



# Ancient Near East

The Fertile Crescent

# ANE Discussion Questions

1. How does ANE art symbolize power?
2. What lengths will rulers and artists go to to showcase this power?

# ANE Timeline

**2900 to 2300 BCE** – Sumerians  
**Standard of Ur**

**2300 to 2150 BCE** – Akkadians

**2150 to 2000 BCE** – Neo-Sumerians

**1800 to 1600 BCE** – Babylonians  
**Law Code Stele of Hammurabi**

**900 to 612 BCE** – Assyrians  
**Lamassu, Lion Hunting and War Reliefs**

**612 to 538 BCE** – Neo-Babylonians  
**Ishtar Gates Processional Way**

**538 to 330 BCE** – Persians

# Sumerian Art

2900 to 2300 BCE

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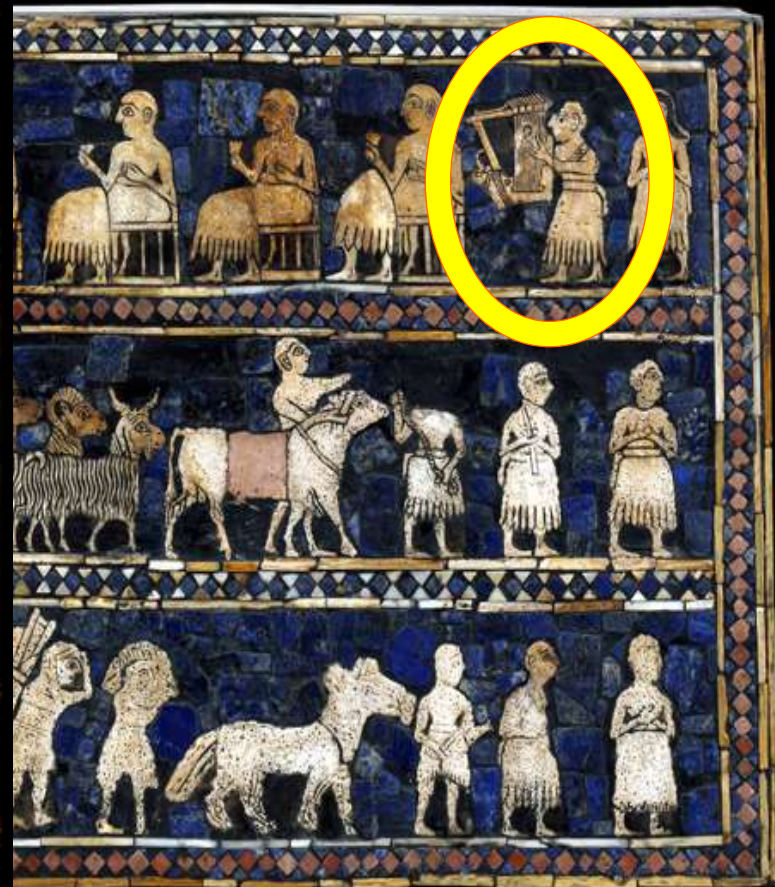












# Sumerian Art

## Bull Headed Lyre Notes:

- Bull Head adorns the front of the Lyre (gold leaf and lapis lazuli) possibly the “bull of heaven” that Gilgamesh wrestles.
- Features **four fables**: the “Gilgamesh Motif” on the top register
- The other three fables contain a lion, jackal, bear, deer, donkey, gazelle, and scorpion-man serving food.
- The meaning behind these stories is unknown, but the animals could also inhabit the land of the dead and this narrative could have funerary purposes.





# Akkadian Art

2300 to 2150 BCE





# Akkadian Art

## Head of an Akkadian Ruler (Sargon):

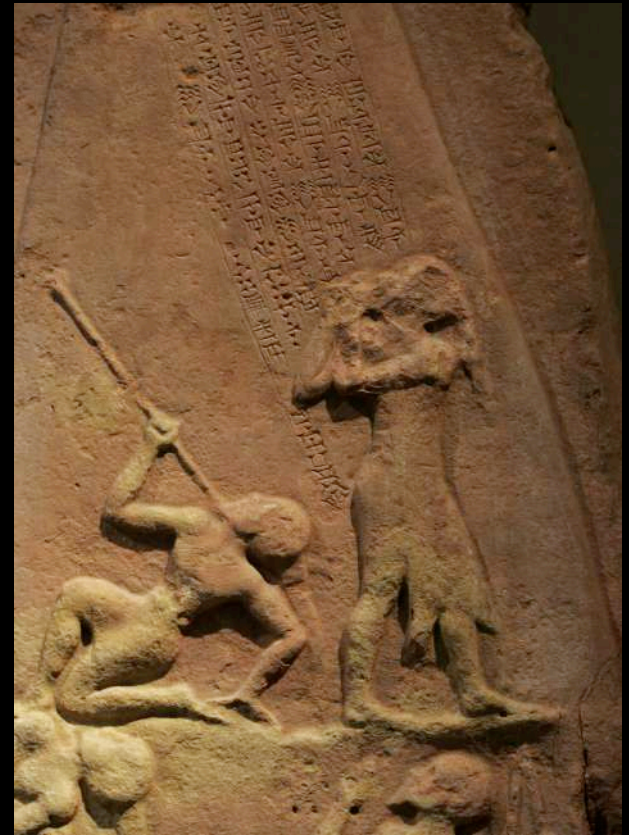
- Stylized beard characterizes it as a work from the ANE.
- One of the earliest known, life size, hollow-cast metal sculptures.
- Sargon (meaning “true king”) led a new age of power where people were loyal to a king, not to a city-state.
- The eyes were once laid with precious gems and stones. Different textures (skin, beard, mustache) depict detail the sculptor used in making this.
- Art would be used as propaganda under the Akkadians. A sentiment that would be used under the Assyrians as well.













# Akkadian Art

## Victory Stele of Naram-sin:

- Tells a story, but not by using registers.
- Celebrates Naram-sin's victory over the Lullubi people of the Iranian Mountains (symbolic for climbing to heaven?).
- Inscribed twice to honor Naram-sin, but also to honor a separate king who stole this after capturing the city of Sippar.
- Naram-sin leads his army up a wooded mountain with enemies falling, fleeing, dying, or begging for mercy.
- He wears the horned helmet of divinity (this is the first time a king appears as a god in Mesopotamian art.).
- Three suns or stars shining over his victory (the gods support his actions and favor his rule.).





# Neo-Sumerian Art

2150 to 2000 BCE





How does this statue differ from the others?







# Neo-Sumerian Art

## Statues of Gudea

### W. Temple Plans or W. Overflowing Vase

- Portray a pious ruler, Gudea of Lagash.
- Made of diorite, these statues were extremely difficult to carve due to the characteristics of the stone, but would not deteriorate.
- Use of diorite is also an indirect assertion of his wealth and power as the stone had to be imported to Mesopotamia.
- “This statue has not been made from silver nor from lapis lazuli, nor from copper nor from lead, nor yet from bronze; it is made of diorite.”



# Babylonian Art

1800 to 1600 BCE

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Discussed in the Lecture





# Assyrian Art

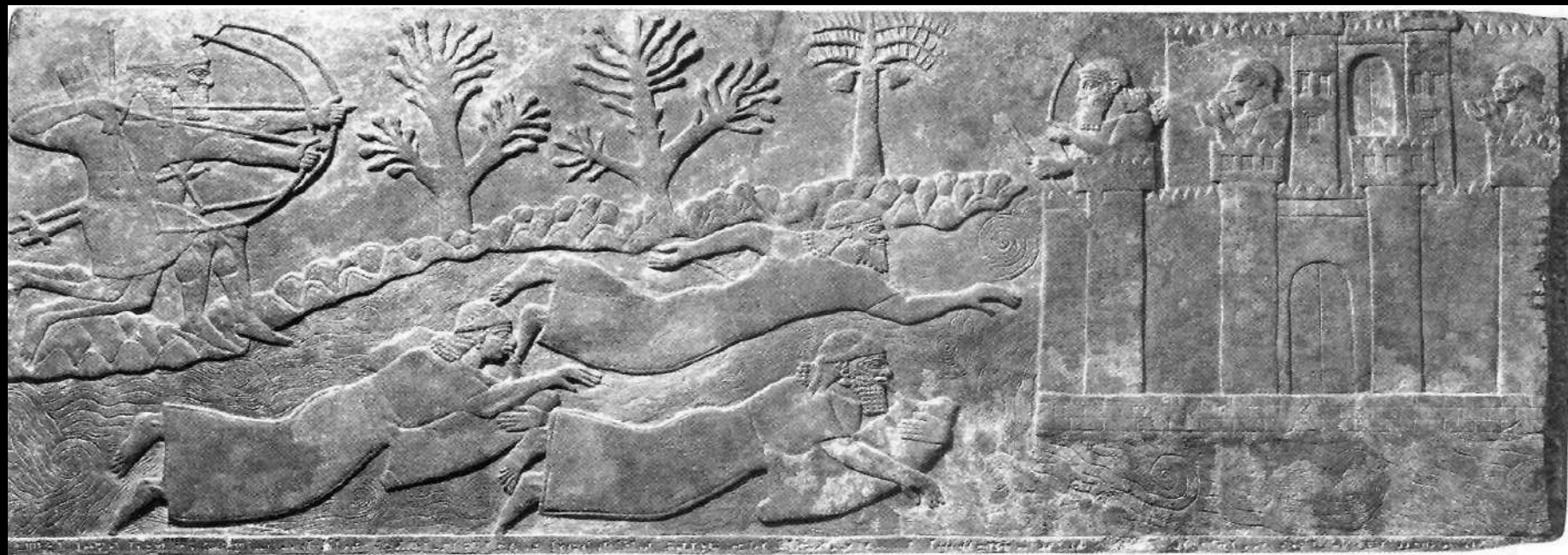
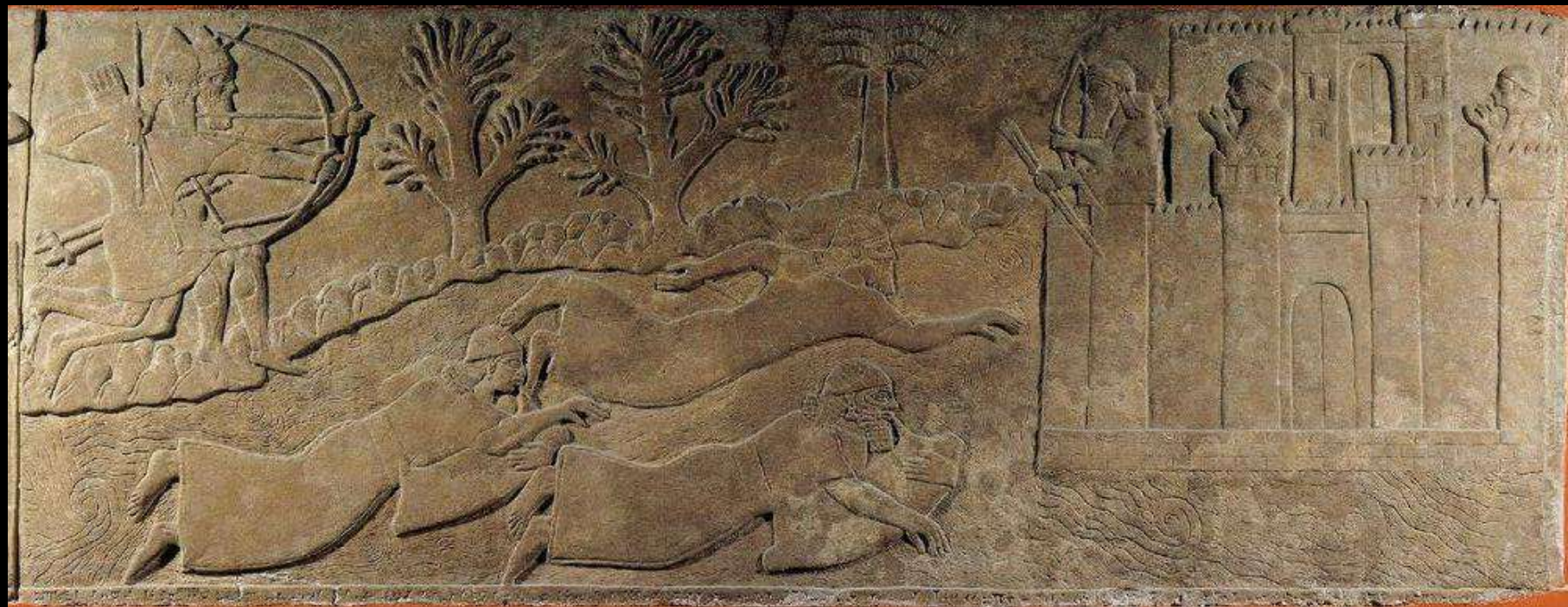
900 to 612 BCE



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# Assyrian Art

## Assyrian Hunting & War Reliefs

- Meant to portray power and evoke fear for ages to come (success in hunting often meant success in warfare.).
- Archers chasing enemies details a battle of 878 BCE.
- Detail of lions and their courage shows the respect that the Assyrians had for these creatures, but is twofold in helping the king earn more respect (Lions will not die easily in these scenes, therefore the king must try harder to kill them.).
- The slaying of the lions also symbolizes the king keeping his cities safe by keeping nature at bay.
- Details of horses shows a more naturalistic depiction of animals.



# Neo-Babylonian Art

612 to 538 BCE



Discussed in the Lecture



# Persian Art

538 to 330 BCE











# Persian Art

## Royal Apadana of Darius I & Xerxes I (Audience Hall)

- The Persian Empire was the largest that the world had seen at the time and would only stop spreading after the Greeks held them.
- The Palace at Persepolis is the defining work for understanding Persian architecture.
- The columned audience hall could hold thousands and stood at sixty feet high and at more than 200 square feet and held 36 massive columns.
- Wall reliefs and art work showcase royal guards, Persian nobles, dignitaries, and representatives from the 23 subject nations under Persia with each bringing tribute.
- Each foreign subject wears the costume of his nation and carries a gift of the region.
- Wall reliefs show subtle traces of Greek style.

