

Assyrian Carpets in Stone

PAULINE ALBENDA

Brooklyn, N.Y.

One category of Assyrian stone reliefs to which little attention has been given is the decorated stone blocks placed originally in select entrances of royal residences. These slabs are carved with floral and geometric designs set in patterns suitable for rugs and, indeed, they may be stone versions of woven floor coverings manufactured to enhance the palace chambers. In the absence of extant fabric remains, the threshold blocks provide invaluable information concerning the kinds of decorated elements and compositions employed to satisfy Assyrian tastes.¹ While a number of decorated threshold slabs are preserved in various museums, still others are known only from drawings and photographs made at the time of their discovery. In order to trace the development of their decoration, all the known slabs are assembled in this paper according to the reigns of the Assyrian kings, from the 8th through 7th centuries B.C.

As attested in 8th century B.C. administrative texts from Nimrud, among the several categories of textile workers in the service of the king included the *kāmidu*, identified as the carpet maker.² The production of his craft required the use of a vertical loom or possibly a ground loom.³ Whether the Assyrian carpets were tapestry woven (kilim) or knotted remains uncertain. We may speculate, however, that the sudden interest in displaying stone versions of rugs and carpets at important entrances after the middle of the 8th century was spurred by the development of pile carpets. A similar conclusion has been made for the apparent invention of the art of floor mosaic-making in Phrygia, which occurred at about the same time.⁴ The origin for such an innovative

1 I wish to express my gratitude to the Trustees of the British Museum for allowing me to study and publish the threshold slabs and original drawings in their possession. Generous assistance was provided by Dr. Julian E. Reade, Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities. Measurements for the Louvre slab were kindly furnished by Dr. Pierre Amiet. Permission to reproduce the photographs of works in their collection was given by: British School of Archaeology in Iraq; Metropolitan Museum of Art; Musée du Louvre; The Oriental Institute, University of Chicago.

2 J. V. K. Wilson, *The Nimrud Wine Lists* (London, 1972), 68–70; *CAD* 8: 121. On the term *išpar birmi* 'weaver of multicolored fabrics' see *CAD* 7, 253–55. For a discussion on the control of the textile industry in the early second millennium B.C., see: S. Dalley, "Old Babylonian Trade in Textiles at Tell Al Rimah," *Iraq* 39 (1977), 155–59; K. R. Veenhof, "Some Social Effects of Old Assyrian Trade," *Iraq* 39 (1977), 114–15.

3 R. S. Ellis, "Mesopotamian Carpets in Modern and Ancient Times: Ancient Near Eastern Weaving," *AJA* 80 (1976), 76–77; M. Barrelet, "Un inventaire de Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta: textiles décorés assyriens et autres," *Revue d'Assyriologie* 71 (1977), 66–68. For Greek and Roman names describing the techniques of weaving, see A. Wace, "TAPPETO," *AJA* 76 (1972), 438–40.

4 R. S. Young, "Early Mosaics at Gordion," *Expedition* 7 (1965), 12–13.

technique of carpet production is unknown, although pictorial evidence suggests that one area of manufacture is to be sought in some region west of Assyria, whence the method was transmitted east to the royal workshops. Three separate art works dated to the reign of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) illustrate among processions of tribute-bearers carpets of substantial size and weight, rolled and hung over poles carried by two attendants. In each instance the fabrics are presented by the inhabitants of some locality to the west of Assyria. In the first example, on the so-called Black Obelisk, the carpets which form part of the tribute sent by Marduk-apal-usur of Suhi (a district on the middle Euphrates) possess carefully delineated fringes (fig. 1).⁵ In contrast, less attention is given to this detail on those carpets borne by the tribute-bearers from the coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon, depicted on the bronze bands from Balawat,⁶ and those transported by attendants from the land of Unqi (the Amuq plain in North Syria), carved on the throne dais excavated in Nimrud.⁷ Interestingly, the Balawat gate inscription mentions only that Shalmaneser received “the tribute of the ships of the men of Tyre and Sidon,”⁸ while the inscriptions on the Black Obelisk and throne dais give the description “bright-colored (woolen) garments and (linen) garments.”⁹ From this one may suppose that the Assyrian scribe, when listing items of tribute, made no distinction between types of textiles and their uses, preferring the general term “garment.”¹⁰

Woven floor coverings do appear in several second millennium B.C. art works, but such examples are rare. It seems to occur on a ca. 14th century B.C. orthostat from Alaca Hüyük in Anatolia which depicts a rectangular fabric, one end possessing fringes grouped into three curved clusters, placed on the ground beneath the throne of the deity.¹¹ And indeed, textual evidence indicates that thrones were set upon a carpet.¹² A second illustration showing a floor covering comes from a Late Kingdom wall painting. A large red carpet with rows of yellow and blue diamonds in its field is spread under the feet of the pharaoh Ikhnaton and his family.¹³ Of particular interest,

5 The stone monument is presently on view in the British Museum (BM 118885).

6 J. V. Canby, *The Ancient Near East in the Walters Art Gallery*, (Baltimore, 1974), pl. 18a.

7 M. E. L. Mallowan, *Nimrud and Its Remains* (London, 1966), 2: 448–49.

8 D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, I (Chicago, 1926), 225. According to a fragment of the annals dated to the 18th year of Shalmaneser's reign, that king “received the tribute of the men of Tyre, Sidon and of Jehu, son of Omri.” *Ibid.*, 243.

9 *Ibid.*, 211 (no. 592); Mallowan, *Nimrud*, II, 445–47. The first references to the fabric called *būšu* from the land of Suhi and Sam'al are found in the 9th century inscriptions of Shalmaneser III. See A. Leo Oppenheim, “Essay on Overland Trade in the First Millennium B.C.,” *JCS* 21 (1967), 248–49.

10 The consignment of tribute and annual gifts from the vassal kings of Philistia included linen fabrics and *saddinu* garments. See M. Elat, “The Economic Relations of the Neo-Assyrian Empire with Egypt,” *JAOS* 98 (1978), 30–31. The principal types of fibers mentioned in the texts (wool, linen, cotton, silk) are discussed by Oppenheim, *ibid.*, 244–53.

11 E. Akurgal, *The Art of the Hittites* (London, 1962), pl. 93. Examination of the original in the Museum of Anatolian Studies, Ankara, by kind permission of the director, Raci Temizer, confirms the following observations: the selvedge line appears on both ends of the fabric, and a hollow recess in the stone occurs to the left of the floor covering, where one might expect to find fringes.

12 Barrelet, *RAssyr* 71 (1977), 85. Of related interest, the upper surface of the throne base of Shalmaneser III was decorated with an intricate honeycomb and rosette pattern, which may represent a rug. See A. Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, (New York, 1969), pl. 269.

13 C. Aldred, *Akhenaten and Nefertiti* (New York, 1973), figs. 20–21. A good color photograph appears in C. Garbini, *The Ancient World* (New York, 1966), pl. 92.

the carpet is fringed with a lotus-and-bud garland, which here seems to be an attachment. This painting may provide the clue to the origin of the border garland designs that formed part of the rugs in later Assyrian periods. It would seem that, initially, after the rug was woven, elaborate tassels could be added to enrich the appearance of the fabric. By the Late Assyrian period ornamental attachments were no longer utilized and in their stead similar motifs were incorporated into the carpet pattern, as suggested by the Assyrian carved threshold pavements.¹⁴

To judge by the stone threshold slabs, Assyrian carpet designs differed from those used to embellish contemporary garment textiles which generally combined figural and floral elements, and occasionally emblems that can be readily identified with specific deities. This group of textile decoration was favored particularly in the 9th century B.C., while a second group, limited to floral and geometric patterns, was applied less frequently.¹⁵ In the course of the 8th and 7th centuries B.C., however, as a survey of the Assyrian wall reliefs demonstrates, the second group of textile designs took precedence. The grid pattern showing concentric squares was popular during the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 B.C.), and this was gradually superseded in the reign of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.) by the use of an overall pattern of rosettes and concentric circles. Still later, during the period of Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.), a rich array of emblematic, floral and geometric elements was selected to decorate garment textiles.¹⁶ But on the thresholds the motifs are limited to geometric and floral patterns arranged in predetermined compositions. The persistence of a select number of design elements on the threshold slabs makes it likely that such floor displays were the prerogative of the royal family.¹⁷ While the carpet compositions remain decorative in appearance, an analytical study may reveal that symbolic significance underlies one or more of the motifs. For example the six-rayed star pattern may actually be a variant of the Ishtar emblem¹⁷ and the floral quatrefoil, if reduced to its simplest form, can be likened to the Maltese cross with central boss and oblique ray lines, generally associated with the god Shamash.¹⁸

One indication that Assyrian rug designs continued to be copied after the royal workshops ceased to exist is attested by finds in a 6th century B.C. tomb at Kizilbel, Lycia. There the remains of a polychrome rug pattern painted upon a floor slab echoes its Assyrian prototype.¹⁹ That Assyrian decorative elements persisted into later periods is further demonstrated by the earliest extant knotted rug known, dated to the 5–4th centuries B.C., and found in a frozen tomb at Pazyryk. It has in its center field rows of squares inscribed with a version of the Assyrian quatrefoil, but here the motif is misunderstood.²⁰

14 For comments concerning the ancient Near Eastern craftsman who prepared the fringes or tassels (*kāšīru*), and the weaver of cloth accessories (*išpar šiprāti*), see Wilson, *Nimrud Wine Lists*, 67–70.

15 J. V. Canby, "Decorated Garments in Ashurnasirpal's Sculptures," *Iraq* 33 (1971), 31–53. For examples of the second group, see S. M. Paley, *King of the World: Ashur-nasir-pal II of Assyria 883–859 B.C.*, (New York, 1976), pls. 22a, 23c, 25a.

16 Applique ornaments may have been used to decorate the garments. See the comments of K. R. Maxwell-Hyslop, *Western-Asiatic Jewellery, C. 3000–612 B.C.* (London, 1971), 254.

17 *Ibid.*, 140–41.

18 P. Albenda, "Landscape Bas-Reliefs in the Bīt-Ijlāni of Ashurbanipal's Palace," *BASOR* 225 (1977), 34; Maxwell-Hyslop, *Western Asiatic Jewellery*, 148.

19 M. J. Mellink, "Excavations in the Elmali Area, Lycia, 1975," *AJA* 80 (1976), 377–79.

20 S. I. Rudenko, *Frozen Tombs of Siberia* (Berkeley, 1970), 289–304.

Thresholds

Decorated threshold slabs are not known to have existed in Assyria before the second half of the 8th century B.C., and then only sporadically. Previous to this period important entrances in the royal residences, as well as temples, were often covered with plain limestone or alabaster slabs. A common practice in the 9th and 8th centuries was to inscribe the stone pavements and portal thresholds with royal inscriptions as seen, for example, in the palace of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.) and the Ninurta temple at Nimrud,²¹ in various chambers at Fort Shalmaneser,²² and the palace of Sargon II at Khorsabad.²³ It has been noted that where entranceways containing threshold inscriptions are also flanked by door guardians and decorated further with wall reliefs, the resultant effect is to instill divine protection whose meaning is expanded in specific terms.²⁴ Thus, the substitution of carved decorated thresholds for the inscriptions at important entranceways, a situation which began in the 8th century B.C., makes it certain that the floor decorations served a significant role, similar to that performed by the door guardians and wall reliefs.

From the second half of the 8th century onwards, the positioning of stone blocks for important doorways became standardized and consisted of two main sections: the portal threshold, a single stone which covered the entrance area and which projected slightly beyond the side walls, and the inner threshold, consisting of three slabs together belonging functionally to the threshold (fig. 2). As a unit, the inner threshold extends beyond the width of the portal, a distance sufficient to include pivot stones which support the door leaves. The two end slabs therefore have cuts through which the pivots extend. The circular cuts are oftentimes edged with a double or triple raised band. The central block contains a rectangular slot centered near the edge adjacent to the portal threshold, into which the bolt was dropped when the doors were closed and locked. The three-slab inner threshold underwent some modification during Ashurbanipal's reign in the 7th century B.C., when a single block was used occasionally for smaller entrances (pls. 19, 20).

The earliest evidence for the use of carved decorations applied to pavement blocks comes from a drawing of a stone slab that is no longer extant. The slab has been dated to the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (pl. 1), and was drawn by Charles Hodder while serving as draftsman for Hormuzd Rassam, during the latter's excavation activities in Nimrud. This drawing depicts the left slab of an inner threshold that was uncovered in the Central Palace; unfortunately its exact findspot was not recorded. The drawing shows that the entire surface was decorated with floral motifs arranged in horizontal rows and, based upon later examples, the design must have extended to the other two slabs which formed originally part of the inner threshold.

During his excavations in the North-West Palace at Nimrud, immediately beyond entrance b of chamber S, Layard discovered a portion of two chambers. In the doorway which united them was a large pavement "ornamented with flowers and scroll-work."²⁵ The more recent excavations

21 A. H. Layard, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon* (London, 1853), 359–60 (hereafter 1853a).

22 Mallowan, *Nimrud*, I, 42, pl. 9; *ibid.*, II, 393, pl. 319.

23 G. Loud, *Khorsabad. Part I. Excavations in the Palace and at a City Gate*, OIP 38 (1936), 122–25.

24 Paley, *King of the World*, 120–21.

25 A. H. Layard, *Nineveh and Its Remains*, II (New York, 1849), 17 (hereafter 1849b).

undertaken by Mallowan reveal that this part of the palace was the domestic wing during Sargon's renovation of the building,²⁶ and we may suppose that the pavement slab uncovered by Layard belongs to this period.²⁷ A carved threshold slab was discovered in the Burnt Palace at Nimrud in a level which the excavators have assigned to the reign of Sargon II (pl. 7). The grid-pattern on the slab has parallels with those found in one of the residences at Khorsabad. At Khorsabad two separate groups of patterned pavement blocks were discovered in what may have been residences reserved for members of the royal family, a further indication that this novel form of applied decoration was used more frequently during Sargon's reign although, interestingly, no such examples were found in the king's palace at the same site. Residence K at Khorsabad had three portals connecting one side of the great hall to a long chamber. The portal pavements were decorated with the same motifs: the center field was filled with quatrefoils and rosettes, surrounded on all sides by a lotus-and-cone garland band (pl. 3). Of further interest, a slab which was intended to form the center section of an inner threshold was found placed against the wall in one of the portals and it, too, was carved with the same distinctive decoration (pl. 2). Residence L at the same site had three portals that were aligned to form a connecting link between the central court and two chambers, each succeeding the other. The pavement blocks set in the entrances were carved with an overall pattern of small squares, each inscribed with a rosette (pl. 4). Near the center of the stone was a seven line inscription which identified the owner of the residence as Sinahuser, Sargon's full brother and vizier.²⁸

In the following reign of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.) elaborate carved pavements were used extensively for important entrances of the South-West Palace at Nineveh (pls. 13, 14, 15). This concern for providing elegant approaches continued into the period of Ashurbanipal, for not only were the grand portals leading into rooms I and M of the North Palace embellished with carved pavements (pls. 23, 25), but also other doorways leading out of these and other chambers (pls. 17, 18, 20). From the archaeological evidence available, one must conclude that the desire to enhance important entrances grew in importance in the course of the late 8th and early 7th centuries.

Wall paintings uncovered in the royal residences at various sites may provide additional data with reference to carpet designs. Although no extant carved thresholds can be ascribed to the reign of Esarhaddon (679–669 B.C.), his throne-room at Nimrud contained an expansive wall painting which consisted of a procession of attendants and, above them, a carpet-like decoration (fig. 3).²⁹ The latter was created by bands of rosettes and a lotus-and-bud garland framing a row of large circles and incurved squares. The field elements are similar in shape to the large Assyrian terracotta plaques discovered in Nimrud and Assur and were used as wall attachments.³⁰ Earlier wall paintings from Til Barsip and Khorsabad include comparative decorative compositions where,

26 Mallowan, *Nimrud*, I, 112–13.

27 Compare Layard's plans I and III shown in his volumes (1849b) and (1853a), respectively, with the plan shown on p. 95 in Mallowan's volume, *Nimrud*, I. The residence of Adad-Nirari III was more likely situated in the area south of room X of the North-West Palace. Layard undertook excavations in this area after 1850; see (1853a), 98.

28 Loud and Altman, *Khorsabad. The Citadel and the Town*, OIP 40 (1938), 48–49.

29 Mallowan, *Nimrud*, II, 380–81, 433–34.

30 A. Moortgat, *Alt-Vorderasiatische Malerei* (Berlin, 1959), pl. 18; British Museum, *A Guide to the Babylonian and Assyrian Antiquities* (London, 1908), 111.

however, more elaborate versions of the plaque pattern and border bands appear.³¹ The Esarhaddon wall painting together with its antecedents may represent either another category of carpet designs developed for royalty, or else may demonstrate that decorative motifs on wall paintings and floor coverings were sometimes interchangeable.

Pavement Decorations

The decorative scheme for the portal thresholds was generally the same, a large center field framed on all sides by one or more continuous bands. In the 8th century, however, thresholds were not yet restricted to this scheme of decoration. On occasion the motifs are arranged in registers or grids, at which times the border bands are omitted (pls. 1, 6, 7, 10, 11). But in all instances the designs cover the entire surface of the slab. Those entrances possessing carved pavements must have produced a striking contrast to the plain stone and brick slabs that were utilized for the remaining major portion of the floor areas. While the range of patterns available was limited and may have seemed repetitious, monotony was avoided by varying the combinations of outer bands, as well as modifying various details within the motifs themselves. No decorated inner threshold slab has been found *in situ* contiguous with the portal block, yet it is probable that both sections displayed similar designs when they were set down in the same entrance area, as inferred from the decorated blocks discovered in residence K at Khorsabad.

Rosettes. Rosettes were used as fillers in the center field, or as border stripes. Rosettes show slight modifications throughout their use on the threshold slabs. The rosettes drawn on the slab illustrated in pl. 1, and assigned to the period of Tiglath-pileser III, have a small "button" center surrounded by large petals numbering twelve or thirteen. In the period of Sargon II, one group of rosettes (pl. 3) is similar in appearance to the preceding example. An increase in the number of petals to sixteen or seventeen occurs on the thresholds shown in pls. 4 and 5, accompanied by a slightly large button center. It is interesting to observe that the rosettes drawn in pl. 6 have sixteen petals while on the slab itself, pl. 7, the petals do not exceed twelve in number. In the period of Sennacherib, both the schematic and realistic renderings of the rosettes reveal that the flower is the same throughout (pls. 8-15), a large round center in slight relief surrounded by sixteen small petals (cf. pl. 12). The rosette undergoes some variations during Ashurbanipal's reign. An important difference is the center which is now framed by a narrow ring (pls. 16-21). This change seems to have occurred in the period of Ashurbanipal, for no such detail appears on the rosettes which formed part of the wall painting in the throne-room of Esarhaddon at Nimrud (fig. 3).

Garland borders. Three types of garland borders are found on the Assyrian thresholds and these consist of the lotus-and-bud, lotus-and-cone, and palmette. When planning for the rhythmical aspect of the garland around two or more sides, the corners must have been of prime importance since in every instance each corner contains a large open lotus or a palmette, depending upon the garland type. Additionally, the corner garland stems are compressed to form double straight lines.

The earliest garland type known for the thresholds is the lotus-and-bud. It appears on the inner threshold found in the Central Palace at Nimrud, where the motif is repeated twice among horizontal rows of rosettes separated by plain stripes (pl. 1). The flowers are connected by scalloped-shaped stems supported by a base ring. A plain triple arch defines the calyx of the closed and open

31 A. Parrot, *The Arts of Assyria* (New York, 1961), 266-67.

lotuses. The open flower displays nine petals, while the petals of the closed bud are indicated by a double line drawn down its center. The lotus-and-bud garland appears again in the reign of Sennacherib (pl. 15). At this time notable modifications occur in details of the garland. The terminals of the stems now emerge above the ring base and curve down over it on each side. A new detail is observable on the calyx of the flower. Between the base ring and scalloped line, now doubled with circular loops, is a triangular projection. Another detail that has been changed is the delineation of the closed bud in the center; the two vertical lines are drawn so that they meet in a point at the top. This last detail undergoes an important modification on similar garlands applied to the thresholds in Ashurbanipal's reign. The two petals covering the bud are delineated by paired lines that curve laterally on either side near the top. The base rings supporting the flowers are no longer plain but now have a ringed upper and lower border (pls. 16-20).

The lotus-and-cone garland occurs on the portal thresholds found in residence K at Khorsabad (pl. 3). Here the plants are supported by a triple base ring, over which the terminals of the scalloped-shaped stems project. The cone appears small and has a narrow body. Its scales are rendered by linear cross-hatchings. This garland type recurs in the next period, at which time the cone seems to be broader, particularly at the base (pls. 8-9). The base ring may be either plain or banded. The stem terminals emerge over the base ring and curve either down or out. The lotus-and-cone garland was used frequently on the threshold slabs dated to the reign of Sennacherib (pls. 11-13), but it is never found on the thresholds used in the time of Ashurbanipal.

The palmette garland appears for the first time on the portal thresholds from Ashurbanipal's reign, where it is applied third in a series of decorated bands, following the lotus-and-bud and rosettes (pls. 22-23). In the one example known of its use on an inner threshold, it occupies the side of the slab that was originally adjacent to the entrance (pls. 17-18). The palmette consists of nine petals of graduating size that radiate from an arched center. Rising over the base ring which supports the flower, the stem terminals divide into four: an outer pair that terminate in upward-curved volutes, below which is an inner pair with downward-curved volutes.

Center field designs. The center field of the thresholds was always covered with motifs that were restricted to floral and geometric elements. In every instance these conform to a harmonious and symmetrical arrangement. It is therefore apparent that the overall decoration was planned according to a basic formula which provided for the orderly division of the parts to the total design.

The motif most often used for the center field is the square quatrefoil. It first appears in the period of Sargon II, on the portal and inner thresholds from residence K at Khorsabad (pls. 2-3). The surety with which the quatrefoil is rendered on these slabs, as well as its importance within the decorative scheme, makes it likely that this motif was inspired from earlier types (see below). On the Khorsabad thresholds the quatrefoil is framed by a plain narrow stripe which is in turn surrounded on all sides by rosette guards. Four rosettes span each side of the quatrefoil, the vertical rows bisected by the continuous horizontal ones. In this period the quatrefoil is composed of a central sixteen-petal rosette from which cones and open lotuses radiate, the former reaching nearly to the corners and the latter touching the sides of the plain stripes. The rendering of the plants is a repetition of the border garland and rosettes. An important exception is the rosette in the quatrefoil, which has a ringed button center.

A variant of the quatrefoil is seen on a fragment of an inner threshold discovered in room 24 in residence K at Khorsabad (pl. 5). Although its surface is much damaged, it reveals that the quatrefoil is framed by a wide band decorated with a lozenge-shaped pattern on all sides. This

last detail continues to be found in the period of Sennacherib with, however, some modification. The lozenge-shaped pattern is now transformed into a continuous chevron line with a narrow band (pl. 9). During the latter period, too, occasional changes are observable in the rendering of the quatrefoil. For example the lotus-and-cone quatrefoil shown in pl. 9 differs somewhat from the same motif shown in pl. 14. In the former work the central rosette has a large button center, while the latter shows a ringed button center. In both instances the rosette is inscribed in a circle. Another distinction during the period of Sennacherib is the treatment of the cone and flower; these are now fuller and fill more of the background area. The plants rest upon a single plain base ring showing at its sides the curved stem terminals.

In the period of Ashurbanipal further modifications are observable in the depiction of the quatrefoil. The emblem is now enclosed by a plain wide band (pl. 18). Each petal of the central ray-flower has a groove down its length, a characteristic that distinguishes it from the rosettes that surround the quatrefoil. One gathers from this that a specific flower may be indicated.³² The base rings supporting the lotus and cone have an upper and lower lined border.

An elegant variant of the quatrefoil appears in two drawings datable to the reign of Sennacherib (pls. 8, 15). This version has a quatrefoil composed of the lotus-and-bud enclosed by plain stripes. Here the outer petals of the open lotuses arch gracefully above the closed buds. A rich array of patterns emerges from the flow of lines that make up the various parts of the flowers.

Another motif applied to the center field was the grid pattern. Its use was confined to the period of Sargon II. It was repeated several times in the portal thresholds discovered in residence L at Khorsabad (pl. 4). The underlying design is simple and effective: rows of small squares, each inscribed with a rosette. The overall arrangement continues to the edges of the slab. Similarly, the absence of a border band is characteristic of the grid pattern used to decorate the entrance threshold of the king's throne-room in the Burnt Palace at Nimrud (pl. 7). The grid is here modified to show rows that combine rectangles and squares. The main element is a large square bordered by rectangles on four sides and small squares in the corners, all of which are filled with one or two rosettes. The large square has in its center a rosette surrounded by a lozenge-shaped line.

The earliest use of the six-rayed star pattern is shown in a drawing of a large threshold dated to Sennacherib's reign, where it covers the main portions of the central area that has been divided by a narrow plain field (pl. 13). The six-rayed star pattern is a geometric motif derived entirely from circles intersecting at regular intervals along horizontal rows set equidistant from one another. The pattern was probably created by first indicating the equidistant lines, and then drawing the circles so that each one touched the center of the preceding circle, above and below as well as side to side. This pattern recurs several times during Ashurbanipal's reign, on inner and portal threshold slabs (pls. 19, 21).

Commentaries on the Decorations

Apart from their occurrence on the stone thresholds, several of the decorative motifs appear in other contexts and on different kinds of materials, such as ivory and metalwork. These include the rosette, the garland, and the square quatrefoil. A brief discussion on each is given separately.

32 P. Albenda, "Grapevines in Ashurbanipal's Garden," *BASOR* 215 (1974), 5.

One emblem used frequently in Assyrian art is the rosette. It is displayed prominently in the upper corners of the altar of King Tukulti-Ninurta I (ca. 1260 B.C.).³³ From the 9th century onwards, the rosette became an essential ornament for the royal headdress and was in all probability a gold attachment.³⁴ It decorated the fillets and bracelets worn by the king or his nobles. Royal standards surmounted by the rosette emblem were used by several Assyrian rulers.³⁵ Throughout the late Assyrian period the rosette varied in design. A rosette with pointed petals was favored by Ashurnasirpal II.³⁶ In the reign of Sargon II the rosette displays a double band of ray flowers surrounding its button center. This particular variant shows affinities with the winged disc emblem generally associated with the god Ashur or Shamash.³⁷ When it appears on the garments of Ashurbanipal, the rosette is drawn in a more realistic manner to represent a flower.³⁸ Aside from its decorative qualities the rosette, sometimes thought to be interchangeable with the six- or eight-pointed star, may symbolize the goddess Ishtar.³⁹ Since the rosette is the one decorative emblem most associated with the Assyrian king, it must have served as the royal insignia.

In Assyria the garland motif first appears as part of a wall painting decoration in Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta, dated to the 13th century B.C.⁴⁰ and later, in the 9th century B.C., as a textile pattern reproduced in stone. As evidenced by the wall reliefs it was of minor importance in the decorative arts. Two main types are known at this time, a cone garland and a floral garland combined from the so-called lily, palmette, and cone. The first type consisted of a series of cones, each decorated with cross-hatching and surmounting a ring base, connected by scalloped stems.⁴¹ This type may have been the antecedent for the Urartian version found on decorated bronzes.⁴² During the 8th century B.C., the cone garland was replaced by the lotus-and-cone. The floral garland is comprised of individual plants that conform to Assyrian decorative motifs, and may therefore be an Assyrian creation.⁴³ The palmette has its origins in the naturalistic representations of the date palm tree, seen on Middle Assyrian seal impressions.⁴⁴ By the 9th century B.C. it became stylized and evolved into the sacred tree type utilized frequently on the wall reliefs from Nimrud. On occasion the sacred tree has scalloped-shaped branches with palmette terminals.⁴⁵

33 Mortgat, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, pl. 247; E. Strommenger, *5000 Years of the Art of Mesopotamia* (New York, 1964), pl. 188.

34 Maxwell-Hyslop, *Western Asiatic Jewellery*, 251.

35 B. Hrouda, *Die Kulturgeschichte des assyrischen Flachbildes* (Bonn, 1965), pl. 52, 4.

36 Strommenger, *Art of Mesopotamia*, pls. 194–95.

37 Compare the rosette with winged disc shown in the following examples: (rosette) Strommenger, *Art of Mesopotamia*, pls. 223–24; (winged disc) *ibid.*, pl. 188 below; Maxwell-Hyslop, *Western Asiatic Jewellery*, pl. 116.

38 Strommenger, *ibid.*, pl. 251.

39 Maxwell-Hyslop, *Western Asiatic Jewellery*, 141–42.

40 Moortgat, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 118, fig. 89.

41 A. H. Layard, *The Monuments of Nineveh. From Drawings Made on the Spot* (London, 1849), 11, pl. 47 (hereafter 1849a).

42 G. Azarpay, *Urartian Art and Artifacts. A Chronological Study* (Berkeley, 1968), 13–14.

43 Layard, (1849a), pl. 47.

44 Strommenger, *Art of Mesopotamia*, pl. 187. For a discussion of the sacred tree motif, see Paley, *King of the World*, 22–23.

45 Strommenger, *ibid.*, pl. 191.

Decorated ivory fragments at Nimrud include the use of a variety of bands, such as the palmette, palmette-and-lily, pomegranate-and-bud, guilloche, lotus-and-bud.⁴⁶ The last type can be traced to much earlier periods and has its origins in Egyptian art.⁴⁷

The complexity of the square quatrefoil emblem which appears for the first time in the late 8th century B.C. presupposes an earlier development. Yet, except for its occurrence on the threshold blocks, the motif is unknown in the Near East during this period. In the absence of direct parallels one might conjecture that the quatrefoil was an Assyrian invention, particularly since its components, the lotus, cone, and rosette, are well attested from the previous century. The idea for this elaborate design, however, may stem from Egyptian prototypes in the decorative arts, for a similar motif was known from much earlier historical periods. Several Old and Middle Kingdom headbands worn by women of royalty have roundels consisting of a central boss with four so-called lily flowers radiating to the four points and a lily bud set between.⁴⁸ It is quite possible that one or more Egyptian objects of value having similar decorations were transported through trade or tribute into Assyria, and subsequently provided the source for the Assyrian version found on the floor coverings.

Catalogue

All the known decorated threshold slabs are assembled in this section and arranged in chronological order, according to the reigns of the Assyrian kings. The listing does not distinguish between extant slabs and those which exist only in photographs, or in sketches labeled as "original drawings" and preserved in the British Museum in bound folios numbered I through VII. In order to establish the reigns into which several of the slabs depicted in the drawings are to be assigned, details of the decorated surface have been considered for stylistic criteria. In some instances it is equally important to determine who was the draftsman responsible for specific drawings, since the artists working at Nimrud and Nineveh drew from reliefs that were uncovered in different locations at various times.

Besides Austen Henry Layard who made the drawings of the reliefs from Ashurnasirpal's North-West Palace at Nimrud, and some more from the Central Palace of Tiglath-pileser III, many of which bear his signature, four artists are known to have been employed to work at Nimrud and Nineveh at separate times between 1848 and 1855. The earliest was Frederick Charles Cooper who, together with Hormuzd Rassam, was hired to assist Layard in 1848.⁴⁹ Among the works produced by Cooper are the drawings of the wall reliefs belonging to the reign of Sennacherib, taken from that king's palace at Nineveh. In September 1850, Cooper became ill and could no longer work. By February 1851, T. S. Bell arrived in Iraq to succeed Cooper.⁵⁰ In the interim, Layard did some

46 Mallowan and Glynn, *Ivories in Assyrian Style. Commentary, Catalogue, and Plates* (London, 1970), nos. 2, 10, 14, 22, 75, 180.

47 E. Porada, "Notes on the Sarcophagus of Ahiaram," *JANES* 5 (1973), 361, n. 37.

48 C. Aldred, *Jewels of the Pharaohs. Egyptian Jewellery of the Dynastic Period* (London, 1971), 131-32; W. S. Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Egypt* (Middlesex, 1965), 51.

49 Layard, (1853a), 2.

50 *Ibid.*, 365, 411, 582.

thirty drawings of reliefs found in the Central Palace of Tiglath-pileser III at Nimrud, which he conveniently signed.⁵¹ Bell's activity in Iraq was short-lived due to a fatal accident in July 1851.⁵² Charles Doswell Hodder was then assigned as draftsman and assisted Hormuzd Rassam in the latter's excavations at Nimrud and Nineveh.⁵³ Hodder, in turn, became severely ill and incapacitated by December 1853, just about the time when Rassam discovered the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh. William Boutcher, who had been with William K. Loftus during the latter's operations in southern Babylonia, was sent to replace Hodder and to draw the slabs already excavated. Boutcher did the drawings of the reliefs excavated by Rassam and, later, by Loftus in the North Palace at Nineveh.⁵⁴

Several of the original drawings are initialed "W. B.," making it certain that these are the works of William Boutcher (pls. 20, 24, 26). The other examples that can be assigned definitely to Boutcher on stylistic criteria are the original drawings shown in plates 6 and 25. His pen and ink drawings of the threshold slabs are schematic renderings bearing a crisp precision of line. The signature of another draftsman, T. S. Bell, is clearly visible in the lower right hand corner of one drawing, seen in plate 8. The work of this individual, showing only the threshold patterns, is rendered with bold contrasting white and black lines, yet imbued with a hint of sensitivity.

Concerning the realistic sketches of the threshold fragments illustrated in plates 9, 10, 11, the person who drew these took special care to record the surface defects, as well as the relief decorations. Together with the linear style suitable for such renderings, the ink-and-wash technique was applied. This method of working is in keeping with that employed by Hodder for other drawings known to have been made by him, as for example the sketches of three slabs from among a group discovered by Rassam, which came from the Central Palace of Tiglath-pileser III at Nimrud.⁵⁵ Still another threshold that originated from the same area and drawn by Hodder appears in plate 1. This leaves the original drawings shown in plates 13, 14, 15, which must be assigned to Cooper. The meticulous mechanical renderings showing the threshold motifs make use of white lead for highlights. It is most probably Cooper's drawings, together with that done by Bell, which is reproduced in Layard's volume, *A Second Series of the Monuments of Nineveh*, plate 56.

Some mention should be made about the measurements. When available, measurements are given according to the original data, followed by its equivalent in either the decimal or metric system. Several original drawings include a scale. In these instances the measurements of the drawing are given, followed by the estimated size of the slab.

51 Barnett and Falkner, *The Sculptures of AŠŠUR-NASIR-APLI (883-859 B.C.) TIGLATH-PILESER III (745-727 B.C.) ESARIADDON (681-669 B.C.) from the Central and South-West Palaces at Nimrud* (London, 1962), xv.

52 Layard (1853a), 214.

53 Ibid., 564.

54 C. J. Gadd, *The Stones of Assyria. The Surviving Remains of Assyrian Sculpture. Their Recovery and their Original Positions* (London, 1936), Appendix 1-2; J. Reade, "More Drawings of Assurbanipal Sculptures," *Iraq* 26 (1964), 1-2.

55 Barnett and Falkner, *Tiglath-pileser III*, 13. On page xv of this volume, the authors incorrectly give credit to Boutcher for the drawings.

*Period of Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 B.C.)**Plate 1*

British Museum. Original Drawing VI, 37

Dimensions: scale of slab, as shown, is given as $2\frac{1}{2}''=1'$. Left side: $6''=2'5''$ (74 cm.), top side: $6\frac{1}{2}''=2'6''$ (76 cm.), right side: $5''=2'$ (61 cm.), space for door post: $2\frac{1}{2}''=1'$ (30 cm.).

It is described as coming from the "Centre Palace-Nimrud." Below the sketch is the additional word, "door." This may indicate the original find-spot of the slab. An addenda in the folio labels the drawing as "ornamental doorway (supposed to be from Central Palace, Nimrud)."

This sketch may depict the left section of an inner threshold which originally consisted of three blocks. The entire surface is decorated with horizontal registers comprised of double rows of rosettes and single rows of lotus-and-bud garlands. Narrow stripes separate each band. Each of the raised double molding framing the circular cut through which the pivot extends has a row of smaller rosettes.

The drawing was done by Charles Hodder in 1853, during which time he was working for Hormuzd Rassam. The drawing represents one of a number of slabs discovered by Rassam during his excavation in the Central Palace of Tiglath-pileser III. Other slabs from this area also drawn by Hodder were decorated with narrative scenes. The word "door" misled Rawlinson, who identified the drawing as an "arched doorway." Similar threshold blocks shaped like horseshoes, whose surfaces are plain, are known from Khorsabad and Nimrud.

References: Barnett and Falkner, *Tiglath-pileser III*, 4, 18; Gadd, *Stones of Assyria*, 198; Loud and Altman, *OIP* 40 (1938), pl. 20; Mallowan, *Nimrud*, I, 43, pl. 9; H. Rawlinson, *The Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World*, I (New York, 1870), 335.

*Period of Sargon II (721-705 B.C.)**Plate 2*

The Oriental Institute no. A17598 (excavation field no. D.S. 1317)

Dimensions: $4'6'' \times 5'10''$ (1.37 m. x 1.78 m.)

Central section of an inner threshold. The upper edge is bordered with a lotus-and-cone garland, facing outward. Three continuous horizontal bands of rosettes separate two horizontal rows of quatrefoil panels, between each of which is a vertical band of four rosettes. The lower edge of the slab has a raised triple border. A rectangular slot appears near its center.

This slab was found placed resting, as if temporarily, against the opposite wall of the central portal from forecourt to room 12, residence K at Khorsabad. It is undoubtedly the central one of three slabs that formed the inner threshold set level with the floor of the entrance. The two end pieces were missing.

Reference: Loud and Altman, *OIP* 40 (1938), 48–49, 66, 95, pls. 30A, 48, 8.

Plate 3

The Oriental Institute photograph no. N18635 (excavation field no. D. S. 1316)

Dimensions: none given

An alabaster pavement slab found *in situ* in the southeast portal from forecourt to room 12, residence K at Khorsabad. The stone floor covering was found in almost perfect state of preservation. The outer border is a continuous lotus-and-cone garland, followed by a second continuous band of rosettes. In the center field are nine square quatrefoil panels, three each way, framed by horizontal and vertical bands of rosettes.

The sculptured decoration on this threshold recurs on the stone pavement in the northwest portal of the forecourt, which was virtually obliterated by weather. The large threshold of the central portal had been mutilated and partially done away with in antiquity. Unlike the other two, its center was five panels deep and four panels wide.

Reference: Loud and Altman, *OIP* 40 (1938), 48–49, 66, 95–96, pl. 30B.

Plate 4

The Oriental Institute photograph no. N15943 (excavation field no. D. S. 1314)

Dimensions: none given

Pavement threshold from portal between room 116 and the Central Court of residence L at Khorsabad. The surface has a grid design of squares, each inscribed with a rosette, nineteen across and nineteen down. Near the center of the slab is a seven line inscription running from side to side which identifies Sinahusur as Sargon's full brother and grand vizier.

This slab was placed in one of the three decorated entrances which one had to pass in proceeding from forecourt to central court. Except in dimensions all are similar to one another. A second portal slab was sent to the Iraq Museum, while the third slab, much damaged, was left *in situ*. The slab is presently in storage in The Oriental Institute, in about a dozen pieces. Mr. Joseph A. Greene, Curatorial Assistant, was able to measure one side of the carved square enclosing the rosette and, working with the photograph, was able to calculate the approximate dimensions of the slab as 3.10 m. x 2.40 m. (10'2" x 7'10½").

References: Greene, written communication, August 19, 1977; Loud and Altman, *OIP* 40 (1938), 48-49, 70, 95, pls. 36B, 66.

Plate 5

The Oriental Institute photograph no. N18636

Dimensions: none given

Fragment of a slab found near the ground surface over room 24 in residence K at Khorsabad. It is probably the left side section of an inner threshold. Its surface shows much weathering. It has an outer raised border. Within is a band of rosettes. In the center is a quatrefoil panel. The wide frame surrounding the quatrefoil has a lozenge decoration, nearly identical to that which appears on an original drawing shown elsewhere (see plate 7).

Reference: Loud and Altman, *OIP* 40 (1938), 49, pl. 30C.

Plate 6

British Museum. Original Drawing I, 18

Dimensions: scale of drawing is given as 1½"=1'. Measurements are as follows: length 2 3/4"=1'9" (53.4 cm.), width 9½"=6'4" (1.9 m.)

The drawing is described as coming from "Nimrud S.E. Palace." It shows in schematic manner the decoration of a threshold whose main motifs are indicated in detail along a portion of the left side. The overall design is based upon a regular arrangement of alternating squares and rectangles, five rows down and seventeen across. The central element is a square surrounded by single and paired rosettes. In the center of each square appears a rosette framed by a square band which is, in turn, surrounded by a chevron pattern. The drawing reveals that the original slab was broken along one side.

The original slab, from which the drawing was made, was found during the excavations undertaken by Loftus in the southeast area of the mound at Nimrud in 1854-55. The drawing was made by Boucher. This slab is most probably one of those re-excavated by Mallowan in the Burnt Palace (see plate 7).

Unpublished.

Plate 7

Nimrud Excavation: British School of Archaeology in Iraq

Dimensions: none given

Stone threshold found at the north end of the passageway 39, Burnt Palace, Nimrud. The surface is carved with a grid pattern made up of squares and rectangles. Each large square panel contains a rosette and lozenge pattern. Single and paired rosettes occur in the smaller panels. Indications are that the threshold was much larger originally. The stone block design is identical to that drawn by Boucher (plate 6).

The original placement of this slab must have been the entrance to the throne-room of the Burnt Palace. The portal entrance had decorated thresholds made in two sections, and another was in a niche of the south wall. The date for these thresholds is ascribed to Sargon II by the excavators.

Reference: Mallowan, *Nimrud*, I, 204-05, pls. 135, 141.

Period of Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.)

Plate 8

British Museum. Original Drawing IV, 10.

Dimensions: none given

It is labeled "ornaments Kouyunjik. between winged bulls Chamber C." In another hand is the additional information, "Vol. II. Part of Plate 56. Sculptured Pavement." In the lower right hand corner appears the signature, "T. S. Bell."

Two detail sections from a sculptured pavement are illustrated. It is probably from a portal threshold. The upper drawing shows a quatrefoil emblem, developed from a ringed rosette in the center, out of which emerge four lotuses and four buds. A row of rosettes set between plain guards appears above and below. The lower drawing consists of horizontal rows of decoration separated by plain guards, as follows: rosettes, lotus-and-cone garland, rosettes, rosettes.

The identification of Chamber C on the drawing may refer to room V (C) of Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh. Entrance e (originally labelled a) was formed by a pair of bulls and scarcely exceeded six feet. The pavement was formed by one slab, carved with flowers and other ornaments. The two sketches which comprise the drawing were reproduced in Layard's volume, with the important difference that the lower example was modified to show a lotus-and-bud garland. It is therefore possible that another drawing, now missing, was used for Layard's work (compare the latter garland type with plate 15).

References: Layard (1849a), II, 101-02, plan facing 101; Layard (1853a), plan facing 67; Layard, *A Second Series of the Monuments of Nineveh*, (London, 1853), pl. 56 (hereafter 1853b).

Plate 9

British Museum. Original Drawing V, 51

Dimensions: none given

The drawing is labeled "Fragments of an ornamental slab. Kouyunjik." An addenda in the folio states "(miscellaneous from Kouyunjik. North Palace)."

Realistic sketch of a fragmentary slab, probably part of the right side of an inner threshold. The decoration consists of a large lotus-and-cone facing outward, followed by a row of rosettes. One side shows what remains of a quatrefoil panel. In a corner is what is left of a raised triple molding, from which extends a triangular area decorated with a lotus and rosettes. Based upon stylistic criteria this drawing is the work of Hodder, who also did the examples shown in plates 10 and 11. Therefore, the identification with the North Palace, cited in the addenda, is incorrect; moreover, Hodder was ill at the time when the North Palace was discovered by Rassam.

Unpublished.

Plate 10

British Museum. Original Drawing V, 52

Dimensions: none given

It is labeled "Fragments of ornamental slabs found at Kouyunjik." An addenda in the folio states "(miscellaneous from Kouyunjik. North Palace)."

The sketch of one corner of an inner threshold, perhaps the right section. The outer border consists of a continuous lotus-and-bud garland. One side has a row of rosettes. One corner of the broken edge has the remains of a lotus which probably extended from the raised molding, now missing (see plate 9). It seems likely that the drawing was done by Hodder, making the identification with the North Palace incorrect.

Unpublished.

Plate 11

British Museum. Original Drawing V, 57

Dimensions: scale of drawing is given as 6"=1'. Measurements are as follows: length 15"=2'6" (76 cm.), width 12½"=2'1" (63.5 cm.).

The drawing is labeled "ornamental pavement. locality uncertain." An addenda in the folio states "locality unknown. probably Kouyunjik."

Realistic sketch showing the central section of an inner threshold. The entire surface consists of bands of decoration separated by plain guards: lotus-and-cone garland facing outward, followed by three rows of rosettes. At the bottom is a triple border, in the center of which is a rectangular slot. Most likely drawn by Hodder.

Unpublished.

Plate 12

British Museum no. 124942

Dimensions: length 94.5 cm. (3'1¼"), width 50 cm. (1'7 3/4")

The slab is the right side of an inner threshold. The outer edge has a lotus-and-cone garland, facing outward, that continues to the side. Three parallel rows of rosettes separated by plain bands cover the remainder of the surface. The remains of a triple raised molding which once surrounded the pivot hole appears in the lower left corner. The dark color of the stone is probably due to intense burning in antiquity. Portions of the surface show signs of wear.

Gadd suggests that this slab may come from the North Palace. The decoration, however, is very close to the original drawing illustrated in plate 11, to which it may have connected originally. It is more likely that, based upon stylistic criteria, the slab comes from the South-West Palace of Sennacherib. The block is presently in storage.

Unpublished.

Reference: Gadd, *Stones of Assyria*, 198.

Plate 13

British Museum. Original Drawing V, 56

Dimensions: none given

Line sketch of an ornamental pavement, shown incomplete on one side. It is from a portal, but there is no inscription to identify its possible location. The outer edge is decorated with a continuous lotus-and-cone garland, followed by a continuous rosette band. The field is divided into three sections: the central one is narrow and undecorated. The field design in the two outer sections is made from rows of circles that overlap at regular intervals to form six-rayed stars.

On stylistic grounds, the sketch compares favorably with another drawing made by Cooper, which depicts Tiglath-pileser III in his chariot.

Unpublished.

Reference: Barnett and Falkner, *Tiglath-pileser III*, 30, pl. 29.

Plate 14

British Museum. Original Drawing I, 52

Dimensions: none given

It is labeled "Pavement slab between lion's chamber, Koyunjik." In another hand is the item, "as in Vol. II, pl. 56."

This is a schematic rendering showing the corner of a pavement. It is decorated with an outer border of a lotus-and-cone garland facing outward. In the field are four complete square quatrefoils, two down and two across, and two further panels are indicated. In the band surrounding each quatrefoil is a chevron pattern. The remainder of the field is filled with rows of rosettes.

The drawing is made with black and white lead, and is the work of Cooper, whose handwriting re-appears on another of his drawings published elsewhere. Concerning an almost identical version of this drawing published in his volume, Layard makes the following comment, "In alabaster between the winged bulls at entrance C of chamber XXIV. Many of the entrances at Kuyunjik have similar pavements." Layard also noted that in this wide entrance "was an enormous alabaster pavement slab, sculptured in relief with a very elegant design."

References: Barnett and Falkner, *Tiglath-pileser III*, 30; Layard (1849b), 7, pl. 56; Layard (1853a), 442.

Plate 15

British Museum. Original Drawing I, 53

Dimensions: none given

The drawing is labeled "Pavement. Kuyunjik." It is a schematic drawing that depicts one side from the central section of a portal pavement. The decoration consists of a series of horizontal bands showing rosettes and a lotus-and-bud garland, and a field covered with a row of three quatrefoil panels. This quatrefoil emblem differs from the previous example in that it is made from the lotus and bud, which may be compared with that illustrated in plate 8. The square band framing the emblem is plain.

Like the previous example this drawing is to be assigned to Cooper, who made it during Layard's excavations in 1849–50. The sketch probably represents a portion of a pavement from the South-West Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh.

Unpublished.

Period of Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.)

Plate 16

Metropolitan Museum of Art no. X153

Dimensions: length 73.5 cm. (2'5"), width 84 cm. (2'9")

The findspot of this slab is unknown. It belongs to the central section of an inner threshold. -Along the upper and lower edges the decoration consists of a lotus-and-bud garland, facing outward in opposite directions. The center field has two square quatrefoil panels enclosed in plain bands. Surrounding them are single rows of rosettes.

The slab reached the museum before 1883. Its source is unknown. The slab is presently dated to the 8th–7th centuries B.C. It is probable that the slab came originally from Ashurbanipal's North Palace.

Unpublished.

Reference: Metropolitan Museum of Art, *The Stone Sculptures of the Cesnola Collection of Cypriote Antiquities, in Halls 14, 18, and 19*, (Handbook No. 3, 1904), 113.

Plate 17

British Museum no. 124943

Dimensions: length 86.5 cm. (2'10"), width 73.5 cm. (2'5")

Extant right side of an inner threshold. The front outer edge is decorated with a lotus-and-bud garland facing outward. The lower edge has a palmette garland facing inward. In the center are two quatrefoil panels surrounded by single rows of rosettes. In the lower corner are three raised moldings that frame the pivot hole.

The slab may be from room I of the North Palace of Ashurbanipal. At the present time the threshold block is exhibited in the British Museum connected to slab no. 124944 (plate 18) by a plaster cast.

References: R. D. Barnett, *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668–627 B.C.)*, (London, 1976), 42–43, pl. 27; Gadd, *Stones of Assyria*, 189.

Plate 18

British Museum no. 124944

Dimensions: length 84 cm. (2'9"), width 71.2 cm. (2'4")

The left side of an inner threshold. The surface decoration is identical to that illustrated in plate 17 (BM 124943), to which it may have connected originally. Both slabs are joined by a plaster cast in the center.

References: Barnett, *North Palace of Ashurbanipal*, 42–43, pl. 27; Gadd, *Stones of Assyria*, 189.

Plate 19

Louvre 74 (AO 19915)

Dimensions: length 2.08 m. (6'10"), width 1.25 m. (4'1 3/8")

An entrance threshold restored to its present appearance from several broken pieces. On three sides the outer edge is decorated with a continuous lotus-and-bud garland. This is followed by a row of rosettes that cir-

cumvent the slab. The center field is covered with rows of overlapping circles to produce six-rayed stars. Two corners have a narrow angle shaped for the door posts. In the center of one side, within the rosette border, is a rectangular slot for the bolt.

References: Barnett, *North Palace of Ashurbanipal*, 42–43, pl. 27; Gadd, *Stones of Assyria*, 207; A. Paterson, *Assyrian Sculptures in the Palace of Sinacherib* (The Hague, 1915), pl. 50, 1; V. Place, *Ninive et l'Assyrie*, III, (Paris, 1870), pl. 49, 1.

Plate 20

British Museum. Original Drawing V, 59

Dimensions: scale is given as $1\frac{1}{2}=1'$. Measurements are given as follows: length $10\frac{1}{5}=6'8''$ (2.03 m.), width $6''=4'$ (1.22 m.).

The drawing is labeled "Pavement. North Palace." The initials "W. B." in the lower left corner make it certain that the sketch was done by Boutcher. Close similarities with the Louvre slab in plate 19 indicates that the stone relief was the subject of Boutcher's drawing. Due to the schematic rendering utilized by Boutcher, differences are apparent in several sections showing the decoration.

References: Barnett, *North Palace of Ashurbanipal*, 42–43, pl. 27; Gadd, *Stones of Assyria*, 208.

Plate 21

British Museum no. 118913

Dimensions: length 1.25 m. ($4'1\frac{3}{8}''$), width 1.26 m. ($4'1\frac{3}{4}''$)

A large corner section of a pavement slab. On two sides is an outer border of a lotus-and-bud garland, followed by an inner border of rosettes. The field is covered with six-rayed stars formed by overlapping circles. The lower end of the field is indicated by a plain band, suggesting that the slab was not much longer originally (compare this slab with the Louvre example, plate 19). The dark color of the stone may be due to burning in antiquity. One side shows signs of wear.

The slab was found by Rassam in entrance b or d of Room I, North Palace of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh. It was brought to England in 1856. The stone block is presently in storage.

References: Barnett, *North Palace of Ashurbanipal*, 42–43, pl. 27; Gadd, *Stones of Assyria*, 189, 190; Paterson, *Palace of Sinacherib*, pl. 102, 2.

Plate 22

British Museum no. 118910

Dimensions: length 1.10 m. ($3'7\frac{1}{3}''$), width 1.58 m. ($5'2\frac{1}{4}''$)

Corner of an ornamental pavement slab. It has an elaborate arrangement of continuous borders: lotus-and-bud garland, rosettes, palmette garland, rosettes. The center field is decorated with six-rayed stars developed from overlapping circles.

The slab was discovered by Rassam and comes from entrance b or d of room I, North Palace. It came to England in 1856. As it is now displayed in the British Museum, the slab rests upon a low base and is completed on the left side by a plaster cast.

References: Barnett, *North Palace of Ashurbanipal*, 42–43, pl. 27; Gadd, *Stones of Assyria*, 189; H. R. Hall, *Babylonian and Assyrian Sculptures in the British Museum* (London, 1928), pl. 61; H. Schmökel, *Ur, Assur und Babylon. Drei Jahrtausende im Zweistromland* (Stuttgart, 1955), pl. 156.

Plate 23

British Museum no. 124962

Dimensions: length 2.43 m. ($7'11\frac{1}{2}''$), width 3.73 m. ($12'2\frac{3}{8}''$)

A large pavement slab, restored from several smaller sections. One side of the pavement is missing. The upper end, as exhibited, has a double border that extends from one side to the other, consisting of the lotus-and-bud garland and rosettes. Along the two sides appear the following borders: rosettes, lotus-and-bud garland, rosettes. A continuous palmette garland frames the outer borders. The main field consists of rows of quatrefoil panels

separated by single rows of rosettes.

This pavement was found by Rassam in entrance c of room I in the North Palace. In her volume, Strommenger presents one corner of this large threshold before its present restoration. (It may be speculated whether portions of the extensive stone block, now placed on a wall, are completed with plaster casts, as was done with several other slabs now on view in the British Museum.) Strommenger assigns this slab to the period of Sennacherib, which is in error.

References: Barnett, *North Palace of Ashurbanipal*, 42–43, pl. 27; Gadd, *Stones of Assyria*, 189, 198; Strommenger, *Art of Mesopotamia*, 451, pl. 230.

Plate 24

British Museum. Original Drawing V, 60

Dimensions: the scale is given as 1½" to a foot. Measurements of the drawing are as follows: length 8½"=5'8" (1.73 m.), width 13¼"=8'10" (2.69 m.).

The findspot is labeled "Pavement. North Palace." The initials "W. B." show that the drawing was made by Boutcher.

The schematic rendering gives the central portion of a large decorated pavement. The outer edge has a single border of a lotus-and-bud garland. As drawn, the field consists of thirty-two quatrefoil panels, eight across and four down, framed by single rows of rosettes.

Unpublished.

Plate 25

British Museum. Original Drawing VII, 39

Dimensions: none given

The drawing is labeled "North Palace. Kouyunjik. Entrance (b) Chamber M. Pavement Slab."

The sketch shows the main divisions of the threshold decoration with details provided in the two corners of one side. Three continuous borders frame the inner field: lotus-and-bud garland, rosettes, palmette garland. In the field are thirty-five squares for the quatrefoil emblem, five rows by seven rows, which are surrounded by rosettes.

The drawing reveals that the slab projects beyond the limits of the wall, and this has led Reade to suggest that the threshold may have been brought from or designed for another building. Evidence from Khorsabad, however, does show that portal thresholds did extend beyond the wall, as was probably the case in this instance. Other pavement slabs with similar ornaments were found fallen into chambers S, T, V, from an upper story.

References: Barnett, *North Palace of Ashurbanipal*, 47–48, pl. 37; Gadd, *Stones of Assyria*, Appendix, 7, no. 4; Loud, *OIP* 38 (1936), 122–25, Reade, *Iraq* 26 (1964), 10–12.

Plate 26

British Museum. Original Drawing VII, 40

Dimensions: scale is given as 2" to the foot. Measurements of the drawing are as follows: length 10½"=5'3" (1.60 m.), width 8¾"=4'1½" (1.26 m.). From this, the entire slab shown in plate 25 is estimated to be as follows: length 12' (3.66 m.), width 9'8" (2.95 m.).

It is labeled "North Palace. Kouyunjik. Entrance (b) Chamber M. Palace pavement slab." The drawing is numbered "40," and has the initials "W. B." (Boutcher).

The drawing is an enlarged section of one corner of the pavement threshold shown outlined in its entirety in the previous illustration (plate 25). The elaborate series of borders and field decorations are worked meticulously. Hatch lines and dark accents serve to show that the motifs were carved in low relief.

References: Barnett, *North Palace of Ashurbanipal*, 47–48, pl. 37; Reade, *Iraq* 26 (1964), 10–12.

Addendum

In her recent study of the bas-reliefs at Persepolis, Ann Britt Tilia discusses and illustrates what seem to represent decorated textiles laid over the seat of the throne. Assyrian decorative elements occur among the ornamental patterns. See: *Studies and Restorations at Persepolis and Other Sites of Fārs. II* (Rome, 1978), 45–53, figs. 3–4.



Fig. 1

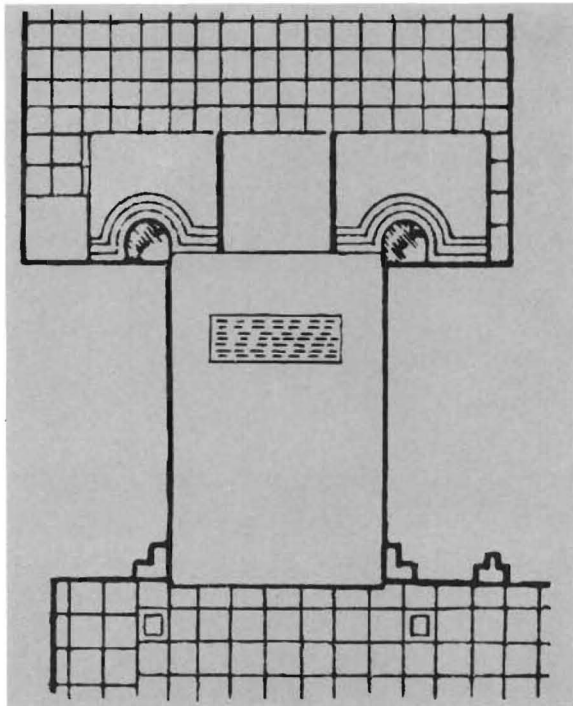


Fig. 2

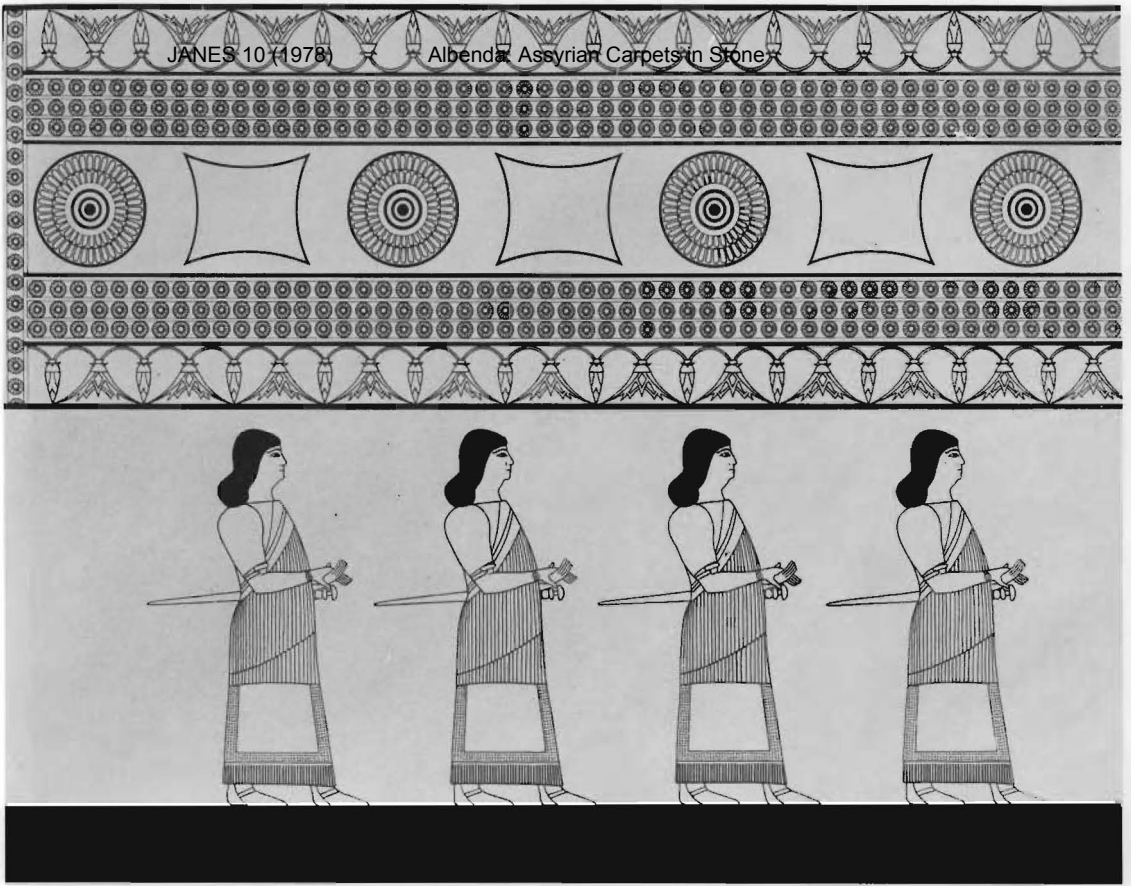


Fig. 3

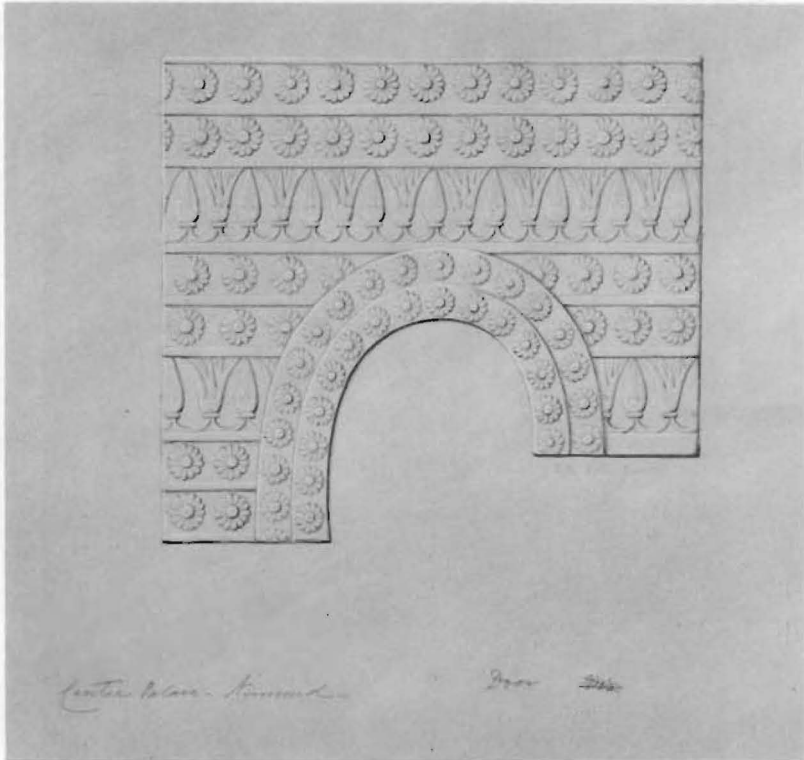


Plate 1

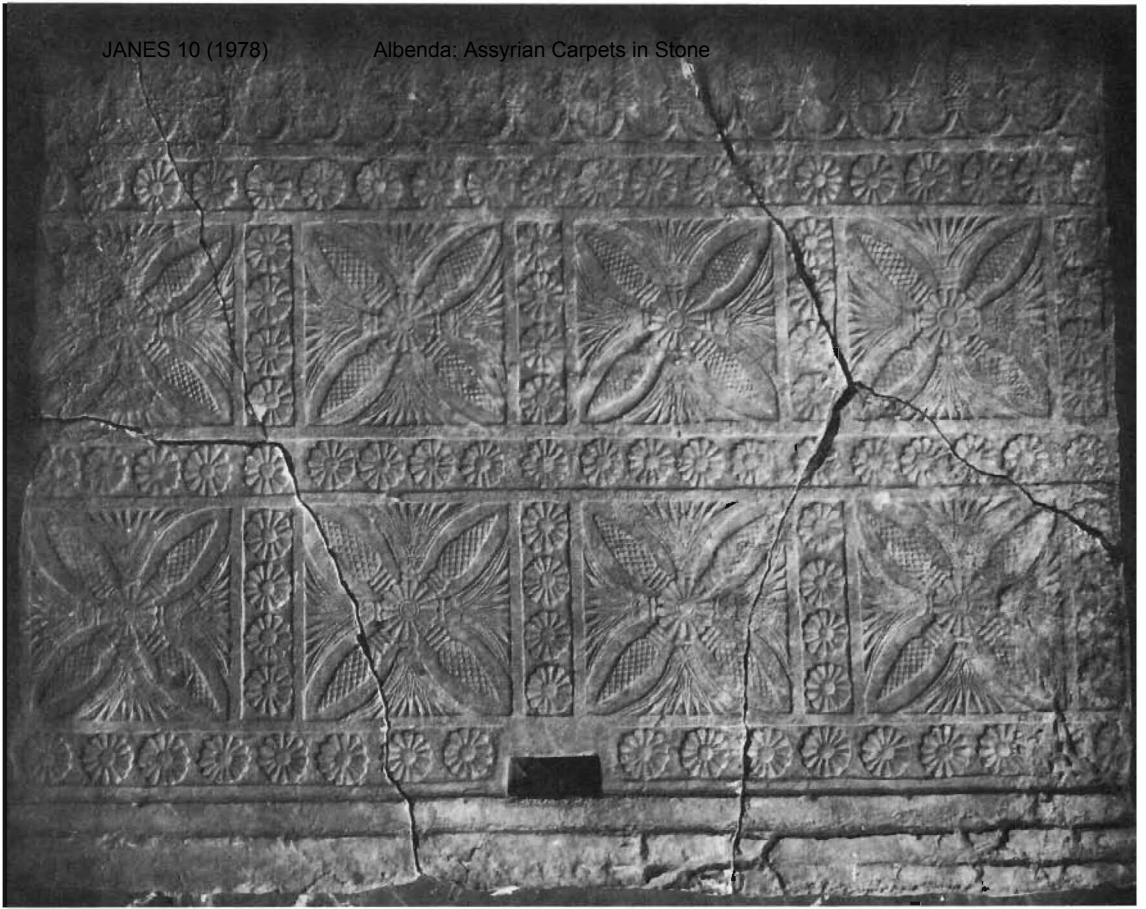


Plate 2

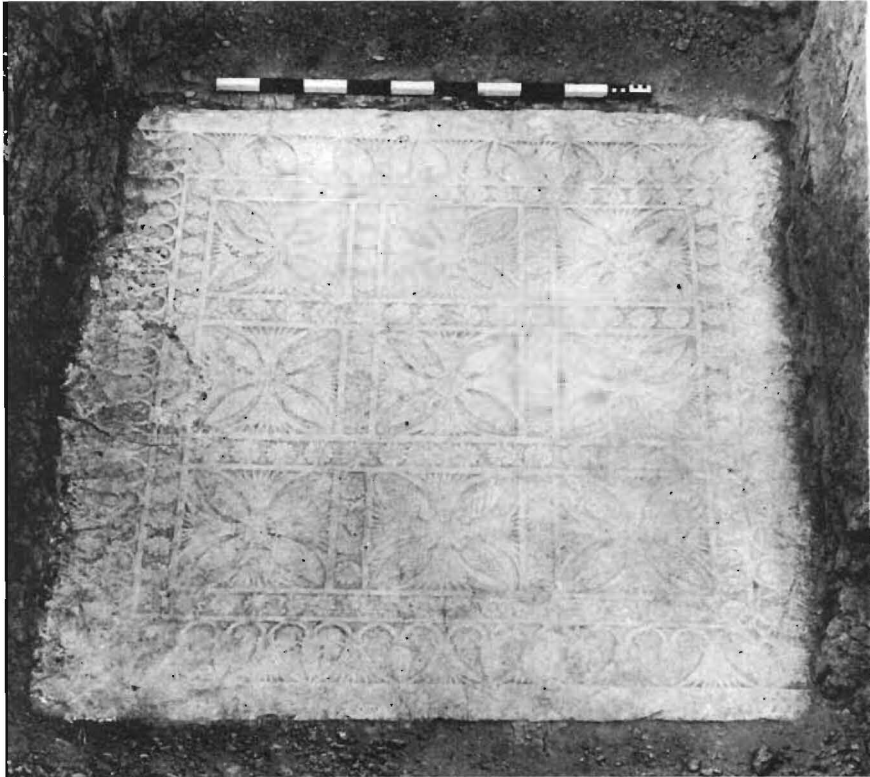


Plate 3

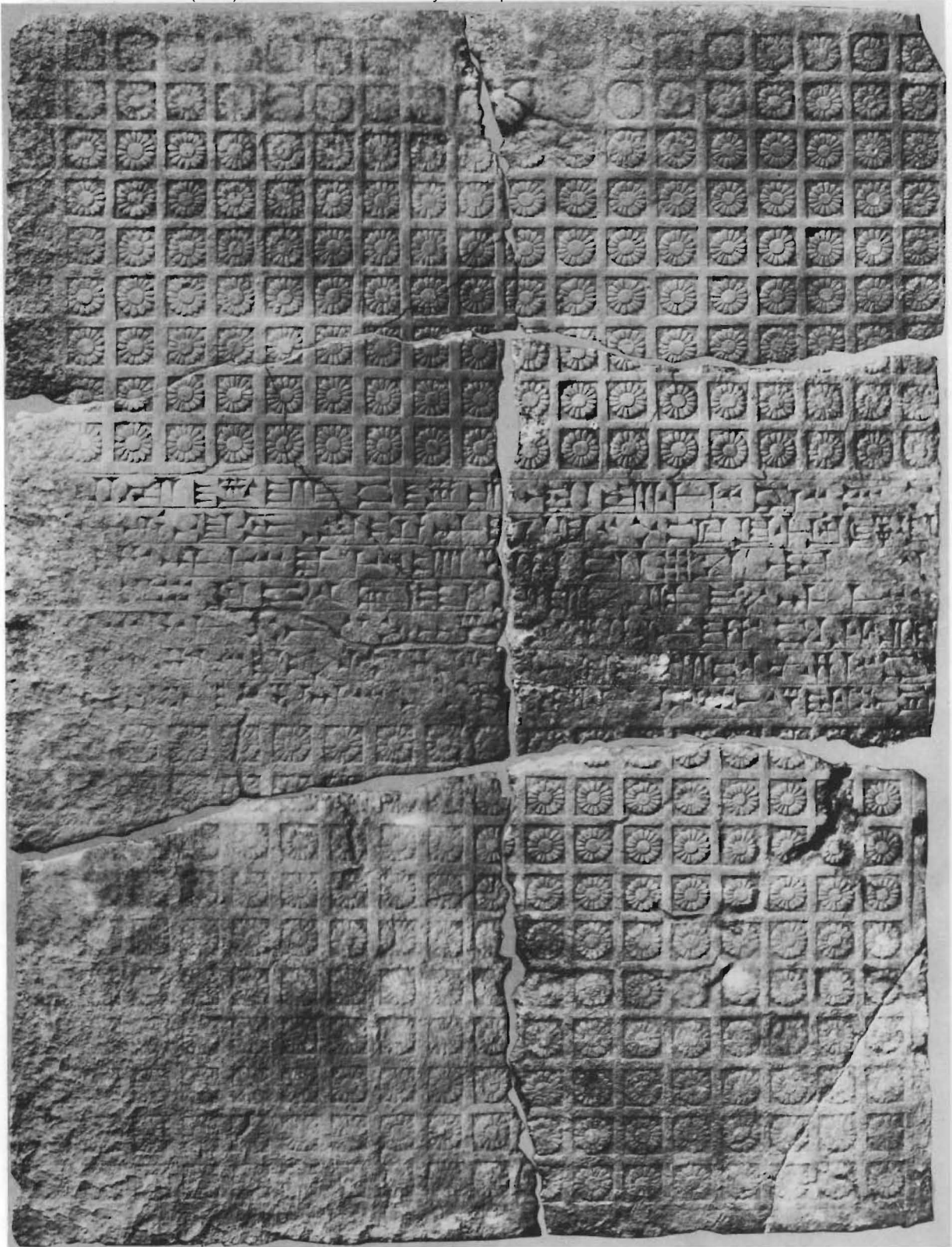


Plate 4

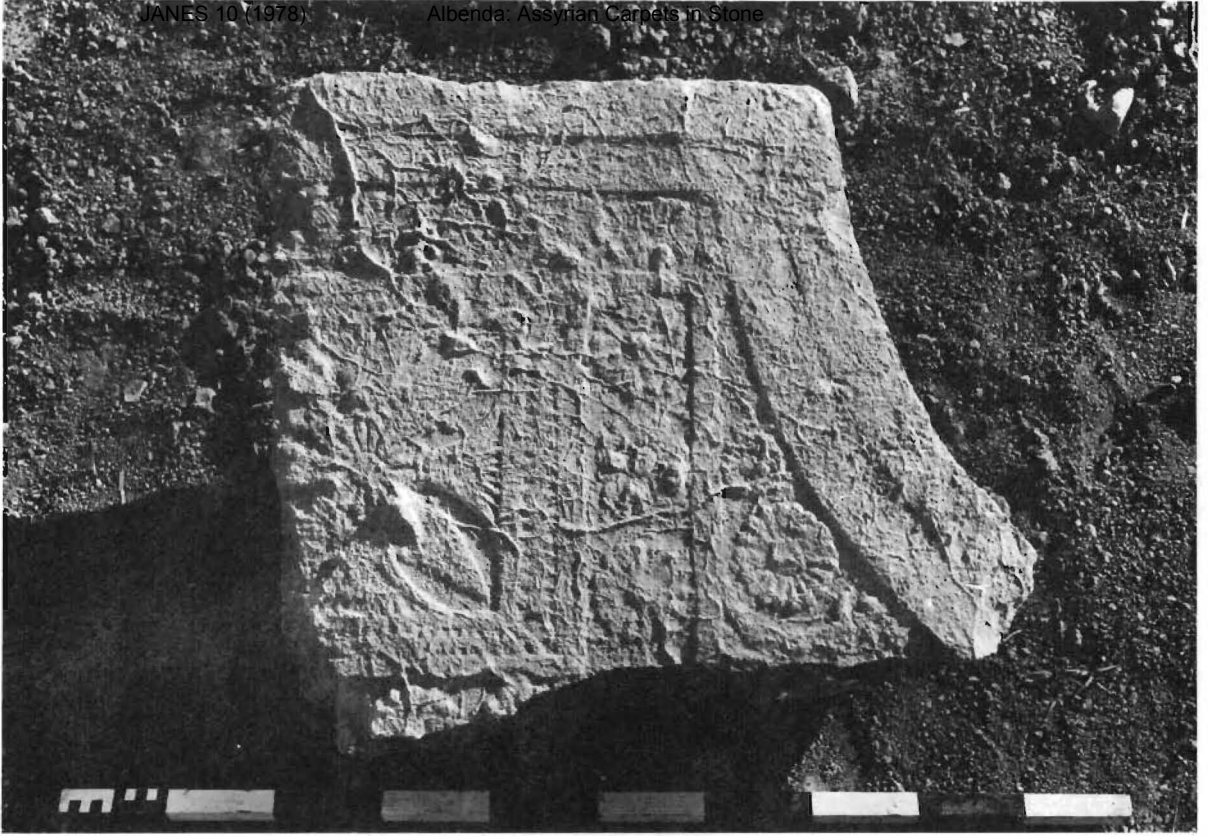


Plate 5

NIMROOD

Pavement. SE. Palace. Scale 1/2" = 1'.

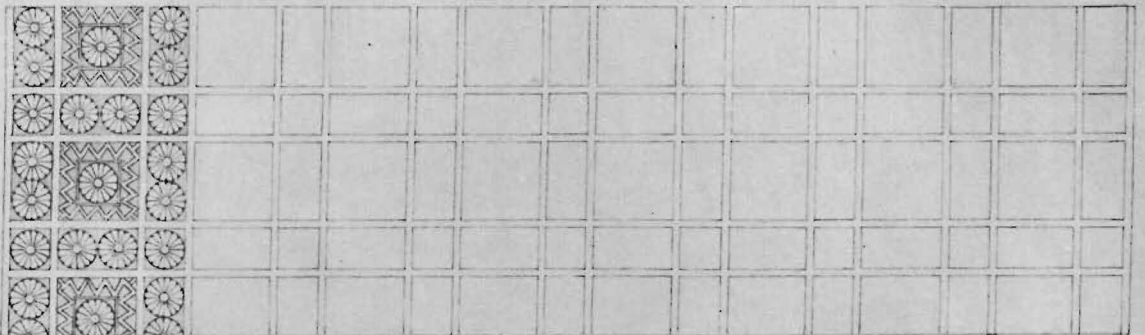


Plate 6

JANES 10 (1978)

Albenda: Assyrian Carpets in Stone



Plate 7

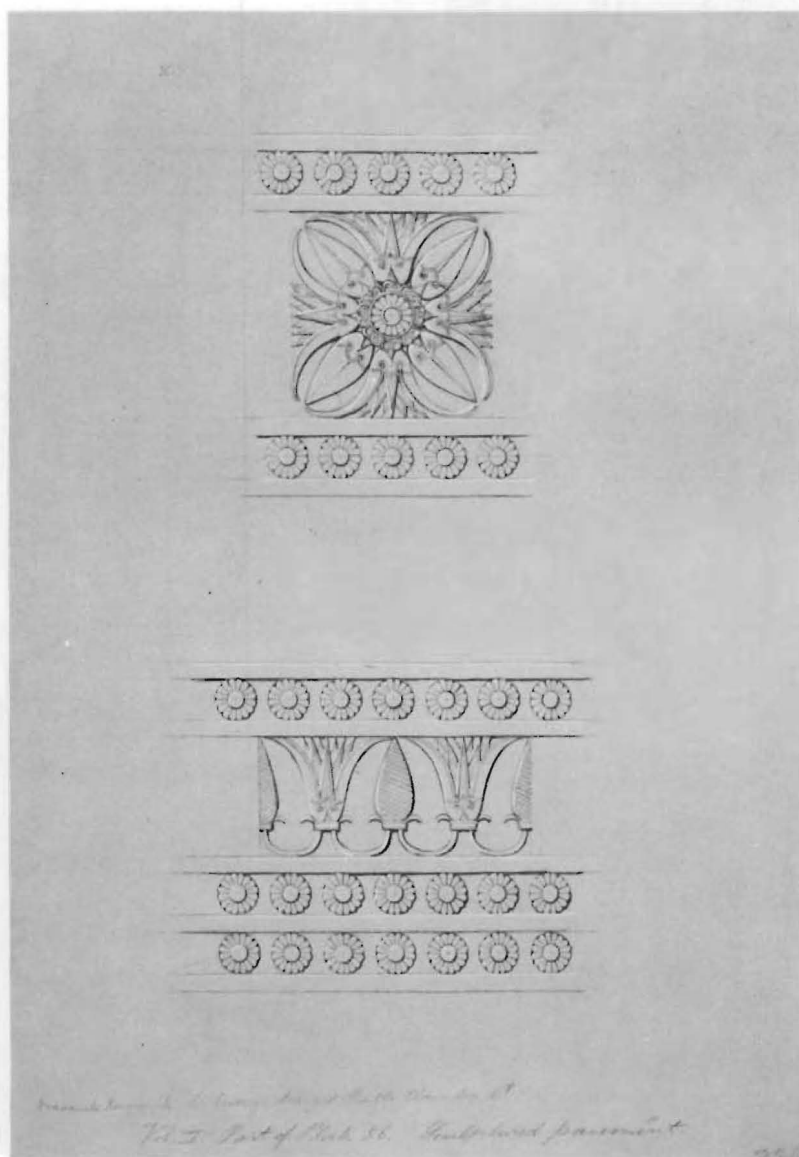


Plate 8

JANES 10 (1978)

Albenda: Assyrian Carpets in Stone

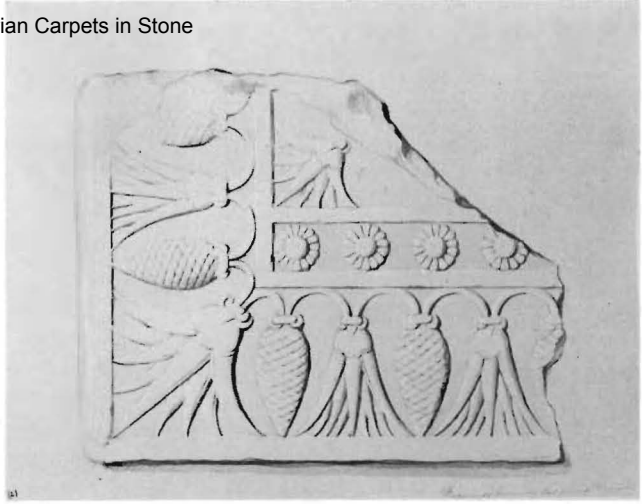
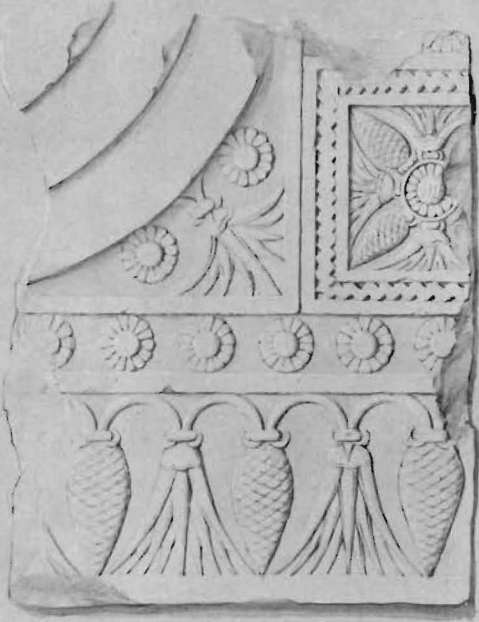
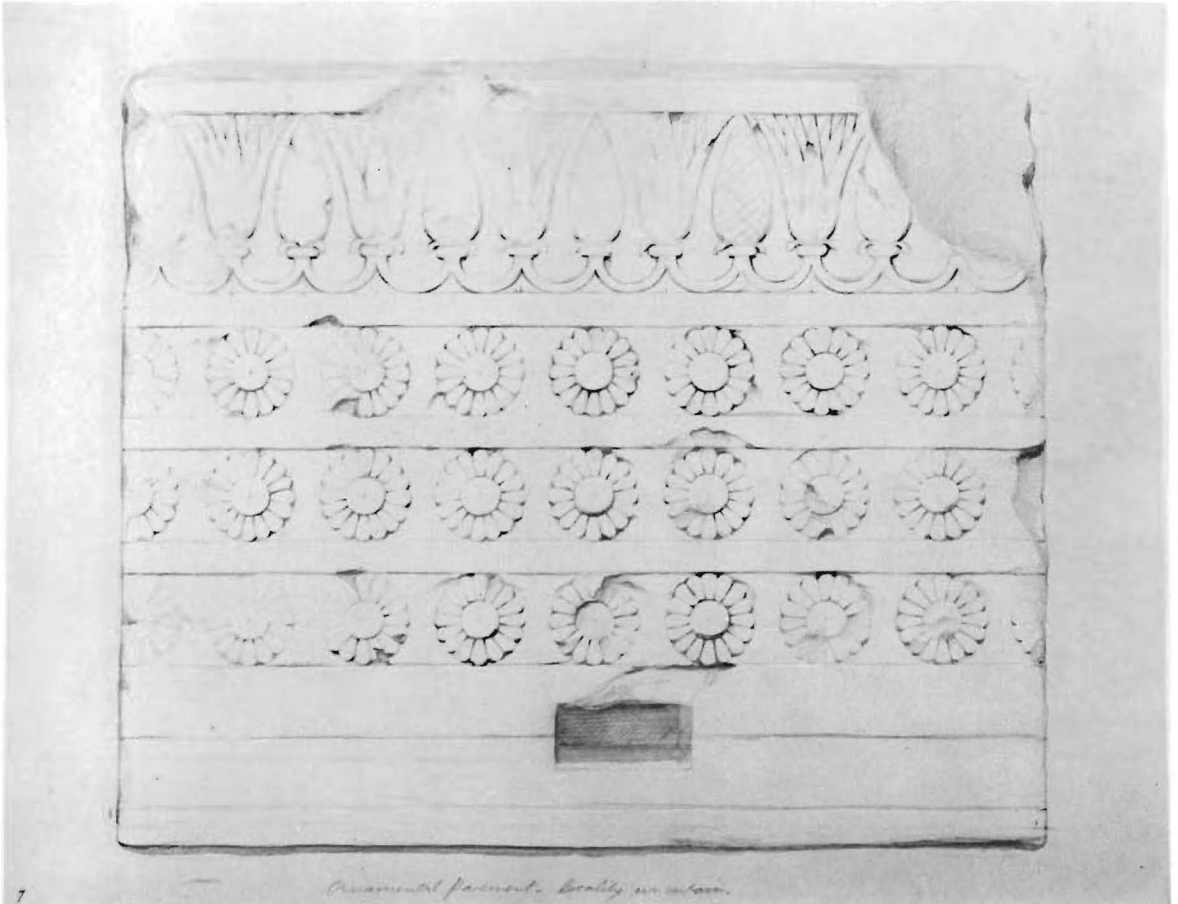


Plate 10

Plate 9



Ornamental pavement. Locally in situ.

Plate 11

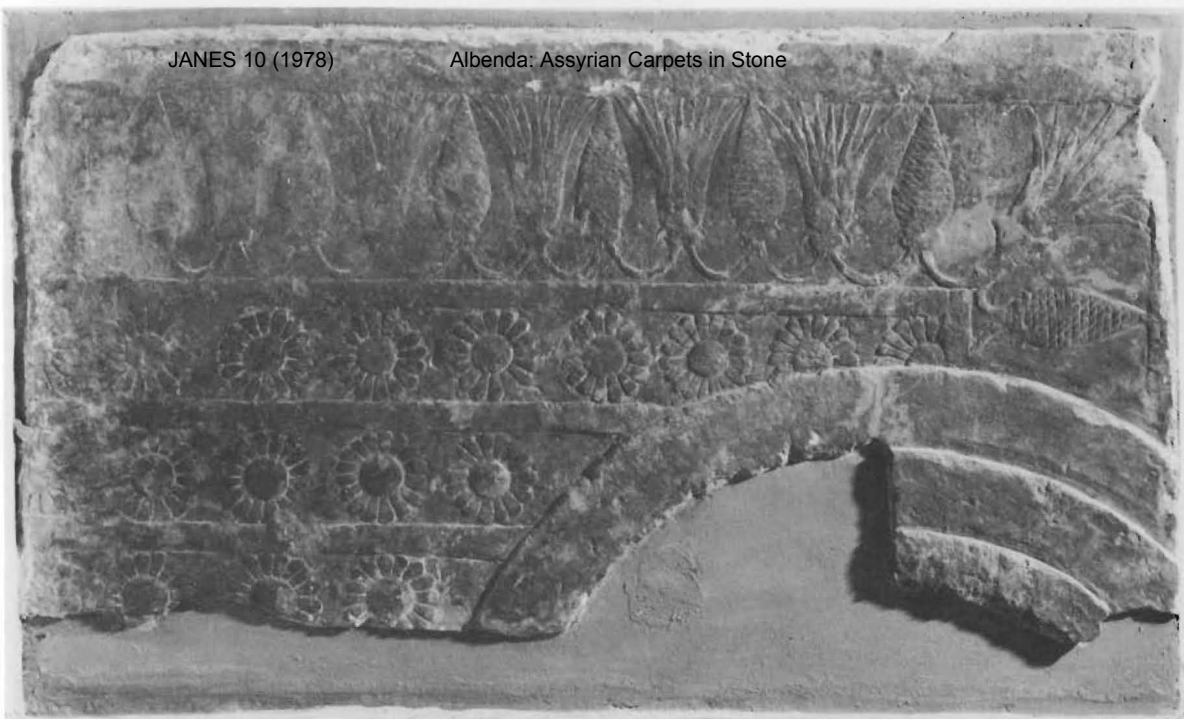


Plate 12

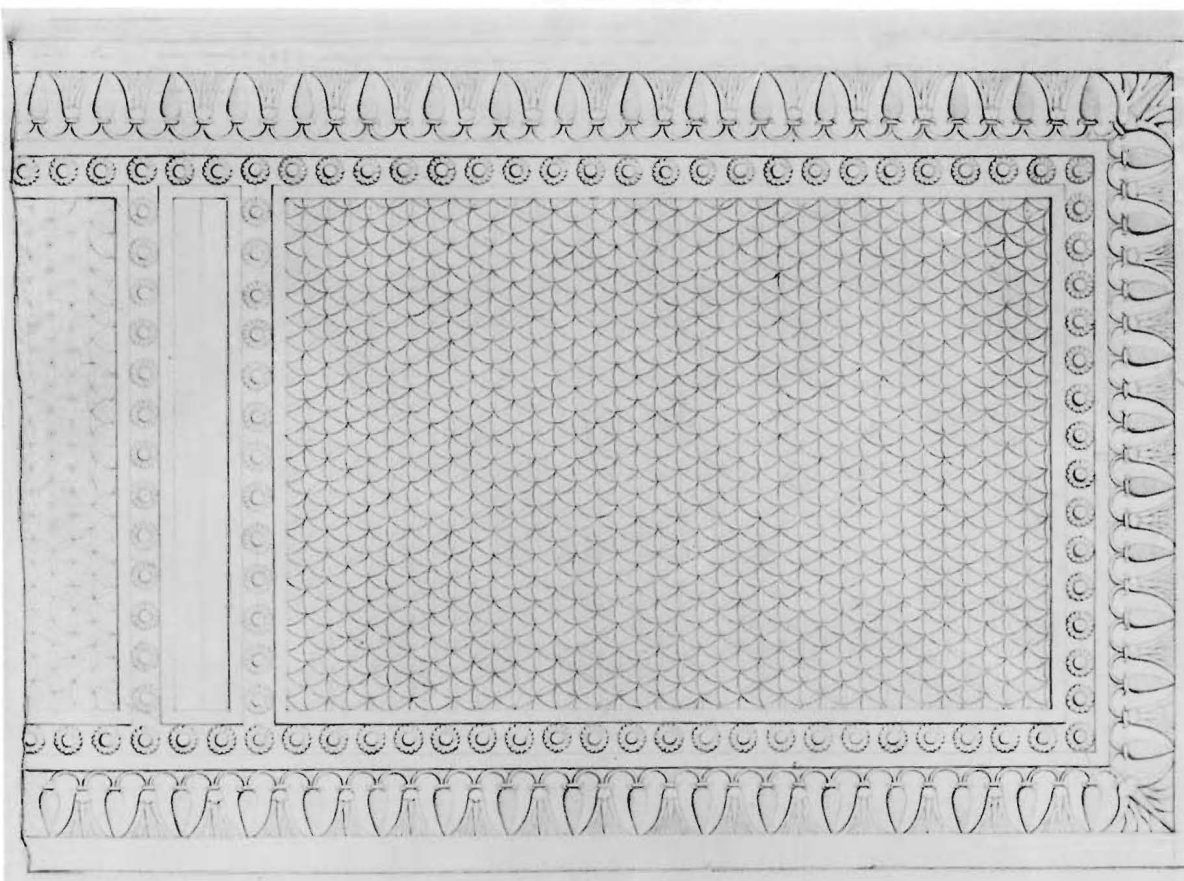
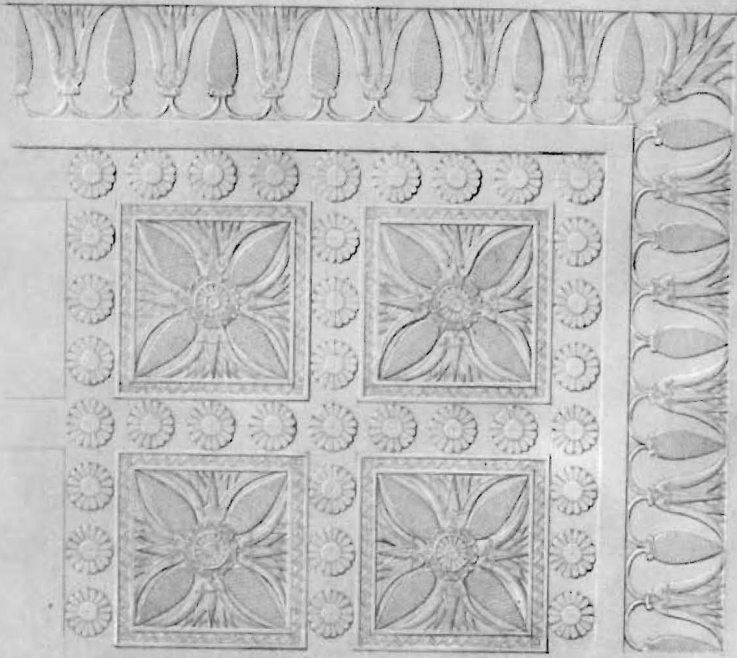
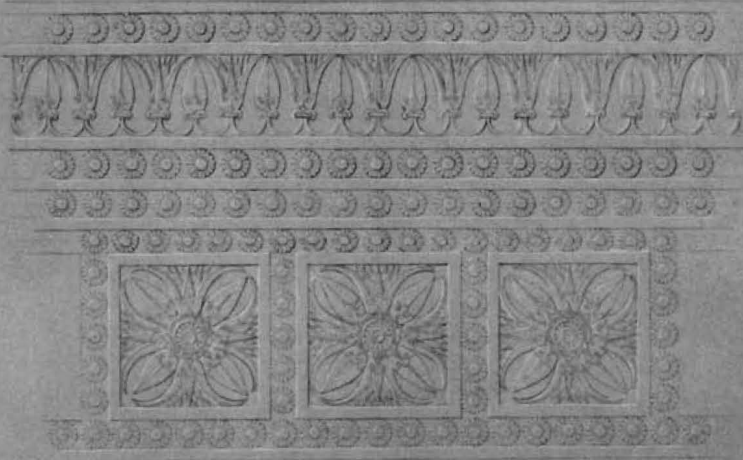


Plate 13



Pavement slab between door's chamber, Kuyunjik -

Plate 14



Pavement, Kuyunjik

Plate 15

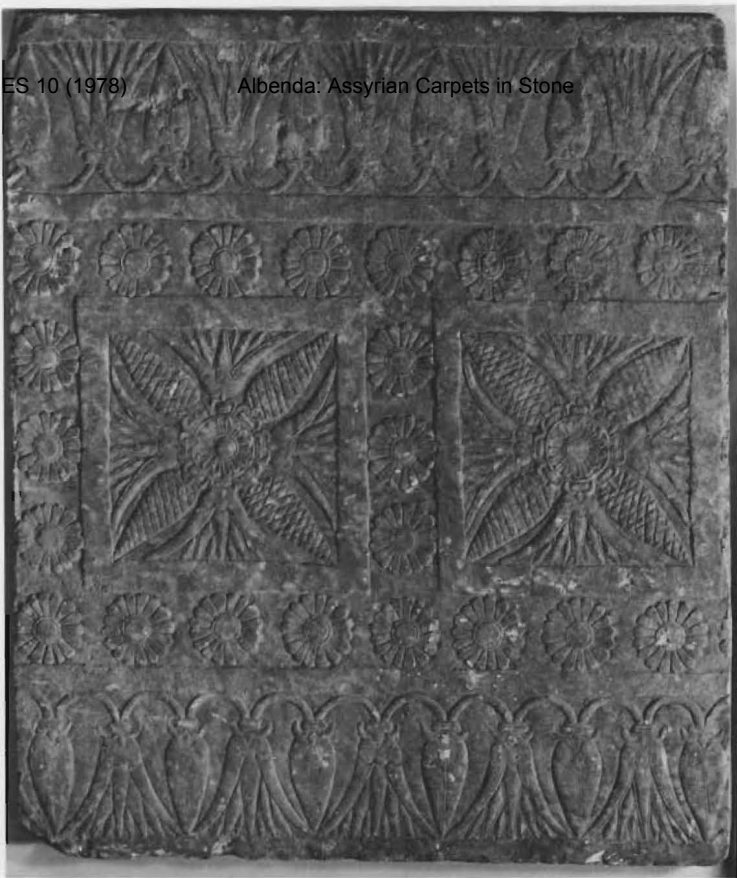


Plate 16



Plate 17



Plate 18

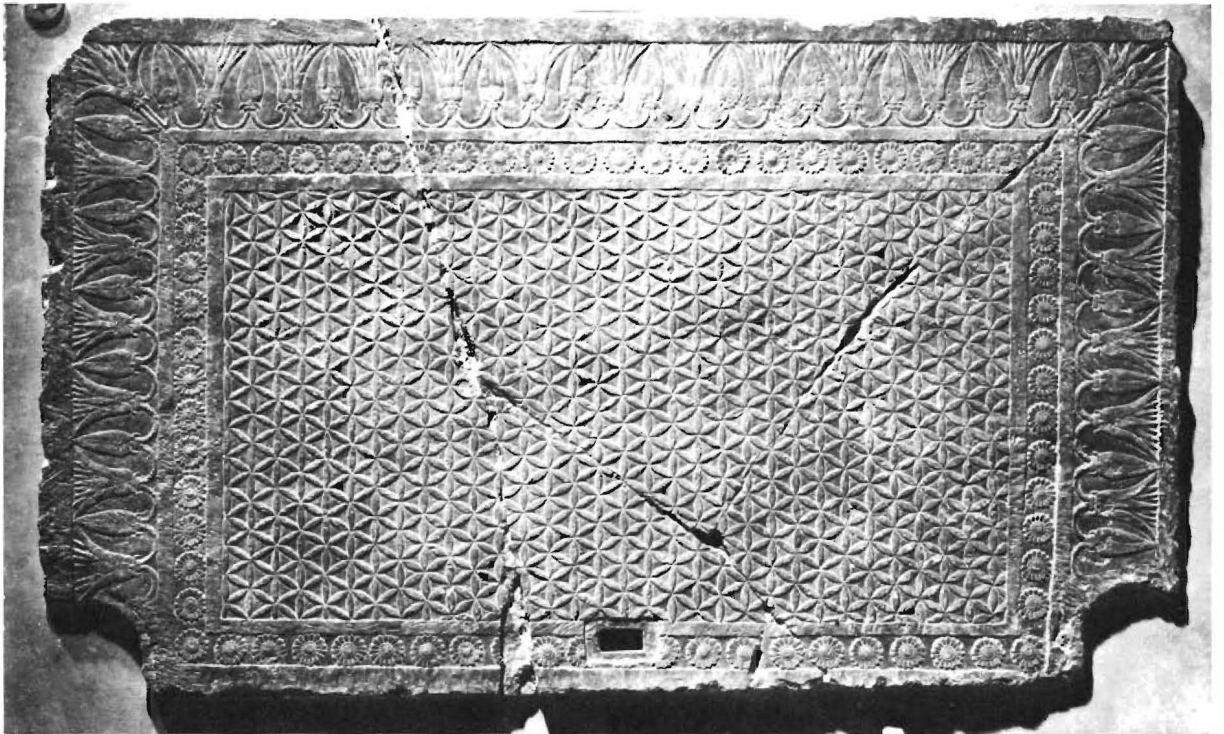


Plate 19

JANES 10 (1978)

Albenda: Assyrian Carpets in Stone

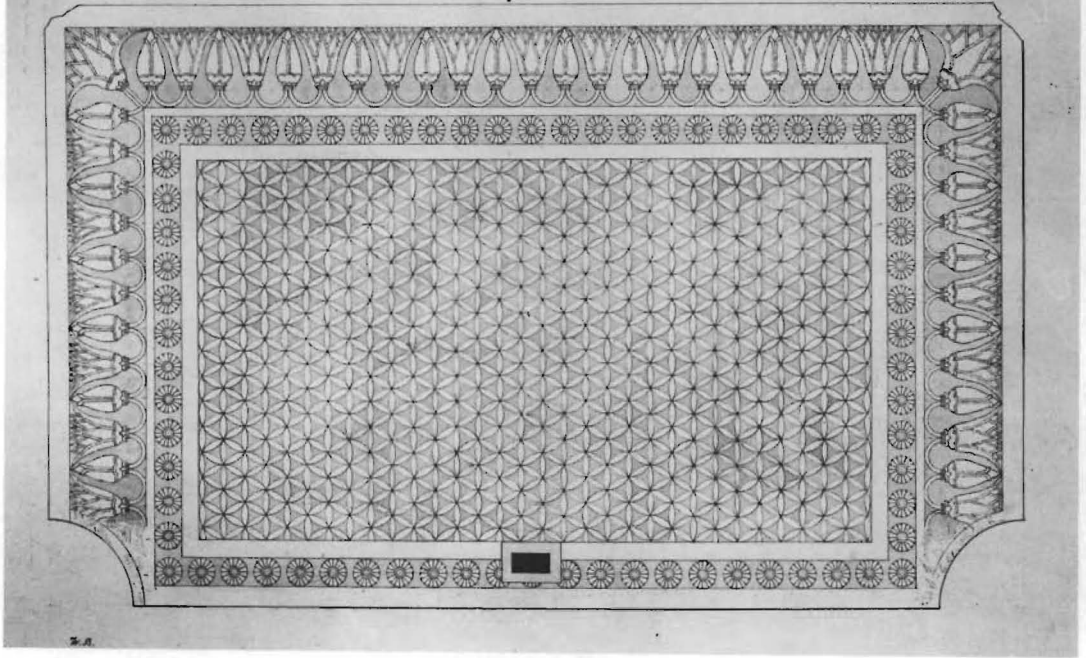


Plate 20

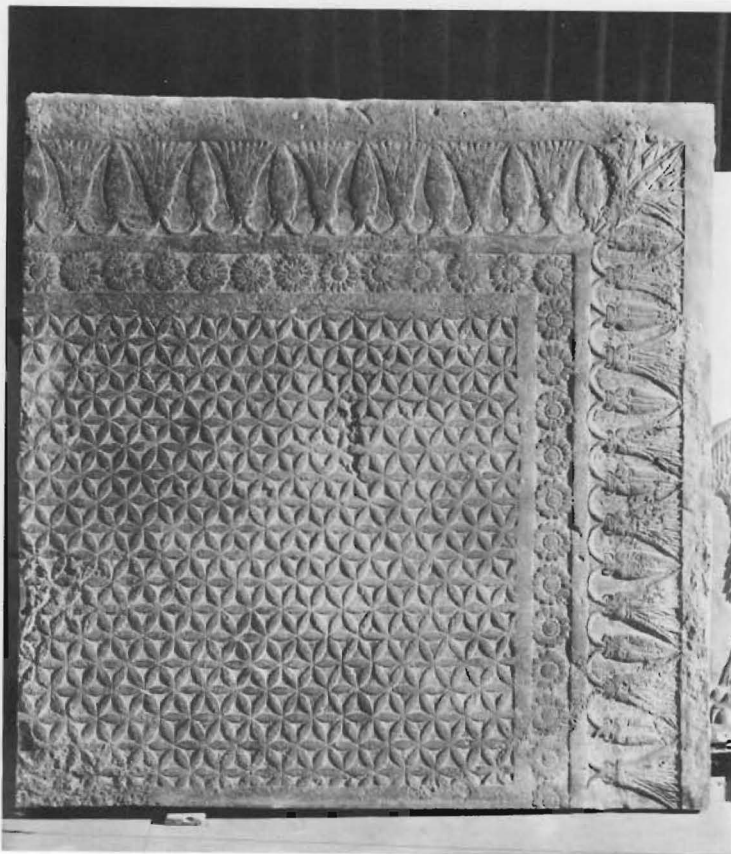


Plate 21

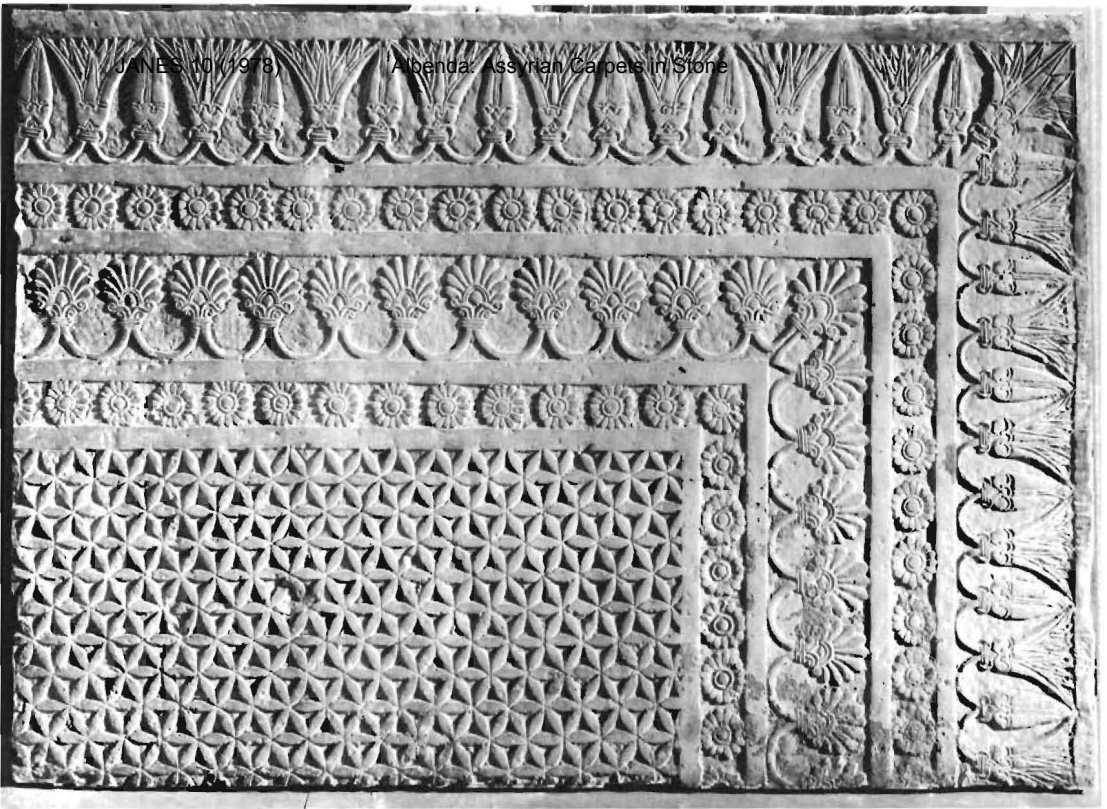


Plate 22

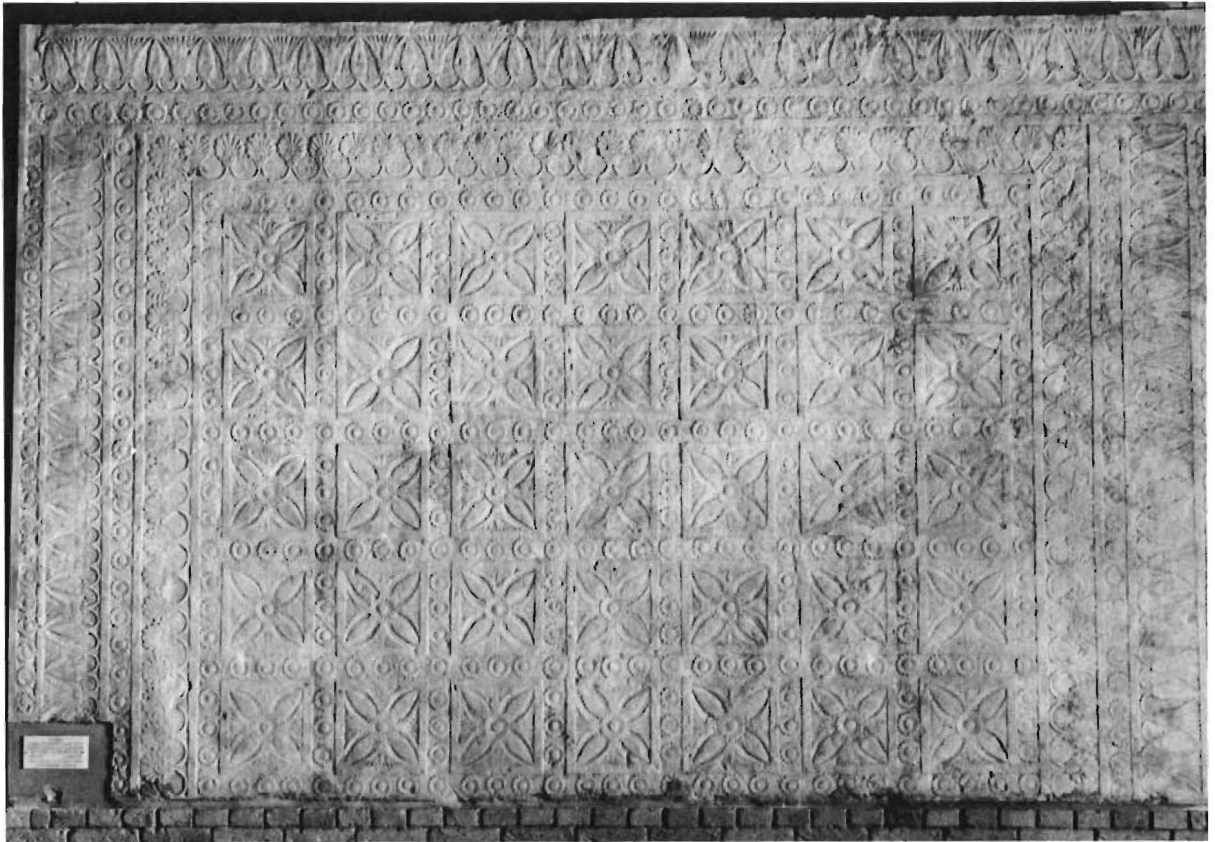
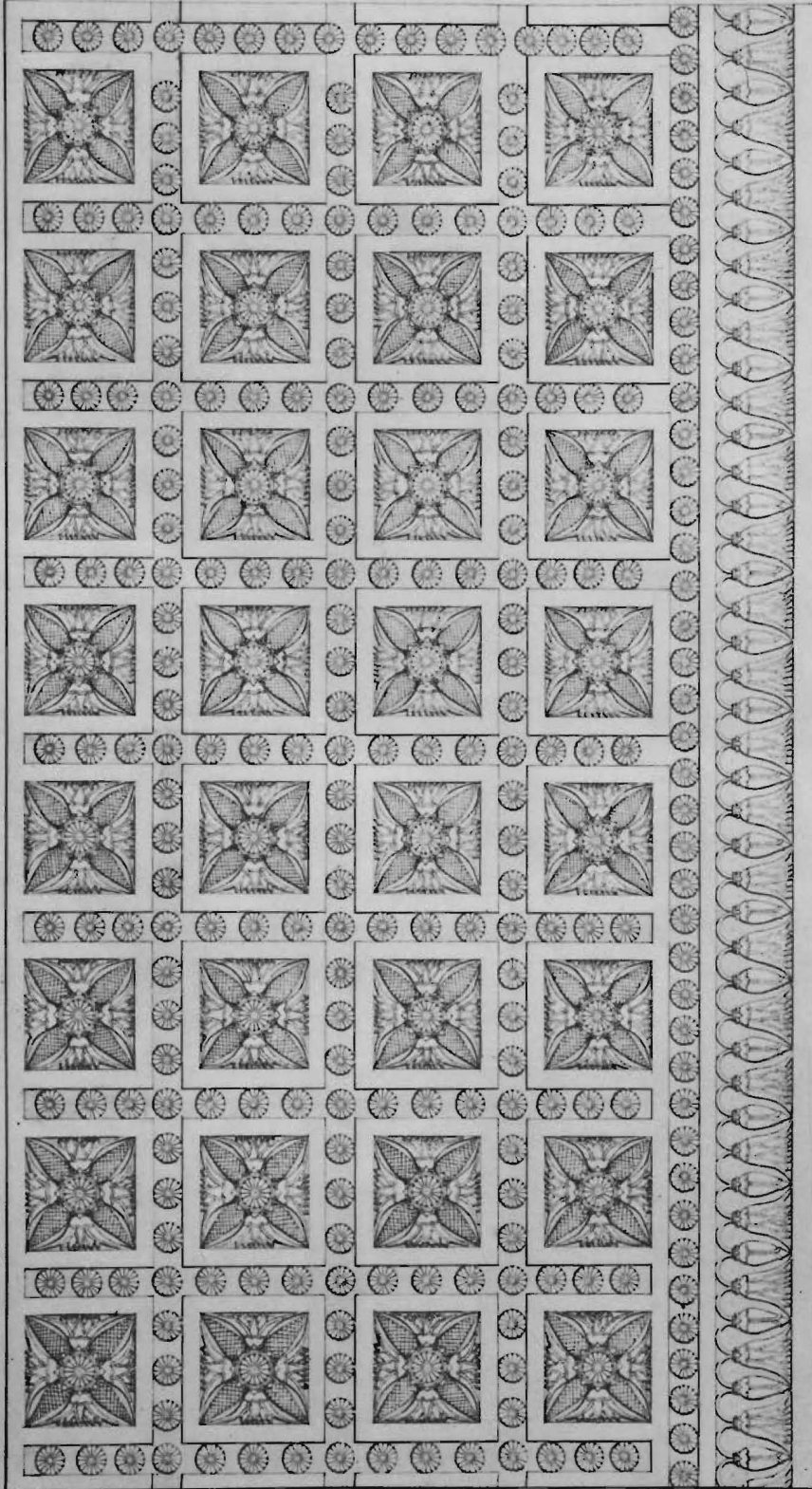


Plate 23



KOUYUNJIK
Zwettent. 160th. 160th. 160th. 160th. 160th.

