



History of Art of the Western World

Introduction

*From the beginning
of recorded history
in the Ancient Near
East to Postmodern
Art at the end of the
20th century.*



**History of Art
of the Western World**

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In addition to the slide lectures, included is a 69-page, printable Synopsis of the contents of each individual lecture.

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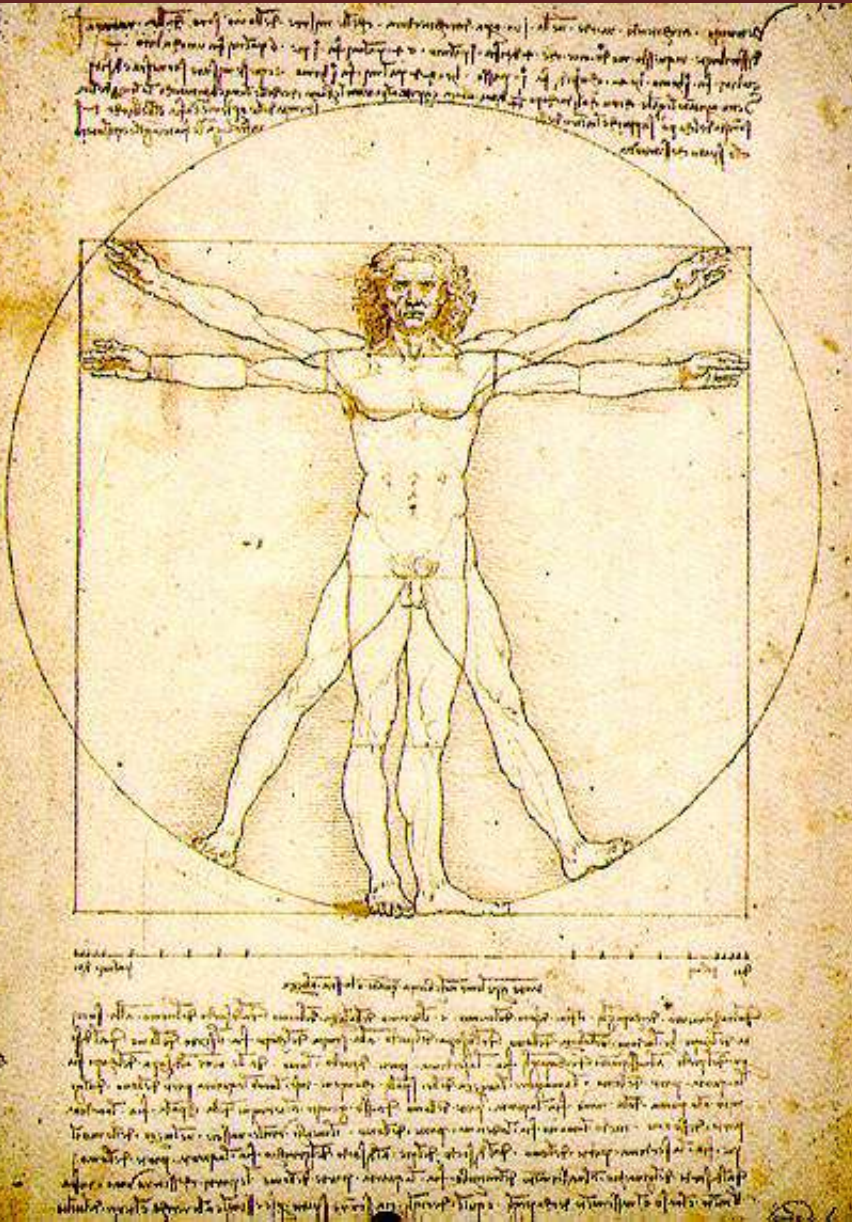
Ann Markham Langer

Susan Anderson-Michalak

Marla Armstrong

Leon Clinch

Forty-one slide-lecture titles



1. Ancient Near Eastern Art (Mesopotamia)
2. Ancient Egyptian Art
3. Aegean, Minoan and Mycenaean Art
4. Archaic Greek Art
5. Classical Greek architecture and architectural sculpture
6. Late Classical and Hellenistic Greek Art
7. Etruscan Art
8. Roman Art
9. Early Christian and Byzantine Art
10. Art of Islam
11. Early Medieval Art
12. Romanesque Art
13. Gothic Art
14. Italian Art of the 13th and 14th centuries
15. International Gothic Art
16. Early Renaissance Art
17. High Renaissance Art

18. Mannerism and Other Trends
19. Northern Renaissance Art
20. The Ambassadors by Hans Holbein
21. Italian Baroque Art
22. Spanish Baroque Art
23. Baroque Art of the Netherlands
24. French and English Baroque Art
25. The Rococo
26. Art of the Enlightenment and the Neo-Classical Movement
27. Art in the Age of Romanticism
28. The Age of Positivism (Realism, Impressionism and the Pre-Raphaelites)
29. Photography Goes Commercial
30. Post Impressionism
31. Symbolism
32. Art Nouveau
33. American Architecture: The Chicago School
34. Pictorial Photography and Photo Secession 1888-1910
35. Toward Abstraction
36. Early Modernist Art and Architecture in America and Europe
37. Art Between the Wars (Dada and Surrealism)
38. Sculpture and Architecture Between the Wars
39. Art in America and Fascist Europe, 1920s and 1930s
40. Postwar to Postmodern (Abstract Expressionism to Pop Art)
41. Postwar to Postmodern (Formalist Art)
42. Postmodern Art



The lectures
begin here

1. ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART (Mesopotamia)



Sumerian

Akkadian

Neo-Sumerian Revival

Babylonian

Assyrian

Neo (Late) Babylonian

Persian

The art of the Ancient Near East

Mesopotamia

Wedge-shaped Cuneiform writing on clay tablets





CUNEIFORM (3400-3200 BCE)

wedge-shaped pictograms were pressed into clay with a stylus.

Mesopotamia, the “land between the rivers”, had opportunities for farmers. Growing *crops* and raising *animals* allowed these Neolithic peoples to stop their nomadic wandering around to find food. Once they discovered the “*fertile crescent*”, they could settle down.

Inventions like the *wheel, plow, casting tools* of copper and bronze gave way to producing food and facilitating trade.

Communities organized into *city-states*. A government with central authority satisfied the needs for resolution of disputes. They built defensive *walls* to be safe.

Ancient Near East

Mesopotamia 4000 BCE

Islamic dominion

in the 7th c. CE



The Land
between the
Rivers.

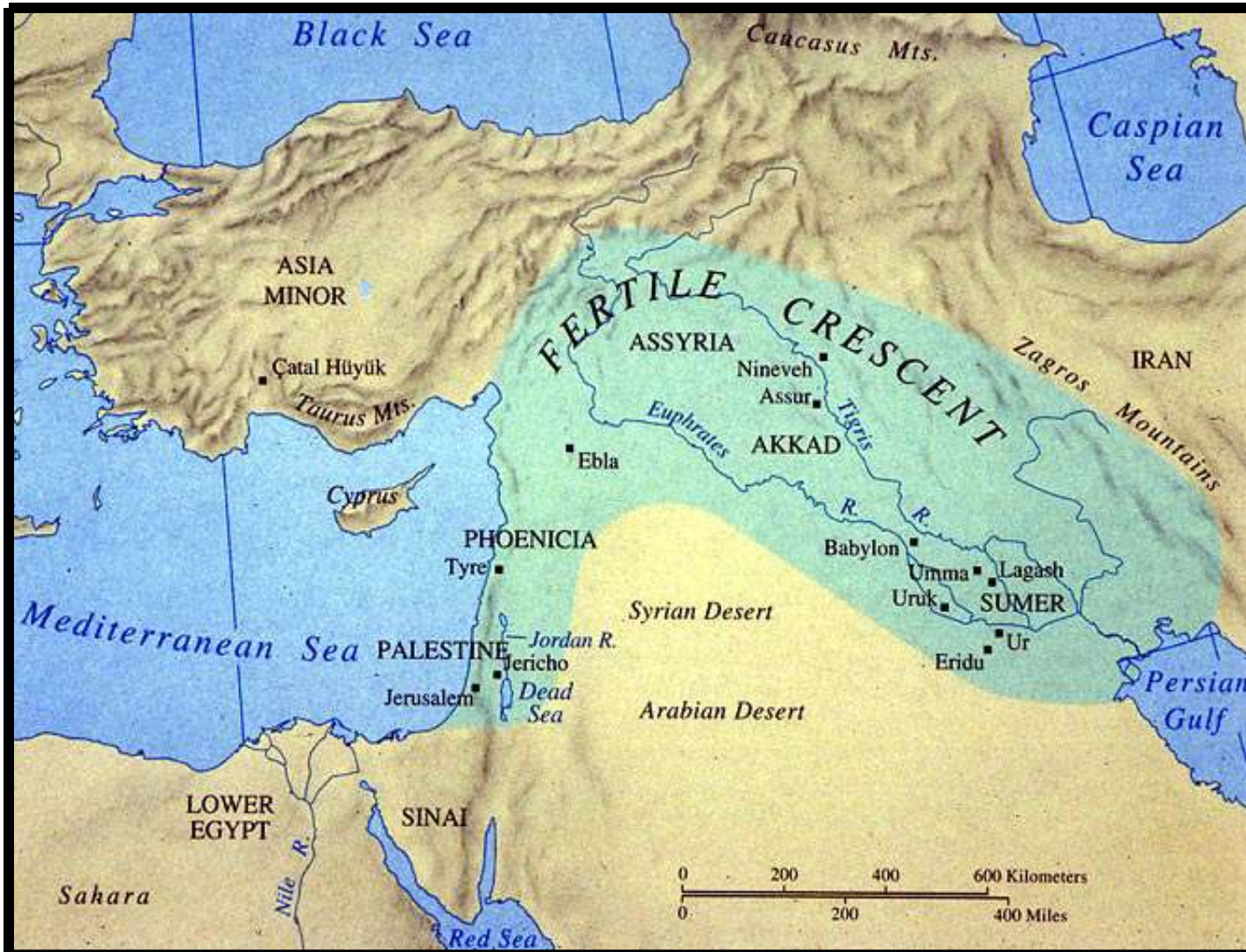
*(Tigris and
Euphrates)*

The Fertile
Crescent.

Garden of Eden.

(brain trigger) S A N B A N + P

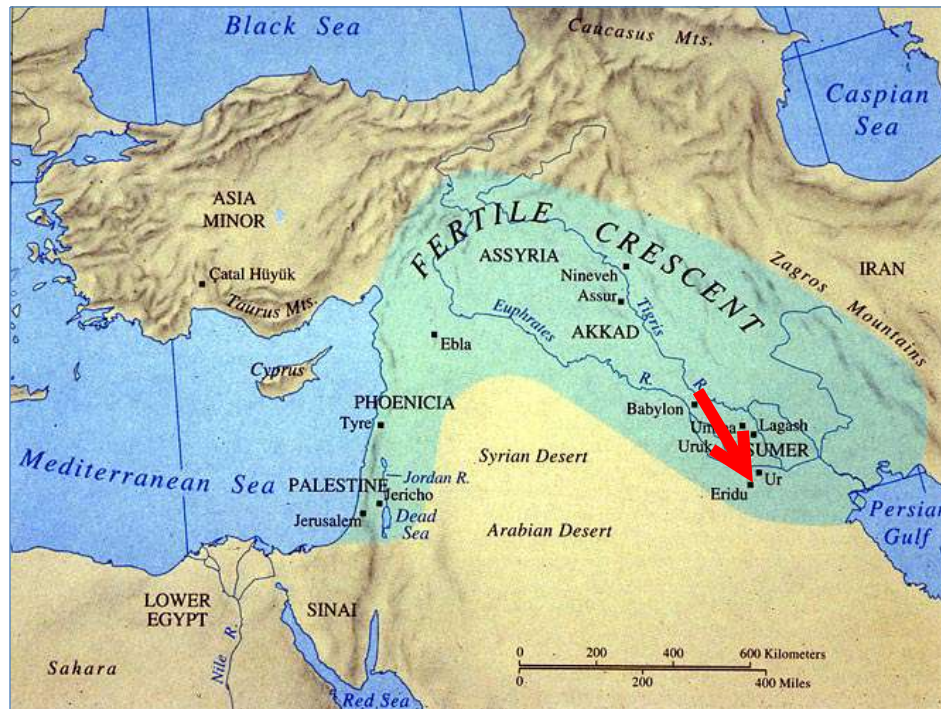
(color coded)



- Sumerian
- Akkadian
- Neo-Sumerian
- Babylonian
- Assyrian
- Neo-Babylonian
- +
• Persia (Iran)

(brain trigger) **S**an Ban + P

S is for **Sumerian**
(Uruk, Ur, Tell Asmar)
3500-2332 BCE



City-states (Ur and Uruk and Tell Asmar).
Local god controls nature.
Administration provides supplies and tools.
Administrative center is the temple.
People provide the labor.

ZIGGURAT at Uruk 3500-3000 BCE (Sumerian)

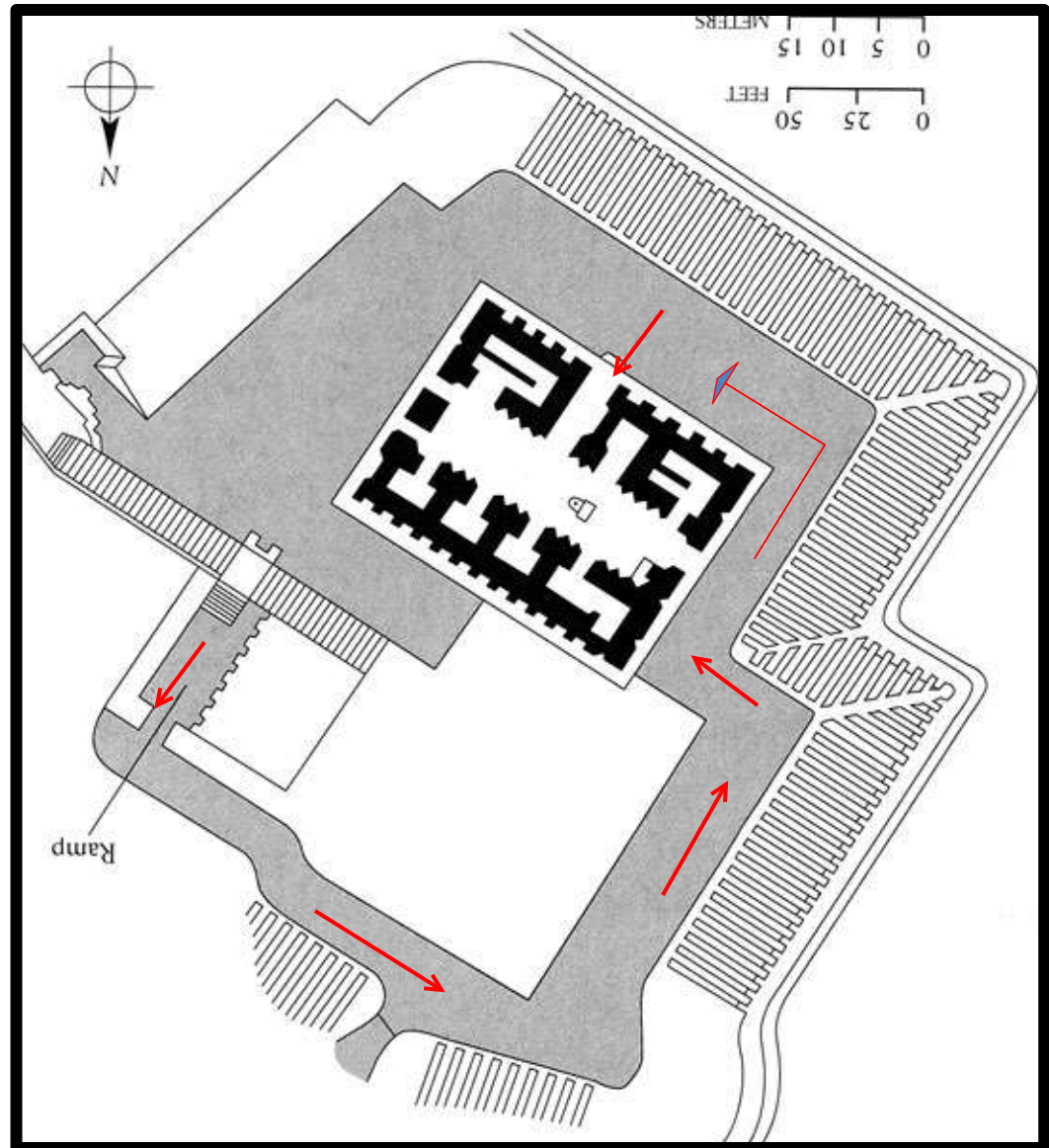
designed as the “mountaintop dwelling place of the gods”



Sumerian

Bent axis
(counter clock-
wise) ascent to
the cella.

This temple sits
on a 40 foot
mound built by
filling in ruins
from old
temples (sacred
site).

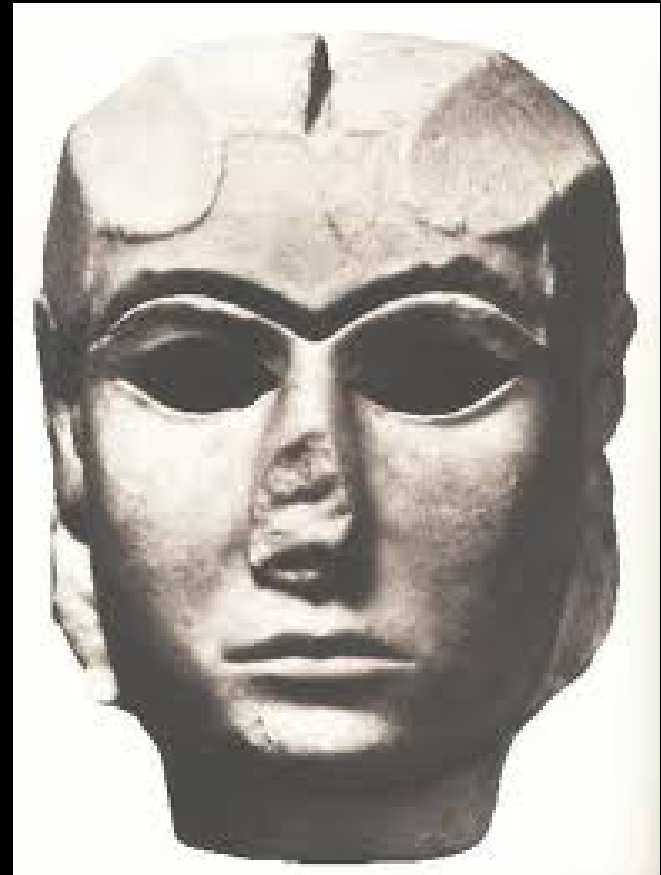


Female Head, ca. 3200-3000 BCE, limestone, 8" (Sumerian)

The temple cella would have contained a cult statue. This head helps us understand what the statue may have looked like.

Head is flat on the back, a gold or copper wig was added from the ridge on top of the head.

Eyes and eyebrows were made of precious colored materials.



Statues of Abu Temple in Tell Asmar (Sumerian) Limestone, ca. 2700-2500 BCE



These figures are “stand-in” worshipers for the workers who are too busy to pray. The figures are eternally present before the divinity. The largest is the god of vegetation. Female is mother goddess. (Sumerian)

Large eyes inlaid with lapis lazuli and shell

Powerful joined eyebrows.

Two reasons the eyes are wide open:

1. sight is the major channel of communication with gods and
2. they were in constant prayer and displayed eternal wakefulness to fulfill their duties.





Goat in Thicket (Ram in Tree),
(Sumerian) from the *Great Death Pit in
the Royal Cemetery of Ur*, ca. 2260 BCE,
wood, gold, lapis lazuli, 20”.

In the 1920s, Leonard Woolley discovered within the walls of a city, about 1,840 burials from 2600 to 2000 BCE.

One particular pit, *the Great Death Pit*, contained 74 bodies of soldiers, attendants and musicians (all people who service the elite). It seems they were drugged before lying down in the grave as human sacrifices.

This suggests that Sumerians believed in an *afterlife*.

Beautifully crafted weapons, jewelry and vessels were found and a pair of goats, one of which is shown here.

Goat in Thicket (Ram in Tree) ca.2600 BCE
(Sumerian)



Gold leaf is the material used to cover the goat's head, legs and genitals, the tree's cylindrical support, the branches and the flowering rosettes.

Lapis lazuli covers his body and horns. Shell enhances the "fleece" and his ears are made of copper.

Even the base contains precious materials, lapis lazuli, shell and red limestone in a carefully organized patterned cover.

The goat and the arranged rosettes are *sacred symbols* that suggest that the Sumerians were concerned with *fertility* in *both plants and humans*.

ROYAL STANDARD OF UR

2600 BCE (Sumerian)

8 inches tall.

This side is *Peace*.

Read registers bottom to top, left to right.

Bottom: carrying sacks of grain, fish, packs of wool.

Center: animals lead to banquet.

Top: seated ruler of Ur with wine, listens to singer and harpist.



Peace
Standard of Ur

The ruler of Ur in a sheepskin skirt, enjoying wine and the music.

(Sumerian)



**Worker carrying fish
to the feast.**



**Enjoying music and wine.
(Sumerian)**



Other side, WAR. Warriors in thick coats with short spears. (Sumerian)

Lapis lazuli
Red limestone
Shell

(Sumerian)

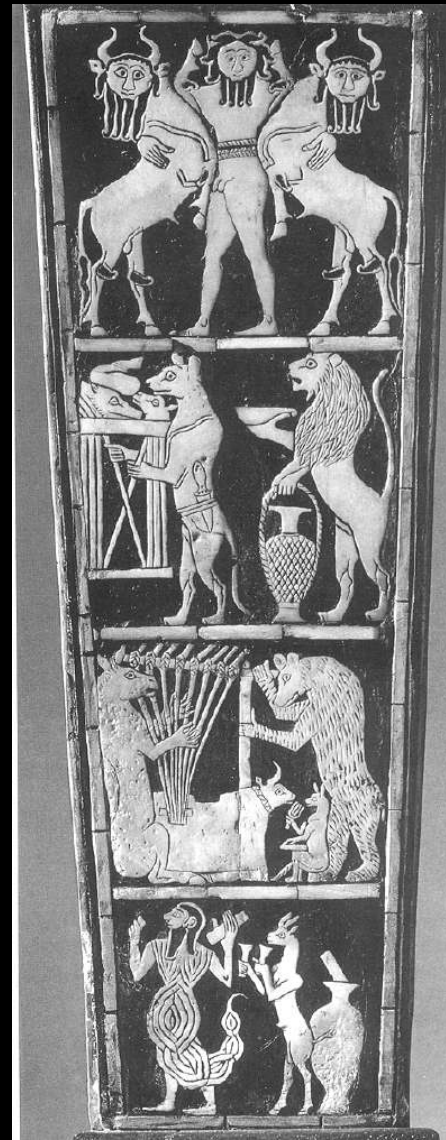






Bull Lyre of Ur (Sumerian) gold, lapis lazuli, bitumen (tar) and shell

2600 BCE

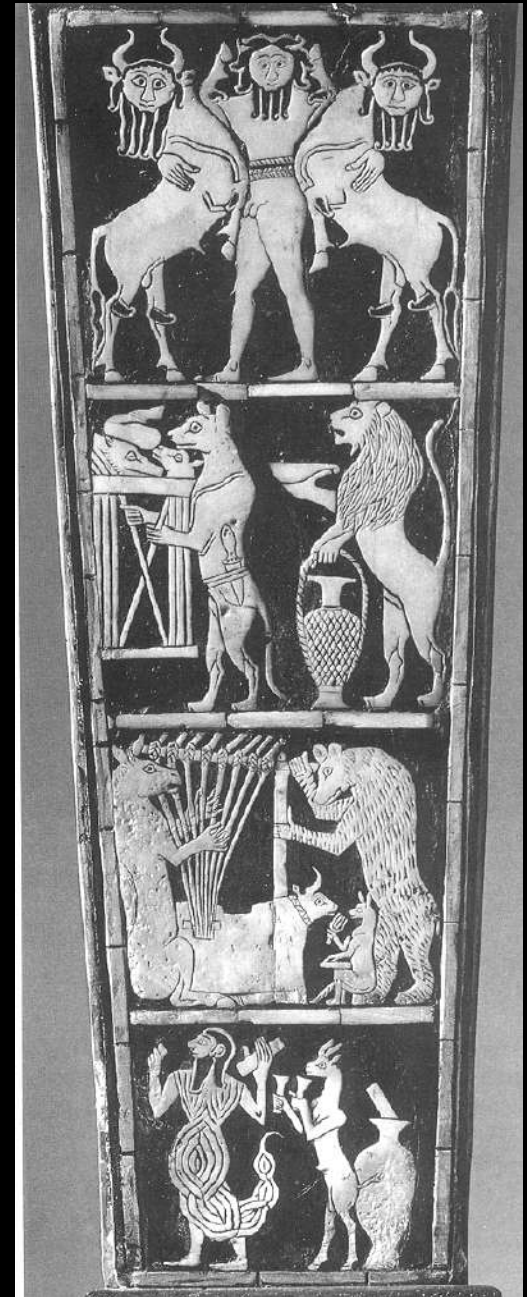


**Animals performing
human tasks.**

What tasks?

**Describe what you see in
each section, down to
scorpion man.**

(Sumerian)

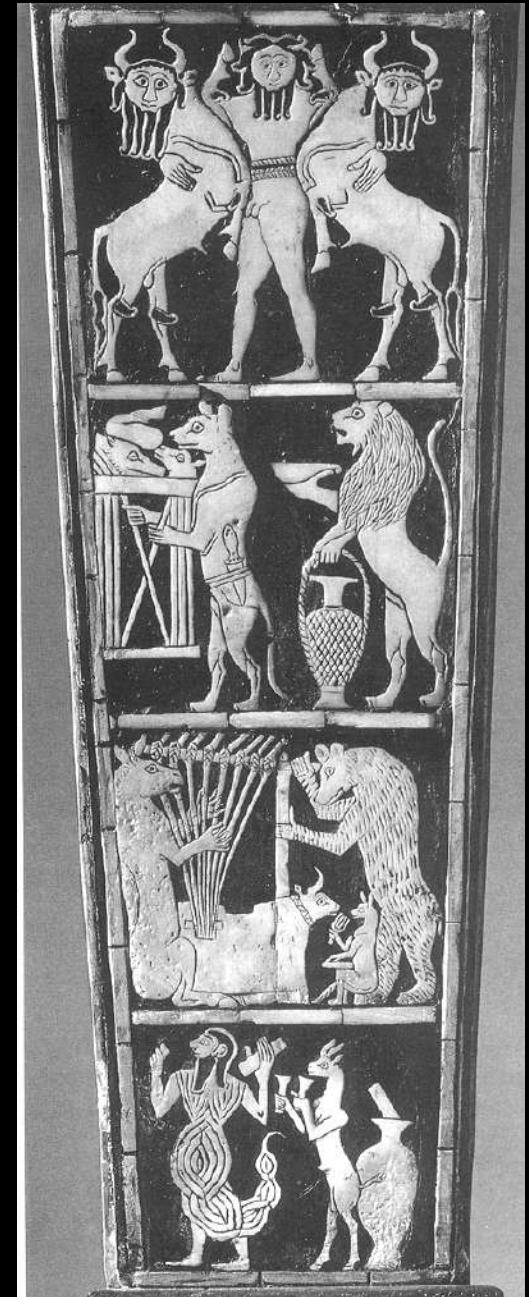


Top: Human male in close union with bulls. All three have the same face and beard.

Second from top: Wolf with knife in belt carries tray with boar's heads followed by lion with wine.

Third from top: Ass plays bull lyre assisted by bear and small animal with shaker.

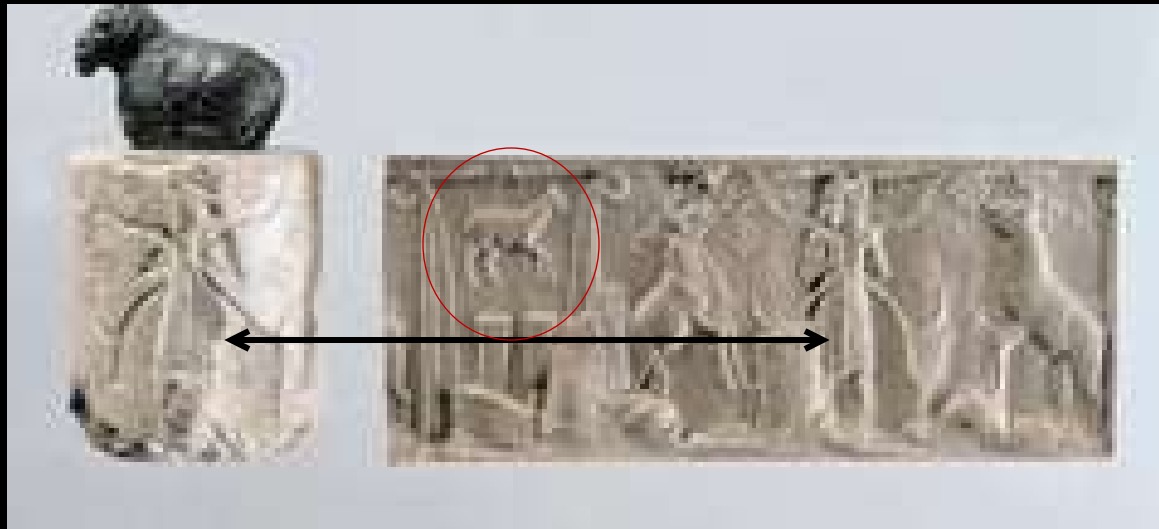
Bottom: Scorpion-man and wine saver goat.



A typical silver lyre (harp) here shows the sound box at the bottom, strings upward, string adjustments at top, decorated with the bull motif.



Priest-King Feeding Sacred Sheep
marble, 3300 BCE, 2 1/2 inches



Note the small **sheep** high up in the picture plane. The fact that it is small and higher on the plane indicates an attempt at perspective.

Cylinder seals were frequently used to seal jars and secure storerooms. They are cylinders of stone with a hole thru the center and a **reverse** design carved into the surface. When the cylinder is pressed into damp clay, a **raised** image unfolds and is repeated as the cylinder continues to be rolled along the clay slab.



A large quantity of cylinder seals have been discovered and they offer glimpses into royal scenes, architecture, animals and daily activities.

The beautifully crafted seal shown here illustrates the priest-king feeding the temple herd which provides a good portion of the temple's wealth.

(brain trigger) **SAN BAN + P**
(Akkadian)



- Sumerian
- Akkadian
- Neo-Sumerian
- Babylonian
- Assyrian
- Neo-Babylonian
- +
• Persia (Iran)

SANBAN 2332-2150 BCE

A is for Akkadian
(Sippar, just north of
Babylon, Nineveh)



Head of an Akkadian Ruler,
from Nineveh, ca. 2250-2300 BCE,
bronze, 12”.

Bronze casting, using the lost wax method is using *new technology*. This is an example of propaganda used to enhance power.

Fights over land and access to water lead to the practice of ruler-kings who were “stewards of the god” making them less bound to the city-state tradition.

The visual arts are increasingly used to reflect P o W e R.

The abstract treatment (stylized) of the hair and beard reflect the style of a Sumerian king.

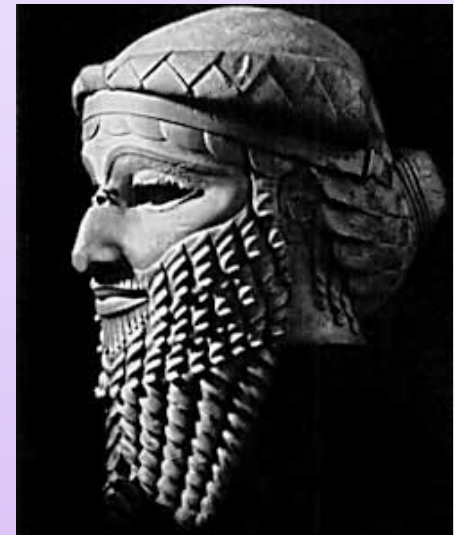
The smooth flesh reflects simplicity and symmetry which denote control and order.

The skill of the metalwork denotes technological advances which also indicates the ability to make sophisticated weaponry.

Once there were precious stones for eyes.

When Nineveh was invaded in 612 BCE, the ears, nose and part of the beard were cut off.

This type of ritualistic vandalism is practiced, even today.



The Semitic-speaking Akkadians gained power over the Sumerians while adopting features of their civilization.

In 2334 BCE, Sargon conquered Sumer.

His grandson is Naram-Sin, the victor on the bas (shallow) relief stele* seen here, wearing the horned helmet, symbolizing divinity. (*He is the first Mesopotamian king to deify himself*).

*Stele (stone marker) is 6 1/2 feet tall in Sippar, a Akkadian city. It celebrates the victory over the Lullubi people.



This heroic figure communicates the message of power, with muscles, and stars (solar dieties).

Soldiers (in composite view) climb the wavy contours of a wooded mountain.

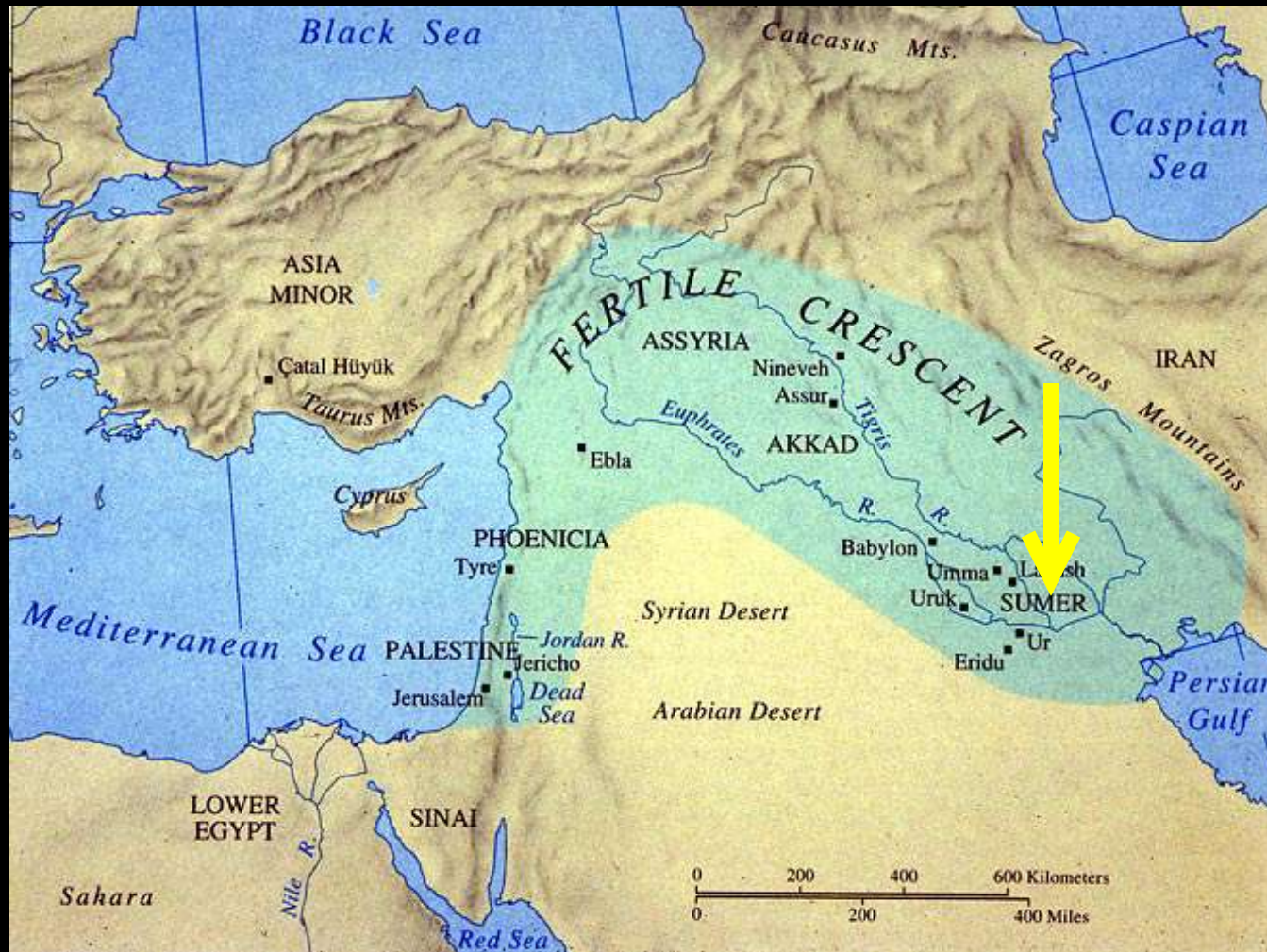
The soldier's march is orderly.

The enemy's is chaotic, some being trampled underfoot, begging for mercy and dying.

Naram-Sin's glory was stolen when, in 1157 BCE, Mesopotamia was invaded and the stele was seized as war booty and installed in the city of Susa.



(brain trigger) S A N B A N + P



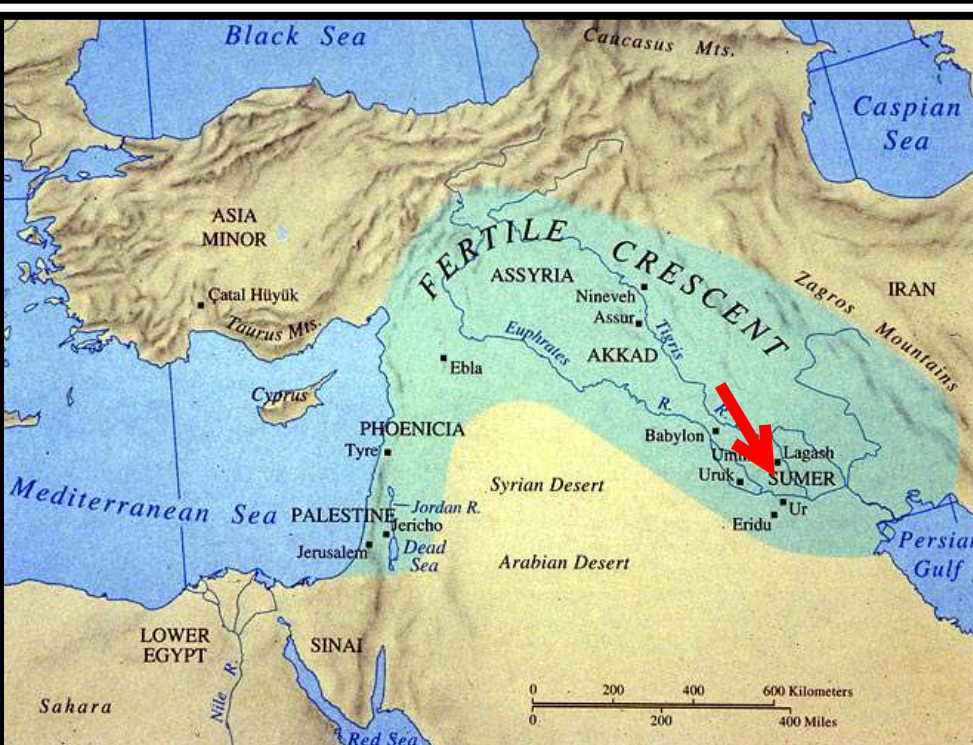
- Sumerian
- Akkadian
- Neo-Sumerian
- Babylonian
- Assyrian
- Neo-Babylonian
- +
- Persia (Iran)

(brain trigger) Sa**N** ban + P

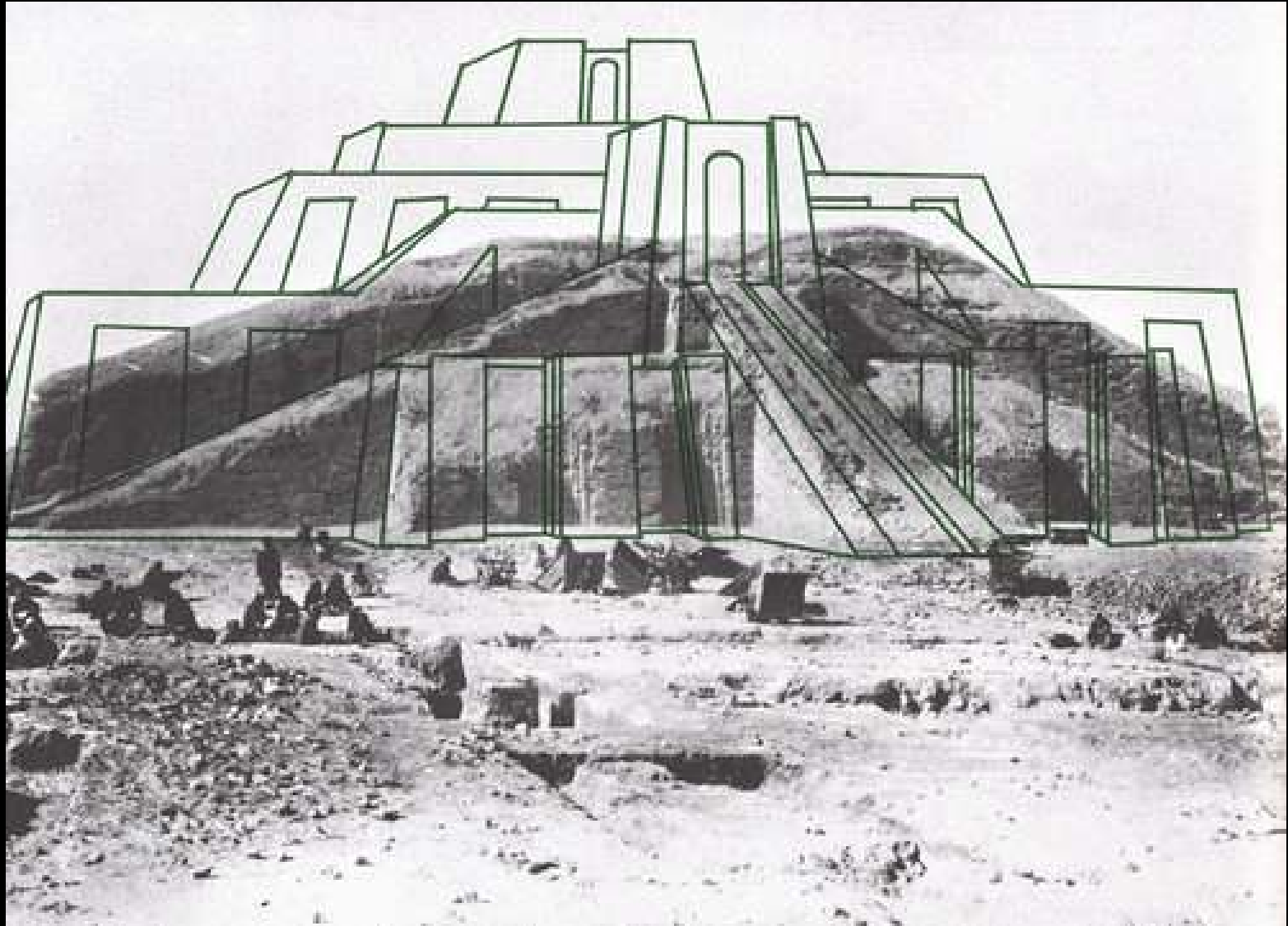
N is for Neo-Sumerian
(Sumer, Ur, Uruk
& Gudea in Lagash)
2159-1600 BCE

King Urnammu of Ur
re-established
Sumerian as the state
language and united
the realm for 100
years.

He began a building
project on a
magnificent scale.



How the Ziggurat at Ur once was, according to historians (Sumerian)



SAN BAN

N is for

Neo -(new)

Sumerian Revival

- Ur will rise again in 2100 BCE under the leadership of King Urnammu of Ur.
- This is the ziggurat of Ur.



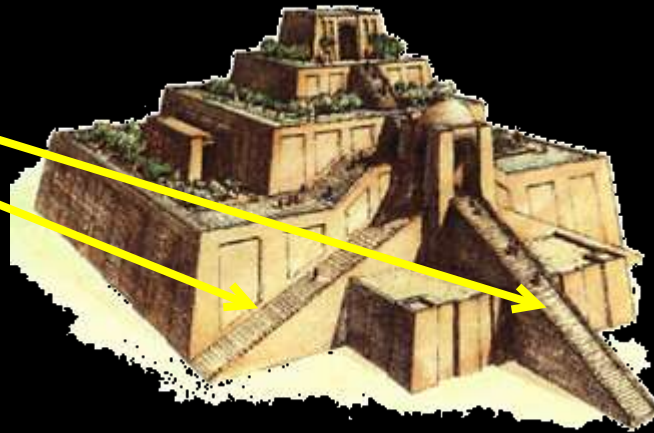
Ziggurat of Ur, ca. 2100 BCE (Neo-Sumerian)

Made of mud brick and bitumen (tar).

Thick buttresses (supports) and vertical lines
give impression of strength.

100 steps.

Vertical
lines point
upward.



Gudea Holding Temple Plan, ca. 2100 BCE
(Neo-Sumerian)

When the Tigris fails to rise, the god encourages Gudea to build a temple.

Here is Gudea with the plan on his lap.



Head of Gudea, ca. 2100 BCE
(Neo-Sumerian)

The temple was built and 20 of these and other statues of Gudea were found. They are carved from diorite.

He always wears a long garment with one bare shoulder. He is wealthy.



Votive Statue of Gudea

Neo-Sumerian

Gudea built many temples.

He placed votive statues in each.

He presents himself as an ideal ruler.

Statue is 2 1/2 feet tall.

Vessel holds life-giving waters of the
Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

Waters are filled with leaping fish.

Diorite.



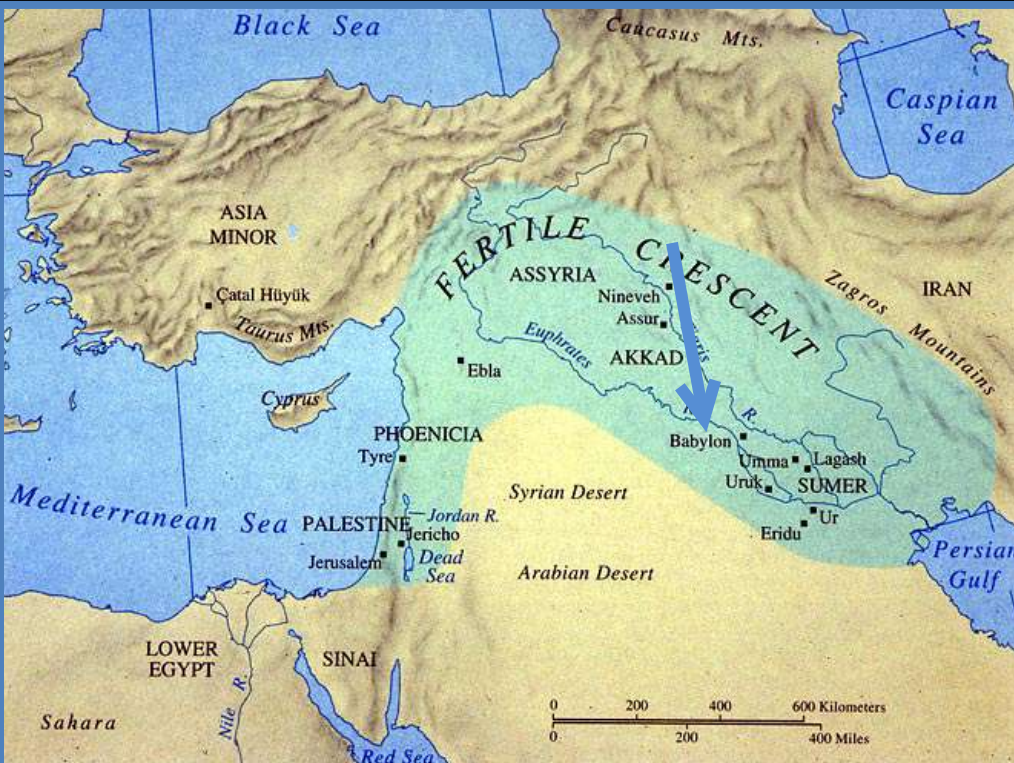
(brain trigger) san **B**an + P

B is for **B**abylon

(Hammurabi and his law code)

Mesopotamia is in turmoil again, then Babylon's unified rule keeps things quiet for 300 years.

Respect for Sumerian tradition plus military power laid the foundation for Hammurabi as the "favorite shepherd".



SAN BAN

B is for Babylonia

Stele of Hammurabi contains
the law code.

1792-1750 BCE.

3500 lines of cuneiform.

Sculpted from basalt (the
Louvre web site verifies this).

Entire stele is 7 feet tall.



General Hammurabi conquered Mesopotamia. The capital, Babylon, becomes a thriving metropolis. Rapid growth caused problems. Organizing a common code of law was a must.

“Eye for an eye”
justice.

Patron god, Shamash, sits on a throne with his horned crown, and extends a measuring rod of kingship and a rope ring to Hammurabi. Sun rays emanate from his shoulders. Their eyes are in high relief, so we can observe their intense gaze.

The figures are in composite view (a convention of Akkadian relief sculpture).

Hammurabi, the “shepherd” has received the divine power and blessing

Law Code of Hammurabi, ca. 1760 BCE (Babylonian)



The Code Of Hammurabi was created to bring a rule of righteousness to the land, to destroy the evil-doers, protect the weak from the strong, and further the well-being of mankind.

The laws are clearly stated and punishment is severe.

If any one steal the property of a temple or of the court, he shall be put to death, and also the one who receives the stolen thing from him shall be put to death.

If any one steal cattle or sheep, or an ass, or a pig or a goat, if it belong to a god or to the court, the thief shall pay thirty-fold; if they belonged to a freed man of the king, he shall pay ten-fold; if the thief has nothing with which to pay he shall be put to death.

If a man wish to separate from a woman who has borne him children, then he shall give that wife her dowry and use of the field, garden and property so that she can rear her children. When she has brought up the children, a portion of that is given to the children, equal as that of one son, shall be given to her. She may then marry the man of her heart.

If a son strike his father, his hand shall be hewn off.

If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out.

(Babylonian)

.... more law code ...

If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out.

If he break another man's bone, his bone shall be broken.

If a builder build a house for some one and does not construct it properly, and the house which he built fall in and kill its owner, the that builder shall be put to death.

If it kill the son of the owner, the son of the builder shall be put to death.

.....this law code is simplistically explained as

“an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.”

(brain trigger)
San ban + P

A is for Assyrian

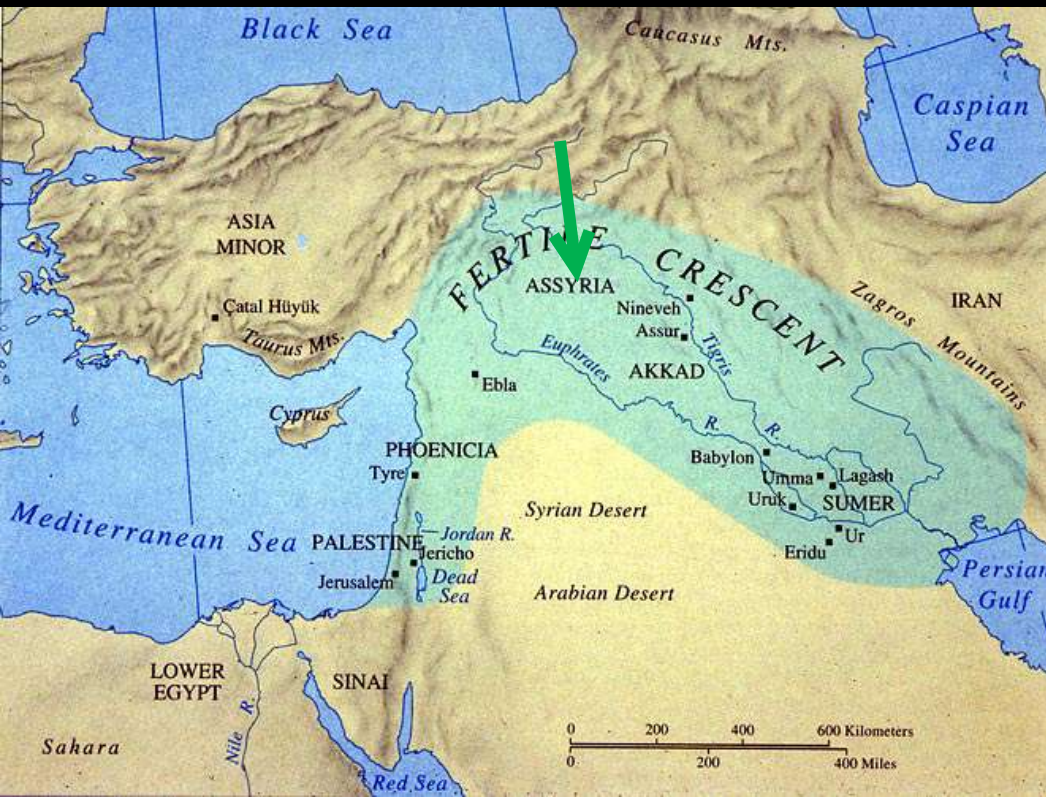
(Sargon II, Dur Sharrukin, a city-state located just north of Nineveh, in Assur)

900-612 BCE

In 1595 BCE, Babylon fell to the Hittites.

The Assyrians controlled southern Mesopotamia stretched from the Sinai Peninsula to the Caucasus Mountains.

The Assyrian's art was an art of empire: propagandistic.



SAN BAN

A

is for

Assyrian



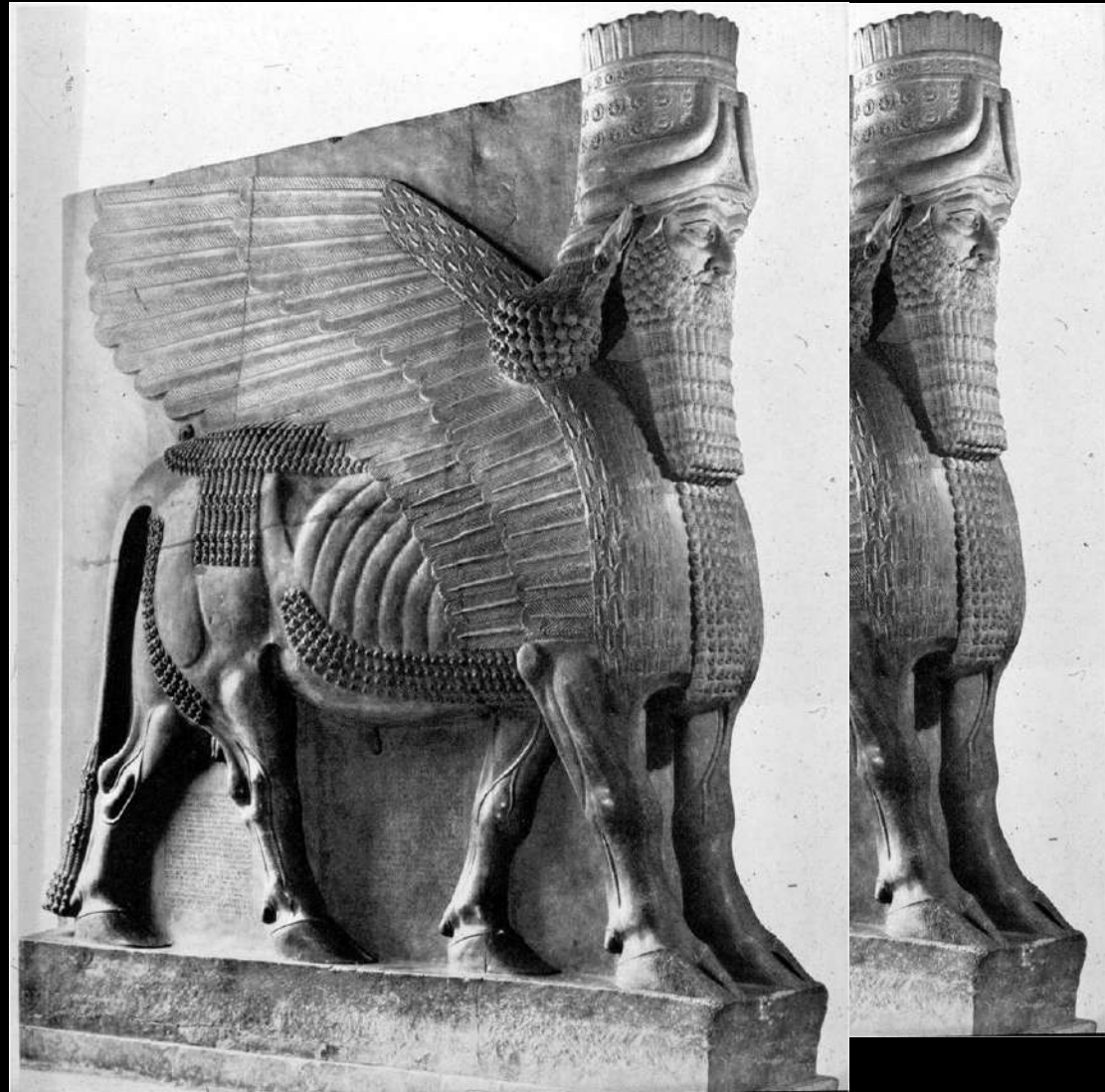
Assyrians came to
conquer and
impress.

The lamassu are 14 feet tall and designed to impress (frighten) you and evil spirits.

Winged bulls with 5 legs and human heads. They act as divine guardians.

When seen from the front, they appear to have only 4 legs; from the side they appear to move.

Lamassu (at the gate of the Citadel of Sargon II, Dur Sharrukin) 742-706 BCE)



The lamassu are carved almost in the round and carved from live limestone rock.

Scholars believe that they were planned as free-standing, so that from the front, it appears there are two front legs, but in profile there appear to be 5 legs on each.

Texts indicate that there were also bronze cast lamassu that were later melted down. No bronze lamassu have survived.

Gate of the Citadel of Sargon II

Dur Sharrukin

742-706 BCE



Tall horned (royal)
headdress.

Deep set eyes.

Powerful musculature of
the body and legs.

Delicate patterning
(stylized pattern) of
the beard and
feathers.

The towering size would
make a visitor fear
the power of the king.

(Assyrian)



Model of *The Citadel of Sargon II*, (Assyrian) Dur Sharrukin (present day Iraq), 721-705 BCE

Art of Empire

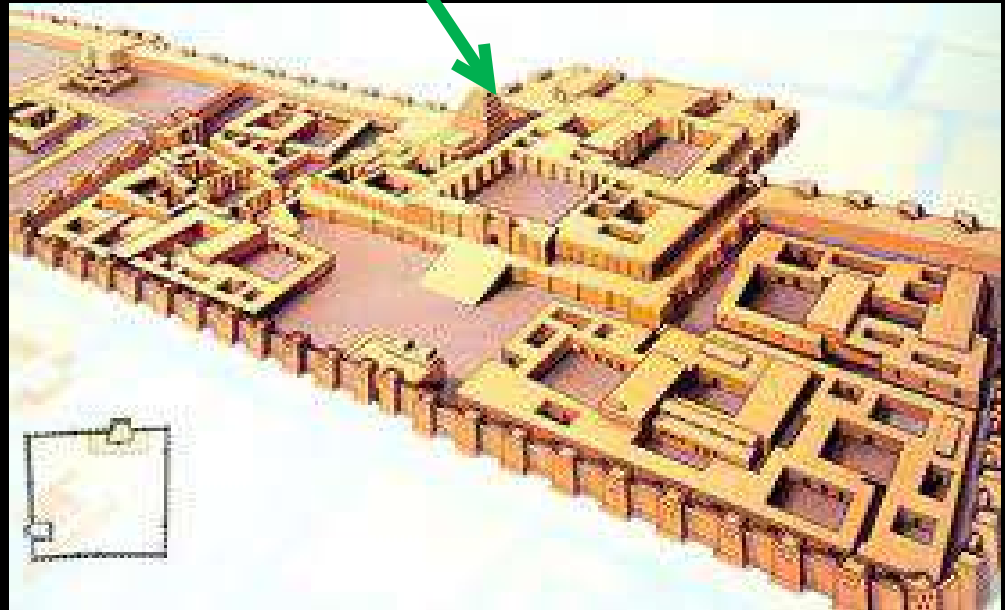
Nearly a square mile enclosed in an imposing mud-brick fortification wall with turrets.

A visitor had to pass through the gate, exposed plazas and climb wide ramps.

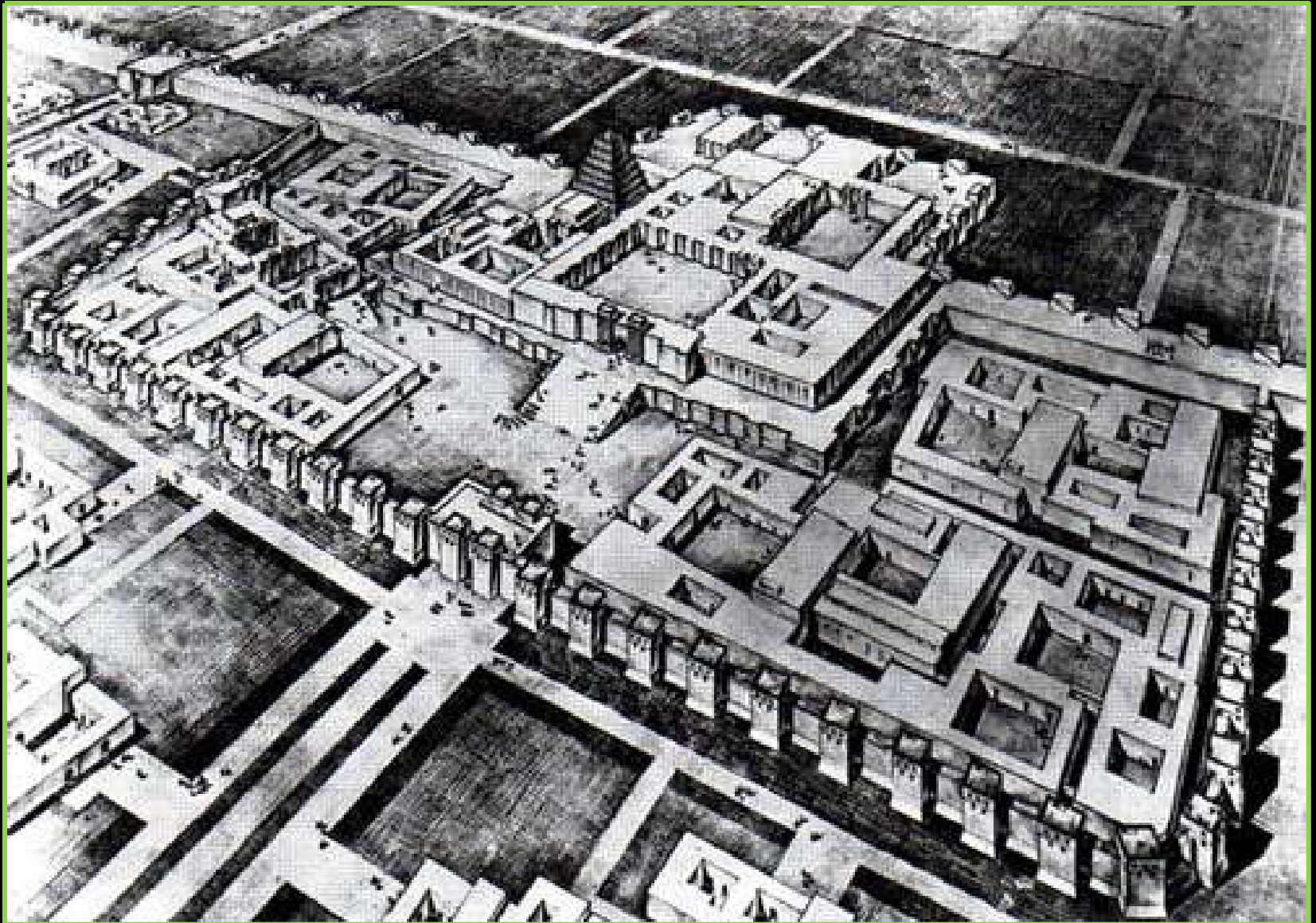
The citadel is shut off from the rest of the town and is elevated on a 50 foot high mound. (King is higher than his subjects).

The complex has 30 courtyards and 200 rooms.

Ziggurat is “stepped up” in 4 stages, each of a different color, each 18 feet high, with a ramp winding to the top.



Reconstruction drawing of the citadel of Sargon II
(Assyrian)



Upright gypsum slabs (orthostats) on the walls of the Palace of Ashurnaisirpal II with relief depictions of conquests, 883-859 BCE (Assyrian)

*The King is glorified by relief details of military conquests, lion hunts, etc.

- Apparently, these depictions line the walls in sequence, propelling the visitor from scene to scene. Text is used to clarify the scenes. Sometimes color was used for emphasis.
- This scene shows the enemy fleeing an advance party by swimming across the river on inflatable animal skins. On the right is the fortified city, the king is raising his bow, emotional women behind him.
- *Note that landscape elements are interspersed with humans.*
- *There is no attempt to keep the scale accurate. *The point, the only point, is the tell the story of the king's conquest.*



Palace of Ashurnasirpal, ca. 883-859 BCE (Assyrian)

Relief sculptures of lion hunts



Assyrian wall relief sculpture from the reign of Ashurbanipal, ca. 645 BCE.

Lion Hunts were staged events, ritually showcasing the king's strength. As a metaphor for military prowess, glorifying the vanquisher because the vanquished is so formidable.

Lion Hunts were enacted on palace grounds. Lions were released into a square formed by troops with shields.

Earlier, the lions were hunted to protect the townspeople.

Later, the hunt became a symbol of the king's strength and power.



(Assyrian)



(brain trigger)

San ban + P

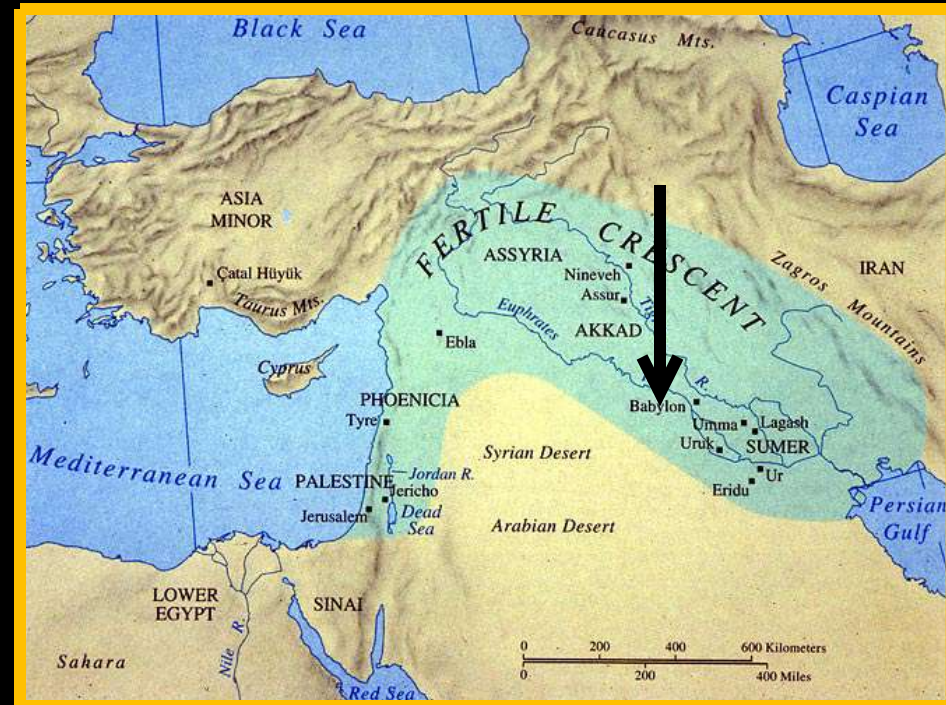
Between 612 and 539 BCE, Babylonia had a final brief successful period of prosperity, until it fell to the Persians.

The Late Babylonian ruler, Nebuchadnezzar II built the *Tower of Babel* (270 feet tall) and the *Hanging Gardens of Babylon* and the *Ishtar Gate*.

N is for Neo-Babylonian

(Late Babylonian, Royal Palace and the Ishtar Gate, Nebuchadnezzar II)

612 BCE



SAN BAN

Royal Palace at Babylon

N is for
Neo-
Babylonian

Ishtar Gate to the Royal
Palace of
Nebuchadnezzar II,
575 BCE



Neo-Babylon

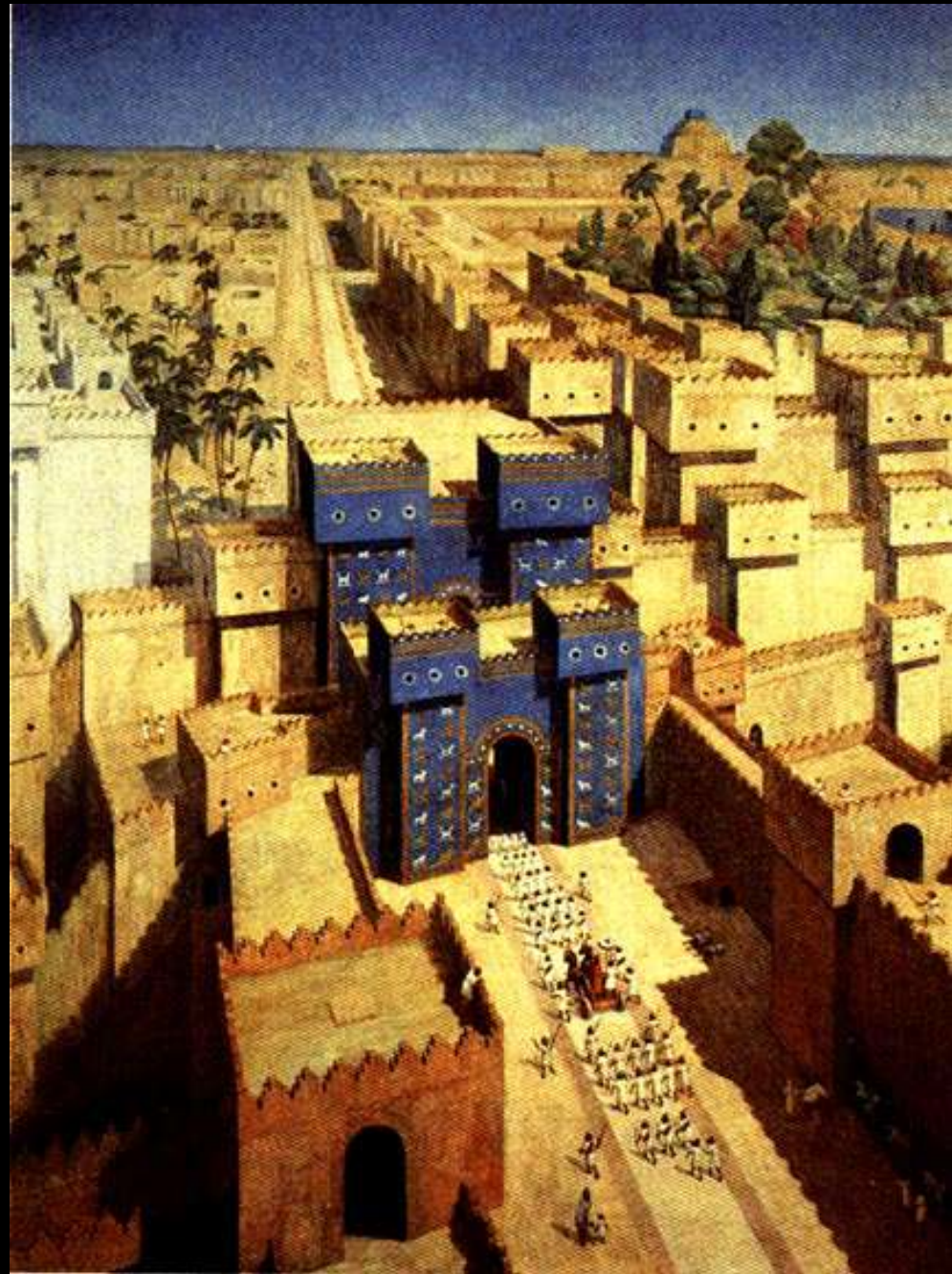
Reconstruction of the *Ishtar Gate*, as it was in ca. 575 BCE.

Blue glazed brick.

Patterned decorative bands and modeled large exotic (fantastical) animals, each vertical row of them are facing in the same direction.



Today, it's in a museum.



Neo (Late) Babylonia was ruled by Nebuchadnezzar

575 BCE

This gate was built of glazed brick, the color of lapis lazuli.

The design is orderly and simplified.

The motif is a series of animal images.

(The gate is now restored and installed in a Berlin, Germany Museum.)

Ishtar Gate to the Royal Palace at Babylon



Yellow snake-headed dragon



Yellow bull with blue hair

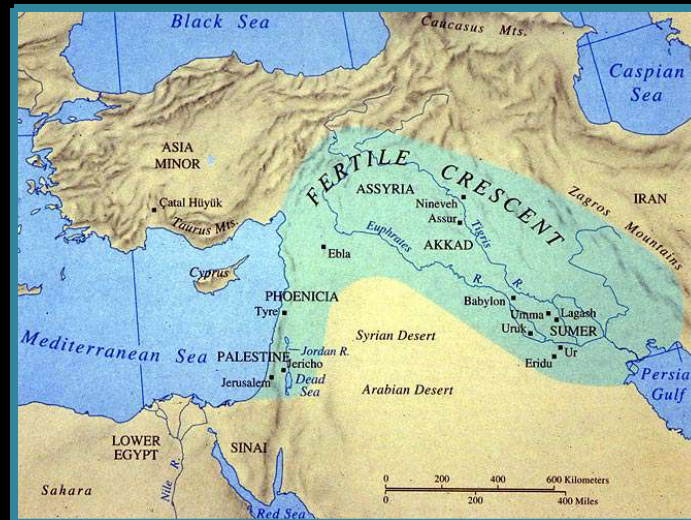


Yellow lions



REGIONAL NEAR EASTERN ART

Hittites (in the north), Iranians (in the east) and Phoenicians (sea-faring on the Mediterranean coast to the west) invaded some of the existing Mesopotamia cultures.



The art they produced reflects their contact with Mesopotamian culture.

REGIONAL NEAR EASTERN ART

The Hittites

The Lion Gate, ca. 1400 BCE, Bogazköy, Anatolia(Turkey)



The Hittites caused Babylonia to fall in 1595 BCE.

It was one of several cultures that developed separately from Mesopotamia.
They adopted cuneiform and kept records of their history.

The Hittites established an empire that extended over most of modern Turkey and Syria (which caused tension and conflict with Egypt). Their successful period was 1400-1200 BCE.

Their capital was fortified with huge irregularly shaped stones, with massive (7 feet high) limestone lions carved into them, framing the doorway entries.
Their frontal position and ferocity probably influenced the Assyrian lamassu.

REGIONAL NEAR EASTERN ART

The Phoenicians



Winged Sphinx, ca. 8th c. BCE, found in Nimrud, ivory.

From the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, which is now Lebanon, the sea-faring Phoenicians spread their culture from Spain and North African (Egypt).

This energized a rapidly growing trade of objects and ideas between east and west.

The Phoenicians were most skilled in ivory carving, metal work and colored glass, all of which incorporated Egyptian motifs.

The “Egyptianness” of the winged sphinx shown here, is in its profile, wig, apron, and stylized plants. The double crown is reduced to *fit* which is *more important* to include *rather than concern for its accurateness*.

(brain trigger)

San ban + P

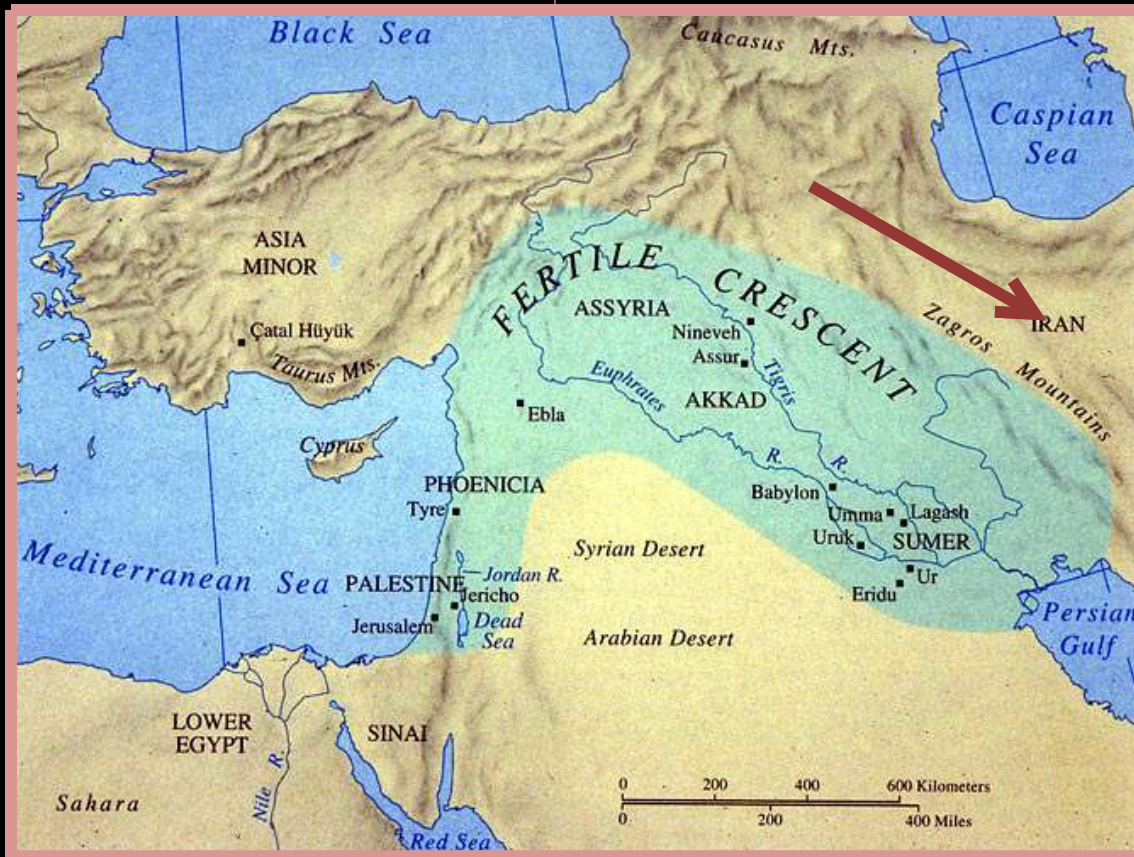
+P is for Persia

(present day Iran)

612-330 BCE

Persia, east of Mesopotamia, was a gateway for tribes migrating to India and Asia.

In 7000 BCE, Persia was a flourishing agricultural and pottery-producing area.



Early Iranian Art (Persia)

Painted Beaker, from Susa,

ca. 5000-4000 BCE, 11 1/4 inches.

Persian (Iranian) art reveals a love of animal forms.

This beaker is a thin shell of yellow clay decorated with brown glaze.

The design is brilliantly simple with abstract animal forms.

The horns of the mountain goat (ibex) are depicted with two sweeping curves.

The racing hounds follow the circumference above the ibex.

The upper rim design is made up of a flock of birds simply expressed as vertical and diagonal lines.

Nomadic tribes left no structures but they did bury their dead with portable art in animal motifs, such as weapons, bridles, buckles and fibula.

This kind of art is called *nomad's gear*.



The PERSIAN Empire

The Persians conquered major parts of Asia Minor and Babylon. Cyrus the Great, ruler of the Achaemenid dynasty, assumed the title “King of Babylon” and the empire continued to expand.

Early in the **5th c. BCE** Darius and Xerxes, the Persian Empire outstripped Egyptian and Assyrian empires combined.

Rhyton, Achaemenid, 5th-3rd c.BCE, gold

Ritual drinking vessel.

Craftsman were brought in from all over the empire, then returned home taking the international style with them.



The **Persian Empire** flourished in the **6th c. BCE**.

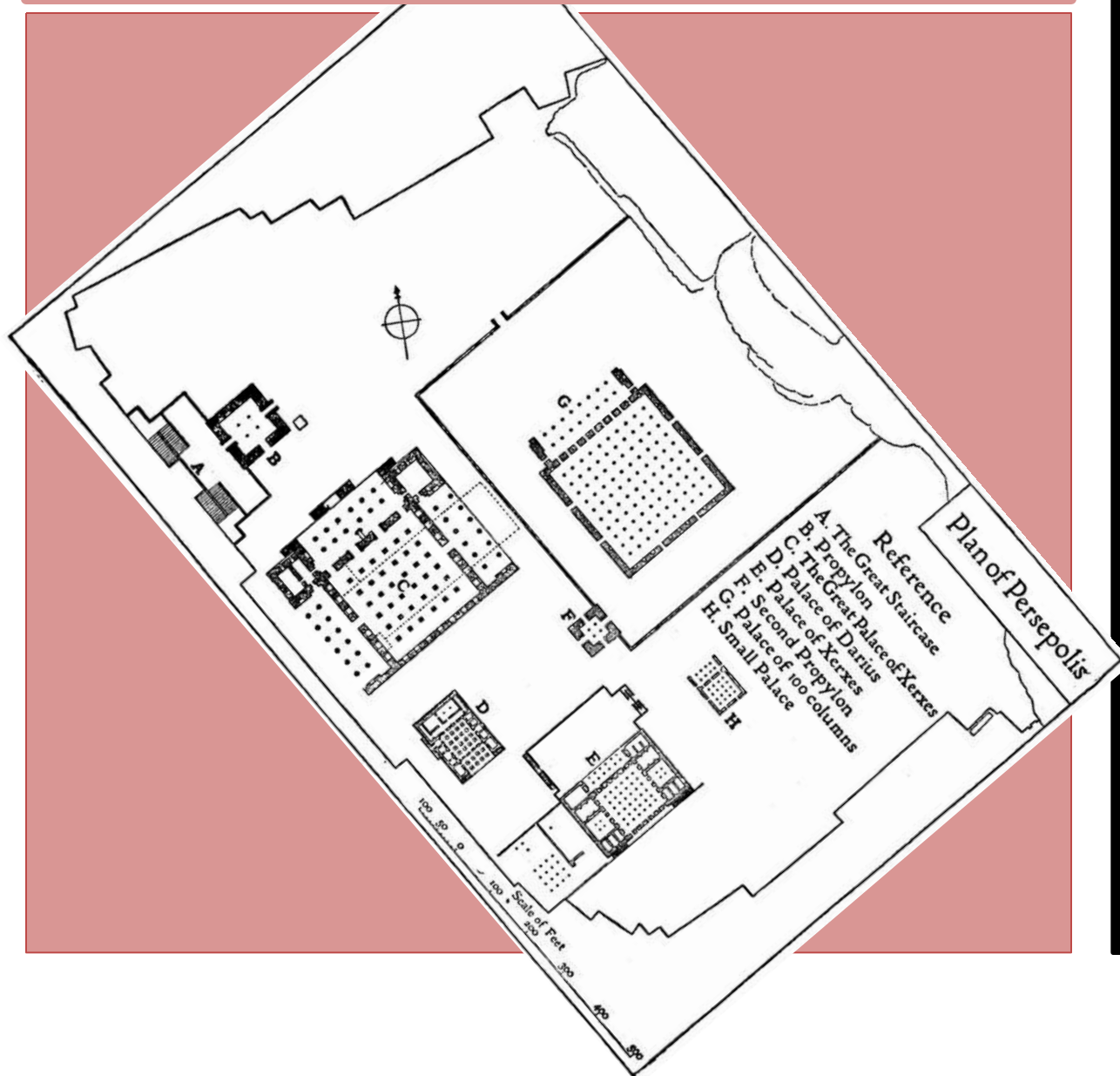
The Persians had very sophisticated tastes.

This gold rhyton (drinking vessel) is shaped as a senmurv, a mythical figure with the body of a lion sprouting griffin's wings and a peacock's tail.

(An early Iranian design.)



Persepolis, 500 BCE



Persian religious beliefs focused on rituals with fire (light/dark, good/evil) altars in open air.

Consequently,

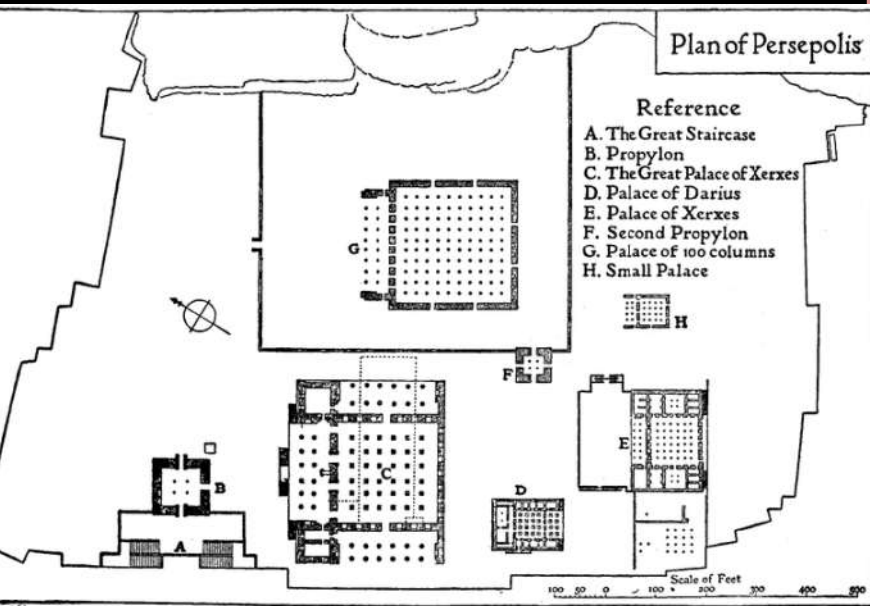
*Persian kings *did not construct religious architecture.*

They built vast and impressive royal palaces instead.

The **Persians** had very sophisticated tastes.

Persepolis is set on a plateau in the Zagros highlands.

The plan is laid out in a grid system, fortified and raised on a platform.

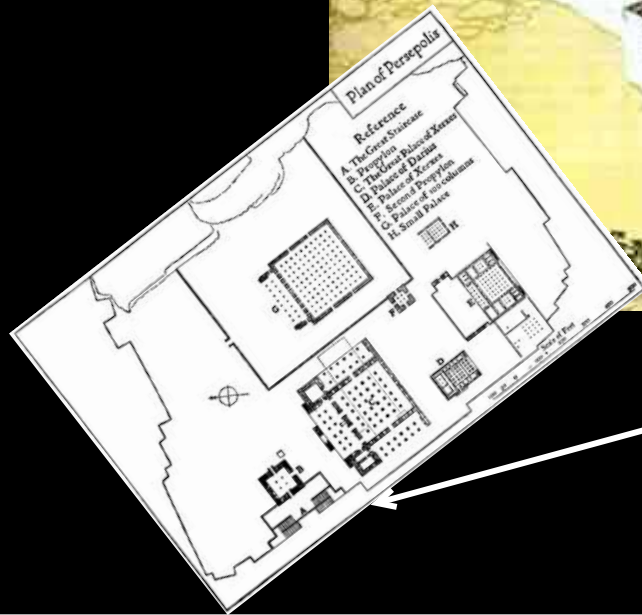
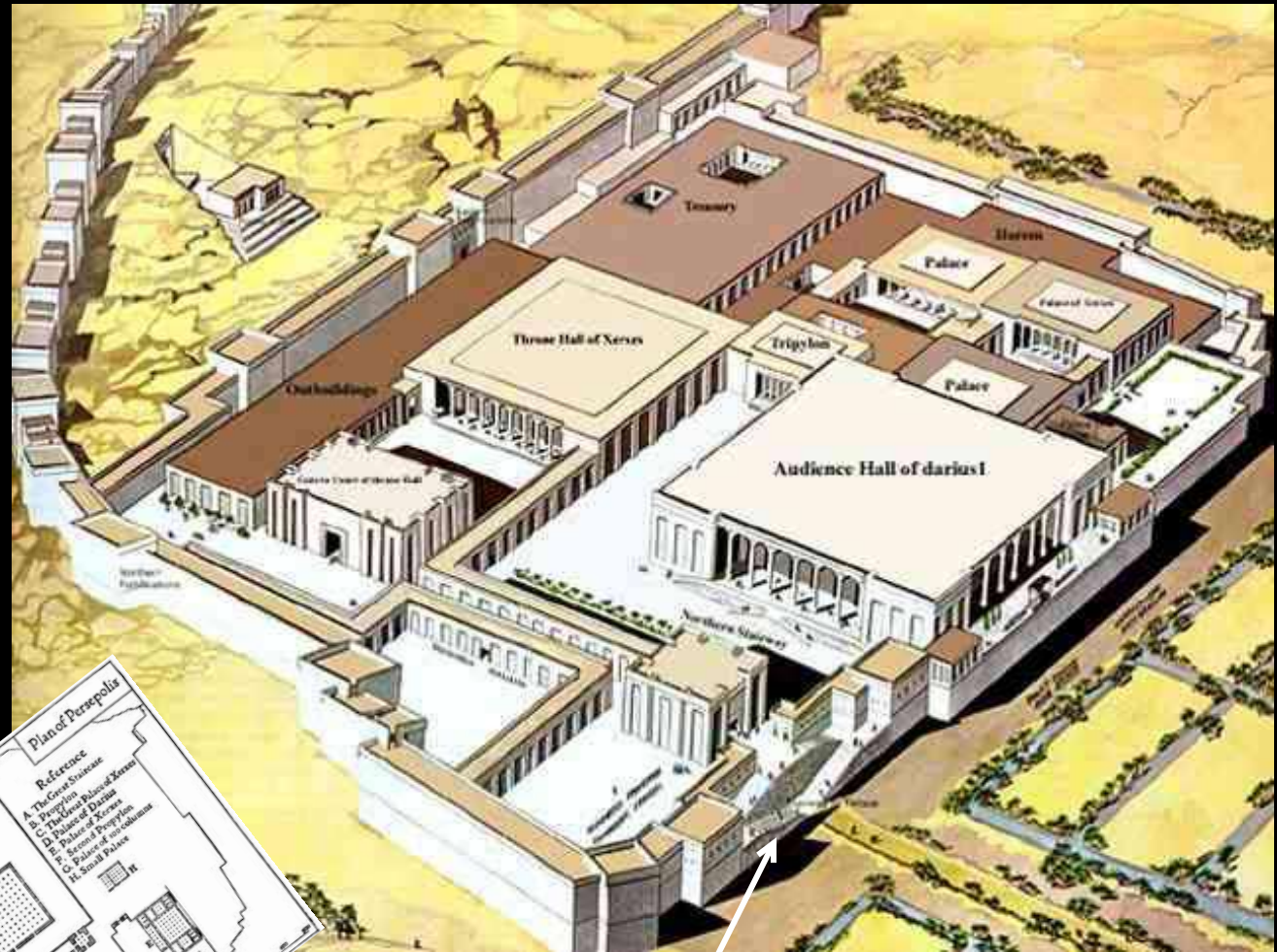


*Persian design is a combination of art traditions from all over the empire which infuses it with the message of internationalism.

*Materials and craftsmen from all over the empire were brought together to build Persepolis. (Wood, bricks, art objects, gold, silver, ebony and lapis lazuli from Lebanon, Gandhara, Carmania, Sag-Sardia and Egypt.)

**Fortified wall.
No temple.
Palaces.
Audience Halls.**

Reconstructed model of Persepolis



Great staircase

Persepolis lamassu have curved griffin wings (and are extremely damaged).



The animal design, highly stylized with bead-like texture has a depression on the combined backs to fit a wooden beam. The beams hold the trusses that support the roof.

*Influences: Plant-like design on the capital is Egyptian.

The fluted shaft is Ionian Greek.

“Back-to-back” arrangement is Iranian such as seen on the rhyton.

Bull capital



Audience Hall (*apadama*) of Darius & Xeres

Persepolis, **P**ersia

Double
stairway to the
elevated (above
the flood plain)
palace first
floor.

36 columns, 40
feet tall,
supported the
wooden ceiling.



Darius (the father)

He is seated to accommodate the height of the top edge and still allow him be the tallest (most important).



Relief sculpture embellishes stairway and hall walls. The motifs set the stage for **harmony and integration*. Rows of marching figures represent the *23 subject nations, royal guards and Persian dignitaries.

Each subject figure wears indigenous dress and bears a regional gift such as precious vessels or textiles.

The carvings are enriched with detail, colored jewels and metal.

The profile figures' rounded edges cast shadows on the level surface background, creating a sense of depth.

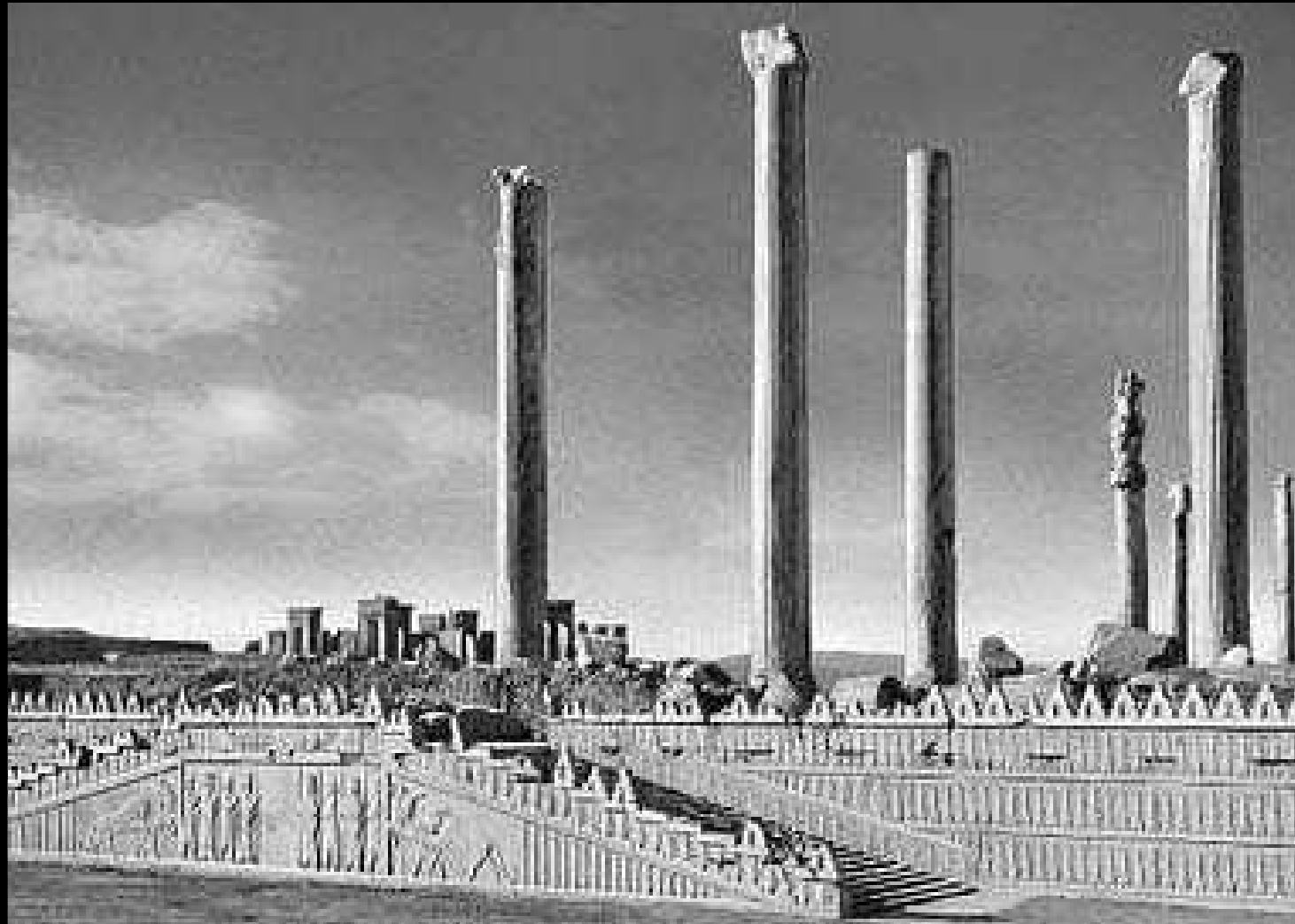


All connected in friendship. Each in the dress of his nation. Bearing gifts from his region. In profile except, to turn and face another.



Persepolis, Persia

Note that the relief figures “fit” the triangles and rectangles.



Persian Empire is conquered by Alexander the Great in 330 BCE.





Shapur I Triumphant over the Roman Emperor Philip the Arab and Valerian, 260-272 CE, near Persepolis, rock-cut relief.

The victor on horseback raises his hand gesture of mercy to the defeated “barbarian” who kneels in submission.

This *stock sculptural pose* is familiar to Romans but the composite view and the heavily armored horse are clearly Near Eastern.

Alexander the Great was victorious over the Persians in 331 BCE. As a symbolic gesture of defiance, he burnt the palace at Persepolis.

Alexander’s realm was divided among his generals. A succession of peoples and their leaders held the territories: Seleukas, the Parthians (Iranian nomads), the Romans under Trajan, Ardashir and then Sasan, who claimed to be a descendant of the Achaemenids until the Arab Islamic conquest in the mid-seventh century CE.

Ardashir’s son, Shapur I, cleverly linked himself with Darius.

Palace of Shapur I

242-272 CE

Iraq (near Baghdad)

Magnificent brick, barrel-vaulted audience hall (*iwan*).

The use of the arch spanning huge spaces was a Roman practice. This space is 90 feet high.

The blind arcades (arched, blank windows) are Roman but their shallowness is a Near Eastern tradition.

Here again, we see Roman and Near Eastern elements combined.

Shapur continued the Near East tradition of large-scale royal buildings.



This late 5th c. CE bowl was turned on a lathe.

The king and his prey were hammered out in a technique called *repoussé*, and accented with gilt (gold). The detailed black areas such as the horns and quiver are inlaid with *niello*, a compound of sulphur.

The design motif (subject of the hunt) was traditional with **Assyrians, Egyptians and Romans**.

Wares such as this were exported to Constantinople and the Christian West and had a **strong effect on the art of the Middle Ages**.

When the area finally fell to the Arabs, the design motif was a source for Islamic art.

King Peroz I Hunting Gazelles,
457-483 CE, silver bowl with gilt,
repoussé, engraved, and inlaid
with *niello*, diameter 8 1/2 inches.



Next...

Ancient Egyptian Art

