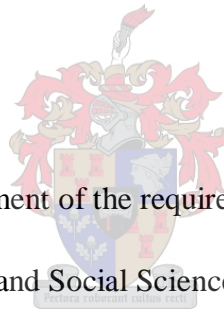


**Bit by Bit: an Iconographic study of horses in the reliefs of the  
Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II (883-859BC)**

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Stellenbosch

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**Abstract - English:**

The focus of this study is to investigate the role that horses played in the Ancient Near East, specifically during the reign of the Neo-Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II (883-859BC). By studying nine of the reliefs from the North-West Palace at Nimrud, the function of horses with regard to warfare during that time was explored. The analysis included an examination of all horses and equine tack, which consists of chariots, bridles, bits, breastplates and decorations. The reliefs are studied by using Erwin Panofsky's Theoretical Scheme, which allows for three stages of analysis. Each of the reliefs is examined as a whole, in order to place the relief in context, followed by a detailed breakdown of the horses, specifically their body language, as well as their tack and the function thereof. It was found that the Assyrians used the horses' body language to help set the tone of the relief, as the horses would display aggressive body language when under attack and relaxed body language when not under attack, for example reliefs showing parades or military camps. It was also noted that the horses of the enemies were illustrated in such a way as to show the prowess of the victorious Neo-Assyrian army. It was found that horses were instrumental in warfare as well as depicting status and rank within the military structures.

### **Opsomming – Afrikaans:**

Die fokus van hierdie studie is om die rol wat perde in die Ou Nabye Ooste gespeel het, te ondersoek, spesifiek tydens die bewind van die Neo-Assiriese koning Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 v.C.). Deur nege van die reliëfs van die Noordwes-Paleis by Nimrud te bestudeer, is die funksie van perde met betrekking tot oorlogvoering gedurende daardie tyd ondersoek. Die analise sluit 'n ondersoek van alle perde en perdetuig in, wat uit waens, tome, stange, borsplate en versierings bestaan. Die reliëfs word bestudeer deur Erwin Panofsky se Teoretiese Skema, wat vir drie fases van ontleding voorsiening maak, te gebruik. Elkeen van die reliëfs word as 'n geheel ondersoek, ten einde die reliëf in konteks te plaas, gevolg deur 'n volledige uiteensetting van die perde, spesifiek hul lyftaal, asook hul tuie en die funksie daarvan. Daar is gevind dat die Assiriërs die perde se lyftaal gebruik het om die toon van die reliëf te help stel. Die perde sou aggressiewe lyftaal vertoon wanneer hulle aangeval word en ontspanne lyftaal wanneer hulle nie aangeval word nie, byvoorbeeld reliëfs wat parades of militêre kampe wys. Daar is ook opgemerk dat die perde van die vyande op so 'n wyse geïllustreer is om die dapperheid/vaardigheid van die oorwinnende Neo-Assiriese leër te toon. Daar is gevind dat perde instrumenteel in oorlogvoering was asook dat hulle status en rang binne die militêre strukture uitgebeeld het.

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I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Izak Cornelius for his continuous support, guidance and encouragement throughout the course of this study.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **1. Overview**

Throughout history one of the animals which has aided humankind the most has been the noble horse. The horse was first domesticated in the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC in the lower Kura River valley, which is modern day Georgia and Azerbaijan (Anthony and Brown 2011:132). Domesticated horses were only introduced to the Ancient Near East in the third millennium BC and were more prominent during the Bronze Age, especially in Anatolia (Moorey 1986:198). The role of the horse gradually developed and over time horses were included in visual representations, especially as companions in warfare.

The focus of this thesis will be an investigation of how horses were used in warfare and other tasks in the Ancient Near East, specifically during the reign of the Neo-Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II, by studying reliefs from his North-West Palace at Nimrud (Russel 1998a:655-715 and Meuszynski 1981). The analysis will include an examination of all horses and equine tack, which will consist of chariots, bridals, bits and decorations.

#### **1.1 Purpose of the Study**

This study will undertake to examine the reliefs in the following contexts:

Horses:

It will undertake to examine whether their manner of depiction – for example their body language, their gait, size or where they are positioned in relation to any other objects, people or animals in the relief – has any specific or symbolic meaning.

Horse Tack:

The equipment which was used; the purpose of the equipment; how it was used and if there was any symbolic significance of the equipment if decorated.

General:

Similarities between reliefs, be it the physical appearance of the horses or the tack which was used, as well as the significance of horses during Ashurnasirpal II's reign.

## **1.2 Research Method and Design**

One has to take into account that the reliefs were created as a means to communicate to others when studying the work (Steymans 2010:66). Keeping that in mind this study will use the iconographic method as developed by E. Panofsky (2006: 86-90; cf. Stansbury-O'Donnell 2011:59-60; Steymans 2010:66) to describe and analyse a selection of representative images. According to Panofsky there are three stages to studying iconography:

1. The first stage or 'preiconographical description' is a study of the motifs that are the most prominent in the artwork (Panofsky 2006: 86-90; Stansbury-O'Donnell 2011:59). The preiconographical description stage describes the image exactly as one sees it, without going into fine detail.
2. Panofsky's second stage is referred to as 'iconographical analysis' and at this point one will have to be more specific with regard to what is being depicted, as well as any potential symbolic meaning in the art piece (Panofsky 2006:86-90; Stansbury-O'Donnell 2011:59).
3. In the final stage, or the 'iconological interpretation' phase, one will attempt to use the information from the preiconographical description and the iconographical analysis to form an overall explanation of the work (Panofsky 2006: 86-90; Stansbury-O'Donnell 2011:60).

In order to limit the scope of this study, only a select number of reliefs from Ashurnasirpal II's North-West Palace of Nimrud (Meuszynski 1981) will be examined. The reliefs that will be

included in this study will not be limited to those only depicting Ashurnasirpal II, but will include all aspects of equine related activities. In total nine reliefs will be analysed, all found in the Throne Room, Room B, of the palace. Each of the reliefs will be examined in the following manner:

1. *As a Whole:*

It is important to look at the relief programme (Reade 1979:329-343; Russell 1998b:245-247) as a whole before examining any single aspect of it. The reason for this is to have a better understanding of the context in which the horse was placed, be it a military campaign, royal procession (Reade 1979:329-343) or a hunting scene.

2. *The Horses:*

The position of the horse will be examined; in which gait it was depicted as well as who is positioned with the horse. The gait of the horse will be examined in order to determine if there was any symbolic significance of each gait. The size of the horse as shown in the relief will be analysed. If the horse is accompanied by a person in the relief, the individual's positioning will be discussed in detail as well as if there is any symbolic importance of their positioning.

The body language of a horse is an important aspect which will be studied, as it will reveal the disposition of the horse at that time. According to Susan McBane horses do not only use vocal sounds in order to communicate with others, but use body language as well (2007:33). Studies have shown that the horse's tail, ears, nostrils and mouth are all used in order to communicate with others (McBane 2007:33). These unique characteristics of body language have been well documented and can be interpreted by human observers (McBane 2007:33). Applicable aspects of body language will be examined in each of the reliefs.



3. *The Tack:*

A careful breakdown will be made of the equipment shown with each horse. The breakdown will include: a description of the tack; its function and if it was decorated the symbology thereof. The tack could include the following:

- Chariots
- Blankets
- Bridles
- Reins
- Bits
- Breastplates
- Whips

4. Similarities:

Any significant similarities between the horses in all the various reliefs will be highlighted.

## Chapter Two

### The Noble Horse

#### 2.1 Introduction

One of the animals that has been closely linked to the human race throughout the ages has been the horse. This chapter will discuss how the horse evolved; the introduction of the horse to the Near East; the development of horse tack as well as the body language of horses.

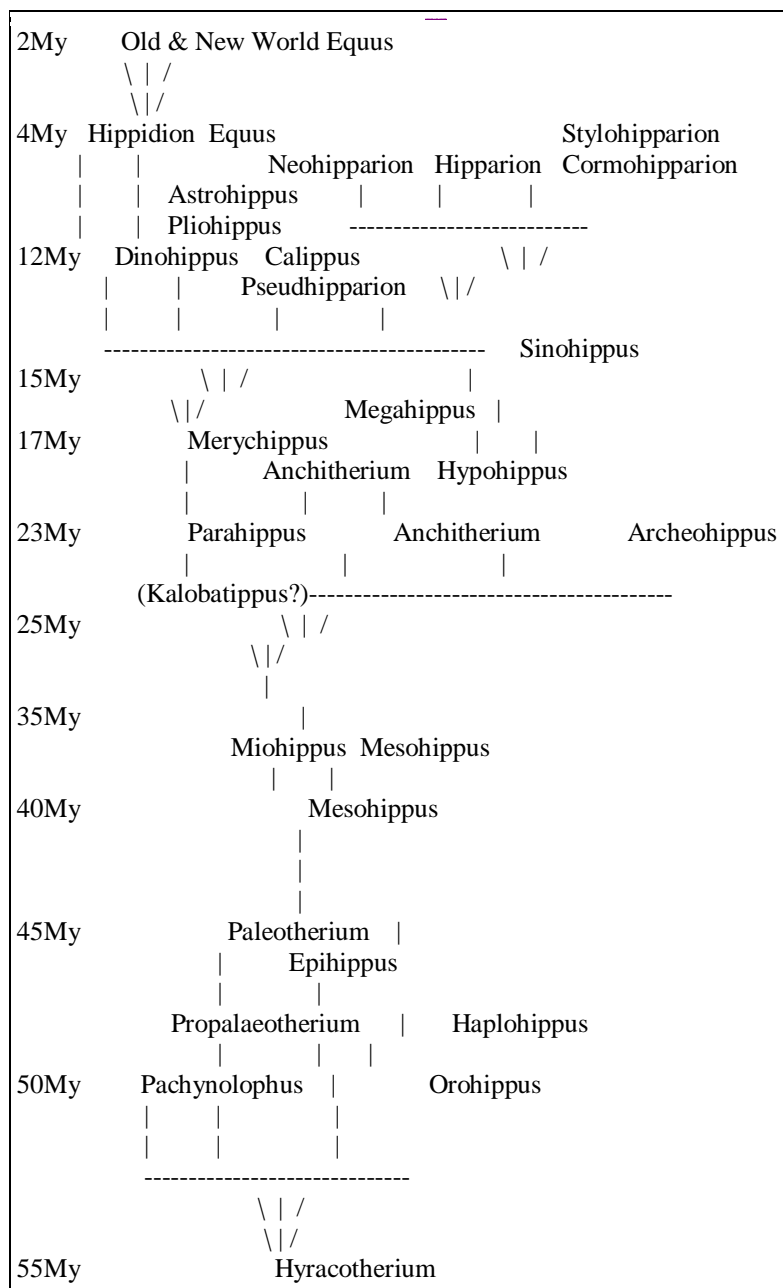


Figure 2.1: Timescale and Horse Family Tree (Hunt 1995)

## 2.2 The Dawn Horse

The origin of the *Equus* species as we know it today predates our own human ancestors. The *Hyracotherium*, or the dawn horse, a small dog size mammal, was the ancestor of not only the horse, but many other species of animals too. The *Hyracotherium* lived during the ‘Eocene epoch of the Tertiary period’, some 60-55 million years ago (Johns 2006:9). It had padded paws, with four toes on its front feet and three toes on its back feet, and it was a browser, living on soft vegetation and fruit.



Figure 2.2: Fossil of the *Hyracotherium* found in Wyoming, dating between 52-45 million years old (Florida Museum of Natural History 1998)

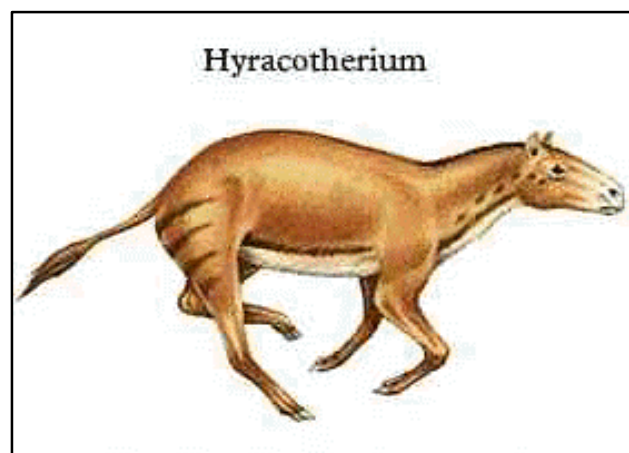


Figure 2.3: An artist's interpretation of the *Hyracotherium* (Low 2013).

Roughly four millions years ago, after millennia of evolution the *Hyracotherium* evolved into the *Equus* species, which consisted of not only the horse, but also asses and zebras (Johns 2006:9). The species spread across the primeval land bridges and thus were able to move across the world and evolve further. The fingernail of the third toe of the *Hyracotherium* evolved into the hoof, which lead to the species evolving its eating habits from browser to grazer, grazing on grasses and grains (Johns 2006:9).

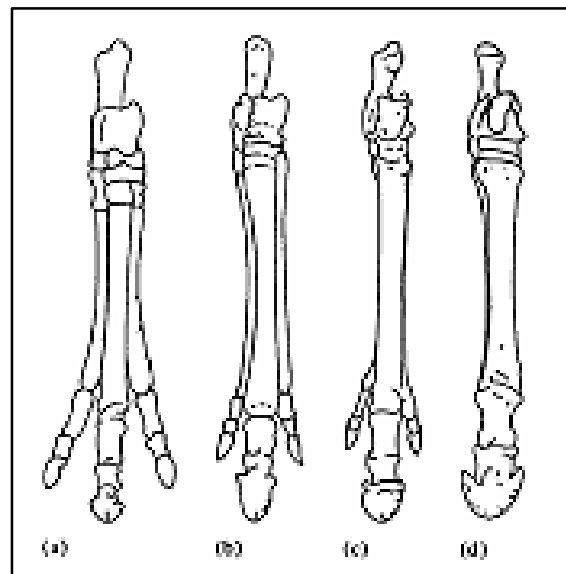
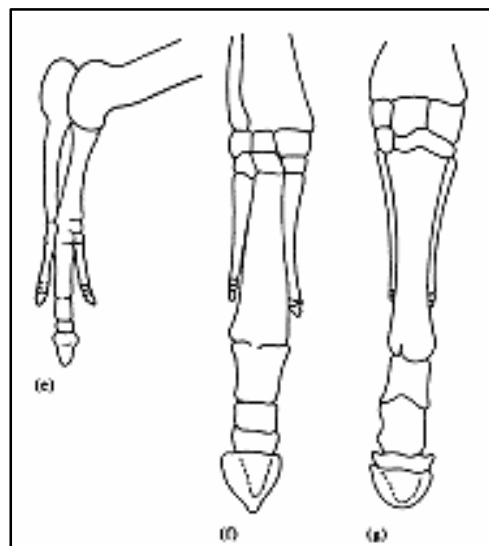


Figure 2.4



Figures 2.4 and 2.5: The evolution of the third toe of the *Hyracotherium* (a and e) into the hoof which today's *Equus* species has (d and g) (Lindsay 1998).

The species consequently preferred to live in open grasslands, instead of densely wooded forests, and they were able to migrate over long distances (Johns 2006:10). As the *Equus* diet was becoming more specialised their teeth evolved too. The species developed two front incisors, which they use to cut the grasses with, and large molars which were used for grinding the grasses. Furthermore, a large gap evolved between the incisors and molars, the *diastema*, which humans were able to use to their own benefit as it helped with the development of the bit (Johns 2006:10).

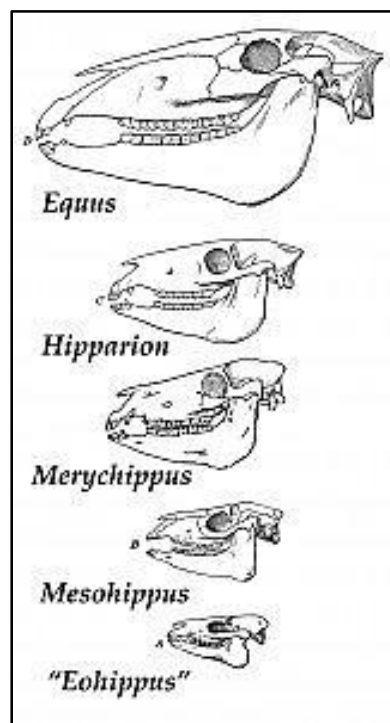


Figure 2.6: The evolution of the horse's teeth (Dirk 2011).

Half a million years ago *Homo sapiens* made its first appearance and by this time the *Equus* species was not only found across the world, but had evolved and adapted physically to suit their environmental conditions. In hotter, dryer climates the *Equus* species evolved to have longer limbs, short haired fur and long ears, all which helped to keep it cool; whereas in colder climates the species evolved to have shorter limbs, thicker fur and smaller ears, all which helped to keep it warm and conserve its energy (Johns 2006:10). During this time frame it was when humankind made acquaintance with horses for the first time.

### 2.3 Domestication of the Horse

The domestication of animals, specifically in the Ancient Near East, was not something which happened instantaneously. *Homo sapiens* had to evolve to the point where they were ready and able to domesticate the animals first. One of the most necessary evolutionary steps which occurred in the human race was the ‘Neolithic or “food-producing revolution”’ (Reed 1959:1629; Crabtree 1993:201; Stiebing 2003:11). This allowed for man to become settlers and give up the nomadic lifestyle which they had led as they moved for hunting and gathering purposes. With settlements man was able to grow and produce his own food, which led not only to much technical and cultural advancement, but also arguably, to the domestication of animals (Reed 1959:1692; Stiebing 2003:11).

Domestication can be defined as the following:

‘The essence of domestication is the capture and taming by man of a species with particular behavioural characteristics, their removal from their natural living areas and breeding community, and their maintenance under controlled breeding conditions for profit’ (Bökönyi 1969:219 as cited in Crabtree 1993:202).

The first animals to be domesticated were cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and dogs. These five animal groups formed part of what is known as the *primary domestic animals* (Crabtree 1993:201). They were domesticated by 6 000 B.C. and offered meat, milk, hides, wool and safety to humans. Horses form part of the *secondary domesticates*, which included the camel and the cat, and were domesticated in Western Asia by 4 000 B.C. (Johns 2006:13). Before then horses were mostly hunted for their meat, skins and bones.

Horses were first domesticated in the steppes of Kazakhstan and Russia between 4500 – 3500 B.C. (Anthony and Brown 2011:131; Moorey 1986:197). A recent discovery has led us to believe otherwise, as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is excavating an archaeological site, named al-Maqar, which could prove that horses were domesticated 9000 years ago (Alsharif 2011). However, based on earlier research, from the fourth millennium the use of domesticated horses started to slowly extend from Kazakhstan south to Anatolia and Mesopotamia (Moorey 1986:197-198). The horses that were found naturally in the Ancient Near East were known as the onagers, *Equus hemionus*, and they were resistant to domestication. Donkeys were also found in these regions and they were easier to domesticate than the onagers (Anthony and Brown 2011:133). Horses were widely used already by the

various cultures in the Ancient Near East before they were finally introduced to Egypt by the Hyksos around 1640 B.C. (Houlihan 1996:33; Stiebing 2003:166). The introduction of horses as well as the light horse drawn chariot made a significant impact on the Egyptians, as they became a 'major component of Egypt's new Kingdom armies' (Stiebing 2003:166).



Figure 2.7: *Equus Hemionus Onager* (Dholakiya 2012)

Horses were domesticated for several reasons; the most important at first was for heavy transportation of goods. Horses were able to move goods faster than cattle and also needed less feed when transporting over long distances (Johns 2006:13). Whether horses were first ridden or used for the pulling of carts for transportation has not yet been established. By studying the body of the horse it would be fairly easy to establish that horses would be more comfortable to ride than cattle for example; horses' backs are more stable than cattle, as there are no protruding shoulder bones (Johns 2006:14). Once domesticated and part of society, the horse was able to revolutionise not only power and transport, but warfare as well (Johns 2006:13). According to Cantrell, horses played a crucial role in defensive strategies during warfare in both Judah and Israel during the Iron Age (Cantrell 2011).

One of the first nations to specialise in horse breeding was the Kassites (Stiebing 2003:114). They kept a record of each of their horses, documenting their pedigree as well as the horse's characteristics. From these horses they could selectively choose those which 'were best suited for chariot warfare' (Stiebing 2003:114).

## 2.4 The Evolution of Horse Tack

Even the smallest of horses are extremely strong animals, which makes controlling the horse so much more difficult. Therefore specialised horse gear, or horse tack, had to be developed in order to control horses as a simple collar and lead would not be sufficient (Johns 2006:14).

### 2.4.1 The Bit and Bridle



Figure 2.8: Bronze horse-bit with decorated cheek-pieces, (ME 130677)  
(The British Museum)

Before the bit was developed, equids were steered by means of lines attached to nose rings (Littauer & Crouwel 1979:35, 45). This method of controlling a horse was not successful, as the rider would struggle to control the horse, especially when the horse was in a gallop (Stiebing 2003: 109). However, as previously mentioned, the horses had a specially evolved gap between their molars and front incisors, which allowed for the development of the bit.

The bit is an

‘element for control of horse by the mouth, composed of mouthpiece ... and cheekpieces .... Reins were attached either directly to the mouthpiece ends or



to some metal element connecting them. The action of these bits was [to exert] pressure on the corners of the horse's mouth' (Littauer & Crouwel 1979:3-4). The rider, or driver, would use the reins to steer the horse, and as the reins were attached to the bit, the horse would feel pressure from the pull through the bit (Stiebing 2003: 109; Anthony & Brown 2011:148). The bit was, and still is, placed in the gap, or *diastema*, between the incisors and molars and rests on the tongue. The horse is controlled by pulling of the reins, as that would put pressure on the soft tissue inside the horse's mouth, which forces the horse to turn its head towards the pressure, thus steering the horse (Anthony & Brown 2011:148; Johns 2006:14; Stiebing 2003:109). When the bit is pulled from both sides, or by both hands, it forces the horse to bring its head down and come to a stop. There is very little evidence as to what the first bits were made out of as there were most likely made out of rope or leather, and examples did not survive the past few thousand years. Bits were first used between 1600-1000 B.C. and were documented in ancient Egyptian representations and texts (Littauer & Crouwel 1979:86). By this time bits were made out of bronze.

#### 2.4.2 Riding and Saddles



Figure 2.9: Ashurnasirpal II riding a horse bareback on a lion hunt (Dubrulle 2006).

The next area in which the horse aided towards rapid development was that of warfare. By studying ancient art some of the earliest depictions horses being ridden for warfare date back to 2 000-1 600 B.C. in Mesopotamia (Anthony & Brown 2011:154; Johns 2006:17). Archers were the first to ride horses during warfare, which due to the nature of riding and archery, led to better archery equipment (Anthony & Brown 2011:154). The riders rode without any kind of saddle or stirrups, which made the art of balancing while riding while aiming a bow and

arrow so much more difficult (Johns 2006:17). Before this development in warfare, horses were mostly ridden for a means of transport in the Ancient Near East (2375-2000 B.C.). The riders would ride bareback and would either sit astride or sideways on the horse's back (Littauer & Crouwel 1979:47).

### 2.4.3 Wagons and Chariots



Figure 2.10: Ashurnasirpal II riding in a chariot during a lion hunt (Dubrulle 2006).

Chariots were at first luxury items, used only by kings and rich noblemen for transport (Stiebing 2003:109). The oldest horse drawn chariots date back to 2100-1700 B.C. and were found in graves at the south-eastern Ural steppes (Anthony & Brown 2011:155). These chariots were much lighter than previous means of transport and had spoked wheels (Littauer & Crouwel 1979:72). What made this chariot unique from the others was that there were no seating in it, which allowed for soldiers to stand next to each other and this aided to the advancement of warfare (Littauer & Crouwel 1979:72). However, before this time equids, which included the ass as well as the horse, were used as draught animals in the Ancient Near East, dating back to the earlier Third Millennium B.C. (Littauer & Crouwel 1979:35). The animals would be paired off and each placed beside a 'pole and under a yoke held on by neck straps' (Littauer & Crouwel 1979:35). The straps would aid with steering, as the lines were attached to their nose rings (Littauer & Crouwel 1979:35).



Figure 2.11: Standard of Ur: War chariot, with spoke-less wheels, pulled by donkeys (The British Museum).

During the reign of Ashurnasirpal II the Assyrian chariot was barely depicted with more than two wheels. The chariots had a 'D-shaped floor plan and a low, solid breastwork' (Littauer & Crowell 1979:140). The chariots were divided in the centre by a partition and allowed for two to three soldiers to stand in it. The wheels, as with the first chariots, had spokes and the Assyrian chariot was depicted with six spokes, whereas enemy chariots were depicted with eight spokes (Littauer & Crowell 1979:140). The wheels revolved on an axle fixed at the rear of the floor.

The development of chariots, as well as horse riding, led to the improvement of archery equipment. Composite bows were developed in parts of the Ancient Near East and its technology spread to other civilisations with the spread of chariot warfare (Stiebing 2003:166). The bow was made of 'fine wood strengthened by bands of sinew and horn' and was much stronger than the simple bow which was used previously (Stiebing 2003:166).

#### 2.4.4 Other Tack Explained

Breastplate: 'In antiquity, protective or decorative element of metal and / or leather, hung across horse's chest' (Littauer & Crouwel 1979:4).

Girth: 'Band encircling the thorax of an animal- or attached to lower edges of saddle cloth and passing under belly' (Littauer & Crouwel 1979:5).

### 2.5 Knowing the Horse

*The wind of heaven is that which blows between a horse's ears – Arabian Proverb  
(Quotegarden 2012)*

In the wild, horses live in herds with a well-established hierarchy set by both the stallions and mares of each herd. By studying the body language of horses in the wild, one will notice that there are definite displays of body language, which horses use to send a message across to the other members of the herd, or a particular horse with which they are not pleased. Horses ranked higher on the hierarchy of the herd have the ability to chase another horse away by merely flicking their ears or swishing their tails, while others have to physically fight off an offending horse (Vavra 1979:14). Just as horses are able to communicate to their own kind by means of body language, they use the same method of communication with their human counterparts (Pickeral 2001:22-23). Before discussing body language it is important to know the different body parts of the horse first.

## 2.5.1 Horse Anatomy

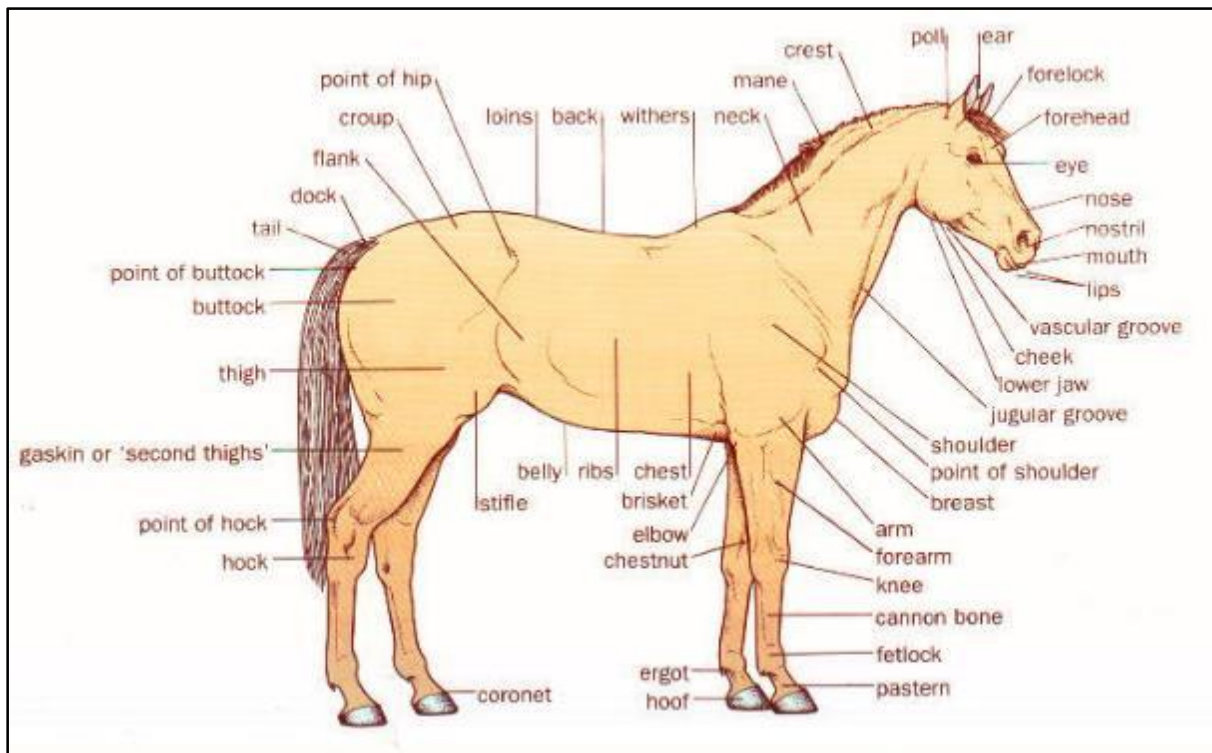


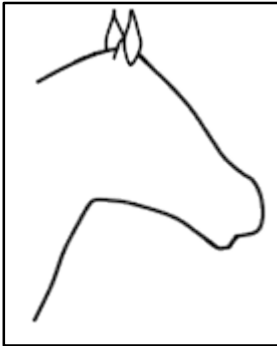
Figure 2.12: The standard description of the horse's body parts  
(Sprint Horse Australia 2013).

## 2.5.2 Body Language

### 2.5.2.1 The Ears

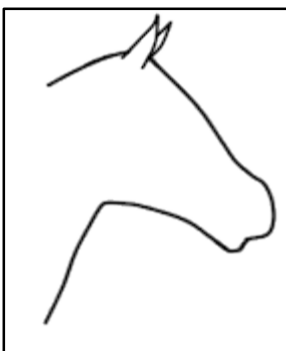
Arguably, one of the most expressive body parts of a horse is its ears. With just one forwards or backwards flick of an ear, a horse can send out a multitude of messages.



*Alertness, interest and curiosity:*

Ears which are upright, but facing slightly backwards indicate a horse which is alert and curious about its surroundings. This horse is in a relaxed state, enjoying its environment. When riding a horse with its ears in this position, it indicates that the horse is focusing on the aids which the rider is giving it (Vavra 1979:34; Pickeral 2001:24).

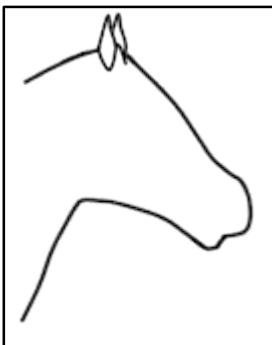
Figure 2.13: The alert, curious and relaxed horse (TAFE NSW 2002).

*Intense interest, alertness and curiosity:*

Ears which are upright, but facing directly forward indicate a horse which is on high alert.

The forward facing ears indicate a horse which is focused on its environment; however, it may be slightly tense as it is listening for the unknown. The intentions of the horse with forward facing ears are good (Vavra 1979:34) When riding a horse with its ears in this position, it indicates that the horse is focusing on the environment.

Figure 2.14: The curious horse (TAFE NSW 2002).

*Submission:*

Ears which are upright and facing as far backwards as it can reach indicate a horse displaying submissive behaviour. In a herd situation the horse would display this position when it has been confronted by a more dominant horse; however, when riding a horse with its ears in this position, it indicates that the rider is the dominant partner of the pair (Vavra 1979:34; Pickeral 2001:24).

Figure 2.15: The submissive horse (TAFE NSW 2002).

*Relaxed:*

Ears which are 'flapped-out' indicate a horse that is very relaxed, or even bored. A horse's ears are generally in this position when the horse is grazing and feels safe in its environment (Vavra 1979:34; Pickeral 2001:24).

Figure 2.16: The relaxed horse (TAFE NSW 2002).

*Anger, aggression, irritation and warning:*

Ears which are pressed flat against the back of the head or the mane indicate a horse which is in a state of anger, irritation or panic. As horses are herd animals and hunted in the wild, their instinct is to run, rather than fight. However, if pushed into a corner, horses will kick and bite



to protect themselves. When their ears are in this position it will first serve as a warning to others to back off, but if the threat is not moving away, the horse will most likely defend itself and fight off the attacker (Vavra 1979:18; 34; Pickeral 2001:24).

Figure 2.17: The final warning (TAFE NSW 2002).

### 2.5.2.2 Facial Expressions

Apart from using their ears, horses are able to communicate various messages to those in their herd by the most subtle change of their eyes, muzzle or mouth (Vavra 1979:34).

*Eyes:*

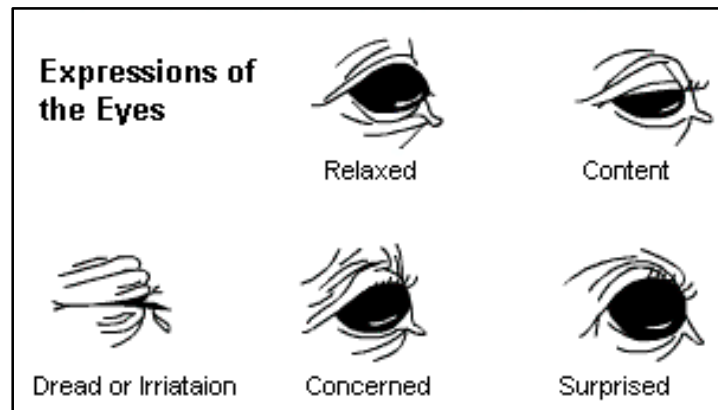


Figure 2.18: Expressions of the horse's eyes (TAFE NSW 2002).

*Tension:* When a horse starts to become tense there will be a subtle change around its eyes. The upper eyelid may appear more wrinkled and there will be 'tightness at the corner of the eye' (Williams 2013).

*Rapid Darting:* When a horse is feeling threatened its eyes will dart from side to side, as it is trying to look for a way to escape from the threat. If the horse cannot find a way to escape it will react violently by biting or kicking at the threat (Williams 2013).

*Whites of the eyes showing:* When one can see the *sclera*, the white portion of the eyeball, the horse is in a state of turmoil. The horse is either extremely angry or scared, depending on the situation (Williams 2013).



### *The Muzzle:*

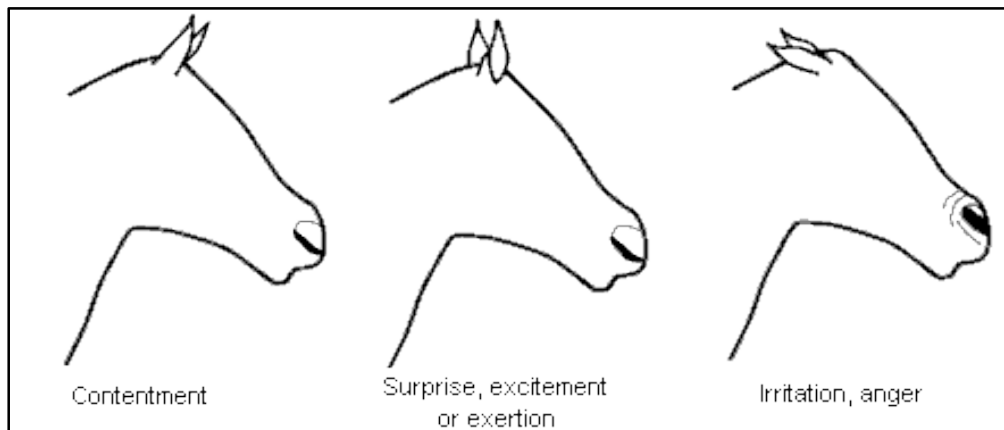


Figure 2.19: Expressions of the horse's nose (TAFE NSW 2002).

### *Drooping lip or slacked muzzle:*

When a horse's lower lip is drooping it means that the horse is very relaxed and may even be asleep (Williams 2013).

### *Chewing:*

A horse does not only chew when it is eating. Horses also chew when they are relaxed, concentrating and learning something new (Williams 2013).

### *Flehmen:*

When a horse is unsure about a smell it will lift up its head, curl back its upper lip and breathe in and out through the mouth. Horses use this method to determine what unfamiliar smells are because it forces the air through a slit in his nose called the vomeronasal organ, which enables a horse to better detect chemicals such as pheromones (Williams 2013).

### *Flared Nostrils:*

A horse may flare its nostrils for one of the following two reasons. Firstly, the horse will flare its nostrils when it is being exercised and needs more air in its lungs. Secondly, a horse will flare its nostrils when it is nervous (Williams 2013).

*Tight Muzzle:*

When a horse tightens its mouth or muzzle it shows that the horse is feeling anxious (Williams 2013).

*Open Mouth with visible teeth:*

Depending on the corresponding body language, an open mouth with visible teeth can have several meanings. If the horse's ears are pinned back, the whites of its eyes are visible and its head is held high, the horse is most likely to start biting at the threat (Williams 2013). If, however, its ears are pricked forward and its eyes are relaxed, the horse most likely has nonaggressive intentions and may just be in a playful mood (Vavra 1979:34).

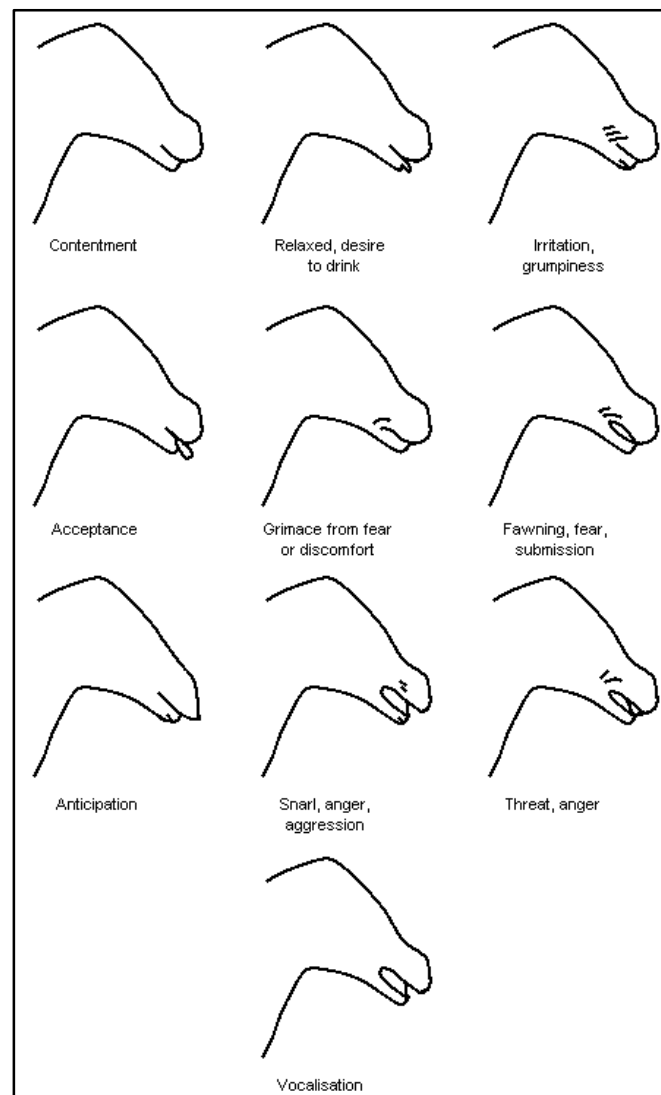


Figure 2.20: Expressions of the horse's mouth (TAFE NSW 2002).

### 2.5.2.3 Head Carriage

The position in which a horse holds its head is also a means of expression for a horse.

#### *Lowered head*

If a horse is keeping his head low it means that it is relaxed. Usually the horse's ears would be in the 'flapped out' position when his head is in a lowered position. Generally horses carry their heads in this position when they are grazing, resting or asleep (Williams 2013).

#### *Raised head:*

A horse will raise its head when something has alerted it. The horse's ears would be in the forward position when its head is raised. At this point the horse would be questioning if it should go into fight or flight mode, or if it should ignore the potential threat (Williams 2013).

#### *Snaking head:*

The snaking position occurs when the horse is feeling threatened and is on high alert and about to attack. The horse will lower its head slightly and move it from side to side. The ears will be pressed back against the horse's head or mane, which will send out a warning to those close by not to move into the horse's immediate space (Williams 2013).

### 2.5.2.4 The Legs

#### *Forelegs:*

#### *Splayed forelegs:*

When a horse stands with its forelegs wide apart and the horse is leaning backwards slightly, it indicates that the horse is afraid and may be getting ready to bolt (Williams 2013).

#### *Pawing:*

Pawing occurs when a horse uses a foreleg to paw at the ground, which is similar to a digging motion. A horse paws at the ground for several reasons. The horse may be bored, impatient or waiting for something, such as its food to arrive. A horse may paw out of anger or rage, this action is usually accompanied by flat ears pressed against the mane, and a low, snaking head (Williams 2013).

*Stomping:*

Stomping should not be confused with pawing. When a horse stomps, it will raise and lower its foreleg forcefully in place. A horse will stomp its forelegs when it is irritated, for example when there are flies in the area (Williams 2013).

*Striking:*

Striking occurs when a horse has to attack or defend itself. The horse strikes with its forelegs in a forward kick. The horse may rear onto its hind legs when striking with its forelegs, which could cause severe damage to other animals and even death to human beings. A horse will only resort to this action as a last resort and as with other aggressive body language indicators, its ears will be pinned back, the eyes will be darting, its head raised and its muzzle tense or showing its teeth (Williams 2013).

*Hind Legs**Cocked:*

When a horse is in a relaxed state it will rest the leading edge of the hoof on the ground and drop its hip (Williams 2013). The horse will change its weight and shift from one leg to the other. This position is usually carried out while a horse is grazing, with its head down and ears in the relaxed position. However, if the horse has its ears flat against its head and keeps looking back over its shoulder, this would indicate that the horse is feeling threatened or irritated by something and may be getting ready to kick with the cocked leg (Williams 2013).

*Raised:*

A horse will raise its legs for several reasons and one has to look at the rest of the horse in order to understand what message it is sending out. Firstly, if the head and ears are in a relaxed position when it raises a hind leg, the horse may just be irritated by a fly. However, if it has its ears and head in a more aggressive or defensive position, the horse will be getting ready to kick with its hind leg (Williams 2013). When both hind legs are raised, the horse is kicking back at whatever is bothering it, be it to defend itself from an attack or to attack another animal or person.

#### 2.5.2.5 *The Tail*

##### *Flagged:*

A horse will carry its tail raised, or flagged, when it is excited about something (Williams 2013).

##### *Clamped down:*

A horse will clamp its tail down between its legs when it is feeling distressed and nervous (Williams 2013).

##### *Rapid swinging:*

A horse will swish its tail from side to side to get rid of flies or other pests, however, when a horse moves his tail from side to side in a quick, sharp motion, it is irritated or angry. The horse will usually move its tail in this way when it is about to kick or buck (Williams 2013).

Emotional State	Head & Neck	Ears	Eyes	Nostrils	Muzzle	Legs / Feet	Tail	Overall Stance
Angry / Annoyed	Snaking	Pinned	Tensed		Tensed	Stomping, striking, kicking, Rearing.	Swishing rapidly	
Bored / Relaxed	Head down	Relaxed	Focused		Slack	Inactive, cocked	Low, still	Slack
Curious	Head and neck extended towards object of curiosity	Both facing upwards and forward	Intently focused	Sniffing, blowing	Tensed	Squarely planted, may be splayed	Held up	Moving stiffly
Fearful	Head turned in towards source of fear	Fixed on source, or flicking to identify source	Darting rapidly, with whites showing. Tense.	Alternately flared and snorting	Tense	Forelegs splayed, frozen, bolting.	Clamped down.	Tense
Submissive	Head held low and averted	Relaxed	Averted		Low, clamped with lip smacking or chewing			Placid
Uncertain	Head held up, neck tense.	Flicking rapidly back and forth.	Darting	Quivering		May be frozen in place or moving around gingerly.		Tense, alert and possibly sweating.

(Equus 2007:28)

### 2.5.3 The Gaits

In general horses have four gaits, or paces, namely the walk, the trot, the canter and the gallop (Pickeral 2001:98).

#### 2.5.3.1 *The Walk*

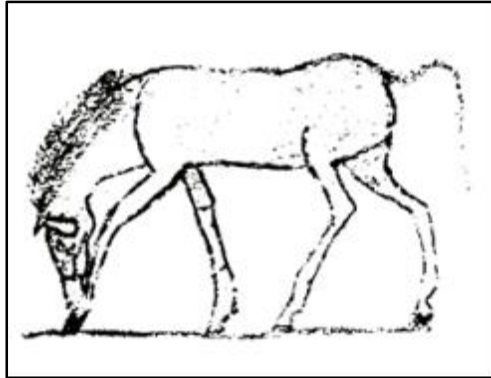


Figure 2.21: This ancient Egyptian ostrakon shows a horse walking and scratching its leg with its nose. Note the position of the legs in the walking gait with each leg moving individually (Rommelaere 1991: 232).

The walk is what is known as a ‘four-beat pace’ (Pickeral 2001:98). This means that you are able to count the beats or movements of the horse in regular and even beats of 1, 2, 3, 4 as the horse’s legs move and touch the ground. There will always be at least two feet on the ground at the same time during the walk (Pickeral 2001:98).

### 2.5.3.2 *The Trot*

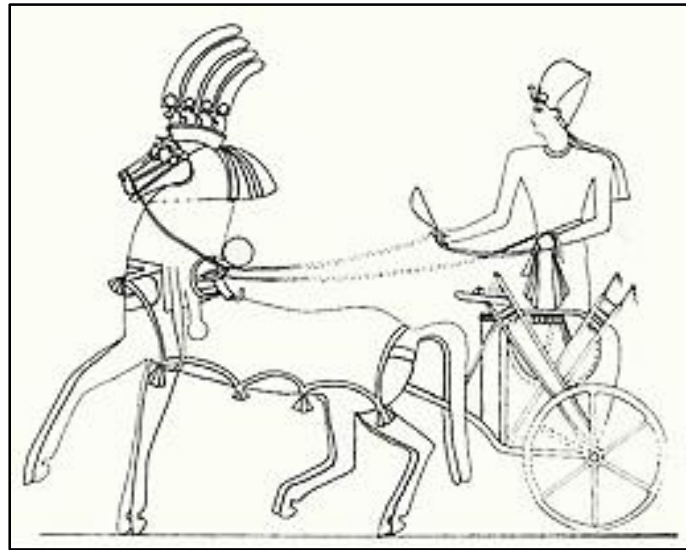


Figure 2.22: Ramses III driving the two trotting chariot-horses. Take note of the two hooves off the ground and two hooves on the ground for the trot (Relief at Temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu) (Rommelaere 1991:80).

The trot is a ‘two-beat pace’ (Pickeral 2001:98). The horse alternates its movements between diagonal legs and the pace is faster than that of the walk. The movement may feel as very ‘springy’ for the rider, as the horse’s movement is less smooth than that of the walk (Pickeral 2001:98). When counting the beats of the movement of this pace it is 1, 2, 1, 2, as the horse alternates in a ‘springy’ motion between diagonal legs (Pickeral 2001:98).



### 2.5.3.3 *The Canter*

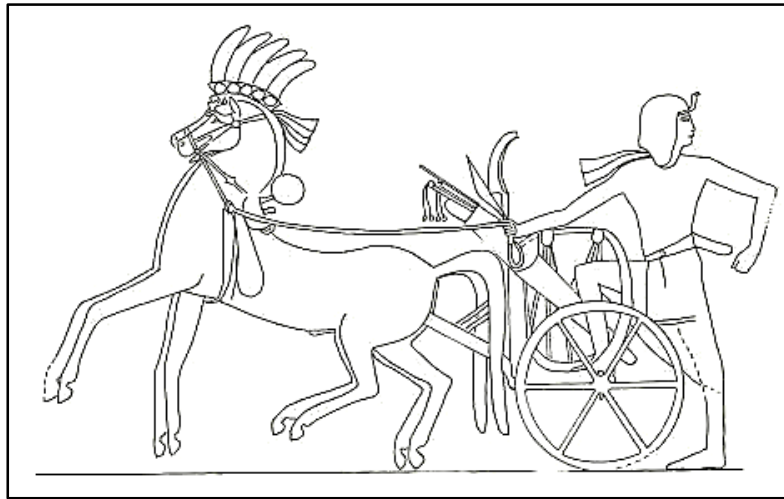


Figure 2.23: Canterng chariot horses from Karnak. Notice how three of the horses' hooves are lifted off the ground, indicating the canter (Rommelaere 1991:78).

The canter is a 'three-beat pace' in which a horse will move by using a foreleg on its own, followed by the opposite foreleg and both hind legs (Pickeral 2001:98). The horse will thus either have one foot on the ground, or three feet alternatively (Pickeral 2001:98).

### 2.5.3.4 *The Gallop*

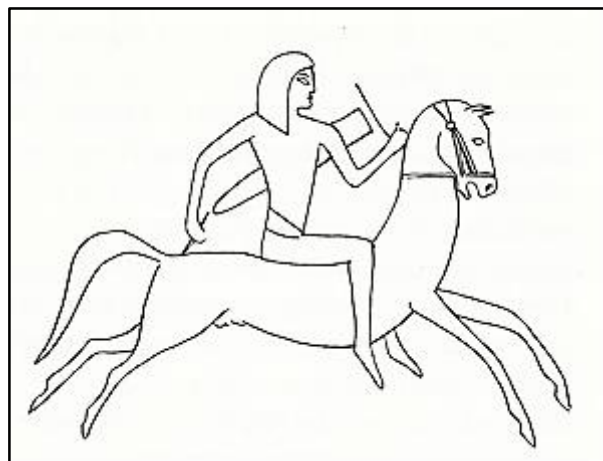


Figure 2.24: The galloping horse from a relief at Abu Simbel. Take note how all four hooves are lifted off the ground to depict the galloping movement (Rommelaere 1991:130).

The last of the gaits is the gallop. The gallop is the fastest of all the gaits and has a 'four-beat pace' (Pickeral 2001:98). With the gallop the horse moves by having all four feet on the ground at the same time, followed by a moment of suspension in the air with all feet off the ground before all four feet touch the ground again (Pickeral 2001:99).

## 2.6 Summary

The focus of this chapter was on the evolution of the horse from the *Hyracotherium* which lived between 60-55 million years ago to the *Equus* species which we know now. The discussion included the evolution of the feet, teeth and adaptation to geographical environments. Furthermore, horses were first domesticated in Western Asia by 4000 B.C. and quickly revolutionized transport and warfare. The development of horse tack was discussed, which included the bit and bridle; riding and saddles as well as wagons and chariots. The different aspects of the horse's body language were explored, starting with the anatomy of the horse; the expressions of the ears; eyes; muzzle; head carriage; legs and tail. Lastly the four different gaits were explained, namely the walk, the trot, the canter and the gallop.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Ashurnasirpal II**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter will focus on the history of Mesopotamia and Assyria, as well as their geographical aspects. The social and political structures of the independent city states will be discussed, as well as how the different empires were formed. Furthermore, the history of king Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria will be examined, including his military campaigns and especially North-West palace which he built at Nimrud during his reign. Lastly, a brief discussion will be given describing the reliefs in the throne room of his palace, the techniques which were used to create the reliefs as well as the function of the reliefs.

#### **3.2 Assyria**

##### **3.2.1 Geographically**

Assyria was a region located within the Northern areas of Mesopotamia, a Greek word meaning ‘the land between two rivers’, which was located between the Euphrates and Tigris (Woolf 2005: 60; Nardo & Kebric 2007:180). Geographically Mesopotamia stretched beyond the rivers and reached on the eastern side to the Zagros mountain range and on the west to the edge of the desert (Woolf 2005:60).

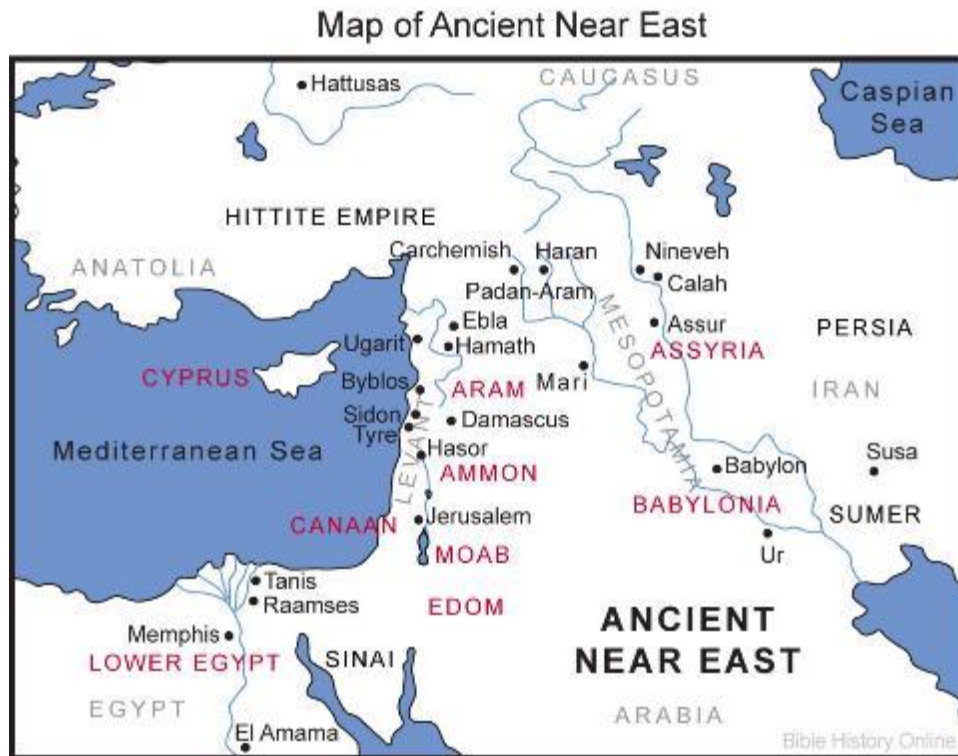


Figure 3.1: Map of the Ancient Near East (Bible History Online).

To the south the rivers drained separately into the ocean, creating deltas which formed marshlands, lakes and waterways (Mcintosh 2005:8). This area was known at first as Sumer, as the first group of settlers in the area was the Sumerians (Nardo & Kebric 2007:180). Later the name changed to Babylonia as the rulers from Babylon governed the area. A great quantity of wildlife was found within these areas, which encouraged human settlements in these areas. Within these areas barley, wheat and dates were harvested (Woolf 2005:60). However, due to the soil not being able to sustain anything larger than shrubs and palm trees, timber and stone had to be imported (Woolf 2005:60; Nardo & Kebric 2007:181).

Northwest of Sumer / Babylonia was Akkad / Assyria. This area, though not influenced geographically by the fertile marshlands, had a more stable annual rainfall which, with the cooler climate, allowed for the growing of grain (Nardo & Kebric 2007:181). As with Babylonia, this area also lacked materials such as stone, thus most of the buildings were built from clay or mud bricks (Nardo & Kebric 2007:182). Other materials which were lacking in Mesopotamia were metals, such as copper, tin, iron, silver and gold. The lack of materials was one of the many reasons why the Mesopotamians often tried to conquer neighboring

regions, as it would have been much more beneficial to have important resources under their control than being dependent on imports (Nardo & Kebric 2007:182). As the towns were mostly located close to the rivers for fertile lands, the cities were able to control the river trade, which helped support the development of the towns (Mcintosh 2005:12).

In western Mesopotamia, not too far from the Euphrates, was the immense desert which stretched all the way from 'southern Arabia to the southern part of the Near East, shading off into semi-desert where rainfall increases well north of Babylonia' (Mcintosh 2005:11). Though these areas were not suited for agricultural purposes, nomads were able to make a living with their domesticated animals which included sheep, goats and donkeys (Mcintosh 2005:11). As the environment was often harsh, the nomads could not set up a permanent home as they had to move after vegetation for their animals. Despite the severe environmental conditions, the desert did play an important role in the trade routes, especially after camels were domesticated and used as means of transport (Mcintosh 2005:11).

### 3.2.2 Civilization, Politics and Kingship

The first settlements in Mesopotamia were established roughly in the seventh millennium B.C. close to the riverbanks of the Tigris and Euphrates. The groups of people who settled down at the riverbanks were farmers and as they planted their crops they were unable to leave the area as their harvests had to be maintained (Nardo & Kebric 2007:74). From these small establishments Mesopotamia quickly flourished as towns and cities were established and by early 5000 B.C. towns such as Hassunah had over 500 villagers (Nardo & Kebric 2007:74). Between 5000-4000 B.C. some of the towns had grown as large as five thousand people and this led to each of the larger cities developing local religions as well as political structures.

Cities were governed as individual city states, which consisted of a group of selected individuals. The ruling party was determined by various means, including land ownership, as those who possessed the most land in the city would be seen as the richest and most powerful. The gods also played an important role in the choosing of the ruler (Nardo & Kebric

2007:126; 156). The ruler, or king, had to prove his right to rule by reciting from a creation myth that the gods handed the power down to him, either directly or through his family (Nardo & Kebric 2007:156). The kings also portrayed themselves as being semi-divine, either by means of written texts, as the son of a deity, or in art form where he was depicted as larger than other people in the setting, or standing next to a god (Nardo & Kebric 2007: 156). Kings also had to claim their patronage as the son of former kings and thus referred to himself as the 'distant descendant of [X], son of [Y] king of Babylon' (Postgate 1995:395). The king's rule was not guaranteed, if he did not perform his duties to his people, the kingdom would rebel against him (Postgate 1995: 395).

'If a king does not heed justice, his people will be thrown into chaos, and his land will be devastated,' and '[i]f he does not heed his nobles, his life will be cut short, if he does not heed his adviser, his land will rebel against him.' From a tablet from the library of King Aššur Banipal of Assyria (668-circa 627) (Postgate 1995:395).

As Mesopotamia became more established as one empire with Sargon from Akkad as ruler, the king would conquer other city-states in order to expand his kingdom, thus recognising him as the chief of state. He would set up local governments to rule the conquered cities under his name. The governors were usually from noble descent and were often inspected by royal inspectors (Nardo & Kebric 2007:127; 156). As the ruler of the empire the king had other administrative duties including meetings with foreign ambassadors; the administration of justice and the king also took time to consider the needs of his subjects (Postgate 1995:395; Nardo & Kebric 2007:156).

The king would also work very closely with high priests, not only for their advice, but also to please the gods and to keep him in their favour (Mcintosh 2005:173; Nardo & Kebric 2007:127). As the king was directly chosen by the gods to rule he was believed to be the highest priest of the society and was as such given a title which was a derivative from the temple or deity which the king worshipped (Postgate 1995:396; Nardo & Kebric 2007:156). The king's most important religious duty was to keep the gods appeased. The Mesopotamians believed that the king would only be successful as a ruler if the gods were appeased, and in contrast, if any form of ill-fortune, be it draught or an unsuccessful military campaign, occurred against the empire the king was blamed for displeasing the gods. Therefore one of the most important duties of a king was to ensure that all religious responsibilities were taken

care of. This included that new temples were built; that temples were maintained; that the appointed priests did their duties; that religious ceremonies and festivals took place correctly and the king also had to be in consultation with the astrologers and diviners to ensure that the fate of the nation was in good hands (Postgate 1995:397; McIntosh 2005:173; Nardo & Kebric 2007:156).

Apart from the local governors and high priests, the king appointed generals in his army. Although the generals, as well as other military officials, were in charge of running the army, the king was still the supreme ruler and he often joined them on many campaigns (Nardo & Kebric 2007:127; 156).

### 3.2.3 The Mesopotamian Empires

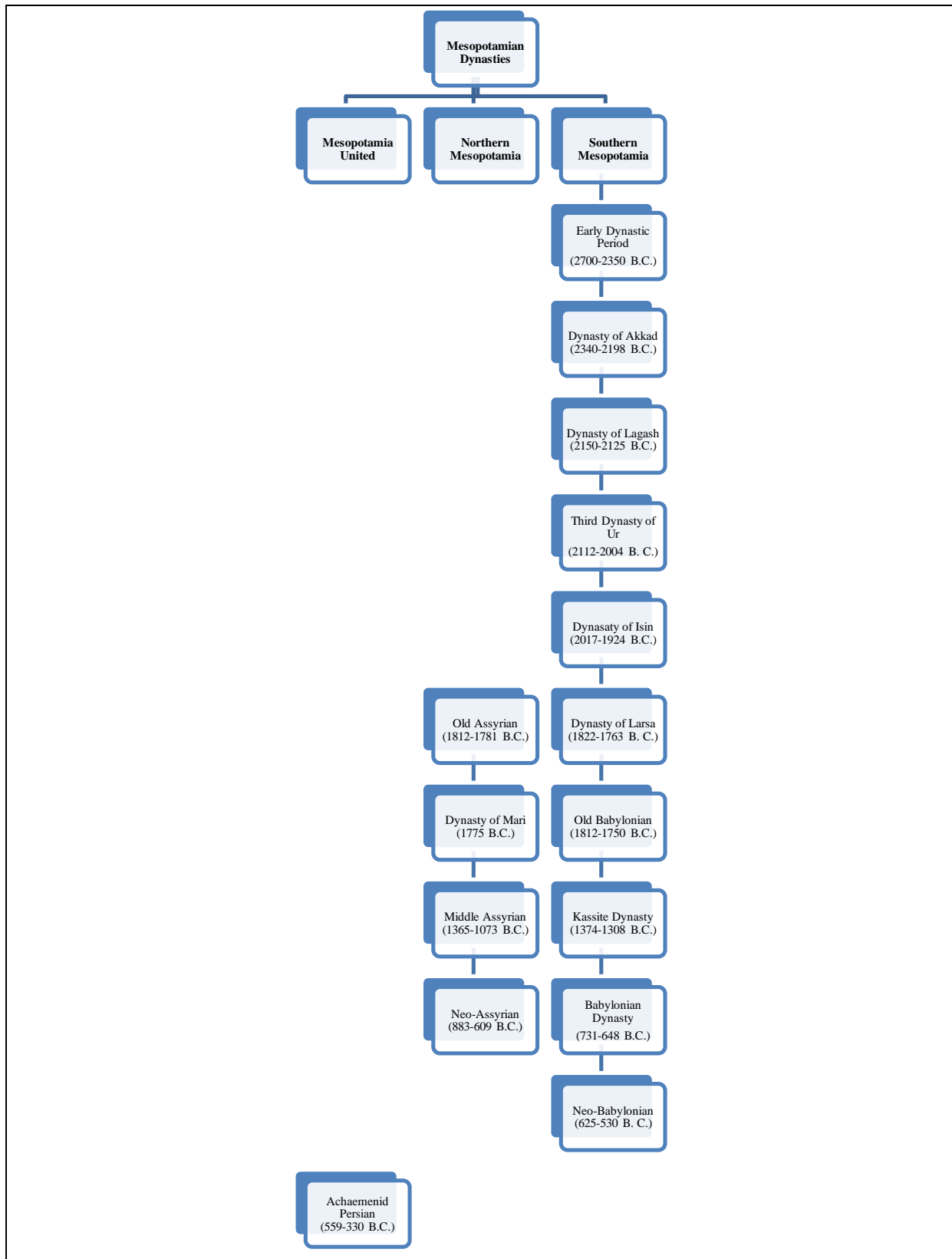


Figure 3.2: The Mesopotamian Empires (Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art:2004).



### 3.3 Assyrian Empires

Located in northern Mesopotamia, Assyria became one of the ‘largest and most powerful of the many imperial realms that rose in and around Mesopotamian plains’ (Nardo & Kebric 2007:40).

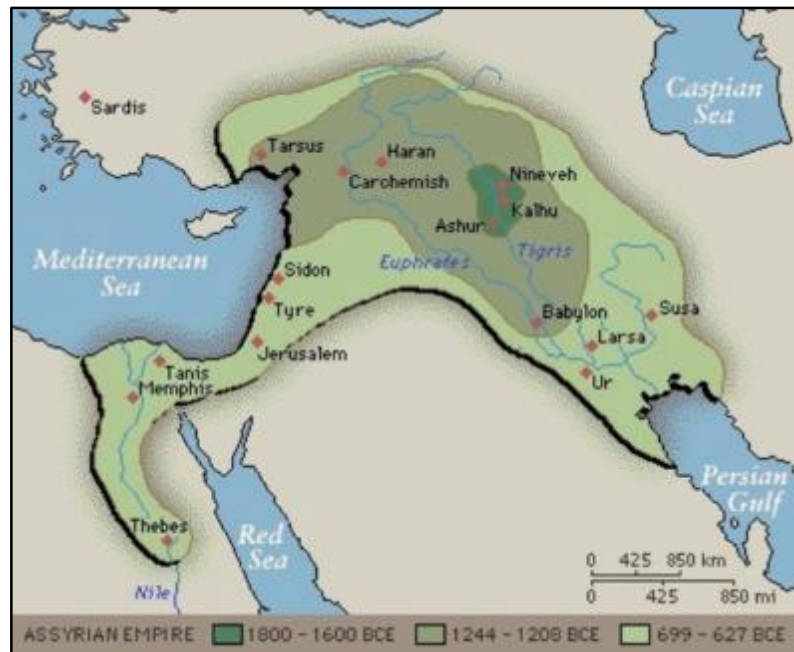


Figure 3.3: Map of the Assyrian Empires (Westerberg 2012).

#### 3.3.1 Old Assyria (1812-1781 B.C.)

For the first couple of millennia Assyria was content to be ruled by the kings from the South, but towards the decline of the Akkadian empire the Assyrians started to develop their own identity, by the means of following their own local deity, Aššur, and by following their own local leaders (Woolf 2005:106; Nardo & Kebric 2007:40). These local leaders stormed into neighbouring areas with their armies and thus the borders of Assyria expanded. The first of the great kings from Assyria was Shamshi Adad I (reigned ca. 1813-1781 B.C.), who conquered the kingdom of Mari and thus took control of most of northern Mesopotamia (Woolf 2005:106; Nardo & Kebric 2007:40). His reign, however, did not last long as roughly in 1759 B.C. Hammurabi, from Babylon, conquered Mari and moved through to Assyria too. The Assyrians were under the control of Babylon and Mitanni for 400 years before taking control of their lands again (Woolf 2005:106; Nardo & Kebric 2007:41).

### 3.3.2 The Middle Assyria Empire (1365-1073 B.C.)

Towards the end of the fourteenth century B.C. the Mitanni rulers were struggling to maintain control of Assyria, as the Hittites were placing them under severe pressure and they were also trying to contain a civil war. This gave the Assyrians another chance to come to power and under the rule of Ashurballit I (1365-1330 B.C.) the Middle Assyrian period started (Postgate 1992:247; Woolf 2005:106; Nadro & Kebric 2007:41).

The Assyrians spent this time to expand their empire and did so by focusing on three distinct areas. Firstly, the Assyrians set out east to the Zagros Mountains; secondly, west into the lands between the Tigris and Euphrates; and thirdly, south to Babylon (Woolf 2005:106; Nadro & Kebric 2007:41-42). Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244-1208 B.C.) managed to capture Babylon during his reign, which secured the power of the Assyrians all the way to the Persian Gulf. Tiglath-Pileser I (1115-1077 B.C.) further expanded Assyrian rule when he conquered the Aramaeans to the west and managed to gain passage to the Mediterranean (Woolf 2005:106; Nadro & Kebric 2007:42). However, the rulers who came after Tiglath-Pileser I were less capable men and the Assyrian empire soon shrank, with only the lands between Ashur and Nineveh left from the once vast empire (Nadro & Kebric 2007:42).

### 3.3.3 The Neo-Assyrian Empire (883-609 B.C.)

It was not until the rule of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.) that the Assyrians would make a mark on the map again. This was the start of the greatest of all the Assyrian Empires, the Neo-Assyrian Empire (883-609 B.C.). Ashurnasirpal II restored the empire and following him the rulers of Assyria managed to not only dominate Mesopotamia, but the entire Ancient Near East, including parts of Egypt (Woolf 2005:106).

In order to keep control over the newly conquered lands the Assyrians would export the new slaves to different parts of the empire, to help ensure that the local people would not be able to revolt against them (Woolf 2005:106). Nevertheless, the empire grew too large and was

difficult to control and ultimately rebellions started to occur throughout. Though some leaders still achieved greatness, such as Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.) who enlarged the city of Nineveh and constructed the ‘magnificent Palace without Rival’ and Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.) who restored Babylon and conquered Egypt, the Assyrian empire ultimately came to its end after the rule of Ashurbanipal in 627 B.C. (Nadro & Kebric 2007:43-44). The Babylonians, with the alliance of the Medes commanded by Cyaxares II, managed to crush the Assyrians by attacking each of the Assyrian towns and cities one by one. The city of Nineveh fell in 612 B.C. after a three month long struggle between the Assyrians and the Babylonians and Medes. It took less than twenty years for the Babylonians and Medes to bring the great Assyrians to their end (Woolf 2005:107; Nadro & Kebric 2007:44).

### 3.4 Ashurnasirpal II (883-850 B.C.)



Figure 3.4: Stela of Ashurnasirpal II ME 118805  
(The British Museum)

Ashurnasirpal II was the son and successor of Tukulti-Ninurta II. The reign of Ashurnasirpal II signified the start of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and he 'built on the success of his predecessors to make Assyria the dominant power in the Near East' (Leick 2010:23).

Ashurnasirpal II expanded his father's empire by gaining more territory to the West. He led a successful campaign and managed to reach the Mediterranean.

'At that time I marched along the side of Mount Lebanon, and to the Great Sea ... In the Great Sea I washed my weapons, and I made offering unto the gods. The tribute of the kings of the seacoast, of the people of Tyre, Sidon, Byblos ... silver, gold, lead, copper, vessels of copper, garments made of brightly colored wool ... maplewood, boxwood, and ivory ... I received as tribute from them, and they embraced my feet' (Ashurnasirpal II's annals as cited in Nardo & Kebric 2007:39).

Ashurnasirpal II also led successful campaigns to the north against Anatolia, the eastern regions at the Zagros Mountains and he maintained peace with the Babylonians to the south (Leick 2010:23). Ashurnasirpal's reputation as a powerful king was vast, which led to some of the neighbouring states to pledge allegiance to him without being attacked (Mcintosh 2005:97; Nardo & Kebric 2007:39). 'Three thousand captives I burned with fire ... [t]heir corpses I formed into pillars [piles]' (Ashurnasirpal II's annals as cited in Nardo & Kebric 2007:30). Furthermore, he had a very mobile and well-resourced army, which he could send out with short notice in order to prohibit any forms of rebellion against Assyria (Leick 2010:23). In order to secure lands and loyalty from local rulers, Ashurnasirpal II would accept the daughters from the rulers as part of his royal harem. He was just as loyal to those who swore loyalty to him, as he would defend such parties and protect them with his military (Leick 2010:23).

Apart from his great military campaigns, Ashurnasirpal II was also remembered for his building projects. He constructed a canal which ran from the Upper Zab River to Kalhu, modern day Nimrud. Kalhu, which was previously a small administrative town, was transformed into Ashurnasirpal II's new capital city (Mcintosh 2005:97). It took fifteen years for Ashurnasirpal II to finish construction and he erected new temples, barracks, residential quarters and of course the Northwest palace to which he relocated (Leick 2010:23). As per

the Banquet Stele, Ashurnasirpal II held a great feast in honour of the new capital and he entertained and fed almost 70 000 guests for a period of ten days. Meals on the menu included ‘14 000 sheep, 1000 lambs, 10 000 eggs, 10 000 wild pigeons, 10 000 jugs of beer, 10 000 skins of wine, 100 containers of honey, 100 containers of onions and 10 homers of shelled pistachio nuts’ (Porter 1989:5).

Kalhu was based roughly 30km southeast of modern day Mosul in Iraq, on the banks of the Tigris. The population grew to be a hundred thousand people and the city spanned over 41 sq. km, making it one of the largest cities of its time (Nardo & Kebric 2007:206; Leick 2010:95). The city had an impressive wall which was measured at 7.2km long. Kalhu, well-fortified and equally well located, remained the capital until 707 B.C. (Mcintosh 2005:97; Leick 2010:23). Ashurnasirpal II was succeeded by his son, Shalmaneser III (Leick 2010:24). Kalhu remained the Assyrian capital for 150 years after Ashurnasirpal II’s reign, with more palaces and tombs added to it as each of the successors contributed building projects.

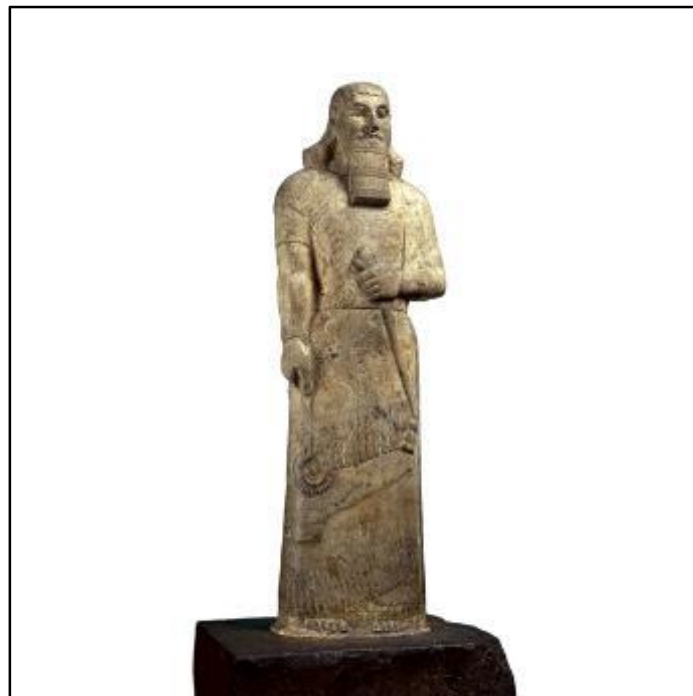


Figure 3.5: Statue of Ashurnasirpal II ME 118871  
(The British Museum).

### 3.5 The Reliefs from the Northwest Palace

After the Assyrians were conquered by the Babylonians and Medes in 612 B.C., the architectural legacy which they had left behind was forgotten too. It was not until 2500 years later, when a British adventurer by the name of Austen Henry Layard rediscovered the ruins of Nimrud in 1845 (Russel 1998a:655; Reade 2010:94). Layard excavated ‘the state apartments, four large suites of rooms decorated with human-headed bull and lion colossi in the major doorways and slabs sculptured in low relief covering the walls’ (Russel 1998a:655). Many of the reliefs and statues were sent to museums across the world, including the British Museum and museums across Europe and North America.

The North-West Palace’s surface area was 200 m north to south and 120 m east to west (Russel 1998a:655). What made the North-West palace so unique for its time was that it was the first palace to be built in such a style, with its gateway colossi and reliefs on the walls (Russel 1998b:245).

By studying the given floor plan, we can see that the palace had a large central court, marked Y, which had many large and smaller rooms opening onto it. It has been found that this was not the only court which the palace had; there was another court to the north of Court Y, which has been destroyed by rain over the centuries (Moortgat 1969:127). The residential quarters were located around another court, court AJ. The throne room is labelled as B. This room was lined with reliefs which were mostly inspired by Ashurnasirpal’s military conquests as well as images of Ashurnasirpal with various deities (Russel 1998b:245, 247). The throne room was the largest of all the rooms in the palace, it was 50m in length, however, it was only 10m wide, which made its shape of the room unusual in comparison to the rest of the palace (Moortgat 1969:127-128). Inside the throne room a ‘double-stepped platform was placed on its long central axis... as well as a podium for the royal throne’ (Moortgat 1969:128).



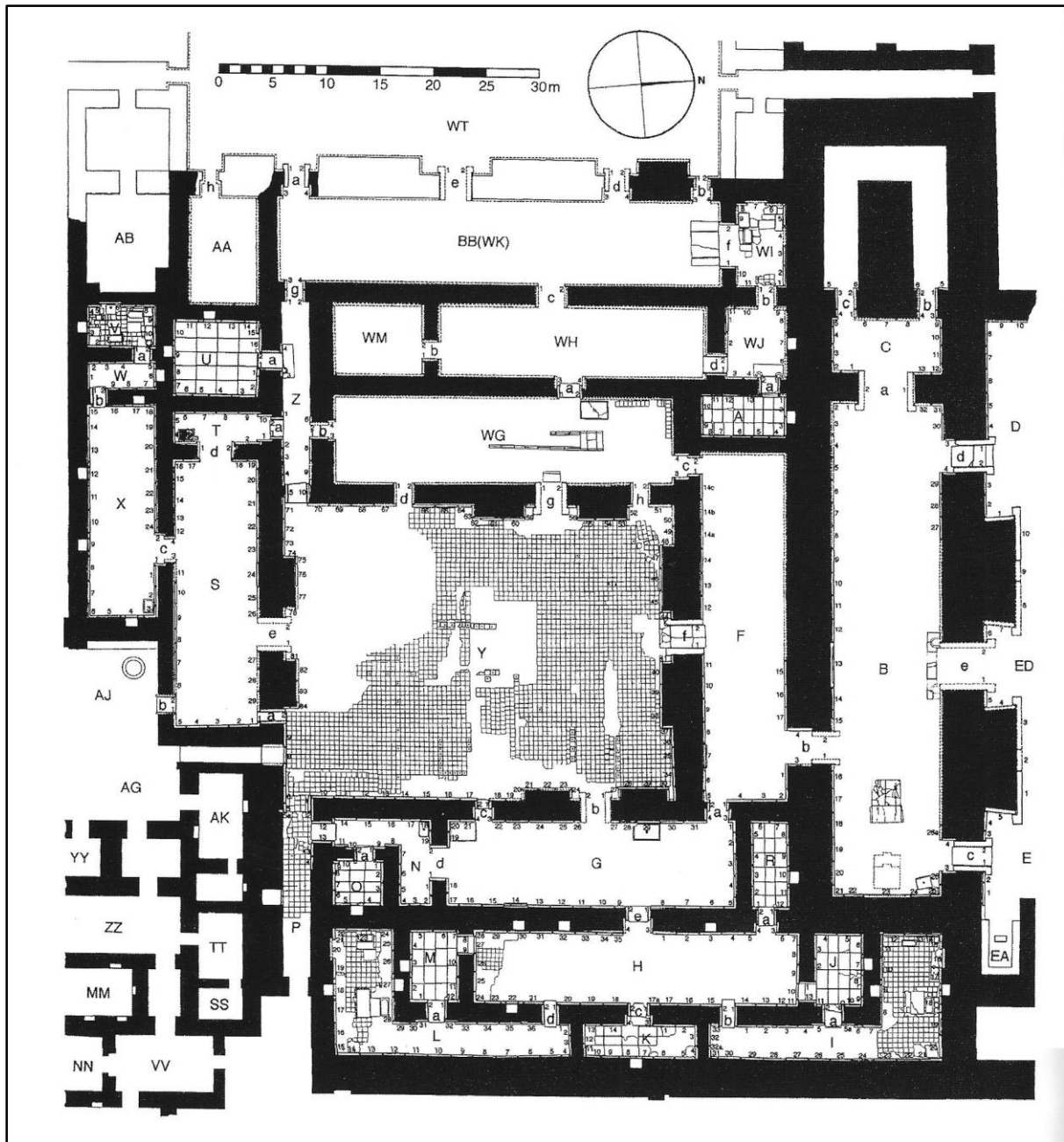


Figure 3.6: Plan of the central area of the North-West Palace at Nimrud  
 (As taken from S. Paley and R. Sobolewski in Porter 2010:146).

One of the many reasons why Ashurnasirpal had the palace built was in order for his legacy to be captured in artwork, and as previously mentioned, his palace walls were decorated with reliefs. Ashurnasirpal managed to fuse the functions of art and architecture to a new level in Ancient Near Eastern history, as the combination of art and architecture merged to become ‘architectural sculpture’ (Moortgat 1969:130). With the throne room as main focus, one can find not only reliefs depicting the divine connection which the king had with the deities; his successful military campaigns and hunting scenes, but the doorways were protected by ‘magical mixed beings made up of lions, bulls, humans and birds of prey, their bodies carved partly in relief on one of the stone blocks on the reveals of the gateways and partly as sculpture in the round projecting from the wall’ (Moortgat 1969:130). These doorway guardians did not only serve as protectors to the king in a mythological form, but they had an architectural function too as they supported the brick walls above them as the inside surface of the gateways (Moortgat 1969:130).

The reliefs, however, did not serve any architectural purpose other than to protect the physical walls. The reliefs were carved on thin slabs of alabaster (bas-relief) and were ‘wall paintings transformed into stone’ (Moortgat 1969:130-131). This was the first time in the history of Assyrian art that the interior of a palace was decorated with reliefs on the walls as opposed to paint only. The reliefs were painted, which must have been an astonishing sight to see. As is said in one text: ‘objects of astonishment’ (Orthmann 2008:251). This form of artwork set the platform for Assyrian art for the next two centuries (Moortgat 1969: 132).

### 3.5.1 How did they do it?

Even though Mesopotamia and later on Assyria lacked many resources, there were a wide variety of stones available for stonemasons to create pieces of art, be it in the form of reliefs, vessels or cylinder seals (Benzel et al. 2010:44). Gypsum alabaster was found in Assyria and limestone and sandstone were found in the greater Mesopotamia. Harder stones, such as Diorite, had to be imported (Benzel et al. 2010:44).



The stonemasons had an assortment of tools available. Stones were first shaped with pounders and grinders after they were quarried. This was done by means of a stone which was harder than the stone being quarried, or by picks and pointers made out of copper alloy and later iron (Benzel et al. 2010:45). Once the basic shape was ready for finer detail, the stonemason used hammers, chisels and droves. The finest of the details, such as beards or other facial features, were carved by using ‘drills fitted with stone bits, using sand as an abrasive’ (Benzel et al. 2010:45). The final stage of carving was to polish the carving, which was done by using quartzite, sandstone, sand and emery (Benzel et al. 2010:45). The reliefs decorating Ashurnasirpal’s palace were only completed once they were painted. The paints were made from natural substances, such as bitumen or mineral compounds (Benzel et al. 2010:49). Colours which were used included black, red, blue and white (Benzel et al. 2010:88).

### **3.6 The function of reliefs**

Propaganda was one of the key factors which contributed to Assyria’s success, along with other official governmental documents (Postgate 1995:395). Though the documentation which was document was partial and the ruling kings only depicted their victories, it contributed towards the understanding of the Assyrian culture. Art, such as the reliefs from Ashurnasirpal’s palace, was used to depict the king as the mightiest of all as he would be illustrated smiting his enemies, or killing powerful beasts such as lions (Postgate 1995:396).

Reliefs were not the only means which the rulers used to propagate his rule across the empire. Other mediums included tablets, sculptures, statues, steles, frieze work and so forth (Holloway 2002:91). These pieces of art were distributed throughout the king’s empire in order to ensure that the importance of the king was noted by as many of his subjects as possible (Holloway 2002:91).

### **3.7 Summary**

This chapter discussed Mesopotamia and Assyria from geographical, historical and political aspects. Each of the Assyrian empires were explained and focus was placed on King Ashurnasirpal II, by looking at his military and building achievements in detail. The North-West palace was further studied, specifically the throne room in which many reliefs were found. Lastly, the techniques used to carve reliefs and the functions of reliefs were explained.

## Chapter Four

### Methodology

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe the method that will be used in the description and analysis of the visual material. It will focus on describing the difference between iconology and iconography before giving a brief discussion on the art theorist, Erwin Panofsky. Panofsky's Theoretical Scheme will be explained with an example of practical application. Lastly the chosen reliefs will be identified, as well as how Panofsky's method will be applied to the study of the reliefs.

#### 4.2 Iconology and Iconography

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, iconology can be defined as 'the study of visual imagery and its symbolism and interpretation, especially in social or political terms' (Holden & Rubery 2013a). Furthermore, the word iconology is derived from two Greek words, namely '*eikōn*', which means 'image [or] representation' as well as 'likeness', and '*logos*', which means 'word, speech [or] reason' (Howard 1996:83).

Iconography on the other hand is defined as 'the visual images and symbols used in a work of art or the study or interpretation of these' (Holden & Rubery 2013b). Iconography also comes from the Greek word '*eikōn*' as described above, as well as '*graphia*', meaning 'writing' (Holden & Rubery 2013b).

For the purpose of this study the chosen reliefs from king Ashurnasirpal II's North-West palace will be studied. The social and political context will be taken into consideration in the analysis.

### 4.3 Erwin Panofsky

Erwin Panofsky was arguably one of the most influential historians of art, who contributed not only to art history, but art theory as well (Lee 1968:368). Panofsky studied in Germany at Freiburg University- and furthered his studies at the University of Hamburg as ‘Privatdozent’ and later professor (Lee 1968: 368). When World War II broke out Panofsky made his way to the United States of America where he was welcomed by New York University and Princeton University. Though his theories are universal and could be applied to all forms of art and architecture, his studies on iconography are what made him famous (Lee 1968: 368).

Panofsky believed that his theory granted ‘insight into the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, essential tendencies in the human mind were expressed by specific themes and concepts’ (Panofsky as cited in Lee 1968: 368).

### 4.4 Panofsky’s Theoretical Scheme

In his studies of iconology, Panofsky developed a theoretical scheme by which art forms can be studied. As his theory is universal and can be applied to most forms of art it was chosen for the purposes of this study.

#### 4.4.1 Theory Criticism

There has been some criticism on his theory and it will be taken into account for the purposes of this study. Panofsky applied his theory mainly to Renaissance art, within a Biblical context and associated with texts (Orthmann 2008:246). A potential problem with applying his theory to Assyrian art is that there were no texts associated with the art, unlike the ancient Egyptians who used hieroglyphs to identify figures (Orthmann 2008:246). This makes the interpretation of the art a challenge, as there is no way of knowing exactly why the artists chose to illustrate a subject in the way that they did (Orthmann 2008:249). One therefore has to keep in mind the historical context in which the art was created and for what purpose the work was done. Various scholars have tried to improve Panofsky’s theory, including Othmar Keel’s ‘Images as Communication’ theory, which focuses on the Motif, Scene and Decoration (Keel 1992:cf.; Steymans 2010:55, 66; Weissenrieder & Wendt 2005:25).

According to Weissenrieder and Wendt, there are criticisms of Panofsky's method for iconographical examination. Firstly, Panofsky's theory requires an unbiased and ideal observer whose examination of the work in question is above reproach (Weissenrieder & Wendt 2005:11). They are expected to recognise the all details within the work and are able to place everything being depicted within context. Furthermore, the researcher is expected to place their own cultural understanding on hold so as to not introduce any form of bias when interpreting the art in question (Weissenrieder & Wendt 2005:11).

Another critique of Panofsky's theory is that by his using the three analytical steps used to scrutinise each art work he creates an appearance of researcher objectivity that resembles a scientific exploration of the work in question. However, it can also be argued that this is purely an attempt to create the illusion of objectivity (Weissenrieder & Wendt 2005:12).

A further criticism of his theory is that the iconographical interpretation cannot only be informed by placing the art into an historical context. In order to make an informed analysis the researcher must be aware of the various aspects unique to the culture of the creators of the art. This means that art is not simply a depiction of their reality, but in essence can depict aspects of culture, myth and legend or even depict history as to how the creators chose to depict it (Weissenrieder & Wendt 2005:12). If Panofsky's theory is used with these criticisms in mind, 'then one gains an efficient instrument for interpreting visual media' (Weissenrieder & Wendt 2005:12).

#### 4.4.2 The Theory Explained

According to Panofsky, there are three layers or strata in a work of art, namely the 'primary or natural subject matter'; the 'secondary or conventional subject matter' and lastly, the 'intrinsic meaning or content' (Van Straten 1986: 166).

#### 4.4.2.1 Primary or Natural Subject Matter

The first stratum of Panofsky's theory can be subdivided into two, namely '*factual*' and '*expressional*' qualities (Panofsky 1972:5). The factual qualities of a work of art comprises the identification of the '*pure forms*' and how the lines, colour and other means of creation represent a '*natural object*' such as people, fauna and flora and inanimate objects such as buildings (Panofsky 1972:5).

'*Expressional*' qualities are the study of the emotions and postures which are shown by the '*natural object*' (Panofsky 1972: 5). Is the person showing joy or sorrow? Is the interior of the room shown as warm and welcoming or cold and unwelcoming? According to Panofsky '[t]he world of pure forms [is] thus recognized as carriers of *primary* or *natural meanings* [and] may be called the world of artistic *motifs*' (Panofsky 1972: 5). This stratum is thus a description of what we see and it is also known as the '*pre-iconographical* description of the work of art' (Panofsky 1972: 5).

#### 4.4.2.2 Secondary or Conventional Subject Matter

In the second stratum Panofsky connects the *motifs* as well as the amalgamations of '*artistic motifs* [or *compositions*] with *themes* or *concepts*' (Panofsky 1972: 6). Simply put, the *motifs* are put together in such a way that a *secondary* or *conventional* meaning is carried through and a specific *image* is recognized. The *images* when all put together shape into a *story* or *allegory* (Panofsky 1972: 6). The focus of the second stratum is also to identify the subject of the art piece. In order to do so successfully one has to be familiar with the '*specific themes and concepts*' at the time the art piece was created (Panofsky 1972: 6; Van Straten 1986: 166). This stratum is also known as '*iconographical analysis*' (Van Straten 1986: 166).

For example, to someone who has no prior knowledge of the Christian Bible and history, Leonardo da Vinci's mural painting of 'The Last Supper' may seem to be nothing more than friends gathering over a meal. However, to those who understand the historical context,

themes and concepts, the image of Jesus in the center of the table with his disciples surrounding him is easily recognized.



Figure 4.1: Leonardo da Vinci's 'The Last Supper' ca. 1492/94 – 1498  
(The Metropolitan Museum of Art 2013).

#### 4.4.2.3 *Intrinsic Meaning or Content*

The third stratum focuses on the 'world of symbolical values' (Van Straten 1986:166). Using the same example as before, da Vinci's 'The Last Supper', one takes the iconographical analysis one step further. By looking not only at the *images* and *story* in the artwork, Jesus having his last meal with his disciples, one has to also take into account that one has to 'deal with the work of art as a symptom of something else which expresses itself in a countless variety of other symptoms' (Panofsky 1972:8). What does 'The Last Supper' say about da Vinci? What does it show about the Italian High Renaissance? The purpose of this stratum is to find the 'deeper meanings in works of art, which means that we should ask ourselves how cultural-historical developments are reflected in a representation' (Van Straten 1986:166). These deeper meanings may not even have been placed there intentionally by the artist (Panofsky 1972: 8).

<b>Object of Interpretation</b>	<b>Act of Interpretation</b>	<b>Equipment for Interpretation</b>	<b>Controlling Principle of Interpretation</b>	<b>History of Tradition</b>
1. <i>Primary</i> or <i>Natural</i> subject matter – (A) factual, (B) expressional, constituting the world of artistic motifs.	<i>Pre-iconographical description</i> (and pseudo-formal analysis).	<i>Practical experience</i> (familiarity with <i>objects</i> and <i>events</i> ).	History of <i>style</i> (insight into the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, <i>objects</i> and <i>events</i> were expressed by <i>forms</i> ).	
2. <i>Secondary</i> or <i>conventional</i> subject matter, constituting the world of <i>images</i> , <i>stories</i> and <i>allegories</i> .	<i>Iconographical analysis</i> in the narrower sense of the word.	<i>Knowledge of literary sources</i> (familiarity with specific <i>themes</i> and <i>concepts</i> ).	History of <i>types</i> (insight into the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, specific <i>themes</i> or <i>concepts</i> were expressed by <i>objects</i> and <i>events</i> ).	
3. <i>Intrinsic meaning</i> or <i>content</i> , constituting the world of 'symbolical values.'	<i>Iconographical interpretation</i> in a deeper sense ( <i>Iconographical synthesis</i> ).	<i>Synthetic intuition</i> (familiarity with the <i>essential tendencies of the human mind</i> ), conditioned by personal psychology and 'Weltanschauung'.	History of <i>cultural symptoms</i> or 'symbols' in general (insight into the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, <i>essential tendencies of the human mind</i> were expressed by specific <i>themes</i> and <i>concepts</i> ).	

Figure 4.2: The 'Panofsky Theoretical Scheme'

(Panofsky 1972: 14-15 as cited in Van Straten 1986: 167).



## 4.5 Practical Application

For the purposes of this study each of the following reliefs from the Throne Room (Room B) in King Ashurnasirpal II's North-West palace will be analysed: Panels B3 to B11. Each of these panels has one or more horses illustrated in their registers. Due to the limited nature of this study, some of the panels with horses illustrated have been excluded.

Panofsky's Theoretical Scheme will be applied to the analyses of each of the reliefs. Each of the reliefs is part of one narrative. Therefore, for the *Pre-iconographical description* stratum the reliefs which accompany each other directly in the narrative will be discussed as a whole. Thereafter each individual relief will be discussed as per the theoretical framework under the following headings:

*Pre-iconographical description*

*Iconographical analysis*

*Iconographical interpretation*

## 4.6 Summary

This chapter focused on the Theoretical Scheme of Erwin Panofsky which has been used for the examination of art worldwide. The theory consists of three strata, the *Pre-iconographical description*; *Iconographical analysis* and *Iconographical interpretation*. Each of the strata were explained. Thereafter the reliefs chosen for the purposes of this study were given, as well as how the theory would be applied to the study of the reliefs.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Ashurnasirpal II's Horses**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The focus of this chapter is to undertake a complete analysis of ten reliefs from Ashurnasirpal II's North-West Palace. Each of the reliefs depict horses, which along with the chariots and other war equipment related to the horses, will be studied at three different levels of analysis, following Panofsky's Theoretical Scheme.

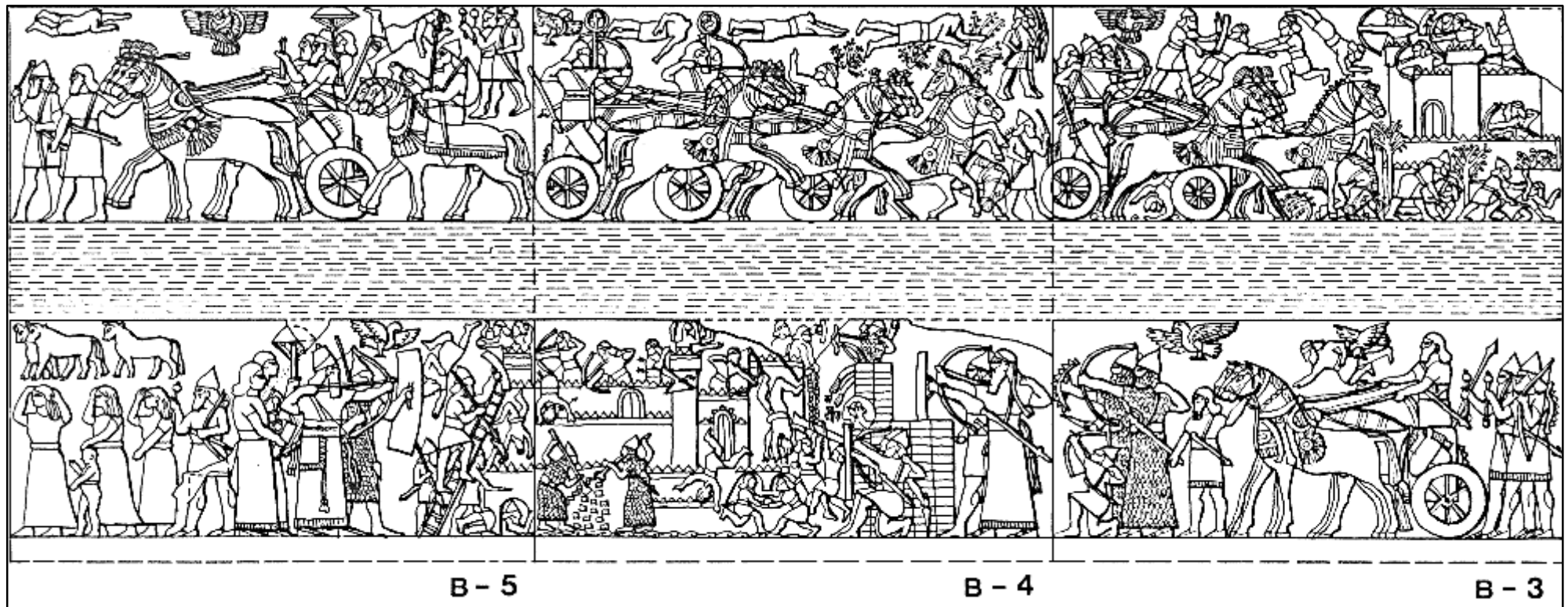


Figure 5.1: Panels B3, B4 and B5 from the Throne Room of Ashurnasirpal II's North-West Palace  
(Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.4).

## 5.2 Panel B3 (Fig.5.1; BM ANE 124556 & 124555)

### 5.2.1 Pre-iconographical Description

Lower Register:

*Height: 0.96m*

*Width: 2.14m*

(Meuszynski 1981:20).

Upper Register:

*Height: 0.93m*

*Width: 2.14m*

#### 5.2.1.1 The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124556)



Figure 5.2: The lower register of Panel B3 from The British Museum, ME 124556  
(The British Museum).

The lower register shows three horses pulling a two-wheeled chariot, of which only one wheel can be seen. The chariots are facing towards the left hand side of the register. The horses are illustrated directly behind one another, with their legs, tails and heads showing, allowing for distinguishing between the three. The horses are harnessed to the chariot and the driver of the chariot is using reins to steer the horses. The driver is standing and holding the reins in both his hands. The driver has a shoulder length hair and a beard. The driver is wearing a short sleeved tunic with a belt, the length is not shown. The chariot is equipped with a spear behind the driver, as well as a quiver. The horse depicted closest to the front is decorated on its front quarters only with a type of breastplate, extending down from the neck, across the front of the chest, over the shoulders to the ribs and under the chest. A floral

pattern is on the ribs of the horse. All three of the horses are shown wearing bridles, which are held by a male figure depicted in front of them. The horses legs are separated with both their right front and back legs extended in front of the left legs. All four hooves are touching the ground. The horses' ears are pricked up and pointing forwards. It is also clear that the horse shown to the front is a stallion, as a penile sheath is depicted.

Two male figures are shown behind the horses. Both are depicted wearing short sleeved tunics with belts, which reach to above their knees. The bottoms of the tunics are decorated with a striped panel. They are also wearing sandals. Both have beards and are wearing conical helmets. Each of the men is carrying a bow and arrow as well as a sword in their belts.

Directly above the horses is a bird carrying a man. The man is wearing a knee length tunic with a belt, and he has shoulder length hair and a beard. He is being carried by the waist and has his right leg pointing backwards straight, while the left leg is positioned forward from the hip and bent at the knee. His left arm is bent at the elbow while his right arm is pointing downwards towards the horses' necks.

The figure who is standing in front of the horses and who is holding the reins is wearing a short sleeved knee length tunic, with a striped panel decorating the bottom, as well as a belt across his waist and he is wearing sandals. He has a sword on a sling strapped over his shoulder. This soldier is smaller than the horses and any of the other figures in the register. A flying bird is depicted above his head.

There are two archers depicted wearing short sleeved, full length armour and sandals in front of the procession and they are shooting at a city, which is shown in Panel B4 (Meuszynski 1981: 20). The soldiers are also wearing belts, conical helmets and have beards. The soldier shown to the front is depicted with a sword strapped across his shoulder. A smaller archer is shown in front of the two archers. This archer is down on one knee and he is aiming his bow and arrow upwards to the same city as the other two archers. This archer is wearing a short sleeved knee length tunic and a conical helmet.

5.2.1.2 *The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124555)*



Figure 5.3: The upper register from panel B3 (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.4).

To the left of the register there are two chariots. The first chariot, which is the chariot towards the left, is drawn by three horses, while the other chariot which is depicted behind the first is drawn by two horses. Both chariots are facing towards the right hand side of the register.

The first chariot is a two-wheel based chariot. It is carrying an archer who is aiming his bow and arrow towards the city to the right of the register. The driver of the chariot is shown behind the archer. The archer is wearing a short sleeved tunic, the length of which is unknown, with a belt, as well as a polos or fez. The archer and the driver both have beards. Directly above the archer's bow is a bird with open wings and a figure depicted inside the bird, aiming an armed bow. The soldiers in this chariot are shown as larger than any of the other figures in the upper register of the panel.

The horses from the first chariot have their front legs lifted into the air. All three horses are shown with bridles and are steered by means of reins. The horses are all looking in the same direction, towards the fortified city to the right. It is unclear which way their ears are pointing, as they are depicted with decorative headpieces. The horse to the front of the relief is portrayed with extra throat pieces which seem to be attached to the bridle. This horse is further decorated with a breastplate, which covers the front of its chest, across the ribs extending over towards the flank with a tassel, and going down to the underside of the chest. It is also clear that the horse shown to the front is a stallion, as a penile sheath is depicted.

Directly above the horses is a bearded soldier who is shown attacking a man across the back with a weapon in his right hand. The soldier is wearing a short sleeved knee length tunic with a belt as well as a conical helmet. The victim is leaning forwards, over the horses' heads. He is wearing the same style tunic as the soldier, however, his face is unclear. The victim has his right arm outstretched towards the front, while his left arm is being held by the soldier's left hand. The right arm of the victim is being pulled by another man, who is positioned above the three horses from the first chariot and the two horses from the second chariot. This man is kneeling down on one knee as he is trying to pull the other man away from the soldier. He is dressed in the same style tunic and has a beard.

Underneath the three horses we see a wheel of the second chariot, as well as a man illustrated falling over the back of the wheel. The man is seen as tumbling, with his left arm hitting the ground, followed by his head facing his arm and his right arm behind his head. His chest is shown to be coming over the wheel. It is unclear where the driver of the second chariot is.

The first horse, shown towards the front of the two horses pulling the second chariot, has its hind legs and hooves on the ground as well as its front right leg. The front left leg and hoof is raised up high, bending at the knee with the hoof pointing towards the ground. The horse's head is facing to the front and its ears are pointing backwards, flat against its head. The horse is shown with a bridle with the reins attached to the mouthpiece and extending to the back of the horse. The horse has elaborate throat pieces decorating its neck and the mane looks different to the other horses' on the panel. The mane is depicted as separate balls, whereas the other horses are shown without manes. This horse is decorated with a breastplate which extends across the front of the chest, over its shoulder towards the ribs and flank, where there is a tassel, and down under the chest. A man is shown lying across the back of this horse, with his arms outstretched and the left hand touching the lower part of the horse's mane. The man is depicted with a beard and a belt; it is not clear what the length of the tunic or the sleeves are. The reins seem to end at the man's right arm. Directly above the horse is a man who seems to be falling from the sky at an angle. He is falling head first, with his head facing forwards towards the ground, showing a beard and a fitted cap. He is wearing a long sleeved knee length tunic with a belt.



The second horse is shown behind the first horse. Unlike the other horses in the panel, this horse is not depicted parallel behind the first horse, except for its hind quarters, which, like the first horse, has its legs and hooves on the ground. The horse's belly is shown lower than the first horse's belly and one can see the breastplate crossing down under the chest. The horse's head is bent down, with its nose almost touching the ground. The horse's nose is close to its chest and the poll is pointing towards the front. Its left leg is shown touching the ground in front of its head, while its right leg is bent at the knee, behind its head. The hoof of the right leg is facing backwards and not flat on the ground. The horse is shown with a bridle; however, no reins can be seen clearly. The horse's mane is shown.

Directly in front of the horses from the second chariot are three men, who are all shown in front of the fortified city. The first of the three men, the one closest to the horses, is portrayed with his feet standing apart and he is bending over a large, round object. His left arm is lying over the round object, while his right arm is holding on to the side. The man is wearing a short sleeved knee length tunic with a belt, as well as a conical helmet. The second man, who is placed in the middle of the three men, is bending forwards, with one leg ahead of the other. His back leg is straight while his front leg is bent. His right arm is bent down while his right arm is carried straight in front of him and he is holding an object in his hand. He is dressed in the same style as the first man in the group. The third man is slightly in front of the second man; however, he is shown as somewhat behind the second man. The third man is bent down, with his right hand on the ground, his left arm bent at the elbow and his hand pointing in front of him. His legs are bent and his calves are on the ground. He is facing the same direction to which his finger is pointing. He is dressed in a similar way to the other two men in the group, however, he is not shown wearing the conical helmet.

Behind the group of three men is a fortified city. The city walls have three levels, as can be seen from the three walls of different heights. In front of the walls there are two trees, one to the left and one in the centre. The first two walls are lower than the third, which is depicted with doors and two towers. There are two archers on the second wall, just behind the second tower. They are aiming their bows towards the approaching horses and soldiers. The archers are shown with beards as well as fitted caps. On top of the third wall are five archers. The first archer is standing on top of the first tower, which is to the left of the city walls. This



archer is aiming his bow directly in front of him, pointing towards the falling soldier above the horses from the second chariot. The second archer is positioned lower than the first archer, standing on the third floor above the doors. This archer is aiming his bow slightly downwards towards the head of the first horse from the second chariot. The third archer is standing behind all the other archers. This archer has one arm bent backwards towards his shoulder. The fourth archer is standing on top of the second tower, which is to the right of the doors. This archer is shown with his bow aiming slightly downwards towards the head of the man falling from the sky. The fifth, and last archer, is standing on the city wall; however, he is shown to be as tall as all three of the archers standing on the towers. This archer has his right arm bent at the elbow and his hand raised, just below his face. He is holding his bow in his left hand, close to his hips. All five archers have beards and are wearing the same fitted caps. Only the fourth and fifth archers are depicted with short sleeved tunics, this detail is unclear on the other three. There is also no indication of the length of their tunics. A fragment of the upper right hand corner of this panel has broken off, thus it is uncertain if more archers were depicted in this scene.

It is clear from this scenario that the city is under attack by the archers and soldiers moving in from the left on their chariots.

## 5.2.2 Iconographical Analysis

### 5.2.2.1 *The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124556)*

It is clear from this scenario that the archers and soldiers are part of a military procession, on their way to war.

### The horses and their body language:

The three horses, depicted parallel to each other, are in a walking gait, as each of their legs are in a forward moving position, with the one side extended ahead of the next, and all are touching the ground (Pickeral 2001:98). Their heads are held upright and facing forward, their ears facing upwards and forwards, and their eyes looking forward seemingly focused on what is happening in front of them. These are all indications that the horses are curious and focused on the scene ahead (Vavra 1979:34; Pickeral 2001:24; Equus 2007:28). Their tails, of which one can be seen clearly, are held up which is also a sign of the horses being focused and curious (Equus 2007:28). Furthermore, though the tail is left long, the tail is tied, or knotted, just above the hock. All three horses are being led by a soldier in front of them and all three stand taller than the soldier.

### The horses' tack:

All three horses are depicted with bridles. The bridle which is most clearly shown on the first horse consists of a noseband, cheekpiece, brow band, throatlatch and headpiece. It is not clear if the noseband is attached to a bit or not. The cheekpiece splits into two parts from just under the eye towards the mouth. A first set of reins are attached to the bridle at the mouth and are shown going around the horse's neck and is being held by the soldier walking in front of the horses. The reins seemed to be twisted, as they are depicted in a spiralling manner. Between the headpiece and the first set of reins is another strap, the nape strap.

The breastplate starts high on the horse, on the lower part of the horse's neck. It consists of various sections, the first from the top being a piece which runs horizontally across the horse's neck. From the neck piece various pieces are placed vertically down across the shoulder and towards the breast. The front of the breastplate is attached to the first vertical piece running down from the neck piece and consists of a circular piece, or semi-circle as shown on the plate, with a piece which crosses horizontally under it and short, vertical pieces attached to the horizontal part. In the middle section, running down from the neck piece, across the shoulder and towards the lower part of the chest, there are two vertical parts which

run down under the chest and form part of the girth. The withers are covered by a circular piece too, or semi-circular as shown and a second set of reins are attached to this piece, which is being held by the driver of the chariot, as well as a bow shaped piece which connects the breastplate to the chariot. Directly under this piece is a floral piece which stretches out across the ribs of the horse.

The horses are harnessed to a chariot, which only has one driver in it. The driver is standing upright and is holding the second set of rein straps in each of his hands. The driver is also holding a whip in his right hand and has a bow hung across his chest and down over his left hip. Only one wheel of the chariot is shown in this scene, as the chariot is depicted from the left side. The wheel has six spokes and one tyre. The side of the chariot shows that the floor piece of the chariot is straight, the front panel is straight; however, the front of the top of the chariot is at a slightly lower angle and the right hand corner is rounded. The bow shaped piece which extends from the back of the horses' breastplates is attached to the chariot at the top of the front piece. On the side of the chariot are two quivers, which have the tips of arrows showing at the open ends of the quivers. A spear is also shown protruding from the back of the chariot. At the bottom of the chariot there is a pole which extends forwards between the horses' legs. The pole is attached to a section protruding from the bottom of the chariot and curves upwards before extending between the horses.

#### *5.2.2.2 The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124555)*

The first chariot and its horses:

The horses and their body language:

The three horses are shown parallel to one another, all with the same body language. Their heads are all facing the front and are held upright, which shows that the horses are focused, as well as curious, about what is happening in front of them. It is unclear in which direction their ears are pointing. Their front legs are all lifted into the air while their back legs are on the

ground, which indicates that they are in the process of rearing (Williams 2013; Equus 2007:28). Their tails, of which one can be seen clearly, are held up which is also a sign of the horses being focused and curious (Equus 2007:28). Furthermore, though the tail is left long, the tail is tied, or knotted, just above the hock. In proportion to the rest of the panel, the horses, chariot and riders are larger than the men on the ground ahead of them.

The horses' tack:

The horses are all wearing bridles, which consist of a noseband, cheekpieces, brow band, throatlatch and headpiece. The headpieces are further decorated with a poll decoration, which is broken into numerous different sections and is standing upright in a crest-like shape. As shown on the horse in front, a circular disk is placed on the area in which all the bands cross. There is also a triangular patch next to the eyes. There are no clear indications of reins attached to the noseband or mouth area. The first horse also has two nape straps, one which runs from the poll down across the upper part of the neck and the other which is a twisted or pleated strap which is situated on the lower part of the neck.

The breastplate starts high on the horse, on the lower part of the horse's neck. It consists of various sections, the first from the top being a piece which runs horizontally across the horse's neck. From the neck piece two pieces are placed horizontally in circular, or semi-circular as shown, shapes across the front of the chest and over the withers. The reins are attached to the circular piece, which crosses over the withers, and are held by the driver on the chariot, as well as a bow shaped piece which connects the breastplate to the chariot. The two circular pieces which are placed across the front of the chest and over the withers are connected with a strap at the bottom of the two pieces. From this strap there are three separate straps attached which form part of the girth. A horizontal strap is attached to the one girth piece and it runs across the front of the chest, with five separate pieces hanging vertically from the cross strap. From the circular piece which stretches over the withers is another strap crossing over the ribs and towards the belly of the horse. In the middle of this strap is a large disk, with two tassels. It is unclear if the piece at the bottom of the disk is a tassel or if it is also part of the girth, or perhaps even both.

The horses are harnessed to a chariot, which has three soldiers riding in it. All three are standing upright, the middle rider shown as in the front, the driver at the back towards the front of the chariot and the third soldier is also at the back, but towards the rear end of the chariot. The driver is holding the two rein straps in each of his hands. The second rider is holding a bow and arrow and is aiming towards the fortified city in front of them. Directly above the second rider is an open winged bird. It is not clear what the third rider is doing, as only the back of his head is shown.

Only one wheel of the chariot is shown in this scene, as the chariot is depicted from the left side. The wheel has six spokes and one tyre. The side of the chariot shows that the floor piece of the chariot is straight, the front panel is straight; however, the front of the top of the chariot is at a slightly lower angle and the left hand corner is rounded. The bow shaped piece which extends from the back of the horses' breastplates is attached to the chariot at the top of the front piece. On the side of the chariot are two quivers, which have the tips of arrows showing at the open ends of the quivers. A spear is also shown protruding from the back of the chariot. At the bottom of the chariot there is a pole which extends forwards between the horses' legs. The pole is attached to a section protruding from the bottom of the chariot and curves upwards before extending between the horses.

The second chariot and its horses:

The horses and their body language:

The first horse, though depicted ahead of the first chariot's horses, is placed behind the other horses. The first horse is extending its head and neck, showing that it is focused on what is happening ahead of it (Williams 2013; Equus 2007:28). The horse's eyes are intently focused on the fortified city ahead and its ears are pinned backwards against its head, which indicates anger (Vavra 1979:34; Pickeral 2001:24; Equus 2007:28). Though its back legs, as well as its front right leg are all on the ground, the front left leg is held up in the air, bent at the knee with the lower half of the leg facing downwards. This leg is in mid strike, about to kick the object directly ahead of it, which in this case is the male figure who is bent over a round

object in front of the city. A horse will strike or kick when it is angry (Williams 2013; Equus 2007:28). The horse's mane is presented differently to the other horses' manes, as it is displayed as numerous round baubles. This could imply that this horse's mane is pleated.

The second horse's body language is very interesting. Its head is bent down to the ground and displays snaking behaviour, which occurs when a horse is extremely angry and aggressive (Williams 2013; Equus 2007:28). It is unclear in which direction its ears are pointing; however, when a horse is snaking its head and in an aggressive state, its ears will most likely be pinned back against its head. The horse's eyes seem to be tensed as it is focused on the same subject as the first horse, the man who is directly in front of the horses. The mane is depicted as bending to the right; however, it is left natural. All four of its legs are on the ground, however, the back right leg is a step ahead of the left leg and the front right leg is extended in front of its head. The right leg is bent at the knee, with the tip of the hoof touching the ground. This leg is behind the horse's head. The belly is shown as lower than the first horse, which further emphasizes that the horse is bending down in order to accommodate its snaking head. Only the lower half of its tail is shown and the position of the tail cannot be concluded; however, a horse with this disposition would rapidly swish its tail from side to side (Equus 2007:28). Lastly, both the horses are much larger than the men on the ground in front of them, but they are shown as the same size as the first chariot and its horses.

The horses' tack:

Both of the horses are depicted with bridles. The bridles each consists of a noseband, cheekpiece, brow band, throatlatch and headpiece. The first horse has reins attached to the bridle, at the lower corner of its mouth. The cheekpiece which is shown clearly splits into two towards the noseband and connects to the noseband at two different points. The headpiece sits rather far back on the horse's head and not directly behind the ears as shown with the other horses. The headpiece is connected to one of three nape straps.

The breastplate starts high on the horse, on the lower part of the horse's neck. It consists of two circular straps, one high on the front of the chest and the other over the withers. These

two circular pieces are connected with a strap at the bottom. From this strap there are three separate straps attached which form part of the girth. A horizontal strap is attached to the one girth piece and it runs across the front of the chest, with three separate pieces hanging vertically from the cross strap. From the circular piece which stretches over the withers is another strap crossing over the ribs and towards the belly of the horse. In the middle of this strap is a large disk, with two tassels. It is unclear if the piece at the bottom of the disk is a tassel or if it is also part of the girth, or perhaps both.

The second horse's bridle has the same split cheekpiece as the first horse. The headpiece is also displayed as far back on the head as the first horse's and only one nape strap is shown. As the horse is bending down, only part of the breastplate is shown, which is the girth crossing down from the ribs to the underside of the chest. It consists of two straps, one which is plain and one which is broken up into four smaller parts.

Only the lower part of the chariot is shown, which is the one wheel, consisting of eight spokes, and the lower half of the chariot. What is significant about this chariot in particular is that a man is shown directly behind the wheel. Judging by the angle and position from which he is falling, it can be concluded that he is falling out of the chariot. Another curious occurrence with the second chariot and its horses is the man shown lying across the back of the first horse, with his hands stretched out in front of him and he has an object sticking out of his back. It is not clear if his hands are tied to the horse; however, they seem to be touching the horse's mane.

### 5.2.3 Iconographical Interpretation

#### *5.2.3.1 The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124556)*

The chariot is typical of the time, Littauer and Crouwel state that the chariots of Ashurnasirpal II 'are shown as having a low, shallow box with a solid siding that dips somewhat towards the front and is rounded at the top rear corner, thus differing from the rectangular profiles of earlier Assyrian chariots' (1979:103). Furthermore, the six-spokes on

the wheel indicate that this is an Assyrian chariot, as Assyrian chariots were depicted with six spokes during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (Madhloom 1969:14; Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 106; Curtis et al 1995:161). The spear protruding from the back of the chariot, as well as the quivers with archery equipment on the side of the chariot, are both typical of the war faring chariots of that time. Though archery equipment was used, the spear was needed for close combat (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 129). The yoke of the chariot appears from the lower part of the front of the chariot as can be seen in the relief. According to Madhloom the

‘yoke pole emerge from underneath the car and is joined to the yoke. It is fastened to the upper part of the car by means of a stay, which was probably made of iron... The yoke pole is supported by the shaft which extends from the car’s front to the yoke’ (1969: 14).

The horses display typical signs of Assyrian horses. Firstly, their manes are left to their natural state (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 112) and their tails are left long and tied at the middle. According to Littauer and Crouwel the tails are tied by a cord (1979: 112). There is no clear reason as to why their tails were tied, though it could be argued that their tails were tied for their own safety as they were pulling the chariots. Secondly, three horses were depicted, which was the standard number of horses displayed harnessed to chariots at that time. There are many theories as to why three horses were chosen, one was that the third horse acted as a spare horse in case one of the other horses got injured during warfare. The third horse would thus not have been used for pulling of the chariot (Madhloom 1969: 16). According to Madhloom, however, the three horses shown in Ashurnasirpal II’s chariots were actually a representation of four horses. Madhloom argues that the reason for this has to do with the yoke of the chariot, as it was attached in a similar way to Mesopotamian chariots. The yoke of this particular chariot would be attached to the four horses by ‘a collar, two breast-bands and girth straps which are always seen on the outer horse ... The inner pair actually bore the yoke and exerted more pull than the outer horses’ (1969: 16).

The bridle which can be clearly seen on the first horse is characteristic of the Assyrian harnessing methods of the time. Littauer and Crouwel state that the cheekpieces split into two so that they can be fitted to the bit (1979: 118). ‘Bits of both driven and ridden horses under Ashurnasirpal II ... have long, roughly rectangular, plaque cheekpieces with canons [a



mouthpiece of a metal bit] passing through holes in the centre ... The ends of what seem to be jointed canons pass through the centres of the cheekpieces and appear to be very long' (Littauer & Crouwel 1979:122; Curtis et al 1995:162). The nape straps were a classic Assyrian decoration too. The twisted strap as previously described is a 'necklace of beads' which is often shown on harnessed and ridden horses during Ashurnasirpal II's reign (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 127). The reins which are held separately in each of the driver's hands are typical of that time, as well as the whip which is shown. According to Littauer & Crouwel the reins were held and 'separated by the fingers of each hand ... [t]he whip [was] then held between the thumb and forefinger' (1979: 124). It must be noted that the horses from this chariot are controlled by a soldier walking in front of them. The reason for this soldier could be to aid the driver as they are going into battle.

The breastplate was used as armour to protect the horses during warfare (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 129). The breastplate as shown on this horse has a floral decoration, which covers the horse's ribs. This flower looks very similar to the lotus flower which was frequently used as a decorative motif in various forms of art during Ashurnasirpal's reign, for example the lotus flowers shown in relief B2 from the Throne Room of the North-West Palace. Flowers symbolise the 'natural process of rebirth and the metaphysical concept of immortal life', and lotus flowers specifically symbolise 'eternal recurrence' (McDonald 2002: 116).

The bird shown above the horses carrying a soldier is a vulture. Vultures are associated with warfare in Mesopotamian and Assyrian art, as the birds feast on the bodies of the dead enemies (The British Museum n.d.b). The Assyrians did not depict any of their casualties of war in their reliefs; therefore it can be assumed that bodies carried by vultures are those of the enemies (The British Museum n.d.b).

Lastly, the depiction of beards plays an important role in Assyrian art; a beardless figure indicates that the person may be a 'young man or possibly a eunuch' (The British Museum n.d.a). Eunuchs were castrated and were employed by the court to serve the king, they were typically depicted with no hair either and occasionally wearing headbands (Ataç 2010:30; Cornelius 2009:321-333; The British Museum n.d.a).

### 5.2.3.2 *The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124555)*

The horses from the first chariot are shown with elaborate headdresses. The crest shape headdress, or poll decoration, which stands between their ears, was usually made out of feathers or horsehair and was set in a semi-circular mount (Madhloom 1969: 14; Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 126; Curtis et al 1995:162). The mount was made out of a 'an arched metal fixture that usually appears to run from [the] back to [the] front across the poll' (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 126). In addition, the bridle is fitted with triangular shapes close to the eyes. These shapes represent blinkers, which were used to keep the horse's attention to the front and not on everything around them. The blinkers do not cover the eyes of the horses in this panel, as they would in real life, due to the fact that the artist wanted to draw attention to the focus of the horse's eyes (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 125; Curtis et al 1995:164). The blinkers were made of a number of materials, of which the best examples found today are ivory and many of them have decorative motives on them such as lotus blossoms or even winged sphinxes (Curtis et al 1995:164). The bridle was also fitted with what looks like a circular object over the gathering point of all the bridle straps. This circular object represents an applique, or bridle ornament, and was usually decorated and made out of metal, ivory or bone (Madhloom 1969: 15; Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 127; Curtis et al 1995:162).

The first horse is decorated with only one nape strap and one twisted or pleated strap. As previously mentioned, this twisted strap represents a necklace of beads (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 127). Furthermore, the horse is depicted wearing a breastplate, which consists of several complicated straps. The decorative strap which covers the ribs consists of a circular plate, which was most probably made of metal, which has three tassels attached to it. The disc itself was usually decorated with a sacred emblem (Madhloom 1969: 15).

The chariot as well as the horses is typical of the time, as described in section 5.2.3.1. As previously stated, there are three soldiers in the first chariot. The driver, the archer and a third soldier standing at the back of the chariot. The driver, though displayed behind the archer, is shown holding onto the reins in typical Assyrian style, as the reins were separate in each hand and between the fingers (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 124). It is unclear if the driver is holding a whip.

The archer in this chariot is Ashurnasirpal II. He is recognised by the garments he is wearing. Firstly, the king is adorned with a shawl, which is draped over his right shoulder and rests diagonally across his chest and ends at his left hip. The shawl is kept in position by means of a belt or a waist cord (Madhloom 1969: 66). The length of the tunic is unclear, as the king is positioned inside the chariot; however, the king's tunic was usually depicted as a full length tunic with embroidery on the edge of the sleeves as well as the hem of the tunic (Madhloom 1969: 66). Secondly, unlike the other Assyrian soldiers depicted with conical helmets, Ashurnasirpal II is shown wearing a very plain polos, with what could be a tassel on the top of the polos (Madhloom 1969: 74). A figure inside a winged disk firing a bow is positioned above Ashurnasirpal II. The winged disk is a symbol of divinity and typically a god (Asshur or Shamash) is depicted inside the disk (Magen 1986:54; Benzel et al 2010:30).

The third rider, or '*shalshu-rakbu*', served to protect the king (Madhloom 1969:13). During battles, such as the one depicted in this panel, the third rider would shield the king from attackers (Madhloom 1969: 13). The chariot with its horses and riders is thus depicted in typical Assyrian style according to the time of Ashurnasirpal II.

The second chariot and its horses show remarkably different characteristics in comparison to the first chariot. Starting with the horses, though the tack which the horses are wearing is very similar to the Assyrian horses illustrated in this panel, their body language display signs of horses which are in an aggressive state, which occurs when horses are under attack and feeling threatened (Vavra 1979:18; 34; Pickeral 2001:24; Williams 2013). The reason for this behaviour is because the chariot is under attack by the king and his army. The second chariot is actually an enemy chariot, as can be deduced by the following reasons. First of all, the first horse's mane is illustrated to show that it has been grouped into bunches, which shows that the mane has been hocked back or it has been braided into knots; this is a typical representation of enemy horses of that time (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 112). The soldiers from Ashurnasirpal II's horse regiment kept their horses' manes natural and did not braid the manes or hock them shorter (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 112). Keeping this in mind, one could then argue that the second horse, which has its head bent down towards the ground, may indeed have been injured and is in the process of falling.

Another sign that the chariot is indeed an enemy chariot are the eight spokes on the wheel. Assyrian chariots from Ashurnasirpal II's reign were characteristically depicted with six spokes (Madhloom 1969:14; Littauer & Crowel 1979: 106). Thus the soldier shown directly behind the chariot, coming down over the wheel is an enemy soldier who was slain during the battle and is in the process of falling out of the chariot. Likewise, the soldier shown lying over the back of the first horse is also an enemy soldier fallen in battle. The protruding object from his back could arguably be an arrow with which he was shot. He may still be alive as he seems to be holding on to the horse's mane. It can therefore be concluded that this is indeed an enemy chariot represented in the upper register of this panel.

### **5.3 Panel B4 (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124554 & 124553)**

#### 5.3.1 Pre-iconographical Description

Lower Register:

*Height: 0.96m*

*Width: 2.14m*

(Meuszynski 1981:20).

Upper Register:

*Height: 0.93m*

*Width: 2.15m*

5.3.1.1 *The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124554)*



Figure 5.4: The lower register from panel B4 (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.4).

Though the lower register has no horses in it, it continues from the scene in Panel B3's lower register. Reading the relief from right to left, there is an archer aiming his armed bow towards the upper left corner of the panel. This archer is shown wearing a short sleeved, but full length tunic, with embroidery on the hem of the tunic as well as sandals. He is also wearing a belt over the tunic, which ends in a sash that falls down his side at the back. His head is covered with a fitted cap and he has a full beard and shoulder length hair. There are two objects over his right shoulder, the smaller of the two resembles a strap of sorts, while the larger one a sword. Behind the archer is a barefooted soldier, wearing a knee length tunic of which the sleeve length is unclear. It is not clear if he has a beard; however, he is wearing a conical helmet. His front leg stands ahead of the archer's and he is holding a shield up in front of the archer. Both the archer and the soldier are illustrated as the tallest individuals in the panel.

Directly in front of the large archer and soldier are two soldiers in a crouching position. The two soldiers are illustrated almost parallel to each other; however, there are a few differences. Both the soldiers are dressed in short sleeved, knee length tunics with belts and are barefoot. They are both wearing conical helmets and the soldier in the front is shown to have a beard. This soldier is carrying a sword. They both have one knee touching the ground, while their other leg is in front of them, bent at the knee with the foot is flat on the ground. The first

soldier is equipped with a bow and arrow, which he is aiming in the same direction as the first archer in the panel. The second soldier has one hand behind him, holding an object, while the other hand is holding a shield in front of the archer.

Behind the crouching archer and soldier is a structure which consists of five columns and fourteen rows in the last three columns and twenty-two rows in the two front columns. At the top of the two front columns are two soldiers. In front of the two soldiers are four objects protruding from the structure. Each of the objects is illustrated with a line coming out of the top three rows of the structure at separate points. At the end of each of the lines are circular shaped pieces. Additionally, five rows from the top of the structure is a large disc with an illustration shown on it.

The two soldiers standing at the top of the structure are illustrated parallel to each other and the one in front is displayed wearing armour and not a tunic, as well as a conical helmet. Though these two soldiers are small in comparison to the other soldiers in scale, it is clear that the first soldier has one arm stretched in front of him while the other one is bent backwards in the same way in which an archer holds his armed bow and arrow. His front arm is aiming in the same direction as the other archers previously discussed in this panel. It is not clear what the soldier behind the archer is doing.

To the left of the panel is a large fortified city. Between the city's walls and the structure, as well as the crouching archer and soldier, are two soldiers holding up a large shield. Both of the soldiers are wearing knee length tunics, conical helmets and the soldier to the left is illustrated with a belt, a beard and shoulder length hair. They are standing facing each other, with their legs intertwined and their knees bent as they are holding the shield above their heads.

The fortified city consists of four levels, with two towers and two gates. Starting from right to left, there are several men shown either on top of or near the city walls. At the top of the first tower, which is the larger of the two towers, are two soldiers. The soldier in front has his arms over the tower wall and he is throwing an object down towards the soldiers at the

bottom, who are holding a shield to cover their heads. The second soldier, who is standing behind the first one, is holding a shield in front of both him and the first soldier, blocking the arrows from the archer in the large structure. The rest of the city's walls are filled with soldiers defending the city, as well as soldiers depicted in mid-air as they are falling head first from the city walls. Two figures are shown on the tower to the left, neither of them are holding any weapons. One has their hands on their head while the other's hands are stretched out in front of them.

### 5.3.1.2 The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124553)



Figure 5.5: The upper register from panel B4 (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.4).

There are three chariots in this panel and one soldier on foot in front of the chariots. Starting from left to right, the first chariot shows three horses illustrated directly behind each other, with their legs, tails and heads allowing for the distinguishing of the three. The horses are harnessed to the chariot and the driver of the chariot is using reins to steer the horses. The driver is standing and holding the reins in both his hands. The driver is behind an archer and only the driver's face, beard and arms can be seen. From his arms it can be noted that he is wearing a short sleeved tunic. The archer has his bow and arrow aimed directly in front of him, with the bow in his left hand. The archer has shoulder length hair, a beard and is wearing a short sleeved tunic with a belt as well as a sash crossing over his chest from his right shoulder to his left hip. The chariot has a spear as well as two quivers with arrows hanging from the sides. Additionally, the chariot is depicted with a standard, a mobile symbol



of the gods (The British Museum n.d.d). The standard was usually placed inside the cart and tied to the yoke with a rope or a bar to ensure that it is kept upright. The standard would usually consist of a disc decorated with sacred emblems (Madhloom 1969: 13).

The horses from the first chariot have their front legs lifted into the air. All three horses are shown with bridles and are steered by means of reins. The horses are all looking in the same direction, towards the right hand side of the register. It is unclear which way their ears are pointing, as they are depicted with decorative headpieces. The horse to the front of the register is portrayed with extra throat pieces which seemed to be attached to the bridle. This horse is further decorated with a breastplate, which covers the front of its chest, across the ribs extending over towards the flank with a tassel, and going down to the underside of the chest. It is also indicated that the horse shown to the front is a stallion. Their tails are kept long, however, they have been tied in the middle. The horse's mane is kept natural, as it is laying down across the horse's neck to the right. The horses have their back legs on the ground, while their front legs are raised in the air, just below the bellies of the horses from the second chariot.

The second chariot is behind the first chariot's horses, though the chariot is ahead of the first. Not much can be seen of the chariot, except for the wheel, which has six spokes, as well as the bottom of the chariot. As with the first chariot, there are three horses harnessed to the chariot. The driver is standing behind an archer, who has his bow armed and aimed directly ahead of him, with the bow in his left hand. A soldier is depicted in line with the arrow. This soldier is facing backwards, towards the archer, and has his right hand raised up in the air. The soldier is standing in the third chariot. The archer is wearing a short sleeved tunic, of which the length is not clear, with a belt and a sash crossing over his chest from his right shoulder to his left hip. He has a beard and shoulder length hair. The chariot has a standard, which is behind the archer.

The horses from the second chariot have their front legs lifted into the air. All three horses are shown with bridles and are steered by means of reins. There are circular objects on the cheekpieces, close to the horse's eye. The horses are all looking in the same direction, towards the front. It is unclear which way their ears are pointing, as they are depicted with



decorative headpieces. The horse to the front of the relief is portrayed with extra throat pieces which seem to be attached to the bridle. There is another strap shown around the horse's neck, which is illustrated as circular objects. This horse is further decorated with a breastplate, which covers the front of its chest, across the ribs extending over towards the flank with a tassel, and going down to the underside of the chest. The horses' tails are kept long; however, they have been tied in the middle. Only the back of the horse's mane is displayed, as it is hanging down to the left hand side. The horses have their back legs on the ground and their front legs are raised in the air; however, their legs are raised slightly lower than the horses from the first chariot.

The third chariot, as with the second one, has the chariot positioned behind the second chariot's horses; however, the horses are ahead of the second chariot's horses. Only the bottom of the chariot is illustrated, beneath the second chariot's horses' bellies. The wheel has six spokes. Only one rider is shown in the chariot, and he was mentioned previously as the soldier who was in direct line of the second chariot's archer's bow and arrow. There are no sleeves to indicate if he is wearing a long sleeve or short sleeve tunic, nor can the length of the tunic be seen. He has shoulder length hair and a beard. He is also wearing a fitted cap.

As with the previous chariots in this part of the panel, the third chariot is pulled by three horses. However, the three horses are not illustrated parallel to each other. All three horses are shown to have bridles, as well as an extra strap just below the bridle around the neck and another strap half way down the neck. The first horse is looking ahead. It is unclear in which direction its ears are pointed, due to the decorative headpiece. The horse has its back legs on the ground and its front legs raised slightly into the air, barely off the ground. . This horse is also decorated with a breastplate, which covers the front of its chest, across the ribs extending over towards the flank with a tassel, and going down to the underside of the chest. The mane is shown and is illustrated as standing straight and not laying across either side of the horse's neck.

The second horse has its front legs positioned high in the air, the one leg is higher than the other and both legs are bent at the knee. It is not clear where the horse's back legs are positioned. The horse's head is held higher up than the first horse, and it is looking

backwards, towards the soldier in the third chariot. The last horse has its head lowered to the ground, with its front left leg stretched out slightly ahead of its head and the front right leg just under its belly, bent at the knee. The back legs are depicted under the belly and they are also bent. The horse's belly is lower than the other two horses' and can clearly be seen. The tail is illustrated hanging down behind the back legs. It is not clear in which direction the ears are pointing, due to the decorative headpiece.

In front of the third chariot is an archer walking, with the back piece of the wheel from the first chariot from Panel B3 illustrated in front of him. The archer is wearing a knee length tunic and a conical helmet. He is carrying his bow in his left hand, with his hand held at shoulder height. In his right hand he is carrying another weapon and he has a bag with arrows strapped behind his right shoulder, with the strap from the bag shown across his chest. One of his legs is placed ahead of the other.

There are figures shown above the chariots, horses and the walking archer. The first figure in the sky is a bird. The bird's wings are open and it is depicted from a side view. The bird is above the back of the first chariot, just behind the archer's head. The second figure is a decapitated man, who is shown lying horizontally above the hind quarters of the horses from the first chariot. His legs are straight and his feet are touching the top of the archer from the first chariot's bow. His left arm is hanging downwards, towards where the driver from the first chariot is holding the reins. His right arm is bent and his hand is held at his lower torso. The man is wearing a knee length tunic.

The second figure above the chariots is also a decapitated man who is positioned lying horizontally stretched out above the heads of the first chariot's horses and the soldier standing in the third chariot. His legs are straight, with one foot touching the top of the bow of the second chariot's archer, and his arms and hands are stretched out ahead of the rest of his body. This man is wearing a knee length tunic with a belt. The third figure is also a decapitated man who is positioned lying horizontally above the heads of the horses from both the second and third chariots. His legs are illustrated as apart, with the lower leg close to the heads of the horses from the second chariot, while the other leg is close to the outstretched hands of the second decapitated man. His arms are bent, with his left arm pulled under his

chest and his right arm slightly ahead, which is causing the upper torso to be slightly raised. Behind, under and in front of the third decapitated man there are three objects placed at his feet, midriff and hands respectively. The first two objects can be described as scribbles, as there are lines and dots concentrated together and it is difficult to distinguish between them. The third object, which is at the hands, is the largest of the three. It is semi-circular at the bottom, and has seven or eight branch like parts, which have small dots around some of the edges. The tallest of the extending parts is behind the decapitated man's arms.

Lastly, there are two archers depicted in front of the third decapitated man. The archers are above the archer in front of the third chariot's horses. The two archers are illustrated parallel to each other, carrying their unarmed bows in their left hands. Only the first archer can be seen as a whole and he has his right hand on an object strung over his right shoulder. Both archers are depicted with beards, shoulder length hair and conical helmets. They are wearing knee length kilts.

### 5.3.2 Iconographical Analysis

#### 5.3.2.1 *The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124554)*

Though the lower register has no horses or chariots, it is still part of the greater narrative which all the panels share. The archer and soldier to the right are illustrated as much larger than any of the other figures on this register, however, they are the same height as the soldiers in the lower band of Panel 3B. If the panels were looked at as a whole, one would see that the archer and soldier form part of the military procession from the previous panel. The archer and soldier who are kneeling down in front of the two large figures, as well as the archer and soldier in the large contraption are part of the Assyrian army too, as they are attacking the fortified city.

### 5.3.2.2 *The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124553):*

The first chariot and its horses:

The horses and their body language:

The three horses are shown parallel to one another, all with the same body language. Their heads are all facing the front and are held upright, which shows that the horses are focused, as well as curious, about what is happening in front of them. It is unclear in which direction their ears are pointing. Their front legs are all lifted into the air while their back legs are on the ground, which indicates that they are in the process of rearing (Williams 2013; *Equus* 2007:28). Their tails, of which one can be seen clearly, are held up which is also a sign of the horses being focused and curious (Williams 2013; *Equus* 2007:28). Furthermore, though the tail is left long, the tail is tied, or knotted, just above the hock. In proportion to the rest of the panel, the horses, chariot and riders are larger than the men on the ground ahead of them.

The horses' tack:

The horses are all wearing bridles, which consist of a noseband, cheekpieces, brow band, throatlatch and headpiece. The headpieces are further decorated with a poll decoration, which is broken into numerous different sections and is standing upright in a crest-like shape. The cheekpiece splits into three separate pieces at the mouth. There are no clear indications of reins attached to the noseband or mouth area. The first horse also has one nape strap, which runs from the poll down across the upper part of the neck.

The breastplate starts high on the horse, on the lower part of the horse's neck. It consists of various sections, the first from the top being a piece which runs horizontally across the horse's neck. From the neck piece two pieces are placed horizontally in circular, or semi-circular as shown, shapes across the front of the chest and over the withers. The reins are attached to the circular piece, which crosses over the withers, and are held by the driver on the chariot, as well as a bow shaped piece which connects the breastplate to the chariot.

From the first piece which runs horizontally across the horse's neck, there are two straps which run vertically down the horse's chest and form part of the girth. A horizontal strap is attached to the one girth piece and it runs across the front of the chest, with five separate pieces hanging vertically from the cross strap. From the circular piece which stretches over the withers is another strap crossing over the ribs and towards the belly of the horse. In the middle of this strap is a large disk, with three tassels.

The horses are harnessed to a chariot, which has two soldiers riding in it. Both of the soldiers are standing upright. The driver, positioned behind the other soldier, is holding the two rein straps in each of his hands. The driver is also holding a whip in his left hand. The second rider is holding a bow and arrow and is aiming directly ahead of himself.

Only one wheel of the chariot is shown in this scene, as the chariot is depicted from the left side. The wheel has six spokes and one tyre. The side of the chariot shows that the floor piece of the chariot is straight and the front panel is straight. However, the front of the top of the chariot is at a slightly lower angle and the left hand corner is rounded. The bow shaped piece which extends from the back of the horses' breastplates is attached to the chariot at the top of the front piece. On the side of the chariot are two quivers which have the tips of arrows showing at the open ends of the quivers. A spear is also shown protruding from the back of the chariot. At the bottom of the chariot there is a pole which extends forward between the horses' legs. The pole is attached to a section protruding from the bottom of the chariot and curves upwards before extending between the horses. Furthermore, the chariot is fitted with a standard, which is placed between the archer and the driver.

The second chariot and its horses:

The horses and their body language:

The three horses are shown parallel to one another, all with the same body language. Their heads are all facing the front and are held upright, which shows that the horses are focused, as well as curious, about what is happening in front of them. It is unclear in which direction

their ears are pointing. Their front legs are all lifted into the air while their back legs are on the ground, which indicates that they are in the process of rearing (Williams 2013; Equus 2007:28). Their tails, of which one can be seen clearly, are held up which is also a sign of the horses being focused and curious (Equus 2007:28). Furthermore, though the tail is left long, the tail is tied, or knotted, just above the hock. In proportion to the rest of the panel, the horses, chariot and riders are larger than the men on the ground ahead of them.

The horses' tack:

The horses are all wearing bridles, which consist of a noseband, cheekpieces, brow band, throatlatch and headpiece. The headpieces are further decorated with a poll decoration, which is broken into numerous different sections and is standing upright in a crest-like shape. As shown on the horse in front, a circular disk is placed on the area in which all the bands cross. There is also a triangular patch next to the eyes. There are no clear indications of reins attached to the noseband or mouth area. The first horse also has two nape straps, one which runs from the poll down across the upper part of the neck and the other which is a twisted or pleated strap which is situated on the lower part of the neck.

The breastplate starts high on the horse, on the lower part of the horse's neck. It consists of various sections, the first from the top being a piece which runs horizontally across the horse's neck. From the neck piece two pieces are placed horizontally in circular, or semi-circular as shown, shapes across the front of the chest and over the withers. The reins are attached to the circular piece, which crosses over the withers, and are held by the driver on the chariot, as well as a bow shaped piece which connects the breastplate to the chariot. From the first piece which runs horizontally across the horse's neck, there are two straps which run vertically down the horse's chest and forms part of the girth. A horizontal strap is attached to the one girth piece and it runs across the front of the chest, with numerous separate pieces hanging vertically from the cross strap. From the circular piece which stretches over the withers is another strap crossing over the ribs and towards the belly of the horse. In the middle of this strap is a large disk, with three tassels.

The horses are harnessed to a chariot, which has two soldiers riding in it. Both of the soldiers are standing upright. The driver, positioned behind the other soldier, is assumed to be holding the two rein straps in each of his hands. The positions of his hands is unclear, as the horses from the first chariot are illustrated in front of the driver. The second rider is holding a bow and arrow and is aiming directly at the soldier standing in the third chariot.

Only one wheel of the chariot is shown in this scene, as the chariot is depicted from the left side. The wheel has six spokes and one tyre. The side of the chariot shows that the floor piece of the chariot is straight and the front panel is straight. However, the front of the top of the chariot is at a slightly lower angle and the left hand corner is rounded. The bow shaped piece which extends from the back of the horses' breastplates is attached to the chariot at the top of the front piece. On the side of the chariot are two quivers, which have the tips of arrows showing at the open ends of the quivers. A spear is also shown protruding from the back of the chariot. At the bottom of the chariot there is a pole which extends forward between the horses' legs. The pole is attached to a section protruding from the bottom of the chariot and curves upwards before extending between the horses. Furthermore, the chariot is fitted with a standard, which is placed between the archer and the driver.

The third chariot and its horses:

The horses and their body language:

The first horse has its back legs on the ground, while the front right leg is raised slightly off the ground and the left leg is raised higher than its chest and it is bent at the knee. The leg which is high in the air shows signs that the horse is going to strike, as it is in an angry state (Williams 2013; Equus 2007:28). The ears, from the bit that can be seen, are pinned against its head, which also indicates that the horse is in an aggressive state (Vavra 1979:34; Pickeral 2001:24; Equus 2007:28). The head is held up, showing that the horse is still focused on forward movement.

The second horse has its front legs held high in the air, however, it is not clear where its back legs are placed. The head is turned around, to face the chariot, which is not the natural position for a horse's head to be in. As the horse's head is higher than that of the other three horses and its front legs are held high in the air, it can be assumed that the horse is rearing and trying to get away from danger. This horse therefore in a state of distress (Williams 2013; *Equus* 2007: 28).

The third horse is shown with its head bent down and its nose close to the ground. The poll is touching the archer in front of it. The front left leg is slightly extended past the nose, while the right leg is bent and the hoof is under its belly. The hindquarters are shown very close to the front right leg and the belly is depicted as lower than that of the other two horses' bellies. This horse is in the process of falling.

### 5.3.3 Iconographical Interpretation

#### 5.3.3.1 *The Lower Register* (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124554)

The archer and soldier who are both illustrated as larger than the other figures in the lower register are depicted in such a way for one of two reasons. Firstly, it is to show that they are mighty and more powerful physically, as they are larger than the enemies. Secondly, it could also be to create a sense of depth, or forced perspective, in the relief, as the fortified city which is under attack could have been a distance away.

The large archer is shown wearing a full length tunic, which is not the typical attire of Assyrian soldiers. Judging by the embroidered lower hem, one would assume that this archer is in fact Ashurnasirpal II (Madhloom 1969: 66). However, the archer is not wearing the royal polos, nor does he have a shawl draped over his shoulders (Madhloom 1969: 66; 74). It could therefore be argued that the archer was a high ranking officer from Ashurnasirpal II's army (Madhloom 1969: 67-68).



Though there are no horses in the lower register, the special contraption which was previously described will be studied further. According to Madhloom, this contraption was known as a siege engine (1969:33). Only two siege engines were illustrated during Ashurnasirpal II's reign, this example which has only one tower added to the rectangular body and the other which has two towers (Madhloom 1969:33). The siege engines were fitted with battering rams, which were used to destroy the walls and gates of enemy cities. The battering rams were operated from the inside of the siege engines. The siege engines were made out of wood (Madhloom 1969:33).

### *5.3.3.2 The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124553)*

The first two chariots and riders are depicted in typical Assyrian style, as explained in section 5.2.3.1 of this chapter. The horses' decorated headdresses shown are also typical Assyrian, as explained in section 5.2.3.2 of this chapter. The bird shown above the first chariot is a vulture which, as discussed in section 5.2.3.1 from this chapter, is characteristically shown with the Assyrian army when depicted attacking enemies (The British Museum n.d.b).

The first horse from the first chariot is decorated with only one nape strap (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 127). Furthermore, the horse is depicted wearing a breastplate, which consists of several complicated straps. The decorative strap which covers the ribs consists of a circular plate, which was most probably made of metal and has three tassels attached to it. The disc itself was usually decorated with a sacred emblem (Madhloom 1969: 15).

The first horse from the second chariot is decorated with only one nape strap and one twisted or pleated strap. As previously mentioned, this twisted strap represents a necklace of beads (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 127). Furthermore, the horse is depicted wearing a breastplate, which consists of several complicated straps. The decorative strap which covers the ribs consists of a circular plate, which was most probably made of metal and has three tassels attached to it. The disc itself was usually decorated with a sacred emblem (Madhloom 1969: 15).

The standards from the chariots most likely represented the gods Adad and Nergal (The British Museum n.d.d). Adad was the god of storms and was represented symbolically as a forked lightning bolt. Nergal was a god connected to the Underworld and during times of wars he was shown 'carrying a scimitar and a single or double-headed lion sceptre' (The British Museum n.d.d).

According to Meuszynski the third chariot is an enemy chariot, which is under attack from the two Assyrian chariots (1981:20). The Assyrian chariots were identified by their standards, whereas this chariot does not carry the standard (Meuszynski 1981:20). This chariot, however, does not have any other obvious signs that it is an enemy chariot. Firstly, the wheel has six spokes, while enemy chariots were typically displayed with eight spokes (Madhloom 1969:14; Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 106). Only one rider is shown in the chariot. The rider is facing the second chariot behind him and has his right arm held up and bent at the elbow. The soldier could be trying to defend himself against the archer from the second chariot, whose bow and arrow are aiming in his direction.

Though the horses are shown with similar tack as the Assyrian horses, there are slight differences when looking closer at their manes. In contrast to the Assyrian soldiers who kept their horses' manes natural, the manes of the horses from the enemy fronts were either illustrated as grouped into bunches, which shows that the mane has been hocked back or it has been braided into knots (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 112). The first horse's mane is illustrated as standing upright, which could be an indication that it has been hocked back. The second horse's mane is illustrated as small round bundles, which indicates that the mane has been braided into knots. The third horse's mane is shown lying flat to the right of the horse's neck. The length of the mane is jagged and slightly shorter than the Assyrian horses' manes.

The body language which the horses are displaying is typical of horses which are feeling threatened and are under attack. Assyrian horses 'are always depicted in a controlled demeanor', which further confirms that the horses from the third chariot do indeed belong to the enemy (Ataç 2010: 22).

## 5.4 Relief B5 (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124552 & 124551)

### 5.4.1 Pre-iconographical Description

Lower Register:

*Height: 0.96m*

*Width: 2.14m*

(Meuszynski 1981:20 & Plate 2)

Upper Register:

*Height: 0.91m*

*Width: 2.14m*

#### 5.4.1.1 The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124552)



Figure 5.6: The lower register from panel B5 (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.4).

On the right hand side of the register we see parts of the fortified city wall from the lower register of relief B4. Two levels of the fortified city's walls have been depicted, as well as a tower. There are two men shown standing at the top of the tower, of which the one on the left is shown holding an object out towards the edge of the tower. Below the tower there is a man shown falling out from the second level of the city's walls. He is depicted as falling head first, with his arms stretched down next to his head, his feet above him and his knees bent. He is depicted wearing a belt only and a line between his bare legs, covering his genitalia. Lastly, there are two fallen figures at the bottom of the fortified city, in front of the lowest wall. The

figures are shown as rolled up bodies with arms and legs displayed as the only distinguishable body parts.

Adjacent to the castle walls is a ladder with one soldier advancing up the ladder and two soldiers standing in front of and behind the ladder. The soldier who is climbing up the ladder is depicted wearing a short sleeved, knee length tunic, a conical helmet and has a beard and shoulder length hair. He is carrying a spear in his right hand and is holding a shield above his head, almost directly below the two men standing in the tower of the fortified city. His left arm is higher than his right arm; however, his right leg is placed higher on the ladder than his left leg. Directly above the soldier is a man shown falling, most likely from the city walls. He is illustrated with his left arm stretched beyond his head, his right hand in front of his chest, his left leg straight and his right leg bent at the knee. He is wearing a short sleeved, knee length tunic.

The soldier standing in front of the ladder is depicted as smaller than the soldier climbing up the ladder. This soldier is shown wearing a knee length tunic; however, the sleeve length is not indicated. His right hand is stretched out in front of him, close to one of the two rolled up bodies shown in front of the city walls. His right hand is holding a shield towards the direction of the falling body. The soldier shown behind the ladder is also depicted as smaller than the soldier climbing up the ladder. This soldier is depicted in a knee length tunic and belt, conical helmet, a beard and shoulder length hair. He is holding a spear in his right hand and has another weapon extended from under his right elbow. His left arm and hand is shown supporting the right leg of the soldier climbing up the ladder.

Directly behind this group of soldiers are a number of figures, most of who are depicted as the largest figures in the register. The first four figures, the central group which is closest to the fortified city, are facing the city and are the largest, while the last five figures are facing the other direction and are illustrated as slightly smaller.

Of the first four figures, the first figure, who is illustrated ahead of the others, is depicted wearing a conical helmet, short sleeved full length armour and is carrying a large shield in his left hand. The shield is held in front of the group and he has a spear in his right hand, which

he is pointing downwards. Furthermore, he is standing with his feet apart, one ahead of the other. Directly above him is an open winged bird.

The archer is standing slightly behind the soldier carrying the shield and spear; however, he is depicted in front of the soldier, as viewed from the side. The archer is wearing a short sleeved full length tunic, with embroidery around the hem as well as embroidery around a square shaped area covering his right hip and thigh and has a tassel dangling from the bottom right corner. He is also wearing a belt and a strap across his chest from his right shoulder. He is also depicted with shoulder length hair, a long, square shaped beard and a polos. He has the bow and arrow drawn, with the bow in his left hand and the arrow pulled back with his right hand. He is aiming straight ahead. His feet, protected by sandals, are slightly parted and his front foot is marginally behind the back foot of the soldier holding the shield.

Behind the archer are two figures standing close to each other. The closest one to the front is wearing a short sleeved full length tunic, which is embroidered around the hem. Though the second figure cannot be seen in full, it is indicated that a full length tunic is also worn and that it has similarly been embroidered around the hem. Neither of these two figures have been depicted with beards, but the one shown to the front of the two has shoulder length hair. The first of the pair is holding an object in front of himself, at hip level. The second person is taller than the first and is holding an object above his, as well as the archer's head. The object is a straight bar, with two pieces splitting off from it at the top and semi-circular shape covering it.

Behind the central group of figures are five people walking away from the fortified city. The first of the four, starting from right to left, is an archer wearing a knee length tunic with a belt, a conical helmet, shoulder length hair and a beard. He is carrying a bow over his left shoulder and he is shown wearing sandals. This archer is also depicted with very well defined calves. His legs are parted and while his left hand is holding the bow, his right hand is placed on the person walking in front of him.

The last group of people consists of three adults and one child. The three adults are all represented wearing the same tunics, which is short sleeved and full length. They are all wearing the same thin belts and no sandals. All three have shoulder length hair and the hair has been illustrated with more detail than the other figures in this register. All three have been depicted with their feet apart. The tunics have more shape around the hip and chest areas, which leads one to believe that these three figures are women. The first of the three women, shown closest to the archer, has her left arm stretched out in front of her, while her right hand is touching her forehead. The second woman is covering her face with her right hand, while her left hand is on the child's head. The child is depicted slightly ahead of her, also with his feet apart. The child is shown wearing only a belt, has no hair illustrated and his left arm is held straight, pointing down slightly ahead of him and the right arm is bent at the elbow and only the forearm is shown as being held at an upwards angle. The last of the women has both of her hands touching the sides of her head. Lastly, three cows are depicted directly above the women, heading in the same direction as the group of figures below them.

#### 5.4.1.2 The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124551)



Figure 5.7: The upper register from panel B5 (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.4).

Reading the register from right to left, there are two horses, one which was being ridden and three horses pulling a chariot, as well as several soldiers on the ground. Starting from the right hand side of the register, two horses are illustrated parallel to each other. The horses have three feet on the ground, with only their front right foot off the ground. The back legs as

well as the front legs are depicted apart from each other. The horses are carrying their heads high and their ears are facing forward. Their eyes are depicted as relaxed. The horse's tail is held up and it is kept long, however, tied in the middle just above the hock. The first horse's mane is shown and it is hanging relaxed to the left hand side of the neck.

The horses are both shown with bridles, of which the reins are attached to the mouthpieces. The rider is holding both of the horses' reins separately in each of his hands. The horse depicted to the front of the two horses, is shown wearing a strap around its neck, just under the head band. Coming from the same area high on the back of the neck, is the start of the breastplate. It starts with a single strap which hangs from the neck down the front of the chest. There are five straps shown hanging from the main strap on the front of the chest. The main strap has two smaller straps extending from it on the shoulder area of the horse, and these two pieces are attached to a large piece of cloth which covers the horse's entire back. This cloth is decorated on the hem and a girth is shown from the cloth, extending under the horse's belly. It is illustrated that the horse in front is a stallion, as a penile sheath is depicted.

Only one rider is depicted on the two horses, sitting sideways towards the right hand side, on the first horse's back. The rider is wearing a conical helmet and only a belt can be seen, therefore it is unclear if he is wearing a tunic or a kilt. He is depicted with a beard and shoulder length hair and is carrying a shield over his left shoulder, a sword hanging from his left hand side, a whip in his right hand and he has a spear, which is being held up right. At the top of the spear is a body, the head at the tip of the spear. The rest of the body is displayed in a horizontal position, with one leg straight, pointing downwards with the toes touching the pole of the second horse. The other leg is bent at the knee and is extended upwards. The arms are in similar positions at the legs and only shoulder length hair is shown. This person is depicted in a knee length tunic. Behind the rider, depicted just above the horses' hindquarters, are two archers. They are illustrated in the same position, with one leg ahead of the other while the back feet are slightly raised. Both are wearing knee length kilts and they are depicted with beards, shoulder length hair and conical helmets. Only the first archer's bow is seen, as he is holding it in his left arm and hand. Both of the archers are carrying the same shaped object in their right hands; a straight lower half with a round object on top, which was most likely a mace (Madhloom 1969: Plate XXXI).



Directly in front of the rider and his two horses is the chariot, which is being pulled by three horses. The bottom right hand side of the chariot's wheel is behind the lifted front legs of the first two horses. The chariot has three riders in it. The closest to the front is holding a bow in his left hand and his right hand is held upwards, holding a straight object, about the length of his forearm. This rider is depicted with a long beard, shoulder length hair, a polos, a short sleeved tunic and a belt. The other two riders are illustrated behind the first rider, one to the front, or left hand side, and one to the back, or right hand side. The rider on the left hand side is the driver, as he is holding the reins in his two hands irrespectively. He is shown with only a long beard and not much more as only his hands and arms can be seen. The rider on the right only has his shoulder and back of his head illustrated. It is shown that he has shoulder length hair, a beard and is holding an object, which has a straight bar, with several pieces splitting off from it at the top and semi-circular shape covering it.

The three horses harnessed to the chariot are depicted as parallel to each other. All three horses have only their front right legs raised into the air, while the other three are shown touching the ground and separated, the back right legs extended in front of the left legs. All three horses are wearing bridles, as well as decorative headpieces, with tassels illustrated extending out from the headpieces. All three horses are held at the bottom of their bridles by a soldier illustrated in front of them. The first horse is depicted with a strap around the upper neck area, just behind the bridle. The horse's mane is shown, hanging naturally down the left hand side of the horse's neck. The horse depicted closest to the front is decorated on its front quarters only with a type of breastplate, extending down from the neck, across the front of the chest, over the shoulders to the ribs and under the chest. A disc is placed on the shoulder and there are three tassels attached to it, extending over the ribs. The reins are illustrated from the back of the breastplate, just above the withers. The horse's tail is held up and it is kept long, however, tied in the middle. It has been illustrated that the first horse is a stallion. These three horses are illustrated as slightly larger than the first two horses in this register. Directly above the horses' backs is a disc, which has an image inside it as well as open wings and a bird's tail.



Depicted in front of the three horses pulling the chariot are two soldiers. The first one is holding the lower part of the horses' bridles, while the other is illustrated behind him. The soldier holding the horses is wearing a short sleeved knee length tunic with a belt; has a sword strapped over his right shoulder and hanging at his waist and across his hip; and has a beard and shoulder length hair. His left arm is bent backwards as he is leading the horses, while his right arm is depicted at his side and his legs are parted. The soldier ahead of him is carrying a bow over his left shoulder and he is holding it in his left hand. His right hand is holding a thin, straight object with a small circle on top, which is touching the top of his head. His tunic is slightly shorter than the first soldiers; however, still knee length and short sleeved. He is shown with a conical helmet, a beard and shoulder length hair. Above these two soldiers is a naked, headless body shown from behind. The body is laying on its belly, with the legs slightly apart and bent, and the left arm stretched out while the right arm is bent.

#### 5.4.2 Iconographical Analysis

##### *5.4.2.1 The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124552)*

Though, as previously mentioned, there are no horses in this register, it forms an important part of the narrative as a whole. This register forms part of the narrative from the lower registers of B4 as well as B3, which shows an enemy city under attack. As with the other lower registers the Assyrian army is illustrated larger than the enemy.

##### *5.4.2.2 The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124551)*

The first two horses and the rider:

The horses and their body language:

The horses are illustrated with only one leg raised, which shows that they are in the walking gait (Pickeral 2001:98). Their heads are extended; ears are pointing forwards; eyes are

relaxed and focused and tail held up, all signs of horses that are relaxed, yet curious and focused on what is ahead of them (Vavra 1979:34; Pickeral 2001:24; Williams 2013; Equus 2007: 28).

The horses' tack:

The horses are all wearing bridles, which consist of a noseband, cheekpieces, brow band, throatlatch and headpiece. The reins are attached to the cheekpieces at the horse's mouth. The first horse is illustrated with the strap around its neck, which is the nape strap. The breastplate starts from high behind the horse's neck, just under the nape strap. It extends downwards to the front of the horse's chest, from where there are five tassels shown hanging from the main strap. Above these tassels, on the horse's shoulder, is an extension from the main strap, which splits into two shorter straps and they are attached to the cloth, or saddle cloth (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 134), which covers the horse's back. The blanket is secured to the horse by means of a girth. The rider is shown riding sideways, with both his legs on the same side of the horse and not astride the horse.

The chariot and its horses:

The horses' body language:

The three horses are shown parallel to one another, all with the same body language. Their heads are all facing the front and are held upright, which shows that the horses are focused, as well as curious, about what is happening in front of them. Their ears are pointing forwards, which further indicates alertness and curiosity (Vavra 1979:34; Pickeral 2001:24; Equus 2007: 28). Their tails, of which one can be seen clearly, are held up which is also a sign of the horses being focused and curious (Equus 2007:28). Furthermore, though the tail is left long, the tail is tied, or knotted, just above the hock. In proportion to the rest of the panel, the horses, chariot and riders are larger than the men on the ground ahead of them, as well as the

horses behind them. They are shown in the walking gait, as only one leg is lifted in the air while the others are resting on the ground.

The horses' tack:

The horses are all wearing bridles, which consist of a noseband, cheekpieces, brow band, throatlatch and decorative headpiece. The headpieces are further decorated with a poll decoration, which is broken into numerous different sections and is standing upright in a crest-like shape. The cheekpiece splits into three separate pieces at the mouth. There are no clear indications of reins attached to the noseband or mouth area. The horses are held at the lowest point of their bridles by a soldier illustrated in front of them. The first horse also has one nape strap, which runs from the poll down across the upper part of the neck.

The breastplate starts high on the horse, on the lower part of the horse's neck. It consists of various sections, the first from the top being two straps which run horizontally across the horse's neck and join a semi-circular strap which is on the lower part of the neck. The reins are joined to this strap and are held by the driver in the chariot. Under the first two straps which run horizontally is another strap, which also joins the semi-circular strap to which the reins are attached. This strap, which is the lowest across the chest, has numerous tassels hanging from it. There is a disk placed on the shoulder of the horse, which is attached to the lowest strap and has a strap extending over the withers. Three large tassels extend from this disk.

The horses are harnessed to a chariot, which has three riders illustrated in it. Only one wheel of the chariot is shown in this scene, as the chariot is depicted from the right side. The wheel has six spokes and one tyre. The side of the chariot shows that the floor piece of the chariot is straight, the front panel is straight; however, the front of the top of the chariot is at a slightly lower angle and the left hand corner is rounded. The bow shaped piece which extends from the back of the horses' breastplates is attached to the chariot at the top of the front piece. On the side of the chariot are two quivers, which have the tips of arrows showing at the open ends of the quivers. A spear is also shown protruding from the back of the chariot. At the

bottom of the chariot there is a pole which extends forwards between the horses' legs. The pole is attached to a section protruding from the bottom of the chariot and curves upwards before extending between the horses.

### 5.4.3 Iconographical Interpretation

#### *5.4.3.1 The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124552)*

Only the most important aspects from this register will be discussed briefly. To begin with, the archer from the central group of figures is surely king Ashurnasirpal II. He is recognised by the garments he is wearing. Firstly, the king is adorned with a shawl, which is draped over his right shoulder and rests diagonally across his chest and ends at his left hip. The shawl is kept in position by means of a belt or a waist cord (Madhloom 1969: 66). The tunic is depicted as a full length tunic with embroidery on the edge of the hem (Madhloom 1969: 66). Secondly, unlike the other Assyrian soldiers depicted with conical helmets, Ashurnasirpal II is shown wearing a very plain polos, with what could be a tassel on the top of the polos (Madhloom 1969: 74). The open winged bird positioned above Ashurnasirpal II is a vulture, as described in section 5.2.3.1 of this chapter.

The men illustrated around Ashurnasirpal II are serving to protect and aid him during the attack. To begin with, he is protected by the soldier with the shield, which is held in front of him. The two men illustrated behind Ashurnasirpal II were officers or courtiers, as they are depicted in the same decorated tunic as the king (Madhloom 1969: 67). The officer depicted at the front is an arms bearer, as he is carrying the king's weaponry (Madhloom 1969: 68). The second officer, who is depicted taller as the rest, is carrying an umbrella to shade the king (Madhloom 1969: 13).

Very few Assyrian women were illustrated in reliefs (Albenda 1987:17-21; Madhloom 1969: 73), thus the last group of figures shown in the register, the three women and child as well as the cows above them, were slaves and animals captured from the enemy side to be taken back

to Assyria. Judging by the body language of the women, they were distraught at the destruction of their home.

#### *5.4.3.2 The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:20; Fig. 5.1; BM ANE 124551)*

Assyrian riders were typically depicted riding horses which looked similar to horses pulling chariots, except without the elaborate breastplate and poll decorations (Madhloom 1969: 134). The bridle and bit which were used for the horses being ridden were the same as those used for the chariots (Madhloom 1969: 134). Though this rider was depicted riding on his own, the Assyrian mounted troops worked in pairs. The pair would ride, even at a gallop, side by side and one would act as the squire while the other was a warrior. The squire would control both the horses, while the warrior would attack the enemy (Madhloom 1969: 134-135; Curtis et al 1995:161). Only one rider is shown in this register, and though he is carrying weapons, neither he nor the rest of the Assyrian army in this register show signs of being under attack or attacking an enemy army. Therefore, this register depicts a campaign scenario.

The horses, chariot and riders are depicted in typical Assyrian style, as explained in section 5.2.3.1 of this chapter. The rider in the front left hand side of the chariot is Ashurnasirpal II. He is recognised by the garments he is wearing. To begin with, the king is adorned with a shawl, which is draped over his right shoulder and rests diagonally across his chest and ends at his left hip. The shawl is kept in position by means of a belt or a waist cord (Madhloom 1969: 66). The length of the tunic is unclear, as the king is positioned inside the chariot; however, the king's tunic was usually depicted as a full length tunic with embroidery on the edge of the sleeves as well as the hem of the tunic (Madhloom 1969: 66). Secondly, unlike the other Assyrian soldiers depicted with conical helmets, Ashurnasirpal is shown wearing a very plain polos, with what could be a tassel on the top of the polos (Madhloom 1969: 74). The king is holding his bow downwards in his left hand and his arrows are held up in his right hand, presenting that the bow and arrows are not drawn and that the war is over. The figure inside is a winged disk is positioned above Ashurnasirpal II. The winged disk is a symbol of divinity as previously mentioned (Magen 1986:54; Benzel et al 2010:30).

The second rider, who is standing to the front right hand side of the chariot, was the driver. The third rider, or '*shalshu-rakbu*', served to protect the king (Madhloom 1969:13). During battles, such as the one depicted in this panel, the third rider would shield the king from attackers; however, in this chariot he is shown holding an umbrella over the king, to keep him in shade during the procession (Madhloom 1969: 13). The chariot with its horses and riders is thus depicted in typical Assyrian style according to the time of Ashurnasirpal II. The fact that this was the king's chariot explains why the horses were depicted as larger than the other horses in this register.

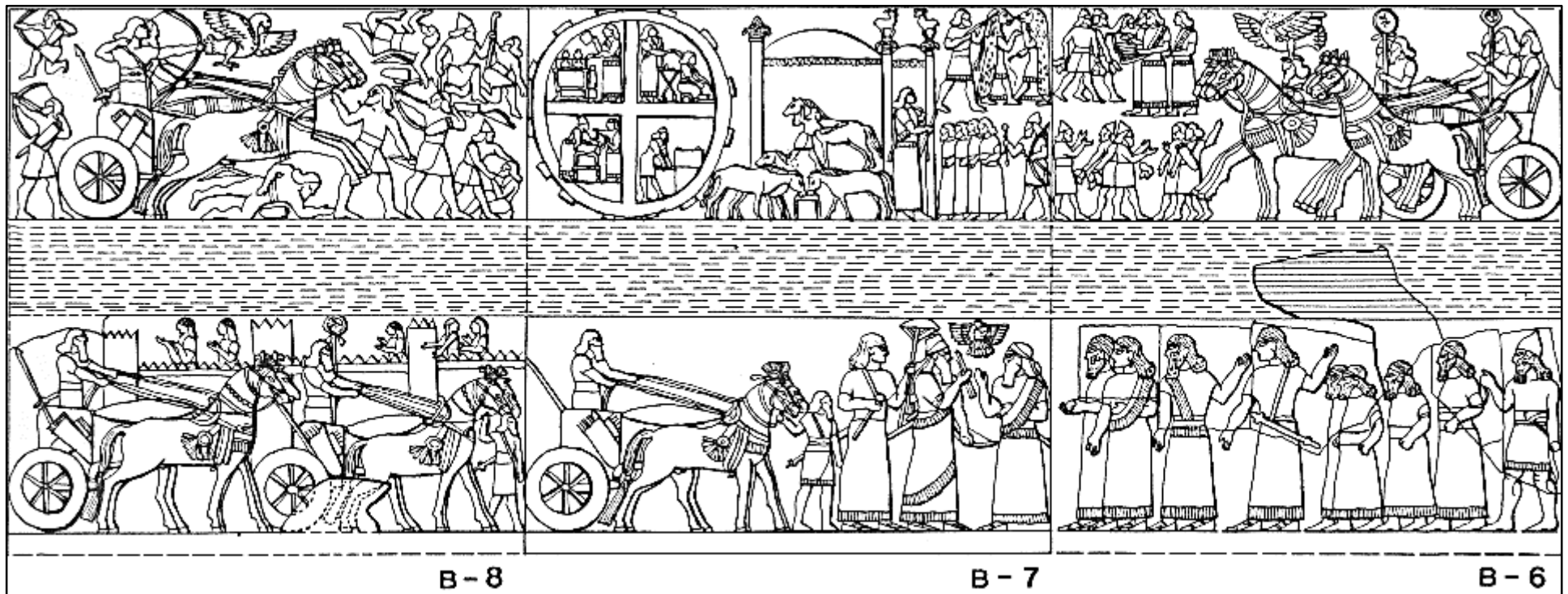


Figure 5.8: Panels B6, B7 and B8 from the Throne Room of Ashurnasirpal II's North-West Palace (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.3).

## 5.5 Relief B6 (Meuszynski 1981:20-21; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124550)

### 5.5.1 Pre-iconographical Description

Lower Register:

*Height: various*

*Width: 2.14m*

(Meuszynski 1981:20-21)

Upper Register:

*Height: 0.88m*

*Width: 2.08m*

#### 5.5.1.1 The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:20-21; Fig. 5.8)



Figure 5.9: Lower register from panel B6 (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.3).

Though there are no horses depicted in the lower register, the register forms part of the great narrative and will be briefly discussed. There are nine men illustrated in this register. All of the men are facing the left hand side and have one foot placed ahead of the other. All of the men, except for the one furthest to the right hand side, are shown wearing short sleeved full length tunics with belts and all of the tunics are embroidered around the hem. The male on the furthest right hand side is wearing a knee length kilt with a belt, as well as a conical helmet. All of the men have shoulder length hair and beards, except for the second and fourth men from the left who are without beards. The fourth and ninth men are the only two who are depicted with weapons, the fourth one carrying a sword and the ninth one a whip. Only the



first four men are depicted with sandals. The second and third men both have decorated shawls across their chests from their shoulders.

Between the fourth and ninth men are four other men, all depicted as shorter than the rest of the men in the register. None of these men are armed and they are wearing headbands. The ninth man is illustrated with well-defined calves, plus he is holding his right arm up and a chord or a rope is shown from his hand going around the eighth man's upper arm. The four men illustrated between the fourth and ninth men are all depicted similarly, with their left arms bent slightly and their left hands at their hips. The fourth man has his right arm in a downwards position slightly in front of him, while his left arm is bent behind him and both his hands are open. The third man is illustrated in the same position as the fourth man. The second man has his right hand in front of him; however, his left arm is bent and held in the shawl across his shoulder.

#### 5.5.1.2 The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:20-21; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124550)



Figure 5.10: The upper register from panel B6 (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.3).

There are two chariots with three horses per chariot in this register, as well as two separate groups of men illustrated in front of the chariots. The two groups are depicted in two levels, the one above the other.

Starting from right to left, there are three horses pulling the first of two two-wheeled chariots. The horses are standing directly behind one another, with their legs, tails and heads showing, allowing for the distinguishing between the three. The horses are harnessed to the chariot and the driver of the chariot is using reins to steer the horses. The horse depicted closest to the front is decorated on its front quarters only with a type of breastplate, extending down from the neck, across the front of the chest, over the shoulders to the ribs and under the chest. The breastplate extends to the horse's ribs with tassels attached to a disk. All three of the horses are shown wearing bridles. The horses' front right legs and right back legs are raised in the air, ahead of the left front and back legs which are all on the ground. The horses' ears are pricked up and pointing forwards. The tails are kept long, however tied in the middle just above the hock.

There are three riders in the chariot. The driver is only partly illustrated, as he is depicted behind the first two riders. The driver is holding the reins separately in each of his hands and he is holding a whip in his right hand. The driver is illustrated with a beard. The second rider, who is depicted in the middle of the three, is holding a standard in his left hand. His right arm is slightly raised. He is depicted with a beard, shoulder length hair and a short sleeved tunic. The third rider is depicted at the back of the chariot, with his left arm stretched out as he is holding onto a strap extending from the chariot. This rider is also shown with a beard and short sleeved tunic. The chariot is equipped with a spear protruding from the back, as well as two quivers with arrows on the side.

The second chariot is illustrated behind the first chariot, though the horses are depicted ahead of the first chariot's horses. There are also three horses illustrated parallel to each other with the second chariot. The horses are standing directly behind one another, with their legs, tails and heads showing, allowing for the distinguishing between the three. The horses are harnessed to the chariot and the driver of the chariot is using reins to steer the horses. The horse depicted closest to the front is decorated on its front quarters only with a type of breastplate, extending down from the neck, across the front of the chest, over the shoulders to the ribs and under the chest. The breastplate extends to the horse's ribs with tassels attached to a disk. All three of the horses are shown wearing bridles. The horses' front right legs and right hind legs are raised in the air, ahead of the left front and back legs which are all on the

ground. The horses' ears are pricked up and pointing forwards. The horses' hindquarters cannot be seen, as they are behind the horses from the first chariot. A severed head is illustrated above the horses' withers. The head is being held by an open winged bird. The head is depicted with a beard and long hair.

Two riders are illustrated in the second chariot. Only the wheel from the second chariot is illustrated, as it is behind the first chariot's horses. Both of the riders are illustrated with beards and shoulder length hair, as well as short sleeved tunics. The rider illustrated first is holding a standard in his left hand, which leads us to assume that the other rider is the driver.

Both of the chariots, as well as the horses, are depicted as much larger than the two groups of men depicted in front of them. The lower group of men, who are closest in relation to the horses and size, reach the chests of the horses in length. This group consists of five men, all dressed with knee length kilts, except for the fifth member, who is wearing a short sleeved knee length tunic. The first three men from the left are wearing conical helmets. The first and third men are both facing towards the horses, while the other men in the group have their backs towards the horses. All five members of the group are shown with their legs apart. The first and third men have their hands raised up in front of them, whereas the second and fourth men have their hands pointing downwards. The second man is holding two severed heads in each of his hands and there is another severed head in front of the third man. The fifth member of the group has his left arm raised upwards and pointing towards the horses from the second chariot.

The second group of men, illustrated above the first group of men, also consists of five men. The first two men, from left to right, are both facing towards the horses and are wearing knee length tunics, conical helmets and have beards and shoulder length hair. Their legs are apart and they are both holding decapitated heads. The second man is holding a head up, towards the other members of the group. The last three members have their backs towards the horses. These three are all wearing short sleeved full length tunics, with embroidered hems, belts and shawls draped across their shoulders.

## 5.5.2 Iconographical Analysis

### 5.5.2.1 *The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:20-21; Fig. 5.8)*

According to Meuszynski, the group of men shown in this register consists of captives being led by Assyrian soldiers (1981:20-21). The men in this register are shorter than the rest of the men and are captives. These men are dressed slightly differently to the Assyrians, as their tunics, though full length and embroidered around the hems, have differently decorated sleeves than the Assyrian tunics, which have plain sleeves. Furthermore, these men are wearing headbands which could represent turbans worn by foreigners at that time (Madhloom 1969: 72).

### 5.5.2.2 *The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:20-2;1 Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124550)*

The horses and their body language:

The three horses are shown parallel to one another, all with the same body language. Their heads are all facing the front and are held upright, which shows that the horses are focused, as well as curious, about what is happening in front of them (Williams 2013; Equus 2007: 28). Their tails, of which one can be seen clearly, are held up which is also a sign of the horses being focused and curious (Equus 2007:28). Furthermore, though the tail is left long, the tail is tied, or knotted, just above the hock. The horses are depicted in the trotting gait, as two feet are on the ground and two are lifted in the air (Pickeral 2001:98).

The horses' tack:

The horses are all wearing bridles, which consist of a noseband, cheekpieces, brow band, throatlatch and decorative headpiece. The headpieces are further decorated with a poll decoration, which is broken into numerous different sections and is standing upright in a crest-like shape. The poll decoration was usually made out of feathers or horsehair and was set in a semi-circular mount (Madhloom 1969: 14; Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 126; Curtis et al

1995:162). The mount was made out of a 'an arched metal fixture that usually appears to run from [the] back to [the] front across the poll' (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 126). The cheekpiece splits into three separate pieces at the mouth. There are no clear indications of reins attached to the noseband or mouth area. The first horse also has two nape straps, one just below the head and the other lower down the neck.

The breastplate starts high on the horse, on the lower part of the horse's neck. It consists of various sections, the first from the top being one strap which runs horizontally across the horse's neck. From this strap there are two major straps which are joined together to form the girth. From the girth there is a strap around the front of the chest, which has decorative tassels, and behind a disk with three tassels is also attached to the girth. The disk and tassels are placed on the horse's shoulder. The reins are attached to straps located at the withers.

The horses are harnessed to a chariot, which has two riders illustrated in it. Only one wheel of the chariot is shown in this scene, as the chariot is depicted from the left side. The wheel has six spokes.

### 5.5.3 Iconographical Interpretation

#### *5.5.3.1 The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:20-21; Fig. 5.8)*

The lower register serves to continue the narrative between the lower registers from panels B7 and B5. In the lower register of B5 we saw the female captives captured and moving away from the fortified city which is under attack. The narrative continues in the lower register of panel B6, where the men have been captured and are led first in the procession by the Assyrians.

### 5.5.3.2 The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:20-21; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124550)

The chariots and riders are depicted in typical Assyrian style, as explained in section 5.2.3.1 of this chapter. According to Meuszynski, the decapitated heads were from enemy soldiers (1981: 21). The soldiers in the register are part of a procession, celebrating the success of the military campaign. The decapitated head which has been illustrated just above the withers of the second chariot's horses is carried by a vulture, as discussed in section 5.2.3.1 in this chapter.

## 5.6 Relief B7 (Meuszynski 1981:2; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124549 & 124548)

### 5.6.1 Pre-iconographical Description

Lower Register:

*Height: 0.98m*

*Width: 2.14m*

(Meuszynski 1981:21)

Upper Register:

*Height: 0.88m*

*Width: 2.15m*

#### 5.6.1.1 The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124549)



Figure 5.11: The lower register from panel B7 (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.3).

Reading the chariot from left to right, there is only one chariot illustrated and four men standing in front of the chariot. The chariot is pulled by two horses. The horses are standing directly behind one another, with their legs, tails and heads showing, allowing for the distinguishing between the two. The horses are harnessed to the chariot and the driver of the chariot is using reins to steer the horses. The horse depicted closest to the front is decorated on its front quarters only with a type of breastplate, extending down from the neck, across the front of the chest, over the shoulders to the ribs and under the chest. The breastplate extends to the horse's ribs with tassels attached to a disk. Both of the horses are shown wearing bridles with poll decorations. Their ears cannot be seen due to the poll decorations. The horses are being held and led by a male depicted in front of them. He is shown holding reins attached to the lower part of the bridles, close to the cheekpieces. The horses' tails are kept long, however, tied in the middle above the hock. It has been illustrated that the first horse is a stallion, as a penile sheath is depicted.

There is only one rider in the chariot and he is the driver. The driver is holding the reins separately in each of his hands and he is holding a whip in his right hand. The driver is illustrated with a beard, shoulder length hair and a short sleeved tunic of unknown length. The chariot is equipped with a spear protruding from the back, as well as two quivers with arrows on the side.

The male depicted directly in front of the horses is holding the horses' reins with his right hand. He is wearing a short sleeved knee length tunic and belt, with an embroidered hem and has a beard and shoulder length hair. He is depicted with a sword, as well as a strap crossing over his right shoulder and chest. He is illustrated without sandals and his feet are slightly apart. Additionally he is depicted as the shortest of all the standing figures in the register, reaching chest height in comparison to the male depicted next to his right.

The last group of figures consist of three men. From left to right, the first of the three men is illustrated wearing a short sleeved full length tunic with a belt, sash and an embroidered hem. He has shoulder length hair, no beard and is illustrated with sandals. His right arm is bent and he is holding a mace in front of his stomach. His left hand is lifted up in front of him and he



is holding an umbrella above the male depicted in front of him. His feet are depicted slightly apart from each other.

The next male is depicted with a beard, shoulder length hair, short sleeved full length tunic which is embroidered at the hem and sleeves. The tunic also has an embroidered cloth draped around it. Furthermore, the male is shown wearing a polos and he is holding a bow in his left hand and arrows raised in front of him in his right hand. An open winged bird with a male figure shown inside the bird is depicted above him to the right.

The last of the group of figures is standing facing the others, who are all looking towards the right hand side of the register. The last male is illustrated with a similar tunic as the others, full length with an embroidered hem. He also has a sash crossing over his chest from his left shoulder. He has a beard a shoulder length hair and a strap tied around his head. His right hand is open and raised in front of him, while his left arm is held at his stomach in the sash crossing over his chest. Only one foot has been illustrated and it is shown wearing a sandal.

*5.6.1.2 The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124548)*



Figure 5.12: The upper register from panel B7 (Meuszynski 1981 Tafel 2.3).



The upper register consists of three sections. From left to right the first section has been illustrated as a circular object, which has been split into four sections. In each of the sections there are figures illustrated busy with a task.

The middle section of the register involves four horses, as well as a worker. The horses are depicted in front of a structure, which has three pillars with emblems on top and the pillars are joined at the top. The horses are standing in two separate groups; the first group closest to the front has three horses together. The fourth horse is illustrated further back and the worker is with the horse. The first three horses are positioned around a tall cylindrical object. There are two horses to the left and right of the object, with their heads bent down towards it. The third horse is standing close by, however this horse is looking back over its shoulder. Only the legs and head of this horse can be seen, as it is behind the horse on the left hand side of the cylindrical object. The two horses adjacent to this object have been depicted rather similarly, the heads are bent down, ears are forward, front legs are parted and back legs are only slightly parted. The horses' tails have been kept long and it is unclear if the tails have been tied in the middle. The manes are shown and kept in a natural state. The horse on the right has been depicted as a stallion, as a penile sheath is depicted.

The last horse, illustrated above and slightly behind the first group, is shown standing with its legs together, head and tail both held up and ears pointing forward. The horse has a rope around its neck, which the worker is holding onto. The worker is standing next to the horse's right shoulder and is holding the horse with his left hand, while his right arm is extended over the horse's back, holding an object which is a thin, long and sphere shape. The worker is illustrated wearing a knee length kilt, a conical helmet and shoulder length hair.

To the right of the horses is the last section of the register. It consists of two groups, depicted above and below each other. In front of the lower group and next to the horses, is the tallest of all the figures. He is illustrated with a short sleeved full length tunic, which has a belt and embroidered sash crossing over his chest. He has shoulder length hair as he is holding a spear in his right hand and his feet are parted. He is facing towards the right. Directly in front of him are four men standing next to each other facing towards the left and they have been illustrated standing in similar poses. The men are all wearing short sleeved full length tunics

with belts, have shoulder length hair and beards. Their feet are slightly parted and only their left arms and hands can be seen, which are all placed close to the men's hips. Behind these men is an archer, holding his bow over his shoulder and in his left hand and his arrows are held in front of him in his right hand. He is wearing a short sleeved knee length tunic, a conical helmet and has shoulder length hair and a beard. His feet are parted.

Above this group are three men. The first two are facing towards the right, while the last one is facing towards the left. The first man is illustrated with his feet parted, shoulder length hair and a beard and he is wearing a short sleeved knee length tunic and belt. The tunic is embroidered at the hem. He is holding a spear in both his hands and he is pointing it up towards the head of the man standing next to him.

The last two men, illustrated facing each other, are both wearing knee length tunics which are embroidered at the hem. Both the men are also wearing animal skins, with their heads covered with the heads from the animal skins. The animals seem to be feline and the skins, which are draped over the men's backs like cloaks, are illustrated with dots. The man on the left has his right hand raised and he is touching the raised left arm of the man in front of him, who is holding a whip in his right hand. Both the men are illustrated standing with their feet apart.

## 5.6.2 Iconographical Analysis

### 5.6.2.1 *The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124549)*

The horses and their body language:

The two horses are shown parallel to one another, both with the same body language. Their heads are both facing the front and are held upright, which shows that the horses are focused, as well as curious, about what is happening in front of them (Williams 2013; Equus 2007: 28). Their tails, of which one can be seen clearly, are held up which is also a sign of the horses being focused and curious (Equus 2007:28). Furthermore, though the tail is left long, the tail

is tied, or knotted, just above the hock. The horses are depicted in the walking gait, as their front and back legs are illustrated as parted and the front and back left legs are extended forwards (Pickeral 2001:98; Williams 2013).

The horses' tack:

The horses are both wearing bridles, which consist of a noseband, cheekpieces, brow band, throatlatch and decorative headpiece. The headpieces are further decorated with a poll decoration, which is broken into numerous different sections and is standing upright in a crest-like shape. The poll decoration was usually made out of feathers or horsehair and was set in a semi-circular mount (Madhloom 1969: 14; Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 126). The mount was made out of a 'an arched metal fixture that usually appears to run from [the] back to [the] front across the poll' (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 126). The cheekpiece splits into three separate pieces at the mouth. There are no clear indications of reins attached to the noseband or mouth area. The first horse also has two nape straps, one just below the head and the other lower down the neck. The horses are led by a soldier in front of them, who is holding onto reins coming from the bridles.

The breastplate starts high on the horse, on the lower part of the horse's neck. It consists of various sections, the first from the top being one strap which runs horizontally across the horse's neck. From this strap there are three main straps which are joined together to form the girth. From the girth there is a strap around the front of the chest, which has decorative tassels, and behind a disk with three tassels is also attached to the girth. The disk and tassels are placed on the horse's shoulder. The reins, which the driver of the chariot is holding, are attached to straps located at the withers.

The horses are harnessed to a chariot, which has only one rider illustrated in it. Only one wheel of the chariot is shown in this scene, as the chariot is depicted from the left side. The wheel has six spokes.

5.6.2.2 *The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124548)*



Figure 5.13: Horses from the upper register of panel B7, ME 124548  
(The British Museum).

According to The British Museum website the circular object to the left of the register is an aerial view of an Assyrian camp (2013; cf. Reade 1999:41). The circle represents the wall of the camp, while the lines splitting the circle into four sections signify roads running through the camp. The workers are demonstrating daily activities such as preparing food and one individual may be a priest busy with divination (The British Museum n.d.c).

Though it is unclear in the line drawings, the horses are all shown wearing bridles. The horses are shown standing around a cylindrical object with their heads bent down towards it; this could be either a feeding or watering trough. Both the horses with their heads bent towards the trough have their ears pointing forward and their tails are held up slightly. This indicates

that the horses are in a relaxed state, but they are also curious, most likely about what is in the feeding trough (Williams 2013; Equus 2007: 28).

The third horse in the group illustrated at the feeding trough, has its head and neck facing backwards. This horse is either depicted scratching its back, or it is resting its head on the withers of the horse next to it. According to Vavra, when a horse rests its head on another horse's back it is a sign of friendship (1979: 148).

The last horse, which is removed from the group, is the only horse with tack. The horse is not wearing a bridle, but a simple rope around its neck which the worker is holding while he is busy with the horse. This horse is standing with its head held up, ears upright and forward, front and back legs together and tail relaxed. The position of the legs indicate that the horse is standing still and not planning on moving at any point soon, his ears, head and tail are all signs of a horse which is relaxed (Williams 2013; Equus 2007: 28). The worker is illustrated busy grooming the horse.

### 5.6.3 Iconographical Interpretation

#### *5.6.3.1 The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124549)*

The horses, chariots and riders are depicted in typical Assyrian style, as explained in section 5.2.3.1 of this chapter. The men depicted in front of the horses include Ashurnasirpal II and members of his court. Ashurnasirpal II is illustrated wearing the royal polos, as well as the tunic which is covered by an embroidered shawl (Madhloom 1969: 66-67). Furthermore, there is a winged disk positioned above Ashurnasirpal II, which is a symbol of the divine (Magen 1986:54; Benzel et al 2010:30). The figure behind Ashurnasirpal II's purpose is to keep him shaded with the umbrella which he is holding, while the male depicted in front of Ashurnasirpal II is one of the high ranking officers from his army, leading the procession of captured slaves from the lower registers of panels B6 and B5 (Madhloom 1969:13, 67-68).

### 5.6.3.2 *The Upper Register* (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124548)

This register is a scene illustrating an Assyrian military camp (Meuszynski 1981: 21; The British Museum n.d.c). The horses in this register are the first to be relaxing and eating in a camp, while one is being groomed. Horses need to be groomed in order to keep them 'clean and healthy; it also stimulates circulation, keeps [the] horse looking good, and can help to build a relationship between the [horse and owner]' (Pickeral 1999: 44). This register illustrates that the Assyrians took care of their horses and the horses show signs of content behaviour.

## **5.7 Relief B8 (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124547 & 124546)**

### 5.7.1 Pre-iconographical Description

Lower Register:

*Height: 1.02m*

*Width: 2.14m*

(Meuszynski 1981:21)

Upper Register:

*Height: 0.93m*

*Width: 2.14m*



5.7.1.1 *The Lower Register* (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124547)



Figure 5.14: The lower register from panel B8 (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.3).

The lower register is illustrated with two chariots depicted in front of a city wall. Both chariots are harnessed with two horses. The horses are standing directly behind one another, with their legs, tails and heads showing, allowing for the distinguishing between them. The horses are harnessed to each of the chariots and the drivers of the chariots are using reins to steer the horses. The drivers are standing and holding the reins in both hands. The drivers both have shoulder length hair and beards. The drivers are wearing short sleeved tunics with belts, the length is not shown. The chariots are equipped with a spear behind in the driver, as well as a bow and arrows and the second chariot from the left has also been equipped with a standard. The horses depicted closest to the front are decorated on their front quarters only with a type of breastplate, extending down from the neck, across the front of the chest, over the shoulders to the ribs and under the chest. Both horses have discs which have tassels attached to them depicted on their ribs. All of the horses are shown wearing bridles. The horses' ears are pricked up and pointing forwards and their tails are kept long, but are tied in the middle. The horses' legs are illustrated apart from each other, with the left front and back legs extending forwards. All four hooves of each horse are touching the ground. The second chariot's horses are being led by a soldier, depicted in front of the horses with his right hand holding onto the horses' reins. The chariots are all facing towards the right hand side of the register.

The city wall behind the horses has only one level, with three separate towers. Between the first and second tower there are two figures standing on the wall, with their hand in front of their chests and their palms facing upwards. Both of the figures are looking down towards the chariots in front of the wall. Between the second and third tower there is only one figure, illustrated in the same position as the first two figures. There are two more figures illustrated next to the third tower, the first one's hands are pointing in the direction of the chariots, while the figure is facing the person to the right, while the last figure is illustrated in the same position as the first three.

5.7.1.2 *The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124546)*



Figure 5.15: The upper register from panel B8 (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.3).

There is only one chariot illustrated in this panel with two riders in it. The chariot shows three horses illustrated directly behind each other, with their legs, tails and heads allowing for the distinguishing of the three. The front of the chariot is facing the right hand side of the register. The horses are harnessed to the chariot and the driver of the chariot is using reins to steer the horses. The driver is standing and holding the reins in both his hands and he is also holding a whip in his left hand. The driver is behind an archer and only the driver's face, beard and arms can be seen. From his arms it can be noted that he is wearing a short sleeved tunic. The archer has his bow and arrow aimed directly in front of him, with the bow in his left hand. The archer has shoulder length hair, no beard and is wearing a short sleeved tunic



with a belt as well as a sash crossing over his chest from his right shoulder to his left hip. The chariot has a spear as well as two quivers with arrows hanging from the sides.

The horse depicted closest to the front is decorated on its front quarters only with a type of breastplate, extending down from the neck, across the front of the chest, over the shoulders to the ribs and under the chest. The breastplate extends to the horse's ribs with tassels attached to a disk. All three of the horses are shown wearing bridles. The horses' front legs are raised in the air and their back legs are on the ground. The horses' ears are pricked up and pointing forwards. The tails are kept long, however tied in the middle. It has been indicated that the horse in front is a stallion, as a penile sheath is depicted. There is an open winged bird depicted above the horses. Furthermore a figure has been shown lying under the horses. This person is depicted with a beard, shoulder length hair and a belt, no tunic or kilt is illustrated. The chariot, the riders and the horses are depicted as larger than the other figures in the register.

There are two archers shown behind the chariot. The archers are depicted above each other and both of them have their bows and arrows aiming towards the left hand side of the register, away from the chariot. The archer directly behind the chariot is shown wearing a knee length tunic and he has shoulder length hair and a beard. A bag with arrows is strapped across his chest and he is shown with a sword protruding from behind his back. His legs are parted and facing forwards, however his upper body is turned around as he is aiming his bow and arrow behind him. The second archer, depicted above the first archer, is shown kneeling on his right knee and is facing towards the left of the register with his bow and arrow aiming in the same direction.

There are seven more figures illustrated in front of the chariot. The first of the figures is directly in front of the horses. He is shown with a beard and shoulder length hair and is wearing a knee length kilt and belt, and is holding a bow in his left hand. His feet are apart and he is looking back towards the horses' heads. His right hand is extending upwards towards the bridles. Next to him, on the right hand side, is another archer. He is illustrated with a beard, shoulder length hair and is wearing a knee length tunic with a belt. He also has a bag with arrows strapped in front of his chest and though his parted feet are facing forwards

to the right, he is aiming the armed bow towards the chariot behind him. To the right of this archer are two smaller figures. The first, to the left, is illustrated standing over the second figure, who is depicted sitting on the ground. The first figure has shoulder length hair and is wearing a knee length kilt and a conical helmet. He has his left hand on the lower figure's head and his right hand is holding the other person's fist. The lower figure is depicted with shoulder length hair and a beard.

Above the group of men are three more figures. The first figure, from the left, is shown in a falling position. He is depicted laying on his side, with his right leg bent and his foot close to his hip, while his left leg is only slightly bent. His arms are stretched out to his sides and there is a bow illustrated under his left hand side. He has shoulder length hair, a beard and is wearing a knee length kilt and a belt. To the right of him are two more figures interacting. The first one, who is illustrated to the left, is wearing a short sleeved knee length tunic, a conical helmet and has shoulder length hair and a beard. He is bending down on his right knee and both he and the figure next to him are holding onto a spear (Madhloom 1969:52). The last figure is also illustrated in a bending position and he is facing the soldier behind him while he is also holding onto the spear. He is illustrated with shoulder length hair, a beard and is wearing a knee length kilt and belt.

## 5.7.2 Iconographical Analysis

### 5.7.2.1 *The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124547)*

The first chariot and its horses:

The horses and their body language:

The two horses are shown parallel to one another, both with the same body language. Their heads are both facing the front and are held upright, which shows that the horses are focused, as well as curious, about what is happening in front of them (Williams 2013; Equus 2007: 28).

Their tails, of which one can be seen clearly, are held up which is also a sign of the horses being focused and curious (Equus 2007:28). Furthermore, though the tail is left long, the tail is tied, or knotted, just above the hock. The horses are depicted in the walking gait, as their front and back legs are illustrated as parted and the front and back left legs are extended forwards (Pickeral 2001:98).

The horses' tack:

The horses are both wearing bridles, which consist of a noseband, cheekpieces, brow band, throatlatch and decorative headpiece. The headpieces are further decorated with a poll decoration, which is broken into numerous different sections and is standing upright in a crest-like shape. The poll decoration was usually made out of feathers or horsehair and was set in a semi-circular mount (Madhloom 1969: 14; Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 126). The mount was made out of 'an arched metal fixture that usually appears to run from [the] back to [the] front across the poll' (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 126). The cheekpiece splits into three separate pieces at the mouth. There are no clear indications of reins attached to the noseband or mouth area. The first horse also has one nape strap, just below the head. Lower down on the neck is a twisted strap.

The breastplate starts high on the horse, on the lower part of the horse's neck. It consists of various sections, the first from the top being one strap which runs horizontally across the horse's neck. A semi-circular strap is illustrated crossing over the horse's withers and joining this strap is a central strap which crosses over the horse's shoulder and front of its chest. This strap splits into a semi-circular strap is shown on the front of the chest. Three straps join the central strap and form the girth. From the girth is a strap which crosses over the lower chest and is decorated with tassels. Lastly there is a disk with three tassels shown on the horse's shoulder. The reins, which the driver of the chariot is holding, are attached to straps located at the withers and continue to the horse's mouthpiece at the bridle.

The horses are harnessed to a chariot, which has only one rider illustrated in it. Only one wheel of the chariot is shown in this scene, as the chariot is depicted from the right side. The

wheel has six spokes and one tyre. The side of the chariot shows that the floor piece of the chariot is straight and the front panel is straight. However, the front of the top of the chariot is at a slightly lower angle and the left hand corner is rounded. The bow shaped piece which extends from the back of the horses' breastplates is attached to the chariot at the top of the front piece. On the side of the chariot are two quivers which have the tips of arrows showing at the open ends of the quivers. A spear is also shown protruding from the back of the chariot. At the bottom of the chariot there is a pole which extends forward between the horses' legs. The pole is attached to a section protruding from the bottom of the chariot and curves upwards before extending between the horses.

The second chariot and its horses:

The horses and their body language:

The two horses are shown parallel to one another, both with the same body language. Their heads are both facing the front and are held upright, which shows that the horses are focused, as well as curious, about what is happening in front of them (Williams 2013; Equus 2007: 28). Their tails, of which one can be seen clearly, are held up which is also a sign of the horses being focused and curious (Equus 2007:28). Furthermore, though the tail is left long, the tail is tied, or knotted, just above the hock. The horses are depicted in the walking gait, as their front and back legs are illustrated as parted and the front and back left legs are extended forwards (Pickeral 2001:98).

The horses' tack:

The horses are both wearing bridles, which consist of a noseband, cheekpieces, brow band, throatlatch and decorative headpiece. The headpieces are further decorated with a poll decoration, which is broken into numerous different sections and is standing upright in a crest-like shape. The poll decoration was usually made out of feathers or horsehair and was set in a semi-circular mount (Madhloom 1969: 14; Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 126). The

mount was made out of a 'an arched metal fixture that usually appears to run from [the] back to [the] front across the poll' (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 126). The cheekpiece splits into three separate pieces at the mouth. There are no clear indications of reins attached to the noseband or mouth area. The first horse also has one nape strap, just below the head. Lower down on the neck is a twisted strap. The horses are led by a soldier in front of them, who is holding onto reins coming from the bridles.

The breastplate starts high on the horse, on the lower part of the horse's neck. It consists of various sections, the first from the top being one strap which runs horizontally across the horse's neck. A semi-circular strap is illustrated crossing over the horse's withers and joining this strap is a central strap which crosses over the horse's shoulder and front of its chest. This strap splits into a semi-circular strap is shown on the front of the chest. Three straps join the central strap and form the girth. Lastly there is a disk with three tassels shown on the horse's shoulder. The reins, which the driver of the chariot is holding, are attached to straps located at the withers and continue to the horse's mouthpiece at the bridle.

The horses are harnessed to a chariot, which has only one rider illustrated in it. Only one wheel of the chariot is shown in this scene, as the chariot is depicted from the left side. The wheel has six spokes and one tyre. The side of the chariot shows that the floor piece of the chariot is straight and the front panel is straight. However, the front of the top of the chariot is at a slightly lower angle and the left hand corner is rounded. The bow shaped piece which extends from the back of the horses' breastplates is attached to the chariot at the top of the front piece. On the side of the chariot are two quivers which have the tips of arrows showing at the open ends of the quivers. A spear is also shown protruding from the back of the chariot. At the bottom of the chariot there is a pole which extends forward between the horses' legs. The pole is attached to a section protruding from the bottom of the chariot and curves upwards before extending between the horses.

### 5.7.2.2 *The Upper Register* (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124546)

The chariot and its horses:

The horses and their body language:

The three horses are shown parallel to one another, all with the same body language. Their heads are all facing the front and are held upright, which shows that the horses are focused, as well as curious, about what is happening in front of them. Their ears are pointing forwards, indicating that the horses are focused (Vavra 1979:34; Pickeral 2001:24; Equus 2007: 28). Their front legs are all lifted into the air while their back legs are on the ground, which indicates that they are in the process of rearing (Williams 2013; Equus 2007:28). However, due to the person shown laying under the horses, it could be argued that the horses were in the process of jumping over him. Their tails, of which one can be seen clearly, are held up which is also a sign of the horses being focused and curious (Equus 2007:28). Furthermore, though the tail is left long, the tail is tied, or knotted, just above the hock. In proportion to the rest of the panel, the horses, chariot and riders are larger than the men on the ground ahead of them.

The horses' tack:

The horses are all wearing bridles, which consist of a noseband, cheekpieces, brow band, throatlatch and headpiece. The headpieces are further decorated with a poll decoration, which is broken into numerous different sections and is standing upright in a crest-like shape. The cheekpiece splits into three separate pieces at the mouth. There are no clear indications of reins attached to the noseband or mouth area. The first horse also has one nape strap, midway down its neck.

The breastplate starts high on the horse, on the lower part of the horse's neck. It consists of various sections, the first from the top being one strap which runs horizontally across the horse's neck. A semi-circular strap is illustrated crossing over the horse's withers and joining

this strap is a central strap which crosses over the horse's shoulder and front of its chest. This strap splits into a semi-circular strap is shown on the front of the chest. Three straps join the central strap and form the girth. Lastly there is a disk with three tassels shown on the horse's shoulder. The reins, which the driver of the chariot is holding, are attached to straps located at the withers and continue to the horse's mouthpiece at the bridle.

The horses are harnessed to a chariot, which has two soldiers riding in it. Both of the soldiers are standing upright. The driver, positioned behind the other soldier, is holding the two rein straps in each of his hands. The driver is also holding a whip in his left hand. The second rider is holding a bow and arrow and is aiming directly ahead of himself.

Only one wheel of the chariot is shown in this scene, as the chariot is depicted from the left side. The wheel has six spokes and one tyre. The side of the chariot shows that the floor piece of the chariot is straight and the front panel is straight. However, the front of the top of the chariot is at a slightly lower angle and the left hand corner is rounded. The bow shaped piece which extends from the back of the horses' breastplates is attached to the chariot at the top of the front piece. On the side of the chariot are two quivers which have the tips of arrows showing at the open ends of the quivers. A spear is also shown protruding from the back of the chariot. At the bottom of the chariot there is a pole which extends forward between the horses' legs. The pole is attached to a section protruding from the bottom of the chariot and curves upwards before extending between the horses.

### 5.7.3 Iconographical Interpretation

#### 5.7.3.1 *The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124547)*

The horses, chariots and riders are depicted in typical Assyrian style, as explained in section 5.2.3.1 of this chapter. The lower register forms part of the narrative described in the lower registers of panels B7, B6 and B5. The chariots from B8 are returning to the Assyrian city where Ashurnasirpal II is (B6). The figures standing on top of the city wall are women welcoming the victorious soldiers back to safety.

### 5.7.3.2 *The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.8; BM ANE 124546)*

The horses, chariots and riders are depicted in typical Assyrian style, as explained in section 5.2.3.1 of this chapter.

Furthermore, in this register we see the chariot under attack from the enemies (Meuszynski 1981: 21). The horses are shown striking out at the enemy, as the soldier in front of the horses is trying to block the horses' attack with his arm. The horses are also trampling the enemy, as can be seen with the fallen soldier laying under the horses. The bird shown above the horses is a vulture, as explained in section 5.2.3.1 of this chapter.



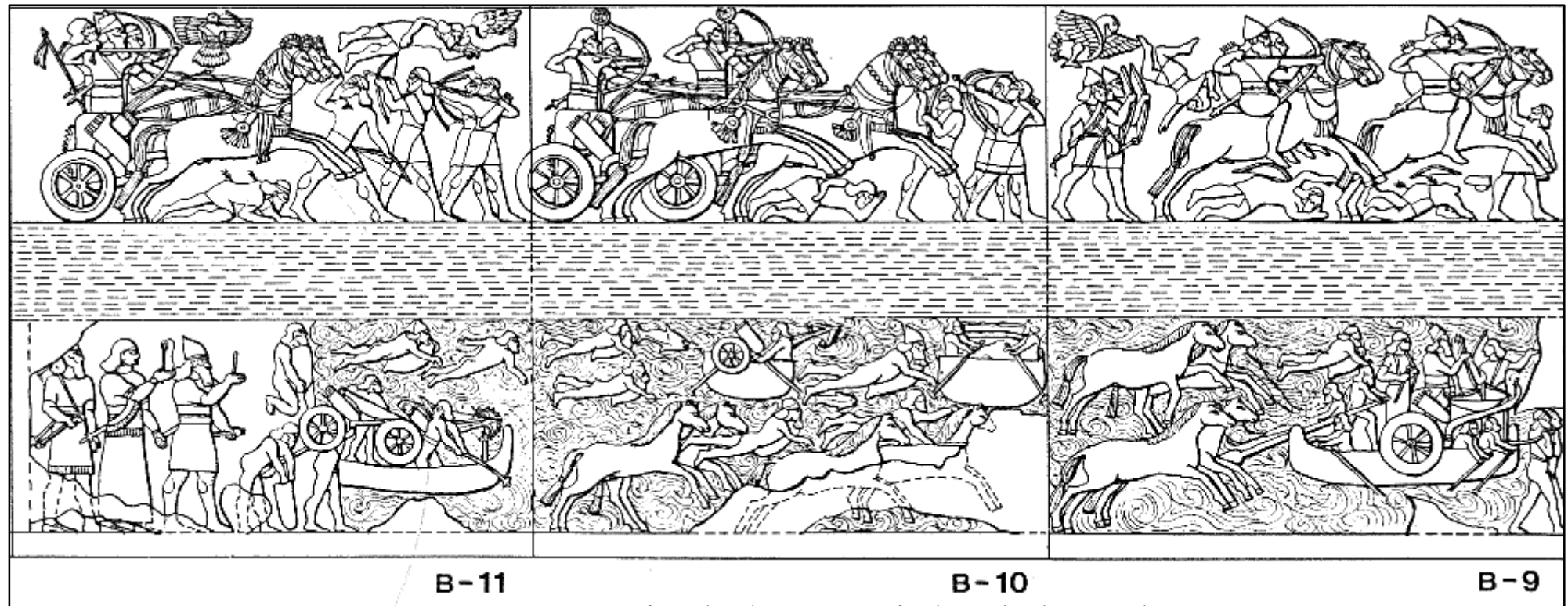


Figure 5.16: Panels B9, B10 and B11 from the Throne Room of Ashurnasirpal II's North-West Palace (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.2).

## 5.8 Relief B9 (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124545 & 124544)

### 5.8.1 Pre-iconographical Description

Lower Register:

*Height: 0.98m*

*Width: 2.14m*

(Meuszynski 1981:21)

Upper Register:

*Height: 0.93m*

*Width: 2.14m*

#### 5.8.1.1 The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124545)



Figure 5.17: The lower register of panel B9 (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.2).

The lower register is illustrated with figures as well as horses swimming across a river (Meuszynski 1981:21). The figures are moving from the left hand side towards the right. Therefore, starting from the left there are four horses depicted in the river. The horses are shown in pairs, with the second illustrated behind the first horse. The two pairs are illustrated above and below each other.

The first pair of horses, illustrated below the others, have been depicted parallel to each other, only the front legs, neck, head and lower parts of the back legs are shown from the second horse. Neither of the horses have been illustrated wearing any tack. The horses' front legs are

raised, while the back legs are on the ground. Their ears are pointing forwards, their heads are held up and their manes have been kept natural. Their tails, of which only first horse's full tail can be seen, has been left long, but it is tied in the middle above the hock.

The second pair of horses have also been illustrated next to each other; however, they do not display similar body language. The first horse has its bent front left leg raised into the air, while his other legs are on the ground. The front right leg is positioned higher than the back legs. The second horse is illustrated ahead of the first horse. Both of its front legs are raised into the air and are only slightly bent. The horse's back legs are on the ground. Both the horses' manes have been kept natural. Their tails, of which only first horse's full tail can be seen, has been left long, but it is tied in the middle above the hock. There is a lead rope shown around the second horse's neck. The rope is held by one of the male figures illustrated sitting at the back of the boat.

Shown in front of the lower pair of horses is a boat carrying eight figures. Three of the figures are depicted much larger than the other five. In the centre of the boat is a wheel with six spokes. By looking closer one can see that the wheel belongs to a chariot, which is being carried in the boat. There are two quivers illustrated on the side of the chariot.

Two of the three tallest figures in the boat are depicted behind the wheel. The third figure is depicted closer to the front of the boat. All three of these figures are standing. The first of the taller figures has shoulder length hair, and he is wearing a short sleeved full length tunic with a belt as well as a fitted cap and he is carrying a mace in his right hand, holding it slightly in front of him. The second figure, standing inside the chariot, is wearing a polos and has shoulder length hair and a beard. Due to the figure depicted standing in the chariot it is not clear what he is wearing. He is illustrated holding an unarmed bow in his left hand and arrows in his right hand. The bow is held below his hip, while the arrows are held in front of his chest. The last of the tall figures is depicted standing in front of the boat. He has shoulder length hair and is wearing a short sleeved tunic. The length of the tunic is uncertain as he is standing behind an object. His left arm is stretched out ahead of him at shoulder height, with his palm raised upwards. He is holding a bow in his right hand and he is facing towards the back of the boat.

The five smaller figures on the boat are all illustrated with shoulder length hair and are mostly seated at the sides of the boat. Each of them is holding an oar of which the lower half is in the river. Only one of the figures is standing and he is steering the boat. This figure is not wearing any clothing. In front of the boat are two men who are pulling the boat by means of a rope attached to the front of the boat. Both of the men are wearing headbands, as well as a belt. They are also shown in the nude.

The last of the figures depicted in this register is a male who is positioned in front of the higher pair of horses and above the boat and its members. He is shown in a horizontal position and is depicted with a beard and shoulder length hair. He is illustrated in the nude and he is holding an object under his chest.

#### 5.8.1.2 The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124544)



Figure 5.18: The upper register of panel B9 (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.2).

There are four horses illustrated in the upper register. The horses are facing toward the right hand side of the register. The first pair of horses, depicted on the left of the register, have been illustrated parallel to each other. The horses' front legs are raised in the air and their back legs are on the ground. A fallen figure is depicted lying under the horses, with his arms extended over his head and his legs are slightly bent at the knee. He is wearing a knee length

tunic, a headband and there is a bow lying next to his side. The horses' heads are held upright, their eyes seem tense and their ears are pinned back against their heads. Their tails are kept long, but they are tied in the middle. The first horse is a stallion, as a penile sheath is depicted.

The horses are depicted with bridles and both of the horses have riders illustrated on their backs. The reins from the first horse are illustrated running over the back of the horse's neck, towards the second horse. The riders, of which only the first rider can be seen, are positioned just behind the horses' withers. The first rider is holding an armed bow and arrow and he is aiming it directly in front of him. The archer is wearing a short sleeved knee length tunic with a belt, a conical helmet, a beard and shoulder length hair, as well as a quiver with arrows on his back. He is seated with his legs on either side of the horse. Only the face and beard of the second rider is shown.

Behind the first pair of horses are two archers, illustrated parallel to each other. Their legs are parted and they are holding their bows in their left hands, in front of their chests, while the arrows are held in their right hands next to their sides. Both are shown wearing conical helmets, knee length kilts which have embroidery detail, an embroidered sash crossing over their chests. An open winged bird is illustrated above their heads. In front of the archers, above the hindquarters of the first pair of horses, is a male figure shown as if falling from the sky. He is illustrated wearing a short sleeved knee length tunic with a belt and has shoulder length hair and a beard. He is falling head first, with one arm stretch out in front of him and the other bent behind his head. Both legs are bent.

The second pair of horses, depicted on the right hand side of the register, have also been illustrated parallel to each other. The horses' front legs are raised in the air and their back legs are on the ground. A fallen figure is depicted lying under the horses. The figure has been decapitated and he is laying in a crawling position. There are arrows sticking out of his back and upper left leg. He is wearing a knee length tunic and there is a bow lying next to his side. The horses' heads are held upright, their eyes seem tense and their ears are upright and pointing forward. Their tails are kept long, however it is not certain if they are tied in the

middle as the tails are behind the first pair of horses' front legs. The first horse is a stallion, as a penile sheath is depicted.

The horses are depicted with bridles and both of the horses have riders illustrated on their backs. The reins from the first horse are illustrated running over the back of the horse's neck, towards the second horse. The riders, of which only the first rider can be seen, are positioned just behind the horses' withers. The first rider is holding an armed bow and arrow and he is aiming it directly in front of him. The archer is wearing a short sleeved knee length tunic with a belt, a conical helmet and he has no beard and shoulder length hair, as well as a bag with arrows on his back. A sword is shown protruding from his back. He is seated with his legs on either side of the horse. Only the face of the second rider has been illustrated. Directly in front of these horses is a figure illustrated with a beard, shoulder length hair, headband and knee length kilt. He is shown with his legs apart and he is facing the horses behind him while his right hand is pointing up towards the horses' reins.

### 5.8.2 Iconographical Analysis

#### 5.8.2.1 *The Lower Register* (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124545)

All four of the horses are illustrated in the river, thus their actions involved will be to swim and cross the river. Only one of the horses is harnessed with a lead rope around its neck. The rope is held by one of the male figures shown sitting at the back of the boat.

The three horses that have both of their front legs raised would usually have us believe that they are in a striking position, but as they are in water we can assume that they are using their legs to swim. The same can be said for the first horse from the second pair, even though only one of his front legs is in the air. When looking at a horse's body language, when only one leg is raised in such a manner the horse may be pawing or stomping with the leg, which indicates that the horse is bored or impatient. This horse may not have enjoyed crossing the river as much as the others. All of the horses' ears are upright and facing forwards, indicating that the horses are alert and focused on what they are doing (Vavra 1979:34; Pickeral

2001:24; *Equus* 2007: 28). The horses display typical signs of Assyrian horses. Firstly, their manes are left to their natural state (Littauer & Crowel 1979: 112) and their tails are left long and tied at the middle. According to Littauer & Crowel the tails are tied by a cord (1979: 112).

Ashurnasirpal II is shown standing inside the chariot which is shown in the boat and he is wearing a very plain polos, with what could be a tassel on the top of the polos (Madhloom 1969: 74). Furthermore, the chariot has only one wheel showing in this scene, as the chariot is depicted from the left side. The wheel has six spokes. The side of the chariot only shows that the front of the top of the chariot, which is at a slightly lower angle and the left hand corner is rounded. On the side of the chariot are two quivers, which have the tips of arrows showing at the open ends of the quivers.

#### *5.8.2.2 The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124544)*

The horses and their body language:

Both pairs of horses are illustrated with their front legs raised, which represents the horses in a striking position. As there are bodies lying under the horses, one could assume that they were striking at the enemies in front of them. Their heads are extended and the second pair of horses' ears are pointing forwards, which indicates that they are focused on their current situation. The first pair of horses are both illustrated with their ears pinned back against their head, which are signs of an angry and annoyed horse (Vavra 1979:34; Pickeral 2001:24; *Equus* 2007: 28). All four of the horses have tensed eyes, which is also a sign of anger (Williams 2013; *Equus* 2007: 28). Their heads and tails are held up, which indicate horses that are focused (Williams 2013; *Equus* 2007: 28).



The horses' tack:

The horses are all wearing bridles, which consist of a noseband, cheekpieces, brow band, throatlatch and headpiece. The reins are attached to the cheekpieces at the horse's mouth and cross over the horses' withers to the horses illustrated at the back of the pairs. The first pair of horses are illustrated with the strap around its neck, which is the nape strap. The nape strap is situated just below the headband. The cheekpiece is attached to the nape strap. Both pairs of horses have twisted straps illustrated just below the nape straps. All four horses are wearing a decorative breastplate. The breastplates, which are only shown on the two horses illustrated as the front horses of the pairs, consists of one large strap which covers the front of the chest, which has tassels hanging from it. The riders shown are riding bareback, with no saddle cloth secured to the horses.

### 5.8.3 Iconographical Interpretation

#### *5.8.3.1 The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124545)*

The lower register forms part of a greater narrative which has been illustrated in the lower registers of panels B9, 10 and 11. All three the registers in the lower panels are illustrated with various horses, boats and swimmers crossing a river. It is not indicated if the crossing is to or from a military campaign. The chariot shown is characteristic of the time, as explained in section 5.2.3.1 of this chapter.

#### *5.8.3.2 The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124544)*

Assyrian riders were typically depicted riding horses which looked similar to horses pulling chariots, except without the elaborate breastplate and poll decorations (Madhloom 1969: 134). The bridle and bit which were used for the horses being ridden were the same as those used for the chariots (Madhloom 1969: 134). The Assyrian mounted troops worked in pairs, as can be seen in this register. The pair would ride, even at a gallop, side by side and one



would act as the squire while the other was a warrior. The squire would control both the horses, while the warrior would attack the enemy (Madhloom 1969: 134-135; Curtis et al 1995:161). It was only during the reigns of Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.) and Ashurbanipal (668-631 B.C.) that the riding method improved which allowed for the archers to control their mounts as well as use their weaponry at the same time (Curtis et al 1995:161). The bird shown in this register is a vulture, as discussed in section 5.2.3.1 of this chapter.

This register forms part of a greater narrative of a military attack by the Assyrians. The narrative is illustrated in the upper register of panels B8, 9, 10 and 11.

### **5.9 Relief B10 (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124543 & 124542)**

#### 5.9.1 Pre-iconographical Description

Lower Register:

*Height: 0.98m*

*Width: 2.14m*

(Meuszynski 1981:21)

Upper Register:

*Height: 0.93m*

*Width: 2.14m*

5.9.1.1: *The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124543)*

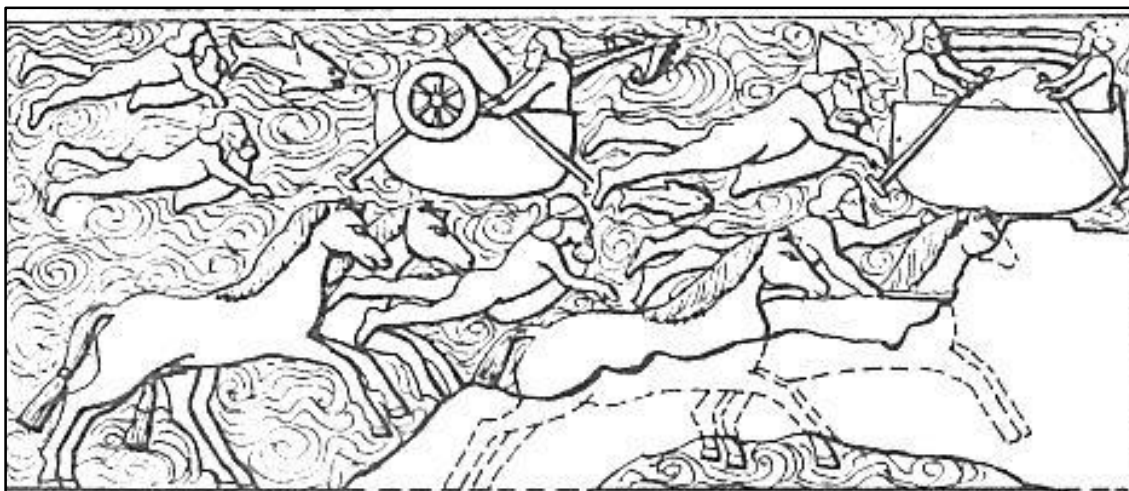


Figure 5.19: The lower register of panel B10 (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.2).

Though the lower register has been damaged in the lower right hand corner, one can still see that the register continues from the same narrative as panels B9 and 11. There are four horses, as well as two boats and four swimmers, all making their way across a river (Meuszynski 1981:21). The horses are shown in pairs, with the second shown behind the first horse. The two pairs are in front and behind each other.

The first pair of horses, in the lower left hand side of the register, have been depicted parallel to each other, only the front legs, neck, head and lower parts of the back legs are shown from the second horse. Neither of the horses are wearing any tack. The horses' front legs are raised, while the back legs are on the ground. Their ears are pointing forwards, their heads are held up and their manes have been kept natural. Their tails, of which only first horse's full tail can be seen, has been left long, but it is tied in the middle.

The second pair of horses are shown in the lower right hand side of the register. The second horse of the pair, behind the first horse, is shown ahead of the first horse. However, it is unclear how the horses' legs were depicted, as this part of the register has been damaged.

Their ears are pointing forwards, their heads are held up and their manes have been kept natural. There is a swimmer holding onto the second horse's mane.

Four swimmers are depicted in the register: two above the first pair of horses, one in front of the first pair of horses and one above the second pair of horses. All of the swimmers are in the nude and they are all holding inflated objects under their chests. A fish is shown swimming in front of the second swimmer depicted above the first pair of horses.

The first of the two boats crossing the river has been depicted above the first pair of horses' heads. The boat has one occupant, shown with a beard and shoulder length hair. He is holding two oars and there is a wheel with six spokes illustrated on the side of the boat. The second boat is illustrated in the top right hand corner of the register. Two men with shoulder length hair and beards are sitting in the boat, both with oars in their hands.

*5.9.1.2 The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124542)*



Figure 5.20: The upper register of panel B10 ME 124542  
(The British Museum).

There are two chariots in this panel, three figures in front of the chariots and one figure under the second chariot's horses. Starting from left to right, the first chariot shows three horses shown directly behind each other, with their legs, tails and heads allowing for the distinguishing of the three. The horses are harnessed to the chariot and the driver of the chariot is using reins to steer the horses. The driver is standing and holding the reins in both his hands. The driver is behind an archer and only the driver's face, beard and arms can be seen. From his arms it can be noted that he is wearing a short sleeved tunic. The archer has his bow and arrow aimed directly in front of him, with the bow in his left hand. The archer has shoulder length hair, a beard and is wearing a short sleeved tunic with a belt as well as a sash crossing over his chest from his right shoulder to his left hip. The chariot has two quivers with arrows hanging from the sides. Additionally, the chariot is depicted with a standard, which is placed in the front corner, next to the archer. The standard was usually placed inside the cart and tied to the yoke with a rope or a bar to ensure that it is kept upright (Madhloom 1969: 13). It would usually consist of a disc decorated with sacred emblems (Madhloom 1969: 13).

The horses from the first chariot have their front legs lifted into the air. All three horses are shown with bridles and are steered by means of reins. The horses are all looking in the same direction, towards the front, or right hand side of the register. It is unclear which way their ears are pointing, as they are depicted with decorative headpieces. The horse to the front of the relief is portrayed with extra throat pieces which seemed to be attached to the bridle. This horse is further decorated with a breastplate, which covers the front of its chest, across the ribs extending over towards the flank with a tassel, and going down to the underside of the chest. It is also indicated that the horse shown to the front is a stallion, as a penile sheath is depicted. Their tails are kept long, however, they have been tied in the middle. The horse's mane is kept natural, as it is laying down across the horse's neck to the right. The horses have their back legs on the ground, while their front legs are raised in the air, just below the bellies of the horses from the second chariot.

The second chariot is behind the first chariot's horses, though the chariot is ahead of the first. Not much can be seen of the chariot, except for the wheel, which has six spokes, as well as the bottom of the chariot. As with the first chariot, there are three horses harnessed to the

chariot. The driver is standing behind an archer, who has his bow armed and aimed directly ahead of him, with the bow in his left hand. A soldier is depicted in line with the arrow. This soldier facing backwards, towards the archer, has his right hand raised up in the air. The soldier is standing in the third chariot. The archer is wearing a short sleeved tunic, of which the length is not clear, with a belt and a sash crossing over his chest from his right shoulder to his left hip. He has a beard and shoulder length hair. The chariot has a standard, which is behind the archer.

The horses from the second chariot have their front legs lifted into the air. All three horses are shown with bridles and are steered by means of reins. There are circular objects on the cheekpieces, close to the horse's eye. The horses are all looking in the same direction, towards the front. It is unclear which way their ears are pointing, as they are depicted with decorative headpieces. The horse to the front of the relief is portrayed with extra throat pieces which seem to be attached to the bridle. There is also another strap shown around the horse's neck, which is illustrated as circular objects. This horse is further decorated with a breastplate, which covers the front of its chest, across the ribs extending over towards the flank with a tassel, and going down to the underside of the chest. The horses' tails are kept long; however, they have been tied in the middle. Only the back of the horse's mane is displayed, as it is hanging down to the left hand side. The horses have their back legs on the ground and their front legs are raised in the air; however, their legs are raised slightly lower than the horses from the first chariot. Under the horses' bellies is a fallen male figure with shoulder length hair and a beard, wearing a short sleeved knee length tunic.

In front of the second chariot's horses are three archers. The first archer is depicted behind the horses' front legs. His legs are separated and facing towards the right hand side of the register, however, he is facing backwards towards the horses and his arms are held out in front of his chest and face towards the horses. He is holding an unarmed bow in his left hand. The other two archers also have their feet facing towards the front and their legs are separated, however they are facing back towards the horses and have their armed bows aiming at the horses' heads. All three archers are shown with beards, shoulder length hair and knee length kilts.

## 5.9.2 Iconographical Analysis

### 5.9.2.1 *The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124543)*

All four of the horses are shown in the river, thus their actions involved will be to swim and across the river. None of the horses are harnessed to any of the soldiers or the boat in the register.

The first pair of horses that have both of their front legs raised would usually have us believe that they are in a striking position, but as they are in water we can assume that they are using their legs to swim. All of the horses' ears are upright and facing forwards, indicating that the horses are alert and focused on what they are doing (Williams 2013; Equus 2007: 28). The horses display typical signs of Assyrian horses. Firstly, their manes are left to their natural state (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 112) and their tails are left long and tied at the middle. According to Littauer and Crouwel the tails are tied by a cord (1979: 112).

### 5.9.2.2 *The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124542)*

The first chariot and its horses:

The horses and their body language:

The three horses are shown parallel to one another, all with the same body language. Their heads are all facing the front and are held upright, which shows that the horses are focused, as well as curious, about what is happening in front of them. It is unclear in which direction their ears are pointing. Their front legs are all lifted into the air while their back legs are on the ground, which indicates that they are in the process of rearing (Williams 2013; Equus 2007:28). Their tails, of which one can be seen clearly, are held up which is also a sign of the horses being focused and curious (Equus 2007:28). Furthermore, though the tail is left long, the tail is tied, or knotted, just above the hock. In proportion to the rest of the panel, the horses, chariot and riders are larger than the men on the ground ahead of them.

The horses' tack:

The horses are all wearing bridles, which consist of a noseband, cheekpieces, brow band, throatlatch and headpiece. The headpieces are further decorated with a poll decoration, which is broken into numerous different sections and is standing upright in a crest-like shape. The cheekpiece splits into three separate pieces at the mouth. There are no clear indications of reins attached to the noseband or mouth area. The first horse also has one nape strap, which runs from the poll down across the upper part of the neck, as well as a twisted strap midway around its neck.

The breastplate starts high on the horse, on the lower part of the horse's neck. It consists of various sections, the first from the top being a piece which runs horizontally across the horse's neck. From the neck piece two pieces are placed horizontally in circular, or semi-circular as shown, shapes across the front of the chest and over the withers. The reins are attached to the circular piece, which crosses over the withers, and are held by the driver on the chariot, as well as a bow shaped piece which connects the breastplate to the chariot. From the first piece which runs horizontally across the horse's neck, there are two straps which run vertically down the horse's chest and form part of the girth. A horizontal strap is attached to the one girth piece and it runs across the front of the chest, with five separate pieces hanging vertically from the cross strap. From the circular piece which stretches over the withers is another strap crossing over the ribs and towards the belly of the horse. In the middle of this strap is a large disk, with three tassels.

The horses are harnessed to a chariot, which has two soldiers riding in it. Both of the soldiers are standing upright. The driver, positioned behind the other soldier, is holding the two rein straps in each of his hands. The driver is also holding a whip in his left hand. The second rider is holding a bow and arrow and is aiming directly ahead of himself.

Only one wheel of the chariot is shown in this scene, as the chariot is depicted from the left side. The wheel has six spokes and one tyre. The side of the chariot shows that the floor piece



of the chariot is straight and the front panel is straight. However, the front of the top of the chariot is at a slightly lower angle and the left hand corner is rounded. The bow shaped piece which extends from the back of the horses' breastplates is attached to the chariot at the top of the front piece. On the side of the chariot are two quivers which have the tips of arrows showing at the open ends of the quivers. At the bottom of the chariot there is a pole which extends forward between the horses' legs. The pole is attached to a section protruding from the bottom of the chariot and curves upwards before extending between the horses. Furthermore, the chariot is fitted with a standard, which is placed between the archer and the driver.

The second chariot and its horses:

The horses and their body language:

The three horses are shown parallel to one another, all with the same body language. Their heads are all facing the front and are held upright, which shows that the horses are focused, as well as curious, about what is happening in front of them. It is unclear in which direction their ears are pointing. Their front legs are all lifted into the air while their back legs are on the ground, which indicates that they are in the process of rearing (Williams 2013; *Equus* 2007:28). Their tails, of which one can be seen clearly, are held up which is also a sign of the horses being focused and curious (*Equus* 2007:28). Furthermore, though the tail is left long, the tail is tied, or knotted, just above the hock. In proportion to the rest of the panel, the horses, chariot and riders are larger than the men on the ground ahead of them.

The horses' tack:

The horses are all wearing bridles, which consist of a noseband, cheekpieces, brow band, throatlatch and headpiece. The headpieces are further decorated with a poll decoration, which is broken into numerous different sections and is standing upright in a crest-like shape. As shown on the horse in front, a circular disk is placed on the area in which all the bands cross. There is also a triangular patch next to the eyes. There are no clear indications of reins



attached to the noseband or mouth area. The first horse also has two nape straps, one which runs from the poll down across the upper part of the neck and the other which is a twisted or pleated strap which is situated on the lower part of the neck.

The breastplate starts high on the horse, on the lower part of the horse's neck. It consists of various sections, the first from the top being a piece which runs horizontally across the horse's neck. From the neck piece two pieces are placed horizontally in circular, or semi-circular as shown, shapes across the front of the chest and over the withers. The reins are attached to the circular piece, which crosses over the withers, and are held by the driver on the chariot, as well as a bow shaped piece which connects the breastplate to the chariot. From the first piece which runs horizontally across the horse's neck, there are two straps which run vertically down the horse's chest and forms part of the girth. A horizontal strap is attached to the one girth piece and it runs across the front of the chest, with numerous separate pieces hanging vertically from the cross strap. From the circular piece which stretches over the withers is another strap crossing over the ribs and towards the belly of the horse. In the middle of this strap is a large disk, with three tassels.

The horses are harnessed to a chariot, which has two soldiers riding in it. Both of the soldiers are standing upright. The driver, positioned behind the other soldier, is assumed to be holding the two rein straps in each of his hands. The positions of his hands are unclear, as the horses from the first chariot are depicted in front of the driver. The second rider is holding a bow and arrow and is aiming ahead.

Only one wheel of the chariot is shown in this scene, as the chariot is depicted from the left side. The wheel has six spokes and one tyre. The side of the chariot shows that the floor piece of the chariot is straight and the front panel is straight. However, the front of the top of the chariot is at a slightly lower angle and the left hand corner is rounded. The bow shaped piece which extends from the back of the horses' breastplates is attached to the chariot at the top of the front piece. On the side of the chariot are two quivers, which have the tips of arrows showing at the open ends of the quivers. At the bottom of the chariot there is a pole which extends forward between the horses' legs. The pole is attached to a section protruding from the bottom of the chariot and curves upwards before extending between the horses.

Furthermore, the chariot is fitted with a standard, which is placed between the archer and the driver.

### 5.9.3 Iconographical Interpretation

#### *5.9.3.1 The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124543)*

The lower register forms part of a greater narrative which is in the lower registers of panels B9, 10 and 11. All three the registers in the lower panels are illustrated with various horses, boats and swimmers crossing a river. It is not indicated if the crossing is to or from a military campaign. The horses display typical signs of Assyrian horses as explained in section 5.2.3.1 of this chapter.

#### *5.9.3.2 The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124542)*

The horses from both chariots are shown with elaborate headdresses which are characteristic of the time, as described in section 5.2.3.2 of this chapter. The first horse from- the first chariot is decorated with only one nape strap (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 127). Furthermore, the horse is depicted wearing a breastplate, which consists of several complicated straps. The decorative strap which covers the ribs consists of a circular plate, which was most probably made of metal and has three tassels attached to it. The disc itself was usually decorated with a sacred emblem (Madhloom 1969: 15). Furthermore, the chariots and riders are depicted in typical Assyrian style, as explained in section 5.2.3.1 of this chapter.

The first horse from the second chariot is decorated with only one nape strap and one twisted or pleated strap. As previously mentioned, this twisted strap represents a necklace of beads (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 127). Furthermore, the horse is depicted wearing a breastplate, which consists of several complicated straps. The decorative strap which covers the ribs consists of a circular plate, which was most probably made of metal and has three tassels attached to it. The disc itself was usually decorated with a sacred emblem (Madhloom 1969: 15).

## 5.10 Relief B11 (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124541 & 124540)

### 5.10.1 Pre-iconographical Description

Lower Register:

*Height: 0.98m*

*Width: 2.14m*

(Meuszynski 1981:21)

Upper Register:

*Height: 0.93m*

*Width: 2.14m*

#### 5.10.1.1 The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124541)



Figure 5.21: The lower register of panel B11 (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.2).

In this register, though damaged on the bottom left corner, no horses have been depicted, however, it forms part of the greater narrative of the registers in panels B9 and 10. Shown in the register are three tall figures to the left hand side, next to the river. There is only one boat depicted close to river's edge. There are two nude men swimming above the boat, one with an inflatable sack. Furthermore, one other nude male is illustrated at the edge of the river, holding onto the inflatable sack, while two more are shown next to the boat. The nude men are all illustrated with shoulder length hair and beards. There are two wheels with six spokes illustrated on the boat, as well as two men in the boat, one holding an oar while the other one is between the two wheels.

The taller figures on the side are all facing towards the river. The two leading figures are illustrated with their right hands in front of them, each holding a straight object, while their left arms are slightly in front of their hips. Only the first and last men have beards, while all three are illustrated with shoulder length hair. The first and last men are both wearing short sleeved knee length tunics; the last one's embroidered at the hem, while the central male is illustrated in a full length tunic with an embroidered belt and sash. The male closest to the river is also illustrated with a conical helmet.

5.10.1.2 *The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124540)*



Figure 5.22: The upper register of panel B11 (Meuszynski 1981:Tafel 2.2).

Starting from right to left, there are three horses pulling a chariot. The horses are standing directly behind one another, with their legs, tails and heads showing, allowing for the distinguishing between the three. The horses are harnessed to the chariot and the driver of the chariot is using reins to steer the horses. The horse depicted closest to the front is decorated on its front quarters only with a type of breastplate, extending down from the neck, across the front of the chest, over the shoulders to the ribs and under the chest. The breastplate extends to the horse's ribs with tassels attached to a disk. All three of the horses are shown wearing bridles. The horses' front right legs and right back legs are raised in the air, ahead of the left

front and back legs which are all on the ground. The horses' ears are not illustrated as their bridles have been decorated with headpieces. The tails are kept long, however tied in the middle. A sun disk has been depicted above the horses, with an armed archer inside. A fallen figure is depicted lying under the horses. The figure is lying in a crawling position. There are arrows sticking out of his back.

There are three riders in the chariot. The driver is only partly illustrated, as he is depicted behind the first two riders. The driver is holding the reins separately in each of his hands and he is holding a whip in his right hand. The driver is illustrated with a beard. The second rider, who is depicted in the middle of the three, is shown holding a bow and arrow. He is depicted with a beard, shoulder length hair, a polos and a short sleeved tunic. The third rider is depicted at the back of the chariot, and he is also aiming an armed bow. This rider is also shown with a beard and shoulder length hair. The chariot is equipped with a spear protruding from the back, as well as two quivers with arrows on the side.

In front of the chariot's horses are four archers. Each of the archers has been illustrated with their legs apart, wearing knee length tunics and headbands, and they have also been depicted with beards and shoulder length hair. All of the archers are facing backwards toward the horses and the three furthest from the horses have their armed bows aiming at the horses. The archer closest to the horses, standing behind the horses' front legs, has his right hand raised towards the horses' heads. Above the archers is a figure illustrated laying on his side, with a bird next to his head.

### 5.10.2 Iconographical Analysis

#### *5.10.2.1 The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124541)*

According to Meuszynski, this register depicts the loading of the royal chariot onto the boat, in order to cross the river (1981:21). This register also presents the start of the journey across the river for the Assyrians.

### 5.10.2.2 *The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:21 ; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124540)*

The horses and their body language:

The three horses are shown parallel to one another, all with the same body language. Their heads are all facing the front and are held upright, which shows that the horses are focused, as well as curious, about what is happening in front of them. It is unclear in which direction their ears are pointing. Their front legs are all lifted into the air while their back legs are on the ground, which indicates that they are in the process of rearing (Williams 2013; Equus 2007:28). Their tails, of which one can be seen clearly, are held up which is also a sign of the horses being focused and curious (Equus 2007:28). Furthermore, though the tail is left long, the tail is tied, or knotted, just above the hock. In proportion to the rest of the panel, the horses, chariot and riders are larger than the men on the ground ahead of them.

The horses' tack:

The first horse is decorated with only one nape strap and one twisted or pleated strap. As previously mentioned, this twisted strap represents a necklace of beads (Littauer & Crowell 1979: 127). Furthermore, the horse is depicted wearing a breastplate, which consists of several complicated straps. The decorative strap which covers the ribs consists of a circular plate, which was most probably made of metal, which has three tassels attached to it. The disc itself was usually decorated with a sacred emblem (Madhloom 1969: 15). The breastplate starts high on the horse, on the lower part of the horse's neck. It consists of various sections, the first from the top being two straps which run horizontally across the horse's neck and join a semi-circular strap which is on the lower part of the neck. The reins are joined to this strap and are held by the driver in the chariot. Under the first two straps which run horizontally is another strap, which also joins the semi-circular strap to which the reins are attached. This strap, which is the lowest across the chest, has numerous tassels hanging from it. There is a disk placed on the shoulder of the horse, which is attached to the

lowest strap and has a strap extending over the withers. Three large tassels extend from this disk.

The horses are harnessed to a chariot, which has three riders illustrated in it. Only one wheel of the chariot is shown in this scene, as the chariot is depicted from the right side. The wheel has six spokes and one tyre. The side of the chariot shows that the floor piece of the chariot is straight, the front panel is straight; however, the front of the top of the chariot is at a slightly lower angle and the left hand corner is rounded. The bow shaped piece which extends from the back of the horses' breastplates is attached to the chariot at the top of the front piece. On the side of the chariot are two quivers, which have the tips of arrows showing at the open ends of the quivers. A spear is also shown protruding from the back of the chariot. At the bottom of the chariot there is a pole which extends forwards between the horses' legs. The pole is attached to a section protruding from the bottom of the chariot and curves upwards before extending between the horses.

### 5.10.3 Iconographical Interpretation

#### *5.10.3.1 The Lower Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124541)*

The lower register forms part of a greater narrative which has been illustrated in the lower registers of panels B9, 10 and 11. All three the registers in the lower panels have been illustrated with various horses, boats and swimmers crossing a river. It is not indicated if the crossing is to or from a military campaign.

#### *5.10.3.2 The Upper Register (Meuszynski 1981:21; Fig. 5.15; BM ANE 124540)*

The horses, chariots and riders are depicted in typical Assyrian style, as explained in section 5.2.3.1 of this chapter.



The first archer in this chariot is Ashurnasirpal II. He is recognised by the garments he is wearing. Ashurnasirpal is shown wearing a very plain polos, with what could be a tassel on the top of the polos (Madhloom 1969: 74). A winged disk is positioned in front of Ashurnasirpal II which is a symbol of divinity as previously mentioned (Magen 1986:54; Benzel et al 2010:30). The bird shown in this register is a vulture carrying the enemy, as discussed in section 5.2.3.1 of this chapter.

The third rider, or '*shalshu-rakbu*', served to protect the king (Madhloom 1969:13). During battles, such as the one depicted in this panel, the third rider would shield the king from attackers, or in this case he is also attacking the enemy soldiers with his bow and arrows (Madhloom 1969: 13).

### 5.11 Recurring themes

Throughout the reliefs there are commonalities between the horses, tack, chariots and figures illustrated. One of the first commonalities to be noticed is how the horses are depicted parallel to each other, especially in registers where the Assyrians were leading a military campaign or where they were part of a parade. It could be argued that the Assyrians depicted their horses in such a manner in order to illustrate the horses' discipline, order and structure. The few exceptions where the horses are shown outside of the military environment, such as the horses feeding at camp (Relief B7, the upper register), we were able to catch a glimpse of their natural behaviour as they were shown eating and even interacting with each other socially. The Assyrians were able to capture horses' body language in their depictions, which helped to set the tone of the register.

The chariots and horses' tack were all consistent, illustrating the latest of war faring technology of that time. The Assyrian chariots were all depicted the same, using wheels with six spokes, extra archery equipment attached to the sides and spears for close combat or standards which . The same can be said of the Assyrian soldiers, who were mostly illustrated wearing short sleeved knee length tunics, conical helmets as well as shoulder length hair and



beards. This uniformity serves to illustrate, the same as the horses, the Assyrian army's discipline, order and structure.

Ashurnasirpal II was consistently depicted in the same manner in the reliefs that were studied. The king was either adorned with the royal polos, embroidered tunic or had a man in a winged disk hovering above him to indicate that the gods were protecting him.

### **5.12 Summary**

The focus of this chapter was to undertake a complete analysis of nine reliefs from Ashurnasirpal II's North-West Palace. Each of the reliefs were depicted with horses, which along with the chariots and other war equipment related to the horses, were studied at three different levels of analysis, following Panofsky's Theoretical Scheme. A brief summary was given of recurring motifs throughout all of the registers.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

King Richard III was not far from wrong with his famous words ‘A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!’ (Shakespeare 2000:354). Horses played an undeniably important role in the history of warfare as well as trade and transportation in not only the Ancient Near East, but on a global scale. Horses were slowly introduced to the Ancient Near East from the steppes of Kazakhstan from 4000 B.C. onwards. Horses were first used for the transportation of heavy goods before they were utilized elsewhere. Horses revolutionised not only transport, but warfare and technology too. By using Panofsky’s theoretical scheme to study nine reliefs from Ashurnasirpal II’s North-West palace in Kalhu, or modern day Nimrud, the role of horses in the Assyrian empire is better understood.

This study undertook to examine the nine reliefs with regard to the following:

Horses:

The study undertook to examine whether their manner of depiction – for example their body language, their gait, size or where they are positioned in relation to any other objects, people or animals in the relief – has any specific or symbolic meaning. It has been deduced that the horses’ body language helped to set the tone of a specific register, as the horses were depicted as intently focused for example the upper register of panel B3, aggressive as in the upper register of panel B4 or relaxed in the upper register of panel B7. Likewise, the horses’ gait also helped to set the tone of the register, a striking horse was linked to aggression, as can be seen in the upper register of panel B8 (Figure 5.8, p.98), and a walking horse was associated with a calmer atmosphere, such as a victory march as can be seen in the upper register of panel B6 (Figure 5.8, p.98).

### Horse Tack:

The equipment which was used was explored; the purpose of the equipment and how it was used. The horses were mostly fitted with bridles, which consists of a noseband, cheekpiece, brow band, throatlatch and headpiece. The bridles were further discussed and included a metal bit, which was guided by two separate reins to control the horses (Littauer & Crouwel 1979:122, 124; Curtis et al 1995:162). Horses were also shown wearing decorative breastplates, which served as armour to protect the horses and also harnessed the horses to the chariots (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 129). Ridden horses used the same bridle and bit as chariot horses, however, they were covered with a saddle cloth (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 134). Decorated equipment was typically shown with artistic motifs such as lotus blossoms (Curtis et al 1995:164). The decorated piece was usually made out of metal, ivory or bone and such pieces included blinkers and discs placed on the bridles or on parts of the breastplates (Madhloom 1969: 15; Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 127; Curtis et al 1995:162).

### General:

There were definite similarities with regard to how the horses were represented between the reliefs, as the Assyrian horses were depicted with set criteria in mind: their manes were kept natural, their tails were left long and tied at the middle (Littauer & Crouwel 1979: 112). The horses were shown parallel to each other in the reliefs, except for the upper register of panel B7 where they were shown eating and relaxing at a camp, as well as the lower registers of panels B9 and B10, where the horses were shown swimming. The depiction of the horses parallel to each other in military based scenes served to illustrate the horses' discipline, order and structure, an important aspect of any army.

Throughout the military exploits and depictions shown in the reliefs from Ashurnasirpal II's throne room of his North-West Palace horses were depicted as part of the success of the campaigns. Therefore it can be reasoned that horses played a vital role in the success of Assyrian warfare.

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