

AIA LECTURE PROGRAM 2007/2008
Lecture Abstract

Lecturer: Steven J Garfinkle

The Creation of Imperial Communities in the Ancient World: The Neo-Assyrian Empire in the First Millennium BC.

Recommended audience level:

- (√) Lecture for mixed audience of professionals, students, and laypersons
- (√) Lecture for the general public with little background in archaeology

The lecture will be delivered in English

Lecture summary:

“The Assyrian Came Down Like the Wolf on the Fold”

With this line, Lord Byron captured the enduring image of the Assyrians for the West. Both modern studies and biblical lore have tended to regard the warlike Assyrians with a wary eye. Fortunately, recent scholarship on the Assyrians is allowing us to produce a more complete picture of these ancient inhabitants of northern Mesopotamia. In particular, recent efforts to document the reliefs and monuments of the Assyrians and to publish their royal inscriptions provide modern scholars with the opportunity to examine in detail the growth of Assyria into a large territorial empire in the first millennium BC, and on the institutions of imperialism that accompanied that growth.

Imperialism is a topic of recent historical interest, and the Assyrians created one of the first world empires. In many respects, the practices and institutions developed by the Assyrians served as a model not only for later imperial societies of the Near East, such as the Babylonians and Persians, but also for the imperial societies of the Classical World.

This lecture examines the Assyrian empire on the basis of the tremendous archaeological evidence that survives from their lavish palaces, as well as the textual record from their archives and monumental inscriptions.

Short bibliography and/or website on lecture topic (for lay reader):

Joannès, F. *The Age of Empires, Mesopotamia in the First Millennium BC*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004.

Larsen, M.T. *The Conquest of Assyria*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Saggs, H.W.F. *The Might That Was Assyria*. London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1984.

Van De Mieroop, Marc. *A History of the Ancient Near East ca. 3000 – 323 BC*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.