Spring 2012 Undergraduate Research Grant Final Report

Project Title: Assyrian Palace Sculptures from Nimrud

Student Researcher: Lauren Kyser

Faculty Sponsor: JeanAnn Dabb

From March 3 to March 9, 2012, I used the funds from an Undergraduate Research Grant awarded to me by the University of Mary Washington in order to conduct primary source research on the Assyrian palace reliefs from Nimrud at the British Museum for my Individual Study course in Art History. My on-site research at the British Museum in London, England, provided me the opportunity to both experience and observe the relief sculptures first-hand and secure photographs and personal interpretations for use in my final Individual Study research paper for ARTH492.

While in London, I was able to devote two full days to research in the Nimrud gallery at the British Museum. During my research, I was able to examine the relief system from Ashurnasirpal II’s throne room at close proximity and take copious notes of the details, formal devices and iconographic elements which were each important focal points for my individual study research paper. Examining these reliefs from this close perspective and being immersed in their museum location also provided the opportunity for me to formulate my own opinions about the political significance of the reliefs. Additionally, while at the museum, I took over two hundred high quality photos of the relief system and its details. These photographs were an integral part of my research and paper, and provided invaluable reference points and visual aids for my work.

My personal research at the British Museum allowed for personal interpretations, photographs tailored to my original hypotheses, and invaluable experience with primary source research and observation as the information gathered and discussed with my advisor could not be attained through secondary source research. Additionally, I was able to use the photographs and information gathered over Spring Break in my presentation for the University’s Student Research and Creativity Symposium. Therefore, my time at the British museum was crucial to the overall success of my Individual Study research paper, which was awarded departmental honors for the spring semester of 2012 and published in Simpson Library. Finally, this experience and interaction with primary sources prepared me for future research endeavors, presented information about Near Eastern Art and Archaeology to my fellow peers and faculty, and was congruent with my desire to continue my studies and professional career in the field of Near Eastern Archaeology.