



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Partialities, Priorities, and Unintended Glimpses of the Archaeological Process: A Review of the Site Reports of the early 20th century British Excavations

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Abstract

This paper interrogates the meaning and impact of images found in the published reports of the British archaeological excavations undertaken at the Syrian site of Carchemish between 1911-1914 and 1919. Carchemish produced some of the earliest publications rendered in a new 'scientific' format by English-speaking missions working in Mesopotamia, and served as the standard after which subsequent excavation reports were modelled. The reports endeavored to convey full, evidentiary documentation of excavated finds and underline the careful, systematic nature of the archaeological process. Despite this drive towards greater scientific objectivity, however, the reports' visual representations were far from objective records of an undisputed 'reality' nor were they comprehensive in scope. On the contrary, the images within these reports reveal constant manipulation and selectivity to fashion many kinds of 'realities' and 'objective' recordings. Altogether, the highly constructed character of Carchemish's site reports is evident, both in what the authors chose to include in them and also what they decidedly chose not to include.

Keywords

Carchemish, site report, images, subjectivity, colonialism

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