

CHAPTER XVI MIDDLE ASSYRIA

During the same period, ranging from the late fourteenth to the early twelfth centuries, which saw the exchange of artistic traditions between Mycenaean and Asiatic decorators (Chapter XV), there also existed two important groups of plant designs that have not yet been taken into account. In the west, craftsmen along the Mediterranean littoral and in the interior of Palestine were using designs continuing the tradition of the Second and early Third Syrian hybrids or others closely related to Egypt. In addition, a second major group of vegetal designs was being developed in the east by Middle Assyrian artists. Since their products are often strongly affected by Mitannian elements and in turn appear to have influenced some of the later “Canaanite” work, we will follow developments in Assyria before returning to the coastal areas to complete our discussion of the plant ornaments of the Second Millenium B. C.

THE SOURCES OF ASSYRIAN PLANT ORNAMENT

In Old Assyrian times, roughly contemporary with the Isin-Larsa period and the First Dynasty of Babylon, Assyria was often a political dependency of the south. The Middle Assyrian period was a chequered phase in the land’s history. At times vigorous rulers were able to maintain the independence of their territory, but during much of this period Assyria was a weak border area that suffered many blows at the hands of its neighbors. Assur was plundered by Shaushattar and remained under Mitannian suzerainty until the decline of that state around 1350 B. C. To the south the Kassites, who claimed a nominal hegemony over the land, were ready to encroach upon Assyria whenever possible. By the time that Akhenaten was ruling in Egypt, Tushratta, the last great king of Mitanni,

had been killed. His kingdom disintegrated into an important buffer state ruled by Mattiwaza, the protégé of the Hittite Shuppiluliumash. The elimination of Mitanni left Ashuruballit I free to begin the creation of a powerful Assyrian kingdom. He was followed by a series of capable kings, chief among whom are Adad-nirai I, Shalmaneser I, and Tukulti-Ninurta I, who laid the foundations of Assyria's future world empire.¹

This political history is mirrored in the cultural and artistic development of Assur. In Old Assyrian times the area was peripheral to Babylonia and in all important respects its culture aped that of the south. The Middle Assyrian period is the crucial phase in the development of Assyrian art. It was during these years that a tradition characteristic for Assyria begins to emerge. By the reigns of the last great Assyrian kings the "national style" of the country was well established. Unfortunately little remains of the art of this highly important phase. Only a stone torso and two altars with figures in relief, the latter carved under Tukulti-Ninurta I, represent the large stone works.² These works are already so thoroughly stamped with the peculiarities of Assyrian style that they are not very useful for the elucidation of the genesis of Assyrian art. Any attack on this problem would be hopeless if it were not for the Middle Assyrian cylinder seals, some of which, particularly the early ones, reveal the sources of Assyrian glyptic, and, by projection, of Assyrian art also. By this means Frankfort has been able to demonstrate in detail the twin springs of Assyrian glyptic - that from the west, chiefly Mitanni, and that from the south, Babylonian art, and perhaps also the art of the Kassites.³ The dual parentage of Assyrian art can be demonstrated with partial clarity by the plant designs.

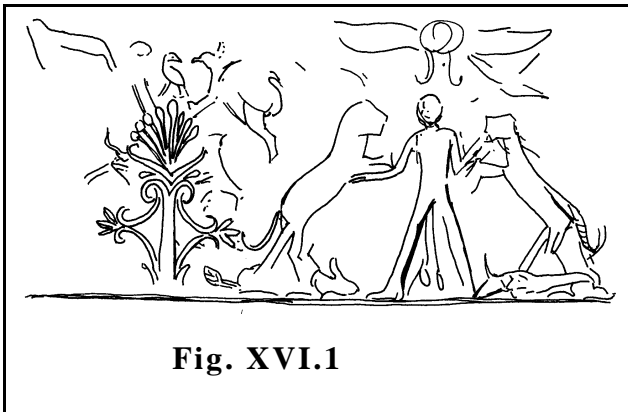
MIDDLE ASSYRIAN ORIGINS OF HYBRIDS WITH WESTERN AFFINITY

¹ Cf. Sidney Smith, *The Early History of Assyria* (New York, 1928).

² Andrae, *Das Wiedererstandene Assur* (Leipzig, 1938), Pl. XLIV,b. Hd. b. Arch I, Pl. CLXIV.

³ CS, pp. 185 ff.

The rarity of Middle Assyrian plants of clear Mitannian derivation finds some compensation in the direct relationship demonstrated by the examples we do possess. One (Fig. XVI.1)⁴, a seal of translucent quartz crystal is still thoroughly imbued with Mitannian characters as is not surprising since it must have been cut at the time that Mitannian seals were in common use at Assur,⁵ and when Nuzi and Kirkuk were still thriving Mitannian centers.



Significantly enough, Fig.XVI.1 is composed in the same free field manner characteristic for the higher products of the Mitannian seal cutters, but no longer used in the developed Assyrian style of 13th century Mitannian seals.⁶ The

composition consists of two main groups, one being a hero quelling two raging lions mounted on couchant bulls. We have not found detailed parallels for this group on Mitannian seals, but its core, the axial human figure between two diagonal beasts of prey, can be matched by groups on Mitannian⁷ and Second Syrian⁸ seals in which the hero is kneeling. Above the man of Fig. XVI.1 is suspended the winged sun disc so common in Mitannian and Syrian glyptic. Here it is distinguished by the presence of downcurving

⁴ Aside from the original publication, this seal is also reproduced by Herzfeld in "Die Kunst des zweiten Jahrtausends in Vorderasien," AMI, VIII (1937), 141-143, Figs. 87, 88; Pl. III, 87. He classifies it as one of the "Mesopotamian seals in the Amarna period," i. e. as Mitannian and discusses its Mitannian, "Hittite, and Middle Assyrian affinities." In CS, p. 282, n. 1, this seal (Ward 711) is considered Mitannian.

⁵ For example, among the seals and sealings illustrated here, Figs.XIV.5, XIV.2, XIV.22, are from Assur.

⁶ Cf. CS, p. 273f; Pls. XLII,a (Shaushattar); XLIII, m (Chagar Bazar), and Fig. XIV.26 are well developed Mitannian examples. Fig. XIV.32 may probably be cited in this connection.

⁷ CS, Pl. XLIII, m.

⁸ A, 928.

hooks.⁹ Herzfeld has pointed out that these fine parallels in the cartouches of the Hittite kings.¹⁰ However, it is not necessary to derive this character directly from the Hittites; it also occurs on a seal in the Walters Art Gallery that must be considered Second Syrian in date.¹¹ The couchant bulls with heads pushed forward, on which the lions stand, are completely comparable to those on Mitannian seals (Figs. XIV.8, XIV.12, XIV.23, XIV.44).¹²

The other main group of Fig. XVI.1 consists of the plant hybrid flanked by two pairs of animals. This composition is at once reminiscent of the canonical Mitannian use of compound forms. Unlike the Mitannian examples with several pairs of attendant beasts (Figs. XIV.44, XIV.46), the uppermost pair on the Morgan seal appears to assume an antagonistic attitude toward one another, similar to groups in Figs. XIV.13 and XIV.2. One of the animals is a winged male sphinx which appears to have more affinities with the monster in Fig. XIV.8 than with the normal sphinxes of Syrian or Mitannian glyptic. Even more striking, however, is the close resemblance between the head of the Morgan sphinx and that on Shaushattar's seal impression.¹³ Among all the Mitannian features of this seal, the plant hybrid is the most striking. With the exception of certain supplementary details added along the stem, to be considered below, it is completely comparable to the standard

⁹ Although it does not provide a good analogy for Fig. XVI.1, a Middle Assyrian seal showing a sun, or moon, disc, without wings, surrounded by a pendant shaped like a Hathor wig should be mentioned (Moortgat, "Assyrische Siegel des 13ten Jahrhunderts," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* XLVII (1942), Fig. 23).

¹⁰ E. Herzfeld, "Die Kunst des Zweiten Jahrtausends in Vorderasien," *AMI*, VIII (1937), p. 142. For examples cf. Bittel-Güterbock, "Boghazkoy," *Abhandlung Preuss. Ak. Wiss., Phil.-hist. Kl.*, (1935), Pl. XXIV, 2a,3; 1a, 3;11.

¹¹ Dussaud, "Rapports entre la Crète ancienne et la Babylonie," *Iraq*, VI (1939), Pl. VII, 55 (Walters Art Gallery, C 61; plaster impression; no information is available concerning the whereabouts of the original). Its Second Syrian affinities are attested by the humped bull (BN, 461; Newell, 299), the seated, pawing lion (BN, 451; Newell, 299,311) and the hare. Newell, 320 and 325 provide Second Syrian parallels for the winged figure; Newell 326 and 328 are probably Third Syrian versions of the same personage. The two-humped camel accommodating two passengers is a unique motive. Seals showing a man riding a llama-like animal (A,904) and a goddess seated on a stool on top of a bull (A, 925), though different in all details, demonstrate that a background for riding figures can be found in Second Syrian glyptic.

¹² CS, Pl. XLIII,1.

¹³ CS, Pl. XLII, a

Mitannian sphragistic hybrid. The normal single tier is crowned by palmette foliage which is even rendered with drill holes at the tips of the leaves in the distinctive Mitannian manner. The angles between perianth and volute are filled by obovate lobes as in the hybrids of Figs. XIV.16, XIV.17 and XIV.22. There can be absolutely no question of the source from which this plant hybrid was derived.

Despite its overwhelmingly Mitannian aspect, Fig. XVI.1 does still demonstrate clearly its Middle Assyrian origin. Technically there is the almost complete absence of drill holes, coupled with a great emphasis on modeling and the reproduction of musculature. The Morgan cylinder even surpasses such Mitannian achievements as the seal of Shaushattar or that found at Chagar Bazar. Ordinary Mitannian cylinders never attempted to render such characters; a comparison between the sphinxes of Fig. XVI.1 and Fig. XIV.8 is very revealing. We have already stated that the group of the hero involved with four beasts has no exact predecessors. It is itself, however, the ancestor of a number of Assyrian designs which differ in that the hero himself stands upon the ruminants and holds his helpless prey by a hind leg.¹⁴ Although male or female personages holding animals in this manner are to be found in both Syrian and Mitannian seals,¹⁵ in these cases the motive lacks the foundation of couchant ruminants. The Morgan design is an example of the early history of a motive so well known in Late Assyrian times as to have been handed on to the derivative Achaemenid glyptic.¹⁶

A number of the details of Fig. XVI.1 are distinctly Middle Assyrian. The master of the lions is clothed in a short, tight-fitting tunic with decorated edges; two long tassels appear between his legs. This costume, particularly the tassels, is extremely characteristic

¹⁴ J. Menant, *Recherches sur glyptique orientale* II, p. 115, Fig. 109 (Musée Fol, Geneva). Ward-Morgan, 157. De Clerq, 357.

¹⁵ CS, Pl. XLII,a. BN, 453 shows a nude goddess holding two animals and mounted on a lion - Mitannian type is very different; this is probably Third Syrian. BN, 477 (probably Cypriote).

¹⁶ BN, 397 (cf. also 402, a variant of this motive). De Clerq, 375; VAR, 762, 763 (VA 563, 3336). A Middle Assyrian seal pertinent in connection with this motive is Moore, 73, where a winged figure with a human victim is mounted on two lions.

for Middle Assyrian seals;¹⁷ in later times it is found only in exceptional cases.¹⁸ Above the heroic group are two birds flying in a vigorous diagonal direction; they are ordinary accessorial motives in Assyrian glyptic of this period.¹⁹ A third bird perches on the palmette foliage of the South-flower hybrid. This theme possesses one Mitannian parallel (Fig. XIV.7), but far better ones are to be found on Middle Assyrian (Figs. XVI.29, XVI.40) and Kassite (Fig. XVI.44) seals. A final, quite definite Assyrian feature is the accessory ornament added alongside the trunk of the otherwise normal Mitannian hybrid. Such elaborations are characteristic for Assyrian work, and we shall have to deal with the problem of their origin in some detail. The plant hybrid epitomizes both the significance of this seal, and also the essential lines along which Assyrian design developed. It demonstrates how a characteristic Assyrian style began to arise, based in great part on Mitannian traditions. The moment the Assyrians adopted a western element, however, they immediately commenced to rework it, producing traits that are to be characteristic Assyrian elements.



Fig. XVI.2



Fig. XVI.3

Besides the Morgan seal may be placed another, Fig. XVI.2, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as an example bearing a hybrid created under strong western influence. The main motive, a rampant horse seized by two winged dragons possessing an ancient

¹⁷ Moortgat, *op. cit.*, Figs. 5, 7-9, 55, 57. Weber, 270. Qc, 26. It is possible that Mitannian parallels may exist. The costume of a hero on BN, 440 (=CS, Pl. XLIII, I) includes three such tassels, and may be compared to the dress of the monster in the Assyrian seal, De Clerq, 357, where three tassels are apparently indicated. This last seal, though of uncertain date, is more likely to be Late Assyrian than anything else.

¹⁸ Ward-Morgan, 160. Possible De Clerq, 357; cf. preceding note.

Mesopotamian ancestry,²⁰ is un-Mitannian. Similar monsters found on a sealing of Eriba-Adad I (1389-1363 B. C.)²¹ and on other Middle Assyrian seals (Fig. XVI.3)²² vouch for the date of Fig. XVI.2. The peculiar curls of the horse are paralleled exactly in an impression on an Assur tablet, dated by its contents to the second half of the reign of Adad-nirari I (1305-1274 B. C.) or to Shalmaneser I (1273-1244 B. C.),²³ and on the bulls of Middle Assyrian seals in the De Clerq and Southesk collections.²⁴

The two-tiered hybrid of Fig. XVI.2 serves as a filling motive, and is not connected with the animals. The South-flower perianths are markedly smaller than the rather flattened volutes whose v-shaped bases project down between the arms of the perianths; this last feature can be paralleled on Mitannian seals (Figs. XIV.13, XIV.17-18, XIV.28). Mitannian comparisons for the lateral, projecting lobes have already been cited, nor would the large drops falling from the perianths be unusual in that style (Figs. XIV.10-11, XIV.13-14, XIV.18). The palmette foliage of the top tier has swollen ends, as in Figs. XIV.8 and XIV.15, where the drill holes, which probably served in the cutting of the design, have been carefully merged with the rest of the "leaf." The only unusual feature is the curved line resting on top of the foliage. This remains unexplained; it is hardly likely that an Assyrian artist would choose such a means to imitate the second row of drill holes often placed by the Mitannians above their palmette leaves. It is evident that the details of the individual tiers of this plant coincide with those of Mitannian hybrids. The lower stage is treated in exactly the same manner as that in the king of Hanigalbat's sealing (Fig.

¹⁹ Moortgat, *op. cit.*, Figs 8, 33, 38, 41, 43, 66. The bird in Moore, 71 flies directly downward.

²⁰ CS, p. 174.

²¹ CS, p. 187, Fig. 56.

²² Weber, 26 (Metropolitan Museum), 35,

²³ Moortgat, *op. cit.*, Fig. 38 (VAT, 8845; KAJ 137).

²⁴ De Clerq, 311 = CS, Pl. XXX1,1. Qa, 28. This use of curls did not die out, but continued into late Assyrian times. A bull with tassels occurs on the black obelisk of Shalmaneser III (858-824 B. C.; Layard, *Monuments of Nineveh* (London, 1858), Pl. LIV). An embroidery pattern represented in relief shows a winged bull with curls on its legs, in front of its tail, and forming a mane (*Ibid.*, Pl. XLVII). Other examples are to be found on a glazed brick (*Ibid.*, Pl. LXXXVII) and a cylinder seal (CS, Pl. XXXV,k /c, 750-650 B. C.).

XIV.28). Instead of the palmette foliage, the stout stem of the upper tier grows from the v-shaped root of the volute. Under these circumstances we may assume that the absence of a two-tiered Mitannian hybrid directly comparable in structure to Fig. XVI.2 is probably accidental. Figs. XIV.26-27 are proof that many-staged forms did exist in Mitanni. Fig. XVI.2 may well be a fairly faithful rendering of a vanished western prototype.

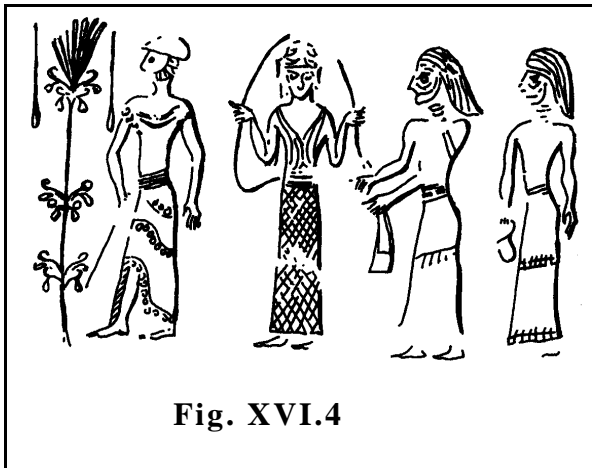


Fig. XVI.4

In a pithos burial at Assur was found an extremely fine glass cylinder (Fig. XVI.4). Nearby graves in the same house which was located at the east corner of the Old Palace, contained small frit vessels characteristic of Kassite graves in Babylon.²⁵ The seal bears four figures, together with a plant hybrid forming a

vertical border. Three of the men give the impression of normal human beings, but the fourth, shown frontally, is far more peculiar, and may possibly delineate the same personage found in the Second Syrian cylinder, Newell, 307. There, too, a frontal figure is dressed in a long, cross-hatched skirt, but in contrast to Fig. XVI.4 he is male, his arms hang limply, and wings appear to sprout from his shoulders. His relationship with the Assyrian figure is very uncertain, and the plant hybrid remains as the only definite link between the Assur seal and the west. Many of the remarks already made in connection with Fig. XVI.2 also hold true for the three-staged hybrid of Fig. XVI.4. The construction of the individual tiers, including the use of filling lobes between the perianth and volute, follows Mitannian traditions. In this case, we may even cite the Hanigalbat hybrid as a direct parallel (Fig. XIV.28). Its tiers are separated by long stems in a manner closely comparable to Fig. XVI.4. Despite all these resemblances to western prototypes, however, the plant of Fig. XVI.4 could never be mistaken for a Mitannian hybrid; the most tangible

²⁵ Cf. WVD OG, LXVIII (1935). Frankfort dates the seal to the 14th century B. C. (CS, p. 191).

difference is the elongation of the palmette foliage. In addition, it possesses a graceful, airy quality, which, notwithstanding all connecting links, distinguishes it sharply from Mitannian forms.

Palmette foliage enlarged in a manner similar to that of Fig. XVI.4 occurs on a sealing from Assur (Fig. XVI.3). The individual leaves appear to be tipped by drill holes. If so, this is practically the only feature connecting the hybrid of Fig. XVI.3 with Mitannian traditions. The remainder of the plant consists of a volute element supported by a spiky palm (?) trunk. It remains as an isolated and unique creation.

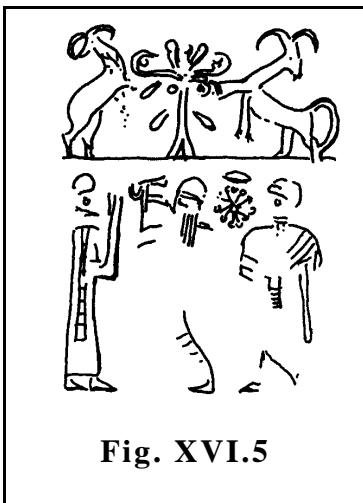


Fig. XVI.5

Western influences not only made themselves felt in Assyria at this time, but also penetrated farther south. Among the pedestrian products which compose the majority of Kassite seals, a few cylinders stand out prominently. Fig. XVI.5, an example in Berlin, without provenience, contains an antithetical group of two goats flanking a hybrid. The workmanship of the seal is not good, and some of the details of the plant are unclear. Nevertheless, as Moortgat has

pointed out,²⁶ its relationship with Mitannian hybrids is quite certain. Of the South-flower perianth, there is visible only the drill holes around which the “petals” should twist. Such holes are present in the volutes, too, and are intimate links with popular Mitannian seals such as Figs. XIV.8-9 and XIV.12. The extremely flattened volute can also be paralleled in the west (Figs. XIV.15-16, XIV.18, XIV.27-28, XIV.23). The same holds true for the drops, which appear to be pendant from the South-flower perianth, as well as inserted in the angle between that element and the volute. Near the ground line the lower stem of Fig. XVI.5 becomes splayed and may possibly have been intended as a split base.

²⁶ VAR, 157. He compares it with our Figs. XIV. 15 and XIV.20.

A vegetal motive comparable to Fig. XVI.5 occurs on a fragmentary rectangular basin found at Susa (Fig. XVI.6). Its affinities with the “Kirkuk” vegetal motives have been referred to by Contenau.²⁷

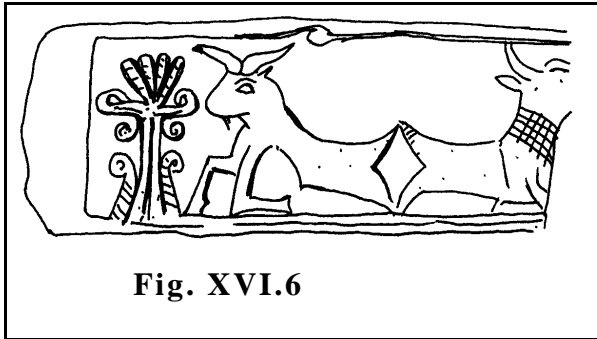


Fig. XVI.6

Here, there is found the same kind of flattened volute and palmette foliage as in Fig. XVI.5; the relationship with that Kassite seal as well as the presence of the old Mesopotamian goatfish motive is sufficient basis for assigning this trough

to a Kassite milieu. On it the perianth has been completely lost. Instead there hangs down two curling ribbons, which are balanced by others springing upwards from the ground line. These four bands offer a striking analogy for those on the fine Mitannian seal of Fig. XIV.22, for which we have not been able to provide satisfactory explanation. It is amazing to find such an apparently meaningless character so minutely reproduced on an object of completely different type, that was not even carved in the same area as the seal of Fig. XIV.22. Fig. XVI.6 thus serves as an impressive reminder of how little we yet know of the decorative arts of Asia.

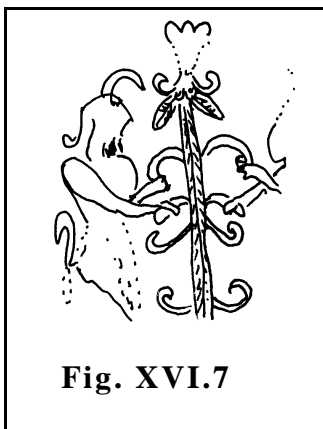


Fig. XVI.7

A remarkable design connected with the two preceding examples is to be found on the stela of an Elamite king, Untash-Huban (c. 1265-1245 B. C.), (Fig. XVI. 7) a contemporary of Kashtiliash III and Tukulti Enurta from Susa.²⁸ There a tall vegetal motive was grasped by a pair of attendant bullmen. This composition as a whole is somewhat reminiscent of those on Mitannian seals such as Figs. XIV.3 and XIV.40, which are

²⁷ G. Contenau, *Manuel de archeologie orientale* (Paris, 1931), II, 913.

²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 909f. Cf. *Encyclopedie photographique de l'art*, I, 260. For historical material on this king, see G. Cameron, *History of Early Iran* (Chicago, 1936), pp. 100-104, p. 230, Table III.

dependent on the Second Syrian designs of Fig. XIII.5. The plant appears to have had a crown consisting of flattened hybrid elements and palmette foliage, comparable to Figs. XVI.5 and XVI.6. Along its trunk project curvilinear motives for which no good parallels can be cited. Since this stela was apparently carved in Elam, it is the most peripheral example of the South-flower hybrids yet known to us. It may be regarded as derivative from such second hand forms as the Kassite seal of Fig. XVI.7.

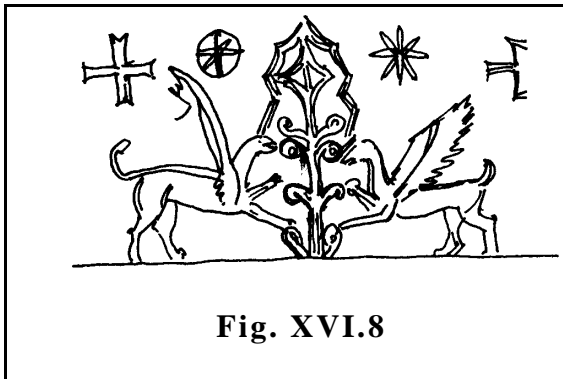


Fig. XVI.8 is a well-cut cylinder in the Bibliotheque Nationale, whose exact status is not quite certain. It could be either Kassite or Middle Assyrian. Both the star and cross were used in Assyria as well as being typical for Kassite works. It is certain

that the cross originated in the South. Since some of the Late Kassite seals share in the feeling for physical structure that was characteristic for certain groups of Middle Assyrian cylinders, and since the bulls confronting one another over a simple, short vegetal form on the seal of the Kassite ruler, Burnaburiash,²⁹ provide a precedent for the antithetical griffins of Fig. XVI.8, we consider a Kassite origin for it likely. The plant consists essentially of two tiers, the lower one remaining incomplete. The upper one resembles that of Fig. XVI.4 except for the absence of drops. The proportion of hybrid elements to stem in Fig. XVI.4 is also comparable to Fig. XVI.8. Unusual is the latter's top, ending in a lozenge, canopied by a wavy line. It is probably connected with certain designs to be discussed below. At the base of the hybrid appears a feature linking it directly with the west. The upturning volutes must be derived ultimately from such Second Syrian motives as Figs. XIII.1-3 and XIII.5. The Mitannian seals of Figs. XIV.3-4 stand as proof of its migration eastwards; it may well have reached the south through the intermediaryship of Mitannian glyptic.

²⁹ CS. Pl. XXX,1
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<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/HJK/HJKXVI.pdf>

We have now completed the enumeration of Middle Assyrian or Kassite objects showing signs of close contact with the west. In addition, there exist many other Middle Assyrian plant motives that are clearly based on hybrid elements of western derivation. However, they have already undergone considerable transformation, which requires for its understanding a survey of certain aspects of the other great source of Assyrian glyptic and artistic traditions. These were nourished, not only by the contributions of the west, but also, perhaps even to a greater extent, by the heritage derived from the central stream of glyptic art indigenous in southern Mesopotamia.

TRADITIONS OF PLANT REPRESENTATION IN SOUTHERN MESOPOTAMIA AND MIDDLE ASSYRIA

Up to this point southern Mesopotamia has played no part in any account of plant ornament, and with justice. Although creation of unnaturally decorative works is one of the most distinctive characteristics of Mesopotamian art, it was the animal and human forms which were woven into ornamental patterns. Plant elements were not transmuted into pure decoration, but usually appeared as part of a landscape setting or as an essential part of the narrative. (e.g. Figs. XVI.9 and XVI.23). The only exception is a simple abstract flower form, the rosette with pointed petals, without prototypes, friezes of which decorate proto-

Dynastic and Early Dynastic temples.

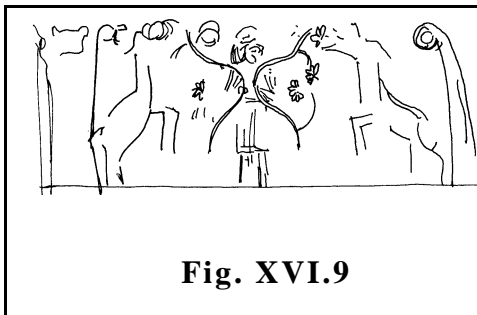


Fig. XVI.9

However, though such rosettes sometimes appear as flowers or leaves (Figs. XVI.9, XVI.16, XVI.15 and XVI.17), the usually discrete uncombined motive is not the beginning of any important development.

Though Mesopotamia developed no important stylized plants, nothing commensurate with Egypt, the long series of plant representations is of importance in our

story. The cylinder seals, of Uruk style, at once provide the earliest sphragistic group preserved in Mesopotamia (Figs. XVI.1, XVI.4). The most abstract are the curving, rosette-tipped branches with which cattle are fed (Fig. XVI.9).³⁰ Realistic representations of reeds, barley and wheat appear.³¹ Another seal of this class shows animals in a mountain landscape (Fig. XVI.10). The trees growing from the tops of rocky peaks are the first of a long line of Mesopotamian “landscapes.”

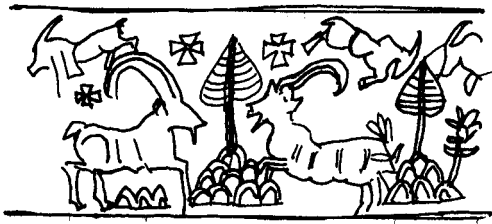


Fig. XVI.10



Fig. XVI.11

This vegetation can be identified as coniferous on the basis of later and clearer examples (Figs. XVI.11, 19, 21). The two flowering shoots on Fig. XVI.10 are very unusual; their remarkable realism becomes especially apparent if they are compared with the formalized vegetation of Fig. XVI.9.

The absence of some of the Uruk types in the Jemdet Nasr style of the later Protoliterate period is probably fortuitous. There is, however, at least one case of rosette-tipped branches directly comparable to those on Uruk seals.³² Rather nondescript three-leaved filling motives are used.³³ Far more significant is the first recorded appearance of irregular deciduous trees. The only approach to this on Uruk seals is a leafy branch held out to the temple flock.³⁴

³⁰ Newell, 690.

³¹ CS, p. 19, Fig. 2; Pls. IV,b; V, b.

³² Footnote is missing in MS.

³³ CS, Pls. V,f; VII,a.

³⁴ CS, Pl. V,d.

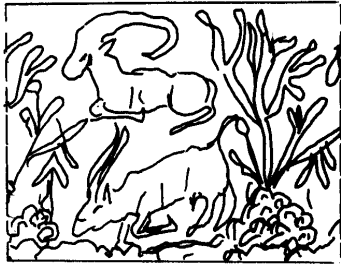


Fig. XVI.12

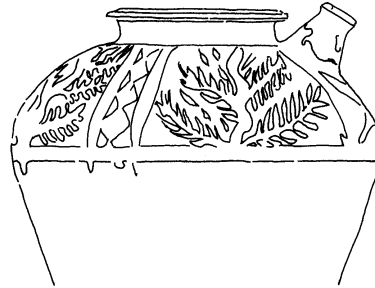


Fig. XVI.13

In Fig. XVI.12 the tree grows from a mountain. The popularity of deciduous trees was not limited to seals. They are also characteristic motives of the contemporary painted ware, as for example in Fig. XVI.13 where some leaves of a “wind-blown” tree have been detached from their stems. To this time, too, must belong the green stone basin decorated in relief with calves and their dams, together with a many-branched tree (Fig. XVI.14), even though it was found in an early Dynastic level in a private house at Khafaje.

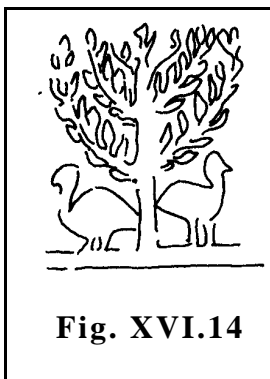


Fig. XVI.14

Deciduous trees continued to be represented in Early Dynastic I as in Scarlet ware where one example shows a tree preyed upon by four goats.³⁵ Simple geometrical pinnate motives were also in use during early Dynastic I-III; their vegetal nature is attested by the animals that feed upon them.³⁶ A small amulet from the ED I (or ED II?) Square Temple at Asmar bears rosette-tipped

branches.³⁷

In Early Dynastic III there are many examples of vegetation used as accompaniment for animal groups, but the types are fairly stereotyped. A double trunked tree on Fig.

³⁵ text of footnote not given.

³⁶ text of footnote not given.

³⁷ H. Frankfort, *Oriental Institute Discoveries in Iraq, 1933-34*, (Chicago, 1935) OIC, no. 19, p. 22, Fig. 22.

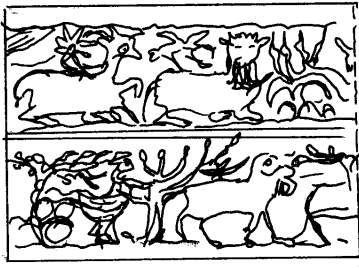


Fig. XVI.15

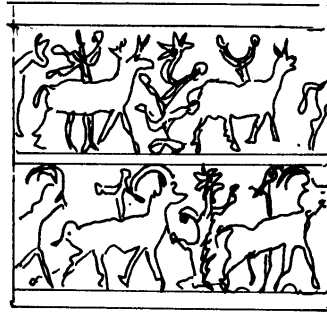


Fig. XVI.16

XVI.15 is probably a direct descendant of Fig. XVI.14. A small piece of inlay from Palace A at Kish is of somewhat the same type.³⁸ Other vegetation on Fig. XVI.15 consists of stiff branches tipped by pointed, bud-like forms and of a rosette-tipped stem. Figs. XIV.16 and XIV.17 illustrate the angular trees with pointed leaves and sometimes rosette flowers which are the dominant vegetal type of the period.

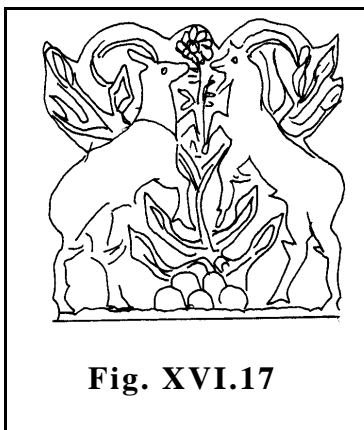


Fig. XVI.17

A number of examples occur in the decoration of objects from the royal cemetery at Ur.³⁹ They are most frequently shown growing from rocky promontories. At the same time ornaments in the form of naturalistic plant elements - veined, obovate or lanceolate leaves, seeds, sprays of foliage - as well as rosette flowers were being worked in gold and semi-precious stones.⁴⁰

The Sargonid era yields the next large group of plant representations. The deciduous trees, already well-known from Jemdet Nasr and Early Dynastic III works, are

³⁸ Mackay, *Report of the Excavation of the A Cemetery at Kish* (Oxford, 1978), Pl. XXXV, i.

³⁹ Woolley, *The Royal Cemetery (Ur Excavations I*, New York, 1934), Pls. XCIII (standard end panels), XCVI-XCVIII (gaming board and pieces), XC, C (shell engravings), CIII (Shub-ad's toilet box), CIV, CX, CXV (sound boxes of lyres).

⁴⁰ Woolley, *op. cit.*, Pls. CXXVII, CXXX, CXXXV, CXXXVI, CXXXVIII, U.9971, CXL, CXLI, CXLIV, CXLV, CCXX.

prominent in a mountain landscape on a seal in Boston (Fig. XVI.18). This is not the only cylinder in which such trees spring from cliffs.⁴¹

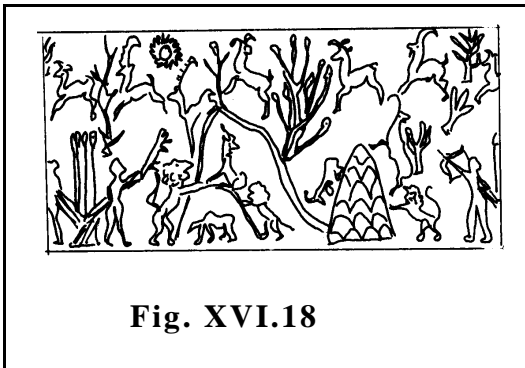


Fig. XVI.18

They appear as subsidiary elements in two seals illustrating the myth of Zu.⁴² A number of other examples can also be cited.⁴³ A sharp distinction was made between the irregular open branching of the deciduous trees and the solid, triangular form of the conifers; the

conventionalized shape used for the latter connects up directly with the tree of the Uruk seal, Fig. XVI.10. In well-cut examples, the horizontal branches, the projections rising from them, and the three crowning elements are all clearly visible.



Fig. XVI.19



Fig. XVI.20

Fig. XVI.19 is the seal of Lugalushumgal, a vassal of Shargalisharri, one of the last kings of the Agade Dynasty. On many other seals the rock-work of Figs. XVI.19 and XVI.20 is omitted, and the trees may be much less carefully delineated.⁴⁴ Newell, 96 is not very carefully cut, but preserves all the essentials of Fig. XVI.20, even to a diminutive cliff. A seal in the Biblioteque Nationale has a rather unusual evergreen (Fig. XVI.11). The crown is formed by a series of diagonal branches. Simple trees shaped only as a pinnate branch

⁴¹ CS, Pls. XIX,a; XXIV,a.

⁴² CS, Pls. XXIII,c, d.

⁴³ VAR, 163 (VA 651), 194 (VA 3037). Newell, 89, 98, 101, 103. Ur, 188.A, 156 (unusual in that the branches are tipped by round drill holes), 176. Cs. Pl. XVII,e. De Clerq, 54.

⁴⁴ CS, Pl. XVII,j. VAR, 166 (VA 256; acquired in El Hibba), 186 (VA 2929=Weber, 230; seal of Ilulu, servant of Si'a'um), 203 (VA 7955; Assur 20555).

are sometimes found on crude rough seals⁴⁵ De Clerq, 61 may represent a combination of the deciduous and coniferous types.

The carefully-cut evergreens of Figs. XVI.19 and XVI.20 find parallels on other products of the Sargonid period.

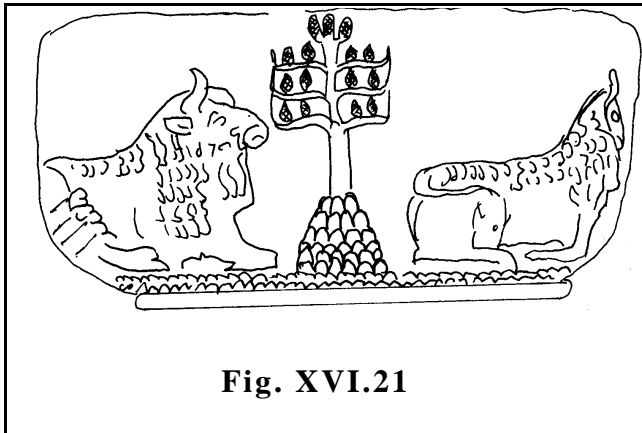


Fig. XVI.21

A beautifully carved stone bowl, found at Susa, is ornamented by a frieze of bearded bulls, each with a cliff and tree in front of him (Fig. XVI.21). These, though varying in outline from the sphragistic conifers are clearly meant as the same type.

The straight trunk, horizontal branches, and triple crowning elements are all the same. In the case of Fig. XVI.21, the vertical projections of the branches are covered by cross hatching, and can thus be recognized as cones.

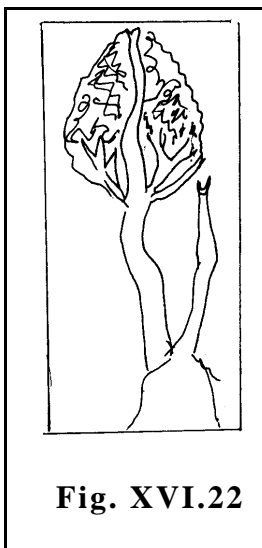


Fig. XVI.22

Fig. XVI.22, a tree growing out from a mountain on the stele of Naram Sin, third king of the Agade Dynasty, is probably also a conifer, though it departs radically from the rectilinear pattern of the other Akkadian examples. The crooked trunk and irregular branches conform more nearly to the actual habit of an evergreen growing in a wind-swept mountain cleft, but the triangular shape of the head and the three minute crowning elements connect this tree with the other representations of conifers.

Besides the coniferous and deciduous themes, the Akkadian seal cutters placed a third, the palm tree. Just as in the first two cases its salient characteristics were seized upon with surety. The tall, rough trunk supports a crown of

⁴⁵ A, 181, 185. Cf. the pinnate vegetation on BN, 79, 81; VAR, 160, 165; Ur, 293, 3450347, 351, all excellent Sargonide seals.

pinnate branches, from which the fruiting clusters hang down. Scenes of the date harvest are shown.



Fig. XVI.23

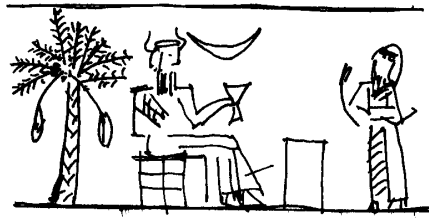
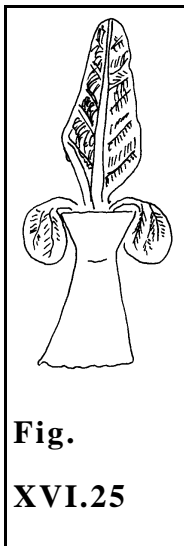


Fig. XVI.24

Fig. XVI.23 is an elaborate example; less well-cut versions also exist.⁴⁶ On other seals the palm serves as a background for the figure of an enthroned deity (Fig. XVI.24).⁴⁷

Between the Akkadian and Middle Assyrian periods tree representations are remarkably scarce. In the stereotyped art of the Third Dynasty of Ur offering stands placed in front of deities bear practically the only plant motives represented; these sometimes are shaped like miniature trees of a rather generalized type, presumably coniferous. (Fig. XVI.25).



**Fig.
XVI.25**

On cylinder seals the motive appears as a simple pinnate branch.⁴⁸ During the First Dynasty of Babylon, the seals yield practically no evidence at all. There is one cylinder on which rampant goats flank a peak from which grows a struggling, spindly twig.⁴⁹ Fortunately proof has survived that the traditions of the Akkadian period had by no means died out. In the palace at Mari on the upper Euphrates, there was found a large series of molds, apparently used in the kitchen. On one a pair of stiffly upright goats poses beside a peak with an oppositely branched tree (Fig. XVI.26). Although it is rather schematic and does not possess the specific

⁴⁶ Ur, 341. A, 177 is a rough example that has none of the modelling of Sargonide seals.

⁴⁷ Newell, 116 belongs to the Gutu period. VAR, 195 (VA 4259; Assur, 18337; without fruit clusters), 212 (VA 558). Ur, 342 (probably Akkadian), Ward, 239 (cast). Brussels, 448.

⁴⁸ Newell, 159, 160. CS, Pl. XXV, c.

⁴⁹ CS, Pl. XXVI, l.

characteristics of the conifers, the entire design is yet derivative from such scenes as Fig. XVI.20. On the other mold, Fig. XVI.27, the two ruminants rush avidly to seize the foliage of a deciduous tree with twisted trunk and ramifying branches.



Fig. XVI.26

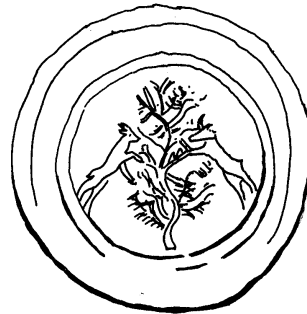


Fig. XVI.27

It is an elaborate version of such Akkadian trees as in Fig. XVI.18. But the most striking trees from Mari are the two pairs which border the sides of the large mural showing Ishtar bestowing upon the king the symbols of rule. One of each pair is a beautifully painted and extremely realistic palm (Fig. XVI.45). Men scramble up the scaly trunk to pluck the heavy clusters. It is a worthy successor to such Sargonid palms as Fig. XVI.23.

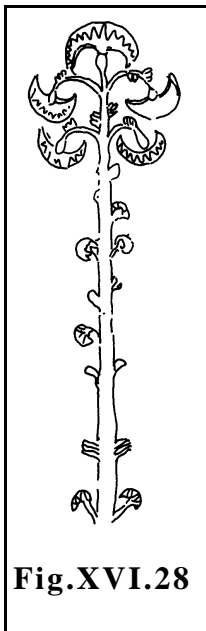


Fig. XVI.28

The other arboreal type of the Mari mural is an amazing artificial form (Fig. XVI.28), completely alien to the whole series whose long Mesopotamian history we have been following. Although it is cast into a shape resembling that of an organic tree, Fig. XVI.28 certainly has no connection with any real species. It is only the new low chronology, according to which Hammurabi was contemporary with the Hyksos in Egypt,⁵⁰ that makes it possible to propose a few clues for the origin of this tree. The down-curving arrangement of the main elements and their semicircular shape are reminiscent of some of the papyri on the Hyksos cylinder, Fig. XIII.15, which cannot be divorced from the Walters Art

⁵⁰ W. F. Albright, "A Third Revision of the Early Chronology of Western Asia," BASOR, no. 88, 1942, pp. 31-32.

Gallery seal, Fig. XIII.12. By means of the latter's connection with the Hyksos seal, it can be assigned to the earliest phase of the Second Syrian group, approximately contemporary with the Second Intermediate period. These two seals are the only objects at present known which provide parallels for the papyriform elements of Fig. XVI.28 and their downcurving arrangement. It is possibly significant that in both Figs. XIII.25, XIII.15 and the Mari tree, the crescentic terminations are sharply distinguished from their stems. In the latter, the ends of the stem are swollen into lobes which project slightly into the crescent. Other elaborations of the Mari tree are the small groups of finger-like projections and the "immature" papyriform elements scattered along the trunk.⁵¹ The sudden appearance of Fig. XVI.28 is an impressive indication of the great gaps in our knowledge of the repertoires of the Asiatic artists.

Thus it is clear that from protoliterate times and from Sumer to Akkad and beyond, a continuous, consistent tradition of naturalistic plant depiction existed, occurring not only on seals but in reliefs on stone vases and stelae and in the Mari group of murals. As Mari shows us, this tradition was established in the north, and was part of the Assyrian heritage. Thus it was that Assyrian seals, and to a much lesser extent Kassite seals, were the heirs of this tradition. The three main formuli of coniferous, deciduous, and palm tree recur, and despite changes are clearly based on older Mesopotamian traditions. In addition, the repertoire was enriched by several unusual or unique types. In fact, Middle Assyrian glyptic is the richest source of carefully worked plant representations which has yet been found in Mesopotamian art.

At present, we possess only one example of a conifer, on a sealing dated either to the reign of Adad-nirari I or Shalmaneser I (Fig. XVI.29). Although it does not have a solid outline, its horizontal branches with vertical twigs conform to the same triangular pattern as Fig. XVI.19 and XVI.20.

⁵¹ Qd, 6 is a typical Second Syrian seal. The plant motive placed under the winged sun disc has a number of pairs of down-curving stems, without any heads, placed along the trunk. This design may possibly be related to the Mari tree, in which case it would presumably be a derivative form.

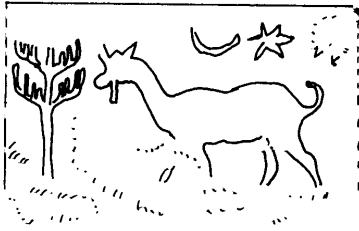


Fig. XVI.29



Fig. XVI.30

Many-branched deciduous trees are the most frequently found trees. In the most elaborate examples each leaf and stem is carefully cut (Fig. XVI.30).⁵² It was commoner, however, for the leaves to be omitted and the trees shown with thickened twigs (Fig. XVI.31)⁵³, sometimes distinctly swollen at the tips (Fig. XVI.32).⁵⁴



Fig. XVI.31

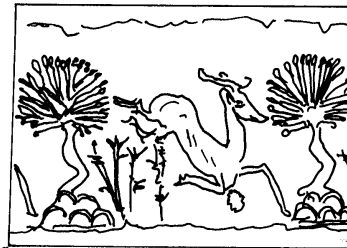


Fig. XVI.32

These deciduous trees form a gradual series, grading from the irregularly branched forms of Fig. XVI.30 to those with much denser and more rounded crowns, as in Figs. XVI.33 and XVI.32. Forms approaching the latter extreme are commoner. There is at least one case in which the entire trunk of a deciduous tree grows diagonally, but it, too, has a roughly circular crown.⁵⁵

⁵² VAR, 586 (VA 1129; Assur 14630).

⁵³ CS, Pl. XXXI,k = De Clerq, 311. Moortgat, *op. cit.*, Fig. 16 (VAT 8831; Assur 14327ck; KAJ 130; first half of Adad-nirari I or Shalmaneser I), 53 (Vat 8975; Assur 44327m; KAJ 145; Adad-Nirari I), 72 (Vat 87650; Assur 14327z; KAJ 114; Shalmaneser I). ZA, XLVII (1936), 26-27, figs. 47-48 (VAT 16364;...Tukulti Ninurta I).

⁵⁴ CS, Pl. XXX, I. A, 712. A, 795, a sealing on a tablet dated to Darius, is, according to Frankfort, either a reused Middle Assyrian cylinder or an "archaistic neo-Babylonian work," CS, p. 219, n. 2. The former alternative seems more probable.

⁵⁵ Moortgat, *op. cit.*, Fig. 42 (VAT 8969; Assur 14327; KAJ 90; Shalmaneser I).

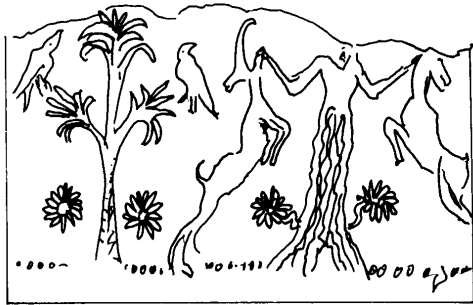


Fig. XVI.33



Fig. XVI.34

Fig. XVI.34 is unusual for the large drill holes tipping the individual branches; it is faintly reminiscent of Mitannian forms in this respect.⁵⁶ A seal in Berlin bears a rare type; the crooked trunk supports a crown with oval circumference, inside of which horizontal branches are carved.⁵⁷ The triple-trunked tree of a seal in the Southesk collection⁵⁸ is also remarkable; it may be related with such forms as Figs. XVI.33 and XVI.32 or intended as a conifer.

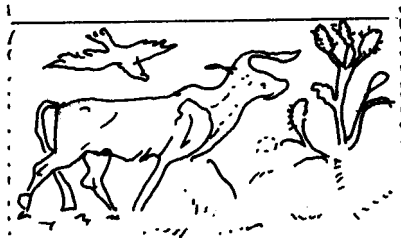


Fig. XVI.35

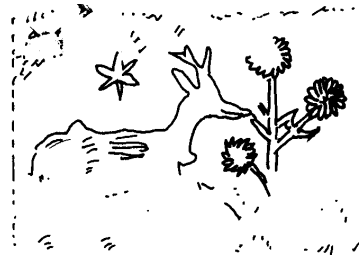


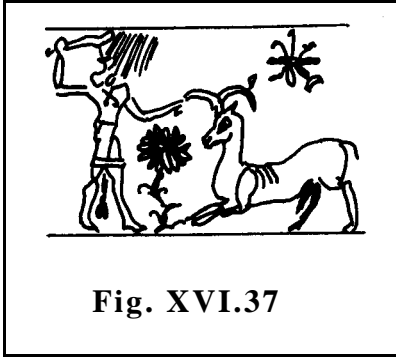
Fig. XVI.36

Figs. XVI.35, XVI.36, XVI.37 contain unique representations. In Fig. XVI.37 there appears an apparently herbaceous plant with a large spiky bloom shaped as a composite. In Fig. XVI.36 arboreal twigs are tipped by similar flowers. The irregular branches of Fig. XVI.35 are tipped by feathery tufts. The last important category of Middle Assyrian trees are the palms. That in Fig. XVI.33 is unusual for its tripartite trunk. The fruit clusters are absent here and in Figs. XVI.38 and XVI.39, but appear in Figs. XVI.40, XVI.41, and

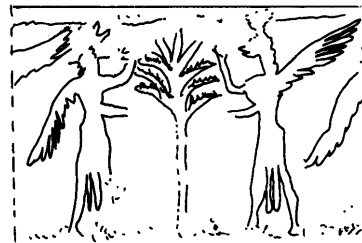
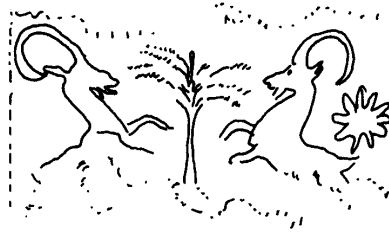
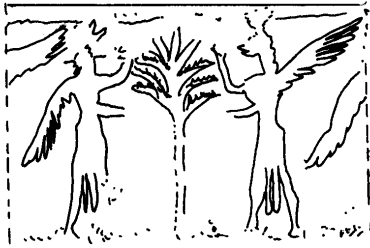
⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Fig. 56 (VAT 8697; probably Shalmaneser I resembles Fig. XVI.34).

⁵⁷ VAR, 588 (VA 1680; Assur 9621).

⁵⁸ Qc, 10.



XVI.42.⁵⁹ The latter two trees are closely comparable to the earlier representations (Figs. XVI.24, XVI.23 and XVI.45). Similar motives were in use on Kassite seals (Fig XVI.43). Fig. XVI.44 is somewhat peculiar for the presence of two drill holes instead of normal date clusters; the same feature recurs on another Kassite seal.⁶⁰



This review of the realistic plants of earlier Mesopotamia and of Middle Assyrian glyptic has illustrated the counter current into which flowed the stream of western hybrid ornament, exemplified by such forms as Figs. XVI.1, XVI.4 and XVI.2.



⁵⁹ A, 947 may be a crude Middle Assyrian seal. It shows two rampant goats beside a fruiting palm.

⁶⁰ A, 620 = CS, Pl. XXXI, g.



Fig. XVI.44



Fig. XVI.45

Now that we have completed the differentiation of the dual sources of Middle Assyrian vegetal design, we may attempt to trace out the creative processes by which these diverse traditions were fused into a unified whole, giving rise to the characteristic Late Assyrian forms, so well known from the art of the Sargonid Dynasty. Unfortunately these Middle Assyrian developments are not well documented. Often a few examples must serve to establish an evolutionary tree. Even worse, at times examples presumed to represent different typological stages are all dated to the same reign. Despite such shortcomings, it, nevertheless, seems possible to construct a schematic development in the light of which the Late Assyrian forms appear more explicable and more firmly rooted in Near Eastern tradition than has heretofore seemed possible.

MIDDLE ASSYRIAN BETWIGGED HYBRIDS

The material available to us may for convenience be divided into three groups, the first of which consists of designs where twigs and other features derived from naturalistic representations are superimposed upon floral elements of western origin. Since this process consisted chiefly of eliminating the stiffness inherent in the inherited formal designs by the addition of curving branches, we have designated this category as the betwigged group.

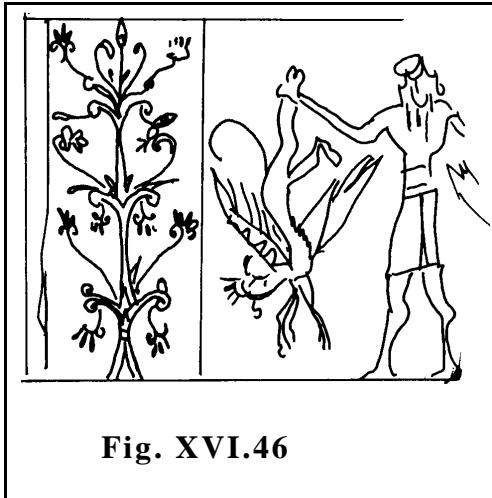


Fig. XVI.46

A lovely seal in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Fig. XVI.46) is the most westernizing of the designs in which an approximation is made to the branching character of natural trees. In Fig. XVI.46 this effect is achieved mainly by the manner in which conventional hybrid elements were used; very few specifically Assyrian details have been added. The basic construction of this

tree is exactly the same as that of the three-staged hybrid of Fig. XVI.4, save that the tiers of the Boston plant are normal, consisting of both perianths and volutes. The splayed base and the proportions of the hybrid elements and intervening stems are identical, both on the Assur sealing and Fig. XVI.46. The latter possesses, in addition, a number of accessory elements. The triangular shape given to the base and to the lobes of the South flowers is reminiscent of comparable features in early Third Syrian designs (Figs. XIII.30, XIII.35). More striking parallels to “Canaanite” patterns are provided by the stems, tipped with three-leaved palmettes, pendant from the corners of the perianths of the two lower tiers. We have already seen such elements on a Ras Shamra seal (Fig. XIII.30, and on some Mitannian plants, Figs. XIV.19, XIV.20. The ornate hybrid of Fig. XIV.27, too, has pendant stems, curving somewhat differently from all other examples. The closest parallels for the palmettes tipping these stems are to be found on Second Syrian seals (Figs. XIII.4, XIII.6). Other palmette-tipped stems growing outward from the volute of the top tier of Fig. XVI.46 are related to some of the papyrus-tipped bands of Fig. XIII.36, and less closely to drooping tendrils on the king of Hanigalbat’s sealing (Fig. XIV.28). This unobtrusive, apparently minor feature should be noted, for it was to serve an important role in the production of Late Assyrian “sacred trees.”

There are still other features of the Boston seal for which western prototypes may be found. Fig. XIV.28 provides a parallel for the lobes projecting alongside the median

stem. The middle tier of Fig. XVI.46 has lateral lobes as in a number of Mitannian plants. More prominent are the additions made to each tier of Fig. XVI.46. In the lowest one, long-stemmed palmettes sprout immediately above the volute. This element is lacking in the middle tier; in its stead appear two stems, cast into a volute pattern. The top tier is complete but has in addition two stems curved into a tall volute shape, sharply distinct from the true volutes of the tiers. The use of flowering stems serving as secondary volutes can be traced back to Syria, and perhaps ultimately to Egypt. The embroideries on the tunic of Tutankhamun contain an attenuated hybrid topped by two curving South-flower stems (Fig. XII.16). Even closer are analogous tendrils on the Tyre pectoral; they not only curve symmetrically but are accessorial to a normal volute as in the top tier of Fig. XVI.46. Such tendrils do not occur on any Mitannian hybrid known to us. This is highly interesting, for it indicates that all of the variety of western features of Fig. XVI.46 were not necessarily carried by way of Mitanni. In fact, many of them - the triangular markings of the perianth, the pendant stems and their palmette ends, as well as the recurving stems just cited - may have been derived directly from coastal Syrian prototypes.

Although the plant of the Boston seal cannot be equated with any single western pattern, in structure and many small details, it is clearly dependent on the South-flower hybrids as transformed by the "Canaanites" and Mitannians. Nevertheless, the tree of Fig. XVI.46 as a whole has a character very different from that of any non-Assyrian hybrid. This is due in great measure to the proportions of the various units and their reduction to narrow sinuous elements. The resultant light and airy pattern contrasts sharply with the ponderous and solid character of almost all "Canaanite" and Mitannian hybrids (cf. Fig. XIV.28 for an exception).

We have already suggested that in Syrian and Mitannian designs, the hybrid elements were fused together into a more integrated whole than in the Egyptian compounds. In Fig. XVI.46 this development seems to have progressed even further. The originally disparate elements are combined skilfully to give the impression of a real, if

somewhat strange tree, whose branches are formed by graceful and apparently freely curving tendrils to which the South-flower and volute elements are subordinated. To our mind, these characteristics of Fig. XVI.46 are explainable only by reference to the milieu in which it was created. In addition to the westernizing patterns of Figs. XVI.1-6, the Middle Assyrian seal-cutter was also using naturalistic trees such as Figs. XVI.30, XVI.31, XVI.32. We believe that the realistic tradition of Mesopotamian tree representation played an important conditioning role in the development of Fig. XVI.46 and similar types. This hypothesis can by no means be proven on the basis of the Boston seal alone, which harbors only one trace definitely relating it to Mesopotamian traditions. The cross-hatched, obovate forms tipping the central shaft of the tree, the accessory volute stems of the top tier, and the short tendrils which take the place of pendant drops in the same stage are the same elements which in Late Assyrian times were used both in plant hybrids and realistic trees.⁶¹ Unfortunately examples showing the use of such a form before Middle Assyrian times are rare. It does appear, however, on the conifer of Fig. XVI.21, which constitutes strong evidence that it is meant as an evergreen cone. Scaly, cone-shaped units tip the vegetal stalks held by the mountain deity in the famous Assur cult-relief (cf. Figs. XV.28-29). Andrae is inclined to consider these, as well as the differently shaped, cross-hatched vegetal lobes on a fragmentary stone vase from Assur (Fig. XVI.47) as grape clusters. It seems possible, however, that such forms, especially Figs. XV.28-29, are more likely to be cones related to fig. XVI.21. In any case it can be considered a certainty that on the Boston seal, the cones are naturalistic details derived from southern Mesopotamian traditions and inserted among the main, westernizing, elements of the design.

⁶¹ Layard, *Monuments of Nineveh I* (London, 1853), Pl. XLVI, 1.

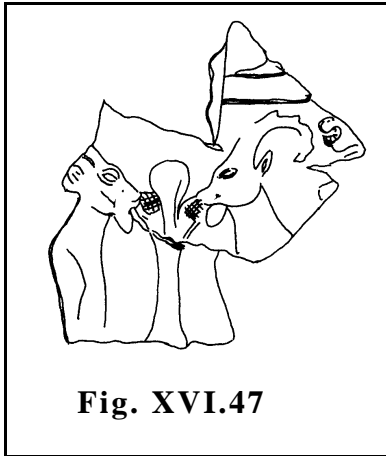


Fig. XVI.47

The discussion of Fig. XVI.46 is sufficient to prove beyond doubt the reliance of its cutter on Western prototypes, but cannot establish definitely the proposition that naturalistic Middle Assyrian tree forms played a role in the production of such designs. More conclusive evidence for this theory can be obtained from a series of ivory plaques, apparently used as inlays, found in the New Palace of Tukulti Ninurta I (1243-1207 B. C.) at Assur.

They are carved in the form of mountain gods with flowing vases, winged bulls, and trees. The borders consist of narrow bands with incised rosettes.

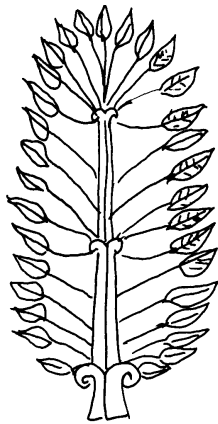


Fig. XVI.48

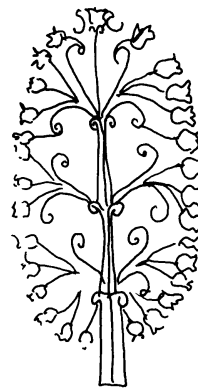


Fig. XVI.49

The two species of trees represented (Figs. XVI.48 and XVI.49) give a far more realistic impression than Fig. XV.28, but like it, they are built up on a framework of hybrid elements. Their trunks consist of greatly thickened stems supporting three South-flower perianths, whose identity is almost lost by their geometricization and the vertical median line dividing them in half. This is a feature which we have only met once before, in one of the hybrids in the Nuzi mural (Fig. XIV.51A). This character, too, may have been imported into Assyria. The remainder of the simpler tree, Fig. XVI.48, is formed of a series of obovate, ribbed leaves, the stems of which spring from the central trunk. The

four leaves projecting from the corners of the two upper South-flower perianths take the place of the drops and tendrils of Figs. XVI.4, XVI.2, XVI.46. The individual leaves of this tree are similar in shape to those of Fig. XVI.32. There can be no question of the intervention of realistic elements in the case of Fig. XVI.48.

Fig. XVI.49 is far more complicated. Like Fig. XVI.4, its three tiers are abnormal. Both elements in Fig. XVI.4, the Assur sealing, curve upward; here, above the thickened South-flower perianth are placed downcurving lines. It is impossible to determine whether these are misdrawn volutes, real comparable to the normal volutes to be found in Fig. XVI.49, or whether they are simply added to balance the prominent upturned volutes. These latter we may equate with the palmette-tipped stems of the middle tier of Fig. XVI.49. To this framework are attached pomegranate stems. In the lowest tier a pair falls from the corners of the perianth in the canonical position of the drops. Others unroll from the spiral ends of the third tier. Still other, triple groups or stems emerge from the angles between the sinuous volute elements, in a position comparable to that filled by lobes in Mitannian seals and in Figs. XVI.1, XVI.4, XVI.2. The top is formed by three pomegranates growing from the tiny curl at the end of the median line of the design. To our knowledge, pomegranates do not appear in the Mesopotamian repertoire before this. Since the species is found in Assyria and in view of the originality of Middle Assyrian designers, it is very possible that the fruits were copied from nature at this time. However, we know the motive was used in other regions,⁶² and it could possibly have been a foreign introduction. There is hardly enough evidence to settle the question, and in any case, Fig. XVI.49 remains as an excellent example of how a Middle Assyrian designer could use western motives as the basic constructional elements of his pattern, but yet produce a result completely different from any of his possible prototypes, by making many subtle changes and by the free use of “naturalistic” stems. The study of all three of the plant designs of

⁶² Chapters XIII, p. 537.

Figs. XVI.46, XVI.48, XVI.49 substantiates the claim that the realistic Mesopotamian tradition constitutes an important factor in their development.

We are not alone in distinguishing two essential sources, western and Mesopotamian for these designs. These twin bases are adumbrated by Herzfeld in a discussion of Fig. XVI.49, where he states that the floral elements of the design are Egyptian and the arboreal ones Mesopotamian.⁶³ Although in this connection he makes comparisons directly with Egyptian forms, elsewhere he refers to the intermediaryship of Mitanni.⁶⁴ Despite his correct appraisal of certain main trends, we find it necessary to take exception to many of Herzfeld's detailed statements. For example, we cannot follow him when he classifies as "Mesopotamian," i.e. as Mitannian and distinct from Babylonian and Assyrian, both the Morgan and Boston seals (Figs. XVI.1 and XVI.49) and a number of betwiggled hybrids now to be discussed (Figs. XVI.50, XVI.51, XVI.53, XVI.54). Neither can we accept his view that the palm was the particular eastern, Babylonian element, that was combined with a western tradition.

None of the betwiggled hybrids to be found on cylinders approach those of Figs. XVI.46, XVI.48, XVI.49 in complexity. The closest parallel is the incomplete design of Fig. XVI.50, a Kassite seal in the Louvre. It is the first of several works, which by their dependence on the formuli of Figs. XVI.46, XVI.49, XVI.48 demonstrate the blending of Late Kassite and Middle Assyrian styles.

⁶³ cf. Herzfeld, "Die Kunst des Zweiten Jahrtausends in Vordasien," AMI, VIII (1937), 145: "In dieser reichen composition sind aegyptische elemente enthalten, aber ebenso unaegyptisch. Die nächsten aegyptischen analogien bleiben immer viel mehr ein "bouquet" nach Sybel's alter terminologie, als ein baum, vgl. die beispiele aus TutEnkhAmon's Zeit in Abb. 92" (our CL 112 and CL 124) (CL + number refers to Typological Check List of South-flower hybrids in Chapter VII).. "und zwar bouquets wie man sie noch heute in Aegypten, Iraq und Indien macht; übereinander auf einem langen stiel gesteckte blüten. Was an dem gebilde von (57) (our Fig. XVI.46) blume ist, ist aegyptischen, was baum ist, babylonischen ursprungs.

⁶⁴ After discussing the Morgan seal of Fig. XVI.1 Herzfeld proceeds: "Dieser künstliche Baum, wie auch den des Hanigalbat-siegels (our XIV.28), ist eine einheitliche, reine form. Die Baume aus Assur (36, 39-41) mischen dagegen diese westliche gebilde mit der viel älteren, einheimischen form der palme. Der complexe heilige baum, wie er in den Isin II-klasse und später in Assyrien vorliegt, ist also eine Kreuzung aus westlichen, durch Subartu vermittelten pflanzen-elementen und aus den alteinheimischen palmbaum" (AMI, VIII[1937], 143).

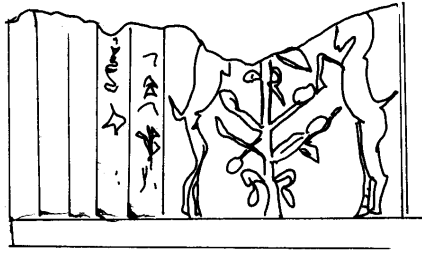


Fig. XVI.50

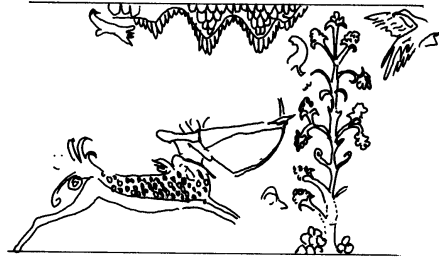


Fig. XVI.51

The relationship between the plant of Fig. XVI.50 and that of Fig. XVI.48 indicates clearly that the priority of invention is on the Assyrian side. The median trunk of Fig. XVI.50 rises from a basal South-flower perianth like that of Fig. XVI.48, save that it is not longitudinally sectioned, and possesses well-formed drops. Another perianth, possibly equipped with linear drops, is placed in the middle of the trunk; a third probably occurred close to the top. The rest of the design consists of stems ending in larger, rather irregular masses, the exact nature of which is not clear.

Fig. XVI.51 is a seal known by impressions on tablets from Nippur, dated in the fifteenth and seventeenth years of Kurigalzu II (1332-1308 B. C.). It, though evidently Kassite, also includes features relating it to Middle Assyrian works.⁶⁵ Its tree is strongly influenced by naturalistic scenes, for it not only grows from rocks (cf. Figs. XVI.32, XVI.31), but also has a simple straight trunk. Only vestigial hybrid elements remain in the form of an inconspicuous volute and perianth scattered along the trunk. The rest of the tree consists of curving stems, homologous with those of Figs. XVI.48 and XVI.50. It is possible that some of the unclear lower twigs of the Louvre seal are really comparable to

⁶⁵ Herzfeld has discussed this seal in detail, pointing out a number of Assyrian and Kassite parallels for its various components; it is amazing that, in spite of these, he can still consider it Mitannian (AMI, VIII [1937], 132 ff.). The main theme is the attack of a centaur upon a griffin. The peculiar anatomy of the former may be paralleled on a sherd from Assur (*Ibid.* p. 134, Fig. 70) and on Kassite boundary stones (*Ibid.*, p. 13). The rain clouds form precedent for those on a glazed brick from Kar Tukulti Ninurta (Andrae, *Farbige Keramik* (Berlin, 1923), Pl. VIII). Flying birds occur frequently on Middle Assyrian seals (e.g. Figs. XVI.42, XVI.54, , 35); as do those perched in trees (Figs. XVI.1, XVI.33). However the latter feature is also found in the Mari paintings (Fig. XVI.45) and on a Kassite cylinder (Fig. XVI.52). The small naturalistic trees resemble Middle Assyrian ones (Fig. XVI.33), but are also known on Kassite seals (Fig. XVI.44). The finely granulated triangles constitute a typical Kassite feature (Fig. XVI.43).

the pair of forked stems in Fig. XVI.50. The ends of the branches here may best be described as the palmettes of Fig. XVI.50 combined with drupelet-like elements (resembling those in the clusters of Fig. XVI.52) bordering the lobe-like center.

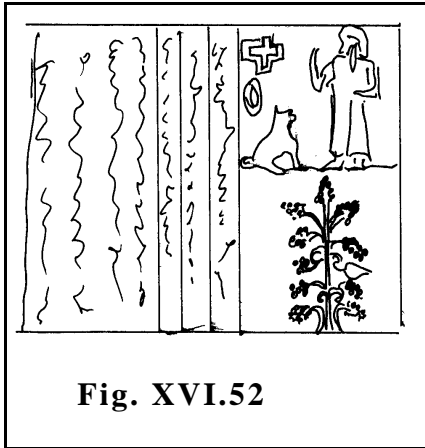


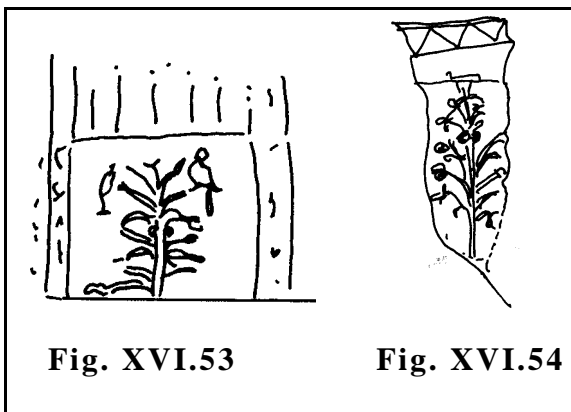
Fig. XVI.52

The Nippur sealing is closely related to a cylinder found in a Late Kassite level at Babylon (Fig. XVI.52) and markedly Kassite in character. Its tree possesses two down-curving elements as tokens of the perianth. Stems fall from the upper one as in Figs. XVI.46 and XVI.48. Most of the other twigs are arranged in much the same manner as in Fig. XVI.51,

except for the two lowermost ones, which curve upwards and outwards from the ground line. These stems must be equivalent to those we have observed on Fig. XVI.6, and on the Mitannian seal of Fig. XIV.22. Unfortunately the origin of such additions remain unclear. It is very doubtful whether those of the Asiatic mainland can be connected with the lateral, half-volutes on Cypriote gold work (Figs. XV.107, XV.108, XV.110) which are probably younger than the Asiatic examples just cited. Another problem in connection with Fig. XVI.52 is the motive of the clusters of dots that tip the twigs. It might be claimed that they are dates. However, their irregularity contrasts strongly with the one good Middle Assyrian rendering of dates that we possess (Fig. XVI.41). Moreover, the hanging date clusters were such familiar and well-defined entities that we believe it would have been rather difficult for them to be used in the construction of an ornament as abstract as Fig. XVI.52. Accordingly we suggest that these clusters be equated with the same conifer cones which appear in Fig. XVI.46.

An abraded seal in the Biblioteque nationale (Fig XVI.53) bears a betwigged tree closely related to Fig. XVI.52. It is clear that the central trunk of Fig. XVI.53 once possessed several South-flower perianths, but their exact number cannot now be

determined. The cone-tipped branches are all attached directly to the median trunk, and curve in a manner reminiscent of Fig. XVI.52.

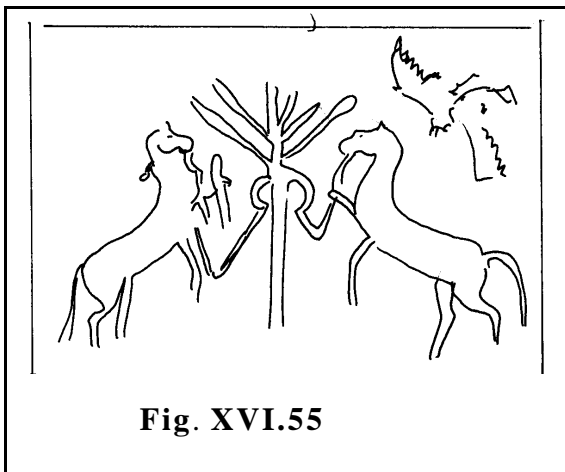


The framework of Fig. XVI.54, from a fragmentary impression on a Nippur tablet dated to the seventeenth year of Kurigalzu II, is dependent on that of Fig. XVI.49. In the Nippur design a pair of cones appear, immediately above the disintegrated South-flower perianth. These are not attached to

branches, but project from between two pairs of down- and up-curving lines in exactly the same manner that the triple group of pomegranates emerge from between the homologous sinuous elements of the Assur inlay (Fig. XVI.49). In Fig. XVI.54 there is next added a pair of cone-bearing stems, and another group like that just described. The top consists of five stems, all springing from a small perianth and each ending in a perianth supporting a cone. The resultant combination resembles closely the “fruits” of Fig. XVI.51.

It is somewhat disconcerting to realize that Figs. XVI.50-54 are all Late Kassite seals; this at once suggests that it may be a mistake to attribute all the originality displayed in the creation of such designs to the Middle Assyrians. However, it is extremely significant that all the Kassite patterns conform closely to the formula of Fig. XVI.49, varying from it only in minor details, which usually results in the production of simpler forms. On the other hand, the three Assyrian trees all illustrate quite varied elaborations conforming to one another only in essential structure. This consideration, together with the well-known creative character of Middle Assyrian art lead us to conclude that it is a mere accident which preserved a number of derivative Late Kassite betwigged trees, while, allowing relatively few examples to be found in Assyria, the focal point for their development. Nevertheless, it is possible that future evidence may force us to give more credit to Late Kassite seal cutters than we are at present prepared to admit.

There remain three Middle Assyrian designs which must be included among the betwiggged hybrids because they combine naturalistic branches with hybrid elements. They do not belong to the group just considered. A seal in the Southesk collection,⁶⁶ contains a long-trunked hybrid, topped by a normal tier, apparently enclosing palmette foliage; the whole is comparable to the tiers of Figs XVI.2 or XVI.4. Below this grows a pair of forked twigs as in Fig. XVI.51 (and possibly Fig. XVI.50), ending in clusters like those of Fig. XVI. 52. The drops of the upper South-flower perianth have been changed to linear bands, falling to meet the twigs; it is possible that this feature is paralleled on the Biblioteque Nationale seal of Fig. XVI.50. The lowermost element of the Southesk seal is evidently a perianth which has coalesced with the South-flower stems dependent from it. Figs. XIII.30, XIV.22, XIV.19 and XVI.46 provide us with examples of the normal motive and are the undoubted prototypes of this peculiar feature of the Southesk seal.



The central axis of a sealing (Fig. XVI.55) dating to the latter part of the reign of Adad-Nirari I or Shalmaneser I consists of a rather naturalistic tree, which does not have a good parallel on other Middle Assyrian trees, though the swollen ends of the branches are like those on Figs. XVI.32 and XVI.31 and related forms. Below this

crown appear two downcurving elements that are apparently derived from a South-flower perianth. From them are dependent tendrils, which apparently turn upwards and are eaten (?) by the adjacent horses. As a whole this design remains fairly mysterious.

⁶⁶ Qc, 10

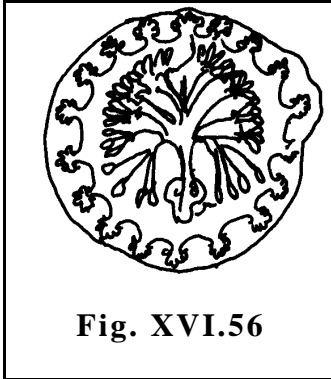


Fig. XVI.56

The last tree is to be found on a leaden plaque from Assur dating to the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I (Fig. XVI.56). The trunk is somewhat like that of Fig. XVI.55, with much the same kind of vestigial South-flower perianth. The spreading semicircular crown consists of branches ending in South-flower perianths, supporting groups of three cone-bearing stems; the general impression is rather of a naturalistic tree than of a hybrid formation.

MIDDLE ASSYRIAN BEWEBBED HYBRIDS

The second major change to which some Middle Assyrian plant designs were subject was the addition of a completely artificial canopy or webbing⁶⁷ around the periphery of the remainder of the pattern. In dealing with this feature we are even more handicapped by lack of material than in the case of the betwigged hybrids. There we were able to see clearly the trend of development and the sources of the various elements. This is not true for the bewebbed hybrids. Since they are very important in the formation of Late Assyrian “sacred trees,” it is unfortunate that, instead of a definite statement of their growth, we are able to offer only suggestions as to their development and possible related forms.

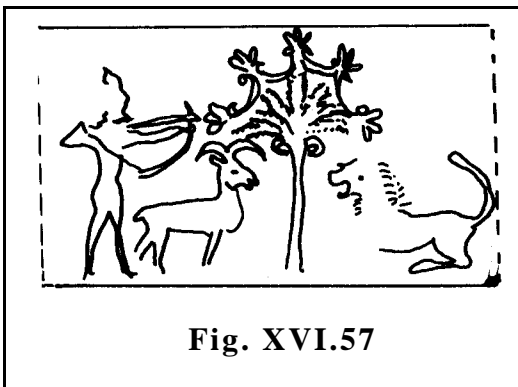


Fig. XVI.57

The tree on Fig. XVI.57, a sealing from a tablet written in the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243-1207 B. C.), is a palm-tree. Like Figs. XVI.38 and XVI.39, except for the addition of a South-flower perianth comparable to that of Fig. XVI.55 and the remarkable webbing around the circumference of the leaves. This takes the form

of a curving arc frieze tipped by palmettes. The hypotactic design has been considerably

⁶⁷ Herzfeld terms this a “Palmettenimbus” (AMI, VIII [1937],
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<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/HJK/HJKXVI.pdf>

simplified. One side of each perianth has dissolved into the connecting link so that actually the pattern consists of triple-leaf groups connected by c-links. The closest parallel for this canopy is to be found, not in the other Middle Assyrian bewebbed hybrids, nor in Mitannian ornament, but in a cylinder from Ras Shamra, which cannot be dated more precisely than the general range of the Third Syrian style (Fig. XIII.31). There the hybrid is crowned by an arc-frieze, tipped with South-flowers. The well-formed and complete character of this frieze, in contrast to that of Fig. XVI.57, can almost be taken as definite proof that the “Canaanite” pattern is more original and the Assyrian one is derivative from it.

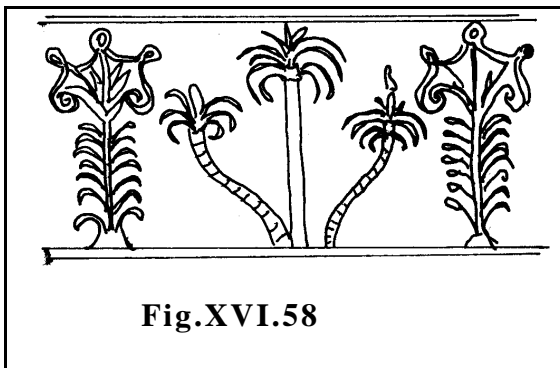


Fig. XVI.58

Further evidence of the use of webbing in Syria is yielded by another, highly remarkable seal from Ras Shamra (Fig. XVI.58). It is presumably Third Syrian even though it demonstrates no close resemblance to other cylinders. The entire

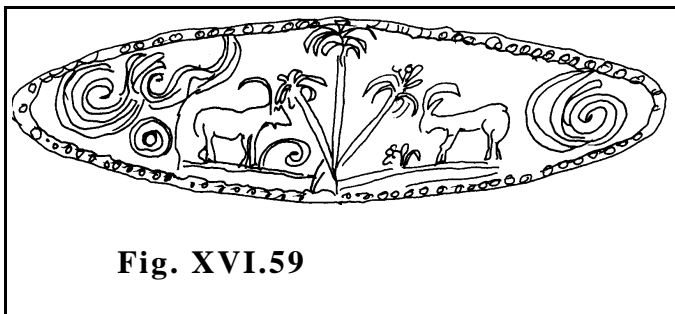


Fig. XVI.59

design is vegetal, consisting of a triple palm alternating with a straight-stemmed hybrid. The presence of a triple group here is interesting, not only because

Second Syrian seals used similar arrangements (Figs. XIII.28-29), but also in view of a palm with three trunks on a gold plaque from OT 93 at Enkomi, dated to the Amarna period.⁶⁸ However, even though rather similar, there is no real necessity for connecting Fig. XVI.58 and XVI.59. It should be recalled that triple groups had also been used in LH II ceramics. This all suffices to show that such groups are too easily produced to be used as a diagnostic character. It is the unusual single tree of Fig. XVI.58 which is

⁶⁸ Cf. Chapter XV, p 622f.
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of primary interest to us. From the thickened base grows a straight stem with opposite down-curving leaves, which may possibly be comparable to elements on a seal in the Southesk collection.⁶⁹ A rather linear South-flower perianth supports five leaves. The ends of a continuous band emerge from the inside corners of the perianth. This webbing forms a loop over each of the three main palmette leaves.

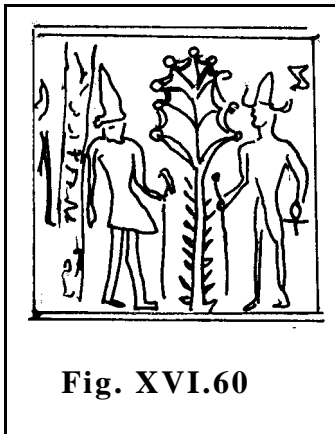


Fig. XVI.60

As a distant relative of Fig. XVI.58, we may cite a seal found at Damanhur in the Delta (Fig. XVI.60), which was apparently made in Palestine under strong Egyptian influence, probably during the latter part of the Nineteenth Dynasty.⁷⁰ In place of down-curving elements, the trunk of Fig. XVI.60 possesses sharp triangular projections; it does not end in a definite South-flower perianth, but branches into a series of

twigs, the ends of which are connected by double curves; bulbous elements are present at the end of each twig. The divergences of Fig. XVI.60 from Fig. XVI.58. are evident from the illustrations, and the Damanhur example may very possibly be derivative from Assyrian conventions, rather than part of the original Syrian tradition, the existence of which we may predicate on the basis of Fig. XIII.31 and Fig. XVI.58.

There remains one other Syrian seal which must be cited for the sake of completeness, though there is little possibility that it could have any connections with the origins of the webbing motive. The Second Syrian seal, Fig. XVI.61, in the Berlin collections, shows two Egyptianizing goddesses flanking a curious plant that has a basal South-flower perianth and hair-like, as well as lobe-like, foliage growing from the median stem. The leaves of the top are connected by double lines which are somewhat reminiscent

⁶⁹ Qd, 6.

⁷⁰ This seal has been much discussed. Frankfort thinks it is probably contemporary with the Third Syrian group and the Nineteenth Dynasty, around 1200 B. C.. He uses the plant motive and its comparison with Assyrian examples as the main criterion (CS. p. 289). Sidney Smith once dated it as late as 650-600 B. C., but now attributes it to the early Eighteenth Century (Smith, *Alalakh and Chronology* [London, 1940], p. 13f, n.48). Albright has assigned it as around 1800-1600 B. C. (JPOS XVII,).

of those of Fig. XVI.60. The similarity is, however, by no means sufficient to compel us to connect the two designs, and Fig. XVI.61 must remain as an isolated piece, not related with certainty to any of the bewebbed hybrids.

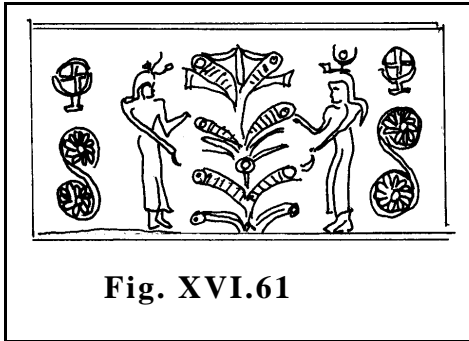


Fig. XVI.61

It is evident then that the “Canaanite” area provides only three definite examples of hybrids with canopies, of which one, Fig. XVI.60, may be modeled after Assyrian usage. There remain Figs. XVI.58 and XIII.31 exemplifying quite different kinds of canopies, whose presence in the same area

suggests the possibility that Syria may have been a focal point for such designs. Neither of the Ras Shamra webs has a clear origin. In the case of Fig. XIII.31 we may consider it a curious adaptation on the part of some “Canaanite” designer of a theme introduced from Egypt. Whatever its genesis the canopy of this Ras Shamra seal appears to be the source of that on Fig. XVI.58, but we have no means of ascertaining whether it was indeed borrowed from such Syrian forms or whether a great mass of intermediary material has disappeared without a trace.

The beginning of the story of the bewebbed hybrids has been far from clear, and its continuation involves many problems. Fig. XVI.58, in which the motive of the canopy is at least clear, remains an isolated example. In addition, we possess another unique form, Fig. XVI.8, one of the westernizing hybrids already discussed. It is topped by a wavy line which might possibly be considered as an arc frieze with the crowning elements omitted, but in the absence of comparative material there is no way to prove this.

With only this slight background to aid us, we are forced to cope with the main group of bewebbed hybrids which were used on seals and, in complex forms, on wall paintings from Kar Tukulti Ninurta. The murals, painted in the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I, give us a chronological focus for the seal designs which are all undated except for a general range in the Thirteenth and Twelfth Centuries B. C. assigned to two of the finest examples

by Frankfort.⁷¹ Since it was at this time, too, that Fig. XVI.57 was in use, it clearly is only a collateral, not a direct ancestor of the majority of bewebbed hybrids. The simplest well-worked example, from the Newell collection, occurs as part of a design symbolizing Assur as a rain-giving god supporting vegetation (Fig. XVI.62).

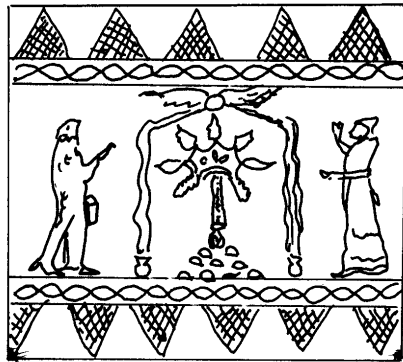


Fig. XVI.62



Fig. XVI.63

The scaly trunk may be intended for that of a palm (cf. Figs. XVI.41, XVI.42). If so, this, together with the ribbed leaves projecting from the canopy and comparable to those of Fig. XVI.48, comprise the sole naturalistic features of the hybrid. The trunk ends in a cross bar and three volutes. These are the extremely simplified and geometricized descendants of the well-formed tiers of Figs. XVI.1, XVI.4, XVI.2. Around this top is placed the webbing, attached, as in the case of Fig. XVI.58 to the “South-flower perianth.” In Fig. XVI.62 as in Fig. XVI.57, the canopy can be considered an arc frieze. The larger hybrid on an excellent cylinder in the Berlin collection, Fig. XVI.63, is exactly the same as that of Fig. XVI.62 except for certain additions. The webbing now consists of double arcs. From the perianth, somewhat better preserved than on Fig. XVI.62, fall two bands, substituting for the drops and connected with curving, three-leaved stems. This is a feature already observed in the betwigged hybrid of Fig. XVI.35.. The pair of half-volute stems curving up and outwards from the base on each side of the trunk constitute a further link with the betwigged class, as exemplified by Fig. XVI.52. The smaller hybrid of Fig.

⁷¹ CS, p. 189; cf. remarks on the linear Middle Assyrian style, exemplified among others by Fig. XVI.63..

XVI.63 conforms to the same pattern, though simplified. The lateral leaved twigs are absent; in place of the lower pair there stand simple half-volutes, reminiscent of the Kassite Figs. XVI.6 and XVI.43. A final peculiarity of this small hybrid is the rounded, not obovate, shape of the webbing leaves.

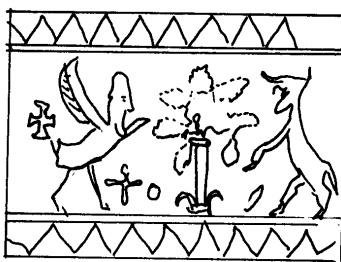


Fig. XVI.64

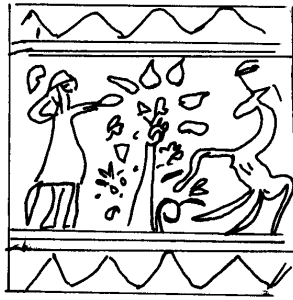


Fig. XVI.65



Fig. XVI.66

In addition to Figs. XVI.63 and XVI.62 there exist several other examples of the same kind of bewebbed hybrids, all of clumsier workmanship and displaying no originality. Fig. XVI.64, in the Newell collection is the best of these, and may well be Assyrian. The only noteworthy feature is the mounting of the hybrid trunk and of the two half-volutes on a base. Fig. XVI.65 was found at Abu Hatab; it exemplifies clearly a careless late Kassite imitation of a bewebbed hybrid. The same applies to Fig. XVI.66 from Warka. These two seals serve to identify Fig. XVI.67, in the Biblioteque Nationale, as an epigenous Babylonian product. Not all Kassite utilizations of the bewebbed motive were this degenerate, however.



Fig. XVI.67

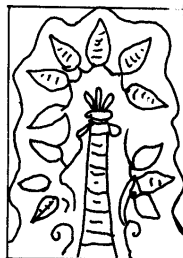


Fig. XVI.68



Fig. XVI.69

Figs. XVI.68 and XVI.69 are designs from the robe and crown worn by the figure of Marduk-nadin-Akhe (1099-1082 B. C.) carved on a kudurru. In both, the perianth has been completely changed into a torus molding, whose identity is, however, attested by the drops pendant from it in Fig. XVI.68. These two designs are also interesting for the tendency they display to extend the webbed canopy along the sides of the hybrid stem. This is by no means a contribution of the Kassites, but derived from certain complex Middle Assyrian hybrids illustrated in the murals. The designs of Marduk-nadin-Akhe's costume were repeated in Babylonia for some centuries.

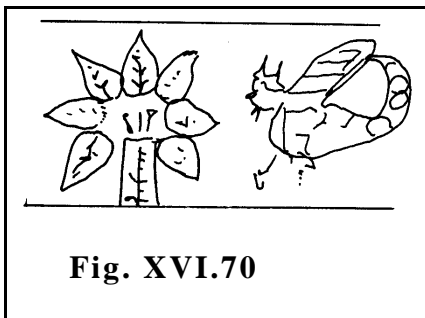


Fig. XVI.70

Fig. XVI.70 from the dress of Nabu-mukin-apli (978-943 B. C.), demonstrates how degenerate a design could become by the early years of the First Millennium.

The archaeology of the small objects and pottery from Assyrian sites has been much neglected, both in publication and subsequent discussion. Prominent among the series which have not received their due is that of the painted pottery representing a late eastern offshoot of the Mitannian ware, corresponding to the western branch found in the Amuq.⁷² The major source for such pottery appears to be the "sherd room" adjoining the north city wall of Assur. This chamber was slowly filled by debris, the lower levels of which contain the painted ware. Although Andrae states that similar vessels occur in Late Assyrian graves, he notes that the deposit preceded the building of certain Late Assyrian projecting walls; Herzfeld dates the room approximately to Shalmaneser I or Tulti-Ninurta I.⁷³ In any case the designs on some of these sherds are conclusive proof that that they fall within the Middle Assyrian range. The most complicated of these is found on a large bowl, the missing sections of which have been

⁷² Sidney Smith, *Alalakh and Chronology* (London, 1940), p. 4ff.

⁷³ Andrae, *Festungswerke von Assur*, WVDOG, XXIII (1913), 69-73 and Pl. LXXXIV. Herzfeld, "Die Kunst des zweiten Jahrtausends in Vorderasien," AMI VIII (1937), p. 146; Pls. IV-X. Andrae, *Farbige Keramik*, (Berlin, 1923), Pl. V.

reconstructed by Herzfeld (Fig. XVI.71). The main register is filled by a series of tree forms, most of which are naturalistic in intent. In their midst there stands a completely artificial form constructed by a combination of betwigged and bewebbed features.

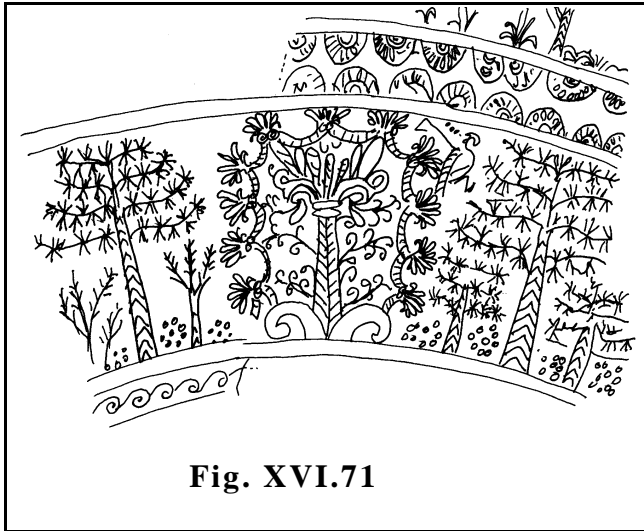


Fig. XVI.71

The central core of the motive consists of a trunk as in Fig. XVI.63. It emerges, however, from a basal South-flower perianth which must be directly derived from those of the betwigged hybrid of Fig. XVI.48, but the lower stem still visible there has disappeared in Fig. XVI.71. The top of the ceramic hybrid consists of a

normal tier comparable to those appearing in Figs. XVI.8 and XVI.46, except for the appearance of two tori in place of the lower part of the perianth. At present the origin of these elements remains unclear. We have seen them occur singly in Figs. XVI.68 and XVI.69 in place of the perianth, but this may be secondary to such forms in Fig. XVI.71. It may be significant that somewhat similar elements appear in analogous places in the late Mitannian ceramic designs of the Amuq (Figs. XV.1-8). Seven elongated palmette leaves top the tree; they are not unlike those in Figs. XVI.4-6. Another sign of the tradition followed by Fig. XVI.71 consists of the drops falling from the perianth, as in Fig. XVI.2. Alongside of them there also appear branching twigs; other curvilinear shoots spring from the median trunk. These additions are more abstract than in other betwigged forms (Figs. XVI.46, XVI.49, XVI.50-52, XVI.35, XVI.54), but were probably developed on the basis of such sinuous elements as those of Fig. XVI.49.

This betwigged hybrid is encircled by a palmette-tipped canopy with its ends attached to the basal South-flower perianth. The webbing of Fig. XVI.57. can be cited as

an analogy. Complicated though Fig. XVI.71 is, its construction can be easily explained when all the pertinent Middle Assyrian parallels are examined.



Fig. XVI.72

There is a possibility that a much simpler bewebbed hybrid was used on pottery of this type, but it cannot be completely reconstructed (Fig. XVI.72). It was formed, apparently, by basal curves derived from the South-flower, and a trunk with simple linear branches around which runs the palemotte-tipped canopy.

Our last examples of bewebbed hybrids are to be found among the fragments of murals from Tukulti-Ninurta

I's capital.



Fig. XVI.73

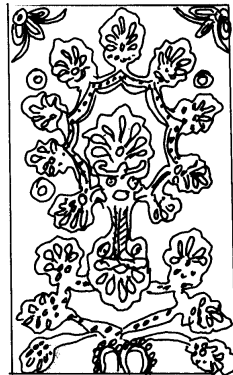


Fig. XVI.74

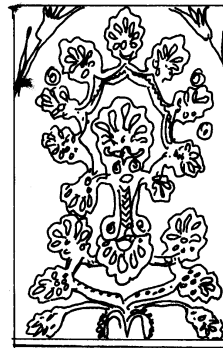


Fig. XVI.75

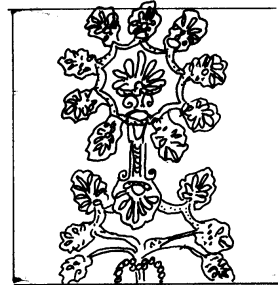


Fig. XVI.76

Fig. XVI.73 apparently consisted of a central trunk with sparse branches, the whole surrounded by a webbing with no projections. There is little to connect this design with Fig. XVI.71 save for the extension of the canopy laterally alongside the trunk. Far more ornate is a design that can be completely reconstructed from several examples with varying proportions (Figs. XVI.74, XVI.75, XVI.76). It illustrates an even more complete dissolution of the plant hybrid than any previous pattern. The peculiar base can be recognized, by means of the intermediate forms of Figs. XVI.71 and XVI.72, as derived from the South-flower perianth. Instead of a straight trunk, this base supports a pair of

downcurving, palmette-tipped stems and a series of linked palmettes outlining a roughly rectangular area. Superimposed upon the upper side of this last feature, is a large palmette, upside down and supporting a short, palmette-crowned trunk comparable in a general manner to that of Fig. XVI.71. The function of the stem as a tree trunk has been completely lost and the resultant double-headed motive remains unique. Its top is formed by a circular or oval canopy completely enclosing the top palmette. The minor details here demonstrate completely the disintegration of the elements inherited from the west. The volute has become so flattened as to be hardly recognizable as the same unit which appears in Figs. XVI.1, XVI.4, XVI.2, XVI.49, XVI.35. Figs. XVI.8, XVI.46, XVI.50-54, XVI.35 illustrate the trend in this direction. The curved ends of the perianths have disappeared leaving as tokens of their presence only two concentric circles. The torus elements in Fig. XVI.71. make their appearance, too. With this pattern we have reached a design in which the reworking of the inherited elements has been carried as far as it was in any Late Assyrian design. In fact, the process has been so thorough, that without the aid of intermediate designs, it would be impossible to distinguish the ingredients derived from the west. With their aid, however, it is possible to appraise the achievement of the Assyrian artists, who in creating Figs. XVI.76, XVI.77, XVI.78, XVI.79 used motives imported from outside - the hybrid tier, the palmette, the arc-frieze canopy - and yet produced from them an entirely new pattern, typical for Assyria.

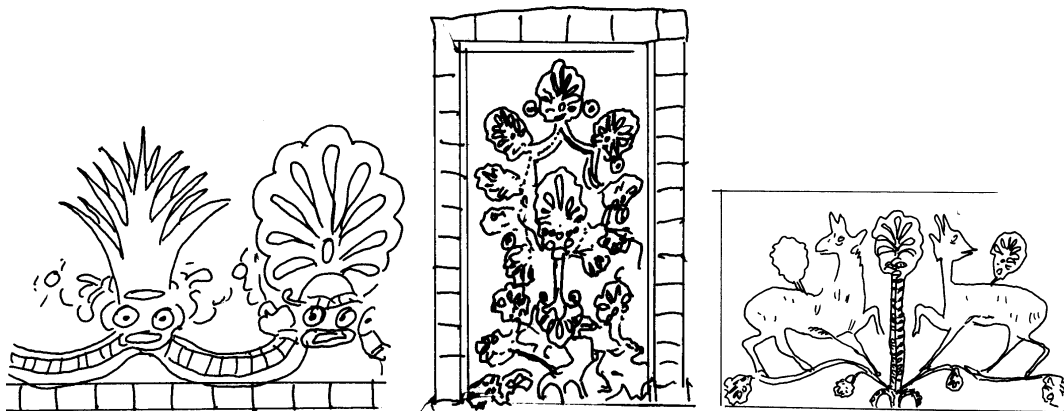


Fig. XVI.77

Fig. XVI.78

Fig. XVI.79

MIDDLE ASSYRIAN BELOZENGED HYBRIDS

The third important group of Middle Assyrian vegetal designs consists of patterns characterized by the addition of short curved lines so arranged as to form roughly lozenge shaped groups. As in the case of the webbed canopies, it is impossible to produce a clear orthogenetic series demonstrating the origin of the lozenge-forming elements. One point is certain. We must not look outside of Assyria for an explanation. Like the “naturalistic” branches of the betwigged hybrids, the formations of lozenges was a completely indigenous development, and the material at hand presents some suggestions as to its beginnings. As our first example we may use the seal in the Morgan collection which illustrated the emergence of an Assyrian style from a Mitannian substratum (Fig. XVI.1). The additions to the trunk have heretofore been purposely overlooked. Bands falling from the perianth, as in Figs. XVI.46, XVI.50, XVI.52, XVI.35, XVI.55, XVI.63 are met by symmetrical ribbons from the base. Together the curved ends of these lines support triple leaf groups, thus forming palmettes in the same manner as in Fig. XVI.57. In fact, the canopy there and the “lozenge” of Fig. XVI.1. both appear to be constructed from much the same element, a c-curve, which developed quite naturally in Fig. XVI.57 by the disintegration of an arc frieze. In Fig. XVI.1, the c-curves are not as complete, being evidently derived from the lines, originally drops, pendant from the South-flower. It is not possible to “explain” exactly the complementary upward springing curves. It should be remembered that in an originative period such as the Middle Assyrian phase, we cannot expect to find an explanation for every feature, but must also take into account the creative, and unreconstructable activities of numerous individuals. Many things were possible; there

exists, for example, a sealing dated to Tukulti-Ninurta I, in which at the base of a stiff pinnate tree, there appear four bands outlining an extremely irregular lozenge, hardly worthy of the name (Fig. XVI.80). Another highly peculiar pattern is the well-formed lozenge tipping the stem of the hybrid in Fig. XVI.8, which also bears an unusual canopy, but is otherwise an easily explained westernizing pattern. Thus it is clear that we must content ourselves with the certainty that these lozenge-forming bands are not incongruous features in the Middle Assyrian milieu. They constitute one of the distinctively Assyrian features of the seal.

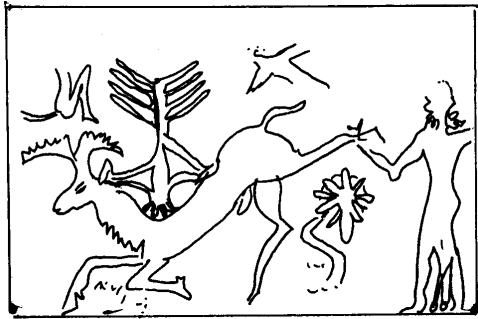


Fig. XVI.80

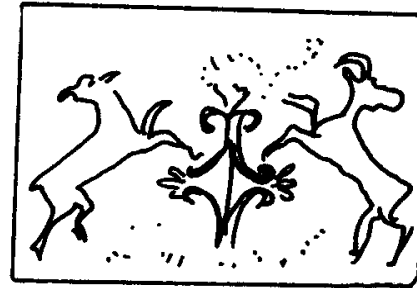


Fig. XVI.81

The closest parallel for Fig. XVI.1 is on a sealing from Assur (Fig. XVI.81). There, however, the plant does not possess a definitely Mitannian top as in the Morgan seal, but has a simple perianth with palmette foliage akin to that in Figs. XVI.3 and XVI.35. Another sealing from Assur is unfortunately incomplete (Fig. XVI.82.).

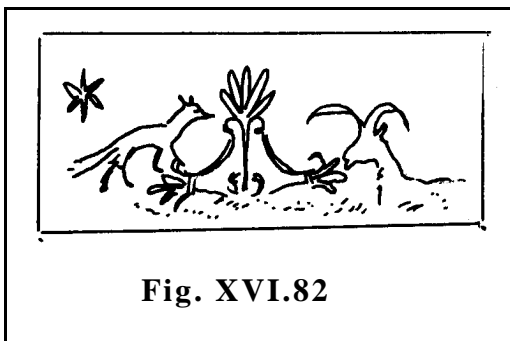


Fig. XVI.82

On it, too, was probably shown a tree like Fig. XVI.81, but presumably with two “lozenges.” The loss of half of the design is particularly unfortunate. The upper curvilinear elements are clearly lines falling from the South-flower perianth, and the other sides of the “lozenge”

may have been formed from the sides of a lower perianth. The bands are tied together by double cross lines. The addition of leaves results in the production of “palmettes.”

The most complicated example of a belozenged tree is to be found on a lovely, but badly worn cylinder in the Joanneum at Graz (Fig. XVI.83). A “Gilgamesh” figure walks in the field bounded by the tree.⁷⁴ Its tall slender trunk is flanked at the base by two half

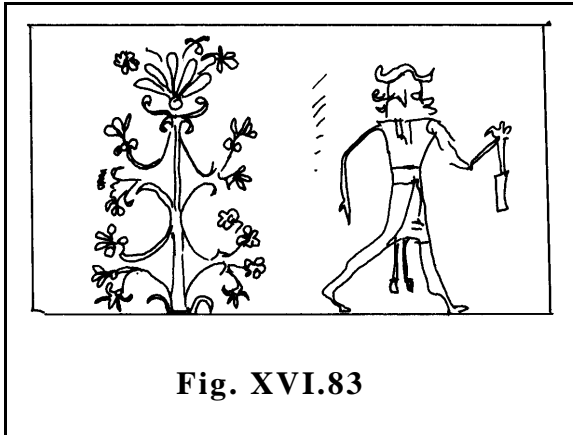


Fig. XVI.83

volutes (cf. Figs. XVI.43, XVI.63, XVI.64, XVI.65), and is topped by a perianth and volute resembling those of the westernizing hybrids. The palmette foliage is, however, quite Assyrian. To this framework were added two groups of lozenge-forming bands. These do not

support leaves, but three-stemmed palmettes, the majority of which consist of seven drill holes so arranged as to give the impression of a perianth and crown. Four palmettes of the same type project on short stems from the interstices of the main palmette crown. The Graz hybrid thus combines characteristics of belozenged forms and of such betwiggled patterns as Fig. XVI.46

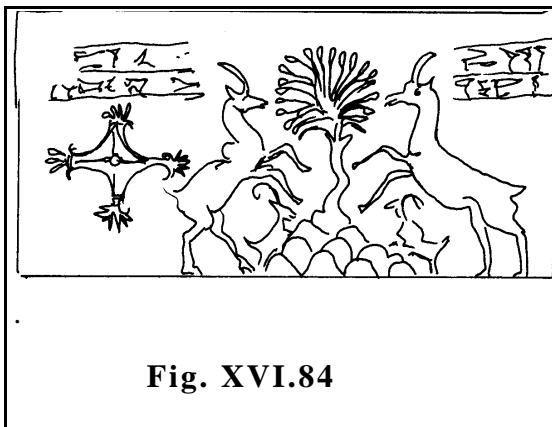


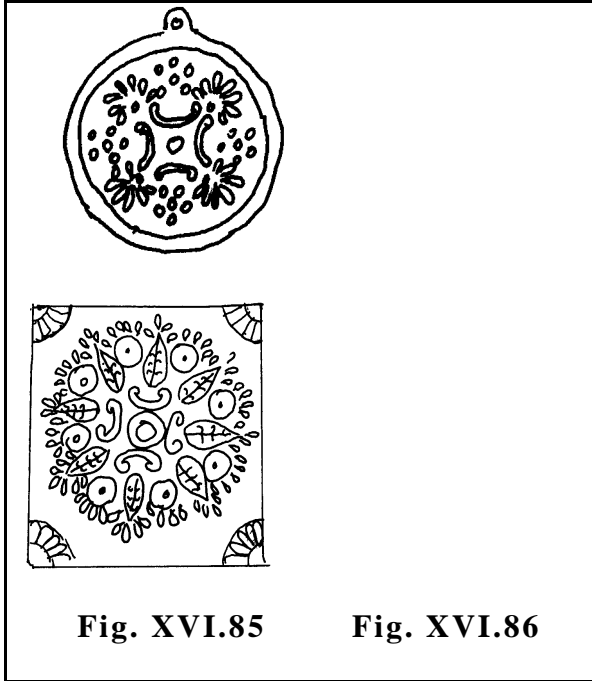
Fig. XVI.84

Whatever their exact origin may be, the c-curves of the “lozenge” patterns emerged as independent motives before the end of the Middle Assyrian period. A long step in this direction has been taken on Fig. XVI.84, where the vegetal motive has lost all connection with a median trunk and now

consists of a lozenge with a skeleton formed by a linear cross. In three cases the ends of the c's are tied together. They support three leaves, as in the majority of belozenged hybrids. A more advance stage occurs on a lead plaque (Fig. XVI.85), one of a series found at the spring and canal of the New Palace of Tukulti-Ninurta I at Assur. Other

⁷⁴ For parallels, cf. Moortgat, *op. cit.*, Fig. 31; Weber, 25, 26, 111; possibly Newell, 685, 686.

plaques with the same motives exist.⁷⁵ Fig. XVI.85 is essentially the same as Fig. XVI.84, the main difference being the shortness of the c-curves and the elaboration of the palmettes.⁷⁶



An even more simplified design of this type was used as one of the motives in a mural from the north side of the palace terrace at Kar Tukulti-Ninurta (Fig. XVI.86). The pattern has been simplified into four c's surrounding a circle; around this has been added a series of circles alternating with ribbed leaves of the type used in Figs. XVI.48 and XVI.51.



⁷⁵ WVDOG, LVIII (1935), Pls. XLVI, b-c; also probably XLVII,m; Pl. XLVII,e is much the same but consists of c-curves.

Fig. XVI.87

Fig. XVI.88

Development in the opposite direction, toward a very complicated decoration based on this motive, is exemplified by the lead plaque of Fig. XVI.87. There the ends of the c's form circular curls and support large palmettes. "Inside" each c there appears a rather curious u-shaped element growing from a forked stem. If Fig. XVI.87 be compared with Fig. XVI.88, it becomes plain that the theme of two arc-friezes overlapping one another played a share in the development of these patterns.

We have now exhausted the material available for the study of c-curves in Middle Assyrian art. It would be easy to guess - from the wide variation among the small number of patterns preserved - that they represent only a small sample preserved from a large repertoire. Rather disconcerting proof of this assumption comes from a small series of objects found in Cyprus and Palestine. They are unmistakably related with the c-curve motive that emerged from Middle Assyrian "lozenge" patterns. Since the origin of these elements in Assyria remains partly obscure, the question arises whether these patterns may not after all have been introduced from the west. We believe it possible to answer this point negatively. The derivative nature of Cypriote and "Canaanite" art has been sufficiently stressed already. Although capable of producing extremely unusual and unrecognizable ornaments from borrowed motives, we do not expect to find them inventing quite new elements. The argument that the c-curves make their appearance in the west in company with cones and palmettes of undoubted Middle Assyrian affinities has greater force. Thus Assyria may have been the original center for designs such as Figs. XVI. 89-94, XVI.97-101, even though comparable compositions have not yet been found there. It is possible that this may be explained by the large gaps in the archaeology of Middle Assyria. Practically no ivory carvings, for instance, have been found.

⁷⁶ Strictly speaking, these are not true palmettes, which we have defined as a South-flower with foliage. Here the South-flower perianth has disappeared.

The examples available are not sufficient to construct a continuous interrelated series, but are only random samples representing widely varying patterns. The design most obviously related to Assyria occurs on a gold diadem from the LC III OT 73 at Enkomi,⁷⁷ which also contained one of the carved mirror handles imitating Mycenaean forms. Fig. XVI.91 is ornamented by c's arranged in groups of four, clearly comparable to Figs. XVI.88-90. A completely different LC III design on a diadem from OT 45 at Enkomi consists of two c's bound back to back by horizontal lines

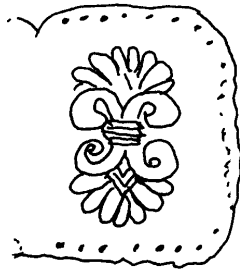


Fig. XVI.89

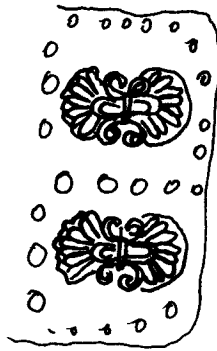


Fig. XVI.90

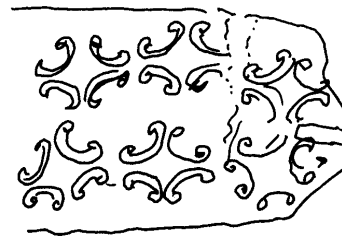


Fig. XVI.91

(Fig. XVI.89). The spurious South-flower perianths thus formed support palmette foliage. This composition is not comparable to any from Middle Assyria, but resembles some that are common in that country in later times. We must assume that it was also present earlier, but the Cypriote design of Fig. XVI.89 remains as the only tangible evidence. In addition to the LC III plaque, similar designs decorate another, somewhat earlier frontlet found by the Swedish excavation of the LC II C NT 18 at Enkomi (Fig. XVI.90). In this, the twinned c-curves create an even better approximation to a true, double palmette than in Fig. XVI.89. It is probable that the Cypriote goldsmiths themselves did not differentiate

⁷⁷ Gjersted, *Studies in Prehistoric Cyprus I* (Stockholm, 1926), p. 284; approximately 1200-1075 B. C. according to Sjoqvist, *Problems of the Late Cypriote Bronze Age* (Stockholm, 1940), p. 197.

scrupulously between normal palmettes formed by South-flower perianths and those produced by the juxtaposition of two c's.⁷⁸



Fig. XVI.92

Among the ivories of LC II are several discs with designs adapted to a circular field. The simplest example is from NT 6 at Enkomi, dated to the later part of LC II B (c.1350-c.1275 B. C.) (Fig. XVI.92).⁷⁹ Four c's are fastened together with broad bands. The composition is to a certain extent comparable to Figs. XVI.89 and XVI.85-86. Fig. XVI.93, from the same tomb, is the same as

Fig. XVI.92. except for the presence of five c's and the addition of scale filling motives in the center. A LC II C (1275-1200 B. C.)⁸⁰ deposit in NT 18 yields an example similar



Fig. XVI.93



Fig. XVI.94

except that the cross bands are all connected, so as to form a circle superimposed upon the c-curves. Tomb 18 also contained a much more complicated example (Fig. XVI.94). In the outer band the c-curves are canopied by a wide band; triple leaf groups fill the interstices. The core of the pattern consists of four c's, turned towards the inside. They support two scaly cone elements alternating with plain cones of different type. From the lower corners of the junctions of the c's emerge semicircular lobes.

⁷⁸ The same kind of pattern adorns oblong gold plaques from Beth Shamesh (Elihu Grant, *Ain Shema Excavations I* [Haverford, 1931] Pl. XVIII top, pot no. 1005b).

⁷⁹ Sjoqvist, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁸⁰ Sjoqvist, *op. cit.*, p. 121

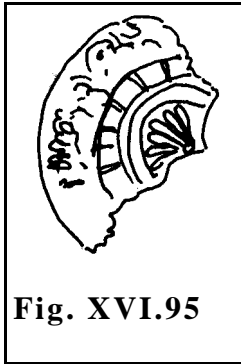


Fig. XVI.95

The arc frieze on a lead plaque from Assur (Fig. XVI.95) is pertinent, for it exemplifies the use of inturning friezes in Assyria. The scaly cones are comparable to those of Figs. XVI.21, XVI.46 and possibly Figs. XVI.52 and XVI.54. The pendant lobes are an exceedingly characteristic feature, whose Assyrian character can be indicated by reference to a frieze reconstructed from sherds found at Assur (Fig.

XVI.96). As a whole, however, Fig. XVI.94. is not paralleled in Assyria. The theory that it was constructed by Cypriote craftsmen, indebted to Assyria only for the units of design, cannot be disproved. Nevertheless, in view of the absence of a large corpus of Middle Assyrian, decorated small objects,⁸¹ we believe that Fig. XVI.94 (and Figs. XVI.92, XVI.93, XVI.97 as well) in reality conform to now vanished Middle Assyrian antecedents. The appearance of such designs in Cyprus would then be a cultural concomitant of the expansion of Assyria under Shalmaneser I, Adad-Nirari I, and Tukulti-Ninurta I.

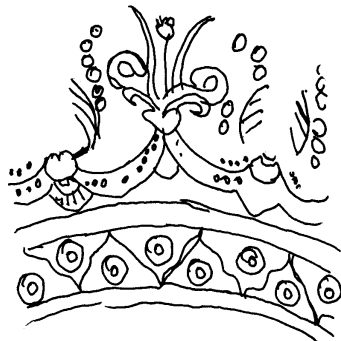


Fig. XVI.96



Fig. XVI.97

Aside from Enkomi, the only site to show designs of this type is Megiddo. There, a fragment of an ivory lid (Fig. XVI.98) bears a frieze of c's tied by narrow bands and crowned with scaly cones identical with those of Fig. XVI.94. These same cones,

⁸¹ The publication of the burials at Assur may throw much light on this question.

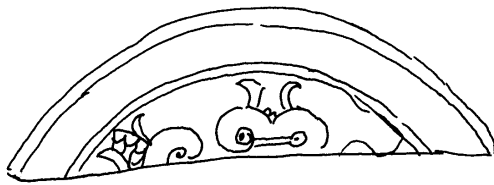


Fig. XVI.98



Fig. XVI.99

together with palmette foliage are prominent as large filling motives in a unique rapport pattern covering an object which the excavator suggests may have been a cup or vase (Fig. XVI.99). It is difficult to suggest the possible factors leading to the formation of Fig. XVI.99, especially as in this case we cannot be certain whether it arose in Canaan or Assyria. Here the pattern is not worked out on the basis of the c-curves themselves, but consists essentially of a tricurved-arch network with the segments of c-curves, bound together, artificially superimposed. There is no way of proving that Fig. XVI.99 was really based ultimately on the Aegean tri-curved arch pattern, but it is not impossible that this design offers a parallel to the roughly contemporary, semi-rapport motive of the late “Mitannian” pottery (Fig. XV.2). The foliate bands borders of Fig. XVI.99 serve as a reminder of the presence of Aegean influence.



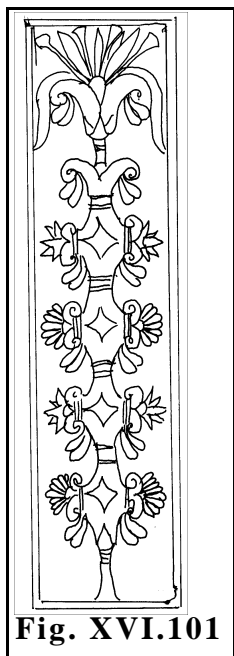
Fig. XVI.100

Fig. XVI.100 is the ornament of another object of the same type as Fig. XVI.99. The middle register is filled only by isolated cones, like those of Figs. XVI.94 and XVI.98, XVI.99, except for the absence of the narrow flanking elements. The other two registers are filled with a design equivalent to the one band dissected from Fig. XVI.99. Palmette foliage supplements the sinuous elements. As in Fig. XVI.99, the exact genesis

of this hypotactic pattern remains obscure, but there can be no doubt of its affinity with

Figs. XVI.92-94, XVI.97, XVI.98-99. The Megiddo pieces must be of much the same date as Fig. XVI.93. This places them in a period roughly corresponding to the long reign of Ramses II, the earlier part of which covers the rule of Tukulti-Ninurta I. In view of the active aggrandizing policy of that ruler, it is not surprising to find that the Mediterranean littoral is now yielding, for the first time, designs in which the dominant influence is Assyrian.

Megiddo has yielded still another ivory betraying evident traces of the Assyrian c-curve motive. This is a long, narrow plaque (Fig. XVI.101), whose Egyptianizing crown has already been discussed in connection with the drooping palm.⁸² The remainder of the design represents a curious mixture of normal Egyptian South-flowers and the lozenge patterns of Figs. XVI.84 or XVI.92. A long-stalked flower, complete with triangular sheathing leaves and drops forms the base. To its “petals” are clamped the lower ends of c-curves, whose “backs” are fused together and tied by horizontal lines. Other c’s form two



more lozenges. Drops fall from all the downcurving units, as if they, too, were genuine perianths. From the curving ends of the c’s project alternately rounded or spiky palmette foliage; the same contrasting types are to be found in Assyria. Fig. XVI.101 stands as one of the most eclectic of all the “Canaanite” designs, for in it can be found, not only Egyptian elements, but also Assyrian and even Mycenaean ones.

MISCELLANEOUS MIDDLE ASSYRIAN DESIGNS

We have now completed our discussion of the three groups of hybrids which have undergone specific types of alteration or development at the hands of the Middle Assyrian artists. They used, in addition, a number of other plant designs, which must be considered before the material available is exhausted.

⁸² Chapter XV, p. 625f.
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<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/HJK/HJKXVI.pdf>

UNIQUE HYBRIDS

There are several ornaments consisting of hybrid elements, but not classifiable under any of the categories we have set up. Two of them are from the Kar Tukulti-Ninurta murals, and are both incomplete. All remarks must be made with the reservation that the reconstructions, though probable, cannot be substantiated in detail.

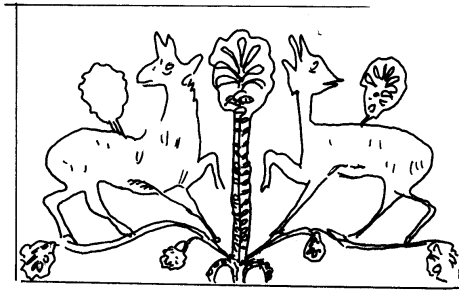


Fig. XVI.102

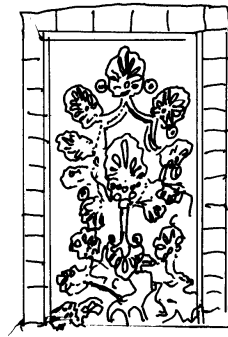


Fig. XVI.103

The trunk of Fig. XVI.102 appears to have resembled that of Fig. XVI.71, and have given rise to curving offshoots somewhat like the lower bands of Fig. XVI.103, but greatly extended. They serve as supports for two antithetical ibex, above whose backs appear palmette-tipped stems.

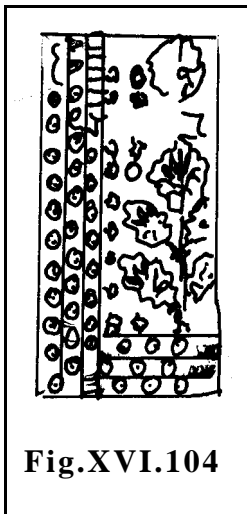


Fig. XVI.104

Although the reconstruction of Fig. XVI.104. is plausible, too little is preserved to make comment worthwhile. The loss of the complete pattern of Fig. XVI.104. is most regrettable of all. As restored, it is somewhat reminiscent of the volute hybrids of the late “Mitannian” pottery (Figs. XV.1, XV.8). However it is probable that we should look no farther than the betwigged hybrids of Figs. XVI.51-53 for parallels.

Fig. XVI.105 is an incomplete sealing from an Assur

document dated to the year Tukulti-Ninurta was eponym . Two mountain goats in a peculiar half-falling, half-kneeling pose flank a highly curious tree. Its straight trunk ends in a semicircular fan of leaves, somewhat similar to those of Fig. XVI.4. The most

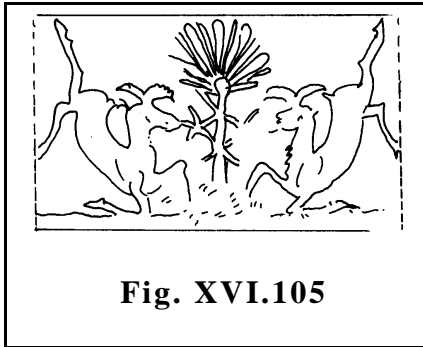


Fig. XVI.105

peculiar feature of Fig. XVI.105 are the straight bands which project from the trunk and cross one another approximately at right angles. Two of the bands project as far as the muzzles of the ruminants. The origin and nature of these ribbons remain mysterious. The bands of Fig XVI.55 and Fig. XVI.80 may be related and it is

possible that designs such as Figs. XVI.50, XVI.35, XVI.63, XVI.81-83 contain the germs of the motive as it appears in Fig. XVI.105.

An alabaster jar from a burial at Assur displays a hybrid bearing far more definite relations with the motives we have been studying (Fig. XVI.106).

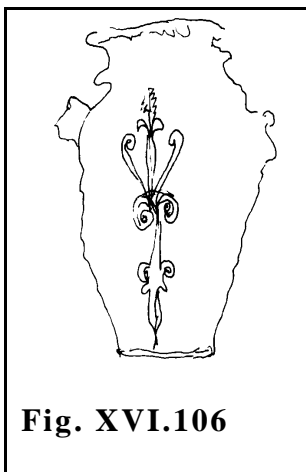


Fig. XVI.106

The trunk consists of triple lines supporting at intervals two South-flower perianths, complete with drops; this part of the motive is essentially much the same as the central stalks of Figs. XVI.46, XVI.50, XVI.52. From the first perianth, project a pair of forked branches completely comparable to those of Figs. XVI.51 and XVI.35. The unusual feature of this alabaster carving is the pair of large, veined leaves projecting upwards from the base, and the unique crown consisting of similar leaves

alternating with palmette stems, all springing from a knobby, semicircular canopy. The ribbed leaves themselves are like those of Figs. XVI.48, XVI.63 and XVI.86. When combined with the palmette stems, they form a group rather reminiscent of the crowning elements of Fig. XVI.101, which in turn is directly dependent on Egypt. A relationship with any western series cannot be proved, however. These various unique examples are

highly interesting for the evidence they give concerning the wide scope of the hybrid repertoire in Middle Assyrian times.

HYPOTACTIC DESIGNS

The bewebbed hybrids and the c-curves have already introduced us to varieties of the only kind of hypotactic design known to have been used in Middle Assyria, the arc frieze. This motive decorates lead plaques from Assur (Figs. XVI.88, XVI.107, XVI.108, XVI.56, XVI.95) or appears as a border in wall paintings (Fig. XVI.77).



Fig. XVI.107

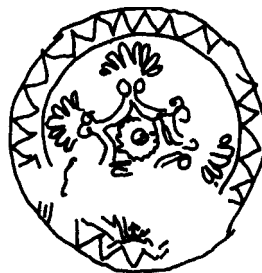


Fig. XVI.108



Fig. XVI.109

It was used, too, on pottery; Fig. XVI.109 represents a small fragment with pomegranate-tipped peaks. Since the curving bands are here doubled, it is possible that this sherd was part of a bewebbed hybrid rather than a simple arc frieze. The most complicated Middle Assyrian frieze also occurs on the light-painted pottery from Assur (Fig. XVI.96).



Fig. XVI.110

Fig. XVI.110 must be part of an almost identical pattern. Several features of Fig. XVI.96 have already been referred to in connection with the Cypriote composition of Fig. XVI.94. Here the main point we wish to stress is that Fig. XVI.96 is an eastern development on the basis of the Mitannian ceramic tradition, which in the west was giving rise to the variety preserved in the Amuq.

Despite the major differences between Fig. XVI.96 and Figs. XV.1-4, a certain resemblance in general effect is apparent. There exist, too, certain detailed coincidences such as the presence of an additional “calyx”-like unit at the base of the various hybrid

heads and the use of dotted bands. Although there is little probability that the two traditions derived from the earlier Mitannian painted ware directly influenced by one another, it is possible that they possessed a larger fund of common features than the material available at present would suggest.

Little evidence as to the source from which the Assyrians derived the arc-frieze tipped with hybrid units has been preserved. Fortunately the unique Mitannian seal, Fig. XIV.19, remains as an indication that this kind of composition was another of the themes inherited from the west and presumably ultimately derived from Egypt.

PALMETTES

The widespread use of small, unvoluted palmettes as part of larger South-flower hybrids can be regarded as typical for Middle Assyrian plant designs. They were used as accessory elements far more commonly (Figs. XVI.46, XVI.51, XVI.54, XVI.57, XVI.81-84, XVI.85, XVI.88, XVI.107, XVI. 87, XVI.108, XVI.56, XVI.95, XVI.102) than in "Canaanite" (Figs. XIII.4, XIII.6) or Mitannian (Figs XIV.28 and possibly XIV.22) work. These palmettes represent a wide variety of forms as is clear from the figures. We need to single out only three types for special mention. Figs. XVI.51 and XVI.54 display palmettes of a cone-shaped outline with a rather elongated central lobe.

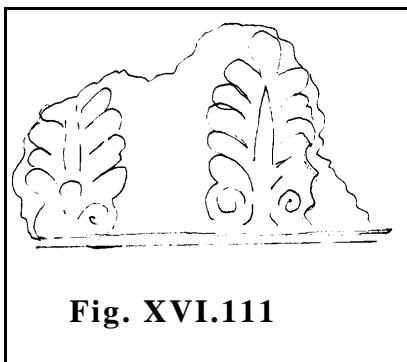


Fig. XVI.111

The same variety also occurs as an isolated motive filling a register of a painting from Kar Tukulti Ninurta (Fig. XVI.111). A second category has spiky palmette foliage (Figs. XVI.77, XVI.112), possibly derived from the waterlily design also in use at the time. The third class consists of the palmettes representing the commonest type used in Assyria; their foliage approximates to a circular outline, or is at most slightly oval. The individual leaves are markedly obovate (Figs. XVI.85, XVI.88, XVI.108, XVI.56, XVI.113, XVI.75, XVI.103, XVI.76).

As in the Mitannian ware (Figs. XIV.64 and XIV.60), palmettes occur as independent elements on sherds from Assur. Those of Figs. XVI.114, XVI.115 are rather peculiar. The South-flower perianth has disintegrated as in Figs. XVI.71 and XVI.103; the crown is formed by elements corresponding to geometric scale and mountain units (Fig. XVI.116,⁸³ rather than to true palmette leaves. The palmette of Fig. XVI.116 follows the more normal Assyrian tradition; it is interesting to note how here the hybrid unit is set upon the rocky peak usually crowned by a naturalistic tree (Figs. XVI.32, XVI.31, XVI.84).

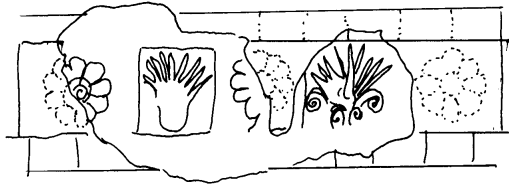


Fig. XVI.112

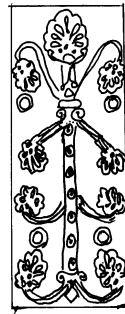


Fig. XVI.113

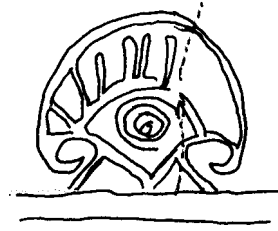


Fig. XVI.114

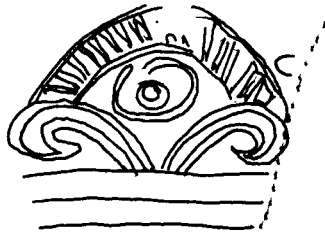


Fig. XVI.115



Fig. XVI.116

Parts of two unique designs are preserved on Assur sherds (Figs XVI.117, XVI.118). They both appear to be formed of series of downcurving volutes, possibly derived from South-flower perianths. These were, in the case of Fig. XVI.117, at least, surmounted by palmette foliage. The existence of such unparalleled motives exemplifies how little we yet know of the full gamut of Middle Assyrian design.

⁸³ See also Herzfeld, *op. cit.* Pls. VII, 113; X, 112, a.



Fig. XVI.117



XVI.118

NON-HYBRID ELEMENTS

A number of non-hybrid units - the ribbed leaf, the cone, the pomegranate, and “twigs” - derived from Mesopotamian naturalistic tradition - have already been dealt with since they entered into the composition of Middle Assyrian hybrids. In addition, there are to be found several other non-hybrid motives used in minor positions in the Kar Tukulti-Ninurta paintings. Obovate (Fig. XVI.119) or lanceolate (Fig. XVI.74) leaf groups are simple designs developed to fill corners. More unusual is the corner motive of Fig. XVI.75, consisting of an apparently naturalistic leaf and stem supporting a flower with pointed petals, and of uncertain character.

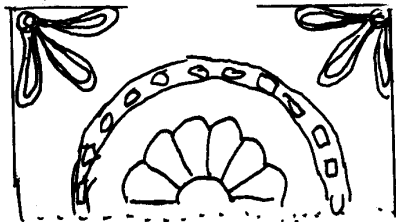


Fig. XVI.119

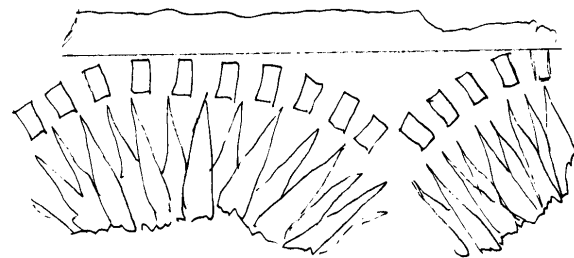


Fig. XVI.120

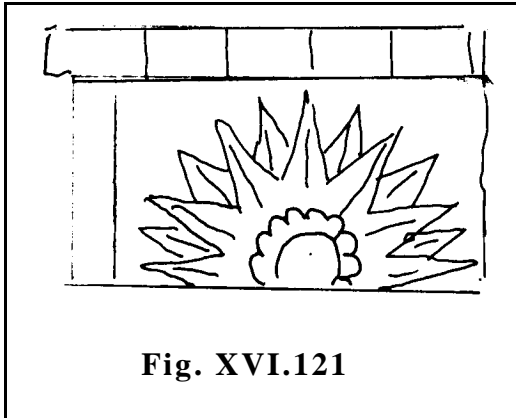


Fig. XVI.121

There also exist certain designs (Figs. XVI.120, XVI.112, XVI.77, and possibly XVI.121) which seem to demonstrate the use of an Egyptianizing *Nymphaea* motive. They raise a considerable problem, for they constitute the only evidence for direct influence from Egypt, and yet are by no means conclusive proof of

this. In view of all the evidence showing that western motives entered Assyria by way of “Canaanite” and Mitannian models, and since Second Syrian seals seem to contain waterlily types (Figs. XIII.10, 11, 12), it may be possible that these nymphaeas, too, reached Assyria by way of the coastal areas.

The Middle Assyrian repertoire also contains a number of rosette types, which we omit, since no definite results can be obtained from them. Despite the naturalistic rosette plants of Figs. XVI.36, XVI.37, it is impossible to determine whether the decorative rosettes were considered as vegetal forms, nor do they demonstrate any useful connections with other areas.

CONCLUSIONS

In Middle Assyria we have been able to observe a process which finds no parallel in the history of Near Eastern plant ornament. In Egypt and Crete there grew up indigenous traditions of vegetal design independent of outside influence. The coastal areas of Asia and Mitanni, despite all their undeniable originality in reworking and completely transforming hybrid designs, were still proceeding mainly on the basis of Egyptian traditions, supplemented at times by characters derived from the Mycenaean *koine* culture. Despite such occasional overlapping of cultural influences, the situation in those areas was quite different from that in Assyria where two great cultural traditions were actually fused together by craftsmen who were creating the foundations, not of hybrid, derivative crafts

such as those of the “Canaanites,” but of one of the most characteristic schools of Near Eastern art. Some of the Middle Assyrian hybrids follow closely the western tradition of compound decoration, the tradition which is formed by strangely metamorphosed Egyptian motives. There can exist no greater contrast than that between such designs and the naturalistic representation of tree forms which was of old a prominent feature of Mesopotamian art, and is greatly developed on Middle Assyrian seals. The meeting of the two traditions produced a wide range of forms, in the majority of which the hybrid elements serve as the core of designs completely transformed by the use of such naturalistic elements as branches, leaves, and cones, often disposed along the hybrid stem as if it were a naturalistic tree trunk. There is at least one example, Fig. XVI.57 where it is the hybrid elements which are added to a completely naturalistic tree. In attempting to impose some order upon the material available, we have distinguished three main categories characterized by the addition of twigs, of canopies, and of c-curves arranged in lozenge pattern. By the latter part of the Middle Assyrian period, there have been developed crosses between these three classes which are the direct ancestors of the “sacred trees” of Late Assyria.

In addition to the actual changes of form, the influence of the naturalistic Mesopotamian tradition makes itself felt in the manner in which the individual Assyrian hybrids were combined with other elements into larger compositions. In Egypt, compounds were most commonly used either alone or in connection with other purely ornamental patterns of pure decoration. When placed between animals, the Egyptian hybrids may be considered to possess a certain degree of “representative” meaning. Only in very rare cases, in certain hunting scenes, do we find Egyptian hybrids playing a more definite, pictorial role, serving as desert vegetation. In “Canaanite” and Mitannian work the compositional role of the South-flower patterns has become more complicated. There are still cases in which they are mere decorative elements (Figs. XIII.1, XIII.3, XIII.31, XIII.37, XIII.39, XIV.19, XIV.51-54), or the axes of antithetical animal groups (Figs. XIII.2, XIII.30, XIII.32, XIII.33, XIV.6-18, XIV.20, XIV.21, XIV.27-28). In addition

they may be used as constituent of certain symbolic patterns, as when they were substituted for the normal head of the Babylonian sun standard, which originally corresponded to an actual object (Figs. XIII.7, XIV.1, XIV.5). The hybrids are important in the formation of the complex symbol showing a vegetal “column” supporting a winged sun disc (Figs. XIII.5, XIV.3, XIV.22, XIV.23-25), and are once, at least, found in a design based in part on the Egyptian unification symbol (Fig. XIII.6). The Middle Assyrian murals from Kar Tukulti-Ninurta exemplify what may be considered pure decorative uses of hybrid designs, nor are ornamental compositions involving antithetical animal groups missing from the Assyrian repertoire (Fig. XVI.50 [Kassite], Figs. XVI.63, XVI.64, XVI.102, XVI.84). In striking contrast to these examples are those in which the hybrid forms replace naturalistic trees. This is clear in Fig. XVI.51, where the compound grows from a mountain peak, and in Fig. XVI.57; in both the artificial patterns serve to give a forest setting for a hunting scene (cf. Fig. XVI.34). In Figs. XVI.46, XVI.54, XVI.35, XVI.83 too, the hybrids do not appear as arbitrary filling ornaments, but as graceful arboreal forms, suggestive of an enchanted forest. This is a striking innovation, and one which appears to be limited to Middle Assyrian times.

The decorative and semi-naturalistic compositions do not exhaust the roles played by the South-flower hybrids in Middle Assyria. A bewebbed tree occurs in the symbolical pattern of Fig. XVI.62, where it serves as a sign for vegetal growth.⁸⁴ In addition, many of the Middle Assyrian types are the first examples of the “sacred tree,” a feature of Assyrian religion discussed, among others, by Sidney Smith⁸⁵ and Frankfort⁸⁶ who point out that in late Assyrian times it was apparently a symbol of the god Assur. Moreover, they equate the “sacred tree” on the seal designs with a cult object described by Sidney Smith as follows: “...at the New Year Festival in Assyria use was made of a bare

⁸⁴ CS, p.213.

⁸⁵ Smith, *The Early History of Assyria* (New York, 1928), p.123 and n. 10. Smith, “The Relation of Marduk, Ashur and Osiris,” *JEA*, VIII (1922), pp.43-44.

⁸⁶ CS, pp.204-207

tree-trunk, around which metal bands, called 'yokes' were fastened, and fillets were attached."⁸⁷ Franfort refers to the archaeological evidence for the presence of tall cedar poles bearing copper bands at the portals of Assyrian temples. He says that certain hybrid designs, "...are unintelligible as the rendering of natural trees, but not so if they represent the ritual object consisting of a pole ornamented with copper bands, cloth and ribbons...Iconographically this Assyrian design, i. e. the "sacred tree" is an inheritance from an earlier period. For it is on Mitannian seals, both of the official and popular style, that we shall witness the transformation of the simple rendering of a natural tree....into the "sacred tree" of scrolls and palmettes."⁸⁸ The detailed discussion of Middle Assyrian developments just completed enables us to claim that, though in symbolic value the hybrid trees may be identical with the cult poles, the shape of the former is conditioned only by the combination of certain naturalistic Mesopotamian traits with formal decorative designs derived from Egypt, but mediated by Mitannian, and possibly to a lesser degree by Second/Third Syrian glyptic designs. The mingling of these two traditions appears to be sufficient to explain the origin of the Middle Assyrian hybrids without reference to the "maypoles," for the actual appearance of which we have very little evidence. In the great series of designs developed on the basis of the Egyptian South-flower and *Cyperus alopecuroides* Rottb., the Middle Assyrian hybrids stand out as especially striking and original products.

SOURCES FOR THE FIGURES

- XVI.1 Ward-Morgan, 165
XVI.2 Poroda, *Morgan Collection*, Pl. LXXXVII, 594
XVI.3 Weber, 316, a = CS, p. 187, Fig. 59 (VAT 9009)
XVI.4 WVDOG, LVIII (1935), 82, Fig. 65 = VAR, 527 = CS, p. 186

⁸⁷ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 123

⁸⁸ CS, p. 207

- XVI.5 VAR, 552 (VA 4879).
- XVI.6 Contenau, *Manuel d'archéologie orientale*, II, 912, Fig. 629 (Susa; fragmentary stone vessel).
- XVI.7 Restoration of part of Stele of Untash-Huban (Susa)
- XVI.8 BN, 385 (given by Pauvert de la Chapelle, 1899).
- XVI.9 VAR, 29 = CS, Pl.III a (VA 10537; bought iun 1915 near Warka)
- XVI.10 CS, Pl. IV, j. (S, 254; Uruk style).
- XVI.11 BN, 74
- XVI.12 CS, Pl. VI, d (Khafaje VI 1416; early Jemdet Nasr style).
- XVI.13 ILN, Sept 14, 1935, Pl. I, 5 (earliest shrine, Abu temple, Tell Asmar, PL)
- XVI.14 *Ibid.*, Pl. I, 4 (reconstruction of tree on green stone vase)
- XVI.15 CS, Pl. XIII, h = Ur, 118 (Early Dynastic III).
- XVI.16 CS, XIII, 2 = Ur, 298 (Early Dynastic III)
- XVI.17 Woolley, *Royal Cemetery at Ur*, PL. C. U.10917 A (Shell engraving).
- XVI.18 CS, p. 140, Fig. 36 (Boston 34-199; Akkadian)
- XVI.19 CS, p. 99, Fig. 31 (T-106. Seal of Lugalushumgal)
- XVI.20 CS, XVIII, h (BM 89308).
- XVI.21 *Encyclopedie protographique de l'Art*, I, 255, Fig. A (Susa)
- XVI.22 *ibid.*, 214, A (Naram-Sin stela, Susa)
- XVI.23 CS, Pl. XXIV, d (The Hague, 18; Akkadian)
- XVI.24 VAR, 192 (VA 668)
- XVI.25 HBD. *Arch.* I, Pl. CXLVII, 3 (steal of Ur-Nammu).
- XVI.26 Syria, XVIII (1937), Pl. XII, 1 (mold 1033, Mari)
- XVI.27 *Ibid.*, Pl. XII, 1 (mold 1036; Mari)
- XVI.28 Syria, XVIII (1937), Pl. XXXIX (Mari mural)
- XVI.29 ZA, XLVII (1942), Fig.39 (VAT 8822; Assur 14327 cp)
- XVI.30 BN, 307 = CS, Pl. XXXI, j (Assur-remani).

- XVI.31 ZA, XLVII (1942), Fig. 32 (VAT 9012; Assur 1446 ex)
- XVI.32 Ward-Morgan, 280 = CS, Pl. XXXI, h.
- XVI.33 Gordon, *The Living Past*, seal 29 on Pl. opposite p. 131 (Baghdad).
- XVI.34 ZA, XLVII (1942), p. 11, Fig. 17 (VAT 8859; Assur 14327 ce)
- XVI.35 *Ibid.*, p. 23, Fig. 43 (VAT 8899; Assur 14446 dc)
- XVI.36 *Ibid.*, p. 23, Fig. 40 (VAT 8764; Assur 14327 ag; KAJ 83)
- XVI.37 *Ibid.*, p. 8, Fig. 9 = Paroda, Morgan, LXXXI V, 599.
- XVI.38 *Ibid.*, p. 29, Fig. 55 (VAT 8740; Assur 14886 g).
- XVI.39 *Ibid.*, p. 28, Fig. 49 (VAT 9006; Assur 14527 s; KAJ 133).
- XVI.40 *Ibid.*, p. 83, Fig. 73 (VAT 8939; Assur 14327 g ; KAJ 101)
- XVI.41 VAR, 587 (VA 2808)
- XVI.42 Newell, 450
- XVI.43 Koldewey, *Das Wiedererstandene Babylon*, p. 262, Fig. 191, 2nd from top
- XVI.44 VAR, 559 (VA 531)
- XVI.45 ILN, Oct. 30, 1937, p. 765, 10 = Syria. XVIII (1937), Pl. XXXIX
- XVI.46 CS, Pl. XXXII, b (Boston, 25-27)
- XVI.47 WVDOG, LIII (1969), Pl. 7, d (fragment of stone vase; Assur 16917)
- XVI.48 Andrae, *Das Wiederstandene Assur*, Pl. LIV (VA Ass 981; Assur 10015/18)
- XVI.49 *Ibid.*
- XVI.50 A, 695
- XVI.51 AMI, VIII (1937), 133, Fig. 67 (drawn after Clay, *Documents*)
- XVI.52 VAR, 556 (VA 6935; Merkes 39782; later Kassite level)
- XVI.53 BN, 299
- XVI.54 Clay, *op. cit.*, p. 15, Pl. XV, 11 (seventeenth year of Kurigalzu II)
- XVI.55 Assur sealing
- XVI.56 WVDOG, LVIII (1935), 106, Fig. 84; Pl. XLVII, p (Assur 9242-)
- XVI.57 Weber, 511 = ZA XLVII (1942), p. 10, Fig. 11

- XVI.58 Syria, XVI (1935), Pl. XXXV, 3rd row from left, 3rd from top
- XVI.59 BM Ex. Cyprus, Pl. VII, 517 (Enkomi, OT; LC II)
- XVI.60 CS, Pl. XLIV, u (Damanhur in the Delta)
- XVI.61 VAR, 547
- XVI.62 Newell, 416 = CS, p. 213, Fig. 65
- XVI.63 VAR, 560 = CS, Pl. XXXII, c (VA 3903)
- XVI.64 Newell, 417
- XVI.65 AMI, VIII (1937), 113, Fig. 18 (Philadelphia, 599)
- XVI.66 *Ibid.*, Fig.17 = VAR 561
- XVI.67 A, 692
- XVI.68 AMI, VIII (1937), 111, Fig. 12, left
- XVI.69 *Ibid.*, 111, Fig. 12, right
- XVI.70 *Ibid.*, 111, Fig. 13
- XVI.71 *Ibid.*, Pl. IX, 108
- XVI.72 *Ibid.*, Pl. V, 106, d
- XVI.73 Andrae, *Farbige Keramik*, Pl. III
- XVI.74 *Ibid.*
- XVI.75 *Ibid.*
- XVI.76 *Ibid.*, Pl. II
- XVI.77 *Ibid.*
- XVI.78 *Ibid.*
- XVI.79 *Ibid.*
- XVI.80 ZA, XLVII (1942), p. 8, Fig. 7 (VAT 8610; KAJ 241)
- XVI.81 Weber, 479 (VAT 8971)
- XVI.82 E. Meyer, *Reich und Kultur der Chetiter*, p. 65, Fig. 55 (VAT 5776)
- XVI.83 Weber, 270 (Graz museum)
- XVI.84 CS, Pl. XXXI, I = Qc, 11

- XVI.85 WVDOG, LVIII (1935), 106, Fig. 80; Pl XLVI, a (Assur 7838)
- XVI.86 Andrar, *Farbige Keramik*, Pl. I
- XVI.87 WVDOG, LVIII (1935), 106, Fig. 81
- XVI.88 *Ibid.*, 106, Fig. 81
- XVI.89 BMExCyprus, Pl. VII, 184 (Enkomi, OT 45; LC III)
- XVI.90 SCE I, Pl. LXXXVIII, 11 (Enkomi, NT 18, 1; LC II C)
- XVI.91 BM Ex. Cyprus, Pl. X, 401 (Enkomi, OT 73; LC III)
- XVI.92 SCE I, Pl. LXXIX, 103 (Enkomi, NT 6; LC II B)
- XVI.93 *Ibid.*, Pls LXXIX, 24; CLII, 18, 53 (Enkomi NT 6; LC II C)
- XVI.94 *Ibid.*, Pl. CLII, 5 (Enkomi, NT 18; LC II C)
- XVI.95 WVDOG, LVIII (1935) Pl. XLVII, g
- XVI.96 AMI, VIII (1937), Pl. VII, 101
- XVI.97 SCE I, Pl. CLII, 3 (Enkomi NT 18, 83; LC II C)
- XVI.98 Meg. Iv., Pl. XIII, 60
- XVI.99 *Ibid.*, Pl. XX, 123
- XVI.100 *Ibid.*, Pl. XXI, 124
- XVI.101 *Ibid.*, Pl. VI, 15
- XVI.102 Andrae, *Farbige Keramik*, Pl. II
- XVI.103 *Ibid.*
- XVI.104 *Ibid.*, Pl. III
- XVI.105 ZA, XLVII (1942), p. 29, Fig. 54 (VAT 8609; Assur 14987b; KAJ 144)
- XVI.106 Andrae, *Das Wiedererstandene Assur*, Pl. XII, a (alabaster)
- XVI.107 WVDOG, LVIII (1935), Pl. XLVI, e
- XVI.108 *Ibid.*, Pl. XLVII, i
- XVI.109 Andrae, *Farbige Keramik*, Pl. V, 1 (Assur; sherd)
- XVI.110 AMI, VIII (1937), Pl. VI, e (Assur; sherd).

