

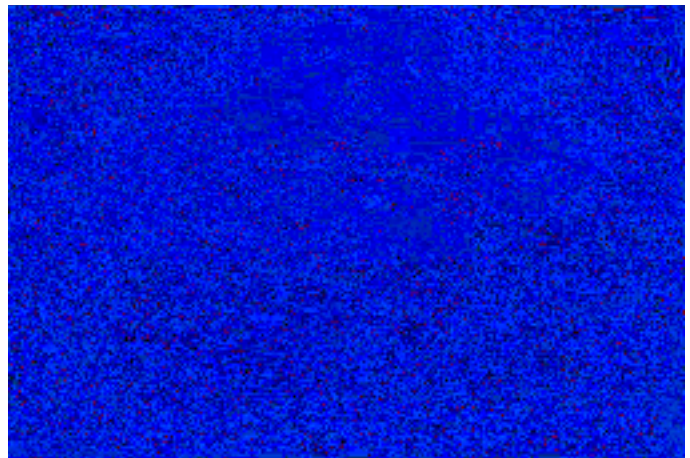
!

All words appearing in a packet. You can also find an answer key for the activities in the back.

Although our Assyrian reliefs hang flat against the walls like paintings they are still objects. A carved relief is a kind of that protrudes (sticks out) from the surface behind it.

There are three basic kinds of relief sculpture:

The carving is raised slightly from the background surface.



Parts of the sculpture are carved deeply and may protrude enough to appear to be free standing.



What types of reliefs are pictured in each image: sunken, low, or high?  
Write your answer in the blank next to each picture.



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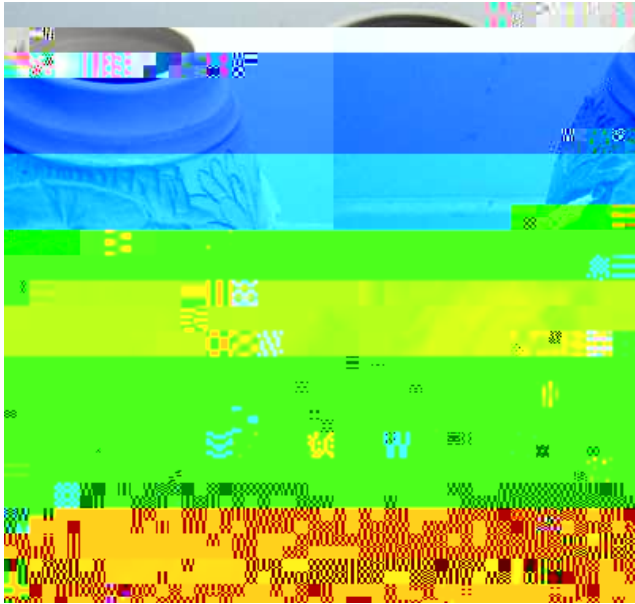


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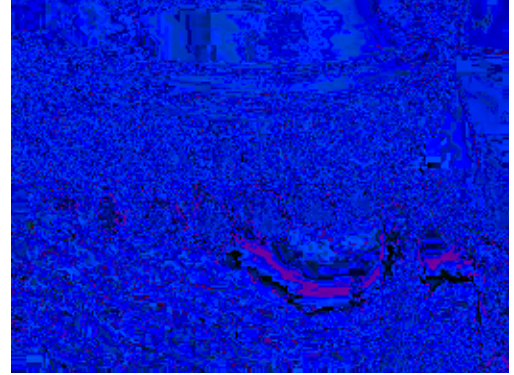
- 1.) Can you identify any of these reliefs?
- 2.) Who or what is being depicted in each image above?
- 3.) Where might these reliefs be located?
- 4.) Can you think of any other examples of reliefs?
- 5.) What types of reliefs do we have inside the museum? (sunken, low, or high)

Now that you know reliefs are sculptures, let's look at how artists make sculptures!

There are two basic kinds of sculpture:

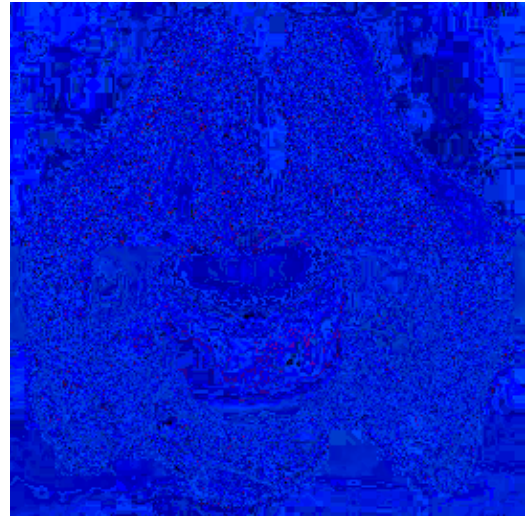


A subtractive process during which material is removed from the original material block (matrix).



An additive process in which material is shaped to create a form.

A process that uses a hollow form to transform liquid material into a solid.



Creating sculpture by welding, gluing, or nailing materials together.

Which method do you think was used to create the Assyrian Reliefs?

Circle your answer below.



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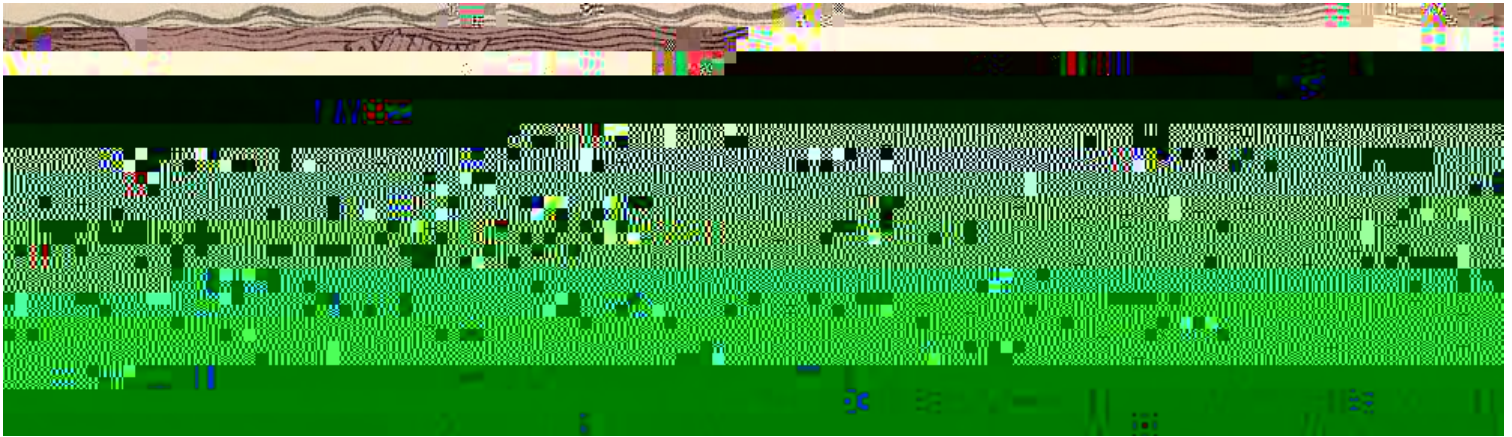
1. Can you spot three differences between these two maps?

!

- 2.



is a kind of science in which people study human-made objects from the past to learn more about the people and places of history.



Austen Henry Layard, *The Monuments of Nineveh*, London, 1853, plate 71!

In 1845 Austen Henry Layard, a British archaeologist, discovered Kalhu, the ancient city where the palace and reliefs were located.

Layard explored the site until 1851. A few years later, a group of American missionaries asked if they could ship some of the reliefs back to the United States. One of these missionaries was Dr. Henri Byron Haskell, an 1855 graduate of the Medical School of Maine at Bowdoin. He asked if Bowdoin would like some of the reliefs. After Bowdoin agreed to accept the reliefs, he shipped five back to Maine.



Shipping was no small event! Each relief weighs several thousand pounds. In order to get the reliefs here, some were cut into smaller pieces. Look at the two reliefs on either side of the doorway; can you see the lines where the reliefs were cut in half?

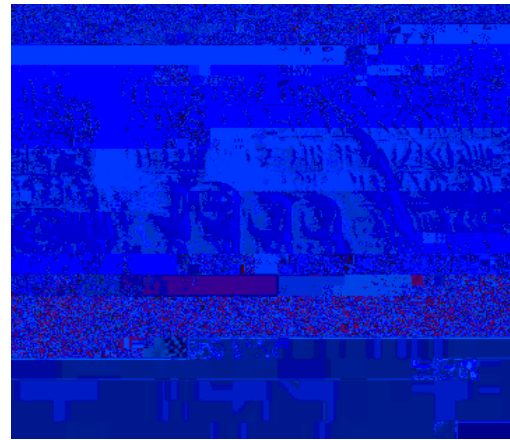
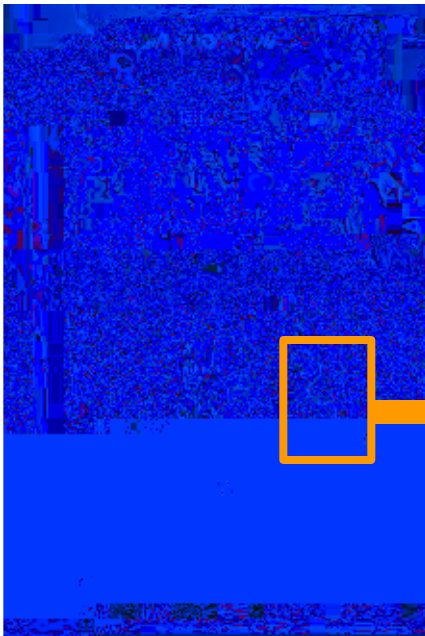
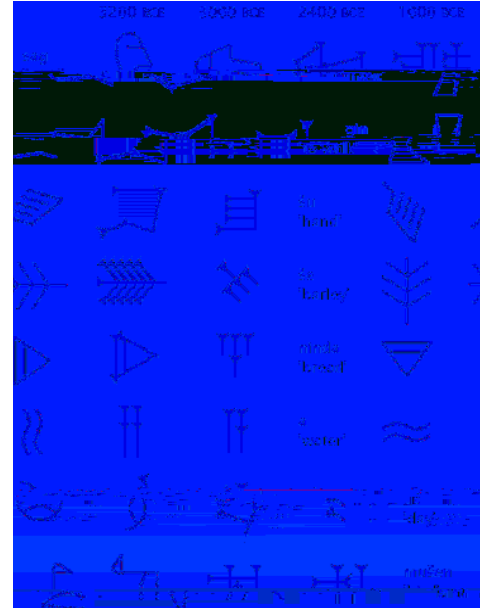
The reliefs were then attached to rafts, as the images above and the image to the left show,

sent down the Tigris River in Iraq, and loaded on ships headed for the United States for a total cost of \$728.17. The reliefs have been at Bowdoin College since 1860.



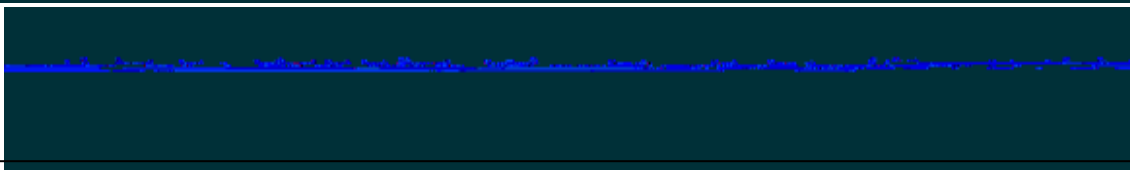
Visitors can see carefully carved rows of symbols across each relief. These are an early writing system known as **cuneiform**, which was used by all of the **ancient Mesopotamian** civilizations (including the Assyrians) until it was abandoned in favor of the alphabetic script after 100 BCE.

The chart on the right shows how the cuneiform alphabet may have evolved from simpler symbols to the more complex language used by the Assyrians.

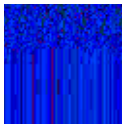


*Assyrian Relief: Winged Spirit of Apkallu from Kalhu (Nimrud), Iraq, ca. 875–860. Bowdoin College Museum of Art.*

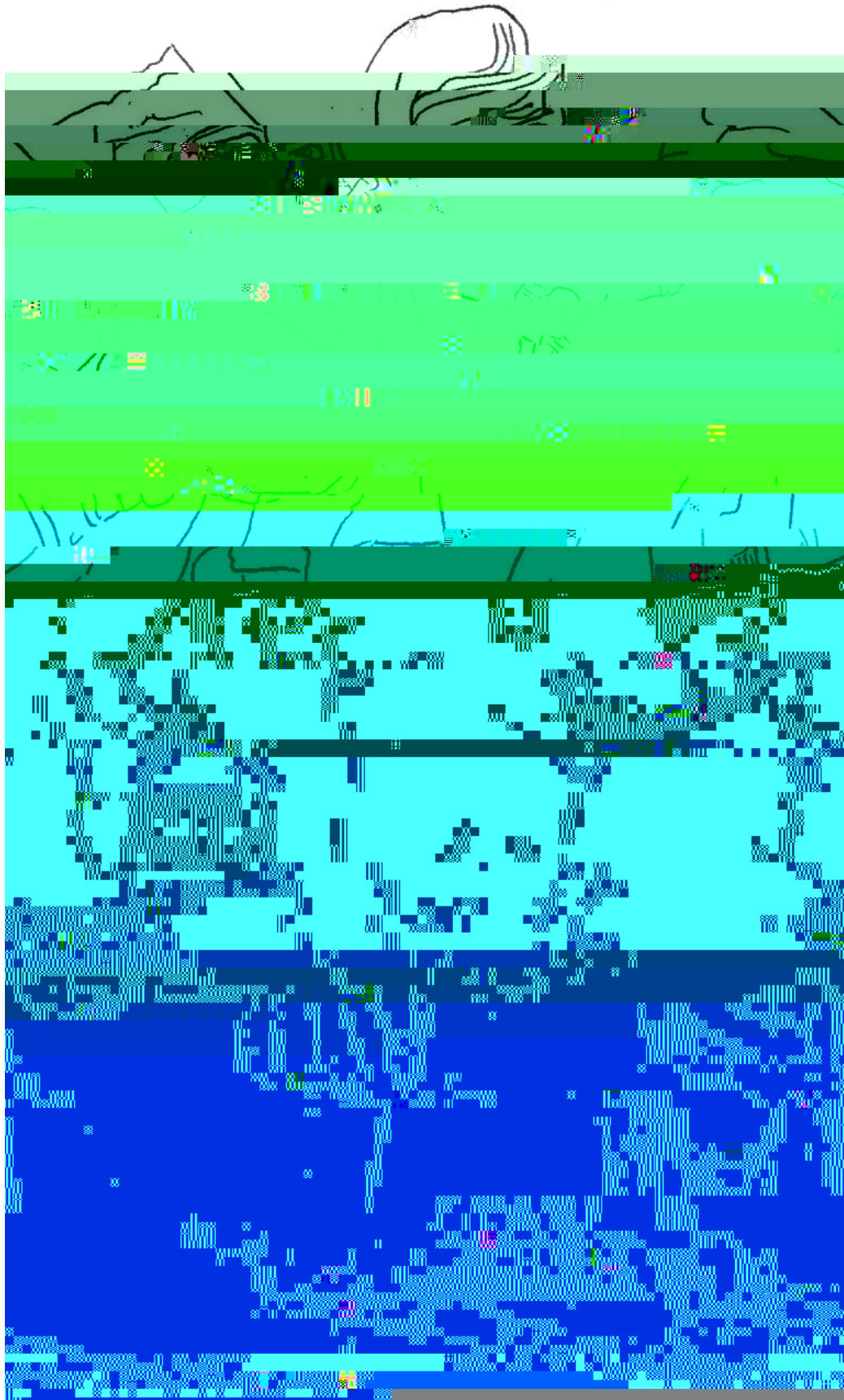
Scholars have translated much of what is written on the reliefs. The script describes the history of the Assyrian Empire and the city of Kalhu, and goes into great detail about the mighty power of King Ashurnasirpal II. Below is a cuneiform text originally carved into a relief similar to those at Bowdoin. This is an excerpt from a line that describes the king as the “wonderful shepherd, fearless in battle.” Try to copy the cuneiform figures in the box below!







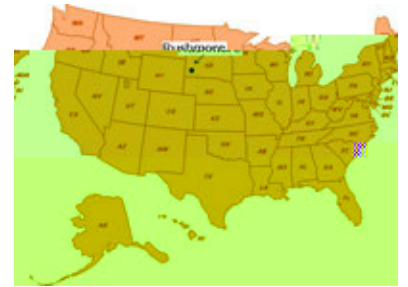
Now, you can “paint” your own Assyrian relief when you get home! If you were the painter in 879 BCE., what colors would you paint the reliefs? Try to imagine what this relief might have looked like when it was new or invent your own color scheme!



Page 2

A.

This is a photo of Mount Rushmore in South Dakota. It is a National Memorial depicting four United States Presidents: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln.



B.

This is United States penny. It depicts Abraham Lincoln on one side and the Lincoln Memorial on the other.

C.

This is a sunken relief sculpture of the crocodile god Sobek (ca.100 BCE), sculpted for the Temple of Kom Ombo in Egypt.



Page 3

The Assyrian Reliefs are examples of .

Page 4

Using iron and copper tools, Assyrian sculptors the surface of the stone named gypsum to create the figures seen in the reliefs.

Page 7

Over the course of nearly -0s3nc A0ha the3cTw -26. Td [O(e 4)]TJ 0 Tc J 0 Tcnc)1(c

material is added to an original form in order to create the final product

the study of human history through the excavation (see definition below) of sites and the analysis of artifacts and other physical remains (An **archaeologist** is a person who studies archaeology)

an object or design cut from hard material

the process of making a solid form by pouring liquid material into a mold where it then hardens

the process of making a form by putting different materials or objects together

a system of writing first developed by the ancient Sumerians of Mesopotamia ca. 3500–3000 BCE; from the Latin word *cuneus* for “wedge” owing to the wedge-shaped style of writing

# Acknowledgements

The Grade School and High School Assyrian Relief resources were created during the 2016–2017 academic year by Bowdoin College Museum of Art Student Education Interns Blanche Froelich '19 and Eliza Graumlich '17 under the supervision of the Curatorial Assistant and Manager of Student Programs, Honor Wilkinson.

Critical support for the Assyrian Collection  
at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art  
is provided by the Yadgar Family Endowment.

Cover illustration: *Relief Head of Ashurnasirpal II*, Assyrian, ca. 875–860 BCE,  
from Kalhu (Nimrud), Iraq; gypsum. Bowdoin College Museum of Art.

