

PART 1

PALACES OF THE ANCIENT
NEAR EAST AND
THE LATE-ANTIQUÉ
MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

“SEAT OF KINGSHIP”/“A WONDER TO BEHOLD”: THE PALACE AS CONSTRUCT IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

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By folk definition, the palace is where the ruler resides. In the successive kingdoms of ancient Mesopotamia, however—Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian, Assyrian—the palace was the seat of many activities: administrative, bureaucratic, industrial, and ceremonial as well as residential. In brief, it was an “institution,” not just a “residence”; part of the state apparatus, not merely a container of state apartments.

The word for palace in Sumerian and Akkadian, the languages of ancient Mesopotamia, is composed of the Sumerian sign for “house” followed by the adjective “large, great” (é.gal).¹ The Akkadian borrowing is not a literal translation (where Akkadian “house” = *bītu* and “large” = *rabû*), but rather is formed from the Sumerian (*ekallu*), emphasizing the composite term as its own cognitive category. At base, the underlying adjective denotes scale, but may also be seen to reflect elevated (enlarged) status and function, such that a more accurate translation might be “the Great House,” as opposed to merely “the big house.”²

In a Mesopotamian gloss, preserved in the year-name of an Old Babylonian ruler of the eighteenth century B.C. and written in Sumerian, a palace the king has just constructed for his highest administrative official is referred to as worthy of being “the seat of his own kingship” (*ki-tuš nam-lugal-la-na*), while a slightly earlier hymn in Sumerian speaks in the voice of a ruler, who describes how the foundations of his rule were made strong “in the palace of kingship, in my pure, good seat” (é.gal-nam-lugal-la-ki-tuš-kù-du₁₀-ga-gá).³ These two references imply far more extended functions for a royal palace than merely the royal residence; the use of the abstract noun, “kingship,” suggests that the palace is the center from which rule is exercised and in which the state is run.

I hope to demonstrate here that issues of morphology and decorative program are tied to this extended function. Were the collection of essays in this volume and the conference it preserves devoted to the palace in the ancient Near East, contributors would each be taking a particular region, period, function, or form—as has been

done in the Islamic contributions that follow. Instead, I will attempt to cover a comparable sub-field within a single paper. The service an overview of the ancient Near East can provide for Islamicists, whose areas of interest coincide in large measure with the major geographical units of the ancient Near East, is to offer a relatively broad survey of trends and a relatively detailed bibliography (see Appendix). This will permit a perspective on continuity and change across historical, cultural, and religious divides, and also the possibility of pursuing particular aspects through further reading. The highlighting of selected examples and aspects of ancient Near Eastern palaces will lay the foundations for inquiry into whether or not there are areas of significant overlap in the pre-Islamic and Islamic Near East, and I hope stimulate others to seek further continuities and observe meaningful changes as particular interests arise.

Regional divisions of the ancient Near East were no less distinctive in ethnic, linguistic, and cultural character than those in later, Islamic periods. The multiple functions of a Mesopotamian palace are thus not necessarily characteristic of royal residences in the neighboring city-states of northern Syria and southeast Anatolia, even though they were also referred to as *ekallu*.⁴ These “palaces” were considerably smaller in scale than their Assyrian and Babylonian counterparts, had their own characteristic forms, and do seem to have been simply residences. In an interesting turn-around, when the Assyrian rulers of the first millennium B.C. adopted and adapted that Western form, they did not also call it a palace—presumably on the principle that you cannot call two different things by the same name—and so coined a special term, *bit-hilāni* (on which, see below), in order to distinguish it from their own larger complexes. Wherever possible, I shall refer to these regional differences, particularly with respect to Anatolia and Syria-Palestine; but for purposes of time and space will leave out significant aspects of ancient Egypt, on the one hand, and ancient Iran, on the other. Throughout, I shall concentrate mainly on the Mesopotamian sequence—the most complete and perhaps also

the most developed we have for the ancient Near East.

In selected examples of palaces from the Uruk period to the Neo-Babylonian (from ca. 4000 to ca. 500 B.C.), focus will be on the three aspects referred to above: form and space, including technology; decorative program; and function. At the same time, the reader is referred to several recent specialized studies that present far more detailed descriptions, analyses, and illustrations than are possible here.⁵

As is the case for much of the pre-modern Islamic world, the direct information we have about the ancient Near Eastern palace comes largely from often incomplete archaeological remains, amplified by textual reference. Unlike Islam, however, there is no living tradition—hence no contemporary practitioners or constructions to aid in interpretation or reconstruction. Our popular impressions of the pre-Islamic palace come from biblical references, on the one hand (as, for example, the description of Solomon's palace in Jerusalem that follows the account of his temple, I Kings 7:1–12), and from British watercolor reconstructions of Assyrian palaces at Nimrud and Nineveh following excavations in the mid-nineteenth century, on the other.

In the latter, we see splendid, multi-storied structures, elaborately decorated. Because the ground plans and ground-floor sculptures were based upon excavated remains, they are generally reliable; however the rest of the elevation is largely invention: oftentimes a hodge-podge copied from other known ruins, such as Persepolis in Iran.⁶ It is also striking when one compares the restoration drawings of Nimrud and Nineveh, how very much they resemble the drawings done for the restoration of the façade of Buckingham Palace in the 1820s! One is forced to conclude that the draftsmen responsible for the Assyrian watercolors were themselves “(re-)constructing” palaces according to their own contemporary desires and imagination—in particular an imagination that saw the Assyrian “empire” in the mirror of the then contemporary British empire.

The account of Solomon's palace does contain a good deal of useful information: from his lavish use of cedar in construction (7:3), to the presence of three rows of windows, suggesting multi-story façades (7:4), the relationship between portico, where the king sits in judgment, and inner courtyard (7:7), and the separate residence for his wife, pharaoh's daughter (7:8).

This information has not received much attention, largely because, as is also the case with Islamic research, scholars have concentrated mainly on religious areas and buildings. Yet, not only for the Solomonic period but throughout the ancient Near Eastern sequence, to establish a new state, or capital, both a temple to the primary deity *and* a palace had to be constructed.

The Uruk Period (ca. 4000–3000 B.C.), in which the early stages of a complex social hierarchy and large-scale urbanization have been observed, is a logical starting point for examining the Mesopotamian palace.⁷ However, at the type-site of Uruk/Warka on the lower Euphrates, although archaeologists have recovered a large complex of buildings identified as temples, with characteristic tripartite plan, bent axis approach in the cella, altar, and podium,⁸ nothing clearly recognizable as a palace has yet been discovered. One anomalous structure has been excavated in the sacred (Eanna) precinct, levels V–IVa; known as building 11 or “Palace E,” it is square in plan, with a large central courtyard surrounded by banks of rooms (resembling more than anything the later Islamic four-iwan building type with very shallow iwans; see fig. 1).⁹ The plan is clearly distinct from that of a temple, so the building has been suggested as a possible palace. The problem is that we have no corroborating textual evidence for the building, nor even for the existence in the early texts of a title that clearly designates a ruler; so the building could well house “administrative” activities and still be related to the religious complex.¹⁰ How the Mesopotamian state and a designated ruler emerged is far too complex to discuss here, although most scholars agree that some sort of hierarchical organization in governance must have been operative in the Uruk period. At the same time, since archaeological work at the site of Warka has concentrated on the sacred quarter, it is certainly possible that a palace exists in unexcavated areas. Only further fieldwork can help to determine whether we are faced with an accidental absence in the archaeological record, or a meaningful absence in the historical record.¹¹

The first buildings to be clearly identified as palaces date from the third phase of the Early Dynastic Period (ca. 2600–2430 B.C.), and coincide with the earliest textual evidence for titles denoting rule: Sumerian **lugal**, “king,” and **ensi**, “steward” or “governor,” a regional title equivalent to king in the hierarchy of governance. The best (and earliest) archaeological evidence comes

from Kish, the legendary city where kingship as an institution is said to have "descended from heaven."¹² Although there seems to be a great deal of variation in overall plan, the two buildings designated as palaces contain a large number of rooms of differing size and shape, suggesting many functions, and all seem to share what is later a defining characteristic of palaces in Mesopotamia—a large central courtyard.¹³ Since this is a period in which autonomous city-states were distributed across the Mesopotamian alluvium, it is to be anticipated that each central city would have had its own palace, however incomplete the present evidence.

In the succeeding, Akkadian period (ca. 2334–2154 B.C.), political development within the period marks a significant change toward a centralized nation-state, incorporating formerly autonomous city-states within a single polity under the hegemony of Agade. Unfortunately, the capital of Agade has not been definitively identified or excavated. A number of other sites have produced large buildings dated to the Akkadian period and identified as palaces (e.g., Khafaje, Tell Asmar, Tell al-Wilayah, possibly Assur), all of which have features in common: at least one central court, perimeter walls with a primary entrance, evidence of residential use together with other activities.¹⁴ The most complete palace plan preserved is that at Tell Brak, a site in the Habur region of northern Mesopotamia.¹⁵ The building is identified through bricks stamped with the name of Naram Sin, king of Agade (2254–2218 B.C.). As reconstructed, it is essentially square, ca. 80 meters a side, but incomplete to the south and southwest, and known only from foundations. Nevertheless, features preserved are common to other palaces: massive perimeter walls; single, monumental entrance on axis with large courtyard, surrounded by rooms; and at least three additional, smaller courtyards also flanked by banks of rooms (fig. 2).¹⁶ However, since Brak is a site at the very northern periphery of Akkadian political influence, this building is probably more a fortress-cum-governor's-palace/provincial administrative center than a royal seat. If we expand our definition of palace to include not only residences associated with the exercise of power by the highest *absolute* authority, but also by the highest *local* authority in any given political structure, then provincial governors and dependent local princes can certainly also occupy "palaces." Indeed, the Old Babylonian year-name cited above, which referred to the residence of a

high-ranking official as a palace [é.gal], suggests that the extended administrative functions performed in such a building may be the most operative variable in defining the term, which should then be applicable to more than the *royal* seat, even within the capital.¹⁷ In any case, while the Brak building may well be called a palace, it is conceivable that the Akkadian kings' palace(s) back in Agade would have been larger, perhaps less regular, the exterior walls perhaps less massive, and might well have contained a greater variety of room types, correlated with a wider range of activities. In short, it is not clear that one can generalize from this plan to the capital, or for the period as a whole.

The recently excavated site of Tell Mardikh (ancient Ebla) in North Syria provides us with further evidence that palaces of this period (roughly the late Early Dynastic/early Akkadian period) were not merely residences, great houses of local hierarchical rulers, but were also centers of political and administrative activity. In the royal palace of level IIB1 were found hundreds of cuneiform tablets the contents of which range from treaties with foreign rulers to daily economic records, all carefully stored on shelves and in baskets within specially designated archives.¹⁸ While no extant southern Mesopotamian palace has produced such archives, this is likely to be a result of the palaces having been cleaned out and often razed to their foundations to permit subsequent building. The demonstrated epigraphical relationship between the Ebla tablets and texts found in non-palatial contexts in Mesopotamia, in conjunction with known political and military events that link the two regions, allows us to posit the existence of similar palace archives in contemporary and even earlier Sumerian and Akkadian palaces as well.¹⁹ That the practice continues into the early second millennium is evident from the accumulated tablets and sealings found in the palace at Tell Leilan in the Habur region of North Syria, the contents of which attest to a broad network of communications between related polities of the Old Babylonian/Old Assyrian period.²⁰

Happily, a relatively well-preserved palace has been excavated at Mari on the middle Euphrates, which was apparently in use over a number of reigns from the late Ur III/Isin-Larsa to the early Old Babylonian period (ca. 2000–1758 B.C.). It is in this palace, consisting of some three hundred rooms and courts, that all of the spatial configurations plus decorative schemes and

administrative functions that characterize later Assyrian and Babylonian palaces can be observed as part of a coherent complex of features.²¹ Clearly recognizable is the primary entrance into a large paved courtyard, with subsidiary rooms ranged around that space and an additional, smaller inner court (see plan, fig. 3). While not all scholars agree on the functions attributed to specific rooms or areas of the palace,²² there is no doubt that ovens and food-storage features indicate the residential nature of the building. Indeed, a small group of cuneiform tablets found in the northwest wing of the palace attest to the delivery of delicacies for visiting dignitaries.²³ When that evidence is seen in conjunction with the later Assyrian administrative texts known as the Nimrud Wine Lists, it is clear that at any given moment the palace household included large numbers of individuals—members of the royal family, high court officials, eunuchs, guards, workers, and visitors—all of whom were being fed and provisioned from palace stores.²⁴ In addition, a vast collection of administrative texts has been preserved in rooms around the outer court. The range of subjects covered by these texts makes it clear that the palace was engaged in administering the king's own estates and production industries, as well as affairs of state.²⁵

The Mari palace also preserves for us the first appearance of a particular constellation of formal reception suites well known from palaces in later periods. At Mari, the reception suite is set parallel to the northern end of the inner court (see fig. 3, court 106 and rooms 64 and 65). A central doorway connects the first room to the courtyard. There is evidence of a podium on the south wall opposite that central door. The podium was plastered and whitewashed, giving it special prominence, and could have been used either as a base for a statue, or, more likely, as a platform for the throne of the ruler himself, for those occasions that called for him to be in full view, and with a full view of the courtyard. The inner room included a second podium on the short, west wall, which then faced down the length of the room toward an elevated niche that, it has been suggested, may have contained an image of the local goddess, Ishtar. Identical suites, with the innermost room being the formal throne room and a throne base preserved along a short wall, are also to be found in Assyrian palaces of the first millennium (see below). What is more, evidence of a developed program of decoration in wall paintings is preserved at Mari that also

echoes the decorative programs of later Assyrian palaces.

In the Mari palace, two sets of wall paintings were found fallen from the northern wall of court 106 that gives access to the throne-room suite.²⁶ One set preserves what is likely to be a royal figure attendant upon a sacrifice; the other what seems to be a scene of investiture of a ruler, identifiable by his headgear and garment, by the goddess Ishtar, within an elaborate setting of trees and plants (see detail, fig. 4). This last scene was placed on the façade just to the right of the doorway entering the throne-room suite, and al-Khalesi has suggested that the space depicted in the painting in fact replicates the physical space of the inner throne room. Especially if this is so, but even if the iconography merely asserts the special selection of the ruler by the goddess in general terms, the presence of the "investiture" painting suggests that the façade of the throne-room complex serves as an important conveyance for statements of royal rhetoric and state ideology—a pattern we will see in both Assyrian and later Babylonian palaces.

A third set of paintings comes from room 132, a small chamber opposite the main entrance off the large court 131. The floor level of this chamber is raised slightly and the entrance emphasized by concentric semicircular steps that jut out into the courtyard. This special focus, in combination with the fact that the imagery includes the figure of a ruler pouring libations before a seated deity, has led to suggestions that the chamber is a small chapel. I find such a suggestion persuasive, particularly as both textual and other archaeological evidence attest to the presence of ritual spaces in other palaces.²⁷ In Hittite Anatolia as well, the king and queen were expected to perform certain ritual acts daily, and Güterbock has adduced the likelihood of a sanctuary as a regular feature of the palace.²⁸ A ritual function has also been attributed to certain suites within the Assyrian palace of Assurnasirpal at Nimrud;²⁹ and in historical times, the association of a royal chapel with the palace is certainly well known. The Mari palace thus adds evidence for an important religious component to supplement the various aspects of the Mesopotamian complex.

Most recently, Margueron et al. and Pierre-Muller have published an additional series of paintings, unfortunately fragmentary, that apparently decorated a reception suite in a second story in the southeast wing of the same palace (above areas E, F, and room 120 on the plan, fig.

3).³⁰ Its fragmentary nature and the difficulty of reconstruction notwithstanding, this group of paintings is extraordinary for containing in its repertory a number of motifs—ruler in combat with a lion, ruler victorious over a fallen enemy, and ruler receiving some delegation of approaching individuals—that find direct counterparts in the more complete decorative programs of later Assyrian palace reliefs. This implies an iconography of rule associated with palace decoration in use over at least a thousand-year period. Furthermore, the presence of a second story that includes a reception space fits well with both the Solomonic description cited above and later textual and pictorial evidence. In particular, in the eleventh-century B.C. Egyptian text of Wenamun, the Egyptian envoy who visits Byblos on the Mediterranean coast is received by the local prince in the upper chambers of his palace, from the windows of which one could see the sea.³¹ Both the texts and this new evidence from Mari suggest that we may be missing quite essential parts of Near Eastern palaces known only from ground floors or foundations, and we should therefore not try to distribute all palatial functions across the ground-floor plan as if that were the entirety of the building.

Recent analyses of wall construction at Mari suggest several rebuildings and a long period of use before Mari was conquered by Hammurabi of Babylon in his thirty-fourth year (ca. 1758 B.C.); Moortgat had earlier argued that the wall paintings in the palace reflected different phases as well.³² This raises an additional caution for the scholar, for, while it is important to emphasize the degree of continuity that exists from the second into the early first millennium B.C. with respect to some aspects of spatial configuration, decoration, and function, it is also the case that we cannot assume each palace represents a single, coherent program. It is only in the Neo-Assyrian period that we have a sufficient number of examples and degree of preservation to attempt fuller readings of attitudes toward rule and to assess experiences of authority—what I have called elsewhere “royal rhetoric”—as articulated in palace construction and decoration.

During the early second millennium B.C., the region around the upper Tigris, near modern Mosul, had established its political independence from the south. In the early first millennium, this area constituted the heartland of Assyria, from which, in a series of military maneuvers over a period of some three hundred years, the state

expanded its territory until it reached from the Zagros in the east to the Mediterranean in the west, and from the Taurus in the north to Babylon and Egypt in the south and southwest. Over this period, virtually every successive ruler initiated the construction of a new palace, as the capital shifted from Assur to Nimrud, to Khorsabad, and finally to Nineveh. Although there are no explanations for these shifts in the several preserved Assyrian royal inscriptions, they have been understood as a function of statecraft.³³ As with Solomon in Jerusalem, a new ruler established the authority of his reign in part through palace and other building campaigns.

The complete circuit of city walls has been traced at Nimrud and at Khorsabad, with enough preserved at Nineveh to suggest that a similar pattern prevailed (fig. 5). Essentially, rectilinear enclosure walls pierced by gates in all directions surrounded large areas. Set into and sometimes breaking the line of the exterior wall were two types of construction, often at different ends of the city: a raised citadel containing royal palace(s) and temples, and a building known in Akkadian/Assyrian as an *ekal-māšarti*, a fortified palace, or arsenal, based on the general plan of a residential palace, but often larger in scale and with a simpler distribution of rooms around each courtyard.³⁴

The consistency of the Assyrian pattern highlights the difference from neighboring first-millennium citadels. In the Assyrian case, the royal palace and citadel are set into the rectangular perimeter wall, often overlooking a distinctive natural feature in the landscape, like a river; in the capital cities of the principalities of North Syria and southeast Anatolia to the west, as in the kingdom of Sam'al at Zincirli, the pattern is rather to contain the citadel and palace at the center, a round perimeter wall more or less equidistant at all points from the citadel enclosing the lower town.³⁵ In all cases, the citadels are raised, and access is limited via controlled routes and gates, in a way similar to later Islamic practice in the Near East. The royal palaces of the ancient Near East are also themselves frequently set on raised platforms, so that a continuous sequence of physical elevations may be read as progressive elevations in status.³⁶

In the case of building techniques and materials, a combination of environmental factors plus wealth, labor force, and extension of trade network conspires to dictate materials and methods, which present significant regional variation.

Throughout Mesopotamian history, the primary building material was mud brick—making use of the most abundant natural resource in a region of virtually no stone or construction-size wood. At Zincirli, set in the foothills of the amply wooded Amanus mountains, stone foundations are overlaid with walls that combine wooden beams and brick. On the Anatolian plateau to the northwest, stone construction was common. In Assyria, brick was used for bearing structural loads; however, proximity to sources of stone and wood allowed rulers under the influence of the west and northwest to introduce stone revetments and orthostat slabs as decorative skins on the walls of their public buildings, and to employ a variety of precious woods as well. From the Middle Assyrian Period (second half of the second millennium B.C.) through the Neo-Assyrian Period (first half of the first millennium B.C.), kings describe in display texts the lavish construction materials assembled for their palaces and, in the later phase, actually depict on palace reliefs the cutting of wood and quarrying of stone blocks for sculpture.³⁷

Limited by the preservation of buildings, we are reduced to reconstructing façades, lighting, and roofing methods from the occasional ancient representations of architecture, in monumental scale on palace reliefs or in miniature on cylinder seals.³⁸ From these images it would seem that massive exterior walls with niched façades and crenellated tops were prevalent at least from the mid second millennium. And, although post-and-lintel construction was likely to have been the principal way of spanning space and bearing weight, there is again evidence for vaulting in palaces from the same period.³⁹ At Khorsabad, both complete barrel vaults and intact arches over major entries were well preserved, as was arched wall construction in the so-called Governor's Palace at Nimrud.⁴⁰ All of this suggests that while the antecedents of Islamic construction may be found most immediately in the great arches of the Sasanian period at sites like Ctesiphon, the beginnings of that tradition may have reached considerably farther back into antiquity than is generally acknowledged. Indeed, I should not be at all surprised if one day we find evidence of simple dome construction in the ancient Near East as well!

Great attention was paid in the Assyrian palaces to the scale and decoration of major gateways and entrances, including threshold inscriptions and the colossal human-headed bulls and lions that

flanked principal doors (fig. 6).⁴¹ It is not clear whether these great stone colossi actually carried the weight of doorway arches, or, like the orthostats, simply lined the walls; but their iconography is one of menace and protection. The placement of monumental stone sculpture at doorways seems to have been borrowed by the Assyrians from the West—where gateway lions and sphinxes are known from second-millennium Hittite sites on the Anatolian plateau, and then later, from first-millennium Neo-Hittite citadels, like Zincirli, with which the Assyrians came into contact during the ninth-century military campaigns in the area.⁴²

The larger lesson to be learned from interactions of this sort, which must surely be relevant for subsequent periods as well, is that in some aspects of architectural practice, like the shapes of perimeter walls and placement of elite citadels, neighboring states may, despite contact, remain distinct; however, in other aspects, like building techniques, materials, or decorative schemes, they may change once contact is established. In the case of Assyria and the West, Assyrian palace construction owes a good deal to foreign contact. In the case of Assyria and the East, by contrast—as seen at the site of Hasanlu in northwest Iran, exposed to Assyrian contact around the same time—we see the converse: Assyrian elements were adopted, as illustrated by the addition of glazed plaques and new porticoes to embellish local building façades.⁴³ In this latter case, it would seem that there was a desire to emulate practices associated with the major political force in the region. In the case of the Assyrian adaptation of Western elements, there may also have been some positive charge associated with the incorporation (appropriation?) of a highly developed tradition just as the Assyrian polity was expanding.

In later historical periods, it is possible to document the spread of new techniques and modes of construction as part of the general dissemination of architectural knowledge and practice. While this is not possible for the ancient Near East, I do wish to underscore the importance of seeking to distinguish between transmission of knowledge as part of practice and culturally charged borrowings that carry with them coordinates of reference and meaning. Furthermore, I would stress the fact that regionally distinct traditions in morphology and decoration are not fixed, but rather, within the constraints of resources and cultural practice, can respond to historical/political exigencies.

The earliest of the relatively well-preserved Neo-Assyrian palaces, the Northwest Palace of Assurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.) at Nimrud, sits on the western edge of the citadel, overlooking the Tigris. Although many rooms of the western sector have been eroded away, the basic configuration of the ground plan can be read (see fig. 7). Typical of most Neo-Assyrian palaces, it conforms to the basic type established by the palace at Mari, in which space is divided into two main sectors organized around an outer and an inner courtyard.⁴⁴

Dividing the two courts on an east-west axis is the throne-room suite of two long rooms, one with a throne base preserved *in situ* (cf. room B on plan). Primary access to the throne room is via the large outer courtyard, where monumental pylons with flanking door guardians mark the entrance. This entrance is on the long, north wall, necessitating a 90-degree turn to face the throne on the short, east wall. The pattern of access and layout is one seen already in the palace at Mari, and is repeated in the reception/throne-room suites of all of the major Assyrian palaces.⁴⁵ Oppenheim suggested that this represents a conscious modeling of the royal audience chamber upon the bent-axis plan of the early Sumerian sanctuary, in effect sanctifying the ruler without formally deifying him.⁴⁶ In any case, the ruler is not on axis with, or visible from, the outer court, as he would have been in the anteroom at Mari, and as was traditionally the case in the straight-axis throne rooms of the later Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods, where the king was seated opposite the main door (for example, in the Southern Palace of Nebuchadnezzar II in Babylon, fig. 8).⁴⁷ These traditions of visibility and sight-lines, both of and by the ruler, can become significant indicators of cultural and national attitudes toward authority and the person of the ruler, and analysis of patterns thereby goes beyond description toward the reconstruction of experience within the built environment, as Islamicist Eric Schroeder called for nearly forty years ago,⁴⁸ and as Gülru Necipoğlu pursues in her paper here.

Subsequent Assyrian rulers also built palaces on the citadel at Nimrud, but the remains are too fragmentary to read the complete plans. When Sargon II (721–705 B.C.) decided to shift the capital to Khorsabad, he constructed the citadel in such a way that his palace and attached temples were the only buildings at the highest level, with subsidiary palaces and administrative buildings

in a separate, lower enclosure (see reconstruction of the citadel, fig. 9, and plan of the palace, fig. 10). Sargon preserved the organizational principle of two main courtyards; however, his throne room (room VII on plan) is no longer between the two courts, but rather is set longitudinally along the southwestern wall of the inner court. Nevertheless, the configuration of the throne-room reception suite remains constant, as it did throughout the Neo-Assyrian period.⁴⁹

As noted at the beginning, a very different sort of royal palace is found in contemporary Neo-Hittite and Aramaean sites to the west of Assyria. Here, small self-contained structures are marked by columned-portico entrances into banks of lateral rooms, often with service rooms at one or both ends (for example, Hilani III at Zincirli, fig. 11). They either stand independently or are grouped around enclosed courts (as in the “Upper Hilani” complex at Zincirli).⁵⁰ The columned portico and limited size are characteristic of royal buildings in Syria and Palestine from at least the mid second millennium onwards. While the polities they represent are considerably smaller than the large urban states of Babylonia and Assyria, the reduced size of the Syro-Palestinian palaces is not merely proportional to their population or territory. Even considering that they may well have stood several stories high, on the model of Mari and the Wenamun text cited above,⁵¹ the limited number and type of rooms and spaces suggest that they could not have served as many and diverse functions or constituents as an Assyrian palace.

It is presumably this smaller type of royal palace to which the Assyrian ruler, Tiglath Pileser III (744–727 B.C.) referred when he declared that he had constructed a palace in the western manner, which he called a *bīt-hilāni*. Sargon II also claims to have constructed such a building at Khorsabad. The literature on this building type in Assyria is long,⁵² and I shall refer to it only briefly here; but I believe it may have ramifications for the later development of the iwan in the Islamic architectural tradition, as well as serving as an important historical case of cultural borrowing.

Scholars have debated just where Sargon’s *bīt-hilāni* might have been located and how its principal features might be recognized. The most salient feature of the plan of known western palaces, the columned portico, has been the marker sought by most scholars, largely because it is observable on the ground! It is this feature that connects the building type to the iwan: and

when, as at Zincirli, several buildings are grouped around one court, we may in fact see antecedents for the three- or four-*iwan* building.⁵³ However, it is possible that the term *hilāni* could be related to modern Hebrew and ancient Ugaritic *hln*, “window,” and may therefore actually be identified less by its columns than by a multistoried façade with windows, such as is described in I Kings 7 for the palace of Solomon and as has been reconstructed at Mari, with perhaps the second-story overhang supported by a columned portico. In such a case, the *bīt-hilāni* may not always reflect a separate building, but rather a suite or complex incorporated in the main palace.

One possibility for the Assyrian *bīt-hilāni* is that the building was not in the city or on the citadel at all, but rather was located in some landscaped area outside the walls, as is depicted in a hunting park on one of Sargon’s reliefs (fig. 12) and on a relief of Assurbanipal from room H of his North Palace at Nineveh, where small pavilions with columned porticoes stand amid trees and water-courses.⁵⁴ A second candidate for the *bīt-hilāni* at Khorsabad is a small, free-standing structure (often labeled a temple, but on no solid evidence) that is set on the western corner of the citadel (see plan, fig. 10). Yet another possibility is that the attached suite of rooms at the northwestern end of the royal palace, which extends out beyond the line of the city wall, constituted a specially designated wing (= rooms 1–8 on plan, fig. 10).

A clue to the character of the structure may be contained in Tiglath Pileser’s description of the building as built “for his pleasure,” that is, despite the formulaic nature of this phrase, which is used by several kings, one is led to think of the structure, free-standing or attached, as distinct from the official apartments and reception areas. This would apply to all of the three possibilities noted above. Along with the separate building on the citadel and the park pavilion, the attached suite of rooms at Khorsabad would lend itself well to repose. The northwest edge of the citadel looks out over the course of the river Khosr, thereby providing both view and fresh air. Sargon tells us that he laid out a landscaped park at Khorsabad, the siting of which would most appropriately be beyond the city to the northwest. In addition, the orientation of room 7 is such that its doorway is aligned with that of room 4, to look out to the northwest; and it is precisely in the reliefs of room 7 that we see banquet scenes and an elaborate frieze of the king’s hunters in a park. Moreover, the trees and river that are represented in the

hunting park conform to Sargon’s description of the park he created, which he tells us explicitly was modeled on a *western* landscape. How better to enjoy the park than in a western-style structure?

However the *bīt-hilāni* in its original or borrowed form may be identified in future, its association with leisure and park land introduces the connection of gardens and purposeful landscaping to Assyrian palaces. This is attested by the Middle Assyrian period, when Tiglath Pileser I records taking both hardwood and fruit trees “from the lands over which I had gained dominion,” and filling the orchards of Assyria with them, while in a second text he records planting a royal garden for his “lordly pleasure, in the midst of which he built a palace.”⁵⁵ The tradition is perpetuated throughout the Neo-Assyrian period, as seen from the Banquet Stele text of Assurnasirpal II, in which the king, describing the founding of the new capital at Nimrud, enumerates the various trees and plants gathered in his travels and incorporated with abundant water canals into luxuriant gardens at home.⁵⁶ Scholars of the ancient Near East are just beginning to look for archaeological evidence of such landscaping, particularly associated with palaces;⁵⁷ but the line from Assyrian to Babylonian to Achaemenid to Islamic palace gardens and orchards can at least be affirmed. Terms utilized in describing these early gardens all denote pleasure and joy. It should come as no surprise that in these early periods no less than in later times, wealth and power would be associated with management of the landscape for purposes of delectation, not just mere sustenance—especially in an environment where gardens were expensive and difficult to establish and maintain; but one can also go a step further in suggesting that such a display could be part of a public statement of wealth, power, and even territorial appropriation through reference to the lands of origin of the various trees and plants collected.

As noted above, Assurnasirpal II also refers to the varied types of wood he employed in his palace at Nimrud, and like the gardens, the building materials would have conveyed wealth and power independent of narrative content. Far more explicit statements of wealth and power, not to mention political ideology, are possible and attested in the decoration of the actual palace buildings, through the addition of applied verbal and visual messages.

It is in the incorporation of inscribed texts into

the scheme of palace "iconography" that Assyrian practice may come closest to later Islamic practice. Although calligraphic script was never developed in the ancient Near East to the extent that it was in later Islamic periods, one does see a distinctly "lapidary style" employed for the palace texts, which needs further study as part of the overall visual effect in the decorative program as a whole (visible, for example, on the block surrounding the doorway colossus, fig. 6). Russell has done the most complete study to date of the role played by various sorts of inscriptions in a single palace, where the ruler makes use of each type of text for different rhetorical purposes.⁵⁸ For regions brought into the Assyrian polity that retained local rulers, we find bilingual inscriptions on palaces that juxtapose Assyrian Akkadian to the local language. This is not unlike the situation described by Catherine Asher (see article in this volume) for Mughal India, where a local Hindu ruler could include inscriptions in both Persian and Sanskrit. The ancient Near Eastern and South Asian cases show intriguing similarities in that both evince significant differences in nomenclature in the local versus the official court language. One ruler of Guzana to the west of Assyria, for example, is referred to as "king" in the local Aramaean, but only as "governor" in the Akkadian, appropriate to his subordinate status vis-à-vis Assyria.⁵⁹

The extent to which the Assyrians developed the application of orthostat stone relief carvings to exterior and interior palace walls was unprecedented and, as noted above, seems to be derived from contact with North Syria and Anatolia. The Assyrians employed limestone and alabaster in their carvings; the Syrian and Anatolian sites often used basalt as well as limestone, and it is interesting that the alternation of black and white stone for decorative purposes, as on the Long Wall and Herald's Wall at Carchemish,⁶⁰ as well as the use of lions as door or gateway figures, can still be attested in the same general region well into the Islamic period (on which, see the Soucek, Redford, and Tabbaa articles in this volume).

The Assyrian orthostats stand some two meters high, and are carved in relatively high relief, often incorporating inscriptions over or as part of visual representations. Traces of color suggest that they were originally painted; and Layard's account of the throne room of Assurnasirpal II in the Northwest Palace includes references to fragments of plastered wall paintings along with the reliefs—presumably from the upper parts of the

wall surfaces and the ceiling (see reconstruction, fig. 13; although note that the human figures are small in relation to reliefs). In addition, Assurnasirpal's Banquet Stele mentions the decoration of his palace with glazed brick and with bronze door bands, examples of which have been found elsewhere,⁶¹ and Postgate, following the speculations of Reade, argues for the probability of textiles, no longer extant, as having been another important medium of palace decoration.⁶²

Numerous studies in recent years have investigated the sorts of political and cultural messages articulated in Assyrian decorative programs. These messages are conveyed by placement, as well as by content. Composite, protective creatures stand at doorways and at corners. Within rooms, the king's figure is often given prominence opposite doorways, or in the center of a wall, regardless of the subject of the scene.⁶³ On one such example, a scene of the Assyrian king Sennacherib receiving prisoners in the field after the siege of Lachish, we see the enthroned ruler positioned exactly in the middle of the northwest wall (fig. 14). In the field above the king's face is a rectangle containing four lines of explanatory text. The introduction of textual labels into visual narratives, first attested on reliefs in the eighth century, served to emphasize the image or the narrative moment with which they are associated, thereby complementing or augmenting the visual program.⁶⁴

When we look at the sorts of motifs commonly represented in palace decoration, many commonalities occur across the entire range of preserved evidence. Foremost among these is the presence of the palm tree, either as an independent element or in association with the image of the king himself. At Mari, as in the Babylonian palace of Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 B.C.), the palm occurs in a repeating frieze on the outer façade of the throne room, flanking the central door through which the ruler could be visible at selected times.⁶⁵ In the Northwest Palace of Assurnasirpal, the same tree is depicted throughout the palace, most frequently flanked by symmetrical genii.⁶⁶ In the throne room, which constitutes a special case, the king himself is shown duplicated on either side of the tree, presumably participating in its ritual care (fig. 15). If Castriota is correct in suggesting that on some occasions the tree stands metonymically for the ruler, precisely because maintenance of the fertility of the land through proper ritual performance is a major function of kingship,⁶⁷ then the repetition of the motif in Babylon and throughout the Northwest

Palace is not merely for purposes of decoration, but also conveys the powerful message that rule is grounded in nature, i.e., in cosmology.

The motif of the king and tree is accorded pride of place in the throne room of Assurnasirpal; it appears both directly behind the king on his throne on the eastern wall and directly opposite the major doorway of the north wall. Throne rooms, as relatively public ceremonial and political loci, are especially likely to be highly invested with charged imagery—in the best preserved cases, incorporating a number of motifs that in total reflect the full panoply of royal activities and attributes.⁶⁸ In the throne room of Assurnasirpal II at Nimrud, scenes of hunt and battle are distributed along the long, south wall and parts of the north wall, with the king himself depicted at the far west end. I have argued elsewhere that the assemblage of images can be read as a unified program, recapitulating in both content and structure the king's "Standard Inscription" that is written over every slab (see, for example, on throne-room slab B.23, fig. 15), and signifying all of the major attributes of the ruler appropriate to his stewardship of the state: ritual performance, virile strength, military victory, and statecraft.⁶⁹ Russell has recently demonstrated that in the later reign of Sennacherib, this lexicon was expanded to include new themes related to civic construction, which convey more explicit messages pertaining to maintenance of the "center," i.e., the capital, in contrast to earlier formulations that emphasized the maintenance of the state through territorial acquisition and the establishment of boundaries.⁷⁰

These Sennacherib reliefs are situated in the large court giving onto his principal throne room. As noted for Mari, the courtyard wall that doubles as throne-room façade is especially adapted to proclamations of rule, and in the Neo-Assyrian palaces of Assurnasirpal II and Sargon, at least (e.g., fig. 16), we find particular attention given on that wall to processions of foreign delegations bearing tribute to the ruler—a *topos* conveying the ruler's ability to command both wealth and stately attention.⁷¹

Through verisimilitude in landscape elements and dress, military narratives are made to be more than generic victories; they refer to actual campaigns of the king's reign. The representation of at least a half-dozen separate campaigns in the reliefs of Assurnasirpal II's throne room confirms the king's account in his Banquet Stele of how he depicted on his palace walls the "glory of

my heroism across highlands, plains and seas." In later Assyrian reigns (as, for example, the Lachish siege of Sennacherib, fig. 14), these military scenes proliferated throughout the entire palace. By concentrating them in the throne room during the reign of Assurnasirpal and by placing the throne room itself at the center of the palace, the ninth-century king conveyed the fundamental message that, as the throne room is the heart of the palace, so the palace is the heart of the state.

The use of extended decorative programs as vehicles for the articulation of ideology is not unusual in the history of royal palaces, and many art historical studies have attempted to reconstruct those programs, along with their ideological underpinnings.⁷² In the palaces of the ancient Near East, the "official" public statements about the ruler and the state as they appear in the decorative program serve to underscore the institutional nature of the palace as part of the larger state apparatus.⁷³ To the extent that "the palace" can serve as metonym for the ruler (as "the White House" does for the American president), and thereby for the state, the palace is the source of ideology; and to the extent that the palace is the physical manifestation of a program of royal rhetoric, it is also the vehicle for that ideology. Thus, we return to issues of function, and the role of the palace-qua-institution, with which we began.

Clearly, the ruler and a large extended household resided in the palace and had to be accommodated. On the practical level, this required private apartments, cooking facilities, and stores. Evidence exists that the king's mess included large parties of his sons and officials and that allocations were made for the rest of the palace on a regular basis.⁷⁴ In addition, periodic festivities must have been organized, which would have necessitated the banqueting of very large numbers of individuals, as on the occasion of the inauguration of Assurnasirpal II's new capital at Nimrud, when the king records he fed some 70,000 people for ten days.

The size of the Assyrian throne room (ca. 10 x 45 meters for both Assurnasirpal II and Sargon II) and its decoration argue for its nature as a public reception suite in which the ruler would give audiences, although whether on a regular basis or occasionally is uncertain. Visual evidence that the ruler at least received selected members of the court and highly placed officials is preserved in scenes carved on cylinder seals, which show individuals presented before the

seated ruler—a tradition that must have been not unlike the Mughal *darbār* illustrated in several miniatures of the seventeenth-century court of Jahangir and Shah Jahan (see Necipoğlu, figs. 26–28).⁷⁵ Scenes on reliefs showing Assurnasirpal II with cup or bowl in hand may attest to the king’s judicial function, in keeping with a long-standing iconography of the ruler rendering just decisions in Mesopotamia.⁷⁶ Whether the ruler exercised legal office inside the palace (perhaps in the throne room) or outside is not certain for this period, however. On the basis of the Solomonic reference (see above, with regard to I Kings 7:7) and a Sumerian literary text regarding the legendary king Lugalbanda, who “takes [or exercises] office in the outer courtyard, in ‘the Gate that Brings in Myriads’,”⁷⁷ one is encouraged to seek possible evidence for similar use of the palace courtyard and gate in the Assyrian period. It must also be considered that the throne room could have functioned as a venue for legal hearings.

Tribute scenes on courtyard façades leading into the throne rooms at Nimrud and Khorsabad (e.g., fig. 16) both illustrate and assert state reception of foreign delegations. That the palaces served as the repositories of such gifts, along with the booty seized in foreign campaigns, we know from Assurnasirpal’s repeated assertion that he brought precious metals and other rich booty to the palace, and also from Sargon’s statement that he restored the Northwest Palace in order to place in it booty from his victory over Carchemish in 717.⁷⁸ Not unlike later palaces, from Fatehpur Sikri to Versailles, the display of valuable goods and elaborate appointments served as signifiers of the success of the ruler, and hence of the state.

Tribute scenes, overall decorative program, and display all attest not only to specific events, but also to the very fact that the palace was the site where statecraft was conducted. Texts from Nimrud further document that the extended household supported in the palaces included ministers, administrative officials, and scribes, whose job it was to run not only the palace but the state.⁷⁹ Assurbanipal’s famous “library” at Nineveh may reflect the special case of an unusually literate ruler; however, the archives of other palaces, such as Mari, strongly argue for the palace as repository of central state records as well.

The iconography of room 132 at Mari and the suite around room G at Nimrud, as was mentioned earlier, may suggest that some rooms in the palace were devoted to ritual activities,

and I suspect that if any new palaces were to be investigated with modern excavation methods, we would find considerably more evidence to support such a contention. The importance of ritual performance and court ceremonial in other times and places argues strongly for the presence of such spaces within the palace.⁸⁰ If we were to include procession as part of ceremonial display, then the fact that the processional route from the Ishtar Gate to the temple of Marduk at Babylon passes along the east wall of Nebuchadnezzar’s palace (see fig. 8) could imply an active role for the palace and/or the king in the procession.⁸¹

Finally, I would argue that a significant component of function is “affect”: the impact of the building upon subjects of the state and upon foreigners. Lackenbacher has studied Assyrian narratives of royal building activities, with particular focus on palace construction.⁸² In a number of instances, rulers take credit for innovations in technique (such as Sennacherib’s reference to bronze casting for column bases) or include statements about how skillfully the palaces have been constructed.⁸³ In addition, rulers express personal gratification concerning their palaces (e.g., “palace of my joy” and “my royal residence that I love”).⁸⁴

Perhaps most important of all, we find references to intended impact. Assurnasirpal refers to his new palace as “fitting and splendid,” “palace of all the wisdom of Kalhu” (Nimrud).⁸⁵ The king is clearly celebratory; but at the same time he proclaims the palace as concentrating within itself all that is of value in the capital. Nearly two hundred years later, Sennacherib calls his new residence “Palace without a Rival.”⁸⁶ He says of the limestone reliefs, “I made them objects of astonishment”; of his colossi, “I made them a wonder to behold”; and of the palace as a whole, “To the astonishment of all peoples I raised aloft its head.”⁸⁷

The importance of this phrase, “to [or for] the astonishment of all peoples” (*ana tabrāt kiššat nišē*) cannot be too strongly emphasized. It is an exact translation of a Sumerian formula of reference to impressive building, largely applied to temples in the earlier periods (*u₆-di un šar*). In Neo-Assyrian usage, both temples and palaces are so described, but it is especially characteristic of texts referring to new palace constructions.⁸⁸ It would be interesting to survey extant attestations to see whether it is possible to determine a time when “astonishment” was accorded to palaces as

well as temples, and whether this correlates with any significant developments in the Mesopotamian state and in the institution of kingship. Garelli has discussed some of the attributes of royal palaces intended to astonish. He noted that standard words for “beautiful” or “well-built” were not used for royal buildings; rather, one finds a vocabulary focusing on qualities also applied to the person of the king. By Garelli’s account, because the palace was the work of the king, it was possessed of the same “splendor” and “majesty” as the king himself.⁸⁹ However, it should be remembered that it is the ruler’s own voice in the texts that articulates the qualities of the palace, so that the king actually imbues the building—or asserts that his buildings are imbued—with those very qualities which he would also have ascribed to himself. The palace is thus set up as a mirror of the king. It is a physical manifestation of the ruler’s power and ability to build; and at the same time, by having built so impressively, the ruler has further demonstrated his power and ability to command resources, induce astonishment, and create a fitting seat of government—in short, to rule. The rhetorical function of the palace, as exemplified through its affect, is, I would argue, as essential as its residential, administrative, productive, and ceremonial functions.

Throughout the preceding survey, I have tried to demonstrate that morphology, decorative program, and function are not independent variables. Rather, room type, organization of space, individual decorative motives, and overall decorative scheme are fundamentally linked to function. Given the nature of the archaeological and textual record, in any scholarly study of the palace we are limited to the expression of the royal voice, which privileges rhetoric and intention over actual practice. Obviously, as is all too well known in modern times, buildings can be poorly designed for anticipated functions. Equally, when buildings are secondarily occupied, or when historical events precipitate change, then their original form and decoration can either constrain function or have little relationship to new usage. Nevertheless, recovery of the ideal schema and the associated originating rhetoric is a necessary first step toward any critique of the fit between intention and actual practice.

In the Mesopotamian schema, and apparently in the Hittite one as well,⁹⁰ the palace was conceived as incorporating a bundle of activities and functions: residential, political, administra-

tive, industrial, ritual, ceremonial, and affective. Storage and display of surplus and luxury goods served as extensions of elaborate decorative programs that articulated state ideology, and spaces were designed to meet the functional needs of the palace as an institution.⁹¹ Limited comparisons with other palace types have suggested the importance of regional diversity; but at the same time, it can be demonstrated that regionally specific building forms and decorative practices could be transmitted across regional boundaries under certain political or cultural conditions. There are many ancient Near Eastern palaces not mentioned in this brief survey, and many palaces that have been mentioned have received less than adequate description or analysis. Because I have been sketching with a broad brush, there has been a tendency to emphasize similarities in the Mesopotamian sequence across some two thousand years. In many ways this is not unjustified. From early royal hymns in Sumerian to later royal inscriptions in Assyrian Akkadian, indications are that the palace was construed as the seat of *kingship*, not merely as the residence of the king. Nevertheless, micro and macro shifts in form and decoration need to be studied more closely with respect to the many political changes in state development over this long period. What I have tried to stress throughout is the role of the palace *within* the context of the state and the rhetorical function of the palace as embodiment of the state.

If there turn out to be significant continuities in building materials and techniques, decorative programs (especially for non-figural motifs of symbolic value), and ceremonial/administrative functions from the pre-Islamic to Islamic periods in the Near East, beyond the few I have noted here, it will not surprise me at all; nor will I be surprised if distinct regional traditions within Islam actually reflect recognizable subdivisions in earlier periods as well. At the same time, one will want to take care to distinguish features apparently similar over time that are merely the consequence of relatively limited ways of representing/organizing authority (what evolutionary biologists call spurious homologies) from features that truly represent continuity in underlying concepts and traditions. When continuity cannot be demonstrated, it then becomes necessary to account for the differences as artifacts of differing historical practice. I confess that a significant part of my mission in the foregoing survey has been to convince historians of Islamic architecture (and culture) that the pre-Sasanian

pre-Islamic world should be included in their scholarly purview. Yet it has also become apparent that, however much we acknowledge the significant divide between before and after the introduction of Islam, students of the ancient Near East have much to learn from considering the more complete historical record of Islamic practice—by which I mean not only building practice, but also cultural and political practice.

In the end, what is so clear as to be obvious, but still needs to be stated, is that any study of the palace, whatever the historical period, is fundamentally linked to the study of concepts of authority and rule. To understand the palace, one must see it as the locus of a particular practice of governance. Furthermore, when continuities of

morphology and/or decoration occur across spatio-temporal boundaries, one cannot immediately assume continuity in meaning; whenever possible, it is necessary to establish associative significance independently. Conversely, it is possible that differences in morphology and/or decoration nevertheless represent quite similar social and political systems.

For the ancient Near East, the play in the subtitle of this survey was a conscious one: the palace is both a physical and a mental construct, both built and construed. It is at once the concentrated center of rule, "the seat of kingship," and also the concrete expression of rule, "worthy of being" the seat of kingship, "for the astonishment of all peoples," "a wonder to behold."

Notes

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1. For the non-specialist, it may be useful to note that Sumerian-speaking peoples precede Akkadian speakers in the lower Tigris-Euphrates valley. The two languages and peoples mixed in the third millennium B.C., after which time we find Sumerian loan words in Akkadian, and evidence for Akkadian influences and words in Sumerian as well. Akkadian briefly (ca. 2300 B.C.) and then ultimately (ca. 1900 B.C.) replaced Sumerian and serves as the language of Babylonia and Assyria. Akkadian scribes and scholars continued to be taught Sumerian, copying old inscriptions as part of the school curriculum, and preserving literary and ritual texts through translation and bilingual word lists. Bilinguals continued into the early first millennium B.C., by which time Sumerian was no longer a living language. The convention in a modern scholarly text is to indicate Sumerian words in **boldface** type and Akkadian words in *italics*.
2. Note that the Sumerian word for temple, by contrast, consists merely of the logogram for "house" followed in construct by the name of the deity, as in É.⁴**Inanna**, "the house of the god(dess) Inanna." My translation of "Great House" for the Mesopotamian palace should not be confused with a structure so indicated and distinct from the palace/*ekallu* in Hittite tradition (see H. G. Güterbock, "The Hittite Palace," in *Le palais et la royauté: XIX^e rencontre assyriologique internationale 1971*, ed. P. Garelli [Paris, 1974], 305–6).
3. J. V. Kinnier-Wilson, *The Nimrud Wine Lists: A Study of Men and Administration at the Assyrian Capital in the 8th Century B.C.* (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1972), 45: year 34 of Samsuiluna of Babylon; G. Pettinato, review of Römer, *Sumerische 'Königshymnen'*, in *Archiv für Orientalforschung* (1992), 208–10, line 99, re Lipit-Ishtar of Isin.
4. And when multiple functions *are* characteristic of Hittite palaces of the late second millennium B.C. on the Anatolian plateau (cf. Güterbock, "Hittite Palace"), this is not to say that they are the *same* functions. Each historical and cultural case needs to be examined first in terms of internal evidence for associated activities.
5. E.g., Ernst Heinrich, *Die Paläste im alten Mesopotamien*, Denkmaler antiker Architektur 15, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (Berlin, 1984); Seton Lloyd and H. W. Muller, *Ancient Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1986); Jean Margueron, *Recherches sur les palais mésopotamiens de l'âge du bronze*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1982); Rudolph Naumann, *Architektur Kleinasiens: von ihren Anfängen bis zum Ende der hethitischen Zeit* (Tübingen, 1955).
6. James Fergusson, *The Palaces of Nineveh and Persepolis Restored* (London: John Murray, 1851), fig. 31 and frontispiece.
7. Hans J. Nissen, *The Early History of the Ancient Near East: 9000–2000 B.C.* (Chicago, 1988), ch. 3, 39–64.
8. O. Tunça, *L'architecture religieuse protodynastique en Mésopotamie, Akkadica*, Supplementum II (Louvain, 1984); Ernst Heinrich, *Die Tempel und Heiligtümer im alten Mesopotamien* (Berlin, 1982).
9. See plan in M. S. B. Damerji, *The Development of the Architecture of Doors and Gates in Ancient Mesopotamia*, trans. T. Takaso and Y. Okada (Tokyo: Institute for Cultural Studies of Ancient Iraq, 1987), fig. 147; also published in Heinrich, *Die Tempel*, fig. 118a, and Nicholas Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History* (London: Routledge, 1992), fig. 4.2.
10. See discussion in Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia*, 137 ff., and also reference to the issue of the connections between the origins of royalty and the palace in early Mesopotamia in O. Tunça, review of Margueron, *Recherches sur les palais*, in *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 74 (1984): 318.
11. See on this period, Heinrich, *Die Paläste*, 9–13, where some possible candidates for palaces are noted, based on morphological comparisons with later palaces, but without definitive evidence.
12. See on Kish, E. Mackay, *A Sumerian Palace and the "A" Cemetery at Kish*, pt. 2 (Chicago, 1929); P. R. S. Moorey, "The 'Plano-Convex Building' at Kish and Early Mesopotamian Palaces," *Iraq* 28 (1964): 83–98; Heinrich, *Die Paläste*, 14–28; Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia*, 137.
13. For a discussion of the spatial properties of that central court in Palace A at Kish, see J. Margueron, "Remarques sur l'organisations de l'espace architectural en Mésopotamie," in *L'archéologie de l'Iraq du début de l'époque néolithique à 333 avant notre ère*,

- Colloques internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, no. 580 (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1980), 165–68.
14. See Heinrich, *Die Paläste*, 43.
 15. See David Oates, "Excavations at Tell Brak, 1978–81," *Iraq* 44 (1982): 187–204, which also includes bibliography for the early excavations of the building.
 16. Heinrich, *Die Paläste*, fig. 22.
 17. This would certainly seem to be true at the Assyrian site of Khorsabad, where the royal palace situated on the upper citadel was replicated in smaller scale in several buildings on the lower terrace. One of the lower buildings has been identified as the residence of the king's brother and chief vizier; the other possibly belonged to his son as crown prince (Gordon Loud, "An Architectural Formula for Assyrian Planning, Based on the Results of Excavations at Khorsabad," *Revue d'Assyriologie* 33 [1936]: 153).
 18. See on Ebla the many publications of P. Matthaie, for example, *I tesori di Ebla* (Rome and Bari: Editori Laterza, 1985), 25–54 and figs. 14–36, 41–47.
 19. It is indeed unfortunate, given the number of administrative texts and literary texts preserved from the Ur III period (ca. 2112–2004 B.C.) in southern Mesopotamia, that we have not recovered any of the major palaces of Ur III rulers (cf. Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia*, 141). It is therefore difficult to estimate how characteristic of the period was the provincial palace built by an Ur III governor of Eshnunna in the Diyala River region to the northeast (Henri Frankfort, Seton Lloyd, and Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Gimil-Sin Temple and the Palace of the Rulers at Tell-Asmar*, Oriental Institute Publications 43 (Chicago, 1940).
 20. Dominique Parayre and Harvey Weiss, "Cinq campagnes de fouilles à Tell Leilan dans la haute Jezireh (1979–1987): Bilan et perspectives," *Journal des Savants* (Jan.–June 1991), 3–26. Unfortunately, however, not enough of the plan of the palace has been excavated to permit comparison with other buildings.
 21. See on Mari the initial excavation reports of Andre Parrot, *Mission Archéologique de Mari*, vol. 2, pt. 1: *Le Palais: architecture*, pt. 2: *Le Palais: peintures murales*; and pt. 3: *Le Palais: documents et monuments* (Paris, 1958–59); and more recently, Heinrich, *Die Paläste*, 68–81; Margueron, *Recherches sur les palais*, 209–380 (the most extensive discussion to date); Marie-Henriette Gates, "The Palace of Zimri Lim at Mari," *Biblical Archaeologist* (June 1984), 70–87. Interpretive studies include Y. al-Khalesi, *The Court of the Palms: A Functional Interpretation of the Mari Palace*, Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 8 (Malibu, 1978); Jean-Marie Durand, "L'organisation de l'espace dans le palais de Mari: le témoignage des textes," in *Le système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome*, Université des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg, Travaux du Centre de Recherche sur le Proche-Orient et la Grèce antiques 9 (Leiden, 1987); Jean Margueron et al., "Les appartements royaux du premier étage dans le palais de Zimri-Lim," *M.A.R.I.* 6 (1990): 433–62; Béatrice Pierre, "Décor peint à Mari et au Proche-Orient," *M.A.R.I.* 3 (1984): 223–54, and Béatrice Pierre-Muller, "Une grande peinture des appartements royaux du palais de Mari (Salles 219–220)," *M.A.R.I.* 6 (1990): 463–558.
 22. See chart in Gates, *Biblical Archaeologist* (June 1984) for divergent opinions.
 23. M. Burke, "Une réception royale au palais de Mari," *Revue d'Assyriologie* 53 (1959): 139–46.
 24. Kinnier-Wilson, *Nimrud Wine Lists*, 32 ff.
 25. Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia*, 149.
 26. See on this Anton Moortgat, "Wandgemälde im Palaste zu Mari und ihre historische Einordnung," *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 3 (1964): 68–74, al-Khalesi, *The Court of the Palms*; and Pierre, "Décor peint à Mari."
 27. See especially, Frankfort et al., *The Gimil-Sin Temple and the Palace of the Rulers*, where the palace of the provincial governor of Eshnunna when the city was under the hegemony of Ur included two shrines, one presumably to the local deity, the other to the deified ruler of Ur.
 28. Güterbock, "Hittite Palace," 310.
 29. Marc Brandes, "La Salle dite 'G' du palais d'Assurnasirpal II à Kalakh, lieu de cérémonie rituelle," *Actes de la 17ème Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (Gembloux, 1970), 147–54. Note, however, that Julian Reade is not persuaded by Brandes's argument that the suite around room G was used for ritual lustrations and suggests banquets as an alternative ("Assyrian Architectural Decoration: Techniques and Subject Matter," *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 10 [1979]: 85). The argument for both is based upon the imagery of the seated king holding a phiale-like bowl on the reliefs, and whether he is lustrating or drinking is not certain. However, on scenes where individuals are clearly banqueting, as in the reliefs of Sargon II at Khorsabad, their drinking vessels are obviously being

- brought to the lips, which is not the case here, so I tend to be more persuaded by the symbolic than the literal in the present scene.
30. Cited above, n. 21.
 31. Cited in I. J. Winter, "Art as Evidence for Interaction: Relations between the Assyrian Empire and North Syria," in *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn: politische und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen im Alten Vorderasien*, ed. Hartmut Kühne, Hans J. Nissen, and Johannes Renger, *Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient*, vol. 1, pt. 1 (Berlin, 1982), 363.
 32. Moortgat, "Wandgemälde im Palaste zu Mari"; also discussed in Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia: The Classical Art of the Near East* (London, 1969), 82–84.
 33. Khorsabad is a particularly good example since, like Samarra and Fatehpur Sikri, it was built and occupied by a single ruler, Sargon II of Assyria. The phenomenon of new palace construction by successive rulers was noted by Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, and has been discussed in part by Sylvie Lackenbacher, *Le roi bâtisseur: Les récits de construction assyriens des origines à Teglathphalasar 3* (Paris: Editions Recherche sur les civilisations, 1982): 76, as a way of demonstrating that the ruler surpassed all of his predecessors.
 34. Fort Shalmaneser, excavated at Nimrud between 1949 and 1963, is a good example of the type—on which, see M. E. L. Mallowan, *Nimrud and Its Remains* (Aberdeen, 1966), vol. 3, plan VII. For the city walls, with citadel and *ekal-māšarti* set into the perimeter, see plan in Moortgat, *Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, fig. 102.
 35. Naumann, *Architektur Kleinasiens*, fig. 259.
 36. Note also the point made by Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia*, 137–40, that in the earlier periods in Mesopotamia, the location of the palace varied significantly from one city-state to another and from one period to another: sometimes located close to the traditional temple/sacred precinct, sometimes in newer sectors of town, away from the older traditional areas, and this was closely tied to the relationship of a particular ruler to the state.
 37. Cf., for example, A. Kirk Grayson, *Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia 2* (Toronto, 1991): 38–45, for the palace of Tiglath Pileser I at Assur and 227–28 for the Northwest Palace of Assurnasirpal at Nimrud; John M. Russell, "Bulls for the Palace and Order in the Empire: The Sculptural Program of Sennacherib's Court VI at Nineveh," *Art Bulletin* 69 (1987): 520–39, and *Sennacherib's Palace without a Rival at Nineveh* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). Although the Neo-Assyrian palaces are far better preserved, it would seem from the Middle Assyrian texts that kings employed many of the same building techniques as are archaeologically attested later—for example, the lining of the walls with basalt and alabaster slabs, and the installation of large gateway figures, noted in the Tiglat Pileser I inscription cited above.
 38. See especially Edith Porada, "Battlements in the Military Architecture and in the Symbolism of the Ancient Near East," in *Studies in the History of Architecture Presented to Rudolf Wittkower* (New York: Phaidon, 1967), 1–12; and Margueron, *Recherches sur les palais*, pt. 2, ch. 2, on open and closed spaces in the Mesopotamian palace.
 39. Heinrich, *Die Paläste*, 89–91 and fig. 46; Margueron, *Recherches sur les palais*, 521–22; H. Gasche and W. Birschmeier, "Contribution à l'étude de la voûte en briques crues," *Akkadica* 24 (1981): 1–16; and Damerji, *Doors and Gates*, 116 ff., for doors with arched construction.
 40. Heinrich, *Die Paläste*, fig. 76.
 41. On attention to doors and gates in general, their construction and plan, see Damerji, *Doors and Gates*.
 42. On this, see Winter, in *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn*, esp. 356. Note, however, that Reade rightly points out Assyrian colossi have Mesopotamian prototypes as well in smaller-scale free-standing figures of glazed terra cotta or stone ("Assyrian Architectural Decoration," 18).
 43. It should be noted, however, that interior spatial configurations did not change. See on this I. J. Winter, "Perspective on the 'Local Style' of Hasanlu IVB: A Study in Receptivity," in *Mountains and Lowlands: Essays in the Archaeology of Greater Mesopotamia*, ed. L. D. Levine and T. C. Young, Jr. (Malibu: Undena Press, 1977), 371–86.
 44. The literature on this palace is vast, as it is one of the best preserved in the ancient sequence. For a recent study of the architectural basis for reconstruction, see Richard Sobolewski, "Beitrag zur theoretischen Rekonstruktion der Architektur des Nordwest-Palästes in Nimrud (Kalhu)," in *Palast und Hütte: Beiträge zum Bauen und Wohnen im Altertum* (Mainz: von Zabern, 1982), 237–50. For this particular two-court plan, see Moortgat, *Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 127, following Loud, "An Architectural Formula," 156, in which the outer court is referred to as the "gate-court" or *bābānu* in Akkadian, the inner court as the "house" or

- "residential court," Akk. *bitānu*. My objections to this terminology would take too long to argue here, but in summary can be related to the likelihood that the rooms flanking the inner court were also devoted to ceremonial or public functions, while the thickness of the walls (some 5 meters) argues again for a second story, with the residential quarters more likely to have been located on the upper floor(s).
45. Geoffrey Turner, "The State Apartments of Later Assyrian Palaces," *Iraq* 32 (1970): 177–213, and discussion in I. J. Winter, "Reading Concepts of Space from Ancient Mesopotamian Monuments," in *Concepts of Space Ancient and Modern*, ed. Kapila Vatsyayan (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1991), 57–73.
 46. *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 328, as cited in Winter, "Reading Concepts of Space," 63.
 47. See on this Marian Feldman, "The Presentation of Kingship: The Neo-Babylonian Throneroom Façade of the Southern Palace at Babylon," unpublished paper, 1992, as well as S. Polony and G. Winkler, "Statische Untersuchung des Thronsaals der Südburg in Babylon," *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 99 (1968): 55–58. The Book of Esther of the Hebrew Bible, 5:1–2, records this straight axis in use on into the Achaemenid period of the second half of the first millennium as well, in its description of the Persian king seated on "his royal throne in the royal house opposite the gate," and from there seeing Esther standing in the courtyard.
 48. "Scientific Description of Art," a review of Donald Wilber, *Architecture of Islamic Iran*, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 15 (1956): 93–102.
 49. Turner, "State Apartments of Later Assyrian Palaces," cited above, n. 45.
 50. See the lengthy discussion in Naumann, *Architektur Kleinasiens*, 354–78, for the sites of Zincirli, Carchemish, and Tell Halaf, among others. More recently on Tell Halaf, see Jeanny V. Canby, "Guzana (Tell Halaf)," in *Ebla to Damascus: Art and Archaeology of Ancient Syria*, ed. Harvey Weiss (Washington, D.C., 1985), 332–38. Indeed, in the earlier, Hittite palace of the second millennium as well, although it was apparently a large complex, Güterbock has suggested that residence and administrative quarters may have been in separate structures (cf. Güterbock, "Hittite Palace," esp. 308).
 51. Cf. reconstruction in Naumann, *Architektur Kleinasiens*, fig. 455.
 52. See Winter, "Art as Evidence for Interaction."
 - Note also that J. Börker-Klähn ("Der *bit-hilāni* im *bit-šahūri* des Assur-Tempels," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 70 [1980]: 258–72) has recently documented an instance in which a *bit-hilāni* was associated with a temple of the Neo-Assyrian period in Assur. She reconstructs the building (Börker-Klähn, "Der *bit-hilāni*," fig. 4) with portal sculpture flanking a large entry, and an upper colonnaded balcony above the entrance.
 53. I have even wondered whether there might not be some etymological relationship between the Aramaean/Akkadian *hilāni* and Arabic (I)iwān, but such speculation goes well beyond my own competence.
 54. Richard D. Barnett, *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh* (London: British Museum, 1976), pl. XXIII (room H).
 55. See Grayson, *Royal Inscriptions*, 27, 55, and, for a similar account by Assur-bel-kala, 105.
 56. Cf. Donald J. Wiseman, "A New Stele of Assurnasir-pal II," *Iraq* 14 (1952): 24–39, and more recent translation in A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, pt. 2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1976), para. 678, as well as discussion in Ann Shafer, "A Monument to the Center of Empire: Ashurnasir-pal II's 'Banquet Stela' in Context," unpublished paper, 1992.
 57. See the early study by A. Leo Oppenheim, "On Royal Gardens in Mesopotamia," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 24 (1965): 328–33; also Donald J. Wiseman, "Palace and Temple Gardens in the Ancient Near East," in *Monarchies and Socio-Religious Traditions in the Ancient Near East*, ed. H. I. H. Prince Takahito Mikasa (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1984), 37–43; and discussion in Lackenbacher, *Le roi bâtisseur*, 124–29.
 58. For the palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh, see Russell, *Sennacherib's Palace without a Rival*, ch. 2, 7–33; see also Pamela Gerardi, "Epigraphs and Assyrian Palace Reliefs: The Development of the Epigraphic Texts," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 40 (1988): 1–35, for a special case of epigraphs applied to the narrative reliefs; and Julian E. Reade, "Sargon's Campaigns of 720, 716 and 715 B.C.: Evidence from the Sculptures," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 35 (1976): 95–104, for the coupling of distinct types of texts with equally distinct types of imagery in the palace of Sargon II at Khorsabad. In I. J. Winter, "Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs," *Studies in Visual Communication* 7, 2 (1981): 2–38, I have attempted to demonstrate that in the palace of Assurnasirpal II at Nimrud, even the

- structure of the text finds parallels in representational practice. In addition, shifts in grammatical structure when referring to the ruler (from third person singular, as part of narrative accounts, to first person singular as self-presentation) are indicative, and not without parallels to the account by Sheila Blair (see article in this volume) of Ilkhanid texts concerning the ruler (that shift from third-person narratives to second-person exhortatives).
59. Ali Abou-Assaf et al., *La statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-araméenne* (Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1982), 64, re line 19 in the Akkadian text and line 13 in the Aramaic.
 60. Winfried Orthmann, *Untersuchungen zur spät-hethitischen Kunst* (Bonn: Habelt, 1971), 501–2, 503–5, and pls. 24, 26–28.
 61. Glazed bricks as part of palace decoration are attested in the Middle Assyrian period by Tiglath Pileser I, who continues a palace begun by his father, adding a façade of glazed brick (the color) of obsidian (black), lapis lazuli (blue), *pappardilū*-stone and *parutu*-alabaster (which must be yellow and white, respectively, for that is the color palette found on later exterior glazed façades and walls). For the Assurnasirpal text, see Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, 2:para. 677; indeed, the Banquet Stele on which the reference occurs could itself be considered part of the palace program, as it stood in niche EA of the great courtyard D of the palace, just adjacent to the throne room (see Shafer, “Monument to the Center of Empire”). The only problem with this is uncertainty, given the later occupations of the palace, that this was the stele’s original location.
 62. For discussion of the throne-room textiles, see Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia*, 143.
 63. Julian E. Reade, “The Architectural Context of Assyrian Sculpture,” *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 11 (1980): 86.
 64. Gerardi, “Epigraphs and Assyrian Palace Reliefs.”
 65. Feldman, “Presentation of Kingship.”
 66. See on this motif, now, Barbara N. Porter, “Sacred Trees, Date Palms and the Royal Persona of Ashurnasirpal II,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 52 (1993): 129–39.
 67. See David Castriota, “Divinity, Kingship and Metonymy: The Imagery of the Sacred Tree in the Art of Syria and Mesopotamia in the Second Millennium B.C.,” unpublished paper.
 68. Unfortunately, however, not all throne rooms in Assyrian palaces have been completely recovered. The reliefs of the throne room of Sargon at Khorsabad (room VII on plan) were lost in an accident after their removal, those of Assurbanipal at Nineveh are poorly preserved, those of Tiglath Pileser were dismantled in antiquity to be reused in a later palace. It is also likely that no matter how complete the archaeological remains of a given building may be, we will never fully recover all of the elements that contributed to the decorative program. The loss of textiles as a contributing factor has been noted. In addition, the actual thrones on which the ruler sat could well have been decorated with motifs appropriate to the ideology of rule. This is certainly the case with the two decorated stone throne bases that have been preserved: one of Shalmaneser III from Fort Shalmaneser (see P. Hulin, “The Inscriptions on the Carved Throne-Base of Shalmaneser III,” *Iraq* 25 [1963]: 48–69, and the recent analysis by Michelle I. Marcus, “Geography as an Organizing Principle in the Imperial Art of Shalmaneser III,” *Iraq* 49 [1987]: 77–90), the other of Sargon II from Khorsabad (discussed in Winter, “Royal Rhetoric,” 19 and fig. 17). Neither of the throne bases adds a rhetorical element not also preserved in wall decoration, although the emphasis on state diplomacy on the Shalmaneser III base offers a different nuance by virtue of its primacy.
 69. Winter, “Royal Rhetoric” (text in Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, 2:paras. 650–53). (For a different reading of this throne room, see Luc Bachelot, “La fonction politique des reliefs néo-assyriens,” in *Marchands, diplomates et empereurs: Etudes en honneur de Paul Garelli*, ed. D. Charpin and F. Joannès [Paris 1991], 109–28.)
 70. Russell, “Bulls for the Palace,” 520–39.
 71. In the palace of Assurnasirpal at Nimrud, there is clear indication by dress that the tribute bearers are foreigners from the West. While just one national contingent is represented, at least in what is preserved of the court D façade, Assurnasirpal mentions that envoys from twelve countries were invited to his inauguration festivities in the text of his banquet stele, which was set up in that same courtyard. It is to be expected that all would have brought gifts, and I see the throne-room façade as a kind of presaging of the delegations anticipated at the inauguration. Sargon II, who restored the Northwest Palace at Nimrud, similarly represents a tribute-bearing foreign delegation on the façade of his throne room (cf. Heinrich, *Die Paläste*, fig. 93 = the west wall of court VIII, leading into the throne room, room VII, our fig. 16). An indication of the sort of high-level gifts between rulers

appropriate to the opening of a new palace is preserved in an exchange of letters between the king of Babylon and the king of Egypt in the later second millennium, in which the Babylonian king declares that he has just built a new "house," is planning a "house-opening," and invites the Egyptian king to attend. The Egyptian king responds by sending luxurious furnishings for the new palace, including ebony furniture overlaid with ivory and gold (cf. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* [Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992], EA 3 and EA5), very much on a par with the chandelier sent by Queen Victoria to the Ottoman court on the completion of the Dolmabahçe Palace in the nineteenth century (for which reference I am indebted to Jülide Aker). That these tribute scenes have a broader valence than merely diplomatic gift exchange has been suggested in a most interesting paper by Jak Cheng, in which he argues that the representation of tribute is a means of proclaiming the stability of the economic base of the state through the effective accumulation of wealth, and as such constitutes an important trope in the iconography of the successful ruler (cf. "Tribute Scenes in the Program of Legitimation by Sargon II of Assyria at Khorsabad," unpublished paper, 1992).

72. For example, Jonathan Brown and W. H. Elliott, on the palace of Philip IV of Spain, *A Palace for a King: The 'Buen Retiro' and the Court of Philip IV* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986).
73. As defined and discussed by Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. B. Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971), 131–49 (originally published in French, 1966).
74. Kinnier-Wilson, *Nimrud Wine Lists*, 32 ff.; Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia*, 145.
75. See discussion in Irene J. Winter, "The King and the Cup: Iconography of the Royal Presentation Scene on Ur III Seals," in *From Image to Insight: Studies in Honor of Edith Porada*, ed. M. Kelly-Buccellati (Malibu: Undena Press, 1986), 263, and Vishakhā N. Desai, *Life at Court: Art for India's Rulers, 16th–19th Centuries* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1985), figs. 12 and 13, for the Mughal paintings.
76. Winter, "The King and the Cup," 253–68; Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia*, 150.
77. Thorkild Jacobsen, "Lugalbanda and Ninsun," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 41 (1989): 69–86, esp. lines 58–59, pp. 71 and 73.
78. Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, 2:para. 653 (=Assurnasirpal II, Standard Inscription); D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* 2 (Chicago, 1927): para. 138 (=Sargon II).
79. Kinnier-Wilson, *Nimrud Wine Lists*, 95 ff.; Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia*, 141.
80. Cf. Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 120–22, 140–41. See also in this volume, Necipoğlu, figs. 2[17], 10a [1], 21 [16], plans which show small mosques in the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal palaces.
81. On the processional route and recent archaeological work in Babylon, see H. Trenkwalder-Piesl, "The Procession-Street of Marduk in Babylon," *Sumer* 41 (1985): 36–40.
82. *Le roi bâtisseur*, esp. 73–81; see also Lackenbacher, *Le Palais sans Rival: Les récits de construction en Assyrie* (Paris: Editions la Découverte, 1990), passim.
83. See, for example, the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, vol. 'N', p. 187, entry under *nakliš*: Sennacherib refers to an earlier palace, whose construction had not been artistic/skillful enough, *ša ehalli . . . epištaš la naklatma*; his son Esarhaddon declares that he "had [a palace] built skillfully as his royal seat and for the pleasure of his lordship," *ana müšab šarrütiya u multa'uti belütija nakliš ušepišma*. This is clearly a continuation of Middle Assyrian rhetorical practice, as when Tiglath Pileser I states that he built his palace at Assur with understanding and skill, decorating it in a splendid fashion, and making it fitting as a royal residence (cf. Grayson, *Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia*, 2:TP I.4.65–66, 77–89). In some of the royal correspondence from the later reigns of the Neo-Assyrian period, there is also evidence that rulers were not only kept informed but engaged through correspondence in decisions regarding construction and decoration. See, for example, Simo Parpola, *State Archives of Assyria* 1 (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1987): nos. 60, 61, 110, 133, and *State Archives of Assyria* 5 (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1990): nos. 15, 56, 282, 293, concerning Sargon II and the work on Khorsabad.
84. Cited in Lackenbacher, *Le roi bâtisseur*, 74.
85. Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, 2:paras. 680 and 653, translates it as "in splendid fashion," and para. 682, the "palace full of wisdom." I find more persuasive the translations of Ann Shafer in "Monuments to the Center of Empire": in the first instance because it is more grammatically accurate and in the second because it implies an "epithet"

- applied to the palace, as opposed to mere description.
86. Literally, "Palace for which there is no second [or, no equal]."
87. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 2:paras. 367, 389, 394.
88. See, for example, Grayson, *Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia*, 2:296, where Assurnasirpal uses a comparable phrase for his Sharrat-Niphi temple at Nimrud.
89. Paul Garelli, "La conception de la beauté en Assyrie," in *Lingering over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran*, ed. Tzvi Abusch, John Huehnergard, and Piotr Steinkeller (Atlanta, Ga.: The Scholar's Press, 1990), 176 and passim, with respect to terms like *tašrihtu*, "splendor, majesty, sumptuousness," from the verb *šarāḫu*, "to render majestic, sumptuous, imposing."
90. Güterbock, "Hittite Palace."
91. Clearly, more work needs to be done in systematic study of the shifting role of the palace as institution over time in the ancient Near East, as seen through changes in decorative program, room, and spatial distribution, sight lines, and avenues of approach. What is interesting is that the evidence provided by Mari and the Neo-Assyrian palaces suggests the palace decorative scheme consisted not merely of a single, generalized message appropriate to the "seat of kingship," but of a series of accumulated messages, communicated in individual rooms and areas, that were specifically tailored to the function of associated spaces. One must therefore "read" the sum of those messages to get closer to the overall rhetorical program of the palace.

APPENDIX

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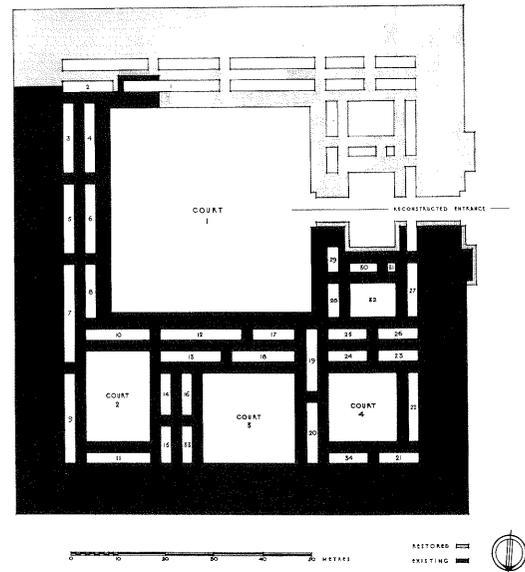
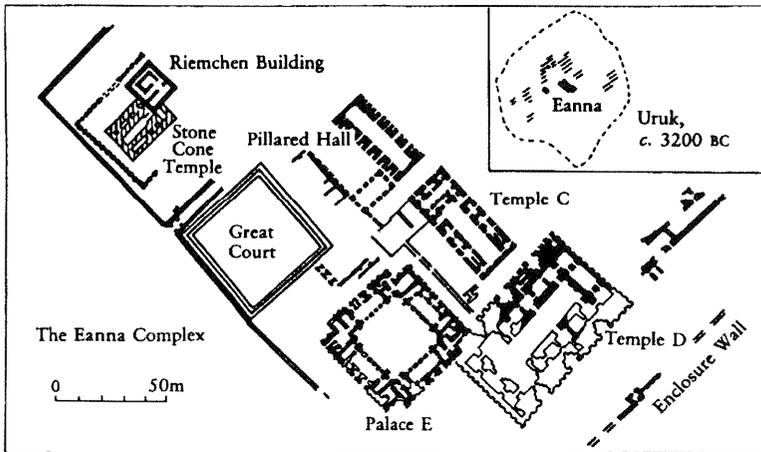


FIG. 1. Uruk/Warka. Plan of Eanna Complex, level IV, ca. 3200 B.C., including "Palace" E (Building 11). From Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia*, fig. 6:4.

FIG. 2. Tell Braq. Plan of Naram-Sin Palace, ca. 2300 B.C. From Heinrich, *Die Paläste*, fig. 22.

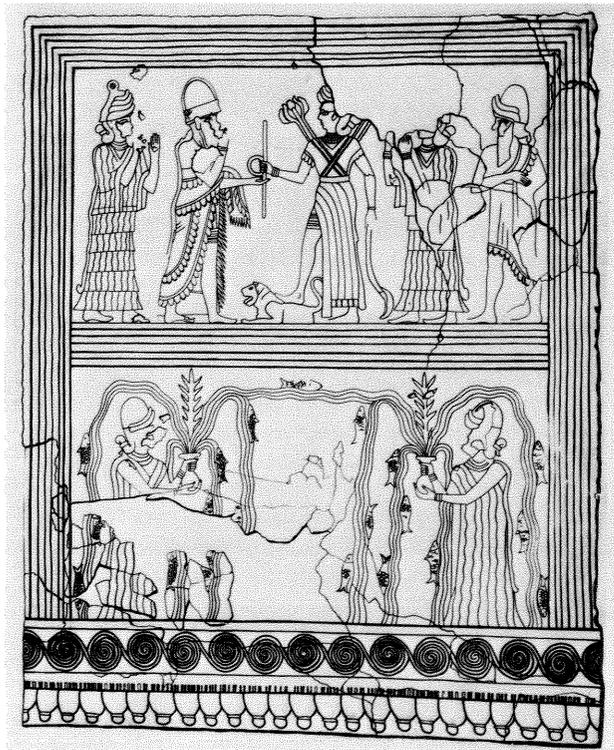


FIG. 3. Mari. Plan of Palace, early 2nd millennium B.C. After Margueron et al., *M.A.R.I.* 6, fig. 1.

FIG. 4. Mari. "Investiture" painting, Palace, court 106, detail. From Parrot, *Mission archéologique de Mari II*, pl. XI.

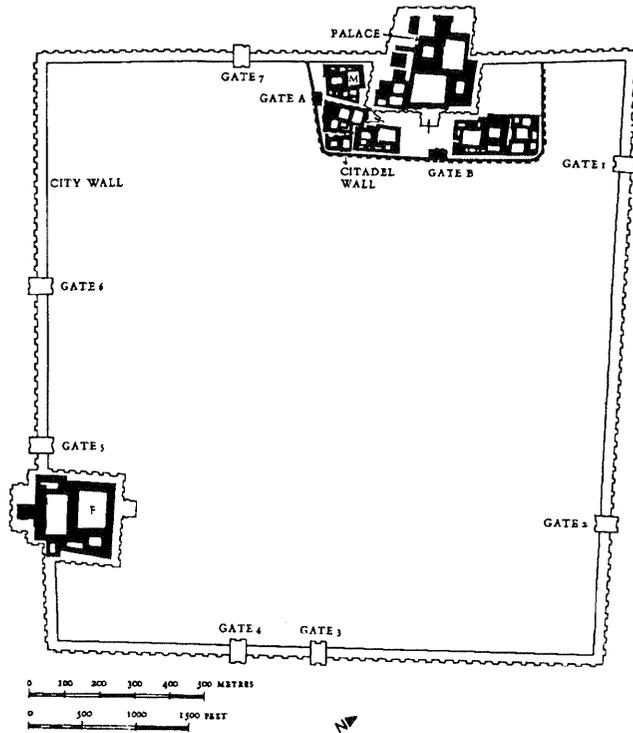


FIG. 5. Khorsabad. Plan of city walls with citadel, built by Sargon II, 8th century B.C. From Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 165.

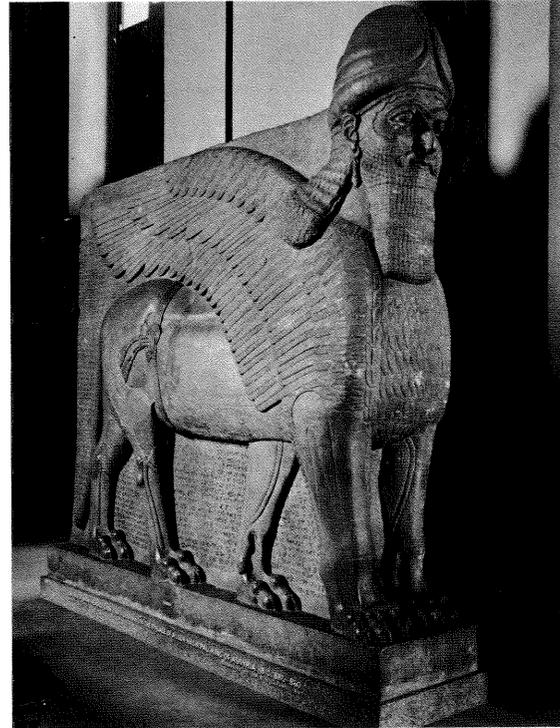


FIG. 6. Nimrud. Colossal gateway figure from entry into throne room B of Northwest Palace of Assurnasirpal II. Photo: courtesy Trustees of the British Museum.

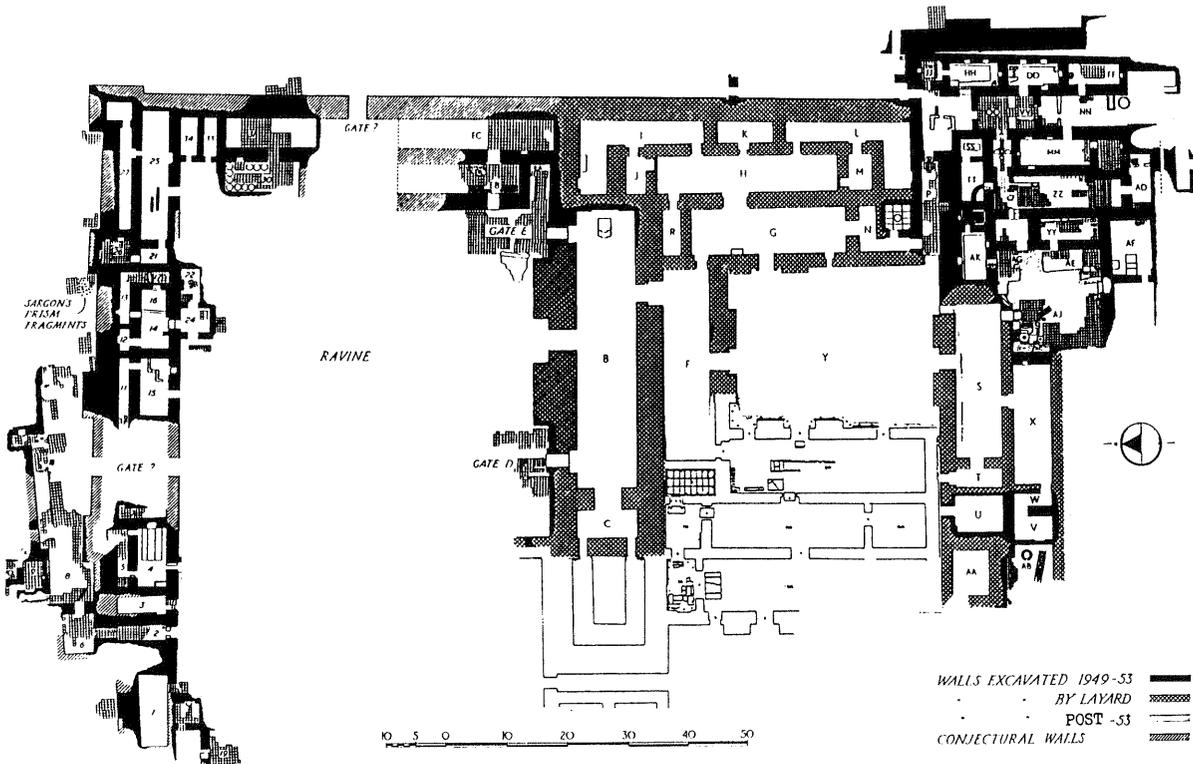


FIG. 7. Nimrud. Plan of Northwest Palace of Assurnasirpal II, 9th century B.C. Composite from several sources, including Mallowan, *Nimrud and Its Remains*, 165, and Heinrich, *Die Paläste*, fig. 55.

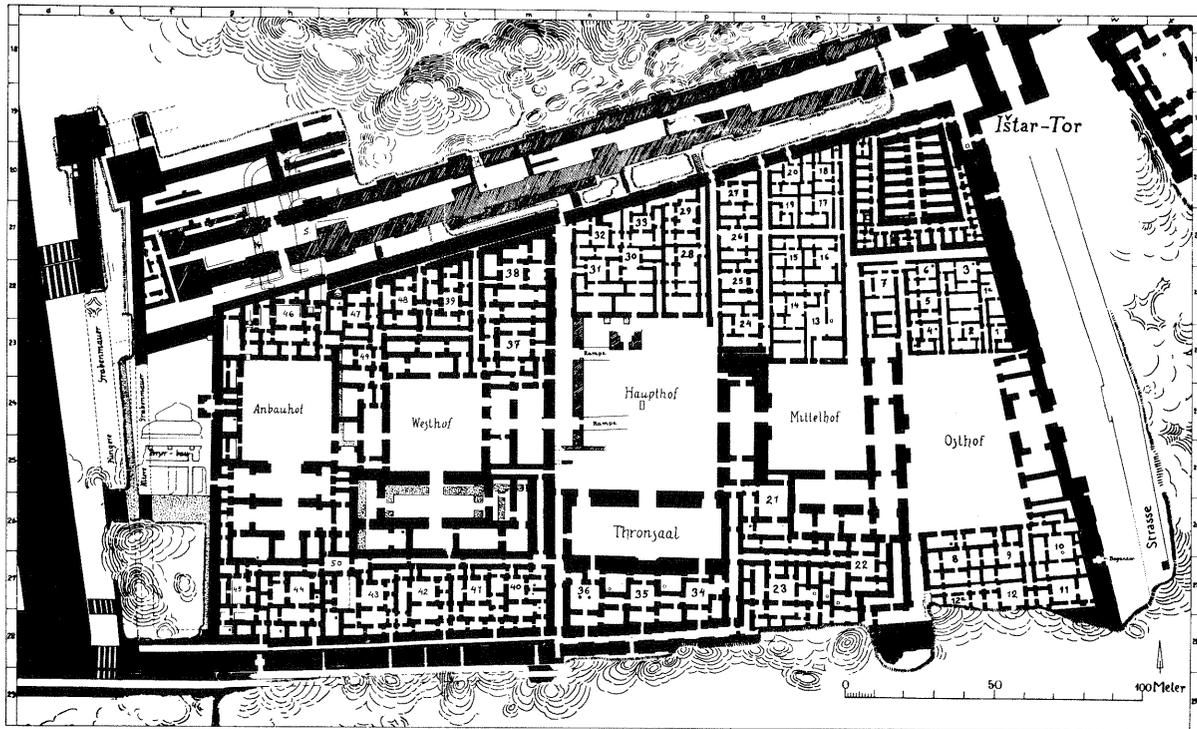


FIG. 8. Babylon. Plan of Southern Palace of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II, 6th century B.C. From Heinrich, *Die Paläste*, fig. 122.

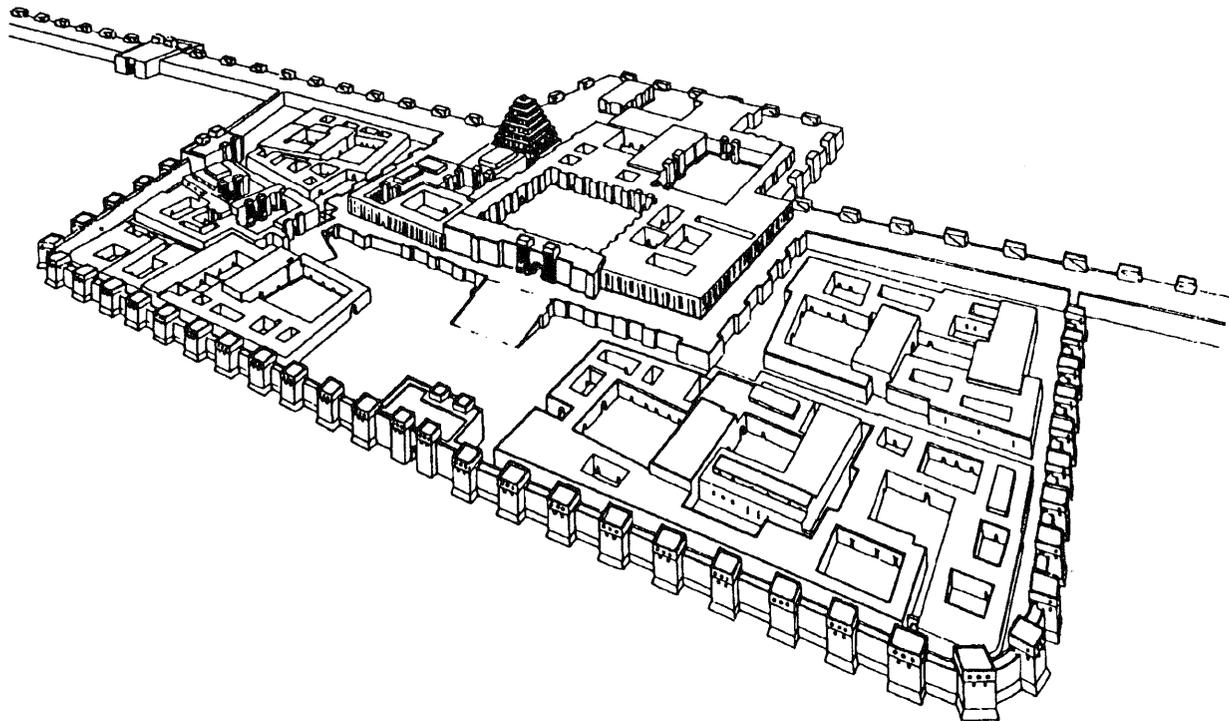


FIG. 9. Khorsabad. Isometric reconstruction of citadel and Palace of Sargon II, 8th century B.C. From Levine, *Bulletin of the Society for Mesopotamian Studies*, fig. 2, drawing by Rob Mason.

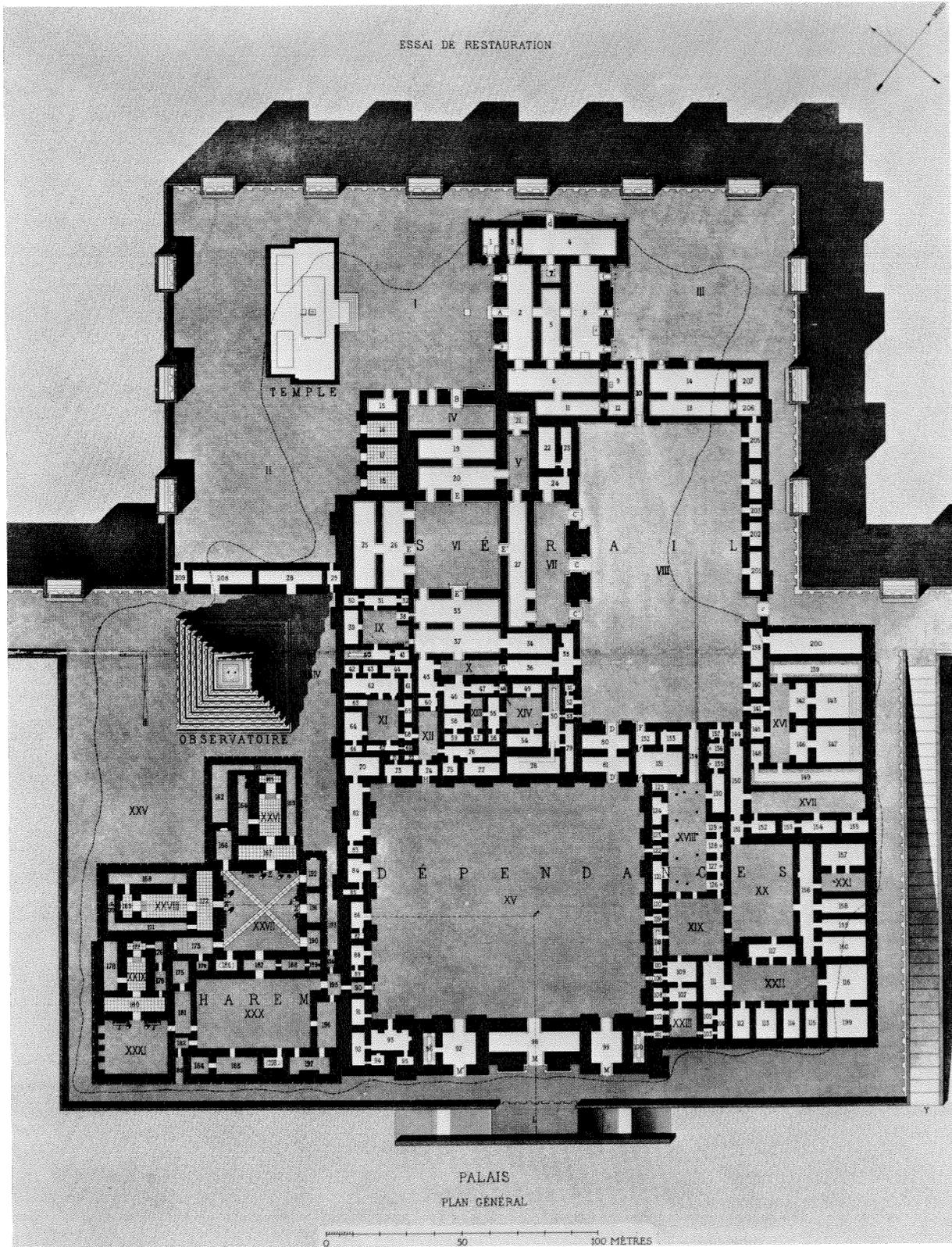


FIG. 10. Khorsabad. Plan of Palace of Sargon II, 8th century b.c. From Loud, *Khorsabad II*, after Place.

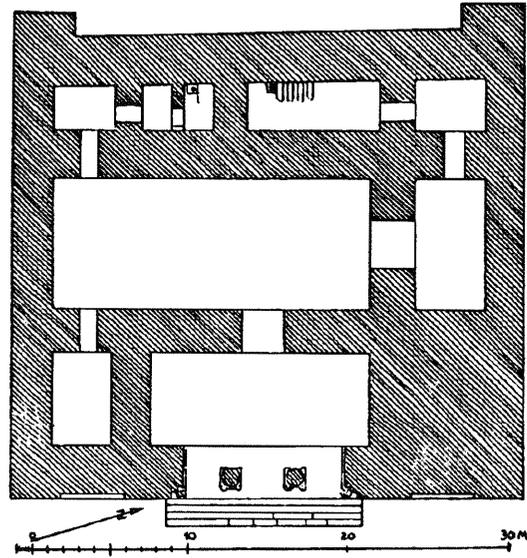


FIG. 11. Zincirli. Plan of Hilani III, 8th century B.C.
After Naumann, *Architektur Kleinasiens*, fig. 448.

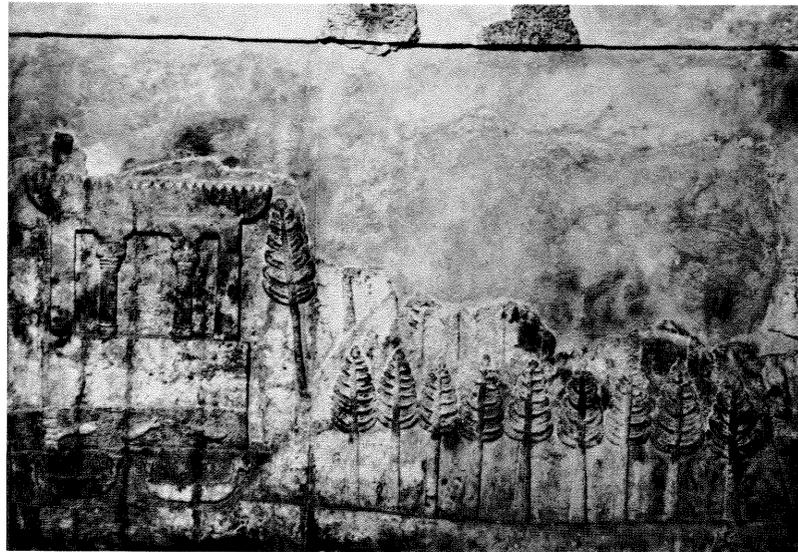


FIG. 12. Khorsabad. Relief showing pavilion in wooded area, from room 7, Palace of Sargon II. Photo: courtesy Oriental Institute, University of Chicago.

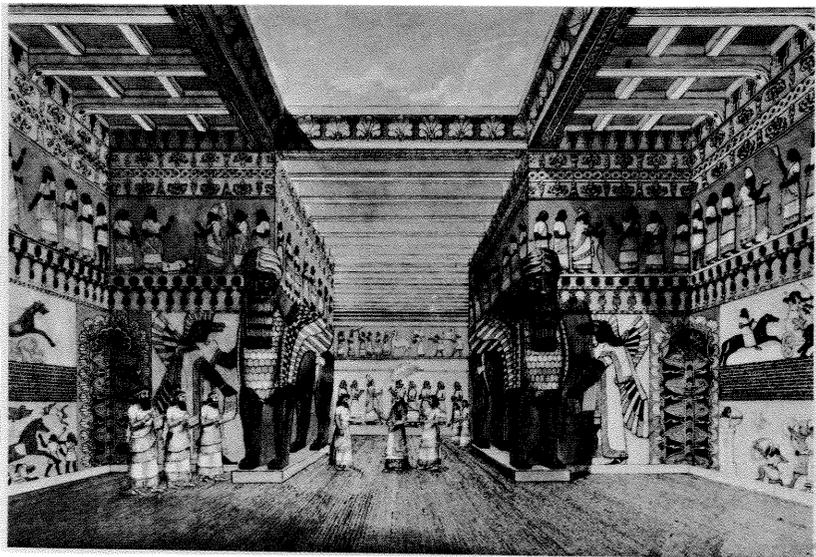


FIG. 13. Nimrud. Watercolor reconstruction of the throne room of Assurasirpal II, room B, Northwest Palace. From Layard, *Monuments of Nineveh*, 1849, pl. 2.



FIG. 14. Nineveh. Relief showing ruler and epigraphic text, in aftermath of the siege of Lachish, from room 36 of the Southeast Palace of Sennacherib, early 7th century B.C. Photo: courtesy Trustees of the British Museum.

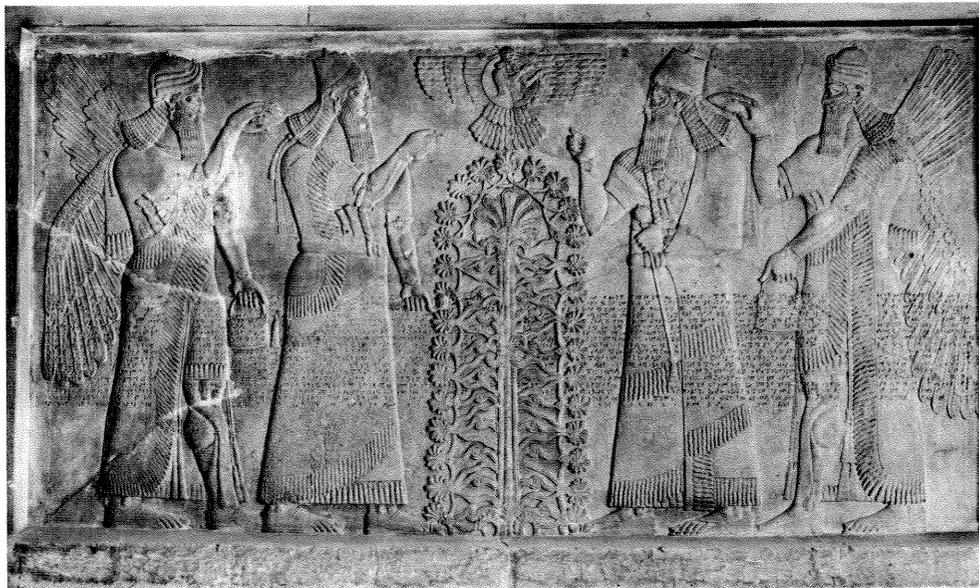


FIG. 15. Nimrud. Relief of king flanking palmette tree, from throne room B, Northwest Palace of Assurnasirpal II. Photo: courtesy Trustees of the British Museum.

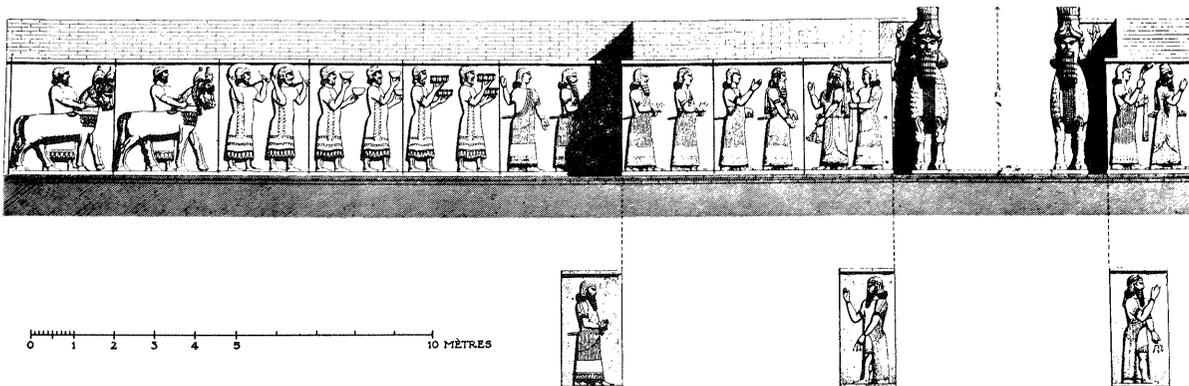


FIG. 16. Khorsabad. Reconstruction of the throne room façade, court VIII, Palace of Sargon II. From Heinrich, *Die Paläste*, fig. 93.