

The Rape of Mesopotamia



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*Behind the Looting
of the Iraq Museum*

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For Penelope

When the muçala of the Temple of Ashur . . . had collapsed and was in ruins, I strengthened that place, I reached its base, I rebuilt it with granite and earth from Ubase, I restored it to its place and I set up my tablet. In future days, let a future prince, when that place shall have grown old and fallen into decay, repair its ruins; my tablet, the record of my name, let him restore to its place, that Ashur may hearken to his prayers. But whosoever . . . conceals my tablet, . . . or brings and places it in a dark house, where it can not be seen . . .

May . . . the great gods, all of them, look upon him in anger! . . .

May the ruin of his land, the destruction of his people and of his territory at their weighty command be decreed! . . .

May Adad strike his land with a destructive bolt!

—FROM AN INSCRIPTION OF ADAD-NIRARI, KING OF ASSYRIA

(1307 B.C.—1275 B.C.)