



Antiquity on Display: Regimes of the Authentic in Berlin's Pergamon Museum (Classical Presences)

Can Bilsel

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Reconstructing the lost monuments of Antiquity became, after 1800, a complement to Europe's colonial imagination. Countless archaeologists and architects travelled to the East, excavated extinct cities, and shipped their finds to Europe for display in imperial museums.

Antiquity on Display is a critical biography of Berlin's Pergamon Museum and its popular architectural displays: the Great Altar of Pergamon, the Market Gate of Miletus, and the Ishtar Gate of Babylon. In this volume, Bilsel argues that the museum has produced a modern decor, an iconic image, which has replaced the lost antique originals, rather than creating an explicitly hypothetical representation of Antiquity.

Addressing the dilemmas raised by the continuing presence of these displays, which embody the distinctive traits of the artistic and ideological programs of the last two centuries, Bilsel questions what the process of reproduction and authentication of Antiquity in the museum tells us about our changing perceptions of historic monuments. Documenting the process through which these imaginative reproductions of architecture were conceived, staged, and came to be perceived as authentic monuments, this volume offers an insight into the history of Berlin's Museum Island and the shifting regimes of the authentic in museum displays from the nineteenth century to the present.



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