

DAVID KERTAI & PETER A. MIGLUS

NEW RESEARCH ON LATE ASSYRIAN PALACES

RUPRECHT-KARLS-UNIVERSITÄT HEIDELBERG

**HEIDELBERGER STUDIEN
ZUM ALTEN ORIENT
BAND 15**

Herausgegeben von

HARALD HAUPTMANN

Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften

PETER A. MIGLUS

Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte und Vorderasiatische Archäologie
Universität Heidelberg



HEIDELBERGER ORIENVERLAG

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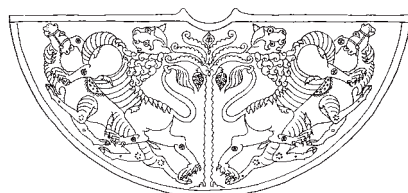
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DAVID KERTAI & PETER A. MIGLUS



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NIMRUD AND ITS REMAINS IN LIGHT OF IRAQI EXCAVATIONS FROM 1989–2002¹

Muzahim M. Hussein, David Kertai
& Mark Altaweel

(Plates XXXVI–XLIX)

This article presents the Iraqi excavations undertaken by the Department of Antiquities and Heritage, and later the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, that started in the 1980s and continued until shortly before the outbreak of the 2003 war. What started as primarily restoration work at the Northwest Palace in Nimrud and some of the major temples on the citadel, soon transformed to excavations throughout various parts of the Nimrud citadel, as major discoveries, including the Queens' tombs, were made. We present here the results of excavations on the Nimrud citadel that have not previously been published or only published in short detail in other volumes.

Excavations and Finds in the Southern Part of the Ashurnasirpal II Palace

The Northwest Palace of Kalḫu (modern Nimrud) was built during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BC). Its central part had already been excavated by Layard in the middle of the nineteenth century (Layard 1849b; 1849c; Layard 1853). His excavations were concentrated in the part of the palace that had been covered with stone reliefs, i.e., the State Apartments. Layard's workmen were not yet able to trace mudbrick walls and, therefore, left the less monumental parts mostly untouched. Almost a century later, Mallowan returned to the palace to excavate areas to the north and south of the State Apartments (Mallowan 1966: 108–183). The remaining southern part of the palace was excavated by the Iraqi Department of Antiquities (Fig. 1) in the years 1988–1993. Information about these excavations has previously been published by Hussein.² After more than 150 years, the Northwest Palace is one of the few Assyrian royal palaces to have been more or less completely excavated.

Courtyard AJ

The Iraqi Department of Antiquities began excavations in the southern area of the palace in 1988, working near the well in courtyard AJ. This courtyard was surrounded by the main residential suites of the palace. The largest suite consists of rooms AF and 59–61. It is generally described as the Queen's Suite. The eastern part of room AF had already been excavated by Mallowan. The rest of the room was thereafter excavated as room 42 by the Iraqi Department of Antiquities.

Room AF is connected with courtyard AJ through two doors. This places the room in a select category of monumental spaces. The most monumental rooms, i.e., the throneroom and rooms WK and WG, possessed three doors of which the central was the most monumental. Rooms G and S

¹ The work at Nimrud was supported by a grant from the United States State Department and National Endowment for Humanities.

² Hussein 1996; Hussein 1999–2000; Hussein & Suleiman 2000; Hussein 2002; Hussein & Al-Gailani Werr 2008: 83–91.

possessed two external entrances, but could be entered through additional doors in adjoining vestibules. These provided a more indirect connection with the outside. Such additional connections were lacking in room AF.

One of the side entrances tended to be correlated to the placement of the throne within these rooms. This is most clearly visible in the throneroom where the location of the throne is secured by the presence of a dais. Similar doors were present in rooms S and AF. The doors suggest that the western wall of room AF functioned as the primary seating location. This seems corroborated by the slightly westward placement of the so-called tram-rails. The tram-rails are an installation intended for the placement of a mobile brazier, which was used to heat the room (Turner 1970a: 186, n. 46–48). They formed common features within the main rooms of larger suites. The tram-rails of room AF consist of eight rectangular calcite stones.

Bathroom 59 was connected to room AF through room 61. The placement of a bathroom close to main seating location within the main room foreshadows the location of bathrooms in later palaces, but is uncommon in the ninth century where bathrooms are usually located more internally, as in the King's Suite, or missing altogether, as in the Throneroom Suites. Room 61 also connected to a large internal room (60), thereby allowing the bathroom to be reached independently from rooms AF and 60. Such internal corridors were also constructed in the palace of Til Barsip (Thureau-Dangin 1931), but do not seem to have gained much popularity and were rarely used otherwise.

The door between rooms AF and 60 contained a large threshold and must have been protected by a massive door whose door sockets were still present.³ Atypically for an internal room, room 60 is paved with baked bricks measuring 44 × 44 × 8 cm. The western part of the room is paved with broken baked bricks, suggesting that these pavements might have been added later. A duck weight was found in one of the corners of room 60. A somewhat smaller threshold was placed in the door between room 60 and corridor 61. Corridor 61 contained wall paintings depicting human figures.

Bathroom 59 is paved with baked bricks. A calcite stone covers a drain that leads to the courtyard to its south (Hussein 1996: fig. 19). Three large stone slabs were placed in the centre of the room (*ibid.*: fig. 11). The eastern most one, located close to the wall, possessed a depression with rounded edge. These slabs were common in all bathrooms. Like the other monumental bathrooms of the palace (rooms I, L and V), a second slab was placed next to it.

Rooms 43 and 46 formed a smaller, but still monumental, suite to the west of courtyard AJ. It consisted of a reception room with an attached bathroom. The entrance into the suite was paved with a threshold measuring 2.10 × 1.75 m (Fig. 2. Pl. XXXVIa), made of bluish Mosul marble. Layard is likely to have excavated the same threshold, which he described as “ornamented with flowers and scroll-work” (Layard 1849c: 17). These finds were located “to the south of Chamber X” (Layard 1853a: 98). Based on Layard's description, Albenda suggested that the threshold dated to the reign of Sargon II. (Albenda 1978: 5). The actual threshold supports such a late date. The threshold is decorated with ten registers of rosettes interspersed with two registers of lotus-and-bud garlands and one register of palmette garlands. No exact parallels are known, but the general design is typical for the decorated thresholds from the reign of Tiglath-pileser III's onwards (Albenda 1978). The closest parallel was likely located at a short distance in the door between corridor Z and courtyard Y, which was decorated with 20 rows of rosettes (Paley & Sobolewski 1981: 86).

³ Hussein 1996: fig. 14, note the slight differences in room numbering.

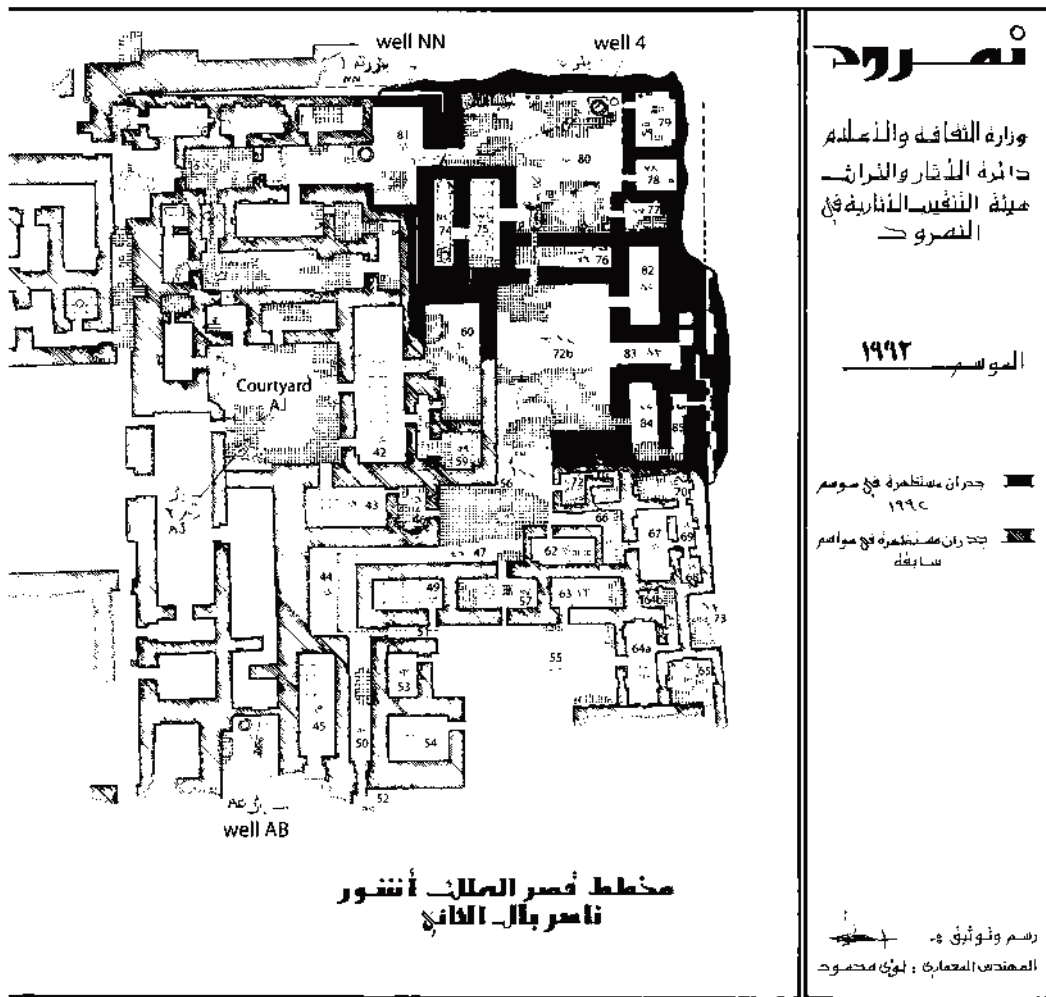


Fig. 1. Plan of the Northwest Palace.

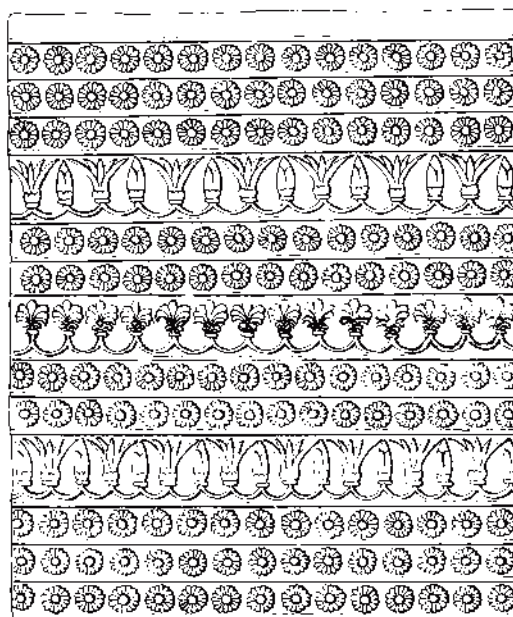


Fig. 2. Drawing of the threshold found in room 43 of the Northwest Palace.

The decorations are comparable to the wall paintings found in room S 5 of Fort Shalmaneser in the Lower Town of Kalḫu (Mallowan 1966: fig. 308). The southern door of room 43 and part of the neighbouring wall contained pitch to a height of 50 cm. The mud plaster on the walls had a thin layer of white plaster with traces of wall paintings. The western wall of room 43 was decorated with paintings showing the king or other human figures raising their hands and others with intertwined hands. This might represent a row of Assyrian functionaries (similar to those known from room S 5 of Fort Shalmaneser) headed by a functionary raising his hand as a halting gesture when reaching the king.

These paintings quickly deteriorated once exposed to the elements. The wall paintings had been in a better state of preservation during Layard's excavations. He described the rooms being decorated with ornamental and figurative paintings, the latter showing the king, courtiers, prisoners and tribute (Layard 1849c: 16–17). Prisoners were probably located at the end of the group, which is likely to have started on the eastern wall, whose wall paintings have not survived. This would explain the absence of prisoners from the still visible wall paintings during the Iraqi excavations. The decoration of the room resembles those of room S 5 in Fort Shalmaneser. The threshold and wall paintings date the changes to the reign of Sargon II or the preceding decades.

Room 43 contained several installations associated with reception rooms. Tram-rails were located in the centre of the room, while an ablution slab (180 × 95 cm) was placed next to the wall. The stone had a rounded concave bent with a depth of 4 cm. A mace (60 cm) made from nineteen cylindrical bronze pieces was found in the southwestern part of the room. The mace was heavily damaged with a long crack and there was heavy damage from moisture.

Bathroom 46 was connected to the courtyard south of it, but this is unlikely to have been an original feature. Bathrooms are not otherwise used as vestibules. The southern entrance was later blocked by a limestone block. A series of pipes running under the room connected to a larger network of sewers in the southern part of the palace.

The Southern Part of the Palace

The southern part of the palace consists of a series of courtyards surrounded by single rooms and a few small suites. The area is most famous for the discovery of the royal graves of the Assyrian queens (Hussein & Suleiman 2000). Coming from the northeast one would pass through a sequence of courtyards before reaching the larger courtyard 80. Underneath this courtyard, a network of drainage pipes was found, which concentrated the water in stone basins. These basins resemble each other and lie adjacent to each other to the south of rooms 77–79 (Fig. 1).

The well found in courtyard 80 was designated as the 'Fourth Archaeological Well' (Hussein 2001–2002), as three wells had already been found previously in the Northwest Palace (Pl. XXXVIb). A large calcite white stone, carved circularly to fit the mouth of the well, was found. Part of this stone lining had been broken in antiquity, with a piece having fallen into the well (Pl. XXXVIIIa). Another large circular stone was found next to the well, and this stone may have been used to close the well as the dimensions of this cover fit the well's mouth.

The well measures 170 cm in diameter at the top. It is lined with well-constructed baked bricks that are wrapped around rows of mud lining. This lining may have been used to help anchor and support the large cover stone for the well. There are more than 300 baked bricks specifically made with the lower length measuring 27 cm and the top length measuring 34 cm. The thickness of these

bricks is 7–8 cm. The variation in size of the sides accounts for the circular configuration of the courses as they line the walls of the well. Following the completion of the work in the well, baked bricks were found to be resting on a large piece of calcite that circled the circumference of the well and having a height of 55 cm and diameter of 160 cm. This is followed by a layer of fragile mud. The well is 5.25 m deep, resembling the depth of the other wells in the palace, and has a total depth of 6.23 m if the layers mentioned are included.

A vaulted complex is located underneath rooms 74 and 75 (Pl. XXXVII) (Hussein & Al-Gailani Werr 2008: 83–90). It consists of a long narrow room connected to three perpendicular rooms. The excavators had expected this to be a possible group burial area due to the shape of the structure. Many of the baked bricks in the construction have dark markings, indicating the use of lamps in the past within the area.

Rooms 84 and 85 provided access to the area south of the palace. The passage continued through a narrow and long space between the southern wall of the palace and the northern wall of a southern complex. Though no building is known to have existed south of the palace during the reign of Ashurnasirpal, the passage seems to have been part of the original palace construction. No evidence to indicate a later construction was found. Inside the corridor, a group of ceramic lamps and glazed brick fragments were found. The glazed bricks show a royal scene, with the king or a leader inside a chariot with people behind him (Hussein 2002: fig. 23). The eight spokes on the chariot dates the brick to the seventh century. Other bricks were decorated with floral and geometric designs in different colours. In addition to this, a group of marble slabs—polished and made ready to be written on, but without any writing—were found.

Room 72 was paved with baked bricks with a network of drains running underneath it. Room 71 was probably a bathroom, as evidence of a drain was found in the room. In addition, the walls are made of, and protected by, baked bricks.

The walls of room 67 show clear evidence of fire. A small child burial was found within the niche in the northern wall. The child was found facing east with three pottery vessels being placed by its feet. In the southwestern corner of the room, remains of a water drain were found. The suite is also atypical for having two rooms that can be classified as bathrooms (68 and 70). Bathroom 70 is especially large. Alternatively, room 70 functioned as a storage space. No drain was found within the room. The southern wall of room 69 has a niche in the centre of the wall. The floor of the room is paved with baked bricks measuring 50 × 50 cm. A ceramic sarcophagus, measuring 183 × 48 cm, was found underneath its floor. The western wall of room 68 has a niche starting about 90 cm above the floor. The lower wall is made of baked bricks and the northwest corner of the room on the floor there is a water drain.

The floor of courtyard 56 is stepped, with parts being paved. The wells uncovered in the courtyard were nine metres deep. Several water drainage systems ended in these wells. A small well-made marble bottle that has a small neck and a pair of handles on the shoulder was found in this courtyard (Pls. XXXIXb).

Corridor 44 connected courtyard 56 with the southwestern part of the palace. A sewer system covered by baked bricks runs underneath corridors 44 and 51. The lower parts of the walls of corridor 44 are composed of baked bricks (Pl. XXXVIIIb). Parts of the wall show evidence of wall paintings.

Corridor 50 led to the damaged western edge of the palace. The western door of corridor 50 was protected by a door whose two door sockets, one on each side of the doorway, were still *in situ*. The door was paved with two calcite stone slabs. The corridor itself was paved with six and half courses of baked bricks that are convex toward the middle part of the brick. Some of the baked bricks had cross-shaped engravings, covering the entire surface, on them.

Room 63 is part of a row of rooms whose two other members contained royal tombs. Its walls are thick and plastered. A door socket signalled the location of its door, which was otherwise difficult to locate. Only the northern and southern parts of the room were paved. Underneath the floor, five very large storage jars were found (Pl. XXXVIc). The storage jars measured 150 × 100 cm. Only fine dirt debris was found inside the jars.

Rooms 64a, 64b and 65 contain floors paved with baked bricks. Bitumen between the bricks act as a mortar. Both rooms are likely to have functioned as bathrooms. The walls of rooms 64a, 64b, and 65 have niches. Ash and the reddened walls of room 64a provide evidence of fire within this room. The walls of room 65 were surrounded by baked clay orthostats (46 × 80 cm), which are inscribed with the Standard Inscription of Ashurnasirpal II (Hussein 1996: figs. 30–33). The cuneiform inscriptions on the orthostats are composed of eight fields (137 × 62 cm) and executed in a large print. Similar orthostats were used in Ashurnasirpal's Old Palace in Ashur (Lundström & Orlamünde 2011; Orlamünde 2004). In the eastern part of room 65, a water basin made of white marble stone was located.

Excavations in the Central Building

The so-called 'Central Building' is roughly located in the middle of Nimrud's citadel to the southeast of the Northwest Palace. The building dates to the reign of Ashurnasirpal II. Layard, Rassam and Loftus had already excavated the area. Excavations were resumed by a Polish team in the 1970s (Meuszyński 1976a; 1976b).

The Central Building is a small complex surrounding a single courtyard as far as is known (see Kertai in this volume). The Iraqi team excavated the Central Building during their 18th season of excavations in 1993. Excavations proved difficult, as much of the architecture was heavily damaged and difficult to trace.

The entrance gate of the building (room 1) was paved with baked bricks (Fig. 3). Both its northern and southern walls contained two entrances. The two western doors were the most monumental entrances and must have formed the central passage through the room and into the building. The northwestern door was paved with a large marble/limestone threshold, whereas the southwestern door was paved with baked bricks. The preserved architecture suggests that the gate was originally organised symmetrically. The gate is, therefore, likely to have possessed a third set of doors to the west of the main entrance. The western part of the room is, however, destroyed by later construction, making it impossible to check this hypothesis.

The exterior of the southern main entrance is decorated with two buttresses flanked by colossi. Only the bases of these figures remain (Pl. XLIa) (*cf.* Meuszyński 1976a: pl. 9; Reade 1968: pl. 18). The colossi closest to the entrance are bull legged, whereas those placed further away are lion legged. The arrangement resembles the throneroom façade of the Northwest Palace.⁴ Unfortunately, the façade of the Northwest Palace is reconstructed on the basis of the Central Building. The only

⁴ Meuszyński 1981: 31–35, pl. 5–6; Paley & Sobolewski 1992: 3–25, Russell 1998: fig. 28.

colossi of the Northwest Palace to have been found in situ were the bull legged colossi. These creatures were atypical in that they included the body parts of a fish (Paley & Sobolewski 1992: 17–20, 22, figs. 6–7, pls. 3–4). The upper parts of the bull colossi of the Central Building have not been preserved, but it is possible that they were fish hybrids originally.

The Iraqi team believed the wall separating rooms 2 and 3, as traced by the Polish team, to be a post-Assyrian construction. Northeast of room 3, and east of room 6, is a small room that does not have any clear entrances and has thick walls surrounding it. No remains were found in this room and it is unclear what its function was.

The complex was organised around courtyard 4. In the eastern part its floor is paved with baked bricks that are 50×50 cm. This part of the courtyard has two phases of paved bricks. The western part of the courtyard is paved with baked bricks measuring 36×36 cm. A square-shaped calcite stone object was found in the area with similar dimensions as the baked bricks. Parts of the lower walls also appear to have incorporated neighbouring baked bricks. The remains of coloured baked brick were found in the northern part of the courtyard. They have different types of designs similar to well-known finds in the Northwest palace. These remains, however, are in very poor condition.

Two large rooms are located to the east of courtyard 4. Their southern parts had already been excavated by the Polish team, who assigned numbers 5 and 6 to them. The Iraqi assigned new numbers, 8 and 9 respectively, to the northern parts of these rooms. Both rooms are paved with a strip of flat river stones. These room's architecture is reminiscence of the workshops found in Fort Shalmaneser (Mallowan 1966: plan VIII), which were paved by similar strips.

The two large entrances into room 5/8 are paved with marble/limestone thresholds. A small door socket was found next to the southwestern entrance. The central entrance was closed with mudbricks placed on top of the threshold (Pl. XL1b). This closure reached a height of 1 m and might be post-Assyrian. The threshold appears to have been repaired in antiquity. Smashed jars were found under the mudbricks blocking the entrance (Pl. XL1c).

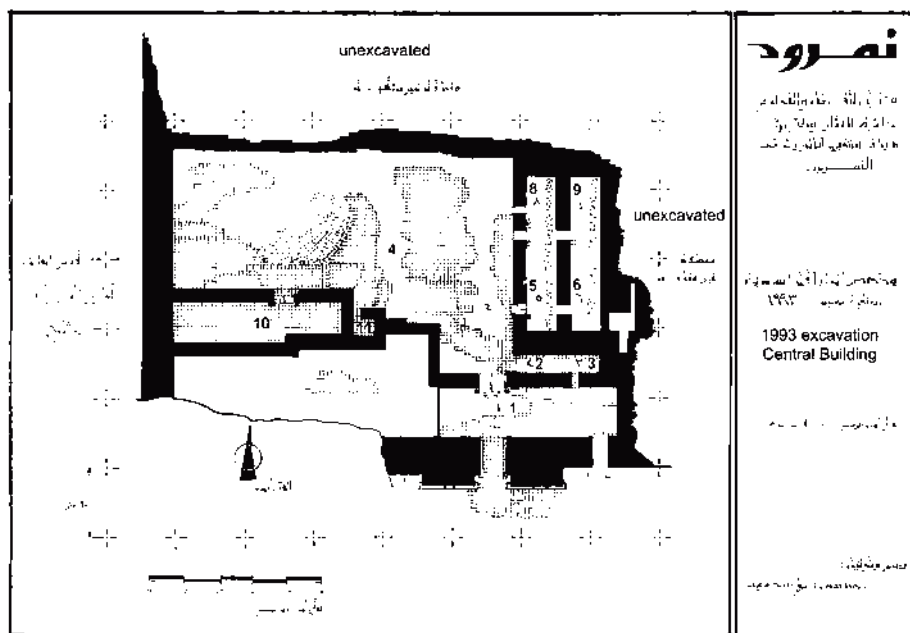


Fig. 3. Plan of the Central Building.

A group of vessels was found in the corner of room 8. It includes wide-mouth and large jars, with one of the sides of these vessels having a hole, and ceramic pipes that were likely used for draining water in the area (Fig. 4). The ceramic material of the vessels is coarse. Within the small northwestern entrance of room 5/8 a group of ceramic vessels that includes lamps with two basins and well-made shallow plates was found (Pl. XLII).

Rooms 10 and 11 are located to the south of courtyard 4. Room 11 is a small room that measures 2.9×2.4 m. The room appears to have been used as a bathroom. The walls have remains of pitch and the height of the walls does not surpass 50 cm. Its northern wall and floor are heavily damaged, the latter from previous excavations in the area. The floor is paved with baked bricks measuring $44 \times 44 \times 3.2$ cm and incorporates pitch. In the northern part of the room there is a baked brick with a hole that appears to have been used for drainage.

Room 10 is a large space with a wide entrance measuring 3.6 m. The floor is paved with baked bricks and has two white calcite stone door sockets. During excavations, it was noticed that the insides of the walls along the entrance had coatings of pitch on them. Rooms 10 and 11 must belong to a later phase in the building's history. Their southern wall is rather irregularly shaped and the walls were built on top of the baked bricks of courtyard 4.

Excavations in the Upper Chambers (Adad-nerari III)

In 1993, the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage began excavations in Adad-nerari III's so-called 'Upper Chambers'. It is associated with room 73, which represents a solid mudbrick platform, south of the Northwest Palace. The higher level of the area could suggest that it was built on top of an earlier structure, a suggestion which was already made by Layard (1853: 532). This would follow the Assyrian practice of filling in rooms with mudbricks in order to create a new platform. The thorough and precise way in which this was done makes it is very difficult to trace the earlier walls. No evidence for an earlier structure has, however, so far been found.

Layard was the first to excavate at this location. He found the remains of four rooms on 'a considerable elevation' (Layard 1849c: 18). Layard's description of these rooms as upper chambers has later come to represent its name. There have been many problems in reconstructing the Upper Chambers.

Iraqi work in this area lasted only four weeks, but allows several of the unresolved questions to be answered. The work uncovered the remains of six rooms (Fig. 5). Rooms 1, 3 and 4 had previously been excavated by Layard. The Iraqi excavations began by opening a sounding, which was expanded to a trench of 15×2 m. This led to the discovery of the walls of room 1. This room functioned as a bathroom originally. The room is split into two parts by a later wall, creating a smaller rectangular room in the southern part of the room. Layard must have mistaken this later wall for the original southern wall of the room, explaining the strange form of his room C. The floor of the southern part is higher than the rest of room 1, supporting the later date of this part of the room. The room had originally been paved with baked bricks joined by bitumen, although a number of these bricks are now missing. A layer of clean sand was found underneath the floor.

The room contains two niches (the northern niche found by Layard was not recovered by the Iraqi team). The southern niche measures roughly 40 cm by 2.5 m. It forms the location of the drain (Pls. XLIIIc. XLIVa). The drainage descends sharply eastward and exits the room in its southeastern corner,

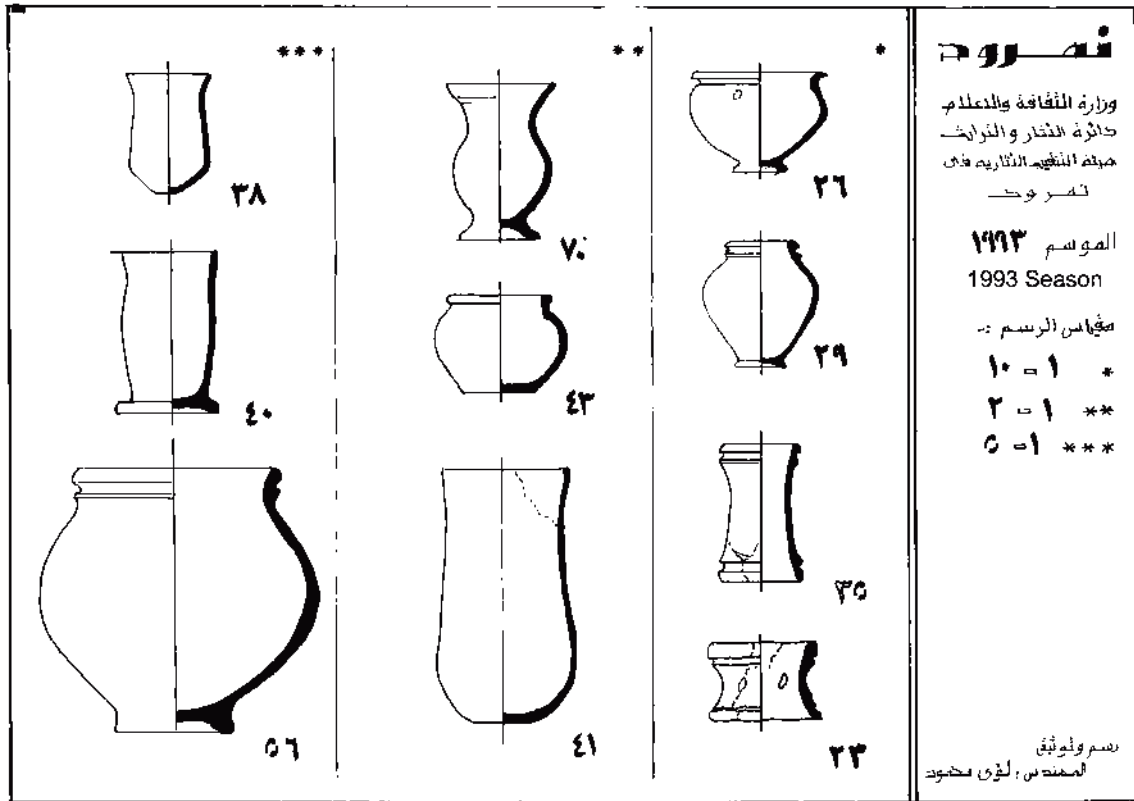


Fig. 4. Drawings of pottery found in room 8 of the Central Building.

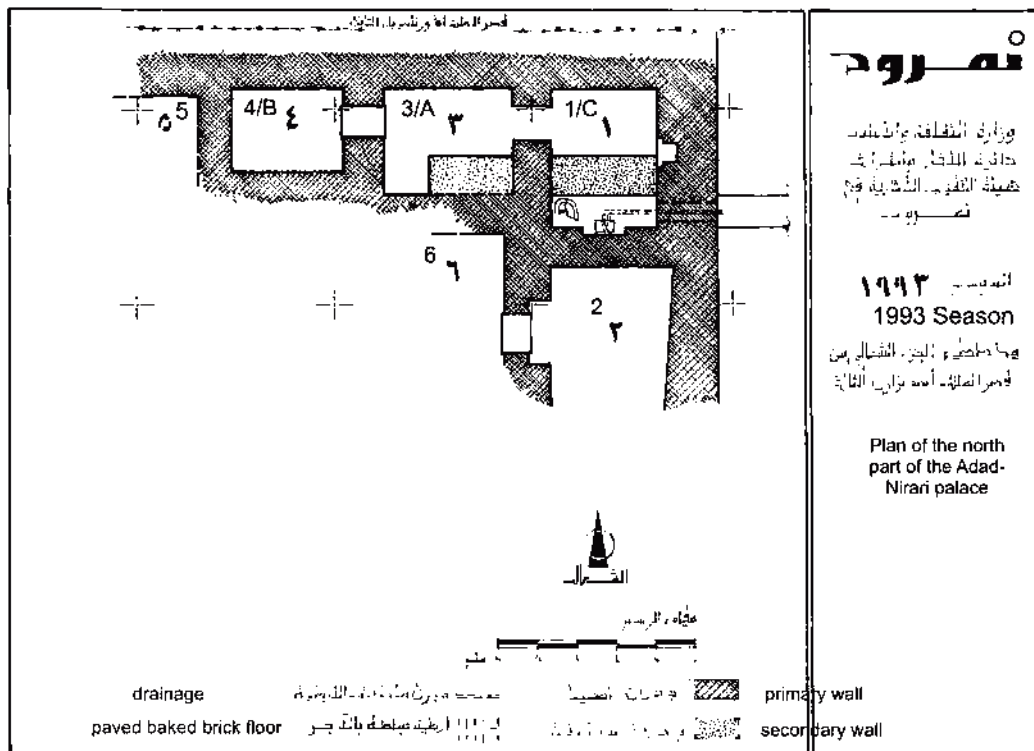


Fig. 5. Plan of Adad-nerari III's Palace (The Upper Chambers).

where it is covered by an arch filled with mudbricks. The drainage system is made of four courses of baked bricks covered with pitch on the inside (Figs. 6–7. Pl. XLIIIa). A large worked stone, broken in two and with a hole in the centre, was found in the higher, western part of the southern area of room 1.

Parts of a bathtub-shaped stone found on the pavement in the western-end of the room (Fig. 7; Pl. XLIIIId). It was probably no longer in situ, as it was lying on top of the pavement rather than being part of it.

The walls are covered by a layer of mud, which covers paintings of pomegranates. The paintings quickly faded in the sun and elements. The lower parts of the walls are covered by a thin layer of pitch. The niche in the eastern wall was decorated with two frames with linear strips and circular features. The colours of the flower designs are red, black and blue (Figs. 7. 9. Pl. XLIIIb).

Layard described this room as having been decorated with bulls framed by two ornamental friezes (Albenda 2005: 15, pl. 5). He described the existence of two phases with differing motifs, but only one was described and illustrated by him. Whether these represent one of the two phases or a combination of both remains unclear. The pomegranates discovered by the Iraqi excavations resemble those found by Layard in the niche of room B (Layard 1849a: pls. 14 and 87–3), *i.e.*, room 4 of the Iraqi excavations.

Room 3 is connected to room 1 through a wide entrance that measures 140 cm. Room 3 formed the main vestibule of the three northern rooms, providing access to rooms 1 and 4. The entrance into room 4 is covered by a blue coloured marble/limestone threshold (Pl. XLIVc). A later wall placed within room 3 must have again led to the strange room shape of Layard's room A, but its reconstruction is less straightforward than in room 1. Layard also found the door connecting rooms 3 and 6 and removed its threshold.⁵ The thresholds between room 3 and rooms 4 and 6 were both inscribed with a genealogical text (*RIMA* 3 A.0.104.1). The architecture of room 6 remains problematic (see Kertai in this volume). This room was not further excavated by the Iraqi team.

The floor of room 4 is paved with baked bricks measuring 44 × 44 × 6 cm. The room represents Layard's room B. Layard described finding a "recess in the wall of ch. B", but did not indicate it on his plans (Layard 1849a: 8, description of plate 87–3). It could have been located in its southern wall, which was largely destroyed in antiquity, probably by Layard's workmen looking for a door. Albenda suggested that Layard's description of the niche was mistaken and in fact described the niche of room C (Albenda 2005: 15). Even if a niche existed, room 4 is likely to represent a storage space. An associated drainage system has not been found and a bathroom was already present in the form of room 1.

Room 2 was heavily damaged, most probably due to Layard's and Loftus' excavations. The room is likely to have excavated by Loftus previously (see Kertai in this volume). Its northwestern doorway was covered by a marble/limestone threshold, similar to the one found between rooms 3 and 4. Loftus probably excavated this door as well (Turner 1970: pl. 43), but apparently left the threshold in situ. The inscription of the slab is different from that found in room 3 and contains a historical narrative (Ahmad 2002). A similar text was found by Loftus (*RIMA* 3 A.0.104.8), but its original location is unclear. Small differences suggest that the texts came from two different thresholds. Loftus found one additional example of the genealogical text (Russell 1999: 84–86) suggesting that it was also used outside rooms 1, 3 and 4. The suite was thus inscribed with both a genealogical as well as a historical text. The genealogical text was probably

⁵ The slab is now in the British Museum (BM 118925).

intended for the minor rooms whereas the historical narrative was inscribed in the doors of the main rooms. Room 5 was located west of the main suite and is near the edge of the citadel. Parts of its floor are paved with baked bricks. On the floor, pieces of long and grooved stones were found, which form part of the so-called tram-rails common in the more monumental reception rooms (Pl. XLIVb). A bathroom might have originally been located to its west, turning it into a typical small reception suite, not unlike rooms 46 and 43 of the Northwest Palace.

Boutcher's plan shows at least two further rooms to the south of room 2. This L-shaped arrangement of rooms is quite uncommon. A possible comparison can be found in rooms 11 and 15 of Adad-Nerari's PD5 Palace in the Lower Town of Kalḫu (Mallowan 1954: pl. 35). It must be noted, however, that many of the room combinations on Boutcher's plan seem atypical and problematic. It cannot be excluded that Loftus excavations failed to correctly trace the walls and doors or that Boutcher's renderings of them introduced mistakes.

The combination of three small rooms attached, through a central room (3), to a set of larger rooms resembles the monumental reception suite of the Northwest Palace (rooms A, WG–WK and WM), which was part of Turner's Reception Suite Type F (Turner 1970a: 204–209). These suites were typified by the presence of three parallel large reception rooms, of which the two external ones were the most monumental. For the Upper Chamber to have formed a similar suite, an additional large room west of room 6 needs to have existed.⁶ Such reconstruction is problematic. Room 6 seems too monumental to have been located in the middle of a suite and is more likely to represent an external room. Furthermore, reception suites of this type were normally located south of the Throneroom Suite and characterised by having both of its sides face a courtyard. North of the Upper Chambers, however, was the external wall of the Northwest Palace and the likely presence of Loftus' rooms to the east makes a direct connection with an eastern courtyard unlikely.

The original suite is, thus, likely to have consisted of the five rooms currently known. It was accessible from a courtyard in the west and ended in a blank well to the east. Such an arrangement was called *bitānu* Type A by Manuelli (Manuelli 2009: fig. 3). Reade made a comparison between the Upper Chambers and rooms 22–28 of the palace in Ḫadattu (Reade 1968: 70). Such comparison suggests that a connection between room (4) and the courtyard to its south could have existed. Such door has not been found, but is nonetheless feasible. The southern wall of this room seems to have been taken away by the workmen of Layard; at least it does not seem to have been present during Hussein's excavation. Such a missed door suggests that it was not paved with a threshold—a feature that would be hard to miss—contrary to most doors of this suite. This hypothetical door could represent the recess as described by Layard.

The complex to which the Upper Chambers belonged probably consisted of a single courtyard surrounded by suites, two of which are currently known: the Upper Chambers and room 5. This courtyard could have been open towards the west, providing a view over the plain, but must have been surrounded by rooms on its southern side. This hypothetical complex seems to resemble courtyards AJ of Northwest Palace and S 6 of Fort Shalmaneser.

⁶ If Layard did indeed find two sets of tram-rails, the western tram-rails might have belonged to such western room. This would suggest that the dividing wall between both rooms was missed by him.

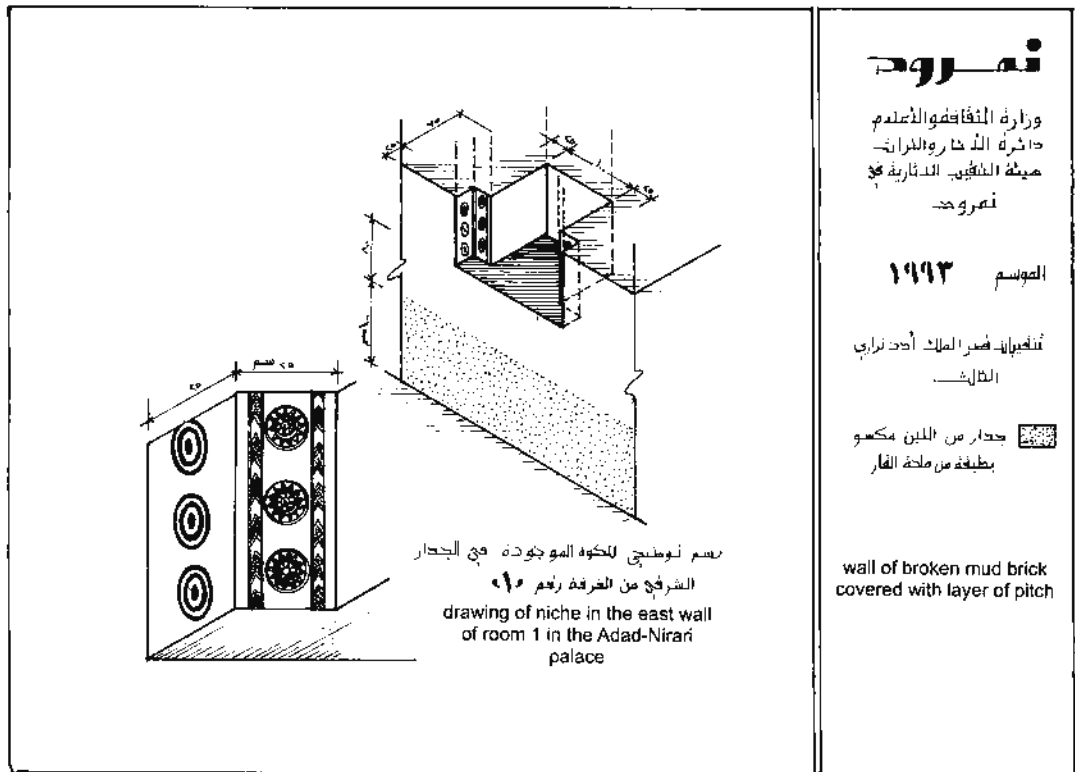


Fig. 8. Drawing of the niche in the eastern wall of room 1.

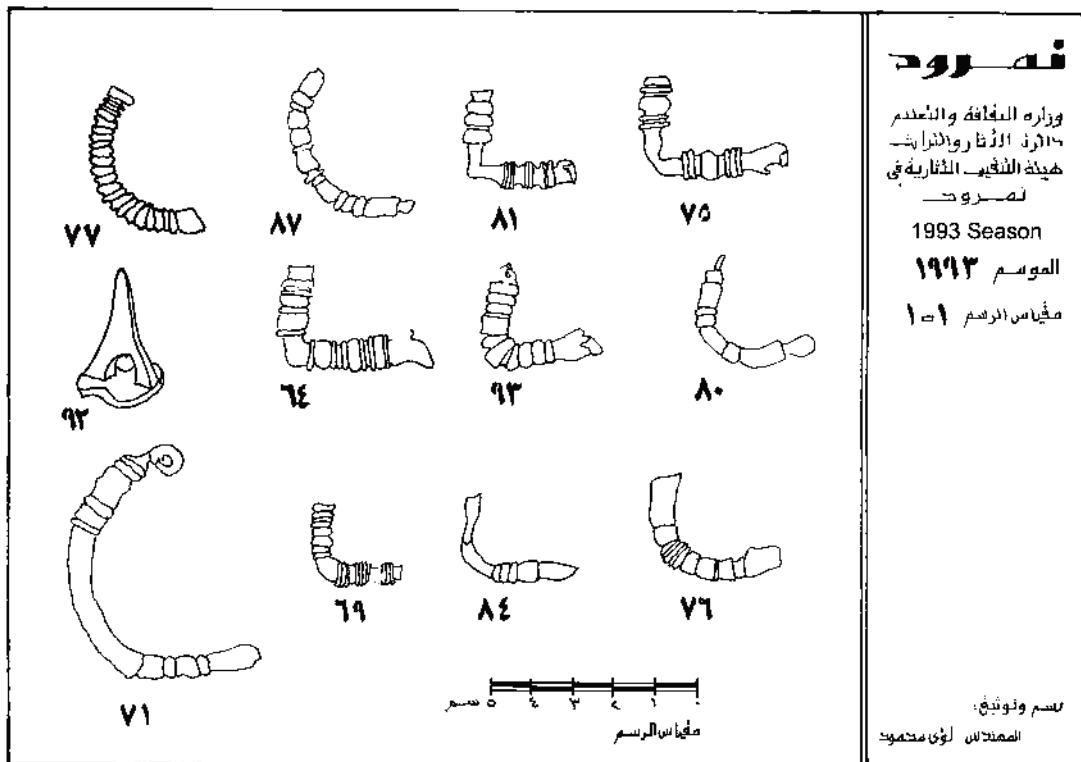


Fig. 9. Drawings of bronze fibula found in the Upper Chambers.

Important Archaeological Finds in the Upper Chambers

Finds in the palace as made by the Iraqi team include a large collection of bronze fibula (Fig. 9). The fibula found are made of varying sizes and manufacturing techniques. Finds also include spearheads and arrowheads made of bronze and iron. Some pottery beakers were also found. One interesting find is an ivory piece showing gazelles with a tree of life scene in the middle.

Excavations in the Sharrat Niphi Temple

Ashurnasirpal II's workmen constructed a number of temples on Kalḫu's citadel. The exact layout of the complex is still unclear (Reade 2002: 191–193). The main temple of the city was dedicated to Ninurta. It forms the only temple from Ashurnasirpal's reign whose architecture is known in some detail. Some information also existed about the Sharrat Niphi Temple, whose cella was excavated by Layard (Layard 1853: 358–362; Reade 2002: 181–186, fig. 20).

The Sharrat Niphi cella is located about 30 meters to the east of the Ninurta Temple. Iraqi excavations have now elucidated a large part of its original floorplan. In 2001, the main entrance into the complex and a large courtyard were uncovered. They also re-excavated the temple's main cella (Fig. 10) (Hussein & Al-Gailani Werr 2008: 91–98). The second season explored the remainder of the courtyard, which led to the discovery of a gate connecting the Sharrat Niphi courtyard to the Ninurta Temple.

The main entrance into the Sharrat Niphi courtyard is located in the east. Its main gate is flanked by two lions. These are similar to those found by Layard in the entrance of the main cella (Reade 1983: contents page). The new lions are heavily damaged (Pl. XLVa–b). The lions face east, suggesting that people were expected to arrive from the east. The outer façade of the Sharrat Niphi gate was decorated with semicircular engaged columns similar to those found in the Nabû Temple (Mallowan 1966: fig. 197). The floor near the entrance is paved with baked bricks that have Ashurnasirpal II's name and his son (Shalmaneser III) inscribed in the bricks. These inscriptions range between 3 to 7 lines.

Both entrance lions were covered with a large inscription. A marble slab with a height of 160 cm and width 71 cm is placed against the wall in front of the southern lion. The slab is inscribed with cuneiform writing. Similarly located inscribed slabs were originally found next to the lions of the cella (Reade 2002: 210). A large uninscribed marble slab is placed on the floor between the lions.

The entrance leads into a rectangular room, which connects to the main courtyard through a wide passage. The courtyard is paved with two separate courses of baked bricks as is common for such courtyards. Some of the top bricks are similarly inscribed to the those found in front of the eastern gate.

The entrance into the main cella was flanked by two lions (Reade 2002: fig. 20). The lion flanking the western side of the entrance is now in the British Museum (BM 118895). The eastern lion was transferred to the Mosul Museum in 1973 (IM 116546) (Agha & Al-Iraqi 1976: pl. 7). The missing head of the eastern lion was found a few metres away within the courtyard (Pls. XLVc, XLVIa). The entrance was flanked by baked brick walls of about 1 m in height. Some of these bricks were glazed. They were decorated with plants and geometric designs. They were found to the east of the doorway. No parallels were found on the other side of the entrance. The incense burners found by Layard next to the lions were no longer present. Two incense burners were found near the southwest niche of the courtyard (Pl. XLIXa).

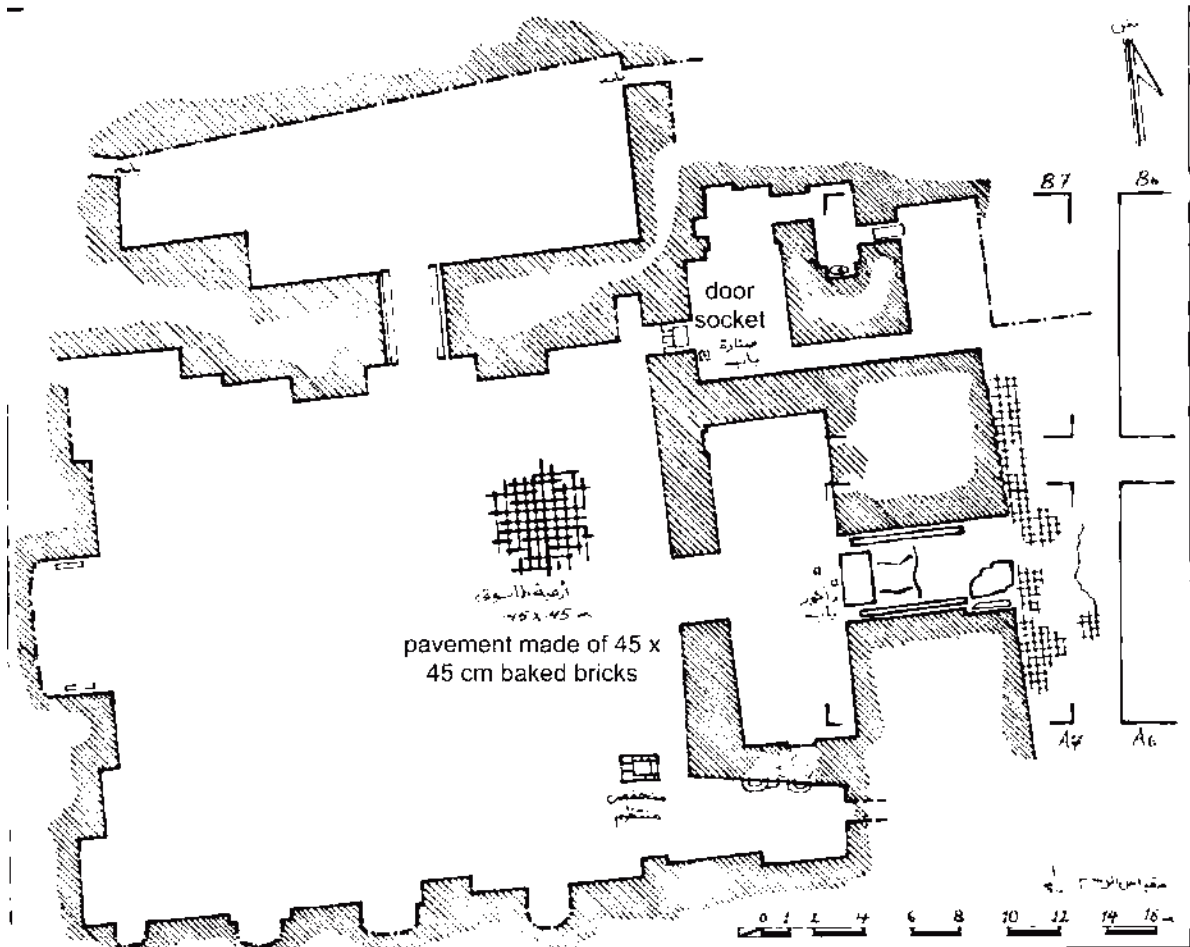


Fig. 10. Plan of the Sharrat Niphi Temple.

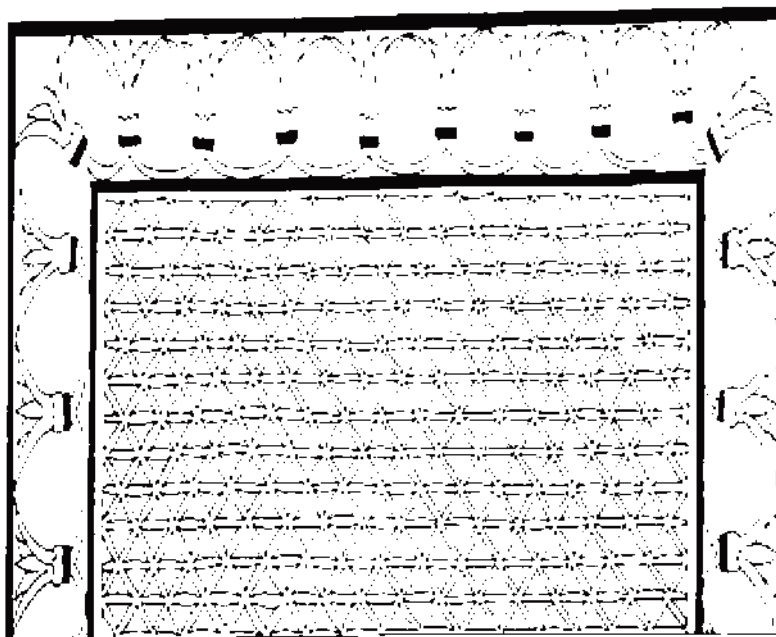


Fig. 11. Pavement stone with geometrical designs (western gate of the Sharrat Niphi Temple).

The threshold between the two lions was broken from the lifting of the lions. The floor of the room is paved with baked bricks. The walls are coated with clay mortar and painted. The room shows evidence of a strong fire. The centre of the cella contains a heavily damaged large piece of Mosul marble, which had previously been found by Layard (Layard 1853: 361). This large stone contains clear and complete writing with large print. It is likely to have formed a platform for something that would have been visible from the court (Reade 2002: 184).

A small room was uncovered in the western end of the room, with large pieces of marble found on the floor that have writing on the face and base. This room had already been excavated by Layard and probably represents the main sanctuary of the Sharrat Niphi Temple (Layard 1853: 359). A small is located to the east of the cella.

The area to the north of the main entrance is somewhat unclear. Somewhere in this area east of the cella Mallowan excavated two rooms (Mallowan 1952: 3–4; Mallowan 1966: 92). Mallowan noticed that the original architecture had been refilled with mud and mudbricks. Further havoc was done by the nineteenth century excavations. The exact location of Mallowan's work is unclear, but his description probably explains the irregular nature of the architecture north of the eastern gate.

This northeastern area was connected to the main courtyard through a small door, whose calcite stone threshold was still in situ. The associated door socket was located in the room. A small bathroom was located in the northern part of this area. Its western door was blocked by baked bricks. The floor is covered by pitch. A second door, to the east, has a calcite stone threshold. The southern niche is covered by a baked brick with a hole that covers a drainage. This area north of the main entrance was suggested to be a later addition.

The southern wall of the courtyard is filled with niches and buttresses. The area seems somewhat chaotic and it cannot be excluded that the niches represented doors originally. The possibilities for such doors were indicated on the plan of the first season (Hussein & Al-Gailani Werr 2008: fig. 12n). Additional niches were found in the second season. The three main niches, with the central one being the largest, correspond to the triple entrances seen in the most monumental façades of the Northwest Palace. Such doors always represent the main entrances and suggest that the main movement would have led from the courtyard southwards. The niches are, therefore, unlikely to have been part of a gate connecting with the outside. The niches are, moreover, quite small in comparison to the other main gates of the temple. While it cannot be excluded that the niches represented doors, the associated room(s) are likely to have been relatively small and unconnected to the outside.

The Western Gate

The main western gate was found in the second season (2002) of the excavations in the Sharrat Niphi Temple. The gate is flanked by two small-sized bull colossi, measuring only 1.00 × 1.01 m. (Pls. XLVc–XLVIIc). The winged bulls are unique in some of their details and do not possess an inscription by which they can be dated. It is, nonetheless, likely that they date to the reign of Ashurnasirpal II. The most striking aspect of these colossi is their small size. Such smaller size colossi are rare and seem confined to the reigns of Ashurnasirpal II and his father Tukulti-Ninurta II (890–884 BC). The fragmentary remains of a bull colossus of Tukulti-Ninurta II were found at Tell Qadhiah (Ahmad 2000). Though no measurements were given, a photo accompanying the article suggests that they were similarly sized to those found in Nimrud. An even smaller colossus with a height of c. 70 cm was found in Ashur (Pedde & Lundström 2008: 41, fig. 66). It probably dates to the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (see below).

The iconography of the bull colossi fits an Ashurnasirpal II date. One of the more striking details is the presence of curls on the front of the bulls' legs (Pls. XLVIb–c. XLVIIc). Slightly less modelled curls were also present on the bull colossi of the Northwest Palace (B–b–1/2; ED–1; ED–10; F–f–1/2; S–e–1/2) and the Shalmaneser Building (Sobolewski 1982: fig. 10). Similar curls seem absent from the colossi of later periods. The head, with only one horn and a lock of hair running in front of the ear, is comparable to the bull colossus that stood in the door of room S of the Northwest Palace (Layard 1849a: pl. 4 [BM 118894]). The best comparison is, however, with a fragmentary colossus head found in Ashur (Pedde & Lundström 2008: fig. 67). The head was found out of situ, but could have originally stood in the Old Palace (Orlamünde 2004: 211–213). More than 100 colossi fragments were found in the foundation of the throneroom (22) of the Old Palace (Orlamünde 2004: 209–211; Pedde & Lundström 2008: 41, pls. 27–28). None is dated, but an associated fragment is inscribed with the beginning of an Ashurnasirpal II inscription (Orlamünde 2004: 213, fig. 12). While not providing hard dating evidence, the Ashur fragments do support dating the Sharrat Niphi colossi to the reign of Ashurnasirpal II.

The entrance is roughly five metres wide. Such width is quite exceptional and suggests that the entrance did not possess a door. Alternatively, a door could have been placed in a door located further inside the gate. The floor is paved with stone pieces and one large central piece has geometric designs on it (Fig. 11).

The gate is flanked by the common baked brick wall corners (Pl. XLVIIc; 7–8 courses high). Rather than forming the lower lining of the walls, as suggested by the photos, these baked bricks might represent platforms for the placement of poles, as found in other passages of the temple complex.

The two bulls stand on small platforms made of calcite stones (Pl. XLVIIa). Rounded baked bricks with black and white colours support the front of the bulls. The bull colossi are raised c. 40 cm above the ground. The combined height is still more than a metre less than the height of the lion colossi in the other gates of the temple. The elevation is executed with care and might be original, although this is impossible to verify.

Discussion

Reade's tentative reconstruction of the temple area separates the Sharrat Niphi and Ninurta Temple into two courtyards, but integrates them into a single complex (Reade 2002: 192, fig. 2). Such organisation can be compared with the later temple complex at Dur-Sharruken.⁷ The new excavations seem to support Reade's hypothesis. There is, however, still no direct evidence that the Sharrat Niphi and Ninurta Temples formed a single complex. Whether they were connected depends on the nature of the newly discovered western gate of the Sharrat Niphi courtyard. It is yet unknown where this gate led. The monumentality of the entrance suggests that the associated room was of considerable importance. It could, therefore, represent the entrance into a cella. Such reconstruction is, however, problematic. Cellae are commonly identified by inscriptions on the adjacent colossi and/or pavement. Such inscriptions were lacking in the western gate.

The absence of inscriptions and the use of small colossi are not the only aspects that make the western gate atypical. The apparent lack of a door is even more puzzling. The wideness of the gate gives it the appearance of a portico—an architectural feature not otherwise attested in Assyria during this period. It is unclear whether the known entrance represents the front or the back of the

⁷ Loud, Frankfort & Jacobsen 1936: 80–129; Reade 2002: 192–193.

gate. Normally, the presence of colossi would identify it as the main entrance. No colossi would be expected on the other side of the gate, *i.e.*, along the Ninurta courtyard. The absence of a door, however, makes such an interpretation uncertain.

The most compelling argument for reconstructing the western gate as having been orientated to the east is the similar orientation of the eastern gate of the Sharrat Niphi courtyard. The Ninurta Temple does not currently possess its own external entrance. In principle the Ninurta courtyard could also have been entered through the mostly unknown southern area of the courtyard. Reade reconstructed a further cella, whose shape he copied from the Sharrat Niphi cella, at this location, but the presence of an external entrance cannot be excluded. Such gate is, however, unlikely due to the linear nature in which movement was normally organised in Assyrian buildings.

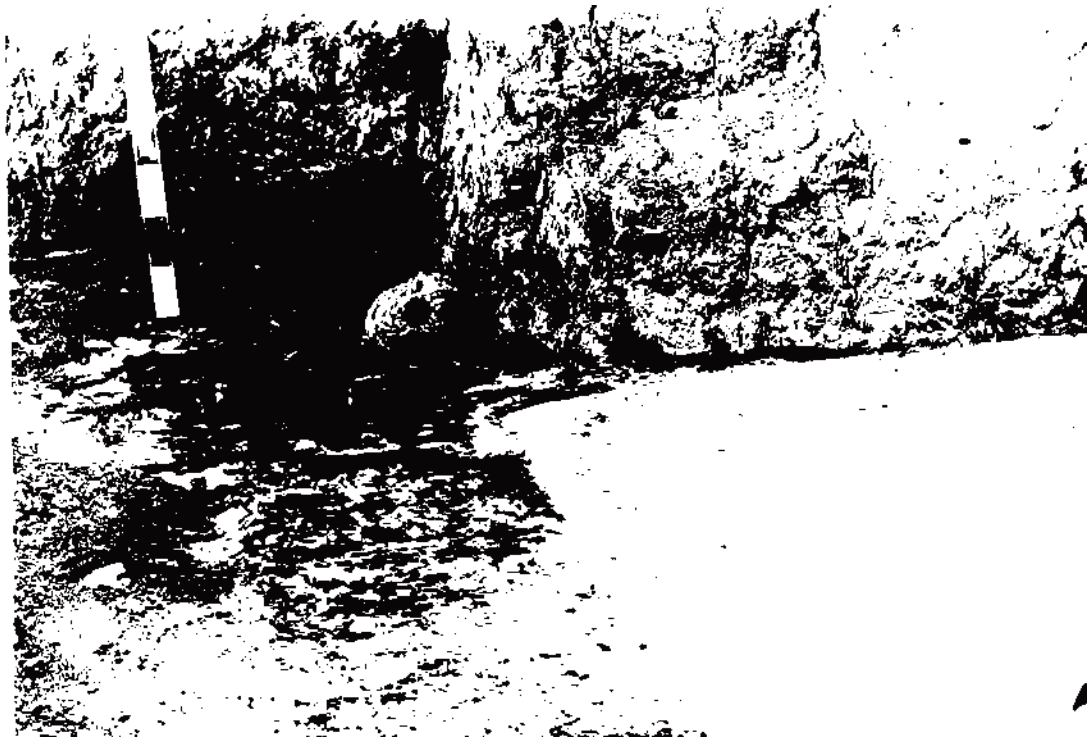
Assyrian temples and palaces tend to have only one main entrance. The gates of the Sharrat Niphi Temple suggest that the main movement was from the east. The nature of the courtyard east of the Sharrat Niphi temple is still unclear. It could represent the outside, turning the eastern Sharrat Niphi gate into the main external entrance, or have formed an additional internal courtyard with the outside being located farther away.

The complex appears to have been organised into a sequence of courtyards with the Ninurta Temple representing the end of the route. Such sequence with its associated hierarchy of accessibility seems unique. A similar distinction in the accessibility of the cellae did not exist in the temple complex at Khorsabad.

PLATES



Map of the Near East (drawn by Kertai, based on Parpola & Porter 2001).



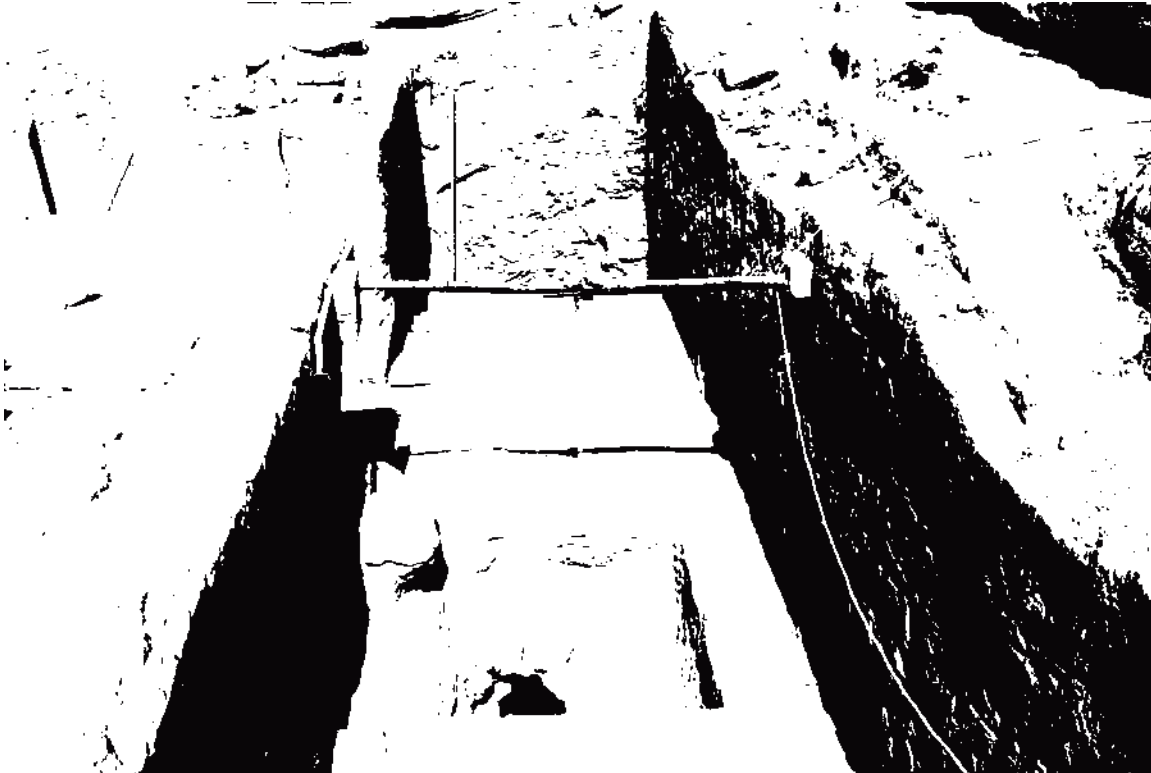
a. Marble threshold between room 43 and courtyard AJ.



b. Courtyard 80 (uncovered in 1992). Looking south down from the staircase in its northeastern corner. The palace's external wall is seen on the left of the photo. Excavations are taking place in room 79.



c. Storage jars found in room 63.



a. View of room 74.



b. Jointing of the underground hall's roof.



a. The Fourth Well found in courtyard 80.



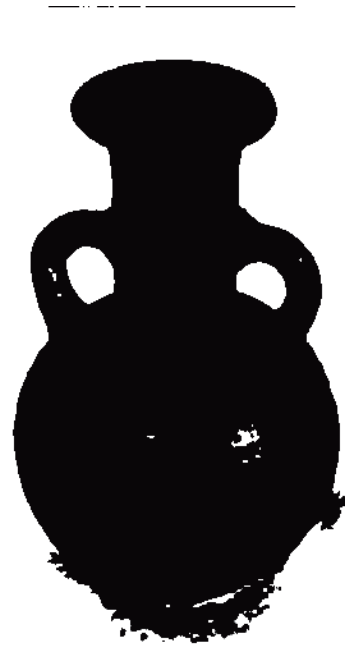
b. Walls in corridor 44 showing baked bricks at the base.



a. Kernos type pottery from underground room C below room 75 (IM 127831).



b. Marble jar found in courtyard 56.



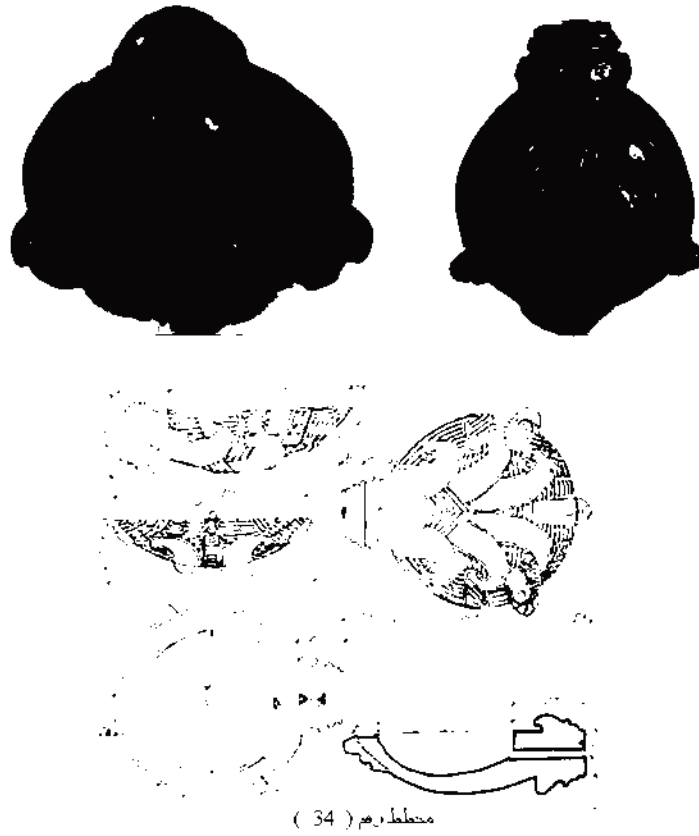
c. Two-handled Cypriote jug found in the vault under room 74 (IM 127766).



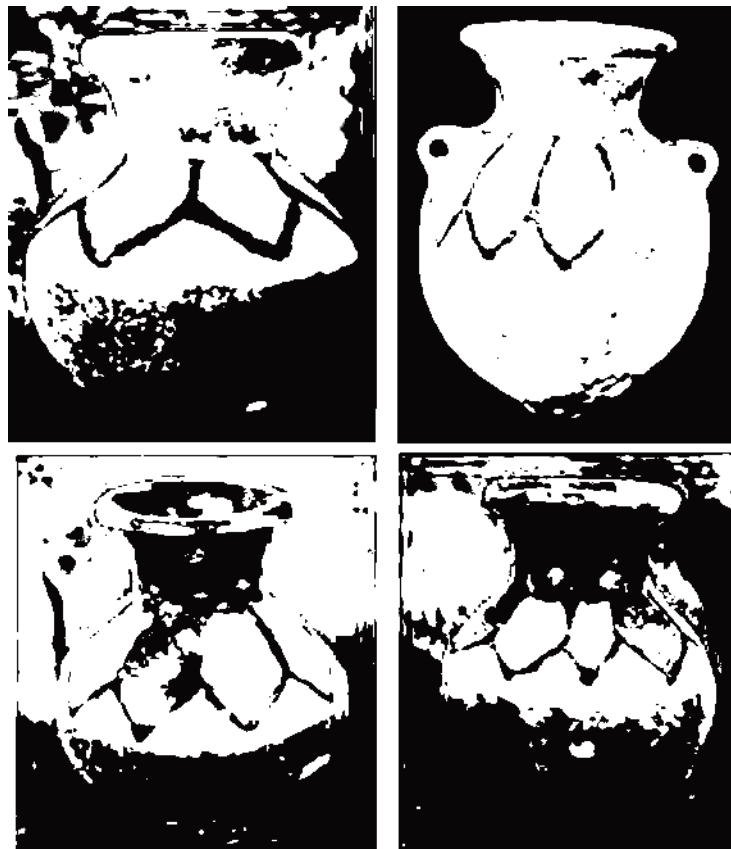
d. Cup found in the first chamber of the underground vault (IM 127715).



e. Plate made of Egyptian blue/frit found in underground vault (IM 127731).



a. Carved stone cup found in well 4 (IM 127734).



b. Small glazed jars found in the vault under room 74 (IM 127638, 127641, 127643, 127764).



a. The lower portion remains of the bull and lion colossi placed along the southeast entranceway in room 1 (Central Palace).



b. Blocked north entrance in room 8 (Central Palace).



c. Smashed pottery underneath a late, perhaps post-Neo-Assyrian, wall in room 8 (Central Palace).



a. Drainage pipe ceramics found in room 8 (IM 139512-139513).



b. Ceramic lamps found in the Central Building.



c. Examples of jars found in the Central Building (IM 139491-139500).



d. Plates found in the Central Building.



e. Jar stands found in the Central Building (IM 139501-139503).



f. Large ceramic vessel found in the Central Building.



a. Wall above the drainage going through the eastern wall of room 1 (Upper Chambers).



b. Geometric flower designs in the niche found in the east wall of room 1 (Upper Chambers).



c. The southern part of room 1 with the drain in the lower right corner (Upper Chambers).



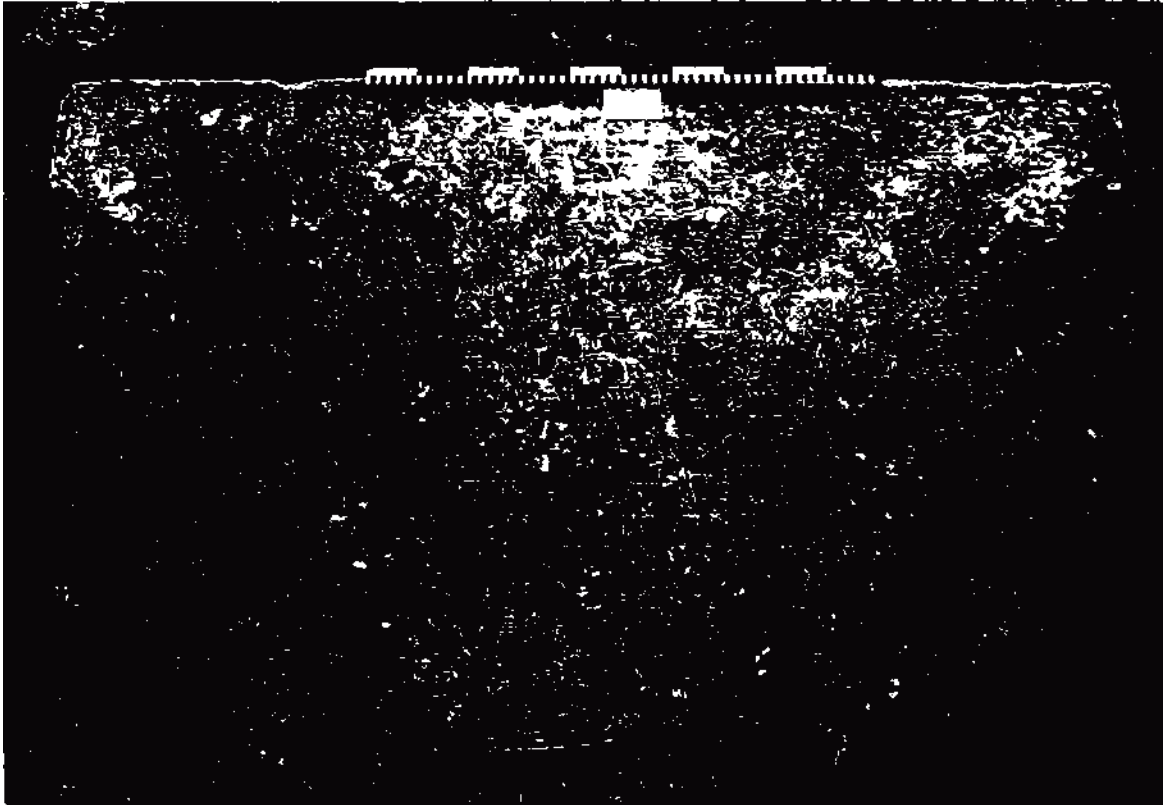
d. The southern part of room 1 with a fragment of a bathtub slab (Upper Chambers).



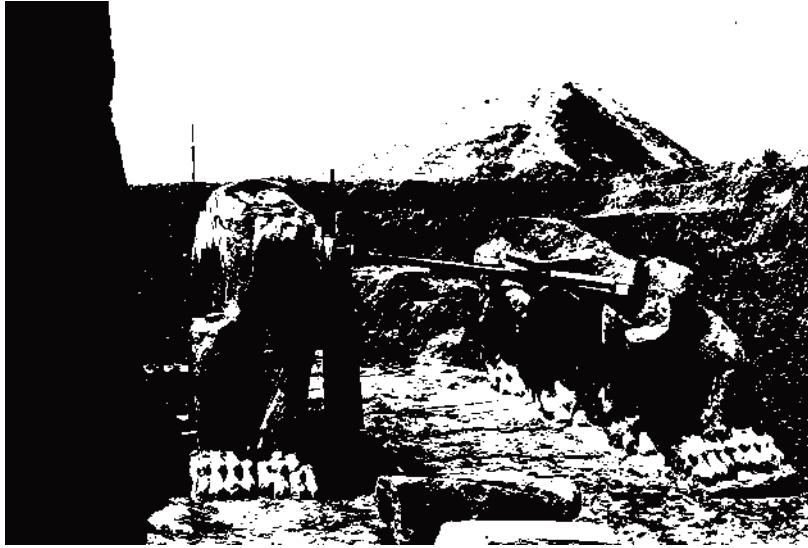
a. Part of the drainage system in room 1 (Upper Chambers).



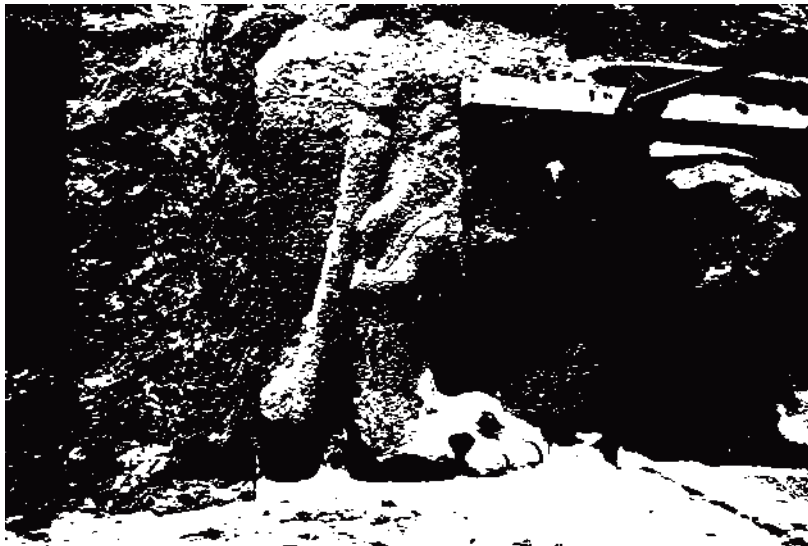
b. Room 5 with one of the original tramlines (Upper Chambers).



c. Inscribed threshold Mosul marble stone found between rooms 3 and 4 (Upper Chambers).



a. Lions flanking the eastern entrance into the Sharrat Niphi Temple.



b. Detail of northern lion flanking the eastern entrance into the Sharrat Niphi Temple.



c. Western gate of the Sharrat Niphi Courtyard.



a. Western gate of the Sharrat Niphi Courtyard.



b. Detail of southern bull colossi in the western gate of the Sharrat Niphi Courtyard.



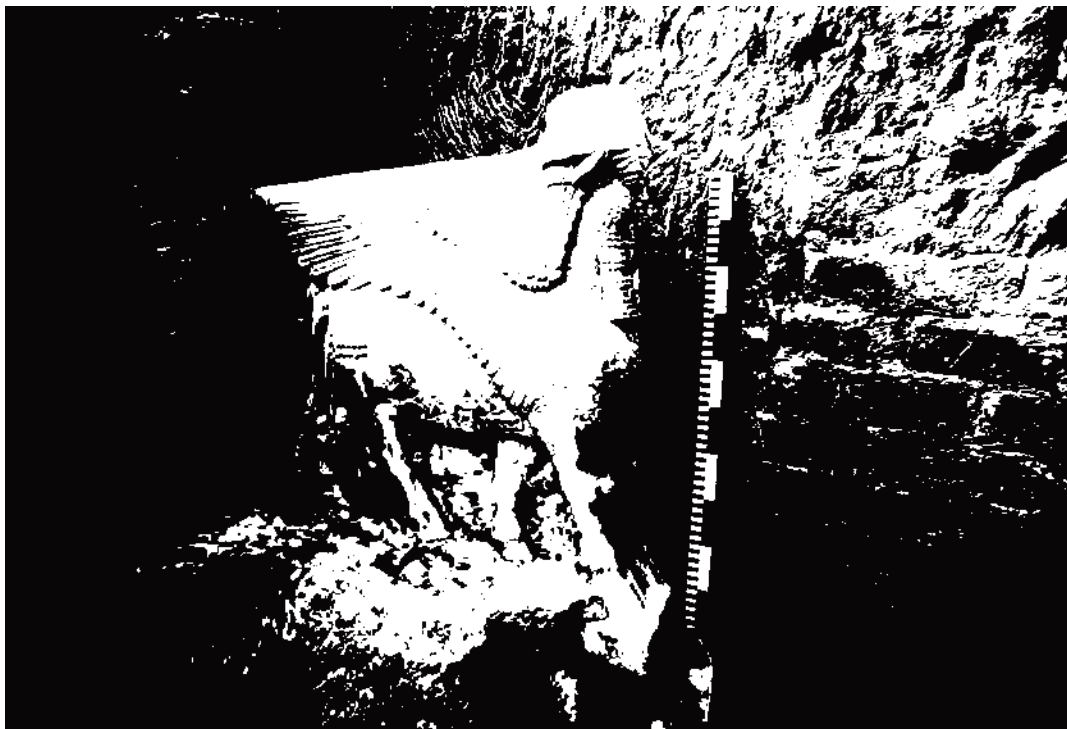
c. Northern bull colossi in the western gate of the Sharrat Niphi Courtyard.



a. Detail of southern bull colossi in the western gate of the Sharrat Niphi Courtyard.



b. Head of the bull colossi in the western gate of the Sharrat Niphi Courtyard.



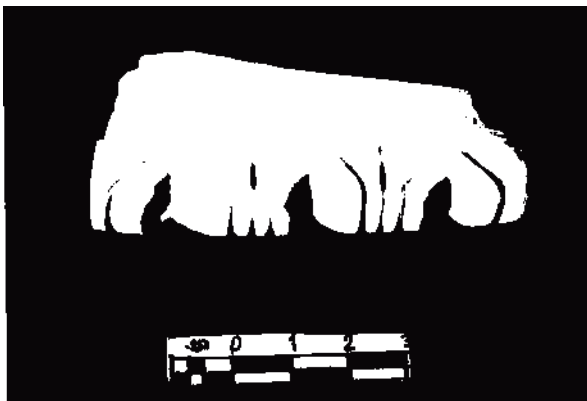
c. Northern bull colossi in the western gate of the Sharrat Niphi Courtyard.



a. Fragment of a winged figurine made of blue frit (Sharrat Niphi Temple).



b. Fragment of a winged figurine made of frit (Sharrat Niphi Temple).



c. Fragment of white marble (Sharrat Niphi Temple).



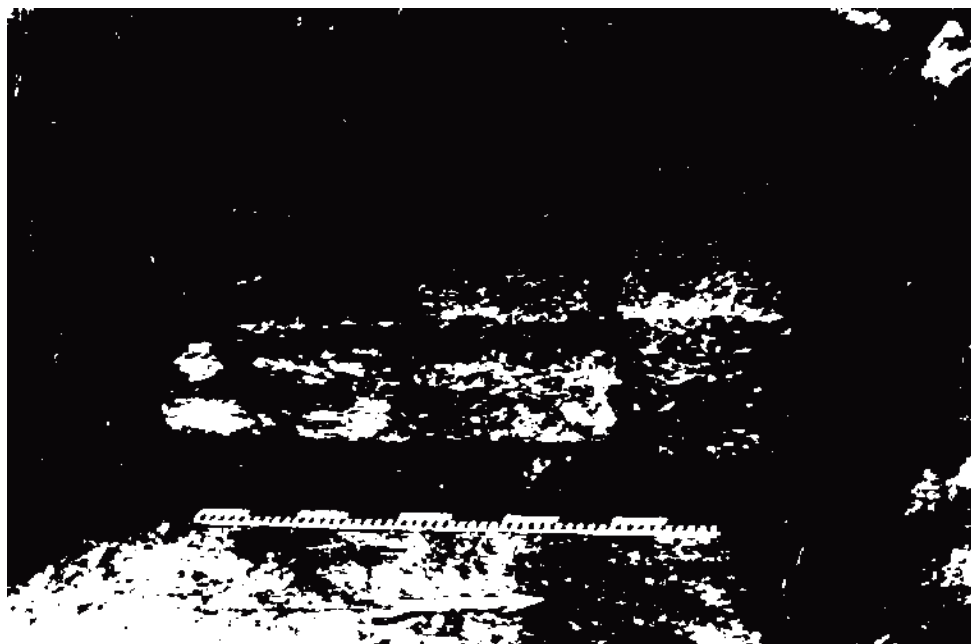
d. Pottery fragment (Sharrat Niphi Temple).



e. Fragment of a lion head, originally part of the eastern lion in the entrance into the Sharrat Niphi cella.



f. Fragment of bird's legs made of bronze (Sharrat Niphi Temple).



a. Incense burner found lying on its side in the southwestern niche of the Sharrat Niphi courtyard.



b. Fragment of an inscribed prism (Sharrat Niphi Temple).

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Abbreviations

<i>AfO</i>	Archiv für Orientforschung (Berlin – Graz / Wien)
<i>AfO Beih.</i>	Archiv für Orientforschung Beihefte (Berlin – Graz / Wien)
<i>AJA</i>	American Journal of Archaeology: The Journal of the Archaeological Institute of America (New York)
<i>Akh Purattim</i>	Akh Purattim - Les Rives de l'Euphrate. Mémoires d'archéologie et d'histoire régionales interdisciplinaires (Lyon)
<i>Akkadica</i>	Akkadica. Périodique bimestriel de la Fondation Assyriologique Georges Dossin (Louvain)
<i>Al-Rāfidān</i>	Al-Rāfidān. Journal of Western Asiatic Studies (Tokio)
<i>Anatolica</i>	Anatolica. Annuaire international pour les civilisations de l'Asie antérieure, publié sous les auspices de l'Institut historique et archéologique néerlandais à Istanbul (Leiden)
<i>ANES Suppl.</i>	Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Supplement Series (Louvain – Paris – Sterling)
<i>AOAT</i>	Alter Orient und Altes Testament (Kevelaer – Neukirchen-Vluyn)
<i>AoF</i>	Altorientalische Forschungen (Berlin)
<i>Athenaeum</i>	Studi di Letteratura e Storia dell'Antichità (Como)
<i>AVO</i>	Altertumskunde des Vorderen Orients. Archäologische Studien zur Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients (Münster)
<i>BaF</i>	Baghdader Forschungen. DAI. Abteilung Baghdad (Mainz)
<i>BAH</i>	Bibliothèque archéologique et historique (Paris)
<i>BAR Int. Series</i>	British Archaeological Press International Series (Oxford)
<i>BATSH</i>	Berichte der Ausgrabung Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad/Dūr-Katlimmu (Berlin – Wiesbaden)
<i>BCSMS</i>	Bulletin. The Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies (Toronto)
<i>BLA</i>	Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology (London)
<i>BIWA</i>	Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals : die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften (Wiesbaden); see Borger 1996
<i>CM</i>	Cuneiform Monographs (Groningen)
<i>CHANE</i>	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East (Leiden – Boston)
<i>DAA</i>	Denkmäler antiker Architektur (Berlin)
<i>DaM</i>	Damaszener Mitteilungen (Mainz)
<i>EtTr</i>	Etudes et Travaux. Travaux du Centre d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences (Warszawa)
<i>HANEM</i>	History of the Ancient Near East Monograph (Padova)
<i>HdO</i>	Handbuch der Orientalistik (Leiden – Boston – Köln)
<i>ICAANE 4</i>	H. Kühne (ed.) 2008. The reconstruction of environment. Natural Resources and Human Interrelations through Time ; Art History - Visual Communication, Proceedings of the 4th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (Wiesbaden)
<i>ICAANE 6</i>	P. Matthiae (ed.) 2010. Near Eastern Archaeology in the past, present and future.

Heritage and Identity. Ethnoarchaeological and interdisciplinary approach, results and perspectives. Visual expression and craft production in the definition of social relations and status. Proceedings of the 6th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (Wiesbaden)

- Iraq* Iraq (London)
- ISIMU* Revista sobre Oriente Próximo y Egipto en la antigüedad (Madrid)
- JNES* Journal of Near Eastern Studies (Chicago – New York)
- KAL* Keilschrifttexte aus Assur literarischen Inhalts (Wiesbaden) = *WVDOG* 116, 117, 121
- MDOG* Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft (Berlin)
- Mesopotamia* Mesopotamia. Rivista di Archeologia. Epigrafia e Storia Orientale Antica (Torino)
- OIP* Oriental Institute Publications (Chicago)
- PIHANS* Publications de l'Institut Historique et Archéologique Néerlandais à Stamboul (Leiden)
- RA* Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale (Paris)
- RGTC* Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes (Wiesbaden)
- RIMA* Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Assyrian Periods (Toronto – Buffalo – London); see Grayson 1987, 1991, 1996
- RIMB* Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Babylonian Periods (Toronto – Buffalo – London); see Frame 1995
- RIME* Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Early Periods (Toronto – Buffalo – London); see Frayne 1990, 1993
- RINAP* The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period (Winona Lake)
- RLA* Reallexikon der Assyriologie (Leipzig / Berlin)
- SA* State Archives of Assyria (Helsinki)
- SAAB* State Archives of Assyria. Bulletin (Padova)
- SAAS* State Archives of Assyria Studies (Helsinki)
- StAT* Studien zu den Assur-Texten (Saarbrücken)
- Subartu* Subartu. European Centre for Mesopotamian Studies (Turnhout)
- Sumer* Sumer. Journal of Archaeology (and History) in Iraq. The Republic of Iraq. Directorate General of Antiquities (Baghdad).
- SVA* Schriften zur vorderasiatischen Archäologie (Saarbrücken).
- Synthese* Synthese. Editions Recherche sur les civilisations (Paris)
- Syria* Syria. Revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie (Paris)
- WA* World Archaeology (London – New York)
- WO* Die Welt des Orients. Wissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Kunde des Morgenlandes (Wuppertal – Stuttgart – Göttingen)
- WVDOG* Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft (Leipzig / Osnabrück / Berlin / Saarbrücken / Saarwellingen / Wiesbaden)
- ZA* Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie (Leipzig / Berlin)
- ZORA* Zeitschrift für Orient-Archäologie (Berlin – New York)

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