

Cruelty and Military Refinements

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La mutilation et la fragmentation des corps des ennemis vaincus appartenait aux techniques de combat néo-assyriennes. De plus, l'exposition des cadavres représentait sans aucun doute plus que de la simple sauvagerie humaine, représentée par des artistes désireux d'impressionner le spectateur avec des images très choquantes. En fait, ces techniques militaires étaient certainement très longtemps mûries avant d'être mises en oeuvre, ne relevant pas d'une soif de sang gratuite et instinctive, base de la mauvaise réputation des Néo-Assyriens dans la littérature vulgarisatrice. Les Néo-Assyriens utilisaient différentes méthodes pour annihiler les corps de leurs ennemis, suivant l'impact qu'ils désiraient obtenir sur une audience choisie, ainsi qu'en fonction des réserves et des sources de victimes disponibles. Plus que cela, ces traitements peuvent également représenter les effets d'une comptabilité mesurable dans le temps et l'espace, au fil des campagnes militaires néo-assyriennes illustrées sur les monuments visuels et textuels des rapports de combat. Cet article propose une analyse préliminaire de ces mauvais traitements ainsi qu'une classification des tortures afin de présenter quelques remarques sur les manières et les raisons pour lesquelles les Néo-Assyriens les infligèrent à leurs vaincus.

Introduction

The mutilation and the parcelling out of the bodies of the overcome enemies formed part of the warlike practices of the Neo-Assyrians, and this part of the world at their time. Moreover, the exhibition of the sufferings in question represented without any doubt more than of the simple human brutality, illustrated by avid artists of sensational images¹. Indeed, these true military techniques were reflected certainly a long time in advance, thus not constituting the consequences of a cruelty only free and instinctive, source for the bad reputation of these people in the literature intended for general public bases.

The Neo-Assyrian used various methods of annihilation of the physical people, according to the effect required on a selected public and sources of victims

1. D. NADALI, « Guerra e morte : l'annullamento del nemico nella condizione di vinto », *Scienze dell'Antichità* 11, 2001-2003, p. 1 ; 4.



Figure 1 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Sargon II, showing the flaying of a human figure by a neo-assyrian soldier. Drawing of the author.

studied within this framework for a few years, this is why one will not make an exhaustive study of the choice of the pieces of body in this article. Other methods of destruction of the bodies will be evoked further, in order to be used as relevant examples within the framework of this study, but will not be the subject there of a complete analysis, for lack of place. Collective flayings, holocausts with the living ones or the late ones, mixed or not, the puncture of the eyes, the pulling up of the tongues, the walling of people alive form part, among so many others, this last category of particular tortures (fig. 1-2).

This study enters within the framework of research of the thesis in progress, in particular in the chapter of the siege techniques⁴. However, the continuation of this type of analysis could prove very interesting for better a understanding the techniques of combat used by the Neo-Assyrians.

Methodology

Within the framework of this article, the interest will relate to the representations of certain treatments considered as severe and inflicted to the enemies overcome by the Neo-Assyrians. With this intention, the macabre scenes of trophies, often illustrated by the contemporary low-reliefs, paintings and texts will provide a starting material which will be the subject of a short recension. More preci-

available². More than that, these treatments "of favour" can also represent the effects of a measurable accountancy in time and space, within the wire of the campaigns that the Neo-Assyrians illustrated on the documents visual and mentioned in the reports of combat. To summarize, one will quote them under the terms of "macabre trophies" within the framework of this article³.

One will be interested mainly in the treatments reserved for the whole bodies, even cut down by certain parts, as with that of the various parts once that they were separated from the body. Among those, the head has constituted one of the subjects most



Figure 2 a : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Assurbanipal, showing the tearing out of an enemy's tongue, maybe dead, by a neo-assyrian soldier. Drawing of the author.

sely, one will stress the representations of stakes like on those of accumulations and exhibitions of pieces of human bodies in the military contexts. Afterwards, one will classify the topics in question by means of several iconographic, recurring criteria with the wire of the successive reigns, without forgetting to announce the particular points of them, while having care to observe some material and chronological orders. Indeed, the artistic representations are sometimes approximate and the statements of lost parts, sometimes too summary. Moreover, certain lacks of neo-assyrian figurative documentation bearing on the treatments previously described are to be raised, in particular between Salmanezer III and Tiglath-Pilezer III (823-746 B.C.), during the reign of Salmanazar V (725-722 B.C.) and starting from Assarhaddon until the fall of Harrân (680-610/609 front. J.-C.).

The contribution of the contemporary texts will precede the presentation by the synthesis of the data collected by the study in progress.

The last paragraph will comprise the relevant conclusions which are revealed at the end of this article. In order not to unnecessarily multiply the examples illustrated, and described in the text, the author will provide many drawings inspired of the original monuments. These will be made as the syntheses of the various light variations, installation or equipment, observed within only one technique and of the same reign.



Figure 2 b : Drawing inspired by a bronze band of Salmanazar III, showing the tearing out of an enemy's tongue, maybe alive, by a neo-assyrian soldier. Drawing of the author.

2. The author expresses his sincere thanks to Professor D. Bonatz, from the Freie Universität of Berlin, whose valuable ideas and suggestions proved so useful for this study. All remaining mistakes are, without any doubt, the author's own.
3. D. BONATZ, « Assurbanipal's Headhunt : An anthropological Perspective », *Iraq* 66, 1, 2005, p. 121-131 ; R. DOLCE, « 'The Heads of the Enemy' in the Sculptures from the Palaces of Nineveh : An example of 'Cultural Migration' ? », *Iraq* 66, 1, 2005, p. 93-101.
4. F. DE BACKER, *L'Art du siège néo-assyrien : La poliorcétique néo-assyrienne* 3. Les techniques de siège, Thèse de doctorat en Sciences de l'Antiquité (U.M.B., Strasbourg II) et en Philologie et Histoire orientales (U.C.L., Louvain-La-Neuve), in progress.



Figure 3 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Tiglath-Pileser III, showing the cut of the throat of an enemy by a neo-assyrian soldier. Drawing of the author.



Figure 4 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Assurbanipal, showing the setting with death of a wounded enemy by a neo-assyrian soldier. Drawing of the author.

I Evolution of the Represented and Mentioned Practices

Before reviewing the treatments inflicted by the Neo-Assyrians and announced in the visual and textual sources, it should be remembered that these details can constitute stylistic or linguistic conventions. Nevertheless, this approach does not completely form part of the subject tackled by this article, like the study of the other treatments that the torments inflicted.

a) Assurnasirpal II

1) The Illustrated Monuments

In the figurative monuments that we preserved of this time, one counts many representations of tortures. Among those, the basic components of this iconographic repertory develop as of the reign of Assurnasirpal II, which started (again ?) the fashion at the beginning of the First Millenium B.C., and are as follows: the cutting of the throat of the enemies, by drawing on the hair, with the scraping-knife, the decapitation of the enemies with the scraping-knife, the bodies of enemies, scattered but whole or scattered but decapitated (fig. 3; 26; 6; 7). Certain details also make it possible to appreciate the scenes of massacres in a more intense way, in particular thanks to the representations of Assur fighting in a winged disc at the siok of neo-assyrian soldiers, Imgi eagle, or of Imdugud, or a simple vulture eating the entrails of enemies fallen but alive (?), even eating the eyes of an enemy fallen to the combat⁵. Another of these peculiar details appears with the counting of the fallen enemies, among musicians and soldiers playing with heads, while a bird is bringing an enemy head grasped in its claws to the scribe⁶ (fig. 27-29).

5. More data about this topic will be available for the reader in the article of the author : *Fragmentation of the Enemies in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, Heidelberg, 2008, forthcoming.

6. E. WALLIS-BUDGE, *Reign of Ashur-Nasir-Pal, 885-860 B.C.*, Londres, 1914, pl. XVI, b.

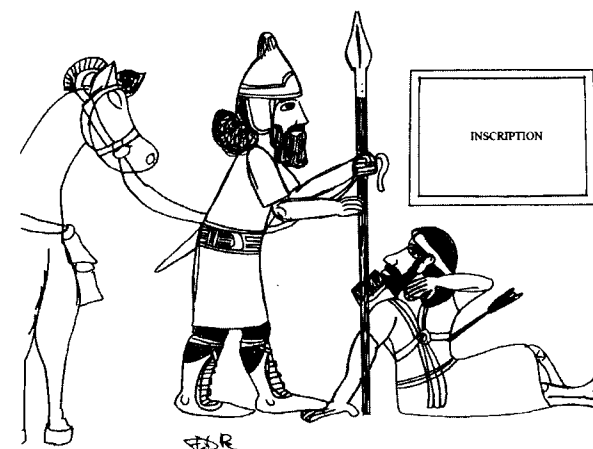


Figure 5 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Assurbanipal, showing a wounded enemy begging a Neo-Assyrian for mercy. Drawing of the author.

2) The Textual References

As that also appears on the low-reliefs of its reign, Assurnasirpal II very often mentions the massacre of a great number of civil people, or warriors, in his inscriptions⁷. In more of that, one notes the redundancy of massive decapitations⁸. The last element which is at the same time represented in the low-reliefs and mentioned in the texts of Assurnasirpal II is the accumulation of the bodies in the cities, the mountains, the ravines or their dispersion in the countryside⁹.

In spite of the absence of representations of these tortures, the texts of Assurnasirpal II often mention the erection of pyramids of heads and the impaling of people opposite the gates of the cities or in the countryside, the pillars of alive and heads, the decapitated heads attached to posts around the cities, in the mountains or with the trees, in the palaces of the overcome enemies¹⁰. The burning of young boys and girls as well as the prisoners with eyes pulled out are missing on the visual monuments¹¹. The same applies to the accumulation of alive in front of the doors of the cities, the prisoners immured alive in the walls of the palate of the overcome kings and the details of the pyramids of heads set up in the plains, the mountains or in front of the doors of the cities¹². The skinning of the prisoners, whose skin will be suspended on the walls of the town of Niniveh or the captured cities, the pillars of heads, containers of the alive prisoners locked up inside, covered with skins of overcome skinned, surmounted by impaled prisoners, cut

7. D. LUCKENBILL, *Ancient Records of Assyria vol. I From the earliest times to Sargon*, New York, 1926, p. 142, 440; 143, 441; 146, 445; 147, 445; 148, 447; 149, 448; 149, 449; 150, 449; 151, 452; 152, 453; 152, 454; 152, 455; 154, 457; 155, 459; 155, 461; 156, 463; 157, 464; 157, 465; 160, 470; 161, 471; 162, 472; 163, 472; 166, 478; 167, 479; 168, 480.

8. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, p. 143, 441; 144, 443; 147, 445; 148, 447; 152, 455; 156, 463; 157, 465; 168, 480.

9. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, p. 148, 447; 150, 449; 151, 452; 154, 457; 157, 465.

10. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, p. 147, 445; 149, 449; 150, 449; 152, 455.

11. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, p. 143, 441; 146, 445; 147, 445; 147, 445; 148, 447; 150, 449; 151, 452-453; 156, 463; 157, 465; 169, 480.

12. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, p. 143, 441; 144, 443; 146, 445; 152, 455.



Figure 6 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Tiglath-Pileser III, showing a full enemy corpse. Drawing of the author.

down or not, and surrounded of enemies attached to posts do not appear either on the low-reliefs and preserved visuals of this reign¹³. The same applies to the prisoners impaled in the mountains, the plains or around the enemy cities like for the amputations of the hands, the hands and the fingers, or the nose, the ears and fingers before slackening the prisoners if required¹⁴.

It is interesting to note that this king and his successor were, as one will see it thereafter, the only ones to thus represent the blood which tints the ground and fills the gullies of the mountains, mentioned in the texts, under the wheels of his chariot or on the battle field¹⁵. Whereas this motif could simply be water flooding, one would have then to explain why it is flowing from both sides of a dying enemy (fig. 30-31). A passage of the Annals of Senacherib also announces it, the blood and the filth which stain the wheels of his chariot, although this king does not seem to have chosen to represent them on his reliefs¹⁶.

b) Salmanezer III

1) The Illustrated Monuments

Salmanezer III continued the tendencies innovated by his predecessor, although he puts some of them for certain reasons on the side (vultures, eagle, Assur), and develops many others of them, more diversified. These reasons count, in particular, the washing of the enemy heads (or the floods of blood ?), the piles or the shelters of heads, the heads laid out on the ramparts taken with besieged, as well as the cutting of the bodies of the enemies, the amputations and the preparation with impalement of "major" type (fig. 19; 10-11; 20-21; 16). Lastly, the varieties continue more and more, like the "deep" impalements of whole or cut down bodies, the holocausts, the meetings of impaled enemies or, more simply, their scattered, cut down and decapitated bodies (fig. 12-13; 22; 1; 8). This king was also the only one to represent the bodies of enemies impaled on the siege ramp and the walls of the cities taken after a siege.

13. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, p. 144, 443; 146, 445; 147, 445; 157, 465.

14. E. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, p. 149, 449; 161, 471; 166, 478; 168, 480.

15. E. WALLIS-BUDGE, *op. cit.*, pl. XVIII, a.

16. See further in this paper.

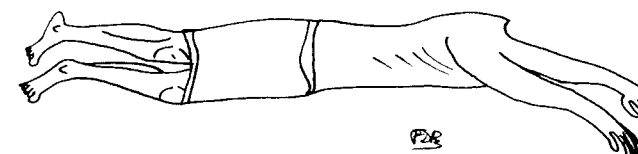


Figure 7 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Assurnasirpal, showing a beheaded enemy corpse. Drawing of the author.



Figure 8 : Drawing inspired by a bronze band of Salmanazar III, showing the corpse of an enemy, beheaded and amputated. Drawing of the author.

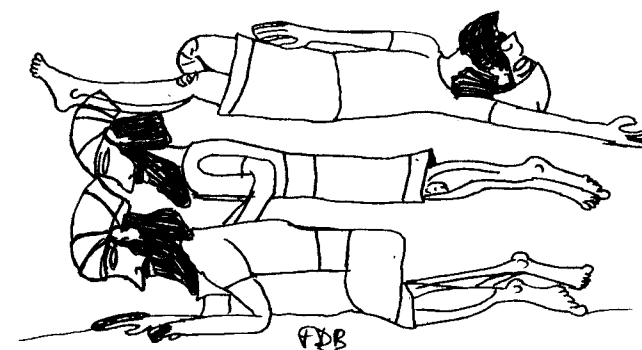


Figure 9 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Tiglath-Pileser III, showing the corpses of enemies heaped up. Drawing of the author.

Figure 10 : Drawing inspired by a bronze band of Salmanazar III, showing a pile of enemy heads. Drawing of the author.

Figure 11 : Drawing inspired by a bronze band of Salmanazar III, showing a small building intended for the storage of the enemy heads. Drawing of the author.



Fig. 10



Fig. 11

2) The Textual References

Once again, and as that appears on the low-reliefs of this reign and others, the massacres of warriors and the civil ones are often mentioned in *Annals of Salmanezar III*¹⁷. The representations and mentions of impalements always have course, as those of the amputations appear in a significant number¹⁸. The texts quote the cut of 1300 fingers, but without specifying the type of finger, if that were done by whole hand or if a preference took place, which indicates a possible variation of the number of enemies and/or their specific ability using their fingers for fighting (like archers, for instance)¹⁹. The dispersion and the accumulation of the bodies of the enemy, in the vast plains, the mountains continue, when sometimes the whole countryside is used to bury all the enemy casualties²⁰. Other scenes illustrate the heads of decapitated enemies who float in a river with the foot of a city, as the bodies which spanned Orontes like a bridge mentioned in the texts²¹. Nevertheless, and as one already read higher, that can also represent the blood which runs with flood on the ground.

The bronze bands carry the representations of the cut of the tongues of overcome, people impaled on a siege ramp and suspension of heads to the walls of a burnt city which does not seem to be quoted in the texts.

Other bad treatments, which were not represented in spite of their mention under the preceding reign, make their appearance, like massive decapitations, the pyramids of heads installed vis-a-vis with the gates of cities. However, the artists abstained from illustrating the details of these trophies, which included alive prisoners locked up inside and prisoners impaled around²². Although the representations of these following tortures do not appear at that time, the texts mention the huge burning of young boys and girls, the people whose skin decorated the ramparts of the cities, people with eyes pulled out and the blood which tints the ground like red wool²³.

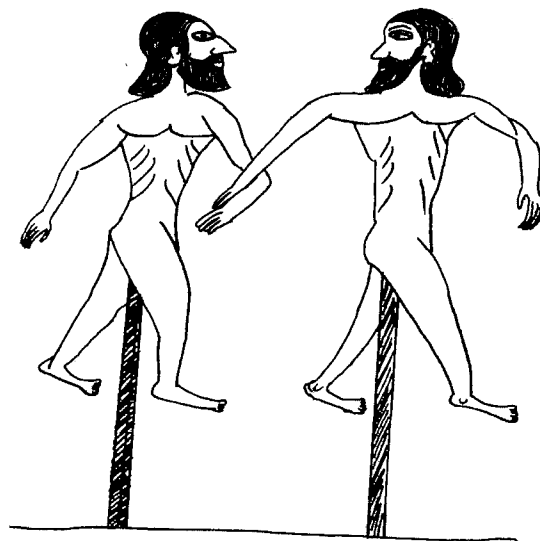


Figure 12 : Drawing inspired by a bronze band of Salmanazar III, showing two full bodies of enemies, seemingly busy with discussion, and deeply impaled on stakes. Drawing of the author.

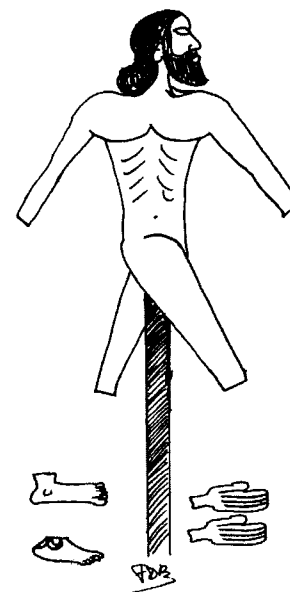


Figure 13 : Drawing inspired by a bronze band of Salmanazar III, showing the body of an enemy amputated and deeply impaled on a stake. Drawing of the author.

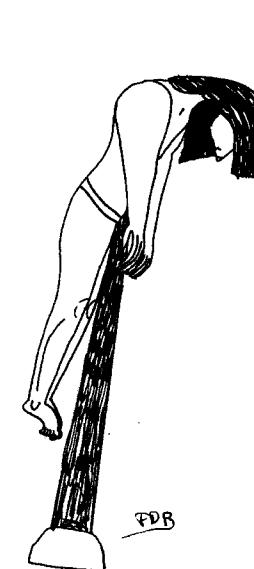


Figure 14 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Tiglath-Pileser III, showing a full enemy body, impaled on a stake which pierces his chest. Drawing of the author.



Figure 15 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Senacherib, showing a full body of an enemy, with his hair shaven, and impaled on a stake which pierces his chest. Drawing of the author.

c) Tiglath-Pilezer III

1) The Illustrated Monuments

Among the practices represented under this king appear the cutting of the throat of the enemies, by drawing on the hair, with the scraping-knife, the decapitation of the carcasses of the enemies with the scraping-knife, the bodies of enemies, scattered but whole, the bodies of scattered but decapitated enemies (fig. 3; 6; 7). The practical details of the cutting up of the bodies of overcome enemies always develop, for example in the shape of piles of whole bodies, even impaled through the chest, or of the calculation and the accumulation of the heads (fig. 9; 14; 24).

Moreover, certain older details but treated in a different way also make it possible to appreciate the scenes of massacres more intensely, in particular thanks to the representations of a bird, eagle Imgi, Imdugud or simple vulture carrying the entrails of a corpse to far²⁴. However, one notices a very clear reduction in the representation of cutting throats and decapitations, which can be a consequence of the lack of original materials preserved, or rather an evolution in figurative conventions, as one will see it in the reigns which follow.

24. More data about this topic will be available for the reader in the article of the author : *Fragmentation of the Enemies in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, Heidelberg, 2008, forthcoming.

17. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, p. 203, 563; 206, 581; 210, 588; 215, 599; 216, 599; 219, 605; 223, 610.

18. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, p. 208, 585; 219, 605.

19. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, p. 215, 599.

20. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, p. 208, 584; 215, 599; 223, 610.

21. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, p. 223, 610.

22. D. LUCKENBILL, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia vol. II From Sargon to the end*, New York, 1927, p. 214, 599; 215, 599; 219, 605; 220, 607; 221, 609; 223, 610.

23. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1926, p. 215, 599; 219, 605; 221, 609; 223, 610.



Figure 16 : Drawing inspired by a bronze band of Salmanazar III, showing the full body of an enemy, seemingly about to be painfully and deeply impaled on a stake. Drawing of the author.



Figure 17 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Assurbanipal, showing a living enemy, leashed as a dog, busy with grinding the bones of a relative under the threat of an neo-assyrian soldier's mace. Drawing of the author.

2) The Textual References

Like always, the Annals mention a great number of massacres of warriors and civilian enemies, who are often symbolically represented on the low-reliefs of Tiglath-Pilezer III²⁵. The impaled enemies also appear in the two sources, with which the bodies will be covered naturally by the ground, while the piles of bodies of overcome fill the plains and the chasms²⁶.

As under the reign of Salmanezer III, the burning of living prisoners and cuttings of fingers are not illustrated, even if the cut down prisoners were returned to their homes, which constitutes an innovation in the neo-assyrian Annals²⁷.

d) Sargon II

1) The Illustrated Monuments

Sargon II continued the tendency, taking again the cutting of the throat and the decapitation of the enemies as well as the representations of bodies scattered but whole or decapitated, and impalement of whole bodies through the chest. Sargon II diversified also, and still, the range of representation of the practical details of cutting up, illustrating the destruction of the statues of the divinities adored by his enemies (fig. 1; 26). Anyway, a new fashion appears with the depiction of the king, holding a leash tied to a kneeling enemy's lip, and threatening him with his spear (fig. 32). This type of torture will also be very appreciated by the successors of Sargon II.

25. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1926, p. 271, 766; 273, 769.

26. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1926, p. 271, 766; 272, 768; 279, 775; 273, 769.

27. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1926, p. 271, 766; 278, 775.

2) The Textual References

Sargon II is, for the moment, the only neo-assyrian king of which the representations of tortures correspond almost all to the mentions in the texts. Among these maltreatments, one counts the massacre of a great number of civil enemies, and warriors, skinings as well as irons fetters²⁸. A small innovation appears with the humiliation of the enemy²⁹.

However, the texts mention many holocausts, which were not represented in art this reign.

Only the impalements, and the prisoners with pierced lips, fixed by a ring attached to a leash hold by the King, busy with stabbing a spear in the enemy's eye, were represented without one finding some in the preliminary analysis of the texts³⁰.

e) Senacherib

1) The Illustrated Monuments

Senacherib continued the tendencies innovated by his predecessors, taking again certain older reasons, like the vultures or the eagle (?), the cutting of the bodies, the bodies of scattered and decapitated enemies, flaying being no new feature, the accumulation and the calculation of the head, or the representation of the decapitated scattered bodies (fig. 1). Others practise, more recent on the preserved low-reliefs, also remain, like the impalements of whole bodies through the chest, the deportation and the destruction of the statues of overcome divinities (fig. 15; 1). With these, Senacherib will still add other more various details, as the reward, in the form of jewel, to a soldier on a scene of calculation of the heads of enemies overcome, the shaving of the head of the impaled enemies (fig. 24-25; 15). Once again, the representation of cutting the throat and decapitations seems lowering in the figurative register of this king, which can illustrate the desire to insist on death of the enemies during the combat, raising the prestige of the winner of it.

2) The Textual References

As usual, the massacres by cutting of the throat and the life are mentioned and represented many times in the texts of Senacherib³¹. The impalements of enemies around the cities continue as well as the dispersion of the enemy bodies in the

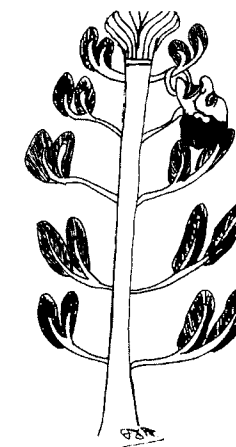


Figure 18 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Assurbanipal, showing the head of the King of Elam, vainquished, suspended in a tree of the gardens of Nineveh. Drawing of the author.

28. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 5, 16, 24.

29. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 13.

30. P. ALBENDA, *Le palais de Sargon d'Assyrie*, « Synthèse » n° 22, Recherches sur les civilisations, 1986, pl. 136 ; 75.

31. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 117; 127.

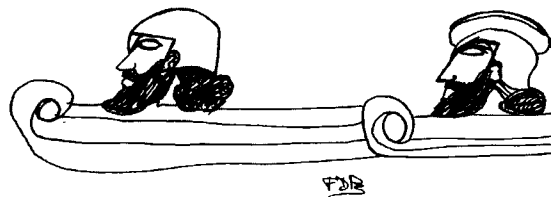


Figure 19 : Drawing inspired by a bronze band of Salmanazar III, showing the heads of enemies being washed up or carried on by the flood of a nearby river. Drawing of the author.

countryside³². The blood which runs and tints the ground is not illustrated, except if the low-reliefs were entirely painted, which is still another subject of which we will not treat here³³.

Nevertheless, Senacherib will add a key of horror while mentioning, without representing them fortunately, the cut of the testicles and the torsion of the remainder "like cucumbers of June" to the enemy prisoners. Cut of the hands, as that is stipulated in Annals of this king, made it possible to adapt the jewels of the overcome Elamites³⁴. There is perhaps also a bond with the scene of handing-over of bracelet to a light soldier after a victory over Elamites, about which one will speak further in these lines. Some other small macabre details in the accounts of the campaigns of Senacherib against Elamites make it possible to see to which point the treatments were savage. Indeed, the texts tell the eviscerations of the enemies, the scatter of their internal bodies, their contents and their blood on the ground on the vast plain and the dejections left by the runaways³⁵.

f) Essarhaddon

1) The Illustrated Monuments

The low-reliefs of this time are very few to be identified with certainty, since this king took again many parts dating from the reign of Tiglath-Pilezer III.

2) The Textual References

In his files, Essarhaddon announces the massacre of many enemies, warriors or civil, as well as the blood which dyed the ground like wool³⁶. Massive decapitations, carrying out sometimes to the suspension of the head of high-ranking persons to the shoulders of their nobles or relatives during parades accompanied by music and songs intended to express the absolute power of Assur³⁷. The bodies of the enemy, sometimes piled up in the plain, could be left without burials³⁸.

A small interesting innovation makes its appearance under this reign, the appearance of the chained enemies, attached to a gate of Niniveh, in company of the dogs and swines³⁹.

32. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 117; 127.

33. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 127.

34. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 127-128.

35. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 127-128.

36. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1926, p. 209, 520 ; 210, 521-522.

37. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1926, p. 305, 512.

38. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1926, p. 209, 520, 210 ; 521.

39. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1926, p. 205, 515 ; 208, 517.

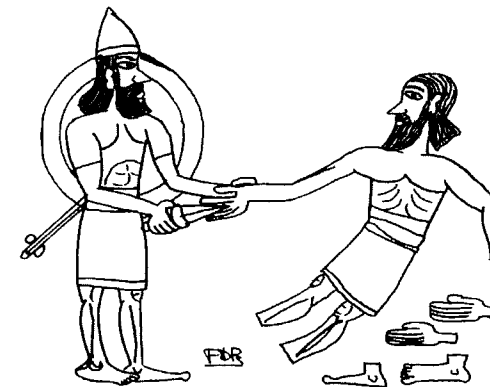


Figure 20 : Drawing inspired by a bronze band of Salmanazar III, showing a neo-assyrian soldier busy with the amputation of an enemy's hands. Drawing of the author.



Figure 21 : Drawing inspired by a bronze band of Salmanazar III, showing a neo-assyrian soldier busy with the amputation of an enemy's feet. Drawing of the author.

g) Assurbanipal

1) The Illustrated Monuments

Assurbanipal continued the tendencies innovated by his predecessors, taking again certain older reasons, like the vultures or the eagle (?), the cutting of the bodies, flaying, the accumulation and the calculation of the heads and develops many others of them more diversified. Indeed, certain treatments of the human bodies represented are more violent in the details than those of Salmanazar III, like the crushing of the bones of the enemies overcome, cut up and output, as well as the religious ceremonies and the suspension of the head of Te' umman in the gardens of Niniveh (fig. 17-18).

The fish of the deep and the birds of heaven, mentioned in the texts, are also illustrated, emaciating the bodies of the killed enemies, or the alive's.

This king is also the one whose reliefs comprise the figuration of birds much more diversified, as if the underlined species had a particular importance. One notes the very weak occurrence of the representation of cutting the throat and decapitations, which concern mainly the enemy characters whose statute is put forward by descriptive phylacters included in the composition of the figurative program. Contrary to the preceding reigns, the correspondence between the heads and the corpses decapitated appears more respected.

2) The Textual References

The usual massacres and decapitations, as that appears on the low-reliefs of this time, the massacres of many enemies, warriors and civil compared with lambs, always took place under Assurbanipal⁴⁰. The pulverization of the bones of

40. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 294, 773 ; 300 787 ; 303, 788; 304, 795-796; 305, 797; 306, 800; 308, 808; 314, 818; 319, 830.

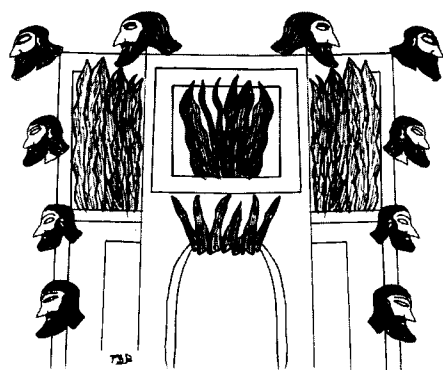


Figure 22 : Drawing inspired by a bronze band of Salmanazar III, showing the ramparts of a vainquished city, decorated with heads and set to fire. Drawing of the author.

of their remainders and flesh to the dogs, swines, birds of heaven, wolves and fish of the depths⁴¹. Skinnings also appear on the low-reliefs, but not the suspension of the skins to the ramparts of the conquered cities and Niniveh⁴⁴.

The Annals of Assurbanipal also mention other tortures, however absent of the illustrated monuments, like the impalements in the plains or around the cities⁴⁵. There were also the different ones, like the accumulation of body and parts of body in the streets, on the places and in the plains, without being able to be buried, with the greatest joy of the dogs and the swines, so that they “died deader than dead”⁴⁶. Among other tortures which were not represented on the low-reliefs of Assurbanipal, some recall those of Essarhaddon, like the torment of the kennel, when the prisoner is attached to the Eastern Gate of the town of Niniveh, the Door of the Thronging Nations -*Nirib Masnaki Adnâti*- in company of the jackals and the dogs⁴⁷. Sometimes, the chins of the prisoners were pierced, before to pass there a cord through the jaw, after which they were sent in Assyria for the pleasure of people and the glory of the gods, before discovering there the kennels which were intended to them⁴⁸. Other times, only the lips of overcome were pierced, before being sent in Assyria for the pleasure of people⁴⁹. Other details, as under the preceding reigns, are not represented with certainty in the low-reliefs, as the

the former kings of Elam and their departure towards Assyria, the deprivation of the offerings of food and water to the souls of the dead and the control of nobles, similar with dogs, constitutes a new reason under this reign⁴¹. The skinning of overcome always appears on the low-reliefs of this king, as well as decapitations and certain phases of the particular treatment reserved for the head of Te’umman, that his brother will carry around the neck before it does finish suspended on the branch of a tree in the gardens of Assurbanipal, in Niniveh⁴². The cutting of the tongues which broke the oath made to Assur is quite harshly illustrated on the low-reliefs of this king, but not the supply

blood which runs and tints the ground⁵⁰. The sequence of the enemies always has course, but the application of the sticks is a fact lately mentioned⁵¹.

An interesting element is provided by the mention of the suicide of an enemy, which was done already under Sargon II, but, in this case, it was made before the confrontation of the armies. The man committed suicide with his scraping-knife of belt in company of his shield bearer, and the Assyrian representative sent to the King the body of the king of Babylone as well as the head of the soldier, preserved in salt. The head of Nabû-bêl-Shumatê, transitory king of Babylone, was suspended on the shoulders of his twin brother and the remainder was not buried⁵². One slab of Tell Halaf also shows this type of event, but the comparison seems so easy that one still has to cautious when using it, for the meaning of this scene at Tell Halaf is quite hazy (fig. 36)⁵³.

One will also notice the redundancy of the mentions of the scraping-knife, dagger of iron, fast, fatal, carried to the belt, penetrating and sharpened⁵⁴.

II The Bodies and the Parts of Body

In the light of these data, one notices the redundancy of certain factors which influenced the treatment of overcome, died and alive. The practice of the mutilation and the parcelling out of the bodies of the enemies overcome with the combat goes up far in the history of the ancient near eastern military traditions. The Sumerian stela of Early Dynastic Period and the shell elements, in particular discovered at Ebla, illustrate well the practice of decapitation at the Third Millennium before our era⁵⁵.

As one will often see it on the preserved figurative monuments, decapitation could also constitute a technique of close combat, making it possible to put quickly an end to the individual confrontations (fig. 3-5).

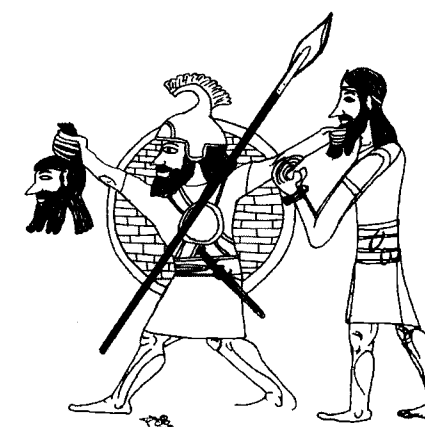


Figure 23 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Assurbanipal, showing a neo-assyrian soldier bringing back the head of an enemy and another living, and still full, one after battle. Drawing of the author.

41. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, 300, 788; 310, 810; 311, 811; 327, 826.

42. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 295, 774; 300, 787; 306, 800; 312, 815.

43. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 304, 795.

44. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 295, 774; 304, 795; 320, 831.

45. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 295, 774; 319, 830.

46. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 298, 786; 300, 787; 304, 796; 312, 815.

47. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 314, 819.

48. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 318, 829.

49. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 306, 800.

50. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 300, 787.

51. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 295, 774; 298, 784; 319, 830.

52. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1926, p. 312, 815.

53. W. ORTHMANN, *Untersuchungen zur Späthethitischen Kunst*, vol. I/II, Bonn, 1971, Tell Halaf A3/75, 182, pl. 10c.

54. D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, 1927, p. 302, 791; 304, 794; 312, 815; 318, 829.

55. R. DOLCE, *op. cit.*, p. 1; 126.



Figure 24 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Assurbanipal, showing the bodycount of the heads of enemies by two neo-assyrian scribes after battle. Drawing of the author.

It will be noticed that certain parts of body were the subject of a particular preference, like the head, the hands, the skin and the blood of the enemies. Although the goal of this article is not to make a study of it, one can however think that the cut off heads made it possible to be ensured of dead threat, and the cut hands would not take any more the weapons to rebel against Assyria. The attention and the treatment reserved for the skin can be compared with the importance attached to the skins of the large game in the East, like the lion, and cuts of fingers with that of these members for the archers, who formed

the main part of the armies at the time. Finally, the reader will realize that in spite of the forcenery and the precision in the narration or the representation of the tortures, worst among those were never illustrated. By way of example, one thinks of the boxes of cut heads, surmounted with impaled prisoners, surrounded by prisoners suspended with posts, covered with human skins and containing alive prisoners. The future of overcome, and thus also that their physical bodies, often depended on many factors, of which the nature of the principal objects: bodies or parts of human bodies concerned. In this case, the advantage of the practices reserved for the parts of body (decapitated bodies or heads), at least for the victims, lay in the fact that they were certainly carried out post mortem, for simple anatomical reasons.

It is however necessary to preserve a certain pragmatic direction at the reflexion in progress, in particular by specifying the conditions under which cutting up proceeded, namely in the smell and the body fluids ejected by the relaxation of the sphincterian nerves, after the death of the subject. Moreover, it happens that the nerves also make shrivelling the limbs of the body little after the death of the individuals, as in the event of crushing of the head or of decapitation.

It is not always easy to distinguish the nationality or the ethnic origin of the victims on the visual neo-assyrian documents; on the contrary, in the texts and in general, the two mentions often go by couples. Moreover, nothing makes it possible either to be able to identify the mixtures of nationalities, perhaps gathering the punished friendly soldiers and the overcome enemy victims, within the macabre trophies. Indeed, the distinctive features of the ethnos group concerned appear sometimes too much summary, by the desire of the sculptor to perhaps facilitate the task by reproducing a basic reason in several specimens, rather than several complex reasons in several examples, on a rather restricted space.



Figure 25 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Assurbanipal, showing a neo-assyrian officer giving a military decoration to a soldier. Drawing of the author.

a) The Nature of the Bodies and the Parts of Body

Within the framework of this paragraph, as the whole human bodies differ rather seldom in kind, this aspect will not be taken into account (fig. 6-8). Nevertheless, it will be for the parts of body, namely the heads, hands, feet, trunks, even of other pieces which were not always represented nor not mentioned in the documents of time. The human body elements gathered in order to form a macabre trophy could be of identical nature, therefore to form a coherent whole of several similar parts resulting from various bodies (fig. 9-11). Notwithstanding that, the pieces of bodies gathered within a single macabre trophy could also differ in kind, component thus of genuine "skewers" of cut out parts, but this option was only mentioned in the documents of time.

b) The Amount of the Bodies and the Parts of Body

Sometimes, one notes that the bodies or the parts of human bodies appear in a raised number, as under the reigns of Salmanezer III and Sargon II, and more rarely in an individual way (fig. 9-13).

c) The State of the Bodies and the Parts of Body

The state of the bodies, amputated, decapitated or both at the same time also helps to represent the eagerness of the winners. One will easily notice the presence of many impaled individuals, deprived or not of their members, according to cases⁵⁶. The dismemberment does not appear however any more on the neo-assyrian illustrated monuments preserved and known nowadays starting from

56. E. WALLIS-BUDGE, *op.cit.*, pl. XVII, 1; L. KING, 1915, pl. XLII, Bd. VII, 5; R. BARNETT, 1962, p. 82-83.

Sargon II. The intensity of the suffering inflicted by this torture makes a point of knowing if they were impaled before or after being mutilated and/or being decapitated (fig. 13). With regard to this last remark, it seems judicious to think that the enemies subjected to the torture by impalement after amputation underwent certainly a cauterization of fortune on the wounds in question. Indeed, by stopping the haemorrhage resulting from an amputation, one lengthened the anguish of the subject while making him more badly suffering, which was undoubtedly one of the goals of these tortures⁵⁷. It is what arrived to the murderer of the General Kléber, in Egypt⁵⁸.

d) The Attitude of the Bodies and the Parts of Body

The attitude of the body also makes it possible to imagine the pains felt by the tortured victims at the crucial time, which they are crucified or suspended. The position of the body, horizontal, vertical or, and its orientation, head in top or not, exposed face or back, and ultimate refinements like the slaughter, the preferences could undoubtedly vary according to the people and conditions met with the liking of the engagements.

e) The Accumulation of the Bodies and the Parts of Body

In certain circumstances, the Neo-Assyrian aligned and piled up the bodies of overcome (their deads also, without any doubt), in order to sort them, to count them or, more simply, to release the passage which they blocked⁵⁹. Nevertheless, a large pyramid of bodies or heads, piled up or impaled, and located on a lane, or one of the nevralgic points of the network to which it belongs, could certainly contribute to the strategic projection of the military events in progress while influencing the moral of one or the other of the belligerents (fig. 9-15). The accumulation of the selected pieces could be simple, as one announces it in the subparagraph preceding, or more complex, using the contribution of a wood post, even built (fig. 9-15). From this last point of view, the heads could in particular appear in small shelters recovered or built for the occasion (fig. 11). As a human head comprises much less plane surfaces than a whole body, one can as think as those were threaded on large piles, like the balls of a counting frame, which ensured the stability of the monument⁶⁰.

f) The Mode of Fixing of the Bodies and the Parts of Body

To stick them altogether, the Neo-Assyrians could choose to tie or nail the parts of body to their respective supports. No scene represents methods making it

possible to fix the bodies, mutilated or not, without piercing them (fig. 16). If no other system of attachment is announced in the currently available sources, there remains however possible that the Neo-Assyrians can have protected the structure of their siege machines against the projectiles of the enemies while fixing on it living prisoners from the besieged enemy.

The texts do not mention technique other than impalement, the attachment or walling in to fix the whole bodies. The mode of impalement selected can prove useful to be able to appreciate the intensity of torture and the effects expected by the practise of the technique at their enemy⁶¹. The opening of entry of the stake in the bodies represented constitutes also an interesting index to conceive the range of refinements of this technique. Indeed, it must certainly exist a whole difference in feelings between the fact of being card-indexed on a stake which pierces the navel or the chest, and that to be literally spit above (fig. 12-16). These first cases could represent the erection of a corpse impaled on a beam in order to simply expose it, which encourages thinking that they were done post mortem. In fact, to die pierced by a pointed beam driven in full chest produced certainly less noise, and lasted as certainly less longer, as the second possibility under consideration in this paragraph. Besides, it remains to be noted on this subject that the stake, inserted in the opening of the body while the person was tied, was not to be so until the heart or lungs, which would have caused the immediate death of the subject. By posterior testimonies, one knows that a technique of impalement required that the patient be laying on the belly, that a broad notch is practised within his basement, and that the head of the stake is inserted there with blows of mallet. Then, the beam was raised and partially inserted in a hole dug in order to maintain it vertically stable⁶². Consequently, it is not truly the depression of the stake which killed the enemy, but rather the gravity which, after the erection of the beam, drew the body downwards. During this time, the point, frayed or not, made its way through the entrails of the torture victim, until the final moment. It is thus by moving the members that the impaled enemies were made suffer or slip along the stake, this is why their torturers broke, or crossed them sometimes, in order to weigh down the weight of the bodies, then unabling them to rest on the feet against the beam. Moreover, and by there, they prevented the suicide attempts of the torture victims, being able to try to break the neck with their hands, in order to put an end to their sufferings. On a purely comparative basis, one can think of the resting place, *sedile*, that the torturers fixed sometimes on the posts of crucified, so that they can rest above and prolong their anguish⁶³.

Impalement by the navel was certainly very difficult to realize correctly, because it was then a question of crossing the body without bursting the inner vital organs nor to touch the interior of the rib cage, where the heart and the lungs reside, in order to avoid killing the subject directly from pain.

57. L. KING, *Bronze Reliefs from the Gates of Shalmaneser King of Assyria B.C. 860-825*, Londres, 1915, pl. LVII, Bd. X, 3 ; XXXIX, Bd. VII, 2.

58. Claude Desprez, about the death penalty given to the murderer of Général Kléber, at Cairo, in 1800.

59. R. BARNETT, *The Sculptures of Aššur-Nasir-Apli II (883-859 B. C.), Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 B.C.), Esaraddon (682-669 B.C.) from the Central and South-West Palaces at Nimrud*, Londres, 1962, p. 140-141.

60. L. KING, *op. cit.*, pl. XLV, Bd. VIII, 2.

61. R. BARNETT, *The Sculptures from the South-West Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh*, Londres, 1998, pl. 350, 430c.

62. Claude Desprez, about the death penalty given to the murderer of Général Kléber at Cairo, in 1800.

63. M. TZAFERIS, « Crucifixion--The Archaeological Evidence », *Biblical Archaeology Review* 11, February 1985, p. 44-53.

g) The Support of the Bodies and the Parts of Body

Certain palaeo-babylonian texts mention the crucifixion of people related to the populations besieged on the siege machine used by besieging during the approach of the walls. Nothing attests the use of this technique for the neo-assyrian period, but nothing cancels the possible use of it either. Nevertheless, the stake was the subject of a preference which lasted a long time in the illustrated representations of the inflicted torments, in certain circumstances, with the victims of the Neo-Assyrians (fig. 9-16). Certain scenes, corresponding to one or the other level of the parcelling out of the bodies, can appear on the visual documents of the time. For example, one of the scenes of siege represented on the bronze sheets of Salmanezer III can correspond to the digging of a sap using a crowbar in the besieged ramparts⁶⁴. However, the image can just as easily represent the setting with dead of an enemy killed by means of a spear (fig. 16)⁶⁵. Finally, the movement details of this label also coincide with those which a torturer would use to impale a victim as an animal passed to the pin, before raising the stake. Certain details of the scenes of impalement carried out under this king remain surprising, in particular the representation of men impaled and occupied to discuss or to be caught the arm (fig. 12). This illustrates the challenge of the victims vis-a-vis to the torturers, whose human History preserves a considerable number of examples, or the extension of the torture victims on their fate, the scene deserved to be announced since the artist who carried it out made it also, on a very small surface and within a vast and complex iconographic program⁶⁶.

h) The Site of the Bodies and the Parts of Body

The site of the place of torment and/or exhibition can also make it possible to determine the statute of the spectators. Close to the walls, on the walls, the siege ramps or along the access roads which carry out to it, it acts certainly of an effect required on the enemies or the residents; close to the camp, of a trophy, a limit not to be exceeded or of a punishment. The places of impalement preferred were, under Salmanezer III, the approach the ramps, the siege ramp, the ramparts of the cities⁶⁷. Thereafter, the neighbourhoods constituted also good supports which were sometimes used under Assurnasirpal II, Tiglath-Phalzer III, Sargon II and Senacherib⁶⁸.

i) The Distribution of the Bodies and the Parts of Body

Sometimes, one notes that the bodies or the parts of human body appear in concentrated groups, more rarely in a dispersed way.

64. L. KING, *op. cit.*, pl. LXXIV, Bd. XIII, 2.

65. About this approach, see the article of the author : « Notes sur certains sapeurs néo-assyriens », *Res Antiquae* 4, 200, p. 45-64.

66. L. KING, *op. cit.*, pl. XXII, Bd. IV, 3.

67. L. KING, *op. cit.*, pl. XXII, Bd. IV, 3; pl. LVII, Bd. X, 3.

68. R. BARNETT, *op. cit.*, 1962, p. 82-83; P. ALBENDA, *op. cit.*, 1986, pl. 112 ; R. BARNETT, *op. cit.*, 1998, pl. 350, n° 430c.

j) The Concentration of the Bodies and the Parts of Body

The erection of macabre trophies, into small or great number, on various points of the perimeter of the operations of combat counted among the psychological options of combat of the neo-assyrian armies.

k) The Treatment Reserved for the Bodies and the Parts of Body

The choice of the torments inflicted to the victims, as well as the details of the exhibition and the destruction of the skins, also differed according to the wishes of the Neo-Assyrians. For this category, two options arise, whose first was the treatment with body or parts of "lost" bodies, left rot, devoured by the animals or emaciated by the men. When the birds appear on the illustrated monuments, it is often in the shape of vultures, crows or eagles undermining the corpses or carrying the entrails of the deceased. More rarely, the remainders of certain overcome enemies, like the bones, for example, finish by being crushed by the close relations of late people on a grinding stone before finishing dispersed with the wind, in a river or into simple bricks of construction (fig. 17). It was in particular the case under Assurbanipal, whose texts and low-reliefs specify the succession of the stages⁶⁹. The major part of the cases of figure which arise at the time follow the destiny of the skins of overcome people in the human History: piled up, burned, buried by the survivors or, more simply, left rot in the surrounding countryside.

Another treatment, "with preserved bodies", in entireties or of pieces chosen, was also taken in consideration. That was in particular the case for the head of certain kings, but never as much as that of Te' umman, king of Elam, who was mummified (fig. 18).

Other illustrations, carried out under Salmanazar III can also correspond to the washing of the heads in a river in order to make them identifiable before their exhibition on a stake or to pile up them somewhere⁷⁰. It is as possible as the heads of decapitated overcome enemies are simply represented descending the illustrated river, carted by the river, or travelling on the ground, hustled by the fury of the combat (fig. 19; 8).

69. R. BARNETT, *op. cit.*, 1998, pl. 289, 381b.

70. L. KING, *op. cit.*, pl. LXXV, Bd. XIII, 4.



Figure 26 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Sargon II, showing the setting with death or the beheading of a vainquished enemy by a neo-assyrian soldier. Drawing of the author.



Figure 27 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Assurnazirpal II, showing a musician playing while a neo-assyrian soldier brings an enemy's head to the bodycount. Drawing of the author.

Sometimes, only the temporary conservation of the skin of the victims seemed to have importance for the winners, insofar as this one took part in the suffering of the individual and the memory of the inflicted torment: skinning⁷¹. The texts are dumb on the selected procedure to skin the human ones, as can one, at least currently, to think as the activity approached the skinning of a big game. With this intention, the torturer was to attach the victim to pitons of wood laid out in the shape of cross of Saint Andrew on the ground, undoubtedly with chains as that appears sometimes on the low-reliefs (fig. 1). He incised then the skin of the ankles like that of the internal face of the lower limbs, then continued along the chest. This operation aimed at carrying out a broad notch according to contours of a letter Y on the body of the torture victim, but without starting the internal muscles or bodies, and this to the chest. Then, the same process was practised on the wrists and the internal face of the arms of the victim in order to connect the heads of the two incisions (fig. 20). Finally, if the operation had been correctly carried out, which required certainly much precision, coolness and practice, it was enough for the torturer to draw on the skin from the ends cut out on the level from the joints, while following a single direction, and this one was removed like a sock. Obviously, the technique could certainly vary according to imaginations of the moment, as by skinning the victim by several small surfaces, for example in the shape of thin straps of skin, which undoubtedly added more intensity with the sufferings inflicted by torture. In other circumstances, it is the tongues of overcome which was the subject of the imagination of the winners (fig. 2). Except the use of a grip, known in the later times in various parts of the sphere but which is not represented nor not mentioned in the neo-assyrian preserved documents, that of the scraping-knife, the dagger, can allow taking the tongue of an overcome enemy, living or not. With this intention, the most difficult phase of this practice was surely the opening and the blocking of the mouth of the victim, undoubtedly facilitated by the fracture of the jaw, which prevented the still alive tortured victims biting the fingers of the torturers or from retaining the scraping-knife with the teeth of it. Then, one inserted the scraping-knife in the oral cavity, by maintaining the tongue well and while drawing above, in order to cut more easily the muscles of the brake and the base⁷². Without that, the torturer was likely to find himself with several fragments of tongue to cut out successively, which is certainly even more difficult, taking into account little accessible space of movement inside the mouth. It arrived perhaps sometimes that the tortu-

rer inserts his scraping-knife too far in the muscles, or that the weapon skids on a bone, and that the point arises from the head of overcome by one of the side faces of the skull⁷³. That seems to be represented on certain low-reliefs of Assurnazirpal (fig. 2). Finally, if everything had correctly happened for the torturer, it only remained to him to tear off the cut out tongue with one dry blow, a little with the manner used to take the genitals or scalper a human head by certain populations, or certain people, at one time famous or remunerated for this practice⁷⁴.

1) The Sacredness of the Treatment Reserved for the Bodies and the Parts of Body

Few documents make it possible to fully apprehend the sacredness reserved for bodies of overcome enemies. In spite of that, under Senacherib, the erection of torture of victims, with the shaven head and card-indexed on posts vis-a-vis with a chosen public, comprises certainly a particular religious aspect which, for this reason, would deserve to be the subject of a more thorough study (fig. 15)⁷⁵.

For the other cases of figures, one can notice three options as for the sacredness of the treatment reserved for the selected pieces. First rests on the idea that one granted sometimes no sacredness to the macabre trophies, which is very little probable.

In the second possibility, one considers that an average sacredness coincides with the scenes of cutting of the throat, which can represent the setting with death, even the "ritual" decapitation of overcome⁷⁶. The disadvantage of a scraping-knife, when the soldiers made use of it to cut the head of their victims, lies in the need for breaking, to even shear the cervical vertebrae in order to disunite them from the trunk. For this reason, the assumption of the "setting to death by cutting ritual" seems more indicated to identify the gesture (fig. 3-5). However, it should well be conceived that, in all the cases, the decapitation of a body is practised more easily after having cut the throat of the person, was this only for reasons of convenience during the facts. On the neo-assyrian illustrated monuments, the parcelling out of the bodies is also practised using a scraping-knife, which presents the same disadvantages as in the case of decapitation (fig. 20-21). However, the attention given to the representation of this weapon in the reliefs, and its precise description in the texts, seems to indicate that the aspect to be underlined was the context of the combat to the hand-to-hand, this is why the scraping-knife is a perfect tool and raises the prestige of the winners.

In the last possibility, a high sacredness could be currently allotted to certain demonstrations of suspension or treatment of the bodies, as the Gauls also did it⁷⁷. For example, the ornamentation of the ramparts of an overcome city, using

71. P. ALBENDA, *op. cit.*, pl. 78.

72. L. KING, *op. cit.*, pl. XVIII, Bd. III, 5.

73. R. BARNETT, *op. cit.*, 1998, pl. 300-302, 384a-c.

74. Chr. FEEST, *L'Art de la Guerre*, Paris, 1979, p. 38.

75. More data about this topic will be available for the reader in the article of the author : *Fragmentation of the Enemies in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, Heidelberg, 2008, forthcoming.

76. R. BARNETT, *op. cit.*, 1962, p. 87; R. BARNETT, *op. cit.*, 1998, pl. 296-297, 383a-b.

77. J.-L. BRUNEAUX, « Un sanctuaire gaulois à Gournay-sur-Aronde (Oise) », *Gallia* 38, 1985, p. 15 ; B. LAMBOT, « Les morts d'Acy Romance (Ardennes) à La Tène finale. Pratiques funéraires, aspects religieux et hiérarchie sociale », in : G. LEMAN-DELERIVE, *Les Celtes* :

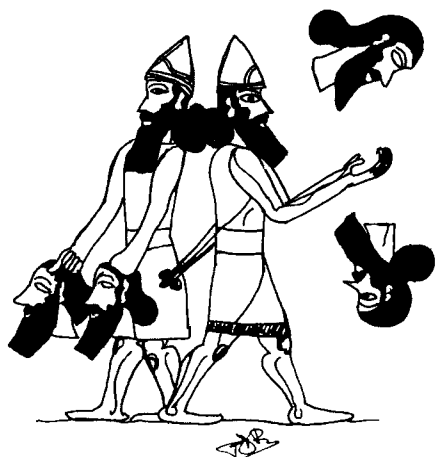


Figure 28 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Assurnazirpal II, showing two neo-assyrian soldiers piling or playing with enemy heads during the bodycount. Drawing of the author.

human heads (fig. 22), can be regarded as a sacrilege since the top of the ramparts comprised a supernatural dimension in the spirit of certain local populations at the time concerned⁷⁸. In the same way, the holocausts of bodies, or parts of bodies, represented on the contemporary documents constitute also a practice comparable with sacrifices, as one did it in Europe with the witches and the heretics (fig. 22)⁷⁹. At the time of Senacherib, and as one already read higher, the head of the body of enemies whole and complete, impaled in the neighbourhoods of the city, was shaven for a reason or for another (fig. 15). The Gods played their parts with that, too. At the request of Ishtar, the treatment given to the head of Te' umman which, after grinds ceremonies in all kinds, will finish suspended on the branch of a tree

under which Assurbanipal lunches in his gardens within Niniveh⁸⁰. That also makes it possible to conceive the existence of ceremonial or religious practices on the remainders of the human skins (fig. 18). In fact, the same applied to the skins of the killed lions during the hunts of the neo-Assyrian kings, as one can see it on their visual monuments. In other circumstances, the winged disc of Assur assists the Assyrian troops with the combat for the destruction of the enemies of King of Assyria, which represents also a certain sacredness in the neo-assyrian understanding of the war.

III Synthesis of the Data Collected

All these variations depended, like the reader suspects it already undoubtedly, on certain requirements due to the material available. As already certain mythological texts of Ugarit tell it, Anat also was delected in the middle of the scattered and parcelled out bodies, going between the sliced palms and heads, in the filth of the heroes⁸¹. This divinity also enjoyed, in the form of Ishtar, of a certain status to the eyes of the neo-assyrian kings and the town of Arbèles, which was devoted to him, also provided a military quota⁸². Assurbanipal, in the Prism B, specifies be-

sides that he took many care of the head of Te' umman because Ishtar of Arbèles had ordered to him to do so⁸³. His predecessors also obeyed as much with their military campaigns, like their Annals, which glorified their gods of Assyria all the two lines, attest it well.

a) The Criteria to Select the Practices Mentioned or Represented

Those, mainly the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the trophies, seem regarded as essential by the scribes or the artists who represented them or described in the neo-assyrian documents. Like the reader suspects certainly it, these choices rested without any doubt on the status of the discounted public, the required effect and the sources or the quality of the victims available. Naturally, the number and the state of the pieces chosen, the attitude of the pieces chosen, accumulation, the mode of fixing, the support, the site, the distribution, the concentration of the selected pieces as well as the treatment which were reserved to them and the sacredness of this one represents the points of interest which put all these factors forward. Indeed, the psychological impact required on the spectators, the psychological and economic profit that the Neo-Assyrians could withdraw from the particular destruction of the human carcasses were not certainly to be negligible either. Finally, some last points, like the utility or the importance of the victims available undoubtedly found their place in the concerns of the time.

Various principal factors were taken into account during the operations of cutting, but other subjacent essential factors were also to be. Among those, the preoccupations with artistic, recurring conventions in the neo-assyrian visuals or textuels, played certainly an important part in the representation of the parcelling out of the bodies. Moreover, the state of excitation or frustration of the spirit of the neo-assyrian troops, as well as the position of the territory conquered within the Kingdom, played a part in the programming of the mutilations. Indeed, all these methods of cutting up human bodies required time and the soldiers available, without counting the state of tiredness of the victorious armies and their military, advantageous situation or not. Finally, the state of decomposition, wished or advanced, of the macabre trophies, as well as the destiny chosen for the bodies of the victims, left rot or being devoured by the wild beasts belonged to the repertory of the options and concerns concerned with the practice of the parcelling out.

Finally, it also appears that the Assyrian kings had a kind of "censorship" of their own, as usually the worst treatments of all, like the buildings and fires of Assurnazirpal II or the castrations of Senacherib, were not represented in the visuals.

b) The Practical Details of Cutting Up

For the little which we can deduce, the Neo-Assyrian gathered certainly the victims intended for cutting up according to the treatment to be inflicted to them

rites funéraires en Gaule du Nord entre le VI^e et le I^{er} siècle avant J.-C., Recherches récentes en Wallonie, Namur, 1998, p. 80.

78. E. PORADA, « Battlements in the Military Architecture and in the Symbolism of the Ancient Near East », D. FRASER, H. HIBBARD, M. J. EVINE (éd.), *Essays in the History of Architecture Presented to Rudolf Wittkower*, Londres, 1967, p. 7.

79. R. DOLCE, *op.cit.*, p. 126.

80. R. BARNETT, *op.cit.*, 1976, pl. LIX ; LXIII-LXV.

81. R. LABAT, *Les religions du Proche-Orient asiatique*, Paris, 1970, p. 393-394.

82. J. POSTGATE, « The Assyrian Army at Zamua », *Iraq* LXII, 2000, p. 105.

83. R. DOLCE, *op.cit.*, p. 1 ; 99. More data about this topic will be available for the reader in the article of the author : *Fragmentation of the Enemies in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, Heidelberg, 2008, forthcoming.



Figure 29 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Assurnazirpal II, showing a bird bringing an enemy's head to the bodycount. Drawing of the author.

before sending them towards the centers of cutting up, then towards the places of exhibition. To a certain extent, this practice approaches what was carried out by nations, before, during and since the Second World War. The details of these horrors make it possible to have an idea of the sufferings inflicted to the enemy according to the circumstances.

c) A Practical Iconoclasm Associated with the Ordalic and Crowned Value of War

The mutilation and the parcelling out of the bodies of overcome by the neo-assyrian armies constitute without any doubt a practical form of iconoclasm, showing the disability of the enemy divinities to protect their followers. Indeed, Assur appeared invincible when the statues of the enemy divinities, were captured, sent in exile, or were also dismembered, as under Sargon II⁸⁴. Moreover, the parcelling out of the enemy victims also formed the show of force of Assur, providing a whole series of particular *ex-votos*, as well as the sacrifice of these divinities and their "cattle" to Assur. The sacrifice of the proper people of foreign divinities to these same divinities, and of those in Assur, constituted certainly a practice equipped with an ironic direction rather appreciated by the winners of the time. Indeed, this iconoclasm remains well evoked by the suspension of human heads at the top of the ramparts of the fortifications besieged under Salmanezer III (fig. 22), especially when the religious value is known that the ancient near eastern populations of that period granted to the top ramparts of their cities⁸⁵. Lastly, these practices of mutilation and parcelling out represented also a means of desacralization of the place occupied by the overcome, which contributed to weaken the preceding local authority and to reinforce the public image of the Neo-Assyrians. It is besides worthy to note that in Egypt, lasting the Pharaonic time, it sometimes happened to people to ritually mutilate the representation of certain gods or monarchs, in order to make symbolically them inoffensive, by erasing their feet, hands, eyes, nose and ears. It is also what arrived at certain portraits of Senacherib and Assurbanipal after the fall of Niniveh.

The Neo-Assyrians can have also chosen to represent the bodies of their enemies parcelled out in order to announce of it the punishment and the total destruc-

84. P. ALBENDA, *op. cit.*, pl. 133.

85. E. PORADA, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

tion, allegedly final, of a correctly remunerated crime and a culprit: the rebellion or the refusal of the tender to the neo-assyrian kingdom⁸⁶. Besides, we preserve similar scenes on the visual monuments of civilizations contemporary and close to the Neo-Assyrians. Among those, the Neo-Hittites of Karkemish left low-reliefs representing the setting with death of an attached prisoner, those of Zincirli illustrate a rider which brings back a head and a man maintained by two warriors (fig. 33-34)⁸⁷. Other monuments, left by the aramean populations of Tell Halaf presents the setting at dead of a man maintained by two others, the presence of a bird at the time of a hunting in the chariot with terrestrial big game and, finally, a double setting with death, using scraping-knife (fig. 35)⁸⁸. This type of episode is also mentioned in Annals of Assurbanipal, which states certainly that that is not only one decorative reason.

Just like Marduk did it with that of Tiamat in the Babylonian mythological texts, the cutting up of the body of the enemy protects the cosmic order from the hostile and dangerous forces, while making it possible to build a new world with the remains of the enemy⁸⁹. In addition, the ordalic value allotted to the war by the Neo-Assyrians involves also the exhibition of the punishment reserved for overcome, just like a cup can represent the concrete result of the long combat of a sportsman for the victory. In any event, the enemy was the negative and chaotic element that the Neo-Assyrians were to eliminate to ensure the future of the world⁹⁰.

The Code of Hammurabi and the middle assyrian laws comprise the mention of the stake and the deprivation of burial only in the cases of voluntary abortion⁹¹. The stake constitutes the punishment reserved for the crimes considered as atrocious and was practised, when that was necessary, even on the corpse of the delinquent. The deliberated loss of the body of the late one, without no funerary rite being celebrated, also means that the crime represented a sacrilege of an extreme gravity. Although there was no time to supplement the investigation in the neo-assyrian texts, it remains very possible that these ideas prevailed always at the time in question, since the atrocity of the punishments inflicted to the overcome enemies, in certain circumstances, is not any doubt.

An element moreover to apply to the ordalic value of the war, according to the neo-assyrian design. This ordalic value, which is not any more to show, obeyed certain rules, in particular based on the principle of the retaliation and the status of the victims, as the destruction of Babylon under Senacherib shows it well⁹². Assurbanipal mentions the cut of the tongues of the cursed liars who had not respec-

86. E. BLEIBTREU, « Grizzly Assyrian Record of Torture and Death », *Biblical Archaeology Review* XVII, 1, 1991, p. 52-57 ; M. VAN DE MIEROOP, « Revenge, Assyrian Style », *Past and Present* 179, 2003, p. 10 ; D. NADALI, *op. cit.*, p. 1-4.

87. W. ORTHMANN, *op. cit.*, pl. 28a, E/11 ; pl. 55b, A/3 ; 57d, B/4.

88. W. ORTHMANN, *op. cit.*, pl. 10c, A3/49 ; 10a, A3/176 ; 11b-c, A3/56-57.

89. R. LABAT, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

90. D. NADALI, *op. cit.*, p. 5 ; 17. More data about this topic will be available for the reader in the article of the author : *Fragmentation of the Enemies in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, Heidelberg, 2008, forthcoming.

91. G. CARDASCIA, 1969, p. 244, n° 53 ; 245.

92. M. VAN DE MIEROOP, *op. cit.*, p. 9-14.

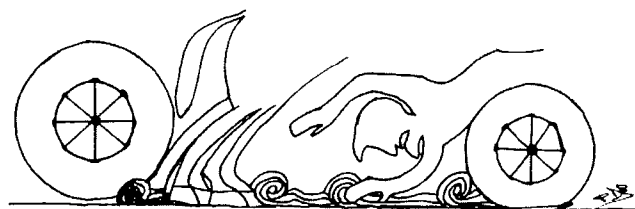


Figure 30 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Assurnazirpal II, showing an enemy falling under a neo-assyrian chariot, with either blood or water flooding at the feet of the horses. Drawing of the author.

ted the oath made to King of Assyria and the sacrifice of prisoners to the shadow of the late, assassinated, Senacherib⁹³. Finally, it will be noticed that the akkadian expression which means “to be avenged” and “to help” is the same one (*gimilla turru*)⁹⁴. The article of Prof. Van De Mieroop puts this phenomenon forward in an admirable way, by showing the relation between the account of the destruction of Babylon and that of the improvements of Niniveh⁹⁵.

When the birds, mostly vultures, appear on the illustrated monuments, they are often devouring the corpses or carrying the entrails of the dead. However, there remains possible that these raptors represent the Imgi eagle rather, or Imdugud, coming to help the Neo-Assyrians, as the Plague which follow the war. On this subject, moreover, a thorough study would be more than advisable in order to be able to slice, if possible, and to propose solid arguments for the identification of these birds during the neo-assyrian time⁹⁶.

It is interesting to note how much the enemy is described as evil, liar and perfidious, in the texts, and always represented as overcome and fallen into pieces in the visual monuments.

d) A Tool of Political Domination

This parcelling out of human bodies allowed, as one already read higher, to reduce the capacity remaining of the local authorities, taking part in the powerful political image of the neo-assyrian armies on the spot, and could counter the desires of revolt, or increase them. Indeed, a population put into pieces could take again the weapons against the occupant with difficulty, unless awaiting the arrival of a new generation, even, more simply, of a new population. Later and further, the capital executions of Ravailac and the Members of the Powder Plot, constitute an interesting ethnographic comparison. There was certainly also a relationship between these techniques of cutting up and the economic, political and military value granted to their macabre trophies by the Neo-Assyrians. The cutting up of the bodies makes it possible to transport a greater number of macabre trophies,

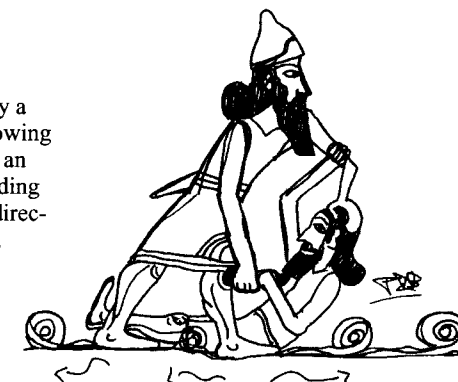
93. M. VAN DE MIEROOP, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

94. M. VAN DE MIEROOP, *op. cit.*, p. 12; 20.

95. M. VAN DE MIEROOP, *op. cit.*, p. 5-17.

96. Fr. THUREAU-DANGIN, « L'Aigle Imgi », *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* XXIV, 1940, p. 200.

Figure 31 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Assurnazirpal II, showing a neo-assyrian soldier stabbing an enemy, with blood or water flooding from that point in two opposing directions. Drawing of the author.



further and by taking less space of storage, since the winners do not take whole bodies, and alive, in load⁹⁷.

Moreover, this practice also makes it possible to distract the victorious troops after the engagements, in their giving a means of decompressing and letting the steam off after strong emotions.

At the same time, cutting up made it possible to the victorious soldiers to gain higher status or rank by bringing back heads of enemies or enemies whole who, for more convenience of transport, were then preserved (temporarily?) alive (fig. 23-25). On another side, a prisoner is one labour-power item, a currency of exchange or a source of raw material interesting for the winner. In the possibility that those were captured without fleeing, one can believe that the prestige of their winners was raised by it, since a dead man does not defend himself.

This tool of policy domination is also based on the “cleaning” and the “pollution” of socio-economical areas. In spite of its economic and political attractions, the problem of the cutting up and exhibition of the human bodies by the winners lies in the risk to declare epidemics and economical problems, in particular because of the bodies left rot or resulting from the massacre of the local mass-labourers. These practices comprised certainly also a relationship with the deportations of whole populations after the neo-assyrian victories, also making it possible to avoid long, expensive and tiresome transport of people, very in “cleaning” the sources of possible revolts and by delimiting the new territory recently brought to the neo-assyrian kingdom.

e) An Idea Reflected from the Beginning for a Measurable Accountancy in Time

As one can suspect it, the practices of mutilation and of parcelling out of the bodies obeyed certainly to some practical requirements, thus saving in ways not to transport the selected pieces on all sides and to any end of fields. Consequently, this practice formed certainly part of an idea reflected from the beginning to avoid

97. R. BARNETT, *op. cit.*, 1998, pl. 210-211, 284a-b.



Figure 32 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Sargon II, showing the king threatening a kneeling enemy, holding the leash fixed into the lip of this last one.
Drawing of the author.

engagements. That would undoubtedly make it possible to identify the possible localization of mass graves or battlefields, that Archaeology could check or not, once that the grounds in question will be again accessible in full safety for the diggers.

Certain soldiers of Senachérib or Assurbanipal receive a jewel on a scene of calculation of the heads of enemies heaped up⁹⁹. One can thus conceive that certain pieces were worth more than others, or than they allowed a faster social recognition (fig. 25). About this subject, we know that the king appointed himself his officers, at least in theory, but nothing prevented the senior officers from doing it in his absence, undoubtedly¹⁰⁰. It is a little what one finds in the biblical episode of David and Goliath. Moreover, decapitation makes it possible to be ensured of the final death of the enemy, while avoiding with the soldiers cheating on the numbers of their personal victims, since the human beings in general have only one and single head, contrary to the fingers and the hands. As an interesting feat, one of Assunazirpal II's reliefs shows an eagle, or vulture, also bringing the head of an enemy to the bodycount, maybe illustrating the animals, or god, has also done his share of the job (fig. 29). Other scenes present also the setting with dead of enemies opposite the King or people of high statute, signs that the moment was from the beginning required according to the attraction which these people could find there. This fact appears clearly on the neo-assyrian paintings of Til-Barsip,

useless displacements, during and after the calculation and the cutting up of the victims on the selected ground (fig. 23-25).

As a different approach to what D. Nadali wrote, it seems the Assyrians knew well their targets, the culture of their adversaries and the means of arriving at the victory, as the analysis of their intelligence network under Senachérib by P. Dubovsky shows it well⁹⁸. Often, the punishment strikes where that makes it most badly, like the profanation and the destruction of sacred woods and the tombs of the former kings of Elam show it well. Moreover, by jointly using the texts and the visual representations of the time, a study could try to measure these effects of an accountancy of enemies killed, or destroyed, and measurable in time and space with the wire of the campaigns undertaken by the neo-assyrian kings. This practice also made it possible to hold the calculations of the enemy losses, a very useful data always during the

98. D. NADALI, *op. cit.*, p. 55-56 ; P. DUBOVSKY, *Hezekiah and the Assyrian Spies. Reconstruction of the Neo-Assyrian Intelligence Services and Its Significance for 2 Kings, 18-19*, Rome, 2006.

99. R. BARNETT, *op. cit.*, 1998, pl. 208-209, 283a-b ; 253, 346c.

100. Fl. MALBRAN-LABAT, « L'armée et l'organisation militaire de l'Assyrie d'après les lettres des Sargonides trouvées à Ninive », *Hautes études orientales* 2, 19, 1982, p. 142.

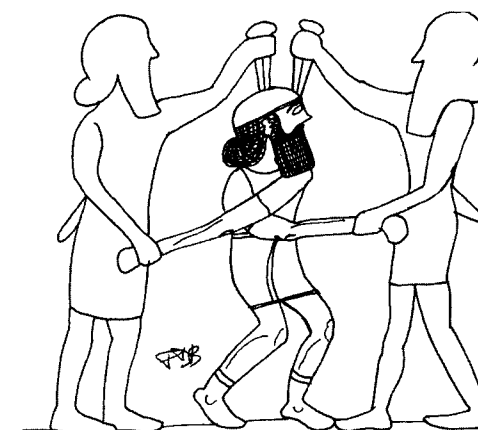


Figure 33 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Carkemish, showing two warriors stabbing a prisoner while holding his both hands.
Drawing of the author.

for example, but the goal of this article is to present an outline of the practices met, not to make an exhaustive catalogue of it¹⁰¹.

f) A Deliberately Selected and Voluntarily Assumed Reputation

One realizes well that this reputation of cruel and pitiless beings, often allotted to the neo-assyrian people, was deliberately required. In fact, as one can say it of Vladimir Bessarab Dracula, known as Vlad Tepesh -the Impaling-, which also practised cutting up and impalement of people: to be a dreaded chief of war, it is necessary to be frightening. As the History shows it, the neo-Assyrians paid their practices the very expensive price, but one still speaks about them according to these terms nowadays. Nevertheless, like the vestiges of certain civilizations, former and contemporary, or moved away and close, help to see, these practices for a long time had course in this part of the world. The Bible, as well as a middle-assyrian text, mention even the ripping open of pregnant women like an act of war punished by a total destruction and without any pity¹⁰². That does not appear nowhere during the neo-assyrian period. Egyptian, eblaïtes, neo-hittites and posterior, Gallic and medieval, Inquisition arts, various revolutions in the world and tribal cultures, as well as the headers of everyday newspapers are full with that kind of events. This shows it well, these practices often have success.

Obviously, this cruelty, in all refinements which appear represented on the visual monuments or mentioned in the texts, could constitute the demonstration of a firm combative resolution or the consequence of a destroying fury, as that which seized certain ancient combatants, sometimes called the *berserk*¹⁰³. The two essential characteristics of the warriors of this type are this propensity, in the medium of the combat, to enter a state of fright which made them forget any concept of pain or survival, and this rage which led them to massacre all the combatants

101. Fr. THUREAU-DANGIN, *Til Barsip*, I/II, Paris, 1936, pl. LI-LII.

102. M. COGAN, « 'Ripping Open Pregnant Women' in Light of an Assyrian Analogue », *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103, 4, 1983, p. 755-756.

103. Sn. STURLUSSON, *Egils Saga*, chap. III; Sn. STURLUSSON, *Ynglinga Saga*, chap. VI.



Figure 34 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Tell Halaf, showing a rider bringing a human head. Drawing of the author.

who were near them on the battlefield, somewhat friends and enemy¹⁰⁴. Nevertheless, the ordinance and the meticulousness of the tortures represented in the visual and textual neo-assyrian data more quickly make lean the balance on other side, evoking a great coolness and a practical planning.

There remains still possible that these cruel refinements expressed in the torture inflicted with overcome represent the revenge exerted by the winners for all the friendly losses which they had to deplore during the combat. The human History comprises many examples of this type of behaviour after a victory. Among those, one can think of the prisoners of war chopped up by the Ligurians following an unhappy battle, or the torments inflicted by Mathô with the Carthaginians to avenge Spendius, which had been crucified at the time of the revolt of the mercenaries of Carthago¹⁰⁵. More recently, there is to only be

interested in the free misdeeds of the Large Companies in France, during the One Hundred Years War or in the topicality of contemporary newspaper, for this returning account that this type of behaviour is much more current and free that one would like to think it.

g) The Importance of the "Mercy" Dagger and the Variations of the Combat Techniques

An interesting remark must be mentioned, because it relates mainly to the basic weapon of the panoply of the neo-assyrian soldier, and *par excellence* arm for the combat with the hand-to-hand: the dagger¹⁰⁶. In the preceding lines and images, the reader noted certainly the redundancy of the use of the dagger, in order to kill or torture the overcome enemy. This technique is not without recalling what was done, a few centuries ago still, in Europe. During the medieval times, the armoured riders competed with the infantrymen armed with long pikes for the domination of the battle fields. When a mortally wounded armoured rider fell to ground, it sometimes happened to him to beseech the mercy of that which had touched it, the pikeman, while asking him to complete it at once to avoid shame to him to live overcome, shorten its sufferings, or to escape from a ransom demand given by his winner for his release. The armour of the riders comprised often certain weak points, as with the articulations and the throat, a favourable place there to insert

a frayed scraping-knife and to put an end to the sufferings of the casualty¹⁰⁷. By extension, this type of scraping-knife took the name of "mercy" dagger and became paramount part of the equipment of the pikeman. It is interesting to note that the dagger, which fills the same kind of functions on the neo-assyrian illustrated documents, also forms paramount part of the panoply of the neo-assyrian soldiers, archers or lancers (fig. 3-5)¹⁰⁸. In a certain direction, this weapon undoubtedly represented an antiquated type of "knife of the Swiss army".

Why did they always announce this weapon, when the Neo-Assyrian had lots of swords, masses, lances, axes and saws which could then have made things easier ? Because that insists on the intensity and the proximity of the combatants, and raises the prestige of the warriors, by there of the king on which they depend, undoubtedly. Huntings scenes from Assurnazirpal II to Assurbanipal, and contemporary neighbour populations, as at Tell Half, also show the King, armed with a dagger and engaged in a combat with the hand-to-hand with a lion¹⁰⁹. As another clue to the religious and braveness details given by the dagger, some scenes appear on Assurnasirpal II's cloak on a relief from Nimrud, with human and eagle-headed genii fighting hand-to-hand a sphinx with a dagger¹¹⁰. During the following reigns, as Tiglath-Pileser's for example, one will often see some neo-assyrian soldier cutting an enemy's throat on top of the walls of a captured city, while one has already previously read in this paper the importance that this peculiar place was granted with by the populations of that area at that time¹¹¹.

To carry out another kind of macabre trophy with human heads, one needed skins of killed enemies, that thus required carrying out a fast, even slow death in certain circumstances, like the alive impalements, holocausts and wallings show it. On this subject, let us note the redundancy of the exploitation of the techniques of slicing (to cut the body of the enemy), to cut the arteries and the trachea, and of stabbing (through the body of the enemy) in order to reach one of the two «doors of the heart», namely the armpit or the posterior face of the clavicle (fig. 26; 33)¹¹². Such a technique of combat approaches the level reached by the fencing masters from the medieval, renaissance and classical periods, fruit of drive and tireless experiment, which is not without causing the admiration of the experts¹¹³.

107. J. ŠACH, *Encyclopédie Illustrée. Les Armes Blanches*, Prague, 1999, p. 252.

108. This corrects what VI. Dolinek wrote while telling there is no example older than the High Middle Ages to illustrate the expansion of this very type of weapon (VI. DOLINEK, *Encyclopédie des armes*, Prague, 1993, p. 113).

109. W. ORTHMANN, *op. cit.*, pl. 9b-d, A3/51-A3/55.

110. E. WALLIS-BUDGE, *op. cit.*, pl. LI, 2; LII, 1; XL, n° 33.

111. R. BARNETT, *op. cit.*, 1962, p. 87.

112. P. ALBENDA, *op. cit.*, pl. 96 ; W. ORTHMANN, *op. cit.*, Karkemish E/11, pl. 28a; Tell Halaf A3/17, pl. 10c.

113. F. dei Liberi, *Flos Duellatorum*, 1409-1410, frontispice, Carta 17 A ; F. Vadi, *Liber de Arte Gladitoria Dimicandi*, 1482-1487, pl. 30 ; C. Agrippa, *Trattato di Scientia d'Arme, con un Dialogo de Filosofia*, 1553, p. XXXXVI, chap. 10, fig. A-I ; G. Lovino, *Opera intorno alla Practica e Theorica del ben adoperare tutte le sorti di armi; ovvero, la scienza dell'Arme*, c. 1580-1600, chap. 11, chap. 12 ; N. Giganti, *Scola, ovvero, teatro : nelquale sono rappresentate diverse maniere e modi di parare, e di ferrire di spada sola, di spada, e pugnale ; dove ogni studioso portra essercitarsi e farsi pratico nella professione dell'Armi*, 1606, p. 52-53 ; 60 ; 86 ; S. Fabris, 1606, pl. 29 ; 32 ; 36-38 ; 40 ; 45 ; 47 ; 73 ; 76 ; 78-79 ; 92 ; 104 ; 110-111 ;

104. César, *La Guerre des Gaules*, VI, 22; Tacite, *Germania*, III.

105. Tite-Live, *Histoire romaine*, XLI, 18.3 ; Polybe, I, 17.

106. F. DE BACKER, *L'Art du siège néo-assyrien : L'équipement offensif néo-assyrien*, Thèse de doctorat en Sciences de l'Antiquité (U.M.B., Strasbourg II) et en Philologie et Histoire orientales (U.C.L., Louvain-La-Neuve), en cours.

For recall, the duellists call “doors of the heart” the two openings in the human body which allows blade frayed not to meet neither bone nor important resistance of grease or muscle before mortally touching the heart. These two anatomical openings of entry often allow a fast death of the subject reached.

Consequently, one can understand that certain enemies of high status, who knew their nearest death, asked their enemy to put an end to their sufferings, by despair or apprehension of the treatment reserved to the prisoners of their quality¹¹⁴. That undoubtedly encouraged one, like Ituni, an Elamite of high status, to declare to his neo-assyrian winner, a man of the row, to put an end to his days, to carry his head to the King of Assyria and to become famous (fig. 5).

These two gestures can also constitute the reassembly of the operational chain of a decapitation. For example, before decapitating the overcome enemy, the Assyrian soldier must immobilize his enemy, arrange himself so that this one offers his throat to him (thus to draw the head to him backwards, by the hair or the beard), then to slice the arteries and the muscles of the throat, break the cervical vertebrae, shear inter-cervical spaces, made up of cartilage and the spinal cord, before tearing off the head to him and carrying it to the scribe in charge of the recording of the enemy losses (fig. 5; 4; 3; 23-26). As a matter of fact, the neo-assyrian soldier sometimes pulled his enemy by the beard to try to kill him but, as everybody knows, during a fight, you grab your enemy by where you can. Obviously, if the neo-assyrian soldier wished to make suffer his victim, for a reason or for another, he could make last the things at will, but no source treating these details precisely currently remains. All this range of varieties and refinements in the torture inflicted to the enemies leaves especially, and very strongly, to think that those which took care of these drudgeries were to be accustomed or specialists in the cutting of the bodies, alive or not.

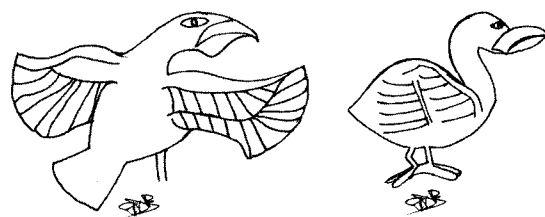


Figure 35 : Drawing inspired by two low-reliefs of Tell Halaf, showing two birds, seemingly eagles (?), represented on the hunting scenes.
Drawings of the author.

h) The Military Doctrines of the Massacre and the Deportation

Let us note in the passing the difference in military doctrines between that of the New Assyrian Kingdom, where cutting up and forced incorporation of the overcome make law, and the Sumerian period, during which the alive bodies and/or the late ones were repurchased according to the rank of the soldier concerned¹¹⁵. Nevertheless, the kings of Assyria often incorporated a great number of soldiers overcome in their armies, in order to compensate for the losses and to ensure the protection of the territory. This control is understood when one counts the various factors of attrition which weighed on the amount of troops available on the spot. Among those, one counts the normal losses caused by the tiredness of the way among the troops, the variable losses caused by the engagements, the logical losses caused by the garrisons left with the protection of the ways of supply, cities, forts, bridges as well as the “losses” caused by the need for protecting the hospitals and for keeping the luggage of the army.

The strategic interests of the Assyrian businesses undoubtedly required the disappearance or the displacement of many enemy soldiers on the zones of evolution lately acquired in order to counter the possible risks of revolt or the weakening of the units of combat for the guard of prisoners. Well, a fighting unit incorporated by force can still produce a valuable human shield during an attack or a mass-labour reserve for a large building program. Even in the occasion of desertion, those can be fair easily killed for punishment and examples, than citizens of Assyria proper.

Conclusion

In fact, the tortures inflicted to the victims varied certainly according to the intentions and goodwill of torturers, guided in that by the aspirations of the senior officers. Indeed, the psychological impact of this spectacle often rested on the search for a quantitative effect, that the parcelling out of the bodies supports (even to mislead the enemy), or qualitative, that the sadism of torture undoubtedly revealed. It is, in any case, which reveals the treatment received by the head of Te' umman, the former king of Elam (fig. 18). Having that with the spirit, one can think only of the sounds, smells and the spectacle which were offered to the spec-

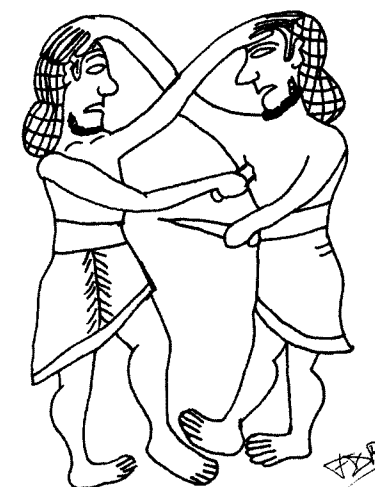


Figure 36 : Drawing inspired by a low-relief of Tell Halaf, showing two human figures trying to stab each other, with one being more successful than the other. Drawing of the author.

113-114 ; 128-129 ; 132 ; 135-137 ; 139 ; 143 ; 145 ; 153 ; 161 ; 163 ; R. Capoferro, *Gran Simulacro dell'Arte e dell'Uso della Scherma*, 1610, p. 115, fig. 41 ; F. Alfieri, *La Scherma di Francesco Alfieri*, 1640, p. 23, ill. 30 ; F. Alfieri, *L'Arte di ben maneggiare la spada*, 1653, p. 149, ill. 39.

114. R. BARNETT, *op. cit.*, 1998, pl. 293, 382b.

115. M. GUICHARD, « Les aspects religieux de la guerre à Mari », *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* 93, 1999, p. 44-46.

tators, especially when those arrived on a center of cutting up, still comprising waste of body as well as the traces of blood and filth on the ground.

It would be interesting to look further into this type of research in the future, while in particular bringing there the contest of the legislative and historical texts of that time, in order to better encircle the symbolic system of the punishments reserved for overcome, and the acts which caused them.

Finally, and like the reader has certainly already noted, one notices the redundancy of the scenes of decapitation, birds and setting with death of the prisoners in the neo-assyrian art as in that of certain nowadays, contemporary and local populations or systems. Thanks to that, one suspects well that this type of scenes does not certainly constitute a simple practice or a local artistic convention, but well a phenomenon common to this area for this period, and from long before.

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