



Assyrian Reliefs from the Palace of Ashurnasirpal II: A Cultural Biography

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The well-known narrative images of the Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.E.) at war and at the hunt are discussed frequently in studies of ancient Near Eastern art. By comparison, the iconic reliefs depicting the ruler, his genies, and the “sacred tree,” which are repeated over and over within the decorative scheme of Ashurnasirpal’s palace in Nimrud, part of modern-day Iraq, are less studied and imperfectly understood by scholars. This volume of collected essays on the reliefs at Dartmouth College and related works in other museums across the United States and in international institutions sheds new light on their meanings, importance, and history. Following the discovery of the reliefs in the nineteenth century, institutions and individuals in Europe and North America competed to acquire them. The greatest number went into European collections in the countries of their discoverers, but “surplus” relief fragments, usually of supernatural figures and trees, were shipped to America, and many found their way to colleges and universities.

The essays in this volume explore the iconography of the reliefs, the fascinating story of their discovery and dispersal throughout the West, their biblical connections, and their cultural, artistic, and historical meanings. The book takes the reader from the ancient world of Assyria to its modern rediscovery to the digital reconstruction of the Nimrud palace. Lavishly illustrated with over 115 color and 35 black-and-white images, *Assyrian Reliefs from the Palace of Ashurnasirpal II* will engage and inform the student, the scholar, as well as the museum visitor.

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