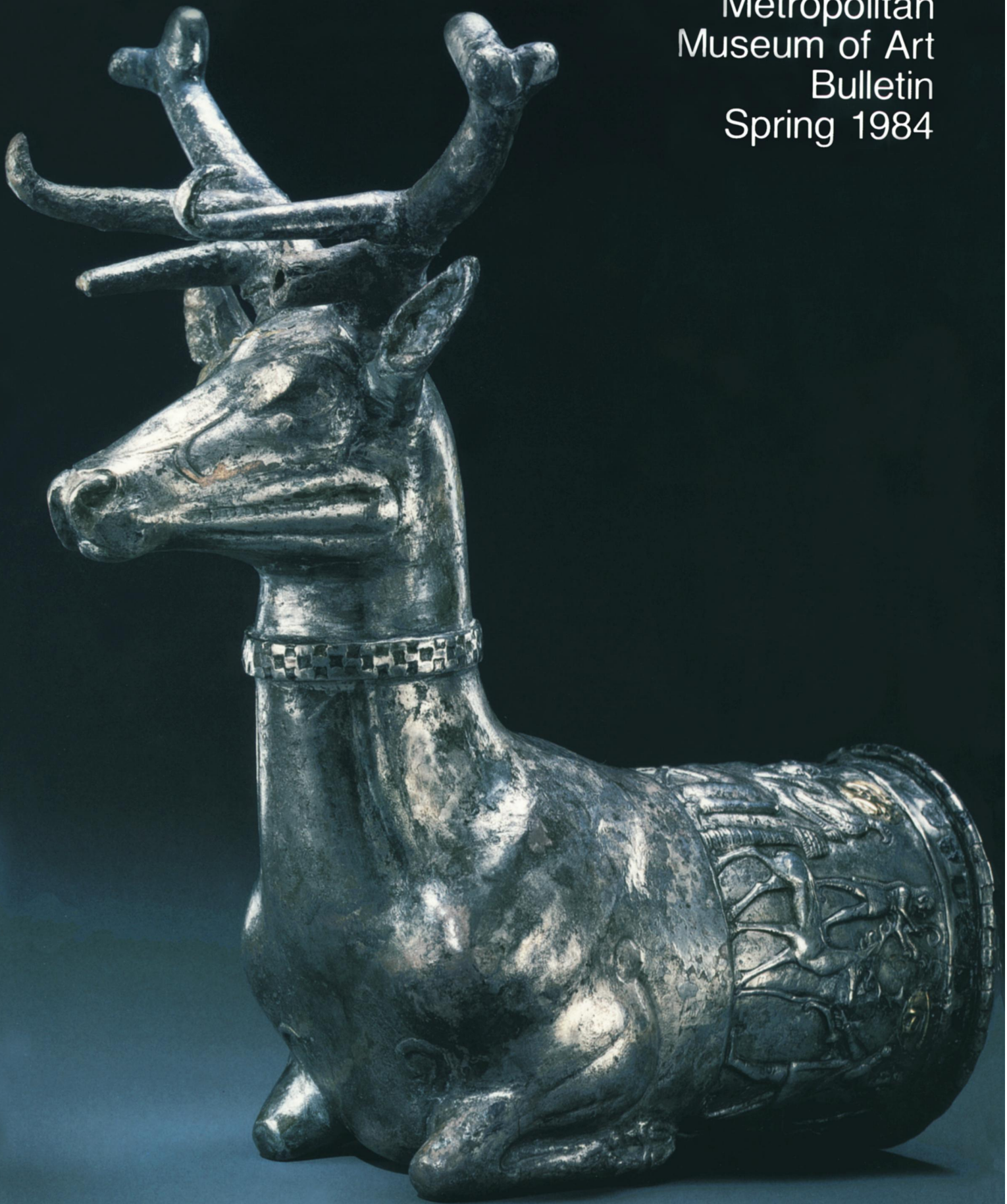


The
Metropolitan
Museum of Art
Bulletin
Spring 1984





ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART



THE METROPOLITAN
MUSEUM OF ART

On the cover: The stag vessel with a frieze depicting a religious scene is a rare example of Hittite silverware. It is part of a collection of silver and gold objects from Anatolia generously lent by Norbert Schimmel for the newly installed permanent galleries of ancient Near Eastern art. Inside covers: Reliefs from the Northwest Palace of Assurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.). Above: Lion's-head dress ornament (see fig. 67).

This *Bulletin* celebrates the new installation of the Metropolitan's collection of ancient Near Eastern art. It is dedicated to the memory of Vaughn E. Crawford, formerly Curator in Charge of that department, under whose leadership the plans for the new galleries were initiated. His efforts and those of his colleagues now culminate in a significant achievement in the history of the Museum: our substantial holdings of ancient Near Eastern art will be once again fully displayed.

For many readers, "ancient Near Eastern art" brings to mind the monumental reliefs from the Assyrian palace of Assurnasirpal II, which command the first gallery of the new installation; others will think of the strong, compact sculpture of Gudea, governor of Lagash, the striding lions from Babylon, or the imposing silver head of a Sasanian king, all highlights of previous installations. Now Museum visitors will have the chance to become acquainted with the full range of ancient Near Eastern art, produced over a span of more than six thousand years and across a vast region that includes ancient Mesopotamia, Iran, Syria, Anatolia, and other lands. The visitor's tour of the chronologically arranged installation concludes with the splendid courtly

art of the Achaemenid and Sasanian dynasties of Iran, housed in galleries leading logically to the Islamic department, whose holdings date from the seventh century A.D. to the modern era.

Although the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art was not officially established until 1956, the history of the collection began much earlier with substantial gifts from J. Pierpont Morgan and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Charles K. Wilkinson, a specialist in the field affiliated with the Museum since 1920, administered the department from 1956 until his retirement in 1963, when Vaughn Crawford, a prominent Sumerologist, took charge. Both men were seasoned archaeologists and each furthered the Museum expeditions indispensable to a deeper understanding of this art. Although Dr. Crawford died in 1981, he lived long enough to see the completion of the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Gallery for Assyrian Art, which opened in the spring of that year. He was succeeded by Prudence O. Harper, who has supervised the rest of the reinstallation of the collection.

The new galleries are a tribute also to those collectors whose gifts and support have enriched and strengthened the collection. We

thank the Right Reverend Paul Moore, Jr., Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New York, for the long-term loan of the Mrs. William H. Moore collection of seals. We are most grateful for the recent gifts of glyptic art from Dr. and Mrs. Martin Cherkasky and the two large gifts of seals, tools, weapons, and vessels of western Central Asia from Judge Steven D. Robinson and Sheldon Lewis Breitbart. Special thanks go to Norbert Schimmel, for his great generosity to the department over a long period of time—reflected in the numerous gifts and loans highlighting the galleries—and his important role in the development of the collection.

For the installation itself we are deeply indebted to The Hagop Kevorkian Fund; James N. Spear; The Dillon Fund; the National Endowment for the Humanities; and Raymond and Beverly Sackler, who funded the expansion of the gallery that bears their names. Only a few of the many donors and supporters who have aided the growth of the department can be acknowledged in this brief space, but all should take pride in the new installation and the role they played in its formation.

Philippe de Montebello
Director

INTRODUCTION

Mesopotamia, the heart of the Near East and the land that has produced the first traces of civilization, lies between two great rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates. These rivers were major routes of communication, opening the way to distant regions and encouraging contacts between the settlements that sprang up as early as the seventh millennium B.C. In time, irrigation canals were constructed to divert the waters and bring fertility to lands where rainfall alone was not adequate to support agriculture.

Two important developments are often associated with the beginning of civilization: the establishment of large population centers within cities, and the introduction of a system of writing. Archaeological excavations have revealed that this stage in the history of mankind was reached shortly before 3000 B.C. in southern Mesopotamia. Urban centers replaced the pastoral village cultures, and specialized

societies with priests, scribes, craftsmen, and farmers came into existence. The people responsible for this urban revolution, as it has been called, were the Sumerians. They entered Mesopotamia sometime during the fifth millennium and developed the first known script, a system of pictographs that later evolved into wedge-shaped cuneiform signs.

Through the millennia, southern Mesopotamia remained an important center, strategically located on land and water routes to Egypt and the Mediterranean world in the west, and to the Indus Valley and Central Asia in the east. The capital cities of the Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, Kassites, Seleucids, Parthians, and Sasanians all lay in this fertile agricultural region. Because southern Mesopotamia is poor in natural resources—primarily metal, stone, and wood—the inhabitants of Sumer established contacts at an early period with neighboring

countries rich in raw materials. Excavations of Uruk period (ca. 3500–3100 B.C.) settlements have revealed that the Sumerians traded with peoples living in Anatolia, Syria, and Iran, and maintained outposts in these lands. By the mid-third millennium B.C. gold, silver, tin, copper, and semiprecious stones (carnelian and lapis lazuli) were imported from the regions east and west of Mesopotamia. This lively trade is documented in the cuneiform texts and in the rich and exotic burials in the Royal Cemetery at Ur (see fig. 66). A thriving textile industry developed in Sumer, and the woven goods manufactured in the south formed an important part of its foreign trade.

The Sumerian language does not belong to a recognized linguistic group, and consequently the ethnic origin of the Sumerians is not yet known. They were succeeded, however, by a Semitic people, the Akkadians, who had entered

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southern Mesopotamia, probably from the west, during the centuries of Sumerian domination. This new dynasty (2334–2154 B.C.) expanded its control within Mesopotamia and made its presence felt, through trade and military invasion, as far as the “cedar forests” of Lebanon, the “silver-bearing” Taurus mountains, and the highlands of Iran. The arts flourished during the Akkadian era. Seal stones are finely carved with elaborate mythological scenes (see fig. 30); stone and metal sculptures are of high artistic and technical quality.

This period of brilliance ended with invasions of Guti, tribesmen from the Zagros mountains, who disrupted the course of life in southern Mesopotamia. During the following decades a few Sumerian city-states gradually reestablished their authority over a limited area. One of these states, Lagash, was ruled by Gudea (fig. 2), who is prominent in the history of ancient Near Eastern art because of the large number of massive diorite sculptures that have survived from the period of his rule (2144–2124 B.C.).

By the end of the third millennium B.C. a new wave of Semitic peoples, Amorites from the Arabian Desert, had spread into Mesopotamia and Syria. A common written language, the Old Babylonian dialect of Akkadian, came into use over a wide area and opened the way to increasingly efficient communications. The most famous of the Amorite rulers is Hammurabi of Babylon (1792–1750 B.C.), whose code of laws, based on earlier Sumerian models, is a comprehensive record of legal practices and an important document for the history of Mesopotamian civilization.

Interconnections in the Near East, both peaceful and warlike, increased during the second millennium. Assyrian merchants from the north of Mesopotamia established trading colonies in Anatolia (see fig. 73); Hittite kings ruling in central Anatolia married Babylonian, Hurrian, and Egyptian princesses; Elamite armies from southern Iran invaded Mesopotamia and carried off statues of the kings and gods to the capital at Susa.

The first millennium was a period of great empires in Assyria, Babylonia, and Achaemenid Iran. Assyria—or northern Mesopotamia—differs geographically from its southern neighbor, Babylonia. Crops grown on the fertile northern plains produced sufficient food for Assyria and sustained her armies and her empire in times of expansion. Stone and timber, which the south lacked, were also available in the more temperate mountain country of the north. While Babylonia

was to some extent bordered and enclosed by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, Assyria was not clearly defined by natural features, and so its boundaries expanded or contracted depending on the balance of power within the region. In the first millennium B.C.—from the ninth to the seventh century—Assyria achieved supreme power in the Near East. Assyrian rulers controlled the major trade routes and dominated the surrounding states in Babylonia, Anatolia, and the Levant. Lavishly decorated palaces were constructed in the capital cities of Nimrud, Nineveh, Khorsabad, and Assur. The downfall of this mighty kingdom was finally achieved, at the end of the seventh century, by Babylonia, a long-standing rival, and by Median and Scythian forces.

For a brief period Babylonia replaced Assyria as a major power. In the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. Chaldean kings from the southernmost region of Mesopotamia unified a diverse society and fended off attacks of western Semites—Aramaean tribesmen. But rebellions within the kingdom weakened the power of Nebuchadnezzar’s dynasty (625–539 B.C.) and left Babylonia and all Mesopotamia open to attack and conquest by Iran.

Southwestern Iran was Mesopotamia’s closest neighbor, both geographically and politically. The modern-day province of Khuzistan—ancient Elam—in southwestern Iran is an extension of the southern Mesopotamian plain, and throughout history the development of civilization in this important cultural and political center was affected by events that occurred in the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. In more distant areas, on the central plateau, the eastern desert, and the northern highlands of Iran, Mesopotamian influence was always weaker. During the fifth and fourth millennia B.C. both Khuzistan and the central plateau were sources of particularly striking pottery that was decorated with elaborate geometric, plant, and animal designs (see fig. 58). Since written records are lacking from before 3000 B.C., it is impossible to give a name or an ethnic identification to the peoples who produced these wares.

In the late fourth millennium B.C., contacts with Mesopotamia increased as the Sumerians became active in the trade in semiprecious stones and metals that moved through eastern Iran and Afghanistan. Under Sumerian influence the cuneiform script was adopted in Iran, and before 3000 B.C. a major center was established in Khuzistan, at Susa, a site that has been excavated by French archaeologists. This city and Anshan (modern

Malyan), in neighboring Fars province, were the most important political and cultural centers throughout the long history of the Elamites. Old Elamite works of art produced in this region during the third and early second millennia were influenced by the art of Sumerian and Akkadian Mesopotamia. The images, however—particularly those of animals and fantastic creatures—are rendered in a distinctive Elamite style that is characterized by naturally rendered forms and decorative surface patterns. Contacts with lands far to the north and east, in present-day Afghanistan, as well as with peoples living along the Indus coastline in the southeast, exposed the artists of Iran to cultures that were unfamiliar to their Mesopotamian neighbors, and this is reflected in the character and appearance of their works of art. Under kings ruling from Susa in the second half of the second millennium B.C. Elam became a major political force in the Near East. Whenever southern Mesopotamia was controlled by weak or ineffective leaders, Elamite armies invaded the region, destroyed its cities, and briefly controlled the course of events there.

Northwest of Khuzistan lies a region within the Zagros mountain chain that in antiquity was the home of semi-nomadic peoples. Little is known of the history or culture of the inhabitants of Luristan, as the region is now called. In the third, second, and early first millennia B.C. the importance of the area as a center of horse breeding resulted in frequent contacts between the mountain people and their sedentary neighbors in Babylonia and Elam. Bronzes made in Luristan during the third and second millennia B.C. illustrate the influence of southern Mesopotamia and Elam. In the first millennium B.C. the florescence of a distinctive local style is documented by a profusion of cast and hammered works of art—the “Luristan bronzes”—for which this region is justifiably famous. Excavations in recent years have uncovered buildings and tombs, but the ethnic origin of the inhabitants and the reason for this rich artistic production remain uncertain.

Late in the second millennium B.C., the arrival of Indo-Europeans, the Iranians, began a new period in the history of the region. By the middle of the first millennium B.C., Mesopotamia and Iran, under the rule of Achaemenid kings, were part of an empire that exceeded in its geographical extent anything that had come before. From capital cities at Susa, Ecbatana, and Babylon, the Iranian rulers controlled an empire that reached from Turkmenistan to the Mediterranean seacoast and Egypt. In the art



of the Achaemenid court, influences from Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, and Greece are apparent in both style and iconography.

The imperial ambitions of the Achaemenids, which led them twice to attack the Greek mainland, were the cause of their downfall. In 334 B.C. Alexander the Great invaded Asia from Macedonia in Greece. Four years later, the victorious Greek army reached Persepolis in southern Iran and burned this great ceremonial center to the ground. Achaemenid rule in the Near East was at an end.

The Greek conquest of the Achaemenid empire interrupted the cultural development of the Near East and altered the course of civilization in that region. Earlier invasions, in the third and second millennia, had brought peoples from desert and mountain areas as well as from the steppes into the fertile lands and urban centers of the Near East. The arrival of these seminomadic tribesmen from outside the civilized world did not radically transform the cultures that had developed over the millennia. New concepts and values were grafted onto existing traditions, the societies were modified, and the fabric of civilization was enriched. The invasion of the Greeks, however, differed from these earlier incursions because it brought into the Near East for the first time a people who had highly

developed cultural traditions. Greek soldiers and merchants came to live in Syria, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Iran; they founded cities and introduced a new way of life. When, in the late third century B.C., the Iranian Parthians reclaimed Mesopotamia and Iran from the Seleucids—the successors of Alexander the Great—the Greek settlers and their culture remained. The Orient had adopted the West, and for the next millennium, in times of peace and war, the kingdoms of the Near East and the Roman and Byzantine empires in the West maintained political and economic ties as well as common cultural traditions.

A reassertion of a Near Eastern identity, an Iranian renaissance, is apparent in the arts at the beginning of the first century A.D., and it developed under another Iranian dynasty, the Sasanians, who ruled Mesopotamia, Iran, and parts of Syria and Anatolia from A.D. 226 to 651. Forms and motifs were adopted from the West, but their significance changed, and they expressed Oriental rather than Western concepts. Similarly, in the Iranian national epic, the *Shahnameh*, originally compiled at the end of the Sasanian period, a legendary Alexander the Great is half-Persian and half-Greek by birth, a modification of history that made events understandable and meaningful to the Near Easterners.

Anatolia and Syria are geographically and culturally part of the Near East, but they also face the West and are neighbors of the Mediterranean world, of Egypt, Cyprus, Crete, and Greece. Their proximity to these lands affected their cultural development, and a distinctive character is apparent in the works of art. Many different civilizations flourished in Anatolia and Syria over the millennia, and new peoples entered both regions at various times: Hittites and Phrygians in Anatolia; Hurrians, Mitannians, and Aramaeans in Syria.

Anatolia is rich in metal ore—notably gold, silver, and copper—and the skill of the Anatolian metalworker is evident in finds dating from the end of the third millennium B.C. (see fig. 32). Vessels of gold and silver found in the tombs of local rulers have long, delicate spouts and handsome curvilinear designs on the bodies (see fig. 10), features that are also seen on the exceptionally fine ceramic wares made in this period. When the Indo-European Hittites entered Anatolia at the beginning of the second millennium B.C., they maintained many of the traditions in metalworking and pottery making established by their predecessors. A spectacular group of gold and silver objects in the collection of Norbert Schimmel deserves special mention here both as an illustration of the

skill of the Hittite artist (see front and back covers, fig. 24) and as a rare example of the art made in court workshops.

The Hittite empire collapsed at the end of the second millennium B.C. in a period of foreign invasions and general chaos that also affected much of southwestern Anatolia and Syria. In the early first millennium B.C., a number of smaller kingdoms replaced the Hittites as major political powers in Anatolia—notably Urartu, with its capital city at Lake Van, a rival of Assyria from the ninth to the end of the seventh century B.C. (see fig. 74), and Phrygia, which in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. occupied the earlier Hittite realm in central and western Anatolia and established its center at Gordion.

During the seventh century B.C., nomadic tribesmen from the steppes north of the Caucasus mountains poured into Anatolia, destroying Phrygian power and disrupting life in western Anatolia. In eastern Anatolia Scythian tribes moved into Iran and Mesopotamia, where they joined with Median and Babylonian armies in their attack on Assyria late in the seventh century. The influence of the Scythians on the art of the Near East is apparent in works made in Iran, Anatolia, and Syria during this period. The objects are executed in a distinctive, beveled style and display a repertory of designs in which stags, panthers, birds of prey, and griffins are favorite subjects.

By the beginning of the sixth century B.C. the Scythians had retreated from the Near East through Anatolia and had returned to the steppes around the Black Sea. The rising power of Achaemenid Iran reached into Anatolia, and in the middle of the sixth century, Persian satraps and officials, responsible to the Achaemenid king at Susa, extended their control as far as the Aegean seacoast.

Syria, to the south of Anatolia and west of Mesopotamia, was a crossroads between the great civilizations of the ancient world and was often disputed by rival powers. The rulers who controlled this land held vital trade routes linking the Mediterranean world and Asia. Evidence of trade between Syria and Mesopotamia in the late fourth millennium B.C. marks the beginning of direct contacts that increased over the centuries. Although foreigners, notably Mesopotamians, lived and traded in Syria continuously from the earliest times, its art had a distinctive character, which has been demonstrated in recent excavations of the third-millennium levels at such sites as Mari and Ebla. In the second millennium B.C. a truly international style developed in this region. Motifs and designs from

Egypt and the Mediterranean world were adopted and passed in time from Syria into the art of Mesopotamia. In the first millennium B.C. Assyria and Phoenicia replaced Egypt and the Mycenaean and Minoan empires as a major source of influence in Syrian art. Ivory carvings from Arslan Tash—exhibited now in the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Gallery for Assyrian Art—clearly illustrate a combination of various artistic styles. The small plaques with relief carvings of human, animal, and plant designs decorated furniture and objects of luxury. Egyptianizing motifs introduced through Phoenicia are combined with stylistic and iconographic details taken from the art of Assyria. Exhibited in the same gallery are ivories excavated at Nimrud, in northern Mesopotamia, where craftsmen, deported from Syria and Phoenicia, worked for the Assyrian court. The Assyrians must also have received some ivories, which were treasured objects, as tribute and booty following their conquest in the early first millennium B.C. of towns in the Syrian west.

The Assyrian domination of Syria was followed by Babylonian conquests and finally by Achaemenid rule. With the invasion of Alexander the Great in the fourth century, a large part of Syria fell into Greek hands, and later came under Roman and then Byzantine control. The border between the western empires of Rome and Byzantium and the Parthian and Sasanian lands in the east ran along the central and northern Euphrates River through Syria.

For a thousand years, from the last centuries before Christ to the coming of Islam, the history of the region was one of almost continual warfare as the great empires of Byzantium and Sasanian Iran battled and ultimately exhausted their resources in the effort to control the rich trade routes and cities of Anatolia and Syria. Finally, Arab armies from the western desert—followers of the prophet Muhammad—overran the Near East, and by the middle of the seventh century Mesopotamia and Iran as well as almost half of the Byzantine empire had fallen under Islamic rule. With the introduction of this new religion and way of life another period in the history of the Near East began.

Throughout antiquity one of man's primary concerns was his relationship to the gods. Statues of the deities, generally in human form, were set up in temples and carried in processions celebrating special occasions. Ancient man believed that the gods controlled the forces of nature and governed the course of events in daily life. Notable exceptions to this understand-

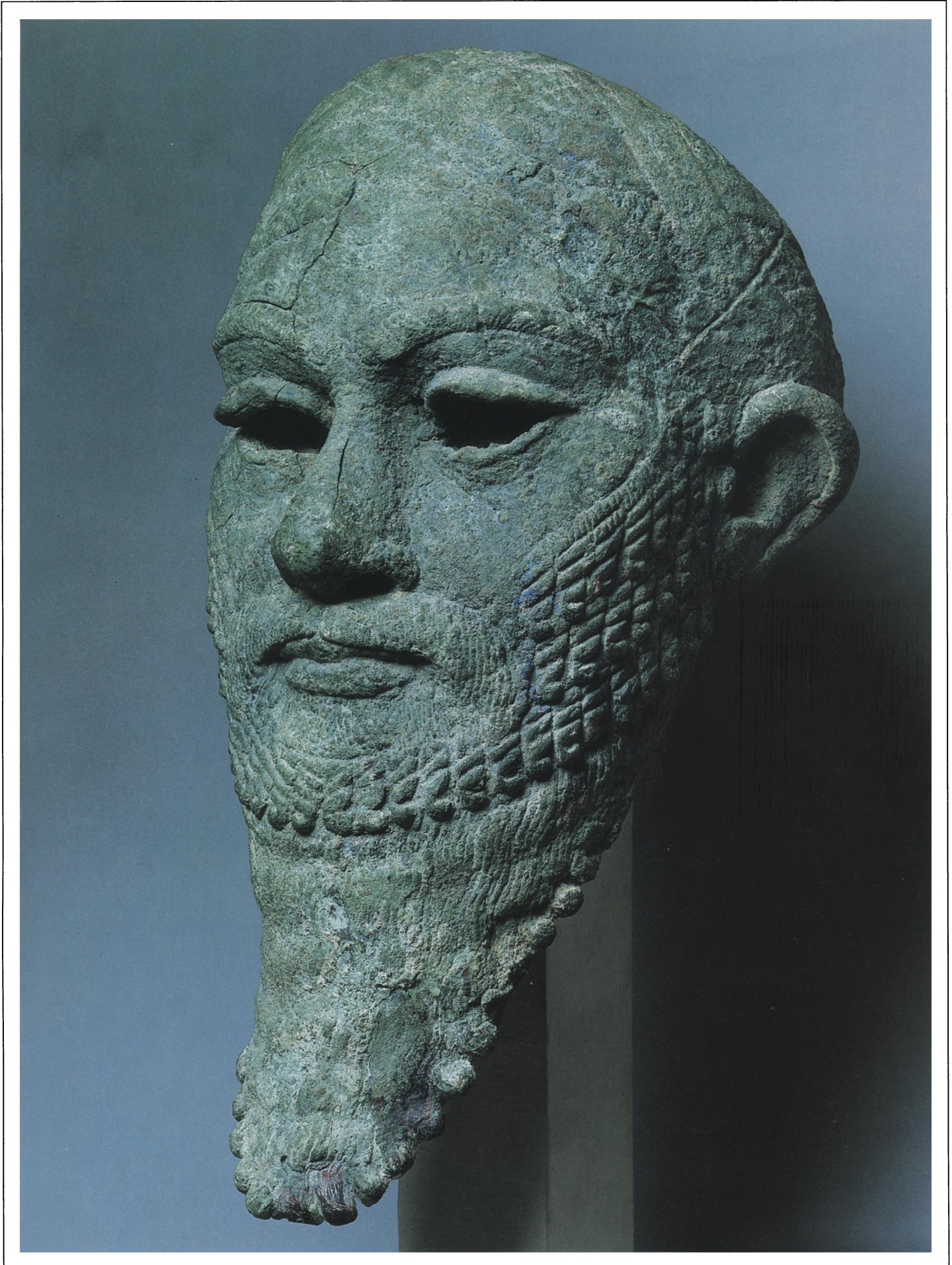
ing of the universe and man's relationship to the divine powers are the religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism. Of these faiths the least familiar to us is the Zoroastrian religion. During the Sasanian period (third to seventh century A.D.) this was the official state religion in the Near East, as Christianity became, under Constantine the Great (A.D. 313–37), the religion of the Byzantine West. The prophet Zoroaster, who may have lived about a thousand years before Christ or somewhat later, preached a doctrine in which the power of Good (personified by the god Ahuramazda, or Ohrmazd) is confronted by the power of Evil (personified by the god Angra Mainyu, or Ahriman). Man's natural role is to follow Good, but he is free to choose between the two principles. In contrast to other early Near Eastern religions, few of the deities are depicted in art. The most notable representations of Zoroastrian gods from the pre-Islamic era appear on rock reliefs carved during the Sasanian period on the cliff faces of Iran.

Archaeological fieldwork and the study of ancient records provide the means to reconstruct ancient history and to understand the works of art. Since the early 1930s, when expeditions first went to Iran, the Museum has continued to mount and support excavations in that country as well as Iraq, Jordan, Syria, and Turkey. A portion of this *Bulletin* is devoted to this work.

Inscribed clay tablets were among the first Near Eastern antiquities the Museum acquired, and the present collection ranges in date from around 2600 B.C. to the first century A.D. The written texts and the designs on stamp and cylinder seals—objects of exceptional interest and often of great beauty—document aspects of Near Eastern life and culture that would otherwise remain unknown.

Works of art from Mesopotamia and Iran form the major part of the exhibition in the new galleries of the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art and are the primary subject of this *Bulletin*. The art of Anatolia and the Levant, as well as the collection of seals and tablets, is represented by a smaller selection of objects. Galleries for the display of these artifacts are planned for the future.

All of the curatorial members of the Department have contributed to this *Bulletin*: Oscar White Muscarella, Holly Pittman, Barbara A. Porter, and myself. A section on writing is by Ira Spar, Associate Professor of History and Ancient Studies at Ramapo College. PRUDENCE O. HARPER
Curator, Ancient Near Eastern Art





Beginning in the early Neolithic period, representations of human figures in terracotta, stone, or bone were made all over the Near East. We cannot often tell whether the figures represent deities or humans, or if indeed such distinctions were intended. But by the late fourth and early third millennia B.C., background scenery or physical attributes and activities were included that can sometimes help us to distinguish gods from men. It is difficult, however, to tell an ordinary citizen—a priest or a worshiper, for example—from a ruler.

In the course of the third millennium B.C. various Near Eastern states were engaged in organized trade and imperial conquest, and then, politically and economically secure, their rulers began to have themselves portrayed unambiguously and sometimes with inscriptions. They were depicted performing secular, military, and religious functions, and the forms employed were statuary in the round or carvings on cylinder seals and reliefs, usually in stone.

The figures reproduced here are clearly rulers, identified as such either by inscriptions or their regal characteristics. Possibly the earliest is the heavy, almost solid-cast head (fig. 1), masterfully and subtly executed to indicate calm dignity and inherent power. The heavy-lidded eyes, the prominent but not overlarge nose, the full-lipped mouth, and the intricately coiffed beard are all so carefully and skillfully modeled that the head may well be a portrait, almost certainly of a ruler. If this is a portrait, then the head is unique among Near Eastern artifacts. Some scholars date it to the second millennium B.C., others to the late third millennium B.C., which, considering the style, seems more likely. The maker and the date of the piece remain unknown, as does the identity of this king, whose representation, mute and nameless, nevertheless remains one of the great works of ancient art.

The seated stone figure (fig. 2) represents Gudea (2144–2124 B.C.), the *ensi*, or governor, of the ancient Sumerian state of Lagash, whose name and title are included in the long inscription. A number of stone statues of Gudea, seated or standing, were excavated at Tello (ancient Girsu), in southern Mesopotamia, while others, presumably from Tello, surfaced on the art market; many from both sources are fragmented, lacking heads or bodies. The Museum's Gudea is complete and depicts the ruler characteristically dressed in a brimmed hat decorated with hairlike spirals and a long garment that leaves one shoulder bare. His hands



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are clasped in prayer—appropriately so, for the inscription informs us that the statue was placed in a temple to represent Gudea in supplication before the gods. The Museum also possesses a stone head, which was joined to a body in the Louvre, of Ur-Ningirsu, the son of Gudea; the complete statue (fig. 69) is exhibited at the Metropolitan and the Louvre in alternating three-year periods.

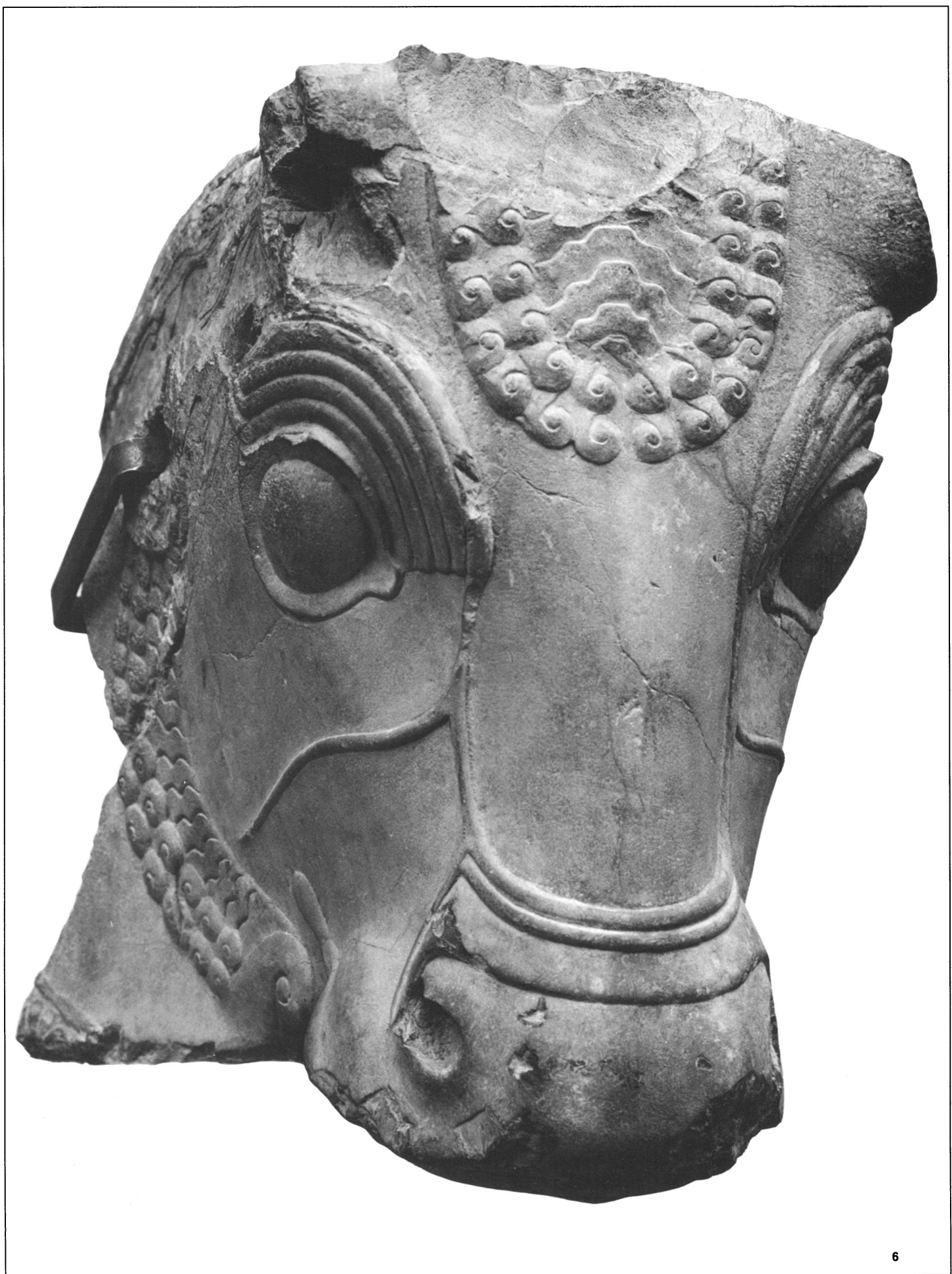
During the first millennium B.C. Assyrian and Persian Achaemenid kings ruled many nations and peoples. They were masters of political propaganda, which was expressed in numerous texts and in various forms of art. The Assyrian palaces were embellished with stone wall reliefs (see inside covers) depicting royal activities in war, the hunt, and domestic and religious ceremonies. On the illustrated relief from Nimrud (fig. 3), the king Assurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.) holds a bow—a symbol of his authority—and a ceremonial bowl. Facing him, an attendant holds a fly whisk and a ladle for replenishing the royal vessel. The peaceful, perhaps religious, nature of the scene is reflected in the calm, dignified composure of the figures.

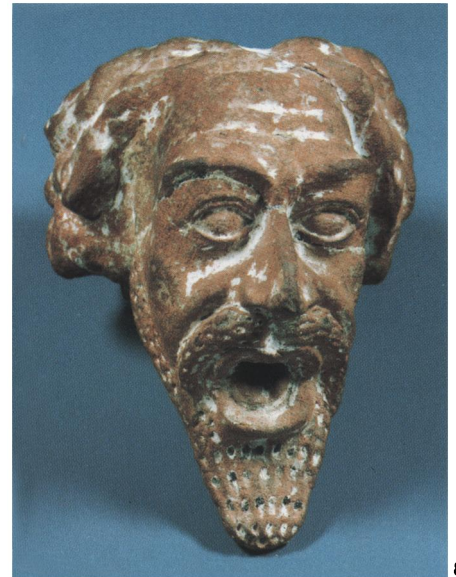
The Achaemenid kings (550–331 B.C.) employed the political and artistic iconography of earlier periods. Although warlike activities do not appear on their palace reliefs, the Persian kings did represent themselves on cylinder seals vanquishing enemies. On the seal at the lower left (fig. 4) an Achaemenid king holds a bow, again a symbol of authority, and thrusts his spear into a soldier, identified as Greek by his helmet and clothing. The naturalism of the carving and details suggests that the artist was either a Greek working for the Persians or a Persian trained in the West.

The Persian Sasanians (third to seventh century A.D.) considered themselves the spiritual and political heirs to the Achaemenid kings. Representations of Sasanian rulers appear on coins, vessels, and rock reliefs, and in stucco busts. On the coins each king is named by an inscription and wears a personalized crown, which usually helps to identify other, uninscribed portraits. Unfortunately, this is not the case with the Museum's slightly under-life-size head (fig. 5), which was hammered from a single piece of silver. Because of slight variations in the crown and the presence of the striated globe headdress, we can infer that he was a fourth-century king, whose controlled fierceness characterizes a posture depicted for millennia. We do not know the function of the piece, but it is a rare example of a Sasanian king portrayed in the round. O.W.M.

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Mud brick, unbaked and baked, reed, wood, and stone were the chief building materials of the ancient Near Eastern world. The collapse of successive mud-brick walls gradually led to the formation of mounds, which mark the sites of human occupation in the Near East (see figs. 44, 49, 51). Because stone is rare in southern Mesopotamia, mud brick and reeds were used to fashion structures. Wood was also generally lacking in the south, where the only common tree was the date palm (see figs. 4, 39). In Syria and Anatolia, however, wood formed an integral part of all large structures. On a clay cult tower probably made in Syria (see fig. 22), sizable wooden beams are represented between the two stories and in the framework of the building.

The walls and doorways of most important royal and cult buildings were embellished with different materials: stone, metal, and painted plaster. Clay bricks molded into figural and plant forms first appear as a type of decoration in architecture of the second millennium B.C. in Mesopotamia and Syria. Some of the most impressive examples of molded bricks come from the city of Babylon. The walls of gateways, the royal buildings, and a long processional road, built during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 B.C.), were faced with molded bricks covered with yellow, blue, black, white, and red glazes. The lions (see fig.



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9), symbols of Ishtar, the great Mesopotamian goddess of love and war (see fig. 27), are from the walls of the processional road leading to the *Bit Akitu*, or house of the New Year's Festival (see p. 23).

The Babylonian taste for molded and glazed bricks spread to Iran, and in the Achaemenid period (550–331 B.C.) the walls of the palaces at Susa had brightly colored glazed surfaces. The most familiar Achaemenid architecture,

however, is at the site of Persepolis, in southwestern Iran. Many of the stone sculptures decorating the entrance gates, stairs, and walls of the royal buildings still stand, but the mud bricks that formed the walls of these buildings have long since crumbled away. Some of the halls at Persepolis had huge stone columns over sixty feet high. On the tops of these columns and the capitals surmounting them, impost blocks held the wooden ceiling beams. These blocks were carved

to represent the foreparts of various animals: griffins, bulls, and human-headed bulls. The head of a bull (fig. 6) in the Museum's collection is part of one of these blocks and combines realistic and decorative forms in the typical style of the Achaemenid royal workshops. The animal's ears and horns, now lost, were made from separate pieces of stone.

Royal and cult buildings were constructed with considerable care and deliberation. The ground chosen for tem-



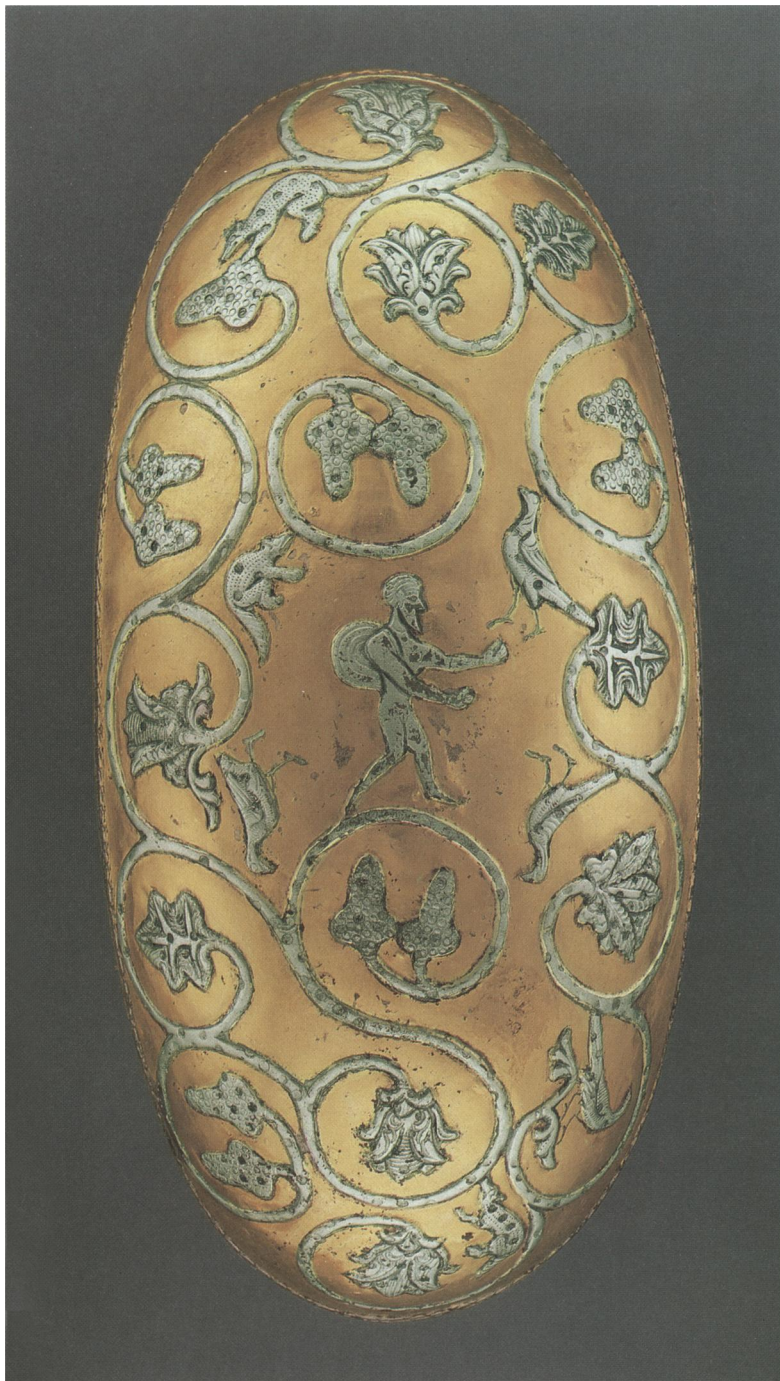
ple buildings was cleared before construction and the soil specially prepared. One customary practice, dating from as early as the mid-third millennium B.C., was the burial of foundation figures at selected points beneath the temple. A nude male figure supporting a box (fig. 7) may have originally served this purpose. Foundation figures often end in a tapered nail-like form so that, in a sense, they secure the building in place. This is true of many Sumerian figures (see fig. 45) and of a

particularly striking example (see fig. 35), probably from northern Mesopotamia, topped with a snarling lion.

The conquest of the Near Eastern lands in the fourth century B.C. by the Greek ruler Alexander of Macedon brought foreign craftsmen in considerable numbers to the Near East, and the architecture soon reflected their presence. Stone was used more frequently for buildings of importance, and Greek capitals, columns, and moldings began to trans-

form the appearance of buildings. A bearded male head of Parthian date (first to second century A.D.) provides evidence of western influence in the rather realistic style and the function of the piece as a waterspout (fig. 8). The person portrayed, however, has the moustache, long, loose locks of hair, and prominent nose of a Near Easterner, probably an Iranian. The head was originally glazed, and the beard still retains traces of iron pyrites. P.O.H.





11

Vessels fashioned from silver and gold were made in several areas of the Near East as early as the middle of the third millennium B.C. Ores producing silver exist in Iran, and silver was brought back from Anatolia by merchants from northern Mesopotamia (Assyria) in the early second millennium B.C. Gold came to Mesopotamia from a variety of sources, including the Taurus and Caucasus mountains in the northwest and Egypt in the southwest. Texts also record the shipment of gold from the Indus coastline (Meluhha) in the east.

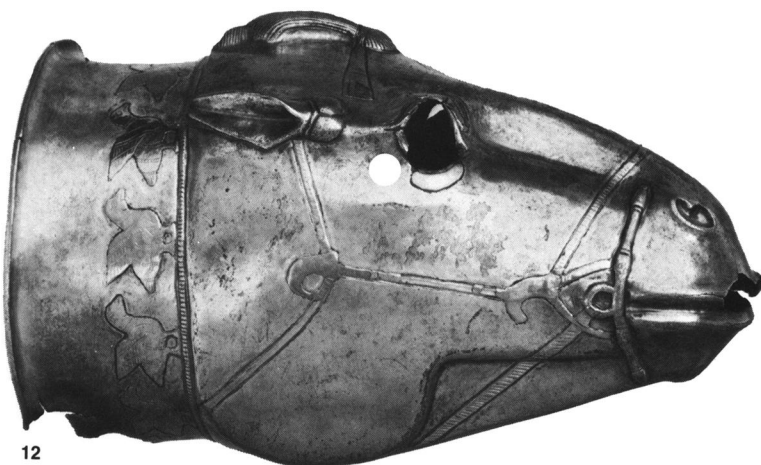
Some of the most spectacular and earliest objects in gold come from the Royal Cemetery at Ur (ca. 2500 B.C.) in Mesopotamia (see fig. 66). Neither gold nor silver is native to Mesopotamia, and the appearance of these materials indicates that an effective system of trade had developed by this time.

Slightly later in date than the objects discovered at Ur are gold vessels found in royal tombs in north-central Anatolia. A ewer made of hammered gold (fig. 10) originally had a long spout that projected from the narrow neck. During the second millennium B.C. spouted jugs became extremely elaborate and elegant in form. A representation of a cult scene on a Hittite cup (see back cover) shows one of these jugs in use at a ceremony where a liquid offering is being poured out before a god.

One vessel type that had a long history in the ancient Near East incorporates the head or forepart of an animal. A spectacular example (see front cover) comes from Anatolia and was made during the period of Hittite rule (fifteenth to thirteenth century B.C.). The handled cup is in the shape of the forepart of a recumbent stag, an animal commonly represented in the art of Anatolia and associated with a stag god, who can be seen on the band encircling the neck of the vessel (see back cover). The meaning of this cult scene is uncertain, but the association of certain animal-shaped vessels with particular divinities is described in Hittite texts.

Religious or cult scenes of the type found on the Hittite cup are unknown on later vessels of gold or silver that are preserved from the period of Achaemenid rule in Iran. In general, the decoration of these works of art is fairly simple. Bodies are often fluted and decorated with egg-shaped bosses (see fig. 72), designs that appear on Near Eastern ceramics and metalwork in the second and early first millennia B.C. Stylized plant motifs include lotuses, palmettes, and rosettes.

An Achaemenid cup made of silver is in the shape of a horse's head (fig. 12). The bridle and the file of birds around the



12

neck are covered with gold foil. This combination of gold and silver was commonly used on metalwork of the Achaemenid period, and the fashion continued on later works of Parthian and Sasanian date.

Another Achaemenid vessel (fig. 14) ends in the forepart of a lion. The mouth of the lion is open, and in characteristic Near Eastern fashion the tongue protrudes from between the teeth. The vessel is made of seven different parts, almost invisibly joined.

A gilded silver rhyton (fig. 13), horn-shaped and having a small spout for pouring, dates from the Parthian period (ca. first century B.C.) and is much influenced, in form and style, by the art of the late Hellenistic West. The panther wears a grape-and-leaf vine wound around its chest, and an ivy wreath encircles the rim of the vessel. These motifs are symbols of the Greek wine god Dionysos, whose cult spread eastward at the time of the invasion of Alexander the Great in the late fourth century B.C. Dionysiac images—panthers, grapevines, and dancing females (see fig. 26)—continue to appear on the silverware of the Sasanian period (A.D. 226–651). On an oval bowl (see fig. 11) dating from the end of this period a curling grapevine scroll is populated with birds and animals and frames a small

male figure, bearded and partially nude. The vine scroll and the nude male figure (an unusual subject in Sasanian art) reflect the influence of Dionysiac imagery. The significance of the Dionysiac motifs in Iranian art is unknown. They are common on silverware of late Sasanian date and, during that period, may have referred to Iranian court festivals rather than to specific Dionysiac cult practices.

Although royal images do not appear on the gold and silver vessels that have survived from the Achaemenid period, names of kings were inscribed on some examples around the rim (see fig. 72). On later vessels, notably those of the Sasanian period, there are no royal inscriptions but the king himself is represented, usually in a hunting scene (see fig. 63). Silver-gilt plates decorated in this fashion were probably intended as gifts for neighboring rulers or for members of the king's own court.

Ancient texts state that goldsmiths fashioned not only vessels but also statues of kings and divinities and many small objects, such as jewelry and other decorations for the clothing of the king and god. Only a small number of these treasured objects have survived, but the remains provide a glimpse of the luxury wares that were used at the royal court and dedicated by rulers to their gods. P.O.H.



13



14



Weapons are documented in the archaeological records of the Near East from at least the Neolithic period. They were initially made of stone and probably wood, and as soon as metallurgy was exploited, they were fashioned of copper, then bronze, and later iron. Our knowledge of weapons and their use in war and the hunt is based on finds from cemeteries, settlements, and on representations.

Sennacherib, king of Assyria (704–681 B.C.), was frequently at war with his neighbors, and his palace walls at Nineveh were lined with stone reliefs depicting his victories. Many of the battle scenes are bloody and dramatic; others, like the Museum's fragmentary example (fig. 15), illustrate troops on the march. Here two cavalry soldiers are shown wearing helmets, armor, and boots; they carry spears, swords, and bows for both close- and long-range combat. Because of the rough terrain—mountains and a spring—the soldiers walk their horses, an example of Assyrian concern for verisimilitude. The horses wear tassels, for decoration, and bells, to create a terrifying noise during charges. The reliefs not only inform us of historical events, but they also yield documentation of contemporary artifacts—in this case, weapons, clothing, and equestrian paraphernalia. Archaeological finds often match items depicted on the reliefs,

which play an important role in dating and attribution.

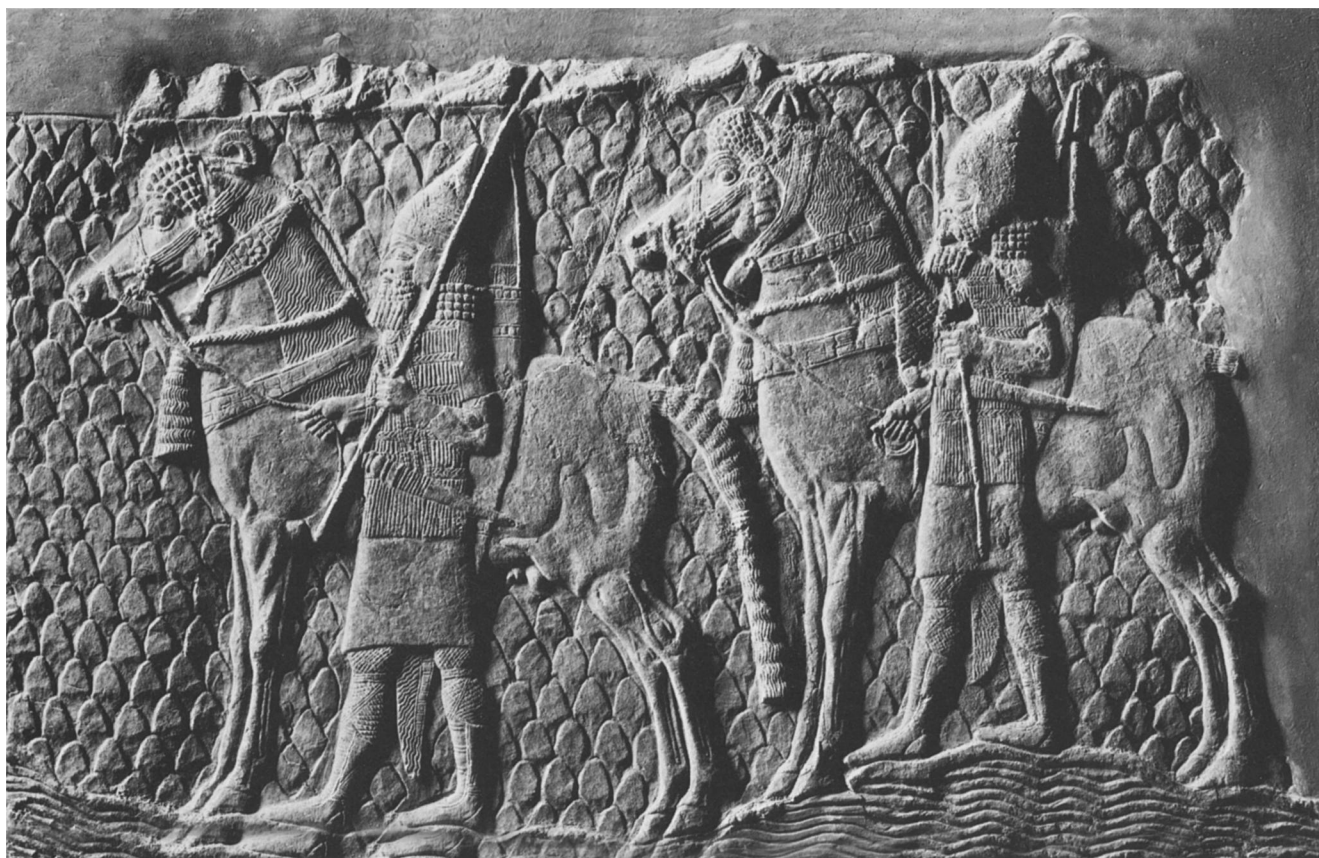
Although approximately eighty examples of iron swords like the Museum's (fig. 16) are known, not one is represented in art or has been excavated by archaeologists. Fortunately the culture and general time of their manufacture are revealed by stylistic analysis of both the figures and the blade shape. The two bearded male heads that project from the pommel and the crouching lions on either side of the ricasso resemble Luristan styles from the late eighth and early seventh centuries B.C., and the willow-leaf blade is paralleled on plain swords excavated from Luristan tombs of the same period.

The placement of the blade at right angles to the hilt and the complex method of construction make this class of sword unique. Each sword was individually hand-forged and consists of about ten separate pieces neatly joined to give the impression that the sword was cast in one piece. Why these swords were so painstakingly made is unknown, but the large number suggests that they may have signaled the special rank of their bearers. Identical in form, they were probably manufactured in one place.

The sword with a gilt bronze guard and a hollow gold hilt (fig. 17) is more difficult

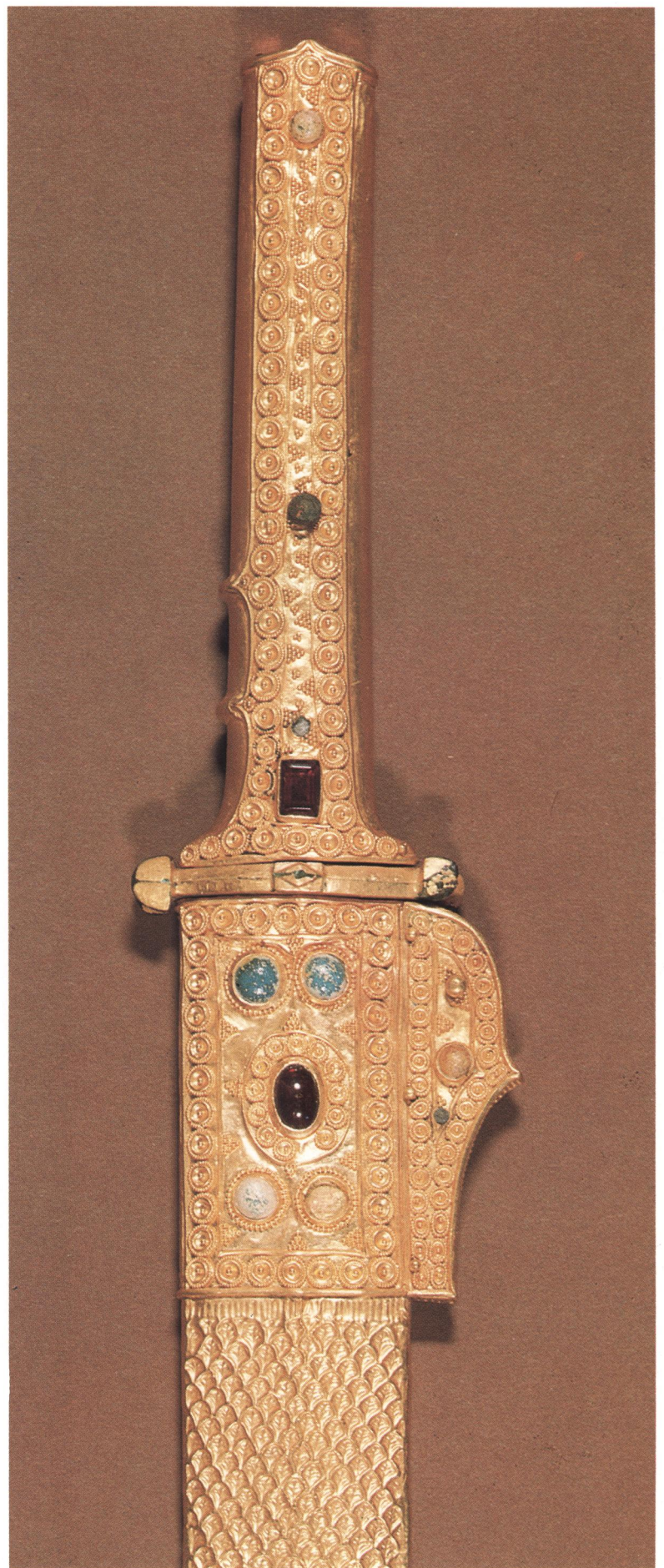
to attribute to a specific area. The iron blade (not shown) is preserved in a gold scabbard decorated with a stamped or punched feather pattern on the obverse and with five pairs of spiral wires on the reverse. The hilt and the two mounts with P-shaped flanges are decorated with granulations and garnet and glass inlays. These mounts held leather straps that allowed the sword to hang from a belt for a "quick draw."

More than a half-dozen other examples of this form of sword and scabbard are known, but none are so elaborately decorated; a few are also represented in art. The double P-shaped mounts are found on swords recovered from Europe to the Eurasian steppes, including Iran, and are associated with the nomadic Turkish-speaking Avars of the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. A rock relief at Taq-i Bustan in Iran provides the only known example of a Sasanian king wearing a similar sword and mounting; other representations of Sasanian swords depict a different form of attachment. Therefore, we cannot be certain whether our sword was once in the armory of a Sasanian king, or whether it and its mates were once in the possession of an Avar chief. O.W.M.





16



17



18



The peoples of the Near East, like those of other cultures, were preoccupied with the world of eternally mysterious spiritual and demonic forces. Their artistic impulses were largely expressed in conceptualizing and docu-

menting their manifold beliefs, interpretations, and fears. Ancient Near Eastern art and textual material eloquently reveal how over the millennia these people resolved their need to relate to and placate the ever-present spirits and deities that manifested themselves in nature and in daily life.

The gold necklace (fig. 19) is a good example of how decorative and spiritual functions were often combined. It is composed of double and triple strands of hollow beads with seven pendants, each in the form of a deity or a symbol of a deity. Although apparently complete, the reconstruction of the more than two hundred pieces is modern, so the original position of each element is not absolutely certain. The two horned females in long

flounced dresses most probably represent Lama, a protective goddess; the central disk with rays emanating from a boss represents Shamash, the sun god; the crescent, the moon god, Sin; and the forked lightning symbol, probably Adad, the storm god. The two disks with granulated rosettes may be purely decorative. While no other elaborate example exists in complete form, wall reliefs depict Assyrian kings of the first millennium B.C. wearing necklaces like this one with pendant divine symbols, indicating that they were to be worn by royalty. The necklace was most probably apotropaic—that is, it protected the royal wearer from harm. Similar individual elements excavated at Larsa in Mesopotamia lead us to assume that this necklace was made in the early

19



second millennium B.C., and as Assyrian examples attest, necklaces with apotropaic features had a long history in the region.

The bronze helmet (fig. 20) with four raised figures prominently positioned on its front had apotropaic value in addition to its immediate practical function. Each of the figures was sculpted from a bitumen core overlaid with silver and gold and then fastened to a bronze plate riveted to the helmet. In the central position is a bearded male deity, identified as a mountain-water god by the scales on a conical background and the water flowing from the vessel he holds. He is flanked by two identical goddesses and protected from above by a giant raptor. The goddesses hold their hands open in rever-

ence before their breasts. They, too, are placed against backgrounds with scales, which suggests that they may be mountain deities associated with the male god, who is probably dominant since his crown has multiple pairs of horns while theirs have only single pairs. Because of the style and deportment of the figures depicted, and the special technique of manufacture, the helmet may be attributed to the Elamites of the fourteenth century B.C. That our helmet was worn by a person of rank is suggested by the precious material used and the complexity of the construction. Its symbolic and spiritually protective value is implied by the presence of the deities in such a prominent and charged position.

The Neo-Assyrian cylinder seal (fig.

18) depicts a religious scene commonly found on these ubiquitous objects. A human worshiper is in reverence before the storm god Adad, who stands on a bull, the animal usually associated with him. A bull-man, one of many mixed-creature spirits depicted by ancient Near Easterners, appears in attendance behind Adad, and various symbols of other deities—the standards of Marduk and Nabu, the seven dots representing the Pleiades, and the winged sun disk—are distributed unobtrusively throughout the scene, which interestingly mixes the anthropomorphic forms of the gods and their symbols. While the owner probably used this device to seal documents and cargo, he no doubt also carried it as his personal talisman and sign of piety. o.w.m.



20

In Mesopotamia man's relationship with his gods was not the personal and immediate one of many modern believers. Instead, it was distant and formal, defined essentially through the performance of elaborate rituals. Ancient man's primary function on earth was to serve the gods, whose decisions and actions determined the outcome of all events and mankind's ultimate fate.

It seems that the common man was excluded from all but the major religious festivals; in most rituals participation was the privilege and the responsibility of priests and, most important, of the king. These rites are not clearly understood, and what little we know comes largely through texts written in various dialects, visual representations, and archaeological remains.

Mesopotamian deities were conceived in human form and were believed to reside in images erected in cult buildings. This image was the focus of the cult and was carefully nurtured through many precisely prescribed rituals for feeding, clothing, and washing, in the hope that the god might then be pleased and disposed to act favorably toward his subjects.

Cuneiform texts tell us that most of the cult images—none of which are entirely preserved—were made of precious woods and were either dressed in elaborate garments or covered entirely with gold. They had staring eyes inlaid with precious stones, often lapis lazuli, for the pupil and shell or alabaster for the surrounding white. Statues of other deities and of important, often royal, worshipers were frequently placed in the temples. The gypsum statue (fig. 21) was found at Tell Asmar in the Square Temple, which was built shortly before the middle of the third millennium B.C. It is probably an image of a pious worshiper, not a deity; his hypnotically staring eyes may resemble those of his revered god.

Offerings of food and drink were brought to the deity every day; they were "consumed" by it behind drawn curtains. In addition to the ritual feeding, libations were offered, usually of water, wine, beer, oil, or the blood of a sacrificial animal. These liquids were poured from a special vessel onto an altar or into another sacred receptacle or object. Such a ceramic vessel (fig. 22), probably from Syria, is in the shape of a two-storied tower topped by a human figure wearing a conical cap and restraining two felines by their tails. Between them is a narrow-necked opening through which a blessed liquid was poured, to flow from one of the two doors cut into the front of the tower vessel.



Across the top of the tower a cylinder-seal impression shows a variation of the presentation scene.

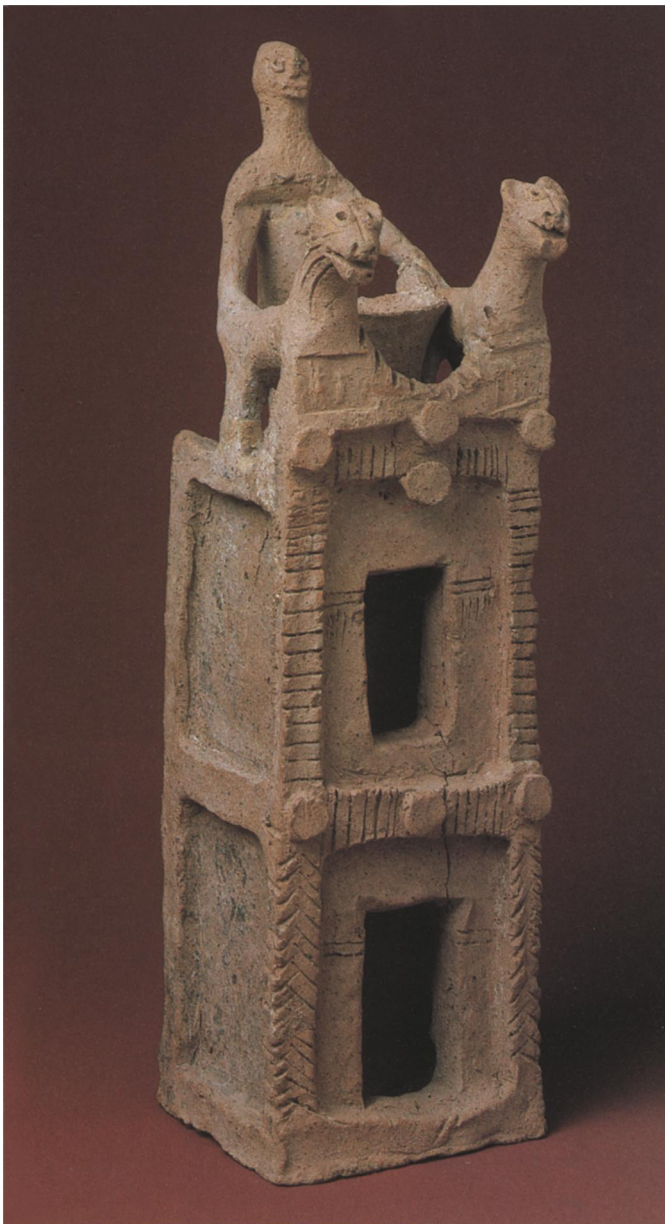
The figurine of a kneeling bull (fig. 23), from early third-millennium Iran, is magnificently sculpted in silver (see p. 46). It is clothed as a human, in a textile decorated with a stepped pattern, and holds a tall, spouted vessel in its outstretched hooves in the posture of a suppliant. We know nothing of the religious rituals of Iran from the beginning of the third millennium B.C. Contemporary Proto-Elamite

cylinder seals do show animals in human posture that may be engaged in some kind of ritual activity.

In addition to the daily rituals surrounding the cult image, the Mesopotamian calendar was full of special days on which particular rites had to be observed by the priests and the king. The most important of these was the New Year's Festival, which, after many changes through the ages, was celebrated in the first millennium B.C. during the spring month of Nisan. In Babylon, the king and priests

performed rituals for eleven days; the high point of the festival occurred when the cult statues of Marduk—the chief Babylonian god—and other deities were paraded along the Processional Way leading from the temple precinct to the *Akitu* house. Outside the magnificent Ishtar Gate, the walls along the way were lined with colorful glazed-brick images of lions (see fig. 9) striding boldly toward the sacred destination where a mysterious and crucial ritual must have taken place. H.P.

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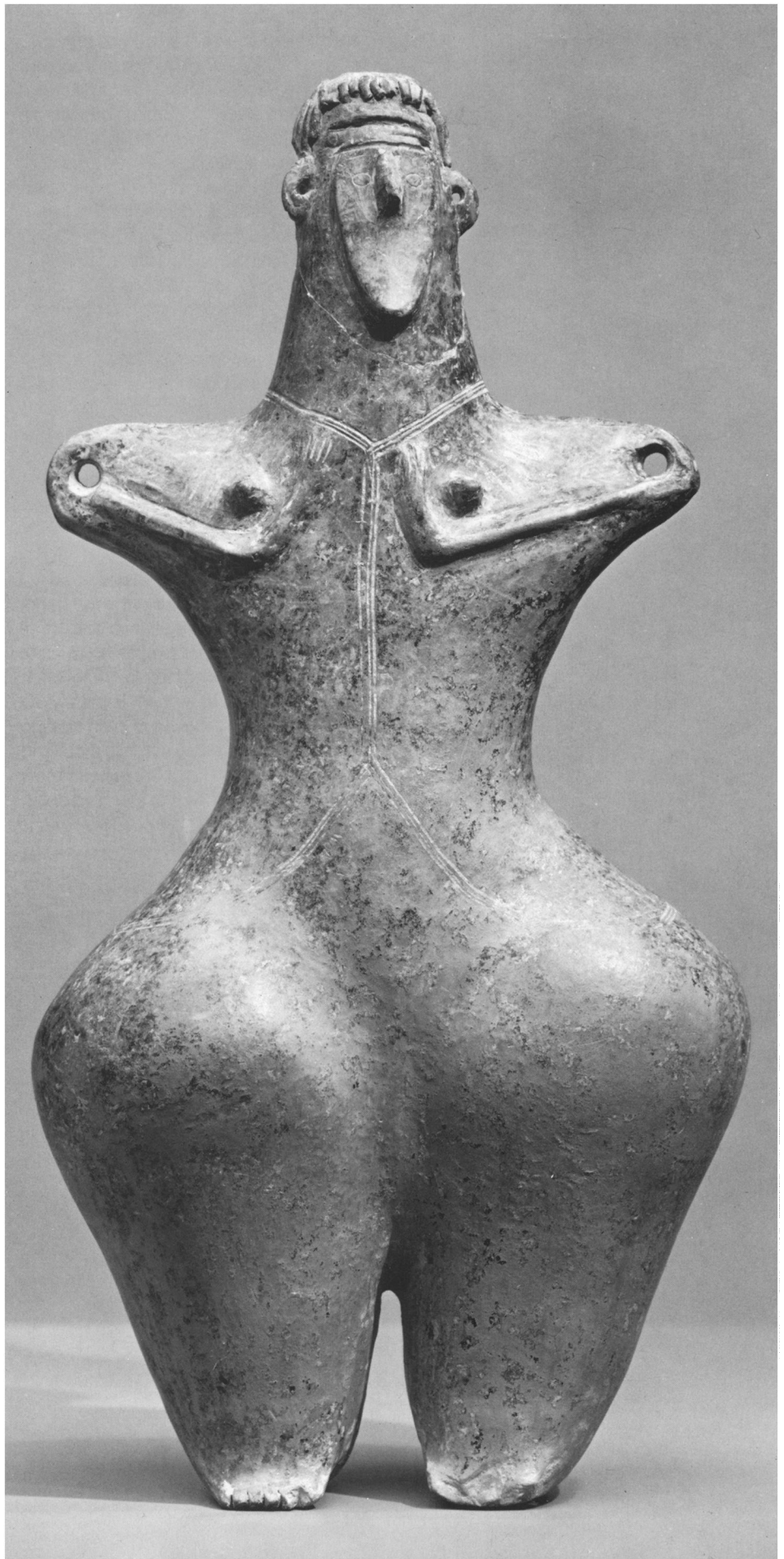




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Some of the most elaborate representations of females in the art of the ancient Near East are images of divine and cult figures whose association with certain aspects of life made them essential to the welfare of mankind. Fertility, procreation, the growth of crops and livestock, and such natural phenomena as thunderstorms and rain were among the basic concepts identified with female divinities by ancient peoples. Representations of nude females in clay, stone, and metal are the simplest and most obvious expression of these concepts, and such figures appeared throughout antiquity in many regions and periods. A striking example in clay from northwestern Iran (fig. 25) is hollow and probably served as a cult vessel as well as a sacred image. The exaggerated width of the pelvis may be intended to emphasize the role of women as childbearers.

One of the most important Mesopotamian goddesses was Ishtar, a divinity who combined in her nature aspects of both love and war. She is frequently represented on cylinder seals (fig. 27) with



25



27



weapons rising from her shoulders or holding a distinctive lion-headed weapon. Her right foot rests on a lion, her animal attribute. Ishtar is a goddess to whom rulers turned for aid, protection, and victory in battle.

A small gold pendant (fig. 24) represents a goddess worshiped in Anatolia. The Hittite figure holds a child on her lap, thus underscoring her role as a mother goddess. The identity of this divinity remains uncertain, but the wide, disklike headdress may represent the sun and the figure therefore may be a sun goddess. Although the enthroned figure rests on a flat podium or base, a loop attached to the back of the headdress indicates that this was a pendant, once suspended, perhaps from a necklace similar to the example from Mesopotamia in the Museum's collection (see fig. 19). On that necklace, small figures of another benevolent goddess, Lama, are included among the pendants.

Dancing female figures decorate a Sasanian silver-gilt ewer (fig. 26), a ceremonial or cult vessel of a type datable to the sixth or early seventh century A.D. The appearance of these images was influenced by Roman representations of maenads, female worshippers associated with the cult of the Greek wine god Dionysos, a complex divinity whose worship was particularly widespread in the ancient world. On the Sasanian vessels the females are always in a dancing pose and hold a select group of objects, including grape-and-leaf branches, birds, animals, and vessels. No texts remain from this period to explain the appearance or function of these females in the Sasanian world, and we can only suppose that they were associated with some court festival of the Iranian year. P.O.H.

26



28

For ancient man the world was full of supernatural spirits, beneficent and malevolent, who had to be constantly appeased or repelled. By the third millennium B.C. a few of these spirits had been represented in tangible forms that, although monstrous, were probably less frightening than previously, when their form was left solely to a believer's imagination. The specific identity of most of these creatures is not known because there is so little coincidence of textual description and visual representation. But often their function is suggested by their appearance or from the context in which they are depicted.

When represented in art, these supernatural creatures were always made up of naturally occurring forms combined in an unnatural manner. Wings were often used to transform a real creature into a fabulous one, as was the mixing of human and animal features (see fig. 64).

Until the last half of the third millennium B.C. only a few such mixed crea-

tures were represented; among them were the bull-man, the human-headed bull, and the lion-headed eagle, Imdugud. But during the Akkadian dynasty (2334–2154 B.C.) a rich variety of these fabulous creatures were placed into the artistic repertory. On the illustrated seal (fig. 30) is carved the snake god, whose form is human above and reptilian below; he is approached from front and behind by minor deities with scorpions or snakes for hands and feet. One of these divinities is winged, while the other has felines emerging wing-like from its back. The domain of the snake god was the underworld, and because he is often associated with growing vegetation or, as here, with scorpions and felines and the gatepost of Inanna (the Sumerian goddess of love and war), he is thought to be a fertility deity, perhaps of Iranian inspiration.

Monstrous images were often borrowed from other cultures, either with or without their original identity. The image of the sphinx—a creature with a lion's

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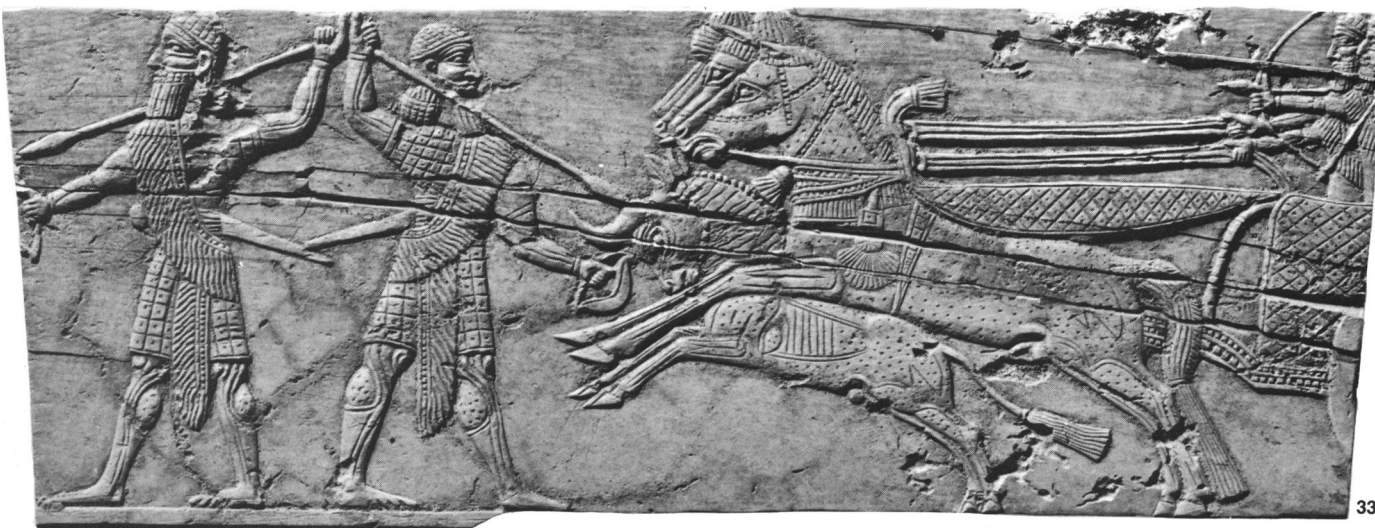


body and a human head—was borrowed from Egypt and adapted by the cultures of western Asia. From the Old Assyrian palace at the site of Achemhöyük comes an ivory figurine of a female sphinx wearing Hathor curls (fig. 29). All of its elements are Egyptian, but they are combined in a completely un-Egyptian manner. This ivory support is one of a group of four that most probably served as decoration for a throne.

An expertly cast silver axe with gold-foil gilding (fig. 28) is decorated with elements of the lively iconography of superhuman heroes and demons that was developed during the Middle Bronze Age in western Central Asia. The heroic demon, composed of a human body with birds' heads, talons, and wings, is a creature most probably borrowed from eastern Iran. It is shown sometimes enthroned and sometimes struggling with natural or fantastic creatures. Its opponent on the axe is a dragonlike creature distinguished by a single horn, a curled beard, a ridged ruff, staggered wings, a feline's body, and bird's talons. This same creature also served as a symbol of the Iranian Shimashki dynasty of the late third millennium B.C.

Representations of fabulous creatures served not only as images of numinous spirits, but also as heraldic symbols for the propaganda of the secular state. Although its meaning is not understood, the horned and winged lion occurs in Achaemenid Persian iconography, frequently in conjunction with the king. On a gold plaque of this period (fig. 31) are two winged and horned lions, each rearing with its head turned back. The plaque was most probably sewn on a soft cloth or leather backing that served as part of the resplendent panoply of an Achaemenid courtier. H.P.





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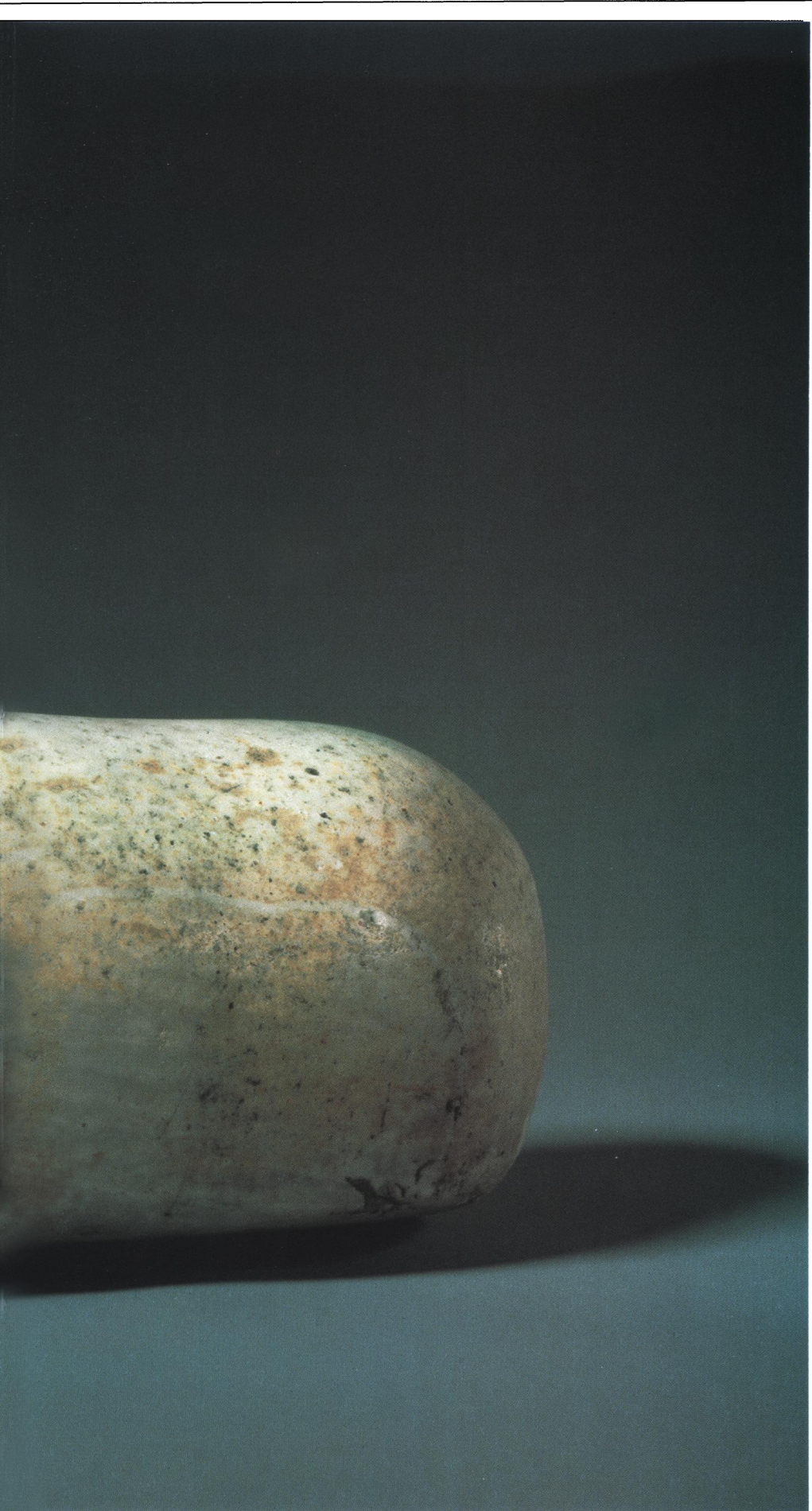
Even in the densely populated cities of the ancient Near East nature was never far from men's daily lives. This is reflected in the art, where images of animals were used from the earliest times. They were represented as natural forms, as symbols of abstract concepts, or as attributes of one of the many Near Eastern deities. Along with domesticated sheep, goats, and bovids, images of wild animals predominate: lions, caprids, mountain sheep, and wild bulls are especially important.

As early as the late fourth millennium B.C., when urban societies were first forming in the lowlands, the lion was clearly

associated with power, both secular and divine. The forepart of a lion emerges from a bronze peg-shaped foundation figurine (fig. 35). The plate beneath the lion's extended paws is inscribed with the name of Tishatal, a king of Urkish, in the language of the Hurrians, a non-Indo-European, non-Semitic people who, from the second half of the third millennium B.C., were present in the northern parts of Mesopotamia and Syria. Stylistic features suggest that this foundation peg—frightening enough to scare off evildoers—was made either by an Akkadian artist or by one within the Akkadian sphere of influence.

The yoked pair of long-horned bulls (fig. 32) served as a decorative finial, perhaps for a ceremonial standard or chariot pole. It is reportedly from an Early Bronze Age royal burial at the site of Horoztepe in central Anatolia. These bulls are examples of how important animal features are often emphasized in ancient Near Eastern art. Here the horns are more than one and one-half times the length of the animal's body, impossible in nature, but an effective stylistic convention. The identification of these early bulls as sacred or divine is based only on an analogy with Hittite bulls that were associated with the weather god Teshub a





millennium later.

Near Eastern artists must have carefully observed animals in nature; the renderings capture their essence either through naturalistic or stylized conventions. A fine sculpture of a wild mountain sheep (fig. 36), or mouflon, identical to several found at Mohenjo Daro (an urban site of the third millennium B.C. in the valley of the Indus River), shows the animal resting; his hindquarters are strongly twisted to receive the full weight of his body. The physical power of this creature is emphasized by the closed outline that incorporates his sweeping horns into the massive volume of his chest.

The three-dimensional, sculptural quality of these animals contrasts with the intricately patterned, two-dimensional bodies of the gazelles striding around the side of a lovely gold cup (fig. 34). The heads at a right angle to the bodies are a feature shared by several similar cups found at Kalar Dasht and Marlik, second-millennium B.C. sites of royal burials south of the Caspian Sea.

From the earliest times in Mesopotamia hunting wild beasts was a religious responsibility that demonstrated the prowess and potency of a ruler. From the time of the Neo-Assyrian king Assurnasirpal II, such hunting scenes were depicted on the carved stone reliefs in the palaces; excerpts from these compositions were copied in minor arts both in Assyria and in the lands under its domination. On an ivory panel (fig. 33) from northwestern Iran, a male figure, possibly royal, is seen about to thrust a spear into the breast of a charging wild bull chased by a royal chariot. H.P.

In the ancient Near East plant motifs were incorporated into designs on the richly decorated pottery of the prehistoric periods. They continued to be represented, in a stylized fashion, on a variety of objects throughout the millennia. Favorite designs included sprig patterns, rows of trees, stylized flowers, and chains of leaves and buds. A schematic representation of rows of date palms appears in three registers on a finely carved chlorite vase (fig. 39) of the first half of the third millennium B.C. The date palm of the oases and river areas of southern Mesopotamia and nearby Iran was a major source of food, of timber for light construction, and of fronds for mats.

The reed, native to the marshes of southern Mesopotamia, is represented during the Uruk period (3500–3100 B.C.) on cylinder seals, which also depict other plants and palm trees in decorative, nonrealistic designs. In the Akkadian period (2334–2154 B.C.) trees and plants were more realistically combined with natural features to give the impression of actual landscape. An Akkadian seal (fig. 37) shows a hunting scene in which a man seizes a horned animal. Fir trees and mounds with imbricated patterns indicate that the setting is a mountainous region, probably the forest lands to the north or east of Akkad.

The ivory carvings from the Neo-Assyrian palaces at Nimrud incorporate many plant forms as decorative elements in the designs. On one example executed in Syrian style (fig. 38) a goat is naturalistically portrayed rearing up on its hind legs and nibbling at the leaves of a highly stylized shrub of intertwined tendrils.

The sacred tree was always a popular motif. This imaginary, decorative plant, composed of ornamental leaves and waterlike tendrils, was repeated many times on the ninth-century B.C. reliefs of the Northwest Palace at Nimrud (see inside front cover). Frequently, attending divinities are shown administering some purifying substance with a date palm spathe and a bucket. The sacred tree was a symbol of vegetal life and fertility—a significance that we attribute to most plant motifs and designs in the art of the ancient Near East. B.A.P.



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43



The Scythians were one of the nomadic tribes that roamed the steppes north of Iran, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia in the first millennium B.C. They are known to us from the writings of their neighbors, the Assyrians and Urartians. By the time of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (681–668 B.C.) Scythian nomads had infiltrated into the rich, settled lands south of the Caspian. Herodotus, the fifth-century Greek historian, who wrote about them in Book IV of his monumental history, tells of sumptuous royal burials of Scythian chieftains, which have been confirmed by the discoveries of burial mounds in southern Russia. The tombs covered by the mounds were filled with weapons and horse equipment as well as intricately and lavishly crafted pieces of jewelry, drinking vessels, and combs.

Typical of Scythian art is the so-called animal style, which chiefly represented such creatures as stags, panthers, boars, and birds of prey. The animals are rendered in a decorative, stylized fashion, as illustrated by griffin-shaped appliques (fig. 41), part of a group of ornaments that has been attributed to a fifth-century B.C. treasure found at Maikop in the Kuban River region north of the Black Sea. The Scythians were great horsemen and their passion for adornment extended to the harnesses worn by their horses. The boar clasp (fig. 42) of carved bone covered with gold is probably a decorative element for the straps of a harness.

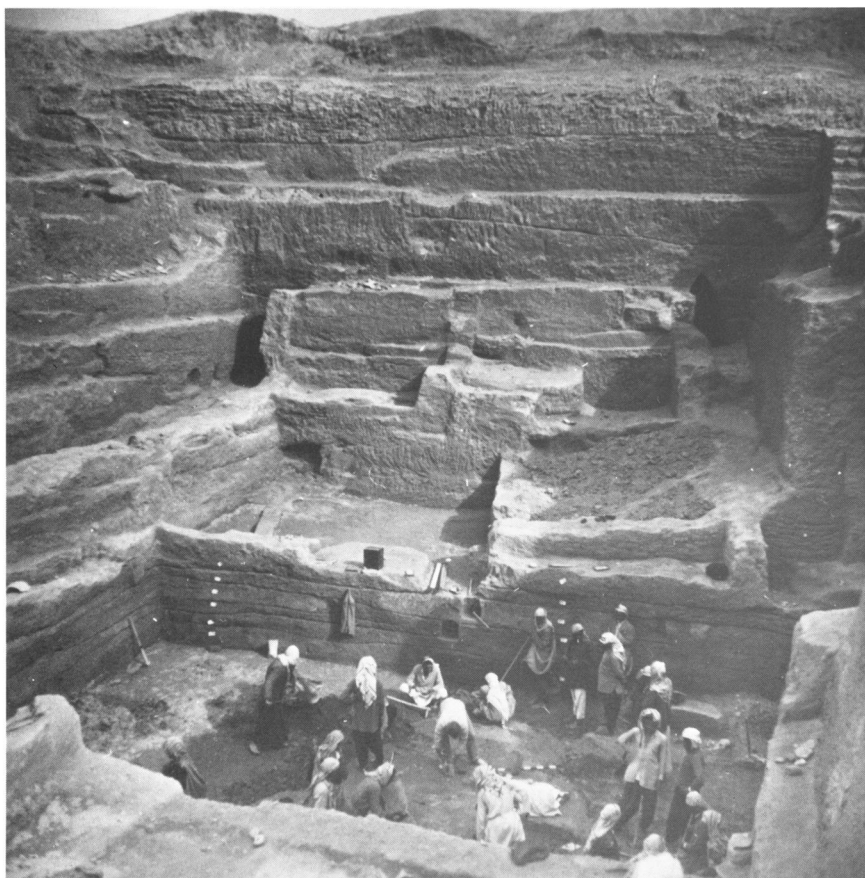
The Scythian animal style influenced the art of other nomadic tribes. This is reflected in a rare example of fourth-century B.C. Thracian workmanship, a silver beaker (fig. 40) probably made in the region of present-day Rumania or Bulgaria. Similar beakers have been found in a princely tomb at Agighiol, near the Danube delta in eastern Rumania. The Museum's cup depicts several animals, some real and some fantastic. An eight-legged stag has antlers terminating in birds' heads, which form part of the decorative border around the rim.

A bronze belt clasp (fig. 43) has an intricate openwork design with a horse and smaller figures of a foal, a dog, and a bull—all enclosed by a frame with bosses. Many belt clasps of this same type and style have been found in ancient Colchis, now western Georgia in the Soviet Union. Recently it has been suggested that they date to the first to third century A.D. These small, portable, and highly decorative objects preserved many of the features of the earlier, nomadic animal style. B.A.P.

Beginning in the early 1930s and continuing to the present, the Metropolitan Museum has been a sponsor of archaeological excavations in the Near East. Before World War II the Museum supported excavations at Qasr-i Abu Nasr and Nishapur in Iran, and at Ctesiphon in Iraq; during the 1950s its concern with archaeological activity increased dramatically. In the past three decades excavations and research have been conducted with other institutions at fourteen sites in Iran, five in Iraq, two each in Syria and Jordan, and one in Turkey. The Museum has helped to finance these projects, and members of its curatorial staff have served as directors or codirectors of several excavations. As a result of its support, the Museum has acquired much material from many cultures and periods, but its support has not always been contingent on receiving objects in return.

The Metropolitan Museum first partici-

pated in excavating in the Near East in 1931–32, when it joined forces with the German State Museums at the site of Ctesiphon in Iraq. And from 1932 to 1934 the Museum itself sponsored three seasons of excavations at Qasr-i Abu Nasr, a few miles southeast of Shiraz in southwestern Iran. The site consists of a large town and fortress and dates from the late Sasanian and early Islamic periods from the sixth to the eighth century A.D. Remains of earlier Achaemenid architecture and carvings that had been transported from nearby Persepolis were also recovered. The Achaemenid material was subsequently restored to Persepolis, and a large number of objects came to the Museum as its share of the finds. These include seals and sealings, coins, pottery, and objects of glass, stone, bone, and metal. One of the metal objects acquired is a bronze stand (fig. 46) that probably held a lamp or candle. Qasr-i Abu Nasr is



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a significant site because it dates to the transition from the Sasanian to the Islamic period, and the extensive architecture and objects furnish us with evidence of the culture during this period of change.

Nippur in southern Mesopotamia was first explored in the mid-nineteenth century and first excavated, by the University of Pennsylvania, from 1889 to 1900. Commencing again in 1948 and continuing to 1961, seven campaigns were sponsored by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago and the University of Pennsylvania, the latter replaced in 1953 by the American Schools of Oriental Research. The Metropolitan Museum actively participated in the campaigns of 1957–58 and 1960–61.

Ancient texts indicate that Nippur was a major religious center rather than a powerful secular state, and the archaeological remains document that reputation. A large temple precinct called the Ekur

with a temple of the god Enlil with a ziggurat, a temple of the goddess Inanna that was rebuilt many times over the millennia (fig. 44), and scribal quarters are the main architectural and cultural features at the site. Seven brick foundation boxes of the king Shulgi were discovered beneath the temple of Inanna, which dates from the Third Dynasty of Ur (2112–2004 B.C.), and three boxes of his father, Urnammu, were discovered beneath the Ekur foundations; they are among the most notable artifacts found there. Each box contained a bronze peg statuette of the king, represented carrying a basket of mortar for the ritual building of the temple. One of the Shulgi statuettes (fig. 45) is in the Museum's collection.

A massive area with fortification walls five miles long surrounding an area of some nine hundred acres, the Assyrian site of Nimrud in northern Mesopotamia has concerned archaeologists since



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1845–54, when Austen Henry Layard excavated there. He was followed by William Kennett Loftus in 1854–55, and George Smith in 1873 and 1876, and three-quarters of a century later by Max E. L. Mallowan, who conducted thirteen campaigns between 1949 and 1963. The Metropolitan Museum supported eleven of these campaigns, from 1951 to 1963—its longest and most fruitful involvement in archaeological research in the Near East.

Nimrud has many preserved palaces and temples built by various Assyrian kings, each yielding quantities of artifacts. The Citadel, in the southwest corner, and the military area called Fort Shalmaneser, in the southeast, are particularly interesting because from the palaces, fort, and wells were recovered the most extraordinary finds at the site, the Nimrud ivories: thousands of carvings in relief and in the round, depicting battle, ritual, and genre scenes, executed in the styles of the Assyrian and neighboring cultures, in



particular Syrian and Phoenician. For its support the Museum received about one hundred forty ivories, two of which are illustrated on p. 37. One is masterfully sculpted in Phoenician style and depicts a Nubian bringing an oryx and a monkey as gifts to the Assyrian king (fig. 48). The other, in Syrian style, is the head of a woman with necklace and braided hair (fig. 47). Each shows the skill and precision of ancient artists with different backgrounds.

Hasanlu (fig. 49) in northwestern Iran was excavated in 1936 by Aurel Stein; from 1956 to 1974 by the University of Pennsylvania; and from 1959 on, with the Metropolitan. It was settled in the sixth millennium B.C. and was occupied through the Bronze and Iron Age periods. The most extensively preserved level is Period IV, or Iron Age II, dating from the twelfth or eleventh century B.C. to close to 800 B.C., when the site was violently destroyed. The preceding level, Period V, Iron I, dates from between the fourteenth and the twelfth or eleventh century B.C. The continuity of culture of the two periods is indicated by architectural features and monochrome pottery common to both.

Thousands of artifacts made of terracotta, bronze, iron, gold, silver, and ivory were found in the monumental Period IV buildings, which are characterized by a columned central hall surrounded by storage rooms and an entrance through a grand portico. Within each hall are hearths, benches, and a raised throne

area. Whether palaces or temples, the buildings clearly had a major state function.

The Museum has acquired many diverse artifacts, some of which are characteristic of Hasanlu and not found elsewhere. Among these are bronze lions joined to iron shanks (fig. 50), which are associated with victims at the largest building uncovered, Burned Building II. The lion pins were worn two or three to a garment. Because the artifacts recovered from Period IV were in use at the time of the destruction, archaeologists have a significant and precisely dated corpus of material.

In 1967, 1970, 1973, and 1974, the Metropolitan Museum and the British Institute of Persian Studies jointly excavated the site of Nush-i Jan, forty-two miles south of Hamadan in western Iran. Built on the summit of a natural shale outcrop thirty-seven meters high, the site dramatically dominates the surrounding plain (fig. 51). Three periods of occupation were revealed, the earliest of which is Median, dating from the late eighth century to about 600 B.C., followed by Achaemenid and Parthian levels. The best preserved is the Median, containing four large mud-brick buildings.

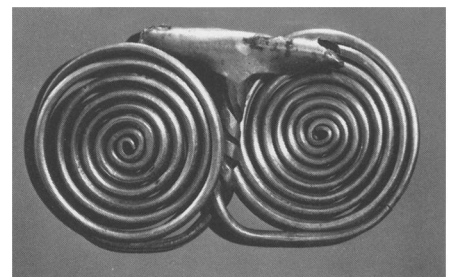
The Central Temple at Nush-i Jan is architecturally unparalleled in the Near East. Lozenge-shaped, it has a free-standing fire altar, suggesting that the building was a temple for fire-worshipping ceremonies. Sometime before the aban-

donment of the site, the temple was painstakingly filled with stones and mud, allowing the building to be preserved to a height of eight meters. Why this "burial" occurred is a mystery. The adjacent Fort Building, identified as such by its buttressed walls and arrow slots, had four parallel magazines, suggesting that it also served to store goods. In a passageway a hoard of 200 silver objects—earrings, bars, quadruple and double spirals (fig. 52)—was discovered in a bronze bowl. The Old Western Building, one of the earliest, also has an altar and may have been a temple. This building was not buried but allowed to decay before the final abandonment. The fourth building is rectangular and has a columned hall of the same basic plan as the contemporary hall at nearby Godin Tepe and those at the earlier site of Hasanlu.

Nush-i Jan is significant for its unique and well-preserved Median remains. At present only one other probable Median site has been excavated, Godin Tepe; the capital city at Hamadan remains unexcavated. O.W.M.

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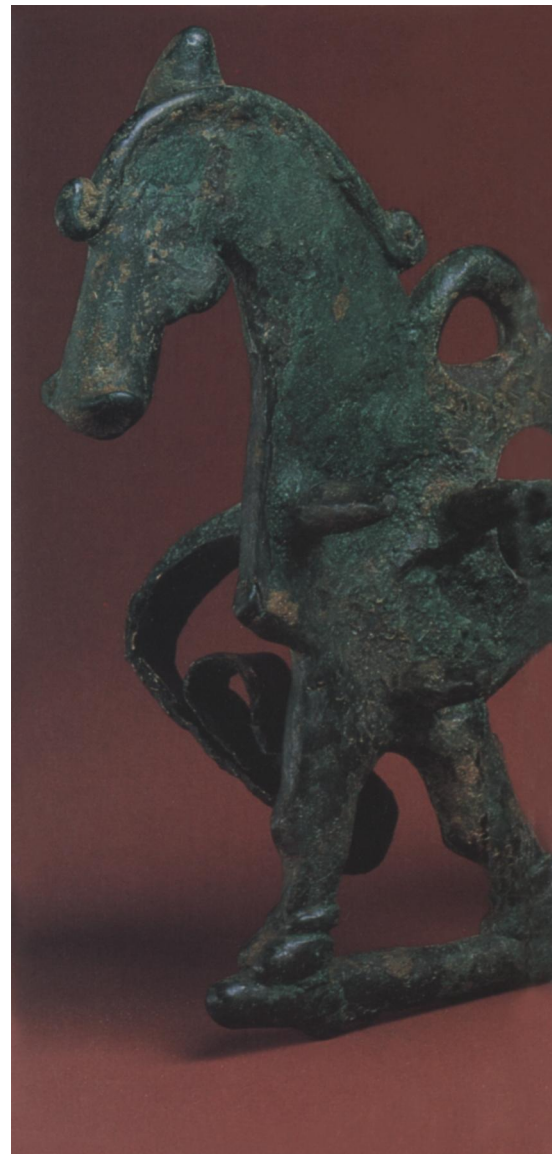
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In the late 1920s, large quantities of bronze artifacts began to circulate in the art market, and by 1930 their source was recognized as Luristan, a mountainous region in western Iran, bordering Mesopotamia and Elam. Aside from a few archaeological campaigns, especially those of Erich Schmidt at Surkh Dum in 1938 and Louis Vanden Berghe at many sites from 1965 to 1979, the great majority of Luristan bronzes derive from clandestine digging. The Metropolitan Museum has in its collection forty-one objects, twenty-four of them bronzes, from Surkh Dum. Because so many bronzes have been dispersed so widely, it is impossible to estimate the number in existence, but there must be thousands.

We do not know the ancient name and language of Luristan, or why the bronzes were made, or what constituted the economy that supported their manufacture. It is also difficult to identify the full range of cultural artifacts and to establish their



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chronology. Nevertheless, we are able to recognize as classic Luristan types the stylized standards and finials, horse cheekpieces, hammered and cast pins, bracelets, whetstone handles, weapons, and quivers. And although ancient cultures existed in the region from as early as the third millennium B.C., the typical Luristan bronzes did not appear until the early first millennium B.C. They reached full production in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. and mysteriously terminated a century before the advent of the Persian empire.

Each of the four objects shown here is a typical Luristan bronze, representing one of a variety of forms for its class. The openwork pin (fig. 54), was excavated at Surkh Dum along with other examples, some enclosed within walls, others stuck in cracks or joints. This pin depicts a squatting female who holds at bay two horned animals, represented only by their heads and necks that curve into a frame.

The female may be in a birthing position, and because it came from a sanctuary, the pin may have been dedicated by a woman seeking a healthy delivery.

Horse bits with figured cheekpieces (fig. 56) and iconic finials are ubiquitous and represent the most characteristic forms of the Luristan corpus. The cheekpieces are in the shape of horses, lions, mouflons, goats, or fantastic creatures. If they were in fact buried in graves, then it was probably the custom for an individual to carry his personal bit with him to the next world, to serve for future riding or symbolically to represent the horse itself. Finials were also presumably taken by their owners to their graves. Mounted on bottle-shaped supports, a number of which survive, they occur in a great variety of forms, often depicting heraldic animals or a central figure between two animals. On the Museum's example (fig. 53) a detached male head is held by two heraldic felines. Because of the large

number known, we may assume that finials existed in most Luristan households, serving as icons or representations of the many spirits and deities who required to be placated and worshiped constantly.

The quiver plaque (fig. 55) was once attached to a leather backing and is decorated with seven uneven horizontal panels in repoussé with superbly rendered mythological scenes. Rampant winged bulls flanking a tree and a procession of antelope frame three narrative panels. At the top are horned and winged humanoids holding a lion at bay, followed by rampant lions flanking a small figure who holds lions and a central figure seemingly threatened by two bulbous-nosed creatures. We cannot interpret these scenes, but clearly they represent mythological or cultic events of some importance. A small number of other Luristan quiver plaques exist, but none is so richly embellished as the present example. O.W.M.





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Clay, so abundant and useful a resource, was developed and exploited throughout Near Eastern history. The great potential

of fired clay was first understood in the seventh millennium B.C. From that point on, pottery was the most common type of object to come from the ancient ruins of Near Eastern civilizations. In the Chalcolithic period of the fourth millennium B.C., painted decoration on pottery flourished, particularly in Iran. Artisans first painted geometric designs in dark brown or black on buff clay vessels, which were made on a slow wheel. Gradually they included more and more animal figures in their decorative schemes. A large storage jar (fig. 58) is similar in shape, fabric, and painted decoration to ones found at the central Iranian site of Tepe Sialk in levels III 6–7. It has on its side schematic silhouettes of three mountain goats, whose enormous ridged horns arch majestically over their bodies. The zigzag-and-band decoration separating the goats is typical of Sialk pottery of this early period.

More than a thousand years later, from

the site of Tureng Tepe in the Iranian Gorgan Plain just to the east of the Caspian Sea, a completely different but equally successful variety of pottery (fig. 57) was produced. Its gray-colored surface—the result of firing in a reducing rather than oxidizing kiln—is textured with six registers of crisscross patterns made by burnishing the surface to a high polish.

During the second millennium B.C. the technology was developed for both the glazing of pottery and the manufacturing of glass vessels. A large jar (fig. 59) glazed with green, blue, brown, yellow, white, and black and decorated with petals above bulls kneeling before trees is one of three in the Museum's collection reportedly from the early first-millennium B.C. site of Ziwiye in northwestern Iran. It is similar in shape and decoration to examples excavated at the Assyrian city of Assur on the Tigris. H.P.



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In antiquity the many mountain ranges of the Near East, including the Taurus of eastern Turkey, the Zagros of western Iran, and the Caucasus between the Black and Caspian seas, were rich in metallic ores. At seventh-millennium B.C. sites such as Cayönü, Tell Ramad, and Ali Kosh the earliest stages of metalworking technology are documented.

Toward the end of the fourth millennium B.C., the burgeoning urban centers in the lowlands began to demand metals to make objects for the ruling elite and for the growing temple complexes. By this time, the basic properties of some nonferrous metals—especially copper, gold, silver, and lead—were understood. It was known, for example, that the shape of

metal could be altered by heating it to a liquid state, pouring it into a mold, and letting it cool and harden. Metals were also shaped by alternately hammering and heating them in a process now called annealing. Artisans had learned as well—probably by trial and error—that when some metals are mixed in their liquid state, they combine to form a metallic alloy, a new material that is often, when liquid, more fluid and, when cool, harder than its components.

The properties of malleability, malleability, and miscibility are the basis of two of the most important techniques of ancient metalworking—hammering and casting. Hammering was used to make or to finish all kinds of objects. Vessels,

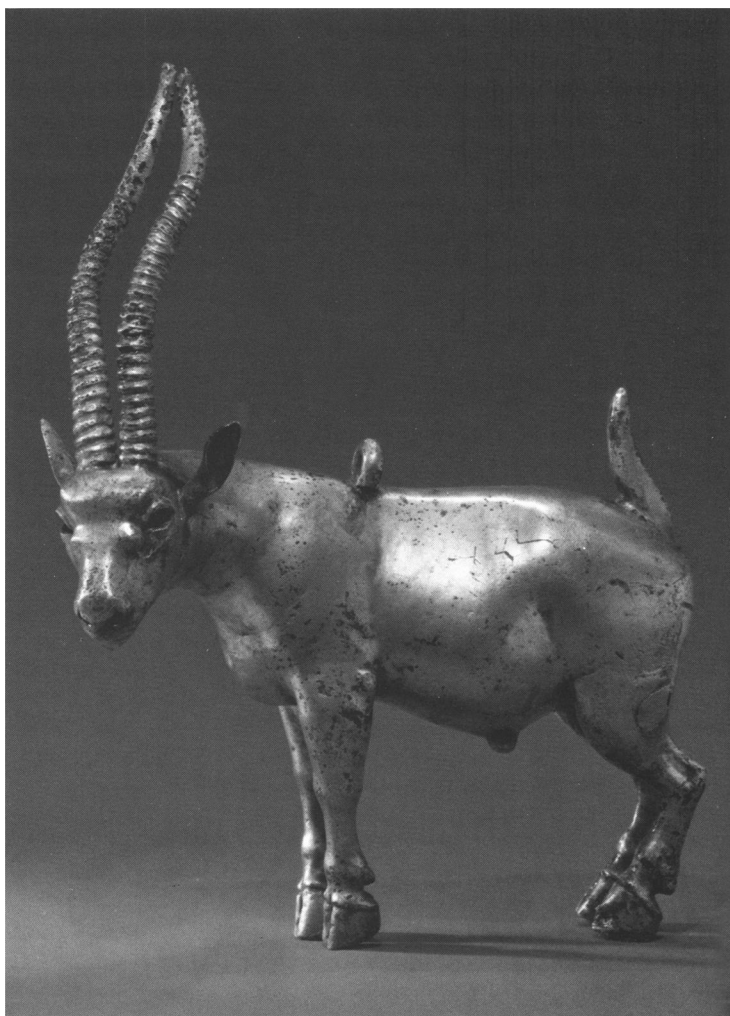
such as the elaborately decorated one (fig. 62) from Luristan, were made entirely by hammering. The shape was formed by raising or sinking the bronze—a copper-and-tin alloy—by hammer blows. This particular vessel was made in two parts, joined in the middle by bronze rivets. Six registers of birds, trees, and horned and striding animals were hammered up from the vessel's surface in the repoussé technique. The bodies were then elaborately decorated with chased lines created by a dull tool that, when struck, pushed the metal to either side.

Gold is a soft metal, easily worked by hammering. A western Iranian trapezoidal plaque of the first millennium B.C. (fig. 64) was made in the same way as

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the decorated bronze vessel: by hammering, repoussé, and chasing. A most impressive example of the hammering technique is the lovely silver figurine of an antelope (fig. 61), which is identified here on the basis of stylistic and iconographic traits as the creation of a Proto-Elamite master of the third millennium B.C. Both the gazelle and the contemporary kneeling silver bull (see fig. 23) were made from separate pieces of silver hammered into shape; each piece was then fitted into the other and finally joined by silver solder.

By the fourth millennium B.C., lost-wax, as well as open- and bivalve-mold casting had been developed. In the ingenious lost-wax process the desired image is sculpted in wax, which is then surrounded with a clay investment that hardens into a mold when baked. The mold has a negative space, corresponding to the burnt-wax image, into which is poured molten metal that hardens into the shape of the original wax model. The third-millennium B.C. ibex stand (fig. 60), of copper alloyed with arsenic, is among

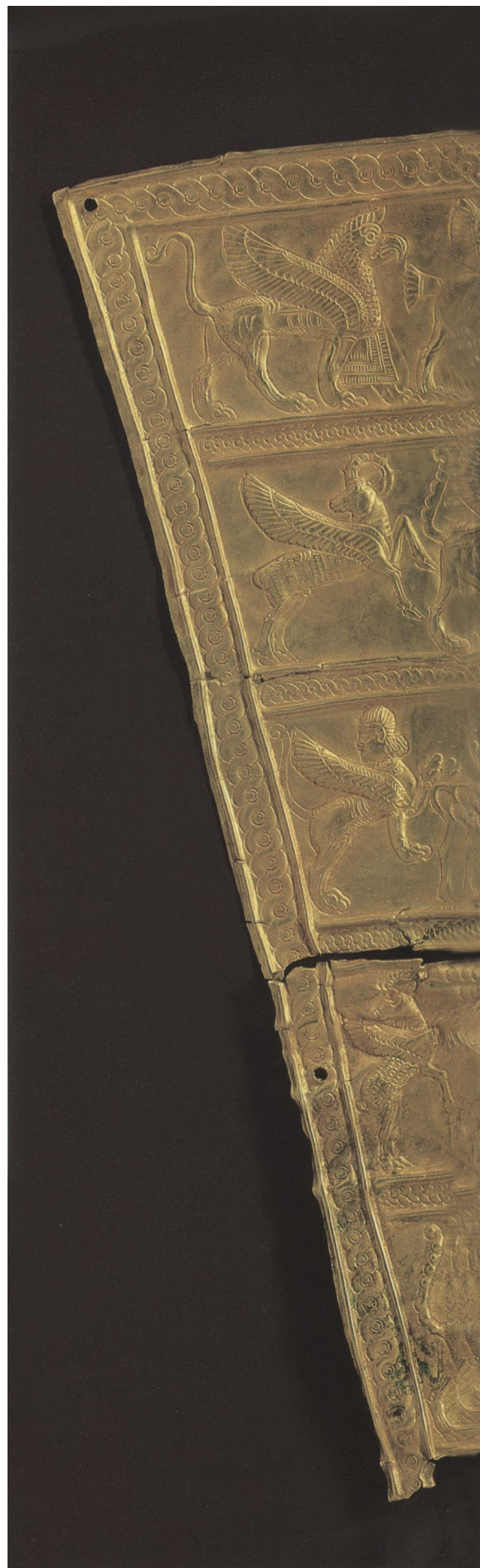
the earliest examples of the more complex technique of lost-wax casting around a central ceramic core.

A handsome silver plate (fig. 63), a product of the last part of the Sasanian period (fifth to early sixth century A.D.), combines the metalworking techniques described above with others. The plate itself was hammered into its final shape from a cast ingot. The low-relief decoration was formed by carving away the background close to the figures, while the higher relief of the bodies of the king, his horse, and the rams was made from separate cast or hammered pieces that were crimped into place. The linear details were either chased into the silver or engraved—a process of cutting instead of pushing away strips of metal. A ring base was attached with solder to the bottom of the plate. Except for the king's face and hands, all the decoration is gilded with an amalgam of gold and mercury. Niello, a shiny black, hard compound of silver and sulphur, accents the king's quiver and bow, and the rams' horns, tails, and hooves. H.P.

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66

Pieces of jewelry are mentioned in ancient Near Eastern texts as royal gifts, parts of bridal dowries, tribute, and booty. They are also recorded in the inventories of temples and workshops. Although there must have been many such precious objects, only a few have been preserved.

A major exception is the jewelry dating from the mid-third millennium B.C. found by Sir Leonard Woolley in his excavations at Ur in southern Mesopotamia. The headdress ornament (fig. 66), made of gold pendants in the form of poplar leaves and carnelian and lapis-lazuli beads, belonged to one of the lavishly adorned female attendants in the "King's Tomb." She also wore two necklaces of gold and lapis lazuli, gold hair ribbons, and two silver hair rings, all of which are now in the Museum's collection. The large number of objects made of precious materials attests not only to great wealth and sophisticated technical ability, but also to a far-reaching trade network: the materials had to be imported into southern Mesopotamia (see p. 15).

A rare example of second-millennium B.C. craftsmanship is the gold necklace with pendants (see fig. 19) illustrated on page 20. The granulation is particularly finely executed. Similar jewelry elements of gold—medallions, crescents, and beads—found in recent excavations at Larsa in southern Mesopotamia suggest that the Museum's piece may date from the nineteenth or eighteenth century B.C.

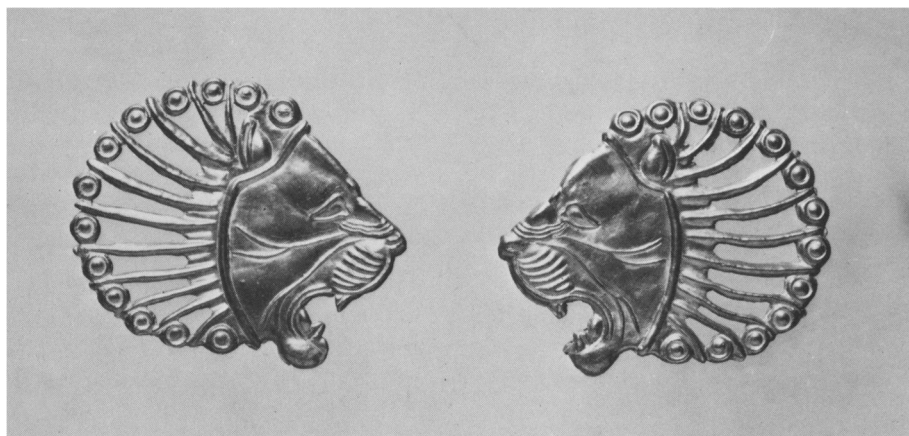
Our knowledge of jewelry of the first

millennium B.C. is augmented by detailed representations on the stone reliefs from the Neo-Assyrian palaces. For example, in the relief (see fig. 3) from the Northwest Palace at Nimrud, which shows the king Assurnasirpal II and an attendant, one can see the rich array of jewelry worn—necklaces, bracelets, armlets, and crescent-shaped earrings with pendants.

Plaques sewn on garments—also called bracteates—were common in the fifth-century Scythian graves of southern Russia (see fig. 41). Gold appliques were also popular in Achaemenid Persia. The lion-head bracteates (fig. 67) have five rings on the back, allowing them to be attached to cloth garments or tent hangings.

The gold necklace (fig. 65) is made up of elements from the Achaemenid period, including a head of Bes—an Egyptian god—plaques of a male figure with a horse, and lotus terminals. Similar jewelry elements were excavated at Pasargadae, where more than one hundred thirty images of Bes, human heads in profile, and the heads of ibexes and lions were found together in a jar.

The sumptuous objects worn by the Persians are confirmed by Herodotus (VII, 83): "Of all the troops the Persians were adorned with the greatest magnificence. . . . they glittered all over with gold, vast quantities of which they wore about their person." Herodotus also tells us that Persian tents captured at Platea in Greece were "adorned with gold and silver." B.A.P.



67





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Clothing in the Near East was commonly made of goat's hair and sheep's wool. A form of dress frequently represented in Sumerian and Akkadian art is the calf-length skirt covered with tufts of wool (see figs. 21, 70). Wrapped around the lower body and occasionally draped over one shoulder, this distinctive garment was worn throughout the third millennium B.C. in Mesopotamia. In time, longer garments (see figs. 2, 69) made of a single piece of wool or linen fabric replaced the earlier skirt. The robes had fringed borders or several horizontal bands of fringes (see figs. 20, 27). Sleeved garments and shawls (see fig. 3, inside covers) of the Neo-Assyrian period (883–612 B.C.) retained this fringed border and were also enriched with woven and embroidered designs and metal appliques.

On a relief from the Achaemenid palace at Persepolis (fig. 68), one figure is in Persian dress and wears a long full-sleeved tunic of a light textile. A second figure is in Median dress, a knee-length tunic and close-fitting trousers of thick wool or leather—clothing appropriate for a horseman. The folds of a similar tunic and trousers worn by the Sasanian king (see fig. 63) indicate that in this case the fabric is thin, perhaps silk. Impractical as this material was for hunting wear, it was represented to symbolize the luxuriousness of royal dress.

Through the millennia, in the art of the Near East, a cap decorated with bull's horns (see figs. 20, 27) signified that the wearer was a god. Only rarely did human rulers claim divinity and adopt this headgear. A headdress worn by southern Mesopotamian rulers in the late third and early second millennia B.C. is a wool cap (see figs. 2, 69). Later in the second millennium B.C. and early in the first millennium B.C. a high, fezlike cap (see fig. 3) was worn in Mesopotamia by nobles and kings. Under the Achaemenid Persians a new crown with stepped crenellations

made its appearance. This form, enriched by many elements such as crescent moons, sun rays, wings, and globes, became the royal crown of Sasanian kings (see fig. 5). P.O.H.



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About 3000 B.C. writing was invented in Mesopotamia as a method of recording and storing primarily economic information. In Egypt early records were kept on papyrus. But since Mesopotamia was located along the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, where clay was plentiful and inexpensive, this material was used for the earliest documents. Writing was done with a reed or bone stylus on small pillow-shaped tablets, most of which were only a few inches wide and fit easily into one's palm. The stylus left small marks in the clay that we call cuneiform, or wedge-shaped, writing.

The earliest script was pictographic—rendering realistic drawings of objects familiar in everyday life. It is not certain who developed this picture writing; we can only infer from archaeological records that it was the Sumerians, who soon after developed a system in which drawings in clay were replaced by signs

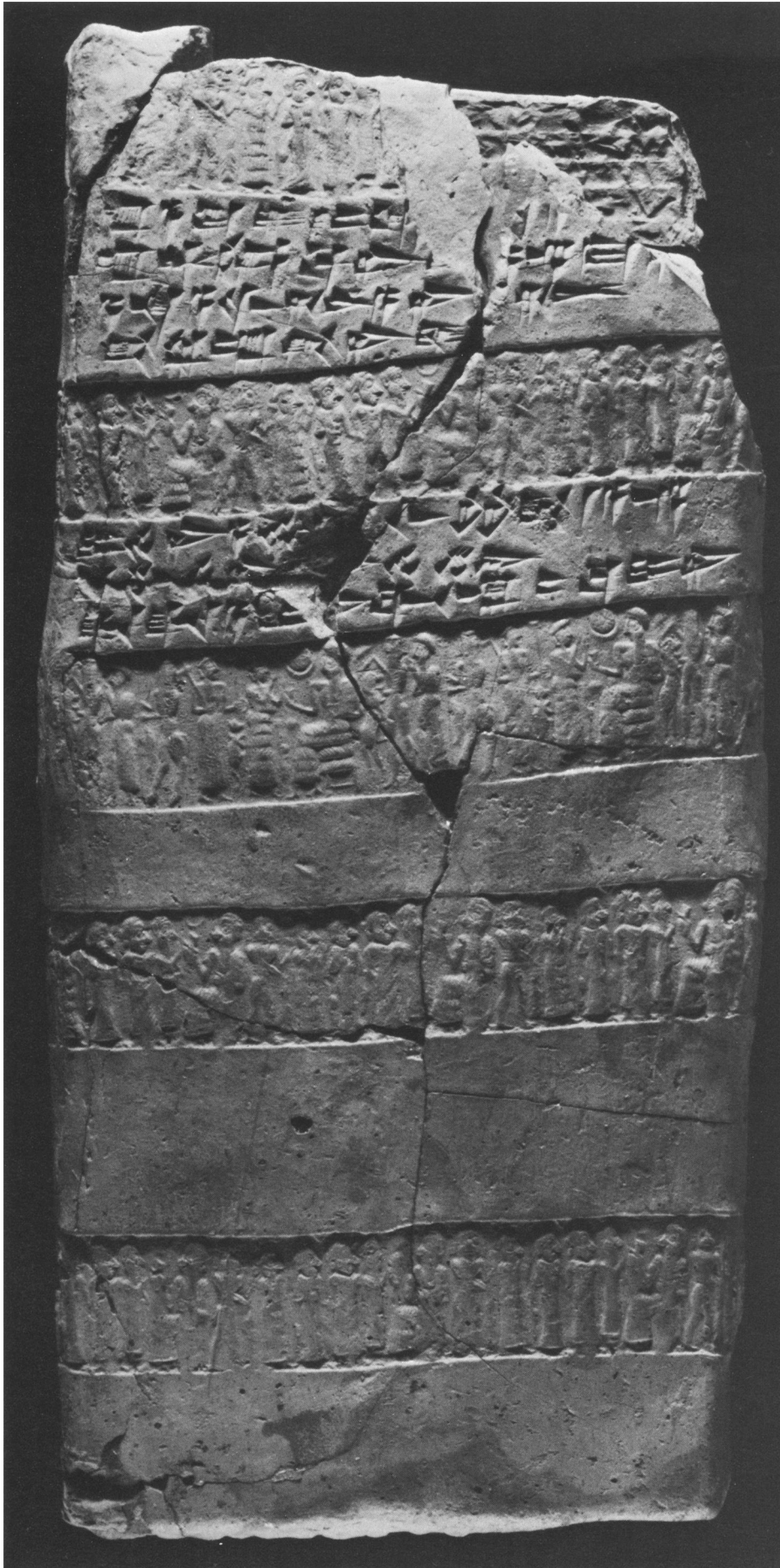
representing the sounds of the Sumerian language.

Cuneiform was adopted by other cultures, and its use quickly spread throughout the Near East. The early Elamites, who lived to the east of Mesopotamia (in the area of modern-day Iran), and various groups of Semitic-speaking peoples, who dwelt along the Tigris and Euphrates, also used cuneiform signs in their writing. By the second millennium B.C., cuneiform writing was widely used by many cultures in the Near East. Later the Urartians, in the northernmost parts of Mesopotamia, also used cuneiform, which can be seen on the band above the second arcade on the Urartian bell (fig. 74) inscribed with the king's name, Argishti.

Hundreds of thousands of cuneiform tablets have been excavated in the Near East, while countless others still lie buried beneath the rubble of ancient, unexcavated cities. The Museum has over five

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hundred texts and inscriptions dating from early Sumerian times (ca. 2800 B.C.) until the first century A.D.

Most Mesopotamian tablets are records of commercial, legal, or administrative activities. One of the earliest Mesopotamian legal documents in the Museum's collection is a small Sumerian stone stele (fig. 71), probably from the É-nun Temple of the god Shara at Umma. The stele has been interpreted as either a record of the purchase of properties and commodities by the priest Ushumgal or as a record of his bequest of these properties and commodities to various people, including his daughter.

The clay envelope of a tablet (fig. 73) dates to the Old Assyrian Colony period in Anatolia (1920–1750 B.C.). The actual tablet contained in the envelope is a legal deposition regarding theft, sworn in a court of law. The clay envelope is impressed on each side (here the obverse) five times with two different cylinder seals.

Records and inscriptions also commemorated royal achievements, such as the building of a palace, or extolled military victories. The rim of the Achaemenid gold bowl (fig. 72) is inscribed "Darius, the great king" in Old Persian, Elamite, and Neo-Babylonian.

The written record from the ancient Near East is extensive. The documents provide information needed to understand the political, economic, social, legal, intellectual, and religious traditions of mankind's first civilizations. I.S.



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Seals were prized possessions in the ancient Near East and served as propitious amulets for their owners. They were impressed on the clay that sealed doors, storage jars, and bales of commodities as well as on clay tablets and envelopes (fig. 73). They are miniature works of art carved with designs whose style and iconography vary with period and region. Seals first appeared in northern Syria and Anatolia during the late sixth millennium B.C. in the form of stamps. In Mesopotamia, from the mid-fourth millennium until the first millennium B.C., the cylinder was the preferred shape.

The cylinder seal (fig. 75) depicting women with their hair in pigtails was excavated in the Inanna Temple at Nippur. Similar seals with pigtailed figures of the late Uruk and Jemdet Nasr periods (ca. 3200–2900 B.C.) have been found at sites from Egypt to Iran.

The Akkadian period (2334–2154 B.C.) produced some of the most beautiful and

iconographically varied seals in the ancient Near East. The lapis-lazuli seal (fig. 76) depicts the struggle of a nude hero and his allies, bull-men, to protect the herd animals from lions.

Many seals of the Third Dynasty of Ur through the Old Babylonian period (2112–1595 B.C.) show scenes of presentation and worship. On an amethyst example (fig. 77) are a male figure with a mace and a suppliant goddess, both of whom are represented on many contemporary seals in virtually the same manner. The ownership of the seal is indicated by the inscription: "Nur Shamaš, comptroller in the palace, son of Dummuqum, servant of Rimsin [king of Larsa]."

The carnelian seal (fig. 78) with a design of two lion-griffins attacking a mountain goat belongs to the Middle Assyrian period (1350–1000 B.C.), when a naturalistic style was favored. The rest of the design includes a bird, a star, and

a thistlelike flower. Landscape elements were frequently depicted on seals of this period.

The seventh-century B.C. Neo-Assyrian seal (fig. 79) was found in the Nabu Temple at Nimrud. Seals were frequently deposited as offerings in temples, which were also centers of economic activity.

From the Neo-Assyrian period (883–612 B.C.) stamps began to be used along with cylinders. This was apparently due to the adoption in Mesopotamia of the Aramaic script, written on papyrus or leather that was sealed with small clay docketets, more easily impressed with a stamp. In the Neo-Babylonian period (625–539 B.C.) symbols of gods were a major part of the seal design. The example below (fig. 80) is engraved with a male worshiper standing before an altar surmounted by a spade, symbol of Marduk, chief god of the Babylonian pantheon, and the stylus of Nabu, god of writing. B.A.P.



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	Mesopotamia (South)	Mesopotamia (North)	Iran	Levant	Anatolia	Egypt	
3500 B.C.	Uruk 3500–3100		Proto-Urban Susa II	Chalcolithic			3500 B.C.
3000 B.C.	Jemdet Nasr 3100–2900		Proto-Elamite Susa III			Archaic 3100–2686	3000 B.C.
	Early Dynastic I–IIIa 2900–2500		Sumero-Elamite Susa IV	Early Bronze	Troy II	Old Kingdom 2636–2160	
2500 B.C.	Early Dynastic IIIb 2500–2334 Akkad Dynasty 2334–2154 Neo-Sumerian period Gudea of Lagash 2144–2124 Third Dynasty of Ur 2112–2004		Akkad suzerainty in Susa Old Elamite		Alaca Hüyük royal tombs	First Intermediate 2160–2060	2500 B.C.
2000 B.C.	Isin-Larsa period 2017–1763 Old Babylonian period 1894–1595 Hammurabi 1792–1750	Old Assyrian period		Middle Bronze	Assyrian Colony period 1920–1750 Old Hittite Empire 1650–1400	Middle Kingdom 2060–1786 Second Intermediate 1786–1570 Hyksos 1667–1559	2000 B.C.
1500 B.C.	Kassite Dynasty 1595–1157	Mitannian Empire 1600–1350		Late Bronze	Hittite Empire 1400–1200	New Kingdom 1570–1085	1500 B.C.
	Second Dynasty of Isin 1156–1025	Middle Assyrian period 1350–1000	Middle Elamite Iron I	Destruction of Ugarit by Sea Peoples			
1000 B.C.		Neo-Assyrian Empire 883–612	Hasanlu IV ca. 1200–800 Neo-Elamite Median Empire	Iron Age Kingdoms of Israel and Judah Phoenicians	Neo-Hittite and Aramaean states Urartian Kingdom 850–600 Phrygian Kingdom 775–690	Third Intermediate 1085–656 Late Dynastic 656–332	1000 B.C.
500 B.C.			Achaemenid Empire 550–331				500 B.C.
	Alexander the Great 331–323 Capture of Babylon 331 Seleucid Empire		Seleucid Empire	Alexander the Great Capture of Tyre 332 Antigonid and Seleucid Empires		Macedonian period 332–305 Ptolemaic period 305–30	
0 B.C./A.D.	Parthian period 200 B.C.–A.D. 224 Sasanian Empire 226–651		Parthian period Sasanian Empire	Roman period Byzantine Empire	Roman period Byzantine Empire	Roman period 30 B.C.–A.D. 325 Coptic period 325–641	0 B.C./A.D.
500 A.D.							500 A.D.

CREDITS

Front cover: Stag vessel. Silver with gold inlay. Anatolia, Hittite, Empire period, 15th–13th century B.C. L. 6¹/₁₆ in. (17 cm.), H. 7¹/₁₆ in. (18 cm.). Lent by Norbert Schimmel (L. 1983.119.1)

Back cover: Detail of frieze on the stag vessel depicted on front cover showing a male god standing on a stag and facing a man who is pouring liquid from a spouted vessel.

Inside front cover: Relief with two registers of sacred tree attended by divinities. Alabaster. Northern Mesopotamia, Nimrud, Northwest Palace of Assurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.), Neo-Assyrian period. H. 89³/₁₆ in. (227.9 cm.), W. 83 in. (210.8 cm.). Gift of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 1932 (32.143.3)

Inside back cover: Relief of bird-headed divinity. Alabaster. Northern Mesopotamia, Nimrud, Northwest Palace of Assurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.), Neo-Assyrian period. H. 90⁹/₁₆ in. (230.2 cm.), W. 71³/₁₆ in. (181.3 cm.). Gift of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 1931 (31.72.3)

1. Head of a dignitary. Arsenical copper. Western Asia, late 3rd millennium B.C. H. 13¹/₂ in. (34.3 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1947 (47.100.80)

2. Seated statue of Gudea. Diorite. Southern Mesopotamia, probably Tello, Neo-Sumerian period, 2144–2124 B.C. H. 17¹/₁₆ in. (44 cm.). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1959 (59.2)

3. Relief of king and attendant. Alabaster. Northern Mesopotamia, Nimrud, Northwest Palace of Assurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.), Neo-Assyrian period. H. 92 in. (233.7 cm.), W. 90¹/₄ in. (229.2 cm.). Gift of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 1932 (32.143.4)

4. Cylinder seal and modern impression. Chalcedony. Iran, Achaemenid period, 550–450 B.C. H. ⁷/₁₆ in. (2.2 cm.), Diam. ⁷/₁₆ in. (1.1 cm.). Collection of Mrs. William H. Moore, Lent by Rt. Rev. Paul Moore, Jr. (L. 55.49.126)

5. Head of a king. Silver, with mercury gilding. Iran, Sasanian period, A.D. 4th century. H. 15³/₄ in. (40 cm.). Fletcher Fund, 1965 (65.126)

6. Bull head. Limestone. Southern Iran, Persepolis, Achaemenid period, ca. 5th century B.C. H. 18¹/₂ in. (47 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1947 (47.100.83)

7. Statuette of man carrying box on head. Arsenical copper. Mesopotamia, Sumerian, Early Dynastic II period, 2750–2600 B.C. H. 14¹/₈ in. (37.8 cm.). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1955 (55.142)

8. Male head used as a spout. Ceramic, originally glazed. Iran, Parthian period, ca. A.D. 1st–2nd century. H. 8¹/₄ in. (20.9 cm.). Gift of Walter Hauser, 1956 (56.56)

9. Panel with striding lion. Glazed brick. Southern Mesopotamia, Babylon, Processional Way, Neo-Babylonian period, reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 B.C.). W. 89¹/₂ in. (227.3 cm.), H.

38¹/₄ in. (97.2 cm.). Fletcher Fund, by exchange, 1931 (31.13.2)

10. Ewer. Gold. North-central Anatolia, late 3rd millennium B.C. H. 7 in. (17.8 cm.), Diam. 4³/₄ in. (12.1 cm.). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1957 (57.67)

11. Oval bowl. Silver with mercury gilding. Iran, Sasanian period, A.D. 6th–7th century. L. 9⁹/₁₆ in. (23.3 cm.), W. 4³/₈ in. (11.1 cm.). Fletcher Fund, 1959 (59.130.1)

12. Vessel in shape of horse's head. Silver with gold foil. Iran, Achaemenid period, ca. 5th century B.C. L. 8¹/₁₆ in. (20.4 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1947 (47.100.87)

13. Rhyton with forepart of a panther. Silver with mercury gilding. Iran, Parthian period, ca. 1st century B.C. H. 10⁵/₁₆ in. (27.5 cm.). Purchase, Rogers Fund, Enid A. Haupt, Mrs. Donald M. Oenslager, Mrs. Muriel Palitz, and Geert C. E. Prins Gifts; Pauline V. Fullerton Bequest; and Bequests of Mary Cushing Fosburgh, Edward C. Moore, and Stephen Whitney Phoenix, by exchange, 1979 (1979.447)

14. Vessel with forepart of a lion. Gold. Iran, Achaemenid period, ca. 5th century B.C. H. 6³/₄ in. (17.1 cm.). Fletcher Fund, 1954 (54.3.3)

15. Relief with cavalymen in the mountains. Alabaster. Northern Mesopotamia, Nineveh, Palace of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.), Neo-Assyrian period. H. 22 in. (55.9 cm.), W. 34 in. (86.4 cm.). Gift of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 1932 (32.143.16)

16. Sword. Iron with carnelian inlays. Iran, Luristan, ca. 750–650 B.C. H. 1 3/4 in. (50.1 cm.). Gift of H. Dunscombe Colt, 1961 (61.62)
17. Detail of sword hilt and scabbard. Gold over wood with garnet and glass paste jewels and gilt-bronze guard. Iran, Sasanian period, ca. A.D. 7th century. Full l. 39 1/2 in. (100.3 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1965 (65.28)
18. Cylinder seal and modern impression. Yellow chert. Mesopotamia, Neo-Assyrian period, ca. 9th–8th century B.C. H. 1 1/16 in. (3.7 cm.), Diam. 5/8 in. (1.6 cm.). Gift of Matilda W. Bruce, 1907 (07.155.1)
19. Necklace with pendants. Gold. Southern Mesopotamia, ca. 19th–18th century B.C. L. 16 1/16 in. (43 cm.). Fletcher Fund, 1947 (47.1a–h)
20. Helmet. Bronze with gold and silver foil over bitumen. Southwestern Iran, Elamite, ca. 1300 B.C. H. 6 1/2 in. (16.5 cm.), W. 8 1/16 in. (22.1 cm.). Fletcher Fund, 1963 (63.74)
21. Standing male figure. Gypsum. Southern Mesopotamia, Tell Asmar, Square Temple, Shrine II, Sumerian, Early Dynastic II period, 2750–2600 B.C. H. 11 1/4 in. (29.5 cm.). Fletcher Fund, by exchange, 1940 (40.156)
22. Cult vessel in shape of a tower. Ceramic. Syria (?), ca. 19th century B.C. H. 12 1/2 in. (31.4 cm.), W. 3 1/4 in. (8.3 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1968 (68.155)
23. Kneeling bull holding vessel. Silver. Southwestern Iran, Proto-Elamite period, ca. 2900 B.C. H. 6 7/16 in. (16.3 cm.), W. 2 1/2 in. (6.3 cm.). Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1966 (66.173)
24. Pendant of seated goddess holding child. Gold. Anatolia, Hittite, Empire period, 15th–13th century B.C. H. 1 1/16 in. (4.3 cm.). Lent by Norbert Schimmel (L.1983.119.3).
25. Female figure. Ceramic. Iran, ca. 900 B.C. H. 12 1/16 in. (31.3 cm.), W. 6 1/4 in. (15.9 cm.). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1964 (64.130)
26. Ewer. Silver with mercury gilding. Iran, Sasanian period, ca. A.D. 6th–7th century. H. 13 3/8 in. (34 cm.). Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. C. Douglas Dillon Gift and Rogers Fund, 1967 (67.10)
27. Cylinder seal and modern impression. Hematite. Mesopotamia, Old Babylonian period, ca. 1850–1700 B.C. H. 1 1/16 in. (2.7 cm.), Diam. 9/16 in. (1.4 cm.). Collection of Mrs. William H. Moore, Lent by Rt. Rev. Paul Moore, Jr. (L.55.49.180).
28. Shaft-hole axe. Silver with gold foil. Northern Afghanistan, ca. 2000–1750 B.C. L. 5 1/8 in. (15 cm.). Purchase, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, James N. Spear and Schimmel Foundation Inc. Gifts, 1982 (1982.5)
29. Furniture ornament of female sphinx. Ivory. Anatolia, Acemhöyük, ca. 19th century B.C. H. 5 in. (12.7 cm.), W. 1 1/2 in. (3.8 cm.). Gift of Mrs. George D. Pratt, in memory of George D. Pratt, 1936 (36.70.8)
30. Cylinder seal and modern impression. Metadiorite. Mesopotamia, Akkadian period, 2334–2154 B.C. H. 1 1/4 in. (3.2 cm.), Diam. 1 1/16 in. (1.7 cm.). Gift of Walter Hauser, 1955 (55.65.5)
31. Ornament with confronted leonine creatures. Gold. Iran, Achaemenid period, ca. 6th–5th century B.C. H. 5 3/8 in. (13.6 cm.), W. 3 3/8 in. (9.8 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1954 (54.3.2)
32. Standard with two long-horned bulls. Arsenical copper. North-central Anatolia, reportedly from Horoztepe. Early Bronze Age period, 2300–2000 B.C. H. 6 1/4 in. (15.9 cm.), W. 5 3/4 in. (14.6 cm.). Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1955 (55.137.5)
33. Panel with bull hunt. Ivory. Northwestern Iran, reportedly from Ziwiye, ca. 8th–7th century B.C. H. 2 1/4 in. (5.7 cm.), W. 6 3/16 in. (15.8 cm.). Fletcher Fund, 1951 (51.131.5)
34. Cup with four gazelles. Gold. Northwestern Iran, ca. 1000 B.C. H. to rim 2 1/2 in. (6.3 cm.), Diam. of rim 3 3/8 in. (8.5 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1962 (62.84)
35. Foundation peg with lion. Bronze. Northern Syria or Mesopotamia, Hurrian, ca. 2200 B.C. H. 4 3/8 in. (11.7 cm.), W. 3 1/8 in. (7.9 cm.). Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1948 (48.180)
36. Recumbent mouflon. Marble. Indus Valley, ca. 2500–2000 B.C. L. 11 1/16 in. (28 cm.). Anonymous Gift and Rogers Fund, 1978 (1978.58)
37. Cylinder seal and modern impression. Serpentine. Mesopotamia, Akkadian period, 2334–2154 B.C. H. 1 1/8 in. (2.8 cm.), Diam. 1 1/16 in. (1.8 cm.). Bequest of W. Gedney Beatty, 1941 (41.160.192)
38. Plaque with goat. Ivory. Northern Mesopotamia, Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, Neo-Assyrian period, ca. 8th century B.C. H. 6 5/16 in. (16 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1961 (61.197.6)
39. Vase. Chlorite. Mesopotamia or Iran, Early Dynastic II/III period, 2750–2334 B.C. H. 9 1/4 in. (23.5 cm.). Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.106)
40. Beaker. Silver. Lower Danube region, Thracian, ca. 4th century B.C. H. 7 3/8 in. (18.7 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1947 (47.100.88)
41. Griffin dress ornaments. Gold. Northern Black Sea region, reportedly from Maikop, Scythian, ca. 5th century B.C. H. 1 in. (2.5 cm.). Fletcher Fund, 1924 (24.97.50, 51)
42. Boar clasp. Gold on bone core with silver backing. Scythian, ca. 500 B.C. L. 2 3/4 in. (7 cm.), H. 1 1/8 in. (3.5 cm.). Gift of Christos G. Bastis, 1979 (1979.352.1)
43. Belt clasp. Bronze. Caucasus, ca. A.D. 1st–3rd century. L. 6 in. (15.2 cm.), H. 5 3/4 in. (14.6 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1921 (21.166.7)
44. Deep sounding in the Inanna Temple at Nippur showing the workmen uncovering Uruk period levels. This view was taken during the 1960–61 season of the Joint Expedition to Nippur of the Oriental Institute and the American Schools of Oriental Research, Baghdad. (Photograph: Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)
45. Foundation figurine. Copper. Southern Mesopotamia, Nippur, Inanna Temple, Neo-Sumerian period, Ur III dynasty, reign of Shulgi (2094–2047 B.C.). H. 12 3/16 in. (31.3 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1959 (59.41.1)
46. Stand. Bronze. Iran, Qasr-i Abu Nasr, Sasanian period, ca. A.D. 6th–7th century. H. 16 1/2 in. (41.9 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1934 (34.107.1)
47. Female head. Ivory. Northern Mesopotamia, Nimrud, Burnt Palace, Neo-Assyrian period, ca. 8th century B.C. H. 2 in. (5 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1952 (52.23.3)
48. Figure of a tribute bearer. Ivory. Northern Mesopotamia, Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, Neo-Assyrian period, ca. 8th century B.C. H. 5 5/16 in. (13.5 cm.), W. 2 1/16 in. (7.2 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1960 (60.145.11)
49. Aerial photograph of the central mound of Hasanlu in northwestern Iran as seen from the southwest taken during the 1962 season. (Photograph: University Museum, University of Pennsylvania)
50. Lion-shaped pin. Bronze, iron. Northwestern Iran, Hasanlu, Citadel, Burned Building II, Gateway area, Level IV, 9th century B.C. L. 5 in. (12.7 cm.), H. 1 1/2 in. (3.8 cm.). Mrs. Constantine Sidamon-Eristoff Gift, 1961 (61.100.10)
51. View of Tepe Nush-i Jan in western Iran taken during the first season of excavations (1967). (Photograph: British Institute of Persian Studies)
52. Double spiral. Silver. Western Iran, Nush-i Jan, Median period, 7th century B.C. L. 2 in. (5.1 cm.), W. 1 1/8 in. (2.9 cm.). H. Dunscombe Colt Gift, 1969 (69.24.1)
53. Finial. Bronze. Iran, Luristan, ca. 8th century B.C. H. 3 3/8 in. (8.5 cm.), W. 1 3/4 in. (4.4 cm.). Gift of George D. Pratt, 1932 (32.161.20)
54. Pin. Bronze. Iran, Luristan, Surkh Dum, ca. 8th century B.C. L. 5 1/8 in. (14.3 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1943 (43.102.1)
55. Quiver plaque. Bronze. Iran, Luristan, ca. 8th–7th century B.C. L. 21 in. (53.3 cm.), W. 6 in. (15.3 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1941 (41.156)
56. Bit and cheekpieces for a horse. Bronze. Iran, Luristan, ca. 8th–7th century B.C.
a. H. 4 1/2 in. (11.5 cm.), W. 5 1/8 in. (13 cm.)
b. H. 4 3/8 in. (10.6 cm.), W. 5 1/8 in. (13 cm.)
c. L. 8 1/2 in. (21.5 cm.) [mouthpiece].
Bequest of Cora Timken Burnett, 1957 (57.51.40a–c)
57. Jar. Ceramic. Northeastern Iran, Türeg Tepe, ca. 1900 B.C. H. 8 1/2 in. (21.7 cm.), Diam. 6 1/4 in. (15.8 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1948 (48.98.24)
58. Jar. Ceramic. Central Iran, ca. 3100 B.C. H. 20 1/8 in. (53 cm.). Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1959 (59.52)
59. Jar. Glazed ceramic. Northwestern Iran, reportedly from Ziwiye, ca. 8th–7th century B.C. H. 17 1/4 in. (43.5 cm.), Diam. of rim 4 3/8 in. (11 cm.). Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1955 (55.121.2)
60. Vessel stand with ibex support. Arsenical copper with shell and lapis-lazuli inlay. Southern Mesopotamia, Sumerian, Early Dynastic III period, 2600–2334 B.C. H. 15 1/16 in. (40 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1974 (1974.190)
61. Antelope. Silver. Iran, Proto-Elamite period, ca. 2900 B.C. L. 4 in. (10.2 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1947 (47.100.89)
62. Vase. Bronze. Northwestern Iran, ca. 10th–9th century B.C. H. 13 1/16 in. (34.8 cm.), Diam. of rim 4 in. (10.2 cm.). Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1964 (64.257.1a)
63. Plate with Peroz or Kavad I hunting rams. Silver gilt with niello. Iran, Sasanian period, A.D. late 5th–early 6th century. H. 1 1/16 in. (4.3 cm.), Diam. 8 5/8 in. (21.9 cm.). Fletcher Fund, 1934 (34.33)
64. Plaque with friezes. Gold. Northwestern Iran, reportedly from Ziwiye, ca. 8th–7th century B.C. H. 8 3/8 in. (21.2 cm.), Max. w. 10 5/8 in. (27 cm.). Top fragment: Ann and George Blumenthal Fund, 1954 (54.3.5). Bottom fragment: Rogers Fund, 1962 (62.78.1a,b)
65. Necklace with Bes head and figured plaques. Gold. Iran, Achaemenid period, ca. 5th–4th century B.C. H. 1 1/16 in. (4 cm.), L. 14 1/8 in. (35.9 cm.). Dodge Fund, 1965 (65.169)
66. Headdress ornament. Gold, carnelian, and lapis lazuli. Southern Mesopotamia, Ur, Royal Cemetery, Grave 789, Sumerian, Early Dynastic IIIa period, 2600–2500 B.C. L. 15 3/16 in. (38.5 cm.). Ex coll.: The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania. Dodge Fund, 1933 (33.35.3)
67. Dress ornaments in shape of lion heads. Gold. Iran, Achaemenid period, ca. 5th–4th century B.C. H. 1 1/8 in. (4.7 cm.), W. 2 1/4 in. (5.7 cm.) and H. 2 in. (4.9 cm.), W. 2 3/8 in. (6 cm.) respectively. Gift of Khalil Rabenou, 1956 (56.154.1,2)
68. Relief with servants carrying food. Limestone. Southern Iran, Persepolis, Achaemenid period, ca. 4th century B.C. H. 34 1/16 in. (86.5 cm.), W. 25 1/2 in. (64.8 cm.). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1934 (34.158)
69. Statue of Ur-Ningirsu. Chlorite. Southern Mesopotamia, probably Tello, Neo-Sumerian period, ca. 2123–2119 B.C. H. 21 3/8 in. (55 cm.). Head: Rogers Fund, 1947 (47.100.86). Body: Lent by Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités Orientales (inv. A. O. 9504) (L.1984.1)
70. Cylinder seal and modern impression. Lapis lazuli. Mesopotamia, Kish, Early Akkadian period, ca. 2334–2278 B.C. H. 1 1/8 in. (2.8 cm.), Diam. 5/8 in. (1.6 cm.). Collection of Mrs. William H. Moore, Lent by Rt. Rev. Paul Moore, Jr. (L.55.49.17)
71. Stele of Ushumgal. Alabaster. Southern Mesopotamia, Sumerian, Early Dynastic I period, 2900–2750 B.C. H. 8 3/16 in. (22.4 cm.). Funds from various donors, 1958 (58.29)
72. Inscribed bowl. Gold. Iran, Achaemenid period, ca. 6th–5th century B.C. H. 4 1/2 in. (11.4 cm.), Diam. 7 3/4 in. (19.6 cm.). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1954 (54.3.1)
73. Envelope for tablet. Ceramic. Anatolia, Kültepe, Old Assyrian period, ca. 1900 B.C. Gr. h. 7 1/2 in. (19 cm.), D. 1 1/8 in. (2.8 cm.). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Klejman, 1966 (66.245.5b)
74. Inscribed bell. Bronze. Anatolia, Urartian, ca. 8th century B.C. H. 3 1/16 in. (8.7 cm.). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel Spear, Jr., 1977 (1977.186)
75. Cylinder seal and modern impression. Pink limestone. Mesopotamia, Nippur, Inanna Temple, Level XVB, Late Uruk-Jemdet Nasr period, ca. 3200–2900 B.C. H. 3/4 in. (2 cm.), Diam. 1 3/16 in. (2.1 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1962 (62.70.74)
76. Cylinder seal and modern impression. Lapis lazuli. Mesopotamia, Early Akkadian period, ca. 2334–2279 B.C. H. 1 1/2 in. (3.8 cm.), Diam. 7/8 in. (2.2 cm.). Collection of Mrs. William H. Moore, Lent by Rt. Rev. Paul Moore, Jr. (L.55.49.178)
77. Cylinder seal and modern impression. Amethyst. Mesopotamia, Isin-Larsa period, reign of Rimsin (1822–1763 B.C.). H. 1 1/8 in. (3.3 cm.), Diam. 1 1/16 in. (1.7 cm.). Bequest of Walter C. Baker, 1971 (1972.118.20)
78. Cylinder seal and modern impression. Carnelian. Mesopotamia, Middle Assyrian period, 14th–13th century B.C. H. 1 1/4 in. (3.2 cm.), Diam. 5/8 in. (1.1 cm.). Collection of Mrs. William H. Moore, Lent by Rt. Rev. Paul Moore, Jr. (L.55.49.90)
79. Cylinder seal and modern impression. Steatite. Mesopotamia, Nimrud, Nabu Temple, Neo-Assyrian period, ca. 8th–7th century B.C. H. 1 1/8 in. (3.5 cm.). Seal h. 1 1/16 in. (2.4 cm.). Rogers Fund, 1958 (57.27.8)
80. Stamp seal and modern impression. Gray chalcidony. Mesopotamia, Neo-Babylonian period, ca. 6th century B.C. L. 7/8 in. (2.2 cm.), W. 3/4 in. (1.8 cm.). Funds from various donors, 1893 (93.17.100)



