

The Unknown Benno Landsberger

A Biographical Sketch of an Assyriological Altmeister's Development, Exile, and Personal Life

by Ludek Vacín

DESCRIPTION:

Benno Landsberger (1890-1968) was an Assyriologist whose research and teaching decisively shaped the development of his field in the latter two thirds of the 20th century. The present work constitutes the first book-length study of Landsberger's life and career. Focusing on his formative years, it is sought to answer the question of his motivation for the study of ancient Mesopotamia in the context of the cultural discourses of the day. In doing so, the work uncovers the personal background behind Landsberger's concept of "Eigenbegrifflichkeit" of Babylonian culture, a foundational theoretical framework for further development of Assyriology as a modern scientific discipline.

Additionally, the book presents and analyzes new evidence for Landsberger's studies and work in Leipzig, relocation to Ankara, as well as his personal life before and during his Turkish exile. The volume also addresses in detail Landsberger's relationship and enduring interaction with his students from the golden age of the "Leipziger Schule" of Assyriology. Drawing on a wealth of often hardly accessible archival, oral, and epistolary sources, the book offers a well-founded and contextualized account of Landsberger's life and work in his European and Turkish periods. It is a welcome contribution to the historiography of Assyriology, providing much new knowledge as well as many stimuli for further research.

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