

# ART OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

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## LEARNING Objectives

Following the conclusion of the chapter, the student will be able to:

- discuss the use of lamassus as a political display of power.
- explain the development of the Fertile Crescent.
- examine the development of agriculture and the emergence of specialized skills.
- list the reasons why the people of Jericho fortified their city.
- name the steps needed to form large city-states.
- explain the reasons why Chatal Huyuk was simple to defend.
- list the types of art that flourished in early cities.
- discuss the development of the Sumerian culture in southern Mesopotamia.
- list the “firsts” achieved by the Sumerians.
- recognize the writing of cuneiform.
- recall the basic story of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.
- discuss the use and construction method of the ziggurat.
- explain the uses and construction methods of the two architectural complexes of Uruk.
- recognize the *Sumerian Votive Figures* as artistic and religious representations.
- describe the registers of *The Great Lyre with Bull’s Head*.
- discuss the uses and artistic achievement of the Sumerian cylinder seals.
- recognize the copper alloy Head of a Man as a hollow-cast sculpture.
- recognize the stele of Naram-Sin as a historical document.
- recognize the images of Gudea.
- discuss the importance of iron to the Hittites.
- explain the importance of the Assyrian palace complex.
- assess the Neo-Babylonians as patrons of architectural construction.
- discuss the expanse of the Persian Empire.
- explain the Persian contribution to coinage.

## What’s new?

**Chapter 2** is reorganized to follow a chronological sequence and to focus on the arts and daily life. This chapter also incorporates the archeological sites of Jericho and Catal Huyuk.

## Key terms/places/names

- Assyrians
- Nimrud
- lamassus
- Fertile Crescent
- Tigris River
- Euphrates River
- Mesopotamia
- city-state
- Inanna
- Ishtar/Ishtar Gate
- Akkadians
- Jericho
- Ain Ghazal
- Chatal Huyuk
- obsidian
- cuneiform
- stylus
- *Epic of Gilgamesh*
- Gilgamesh
- ziggurat
- Uruk
- inlaid
- register
- phonograms
- votive figure
- lyre
- sistrum
- iconography
- Babylon
- Kalhu

- Persia
- Darius I
- Alexander the Great
- Nebuchadnezzar
- Hammurabi
- Ashurnarsipal II
- cylinder seal
- stele
- Naram-Sin
- Gudea
- hieratic scale
- diorite
- Amorites
- *Code of Hammurabi*
- citadel
- palace complex
- glaze(d)
- crenellations
- crenels
- *mushhushshu*
- grid
- gold leaf
- daric

## Key images

1. **Human-Headed Winged Lion**, Colossal gateway figure from the Palace of Assurnasirpal II, Mesopotamia, Assyria, Kalhu, 883-859 BCE, Alabaster; height 10' 3 1/2" (3.11 m), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (fig. 2-1)
2. **Human Figure**, Ain Ghazal, Jordan, c. 7000-6000 BCE, Fired lime plaster with cowrie shell, bitumen, and paint; height approx. 35" (90 cm), National Museum, Amman, Jordan (fig. 2-4)
3. **The Warka Head**, Uruk, c. 3300-3000 BCE, Marble; height approx. 8" (20.3 cm), Iraq Museum, Baghdad (fig. 2-6)
4. **The Uruk Vase**, Uruk, c. 3300-3000 BCE, Alabaster; height 36" (91 cm), Iraq Museum, Bagdad (fig. 2-7)
5. **Votive Figures**, The Square Temple, Eshnunna, c. 2900-2600 BCE, Limestone, alabaster, and gypsum; height of largest figure approx. 30" (76.3 cm), The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (fig. 2-8)
6. **The Great Lyre with Bull's Head**, Ur, c 2550-2400 BCE, Wood with gold, silver, lapis lazuli, bitumen, and shell, reassembled in modern wood support; height of head 14" (35.6 cm), University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia (fig. 2-10)
7. **Head of a Man known as Akkadian Ruler**, Nineveh, c. 2300-2200 BCE, Copper alloy; height 14 3/8" (36.5 cm), Iraq Museum, Bagdad (fig. 2-13)
8. **Stele of Naram-Sin**, Sippar, c. 2220-2184 BCE, Limestone; height 6'6" (1.98 m), Musée du Louvre, Paris (fig. 2-14)
9. **Votive Statue of Gudea**, Girsu, c. 2090 BCE, Diorite; height 29" (73.7 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris (fig. 2-15)
10. **Ishtar Gate and Throne Room Wall**, c. 575 BCE, Glazed brick; height of gate originally 40' (12.2 m), Vorderasiatisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz (fig. 2-21)
11. **Air View of the Ceremonial Complex, Persepolis**, Iran, 518-460 BCE (fig. 2-22)
12. **Darius and Xerxes Receiving Tribute**, Detail of a relief from the stairway leading to the Apadana, Persepolis, Iran, 491-486 BCE, Limestone; height 8'4" (2.54 m), The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (fig. 2-24)

## Discussion topics

1. How were the ancient Near Eastern city-states created?
2. How did agricultural innovations change the face of culture in the Fertile Crescent?
3. What types of arts flourished in early cities of the ancient Near East?
4. What are some of the Mesopotamian building techniques, and specifically, how was the ziggurat constructed, and what purpose did it serve?
5. What are the basic Sumerian votive figure canons, and specifically, what is the traditional convention of the Sumerian votive figure?
6. What were some of the marvels of the city of Babylon?
7. What types of art demonstrate the Persian's high level of technical and artistic sophistication?