

# MAKING PICTURES OF WAR

*REALIA ET IMAGINARIA* IN THE  
ICONOLOGY OF THE  
ANCIENT NEAR EAST

Edited by

**Laura Battini**

ARCHAEOPRESS ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY 1

# ARCHAEOPRESS PUBLISHING LTD

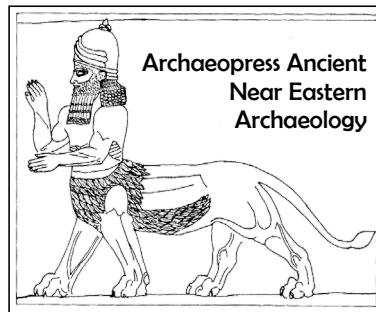
Gordon House  
276 Banbury Road  
Oxford OX2 7ED

[www.archaeopress.com](http://www.archaeopress.com)

ISBN 978 1 78491 403 5  
ISBN 978 1 78491 404 2 (e-Pdf)

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Cover: VICTORY STELE OF NARAMSIN. AKKADIAN PERIOD. LOUVRE MUSEUM



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Printed in England by Oxuniprint, Oxford  
This book is available direct from Archaeopress or from our website [www.archaeopress.com](http://www.archaeopress.com)

# Contents

<b>List of Figures</b> .....	iii
<b>Abbreviations and General References</b> .....	vii
Abbreviations .....	vii
References .....	ix
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	x
<b>Introduction: the War and its Representations</b> .....	1
<i>Laura Battini</i>	
References .....	3
<b>Some Observations on the War Scenes on the Seals from Mari City II</b> .....	5
<i>Dominique Beyer</i>	
The seals of King Ishqi-Mari .....	5
The seal of <i>Shakkanakku</i> Iddin-Eshtar .....	12
References .....	12
<b>Elements of War Iconography at Mari</b> .....	13
<i>Béatrice Muller</i>	
Graphic vocabulary: components of the military apparatus .....	13
Costumes and weapons .....	13
Costumes and weapons from City II (DA III-b) .....	13
Costumes and weapons from City III .....	15
Heavy equipment: harnesses .....	16
Frame .....	17
The figure of the vanquished enemy .....	19
Elements of iconographic syntax .....	19
Soldier and prisoner .....	19
Clues about a military hierarchy from shell inlays .....	20
Warriors and the image of the victorious King in the Old Babylonian period .....	22
The axe, the javelin and the bow .....	22
Overall compositions and significance – the place of Mari in war iconography .....	25
Overall composition of the mosaic shell panels: new paths .....	25
Mari and the modalities of the royal victory iconography in the Old Babylonian period .....	25
Conclusion .....	26
References .....	27
<b>Visualizing War in the Old Babylonian Period:</b>	
<b>Drama and Canon</b> .....	29
<i>Silvana Di Paolo</i>	
Victories and Defeats: The Sedimentation of War Experiences .....	29
‘Inscribing’ the War on the Bodies between Aberrations and Tangible Signs .....	31
The Power of Symbols: the ‘Canon’ of Naram-Sin .....	33
References .....	35
<b>Middle Assyrian Drama in Depicting War: a Step towards Neo-Assyrian Art</b> .....	37
<i>Laura Battini</i>	
The grammar of Middle Assyrian depictions of war .....	37
Outline of a syntax .....	40
Relationships with the Iron Age .....	41
References .....	42

<b>“Losing One’s Head”. Some Hints on Procedures and Meanings of Decapitation in the Ancient Near East .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<i>Rita Dolce</i>	
The act of decapitation .....	46
The act of displaying .....	47
Destinations of the SH: some pieces of evidence .....	50
The moving SH .....	52
References .....	54
Abstract.....	56
Key words: .....	56
<b>Where is the Public? A New Look at the Brutality Scenes in Neo-Assyrian Royal Inscriptions and Art .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<i>Ariel Bagg</i>	
Introduction .....	57
Catalogue of atrocities: The written sources .....	58
Group A: Soldiers .....	58
Group B: Members of the elite .....	58
Group C: Civilians .....	60
The audience of the royal inscriptions.....	60
Catalogue of atrocities: The iconographic sources .....	62
Group A: Soldiers .....	62
Group B: Elite Members .....	62
Group C: Civilians .....	63
The audience of the palace reliefs .....	65
The brutality scenes in their context .....	68
Conclusions.....	71
References .....	71
Appendix: Catalogue of brutality scenes in Neo-Assyrian art.....	72
<b>Images of War in the Assyrian Period: What They Show and What They Hide .....</b>	<b>83</b>
<i>Davide Nadali</i>	
References .....	87

# List of Figures

## Some Observations on the War Scenes on the Seals from Mari City II

Figure 1.1: Schematic Diagram of the North Part of P-1 with the Positions of the Sigillographic Finds. ....	6
Figure 1.2: Door Seal with Imprints of <i>Version a</i> of Ishqi-Mari's Seal.....	7
Figure 1.3: Fragmentary Imprint of <i>Version a</i> of Ishqi-Mari's Seal. ....	7
Figure 1.4: Graphic Reconstruction of the Imprint of <i>Version a</i> . ....	7
Figure 1.5: Door Seal with Fragmentary Imprints of <i>Version b</i> of Ishqi-Mari's Seal. ....	8
Figure 1.6: Fragmentary Imprint of <i>Version b</i> .....	8
Figure 1.7: Fragmentary Imprint: Upper Section of <i>Version b</i> .....	8
Figure 1.8: Fragmentary Imprint: King Ishqi-Mari ( <i>Version b</i> ) . ....	9
Figure 1.9: Graphic Reconstruction of the Imprint of <i>Version b</i> (2007) .....	9
Figure 1.10: Graphic Reconstruction of the Imprint of <i>Version b</i> : New Version.....	10
Figure 1.11: Door Seal with Fragmentary Imprints of Iddin-Eshtar's Seal. ....	11
Figure 1.12: Fragmentary Imprints of the Seal of Iddin-Eshtar and the Seal of a King Iku-X.....	11
Figure 1.13: Graphic Reconstruction of the Imprint of Iddin-Eshtar's Seal. ....	11

## Elements of War Iconography at Mari

Figure 2.1: Inlaid mother-of-pearl from the Temple of Ninni-zaza (Mari, City II) : helmeted soldiers. H. average 4.5-5cm. a - Parrot 1952: fig. 66. b - Drawing of a selection of parts. Parrot 1967: 209-214, fig. 252-254 (cf. pl. LXIII).....	14
Figure 2.2: Plaque of gypsum or alabaster M. 4989-5029-5045 from room 46 of pseudo-Palace (Mari, City II) : scene of siege (?) (fragmentary?). H. 16cm ; l. 9.8cm. Parrot 1974: fig. 30.....	15
Figure 2.3: Terracotta stamped plaques from the Great Royal Palace (Mari, City III) : soldier with a long weapon (spear?) and an axe. a - M. 768, room 62 (near the Throne Room 65, official sector M). Parrot 1959: fig. 55 et cf. pl. XXIX. b - M. 1073, court 87 (sector G : chambers of the staff belonging to the King's House). Parrot 1959: pl. XXIX. ....	15
Figure 2.4: Fragments of mural painting from room 220' (sector F: royal private apartments on the first floor) of Great Royal Palace (Mari, City III). a - M. 4596 : archer standing at rest. H. 31cm. Gouache J. Depauw, © MAM, slide A. Parrot. b - M. 4592 : end of a building in bricks bordered by a fragmentary character ( <i>polos</i> and shoulder) dressed in a blue and white striped garment. H. 12cm. ....	16
Figure 2.5: Fragments of mural painting from the West wall of the Court 106 (official sector M) of the Great Royal Palace (Mari, City III) : figure of victorious King (module 1, restored h. c.1.60m). Parrot 1958: fig. 35 and 36. a - Elements of garment with rich drapes having scalloped edge, a dagger in a side. b - Folded arm, hand gripping a tuft of hair belonging likely to two individuals. c - Provisional restitution. Muller 2008, never published. ....	17
Figure 2.6: Graffiti engraved with a point on plaster ( <i>juss</i> ) of a wall of room 52 (sector H, chambers of the staff belonging to the Women's House) of the Great Royal Palace (Mari, City III) : soldiers. Parrot 1958: fig. 13 and 14. a - Bearded and helmeted soldier who is about to launch a weapon like a dagger or a sword rather than a feature weapon. Preserved H. of the character: 14cm. b - Profile heads of two characters, one with a flat headgear, the other with an helmet. Preserved H. c. 8cm and 10cm. ....	18
Figure 2.7: Piece of inlaid mother-of-pearl from space 4 of the pseudo-Palace (Mari, City II) : deck tank showing a pair of engraved reins in its upper indentation ; the lower edge curved leaves room for the installation of a wheel. H. 6.8cm. Never published © MAM J.-Cl. Margueron.....	18
Figure 2.8: Piece of inlaid mother-of-pearl from space 20 (square) south of the Temple of Ishtar (Mari, City II) and belonging to the Standard: fragmentary wheel associated with the box of a chariot on whose step the legs of a soldier brace themselves. Total h.: c. 7cm. © B. Muller. Louvre AO 17572/19820.....	18
Figure 2.9: Miniature registry of fragmentary mural paintings from room 220' (sector F: royal private apartments on first floor) of Great Royal Palace (Mari, City III). a – Head caped with a <i>polos</i> blue and white striped. (M. 4587) at the corner of a brick building. H. of the fragment 10.9cm. © MAM, slide A. Parrot. b - Restitution of register. Muller 1990: pl. XXVIII p. 554.....	19
Figure 2.10: Piece of inlaid mother-of-pearl M. 2477 from room 13 of the temple of Ninni-zaza (Mari, City II) : Kneeling prisoner. H. 7cm. Parrot 1952: fig. 67.....	20
Figure 2.11: Pieces of Standard from space 20 (square) south of the temple of Ishtar (Mari, City II). A - bust of the military dignitary M. 474 <i>in situ</i> , yet in connection with the background and border, while the bottom of the garment is visible above on the plate. Parrot 1956: detail of fig. 32. B - Restitution by Parrot (1956: PL. LVIIa).....	21
Figure 2.12: Fragment of the panel inlaid from the passage 52/49 of the pseudo-Palace of City II, level P-1: helmeted soldier pushing a prisoner (M. 4785 and M. 4793) and wearing clothes of this one on the top of his javelin which is pointed downward. H. of the character c. 8.5cm. Parrot 1969: figures 12 and 13. a - Outlook <i>in situ</i> . b - Restitution of a set as presented in the Museum of Damascus. ....	22
Figure 2.13: Contour of warrior M. 471 (temple of Ishtar, Standard) by comparison with the previous figure.....	23

Figure 2.14: Fragmentary mural painting from room 220' (sector F: royal private apartments on the first floor) of the Great Royal Palace (Mari, City III), upper register: restitution, inspired by the scene of fig. 2.15, of the pattern of the King trampling his enemies. Module 2. h.: 1-1.10m. Muller 1990: extraction of pl. XXV.....	23
Figure 2.15: Restitution drawing of the impression of a seal known from different clay door-lock sealings from the Great Royal Palace (Mari, City III) inscribed with the name of Mukannishum, intendant of the palace: the King hits a standing enemy with his <i>harpè</i> while he tramples a cluster of five others collapsed to the ground. Beyer in Margueron 2004: fig. 506-2 and cf. Amiet 1960: fig. 12; Parrot 1959: 189-191. ....	23
Figure 2.16: Modern impression of the seal of Ana-Sin-taklâku. A lot of his sealings (especially of jars) were found in the Great Royal Palace (Mari, City III): the King, surrounded by deities and holding an <i>harpè</i> tramples an enemy. H. 2.7cm. Louvre AO 21988. Beyer in Margueron 2004: fig. 506-1; cf. Amiet 1960: fig. 13; Parrot 1959: 169-185.....	24
Figure 2.17: Iconographic and architectural restitution of paintings of room 220', south wall, of the Great Royal Palace (Mari, City III). H. 3.50m c., L. 14.75m. Margueron <i>et al.</i> 1990: fig. 11.....	24
Figure 2.18: Fragments of wall painting on coating of <i>juss</i> from the court 106 of the Great Royal Palace (Mari, City III) : presentation panel conceived by B. Muller and realized after restoration by CEPMR/CNRS (Centre d'Etudes de Peintures Murales Romaines, Soissons) under the direction of A. Barbet for the Louvre Museum. « Le Grand Palais Royal de Mari (2000-1760 a) », <i>Actualités du Département des Antiquités Orientales</i> n° 21 (4th December 2013-2nd June 2014). ....	25
Figure 2.19: Restitution drawing of the impression of the seal (n° 1) of Ishqi-Mari from different sealings discovered in room 11 of the pseudo-Palace (Mari, City II) : battle and banquet celebrating victory. Beyer 2007: fig. 17. Scale 2: 1.....	26

### Visualizing War in the Old Babylonian Period: Drama and Canon

Figure 3.1: Victory Stele of Eannatum. From Tello. Early Dynastic period. Louvre Museum (after Forest 1996: 222). ....	29
Figure 3.2: Victory Stele of King Dadusha of Eshnunna. From Tell Asmar. Old Babylonian period. Baghdad Museum (after Ismail and Cavigneaux 2003: pl. 34) .....	31
Figure 3.3: Neo-Assyrian bas-relief. From Nineveh. North Palace, Room S. Reign of Ashurbanipal. British Museum (after Orthmann 1975: 325, pl. 247).....	32
Figure 3.4: Cylinder seal. Newell Collection. Old Babylonian period (after von der Osten 1934: pl. 14: 155) .....	33
Figure 3.5: Cylinder seal. Moore Collection. Old Babylonian period (after Eisen 1940: pl. 7: 60) .....	33
Figure 3.6: Victory Stele of Naramsin. Akkadian period. Louvre Museum (after Orthmann 1975: 196, pl. 196).....	34
Figure 3.7: Terracotta Plaque. From Kish. Old Babylonian Period. Baghdad Museum (after Moorey 1975: pl. 23a).....	35

### Middle Assyrian Drama in Depicting War: a Step towards Neo-Assyrian Art

Figure 4.1: Pyxis lid from Assur (Berlin, Vorderasiatische Museum, VA7989), 13th s. BC. Source: Matthiae 1997: 32.....	37
Figure 4.2: stone Cult Pedestal of Tukulti-Ninurta I. Source: Matthiae 1997: 31-32. ....	38
Figure 4.3: stele from Suse (Louvre, Sb 7). Source: Matthiae 2000: 52.....	39
Figure 4.4: Hunt seals Source: Harper <i>et alii</i> 1995: 65-66, fig. 26 ; Invernizzi 1992 : n° 310. ....	39
Figure 4.5: Broken Obelisk of Assur-bel-kala (11th century BC), from Nineveh. Source: Matthiae 1997: 33.....	40
Figure 4.6: Old Babylonian terracotta representing the epiphany of god (Philadelphie, Penn Museum, Y.B.C. 10.035). Source: Opificius 1961: n° 399. ....	40
Figure 4.7: Urban settings of Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta and Dur-Sharrukin. Source: original setting. ....	41

### “Losing One’s Head”. Some Hints on Procedures and Meanings of Decapitation in the Ancient Near East

Figure 5.1: Neo-Assyrian bas relief. ....	46
Figure 5.2: Detail of the Stele of Vultures (III mill. BC) .....	47
Figure 5.3: Example of paintings from Catal Höyük.....	47
Figure 5.4: Heaps of SH piled up next to valuable furnishings and weapons, Neo-Assyrian period. ....	48
Figure 5.5: Soldiers bringing decapitated heads. From Ebla, III mill. BC.....	49
Figure 5.6: Soldiers bringing decapitated heads. From Tell Taynat, I mill. BC.....	49
Figure 5.7: Removal of SH and their transportation to the place of “counting”. Neo-Assyrian period. ....	50
Figure 5.8: Heads became food for birds of prey, example from Uruk glyptic. ....	51
Figure 5.9: Heads became food for birds of prey, example from Catal Höyük. ....	51
Figure 5.10: Flying vultures grabbing the heads of enemies, III mill. BC (Stele of vultures).....	52
Figure 5.11: Stele of the king Dadusha, early II mill. BC .....	53

### Where is the Public? A New Look at the Brutality Scenes in Neo-Assyrian Royal Inscriptions and Art

Figure 6.1: Atrocities in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions .....	59
Figure 6.2: The addressees of the royal inscriptions. ....	61
Figure 6.3: Battle of Til-Tuba. A soldier holds Teumman’s cut-off head (second register from the bottom, left side; Cat.-No 44); corpses of defeated Elamites are thrown into the River Ulai (lower half, right side; Cat.-No 45). From Barnett, Bleibtreu and Turner 1998: pl. 296. ....	63

Figure 6.4: Shalmaneser's Balawat gates as displayed in the British Museum (Cat.-Nos 3–7). Door reconstruction based on Schachner 2007: 24, fig. 6; depictions from Schachner 2007: plates 2, 4, 8, 10 and 13. ....	63
Figure 6.5: Soldiers carrying severed heads for inventory (Cat.-No 37). From Barnett, Bleibtreu and Turner 1998: pl. 210. ....	64
Figure 6.6: Grinding the ancestor's bones (upper register, left side; Cat.-No 40); soldiers carrying severed heads for inventory (second register from the top, right side; Cat.-No 41); a soldier holds Teumman's cut-off head (second register from the top, left side; Cat.-No 42). From Barnett, Bleibtreu and Turner 1998: pl. 288. ....	64
Figure 6.7: Siege of Lachish, impalement of three prisoners (Cat.-No 30). From Barnett, Bleibtreu and Turner 1998: pl. 330. ....	64
Figure 6.8: Flaying of two prisoners (Cat.-No 29). From Barnett, Bleibtreu and Turner 1998: pl. 338. ....	65
Figure 6.9: Soldiers flay prisoners while another one holds a severed head (second register from the top; Cat.-No 46); soldiers pull out the tongue of prisoners (third register from the top; Cat.-No 47). From Barnett, Bleibtreu and Turner 1998: pl. 300. ....	65
Figure 6.10: Zincirli Stele. Esarhaddon holds two ropes attached to rings pierced in Uš-Anaḥuru's and Abdi-Milkūti's lower lips (Cat.-No 35). From Börker-Klahn 1982: Nr. 218. ....	66
Figure 6.11: Sargon gouging out the eyes of a prisoner (Cat.-Nr. 13). From Botta and Flandin 1849b: pl. 118. ....	66
Figure 6.12: Brutality scenes in Neo-Assyrian art. ....	67
Figure 6.13: The addressees of the iconographic sources. ....	67
Figure 6.14: Degrees of accessibility to the palace reliefs. ....	68
Figure 6.15: Location of the brutality scenes. ....	69
Figure 6.16: Visibility of the brutality scenes. ....	70





## Abbreviations and General References

### Abbreviations

<i>AASyr.</i>	<i>Annales archéologiques arabes syriennes. Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire</i> (Damas).
<i>AASOR</i>	<i>Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i> (New Haven & Cambridge, Mass).
<i>AfO</i>	<i>Archiv für Orientforschungen ; Beih.</i> (Berlin & Graz).
<i>AHw</i>	W. von Soden, <i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> (Wiesbaden).
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i> (Princeton & Baltimore).
<i>Akkadica</i>	<i>Akkadica. Périodique bimestriel de la Fondation Assyriologique Georges Dossin</i> (Bruxelles).
<i>AMI</i>	<i>Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran</i> (Berlin).
<i>Amurru 2</i>	J.-M. Durand & D. Charpin (éds.), <i>Mari, Ébla et les Hourrites : dix ans de travaux, deuxième partie. Actes du colloque international</i> (Paris).
<i>AnSt.</i>	<i>Anatolian Studies. Journal of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara</i> (London).
<i>ANES</i>	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Studies</i> (Melbourne).
<i>AnOr</i>	<i>Analecta Orientalia</i> (Roma).
<i>Antiquitas</i>	<i>Antiquitas. Reihe 3 : Abhandlungen zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, zur klassischen und provinzial-römischen Archäologie</i> (Bonn).
<i>Antiquity</i>	<i>Antiquity. A Quarterly Review of Archaeology</i> (Gloucester).
<i>AOAT</i>	<i>Alter Orient und Altes Testament</i> (Kevelaer & Neukirchen-Vluyn & Münster).
<i>AoF</i>	<i>Altorientalische Forschungen</i> (Berlin).
<i>AOS</i>	<i>American Oriental Series</i> (New Haven).
<i>ARM</i>	<i>Archives royales de Mari</i> (Paris).
<i>ARMT</i>	<i>Archives royales de Mari – Textes</i> (Paris).
<i>AS</i>	<i>Assyriological Studies</i> (Chicago).
<i>ASJ</i>	<i>Acta Sumerologica</i> (Hiroshima).
<i>Assur</i>	<i>Monographic Journals of the Near East. Assur</i> (Malibu).
<i>Athenaeum</i>	<i>Athenaeum. Studi periodici di letteratura e storia dell'Antichità</i> (Pavia).
<i>AulaOr</i>	<i>Aula Orientalis</i> (Barcelona).
<i>AUWE</i>	<i>Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka. Endberichte</i> (Mainz).
<i>BagM</i>	<i>Baghdader Mitteilungen</i> (Berlin).
<i>BaF</i>	<i>Baghdader Forschungen</i> (Mainz am Rhein).
<i>BAH</i>	<i>Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, Institut Français d'Archéologie du Proche-Orient</i> (Paris).
<i>BAR</i>	British Archaeological Reports.
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i> (New Haven).
<i>BBV</i>	<i>Berliner Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte</i> (Berlin).
<i>BBVO</i>	<i>Berliner Beiträge zum Vorder Orient</i> (Berlin).
<i>Belleten</i>	<i>Belleten. Türk Tarih Kurumu</i> (Ankara).
<i>BiMes</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Mesopotamica</i> (Malibu).
<i>BIWA</i>	Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals, Borger R., 1996 (Wiesbaden).
<i>BPOA</i>	<i>Biblioteca del próximo oriente antiguo</i> (Madrid).
<i>BSAOS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i> (London).
<i>CAD</i>	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago</i> (Chicago).
<i>CM</i>	<i>Cuneiform Monographs</i> (Groningen & Leiden).
<i>CMAO</i>	<i>Contributi e materiali di archeologia orientale</i> (Roma).
<i>CMO</i>	<i>Cahier de la Maison de l'Orient</i> (Lyon).
<i>CNIP</i>	<i>Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications</i> (Copenhagen).
<i>CRAI</i>	<i>Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres</i> (Paris).
<i>CRRRA</i>	<i>Compte rendu de la Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale.</i>
<i>Eblaitica</i>	<i>Eblaitica. Essays on the Ebla Archives and Eblaite Language</i> (Winona Lake).
<i>FAOS</i>	<i>Freiburger Altorientalische Studien</i> (Fribourg).
<i>FM</i>	<i>Florilegium Marianum</i> (Paris).
<i>HANEM/S</i>	<i>History of the Ancient Near East/ Monographs/ Studies</i> (Padova).
<i>HdO</i>	<i>Handbuch der Orientalistik</i> (Leiden).
<i>HSAO</i>	<i>Heidelberger Studien zum Alten Orient</i> (Heidelberg).
<i>HSS</i>	<i>Harvard Semitic Series</i> (Cambridge, Mass).

<i>Iraq</i>	<i>Iraq. Journal of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq</i> (London).
<i>Isimu</i>	<i>Isimu. Revista sobre Oriente Próximo y Egipto en la antigüedad</i> (Madrid).
<i>JANES</i>	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i> (New York).
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i> (New Haven).
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i> (New Haven & Ann Arbor).
<i>JEN</i>	<i>Joint Expedition with the Iraq Museum at Nuzi</i> (Paris & Philadelphie).
<i>JEOL</i>	<i>Jaarbericht van het Voor-Aziatisch-Egyptisch Gezelschap</i> (depuis 1945 : <i>Genootschap</i> ) <i>ExOriente Lux</i> (Leiden).
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i> (Leiden).
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i> (Chicago).
<i>Ktema</i>	<i>KTEMA. Civilisations de l'Orient, de la Grèce et de Rome antiques</i> (Strasbourg).
<i>LAPO</i>	<i>Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient</i> (Paris).
<i>MAD</i>	<i>Materials for the Assyrian Dictionary I-IV</i> (Chicago).
<i>MAM</i>	<i>Mission Archéologique de Mari</i> (Paris).
<i>MARI</i>	<i>Mari, Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires</i> (Paris).
<i>MARV</i>	<i>Mittelassyrische Rechtsurkunden und Verwaltungstexte</i> (Berlin).
<i>MC</i>	<i>Mesopotamian Civilizations</i> (Winona Lake).
<i>MCS</i>	<i>Manchester Cuneiform Studies</i> (Manchester).
<i>MDOG</i>	<i>Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft zu Berlin</i> (Berlin).
<i>MDP</i>	<i>Délégation en Perse, Mémoires</i> (Paris).
<i>MEE</i>	<i>Materiali epigrafici di Ebla</i> (Napoli).
<i>Mesopotamia</i>	<i>Mesopotamia</i> . (Torino).
<i>MHEOP</i>	<i>Mesopotamian History and Environment Occasional Publications</i> (Louvain).
<i>MSL</i>	B. Landsberger <i>et al.</i> , <i>Materials for the Sumerian Lexikon</i> (Roma).
<i>MVN</i>	<i>Materiali per il vocabolario neosumerico</i> (Roma).
<i>MVSum</i>	<i>Materiali per il vocabolario sumerico</i> (Roma).
<i>NABU</i>	<i>Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires</i> (Paris).
<i>OBO</i>	<i>Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis</i> ; SerAr. = <i>Series archaeologia</i> (Fribourg & Göttingen).
<i>OIP</i>	<i>Oriental Institute Publications</i> (Chicago).
<i>OIS</i>	<i>Oriental Institute Seminars</i> (Chicago).
<i>OLA</i>	<i>Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta</i> (Louvain).
<i>OLZ</i>	<i>Orientalistische Literaturzeitung. Monatsschrift für die Wissenschaft vom ganzen Orient und seine(n) Beziehungen zu den angrenzenden Kulturkreisen; Orient und seine Beziehungen zum Kulturkreise des Mittelmeeres</i> (Berlin & Leipzig).
<i>Or</i>	<i>Orientalia</i> (Roma).
<i>OrAnt</i>	<i>Oriens Antiquus : rivista del Centro per le antichità e la storia dell'arte del Vicino Oriente</i> (Roma).
<i>Orient</i>	<i>Orient. The Reports of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan</i> (Tokyo).
<i>Paléorient</i>	<i>Paléorient. Revue pluridisciplinaire de préhistoire et proto-histoire de l'Asie du Sud-Ouest</i> (Paris).
<i>Philippika</i>	<i>Marburger altertumskundliche Abhandlungen</i> (Wiesbaden).
<i>PINHAS</i>	<i>Publications de l'Institut historique et archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul</i> (Leiden).
<i>PRU</i>	<i>Palais royal d'Ugarit. Mission de Ras Shamra</i> (Paris).
<i>RA</i>	<i>Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale</i> (Paris).
<i>RGTC</i>	<i>Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes</i> (Wiesbaden).
<i>RHA</i>	<i>Revue Hittite et Asianique</i> (Paris).
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i> (Paris).
<i>REMA</i>	<i>Revue des Études Militaires Anciennes</i> (Paris).
<i>RIMA</i>	<i>Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods</i> (Toronto).
<i>RIME</i>	<i>Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods</i> , (Toronto).
<i>RIA</i>	<i>Reallexicon des Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie</i> (Berlin).
<i>RS</i>	<i>Ras Shamra</i> (Louvre et Damas), numéro d'inventaire.
<i>RSO</i>	<i>Ras Shamra-Ougarit</i> (Paris).
<i>RTC</i>	F. Thureau-Dangin, <i>Recueil de tablettes chaldéennes</i> , Paris, 1903.
<i>SAACT</i>	<i>State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts</i> (Winona Lake).
<i>SAA/B/S</i>	<i>State Archives of Assyria / Bulletin/Studies</i> (Helsinki & Winona Lake).
<i>SAOC</i>	<i>Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization</i> (Chicago).
<i>SCCNH</i>	<i>Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians</i> (Winona Lake & Bethesda).
<i>SEL</i>	<i>Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici sul Vicino Oriente Antico</i> (Verona)
<i>Semitica</i>	<i>Semitica. Cahiers publiés par l'institut d'études sémitiques de l'Université de Paris</i> (Paris).

SMS	<i>Monographic Journals of the Near East. Syro-Mesopotamian Studies</i> (Malibu).
StOr	<i>Studia Orientalia</i> (Helsinki).
Subartu	<i>Subartu. European Centre for Upper Mesopotamian Studies</i> (Turnhout).
Sumer	<i>Sumer. A Journal of Archaeology (and History) in Iraq</i> (Bagdad).
Syria	<i>Syria. Revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie</i> (Paris).
TAVO	<i>Tübingen Atlas des Vorderen Orients</i> (Wiesbaden).
TCL	<i>Textes Cunéiformes du Louvre</i> (Paris).
TCS	<i>Texts from Cuneiform Sources</i> (Locust Valley, NY).
TIM	<i>Texts in the Iraq Museum</i> (Baghdad & Wiesbaden).
TUAT	<i>Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments</i> (Gütersloh).
UAVA	<i>Untersuchungen zur Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie</i> , (Berlin).
UE	<i>Ur Excavations. Publications of the Joint Expedition of the British Museum and of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, to Mesopotamia</i> (London & Philadelphia).
UET	<i>Ur Excavations : Texts</i> (London).
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i> (Kevelaer, Neukirchen-Vluyn & Münster).
Ugaritica	<i>Ugaritica. Mission de Ras Shamra</i> (Paris).
UVB	<i>Vorläufiger Bericht über die von der Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft in Uruk-Warka unternommenen Ausgrabungen</i> (Berlin),
VAB	<i>Vorderasiatische Bibliothek</i> (Leipzig).
VAT	Vorderasiatische Museum, Tontafeln (Berlin), numéro d'inventaire.
VS	<i>Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der (Königl.) Museen zu Berlin</i> (Berlin).
WO	<i>Die Welt des Orients Wissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Kunde des Morgenlandes</i> (Wuppertal & Göttingen).
World Arch.	<i>World Archaeology, Journal</i> (London).
WVDOG	<i>Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft</i> (Leipzig).
WZKM	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i> (Wien).
YBC	<i>Yale Babylonian Collection</i> (Yale University, New Haven).
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete</i> (Leipzig)
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> (Berlin).
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i> (Wiesbaden).

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## Acknowledgments

The conference and its outcomes would not have been possible without many people's help and without the financial support of several institutions. I would like to thank all of them here.

The CNRS (UMR 5133-Archéorient) and the University of Lyon provided a solid budget and gave all the means and help possible towards the success of the conference and this publication. I am also very grateful to the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, Directorate General for Research and Innovation. It generously supported the conference despite going through a period of budget cuts. Significant financial contributions were also provided by the City of Lyon and the Regional Council. My warmest thanks to all these institutions.

But a conference is above all about people. I wholeheartedly thank the colleagues who participated with active interest in it and whose patience I put to the test.

This book would not have been published without my family showing great patience, as they tolerated a very stressed week before I handed the manuscript to the editor! And finally, this book would also not have been possible without the urgent translation from French to English by Nathalie Masure and Steve Leddy, so all my gratitude and sincere appreciation to them also!

Riom, 2016-06-13

**To the People of Iraq and Syria,  
for Peace and a better life.**

**And to Paolo Matthiae and Mario Liverani, who stressed the importance of historicity in the  
studies of the Ancient Near East and created a wonderful school in Rome:  
Deepest Thanks**

*Of all the sciences that man can and must know the main, it is the  
science of life so as to do the least harm and the most good possible.*

*(L. Tolstoï, Letter to Romain Rolland)*



## Introduction: the War and its Representations

This book brings together the main discussions that took place at an international conference on the iconology of war, held in Lyon on 4th December 2012. Its publication has been delayed for personal reasons that made it impossible to produce any earlier, and for that I would like to express my fullest apologies to the participants and to all other colleagues, especially those who expressed a real interest in the conference. I'm also of course terribly sad that the theme of the conference remains of such relevance today in Syria and Iraq. I express the hope that the war will end as soon as possible and that life can return to normal.

The idea of organising a symposium on this theme came from the discovery of the absence of synthesis on the subject in the literature regarding the ancient Near East and from the ascertainment that this theme had rarely, if ever, been explored in the context of international meetings. Several articles have covered the subject in terms of the Neo-Assyrian period, but relatively few in terms of previous periods. The problem of war is furthermore one of the subjects that interests me the most, essentially from an architectural point of view (fortifications, their active and passive use; symbolic and dissuasive values of military works; territorial occupation and control). More recently, I have also become interested in images, so I naturally came around to the idea of combining the two themes: war and how it is represented.

Of course, the images under discussion are not a faithful reproduction of reality – they cannot be regarded like photos, capturing actual events. They are firstly subject to the chosen medium, to the material and techniques employed. They also conform to a series of stylistic principles which codify and thus limit their expression (see here the article by Béatrice Muller). And finally, they cannot make abstraction of the political, ideological and symbolic reasons that determined and justified the war being pursued. As Silvana Di Paolo stresses in the third communication, war in the ancient Near East was a kind of divine ordeal: decided by the gods, war must lead to the 'goodies' conquering 'the baddies', so that the chaotic risks disappear and the cosmos can shine in its splendour. In this case, there are many images that the winners can never replicate (see here the article of Nadali), such as partial defeats and the deaths of their own soldiers. But the images also served to inform those who were not on the battlefield, including the delegations of other kingdoms. To echo Carl von Clausewitz – who was the first to stress the psychology of the military milieu – the psychological effects of warlike images can be guessed at, but probably not completely so, because Western society today has become estranged not only from 'classical' war but even

from recent memories of it. And differences of society, lifestyle, concepts, connection with the divine and with political power no longer allow a full comprehension of all the psychological and superstitious frameworks of the past. That images of war have psychological and informative effects is demonstrated by their location: the steles and reliefs on rocks typical of the Third and Second millennia BC are generally 'external' – on the outside – and can be therefore be assumed to be aimed at a broader audience, as well as at gods. So the change in the First millennium BC, when most representations of war are found to be 'internal' (in the reliefs within the palace, – see here the article by Ariel Bagg), leads us to believe that such images are intended not for a potential enemy, as during the two previous millennia, but rather for gods and for Assyrian citizens and more likely, the members of the royal court and the diplomatic corps.

While the images certainly do not provide a full and clear account of the war, neither are they fake and, being a contemporary source, at least one part of their reproduction corresponds to a real situation. The artisan/artist who made them participated in an historical, economic, social and political context, which determined certain characteristics of his work.

Thus, the images are good sources of information about specifics that otherwise would be completely unimaginable, such as military dresses, the types of weapons, the military position in combat. In this context, anything that does not correspond exactly to other source testimonials – such as weapons found in graves or description of battles – provides an additional information base toward a political and ideological explanation. Because war, with its share of dead and wounded, required an ideological basis that explained and even justified war: the will of the gods or the spread of civilization among the barbarian tribes were just ways of idealising the expansionist desires of the Mesopotamian kings. The different ways in which war was represented can provide a basis for reflection about political strategies and propaganda, and different reading levels of artistic/craft production and the goals of power. In other words, the political value of the war scenes.

In the Syro-Mesopotamian world, in fact, the war scene can only include the king. From the outset, the "typical" war scene embodied the armed king and his soldiers, with enemy soldiers depicted in defeat. It was not during the Akkadian period that this scene was established and codified: the image appears at the end of the Fourth millennium BC. It thus accompanied the establishment of a secular and political power that participated in the transformation of the village into a town. In some seals

from this time – and even on a stone relief from Kish that is now in Brussels (Musées Royaux) – the armed king accompanies the assault of his soldiers on the enemy or even strikes a losing opponent in front of a building. One can say that from the late Fourth millennium BC, the king was represented not only as a pious devotee but also as a courageous warrior. This image related to the royal function of protecting people, to presenting himself as a good father, the good shepherd, the defender of his people against their enemies and against the evil powers that were always perceived to be ready to attack humans. No danger threatens the people and the city, when the king, blessed by the gods, is able to assume his duties. And from the beginning, the war scene depicting the king binds tightly with that of hunting, which is a metaphor for a warrior king. The repeated and constant conflicts of the Third millennium BC which had every city competing against each other provoked the use of a new medium for war images: the stele. The significant change here was about scale: the dimensions of steles make them imposing monuments, visible from afar, installed outdoors or in crowded places like temples; the introduction of gods to the war scene served to endorse the king's actions and the insertion of inscriptions on the monument perpetuated the memory of the king, of the city and of war. It was the Akkadian kings who mainly used warlike representations on steles and who change the scene itself: the phalange is no longer represented trampling the defeated enemy (as in the Stele of the Vultures) but rather it is the king doing so (e.g. the stele from Naram-Sin). His size largely exceeding that of other figures and his prominent position places him near the divine symbols. This is the warrior image that will be reproduced in the Second millennium BC on rocks (Darbaud-i-Gawr, Darband-i Ramqan, Sar i-Pol-i Zohab, Darband-i Sheh Han: cf. here Silvana Di Paolo), on steles (stele of Shamshi - Adad I), on seals (from Mari, Sippar, Diyala) and even on terracotta plaque (cf. Silvana Di Paolo). The last big change in war representations happens under the Neo-Assyrian kings, at both the quantitative and qualitative levels. The war (and its symbolic pendant, the royal hunt) is represented frequently in the broadest range of media, from bas-reliefs in the royal palaces to the obelisks and steles, to the glazed terracotta plaques (mostly of Esarhaddon and his campaign in Egypt), to paintings, to the bronze decorations of doors and to seals. But while hunts remain the sole property of the king, the scenes of war slip from the king to the army between the ninth and seventh centuries BC. Assurnasirpal II and to some extent Sargon II still participate actively in war, but from Sennacherib onwards, the king is only present in war scenes as a spectator, not as a warrior. This is the reason for the increase in the frequency of army representations from Assurnasirpal to Assurbanipal. The last Neo-Assyrian kings combined a meticulous description of the battles with an ever greater insistence of atrocities practised on enemies to increase the dramatic power of the representations (see here the article of Ariel Bagg).

The conference and the discussions provoked by the papers presented at it were very interesting and profitable. The article by Béatrice Muller is more theoretical and raises important questions about the war representations. For example, what is “warrior” iconography and on what basis it can be defined? Did the war scenes follow a specific directory whereby they adopted the most varied forms? Can we determine more favourable conditions for the execution of pictures of war times (e.g. the periods of great change)? To these questions Dominique Beyer adds others: were the war scenes referring to specific historical facts or were they generic representations? The ties that develop between Mari (Second millennium BC) and Nineveh (First millennium BC) show a warrior catalogue whose subjects are fairly differentiated, suggesting the existence of a specific code for the representation of war (see also here the article by B. Muller). And probably the gestures, the position of the characters, perhaps also the type of weapons were significant, although difficult to understand today. Ariel Bagg returns to the issue of the actual historical value of representations. Starting from Neo-Assyrian documentation, with particular emphasis on the “atrocities” of war, he shows the strong coherence between textual descriptions and iconographic representations. That is also the position of Rita Dolce, whose paper stresses with great sensitivity the psychological effects of images of decapitation. This act was certainly used to count dead enemies, but was also intended as a « punishment » because of the shame provoked by it, and as a real and definite destruction, an act of annihilation and alienation (because without their head or hands none of them can be recognised: this is the reason for the elimination of these two elements during the destruction of statues). The corruption of the body, particularly by decapitation, interests Silvana Di Paolo from a more conceptual point of view. What can a society accept from the representations of war? What is a “just” punishment of enemies? Who has control of the representation and thus also the memory of war? Silvana Di Paolo shows how a society arrives at establishing a “just” way to represent war, an approach justified by the socio-economic benefits and she shows how the power elites had control of the interpretation and memory of events. Davide Nadali also focuses on “silences”, that is, on the elements that the images do not show and the reasons for these exclusions. And Laura Battini concentrates her study on the analysis of the multiple and complex influences in images of war that spread from Middle Assyrian to Neo-Assyrian, especially under Tukulti-Ninurta I. What is emerging from all the articles published here is the relevance of textual data in any analysis of iconological material. And this is not only true for iconology, but for all the archaeological material discovered in historical sites.

This book could not be regarded as complete if the names of at least two other participants were not mentioned. Luc Bachelot and Yves Calvet, who participated in the conference, unfortunately did not have the time to give their paper in time for publication. I would like to thank them as well as the authors who submitted their article for publication.