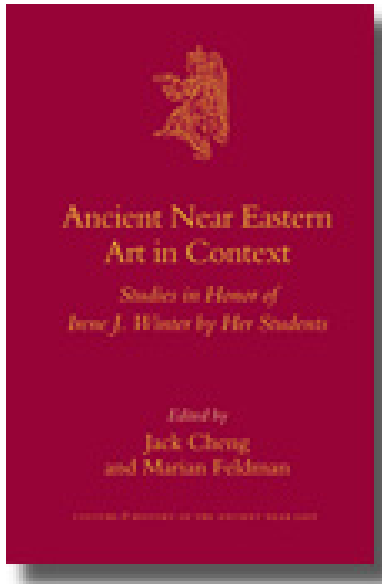


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Ancient Near Eastern Art in Context: Studies in Honor of Irene J. Winter by Her Students

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The volume under review is a collection of studies written in honor of Professor Irene Winter by her students (both direct and “indirect”). The volume is a worthy tribute to a stellar scholar and teacher, one who has had a deep effect both in the field of ancient Near Eastern studies in general and, clearly, on her students. As can be seen from the introductory statements, as well as comments regarding the honoree throughout the volume, these students are truly fortunate to have had such a talented and giving teacher, and she is privileged to have so many excellent students!

From the title, and from Irene Winter’s interests as well, the studies in this volume tackle a wide range of topics relating to the ancient Near Eastern culture (primarily, but not only, art), attempting to place these issues within a broader cultural and social context, combining historical, archaeological, art-historical, social, and linguistic perspectives. All told, I am sure that Winter is quite satisfied with the harvest of knowledge that her students have produced, in a manner so clearly influenced by her methods of research. Time and again the studies in the volume start, or return, to studies by Winter, serving as impetus or buttressing for the arguments presented.

After three introductory chapters by Cheng and Feldman (the editors), Russell, and Marcus, and a list of the honoree's publications up to 2005, there are five sections with eighteen studies. In the first section ("‘Seat of Kingship/A Wonder to Behold’: Architectural Contexts"), one finds three studies. I. Ziffer discusses the so-called "crowns" from the Chalcolithic hoard at Nahal Mishmar and suggests that they represent a palace-like structure and are indicative of the ideologies relating to the kingships that evolved during this period, while showing similar iconographical elements in later ancient Near Eastern art. Ö. Harmanşah discusses the appearance and meaning of "orthostats" in public architecture during the MB, LB, and Iron Ages. He claims that this architectural feature first appears in Northern Syria during the MB, then spreads to both Anatolia and Canaan in later periods. Although largely convincing, he overlooks the appearance of orthostats in MB city gates in Canaan, such as at Gezer and Ashkelon. S. Reed discusses the treatment of enemies in Assyrian art and ideology, primarily based on depictions in Ashurbanipal's reliefs. She suggests that, although the Assyrian tortured and killed those who rebelled against them, noncombatants were treated with relative leniency, due to the Assyrian king's image as the shepherd of both the Assyrian and the foreign populations.

The second section ("‘Idol of the King’: Ritual Contexts") offers four studies. A. Shaffer discusses the context and ideological background of the Assyrian royal monuments on the periphery of the Assyrian Empire. T. Ornan discusses imagery of Sennacherib, suggesting that it indicates an ideological framework in which the king became more and more godlike. E. Denel discusses the messages behind and context of the elaborate reliefs at Iron Age Carchemish, suggesting that they reinforced the status of the rulers of the city. T. Tanyeri-Erdemir paints an interesting picture of the ideological intertwining of Urartian temple architecture and Urartian royal ideology, as seen in the architectural details and ritual that were conducted in the Urartian temples.

Three studies appear in the third section ("‘Legitimization of Authority’: Ideological Contexts"). J. Aker discusses the varying quality of workmanship seen in the Ashurbanipal lion hunt relief and suggests that this is not the result of poor workmanship but of purposeful, hierarchical differentiation between the roles of the people depicted in the reliefs, where those of higher ranks were depicted using higher standards of workmanship. M. Feldman discusses the Mesopotamian roots of Darius I's "heroizing" style and puts this within the context of the transmission of various aspects between Mesopotamia and Iran from the third through the first Millennium B.C.E. M. Ataç attempts to explain the concept the Akkadian concept *mellamu* (= divine radiance), based on parallels from classical Greece.

The fourth section ("‘Sex, Rhetoric and the Public Monument’: Gendered Contexts") contains three studies. C. Suter discusses the roles and a method for the identification of

depictions of high priestesses in Mesopotamian culture, using both the textual and artistic depictions. T. Sharlach presents some preliminary thoughts on how to define an archive of texts as that of a women's, based on a discussion of some of the texts that are related to the royal wife Shulgi-Simti from the Ur III period. She rightly cautions us from modern gender misconceptions that can cloud and distort our view on defining documents as woman-related. J. Assante discusses a little-known group of lead inlays portraying "pornographic" scenes of Middle Assyrian date. She suggests that these depictions always depict non-Assyrian people, were meant for very limited use by persons close to the Assyrian royal court, and in fact represent the Assyrian worldview differentiating the Assyrians from foreign peoples. The only question that I believe can be asked here is whether the use of the term "pornography" is appropriate in this context (being a relatively modern concept) and whether "erotica" would be more suitable.

There are five studies in the fifth and final section ("Opening of the Eyes and Opening the Mouth': Interdisciplinary Contexts"). A. Cohen discusses the symbolic importance of barley in the early Mesopotamian world. A. Winitzer suggests a new, and very interesting, etymology for the biblical term *melilot* (Deut 23:26), in which, as opposed to the standard interpretation as an ear of wheat, suggests a more contextually appropriate term, borrowed from Akkadian *millatum*, which indicates "eating one's fill." J. Cheng attempts to understand the very unique and interesting phenomenon of objects on which there are "depictions of themselves" (seen in the Warka vase, the Great Lyre of Ur, and the Altar of Tukulti-Ninurta), suggesting that they were meant to communicate with future observers of these objects. A. Gansell attempts to use an ethnoarchaeological perspective on adornments in ancient Mesopotamia, based on bridal adornments from traditional communities in modern-day Syria. Finally, the last paper in the volume, by B. Studevent-Hickman, discusses the phenomenon of the ninety degree rotation of the cuneiform script, arguing for an early, Akkadian date for this, even if nonrotated script continued to be used for centuries later.

All told, the varied, provocative, and generally holistic studies that appear in this volume are an extremely fitting tribute to one of the most prominent and well-rounded scholars of the ancient Near East in recent times. The fact that these studies are products of her students, using a worldview clearly borrowed from their teacher, is perhaps the most lasting feature of this tribute!