

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

LECTURE SERIES FB07

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**'Fake' from the Kiln? –
Meaning and Values of Ancient
Glazed Quartz Ceramic**

‘...and lapis lazuli will come out of the kiln’ In no other textual source of the Ancient Near East is the function of glass and glazed materials as clear as in the so-called ‘glass-recipes’ from the library of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (668 – 631/627 BC). According to those, the aim has been to imitate rare and precious stones like lapis lazuli and agates. The use of glassy stones “from the kiln” in ritual instructions and archaeological contexts verifies that the substitute materials do not only take on the appearance, but also the magic function of the protective and healing originals in ritual contexts. Starting from this observation and based on evidence for glazed quartz ceramic from Assyria, the question of the ancient value of this artificial material as magic equivalent for precious stones will be one focus of this paper. Are original and imitation facing each other in this case as equivalents of the same value? Or has Assyrian quartz ceramic been a magic but cheap ‘fake’?