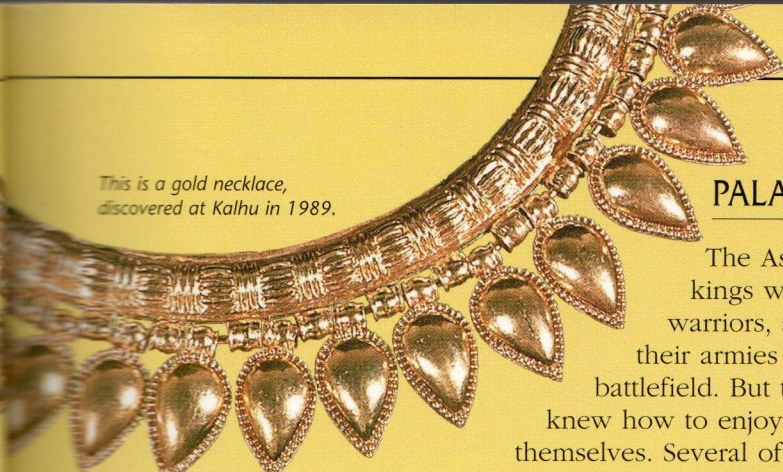


*This is a gold necklace, discovered at Kalhu in 1989.*



## RUNNING AN EMPIRE

Assyrian kings lived in luxury because of the taxes pouring in from around the empire. But they also had to pay for a huge workforce. Officials governed faraway regions, scribes recorded information and relay runners carried messages between the different parts of the empire. With all the construction work making palaces, temples and new cities, the top craftsmen also came from all around the empire to work for the kings.

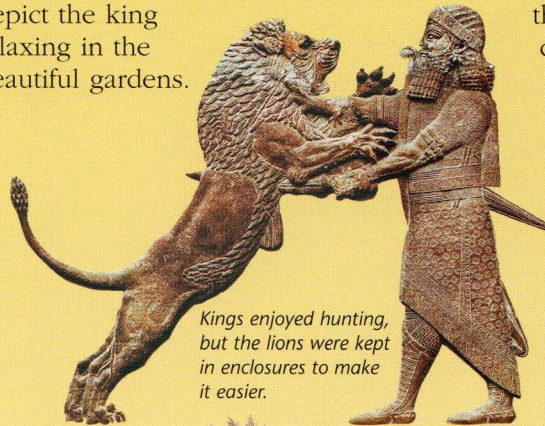
*This scene shows King Ashurbanipal relaxing in the palace gardens at Nineveh.*



*Ashurbanipal, who reigned from 668 to 627BC, was one of the last great Assyrian kings.*

## PALACE LIFE

The Assyrian kings were great warriors, and led their armies onto the battlefield. But they also knew how to enjoy themselves. Several of the kings had zoos of exotic animals. They also hunted lions to prove their skill and bravery. Carvings show this, and also depict the king relaxing in the beautiful gardens.



*Kings enjoyed hunting, but the lions were kept in enclosures to make it easier.*

## THE EMPIRE CRUMBLES

In the end, however, the cruelty of the Assyrian kings united their enemies against them. The Babylonians made an alliance with the Medes from Persia (see page 40), and in 612BC the joint force attacked the Assyrian city of Nineveh and completely destroyed it.

Although many Assyrians fled from the ruins, they were finally defeated by the Babylonians in 609BC. The magnificent empire with all its wealth, finery and power had finally come to an end.