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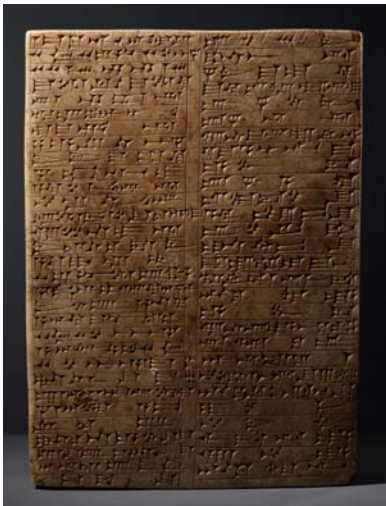
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**THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM TO EXHIBIT EXTREMELY  
RARE ASSYRIAN STONE TABLET DATING TO  
THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY B.C.**

*TABLET COMMEMORATES THE RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE OF ISHTAR AND  
HAS NEVER BEFORE BEEN EXHIBITED IN A MUSEUM*

**Object Was Sold at Auction in 2008 and Is the Centerpiece of an Exhibition Opening  
April 13 Devoted to Historic Inscriptions from the Ancient Near East**

**New York, New York, April 8, 2010**—An inscribed tablet from the Middle Assyrian period of Mesopotamia—recording and commemorating the restoration of the temple of the goddess Ishtar in the capital city of Assur—will go on view at The Morgan Library & Museum from April 13 through September 5, 2010.



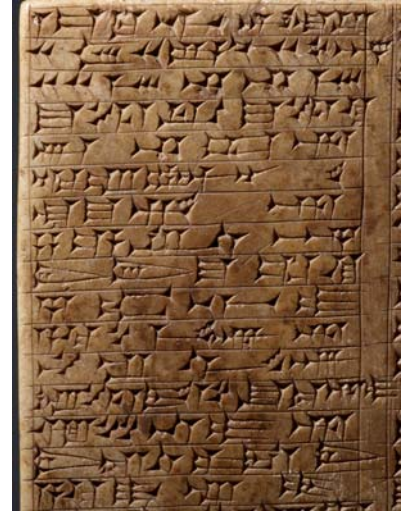
Stone Foundation Tablet with an Historical Inscription of King Tukulti-Ninurta I in Assyrian. Gypsum alabaster, Mesopotamia, Middle Assyrian period, Reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I (ca. 1243–1207 B.C.). Photography by Graham Haber, 2010.

The extremely rare object is on loan from a private collector and will be part of a special exhibition of inscribed ancient Near Eastern stone items. The tablet, made of gypsum alabaster and measuring 14 5/8 inches high by 10 5/8 inches wide, has never been shown in a museum and is considered of exceptional historical importance. The exhibition, entitled *Written in Stone: Historic Inscriptions from the Ancient Near East, ca. 2500 B.C.–550 B.C.*, will be installed in the Gilbert Court.

The tablet, in a German private collection from 1917 and acquired by the current owner in 2008, was made during the reign of King Tukulti-Ninurta I, ca. 1243–1207 B.C. He was notable for his conquest of Babylon, thereby becoming the first ruler to ensure full Assyrian supremacy over all of Mesopotamia, as well as for an extensive building program in Assur, which included the restoration of the temple of Ishtar.

The inscription on the tablet records the king's deeds and conquests, as well as his ancestors, and describes the ruined state and restoration of the Ishtar temple. It concludes with a curse on anyone who would attempt to remove the king's name from the tablet.

In addition to the tablet, other ancient Mesopotamian objects on view in the exhibition include: a stone bowl dating to about the twenty-fifth century B.C. with a dedication inscription in Sumerian; a stone foundation tablet dating to the twenty-first century B.C. with the name and titles of King Ur-Namma in Sumerian; an "eye stone" amulet with an inscription of King Kuigalzu I in Sumerian ca. early fourteenth century B.C.; and another "eye stone" amulet with an inscription of King Nebuchadnezzar in Akkadian ca. 604-562 B.C. All of the items are part of the Morgan's notable collection of ancient Near Eastern artifacts, a period of great interest to the museum's founder, Pierpont Morgan.



Stone Foundation Tablet with an Historical Inscription of King Tukulti-Ninurta I in Assyrian (detail). Gypsum alabaster, Mesopotamia, Middle Assyrian period, Reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I (ca. 1243-1207 B.C.). Photography by Graham Haber, 2010.

The exhibition explores the development of writing in Mesopotamia—the wedge-shaped system that we call cuneiform—that was in use for over three thousand years. The system, based on the use of syllables, proved so efficient that it was used for a number of different languages, including Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Assyrian, and Babylonian. With the collapse of the ancient civilizations of the Near East understanding of the writing system was lost and not deciphered until the 1860s.

This installation is made possible by a generous gift from Jeannette and Jonathan P. Rosen.

### **The Morgan Library & Museum**

A complex of buildings in the heart of New York City, The Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today it is a museum, independent research library, musical venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. More than a century after its founding, the Morgan maintains a unique position in the cultural life of New York City and is considered one of its greatest treasures. With the 2006 reopening of its newly renovated campus, designed by renowned architect Renzo Piano, the Morgan reaffirmed its role as an important repository for the history, art, and literature of Western civilization from 4000 B.C. to the twenty-first century.

### **General Information**

The Morgan Library & Museum  
225 Madison Avenue, at 36th Street, New York, NY 10016-3405  
212.685.0008  
[www.themorgan.org](http://www.themorgan.org)

### **Hours**

Tuesday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; extended Friday hours, 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closed Mondays, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Day. The Morgan closes at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve.

**Admission**

\$12 for adults; \$8 for students, seniors (65 and over), and children (under 16); free to Members and children, 12 and under accompanied by an adult. Admission is free on Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m. Admission is not required to visit the Morgan Shop.