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Phenomenology of Garden in Assyrian Documents and Reliefs; Concepts and Types

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Abstract: Problem: The Assyrian reliefs, especially the Neo-Assyrian, in addition to “historical narratives,” have a long tradition in “representing the natural environment.” On the other hand, Assyrian dipole ontology based on the “center/periphery” and “order/chaos” dichotomy has been influential in their naturalistic way of life and has shaped their aesthetic understanding. However, the role of these in shaping the garden as a third nature is a major issue in the Assyrian documents and reliefs, which has been considered less as an independent research, and no model has been presented. Goals: The purpose of this paper is to identify the key factors affecting the formation of gardens in the Neo-Assyrians and their typology and modeling their view of the garden and its various functions based on the analysis of research texts and surviving reliefs. Research method: This research based on a qualitative method in a critical and inferential approach and with an explicit reading of the phenomenology of the garden in the lands of Neo-Assyrians. The “triangulation of data” has been used to achieve theoretical saturation. Conclusion: The results show that gardens with the Assyrians are manifestations of the “microcosm” and include a spectrum of recreational-dramatic functions, including occasional, even ecological and economic ones. The typology proposed in this paper based on the location-operation of (a) gardens and parks in the urban landscape, and (b) gardens and parks of the urban fringe. The conceptual model, show that by moving away from downtown and decreasing gardens ritual and religious values, geometric and regular design changes to a free (natural) approaches landscape planning. The change in the paradigm of garden design based on the change of the garden from “Kirū” to “Kirimāhu” means the succession of dramatic gardens (fun and pleasure) instead of functional gardens (botanical) at the time of Sargon II (late 8th century BC), and this is The golden age in the Assyrian gardens, the elements of the dramatic art such as artificial lakes, Bitānu, and Aqueducts were added to the gardens and hanging and stepped gardens were flourishing.

Keywords: *Typology, Assyrian gardens, Reliefs, Bitānu, Hunting.*



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Introduction and Problem

The most important and, of course, the least discussed topic in Assyrian thought is the representation of the garden in Assyrian art. The inventive aspect of current research is the link between ontology and the Assyrian conception of the world with a landscape reading (first nature) and its representation and re-creation into the cultivated land (second nature) and gardens (third nature). This new look represents a conceptual model based on the paradigm of “cultural geography” on the exploration and interpretation of Assyrian reliefs emphasizing Neo-Assyria. The purpose of this paper is to identify the factors affecting the formation of a variety of gardens in the Neo-Assyrians and the typology of their perspectives on it and the various garden functions based on the analysis of texts and the study of outstanding features. Accordingly, the key questions of the research are as follows: A) What is the subject matter of the garden to the Assyrians? B) What are the types of gardens in Assyrian thought and what is the link between their ontology and the nature of gardens? And (C) How are the representations of the gardens in Neo-Assyrian reliefs?

Research background

Several studies have been conducted over the past 150 years about the Assyrians. These studies include researches on the geography of the Assyrian (Reade, 1978a, 1978b), the identification of cities in the roots of Nineveh, Khorsabad and Nimrod (Jacoby, 1991), inscriptions and their contents in the palaces (Russell, 1998; Gerardi, 1988) and studies on art and Assyrian (Collins, 2009; Dalley, 1991). Articles about the Assyrian gardens and the archaeological gardens of the Assyrian gardens of Iraq have been written. For instance, Albenda (1974) has published an article on vineyards in Ashurbanipal gardens and vineyards in Assyria (Albenda, 1974). Dolly (1994) also attempted to use the historical documentation and theoretical interpretations to conceal the secret of the Nineveh Gardens and distinguish them from Babylon (Dalley, 1994). Such an attempt was also

made by Foster (2004) to understand the gardens of Nineveh (Foster, 2004). The latest research, among other one, is Amrhein’s studies (2015), which recalled Gardens of Neo-Assyria based on a rational spectrum, including courage, sanctity, and accessibility (Amrhein, 2015). However, the present essay on the ontology and phenomenology of Assyrian gardens, which is an innovative topic.

Research method

This research uses a qualitative method in a critical and deductive approach with an interpretive analysis. Primary data have been collected from written and published sources and various views have been analyzed around the core issues of the research to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The “triangulation of data” has been used to achieve theoretical saturation. Finally, the findings are presented as a conceptual model to enable the “narration” of the Assyrian garden.

Theoretical fundamentals of research

• Assyrian ontology and its fundamental dichotomies

Assyrian thought describes the idea of a dual world; a world that is divided between “divine” and “profane (secular world affairs).” The god of the Assyrian was the land and in the broader sense of all plants, animals, and humans “inhabited on/in the earth”. The king applied Assyrian kingdom to the entire world by “integrating the territory in the land of Assyria” and “increasing the diversity of people, plants and animals and natural resources under the country’s power”. “Diversity” was a reflection of the power and domination of the Assyrian on everything (Hunt, 2015: 23-25)., each Assyrian garden was itself a manifestation of a civilization, full of the heavenly presence (Amrhein, 2015: 3). Another dichotomy in Assyrian thought is rooted in ancient beliefs about “order” and “disorder” in existence. These two contradictory concepts also created other contradictory couples that were somehow considered as examples of that belief. The ancient thoughts had

been aware of the contradiction between the two concepts of “center” and “periphery”. Farming or “the wilderness” was, in fact, an attempt to domesticate the opposite, the periphery, and thus “hunting” and “warfare”, which were conceptually interlinked, trying to influence the center and domestication of nature, and the universe was considered a wild world (Dick, 2006: 243). The constant struggle of the Assyrians against the clutches of “chaos” emphasizes an ecological between the central territories of the Assyrians and the periphery (Amrhein, 2015: 3).

In their ontology (Fig. 1), the city (alū) was located in the center of the world and the serū created “sacred mounds”, “wild nature” and “mountains”. The “lower, middle and upper paradise” above and “middle ground” and “lower world” were lower layers (Dick, 2006: 244). The idea originated from the traditional Mesopotamian concept of a vertical and universal hierarchy of dipole world, in which the land inhabited by the man played a dividing line between heaven and the world of the underworld (Carolyn, 2004: 15).

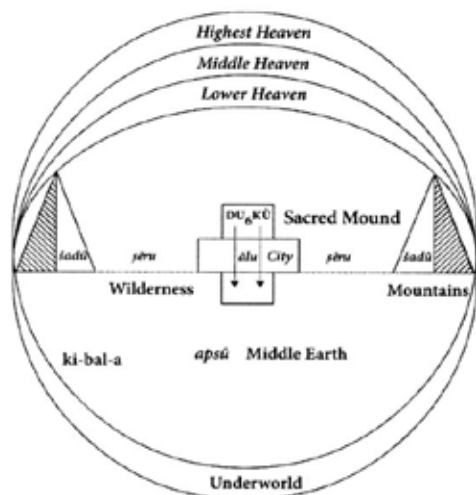


Fig. 1. The Assyrian dipolar ontology model.
Source: Dick, 2006: 244.

● **Garden terminology and its components to the Assyrian**

The term “kirimāhu” meaning “gardens” was first used by Sargon II, meaning “pleasure garden”, which had an unbreakable link with the palace. The term actually stands at the opposite of the traditional “kirū” meaning

the botanical garden, located outside the fence of the main cities (Wiseman, 1983: 137). This change in the vocabulary is the result of a change in “scale” and “change in viewpoint” that has arisen from the dimensions, function, and design of the garden. Sargon II and his son Sennacherib created a change from “functional goals” to “dramatic intentions” in the Assyrian garden (Amrhein, 2015: 3). The word “kirimāhu” (the big garden / enormous) was borrowed from the Sumerian language and was seen as part of the city of Uruk earlier (Amrhein, 2015; Wiseman, 1983). Most gardens prior to Sargon exhibited no stylization beyond terracing, and after this period the gardens were explicitly linked to the temples or palaces and based on appearance, shadows, fragrance, and so on, they were set up as “enhance the pride of the city” (Amrhein, 2015: 3). In other words, the term “kirimāhu” in the Sargon II era represents a new way in the design of royal gardens built alongside or within royal settlements. Although there is evidence of gardening and garden design from the first Tiglath-Pileser I for the collection of plants and animals, since Sargon II, the focus has shifted from “function of the garden” to “fun and pleaser”, and this is done by substituting the term kirimāhu instead of kirū (Oppenheim, 1965: 328, 329).

Another common term in the Assyrian gardens is “bitānu”, which means a pavilion, a kiosk or summer house, which varies with the same term, but different from that of the “inner part.” This Akkadian term was also returned to the “house”, and when it appeared in the writings of Esarhaddon (681-669 BC), the word “bitan” was associated and the translation of “Palace” was also accepted for it. However, its use for naming a special building dates back to the days of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon; Sennacherib in Nineveh built his own bitānu, which was in fact “small palace”, for his son Ashur-nadin-shumi in the city of Assure. This theme is described in brick inscription and two rock reliefs. The change in the role of the garden at the time of Sargon II provided a platform for the

formation of the concept of bitānu and made it an integral part of the royal gardens (Fig. 2). These traditions were continued by Esarhaddon, and by constructing a 48-by-16-m² pavilion; a unique and large pavilion as he had itself referred to (Oppenheim, 1965; Wiseman, 1983). Bitānu was originally borrowed from an architectural element from the West of the Assyrian (Syrian-Hittite) civilization called the bit hilāni (hall formed with

columns) (Oppenheim, 1965: 328), originally designed in the Sargon II palaces as a vantage point to the gardens (Amrhein, 2015: 3). The bit hilāni actually linked “the outer landscape to the interior of the palace” (Thomason, 2016: 253). The gardener’s work (nukaribbu) has always been referred to Assyrian texts; gardeners sometimes received rations from the king, including women and even blind people (Wiseman, 1983: 143).

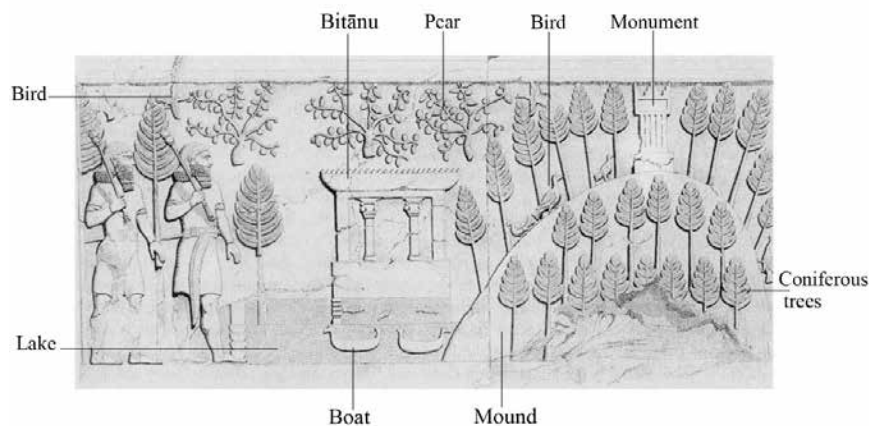


Fig. 2. The Sargon II Garden in the Dur-Sharrukin (Khorsabad); artificial lake with boats, Bitānu and the hills on the right with the shrubs. Source: Dalley, 1993: 5.

Archetypes in Assyrian Gardening

The Neo-Assyrian show that the natural landscape of northern Syria, in the eyes of the Assyrians, was so wild, rich and diverse, and so lovely that the representation of the kings by the reestablishment of herbal and animal richness in the mainland of the Assyrians was followed by it. It was not just a visual imitation, but a fictional and imaginative compilation that illustrated how such diverse and fertile lands could include both royal realms in the distant lands and their reproduction at home, thus representing the “microcosm” (Thomason, 2001: 65) where the king dominated it. The “Amanus Mountains” in Syria and the Near East is another example of the Assyrian herd of landscapes, often described by the Assyrian scribes (Amrhein, 2015: 3.4). Mount Amanus was attractive due to its stunning height, diverse wild animals and dense forests on its slopes. This attention was paid to the Syrian sight in the second half of the Assyrian kingdom, with the construction of the royal

gardens at the time of Sargon II, which culminated in his writing of gardens by sampling the mountain of Amanus, in which all the floral herbs and mountain fruit trees were planted (Thomason, 2001: 66.67).

Trees, Plants and Water Supply System

The presence of grapes that depend on other trees as a base is a key requirement for the great gardens that created the continuous foregrounds in the landscape (Albenda, 1974: 6). The conifer family, such as pine, white pine, cypress or spruce and palm are other in the gardens. Coniferous trees such as pine and cedar grew rapidly in the land of Assyria. The “Sacred Tree” in Neo-Assyria was also a combination of palm leaf inflorescences and occasionally pomegranate or grape, which became a symbol of femininity, or the birth and fertility of the Assyrian land (Collins, 2006). The trees of apple and medlar, almonds and quince were planted in orchards and other types of ebony, olive, goose, brown walnut, mastic, asparagus,

spruce, pomegranate, pear and fig have been planted in gardens (Dalley 1993: 4). Flowers and shrubs also played an important part in the Assyrian gardens, although there was less mention in the texts (Fig. 3). The prominent “garden banquet” from Ashurbanipal is the coarse flowers of the sunflower and lily (which is very common in the gardens of his time) as well as pine trees, pomegranates, and foliage fruit trees. Broad leafy bushes with seedlings (possibly from

the Mediterranean) also had been contributing to the alleged battles of Egypt. Aquatic plants like aquatic lilies are seen in lakes and climbers, which are respectively native to Egypt and the highlands of Assyria (Albenda, 1976: 214). In the royal orchards, cotton plants were also planted and there were some parts for planting vegetables and medicinal plants (based on evidence from the 9th century AD) (Wiseman, 1983: 138, 142).



Fig. 3. A relief of Ashurbanipal, which displays flowers in the hunting park. Source: Trustees of the British Museum.

The water supply system to the city, the gardens and orchards used two key sources; first, the rivers' water (Tigris and Euphrates and its branches) and the tasty mountain water. River water was transmitted through the canal and the mountain water through the aqueduct. The stone slabs of the engineering adventure of Ashurnasirpal II described the transfer of mountain water to its own gardens in Nimrod. Sennacherib also refers to construction work on the transfer of water from the mountains to the city of Nineveh for drinking and irrigating the garden that he had set up. These gardens are probably the ones that 50 years later, when fully, are seen in the striking designs of Assurbanipal (Dalley, 1994: 50). Sargon also transferred the mountain water using the aqueduct to its gardens and new parks in the Bavian palace in Nineveh (Dalley, 1993: 5). Ashurnasirpal II, in the group, traveled from the top of the garden down to the bottom of it and mentions “waterfalls such as the stars of heaven” (Wiseman, 1983: 142). The use of the Schematic Archimedean system was the invention of innovations for the transfer of water on a smaller scale to a higher level that was carried out by Sennacherib for garden irrigation. Artificial lakes have also been made from other types of water

displays in gardens and large parks.

Results

The criterion of this research in typology is the concept of “control” and “power representation” that is based on the Assyrian ontology, with the intervention of the landscape in order to regulate it, thus suggesting a model of the microcosm of the Garden to the Neo-Assyrians. To achieve this goal, typology of gardens' functions has been combined with the distance from the center (city = order) to the periphery (outside the city = disorder) to describe the method of applying “environmental control” based on the amount of intervention in the natural landscape in a spectral viewpoint and also displays the Assyrian approaches based on planning and designing. Accordingly, the Assyrian gardens can be divided into two main location groups, each of which has common, but also different features: a) gardens and parks in the city; and b) gardens and parks of the urban margin.

A) Urban Gardens and landscape parks

Inland town gardens are often private and limited access to them. These gardens include gardens,

enclosed courtyards, hanging gardens, temple gardens and inland parks (imitation gardens from alien landscapes).

- **Courtyards and royal gardens of palaces**

Porter(1993)believedthatthedistinctionbetweenroyal gardensandritualgardensisuseless(Amrhein,2015:7), since the segregation of religious rituals and secular life does not have any place in ancient culture, and political behavior and religious behavior are actually the same (Melville, 2016: 219). However, the royal gardens have a typically distinct range of the rarest types of gardens in the country that are completely different from the gardens associated with the temples. The Neo-Assyrian palaces are geometric and right-angled, and the existence of the numerous courtyards in closed spaces is not only the best place for “pleasure, to escape the plunder of pigs, the villains, and the thieves, the dirty goats, and city crowd” (Dalley, 1993: 2), but one of the features of the palaces. The mausoleum of the Assyrian queens in the 9th and 8th centuries in the city of Nimrud was discovered with all their luxurious objects underneath the stone paving of the courtyard in the northwestern palace, which could be considered as a document that the garden of the palace buildings functioned as the “memorial garden”. In addition, these gardens are also a place for “picnics, love, displaying military spells, and praising the beauty of nature” (Dalley, 1993: 3).

- **The gardens of the temples**

Archaeological documents have shown that the courtyards of the temples, such as palaces, have been dedicated to the garden (Wiseman, 1983: 138). The regular arrangement of trees in the inner city garden temples was designed according to the ritual order, as well as with the access of a small number of high court officials and religious authorities. There is no significant difference between the trees in the temples and other tree species planted in the palaces. However, it seems that these gardens do not have much size.

- **Hanging and gardens**

The hanging gardens of Nineveh (Fig. 4) are

different from what is thought to be made in the shape of a ziggurat in Babylon. In fact, confusion is the of the Leonard Woolley on “ziggurat gardens” in public minds. Stevenson (1992) explored the geometric structure and irrigation technology of the pentagonal ziggurat in Babylon (Stevenson, 1992). However, Dolly (1993) believed that this mistake was due to the translation of the Greek term *kremastos* in English (hanging); in fact, the concept of the Greek word was the human sloping surface that was raised on the terraces of rock, bitumen and wood, such as the Greek theater, and on top of them were masses of soil and trees (Dalley, 1993, 1994). Thus, based on archaeological arguments and written documents, Dolly (1994) believed that there was basically no document based on the planting of plants on the ziggurat levels, and that Wooly’s belief had been incorrect, and so the purpose of the hanging garden was actually the sloping garden. He believed that a collection of archaeological evidence and remaining Greek documents proved that the gardens of Sennacherib, which are carved in the stone reliefs of the Ashurbanipal palace, were the same well-known hanging garden, which the Greeks (for instance Diodorus Siculus) had referred to as “a naturalistic landscape rising on steps such as theater”; the forest trees have been planted in all steps, and water was transmitted through the aqueduct that was integrated with terraces (Fig. 5). Besides, various mountainous regions’ trees were probably planted like pine and juniper and other aromatic trees. Decorative pawl or small palace is also depicted in the picture (Dalley, 1994: 51). Another challenge is water supply. Sennacherib describes the innovative method of water supply to the levels, including the connection of two bronze or copper-plated copper molds, resulting from their interconnection of a sophisticated tool for raising water, which was itself “a wonder for all people” (Dalley, 1993: 9). Of course, he does not tell us about the way it works.

- **landscape parks**

There are not many that could be used to represent

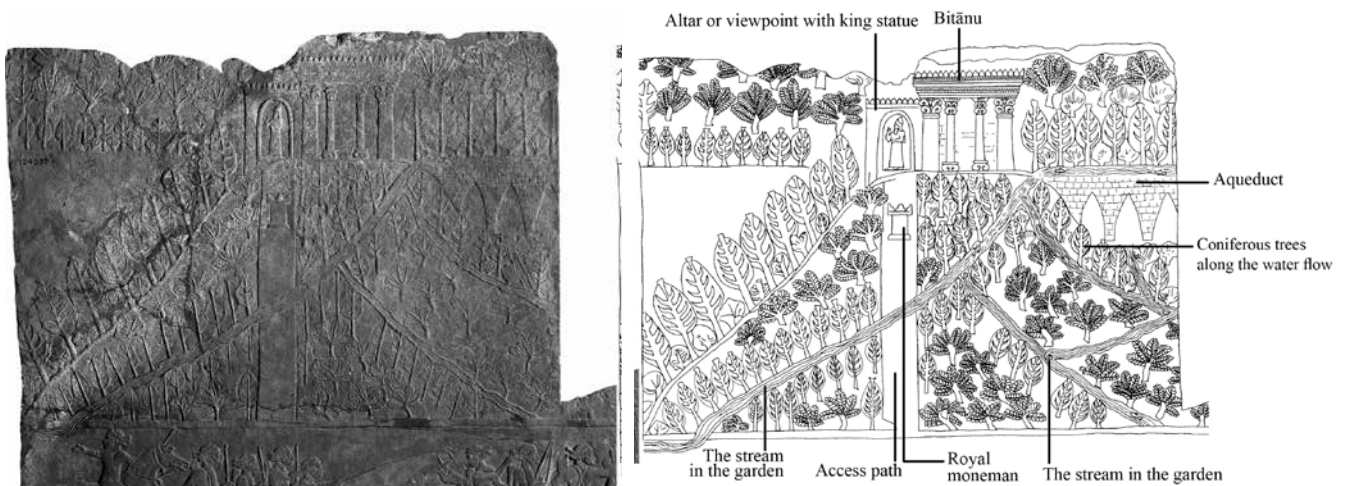


Fig. 4. The Ashurbanipal relief that depicts the Sennacherib Gardens and its aqueduct in Nineveh, with numerous interpretations of its content. Source: Trustees of the British Museum; Dalley, 1994: 10.

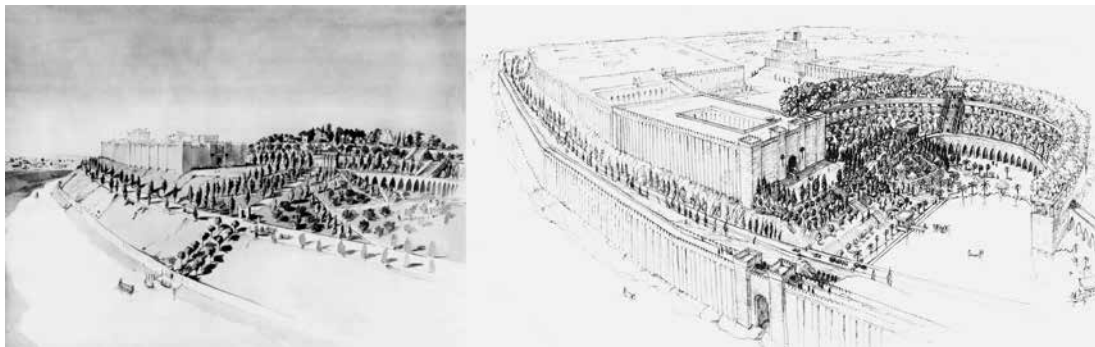


Fig. 5. Representation of the Sennacherib hanging garden in Nineveh. Right: Terry Ball. Source: Amrhein, 2015: 8; and left: Stephanie Dalley. Source: Dalley, 1994: 57.

intercity landscape parks. Because such parks were often the same with other types of royal gardens, hunting or game parks. Sennacherib refers to the construction of a park “like Mount Amanus” near his palace with a variety of fruit and sweet-smelling trees such as those in mountainous areas and in Chaldea (1927: 160). It is thought that the queen could spend time on the walkways. The presence of the lake

in royal parks dates back to the time of Sargon II (Albenda, 1976).

B) Suburban gardens and landscape parks

• Private royal park – gardens

The “garden banquet” is a prominent example of the last powerful Assyrian king Ashurbanipal in the S1 room (Fig. 6) in the northern palace (city of Nineveh).

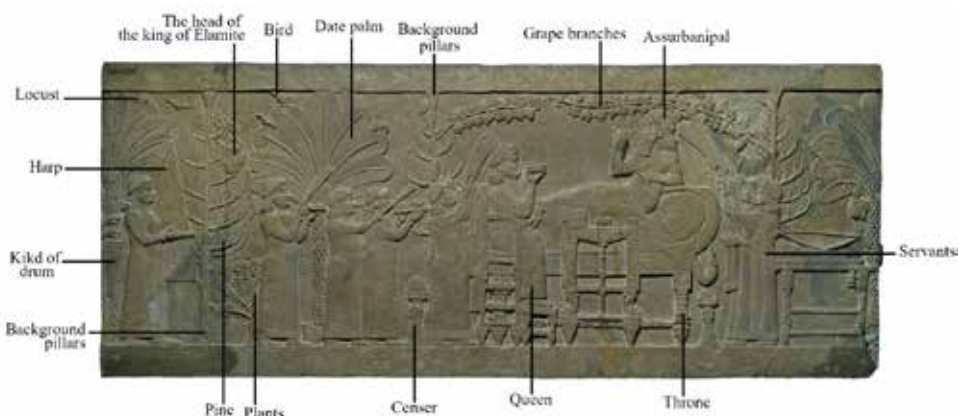


Fig 6. Garden banquet in the royal garden of Assurbanipal in the suburbs of Nineveh. Source: Trustees of the British Museum.

This relief is the upper part of the scene, which presented in a three separate one upper the other, each of them represents a specific aspect of the landscape that will be discussed in the following. This relief depicted the king on the throne and under the pergola, along with the queen and attendants at the banquet. This relief is also called the “Queen’s Garden” (Collins, 2006: 103). What is so unusual in this “gorgeous gardens” is the presence of grapevine trees in which the ivy has traveled in several directions and circled around coniferous trees probably from the white pine family (Albenda, 1974: 10). The king in this scene resting on all the powers of turmoil and disturbance (Dick, 2006: 256), and the birds flying and feeding their chicks, and the flowers are blooming shrubs are also simplified (Albenda, 1974, 1976). The garden seems to have been on the edge of the city of Nineveh (Collins, 2004: 3). The plants planted around the royal couples have symbolic messages; the pine trees are native to the Assyrian, sometimes used to distinguish the Assyrian land from other lands, and date palm trees are also in the country, but it would be frozen and do not the tree on the right of Assurbanipal have given fruits. The date palms with fruits also featured in the plans to introduce the land of Elam or Babylon, but the carved descriptions do not hesitate to place the banquet. In general, these two types of herbs bring the harmony and obscurity of the Assyrian world to viewers (Collins, 2004: 2, 3); (Fig. 6).

● **Festivals gardens**

The “New Year’s temple” was built by Sennacherib with

a garden outside the wall of the traditional city of Assyria in the middle of the Euphrates River. The excavations include the discovery of regular trenches, where the planting of trees or shrubs was in a row order, in the central courtyard of the rectangular temple and displaying a temple among the fruit gardens (Fig. 7) (Dalley, 1993: 6). Sennacherib wrote on a relief that “I dug two irrigation water around it and surrounded it with a garden of fruit trees and the bounties of Sasa; I planted fruitful implants in its sides”; he also “picked up all sorts of aromatic herbs” (Luckenbill, 1927: 184) in the garden. The Garden of New Year’s festival was not the private garden of the gods but was used for ritual ceremonies. It was, therefore, a public or semi-public space. The displacement of trees and their temporary planting according to archaeological evidence about 100 pits -founded in the courtyard of the festival garden (rebuilt by Sennacherib) without any connection to irrigation pipes - show that the trees were moved for religious ceremonies; thus, the “artificial” prior to “being natural” (Amrhein, 2015: 6, 11);(Fig. 7).

● **Hunting parks**

Tiglath-Pileser I refers to the inscriptions used to collect herds of horses, bulls and wild donkeys as booty. He has also referred to the control and the formation of reindeer herds, gazelles and gooseberries (Dalley, 1993). At that time, it seems that the collection of non-native animals was used to create the “microcosm” on the basis of being, in order to indicate the king’s control and dominance over the

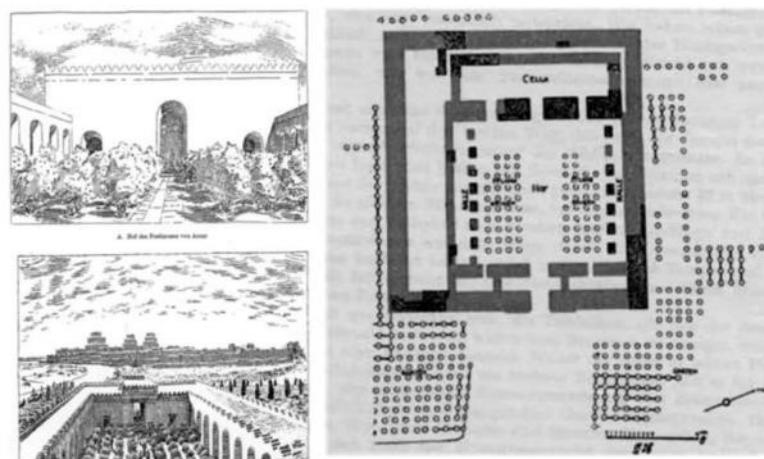


Fig. 7. Plans and Perspectives representing the Garden and Temple of the New Year Festival. Source: Amrhein, 2015: 7.

whole land on behalf of the Assyrian god, and thus it depicted “political meaning” (Albenda, 2008: 11). However, the ritual and social work of hunting in the Assyrian community also needed a place to do so.

The hunting of lion during Assurbanipal was carried out in a special garden named “ambassu” at the bottom of the hill full of spectators’ citizens (Fig. 8). The reliefs of the room C at the north palace in Nineveh, as well as the room S, describe this story (Dick, 2006). He was very fond of hunting and pursuing sports (Walker, 1888: 100). In this garden, there are several consecutive columns and, respectively, an army of pilgrims to the Elamite towns, a landscape vista, lions hunting chariot, and a king hunting the lion on foot are drawn. A row of pine and pomegranate trees with short shrubs has been depicted in the

scene. Pomegranate trees cover about two-thirds of the image (Albenda, 1976). In general, wild animals were kept for hunting in ambassu, which also had numerous trees, fruits, olives and foreign species. These are well represented in the prominent features of the Sennacherib Palace. In fact, the “Botanical Garden” was combined with the “Game Park” and ritualistic or at least ritualistic activities, so that “hunting” could be realized (Oppenheim, 1965: 332). For this reason, hunting parks (ambassu) were in fact “ritual drama” in which the king was hunting lion and on the other hand, the gods were hunting bulls. Therefore, king’s success in hunting meant heavenly confirmation in support of him (Amrhein, 2015: 12). Since none of these wild animals were natives of the mainland of the Assyrian, their hunt was also a

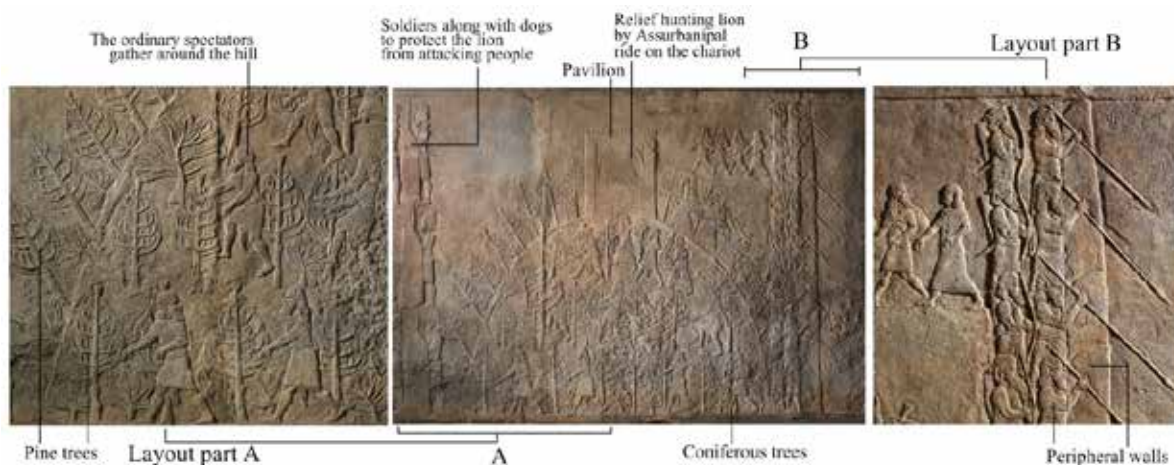


Fig. 8. The Assyrian Hunting Park. Source: Trustees of the British Museum.

political meaning, and it also reflected the success of the king in military battles (Albenda, 2008: 75, 76);(Fig. 8).

• Game parks

In terms of scale, the game parks (ambassi) were the hunting parks (ambassu). An impressive example is outside the gate of Adad at the north of Nineveh, which was located near the royal garden. These types of parks were used to drive back the flood of the Khosr, including the Cyprus and Sissoo trees, the tall canyons, and the swampy plants that quickly flourished for migratory birds, wild boars, and aquatic animals. Their wood was also enough to build a mansion (Wiseman, 1983: 138). Thus, they also had

a reserve role in ritual hunting (Amrhein, 2015: 16).

Discussion and modeling of findings

The change in the garden design paradigm was based on a change in the garden from “kirū” to “kirimāhu” and the substitution of the display gardens (fun and pleasure) instead of functional gardens (botanical) at the time of Sargon II (late 8th century BC). The tradition of garden design, before this period, lacked a special style in terracing, but from the time of Sennacherib (early 7th century AD), changes occurred in old traditions, and dramatic elements such as artificial lakes, bitānu, and aqueducts were added to the gardens. Hanging gardens were flourishing. The prominent features of this period have represented many

Table 1. Typology of Assyrian Gardens and Parks. Source: author.

| Category | Type | Place | Accessibility | Nature of space | Size | Main Function | Geometry | Kind of design/ intervention |
|---|---|-----------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A) Urban Gardens and landscape parks | Courtyards and royal gardens of palaces | Intercity | Restricted | Private | Small/ Medium | Dramatic-Recreational | Regular and right angled | Design |
| | The gardens of the intercity temples | Intercity | Restricted | Semi-Private | Medium | Ritual | Regular | Design based on planting order |
| | Hanging and sunken gardens | Intercity | Restricted | Semi-Private | Medium | Dramatic-Recreational | Stepped / rising | Design |
| | Intercity landscape parks | Intercity | Limited | Semi-Private | large | Recreational-Ecological | Organic | Planning |
| B) Suburban gardens and landscape parks | Private royal park – gardens | Suburban | Limited | Semi-Private | large | Recreational-Dramatic | Organic | Planning |
| | Festivals gardens | Suburban | Limited | Semi-Public | large | Ritual-Ceremonial | Organic | Design based on planting order |
| | Hunting parks | Suburban | Limited | Semi-Public | large | Ritual-Political | Organic | Planning |
| | Game parks | Suburban | Limited | Semi-Public | large | Recreational-Ecological | Organic | Planning |

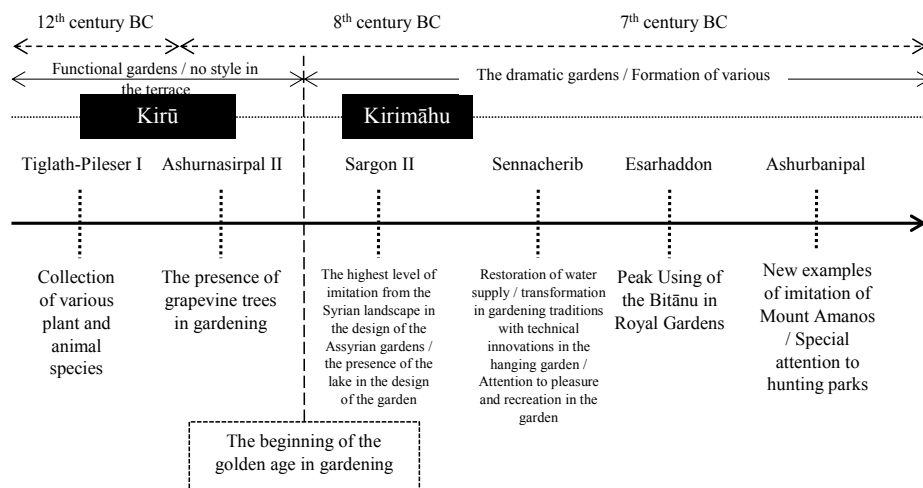


Fig. 9. The historical developments in Assyrian gardens. Source: author.

varieties of plants, trees, and animals with great care and detail. Sennacherib’s attention to detail with the beauty of nature is an example that illustrates the Assyrian dominance over the political and natural realms of their surroundings (Table 1 and Fig. 9).

On the other hand, it has been manifested a bipolar in the Assyrian ontology as “center/periphery” of “order/disorder”. In this view, the city was transformed into a symbol of order in the center due to its highest environmental control, and the wild nature and pristine landscape became a symbol of turmoil and disorientation. The “alien landscape” (Mount Amanus, its flora, and fauna) with a fictional, imaginative, and a symbolic look turned into a fundamental form of representation and found a political, religious, and social role to represent the Assyrian microcosm and their dominance over the entire territory of the country. This subject influenced the aesthetic paradigm of the Assyrians and shaped the garden as a “reproductive nature” based on the adornment of planning and ordered irrigation arrangement, and made hunting an instrument for establishing and confirming their dominance of the “well-known being”.

Conclusion

The Assyrian Garden Model (Fig.10) encompasses a spectrum of recreational, dramatic, and even ceremonial

and even ecological and economic functions. The typology of the Assyrian Gardens and Park proposed in this paper, based on the location-function (urban gardens and landscape parks and suburban gardens and landscape parks), shows that by moving away from the city center and reducing ritual and religious values geometric and regularly would have replaced with the “natural planning” based on “landscape planning The royal gardens and gardens of the inner-city temples were based on a regular pattern of planting in right-angled geometry. Hanging gardens, royal gardens, gardens of ritual ceremonies also had a planting pattern that, as much as possible, increased their religious value; they were more affected by land alignment and local requirements. The hunting parks (ambassu) and the game (ambassi) were mostly based on natural landscape planning to follow a specific geometric design. In these parks, the economic and ecological benefits followed alongside the political goals of the Neo-Assyrian. Thus, the world of the Assyrian Garden in its golden age of the 7th century AD was based on their ontology and to their everyday, ritual, religious, ceremonial, political and economic needs. At the end, the influence of the Assyrian gardens on the Elamite gardens and, more importantly, the probable role of the Assyrians on the Achaemenid gardens is a very important and detailed subject that could be another subject of research and

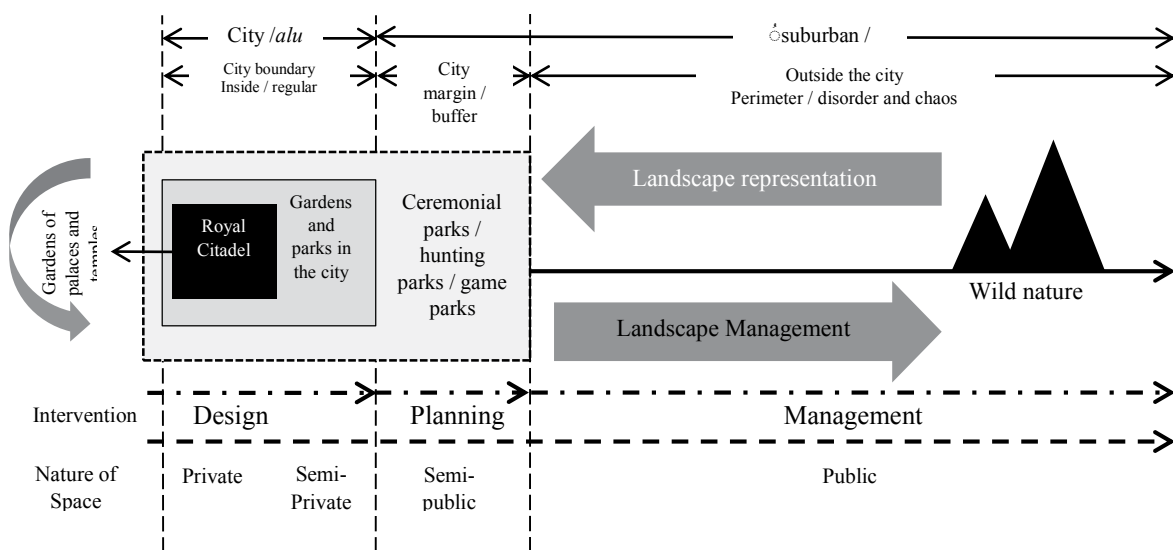


Fig. 10. The Assyrian Garden Model based on the bipolar ontology. Source: author.

requires extensive theoretical, historical and field studies that hoped to be done in the future.

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