

History 1039

First Empires: *Power and Propaganda in the Ancient World*

Spring 2022

Time: Mon-Wed 3:00-4:15pm + weekly discussion sections TBA

Location: Sever Hall 110

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 9-11am, and by appointment

Canvas: <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/100736>

Course Description

This course traces the continuum of socio-political and cultural developments in the Near East that led, over the course of three millennia, from stateless societies to the emergence of Assyria as the first true empire in history. The class focuses on the long-term history of power centralization, and the role of ideology and propaganda in overcoming resistance to this concentration of authority. The course material covers a broad evidentiary and chronological range. We will employ textual, visual, and archaeological sources to explore the evolution of the political and cultural landscape in the Near East and the Mediterranean, from the emergence of the first city-states in the late fourth millennium BCE to the early development of Roman imperial ideology around the start of the Common Era.

The course will begin by looking at the workings of stateless societies and how, through processes of cultural resistance, they inhibit the centralization of political power. We will then look at a series of political and cultural developments in southern Mesopotamia that managed to overcome this resistance, leading to the formation of the first city-states. From there, we will follow the development of new mechanisms of power centralization in these societies that led to the emergence of large territorial states and, eventually, imperial domination.

The core of the course will be an exploration of the formation, expansion, and eventual collapse of the Assyrian Empire, from the diverse perspectives of the individuals and social groups that acted as beneficiaries, agents, and victims of imperial domination. We will track changes in economic organization, social structure, government, religion, art, and literature, paying close attention to strategies of control and power legitimization, the role of ideology in overcoming societal resistance, and the function of propaganda in transmitting this ideology and weaving it into the cultural tapestry of a society.

The last part of the course will be devoted to an analysis of the long-term historical consequences of Assyrian imperialism. We will look at how the Persian Empire integrated Assyrian and other influences into a unique syncretic character, and how it influenced the philosophy, religion, culture, and politics of Greece and Rome, thus helping to shape Western civilization. Finally, the course will end with a discussion of how Assyrians shaped, in many ways, the complex web of politics and ethnic identities that continue to define the Middle East to this day.

Course Requirements and Grading

Readings and Participation

There are no required textbooks for this class: all the readings will be posted on the course's Canvas site in PDF format. Students are expected to do the required background readings for each class. I am always happy to guide you to further bibliography and other resources, whether in connection with your essays or simply to pursue a personal interest.

Writing Assignments

Writing assignments for the class will consist of two short essays, a proposal and bibliography for a research topic, and a final essay due at the end of the term.

The short essays, roughly 1,000 words in length, are designed to help you develop or refine your historical writing skills. They will focus on two key areas: source criticism (learning to assess the usefulness, reliability, and limitations of primary sources) and historical argumentation (identifying and framing a question about the past, argument and support it using relevant historical evidence).

The final essay, roughly 4,000 words long, is meant to give students the opportunity to test the skills developed through the short essays. Students will choose a research topic in collaboration with the instructor and turn it into a critical discussion of a relevant historical problem or topic within the scope of the course (drawing comparisons with other regions and time periods is perfectly acceptable). A short proposal outlining your chosen topic and a brief bibliography of related sources will be due during the penultimate week of classes.

Grading

The final grade will be determined as follows:

Participation: 25%

Short Essays: 30% (15% each)

Proposal + Bibliography: 10%

Final Essay: 35%

Course Policies and Expectations

Collaboration Policy and Academic Integrity

Your work must be original, and all sources must be properly cited. I encourage you to consult your classmates and fellow students for advice on sources as well as for feedback. However, the work you turn in must be the result of your own research and writing and must follow standard citation practices for any books, articles, lectures, websites, archival sources, and so on that you have quoted or drawn from. Plagiarism will be taken extremely seriously and handled in accordance with Harvard policy. If you have any doubts about specific situations, I am happy to answer any questions.

Accommodations for students with disabilities

Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with me by the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential.

Class Schedule and Readings

Unit 1: Fall from Grace

At the turn of the fifth millennium BCE, Mesopotamia experienced a radical social, economic, and political transformation that led to the formation of the first states in history. This week will include an overview of the course. We will also explore the often brutal, repressive consequences of power centralization and how the processes that enable the emergence of states are strongly inhibited in stateless societies. We will discuss the means by which an incipient ruling class can overcome these regulatory mechanisms.

Readings:

Monday:

First class – no readings.

Wednesday:

Roaf, Michael. *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East*. New York: Facts on File, 1990. Pp. 18-39.

Gledhill, John. 'The Origins and Limits of Coercive Power: The Anthropology of Stateless Societies'. In *Power and Its Disguises: Anthropological Perspectives on Politics*, 2nd ed. Anthropology, Culture, and Society. London; Sterling, Va: Pluto Press, 2000. Pp. 23–44.

Unit 2: Heartland of Cities

In Sumer, small, isolated settlements transformed into large cities, and the complexity of their sociopolitical and economic structure expanded dramatically. Technological and cultural advances followed, including metalworking, weaponry, fortifications, and writing. In each city, the patron deity was regarded as the supreme power. Temples owned the land and herds and the ruler of the city was viewed as the manager of the deity's estates. This week, we will look at the social, political, and economic life of these cities and explore the mechanisms by which the power and authority of the ruler were legitimized.

Readings:

Monday:

Mann, Michael. *Sources of Social Power: Volume 1. A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986. Pp. 73-102.

Yoffee, Norman. 'Political Economy in Early Mesopotamian States'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 281–311.

Wednesday:

Frankfort, Henri. *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature*. Oriental Institute Essay. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1948. Pp. 215-274.

Foster, Benjamin R. 'A New Look at the Sumerian Temple State'. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 24, no. 1 (1981): 225–41.

Unit 3: Hegemony

Rivalry between city-states led to a tumultuous struggle for control of Sumer, as a succession of competing dynasties attempted to establish a regional kingdom in southern Mesopotamia. These developments radically influenced the area immediately to the north, but as power centralization took hold, that area followed a markedly different course of political and socioeconomic development. Unlike the south, where the city-state remained the basic political unit, the north formed a single territorial state with a strong, authoritarian, and predominantly secular form of kingship. This week, we will explore the expansion of the powers of the city ruler, as well as how this influenced other aspects of society and the ideological elaborations used to justify it.

Readings:

Monday:

Winter, Irene J. 'After the Battle Is Over: The "Stele of the Vultures" and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Art of the Ancient Near East'. *Studies in the History of Art* 16 (1985): 11–32.

Wednesday:

Steinkeller, Piotr. 'Early Political Development in Mesopotamia and the Origins of the Sargonic Empire'. In *Akkad: The First World Empire: Structure, Ideology, Traditions*, edited by Mario Liverani, 107–129. Padova: Sargon, 1993.

Frayne, Douglas. 'The Struggle for Hegemony in "Early Dynastic II" Sumer'. *Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies Journal* 4 (2009): 37–75.

Unit 4: True King

A usurper took over the city of Kiš, calling himself Sargon—the “true king”—and set out to conquer all of Mesopotamia and beyond. In his new capital, Akkad, he reorganized the economy and introduced many administrative reforms. His dynasty prospered until the Gutí, “barbarians” from the Zagros mountains, overran southern Mesopotamia and caused the collapse of the Akkadian state. This week, we will cover the rise of Sargon of Akkad and the consolidation of independent Sumerian cities into a territorial state. We will look at the socio-political structure of the Akkadian state and explore the mechanisms that Akkad deployed to control its vast territory.

Readings:

Monday:

Foster, Benjamin R. 'The Rise and Fall of the Akkadian Empire'. In *The Age of Agade: Inventing Empire in Ancient Mesopotamia*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2015. Pp. 1-30.

Michalowski, Piotr. 'Memory and Deed: The Historiography of the Political Expansion of the Akkad State'. In *Akkad: The First World Empire: Structure, Ideology, Traditions*, edited by Mario Liverani, 69–90. Padova: Sargon, 1993.

Wednesday:

Cooper, Jerrold S. 'Paradigm and Propaganda. The Dynasty of Akkade in the 21st Century'. In *Akkad: The First World Empire: Structure, Ideology, Traditions*, edited by Mario Liverani, 11–23. Padova: Sargon, 1993.

Eppihimer, Melissa. 'Assembling King and State: The Statues of Manishtushu and the Consolidation of Akkadian Kingship'. *American Journal of Archaeology* 114, no. 3 (2010): 365–80.

Westenholz, Aage. 'The World View of Sargonic Officials. Differences in Mentality Between Sumerians and Akkadians'. In *Akkad: The First World Empire: Structure, Ideology, Traditions*, edited by Mario Liverani, 157–169. Padova: Sargon, 1993.

Unit 5: Bureaucrats and Merchants

As the Gutis were driven out of Sumer, new rulers emerged in the form of the Third Dynasty of Ur, which relied on a sophisticated bureaucracy to maintain control of its vast territory. The Third Dynasty of Ur did not last long, however, and as it slowly collapsed, Amorite migrants from Syria took advantage of the situation to seize power. They restored the central position of temples in the economy, while also encouraging private enterprise. Aššur, a small city in the north, began establishing significant trading colonies in Anatolia. This week, we will compare the systems of territorial control employed by the rulers of Akkad and the Third Dynasty of Ur and explore the nature of long-distance trade in the region.

Readings:

Monday:

Foster, Benjamin R. 'Management and Administration in the Sargonic Period'. In *Akkad: The First World Empire: Structure, Ideology, Traditions*, edited by Mario Liverani, 25–39. HANE. S.; 5. Padova: Sargon, 1993.

Adams, Robert McC. 'Shepherds at Umma in the Third Dynasty of Ur: Interlocutors with a World beyond the Scribal Field of Ordered Vision'. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 49, no. 2 (2006): 133–69.

Wednesday:

Orlin, Louis Lawrence. *Life and Thought in the Ancient Near East*. University of Michigan Press, 2007. Pp. 72–79.

Veenhof, Klaas R. 'Ancient Assur: The City, Its Traders, and Its Commercial Network'. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 53, no. 1/2 (2010): 39–82.

Veenhof, Klaas R. 'Kanesh: An Assyrian Colony in Anatolia'. In *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, edited by Jack M. Sasson, John Baines, Gary Beckman, and Karen S. Robinson. New York: Scribner, 1995. Pp. 859–871.

Unit 6: International Age

Assyria's commercial enterprise flourished, and a strong, charismatic new king, Šamši-Adad I, vastly extended its influence. His sons, however, lacked Šamši-Adad's charisma, and after his death were soon defeated by Hammurabi of Babylon. While Babylonian domination was short lived, it proved deeply destabilizing, and civil war and foreign domination followed for nearly three centuries. While Assyria became a vassal of Mitanni, a Hurrian kingdom in northern Syria and southeast Anatolia, the Near East became fully integrated into an international system that included the entire region. A number of large territorial states interacted with one another as equals and rivals. Only the Great Kings, the rulers of the large territorial states, regarded themselves as equals, addressing each other as "brothers". This week, we will discuss the reign of Šamši-Adad I and how it foreshadowed the later Assyrian Empire. We will also look at how Assyria succeeded Mitanni as the dominant power in northern Mesopotamia and sought to become one of the great states of the International Age.

Readings:

Monday:

Sasson, Jack M. 'A King of Early Assyria: Shamsi-Adad'. *History Today*, 1 November 1968. Pp. 794-801.

Villard, Pierre. 'Shamshi-Adad and Sons: The Rise and Fall of an Upper Mesopotamian Empire'. In *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, edited by Jack M. Sasson, John Baines, Gary Beckman, and Karen S. Robinson. Volume II. New York: Scribner, 1995. Pp. 873–883.

Oates, David. 'Assur, Nineveh, and the Origins of Assyria'. In *Studies in the Ancient History of Northern Iraq*. London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq; Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. 19-41.

Margueron, Jean-Claude. 'Mari: A Portrait in Art of a Mesopotamian City-State'. In *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, edited by Jack M. Sasson, John Baines, Gary Beckman, and Karen S. Robinson. Volume II. New York: Scribner, 1995. Pp. 885–999.

Kuhrt, Amélie. 'Hammurabi and the First Dynasty of Babylon'. In *The Ancient Near East, C. 3000-330 BC*. New York: Routledge, Pp. 108-117.

Wednesday:

Van de Mieroop, Marc. 'The Club of the Great Powers'. In *A History of the Ancient Near East, Ca. 3000-323 BC*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004. Pp. 121-140

Lewis, Megan, and Marian H. Feldman. 'Late Bronze Age Internationalism and the International Artistic Style'. *OpenStax CNX*, 24 October 2015.

Kuhrt, Amélie. 'Assyria in the Middle Assyrian Period'. In *The Ancient Near East, C. 3000-330 BC*. London; New York: Routledge, Pp. 348-381.

Artzi, Pinhas. 'The Middle-Assyrian Kingdom as Precursor to the Assyrian Empire'. In *Assyrien im Wandel der Zeiten: XXXIXe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*, edited by Hartmut Waetzoldt and Harald Hauptmann. Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 1997. Pp. 3-6.

Unit 7: World's End

The prosperity brought about by the International Age came to an abrupt end. A sudden, violent, and culturally disruptive event on an unprecedented scale put an end to urban civilizations throughout the entire Near East and the Mediterranean. Within a period of less than fifty years, almost every significant city in the eastern Mediterranean world was destroyed. Assyrian territory shrunk dramatically, stagnation was followed by civil war and decline, and two-and-a-half centuries would pass before the Assyrians began to assert themselves beyond their borders once more. This week, we will look at possible explanations for the Late Bronze Age collapse, from climate change and volcanic events to mass migrations and raids, and how it affected Assyria and its neighbours. We will also explore the mechanics of Assyrian expansion and its eventual transformation from an empire of networks to a territorial one.

Readings:

Monday:

Cline, Eric H. *1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed*. Princeton University Press, 2014. Pp. 139-176

Van de Mieroop, Marc. 'The Collapse of the Regional System and its Aftermath'. In *A History of the Ancient Near East, Ca. 3000-323 BC*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004. Pp. 179-194.

Wednesday:

Van de Mieroop, Marc. 'The Rise of Assyria'. In *A History of the Ancient Near East, Ca. 3000-323 BC*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004. Pp. 216-231

Grayson, K. *The Early Development of Assyrian Monarchy*. Ugaritica Forschungen 3: 1971. Pp. 311-319

Joannès, Francis. 'Political History of the Assyrian Empire (934-610 BC)'. In *The Age of Empires: Mesopotamia in the First Millennium BC*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004. Pp. 27-52

Unit 8: The Land of Aššur

Assyria was once more on its way to becoming a great power, but internal strife continually threatened its stability. After 70 years of ineffectual rulers and civil war, a new king radically restructured the civil administration of the empire. Administration was based on a clear distinction between those areas that acknowledged Assyrian domination but retained some form of autonomy, and those territories which were incorporated within Assyria proper: The Land of Ashur. This week, we will survey the sociopolitical and economic structure of the Assyrian empire from the vantage point of the Assyrians themselves. In the process, we will review Tiglath-Pileser III's reforms, look at how the imperial enterprise directly benefited the Assyrian elite, and study how the population participated as agents of empire.

Readings:

Monday:

Postgate, J.N. *The Land of Assur and the Yoke of Assur*. In: *World Archaeology* 23:1992. Pp. 247–263.

Liverani, Mario. 'The Growth of the Assyrian Empire in the Habur/Middle Euphrates Area: A New Paradigm'. *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* II, no. 2 (1988): 81–98.

Joannès, Francis. 'Control of the Imperial Territory'. In *The Age of Empires: Mesopotamia in the First Millennium BC*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004. Pp. 53-77

Wednesday:

Van de Mieroop, Marc. 'Assyria's World Domination'. In *A History of the Ancient Near East, Ca. 3000-323 BC*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004. Pp. 232-252

Postgate, J. N. 'The Economic Structure of the Assyrian Empire'. In *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires*, edited by Mogens Trolle Larsen, 193–221. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979.

Kaplan, Yehuda. 'Recruitment of Foreign Soldiers into the Neo-Assyrian Army during the Reign of Tiglath-Pileser III'. In *Treasures on Camels' Humps: Historical and Literary Studies from the Ancient Near East Presented to Israel Eph'al*, edited by Israel Eph'al, Mordechai Cogan, and Dan 'el Kahn, 135–52. Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2008.

Unit 9: The Yoke of Aššur

Assyrian kings exacted annual tribute from client kingdoms: those who “bear the Yoke of Aššur”. Unlike the offerings made by the provinces in the Land of Aššur, these consisted of valuable goods, such as precious metals, horses, or, sometimes, forced labor. Failure to pay tribute would be construed as a political statement, and dire consequences would follow. Enforcement of these arrangements fell to the Assyrian army, the most efficient military force in the ancient world, with a reputation for ruthlessness that persists to the modern day. This week, we will look at the Assyrian Empire from the point of view of the populations being conquered. We will explore the complex articulation between imperial and local politics and look at how some individuals negotiated these new power dynamics to their advantage. We will also cover Assyrian military tactics, the composition of the army, relocation policies, deportation, intimidation, and yearly campaigns.

Readings:

Monday:

Liverani, Mario. ‘The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire’. In *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires*, edited by Mogens Trolle Larsen, 297–317. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979.

Tadmor, Hayim. ‘World Dominion: The Expanding Horizon of the Assyrian Empire’. In *Landscapes: Territories, Frontiers and Horizons in the Ancient Near East*, edited by Lucio Milano, S. de Martino, Frederick Mario Fales, and Giovanni B. Lanfranchi, 55–62. Padova: Sargon, 1999.

Russell, John Malcolm. ‘Bulls for the Palace and Order in the Empire: The Sculptural Program of Sennacherib’s Court VI at Nineveh’. *The Art Bulletin* 69, no. 4 (1987): 520–39.

Wednesday:

Fagan, Garret G. “‘I Fell Upon Him Like a Furious Arrow’: Toward a Reconstruction of the Assyrian Tactical System’. In *New Perspectives on Ancient Warfare*, edited by Garrett G. Fagan and Matthew Trundle, 81–100. Leiden, the Netherlands; Boston: Brill, 2010.

Saggs, H. W. F. ‘Assyrian Warfare in the Sargonid Period’. *Iraq* 25, no. 2 (1963): 145–54.

Noble, Duncan. ‘Assyrian Chariotry and Cavalry’. *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* 4, no. 1 (1990): 61–68.

Oded, Bustenay. *War, Peace, and Empire: Justifications for War in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*. Wiesbaden: DrLudwig Reichert Verlag, 1992. Pp. 177-190

Unit 10: Propaganda

The growing power and wealth of Assyria was reflected in the palaces of the Assyrian kings. Their interiors were decorated with massive stone reliefs depicting a variety of subjects, including historical narratives featuring the Assyrian army on campaign in foreign lands. These decorative schemes were carefully designed to function as a form of visual propaganda. Their content and appearance was determined by Assyrian ruling ideology, which they also disseminated and built upon. This week, we will explore the central role of ideology and propaganda in the creation, expansion, and maintenance of the Assyrian empire, and how narrative and history fit into this scheme. We will also look at the reign of Aššurbanipal, the last great king of Assyria, and construct a holistic picture of the Assyrian Empire during its apogee.

Readings:

Monday:

Reade, J. E. 'Ideology and Propaganda in Assyrian Art'. In *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires*, edited by Mogens Trolle Larsen, 329–59. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979.

Winter, Irene. 'Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs'. In *On Art in the Ancient Near East*, edited by Irene Winter. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010.

Laato, Antti. 'Assyrian Propaganda and the Falsification of History in the Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib'. *Vetus Testamentum* 45, no. 2 (1995): 198–226.

Wednesday:

Zamazalová, Silvie. 'The Education of Neo-Assyrian Princes'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*, edited by Karen Radner and Eleanor Robson, 313–30. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Grayson, A. K. 'The Chronology of the Reign of Ashurbanipal'. *Zeitschrift Für Assyriologie Und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 70, no. 2 (1980): 227–45.

Unit 11: Downfall

The fall of the Assyrian empire came suddenly. Assyria dominated the entire Near East: its capital, Nineveh, was the largest urban concentration ever seen in the world, its armies invincible, and the royal treasury inexhaustible. Yet, less than fifteen years after the death of Aššurbanipal, Assyria lay in ruins. The collapse of the Assyrian Empire has been called one of the greatest mysteries in history. This week, we will explore the available evidence and discuss different interpretations, theories, and models to explain this mysterious turn of events. We will also look at the repercussions of the fall of

Assyria, and at how their successors borrowed from Assyrian ideology for the purpose of legitimization.

Readings:

Monday:

Liverani, Mario. *The Fall of the Assyrian Empire: Ancient and Modern Interpretations*. In: *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*. Alcock, S.E. (ed.). Cambridge:2001. Pp. 374–391.

Machinist, P. *The Fall of Assyria in Comparative Ancient Perspective*. In: *Assyria 1995*, Parpola, S. and R.M. Whiting (eds.). Helsinki:1997. Pp. 179-95.

Mann, Michael. *Sources of Social Power: Volume 1. A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986. Pp. 130-178.

Wednesday:

Wiesehöfer, J. *The Medes and the Idea of the Succession of Empires in Antiquity*. In: Lanfranchi, Giovanni B., Michael Roaf, and Robert Rollinger (eds.). *Continuity of Empire (?): Assyria, Media, Persia*. Padova: 2003. Pp. 391–396

Reade, Julian. 'Why Did the Medes Invade Assyria?' In *Continuity of Empire (?): Assyria, Media, Persia*, edited by Giovanni B. Lanfranchi, Michael Roaf, and Robert Rollinger, 149–56. HANE. M; v. 5. Padova, Italy: Sargon Editrice e Libreria, 2003.

Liverani, Mario. *The Ancient Near East: History, Society and Economy*. Translated by Soraia Tabatabai. London; New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2014. Pp. 537-553.

Unit 12: Universal Empire

The Babylonians attempted to fill the power vacuum created by the fall of Assyria, but their empire was short-lived and soon overrun by Cyrus the Great, along with the rest of the Near East, as well as most of Southwest Asia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. His Achaemenid Persian Empire took a markedly different approach to domination, maintaining the customs and religions of the lands they conquered. It flourished for over two centuries, until it was conquered by Alexander the Great in 330 BCE. The Hellenistic kingdoms that succeeded Alexander provided fertile ground for cross-cultural developments. The Greeks, and later the Romans, adopted and adapted aspects of Near Eastern imperial ideology that provided a model of autocratic rule they previously lacked. This week, we will look at the Achaemenid Persian Empire, focusing on its political, social, and economic structure and its character as a universal empire that syncretized a multitude of identities. We will also explore how Near Eastern imperial ideology was absorbed into the philosophy, religion, culture, and politics of Greece and Rome, and thereby influenced and shaped the rise of western civilization.

Readings:

Monday:

Briant, Pierre. *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*. Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2002. Pp. 13–28

Van de Mieroop, Marc. *A History of the Ancient Near East, Ca. 3000-323 BC*. Blackwell History of the Ancient World. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004. Pp. 267-280.

Kuhrt, Amélie. 'Cyrus the Great of Persia: Images and Realities'. In *Representations of Political Power: Case Histories from Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East*, edited by Marlies Heinz and Marian H. Feldman, 169–91. Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2007.

Mann, Michael. *Sources of Social Power: Volume 1. A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986. Pp. 231-249.

Wednesday:

Strootman, Rolf. *Courts and Elites in the Hellenistic Empires: The Near East After the Achaemenids, C. 330 to 30 BCE*. Edinburgh University Press, 2014. Pp. 1-12.

Woolf, Greg. 'Inventing Empire in Ancient Rome'. In *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, edited by Susan E. Alcock, Terence N. D'Altroy, Kathleen D. Morrison, and Carla M. Sinopoli, 311–22. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

George, A.R. 'Assyria and the Western World'. In *Assyria 1995*, edited by Simo Parpola and Robert M. Whiting, 69–75. Helsinki: The Project, 1997.

Morrison, Kathleen D. 'Sources, Approaches, and Definitions'. In *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, edited by Susan E. Alcock, Terence N. D'Altroy, Kathleen D. Morrison, and Carla M. Sinopoli, 1–9. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Unit 13: Rediscovering Assyria

In Europe, the great Assyrian Empire became little more than a name remembered in the Bible and ancient Greek literature. It was only in the 19th century that its material remains were rediscovered, as European explorers and adventurers begin to search for objects to display in museums. Perhaps fittingly, the process of rediscovering Assyria is very much an imperial undertaking, as the production of such knowledge was seen as an integral part of the process of modern European colonization. This week, we will look at how ancient Near Eastern civilization was rediscovered, and how the process fit within the colonialist enterprise and its civilizing imperial mission.

Readings:

Monday:

Grayson, A. K. 'The Resurrection of Ashur: A History of Assyrian Studies'. In *Assyria 1995*, edited by Simo Parpola and Robert M. Whiting, 105–14. Helsinki: The Project, 1997.

Bahrani, Zainab. 'Conjuring Mesopotamia: Imaginative Geography and a World Past'. In *Archaeology Under Fire: Nationalism, Politics and Heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East*, edited by Lynn Meskell, 159–74. London; New York: Routledge, 1998.

Harmanşah, Ömür. 'ISIS, Heritage, and the Spectacles of Destruction in the Global Media'. *Near Eastern Archaeology* 78, no. 3 (2015): 170–77.

Mann, Michael. *Sources of Social Power: Volume 1. A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986. Pp. 518-541.