

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE NEO-ASSYRIAN ARMY

AS DEPICTED ON THE ASSYRIAN PALACE RELIEFS, 745–612 BC

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Assyriologists and archaeologists have for long been interested in the study of the history of the Assyrian army.¹ In spite of this, only a few monographic syntheses were written on the Assyrian army.² Generally speaking we know more and more about the military history of Assyria and the details of the structure of the Assyrian army, but a synthesis which covers all the aspects of the problem has not been written. There is a large number of short articles on the Assyrian army, which include general summaries of the topic,³ and articles elaborating certain aspects of the history of Assyrian army. Such aspects are the history of certain campaigns,⁴ the branches of service, e.g. the chariotry,⁵ the supply, reserves and logistics,⁶ weaponry,⁷ and tactical reinterpretation of certain battles of Assyrian military history.⁸ Undoubtedly, the reason of the hundred years of Assyrian military success is hidden in these details. However, little work has been done so far on the reconstruction of the Assyrian army as depicted on the Assyrian sculptures.

There are three major groups of sources which can be used for the reconstruction of the Assyrian army: the written (cuneiform) sources, the archaeological evidence (arms and armour), and the sculptures.

What has already been written on the Assyrian army was mainly based on the analysis of cuneiform sources. The limited number of archaeological evidence in itself makes it impossible to form a concept on the development of arms and armour of the Assyrian army. This archaeological record consists primarily of 30 helmets and fragments (8 pieces of pointed bronze helmets and fragments, 2 pieces of pointed iron helmets, 4 pieces of crested bronze helmets, and 16 fragments of crested iron helmets⁹). Furthermore there is a large amount of bronze and iron armour scales known from the 1st millennium B.C. Near East, and from the Assyrian capitals.¹⁰ The next group of archaeological evidence consists of a 9th century B.C. large bronze shield and several fragments (similar to the much later Greek *hoplon* shields) from Nimrud, now in the British Museum.¹¹ These Assyrian

¹ PANCRITIUS 1904; MANITIUS 1910; HUNGER 1912.

² YADIN 1963; MALBRAN-LABAT 1982; MAYER 1995.

³ SAGGS 1963, 145–154; VON SODEN 1963, 131–144; POSTGATE 2000.

⁴ For example the 8th campaign of Sargon II (714 BC): LEHMANN-HAUPT 1917, 119–151; LIEBIG 1996, 207–210; MAYER 1980, 13–33; MAYER 1983, 65–132; RIGG 1942, 130–138; VERA CHAMAZA 1994, 91–118; VERA CHAMAZA 1995–1996, 235–267; VERA CHAMAZA 1992, 109–128; WRIGHT 1943, 173–186; ZIMANSKY 1990, 1–21.

⁵ DALLEY 1985, 31–48; DALLEY-POSTGATE 1984, 27–47; NOBLE 1990, 61–68.

⁶ BREADLEY 1997, 77–88; FALES 1990, 23–34; FALES 2000, 35–62; MAYER 1979, 571–595.

⁷ HENSHAW 1969, 1–24; POSTGATE 2001, 373–388.

⁸ SCURLOCK 1997, 491–517; SMITH 1994, 229–239.

⁹ DEZSŐ-CURTIS 1991, 105–126; DEZSŐ 2001, 18–55. At least 142 further pieces of Near Eastern (North Syrian, Urartian, Northwest Iranian, Iranian, Caucasian, Hasanlu and Persian helmets) are known. For additional pieces of the armament see: BORN-SEIDL 1995.

¹⁰ DEZSŐ 2004, 319–323.

¹¹ London, British Museum, WA 22484, diam.: 89 cm; WA 22486, WA 22490.

ian shields are the earliest known examples of this type. Similar bronze shields are known from 8th and 7th-century Urartu (Eastern Turkey, Armenia, Northwest Iran).¹² As for the rest of the Assyrian weaponry, there are a few pieces and fragments of swords, spearheads and a large amount of arrowheads. This archaeological record represents undoubtedly an insignificant portion of the hundreds of thousands of mass-produced Assyrian arms and armour, but with the help of the palace reliefs we can reconstruct a fairly coherent picture of the development of the Assyrian army itself. However, important elements missing from the palace reliefs are known from the archaeological finds. For example the details of the decoration of bronze and iron helmets, and the fact that the Assyrian soldiers from the end of the 8th century B.C. wore iron helmets and scale armour in increasing numbers. With the mass-production of iron arms and armour, the Assyrian ironworking industry reached such heights that were not exceeded for hundreds of years.¹³

Our main group of sources from the period in question consists of more than a thousand palace reliefs and fragments from the palaces of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.), Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.), and Assurbanipal (668–631/627 B.C.). There are altogether more than two thousand soldiers represented on these reliefs: 131 on the Nimrud sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III, 227 on the Khorsabad sculptures of Sargon II, 957 on the Nineveh sculptures of Sennacherib, and 699 on the sculptures of Assurbanipal. This database forms the basis of the present article and the further work of the author.

Interestingly, this almost inexhaustible source of information has not yet been examined systematically. There are two cultural historical monographs,¹⁴ which hardly touched upon the question of the Assyrian arms and armour. Yadin's work offered a more detailed analysis, but did not concentrate on the development of the structure and branches of services of the Assyrian army. However, there are several studies which deal with certain aspects of the military scenes depicted on the Assyrian palace reliefs. Such aspects are the study of the representations of campaigns and battles,¹⁵ camp scenes,¹⁶ the depiction of revenge,¹⁷ and the analysis of short explanatory inscriptions.¹⁸ There are altogether four articles which, partly with the help of cuneiform sources, tried to classify the huge amount of soldiers depicted on Assyrian sculptures.¹⁹ A better studied and a relatively independent aspect of the representational evidence are the siege scenes.²⁰ However, these studies concentrate mainly on the technical details of sieges, and not on the reconstruction of arms and armour or branches of Assyrian military service.

Without the discussion of the cuneiform sources, it has to be shown that there is little harmony/agreement between the pictures unfolding from the written sources and from the representational evidence. However, this contradiction is an illusory one, because it derives not from interpretational mistakes but from the different dimensions of the two types of sources. It goes without saying that it is impossible to reconstruct from the sculptures the more than a hundred military ranks and/or military assignments²¹ known from cuneiform sources. It can be reconstructed not more than a figure on the sculptures is an officer, or not. Since the arms and armours of the Assyrian officers is similar (their mace or staff identifies them), it hardly can be decided whether the figure of an officer is a *rab kisri*, a *qurbūtu*, a *ša-šēpi*, a *rab urâte* ('team commander'), *šaknu ša ma'assi* ('prefect of stables'?), or a *mušarkisu* ('recruitment officer'), etc. The thorough examination of more than a hundred representations of officers²² could make this picture more precise, but the break-through between the two interpretational dimensions is hardly conceivable. This examination, however, goes beyond the possibilities of this article, and forms the subject of further research of the author.

¹² PIOTROVSKY 1950, 62; PIOTROVSKY 1952, 51–53; PIOTROVSKY 1955, 26–30; On further Urartian and Northwest Iranian shields: BOYSAL 1967; DINÇOL–DINÇOL 1995, 23–55; BORN 1988, 159–172.

¹³ DEZSŐ–CURTIS 1991, 105–126; DEZSŐ 2001, 33–37, 47–55.

¹⁴ HROUDA 1965; MADHLOOM 1970.

¹⁵ OPITZ 1931–1932, 7ff.; READE 1976, 95–104; FRANKLIN 1994, 255–275; CORDOBA 1997, 7–18; KÄLIN 1999.

¹⁶ GADD 1935, 209–224; PONGRATZ–LEISTEN–DELLER–BLEIBTREU 1992, 291–356.

¹⁷ BLEIBTREU 1991, 52–61; COLE 1997, 29–40.

¹⁸ GERARDI 1995, 31–36.

¹⁹ READE 1972, 87–112; BLEIBTREU 1993, 27–33; POSTGATE 2000, 89–108; POSTGATE 2001, 373–388.

²⁰ BRUNNER 1952–1953, 253–262; BARNETT 1958, 161–164; GUNTER 1960, 103–112; MADHLOOM 1965, 9–15; USSISHKIN 1982; EPH'AL 1984, 60–70; SCURLOCK 1989, 129–131; BLEIBTREU 1990, 37–44; EPH'AL 1997, 49–54.

²¹ According to his attributes the *rab kisir* ('cohort commander') occurs for example in 35, the *qurbūtu/ša qurbūte* ('bodyguard') in 28, and the *ša-šēpi* ('bodyguard') in 14 different versions.

²² There are at least 58 officers of the heavy infantry depicted on the sculptures of Sennacherib, and further 94 on the sculptures of Assurbanipal.

The military scenes on the sculptures, however, give a lot of information which is missing from the cuneiform sources. We can observe the different branches of service of the Assyrian army, the weaponry of the different types of soldiers, and where were made use of their services. We can trace the changes of the weaponry, and the gradual transformation of the Assyrian army. In this paper I intend to present an outline of the structure and development of the Assyrian army (745–612 BC) based on the third group of sources, the Assyrian palace reliefs.

The structure of the Assyrian army was as follows:

Infantry	light infantry	auxiliary archers auxiliary spearmen
	regular infantry	regular archers regular spearmen
	heavy infantry	armoured archers armoured slingers armoured spearmen
	guard	
Cavalry		
Chariotry		

I. INFANTRY

As in the case of other ancient armies, the most important and most numerous part of the Assyrian army was the infantry. As can be seen on the palace reliefs²³ of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.) and on the Balawat Gates²⁴ of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) the Assyrian army of the 9th century B.C. consisted of two arms: regular infantry and heavy infantry. The soldiers of the regular infantry wore pointed bronze helmets, and were equipped with rectangular wicker and wooden shields or rounded bronze shields, spear, bow, and sword. The heavy infantry at this early period consisted of armoured archers. The armoured archers wore scale armours and pointed helmets and fought with or without shield-bearers. The helmets of the 9th century were made of bronze, but the scale armours were made of bronze and of iron as well.²⁵ Soldiers of the regular infantry were probably recruited from the Assyrian peasantry, while the members of the heavy infantry were probably professional soldiers. The composition of the 9th century Assyrian army from the ethnic point of view was almost homogeneous: it consisted mainly of Assyrians.

On the other hand, in the second half of the 8th century, following the extensive conquests of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.), the Assyrian army changed significantly. A lot of new people became Assyrian subjects, and for the defence of the new territories, and for the new conquests, the Assyrian army of the former period became insufficient. From that period onwards a lot of soldiers were recruited or hired as mercenaries from the conquered territories, and were enlisted to the ‘new-model’ Assyrian army. When Tiglath-Pileser III in his 13th–14th *palu* (732 B.C.) defeated Peqah, the king of Israel, he took a number of Israeli soldiers with him to Assyria (see later).²⁶ Sargon II enlisted foreign contingents in his army (*kisir šarrūtiya*) as follows: in the year of

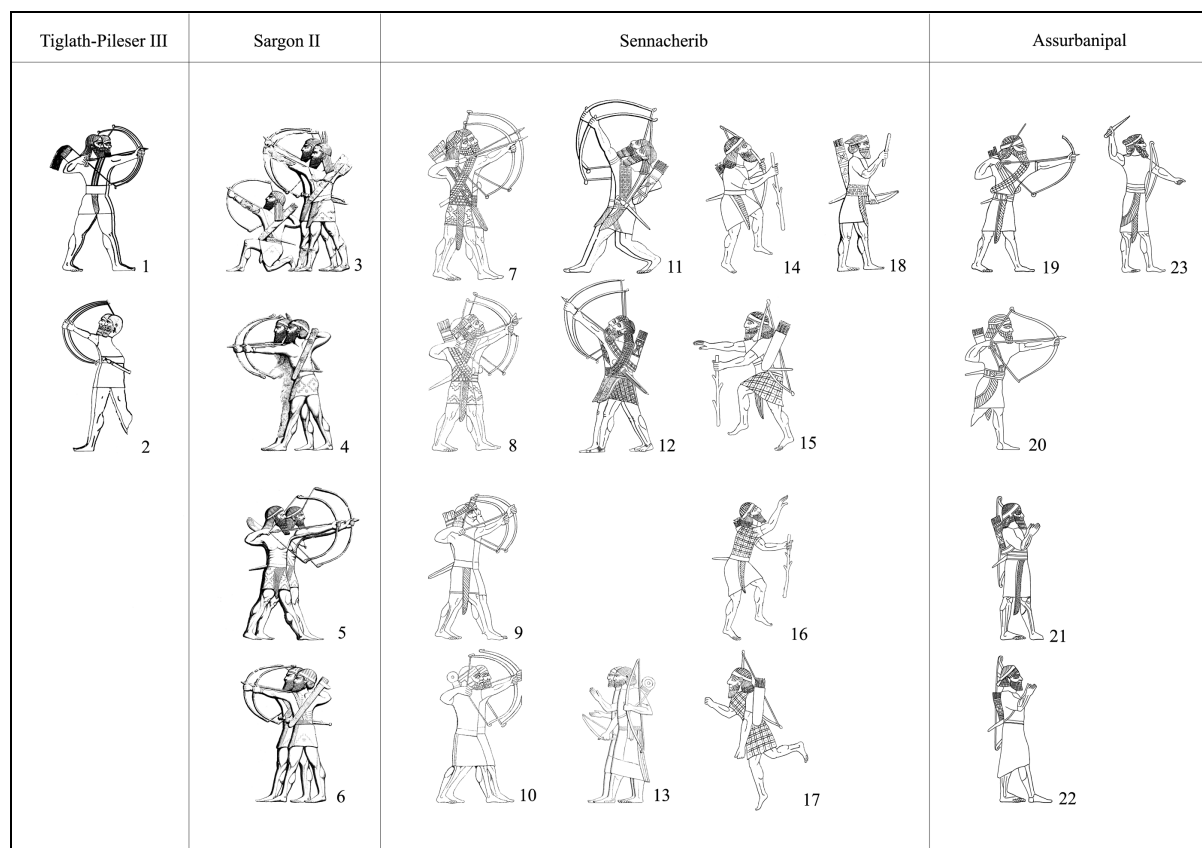
²³ BUDGE 1914.

²⁴ KING 1915.

²⁵ HROUDA 1965, 181 mentioned a fragment of a glazed brick from Ashur with a representation of a helmeted Assyrian soldier on it (Ass. 10756, ANDRAE 1925, pl. 9, no. 9e) as from the reign of

Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243–1207 B.C.). But the bronze helmet (painted yellow), the iron scale armour (painted blue) attached to the rim of the helmet and the characteristic spiked shield dates the scene to the reigns of Ashur-nasir-pal II or Shalmaneser III.

²⁶ TADMOR 1994, Summ. 4: 16’.

Fig. 1. Auxiliary archers (*Itu'a*)

1: Nimrud, Central Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. XXXV (Ser. B. Upper Reg. Slab 15a(?), *Or. Dr.* III. Central I); 2: Nimrud, Central Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. XXI (Ser. B. Upper Reg. Slab 12a, *Or. Dr.* III. Central XXI);

3: Khorsabad, Room V, slab 5. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 89; 4: Khorsabad, Gate H, slab 2. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 77;

5: Khorsabad, Room XIV, slab 1. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 145; 6: Khorsabad, Gate O, slab 1. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 99;

7: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 20; 8: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 20; 9: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 20; 10: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 20;

11: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 79; 12: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 78; 13: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 83;

14: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 70; 15: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 70; 16: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 70; 17: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 70;

18: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 19;

19: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 45; 20: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 45; 21: Nineveh, North Palace. PLACE 1867, pl. 59; 22: Nineveh, North Palace. PLACE 1867, pl. 59;

23: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 26

his coronation (721 B.C.) 50 Samaritan chariots,²⁷ on his 1st campaign, at the North Syrian Qarqar 200 chariots and 600 cavalry;²⁸ on his 5th campaign at Karkemish 50 chariots, 200 cavalry and 3,000 infantry;²⁹ on his 9th campaign at Tabal 100 chariots,³⁰ and on his 13th campaign 20,000 archers and 10,000 slingers and spearmen³¹ from Bīt-Yakin. The armament of the foreign soldiers differed considerably from the traditional Assyrian equipment. The most obvious difference was that the Assyrians always wore pointed helmets, while the foreign (North Syrian and Anatolian) soldiers wore crested helmets. But, on sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III, these foreign soldiers wearing crested helmets appear in the Assyrian army as well. Their equipment consisted of a spear, a sword, a crested helmet, a rounded wicker or wooden shield, a rounded “chest plate” (*kardio phylax*) which was fastened to the chest by two leather bands crossing each other under the chest plate. However, there is a further type of foreign soldier which appears on the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III. These soldiers wore no defensive armour at all, only a head band, and a short skirt or they were equipped only with a bow, a quiver and a short sword. During the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III these foreign contingents became an integrant part of the Assyrian army. It seems, that – in spite of convincing theories for the ethnic affiliation of the two groups³² – with time these two people lost their homogenic ethnic character and became simply the light (auxiliary) infantry of the Assyrian army.

1.1 Light Infantry

1.1.1 Auxiliary archers (Fig. 1.1–23)

The auxiliary archers (archers of the light infantry) appeared first on the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.).³³ Their appearance is characteristic: their long hair is fastened by a headband. They are barefooted, half-naked and wear a short skirt or a short dress. The cloth-pattern of their skirt is characteristic. Their weapons are a bow and a short sword. The band of their quiver (sometimes with a different band) crosses their chest.

There were successful attempts for the ethnic identification of the auxiliary archers.³⁴ On the basis of their equipment they were probably Aramaic semi-nomads. In the cuneiform sources, especially in the royal letters and administrative documents, *Itu'ean* (LÚ.i-tu-'u-a) is the Aramaic tribe whose members appear most frequently in the ranks of the Assyrian army. It seems that this Aramaic tribe provided most of the auxiliary archers of the Assyrian army. The first mention of the *Itu'ean* tribe – living along the middle reaches of Tigris river – in the cuneiform sources is known from the early 9th century B.C. from the reigns of Tukulti-Ninurta II (890–884 B.C.) and Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.).³⁵ However, they appear only on the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.), who conquered the Aramaic tribal territories along the Tigris river.³⁶ While the royal inscriptions never list Aramaic tribes as soldiers of the Assyrian army, the administrative documents mention them frequently as highly prized and probably permanent auxiliary units of the Assyrian army. Their important role is indicated by those letters in which Assyrian governors almost begged to the king to send them *Itu'ean* troops. From these letters it is clear that the auxiliary archers, the *Itu'ean* troops fall under the direct control (and the direct command?) of the Assyrian king, and it was the king who dispatched them to the various provinces of the empire. It seems that they were professional soldiers serving probably all year round. In all probability they received fields for their service from the ruler: Ša-Aššur-dubbu, the governor of Tušhan (an Assyrian border province in Eastern Anatolia) asked Sargon II (721–705 B.C.) as follows: “The king, my lord, should send word that the prefects of the royal *Taziru* and *Itu'u* (troops) holding (fields) here should come and stand guard with me, ...”.³⁷ Another governor, Liphur-Bēl, the governor of Amidi (another Assyrian border province in Eastern Anatolia) wrote to

²⁷ FUCHS 1994, Annales, line 15.

²⁸ FUCHS 1994, Display Inscription, lines 35–6.

²⁹ FUCHS 1994, Annales, line 75.

³⁰ FUCHS 1994, Annales, line 200.

³¹ FUCHS 1994, Annales, lines 409–10.

³² READE 1972, 87–112; POSTGATE 2000, 89–108.

³³ BARNETT–FALKNER 1962.

³⁴ READE 1972, 87–112; POSTGATE 2000, 89–108.

³⁵ A cuneiform tablet found north of Nineveh, at Tell Baqqaq mentions the Utu'āja form. ISMAIL 1989, 61–4.

³⁶ TADMOR 1994, Summ. 1:5; Summ. 2:4; Summ. 7:5; Summ. 11:5; Misc. I, 1:3. From the beginning of his reign till his 17th regnal year Tiglath-Pileser III conquered 15 additional Aramaic tribes.

³⁷ LANFRANCHI–PARPOLA 1990, no. 32 (ABL 138+), 11–16.

Sargon II that, as the king had ordered, the bow field (A.ŠÀ GIŠ.BAN) of the *Itu'ean* prefect was exempt from straw and barley tax.³⁸ Another letter of Liphur-Bēl mentions, that he sent a contingent of *Itu'eans* with the village inspector for logs to the mountains, to Eziat. The village inspector got them moved through by fighting. The deputy of their village inspector and nine of his soldiers were struck down by bow; two of them died. They wounded three enemy soldiers. Furthermore: "The *Itu'eans* of the Palace at my disposal have returned from the Euphrates; They did not go with the Vizier. I have sent for them, but (men) of one or two houses only have come out of the town. Let the king, my lord, write to the sheikhs; they should bring the king's men out jointly, to keep watch with me in Laruba, until we have collected the harvest."³⁹ The term 'bow field' indicates that the *Itu'ean* were really archers, and were exempt from certain taxes. It is known from these letters, that the king exercised direct authority over their settlements. The *Itu'ean* had military commanders (prefect, *šaknu*),⁴⁰ village inspectors and tribal leaders, sheikhs. The prefect (*šaknu*) might have been an Assyrian military official, but the village inspectors and the sheikhs were certainly *Itu'eans*. A fragmentary letter proves that they were stock-breeders: Mannu-ki-Adad, a governor of Sargon II mentioned that according to the order of the king, he bought [ungelded bulls] from the *Itu'eans* with silver.⁴¹ Adda-hati, governor asked for Assyrian or *Itu'ean* settlers from Sargon II to settle them in his province on the steppe⁴² – probably for guarding the desert frontier. This borderguard duty is clearly shown in a letter of Tāb-sill-Ēšarra to Sargon II, which mentions that 100 *Itu'ean* of the governor of Arapha stand guard at Sibtu.⁴³ Further letters emphasize the importance of the *Itu'ean* border guarding service. In another letter of Tāb-sill-Ēšarra, he wrote to the king that he sent his *Itu'eans* over the Euphrates, to stand guard at Sinnu. Ašipā, governor of Tidu wrote to Sargon II as follows: "Of the *Itu'eans* in my country, there is a surplus of 500 men who should have kept watch with me. Why [did they g]o [to] Guzana? Let them release the men to me."⁴⁴ A further, very important, but unfortunately fragmentary letter tells us that the Chief Cupbearer (*rab šaqê*) has a contingent of 3,000 *Itu'eans*, and the unknown writer of the letter probably wants to send an *Itu'ean* contingent to the neighbouring buffer state, Šubria, as well.⁴⁵

A very important aspect of the border security was the building of forts.⁴⁶ Nabû-šumu-iddina wrote Sargon II that he had drawn a sketch of the fort on leather and was herewith sending it to the king. Furthermore he informed the king that there were altogether 50 *Itu'eans* and 30 *Gurreans*, as garrison troops in the fort.⁴⁷ In another letter Il-yada' wrote Sargon II that the magnates had constructed two forts. The magnates had raised 100.000 liter of barley from another fort, while Il-yada' had placed 1,000 liter of salt, 30 jugs of oil, 18 jugs of naphtha, 30 bows, 20,000 [...] arrows, 10,000 arrow-shafts, etc. there. He had appointed his official there accompanied by 100 *Itu'eans* and the *Gurreans* of the Palace. The magnates had constructed another fort at the mouth of the Patti-Illil canal. It's garrison troops consisted of Il-yada's 10 *Gurreans* and his 20 *Itu'eans*.⁴⁸

The *Itu'eans*, however, appeared in the Assyrian army as early as the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.). In 731 B.C., under the Mukin-zēr revolt in Babylonia they fought in Assyrian pay.⁴⁹ A very interesting letter of Qurdi-Aššur-lamur, governor of the Phoenician territories, mentions the *Itu'eans* in their police force capacity. The governor informed Tiglath-Pileser III, that the Sidonians had cut timber in the Lebanon range without permission (they chased the tax inspector away from the customs house). Thereupon the Assyrian governor dispatched the *Itu'ean* contingent into the Lebanon range, who terrorized the people. Afterwards the governor prohibited the Tyrians and Sidonians from delivering the lumber to the Egyptians or Philistines.⁵⁰ This document shows the *Itu'eans*' fearful reputation and the varied possibilities of their employment.

The *Itu'eans* however played a significant role not only in local conflicts, and in guarding the border, but during the military campaigns, as well.⁵¹ A very important letter, the letter of Adad-issiya to Sargon II, lists the

³⁸ LANFRANCHI–PARPOLA 1990, no. 16 (ABL 201), 4–7.

³⁹ LANFRANCHI–PARPOLA 1990, no. 3 (ABL 424).

⁴⁰ FALES–POSTGATE 1992, no. 5 (ADD 857), I:30, II:11.

⁴¹ LANFRANCHI–PARPOLA 1990, no. 238 (ABL 903), R. 1–2.

⁴² SAGGS 2001, 169–171, Nimrud Letter 20 (ND 2437).

⁴³ PARPOLA 1987, no. 97 (ABL 95).

⁴⁴ LANFRANCHI–PARPOLA 1990, no. 21 (ABL 506).

⁴⁵ SAGGS 2001, 124–125, (ND 2488).

⁴⁶ BREADLEY 1997, 77–88.

⁴⁷ FUCHS–PARPOLA 2001, no. 136 (ABL 685).

⁴⁸ FUCHS–PARPOLA 2001, no. 166 (ABL 883).

⁴⁹ SAGGS 2001, 64–66, Nimrud Letter 3 (ND 2700) and 26–28, Nimrud Letter 8 (ND 2663).

⁵⁰ SAGGS 2001, 155–158, Nimrud Letter 12 (ND 2715), lines 3–29.

⁵¹ LANFRANCHI–PARPOLA 1990, no. 277 (CT 53, 305), no. 178 (CT 53, 124): 1000 *Itu'a*.

Assyrian army gathering in the province of Māzāmua. The local contingent consisted of 630 Assyrians, 360 *Gur-reans* and 440 *Itu'eans*. This gathering army was waiting for the contingents of the magnates and provincial governors.⁵²

Though this type of warfare was almost exclusively connected to the *Itu'eans*, some documents mention other Aramaic tribes, as well. It can be assumed that members of these tribes also fought as members of the light infantry, probably as auxiliary archers of the Assyrian army. These tribes are the *Taziru*⁵³ mentioned above, and the *Ruqahu* and *Hallatu*.⁵⁴

It is clear from the royal correspondence that the *Itu'eans* were a mobile force, which could easily be deployed anywhere in the empire. The written sources show them primarily in their border guarding and police force capacity, but the Assyrian palace reliefs prove that the auxiliary archers were active during military campaigns as well. They are shown fighting at sieges, and in the midst of battles, pursuing the enemy, raking a district (mountains or swamps) for fugitives, or escorting captives.

There are altogether 353 auxiliary archers depicted on the Assyrian palace reliefs (Tiglath-Pileser III: 10; Sargon II: 32; Sennacherib: 164; Assurbanipal: 147). We can hardly find two auxiliary archers – with the exception of those who are depicted on the same scene – who wear exactly the same garment, quiver, headband and hair. Further research undoubtedly will show distinct groups according to the differences mentioned above. It is quite possible that these differences in the manner of wearing their hair, in the various types of headbands, in the diverse decoration and shape of the quivers, and in the manifold decoration of the skirts – apart from the changes in fashion in the course of time – show ethnic, tribal, and clan differences. It is not clear whether on the sculptures of subsequent rulers the change in dress of the auxiliary archers can simply be ascribed to the change in fashion, or some other factor. In general terms, however, the sculptures consistently depict the same type of soldier, the auxiliary archer (*Fig. 1.1–23*).

The earliest representations of auxiliary archers can be found on the palace reliefs of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.). These archers (*Fig. 1.1–2*) are the archetype of the later representations. The main difference between the two types (*Fig. 1.1 and 2*) is their hairdo. The first type wears a wide headband, the second does not. Similar auxiliary archers (*Fig. 1.2*) wearing the same type of garment (short dress), but with a fringed trimming, are shown fighting with similar (Chaldean) archers during the siege of a Babylonian town.⁵⁵ The characteristic fringed or tasseled quiver of the first archer could be a tribal characteristic which disappeared on the sculptures of later Assyrian kings.

The auxiliary archers depicted on the sculptures of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.) show a much more coherent picture (*Fig. 1.3–6*). They are half naked with a short skirt (made of a piece of dress material with fringed trimming) around their hip. The characteristic geometric design of the fabric is shown on all the skirts (*Fig. 1.3–6*), and appears even on the palace reliefs of Sennacherib (*Fig. 1.7–8*). This characteristic could show some ethnic/tribal continuity or relation (as is known in case of the *Itu'eans*). However, the manner of wearing their hair divides them into two groups. In the first group the hair (secured by the headband) is hanging down (*Fig. 1.3, 5*), but in the second group the hair is folded up under the headband, and forms a kind of knot (*Fig. 1.4, 6*). This hairdo later appears on an officer of the auxiliary archers (*Fig. 1.18*). It is interesting that all four quivers differ in small details. Furthermore, the quivers of the huge number of auxiliary archers depicted on the palace reliefs of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.) fall into only two types: a traditional (*Fig. 1.7–9, 11–12, 14–18*) and a quiver with a rounded cap (*Fig. 1.10, 13*). The archers with the second type of quiver wear a similar dress, which differs from the garment of the other auxiliary archers. So they are probably not *Itu'eans*. There are further characteristic differences shown on the headbands. In addition to the simple, undecorated headband, a wide headband decorated with a kind of checkered motif becomes widespread. A new type of headband with two long, fringed tassels covering the ears appears on the sculptures of Sennacherib (*Fig. 1.8, 10*). This type of headband is characteristic of the Judaeans shown on the relief depicting the siege of Lachish.⁵⁶ It is interesting that there are auxiliary

⁵² SAGGS 2001, 128–130, Nimrud Letter 89 (ND 2631); LANFRANCHI–PARPOLA 1990, no. 215; POSTGATE 2000, 89–108; FALES 2000, 40–43.

⁵³ LANFRANCHI–PARPOLA 1990, no. 32 (ABL 138+).

⁵⁴ PARPOLA 1987, no. 91 (ABL 94).

⁵⁵ BARNETT–FAKLENER 1962, pls. XXXIII–XXXIV.

⁵⁶ LAYARD 1853b, pl. 20–24.

archers wearing this type of headband fighting in the ranks of the Assyrian army besieging Lachish (*Fig. 1.8, 10*).⁵⁷ This type of headband is shown on bodyguards of the Assyrian king on the Til-Barsip frescoes (*Fig. 5.83*) and on the sculptures of Sennacherib (*Fig. 5.86*).⁵⁸ Another new conspicuous feature are the crossbands on the upper body of the auxiliary archers (*Fig. 1.7–8, 11–12*). One of the bands might be the band of the quiver, but the function of the other is unknown (perhaps a rolled up garment?). The design of the fabric of the bands is similar to the checkered design of the headband. If these bands were made of leather, the design probably shows metal rivets. The same design can be seen on their belts as well, which could be easily made of leather or metal. These characteristics might identify a tribal group for example.

The relative difference between the groups of auxiliary archers is best shown on the Lachish reliefs of Sennacherib mentioned above. There are altogether 40 auxiliary archers represented in the ranks of the Assyrian army besieging the town. They fall in 4 different types (*Fig. 1.7–10*). The simultaneous representation of the 4 types proves that there was more than one ethnic group, tribe or clan of auxiliary archers in the Assyrian army. Most of them might have belonged to different clans of *Itu'ean*s (*Fig. 1.7–9*) or other Aramaic tribes. This simultaneous representation of more than one type on a single relief proves that the differences between the auxiliary archers of the different sculptures of the same king might easily represent real time differences, and not only the changes in dress fashion. It is conceivable that these differences indicate the different army units (*e.g.* cohorts) of auxiliary archers if they were organized into formal military units. It seems however that these units were in all cases based on tribal groups or clans.

The auxiliary archers are frequently depicted in pairs – it means that in formal battles or at sieges they were deployed in formation in large numbers. At the same time there are palace reliefs which show them in their real light infantry capacity, fighting independently, pursuing enemy, raking a district (mountains or swamps) for fugitives, or escorting captives. These are the tasks with which the *Itu'ean*s are brought into connection with in the cuneiform sources.

A very interesting scene of the sculptures of Sennacherib shows auxiliary archers and auxiliary spearmen encamped (?) on a hillside.⁵⁹ The same garment of the auxiliary archers appears in four versions (*Fig. 1.14–17*). In the first version (*Fig. 1.14*) the garment is undecorated, in the second version (*Fig. 1.15*) the skirt is checkered, in the third (*Fig. 1.16*) the “shirt” is checkered, and in the fourth version (*Fig. 1.18*) the whole garment is checkered. The reasons are unknown. The scene does not imply any difference between the soldiers – it is impossible to decide whether the degree of decoration also symbolized the rank of the garment's owner.

There are only a few representations on which *Itu'ean* officers or other leaders can be detected. The auxiliary archer (*Itu'ean*?) officer represented here (*Fig. 1.18*) is escorting captives on one of the sculptures of Sennacherib. His staff shows his rank, but there are further details which prove that he is an officer. Such details are his elaborate belt, his decorated quiver, and his hairdo. He wears a kind of a diadema, and his hair is folded up under this like a headband, and forms a knot. This hairdo differs from that of the other auxiliary archers.

On the palace reliefs of Assurbanipal (669–627 B.C.) the relative variety of the auxiliary archers decreased (*Fig. 1.19–23*). The checkered crossband of one of the auxiliary archers (*Fig. 1.19*) fighting in the battle of Til-Tuba (653 B.C.)⁶⁰ reminds us of the similar crossbands of auxiliary archers on the sculptures of Sennacherib. As has been mentioned, one of the bands holds the quiver, but the other might be a piece of garment wound around the upper body. The other archer (*Fig. 1.19*) fighting in the same battle has a different garment. It is very important, that in close-range fighting the auxiliary archers fought in pairs with auxiliary spearmen (*Fig. 2.42–43*), regular spearmen (*Fig. 3.60–62*) or armoured spearmen (*Fig. 5.81*) as well. The spearman fights with his spear, while the auxiliary archer shoots from behind the big standing shield of the spearman. They cover and protect each other. It seems that after the battle array of the enemy had disintegrated, the Assyrian infantry used this tactic to finish the battle. It seems furthermore that their fighting tactics complemented each other, which increased the efficiency of their combined efforts. In addition to their fighting capacity in battles and sieges, the

⁵⁷ It is an interesting question whether they are Judaeans or Israeli mercenaries fighting against their fellow-countrymen, or not.

⁵⁸ For the possible identification of soldiers wearing this type of headband with Israeli/Judaean soldiers of the Assyrian army see the

chapter on bodyguards.

⁵⁹ LAYARD 1853a, pl. 70.

⁶⁰ LAYARD 1853b, pl. 45–46.

auxiliary archers were undoubtedly used in their other capacity as easily deployable border guards in mountainous regions, police authorities in the provinces, and together with auxiliary spearmen escorting or guarding captives etc.

On the palace reliefs of Assurbanipal the auxiliary archers are depicted in large numbers in processions (Fig. 1.21). It is a new development that the defeated Elamite archers appear in these processions, as well (Fig. 1.22). The Elamite armies consisted of almost exclusively archers, so it is obvious that in case they were enlisted into the Assyrian army, they were hired as archers. The garment of the Elamite archers is characteristic: their garment is longer than the dress of the auxiliary archers of the Assyrian army, it reaches below the knees, and a little bit longer at the back. Their hair is shorter than the hair of the other soldiers. Their simple headband is tied into a knot at the back of their head.

Officers of auxiliary archers appear very rarely on the sculptures of Assurbanipal. Since the auxiliary archer (Fig. 1.23) is wearing similar dress and hairdo as the officer on the palace relief of Sennacherib (Fig. 1.18) it is possible, that this auxiliary archer escorting captives is an officer as well.

1.1.2 Auxiliary spearmen (Fig. 2.24–45)

The auxiliary spearmen of the Assyrian army appear for the first time on the palace reliefs of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.).⁶¹ Their equipment is characteristic: a crested helmet, a rounded wicker or wooden shield (covered with leather, and sometimes reinforced with a metal boss), spear and a sword. Their “armour” is a small rounded “chest plate” (*kardio phylax*) which is fastened to the chest by two leather bands crossing each other. Their garment is a short dress. They are barefooted, sometimes depicted wearing sandals or Assyrian military boots. The most characteristic feature of their armament is the crested helmet.⁶² This type of helmet may disclose the most about the origins of this type of soldier. Only the auxiliary spearmen wear this type, it never appears on the soldiers of the heavy infantry, cavalry or chariotry of the Assyrian army.

The crested helmet probably originated from North Syria and Eastern Anatolia. According to a theory⁶³ it derives from the Late Bronze Age North Syrian and Hittite tradition which survived to the early 1st millennium B.C. North Syrian Neo-Hittite states. The earliest known Iron Age representations are known from the sculptures⁶⁴ of the palace of Katuwash, king of Karkemish (ca. 900–873 B.C.). Variants of the type are known from orthostates from Kültepe⁶⁵ and Zinçirli.⁶⁶ The arena of the further development of this type of crested helmet was not exclusively Karkemish. There are soldiers wearing crested helmets and fighting with (probably Assyrian) soldiers wearing pointed helmets on the early 8th century B.C. Karatepe sculptures as well.⁶⁷ Although the first depiction of this helmet type in Assyrian art is on the palace reliefs of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.), archaeological finds prove that this type was used in Assyria as early as the late 9th – early 8th century B.C. In addition to several representations,⁶⁸ there are two Urartian crested bronze helmets⁶⁹ containing with an inscription of Išpuini, king of Urartu (ca. 830–810 B.C.). Two Assyrian crested bronze helmets can be dated to the same period on the base of stylistic analysis.⁷⁰ An Assyrian crested helmet⁷¹ from the mid-8th century B.C. has a different type of crest which is crescent-shaped (e.g. Fig. 2.27, 30, 39, 40) and not curving forward. One of the best known pieces is the Assyrian crest found at Lachish⁷² from 701 B.C. The first ever known crested iron helmet is represented by 15 iron fragments from at least 3 Assyrian crested helmets from Nimrud.⁷³

The further development of this helmet type can be observed on the Assyrian palace reliefs. The helmet depictions of the Assyrian sculptures show a tendency from the initial formal diversity to the standardization of

⁶¹ BARNETT–FALKNER 1962.

⁶² DEZSŐ 2001, 37–55, Charts 3–4.

⁶³ RITTIG 1994, 247–254; DEZSŐ 2001, 37–39, Charts 1, 3.

⁶⁴ HOGARTH 1914, pls B.2a, B.2b; WOOLLEY 1921, pl. B.26c; WOOLLEY–BARNETT, 1952, pls B.44, B.45, B.46.

⁶⁵ BITTEL, 1976, fig. 321.

⁶⁶ ORTHMANN 1971, 542–543, pl. 59b, 61b.

⁶⁷ ORTHMANN 1971, 491, pl. 16c, pl. XIII, no. 69, 493, pl. 18a, 494, pl. 18f.

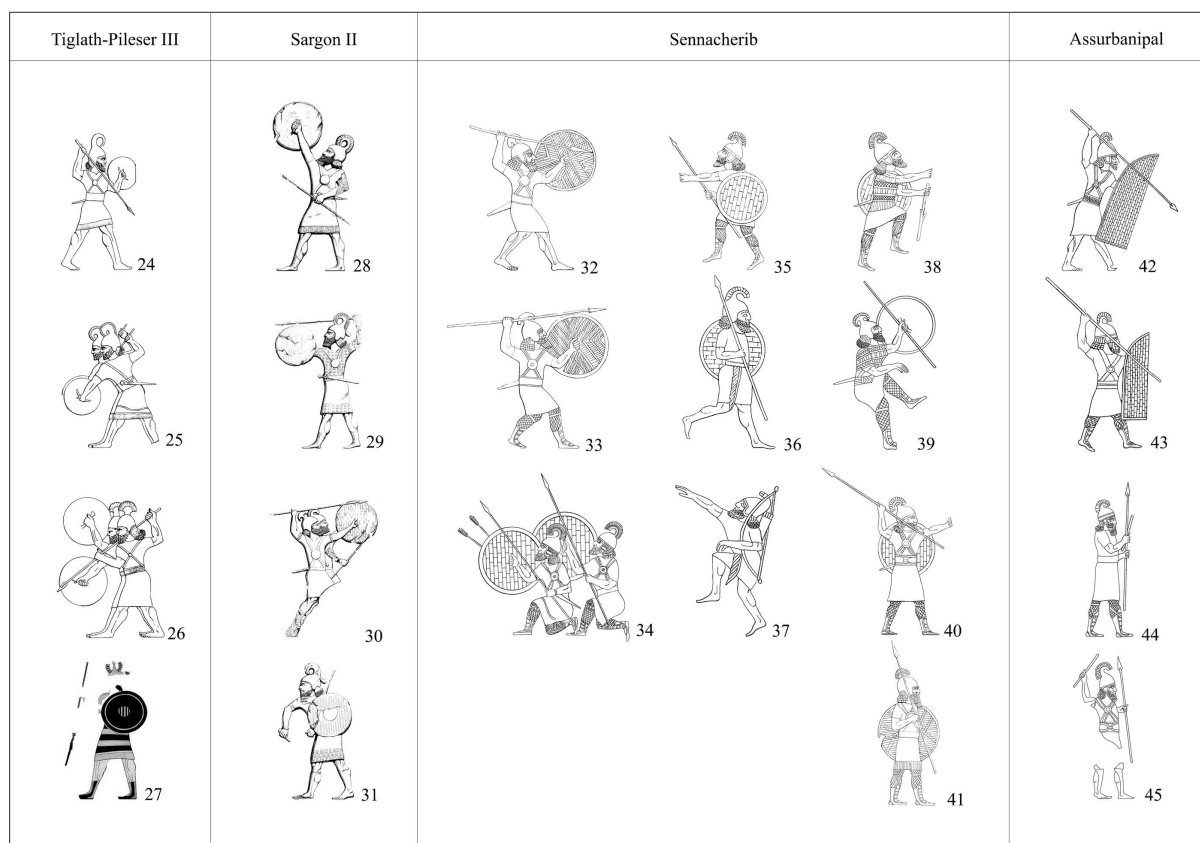
⁶⁸ DEZSŐ 2001, 94–95, Chart. 3, nos 118–119, 120–123.

⁶⁹ DEZSŐ 2001, 94–95, Cat. nos 109–110, pls 109–110.

⁷⁰ DEZSŐ 2001, 37–47, Cat. nos 13–14, pls 18–23.

⁷¹ DEZSŐ 2001, 37–47, Cat. no. 15, fig. 3, pl. 24.

⁷² DEZSŐ 2001, 37–47, Cat. no. 12, pl. 17.

Fig. 2. Auxiliary spearman (*Gurru*)

24: Nimrud, Central Palace. BARNETT-FALKNER 1962, pl. XXXV (Ser. B. Upper Reg. Slab 15a(?), *Or. Dr.* III. Central I);

25: Nimrud, Central Palace. BARNETT-FALKNER 1962, pl. XLI (Ser. B. Upper Reg. Slab 12a, *Or. Dr.* III. Central XXI); 26: Nimrud, S.W. Palace. BARNETT-FALKNER 1962, pl. XC (Ser. B. Upper Reg. Slab 15a(?), *Or. Dr.* III. S.W. XVIII); 27: Til-Barsip, Room XXIV. THUREAU-DANGIN-DUNAND 1936, XLIX.

28: Khorsabad, Room V, slab 10. BOTTA-FALNDIN 1849, pl. 93; 29: Khorsabad, Room V, slab 6. BOTTA-FALNDIN 1849, pl. 90;

30: Khorsabad, Room V, slab 6. BOTTA-FALNDIN 1849, pl. 90; 31: Khorsabad, Room V, slab 6. BOTTA-FALNDIN 1849, pl. 90;

32: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 20; 33: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 20; 34: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 78;

35: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 70; 36: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 69; 37: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 69;

38: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 70; 39: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 75; 40: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 68; 41: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 22;

42: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 45; 43: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 46; 44: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 26; 45: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 26

forms. While there are 10 basic forms of crested helmets shown on the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III, only 6 types remain on the sculptures of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), 12 variants of 4 basic types on the sculptures of Sennacherib (704–608 B.C.), and 9 decorative variants of one single type on the sculptures of Assurbanipal (668–627 B.C.).⁷⁴ The process can be undoubtedly connected to the standardization of the arms and armour of the Assyrian army, a process which started under the reign of Sennacherib and reached its peak during the reign of Assurbanipal.

Not only the Assyrian light infantry, or troops said to be North Syrian allies or associated with Anatolian⁷⁵ or Phrygian⁷⁶ auxiliaries of the Assyrian army, but also their enemies, recruited when defeated as auxiliary units, wore crested helmets.⁷⁷ With their integration into the Assyrian army their weaponry also spread. But, while at the end of the 9th century B.C. – first half of 8th century B.C. the crested helmet indicated the nationality of its wearer (Syrian, Anatolian or Phrygian troops), later, from the reign and army reform of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.) and his successors it simply implied the membership of a special service, the auxiliary spearmen of the Assyrian light infantry. It is easily conceivable, that from the end of the 8th century and during the 7th century onwards soldiers of any nationality could be recruited to the auxiliary spearmen. However there is a theory, which seems to contradict the conclusions outlined above, and maintains that with the help of cuneiform sources – similarly to the *Itu'eans* – it is possible to determine the ethnic character of the auxiliary spearmen.

Assyrian cuneiform sources mention a people called *Gurru* (^{lú}*gur-ru*)⁷⁸ already from the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III. Some scholars argued convincingly that the *Gurreans* are identical with the auxiliary spearmen wearing crested helmets, and depicted on the Assyrian palace reliefs.⁷⁹ However the North Syrian and Southeast Anatolian origin of the crested helmets does not entirely support this theory. Namely, as has been mentioned, there are 15 variants of crested helmets (11 in the Assyrian army and 4 in the ranks of their enemies) represented on the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser.⁸⁰ This fact suggests that this type of helmet can hardly be brought into connection with a single ethnic group. The evolution of this helmet-type is the result of parallel developments which took place in a number of North Syrian and Southeast Anatolian city centres. Furthermore, it is hardly conceivable, that a people of unknown origin⁸¹ (Aramaic or non-Aramaic, nomadic or semi-nomadic) supplied the Assyrian army with auxiliary spearmen (a complete arm of the light infantry), the number of whom could reach tens-of-thousands of soldiers.⁸² Furthermore, the standardization of helmet types (and the complete arms and armour) of the Assyrian army noticeable from the reign of Sennacherib was undoubtedly the result of a centralized army reform, and not of a spontaneous process which took place in a nomadic or semi-nomadic tribe. However, it is possible that the *Gurreans* – if they were a nomadic or semi-nomadic tribe or people – had adopted this characteristically not nomadic type of weaponry in the Assyrian army, and became one of the most numerous groups of auxiliary spearmen.⁸³ It is presumable, that some time after, the unidentifiable *Gurrean* ethnonym lost its original function as a term identifying a people, and started to denote simply a member the auxiliary spearmen unit of the Assyrian army, without any allusion to a supposed ethnic origin.

The picture, emerging from the cuneiform sources is similar to that of the *Itu'eans*. The *Gurreans*, like the *Itu'eans* (auxiliary archers), played an important role in guarding the frontiers of the empire, and were deployed in the provinces probably as arms of the law as well. However it is known from the palace reliefs that they took a prominent part on campaigns and during the sieges as well. A letter from the reign of Sargon II mentioned above lists the contingents of an Assyrian army gathering for an eastern campaign in the province of Māzāmua.

⁷³ DEZSŐ 2001, 47–55, Cat. nos. 16–31, pls 25–43.

⁷⁴ DEZSŐ 2001, Chart 3.

⁷⁵ BARNETT-FALKNER 1962, xix, pls XXXVI, XXXVIII, xxiii, pl. LI.

⁷⁶ BARNETT-FALKNER 1962, xxiii, pl. LII.

⁷⁷ BARNETT-FALKNER 1962, xix–xx, fig. 2:1, pl. XLI (Eastern campaign of Tiglath-Pileser III, 2nd and 9th *palû*); xx–xxiv, fig. 2:2, pl. LI (Anatolian [Phrygian?] campaign of Tiglath-Pileser III, 3rd *palû*); xxii–xxiv, fig. 2:13, pl. LXV (Uartian warrior?), (Uartian campaign of Tiglath-Pileser III, 3rd *palû*) and pl. LXI.

⁷⁸ LANFRANCHI-PARPOLA 1990, 53, 215, 277; FALES-POSTGATE 1992, 5, 115.

⁷⁹ READE 1972, 105–106; POSTGATE 2000, 103–104; FALES 2000, 42.

⁸⁰ DEZSŐ 2001, Charts 3–4, nos 145–159.

⁸¹ POSTGATE 2000, 103.

⁸² From all the soldiers, depicted on the Assyrian sculptures, the percentage of the auxiliary spearmen is as follows: Tiglath-Pileser III: 15.5%; Sargon II: 22.4%; Sennacherib: 22.8%; Assurbanipal: 28.7%.

⁸³ POSTGATE 2000, 104. For further possibilities see FALES 2000, note 33.

In the ranks of the local, provincial units were 360 *Gurreans* and 440 *Itu'eans*.⁸⁴ *Gurreans* are mentioned side by side with *Itu'eans* in those letters from the reign of Sargon II which list the garrisons and equipment stored in three border forts. The garrison of the first fort consisted of 50 *Itu'eans* and 30 *Gurreans*,⁸⁵ the second fort was guarded by 100 *Itu'eans* and the *Gurreans* of the Palace, and in the third fort there were 10 *Gurreans* and 20 *Itu'eans*.⁸⁶ Another Nimrud letter lists the daily stations of a journey along the high road from Kalhu (Nimrud) to Māzamua province. The 9th station is the “fort of *Gurreans*”.⁸⁷ It is unknown whether this fort was a former border fort or a regional *Gurrean* garrison. It is known however that the *Gurreans* owned estates. An administrative cuneiform text lists the name of Barbiri, a *Gurrean* soldier, who got 40 hectares of land in the town of Apiani.⁸⁸ Between two campaign seasons the *Gurreans* were probably based in garrisons and/or villages/towns. One of the letters written by a provincial governor to Sargon II mentions,⁸⁹ that a local lord, Atua had duly set out to join the campaign of the Assyrian king, but had turned back. 40 *Gurreans*, who a year before served the king, and went to Hardi, were disobedient and had not come out from their own territory. Atua said to them: ‘You shall not go. You are my servants.’ The most interesting text is however a long letter⁹⁰ of Aššur-dūr-pānīya (governor of the Assyrian province of Šabirešu, next to the Šubrian border) informs Sargon II, that a commander-of-fifty (*rab hanše*) of the *Gurrean* troops from Meturna, killed the mayor of Meturna. When the expedition came, he took with him 15 *Gurreans* and went away to Urartu. The governor sent after them Il-dalâ, who pursued them till they entered Marhuha, the fort of the Šubrian king. Il-dalâ met the *Gurrean* commander-of-fifty and made a sworn agreement with him. However the commander-of-fifty went after Il-dalâ with 100 Marhuhean hoplites, and attacked him on the road. But the Assyrians were on their guard, none of them got killed, and they wounded the commander-of-fifty, who turned back to Marhuha. The Šubrian king did not hand over the deserters to the Assyrians.

Looking over the written sources it can be established, that the *Gurreans* in contrast to the ethnically identifiable auxiliary archers (*Itu'eans* and other Aramaic tribes) – had no identifiable tribal structure. While the Aramaic auxiliary archers in addition to military commanders (prefect, *šaknu*), had villages, village inspectors and tribal leaders (sheikhs), it seems that the *Gurreans* were organized into regular Assyrian military units. So, it is possible that they were deployed as formal military units, and not as tribal groups under the command of sheiks. Both groups had Assyrian military commanders, the prefects (*šaknu*), but besides this the *Gurreans* had only military officers, for example the commander-of-fifty (*rab hanše*),⁹¹ and no tribal leaders.

Examining the Assyrian palace reliefs we can form an idea about the varied employment of auxiliary spearmen. Auxiliary spearmen appear in the following contexts:

1. As a consequence of its characteristics, the light infantry could easily be deployed in military operations conducted to difficult terrain. Such occasions are fighting battles, or pursuing the enemy in mountainous districts. On the sculptures of Sennacherib, there are some scenes from western campaigns, which show auxiliary spearmen and auxiliary archers raking a mountainous district (perhaps the Lebanon) for runaways (*Fig. 2.35–38*), and fighting the enemy.⁹²

2. Similar raking operations are shown on one of the sculptures of Assurbanipal, on which Assyrians are searching for fugitive Aramaic inhabitants in the Southern Babylonian marshlands. While the fugitive tribesmen are seeking safety in the reeds, the Assyrians are trying to find them on rafts and boats.⁹³

3. The auxiliary spearmen took part of course on formal military campaigns as well. Two series of interesting sculptures of Sennacherib show the whole Assyrian expeditionary army on march. One series of scenes showing the march culminates in a siege, the other in a battle. The structure of the siege scene is as follows: the marching Assyrian army is depicted in two registers. In the lower register from the back there are 3 armoured cavalymen → 12 armoured spearmen in close order → 2 auxiliary spearmen → 4 armoured slingers → 6+1

⁸⁴ SAGGS 2001, 128–130, Nimrud Letter 89 (ND 2631); LANFRANCHI–PARPOLA 1990, no. 215; POSTGATE 2000, 89–108; FALES 2000, 40–43.

⁸⁵ FUCHS–PARPOLA 2001, no. 136 (ABL 685).

⁸⁶ FUCHS–PARPOLA 2001, no. 166 (ABL 883).

⁸⁷ FALES–POSTGATE 1995, no. 14 (ADD 1083).

⁸⁸ FALES–POSTGATE 1995, no. 228 (ADD 918).

⁸⁹ SAGGS 2001, 130–132, Nimrud Letter 43 (ND 2635).

⁹⁰ LANFRANCHI–PARPOLA 1990, no. 53 (ABL 252).

⁹¹ LÚ.GAL–50 ... *ša* LÚ.Gur-ra-a-a: LANFRANCHI–PARPOLA 1990, no. 53 (ABL 252), 4.

⁹² BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, nos 20, 28.

⁹³ BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, no. 340.

armoured archers → the siege, in which several armoured archers (behind siege-shields), auxiliary archers and spearmen are attacking the walls. In the fragmentary upper register there are 9 armoured spearmen in close order → 2 auxiliary spearmen → 4+ armoured slingers. Thus the auxiliary spearmen took a prominent part in sieges, but were depicted as reserve troops as well. The armoured spearmen did not play an active role in sieges.⁹⁴

4. With the help of further siege scenes a more detailed picture of the versatility of auxiliary archers emerges. One of the siege scenes of Sennacherib shows auxiliary spearmen climbing the steep hillside leading to the citywall,⁹⁵ the other shows them fighting a close combat with the defenders on the roofs of the houses of the lower town,⁹⁶ a third shows them climbing the wall on scaling ladders.⁹⁷ On one of the sculptures of Assurbanipal an auxiliary spearman in the cover of his big standing shield (see for example *Fig. 2.42–43*) is breaking the wall with his sword.⁹⁸

5. The other series of slabs showing the Assyrian army on march culminates in a battle on a mountainous terrain.⁹⁹ The structure of the battle scene is as follows: the marching Assyrian army is depicted in two registers. In the lower register from the back there are the following units: 13 auxiliary archers → 7 auxiliary spearmen → 22 armoured horsemen. The horsemen of the first lines are fighting a battle with the archers and spearmen of the enemy infantry. The representation of the charge/attack of the cavalry on the last slab from the more than ten-slab-long scene is divided into more registers. This implies probably the extensive character of the battle. In the upper register of the beginning of the marching scene there is the Assyrian military camp. In front of the camp there is the king with his entourage, which consists of 7 armoured horsemen (perhaps the mounted bodyguard), and 7 armoured spearmen standing in close order.

6. On the famous sculptures of Assurbanipal depicting the defeat of the Elamite Te-Umman at Til-Tuba (653 B.C.) the auxiliary spearmen appear as a 'battle infantry' in the midst of combat, fighting in close combat (*Fig. 2.42–43*). An important change in their equipment is that in addition to the rounded wicker shield a new type of shield, the heavy, wooden battleshield appeared (see later). At this time the same type of standing shield was used by the regular and armoured spearmen as well. The spearmen are driving back the enemy infantry – into the water of the River Ulay – with their spears from the cover of their large shields. As has been mentioned there are auxiliary archers with them shooting from the cover of their shields.¹⁰⁰

7. There are two interesting siege scenes depicted on the sculptures of Sennacherib. In the foreground of both siege scenes there is a low wall, with towers and battlement. On the top of the wall and the towers auxiliary archers alternate with auxiliary spearmen. They are guarding the wall. It is difficult to determine whether the wall is the outer wall of the besieged town, or a kind of siege-wall built by the Assyrians. The siege-wall theory is more likely, however, in which case this wall, and the guards prevented the defenders from breaking out, and prevented a liberating/relieving army to reach the besieged town.¹⁰¹

8. Other sculptures of Assurbanipal show the Assyrian army crossing a river. In addition to other soldiers there is an auxiliary spearman – with his battle shield fastened to his back – swimming with the help of an inflated animal skin.¹⁰²

9. One of the most important duty of the light infantry was however to escort the captives and the booty which was carried off in a campaign (*Fig. 2.40–41, 44–45*). This duty is predominantly assigned to auxiliary archers and spearmen.¹⁰³

10. The next capacity, in close relation to the former was the guarding those captives who worked on big building (mining, etc.) projects. On one of the sculptures of Sennacherib, for example, auxiliary archers alternate with auxiliary spearmen standing guard on the edge of a quarry, in which captives quarrying stone can be seen.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁴ BARNETT-BLEIBTREU-TURNER 1998, nos 234–241.

⁹⁵ BARNETT-BLEIBTREU-TURNER 1998, no. 49.

⁹⁶ BARNETT-BLEIBTREU-TURNER 1998, no. 50.

⁹⁷ BARNETT-BLEIBTREU-TURNER 1998, nos 70, 71.

⁹⁸ BARNETT-BLEIBTREU-TURNER 1998, no. 278.

⁹⁹ BARNETT-BLEIBTREU-TURNER 1998, no. 100–111.

¹⁰⁰ LAYARD 1853b, pls 45–46.

¹⁰¹ BARNETT-BLEIBTREU-TURNER 1998, no. 214, 226–227.

¹⁰² BARNETT-BLEIBTREU-TURNER 1998, no. 273.

¹⁰³ BARNETT-BLEIBTREU-TURNER 1998, nos 50, 83.

¹⁰⁴ BARNETT-BLEIBTREU-TURNER 1998, nos 152–153, 156–157.

11. One of the most interesting scenes is a scene from the sculptures of Assurbanipal. On this sculpture there are auxiliary spearmen with their heavy shields fastened to their backs and wearing a unique feather-crown on their crested helmets. This scene depicts a procession.¹⁰⁵

The weaponry of the auxiliary spearmen hardly changed during the hundred years of their Assyrian representational tradition. The standardization of the helmet forms has already been discussed. In addition to this change only the shape and characteristic of their shields has changed. While on the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.), Sargon II (721–705 B.C.) and Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.) the shape and structure of their shields was uniform: a rounded wicker or wooden shield with a wicker pattern on the inside (*Fig. 2.30–34, 36, 38, 40–41*) or the outside (*Fig. 2.31, 35*) of the shield, or without the indication of the wicker pattern (*Fig. 2.24–26, 39*), with a shieldboss (*Fig. 2.27, 31*) or without a shieldboss. On the palace reliefs of Assurbanipal (668–627 B.C.) there appears a new type of shield. This large and long wicker or wooden standing shield has a straight bottom and a rounded top (*Fig. 2.42–43*). This shield type was used however not only by the auxiliary spearmen, but by the regular and armoured spearmen as well. The shields of these two arms might have been covered with bronze sheet and might have been reinforced with a bronze shieldboss.

On the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II the auxiliary spearmen are characteristically barefooted, or sometimes wear sandals. The auxiliary spearman of the Til-Barsip frescoes (*Fig. 2.27*), however, wears Assyrian military boots. The first auxiliary spearman wearing military boots appears on the palace reliefs during the reign of Sennacherib (*Fig. 2.33–35, 38–41*). Unfortunately the reason for the difference between the barefooted auxiliary spearmen and spearmen wearing boots is unknown. It can be assumed that it does not depend on the weather conditions, because there are auxiliary spearmen of both types represented side by side on the same relief (*Fig. 2.32–33, 42–43*).

Auxiliary spearmen theoretically never wore scale armour, in fact, except for their breastplate, they wore no armour at all. Yet we can find a few cases on the sculptures of Sennacherib, where an auxiliary spearman is wearing scale armour. The first case is a military clearing operation in a hillcountry mentioned above (*Fig. 2.38*). The second is a siege scene, where an auxiliary spearman wearing scale armour reaches the top of the besieged wall first (*Fig. 2.39*). In the third case the auxiliary spearman is escorting captives.¹⁰⁶ In these cases it is reasonable to assume that they are officers, perhaps the very officers-of-50 (*rab hanše*) discussed above. Those auxiliary spearmen who are depicted escorting captives were not necessarily officers (*Fig. 2.40–41*), except those, who carry a staff (officer's staff) in their hand (*Fig. 2.44–45*). Furthermore there is a unique representation which shows an auxiliary spearman carrying a bow (*Fig. 2.37*), the reason of which is unknown, but the life-likeness of the situation is fully conceivable.

1.2 Regular Infantry

1.2.1 Regular archers (*Fig. 3.46–49*)

The most important characteristic of the regular infantry is that its members never wear armour, and are only equipped with a pointed helmet, a bow, a quiver, a spear and a shield. The typical Assyrian weaponry (especially the pointed helmet) proves that the members of this arm were primarily or exclusively Assyrians. They differ from those auxiliary archers (*Itu'eans*) and auxiliary spearmen (*Gurreans*) discussed above whose ethnic identity and weaponry is dissimilar to the Assyrians. The origin of this medium-weight weaponry and the arm of the regular infantry can be traced back to those conscripted Assyrian peasant soldiers, who are depicted in large numbers on the 9th century B.C. palace reliefs of Assur-nasir-pal II (883–859 B.C.). On the Nimrud sculptures of Assur-nasir-pal II only a few soldiers of the elite troops wear scale armour. The ordinary soldier's equipment consisted of a pointed helmet, a shield, a sword, a spear and/or a bow with quiver.¹⁰⁷ The equipment of the masses

¹⁰⁵ BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, no. 312.

¹⁰⁷ BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pls CXVIII, CXIX, CXXII.

¹⁰⁶ BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, no. 229.

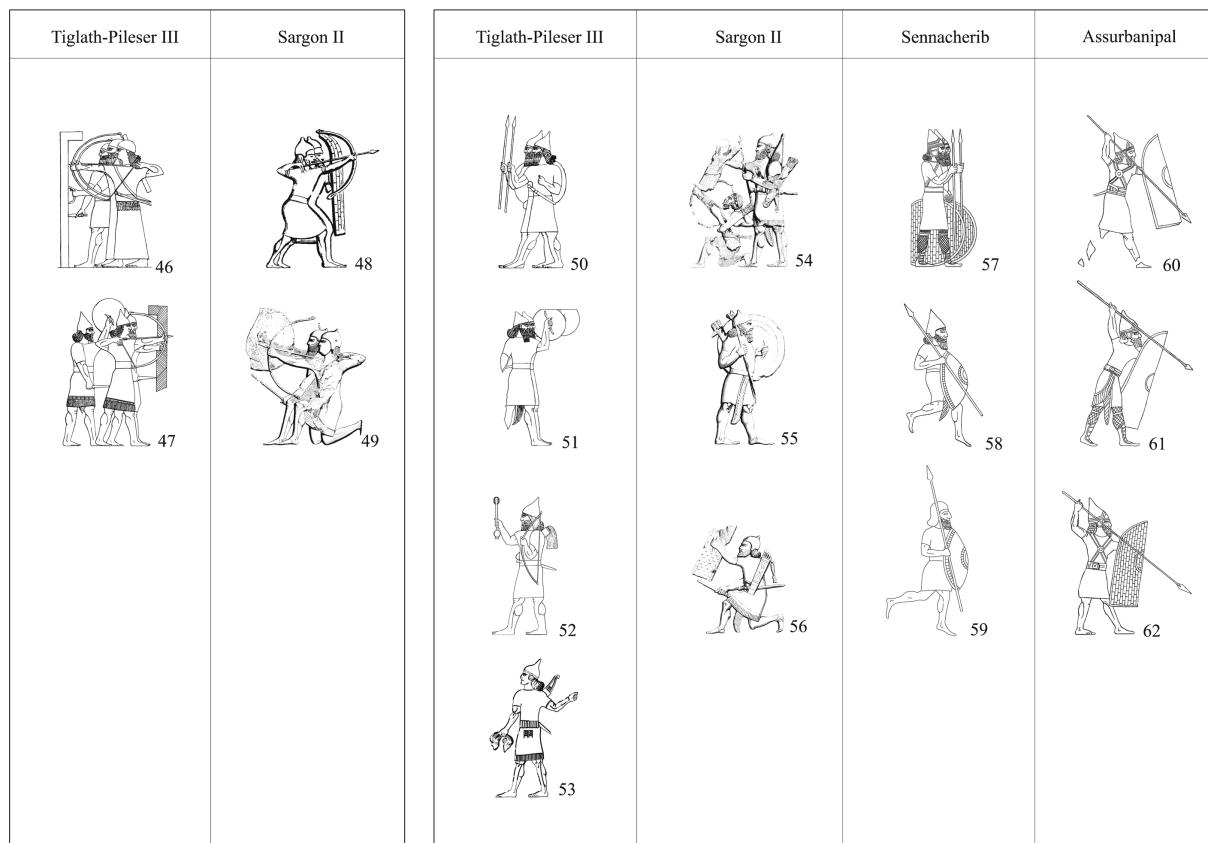


Fig. 3. Regular archers and spearmen

46: Nimrud, Central Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. XI (Ser. A. Upper Reg. Slab 2a, *Or. Dr.* III. Central IV); 47: Nimrud, Central Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. XXXI (Ser. B. Upper Reg. Slab 14a, *Or. Dr.* III. Central XXV);

48: Khorsabad, Room XIV, slab 1. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 145; 49: Khorsabad, Room XIV, slab 12. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 147;

50: Nimrud, Central Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. IX (Ser. A. Upper Reg. Slab 4a, *Or. Dr.* III. Central VIII); 51: Nimrud, Central Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. XLVIII (Ser. B. Lower Reg. Slab 17b, *Or. Dr.* III. Central XXIX); 52: Nimrud, Central Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. XXVII (Ser. A. Lower Reg. Slab 3a, *Or. Dr.* III. Central VII); 53: Nimrud, BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. LIX;

54: Khorsabad, Room II, slab 15. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 62; 55: Khorsabad, Room II, slab 16. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 63; 56: Khorsabad, Room II, slab 23. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 68;

57: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 83; 58: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 69; 59: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 69;

60: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 45; 61: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 45; 62: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 45

of conscripted Assyrian peasants was probably never characterized by the wide-ranging use of scale armour. It can be assumed that the scale armor made of bronze, later of iron was the armour primarily of the elite arms of Assyrian army, the armoured spearmen, archers, slingers, the cavalry and the chariotry.

The archers of the regular infantry are shown only on the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.) and Sargon II (721–705 B.C.). If the palace reliefs show the real picture or at least tendencies, it can be asserted that the regular archers lost their importance in the armies of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.) and Assurbanipal (669–627 B.C.), and were replaced by auxiliary archers and armoured archers.

This arm can hardly be identified in the written sources. It is difficult to decide whether the general term ‘archers’ (*sābē qašti*) mentioned frequently in cuneiform sources denoted the auxiliary archers, the regular archers, the armoured archers or all three of them. The Assyrian royal inscriptions mention troops of archers and spearmen in very high numbers. The inscription of Sargon II mentions that in his 13th campaign, after defeating Merodach-baladan of Bīt-Yakin, from his defeated forces in addition to 150 chariots and 1,500 horsemen he enlisted in the Assyrian army 20,000 archers (*sāb^{giš} qašti*) and 10,000 slingers-spearmen (or shield bearer spearmen) (*naš^{giš} kabābi u^{giš} azmare*).¹⁰⁸ The 20,000 archers in this case meant Chaldean (Aramaic) auxiliary archers. Other texts from the reign of Sargon II mention hundreds of archers as well. There is an administrative document which lists archers serving high officials.¹⁰⁹ 17 bow(men), at the disposal of Nabû-eriba, prefect of the crown prince; 17 cavalry, 1 bow(man) from the village of Hanê, at the disposal of Silim-Aššur, vizier (*sukkallu*); 6 bowmen from the town of Til-rahawa, at the disposal of Aya-yababa, the prefect of the staff-bearers. It is unknown whether these archers were auxiliary archers or the archers of the regular infantry. It is unfortunately also unknown whether the villages mentioned above – as has been shown in case of the *Itu’ean*s – were special archers’ villages, or simply denoted that the Assyrian army organized in a territorial system recruited archers from several (or all?) villages.

It can be assumed that from the reign of Sennacherib, the Assyrian sculptures were not responsive to represent the regular infantry recruited from peasant soldiers, whose equipment was worse than the armoured infantry, and whose military value might have lagged behind the fighting value of the professional or semi-professional soldiers of the two other arms. So, from the reign of Sennacherib, the regular infantry was overshadowed on the sculptures by the auxiliary and armoured infantry.

It is interesting to see, that on the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III (*Fig. 3.46–47*) and Sargon II (*Fig. 3.48–49*) the archers of the regular infantry are always represented with shield bearers. It means not necessarily that archers of the regular infantry always fought in pairs with shield bearers. Much rather these regular archers are usually depicted on siege scenes, where as usual, they shoot from behind the huge siege-shields, or are covered by other types of shield bearers. It must be noted however that both regular archers represented on the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III might be high officials, who were protected by shield bearers (*Fig. 3.46–47*).

1.2.2 Regular spearmen (*Fig. 3.50–62*)

Contrary to regular archers, the spearmen of the regular infantry – although in decreasing numbers – were represented on the Assyrian sculptures throughout the period. The 38 soldiers of the regular infantry depicted on the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III comprise 33% of the total infantry represented on the sculptures of that king. The ratio on the sculptures of Sargon II is 1.8%, on the sculptures of Sennacherib 9.9%, and on the sculptures of Assurbanipal only 2.2%. The characteristic of their equipment is that they never wear armour, only a pointed helmet. Their weapons are the spear and sword, sometimes the bow. Their shield is a rounded bronze shield (*Fig. 3.50–51, 55, 58–59*), a rectangular wicker shield (*Fig. 3.54 and 56*), a rounded wicker shield (*Fig. 3.57*), a standing bronze shield (*Fig. 3.60–61*), or a standing wicker shield (*Fig. 3.62*).

Summing up their equipment it can be pointed out that the relative diversity of their weaponry (several types of shields and the bow) can be seen on the palace reliefs of Sargon II disappears on the sculptures of Sen-

¹⁰⁸ FUCHS 1994, Ann. 409–410.

¹⁰⁹ FALES–POSTGATE, 1992, no. 30 (ADD 815+).

nacherib. At that time the regular spearmen wore pointed helmets, boots (or were barefooted) and the rounded shield remained their only type of shield. On the palace reliefs of Assurbanipal the equipment of the regular spearmen shows a more uniform picture. The huge standing shields – made of bronze (*Fig. 3.60–61*) or wood (*Fig. 3.62*) – almost entirely unified the appearance of this arm. It is an interesting new feature that the breast-plate (*kardio phylax*) – which has already been discussed in the chapter on auxiliary spearmen and was a characteristic feature of their equipment – appears on regular spearmen as well (*Fig. 3.60, 62*). Furthermore, on the sculptures of Assurbanipal the auxiliary spearmen use the heavy ‘battleshield’ too (*Fig. 2.42–43*). It is possible however, that this large and heavy standing shield in the ranks of the regular and auxiliary spearmen was not for everyday use. It would have been too heavy for the daily duty (going on patrol in a hillcountry, escorting captives, etc.). This type of shield was excellent in battles, where the infantry could easily form a wall of shields with them. This type of phalanx tactic had a long history in Mesopotamian and Assyrian warfare.

While on the palace reliefs of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II there are representations which probably show the officers of regular infantry (*Fig. 3.52–53, 55*), on the sculptures of Sennacherib and Assurbanipal there are no officers which can be positively assigned to the regular infantry.

1.3 Heavy Infantry

The heavy infantry was the most important arm of the Assyrian army. The most important feature of their arms and armour is the pointed helmet (made of bronze, later of iron), the scale armour covering the upper body (made of bronze or iron). Soldiers of the heavy infantry – like the cavalry and chariotry – wore only pointed helmets. The scale armour and the pointed helmet were already in the 9th century the main characteristic of the heavy infantry. These heavy infantrymen are shown on the palace reliefs of Assur-nasir-pal II (883–859 B.C.),¹¹⁰ and on the bronze bands of the Balawat Gates of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.).¹¹¹ The Assyrian pointed helmet kept its leading role during the 9th–7th centuries B.C. Unfortunately it is unknown whether the pointed helmet indicated the (Assyrian) nationality of its wearer, or not. It can be assumed that after the army reform of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.), when large numbers of foreign soldiers were enlisted in the Assyrian army, this type of helmet probably also lost its original function as indicator of ethnic identity. As has been mentioned above, the key arms of the army – heavy infantry, cavalry and chariotry – always wore pointed helmets. At the same time it is known from the cuneiform sources that large numbers of foreign soldiers or even complete units were enlisted in the Assyrian army. The royal inscriptions of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.) mentioned that in his first year 50 Samarian chariots,¹¹² on his 1st campaign at Qarqar 200 chariots and 600 cavalrymen,¹¹³ and on his 5th campaign at Karkemish 50 chariots and 200 cavalrymen¹¹⁴ were enlisted in the Assyrian army (*kisir šarrūti*). However there is no visible sign of these foreign cavalrymen or chariot staff on the sculptures – the equipment of these units must have been the same as the equipment of Assyrian cavalry and chariotry.

The Assyrian heavy infantry is divided into three arms: archers, slingers and spearmen.

1.3.1 Armoured archers (Fig. 4.63–75)

The armoured archers are represented basically in two contexts on palace reliefs: with or without shield-bearers. On the palace reliefs of Tiglath-Pileser III armoured archers appear in eight scenes.¹¹⁵ They are shooting at besieged walls without exception from the cover of shield-bearers (*Fig. 4.63*). Because of the artistic concept of the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III (and Sargon II as well: a few large figures often with symbolic meaning) it is unfortunately unknown whether they were high officials protected by their attendants or simply represent the members of the armoured archers arm of the Assyrian heavy infantry.

¹¹⁰ BUDGE 1914, *passim*.

¹¹¹ KING 1915, *passim*.

¹¹² FUCHS 1994, *Annales*, line 15.

¹¹³ FUCHS 1994, *Display Inscription*, lines 35–6.

¹¹⁴ FUCHS 1994, *Annales*, line 75.

¹¹⁵ BARNETT-FALKNER 1962, pl. X, XXXIX, LII, LIV, LXXII, LXXVI, LXXVII, LXXXIX.

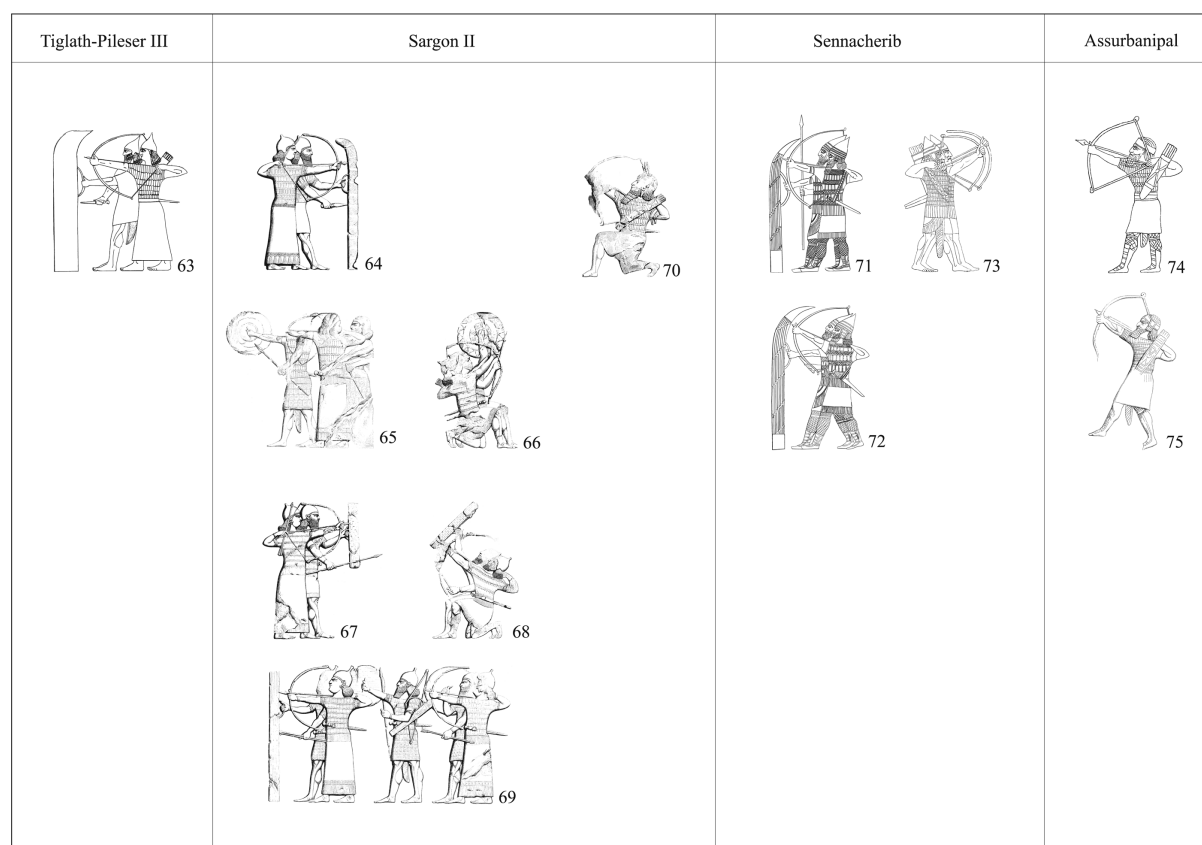


Fig. 4. Armoured archers

63: Nimrud, Central Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. LIV (Ser. B. Lower Reg. Slab 13b, *Or. Dr.* III. Central XXIV);

64: Khorsabad, Room XIV, slab 1. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 145; 65: Khorsabad, Room V, slab 21. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 95; 66: Khorsabad, Room V, slab 21. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 86; 67: Khorsabad, Gate H, slab 2. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 77;

68: Khorsabad, Room I, slab 1. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 49; 69: Khorsabad, Gate O, slab 2. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 99;

70: Khorsabad, Room V, slab 4. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 88;

71: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 78; 72: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853a, pl. 78; 73: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 20;

74: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 43; 75: Nineveh, North Palace. PLACE 1867, pl. 61

A new feature, the siege-shield appears on the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III. The siege-shield (*Fig. 4.63*) is a large (taller than a man) standing shield made of wicker or wood, and sometimes reinforced with bronze or iron fittings (*Fig. 4.64, 71–72*). Masses of armoured archers (and sometimes auxiliary archers) are approaching the besieged walls in the cover of these huge shields. The shields, which placed tightly side by side could form a kind of siege wall, remained a characteristic feature of the Assyrian siege equipment for a long time.

According to the evidence of the sculptures, these archers were used primarily at sieges. On the sculptures of Sargon II they are exclusively depicted in this context. In addition to the large siege-shields (*Fig. 4.64, 69*), on these sculptures there are shield-bearers carrying rounded bronze shields (*Fig. 4.65–66, 69*), and rectangular wicker shields (*Fig. 4.67–68*) as well. Those shield-bearers, who carried rounded bronze shields, were probably armoured spearmen, who – according to the palace reliefs – were rarely put directly into action during the sieges.

The first representation of an armoured archer without a shield-bearer is known from the sculptures of Sargon II (*Fig. 4.70*). Such an independent deployment of armoured archers later became more frequent, and indeed, during the reign of Assurbanipal their number exceeded the number of armoured archers represented with shield-bearers on the sculptures.

If we would like to establish the ratio of armoured archers in proportion to the Assyrian infantry as a whole, we can apply two methods. We can check their ratio in proportion to all the infantrymen represented on the existing palace reliefs (as a statistical base), or we can establish their ratio in proportion to the number of infantrymen represented in a particular scene, in a compact composition, for example on a major siege scene.

The ratio of the armoured archers in proportion to the Assyrian infantry as a whole is as follows: on the palace reliefs of Tiglath-Pileser III the percentage of the represented heavy infantry is 24.8% of the Assyrian infantry as a whole. The percentage of the armoured archers is 19.8% of the infantry as a whole, so the ratio of the armoured archers in proportion to the heavy infantry is very high, almost 80%. The same ratio on the palace reliefs of Sargon II is 30.9%. On the palace reliefs of Sennacherib, the number of represented heavy infantry suddenly grows. The represented 418 heavy infantrymen give 48.3% of the infantry as a whole. The ratio of armoured archers is 20.1% (in proportion to the infantry as a whole), that is very high. On the palace reliefs of Assurbanipal the represented 218 heavy infantrymen give 35.8% of the infantry as a whole. It is interesting however, that the percentage of the armoured archers decreased to 9.1%. While the artistic, representational concept of the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II mentioned above could question the authenticity of the mathematical results, it can be assumed that the different concept of the palace reliefs of Sennacherib and Assurbanipal, namely the high number of represented soldiers (there are 866 and 608 infantrymen on the palace reliefs of these two kings respectively) makes the mathematical results in this case more authentic. So the change of the ratio of armoured archers on the sculptures of these two kings cannot be interpreted simply as a distortion which derives from the concept of representation.

If we examine a particular scene, for example a major siege scene, in addition to the proportion of the different arms of the Assyrian army, we can form a notion of the use of armoured archers in Assyrian warfare. There are nearly 200 Assyrian soldiers represented on the Lachish reliefs (depicting the 701 B.C. siege of Lachish) of Sennacherib. The composition consists of three scenes: 1. preparation and the shooting at the walls; 2. siege; 3. after-siege events.

There are altogether 74 soldiers represented on the first scene. Soldiers of the light and heavy infantry are depicted in three registers. 4 auxiliary spearmen (*Fig. 2.32–33*) are closing the wall – their role in this phase is secondary. The remaining 70 soldiers are slingers and archers: 32 auxiliary archers, 14 armoured slingers (*Fig. 4.76*), 17 armoured archers without shield-bearers (*Fig. 4.73*), and 4 armoured archers with shield-bearers. They are represented in pairs, which could be the iconographical code of close formations and large numbers of soldiers. All of them are shooting at the wall. The four types of auxiliary archers (*Fig. 1.7–10*) give nearly the 50% of all the archers represented in this scene. It is obvious that they were deployed in larger numbers farther from the walls, in a safe distance. The 14 armoured slingers are represented in the back rows, behind the archers. This suggests that the range of the slingers exceeded that of the archers (there were lot of large sling-stones found in Lachish). The 17 armoured archers are represented behind the 4 armoured archers and their shield-bearers. So during the sieges the order of the position of archers and slingers was as follows: in the first row there were armoured archers with shield-bearers (huge siege-shields), behind them we can find the units of armoured archers

and auxiliary archers (in close order), and behind them the armoured slingers, also in close orders. We have to mention the possibility, however, that the large number of armoured archers on this siege scene represents not only armoured archers of the heavy infantry, but dismounted cavalry archers as well. The arms and armour of the armoured archers and the cavalry archers is essentially the same: pointed helmets and scale armours. The only difference between them is that while the horsemen always wear boots (*Fig. 6.98–99*), the armoured archers of this siege scene do not. A further difference is that the quiver of the cavalry archers at the same time served as a bow case. This problem however cannot be decided on the basis of the quivers of the armoured archers represented on this siege scene.

The second scene shows the siege. The Assyrians built two siege-ramps with 10 paved tracks for 7 siege-engines. The Assyrian soldiers attack the walls from the cover of the siege-engines. There are altogether 8 auxiliary archers, 16 auxiliary spearmen, 8 armoured slingers, 26 armoured archers (+ 6 on the siege-engines), and 12 armoured archers with shield bearers depicted on this scene. It is understandable, that the number of the unarmoured auxiliary archers (8) is decreasing as the siege closes to the walls, while the number of armoured archers (44) is growing. The reason for the relatively high number of auxiliary spearmen (16) is that they had an important role in the close combat on the top of the walls or after breaking through the walls.

The third scene shows the procession of the booty, so its military importance is minor. However, there are some horsemen represented on this scene (*Fig. 6.98–99*). Since the cavalry did not play a direct role during the sieges, there are no horsemen represented on the first and second scenes. As these horsemen are standing in the immediate vicinity of the king, they probably belong to the cavalry of the royal bodyguard (*pēthal qurubte*, see below).

An interesting feature is that the shield-bearers always carry either a spear (*Fig. 4.71*) or a sword (*Fig. 4.72*) in their hands, so there is no doubt that after breaking through the walls, in close combat they fought as heavy infantry with spears and swords.

An important feature of the development of this arm is that on the palace reliefs of Assurbanipal there are armoured archers who wear headbands instead of pointed helmets (*Fig. 4.74–75*). These archers were presumably not *Itu'eans*, because the rest of their equipment – scale armour, Assyrian skirt and boots – is the same as the equipment of the armoured archers.

1.3.2 Armoured slingers (*Fig. 5.76–77*)

The sling is one of the most ancient and most simple weapons. Those few monographs which deal with the history of weapons, mention this weapon only superficially.¹¹⁶ The sling played an important role in the Bible.¹¹⁷ Iron Age representations of the sling outside the Assyrian sculptures are hardly known.¹¹⁸ According to the Assyrian cuneiform sources there were large contingents of slingers in their enemies' armies. Tiglath-Pileser III mentions that on his 13th campaign (732 B.C.) he defeated Rahiani, king of Damascus, and captured large numbers of his archers, slingers and spearmen.¹¹⁹ When Sargon II on his 13th campaign (709 B.C.) defeated Mero-dach-baladan, king of Bit-Yakin, he enlisted from the Chaldeans 20.000 archers (*sāb* ^{gis}*qašti*) and 10.000 slingers (*naš* ^{gis}*kabābi*) and spearmen (^{gis}*azmare*) into the Assyrian army.¹²⁰ But on the Assyrian sculptures there is no representation of one single auxiliary slinger, as they are always armoured Assyrian infantrymen. Three armoured slingers are shown on a fragmentary siege-scene from the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III.¹²¹ The palace reliefs of Sennacherib show a large number of armoured slingers, among others those 22 slingers who are depicted on the Lachish siege-scenes discussed above (*Fig. 5.76*). On the sculptures of Assurbanipal, however, the armoured slingers are – similarly to the armoured archers – depicted without pointed helmets, but wearing a headband, scale armour, 'skirt' and boots (*Fig. 5.77*).

¹¹⁶ BONNET 1926, 114–117; YADIN 1963, 9–10, 64, 296.

¹¹⁷ KORFMANN 1986, 129–149.

¹¹⁸ An important representation is known from the 10th century B.C. orthostate of the palace of Kapara at Tell Halaf. It shows an Aramaic slinger throwing a stone. YADIN 1963, 364.

¹¹⁹ TADMOR 1994, Ann. 23: 1'–12'.

¹²⁰ FUCHS 1994, Annales, lines 409–410. It has to be mentioned however, that the meaning of *kabābu* = sling in these cases is problematical.

¹²¹ BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pls LXXXIX, XCIV.

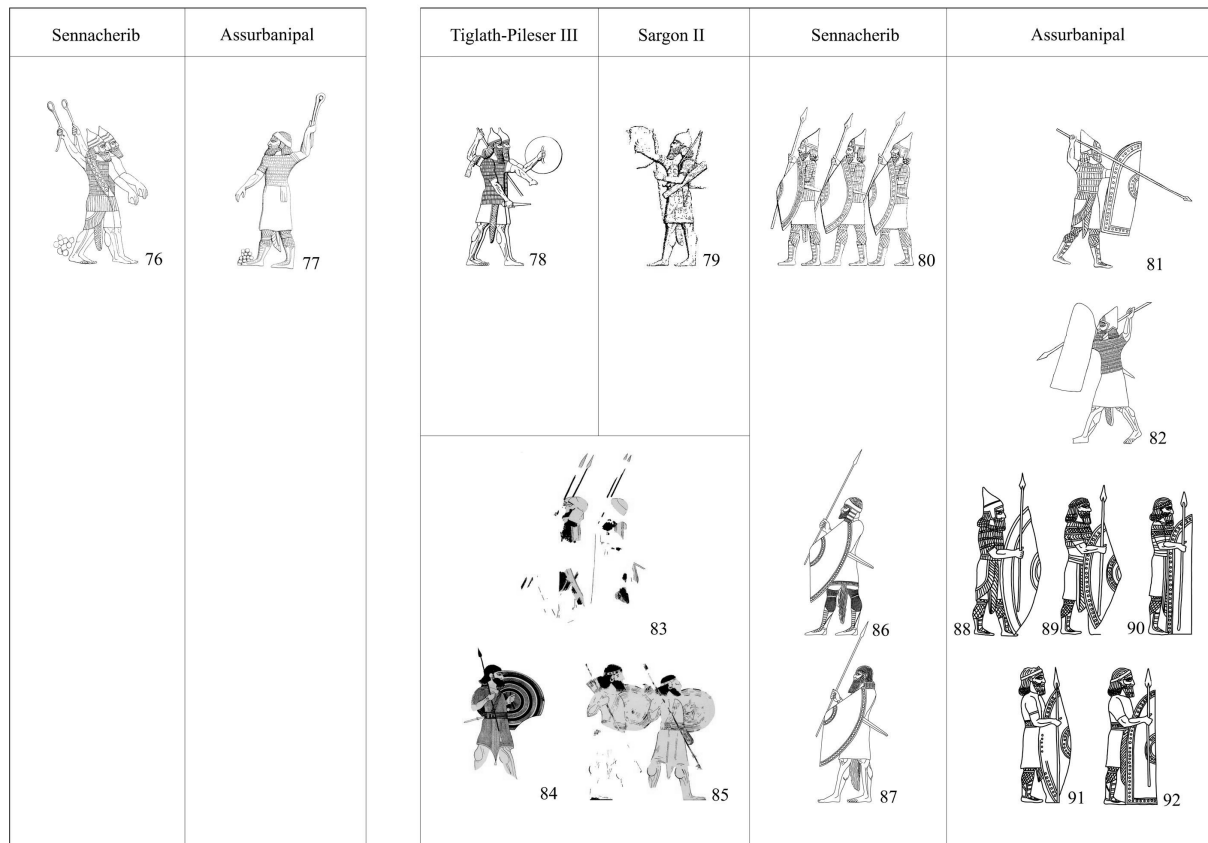


Fig. 5. Armoured slingers and spearmen

76: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 20;

77: Nineveh, North Palace. PLACE 1867, pl. 61;

78: Nimrud, Central Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. XXVII (Ser. A. Lower Reg. Slab 3a, *Or. Dr.* III. Central VII);

79: Khorsabad, Gate O, slab 2. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 99;

80: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 19;

81: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 46; 82: Nineveh, North Palace. PLACE 1867, pl. 59;

83: Til-Barsip, Room XLVII, f. THUREAU-DANGIN–DUNAND 1936, LII; 84: Til-Barsip, Room XXIV, abc. THUREAU-DANGIN–DUNAND 1936, XLIX; 85: Til-Barsip, Room XLVII, abc. THUREAU-DANGIN–DUNAND 1936, LII;

86: Nineveh, BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, no. 664; 87: Nineveh, BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, no. 664;

88: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 43; 89: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 47; 90: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 47; 91: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 47; 92: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 47

In case of armoured slingers the same question may be raised as in the case of the armoured archers: were they a separate arm of the heavy infantry, or simply soldiers of other arms (*e.g.* armoured spearmen, cavalry and chariotry) who were not put into action in the first phase of sieges, the shooting of the walls. To tell the truth, the same must be true for armoured archers as well, where units of dismounted armoured cavalry and chariot archers could have been deployed side by side the archers of the heavy infantry during the sieges. This question cannot be answered, since the armour of the heavy infantry, cavalry and chariotry became standardized during the reign of Sennacherib. The heavy infantry, cavalry and chariotry wore probably the same type of scale armour and pointed helmet. The only difference is that some of the soldiers were barefooted, while some wore boots. Furthermore it can be assumed that the know-how of using the sling was widespread in the ranks of the Assyrian army. As has been mentioned, the equipment of armoured slingers (similarly to the armoured archers) can be distinguished from the equipment of armoured spearmen, cavalry and chariotry only on the sculptures of Assurbanipal: the slingers and archers wear headbands instead of a pointed helmet.

As can be seen on the Lachish reliefs, the slingers are standing behind the archers, in the back rows of the battle array, and at the base of the siege-ramp. The range of the sling therefore must be greater than the range of the bow. A lot of large sling-stones were found during the excavations of Lachish,¹²² and these were roughly dressed, to have a better trajectory. There are 22 slingers depicted on the Lachish reliefs, which makes them 14.1% of the infantry represented on this scene. Large numbers of armoured slingers could open such a barrage, that the hail of stones prevented any living creature (people and animals) to leave their shelters. This barrage – together with the shower of arrows from the archers – prevented the defenders to defend their walls against the attacking Assyrians and their siege-engines.

1.3.3 Armoured spearmen (Fig. 5.78–82)

The armoured spearmen (the “Assyrian hoplites”) were undoubtedly the elite arm of the Assyrian army. Their battle tactics – advancing in close order, like a wall of armours, and wearing out (?) the lines of the enemy, who could hardly deploy similarly heavy troops – needed a lot of skill and discipline, to hold the close order, shield by shield, and keep the pace. They were probably the most skilled and experienced soldiers of the Assyrian army. As can be seen on the palace reliefs of Assurbanipal depicting the defeat of Te-Umman, king of Elam in the battle of Til-Tuba (653 B.C.), after the disintegration of the battle array of the enemy, the armoured spearman (Fig. 5.81) could fight in close combat outside the front-line alone, in pairs, in pairs with regular and auxiliary spearmen, but always in the cover of an auxiliary archer.¹²³ This tactic in a close combat combined the safety provided by the armoured spearman equipped with the large battle-shield, and the ‘fire power’ of the auxiliary archer in a very useful way.

The weaponry of the armoured spearman consisted of a pointed helmet, scale armour, a large rounded bronze shield,¹²⁴ a spear and a sword. Their main combat weapon is the thrusting spear. They were barefooted (Fig. 5.78–79, 82) or wore Assyrian military boots (Fig. 5.80–81).

Interestingly there is no Akkadian terminus technicus in the cuneiform sources for the armoured spearmen, and even for the infantrymen. J. N. Postgate, realising the absurdity of the question, made an effort to solve the problem.¹²⁵ Looking over the possible – but as compared to the importance of the question rarely used – expressions (*sābē šēpē*, *zūk šēpē*, *zūku*) he concluded that the best candidate for the Assyrian infantryman is the word *kallāpu*, which is translated by the dictionaries usually as “messenger”. But the cuneiform documents frequently mention them in an order of hundreds, which seems to contradict the identification as “messenger”. Their number sometimes approximates the number of actual fighting units, a Neo-Assyrian administrative document for example mentions more than 1,800 *kallāpu qurbūte* (‘*kallāpu* bodyguard’).¹²⁶ Summing up the *kallāpu*-s listed in another cuneiform document their number equals 2,079.¹²⁷ These texts question, in fact almost preclude the

¹²² USSISHKIN 1982,

¹²³ LAYARD 1853b, pl. 46.

¹²⁴ See above, note 11.

¹²⁵ POSTGATE 2000, 89–108.

¹²⁶ FALES–POSTGATE 1995, no. 126 (ADD 855); DALLEY–POSTGATE 1984, 43–45.

¹²⁷ PARKER 1961, 15–66, ND 2646.

possibility of the “messenger” identification. There is a further, previously unexamined category, the so-called “shield-bearer” soldier. A Nimrud text for example mentions 500 shield-bearers (LÚ.ERIM.MEŠ ša ^{giš}arite).¹²⁸ It is quite possible, that this idiom indicates all the shield-bearing soldiers serving both in the Assyrian and enemy armies. In this case, however it is impossible to separate the soldiers of the regular and armoured spearmen in the sources. A further question is whether the Assyrian documents used the ‘Gurrean’ ethnonym for the auxiliary spearmen, or called them ‘shield-bearers’ too, according to their rounded wicker shields. In any case, for lack of a terminus technicus denoting the armoured spearmen, all attempts of identification should be accepted with reservations.

The armoured spearmen did not play such an important role on the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II, as on the sculptures of Sennacherib and Assurbanipal. Their proportion on the palace reliefs of the two former kings is hardly determinable. It is a question whether this “underrepresentation” comes simply from the absence or smaller importance of this arm in the armies of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II, or derives from the representational conception, the characteristic representational style (small number of large, symbolic figures) of the sculptures of these two kings.

On the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III there are two armoured infantrymen represented in a pair and fighting in close combat (*Fig. 5.78*). One of them uses a spear and a shield, the other a sword. On the palace reliefs of Sargon II there is one single armoured spearman within a group of armoured archers. He protects the archers with his rounded wicker(?) shield (*Fig. 5.79*). In addition to his shield and spear, he is equipped with a bow and a quiver as well. It is possible, that this scene shows an infantry officer or a universal heavy infantryman. It is also possible that the different arms of the heavy infantry (archers, slingers, and spearmen) were separated from each other during the reign of Sennacherib. And indeed, on the palace reliefs of Sennacherib the armoured spearmen appear in large numbers (16.5% of the represented Assyrian infantrymen are armoured spearmen). Their equipment became standardized: a pointed helmet (which at this time could have been made of iron as well), a large rounded bronze shield, a scale armour waistcoat, boots with some kind of stockings, a spear and a sword (*Fig. 5.80*). As has been mentioned, all parts of their arms and armour are known from the archaeological record.

The armoured spearmen appear on the sculptures of Sennacherib in three contexts: standing in close order they are watching the siege,¹²⁹ they are standing in close order in front of the king as bodyguards;¹³⁰ or marching in formation.¹³¹ In these contexts these elite units of the Assyrian infantry, the armoured spearmen are always depicted in a passive role, standing or marching in formation. There is not a single scene which shows them in a battle or close combat context.

On the palace reliefs of Assurbanipal the armoured spearmen appear in three contexts. The first context is the battle scene mentioned above. In the battle of Til-Tuba (the defeat of Te-Umman, king of Elam in 653 B.C.) similarly to the regular and auxiliary spearmen, the armoured spearmen carried large standing shields with an arched profile, a flat bottom and an arched top. These “battle shields” were probably made of wood, covered with bronze sheet or leather, and furnished with bronze or iron fittings and sometimes with a shieldboss as well (*Fig. 5.81–82*). From these large standing shields a wall of shields could be formed (similarly to the shields of Roman legionaries).

The second context is escorting the king on a campaign. The marching spearmen carry their spears over their shoulders, their shields fastened on their backs, probably with a strap.¹³² The third context shows them standing in front of the king in close order.¹³³ In this context they are undoubtedly portrayed in the function of royal bodyguards, which is emphasized by their equipment, as well, since on these scenes the huge, almost of a man’s height rounded bronze shield appears, which is always depicted as standing on the ground (*Fig. 5.83*). This huge shield would be almost entirely useless in battles, and thus has to serve only for the king’s protection, and for representation.

¹²⁸ SAGGS 2001, 120–124, ND 2487.

¹²⁹ BARNETT–FALKNER–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, nos 234–236.

¹³⁰ BARNETT–FALKNER–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, nos 66, 101–102, 219–221, 370 (*Fig. 5.80*).

¹³¹ BARNETT–FALKNER–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, nos 442–446.

¹³² BARNETT–FALKNER–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, nos 271–273.

¹³³ BARNETT–FALKNER–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, nos 278–279.

1.3.4 Royal bodyguards (Fig. 5.83–92)

Soldiers who can be identified as royal bodyguards can be found not only in the ranks of armoured spearmen. Already on the Til-Barsip wall paintings we can observe some soldiers in the royal entourage (Fig. 5.83–85), who are undoubtedly members of the royal bodyguard units.¹³⁴ The most interesting figures are those four who march in front of the king in formation, and wear a characteristic Judaeen garment, first of all headgear (Fig. 5.83). The basis of their identification are the Lachish reliefs of Sennacherib, which show Judaeen captives from Lachish wearing exactly the same headgear¹³⁵ as the bodyguards of the Til-Barsip wall paintings. This is a kind of turban, made of a long scarf, which was wound around the head, with the two ends hanging down onto the ears. The same headgear appears on other sculptures of Sennacherib probably showing the same Judaeen captives, and there are royal bodyguards wearing the same headgear, equipped with spears and large rounded bronze shields (Fig. 5.86) shown on a series of very interesting sculptures of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.). The headgear is in this case a headband, but the characteristic ‘earflaps’ are the same. These sculptures decorated the walls of the passage which led to the Ishtar Temple. It may show the impressive ceremony when the crown prince was led to the *bīt redūti*, the “house of succession”.¹³⁶ But where did they originate from? How could they appear on the Til Barsip wall paintings, which can be dated on stylistic grounds to the reign of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.)? It is known that Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727) led campaigns against Israel in 734, 733, and 732 B.C. respectively. From the Kingdom of Israel he formed three Assyrian provinces and a vassal/puppet state centred at Samaria. Judah became Assyrian vassal, too. It is known from his royal inscriptions that when he defeated Peqah, king of Israel in 732 B.C., he took large numbers of Israeli soldiers with him to Assyria.¹³⁷ It is possible that Tiglath-Pileser III enlisted Israeli bodyguards into the royal entourage at that early time. Sargon II also led campaigns to the West, and fought in the territories of Israel, Judah and Philistia (721–720, 712 B.C.). Sargon II also deported the Jewish people of Samaria and brought foreign peoples to their place.¹³⁸ It is known furthermore from the Nimrud tombs of the Assyrian queens that one of the wives of Sargon II, Atalya, was probably an Israeli or Judaeen princess.¹³⁹ It is possible, that – in addition to the deported, enlisted or mercenary soldiers – she took Israeli or Judaeen bodyguards with her. Furthermore Sargon II mentions in his royal inscriptions that in 721 B.C. he enlisted 50 Samarian chariots (with their crews) into the Assyrian royal army, into the *kisir šarrūti*.¹⁴⁰ This Samarian unit is known from the Nimrud Horse Lists as well.¹⁴¹ It is also possible that these Israeli or Judaeen bodyguards arrived to Assyria with this chariot troop. The scene on the walls of the passage leading to the Ishtar Temple proves that units of Israeli or Judaeen bodyguards served in the Assyrian court during the reign of Sennacherib as well.

In addition to the Judaeen/Israeli bodyguards there are two other scenes on the Til-Barsip wall paintings depicting soldiers in a bodyguard context (Fig. 5.84–85). Both scenes show unarmoured soldiers equipped with rounded bronze shields, spears and swords. The bodyguard of the first scene does not wear headband, and the inner side of his rounded bronze shield is decorated in concentric bands (Fig. 5.84). The two bodyguards of the second scene wear headbands, and their equipment consists of rounded bronze shields, spears, swords, bows and quivers (Fig. 5.85). The inner rim of their shields is decorated with geometric motifs similar to the shield decorations of the sculptures of Sargon II (Fig. 4.65–66).¹⁴² Similar guards appear side by side with the Judaeen/Israeli guards on the sculptures of Sennacherib which decorated the walls of the passage to the Ishtar Temple mentioned above. They do not wear helmets and armours, and are equipped with the same large rounded bronze shields and spears (Fig. 5.87). On the basis of their equipment all three soldiers (Fig. 5.84–85, 87) can be identified as Assyrian members of the royal bodyguard.

On the palace reliefs of Assurbanipal there are 5 types of figures represented in a bodyguard context. Three of them are armoured (Fig. 5.88–90), two of them are unarmoured (Fig. 5.91–92). Examining the equipment and context of these soldiers can be divided into two groups. Those bodyguards who wear pointed helmets,

¹³⁴ THUREAU-DANGIN–DUNAND 1936, pl. LII.

¹³⁵ LAYARD 1853b, pls 20–24.

¹³⁶ BARNETT–FALKNER–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, 133.

¹³⁷ TADMOR 1994, Summ. 4: 16’.

¹³⁸ 2Kings 17.

¹³⁹ DAMERJI 1999, 6–8, 17; DALLEY 1998, 83–98.

¹⁴⁰ FUCHS 1994, Annales, line 15.

¹⁴¹ DALLEY–POSTGATE 1984, no. 99, II:16–23.

¹⁴² BOTTA–FLANDIN 1849, vol. I, 55, 60, 63; vol. II, 86, 95.

scale armour and carry a large rounded bronze shields (Fig. 5.88) appear mainly in a campaign context,¹⁴³ while the remaining four types (Fig. 5.89–92) appear on the same scene, on which they are standing in formation in a triumphal following the defeat of Te-Umman, king of Elam in 653 B.C. It is interesting that the two armoured types (Fig. 5.89–90) and the two unarmoured types (Fig. 5.91–92) are standing side by side. Therefore it can be assumed that at least four infantry units of the royal bodyguards were depicted on this scene. The two types of shields indicate further differences between these units. Both the huge rounded and standing shields were probably made of, or covered with bronze. Their rims were decorated with rivets, and at least three of them were decorated or fitted with a shield boss.¹⁴⁴ These bodyguards were depicted in full dress and probably wore the parade uniform of their unit. Since these bodyguards had an important role in the royal representation, they appear in large numbers on the sculptures of Assurbanipal. Their 5.7% proportion on the sculptures (related to the total number of the represented infantry) may be a little bit exaggerated.

In the Assyrian cuneiform sources there are two expressions which can be connected to a kind of bodyguard context. One of them is the *qurbūtu* (*ša qurbūte*), the other is the *ša šēpi*.

It is known from the large amount of cuneiform letters dated to the reign of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.) that the *qurbūtu* (it is not known whether it was a rank or a duty) was a confidential representative or a plenipotentiary of the king, who in certain cases could give orders even to governors and other officials.¹⁴⁵ In this capacity it is hardly believable that the *qurbūtu* was a simple infantry bodyguard, and it is known furthermore that they had cavalry (*pēthal qurubte*)¹⁴⁶ and chariotry (*narkabat qurubte*)¹⁴⁷ units, but they were not identifiable as an infantry unit. Therefore the *qurbūtu* might much rather be a (distinguished?) member of the royal cavalry escort (see later).

During the reign (and after an army reform?) of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.), however, this picture has changed. The text referring to the 1,800 *kallāpu qurbūte* (*kallāpu* bodyguard)¹⁴⁸ proves that – if Postgate is right, and the *kallāpu* designates the Assyrian infantryman – the armoured spearmen (Fig. 5.80) escorting Sennacherib on his campaigns might be such *kallāpu qurbūte* units.

The *ša šēpi* category corresponds better to these units of infantry bodyguards. The *ša šēpi* phrase appears frequently in the Neo-Assyrian text corpus, but never in a “position of trust” like the *qurbūtu* guards. During the reign (and after a possible army reform) of Sennacherib this picture changes a little bit with the appearance of the chariotry units of the *ša šēpi* guard (LÚ.GIŠ.GIGIR *ša-šēpi*)¹⁴⁹ in the cuneiform sources, and there is a single cuneiform text which mentions a cavalry *ša šēpi* (*pēthal šēpi*).¹⁵⁰ Although the chariotry units of *ša-šēpi* guard are known from the reign of Sennacherib their importance would not have been too great. This has two reasons. The first reason is that from the more than 130 occurrences of the *ša-šēpi* phrase, only 17 are set in a chariotry context (LÚ.GIŠ.GIGIR *ša-šēpi*). The reason is that on the more than 600 known sculptures and sculpture fragments of Sennacherib there is not a single chariot depicted with the exception of of the royal chariot. Accordingly the chariot arm was not represented at this time at all (see later).

The intermingling and merging of the two phrases used in the bodyguard context can be observed after the army reform of Sennacherib. At that time the *qurbūtu šēpēya*¹⁵¹ appears, later on the *qurbūtu ša-šēpi*¹⁵² and its chariotry counterpart, the *qurbūtu šēpi ša narkabte* (GIŠ.GIGIR),¹⁵³ and *qurbūtu ša-šēpi* LÚ.GIGIR DU₈.MEŠ (of open chariotry).¹⁵⁴ Unfortunately it is not known that in contradiction to the relatively clear 8th century B.C. difference between the meaning and context of *qurbūtu* and *ša-šēpi*, which changes happened in the 7th century B.C.

¹⁴³ BARNETT-BLEIBTREU-TURNER 1998, nos 278–279, 282–283.

¹⁴⁴ These shields certainly got a polished metal (probably bronze, or even silver) cover. It is known, that the Assyrian bronze and iron crested helmets were decorated with pseudo-rivets even when the helmets were made of a single piece of bronze, or were made with a different technique. See for example the Karlsruhe Assyrian bronze helmet with its repoussé pseudo-rivets (DEZSŐ 2001, Cat. no. 13, pls 18–19), or the Nimrud iron helmet fragments, on which the rivets were symbolized by bronze inlay decoration (DEZSŐ 2001, 47–55, Cat. nos. 16–31, pls 25–43).

¹⁴⁵ MALBRAN-LABAT 1982, 52–53, 141–145.

¹⁴⁶ DALLEY-POSTGATE 1984, nos 99–101.

¹⁴⁷ DALLEY-POSTGATE 1984, no. 103.

¹⁴⁸ FALES-POSTGATE 1995, no. 126 (ADD 855); DALLEY-POSTGATE 1984, 43–45.

¹⁴⁹ KWASMAN 1988, no. 369 (ADD 236), R. 8.

¹⁵⁰ FALES-POSTGATE 1995, no. 36 (ADD 1036), R. I:6.

¹⁵¹ LUCKENBILL 1924, 36, III:81

¹⁵² MATTILA 2002, 100 (ADD 177), 6–7 (644 B.C.).

¹⁵³ FALES-POSTGATE 1992, 152 (ADD 971), R. I':4'.

¹⁵⁴ FALES-POSTGATE 1992, 154 (ADD 970 + ADD 1138), R. II':21'.

Whether the difference between the two categories survived, or as the fused *qurbūtu ša-šēpi* phrase suggests, the two types of guards merged, and after that only a single type of bodyguard existed¹⁵⁵ is still a question.

Summing up it can be assumed that in the Neo-Assyrian cuneiform sources two phrases – *qurbūtu* and *ša-šēpi* – were used in a “bodyguard” context. The latter probably designated the infantry bodyguard. While on the palace reliefs of Sennacherib in addition to the armoured spearmen (Fig. 5.80) unarmoured Judaeans/Israeli (Fig. 5.86) and Assyrian (Fig. 5.87) spearmen appear in this capacity, on the sculptures of Assurbanipal there are at least five types of differently equipped bodyguard units shown (Fig. 5.88–92).

II. CAVALRY

One of the most important chapters of the military history of Assyria, and of the Near East is the development of the cavalry as an independent arm of the army. Although the know-how of horse riding was known as early as the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.,¹⁵⁶ the cavalry, as an independent, regular arm of an army can be identified for the first time in Assyria. In addition to the earlier Near Eastern “mounted messenger” use of the horsemen, the first representations of the cavalry as a fighting arm appears on the palace reliefs of Assurnasir-pal II (883–859 B.C.). It is obvious, that the first Assyrian (and Near Eastern) cavalry units were established not by Assurnasir-pal II, and that other Near Eastern people had cavalry units at that time. The horse-breeding people of the Zagros and Armenian Mountains certainly used cavalry units in their troops. The first representation of this foreign cavalry was on the palace relief’s of Assurnasir-pal II, as fleeing horsemen pursued by the Assyrian chariotry.¹⁵⁷ On this scene an Assyrian chariot (perhaps the king himself) is pressing six enemy horsemen equipped with a bow and a sword. The place of the evolution of horsemanship and the cavalry is unknown, but it probably happened somewhere in the Armenian Mountains – Zagros Mountains – Assyria triangle. But Assyria became the power where, in the course of its progress, the cavalry developed into an independent arm of the army. The 9th century B.C. Assyrian royal inscriptions mention large numbers of enemy horsemen. It is known from the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.), that in the battle of Qarqar (853 B.C.) the coalition of the 12 kings deployed 1200 horsemen from Damascus and 700 horsemen from Hamath against the Assyrian army.¹⁵⁸ The same king mentions that Marduk-mudammiq, king of Namri sent large numbers of cavalry against him in a battle.¹⁵⁹ At the same time Shalmaneser III boasts that he had horses for 2002 chariots and equipped further 5542 horsemen for the service of his country.¹⁶⁰ His successor, Shamshi-Adad V (823–811 B.C.) mentions in his royal inscriptions, that – when he defeated Marduk-balatsu-iqbi in the battle fought near the Daban River – he captured 100 chariots and 200 horsemen from his enemy,¹⁶¹ and indeed, he captured 140 horsemen of the Median Hanasiruka as well.¹⁶²

The Assyrians developed those different uses of the cavalry on which the cavalry traditions of later ages were based. The cavalry was divided into lancers and horse archers at the latest during the reign of Assurbanipal, and the armoured cavalryman appeared in the Assyrian army as well. On the Assyrian palace reliefs all the important fields of the cavalry’s use can be detected. Furthermore the same sculptures show how the cavalry overshadowed, and finally replaced the chariotry which became gradually an obsolete and redundant feature of the Assyrian army. The which the Assyrian cavalry played in the general development of the military use of horsemanship has not been fully realized. Only a few articles – based on cuneiform sources¹⁶³ or on the cavalry repre-

¹⁵⁵ At this point it has to be remarked, that the reconstruction of the structure of the Assyrian army from the written sources is a very complex process. Thousands of cuneiform documents have to be examined. For example, at least 28 different types/ranks/services of *qurbūtu* and 14 types/ranks/services of *ša-šēpi* are known from this period. This research exceeds the possibilities of this article and forms another field of study of the present author.

¹⁵⁶ RITTIG 1994, 156–160.

¹⁵⁷ MEUSZYNSKI 1981, Taf. 3, B–27; Nimrud, Northwest Palace, London, British Museum, WA124559.

¹⁵⁸ GRAYSON 1996, A.0.102.2, II:89b–102.

¹⁵⁹ GRAYSON 1996, A.0.102.6, IV:7–25.

¹⁶⁰ GRAYSON 1996, A.0.102.6, IV:47–48.

¹⁶¹ GRAYSON 1996, 185, A.0.103.1, IV:37–45.

¹⁶² GRAYSON 1996, 185, A.0.103.1, III:27b–36.

¹⁶³ DALLEY–POSTGATE 1984, 27–47; DALLEY 1985, 31–48.

sentations of palace reliefs¹⁶⁴ – were published. These studies, however, are highly specialized, and the general summaries of the military history of the Near East still do not lay proper stress on the cavalry developments mentioned above.

The Assyrian cavalry is represented on the palace reliefs of Assur-nasir-pal II in two contexts. In the first context the cavalryman is hunting. It is interesting that there are two horses depicted side by side on the scene, and the cavalryman rides the horse which is in cover, and he holds the reins of both horses. The empty/free horse is probably the reserve horse of the royal chariot running in front of them. The horseman wears the well known pointed helmet. There is a rounded (bronze) shield fastened to his back. He is equipped with a bow, a quiver, a sword and a tasseled spear with which he is stabbing a wild bull.¹⁶⁵ On another bull-hunting scene he is escorting the royal chariot.¹⁶⁶ A similar horseman appears on a third sculpture, on which he is leading the reserve horse of the royal chariot.¹⁶⁷

The character of the second context is clearly military, and shows the employment possibilities of the early Assyrian cavalry. There are two cavalymen fighting in a pair on one of the palace reliefs of Assur-nasir-pal II. One of them – an archer wearing pointed helmet – is shooting with his bow, while the other – equipped with rounded bronze shield, sword and spear and wearing a hemispherical helmet with earflaps – holds the reins of both horses.¹⁶⁸ The garment of the archers is decorated, they have no armour, only a wide belt probably made of bronze. On this sculpture two pairs of such cavalymen are chasing the fleeing enemy.

The similarity to chariot warfare is obvious: the chariot warrior (the archer) uses his weapon, while the chariot driver/third man (shield-bearer) holds the reins and/or protects him with his shield. At this point one of the most important reasons for the development of the cavalry can be detected. An Assyrian chariot was pulled by two, three or even four horses, and in an optimal case had a crew of three:¹⁶⁹ the chariot warrior, the chariot driver and the ‘third man’ (shield-bearer). The warrior – horse ratio in this case is 1:2 or 1:3. The role of the shield-bearer ‘third man’ in the battle is questionable. In close combat, and only then, he might have played an active role in the fight. The 1:2 or 1:3 warrior – horse ratio is very uneconomical, because horses are very expensive (not only their acquisition and breeding, but their breaking in to the chariot, their continuous exercising, too). Furthermore if a chariot horse got a wound in a battle, the other horses and the chariot crew could easily become useless. Similarly, if the chariot warrior got a wound, the chariot (with its horses and the remaining members of the crew) could easily lose the majority of its fighting efficiency.¹⁷⁰ In contrast, in case of the cavalry the warrior – horse ratio was the ideal 1:1. This was the most economical use of the horse. Moreover there was no need for the expensive chariot, repair of which was probably difficult. In addition to this, the cavalry was a much more flexible arm, it could be deployed on difficult terrains (muddy ground, rivers, watercourses, hilly and mountainous country, forest, etc.), where the chariot was useless.

The palace reliefs of Assur-nasir-pal II show a transitional phase of the evolution of the cavalry, the departure from the chariotry, and the advent of independent cavalry. Still there is the shield-bearer horseman beside the horse archer, but it is obvious, that this shield-bearing spearman’s fighting efficiency was of full value. They are two cavalymen, probably with the same fighting efficiency and with the possibility of independent fighting capacity. Moreover, in close combat they ideally complemented each other.

The Balawat Gates of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) display several possibilities of the cavalry’s employment. There are galloping cavalymen riding in pairs, alternating with chariots represented in a battle scene, just when trampling the fleeing enemy infantry down. Both cavalymen wear a pointed helmet. One of them is shooting with his bow, while the other is protecting him with his rounded (bronze) shield.¹⁷¹ The same scene is repeated on another band, but the cavalry spearman riding side by side the horse archer is stabbing an enemy infantryman with his spear.¹⁷² Further cavalymen are represented marching behind chariots. On this scene the cavalymen are depicted in pairs and alone. Those, who are marching alone (both archers and shield-bearing

¹⁶⁴ NOBLE 1990, 61–68.

¹⁶⁵ LAYARD 1853b, pl. 32.

¹⁶⁶ LAYARD 1853b, pl. 11.

¹⁶⁷ LAYARD 1853b, pl. 21.

¹⁶⁸ LAYARD 1853b, pl. 26.

¹⁶⁹ For a detailed study see the chapter on Chariotry.

¹⁷⁰ In this case the ‘third man’ could probably replace the chariot warrior to some extent.

¹⁷¹ BARNETT 1960, 167.

¹⁷² BARNETT 1960, 147, 167.

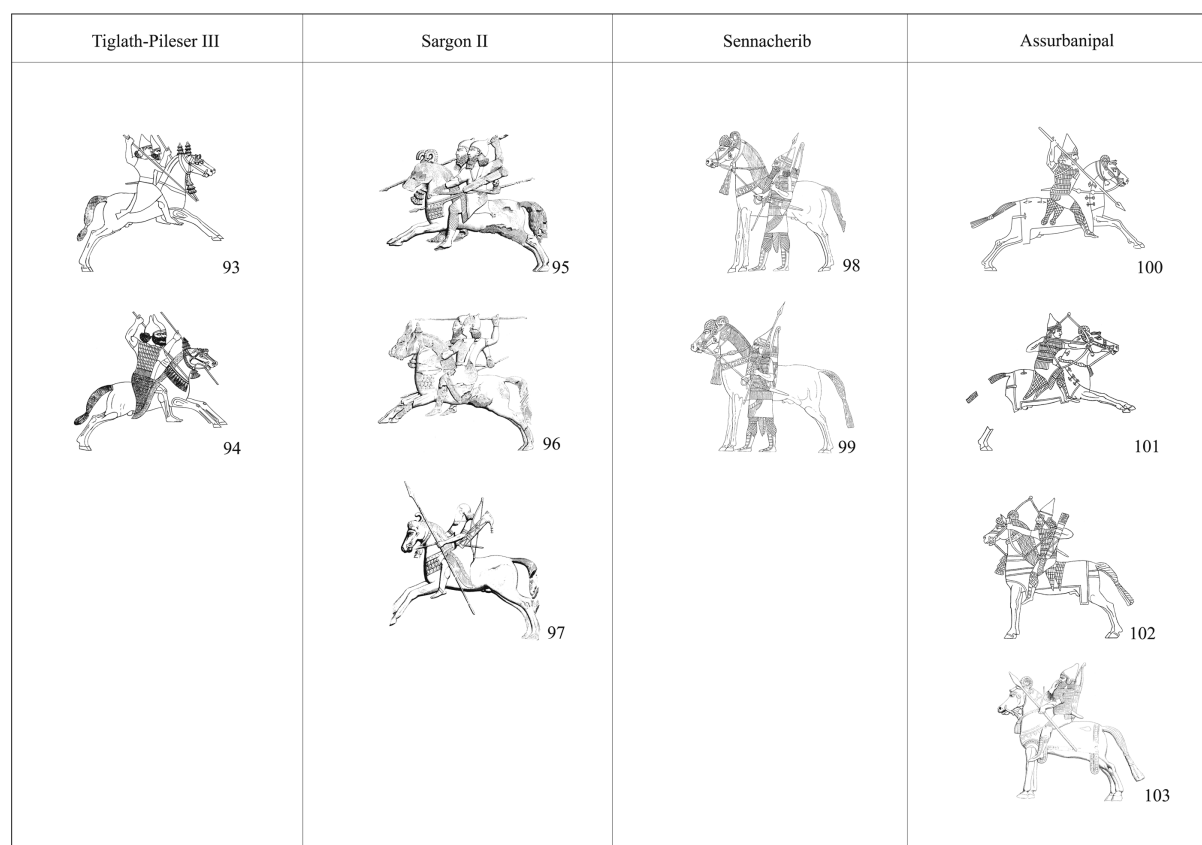


Fig. 6. Cavalry

93: Nimrud, Central Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. XIII (Ser. A. Lower Reg. Slab 1b, *Or. Dr.* III. Central III); 94: Nimrud, Central Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. LXVI (S.W: Palace, Wall n: Slab 3, *Or. Dr.* III. S.W. XV);

95: Khorsabad, Room II, slab 17. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 64; 96: Khorsabad, Room V, slab 4. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 88; 97: Khorsabad, Room V, slab 6. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 142;

98: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 24; 99: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 24;

100: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 46; 101: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 45; 102: Nineveh, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pl. 43; 103: Nineveh, North Palace. PLACE 1867, pl. 61

spearman) are leading reserve horses.¹⁷³ The next scene shows cavalymen (equipped again with bow and spear), who are crossing a river. Each of them is taking a reserve horse with him.¹⁷⁴ An interesting scene shows a cavalryman equipped with a spiked bronze shield, spear and bow, who is leading a reserve horse behind the royal chariot.¹⁷⁵ He is probably a high official or a member of the cavalry bodyguard unit.

The palace reliefs of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.) show both unarmoured and armoured cavalrymen. The unarmoured¹⁷⁶ cavalymen (*Fig. 6.93*) are depicted in a pair as chasing an Arab tribesman fleeing on a camel. The depiction of cavalymen in pairs in this case however does not mean that they fought in pairs, but that in the iconographical conception of the sculptures the masses of cavalymen fighting a battle (in a formation) were represented as pairs. They wear pointed helmets and tunics (with a loosely fitting skirt reaching to the knees). The horses are unarmoured, their trappings are decorated. The most important weapon of the cavalymen is the long cavalry spear, with which they are stabbing the enemy from an upper hand position. Their auxiliary weapon is the sword. A fragmentary sculpture of Tiglath-Pileser III shows a cavalry battle. Two Assyrian cavalrymen are stabbing a wounded enemy horseman, whose crested helmet may indicate his Urartian origin.¹⁷⁷ It is known from the royal inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III that in his 3rd *palû* (743 B.C.) in the territory of Kummuh, between Kishtan and Halpi the Assyrian army defeated the coalition army of Mati'il, king of Arpad, Sarduri II, king of Urartu, Sulumal, king of Meliddu, and Tarhularu, king of Gurgum. The Assyrian cavalry chased the fleeing Urartian king to his capital, Turushpa, and won a battle in front of the gates against the Urartians.¹⁷⁸ It is possible, that this scene depicts an episode of this campaign.

The first armoured spearman appeared on the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III (*Fig. 6.94*). Their equipment differs from the equipment of the unarmoured cavalymen in their scale armour, and their loosely fitting armoured skirt reaching to the knees. On the palace reliefs of Tiglath-Pileser III all the cavalymen are barefooted. They wear pointed helmets with earflaps. With their long cavalry spear they are stabbing an enemy horseman from an upper hand position. Unfortunately the front part of the figure of the enemy horseman is missing, so it is impossible to identify his nationality.

On the palace reliefs of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.) the number of depicted cavalymen grows significantly (10.2% of the represented soldiers are cavalymen).¹⁷⁹ The large number of cuneiform sources proves that this high percentage is not simply a distortion originating from the iconographical conception of the sculptures. These cuneiform texts testify that huge numbers of horses were obtained from booty, tribute, taxes, audiency gifts, and from (royal) merchants. Some texts list horses, which were mustered on reviews of the Assyrian army leaving for a campaign. One of the texts lists 2207 horses and 177 mules,¹⁸⁰ a Borsippa muster reviews 3477 horses and mules,¹⁸¹ a third text however mentions 1523 horses and mules.¹⁸² Nevertheless these texts list not only horses, but hundreds of cavalry and chariotry officers as well. Five Nimrud texts¹⁸³ mention for example high ranking officials of the cavalry (bodyguard) (*mušarkisāni ša pēthal qurubte*), who were responsible for the replacement and provision of horses in the provinces.¹⁸⁴ A further administrative document lists North Syrian and Babylonian cavalymen, chariot drivers and 'third men' according to their provinces. This list is probably a registration of those soldiers of the Assyrian effective force who were deployed in the provinces. The list sums up 1669 cavalymen, 577+ chariot drivers and 1164 'third men'.¹⁸⁵

The cavalry on the palace reliefs of Sargon II is usually depicted in pairs. The trappings of their unarmoured horses is decorated (*Fig. 6.95–96*). The cavalymen are unarmoured, too, wear a pointed helmet and a tunic ending in a loosely fitting skirt reaching to the knees. The saddle was unknown at the time, and the Assyrian

¹⁷³ BARNETT 1960, 143.

¹⁷⁴ BARNETT 1960, 161.

¹⁷⁵ BARNETT 1960, 161.

¹⁷⁶ BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pls XIII–XIV, Ser. A. Lower Reg. Slab 1b, *Or. Dr.* Central III. It has to be mentioned that the original drawing of A. H. Layard shows unarmoured cavalymen, but on the photography the outlines of the scales of a scale armour may probably be seen.

¹⁷⁷ BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pls LXIV–LXV.

¹⁷⁸ TADMOR 1994, Ann. 17, *Stele IB*: 21'–43', *Summ.* 1: 20–23.

¹⁷⁹ The same number is 4.6% on the sculptures of Tiglath-Pileser III, 9.5% on the sculptures of Sennacherib, and 5.6% on the sculptures of Assurbanipal.

¹⁸⁰ DALLEY–POSTGATE 1984, no. 98.

¹⁸¹ DALLEY–POSTGATE 1984, no. 103.

¹⁸² DALLEY–POSTGATE 1984, no. 108A.

¹⁸³ DALLEY–POSTGATE 1984, nos 99, 100, 101, 102, 108.

¹⁸⁴ PARKER 1961, ND 2836 + 2730.

¹⁸⁵ PARKER 1961, ND 2619.

ians used animal skins as a kind of ‘saddle cloth’. Their main offensive weapon is the long cavalry spear, but they are equipped with bow, quiver and sword as well. An important development in the evolution of the cavalry was that the cavalymen stabbed with their spear not only from the upper hand position, but from the lower hand position as well. The long cavalry lance, which was designed for thrusting, will emerge later from this use. Since the cavalymen are equipped with a spear and bow as well, they may have been a kind of “regular cavalry” intended for universal purposes.

The question of royal bodyguards has already been discussed in the previous chapter. It is known from the cuneiform documents of Sargon II that the *qurbūtu* was a confidential representative or plenipotentiary of the king, who in certain cases could give orders even to governors and other officials.¹⁸⁶ During the reign of Sargon II – in the absence of an infantry context – these *qurbūtu*-s can be identified as a type of cavalry bodyguard or escort of the king. This seems to be reinforced by the group of texts mentioned above, which list supply officers (*mušarkisāni*) belonging to the high ranking officer category (*rabūti*), and their subaltern officers (*rab kisri/rab urâte*).¹⁸⁷ This cavalry bodyguard theory is supported by the description of the 8th campaign of Sargon II. The inscription mentions, that in the battle of Wauš(*Ú-a-uš*) Sargon II himself led the charge of the Assyrian cavalry against the Urartian army of Rusa. Sargon II was escorted by the cavalry regiment (*kitullu perru*) of Sin-ahu-usur, the brother of the king. This unit escorted the king under all circumstances, and did not budge from his side, neither in enemy nor in friendly country.¹⁸⁸ Probably Sin-ahu-usur was the commander of the cavalry bodyguard. The same inscription mentions furthermore that the king led an expeditionary force to capture the city of Musasir, consisting of 1000 cavalry, archers and spearmen.¹⁸⁹ This cavalry unit of 1000 horsemen is obviously the regiment of Sin-ahu-usur mentioned above, the cavalry bodyguard (*pēthal qurubte*), or at least one of its regiments.¹⁹⁰

The events of the 8th campaign of Sargon II were depicted on the sculptures of Room XIII of the Khorsabad palace. On the sculptures there are three interesting cavalymen (Fig. 6.97), who are riding in a hill-country (probably Urartu). One of them is escorting the chariot of the king, two others are trampling upon the defeated enemy. Their equipment differs completely from the equipment of other horsemen.¹⁹¹ The trappings of their horses are similarly decorated, but they do not wear helmets. Their garment is the same kind: their tunics end in a loose-fitting skirt reaching to the knees. The trimming of their skirt is decorated with a rectangular border motif. Their weaponry consist of a spear, a sword, a bow, and a unique, decorated quiver as well. This gives us the impression of notability. This type of horsemen is otherwise unknown from Assyrian sculptures. They are probably high officials of the royal entourage (who in other contexts were never represented on horseback), or the distinguished members of the royal cavalry bodyguard, amongst them Sin-ahu-usur, the brother of the king – obviously not in battle dress.

The units of the chariotry bodyguard (*narkabat qurubte*)¹⁹² and the cavalry bodyguard (*pēthal qurubte*)¹⁹³ are also known from the reign of later kings. One of the inscriptions of Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.) mentions the two elite units.¹⁹⁴ Several members of the cavalry bodyguard are known from the administrative documents.¹⁹⁵ One of these texts is a long list, which distributes booty amongst the palace personnel.¹⁹⁶ Here we find a cavalry officer (*rab mugi ša pēthalli*), a cavalry bodyguard (*pēthalli ša LÚ.qurbūte*) and another type of cavalry bodyguard, the *pēthalli šēpi*, which has no other known reference. The date of these texts, however, is uncertain. They could have been written any time during the reigns of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon or Assurbanipal.

¹⁸⁶ MALBRAN-LABAT 1982, 52–53, 141–145.

¹⁸⁷ DALLEY–POSTGATE 1984, nos 99, 100, 101, 102, 108.

¹⁸⁸ THUREAU-DANGIN 1912, lines 132–133.

¹⁸⁹ THUREAU-DANGIN 1912, lines 320–321.

¹⁹⁰ An interesting story appears in Xenophon’s, *Κύρου παιδεία* IV, 6, 2: Gobryas an old Assyrian official, who used to be the most devoted friend of the Assyrian king, and who used to put at the disposal of the Assyrian king 1000 cavalymen, surrendered to Cyrus, and became his most valuable general, who conquered Babylon. It seems to the present author that this story (with further interesting details!) is a *topos* originated from Assyria, and was transplanted into a Babylonian context. Gobryas (an old Assyrian) might

well have been the commander of the royal bodyguard (obviously the most devoted friend of the Assyrian king), who commanded 1000 cavalymen, which might have been a standard unit size of the Assyrian royal cavalry bodyguard. For the role and background of Gobryas see PARPOLA 2003, 339–350, esp. 343–345.

¹⁹¹ BOTTA–FLANDIN 1849, pls. 142–143.

¹⁹² DALLEY–POSTGATE 1984, no. 103.

¹⁹³ DALLEY–POSTGATE 1984, nos 99–101.

¹⁹⁴ BORGER 1956, 106, §68, Gottesbrief, lines 16–17.

¹⁹⁵ See for example: FALES–POSTGATE 1995, no. 110, 2: *Nabû-šarru-usur* BAD.HAL *qur-ub*.

¹⁹⁶ FALES–POSTGATE 1995, no. 36.

The cavalry and chariotry played an important role in the army of Sargon II, which is proved not only by their highest representational proportion among the sculptures of Assyrian kings, by the thousands of horses listed in the horse lists, or by the descriptions of the cavalry bodyguard in the 8th campaign, but by other royal inscriptions of Sargon II, as well. As has already been mentioned, Sargon II enlisted in the *kisir šarrūti* (the royal corps of the Assyrian army) on his first campaign 200 chariots and 600 horsemen¹⁹⁷ from Qarqar, on his 5th campaign 50 chariots and 200 horsemen¹⁹⁸ from Carcemish.

The proportion of the cavalry on the sculptures of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.) is also high. The 91 represented cavalymen give 9.5% of all the soldiers depicted on the sculptures. One of the reasons of this high ratio is that on the more than 600 known sculptures and sculpture fragments there is not a single chariot represented with the exception of the royal chariot. This probably means that the chariotry was overshadowed by the cavalry represented in large numbers, whose presence became permanent (*Fig. 6.98–99*). The horses are unarmoured, the cavalymen wear pointed helmet and scale armour. The skirt of their garment became tighter, and from that time the Assyrian cavalymen wore the characteristic military boots. Their weaponry consisted of a sword, a spear, and a combined bow case and quiver. All these changes, and the standardization of the arms and armour of the heavy infantry and cavalry can be connected to a possible army reform of Sennacherib.¹⁹⁹

The palace reliefs of Sennacherib show the Assyrian cavalry in several contexts. The cavalry is represented as standing on alert and watching a siege;²⁰⁰ as fighting a cavalry battle in the mountains;²⁰¹ fighting a battle (with spears and bows) with the enemy infantry;²⁰² as leading their horses dismounted in the bed of a mountain brook;²⁰³ as marching in the mountains in a single file;²⁰⁴ as marching in a plain among palm-trees in a single file;²⁰⁵ and as standing guard dismounted in the escort of the king.²⁰⁶ These representations cover the main fields of the employment of cavalry on the whole. Show us furthermore the use of cavalry in various characters of the terrain, their capacity of quick deployment and to fight battles with cavalry and infantry as well. The cavalymen depicted in the escort of the king (*Fig. 6.98–99*) were probably the members of the cavalry bodyguard (*pēthal qurubte*).

The evolution of Assyrian cavalry reached its height during the reign of Assurbanipal (668–627 B.C.). The two most important results of this evolution were the appearance of horse armour, and the separation of the cavalry spearmen (*Fig. 6.100*) and cavalry archers (*Fig. 6.101–102*) in the representational tradition. The use of horse armour probably improved the efficiency of the cavalry, since it reduced the loss in horses, increased the safety of the cavalry in battles, and improved the supply of horses during campaigns.

On the palace reliefs of Assurbanipal the horses were covered by thick leather armours. The armour covered the neck and body of the horse, and hung down to its hind legs. It is shown on the sculptures quite well that the armour was made of separate pieces, which were fastened together with hooks on the neck, breast, back and croup of the horse (*Fig. 6.100–101*), thus only the forehead and the legs were left free. These small surfaces offered more difficult targets for the enemy's spears and arrows, than the breast and side of the horse. Furthermore, the horse's forehead could have been protected by a bronze plaque. The horse armour greatly improved the efficiency of the cavalry as an arm, as well.

The armour of the cavalymen is the same as on the palace reliefs of Sennacherib: they wore pointed helmets, which – since the reign of Sennacherib – could have been made of iron as well.²⁰⁷ Their upper body was

¹⁹⁷ FUCHS 1994, Display Inscription, lines 35–6.

¹⁹⁸ FUCHS 1994, Annales, line 75.

¹⁹⁹ See for example the texts listing the “new corps of Sennacherib”: FALES–POSTGATE 1992, 3 (ADD 853, obv. I:6'), 4 (ADD 854, obv. I:1'-rev. II:6'). The high-ranking officials (and their troops) listed in these documents were assigned to Sennacherib. These texts mention him without a royal title, which means that he was probably the crown prince at that time. From the reign of Sargon II or Sennacherib in the royal court high ranking military officers were assigned not only to the king and the chief eunuch (the commander of the *kisir šarrūti*), but to the crown prince and the queen mother as well. See for example FALES–POSTGATE 1992, 5 (ADD 857).

²⁰⁰ BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, nos 234, 245, 246, 369–370.

²⁰¹ BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, nos 66, 68.

²⁰² BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, nos 101–104, 108, 110–111, 121–122, 129.

²⁰³ BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, nos 456, 518.

²⁰⁴ BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, nos 94.

²⁰⁵ BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, nos 650.

²⁰⁶ BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, nos 68, 86, 87.

²⁰⁷ DEZSŐ–CURTIS 1991, 105–126, DEZSŐ 2001, 33–36.

covered with scale armour, which could have been made of iron since the early 8th century B.C. This scale armour covered part of the groin and waist as well. They wore Assyrian military boot. The saddle was unknown and the cavalymen sat on the back of the horses on animal skins.

On the palace reliefs of Assurbanipal the cavalry archers and cavalry spearmen are consequently distinguished from each other. This means that the two arms had been separated irrevocably in the Assyrian army. On the representation of the battle of Til-Tuba (653 B.C.) the cavalry spearmen (*Fig. 6.100*) and cavalry archers (*Fig. 6.101*) are depicted as fighting close combat with the fleeing Elamite infantry and horsemen. With the help of the Assyrian infantry they are squeezing the enemy into the river.²⁰⁸ Another Assyrian cavalry archer is shown in an interesting context: he is shooting an arrow to a besieged citywall from horseback (*Fig. 6.102*). Further cavalry spearmen are shown lined up during a celebration.²⁰⁹ The same series of sculptures show a walled court on which grooms are holding horses on reins. The building was probably an arsenal on the court of which horses were mustered.²¹⁰

On the sculptures of Assurbanipal cavalry officers can be identified as well. One of the most interesting representations is a siege-scene, on which a cavalry officer (or an infantry officer on horseback?) is shouting orders or calling upon the enemy to surrender (*Fig. 6.103*). His equipment is similar to the equipment of the cavalymen, but the border of his horse armour is decorated, and he is also provided with a spear and a bow. This combined weaponry might be the attribute of the officers on the sculptures. Cavalymen or cavalry bodyguards escorting the king²¹¹ are depicted on the relief slab which shows the submission of the Elamites after the battle of Til-Tuba (653 B.C.).²¹²

The history of the Assyrian cavalry has been traced from the gradual replacement of the (redundant) chariot by the cavalry to the separation of cavalry spearmen and cavalry archers.

III. CHARIOTRY

From the appearance of the light, horse-drawn chariot in the second third of the 2nd millennium B.C., archaeologists followed its development with attention. In addition to the comprehensive monographs and studies,²¹³ a lot of articles have been written on questions of detail, such as the problem of horse-harness,²¹⁴ the crew,²¹⁵ and the territorial development of chariots.²¹⁶ Especially the history of Assyrian chariotry was followed by distinctive attention.²¹⁷ A very interesting issue is the question of the Hittite/Mitannian and Middle-Assyrian tractates on horse-breeding.²¹⁸

The earliest known representation of an Assyrian chariot appeared on a cylinder seal impression of Ninurta-tukulti-Assur (c. 1133 B.C.),²¹⁹ where we can see two figures standing on a light, open-sided chariot with six-spoked wheels. The next chariot representation, on the White Obelisk²²⁰ (which can be dated probably to the

²⁰⁸ Ninive, Southwest Palace. LAYARD 1853b, pls 45–46; BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, no. 383.

²⁰⁹ BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, no. 313.

²¹⁰ BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, no. 309.

²¹¹ BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, no. 282.

²¹² BARNETT–BLEIBTREU–TURNER 1998, no. 384–385.

²¹³ CHILDE 1951, 177–194; FARBER–LITTAUER–CROUWEL 1976–80, 336–351; FITZGERALD 1954, 95–96; HORN 1995; LITTAUER–CROUWEL 1979; MOOREY 1986, 196ff.; NAGEL 1966; PIGGOTT 1968, 266–318; PIGGOTT 1979, 3–17; PIGGOTT 1983; POTRATZ 1941–1944, 1–39; POTRATZ 1970, 191–194.

²¹⁴ DE SCHAUSENSEE–DYSON 1983, 59–77; GROPP 1981, 95–123; LITTAUER–CROUWEL 1977a, 1–8; LITTAUER–CROUWEL 1977b, 95–105; LITTAUER–CROUWEL 1979, 107–120; LITTAUER–CROUWEL 1980, 169–171; LITTAUER–CROUWEL 1984, 41–51; LITTAUER–CROUWEL 1989, 111–161; MAASS 1987, 65–92; MAASS 1990, 7–23; ÖZGÜÇ 1989, 409–419; SEIDL 1986, 229–236; SEIDL–CALMEYER

1985, 309–314; WESTERN 1973, 91–94; WINTER 1980; YILDIRIM 1987, 469–496.

²¹⁵ ALBRIGHT 1930–1931, 217–221; REVIV 1972, 218–228; MASTIN 1979, 125–154.

²¹⁶ CROUWEL 1987, 101–118; DEL OLMO LETE 1978, 47–51; HROUDA 1994, 53–57; ÖZGEN 1983, 111–131; ÖZGEN 1984, 91–154; SCHULMAN 1963, 75–98; SCHULMAN 1980, 105–153; STUDNICZKA 1907, 147–196; ZACCAGNINI 1977, 21–28.

²¹⁷ DALLEY 1985, 31–48; HROUDA 1963, 155–158; LITTAUER 1976, 217–226; MACGINNIS 1989, 184–192; MAYER 1979b, 175–186; NOBLE 1990, 61–68; PONGRATZ–LEISTEN–DELLER–BLEIBTREU 1992, 291–356; POSTGATE 1990, 35–38; WOLFF 1936–1937, 231–235.

²¹⁸ KAMMENHUBER 1988, 35–51; STARKE 1995.

²¹⁹ NAGEL 1966, Abb. 40; MADHLOOM 1970, V, 2a.

²²⁰ BÖRKER–KLAHN 1982, 179–180, no. 132, pls 132a–d.

reign of Assur-nasir-pal I, 1050–1032 B.C.), shows a similar picture. The next depiction of Assyrian chariots is a fresco fragment from the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta II (888–884 B.C.), but the systematic research of Assyrian chariots became possible only with the study of the palace reliefs of Assur-nasir-pal II (883–859 B.C.).

On the sculptures of Assur-nasir-pal II the light, open-sided chariot was replaced by the heavier chariot, the parapet of which was closed. The relatively small and low chariots were always drawn by three horses harnessed with ornamented horse-furniture.²²¹ One of the horses was probably a spare horse, but the eight reins handled by the chariot driver would suggest a fourth animal, in which case the extra horses were attached only by traces. This provided the necessary manoeuvrability needed for the chariotry, which was still a light and fast pursuing arm.²²² The wheels were six-spoked, and the two quivers fastened onto the side of the chariot box were filled with arrows, and carried two axes. The open back of the chariot box was closed by a characteristic spiked bronze shield which was decorated with an animal headed protome. An auxiliary weapon, a tasseled spear was fastened to the back of the chariot box.

Chariots appear on the palace-reliefs of Assur-nasir-pal II in five contexts. 1. Hunting scenes: the king is hunting lion²²³ or wild bull²²⁴ with bow and arrow. A third scene shows the crown-prince also hunting lion with bow and arrow.²²⁵ 2. The king is shooting with his bow at a besieged city-wall, while his chariot with its driver is waiting in the background.²²⁶ 3. Crossing a river (Euphrates). Three chariots (one of them is the royal chariot) are shown in this scene embarked on boats or rafts. The horses are swimming with their bridles attached to the stern of the boat.²²⁷ 4. Battle scenes. On the first battle scene the royal chariot and two other Assyrian chariots are pursuing the enemy, who are fleeing towards a besieged city.²²⁸ The royal chariot is engaged in the pursuit of an enemy chariot. The enemy chariot is drawn by two horses, its 8-spoked wheels are smaller than the wheels of its Assyrian counterpart, and its two-men crew hit by arrows is dropping out from the chariot-box. In the royal chariot we can observe the third crew member, the shield-bearer (Akkadian *tašlišu* = ‘third man’), equipped with the characteristic rounded, spiked bronze shield decorated with an animal-head protome. Behind the royal chariot there are two further Assyrian chariots, which are trampling on an enemy chariot. The crew of the Assyrian chariots consist of a driver and a chariot warrior. The most interesting features of the scene and these two chariots are the two standards (rounded emblem attached to long staff) fastened to the chariot-boxes. The first shows the symbol of Adad, the second probably displays the symbol of Nergal. These two standards probably designated those two chariots which led the two wings of the Assyrian battle order. As Menzel,²²⁹ Dalley and Postgate²³⁰ have pointed out, particular units of the Assyrian army marched under the aegis of particular deities.²³¹ They suggested that Ishtar was patron of the king’s immediate entourage, maybe patron of the body-guard, or patron of the royal troops occupying a central position in the battle order. The same scene appears on another relief slab, which shows the two chariots trampling down the fleeing enemy infantry.²³² A third battle scene also shows two Assyrian chariots trampling down fleeing enemy infantry.²³³ Both chariots are drawn by three heavily armoured horses. There is a three member crew on each chariot: the chariot driver, the chariot warrior and the shield-bearer. All of them wear pointed helmets, and two of them, the chariot driver and the chariot warrior scale armour as well. A kind of scale armour hood – leaving only the eyes and nose free – is attached to the rim of the helmet. The short sleeved suit of scale armour probably reached down to the knees. The shield-bearer is unarmoured, he only wears the pointed helmet. The third Assyrian chariot, the royal chariot is riding in front of them. The three armoured horses of the chariot are trampling down an enemy chariot. The enemy chariot warrior and his two horses – hit by arrows – are collapsing. The most interesting feature of the scene is that the enemy chariot has 12-spoked wheels. Neither the king nor the crew of his chariot wear scale armour. A further battle scene shows an

²²¹ DE SCHAUENSEE–DYSON 1983, 59–77.

²²² LITTAUER 1976, 224.

²²³ LAYARD 1853b, pl. 10.

²²⁴ LAYARD 1853b, pl. 11.

²²⁵ LAYARD 1853b, pl. 31.

²²⁶ LAYARD 1853b, pl. 18.

²²⁷ LAYARD 1853b, pls 15–16.

²²⁸ LAYARD 1853b, pls 13–14.

²²⁹ MENZEL 1981, vol. II, T. 85.

²³⁰ DALLEY–POSTGATE 1984, 40–41.

²³¹ We do not have detailed information on the marching and battle order of ancient Near Eastern armies, except for an extract from the Epic of Zimri-lim (DURAND *et al.* 1988, 393) saying that Adad goes on the left wing of the battle order and Erra (Nergal) goes on the right. See furthermore SCURLOCK 1997, 491–517.

²³² LAYARD 1853b, pl. 27.

²³³ LAYARD 1853b, pl. 28; BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pls. CXVI–CXVII.

Assyrian (probably royal) chariot which is pursuing six fleeing enemy horsemen on a riverbank.²³⁴ The horsemen (Medes?) are equipped with bows and swords. 5. Procession after a victory, receiving submissives. One of the scenes shows the king standing on his chariot with a driver and a baldachin-bearer. Behind the chariot there is a cavalryman with two horses, and behind the cavalryman the two standard-bearing chariots.²³⁵

On the bronze bands of the Balawat Gates of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) the chariots appear as middle weight chariots with six-spoked wheels drawn by two horses. Three functions can be separated: the royal chariot, the standard-bearing chariots and the regular chariots of the army. All three types of chariots are similar. The royal chariot appears as waiting behind the king²³⁶ or attacking a besieged city.²³⁷ In this siege scene the king is shooting with his bow. He is escorted by the ‘third man’ who is defending him with a rounded, spiked bronze shield. The most complete scenes show all three types of chariots together: the royal chariot heads the line; followed by the two standard-bearing chariots and the regular chariots of the army. The crew of the regular chariots consists of a driver, and a chariot warrior who is usually equipped with a pointed helmet and a bow.²³⁸ In one case both the driver and the warrior wear a pointed helmet.²³⁹ The regular chariots appear on battle scenes independently as well. The chariot representations of the bronze bands of the Balawat Gates emphasize the versatility of the chariot arm: the vehicles appear driven uphill²⁴⁰ or crossing a river²⁴¹ on a pontoon bridge(?).

The representations always show chariots pursuing a fleeing enemy. The key question concerning the employment of the chariot (and partly the cavalry) is whether the chariot horses run against the enemy infantry standing in close order or not. A single horse probably gets out of the way. However the chariot or cavalry horses galloping in close order in a mass, could not swerve sideways, only stop short. The question is whether the enemy infantry standing in close order, and waiting for a chariotry or cavalry charge went on to the bitter end, and the cavalry charge broke under the opposition of their battleline, or the infantry line broke down under the pressure of the impending cavalry charge and fled. If a disciplined infantry holds the battle line the chariotry or cavalry charge will probably break, the horses stop short, but the horses thrusting up in the back rows will push the first rows of horses into the battle line of the enemy.

9th century B.C. Assyrian royal inscriptions usually list the captured enemy chariots at the beginning of the booty lists. Adad-nerari II, (911–891 B.C.) in the *limmu* of Likberu (898 B.C.) marched against Hanigalbat for the fourth time, and captured a large number of horses and chariots.²⁴² Assur-nasir-pal II, for example in the *limmu* of Sha-ilima-damqa (879 B.C.) in the land of Bit-Zamani received equipped chariots, equipment for troops and horses, and 460 horses as tribute.²⁴³ When Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) fought a battle against the coalition of 12 Syrian kings at Qarqar (853 B.C.), the coalition army lined up 1200 chariots and 1200 horsemen of Hadad-ezer (Adad-idri), king of Damascus, 700 chariots and 700 horsemen of Irhuleni, king of Hamat, 2000 chariots of Ahab, king of Israel, 10 chariots from Irqanata, and 30 chariots of Adunu-Ba’alu, king of Sianu.²⁴⁴ The huge number of coalition chariots (3940) deployed in this battle is probably exaggerated, but shows the importance of the chariot arm in the 9th century armies of the Near East. The size of the Assyrian chariotry and cavalry in this battle is unknown, but Shalmaneser III crossed the Euphrates regularly with 120,000 soldiers. An inscription of Shalmaneser III mentioned above tells us that he had horses for 2002 chariots, and equipped further 5542 horsemen for the service of his country.²⁴⁵ These numbers are much more credible, since the inscription gives the number of Assyrian chariots and cavalry on the whole.

In addition to the manufacture of chariots and the breeding of the horses, other important sources of supply were the booty, and the tribute. It is known that in 840 B.C., when Shalmaneser III defeated Hazael, king of Damascus, he captured 1121 chariots and 470 horsemen in the enemy’s camp.²⁴⁶ His successor, Shamshi-Adad V (823–811 B.C.) captured 100 chariots and 200 horsemen, when in the Daban River battle defeated Marduk-

²³⁴ MEUSZYNSKI 1981, Taf. 3, B–27; Nimrud, Northwest Palace. London, British Museum, WA124559.

²³⁵ LAYARD 1853b, pls 21–22.

²³⁶ BARNETT 1960, 142.

²³⁷ BARNETT 1960, 142, 148, 149, 169.

²³⁸ BARNETT 1960, 157, 167.

²³⁹ BARNETT 1960, 147.

²⁴⁰ BARNETT 1960, 171.

²⁴¹ BARNETT 1960, 162.

²⁴² GRAYSON 1991, A.0.99.2, 49–60.

²⁴³ GRAYSON 1991, A.0.101.1, II:118b–125a.

²⁴⁴ GRAYSON 1996, 23, A.0.102.2, II:89b–102.

²⁴⁵ GRAYSON 1996, A.0.102.6, IV:47–48.

²⁴⁶ GRAYSON 1996, 48, A.0.102.8, I”–27”.

balatsu-iqbi.²⁴⁷ Unfortunately it is unknown whether the Assyrians in the 9th century only needed the chariots and horses, or enlisted the whole units with crew in the Assyrian army, as well. It can be assumed however that the 9th century B.C. importance of the chariot arm survived in the 8th century as well – whether as an arm of prestige, or as a servicable arm.

On the palace reliefs of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.) there are altogether eight chariots. Only the royal chariot can be identified on these representations. It is shown standing empty in a siege-scene. This heavy chariot with eight-spoked wheels is drawn by two armoured horses, whose armour is made of small metal plaques. A bronze shield is hanging on the back of the chariot box together with the spear of the king. The chariot driver wears an elaborate dress.²⁴⁸ The same empty chariot is shown in an other scene. The horses are unarmoured, but the chariot box is covered with rectangular metal plaques. The spear is shown at the back of the chariot box behind the driver.²⁴⁹ The same, or a very similar chariot can be seen on another sculpture.²⁵⁰ More than one chariot appear only on two sculptures. One of these two fragmentary sculptures shows the eight-spoked wheels of two chariots, one of them drawn by armoured horses.²⁵¹ The second scene is a procession scene showing the king on his chariot with the driver and a ‘baldachin-bearer’. In front of this chariot goes another chariot with eight-spoked wheels. Unfortunately on this broken slab only the wheels, the back of the chariot box and a single figure can be shown, who is definitely not the chariot driver.²⁵²

The only scene which shows the king in military context is a sculpture depicting a battle against the Arabs. The king is standing on his chariot (which has six-spoked wheels) in the company of his driver and ‘third man’. Both of them wear pointed helmets. The king is shooting with his bow at an Arab warrior, who is riding on the back of a collapsing camel. A bronze shield hangs on the back of the chariot box. The body and neck of the horses is covered with an armour made probably of leather and reinforced with rectangular metal plaques.²⁵³

On the Til-Barsip wall paintings the Assyrian chariot appears only in royal context. The royal chariot with large, 8-spoked wheels is shown in a hunting-scene. The king as archer is hunting lion from his chariot, while a horseman brings the spare horses, and two further chariots transport the lions brought down by the king.²⁵⁴ The other scene is a procession, which shows the king on his chariot with his chariot driver. The chariot is followed by a bodyguard and soldier leading the spare horses.²⁵⁵

On the palace reliefs of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.) the number of chariots increases greatly. On the palace reliefs of Sargon II the chariots appear in several contexts.

The royal chariot is shown in procession scenes. The chariot is 8-spoked, and is drawn by two horses (and a spare horse). In addition to the king and the driver a baldachin-bearer can also be seen on the vehicle. The five procession scenes²⁵⁶ show interesting similarities. The royal chariot is escorted in all cases by “noble horsemen”, who in the chapter on Cavalry were identified as the cavalry bodyguard (*pēthal qurubte*), the cavalry regiment (*kitullu perru*) of Sin-ahu-usur, the brother of the king. This regiment always escorted the king, and did not budge from his side neither in enemy nor in friendly country.²⁵⁷ One of these scenes (a procession to a park sanctuary?) shows at least three such horsemen behind the royal chariot. The first two riders are eunuchs, while the third rider wears the characteristic diadema (with two tassels) of the crown prince. It is an interesting question whether the third rider is the crown prince (Sennacherib) or the brother of the king, Sin-ahu-usur himself.²⁵⁸

Furthermore the royal chariot is represented in battle context as well (*Fig. 7.106*). The royal chariot is the same, but the king is accompanied by a driver and two ‘third men’ (shield bearers). They are unarmoured and all of them wear pointed helmets. The rim of the rounded bronze shield of the ‘third men’ is decorated with

²⁴⁷ GRAYSON 1996, 185, A.O.103.1, IV:37–45.

²⁴⁸ Nimrud, Central Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. IX.

²⁴⁹ Nimrud, Central Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. XLIII.

²⁵⁰ Nimrud, South-West Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. LXXXII, LXXXIII.

²⁵¹ Nimrud, South-West Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. LXXXI.

²⁵² Nimrud, South-West Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. LXVIII.

²⁵³ Nimrud, Central Palace. BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pl. XV.

²⁵⁴ THUREAU-DANGIN–DUNAND 1936, pl. LIII.

²⁵⁵ THUREAU-DANGIN–DUNAND 1936, pl. XLIX.

²⁵⁶ Procession to sanctuary/pavillon in a park (BOTTA–FLANDIN 1849, vol. II, pls 112–114); submission scene (BOTTA–FLANDIN 1849, vol. I, pls 53–54); siege scene (BOTTA–FLANDIN 1849, vol. I, pls 61–64); procession scene (BOTTA–FLANDIN 1849, vol. I, pls 71–73); Urartian campaign (BOTTA–FLANDIN 1849, vol. II, pls 142–143).

²⁵⁷ THUREAU-DANGIN 1912, lines 132–133.

²⁵⁸ BOTTA–FLANDIN 1849, vol. II, pls 112–114.

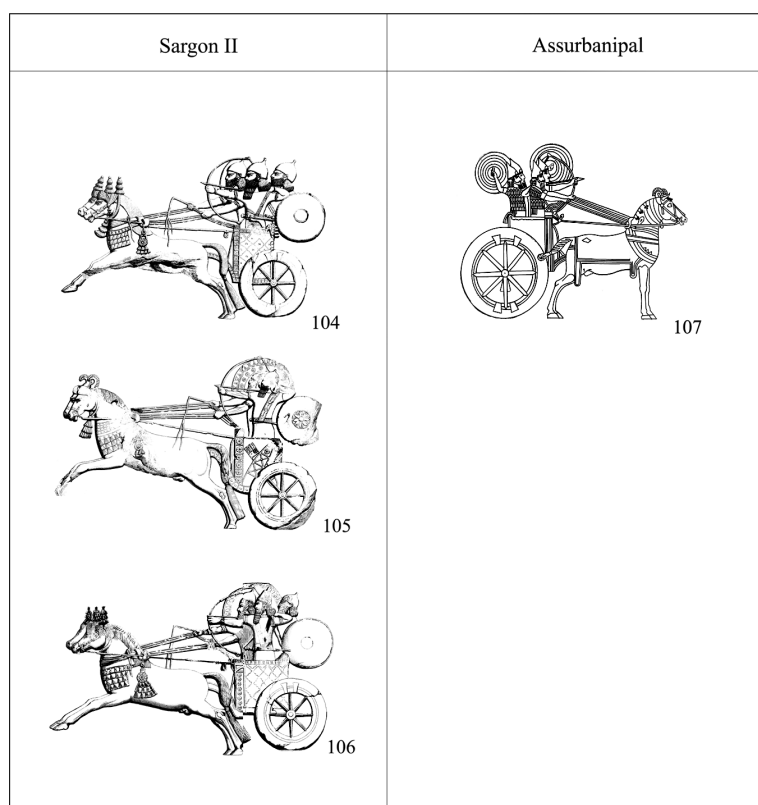


Fig. 7. Chariotry

104: Khorsabad, Room II, Door H, slab 1. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 76; 105: Khorsabad, Room II, slab 12. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 59bis; 106: Khorsabad, Room II, slab 18. BOTTA–FALNDIN 1849, pl. 65;

107: Nineveh, North Palace, Room V¹/T¹, slab A, BARNETT 1976, LXIX

geometric motifs. Behind the royal chariot there are two Assyrian chariots (*Fig. 7.105*) pursuing enemy cavalry.²⁵⁹ The other battle scene shows the royal chariot trampling down the fleeing enemy infantry. The crew of the chariot consists of the king, the driver and the ‘third man’. The driver and the ‘third man’ wear pointed helmet. It is interesting that the ‘third man’ (shield bearer) holds two decorated rounded bronze shields. Behind the royal chariot there are three Assyrian horsemen and an Assyrian chariot. The crew of this chariot consists of the chariot warrior, the driver and the ‘third man’. All of them are unarmoured and wear pointed helmets. The ‘third man’ holds two decorated rounded bronze shields.²⁶⁰

The other six battle scenes show the same chariots with 8-spoked wheels, and manned by a crew of three: the driver, the chariot warrior and the ‘third man’ (*Fig. 7.104*). The crew members are unarmoured and wear pointed helmets, and most of the scenes can be connected to the Western campaigns (721–720 B.C.) of Sargon II.²⁶¹ The chariots are accompanied by cavalry chasing the fleeing enemy.²⁶² A further battle scene shows an Assyrian chariot pursuing enemy. The members of the crew are unarmoured and wear pointed helmets. An interesting detail of the scene is that the ‘third man’ holds two decorated rounded bronze shields in his hands.²⁶³

²⁵⁹ BOTTA–FLANDIN 1849, vol. I, pls 58–59.

²⁶⁰ BOTTA–FLANDIN 1849, vol. I, pl. 65–67.

²⁶¹ FRANKLIN 1994, 255–275.

²⁶² BOTTA–FLANDIN 1849, vol. II, pls 92, 93, 94, 95–96, 97–98, 100.

²⁶³ BOTTA–FLANDIN 1849, vol. I, pl. 76.

An interesting chariot scene depicts two Assyrian chariots trampling the enemy down in a battle.²⁶⁴ The first chariot is unfortunately fragmentary, the crew missing. Only the 8-spoked wheel and part of the chariot box can be detected. A unique feature however is that there is a figure of a god (probably of Assur) shooting with his bow on the side of the chariot box. The figure was probably a protome applied onto the chariot box. This figure designated the status of the chariot as the leader of a unit or the leader of a wing of the battle order. Since the chariot behind this chariot is a wing-leader chariot with a divine standard (known from the 9th century chariots of Assur-nasir-pal II mentioned above) and with a crew of two (unarmoured driver and chariot warrior), this first chariot might be the other wing leader, or most probably the royal chariot leading the centre of the battle order. The protome figure of a god (probably of Assur) on the chariot box is unknown from other representations of regular or wing-leader chariots, and never appears on other representations of the royal chariot either. If the figure shows Assur, the chariot must be the royal chariot leading the charge, as known from the inscriptions of Sargon II.

There are several Akkadian terms designating officers and crew members of the chariotry. The study of cuneiform sources however exceeds the aim and possibilities of this paper, but a short overview helps us to understand the importance of the examination of written sources.

The most general term of ‘chariot man’ or ‘groom’ was probably the LÚ.GIŠ.GIGIR (*susānu*). At least 58 different types and variants of the term are known from Neo-Assyrian sources. 21 of them show that they were recruited on a territorial base. They served not only in the ranks of the regular chariotry but in the ranks of the bodyguard chariotry of the *qurbūtu* (LÚ.GIŠ.GIGIR *qurbūte*) and *ša-šēpi* (LÚ.GIŠ.GIGIR *ša-šēpi*) units. They had officers of different types: the LÚ.EN.GIŠ.GIGIR (*bēl mugerri*, ‘lord of the chariot’) is usually translated as ‘noble’ and simple as ‘chariot warrior’ or ‘chariot fighter’. The *šaknu* LÚ.GIŠ.GIGIR *tah-líp* (‘prefect of the *tahlipu* charioteers’) is a high ranking officer of a special type of chariotry. The prefect was probably the highest ranking officer, who might be active on the field.

The *mušarkisu* (‘recruitment officer’) was a high ranking officer, who was probably in charge of the supply and provision of horses²⁶⁵ on a territorial base.²⁶⁶ There are three types of *mušarkisāni* who can be reconstructed from 8th century B.C. Assyrian cuneiform sources: *mušarkisu ša GIŠ.GIGIR É.GAL* (‘recruitment officer of palace chariotry’), *mušarkisu ša GIŠ.GIGIR qur-ub-tú* (‘recruitment officer of *qurubtu* (bodyguard) chariotry’), and *mušarkisu EN GIŠ.GIGIR* (‘recruitment officer of chariot warrior(?) or the ‘lord of the chariot’’).

The *rab mūgi ša GIŠ.GIGIR* (‘officer of chariotry’) was a chariotry officer with an unknown scope of duties. This military rank is known only from a few administrative lists.

The *rab urâte* (‘team commander’): at least 11 types and variants of team commanders can be reconstructed (e.g. team commander of the chief eunuch, of the palace chariotry, of the prefect of stables, of the deportees (a unit?), etc.).

The *rab 50 GIŠ.GIGIR.MEŠ* (‘commander of 50 of the chariotry’) rank shows that the chariotry was organized in fifties.

The *raksu* (‘recruit’) term was used for the recruits of the chariotry as well. The *rab kisir ša lú-rak-su.GIGIR* (‘cohort commander of the recruits of chariotry’) rank shows that they were organized into recruit units.

The crew members of the chariot were as follows:

The *mukil appāte* (chariot driver): altogether at least 27 types and variants of the driver can be reconstructed (chariot driver of the king, crown prince, queen, palace, chief eunuch, *turtānu*, chief cupbearer, and other high officials, etc.) from Assyrian cuneiform sources.

The *māru damqu* (chariot warrior): altogether at least 13 types and variants of the chariot warrior are known from the cuneiform sources.

The *tašlišu* (‘third man’, shield bearer): at least 30 types and variants of the third man are known from the cuneiform sources. The most important types of third man are: third man of the king, queen, palace, chief eunuch, *turtānu*, chief cupbearer, and other high officials.

²⁶⁴ BOTTA–FLANDIN 1849, vol. I, pls 56–57.

²⁶⁶ PARKER 1961, ND 2386 + 2730.

²⁶⁵ DALLEY–POSTGATE 1984, 27–47.

It is important to know, that the crew members of the Assyrian chariots were organized into units separately, and not as chariot crews. Some texts (for example Nimrud Letter 89²⁶⁷) list them separately, as groups of chariot drivers (11), ‘third men’ (12) and chariot fighters/nobles (30/10). Another Nimrud Letter²⁶⁸ lists large numbers of chariot crew members: 553 chariot drivers from Bit-Adini and Bit-Ukani; [x] chariot drivers and 1157 ‘third men’ from Bit-Adini and Sabhanu; 7 ‘third men’ from Larak; and 24 chariot drivers from the Ru’a tribe. The fact, that the crew members of the chariot were organized into separate units by their function and not by chariots is reinforced by the appearance of officers such as the GAL.50.MEŠ (*rab hanšē*) *ša tašlišu* GÌR.2 (*ša-šēpi*) (“commander of 50 of the ‘third men’ of the *ša-šēpi* guard”), or the *rab kisir ša LÚ.A.SIG(māru damqu) ša MÍ.É.GAL* (“cohort commander of the chariot warriors of the queen”).

In Neo-Assyrian cuneiform sources there are three terms designating chariots:

*ša DUH(GAB).MEŠ (pattute)*²⁶⁹ – “open chariot” might be the light open-sided hunting chariot mentioned above. This term is known from the inscriptions of Assyrian kings of the 10–9th centuries B.C. in hunting context.²⁷⁰ Another explanation is that the back of the chariot cab is open at the back, while other 9th century chariots have a rounded bronze shield hanging on the back, and it is possible that this shield was in fact a kind of a door.

*ša GÌR.2 (ša-šēpi)*²⁷¹ – “chariot type of the *ša-šēpi* guard?”. The identification of such a chariot type is impossible. This term probably denotes the chariot troops of the *ša-šēpi* guard, and not a special chariot type. The very complex *qurbūtu šēpi* (GÌR.2) DU₈.MEŠ (*qurbūtu* of the *ša-šēpi* guard of the open chariotry)²⁷² term shows that in this case a troop type or a title is a more credible identification.

*ša GIŠ.TAH.KAL(tahlīp)*²⁷³ – “armoured chariot?”. As has been mentioned, only a few chariot representations show the signs of a type of chariot armour. But the chariot representations of the palace reliefs do not prove the existence of a separate chariot contingent made of armoured chariots. It is possible however that the side wall of the chariot cab of some chariots was made of metal plates, and this made the chariot ‘armoured’. Furthermore the horse armour²⁷⁴ would indicate a kind of ‘armoured chariot’ as well.

On the palace reliefs of Sennacherib there is no representation of a regular chariot, only the royal chariot can be seen in various contexts, always in marches or processions. There is an interesting scene, which shows the two “wing-leader” chariots with standards in the siege-camp of Sennacherib at Lachish.²⁷⁵ Two priests are performing sacrifice in front of the two empty chariots for the military success of the Assyrian arms.

The missing of chariot representations does not mean the total disappearance of the chariot arm, but probably hints at a shift of accent from the chariotry to the cavalry. The crew members and officers of the chariotry mentioned above appeared in the cuneiform sources further on.

Following this representational hiatus, the chariots of the palace reliefs of Assurbanipal (668–630 B.C.) show a quite different character. The chariot cab became bigger to house the crew of four. The 8-spoked wheels became larger, too. Their height almost reached that of an adult man. The horses were armoured, and wore similar leather armour to the cavalry horses. The crew of the chariot consisted of four members: the chariot driver, the chariot warrior and two ‘third men’ (shield-bearers). Both shield-bearers used a rounded bronze shield decorated (or reinforced) with concentric ribs. All members of the crew wore pointed helmets and scale armour. This heavy equipment, the horse armour and the armoured crew increased the reliability and efficiency of the chariot in battle (mainly in close combat), but the armour increased the weight, too, and decreased its manoeuvrability, mobility and speed.

The representational evidence shows these heavy chariots in three contexts. The standing, empty chariot is shown during the submission of the Elamites. Only the driver is on board, the two ‘third men’ are standing

²⁶⁷ Nimrud Letter 89 (ND 2631), 6–12, SAGGS 1966, 177–191, no. 89; LANFRANCHI–PARPOLA 1990, no. 215; POSTGATE 2000, 89–108; FALES 2000, 40–43; SAGGS 2001, 128–130.

²⁶⁸ ND 2619, PARKER 1961, 15–66.

²⁶⁹ KINNIER WILSON 1972, 6, R. 34; 7:3; 11, R. 4; 14: 22; 16: 17; 18: 6; 19: 19; 33, II:8; DALLEY–POSTGATE 1984, 102, I:10; 111, O:2’; FALES–POSTGATE 1992, 5 R. I:24–27; 5 R. II:2.

²⁷⁰ POSTGATE 1990, 37.

²⁷¹ KINNIER WILSON 1972, 6, R. 34, 19: 19; DALLEY–POSTGATE

1984, 102, I:11; 111, O. 3’; MATTILA 2002, 29, 1–2, R. 15, 16, 17, 19.

²⁷² FALES–POSTGATE 1992, 150, II:4’; 152, R. I’:5’

²⁷³ KINNIER WILSON 1972, 6 R. 36; 7: 5; 11: 6; 16: 19; 18: 20; 19: 20; DALLEY–POSTGATE 1984, 108, O. I:12; 110, I:6.

²⁷⁴ LAYARD 1853b, pl. 28; BARNETT–FALKNER 1962, pls. CXVI–CXVII.

²⁷⁵ LAYARD 1853b, pl. 25.

behind the chariot.²⁷⁶ Chariots are shown chasing Arab warriors who are fleeing on the back of camels in a palm grove²⁷⁷ and in the desert.²⁷⁸ The third and most popular context of chariot representations is surprisingly the siege-scene. The chariots are standing, and are escorted by cavalymen. The chariot warrior usually shoots at the besieged citywall with his bow (*Fig. 7.107*) as do the cavalry archers.²⁷⁹ There is a further siege-scene (the siege of Hamanu) which shows the chariot with its crew, but the chariot warrior does not shoot, and there are two cavalry spearmen in front of the chariot.²⁸⁰

As these representations prove, the Assyrian chariot slowed down, and was used probably for different purposes as in the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. The Assyrian chariot of the mid-7th century B.C. was not suitable for long-range chases anymore, and was not the same light and fast pursuing arm as it had been in the 9th and 8th centuries B.C.

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²⁷⁶ BARNETT 1976, pl. XXV.

²⁷⁷ BARNETT 1976, pl. XXXII (Room I, slabs 3–7).

²⁷⁸ BARNETT 1976, pl. XXXII (Room I, slab 13).

²⁷⁹ BARNETT 1976, pls XVI (Room I, slab 1, Elamite campaign), LXVII (Room V¹/T¹, slab A), LXIX (Room V¹/T¹, slab A), pl. LXX.

²⁸⁰ BARNETT 1976, pl. B.

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