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EGYPTIAN IMPERIALISM*

By way of justification for his protracted digression on Egypt Herodotus claims that the geo-physical characteristics of the land and the customs and behaviour of its population are in most respects the opposite of those of other peoples and countries; and in contradistinction to his mention and discussion of the latter Egypt is dealt with as a separate entity.

In a way this view of the old civilization has survived until the present day – reflected, partly, in the ever growing curiosity of the general public and in the closed discipline of Egyptology.

However, in the last decade an increasing number of Egyptologists have become aware of the necessity to reconsider and reassess what former generations of scholars established as firmly rooted concepts and incontestable "facts", the incentive being less the constant flow of new material than precisely the recognition that the subjects of study and the results obtained are to a considerable extent the product of the mind of the investigator. It is no secret that Egyptologists are not in the forefront of the modern transformations of the humane and social sciences, but we find some excuse in the fact that the field is still in its infancy; the language is imperfectly understood; the material remains are in a variety of ways very unrepresentative; in short, Egyptologists use all their efforts in an attempt to acquire an adequate command of a broad spectrum of very basic sub-disciplines.[1]

However one may account for the change – and the matter is of course more complex than these few words indicate – it is the case that by means of new theoretical assumptions and methods borrowed from other fields Egyptologists have indeed embarked upon a process of what one might call subversion.

On the occassion of this symposion, therefore, I should like to join the colours by way of a discussion of the Egyptian Empire.

While the existence of an empire during at least some part of the New

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*) I am grateful to Professor Torgny Säve-Söderbergh for allowing me to quote from his unpublished paper "Aspects of ancient Egyptian relations with Nubia and the Sudan" and to Professor J. R. Harris for revising the English text of the original version of this paper.

Kingdom is generally recognized, a new case has been made out recently for a kind of hold over Syria and Palestine by the pharaos of the 12th dynasty.[2] Having enumerated "the most striking facts"[3] Posener concludes that "there emerges the impression of domination by the pharaohs, uneven and interrupted, no doubt, but on the whole vigorous. Its precise nature still eludes us".[4]

Let us briefly look at his arguments. "The sources at our disposal are evasive", he says, "and do not permit us to settle the question"[5] (whether there was a political domination/empire).

He shows that the use of the Execration Texts "as a source for political history is very hazardous", though the texts' omission – among the potential enemies of Egypt – of precisely those towns "in which (. . .) the presence of Egyptians made itself especially strongly felt" "may be significant".[6] There remains, then, the actual Egyptian material found in these places, first and foremost statues of Middle Kingdom officials found in Megiddo, Ugarit, etc.

Arguing by analogy with a similar group of statues of Middle Kingdom officials found at Kerma in Nubia and by reference to the other inconclusive material he arrives at the conclusion quoted a moment ago.[7]

To put it bluntly, this is an instance of the typical dagger-handle way of reasoning, and, as it happens, Helck has demonstrated beyond doubt that both the Nubian and the Asiatic material have been found in archaeological contexts that cannot be dated earlier than the Hyksos period.[8] Consequently, the Egyptian domination over Syria and Palestine must be regarded as a red herring.

The Egyptian occupation of Lower Nubia during the Middle Kingdom is as certain as the purpose and content of this domination is disputed[9] and in what follows I shall therefore confine myself to the New Kingdom, the period of the Empire, as it is called in all textbooks. Within this span of time the bulk of material drawn upon will be from the 18th dynasty, that is – roughly speaking – from 1500-1300 B.C.

During this period Egyptian expansion was directed towards Asia and Nubia, the two traditional foci of the country's foreign policy. Scholars usually refer to the outcome of this process in terms of occupation, but, as will be seen, the measures adopted by the Egyptians in the two areas – their scope and execution – were in certain basic respects so different, that the grouping of them under such a heading is hardly justifiable. In terms of territorial expansion the peak was reached in the reign of Thutmosis III who succeeded in extending the southern frontier all the way down to the 4th cataract, while parts of Syria and Palestine were brought into some state of dependency on Egypt. In both areas the form and content of their relationship with Egypt were subject to modification and

development, but in that I am not immediately concerned with the history of the individual components of this relationship as such, the following survey of what I consider the most salient features will present a state of affairs, which – as a whole – may have existed only at a given point during the New Kingdom, or indeed may not have existed at all. This procedure, of course, raises at least one very important problem which will be discussed later.

Let us now turn our attention to Nubia, where the Egyptians managed to accomplish an almost perfect Egyptianization.[10]

At the political and administrative level the expansion meant the introduction of the Egyptian administrative technique. The country was divided into two regions: Wawat, embracing lower Nubia down to Semna, immediately south of the second cataract, and Kush, the deep south. Monuments and especially prosopographical analyses show that the government of Nubia was modelled on that of Egypt. At its head was the Viceroy, who was responsible only to the king on an equal footing with the vizier. And again corresponding to the organizational role of the viziers of Upper and Lower Egypt, Wawat and Kush were then administered by two deputies, and both regions were subdivided into settlements or administrative districts, each under the control of a mayor. The government comprised the usual departments, witness such titles as Overseer of the Treasury, Overseer of Granaries, etc.

At all levels of administration the majority of the officials seem to have been Egyptians, but local chiefs even holding important offices were by no means rare. Like in Syria and Palestine the Egyptians took great pains to ensure their loyalty. To this end the most effective means was the practise of taking the sons of the indigenous rulers as hostages to Egypt, where the education at the court of Pharaoh was so successful that, allegedly, they forgot their own language.[11] However, in that the aim of Egyptian policy in the two areas was not the same, the Nubian youths were apparently brought up as potential members of the Egyptian ruling class,[12] i.e. having "job possibilities" in Nubia as well as Egypt. In support of this contention I should like to draw attention, first to the well known fact that these "children of the royal training school"[12a] not only had their native names replaced by an Egyptian one, but, more significantly, had their tombs cut in a wholly Egyptian style. Already in the early part of the 18th dynasty we find tombs which are completely indistinguishable from those of true Egyptian officials.[13] The second point actually needs further elaboration before it can find general acceptance, but it cannot be denied that, as from the reign of Amenophis II, men of Nubian extraction figure conspicuously among the most trusted officials of Pharaoh. Thus the tutor of Tuthmosis IV – whose name shows him to be a Nubian (or

perhaps of Nubian descent)[14] was also Overseer of all the king's work under Amenophis II with whom he probably grew up. His son at any rate was brought up together with the sons of that king and he later crowned his career by becoming tutor of Amenophis III.[15] Moreover, both men had their tombs in the Theban Necropolis, and indeed in the more fashionable part of it.[16]

Though the administration was backed by armed forces garrisoned in the numerous fortresses throughout the area, the success of the Egyptianization policy was largely due to the new settlements which were established in great number especially in Lower Nubia. The impact of this policy must have been primarily at the socio-economic level, since, as argued by Säve-Söderbergh,[17] the advance of Egyptian culture at the expense of the indigenous can be traced back to the 2nd intermediate period, when there was no transfer of Egyptian personnel to Nubia.[18]

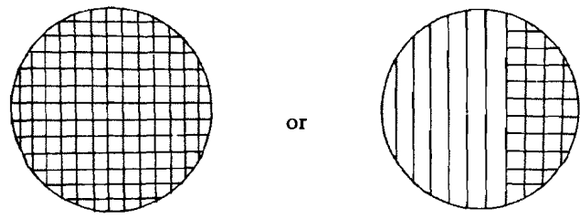
Although even when quantitative data are available we have virtually nothing with which to compare them, there can be little doubt that the settlements brought about a major increase in the production.

For all we know the settlement pattern in Nubia was also a replica of that in Egypt.[19] As regards the physical design of the settlements Trigger[20] and Kemp have demonstrated, that they were in effect "temple-centred towns of the type which probably now formed the backbone of urbanism in Egypt",[21] and, as implied by the latter, this conclusion is borne out "by the conversion of an old citadel at Buhen, dating from an earlier period of Egyptian expansion, to conform to the appearance of these new towns."[22] An important modification, however, is provided by the fortified walls which in Nubia – for reasons of security – enclosed the whole settlement, whereas in the towns of Egypt only the temple had an enclosure wall.[23] In his discussion of the archaeological evidence for the economic aspects of the temple/town problem in ancient Egypt, Kemp distinguishes between two situations, of which the first, namely, "where the temple was a new foundation on a hitherto non-urban site and where is was to remain the principal or even sole reason for a settlement's existence"[24] is believed to account for the settlement pattern in Nubia.[25] Kemp duly emphasizes that while the idea of organizing the administration and exploitation of Nubia with a temple economy as a basic unit is very attractive, it is so far largely unsubstantiated. The advantage of this hypothesis is that is "provides a ready-made selfsufficient unit integrated with the fabric of the Egyptian state and capable, through the institution of khato-land of administering crown lands as well".[26] Be this as it may – and I do not want to go into the extremely vexed question concerning the extent to which state and temple should be conceived of as being two separate economic entities[27] – of far more importance for the present purpose

than the *organization* of the economy is the nature of the economic structure. The question is whether the Nubian economy was structurally integrated into the Egyptian, which roughly speaking was a system of redistribution.[28]

The available evidence is extremely sparse, but I think the answer must be in the affirmative. Until the publication of Smith's monumental, *The Fortress of Buhen, The Incriptions*, London 1976, there existed to my knowledge hardly any written material bearing on this,[29] but the Buhen material, jar sealings and dockets, presents the faint, yet unambigous contours of a picture very familar from Egypt itself – in this case the delivery of commodities to Buhen from various parts of Egypt and Nubia. As the provenance of wine the following places are attested: divine and royal establishments in Lower-Egypt; Memphis, Amarna, the Oases, Nubia;[30] and probably Syria and Palestine.[31] As one would expect in a different socio-ecological setting, the composition of the commodities recorded in Buhen deviates from comparable material from Egyptian sites, but in that the figures at Buhen are considerably smaller than the Egyptian, one should perhaps not attach too much importance to this phenomenon.[32]

If the view here taken be accepted we have not only been furnished with a new and substantial piece of evidence adding further dimensions to the Egyptian policy in Nubia, as I see it the economic relations may be represented in the following way:



the difference between the two "models" is entirely one of quantity, and to avoid misunderstanding let me say that the size of the cross-hatched area is pure guesswork.

Contrary to the usual idea of a unilateral exploitation of Nubia on the part of its conqueror I am suggesting that Nubia was no more exploited than any other region of considerable economic potentialities in Egypt itself. On the other hand, since, after all, it was an old enemy territory, and since – with the exception of gold – the products of Nubia were, by and large, of a kind unobtainable in Egypt (ivory, ebony, ostrich feathers, leopard skins, etc.) the control of this area assumed a more overt, occasion-

ally repressive – and ideologically more intensive form. The Egyptian expansion towards Nubia is generally attributed – first and foremost to the presence, in huge quantities, of gold, its product par excellence.[33] Now, in a recent study Janssen[34] has shown that there are very good reasons for assuming that the output of the Egyptian mines was a great deal larger than that of Nubia – though the reverse situation has ranked as another of the basic "facts" in Egyptology. If that is true, it gives rise to a number of highly important questions, such as: was this the case also before the reconquest? or, did the Egyptians expect the Nubian mines to be richer – and easier to work – than their own? or was the higher output in Egypt due to the discovery of new mines? a more extensive use of the known sources? a depletion of the Nubian mines? or a combination of these and other factors? Thus posed none of the questions is likely ever to be answered, but they do compel us to put the problem of why the Egyptians went into Nubia on an entirely new basis.

The fact, however, that during the Middle of the 18th dynasty the jurisdiction of the viceroy was extended to include the three southernmost, gold-producing nomes of Egypt itself[35] – I would emphasize that Nubia and old Egyptian territory were unified under his charge – is in my opinion a clear indication in favour of the view that Nubia (Wawat) – in this period at least – was a fully integrated part of Egypt, though – for the specific reason mentioned a moment ago, it was not on an entirely equal footing with, say, the grain-producing Lower Egypt.

I quoted Kemp[36] for a situation "where the temple was a new foundation on a hitherto non-urban site and where it was to remain the principal or even sole reason for a settlement's existence", and according to him "the most obvious category in (this) situation is the royal mortuary temple." The implications of the first part of this statement have already been referred to and I shall now use the latter as the starting-point for some further remarks on the settlement policy.

First it must be emphasized that this sentence (where it was to remain the principal or even sole reason for a settlement's existence) is not an expression of a general acceptance of the idea that in the development of human society ideological motives should be given priority over material factors. Rather it is in keeping with the prevailing opinion that would attribute, for instance the marked increase in the production, which begins to show up as from the 3rd dynasty, to a more rigorous and accomplished interpretation of the concept of kingship, resulting in the setting up of large scale funerary establishments consisting of a pyramid-tomb, a mortuary temple and endowments – mainly in the form of new settlements – for the maintenance of the cult of the dead king.

And this development, in turn, is of course but one stage in a process where, unfortunately, the interaction of material and ideological elements is little known.

What the statement does imply is that the nature of this particular relationship between settlement and temple is such that as soon as the upkeep of the cult is brought to a stop the settlement is disestablished. This point is illustrated by Kemp in his discussion of the relationship between the pyramid and mortuary temple of Sesostris II and the town of Illahun; but does it apply to the Nubian scene?

While it is probable, as mentioned earlier, that a temple economy was used as the basic unit in the organization of the economic administration of Nubia, the motives behind the planning of the Egyptianization program are not easily apparent. On the one hand we have the fortified settlements of Lower Nubia the distribution of which is clearly correlated with the location of the gold mines and the need to control the river-traffic; and on the other hand, as stated by Kemp, "the apparently nonecologically based distribution of temple towns into the impoverished area between Batn-el-Hagar and the Third Cataract looks suspiciously like the result of an over-assessment of agricultural potential based on a false understanding of the process of nature."[37]

In other words, we do not know whether the fortified temple settlements were instruments of a policy primarily aimed at creating a stable background, say, for the working of the gold mines, or were aimed at the development and subsequent exploitation of Nubia as a whole; in short, whether the settlements belong to the level of ideology or economy.[38]

However, it is obvious that the presence of a number of important gods, including – among the gods of state – a divine form of the living king, must have made a certain ideological impact, though its range and scope are the subjects of some controversy. Some scholars would subscribe to Trigger's assertion when he writes: "While the worship of reigning monarchs may have been carried to further extremes architecturally in Nubia than it was in Egypt, it is wrong to view these cults as being surreptitiously or experimentally introduced among the credulous barbarians of Egypt's Nubian empire. Statues of Amenhotep III and Ramesses II were objects of worship in Egypt no less than in Nubia."[39]

This is undeniable; divine forms of those kings were indeed worshipped in both countries,[40] but the special form of the worship in Nubia was not restricted to architecture. The material pertaining to the cult of a divine form of the reigning king (mainly Ramesses II) has been

gathered together by Habachi[41] and systematized by Wildung,[42] and it reveals a process of deification manifesting itself in iconography, epigraphy, epithets, and divine typology, and with a distribution confined, by and large, to Nubia. To Wildung the massive array of material leads to the inevitable conclusion that we are faced with a clear instance of "Aussenpolitische Propaganda", created in response to a new political situation, but "stets auf der soliden Basis der Einlösung einer dogmatischen Forderung."[43] As said before, the sources for this phenomenon derive for the most part from the 19th dynasty, but in that the origin of nearly all the elements of this process can be traced to the time of Amenophis III – in some cases even to Tuthmosis III – the inclusion of this material in the present discussion seems justified.

And so does the choice of the term Egyptianization *policy*. The combined evidence of the topics singled out for mention or brief discussion in the preceeding outline – the restructuring of the political and administrative institutions; the acculturation of at least the upper strata of Nubian society; the transformation of the settlement pattern; an ideological expansion amounting almost to propaganda; and – above all, the integration of the economy into the Egyptian redistributive economy – reveals, in my opinion, nothing short of a conscious effort on the part of the Egyptians to push also the non-material borderline southwards to the 4th cataract.

The available documentation enables us to gauge the success of this policy in several ways, but let me end this part of the paper by calling your attention to two points. First, the fact that already at the beginning of the reign of Amenophis III we find Nubian mercenaries taking part in Egyptian punitive raids against the tribes of the eastern desert.[44] Second, the well-known scenes of "tribute-bearers" in the tombs of Rekhmire,[45] who was one of the southern viziers under Tuthmosis III and Huy,[46] viceroy under Tutankhamun. In the first tomb the Nubian tribute-bearers are wearing loincloths, but a century later only ethnic ornaments and their physical appearance distinguish them from the elegantly dressed Egyptians.

Let is now briefly – for purposes of comparison – recapitulate the state of affairs in what is commonly called the Asiatic empire. Again it must be emphasized that since we do not possess source material admitting of a synchronous description at any given moment during the New Kingdom, we are dealing with a reconstruction – a model in fact.

In contrast to the Egyptianization policy in Nubia, the Egyptian exercise of power in Syria and Palestine seems to have had the maintenance of ordered relations between separate societies as its primary

objective – ordered social relations being necessary for a peaceful two-way trade. By means of a vigorous and well-planned application of power – one of the two essential conditions of the establishment of social order – during the earlier part of the 18th dynasty,[47] resulting in a substantial alteration of the map,[48] the pharaohs succeeded in making the local rulers acknowledge their authority in matters of political organization. In this part of the world – as in ours – authority implies the right to exercise power, and in that the princes – albeit at different levels – acknowledged this right – which is the other condition of the maintenance of social order – the outcome of what at the outset might have been intended as a complete subjugation was a relationship between societies based on a system of international law.[49]

We have here a clear indication of the existence of a shared system of values, but whether it was part of the prerequisites of this development or resulted from it we cannot tell.[50]

At any rate, by the time of Amenophis III there seems to have obtained a situation of social stability requiring the presence of only a symbolic Egyptian military force.[51]

The overall administration of Syria and Palestine was in the hands of the Egyptians.[52] At the top of the pyramid we have an office known as the Bureau for the Correspondence of Pharaoh, from which two channels of command appear to have branched off, one to the local rulers and the other to the Egyptian govenors, the rabisu of the Amarna letters.

In certain general respects the local rulers had a status comparable to that of a vassal in European feudal society.[53] In return for political and social stability[54] the vassal took an oath of allegiance to the reigning king; the oath was taken for a limited period thus making it possible for a vassal to choose another overlord. This is explicitly stated in the treaty between Suppiluliuma and Šunaššura (Kizzuwatna),[55] and although evidence for an Egyptian acknowledgement of this right has yet to be adduced, there is some reason to believe that they did in fact adhere to this principle.[56]

In theory the prince was the master within his own territory, but his many obligations to pharaoh entailed a severe restriction on his liberty of action. The list of his duties is very long but may be boiled down to the following two: a) to report anything that might conceivably upset the political and social equilibrium and, if necessary, to help in redressing the balance; b) to look after Egyptian economic interests in the area under his jurisdiction – something which included also an obligation to supply the Egyptian troops and garrisons therein.[57] As in Nubia the Egyptians ensured the loyalty of their vassals by carrying members of their family

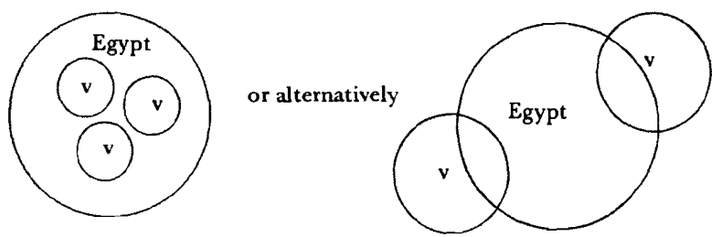
off to Egypt as hostages, as one text has it: "Now the children of the princes and their brothers were brought to be hostages in Egypt. Whoever of these princes died, His Majesty used to make his son go to stand in his place."[58]

Mention should also be made of the further restriction of liberty of action in interstate relations by which the Petty Kings were prohibited from having diplomatic contact with foreign powers.[59] In Nubia, of course, the question did not arise.

In order to co-ordinate the administration of the area as a whole and to control the vassals, Retenu, as the Egyptians called Syria and Palestine,[60] was divided into three districts, each under a rabisu. In addition to these responsibilities the three governors formed a body of arbitration which was authorized to settle disputes between the princes.[61]

These few remarks will suffice to convey an idea of the principles by which the Egyptians controlled their sphere of influence. They retained, by an large,[62] the existing political and administrative organization to which they added only such units as were necessary for the preservation of Egyptian suzerainty.

For most of the components of the economy the documentation is extremely poor. As to land holding, we know of the existence of royal and temple domains, but hardly anything abour their internal organization or their position within the general framework of administration.[63] There is a fair availability of source material related to the products of the area,[64] whereas, for instance, evidence for taxation and/or tribute is so small and uninformative that we do not know whether these two categories correspond to two or merely one component.[65] To cut the argument short, however, nothing in the material suggests an economic relationship resembling that which was drawn up for Nubia and Egypt, and as a working hypothesis one might represent the situation in the north thus (v = vassals):



The fact that – in the absence of proper material – I am inferring from the political organization to the economic should make it quite clear, that what I offer is merely guesswork, a working hypothesis.

The first model sees the economy of the city state as a separate entity in the Egyptian economic sphere and therefore entirely dependent on it. The second model, which indicates that part of the surplus product of Retenu is appropriated by Egypt – in a way that we do not really know very much about – is probably the more likely.

The essential point common to both models is, however, that the economy of the vassal-states was not structurally integrated into the Egyptian economy. It is not known whether the structure of their economy should be conceived of as a system of redistribution,[66] and as regards the two models it is in fact immaterial.

The civilizations of Western Asia and Egypt benefited from mutual contact ever since the 4th millennium, but Egyptian expansion during the New Kingdom was not accompanied by any kind of cultural imperialism. A few temples were indeed built to Egyptian gods, but apparently only in places where Egyptian officials were stationed. In contradistinction to what happened in Nubia there were no attempts to impose Egyptian cults upon the people of Retenu.[67] Though the documentation for Asiatic influence on Egypt is considerably more comprehensive than the reverse we may nevertheless characterize the cultural atmosphere of the period as one of a constant give and take.[68]

Finally, in order to complete the picture of the Egyptian exercise of authority in the dependent territories it should be mentioned that, as opposed to their employment of groups, or occasionally whole tribes, of Nubians as auxiliaries in the army and as police in Egypt itself, the Egyptians did not use foreign prisoners of war in the armed forces until the reign of Amenophis III – and then only rarely people from Retenu.[69]

Having come thus far it should be clear that Egypt did possess an empire by any standard definition of the term, in that it exercised authority over other nation-states or nations for its own benefit. On the other hand, it should be equally clear, that two types of imperial rule must be differentiated. The analysis of the empire was based on a small number of categories and it produced two imperial "states" – so widely different that, as I endeavoured to show, we may be justified in regarding Nubia as just another part of Egypt.

This brings me to the more important question as to how those two types of imperial rule came about. Even in this vague formulation the question seems to promise more than I can perform, so what I shall do is to indicate some other ways of posing the problem by means of a few remarks on the explanations that have been offered. But first I should like to say that the conceptual system of Egyptologists with respect to problems of history is so crude and the available material often so peculiar that

we frequently fail to notice the essential features of the subject under investigation. In addition to the ubiquitous "common sense"[70] our analytical categories are still to a large extent those of traditional historical research and in that no coherence has been established between them, we are in fact without a theory that could help us to ask the right questions.

On the other hand, the issue may of course be avoided if people do not ask questions, and, with one or two exceptions to be mentioned in a moment, this seems indeed to have been the case as regards the present problem.

It has been said of the kind of writing of history that we meet, for instance, in *CAH*, that it obscures history with facts.[71] Another result of this approach to history may be seen in the numerous cases where a single subject is split up and treated without any regard for coherence. I know I am exaggerating, but it remains a fact, nevertheless, that although – or as I am arguing, precisely because the contributions in *CAH* to the history of the Asiatic Empire of Egypt, made by several eminent scholars, were commissioned as separate chapters, the question as to why the Egyptians embarked upon this expansion is never raised.

As far as I am aware Helck is the only scholar who has seriously considered the matter. In his famous book, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*[2], 1971, which is the most comprehensive and substantial study of the relationship between Egypt and Asia, he has argued that the Hyksos people were not of Semitic stock but were Hurrians. This would explain why Egyptian expansion already under Tuthmosis I had Mitanni as its military goal.[72] For Helck, then, the incentive to the establishment of an empire is political and military, a possible desire for material gain being of secondary importance.[73] In the case of Nubia a similar line of reasoning has been advanced.[74] The rulers of the independent Nubian Kingdom, which came into existence in the centuries preceding the New Kingdom, were close allies of the Hyksos kings, and from the Kamose stela we know that they were committed to assist their allies in the north. Thus, the war waged against those kings is explained by reference to a military necessity, whereas the decision to annex and subsequently to incorporate Nubia into Egypt is attributed primarily to a "wish" to gain full control of the gold mines – as mentioned earlier.

How then, to return to the first question, has one accounted for the two types of imperial rule.[75] The following two quotations may be regarded as representative of the general opinion. Having stated that Egypt did not "alter the internal social or political arrangements of" the Asiatic states, Trigger[76] continues: "The Egyptians were well aware that in some

crafts, such as weaving and metal-working, the Levantines were more skilled than they were and Asiatic deities soon found an honoured place in the Egyptian pantheon. By contrast, the Egyptians had no respect for the technology, religion or customs of the Nubians. Like European colonists in Africa more recently, they dismissed the local technology and failed to appreciate religious practices or patterns of kinship and reciprocity that were based on principles that were radically different from their own." A similar opinion is voiced by Drower in her chapter in *CAH* and she adds: ". . . to introduce into Syria the whole machinery of Egyptian government would have put too great a strain on manpower, even had it been wise".[77] In support of these explanations a number of points might be put forward in addition to those already given. For instance, in one of a series of large scarabs Amenophis III commemorated the admission of a Mitannian princess into his harîm; and from the Amarna letters we know that he requested – and received – princesses also from Babylon and Arzawa; the magnificent tombs of Tuthmosis III's three Syrian wives and the marriage of Ramses II to at least one Hittite princess may serve to complete the picture.[78] I do not deny that these Asiatic princesses were coveted partly for diplomatic reasons and partly because women from these cultural spheres had the reputation of being particularly skilled in the art of making love, but the complete lack of evidence for the presence of Nubian women in the royal harîm is significant, and probably not to be attributed to an accidental gap in the material.[79] Among other well-known phenomena mention should also be made of the Egyptians' recognition of Akkadian as the lingua franca of those days.

Finally, the careful planning over a seven year period of Tuthmosis III's campaign against Mitanni might underpin the assumption that Retenu was a tall order for the Egyptians.

It has duly been pointed out that Syria and Palestine were the sphere of influence of other great powers, that Egypt's primary interest was the safeguarding of the trade routes,[80] and so on.

All these points, which by themselves or combined may add up to an explanation, have, however, one thing in common, namely, that they seek to explain the events by reference to how Egypt responded to phenomena from without.

In contemporary theory on historical method three very broad categories have been differentiated. The first method which some scholars label dialectic,[81] others diffusionist,[82] and yet others genealogical,[83] seeks to account for evolution or development within a system by way of accounting for each of its components separately. It searches for the incentives of history and explains social, political, and cultural change in terms of the diffusion of institutions, ideas, cultural traits etc. The standard

argument against this type of explanation is that it fails to explain why a system, for example a society, accepts some elements in transmission while others are rejected.[84]

It will be seen that the explanations which orientalists have offered concerning the expansion during the New Kingdom belong to this category.[85]

At this point one might well ask whether we are not imputing to the ancient Egyptians motives and decision-making processes which they did not have. Of course, this possibility cannot be ruled out, because the documents hardly ever provide us with information as to the reasoning by which a decision was made.

However, instead of refraining from seeking motives at all because of a lack of explicit information relating to this, a certain degree of probability may be assumed, if the postulated motives of the Egyptians can be shown to lie within their intellectual framework. In Egyptology the most obvious instances of the non-observance of this principle are reflected in the numerous calculations and interpretations of technological problems which all suffer from one thing – that they are technically and intellectually incompatible with the conceptual system of the ancient Egyptians.

As regards problems of history the situation is admittedly more difficult, and it is for this reason too that a functional analysis may be appropriate.

Instead of focussing on the individual components of the system, the structure of the system becomes the real subject of study.[86] The intention is to grasp a total phenomenon in terms of the relationships that constitute it, to analyse the processes of reproduction within which the structures are formed rather than concentrating on the institutional structures themselves. Whether the objective is a strictly synchronous exposition or a comparative static analysis – and, as pointed out a couple of times, the approach used in this paper falls within the latter category – this method is extremely useful, owing to the amount of information it may produce.

But there is one fundamental objection which constantly is raised against the functionalist theory – namely its inability to explain social change;[87] witness for instance this paper. It is static – whereas a theory that wants to explain social change must be dynamic. What is required is therefore a functionalist description which shows how one and the same phenomenon/relationship may be at the same time destructive and preservative for the system. This is the third method, called dialectic by some scholars and genetic by others.[88] The most obvious instance of this mechanism could very well be the function of the temple in Egyptian economy. As earlier indicated the temple was probably a dynamic force in the development of Egyptian society during the major part of the 3rd and

2nd millennium, but by the end of this period the high priest of Amun arrogated to himself the titles and power of pharaoh and Upper Egypt became what is generally known as the Gottesstaat des Amun. – In fairness I ought to say that the role of the nobility in especially the Old Kingdom[89] has for some time been dealt with in this way.[90]

It should now be clear why I cannot answer the question as to what brought about Egyptian imperialism, and even with this approach to the problem, the nature of the material may still stand in the way of a solution.

Nevertheless it seems worth trying. Instead of seeking an explanation exclusively in how the "behaviour" of everybody else affected the Egyptians I suggest that we break into the problem by way of asking the question, which oddly enough has never been posed: "Who in Egypt benefited from the empire?"

Some of you may wonder why I can warm to what you may consider commonplaces? and why I did not use the dynamic approach that I am asking for? To the first question I shall answer that these matters are not current in Egyptology; and to the second, that I had first to become aquainted with details relating to this problem.

NOTES

1. I shall take up this point again at the end of this paper.
2. Posener in *CAH*, I[3], ch. XXI, sect. II = pp. 537–50; cf. also Williams in Harris (ed.), *The Legacy of Egypt*[2], 1971, p. 257: "During the Middle Kingdom (. . .) Egypt exercised an economic if not political domination over Syria-Palestine" Kantor, "The Relative Chronology of Egypt and Its Foreign Correlations before the Late Bronze Age", in Ehrich (ed.), *Chronologies in Old World Archaeology*, 1965, p. 22, talks about "client areas".
3. Posener, op. cit., pp. 537–547.
4. ibid., p. 549.
5. ibid., p. 548.
6. loc. cit.
7. See n. 4 above; in full the quotation goes: "Its precise nature still eludes us; fifty years ago it was barely suspected. In view of this progressive increase in our knowledge, we shall err less if we exaggerate than if we minimize the hold the Twelfth Dynasty had over Syria and Palestine".

8. "Ägyptische Statuen im Ausland – ein chronologisches Problem" in *Ugarit-Forschungen*, VIII (1976), pp. 101-15; the question as to why and when the statues were then dispatched is immaterial for our present purpose, but see op. cit., pp. 113-15. – A similar opinion is voiced in Adams, *Nubia, Corridor to Africa*, 1977, p. 212, and above alle by Weinstein, "Egyptian Relations with Palestine in the Middle Kingdom", *BASOR*, CCXVII (1975), pp. 1-16.
9. The basic study is still – as indeed on all matters relating to ancient Egypt and Nubia – Säve-Söderbergh, *Ägypten und Nubien*, 1941, pp. 80-102. The core of the discussion is the function of the series of Lower Nubian forts erected during the 12th dynasty and the interaction between the C-group and the Egyptians. A few quotations from the most recent contributions towards an overall interpretation may illustrate the present position of research. Säve-Söderbergh in *Aspects . . .*: "Personally I still believe that we have to do with a military occupation and a repression of a reluctant indigenous population. The more I have studied the settlement pattern contemporaneous with the fortresses the more indications I have found that this theory is plausible and that the fortresses of Lower Nubia were built to control the Nubians and to secure the exploitation of the raw materials of Lower Nubia, especially its gold resources. Others have their reasons to believe that the Nubian C-group lived under the protection of the Egyptian fortresses as a peaceful population benefitting from the occupation." – The opinion of "others" might be represented first by Trigger, *Nubia under the Pharaohs*, 1976: " . . . the moderate policies by which the early Pharaohs of the Twelfth Dynasty established their authority in Egypt probably inclined them to attain their ends in Nubia in as gentle a manner as possible. Chief among their purposes was once again to enjoy a monopoly over trade with Kush. Thus they did not seek to control Lower Nubia by exterminating, driving out, or deporting its native inhabitants. Instead, they established a series of forts to protect their frontiers and lines of communication and to allow them to facilitate their exploitation of the Eastern Desert" (p. 77). "The dearth of [Egyptian] goods in [C-group] graves dating from the Middle Kingdom suggests the absence of close economic or social ties between the occupants of the Egyptian forts and the C-group." "No fundamental restructuring of C-group society can be correlated with the Twelfth Dynasty occupation of Lower Nubia" (p. 79; cf. also p. 80). Adams, *Nubia, Corridor to Africa*, 1977, shares in the opinion that 'The Middle Kingdom was a period of armed trade monopoly, operating through one or more established trading posts in the interior. Its main concern was not the subjugation of territory or of the native population, and production (except in the case of minerals) was left in Nubian hands. Animal and forest products, which were perhaps still more important than minerals at this period, were obtained through subsidization of native suppliers, meaning in all probability local rulers" (p. 165). As for the fortresses he argues that they "are functionally intelligible only in relation to the Nile . . . (p. 184), . . . at once the defences and the custom posts of the Nile trade. Their function was not to keep the Nubians under control, but rather to keep the Nile under Egyptian control" (p. 185). – Following J. Pirenne, A. Théodoridès, *RIDA*, XXII (1975), p. 92, speaks about "une politique d'expansion territoriale qui a conduit (sous la XII^{e} dynastie (. . .)) à l'exploitation, la colonisation et l'annexion du Haut Nil, jusqu'au Sud de la deuxième cataracte".
10. Cf. in general Hayes, *CAH*, II^{3}, ch. IX, sect. VII = pp. 346-53.
11. Säve-Söderbergh, *Ägypten und Nubien*, 1941, p. 185 ff.

12. From the late 18th dynasty this applied to the Asiatics as well, cf. Helck, *Beziehungen . . .*^{2}, 1971, p. 352 ff.

12a. *ḫrdw n K3p*; for this title see Helck, *Der Einfluss der Militärführer . . .*, 1939, p. 34 ff.; ibid., *Zur Verwaltung . . .*, 1958, p. 254; Simpson, *Heka-Nefer*, 1963, p. 26; cf. also Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III*, 1969, p. 14.

13. What is at issue here, among other things, is the all-important question whether the development in Nubia as from the middle of the Second Intermediate Period was one of acculturation or depopulation. The crux of the matter is the so-called Egyptian tombs in Nubia which according to Säve-Söderbergh mainly belonged to Egyptianized Nubians (*ZDMG*, 1969, Supplementa I, pp. 19-20 supra 3), whereas Adams thinks that they were those of Egyptian settlers (*JEA*, L (1964), pp. 103-08). Unfortunately the anthropological evidence from the C-group graves, Egyptian tombs, Pan-graves, Kerma-group and genuine Egyptian cemeteries is far from conclusive (Säve-Söderberg, op.cit., pp. 18-19, to which should now be added Nielsen, "Population Movements and changes in Ancient Nubia with Special Reference to the Relationship between C-Group, New Kingdom and Kerma", in *Journal of Human Evolution*, II (1973), pp. 31-46) and the strongest support in favour of the theory of C-group acculturation would therefore seem to be the almost complete lack of funerary inscriptions: "Eine der wichtigsten Aufgaben eines ägyptischen Grabes war doch, den Namen des Toten leben zu lassen, und wenn diese Gräber tatsächlich Ägyptern gehörten, wäre es recht auffallend, daß nicht einmal in den reichsten und ungeplünderten Gräbern der Name des Toten zu finden ist – weder auf der einfachsten Grabstele noch auf Uschebti-Figuren, Skarabäen, Grabkonen oder sonstigen Gegenständen. Uschebti kommen überhaupt nicht vor, von Herz-Skarabäen nur ein einzelner ohne Namen, auch keine Stelen oder beschriftete Architekturfragmente; die einzigen Namen, die überhaupt vorkommen, sind zwei Topf-Inschriften eines Wakils (*idnw*) und eines Künstlers (*sš ḳdwt*)" (Säve-Söderbergh, op. cit., p. 17). The most recent formulation of the two views are to be found in Säve-Söderbergh, *Kush*, XV (1967-68), pp. 237-42 and Adams, *Nubia, Corridor to Africa*, 1977, pp. 231; 235-40; with Trigger, *Nubia und the Pharaohs*, 1976, pp. 131-35 taking up an intermediate position. Reference should also be made to *Aspects . . .*, where Säve-Söderbergh gives a balanced exposition of how the problems might be solved. Cf. finally Lorton, *The Juridical Terminology . . .*, 1974, p. 29 top and Holthoer, *New Kingdom Pharaonic Sites, The Pottery*, (= *SJE*, vol. 5:1), 1977, p. 2, who with reference to the above mentioned publications by Säve-Söderbergh writes: "Although leaving a closer scrutiny of the evidence and any subsequent discussion to the coming parts of the present volume, I would like to point out that the Egyptian pottery does not, in this case, provide us with any reason to doubt this conclusion".
14. Names compounded with *ḥq3-* are generally assumed to indicate Nubian extraction and in a forthcoming article I intend to show that this is indeed the case; cf. also Helck, *Zur Verwaltung . . .*, 1958, p. 273.
15. Frandsen, *AcOr*, XXXVII (1976), pp. 5-10; and see in general Säve-Söderbergh, *Ägypten und Nubien*, 1941, pp. 237-40.
16. Frandsen, op. cit., p. 9 and Helck, *JESHO*, V (1962), pp. 225-43, esp. pp. 237 and 239.
17. op. cit., pp. 187-89.
18. Säve-Söderbergh, *Kush*, XV (1967-68), p. 241.

19. Systematic and reasonably detailed knowledge of settlements and urbanization is only now coming into existence, cf., e.g., Butzer, *Early Hydraulic Civilization in Egypt*, 1976, p. 57 ff. and Kemp, "The early development of towns in Egypt", in *Antiquity*, LI (1977), pp. 185-200.
20. *History and Settlement in Lower Nubia*, 1965, p. 109.
21. Kemp, "Fortified towns in Nubia", in Ucko, Tringham and Dimbleby (eds.), *Man, Settlement and Urbanism*, 1972, p. 654; cf. also the remarks by Azim, *CRIPEL*, III (1975), p. 123.
22. Kemp, op. cit., p. 653.
23. ibid.
24. ibid., "Temple and town in ancient Egypt", in Ucko, Tringham and Dimbleby (eds.), op. cit., p. 661.
25. ibid., p. 667; the use of the notion "settlement pattern" does not include the location of the settlements, which was, of course, determined by considerations of productive, military, religious and political objectives.
26. loc. cit.
27. Cf. ibid., pp. 657-80; Janssen, *SAK*, III (1975), pp. 180-82 and Helck, *OA*, VIII (1969), pp. 281-327.
28. Cf. Janssen, op. cit., pp. 183-85 and ibid., *Commodity Prices . . .*, 1975, pp. 558-62.
29. Three dockets on wine jars were found at Aniba and published by Steindorff, *Aniba*, II, Text, pp. 151-52. Another 16 out of a total of 28 wine dockets, found at Kor, are published by Vercoutter, *Kush*, III (1955), pl. VIa, cf. p. 15 n. 45; according to their discoverer, *Kush*, VII (1959), p. 127 n. 15, "They bear hieratic inscriptions giving the provenience of the wine — usually vineyards in the Delta". Knudstad, *Kush*, XIV (1966), p. 186, mentions an ostracon from Dorginarti "in XIXth and XXth Dynasty hieratic characters recording the arrival of grain". — The traditional material (tribute scenes/lists, temple decrees, etc.) relevant to the economic relationship between Egypt and Nubia is of little value for the present question. For a full discussion of the import *from* Nubia see Säve-Söderbergh, *Ägypten und Nubien*, 1941, pp. 206-30; cf. also Adams, *Nubia . . .*, 1977, pp. 230-32. For leasing or donation of land to private individuals see Säve-Söderbergh, op. cit., pp. 199-200 (= Helck, *Materialen zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte . . .*, II, 1961, pp. 295-97) to which should be added *Urk* IV, 1637, 9-14 (where the reference to *PSBA* should read 16 (1893)!).
30. For viticulture in Nubia see Adams, *Kush*, XIV (1966), pp. 262-83.
31. See the exciting chapter on "Commodities imported into Buhen in the New Kingdom" in Smith, *The Fortress of Buhen . . .*, 1976, pp. 180-89, esp. pp. 182-86.
32. op. cit., p. 182.
33. Cf., e.g., *CAH*, II^3, ch. IX, sect. VII = p. 350 ff. and Vercoutter, *Kush*, VII (1959) pp. 120-53.
34. *SAK*, III (1975), pp. 154-55.
35. Cf. *CAH*, II^3, ch. IX, sect. VII = p. 348.
36. See above n. 24 and 21.
37. Kemp, op. cit. (n. 24 above), p. 667.
38. The approach to this problem, that is, an attempt at isolating certain factors (in tems of a disjunction), will be dealt with below.
39. *Nubia under the Pharaohs*, 1976, pp. 118-19.
40. In the case of Amenophis III Helck would disagree, cf. *OA*, VIII (1969), p. 317.

41. *Features of the deification of Ramesses II*, 1969.
42. *OLZ*, LXVIII (1973), pp. 549-65 and *ZÄS*, IC (1973), pp. 33-41.
43. *OLZ*, LXVIII (1973), p. 562.
44. Säve-Söderbergh, *Ägypten und Nubien*, 1941, p. 158 ff. and p. 230 ff. See also Helck, op. cit., p. 297.
45. Davies, *Rekh-Mi-Rē'*, 1943, I, p. 17 ff. and II, pl. XVIII ff.
46. Davies and Gardiner, *Ḥuy*, 1926, p. 21 ff. and pl. XXIII ff. See also below n. 77.
47. Cf. Drioton et Vandier, *L'Égypte*^{5}, 1975, p. 398 ff.
48. Cf. Helck, *AfO*, XXII (1968/69), pp. 27-29.
49. On the basis of, e.g., *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* where law is defined as "the body of rules, whether formally enacted or customary, which a state or community recognizes as binding on its members or subjects", while international law is the law "under which nations, as individual members of a common polity, are bound by a common rule of agreement or custom" the use of the latter term seems justified within the framework of the present model. That the famous 19th dynasty treaty between the Hittites and the Egyptians falls within the definition is evident, although it should be borne in mind that treaties in this period were always made between persons and not states, cf. Korošec, "Über die Entwicklung von völkerrechtlichen Beziehungen in der El-Amarna Zeit", in *RIDA*, XXII (1975), pp. 47-70, esp. pp. 53-59. The same author would, moreover, also let such a definition apply to the relationship between Great Kings and Petty Kings, cf. op. cit., p. 53. In further justification of the contention that the legal agreement between a Great King and a Petty King is a treaty and not a private contract one might mention the right on the part of the Petty King to choose another overlord (see further below n. 55).
Whether the Egyptians already in the 18th dynasty "bound themselves by a common rule of agreement or custom" is, however, a moot point. Basing themselves on the different series of correspondence (Amarna, Taanakh, etc.) and arguing on analogy with the Hittite "Staatsverträge" most scholars assume that the Egyptians of this age not only accepted Akkadian as the lingua franca but also adopted the system of international relations current in Western Asia; cf. Pirenne, "Le droit international sous la XVIII^e dynastie égyptienne aux XV^e et XIV^e siècles av. J.-C.", in *RIDA*, V (1958), pp. 3-19; Korošec, op. cit.; Théodoridès, "Les relations de l'Egypte pharaonique avec ses voisins", in *RIDA*, XXII (1975), pp. 87-140, esp. pp. 87 n. 2, 109, 111, and 138: "A l'evidence, un 'Droit des Gens' a existé (. . .) Ce droit des gens a engendré corrélativement un 'droit international privé' destiné à assurer la sauvegarde des personnes . . ." etc.; Helck, *Beziehungen . . .*^{2}, 1971, p. 247; Drower, *CAH*, II^3, ch. X, sect. VI = p. 484; Lorton, *The Juridical Terminology of International Relations in Egyptian Texts through Dyn. XVIII*, 1974, pp. 4, 176-79 et passim and Goetze, *CAH*, II^3, ch. XVII, sect. I = p. 5 (" . . . one is led to assume that a formal understanding must have existed . . . ").
The matter could be settled if the mention in the second Plague Prayer of Muršiliš II of a treaty between Hatti and Egypt be regarded as evidence of a historical fact — as does Goetze, op. cit., sect. II = p. 9; Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs*, 1962, p. 22 n. 1 and Helck, *MDOG*, XCII (1960), p. 3; for the text see Goetze, *Kleinasiatische Forschungen*, I (1930), p. 204ff., esp. pp. 208-11 and 224, conveniently in Pritchard, *ANET*, 1955, p. 395. The treaty is referred to also in *The Deeds of Suppiluliuma . . .*, (Güterbock, *JCS*, X (1956), pp. 98, 107-08), and according to Carruba, "Le relazioni fra l'Anatolia

e l'Egitto intorno alla metà del II millennio A.C.", in *OA*, XV (1976), pp. 295-309, esp. p. 302ff., the contractants were Tudkhalias II and either Tuthmosis III or Amenophis II. — See also the following note.

50. At the symposion this statement was criticized by Liverani who later kindly presented me with off-prints of two articles of his. Though in itself inaugurating "un nuovo modo di lettura delle lettere di el-Amarna", "Le lettere del faraone a Rib-Adda", in *OA*, X (1971), pp. 253-68, is "una logica prosecuzione" of the thought-provoking paper "Contrasti e confluenze di concezioni politiche nell'età di el-Amarna", in *RA* LXI (1967), pp. 1-18. The tenor of the argument is this: In the feudal system of "Asia" in which interstate relations are merely transpositions to a different level of the relationship between a king and his noble warriors (p. 2) the Great King and the Petty King drew up a contract under which the former guaranteed the Petty King his throne in return for which the latter was obliged to protect the Great King, i.e., perform military service. In Egypt "political contracts" (rapporti di tipo contrattuale) — international as well as between pharaoh and his subjects (who were not guerrieri but funzionari) — were incompatible with the concept of divine kingship, and the pharaohs therefore established a bond of dependency by making the Petty Kings take an oath of fealty (pp. 3-5). Accustomed to the "Asiatic system" the Petty Kings laboured under the fatal misapprehension that their new relations were also reciprocal. But far from intervening in the local feuds the Egyptians even had a certain interest in "lotte locali". The situation reflected in the Amarna Letters is not expressive of a crisis; on the contrary, it is normal and the direct outcome of the political intentions of the Egyptians (pp. 7-10). They regarded the Petty Kings as officials and were reasonably successful (p. 13 top) in making them internalize this attitude (pp. 5, 11-16). The result was "una situazione di normalità (o se si vuole di anormalità permanente), una prassi di amministrazione e di comunicazioni ormai standardizzata, un'amministrazione egiziana che conosce la situazione locale e la valuta nella sua reale portata in rapporto agli interessi egiziani, una classe dirigente locale che incessantemente cerca di trar vantaggio dai rapporti con la potenza dominante per il raggiungimento dei fini politici locali" (*OA*, X (1971), p. 268).
If this analysis is correct, I would still maintain the existence of a shared system of values emerging, however, from a somewhat intricate situation. On the other hand, since the Egyptians very likely did conclude a treaty with the Hittites at a much earlier date than the Amarna period proper (se above n. 49), Lorton is probably right in arguing, first that "documents were [probably] as important to the Egyptian system as to the Asiatic" and secondly: "Since the oath was the constitutive element of the agreement, and since the documents were only evidentiary, the terms "oath" and "treaty" have been used interchangeably here", (op. cit., p. 178; the same view is held by Weinfeld, "The Loyalty Oath in the Ancient Near East", in *Ugarit-Forschungen*, VIII (1976), pp. 379-414). It is of greater importance, however, that Liverani's contention about the relationship between Pharaoh and his subjects being radically different from that of "Asia" cannot be substantiated, cf. Helck, "Überlegungen zur Geschichte der 18. Dynastie", in *OA*, VIII (1969), pp. 281-327, esp. p. 292: "Alle diese Einzelzüge machen es deutlich daß die Vorstellung von einer besonderen Schicht der Streitwagenkämpfer (marjannu) mit besonderen Pflichten, Vorrechten und Vorstellungen allgemein vorderasiatisch gewesen zu sein scheint und so auch nicht sekundär in Ägypten entwickelt worden ist"; and p. 313: "Damit ist aber

der Staat auf eine ganz andere Grundlage gestellt: nicht Wissen und traditionelle Erziehung sind entscheidend, sondern Zuneigung, Treue und Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl, gemeinsame Erinnerungen und Jugenderlebnisse, also alles gefühlsmässige Bindungen. Damit wird aber der Gegensatz zur alten Beamtenschaft weiter vertieft".

51. Cf. Schulman, *JARCE*, III (1964), pp. 64–66; Helck, *MDOG*, XCII (1960), p. 13 and *Beziehungen* . . . [2], 1971, pp. 253-55.
52. For what follows see in general Helck, op. cit., p. 246 ff.; Abdul-Kader Mohammad, "The Administration of Syro-Palestine during the New Kingdom", in *ASAE*, LVI (1959), pp. 105-37; Drower, *CAH*, II[3], ch. X, sect. V = pp. 467-483; Kühne, *Die Chronologie der internationalen Korrespondenz von El-Amarna*, 1973, (= *AOAT*, vol 17).
53. In the present state of our knowledge it seems reasonable to retain the "traditional" concept of feudality current among orientalists (e.g., Liverani, above n. 50) and some political anthropologists, cf. e.g., Maquet apud Balandier, *Political Anthropology*, 1972, p. 95: "The specific fact is the interpersonal link: 'Feudal institutions set up between two persons unequal in power relations of protection on the one hand and of fidelity and service on the other'. They link the lord with the vassal (at the higher level of social stratification) and the patron with the client (from a higher to a lower level of stratification)". Others have different views, e.g., Balandier, loc. cit., and Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, 1974, p. 147 ff., for whom feudalism is a mode of production.
54. Liverani would disagree: "A consolazione postuma dei re siro-palestinesi è da dire che le loro lettere, se non sono riuscite a trarre in inganno la corte egiziana, hanno però ottenuto tale risultato con numerosi studiosi moderni", *RA*, LXI (1967), p. 10 n. 1.
55. This important point has been made by Helck in *MDOG*, XCII (1960), p. 4 and *Beziehungen* . . . [2], 1971, p. 247, in both places, however, without any reference. The text is *KBo* I 5, published by Weidner, *Politische Dokumente* . . . , 1923, (=*BoSt*, 8), p. 88ff. and, partly, with an improved translation by Goetze, *Kizzuwatna and the Problem of Hittite Geography*, 1940, (= *YOS*, 22), p. 36 ff. Helck's quotation is from obv., col. I, 1.17-18 where the words are attributed to a Hurrian king; they are then repeated almost verbatim by Suppiluliuma in 1.30-31. This interpretation — "a prima lettura" — is disputed by Liverani in a fascinating article, "Storiografia politica Hittita — I. Šunaššura, ovvero: della reciprocita", in *OA*, XII (1973), pp. 267-297. In his opinion Kizzuwatna had no real choice and "si direbbe che Ḫatti utilizzi l'occasione del trattato con Kizzuwatna per inviare un messagio destinato a Ḫurri: che insomma parli a voce alta con un interlocutore del quale non fa più gran conto, affinché un'altra persona, più lontana e formalmente non in ascolto, riceva un avvertimento. Kizzuwatna è dunque strumentalizzata per stabilire una comunicazione Ḫatti-Ḫurri che in quel momento doveva essere interrotta sul piano formale, ufficiale" (p. 297). The "prima lettura" is accepted by Goetze, *CAH*, II[3], ch. XVII, sect. I = pp. 6-7.
56. Cf. Helck, *Beziehungen* . . . [2], 1971, p. 247.
57. See most recently Pintore, "La prassi della marcia armata nella Siria egiziana dell'età di el-Amarna", in *OA*, XII (1973), pp. 299-318.
58. *Urk.* IV, 690, 2-5.
59. Cf. *EA* 161 and possibly 162.
60. The latest discussion of the substance of this term is Vandersleyen, *Les Guerres d'Amosis*, 1971, p. 91 ff. et passim.

61. There is a divergence of opinion concerning the nature of the mutual relations of the Petty Kings, cf. Kühne, "Zum Status der Syro-Palästinischen Vassalen des Neuen Reiches", in *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, I (1963), pp. 71-73; Liverani, *RA*, LXI (1967), p. 11 n. 2 and McCarter, "Rib-Adda's Appeal to Aziru (*EA* 162, 1-21)", in *OA*, XII (1973), pp. 15-18.
62. Cf. above n. 48.
63. See Helck, *Beziehungen* ...[2], 1971, pp. 252-53 and 255. What Kitchen (in Liverani (ed.), *La Siria del Tardo Bronzo* (= *Orientis Antiqui Collectio*, IX), 1969, p. 80) says about "Egyptian 'inspectors' estimating the yield of Palestinian harvests, just as in Egypt, and Palestinian territories assigned to the domains of the Egyptian temples back home" applies in fact only to the Egyptian domains; for the correct interpretation of the data in *Urk.* IV, 667; 744 *and* 664, 17 ff. see Helck, *MDOG*, XCII (1960), p. 10. Kitchen's view has found its way into Sandars, *The Sea Peoples*, 1978, p. 45.
64. Cf. Helck, *Beziehungen* ...[2], 1971, pp. 347-50 and 370-431; ibid., *Wirtschaftsgeschichte* ..., 1975, pp. 259-65.
65. For the different interpretations of the Lachish Bowl no. 3 see Kitchen, op.cit., p. 81 (tax) and Helck, *Beziehungen* ...[2], 1971, p. 232 "(Getreideabrechnung (...) aus einer (...) ägyptischen Liegenschaftsverwaltung...)". A new, but equally tantalizing, hieratic inscription is discussed by Gilula, *Tel Aviv*, III (1976), pp. 107-08. – Our knowledge of taxation in Egypt itself is not at all clarified, cf. Janssen, *SAK*, III (1975), pp. 173-77. The same ignorance obtains concerning the problem of tribute/trade/exchange of gifts, where most scholars appear to lean to the opinion that the traditional rendering of *ỉnw* in official texts hardly reflects the true state of affairs, cf., e.g., Hayes, *CAH*, II[3], ch. IX = p. 385 ff. and above all Liverani, "Elementi "irrazionali" nel commercio Amarniano", in *OA*, XI (1972), pp. 297-317.
66. This was the case in Ugarit, cf. Heltzer, *The Rural Community in Ancient Ugarit*, 1976.
67. Cf. Helck, op. cit., pp. 444-45 and Drower, *CAH*, II[3], ch. X, sect. V = p. 476.
68. In addition to the material found in the following references a modern translation of the famous passage in the documentary text, *Wenamun* 2, 19 ff. (see e.g., Wente, in Simpson (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, 1973, p. 149), might lend support to this view. Cf. Helck, "Zum Auftreten fremder Götter in Ägypten", in *OA*, V (1966), pp. 1-14; ibid., *OA*, VIII (1969), p. 297 ff.; ibid., *Beziehungen* ...[2], 1971, pp. 470-73 and 495-581; Kitchen, op. cit., pp. 83-94; Williams, "Egypt and Israel", in Harris (ed.), *The Legacy of Egypt*, 1971, pp. 257-90; Vergote, *Joseph en Égypte*, 1959; Norin, *Er spaltete das Meer*, 1977, and Edel, *Ägyptische Ärzte und ägyptische Medizin am hethitischen Königshof*, 1976. [See now also Liebowitz, "The Impact of the Art of Egypt on the Art of Syria and Palestine", in Schmandt-Besserat (ed.), *Immortal Egypt*, 1978, pp. 27-36].
69. Cf. Hayes, op. cit., p. 366; Helck, op. cit., pp. 342-47 and Klengel "Das Land Kush in den Keilschrifttexten von Amarna", in *FS Hintze* (*SGKAO*, vol XIII), 1977, pp. 227-232.
70. Gun Björkman's interesting attempt at improving matters has been largely unnoticed, cf. "Egyptology and Historical Method", in *Orientalia Suecana*, XIII (1964), pp. 9-33.
71. Erik Iversen, *JEA*, LV (1969), p. 221 and orally.
72. Helck, op. cit., pp. 110-11; 116 et passim.

73. Cf. *OA*, VIII (1969), pp. 310-11: "Was Thutmosis III. dann durchführt, ist eine offensive Verteidigung gegen dieses Mitanni, das die Hurritermacht wiederherstellen will. Sicher spielen wirtschaftliche Ziele auch hier eine Rolle,...".
74. Cf. Trigger, *Nubia under the Pharaohs*, 1976, p. 103.
75. Helck, *MDOG*, XCII (1960), p. 9: "ein Grund dafür ist nicht bekannt".
76. op. cit., pp. 109-10.
77. op. cit., p. 468. – The Egyptian contempt for Nubian civilization applied even to the food, cf. Sauneron, "L'avis des Egyptiens sur la cuisine Soudanaise", in *Kush*, VII (1959), pp. 63-70. Yet I cannot help wondering whether the matter is as simple as that. If anything relating to Nubia really was that despicable it is difficult to account for the wall paintings in the tomb of Qenamun depicting several statues of Amenophis II dressed in what "may be the uniform of a Nubian, or even negro, regiment...", Davies, *Ken-Amun*, 1930, p. 26; similarly Drenkhahn, *Darstellungen von Negern*, 1967, p. 63. Compare this with the well-known statue of Amenophis III where the king is shown in an Asiatic robe and pose, see Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt*, II, 1959, pp. 236-37 and fig. 142.
78. For these and many other examples see conveniently Helck, *Beziehungen* ...[2], 1971, pp. 350-52. Cf. also Gaál, "Women of Alalaḫ and Arrapḫa in Egypt", in *Studia Aegyptiaca*, II (1976), pp. 207-13.
79. Even if the two Nubian princesses in the well-known tribute scene from the tomb of Huy be regarded as hostages rather than part of the entourage of the princes (Davies and Gardiner, *Huy*, 1926, pl. XXVII), this does not prove that they were subsequently admitted to the royal harim; see in this respect *Urk.* IV, 2036, 16-17.
80. e.g., Helck, *OA*, VIII (1969), p. 311.
81. Postans apud Elster, *Nytt perspektiv på økonomisk historie*, 1971, p. 17.
82. This term is the current one in social anthropology, cf., e.g., Beattie, *Other Cultures*, 1970, pp. 241-50; usually a distinction is made between diffusion in time (a more sophisticated version of evolutionism, cf. Lévi-Strauss, "History and Anthropology", in *Structural Anthropology*, 1967, p. 3 ff.) and diffusion in space (acculturation).
83. Elster, loc. cit.
84. Cf. Elster, Beattie and Lévi-Strauss, loc. cit. (n. 82 and 83). The attack on diffusionist theories comes not only from historically orientated functionalists (e.g., Evans-Pritchard, *Social Anthropology*, 1972, pp. 43-63) and Marxists, but especially, of course, from such structuralist quarters where "genealogical" causation has little or no explanatory value, cf., e.g., Leach, "Magical Hair", in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LXXXVIII (1958), p. 151: "Enquiry into the origin of the elements of a language is a legitimate academic pursuit but it has no immediate bearing upon what the elements of the language mean. Likewise we do not have to know the origin of a piece of ritual symbolism in order to understand its present meaning". – In the historical interpretation of archaeological data the problem presents itself in a somewhat different way, cf. the important – and entertaining – paper by Adams, "Invasion, Diffusion, Evolution?", in *Antiquity*, XLII (1968), pp. 194-215.
85. For instance, in nearly all the articles and books by Helck used in this paper the horse and the chariot are as important for the formation of the New Kingdom as White, *Medieval Technology and Social Change*, 1962, ch. I, believed the stirrup to be for feudal society in France. Cf. Helck, *Beziehungen* ...[2], 1971, p. 585: "So haben die hurritischen Hyksos durch die Einführung von Pferd und

Streitwagen, damit verbunden aber durch Verbreitung ihrer Art der Weltbetrachtung, den Anstoss zu der geistigen Entwicklung der 18. Dynastie gegeben."

86. For the following see Elster, op. cit., ch. 3 and 4.
87. This is disputed by Goddard, "Anthropology: the Limits of Functionalism", in Blackburn (ed.), *Ideology in Social Science*, 1972, pp. 61–75.
88. Cf. Elster, op. cit., ch. 4.
89. Cf. Wilson, *The Burden of Egypt*, 1951, p. 95 ff. Helck, *Geschichte des alten Ägypten*, 1968, ch. 6 and E. Martin-Pardey, *Untersuchungen zur ägyptischen Provinzialverwaltung bis zum Ende des Alten Reiches*, 1976.
90. The classic study in this respect is, however, Helck, *Der Einfluß der Militärführer in der 18. ägyptischen Dynastie*, 1939.

PART IV

The Neo Assyrian Empire

Julian Reade

IDEOLOGY AND PROPAGANDA IN ASSYRIAN ART

This paper has two main themes: how the Assyrians viewed themselves and their relationship with the outside world, and how they wished the outside world to view them. In considering what the official art of Assyria, which means above all the Assyrian sculptures, has to tell us about these matters, I occasionally refer also to written documents. They and the sculptures are inseparable, like the print and pictures in an illustrated book, but other contributors deal with the written evidence in greater detail.[1]

The historical background should first be summarized. Assyria was an ancient kingdom based in what is now northern Iraq. In the first half of the ninth century B.C. it expanded west and east by military conquest to cover an area stretching from the Euphrates, in Syria and Turkey, to the central Zagros, roughly the present frontier between Iraq and Iran. The bulk of this empire was a homogeneous area to much of which Assyria had traditional claims inherited from a comparable period of expansion in the past; it had a common economic basis of rain-fed agriculture, and was readily absorbed into Assyria proper so that, for instance, when the empire disintegrated, its last stronghold was in the far west at the city of Harran. The eastern extension into the Zagros may have been due to the strategic necessity of controlling routes across to states on the Iranian plateau from which the horses vital for military operations were obtained. Other military supplies needed by Assyria – iron, copper, and tin – may all have been imported from the west where the Assyrians were constantly trying to establish colonies or client-kingdoms, though copper might have been obtained from the north-western corner of the ninth-century empire and iron was not necessarily a problem. Apart from horses and metals, imports were essentially luxury items, since Assyria was well provided with goods such as food and stone.

A century later, beginning in the 740s, there was another phase of successful expansion during which Assyria conquered or otherwise came to control virtually all the lands from the eastern coast of the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. The empire was separated by natural boundaries or buffer states from other great powers – Egypt, Phrygia, Urartu, and Elam. During the seventh century Assyrian kings attempted, with varying

competence and consistency, to consolidate their rule over this much more heterogeneous territory. The attempt eventually failed, so far as the Assyrians were concerned, with Nineveh falling in 612 B.C., but the greater part of the empire was inherited entire by the Chaldaean kings of Babylon.

Many of the historical events of these three centuries were recorded in sculptures: stone slabs, carved in low relief, which decorated the walls of the royal palaces. Modern displays of these sculptures are unavoidably misleading as they always consist of fragments – several slabs long, perhaps, but nonetheless fragments – of what were very complicated schemes of decoration including paintings also and embracing entire palaces. Each of these was essentially the creation of one Assyrian king, built in his capital-city.

In the early ninth century Ashurnasirpal, an important king of the first phase of expansion, turned the small provincial town of Kalhu into a new capital-city for himself. Over a century later Tiglath-pileser III, who inaugurated the second phase of expansion, built himself a new palace, also at Kalhu. Shortly afterwards Sargon built a new capital-city on a fresh site in the neighbourhood, which he named after himself, Dur-Sharrukin. Hin son Sennacherib, late in the eighth century at the start of his reign, shifted the capital to another nearby city, Nineveh. His son Esarhaddon made arrangements to move back to Kalhu, and his son Ashurbanipal returned to Nineveh. We therefore have a magnificent succession of palaces, each the memorial of one man.

This memorial status is plain from inscriptions commemorating the building projects. They hardly mention the administrative convenience or political motives that may sometimes have been involved. They concentrate instead on the personal achievement of the king responsible. Ashurnasirpal states it clearly:[2]

> "I founded therein a palace as my royal residence and for my lordly pleasure for eternity. I decorated it in a splendid fashion... May a later prince restore its weakened portions and restore my inscribed name to its place. Then Ashur will listen to his prayers. He must not forsake my mighty palace, my royal residence, of Kalach, nor abandon it in the face of enemies. He must not remove the doors, beams, or knobbed nails of bronze from it and put them in another city in another palace . . . He must not block up its door. He must neither appropriate it for a warehouse nor turn it into a prison . . . He must not allow it to disintegrate through neglect, desertion, or lack of renovation. He must not move into another palace, either within or without the city, instead of my palace."

And so on: a list of all the dreadful things that eventually did happen to Ashurnasirpal's palace at the hands of his practically minded successors, and to their palaces in their turn.

Each palace, of which the sculptures were an integral part, had its individual character. They have features in common, so that we can see a logical sequence of development and sometimes imitation, but they were designed for different kings each of whom was anxious to prove his own superiority. The king's names, titles, and achievements were written repeatedly in both conspicuous and concealed places, and frequently assert that he had done what his predecessors had failed to do. The palace was a massive corpus of personal propaganda.

The sculptures and paintings, apart from those which had a magical or ornamental function, concentrate in accordance with Mesopotamian tradition on the achievements of the king. We see him worshipping, standing to receive his courtiers or processions of tributaries, administering justice, and winning or celebrating victories which may be over men, wild animals, or natural obstacles. Assyrian art employs various traditional Mesopotamian conventions: an example is the treatment of the human face, where types may be distinguished but we can seldom recognize individual portraiture. No significance need be attached to such stylistic conventions except in so far as they demonstrate continuity with the past. There are of course stylistic and other developments within Assyrian art over the centuries; the most important, from our point of view, is that the scenes become more complicated so that the latest ones are the most informative. There is, however, no great change in their ideological content, in the assumptions and attitudes illustrated by them.

The king is invincible, but not superhuman. In each composition, or in each unit of a strip-cartoon composition, he normally appears once and once only, like anyone else. He is the most important figure, but he is normally the same size as other people until Esarhaddon's conquest of Egypt, after which he tends to be slightly bigger. He may seem to be no more than one in a crowd; there are exceptions in certain kinds of composition, but they merely reflect stylistic difficulties which can equally result in the king being smaller than other people (Fig. 1): once, for instance, he appears as a dwarf riding a pony. The opposition which the king overcomes sometimes seems unworthy of him, but at other times he faces dangerous problems which enhance his ultimate victory. The sculptures seem reliable in what they include: thus Sargon and earlier kings take a more active part in battle than later kings; there are also pictures of campaigns in which, as we happen to know, the king did not participate, and he is not shown as participating. On the other hand the sculptures exclude undesirable subjects such as Assyrian casualties: some of these were in-

advertently included, through uncritical use of the stylistic convention of chariots running over a dead enemy, on one embossed door fitting,[3] but instead of being scrapped it was relegated in the practical Assyrian way to the most inconspicuous position available. Mass-production, coupled with poor supervision, as well as provincial arrogance or ignorance, also led to various breaches of etiquette, but they were generally tolerated so long as they did not infringe the prerogatives of royalty.

The king, besides being invincible, has god on his side. In normal circumstances he needs no justification for what he does. He is high priest of the god Ashur, whose glory he proclaims throughout the world. Early ninth-century kings are accompanied by a god in mid-air; divine insignia go with the army; the gods of defeated nations acquiesce. It was the king's duty to protect his realm, the realm of the god Ashur, from the powers of chaos which the enemy represented. Sennacherib was even shown, according to one ancient description of a picture which does not survive, helping the gods in their own struggle against primeval Chaos.[4] The theme was epitomized in the design of the stamp-seal used by royal officials: it shows the king killing a lion, one of the wild animals which threatened the security of the realm such as human enemies did (Fig. 2). A comparable but simpler design, the king drawing a bow, was adopted for the coinage of imperial Persia. The gods naturally rejoiced in the defeat and death of those who opposed the Assyrian king, and artists recorded the events with a triumphant relish for detail.

The king ruled, however, a peaceful and well-ordered state. His noteworthy achievements, within the boundaries of his empire, spoke for themselves and there are relatively few useful illustrations of them. If a tributary state was turned into an imperial province under an Assyrian governor, it became part of the realm of Ashur; it ceased paying tribute and paid tax instead; this payment was a routine affair, and not worth illustrating. There is a strong contrast with the Persepolis sculptures, with their emphasis on the international nature but internal cohesion of the Persian empire. There are some Assyrian pictures that show engineering operations at home, but idyllic scenes, such as the countryside near Nineveh (Fig. 3), tend to be inserted marginally in compositions that really deal with other subjects.

This attitude towards the king – the justice of his cause and the unquestioning loyalty of his people – is one aspect of Assyrian ideology illustrated by the sculptures; there was nothing exceptional about it in the ancient Near East. The Assyrian attitude to the world outside the empire was more complicated, reflecting in a practical fashion the realities of imperial power and responsibility. Foreign states were grouped in categories and treated accordingly; the distinction between the different categories

was flexible, and circumstances naturally varied in ways that the sculptures do not indicate, but the general rules are tolerably clear.

Some foreign kingdoms were recognized as independent equals. In the second millennium B.C. there had been several great powers which recognized each other's independence, and Assyria itself eventually joined this select group. Similarly, in the middle of the ninth century, we find the king of Assyria posing as brother of the king of Babylon: the pair were shown shaking hands (Fig. 4) after the Assyrian had intervened, by invitation according to Assyrian sources, in a Babylonian civil war. Later, when Tiglath-pileser III conquered Babylonia around 730, he continued to recognize Babylonian pretensions to independence, taking the throne himself. This meant accommodating two kingdoms within one empire, and the recalcitrant problem of how best to do this was an important factor in the collapse of Assyria a century or so later.

Another state recognized as independent was Urartu, beyond the mountains on Assyria's northern border. The peaceful albeit nervous relationship established between Assyria and Urartu is illustrated by a mid-seventh-century picture in which two Urartian ambassadors witness an Assyrian triumph (Fig. 5).

Elam, in southern Iran, had similar status. There is a picture of Elamite princes competing unsuccessfully with the Assyrian king in a lion-hunt, which may well have been a specifically royal activity.[5] There is also a picture of Elamite ambassadors, who have brought an insulting message, being detained not without respect at the Assyrian court.[6] On one occasion the Assyrians supplied Elamites with food during a famine – one of the few clear examples from Mesopotamia of food affecting international relations.[7] In the middle of the seventh century war broke out between Assyria and Elam, and the Elamite king, who had sent the insulting message, was killed in battle; maltreatment of the Elamite king's head (Fig. 6) was justified by reference to this message, though even pro-Assyrian Elamites evidently regarded it as a breach of international good manners.[8] After their victory the Assyrians presented the Elamites with a new king, who had been a political refugee in Assyria; he was shown being introduced to the Elamite people by an Assyrian officer (Fig. 7), and greeted with songs and music while bodies from the battle floated down the river nearby. The Assyrians, then, were representing themselves as friends and liberators. Subsequent troubles, however, altered the Assyrian attitude towards Elam, and it was treated more harshly.

Egypt too was probably accepted as an independent power before the brief seventh-century Assyrian occupation. There is a ninth-century picture of tribute from Egypt,[9] but this may have been either an idle boast or a reference to the status of Byblos, a possible Egyptian protec-

torate in Lebanon. There is a suggestion in one text that the Assyrians, when they did occupy Egypt, made a point of replacing the foreign Nubian kings with presumably more popular native rulers,[10] and pictures draw a distinction between the two groups of people (Fig. 8), though this may be an accident of preservation.

A second category of foreign state consisted of those which were not equals of Assyria but nonetheless did not owe allegiance to the Assyrian king. Various sculptures show wars with states of this kind. There is a ferocious battle, with the atrocities that have been customary in warfare throughout history. The enemy town may or may not be burnt, and the king then reviews the prisoners, men, women, and children. There is rough justice, but there are no elaborate executions. The people may or may not be transferred, for security or other reasons, to another area of the empire; if so they are replaced, as texts tell us, with other captives from elsewhere.[11] Pictures show them under escort, but reasonably well treated.

A third category included people who denied allegiance both to the Assyrian king and to the ideals of urban civilization which the Assyrians and other states upheld. These were the wild tribes and villagers of hill and desert; they were liable to be exterminated.

The next category consisted of tributary states. The king was shown receiving their gifts, sometimes on campaign and sometimes at home, in formal conventionalized compositions. In the seventh century, after the second great phase of imperial expansion, this theme disappeared from Assyrian art. One reason, perhaps, is that the very expansion of the empire had greatly reduced the significance of tribute. Once most of the old tributary states had been incorporated into the empire, with others as well, the new tributary states in distant Iran and Anatolia had nothing remarkable to offer.

Disobedience or rebellion by a tributary state attracted punishment. A famous example is Sennacherib's capture of Lachish. After the fall of the town, the local dignitaries were tortured to death publicly. It was hoped that this would help ensure peaceful conditions in future, and it was a scene of this kind that the Urartian ambassadors were shown. The surviving population of Lachish was moved elsewhere, and we see prisoners from this and other campaigns employed as forced labour on public works in Assyria (Fig. 9). Some nomadic and correspondingly less manageable Arabs were treated far more severely: after the battle, when the Assyrians reached their encampment, even the women were assaulted and killed (Fig. 10).

These, then, are the different categories of foreigner which we can distinguish in the pictures. In one respect, however, they are all treated alike: tremendous care is taken to represent them, their cultural and sometimes physical characteristics, and the landscapes in which they live (Fig. 11). We do occasionally see the Assyrians making fun of foreigners, as when rival claimants to the Elamite throne were forced to act as waiters, but the sculptures remind me far more frequently of Oppenheim's remarks referring to the account of Sargon's eighth campaign:[12]

> "The text addresses itself at an audience really interested in learning about foreign peoples, their way of life, their religion and customs. In fact one feels tempted to draw a parallel between the priests and citizens of Ashur of 714 BC and the audience which listened to the logoi of the predecessors of the Ionian logographers only a century or so later in Asia Minor . . . The attitude just described indicates an audience sure of itself, deeply imbued with a conscious tradition of native origin but, at the same time, aware of the existence of other traditions without reacting to them so intensely as to evolve patterns of either aggression or fossilizing self-isolation."

This receptive attitude is implicit in the sculptures. I would mention a further specific example. The palaces were decorated partly with magical figures which kept away disease and bad luck. In the ninth century these figures are traditional Assyrian types (Fig. 12), which subsequently become less frequent. They are joined, and largely replaced, by others borrowed not only from Babylonia, the traditional home of wisdom and magic, but also from the western provinces, which contributed the sphinx. Similarly we find Assyrian kings sitting happily on Phoenician furniture (Fig. 13), and announcing that they have built themselves palaces in the Hittite style of architecture.[13] We are given the impression that they viewed the world with enormous self-confidence, and were therefore willing to adopt anything which appealed to them, regardless of its origin.

While the narrative sculptures tell us a great deal about the Assyrians, they were not as prominent in the Assyrian palaces as they are now in books about Assyrian civilization. To appreciate the relative significance of different types of sculpture in the palaces, we have to reconstruct in our mind's eye the architectural context. We do not know what any Assyrian building looked like in its entirety, but we can, generalizing with all appropriate reservations, build up a composite picture for palaces of the ninth and eighth centuries.

The exterior walls are largely plain, but for magical decoration at the entrances and along the crenellations. This is all that the common people of Assyria normally saw, a massive but fairly simple structure inside the citadel. The sheer size of some of the magical figures, however, which

weighed up to sixteen tons, must have been intended to impress human as well as supernatural visitors (Fig. 14).

Those with business inside the palace entered through a gate-chamber which was decorated internally, at least in the provincial palace of Til-Barsip, with narrative pictures of a military campaign. The great gate of the city of Ashur, and the entrance to the imperial barracks at Nineveh, also held military trophies. The palace gate-chamber opened into a huge outer courtyard surrounded by offices; these were, so far as we know, undecorated. Beyond lay another courtyard with more offices but also having, on one side, the magnificent facade of the royal throneroom, together with side access to further state apartments.

Above the throneroom doors were brilliantly coloured pictures in glazed brick, showing the king at worship. There is a standard composition: the king in duplicate, on either side of a sacred tree above which floats a winged disk carrying the figure of a god. The scene has been variously interpreted, but seems to show the king in some relationship with powers of the earth and sky, for whose favour he as high priest and shepherd of his people was primarily responsible. In any case, it is a ritual scene, emphasizing the king's religious duties. Anyone looking through the great central door of the throneroom could see the self-same scene on the wall opposite, and it recurred in various contexts elsewhere (Fig. 15).

The throneroom facade was dominated, lower down, by magical figures such as colossal human-headed winged bulls. On either side, however, leading the eye towards the throneroom doors, were smaller slabs showing the king with a few attendants receiving groups of people. Once these were courtiers bringing furniture and other equipment for some court ceremony. More often there were processions of people bringing or preparing to bring tribute. Tribute was again the constant theme of obelisks which were erected, probably in fairly public places, during the ninth century: the tributaries come naturally from the periphery of the Assyrian empire, but it does sometimes seem that they have been selected for their remoteness and for the exotic goods they have with them.

The places decorated by these sculptures were as far as the ordinary subject could hope to penetrate, unless we may imagine an occasional guided tour, into the royal palace. We have, as it happens, one list of the people such a palace was meant to impress, the 70,000 odd guests at Ashurnasirpal's housewarming party:[14] nearly all of these were Assyrian subjects, a few represented states which either were or may have been tributary, and there were none at all from major independent powers. The image these public monuments present is plain: a king, devoted to his religious duties, to whom gifts come from the far ends of the earth for the greater glory of the god Ashur and his servants. Military themes were not

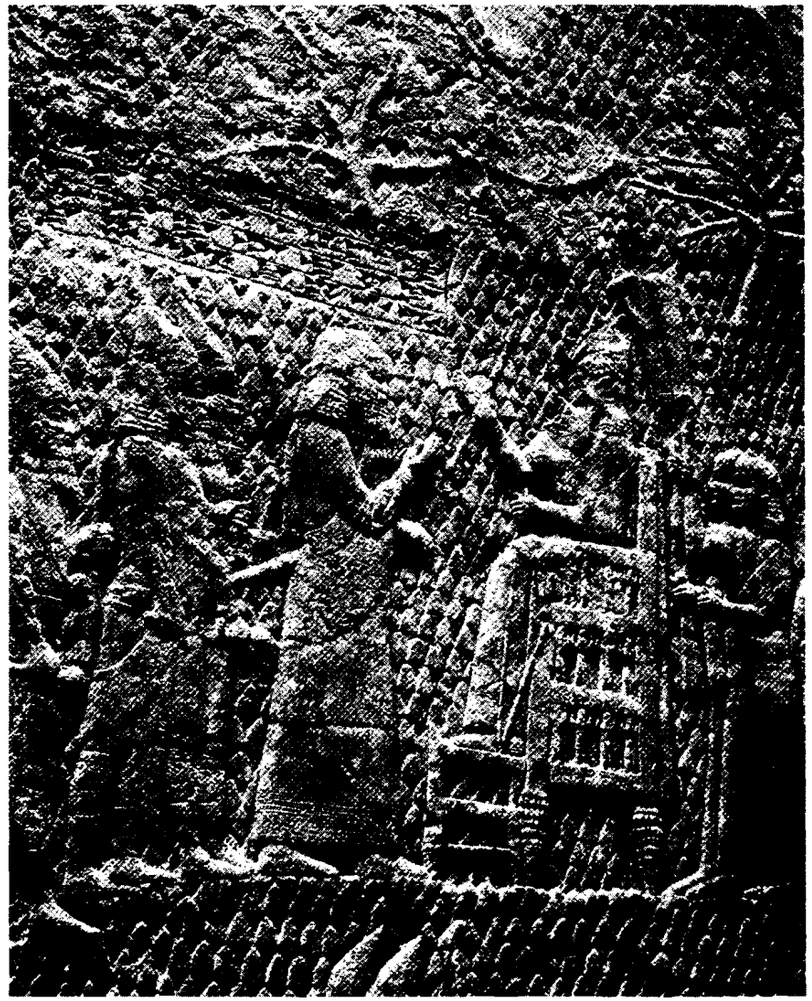


Fig. 1 Sennacherib enthroned at Lachish (BM 124911).

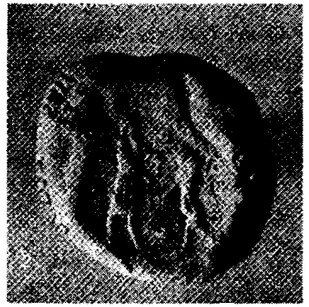


Fig. 2 Assyrian royal seal (BM 50790).

Fig. 3 Deer in Sennacherib's Nature Reserve at Nineveh (BM 124824).

Fig. 4 Meeting between kings of Assyria and Babylon. Reign of Shalmaneser III. (Iraq Museum).

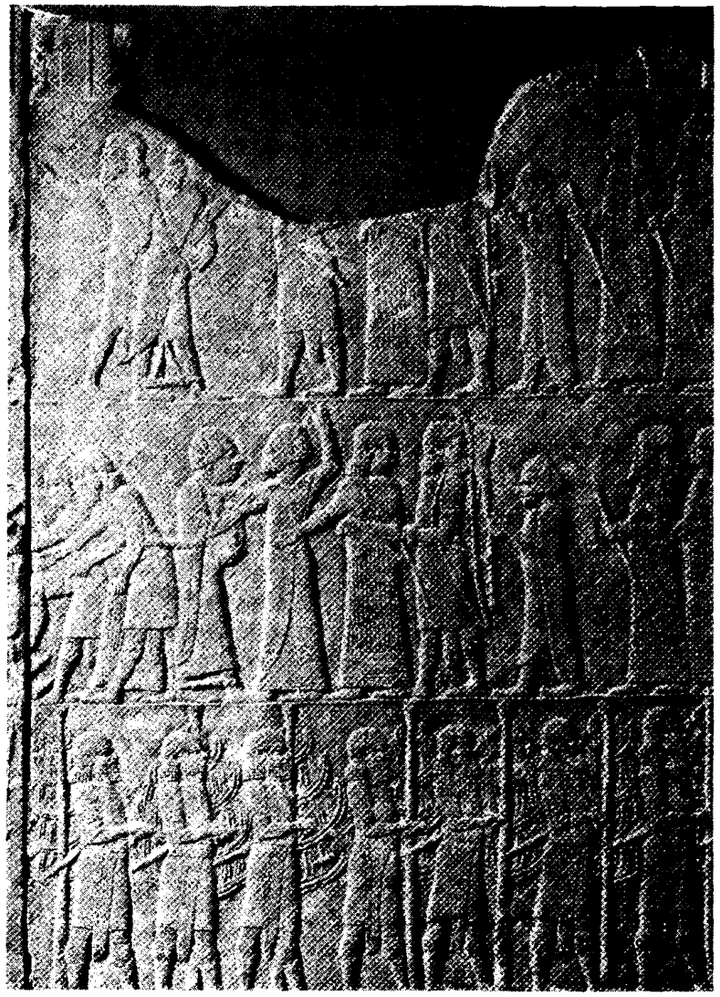


Fig. 5 Urartian ambassadors (the short men in caps) watching the punishment of anti-Assyrian rebels. Reign of Ashurbanipal (BM 124802).

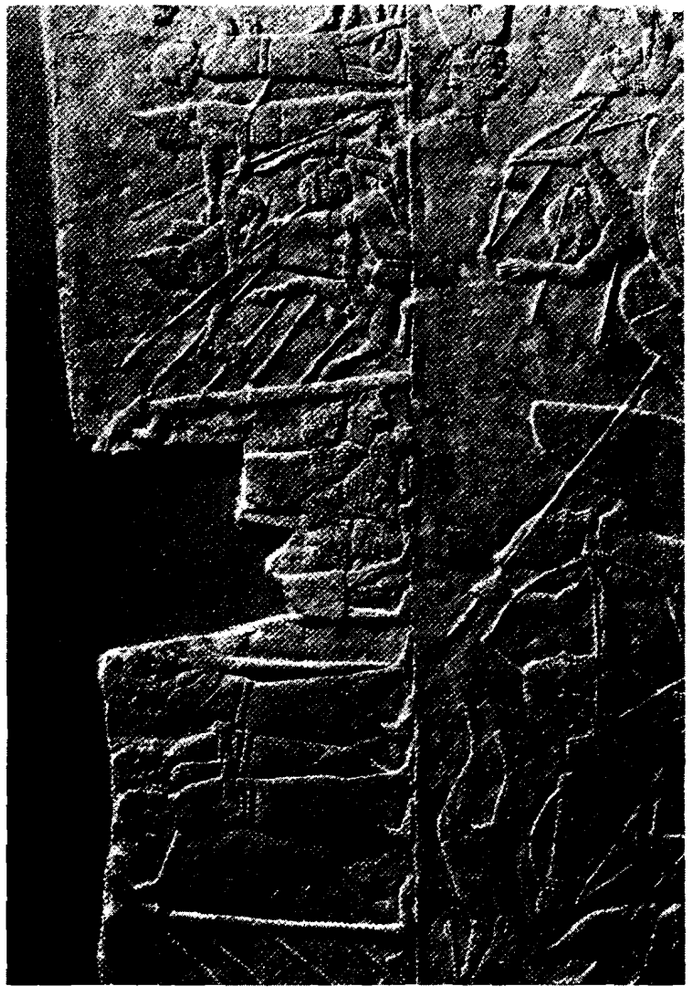


Fig. 6 Recognition of Elamite king's head, held by Assyrian soldier to right of tent. Reign of Ashurbanipal (BM 124801).

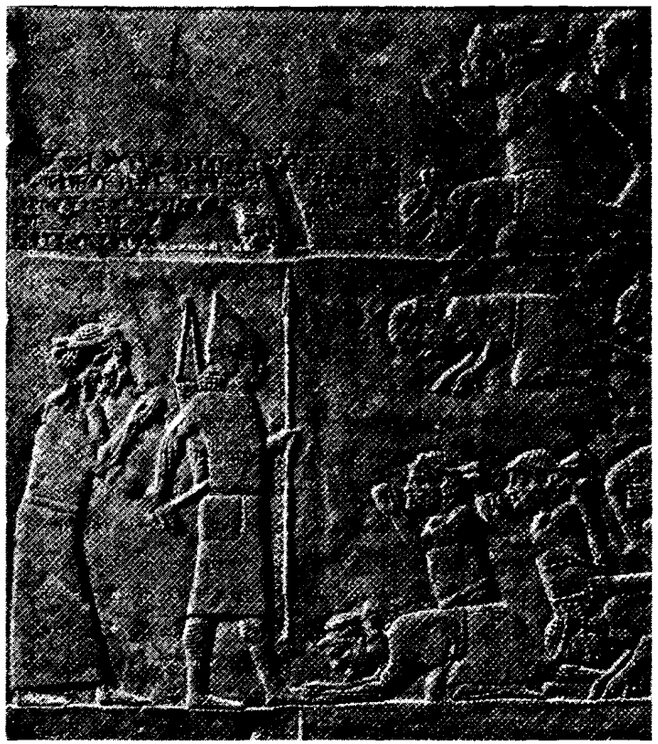


Fig. 7 Assyrian officer presenting Elamites with new king. Reign of Ashurbanipal (BM 124802).

Fig. 8 Assyrian campaign in Egypt, with captured Nubian soldiers (left) and Egyptian civilian prisoners (right). Reign of Ashurbanipal (BM 124928).

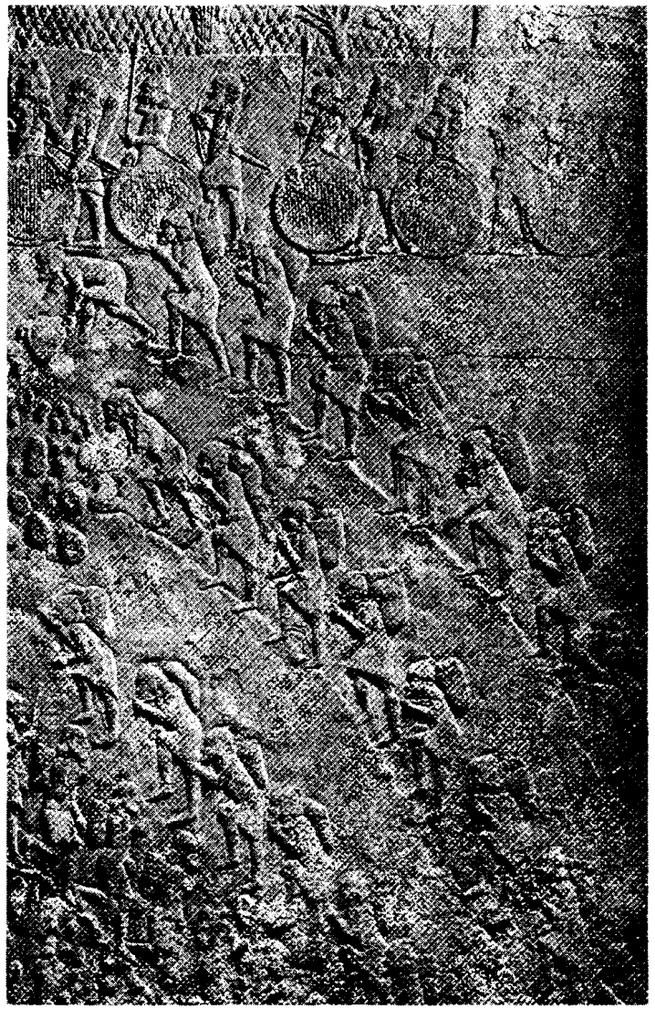


Fig. 9 Western prisoners working in Assyrian quarry. Reign of Sennacherib (BM 124821).

Fig. 10 Assyrians assaulting Arab women. Reign of Ashurbanipal (BM 124927).

Fig. 11 Assyrians recording details of a campaign. Reign of Sin-shar-ishkun? (Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, Burrell Collection 28/33).

Fig. 12 Assyrian protective genie from palace of Ashurnasirpal (BM 98064).

Fig. 13 Ashurbanipal and consort at picnic (BM 124920).

Fig. 14 Facade of Sennacherib's palace (?). Reign of Ashurbanipal (BM 124938).

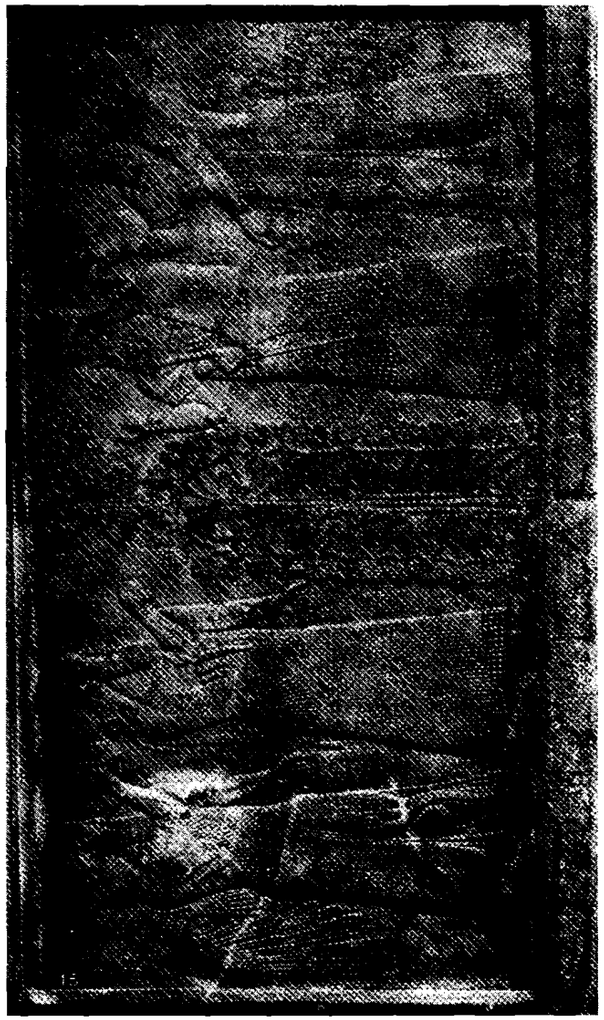


Fig. 15 Ashurnasirpal portrayed twice, in ritual pose, with protective genies behind and winged disc above (BM 124531).

Fig. 17 Incident from Assyrian-Elamite battle (BM 124801).

Fig. 18 Eunuchs acting as labourers for Sennacherib (BM 93019).

Fig. 19 Stela of Ashurnasirpal II (BM 108805).

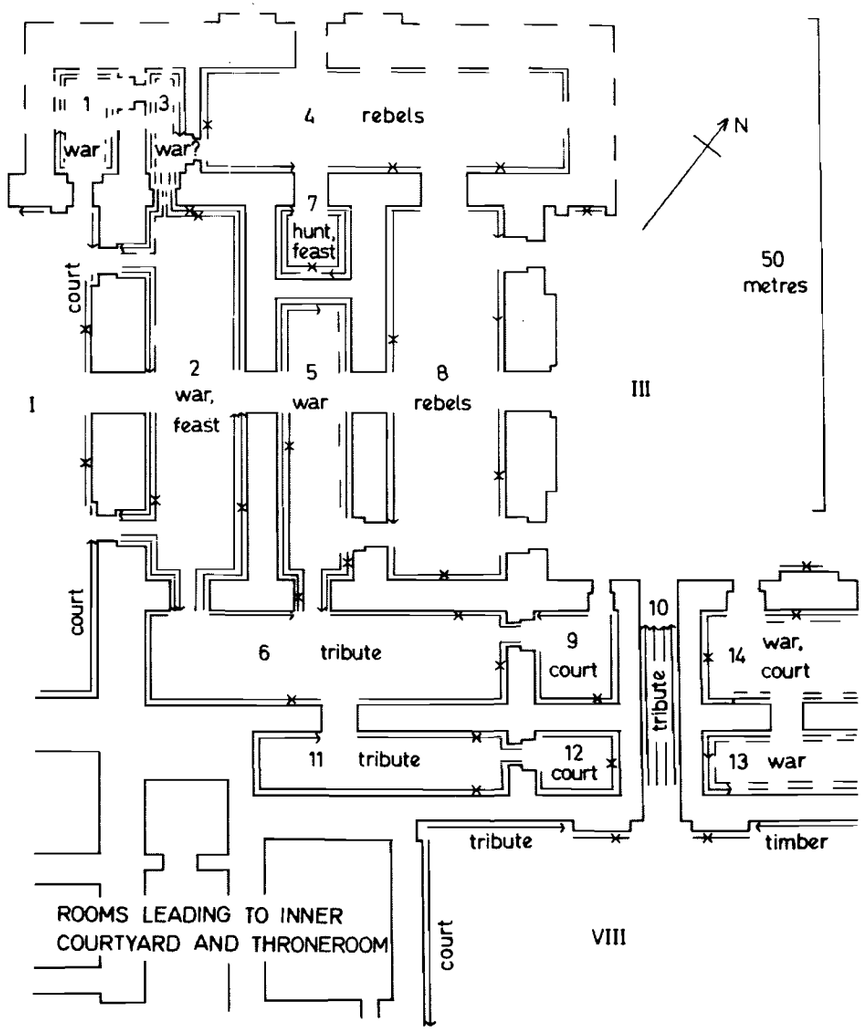


Fig. 16. Reception area of Sargon's palace at Khorsabad.

excluded, and may of course have had a wider circulation on textiles and small objects. The emphasis, however, was on peace, Pax Assyriaca, rather than on war.

Inside the throneroom, at least in Ashurhasirpal's palace, there was a greater range of subject-matter. The king, besides appearing in ritual scenes opposite the main entrance and behind his throne, was also shown in formal compositions with his courtiers. There were many magical figures. Over half the sculptures, however, were narrative scenes of military expeditions in different lands or occasionally of hunts. Some kings do specifically mention how magnificent their military narrative sculptures were, and they doubtless impressed some foreigners with the irreversible progress of Assyrian arms, but entry to the throneroom must in practice have been largely restricted to men already connected with the Assyrian court. Propaganda is better exemplified in the reception-wing of the palace of Sargon.

The identification of this area as a reception-wing is largely dependent on the architectural plan (Fig. 16) but the sculptures help to explain it. It was approached from the throneroom court (VIII) by a passage (10) in which were depicted rows of tributaries from east and west; we may suppose that such people, or their leaders, did indeed come this way, and there are other instances in the Assyrian palaces of illustrative decoration of this kind. They emerged into an open space (III) with the reception-wing to one side. Its facade was again decorated with magical figures, and with the king and his attendants. Through the doors they could again see sculptures representing the king, a feature of doorways throughout this building. On entering the room (8), they found that the king was depicted presiding over the torture and execution of important rebels, a clear piece of deterrent propaganda. These salutary scenes led their eyes to a small doorway at the throne end of the room, which communicated with private apartments (6, 11); through this door the king emerged to receive them in person.

An adjoining reception-room (4) was suitable for the entertainment of guests. They will not have been surprised to find here exactly the same pictures of execution. A few guests may have had the privilege of entering a smaller room (7) nearby, surrounded by more congenial scenes of hunting and feasting; the king as usual was represented opposite the door, and this is where he himself probably sat.

Pictures of Assyrian military achievements were restricted, in Sargon's palace, to other anterooms and reception-rooms on the less accessible side of the reception-wing, and elsewhere. They were presumably used to a greater extent by Assyrian courtiers. Similarly, in all Assyrian palaces, the king's achievements in the hunting field were restricted mainly to the

more private state apartments and the approaches to them. Even when hunting scenes appear in a throneroom, as they do in Ashurnasirpal's palace, they are the two narrative sculptures closest to the royal throne. This illustrates an important feature of Assyrian narrative art, its entertainment value: it is full of anecdotes and reminiscences, and it was meant to be enjoyed as much as admired. The king's personal achievements in the hunt were a theme likely to give particular pleasure to him himself, and they were sited accordingly. A courtier could look at a campaign scene, perhaps with an explanatory caption, and remember battles in which he himself had participated (Fig. 17). This was preaching to the converted rather than propaganda.

At this stage I would again emphasize that I have been generalizing, describing tendencies rather than absolute rules, and dealing primarily with palaces of the ninth and eighth centuries. The same tendencies are visible, however, in the late seventh-century palace of Ashurbanipal. On the other hand the palace of Sennacherib, the early seventh-century king who seems to have stood firm against further imperial expansion, appears paradoxically full of scenes of military narrative. Even so, half the walls of the more public courtyards in the open air showed the king's civic achievements, notably the successful transportation of heavy loads across difficult country. This king's sculptures also showed hunting expeditions, though only one group has been partially excavated. To some extent Sennacherib's scenes of military narrative fill the gap left by the disappearance, considered already, of the tribute scenes. There is also a possibility that the military emphasis of Sennacherib's sculptures reflects internal Assyrian politics, with the army gaining power at the expense of the old court establishment of eunuchs; certainly the beardless eunuchs are depicted in extraordinarily menial roles, such as carrying equipment (Fig. 18), and do not appear as high officials as they had done previously. There is also, however, a stylistic consideration: in Sennacherib's reign, for various reasons, military narrative pictures were transformed into sweeping panoramas capable of covering vast stretches of wall without difficulty, far superior in this respect to anything that had gone before. It is to me an open question which if any of these explanations accounts best for the expansion of military narrative in Sennacherib's scheme of palace decoration. In any case, though military decoration on this scale presupposes an imperial scale of military involvement, it certainly does not reflect a growth of militant imperialism.

There are also examples of Assyrian official art in temples. They are mainly concerned with magic or religion, but there were scenes of military narrative displayed in temples, most notably in the courtyards of the great Ashur Temple.[15] They underlined divine interest in Assyrian mili-

tary successes. On the other hand it is notable that wall-decoration in Assyrian private houses is restricted to ornamental, magical, or religious themes. For instance, in Sargon's capital, the largest palace besides that of the king contained, in its main reception-room, equivalent to the royal throneroom, a picture of the king and the master of the house engaged in an act of worship. There are no scenes of warfare.

It is in fact as a worshipper, as high-priest of his god, that the Assyrian king is represented in the sculptures which were most widely viewed. This is how Sennacherib appears in the great rock-carvings with which he commemorated his construction of a permanent water-supply for Nineveh. This was the aspect of the king's personality which was publicized in the Assyrian equivalent of a political poster, the royal stela.[16] It shows the king in the distinctive robes which he probably wore as high priest. He is making a specific gesture of respect and supplication. Above him are symbols representing the major gods of Assyria (Fig. 19).

These stelas, or rock-carvings in stela form, or occasionally statues, were placed inside shrines and in temple courtyards and gateways; in palace courtyards; in city gates and streets; on isolated rocks by battlefields, and on seemingly inaccessible cliffs in the far corners of the known world. They were directed at every possible audience: the gods, the king's contemporaries, universal posterity. Some of those on cliffs were exceedingly difficult to reach, so much so that at least one (Uramanat) still remains unpublished, and others were exceedingly difficult to find, so that it is still uncertain, for instance, how many of Sennacherib's there are on the Judi Dagh. At Nahr el-Kelb in Lebanon, beside the coast road, there are stelas commemorating several different expeditions, and we see again that striving after immortality which the successive palaces embody, the conviction of each individual king that he too had his place in history, and that it was up to him to ensure it. At least two Assyrian stelas were carved directly beside those of other already ancient kings, one of them Egyptian; the older monuments were respected, as the Assyrians hoped their own would be.

Various texts refer to these monuments. A ninth-century king states: "At that time I made an image of my likeness; the glory of Ashur, the great lord, my lord, and the power of my might, I wrote thereon; I set it up by the sea."[17] And, shortly afterwards, "I fashioned an image of my royal self. My deeds of heroism, my acts of bravery, I wrote thereon. At the sources of the river I set it up". The god Ashur is omitted from the second description, but his presence may be understood. This scene of the king worshipping his gods, in conjunction with the seal where he kills his lion, summarizes all the royal achievements.

In the eighth century some Assyrian provincial governors used the stela

form to publicize their own achievements and perpetuate their own memory. Nergal-eresh, the earliest of them, portrayed the king on the stela, but included his own name inconspicuously in the text: in this case his name was later mutilated and almost erased. At least two other governors, Bel-Harran-bel-usur and a ruler of Duru, erected stelas portraying themselves instead of the king, though in both cases the symbol of the god Ashur was perhaps tactfully omitted; the king's name was mentioned in the one text fully preserved. The circumstances in which these officials felt free to act in this way are not clear; the central government may have permitted the practice or have been unable to prevent it. Certainly the monuments of another provincial governor, Shamshi-ilu, whose public sculptures and inscriptions exalted him without reference to the king, were systematically modified at a later date. These provincial sculptures, erased or not, emphasize that officials besides royalty appreciated the memorial function of the stela.

The stela, appropriately, is the medium in which propaganda statements are most easily detected, since alterations in a simple formula are naturally more noticeable than elsewhere.

The gods represented by symbols change. Originally there are five or six traditional Assyrian gods. In the early eighth century, however, the great Babylonian gods, Marduk and Nabu, appear for the first time on a major monument, just when a Nabu temple was being built at Kalhu. Tiglath-pileser III is the only king to employ the relatively obscure god, Amurru, apparently a personal choice, and Sennacherib is the only king to employ Ninurta. Some of the variations cannot now be explained, but the increased popularity of Marduk and Nabu is a further example of open respect for Babylonian traditions.

One development publicized on stelas is represented by the appearance, in the king's hand, of an object of uncertain nature, shaped either like a banana or like an ice-cream cornet. Similar objects were traditionally held by the kings of Babylon, and the custom was adopted by Assyrian kings after Sennacherib's sack of Babylon and his amalgamation of the two state cults. The latter was a reform of outstanding importance, which involved drastic remodelling of the Assyrian national shrine, and it must have caused considerable heart-searching. The change in the stela formula proclaimed Sennacherib's decision to all and sundry.

Another stela shows one king, Shamshi-Adad V, wearing a peculiarly archaic forked form of beard; this is not chance, as the text too is written in archaic characters. A possibility here is that the king, whose accession had been disputed, was claiming a connection with Shamshi-Adad I, an illustrious king (and usurper) of the far distant past. Something similar may have been done by Sargon, whose very throne-name "True King"

exposes the suspect nature of his claim to the Assyrian throne. Some Sargon pictures in a temple courtyard[18] show him paired with an unreal bearded gentleman who could well represent one of his earlier namesakes, the first of whom was a dominant figure in early Mesopotamian history.

A final example concerns Esarhaddon, a seventh-century king. He, in order to fix the succession and avoid civil conflict on his own death, appointed one of his sons crown-prince of Assyria, and another crown-prince of Babylon. The decision was obviously disastrous. There are letters to the king praising it, but we can sense the furious opposition of more far-sighted courtiers some of whom were probably executed not long afterwards. Official policy was firmly expressed in stelas, three of which survive. Esarhaddon appears on the front of these; on the sides are his two sons, each in the appropriate robes of office.

The same group of stelas employs an unusual convention in showing the king, Esarhaddon, on a larger scale than his sons; there are also two small-scale enemies leashed at the king's feet. While there is a parallel in the Middle Assyrian period, four centuries earlier, the appearance of these small-scale enemies at this moment, just after Esarhaddon's conquest of Egypt, suggests that he may have been impressed by the themes and social perspective of Egyptian official art. If this is correct, we have yet another illustration of the receptive and practical approach to other cultures which we find repeatedly expressed in the Assyrian monuments.

These royal stelas are the trademark of the Assyrian empire. Their predominant characteristic, as in the narrative sculptures, is that they show the king as agent and servant of his gods.

We are left then with a picture, a self-portrait, of a traditional Mesopotamian king: this is how the ruler of Assyria saw himself and wished us to see him. There is little explicit recognition of the fundamental nature of the change brought about by Tiglath-pileser's conquests. The emphasis is national rather than imperial, and personal rather than national. The most significant alteration, perhaps, foreshadowing that Achaemenid community of nations that was already beginning to emerge under Assyrian dominion, lies in Sennacherib's incorporation of Babylonian royal symbolism into the Assyrian iconographic tradition. This is one case in which the sculptures, and other archaeological evidence, add substantially to the information derived from written texts. It is to these, however, that we must turn for a deeper understanding of Assyrian ideology.

NOTES

1. This paper is a slightly changed version of that read to the symposium. Footnotes have been kept to a minimum; there is no satisfactory book dealing with Assyrian sculpture in general, but essential sources are included in the list given by me in *Iraq* 34 (1972), 112. Most monuments referred to in this paper are accessible through *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* or J.B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures*. I am indebted to the Trustees of the British Museum for photographs of objects in their care, and to Mr. William Wells of the Burrell Collection, Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, for fig. 11.
2. A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* II, 154–5.
3. E. Unger, *Zum Bronzetor von Balawat*, Taf. III, Platte P.
4. D.D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* II, 186–8. Luckenbill's translations, to which I refer below, are convenient but cannot always be relied on; they will be superseded by forthcoming volumes of Grayson.
5. Reade, *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 9 (1976), Taf. 21, 1.
6. Reade, op. cit., Taf. 22, 2.
7. Luckenbill, op. cit. II, 328–9.
8. Luckenbill, op. cit. II, 303, 330–337.
9. Luckenbill, op. cit. I, 211 (Musri).
10. Luckenbill, op. cit. II, 227.
11. e.g. Luckenbill, op. cit. I, 276.
12. The waiters: Reade, op. cit., Taf. 28, 2. Quotation from A.L. Oppenheim, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 19 (1960), 146.
13. Luckenbill, op. cit. I, 288; II, 65 &c.
14. Grayson, op.cit. II, 197.
15. W. Andrae, *Coloured Ceramics from Ashur*, pl. 6.
16. Stelas and other rock-carvings are listed by L.D. Levine, *Two Neo-Assyrian Stelae from Iran*, 51–58. Supplementary list in Reade, *Iranica Antiqua* 12 (1977), 33–44, with discussion of the symbolism of these monuments.
17. Luckenbill, op. cit. I, 214.
18. G. Loud, *Khorsabad* I, fig. 104.