

NIMRUD FOR MUSEUMS AND MOBILES

July 31, 2013 JonTaylor Day of Archaeology 2013, Digital Archaeology, Education, Historical Archaeology, Museum Archaeology, Public Archaeology Assyria, British Institute for the Study of Iraq, British Museum, Department of the Middle East, Eleanor Robson, Fertile Crescent, Iron Age, Middle East, Nashimarta, University of Cambridge

“Just as this bug stinks, so may your breath stink before god, king and mankind!”

— *one of the chilling curses invoked in the treaty between King Esarhaddon of Assyria and his vassals in 672 BC.*

I’m [curator of cuneiform collections](#) in the Department of the Middle East at the British Museum. No two days are the same for me. One of the more predictable parts of my schedule is project work. Today I’ve been working on a collaborative project called [Nimrud: Materialities of Assyrian Knowledge Production](#), funded by the AHRC and directed by Eleanor Robson at the University of Cambridge.

The Nimrud project explores how scientific and historical knowledge is made from archaeological objects. We’re tracing the biographies of inscribed artefacts from their manufacture and use to their current locations in museum collections and their virtual representations on the web. As part of the project, we’re assembling online resources related to the ancient Assyrian capital city of Nimrud (Kalhu/Calah), especially the finds from excavations by the [British Institute for the Study of Iraq](#) in 1950’s and 1960’s. We’ll also be hosting several related events throughout 2013.

Our resources are designed and licensed for re-use by museums in mobile gallery guides. The technical focus is on the development of Linked Data, to encourage meaningful connectivity between previously isolated resources, and to bridge the gap between the museum case and the online world.

Today I’ve been writing web pages about the “Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon”. King Esarhaddon drew up a remarkable treaty to ensure that his chosen son would succeed him on the throne. His own experience showed that a smooth succession could not be taken for granted. My biography of this object will go live on the [Nimrud website](#) in August. In the meantime, you can read the text – and all the fun curses – on the [SAA website](#) (it’s no. 6).



The treaty between Esarhaddon and Humbaresh, ruler of the city of Nashimarta. [BM 132548](#). Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.