fund (published in Barnett 1976: 74).

[46] Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 25, note to RINAP 1, 25: 3′. This is a correction of Tadmor (1994: 86–7) where a measurement of 6 cubits was mentioned.

[47] Powell 1990: 475.

palace. It probably lay just south of the Shalmaneser Building. This courtyard could have resulted in the gully that is present at this location on the citadel. The gate found by Loftus, and perhaps dated to Tiglath-pileser, can be seen as an attempt to connect both buildings. The few remains of this gate suggest that the main direction was from the north. Its northern wall was thicker, its colossi larger, and the only preserved door-socket was located behind it.

Tiglath-pileser's palace was decorated with reliefs, but only a few have been found. Barnett listed 54 reliefs,[48] but Layard found at least 100 in the Shalmaneser Building alone.[49] To put these numbers into perspective it might be good to remember that Ashurnasirpal's Northwest Palace contained at least 400 reliefs. Many reliefs originally belonging to Tiglath-pileser's palace must still be buried on the citadel. The known reliefs can represent the decoration of only a few rooms. Tadmor and Barnett were able to reconstruct six different walls to which the known reliefs could originally have belonged. These were separated into those with 7 (series A) and 12 lines (series B) of inscriptions. A third category (series C) consisted of longer inscriptions, up to 30 lines, and form a heterogeneous collection.[50] Those with 7 or 12 lines had two pictorial registers divided by an inscription. The 30-line variant consisted of a single register over which the text was inscribed.

Most information about the building is found in the royal inscriptions that commemorated its construction.[51] Whether everything described in the text was executed by the time of Tiglath-pileser's death is uncertain. His palace is said to have possessed at least three main entrances, which were, atypically for a palace, given names. They were called 'Gates-of-Justice-Which-Give-the-Correct-Judgement-for-the-Rulers-of-the-Four-Quarters [i.e. the world], Which-Offer-the-Yield-of-the-Mountains-and-the-Seas, Which-Admit-the-Produce-of-Mankind-Before-the-King-Their-Master'. The palace contained the first known example of an Assyrian *bēt ḫilāni* as well as 'a glittering chamber inlaid with precious stones'. It was decorated with multiple types of wood, knob-plates and door-bands made of precious metals, and stone colossi, reliefs, and thresholds.

[48] Barnett and Falkner 1962: 45–6. [49] Layard 1849c: 22.

[50] Tadmor 1994: 238–57; Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 19–20. Reade (1968: 73) had earlier also established 16- and 20-line reliefs, belonging to Tadmor's series C. See also Wäfler 1975: 302–5.

[51] RINAP 1, 47: 18′–36′.

FIVE

# Sargon II (722–705)

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Tiglath-pileser III (744–727) was succeeded by his son Shalmaneser V (726–722), whose short reign left few traces. The Assyrian realm remained more or less stable. Shalmaneser V conquered Samaria[1] and probably turned the western vassals Sama'al, Samerina, and Que into provinces.[2] Grave goods of his queen Banitu were found in tomb 2 of the Northwest Palace.[3] Sargon II, another son of Tiglath-pileser, removed Shalmaneser V from the throne.[4] This succession was accompanied by turmoil and a diminished control over several western provinces and vassals as well as the loss of Babylonia. Sargon's first years were occupied by reclaiming the western territories. The following years led to successes in the north-east against Urartu and Media. The years 710 and 709 finally saw the reoccupation of Babylonia.

In 717 Sargon started the construction of a new royal city, named Dur-Sharruken,[5] which was meant to replace Kalḫu as the primary city of the empire (Pl. 10a). He chose the small village of Maganuba as its location. The project was enormous and can only be compared to the founding of Kalḫu as the new primary city almost 150 years earlier. While we are ill informed on the exact statuses of the different palaces in Kalḫu, the Northwest Palace must still have formed the primary palace of the empire during most of Sargon's reign. Whereas the construction of Kalḫu had lasted into the reign of Shalmaneser III it seems that Dur-Sharruken was finished much quicker. The gods were welcomed into the new city in September/October 707 and the main palace was inaugurated in April/May 706.[6] Sargon was unable to enjoy his new city for long. He was killed on the battlefield in 705.[7]

Kalḫu started to lose its importance during the final years of Sargon's reign. This process probably started a few years before Dur-Sharruken was inaugurated. Sargon stayed in Babylonia from 710 to 708, during his campaigns and after its occupation. He might thereafter have resided, at least temporarily, in Nineveh.

[1] Baker 2008a: 586; Tadmor 1958: 33–8. [2] Baker 2008a. [3] See n. 18.
[4] For a summary of Sargon's reign see Fuchs 2009.
[5] On the urban aspects of Dur-Sharruken see Battini 1998; Novák 1999: 141–52.
[6] Russell 1999c: 107. [7] Frahm 1999.

This would have been a convenient location from which to supervise the building activity in Dur-Sharruken especially during the years 707–706 when Sargon seems to have occupied himself mainly with this task.[8] A stay in Nineveh may be reconstructed on the basis of a single letter[9] as well as by the presence in Nineveh of Sargon's correspondence.[10] These texts could, however, also have been moved to Nineveh later and even if the king was present in Nineveh this does not mean the city formed his main residence.

Little is known about the royal palaces throughout the empire during Sargon's reign, even though most must still have been in use. For the Military Palace in Kalḫu almost nothing can be dated to his reign, although a scribe of this palace is attested in 709 when the court still resided in Kalḫu.[11] It is the first time that the palace is described as an *ekal māšarti*.[12] The statement that the scribe belonged to the *ekal māšarti* of Kalḫu suggests that other *ekal māšarti* existed as well. It could hint at the military complex in Dur-Sharruken, which was probably being constructed during this period. A letter of crown prince Sennacherib mentions an *ekal māšarti* that seems to be located in Dur-Sharruken, but this is uncertain.[13] The older Military Palace of Nineveh could also still have been in use.

Some minor changes in the Old Palace of Assur could date to Sargon's reign. A few glazed knob-plates of Sargon were found in that palace, probably in room 10 (Pl. 8a).[14] Preusser believed Sargon to have been responsible for introducing a new connection between room 18 and the north-eastern entrance courtyard,[15] but the reasons for this dating remain unclear.

Sargon probably started his family during the reign of his uncle Ashur-nerari V (754–745). The chances of Sargon becoming king must have been quite remote. Even after his father Tiglath-pileser III had become king in 745, Sargon's prospects for kingship must have been limited considering he had an older brother who would indeed rule as king before him.[16] Sargon, being part of a side branch of the royal family, cannot have resided in the Northwest Palace itself and probably lived in one of the many palatial complexes in Kalḫu.

## 5.2 THE NORTHWEST PALACE (KALḪU)

The Northwest Palace (Pl. 4) remained the primary palace of the empire until the reign of Sargon. It was the palace most foreign dignitaries would have visited, where activities and ceremonies of state would have taken place, and where the

[8] Fuchs 2009: 54. On the construction of the Royal Palace see Parpola 1995.
[9] SAA 15, 226: 10–11. [10] Fuchs and Parpola 2001: LIV n. 122. [11] SAA 6, 31: r. 26.
[12] Also mentioned in SAA 5, 206: r. 2–4. [13] SAA 1, 39: r. 7.
[14] Nunn 2006: 107, nos. 61–2; Pedde and Lundström 2008: 182.
[15] Pedde and Lundström 2008: 55. [16] Frahm 2008: 14.

royal family resided most of the time. Its status would dramatically change during the reign of Sargon, but the process cannot be followed precisely. For most of Sargon's reign it must have functioned more or less unchanged as the primary palace of the empire.[17] Its continued status is supported by the burial of his queen, Ataliya, within its walls.[18]

After the palace community moved to Dur-Sharruken the Northwest Palace lost much of its former status and appears to have become a local administrative centre. Some of the more monumental rooms were used for storage, suggesting that they had lost their original functions. In room I Layard found several broken alabaster vases (and one complete example) as well as a glass vase bearing Sargon's name stored together with armour.[19] It is not unlikely that the items were stored here during the reign of Sargon, which suggests that these objects were stored in their magazines for almost a century, until the palace's final destruction in 612. The Oateses believed that rooms such as A and V were intended as 'strong-rooms' or 'treasuries'.[20] The same description can be used for room U, in which the Carchemish booty was placed by Sargon, probably directly after the city's conquest in 717.[21] Even though some of these rooms, such as room U, had always been storage rooms, the more general use of the palace for such storage purposes was not without its irony. Ashurnasirpal had explicitly warned against the misuse of his palace as a warehouse in his royal inscriptions covering the palace walls:

> (v 35) He [i.e. the future king] must neither appropriate it for a warehouse (nor) turn it into a prison. He must not incarcerate its (the palace's) men or women as prisoners therein. He must not allow it to disintegrate through neglect, desertion, or lack of renovation. (v 40) He must not move into another palace, either within or without the city, instead of my palace.[22]

This cannot have escaped Sargon's attention as he placed his own inscription in room U above those of Ashurnasirpal, commemorating its use as a storage space (using the same term as Ashurnasirpal: *bēt nakkamti* ).[23]

## 5.3 THE ROYAL PALACE (DUR-SHARRUKEN)

The citadel of Dur-Sharruken contained several large palatial complexes (Pls. 13–15b). Like Assur, but unlike other citadels, it was located on ground level.

[17] Mallowan (1966: 112) suggested that the Northwest Palace functioned as a specialized workshop for the new city, but evidence for this is scarce. The hypothesis is largely based on the find of a single inscribed ivory board in the well of room AB, which mentions being destined for Dur-Sharruken. Mallowan also interpreted the finds of tusks and unfinished ivories in this light, although these are more difficult to date.

[18] Al-Rawi 2008: 119–24, 136–8. For a discussion on the identities of the buried queens see Baker 2008a: 586; Dalley 2008; Kertai 2013c; Radner 1999.

[19] Layard 1849b: 277–9. [20] Oates and Oates 2001: 55. [21] Na'aman 1994: 20.

[22] RIMA 2, A.0.101.17: v. 35–41. [23] Russell 1999c: 99.

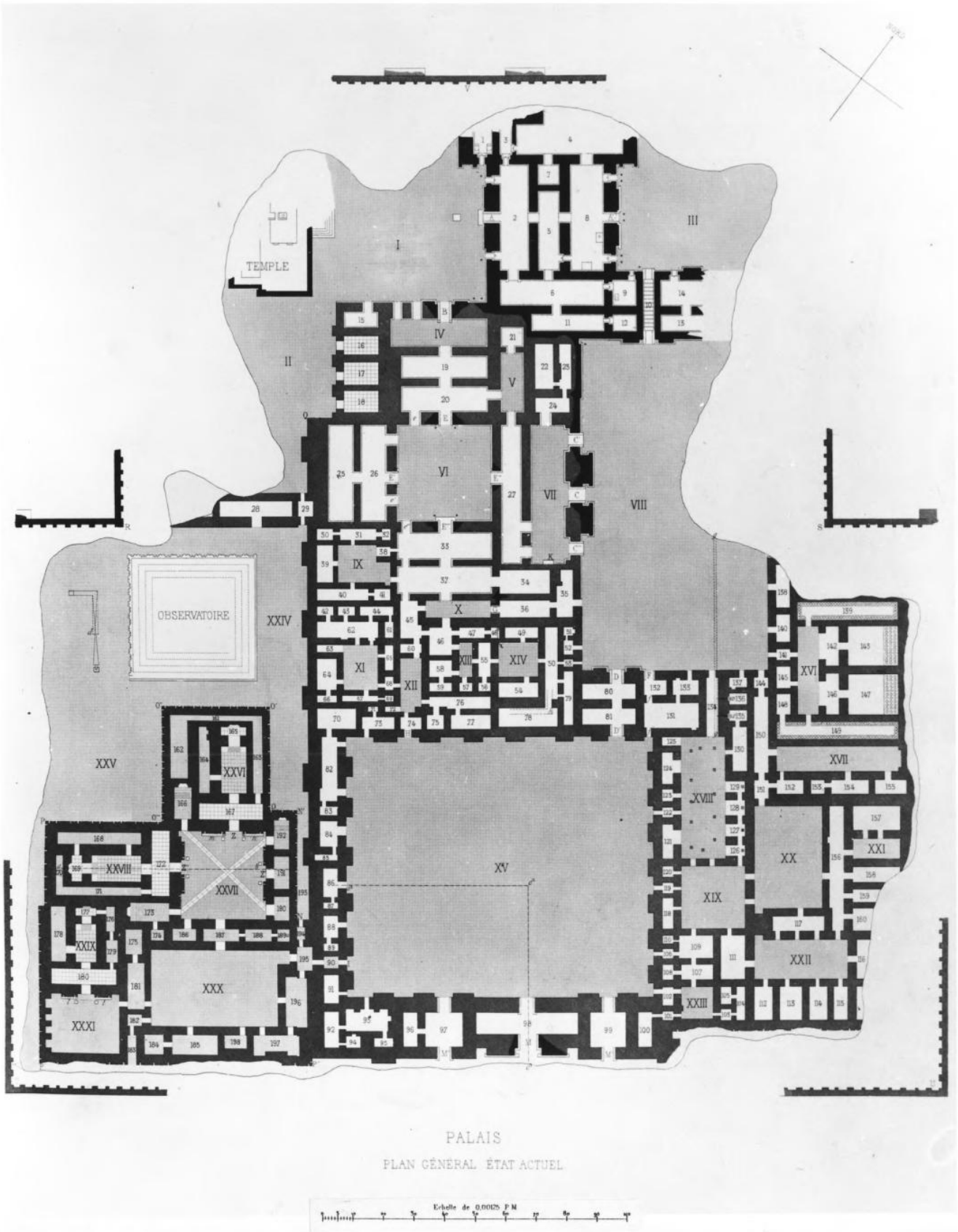



FIG. 5.1 Place's floorplan of the Royal Palace

The citadel of Dur-Sharruken contained two raised platforms within its confines. The largest can be described as the palace terrace. It not only accommodated Sargon's Royal Palace, but also a complex of temples with its associated Ziggurat. The Nabu Temple was placed on a platform of its own and connected with the palace terrace through a bridge. Both terraces were easy to reach. Their entrance gates were located on the terraces themselves rather than at their foot. The palace terrace could be reached by at least two ramps (Pl. 11). The most monumental ramp was located in front of the main entrance of the palace. It protruded out of the palace terrace and was located in the middle of the citadel.[24] A second ramp was placed in the south-western corner of the palace terrace. It was a more modest four-metre wide ramp that was integrated into the platform. It formed an extension of the route coming from Citadel Gate A.[25]

Analyses of Sargon's Royal Palace face some paradoxical problems. The palace is almost entirely excavated, but is nonetheless only poorly known. Its floorplan, as published by Place (Fig. 5.1), is largely complete, but mostly uncertain. And while there is no reason to doubt its general validity, there is every reason to mistrust its exactness. While a typical Late Assyrian palace can be seen hidden in the lines of Place's floorplan, many parts of the plan remain puzzling.

### *5.3.1 A Short History of its Excavation*

The palace was first excavated by Botta with the aim of finding biblical Nineveh. His excavations were concentrated on the protruding Double-sided Reception Suite on the palace terrace (Fig. 5.2).[26] Layard very briefly excavated here as well.[27] Botta's work was continued by Place, who excavated the rest of the palace.[28] It would remain the only 'fully' excavated royal palace for more than hundred years. Smith 'spent some time in inspecting these ruins',[29] but the results of this effort are unknown. The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago re-excavated small parts of the palace from 1927 till 1935 under the direction of Chiera, Frankfort, and Loud (Fig. 5.3).[30] After a short excavation by the Department of Antiquities of the Republic of Iraq in 1938 no further excavation has taken place in the palace area.

### *5.3.2 Methodological Problems*

Place was by any standards an impressive archaeologist. Not only was he interested in excavating the unsculptured rooms, complaining that excavations were too

[24] Loud and Altman 1938: 29, pls. 11 C, 12 B–C. [25] Loud and Altman 1938: 29, pls. 11 A–B.
[26] Albenda 1986; Botta 1849a; b; 1850. [27] Layard 1853a: 129–30.
[28] Place 1867a; b; 1870. See the articles in Fontan 1994. [29] Smith 1875: 101.
[30] Loud and Altman 1938; Loud, Frankfort, and Jacobsen 1936. For a short summary see Wilson 1995.

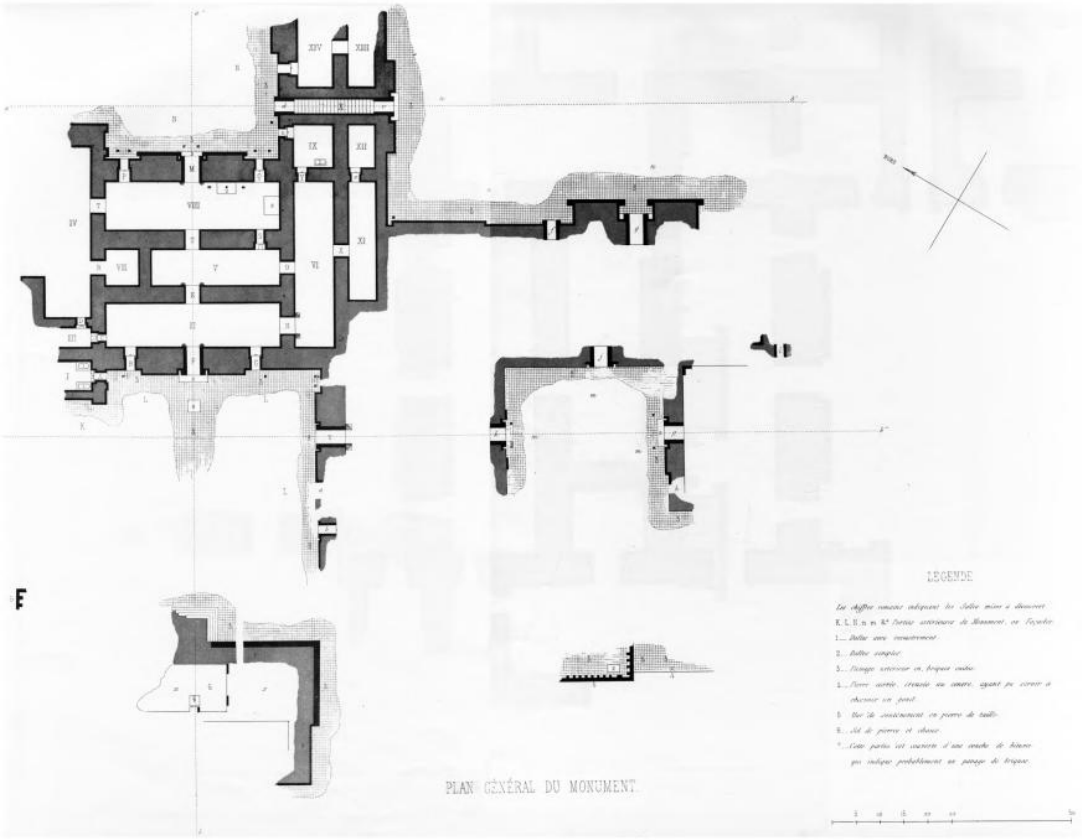



FIG. 5.2 Floorplan of the Royal Palace as excavated by Botta

much focused on getting reliefs to museums,[31] but he was also able to reconstruct a floorplan from these rooms (Fig. 5.1). Contemporaries such as Layard, Loftus, and Rassam had much more trouble finding mudbrick walls and their resulting floorplans were much more fragmentary. Place was also more explicit about the methodologies of his excavations. These were considerable achievements during what were still the early days of Near Eastern archaeology. Place was, of course, not beyond taking away reliefs and other finds from his excavations. But at the time of writing most of his reliefs were lying on the bottom of the Tigris river after the boats carrying them had been overtaken by local tribes and sank.[32] While he might have actually been better at tracing mudbrick walls, he also seems to have been less burdened by doubt.

Place warned against creating fantasy and mentioned his problems with reconstructing some of the rooms,[33] which were those that had eroded away and could thus not be excavated. He had no uncertainties about the rooms he did excavate,[34] which is somewhat suspicious considering the scale of his excavations. Frankfort would later complain about the difficulties of tracing mudbrick walls at Dur-Sharruken.[35] It is unlikely that the situation would have been much easier during the days of Place. Actually, Place acknowledged that the situation had been similar. He had the additional problem of not knowing what kind of building he was looking for. Nobody had ever excavated an entire Assyrian palace before and the knowledge of even the monumental parts was not sufficiently developed to provide much of a blueprint.[36] The area of the palace he identified as a 'harem' can now easily be recognized as a complex of temples, just as his 'Courtyard VII' is now understood to be the throneroom. In the case of the main entrance Place used the known remains of Persepolis as the basis for reconstructing a large entrance staircase.[37]

Place's technique consisted of tracing the plaster found on the walls. According to him plaster was present on all walls,[38] although he had not yet recognized this at the start of the excavations.[39] This would make it the only Assyrian palace where plaster was preserved on all walls, which seems unlikely. Place actually mentioned that plaster was found only most of the time,[40] fallen on its floors rather than still attached to its walls,[41] and that the paintings were often destroyed by the workmen before he had arrived.[42] He even acknowledged that when no relief or plaster was present corners could be missed resulting in the excavation of the wall beyond it.[43] This certainly suggests that plaster was not always present and

[31] Place 1867a: 38. [32] Pillet 1962: 69–84; see also Larsen 1996: 344–9.
[33] Place 1870: 2–5. [34] Place 1870: 7. [35] Frankfort 1933: 82.
[36] Chevalier 2008: 408 citing Place (AN $F^{21}$ 546 no. 31; 13 May 1853).
[37] Place 1870: 29–31. [38] Place 1870: 103. [39] Place 1867a: 52. [40] Place 1870: 103.
[41] Place 1870: 81. [42] Place 1870: 80. [43] Place 1870: 106.

that walls were sometimes missed. It is also likely that some walls were misidentified as such. The trustworthiness of the doors is even more difficult to establish.

There are thus many reasons to doubt the details of Place's plan. This is, however, of little help while one does not know which parts are incorrect.[44] Neither are Place's texts of much assistance. He was, like many of his contemporaries, largely silent on architectural details, but contrary to others he generally refrained from describing the content of the reliefs he found. This was substituted by an interest in general argumentation, mostly aimed at analysing the floorplan. Unfortunately, Place described most spaces only as they were shown on his plan rather than how they appeared during the excavations. Perhaps this was a consequence of the loss of his field notes during the Tigris shipwreck, which necessitated basing his findings on documents made by others and on the reports he himself had written to the Minister of the Interior.[45] The original plan made on site and at least one further plan must have made their way back to Paris, but have since been lost.[46]

The French government had specifically send Tranchand 'together with the best available surveying equipment' to Khorsabad to make 'scientific measurements'.[47] Tranchand was the main supervisor during the excavations, with Place often being involved with his other responsibilities. Tranchand was, however, an engineer and his photos, a new invention at that time, clearly show his main interest was with technical details such drainage.[48] Regardless of what Place said, and despite the technical expertise of Tranchand, one has to assume that parts of the plan and perhaps many of its architectural details were reconstructed afterwards. Such a sceptical view is supported by several arguments. First, many doors, walls, and rooms are at odds with common Late Assyrian architecture. On Place's plan doors tend to be located in the centre of the walls whereas Assyrians had a predilection for asymmetrical positioning, especially when it came to smaller rooms such as bathrooms. Second, we know that Place was not incapable of missing walls. It is, for instance, certain that a bathroom existed behind the throneroom. This is not only to be expected, but also indicated by the two adjacent doors traced by Place. Third, it is highly unlikely that Place excavated the entire palace. The few surviving excavation photos, although probably not representative, show only single trenches in an unexcavated landscape.[49] Like his contemporaries, Place used tunnelling as his main method of excavation, making it much more difficult to trace plaster and mudbrick walls.[50] His excavations were

[44] Besides the sunken excavation documentation, excavation photos made by Tranchand could also help solve some questions, but most of these (up to 139) were lost as well (Pillet 1962: 107).

[45] André-Salvini 1994: 173.

[46] Albenda 1986: 39.

[47] Guralnick 2002: 26 esp. n. 6.

[48] Chevalier and Lavédrine 1994; Pillet 1962: pls. II–III.

[49] Pillet 1962: pls. II and IV.

[50] Pillet 1962: 48–51.

done on the basis of vertical, horizontal, and diagonal trenches, with a predilection for diagonal ones.[51] Place noted that he took away almost 4000 $m^3$ of earth by 20 April 1852.[52] This represents an excavated area of approximately 1140 $m^2$, which translates into an accumulation of approximately 760 m of trenches.[53] This is impressive for any excavation, but represents only a small area of the palace complex that measured approximately 35,000 $m^2$ excluding its main courtyards. Even if he had continued at the same pace he would not have excavated much more than 10 per cent of the palace. His method consisted of looking for walls inside the trenches which were then followed wherever possible from the level of the floor, if a floor was found.[54] Rooms were not completely excavated. As common for this period, trenches mostly followed a 1.5m-wide strip along the wall leaving the middle of the room unexcavated.[55] Fourth, rooms were sometimes reconstructed on the basis of doors,[56] which suggests that the line of the wall was missed. Lastly, it has turned out that Place's palace contours are flawed. The later and more accurate citadel plan of the Oriental Institute shows two large diversions from Place's plan.[57] First, the palace was not strictly orthogonal, but had the shape of an irregular parallelogram. Second, the area between the throne-room and the Entrance Courtyard turned out to be more than 20 m too long. To correct this one needs to cut out a considerable part of his plan. Such a large margin of error puts the entire plan into question. While the differences in size seem real, much of the internal alignments do not seem to have been retraced by the Chicago expedition and must therefore be considered hypothetical. Margueron and Adam have tried to fit the plan of Place within the contours provided by the Oriental Institute.[58]

The plans of Botta and Flandin seem more accurate, which is certainly related to the much better preservation of the rooms excavated by them. Their plans were nonetheless not completely accurate either. This became clear in the excavations of the 1930s. Loud's excavation showed rooms 10 and 12 to have been more irregular than suggested by the orthogonal plan of Botta (Fig. 5.3). In 1938 rooms 6 and 11 were re-excavated by the Department of Antiquities of the Republic of Iraq. The photo made of reliefs 17–22 in room 6 shows considerable differences from Flandin's drawing,[59] although the general subject was correctly depicted. Other

[51] Place 1870: 101–2. [52] Chevalier 2008: 408 citing Place (AN $F^{21}$ 546; 20 April 1852).

[53] As a rule of thumb Place's description of a trench that was 60 m long, 1.50 m wide, and 3.50 m high was used (Chevalier 2008: 408 citing Place (AN $F^{21}$ 546; 20 April 1852)).

[54] Place 1870: 101. [55] Russell 1999c: 113 n. 34. [56] Place 1870: 106.

[57] Loud and Altman 1938: pl. 70.

[58] Margueron 1995: 187, fig. 4. The plan of Margueron and Adam makes the necessary changes while staying as close as possible to Place's original plan. This leaves many problems unresolved. The plan also proposes a new layout of the main entrance into the palace complex (rooms 197–9).

[59] These photos were published by Albenda (1986: pls. 84–6). Albenda noted several differences between the photos of reliefs 17–22 and Flandin photos (Albenda 1986: fig. 85). Three more differences can be added to the ones discussed by Albenda. Relief 21 is only as wide as the figure portrayed on it. The wall contained

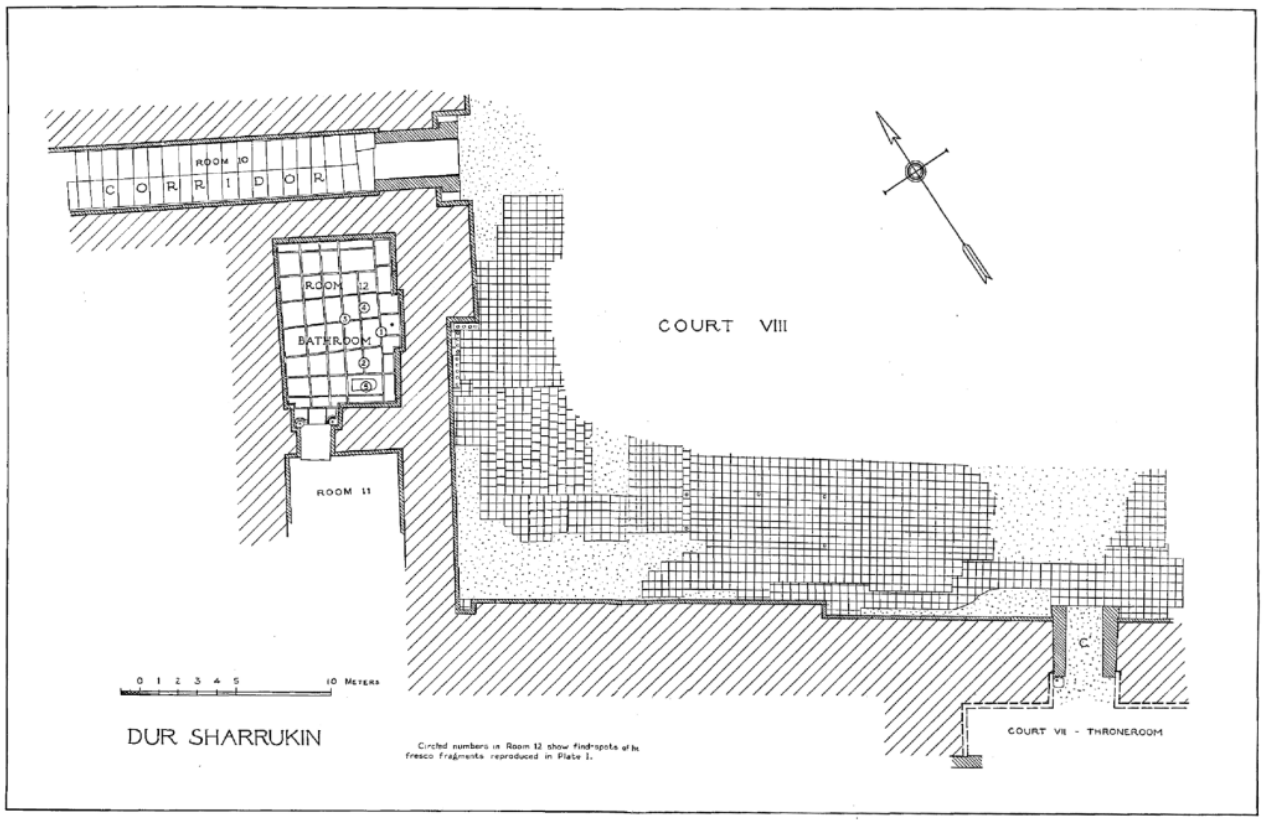



FIG. 5.3 Floorplan of the Royal Palace as excavated by the Oriental Institute

mistakes were found by the Chicago mission along the Throneroom Courtyard façade, where some of the courtiers turned out of be carrying completely different objects from those reconstructed by Botta.[60] It is thus not unlikely that at least part of the reconstructed reliefs were imagined rather than found.[61]

### *5.3.3 The General Organization of the Palace*

Sargon's palace formed a new attempt to accommodate the different areas within the palace in a satisfying way (Fig. 5.4; Pl. II). This was done through a scheme that was not only new, but would not be repeated in later royal palaces. The plan also differed from the other palatial buildings in Dur-Sharruken. This was probably due to the larger programme that needed to be incorporated into a royal palace. Its programme was not only larger, but also more 'urban'. The palace

an additional relief next to relief 21 of a similarly small size. Lastly, the bottoms of the reliefs were stepped with relief 18 starting higher than relief 22, rather than following the straight line drawn by Flandin.

[60] Loud, Frankfort, and Jacobsen 1936: 38, figs. 41, 43–4.

[61] The concordance between text and reliefs also showed some mistakes, at least in room 5 (Frame 2004).

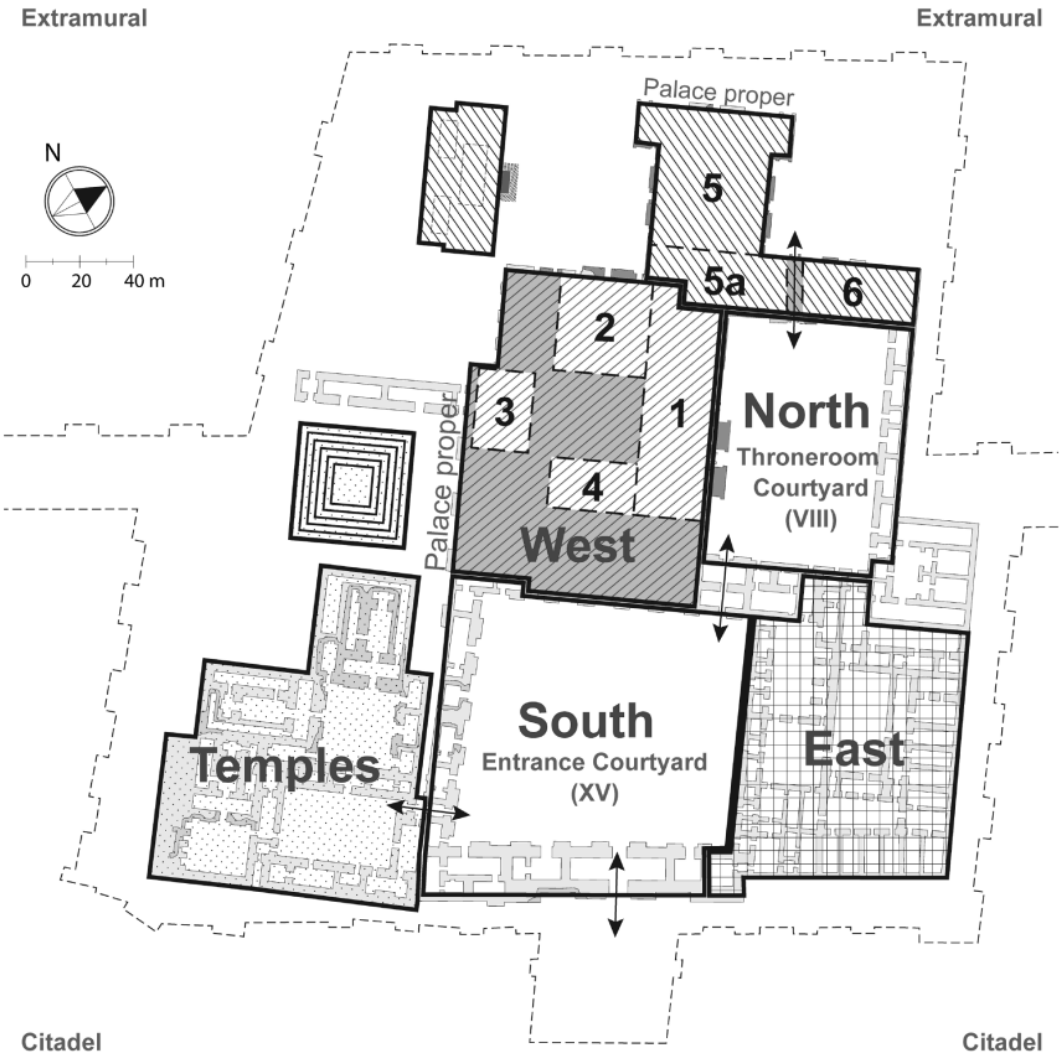



FIG. 5.4 Palace divided into quadrants, including the main suites of the palace

complex can be described as an urban ensemble as well as a single building. This ambiguity formed one of its most characteristic aspects. Sargon's palace was organized into a square subdivided into four quadrants, a scheme that is unique within the corpus of Late Assyrian architecture, though somewhat comparable to the Military Palace of Kalḫu.

Two quadrants were taken up by large courtyards. The southern quadrant formed the Entrance Courtyard (XV) whereas the northern quadrant represents the Throneroom Courtyard (VIII). The eastern quadrant was occupied by service functions. The main part of the palace was located in the western quadrant with two monumental suites located on the terrace to its north-west. What we would normally consider a Late Assyrian royal palace only occupied the two north-western quadrants. This area contained most functions that were present in other royal palaces and can therefore be described as the palace proper. A fifth quadrant, to the south-west, was formed by a complex of temples.

To understand Sargon's palace complex it is good to compare it to Ashurnasirpal's Northwest Palace in Kalḫu (Pl. 22a–b). The Northwest Palace contained many similar areas, but was organized linearly with the temples in the north followed to the south by the Throneroom Courtyard, the main reception suites, the Royal Courtyard, and the service area. In the intervening years the required spaces, especially the service and representational ones, seem to have greatly increased in number. The service quadrant took up almost half of the build-up space in Sargon's palace. This suggests that several new functions were added to the palace in comparison with the Northwest Palace. It did not represent a change within the palace proper (i.e. the western quadrant), which was similar in size and general organization to the Northwest Palace.

Several constrains must have been present in the planning of Sargon's palace. Most of these relate to the distances and connections required between the different areas of the palace, with each part being able to function without hampering the others. This required direct connections to the outside, but also the protection of the representational and residential areas. To these must be added the apparent wish to situate some of the representational spaces of the palace on its terrace and the common orientation of the throneroom. Sargon's palace appears to be a mostly successful attempt to fulfil these requirements.

### *5.3.4 The Entrance Courtyard*

Sargon's palace was entered through the Entrance Courtyard (XV) with the Throneroom Courtyard being placed further inside. The Entrance Courtyard connected the three main areas of the palace: the temple complex, the service area, and the palace proper. It must have been relatively easily accessible and

formed the main access point for people associated with the temples and service areas, but who might never have entered the palace proper.

Contrary to other palace courtyards, the Entrance Courtyard did not contain many associated spaces. Most of the surrounding rooms formed passages into the adjacent areas. The only rooms belonging to this courtyard were located along its south-western side. Here Place found a row of four small Standard Apartments.[62] Place stated that the door of room 84 was 2.50 m wide and contained white plaster, with two large vessels (1.15 m high), one on either side of its entrance. The room itself was filled with pottery, which led Place to believe it had been a pottery shop.[63] Room 86 contained a large iron deposit.[64] Such features are more typical of workshops and storage spaces than of Standard Apartments.[65] In the southern corner a larger suite was found centred on room 93. It probably formed the 'corner office' and must have belonged to an official in charge of organizing the comings and goings in this courtyard.

The main gate into the Entrance Courtyard was formed by rooms 97–9. These formed three independent gates next to each other protected by sixteen colossi. The architecture, as proposed by Place, is problematic and without precedent. Place believed these gates to have been intended to separate between different groups, but this is not how movement was generally organized. Place used the throneroom façade as comparison,[66] but one would rather have expected this entrance to resemble the gates leading into the city and citadel.[67] These consisted of two longitudinal rooms placed behind each other, each room connected to a smaller room, one of which contained a staircase. Such main entrances were normally flanked by two bull colossi at the outside door only. This is clearly not how the gate of Place looks. Margueron tried to make sense of this gate by eliminating the side gates.[68] This is certainly the most logical reconstruction, but one must note that Place indicated having found the colossi standing in the side entrances.[69] While the drawings of the 'actual' situation can be considered

[62] These rooms were probably more standardized than the somewhat irregular rooms shown on Place's map. Room 82 must have been divided into two rooms with its eastern half forming part of a small Standard Apartment.

[63] Place 1867a: 82–3. Rooms 84 and 86 were mixed up by Place (Loud, Frankfort, and Jacobsen 1936: 87).

[64] Place 1867a: 84–9.

[65] These rooms were reconstructed as single rooms by Loud (Loud and Altman 1938: pl. 70), but his plan is suspect as well, as it contains too much space between these two rooms.

[66] Place 1867a: 91. [67] Loud and Altman 1938: pls. 7 and 78.

[68] Margueron 1995: 189, fig. 4. Loud came to the same conclusion by re-excavating part of this façade without finding a side gate (Loud and Altman 1938: 55). Place himself is also unclear on the function of room 99, which he believed to have been a workshop for the sculpting of reliefs (Place 1867a: 93), which would seem to contradict his reconstruction of this room as a gate.

[69] Place 1867b: pl. 20.

artistic rather than realistic, to ignore these colossi seems problematic, though probably necessary.[70]

Regardless of the original appearance of the gate, it must have formed one of the more monumental gates within the city. Its monumentality was further enhanced by the large ramp leading up to it, the open space below it and the axis from Citadel Gate B leading up to it. The monumentality of this gate was in stark contrast to the other major gates within the Entrance Courtyard. The courtyard was clearly not centred on the gates surrounding it. Rather than central axes or striking architecture the Entrance Courtyard placed the gates in its corners and submerged them into the façades. The main gate into the palace proper (rooms 80–1) was placed in the northern corner. Because of the quadrangular scheme the connection between the Entrance and Throneroom Courtyards necessarily occurred at their corners. This resulted in the throneroom being approached from the side. Whereas a diagonal approach was common, such side approach must have diminished the monumental impact of the throneroom façade, which was hardly visible when entering the Throneroom Courtyard. Place's plan again shows a secondary passage, through rooms 131–3, to have existed next to the main gate. Since Place did not explicitly mention the gates of rooms 131–3 in his publications one can question their existence.

The entrances into the service quadrant were oriented towards the Entrance Courtyard. This quadrant does not seem to have possessed its own external entrance. The main route into the temple complex also passed through the Entrance Courtyard. Temples were always closely related to Assyrian kingship and were often found in close proximity to the royal palaces by virtue of their shared presence on the citadels. In most cases, however, they formed spatially independent structures. At Dur-Sharruken, the distinction between the temple complex and the palace seems to have been intentionally blurred. The outer façade of the temple complex was submerged into the outer façade of the palace. The only known outside entrance into the temple complex appears to have been a small corridor (183) that was probably intended to connect with the bridge leading to the Nabu Temple, but is unlikely to have functioned as the main entrance. Room 90 of the Entrance Courtyard formed the most monumental entrance into the temple complex. This gate was, however, located in the southern corner of the courtyard, an even more hidden placement than the gate leading into the Throneroom Courtyard.

The complexes that surrounded the Entrance Courtyard must have been articulated through differences in height and ornamentation. Whereas major gates were normally articulated through flanking buttresses, this tool was rendered less useful

[70] For a discussion of this problem see Albenda 1986: 43–4.

here by the profusion of regularly placed buttresses throughout the courtyard. The presence of buttresses in an internal courtyard is in itself remarkable and forms another aspect of the urban character of this courtyard.[71] Whether these buttresses were indeed as common as Place believed them to be might be questioned. It is conceivable that he copy-pasted the buttresses he found next to the more important gates, judging them to be general architectural features.[72]

The Entrance Courtyard must have placed the emphasis on the continuous façade rather than the complexes surrounding it. The resulting effect is unique within Late Assyrian architecture and can perhaps best be compared to urban squares such as the Naqsh-e Jahan Square in Isfahan, which was also part of a royal building programme with a homogeneous façade punctuated by the different palace, urban, and mosque gates. These gates made a subtle play with the general façade,[73] perhaps not unlike the Entrance Courtyard of Sargon. It is, however, possible that the Northwest Palace contained a similar urban square to its east (§2.2.3), making both palaces more alike.

This analysis suggests that the borders of the palace proper were intentionally blurred. While the entire complex is clearly delineated by its placement on a platform within the citadel, the identity of the palace was diminished by the inclusion of the service quadrant and the temple complex. This enhanced the association of the temples with the palace, but diminished their autonomy. The placement and architecture of the gates shows this blurring to have been intentional. The uniqueness of the Entrance Courtyard is that it does not seem to choose where the borders of the palace lay, an ambiguity unknown in other palaces.

### *5.3.5 The Service Quadrant*

The eastern quadrant (Fig. 5.4) must have been largely devoted to service functions, although the exact nature of the rooms remains unclear. The area consisted, with a few exceptions, of a combination of courtyards, corridors, and storage spaces. It seems comparable to similar areas found in the major residences of Dur-Sharruken (Pls. 13–15b). While some spaces and connections are atypical and suspect, most spaces look familiar. Most courtyards were, as much as possible, directly connected to the Entrance or Throneroom Courtyards. It must, however, be noted that the connections with the Throneroom Courtyard were more limited and elaborate, although this might simply be an effect of the shorter stretch of façade available to incorporate entrances into.

[71] See also Matthiae 2012: 478–9.

[72] Buttresses do not appear on Loud's plan of rooms 84 and 86 (Loud and Altman 1938: pl. 70).

[73] Babaie 2008: 144, 183–4.

Place (Fig. 5.1) interpreted most courtyards (XVIII–XXII) as stables.[74] Such reconstruction is, however, only convincing for courtyard XVIII. This courtyard contained four alcoves (126–9) that were open towards the courtyard and connected with each other and courtyard XIX. Similar alcoves were found in the Nabu Temple (courtyards III and IV) and in Residence L (courtyard 105/106; Pl. 14).[75] Courtyard XVIII contained several bronze rings attached to a stone pavement, whereas each alcove contained a single ring.[76] The broad doors of rooms 121 and 124 remind one of the rooms at the Military Palace of Kalḫu[77] that were, on the basis of their wide doors, interpreted as workshops for the repair of chariots.[78] Close to corridor 134 Place found a 4m-tall square pillar crowned by a palmette.[79] It reminded Place of a relief from the Northwest Palace showing a similar pillar as part of a pavilion/tent containing horses, some of which were tied to rings on the floor.[80]

Rooms 100–11 and courtyard XXIII are difficult to interpret due to the atypical nature of their architecture. Courtyard XIX's main function was to connect to other courtyards. It possessed only two small rooms associated with it. Courtyards XX and XXIII were surrounded by several unconnected long rooms that must have functioned as storage spaces. They could have formed treasuries, but could also have been intended for products of daily use. Place believed courtyard XVII to have formed a bakery and kitchen;[81] it might simply have been a storage area. The rooms contained mudbrick benches with many pottery jars, some of which contained charred grain.[82]

Rooms 139 and 142–9 form the most northern part of the service quadrant (Fig. 5.5). These rooms were clearly considered important. They were connected

[74] Place 1867a: 95.

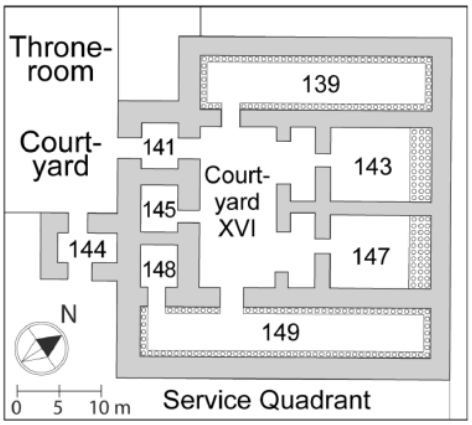
[75] Loud found ovens in the alcoves of courtyard IV of the Nabu Temple and therefore considered them to be intended for cooking. This was corroborated by ethnographic examples (from the 1930s) and the protection the placement of these alcoves provided against the prevailing south-eastern wind (Loud and Altman 1938: 63). A similar conclusion was not reached for courtyards 105 (Residence L) and IV (Nabu Temple). Loud suggested that 106 formed a portico to courtyard 105 that might have functioned as a 'bureau of weights and measures' (Loud and Altman 1938: 71), whereas he did not know how to interpret the alcoves of courtyard III (Loud and Altman 1938: 63). The rubble paving of courtyard 105 may have been quite suited for horses (Loud and Altman 1938: 71).

[76] Place 1867a: 95. [77] Especially rooms NW 20–2. [78] Oates and Oates 2001: 156.

[79] Place 1867b: pl. 34.

[80] Place 1867a: 96. Illustrated in Place 1867b: pl. 34.1–2. Albenda (1986: 47, n. 55) mentioned a similar column with almost identical measurements to have been found in 'passage 47, leading into court x'. According to her this column is mentioned in report no. 49, dated 19 July 1854, and illustrated as Place 1867b: pl. 35. There are a few problems with this description. First, 47 is a room that has no direct connection to courtyard X. Second, the capital shown on Place's pl. 35.1–2 was found in the 'Dépendances' that is in the south-eastern quadrant. The rest of the column does not seem to have been found. The capital could represent a column base instead. [81] Place 1867a: 101. [82] Place 1867a: 99–100.

FIG. 5.5 The royal storage facility




directly to the Throneroom Courtyard and only loosely to the service quadrant. They are therefore perhaps best understood as a separate unit. Place believed this area to have been used as a storage space for liquids (mostly wine), which were placed into pierced limestone and mudbrick benches.[83] Botta also excavated a part of this complex, finding similar storage jars, but his plan (Fig. 5.6) cannot be fitted onto that of Place (Fig. 5.1).[84] While the function as wine storage has been accepted by later scholars, most have interpreted this to be a later use of the complex. Turner[85] was the first to argue that the rooms resembled a Nabu Temple as known from Kalḫu,[86] Dur-Sharruken,[87] and Guzana.[88] Other scholars have followed this interpretation,[89] which was largely based on a comparison with a similar suite in the palace of Ḫadattu (Pl. 24a; rooms 32–42).[90] Thureau-Dangin's plan of the Ḫadattu palace is incomplete with several rooms lacking an entrance.[91] The original floorplan is therefore unknown, but it seems to resemble the double shrine structure surrounded by long corridor-like rooms as known from Nabu Temples. Such shrines always contained a raised limestone platform. Heinrich added that the external wall of the Dur-Sharruken complex had niches similar to the temples on the palace terrace.[92] One must, however, note that these niches were reconstructed by Place.[93] They are completely hypothetical.

[83] Place 1867a: 102.

[84] Botta 1849b: pl. 165. North should be located towards the bottom left of the plate if the general citadel plan is correct (Botta 1849a: pl. 4).

[85] Turner 1968: 63–4. [86] Mallowan 1966: 231–85, Plan VI.

[87] Loud and Altman 1938: 56–64, pl. 71.

[88] Langenegger, Müller, and Naumann 1950: 349–57, fig. 165.

[89] Heinrich 1982: 250–1; Seidl 1998a: 24–9.

[90] Turner 1968: 63, fig. 1. The comparison was also made by Reade 1968: 70 n. 6.

[91] Thureau-Dangin and Dunand 1931: Fouilles d'Arslan-Tash, 1928. [92] Heinrich 1982: 251.

[93] Place 1870: pl. 7.

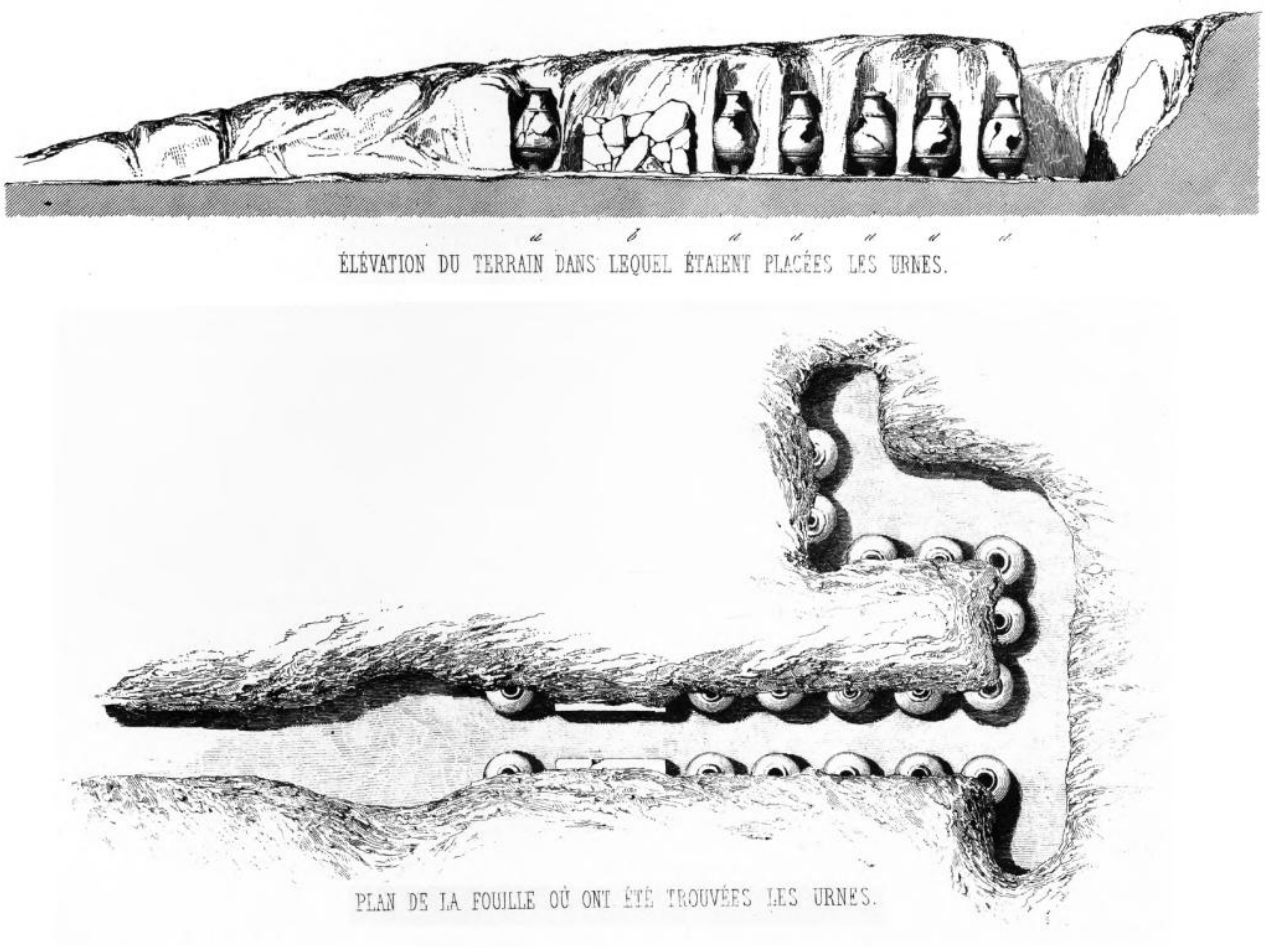



FIG. 5.6 Floorplan and section of the wine storage

A designation as Nabu Temple seems problematic. The known Nabu Temples are quite standardized in the architecture of their shrines. The shrines in the palaces of Ḫadattu and Dur-Sharruken deviate considerably from this scheme. In the Ḫadattu palace the shrines were not preserved as such and had to be reconstructed by Turner.[94] This necessitated the introduction of a separation wall in room 39 that would have lacked a foundation.[95] The presence of the two small rooms 25–6 in front of the shrine also differed from standard temple designs. The shrines in Sargon's palace are also atypical. Only parts of rooms 143 and 147 were raised, whereas the inside of shrines were always completely raised. Furthermore, the proportion between the front and inner rooms seems incorrect. The front room, rather than the inner room, is expected to be the bigger. If this suite formed a temple then courtyard XVI must have formed its entrance room from

[94] Turner 1968: fig. 1. [95] Heinrich 1984: 140.

which the shrines and circumventing corridor would have been reached. Such a corridor could have existed since the back of the shrines has not been preserved. Room XVI was, however, almost certainly a courtyard due to the existence of an additional row of rooms (140–1, 145, and 148) that lay between it and the Throneroom Courtyard. Reconstructing XVI as a room results in a unique sequence of five rooms.

Lastly, one can wonder whether temple complexes existed in palaces. Reade suggested that the entire palace of Ḫadattu might have formed a Nabu Temple,[96] but the building is more palatial than temple-like. The complex in Sargon's palace was simply too small to have formed a Nabu Temple. A temple is much larger than its shrines. It is improbable that Sargon intended this to be the main Nabu Temple, later changing his mind and starting anew outside the palace. Nor is it likely that two Nabu Temples existed in Dur-Sharruken or that the main Nabu Temple was not part of the original plan. While the Nabu Temple is missing from the earliest inscriptions, by Sargon's time Nabu was one of the major gods and it seems unlikely that a monumental temple was not envisaged from the outset. The position of the actual Nabu Temple also suggests that it was constructed relatively early as the Residences were build to surround it (Pl. 13a).

This leads to the conclusion that these suites had a profane function. The complex in Sargon's palace was probably intended as a royal wine (and other liquids) depository from the outset. This function is well suited for a palatial setting (§9.3.2). The complex in Ḫadattu probably formed a similar privileged storage facility protected by the surrounding palace.

### *5.3.6 The Palace Proper*

The main part of the palace was located in the western quadrant, which contained most of the representational and residential functions combined with some service areas (Fig. 5.4). The size of this quadrant was similar to that of the Northwest Palace south of the Throneroom Courtyard. Its constitutive parts are also comparable. The organization of the western quadrant, however, was different due to its changed location within the palace. The quadrant seems to have been organized around a T-shaped series of corridors (Pl. 11).

The main corridor connected the Entrance Courtyard (XV) with the palace terrace (I), thereby dissecting the entire interior of the palace proper. This corridor was not recognized as such by Place.[97] The existence of a corridor next

[96] Reade 1968: 70 n. 6.

[97] It must be noted that Place's view was clouded by his belief that the three suites surrounding courtyard VI were identical. Furthermore, the reliefs were badly damaged in this area (Place 1867a: 67), probably to a degree that could have led to walls being missed.

to suite 2 was already proposed by Turner on the basis of the thickness of the wall and the presence of a fourth door (*b*) between courtyard I and room IV (Figs. 5.1, 5.7).[98] The importance of this entrance is indicated by the bull colossi that flanked it.[99] This corridor continued south-west of suite 4.[100] The rest of the corridor (45, 60, XII, and 74) is present, but appears as a series of rooms and courtyards.

The second corridor connected the Throneroom Courtyard through rooms 35, 36, and X with the main corridor and represents the standard Throneroom Corridor. Place's rendering of this area is problematic. Precedent suggests that the corridor ran directly next to the throneroom. This would require the elimination of room 34 (which is not mentioned by Place) and a large part of room 35 and the moving of the corridor and suite 4 to the north-west. If Place's plan is indeed too wide in this area, eliminations of this size would be expected. The resulting plan is not only more akin to other Late Assyrian palaces, but also supported by the plan of Botta. Botta's door *l* was part of this corridor and possessed an inscribed threshold.[101] In comparison to Place's plan (door G), Botta's plan placed the door further north-east (Figs. 5.1–2) at a location that corresponds to the end of throneroom, exactly where one would have expected the corridor to have run. Notwithstanding the importance of this corridor, it does not seem to have been protected by colossi. This seems typical for all Throneroom Corridors. The autonomous character and centrality of the throneroom façade trumped the protection that the colossi could have provided to the corridor next to it.

The importance of these direct internal connections is visible in the presence of strong control mechanisms. Place's plan shows both corridors to have been intersected by guardrooms, thus separating the corridors into smaller units, which provided access to different areas without necessarily giving access to the entire quadrant.

Most decorations that must once have existed have disappeared, but some general tendencies in their application are nonetheless noticeable. These considerations are mostly based on the excavations by Botta, which might be incorrect in some details, but seem generally correct. In comparison to the Northwest Palace of Kalḫu two aspects stand out. First, the reliefs in Sargon's palace emphasize other, partially new, subjects. So far as we can tell, apotropaic figures were used

[98] Turner 1970a: 209. Place (1870: 61) also noticed the unusual width of this wall and made a special trench to check it, but found only wall, which he suggested could have been protective in nature.

[99] Botta 1849a: pl. 11.

[100] Place's plan shows the corridor as a series of doors running along the south-western edge of rooms 33 and 37. Place probably missed the walls separating the corridor from rooms 33 and 37.

[101] Russell 1999c: 108–9. Russell's plan mistakenly names this door *i* leading to the conclusion that door *l* does not appear on the plans, but see Botta 1849a: pl. 5.

sporadically and more strategically. Their absence seems partly compensated for by an increased number of scenes with military campaigns, but the most striking change is a proliferation of rooms decorated with files of people, normally headed by the crown prince, approaching the king (Pl. 12b). These groups could consist of courtiers, sometimes carrying furniture and other objects; prisoners, sometimes in submission before the king; and tribute bearers. Similar scenes had been displayed on the throneroom façade of the Northwest Palace. In Sargon's palace they were omnipresent. Their use expanded the presence of the king within the palace, but he had been present in most rooms of the Northwest Palace as well, although mostly in apotropaic settings. The main beneficiaries of these new subjects were courtiers and crown prince Sennacherib. The images of the crown prince were almost as numerous as those of the king, often forming a joint scene.[102]

The second main development in the decoration of the palace can be found in the monumental courtyards, which were now decorated with figurative reliefs throughout. Late Assyrian courtyards were both autonomous spaces with their own decorative programmes as well as settings for the surrounding spaces. In comparison to the Northwest Palace, Sargon's palace contained more monumental courtyards. They depicted subjects that were partially depended on the suites they gave access to, but the topics were distinct from those used in the suites themselves. Moreover, the courtyard decorations were not divided into distinct façades, but often continued over several façades. In this respect courtyards functioned like the rooms of the palace.

### *5.3.7 The Throneroom Courtyard and the Central Courtyard Suites*

The Throneroom Courtyard is only partially known. The courtyard was dominated by the monumental façade of the throneroom. The combination of apotropaic figures and tribute bearers, which had characterized the throneroom façade of the Northwest Palace, was still present, but the two topics were placed further apart. The throneroom façade and its doorways contained only apotropaic figures. Such an uninterrupted sequence of apotropaic figures is typical for this palace. The rest of the south-western wall showed courtiers, carrying different objects, walking towards the king who stands closest to the throneroom. The height of the king was enhanced through two spatial tricks. First, the floor sloped down towards a drain in front of the king, giving him the appearance of standing higher than the

[102] Many reliefs are preserved only below the level where the diadem with hanging bands that identifies the crown prince would have been visible. It is therefore uncertain whether the crown prince is actually represented on these reliefs. Such reconstruction is nonetheless likely due to the standardized position of the crown prince facing the king on the preserved reliefs.

rest of the file.[103] Second, the size of the reliefs and the figures shown on them increased towards the king.[104]

The north-western wall showed a row of tribute bearers. They appear to emerge out of the corner due to the visual trick of hiding the edge of the first relief. The file moves towards corridor 10 (Fig. 5.3). A few courtiers move towards the corridor from the other side. Each of these three rows is headed by the crown prince. They all walk towards the king, who stands ready to receive them. The king thus appeared at least three times in this courtyard. The north-western wall continued with a scene depicting the acquisition of building material.[105]

Throneroom Courtyards tend to include a 'corner office', probably belonging to one of the palace managers. Such a suite could be represented by rooms 131–3, but its architecture and existence are rather conjectural. Not only did Place believe this suite to have functioned as a gate, but one would also expect the largest room to have been the first room to have been entered. The north-eastern side of the courtyard has mostly eroded away, but Place made a plausible reconstruction of a row of rooms. An entrance towards the outside (door *c*), as reconstructed by Place, seems less likely.

The Throneroom Suite is not unlike its predecessors. Its original decoration is unfortunately mostly unknown. Place mentioned that the reliefs showed persons walking towards the king, but that wall paintings were not present.[106] The American excavations have, however, found many fragments of wall and roof painting[107] as well as some relief fragments with narrative scenes divided by an analytical inscription.[108] They also found the throne dais[109] and tram-rails without grooves.[110] Noteworthy are the niches opposite the central door and at the end of the room. While their position is familiar, they were apparently left blank.[111] Both the tram-rails and the niches might have been unfinished.

The throneroom ramp (rooms 22–3) and its vestibule (room 24) were void of reliefs and apparently painted only white. A storage space was found below this ramp.[112] A bathroom appears for the first time next to the throne, although it must be emphasized that no new throneroom has been preserved from the

[103] Loud, Frankfort, and Jacobsen 1936: 40.

[104] Loud, Frankfort, and Jacobsen 1936: 31–7, figs. 38–44.

[105] There has been some discussion on the location represented by the water in this scene. Albenda (1983) argued that the scene represented the Mediterranean, but Linder (1986) has convincingly argued for a river setting.

[106] Place 1867a: 52.

[107] Loud, Frankfort, and Jacobsen 1936: fig. 71, pls. 2–3.

[108] Blocher 1999: 230–4; Guralnick 2013: 7.

[109] Blocher 1994.

[110] Loud, Frankfort, and Jacobsen 1936: 60–1.

[111] Loud, Frankfort, and Jacobsen 1936: 57.

[112] Place 1867a: 54. Neither the storage space nor the ramp were noticed by Place, but were first argued for by Loud (Loud and Altman 1938: 27–8).

century after Shalmaneser III's reign. The door into this bathroom was apparently undecorated.[113]

The Northwest Palace in Kalḫu contained five monumental suites grouped around the Central Courtyard (Y), albeit with a bit of creativity on its southern side where two Residential/Reception Suites were located (Pls. 4, 7b). This solution was no longer feasible in Sargon's palace due to the increased number of major reception suites. Suites were now also placed on and around the palace terrace. The Central Courtyard (VI) was still surrounded by large suites, but their importance seems to have diminished. Suites 2 and 3 were less grand than their predecessors and none can compare in monumentality to suite 5 on the palace terrace. This is also visible in the relatively small size of the colossi that lined the central doors of the suites surrounding the Central Courtyard.[114] All suites must originally have been decorated with reliefs, but most have disappeared. They might have been destroyed, but the presence of a few rather well-preserved reliefs suggests that many were removed in antiquity. Other modes of decoration such as decorated corbels,[115] glazed bricks,[116] and paintings were probably also employed. Place mentioned wall paintings to have shown geometric patterns, people and animals,[117] but he only published one such painting.[118] Its precise location is unknown.[119]

While several details on Place's floorplan of these suites must be incorrect, it was probably correct in showing that these suites were arranged axially (Fig. 5.1). Such axes might have been present in suites 2, 3, and 5. The axial alignment of doors was very rare in earlier palaces, but would become common during the seventh century.

A Double-sided Reception Suite (suite 2) was located at its common position behind the throneroom. While the basic features of this suite can readily be identified, some elements seem lacking. Place missed a few doors within this suite, which must have had triple doorways in its outer façades. Although in its lack of doors it would resemble the Double-sided Reception Suite of Dur-Sharruken's Military Palace (Pl. 10b).

The suite was, like its forebear in the Northwest Palace of Kalḫu, located inside the palace with only one side facing outside onto a terrace. It was internally connected with the Throneroom Suite through room V. Room 21 was probably a storage space shared by both suites. The outward-oriented rooms, room IV in

[113] Place 1867a: 53. The reconstruction of the ramp and bathroom were first suggested in Loud, Frankfort, and Jacobsen 1936: 55–6.

[114] Botta 1849a: pl. 42. [115] Guralnick 2008. [116] Reade 1995.

[117] Place 1867a: 52. [118] Place 1867b: pl. 32.

[119] The description of the plate states 'dans une des chambres de la partie simple' (Place 1867b: IV), which seems to be in contradiction to Place's description in which this painting belonged to the monumental part of the palace. It did not belong to the throneroom, as this was considered a courtyard by Place.

this suite, tended to function as secondary thronerooms and were always directly connected to the Throneroom Courtyard. Such connection was absent here. Room IV might have functioned as a secondary throneroom nonetheless. Its short wall seems to have been devoid of doors, allowing for the placement of a throne. It would, however, have been something of an internal throneroom, lacking the accessibility common for such rooms.

The size of this suite is dependent on where one places the reconstructed corridor that must have run south-west of the suite. The only viable solution is to place the corridor south-west of rooms 19 and 20. Any other reconstruction would shorten rooms 19 and 20 too much. This entails a south-westwardly extension of the Central Courtyard, which would make it more akin to other Central Courtyards in its proportions and size. The suite had few associated spaces and it seems unlikely that further spaces can be reconstructed.

The nature of the two other suites is less clear. It would be expected that one would have formed the King's Suite, but due to a lack of bathrooms none appear to be residential in nature. The location of suite 4, between the Central Courtyard and the residential and service part of the palace proper, seems most suitable as the location of the King's Suite. Some changes need to be made to Place's plan to accommodate this. As argued above, the three south-western doors belonged to a corridor running south-west of this suite rather than to the suite itself. Room 37 must have included a bathroom. Lastly, the alignment of the central doors is unlikely to be correct, since the King's Suite is typified by its asymmetrical placement of doors.[120]

We know almost nothing about the decoration of this suite. The façade of room 33 seems to have been filled with apotropaic figures.[121] Of the reliefs that must have once decorated the suite's interior we know only that room 33 was decorated with an apotropaic tree in its northern corner.[122] The King's Suite in the North-west Palace was decorated with apotropaic scenes in its main room. The presence of an apotropaic tree in the corner of Sargon's suite might suggest that room 33 was decorated with similar scenes, but this seems unlikely. There is no indication that rooms with purely apotropaic scenes existed in Sargon's palace. Other

[120] A door towards corridor X cannot be excluded, but would certainly have been smaller and is unlikely to have been placed on an axis.

[121] Botta 1849a: pl. 42.

[122] Place 1867b: pl. 49-2. The published photo (Pillet 1962: pl. XXV) was almost certainly incorrectly assigned to this room. The relief has an inscription in its centre, which is atypical for Sargon's palace. Albenda (1986: 58) suggested that the relief was found in Kalḫu's Northwest Palace. Pillet probably mixed up the relatively comparable reliefs. These arguments do not refute Place's finding a similar relief at this location. The presence of a complete relief amidst an almost empty room seems typical for the suites surrounding the Central Courtyard.

apotropaic trees were found in the corners of rooms 4 and 8, but these rooms were decorated with files of people. This might have been the subject in room 33 as well.

The final suite surrounding the Central Courtyard was formed by rooms 25 and 26 (suite 3). It formed a Dual-Core Suite, which consisted only of a core of two rooms without any attachments. It seems to have formed a specific subtype, which was also found in the Southwest Palace in Nineveh (suite 3; Pl. 17). Both were located in a similar position within the palace. The internal organization of suite 3 probably resembled the Nineveh suite, having been connected through axially placed triple doorways. Place's plan shows the general outlines of such a suite, but differs in the number and placement of its doors. Similar mistakes have been pointed out in all suites surrounding the Central Courtyard. The differences with the Nineveh suite are the result of Place's failure to trace doors and his belief that axes ran through multiple suites. Place probably shifted the position of doors to fit with this ideal, thereby providing room 26 with an asymmetrical façade. Assyrian palace architecture of this period onwards had an opposite set of ideals. It had a predilection for symmetrical façades, but usually avoided axes extending beyond the individual suite.

Turner added a bathroom to room 25 turning it into a Residential/Reception Suite similar to suite 4.[123] Two such suites might be redundant and the position of suite 4 is more appropriate for the King's Suite. All these proposed changes are certainly significant and without an archaeological basis, but they are made more feasible by the strong resemblance to the suites surrounding the Central Courtyard of the Southwest Palace in Nineveh.

### *5.3.8 The Terrace Courtyards*

The number of monumental suites within Sargon's palace had considerably expanded in comparison to the Northwest Palace in Kalḫu. The circulation patterns necessarily became more complex. Direct connections between all suites were no longer possible. The additional suites were placed on and around the terrace at the western edge of the palace (Fig. 5.7). This resulted in a sequence of courtyards that apparently formed a large loop running along the terrace, between the temples and the palace, and through the Entrance and Throneroom Courtyards. In theory such a route had no beginning or end and allowed even the most remote parts of the palace terrace to be easily reached. The route was nonetheless clearly intended to be traversed consecutively from the Throneroom Courtyard through courtyards III, I, and II. Courtyards I–III functioned as independent courtyards, but probably also formed part of a large terrace that provided a view over the surrounding plain.

[123] Turner 1970a: 196.

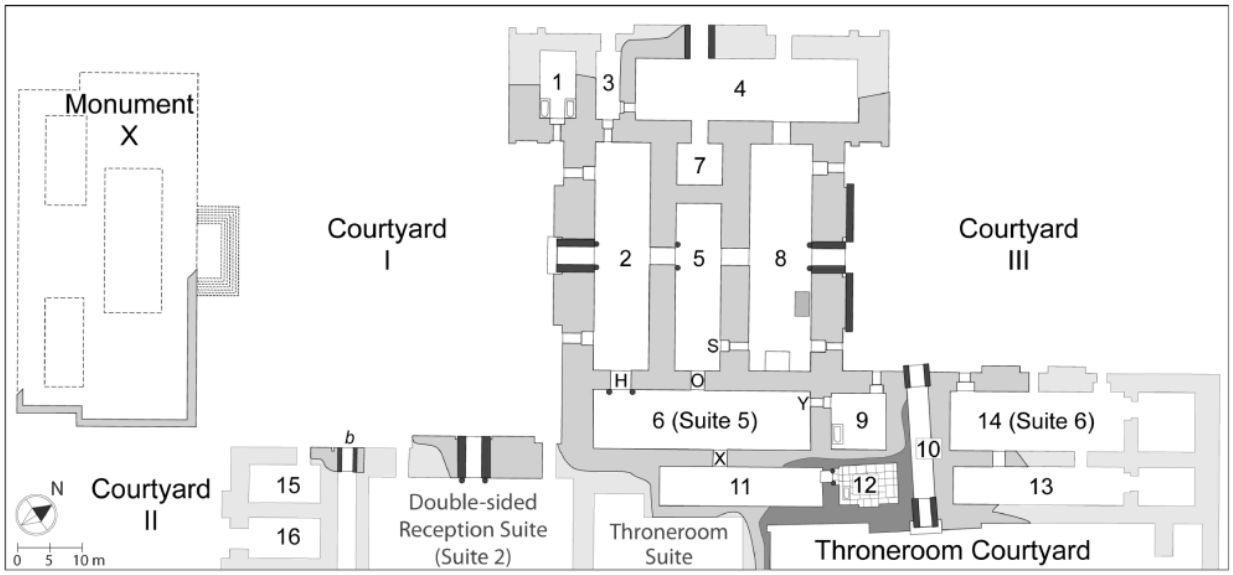



FIG. 5.7 The palace terraces

The terrace was dominated by suite 5, which formed the second Double-sided Reception Suite of the palace, build on an unprecedented scale. In the Northwest Palace the two façades of the Double-sided Reception Suite had respectively been related to the Central Courtyard/throneroom and a terrace that was connected to the Throneroom Courtyard. Such spatial relations still existed in Sargon's palace, but they were divided over the two Double-sided Reception Suites. Room 20 of suite 2 was oriented towards the Central Courtyard and the Throneroom Suite, whereas room 8 of suite 5 was oriented towards the Throneroom Courtyard. The two additional external façades were directed towards courtyard I.

Corridor 10 connected the Throneroom Courtyard to the terrace. It was functionally akin to a Throneroom Corridor connecting the Throneroom Courtyard with a secondary throneroom. The corridor was monumental and clearly meant for outsiders to traverse. Its walls showed rows of tribute bearers. The Chicago expedition found corridor 10 to have been oriented differently from the rest of the palace (Fig. 5.3), but the reasons for this are not apparent.

The known part of the courtyard III façade was almost completely filled with apotropaic figures. These formed one long, uninterrupted sequence that stretched from the western door of room 14, passed along corridor 10 and room 9, and covered the entire facçade of room 8. In this palace, such apotropaic sequences seem to have been closely related to the king. They appear in front of the throneroom, the King's Suite, and the secondary throneroom (room 8).

Suite 6 was located to the east of corridor 10. The suite seems to have been reachable only from the terrace. Only the south-western ends of two rooms are known. The reliefs of room 14 showed the campaign of 715 to Mannea, which was undertaken under the leadership of the treasurer (*mašennu*) Ṭab-šar-Assur. His name was probably mentioned on the military camp depicted on relief 10.[124] This room might also be alluded to in a letter in which officials complained that, in contrast to the Mannea campaign, their names were not mentioned on the reliefs.[125] The suite was well connected to suite 5 and the Throneroom Courtyard, but it was rather poorly connected to the rest of the palace. The suite appears to have formed a Residential/Reception Suite, but its occupant is unknown. A similar suite might have existed in the Northwest Palace (rooms W1–2). A better comparison is the similarly located Residential/Reception Suite in the Military Palace of Dur-Sharruken (rooms 5–8 and 12).[126] This comparison suggests that bathrooms were located to the north-east of rooms 13 and 14.

[124] Reade 1976: 98–9.

[125] SAA 5, 282: 4–11. The letter is assigned to the reign of Sargon, but one may suggest a later date. The text seems to mention that the Mannea campaign was depicted in the 'Old Palace'. Such designation for Sargon's palace only seems to make sense after the palace was abandoned.

[126] Turner 1970a: 206.

Courtyard II was more difficult to reach. The main route towards it must have gone around suite 5. Its façade showed at least two processions of courtiers, both headed by the crown prince, walking towards the king, who was located on the two external piers of room 2. A third procession was found on the outer façade of room 1 walking away from room 2. Feet of eight courtiers were preserved.[127] Since each of these points in the same direction it can be assumed that the row continued on the south-western exterior wall of room 1 until it reached the king. This file could have continued towards the king shown on the north-western wall of courtyard III, but is perhaps more likely to have ended earlier. These courtiers carried furniture, horses, and chariots, probably taken from foreign palaces.

A few singular rooms were located along the south-western part of the terrace. Room 15 appears to have been a single room facing terrace I. Its shape suggests a storage function, but it was apparently decorated with reliefs, which suggests a more representative use.[128] Rooms 16–18 formed three independent rooms. They were similar to rooms 27–9 of the Military Palace of Dur-Sharruken, but lacked a room in front of them. The rooms were apparently not on the same level as the surrounding terrace, but raised to a level similar to Monument X. It is unclear how they would have been reached. It has been suggested that they formed shrines,[129] but their architecture is not shrine-like. They were probably treasuries containing some of the spoils of war: such use may be supported by the find of bronze military equipment within them.[130] Their independent character associates these spaces with a space such as room U of the Northwest Palace in Kalḫu, which was used by Sargon to store booty.

The courtyard was centred on the mysterious Monument X (Fig. 5.8). It appears to be a freestanding building placed on a raised platform and reached through a staircase placed in front of its main façade. The platform was located 1.82 m above the courtyard pavement (Fig. 5.9). This is a considerable height, which must not only have raised the platform above the heads of most Assyrians, but also could only have been reached by the means of a staircase. The building seems to have formed an Assyrian adaptation of a building type known from Aramaean and Neo-Hittite cities in the western part of the empire. Whereas Late Assyrian suites had a pavilion-like character, these were never articulated as such nor were they free-standing. That pavilions existed in the parks outside the palace, from at least this time onwards, is clear from the reliefs, but with a possible exception in the North Palace in Nineveh (§8.2.6) no palace pavilions are otherwise known. Monument X was 'un-Assyrian' in many other ways as well, all of which associate it with 'western' architecture. It was raised, surrounded by a moulded stone revetment,

[127] Botta 1843: 67, pl. 8; 1849a: pl. 10.
[128] Place 1867a: 64.
[129] Heinrich 1984: 72; Turner 1970a: 206.
[130] Place 1867a: 64–6.

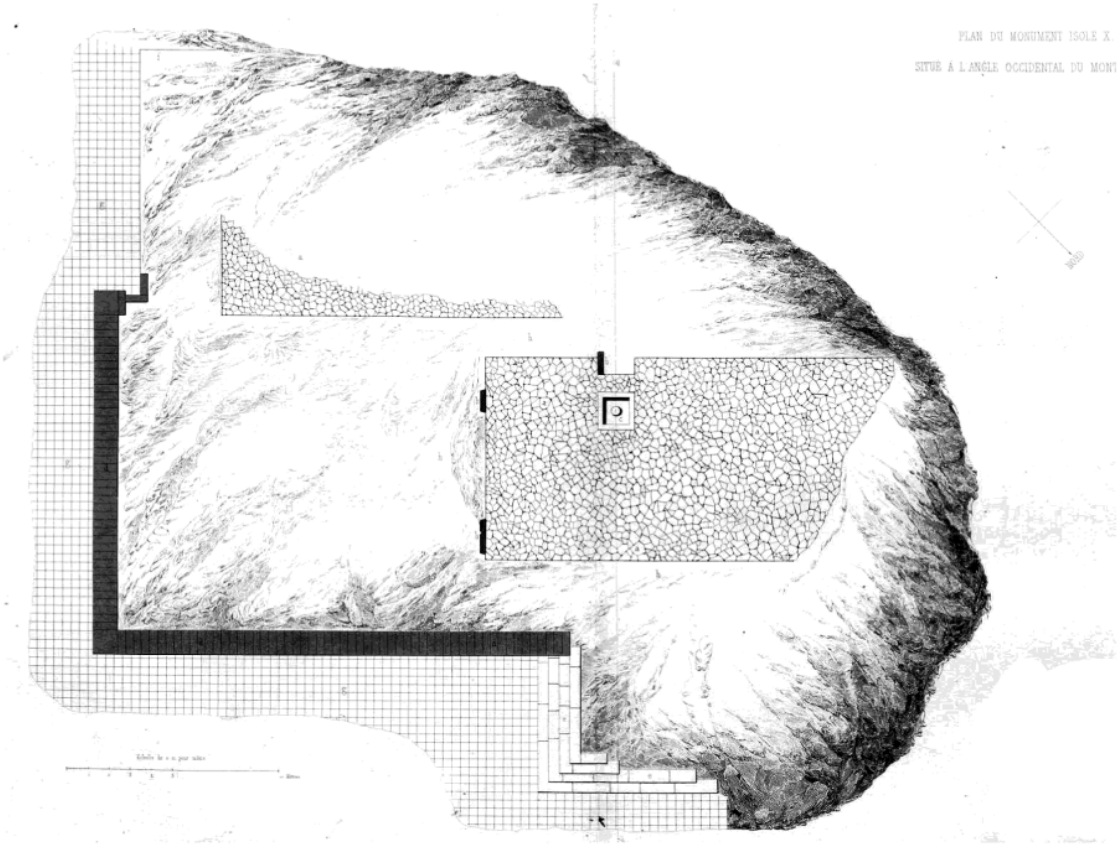



FIG. 5.8 Floorplan of Monument X

reached by a staircase, entered through a loggia, decorated with black limestone reliefs, and paved with broken bricks.[131] While the pavilion must have been intended to convey an association with the 'west' it is not clear whether it formed an imitation or an adaptation. The known reliefs were Assyrian in nature, indicating that its internal walls conveyed an Assyrian ideology.[132] The presence of reliefs inside the room was in itself more typical for Assyrian palaces than of those from the 'west'. More importantly, whereas the Aramaean and Neo-Hittite examples formed important parts of palaces or even autonomous buildings, Monument X is only one suite within a much larger palace. Monument X did not replace any of the main suites known from Assyrian palaces and it was placed on the edge of the palace. Even though the building has the appearance of an architectural folly, it is unlikely to have been purely ornamental. Its construction certainly entailed a considerable amount of effort, but it also showed the enormity of the surrounding

[131] For a thorough discussion of this suite and earlier reconstructions see Reade 2008c; Gillmann 2008.

[132] Botta 1849b: pl. 150; Place 1867b: pl. 48. Several other black limestone reliefs were found out of context in the palace (Albenda 1986: 48 n. 57). These could all have belonged originally to Monument X, although it is unclear why these reliefs would have been dispersed in such a manner, a phenomenon not attested for the other reliefs.

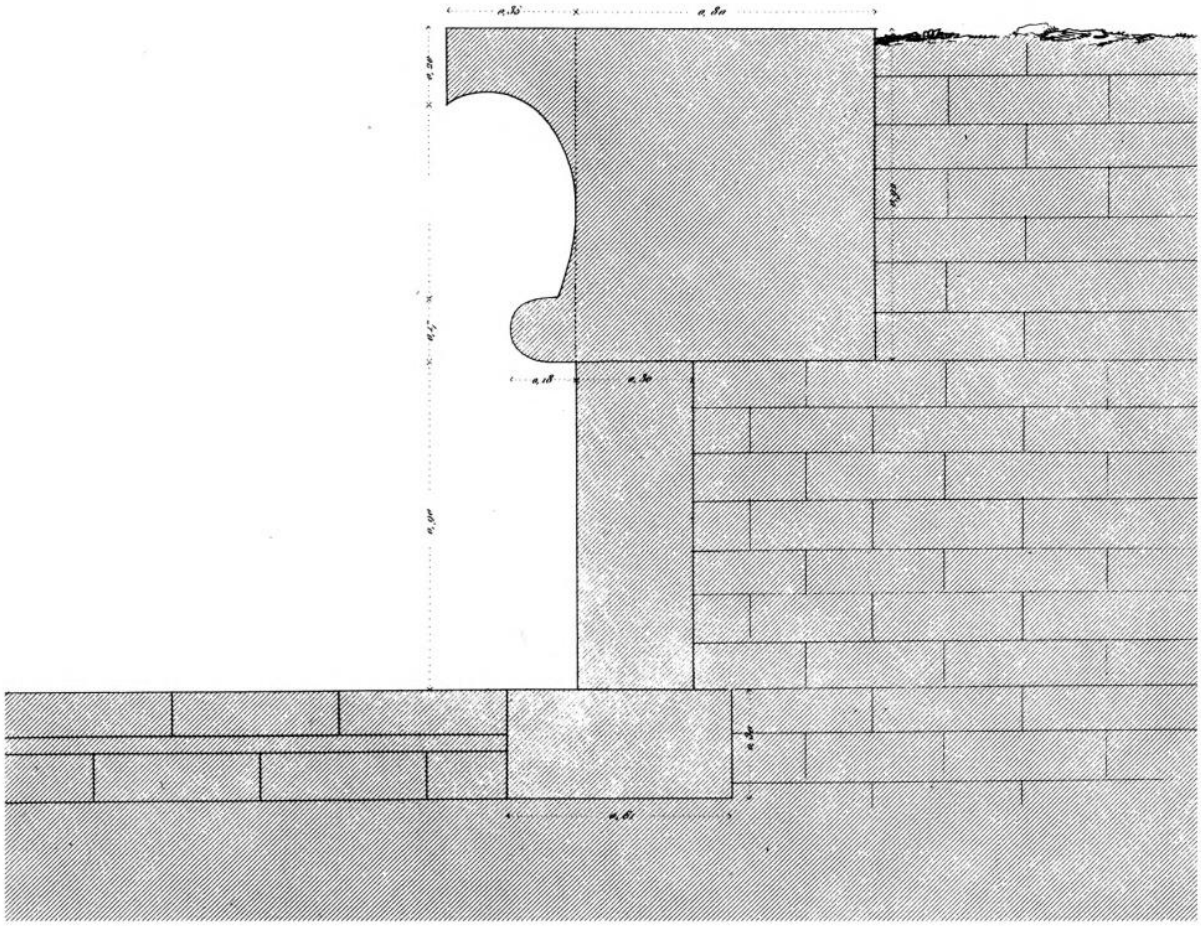


FIG. 5.9 Section of Monument X

palace. Building a palace in the likeness of an 'western' palace as an appendix to his own much larger palace, formed a good representation of the political landscape. Whether this was intentional is far from certain. Assyrian kings were clearly interested in the west, but the audience for which Monument X was constructed is unclear. Its position on the edge, but within, the area of the State Apartments, suggests that the suite was representational in nature.

### *5.3.9 The Double-sided Reception Suite on the Terrace*

Suite 5 was by far the largest within the palace, consisting of at least eleven rooms (Fig. 5.7). It was excavated by Botta, but partially re-excavated by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago and the Department of Antiquities of the Republic of Iraq. It represents the only suite in the palace whose architecture and decoration are well known. On first sight, the suite appears to be a monumental version of a Double-sided Reception Suite, with the additional rooms being

extensions of the familiar central part. A closer inspection shows the suite to be more complex. The remaining eight rooms cannot be treated as mere extensions, but have to be considered as constitutive parts of the suite. In fact, rooms 6, 9, and 11–12 (suite 5a) formed a typical Residential/Reception Suite, submerged into the larger suite. Because of its compounded nature, the suite shares many similarities with the Dual-Core Suites that would become common in the succeeding period. One can thus interpret the suite as an extended Double-sided Reception Suite containing a monumental Residential/Reception Suite and as an early variant of the Dual-Core Suites, but it is the combination that is noteworthy and as such the suite is unique.

It is nonetheless helpful to start by looking at the constitutive parts of the suite. The central double-sided part of the suite (rooms 2, 5, and 8) is very similar to other such suites. Even though the room sizes of suite 2 are known only by approximation, they seem to have been similar to those of suite 5. While suite 5 did contain bathrooms, none of these is directly associated with the three central rooms. The suite did not contain any storage spaces. It thus seems that none of the three known Double-sided Reception Suites in Dur-Sharruken contained bathrooms or storage spaces.[133]

The double-sidedness of these rooms created differences in accessibility. The more accessible room tended to function as a secondary throneroom. This designation certainly applies for room 8, which contained an ablution slab and a throne dais,[134] with the king and crown prince prominently shown on the wall behind it. Tram-rails could have been present in rooms 2 and/or 8 as Botta does not seem to have excavated the centres of these rooms.[135] Similarities with the throneroom can also be found in the presence of colossi along the external buttresses of its façade, which are otherwise only known from the exterior of the throneroom and the main entrance into the palace. The ensemble in front of room 8 was less monumental than the façade of the throneroom itself as no figure was placed between the two colossi along the buttresses and no colossi were placed in its side entrances.

This suite is the only Double-sided Reception Suite whose decorations have been preserved in detail allowing us to analyse the differences between the sides in more detail. These confirm the two-sidedness of the suite. Each room, or more precisely each register, appears to have been decorated with a single subject. Room 8 was decorated with a procession of courtiers and prisoners whereas room 2 was decorated with military scenes on its lower register and a banquet scene above it. These represent the main subjects represented in this suite, with a

[133] Room 19 of the Military Palace could have functioned as storage space though it seems too monumental for such a function.

[134] Botta 1849a: pl. 6. It is unclear whether the dais was elevated.

[135] Botta 1849a: pl. 4.

clear distinction between each side of the suite. Most rooms adjacent to room 2 (rooms 1, 3, and 5[136]) were decorated with military scenes. The procession shown in room 8 found its counterpart in room 4 and suite 5a. A distinction can also be seen in the types of text inscribed on its wall. Rooms 2 and 5 were inscribed with an annalistic text, whereas rooms 4, 7, and 8 were inscribed with a long historical summary. Both types ended with a description of the palace.[137]

Another difference occurs at the main façades of rooms 2 and 8. Courtyard I was decorated with a procession of courtiers, thereby representing the subject found on the other side of the suite, whereas Courtyard III showed only apotropaic figures. The threshold inscriptions show further differences between each side of the suite, but also create patterns of their own (Pl. 12a). Most thresholds surrounding Courtyard I were inscribed with texts in the third person, whereas those of Courtyard III were mostly written in the first person.[138] The central doors of rooms 2, 5, and 8 were all inscribed with a text that mixed the third and first person. The meaning of all these differences is unclear, but they are unlikely to have been random and appear to have correlated with the intended use and associated audiences of the rooms.

Room 4 lay to the north-west of the central rooms. It turned the suite into a Three-sided Reception Suite. Room 4 was almost as big as room 8 and thus among the largest rooms of the palace. It gave access to rooms 3, 7, and 8. Room 3 was a small vestibule whose western part is unknown, but it is likely that a door connected it with the terrace. The connections provided by this room were apparently secondary. The entrance into room 2 was relatively small and tucked away in the corner of the room.

The connection from room 4 to room 8 was direct and more monumental. The door was placed centrally within the north-western wall of room 8 and faced the throne on the other side of the room. The importance of this axis and its association with the king is indicated by the placement of the king in room 4. Not only did he stand at both sides of the door receiving prisoners, who were walking towards the door, he also appeared on both doorjambs facing those who entered room 8. The inscribed threshold of the door forms another indication of its centrality, being inscribed with the mixed first and third person text, which seems to have been used in central doors only. While a door always existed opposite the throne, it usually led into a vestibule, corridor, and/or the throne-room ramp. This is the only example where such a room possessed a monumentality of its own. The correlation between rooms 4 and 8 is enhanced by their reliefs, which show processions and carry the long historical summary.

[136] For room 5 see also Frame 2004 and Franklin 1994: 261–73.
[137] Russell 1999c: 113–14.
[138] Russell 1999c: 108–11.

Room 4 is only known to have possessed one external entrance, which was flanked by bull colossi.[139] Such a monumental door was normally flanked by two smaller doors on each side.[140] A second external entrance could have continued the axis coming from room 8. While this would have allowed the king to watch outside from his throne, the view will have been limited from such a distance. A third door did not exist in room 4, but the external façade might nonetheless have looked 'normal' from the outside if room 3 possessed a door towards the terrace.

The main door into room 4 was centred on room 7. Within the palace this was a relatively small room,[141] though still almost 50 $m^2$. Its walls were decorated with a hunting scene in its lower register and a banqueting scene in its upper register. Room 7 might have been related to the plain outside the palace, although the view would have been better from room 4 or the terrace itself and must have been limited from within room 7. Such small representational rooms, which were neither bathrooms nor storage spaces, were rare. It is not unlike a category of rooms that can be called 'backrooms' (§10.4.1). This category includes room K in the Northwest Palace at Kalḫu and rooms 35–7 in the Southwest Palace of Nineveh. The use of these rooms is unknown and their contexts are not easily compared.

Suite 5a is akin to a monumental Residential/Reception Suite with a large reception room (6) with an associated reclining room (11) and bathroom (12).[142] The importance of these rooms is indicated by their size, room 6 being among the largest spaces within the palace; their decorations—all rooms were decorated with reliefs; and the routes leading into the suite. The intended public of this sub-suite seems to have been more restricted. The sub-suite possessed only internal and side entrances, with the door into room 9 forming the only external entrance, allowing this sub-suite to be reached independently from the outside. The door was protected by several apotropaic figures. The two other doors into the sub-suite, from rooms 2 and 5, were not decorated with apotropaic or royal figures.

Room 9 appears to have been a bathroom owing to the presence of a bathtub slab (§9.2), but functioned as a vestibule. It can be compared to the vestibules N and T of the Northwest Palace in Kalḫu. Bathrooms were otherwise located deeper inside the suites and not connected to the outside. Room 9 does not appear to have possessed a bathroom niche, though Botta did fail to notice the niche in room 12. Room 1 at the other side of this suite formed another vestibule

[139] Botta 1849a: pls. 6bis and 80.
[140] The room behind the throneroom is a common exception to this rule.
[141] Loud, Frankfort, and Jacobsen 1936: 71.
[142] Albenda 1986: fig. 85.

with bathtub slab. Room 9 might represent a condensed version of the vestibule/bathroom combinations found in other palaces.[143]

Suite 5a was closely related to the throne in room 8, with doors *O* and *S* providing a direct connection between both. The apotropaic figures at door *S* point to the importance of this route. Apotropaic figures at internal doors were found only at door *S* and two doors (*X* and *Υ*) that were part of this sub-suite. In contrast to other royal palaces, it seems that internal doors were not normally protected by apotropaic figures in Sargon's palace. The inscribed thresholds form another connection between this sub-suite and throneroom 8, both being inscribed with a text in the first person (Pl. 12a).

The decorations provide further support for a more restricted audience. All rooms showed processions, but none contained inscriptions.[144] Whereas the two large rooms (6 and 11) showed the familiar procession of courtiers and prisoners, vestibule 9 and bathroom 12 showed only beardless officials, who can be considered to have formed the more intimate courtiers of the king. The placement of the king and crown prince within this suite was chosen with care as they were usually placed at the ends of visual axes.

The combination of semi-independent units combined into a larger suite is atypical. The presence of a secondary throneroom combined with what appears to be a monumental Residential/Reception Suite might suggest that suite 5 formed an independent unit, duplicating on a smaller scale the four suites surrounding the Central Courtyard. The omnipresence of the crown prince on the reliefs of this suite could suggest that he was its main user, but it must be noted that the crown prince seems to have been omnipresent throughout the palace. The king could certainly have possessed multiple suites within the palace. The combination of apotropaic figures on the outer façade, thresholds inscribed in the first person, and the processions of courtyard I seem to associate the suite with the king. Following this correlation, the presence of war scenes and the use of the third person on the thresholds of suite 6 could suggest that suite 6 was not associated with the king. Precise correlations between architecture, decoration, and use are, however, impossible to substantiate at the moment.

Within the unique organization of suite 5 can be traced the emergence of a different spatial conception that would become common in the seventh century, especially in the form of the Dual-Core Suites. The complexity of suite 5 formed a departure from the principles that had typified, and would continue to be common within, Late Assyrian palaces. Suites had always been characterized by

[143] e.g. rooms 12–13 of the Ḫadattu palace (Pl. 24a); rooms 41–2 of Residence M in Dur-Sharruken (Pl. 13b); rooms 12–13 in Assur's Old Palace (Pl. 8a). [144] Blocher 1999: fig. 6.

routings that finished in dead ends. After entering a suite, routings were predetermined, with internal rooms usually possessing only a single door. Suite 5 differed by introducing alternative routes, which was further enhanced by the multiplicity of the external entrances, fundamentally changing the way movement and access could be organized. The inner rooms, oriented perpendicularly in relation to each other, increased the size of the interior, and the alternative routes made the spaces more integrated. This internal fluidity would become more pronounced during the seventh century, but would largely remain an internal aspect of architecture. With a few notable exceptions, Assyrian architecture would not open up towards the outside.

### *5.3.10 The Non-Monumental Areas of the Western Quadrant*

Several suites were located between the State Apartments and the Entrance Courtyard. A detailed discussion of this area is hampered by the apparent inaccuracies of Place's plan. Assuming Place's map is correct in its general outlines, the area seems grouped around four small courtyards (IX, XI, XIII, and XIV). Courtyards XIII and XIV seem to resemble typical service/kitchen areas. Their position between the Central and Entrance Courtyards seems well suited for such purposes.

The original functions of courtyards IX and XI are more difficult to reconstruct. Sargon's palace seems to lack a Royal Courtyard containing the Residential/Reception Suites of the royal family. Its requirements, which entailed being separate but close to the main reception suites, are best fulfilled by the spaces surrounding courtyard IX. This courtyard is as close to the Central Courtyard as possible without being directly connected to it. It could also have contained a direct connection with the King's Suite. The rooms surrounding courtyard IX, however, seem to lack the necessary monumentality.

Such monumentality does seem to be present west of courtyard XI, in the suite centred on room 62. The suite drawn by Place is certainly incorrect in its details, but one can nonetheless recognize a monumental Residential/Reception Suite similar to those found surrounding courtyard 67 of Residence M in Dur-Sharruken (Pl. 13b). While courtyard XI could have belonged to a high official or royal family member, its close proximity to the Entrance Courtyard makes a residential function less ideal.

## 5.4 THE MILITARY PALACE (DUR-SHARRUKEN)

The construction of a new primary city also entailed the establishment of a Military Complex (Pl. 10a). Its palace is commonly known as Palace F (Pl. 10b). The complex occupied the southern corner of the city. Its general size is readily

visible on the contour map,[145] roughly occupying the area between city gates 4 and 5.[146] The city gates probably lay just outside the complex. Its size and location was comparable to the Military Complex in Kalḫu. Nothing, however, is known from the larger complex.

The Military Palace itself was raised above the surrounding plain and reachable via a ramp similar to that of the palace terrace. The palace was only partially excavated.[147] The trustworthiness of the plan is difficult to assess since it exaggerates the actual amount of excavated area. Place had already excavated within the palace (and provided it with the designation F), but his plan is impossible to interpret.[148] His rooms do not constitute logical suites and the entire plan was mistakenly turned ninety degrees.[149] The area excavated by Place probably overlapped with the excavations of the Chicago team, being in the highest and thus most promising area of the palace. Loud mentions having come across the trenches of Place in room 20.[150]

The excavations provided information on the more monumental parts of the palace. The palace was apparently smaller than its forebear in Kalḫu, containing only two main courtyards. The palace lacked a large residential and facilitating wing, which had been present in the Military Palace of Kalḫu (area S). Even though there is almost nothing to base an interpretation upon, some of these functions might have been grouped around courtyard 4, which was connected to the palace terrace through vestibule 3. The exact functions surrounding courtyard 4 cannot presently be reconstructed.

The Throneroom Courtyard was centred on the throneroom although the corridor next to it (rooms 13 and 15) was also architecturally elaborated by two flanking buttresses. The throneroom was monumental and surpassed even the throneroom of the Royal Palace in size. It contained most architectural features expected from a throneroom of this period, including a throne dais with niche and an associated bathroom. Similarly to the Military Palace of Kalḫu, its ornamentation was less monumental than that of the main palace. Its central door was, however, flanked by bull colossi, but this could have been true for Kalḫu's palace as well. The room behind the throneroom (24) connected to the palace terrace. It also connected to a large storage space (20), which is identifiable by its limestone pavement.[151]

Located to the south-west of the Throneroom Suite was the common Double-sided Reception Suite. In its relative simplicity it resembled suite 2 of the Royal

[145] Loud and Altman 1938: pl. 68. This was already noticed by Heinrich 1984: 170.

[146] Loud and Altman 1938: pl. 69.

[147] Excavation photos (Fig. 5.10; see also Loud and Altman 1938: pls. 40A and B) seem to suggest that not everything shown as excavated on the plan was actually excavated.

[148] Place 1867b: pl. 2. [149] Loud and Altman 1938: 9.

[150] Loud and Altman 1938: 77, pl. 40A. [151] Loud and Altman 1938: 77, pl. 40D.

FIG. 5.10 The portico of room 15

Palace. In neither suite was a bathroom found, which would seem to make them incomplete. Besides the three parallel rooms the suite contained only one additional room (19). Its number of external doors was limited. The lack of a central door in room 16 is especially remarkable and somewhat suspect. The alignment of its central doors is similar to the axes found in the main reception suites of the Royal Palace. The suite was apparently not directly connected to the Throneroom Suite. The façade of room 18 seems to have been decorated with a glazed brick panel.[152] The two main façades of the suite were, as usual, directed respectively towards the Throneroom Suite and the Throneroom Courtyard through a Throneroom Corridor.

The Throneroom Corridor was especially elaborate. In contrast to similar connections, it was split into two parts together forming a T-shaped space opening onto the terrace. The room facing the terrace consisted of a wide portico supported by two columns (Fig. 5.10). It is the first known use of a portico within the royal palaces,[153] and represents an important departure from the Assyrian concept of interiority. This passage opens up to the outside and was protected by a single door at its entrance from the Throneroom Courtyard. The terrace also provided access to a suite to its west consisting of rooms 5–8 and 12. These rooms formed a monumental Residential/Reception Suite. Its location between the terrace and courtyard 4 could, if courtyard 4 contained residential suites, suggest that it formed the King's Suite.[154] There was, however, no connection found between this suite and courtyard 4. It was similar to suite 6 of the Royal Palace, which suggests that both had a comparable function. The terrace contained one further suite consisting of three rooms (27–9) that could be accessed through room 30. It contained a limestone pavement, but no objects were found to elucidate it function.[155] As discussed for the Royal Palace this complex probably formed a treasury.

[152] Loud and Altman 1938: 77.
[153] Monument X must also have possessed a portico, but was detached from the rest of the palace.
[154] Heinrich 1984: 170. [155] Loud and Altman 1938: 77.

SIX

# Sennacherib (704–681)

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The death of Sargon II, probably on the battlefield, and the fact that his body was not retrieved for proper burial, must have been experienced as a major catastrophe within the Assyrian Empire.[1] The graveness of the situation becomes clear from the fate of Dur-Sharruken. Less than a year after its inauguration, construction started on a new primary royal city. Sennacherib did not return to Kalḫu, but chose to expand the ancient city of Nineveh (Pl. 16b), one of the oldest cities of Assyria. The city must have been full of buildings and contained palaces already. Even 400 years after the construction of Tiglath-pileser I's palace in Nineveh it is still likely to have functioned as Nineveh's main palace. The city possessed several large temple complexes on the citadel and a Military Complex centred on Nebi Yunus, the second mound of the city.[2] Sennacherib constructed a new palace, commonly known as the Southwest Palace, and built anew the Military Complex. In Assur he worked on the Old Palace (Pl. 8a).

The Late Assyrian period had known three successive primary palaces.[3] Sennacherib belonged to the generation that had known all three, although he probably did not reside in the two older palaces. Sennacherib must already have moved out of his father's house when, in 722, the latter became king. It is only at this point that Sargon will have moved into the Northwest Palace in Kalḫu, which had been the primary palace for almost 150 years by then. Sennacherib must have been well acquainted with that palace, having been born approximately forty years before Dur-Sharruken was completed. Sennacherib must have been actively involved in the construction of Dur-Sharruken, on whose walls he is often represented as crown prince. Sennacherib's Southwest Palace would become the last primary palace of the empire and was in use for the final century of the empire's existence.

[1] See e.g. Frahm 1999.
[2] On the urban aspects of Nineveh see Lumsden 2004b; Novák 1999: 152–64.
[3] Kertai 2013b: 11–19.

## 6.2 THE SOUTHWEST PALACE (NINEVEH)

Work on Sennacherib's new palace commenced shortly after Sargon's palace had been finished.[4] One can assume that many of the people involved in the construction of both palaces, e.g. Sennacherib,[5] were the same. It is therefore quite remarkable how different the two palaces became (Pls. 11, 17). Whereas Sargon's palace consisted of a system of quadrants with two large courtyards, which integrated the service areas and the main temple complex into the palace ensemble, Sennacherib returned to a more linear organization, making the palace more comparable to Ashurnasirpal's Northwest Palace (Pl. 4). The organization of Sennacherib's palace might have been prompted by the constraints of an already fully operational citadel.

Even though Sargon's Royal Palace had been more monumental than its predecessor, it seems that it was already insufficient the moment it was inaugurated (Pl. 22b–c). The Southwest Palace drastically increased the number of major reception suites. Their expansion was accompanied by a shift away from the Central Courtyard behind the throneroom. Whereas Sargon had placed new monumental suites on the palace terrace, the Southwest Palace introduced additional internal courtyards. The organization of the Southwest Palace can be summarized as a combination of interlocking zones emanating from the Throneroom Courtyard and centred on different internal courtyards. This allowed the different zones of the palace to be separated from each other, while remaining closely connected. The connections between the different areas of the palace were concentrated in a few corridors.

The new suites of the Southwest Palace were not only more numerous and larger than their predecessors, but their interiors were also more monumental and integrated (Fig. 6.1). The architectural changes, which had been most visible in suite 5 of Sargon's Royal Palace, continued within the Southwest Palace. However, nothing comparable to Sargon's suite 5 existed in Sennacherib's palace. This suggests that its functions had either become obsolete or were taken over by other suites. In general, the multiplicity of State Apartments in Sennacherib's palace must have meant that earlier functions were divided over more suites, that they needed more space, and/or that new functions had emerged. These developments coincided with the expansion of the number of Dual-Core Suites, each centred on two parallel rooms with triple aligned doorways (§10.4; Pl. 17). The palace was filled with such suites, although the number, size, and organization of the attached rooms varied considerably.

[4] Through different royal inscriptions one can follow the construction of Sennacherib's palace (Reade 2000b: 411–13).

[5] See SAA 1, 39.

### *6.2.1 A Short History of its Excavation*

In 1843 Botta became the first to excavate the citadel of Nineveh, nowadays known as Kuyunjik.[6] His efforts were unsatisfactory and he abandoned the site after finding Sargon's palace at Khorsabad. This allowed Layard to lay claim on the site.[7] Layard made a small and unsuccessful attempt in the early summer of 1846, finding the Southwest Palace during his second attempt in May 1847. He left a month later. During this period he managed to excavate ten rooms in and around the Throneroom Suite.[8] Ross continued his work until October 1847 working in the Throneroom Courtyard (H) and rooms 51(s), 52, and 53.[9] Layard returned in September 1849 with work continuing until his departure in April 1851. Layard himself was often away, leaving the excavations to continue without his presence.[10]

These first excavations focused on the architecture of the palace and more specifically the reliefs that adorned most of its walls. No other Late Assyrian palace had so many metres of preserved reliefs. This allowed Layard to trace a large extent of the floorplan (Fig. 6.2). The biggest find was formed by the reliefs depicting the siege of Lachish in room 36,[11] as these paralleled their description in the Bible. This created a public interest in Late Assyrian palaces not seen since. This was further enhanced when among the cuneiform tablets brought back from the palace a fragment was found containing an Assyrian version of the biblical story of the Deluge. This find shifted the focus of interest towards the discovery of more tablets, specifically other fragments of the Deluge text. The palace remained a popular destination throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Rather than opening new trenches, most work continued in and around Layard's old trenches. The central parts of the palace were thoroughly pillaged for tablets.[12]

Of the later excavators King and Campbell Thompson are the more notable (Fig. 6.3; see also Fig. 6.8).[13] King worked in Nineveh during 1903–4.[14] Campbell Thompson excavated rooms in the northern part of the palace in the 1930s. The Iraqi archaeologists re-excavated the Throneroom Suite in the 1960s.[15] The latest excavations were undertaken by Russell who opened a few small trenches in the area of the western terrace and room 54 in 1990.[16]

[6] For the history of excavations see Reade 2000b: 392–4; Russell 1991: 34–44.

[7] Reade 1993: 47. [8] Layard 1849b: facing p. 124. [9] Turner 2001.

[10] Notes pertaining to Layard's excavations have been published in Russell 1995 and Turner 2003. For a general overview of archival material see Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner 1998; for Rassam's excavations see Reade 1993; for Ross's excavations see Turner 2001.

[11] McCormick 2002: 74–82; Russell 1991: 202–9, 252–7; Ussishkin 1982.

[12] Smith 1875: 94–103, 148–50. See also Russell 1998a: 45–51.

[13] Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner 1998: pl. 3; Campbell Thompson 1934: fig. 1.

[14] Turner 1998: fig. 9. [15] el-Wailly 1966; Madhloom 1967. [16] Russell 1999b.

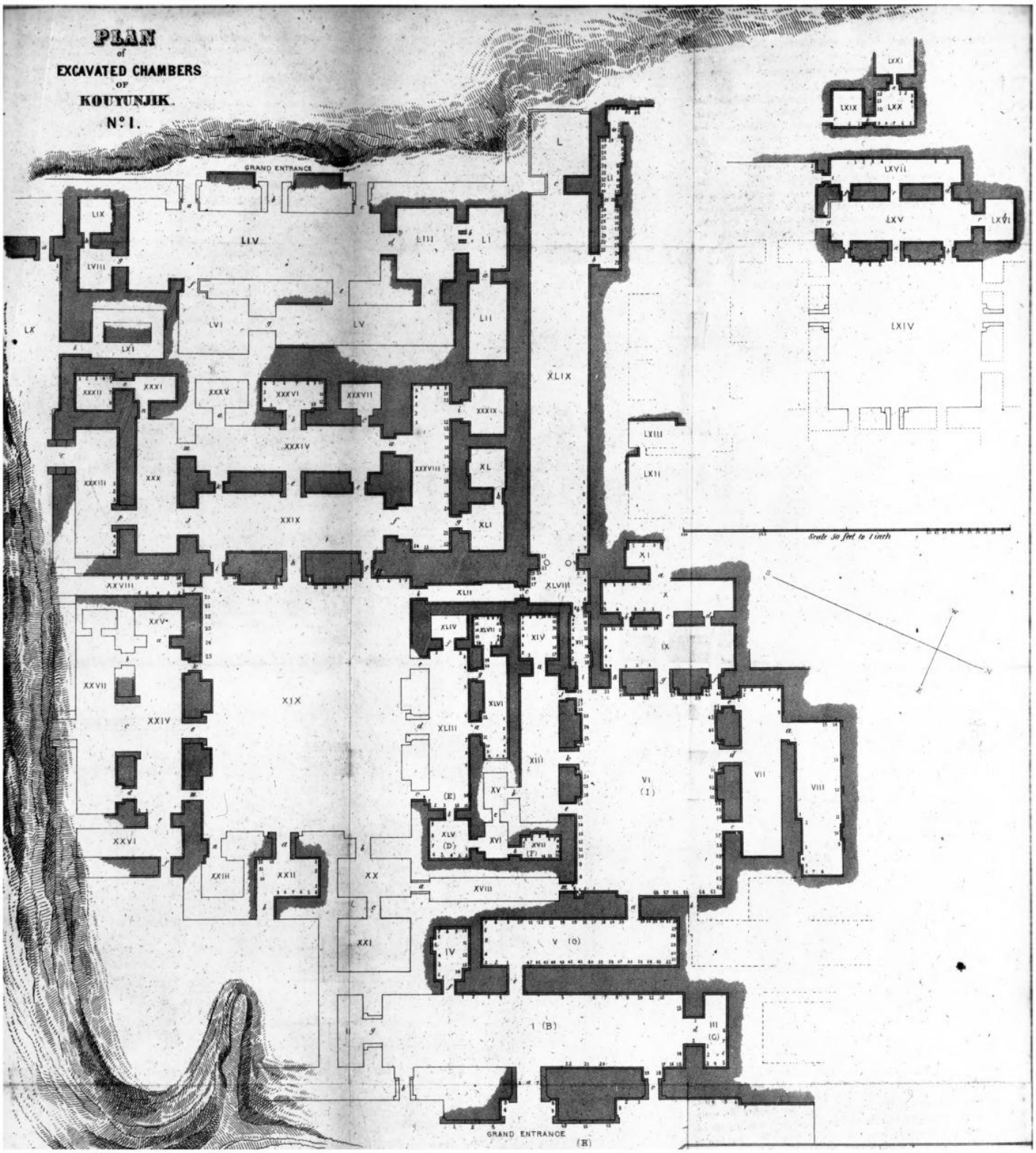



FIG. 6.2 Layard's plan of the Southwest Palace

of Layard's plans some caution is warranted. The Iraqi excavations showed that the measurements of, and connections between, the rooms of the Throneroom Suite differed considerably from those of Layard's plan.[21] The deviations might, however, have been more pronounced in the first season of excavation, which was the one taking place in the Throneroom Suite. More precise measurements might have been taken during the later seasons.

Layard's first plan used alphabetic room designations. These were later changed into Roman numerals. Two earlier designations (NNN and YY)[22] did not receive a Roman numeral and will therefore be designated by their original names. Following Reade, Arabic numbering will be used.[23]

### *6.2.3 The Decoration of the Palace*

The reliefs of the Southwest Palace differed considerably from those of Sargon's Royal Palace,[24] but are nonetheless still recognizably Assyrian. Some of these changes can be described as a homogenization. Whereas Sargon's palace introduced a wide range of topics, the rooms of the Southwest Palace showed only military campaigns. Any correlation that might have existed between the use of rooms and the topics depicted on its walls were no longer present in the Southwest Palace. Only courtyards and corridors showed other subjects.

The intentions behind the indiscriminate use of military scenes is unclear. Russell suggested that it would have reminded visitors, who 'might recognize their own peoples and lands in these highly specific images' of the cost of rebellion and show courtiers the triumph and power of the king.[25] The deterrent intention of war scenes is problematic as a general explanation for two reasons. First, these scenes were located everywhere, even in storerooms and spaces such as the bathroom of the King's Suite, places foreigners and tributaries probably did not visit. Second, one can question the preciseness of these reliefs. The reliefs certainly showed specific campaigns, with captions stating the city or region being attacked. For those standing at a distance or unable to read Akkadian, the reliefs must have been more difficult to interpret. This can be inferred from our own difficulties in reconstructing the location of the depicted military campaigns. One can assume that people less accustomed to the Assyrian way of depicting such scenes would have had similar problems interpreting them.[26] Deciphering the reliefs of the Southwest Palace might have been even more difficult as they used several

[21] Russell 1998a: figs. 1–5. This had consequences for the location and number of reliefs that were originally present in these rooms, which led Russell to suggest a new numbering for them. This is somewhat impractical as these reliefs are commonly known and published with their old numbers.

[22] Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner 1998: 133, pl. 7. [23] Reade 2000b.

[24] Russell 1991: 179–222. [25] Russell 1987: 536.

[26] See also Jacoby 1991: 116–18 (discussing the depiction of Ḫamanu).

innovative ways of depicting scenes.[27] Even though these reliefs might have been explained to visitors, they were nonetheless not made to be overly specific.

A second homogenization occurred in the doors. Sargon's palace had used apotropaic figures selectively. The doors of the Southwest Palace were protected by apotropaic figures throughout (Pl. 21). The only type of doors that were sometimes devoid of such figures were those of corridors, which indicate the lesser status of these connecting spaces. This had also been apparent in the Northwest Palace where corridors were mostly left undecorated. Some corridors of the Southwest Palace were, however, protected by large groups of apotropaic figures of types much more diverse than before.[28] They were combined into different sets, which seem to represent an intellectual creation by Sennacherib's scholars rather than reflecting a known cosmological system.[29] The so-called Smiting God (*lulal*) and Lion-demon (*ugallu*) formed a combination that was exclusively used in bathrooms, though in larger combinations it was also found in two corridors (Pl. 20a).

In comparison to earlier palaces, the presence of colossi was expanded within the Southwest Palace. This is partially due to the increased number of major reception suites, but also to their placement in internal doorways. This can be related to the increased monumentality of the interior, which typified palace architecture of the seventh century. They were not employed to increase the monumentality of the outer façades. The hierarchy between the different external entrances was maintained, with only the central door being flanked by colossi. Most colossi had the body of a bull, but lion colossi also appear to have existed.[30] The reasons for choosing the type of colossus remain unclear and the royal inscriptions suggest that more than two types existed.[31]

### *6.2.4 The Forecourts*

Roughly half the palace was taken up by three forecourts (Pl. 16a). This area, east of the throneroom, is largely unknown. Campbell Thompson excavated part of a building to the north-east of the palace,[32] which was partially re-excavated by Russell in 1989.[33] It is unclear whether the complex, called *bēt nakkapti*, formed part of the palace.[34] Nothing is known about the central forecourt. Layard might have found two porticos in this area, but the structure described by him is not easy to reconstruct.[35] Its original location and orientation remain unclear. They could

[27] Russell 1991: 191–222. [28] Russell 1991: 179–87. [29] Kertai forthcoming b.
[30] Russell 1991: 181–3. [31] Engel 1987.
[32] Campbell Thompson and Hutchinson 1929: 65–6. [33] Russell 1997.
[34] Russell 1991: 86.
[35] 'The distance from centre to centre of the pedestals facing each other was 9 feet 3 inches; their diameter, 11½ inches in the narrowest, and 2 feet 7 inches in the broadest part. The second pair found were

throne would have allowed the king to receive even larger groups of people and their tribute than would the throneroom.

Statue fragments of hands with flowing water were apparently found in this area and might resemble a cultic relief found in Assur.[43] The Throneroom Courtyard would, however, seem an unlikely place for a cultic relief.

Hormuzd Rassam found Ashurnasirpal I's White Obelisk in or around the Throneroom Courtyard as well as the reliefs that must once have lined a corridor (IT) connecting the courtyard with the Ishtar Temple.[44] The reliefs show a procession including priests, the king, and the crown prince, which supports the interpretation of the associated space as a Temple Corridor. The reliefs were found 65 m north of the throneroom façade, which probably corresponds to a large hole on the citadel plan of King and Campbell Thompson.[45] While we do not know the exact size of the Throneroom Courtyard, its northern façade probably did not have enough space to accommodate the main entrance nor is such entrance expected to have been located next to the Temple Corridor. This suggests that the entrance into the Throneroom Courtyard passed through an additional courtyard first, perhaps through the porticos described above. Such a courtyard is likely to have formed the Entrance Courtyard, perhaps with the area further north representing a service quadrant. The Throneroom Courtyard would have been entered facing the throneroom façade rather than via the more common diagonal approach.

Beside the passage through the Throneroom Suite, at least one further route led from the Throneroom Courtyard into the rest of the palace. Corridor 21 forms the common Throneroom Corridor. It provided a direct connection to courtyard 19,[46] which was surrounded by some of the most monumental reception suites. A hypothetical corridor could have connected to the unknown northern part of the palace, creating a route towards courtyard 64 in the north-western part of the palace.[47]

[43] Reade 2000a: 111.

[44] Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner 1998: pls. 473–96; Rassam 1897: 8–9. Rassam also described finding inscribed and painted bricks, but as these were found above the level of the reliefs, it remains unclear whether these belonged to Sennacherib's palace.

[45] Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner 1998: 133, pl. 3.

[46] This hypothetical corridor was first suggested by Reade (2000b: fig. 11). Its original existence seems probable due to the commonness of such Throneroom Corridors. Reade's suggestion that corridors 21 and 18 met in a large intermediate room seems convincing. It would have been similar to room 48. Turner, who also argued for the existence of a Throneroom Corridor, made it part of room 22 (Turner 1998: 31). This seems less likely in comparison to other Late Assyrian palaces, which placed corridors in the corners of courtyards.

[47] This corridor was already suggested by Reade (2000b: fig. 11).

### *6.2.5 The Throneroom Suite*

The throneroom followed the typical organization with three external entrances, a niche opposite the central entrance,[48] a ramp (3),[49] and a bathroom (4).[50] The central niche, the only one preserved, is fragmentarily known. Its lower right corner shows two pairs of feet facing left.[51] These feet must belong to two large figures, probably the king accompanied by a winged apotropaic figure. This would be the only appearance of an apotropaic figure within a room and a rare occurrence of the king as a life-sized figure within the palace. The scene is likely to have been symmetrical and thus comparable to the niches in Ashurnasirpal's Northwest Palace.[52] This assumes that an apotropaic tree, otherwise missing from the palace, stood in its middle. This seems to have been the only non-military scene used within a room, though the military scenes did continue beneath the niche. The scene highlights the importance of the niche and the traditionalism inherent in thronerooms. The original existence of a second niche behind the throne can only be assumed.

From the throneroom a further large room (5) connected to the Central Courtyard (6). In its currently known form, room 5 gave access only to the Central Courtyard. No remains were found of the room that must have existed north of room 5. It was probably accessed from the Central Courtyard[53] and is unlikely to have been connected directly to room 5. Relief 28 of room 5, which was destroyed by the construction of a well in post-Assyrian times,[54] could have represented a door originally, but the available space is limited and the adjacent reliefs suggest that the missing slab showed a city under attack.[55]

The missing room was probably accessed through door *b* of the Central Courtyard. This hypothetical door was based on the absence of relief 65 and the continuation of the narrative scenes on the edge of relief 64 (Fig. 6.4).[56] A door is

[48] Russell 1991: 49–50; 1998a: 223. The part of the wall where the second niche would have been expected has not been preserved.

[49] The ramp was not identified by Layard, but was reconstructed by Turner (1998: 25). A photo made by King (Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner 1998: pl. 37; Russell 1998a: pl. 24) might show a door at the expected location behind the person in the photo, but this is extremely conjectural.

[50] Layard's reconstruction of the throneroom included a second alcove-like chamber (2). Several authors have compared this to the throneroom of the North Palace in Nineveh (Heinrich 1984: 176, 194; Turner 1998: 24–5). The presence of this hypothetical room has been refuted by Russell (1991: 47–8) and has turned out not to exist (Russell 1998a: 33–4).

[51] Russell 1998a: pl. 86.

[52] Russell 1998a: 223.

[53] As already argued by Layard (quoted in Russell 1995: 77).

[54] Layard 1849c: 107. The reconstruction of Russell (1998a: 42, figs. 154–6) shows one relief (30a in Russell's new numbering) missing.

[55] Relief 27 shows the army attacking a city, whose border was visible on the right edge of the relief. Relief 29 showed the heads of prisoners being taken to scribes (Layard (fos. $47^{r}$–$49^{r}$) quoted by Russell 1995: 74). The attacked city must have been in between both scenes on relief 28.

[56] Turner (1998: 25, fig. 2) suggested that the corner could have represented a buttress instead.

indeed the most likely reconstruction as no single slab seems able to bridge the narratives on reliefs 64 and 66.[57] More importantly, the missing room is exactly located as to make a door into the Central Courtyard possible. The resulting corridor could have connected the Central Courtyard with the northern part of the palace as well as the Throneroom Courtyard. This arrangement would have foreshadowed corridor C in the North Palace of Ashurbanipal, which connected different areas of the palace (§8.2.8; Pl. 19).

### *6.2.6 The Central Courtyard*

The suites surrounding the Central Courtyard (i.e. courtyard 6) seem comparable to those known from Sargon's Royal Palace. The courtyard was decorated with a military campaign in a mountainous terrain and the transport of bull colossi. Russell argued that both subjects formed a coherent whole, showing how military victories in the periphery brought benefits for the centre, in this case by providing manpower for the work on the construction of the palace.[58] While this is a nice way to combine both scenes, it is not clear whether their adjacency represents a correlation. All other military scenes were self-contained, showing the rewards of war to be plunder, tribute, and prisoners. A similar transport and quarrying scene on the walls of the Throneroom Courtyard of Sargon's Royal Palace does not seem to have been paired to war scenes.[59] While it is possible that audiences would have connected the rewards of war with the building of the palace, both subjects seem to have been able to function independently. McCormick argued that depicting the effort needed to bring one colossus into the palace would be even more powerful as the observer would have been surrounded by eight such colossi in this courtyard.[60] While this is certainly true, it must be noted that each courtyard contained eight colossi, those of the Central Courtyard not being the largest, thus not explaining why the scene was depicted here. There is no specific spatial argument discernible for the placement of the quarrying scene in this specific courtyard beyond the restriction that such scenes were relegated to courtyards and corridors. A similar scene was depicted in courtyard 49 slightly to the west. It does, however, show the importance Sennacherib attached to the procurement of these colossi.

[57] The known reliefs on both sides of this hypothetical door (Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner 1998: pls. 115–16) are directed towards the gap between them. Both reliefs end with a mountain and rows of soldiers facing the gap. The gap could have been filled with a relief (65) containing a central scene towards which the others were directed, most probably involving the king, but this seems problematic. While the king might have been present on such a relief, he cannot have faced both directions, which means that one side faced his back. A door flanked by both mountains and soldiers seems a more likely reconstruction for the gap.

[58] Russell 1987: 537. [59] Botta 1849a: pls. 31–5. [60] McCormick 2002: 70.

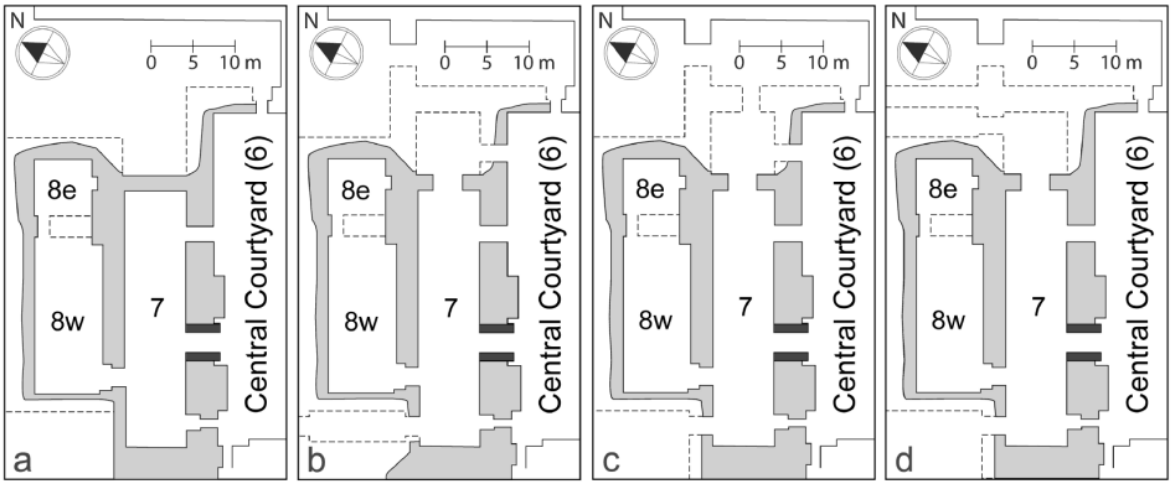



FIG. 6.4 The King's Suite (variants a–d)

In suite 2 one can recognize the King's Suite (Fig. 6.4; §10.5.2). It represents the most monumental Residential/Reception Suite of the palace (for the traditional plan see Fig. 6.2). In fact it represents the only Residential/Reception Suite currently known within the palace (Pl. 17). The suite contained a large reception room (7), a reclining room (8w) and a bathroom (8e).[61] Its organization is atypical for this palace, but very similar to the King's Suite in Ashurnasirpal's Northwest Palace (Pl. 4). The conservatism of the King's Suite is especially remarkable in a palace where only a few suites still bore a resemblance to those of the Northwest Palace. Whereas the majority of doors were aligned in the Southwest Palace, the internal door *a*, between rooms 7 and 8w, was placed asymmetrically. This small deviation is significant and points to the importance of seclusion within this suite, which seems to have been less relevant in the other known suites or was attained by other means.

The suite was probably even more like its forebear than Layard's plan indicates. Room 7 is likely to have possessed two additional doors (variants b–d), which were both present in the King's Suite of the Northwest Palace. The associated rooms fill in some of the blank spaces surrounding the suite. A back door can be reconstructed in western part of the northern wall of room 7. This would explain why the south-eastern walls of rooms 7 and 8 did not align.[62] Such a back door would have connected to a courtyard, either directly or through an additional corridor.

[61] Room 8 has been reconstructed as having a bathroom by Turner (1970a: 196), with further proof provided by Russell (1995: 80).

[62] While Layard did not find any door at this location, his plan shows only two reliefs (8 and 9) to have decorated this wall, which seems too few for the length of the wall. Bleibtreu's (1998: 71) solution to extend the length of these slabs does not seem warranted by the width of these reliefs.

The nature of suite 4 is less clear. The relatively small size of its main rooms suggests that this area was of secondary importance. It was nonetheless very centrally located within the palace. On first sight it is akin to the Double-sided Reception Suites found behind the Throneroom Suite in earlier palaces. Its changed position—being located close to the throne rather than the throneroom ramp—is not in itself significant. It is the relative position of suites within the palace that is more relevant. The lack of a direct connection to the Throneroom Suite, due to the presence of corridor 18 between them, is more problematic.[66] Atypically for a Double-sided Reception Suite, its two outside façades did not align. Both sides were only indirectly, if at all, connected to each other. The suite might have been divided into two smaller suites (4a and 4b).[67] Layard showed a connection to have existed between the sides through a series of smaller rooms (15, 16, and 45). This connection is rather haphazard compared to the architecture of the rest of the palace and might be incorrect or represent changes of a later date.[68] The suites themselves also lack the symmetrical organization so characteristic for this palace.

The disappearance of the Double-sided Reception Suite from the palace can be related to the shift of the monumental core of the palace away from the Central Courtyard (§11.5.3), but might also be a consequence of the wish to make the connection between the Central Courtyard and the Throneroom Corridor more direct. This connection was made by inserting corridor 18 between suite 4 and the Throneroom Suite. Such a route had not existed in earlier palaces—though rooms T 9 and 11 in the Military Palace of Kalḫu might have functioned similarly (Pl. 9). Corridor 18 could probably be entered directly from the Throneroom Corridor, through the hypothetical room 20, without the need to enter courtyard 19 first. This made the route more hidden than was common within these palaces.

### *6.2.7 The Monumental Zone*

Courtyard 19 represents the largest inner courtyard. King found charred cedar beams, perhaps indicating the presence of canopies,[69] and paving stones inscribed

[66] Even though this corridor is hypothetical (Russell 1995: 77), the space between suites 1 and 4 must have been filled by a corridor.

[67] Turner (1970a: 207–9) placed this suite under his heading of Reception Suite Type F due to its position next to the throneroom, but acknowledged that it was probably divided into two suites.

[68] There is no evidence for the door between rooms 13 and 15 (Bleibtreu 1998: 26). Layard stated that the 'walls of this chamber [room 13] had been almost completely destroyed, and the chamber was not, consequently, all excavated' (Russell 1995: 78). It is unclear whether any archaeological basis exists for the doors between rooms 13, 15, and 16. Russell has suggested that rooms 15 and 16 could have formed one single room (Russell 1991: 57), but such a shifted position compared to the adjacent reception room would be uncommon. One could similarly propose that rooms 15 and 16 were not connected at all.

[69] The lack of stratigraphical information and the ravaged nature of this part of the palace makes such a hypothesis speculative.

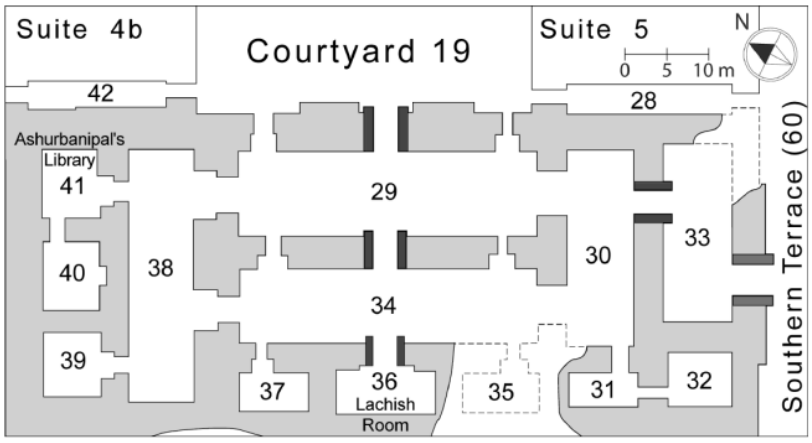



FIG. 6.5 Suite 6

with Sennacherib's name.[70] It was surrounded by some of the largest suites within the palace. Corridors provided connections to the other areas of the palace. If Layard's plan of corridor 42 is correct, the shifted line in its western wall suggests the presence of a third door halfway along its length.[71] Such a measure of additional security might have been inserted at this point to separate the different areas of the palace.

The largest, and thereby probably most important, suite (6) was formed by rooms 29–41 (Fig. 6.5). It represents a Dual-Core Suite with a large range of attachments surrounding a core of two central rooms. It formed the location of the two most famous discoveries made within this palace: the Lachish reliefs in room 36 and Ashurbanipal's library in room 41. Its core was formed by rooms 29 and 34. Exceptionally, the slabs of room 29 were left blank, as were its doors except for the colossi at its central doors. Room 29 was therefore the only room in the palace not protected by apotropaic figures. This is unlikely to have meant that the room was less protected, but must indicate the protective properties associated with the plain 'fossiliferous limestone' lining its walls,[72] described by the Assyrians with the logograms $NA_4$.$^{d}$ŠE.TIR.[73]

The suite contained a third row of smaller rooms in the back, the central one representing the Lachish Room.[74] The function and importance of these inner rooms is unclear (§10.4.1), but this is true for most spaces within the palace. The rooms were given a visual prominence by being placed at the ends of the visual axes that ran through the suite. The central axis was especially monumental. Not only was the central (Lachish) room larger than the two other backrooms, but the

[70] Campbell Thompson and Hutchinson 1929: 60.
[71] Turner 1998: 26.
[72] Layard 1853a: 445–6.
[73] RINAP 3, 34: 72. See also Engel 1987: 10, 169–70; Frahm 1997: 140–1 (T 72); Russell 1991: 90, 166, 276; Schuster-Brandis 2008: 443–4.
[74] See n. 11.

central axis was also flanked by colossi at each of its doors. These colossi decreased in size towards the inside.[75]

The core was further expanded by two perpendicular rooms (30 and 38) placed on each of its short ends. These made the routing within the suite more flexible. Each provided access to additional rooms. Room 38, one of the largest rooms in the palace, connected to a bathroom (40) and vestibule (41) combination and a storage room (39). Room 30 provided a route towards the southern terrace through room 33. The fossiliferous limestone slabs of room 33 were probably also blank originally.[76] The door leading to the southern terrace did not have stone colossi flanking it. Instead, two plain stone blocks were found, probably used as plinths for metal colossi.[77] Room 30 also connected to a further vestibule (31) and bathroom (32) combination.[78] The monumentality and organization of this suite were unprecedented, but the attachments can perhaps be compared to those of suite 5 in Sargon's Royal Palace (Fig. 5.7; Pl. 11). Both suites can be described as consisting of a differently organized core with an internal attachment (sub-suite 5a and rooms 38–41 respectively) and an added connection to the palace terrace (rooms 4/7 and 30–3 respectively).

The floorplan of suite 5 is incomplete, but can probably be reconstructed as a Dual-Core Suite having attachments only on its sides (Fig. 6.6). Most scholars have reconstructed a third row to the south of suite 5 (variants b–c).[79] The modest size of its core argues for a more subdued reconstruction. The suite could have connected to the southern terrace (60),[80] but such double-sidedness was extremely rare.

Several of the internal doorways, especially at door *c*, were too wide to have been able to carry their loads without additional supports. No such supports have been found, however, but they can nonetheless be expected to have existed and seem necessary from a constructive point of view.[81] Within Dual-Core Suites, columns or statues were regularly placed in such wide central doors (§10.4). A bathroom could have existed in the area of room NNN[82] or in the southern

[75] Turner 1998: 26. [76] Turner 1998: 29. [77] Turner 1998: 27. [78] Turner 1998: 29.

[79] See also Heinrich 1984: fig. 109; Reade 2000b: fig. 11.

[80] This was first proposed by Heinrich (1984: 177–8) on the basis of the Northwest Palace in Kalḫu and the Royal Palace of Dur-Sharruken, but there is no indication that suite 5 represents a Double-sided Reception Suite.

[81] Reade (1979b: fig. 9) was the first to restore additional elements. Turner (1998: 31) has argued that Layard's drawing of door *c* between rooms 24 and 27 does not provide places for such supports. He posited the problem as one of beam length and since rooms 1 and 29 are wider than door *c* there would have been no a priori reason why it could not have been bridged by a single beam. The problem is, however, constructional. Doorway *c* had to carry the additional weight coming from the roof of rooms 24 and 27, considerably enlarging the load needed to be carried and making a support structure necessary.

[82] Turner 1998: fig. 6A.

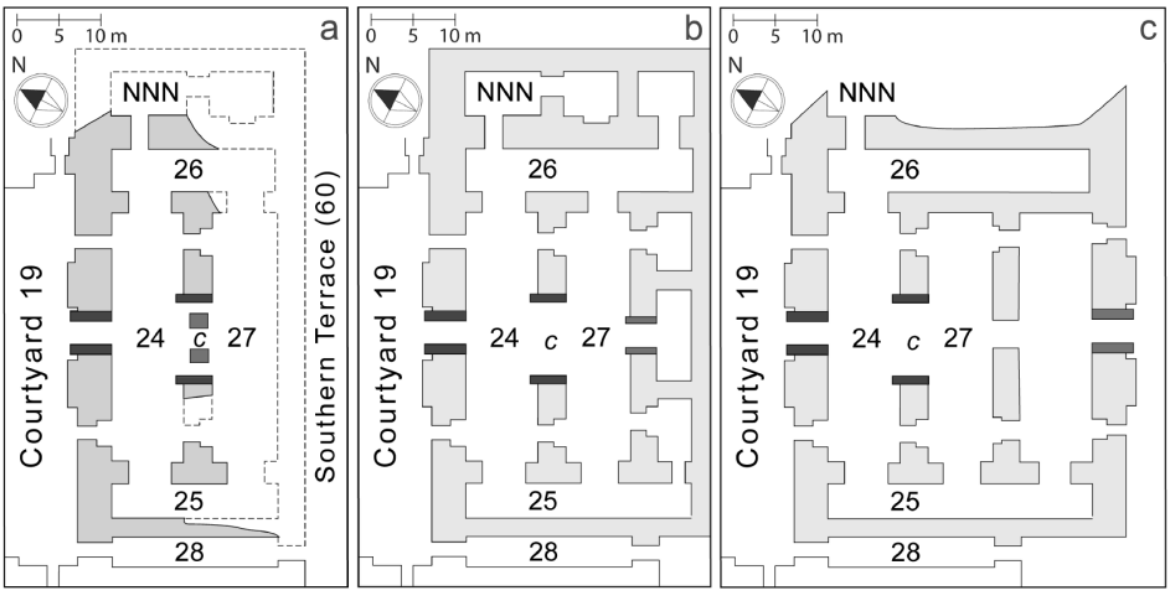



FIG. 6.6 Suite 5 (variants a–c)

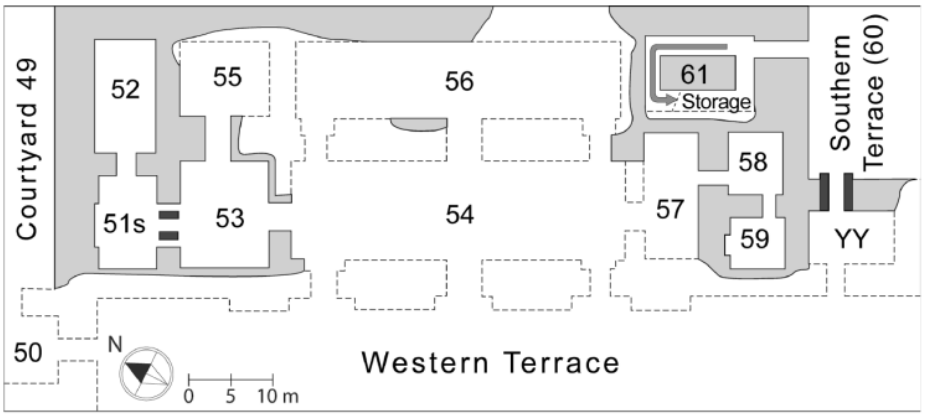
parts of rooms 25 or 26. Such a bathroom is to be expected to have existed, but is unlikely to have been directly connected to the core of the suite.

### *6.2.8 The Terraces of the Palace*

Suite 7 opened onto the western terrace (Fig. 6.7). It was relatively far removed from the throneroom. The preservation of the suite is, unfortunately, rather fragmentary. It must have been one of the most monumental suites within the palace, but the descriptions by its excavators have led to much confusion. Most discussions have concentrated on its outer façade. Layard stated that it was similar to that of the throneroom, possessing five pairs of bull colossi with several other 'colossal figures'.[83] King excavated a façade, which he believed to have been located west of Layard's.[84] This has led to the question whether this suite possessed two monumental façades one behind the other[85] or whether Layard and King had excavated the same one.[86] A double façade would be unique and the resulting reconstructions have no basis in Late Assyrian palace architecture. A solution presents itself from the acknowledgement that Layard did not in fact excavate this façade. It does not appear on his MS plan[87] nor does it seem to have been mentioned in any of his diaries, notebooks, or letters.[88] King's statement

[83] Layard 1853a: 645.
[84] Turner 1998: fig. 9; Campbell Thompson and Hutchinson 1929: 35, 59–61.
[85] Heinrich 1984: fig. 109; Matthiae 1999: 49; Turner 1998: fig. 5.
[86] Russell 1991: 76; Turner 1998: 35.
[87] Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner 1998: pls. 6–7.
[88] Turner 2001: 127.

FIG. 6.7 Suite 7




that 'Layard's plan of the palace is not only incomplete but for the W. part extraordinarily inaccurate, for he seems to have stopped tunnelling here and trusted to conjecture'[89] seems to support this hypothesis. The exact location of its façade is nonetheless uncertain. The façade was partially re-excavated by Russell, but he was unable to determine its exact location within the palace.[90] The architecture of the suite suggests that the outer façade, even if not excavated by Layard, was nonetheless located where Layard had placed it. It is unlikely to have been as monumental as that of the throneroom.

King found glazed brick fragments somewhere in rooms 49, 51(s), or 53–4.[91] The original panel(s) are expected to have been part of an external façade. The wall above the entrance into courtyard 49 forms the most likely location. This entrance could have passed through room 50,[92] although this room seems largely hypothetical.[93] Russell found more than a hundred fragments of glazed bricks in the fill of the southern terrace.[94] King also found fragments of a throne made of 'red and white marble' close to this façade.[95]

Layard's reconstruction of the inner part of the suite seems too chaotic in comparison to the other suites of the palace. The suite is more likely to have formed yet another Dual-Core Suite with two large central rooms (54 and 56) connected by triple doorways. This requires a few adjustments to the walls on Layard's plan of which only small parts were said to have been found.[96] To the

[89] D'Andrea 1981: 152. [90] Russell 1995: 189, fig. 2. [91] D'Andrea 1981: 99.
[92] As restored by Reade 1979b: 87. [93] Turner 1998: 32. [94] Russell 1999b.
[95] Turner 2001: 128.
[96] If this suite formed a Dual-Core Suite then rooms 55 and 56 need to have been separated originally. Rooms 53 and 55 were probably of equal width. Room 56 seems somewhat thin in comparison to the

south of the core, room 57 provided access to a vestibule (58) with bathroom (59).[97] The wide opening, which Layard indicated as having existed between rooms 54 and 57, must have been considerably smaller, probably paralleling entrance *d* into room 53[98] or alternatively one of the other wide doorways of the palace.

Room 55, and apparently room 56 as well, were 'surrounded by low slabs of very fine white limestone'.[99] This would represent a modest mode of decoration for such a monumental suite. The architectural emphasis seems to have been directed towards the northern part of the suite and its small rooms 51s and 52.[100] The door between rooms 53 and 51s is noteworthy for the crouching lion statues, probably used as pillar supports, within its doorway.[101] These were probably part of the 'four lion sphinxes' said to have been found by Ross.[102] The two additional 'sphinxes' could have flanked the door. The statues leave little space for movement, but this seems to have been common for such doors in the seventh century. Other wide, apparently empty, entrances were probably similarly filled with statues (§10.4). The niche in the northern wall of room 51s is another sign of the room's importance.[103] At this location it is unlikely to indicate the presence of a bathroom. A comparison with the throneroom niches might be more appropriate.[104] Its reliefs, showing a battle taking place in Babylonia,[105] do not, however, indicate a special status.

Layard found three rooms (69–71) west of suite 10. Each was decorated with reliefs, indicating their importance. The reconstruction of the associated suite and its connection to the palace are problematic. Decorated rooms have so far been found only as part of large monumental suites.[106] Judging from the preserved

monumentality of this suite. It is not unlikely that all rooms ended on the same line as rooms 52 and 61, which would also decrease the extraordinary thickness of the wall separating suites 6 and 7.

[97] Russell (1991: 73) based this identification on the niche in the northern wall of room 59. The presence of the Lion-demon and Smiting God combination in the door of room 59 supports this identification (Kertai forthcoming b).

[98] Such narrowing was already suggested by Reade on his plan of the palace (Reade 2000b: fig. 11). Such a wide opening is constructively impossible as the doorway did not only carry its own weight, but must also have supported the roof beams of room 57. [99] Russell 1995: 82.

[100] Turner (1970a: 196 n. 9; 1998: n. 24) suggested it to be the location of palace shrines as mentioned in Sennacherib's palace inscriptions. [101] Layard 1853a: 68. [102] Turner 2001: 127.

[103] This niche was restored by Turner (1998: figs. 7, 34).

[104] Turner (1998: 35) argued that room 51s was not just an unlikely place for a bathroom, but also for a throne. In a later article Turner (2001: 127) suggested that this was not a niche, but an entrance. This suggestion is not fully convincing. Side entrances into suites are quite rare and the structure of this suite does not suggest a door at this location. [105] Turner 2001.

[106] Doorway *a*, between rooms 70 and 71, clearly indicates that people were expected to approach from the west. Its doorway figures faced west (Russell 1995: 85) and the recess to accommodate the door was located inside room 70. An additional room, probably south of room 71, must therefore have existed. These

doors, which indicate that room 70 was approached from room 71, the suite most probably extended southwards, thereby coming close to where Descending Corridor 51n was located.[107] A westward expansion is less likely as the associated protrusion would extend the suite beyond the edge of the citadel. Rooms 69–71 were located considerably west of the façade of suite 7. If correct, the western façade of the palace must have been stepped. King found reliefs representing a 'sea surrounded by flat land covered with date palms' in this general area.[108] The topics are similar to the reliefs known from rooms 69 and 70 to which they might therefore belong. Alternatively, the reliefs decorated the wall surrounding the palace terrace.

There seems no place between suites 9 and 10 for an eastern approach to this suite. Turner suggested that it would have been accessible from the terrace itself.[109] This would necessitate a considerable enlargement of the western terrace. King is said to have found a 30ft-wide pavement running along the façade of suite 7.[110] This width is not enough to reach the westward location of room 71, but the original terrace might have eroded in antiquity.

A terrace (60), providing a view over Nineveh, must have existed south of suites 5 and 6.[111] Its walls were covered with reliefs showing a campaign in the Zagros mountains. Layard found several reliefs, but indicated the existence of only two reliefs on his plan.[112] The terrace seems to have been less monumental than its western counterpart. Its connections with the palace were few and appear secondary. Several scholars have argued that a further set of rooms existed here.[113] This idea seems based mostly on the proposed extensions with a third row of suites 5 and 7. Even with such extensions, it is unlikely that the area between them would have been filled with a room. The doors into rooms 33 and 61 represent external entrances.

The terrace provided access to ramp 61.[114] This ramp was not directly connected to any of the suites, but its location next to the largest reception suites

three rooms might, however, have been located a few metres east, decreasing their protrusion, since the space between rooms 67 and 69/70 seems exceptionally large. Alternatively, a corridor can be squeezed into this space, although it is unclear what such a corridor would have connected.

[107] The precise course of the Descending Corridor is hypothetical and does not need to have run below the suite associated with rooms 69–71. For a continuation of the Descending Corridor see Turner 2003: fig. 5.

[108] Barnett 1976: 25. [109] Turner 1998: 36.

[110] Campbell Thompson and Hutchinson 1929: 61.

[111] Layard (1853a: 460) was unsure whether the terrace was not already outside the palace, with the southern walls of rooms 32/33 representing the outer wall of the palace. King is said to have corrected certain errors in Layard's plan in this area (Campbell Thompson and Hutchinson 1929: 61), but the nature of these mistakes and changes is unknown.

[112] Russell 1995: 83. Some of the reliefs assigned to room 38 could have originated from here (Bleibtreu 1998: 108–9 (n. 1), 127 (n. 1)).

[113] e.g. Layard 1853a: 460; Reade 1979b: 87, fig. 9; Russell 1991: 74.

[114] Reconstructed by Turner (1998: 32) as having a height of 3.5 m. This could be somewhat too low to have given access to the roofs of the main rooms, but could have been enough to reach the roof of some lesser rooms such as 58–9.

may we both live long in health and happiness in this palace and enjoy well-being to the full![123]

The suite resembles suites 3 and 5 in its size and organization. It possessed sideward extensions, but their organization is largely unknown.[124] The reliefs in courtyard 64 and room 65 continue the military topics seen throughout the palace.[125] Nothing in its decoration or architecture is stereotypically 'feminine' nor indicates that its inhabitant was lacking in power. On the contrary, the preserved architecture is in line with the monumentality seen in other parts of the palace. Courtyard 64 was, however, relatively far removed from the other major reception suites as well as from the King's Suite.

Despite its location in the inner parts of the palace, the suite forms a typical Dual-Core Suite, other examples of which do not appear to have been residential in nature. This implies that if Tashmetum-sharrat possessed a Residential/Reception Suite it must have been located somewhere else. Residential/Reception Suites of other royal family members can also be assumed to have existed. Courtyard 64 was certainly surrounded by further suites, some of which could have been residential in nature. This might have made courtyard 64 similar to the Central Courtyard in its organization. As in most other royal palaces an external entrance could have existed in this area in order to provide easier access to the inner areas.[126]

Areas 8 and 9 are largely hypothetical. Most of the preserved walls were found by Campbell Thompson, but his descriptions and plans are difficult to interpret (Fig. 6.8).[127] Reade's suggestion that this area was filled with Standard Apartments seems based on the assumption that the palace contained many residents (eunuchs, concubines, etc.) who had to reside somewhere.[128] Without more information such presupposition cannot be tested, but a different reconstruction will be proposed here. These spaces seem ideally situated to have functioned as the main service area of the palace containing kitchens and storage rooms. The area was located in the middle of the palace with the nearby Descending Corridor 51n providing easy delivery lines. Food would have been able to reach the different

[123] Radner 2012: 692. See also Borger 1988: 5; Galter, Levine, and Reade 1986: 32.

[124] A room can be reconstructed west of room 67. This could represent an extension of room 66, whose walls were badly preserved, with or without a connection to room 67, or as a separate room accessed from room 67. The walls of room 66, although shown on Layard's plan, had all 'almost entirely disappeared' (Layard 1853a: 586) with 'the surface of the mound . . . almost [being] on a level with the flooring' (Layard (fo. 79$^{v}$) quoted by Russell 1995: 84). The northern wall of room 67 was 'almost entirely destroyed' (Layard (fo. 79$^{v}$) quoted by Russell 1995: 84). Whether room 68, whose designation was reconstructed by Russell (1991: 75), was originally divided is unknown. If rooms 66 and/or 68 formed large undivided rooms, either one of them might have given access to a further group of rooms, which would be expected to have included a bathroom, similar to rooms 57–9.

[125] Layard 1853a: 584–6.

[126] Turner 1998: 36.

[127] Russell 1991: 76–7.

[128] Reade 2000b: 414.

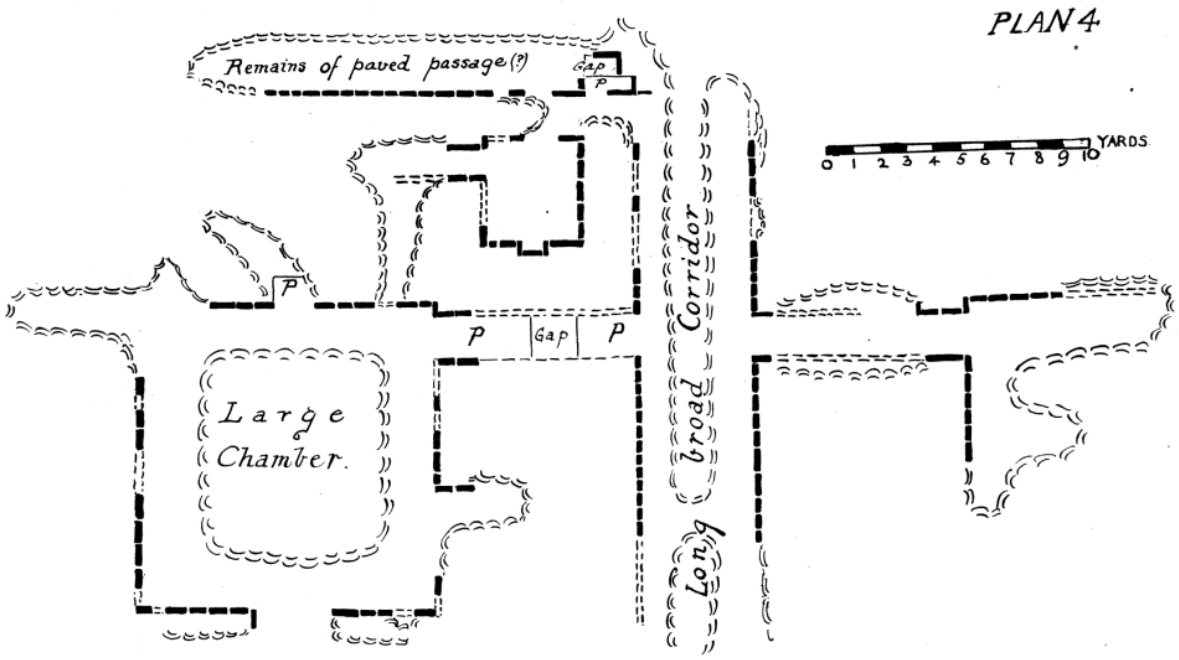



FIG. 6.8 Plan of Campbell Thompson's excavations in the Southwest Palace

suites quickly. It might also explain the position and function of room 11. Its door towards room 10 is shifted and thereby somewhat hidden, providing a backdoor for the food to enter. One must, however, note that such hidden delivery doors are otherwise absent from Late Assyrian palace architecture.

The architecture of these rooms was much less monumental than the other spaces known within the palace. Layard's rooms 62 and 63, which were found in this area, were surrounded by small limestone slabs approximately 1 m in height.[129] Smith found similarly decorated rooms in this area.[130] King excavated in this area, finding pavements and drainages dating to Sennacherib's reign.[131] Similar rooms seem to have been found north of room 8 by Campbell Thompson in his trench I.[132] Campbell Thompson excavated a total of four trenches in this part of the palace (Fig. 6.3), but his descriptions are extremely difficult to follow, especially as no plan was published for most of this work. The plan he did provide does not bring much enlightenment either. One of the more striking aspects of his descriptions is the omnipresence of pavements made of baked bricks and limestones surrounded by limestone dados.[133] Such pavements are likely to represent courtyards, storage spaces, and/or bathrooms, and are reminiscent of the southern part of Kalḫu's Northwest Palace. More monumental finds included a 'small broken stone model of a winged bull' (trench I) and 'pieces of Assyrian sculpture and bull' (trench II).[134] These were apparently found, respectively 2 and 4 ft above the floors, suggesting they were not in situ.

The connections between the northern part of the palace and the State Apartments is largely unknown. Considering the monumentality of Tashmetum-sharrat's suite, it might be assumed that its connections with the rest of the palace were monumental as well. Three possible connections exist: a long corridor towards the Throneroom Courtyard; the backdoor from the King's Suite, probably joining the long corridor; and a corridor connecting to courtyard 49. The latter corridor would run in between the service areas, which might lack the monumentality that can be assumed for such an important connection. Campbell Thompson found a *c.*3.5m-wide space paved with limestones and flanked by a limestone dado in his trench I (Fig. 6.3).[135] Its position and description supports the presence of the long corridor.

[129] Russell 1995: 83.
[130] Campbell Thompson and Hutchinson 1929: 66.
[131] Campbell Thompson and Hutchinson 1929: 61.
[132] Campbell Thompson and Mallowan 1933: 71–2.
[133] Campbell Thompson and Mallowan 1933: 71–4.
[134] Campbell Thompson and Mallowan 1933: 73.
[135] Campbell Thompson and Mallowan 1933: 73.

### *6.2.10 The Palace During the Seventh Century*

There is little evidence for large building activity after the completion of the palace. Several walls were redecorated after Sennacherib's death, but most of Sennacherib's reliefs were left untouched. The majority of these changes seem to date to the reign of Ashurbanipal. The most notable interventions took place in suite 6, the most monumental suite of the palace (Fig. 6.5). Room 41, which formed a vestibule to bathroom 40, became the storage place for a considerable part of Ashurbanipal's famous library.[136] The formerly uncarved reliefs of room 33 were carved with scenes from Ashurbanipal's campaigns in Gambulu and Elam. The Elamite battle found its thematic counterpart in room S, and on some of the reliefs fallen into that room, in Ashurbanipal's North Palace (§8.2.7).[137] The reliefs along the external façade of the throneroom ramp were also recarved to show the Elamite campaign.[138] Madhloom dated a new pavement in the Throneroom Courtyard, made of differently sized limestone slabs, to Ashurbanipal,[139] though without providing arguments. Reliefs in room 22 were also recarved,[140] but the exact nature of this intervention is unclear. Layard stated that some reliefs had been turned and recarved.[141] Reliefs from the reigns of both Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal were found,[142] but the reliefs datable to Sennacherib might have been turned towards the wall.[143] Precise information is, however, lacking. The reliefs from room 43 might also have been carved during Ashurbanipal's reign.[144] A large statue of Ashurbanipal stood somewhere in the vicinity of courtyard 49.[145] The reliefs of courtyard 19 and corridor 28 were probably carved during the reign of Ashurbanipal[146] or Sin-sharru-ishkun.[147]

These interventions do not in themselves elucidate the status of the palace nor the ways in which it was used. They do, however, indicate that the palace had not lost its importance. As the Southwest Palace remained the largest palace within the empire, it can be expected to have continued to function as the primary palace.

The Southwest Palace lacks archives from the final decades of the Assyrian Empire. Reade argued that this reflects the movement of the main offices of the empire to the North Palace after it was completed.[148] This is, however, an

[136] Layard 1853a: 344–7. [137] Watanabe 2008: 328.
[138] Bleibtreu 1998: 49–50. [139] Madhloom 1968: 50.
[140] Bleibtreu 1998: 84–86. Lumsden (2000: 819) argued that the room showed the city of Nineveh.
[141] Layard 1853a: 230–1. [142] See also Frahm 1997: 232–6.
[143] Two reliefs (8 and 9) can be dated to the reign of Sennacherib. The scenes do not fit, which could support the hypothesis that they were found facing the wall awaiting to be recarved (Bleibtreu 1998: 85). They could also have been recarved with an unknown new decoration.
[144] Bleibtreu 1998: 110. See also BM 124773 (Bleibtreu 1998: 70; Reade 1967: 42–45).
[145] Smith 1875: 147. Reade and Walker (1981–2: 119–21) have argued for a location next to room 48.
[146] Bleibtreu 1998: 84 n. 1; Magen 1986: 168–9. [147] Reade 1979b: 109–10.
[148] Reade 2000b: 426–7

*argumentum e silentio*. The main state archives would be expected to have been located in the offices surrounding the, still unexcavated, Throneroom Courtyard of the Southwest Palace.

## 6.3 THE MILITARY PALACE (NINEVEH)

The Military Palace in Nineveh remains one of the least understood palaces of the empire, but its importance can hardly be overstated. The palace that had existed in Nineveh from at least the later Middle Assyrian period onwards. Its old name was the *bēt kutalli*, a name that continued to be used, but the palace was also described by the more general term *ekal māšarti* and was named '*Ešgalšiddudua*, "The palace that administers everything"' by Esarhaddon,[149] a literary name not attested in other contexts.

The palace was probably built anew and expanded by Sennacherib, who describes tearing down the old Military Palace in order to construct a larger palace in a new location within the city.[150] Nonetheless both palaces were probably located on and around Nebi Yunus, the second mound of the city (Pl. 16b). The newly added ground is more likely to have referred to the enlarged Military Complex on the plain below Nebi Yunus.

The size of the Military Complex is unknown. In contrast to Kalḫu and Dur-Sharruken, its outer walls are not visible on contour maps such as Jones's map of 1852.[151] Lumsden suggested that it would have occupied the southern part of the city.[152] This would have placed the Military Palace in the north-west corner of the larger complex, a placement comparable to the earlier Military Complexes. A wall made of at least six rows of baked bricks, carrying Sennacherib's inscription, on top of a course of limestone blocks was found to the south-east of the modern cemetery.[153] Three sets of horse-troughs, found slightly north of Nebi Yunus, were probably part of the Military Complex, which would however suggest that the complex extended north of Nebi Yunus. Each bore an inscription by Sennacherib.[154]

The size of Nebi Yunus is comparable to the Military Palace of Dur-Sharruken (Pl. 10a). The two palaces were probably also similar in their general organization. Nebi Yunus protrudes slightly from the line of the ancient city wall, indicating that, like Dur-Sharruken, the Military Palace's terrace extended somewhat beyond the city wall. Sennacherib's building descriptions provide further similarities with the Dur-Sharruken palace.

[149] RINAP 4, 2: vi. 7–9. [150] RINAP 3, 22: vi. 37–50.
[151] Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner 1998: pl. 1. [152] Lumsden 2000: fig. 9.
[153] Scott and MacGinnis 1990: 72, fig. 4. [154] MacGinnis 1989.

throne daises in the Throneroom Courtyards of the Military Palace in Kalḫu and the Southwest Palace in Nineveh. The two reconstructed courtyards might represent the 'outer courtyard' (*bābānû kisallu*[185]) and 'large courtyard below the limestone palace' (*kisallu rabû šaplānu ekal* $^{na4}$*pīli*[186]).

Reliefs of an unknown date, showing horses being led along by bearded courtiers (the so-called 'Wash House' excavations) were found on the northwestern part of the citadel.[187] Scott and MacGinnis wondered whether they had been made during the reign of Sargon and brought to Nineveh later, but there seems no reason to reconstruct such a complicated history. The scenes are reminiscent of the Descending Corridor of Sennacherib's Southwest Palace, although they may have been of a later date.[188] They could be associated with the horse-troughs found slightly to the north if the reliefs were part of a similar Descending Corridor. The reliefs do not, however, appear to slope downwards. Horses were certainly an important component of the Assyrian army. A relief in the Southwest Palace probably shows the Military Palace with its horses standing within its walls.[189]

### *6.3.4 The Throneroom and its Façade*

Sennacherib's palace must have contained a throneroom, but the excavated ensemble seems to date to a later period. Esarhaddon boasted of having built a throneroom of *c.*51 by 17 m (§10.2.5).[190] The excavated ensemble represents a hybrid collection of architectural elements that were probably combined at a late date.

The first bull colossus (2[191]) was found by Al-Azzawi in 1986 (Fig. 6.9).[192] Uniquely, the colossus is not monolithic, but made from smaller blocks. Its date is unclear, but the absence of a fifth leg points to a Sennacherib or later date.[193] The colossus was never completed. An inscription is absent and its feathers are left unfinished. Its upper part is missing. Jabr's re-excavation of this colossus led to the discovery of relief 1, which is located behind the colossus.[194] The figure it

[185] RINAP 3, 34: 58. [186] RINAP 3, 34: 82.

[187] Scott and MacGinnis 1990: 72, fig. 3; pl. XIIIb.

[188] Russell 1999a: 258, 260 (suggesting a possible Sennacherib or Esarhaddon date).

[189] Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner 1998: pl. 226.

[190] RINAP 4, 2: v. 18–19. Measurements based on Powell 1990: 476.

[191] Numbering added by author.

[192] Al-Azzawi 1987–8: fig. 2; Scott and MacGinnis 1990: pl. XIIIa.

[193] Scott and MacGinnis's (1990: 71) suggestion that it came from Dur-Sharruken seems therefore problematic.

[194] http://archive.cyark.org/polylithic-lamassu-and-human-figure-media , and http://archive.cyark.org/polylithic-human-figure-media. All subsequent photos are by Stevan Beverly, accessed from CyArk's Nineveh Region website (all accessed 1 July 2014).

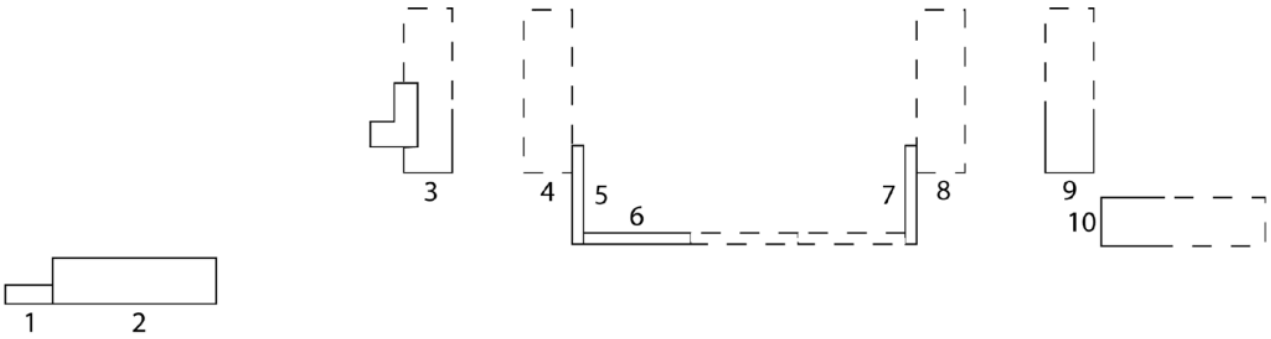



FIG. 6.9 Schematic plan of reliefs and colossi from the throneroom façade

depicts probably represents a *laḫmu* (Pl. 20a).[195] The relief is incomplete and was never finished. Its left foot is only roughly hewn as is the part between its legs, which might have been intended to be chiselled away.

This combination of figures is likely to have formed part of a gate or to have lined the throneroom façade, but its location seems incompatible with either option. In each case a second ensemble is required. If part of a gate one would expect the figure (1) to face in the same direction as the colossus, whereas a throneroom ensemble requires two colossi with the figure in between them. No second bull seems to have existed nor was there any trace of a second ensemble in its vicinity.

The front legs of a monolithic colossus (3) were found to the north of the first ensemble, standing perpendicular to the façade and probably flanking a door.[196] A relief (6) decorated with a protruding, south-facing colossus stood slightly further north. An inscription on its back dates it to the reign of Ashurbanipal.[197] Relief 7 also contained an inscription on its back, dating it to the reign of Esarhaddon.[198] Both inscriptions describe the building as palace (*ekallu*) rather than as the Military Palace (*ekal māšarti*). Relief 7 must have formed part of an entrance whose northern side was formed by two partially preserved bull colossi (9 and 10), again constructed of smaller blocks.[199] Both were left unfinished.

[195] It is certainly feasible that the figure represents another type of *Mischwesen*, but placed next to a colossus, its short skirt and bare feet make an identification as a *laḫmu* more likely.

[196] http://archive.cyark.org/base-of-damaged-lamassu-media , accessed 1 July 2014 (see n. 194).

[197] http://archive.cyark.org/inscription-1-media , accessed 1 July 2014 (see n. 194). (1) É.GAL $^{m}$*aš+šur*-DÙ-AŠ MAN GAL (2) MAN *dan-nu* MAN ŠÚ MAN KUR AŠ (3) A $^{m}$*aš+šur*-PAP-AŠ MAN KUR AŠ (4) A $^{md}$30-PAP.MEŠ-SU MAN KUR AŠ-*ma*.

[198] http://archive.cyark.org/inscription-media and http://archive.cyark.org/inscribed-orthostat-and-unfinished-polylithic-lamassu-media, accessed 1 July 2014 (see n. 194).

[199] http://archive.cyark.org/unfinished-polylithic-lamassu-media , and http://archive.cyark.org/inscribed-orthostat-and-unfinished-polylithic-lamassu-media , accessed 1 July 2014 (see n. 194).

According to Russell, parts of the room behind this façade were excavated.[200] This room must represent the throneroom. It was apparently panelled with unsculptured reliefs, although Russell mentions the presence of pairs of bull colossi, each pair with a lion-clutching figure in between, and the presence of winged deities. These must include some of the figures seen by Felix Jones[201] and Rassam, who also described finding a bronze lion.[202] Al-Azzawi found several blue and yellow glazed bricks close to colossus 1 as well as an inscribed mudbrick[203] with what seems to be a version of Sennacherib's brick inscriptions as used in the Southwest Palace.[204] The brick might originate from the Southwest Palace, but the same text could also have been used for the Military Palace. A more specific palace name was not preserved on the inscription.

This façade combined colossi of different dates, styles and techniques. The entire ensemble does not resemble the standardized organization of other monumental façades. Its hybrid nature suggests that fragments from different buildings and/or periods were combined to form a new ensemble. Such a mode of additive construction is not otherwise attested. The unfinished nature of some of the colossi moreover suggests that the façade was never finished. The bulls are unlikely to have been left unfinished for several decades. This suggests a very late date, either within Ashurbanipal's reign or perhaps that of a later king, most likely Sin-sharru-ishkun.

[200] Russell 1999c: 145. [201] Gadd 1936: 91–2. [202] Rassam 1897: 5–7.
[203] Al-Azzawi 1996: 40. [204] Scott and MacGinnis 1990: 71–2.

SEVEN

# Esarhaddon (681–669)

## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

Sennacherib's reign ended with his murder by a faction associated with one of his sons.[1] Sennacherib had planned to be buried in Assur like his forefathers, where he had himself built a 'palace of repose', alternatively known as the 'palace of sleep',[2] but whether his body was buried there is unclear due to his tragic end.[3] The Assyrian realm increased considerably during the reign of Esarhaddon, especially with the conquest of Egypt in 671.

Nineveh remained the primary royal city during Esarhaddon's reign. Although some reliefs might date to this period, Nineveh's Southwest Palace seems mostly devoid of traces from his reign.[4] Nonetheless, the palace probably remained the primary palace of the empire. This is supported by the state archives, the bulk of which were found inside the Southwest Palace and show the king being informed on the activities in other palaces such as Nineveh's Military Palace (§6.3). The Military Palace, even though only fragmentarily known, contains some architectural features datable to Esarhaddon's reign. In the final years of his reign construction started on a new palace in Kalḫu, which is now known as the Southwest Palace (§7.2). Kalḫu's Military Palace was being reconstructed and extended during the same period (§7.4). Whether these palaces were aimed at re-establishing Kalḫu as the primary royal city is doubtful due to the relatively modest scale of the new palaces in Kalḫu (Pl. 3). It more probably represents an attempt to provide Kalḫu with the palaces befitting its status as important royal city. Even if it was the intent, the move away from Nineveh never materialized. His son and successor Ashurbanipal never finished Kalḫu's Southwest Palace and continued using Nineveh as his main residence.

[1] Parpola 1980.

[2] Frahm 1997: 181–2 (T 157–8); Luckenbill 1924: 151 (I 25–6); Miglus 2007: 266; Pedde and Lundström 2008: 42.

[3] Frahm 1999: 84 n. 53.

[4] Reade (1972: 111–12) argued that a relief might be datable to Esarhaddon's reign, but there is no other hint of Esarhaddon's involvement in reconstructing the palace.

## 7.2 THE SOUTHWEST PALACE (KALḪU)

Esarhaddon started the construction of a large palace in Kalḫu at the end of his reign. The palace was located in the south-western corner of the citadel. Chapter 4 argued that Tiglath-pileser III's palace was intended to occupy more or less the same area of the citadel (§4.5.1; Pl. 3). Esarhaddon's palace could have represented a reconstruction of Tiglath-pileser's unfinished palace,[5] but Assyrian kings generally started anew. Esarhaddon freely used the reliefs of Tiglath-pileser's palace, as well as those from Ashurnasirpal's Northwest Palace, for his own. Tiglath-pileser's reliefs were mostly still lying in the Shalmaneser Building. As reliefs were among the first things to be installed in a palace, Esarhaddon's palace appears to have been far from finished when he died. Esarhaddon's reuse of reliefs from other kings is exceptional and his reasons for doing so remain unclear. Stronach suggested that the sources of alabaster had become depleted,[6] but this seems unlikely as these sources were present again during the reign of Ashurbanipal.

Only a small area of Esarhaddon's palace has been excavated, representing parts of a courtyard and a single large suite (Fig. 7.2). When finished, this courtyard would probably have been surrounded by suites on all sides. Except for the southern suite, little was found of these others. To the north a door flanked by bull colossi gave access to a room[7] whose size is unknown. It is likely to have been part of the Throneroom Suite. Only the lines of some of the walls at the western side were traced[8] with limited information about the relationships between them.

The southern suite is much better preserved (Fig. 7.1). It is yet another example of a monumental Dual-Core Suite consisting of two central rooms with large rooms at both of their short ends. These four rooms were connected through large columned porticos.[9] The palace showcases the expanded use of decoration within suites. The main external entrance was flanked by bull colossi.[10] The two internal central doors were wide passages flanked by colossi (bulls in door *b* and lions in door *a*) with pairs of freestanding sphinxes in their midst.[11] These sphinxes had flat tops to support columns. The external entrance *c* was the least monumental door of the three central passages. Both the external and the first internal wall possessed only two doors. This made the suite unusually asymmetrical.[12] Portico *ii*, at the short end of the first room, was decorated with bull

[5] Russell 1999c: 148. [6] Quoted by Russell 1999a: 260. [7] Layard 1849c: 33.
[8] Barnett and Falkner 1962: 21–2, 27–30; Layard 1849b: 59, 69, and 307.
[9] Layard 1849c: 28. [10] Barnett and Falkner 1962: 24, pl. CXIII.
[11] Barnett and Falkner 1962: pls. CVIII–CIX; Layard 1849b: 283; 1849c: 27.
[12] It cannot be excluded that the rooms originally contained three entrances, even though that seems unlikely on the basis of the current information. Layard, however, only partially excavated wall *k* (Layard 1849b: 60) and found no reliefs along wall *p* (Layard 1849b: 306).

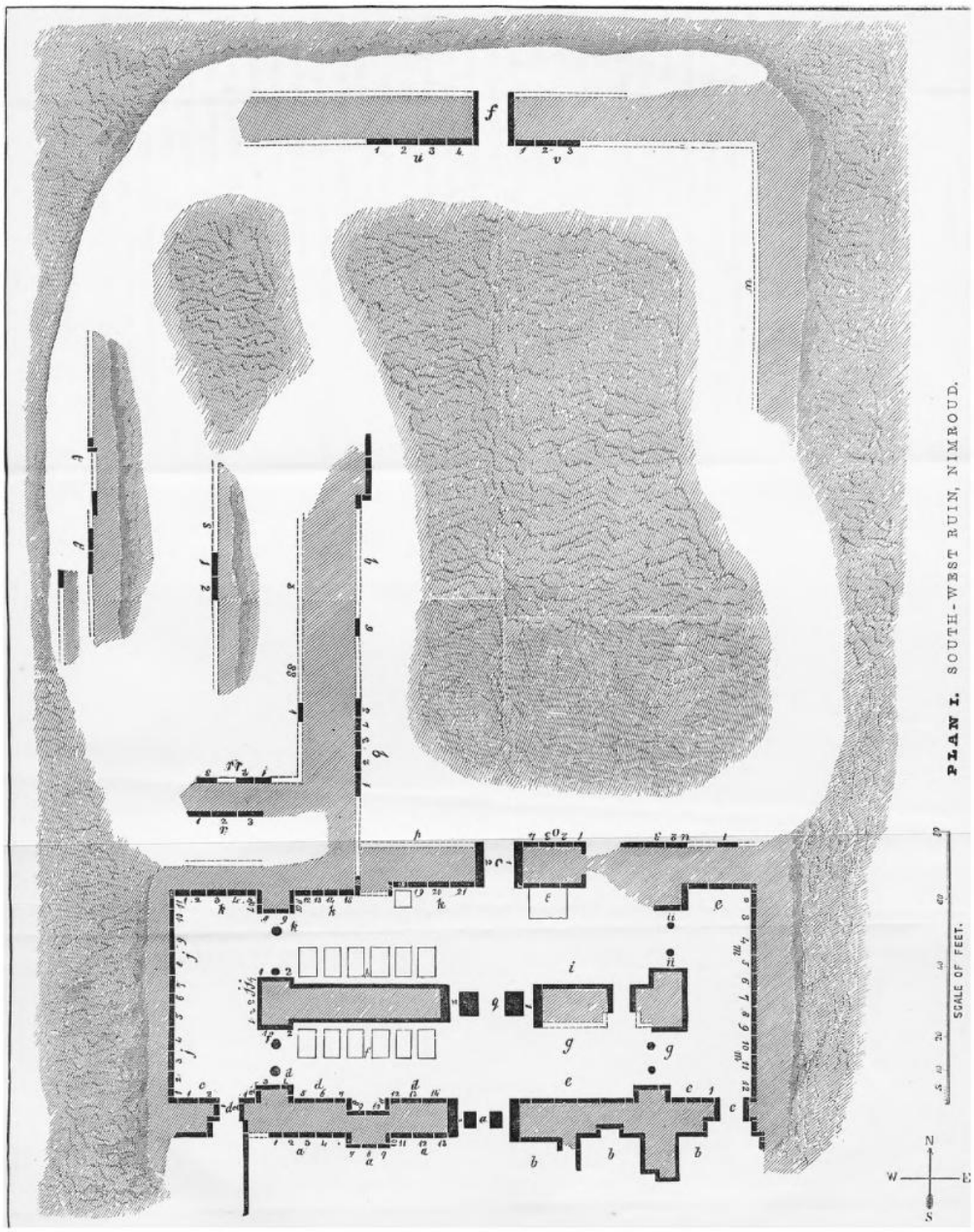



FIG. 7.1 Layard's floorplan of the Southwest Palace


FIG. 7.2 Southern Suite

colossi in relief,[13] described as resembling similar colossi made by Tiglath-pileser that were found among the reliefs stacked in the Shalmaneser Building (§3.2).[14]

The innermost row seems to have consisted of smaller rooms, but their architecture has been elucidated only partially. Turner reconstructed five rooms separated into two units.[15] His rooms 7 and 8 formed a small bathroom/vestibule combination, whereas rooms 4–6 formed a series of connected spaces whose function is less apparent. Alternatively, rooms 4–6 were separated into a second bathroom (5)/vestibule (4) combination with room 6 becoming a single room placed on the end of the central axis of the suite. While such symmetrical organization would be more typical for a Dual-Core Suite, Layard's buttress is not easily turned into the beginning of a wall.[16]

It is impossible to reconstruct the layout of the palace based upon these fragments, but the monumentality of the southern suite and the area available for the palace provide an indication of the intended scale of the palace. At the present, no second internal courtyard seems to have existed nor does there seem to have been much space for a more residential area. The palace was probably on its way to become the most monumental palace of Kalḫu, but would have remained considerably smaller than the Southwest Palace in Nineveh. The palace is likely to have been comparable in size and monumentality to Ashurbanipal's North Palace (Pl. 19).

## 7.3 THE LOWER TOWN PALACE (NINEVEH)

The closest parallel to the Southwest Palace was excavated in Nineveh and is nowadays known as the 'Lower Town Palace' or alternatively as the *bēt ḫilāni* (Pl. 23c). It was excavated by Jabr of the Mosul Museum. The palace is briefly described in publications by Postgate[17] and Jabr.[18] Postgate's descriptions and Jabr's floorplan form the main information currently available. These two sources do not match perfectly, with several features described by Postgate not being present on Jabr's floorplan. Information is lacking about most rooms and courtyards.

Only a small part of the palace has been excavated, but it is nonetheless among the best-preserved palaces of the seventh century. The number of excavated rooms is especially astonishing considering that the excavations lasted for only one month. Some walls are indicated as having been reconstructed, but the floorplan does not allow the extent of these reconstructions to be established.

[13] Layard 1849b: 305.
[14] Barnett and Falkner 1962: 18, 26, pl. CVII; Layard 1849c: 32.
[15] Turner 1970a: pl. 45.
[16] Layard 1849b: 303.
[17] Postgate 1975: 60.
[18] Jabr 1997–8.

Postgate mentions bricks with a Sennacherib inscription having been found in the western (residential?) courtyard, but it is unclear whether these were part of the pavement or stray finds. The column bases found between rooms 2 and 3 carried an Ashurbanipal inscription according to Jabr.

The main suite (rooms 2–12) forms a large Dual-Core Suite that is very similar to the main suite of the Southwest Palace in Kalḫu. It consists of a core of two rooms (both *c.*23 × 7.50 m[19]) with two perpendicular rooms, one at each end. Two circular stone column bases stood in the central door between the two central rooms.[20] They are similar to other Late Assyrian column bases.[21] Their diameter was *c.*1.50 m according to Postgate. He mentioned the presence of several additional column bases (*c.*1 m in diameter) that do not seem to have been present on the published floorplan of Jabr, which is admittedly very sketchy. The suite possessed several additional rooms, including a row of five smaller rooms at the back. The Southwest Palace could have been organized similarly.

The suite was surrounded by at least three courtyards. The main courtyard (1) was located to the north and is likely to have formed the Central Courtyard with the Throneroom Suite located to its north. A second monumental suite was recovered west of courtyard 1. The suite does not fit easily into the typology used in this book. The limited number of entrances suggests it to be a Residential/Reception Suite, but the central axis running through the suite and the wide entrances with column bases at the side of the main room are more typical of Dual-Core Suites (§10.4).

Two additional courtyards were accessible from the Central Courtyard. The western courtyard is likely to have functioned as the Residential Courtyard with a smaller Residential/Reception Suite to its east and perhaps a larger one along its southern edge. The eastern courtyard is less easy to interpret. The corridor running between the main suite and the eastern courtyard could have led to a back entrance. A similar corridor was present in the palace at Tarbiṣu (Pl. 23b). The palaces appear to have been comparable, possessing a large Dual-Core Suite to the south of their main courtyard and a heterogeneous Residential/Reception Suite to its west. The Southwest Palace in Kalḫu could have been similarly organized with a large suite to the west of the courtyard and a Residential Courtyard to its south.

## 7.4 THE MILITARY PALACE (KALḪU)

The Military Complex at Kalḫu had probably lost some, if not most, of its military functions after Sargon moved the court to Dur-Sharruken and its subsequent

[19] These measurements were used to scale Jabr's floorplan (Pl. 23c).
[20] Jabr 1997–8: figs. 2–3.
[21] Layard 1853a: 590; Loud and Altman 1938: pl. 32B.

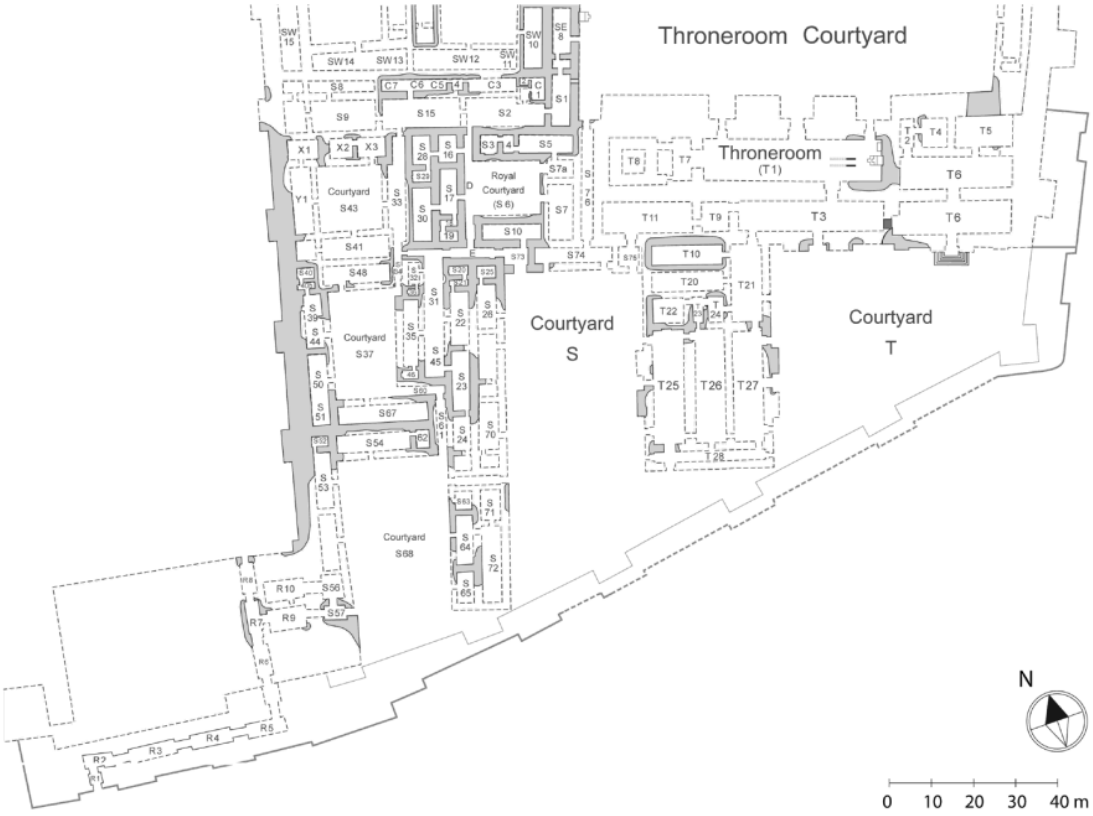



FIG. 7.3 Plan of the Military Palace (Kalḫu) showing the later phase, roughly contemporary with the end of Esarhaddon's reign

transfer to Nineveh. The Military Complex of Dur-Sharruken might, however, never have been finished and Kalḫu could have remained an important military basis for some time. The gathered spoil and tribute remained within the palace, which retained its function as royal storage. There is little indication that the palace was neglected or had decayed during the period up to Esarhaddon's reign.

### *7.4.1 Methodological Problems*

Layard's soundings at the Military Palace were described only briefly by him. He limited his excavations to what he called 'the Tel of Athur', his name for Tulul el 'Azar, which he described as an 'irregular mound' 'rising abruptly, and almost perpendicularly, from the plain'.[22] The exact geographic boundaries of Tulul el 'Azar have never been clear.[23] The exact location of these excavations remains unclear. Area R and the mound that contained the throneroom could both fit

[22] Layard 1853a: 165.

[23] Postgate and Reade (1976–80: 317) have described the entire site of the Military Palace as Tulul el 'Azar.

such a description.[24] The Oateses argued that Layard excavated the latter,[25] which suggests that this was the area where Oates found the 'few pits and tunnels' of Layard, located 'on and near the high eastern mounds of Tulul el 'Azar'.[26]

Layard's most important finds were a number of glazed bricks dating to the reign of Esarhaddon. Nadali suggested that these bricks would originally have been placed above those of Shalmaneser III at the southern entrance of room T 3.[27] Postgate and Reade did not suggest a location, but noted the find of a similar brick in the southern door of room T 25.[28] Since Layard took only the best examples while stating that he left many fragments in situ,[29] finding their original location would probably have resulted in the find of these fragments. No such stack has been reported so far, suggesting that Layard's original trenches are still to be found.

His trenches are therefore more likely to be looked for outside the excavated parts of the palace. With such restriction, area R seems to represent the only feasible location. Other arguments support this hypothesis. Its western part resembles a ziggurat, a similarity that cannot have escaped Layard and would have made it a tempting place to excavate. One can also note that Tulul el 'Azar seems to refer to this mound only on Felix Jones's map of 1852.[30] Layard's trenches might even be indicated by two large diagonal inclinations that can still be seen on aerial photos.[31] Diagonal trenches seem to have been a favoured method of exploration and were also used at the ziggurat on the citadel of Kalḫu.[32] The dating of most of area R to the reign of Esarhaddon seems to corroborate this hypothesis.

As Esarhaddon is the only later king to have claimed construction works within this palace, the excavators have ascribed most later changes to him. They used several arguments to assign structures and changes to his reign when direct evidence was lacking. The most common argument was the presence of pavement bricks of 37 $cm^2$, which were seen as common for the seventh century.[33] The wall paintings in room S 5, resembling Sargon II's reliefs in Dur-Sharruken, were also dated to the reign of Esarhaddon (Fig. 3.6).[34] In general all additions that were of good quality, such as those in the eastern part of Northeast Courtyard, were believed to have been constructed during his reign.[35]

[24] Oates 1959: 98. [25] Oates and Oates 2001: 183–4. [26] Oates and Oates 2001: 148.
[27] Nadali 2006: n. 6. [28] Postgate and Reade 1976–80: 317. [29] Layard 1853a: 165–6.
[30] Oates and Oates 2001: fig. 9. [31] Matthiae 1999: 13. [32] Smith 1875: 75.
[33] e.g. in Gate NW 17 (Oates 1962: 6) and Courtyard T (Oates 1963: 24–5).
[34] Oates 1959: 117–19. Mallowan suggested that it was refurbished by Esarhaddon who 'used it as a temporary throne-hall at a time when the great throneroom T 1 of Shalmaneser III had fallen into disrepair' (Mallowan 1966: 433). There is, however, no proof that the throneroom fell into disrepair.
[35] Oates 1961: 13–14.

This chronology is probably too rigid. Many of the later alterations are of unknown date. There is little reason to presuppose that the quality of the work represents a precise dating tool. The palace was in use for a long period and there is no a-priori reason to assume that changes were not happening on a regular basis. While a more complex chronology is to be preferred, it cannot presently be reconstructed. The later changes can only be discussed as a palimpsest. Assigning most changes to the reign of Esarhaddon makes sense as a working hypothesis, but it is unlikely to represent the exact history of the palace. The following discussion will, therefore, present the constructions of Esarhaddon and provide a snapshot of how the palace might have looked at the end of his reign. This might also incorporate changes that occurred towards the end of the Assyrian Empire.

### *7.4.2 Changes Through Time*

Many of the workshops in the Northwest and Northeast Courtyards became rooms whose use is less easily discernible. A row of rooms was added along the inside of the Northeast Courtyard, but their remains are very fragmentarily known. The eastern part of this area also seems to have changed considerably during the course of its history, especially surrounding rooms NE 22–5, but the exact nature of these changes is difficult to reconstruct. Separation walls were added in several rooms turning them into what appear to have been Standard Apartments (e.g. NE 4, NE 9, and SW 4). The Italian excavations under the direction of Fiorina found considerable evidence for changes and additions in area SW.[36]

Several changes must have occurred in area S as well. The most noteworthy changes occurred at the entrances of the area, both of which were expanded by the addition/incorporation of rooms. The Standard Apartment formed by rooms SE 8 and 9 went out of use and was connected to entrance S 1, whose door to the Southeast Courtyard was probably closed at the same time. This made the entrance more layered and therefore better protected. The entrance from courtyard S was expanded by the addition of room/portico S 73. Rooms S 74–5 probably belonged to the same intervention even though their walls were not aligned. Reception room S 5 was painted with a row of dignitaries at some time (Fig. 3.6), but does not necessarily date to Esarhaddon's reign.

A few small repairs and changes can be dated to the reign of Adad-nerari III. Inscribed bricks were found in the pavement of room NW 3[37] and in the northern end of room S 35 (Pl. 9).[38] Originally the excavators believed the latter to indicate that the entire southern part of area S was built by Adad-nerari.[39] This hypothesis was not repeated in later reports. The chronology of room S 35 is

[36] Pappalardo 2008: 495. Their tripartite chronology shares the rigidity discussed in §7.4.1.
[37] Oates 1962: 18 = RIMA 3, A.0.104.17. [38] RIMA 3, A.0.104.18. [39] Oates 1961: 7–8.

unclear. A floor made of mudbricks of 47–8 $cm^2$, which were normally assigned to the reign of Shalmaneser or Ashurnasirpal, was found above the mudbricks of Adad-nerari. This stratigraphical problem led the excavators to suggest that the bricks of Shalmaneser had been reused.

### *7.4.3 The Military Palace During Esarhaddon's Reign*

Esarhaddon described the work carried out in texts dating to 676[40] and 672.[41] These texts do not mention the Military Palace itself. Millard was not even sure whether the text of 676 referred to the Military Palace or to Kalḫu in general.[42] The work can nonetheless be related to the Military Palace. The texts were found within the palace and seem to correspond to actual repairs made during Esarhaddon's reign. The text of 672 also refers to Shalmaneser as the original builder. The text of 676 is rather general, perhaps because the work was still in its early stages:

> I repaired (and) renovated the dilapidated parts of the ruined wall, city gates, (and) palaces, which are in Kalḫu. I built (and) completed (them) (and) made (them) greater than ever before. I made foundation inscriptions, had the might of the god Aššur, my lord, (and) the deeds that I had done written on them, and placed (these inscriptions) in them (the foundations).[43]

The text of 672 is somewhat more precise and describes work on a terrace (*tamlû*) and additional structures. The latter were only referred to with the generic word *ekallāti* (É.GAL.MEŠ), which can refer to the entire complex, the palace proper, or parts of it. These spaces were roofed with cedar beams and their doors were made of cypress-wood. This provides little information on the exact spaces that were (re)constructed. Actual evidence for (re)constructions during this period are few. Mudbricks inscribed with Esarhaddon's name were found only in room S 35 and postern-gate R 1. The latter also contained four inscriptions of Esarhaddon.[44]

Gate R 1 was part of the restructuring of the southern outer wall and formed the most substantial project initiated within the palace during Esarhaddon's reign. It consisted of a new wall, abutting the original Shalmaneser III outer wall, running along the entire southern and parts of the eastern side of the Military Palace (Fig. 7.3). The repaving of courtyard T is likely to be associated with these constructions.[45] These works seem to correspond to Esarhaddon's royal inscriptions, although his remark that the palace 'had no terrace and its site had become too small'[46] is somewhat of an exaggeration if one looks at the actual changes made. Most of the terrace must date to the reign of Shalmaneser III and besides

[40] RINAP 4, 78. See also Millard 1961. [41] RINAP 4, 77. See also Wiseman 1952.
[42] Millard 1961: 176–7. [43] RINAP 4, 78: 38–41
[44] RINAP 4, 81–2; Russell 1999c: 146–7. [45] Oates 1963: 24–5. [46] RINAP 4, 77: 44.

The height difference in area R is replicated in the area east of the Throneroom Suite, whose known remains might also be datable to the reign of Esarhaddon. In both cases older rooms seem to have been used to create a platform for the new rooms. It is unclear how and where the height differences of this Eastern Suite were bridged. No connection has been preserved between T 6 and the rest of the palace. A staircase in front of T 6 forms the most plausible means to bridge the height difference. The connection with room T 3 is more likely to have fallen out of use after the floor of the Eastern Suite was raised. The Eastern Suite must have consisted of three rows of rooms. It can be compared to the main suite in the palace in Tarbiṣu (Pl. 23b).

EIGHT

# Ashurbanipal (668–631)

## 8.1 INTRODUCTION

Ashurbanipal was relatively young when he came to the throne. He ruled for approximately forty years. Apart from reconquering Babylon, the biggest military achievement of his reign was the conquest of the Elamite Empire. During his reign the Assyrian Empire came to encompass most empires of the Near East.[1] The final years of his reign and the succeeding period seem to have been chaotic, but remain poorly understood.[2] By 612 the Assyrian Empire had come to an end.

Ashurbanipal's main palaces were those of Nineveh. He reconstructed parts of the Southwest and Military Palaces. The Military Complex of Nineveh must have remained the primary military establishment of the empire, but its architectural history is known only very sketchily (§6.3). Ashurbanipal mentioned restoration works in a foundation prism dated to 649.[3] Ashurbanipal also constructed a new palace on the northern part of Nineveh's citadel, which is therefore known as the North Palace (Pl. 19). This was built between the years 646 and 643[4] and is the last-known newly constructed royal palace of the Assyrian Empire. The North Palace was probably subordinate to the Southwest Palace, but the exact relationships between the Ninevite palaces remain unclear.

## 8.2 THE NORTH PALACE (NINEVEH)

With the construction of the North Palace the citadel of Nineveh gained a second royal palace. While multiple royal palaces were a basic component of Assyrian kingship, they were not usually located on the same citadel as the primary palace of the empire. The floorplan of the North Palace is only partially known (Pl. 18). The preserved parts include most of the Throneroom Suite and some fragmentary suites surrounding it.

[1] For an concise overview of Ashurbanipal's reign see Ruby 1998.
[2] Beaulieu 1997; Millard 1994; Reade 1998; Zawadzki 1995.
[3] Russell 1999c: 154. [4] Reade 2000b: 417.

### *8.2.1 A Short History of its Excavation*

Layard was the first to open trenches in the northern part of Nineveh's citadel. Their exact location is unknown, although Rassam managed to pitch his tent on top of one of them, which subsequently gave way beneath him on a stormy night.[5] The concession to excavate this part of the citadel had been awarded to the French archaeologists by Rawlinson.[6] Rassam, circumventing this directive, started excavating the palace in 1853 during the night of 20 December and was the first to find the remains of the palace.[7] Rassam continued his excavations until April 1854 at which point Boutcher and Loftus took over.[8] Smith excavated the palace in 1873–4,[9] but the exact location of his finds remains unclear. Rassam returned to the palace in the first months of 1878.[10] Campbell Thompson excavated a few trenches in 1904–5 (Fig. 8.4).[11]

### *8.2.2 The bēt redûti*

Ashurbanipal described the construction of his palace in two duplicate texts.[12] These texts describe the building as a *bēt redûti*, which led most scholars to equate the North Palace with that name.[13] Two general problems emerge from this equation. First, the designation *bēt redûti* is normally interpreted as the 'Succession House' of the crown prince rather than as a royal palace of the king. There is, however, no indication that the North Palace was intended for the use of a crown prince. Earlier, Esarhaddon did built a palace in Tarbiṣu which was explicitly intended for the crown prince, i.e. Ashurbanipal (Pl. 23b).[14] This has led some scholars to describe it as the *bēt redûti*,[15] but in this case the *bēt redûti* referred to the status of Ashurbanipal and was not used as the name of the palace itself. We thus have a palace for the crown prince in Tarbiṣu that was not called *bēt redûti* and a *bēt redûti* in Nineveh that was intended for the king.

Second, Ashurbanipal's descriptions are at odds with the known North Palace. Most of Ashurbanipal's description cannot have referred to a single palace, let alone the North Palace, and must refer to a more abstract notion. Ashurbanipal described the *bēt ridûti* as the palace that was built by his grandfather Sennacherib,[16] but there is no archaeological indication that the North Palace existed

[5] Rassam 1897: 39.
[6] For a summary of the excavations in the North Palace see Barnett 1976: 9–27.
[7] Rassam 1897: 23–8. [8] Rassam 1897: 36–9. [9] Smith 1875. [10] Rassam 1897: 221–9.
[11] Campbell Thompson and Hutchinson 1929: 61–2, 69.
[12] These texts are the so-called 'Rassam Cylinder' and its duplicate K 8537.
[13] e.g. Borger 1996: 14; Grayson 1991a: 155–6; Parpola 1986: 233.
[14] RINAP 4, 93–5. [15] Curtis and Grayson 1982: 88. [16] BIWA: F §36, VI. 25.

before the reign of Ashurbanipal.[17] More importantly, there is no single palace that can be described thus:

> With joy and celebration I entered the House of Succession, the sophisticated place, the centre of royalty in which Sennacherib, the father of the father, my creator, practised princeship and kingship; the place in which Esarhaddon, the father, my creator, was born and grew up (and) practised the lordship of Assyria, controlled all the princes, extended the family, gathered (his) relatives and family.[18]

Sennacherib and Esarhaddon must have ruled from Nineveh's Southwest Palace as kings.[19] The North Palace never functioned as the main palace of the empire, even in the days of Ashurbanipal. Moreover, Esarhaddon was born when Sennacherib was still crown prince. Their residence during this period is unclear, but cannot have been the Southwest Palace, which was not yet constructed. Even if a palace had existed at the location of the North Palace, Ashurbanipal is unlikely to have used it for training with chariots and practising archery.[20] Such military training is much more likely to have taken place in the Military Palace, forming one of its main stated purposes, and represents the palace where Ashurbanipal seems to have resided as crown prince (§6.3).

The texts seem to make more sense if the *bēt redûti* is understood as both a general 'space of kingship' and a concrete physical manifestation in the form of a specific building. The North Palace was a physical manifestation of the *bēt redûti* of which perhaps only one existed at any time, but this remains unclear as long as we do not know the location of the *bēt redûti* before Ashurbanipal's reign.[21] The exact nature and connotation of the *bēt redûti* is beyond the scope of this book.

[17] It is only in room F that Rassam (1897: 222) found '. . . a large sewer below the floor, built partly of molded bricks, representing Assyrian mystic figures, which evidently belonged formerly to an ancient building'. Earlier buildings certainly existed below the North Palace, but there is no indication that these belonged to the time of Sennacherib. Turner (1976: 30) suggested that the 'fabric of an earlier structure' could still have been present. This was, however, based on the presence of a staircase in front of the throneroom rather than on archaeological evidence. Earlier archives were found in the palace (e.g. Kwasman and Parpola 1991: p. xvi), but these were part of Ashurbanipal's palace and must have been transferred from another palace, and do not inform us about the possible presence of an earlier palace at this location.

[18] Melville 2006: 363. See also BIWA: F §3, I. 18–22.

[19] Ashurbanipal's description of his *bēt redûti* has also been interpreted as a description of a part of the Southwest Palace in Nineveh. For a discussion of this problem see Barnett 1976: 5–6 n. 10. He argued both that the *bīt redûti* was not 'part of that building, known to us as the South-West Palace of Sennacherib', and that room 33 in the same palace 'formed part of the bīt redûti which he [Ashurbanipal] claims to have restored and embellished'.

[20] BIWA: F §3, I. 28–9.

[21] The *bēt redûti* is mentioned as a concrete location in at least some texts of Esarhaddon's reign, e.g. as a location of query (SAA 4, 89: r. 12, date: probably 672–669) and a divination (SAA 4, 325: r. 5, date: 651), but also in SAA 16, 95: r. 16 (date: 681) and SAA 13, 157: 13′ where a statue is brought out of the *bēt redûti*.

### *8.2.3 The Size, Surrounding, and Entrances of the Palace*

The overall dimension of the North Palace remains unclear, but it is unlikely to have constituted a very large palace. The overall size of the palace can be estimated by looking at its south-western part. This area beyond the throneroom represents the known part of the palace, and is relatively small if compared to the Southwest Palace (Fig. 8.1). The original dimensions of the palace depend mostly on its unknown north-eastern extension, i.e. the number and size of its forecourt(s). If the palace was comparable to other palaces, one would assume the throneroom to have been roughly in the middle of the palace. Modern reconstructions have sometimes assumed that the palace occupied the entire north-eastern corner of the citadel.[22] This would have made the area in front of the throneroom almost four times as large as the area behind it. Such a northern extension is, however, hypothetical. The size of the palace is based on the external walls traced by Loftus,[23] but his walls did not extend towards the north-eastern edge of the citadel. There is no indication that the palace extended beyond Loftus's northernmost wall. If this wall is taken as the north-eastern edge of the palace, a palace of normal proportions emerges.[24]

The main entrance of the palace is likely to have surrounded the Throneroom Courtyard or an additional courtyard in front of it. Loftus seems to have found an entrance in the north-eastern corner of the Throneroom Courtyard, but it does not appear to have been very monumental.[25]

The western corner of the palace was located at a lower level than the palace proper. The surrounding walls were formed by a massive 'basement wall of roughly-cut stone blocks'.[26] The palace could be entered at this lower point through doors leading into room S. This entrance had an exceptionally open character. The main door *d* had two columns in its centre and could probably not be closed. The columns themselves have not been found and will have been made of wood, metal, or a combination of the two. Their stone bases were still in situ and measured *c.*1.80 m in diameter, not unlike the portico of the Military Palace in Dur-Sharruken. A smaller door (*a*) provided entry from the south. The openness of room S was countered by room W, which controlled access into the rest of the palace through a Descending Corridor.

The basement wall could have been located underground below the portico or above ground next to it. The designation 'basement wall' is unhelpful as it is unknown whether it formed the basement of room S or of the palace proper,

[22] See e.g. Reade 2000b: fig. 2. [23] Barnett 1976: pls. 8–9.
[24] As already suggested by Turner 1976: 29. [25] Barnett 1976: pl. 9.
[26] Loftus, 2nd Report of the Assyrian Excavation Fund (published in Barnett 1976: 74).

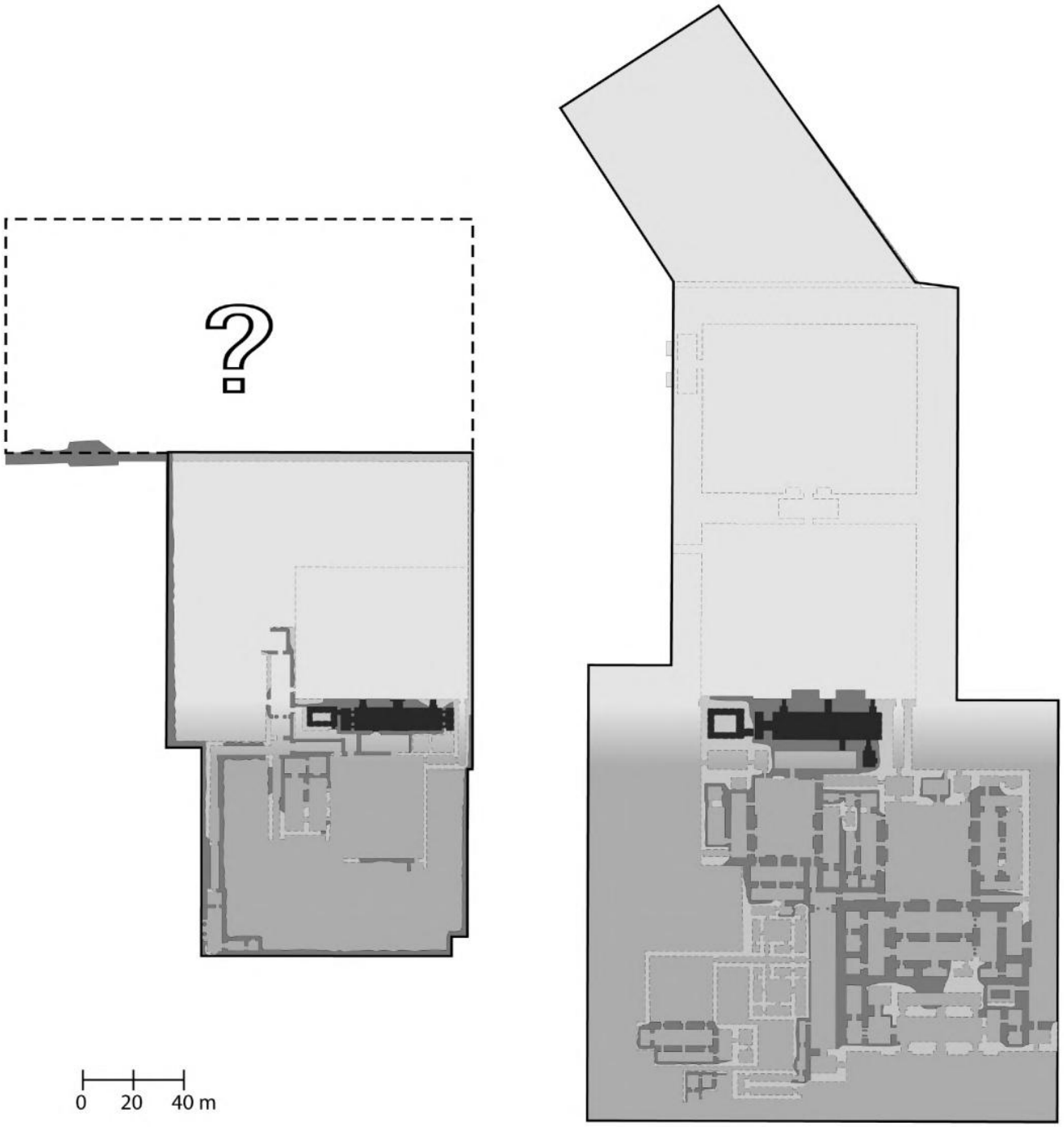



FIG. 8.1 Comparison between the North Palace (left) and the Southwest Palace (right)

whose floor was located much higher (Pl. 19).[27] Whatever reconstruction is correct, the use of stones is uncommon. It was used in Esarhaddon's lower entrance into the Military Palace of Kalḫu, but there the door itself was also made of stone. The 'basement wall' of the North Palace continued upwards as a mudbrick wall. This part of the wall was plastered white. Glazed bricks were found in this area[28] and might originally have been part of one or several panels placed on the outer wall.

The open character of room S suggests that the grounds outside it were part of a protected area. The northernmost external wall, as found by Loftus,[29] which ran away from the palace (Pl. 18), might have formed part of the external wall surrounding this area. The continuation of Loftus's wall is unclear. It is not even certain whether it represents an outer wall. Nonetheless, it is not unlikely that it formed part of an outer wall that surrounded an area adjacent to the North Palace. Turner suggested that it could have enclosed a park covering the north-eastern corner of the citadel.[30] This is certainly feasible, but such a park seems to lie on the wrong side of the palace. It would have been far removed from the inner parts of the palace and would not have protected room S. Loftus's wall could also have enclosed a park west of the palace, thereby surrounding room S.[31] This reconstruction would, however, require a second wall to close off the park from the south or south-west. Such a wall has not been found so far.

Smith found 'a ruined entrance with the bases of two columns in the doorways' in the southern corner of the palace.[32] These bases were small with a diameter of only 22.2 cm.[33] The associated entrance cannot have been very monumental, certainly not in comparison to the portico of room S. The location of Smith's entrance is unknown nor is it described more precisely.[34] The published plans all show an unbroken outer wall. If this entrance was indeed external, which seems unlikely,[35] the presence of columns would again imply a protected outside area. The palace does not seem to have had enough space to accommodate a second Descending Corridor, but the ground next to the southern corner was higher and might have been on the level of the palace.[36]

[27] This description was made after Loftus had already realized that the lower rooms were part of the North Palace. Boutcher's drawing of this outer wall, as excavated by Loftus, provides no additional information concerning its correlation to room S (the drawing was originally published in the *Illustrated London News*, 3 November 1855, and has been reproduced in Reade 2010: 164–5, fig. 1).

[28] Loftus, 2nd Report of the Assyrian Excavation Fund (published in Barnett 1976: 74).

[29] Barnett 1976: pls. 8–9. [30] Turner 1976: 29. [31] Reade 2000b: 403.

[32] Smith 1875: 143. [33] Smith 1875: 431. [34] Turner 1976: 31.

[35] Smith (1875: 94) described the south-eastern corner of the palace as having been excavated before, but earlier excavations do not seem to have worked in the south-eastern corner. Smith's south(-eastern) corner might have been located closer to the central part of the palace. His description of this entrance as 'of the palace' rather than 'in the palace' suggests that he believed the excavation to have been of an outer entrance.

[36] Barnett 1976: fig. 6.

### *8.2.4 The North-Western Area*

The architecture of the Throneroom Courtyard (O) is mostly unknown, except for its western edge and the entrance found by Loftus (Pl. 18). The Throneroom Corridor, connecting the Throneroom and Central Courtyards, must have made a ninety degree turn in order to circumvent the Throneroom Suite. A corridor as reconstructed by Reade seems the most plausible solution.[37] The route in the Southwest Palace was comparable with the difference that it passed through courtyard 19 with its monumental reception suites. Such a monumental courtyard was absent in the North Palace.

The north-western edge of the Throneroom Courtyard is only partially known, consisting of rooms B, P, and Q. Room B can best be understood as the vestibule of room P. Two column bases were found in the doorway between them, giving it the appearance of a portico.[38] The size of room P was matched only by the throneroom. It seems, therefore, somewhat oversized to have functioned as a mere corridor. It is nonetheless too much of a connector to have functioned as a reception room. Its architecture and size is reminiscent of the unroofed courtyard 49 and its vestibule 48 in the Southwest Palace. Room P, however, was likely to have been roofed.[39] It probably gave access to a courtyard to its north-west.[40] The area between these rooms and the northern outer wall is unknown, but one or more courtyards must have provided air, light, and access.

### *8.2.5 The Throneroom Suite*

Architecturally, the throneroom formed one of the most conservative spaces with only modest changes being traceable during the Late Assyrian period. New features and concepts were introduced more frequently in other parts of the palace. In the North Palace some of these new features appear for the first time in the Throneroom Suite as well (Fig. 8.2). The identity of the suite is, however, still easily recognizable. Its position in the palace was unchanged and it contained many of the typical and specific features that characterized these suites, especially

[37] Reade 2000b: 417, fig. 12. This corridor is replicated on Pl. 19.

[38] Barnett 1976: 36.

[39] An open corridor adjacent to a courtyard seems redundant and might require the existence of a row of rooms between room P and the Throneroom Courtyard. Such an additional row could create a straight courtyard façade, which now seems to be lacking due to the different alignments between the southern walls of rooms P and Q. The southern wall of room Q might also simply have been thicker. Such an additional row would, however, block parts of the throneroom ramp from view, or must have been improbably small as on Turner's reconstruction (Turner 1976: fig. 7).

[40] Turner 1976: 32. The recessed door leading towards the north-west indicates that the door opened into room P, suggesting that room P gave access to an even more monumental room or a courtyard. The existence of such a room to the north-west seems unlikely. Room P is itself very monumental and the largest room is expected to be the first to be entered from the Throneroom Courtyard.

The placement of the expected bathroom is unknown. It could have opened directly from the south-eastern alcove or through an additional vestibule and could even have connected to the Central Courtyard. The throneroom might have been similarly organized as the Throneroom Suite of the palace in Ḫaddatu (Pl. 24a). This would suggest that the south-eastern area did not form an alcove, but was filled with a smaller door (Fig. 8.2b). The alcove N might, however, for reasons of symmetry, have required a counterpart on the south-eastern side. A bathroom could also have been located at the more traditional position behind relief 4.[42]

The deviating organization of the Throneroom Suite did not replace the more traditional organization. The throneroom of the Southwest Palace must have remained the main throneroom of the empire and its organization was not changed in later times. The organization used in the North Palace might reflect the lesser status of the palace, allowing for more flexibility and experimentation in its organization.

The existence of a corridor behind the throneroom ramp, as reconstructed by Turner,[43] is problematic as it leaves only a small space for the actual ramp. A buttress found by Rassam has been seen as part of a door that connected the ramp with the corridor surrounding it. Such a backdoor into the ramp, and thereby the throneroom, would be unique and would considerably alter the secluded nature of the throneroom ramp. The concept of backdoors is uncommon in Late Assyrian palace architecture. The buttress and the reconstructed entrance should therefore be treated with some suspicion.

### *8.2.6 The Central Courtyard*

Like all inner courtyards, courtyard J was probably surrounded by four suites. They appear to have been comparable in size to the suites surrounding the Central Courtyard of the Southwest Palace. Its suites did not match the more monumental suites of the Southwest Palace. Unfortunately, beyond the Throneroom Suite only one is known. It was located along the north-western side of the courtyard and consisted of two central rooms (H and I) with an attached vestibule (G) and bathroom (F) combination.[44]

Even though Rassam failed to mention the presence of a drain in room F, its designation as bathroom seems correct. In general, the North Palace continued the tradition of using military scenes in all rooms, but the niche in room F formed a noteworthy exception as it depicted apotropaic figures (Pl. 20b). These figures indicate the importance of the niche. The central scene was formed by a Lion-dragon

[42] Reade 2001: 71; Turner 1976: 29.
[43] Turner 1970a: 190; 1976: fig. 7.
[44] Discussed in Turner 1976: 30.

(*abūbu*).[45] This *Mischwesen* represented the Deluge and was a popular supporter of multiple gods. Its presence in a palatial context seems unique, though suitable for a bathroom niche. A Lion-centaur (*urmaḫlullû*; Pl. 20a),[46] identified by a text on the back of the slab,[47] formed the lower figure flanking the niche. Such an inscription identifying the depicted figure is unique.

The suite might have possessed a further row of smaller rooms to its south-east. This would have made the width of the suite similar to that of the courtyard, whose contours are, however, tentative. The known architecture of the suite is too generic for a more precise reconstruction and both a reception as well as a more residential use are feasible. The external doorways were reconstructed as a large portico by Boutcher (Pl. 18), with an especially large central door. Archaeological evidence seems lacking for this reconstruction and such open façades are otherwise very rare. A façade with three smaller doors seems more likely.[48]

Architecturally the rooms form a simple Dual-Core Suite, but it cannot be excluded that the suite functioned as a Residential/Reception Suite. The differences between the two types of suite seem to decline in the seventh century, with the inner doors of the Residential/Reception Suite becoming more numerous and more aligned with those on the outside. The fragmentary knowledge about the doors of rooms H and I complicate its reconstruction.

The area to the south-east of the courtyard is completely unknown. It is not even clear where the edge of the courtyard was located, but Reade's reconstruction of two rows of rooms is probably not far off the mark.[49] The south-western edge of the courtyard was found by Boutcher. It seems to have consisted of a 'moulded stylobate'.[50] The moulding was found for a length of 25 ft (*c.*7.60 m). Such mode of decoration is uncommon. It was found surrounding Monument X of Sargon's Royal Palace and in a side entrance into Residence K, both located in Dur-Sharruken.[51] Monument X was probably a freestanding complex. It is not certain whether the two fragments of Residence K were found in their original location. They certainly do not constitute a complete architectural feature.

The architectural implications of these mouldings in the North Palace remain uncertain. There is no indication that the associated spaces were on a higher level nor that they were free-standing. Mouldings might simply represent a different,

[45] Rassam 1897: 32; Seidl 1998b: 107. [46] Green 1994: 256, §3.20.

[47] Barnett 1976: 40. Barnett discusses the preserved lower half of the relief as number 13, but correctly describes it as relief 11 on pl. 20.

[48] Turner 1976: 31. [49] Plate 19 uses Reade's reconstruction in this respect.

[50] Turner (1976: 31) suggested that the mouldings could have been found in the debris rather than as part of the wall. This seems unlikely. Boutcher's plan (Barnett 1976: Text-pl. 6) placed the description 'Moulded Stylobate' immediately next to the line of undecorated slabs. See also Reade 2010: 170.

[51] Loud and Altman 1938: 66.

and exceptional, form of decoration. Nonetheless, even if the associated suite(s) were not freestanding, the moulding would have set them apart from the other suites surrounding the courtyard. It should again be noted that Late Assyrian suites were all pavilion-like in their organization, the moulding might have accentuated this fact without necessarily making the suite freestanding.

Boutcher's plan shows a single line running away from this courtyard wall towards the north-east (Pl. 18). It is unclear whether this represents the traces of the north-eastern edge of the courtyard. Other walls were given a thickness. Beyond this line the wall forming the south-western edge of the courtyard continued up to what appears to have been a doorjamb. The wall apparently continued around this corner. South-west of this courtyard must have been what Campbell Thompson thought to be 'a large paved and cemented court, with part of the pavement of the entrances beautifully ornamented with patterns in relief' (Fig. 8.3).[52] Alternatively, these represented the floors of the suites themselves.[53] Campbell Thompson's plan and descriptions are unfortunately too sparse to be used as basis for a reconstruction. This area of the palace was covered by a later Parthian building, which seems to have reused many of the stones that once lined the Assyrian walls and floors.[54]

It is impossible to reconstruct the alignment of walls on the basis of Campbell Thompson's plan, which is confusing and shows no walls except for a 'Brick Pier'. The plan shows pavement fragments and what he described as a '[revetment made] by a double coursing of limestone blocks'.[55] This must have been a foundation, because the section on the same plan shows it to be below the surface of the floor. Confusingly, on the plan it looks like a wall with a door in its centre. This interruption, whose nature remains unknown, cannot indicate a door. Foundations usually ran underneath the doors as well, but more importantly doors are already indicated by doorsill slabs. Five doorsill slabs are present on the plan probably indicating the presence of four doors. One was decorated and two contained apotropaic figurines beneath them—probably indicated by the small squares on two of the slabs. While this indicates the location of the doors, it does not tell us in which direction the respective doors faced. It remains impossible to reconstruct the associated walls. Another uncertainty is added by the line of floor slabs in the middle of the plan. It seems unlikely that this single line would be all that remained of a pavement, which was apparently made of earth and cement in this area, nor does it seem to represent the remains of tram-rails. Alternatively, it could represent another foundation or a collapsed vertical dado along a missing wall. Such a wall could have connected the two doors that are indicated by two

[52] Campbell Thompson and Hutchinson 1929: 61, D'Andrea 1981: 119.
[53] Turner 1976: 31. [54] D'Andrea 1981: 110.
[55] Campbell Thompson and Hutchinson 1929: 66.

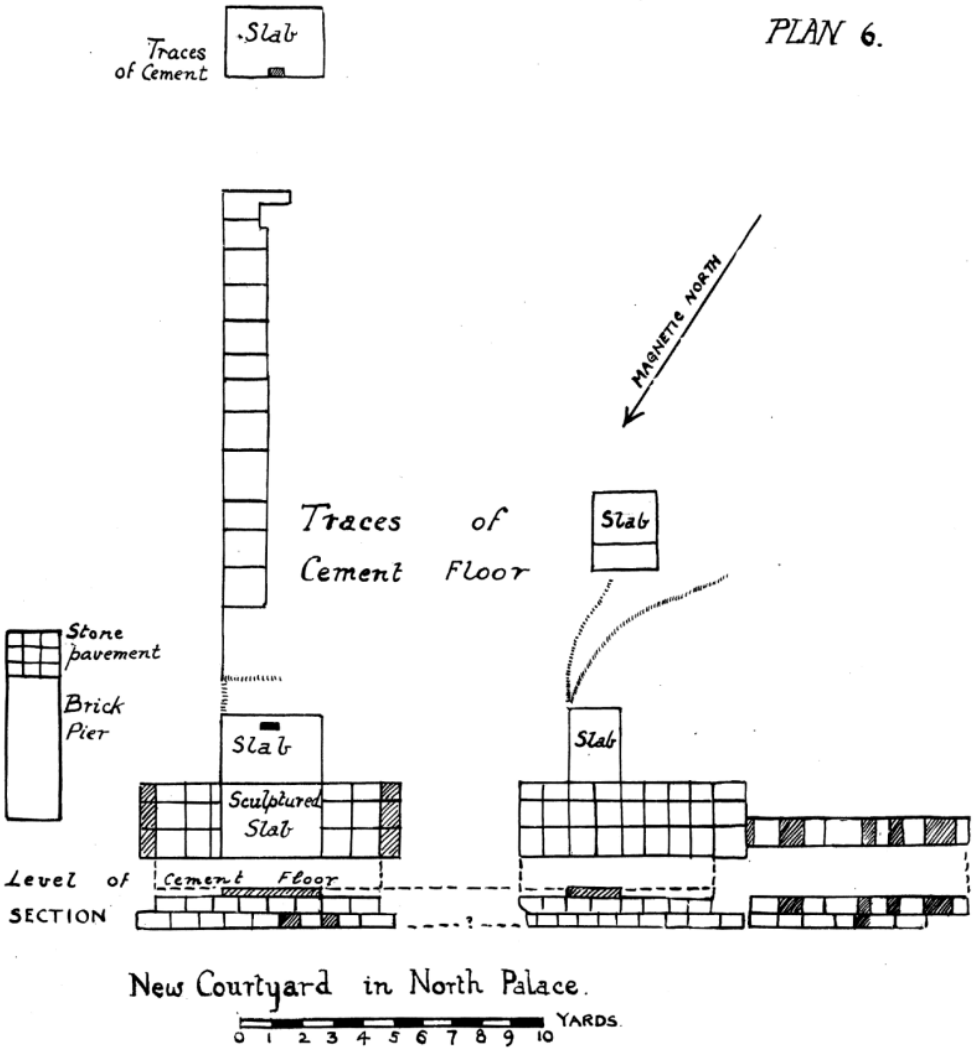



FIG. 8.3 Plan of Campbell Thompson's excavations in the North Palace

doorsills, one at each end, but this remains hypothetical. Campbell Thompson's placement of his excavations into the general plan of the palace[56] is also problematic, because the space between any possible wall and courtyard J is too big for a single room, but too small for a suite of two rooms.

Reade suggested that this part of the palace might have had windows or balconies on its southern and western edges.[57] This cannot be excluded, but the south-western corner must have been closest to the citadel surface and thus seems to have been the least likely location for openings towards the outside. Somewhere in the central part of the palace Smith found 'Large blocks of stone, with carving and inscriptions, fragments of ornamental pavement, painted bricks, and decorations, [that] were scattered in all directions, showing how complete was the

[56] Campbell Thompson and Hutchinson 1929: Plan 5. [57] Reade 2010: 170.

Several reliefs were found in rooms R, S, T, and V that appear to have fallen from above. This hypothesis is supported by the discovery of these reliefs 'several feet above and upon the flooring'.[62] The situation is, nonetheless, far from clear. Barnett assumed the upper rooms to have followed the contours of those below,[63] but there are two fundamental problems with such a reconstruction. First, the number of fallen reliefs is too low to have covered the walls of entire rooms. The single relief (E) fallen into corridor R is even more problematic. It appears to belong to those found fallen into rooms T and V,[64] but it is unclear how it managed to end up so far away. It might of course belong to another room, but a single relief is unlikely to represent the decoration of a nearby room by itself. Second, the constructive problems associated with having reliefs located above other rooms seem insurmountable.[65] Reliefs are extremely heavy and require considerable support. They are usually dug into the platform for additional stability. They are too heavy to be placed on wooden floors or beams. The beams continued into the walls leaving even less room for the placement of reliefs. If the reliefs would have been placed too close to the edge of the walls, their weight will have made the walls collapse. It seems more likely that the rooms of the upper storey, which represents the ground floor of the palace, were located to the east of the lower rooms.

The distribution of reliefs in rooms S, V, and T causes further problems for reconstructing the upper rooms. The reliefs constitute at least five different series, but an exact reconstruction is hampered by our lack of information about their exact find spots. The first four relief series were found in room S. Series 1 depicts a royal hunt (1A–E),[66] which should probably be divided into two series (1A–B and 1C–E);[67] series 2 shows a park setting with the famous Garden Scene that includes the king and queen (2A–E); series 3 and 4 show the military campaign against Babylonia and Elam of 652–648 (3A–B) and (4A–B). Series 1 and 2 probably originated from the same context[68] even though their contents do not seem to

[62] Loftus, 2nd Report of the Assyrian Excavation Fund (published in Barnett 1976: 73).

[63] Barnett 1976: 20. [64] Barnett 1976: 59.

[65] This problem was brought to my attention by McGuire Gibson.

[66] Barnett described the different reliefs with letters, resulting e.g. in the presence of three reliefs A in room S. To avoid confusion the reliefs are here divided into different series by adding a number in front of the letters. The series correspond to the following plates in Barnett 1976: Series 1 = pls. LXIII–LXV; Series 2 = pls. LVI–LIX; Series 3 = pl. LXVI; Series 4 = pls. LX–LXI.

[67] Curtis 1992; Meissner and Opitz 1940: 59–60. Curtis assigned the relief of a dying lion to the series 1A–B, because of the small size of its lions. This is certainly a noteworthy feature, but perhaps not enough in itself. The 'dying lion' does indeed seem to have originated from the top of a relief, because it has a border along its upper part. The presence of a ground-line underneath the lion, however, is missing from reliefs 1A–B, but was present in room C. The 'dying lion' may have originated from another series altogether, although one closely connected to series 1.

[68] Curtis, Reade, and Collon 1995: 54.

the garden with lions depicted in corridor E (reliefs 7–8) would appear to have shown the same garden.

While it seems that women did not actively participate in hunting and war—they were not depicted nor described as participating—the reliefs show that they did not shy away from its violent consequences. The women were in close proximity to the severed head of the Elamite king Teumman, which hung in a nearby tree, without any sign of being disturbed. The Elamite princes were bowing in surrender close by[75] and women attendants were present in the (partially reconstructed) bird-hunting scene of the middle register.[76] There is thus no reason to suppose that the lion hunt could not have covered the walls of the same room.

Whether the presence of women on these reliefs reflects the intended female use of the associated room is questionable. There is little to suggest that such thematic correlations existed. We saw that the suite of queen Tashmetum-sharrat in the Southwest Palace was decorated with military scenes as far as preserved (§6.2.9). Series 3 and 4 show that military scenes also covered the walls of nearby rooms. The location of these rooms deep inside the palace might suggest a more secluded nature, but they must have been relatively easily reached through corridor E, which provided access to the Throneroom Courtyard and the Descending Corridor.

### *8.2.8 The Corridors and Associated Spaces*

The known corridors of the North Palace formed a system, which was centred on room D. The largest corridor (A/R) was the one connecting room D with room S below. It showed a procession going towards a hunt (moving downwards) and its return (moving upwards). Relief 9 of room R shows one attendant sitting on his horse. Similar figures were said to be shown on reliefs 10–17.[77] The corridor must certainly have been high enough to allow people to ride their horses through them, but the horses are more generally shown being led.

Corridor C, as restored by Turner,[78] connected room D with the Central Courtyard (J). Its walls were decorated with yet another lion hunting sequence. Above them were the only preserved, or noted, remains of wall paintings in this palace, apparently showing 'hunting or war scenes'.[79] Rassam stated that this corridor had formed the location of part of Ashurbanipal's library.[80] This is a somewhat odd location, considering that the corridor was lined with sculptured reliefs, which would have been hidden from view if the library had been placed in

[75] Additional intermediate reliefs could have set these two scenes somewhat further apart.
[76] Albenda 1976: 69. [77] Barnett 1976: 48. [78] Turner 1976: 32.
[79] Rassam 1897: 28. [80] Rassam 1897: 31.

is probably inconsequential, as there is usually no apparent correlation between the depictions on the reliefs and the occupants of the suite. Nonetheless, one can wonder whether the topics of the reliefs reflect the purpose of the palace.

The most remarkable aspect of the reliefs is the large number of hunting scenes. These were, however, all depicted in corridors, or in the case of room S an entrance space. Fallen series I might have been an exception, but its original location is unknown. The topics depicted in corridors seem to have differed from those of the suites in that the rooms were always decorated with military scenes. The large number of hunting scenes in the North Palace might simply reflect the abundance of corridors. Nonetheless, the choice of hunting is not arbitrary and could reflect the function of the palace. As noted before, it is not unlikely that the palace was surrounded by a park, which the reliefs could have showed, though it is more likely that the hunting grounds were located outside the citadel. Some of the activities such as the royal banquet could have taken place on the citadel, but the river setting as argued for by Deller seems incompatible with a closeness to the North Palace since the Khosr River is located away from the palace to the south(-east) of the citadel. The depictions within the North Palace do thus not seem to represent the area immediately outside the palace, but their emphasis on hunting might still reflect one of the main purposes of the palace. Even if the hunting park was located further away, the North Palace might have provided a proper setting for such hunts and its associated ceremonies and celebrations. Such correlation is, however, uncertain if the hunting and garden scenes were related to the victory against Teumman, the Elamite king, in which case they do not show a general activity, but a specific occasion. The reliefs seem more occupied with rendering these festivities than showing the purpose of the palace.

NINE

# Palatial Spaces

This chapter discusses the five main types of space that can be identified in Late Assyrian royal palaces. The rooms incorporated a standardized set of installations, which will be discussed below. The chapter ends with a discussion of courtyards and corridors, which formed the main spaces of movement within the palace. The different suites that were created by combining these spaces forms the topic of Chapter 10.

## 9.1 RECEPTION ROOM

Most suites were organized around one or more large rooms, which have been described as reception rooms throughout this book. This is a catch-all term for the most monumental rooms of the palace. These rooms will also have been used for meetings, banquets, dinners, and other activities. The use of such spaces will have been situational and will have depended on the suite of which they were part, their location within the palace, and their monumentality. The reception rooms were often similarly organized and contained a common set of installations, such as the tram-rails and libation slabs.

The reception rooms formed the monumental centre of each suite. Though some suites possessed side entrances, the reception room always formed the most monumental and central entrance. The largest space of a suite was moreover always the first to be entered. The reception room thus functioned as a threshold space. Through the reception room further spaces could be reached. The internal spaces were usually dependent on the reception room for their accessibility.

### *9.1.1 Tram-Rails and the Art of Heating*

The thickness of the palace's walls will have insulated against the largest climatic extremes, but nonetheless will have left the palace relatively cold during the winter months. Heating was primarily provided through wheeled braziers[1] placed on

[1] Mallowan (1966) had several alternative interpretations, suggesting the tram-rails were variously used 'for some heavy ceremonial object which had to be carried into the room and exactly placed in front of the

tram-rails, a type of installation that was present in most, if not all, large reception rooms. Moving the brazier along the tram-rails allowed the heat to be controlled. Tram-rails consisted of a group of stone slabs placed in the centre of the room, usually between the central entrance and the side entrance closest to where the throne would have stood. Exceptionally, the throneroom of the Southwest Palace in Nineveh contained two sets, one on each side of the central door.[2] These installations were constructed in three general ways. They could be made from two parallel sets of grooved stone rails, or made of large slabs that either had a pair of parallel grooves or were left plain.[3]

Information on the use of braziers (*kanūnu*)[4] in the palace is scarce. One is associated with a storage room for wood,[5] while another is reported as having been stolen from the palace.[6] Braziers could also be sites for libations.[7] Only two Late Assyrian braziers have been excavated. The first was found in Guzana (modern Tell Halaf) and measured 1.41 by 1.21 m.[8] The Italian expedition working in the Military Palace of Kalḫu later found a second example, which must have been approximately 1 m wide originally.[9] The braziers used in the main reception rooms must have been larger as their rails stood further apart, e.g. 1.60 m in the throneroom of the Military Palace of Kalḫu.[10] The presence of stone slabs without rails suggests that other types of brazier were also in use, although the length of the slabs indicates that such braziers were still intended to be moved to control the heat. Technically speaking these grooveless slabs are not tram-rails, but their intended purpose is thought to be the same.

Braziers might have been taken out of the rooms and stored for the summer. The heat they provided could, however, also have been used for other purposes. Braziers are among the few known heat sources within the palace. They could have heated water, but were also usable for the preparation of food. The braziers would certainly have been big enough to feed a large group, especially since the palace contained a considerable number of them. Such use will, however, have

king' (pp. 96–7), 'for the bier upon which the god's statue was carried in the course of the various religious processions' (p. 240), or 'as a base for the king's table' (p. 443). None of these suggestions seems convincing as a general explanation, especially since the rails were also found in non-royal residences. They seem to represent the only proper form of heating available within these buildings (Turner 1970a: 186).

[2] Russell 1998a: figs. 1–5.

[3] For an overview of tram-rails see Turner 1970a: 186 nn. 46–8. For other examples see Duri, Rasheed, and Hamze 2013: pl. XXXIVa, XXXVb; Miglus 2013: pl. XXII.

[4] AHw: 481–2 (*kinūnu*(*m*)—Kohlenbecken); CAD/K: 393–4 (*kinūnu* 2b). A bronze *kanūnu* is received by Ashurnasirpal II from the king of Ḫatti in Carchemish (RIMA 2, A.0.101.1: iii. 67). Sargon II takes a silver *kanūnu* as booty (Mayer 1983: 104–5 (col. iv. 365)).

[5] SAA 1, 77: 10. [6] SAA 19. 7–11. [7] SAA 3, 37: 9–10; SAA 13, 57: 2′–5′.

[8] Langenegger, Müller, and Naumann 1950: 45–50, figs. 14–15, Tf. 12.

[9] Fiorina, Bertazzoli, and Bertolotto 1998. For a colour photo of the brazier see Oates and Oates 2001: pl. 12c.

[10] Oates 1963: 10.

between 1.30 and 1.40 m.[21] The recess in room ZT 12 of Kalḫu's Northwest Palace starts slightly above floor level.[22] This recess would seem ideal as a cupboard, but nothing further indicates such a use.

Some recesses could have been intended for the placement of light sources. Their placement within the inner rooms seems ideal to compensate against the darkness that must have been prevalent in these rooms. Such use does, however, seem incompatible with a reconstruction as a ventilation shaft since the associated draught would have wreaked havoc on the flame. The expected soot from these lamps does not seem to have been attested so far.

### *9.1.3 Light and Air*

Late Assyrian palaces must have been relatively dark inside. While the reliefs that decorated its more monumental walls are nowadays generally shown in well-lit museums, 'the conclusion is inevitable, that this lavish collection of sculpture was ill-lit, and seen in comparative obscurity' in their original contexts.[23] Mesopotamian spaces may have been too dark for our senses, but the 'obscurity' in which the reliefs would originally have been seen was probably not that different from the situation in which the original excavators found them. The amount of light in their excavated tunnels was apparently sufficient to draw the reliefs. Nonetheless, as Loud formulated it: 'it seems highly improbable that the Assyrians were forced or content to grope their way about a large part of the interior of their dwellings in semi- or total darkness'.[24]

Ventilation shafts alone cannot have admitted much light, but there are some other possibilities for light to have entered the rooms. The doors would certainly have functioned as sources of light, but the rooms cannot have been dependent upon them. The doors, though sizeable, are small in comparison to the size of the wall. One should also have been able to close the doors without leaving the occupants of the space in total darkness. Different sources of light are needed, especially for the inner rooms.

Artificial lighting must have been used at least after dark. Its use is mentioned in the Banquet Text, one of the few texts describing a banquet taking place in a royal palace.[25] It describes the lighting and entrance of torches (*zīqtu*) into the palace and the presence of officials holding them between the tables after sunset.[26] Braziers, lamps, torches, etc. could have provided only a limited amount of light within such huge spaces. Substantial installations for artificial light have not been found, although some of the recesses (§9.1.2) could have been used for such purposes.

[21] Meuszyński 1981: 56 (H-3: 1.40 m), 59 (H-22: 1.30 m), 60 (H-30: 1.34 m and H-32: 1.28 m), 69 (L-27: 1.36 m).
[22] Oates and Oates 2001: fig. 23. [23] Mallowan 1966: 106. [24] Loud and Altman 1938: 26.
[25] Müller 1937. [26] Müller 1937: 64–7 (K 8669: III. 37, 39, 42).

Artificial lighting is unlikely to have functioned as the main source of light during the day. Russell suggested that objects with shining surfaces could have been used as mirrors, either in connection with the ventilation shafts or carried by servants.[27] Their use, for which there is no proof so far, would have brightened rooms during the day. White plaster, which appears to have been used frequently, would have had a similar effect by reflecting light into and within the room.

Light could also have entered from the upper regions of the rooms, either through windows or lightwells. Windows have not been found in the lower regions of the wall, which suggests that if they existed they were placed higher, probably below the roof. Archaeological proof is lacking as the upper parts of the rooms have not been preserved. Light-wells or other types of opening in the roof cannot be excluded, but they would have considerably complicated the already impressive task of bridging the large widths of the monumental rooms. This seems to exclude them as realistic features. Clerestories would have been technically less problematic as they would not have conflicted with the roof beams. With walls of more than one metre, and often several metres thickness, the amount of light that would have been able to reach inside must have been rather limited. The presence of light sources in the upper parts of these high rooms would have been of limited use for someone trying to read the inscriptions on the reliefs near floor level.

The presence of clerestories will have been limited if the rooms were of the same heights. The presence of second storeys would have further limited the options to get light into the lower floors. Even without a second storey and the presence of roofs with different heights, the amount of light that could have reached the inner rooms must have been quite limited. The inner rooms were often smaller, which makes it likely that they were lower than the surrounding rooms and thus unlikely to have possessed fenestration.

The absence of light may have made the rooms comparatively dark, but also provided opportunities for highlighting certain spaces, areas, and people. The doors located close to most thrones would probably have highlighted the throned king while leaving most of the space in relative darkness.[28] The central door of the throneroom would have created a similarly bright spot on the opposite niche highlighting the king's image. The throneroom was not, however, oriented to benefit from the sun directly.

## 9.2 BATHROOMS

Even though the designation 'bathroom' is used throughout this book, the use of these spaces remains unclear. Though toilets and baths are to be expected

[27] Russell 1998b: 671–2 n. 45.

[28] Russell 1998b: 699; see also Miglus 1993: 197.

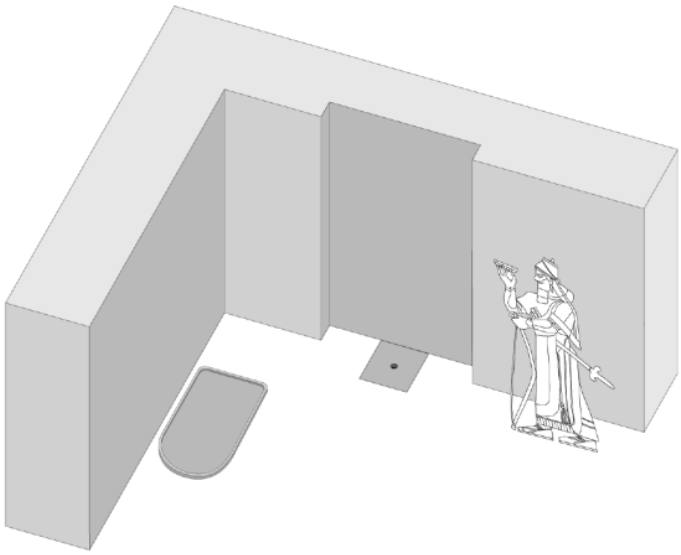


FIG. 9.2 Schematic view of a bathroom with niche, drain, and stone slab

within a royal palace, the omnipresence of these rooms is somewhat puzzling. Even the smallest type of suite, i.e. the Standard Apartment, contained a bathroom. The bathrooms were not only omnipresent, but also far larger than the placement of a toilet and bath would seem to have required. Even in the Standard Apartments, they rarely measured less than twenty square metres.

Together with storage rooms, bathrooms were the only internal spaces to have been insulated against fluids. Bathrooms were generally paved with baked bricks with bitumen coating. A drain was placed within or adjacent to a niche, which is its most recognizable feature when looking at a floorplan. The drain connected to the drainage system running underneath the palaces (Fig. 9.2).

Bathrooms might literally have been rooms with a bath. The rooms generally contained stone slabs with a depression that was rounded at one end. The shape of this depression seems to match a single person bathtub. Mallowan's[29] and Turner's[30] proposal that the slab was intended for standing on does not explain the rounded shape of the slab. In the Northwest Palace of Kalḫu several bathrooms (rooms I, L, V, and 59) contained two such slabs.[31] Two further stone slabs were placed in front of most of these slabs. These slabs seem more likely to have been intended to stand on before and after having stepped into the bathtub.

Brown has noted that the slabs in bathrooms I and L of the Northwest Palace were comparable in shape to the bronze coffins found within the Queen's burials in the same palace (§2.2.13).[32] He suggested that the slabs could have been used to

[29] Mallowan 1966: 42. [30] Turner 1970a: 193.

[31] For rooms I, L, and V see Meuszyński and Abdul-Hamid 1974: fig. 5; Paley and Sobolewski 1987: plan 2. For room 59 see Hassan 1996: fig. 59.

[32] Brown 2010: 15.

Though the evidence for their use as lavatories is patchy, the bathrooms are the only rooms suited for such use. It is difficult to imagine that guests, courtiers, or the royal family had to go outside for such purposes whilst being surrounded by bathrooms. It can be no coincidence that each suite possessed at least one bathroom. The bathrooms increased the self-contained nature of Late Assyrian palatial suites. Even basic functions could be fulfilled in each suite, discouraging people from wandering through the palace. The only suites lacking a bathroom were the early thronerooms of Kalḫu. It is remarkable that the most important suite of the palace was the only one lacking a bathroom. While bathrooms were incorporated in later palaces, they were not present in the smaller Throneroom Suites such as those of Residence J or Z in Dur-Sharruken (Pls. 13b–15b, 15d; §10.2.6).

The known installations seem to warrant the designation 'bathroom'. The omnipresence of lavatories is, however, easier to understand than the frequent presence of bathtubs. The conclusion that the Assyrian court was taking baths constantly is not fully satisfactory. While the presence of bathrooms in each Residential/Reception Suite can point to the importance of cleanliness, their presence in other types of suite is less easily understood. One can, for instance, wonder who would be taking baths in entrance spaces such as rooms 1 and 9 in suite 5 of Sargon's Royal Palace (Fig. 5.6; Pl. 11; §5.3.9). Whereas bathrooms were normally located deep inside the suite these rooms were directly accessible from the outside. The function of room 9 as a vestibule associates its bathtub slab with the libation slabs found in similar vestibules N and T of Kalḫu's Northwest Palace (§9.2.1).

Bathrooms might reflect an astonishing desire for hygiene, but could also suggest that the bathrooms were used for other purposes as well. Libations and other cultic activities are the most likely alternative functions for which these bathrooms could have been suitable. Similar doubt can, however, be raised about these activities. Did rituals take place in all suites? And, did they require so much space? Though such activity is easily imagined, textual sources describing rituals taking place within the palace, let alone in its bathrooms, are scarce.

A possible reason for the size of bathrooms is that it allowed a large group to be present within the room. For most senior functionaries and royal family members one can presuppose that taking a bath would require the presence of numerous courtiers. Such a group could also have been necessary for certain cultic activity. Being large and well insulated against fluids also made bathrooms ideal storage spaces. Bathroom 9 of the PD 5 Palace at Kalḫu is a good example.[43] Storage does not, however, appear to have been the intended purpose of most bathrooms.

[43] Mallowan 1954b: pl. 36-2–3.

The frequent absence of door sockets implies that most bathrooms did not possess doors and could thus not be closed.

The omnipresence of bathrooms suggests that cleanliness was an important feature in the Assyrian court. This cleanliness is likely to have been physical as well as cultic; these two realms seem to have been combined within these spaces. Toilets and ritual activity do not seem to have been mutually exclusive. Except for differences in monumentality, there is little in their architecture to distinguish the numerous bathrooms regardless of the suite they were part of.

### *9.2.1 Libation Slabs*

Square slabs were regularly placed against the wall on the floors of most reception suites. While these slabs have often been found, they have rarely been described.[44] Most slabs were large, reaching sizes of more than two metres in length.[45] Their edges were usually slightly raised. Most slabs had a hole in their middle, which was, however, generally not pierced and thus not connected to a drain.[46] They were located in, or next to, the large reception rooms, where they were predominantly placed against external walls. In the thronerooms of Kalḫu's Northwest and Military Palaces, they were placed against the short wall next to the throne dais. In the Northwest Palace they were also placed in the vestibules (N and T) leading into reception rooms.

Libations[47] and placement for porous water jars[48] represent the two most common interpretations for the purpose of these slabs. They are certainly large enough for the performance of certain kinds of libations, but their low edge did not provide much protection against the spill of liquids. Libations over dead animals, as shown on the reliefs, are unlikely to have taken place inside the rooms. Bulls and lions were certainly too large to place on these slabs. More importantly most libations took place in front of the object being worshipped.[49] The placement of these slabs makes this impossible nor is it likely that the wall was the focus of the libation.

[44] For an overview and discussion see Miglus 1999: 156; Turner 1970a: 187–8.

[45] Exact sizes are rarely provided, but the slab of the throneroom of the Military Palace in Kalḫu was 1.20 × 2 m (Oates 1963: 10), that found in room C of Building IX in Tell Taʿyinat measured 1.20 × 2.80 m (Haines 1971: 62), while those found in the palace of Til Barsip were respectively 2.25 × 2.90 m (room XXI), 2.64 × 1.65 m (rooms XLVII and XLV), and 3.05 × 1.58 m (room XXIV) (Thureau-Dangin and Dunand 1936: 16, 18 n. 2, and 21). Other slabs appear to have been similar in size.

[46] The slab of the throneroom of the Military Palace in Kalḫu was connected to a drain through a hole in the wall, but the slab sloped towards the middle whose hole was not pierced (Turner 1970a: 188).

[47] Andrae 1938: 11; Haines 1971: 62; Thureau-Dangin and Dunand 1931: 46.

[48] Heinrich 1984: 130 n. 146; Pillet as paraphrased in Thureau-Dangin and Dunand 1936: 19.

[49] Watanabe 1992: 102.

O, U, and YY). In the palaces of Dur-Sharruken such rooms were also found bordering the terraces (rooms 16–18 of the Royal Palace (Pl. 11); rooms 25 and 27–9 of the Military Palace (Pl. 10b)). Sargon's palaces appear to have contained several storeroom clusters. Some of these rooms can probably be described as treasuries.

Stone slabs were used also for the floors of other rooms such as corridor 10 and bathroom 12 of Sargon's Royal Palace.[53] In general, the indicative use of limestone slabs for identifying storerooms decreased over time, as more spaces came to be paved in such a way. This change is difficult to follow, however, due to limited information about the floors of the seventh-century palaces.

### *9.3.2 Wine Storage*

After a victory against king Rusa of Urartu, Sargon proudly described how he found the hidden wine store within Rusa's palace.[54] Considering the importance of wine it is not surprising that among the few storage spaces whose purpose is known at least two were meant for wine. The most famous store was found in room SW 6 of the Military Palace in Kalḫu, which was also the location of the archive that is commonly referred to as the Nimrud Wine Lists.[55] The jars in the room could store approximately 16,000 litres of wine, of which the individual wine lists distributed an average of 1,095 litres.[56] According to Fales, this could have been enough for approximately 5,475 people.[57] The second wine store was located in the Royal Palace of Dur-Sharruken, occupying rooms 139–48 (§5.3.5). This appears to have been a much larger storage facility. These spaces formed permanent storage facilities, but wine could, just like any other object and commodity, be stored wherever deemed fit, leading to letters asking 'there are no shelters where we could deposit the king's wine. May the king, our lord, command that (storage) rooms be shown to us, so that we may proceed. There is much wine of the king—where should we put it?'[58]

### *9.3.3 Archival Rooms*

Some of the administrative documents associated with the different royal family members and their functionaries were stored in the palace. Only rarely can archives be correlated to the use of the space in which they were found, more often they were found out of context or in generic storage spaces. A noteworthy exception is formed by the 'foreign correspondence' found in rooms ZT 4 and 5 of the Northwest Palace in Kalḫu. The architecture of room ZT 4 shows this to have

[53] Loud, Frankfort, and Jacobsen 1936: fig. 22.
[54] Mayer 1983: 90–1 (col. II. 220).
[55] Kinnier Wilson 1972.
[56] Fales 1994: 369.
[57] Fales 1994: 370 n. 52.
[58] SAA 16, 117: 15–r. 8.

been a scribal office with different boxes installed on the ground.[59] The 'corner office' (§10.5.3) of the same palace, which can be assumed to have accommodated an important palace functionary, also possessed large archives associated with the period that the palace was no longer occupied by the royal family.

These archives were located around the Throneroom Courtyard. The Throneroom Courtyards in Dur-Sharruken and Nineveh, which have been excavated only fragmentarily, can be expected to have contained similar archives.[60] The Southwest and North Palaces of Nineveh did possess several archives. These were found in the inner parts of the palace, even though their exact locations are uncertain.[61] The archive from room 57 in Kalḫu's Northwest Palace was similarly located in the inner parts of the palace. These archives were not necessarily found in the offices of functionaries and some were probably no longer in active use, but stored for possible retrieval.

## 9.4 COURTYARDS AND CORRIDORS

Each palace contained several monumental courtyards around which its suites were organized. The Throneroom Courtyard will have been the largest courtyard within most palaces. It formed the main entry into the palace and organized the entrance into the throneroom as well as into the rest of the palace. The offices surrounding it will have been frequented by numerous people who had dealings with the palace and its officials, but who may never have entered the rest of the palace. The courtyard must have been relatively lively at most times. This must be especially true for the Throneroom Courtyard of the Primary Palace, which formed the centre of the palace administration and thus of the empire.

Courtyards were intermediate spaces not belonging to any suite in particular. The reliefs covering their walls made them coherent and autonomous spaces. The walls functioned as the internal façade of the courtyard rather than as the external façades of the surrounding suites. Scenes tended to continue along the façades of multiple suites. Only in a few cases did the subjects correlate to the surrounding rooms. The most unequivocal correlation was formed by the throneroom façade and the throneroom, with the external façade showing a procession walking towards the throneroom.

Even though courtyards were coherent and autonomous spaces, they also highlighted the surrounding suites. They did so primarily through the monumental entrances into these rooms, which pierced out from the courtyard façades. These doorways would probably have been even more pronounced by the height of their doors (§1.4) and the additional decorations they possessed, e.g. decorated

[59] Mallowan 1966: fig. 106. [60] Reade 1986: 220. [61] Parpola 1986; Reade 1986.

bronze bands. While these doors would have been architecturally pronounced, they seem to have been rather uninformative about the nature of the rooms to which they gave access. One can wonder whether a person standing in a courtyard would have known what lay behind the multiple doors surrounding him or her.

The only noticeable difference between doors seems to have been the kind and number of apotropaic figures flanking them. The central doors were generally flanked by bull or lion colossi. The side entrances showed more variation, but the apotropaic figures rarely informed one on the use of the adjacent space (Pls. 20–1).[62] Even if such correlations existed its decipherment must have required specialized knowledge. While courtyards did not provide cues about the function and nature of the surrounding spaces they were probably not intended to hide the function of the adjacent rooms.

The courtyard façades placed coherence and symmetry above the legibility of the spaces surrounding it. The eastern façade of courtyard 19 in the Southwest Palace at Nineveh provides a good example of the choices such preference entailed. While this façade is mostly uncertain, from the outside it must have appeared as if it provided access to a large reception room, with a central door flanked by lion colossi and two smaller side entrances. It suggested the presence of a monumental suite, but gave access to three small rooms. The monumentality of its central entrance certainly does not correlate to the size of room 22, which is among the smaller rooms of the palace.[63]

The façade of room 4 in Sargon's Royal Palace provides an additional, somewhat hypothetical, example (§5.3.9). Its façade is likely to have appeared to represent a normal monumental façade with a central door flanked by two smaller doors. One of these doors did not, however, lead into room 4, but into a small corridor. These examples created spatial tricks, since the doors did not lead into the expected room. Normally, even when all doors of a monumental façade were closed one could still guess the size of the room behind it. The mismatch between these façades and their associated rooms was probably a consequence of the wish to create a coherent courtyard façade rather than being intended to trick.

The organization of the palace concentrated all the movement into corridors. The royal palaces were generally quite successful in connecting all courtyards with a minimum number of corridors. They could use multiple courtyards and terraces

[62] Kertai forthcoming b; Wiggermann 1992: 98.

[63] Reade (1979b: 109–10) argued that substantial changes were made in this area during the reign of Ashurbanipal (§6.2.10) and dated the colossi of room 22 to his reign. Regardless of their dating, it seems unlikely that no colossi had been present during the reign of Sennacherib, since all central doors were flanked by them. While changes in the floorplan cannot be excluded, it seems unlikely that the area originally contained a larger suite, since it would still have had to provide access from the Throneroom and Central Courtyards.

entrance to have provided such protection. They are moreover not connected to any other space. They are best understood as stations for security guards.

### *9.4.2 Moving Through the Palace*

The king is consistently depicted with an entourage, which suggests that he moved around with a standardized group of functionaries. Officials holding maces, bows, towels, fly-whisks, and/or parasols are omnipresent wherever the king is.[79] The depictions suggest a considerable amount of protocol in how the king moved through the palace. Other persons are not shown with such a retinue. The crown prince, who is easily recognizable and omnipresent does not seem to have been accompanied by officials. It is, however, certainly feasible that this is a consequence of the reliefs being centred on the king. The textual sources make it clear that all high officials had a staff, some of whom might have accompanied their masters.

Ashurbanipal's Garden Scene seems to show the retinue of the queen.[80] These women also waited on the king, whose own attendants were present at a distance. The scene suggests that the personnel of other people, at least those of the queen, could take over the functions of the king's own attendants. This suggests a greater flexibility in the execution of palace activity than the standardized depictions of the king and his retinue would indicate. It must, however, be noted that the depictions show only a few types of activity, mostly those of files of people moving towards the king. It cannot be assumed that all movement within the palace was similar.

While the depiction of walking and standing can be quite similar, the king is normally shown as standing still at the place of activity. The king is not shown walking. This does not need to imply that he was reluctant to walk, but walking was certainly not the most prestigious way of moving. In a long complaint about his circumstances, Urad-Gula deplored that he was so poor that he needed to walk, while the important people passed by his house on their thrones—probably in the form of palanquins.[81] The throne of the king could be integrated into a rickshaw, which is seen being pulled by two officials in the procession of the Temple Corridor (IT) in Sennacherib's Southwest Palace in Nineveh. Sennacherib is depicted as reviewing the transport of colossi from a chariot that is pulled by courtiers,[82] which turned the chariot into a rickshaw. In two scenes on Ashurnasirpal's bronze gates at Imgur-Enlil, Ashurnasirpal is shown having left the city in a

[79] An attempt to correlate functionaries with their depictions was made in Reade 1972.
[80] Albenda 1976: pl. 1; Barnett 1976: pl. LXIV.
[81] SAA 10, 294: r. 18–20; see also Parpola 1987b.
[82] Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner 1998: pls. 477, 479; Layard 1853b: pls. 12, 15.

rickshaw while tribute bearers approach him.[83] The rickshaw (*ša šadādi*[84]) clearly formed an important royal vehicle.[85]

To make the work of its pullers easier, the rickshaw was kept light, basically consisting of a board with a throne on top of it. Its lightness is indicated by a relief in Sargon's Royal Palace, which shows the rickshaw being carried by two officials.[86] Pulling the king's rickshaw must have been a privilege preserved for the most trusted officials. The act itself had enormous theatrical potential, which was used fully by Ashurbanipal, who mentions having his rickshaw pulled through Nineveh by four defeated Elamite kings.[87]

An insurrection inquiry from the reign of Esarhaddon lists the places where the king might be harmed as follows: '(17) whether while (he is) sitting on the royal throne,[88] or in a chariot, or [in a rickshaw], or while walking, whether while going out or co[ming in], (19) or while (he is) sitting on the . . . '.[89] It is unlikely that the king used a rickshaw to move within the palace. Although the rickshaw would have been small enough to pass through the doorways, it seems ill suited for its unpaved rooms. Frequent use of a rickshaw would certainly have left its marks. The king could have moved through the courtyards and corridors in his rickshaw, which could be one reason why the corridor connecting the Throneroom Courtyard of Dur-Sharruken's Royal Palace to the terrace was paved with stone slabs. Nonetheless, most corridors were not paved and would thus be ill suited for a rickshaw, chariot, or any other wheeled transport. Alternatively, the king could have moved through the palace in a palanquin, but there seems no indication that he did. It seems more likely that the king simply walked through the palace even though he may have arrived there in a rickshaw, in a palanquin, or on a chariot. In a letter of prince Shamash-metu-uballiṭ, the prince mentioned riding on a chariot behind his father Esarhaddon into the centre of Nineveh, at which point his chariot broke due to bricks in the pavement. Apparently he needed permission from his father to have it repaired.[90]

The existence of exclusive routes and doors for the king's use seems limited within the palace. The concentration of routes and the restricted number of doors would have necessitated people to share routes. Nonetheless, the palaces were clearly organized around the king. Some routes seem primarily designed for the king's

[83] Curtis and Tallis 2008: fig. 68 (temple gate, band MM ASH II L6), fig. 84 (temple gate, band MM ASH II R6).

[84] CAD/Š1: 32 (*ša šadādi*).

[85] See e.g. Gerardi 1988: 23–4 (epigraph on Relief 13, room M, North Palace, Nineveh: GIŠ *šá šad-ʳda*ʾ-ʳ*di*ʾ [*ru*]-*kub* EN-*ti-šú*).

[86] Botta 1849a: pl. 17. [87] Streck 1916: III. 10: 9 (p. 272), also III. 11: 9 (p. 274).

[88] *kussîš*, lit. 'the seat of kingship'. [89] SAA 4, 139: 17–19.

[90] SAA 16, 25; see also Luukko and Van Buylaere 2002: p. xxviii.

generally, of a Descending Corridor. There is no reason to believe that these routes were primarily intended for the king. Having argued that movement was visible and ceremonial, there is no reason to assume that the king would have preferred such back doors for entering or leaving his palace. The front door was clearly the more ceremonial way of accessing his own palace. The existence of back doors must nonetheless have been convenient and useful in certain cases, especially if it led into a park as at least the North Palace in Nineveh may have done.

A second place for alternative routes is found in the suites. The common monumental façade contained three doors with the central door being the most monumental. This tripartite organization was clearly meaningful even though we don't know its exact functional or symbolic relevance. It created hierarchies and differences in entering, but also restricted them by limiting the entrances to three in total. No need for more open façades existed or emerged. It is possible that each door was intended for a different group, though this could be context- and situation-dependent. The consistency of façades with triple entrances suggests that the related protocol was well ingrained or changed without the need for a different architectural setting. The tripartite organization formed an expansion of the façades with two doors as present throughout the Northwest Palace. It is noteworthy that in the Northwest Palace only the throneroom and the external rooms of the Double-sided Reception Suite possessed three doors. Later palaces expanded their presence. One could argue that over time all façades came to replicate that of the throneroom in the way movement was organized. The template offered by the throneroom seems to have trickled down to the other suites.

The tripartite organization of entrances did not catch on in the non-royal palaces, where fewer doors remained more common. The smallest thronerooms possessed single doors only (§10.2.6). The protocol connected to triple entrances seems to have been maintained in the most monumental buildings only. Instead of doors, in the smaller residences, two niches were placed one on either side of the entrance. These niches were often filled with libation slabs.[92] This symmetry seems important, but its significance remains unclear.

[92] A few reception rooms, such as those of Residence Z in Dur-Sharruken (Pl. 15d), possessed only one niche.

ground floor level.[7] Margueron has provided the most thorough discussion of the feasibility of a second storey in this palace.[8] He noticed the existence of several dead-end spaces on Place's plan. These were not unlike room ZT 3 of the Northwest Palace in Kalḫu and could have accommodated a staircase. There are, however, two problems with reconstructing staircases in these spaces. First, these spaces are among the more problematic ones on Place's plan. While a staircase might be a reasonable solution for their oddness, they could also be incorrect. Second, it is unlikely that any of these rooms was large enough to accommodate a staircase that could have reached a second storey. In other words, Margueron seems to have misidentified what kind of space could have reasonably been expected to have accommodated a staircase.

Loud stated that the Entrance Courtyard in front of room 86 was 3 m lower than the throneroom.[9] This difference might appear considerable, but the resulting slope would have been less than 2 per cent. Loud's conclusion that the difference must have been bridged by a slope rather than staircases therefore seems plausible.[10] As a consequences of this height difference the monumental part of the palace would have appeared even higher from afar. The elevation of the throneroom was certainly intentional. Similar tricks were used in the Throneroom Courtyard (§5.3.7) and in the rooms themselves.[11]

### *10.1.4 Southwest Palace (Nineveh)*

The Southwest Palace is the only palace where a second monumental ramp (61) has been found. Located along the southern terrace (60), this ramp was certainly monumental, but also considerably smaller than the throneroom ramp. It seems unlikely that its existence indicates the presence of a second storey. With only two ramps such a second storey would still be poorly connected. It would have taken away any means of getting light into suites 6 and 7 with their large number of internal rooms. Lastly, ramp 61 was located on the edge of the palace, far removed from the more residential northern part, and adjacent to the main reception suites. Its location was apparently not chosen to provide easy access to whatever it led to and is therefore unlikely to have led to a more residential second storey.[12]

### *10.1.5 Room Fills*

A second storey has sometimes been argued for on the basis of room fills, which were thought to have originated from a second storey. Rassam believed the

[7] Place 1867a: 76. [8] Margueron 1995. [9] Loud, Frankfort, and Jacobsen 1936: 84.
[10] Loud, Frankfort, and Jacobsen 1936: 84–5.
[11] For the sloping floor in room 6 see Albenda 1986: fig. 85.
[12] Such a residential second storey was assumed by e.g. Barnett 1976: 5–6 and Dalley 2002: 70.

these walls needed to stabilize themselves by their mass and thickness alone. It also explains the presence of buttresses along such façades.

A second storey at a height of at least eight metres, and considerably more above the main reception suites, is akin to walking up to the third floor or higher of a modern residential complex. The climb that a second storey would have entailed will certainly have diminished the enthusiasm for their construction. The available space on the ground floor appears to have sufficed to accommodate all relevant functions without the need to extend the palace vertically.

## 10.2 THE THRONEROOM SUITE

The throneroom was by far the largest Late Assyrian room with a size that often exceeded 500 $m^2$. This single room was as large as the entire habitable space of the *Rotes Haus* (Pl. 15c), one of the largest Late Assyrian houses excavated in Assur.[28] Beyond its size, the throneroom was also remarkable for its position within the palace. It was without exception the first monumental suite to be encountered by those entering through the main gate. Such forward placement gave the king a permanent architectural presence in the most accessible part of the palace. By placing the throneroom at the entrance of the palace, the physical distance to the king was largely erased.[29] This closeness might have been more symbolic than actual, but the symbolism of accessibility must nonetheless be understood as part of Late Assyrian kingship, which seems to have required the conveying of a certain amount of accessibility even though this was clearly not actualized constantly.

The Throneroom Suite forms the only suite whose main function seems beyond doubt. Its function is based on the presence of a single piece of furniture: the throne, or more precisely the throne dais upon which one can expect the unpreserved throne to have stood. Beyond the presence of a throne, we know very little about what happened within the throneroom. The presence of a throne is of limited significance as thrones could have stood in many places. Court activity will have taken place in other reception rooms as well, or even on some occasions in a temple.[30] Nonetheless, the short end of the throneroom formed the most pronounced location for a throne within the palace. Its importance was indicated by the size of both the throne dais as well as the throneroom itself.

### *10.2.1 The Throne*

A throne can be understood as any seat used by the king, but in the Late Assyrian period one can probably restrict this designation to those with a back and armrests

[28] Miglus 1999: 337. [29] Already noted by Mallowan 1966: 103.
[30] See e.g. George 1986: 141–2; Pongratz–Leisten 1994: 97–8.

FIG. 10.1 Throne being carried by two Assyrian courtiers

(Fig. 10.1). The elaborateness of the depicted throne can differ, with the king often sitting on a more modest model, but this appears to represent a choice to depict less detail rather than the existence of more mundane thrones. Chairs with back and armrests appear to have been used by the king (and gods) only, although it is noteworthy that on the Garden Scene of the North Palace—a rare depiction of an

### *10.2.2 The Throne Dais*

Even though thrones were quite common, and several large reception rooms seem to presuppose the placement of a throne at one of their short ends, throne daises were quite rare. Most were found in the throneroom,[42] but they have been found in two other locations as well. One throne dais was found in the Throneroom Courtyard of the Military Palace of Kalḫu.[43] It was less elaborate than the throne dais found in the throneroom of the same palace,[44] but it was nonetheless 3.2 $m^2$ in area.[45] Similar throne daises seem to have existed in the Military and Southwest Palaces of Nineveh.[46] A second throne dais was found in room 8, the secondary throneroom, of Sargon's Royal Palace. This type of room was normally part of the Double-sided Reception Suite (§10.3).

The throneroom daises were the most monumental exemplars, although in the ninth-century palaces of Kalḫu this was more a question of decoration than size. The throneroom dais of the Northwest Palace was inscribed,[47] while the one found in the Military Palace was decorated and inscribed.[48] Sargon's throneroom dais was much larger, measuring *c.*4.6 × 4 m with a likely height of 1 m.[49] Raising the throne was clearly deemed important. It can be related to the use of footstools. Both prevented the king's feet from touching the ground while seated.

The size and height of the dais created a natural distance to the king. Even when seated, the king would not have to look up to those in front of him. The elevation, and thus the distance to the king, was more symbolic than physical. The dais will not have elevated the king much above people standing in front of him. The dais can better be understood as creating an appropriate setting within a space as gigantic as the throneroom. A single throne, however elaborate it might have been, would easily have been dwarfed by the size of the room. The king would be in danger of being overwhelmed by his own palace. The throne dais and the niche behind it with large representations of the king created a more elaborated setting for the king to sit in.

### *10.2.3 The Furniture of Kingship*

Texts and reliefs show only a small selection of palace inventory. This selection is consistent throughout the Late Assyrian period. The royal inscriptions emphasize precious materials and people. When they do mention the looting of royal

[42] See Turner 1970a: 186 n. 46. [43] Mallowan 1966: fig. 353.
[44] Mallowan 1966: fig. 369. [45] Oates 1959: 113. [46] Layard 1849c: 138; RINAP 3, 34: 83–5.
[47] Russell 1999c: 41–4, fig. 18. [48] Mallowan 1966: 444–9; Oates 1963: 10–11.
[49] Loud, Frankfort, and Jacobsen 1936: 65–6, fig. 80. See also Blocher 1994.

### *10.2.4 The Throneroom Ramp*

In most palaces only the Throneroom Suite possessed a means to reach a second storey or roof. The importance of these spaces is beyond doubt. They belonged to the core of the Throneroom Suite, without which the suite would have been incomplete. All known Throneroom Suites possessed a similar room. These spaces are much more specific to the Throneroom Suite than the presence of a throne.

Unfortunately, most of these spaces have not been excavated. It is therefore not certain whether they were filled with a staircase or a ramp. Archaeologically the main difference is to be looked for in the materials used for its surface. Whereas a ramp can be made of a packed substance such as mud, not unlike the floors of most rooms, a staircase needs stronger materials such as baked bricks or stones to protect its treads.[60] In most excavated examples no preserved surface was noticed, which suggests that the surface was made of packed mud and thus represents a ramp.

Room 61 of the Southwest Palace in Nineveh is among the few excavated spaces. It was filled with a ramp. Exact measurements are missing and Layard's drawing is problematic.[61] Nonetheless, a slope with an angle of approximately 8°, as shown on the drawing, is realistic. The ramp would have had a horizontal length of approximately 25 m before coming full circle. This assumes that the corners were intermediate quarter landings (i.e. not sloping). An angle of 8° would have resulted in a height of *c.*3.5 m after one run.[62] The ramp next to the throneroom was larger, but also had to reach a greater height. A single run cannot have been sufficient to reach the roof of the ground-floor rooms. Staircases and ramps would have had to continue for several runs to reach a sufficient height. Since a storage space was typically located below the third flight, the staircase or ramp must have become floating after the second flight. A floating ramp or staircase could have been constructed by means of wooden supports. No holes for the wooden beams or supports have, however, been found so far in these spaces.[63] Alternatively, the staircase could have been constructed as a vaulted structure as attested in staircase AZ in Palace F/W at Dur-Katlimmu.[64]

[60] See also Miglus 1999: 140–1.

[61] Bleibtreu 1998: pl. 19; Layard 1853a: 461. It is unclear whether the plan is drawn to scale. The mudbricks seem too short compared to their length. The drawing must represent a reconstructed ramp, as it shows no eroded parts. Horizontal landings which should have existed at both ends are also missing.

[62] Turner 1976: 31. Turner (1998: 32) was the first to reconstruct this ramp. The stated slope of 4° is probably a typographical error.

[63] The remains of supporting structures were found in the entrance gate of the Military Palace in Kalḫu (Oates 1962: 7–8, pl. II).

[64] Kühne 1993–4: 270.

At least two to four runs around the core would have been required to reach the height of 7–18 m of the ground-floor rooms. This assumes that the goal of these ramps was to reach the roof. As suggested by Sobolewski,[65] the throneroom ramp could alternatively have provided the opportunity to look back into the throneroom itself by using the vestibule between the ramp and the throneroom as a balcony. A door was apparently found at the top of stairway T 8 looking back into the throneroom of the Military Palace of Kalḫu.[66] Considering the height of the door between the throneroom and the vestibule, which contained colossi, a balcony can only have been located after the second run at an approximate height of 7 m.

Though throneroom balconies are certainly feasible, a similar reconstruction cannot explain the purpose of the ramp in room 61 of the Southwest Palace. Room 61 was not associated with any other room. Alternatively, it could have formed a balcony towards the outside overlooking the terrace and plain below. Its roof and the adjacent terrace would, however, have provided ample and probably better possibilities for such views. Its detached nature seems to imply that its purpose was to reach the roof.

The throneroom ramps could certainly have used the opportunity to create a balcony within the throneroom, but their main purpose is likely to have been to reach a roof. The roof of the throneroom provided the highest vantage point within the palace. Reaching its roof was quite an undertaking. The throneroom is unlikely to have been less than 15 m high (§1.4). This would have entailed a climb of approximately 110 m. The width of the ramp's circuit was usually between 2½ and 3 m, wide enough for the use of palanquins.[67] The king, and other important courtiers or royal family members, might thus have been able to spare themselves the climb by having their officials do the heavy lifting.

### *10.2.5 The* bētu dannu/bēt šarri *as Designations for Throneroom*s

It is not clear whether the Assyrians used a specific designation to describe the main throneroom. In a few cases, however, the term *bētu dannu* seems to have been used, although the term itself was used for a broader range of spaces.[68] As with most spatial expressions, the name itself provides little information on its use. Literarily translated it means the 'large/strong *bētu*' (§1.1.2).

[65] Paley and Sobolewski 1981: 254.

[66] This could have led to a second storey or roof garden (D. Oates pers. comm. as cited in Curtis, Collon, and Green 1993: 27). The arguments in favour of such a reconstruction are unclear.

[67] As noted above (§9.4.2) the use of rickshaws is less likely on a surface of packed mud.

[68] Radner 1997: 270–1.

Some information is provided by two attestations of a palatial *bētu dannu* dating to the reign of Esarhaddon.[69] The first text describes the burying of apotropaic figurines in the palace: 'they should bury them in front of the main room (*bētu dannu*) and the bedrooms, in places to be additionally specified by the king'.[70] The bedrooms were apparently not part of this *bētu dannu*, but the text does not specify their spatial relationship nor does it provide more information. The second attestation is part of a royal inscription and describes the construction of a *bētu dannu* within Esarhaddon's Military Palace in Nineveh:

> I built a great (royal) house [*bētu dannu*] ninety-five large cubits long (and) thirty-one large cubits wide, something none of the kings who came before (me), my ancestors, had done. I roofed it with magnificent cedar beams. I fastened bands of silver and bronze on doors of cypress, whose fragrance is sweet, and installed (them) in its gates.[71]

With a size of *c.*51 by 17 m.[72] it is too small to describe an entire building or monumental suite, but it is also too big to describe most single rooms within the palace. Its length could describe the main throneroom, although its width would be exceptional. Such size (*c.*850 $m^2$) would indeed have been larger than any of his forefathers had ever constructed. The details provided in this building description support a correlation with the throneroom, which is a location worthy of receiving special attention in a royal building inscription. This seems corroborated by a textual variant that replaces *bētu dannu* with *bēt šarri*,[73] which refers to the '*bēt* of the king'. This uncommon expression is attested in two administrative texts that describe the future locations of colossi and as such probably refer to specific places.[74] It could refer to the main entrance to the palace,[75] but also to a single space such as the throneroom. An interpretation as throneroom seems suggested by its association with the *bētu dannu* in the royal inscription already cited. To complicate things further, *bēt šarrani*, i.e. its plural form, refers to the royal burial complex in Assur (Pl. 8a).[76] Reconstructing the function, location, and size of a palatial *bētu dannu* is rather difficult with such limited and inconclusive attestations. The *bētu dannu* nonetheless belongs to the better-attested spatial designations.

### *10.2.6 Non-Royal Thronerooms*

Defined as the primary reception room, all houses possessed a throneroom. The Throneroom Suite is, however, a more specific concept, defined by a standardized

[69] See also Kertai 2013a. [70] SAA 10, 263: r. 5–9. [71] RINAP 4, 2: v. 18–32.
[72] Measurements follow Powell 1990: 476, which suggests a cubit of *c.*53–4 cm.; see also Guralnick 1996.
[73] RINAP 4, 1: vi. 5. [74] SAA 15, 283: 9 and SAA 1, 150: 16.
[75] This is how both Parpola (1987a) and Fuchs and Parpola (2001) translate the *bēt šarri*.
[76] SAA 14, 60: r. 4; SAA 14, 62: 8; Deller, Fales, and Jakob-Rost 1995: no.75: 28; see also Donbaz 1992.

set of rooms, which were placed at a fixed location. It is the presence of a ramp at the end of the main reception room that makes the suite unique. The Throneroom Suite is the only suite with a vertical connection. By including other residential complexes, the specificity of the Throneroom Suite becomes more blurred. The less monumental versions could be entered only through a single door, lacked doors along their long axis, and did not provide a vertical connection. The smaller suites, such as rooms 21–2 of the *Großes Haus* in Assur (Pl. 15e), were reduced to a monumental gate chamber. These suites contained the largest room, and the first reception room to be encountered, in their respective buildings. In contrast to gate chambers, even the smaller Throneroom Suites consisted of two rows of rooms, the second generally being connected to a storage space. Options for movement were more limited in the smaller Throneroom Suites.

The large residential complexes in Dur-Sharruken, i.e. Residences J, K, L, M, and Z, represent the largest corpus of Throneroom Suites known from Assyria (Pls. 13a–15b, d). Having been constructed at the same time, they show both the suite's standardization and its flexibility. Each of these palaces was among the largest residences known from Assyria. The Throneroom Suites of the smaller palaces (Residences J and Z) differed from the larger palaces in the absence of a bathroom, the presence of only one external entrance, and the inability to bypass the suite. The absence of a bathroom does not reflect a lack of space. Rooms 18 (Residence J) and 24 (Residence Z), which appear to be storage spaces not directly connected to the throneroom, could easily have been turned into bathrooms. The bathroom in the throneroom thus appears to be a luxury addition, which might be necessary for the functioning of the most monumental throne-rooms, but could be left out in smaller ones.

A Throneroom Suite was clearly not a royal prerogative and is likely to have been present in all major residences of the empire. While the respective area has not always been excavated, Throneroom Suites were also discovered in the provincial palaces of Ḫadattu (Pl. 24a), Til Barsip (Pl. 23a), and the Town Wall Palace in Kalḫu (Pl. 24c). Several palatial residences possess a comparable suite. This group includes the *Rotes Haus* (Pl. 24e)[77] and Palace F/W (Pl. 24b)[78] in Dur-Katlimmu, the *Karawanserei* in Assur,[79] the *bâtiment aux ivoires* in Ḫadattu (Pl. 24d),[80] and the so-called *Haus an der kassierten Stadtmauer* in Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta.[81] These show the changes that could be introduced, especially in the placement of the vertical connection, when circumstances required it. These

[77] The suite surrounding room CW (Kreppner 2006: fig. 8) is organized somewhat differently by placing the staircase (IW) next to the second room rather than the main reception room, which might reflect a lack of space to expand the suite along the long axis of the main reception room.

[78] Rooms W and AZ (Kühne 1993–4: fig. 90).

[79] Miglus 1999: fig. 381.

[80] Turner 1968: 66.

[81] Eickhoff 1985: fig. 10.

connections, moreover, could take the form of a staircase in contrast to the royal palaces where a ramp seems to have been the preferred solution.

## 10.3 THE DOUBLE-SIDED RECEPTION SUITE

By its double-sidedness, this kind of Reception Suite deviated from others. Only the Throneroom Suite had a somewhat comparable two-sidedness, but with a large hierarchical difference between the sides. The room behind the throneroom was as large as the other reception rooms of the palace, but contained none of the known installations associated with such rooms.

The two sides of the Double-sided Reception Suite were more comparable. The placement of this suite behind the Throneroom Suite and its general accessibility introduced slight, but fundamental, differences between its two sides. Its 'external' side was directly accessible from the Throneroom Courtyard through the Throneroom Corridor located next to the throneroom. This 'external' reception room could possess a throne dais (§10.2.2) and tram-rails (§9.1.1). The room was accessible through a back door. Such entries were rare in Late Assyrian royal palaces, which usually possessed only entrances from the outside. It is noteworthy that such back doors seem to be present only in those suites that were most directly associated with the king, i.e. the throneroom and the King's Suite. One can also argue that the presence of back doors associates the Double-sided Reception Suite with the king. The 'external' reception room can be described as the secondary throneroom of the palace. It is located slightly further inside the palace, but did not automatically provide access to other areas. The external reception room was part of the more accessible areas of the palace.

The 'internal' reception room was located around the Central Courtyard and was directly connected to the Throneroom Suite. The importance of this direct connection is indicated by the longevity of its existence. It was the only internal connection between suites that was still present in Sargon's Royal Palace, though it was not present in his Military Palace. The accessibility of the inner reception room is likely to have been more limited. Both reception rooms were related to the king through their close connection to the Throneroom Suite.

The Double-sided Reception Suite was specific to royal buildings and has not been found in other residences.[82] These suites were placed either between two monumental courtyards or on a large terrace. Only the primary and Military Palaces of the empire enjoyed such settings. Even royal palaces such as the North Palace of Nineveh lacked these conditions. Such contexts could, however,

[82] The Til-Barsip palace could have formed a notable exception (Pl. 23a), but this might reflect the intended royal use of the palace.

chariot floorboard being in a *bētu šaniu*.[92] Oates suggested that it might have designated the workshops of the Military Palace,[93] a hypothesis that was supported by Kinnier Wilson.[94] This is unlikely, as it is the Military Palace that the board had been taken from.[95] One *bētu šaniu*, in a rather fragmentary text, seems to represent the location where horses were fed.[96]

A *bētu šaniu* must also have existed in the Northwest Palace of Kalḫu. It is mentioned on a doorsill, which states that it was the 'paving slab of the *bētu šaniu*'.[97] The text is written on its bottom and would thus not have been readable. The naming of spaces, regardless whether the result was readable, is exceptional. The doorsill also contained a short text on its obverse. Both texts were directed inside, allowing the obverse text to be read when the doors were closed. They were thus oriented at those already inside the suite and do not represent an external marker.

Unfortunately, the doorsill was found out of context in the Central Courtyard (Y). Its size implies that it originated from one of the monumental doors surrounding this courtyard.[98] Paley suggested that it originated from door *f* in room F (Fig. 2.5), but admitted that the other monumental doors could also have represented its original location.[99] His reconstruction coincided with his proposal that the *bētu šaniu* designated the monumental central part of the palace, believing that the palace also contained a first and third area.[100] Door *f* was, however, almost certainly not the original location of the doorsill. Assyrians are not known to have divided their palaces into zones. All known spatial designations refer to buildings, suites, or rooms. Moreover, door *f* belonged to the Throneroom Suite, which is unlikely to have been designated as *bētu šaniu*.

These discussions are further complicated by the presence of a functionary called *ša bēti šanie* (lit. '(the man) of the *bētu šaniu*'). It is often translated as 'lackey'[101] or 'domestic',[102] while Postgate made a more technical translation as 'of the "Second House"'.[103] The *ša bēti šanie* functionaries play a prominent role in the Banquet Text,[104] where they form the main group of service personnel. They were responsible for the incense and fire, provided clean towels and water for washing the hands, used the flywhisk,[105] and lit and held torches after dark. In

[92] CTN 3, 96: 14. [93] Oates 1961: 22. [94] Kinnier Wilson 1972: 85.
[95] Dalley and Postgate 1984: 165 n. 2. [96] SAA 1, 107: 12.
[97] Paley 1989: 138–9; RIMA 2, A.0.101.104. [98] Paley 1989: 137.
[99] Whether it could have originated from door *f* remains unclear (Russell 1999c: 259).
[100] Paley 1989: 142.
[101] e.g. in Fuchs and Parpola 2001; Parpola and Lanfranchi 1990 (in italics); Mattila 2002. For a critique on this use see Dalley 2004: 307.
[102] e.g. in Parpola 1987a. [103] Ahmad and Postgate 2007: 5. [104] Müller 1937.
[105] CAD/S: 189 (*sāru*).

general they were present and ready to serve.[106] The *ša bēti šanie*, or a similar functionary, is seen performing these tasks on the numerous depictions of banquets. Their tasks could extend beyond the palace. In a letter about the construction of Dur-Sharruken they are responsible for preventing fires from being lit inside the city.[107] Eight *ša bēti šanie* functionaries are mentioned as part of the 'domestic' staff (UN.MEŠ É) of Sargon's army.[108] The *ša bēti šanie* functionaries are thus unlikely to have worked only in the *bētu šaniu*, but represented a more general group of courtiers.

The correlation between the *ša bēti šanie* functionaries and banquets might suggest that the *bētu šaniu* referred to spaces where such banquets took place, a proposal made by Wiggermann[109] and Russell.[110] Of the State Apartments of the Northwest Palace, the Double-sided Reception Suite seems the most likely place for such banquets. It might be significant that the banquet scenes in Sargon's Royal Palace were found on the walls of a Double-sided Reception Suite, albeit one that was atypical in its organization (§5.3.9). Even if the *bētu šaniu* referred to the Double-sided Reception Suite of the Northwest Palace it cannot be assumed that a perfect correlation existed between the Assyrian term and our modern categories.

## 10.4 DUAL-CORE SUITES

The Dual-Core Suite consisted of two central rooms of similar length, with the internal room often being somewhat less wide. This core was surrounded by different kinds of spaces. The Dual-Core Suite represents a similar way of organizing space, which deviated from the other known suites. The category is foremost a tool for understanding the architectural changes visible from the reign of Sargon onwards. It represents a changed architectural idiom, but it remains unclear whether it should be treated as a functional category. Its appearance coincided with the emergence of a set of interrelated architectural features that transformed the functioning of Late Assyrian palatial spaces. These changes can be summarized as the increased integration and monumentality of interior spaces. This was achieved by increasing the number of inner doors, aligning them with those on the outside and, if present, with those further inside. These internal doors were often wider than before, which sometimes meant that they could not be closed.

[106] CAD/M1: 339 (*maṣṣartu* 6a: 'duty, service [performed] . . . in the palace').
[107] SAA 1, 39: 9′–12′. [108] SAA 5, 215: 15.
[109] Wiggermann (1992: 48) suggested that it referred to the 'dining room' (quotation marks by Wiggermann). [110] Russell 1998b: 666–7.

In the more monumental Dual-Core Suites large rooms were added to the short ends of the central rooms. This expanded the core with one or two additional rooms. The increased fluidity and monumentality of the interior did not change the relation to the outside. Even though the suite was much more permeable, with the aligned doors creating visual axes from the outside, the external façades were as closed as they had been throughout the Late Assyrian period.

Dual-Core Suites were found in most known seventh-century palaces. Some of these suites seem to form a subcategory, though our knowledge about their use is presently too limited to make such an exercise very constructive. One can, however, highlight the similarities between suites 3 in the Royal Palace of Dur-Sharruken and the Southwest Palace of Nineveh. Each was located at a similar location in the Central Courtyard opposite the Throneroom Suite.

Suite 6 of Nineveh's Southwest Palace forms another standardized suite, and, with its row of back rooms, represents a common way to organize large reception suites during the seventh century. It is comparable to the main suites of the Lower Town Palace in Nineveh (Pl. 23c; §7.3), the palace in Tarbiṣu (Pl. 23b), Esarhaddon's Southwest Palace in Nineveh (Fig. 7.2), and probably the Eastern Suite in the Military Palace of Kalḫu (§7.4).

The monumentality of suites increased in accordance with the status of the palace. The least monumental suite of this type is arguably found in the Lower Town Palace in Nineveh. Its internal porticos are filled with column bases. The Southwest Palace in Kalḫu is more monumental and used colossi with columns on top of them along its central axis but more basic columns in the side porticos. These palaces indicate that the increased size of the internal doors was only partly about increasing their visual permeability, and was perhaps primarily introduced to create places for additional ornamentation. The increased ornamentation of porticos is less pronounced in the Dual-Core Suites of the Southwest Palace in Nineveh. The central axes of suites 5 and 6 did contain colossi at their doors, but only in the side doorway of the less monumental suite 7 were statues found in situ. This could indicate that the most monumental suites did not provide a similar ornamentation to their large internal doorways, but it is more likely that they were ornamented with precious materials that have not survived. Statues of metal have long been known to have existed in these palaces as they are mentioned in the royal inscriptions.[111] These include the presence of statues in the form of column bases, which are otherwise only known to have been used inside the suites in Assyria. Considering the increased monumentality in these suites and the apparently empty porticos in the most monumental, the internal portico represents the

[111] Engel 1987.

most likely place for these statues. Such placement corresponds well with the emphasis on the interior that is typical of Late Assyrian architecture. It is these internal porticos that must represent the so far elusive *bēt ḫilāni*. Because it was less monumental, the Dual-Core Suite in the Southwest Palace of Kalḫu might be the most representative suite of its kind.

### *10.4.1 The Backroom*

The small room 36 of the Southwest Palace in Nineveh (suite 6) is one of the most famous Assyrian rooms due to the siege of Lachish depicted on its reliefs. The importance that has been attached to its reliefs seems to contrast with the meagre size of the room. While the room was 7.5 by 5 m in size, it pales in comparison to the size of the surrounding rooms. Such back rooms are not uncommon in Dual-Core Suites. The clearest sign of their importance is formed by the monumentality of the axes that lead to them. The door into room 36 was flanked by a pair of colossi, which were clearly oversized for such a small room. Other back rooms were found in Esarhaddon's Southwest Palace in Kalḫu (§7.2) and in Nineveh's Lower Town Palace (§7.3; Pl. 23c). Both possessed elaborate and monumental entrances. Each contained at least three back rooms. The two other back rooms of suite 6 in Sennacherib's palace are architecturally similar to the central back room and might have had a similar function. Such functional similarity is unlikely to have existed in the two other palaces.

The three back rooms in Sennacherib's palace were all single rooms accessed from the core of the suite. They formed the endpoints of three axes running through the suite. The additional back rooms in the two other palaces were accessible from the side rooms only and were often accompanied by bathrooms. The side rooms are more similar to rooms 31–2 and 39–41 of Sennacherib's palace, which were likewise accessed from larger side rooms, than they are to back rooms 35 and 37.

Turner compared room 36 of Sennacherib's palace to room K in the Eastern Suite of Ashurnasirpal's Northwest Palace.[112] The Eastern Suite also contained three rows of rooms ending in a blind wall. It is similar to the later Dual-Core Suites in the presence of two similarly sized reception rooms and in its agglutinating nature. The central back room (K) appears to be a storage space/treasury due to its stone pavement. The historical continuity of the Eastern Suite is made more difficult by the absence of a similar suite in Sargon's Royal Palace. Partial comparisons can, however, be made with room 7 of Sargon's Royal Palace, which can be interpreted as a back room, even though it was not part of a Dual-Core Suite.

[112] Turner 1970a: 200–2 n. 120; Turner 1998: 29–30.

## 10.5 RESIDENTIAL/RECEPTION SUITES

The absence of second storeys will have limited the amount of residential space. Though roofs or courtyards could have provided additional sleeping spaces in the summer, the internal spaces needed to be self-sufficient for at least the winter months. Sleeping arrangements are unknown, but in theory each space could have been used for sleeping. Such flexibility is, however, likely to have been culturally constrained.

This book has argued that the palace contained a type of suite that can be defined as residential: the Residential/Reception Suite. The core of these suites consisted of a large room combined with a bathroom. This core, i.e. a Standard Apartment, should be regarded as the minimum requirements to enable one to talk of a residential suite. In general, single rooms are better understood as storage spaces (§9.3). The core could be enlarged to create more monumental suites, with the King's Suite (§10.5.2) forming the most monumental type of Residential/Reception Suite.

Though the Residential/Reception Suites probably represent the only residential suites within the palace, their architecture indicates that they were foremost reception rooms and only secondarily places for sleeping. The more monumental suites were decorated with reliefs or elaborate wall paintings and possessed installations such as tram-rails. They were clearly intended to accommodate receptions and other court activity. Architecturally, they do not appear to have made special accommodations for sleeping.

Nonetheless, bedrooms are known from textual sources even though they are rarely attested in reference to palaces. This lack of sources is, however, typical for all spaces within the palaces. The *bēt mayāli* (lit. 'space of the bed') is attested once in the plural as the burying place of apotropaic figurines.[113] The alternative *bēt erši*, which has a similar meaning, is not known in relation to a palatial context.

Though bathrooms should be understood as a prerequisite for a residential suite, their presence is not specific to these suites. Bathrooms formed standard elements of all suites. The residential bathrooms do not seem to have differed from those present in other suite types. The bathroom took up an especially large part of the Standard Apartments. The absolute and relative size of these bathrooms is remarkable and might from our perspective seem like a waste of precious space, but it was clearly an essential and important room requiring a significant area (§9.2).

These suites were suited for living, sleeping, and working. Judging whether they were used for residential purposes is difficult on the basis of the architecture of the suite itself. The most significant feature of these suites was not their

[113] SAA 10, 263.

architecture, but their location within the palace. Their placement followed certain patterns, which allows us to distinguish between two broad categories. The first group is found in the forecourts and service areas of the palace. Due to their location, they can generally be described as the offices of palace functionaries. Their location seems ill suited for residential purposes. They are too accessible and surrounded by storage spaces. The suites of the second category cluster behind the main reception suites and are therefore better suited to have functioned as the residential suites of the royal family. Whether all Residential/Reception Suites were residential is unclear and will have depended on the question whether court officials resided in their suites within the palace. While this is possible, the palaces could have accommodated only a select group of residential courtiers (§11.6).

### *10.5.1 The Bed/Couch*

Beds (*eršu*[114]) are often taken away from foreign palaces as booty.[115] Their shape is similar to the bed in Ashurbanipal's Garden Scene, but also resembles those that were depicted within the military camps.[116] Beds were not generally depicted as being used within Late Assyrian palaces. This correlates to the absence of depictions of a 'domestic' nature.[117] Ashurbanipal's Garden Scene forms the notable exception. The relief shows the king reclining on a bed. The bed is relatively high, but the loot shown on the reliefs of room 28 in the Southwest Palace of Nineveh indicates that small stools were associated with beds, making it easier to get out of them. The Garden Scene is unique and therefore difficult to interpret.[118] Albenda argued that the use of a bed represented the sickness of the king,[119] but it is unlikely that the Assyrian artist would have chosen, or have been allowed, to depict a sick king.

The combination of the queen sitting on a throne while the king reclined on a bed seems awkward, even though it may have been common practice. The chosen solution could represent a way to solve the king's position in the presence of his queen. With the queen occupying the throne, perhaps because the banquet was

[114] CAD/E: 315–18 (*eršu* C).

[115] Relief 19 (lower register), courtyard 19, Southwest Palace, Nineveh (Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner 1998: pl. 193); reliefs 12–13, room 48, Southwest Palace, Nineveh (Layard 1853b: pl. 40); relief 10 (lower register), room 28, Southwest Palace, Nineveh (Layard 1853b: pl. 36). See also Barnett 1976: pl. 67.

[116] Barnett and Falkner 1962: pl. LX; Barnett, Bleibtreu, and Turner 1998: pls. 129, 138, 402; Layard 1853b: pl. 24; Russell 1998a: pl. 178. One bed is shown carried over a river along with the Assyrian army on relief 10 of the throneroom (B) of the Northwest Palace in Kalḫu (Meuszyński 1981: Tf. 2, 2).

[117] Marcus 1995: 2498.

[118] Albenda 1976: pl. 1; Barnett 1976: pl. LXIV. The Imgur-Enlil gates of Shalmaneser III also show a person, probably a king, reclining on a bed (door C, band XIII, Imgur-Enlil (Schachner 2007: Tf. 13). He appears to be on the roof, but Assyrian renderings of depth make such a reconstruction uncertain.

[119] Albenda 1976: 65.

being hosted by herself as suggested by the presence of her officials, a bed may have represented an appropriate alternative for the king. The king could certainly not be shown sitting on anything less than a throne. The bed elevated the king without diminishing the status of the queen.

### *10.5.2 The King's Suite*

It seems logical to presuppose that the most monumental Residential/Reception Suite was occupied by the primary occupant of the palace, which in most cases will have been the king. This suite can thus be described as the King's Suite. The King's Suite was always the first Residential/Reception Suite to be encountered when moving through the palace. The forward placement of the King's Suite can be compared to the similar placement of the throneroom. The King's Suite tended to be located in the Central Courtyard and was the only Residential/Reception Suite within the area of the main reception suites. Its location and placement were clearly not chosen to provide seclusion to its occupant.

Of the three primary palaces, in only two can the most monumental Residential/Reception Suite be reconstructed. The King's Suite in the Northwest Palace in Kalḫu (§2.2.9; Fig. 2.8) and the Southwest Palace in Nineveh (§6.2.6; Fig. 6.4) differ somewhat from the other monumental Residential/Reception Suites, but are remarkably similar to each other. This is especially striking if one considers the many architectural differences between them. The architecture of the King's Suite in the Northwest Palace was typical for that palace, for instance, in the asymmetrical placement of the inner doors, the presence of a relief showing the king on its short wall, the axial approach towards this king, and the closeness of a back door (Pl. 6c). The King's Suite in the Southwest Palace was, however, unique within the palace precisely because it was so similar to the suite in the Northwest Palace. In the Southwest Palace, most suites were organized symmetrically with aligned inner doors. Back doors were rare. The main, but important, similarity between the King's Suite and the rest of the Southwest Palace was the presence of military scenes on its reliefs (§11.2).

The King's Suite can thus be called conservative. Such conservatism was not random. It is certainly no coincidence that the Throneroom Suite was the most conservative suite of the palace. The conservatism of the King's Suite was not present from the outset, but represents an innovation in itself. The King's Suite in the Northwest Palace had on the whole followed the architectural conventions of the palace, but when it came to the King's Suite Sennacherib's Southwest Palace chose to ignore the changed architectural conventions and repeat those of days gone by.

Besides its location surrounding the Central Courtyard and its monumentality, the King's Suite was also purposely positioned between the monumental part of

more secluded, there is no reason why the queen could not have ventured into other, more easily accessible, suites to conduct ceremonies, receive visitors, or partake in palace activity. The close connection between the main reception suites and the more residential parts of the palaces make a strict separation of spheres unlikely. This is especially true for the Northwest Palace, whose Royal Courtyard was directed primarily towards the Central Courtyard.

### *10.5.3 The Corner Office and Other Offices*

Many officials would have worked on a daily basis within the palace and it can be assumed that at least the more important among them had their own work spaces. Their individual offices cannot presently be identified. In general there were more important palace officials than there were known Residential/Reception Suites. One of the most common and monumental offices was located in the corner of the Throneroom Courtyard, often close to the main entrance. The best-preserved 'corner office' was found in the Northwest Palace of Kalḫu (Pl. 4; rooms ZT 21, 25–7 and perhaps ZT 32–4). Another 'corner office' can be reconstructed in the Military Palace of Kalḫu (Pl. 9; rooms SE 21–3). Everything within Sargon's Royal Palace is architecturally uncertain, but rooms 131–3 could represent a similar office (Pl. 11). Entrance Courtyards seem to have possessed their own corner offices, e.g. rooms 91–3 in the Royal Palace of Dur-Sharruken and rooms NW 1–3, NE 51–4 in the Military Palace of Kalḫu (Pl. 9).

There are a number of officials that might have occupied these suites. The most likely candidates are either the main palace managers the *rab ekalli* or the *ša pān ekalli*. The officials in charge of organizing entry such as the *rab atê*, his possible superior the *ša pān nērebi*, or the *rab sikkāte*[121] could also be thought to have possessed offices in this area of the palace. While the 'corner office' was the most monumental suite, other office-like spaces surrounded such courtyards. This is most clearly visible in the Northwest Palace of Kalḫu where the entire courtyard seems to have been surrounded by offices, perhaps belonging to different officials. The Standard Apartments surrounding the Throneroom Courtyard of the Military Palace of Kalḫu might also have functioned as offices. The Throneroom Courtyard of the Ḫadattu palace (Pl. 24a) and the Entrance Courtyard of the Til-Barsip palace (Pl. 23a) seem to have been surrounded by a similar set of Standard Apartments. Offices surrounded most forecourts. Most palatial residences combined these with storage facilities and gave access to additional courtyards, e.g. the Residences of Dur-Sharruken (Pls. 13–15b, d), the *Rotes Haus* in Dur-Katlimmu (Pl. 24e), and the *Großes Haus* (Pl. 15e) and *Rotes Haus* (Pl. 15c) in Assur.

[121] See Radner 2010: 272–80.

ELEVEN

# 250 Years of Late Assyrian Palaces

Late Assyrian royal palaces existed to accommodate the Assyrian king and his court. They were dependent on the well-being and survival of Assyrian kingship and could be abandoned, left unfinished, or downgraded to a lesser status depending on the fortunes and wishes of the ruling king. Unfortunately, daily life in these palaces and the associated protocol remain poorly understood. Comprehensive studies relating to these topics are mostly still to be written. Architectural analyses are by themselves limited in the information they can provide on the functioning of the Assyrian court.

This study aimed to contribute to our understanding of Assyrian kingship by describing one of the primary spatial settings in which it existed. It has argued that the principles underpinning Late Assyrian palace architecture remained remarkably stable throughout the two hundred and fifty years under discussion. The resulting palaces had, nonetheless, changed considerably. This final chapter tries to summarize and explain these changes.

## 11.1 ARCHITECTURAL MULTIPLICITIES

The most common way to apprehend a Late Assyrian palace is through the concepts of seclusion and zoning. This book outlines an alternative way of understanding the architecture by describing the ways in which it organized access and movement. The architectural analyses within this book describe the palaces as a set of multiplicities. It defines a set of architectural features that shaped the palaces and traces the interplay between them. The smallest scale consists of rooms and their associated installations. These formed the focus of Chapter 9, which discussed three types of rooms: the reception room, the bathroom, and storage spaces. Other spaces, such as internal corridors, reclining rooms, vestibules, etc., could have expanded this list. Even with extensions and subdivisions, the list remains short. This is mostly due to uncertainties about the use of these room types, which do not allow us to differentiate between more specific functional categories. The long list of functionally specific rooms making up a modern Western house or palace cannot be replicated for a Late Assyrian palace. This is

and 84 respectively), which are not as permeable as the typical Dual-Core Suite, but might nonetheless represent a similar attempt to expand the capacity of its reception suites through a similar set of spaces. The suite surrounding room 17 of the Lower Town Palace in Nineveh (Pl. 23c) does possess the architectural features of a Dual-Core Suite, such as a central axis and wide internal porticos, but only possessed a single reception room. Interpreted as a core surrounded by smaller rooms, the Dual-Core Suite can also be described as a more monumental version of the typical Assyrian reception suite. These considerations highlight that in their most basic form Late Assyrian suites represent different ways of organizing a group of rooms around a reception room.

Suites functioned as independent units. They were generally not connected to other suites and only accessible from a courtyard. These courtyards formed self-contained spaces that provided little information about the activity taking place in the surrounding parts of the palace. Movement between the courtyards was funnelled through corridors, making connections direct and efficient, and therefore easy to control. These spaces of movement were generally not architecturally elaborated and only possessed modest entrances, which tended to be placed in the corners of the courtyards.

Only a few of the possible ways of combining suites were actualized. Most suites were located in time-tested places within the palace. One could describe these patterns as zoning, but this would greatly underestimate the subtleties of its organization. The palaces were not organized into zones, but into courtyards, of which there were many. The implicit, and sometimes explicit, equation of zoning with a public and private divide is even more problematic. It is doubtful whether private and public existed as concepts in Late Assyrian times. These concepts are both problematic and unhelpful. By its very nature, Assyrian kingship blurred any distinction between public and private that might have existed. The main focus is better placed on access and protocol, topics about which our knowledge is limited.

The term 'State Apartments' is sometimes used to describe the more externally oriented spaces of the palace. This category would include the Throneroom Suites, the Double-sided Reception Suites, and the Dual-Core Suites. It would, however, be incorrect to contrast these suites with the Residential/Reception Suites. This book has argued that the Residential/Reception Suites were also primarily geared towards state activity. While there might have been a difference in audience between the State Apartments and the Residential/Reception Suites, this is likely to have been contextual and incremental. All monumental suites contained reception rooms that were associated with the activities of state. Some visitors might have met the king in the King's Suite, while at other times taken part in activity in the throneroom or any of the other reception suites. A fundamental distinction between these suites seems absent.

The Northwest Palace in Kalḫu predominantly used apotropaic figures and trees to decorate its walls. Narrative scenes (military and hunting) were employed only in the largest reception rooms. Apotropaic figures were generally not used to decorated the walls of later palaces. The Royal Palace in Dur-Sharruken replaced most apotropaic figures with narrative scenes and expanded their topics, with a predilection for different files of people approaching the king. The rooms of the Southwest and North Palace in Nineveh showed only military scenes, while other topics were introduced in the courtyards and corridors.

The decoration of the palace doors is correlated to the apotropaic protection of the palace and reflects a different set of choices.[10] The Northwest Palace in Kalḫu and the Southwest and North Palaces in Nineveh placed protective figures in most doors, at least in the areas where reliefs were used. Such protection was apparently not deemed necessary in Sargon's Royal Palace, which used apotropaic figures more sporadically and strategically, and often depicted the king on its door jambs. Corridors were frequently left unprotected in all palaces. The palaces before the seventh century had also often left their bathrooms unprotected, or had used different modes of protection, in contrast to the Southwest and North Palaces in Nineveh where a special pair of apotropaic figures was introduced to provide protection to these rooms.[11]

Texts played an especially important role on the Assyrian reliefs.[12] This prominence did, however, decline over time. All reliefs in the Northwest Palace in Kalḫu had carried inscriptions in a band running over the middle of the relief. Reliefs that only carried inscriptions were placed in the Central Courtyard, some of the corridors, and its many monumental storage spaces. Such reliefs are not known from later palaces. The palaces of the seventh century expanded the pictorial field and turned most texts into labels that explained the narrative scenes.[13]

While the significance of the reliefs can hardly be overestimated, they seem only weakly related to the use of the spaces they decorated. The most consistent correlations between decoration and the use of spaces are to be found around the throneroom, whose façade, internal niches, and walls correlate with its intended use.[14] In general decoration and architecture followed two distinct historical trajectories. This might reflect the different groups of scholars involved in the design of these aspects. The difference is most clearly visible in the King's Suite in Kalḫu's Northwest Palace and Nineveh's Southwest Palace. Their remarkable architectural similarity (§10.5.2) is absent when it comes to the reliefs in which both suites follow the practices of their respective palaces.

[10] Ataç 2010; Kolbe 1981; Nakamura 2004; 2008; Wiggermann 1992. [11] Kertai forthcoming b.
[12] Russell 1999c. [13] Russell 1991: 191–222. [14] Porter 2003; Roaf 2008; Winter 1981; 1983.

## II.3 VISITING THE PALACE

Most inhabitants of the Assyrian Empire will never have entered the royal palaces discussed in this book. The palaces are, however, unlikely to have been completely unknown or inaccessible. Even the most distant visitors, such as the emissaries from Egypt, Gaza, Judah, Moab, and Ammon mentioned in the Introduction, will have been familiar with Assyrian palaces and customs. The emissaries were travelling in Assyrian territory for most of their journey and passed through several provincial capitals. These cities, their palaces, and customs will have prepared them for their visit to Kalḫu.

The emissaries were not unique. Numerous people travelled to and from the Assyrian royal cities on a regular basis. These visitors entered the palaces in different capacities and had travelled various distances. Some visited the palace routinely, while others travelled weeks if not months for a once-in-a-lifetime visit to the king and his palace. Throughout the Near East lived people who had either visited the royal palaces or knew people who had done so.

The palaces were probably lively places, even if only a small percentage of Assyrians were ever given access. The number of important Assyrian functionaries, foreign dignitaries, and courtiers will have made even the more restricted meetings sizeable events. The main reception suites were monumental spaces able to accommodate enormous groups. All suites were big enough to provide even large groups with plenty of space.

The confinement of stone reliefs, the most powerful mode of decoration used in the palaces, to the main reception suites suggests that visitors were expected to enter them. One can assume that the more monumental decoration was located where it was most effective, i.e. where people would have had a chance to see them.

While this book has argued that the palaces were designed to accommodate ever-increasing numbers of visitors, the scant sources relating to activity in the palaces all suggest that such visits would have followed strict protocol. This is visible in Assyrian iconography, which shows the structured nature of meetings with the king and the numerous officials involved. While meetings in the palaces will have taken place on a daily basis, clearly not everybody was granted entrance.[15] The palace possessed several functionaries whose roles included screening entrance.[16] Such officials are most likely to have occupied the different 'corner offices'. Texts pertaining to meetings with the king also highlight the protocol involved.[17]

[15] See e.g. Barjamovic 2011: 41. [16] Radner 2010. [17] Zgoll 2003.

### *11.4.1 Late Assyrian Residential Architecture*

Royal palaces are part of a continuum of residential buildings. Comparisons are easiest with the largest residences as these are often constructed at a specific time, according to a unified design and are therefore able to follow architectural principles more easily. In contrast, in the smallest houses a need for flexibility often trumped architectural principles, which are therefore less easy to discern. The smallest houses tend to be the result of an agglutination of rooms over time.[18] The typology used for the palatial residences is of little use in the smaller houses, where most suites can only be described as belonging to the Residential/Reception Suite category.

All residences shared a few general traits, at least if circumstances allowed it. Like the palaces, smaller houses separated their rooms into suites that were not connected to each other. Each placed the most important spaces and suites to the fore. The main reception rooms were generally connected directly to the courtyard. Layering access through porticos or additional smaller rooms was rare in Assyria. Smaller units, such as Standard Apartments or storage rooms, were often placed around and behind the main reception room.

Routes tended to be limited and concentrated. Not all houses were able or willing to use corridors to connect different courtyards. Smaller residential complexes economized on alternative routes. This often turned the main reception suite into a connector. This suite continued to perform a threshold function, but in contrast to the more monumental versions, it represented a threshold that often had to be crossed in order to get into the rest of the building. Residences J and K in Dur-Sharruken (Pls. 15a–b) provided an alternative by connecting the Central Courtyard directly to the outside, thereby circumventing the Throneroom/Entrance Courtyard altogether.

### *11.4.2 Late Assyrian Temple Architecture*

As the residences of the gods, temples could be expected to be similar to the palaces, but the residential requirements of gods seem to have deviated considerably from those of humans. This book has argued that gods did not reside in the palaces, i.e. the palaces did not include temples or cellae. Temples and palaces were, however, often integrated into a single urban landscape. Like palaces, the temples can be said to be organized into unconnected suites surrounding and accessed from different courtyards. Small units, such as storage spaces and Standard Apartments, were abundant in both contexts, but these are too generic to make their presence very meaningful, beyond reflecting the presence of numerous

[18] See e.g. Miglus 1996; 1999.

diverse and their history cannot be traced precisely. The limited sample of three primary palaces makes comparisons problematic. The number of comparable suites is further limited by the uniqueness of the Eastern Suite in the Northwest Palace, which leaves only two suites to base comparisons upon, and the emergence of the Dual-Core Suites in the Southwest Palace, which are architecturally distinct from the former suites. The apparent omnipresence of Dual-Core Suites during the seventh century suggests that older suite types were turned into Dual-Core Suites or were no longer in use.

### *11.5.2 The King's Courtyard*

The Central Courtyard behind the throneroom retained its position between the main reception suites and the more residential and service-oriented parts of the palace. Three of the four suites surrounding the Central Courtyard of Sargon's Royal Palace (§5.3.7) appear to have replicated those in Ashurnasirpal's Northwest Palace (§2.2.6–9). The main difference is formed by the replacement of the Northwest Palace's Eastern Suite by a simple Dual-Core Suite (suite 3). Their uses are unlikely to have been comparable. The succeeding Southwest Palace replicated Sargon's scheme (§6.2.6).

These changes coincided with the shift of the monumental core of the palace away from the Central Courtyard. The two suites most closely connected to the king, i.e. the Throneroom Suite and the King's Suite, remained, while the main State Apartments disappeared. The Central Courtyard became ever more centred on the king. Its status diminished over time. The same is likely to have been true for the status of the surrounding suites such as the Throneroom Suite and the King's Suite. As visitors no longer needed to pass through the Central Courtyard to visit the main reception suites, it became more sheltered even though it remained located in the centre of the palace.

### *11.5.3 The Main Reception Suites*

The main reception suites did not increase only in number, but also in size. Over time the single reception room seems to have become too limited. Rooms made of mudbrick and wood have a maximum width, albeit one that could easily reach monumental sizes of up to ten metres. However, they could not expand indefinitely. The Assyrian architects solved this problem by integrating reception rooms and by adding new ones. The increased size of the individual suites reached their high point in suite 5 of Sargon's Royal Palace (§5.3.9) and suite 6 of Sennacherib's Southwest Palace (§6.2.7).

Both the Double-sided Reception Suite and the Dual-Core Suite contained at least two reception rooms. The two reception rooms of the Double-sided

Reception Suite were separated, with each facing a different courtyard, but comparable in importance. The room between them gave access to supporting functions such as bathrooms and storage spaces. Over time this central room expanded in size and monumentality, turning the area into a tripartite suite with three more or less equally sized rooms.[28] The monumentalization of the central room integrated both sides and made the transition between them more incremental.

The advantages offered by the two-sidedness of the Double-sided Reception Suite seem to have fallen out of grace in the seventh century. The use of the Double-sided Reception Suite declined over time until it was replaced by smaller units in the Southwest Palace. The suite is no longer present in the Ninevite palaces of the seventh century.[29] The reason for this might be sought in the increased separation between the Throneroom Suite and the main reception suites of the palace. It was the Double-sided Reception Suite, and especially the internal reception room, that had provided this link. Such direct connection seems to have fallen out of favour as time progressed and the main reception suites of the palace came to be located at a greater distance from the throneroom. Without a direct connection, the internal reception room, and thus the two-sidedness of the suite, seems to have lost its rationale. The Dual-Core Suite, i.e. the main reception suite of the seventh century, was not two-sided.

The options to expand the capacity of the reception room provided by the Dual-Core Suites became the preferred solution in the seventh-century palaces. Rather than distributing the reception rooms along external façades, the Dual-Core Suites combined them into a single group, which was accessible only from one side. This core formed a single, albeit partitioned, space. One could describe the internal separating walls as oversized pillars. The suite was not turned into a true pillared space, but it does seem to represent an attempt to create a more unified area that went beyond the technical possibilities of wood, leading to suites that were more integrated.

The merging of two reception rooms into a single core differentiated the Dual-Core Suite from preceding versions such as the Double-sided Reception Suite. The Dual-Core Suite can nonetheless also be described as a logical rearrangement of the units present in the Double-sided Reception Suite. This rearrangement was necessitated by the one-sidedness of the new suites and the removal of the central room, which required access to the storage spaces and bathrooms to be organized

[28] e.g. rooms T25–7 of Kalḫu's Military Palace, suite 2 of Dur-Sharruken's Royal Palace, and rooms 16–18 of Dur-Sharruken's Military Palace.

[29] Its presence in the Military Palace of Nineveh cannot be excluded. Like the Dur-Sharruken palaces, which did contain a Double-sided Reception Suite, Nebi Yunus protrudes from the city wall suggesting the presence of a large palace terrace where such a suite could have been located.

differently. The general solution in the Dual-Core Suites was to place the central room to the side of the core. The type of spaces that needed to be traversed were comparable, with a large room (the former central room) giving access to the storage spaces and bathroom/vestibule combinations.

### *11.5.4 Hierarchies of Distance*

The most important spaces in a Late Assyrian royal palace were always placed to the forefront. This was true on the level of the suites, where the throneroom and King's Suite were, respectively, the first reception room and residential suite encountered when moving through the palace, and also within each individual suite. The main room of a suite was generally the first to be entered, functioning as a threshold into the suite.

The Double-sided Reception Suite possessed reception rooms on both sides. The simultaneous use of these rooms allowed hierarchies of distance to be established. Judging by their location one would assume that the internal reception room, which was less accessible, but directly connected to the Throneroom Suite, would have represented the more prestigious location. It was, however, the more easily accessible external reception room where a setting for a throne was made. It is feasible that the two rooms were used for different types of meeting, whereby the external reception room functioned as a secondary throneroom, while on other occasions both rooms were used in unison to accommodate larger groups, with the inner reception room being reserved for the more important participants.

The more integrated space created by the Dual-Core Suites did not function as a single room in the sense that one would have had an unobstructed view or access, but that need not have been the intention. The internal integration of spaces would have allowed for a hierarchical organization of space, well suited for turning distance into a status marker. In contrast to most other large reception rooms, most Dual-Core Suites lacked blank walls in front of which a throne could have been placed. This could reflect a lack of events where the king would have been seated on a throne. The suite could have been intended for banquets and other types of activity that did not require the placement of a throne in its common space. Alternatively, the Dual-Core Suite might represent a different way of organizing space entailing a different location for the king. The most likely alternative place for a throne is at the back of the suite, especially in the back room, if there was one. Such back rooms were highlighted by means of a monumentalized central axis that led towards them.

The back rooms could have functioned as the more exclusive place during banquets or other activities. Placing the king at the back of the suite would, however, have reversed the normal threshold significance of his location. A position that was further back does not otherwise seem to have signified status.

The first rooms tended to be the most monumental space, with monumentality decreasing towards the inside. In similar suites found in Babylonia and Elam, even more emphasis seems to have been placed on the central backroom.[30]

## 11.6 THE PALACE COMMUNITY

The palaces were not only the main centres of state, but also functioned as the residences of the royal family. The main residential area, at least in the royal palaces of Kalḫu and Assur, were argued to have clustered around a single courtyard, which has been called the Royal Courtyard throughout this book. The number of unknown spaces, especially in the inner parts of the palaces in Dur-Sharruken and Nineveh, leaves room to argue for a larger palace community. This is, however, an architectural *argumentum e silentio*. None of the discussed palaces seem to be designed to accommodate a large residential community. The number of Residential/Reception Suites is usually limited, but probably enough to accommodate the members of the royal family. Harems, i.e. locations where numerous women could have resided, cannot be identified.[31]

As axiality, symmetry, and permeability came to pervade most suites of the seventh century, it becomes more difficult to distinguish which of them could have been intended for residential purposes. The small Dual-Core Suite in the North Palace (rooms F–I) could, for instance, also represent a slightly more symmetrically organized Residential/Reception Suite (§8.2.6).[32] The suites west of the main courtyards in the Lower Town Palace in Nineveh (§7.3) and the palace in Tarbiṣu are even more difficult to interpret. Though the differences decreased over time, the Residential/Reception Suite remained typified by the absence of a complete alignment and permeability of its main inner spaces.

### *11.6.1 The Primary Palaces*

The main Residential/Reception Suites of the Northwest Palace were concentrated around the Royal Courtyard and oriented towards the main reception suites.

[30] See e.g. Roaf 1973: figs. 10–11. The correlation between some of these suites and Elamite and Babylonian architecture have been drawn by both Turner (1998: 30) and Roaf (1973). What Roaf called 'salle à quatre saillants' after Ghirshman, should not in the Late Assyrian context be seen to represent an autonomous type, but forms part of the increased monumentality, integration, and elaborateness of the interior.

[31] For a counter-argument see Parpola 2012.

[32] Such more permeable organization was already visible in the Residential/Reception Suites of Sargon's Royal (rooms 13–14) and Military Palace (rooms 5–8, 12) and in the Residential/Reception Suites of the Tarbiṣu palace (Pl. 23b). These added a second entrance to the internal room or aligned the inner door with those from the outside. None of these suites fully aligned their internal doors with the external ones.

The palace contained only a few living spaces, suggesting that the palace community was relatively small. If one should want to reconstruct a larger palace community one would have to accommodate it in the southern part of the palace. Such reconstruction seems problematic. Most southern residences would have lacked bathrooms, which appear to have been omnipresent otherwise. Its residents would, moreover, have been surrounded by any other non-residential activity taking place in the southern area. If the entire southern area was residential the palace would have had no service area. Lastly, the southern part is very poorly connected to the Royal Courtyard. Its residents would have had trouble getting to the king and vice versa. The connections between the southern and central area of the palace are few and this must have been intentional.

While Sargon's Royal Palace is much larger than the Northwest Palace, its increased size was mostly due to the addition of monumental suites and service functions. The size of the palace proper was comparable to the Northwest Palace. The number and size of its residential spaces are thus unlikely to have increased significantly. The size of the palace community depends on the reconstruction of the non-monumental areas of the western quadrant (§5.3.10). With the entire eastern quadrant being occupied by service functions one might argue that the western area would have had more space for residential purposes as compared to the Northwest Palace. This is certainly feasible and the non-monumental areas of the western quadrant could have accommodated a large number of residents. Here, another reconstruction is preferred. Even though it cannot be substantiated, it would seem likely that some functions would have been located closer to the monumental part of the palace. Most of the eastern quadrant was oriented towards the Entrance Courtyard and possessed no direct connections with the palace proper. The western quadrant would have provided more security for such delicate functions as cooking, storing the king's food, and preparing for the ceremonies that took place within the palace. The quadrant is also likely to have accommodated at least some palace officials with their offices. Lastly, the areas located next to the Entrance Courtyard seem less ideal for living quarters.

The northern area of the Southwest Palace in Nineveh seems much larger than the service areas of the Northwest Palace in Kalḫu and the Royal Palace in Dur-Sharruken. The northern part of the Southwest Palace is, however, likely to have contained storage functions, similar to the 'wine storage' and the treasuries of Sargon's palace. Additional monumental suites surrounding courtyard 64 would have decreased the available space even further. Though the northern area must have been considerable, it does not seem to have been exceptionally large and is unlikely to have contained large residential quarters.

dormitories. It is certainly feasible that most palaces accommodated no more than fifty people each. This assumes that at least some officials resided in the palaces as well. The more important officials will certainly have possessed their own residences where they could welcome and entertain visitors, but certain types of officials must have been present at any time. It is certainly feasible that some of the lower-ranking officials had to accept much more meagre sleeping conditions while working in the palace.

The number of people working in the palaces would have been much higher than the number of residences. It is easily imagined that each palace would have contained up to a hundred workers, including guards, cooks, servants, and administrative personnel. The palace will have been much busier than the number of residents would suggest.

## 11.7 TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS OF LATE ASSYRIAN PALACES

Our emissaries could have visited all three primary palaces of the Late Assyrian Empire in their lifetimes. They would have been able to gauge the differences in protocol and courtly life accompanying the architectural changes discussed in this book. We, unfortunately, are much less able to do so. The correlation between changes in architecture and protocol is unlikely to have been straightforward. Changes in protocol will have been more incremental and frequent than the longevity of the Northwest and Southwest Palaces implies. Most changes in court activity will not have been accompanied by large-scale reconstructions. This reflects the flexibility of the palaces, which were able to accommodate changes in protocol, but also the conservative nature of palace activity and a taboo on changing the work of one's forebear. This taboo is most visible in the reluctance of kings to replace the original reliefs with their own successes. Most kings, even some of the militarily most successful ones, acted within the setting made by the founder of the palace.[34] The continued use of the primary palaces suggests that this was not seen as diminishing the status of the reigning king.

The architecture of the Late Assyrian royal palaces argues that they were occupied by an active royal family. It placed the king front and centre, but bundled movement in such ways that its spaces were easy to control. Even the more residential spaces were foremost set up for formal activity and were flexible in their accessibility. No royal palace was the same, but all were organized through

[34] The pillaging of the Northwest Palace occurred only after the palace had lost its status as a primary palace.

APPENDIX

# Room designations of the Northwest Palace not present on published plans

| Room name | Bibliography | Description |
|---|---|---|
| ZT 18 | Mallowan 1954b: 124 | North of room ZT 19. Contrary to the report of 1952 in which only Room ZT 19 was located in this area (Mallowan 1953b: 30). |
| ZT 23 | Mallowan 1953b: 37 | Western part of room ZT 22. |
| ZT 29 | Mallowan 1954b: 126 | East of ZT 27. |
| CC | | Location unknown. |
| EE = VV | Field notebook 7 of the Nimrud expedition | |
| GG = NN | Field notebook 7 of the Nimrud expedition | |
| II | Field notebook 2 of the Nimrud expedition | A long trench in the north-eastern corner of Mallowan's excavations, but its location is not specified. |
| KK | Field notebook 2 of the Nimrud expedition | Location is close to corridor P and was later separated in two after a wall was found running east–west. It might therefore represent the area that is called AO in this book, but has no known name. |
| LL | | No information found, location unknown. |
| PP | | No information found, location unknown. |
| RR | Field notebook 7 of the Nimrud expedition | Located next to room QQ, probably originally representing the northern part of room ZZ. |
| UU | | No information found, location unknown. |
| WW | | No information found, location unknown. |
| XX | Reade 2002: 195 | First assigned to the northern part of room ZZ. |
| AB | Field notebook 2 of the Nimrud expedition | Even though Layard already designated a room by this name, its name was re-used twice by Mallowan. First to designate the southern part of what is now known as courtyard NN and later the room between MM and AD(e). |

(*continued*)

| Room name | Bibliography | Description |
|---|---|---|
| AC | Field notebooks 2 and 8 of the Nimrud expedition | Field notebook 8 mentions AC in a list of rooms (MM, ZZ, AB, AD, XX and NN). Its location must be looked for in this area, but remains unknown. Field notebook 2 describes AC as a southern wall. |
| AD(e) | Field notebook 2 of the Nimrud expedition | |
| AD(w) | Field notebook 2 of the Nimrud expedition | |
| AE | Field notebook 2 of the Nimrud expedition | Published as part of courtyard AJ, but first assigned to what would become AD(w). |
| AH | Mallowan 1966: 120 | |
| AI = AK | Field notebook 12 of the Nimrud expedition | |
| AL = 43 | Field notebook 12 of the Nimrud expedition | |
| AM = TT | Field notebook 3 of the Nimrud expedition | |

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*room numbers are set in italics to distinguish them from the page numbers

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