

Theme 5

Import/Export

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON THE SAMARRA 'HORIZON' IN THE LIGHT OF A CLOSE STUDY OF THE HERZFELD FINDS IN THE LONDON MUSEUMS

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Communication Type: Oral

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The British Institute for the Study of Iraq awarded their Pilot Project funding 2013 to the Victoria and Albert Museum, specifically to catalogue and study their collection of the Herzfeld Samarra Finds from the 1911-13 seasons. These had been exported to London via Baghdad and Basra in 1921, and subsequently divided between Berlin and London, with typesets being distributed to around 15 other institutions in North America, Europe and Asia. The British Museum retained a major portion of these finds, which have been studied intermittently by individual scholars, but not as a whole. The pottery demonstrates that certain areas of the site do not conform to the idea of a single 9th century occupation, as already noted by Sarre, the Iraqi excavators, and Northedge, in their respective publications. This paper aims to illustrate the varieties encountered. Many of the artefacts retained Ernst Herzfeld's find numbers which greatly assists in mapping their distribution. Herzfeld's Finds Journal is now in the public domain and available online, through the Smithsonian Institution's website. Despite this acceptance of later pottery finds, many scholars have interpreted the so-called 'Samarra horizon' as a definitive period in pottery production. This paper will attempt to refine this perception.