

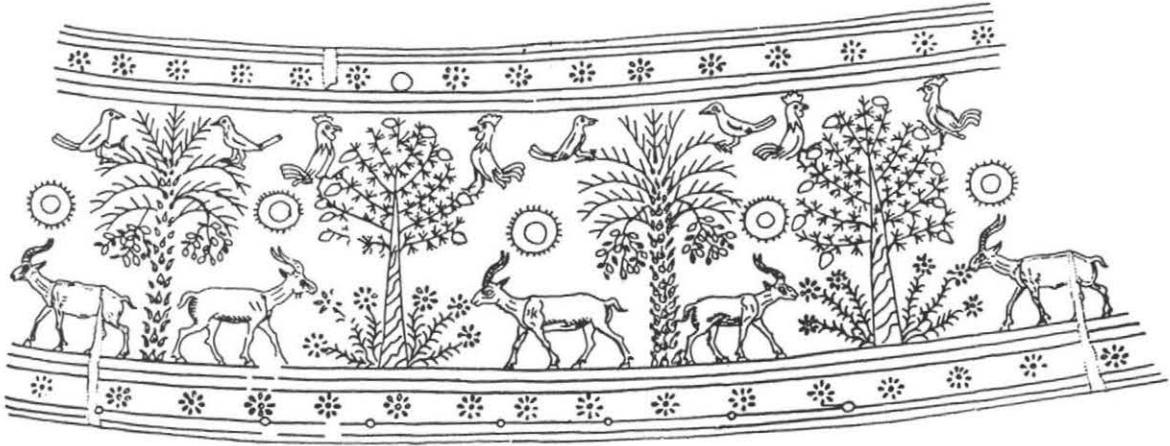
DISCOVERIES AT ASHUR ON THE TIGRIS  
ASSYRIAN ORIGINS

*Antiquities in the  
Vorderasiatisches  
Museum, Berlin*

THE  
METROPOLITAN  
MUSEUM  
OF ART



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*Antiquities in the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin*

*Edited by*

PRUDENCE O. HARPER, EVELYN KLENGEL-BRANDT,

JOAN ARUZ, AND KIM BENZEL

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART NEW YORK

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## FOREWORD

THE SELECTION of antiquities from the ancient city of Ashur in Mesopotamia in this exhibition comes from the spectacular collection of the Vorderasiatisches Museum of the Berlin State Museums. Ashur was a major city in northern Mesopotamia, or Assyria, and the antiquities dating to the third and second millennia B.C. from this site are the subject of the present exhibition. The finds reflect the early development of Assyrian art and culture, a phenomenon that culminates in the first millennium B.C. These works of art have been relatively inaccessible for the past fifty years, so it is with great pleasure that The Metropolitan Museum of Art is able to display them now in New York. We extend most sincere thanks to Wolf-Dieter Dube, General Director, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, through whose cooperative efforts and interest this project has been realized.

Among the earliest controlled archaeological excavations in the Near East were the expeditions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (German Oriental Society). The cities uncovered by the German archaeologists include Uruk, Babylon, and Ashur, names known from the Bible and now familiar to all students of the history of art. A significant part of the finds made at these and other sites in the Near East went eventually to Berlin, where they were placed on display. As the exhibition "Assyrian Origins: Discoveries at Ashur on the Tigris. Antiquities in the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin" is mounted at

the Metropolitan Museum, new plans are being formulated in Berlin for the reinstallation of the antiquities collections—Near Eastern, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman—on the Museum Island, the original home of the Berlin State Museums. Dispersed during World War II, the collections will be brought together again in what promises to be one of the most impressive museum installations of ancient art in the world.

The authors and editors of the present catalogue are members of the curatorial staffs of the departments of Ancient Near Eastern Art at the New York and Berlin museums. Through their collegial efforts, the antiquities excavated at Ashur were selected and are presented with particular reference to archaeological documentation as well as to new art historical and scientific research.

They and I owe thanks to Judy and Michael Steinhart for their financial contribution toward the catalogue, as well as to Shelby White and Leon Levy and to Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan P. Rosen for their support.

We are grateful to The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for its generosity in making the exhibition possible. Additional funding for the exhibition was provided by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

Philippe de Montebello

*Director*

*The Metropolitan Museum of Art*



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THIS EXHIBITION would not have been possible without the constructive support, enthusiastic guidance, and continuing interest of Evelyn Klengel-Brandt, director of the Vorderasiatisches Museum. From our first visits to Berlin to the completion of the catalogue and exhibition, Dr. Klengel-Brandt contributed in almost every aspect of this joint project. We thank her associates and assistants in Berlin who also made constructive suggestions and facilitated our work at each stage.

Here at the Metropolitan Museum, several students worked with us on catalogue research and preparation—Sarah Graff, Jennifer Padden, and Yelena Rakic. We were also greatly assisted by Laurie Tedesco, Hagop Kevorkian Curatorial Fellow in the Department this year. In addition, Robin Menczel, Hagop Kevorkian Curatorial Research Fellow, aided us in proofreading and footnote checking.

Megan Cifarelli, the Norbert Schimmel Fellow for Mediterranean Art and Archaeology, worked closely with the staff of the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art in the preparation of the graphic and text panels for the exhibition as well as the chronological charts, plans, and illustrations used in the catalogue and the exhibition. Her painstaking care is everywhere evident in this catalogue, and we acknowledge her contribution with particular thanks. Cynthia Wilder and ReBecca Ames coordinated and executed various aspects of the project.

The scholarly editing of the catalogue was complex and was accomplished in a most cooperative fashion in spite of the pressures of time and the distance between Berlin and New York. Donald P. Hansen, Stephen Chan Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Art and Archaeology, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, was our chief adviser on the catalogue text, and we are grateful for his time and intelligent efforts on our behalf. Errors inevitably

creep into catalogues at various stages, and we accept final responsibility for any oversights or omissions.

Exhibition catalogues always present challenges to the persons responsible for scholarly publications. At the Metropolitan Museum, the expert advice and broad experience of John O'Neill, Editor in Chief, Barbara Burn, Executive Editor, and Margaret Aspinwall, Senior Editor, supported and guided us from the start. The design was ably conceived and developed by Abby Goldstein, and Rich Bonk supervised all stages of production. The translations of the German texts were made in New York by Russell Stockman. Catalogue and exhibition maps were executed with customary skill by Wilhelmina Reyinga-Amrhein. Site photographs and plans were selected by Evelyn Klengel-Brandt and her staff in Berlin.

The development of the Ashur exhibition plan was in the hands of Daniel Kershaw in the Design Department. Graphics were designed and executed by Sophia Geronimus; the lighting was arranged by Zack Zanolli. The installation was handled by Nancy Reynolds and Alexandra Walcott. Jean-François de Lapérouse was conservator for this project, working with us closely on the exhibition.

Significant additions to both the catalogue and the exhibition are watercolors and drawings by Walter Andrae, the excavator of Ashur. We thank most sincerely the Andrae family for the loan of these works and Evelyn Klengel-Brandt and Rainer Boehmer for transparencies and communications with the owners on our behalf. The Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (German Orient Society) has made available original excavation notebooks and other archival material for the exhibition, for which we are most grateful.

During visits to Berlin, members of the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art were fortunate to be able to stay in the residence of Arthur and Laurie

Sackler. For this gracious hospitality and assistance to the project, we thank them, as well as Marietta Lutze Sackler.

Well illustrated and designed exhibition catalogues that are intended to contribute to scholarship in the field are costly ventures. For their generous support, we thank Judy and Michael Steinhardt who expressed confidence in our project from the start.

THANKS TO the kind invitation of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Vorderasiatisches Museum of the Berlin State Museums is able to present a major exhibition in New York. It is the first time in the nearly one-hundred-year history of the museum that a selection of the most important finds from the German excavations at Ashur has been displayed outside Germany. Among the exhibited objects are many that are little known and that have not previously been properly studied.

The decision to lend these objects was facilitated by the congeniality of Dr. Prudence O. Harper, curator of Ancient Near Eastern Art at the Metropolitan Museum, and her staff. The scholarly discussions throughout our collaborative effort to prepare the exhibition and the catalogue were stimulating and enlightening. For their initiative, their constant attentiveness, and their valuable support, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Harper, Dr. Joan Aruz, and Kim Benzel.

In the Vorderasiatisches Museum, the scholarly staff members—Dr. Ralf-Bernhardt Wartke, Dr. Joachim Marzahn, and Dr. Lutz Martin—played a large role in preparing the exhibition and in writing the catalogue.

Other supporters also stood behind our effort, and we particularly thank Shelby White and Leon Levy, and Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan P. Rosen.

Prudence O. Harper

*Curator in Charge*

*Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

We are grateful to Prof. Dr. Horst Klengel and Dr. Helmut Freydank for their willingness to contribute several entries to the catalogue. Special thanks go to the conservators at the Vorderasiatisches Museum—Uta von Eickstedt, Gert Jendritzki, and Stefan Geismeyer—who, with great skill and sensitivity, expertly cleaned and restored many of the objects exhibited here. The untiring and reliable help of Brigitte Gaspar in our administrative office and of Hans-Joachim Nohka in the storeroom should not go unmentioned. A significant contribution to the success of the catalogue was made by the photography studio of the State Museums under the directorship of Reinhard Saczewski and the photographer Gudrun Stenzel. We also thank the photographer Margarete Büsing for her excellent work.

It is a great pleasure to present to the discerning New York public a small but significant selection from the collections of the Vorderasiatisches Museum of the Berlin State Museums.

Evelyn Klengel-Brandt

*Director*

*Vorderasiatisches Museum  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin  
Preussischer Kulturbesitz*

# INTRODUCTION

A NATURAL FOCUS for an exhibition designed to illustrate and define cultural developments in the third and second millennia B.C. in Assyria (northern Mesopotamia) is the political, religious, and cultural center of Ashur. This ancient city, situated on a bank rising high above the Tigris River, was first excavated between 1903 and 1914 by an expedition of the German Oriental Society under the direction of Walter Andrae. The objects found at Ashur by Andrae and his team are now, in part, housed in the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, and it is from this body of material that selections for the present exhibition were made.

The site of Ashur has produced a wealth of information, from the levels of the mid-third millennium B.C., where contemporary southern Mesopotamian and Syrian influences are evident, to the massive remains of Iranian Parthian date in the late first millennium B.C. This material has been published comprehensively and eloquently by the German Oriental Society in numerous volumes first produced under the leadership of Andrae and in many instances written by him.

The present exhibition concentrates on finds dating to the third and second millennia B.C., many of which have been reexamined and restored in recent years in Berlin through the efforts of Evelyn Klengel-Brandt and her staff at the Vorderasiatisches Museum. As described in Dr. Klengel-Brandt's essay on the excavations at Ashur and the Vorderasiatisches Museum, the history of the ancient Near Eastern collection included the dismantling and storage of the objects in Berlin during World War II and the recovery of the material following the war. The collection was then reinstalled in the magnificent setting originally designed by Andrae on Berlin's Museum Island. Now the continuing restoration of the Ashur finds, their publication, and their eventual rearrangement in refurbished galleries remain the primary concern of the Vorderasiatisches Museum and the German Oriental Society.

To revisit Ashur at this time is to appreciate the results of recent research and study and to recognize how many questions remain concerning the early

cultures that developed in northern Mesopotamia. The main emphasis in this exhibition is on groups of objects that can be attributed to specific find contexts, such as the Ishtar Temple, an Old Assyrian grave (Grave 20), and a Middle Assyrian tomb (Tomb 45). However, even these excavated objects raise questions about date, function, and methods and sources of manufacture. In addition, because of the lack of securely dated monuments from both southern and northern Mesopotamia, the attribution and dating of major sculptures remain uncertain. Two of the most beautiful and impressive works in this exhibition, the small head of a female worshiper (cat. no. 5) and the almost life-size diorite image of a ruler (cat. no. 22) belong to this category. The latter piece remains enigmatic in spite of the startling discovery by Iraqi archaeologists working at Ashur of a male head which, as Dr. Evelyn Klengel-Brandt observed recently, fits the body excavated over seven decades earlier by Walter Andrae.

One object in damaged condition belongs to a distinctive class of high-relief sculptured vases (cat. no. 1), a relatively uncommon type, known from examples excavated in southern Mesopotamia but not previously from finds in the north or in Syria. This stone vessel is part of the small corpus of material that derived from the earliest levels of the Ishtar Temple at Ashur. A hoard of copper/bronze objects of late-third-millennium date found in the Ashur Temple (cat. nos. 12–21) can now be better understood after examinations in the laboratories of the Vorderasiatisches Museum. New ideas regarding the significance of the lavish Old and Middle Assyrian burials of the early to mid-second millennium B.C. (Grave 20 and Tomb 45) have resulted from opportunities to reexamine the grave contents, with particular attention to techniques of jewelry manufacture, as well as to original field drawings and notes. The results of these analyses further define various types of cultural interaction between northern Mesopotamia and its neighbors.

It is evident from the material recovered by Walter Andrae at Ashur that contacts with foreign

cultures were essential to the formation of societies in the third millennium B.C. Both Sumerian and Akkadian artistic styles from more southern regions of Mesopotamia are reflected in many of the earliest works of art found at the site. By the early second millennium, the variety of objects found in the Old Assyrian burials at Ashur are testimony to a trading network that brought raw materials and finished products through Ashur. As trade and diplomatic interconnections increased throughout the Near East, a shared cultural heritage developed, and by the fourteenth century B.C., works of art from different parts of the Near Eastern world were executed in styles that combine Egyptian, Anatolian, Mesopotamian, Syrian, and Aegean elements. This mixed cultural phenomenon is particularly evident in the luxury goods, ivories, and jewelry that were found in a Middle Assyrian tomb at Ashur (cat. nos. 45–60).

All of the works of art selected for the exhibition call to our attention the considerable talents and intellect of Walter Andrae. His presentation of the materials he unearthed as a young man placed in charge of a major excavation for the first time remains in many ways a model. Bringing to his task an imaginative vision, an artist's talent, and the careful and disciplined mind of a trained architect, Andrae created a living world around the ruins of Ashur (see color pl. 16). His publications of the Ashur excavations include the scholarly volumes of the German Oriental Society as well as a more general but still detailed survey of archaeological work at the site, all listed in the bibliography. Art historians, archaeologists, and general readers of the descriptions of the objects by Andrae in these reports can appreciate the keen and sensitive observations of this perceptive individual. Working on the Ishtar Temple, a complex

structure built, destroyed, and rebuilt over the millennia, Andrae developed the stratigraphic techniques that are now standard methods of investigation in the field. The plans, sections, elevations, and reconstructions of this structure (see fig. 5) illustrate his achievement as he painstakingly attempted to record floor and debris levels, locations of internal structures, and placement of objects. While the reconstructions and imaginative renderings produced by Andrae, notably of the Ishtar Temple Cult Room (fig. 6), are now a form of documentation that is largely out of style, many of the elements in this re-creation can still be accepted, and his drawing is often reproduced. The low benches in the Cult Room, later found also in temples in southern Mesopotamia, may well have served as bases for the statues of worshipers. Only the immense divine image placed on the far wall, which was modeled on the tiny gypsum plaque found in the temple and now in the British Museum, is entirely speculation. There is still no archaeological evidence from Mesopotamian sites in this period, about 2500 B.C., attesting to the physical appearance of major statues of divinities centrally placed in temples.

The works of art of the third and second millennia B.C. excavated at Ashur and presented here illustrate stages in the development of a cultural identity and of a political and economic state whose influence in these early centuries gradually expanded across the ancient Near Eastern world. The culmination of the Assyrian achievement came in the first millennium B.C., when Assyrian power spread outward from the great cities of Ashur, Nineveh, and Nimrud, and a vast world empire greater than anything previously known in the Near East came into existence.

P.O.H.

### *Note to the Reader*

Because the languages of the ancient Near East are incompletely understood, scholars do not entirely agree on their transcription. In this catalogue, names are generally spelled following the most commonly used transcriptions.

The "Chronology for Ashur and Southern Mesopotamia" is based on Brinkman, in Oppenheim 1977, 335–48, with adjustments to the dates of Shamshi-Adad I suggested

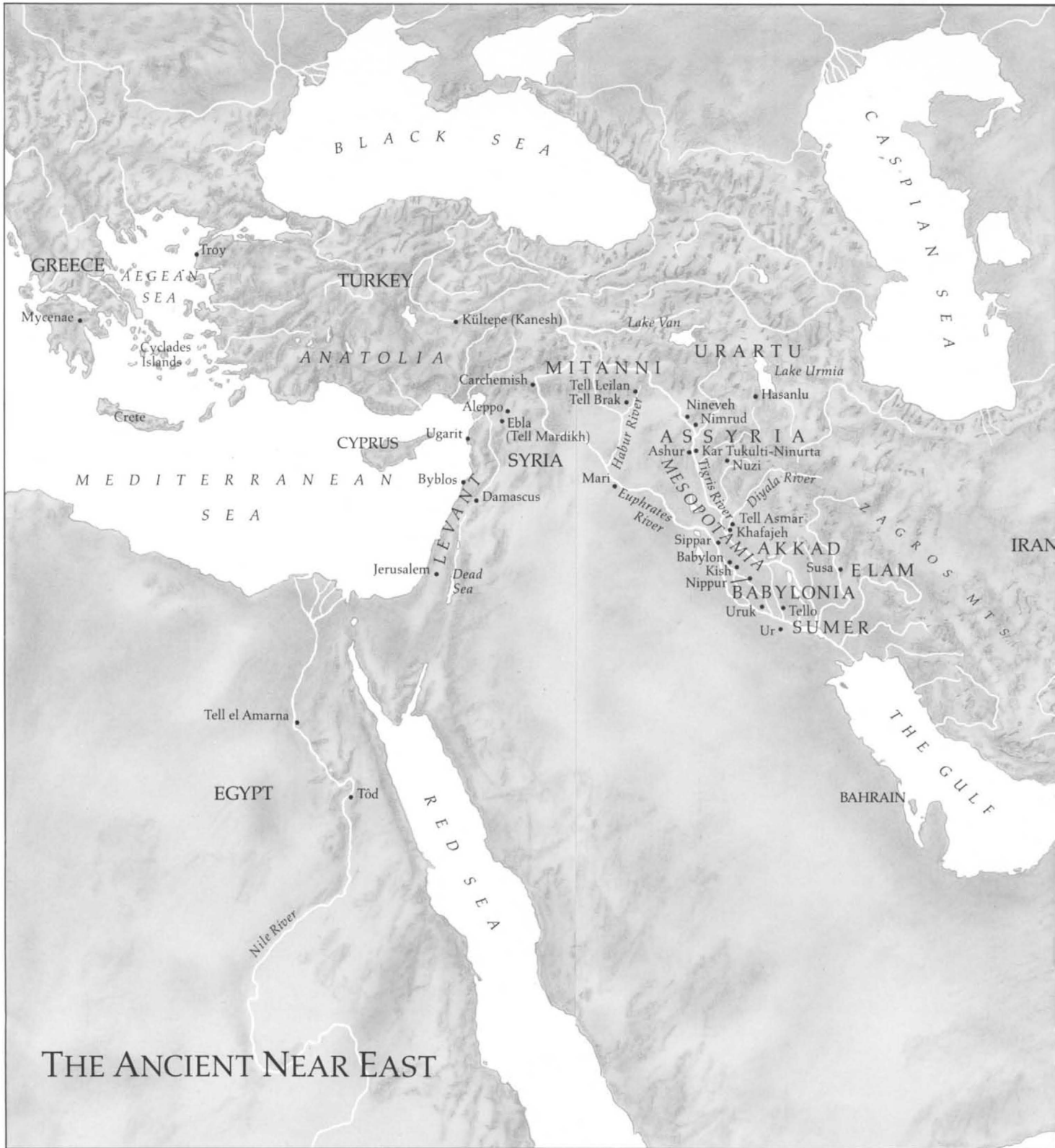
by Durand 1990, 271–75. Dates provided for a ruler give the time of the individual's known activity and do not necessarily represent either a life span or the duration of a reign.

In the headings to the catalogue entries, the numbers in parentheses following the Vorderasiatisches Museum inventory numbers are the numbers assigned to objects at the time of the excavation.

Throughout the catalogue, the word "tomb" refers to a structure for burial above or below ground, while "grave" indicates simply a burial in the earth.

# CHRONOLOGY FOR ASHUR AND SOUTHERN MESOPOTAMIA

DATE B.C	HISTORICAL PERIODS AND RULERS AT ASHUR	HISTORICAL PERIODS AND RULERS OF SOUTHERN MESOPOTAMIA	ANATOLIA AND THE LEVANT
4000		URUK PERIOD	CHALCOLITHIC AGE
3500			
3100	PERIODS OF SUMERIAN CULTURAL INFLUENCE	JEMDET NASR PERIOD	
2900		EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD	EARLY BRONZE AGE
2600	<i>Ashur Ishtar Temple Level H</i> <i>Ashur Ishtar Temple Level G</i>		Troy II
2300	PERIODS OF AKKADIAN CULTURAL INFLUENCE AND CONTROL Azuzu (governor of Ashur under Manishtushu)	AKKADIAN PERIOD  Sargon (2334–2279) Manishtushu (2269–2255) Naram-Sin (2254–2218)	
2100	PERIODS OF NEO-SUMERIAN/UR III CULTURAL INFLUENCE AND CONTROL Zariqum (governor of Ashur under Amar-Sin)	NEO-SUMERIAN/UR III PERIOD Gudea of Lagash (ca. 2100) Ur-Nammu (2112–2095) Shulgi (2094–2047) Amar-Sin (2046–2038)	
2000	OLD ASSYRIAN PERIOD Sulili Puzur-Ashur I Shalim-ahum Ilu-shumma Erishum I	ISIN-LARSA PERIOD	MIDDLE BRONZE AGE
1900	Ikunum Sargon I Puzur-Ashur II Naram-Sin Erishum II		OLD ASSYRIAN COLONY PERIOD IN ANATOLIA Kültepe <i>karum</i> level II (ca. 1920–1840)
1800	Shamshi-Adad I (1815–1782) Ishme-Dagan I (1782–1742) Puzur-Sin	OLD BABYLONIAN PERIOD Hammurabi (1792–1750)	Kültepe <i>karum</i> level Ib (ca. 1840–1740)
1600			LATE BRONZE AGE
1400	MIDDLE ASSYRIAN PERIOD Eriba-Adad I (1390–1364) Ashur-uballit I (1363–1328) Arik-din-ili (1317–1306)	KASSITE PERIOD  Burnaburiash II (1359–1333)	HITTITE EMPIRE
1300	Adad-nirari I (1305–1274) Shalmaneser I (1273–1244) Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243–1207)	Kashtiliash IV (1232–1225)	
1200	Ashur-resha-ishi I (1132–1115)	ISIN II PERIOD	
1100	Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076)	Nebuchadnezzar I (1125–1104)	IRON AGE
1000			





### ASHUR IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

THE CITY OF ASHUR, on the site now known as Qalat Sherqat, was located on the west bank of the Tigris River south of the richest agricultural region of northern Mesopotamia. At Ashur, the summer is extremely hot and dry, and the winter cold, with a brief rainy period in the spring. Lacking reliable, sufficient rainfall for cultivation without irrigation, Ashur's great wealth and regional importance were therefore largely derived from its strategic location.

Constructed on a high, rocky plateau on the bank of the Tigris River, the city overlooked an important river route between southern and northern Mesopotamia. It also lay on the caravan routes that connected Anatolia and the Levant with the highlands of Iran. By the beginning of the second millennium B.C., Ashur was an important hub in a vast trade network that centered on Assyria and Anatolia, but drew upon raw materials and technology from as far away as Afghanistan, the Indus River valley, and the Arabian peninsula. Later in the second millennium Ashur maintained important contacts with the Levant, Egypt, and the Aegean world.

M.C.

Fig. 1. Map of the ancient Near East. Adapted from Harper, Aruz, and Tallon 1992, fig. 1, drawn by Wilhelmina Reyinga-Amrhein



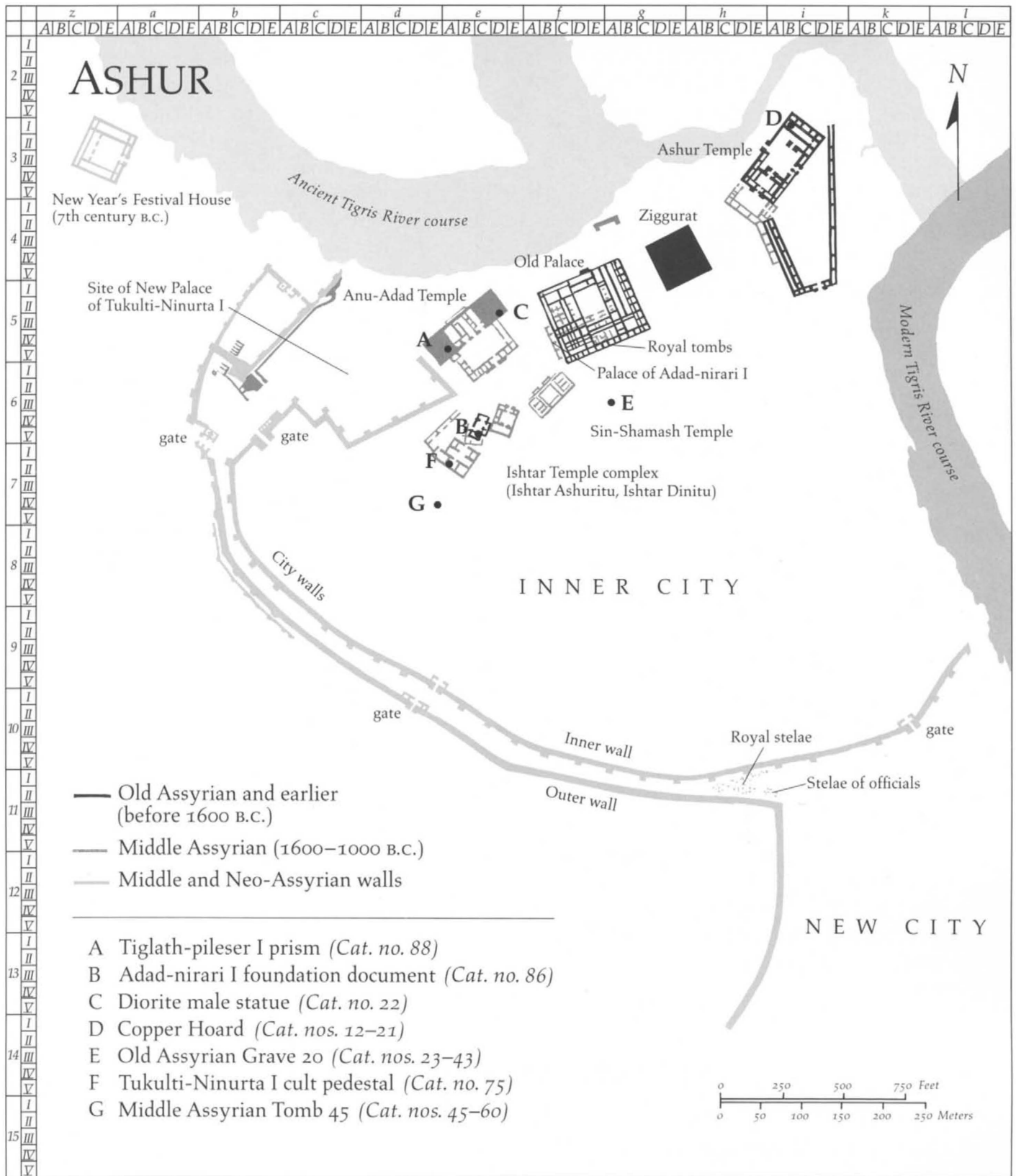


Fig. 2. Site plan of the city of Ashur showing locations of major finds. Drawn by Wilhelmina Reyinga-Amrhein, after Roaf 1990, 129

## THE HISTORY OF THE EXCAVATIONS AT ASHUR AND OF THE VORDERASIATISCHES MUSEUM

IN OCTOBER 1903, fresh from his successful excavations in Babylon, Robert Koldewey began a second German undertaking in Iraq, the archaeological investigation of the mound Qalat Sherqat—ancient Ashur (fig. 1). He appointed his colleague Walter Andrae as director of the dig (fig. 3). A young architect who had already proven himself in Babylon, Andrae led the excavation up to the time it was brought to a close in 1914.

The ruins of Qalat Sherqat had previously attracted but little attention, for they lay well off the traveled roads in Mesopotamia, and Ashur was not one of the more familiar cities long known from the Bible such as Babylon, Ur, or Nippur. The British archaeologist Austen Henry Layard, excavator of the palaces of the Assyrian kings in Nineveh and Kalhu (Nimrud), had stopped there only briefly in 1847 and 1850–51, as had Hormuzd Rassam, his associate, somewhat later. In their investigations at Ashur, they had turned up, among other things, a monumental statue of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III and a few prisms of Tiglath-pileser I (see a similar one in cat. no. 88).<sup>1</sup>

Walter Andrae set out to research the layout of the city in its various stages of development as precisely as possible, and he turned first to its defense works<sup>2</sup> and to the remains of monumental structures in the north of the city (fig. 2).<sup>3</sup> In various spots he managed to penetrate down into the oldest settlement strata, thus determining that in Ashur he had found one of the most important sites for the development of the Assyrian state.

Ashur occupied a strategic position on a high, rocky plateau protected on the east by the Tigris River (see color pl. 1). The main approach to the city was from the west, where there were several heavily fortified gates. Additional bulwarks were built to the north that connected with fortifications to the west and south of the city. Although Ashur served only rarely in its long history as the sole residence of the Assyrian rulers, it had such great religious impor-



Fig. 3. Walter Andrae, *Self-Portrait at Ashur*, 1908. Chalk on tinted paper, H. 8 $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (23 cm). Collection of Ernst Andrae

tance and was of such significance in the development of Assyrian traditions that it was constantly enriched with new structures over the millennia.

The temple to the goddess Ishtar, in the central part of the city, can be traced back into the late Early Dynastic period (ca. 2500–2334 B.C.; figs. 2, 5).<sup>4</sup> It was frequently renovated or entirely rebuilt with a different ground plan.<sup>5</sup> The city's most important shrine, consecrated to the god Ashur, stood at the highest point, on a rocky spur in the northeast. Almost all of the Assyrian rulers took particular care of it, adding new structures or expanding and renovating it. The nearby ziggurat (fig. 4), first consecrated to Enlil, the most important god in the pantheon, then later to Ashur, still stands to a height of roughly 30 meters and is the city's landmark.<sup>6</sup> The "Old Palace," covering over 12,000 square meters, was erected in the beginning of the second millennium B.C. on buildings of the Akkadian–Ur III periods

(2334–2004 B.C.). It was used as one of the original administrative and trading centers of Ashur. After numerous rebuildings, it would receive the tombs of various Assyrian kings in the first millennium B.C.<sup>7</sup> The greater part of a later building, the “New Palace,” was built over with residential structures toward the end of the second millennium B.C.<sup>8</sup> The double shrine to Anu and Adad, complete with two tower structures (ziggurats), and the temple precinct for the gods Sin and Shamash were created during the second millennium B.C.<sup>9</sup>

In the southern part of the site, between the inner and the outer walls that surrounded the city of Ashur, Walter Andrae discovered objects with important information about the city’s history. In that area there had been set up monuments of various sizes bearing the names of a few kings, as well as names, genealogy, and functions of high Assyrian officials. The names of these officials were used as eponyms (Assyrian *limmu*), and were recorded in lists on clay tablets to mark the progression of time.<sup>10</sup> The king’s name was used as the eponym in the first year of his reign. In each succeeding year a different official’s name was used as the eponym.

The huge extent of the ruins, with a total of 1.3 square kilometers, or more than 321 acres, precluded a complete archaeological examination of the city area at the outset. To establish at least an overview of its structures, Walter Andrae had trial trenches dug across the site at intervals of 100 meters. The main finds were remains of residential buildings and graves from various periods, which yielded clay tablets and numerous small objects.<sup>11</sup>

Assyrian rulers of all periods celebrated the most important religious festivals in Ashur. As late as the seventh century B.C., Sennacherib erected a New Year’s Festival House with a processional avenue on the plain northwest of the city (fig. 32).<sup>12</sup> Ashur lost its importance as a major center following the conquest and partial destruction of the city in 614 B.C., but in the second century B.C., after the Parthians, a Hellenized Iranian dynasty, had seized power, it flourished anew. As the seat of a Parthian governor, it was given new temples and palace structures, notably the Parthian palace in the southeast. The city area was once again occupied, and for the most

part the dead were buried beside the fortification walls of the Neo-Assyrian period that had collapsed in the interim.<sup>13</sup>

During the years 1903–14, in which excavation by a large number of workers proceeded without interruption, Walter Andrae was able to ascertain the layout of the ancient city and its most important structures. In addition to his study of ground plans, building periods, and architectural details, the large numbers of smaller finds and, especially, written documents (clay tablets, inscribed bricks, foundation offerings, and monumental stone inscriptions) from all periods of the city’s settlement have provided insight into the development of the metropolis and Assyrian history in general.<sup>14</sup>

The antiquities authorities in the Ottoman Turkish Empire, which then ruled Iraq, had agreed with the Germans to a division of the anticipated finds when they issued the excavation permits for archaeological investigation in the ruins of Qalat Sherqat, ancient Ashur. When excavations were ended in Ashur in 1914, the majority of the finds were still in the excavation headquarters there. Walter Andrae was obliged to pack them up and ultimately set out on the Tigris for Baghdad with seven hundred boxes. The final division took place in Baghdad, negotiated between representatives of the Ottoman government and the excavators. The pieces that went to Turkey were transferred to the archaeological museum in Istanbul. The remaining boxes were loaded onto a German ship that was supposed to take them back to Germany from Basra. The excavation team arrived home in good time, but the German ship happened to be in the harbor at Lisbon at the moment Portugal entered the First World War, whereupon the cargo was confiscated and the Ashur finds were handed over to a museum in Oporto.

Once the war ended and the staff of the Berlin museums was able to resume work, the archaeologists and philologists had access to drawings and photographs from the excavations in Ashur and Babylon but few original artifacts, for most of the finds from Babylon had been held in Iraq while those from Ashur waited in Oporto. After years of

effort and intense negotiation Walter Andrae finally managed to ransom the Ashur finds in Oporto for other works of art from the Berlin museums. That was in 1926. About the same time, the antiquities authorities in Iraq, under English sponsorship, released the boxes of objects from Babylon.

Just then, as work on the long-unfinished new Pergamon Museum on the Museum Island in Berlin drew close to completion, the large exhibition halls on the main floor of its south wing were offered to the Vorderasiatisches Museum (the ancient Near Eastern section). Walter Andrae was appointed director of the Vorderasiatisches Museum in 1928, and through his initiative and imagination as an architect, full-scale reconstructions of various ancient Near Eastern monuments were realized.<sup>15</sup> Glazed bricks from the splendid buildings of Nebuchadnezzar II from Babylon had arrived in Berlin in the form of thousands of fragments. In just two years these were desalinated, conserved, and assembled, so that in 1930, for the centenary of the state museums, a part of the Vorderasiatisches Museum with the Processional Street and the Ishtar Gate from Babylon was opened to the public along with the Pergamon Altar, the market gate of Miletus, and other ancient monumental structures in the Pergamon Museum.

A whole wing of the Vorderasiatisches Museum consisting of three large halls was devoted to the finds from Ashur. In one, Andrae reconstructed a portion of the Ashur city walls faced with glazed bricks. Among the monumental pieces exhibited were limestone and lead foundation stones discovered in the Ishtar-Ashuritu Temple, numerous large-scale inscribed stelae, and a water basin, reassembled from countless fragments, from the forecourt of the Ashur Temple. All of these were placed on view after 1930 along with a great number of smaller finds, such as ceramics, terracottas, jewelry, metal utensils, and clay tablets from various periods.

For a few years the public and specialists could visit the exhibits. Then in 1939, with the outbreak of the Second World War, the museums were closed and the artifacts packed. Walter Andrae successfully opposed storing his museum's antiquities off the

premises of the Museum Island, and they were finally placed in the cellar of the Pergamon Museum, where they survived the war.<sup>16</sup> Then, like most works of art remaining in museums and in other storage places controlled by the Russians, they were taken into custody and many were transported to the Soviet Union. By 1951, despite heavy damage to the museum buildings, the Vorderasiatisches Museum reopened some of its rooms to the public. Many of the familiar treasures like the cult pedestal of Tukulti-Ninurta I (cat. no. 75), the diorite statue of an Akkadian ruler from Ashur (cat. no. 22), and the wall reliefs from the palaces in Kalhu were missing; they were replaced either by plaster casts or by objects that had been left in the storerooms.

Actual reconstruction and redesign of museum exhibits were begun in 1958–59, when the majority of the art objects removed to the Soviet Union were returned. Unlike many of the other German state museums, the Vorderasiatisches Museum did not lose too many of its holdings as the result of the war, and none of them had been stored in what became the western zone. However, among the losses, unfortunately, were some of the loveliest pieces of jewelry in gold and other precious metals. Only a portion of the rich ensemble of Middle Assyrian jewelry from Tomb 45 at Ashur survives (cat. nos. 55–60), having turned up in West Berlin in the 1960s.

Through the decades in which the museums belonged to the German Democratic Republic, the important archaeological and art-historical collections on Berlin's Museum Island were supported as tourist and scholarly attractions. The existence of the border and the lack of funds made further expansion of the Museum Island and international contacts problematic. Even so there was a certain amount of scholarly work and exhibitions. In the Vorderasiatisches Museum, the displays were redesigned following Walter Andrae's original concept.<sup>17</sup> The staff devoted itself to reorganizing and inventorying storeroom holdings and to publishing catalogues and scholarly studies.

A new era in the development of the Berlin museums was begun with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the decision to merge the institutions in

the East and West. The Vorderasiatisches Museum has not lost objects through the division of inventories, as some of the other museums have, and anticipates adding Near Eastern artifacts acquired through purchase and as shares from excavations that are stored at the moment in the Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte in Charlottenburg, formerly in the West.

The Vorderasiatisches Museum has an important place in the plan for the future arrangement of the Berlin museum landscape worked out by the various archaeological museums.<sup>18</sup> As the sole important collection of ancient Near Eastern cultural artifacts in Germany, it plans to modernize and expand its permanent exhibitions within the building complex of the Pergamon Museum. Efforts to publish the results of early German excavations in the Near East will be intensified. In conjunction with the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (German Oriental Society), which supported the excavations in Ashur, the museum plans to concentrate on publishing the finds, thereby realizing the project initiated by Walter Andrae at Ashur.

In Ashur, after Andrae's excavations ended in 1914, no more work was done for decades. The floor plans and portions of buildings he had uncovered gradually eroded and were once again covered with sand. It was not until after 1945 that the Iraqi antiquities authorities began to preserve the ruins. Their efforts have been intensified since 1978 with a program of excavation and restoration. In recent years, the main focus has been on the reconstruction of portions of the city walls and gates, the ziggurat, the Ashur Temple, and other monumental structures.<sup>19</sup>

In 1989, a new German expedition under the direction of Barthel Hrouda began archaeological research in Ashur, but political events soon brought these to a halt.<sup>20</sup> Ashur will continue to be an important site, and doubtless in the future informative excavation and research work will be carried out there. Large areas of the city precinct remain virtually uninvestigated, especially areas in which it

would be possible to penetrate to the deeper layers of settlement. Sources for the early periods of Assyrian history and less well understood centuries of the second millennium B.C. are still buried at Ashur.

E.K.-B.

1. Pallis 1956, 348f.
2. Andrae 1913a.
3. Andrae 1909; Preusser 1955; Haller and Andrae 1955.
4. Andrae 1922.
5. Andrae 1935.
6. Haller and Andrae 1955.
7. Preusser 1955.
8. Preusser 1954.
9. Andrae 1909; Haller and Andrae 1955.
10. Andrae 1913b.
11. Preusser 1954; Haller 1954.
12. Haller and Andrae 1955, 74ff.
13. Andrae and Lenzen 1933.
14. For publications of the written documents, see the bibliography in Andrae 1977, 315ff.  
Andrae published extensively on the eleven demanding but productive years of excavation at Ashur. Concerning the scientific results, see Andrae 1938a; for the excavation in general and his personal experiences, see his reminiscences, Andrae 1961.
15. A summary of Walter Andrae's many artistic works based on the excavation results is published in E.W. Andrae and Boehmer 1989. Numbers of W. Andrae's books and articles include reconstruction drawings of buildings and city views.
16. The facts briefly touched upon here are colorfully described in Andrae 1961.
17. Regarding the reorganizations of the exhibition, see the catalogues Meyer 1956, Meyer 1965, and *Vorderasiatisches Museum* 1987. Of the various scholarly publications, let me point out only the resumption of the series *Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler*, n.s. 1–8, in which the cuneiform tablets in the Vorderasiatisches Museum are presented, and numerous archaeological publications such as Jakob-Rost 1975, Klengel-Brandt 1978, and Wartke 1983.
18. See the articles and documentation in *Jahrbuch Preussischer Kulturbesitz* 28 (1992) and 29 (1993).
19. Reports on work in progress were published mainly in the journal *Sumer*; see, for instance, *Sumer* 35 (1979), 23ff., 278ff.; *Sumer* 42 (1981), 95ff.
20. See a short summary in Hrouda 1991, 95ff. In the years 1989 and 1990, Reinhard Dittmann worked in Ashur by default, having been forced to interrupt his excavations in Kar Tukulti-Ninurta. He concentrated primarily on the region southwest of the Sin-Shamash Temple; see Dittmann 1990.

## THE HISTORY OF ASHUR IN THE THIRD AND SECOND MILLENNIA B.C.

ASHUR'S GEOGRAPHIC POSITION was a decisive factor in the founding and development of the city-state. Qalat Sherqat, the site of the first-millennium B.C. ritual center of Assyria, is not in a major agricultural area (fig. 1). Based on its mean annual precipitation of roughly  $7\frac{3}{4}$  inches (200 mm) a year, the region belongs to the so-called Fertile Crescent, but its arable lands lie for the most part in the valley of the Tigris River, below the city. To the west, the land merges with the upper Mesopotamian desert steppe.

Other factors must have been responsible for the establishment of a settlement at Qalat Sherqat as early as the first half of the third millennium B.C. (the Early Dynastic period). Ashur occupies a rocky, high plateau that is part of the northwestern foothills of the low mountain range called the Jebel Hamrin, which is cut through by the Tigris at Qalat Sherqat (see color pl. 1). This terrace next to the river valley, with steep sides facing the river to the

north and east, clearly offered a certain protection from attackers and at the same time provided a view of the traffic moving up and down the valley of the Tigris. It was perhaps this last aspect of the site that was decisive in the development of a city there. Not only did it control the trading route leading from southern Mesopotamia to its city-states in the north, but Ashur also lay close to the routes connecting northern Syria with the Iranian highlands.

Early Dynastic building layers in the area of the Ishtar Temple (fig. 5) confirm that the site was settled by this period, but it has not been possible to determine what early Ashur may have looked like. There are no known contemporary textual references to it, but based on later tradition it appears that the settlement already had a certain importance. It is unlikely, however, that it can be identified as the city called Abarsal, described in a text relating to trade in the middle Euphrates region as a



Fig. 4. The site of Qalat Sherqat, ancient Ashur, showing the Enlil ziggurat from the north. Photo by Vaughn E. Crawford

trading partner of Ebla, in northern Syria.<sup>1</sup> Rather, the name of the settlement was probably already Ashur (a-šūr, a-šur<sub>4</sub>), which appears in cuneiform texts shortly after the middle of the third millennium B.C. It probably derives from the name of a local deity, the settlement's patron god, who then gained increasing stature as the city assumed greater importance.

Later in the third millennium, the worsening of the climate in the northern region of the Fertile Crescent, which is documented in excavations of a number of upper Mesopotamian dwelling sites,<sup>2</sup> may have led to increasing settlement by seminomadic peoples in the vicinity of the Tigris River valley. The names of princes who reigned in Ashur at the time are known from inscriptions discovered in Ashur itself.<sup>3</sup> A certain Ititi, who must have been a ruler of Ashur during the Akkadian period (2334–2154 B.C.) and is identified in a stone inscription as “overseer” or “regent” (in the service of the local god Ashur?) and as the son of a certain Ininlaba, alludes to the city's attempt to gain influence over fertile fields downstream. He mentions booty from the land of Gasur that was given over to the goddess Ishtar in Ashur. Gasur is an earlier name for the site of Nuzi (modern Yorgan Tepe), roughly 9½ miles (15 km) southwest of modern Kirkuk. At this time the kings of Akkad in central and southern Mesopotamia were creating the first important territorial state and showing an interest in the region to the north. The princes of Ashur had to bow to the authority of the Akkadian kings, who extended their power along important trading routes to the north and west. An inscription from the Ishtar Temple in Ashur, in which a certain Azuzu refers to himself as the servant of the Akkadian king Manishtushu (2269–2255 B.C.), reveals that Akkad held sway as far north as Ashur and confirms the findings of archaeological excavations in the city, which also seem to reflect the dominance of Akkad. Ashur appears to have developed by that time into the region's political and administrative center. During the Third Dynasty of Ur (ca. 2112–2004 B.C.) the settlement was important primarily for its control of trade. At the time of the king Amar-Sin (2046–2038 B.C.), Ashur was

administered by a governor named Zariqum, who left a votive inscription relating that he dedicated a temple to the life of Amar-Sin. Inscriptions from southern Mesopotamia reveal that Zariqum already held office in Ashur in the time of the king Shulgi (2094–2047 B.C.) and that Zariqum became provincial viceroy in Elamite Susa in the fifth year of the reign of Amar-Sin.

After the empire of the Third Dynasty of Ur collapsed, previously seminomadic groups who had invaded the land of the two rivers from the west began to gain increasing influence. It is possible that the worsening climate at the close of the third millennium, especially evident in the transition zone between arable lands and the desert steppe, helped to lure ever larger numbers of Amorite (*martu* or *amurru*) peoples into the region of the upper Tigris. Some got as far as Ashur, which had become independent again after the collapse of the Third Dynasty of Ur.

During the first two centuries of the second millennium (known as the Old Assyrian period), the names of Ashur's rulers indicate, both in their own inscriptions and in the Assyrian king list,<sup>4</sup> that the city deliberately held to local traditions of the third millennium despite the influx of Amorite populations. The king list begins with the rulers considered to be direct ancestors of the Amorite Shamshi-Adad I (1815–1782 B.C.), who had gained control of Ashur. Named were seventeen “kings who lived in tents” and ten “ancestors.” There follows a sequence of six Ashur princes, some of whom are also known from their own inscriptions. It is still unclear whether Silulu, known from impressions of his seal found at Kültepe (Kanesh)<sup>5</sup> in Anatolia, is the same person as the prince identified in the list as Sulili. It is striking, however, that this Sulili named the local god Ashur as king and himself only as *ensi/ishiakkum*, that is, regent representing the god Ashur. In the same manner, Shalim-ahum and Ilu-shumma, whose votive inscriptions have been found in the temples of Ishtar and Ashur, also thought of themselves only as deputies of the city god. The former identifies himself as the son of Puzur-Ashur I, the latter as the son of Shalim-ahum; both undertook major building projects in Ashur. Funds for these may have

come from the far-reaching trade during the twentieth century B.C. in which merchants of Ashur were engaged. A building inscription of Ilu-shumma from the Ishtar Temple at Ashur links the copper trade with the inhabitants of southern Mesopotamian cities, who mediated in the exchange of copper coming from the region of Oman. At this same time, textiles from Mesopotamia and tin from Iran or beyond were traded for silver in Anatolia, where Ashur's traders had established permanent trading colonies in a number of princedoms with the consent of the local rulers and carried on trade with Anatolian merchants. Thousands of cuneiform texts discovered in these settlements known as *karums*, especially in Kültepe (Kanesh), not far from Kayseri, provide a glimpse into the business practices of merchants from Ashur and their relations with Anatolian princes as well as with their home city.

At the time when Assyrian merchants were trading in Anatolia, a certain Erishum I, son of Ilu-shumma, ruled in Ashur. Several of his building inscriptions are preserved. One example also turned up in Kanesh, which may indicate that it was probably during his reign that trading colonies were established in Anatolia. The year-officials (eponyms) listed on Old Assyrian clay tablets in Anatolia seem to confirm this date. Other rulers of Ashur who governed the city-state during the period when trading centers were established in Anatolia were Ikunum, Sargon I, Puzur-Ashur II, Naram-Sin, and Erishum II. Since these were followed by the "interregnum" of Shamshi-Adad, they must date from the nineteenth century B.C. Ikunum and Sargon I are not only attested in the Assyrian king list but also in inscriptions they left behind in Ashur. The latter is also known from impressions of his seal found at Kanesh.<sup>6</sup>

A second, shorter phase of Old Assyrian trade in Anatolia dates to the time when Ashur was ruled by Shamshi-Adad I (1815–1782 B.C.). This prince did not reside in Ashur, but in Shechna, in upper Mesopotamia, which he called Shubat-Enlil, "Dwelling of Enlil." American excavations under the direction of Harvey Weiss have uncovered the ruins of his royal residence at the site of Tell Leilan

and in the process discovered clay tablets from the period. Shamshi-Adad ruled, as is also clear from texts found in Mari (Tell Hariri) on the Euphrates River, an extensive territorial state, whose center lay in the area of the upper Habur River, but which also included Ashur and Mari.<sup>7</sup> Shamshi-Adad, son of Ila-kabkabu, apparently came from seminomadic roots; the list of his ancestors includes the names of tribes. He managed to incorporate Ashur into his realm and to govern the city in the name of the city god. He did not call himself "king" of Ashur and did not make the city his residence. Inscriptions found in Ashur speak of him as a builder but also point to his military successes. The Mari texts make it clear that he quarreled with the rulers of the northern Syrian kingdom Yamhad (around Halab/Aleppo) and also gained influence in Babylonia. One of his campaigns to the Mediterranean coast was undertaken in part to secure timber required for his restoration of the Enlil (or Ashur) Temple in Ashur.

Shamshi-Adad ruled over Ashur only for a brief time. He was followed by his son, Ishme-Dagan I (1782–1742 B.C.), who had previously seen to his father's interests in Ekallatum, on the Tigris not far from Ashur. But soon Ashur was again ruled by representatives of the local aristocracy. The first of these, Puzur-Sin (late eighteenth century B.C.), stressed in an inscription discovered in Ashur that he occupied the throne of Shamshi-Adad, who "was not flesh of the city of Ashur."<sup>8</sup> These "regents of the god Ashur" were unable to proclaim any military successes in their texts, and ultimately they fell under the supremacy of the Hurrian state of Mitanni, which had come into being in upper Mesopotamia.<sup>9</sup> At this time the seat of actual power was in the area along the upper Habur, which had meanwhile become much more densely settled, and not in Ashur itself.

A new phase in the history of Ashur (Middle Assyrian period) began at the time of Ashur-uballit I (1363–1328 B.C.). During his reign the Hurro-Mitannian empire collapsed under attack from the Anatolian Hittites. Ashur-uballit, previously of only local importance, took the opportunity to establish contacts with other princes in the Near East and Egypt and attain recognition as "King



of the Land of Ashur"—or Assyria—and "Great King." Ashur texts continued to characterize him as vice-regent for the god Ashur, yet his grandson, Arik-den-ili (1317–1306 B.C.), assumed the title "Mighty King, King of the Land (of the god) Ashur." In one of his brick inscriptions from Ashur, the determinative for the god is lacking before the name Ashur. Thus a local prince who ruled the region for the local god became the king of Assyria, which also included the fertile fields of Nineveh.

Adad-nirari I (1305–1274 B.C.), a great-grandson of Ashur-uballit, made Assyria a military power.<sup>10</sup> He fought against the upper Mesopotamian city Hanigalbat, which was still largely supported by the Hittites, and he penetrated as far as the vicinity of the fortress of Carchemish on the Euphrates. He was also able to subject the valleys of the Balikh and Habur rivers to his control. The Assyrian king gave expression to his increased authority by assuming the title "King of the Universe," which was used earlier by Shamshi-Adad I (an interpretation of a third-millennium B.C. Early Dynastic title), which later Middle Assyrian kings continued to use. Shalmaneser I (1273–1244 B.C.) incorporated the region of Hanigalbat into his realm, establishing an Assyrian administration there. Assyria and the Hittites now confronted one another on the Euphrates, and Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243–1207 B.C.) even claimed to have fought successfully against the Hittites to the west of the river. Tukulti-Ninurta led campaigns not only into the mountains of Nairi, northeast of Ashur, but also against Babylonia, which suffered a heavy defeat. The city of Babylon itself was conquered and destroyed, and its king, Kashtiliash IV, accompanied by a portion of the populace, was taken captive to Assyria. The same fate befell Marduk, the city god of Babylon, for his statue was removed to Assyria. Tukulti-Ninurta ruled Babylon for "seven" years. It was perhaps the opposition of the Ashur aristocracy that led him to establish his residence in Kar Tukulti-Ninurta (see text with cat. no. 74), a city quickly constructed within sight of Ashur. According to a later Babylonian

chronicle he was murdered during a palace conspiracy in which his own son participated.<sup>11</sup>

Tukulti-Ninurta's successors, whose reigns represented the high point of the Middle Assyrian kingdom, now once more ruled from Ashur. There was no rival power in western Asia at this time, but the expansion of Aramaic groups proved to be an especially great danger for Assyria; they blocked the route to the Mediterranean and founded a number of principalities both in northern Syria and upper Mesopotamia. Inscriptions of Tukulti-Ninurta's immediate successors found in Ashur say nothing about military activities. Ashur-resha-ishi I (1132–1115 B.C.) was the first to mention conflicts with mountain dwellers in the east and Aramaic groups in the west. Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076 B.C.), who led Assyrian forces as far as Lake Van in the northeast and the coast of the Mediterranean in the west, was once again able to report greater successes. In the coastal mountains of the Levant he cut down cedars needed to roof the Anu-Adad Temple in Ashur. Despite his military victories, he was unable to prevent the Aramaeans from expanding farther and gaining control of upper Mesopotamia. Ashur and its surrounding lands, ruled by a local dynasty, retained only slight importance until Assyria regained prominence in the ninth century B.C.

H.K.

1. Archi, Piacentini, and Pomponio 1993, 87–91.

2. See H. Weiss 1993, 995–1004.

3. Grayson 1987.

4. On the king list and the chronology of Old Assyrian rulers, see Larsen 1976. The Assyrian king list is handed down to us in copies of the 1st millennium B.C. It purports to contain a complete list of the names of all rulers of Ashur from the earliest times.

5. Grayson 1987, 12f.

6. Grayson 1987, 45f.

7. See Durand 1987, 155–98, and Durand 1990, 271–301.

8. Grayson 1987, 77f.

9. See the summary by Wilhelm 1989, 7–41.

10. See Harrak 1987; also Liverani 1988, 577–601, with maps, 579.

11. Grayson 1975, 176.

# TEMPLE AND CULT: EARLY PERIODS AT ASHUR

## The Archaic Ishtar Temple, Level G, Mid-Late Third Millennium B.C.

WITHIN THE ASHUR city precinct lies a complex of ruins that includes the remains of a repeatedly rebuilt temple dedicated to the goddess Ishtar (fig. 2).<sup>4</sup> Altogether, some eight structural levels can

be distinguished, and these have been labeled Levels A–H. They extend in time from the second half of the third millennium to the first half of the first millennium B.C.

Levels E–H represent the older structures from the third millennium. Of these, Level G is of particular importance to us here since it was in the Cult Room and immediate environs of the Level G Temple that almost all of the finds in catalogue numbers 1–11 were discovered.

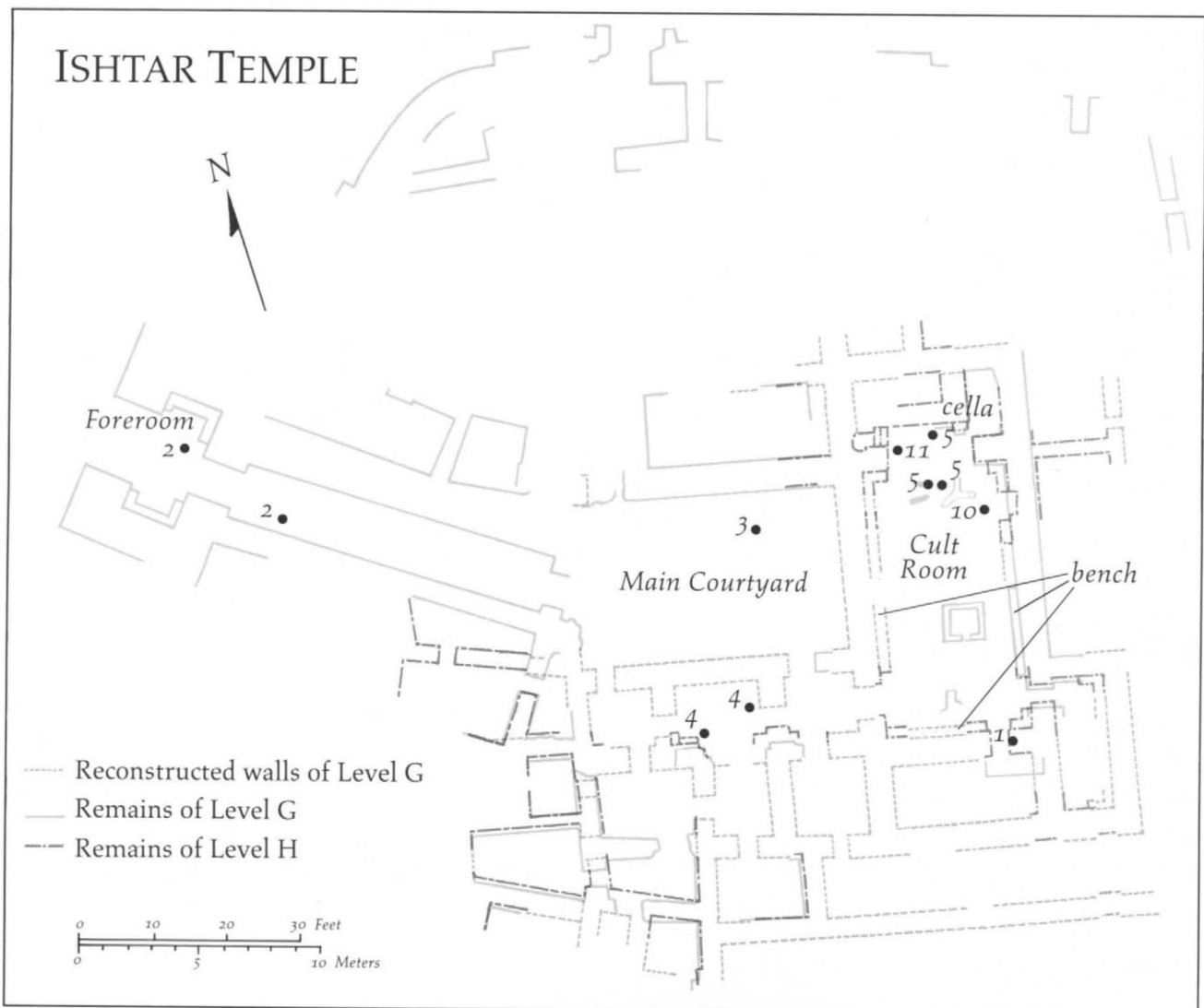


Fig. 5. Reconstruction of the plan of the Ishtar Temple Level G at Ashur, showing remains of Levels G and H. Findspots of cat. nos. 1–5, 10, and 11 are indicated on the plan. Drawn by Wilhelmina Reyenga-Amrhein, after Andrae 1922, pls. 2, 3, 6

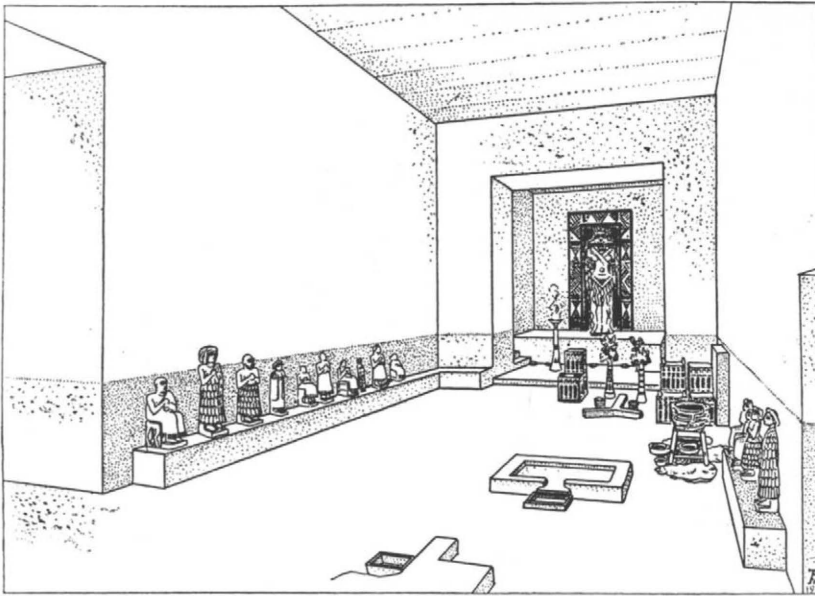


Fig. 6. Hypothetical reconstruction by Walter Andrae of the interior of the Cult Room of the Level G Ishtar Temple at Ashur, including objects excavated in the temple area. Courtesy of the Vorderasiatisches Museum

The temple of Level H was erected on bedrock, so-called *Nagelfluhfelsen*. The leveled stumps of its walls, which were still roughly a meter high, served as the foundation for the building in Level G. The Level G Temple must have come to a violent end, for there were traces of fire and plundering, with even its foundations extensively destroyed. It was only possible to reconstruct its ground plan on the basis of the older Level H walls (fig. 5).

The shrines that belong to Levels H and G were both structures with a central hall and a projecting court. One finds parallels in the temples on the Anu Ziggurat at Uruk,<sup>2</sup> the Ninni-zaza/Ishtar and Ishtar Temples at Mari,<sup>3</sup> and the Sin Temple at Khafajeh, ancient Tutub.<sup>4</sup> In contrast to the Khafajeh Sin Temple, Level G of the Ishtar Temple at Ashur had projecting rooms not only on its long sides but on the two short sides as well. The room off the small side on the north obviously served as a cella. Walter Andrae proposed that a cult image stood on the podiumlike raised section of this room, but this cannot be determined with certainty (figs. 6, 15). The inner sanctum was separated from the level of the Cult Room, measuring roughly 36 by 19½ feet (11 x 6 m), by a step placed at a diagonal. Various cult utensils were discovered in front of this step:

offering stands, braziers, ceramic vessels, a star-shaped ceramic seat, and fragments of house-shaped altars (see cat. nos. 10, 11).

The entrance to the Cult Room was in the western long wall, not far from the southwest corner. This so-called bent-axis approach required the visitor to make a 90-degree turn to see the altar. A clay bench, roughly 11¾ inches (30 cm) high and 15¾ inches (40 cm) wide, ran along the walls of the Cult Room. It was suggested by Andrae that this bench served as a base for the display of alabaster votive statuettes (fig. 6). A nearly square structure comprising an exposed basin and drain was slightly to the east of the center of the Cult Room. It was probably used for libations.

Andrae made the interesting observation that in Ashur the so-called plano-convex bricks typical of the Early Dynastic period were not used.<sup>5</sup>

L.M.

1. On the archaic Ishtar Temple of Level G, see Andrae 1922, 5ff., pls. 2–5, 8; Heinrich 1957, 64ff.; Heinrich 1982, 107, 127ff., figs. 191–94.

2. Heinrich 1982, 127.

3. Hrouda 1971, 116.

4. Heinrich 1982, 107.

5. Heinrich 1982, 107.

### 1 *Fragmentary vessel decorated with high-relief figures*

Stone

Late 4th–early 3rd millennium B.C.

Found in the Ishtar Temple, Level G, in burned debris near the southeast door of the Cult Room

H.  $3\frac{3}{8}$  in. (8.6 cm), W.  $2\frac{5}{16}$ – $3\frac{13}{16}$  in. (7.5–9.7 cm)

VA 7887 (Ass 22408)

The conical vessel form is a minor element in this elaborate but sadly damaged sculpture, a ritual work of art that is richly decorated and technically sophisticated.<sup>1</sup> Human and animal figures carved almost in the round are arranged in two registers, or levels, separated by a flat rectangular plate which extends at right angles from the upper part of the conical vessel. The edge of the plate, where it is intact, is serrated or notched. Below the vessel rim on the upper surface of the plate are the remains of three recumbent lions, two of which, on diagonally opposite corners, have manes defined with an incised circle-and-dot pattern. Only one of the three remaining felines has a head, and one corner of the plate, presumably decorated with a fourth lion, is broken away. Below the horizontal plate encircling the lower part of the vessel are figures in animal and human form carved almost in the round. Only the upper portion of these figures has survived, but if they had been depicted as full figures they would have extended below the base of the conical vessel.

The two main compositions in the lower register are arranged on opposite sides beneath the longer edge of the upper plate. On one side there is a frontal, nude, heroic figure between two short-horned bovids, and on the other side is a lion-and-bull combat. Nothing survives in the adjacent areas beneath the two short sides of the horizontal plate. Walter Andrae suggested that other figural groups filled these areas on the basis of traces left on the underside of the flat plate. However, it seems as probable that the bodies of the existing bovids and lion extended over the remaining surface, perhaps with other minor elements, plant or bird forms, between them and the platform above. On a similar vase decorated in high relief, in the British Museum, two birds are represented above the sculptures.<sup>2</sup>

A small number of conical vases encircled by high-relief figures are known from Mesopotamian sites. Two in the British Museum have been dated within the early Sumerian period (Late Uruk–Jemdet Nasr, 3300–2900 B.C.).<sup>3</sup> Each of these vessels illustrates one part of the scene on the Ashur vase; lion-and-bull combats decorate the larger vessel and two nude heroes grappling with two bulls form the sculptural decoration of the second example. A third comparable high-relief vase embellished with two-register scenes of lions, a human-headed bull, and a nude hero was excavated



1

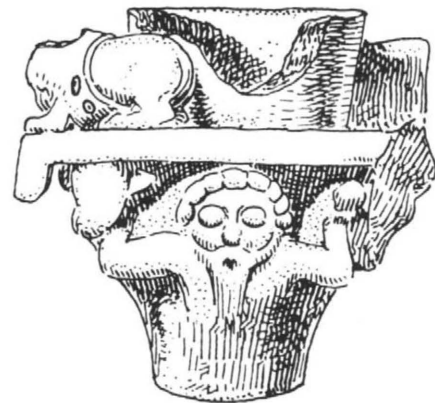


Fig. 7. Drawing of cat. no. 1. Reproduced from Andrae 1922, fig. 60

at Tell Agrab in the Diyala River region of southern Mesopotamia, and a high-relief vase of unknown provenance is in the Burrell Collection in Glasgow.<sup>4</sup> This example also has two registers of high-relief, animal-combat scenes separated by a plate with a notched border.

In his perceptive and detailed description of the Ashur vessel, Andrae suggested that the lower, now missing, part of the object rested originally in a stand.<sup>5</sup> H. R. Hall, describing one of the two vessels in the British Museum cited above, also proposed that the space left between the two upright lion tails originally accommodated a metal holder.<sup>6</sup> Since the lower parts of all known conical relief

vases are broken away or incomplete, it is impossible to know whether they were discrete units or required a stand or support of stone or another material. A stone vessel stand or base excavated at Tell Agrab is decorated with imagery similar to that appearing on the Ashur vase and is a work of contemporary date.<sup>7</sup> The borders of the scenes are also deeply notched.

A few stylistic and iconographic features on the Ashur vase deserve special mention. In profile, the hero's head is extremely flat, having no depth as a three-dimensional sculpture. Similarly the male heads that decorate other contemporary vessels and vessel stands are essentially two-dimensional forms. More curious are two features peculiar to the Ashur vase: the arrangement of the human hair in circular knobs that form a single lock around the head ending in a curl on either side, and the small triangular form below the lower lip, perhaps an attempt to articulate the shorter hairs of a longer, now missing beard.

On the basis of form and style the Ashur high-relief vase appears to be contemporary with the other vases mentioned above and dated variously between 3300 and 2900 B.C. It is, therefore, one of the earliest remains from the Ashur Ishtar Temple and must have been an heirloom in Level G.<sup>8</sup>

P.O.H.

1. Andrae 1922, 81–82, no. 116. The material is described as "Speckstein," steatite.

2. Lindemeyer and Martin 1993, 87–88, no. 281, pl. 34; Orthmann 1975, 183, no. 72.

3. Hall 1927–28, 12–14.

4. Frankfort 1970, 30, figs. 17, 18; Peltenburg 1991, 39–40, no. 16.

5. Andrae 1922, 82.

6. Hall 1927–28, 13.

7. Orthmann 1975, 184, no. 73.

8. The vase would also have been an heirloom in Level H (the foundation of the Ishtar Temple), even if the structure was built as early as ca. 2800–2700 B.C. See Andrae 1977, 303, n. 63.

## 2 *Bearded male figure*

White stone

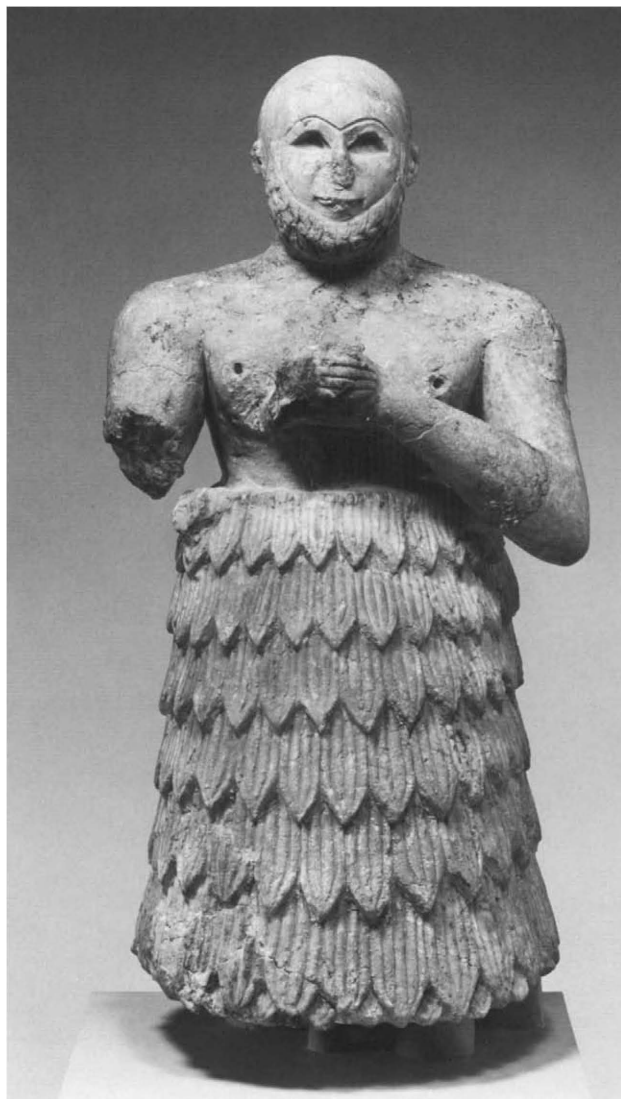
Early Dynastic period, ca. 2400 B.C.

Found in the Ishtar Temple, Level G, Foreroom and passage to the northwest door, 2.4 m from the door

H. 18½ in. (46 cm), W. ca. 7⅞ in. (ca. 20 cm)

VA 8142 (Ass 21801, Ass 21851)

In the rich corpus of Early Dynastic Sumerian sculptures found in Mesopotamia and in Syria, a few examples are of quite exceptional quality. Among these works of art is the bearded male found in pieces by Walter Andrae on the floor of the Level G Ishtar Temple complex (fig. 5).<sup>1</sup> The body, clad in a sheepskin skirt, lay in the northern half of the Foreroom; the head, with shaven crown, empty eye sockets, and short curled beard, was in the passage to the northwest door. Broken and scattered in antiquity, the



statue, Andrae believed, was probably protected from the ravages of the subsequent fire by the debris from the collapse of surrounding walls. Nevertheless the elbows, part of the arms, the feet, and the base are missing, and, most regrettably, the nose is fragmentary as well.

When complete the striding male figure was probably over 20 inches (50 cm) high. His tufted sheepskin skirt is tied at the back and his chest is left bare. In these and other details the Ashur worshiper is comparable to late Early Dynastic male sculptures found in Mesopotamia and at Mari in Syria. In the level of craftsmanship, the image holds a place among the finest works of the period. Conventionalized according to the contemporary mode, the sculpture is, nevertheless, an extraordinarily individual and distinctive portrayal of an important personage. Andrae's original description of the piece in *Die archaischen Ishtar-Tempel in Assur* (1922) includes some observations that reflect an awareness of an individual or personality behind the stylized image. He compared the proportions of the head to the physiognomy of some members of the Arab families living in his own time in Mosul and wrote that the short beard gives the face a "pastorlike" appearance.<sup>2</sup> The distinctive character is also reflected in the nickname given by the German archaeologists to the figure, "Konsistorialrat" (church councillor), which has persisted in the scholarly literature.<sup>3</sup>

Attention to detail is evident in many features: modeling defines the mouth, chin, and beard; careful definition gives substance to the body beneath the thick sheepskin garment, and naturally differentiated details—tufts and strands—enliven the belt tie. Even the small hole piercing the fist is probably too small (only 5 mm in diameter) to be a socket for another object, as Andrae had suggested, and is probably a naturalistic rendering of the folded human hand. The backbone of the figure is rendered as a depression that extends from the waist only a short distance up toward the shoulder blades. On the chest the sockets for the nipples, which were originally inlaid, are unevenly placed, one lower than the other. The arms of the statue, ostensibly carved in the round, were held at certain places by struts of stone left to support them. Similarly a stone block exists at the base of the statue behind the figure's left leg. Both legs, however, were freestanding.

In contrast to contemporary stone sculptures found in southern Mesopotamia, Syria, and Elam, none of the Early Dynastic images excavated at Ashur is inscribed and the identity and rank of this personage is unknown. The individuality of the portrayal and the detailed rendering of the figure testify to the skills of the ancient craftsman. The pious worshiper who commissioned this work must have been a person of importance and rank, probably a priest or official in the city of Ashur in the mid-third millennium B.C.

1. Andrae 1922, 62–64, no. 70, pls. 30, 31; *Vorderasiatisches Museum* 1992, 142, no. 84; Orthmann 1975, 166–67, no. 27.
2. Andrae 1922, 64.
3. Spycket 1981, 101, pl. 65.

### 3 Standing female figure

White stone

Early Dynastic period, ca. 2400 B.C.

Found in the Ishtar Temple, Level G, floor of the Main Courtyard  
H. 17 $\frac{7}{16}$  in. (44.3 cm), W. max. 5 $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (14.5 cm)

VA 8141 (Ass 22049, Ass 22433)

The most striking feature in the appearance of this female sculpture is the large head, covered by an elaborate turban-like headdress that encloses the hair.<sup>1</sup> Well known as an





3, detail of back

Early Dynastic type, and represented by a number of examples excavated at Ashur, this hair covering also appears in variant forms on images found in southern Mesopotamia, in the Diyala River region, and in Syria, notably at Mari.<sup>2</sup> Probably made up of bands of fabric intertwined around the head, the headdress, in its design, follows the plaited hair arrangements appearing on many Early Dynastic female sculptures.<sup>3</sup> On the statue from Ashur the hair projects slightly from under the covering on both sides of the face, and the earlobes are visible beneath the hair.

Also elaborate in form are the garments worn by this female worshiper: a plain robe is covered by a shorter fringed outer garment divided at the center, which is surmounted by a short cape closed at the top and probably put on over the head. The surface of the cape is covered with sheepskin tufts. The stubs of the broken arms project from under the tufted cape and outer garment.

Although crudely executed on the Ashur example, this was a rich form of dress, and its original elaborate appearance can be imagined from fragments of a statue found at Mari in the Ishtar Temple.<sup>4</sup> On one of these fragments the cloak fringe retains traces of black paint and the undergarment, tufted and more elaborate than the plain Ashur undergarment, has traces of red coloring. The prestigious nature of this dress, worn by women with either the turban or, at Mari, a polos as a headdress, is suggested by an enormous onyx fragment of similar drapery recovered at Mari.<sup>5</sup> The piece shows what may be part of the divided, fringed

overgarment from a huge statue of some major personage carved from a rare and precious stone.

The head of the Ashur sculpture is large in proportion to the body and is the most fully defined part of the sculpture. Although the head is damaged, the eyes, unevenly placed, remain as sockets carved out to hold inlays. Particularly noticeable in the back view is the square columnar body, abstract and geometric in form. It is supported by a massive strut on the front of which two diminutive legs are defined in relief.

The craftsmanship is poor and a contrast to the status of the worshiper, whose rank is indicated by the rich form of dress and head covering. The inexperience of the artisan who made this work is also indicated by the pose, with forearms unwisely extending as freestanding elements in front of the body. Carved from relatively soft stone, such elements in the round on sculptures were invariably broken in time and often show signs of repairs made in antiquity. The usual pose, therefore, for figures rendered in stone is with the arms carved in relief against the chest or, if free-standing, held by struts left in the stone to join them to the body. The placement of the arms of the Ashur female is extremely unusual and is more characteristic of Early Dynastic sculptures in metal.

P.O.H.

1. Andrae 1922, 68, no. 79, pl. 37.

2. Parrot 1956, 91, no. 46, pl. xxxviii, no. 197; Spycket 1981, 108–10, pls. 69, 70, 72.

3. Frankfort 1939a, pls. 86–88; Spycket 1954, 120, 122–23, figs. 23–28.

4. Parrot 1956, 96–98, pl. xl.

5. Parrot 1956, 98, no. 69, fig. 62.

#### 4 *Enthroned figure holding a beaker*

White stone

Early Dynastic period, ca. 2400 B.C.

Found in the Ishtar Temple, Level G, floor of the Main Courtyard, southern area

H. 11 in. (28 cm), W. 5½ in. (15 cm), D. 7½ in. (19 cm)

VA 8145 (Ass 21970)

Seated on a decorated stool is a figure who wears a simple sheepskin garment wound around the body leaving one shoulder bare.<sup>1</sup> This style of dress suggests that the person is female, a worshiper represented holding a beaker in a ceremonial, banqueting pose. A single row of sheepskin tufts decorates the lower hem of the garment. Although an essentially frontal image, the sculpture exhibits some torsion in the body and an irregularity of form. The figure



4

turns slightly on the seat, which slopes unevenly from side to side. Other early Sumerian stone sculptures, notably the great male figure excavated in the Abu Temple at Tell Asmar, although seemingly frontal, are similarly twisted on the vertical axis.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast to the stark simplicity of the human body, the stool on which the worshiper sits is elaborately carved in relief. On three sides are represented two hind legs of a bull and, between them, the animal's tufted tail. In one place traces of a black material (bitumen?) remain on the tail in the strands of hair and suggest that originally the stool was enriched with color. Small drill holes on the front of the sculpture between the ankles of the seated figure may be the remains of an ancient repair in an area now damaged or, alternatively, may be traces of the original fabrication.

Thrones or stools of this form including a hind leg of a bull and occasionally a tail are well known in the art of the Early Dynastic period. Although the significance is unknown, the animal, *pars pro toto*, may be generally understood as a reference to fertility and animal husbandry, significant aspects of Sumerian life.

An Early Dynastic sculpture from the Ishtar Temple at Mari in Syria illustrates a similar throne on which a female wearing a tall poloslike headdress is seated.<sup>3</sup> On small shell plaques from Mari and from Ur in southern Mesopotamia there are also depictions of male and female figures seated on stools having at least one of the supports in the shape of a bull's hind leg.<sup>4</sup> Furniture legs in the shape of both fore

and hind legs, roughly contemporary with the Ashur sculpture, are known in Old Kingdom Egypt.<sup>5</sup>

Legs of bulls as throne or stool supports are far less common in the Near East in the third and second millennia B.C. than legs of lions and fantastic creatures. An exceptional seal in the British Museum, datable to the reign of the Neo-Sumerian ruler Ur-Nammu (ca. 2112–2095 B.C.) illustrates a scene in which the deified king sits on a throne with a back leg in the form of a bull's hind leg.<sup>6</sup> This throne also has a high back, unlike the typical Neo-Sumerian throne form of a fleece-covered stool. In another representation of a bull-legged throne, on an eighteenth–seventeenth-century B.C. Syrian seal in the Pierpont Morgan Library, the animal's fore and hind legs are clearly differentiated, and it has been suggested that the throne reflects Egyptian influence.<sup>7</sup> Such a distinction between the two legs is characteristic of Egyptian furniture but not of the ancient Near Eastern examples.

P.O.H.

1. Andrae 1922, 71–72, no. 82, pl. 41c, d.

2. Frankfort 1939a, pl. 1.

3. Parrot 1956, 85–86, pl. xxxvii, no. 647–826; see also a headless female enthroned figure in Wootton 1965, 113–18, pls. 1–4. I thank Yelena Rakic for this reference.

4. Parrot 1967, pl. ix, no. 2630; Metzger 1985, vol. 1, 130–31, vol. 2, 97, no. 346 (no. 347—Ashur statue).

5. Metzger 1985, vol. 2, pl. 6.

6. Collon 1982, 167–68, pl. lii, no. 469.

7. Metzger 1985, vol. 1, 253, vol. 2, pl. 112, no. 1172. On the early-2nd-millennium B.C. Acemhöyük ivory furniture elements, the fore and hind legs of lions are differentiated. Egyptian influence, evident in the imagery of these ivories, undoubtedly also explains this aspect of the furniture legs as well.

## 5 *Head of a woman*

White stone

Akkadian–Ur III period, last quarter of the 3rd millennium B.C.

Found in pieces in the Ishtar Temple, Level G (?), in the burned debris above the floor of the Cult Room

H. 2<sup>11</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (6.8 cm), W. ca. 1<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (ca. 5 cm)

VA 6980 (Ass 22031)

See colorplate 2

A masterpiece of early Mesopotamian art, this sensitive rendering of a woman wearing her hair enclosed in a supple cloth covering was recognized by Walter Andrae as an important discovery both in the quality of the workmanship and in the implications the sculpture had for the dating of Level G of the Ishtar Temple.<sup>1</sup>





5, side view

In the subtle modeling of the lips, the definition of the cheekbones and dimpled chin, and the realistic rendering of the head covering, the artist displayed masterful skills of observation and craftsmanship. The folds in the cloth covering (probably fine linen), caused by the gathering of the fabric at the base of the neck, differ on either side of the head. No stereotyped repetition or stylized rendition of details mars the beauty of the small female image.

Andrae in his description of the piece mentioned the slightly upturned corners of the lips, a feature that produced a serene countenance in the hands of this artist but that so often became in lesser works of ancient art an exaggerated, artificial smile.<sup>2</sup> Both earlobes are pierced and must originally have held earrings, probably of gold or silver since copper and bronze ornaments commonly discolor the surface of the stone. Inlays of other materials, perhaps lapis lazuli and shell, representing the hair strands that project beneath the head covering, the eyes (see cat. no. 6), and the eyebrows are now lost. The only significant damage to the head is the broken portion of the nose.

The style and appearance of the female head led Andrae to suggest a date for the sculpture after the late Early Dynastic period to which most of the finds in Level G belong, and scholars have followed his attribution of this work to the Akkadian period (2334–2154 B.C.).<sup>3</sup> The refined and sensitive workmanship has parallels in the few pieces of sculpture in the round of the Akkadian era that have survived, and certain details such as the partial covering of



5

the ears by the headcloth are characteristic of the naturalistic style that is typical of the finest works of Akkadian date. In later periods the entire ear is awkwardly depicted as if applied to the human head.

In form and style the female image differs significantly from all Early Dynastic sculptures that are preserved, but our knowledge of sculptural developments in the last third of the third millennium and the early second millennium B.C. is not sufficiently precise to enable us to state with certainty that the female head is Akkadian, as Andrae sug-

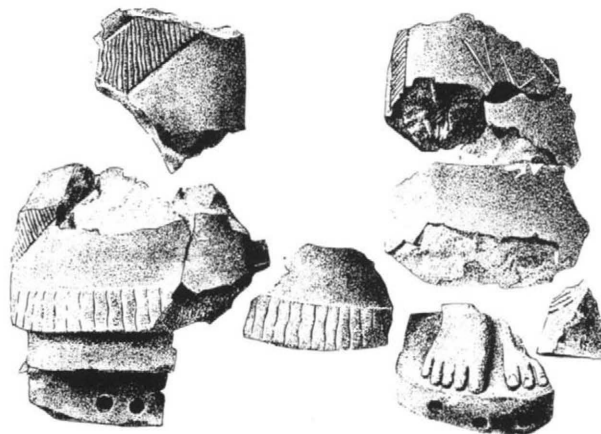


Fig. 8. Drawing of body fragments of a stone sculpture, associated by Andrae with cat. no. 5. Reproduced from Spycket 1981, fig. 51

gested, rather than a work of a slightly later time, perhaps the Neo-Sumerian period (2112–2004 B.C.) when southern Mesopotamian control also extended over Ashur. More abstractly rendered female heads having precisely the same distinctive hair arrangement and covering are known from the end of the third millennium B.C. in southern Mesopotamia.<sup>4</sup>

Additional evidence for dating the female head to a time after the Early Dynastic period is provided by a group of draped body fragments which Andrae claimed belonged to the sculpture and that were found scattered in the same area in the Cult Room of the Ishtar Temple (figs. 5, 8).<sup>5</sup> His claim has generally been accepted in spite of the fact that there are no joins between any of the body fragments and the head and most of the body is missing. The drapery on the fragments, plain and having a long, finely fringed border, is a form not used before the Akkadian era. It then remained in use in subsequent periods. The body pieces may, therefore, be contemporary with the female head, but whether they are, in fact, part of the same sculpture is uncertain.<sup>6</sup>

The attribution of the female head and the draped body fragments to Level G of the Ishtar Temple led Andrae to date the destruction of that temple level to the end of the Akkadian period. However, the circumstances of the find and the archaeological evidence for placing the pieces within Level G are not conclusive. In his description of the finds, Andrae stated that the head lay not on the Ishtar Temple Cult Room floor but in wall destruction debris, collapsed bricks, full of charcoal, 60 centimeters above the floor. The body pieces, unlike the head, are blackened by fire.

If questions remain concerning the precise date of the Ashur head (Akkadian or Neo-Sumerian), the relation of the head to the body fragments, and the interpretation of the archaeological context of all the pieces, these uncertainties cannot detract from the sculpture as a remarkable ancient Near Eastern work of art. The female worshiper represented is undoubtedly a personage of importance. Anton Moortgat has suggested that she may be a high priestess of Ishtar.<sup>7</sup> Although small in size, a work of this quality can only have been created by a master sculptor and commissioned by a wealthy patron. The head is a work of extraordinary artistry and skill, a rare and lovely image from a period late in the third millennium B.C.

P. O. H.

1. Andrae 1922, 68–71, no. 80, pls. 28a, 39; *Vorderasiatisches Museum* 1992, 145, no. 85.

2. Andrae 1922, 68.

3. Spycket 1981, 166–67.

4. Spycket 1981, 200, pl. 136a, b; 202, fig. 61. The difficulty in dating some of the major works of art from this era is demonstrated by the

attribution of a finely rendered head of a male found at Bismaya in southern Mesopotamia to various periods ranging from the late 3rd (Akkadian and Neo-Sumerian) to the early 2nd millennium B.C. See Spycket 1981, 148–49, pl. 99; Schlossman 1981–82, 164–65, figs. 38, 39.

5. Andrae 1922, 68, pl. 38; Spycket 1981, 167, fig. 51.

6. The pieces are not to be found at present in Berlin. It is not clear from the photographs published by Andrae (1922, pl. 38) whether or not all of the body fragments belong to one statue and, if so, exactly how the drapery was arranged. The smallest fragment appears to preserve part of an obliquely curving upper border of a garment of a type similar to the drapery on a sculpture from Level E in the Ishtar Temple (Andrae 1922, 108, no. 159, pl. 63) and other known works of Neo-Sumerian date (Harper, Aruz, Tallon 1992, 169, no. 110). However, in the published illustration, there are faintly visible vertical lines on the garment fragment, which would suggest a different form of dress, the striped robe known on works of the Akkadian and Neo-Sumerian periods (Collon 1982, 72).

7. Moortgat 1969, 48, pl. 132.

#### 6a–d *Eye inlays*

Shell, slate, lapis lazuli

Early Dynastic period, ca. 2400 B.C.

Presumably all of the pieces come from the Ishtar Temple, Level G; individual find numbers cannot be determined

6a: H.  $1\frac{5}{16}$  in. (2.3 cm), W.  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (1.9 cm)

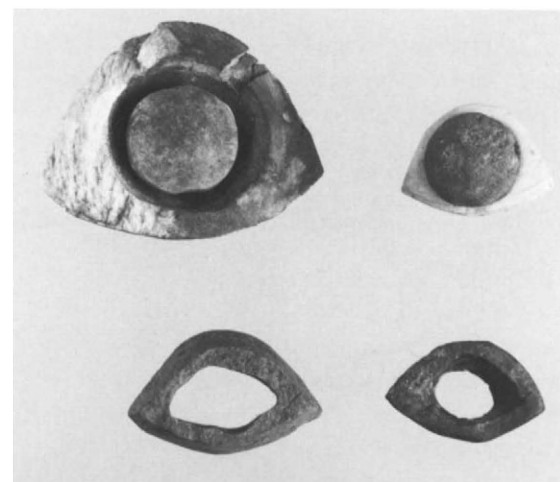
6b: H.  $\frac{9}{16}$  in. (1.4 cm), W.  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (0.9 cm)

6c: H.  $\frac{5}{8}$  in. (1.6 cm), W.  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (1 cm)

6d: H.  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (1.3 cm), W.  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (0.9 cm)

VA Ass 3564 (Ass 22574, Ass 22446)

Among the many objects discovered in the Cult Room and adjacent areas of the archaic Ishtar Temple in Level G are a number of fragments of eye inlays.<sup>1</sup> The ones shown here



Clockwise, from top left: 6a, b, d, c

do not fit any of the statues that survive from the Ishtar Temple, all of which have empty eye sockets. However, they undoubtedly belonged to statues found in this area, and they give an impression of the appearance of the eye in those empty sockets. The technique of using inlays for eyes was widespread, and statues preserved with inlaid eyes have been found at other sites.<sup>2</sup>

The eye inlays were made of different colored materials to make them look as realistic as possible. Especially common were limestone or shell to simulate the white of the eye, with darker stone or lapis lazuli for the iris and pupil. In many cases the eyes were made particularly large, which gave the figures a magical, ethereal appearance. One can well imagine that the sight of such statues of gods, worshippers, or other creatures with their large shimmering eyes must have had a deep impact on the viewer.<sup>3</sup>

E.K.-B.

1. See the references in Andrae 1922, 67, 73, list for pl. 6.
2. A few examples can be seen among the statues from the Temple Oval at Khafajeh, see Frankfort 1939a, pls. 1-10, 14-25; and from Mari, see H. Weiss 1985, nos. 61, 63, 64.
3. It is not surprising to find a text referring to the contrast between the steady gaze of a person and that of a statue; see CAD, vol. 16, "Š," 79.

### 7, 8, 9 Fragments of hair from statues

Egyptian blue

1st millennium B.C. (?)

Location of finds: Ass 9501, city area; Ass 6356, map square dE 6II;

Ass 17236, map square iA 3III, northeast

7: H. 1<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (4.9 cm), W. 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (3.5 cm)

8: H. 1<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (4.9 cm), W. 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (4.5 cm)

9: H. 1<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (3.3 cm), W. 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (3 cm)

VA Ass 4636-38 (Ass 9501, Ass 6356, Ass 17236)

Even as early as the fourth millennium B.C., it was customary in Mesopotamia to use varied materials in the production of a particular statue, utensil, or piece of furniture. It was especially common to ornament treasured statues of the gods, made of a layer of bronze or precious metal over a wood core, with faces, hair, beards, and jewelry of other materials. Examples of the technique are familiar from smaller sculpture,<sup>1</sup> but so far no statue of a deity has been recovered. We know of such statues of the gods only from later descriptions in the cuneiform literature<sup>2</sup> and from depictions in reliefs<sup>3</sup> and in wall paintings.<sup>4</sup>

In the creation of those statues particular attention was paid to hair and beards, which were frequently made of lapis lazuli or its imitation, Egyptian blue (see "Glass," preceding cat. nos. 69-73). This substance was poured into molds or carved and cut out.<sup>5</sup> Two of the fragments of

Egyptian blue shown here are clearly recognizable as parts of beards. In one piece it is possible to make out the edge of a mustache (cat. no. 7). The other fragment shows the bottom of a beard made up of numerous curled locks (cat. no. 8). The perforation may have been used to secure the beard to a statue. The third piece was presumably a piece of hair (cat. no. 9) and could have been attached to a figure as a curled lock next to an ear or over the forehead.

Given the fragmentary nature of the pieces, it is extremely difficult to date them. To judge from the forms of the beards, they may well belong to the Neo-Assyrian period from the ninth to eighth century B.C. It is possible that similar inlays were used for the sculpture of the third millennium shown here.

E.K.-B.

1. For the statuettes of rams or the musical instruments with sculptural rams' heads and inlaid friezes from Ur, see Woolley 1934, pls. 87, 88, 107-21. For various examples from Ebla, where steatite and lapis lazuli were especially popular, see Matthiae 1985, pls. 39, 44, 45. See also Pinnock 1987, 65ff.

2. In a Neo-Babylonian text we read: "he made the image of the great lord Shamash carefully and duly of reddish gold and shining lapis lazuli according to the techniques of the crafts." See CAD, vol. 16, "Š," 79.

3. Many examples are found on Neo-Assyrian reliefs and stelae; see Börker-Klähn 1982, nos. 187, 207-10.

4. See the wall paintings from the palace at Mari or those with such subjects from Khorsabad. For illustrations, see Orthmann 1975, pls. 187, xxii.

5. See Wartke 1982, 7f.



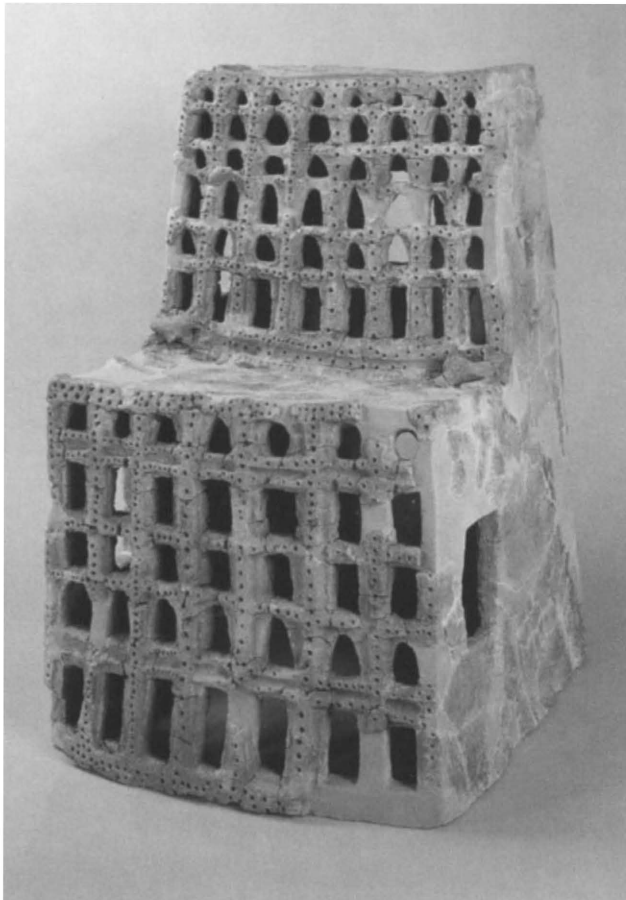
Clockwise, from top left: 8, 7, 9

**10 Altar in the shape of a house**

Baked clay  
 Early Dynastic period, ca. 2400 B.C.  
 Found in the Ishtar Temple, Level G, crushed *in situ* against the east wall of the Cult Room  
 H. 25<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (66 cm), W. 15<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (40 cm), D. 19<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (50 cm)  
 VA 8806 (Ass 22545)

Among the countless small finds that came to light in the Cult Room of the archaic Ishtar Temple were fragments of several two-stepped clay altars in the shape of houses, which have been restored. They all have a lower story with two rooms and a second story above the back section. Their outer surfaces are structured and ornamented in different ways.<sup>1</sup> The front of the small clay house-shaped altar shown here is perforated with openings of various sizes. The side and back panels have windowlike openings. Numerous applied ribs with indentations serve as decoration. There are two thick crossed braces on the back wall. Serpents with dotted bodies crawl across the altar's surfaces. Portions of two lions can be seen on the top of the projecting lower section.<sup>2</sup> The serpents and lions that decorate this object were associated with the goddess Ishtar, in whose temple the altars were found.<sup>3</sup>

A great amount of work went into the making of these clay structures, to give their heavily fenestrated surfaces sufficient stability and to create ornamentation that was highly individual and imaginative. Much thought must

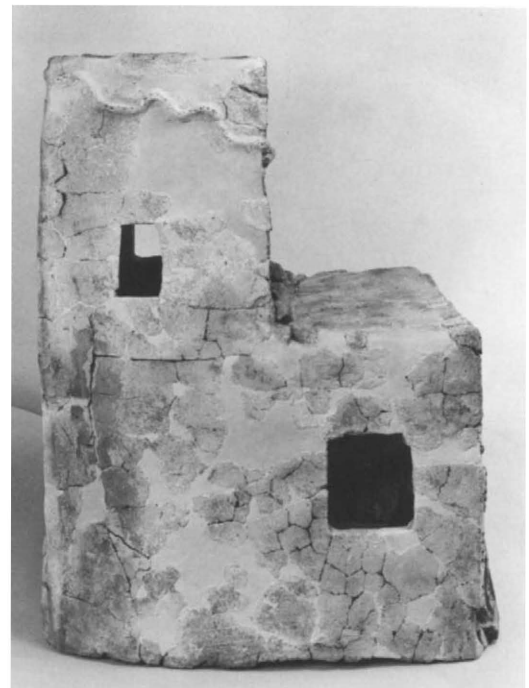


10



Fig. 9. Drawing of an Akkadian period cylinder seal impression showing a house-shaped altar set before a seated deity. Reproduced from Boehmer 1965, fig. 387

have gone into the purpose and significance of the decoration. The fact that all the structures have numerous perforations has led some scholars to assume that incense was burned inside them. There are no traces, however, of this use. It is more likely that offerings were placed on the two steps, suggesting that they functioned as altars (see fig. 9). This hypothesis is supported by the fact that a number of such altars were found in the vicinity of the cult niche.<sup>4</sup> Various scholars have surmised that the Cult Room of the Ishtar Temple served for worship not only of the goddess



10, side view

but also of deceased ancestors. Accordingly, these altars might be thought of as cult utensils connected with offerings to the dead.<sup>5</sup>

Similar small clay altars have since been found in a number of other excavations in Mesopotamia and Syria. Some scholars trace their forms back to the mud-brick architecture of the Uruk temple, which is connected with early post-and-lintel construction. The framing elements with round perforations in them may recall an earlier type of bracing by means of hollow bottles or clay pegs. However, the makers of these clay altars could have had no direct memory of such architectural forms.<sup>6</sup>

E.K.-B.



1. See Andrae 1922, 32ff., pls. 13–17.

2. Illustrated in Bretschneider 1991, pl. 25.

3. Bretschneider 1991, 62ff.

4. Andrae 1922, 34ff.

5. Mayer-Opificius 1988, 257; Tsukimoto 1985, 1ff.; Bretschneider 1991, 46ff.

6. Bretschneider 1991, 40ff.

### 11 *Cult stand*

Baked clay

Early Dynastic period, ca. 2400 B.C.

Found in the Ishtar Temple, Level G, against the northeast wall of the room under the Cult Room of Level E

H. 17¼ in. (45 cm), Diam. max. 5⅝ in. (15 cm)

VA Ass 4199 (Ass 2203ob)

The hollow clay stands found mostly in the area of the archaic Ishtar Temple display a wide variety of forms.<sup>1</sup> Some are quite tall and slender, others more compressed, and some very squat. Most are richly decorated and perforated in various ways. They were adorned with either applied ribs decorated with indentations or incisions. One finds on them the wavy lines, zigzags, or combed lines that appear on contemporary ceramic vessels. Their bases and tops have a projecting lip.

It has been suggested that these clay stands—as with the clay altars—were used for burning incense. For the most part, however, there are no traces of ash or smoke on the stands themselves. It may be that bowls of incense were placed on top of them. It is equally possible to imagine that they held large bowls with fruit or other foodstuffs donated to the temple by the faithful.

E.K.-B.

1. Andrae 1922, 40ff., pls. 18–20.

## The Copper Hoard from the Ashur Temple

IN EARLY NOVEMBER 1909, Walter Andrae began his investigation of the Ashur Temple with a trial trench in the northern part of the city (fig. 2). In the deeper levels of Cult Room o, from the time of Shamshi-Adad I (1815–1782 B.C.), remains of earlier buildings came to light but were so meager that they could not be more precisely dated.<sup>1</sup> The excavators designated them “prehistoric” structures with no cult function.

In the course of these excavations, the hoard known as “copper find Ass 16317” surfaced in Cult Room o (fig. 2, E).<sup>2</sup> The various metal objects were contained in a ceramic vessel hidden by sherds and gravel and embedded in alternating layers of charred wood, ash, and rubble. These layers could not be differentiated more precisely, but to judge from the objects recovered from them it would appear that they generally date from the close of the third millennium B.C. We cannot know just when the vessel was buried or why it would have seemed necessary to conceal it. The style of the two statuettes included in the hoard (cat. nos. 12, 13) places them in the last quarter of the third millennium B.C. The type of the axe, with the hole for the handle off-center from the blade (cat. no. 16),<sup>3</sup> and the mace head with raised vertical ribs (cat. no. 15)<sup>4</sup> also point to the late third millennium B.C. and serve to confirm the dating of the statuettes.

With the exception of the two statuettes,<sup>5</sup> the metal objects from this find have received only scant attention since their first publication.<sup>6</sup> Most of the pieces no longer match the descriptions given there, for restoration work has altered their appearance considerably. Objects that were held together by corrosion have been separated. In the process, it was recognized that a separately worked leg (cat. no. 14) actually belongs to the statuette, catalogue number 13.

In addition to the objects described in greater detail in the catalogue, the cache included: three bands (portions of the rim for a wheel roughly 80 cm in diameter),<sup>7</sup> an irregular convex object whose

function is unknown, numerous fragments of three separate vessels, two more dagger blades (incomplete), a small animal figure (now lost), another fragment from a pair of antlers, a “double spatula,” and a small, unidentified metal fragment.

Mixed in with objects that were largely intact, such as the lamb bearer (cat. no. 13), the mace head (cat. no. 15), the axe (cat. no. 16), the dagger blade (cat. no. 18), the “double spatula,” and the small animal figure, were pieces, some already mentioned, that were incomplete, bent, or broken. Considered as a whole, the cache was a varied one. The fragmentary objects suggest that it represented what must have been a supply of scrap metal to be melted down again.

The hoard is of particular metallurgical importance, both for what it tells us about alloys of the period and for the techniques employed in producing the individual objects. Some of the objects, such as the fragment of a bowl, the three bands from the rim of a wheel, one of the blades (cat. no. 18), and the unidentified convex fragment, are pure copper; others, the antlers, the “double spatula,” and the axe, for example, are made of a copper containing more than 1 percent arsenic. Some of the bronzes have a low tin content, such as the two beaker fragments, while in others, notably the dagger blades, the percentage of tin is much higher. The alloy used for the bronze mace head is unlike any of the others, with over 3 percent arsenic, 9 percent lead, and 4 percent antimony. Although the exact compositions have not yet been determined, it appears that the alloy of the statuette in catalogue number 12 is an arsenic-rich lead bronze, while that of the statuette in catalogue number 13 is bronze with a high proportion of tin.

With few exceptions, the entire cache has been subjected to poor restoration at various times since its discovery. In the process, the original patina on the majority of objects has been chemically removed to expose the metal surface. These “cleaned” objects look very different from the way they did at the time they were discovered. This is especially unfortunate in the case of the statuette in catalogue number 13; the animal cradled in its left arm has been lost, and so much of the substance of the arms was removed during so-called restoration that they

now look strange. Moreover, the right hand is missing, and the structure of the face is completely distorted.

To understand certain features of the two statuettes it proved necessary to resort to gamma-ray radiography and computer tomography.<sup>8</sup> Both figures turn out to be hollow castings. X-ray radiographs of catalogue number 12 reveal the remains of its casting core and its armature. X rays and tomographs also show remnants of the thin supporting rods extending from the outer walls of the figures into the clay core. These were removed on the outside by reworking the surface after casting, so that they are scarcely noticeable on the surface. The tomograph through the neck of catalogue number 13 reveals a casting flaw: despite the presence of supporting rods, the core had shifted so much during or after the casting wax was poured out that it nearly touched the exterior investment at the back of the neck. As a result, the finished casting had only a very thin wall at this spot, and correspondingly, the wall at the front of the neck is twice as thick as it was meant to be. On the removal of the patina, this area gave way, so that a hole is now there.

R.-B.W.

1. Haller and Andrae 1955, 6ff., pls. 4–6; van Driel 1969, 4ff.
2. Haller and Andrae 1955, 12, pls. 26, 27.
3. Deshayes 1960, vol. 1, 177, vol. 2, 73, no. 1419-C1; Calmeyer 1969, 39f., no. 19c. See also Maxwell-Hyslop 1949, 102, type 12A.
4. Calmeyer 1969, 119, no. 54c'; Wartke, in *Vorderasiatisches Museum* 1992, 147, no. 89 left.
5. Meyer 1965, 11, fig. 32; D. P. Hansen, in Orthmann 1975, 170, pl. 40a; Spycket 1981, 163; Braun-Holzinger 1984, 14f., nos. 43, 44, pls. 7, 8; *Vorderasiatisches Museum* 1987, 134, fig. 158; Wartke, in *Vorderasiatisches Museum* 1992, 146, no. 87; Wartke 1994, 127ff.
6. The objects from the Ashur copper hoard were also examined in connection with the not yet published project "Early Metals in Mesopotamia" (Frühe Metalle in Mesopotamien: FMM) being undertaken by the Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte der Universität Heidelberg and the Max-Planck Institut für Kernphysik Heidelberg. The aim of the project is to establish a database for the composition of Mesopotamian metals from the earliest periods to the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.
7. Littauer and Crowel 1989, 111ff., fig. 2-D1-3.
8. Wartke 1994, 127ff.

## 12 *Male figure*

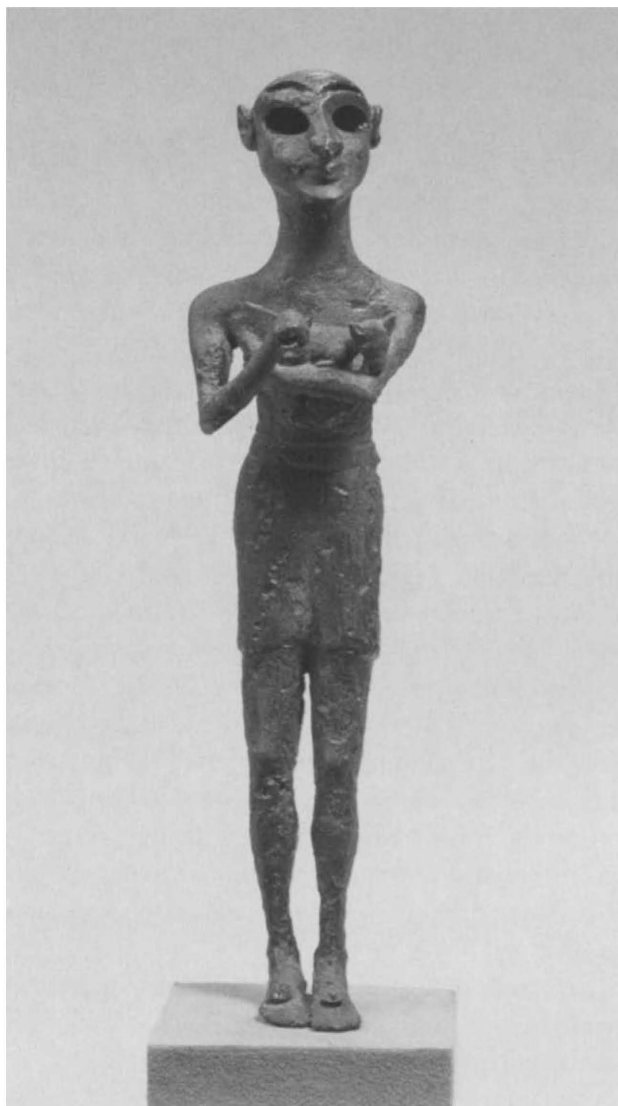
Bronze

Akkadian–Ur III period, last quarter of the 3rd millennium B.C.  
From the cache discovered in the Cult Room of the Ashur Temple  
H. 8½ in. (21.5 cm), W. 2½ in. (5.4 cm), D. 1⅞ in. (4 cm)

VA 5009 (Ass 16317a)

See colorplate 3

This figure of a bareheaded man wearing only a short skirt secured with a belt appears to represent an offering bearer. With his left arm he holds a small calf pressed close to his body. The knife in his right hand, separately worked and fixed on, suggests that the animal is about to be sacrificed. The man's shaven head on a long neck may identify him as a priest. The rigidity of his pose is softened somewhat by a slight forward bend of the torso at the hips, by the placement of one foot slightly ahead of the other, and by the



skirt, which traces the form of the thigh. His back, kneecaps, ankles, and mouth and chin are modeled with particular care. The statuette's considerable artistry is evident in a number of details, such as the suggestion of the man's fingers and the delicate tail, hooves, and elegantly sculptured head of the calf. By contrast, the man's ears look as though they had been added only as an afterthought.

The two holes drilled through the statuette's feet are ancient and suggest that it was once affixed to a base. The original stone inlays for the eyes and brows are missing.

X rays revealed that the figure is a hollow casting from the head to the knees. One of the core support rods, which looks like a wire bent upward, is visible through one of the eye holes.<sup>1</sup>

R.-B.W.

1. Wartke 1994, 134ff.

### 13, 14 *Male figure and leg*

Bronze

Akkadian–Ur III period, last quarter of the 3rd millennium B.C.  
From the cache discovered in the Cult Room of the Ashur Temple H. (with leg) 7<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (19.3 cm), W. 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (5.3 cm), D. 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (3.4 cm)

VA 5010, 5024c (Ass 16317f)

When this statuette was unearthed, a sacrificial animal, probably a lamb, lay across the man's extended left forearm. His right arm is bent upward, the hand open. The suggestion of sacrifice is thus not so direct as in the case of the man carrying a calf. The bald-headed bearer wears a delicately fringed long skirt wound about the lower part of his body. The surface of the skirt is adorned with little tufts, possibly meant to suggest fur.

Through computer tomography investigation of this figure,<sup>1</sup> it was discovered that, in the area of the face, a secondary layer of metal had been applied over the original surface. This "second face" was presumably cast on top of the first one. It consists of almost pure copper and is now badly distorted owing to deep cracks and a pitted surface. This interesting technological anomaly may have been the result of a casting flaw in the original that was so severe it needed to be covered with another casting. The inlays for the eyes and brows are missing.

The legs, one of which survives, were separately worked and then attached to the statuette by means of the two pins projecting from its bottom. The leg, solid-cast at the lower part, has a carefully modeled kneecap, ankle, and heel. There is a portion missing from the front of the leg, and beneath the foot there are traces of an attached ring used to secure the statuette to its base. Gamma-ray radiography



13



14



and computer tomography reveal that the lower part of the body of the statuette is closed off by a concave round disk pierced by the two pins to which the legs were attached. A third pin inside the figure, one of the core supports, can be seen through the hole in the area of the neck and throat.

The alloy of the remaining leg is the identical tin bronze used for the figure. One of the two pins that once secured the legs is an alloy of arsenic and copper; the other was not examined.

R.-B.W.

1. Wartke 1994, 141ff.

### 15 Mace head

Bronze

Akkadian–Ur III period, last quarter of the 3rd millennium B.C.  
From the cache discovered in the Cult Room of the Ashur Temple  
H.  $3\frac{3}{8}$  in. (9.9 cm), Diam.  $2\frac{5}{8}$  in. (6.6 cm)  
VA 5012a (Ass 16317c)

This mace head consists of a solid, spherical knob cast in one piece with a tubular shaft hole that was strengthened with narrow ridges at both ends. The knob has a single circle of molding around its top, a double circle at the bottom. Two rows of raised vertical ribs around the knob, six in each row and staggered in their placement so that they are not aligned vertically with each other, served to maximize the damage wrought by a blow from this weapon.

R.-B.W.

### 16 Axe

Copper

Akkadian–Ur III period, last quarter of the 3rd millennium B.C.  
From the cache discovered in the Cult Room of the Ashur Temple  
H.  $2\frac{5}{8}$  in. (6.5 cm), W.  $4\frac{1}{8}$  in. (12.5 cm), Th. 1 in. (2.6 cm)  
VA 5013 (Ass 16317d)

The axe blade widens outward in gentle curves from the cylindrical shaft hole to its rounded cutting edge. The lower end of the shaft hole extends downward on the side away from the blade for added strength. The transition from the shaft hole to the blade, an area especially susceptible to breakage, has been reinforced by a ridge that also forms a swelling around the top of the hole. A sharp projection from the rear of the shaft hole made the weapon even more useful in battle.

R.-B.W.

### 17 Animal tail

Bronze

Akkadian–Ur III period, last quarter of the 3rd millennium B.C.  
From the cache discovered in the Cult Room of the Ashur Temple  
L.  $4\frac{1}{8}$  in. (10.4 cm), Diam.  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (0.4 cm)  
VA 5023b (Ass 16317p)

This S-shaped animal's tail ends in a slightly thicker tuft scored with cross-hatching to imitate locks of hair. The flattened left end that would have been attached to the body of the animal, most likely a statuette of a lion, has been broken.

R.-B.W.

### 18 Blade

Copper

Akkadian–Ur III period, last quarter of the 3rd millennium B.C.  
From the cache discovered in the Cult Room of the Ashur Temple  
L.  $7\frac{7}{8}$  in. (19.4 cm), W.  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. (3.2 cm), Th.  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (0.2 cm)  
VA 5015 (Ass 16317l)

The shape and dimensions of this double-edged blade, only slightly thicker along the center, suggest that it was probably intended for use as a dagger. A simple bend marks the transition from the blade to the short, flat tang, or shank, which has no rivet holes. This is a relatively simple type of Near Eastern dagger.<sup>1</sup>

R.-B.W.

1. See Maxwell-Hyslop 1946, 3ff, pl. 1, 1, type 1a; Stronach 1957, 90, type 1.

### 19 Blade

Bronze

Akkadian–Ur III period, last quarter of the 3rd millennium B.C.  
From the cache discovered in the Cult Room of the Ashur Temple  
L.  $10\frac{7}{8}$  in. (27.6 cm), W.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. (3.9 cm), Th.  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (0.4 cm)  
VA 5016 (Ass 16317k)

This blade had been broken in two in antiquity. Its present condition is the result of a modern repair of the break and surface cleaning. It belongs to the same type of dagger as the preceding blade, but it is longer and thicker, and it has definite strengthening in the middle. The lower half of the blade has sharpened edges above the shank; however, the upper half does not appear to have been completely forged.

The point at the end has not yet been shaped, and the cutting edges are still as much as 2.5 millimeters thick.

R.-B.W.

**20 Fragment of a pair of antlers**

Copper alloy (with lead and arsenic)  
 Akkadian-Ur III period, last quarter of the 3rd millennium B.C.  
 From the cache discovered in the Cult Room of the Ashur Temple  
 H. 2¾ in. (7 cm), W. 2<sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (7.1 cm), Th. ¾ in. (1.9 cm)  
 VA 5024b (Ass 16317f)

With the help of two quite similar fragments also preserved in the cache, it has been possible to determine that this is part of a pair of antlers with five points on each branch. The statuette to which they were attached does not survive, but to judge from the antlers it represented a maral (*Cervus elaphus maral*, or the Asiatic red deer).<sup>1</sup> Just above the flat pin by which it was attached to the stag's head, two additional hook-shaped points branch off to the front.

The left-hand branch had been broken at the bottom in antiquity. The damage had been subsequently repaired, the

break bridged over by recasting. A second "repair" between the antlers' two branches simply holds the two sides in place. Thus it stabilizes the overcasting; it does not represent a separate procedure.

R.-B.W.

1. See Van Buren 1939, 38f.; Orthmann 1975, 193, no. 97 (illus.)—lion-eagle with stags from Tell al-'Ubaid in southern Mesopotamia.

**21 Fragment of a pair of antlers**

Bronze  
 Akkadian-Ur III period, last quarter of the 3rd millennium B.C.  
 From the cache discovered in the Cult Room of the Ashur Temple  
 H. 2¼ in. (5.7 cm), W. 1½ in. (4 cm), Th. ¼ in. (0.6 cm)  
 VA 5012b (Ass 16317c)

This antler branch with the top four points belonged to a different pair of maral antlers from catalogue number 20, which indicates that there was at one time at least one additional statuette of a stag in this hoard.

R.-B.W.



15



Clockwise, from top left: 16, 19, 18, 17, 20, 21

## Monumental Sculpture

### 22 *Torso of a male statue*

Diorite

Akkadian period, ca. 2300–2200 B.C.

Found next to the east corner of the northeast ziggurat of the Anu-Adad Temple

H. 5 ft. (1.37 m), W. max. 20½ in. (52 cm)

VA Ass 2147 (Ass 7332)

See colorplate 4

This headless statue from the Vorderasiatisches Museum portrays a man with a muscular upper body holding his hands together in front of his waist. He is dressed in a long, smooth, wraparound skirt that has delicately ornamented seams visible at the waist and the hem. A broad belt secures

the garment. The musculature of the man's chest and arms and his shoulder blades and spine are three-dimensionally rendered. His beard hangs down on his chest and a necklace of thick beads can be seen around his neck, but there are no traces of his hair. Damage to the figure after its manufacture detracts only slightly from the superb treatment of its surface.

When Walter Andrae discovered this monumental statue in 1905 (see fig. 2, c), he was certain that he had before him a work from the early history of Ashur. At that time he proposed dating the sculpture to the late third or early second millennium B.C., placing it close in time to the Neo-Sumerian sculptures of the governor Gudea and Old Babylonian statues.<sup>1</sup> Later study, which focused primarily on iconography and style, determined that the work probably belongs to the Akkadian period, a dating that has since been generally accepted.<sup>2</sup>



Along with finds from the archaic Ishtar Temple in Ashur, the statue belongs among the earliest examples of monumental art in Ashur. It has taken its place beside well-known examples of Akkadian art from southern Mesopotamia and Elam. Unfortunately, it has been impossible to fully appreciate the work because the head is missing.

A large-scale male head came to light in Ashur during Iraqi excavations in the area of the Ashur Temple (fig. 2, D) in 1982 and was published shortly thereafter; it is now in the Iraq Museum in Baghdad (fig. 10). At the time it was not possible to establish any connection between that work and other sculptures excavated in Ashur.<sup>3</sup> Based on the style of the head, scholars dated it anywhere from the Akkadian to the Old Assyrian periods.<sup>4</sup> It was my suspicion that it belonged to this long-known male figure in the Vorderasiatisches Museum, but I could not verify my hunch until recently, when I was finally able to offer proof of my theory by matching together the break lines of the head and body.<sup>5</sup> However, because the two pieces are housed in different museums, it has not been possible to exchange plaster casts of the actual head or body to gain an impression of the complete statue.

The rather badly damaged head depicts a narrow male face with a full curly beard that—as we know from the torso—hangs down onto his chest. At the front of his head, his hair is suggested by delicate incising on the skull. At the back, several artfully braided strands are secured by bands in a knot. Wavy locks appear from beneath a broad, unornamented headband that circles his brow. The appearance of the face is marred because the nose is broken off. The upper lip is adorned with a smooth mustache curled up at the corners of the mouth. Even in these details of the hair and beard, the head has much in common with the famous copper head of an Akkadian ruler from Nineveh, also housed in the Iraq Museum in Baghdad.<sup>6</sup> It displays the same facial type, and the treatment of the hair, the headband, and the beard are identical. All of this supports the dating, mentioned above, to the time of Manishtushu, king of Akkad. The choice of a gray diorite speckled with small holes as a medium may indicate that the work was made outside the power centers of the Akkadian empire, possibly in Ashur itself. Certain features of the statue do not accord with standard statues of the Akkadian rulers, and this tends to support such a hypothesis.

According to the records of the finds, the two parts of the statue were widely separated by destruction in the city, possibly even in antiquity. For this reason it is not possible



Fig. 10. Diorite head discovered at Ashur by Iraqi archaeologists in 1982 and later identified as belonging to cat. no. 22. Iraq Museum, Baghdad. Photo by W. Sommerfeld

to determine where the work once stood. Because the statue bears no inscription, it is also impossible to identify it with any specific historical figure. The Akkadian period is documented in Ashur by a few written sources and other finds. The city was apparently for a time under the control of Akkadian rulers in the south, which suggests the possibility that the statue may represent one of the kings of Akkad. An inscription of the Akkadian king Manishtushu that survives in a copy reads: "He [Manishtushu] created his statue and donated it to Enlil."<sup>7</sup> One could interpret this as an indication that such royal statues existed. It is not impossible, however, that one of the local princes had the statue carved and set up in Ashur, following the practice of his overlords.

E.K.-B.

1. Andrae 1905, 41ff., figs. 22, 23; Andrae 1909, 28, fig. 21.
2. Strommenger 1960, 52f., pl. 14; Moortgat 1982, 93.
3. Abu as-Soof 1983, 304f.
4. Harrak 1988, 27ff.; Ehrenberg (in press).
5. Klengel-Brandt 1993, 133ff.
6. Strommenger 1962, pls. XXII, XXIII.
7. Gelb and Kienast 1990, 77.

# TRADE AND EXCHANGE: THE OLD ASSYRIAN PERIOD

## Old Assyrian Merchant's Grave (Grave 20)

WHILE DIGGING in the so-called trial trench 6III (map square gA 6III, fig. 2, F), located to the east of the Sin-Shamash Temple, excavators came across a type of burial not seen previously at Ashur. Grave 20 (find no. Ass 20504), discovered in early September 1912 at a depth of some 6 meters below the surface, had no masonry enclosure.<sup>1</sup> Nor was this a burial chamber carved out to the side of a tomb shaft, as was often seen in contemporary graves of the early second millennium B.C. Rather, according to the sketch of the find in the excavation documents (fig. 11), it must have been a simple rectangular hole, or "earthen grave," measuring roughly 1.9 by 1.3 meters and oriented to the north-east and southwest, the corners pointing approximately to the four points of the compass.

The remains were in an extremely poor state of preservation. Except for fragments of the top of a skull, all of the skeletal remains were missing. Nevertheless, it is clear from the sketch that a body had been placed with the head at the northeast end of the grave.<sup>2</sup>

What made this burial especially significant were the quantity and composition of its extraordinarily rich grave goods.<sup>3</sup> From the sketch showing the arrangement of the finds (fig. 11), it is possible to discover important details about the placement of specific objects. A copper/bronze lance point (Ass 20504af3),<sup>4</sup> for example, lay in the north corner, a copper/bronze dagger (Ass 20504af3) in the one to the east. The ceramic objects—three carinated vessels and a completely shattered flask (Ass 20504ah-al)—were discovered in the west corner, while at least some of the copper/bronze vessels (Ass 20504ac, ae-af2) lay in the south corner. The location of four rings (Ass 20504am), not far from the southwest edge of the grave and almost precisely on its vertical axis, suggests that these were

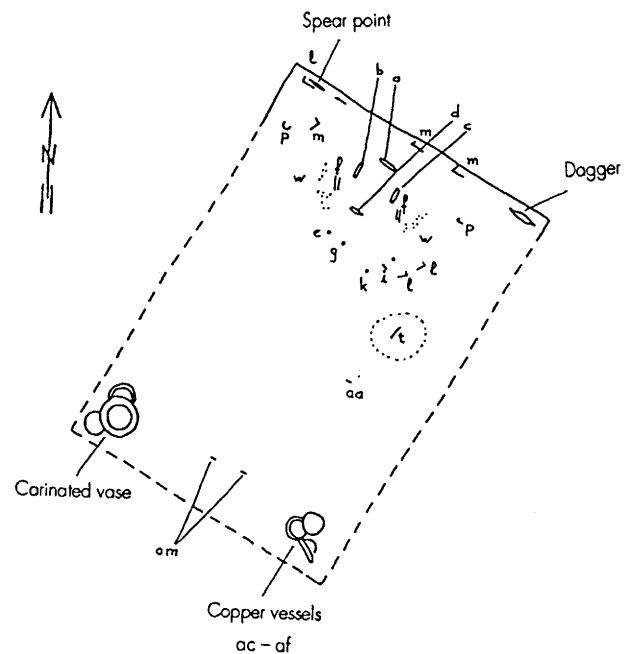


Fig. 11. Excavation sketch of Grave 20, showing the locations of some finds, including cat. nos. 23–26 (a–d), 35a–d (f), 36a, b (p), 37 (aa), 41 (i). Courtesy of the Vorderasiatisches Museum

foot rings and that the corpse was laid out in a prone position. The four golden diadems (cat. nos. 23–26) had apparently been placed at regular intervals on the skull or immediately next to it, one (cat. no. 23) above (on the forehead?), one below (near the mouth?), and one on either side. Also close to the skull on either side, roughly at the level of the ears, lay the large gold earrings with granulation (cat. no. 35). Somewhat farther away from the skull, one on either side, were the two smaller gold earrings with lapis lazuli (cat. no. 36). Below these earrings lay the large gold beads (cat. no. 30), six on each side. Other pieces of jewelry—beads of semiprecious stones, some mounted in gold, and a rosette of vitreous paste (see cat. nos. 27 and 34)—must have been placed on the upper body. The small animal figures, six in all—three of lead (Ass 20504l) and three of copper/bronze (see cat. no. 40)—lay at the northeast edge of the grave, right and left at the level of

the head and shoulders. In addition to the grave goods already mentioned, the inventory includes three cylinder seals of lapis lazuli (cat. nos. 41–43), other beads of semiprecious stones (see cat. nos. 28, 29, 32), an especially large number of beads of vitreous paste (cat. no. 33), a gold ring with an agate bead (cat. no. 37), gold necklace elements (see cat. nos. 27–29), twenty-six gold rings (see cat. nos. 38, 39), small disk-shaped objects of silver and copper/bronze (Ass 20504s, v), other copper/bronze vessels (Ass 20504ab, an, ao, au, av), a fragment of a painted sherd (Ass 20504ag), a piece of an ostrich egg (Ass 20504ap), two copper/bronze armbands (Ass 20504ar), two copper/bronze toggle pins (Ass 20504as), and four copper/bronze finger rings (Ass 20504at).

The four ceramic vessels were apparently tossed aside at the site and cannot be evaluated because of insufficient documentation. It is possible, however, to reconstruct the metal vessels, although for the most part they are incomplete or badly broken and misshapen. They were hammered out of sheet metal, with added elements either forged or cast. It is possible to distinguish the following types:

- two bowls with tiny perforations in the center (sieves);

- two bowls each with a foot ring hammered out from the inside;

- two slender beakers each with slightly concave sides and with one pair of ornamental ridges hammered out at the level of the base and another at roughly the middle;

- one richly decorated bowl, the outside adorned with hanging triangles in repoussé;

- the rim of a small bucket or kettle, in the twin soldered loops of which are remnants of the omega-shaped ends of a hoop handle, separately worked;

- the rim of a large, probably straight-sided kettle, inside which two other vessels were found. Riveted close to the rim on one side is a horizontal handle, originally probably one of two.

The preponderance in this grave of vessels designed for holding liquids or associated with drinking—notably the pairs of beakers, bowls, and

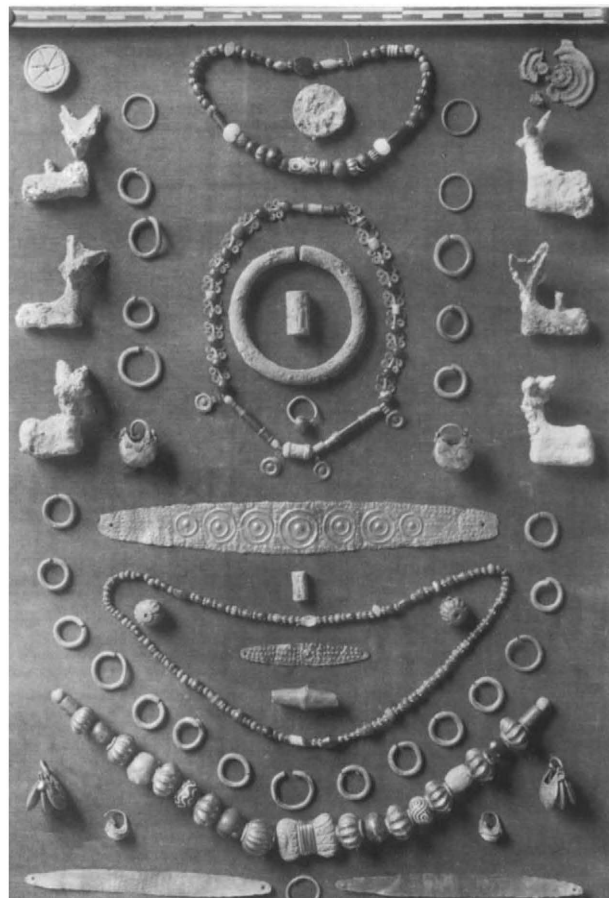


Fig. 12. Original arrangement of a selection of the finds discovered in Grave 20. Courtesy of the Vorderasiatisches Museum

sieves and the two bucketlike vessels—suggests that these metal pieces comprised an elaborate drinking service with perhaps two settings made up of identical or very similar components—bowls, beakers, sieves, and other vessels.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the above list, particular attention has been paid to what is unquestionably the most interesting piece in Grave 20, the large “saucepan,” more accurately a flat pan with straight walls and a long handle (fig. 13).<sup>6</sup> At the center of the interior is a prominent omphalos ringed by two concentric ridges. The end of the slightly tapered flat handle, rolled upward,<sup>7</sup> is embellished by round disks on either side—little wheels, only one of which survives, joined by an axle.

Handled pans of precisely this type were published in connection with a multiple find from

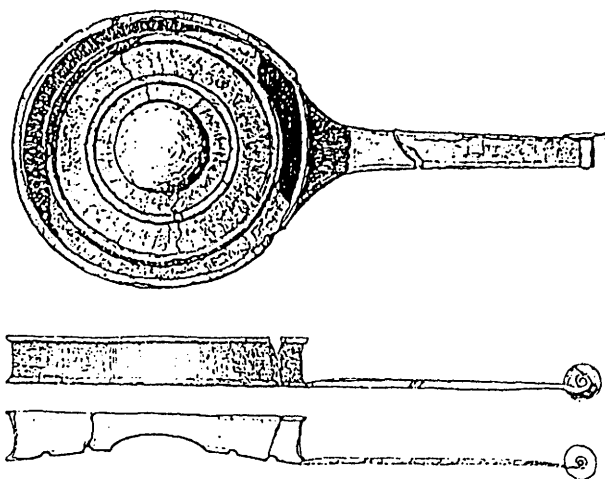


Fig. 13. Drawing of a handled pan found in Grave 20 at Ashur.  
Reproduced from Calmeyer 1977, pl. IIa

the Troad by Kurt Bittel, who was able to add another example preserved in two pieces from Troy (Treasure A, Troy IIg, ca. 2300–2200 B.C.).<sup>8</sup> The Ashur example from Grave 20 and a second quite similar but smaller one from a different but roughly contemporary grave at Ashur were apparently unknown to him.<sup>9</sup> He therefore supposed that the various pieces he published from the Anatolian find, including the handled pan, “were originally at home in the Troad or at least in northwestern Asia Minor, some of them exported from here [the Troad] and possibly imitated in other places.”<sup>10</sup> In the context of his reexamination of the finds from Grave 20, Peter Calmeyer was able to relate to the above-mentioned pieces from the Troad and Ashur an additional Mesopotamian example from Tell Abu Habba/Sippar.<sup>11</sup> The handled pans are closely related in type to the so-called handled bowls known from Ur, Kish, Tepe Gawra, and Tello, which are dated to the Early Dynastic IIIb–Early Akkadian period (ca. 2500–2250 B.C.).<sup>12</sup>

The lance point and the dagger from Grave 20 correspond to types of weapons found in other late-third–early-second-millennium B.C. graves at Ashur.<sup>13</sup> The lance point with a narrow blade has a socket for the shaft. The flat dagger blade had a short haft with the handle grips secured by three

rivets; where the haft was broken, two rivets and one rivet hole survive.<sup>14</sup>

The small recumbent gazelles are the only figurine pieces from Grave 20.<sup>15</sup> Although no one has yet been able to say anything definite about their meaning and importance, they appear to have played some part in special burial customs.<sup>16</sup> Small recumbent gazelles made of copper/bronze, lead, vitreous paste, or alabaster have turned up with some regularity in the oldest graves at Ashur, dating from the late third and early second millennium B.C.<sup>17</sup> Within the corpus of figurines representing recumbent gazelles, one notes that they most often appear in threes, as they do in Grave 20, with its three gazelles of copper/bronze, and three of lead. It would seem that the function or meaning of the animals was specific to the death or burial rite and that they were not among the personal possessions of the deceased while he was alive but were made only on the occasion of his death. Those animals made of metal frequently have casting ridges and pins that have not been filed down. Thus, although the tiny figures had not been completed, they were still capable of functioning perfectly well, perhaps symbolizing some aspect of the afterlife.<sup>18</sup>

The two copper/bronze pins, probably cast and at least 17 centimeters long with fluted heads,<sup>19</sup> may have been used to fasten garments. Such pins appear frequently in inventories of late-third–early-second-millennium B.C. graves at Ashur.<sup>20</sup>

The jewelry (beads, diadems), the three cylinder seals, and the rings and earrings are discussed in catalogue entries that follow. There is only one foot ring in Berlin, made of silver, and it is not included in this catalogue. The function of the small rosette of vitreous paste (cat. no. 34) has not been ascertained.

To judge from the composition of the inventory, Grave 20 does not represent a uniform find,<sup>21</sup> and it has been assigned various dates from the mid-third to early second millennium B.C.<sup>22</sup> The grave inventory confirms contacts between Ashur and Anatolia (see cat. no. 41) and provides evidence of more general cultural relationships between Mesopotamia and northern Asia Minor (see cat. nos. 27, 35). These connections, plus the fact that the cylinder seals

were recarved, lead to interesting conclusions. The various objects in the grave inventory were not necessarily the same age when they were buried. Especially valuable pieces—some of the jewelry, for example—might have been heirlooms in a family's possession for a long time.<sup>23</sup> The cylinder seal with an Ur III presentation scene, recarved with an image of early Old Assyrian type (cat. no. 41), is the latest in date of all of the grave goods, and as such, is decisive for the determination of the date of the final burial.<sup>24</sup> This seal does not, however, help to date the contents of the grave.

As has been suggested by Calmeyer, it is tempting, based on the evident links to Anatolia provided by various objects in the inventory, to see the deceased as a participant in the "much discussed contacts between Mesopotamia and southeast, central, and western Anatolia."<sup>25</sup> At the very least, it is possible this grave was that of a family member of a citizen of Ashur whose commercial or political interests were oriented toward Anatolia.

R.-B.W.

1. The find in map square gA 6III lay northeast of the "Old Akkadian building" (as correctly stated in Preusser 1954, 6, pls. 1, 2) and not "in the Old Akkadian building" (Haller 1954, 10—Grave 20).
2. There is no evidence of traces of "4 burials," as indicated by Andrae (1938a, 79f.). The extremely modest skeletal remains in the excavator's sketch can by no means be attributed to four individuals. The ornamental beads strung into a total of thirteen necklaces in the Vorderasiatisches Museum (four of stone and gold beads, nine of vitreous paste beads) are modern reconstructions. Five examples are in this exhibition. The arrangement of these necklaces was not based on the location of the finds in the grave.
3. Spanos (1977, 105) also assumes that this was a multiple burial. Such is often the case in brick tombs but is more difficult to imagine in an earthen grave.
3. See Haller 1954, 10, pl. 10a–d—Grave 20; Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 70f.; Calmeyer 1977, 87ff.; M. Müller-Karpe (in press).
4. Without scientific analysis of the metal, it is not possible to distinguish among copper, copper alloys, and bronze. Since not all of the finds mentioned are in the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin and analyses of only certain of the metal vessels are available, a designation of copper/bronze is used for all items that have not undergone analysis.
5. At the XLI Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Berlin, July 4–8, 1994, M. Müller-Karpe presented a drinking service found at

Uruk/Warka in southern Mesopotamia and dated to the Akkadian period (2334–2154 B.C.). The elements of the Uruk service are directly comparable to certain objects in Grave 20 at Ashur.

6. The pan (Ass 20504ac) is not in Berlin. Regarding this piece, see Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 58, 71f., fig. 47 (after the excavation photograph); Calmeyer 1977, 90ff., pl. IIa (after original excavation drawing); M. Müller-Karpe (in press [with corrected drawing]).
7. In conversation, M. Müller-Karpe asserted that the end of the handle is rolled downward.
8. Bittel 1960, 1ff., figs. 1–6 (five handled pans or fragments of the same), or 13, fig. 26.
9. Haller 1954, 104, pl. 21a (f)—Ass 21410 (Grave 21). In place of the little wheels, the rolled end of the handle has a ring.
10. Bittel 1960, 31.
11. Calmeyer 1977, 90ff., pl. II,c.
12. M. Müller-Karpe 1993, 207ff.—Form 42II, nos. 1386–98.
13. Not in Berlin; the only evidence is the excavation photograph.
14. See Maxwell-Hyslop 1946, 7ff., pls. 1, 3—Type 3.
15. Of the original six gazelles from Grave 20, there appear to be three lead ones extant in Berlin and one of copper/bronze; but the association of the last with Grave 20 is not altogether certain (see cat. no. 40).
16. The recumbent gazelles are interpreted, for example, as amulets; see Braun-Holzinger 1984, 61, nos. 206–10.
17. For example: of lead—Grave 18 (Haller 1954, 9); of alabaster—Grave 3 (Haller 1954, 6f.); of vitreous paste—Graves 1, 2, 6, 8, 11, 17 (Haller 1954, 6ff.), as well as Ass 20591 (not clearly from a burial context).
18. See in this regard the interesting reflections of B. Hrouda (in Haller 1954, 184), who likewise suspects a connection to death rites and notions of the afterlife.
19. Cannot be located in Berlin.
20. See Klein 1992, 102ff., 368f., dated late 3rd–early 2nd millennium B.C.
21. While the weapons—the lance point and dagger—are typical grave goods for male burials, the extensive inventory of jewelry (necklaces, earrings, foot rings, garment pins) suggests that the deceased was a woman. From the excavation documents, there are unfortunately no indications of a double or multiple burial as Andrae proposed that could explain this incongruity.
22. Andrae 1938a, 79f.; Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 58, 70f.; but Maxwell-Hyslop 1970, 227f., calls the grave Old Assyrian.
23. While the four diadems were apparently produced as funerary ornaments on the occasion of the burial, the earrings show clear signs of wear explained only by long use.
24. See Calmeyer 1977, 88f.
25. Calmeyer 1977, 97. See also H. Klengel, "The History of Ashur in the Third and Second Millennia B.C.," in this catalogue. On the consequences of the dating of the destruction of Troy II, see Calmeyer 1977, 95ff.; but see also, for example, Spanos 1977 and Quitta 1981, 21ff.



**23–26 Diadems**

Gold

Beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.

Found in Grave 20

23: L. 8 $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (20.9 cm), W. 1 $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (2.7 cm), Wt.  $\frac{3}{16}$  oz. (5.39 g)24: L. 5 $\frac{3}{16}$  in. (13.1 cm), W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (1.3 cm), Wt.  $\frac{1}{16}$  oz. (2.11 g)25: L. 2 $\frac{11}{16}$  in. (6.8 cm), W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (1.2 cm), Wt.  $\frac{1}{32}$  oz. (1.10 g)26: L. 5 $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (12.8 cm), W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (1.3 cm), Wt.  $\frac{1}{16}$  oz. (2.12 g)

VA 5640 (Ass 20504a), VA 5641 (Ass 20504b), VA 5642 (Ass 20504c), VA 5643 (Ass 20504d)

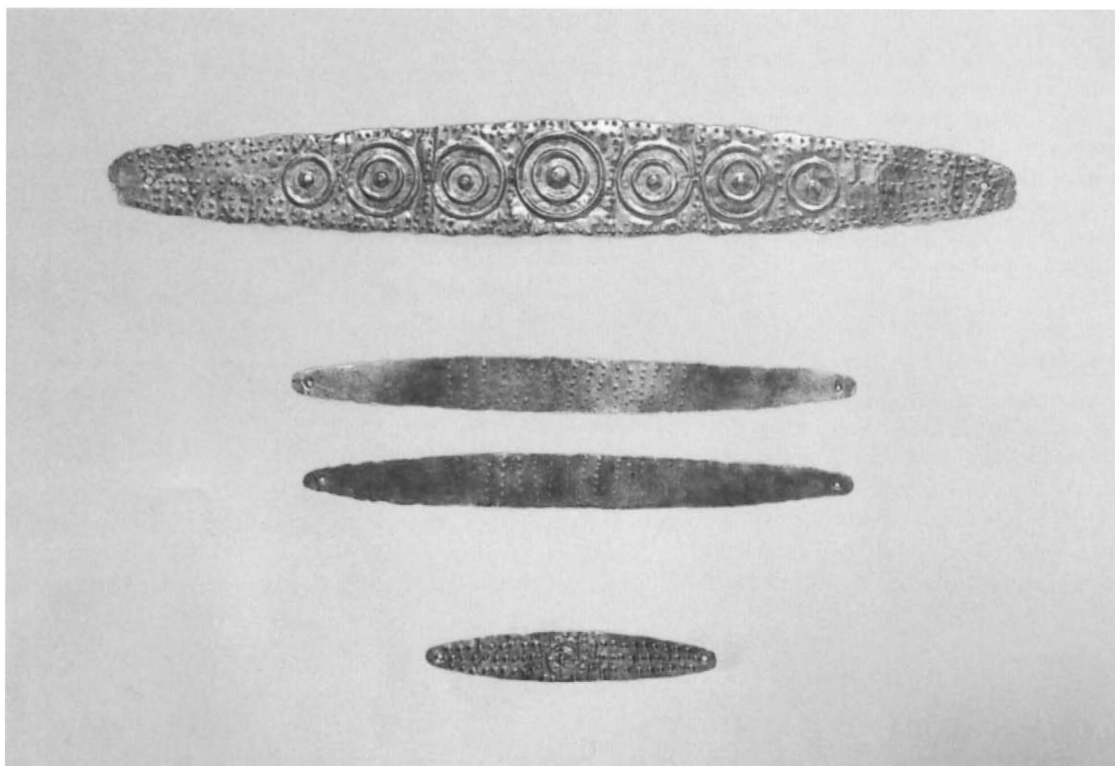
Four funerary diadems were found in the vicinity of the skull in Grave 20 (see sketch, fig. 11). The largest and most elaborate (cat. no. 23) was placed across the top of the skull, perhaps originally on the forehead. It is made of a thin sheet of gold and decorated with a design of seven raised circles arranged in a row. They are framed by vertical and curved rows of dots and by a horizontal border of single, double, or triple rows of dots. The band is widest at the middle, with the largest of five double concentric rings around a center boss.<sup>1</sup> At either side of these are smaller single concentric circles<sup>2</sup> and then a horizontal row of dots toward the single perforations at the tapered ends, which must have been used for attachment to a backing material or a fastening device.<sup>3</sup>

The concentric rings, the raised center bosses, and the tiny dots were formed from the back with the help of

punches and embossing dies. To create the very regular circles, four different “ring punches” were used, their inner diameters respectively 0.7, 0.9, 1.4, and 1.7 centimeters.<sup>4</sup> This is rather mechanical but careful work and contrasts in effect with the punched dots of the border decoration, which are not regular in spacing or in design. For instance, the last circle at the right is surrounded by a circle of dots, while the one at the left has a vertical line and arc of dots around it. The edges of this very thin strip of gold also do not seem to have been finished.

The use of funerary headbands made of thin leaves of precious metal is a distinguishing feature of important burials from the Near East to Europe in the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age periods.<sup>5</sup> An elongated ovoid shape and dot-repoussé decoration are characteristic of mid–late-third-millennium B.C. examples in Mesopotamia, Syria, and the Aegean. One decorated gold band from an Akkadian grave at Ur has a stamped figural design and a fine dot-repoussé border.<sup>6</sup> Other examples from Ur III burials are smaller, undecorated, and ovoid with elongated ends, or elliptical in shape; from two to six were found on individual skulls.<sup>7</sup> On Crete and in the Cyclades Islands both figural and geometric designs and borders were executed in dot repoussé on gold and silver funerary diadems.<sup>8</sup>

There is also evidence from Anatolia for adorning the dead with gold or silver diadems, which in form and design



are attributed by Tahsin Özgüç to Mesopotamian influence.<sup>9</sup> A plain silver diadem was found in a cist grave in level 13 on the city mound at Kültepe (ca. 2300 B.C.).<sup>10</sup> During the Old Assyrian Colony period (Kültepe, *karum* II, ca. 1920–1840 B.C.), contemporary with the latest deposition in Grave 20, more diadems appear in graves at Kültepe, one with zigzag dot-repoussé design.<sup>11</sup> Others are plain, with the exception of a silver strip with three widely spaced raised circles, which was found, however, between the legs of a skeleton.<sup>12</sup> This placement and the pattern bring to mind a metal strip with circle designs, found near the side of a male skeleton in a Middle Bronze Age tomb at Jericho. It has fastening devices at the ends and has been convincingly interpreted as a belt.<sup>13</sup> While the shape of the large diadem in Grave 20 originates in the Akkadian–Ur III periods in Mesopotamia, the circle pattern may date it to the early second millennium B.C.

The other three diadems in Grave 20 consist of a pair (cat. nos. 24, 26), nearly matched in size and design, and a smaller piece with a central circle (cat. no. 25). According to the excavator's sketch, two diadems (cat. nos. 24, 25) were placed vertically at the sides of the head and the third came from the area of the mouth (cat. no. 26). This deviation from the expected arrangement, with the pair at the sides of the head and the small piece at the mouth, may possibly be the result of an arbitrary numbering of the finds when they reached the museum.<sup>14</sup>

The nearly matching strips (cat. nos. 24, 26) are perforated at both ends and are patterned with fourteen and seventeen rows of vertical dots, respectively, spaced closely together toward the center and have the tapering ends left plain. Probably both (accepting a discrepancy in numbering) were set vertically at the sides of the head, thus suggesting that they may have been ear rather than eye coverings.<sup>15</sup> The center of the small diadem that looks like a mouth cover (cat. no. 25) is emphasized by a raised circle with a center boss. Three horizontal lines of dots fill the space between the circle and the perforations at each end.<sup>16</sup> The punched dots are not carefully spaced; they form a rough circle around the central device and some of them have been punched within its outer ring. The edges are rough and the piece is not carefully finished.

Covering the eyes and the mouth of the deceased with strips and circles of gold or silver is an ancient practice,<sup>17</sup> which is documented in the Old Assyrian Colony period at Kültepe.<sup>18</sup> While the shielding of the eyes is mentioned in the literature in connection with mourning,<sup>19</sup> Mesopotamian rituals of sealing the mouth of clay figurines and of cleansing the mouth, in both cases to prevent evil speech, may

somehow be related to the practice of covering the mouth upon death as a means of laying the deceased to rest.<sup>20</sup>

J.A.

1. The outside diameter of the central circle is 2 cm; of the two surrounding circles on each side, 1.7 cm.
2. Their outer dimensions are 1.2 cm in diameter.
3. A gold frontlet from Kültepe, *karum* II, is still attached by rivets to a fragment of a silver headdress: T. Özgüç 1986b, 24–25, pl. 64, 1a–c; gold ribbons were found with diadems at Ur: Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 22–23, figs. 13, 14b.
4. This description was provided by Ralf-B. Wartke.
5. For the earliest evidence, see Brandl 1994, vii.
6. Woolley 1934, pl. 139; Nissen 1966, 165.
7. Woolley 1934, 195, 202, 203, 595, pls. 146, 147, 219; Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 23, 65–67, pls. 46, 47; Nissen 1966, 191; one of two purchased diadems that are referred to as from Ebla phase IIB by Musche (1992, 104, pl. xxxiv) has repoussé circles covering the entire band. A funerary diadem from Byblos is rectangular, found in early-2nd-millennium B.C. context: Musche 1992, pl. xlvii; the tapering ovoid type, however, survives into the Middle Bronze Age: see Musche 1992, pl. lxi, from Tell Ajjul.
8. H. Müller-Karpe 1974, pls. 368:2, 4, 8; 377:32, 357:3.
9. T. Özgüç 1986a, 42–43; T. Özgüç 1986b, 25.
10. T. Özgüç 1986a, 42; in western Anatolia, at Troy, funerary diadems are quite different, shaped as long strips, in two cases with pendant ornaments on chains that covered the forehead and ears: Schliemann 1881, 463, no. 767.
11. See Bass 1969, 35, for a similar rectangular diadem with repoussé design, purchased by the University of Pennsylvania Museum.
12. T. Özgüç 1986b, 24; T. Özgüç 1953, 113, fig. 7.
13. Kenyon 1960, 308, 312, fig. 117; Moorey 1967, 84; the spectacular gold diadems from the Shaft Graves of Mycenae (Karo 1930, pls. 35, 38), while resembling the Ashur and Jericho examples, are later creations without certain links to them.
14. This possibility was suggested to me by Ralf-B. Wartke.
15. The elaborate diadems of Troy had pendants that hung over the ears: Schliemann 1881, 458, no. 688.
16. This description was provided by Ralf-B. Wartke.
17. At Varna in Chalcolithic Bulgaria, large clay heads were placed in pseudo-graves with gold head, eye, and mouth coverings: Brandl 1994, vii; at the site of Mochlos, Crete, a diadem bears a representation of two eyes: H. Müller-Karpe 1974, pl. 368:4.
18. T. Özgüç 1986b, 25.
19. Sjöberg 1973, 31; H. Waetzoldt, "Kopfbedeckung," *RLA*, vol. 6, 202.
20. Lambert 1957–58, 290; Marcus 1994, 9f.; Astour 1980, 227–28; Bottéro 1992, 283ff., discusses the escape of the spirit from the body upon death; the body may have been sealed to prevent the entry of malevolent demons. See von Soden 1994, 199, 202, on demons that attack the dead and on laying the dead to rest.

## GRAVE 20 BEADS

Numerous beads were among the Grave 20 finds, but the excavator's sketch of the grave does not give information regarding their location, except for six gold beads that were found at either side of the skull (fig. 11, w). Many of the beads found were subsequently strung into four gold and stone necklaces (cat. nos. 27–30) and nine necklaces of vitreous paste (for one example, see cat. no. 33). Scholars have used several types of beads illustrated in the publication of this burial<sup>1</sup> in an attempt to determine its date and the identity of the owner. The following description of the most distinctive examples of the beads is arranged according to material.

*Gold*, treasured from earliest antiquity,<sup>2</sup> was used at Ashur for disk-shaped pendants with suspension straps and for beads of four main forms: quadruple spirals, fluted beads with or without collars, barrel-shaped beads with horizontal ribs or a crosshatched pattern, and plain spheres. Gold mounts also embellish beads made of lapis lazuli and carnelian.

Perhaps the most distinctive examples in the corpus are the eighteen quadruple-spiral beads, made by joining two half-tubes with spiral ends (cat. no. 27 and fig. 14). This specific type is one of many varieties of gold and silver quadruple-spiral beads; examples found at a number of sites to the west of Ashur seem to predate those found in Mesopotamia.<sup>3</sup> The earliest dated examples of this type appear to be silver beads, part of a necklace that was found in a ritual deposit of the Akkadian period (ca. 2334–2154 B.C.) at Tell Brak in northern Syria.<sup>4</sup> Similar beads made of gold and silver, respectively, were found at sites in north central Anatolia in late-third-millennium B.C. contexts.<sup>5</sup> Farther west, gold quadruple-spiral beads occur at Troy and the eastern Aegean.<sup>6</sup> This type survived in the late second–early first millennium in Syria and Iran.<sup>7</sup>

While the earliest known jewelry elements with quadruple-spiral decoration come from the Royal Cemetery at Ur in southern Mesopotamia, these are significantly different and cannot be considered to be the direct predecessors of the bead type found in Grave 20.<sup>8</sup> One may then conclude that the quadruple-spiral beads from this grave came from an area to the west of Ashur. As has been pointed out, their form may have had symbolic significance in the Near East.<sup>9</sup>

Fluted spherical gold beads in Grave 20 with deeply cut concave grooves forming raised ridges are used throughout antiquity in the Near East and are known first in Mesopotamia in the Early Dynastic period.<sup>10</sup> These beads are formed around a core and occur in different sizes. Those with collars around their string holes seem to be more characteristic of Mesopotamian and Syrian jewelry of the early second millennium B.C.<sup>11</sup> One gold bead from Grave

20 with horizontal ribs has parallels in Neo-Sumerian jewelry found at Uruk.<sup>12</sup>

Gold tubes and thin braids of twisted wire on elongated carnelian and lapis lazuli beads from Grave 20 have no close parallels. While the use of twisted wire can be documented in the Early Dynastic period at Ur,<sup>13</sup> the use of gold mounts on stone beads seems to be a later feature, characteristic of the late-third–early-second-millennium Ur III–Old Babylonian periods. An example from Ur is of a form that has been called “date shaped” in the literature.<sup>14</sup>

Four other distinctive gold ornaments are disks with a raised ring border, a circle of dots, and a central high boss, which are pendants having a flat strap that coils at the top to hook onto a piece of jewelry (cat. no. 27). Similar suspension straps, indented to fit around the strings of multiple rows of beads, are characteristic of pendants found in Mesopotamia and Syria in the third millennium B.C.<sup>15</sup>

The closest parallels for the Ashur pendant disks are also to be found in late-third-millennium B.C. southern Mesopotamia and at Tell Brak in Syria, where there are circular disks with concentric patterns and raised centers.<sup>16</sup>

*Carnelian*, a hard stone that was procured in India (and perhaps other regions east of Mesopotamia) and worked by Harappan bead makers, was probably imported into Mesopotamia both in a raw state and as finished beads in the third millennium B.C.<sup>17</sup> A large number of beads in standard Sumerian shapes are found in Grave 20: spherical,

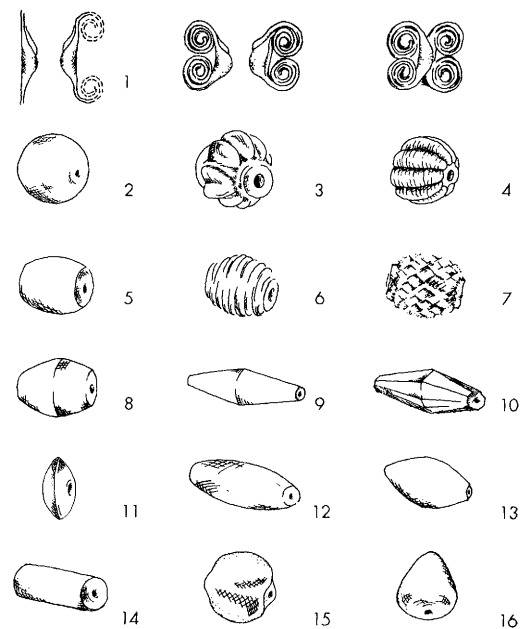


Fig. 14. Bead chart: 1. quadruple spiral: stages in manufacture; 2. spherical; 3. fluted with collar; 4. melon; 5. barrel; 6. barrel: ribbed; 7. barrel: crosshatched; 8, 9. biconical; 10. faceted biconical; 11. shallow biconical; 12. date form; 13. elliptical; 14. cylindrical; 15. lentoid; 16. teardrop. Drawn by J. Ganem

lentoid, date form, biconical, and elongated elliptical. Two variations of the biconical form are a faceted version and a large bead with a high central carination; both are related to examples from Early Dynastic and later graves at Ur.<sup>18</sup>

Of particular interest are the four etched carnelian beads that were probably originally imported into southern Mesopotamia, via the Persian Gulf, from the Indus valley.<sup>19</sup> While such beads are rather numerous at Sumerian sites in the south, they are only rarely found farther north—a further indication of the contacts known to exist between northern and southern Mesopotamia. The beads from Ashur are of the most common type, with white designs etched into the natural red ground by a method that involves heating the stone and applying an alkali (soda) solution.<sup>20</sup> Three of the four etched carnelian beads found in Grave 20 are spherical in shape with banded, wavy-line, and guilloche patterns (cat. nos. 28, 30). The fourth is barrel shaped with dot circles enclosed in a net pattern (cat. no. 28). Both of these shapes as well as the wavy and net designs are found on etched carnelian beads in mid- to late-third-millennium contexts at southern Mesopotamian sites.<sup>21</sup> The example with a guilloche design, however, is unusual and has a parallel that is dated to the beginning of the second millennium B.C.<sup>22</sup>

*Lapis lazuli* was a precious imported material that was as abundant as carnelian in many Sumerian graves of the third millennium B.C. Many beads in Grave 20, of rectangular, cylindrical, flattened cylindrical, biconical and faceted biconical, barrel, and elongated elliptical shapes, were made of this material. Two distinctive forms are closely paralleled in the Early Dynastic royal burials at Ur: a bead with a spiral coil on top (cat. no. 32a) and a convex biconical one, with a strong central carination (cat. no. 28).<sup>23</sup> A third bead (cat. no. 31) is bow shaped with irregular lines of zigzag decoration; damaged and later repaired with a gold band at the middle, it resembles a chignon of the type seen on the helmet of Meskalumduḡ from the Royal Cemetery of Ur.<sup>24</sup>

*Rock crystal, milky quartz, and banded agate* are rare in Grave 20. Banded agate beads, some quite spectacular with gold mounts, are found in late-third-millennium Neo-Sumerian graves;<sup>25</sup> one teardrop-shaped agate bead (cat. no. 29) is paralleled in a *karum* level Ib tomb (ca. 1840–1740 B.C.) at Kültepe.<sup>26</sup>

From this survey, it appears that, with few exceptions, the beads in Grave 20 most closely resemble jewelry recovered from sites in southern Mesopotamia, found in contexts ranging from the mid-third to early second millennium B.C. This includes the etched carnelian beads, which probably came only indirectly to Ashur from their original source in the Indus valley. The quadruple-spiral beads, however, are most similar to beads found largely outside Mesopotamia. Other examples are found in late-

third-millennium contexts along a route from northern Syria to central Anatolia, a route that was most probably traveled by merchants from Ashur; they are also found in northwestern Anatolia, which had close contacts with north central Anatolia. Along with a number of other beads in Grave 20, the quadruple-spiral beads may have been heirlooms, collected abroad either in an early phase of contact or during the Old Assyrian Colony period.

J.A.

1. Haller 1954, 10, pl. 10a.
2. See entries in *RLA* by W. F. Leemans, "Gold," vol. 3, 504ff, and J. Boese, "Gold," vol. 3, 516ff.
3. Huot, Pardo, and Rougelle 1980, 120, fig. 1:1, 4, 6, 15, 22, 24, 125, group the Ashur beads with "type A," described as made from a single wire. The Ashur beads (fig. 14:1), however, were made from two wires, as were several others of "type A."
4. Tell Brak: see Oates and Oates 1993, 162ff., 167, fig. 13; Mallowan 1947, 73–74, 171f.; for an Ur III silver example from Selenkahiye on the Syrian Euphrates, see van Loon 1977–78, 166–67, pl. 7; Huot, Pardo, and Rougelle 1980, 123:6.
5. Alaca Höyük: Arik 1937, pl. 249; Koşay 1938, 140, 141:12, 26; M. J. Mellink, in *COWA* 1992, vol. 1, 218–19, vol. 2, 173; Eskiyyapar: Özgüç and Temizer 1993, 613ff., 617, 622.
6. Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 53, fig. 37b; *Land of Civilizations, Turkey* 1985, 360, pl. 65:1; Schliemann 1881, 489, figs. 836, 838; 490 fig. 853; Huot, Pardo, and Rougelle 1980, 120, fig. 22; Mellink 1956, 51.
7. Parrot 1937, 81ff., pl. xv:2; Huot, Pardo, and Rougelle 1980, 124:21, fig. 1:21.
8. Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, pls. 9, 10; Woolley 1934, pl. 134, found in RT/580, ED IIIa; the dates for tombs at Ur are given according to Nissen 1966.
9. Maxwell-Hyslop 1989, 215ff.; of interest is the image of a deity seated before a quadruple spiral on a cylinder seal impression from Tell Brak.
10. Woolley 1934, 368; Musche 1992, pls. xxvi: types 4, 5.3, xxx: Bänder, type 2.
11. Musche 1992, pls. xxxiv:4, xlviii: Halsschmuck 2, 11:5.
12. Uruk: Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 65; Musche 1992, pl. XLIII; Limper 1988, pl. 22; horizontally ribbed beadlike suspension elements, along with fluted beads with collars are also part of the assemblage of Old Babylonian jewelry known as the "Dilbat necklace": Lilyquist 1994, 5ff.
13. Woolley 1934, pl. 138:U.9779.
14. Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 68, pls. 48, 49; Woolley 1934, pl. 132: P.G. 1422: Ur III.
15. Ur, Tell Asmar, Mari: Musche 1992, 90, fig. 8, pls. xx, xxiv, xxv; Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 15, 29; they differ from pierced suspension straps found at contemporary Early Bronze Age sites in central Anatolia, some of which have circular pendants: Mellink 1956, pl. 1:2; Özgüç and Temizer 1993, pl. 113:1.
16. Oates and Oates 1993, 166, fig. 12 (Akkadian ritual deposit); Tell Asmar: Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 29, pls. 27, 29; pendants from Ur are also circular in shape but with central disks of lapis lazuli: Woolley 1934, pl. 135.

17. During Caspers 1971, 96; for mention of trade in long beads, see Mackay 1937, 3; M. Tosi, "Karneol," *RLA*, vol. 5, 452.
18. Woolley 1934, 366–67, pl. 131; for a gold bead from Tell Asmar, formed of two parts, and with a high central carination, see Frankfort 1934, fig. 29.
19. During Caspers 1971, 95f.; Reade 1979; imitations of these beads were also made in Mesopotamia.
20. Beck 1933, 384ff.
21. Ur, Kish, Tell Asmar: Woolley 1934, pl. 133; Beck 1933, 384ff.; During Caspers 1971, 83ff., fig. 1:16, 18–20.
22. Tell Asmar: Frankfort, Lloyd, and Jacobsen 1940, 205, fig. 105i; see also imported beads at Susa, dated to the Akkadian period: Amiet 1986, pl. 92b.
23. Woolley 1934, pls. 134 (ED IIIb), 131 (ED IIIa).
24. Woolley 1934, pl. 150. For a black steatite hair piece with a gold band, see Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 86, fig. 55; for a somewhat similar spacer from Kish, see Mackay 1929, 186, pl. LX:43.
25. Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 26, 65, pl. 45.
26. T. Özgüç 1986b, 36, pl. 74,7; while interesting, this is not sufficient evidence for lowering the date of Ashur Grave 20 to the Kültepe, *karum* Ib period. The Kültepe bead could either have been an heirloom or an example of a type that existed earlier.

## 27 *Necklace beads and pendants*

Gold, carnelian, lapis lazuli, agate  
 Late 3rd–beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.  
 Found in Grave 20  
 Diam. ca. 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (11 cm)  
 VA 5800a (Ass 20504g, h, u, x)  
 See colorplate 5

The modern arrangement of this small necklace combines three elongated beads with gold settings (carnelian and lapis lazuli), four round pendant disks made of sheet gold with long suspension loops, and eighteen gold quadruple-spiral beads, each interspersed with stone beads. The stone beads have traditional forms: spherical, spherical with flattened ends, biconical, elliptical, barrel, and date form.

The caps of the elongated carnelian and lapis lazuli beads consist of sheet-gold conical tubes with thin double twisted wire soldered to the edges on either end of each tube as decoration. The openings of the outer sides of the tubes were made smaller by bending the edge of each opening inward. An identical double twisted wire circles the middle of the long tubular carnelian bead like a small ring.

Each of the round pendants has the form of a raised circle with a prominent center boss, the intervening space filled with a ring of tiny dots. The basic circles are quite regular, and they must have been formed by means of an embossing die. However, the rings of dots punched from the front and the way the outer edges of the pendants were



27

trimmed reveal workmanship that was not the finest. The suspension loops are curled forward, and the strap of each has two horizontal folds.

Each of the quadruple-spiral beads was made from two pieces. A long thin wire was hammered flat at the center, and its two wire ends were rolled up into spirals. The edges of the flat center section between the spirals were then bent up to form a half-tube and joined to another similarly prepared piece. The two pieces were interlocked and soldered together, making it look as though one tube sprouts two spirals at each end (fig. 14).

R.-B.W.

## 28 *Necklace beads*

Gold, carnelian, lapis lazuli, milky quartz, vitreous paste  
 Late 3rd–beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.  
 Found in Grave 20  
 Diam. ca. 3<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (10 cm)  
 VA 5570 (Ass 20504 o)  
 See colorplate 6

In the modern reconstruction of this necklace, an alternation of gold and semiprecious stones of contrasting colors, the most notable beads are a carnelian one with an etched white design and two made of milky quartz. The stone beads have the following shapes: spherical with flattened

ends, cylindrical, biconical, date shaped, elongated elliptical, convex biconical with a sharp central carination, and carinated lentoid. Most of the beads of hammered gold still have some gray substance as a core. They tend to have longitudinal ribs or flutes, with or without collars. Unusual forms are the one bead with a crosshatched pattern and the two with horizontal ridges.

The small cylindrical bead ringed with deep channels probably never belonged to a necklace of gold and semi-precious stones. It is part of the large corpus of vitreous paste beads that were reconstructed into nine necklaces (see cat. no. 33).

R.-B.W.

### 29 *Necklace beads*

Gold, carnelian, lapis lazuli, agate, rock crystal, black stone  
Late 3rd–beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.  
Found in Grave 20  
Diam.  $6\frac{5}{16}$  in. (16 cm)  
VA 5621 (Ass 20504z)  
See colorplate 6

This delicate and complex necklace, a modern arrangement, incorporates small stone beads alternating with sixty tiny beads of gold.<sup>1</sup> The beads vary widely in shape. Among them are spheres, some with flattened ends; ring, date, barrel, and biconical shapes; teardrop shapes with longitudinal bores; elliptical and faceted biconical shapes.

Except for three plain beads, all of the gold beads are fluted and are therefore closely related in type and technique to the large gold beads from the necklace in catalogue number 30. The majority of the beads have collars; a few have flattened ends.

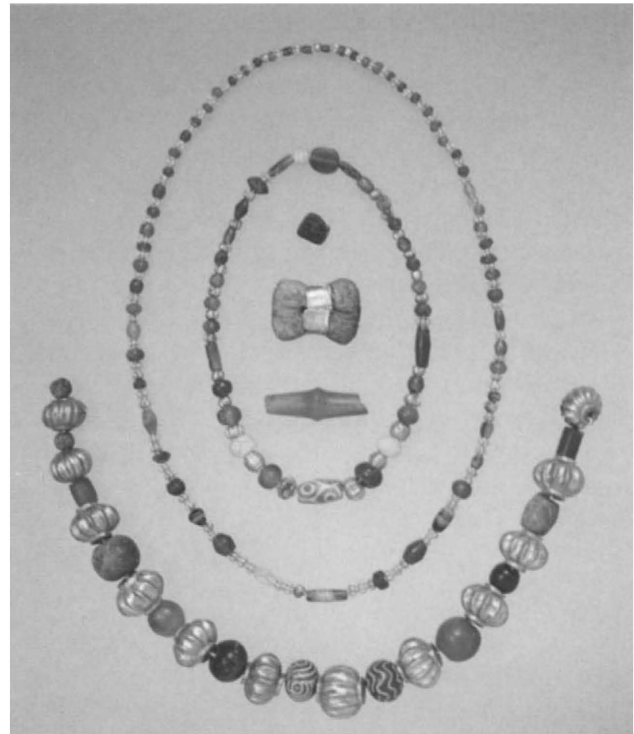
R.-B.W.

1. According to the original excavation drawings, more than forty small gold beads are now missing.

### 30 *Necklace beads*

Gold, carnelian, lapis lazuli  
Late 3rd–beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.  
Found in Grave 20  
L.  $11\frac{7}{16}$  in. (29 cm)  
VA 5801 (Ass 20504 o, w), VA 5624a, b (2 gold beads, Ass 20504 o)  
See colorplate 6

These striking beads are made of gold, carnelian, and lapis lazuli. Most of the stone beads are round, although two examples in carnelian are cylinder shaped. One biconical



From the bottom: 30, 29, 28, 32b, 31, 32a

lapis lazuli bead presents small facetlike planes on the surface, traces of grinding. Two beads of carnelian have etched white decoration, one with a guilloche and the other with a wavy band and rosettelike pattern surrounding the string holes.

The round gold beads, more or less flattened, were made by putting sheet metal over a filling that is still a gray mass visible inside the bead. Ten beads have collars and fluting with sharp ridges. Two additional fluted beads display a variation of the basic type, with shallower flutes and broader ridges, approaching a form known as “melon shaped” (see cat. no. 33). One has a collar; the other does not.

R.-B.W.

### 31 *Necklace element*

Gold, lapis lazuli  
Late 3rd–beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.  
Found in Grave 20  
L.  $1\frac{3}{16}$  in. (3 cm), W.  $\frac{7}{16}$  in. (2.3 cm), Th.  $\frac{3}{16}$  in. (1 cm)  
VA 5801 (Ass 20504e)  
See colorplate 6

This object is thought to be a necklace element because of the holes bored through it. The surface of the stone on one side is divided by four incised horizontal bands with zigzag

filling. Wound around the middle is a strip of sheet gold 0.8 centimeters wide. Four raised ribs in the stone, visible through the thin gold band, seem to cinch the piece together like a five-layered bundle. There is a certain tension in the small piece as a result, its ends swelling outward.

From the point of view of technique, the piece has several notable features. While the front side seems clearly laid out in the manner described, the ribs are lacking on the back. There, a number of notches cross the length and width of the stone's surface. During restoration it appeared as though the gold band was meant to mask an ancient repair. The piece is made up of two halves, their inner surfaces being carefully filed and joined together by means of two thin copper pegs inserted into two drill holes, one on either side of the central hole.<sup>1</sup> The gold strip was added to mask both a faulty bore on the side and the break in the center.

R.-B.W.

1. Oxidation of the small copper pegs has split the drilled holes into which they were inserted, splintering the surrounding stone and lifting the gold wrapping. The corrosion has now been drilled out of the peg holes for the most part, and the two halves of the lapis lazuli ornament are held together with a modern high-grade steel sleeve in the central bore.

### 32a, b Beads

Lapis lazuli (32a), carnelian (32b)  
Late 3rd–beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.  
Found in Grave 20

32a: L.  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (1 cm), W.  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (1 cm), Th.  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (1.75 cm)

32b: L. 1  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (3.5 cm), Diam. at center  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (1.3 cm)

VA 5625 (Ass 20504r), VA 5588 (Ass 20504t)

See colorplate 6

The single lapis lazuli bead with a square base tapers to a point on the top. A delicate spiral line on the top surface is badly worn away, indicating that the ornament was used for a long time. Two drilled holes crossing diagonally from opposite corners suggest that the bead functioned as a divider in a multistrand necklace.

The long carnelian bead, not uniformly polished, tapers toward the ends and is distinguished by a high center ridge. A fragment has splintered off one end.

R.-B.W.

### 33 Necklace beads

Vitreous paste  
Late 3rd–beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.  
Found in Grave 20  
Diam. ca.  $6\frac{1}{16}$  in. (16 cm)  
VA Ass 1828 (Ass 20504aq)

Nine different necklaces have been assembled in modern times out of the many hundreds of beads of glazed vitreous paste ("frit"; see "Glass," preceding cat. nos. 69–73) that were found in Grave 20. The beads have many different shapes and range in color from white to a yellowish gray brown. The surfaces of some are entirely glazed, while others seem to have preserved only traces of glaze. The best are in tones of turquoise and green.

Except for a few irregular pieces, the beads, although of different sizes and shapes, fall into the following basic types: small ring shapes, smooth spheres or spheres with flattened ends, melon-shaped beads, cylinders ringed with two rather deep channels, date-shaped, and biconical beads, some ringed with channels, and lentoids with deep notches on the edges. One ridged, elongated bead is square in cross section. The bead hanging in the center of the small loop has the form of a segment of a sphere drilled horizontally;



it has three longitudinal channels on its convex side and therefore resembles the lapis lazuli stones in the earrings in catalogue number 36.

R.-B.W.

### 34 *Rosette*

Vitreous paste with yellow glaze  
Late 3rd–beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.  
Found in Grave 20  
Diam.  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (2.4 cm), Th.  $\frac{3}{16}$  in. (0.5 cm)  
VA 5533 (Ass 20504k)

This small, round, buttonlike object has a smooth upper surface and convex underside and is drilled through the center. The top surface has incised decoration consisting of a circular line parallel to the edge and six straight lines from the circle to the center point, creating a kind of rosette pattern.

R.-B.W.

### 35a–d *Four earrings*

Gold  
Akkadian period, 2334–2154 B.C.  
Found in Grave 20  
35a: H. 1 in. (2.6 cm), W.  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (2 cm), Th.  $\frac{5}{8}$  in. (1.6 cm),  
Wt.  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. (5.88 g)  
35b: H.  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (2.4 cm), W.  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (2.1 cm), Th.  $\frac{5}{8}$  in. (1.6 cm),  
Wt.  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. (5.73 g)  
35c: H. 1 in. (2.5 cm), W.  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (2 cm), Th.  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (1.9 cm),  
Wt.  $\frac{3}{16}$  oz. (6.14 g)  
35d: H.  $1\frac{1}{16}$  in. (2.7 cm), W.  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (2 cm), Th.  $\frac{7}{16}$  in. (1.1 cm),  
Wt.  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. (6.24 g)  
VA 5576a–d (Ass 20504f)  
See colorplate 7

Since their initial publication in 1954, the granulated earrings from Grave 20 at Ashur have been frequently discussed and variously dated to the Ur III through the Old Assyrian periods (ca. 2100–1740 B.C.).<sup>1</sup> The four earrings, probably constituting two pairs, are absolutely identical in type and in construction. The basic form of each is three separately made, pouch-shaped elements, or lobes, joined together to create a single earring. At either end of the conjoined pouches are small circles of sheet gold surrounded by granules, each of which formed a cell originally intended for inlay material.<sup>2</sup> At one end of each earring there is a single circle; at the other end, three circles are clustered together. It is probable that the end having three circles was

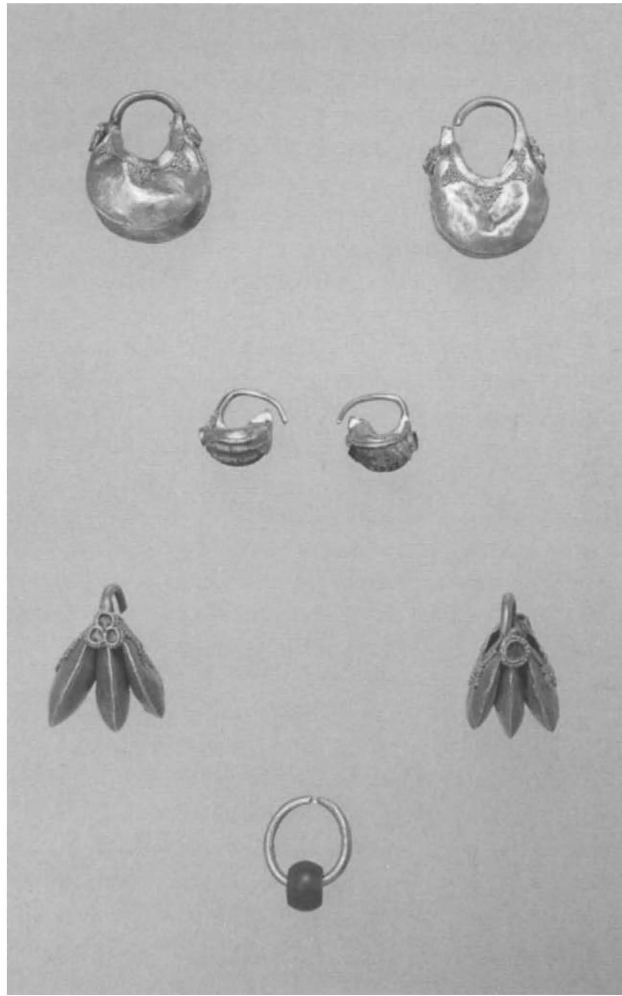
the front of the earring, not only because it is more elaborate but also because the wire which passes through the ear (the ear wire) emerges from this side. On each earring the upper edges of the two outermost pouch shapes are reinforced on the exterior with a narrow strip of sheet gold. Along the bottom edge of each of these strips is a single row of small spheres, or granules, to which are attached further granules arranged in a pattern of three triangles.<sup>3</sup>

Of importance is the fact that the triangle patterns were achieved through the technique called granulation, a process which entails the bonding of the gold granules to the sheet-gold background by heating the area enough for surface fusion to take place without melting down any of the gold elements. True granulation does not involve the use of metallic solder, a medium which melts at a lower temperature than the gold and facilitates the bonding procedure. The technique, however, can make use of non-metallic solders, such as copper salts. Granulation therefore refers more to the type of bonding that takes place (fusion vs. soldering) than the fact that granule-shaped elements are necessarily being used.<sup>4</sup>

Although complicated in design and ambitious and labor-intensive in technology, the earrings are rather crudely made. The granules are not uniform in size, and the triangles are poorly formed. The flattened top surface of many of the granules may be due both to mechanical handling during manufacture and to long use and general wear of the earrings. Other traces of wear include the dented surfaces of the pouches and the crushed condition, particularly of one earring. Several granules have fallen off either from wear or because they were never properly fused onto the surface during the granulation process. There is evidence of blistering on the sheet-metal background, an indication of possible overheating during manufacture. Despite these inconsistencies in the quality of production, the earrings are important for the history of jewelry technology since they may represent one of the earliest extant examples of true granulation.

To find the best parallel for the Ashur earrings, one must begin with the distinctive shape and construction of the body rather than with the granulation. While multi-lobed ear and hair rings of more or less lunate or boat shape, both hand and mold made, have a long tradition in the Near East (see cat. no. 77), there are only a few which seem to resemble the Ashur earrings in the deep, pouchlike shape and in the method of construction that involves the joining of separately made lobes:<sup>5</sup> an earring from a tomb in level 13 on the mound of Kültepe (Early Bronze IIIA, ca. 2300 B.C.);<sup>6</sup> one discovered in a clay vase at Tell Brak (Akkadian period, 2334–2154 B.C.);<sup>7</sup> and an example from Private Grave 1850 at Ur, the contents of which seem to vary in date from the Early Dynastic to the Ur III period





First and third rows: 35a–d; second row: 36a, b; fourth row: 37

(mid–late third millennium B.C.).<sup>8</sup> A connection between the examples from Ur and Kültepe has already been noted by Maxwell-Hyslop.<sup>9</sup> On the basis of the method of manufacture, the Brak and Ashur earrings may be added to this group, the Ashur ones being the most elaborate examples of the type.<sup>10</sup>

The granulation on the Ashur earrings, a feature not given primary importance in the dating of the pieces, is by no means of secondary importance in terms of the development of jewelry technology in the ancient Near East. The origins of granulation have often been said to be in the west, specifically at Troy, where the earrings supposedly from Treasure A seem to display refined and well-executed versions of the technique.<sup>11</sup> While these Trojan pieces, assigned to level IIg (ca. 2300–2200 B.C.), seem to be the only other significant extant examples of granulation before the Ur III period (2112–2004 B.C.) apart from the Ashur earrings, the linear style of granulation at Troy is very different from the style used at Ashur.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, it seems that the method of assembling the Trojan exam-

ples also appears to be unlike that of the ones from Ashur.<sup>13</sup> For these reasons, in addition to the controversy over the dating and the integrity of Troy Treasure A or of level IIg in general,<sup>14</sup> it seems unwise to relate the Ashur earrings to those from Troy, on technical, stylistic, or chronological grounds.<sup>15</sup>

Rather, given the particular pattern used for the granulation on the Ashur earrings, it is logical to suggest southern Mesopotamia as the source for the design on the earrings.<sup>16</sup> Triangular motifs appear frequently in jewelry found at southern sites.<sup>17</sup> In the north, at Ashur itself, a plaque from the Ishtar Temple of the mid–late third millennium B.C. (fig. 15) depicts a female figure wearing a collar necklace of elements arranged in a triangular pattern.<sup>18</sup> While there is minimal evidence for the actual technique of granulation, defined above, in southern Mesopotamia before the Ur III period (2112–2004 B.C.),<sup>19</sup> the use of gold and stone spheres to create decorative patterns, especially triangular ones, is common and represents a further design concept closely related in spirit to the granulation on the Ashur earrings.<sup>20</sup> The sensibility of creating specific decorative designs with spheres certainly seems a plausible impetus for the development of the technique as manifested on the Ashur earrings.

Considering the above evidence, a date in the Akkadian period for the Ashur earrings seems probable. The crudeness of the granulation on the Ashur earrings may then be explained by the fact this is an early stage in the develop-



Fig. 15. Drawing of a painted gypsum plaque representing a female figure found in the area of the Ishtar Temple at Ashur. Mid–late 3rd millennium B.C., H. 6¼ in. (17.5 cm). The British Museum, London. Drawing reproduced from Andrae 1977, fig. 87

ment of the technique. Furthermore, it seems clear that the Ashur earrings, like other aspects of Grave 20, show as many connections with southern Mesopotamia as with areas west of Ashur, thereby testifying to the complex nature of the grave's contents.

K. B.

1. Haller 1954, 10, pl. 10a; Maxwell-Hyslop 1970, 227–28; Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 70–71, fig. 46; Calmeyer 1977, 87, fig. 1; Musche 1992, 145, pl. 1:1; and Lilyquist 1993, 34–35, fig. 5b, among others.
2. Traces of a white incrustation substance have survived in the upper of the three adjacent cells of cat. no. 35d (VA 5576d). The substance appears to be a vitreous paste.
3. This description of the earrings has been provided by Ralf-B. Wartke.
4. For a complete description of granulation, see Wolters 1983, Muhly 1989, and Nicolini 1990.
5. The lobed appearance of most multilobed ear and hair rings seems to have been achieved by bending the domed ends toward each other until they met side by side; see, for example, Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, pls. 4, 18, 24a, b, c, 44, 58a, b. Alternatively, these items could be mold made; see Canby 1965, pl. IX, b, d. In either case, the process did not involve joining any seams or assembling the final earring from individually made parts as with the Ashur earrings and related pieces.
6. T. Özgüç 1963, 13, pl. VII:1, where the earring was found with an openwork disk of Early Dynastic type known from Ur, Uruk, Kish, Tell Asmar, Tell Brak, and Mari; for the date of EB IIIA, see Spanos 1977, and M. J. Mellink, in *COWA* 1992, vol. 1, 213–20.
7. Mallowan 1947, 71, pl. xxxvi:28.
8. Woolley 1934, 200, 595 (U. 17913, P.G. 1850), pl. 219, type 10. Nissen 1966, 191, dates the deposition of the grave to the Neo-Sumerian period. The contents of the grave in general resemble those of Ashur Grave 20.
9. Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 28–29.
10. Also related may be an earring from Nuzi, as pointed out in *COWA* 1992, vol. 1, 115. I thank Joan Aruz for this reference.
11. Schliemann 1990, pls. 196, 209.
12. The granulation patterns at Troy are distinctly linear rather than geometric as on the Ashur earrings and in Mesopotamia in general later in the 2nd millennium. For discussions of parallels for and the alternative dating of the Trojan earrings, see Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 57–60, and Calmeyer 1977, 95–97.
13. This conclusion is based on the evidence from photographs only.
14. Easton 1976 vs. Mellink, in *COWA* 1992; Spanos 1977; Easton 1984 vs. Traill 1983; Calmeyer 1977; Maxwell-Hyslop 1971; and Yakar 1979.
15. I thank Machteld Mellink for useful discussions concerning the Trojan and Ashur material.
16. Contra Lilyquist 1993, 34–36, 51.
17. For triangle motifs used in southern Mesopotamian jewelry, see Ur (Woolley 1934, pls. 133, 145, 220); Tell Asmar (Frankfort 1934, fig. 29); and Kish (Watelin and Langdon 1934, pl. xxxv).
18. Andrae 1922, pl. 28c.

19. See Lilyquist 1993 for the most recent study of the history of granulation.

20. The use of granular decoration in rows, clusters, and triangles is especially prominent on daggers from Ur (Woolley 1934, pls. 151, 152, 155, 157).

### 36a, b *Pair of earrings*

Gold, lapis lazuli

Late 3rd–beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.

Found in Grave 20

36a: H.  $\frac{5}{16}$  in. (1.4 cm), W.  $\frac{3}{16}$  in. (1.5 cm), Th.  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (1 cm)

36b: H.  $\frac{5}{16}$  in. (1.4 cm), W.  $\frac{3}{16}$  in. (1.4 cm), Th.  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (1 cm)

VA 5627a, b (Ass 20504p)

See colorplate 7

These two identical earrings doubtless formed a pair. They consist of wide, lunate bodies of sheet gold inlaid with lapis lazuli that has three deeply carved, longitudinal grooves. Each gold body is articulated on the outside curves by two twisted wires laid side by side to create braids or plaits. A small circle of sheet gold was attached where the ear wire emerges out of the body, presumably to serve as a cell for inlay (now missing) and as a decorative detail marking the front of the earring.

The body of each earring appears to have been produced by splitting open one end of a round wire, then hammering the two “branches” of the split wire into sheet metal, and finally soldering together these two sheets to form a cuplike construction.<sup>1</sup> A small piece of separately made sheet gold was soldered over the seam to cover it. This cuplike element served as the mount for the lapis lazuli stone.<sup>2</sup>

Two additional small pieces of sheet gold, roughly triangular in shape, were soldered onto the ends of each earring, probably to more securely hold in place the lapis lazuli inlay. Of these two triangles the front one was attached before the cell-like ornament and the plaited wires since both sit on top of the sheet. In contrast, the triangular piece at the back seems to have been positioned after the rest of the earring had been completed and the lapis lazuli inlay slipped into position. This sheet clearly covers the decorative wires.<sup>3</sup>

Like the earrings described in catalogue number 35, these earrings are complex and ambitious works in the method of their construction, yet crude in execution. They too show signs of wear, especially on the plaited wires. The form of the earrings is related to, but a variant of, the common Near Eastern multilobed, crescent, or boat-shaped ear and hair rings. In addition to the use of lapis lazuli inlay as part of the body of the earring, the distinctive characteristics are the wide, splayed lobes and the fat and stocky

appearance of the body element. Both aspects are in contrast to the more typical elongated shape and tightly compressed lobes. The closest parallels for these earrings are examples from Tell Asmar, Isin, and Nippur in southern Mesopotamia, and from Susa in southwestern Iran.<sup>4</sup> All these examples are very similar in form but are constructed entirely of sheet gold, silver, or electrum instead of a combination of metal and stone. The dates for this group range from the late third to early second millennium B.C., making a date anywhere up to the end of the early Old Assyrian period (ca. 1840 B.C.) probable for the Ashur earrings. The lapis lazuli used in the Ashur examples underscores the importance of this material—brought from distant regions in Afghanistan—to the trading activities of Ashur during this time span.

A unique piece from Kültepe, *karum* level II (ca. 1920–1840 B.C.), may be related to these Ashur Grave 20 earrings since the body shape is also designed to hold a stone inlay, obsidian in this case.<sup>5</sup> While the Ashur Grave 20 earrings are certainly of a different type, the design concept of combining metal and stone to produce a piece of jewelry usually made of metal alone is not dissimilar. Both examples, in spite of their overall differences, display innovativeness of technique and design. These two qualities, often at the expense of refinement and technical skill, seem to be the hallmarks of metal crafting at Ashur.

K. B.

1. Alternatively, it is possible that the body was formed from a single sheet of metal, hammered out of the one end of the wire, which was pinched together to create the same shape.
2. On the back of one of the lapis lazuli stones, which was removed from its setting when the piece was cleaned, there are notches in the form of a cross.
3. This description was provided by Ralf-B. Wartke.
4. Frankfort, Lloyd, and Jacobsen 1940, 204, fig. 105h; Hrouda 1977, pl. 12 (1B201); McCown, Haines, and Hansen 1967, 142, pl. 151:2; Tallon 1987, vol. 1, 261, vol. 2, 312, nos. 1148–53.
5. T. Özgüç 1986b, 30, pls. H:2, 68:16.

### 37 Ring with bead

Gold, carnelian  
 Beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.  
 Found in Grave 20  
 Ring: Diam.  $\frac{3}{16}$  in. (1.5 cm), Th.  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (0.2 cm)  
 Bead: Diam.  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (0.9 cm), Th.  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (0.6 cm)  
 VA 5626 (Ass 20504aa)  
 See colorplate 7

This ornament consists of a simple, open gold hoop that passes through a spherical carnelian bead with flattened ends.<sup>1</sup> It is unclear how this object was worn, whether as a finger ring, an earring, a hair ring, a nose ring, or some element of a more elaborate piece of jewelry. A closely related ring with carnelian bead was excavated in a grave from Kültepe, *karum* level II.<sup>2</sup> The piece is almost exactly like the Ashur example in size and appearance except that the ring is made of bronze instead of gold.

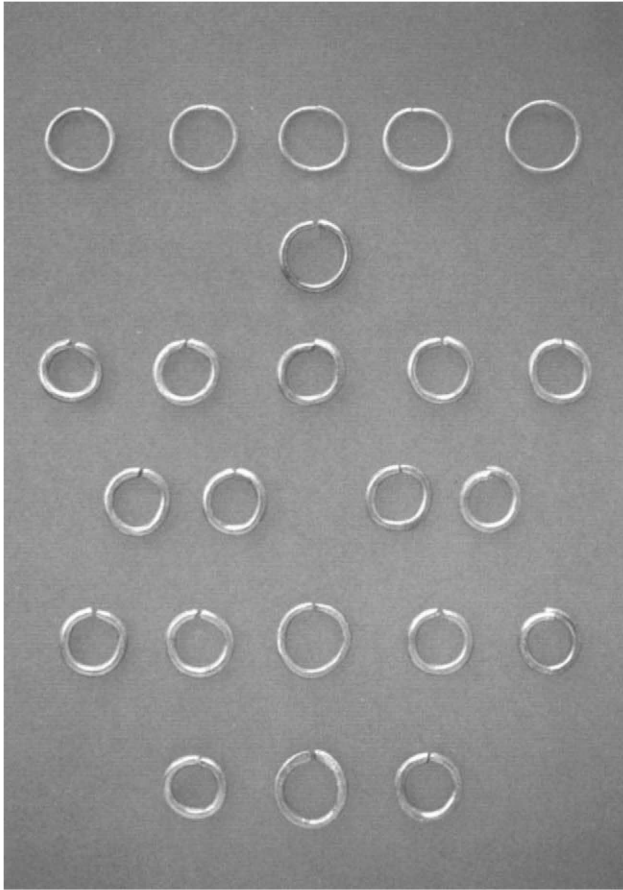
K. B.

1. This description was provided by Ralf-B. Wartke.
2. T. Özgüç 1986b, 37, pl. H:18. Level II is generally dated to 1920–1840 B.C.

### 38, 39 Twenty-three rings

Gold  
 Beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.  
 Found in Grave 20  
 First row, 5 rings: Diam.  $\frac{11}{16}$ – $\frac{13}{16}$  in. (1.8–2 cm), Th. ca.  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (0.16–0.17 cm)  
 Single ring: Diam.  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (1.9 cm), Th.  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (0.2 cm)  
 Third and fourth rows, 9 rings: Diam. ca.  $\frac{11}{16}$  in. (1.7–1.8 cm), Th. ca.  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (0.27–0.3 cm)  
 Fifth row, 5 rings: Diam. ca.  $\frac{11}{16}$  in. (1.7–1.8 cm), Th. ca.  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (0.28–0.3 cm)  
 Sixth row, 3 rings: Diam.  $\frac{11}{16}$ – $\frac{13}{16}$  in. (1.7–2 cm), Th. ca.  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (0.26–0.3 cm)  
 VA 5622a–c, VA 5799a–t (Ass 20504y)

Of the twenty-six massive gold rings that were once part of the find, only twenty-three are still preserved. With one exception, all the rings are open-ended. The ring at the far right in the top row, VA 5622a, has had the ends joined through soldering or fusing. Most of the ends were coarsely cut or sawed. Two of the examples in the bottom row are more carefully finished: the one at the right has tapered ends while the one in the center has ends that are slightly flattened. The thick wires from which the rings were made have slightly faceted surfaces, suggesting that they might have been hammered into the round section.<sup>1</sup>



38, 39

Simple rings such as these, usually made of copper but occasionally of gold, silver, and electrum, first became popular in the Near East in the second half of the third millennium B.C. The majority of the rings come from burial or hoard contexts where they are found individually or in small numbers. In addition, similar rings of gold and silver were used during the late Early Dynastic (ca. 2500 B.C.) and Akkadian (2334–2154 B.C.) periods as necklace pendants and headdress elements, alone or in combination with twisted wires, most notably at Ur, Tell Asmar, and Tell Brak.<sup>2</sup> For this usage it would not have been necessary to finish the ring since the join would have been hidden by the suspension loop of the pendant. The only prerequisite for design purposes might have been uniformity of size and shape.

In early-second-millennium B.C. burial and hoard deposits in the ancient Near East, however, larger numbers of rings similar to these appear.<sup>3</sup> They are not often given much attention because they are commonly found alongside more elaborate jewels, cylinder seals, and other objects. The rings are usually assumed to be finger rings, earrings, or sometimes hair rings, but they might also have been elements of larger pieces of jewelry such as the examples of

necklaces and headdresses mentioned earlier. Since hoard deposits are sometimes identified as jewelers' stashes because of the presence of scrap metal,<sup>4</sup> it is also conceivable that rings found in such contexts might have been preweighed, roughly formed wire. As such, they might have served as a jeweler's inventory of raw material. Only the systematic measuring and weighing of the rings in the various extant deposits can determine whether this is an accurate hypothesis.

Several groupings of the Ashur rings can be made based on their thickness and weight. Five of the rings, shown in the top row, are thin and weigh between 1.59 and 1.7 grams; seventeen are thicker and weigh from just under 4 grams to barely over 4.5 grams; one, shown by itself in the second row from the top, does not fall into either group as it weighs 3.1 grams. The rings are all between 1.7 and 2 centimeters in diameter. The diameter size is consistent with a basic finger size; however, one would expect a finger ring to be properly finished. The majority of the rings are rather heavy and, if combined in a necklace, they would add up to a considerable, probably uncomfortable, weight. Their weight would also make it difficult for them to be kept in place as hair rings. Therefore, the possibility must be considered that the Ashur rings, at least the groups of five and of seventeen having similar dimensions and weight, were part of the raw material inventory of the individual buried in Grave 20.<sup>5</sup> This would not necessarily mean that the deceased was a jeweler. Judith Bjorkman has recently pointed out that, since merchants acted as brokers of goods as well as financiers and money lenders in the Old Babylonian period, it is conceivable for a merchant to have possessed finished as well as unfinished or scrap pieces of precious metal. Both could have served as capital.<sup>6</sup> The same might have been the case in earlier times. If the deceased in Grave 20 was in fact a merchant, as Peter Calmeyer suggests,<sup>7</sup> these rings may have represented part of his wealth and thus would logically have been buried with him in his grave along with finished goods of value.

K.B.

1. This description has been provided by Ralf-B. Wartke.

2. Woolley 1934, necklaces: pls. 129, 135, 220; headdresses: pls. 127, 128, 130b; Frankfort 1934, fig. 29; Mallowan 1947, pls. xxxv, xxxvi:11, LIII:35.

3. T. Özgüç 1986b, pl. 67; Arnaud, Calvet, and Huot 1979, pl. II:7; Lilyquist 1994, fig. 4; Montet 1929, Atlas, pl. LXX:598; Bisson de la Roque 1950, pls. VII, VIII.

4. Arnaud, Calvet, and Huot 1979.

5. Since writing this I have learned of a similar observation regarding Late Bronze Age burial finds in Cyprus by Goring (1989, 103–4).

6. Bjorkman 1993, 6.

7. Calmeyer 1977, 97.



#### 40 *Gazelle*

Copper/bronze

Late 3rd–beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.

Found in Grave 20 (?)

H. 1<sup>11</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (4.3 cm), W. 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in. (3.8 cm), Th. <sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (2.4 cm)

VA Ass 4319 (Ass 20504m [?])

The animal is shown facing to the right with the legs tucked under the body and the head turned toward the viewer. Its characteristic features are summarily depicted: a compressed body, long slender neck, long pointed nose, and long straight horns. In addition, the ears protrude at right angles, and one foreleg ending in a hoof is clearly defined. The absence of a beard and the shape of the horns have led scholars to identify these creatures as gazelles. Two lead figures of the same type from this grave have casting rods projecting from their backs. A hole has been drilled up from the bottom of this gazelle but does not go through the body.

Because of restoration work, this animal no longer looks like the one described in the find, and it is not altogether certain that it is one of the three copper/bronze gazelles from Grave 20.

R.-B.W.

#### 41 *Cylinder seal*

Lapis lazuli

Ur III period (ca. 2112–2004 B.C.), recut in the early Old Assyrian Colony period, Kültepe, *karum* II (ca. 1920–1840 B.C.)

Found in Grave 20

H. <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (2.1 cm), Diam. <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in. (1.1 cm)

VA 5364 (Ass 20504i)

It is probably of some significance that the three cylinder seals deposited in Grave 20 (cat. nos. 41–43) were made of

lapis lazuli—a material that had prestige in lifetime and was also an appropriate gift to present to the gods of the netherworld.<sup>1</sup> This material was not commonly used for seals during the Ur III to Old Assyrian periods, the time during which this example was first made and then recarved. However, there are Old Assyrian textual references to seals of lapis lazuli and some evidence that it was traded in Anatolia.<sup>2</sup>

The largest of the three lapis lazuli cylinder seals, found below and to the proper left of the skull (fig. 11, i), is a Mesopotamian seal that was altered on probably two occasions. It was first carved in the Ur III period with a three-figure “presentation” scene.<sup>3</sup> A goddess wearing a single-horned crown and a vertically striped or pleated garment with a double hem is shown leading a worshiper with shaven head and fringed cloak to a seated goddess in a flounced robe and single-horned crown, who sits on a double-box seat. A crescent moon was probably also part of the original scene, along with an inscription that was later erased.

Sometime later, in place of the inscription, a scene was carved in somewhat smaller scale than the original group. It consists of a standing figure wearing a rounded cap and a long garment textured with diagonal stripes and possibly fringes; his arm overlaps the seated deity, thus barely fitting into the space, and his feet, which are not visible, would have protruded below the groundline. Before him on a platform rendered by four horizontal lines is a bull with a rectilinear hatched pattern on the body, an upturned head and curved horns, a well-defined neck, and a triangle above its rump.

Also added to the original Ur III seal were a little figure below the arm of the leading goddess; a two-handled globular vessel with a flat rim; and a “ball-staff” with the ball placed centrally. The last may represent a first recutting. A second, smaller vessel and a ball-staff with the ball placed laterally on the staff probably represent a second recutting which dates to the time that the bull-god was carved.<sup>4</sup> Two sun disks with star patterns may also belong to this phase of recutting, one placed above the original crescent.



41 and modern impression

Neo-Sumerian seals are quite prominent in the corpus of seal impressions from Kültepe in Anatolia and many of them are recut. It has been pointed out that they probably came to Anatolia from Ashur rather than directly from southern Mesopotamia, although very few examples have actually been found at Ashur.<sup>5</sup> Figures were added that made these seals look more Anatolian, and inscriptions identifying their former owners were erased.

One of the most characteristic Anatolian images was the bull with a triangle on its back, interpreted as a weather-god in the form of a bull.<sup>6</sup> This motif of the bull-god appears frequently on seals in the local Anatolian style.<sup>7</sup>

The Neo-Sumerian “presentation” scene also provided the model for the composition of Assyrian-style seals that were cut at the beginning of the second millennium B.C., presumably in Ashur or in Anatolia for use by Assyrian businessmen.<sup>8</sup> Many of these seals additionally included the image of the Anatolian bull-god, which may have had a specific meaning for merchants from Ashur that now eludes us.<sup>9</sup>

The image of the bull-god on the seal in Grave 20 is the strongest evidence to support the idea that this was the grave of an Old Assyrian merchant who had his seal altered, probably in central Anatolia, and then brought it home with him.<sup>10</sup> The style of the bull-god on this seal is the most diagnostic feature in Grave 20 for dating the burial to about 1920–1840 B.C., the Kültepe *karum* II period. A small number of Old Assyrian seal impressions on Cappadocian tablets from this period have bull-gods rendered in a similar manner;<sup>11</sup> they differ somewhat from the more characteristic contemporary linear depictions, in which the animal is reduced to a rectangle with a triangular head and no neck, one example actually found elsewhere at Ashur.<sup>12</sup>

J.A.

1. See Kramer 1967, 111, 119.

2. Larsen 1977, 93; Larsen 1976, 198–99. Lapis lazuli was brought to Kültepe by the late third millennium in the form of seals and beads, and a lapis lazuli cylinder seal with gold caps was found in a tomb of the Old Assyrian Colony period: T. Özgüç 1986b, 34, pl. 71:4, 37, pl. 75:2a, b; one is also reported from Acemhöyük level III: N. Özgüç 1986, 48; see also Porada 1982, 286, 299, fig. 3, for a Syrian Colony-style seal made of lapis lazuli from the Töd Treasure.

3. Moortgat 1940, pl. 61:506; for comparison, see for instance, Collon 1982, pl. XLIV:369–71.

4. Porada 1966, 256, argues this point, based on the two different forms of the bull-staff; for interpretations of these standard Mesopotamian motifs, see Collon 1986, 49–50.

5. Teissier 1994, 61–62; Leinwand 1984, 39–40; see also N. Özgüç 1989, 378.

6. Porada 1966, 246; Leinwand 1984, 90ff., 102.

7. N. Özgüç 1965, pl. XIII.

8. Leinwand 1984, 94, 100–106, refers to documents which were sealed by both Assyrian merchants using Assyrian-style seals and native Anatolians using their own style seals; Teissier 1994, 47, refers to native Anatolians who used second-hand Old Assyrian seals.

9. N. Özgüç 1989, pl. 88; Leinwand 1984, 22ff., 230, 256; her theory is questioned by Teissier 1994, 53; an official seal of the city of Ashur found at Acemhöyük in the succeeding IB period has a representation of a suppliant goddess before a version of the bull-god: Veenhof 1993, 651–53, pl. 124:3, 4. Syrian-style seals also have bull-god images: Porada 1966, pl. XVII:81.

10. Calmeyer 1977, 87ff. The interpretation of this burial is complex. The lack of physical evidence seems to indicate that the material in Grave 20 belonged to a single skeleton. The grave goods, however, are of different periods and could have come into the possession of the deceased in various ways and times.

11. Teissier 1994, 215 nos. 75, 95; 221 no. 225; 222 no. 241.

12. Moortgat 1940, 130, pl. 61:505.

## 42 *Cylinder seal*

Lapis lazuli

Old Assyrian Colony period, Kültepe, *karum* II (ca. 1920–1840 B.C.)

Found in Grave 20

H.  $\frac{5}{16}$  in. (1.5 cm), Diam.  $\frac{3}{16}$  in. (0.8 cm)

VA 5368 (Ass 20504q)

This seal from Grave 20 has a rough and partially abraded surface that may be due to its having been recut, thereby totally obliterating an earlier scene.<sup>1</sup> The seal carving is modeled after the Neo-Sumerian “presentation” scene with a deity leading a worshiper to a seated bearded figure who may be a deified king. The seated figure is wearing a now-abraded flounced robe that leaves one shoulder bare and a slightly elongated cap with a brim (?), and he sits on a box-shaped seat. Beneath a crescent moon his proper right hand is extended, holding a conical cup toward the first of three approaching figures, two with their proper left arms raised, the middle one with the arm bent toward the body. These figures wear caps, and the garments of the first two are clearly flounced; the third figure seems to wear a plain robe



42 and modern impression

with two horizontal lines representing flounces or a bordered hem. Behind the seated figure is a standing male figure wearing a pointed conical cap and probably a short kilt.

Anton Moortgat was the first to recognize the non-Mesopotamian character of this representation, and he attributed it to Cappadocian (central Anatolian) workmanship.<sup>2</sup> While difficult to parallel in any single example, the stylistic treatment of the figures and the iconography of the Ashur seal seem to fit best with Old Assyrian-style seal impressions on tablets from Kültepe, *karum* level II. On these seal impressions, there are numerous scenes with figures of similar type approaching a seated personage who wears a flounced garment.<sup>3</sup> There are also nude or kilted males, some with pointed conical headgear.<sup>4</sup> These male images may have been inspired by local Anatolian-style glyptic, where the conical headdress appears to designate divinity and is worn both by seated figures in long robes and by figures in kilts, some of whom are identifiable as weather gods.<sup>5</sup>

It is possible that, as in the case of catalogue number 41, some aspect of the design of this Old Assyrian seal alludes to images on Anatolian seals. It may have been carved in Anatolia or in Ashur itself, where there are rare examples of Old Assyrian-style seals.<sup>6</sup>

J.A.

1. The carving is of poor quality and the condition of the seal is rather poor, which is often a characteristic of cylinders made of scraps of lapis lazuli and reused: Collon 1987, 122.

2. Moortgat 1940, 48, pl. 61:508.

3. Teissier 1994, 221, no. 229; Lewy 1937, pl. CCXXXIII:49–52.

4. Teissier 1994, 220, nos. 212, 216 (?); Matouš 1962, pl. CXX:Ka 601c.

5. N. Özgüç 1965, pl. I:2; Spar 1988, pl. 131, seal 49.

6. Moortgat 1940, pl. 61:512.

### 43 Cylinder seal

Lapis lazuli

Ur III period (ca. 2112–2004 B.C.)

Found in Grave 20

H.  $\frac{5}{16}$  in. (1.5 cm), Diam.  $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{3}{16}$  in. (0.7–0.8 cm)

VA 5800b (Ass 20504n)

The smallest seal in Grave 20 is a Neo-Sumerian cylinder that seems to show some evidence of abrading that was perhaps a preliminary step before a planned recutting which never occurred.<sup>1</sup> The seal is distinguished by having ridged caps carved out of the actual stone, imitating a type of mount that was often made of gold. The seal form has parallels on a small number of stone seals with “presentation” scenes of the Ur III period.<sup>2</sup>

Carved in a modeled style on the seal is a goddess, who appears to be wearing the usual striped or pleated garment with double hem, and probably a single-horned crown. She leads a bald worshiper wearing a long fringed (?) robe toward a goddess on a box-shaped seat. With the exception of a three-line inscription, of which part may be erased, and a missing crescent (also erased?), the scene is similar to the original design of catalogue number 41. The text on the seal identifies the owner as “Izi-x-kin, son of Aba.”<sup>3</sup>

This seal and the recut example catalogue number 41, as well as a third seal made of marble, are the only cylinder seals of Neo-Sumerian date discovered at Ashur.<sup>4</sup> All are carved with “presentation” scenes in which there is a seated goddess.<sup>5</sup> Irene Winter has suggested that the presence of a seated deity rather than a seated divine king on such seals may be meaningful in determining whether the seal owner was part of the temple or the court administration.<sup>6</sup> Such distinctions may have been lost when a seal such as this one came to Ashur. It may rather have been regarded as a precious piece of lapis lazuli that would eventually be recarved with images appropriate for an Assyrian merchant working in the trading centers to the west.

J.A.

1. Moortgat 1940, pl. 61:507; referred to in the scholarly literature as part of a necklace, the seal was strung after excavation with other beads found in the burial (cat. no. 27, fig. 12) and subsequently removed.

2. Collon 1987, 109–10:12ii, 121:515, imitating type 12i, who notes that the type continues into the Old Babylonian period; see also Porada 1948, nos. 278 (rock crystal), 287 (hematite); Buchanan 1966, 76:420 (“steatite”), pl. 31:420; Collon 1982, 151:391 (chlorite), 154:409 (calcite), 162:443 (serpentine), pls. XLVI:391, XLVII:409, L:443.

3. Moortgat 1940, 130:507; Calmeyer 1977, 88.

4. Moortgat 1940, pl. 34:250.

5. For presentation scenes that may date to the Isin-Larsa and Old Babylonian periods from Ashur, see Moortgat 1940, pls. 39:296, 40:309.

6. Winter 1987, 77–78.



43 and modern impression

## Cult Vessel

### 44 *Fragments of a relief vessel*

Schist

Old Assyrian period, ca. 18th–17th century B.C.

Found in map square iB 4I

VA 5150: H. 6½ in. (15.5 cm), W. 7½ in. (ca. 19 cm)

VA 8322: H. 1½ in. (5 cm), W. 2½ in. (6 cm)

VA 5131+5149: H. 6 in. (15.3 cm), W. 6¾ in. (ca. 16 cm)

VA 5131+5149, VA 5150, VA 5132, VA 8322 (Ass 17350)

These fragments from a large stone vessel provide only an approximate notion of the actual object. By fitting together some of the pieces and combining parts of the frieze, it was possible to calculate that the straight-sided vessel had an inner diameter of roughly 29 centimeters and was roughly 30 centimeters tall. Its sides vary in thickness between 2 and 2.3 centimeters.<sup>1</sup> The vessel was ornamented on the outside with relief scenes arranged in registers. One large

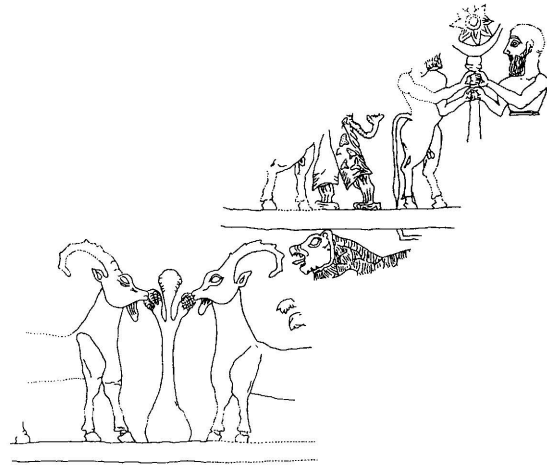
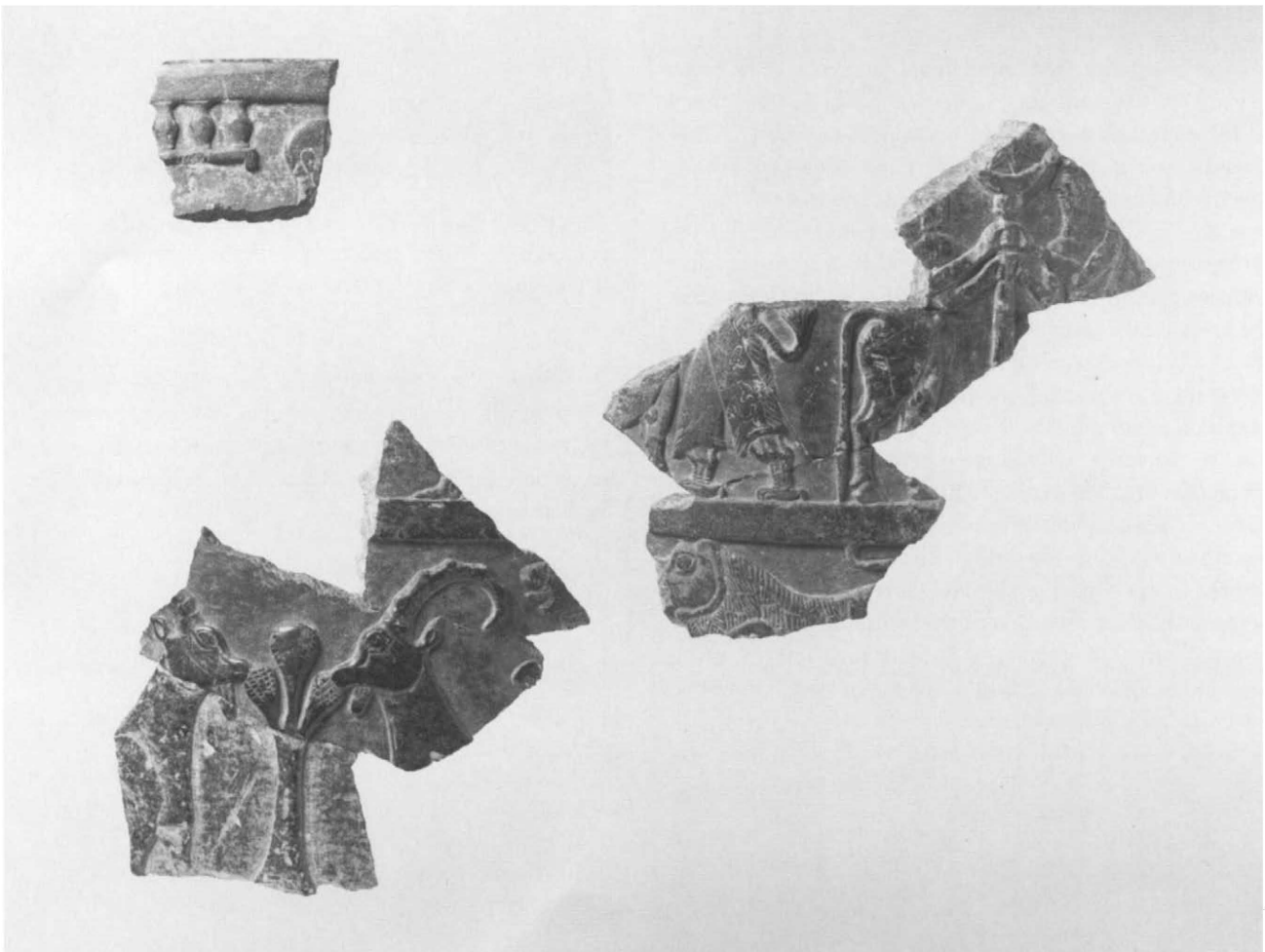


Fig. 16. Composite drawing of imagery on cat. no. 44. Original drawing by Katrin Hinz; redrawn by J. Ganem





fragment shows two caprids that have been identified as ibexes. They are eating from a three-lobed, highly stylized plant that stands between them in a scene not unlike that appearing on a cult relief of approximately the same date (fig. 17). From the surviving fragments of the vessel it can be determined that at one time there were three such groupings of feeding animals pictured directly above the vessel's base. How the figure of a lion above the back of the ibex fits into the composition is still uncertain.

In the second register, it is possible to distinguish the figures of a bull-man and a bearded man, the latter probably without bull's legs. These two figures are holding a standard crowned by a crescent moon and an eight-pointed star. Behind the bull-man is the lower part of a fabulous creature with powerful bird's claws and a feathered garment. A tail begins at the waist, then curves upward and ends in a fan-shaped tuft. To judge from numerous parallels, this creature would have had a lion's head and wings. The upper register may be represented by only a single small rim fragment on which one can see the back of a man's head and several vessels on a shelf. However, no join has been established between this fragment and other portions of the vessel.

The fragments were found in various spots in the region of the Ashur Temple (fig. 2).<sup>2</sup> From the above description it is clear that they were parts of an important vessel of considerable size and ornamented with mythological scenes. The documentation of the find provides no clues to the possible dating of the fragments; therefore it is necessary to rely on stylistic comparisons.<sup>3</sup> A number of iconographic features, such as the fabulous creature with bird's legs and the group of the standard bearers, are found in the art of the Old Babylonian period (1894–1595 B.C.). For the lion figure there are parallels on the cult basin of Ebla (Tell Mardikh), from roughly the same time. In the scholarly literature, the cult vessel has often been related to Mitannian art and dated to the middle of the second millennium B.C.<sup>4</sup> Various stylistic qualities argue against this, however, among other things the rigid stances of the animal figures and the compressed, massive body forms of the standard bearers. The poor condition of the fragments and the unusual formal idiom make it difficult to assign the work to a specific time and culture. Until convincing arguments for a later dating are advanced, one can only assume that the work was executed in the Old Assyrian period.<sup>5</sup>

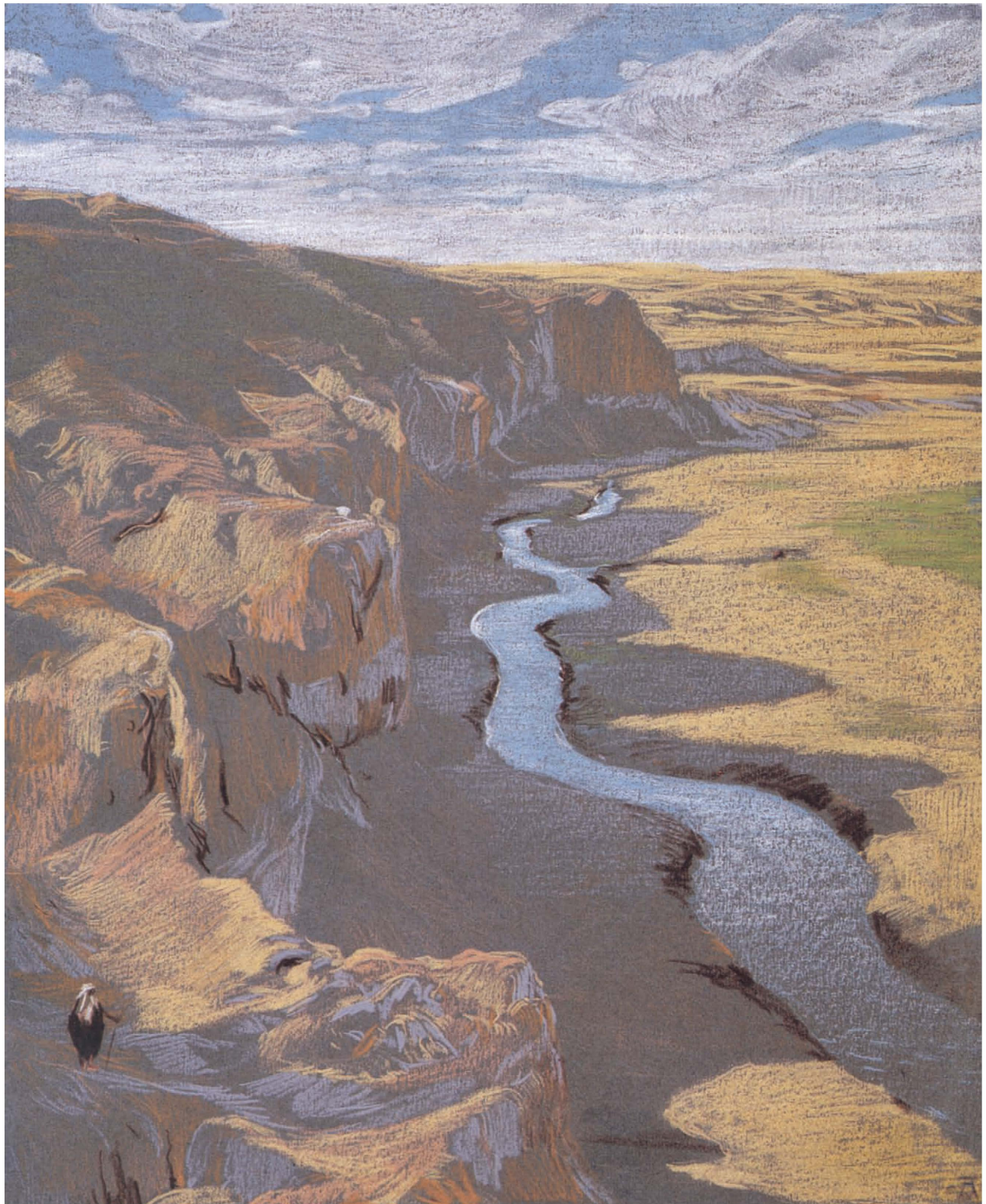


Fig. 17. Cult relief found in a well located in the Ashur Temple at Ashur. Old Assyrian period, early 2nd millennium B.C., limestone, H. 52¼ in. (1.36 m). Vorderasiatisches Museum

Traces of wear are evident on the vessel fragments. This is not surprising since stone relief vessels were preserved as precious possessions for centuries, not only for their material value, but also because of the religious ideas embodied in their imagery.

E.K.-B.

1. Klengel-Brandt 1980a, 211ff.
2. Andrae 1931, 10, pl. 7d.
3. Opificius 1969, 261ff.
4. Moortgat 1932, 62f.; Orthmann 1975, pl. 255b.
5. Klengel-Brandt 1980b, 38ff.



Pl. 1. Walter Andrae, *Ashur: North Face from the East*, 1909. Colored chalk on tinted paper, H. 10 in. (31 cm). Collection of Ernst Andrae



Pl. 2. Cat. no. 5



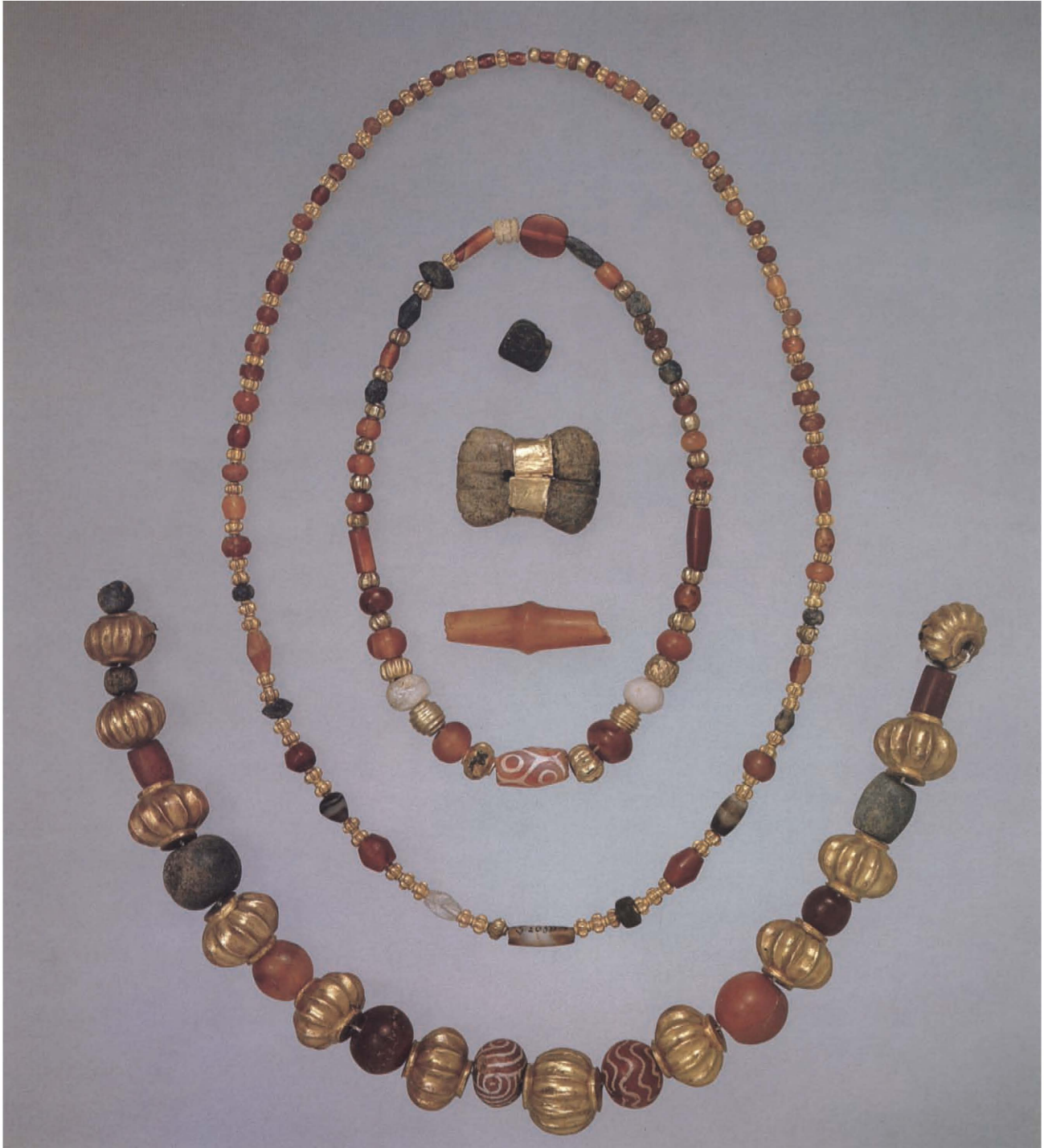
Pl. 3. Cat. no. 12



Pl. 4. Cat. no. 22



Pl. 5. Cat. no. 27



Pl. 6. From the bottom: cat. nos. 30, 29, 28, 32b, 31, 32a



Pl. 7. First and third rows: cat. nos. 35a-d; second row: cat. nos. 36a, b; fourth row: cat. no. 37





Pl. 8. Cat. no. 51



Pl. 9. Top: cat. no. 54 and modern impression; bottom: cat. no. 55



Pl. 10. Cat. no. 56



Pl. 11. Top: cat. no. 57; bottom: cat. no. 59



Pl. 12. Top: cat. no. 69; bottom: cat. nos. 72, 71, 70



Pl. 13. Top: cat. no. 73;  
bottom: cat. no. 74





Pl. 14. Cat. no. 75



Pl. 15. Cat. no. 88





Pl. 16. Walter Andrae, *Ashur: The Expedition House Garden*, 1912. Watercolor and pencil on paper, H. 12 in. (30.4 cm). Collection of Ernst Andrae

# THE WEALTH OF ASHUR: THE MIDDLE ASSYRIAN PERIOD

## A Noble Tomb (Tomb 45)

ONE OF THE best-preserved burials, and the richest private burial, discovered in Ashur was the Middle Assyrian Tomb 45 (Ass 14630).<sup>1</sup> During excavations by Walter Andrae, investigations in a trial trench to the southwest of the temple of Ishtar Ashuritu (fig. 2, H) uncovered the south corner of a large tomb on August 29, 1908. The door to the tomb was still closed, just as it had been after the last burial. The tomb was finally opened at the beginning of December, and its contents were found to be undisturbed.

The tomb, consisting of a vaulted brick chamber and a vertical entry shaft roofed by two limestone slabs (fig. 18),<sup>2</sup> contained skeletal remains and a large number of burial goods. In two spots just above the tomb, directly at the entry shaft, numerous unbaked clay tablets came to light. All of these may be attributed to a single private archive probably belonging to a man named Babu-aha-iddina.<sup>3</sup> According to more recent studies, Tomb 45 may belong to a house that was discovered in the original excavations but which was never fully excavated.<sup>4</sup> It may be assumed that the tomb was constructed beneath the room in this house in which the above-named archive was stored.<sup>5</sup>

It is clear from observations made during the recovery of the find that the tomb had been used repeatedly for burials over a period of time. From the remains of skulls, it was possible to distinguish ten individuals, one of them a child. With each new burial the bones of the existing skeletons were disturbed. Some had even been collected and laid in a ceramic vessel in the southwest corner of the tomb, while others were simply pushed together against the walls. The two last bodies—stretched out on their backs—lay on the remains of earlier burials.

Although a reconstruction sketch indicates the locations of the burial goods in relation to the skeletal remains of the last two bodies (fig. 19), the

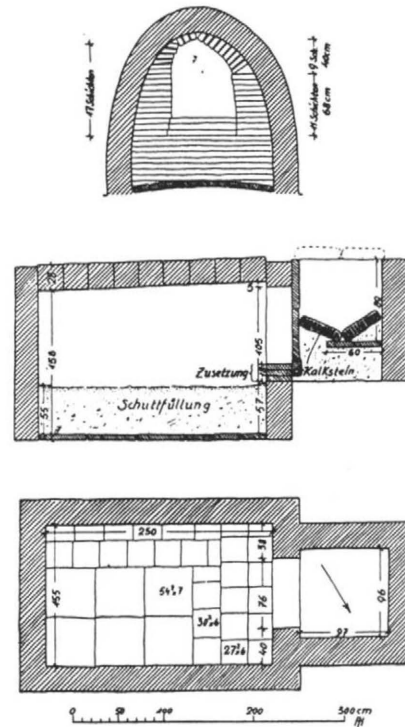


Fig. 18. Diagrams of the Middle Assyrian Tomb 45. Reproduced from Haller, 1954, fig. 158

assignment of all the individual pieces in the grave inventory to these bodies is not necessarily correct. We do not know the original positions of some of the ceramic vessels or of the beads washed separately out of the silt that had found its way into the burial.

The inventory of goods in Tomb 45 consists primarily of ceramic vessels (flasks, beakers, and bowls—of a total of thirteen vessels recorded in the grave inventory, three have been identified in Berlin); alabaster vessels (twenty-two jars, a few excellently preserved, others damaged or badly broken [see cat. nos. 50–53]); ivory objects (combs, pins, pyxides [see cat. nos. 45–49]); one cylinder seal of lapis lazuli (cat. no. 54); and jewelry of gold and semiprecious stones (see cat. nos. 55–60).

The excavator's claim that the body to the north (the one on the left as seen from the entrance,

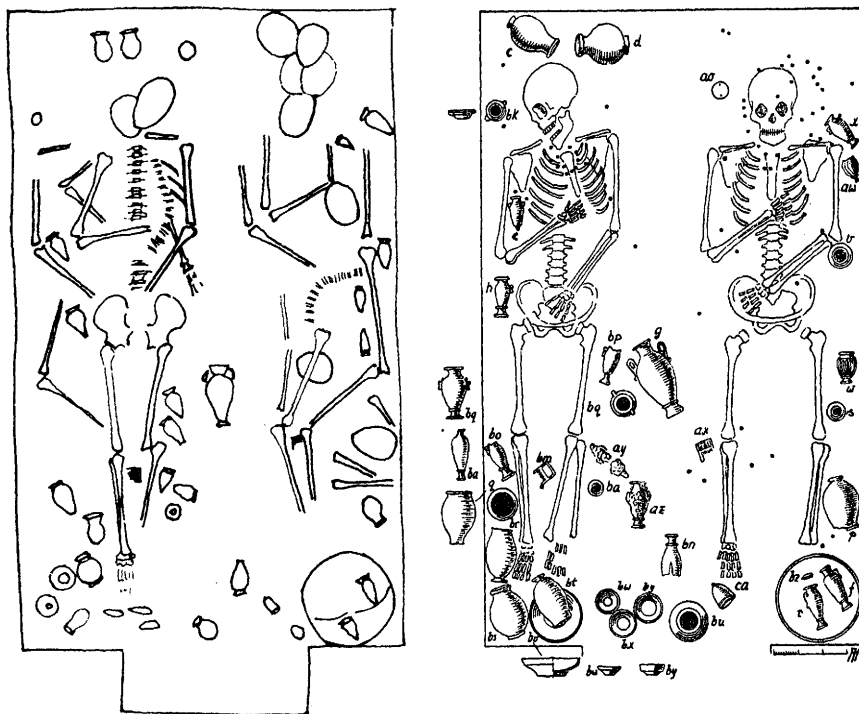


Fig. 19. Left: sketch of the contents of Tomb 45 made at the time of excavation. Right: later reconstruction drawing of the contents of Tomb 45 showing cat. nos. 45 (ao), 46 (ax), 49 (bk), 51 (az), 52 (ay), 53 (g), and dots indicating jewelry elements. Reproduced from Wartke 1992, figs. 4, 5

fig. 19) was that of a male while the skeleton to the south (right) was that of a female was later called into question—rightly, in my opinion. It is probable that both were female. The burial goods suggest as much, since there are no objects such as weapons that generally characterize male burials. Unfortunately, anthropological examination of the skeletons was neglected at the time of discovery and could not be done later.

Andrae reconstructed the various sets of jewelry in the way they might have been worn by a man or a woman.<sup>6</sup> The first museum display of the separate pieces, the one followed in the first publication of the tomb (see note 1), did not take into account possible arrangements suggested by the findspots of individual elements in the tomb. In 1967, after a portion of the inventory of jewelry from Tomb 45, missing since 1945–46, reappeared, the material was rearranged with an eye toward restoring correct combinations in terms of findspots.<sup>7</sup> Following this latest reconstruction, the beads and necklace elements are now displayed as they are thought to have been originally combined: as a headband (cat. no. 55), a bead necklace (cat. no. 56), and a necklace associated with two small stone pendants in the form of zebu calves (cat. no. 57).<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately, many pieces of jewelry recovered by Andrae from Tomb 45 are still missing (see fig. 24). Among them are several of the gold-mounted pendants of semiprecious stones, two gold double spirals with loops on the edges, a gold double spiral with small half-moons as pendants, three gold chain dividers, gold-mounted and unmounted rock-crystal pendants, a large number of beads (many with gold settings), and all but three of the gold earrings, including two flower earrings and eight earrings with hoops ringed with furrows (“caterpillar” earrings).

The dating of Tomb 45 to the Middle Assyrian period seemed assured given the type of brick tomb and the contents of the burial. The clay tablets associated with the burial narrow down this suggested dating to the fourteenth–thirteenth century B.C.<sup>9</sup> The central figure in the texts and therefore the likely owner of the archive was Babu-aha-iddina,<sup>10</sup> and those buried in the tomb must have been closely related to him. The archive texts mention two female members of Babu-aha-iddina’s family, Marat-ili and Mushallimat-Ishtar, but there is nothing to indicate that they might be identified with the two skeletons that were buried last in Tomb 45.

1. W. Andrae, in Haller 1954, 123ff., pls. 27ff.—Tomb 45; Wartke 1992, 97ff.
2. Dimensions of the tomb chamber: 8 ft. 2½ in. x 5 ft. 1 in. (2.5 x 1.55 m); height of the vault: 5 ft. 2½ in. (1.58 m). Entry shaft: 3 ft. 2¼ in. x 3 ft. 1¼ in. (0.97 x 0.96 m), 3 ft. 11¼ in. (1.2 m) deep.
3. On the archive and its owner, see Postgate 1986, 176ff. (with earlier bibliography); Pedersen 1985, 106ff.—Archive M11.
4. P. A. Miglus, *Das Wohngebiet von Assur: Stratigraphie und Architektur* (not yet published, planned for the series WVDOG).
5. Pedersén pointed out the interesting fact that private archives are not uncommonly found in rooms directly above family tombs; see Pedersén 1989, 155ff.
6. Pastel drawings on brownish yellow cardboard, each 19½ x 15½ in. (49.5 x 39.5 cm), undated.
7. Nagel 1972, 43ff.
8. Wartke, in *Vorderasiatisches Museum* 1992, 154ff., nos. 96–98.
9. The texts found in the archive give eponyms of the Assyrian rulers Adad-nirari I (1305–1274 B.C.), Shalmaneser I (1273–1244 B.C.), and Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243–1207 B.C.).
10. On the texts, see Freydank and Saporetta 1989.

#### 45 *Incised pyxis*

Ivory

Middle Assyrian period, late 14th century B.C.

Found in Tomb 45

H. ca. 3⅝ in. (8.4 cm), Diam. ca. 2⅜ in. (6 cm)

VA Ass 1099 (Ass 14630 a0)

A precious object in Tomb 45 that both throws light on the development of Assyrian style and attests to the high level of cultural exchange with Egypt and the Levant in the late second millennium B.C. is a cylindrical ivory pyxis with an incised design of animals in nature.<sup>1</sup> Now in fragmentary condition and lacking the base, it was found near the left side of the head of a skeleton that has been identified as female.

Fashioned from a section of tusk, the pyxis has a lid decorated with flowering branches bordered by a circle of rosettes. The lid was originally attached to the box by a pin that would have fitted into a hole in the lid and passed through another hole on the inner face of the rim. The lid thus would have swiveled horizontally to open the box. A second pair of holes, one on the lid with an outline of a missing knob, and the other on the side of the box, probably also for a knob, must have been used to secure the box by a connecting string in the Egyptian manner.<sup>2</sup> There are seven nail holes around the lower part of the cylinder, presumably for the attachment of the flat base.



Cylindrical ivory containers of late-second-millennium date, found in the Levant, Egypt, and the Aegean, have relief carvings of dynamic animals in nature and in violent combat with one another.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, the pyxis from Ashur is incised, with a peaceful scene of striding animals forming a continuous pattern—like a rolled cylinder seal—of addorsed and facing pairs of gazelles flanking two varieties of trees with birds (possibly hens) and cocks perched on their branches.<sup>4</sup> Rayed sun disks of a type related to those on some late-second-millennium Mitannian-style seals punctuate the scene.<sup>5</sup>

The coniferous tree approached by two gazelles on the Ashur pyxis is in a position occupied in scenes on other objects by the “sacred tree.” This stylized tree is depicted with elements of both the palm and the conifer, and in the first millennium B.C. is flanked by winged divinities holding cones.<sup>6</sup>

Alternating types of trees on the Ashur box, here date palms and conifers, are found also on painted pottery from Ashur.<sup>7</sup> This iconography may be an allusion to gardens (some in the afterworld) which are also depicted in Egyptian tombs of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties with an alternation of palms and other trees.<sup>8</sup>

The cocks depicted on the Ashur pyxis may be a further allusion to an exotic garden paradise. These are jungle fowl, which originated in east India and southeast Asia. As the ancestors of the modern chicken, they are known to run with great speed, fly high, and roost in trees.<sup>9</sup> On the Ashur pyxis the cocks sit in the coniferous trees, alternating with birds<sup>10</sup> (possibly hens) on the branches of the date palms. In addition to being exotic creatures, perhaps royal gifts, they may have had some magical or ritual significance related to the new day or to their fertility.<sup>11</sup> Jungle fowl are also depicted on a few Near Eastern seals<sup>12</sup> and, rarely, in Egyptian art of the fourteenth–twelfth centuries B.C.<sup>13</sup>

An interest in portraying animal species and natural settings is characteristic of the extraordinary style of art that first developed in the Middle Assyrian period in the fourteenth century B.C. Another distinctive aspect is the sensitive treatment of animal bodies, with their elongated curving necks and horns, rounded bodies with hatching on the belly, and slender legs. A close examination of individual figures, however, reveals that the workmanship on the Ashur ivory pyxis is not uniform. In some instances, the horns are clearly differentiated in a three-quarter view, a feature that has been attributed to Aegean influence,<sup>14</sup> in others they fuse into a single horn with two points. Similarly, some bodies are much more carefully rendered than others. This may suggest that a master carver turned the piece over to an apprentice after completing only a portion of the design.

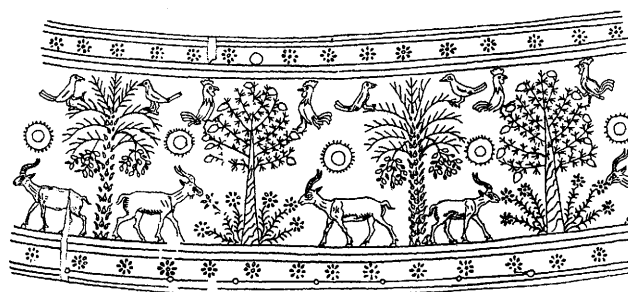


Fig. 20. Drawing of incised decoration on cat. no. 45. Reproduced from Haller 1954, fig. 161

1. Haller 1954, 135–37; Klengel-Brandt, in *Vorderasiatisches Museum* 1992, 152, no. 94.
2. See Freed 1981, 203; Egyptian boxes were also sealed with an impressed lump of clay over the string knot.
3. For Ugarit: Gachet 1987, 268, pl. 3; Lachish: Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940, 62, no. 15, pl. xviii; Megiddo: Loud 1939, pls. 13, 27, 28; Aegean: Poursat 1977a, pls. 1, v, x; Poursat 1977b, pls. xxviii, xxix, xxxvii. One from the Athenian agora (Poursat 1977a, pl. 1) is in a style that may relate to dynamic combat scenes in Middle Assyrian art.
4. The black material that occurs unevenly on the surface and in some of the incisions was probably not deliberately added; it has not yet been analyzed.
5. Porada 1947, pl. xviii, no. 347.
6. Frankfort 1939b, 206, suggests that the “sacred tree” was a cedar, a tree that was prized both in Mesopotamia and in Egypt, and the object of expeditions to the Levantine coast; Danthine 1937, 7, derives it mainly from the date palm.
7. Haller 1954, 135, identifies the conifers as cedars; Moortgat 1969, 115, thinks they are larch trees; for a sherd with similar trees, see Hrouda 1957, pls. 2, 3.
8. Wilkinson 1983, 12–13 pl. 6, 60–61 pl. 64. For a 7th-century B.C. cuneiform tablet from Ashur with a dialogue between a date palm and a tamarisk tree, see Smith 1926–28, 70, who thinks this text was originally written in the Middle Assyrian period. For Assyrian gardens and plants, see Miller 1990, 57f.; E. Ebeling, “Garten,” *RLA*, vol. 3, 147–50; Stronach 1989, 476ff.
9. For images and faunal remains of fowl at Mohenjo-daro, see Marshall 1931, 662, 669, pls. xcvi, cxl:338; Mackay 1938, 218–19, pl. lxviii:24.
10. Haller 1954, 135 (called “Mandelkrähe”).
11. Porada 1986, 88.
12. Porada 1986, 85, fig. 8-1, with a ritual scene; Venit 1986, fig. 18; Delaporte 1923, pl. 98:1 (A.956); Collon (in press).
13. For a sketch of a red jungle fowl on a limestone trial piece from Thebes, dated ca. 1349–1108 B.C., see Carter 1923, pl. 20, fig. 1; for a depiction of fowl and chicks near a palm tree on a 12th-century B.C. “international style” silver bowl from Tell Basta in the eastern Nile

Delta, see Simpson 1959, 37f.; see also D. Opitz, "Ägypten und Mesopotamien," *RLA*, vol. 1, 49, for mention of a text of Tuthmosis III referring to an Asiatic bird that laid eggs every day.

14. Porada 1948, 68.

#### 46 *Incised comb*

Ivory

Middle Assyrian period, late 14th century B.C.

Found in Tomb 45

H. 1 7/8 in. (4.7 cm)

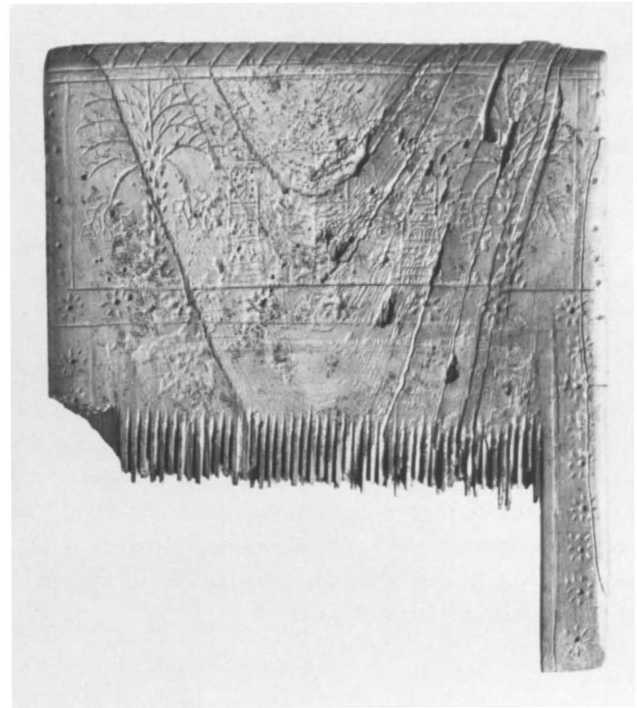
VA Ass 1097 (Ass 14630 ax)

Positioned next to the right knee of a skeleton in Tomb 45 that has been identified as female<sup>1</sup> was an ivory comb, decorated with a ceremonial scene that was incised on both the front and the back.<sup>2</sup> The comb is one of a number of ivory objects found in the tomb, including the ivory pyxis (cat. no. 45) located near the head of the same skeleton. A second, less elaborate ivory container and an undecorated comb were found with a second skeleton, which Ralf-B. Wartke thinks was also female.

Anton Moortgat suggested that the pyxis and the comb represent the earliest examples of art in a fully developed Assyrian style of the late fourteenth century B.C., produced during "the Amarna period," a time of widespread interaction in the eastern Mediterranean world.<sup>3</sup> The representations on the pyxis and comb share many features. However, they differ in composition and probably in narrative intent. Whereas on the cylindrical form of the pyxis the impression of a continuously unfolding scene is achieved, on the comb there is a definite direction, with six figures proceeding toward a standing personage. The scene is punctuated by date palms.

All the figures appear to be lacking beards and to have long hair. Some figures have swellings of the upper body that suggest that they are female. All wear similar cylindrical crowns, with two or three horizontal layers and vertical lines, possibly feathers, emerging from the top.<sup>4</sup> Their long elaborate garments are girdled at the waist and have horizontal stripes and geometric decoration (embroidery?) that is rendered by fine incisions. Hem fringes are drawn on three garments. The procession is led by a figure who is distinguished by a long fringed shawl with dot-circle decoration and who presents a bunch of flowers to the principal personage. A second figure holds a shallow bowl in one hand and a circular object in the other, either a garland of flowers or fruits, or possibly a necklace or headband (see cat. no. 55).<sup>5</sup>

The procession continues on the reverse side of the comb with a musician holding an angular harp, an instru-



46

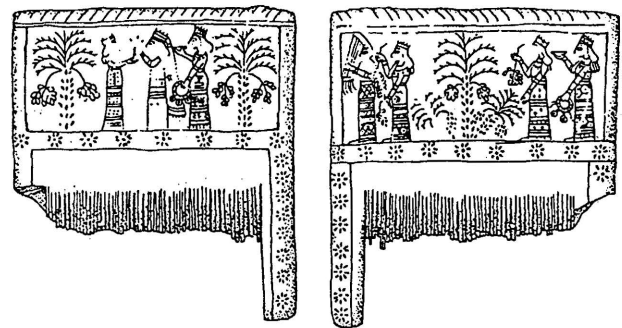


Fig. 21. Drawing of the front (at left) and the back (at right) of cat. no. 46. Drawn by C. Gully

ment which first appears in the Near East in the early second millennium B.C.<sup>6</sup> It is defined by an upper diagonal line for the resonator, which was held against the body, and five strings which were attached to the neck with tassels hanging below for the tuning of the strings.

The musician is followed by two figures holding branches with bunches of dates and a figure with another garland (or piece of jewelry) and possibly another bowl (now abraded). The occasion appears to be a ritual/ceremony that may emphasize earth's bounties.<sup>7</sup>

Ivory hair combs range from a simple type found in fourth-millennium B.C. context at Tepe Gawra to elaborately

ornamented examples found in tombs of the Late Bronze Age, particularly in the Levant.<sup>8</sup> While combs were often placed near the head of the deceased, the two examples in Tomb 45 at Ashur were found near the knees of the two skeletons that were the latest burials in the tomb. Both combs have a single set of fine teeth placed very closely together.<sup>9</sup>

In this period of intense interconnections, the fashion of wearing hair combs—clearly evident on Middle Assyrian clay figurines (see cat. no. 78)—may have come from the west. However, the style and iconography of the Ashur comb, with its incised figures, are best understood as fore-runners of the images on incised ivories in Assyrian style found in ninth–seventh-century B.C. context at the site of Nimrud. On the Middle Assyrian comb and on Neo-Assyrian ivories, there is also much emphasis on the detailed patterns that were probably embroidered on elaborate courtly garments, also emphasized on the palace reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.).<sup>10</sup>

J.A.

1. See Wartke, in his description of Tomb 45 in this catalogue; Moortgat 1969, 113, who calls them high priestesses of the Ishtar Temple; M. Müller-Karpe 1986, 41ff.
2. Haller 1954, 127, 130 (ax), 137–39, fig. 163a, b, pl. 30a, b; the bunch of fruit held by the fifth figure, seen in the drawing published by Haller, is now missing.
3. Moortgat 1969, 113.
4. See E. Unger, “Diadem und Krone,” *RLA*, vol. 2, 203–4; R. M. Boehmer, “Kopfbedeckung,” *RLA*, vol. 6, 205ff.
5. Bo Lawergren, who kindly examined a photograph of the comb, believes that this was not a musical instrument, such as a rattle; I thank Prudence O. Harper for the suggestion that it might be a necklace: see, for instance, Teissier 1984, 261, fig. 519.
6. B. Lawergren, “Harps, ancient,” *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (in press), explains that the angular harp could accommodate more strings than the earlier arched harp, one example of the latter actually surviving in the tomb of Queen Pu-abī in the Royal Cemetery of Ur; see Galpin 1937, pl. v; see also Stauder, “Harfe,” *RLA*, vol. 4, 114ff. Lawergren notes that the usual position of the angular harp was on the left shoulder; the position was switched on the comb to allow a full view of the face.
7. Moortgat 1969, 114, identifies the main personage as Ishtar or, if male, as the king approached by *Naditu* priestess. Von Soden 1994, 245, refers to music and ritual.
8. A. Spycket, “Kamm,” *RLA*, vol. 5, 332–35.
9. Contemporary Canaanite examples have one or two sets of teeth and registers often used for incised or relief images of horned animals and lions: Loud 1939, pls. 16–18; see also Kantor 1958, 69ff., pls. 61, 65. The designs resemble those on Aegean ivories: Poursat 1977a, 142ff., pls. 18:2, 17:3; Kantor 1956, 170.
10. Mallowan and Davies 1970, pls. I, vii.

## 47, 48 Pins

Ivory

Middle Assyrian period, 14th–13th century B.C.

Found in Tomb 45

47: H. 3 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (8.6 cm)

48: H. 3 in. (7.6 cm)

VA Ass 1101, VA Ass 1102 (Ass 14630 a0<sub>1</sub>, Ass 14630 b1)

These two delicately carved pins exemplify Middle Assyrian attention to detail. One depicts a female with a tambourine who seems to be in mid-step on top of a leafy capital; the other, a clenched fist. The tambourine player has a lovely face rendered with great care to show all its features; a hairstyle which is full at the forehead and neatly arranged at the back with its strands clearly delineated; a long dress that accentuates her elegant, narrow waist and



allows us to sense the forward motion of her striding leg and rounded buttocks underneath; elements of the dress such as a carefully incised sash that is shown crossing over the front of the skirt; and feet, hands, and fingers depicted with a remarkable amount of physical detail. The fist pin displays the same artistic qualities. Each knuckle is clearly defined, from both the front and the back. The artist has even shown the line created by the finger tips pressing into the fleshy palm of the hand.

The tambourine-player pin was found broken during the excavation of the tomb (the top half was recovered by itself at the time)<sup>1</sup> and was only recently restored.<sup>2</sup> The fist pin, on the other hand, lay above the head of the right skeleton, prompting Andrae to consider it a hair or headdress pin, possibly for the headband (cat. no. 55).<sup>3</sup> Alternatively, either or both may have been used as pins for clothing.

The tambourine-player pin has no exact parallels, but processions of musicians are known from this period and from other objects in this tomb (cat. no. 46). Tambourines are shown being played by females on Mesopotamian terracottas dating to the early second millennium B.C.<sup>4</sup> and are often associated with the goddess Ishtar in her warlike aspect.<sup>5</sup> A female figure with tambourine leading a procession of musicians on an unusual Kassite *kudurru* (boundary stone) found at Susa, Iran (twelfth century B.C.), perhaps bears the closest resemblance to the figure on the Ashur pin.<sup>6</sup> It is possible that the significance of the Ashur tambourine player is related to that of the enigmatic scene on the *kudurru*, where the tambourine player is the only female in a procession with seven male musicians.

A silver pin in the shape of a clenched fist from an Early Dynastic grave at the Royal Cemetery at Ur<sup>7</sup> is very close in appearance if not in date to the Ashur fist pin. A bone version, less carefully rendered, was excavated in a Mitannian level at Nuzi in northern Mesopotamia<sup>8</sup> and provides a chronologically more appropriate parallel. However, the meaning of the fist in any of the above contexts is unclear. Andrae suggested that it might be related to the modern Near Eastern gesture of the clenched fist, a gesture associated with procreation.<sup>9</sup> In ancient times the fist was associated with the manifestation of sheer physical strength.<sup>10</sup>

K. B.

1. Haller 1954, 132, pl. 30, g. The pin was apparently found inside the pyxis (cat. no. 45). See also Klein 1992, pl. 169, 2.

2. Wartke 1992, 121.

3. Haller 1954, 132–33, pl. 30, h. See also Klein 1992, pl. 169, 4.

4. Galpin 1937, pl. III: 3, 5.

5. E. Porada, in H. Weiss 1985, 96, fig. 19.

6. Harper, Aruz, and Tallon 1992, 178–80, no. 116.

7. Woolley 1934, pls. 189, 231.

8. Starr 1937, vol. 2, pl. 127, z.

9. Haller 1954, 132. See also Musche 1988, pl. LVII, for possible evidence of this association in the Parthian period.

10. E. Ebeling, "Apotropaeen," *RLA*, vol. 1, 121.

#### 49 *Small bowl*

Ivory

Middle Assyrian period, 14th–13th century B.C.

Found in Tomb 45

H. 1 $\frac{3}{16}$  in. (3 cm), W. 3 in. (7.6 cm)

VA Ass 1100 (Ass 14630 bk)

This bowl was found near the head of the left skeleton and was thought by Andrae to have been a container for narcotics.<sup>1</sup> It is more likely that it served as part of a toilet set, perhaps as an ointment jar. While its original function is difficult to determine, the piece offers us a nice example of the stylistic interconnections between Ashur and the Levant during the so-called "international age" of the late second millennium B.C.

The shape of the bowl is simply conceived: a shallow, round bowl with a sharply carinated shoulder and a slightly raised base and lip. On either side is an attached handle in the form of a well-sculpted head. A hole was drilled into the top of each of the heads, indicating that the item originally had a lid which would have been secured with string. The faces of the protomes are slightly damaged so that it is difficult to tell whether or not the image was once more attractive. The nose and chin seem particularly worn away. Nonetheless one can see that these heads were skillfully carved.

The faces are somewhat full and fleshy in appearance and incorporate large almond-shaped eyes. The blunt noses,





thick lips, and weak chins may be due more to damage than to design, while the eyebrows, eye sockets, and facial lines are purposefully well defined. The ears are likewise clearly and deeply delineated and seem to bear small round earrings. The hairstyle is noteworthy for the thick strands that are neatly pulled back behind the ears and then curl in an S off the neck. On each face, a bit of hair, neatly arranged, comes down over the forehead.

The shape of the vessel, with its original lid, is related to one of vitreous paste also found at Ashur (cat. no. 72). However, a more striking parallel for the ivory vessel is represented by an ebony bowl found in Egypt and now in the Louvre.<sup>2</sup> While nearly identical in shape to the Ashur example, it is far more richly decorated with images typical of the "international style" and with protomes consisting of Hathor heads. It has been dated to the first half of the fourteenth century B.C. based on other objects from the same find inscribed with the names Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV and is considered an import because of its iconography and style.

As distinctive as the shape of the vessel is the hairstyle of the figures on the bowl. While hair rendered in sharply striated strands is common throughout the Near East and Egypt, there are very few images which show the strands looping in an S back up the neck. The Hathor head images so popular at this time<sup>3</sup> display a very specific curl that is different from that seen here. Several female figures from Mari dating to the first half of the second millennium<sup>4</sup> seem to have looped-up hair which, although not striated, in form resembles that on the bowl's figures and which allows one to imagine that this is a particular type of feminine hairstyle that remains in fashion over time. However, one of the plaques on the well-known fourteenth–thirteenth-century B.C. ivory bed panel from Ugarit,<sup>5</sup> showing a Near Eastern depiction of an Egyptian smiting an Asiatic enemy, perhaps offers the best parallel for the hair, both in its S form and striated rendering, and is shown worn by a bearded male. While the heads on the Tomb 45 bowl nonetheless appear more feminine in character, the comparison with the Ugarit panel affirms the Levantine influence on the Ashur piece and underlines the popularity of such "international style" works of art at Ashur.

K.B.

1. Haller 1954, 139, pl. 30, e, f.

2. Kozloff et al. 1993, 358–59, pl. 113 bis. I am grateful to Christine Lilyquist for this reference.

3. For example, see Loud 1939, pl. 44.

4. Parrot 1959, pls. vi, xiii, xv.

5. Schaeffer 1954, pl. x. For Egyptian depictions of Asiatics, see Smith 1965, fig. 55.

## 50 *Single-handed vessel with lid*

Alabaster

Middle Assyrian period, 14th–13th century B.C.

Found in Tomb 45

H. 6½ in. (16.5 cm); Diam.: lip 1⅞ in. (4.7 cm), max. 2¼ in.

(5.7 cm), base 1¼ in. (4.5 cm)

VA Ass 1116a (Ass 14630 ck)

This tall vessel has a single flat, angular handle that steps out at the base and has a hole for suspension.<sup>1</sup> Vertical gouge marks inside show that the vessel was hollowed out with a chisel. Inscribed on the smoothed outside surface is a so-called goat-fish, a hybrid creature half fish, half goat, the animal symbol of Ea (Enki), lord of the freshwater ocean Apsu. In this aspect, Ea, god of wisdom and incantations, was also a fertility god.

As a funerary gift, this lidded vessel may have held cosmetics.

L.M.

1. For the vessel, see Haller 1954, 131, 140, fig. 164d, e, pl. 31c; Klengel-Brandt, in *Vorderasiatisches Museum* 1992, 153, no. 95.



### 51 *Two-handled vase*

Alabaster

Middle Assyrian period, 14th–13th century B.C.

Found in Tomb 45, between the two skeletons at the level of the lower legs

H.  $6\frac{5}{16}$  in. (16 cm); Diam.: rim  $2\frac{3}{16}$  in. (5.5 cm), max.  $3\frac{3}{4}$  in. (9.5 cm), foot  $1\frac{7}{8}$  in. (4.8 cm)

VA Ass 1113 (Ass 14630 az)

See colorplate 8

This vessel is oval in cross section and grows narrower toward the base.<sup>1</sup> Below a projecting ring at the bottom there is a disk-shaped foot, which was carved out of the original stone. The vessel was hollowed out, leaving the diameters of the mouth and neck smaller than the maximum inner diameter of the body of the piece. In the transition from the neck to the shoulder area are two fragmentary ring-shaped handles. On each of the flat sides of the vessel, front and back, one can discern with difficulty a stylized three-tiered tree with lobes and volutes, flanked by a pair of strongly modeled rampant bulls. In form the vessel is reminiscent of Egyptian stone vases of the late fourteenth century B.C.<sup>2</sup> However the decorative motif, with two opposing animals rearing up against a tree, is very familiar in Mesopotamian art, especially seal carving. While the overall composition is purely Near Eastern in character, both Babylonian and Egyptian influences are recognizable in the depiction of the stylized tree.<sup>3</sup>

Vessels of this kind presumably held ointments.

L.M.

1. For the vessel, see Bissing 1940, 167f., fig. 23; Haller 1954, 140, fig. 164c, pl. 32a, b; Moortgat 1985, 74, fig. 31, pl. 32; Orthmann 1975, 331, fig. 254a, b; Wartke 1992, 121.

2. Moortgat 1985, 74.

3. Kepinski 1982, 103.



51

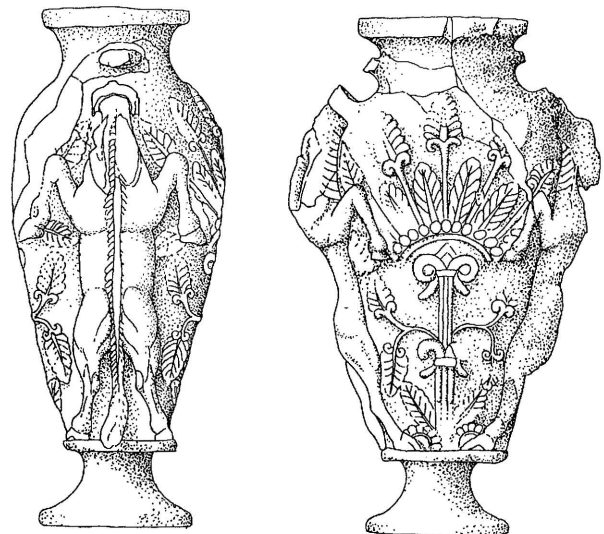


Fig. 22. Drawing of relief decoration on cat. no. 51.  
Drawn by C. Gully



**52 Relief vessel fragment**

Gypsum  
 Middle Assyrian period, 14th–13th century B.C.  
 Found in Tomb 45, near the knees of the left-hand skeleton  
 H. 4 1/8 in. (10.5 cm), W. 1 15/16 in. (5 cm)  
 VA Ass 1114 (Ass 14630 ay)

This vessel fragment depicts a female (possibly Ishtar) with her skirt drawn up to reveal her lower torso. Portions of her wings are still visible.<sup>1</sup> Her garment has decorative borders. All that is left of her head are parts of the hair and a poloslike headdress. The figure wears a necklace, and a double arm-band above the left hand. A parallel to this figure is a terracotta from Nuzi in northern Mesopotamia,<sup>2</sup> which would suggest Mitannian stylistic influence.<sup>3</sup>

The fragment is part of a vessel (similar in form to cat. no. 51) that was probably decorated with two figures.

L.M.

1. For the vessel fragment, see Bissing 1941, 49; Haller 1954, 128, 140, fig. 164a, b, pl. 32c, d; Moortgat 1985, 74, figs. 31, 32, pl. 33; Wartke 1992, 121.

2. Starr 1937, vol. 2, pl. 100 B.

3. The Hurrian goddess Sawuska, attested since the Ur III period, was equated in Assyria and the eastern Tigris region with Ishtar.

52

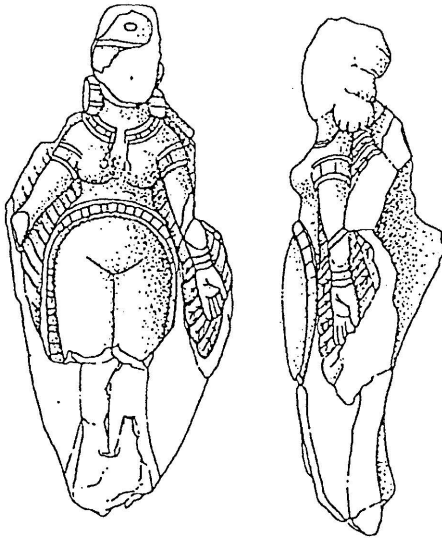


Fig. 23. Drawing of relief decoration on cat. no. 52. Drawn by C. Gully

**53 Two-handled vase**

Alabaster  
 Middle Assyrian period, 14th–13th century B.C.  
 Found in Tomb 45, between the two skeletons at the level of the thighs  
 H. 12 in. (30.5 cm); Diam.: rim 3 7/16 in. (8.8 cm), max. 5 1/2 in. (15 cm), base 3 3/8 in. (9.2 cm)  
 VA Ass 1127 (Ass 14630 g)

This vessel is oval in cross section and has two well-developed upright handles at the shoulders.<sup>1</sup> The body of the vessel grows narrower toward the bottom, where it has a ring of molding and a simple disk foot. The surface of the vessel is well polished. Vertical marks visible inside permit us to see how it was hollowed out: proceeding from a vertical drilling, the body of the vessel was carved out with a

burin-shaped tool and the inner surface then smoothed. In this vessel one can also see that the diameter of the mouth is smaller than the maximum diameter of the body of the piece.

The vessel was intended as a funerary gift probably containing precious oils, salves, or other essences.

L.M.

1. For the vessel, see Bissing 1940, 167, fig. 22; Haller 1954, 128, pl. 31g.



53

#### 54 *Cylinder seal: ewe suckling lamb*

Lapis lazuli

Middle Assyrian period, 13th century B.C.

Found in Tomb 45

H.  $\frac{13}{16}$  in. (2.1 cm), Diam.  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (0.7 cm)

VA Ass 1129 (Ass 14630 cm)

See colorplate 9

Objects made of lapis lazuli, a material imported from remote regions of Afghanistan, were highly prized in Mesopotamia. This cylinder seal, part of the inventory of Tomb 45, may have been owned by one of the people buried there. As has recently been shown, the seal should not necessarily be attributed to the presumed owner of the tomb, Babu-aha-iddina.<sup>1</sup>

The precious material and the high quality of the carving make this seal an outstanding example of Middle Assyrian glyptic. In the center of the scene a sheep with woolly fleece strides to the right, extending its head into the foliage of a small, branched tree with elongated leaves. The ewe is suckling a lamb kneeling beneath it. Inscribed above the ewe's back is the decorative, star-shaped cuneiform sign DINGIR, meaning god.<sup>2</sup>

The nature-oriented style of the Middle Assyrian period began in the fourteenth century and reached its height in the thirteenth century B.C. In this seal image the few pictorial elements are placed in such a way as to suggest an airy breadth of space. The three-dimensional rendering of the animals' bodies contrasts with the delicate linear branching of the tree and the cuneiform inscription. The nursing motif, quite popular in the art of Mesopotamia, expresses the intimate relationship between the mother animal and her offspring especially well. In addition to the carefully rendered distinction between their coats, the representations of the two animals display other naturalistic details.



54 and modern impression

Scholars have placed the seal in the stylistic epoch of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser I (1273–1244 B.C.), which agrees with the dating for the tomb derived from other evidence.<sup>3</sup>

E.K.-B.

1. Wartke 1992, 121f., fig. 17.
2. Moortgat 1940, no. 586; Moortgat 1941, 72–73, fig. 45.
3. Matthews 1990, 101.

### 55 *Headband elements (?)*

Gold, lapis lazuli, carnelian; modern gold chain and pendants with rock crystal and imitation malachite insets

Middle Assyrian period, 14th–13th century B.C.

Found in Tomb 45

Diam. ca. 7½ in. (20 cm)

Va Ass 1014–1021 (Ass 14630 cd<sub>1,2</sub>, ae, y, am<sub>1–3</sub>, av),

VA Ass 1024 (Ass 14630 k), VA Ass 1025 (Ass 14630 ag)

See colorplate 9

This magnificent piece of jewelry has been designated a headband because the elements from which it is composed were found in the vicinity of the head of the right skeleton. In Andrae's original arrangement of the jewelry there were

many more pendants incorporated;<sup>1</sup> however, it was later reconstructed to include only ornaments that were found close to the skull and that were represented in duplicate, eliminating, for instance, the two- and three-tiered spacer beads that clearly served a different purpose.<sup>2</sup> The placement of the fifteen pendants attributed to the so-called headband is hypothetical, relying largely on considerations of symmetry and the play of color. It has been suggested that some of the jewelry elements now missing from the Tomb 45 grave goods in Berlin might also have belonged to this headband or to a similar piece of jewelry (see fig. 24).<sup>3</sup>

The individual pendants that form the headband consist of: three gold, rosettelike medallions inlaid with green stones, which are among the missing jewels from Tomb 45 but shown here in replica of the well-documented originals; two carnelian pomegranates each with a gold suspension loop and point; four carnelian and gold vasselike shapes; two large lapis lazuli elements carved to resemble conjoined cylinders and then adorned with gold caps and palmettes at one end; two large, almond-shaped pieces of carnelian with similar gold caps and palmette ends; and finally, two rock-crystal teardrops in gold sawtooth frames that are also replicas of the lost originals.

The colorful liveliness of the piece and certain of its motifs have been considered reminiscent of the Mesopotamian tradition begun with the necklaces and





Fig. 24. Andrae's inventory-book sketches of jewelry elements from Tomb 45, now missing. Courtesy of the Vorderasiatisches Museum

headdresses found at the Royal Cemetery at Ur.<sup>4</sup> However, as with many of the objects found in Tomb 45, the headband also displays a taste for foreign influences, particularly those of Mitannian north Mesopotamia and Syria, Kassite Babylonia, the Levant, and indirectly Egypt and the Aegean via the Levantine coast.<sup>5</sup> Such eclecticism is typical of the "international style" prevalent in the Near East during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C.

The palmette is probably the most popular of the elements featured in the headband. While it is shown in an abbreviated version in the Ashur jewel, its most recognizable form is that of the stylized tree, or sacred tree. This particular rendering of the palmette most resembles the full-bodied and sharply outlined ones in Mitannian style.<sup>6</sup>

Since rosettes or rosette patterns are typically included in depictions of stylized trees, it is not surprising to see rosette medallions as elements of the headband. Rosettes and stylized trees or palmettes often appear together within groups of material, such as in a collection of simply made sheet-gold pendants from a Late Bronze context at Lachish.<sup>7</sup> While each pendant depicts only one motif, as a group they combine several images in much the same way as the more elaborately made Ashur headband.

The pomegranate as a motif gained in popularity at this time, especially in Babylonia and the Levant.<sup>8</sup> It can be found in bead form in Kassite graves at Babylon,<sup>9</sup> and elsewhere at Ashur itself it figures as the fruit being borne on the stylized trees depicted in ivory inlay fragments that display Kassite influence (cat. no. 61). At Ugarit on the Levantine coast they appear frequently, most prominently in an extraordinary gold bowl dated to the mid-fourteenth through mid-thirteenth century B.C.<sup>10</sup>

The vase-shaped pendants in the Ashur headband resemble the vases actually deposited in the tomb (cat. nos. 51, 53) and therefore may signal direct or indirect Egyptian influence. Vases are not uncommon in scenes depicting the sacred tree motif where they represent the objects that water the vital tree. Perhaps their inclusion here is related.

It is noteworthy that many of the elements that make up the headband are vegetal in nature, possibly relating to each other in an intentional and symbolic manner, not unlike that seen on other objects placed in this tomb. As such these elements might be more than purely decorative and ornamental. The significance of the palmette as a symbol for the sacred tree is well attested and surely refers to the life-giving powers of vegetation, the date palm in particular for the Near East. The rosette flowers and pomegranates are further expressions of the fertile aspect of vegetation, being the budding products of well-cared-for plants and trees. The vases, as already mentioned, may then represent the life-giving waters essential to the process. Similar images of fertility and life are commonly found in burial contexts and consistently appear in this particular tomb. In this respect the elaborate and exotic objects placed in Tomb 45 may signal more than a taste at Ashur for the eclectic, decorative style so prevalent during the international age of the fourteenth–thirteenth century B.C.; they may well give us a glimpse into Assyrian mortuary practices and beliefs.

K. B.

1. Haller 1954, 125ff., figs. 166, 167, pls. 34, 35.

2. Nagel's revision of the headband's appearance is reflected in the present arrangement of the piece. For details of his methodology, see Nagel 1972, 45, 47–48, figs. 7, 8. For a different view, see Musche 1992, 186–87, fig. 7, who thinks some of these elements represent leg jewelry.

3. Wartke, in *Vorderasiatisches Museum* 1992, 155, no. 96; Wartke 1992, 112–4, figs. 7, 8, 11; Musche 1992, 176–79, fig. 3.

4. Maxwell-Hyslop 1960, 107; Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 165.

5. This same combination of influences can be seen in another significant group of objects from Ashur, also dated to the Middle Assyrian period; see Haller 1954, pl. 14a.

6. For example, see Starr 1937, vol. 2, pls. 128, 129; McEwan et al. 1958, pl. 60.

7. Tufnell, Inge, and Harding 1940, pl. xxvi, 6–15.

8. W. Röllig, "Granatapfel," *RLA*, vol. 3, 616ff.

9. Reuther 1926, pls. 58, 50:21, 51:x, and 162, fig. 91.

10. Schaeffer 1934, pl. xv.

## 56 *Necklace beads*

Gold, semiprecious stones

Middle Assyrian period, 14th–13th century B.C.

Found in Tomb 45

Diam.: inner, 5½ in. (13 cm); outer, 6½ in. (16.5 cm)

VA Ass 1026–1034 (Ass 14630 au, t<sub>1</sub>, t<sub>2</sub>, cb, ec)

See colorplate 10

During the excavation of Tomb 45 more than 1100 individual beads came to light.<sup>1</sup> The majority of these were found loosely distributed in the silt at the bottom of the tomb, therefore not allowing for associations with specific skeletal remains. It is likely that these many beads originally formed several necklaces or other items of jewelry. A selection of the beads was arbitrarily combined to create this necklace, which centers on the three spacer elements made of cat's-eye onyx in plain and granulated gold settings.<sup>2</sup> These spacers were found separately and can be assigned with certainty to the right skeleton.<sup>3</sup> Such devices served to organize a necklace into distinct strands that would not get entangled with use and to enhance the overall design of a piece, in this case three strands graduating into two. The beads of lapis lazuli, agate, carnelian, smoky quartz, and onyx (and turquoise?) chosen to be combined with the spacers are of different sizes and shapes. They have been arranged to enhance the interplay of colors and forms, a



design concept valued in the Near East and Egypt since the earliest times.<sup>4</sup>

If one considers that the various beads described in catalogue number 60 were probably part of the same corpus as the beads here, several parallels can be drawn. One finds evidence for assortments of beads of similar shapes and stones in Mitannian levels at Nuzi and Tell Chuera in northern Mesopotamia,<sup>5</sup> in Kassite graves at Babylon in the south and at Tell Yelki in the Hamrin<sup>6</sup> as well as in other contexts at Ashur itself.<sup>7</sup> The great variety of forms and colors and the known symbolic associations of many of these—such as flies, frogs, and birds or ducks (see cat. no. 60)<sup>8</sup>—strongly suggest that such beads in combination served a meaningful purpose when worn by the living or the dead. The use of cat's-eye onyx, or stones combined to look like an eye, is linked to protective powers<sup>9</sup> and is widely attested throughout the late second and first millennia.<sup>10</sup> The eye bead spacers in this necklace clearly convey the potency of these amuletic properties.

K.B.

1. Haller 1954, 125ff., pls. 34, 35, 36f.; Wartke, in *Vorderasiatisches Museum* 1992, 155, no. 97; Wartke 1992, 111–12, figs. 7, 8, 10.

2. Nagel 1972, figs. 9, 20.

3. Wartke 1992, 111–12.

4. Dubin 1987, pls. 10, 11, 21, 23.

5. Starr 1937, vol. 2, pls. 119, 120; Moortgat and Moortgat-Correns 1976, fig. 15.

6. Reuther 1926, pls. 47–49; Invernizzi 1980, fig. 73.

7. Haller 1954, pl. 14a.

8. E. Ebeling, "Fliege," *RLA*, vol. 3, 87; Ebeling, "Frosch," *RLA*, vol. 3, 118; Hilzheimer, "Ente," *RLA*, vol. 2, 339–400.

9. E. Ebeling, "Apotropaeen" and "Auge," *RLA*, vol. 1, 121 and 313. See also Dubin 1987, 307–12, for magical eye beads.

10. For Neo-Assyrian examples, see P. Elmer-DeWitt, "The Golden Treasures of Nimrud," *Time Magazine*, October 30, 1989, 80–81.

### 57 *Necklace elements*

Gold, lapis lazuli, jasper (?)

Middle Assyrian period, 14th–13th century B.C.

Found in Tomb 45

L. 10<sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (27.5 cm), W. 15<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (2.4 cm)

VA Ass 1008–1013, VA Ass 1022, VA Ass 1023

(Ass 14630 a<sub>1–5</sub>, i<sub>1–6</sub>, l, m)

See colorplate 11

The elements that make up this collar-type necklace can be assigned to the left of the two skeletons last interred in Tomb 45.<sup>1</sup> Its present arrangement reflects the fact that these eleven massive, nearly square sections, or spacer beads, of gold and lapis lazuli, each of which is pierced twice on each side to accommodate two stringing wires or threads, were found close together near the base of the neck of the deceased. The piece as it has been reconstructed makes use of the juxtaposition of the solid, dark, matte slabs of carved lapis lazuli and the airy, light, shiny open-work sections of gold. It is interesting that the shape and form of the two types of elements are essentially the same, four joined half-cylinders, and that the contrast has been achieved entirely through differing technical interpretations.

While the construction of the lapis lazuli segments is rather basic (the simple carving of the top surface), that of the gold versions is not. It seems that first a box was made of sheet gold. The next phase consisted of inserting four equally spaced wires across the length of the top of the box. Four half-cylinders of sheet gold with arch-shaped perforations were then placed between the wires before the arches were decorated with wire trim and small granules. As a last step the tops of the half-cylinders between the arches were pierced several more times.<sup>2</sup> Despite the intricacy of the design and the labor required to execute it, the gold spacers are not of the finest workmanship. Nonetheless the overall effect is dazzling.

As has been pointed out before,<sup>3</sup> the design pattern of the necklace is indeed reminiscent of that on necklaces found at Ur, Kish, and Tell Asmar from the mid-third millennium B.C.<sup>4</sup> In contexts more closely related in time to Tomb 45 at Ashur one also finds several examples of similar jewelry elements. A solid slab carved to represent four half-cylinders was found in a Kassite grave at Babylon in southern Mesopotamia,<sup>5</sup> while the Mitannian levels at Nuzi in the north yielded two different boxlike necklace sections that resemble the Ashur gold ones in the distinctive method of their manufacture if not in exact designs.<sup>6</sup> A necklace from the Levantine site of Kāmid el-Lōz, although made more simply of repoussé and chased sheet gold, can be linked to the Ashur necklace through its overall design of a series of square spacers, each of which is decorated with repoussé sections resembling half-cylinders.<sup>7</sup> It is



57, detail

noteworthy that the herringbone pattern on the Kāmid el-Lōz sheet-gold spacers is the same as that on one of the Nuzi boxlike examples.

Attached to the necklace are two lovely calf pendants carved from a speckled red stone thought to be jasper. While these were found near enough to the rest of the necklace elements to warrant their inclusion here, the association is not absolutely secure. However, they are works of art in their own right. Each is beautifully modeled and displays details of physiognomy that are remarkable for their minute size. Such naturalistic renderings of animals are characteristic of the Middle Assyrian period (see cat. no. 63) and are well represented here and on other objects from this tomb (see cat. nos. 45, 54).

K.B.

1. Haller 1954, 140–41, fig. 165a–c, pl. 33c–f; Wartke in *Vorderasiatisches Museum* 1992, 157, no. 98; Wartke 1992, 111, pls. 7, 9.

2. See Haller 1954, 141, fig. 165a–c, and Nagel 1972, fig. 2, for technique of construction. After examination of the piece the present author would like to suggest that the half-cylinders were first decorated with wires in the shape of arches, after which the perforations were made. This would allow for a guideline when cutting out the arches whereas the other method would require an enormous amount of tedious freehand cutting and wire forming. The application of the granules seems to have been done last as some of the granules spill over the edge of the box. It appears that the granules were soldered, not fused, on.

3. Maxwell-Hyslop 1960, 107; Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 165.

4. Woolley 1934, pl. 145; Watelin and Langdon 1934, pl. xxxv; Frankfort 1934, fig. 29. From the Ishtar Temple at Ashur there is a plaque depicting a similar piece worn around the neck of a female (fig. 15).



5. Reuther 1926, pls. 47, 15:21. The Kassite graves at Babylon produced large numbers of beads of great variety, many of which are paralleled in Tomb 45 at Ashur (see cat. nos. 56 and 60).

6. Starr 1937, vol. 2, pl. 120:S,V<sub>1,2</sub>. The material is given as “composite.”

7. Miron 1990, pl. 4:7–10, fig. 41; *Frühe Phöniker im Libanon* 1983, 155, no. 88 (and colorplate on p. 176). A similar piece is attested at an earlier date at the site of Tell Ajjul (Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 122, fig. 87).

## 58, 59 Earrings

Gold, lapis lazuli, jasper, carnelian, onyx  
Middle Assyrian period, 14th–13th century B.C.

Found in Tomb 45

58: L. 2½ in. (5.4 cm)

59: L. 1½ in. (2.9 cm), 1¾ in. (3.5 cm)

VA Ass 1005, VA Ass 1006, VA Ass 1007 (Ass 14630 bc, af<sub>1, 2</sub>)

59: see colorplate 11

These earrings, the large single example and the smaller pair, are the only ones extant of the several originally uncovered in Tomb 45. Although its findspot in the tomb was not recorded, the single earring can be associated with the left skeleton because its mate, now lost, was located directly next to the head of those remains. The pair, on the other hand, lay near the head of the right skeleton and therefore has been assigned to it.<sup>1</sup>

A hollow, lunate body of gold is the basis for the design of all three earrings. Each has an ear wire which emerges from one point of the crescent and bends back toward the other point to fit securely into the hole located there. Three decorative wires that wrap around the center of the lunate body were made long enough to serve as a stringing device for the assorted stones that hang below. These stones consist of lapis lazuli and carnelian in the case of the single earring and jasper and carnelian in that of the pair.

A separate deposit at Ashur revealed earrings similar to those from Tomb 45.<sup>2</sup> The type might have developed from the “mulberry” pendant earrings popular throughout the Near East during the mid-second millennium B.C.<sup>3</sup> The general form of the earrings—a lunate body with decorative elements attached perpendicularly to it—became the



58

predominant earring shape during the later Neo-Assyrian period (ninth–seventh centuries B.C.).<sup>4</sup>

A prominent decorative element on each of the earrings is the large “eye” inlay. Cat’s-eye onyx was used for the smaller pair while the eye image was re-created with lapis lazuli and jasper in a double setting of gold for the large one. The effect is similar to that of the triple and double eye spacer beads that form part of a bead necklace from this tomb (cat. no. 56). The eye elements here, like those in the necklace, dominate the jewels and provide a potent and mesmerizing image for anyone coming in direct view of the earrings. The apotropaic powers of jewelry and of eye images are combined and convincingly alluded to in these earrings,<sup>5</sup> foreshadowing the use of similar concepts to create the magnificent jewelry of the later Neo-Assyrian period.<sup>6</sup>

K.B.

1. Haller 1954, 133–34, pls. 33b, 36n; Wartke, in *Vorderasiatisches Museum* 1992, 158, nos. 99, 100; Wartke 1992, 115, figs. 7, 12.

2. Haller 1954, pl. 14a.

3. Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 130–31, pl. 96.

4. Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 236–37, figs. 126–27.

5. E. Ebeling, “Apotropaeen” and “Auge,” *RLA*, vol. 1, 121 and 313. See also Dubin 1987, 307–12, for magical eye beads.

6. P. Elmer-DeWitt, “The Golden Treasures of Nimrud,” *Time Magazine*, October 30, 1989, 80–81.

## 60 *Beads*

Semiprecious stones, including carnelian, lapis lazuli, agate, rock crystal, rose quartz, turquoise

Middle Assyrian period, 14th–13th century B.C.

Found in Tomb 45

Variou dimensions; the smallest: H.  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (0.4 cm), W.  $\frac{3}{16}$  in. (0.5 cm), Th.  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (0.2 cm); the largest: H.  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. (3.1 cm), W.  $\frac{11}{16}$  in. (1.7 cm), Th.  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (1.2 cm)

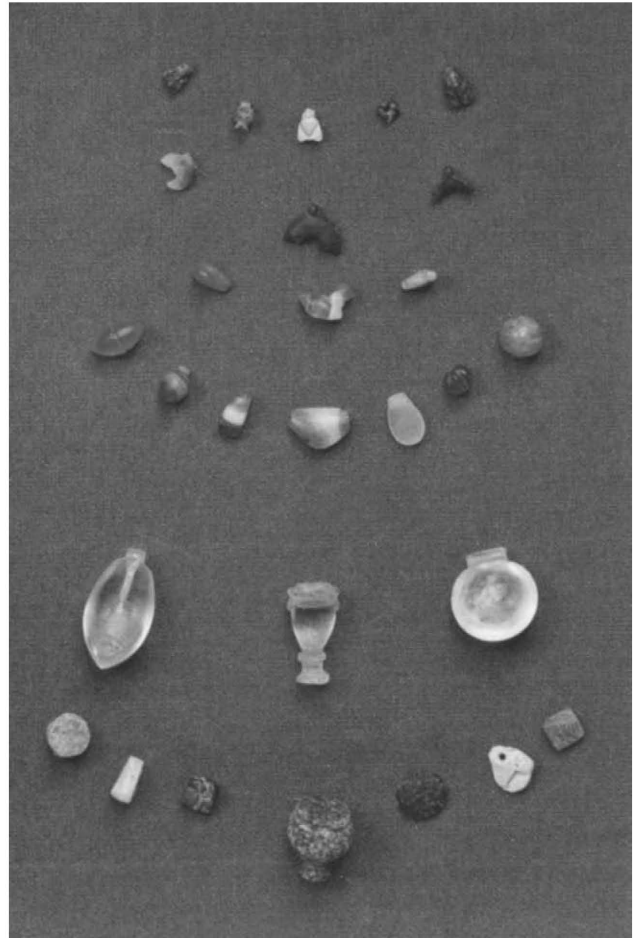
VA Ass 1067, VA Ass 1068, VA Ass 1070, VA Ass 1091, VA Ass 4257 (Ass 14630 cc)

These twenty-eight beads in different shapes and made of various stones represent only a part of the jewelry elements from Tomb 45 that were published originally by Walter Andrae and displayed in the Vorderasiatisches Museum. Much of this material has been missing since 1945–46.<sup>1</sup>

The three rock-crystal pieces in the second row from the bottom can be called pendants rather than beads. Both the lentil-shaped piece on the right and the one in the form of a double-handled jar are parts of a matching pair. The teardrop-shaped pendant that ends in a sharp point is closely related in type to two gold-mounted oval pendants of rock crystal, which are among the missing pieces. The small jar pendant has precisely the same shape as the alabaster jars in the inventory of the tomb (see cat. no. 53). The lapis lazuli pendant with holes bored just under the upper edge (bottom row, center) is reminiscent of a footed goblet.

A single carnelian example survives—of a group of small, oval ornaments of carnelian (4), jasper (1), and rock crystal (11)—without drill holes, but with an indentation around the middle. According to the excavation notes all these pieces were originally mounted as pendants by means of a band of gold wire.

The roughly triangular bead (fourth row from the top, center) is worth noting, as it was specially designed to be placed at the center of a string of beads. Beads of simple shapes are in the minority—spheres with flattened ends, disk forms drilled lengthwise, teardrops, cushions, and various irregular shapes. A number of beads are in the form of specific objects or animals: vessels, fruits (pomegranates, for example), weapons or tools (a mace head with longitu-



60

dinal ribs, an axe), a knucklebone, birds, flies, and a frog. The symbolism of the figural beads is not always clear but the half-moon pendants may, perhaps, be amulets. It is worth mentioning that birds can be attributes of deities; frogs were often depicted and appear not infrequently with flies; flies have an ancient tradition as amulets and have been thought to be associated with the realms of death and warfare.

R.-B. W.

1. Wartke 1992, 115f., fig. 13.

## Middle Assyrian Imagery and the Decorative Arts

### 61 *Inlays*

Ivory

Middle Assyrian period, 14th century B.C.

Fragments found in front of the terrace of the "New Palace" of Tukulti-Ninurta I

H. ca. 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (ca. 25 cm), W. ca. 23<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (ca. 60 cm)

VA Ass 981 (Ass 10015–10018)

With stone and shell, ivory was used in great quantities for inlay work. The raw material, elephant tusk, was relatively easy to come by in the ancient Near East.<sup>1</sup> Some ivory was imported from Africa (Upper Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea) and the Indus River valley, but there were also elephants in Mesopotamia itself, along the upper course of the Euphrates and in the Habur region until the eighth century B.C.<sup>2</sup>

Although ivory carvings are known from late Paleolithic times, works in this medium in the Near East are best known from examples that have survived from the third, the late second, and the first millennium B.C. In the fourteenth–thirteenth centuries B.C., there was a noticeable increase in the use of ivory for luxury goods and art objects in the Levant (Ras Shamra, Megiddo) and the Aegean. The stimulus for the revival of this craft tradition in the Assyrian heartland therefore apparently came from the west.<sup>3</sup> The techniques used in working ivory and shell are the same, and one can distinguish incised work, relief-carved objects, and pieces carved in the round.<sup>4</sup>

From the numerous ivory fragments between 0.3 and 0.5 centimeters thick found at Ashur, Walter Andrae proposed the friezelike reconstruction partially shown here.<sup>5</sup>

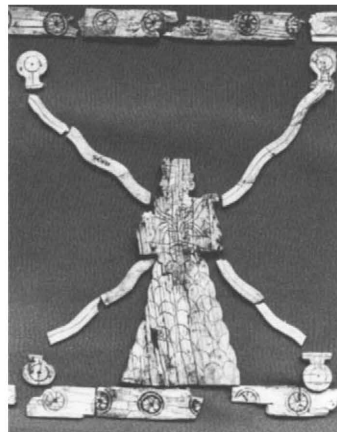
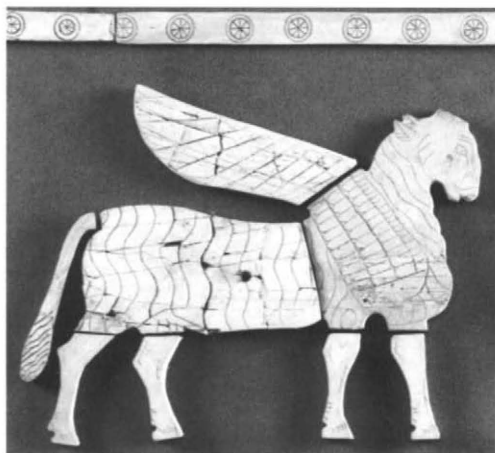


Fig. 25. Ivory inlays depicting mountain god and streams, part of original composition of cat. no. 61. Vorderasiatisches Museum

He placed two winged bulls, whose massive bodies contrast somewhat sharply with their less substantial legs, standing opposite each other next to a pomegranate tree. The tree conforms to a three-tiered volute type of stylized tree known from glyptic of the Middle Assyrian period. Above and below the motif are strips decorated with rosettes.

It is no longer possible to determine how often in the original composition the delicately carved and incised motif was repeated, or alternated with a mountain god (fig. 25), whose robe is adorned with semicircular arches, symbols of a mountainous terrain. Wavy streams of water flow down toward the deity from two upper vessels and are caught again in two lower ones.

The individual elements of this composition represent an old tradition, as can be seen from the images on the earlier cult relief from the Ashur Temple at Ashur (fig. 17). The mountain god portrayed there wears a garment similar to the one worn by the deity in the ivory inlays.<sup>6</sup> A more



contemporary rendering of mountain gods is found on the facade of the Kassite Karaindash Temple at Uruk, where they alternate with water goddesses.<sup>7</sup> All of these depictions are based on similar concepts of the life-giving power of water, the continuity of life embodied by the tree, and the fertility and strength symbolized by the bull.

There is no evidence concerning the material into which the inlays shown in catalogue number 61 were set or the function of the object they embellished. However, it is possible that the inlays decorated the wooden surface of a piece of furniture.<sup>8</sup>

L.M.

1. On elephant and hippopotamus ivory, see Barnett 1982, 8.
2. Parrot 1961, 255.
3. Barnett 1982, 40.
4. Parrot 1961, 255.
5. Andrae 1931, 5ff., pl. 6a; Andrae 1938a, 116f., pl. 54; Andrae 1938b, 12ff., fig. 1a, b; *Vorderasiatisches Museum* 1987, 166, fig. 199; Barnett 1982, 40, pl. 35a, b; Moortgat 1985, 76f., pls. 38, 40; Parrot 1961, 254f., fig. 329; Preusser 1955, 30f., pl. 25.
6. Andrae 1931, pl. 1.
7. Moortgat 1985, pl. 22a, b.
8. Moortgat 1985, 76.

## 62 *Cylinder seal: temple tower (ziggurat)*

Red marble

Middle Assyrian period, 13th century B.C.

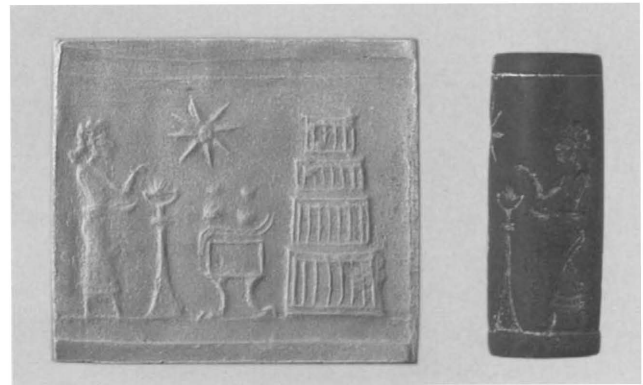
Found in the Ishtar-Dinitu Temple, among sherds in rubble at the level of the stair landing

H. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (4.2 cm), Diam.  $\frac{5}{8}$  in. (1.6 cm)

VA 5362 (Ass 19826)

This seal depiction contains one of the most striking motifs of Middle Assyrian glyptic. It shows a five-stepped tower, each level of which is decorated with pilasters. In front of the tower, a worshiper in a simple robe presents a sacrifice before a tall stand. Next to the stand is a lower table with lion's legs, on which lie a few offerings, possibly loaves of bread. Hovering above the scene is the eight-rayed star of the goddess Ishtar.<sup>1</sup> The depiction of this temple tower has often been used by scholars for the reconstruction of actual ziggurats. The seal shows in general outline a multistoried building of the type familiar from written documents and from archaeological investigations in various cities.<sup>2</sup>

The seal was found in the rubble of Ashur's ruined temple of Ishtar Dinitu, so that a connection may be made to this goddess. The star above the scene also supports the connection. Walter Andrae's excavations at Ashur confirmed the existence of several shrines with temple towers,



62 and modern impression

but the Ishtar-Dinitu Temple did not have one. If we assume some connection between the goddess Ishtar and a ziggurat like the one shown on the seal, we thus have to look for the structure in some other city, possibly Nineveh.

The location where the seal was found provides no certain indication of its date. To judge from the iconography of the piece, it dates to the thirteenth century B.C., which saw an increase in religious subjects in Assyrian art. The absence of landscape elements in this depiction and the isolation of the figures are stylistic aspects that tend to confirm such a dating.<sup>3</sup>

E.K.-B.

1. Andrae 1926, 45, fig. 19; Moortgat 1940, no. 591; Orthmann 1975, pl. 272a.
2. For an overview, see Klengel-Brandt 1982, 74ff.
3. Porada 1979, 1ff., fig. 15; Collon 1988, 74f., fig. 9w; Kühne and Röllig 1989, 295ff.

## 63 *Tag with cylinder seal impression: ibexes and tree*

Baked clay

Middle Assyrian period, 13th century B.C.

Found in map square bB 61

H. 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (4.4 cm), W. 2 $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (7 cm), Th.  $\frac{5}{16}$  in. (1.5 cm)

VAT 16364 (Ass 11018c)

A large number of clay tablets, many of them with seal impressions depicting animals and fantastic creatures as well as ritual scenes, belong to the period of vigorous Assyrian expansion in the thirteenth century B.C. This example bears a traditional image of rampant ibexes flanking a tree. However, the dynamic postures and organic rendering of the animals, the natural setting, and the specific tree depicted distinguish it as a product of the innovative



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Middle Assyrian style seen on both ivory and seal carvings from Tomb 45 at Ashur. It resembles sealings on tablets that can be dated by inscription to the time of Adad-nirari I at the beginning of the thirteenth century B.C.<sup>1</sup>

This uninscribed clay object, one of two bearing the same seal impression, is of a type sometimes referred to as a “tag” or “tongue.” It is completely covered on one side by a single seal rolling; the reverse is irregular with two slightly depressed channels but with no reverse impressions or holes to give evidence that it was affixed to any document or container. If this tag served an administrative function relating to seal identification, it is notable that the impression does not preserve the intended composition of the original seal, in which the ibexes would have been shown flanking a central tree.<sup>2</sup> Recently the suggestion has been made that such clay objects were amuletic, based on their tongue-like shape and on ritual texts that mention the sealing of the mouth.<sup>3</sup>

A sense of movement—perhaps a reflection of the new styles in the eastern Mediterranean under Aegean influence—is imparted by the postures of the ibexes.<sup>4</sup> Both of their bodies are extended toward the central tree but are not entirely symmetrical. On both animals, the hind legs closest to the viewer extend back and the near forelegs are lower than those in the background. On the ibex at the right, the lower foreleg is fully extended and makes contact with a branch emerging from the rocks, while the upper leg touches the tree. In Near Eastern as opposed to Aegean fashion the hind feet make contact with the ground. The curves of the animals’ backs serve to frame a large rosette-shaped shrub that seems to float in the otherwise empty field.

The animals are placed in a rocky landscape setting from which emerges a tree. The tree is not an abstract form

but rather has distinctive characteristics, a bent or twisted trunk and long radiating branches forming a globular crown.<sup>5</sup> This tree first appears in fourteenth-century B.C. representations on Kassite seals of southern Mesopotamia.<sup>6</sup> It has been called both a willow and an olive tree, the former not appropriate for a mountain setting and the latter a Mediterranean species with twisted trunk that is depicted in Aegean-style art in Greece, the Levant, and Cyprus with distinctive foliage that is not shown here.<sup>7</sup> While this unusual tree is difficult to identify, it may be significant that it appears at a time of intense international contacts, during which there seems to have been an increasing interest in exotic plants and animals (see cat. no. 45).<sup>8</sup>

While the stylistic and iconographic features of this sealing display a sensitivity to the natural world that sets Middle Assyrian renderings apart from earlier depictions, the group of ibexes and tree is not genre, but rather must be viewed in the context of such cult scenes as the deity and feeding goats depicted on a relief from the preceding Old Assyrian period, found at Ashur (fig. 17).

J.A.

1. Matthews 1990, 92–95, 141, no. 321, who notes that some examples date to the period of Shalmaneser I; for similar images, see Collon 1988, 71; Parker 1977, pl. XXIX, 32A.

2. Collon 1987, 119, discusses sealed “tongues,” which have been referred to as “visiting cards,” as possibly trial rollings for carver or buyer or as identifiers. In both cases, however, one would expect that the seals would be rolled correctly on them, preserving the intended compositional scheme. On this sealing and on a second one rolled by the same seal (Moortgat 1941, 74–75, figs. 47, 48) the ibexes appear addorsed and the tree is on one side.

3. Marcus 1994, 11–12, discusses flat ovoid tags that were found in elite public buildings at Hasanlu in Iran and also at a number of other Near Eastern sites. Context, imagery, and other objects sealed by the same cylinders used on tags should be further explored in the attempt to determine their function.

4. For Aegean renderings of confronted and addorsed ibexes, see *Corpus der Minoischen und Mykenischen Siegel*, vol. 1, nos. 99, 123, both from Mycenae.

5. For variations on this form of tree, see Matthews 1990, figs. 311–24, 330–32, 430–32, 434, 445.

6. Porada 1952, 181f., pl. XXIX:2; Matthews 1990, 92, fig. 130; however, see Parrot 1953, fig. 88, for earlier representations of goats flanking both a tree with undulating trunk and an ornamental tree on a mountain.

7. For discussions of the olive tree, see Porada 1979–86, 302–3, pl. E; Venit 1986, 5; Zohary 1973, 372; Smith 1926–28, 70.

8. See E. Ebeling, “Garten,” *RLA*, vol. 3, 147–50; for a possibly similar Egyptian acacia tree, see Baum 1988, 154ff., 160, fig. 43.

**64 Tag with cylinder seal impressions:  
fantastic animal combat**

Baked clay

Middle Assyrian period, 13th century B.C.

Found in map square bB 61

H. 1¼ in. (3.15 cm), W. 1⅞ in. (4.92 cm), Th. ⅝ in. (1.65 cm)

VAT 16376 (Ass 11018u)

During a period of Assyrian military prowess in the thirteenth century B.C., a number of cylinder seals impressed on tablets at Ashur were engraved with scenes of conflicts between animals and fantastic creatures.

One well-preserved design dating to the period of Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243–1207 B.C.) was rolled on both the front and the back of a clay tag (see cat. no. 63 for discussion of a tag).<sup>1</sup> Represented in a triangular composition are a rampant horse and a fierce winged lion monster with the tail of a scorpion and a gaping mouth exposing a pointed tooth. The creature's wings have an angled profile, which is a characteristic possibly associated with areas influenced by Aegean art. Feathers are indicated, but rather than being carefully drawn to give the appearance of layers, they simply look like decorative patterning; there is no attempt to delineate the parts of the wing. The body is lithe with the hind leg nearest to the viewer extended backward and the other one pushed forward. While the hind feet are missing, the proper right foreleg seems to end in the claw of a bird of prey under the horse's mouth. The body of the lion is suggested by fine modeling and a curved outline but not by the heavy musculature that becomes characteristic in later Assyrian art. Leonine creatures with feet of birds of prey appear earlier in Mesopotamian art and are depicted in ritual context on a relief vessel from Ashur (cat. no. 44).<sup>2</sup>

The adversary of the lion monster is a horse, whose body is also well modeled. As a draft animal, the horse is clearly documented in the Near East and represented in art originally just before the mid-second millennium B.C.<sup>3</sup> The horse occurs on Middle Assyrian seals in the thirteenth century as the adversary of lion monsters.<sup>4</sup> Supernatural creatures such as the winged horse and the centaur also appear at this time, fighting against the lion,<sup>5</sup> and continue to be represented in the twelfth century as well.<sup>6</sup>

Edith Porada noted that in Middle Assyrian art there is a progression from the emphasis on demonic images to one in which human figures play principal roles, often defeating demons and monsters.<sup>7</sup> There are also many hunt scenes, with archers shooting lions and even ibexes near mountains and trees,<sup>8</sup> and in later phases of the Middle Assyrian period, human-headed beings with added physical attributes of lions, birds of prey, scorpions, and horses appear.<sup>9</sup> Yet, images of griffin demons in ritual scenes seem



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to persist into the thirteenth and twelfth centuries, alongside those with humans.<sup>10</sup> Contests between powerful beasts and fantastic creatures also continue to proliferate during this period. Donald Matthews points out that whereas in earlier images the animals were always defeated, there now seems to be a random combination of figures and no clear predominance of supernatural beings over the mighty lion, or even the horse.<sup>11</sup> While in one image the hero with scorpion tail and clawed feet is depicted as a victor, fighting a bull, other human-headed demons appear to be equally matched with animal-headed adversaries.<sup>12</sup>

J.A.

1. Moortgat 1941, 63, fig. 24.

2. For a discussion of the textual evidence for lion-dragons with bird parts, see Wiggermann 1992, 185.

3. Littauer and Crouwel 1979, 56, 66.

4. Moortgat 1941, 62, fig. 22.

5. Frankfort 1970, 141, fig. 158, 142, fig. 163; Moortgat 1941, 64, fig. 25, 67, fig. 30.

6. For the great importance of the horse and manuals on the care of horses found at Ashur and elsewhere, see Littauer and Crouwel 1979, 82–83.

7. Porada 1979, 2, 9.

8. Moortgat 1941, 58–59.

9. Moortgat 1941, 67; Moortgat 1944, 31–33, 39; Porada 1992, 184; Wiggermann 1992, 143–45.

10. Moortgat 1941, 77–79; Moortgat 1944, 35.

11. Moortgat 1941, 62–70; Moortgat 1944, 28–31; Matthews 1990, 102–3, considers these combinations to be mainly decorative; while nuances of interpretation elude us, images of specific demons could have been charged with meaning; see Green 1984, 80–94.

12. Matthews 1990, figs. 394, 401.

**65 Tag with cylinder seal impression:  
chariot hunt**

Baked clay

Middle Assyrian period, 12th century B.C.

Found in map square eE 5IV

H. 1¼ in. (3.1 cm), W. 1⅞ in. (4.73 cm), Th. ⅞ in. (1.36 cm)

Surviving impression: H. ¾ in. (1.88 cm), W. 1⅜ in. (3.44 cm)

VAT 9316 (Ass 6096ap)

An archive deposit of 112 clay tablets, found in a jar near the Anu-Adad Temple (fig. 2), dates to the very short reign of Ninurta-Tukulti-Ashur, who succeeded Ashur-dan I to the Assyrian throne, ruling possibly from 1133–1132 B.C. The tablets record the delivery of livestock, mainly sheep and goats, for various purposes.<sup>1</sup> Only four have seal impressions, one by a cylinder engraved with confronted griffin demons, and three by a cylinder with two charioteers hunting ibexes in mountainous terrain.<sup>2</sup>

One of the examples impressed with the latter seal is ovoid and bears no inscription. It is of a type referred to as a “tag” or “tongue” (see the discussion in cat. no. 63), completely covered on one side by a single seal rolling; the reverse is marked only with fingerprint impressions. As on catalogue number 63 (with an impression of ibexes and tree) the intended composition of the seal is not fully represented in the rolling on this tag.<sup>3</sup>

Depicted on the original seal was a single scene in a mountainous landscape. Two figures without beards and headgear and wearing long garments ride in a chariot drawn by two galloping horses. One is the driver, his hands on the reins, and the other, an archer drawing his bow against three ibexes, one leaping forward with an arrow in its back, another falling down, and the third beneath the horses’ bodies. The figures are rendered in a finely modeled style, and the animals are in dynamic postures, the musculature of their bodies mainly defined by curving outlines.<sup>4</sup>



In this phase of intense cultural interaction within the entire eastern Mediterranean world, the most significant parallels for the chariot scene come from Egypt and from Assyria itself. In both subject matter and the arrangement of figures, this scene closely resembles Eighteenth–Nineteenth Dynasty images of Egyptian pharaohs engaged in hunt and war.<sup>5</sup> It is probable that for the Assyrians such scenes retained some of the symbolism that they had in Egypt, where the king was portrayed as an invincible ruler. However, in Egyptian renderings of chariot hunts and battles, there is only one charioteer, the ruler, wearing his crown and with the reins tied around his waist.

These Egyptian hunt scenes were made during periods of close ties with the Aegean world, where, in the sixteenth–fourteenth centuries B.C., Aegean hunt scenes depicted chariots led by galloping animals and wounded animals falling and contorted in a space that was not organized with groundlines.<sup>6</sup> Such imagery also occurred in the Levant and Cyprus, under Aegean (and in some cases Egyptian) influence.<sup>7</sup> The horses, both in Egyptian scenes and on the Ashur seal impression, are in a much more static posture, with hind legs rooted to the ground, thereby interfering with their dynamic movement. It has also been pointed out that on the Ashur seal impression, the wounded ibex has its hind legs on the extended legs of the horses, serving thereby to keep limbs from floating in space.<sup>8</sup> The tendency to provide animals with some kind of a groundline within a landscape is also characteristic in Egyptian hunt scenes.

The form of the chariot depicted, with a rectangular box and six-spoked wheels, has been related both to Egyptian chariots and to those shown on the White Obelisk, found at Nineveh and dated by a number of scholars to the reign of Ashurnasirpal I in the eleventh century B.C.<sup>9</sup> On this monument, scenes of hunt and war with landscape and architectural details are part of a narrative that alludes to the power of the ruler. Archers are distinguished from charioteers in details of dress and hairstyle.



Fig. 26. Drawing of the seal impression on cat. no. 65. Reproduced from Porada 1992, fig. 22.4

Since the archer on the Ashur seal impression is not bearded in Assyrian royal fashion (and does not have distinctive royal dress), the original view that the chariot-hunt seal was a royal cylinder of Ninurta-Tukulti-Ashur has been disputed.<sup>10</sup> However, it also seems clear that chariot hunts must have been the privilege of the highest levels of society, kings and nobles, and that a high official or royal personage was possibly the owner of this beautifully carved seal.<sup>11</sup>

J.A.

1. Weidner 1935–36, 1f.
2. Opitz 1935–36, 48ff.; see also Weidner 1935–36, 34, no. 52, and 41–42, no. 95.
3. Moortgat 1944, 38, fig. 39; Opitz 1935–36, 49, figs. 2, 3, which depict other rollings of the seal, in which the composition seems to be preserved.
4. One can contrast the modeled style of this sealing with the more linear style of a similar composition on a Kassite seal, discussed both by Smith 1965, 117, fig. 147, and by Venit 1986, 6, fig. 20.
5. Groenwagen-Frankfort 1987, 117, fig. 24, pls. XLIVb, XLVIII; Smith 1965, 117–18, refers to the use of landscape elements to arrest a chariot charge, both on this sealing and on reliefs of Seti I.
6. *Corpus der Minoischen und Mykenischen Siegel*, vol. 1, no. 16; silver cup with hunt scene from the Royal Tomb at Dendra, Persson 1931, pl. 17.
7. Schaeffer 1949, pl. I; Vandenabeele 1977, pls. xxiv–xxvi, 1; Porada 1992, 185, considers a cylinder rolling from Cyprus to be inspired by a western Asiatic prototype. Such an image, with galloping animals, must have originally derived from the Aegean world.
8. Venit 1986, 9.
9. Littauer and Crowel 1979, 75, use these similarities as evidence for the early date of the obelisk; see also Reade 1975, 144.
10. Opitz 1935–36, 51; Frankfort 1939b, 192; Mayer-Opificius 1986, 165–67, fig. 14; for another Middle Assyrian chariot scene from Tell al Rimah, see Parker 1977, pl. xxix, 26.
11. Porada 1992, 186; Littauer and Crowel 1979, 95.

### 66 *Tablet with cylinder seal impression: fantastic creatures*

Baked clay  
 Middle Assyrian period, reign of Eriba-Adad I (1390–1364 B.C.)  
 Found in map square iA 81  
 H. 1¾ in. (4.4 cm), W. 1¼ in. (4.3 cm)  
 VAT 9009 (Ass 14446t)

The content of this cuneiform document has not been conclusively determined.<sup>1</sup> It seems to be a contract that presumably relates to the royal house,<sup>2</sup> since the seal of the Assyrian king Eriba-Adad I was impressed upon the tablet. This ruler can be identified as the owner of the seal on the basis of an inscription on another clay tablet impressed by the

identical seal. This inscription suggests that the seal used was that of the king.<sup>3</sup>

The seal impression depicts a pair of lion-griffins with their arms raised, holding a large sun disk. A palm tree stands between them. A second grouping is made up of a double-headed, winged lion demon holding up two lion-griffins by their hind legs. Beneath each of their heads is a cross with arms of equal length. The composition of the seal is well balanced, with the two groups given equal weight. Each grouping is composed of self-contained, antithetical motifs, one providing a contrast to the other.<sup>4</sup>

The images on this early-fourteenth-century B.C. seal derive from the tradition of the preceding Mitannian period, which favored fabulous beasts and compositions filling the entire field.<sup>5</sup> The image here was reduced to a few figures of equal height standing on a common baseline. The rest of the surface of the seal was filled with secondary motifs like the crosses and the tree.

Comparing this seal impression from the reign of Eriba-Adad I with the one of Ashur-uballit I from roughly forty



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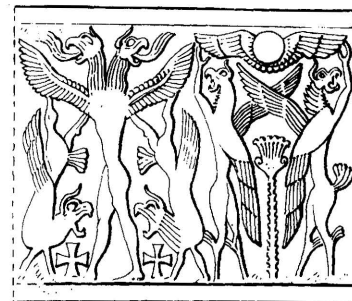


Fig. 27. Drawing of the seal impression on cat. no. 66. Reproduced from Frankfort 1939b, fig. 59



years later (cat. no. 67), one can see a difference in style. Despite the similarity in motif and iconography, the carver of the later seal abandoned the attempt to fill the surface and set his clearly outlined figures in space. The heraldic composition of the image was already anticipated in the earlier example and would in time become still more emphatic.

The carver of the seal used on the present tablet was a master of his craft. This is especially apparent in the formation of the bodies, the depiction of their musculature, the execution of the heads with what looks like darting tongues or fire, and the details of the delicate feathers. Particularly characteristic of the period are the feathers made up of tiny dots, raised in the impression, on the lower edge of the sun and on the wings of the demon at left. One of a large group of seals of similar design, this is an important example for the development of Middle Assyrian glyptic, which, drawing from various sources, produced a distinctive style of fourteenth–thirteenth century B.C. seals.

E.K.-B.

1. Schroeder 1920, 209.
2. Pedersen 1985, 23, M 9.
3. See Weber 1920, pl. 316a: the impressions on the two tablets are identical; Schroeder 1922, 163.
4. Beran 1957, 144f., fig. 2.
5. There are many examples in Porada 1948.

### 67 Tablet with cylinder seal impression: *fantastic animals*

Baked clay  
Middle Assyrian period, reign of Ashur-uballit I (1363–1328 B.C.)  
Found in map square iA 8I, ca. 2.75 m under the surface of the mound  
H. 1 $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (4.7 cm), W. 1 $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (4.7 cm)  
VAT 8995 (Ass 14446cy)

The text of this document speaks of the donation by the Assyrian king Ashur-uballit I of a share in a house belonging to the palace, along with the grain belonging to it, to a man by the name of Abi-ilu, son of Adad-nirari.<sup>1</sup> The seal impressed on the document was also used on other tablets and can easily be reconstructed. It bears a four-line legend that translates as follows: "Seal of Ashur-uballit, King of Assyria, Son of Eriba-Adad."<sup>2</sup> This is therefore an official, royal seal that was surely produced in an important stone-cutting workshop, and one with images that may be considered to be typical of the period.

The image on the seal presents a strictly symmetrical motif resembling a coat of arms. Two winged hunting demons with bird's heads are holding up a lion between them by its hind legs, stabbing their daggers into its belly.<sup>3</sup> Depictions of mythical animals like these were common in Mesopotamian glyptic. In this instance it may be possible to see the particular influence of Mitannian art, in which such monsters were especially popular. The two demons were carved with great care. Their human bodies are fully three-dimensional, their wing feathers and the crests on their bird heads were executed with the most delicate drills. The rendering of the lion is unusual. Seen frontally from above, it fits nicely into the symmetry of the composition.

The reign of the Assyrian king Ashur-uballit not only marked an upswing in the political fortunes of the Assyrian state; it also witnessed a number of new trends in art, of which the king's seal is an important example. Despite its small size, the heraldic composition seems almost monu-



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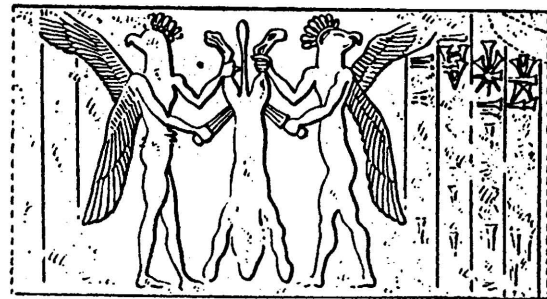


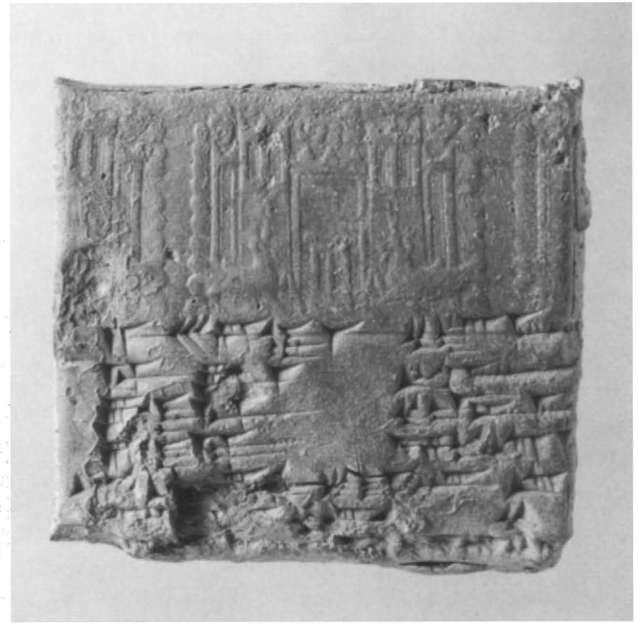
Fig. 28. Drawing of the seal impression on cat. no. 67. Reproduced from Frankfort 1939b, fig. 58

mental. The symmetry, broken only by the legend outside the scene proper, gives it a certain authority. The use of a uniform groundline and the concentration on a few clearly outlined figures create a unified space, one in which the images and background complement each other. Such features, which differ from the Mitannian art of earlier epochs, would continue to characterize later Middle Assyrian glyptic.<sup>4</sup>

Demons played a large role in the imagination of ancient Near Eastern peoples, and this seal shows an especially powerful representation of such creatures. The killing of the lion might possibly be interpreted as a victory over the hostile forces of the underworld, a friendly act on the part of demons protective of mankind.<sup>5</sup>

E.K.-B.

1. Ebeling 1927, no. 173; Schroeder 1920, no. 210.
2. Grayson 1987, 073.6.1.
3. Beran 1957, 151f., fig. 17.
4. Venit 1986, fig. 6.
5. Porada 1979, 1ff., fig. 12.



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### 68 Tablet with cylinder seal impression: temple facade

Baked clay

Middle Assyrian period, reign of Tiglath-pileser I  
(1114–1076 B.C.)

Found in a clay jar (A) in the Ashur Temple

H. 2 $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (6.5 cm), W. 2 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (6.7 cm)

VAT 15468 (Ass 18771br)

This clay tablet was part of a major archive preserved in several clay vessels in a room of the Ashur Temple. One group of documents could be dated to the reign of the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser I.<sup>1</sup> This tablet lists the supplies of barley, honey, sesame, and fruit received by the temple of Ashur as the standard offering from the city of Ashur or the province of Talmushu, represented by the governor Sin-zera-iddina. The receipt, formulated as a contract, was executed in two copies jointly sealed by the donor of the offering and its recipient. The present tablet may bear the seal of the governor of Talmushu.

The image on the seal shows a highly detailed temple facade with an entrance flanked by crenellated towers. One can clearly distinguish niches in the structure and windows above. In the center, in front of the temple entrance, stands a cult pedestal, similar to the one shown in this exhibition with a depiction of Tukulti-Ninurta I (cat. no. 75). The pedestal, structured by vertical pilasters, has volutes on the

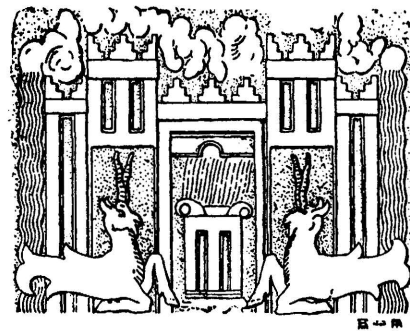


Fig. 29. Drawing of the seal impression on cat. no. 68. Reproduced from Andrae 1977, fig. 131

upper corners. On either side of the pedestal rests a goat-fish, a mythical creature with the head and body of a goat but the tail of a fish. Streams of water flow decoratively upward behind them.<sup>2</sup> It may be that these creatures, like the goat-fish in countless other depictions, on *kudurru* (boundary stones) for example, are to be thought of as animals sacred to the water god Ea.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore tempting to see the structure itself as a temple of Ea. One could also interpret the fabulous beasts as apotropaic guardians like those of later Neo-Assyrian temples, which had no particular association with the water god.

This seal image is one of the few depictions of architecture in ancient Near Eastern art and is therefore of great importance for the reconstruction of Mesopotamian temples. From it we learn of the presence of crenellations and of windows, few traces of which have survived on actual

monuments. In this period gateways were apparently not vaulted.<sup>4</sup> No temple of the god Ea has been identified at Ashur, and therefore the seal depiction cannot be associated with a specific Ashur shrine.

The seal image is representative of the style of late Middle Assyrian seal carving, which tended to stress linear pattern over the three-dimensionality that was characteristic of the earlier period. In general, landscape elements are

lacking, and the individual figures appear massive and strongly contoured.

E.K.-B.

1. Pedersén 1985, M 4 no. 50, no. 61.

2. Andrae 1938a, figs. 130–32; Moortgat 1944, 43, fig. 45.

3. Seidl 1968, 178ff.

4. Heinrich 1982, 214, fig. 318a; Porada 1967, fig. 8; Green 1986, 25f., fig. 1.

## GLASS

The history of vitreous materials can be traced back into the prehistoric period in the ancient Near East. All vitreous substances should be considered as one material. The various synthetic products commonly called “glass” are, at least until the second half of the first century B.C., soda-lime glasses composed mainly of three substances: silica, sodium oxide, and lime. The differences in their appearance depend on the way the three substances are combined in terms of their chemical composition and relative ratios as well as the technology employed.

The main components occur naturally and were easy to obtain in antiquity. They were available in the form of quartz sand (silica,  $\text{SiO}_2$ ), calcium carbonate or limestone ( $\text{Ca}_2\text{CO}_3$ ), and sodium carbonate or soda ( $\text{Na}_2\text{CO}_3$ ). In Mesopotamia the last of these substances was often replaced by another alkali, potash ( $\text{K}_2\text{CO}_3$ ). To these components, plant ash was added as a glass-forming substance, and metal oxides were added for color. Among glassy materials, one must distinguish among the following terms:<sup>1</sup>

*Glass* is a synthetic substance with a homogenous, non-crystalline structure produced by melting silica, sodium oxide, and lime at a sufficiently high temperature.

*Glaze* is a thin layer of glass on a ceramic base material (fired clay, vitreous paste).<sup>2</sup>

*Vitreous pastes*, often confusingly referred to as “frit,” are a synthetic, crystalline product of the above-mentioned raw materials in which the finely powdered substances were “fritted” or fused together at a relatively low temperature. There is no surface glaze, although a very thin self-glaze can occasionally be seen.

*Blue vitreous paste* (copper-silica frit) is a fused substance and has a high copper content. It can be distinguished from “Egyptian blue,” a double silicate of copper and calcium ( $\text{CuO} \cdot \text{CaO} \cdot 4\text{SiO}_2$ ), which may be present in blue vitreous paste.

*Glazed vitreous paste* is called “faience” by ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian scholars.

Written references to glasslike substances first appear in Sumerian-Akkadian word lists. Sumerian terminology persists down to the end of the third millennium B.C., providing evidence of the antiquity of glass technology. This technology involved the production of vitreous pastes, which were particularly important as synthetic materials from which small objects were produced even in prehistoric times. After about the third quarter of the third millennium B.C. the number of objects formed of vitreous pastes jumps dramatically. Among these objects are jewelry, small vessels, figures, and votive gifts, all of which are found among the funerary gifts in the burials at Ashur.

It is generally agreed that major advances in the technology of glassmaking were introduced in the middle of the second millennium B.C. Objects of genuine glass—beads, for example—had been made even earlier, but it was at this time that the first larger glass objects were produced, among them hollow glass vessels, the manufacture of which attests to significant technological development. Glazed pottery, glass vessels, produced by the core-formed technique, and mosaic glass attest to a high standard of glass production and glassworking at Ashur.

The vitreous materials and the vitreous technologies known from the Ashur excavations were further developed and refined. They continued to be used into the Hellenistic and Roman periods in the Near East. The richness of the finds at Ashur makes clear that it was a site especially important as the center of a prominent glass industry.

R.-B.W.

1. For the terminology and history of glass production, see Moorey 1985, 133ff.; H. Kühne, “Glas (B. nach archäologischem Material),” *RLA*, vol. 3, 410ff. For the archaeological and cuneiform inscription sources, see Oppenheim 1970.

2. Glazes on a metal supporting material are called enamels.

**69 Flask**

Glass

Middle Assyrian period, 14th–13th century B.C.

Found in a sherd grave, map square cC 8I

H. 9 $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (23.3 cm), Diam. max. 3 $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (8.2 cm)

VA 5699 (Ass 14331b)

*See colorplate 12*

This flask is part of a grave inventory and was restored from numerous fragments. It has an ovoid body, a small foot, a long, slightly tapering neck, and a thin lip.<sup>1</sup>

The flask was produced by the core-formed technique. The walls of the vessel were formed by applying a layer of hot viscous glass over a core made of a mixture of clay and sand in the precise shape desired. Then, in a separate procedure, the decorative elements, colored glass threads and drops, were fused onto the body. These elements were then worked into patterns while the glass was still malleable. The foot and the lip were fused separately onto the body.

Surface deterioration has made the surface opaque so that the original colors are no longer preserved. The base color, originally a bright yellow, is now a yellowish white. The whole surface of the vessel is covered with decorative patterns in blue, red (red-brown), and white. Thick twisted glass threads of these three colors were applied to form horizontal divisions on the body. The spaces in between are filled with various different patterns: bands combining festoons and arcades; intersecting loops of twisted, multicolored glass threads; bold blue dots interspersed with these twisted threads; and at the base, vertical blue stripes.

After the vessel had cooled, it was necessary to remove the sand core. Once the core had been scraped out, the glass flask could be used to hold precious fluids. The material and elaborate decoration attest to the value of the contents.

R.-B.W.

1. Haller 1954, 18, pls. 11f.—Grave 133; Barag, in Oppenheim 1970, 144, fig. 22 (no. 5), for a vessel of similar form but with a different decorative pattern.

**70 Beaker**

Glass

Middle Assyrian period, 14th–13th century B.C.

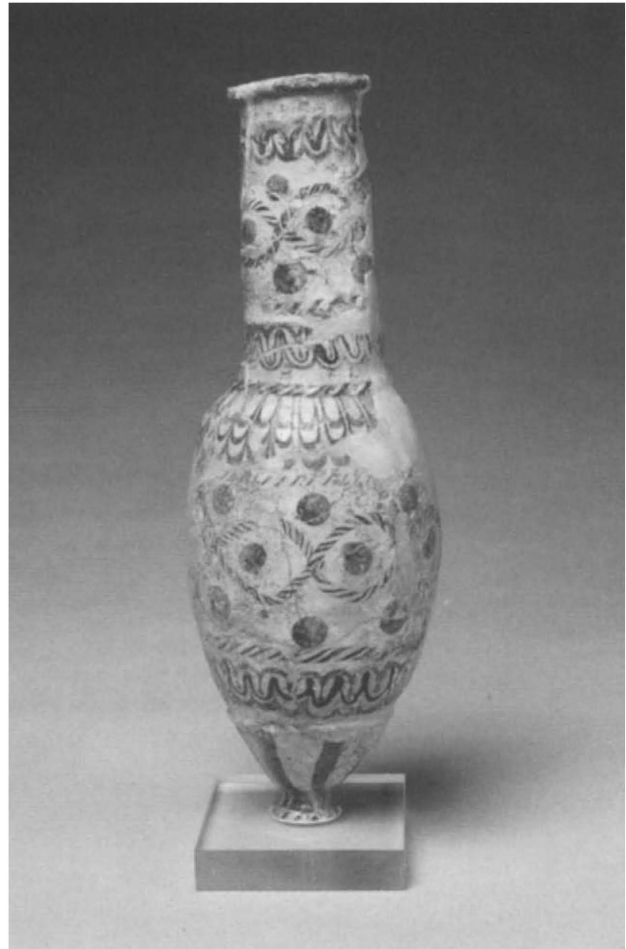
Found in a tomb, map square eC 7III

H. 4 in. (10.1 cm), Diam. 2 $\frac{5}{8}$  in. (6.6 cm)

VA 5909 (Ass 137071)

*See colorplate 12*

This small beaker was found along with other glass vessels in a brick tomb. Although it is impossible to date the tomb with certainty from the surrounding stratum, the nature of



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the finds suggests a date around the middle of the second millennium B.C.<sup>1</sup>

The rough interior of the beaker, in contrast to the smooth exterior, indicates that the vessel was produced in the core-formed technique. The ovoid body tapers slightly toward the mouth, which is ringed with a round lip. Three small, separately applied feet support the vessel. The opaque glass matrix of the vessel now appears as a silvery gray, but the original color was possibly different. White glass threads fused onto the outside of the beaker were drawn upward while still hot so that they form three ornamental rows of festoons hanging from slightly raised bosses. Another white glass thread was fused onto the surface between the feet and drawn downward to form an arcade pattern.

R.-B.W.

1. Haller 1954, 114f., pl. 24e—Tomb 37; H. Kühne, in *RLA*, vol. 3, 418f., beaker fig. 6; Barag, in Oppenheim 1970, 141ff., beaker fig. 18 (no. 1).



72, 71, 70

### 71 *Beaker*

Blue vitreous paste

Middle Assyrian period, 14th–13th century B.C.

Found in map square eC 7III

H.  $2\frac{15}{16}$  in. (7.4 cm), Diam.  $2\frac{1}{16}$  in. (5.3 cm)

VA 5945 (Ass 13603)

See *colorplate 12*

Synthetic blue vitreous paste (a double silicate of copper and calcium) was considered to be a prized material in antiquity in both Egypt and the Near East. In Akkadian texts, the term *uqnû* refers both to the naturally occurring blue stone, lapis lazuli, as well as to an artificial “blue stone from the oven.”<sup>1</sup> This latter medium was almost the same color as lapis lazuli, and it is probable that this small beaker was intended to be an imitation of a vessel made of the semiprecious stone.

The body of the beaker is not absolutely regular. It appears to have been mechanically formed or cut out of a larger piece of blue vitreous paste. Inside the vessel one can still see vertical tool marks. The vessel ends in a point at the bottom. The three small feet are in the form of bull’s legs and are connected with crosspieces. The decoration of the beaker’s outer surface consists of both incised lines and low-relief carving. Long, narrow rosette petals curve upward from between the three bull’s feet, each marked at the tip by a small dot. The area above these feet is ornamented with two bands of zigzags enclosed within delicately inscribed double lines. Two perforated projections at the rim indicate that the vessel once had a lid. When the piece was discovered, it contained numerous necklace beads

of vitreous paste and stone, suggesting that it was designed to serve as a box for jewelry.

R.-B.W.

1. Oppenheim 1970, 10f.

### 72 *Jar with lid*

Glazed vitreous paste

Middle Assyrian period, 14th–13th century B.C.

Found in a burial, map square eC 9I

H. with lid  $2\frac{1}{16}$  in. (5.3 cm), Diam.  $4\frac{3}{16}$  in. (10.7 cm)

VA 5930 (Ass 14881c)

See *colorplate 12*

This small vessel is part of the grave goods of a two-piece Middle Assyrian tub sarcophagus in which there is evidence of multiple burials. It lay to the left side of the later burial in the tub roughly at the height of the upper arm.<sup>1</sup>

Both the body of the vessel and the flat lid are of white vitreous paste with a secondary glaze. The basic form of the vessel is similar to a large rosette. Raised ribs extend upward from the base ring and end at the rim in a flat horizontal surface. Two ribs on opposite sides of the vessel do not end in this manner but were shaped into trapezoidal forms that joined the rim of the jar to form the surface on which the lid rests. The lid could be fastened, as there are small holes, not precisely aligned, in these trapezoidal surfaces of both the lid and the jar itself.

The glaze was doubtless originally a much brighter color. In spots it has flaked off or weathered. The basic color

both inside and out is white; the colors of the ribs are variations on white, brown, and greenish yellow.<sup>2</sup> The lid is covered with yellow glaze, accented with a strong brown circle at the center.

R.-B.W.

1. Haller 1954, 62f., fig. 76, pl. 161—Tomb 746; Andrae and Watzinger 1939, 714, pl. 154.1.3.

2. The color description reflects what the colors look like now.

### 73 *Mosaic fragment*

Glass

Middle Assyrian period (?)

One fragment found at the southeast side of the ziggurat, map square hA 5I, and the other fragment at the northeast side of the West Gate, map square eA 9V

H.  $4\frac{1}{8}$  in. (10.5 cm), W.  $3\frac{1}{16}$  in. (9.3 cm), Th.  $\frac{7}{8}$ –1 in. (2.3–2.5 cm)

VA 5820+5822 (Ass 1918, Ass 12066)

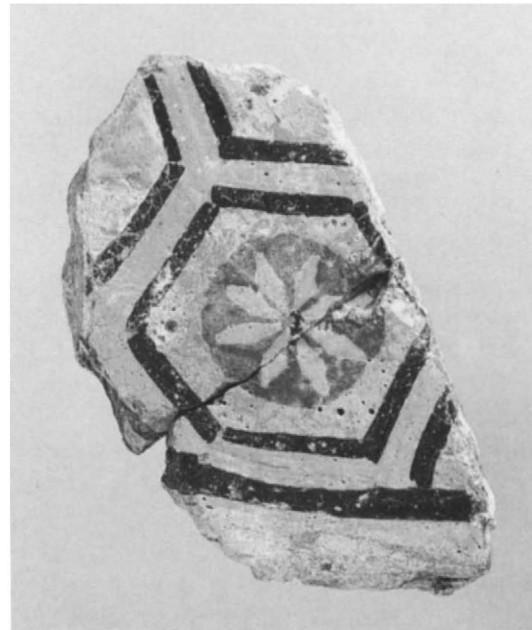
See *colorplate 13*

This piece of a colored tile consists of two fragments that fit together. It is one of a group of quite similar fragments found at widely separated spots at Ashur: in the so-called trial trench 8I, at the West Gate, in the vicinity of the large gate structures to the northwest, and next to the ziggurat (the southeast and southwest fronts).<sup>1</sup> The fragment, restored for a special exhibition on ancient glass technology,<sup>2</sup> was referred to in the documentation of the excavation as a “long-distance join.”

Ever since the pieces in question were first published, they have been dated to the Middle Assyrian period. Yet to judge from the various contexts in which they were found this dating is by no means assured. The majority of the adjacent finds date from the Neo-Assyrian period, so it is possible that these glass tiles are not as old as has been assumed.

Unfortunately, we do not know just how these colorful glass tiles were originally used. It is probable that they functioned as wall tiles or wall inlays.

The fragment displayed still has part of the original outer edge with a yellow border. The surface was decorated in a hexagonal, honeycomb pattern, with black frames enclosing light blue fields, each filled with an eight-petaled



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rosette. The black frames were separated by strips of yellow. From some of the other fragments and even in this piece, close to the broken edge, it is clear that the rosettes were executed in alternating colors. Some have yellow petals and black centers against a red circular ground, others have white petals and red centers in a circle of dark blue.

The rosettes are examples of so-called millefiori glass; the black hexagonal frames and yellow dividing strips were made of cut pieces of glass in the mosaic glass technique. These designs were fused onto a base layer of black. The entire surface was carefully polished, so that tiny chalk particles and bubbles in the glass now appear as small white spots or holes.

R.-B.W.

1. Haevernick 1968, 66, 68, no. 11, color pl. II (Haevernick 1981, 164, 166, no. 11, pl. 2)—the indication of the find site “Ishtar Temple” is incorrect; von Saldern, in Oppenheim 1970, 215, no. 7, fig. 2G; Moorey 1985, 204.

2. Wartke 1982, 27, fig. 14.

## WALL PAINTING FROM KAR TUKULTI-NINURTA

As a sort of extension of the main work at Ashur, excavation was begun in Kar Tukulti-Ninurta (modern Tulul al Aqar), roughly two miles northeast of Ashur on the east bank of the Tigris, on October 15, 1913. The project, directed by Walter Bachmann, was forced to shut down after only a few months, on March 30, 1914. Once the excavators had discovered a foundation document bearing the name of Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243–1207 B.C.), they could confirm that the massive, rectangular ruin was indeed the site of the cult center and royal residence Kar Tukulti-Ninurta. Traces of settlement extended into Neo-Assyrian and post-Assyrian times. Walter Bachmann managed to investigate portions of the fortifications, together with the South Gate, the Ashur Temple and its ziggurat, and various palace buildings.<sup>1</sup> In 1986, a new survey of this important site was made, and in 1989 excavation was again undertaken.<sup>2</sup>

Among the archaeological finds uncovered by the Bachmann excavation in 1913–14 are countless fragments of painted wall decoration. From the records of the dig it is clear that colored wall fragments were salvaged from three different locations: the Ashur Temple and the so-called South and North Palaces. Apparently, only a few of the colored wall decorations, some of them quite large, had survived. Most of what we know about the Middle Assyrian wall paintings from Kar Tukulti-Ninurta comes from Walter Andrae's publication of the fragments discovered,<sup>3</sup> utilizing watercolors (see fig. 30) that he made during Bachmann's salvage operation and Bachmann's handwritten notes and drawings.<sup>4</sup> The paintings in the Ashur Temple consisted of black base stripes and monotone red surfaces, whereas fragments from the so-called South

Palace, especially from the south side of its terrace, reveal that the palace walls were adorned with polychrome ornamental and figural paintings. It is clear that the walls were divided into large spaces above a black base strip. The dominant motifs were botanical patterns like rosettes, palmettes, and lotus blossoms, the stylized sacred tree, geometric patterns, and depictions of figures. Among the latter were spirits flanking a sacred tree, gazelles, and other animals.

A few of the samples of these wall paintings from Kar Tukulti-Ninurta preserved in the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin underwent restoration for a special exhibition in 1990, making it possible to determine how they were produced.<sup>5</sup> The colors were applied *al secco*. Because no binding substance was used, there are now only flakes of color adhering to the surface; blue has survived the least well. In most cases the clay wall surface was first painted white, then the areas of color and decoration applied. In many instances several layers of pigment were found, indicating that there had been corrections, overpainting, or renovation of either whole wall sections or individual details. Analysis of the pigments showed that the white was a mixture of chalk and plaster, that hematite was used for red, "Egyptian blue" for blue, and charcoal for black.

R.-B.W.

1. For the results of these investigations, see Eickhoff 1985.

2. Dittmann et al. 1988, 97ff.; Dittmann 1990, 157ff.

3. Andrae 1923, 7ff., pls. 1–4.

4. In 1992, Walter Bachmann's original documents relating to his excavations in Kar Tukulti-Ninurta were tracked down in an archive in Dresden. A review of these important records will appear in connection with the final publication in WVDOG of the investigations from the years 1986 and 1989.

5. Von Eickstedt et al. 1994, 17ff.

**74a–c Fragments of polychrome wall paintings from Kar Tukulti-Ninurta**

Clay mixed with sand and vegetable matter, white ground with painting in blue (only traces), red, and black

Middle Assyrian period, 13th century B.C.

Found at the south side of the large terrace of the so-called South Palace

74a: H. 6 $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (15.5 cm), W. 4 $\frac{15}{16}$  in. (12.5 cm), Th. 1–1 $\frac{3}{16}$  in. (2.5–3 cm)

74b: H. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (7 cm), W. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (7 cm), Th. max. 1 in. (2.5 cm)

74c: H. 1 $\frac{3}{16}$  in. (4 cm), W. 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (4.5 cm), Th. max.  $\frac{13}{16}$  in. (2 cm)

VA Ass 3524, VA Ass 3528 (T 162 or 214)

See colorplate 13

The fragments of catalogue number 74a are from a larger painting (fig. 30) that had a rectangular blue field filled with a stylized sacred tree in the form of the palmette.<sup>1</sup> The blue survives only in traces, leaving the white ground exposed. The field was framed with a band formed of alternating squares of red and blue. In the center is a small trunk with a chevron pattern supporting a profusion of palmettes. All of the fields of color are set off by black, and this outlining lends a particular linear quality to the depic-

tion. In some spots it is possible to see overlays of color, suggesting that the wall had once been painted with a different design.

The fragment of catalogue number 74b preserves the corner of a decorative field showing two richly articulated palmettes.<sup>2</sup> The corner is filled with tiny palmettes and circular rosettes, with only traces of the blue of the background. A three-part frame (red-white-red) encloses the field. The frame, the large red palmettes, and the field are doubly outlined in black, the other details singly.

Catalogue number 74c shows a three-part horizontal frame molding stopped at the sides by strong black lines that cross the white background of this painting. The outer part of the molding is made of red and white triangles. The center strip is filled with small rosettes, and here it appears that there is an alternation of at least red and white as well.<sup>3</sup>

R.-B.W.

1. See Andrae 1923, pl. 2, bottom left.

2. Andrae 1923, pl. 3, top right.

3. Andrae 1923, pl. 3, top center.

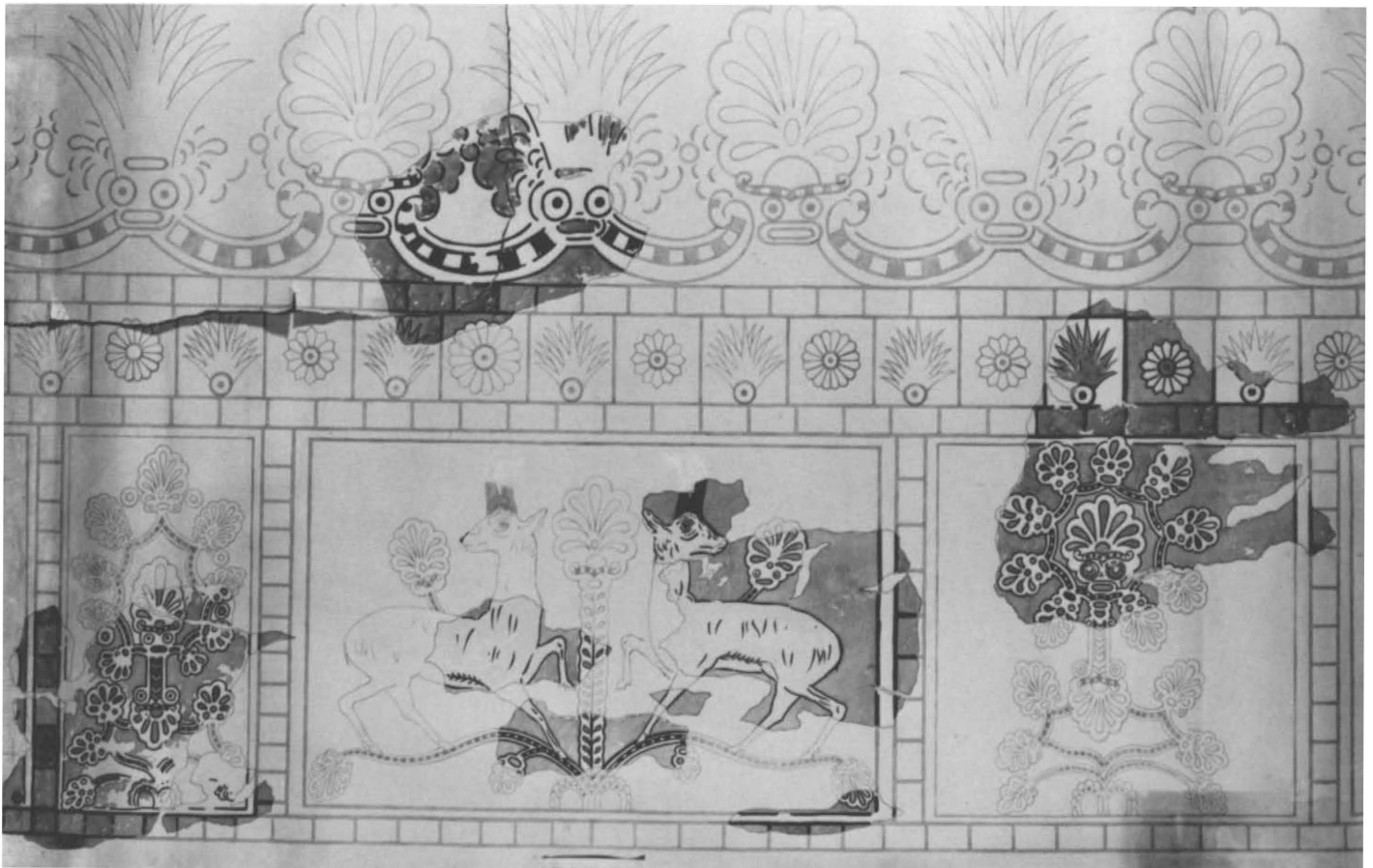


Fig. 30. Walter Andrae's reconstruction drawing of the fragmentary wall paintings from Kar Tukulti-Ninurta, cat. no. 74. Courtesy of the Vorderasiatisches Museum



## Royal Monument

### 75 *Cult pedestal of the god Nusku*

Alabaster

Middle Assyrian period, reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I  
(1243–1207 B.C.)

Found in the Ishtar Temple, in the debris of Room 6

H. 22<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (57.7 cm), W. 22<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (57.7 cm)

VA 8146 (Ass 19869)

See colorplate 14

Three stone socles, each of the same shape, were found in Room 6 of the Ishtar Temple (figs. 2, G; 31), established by inscribed bricks to have been built by the king Tukulti-Ninurta I. One example is decorated with a worship scene;<sup>1</sup> the other two bear no figures and are essentially plain. While the first was recovered resting slightly askew on a low level of debris, the latter two socles were set into the brick pavement (fig. 31). The excavator Walter Andrae argued convincingly that the socles were not recovered in their original position. Their backs were left undecorated, indicating that they were designed to be placed against a wall, which was not their position in Room 6; the decorated socle was manifestly in a secondary position; and, finally, sometime after the deposition of the socles the door of Room 6 was sealed off. Andrae suggested that the three socles were originally placed in the main Cult Room, that at some time they were no longer needed there and subsequently were moved for safe storage. The sealed room was

interpreted as a ritual “burial” needed to enclose and protect the sacred objects. Andrae also assigned another decorated socle (Ass 20069, now in the archaeological museum in Istanbul), which was recovered to the side of the temple’s door, to an original position in the Cult Room.

The present decorated socle is sculpted in one piece in the form of a base consisting of two plinths of different heights, above which is a bordered rectangular area that has a semicircular projection at each upper end; a thirteen-petal rosette fills the corner spaces. Andrae noted that the full height to the top of the swellings is the same as that of the full width measured from both the plinth and the swellings, and thus the socle is essentially a square.

On the plinths is an incomplete cuneiform inscription, which preserves enough to inform us that the socle belongs to Nusku, the deity of light, who intercedes with the higher deities Ashur and Enlil for Tukulti-Ninurta I and who prays for him daily.

The scene represented above is extraordinary and sensitive. Two male figures, one kneeling, the other walking, move from the left toward a socle that is exactly the same in form as the one that bears the scene. Depicted above the relief socle is a rectangular form behind a tapering rod. The human figures make it clear that the socle or what rests on it, or possibly the ensemble, is being worshiped. But it remains unclear just what is depicted on the socle. Interpretations suggest that a door of a temple is represented; or that the rod is the bright rod of Nusku; or that, inasmuch as something about fate is preserved in the inscription, the rod is a stylus, the rectangle a tablet, and thus it is there to record



Fig. 31. Excavation photograph showing three stone cult stands *in situ* in Room 6 of the Ishtar Temple of Tukulti-Ninurta I at Ashur. Courtesy of the Vorderasiatisches Museum



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the king's fate. Whatever is represented, however, it is not a deity itself but rather a symbol.

The two human figures are depicted exactly the same in all details of physiognomy and dress, which consists of an undergarment and covering mantle, the same worn in later centuries by Neo-Assyrian kings. They also both carry a mace, a sign of royal power, in the left hand, and from a clenched fist they extend their right forefinger toward the object of veneration, the typical Assyrian gesture of prayer. All scholars agree that the best interpretation here is that the two figures are Tukulti-Ninurta I represented twice, in a sequential action of approaching and then kneeling before the socle.

The narrative form is an innovation of the Middle Assyrian period, but it is not the only extraordinary feature of the socle. Previously a king in prayer before a deity depicted on a relief or a cylinder seal was shown walking, and this is the first time in such a portrayal that he is represented kneeling. Moreover, representation of the symbol

of a deity, rather than the deity itself, as the object of worship seems to occur first in this period. Supporting this view are two contemporary Assyrian seal impressions from Ashur that depict socles exactly like the present example (see cat. no. 68).<sup>2</sup> Depicted above the socle on one of the seals is a seated dog, the symbol of the goddess Gula, and flanking the other are symbols of Ea. While similarly shaped socles were recovered in Assyria from the ninth century B.C., they were recovered out of original contexts, so we do not know whether at that time they held symbols or deities.

We are fortunate that enough of the inscription survives to establish a date both for the creation of this fine work and for the innovative features that it reveals.

O.W.M.

1. Andrae 1935, 57–76, pls. 12, 30; L. Jakob-Rost, in *Vorderasiatisches Museum* 1992, 160, no. 103.

2. Andrae 1935, 16, figs. 2, 3.

## ASSYRIAN TERRACOTTA FIGURINES

SEVERAL THOUSAND clay figures were found in Ashur, with examples from every area of the city. Many of them came to light in the vicinity of the temples and palaces, but others either lay on the surface or could not be related to a specific site. Because the same is true of numerous excavation sites in the Near East, dating and interpreting such works has always been difficult. In most instances, they have received little attention in published reports of excavations, for they are so numerous, of only modest artistic interest, and often fragmentary. Only in the most recent decades have scholars recognized that terracottas provide rare glimpses into the culture and thinking of the ordinary populace. Much has been written about them, but there are still a number of questions about these works that have not yet been answered.

The question of their dating is the first problem facing anyone studying the terracottas found in Ashur. These small clay figures were produced in quantity over the millennia. Unfortunately, notes and observations regarding their findspots provide few hints about their age, so it is necessary to rely on iconographic and stylistic considerations and comparisons with similar figures from other sites. These have provided a few dates which indicate that terracotta production began with the first flowering of the city around the middle of the third millennium B.C. To judge from the available examples and the research accomplished so far, terracotta production reached a peak toward the end of the third millennium, and then appears to have declined. More ambitious and varied production of terracottas was only resumed in Ashur toward the end of the second millennium and in the first half of the first millennium, with the rise of the Assyrian Empire. A revival of this ancient traditional art occurred toward the end of the first century B.C., at the time the Parthians ruled Assyria.<sup>1</sup>

Originally, and for millennia to follow, terracottas were produced by hand. It is a relatively simple matter to mold the figure of a person or an animal out of this very plastic material. The finds reveal, however, that even at an early date there was a specific group of people engaged in making clay figures, namely the potters whose chief employment was turning out everyday, utilitarian ceramics.<sup>2</sup> In a few cases it was possible to identify the marks of a potter's wheel on certain terracottas. From the end of the third millennium B.C., the majority of terracottas, especially in southern Mesopotamia, were produced with the help of molds, but in Ashur most continued to be made by hand. Even in the last flowering of terracotta manufacture, in the Parthian period, the two techniques were used side by side. There must have been several places in Ashur where the skills and artistic traditions of the craft were preserved over the millennia. It may be that Ashur's importance as a religious center had some connection with this phenomenon, but this is only a hypothesis.

Like all the other ancient Near Eastern arts and crafts, terracottas were produced to conform to special formal and iconographic types. This is abundantly clear from the examples excavated at Ashur. Here, as at nearly all other sites, figures of women make up the vast majority of the terracottas.

The few examples in the present exhibition provide a representative sample. Among the earliest known examples from Ashur is the terracotta of a nude woman (cat. no. 77). It was executed in a very fine clay with a delicate slip, and is remarkable for its extraordinary craftsmanship. Its lavish jewelry, including neck and arm bands and the familiar boat-shaped earrings (see cat. nos. 35, 36) shows that the craftsman who made it was following fixed rules and working from established prototypes. The type of the woman holding her breasts, common through-

out the Near East, was especially popular in Ashur.

Another example of the close connection between pottery and terracotta production was the use of some sort of comb-like tool to apply decoration. Many clay objects, whether actual vessels, so-called incense stands, or the house altars excavated in locations such as the archaic Ishtar Temple (see cat. nos. 10, 11), were ornamented with wavy lines or dash patterns.<sup>3</sup> Similar decorations can be seen on many of the figurines shown here. This may indicate that they were produced in the same workshops. It would appear that this is the case, for on some of the terracotta figures wearing bell-shaped skirts, catalogue number 79 for example, the bottom part was turned on a potter's wheel and then attached to the top part.

In terms of iconography, catalogue numbers 77–81 are closely related. They display the type of ornamentation mentioned above, have similar hairstyles—those of the women adorned with a large “comb”—and similar eyes and noses. The striking degree of variation among them appears to be typical of terracotta production in Ashur and also results from their having been made by hand.

Catalogue number 84, however, a male figure, must have been patterned after a different prototype. It is one of a small group of similar depictions of men remarkable for their delicate form, the shapes of their faces and headdresses, and the positions of their arms. Like the terracottas discussed above, it was produced by hand.

The only example of a figure produced with the help of a mold, a technique widespread in Mesopotamia, is catalogue number 85, a small female figure with a child. With this method it was possible to produce in a short time a nearly unlimited number of identical figures. The few examples from Ashur of figures made in this way could have been imported.

We still do not know how these terracotta figures were used. Some scholars have proposed that they were children's toys, but with few exceptions that hypothesis must be rejected. Although nothing can be deduced from the locations in which they were found, for they have come to light in public buildings, shrines, and private dwellings, they must have had a distinct significance, for people took the trou-

ble to mend them with bitumen if they broke. It has also proved impossible to find an explanation of their purpose in the written documents. One can only assume that the great majority of terracottas were some sort of votive gifts preserved as sacred objects both in temples and in people's homes. Possibly the female figures were thought to have a favorable influence on women's fertility and assure easy childbirth, but this is only speculation. The related question of whether they represent people or gods is also an open one. Scholars today tend to think of them as depictions of people, since they do not have the attributes of gods such as horned crowns or other divine symbols. Given the notions of magic that prevailed in the cultures of the ancient Near East, terracotta figures may have been thought to ward off evil and bring good fortune.

E.K.-B.

1. See Klengel-Brandt 1978.

2. Barrelet 1968, 7ff.

3. Andrae 1922, for example pls. 18–23.

## 76 *Vessel with a representation of a woman*

Baked clay

Early Dynastic period, ca. 2400 B.C.

Found in Level G of the Ishtar Temple

H. 3⅜ in. (7.9 cm), Diam. 2¼ in. (5.7 cm)

VA Ass 2253

This vessel is a good example of a practice that was widespread in the ancient Near East of shaping clay into human and animal forms, or of suggesting these forms with simple, applied features.<sup>1</sup> Just below the projecting rim of this small conical, three-footed flask, a face is suggested by a triangular piece of clay meant to be a nose and by eyes that were also separately applied. Two elongated strips of clay hanging down on either side of the face represent hair. The impression of a female figure is achieved by the presence of applied breasts. Bent strips of clay serve as arms.<sup>2</sup>

The piece was discovered in front of the door of the Cult Room in the archaic Ishtar Temple and probably originally belonged to the temple inventory.

E.K.-B.

1. For a review of this type of figurine, see Barrelet 1968, 64ff.

2. See Andrae 1922, 52, fig. 32; Klengel-Brandt 1978, no. 745, pl. 23.

### 77 *Fragmentary figure of a nude woman clutching her breasts*

Baked clay

Last quarter of the 3rd millennium B.C.

Found in the rubble in the gravel filling in map square iE 4V

H. 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (6.9 cm), W. max. 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (6 cm)

VA 4960 (Ass 18427)

This figure of a woman, of which only the head and upper body survive, is highly sculptural. The woman has a hand placed on each of her full breasts. Her face has been reduced to the essentials. Double disks on either side of her prominent nose stand for her eyes. Her mouth was also attached separately. Her hair appears to be covered with a scarf. To judge from parallel examples, one should imagine that a broad comb once stood out at the back of her head. She is adorned with double armbands, a necklace decorated with parallel notching that hangs down onto her back in two incised ends, and three-part, boat-shaped earrings (see cat. nos. 35, 36). The woman wears no clothes and surely her pubic triangle would have been clearly marked.<sup>1</sup>

E.K.-B.

1. Klengel-Brandt 1978, no. 2.

### 78 *Figure of a nude woman*

Baked clay

End of the 3rd millennium B.C.

Found ca. 3.5 m below the surface of the hill in map square gD 8I

H. 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (12.2 cm), W. 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (5.3 cm)

VA 4949 (Ass 14491)

The upper body of this complete female figure is plank shaped, but the lower body is well developed on the back side. The legs are pressed closely together, separated only by a deep groove on the back, and at the bottom the clay is bent slightly forward to suggest feet. The crudely stylized hands are placed on the body below the breasts, which were added on separately. Her pubic triangle is indicated by simple incision.

The woman's face has been reduced to a large, projecting nose and disks set on for eyes. She wears a decorated headband, a broad comb sticking out from her head, and a three-strand necklace. Each of her large ears is perforated twice, possibly so that metal earrings could be attached. The shoulder area and the lower part of the front of the body are decorated with groups of dashes made with a comb or similar instrument.<sup>1</sup> We do not know whether these patterns represent designs on her garment or tattoos.

E.K.-B.

1. Van Buren 1930, no. 39; Klengel-Brandt 1978, no. 27.



Left to right: 81, 76, 82, 79, 80, 78, 84, 77, 83, 85

**79 *Standing woman in a bell-shaped skirt***

Baked clay

End of the 3rd millennium B.C.

Location of find not indicated

H.  $5\frac{1}{16}$  in. (12.9 cm), W. max.  $2\frac{3}{16}$  in. (5.5 cm)

VA 7924 (Ass 21207)

This woman's flat upper body passes into a rounded lower section that is slightly concave. Like the other female figures, her hair is dressed with a prominent, projecting comb and a headband. She holds her hands on her body below her breasts, which were separately modeled and attached. Dash patterns made with a comb suggest the headband and a necklace. Parallel incised lines on the lower part of the bell-shaped skirt suggest the folds of the drapery.<sup>1</sup>



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E.K.-B.

1. Van Buren 1930, no. 135; Klengel-Brandt 1978, no. 89.

**80 *Standing man with a curved stick***

Baked clay

End of the 3rd millennium B.C.

Found roughly 3 m below the surface of the hill in map square eD 6IV

H.  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in. (8.9 cm), W.  $1\frac{1}{8}$  in. (4.1 cm)

VA 8058 (Ass 13076a)

This man represents the same type as catalogue number 79, the female figure with a bell-shaped skirt. His simplified face is dominated by a large nose and the attached eye disks. He wears a simple round cap covered with a dash pattern like that on his beard. In his left hand he holds a curved stick<sup>1</sup> generally considered to be a piece of wood and thought to be symbolic. The shoulders have also been decorated with dash patterns.<sup>2</sup>



E.K.-B.

1. Magen 1986, 71, no. 10.

2. Klengel-Brandt 1978, no. 135.

**81 *Seated female figure***

Baked clay

End of the 3rd millennium B.C.

Found in map square eD 6I, northeast

H.  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in. (8.3 cm), W.  $2\frac{3}{8}$  in. (6 cm)

VA 4936 (Ass 6600a)

One must imagine that the now-missing head of this female figure looked much like that of the standing figure in catalogue number 79. Her lower body becomes one with the piece of furniture on which she sits, her legs serving as

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the front legs of the stool. Her hands are placed against her body, well below the crudely applied breasts. Large areas of her upper and lower body are decorated with closely placed dashes made with a comb.<sup>1</sup>

E.K.-B.

1. Dales 1960; Klengel-Brandt 1978, no. 173.

**82 Bird**

Baked clay

Second half of the 3rd millennium B.C.

Found on top of clay brick masonry in map square eB 6V

H. 2<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (7.4 cm), W. 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (3.5 cm)

VA 7159 (Ass 13749)

This figure of a bird has a small head, a short neck, a big body, and a foot that is treated like the base of a vessel. The type of bird is hard to determine. The figure was hollow with something inside, suggesting that it was a rattle, used to make noise, perhaps during festivals.<sup>1</sup>

E.K.-B.

1. Klengel-Brandt 1978, no. 722.

**83 Vessel with bear's head**

Baked clay

Second half of the 3rd millennium B.C.

Found in map square hA 4I

H. 2<sup>2</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (6.5 cm), Diam. max. 1 in. (2.5 cm)

VA 5503 (Ass 3381)

A bear's head in the form of a mask has been affixed to this slender, nozzle-like utensil below the opening. The form and purpose of the whole object are not possible to reconstruct.<sup>1</sup>

E.K.-B.

1. Klengel-Brandt 1978, no. 748.

**84 Standing man with pointed cap**

Baked clay

End of the 3rd–beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.

Found in the tunnel in map square fD 4III

H. 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (8.5 cm), W. max. 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (4 cm)

VA 5499 (Ass 4660)

This male figure has a slender, column-shaped body that widens only slightly, presumably so that it could stand. His small head, with prominent nose and double-disk eyes added separately, is crowned by a pointed cap ringed with grooves. Originally the ears stood out as semicircles and were perforated so that jewelry could be hung from them. The man has one hand placed on his chest and the other arm raised. He may originally have held something, but this is not certain.<sup>1</sup>

E.K.-B.

1. Klengel-Brandt 1978, no. 163.

83

**85 Seated woman with child**

Baked clay

Probably 2nd half of the 2nd millennium B.C.

Found in the second trial trench level in map square iD 8I

H. 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (7 cm), W. ca. 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (ca. 4 cm)

VA 4985 (Ass 14431)

This headless female figure sits on a tall stool with semicircular sides. She holds one hand to her breast, and with the other she supports the head of the child seated on her lap. She is dressed in a long garment with ornamental borders at the sleeves and the hem. The figurine was produced from a mold and then worked by hand.<sup>1</sup>

E.K.-B.

1. Van Buren 1930, no. 249, fig. 62; Klengel-Brandt 1978, no. 261.



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# WRITTEN SOURCES

## 86 *Foundation document of Adad-nirari I* (1305–1274 B.C.)

Alabaster

Middle Assyrian period, eponymy of Ashur-dammeq

Found in the back wall of the cella of the Ishtar-Ashuritu Temple

H. 14<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (38 cm), W. 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in. (26.7 cm), Th. 1<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (3.3 cm)

VA 8252 (Ass 22057)

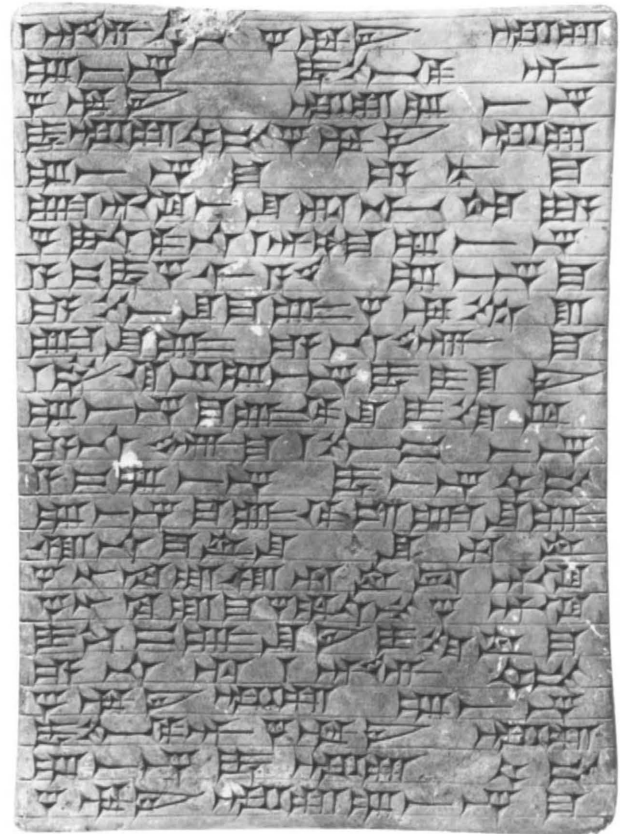
This stone tablet is just one example of the magnificent inscriptions Adad-nirari I commissioned for his building projects.<sup>1</sup> To judge from his documents, he was one of the most tireless builders in Assyrian history. Among his major undertakings, almost exclusively confined to the capital city of Ashur, were the restoration of the Ishtar Temple, the rebuilding of the Ashur Temple, and reconstruction of his palace, the city and quay walls, the city gates, and the great ziggurat (fig. 2).

Because of the countless foundation documents he commissioned, evidenced by the large number that survive, this ruler has a unique place in literary history. His building and restoration efforts are documented on 58 stone slabs, 12 clay tablets, and no fewer than 170 bricks—to name only the most common types of inscriptions of this kind. There are also clay cones, cylinders, cornerstones; alabaster vessels and other objects in stone; and an axe and a bronze sword that is now in the Metropolitan Museum.

The king's favorite project was the temple of the goddess Ishtar Ashuritu (fig. 2), the Assyrian Ishtar, worshiped at Ashur since Early Dynastic times. Built of sun-dried bricks, such structures deteriorated rapidly and required constant upkeep. Accordingly, one of a ruler's most noble tasks was to provide for the preservation of important shrines. In so doing he brought honor to himself as well as to the god in question. In royal epithets the term "restorer" became a literary topos.

In the course of such undertakings, kings paid particular attention to the similar efforts of their predecessors. By the time of Adad-nirari I, the tradition of giving public structures appropriate foundation documents was already thousands of years old. Royal workmen carefully searched for documents from the past and treated the ones they found according to the admonitions included in the texts. Among the reasons for this was their fear of the curses contained in the texts, which called for the direst punishments of those who mistreated such documents.

Accordingly, after listing his titles and epithets on the present tablet, Adad-nirari I recounted the structure's long history: "At that time the temple of the Assyrian Ishtar, my mistress, which Ilu-shumma, vice-regent of Ashur, my



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forefather, son of Shalim-ahum [who was] also vice-regent of Ashur, had previously built and completed—that temple became dilapidated and Sargon [I], vice-regent of Ashur, son of Ikunum [who was] also vice-regent of Ashur, restored it; again it became dilapidated and Puzur-Ashur [III], vice-regent of Ashur, my forefather, son of Ashur-nirari [I, who was] also vice-regent of Ashur, restored it—that temple, its towers, the room of the *shuhuru* of the courtyard, the storeroom of the goddess Ishtar of the courtyard which is called the 'Inn of the Goddess Ishtar,' and the room of the goddess Ishara of the courtyard had again become dilapidated. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

He then detailed his own restoration, expressly noting his strengthening of the foundations, his replacement of ceiling coffers and roof beams, and other more general rebuilding work. The text concludes with the traditional blessing and cursing formulas: "In the future may a later prince, when that temple becomes dilapidated and he restores [it], restore my monumental inscriptions and



inscribed name to their places. [Then] Ashur will listen to his prayers. As for the one who removes my inscriptions and my name, may Ashur, my lord, overthrow his sovereignty; may he destroy his name [and] his seed from the land. May the goddess Ishtar, my mistress, bring about the defeat of his land. May he not stand firm before his enemy. May the god Adad strike his land with terrible lightning [and] afflict his land with want."<sup>3</sup> The date is the tenth day of the month of the goddess Belat-ekallim, in the eponymy of Ashur-dammeq.

It was clear from the location in which the slab was found that these admonitions had been respected. During later restoration of the structure under Shalmaneser I (1273–1244 B.C.) and especially Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243–1207 B.C.), the older stone tablets were carefully preserved and on completion of the projects were set back in place along with the documents commissioned by these later rulers. The excavators discovered no fewer than five tablets of Adad-nirari I in the back wall of the cella of the temple, behind the great inscribed block of Tukulti-Ninurta I.<sup>4</sup> Historians were delighted to be able to add the information the tablets contained to the history of the Ishtar-Ashuritu Temple that they had thus far pieced together from later inscriptions. The tablets also increased the excavators' incentive to uncover the very oldest levels of the temple.

The content and style of the inscription on the present stone slab are far less imposing than those other works by Adad-nirari I. It lacks features that came to characterize later historical writing of the sort in Assyria, as for example the prism of Tiglath-pileser I (cat. no. 88). There is no mention, for example, of Adad-nirari's campaigns against Hanigalbat or Babylonia, not even in the listing of his titles. It would appear that he was concerned solely with continuing the long tradition of documenting the history of the building itself.

Accordingly, the slab is not among the most important documents from the king's reign, but one would never suspect this from the care with which it was executed. On the contrary, the choice of material, the treatment of its surface, and especially the way the scribe managed to fit the text precisely into the space provided suggest a mastery in the production of such documents based on long experience. The carver deliberately imitated the wedge-shaped forms of inscriptions on clay tablets, creating shapes that are not normally found in stone carving. He reproduced the precise depths that the impressions of a reed stylus on clay would have created and took pains to let the corners of the wedges overlap the guidelines as they often do on clay tablets. Also, the fact that one has to turn the slab over endways to read the continuation of the text on the back is a sign that the carver was following the tradition of the clay

tablet rather than the normal practice with inscriptions on stone, which were turned over right to left like a modern book page. Moreover, the stone imitates the pillow shape of clay tablets with their slightly drawn-out corners.

It would seem that such conscious respect for cultural tradition was somehow meant to reflect the actual purpose of the document, namely the glorification of the building patron, the king, and his devotion to the goddess Ishtar.

J.M.

1. For information on the foundation document of Adad-nirari I, see Andrae 1935, 37–51; Andrae 1922; Grayson 1987, 76.15.5; Freydank 1991; Ellis 1968; Schroeder 1922, 34.

2. The translation of this part of the king's inscription is based on Grayson 1987, with amendments by Marzahn.

3. See note 2.

4. VA Ass 2296. See Grayson 1987.

### 87 *Tablet of Middle Assyrian laws*

Baked clay

Middle Assyrian period, reign of Ninurta-apil-Ekur (1191–1179 B.C.)

Found in map square eE 5IV

H. 12% in. (32 cm), W. 8% in. (20.5 cm), Th. 1% in. (2.8 cm)

VAT 10,000 (Ass 5987)

The best-preserved tablet of Middle Assyrian laws, which is entirely made up of laws pertaining to women,<sup>1</sup> can now be dated to the reign of Ninurta-apil-Ekur in the twelfth century B.C.<sup>2</sup> However the comment by Walter Andrae, the excavator of Ashur, that "the large law tablet . . . found in the 'Justice Gate' between the Old Palace and the Anu-Adad Temple" (fig. 2) was "the most important document of the eleventh century" applies equally well to the previous century. He went on to say: "The quarreling parties gathered in front of the gate in view of the ruler, who sat in judgment at the gate and therefore required lists of the laws."<sup>3</sup>

To judge from several small fragments of law tablets found near the Gate of Shamash and in the temple district of Ashur, there were originally over a dozen tablets with such lists of legal decisions. Two fragments probably came from the archives of the Ashur Temple.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the present large tablet of laws about women, there are fragments of tablets. Some of them are so small that it is impossible to determine the legal substance of the texts from the few surviving words or passages.<sup>5</sup>

The tablets are most likely based on works from various traditions, for no Middle Assyrian king claims the act of lawgiving for himself as did Hammurabi (1792–1750 B.C.)



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of Babylon. Instead it seems that the compilation of legal decisions was continued under various rulers and that the decisions refer to legal precedent and its codification dating back several centuries.<sup>6</sup> Middle Assyrian laws were fully consistent with the form established for codes that evolved from compilations of specific legal judgments and other laws in the ancient Near East. If a given situation had occurred at least once and had been recorded, it served as an admonition for the future.<sup>7</sup>

The present tablet containing laws about women is the only one yet discovered to reveal a thematic unity.<sup>8</sup> In its fifty-nine "paragraphs," it presents a multifaceted picture of the legal position of women. It includes offenses committed both by women and against them. Various sexual offenses are treated at length with the threat of punishment. The marriage provisions cover the forms of the marriage contract as well as estate issues of the married couple. Rules governing the appearance of women in public are also included. Prostitutes and slaves, for example, were prohibited from wearing veils.<sup>9</sup>

All of these laws reveal that women had relatively few rights within the patriarchal and strictly sheltered family.

In countless legal situations the head of the family was left to decide over the life and death of its members. The judgments in this tablet provide for various physical punishments, including beating with a rod and amputations. Ordeals by water were frequently employed as an allegedly reliable means of determining the truth. A person who did not drown during this procedure was believed innocent.

A comparatively large fragment<sup>10</sup> is part of another tablet of laws that originally had approximately the same dimensions as catalogue number 87. Both are roughly contemporary. Preserved on it are some twenty decisions having to do with real property and its protection. Among other things, they deal with inheritance issues, particularly with respect to water rights, and several cases relate to the irrigation of fields.<sup>11</sup> Laws that can be made out on other fragments relate to the rights of slaves, to arrests, theft, embezzlement, and blasphemy, although it is often impossible to determine the particulars of the cases owing to the fragmentary state of the individual paragraphs.<sup>12</sup>

The great diversity of subjects suggests that the corpus of Middle Assyrian laws was amazingly comprehensive and that only a small portion of it is so far known to us. Although fragmentary, what does survive is nevertheless an invaluable monument for legal and cultural historians, one that illuminates important aspects of daily life.

H.F.

1. Published in facsimile in Schroeder 1920, no. 1. The first translation was Ehelolf and Koschaker 1922; the first commentary, Koschaker 1921 (MVAeG 26/3).

Driver and Miles (1935) present a comprehensive philological and historical analysis of the Middle Assyrian law tablets, one that has served as the basis for all subsequent editions and supplementary investigations. Schroeder (1920) published the tablet fragments as nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 143, 193 (?). Weidner (1937–39, 46–54, pls. III–VI) published five additional fragments.

For more recent studies of the Middle Assyrian laws, see Cardascia 1969 and Saporetti 1979b. A small fragment found in Nineveh that duplicates the beginning of the present tablet was published in Postgate 1973, 19–21.

2. Saporetti 1979a, 157; Freydank 1991, 68.

3. Andrae 1977, 192.

4. G. Cardascia, "Gesetze: B. Assyrien, 2. Lois Mésopotamiques," *RLA*, vol. 3, 280a–287b, esp. 280a.

5. Cardascia, in *RLA*, vol. 3, 280b.

6. Cardascia, in *RLA*, vol. 3, 280a.

7. Cardascia, in *RLA*, vol. 3, 281a.

8. Cardascia, in *RLA*, vol. 3, 281a–285a. This uniformity appears to be breached in a number of spots, however. The arrangement was seemingly based on the appearance in these laws of the key word "woman," and the compilers often proceeded by way of association, permitting themselves to be guided more by outward form than by content.

9. Cardascia, in *RLA*, vol. 3, 284b.

10. Schroeder 1920, no. 2.  
 11. Cardascia, in *RLA*, vol. 3, 285b–286a.  
 12. Cardascia, in *RLA*, vol. 3, 280b.

**88 Eight-sided prism with foundation inscription of Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076 B.C.)**

Baked clay

Middle Assyrian period, eponymy of Ina-iliya-allak, 1109 B.C.

Foundations of Anu-Adad Temple, south of the west ziggurat

H. 22 $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (56 cm), W. 6 $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (17.5 cm)

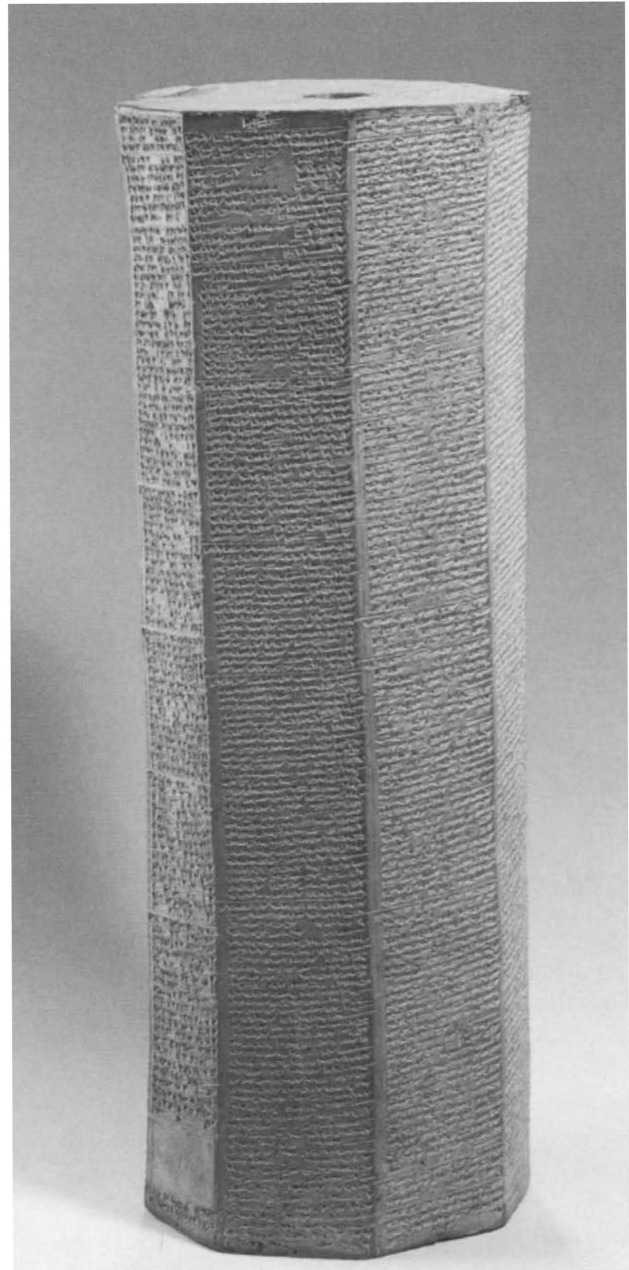
VA 8255 (Ass 22980)

See colorplate 15

This eight-sided prism was uncovered in the foundation levels of the famous temple to the gods Anu and Adad in Ashur (fig. 2, A). It contains a report by the king Tiglath-pileser I regarding his restoration work on the structure.<sup>1</sup> When excavators discovered the prism, on December 15, 1913, they had reason to rejoice. It was remarkable to make a find that was so major, both as a written document and as a crafted object, shortly before work at Ashur was to shut down. When the objects were divided between the German excavators and the Ottoman authorities, Berlin acquired in this piece an example of a document that had already played a major role in early Assyriological studies. A duplicate of this foundation text, also from Ashur and now in the British Museum, had served as a test case to determine how trustworthy the decipherment of cuneiform writing, still quite new, had become.

In 1857, the Royal Asiatic Society placed the example owned by the British Museum before the scholars H. C. Rawlinson, E. Hincks, J. Oppert, and Fox Talbot, all of whom were then in London, to see whether they would independently come up with the same reading of the script. The experiment was a brilliant success. The validity of cuneiform studies was established, and the discipline has since spawned various scholarly specialties.

The episode just recounted also demonstrates that as a rule one can expect to find multiple versions of the foundation inscriptions of ancient Near Eastern rulers. The London and Berlin examples of this prism are not the only testimonials to the intensive building activity of Tiglath-pileser I on the Anu-Adad Temple in Ashur. No fewer than forty-two different prisms containing the same text are known. Of these, six are preserved virtually complete. The rest are either single fragments or fragments pieced together from numerous smaller pieces. Most of the finds came from the area of the Anu-Adad Temple, but fragments were also turned up in private houses and next to the forecourt of the Ashur Temple. It is even reported that a



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fragment was discovered in Nineveh. The majority of the examples of this foundation text are now preserved in Istanbul, while Berlin, London, and Baghdad each have a few.

Of the roughly thirty types of surviving inscriptions that can be attributed with certainty to Tiglath-pileser I, represented—as is usual with foundation inscriptions—mainly by clay tablets, stone slabs, and especially stamped brick inscriptions, more than half come from Ashur. This is an indication of how attentive the ruler was to the adornment and preservation of his capital. Of these, inscriptions on prisms are special. Prisms are known, along with clay

cones and cylinders, as early as the third millennium B.C., but this shape had not always served for royal inscriptions. In Sumer, prisms were traditionally used for literary and lexicographic texts. Royal inscriptions only began to be preserved in this form in the Old Babylonian–Old Assyrian period. The first shape to appear (in the reign of Shamshi-Adad I [1815–1782 B.C.], for example) was the four-sided variant, already with a longitudinal cavity. This form was supplanted by polygonal prisms, which had a greater number of writing surfaces and could therefore accommodate longer texts. Prisms with six or eight sides became the accepted form for royal inscriptions in Middle Assyrian times. They were in fact so popular that in this period and later times it is not uncommon to find this shape imitated in stone. Even the longitudinal cavity that was part of the technique of producing such prisms in clay was duplicated in stone. However, it was in the reign of Tiglath-pileser I that the virtually perfect octagonal prism made its first appearance. Earlier examples providing direct typological precedents of this prism form are as yet unknown.

The perfection of this prism is immediately evident. It required a very high level of craftsmanship to organize the text in a way that would fill the available surface in well-balanced proportions. A real masterpiece was achieved, as this example demonstrates, when the scribe arranged the text so that most of the lines ended with verb forms which, in Assyrian syntax, usually fall at the end of sentences. In this respect duplicate texts are much less well designed and more irregular.

The scribe's careful planning is also evident in other details. The beginning of the text, which probably would not be immediately obvious to a contemporary reader, is properly stressed. The logogram *SAG*, or "head," indicating "the beginning" and clearly written in a larger size, is separated from the rest of the text by a line. Of course, the concept of reading a document hidden in the foundations may seem odd to a modern observer, but the document was surely meant to be read by the gods and by later rulers who might restore the building.

This heading is followed by the first fourteen lines which, as was customary, contain a dedication naming the deities important to the patron: Ashur, the god of the state and the city; Enlil, lord of the old pantheon; Sin, the moon god; Shamash, the sun god and supreme judge; Adad, the storm god; Ninurta, the warlike vegetation god; and the goddess Ishtar, who adorns battles. These first few lines were deliberately begun at the left edge of the column. In the whole of the text that follows, only the first line of a section is given this treatment for emphasis.

Each of the individual sections of the text is set off by a horizontal line and by a brief introduction repeating the

king's name with his titles and epithets. These are clearly recognizable as shorter lines. Gaps formed by the accumulation of short words in the lines of uniform length for grammatical and syntactical reasons have been bridged by lengthening the horizontal wedge elements of the signs. Gaps occur nonetheless, and these have been "filled" with small depressions made with the end of the stylus handle. Unusually elongated forms of given signs are the result, although these are familiar enough from clay tablets, where similar practices were followed. Empty space was avoided as much as possible. The columns are bordered by vertical lines at left and right and another line quite close to the edge of the side separates it from adjacent sides. The importance of aesthetic considerations in such a document is also evident in the shapes of the signs themselves, which approach the elegant flow of later, Neo-Assyrian texts. The result is a written document of extraordinary quality, one executed with an eye toward touches of beauty in both the writing and proportions that were seldom accorded to the cuneiform script.

The text of the prism is important in various respects. Although the prism was commissioned for the building or restoration of the Anu-Adad Temple, the descriptions of military events, which comprise most of the content, advance the art of historical and geographical reporting considerably. Modern scholars study the prism text not so much for what they can learn about Tiglath-pileser's building program as for what its reports of his military campaigns reveal about events in the first five years of his reign. Also, this is the first time that such reports appear as individual episodes arranged in chronological order. The text can therefore be considered a direct precursor of later annals, and in terms of literary history it marks a turning point in the development of such narrative inscriptions in the ancient Near East.

The successive military operations are described in a vivid, realistic style as events having great military and imperial importance: "In the year of my accession: 20,000 people from the land of Mushkaja, who for fifty years had held the lands of Alzu and Purulumzu—which pay tribute and tithes to the god Ashur, my lord—and whom no king has ever been able to subdue in battle, came down confident in their strength and occupied the land Katmuhi. With the help of the god Ashur, my lord, I led my chariots and my ready troops [and], not waiting for my rear guard, crossed the rough terrain of the mountain Kashijari. I fought against their 20,000 armed soldiers and their five kings in the land of Katmuhi. I defeated them. Like a storm demon I heaped up the bodies of their warriors on the battlefield and let their blood flow into the hollows and low places of the mountains. I cut off their heads and placed them around their cities like sheaves. I took their booty, their properties and possessions without number. I sub-

jected the remaining 6,000 of their troops, those who had fled before my weapons and treated them as people of my country" (column I, 61–86).<sup>2</sup>

Historians tend to describe Assyrian military commanders as especially cruel, but a close reading of these reports reveals that this was not always the case. Assyrian warfare was not always simply a matter of slaughter, arson, and torture. A commander's behavior clearly depended on Assyria's interests in a given situation, and these could vary. Thus, even though there is no question that warfare was far from humane, there is frequent mention of incorporating enemy survivors into the native populace. We read of the mere imposition of tributes and levies, of the conclusion of contracts making vassals of the defeated enemy, and of the taking of hostages. There is also the express mention of forbearance and sympathy in the case of the capture of the "kings" of the lands of Nairi (later Urartu): "I brought Seni, the king of the land of Daienu, who was not a subject of the god Ashur, my lord, in bonds and chains to my city of Ashur. I had compassion for him and permitted him to leave my city of Ashur alive, charging him to proclaim the glory of the great gods. Thus I became lord of all of the broad lands of Nairi. Verily, I subjected all of their kings" (column IV, 92–101).<sup>3</sup>

The reports tell of military feats that no Assyrian king had accomplished heretofore. Tiglath-pileser led campaigns deep into Anatolia and Armenia, and he frequently called upon his engineers to build bridges or create smooth roads through impassable terrain for his battle chariot units, his most decisive weapon. Where this was impossible, he had his chariots carried. He crossed rivers on rafts made with animal bladders, and he traversed great distances in quick marches. He frequently ventured over a thousand kilometers to bring back booty, captives, and supplies to Assyria, to expand his borders, to secure vassal states, or simply to procure exotic plants that he wished to introduce into his country. "All in all . . . [I conquered] forty-two lands and their rulers, from the other side of the lower Zab in remote

mountain regions to the other side of the Euphrates, people of Hatti, and the upper sea in the west [i.e., the Mediterranean], between the year of my accession and the fifth year of my reign" (column VI, 13ff.).

The text preceding the account of the reconstruction of the dilapidated Anu-Adad Temple also gives a detailed description of a hunt, telling of the killing and capture of wild bulls, bull elephants, and hundreds of lions, and explains how the king built up herds of numerous wild animals and improved agriculture by introducing the plow throughout his realm. The actual building report begins by referring to the history of the structure, tracing it back to Shamshi-Adad I (1815–1782 B.C.), and to the fact that one of Tiglath-pileser's predecessors, Ninurta-apil-Ekur, had started to rebuild the temple some sixty years previously but had failed to complete the project. There follows a description of Tiglath-pileser's restoration, including the addition of the unusual double ziggurats. There is no mention of the earlier building activity of his father, Ashur-resha-ishi I (1132–1115 B.C.), although that is known to us from brick inscriptions. The text concludes, as was the custom, with Tiglath-pileser's blessings on those who might emulate his endeavors in future and with frightful curses for those tempted to make light of his accomplishments.

The text is dated on the twenty-eighth day of the month Kuzallu, in the eponymy of Ina-iliya-allak, the chief cupbearer, or the year 1109 B.C. Another copy is dated only one day earlier, suggesting that the king's scribes were capable of producing such a work in a single day—another indication of their extraordinary achievement.

J.M.

1. For further reading, see Andrae 1909, 32–38; Andrae 1935, 39f., figs. 12, 13; Ellis 1968; Heinrich 1982, 237ff., figs. 324, 327; Freydank 1991; Grayson 1991, A O.87.1.1.

2. The translation of this part of the text is based on Grayson 1991, with amendments by Marzahn.

3. Translation based on Grayson 1991, with amendments by Marzahn.

## TRANSITION TO THE FIRST MILLENNIUM B.C.

ASSYRIA EMERGES into recorded history in the twentieth century B.C. at a time when the state had become a redistribution center for tin and had subsequently established markets in Anatolia. For two centuries the state prospered, as may readily be judged from the contents of thousands of texts preserved, and under Shamshi-Adad I (1815–1782 B.C.), a major geographical expansion of the state ensued. Soon after the latter king's reign, however, Assyria was conquered, first by Hammurabi of Babylon (ca. 1759 B.C.), then a half-century later by the Mitanni, in both cases suffering vassalage. Perhaps as a result of this condition, and perhaps also to some extent as a result of poor preservation of archaeological material into modern times, very little art and architecture survives from these centuries.

By the mid-fourteenth century B.C. Assyria regained its independence, and several centuries of

alternating imperial expansion and retraction began. Archaeology has revealed a one-century-long period of building activity and artistic creation that commenced by the end of the fourteenth century. Manifested by the preservation of palaces (or textual references to them), wall painting, exquisitely carved cylinder seals, and other minor arts, the Middle Assyrian period is justly recognized for its aesthetic sensitivity. One of the most powerful and best-known kings from this period is Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243–1207 B.C.), who conquered Babylon (ca. 1235 B.C.). He built temples and a palace in Ashur, and also a new city, Kar Tukulti-Ninurta, just two miles to the northeast (see cat. no. 74). One of the best-known works of art from this period is the stone socle of the king depicted worshipping (cat. no. 75).

In the years between about 1200 and 1180 B.C. terminal destructions are attested archaeologically

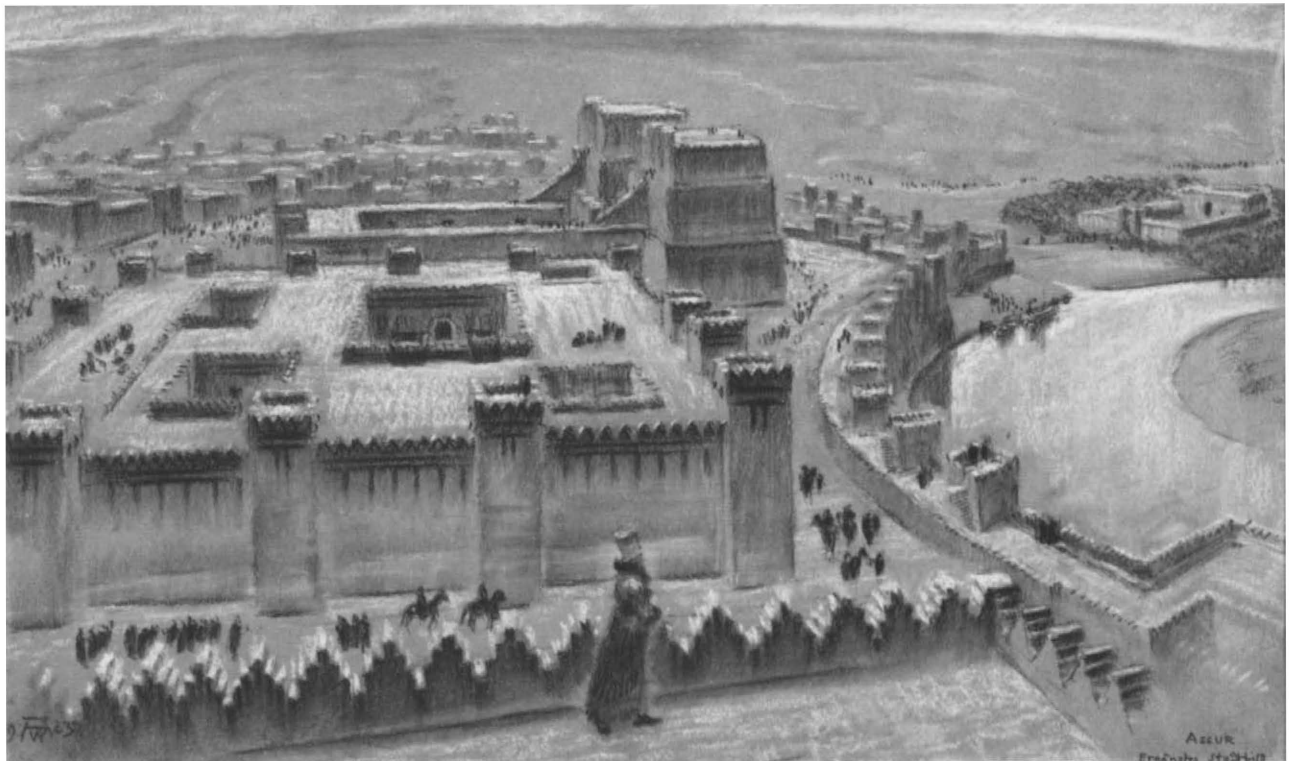


Fig. 32. Walter Andrae, *Ashur: A View of the Festival House. A Reconstruction*, 1923. Charcoal on paper, H. 10 in. (30 cm). Collection of Ernst Andrae

and textually in the Aegean world, in western, central, and southern Anatolia, in north Syria, and in the Levant. As a result powerful states and their cultures, Mycenaean, Hittite, Ugaritic, and so forth, ceased to exist. These destructions were surely caused by invaders of different origins, but the historical background and social conditions for the massive hostile movements are still not fully understood. In many destroyed sites resettlement, often by new cultures, did not occur for one or more centuries. These movements and concomitant catastrophes and the ensuing political collapse and social disruption did not occur so far east as Assyria and Babylonia. But it is fascinating and worth keeping in mind that at precisely this time, within years after the death of Tukulti-Ninurta I, the pattern in Assyria outlined above of political and social decline following prosperity recurs. While not suffering the termination experienced by many polities to the west, because the state and society continued to function, a general weakening of political and social structures is manifest for almost three hundred years.

Tukulti-Ninurta was assassinated, apparently by a son, and the succeeding kings were occupied with consolidating their now unstable internal positions, even fighting a civil war. They fought again with Babylonia as well as with enemies to the north and west, and also in the south against an Elamite attack (ca. 1160 B.C.), that in fact terminated the Kassite Dynasty in Babylonia. Toward the end of the century appear the first of ongoing records of hostile and destructive nomad Aramaean incursions, which developed into serious, long-lasting problems for both Assyria and Babylonia.

A markedly reduced number of texts per reign have been recovered from the period after Tukulti-Ninurta's death (although new finds do occur). Except for the reign of Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076 B.C.)—see catalogue number 88—this paucity of textual material continues into the ninth century B.C. These texts together with extant king lists nonetheless document a continuous succession of political authority across the centuries. Perhaps associated with the scarcity of texts in some eco-

nomic or political manner is the fact that only a handful of works of art and architecture from the time after Tukulti-Ninurta's reign is preserved, a scarcity that also continues down to the beginning of the ninth century B.C. The same diminution of data occurs also to the south in Babylonia, beginning there in the first half of the twelfth century, but more obvious in the eleventh and tenth and continuing into the eighth century B.C. Thus, even though the political dynasties continue to function in both geographical areas, there is a form of dark age from a modern perspective, although as noted, by no means so dark as farther west.

The causes of the social and historical decline in written and material records during these centuries is continuously investigated by scholars. It has been posited that the problem, or part of it, may actually be the result of the luck of modern archaeological recovery, or perhaps of ancient destructions of the material. At the same time some historians have noted that even among the few texts preserved there seems to be a relatively large number of references to famine, crop failures, and nomadic incursions (sometimes all mentioned together), in both Assyrian and Babylonian records beginning in the late twelfth century and continuing into the eleventh (where there is a grim reference to famine leading to cannibalism)<sup>1</sup> and the tenth centuries B.C. Furthermore, paleoclimatologists suggest that during these very centuries there was a long-term climatic change, a warming period, producing a decline in rainfall and in the availability of water in Mesopotamia and farther west.<sup>2</sup>

Some archaeologists and scientists see the coinciding of the two sets of evidence as significant, that the climatic data explain the famines and the cause of the incursions of belligerent nomads, who were seeking water and food. Although some criticism concerning the interpretation of the scientific data has arisen, and all scholars agree that more scientific research is needed, the textual information on its own terms does suggest drastic, long-range social and agricultural, indeed, climatic, problems in the area, problems that may have played a major role in preventing the adequate maintenance of local economic and political power. Worthy of consideration

in this context is that at the time the Assyrians regained political power and wealth, manifested by major building activity and an explosion of artistic activity, beginning in the ninth century B.C., the texts cease to mention famine and incursions. And indeed, climatologists claim that a cooling and rainy period commenced about 900 B.C. lasting for the rest of the millennium.<sup>3</sup>

This is as far as one can go with the evidence; more excavation and climate research may support, modify, or eliminate some of the tentative conclusions noted. What remains certain, however, is that

Assyria between 1200 and 900 B.C. was, except for one or two outstanding reigns, not a major political and cultural force in the ancient Near East. It was only after 900 B.C., in the Neo-Assyrian Empire, that Ashur regained importance as a center of cultic and dynastic tradition.

O.W.M.

1. Neumann and Parpola 1987, 171-77, 178-80.

2. Neumann and Parpola 1987, 163-70; B. Weiss 1982, 174, 182-85, 194-97.

3. Neumann and Parpola 1987, 162, 175-77, 181-82.



# CONCORDANCE

## Vorderasiatisches Museum Inventory Numbers and Catalogue Numbers

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VA Ass 4319	40	VAT 9009	66		
VA Ass 4636	7	VAT 9316	65		

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## Abbreviations

- AASOR Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research. New Haven.
- AfO *Archiv für Orientforschung*
- AnatStud *Anatolian Studies*
- AOAT Alter Orient und Altes Testament: Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments. Neukirchen-Vluyn and Kevelaer.
- CAD *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. A. Leo Oppenheim, Erica Reiner, et al., eds. Chicago, 1956–.
- COWA *Chronologies in Old World Archaeology*. Robert W. Ehrich, ed. 2 vols. 3rd ed. Chicago and London, 1992.
- MDOG *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*
- OIP Oriental Institute Publications, University of Chicago. Chicago.
- RLA *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*. Erich Ebeling, Bruno Meissner, et al., eds. Vols. 1, 2, Berlin and Leipzig, 1932–38; vols. 3–, Berlin and New York, 1971–.
- WVDOG Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft. Leipzig and Berlin.
- ZA *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete*, to 1939; *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie*, 1940–.

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