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Creating capitals: The rationale, construction, and function of the imperial capitals of Assyria

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Creating Capitals
The Rationale, Construction, and Function of the Imperial Capitals of Assyria
A. Politopoulos

The creation of new capital cities are watershed moments in the lives of ancient empires. Assyria, arguably the most successful imperial state of the ancient Near East, repeatedly engaged in *capital creation. Capital creation* denotes the development of a monumental capital, either in a new location or through the profound transformation of a pre-existing settlement. This volume focusses on the rationale, construction, and function of the imperial capitals of Assyria: Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta, Kalḫu, Dur-Šarrukēn, and Nineveh. By exploring three key questions – *why* was a capital created, *how* was a capital created, and *what* were the functions of the capital – this study presents a comparative analysis of these four urban centers and presents a new perspective on their creation, as well as an innovative framework for the study of capital creation from antiquity to today.

Aris Politopoulos is an archaeologist whose research focuses on ancient Near Eastern empires, the development of cities, and the study of play in the past. He is a lecturer of Near Eastern Archaeology at the Faculty of Archaeology (Leiden University) and a post-doctoral researcher for the *Past-at-Play Lab* in the Leiden University Centre for Arts in Society.

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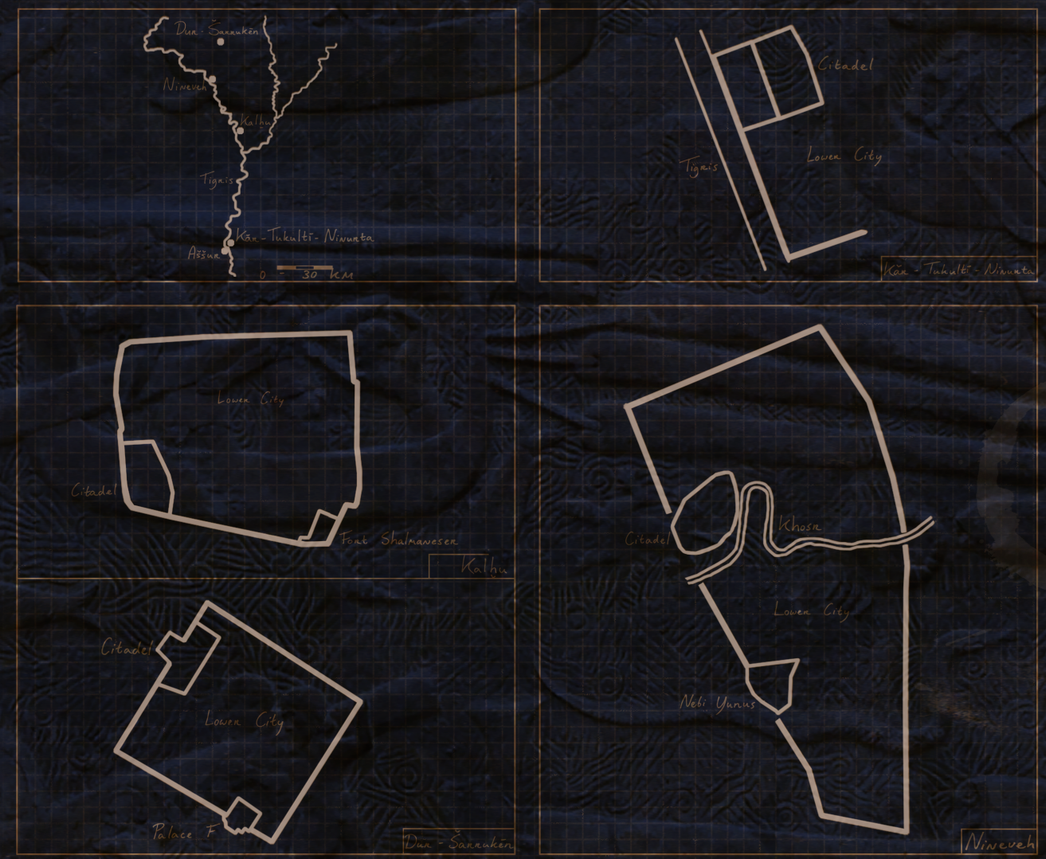

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