



From Ur to
Neo-Babylonian
Kingdoms

AP ART HISTORY

DR. FORD

Cultural Contexts of Ancient Mediterranean Arts

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

CUL-1

Cultural practices, belief systems, and physical setting constitute an important part of art and art making and are often communicated in various stylistic conventions and forms. Such cultural considerations may affect artistic decisions that include, but are not limited to, siting, subject matter, and modes of display, and may help to shape the creation of art in a given setting or within a given culture.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

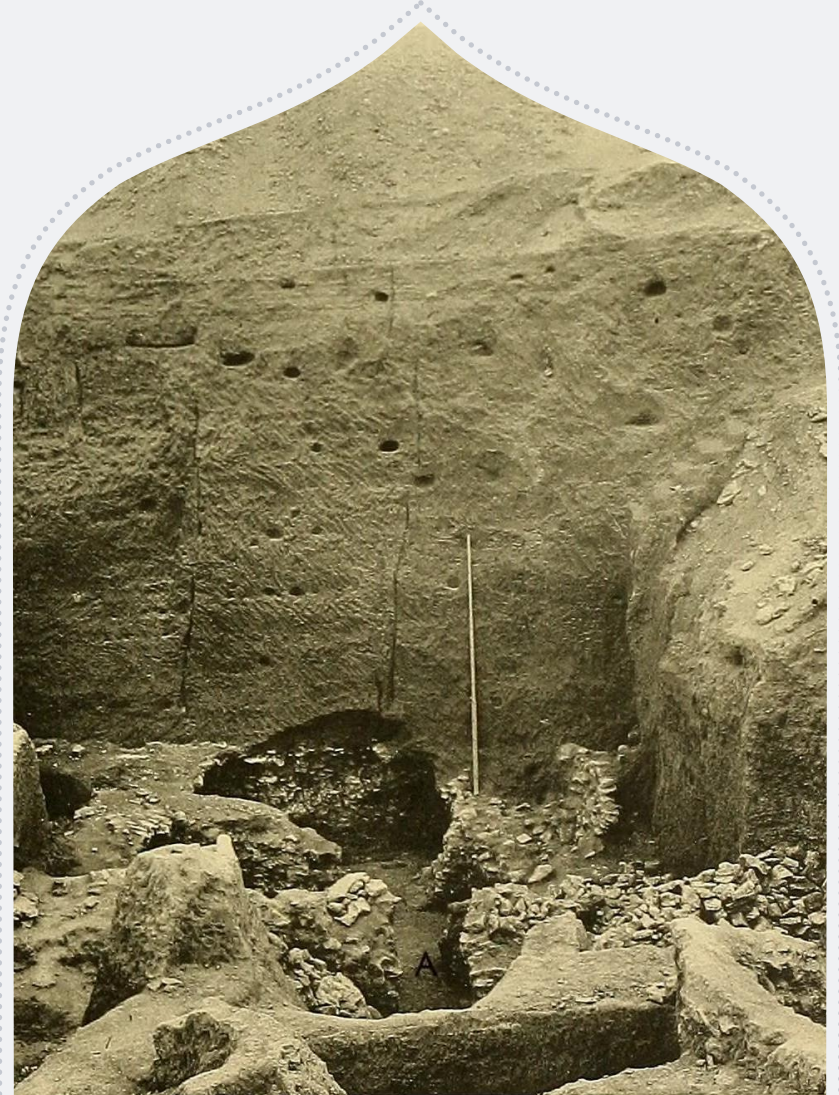
CUL-1.A

Explain how cultural practices, belief systems, and/or physical setting affect art and art making.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

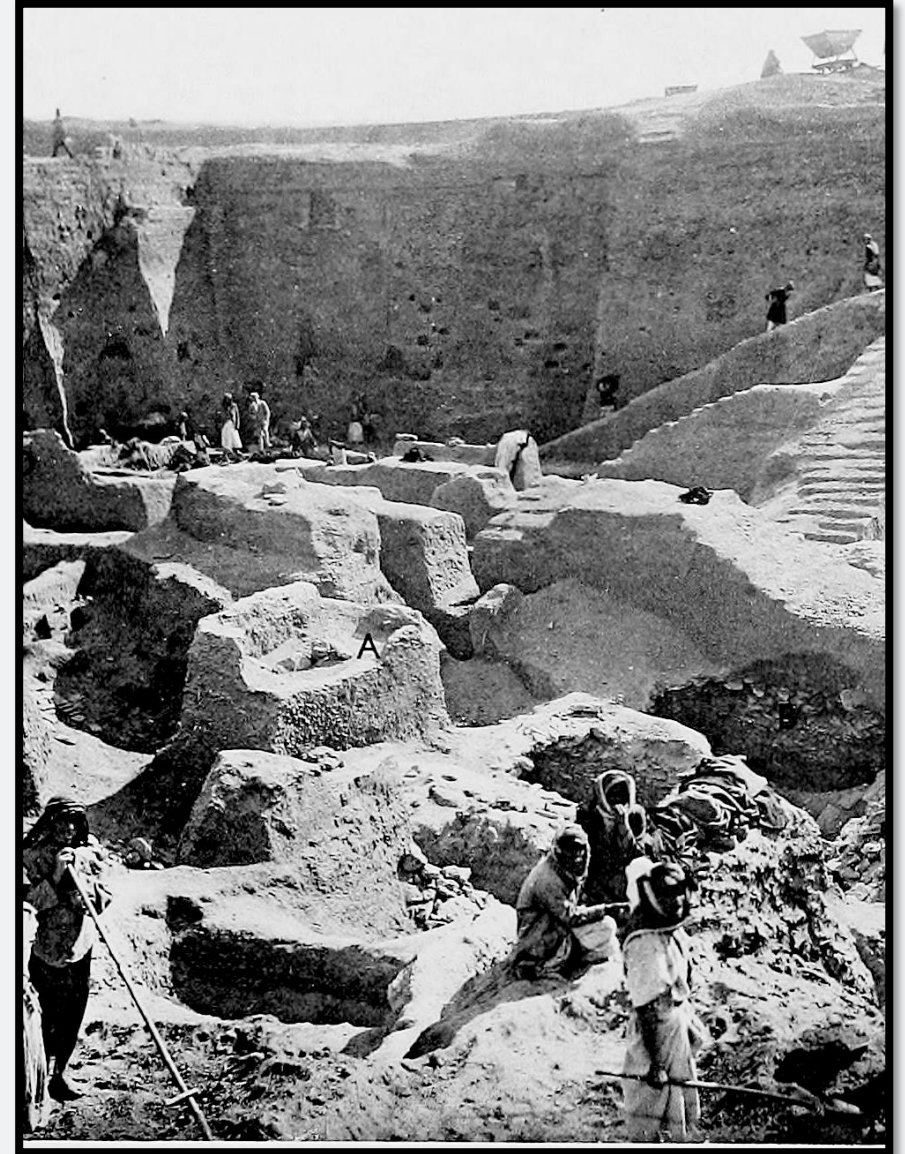
CUL-1.A.5

The art of the ancient Near East (present-day Iraq, Syria, Iran, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, and Cyprus, from 3500 to 330 BCE) is associated with successive city-states and cultural powers—Sumerian, Akkadian, Neo-Sumerian and Babylonian, Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian. Religion plays a significant role in the art and architecture of the ancient Near East, with cosmology guiding representation of deities and kings who themselves assume divine attributes.



The Standard of Ur

- What provided wealth to ancient Sumer?
Agriculture and trade!
- What provides evidence of this wealth? The burial grounds at the “Royal Cemetery” at Ur
Ur is noted in Judaic and Christian religious texts as the home of Abraham.
Scholars are still debating the nature of the tomb found at Ur – Is this a royal burial? Are the people simply aristocrats? Could the burials be of priests?
- What do we know? The individuals buried here are buried in a regal fashion.
- Read pgs. 36-38 The Standard of Ur



War and Peace on the Standard of Ur (Smarthistory)

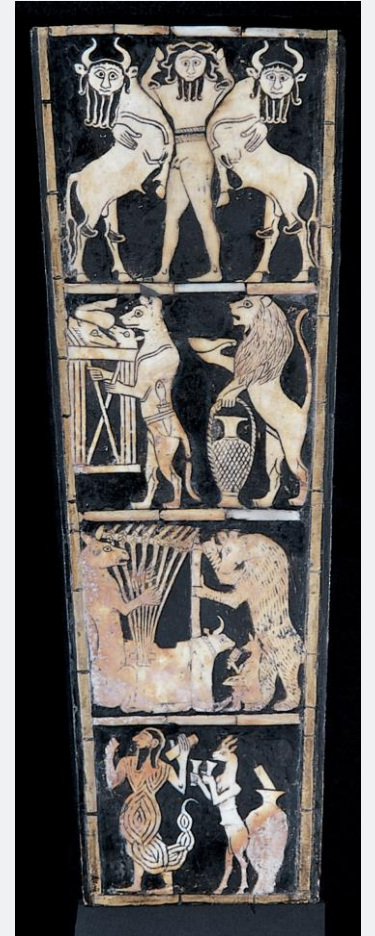


Why is it important that we attempt to understand what this work is revealing about the culture at Ur?

What causes us difficulties in truly “knowing” what this work is meant to reveal?

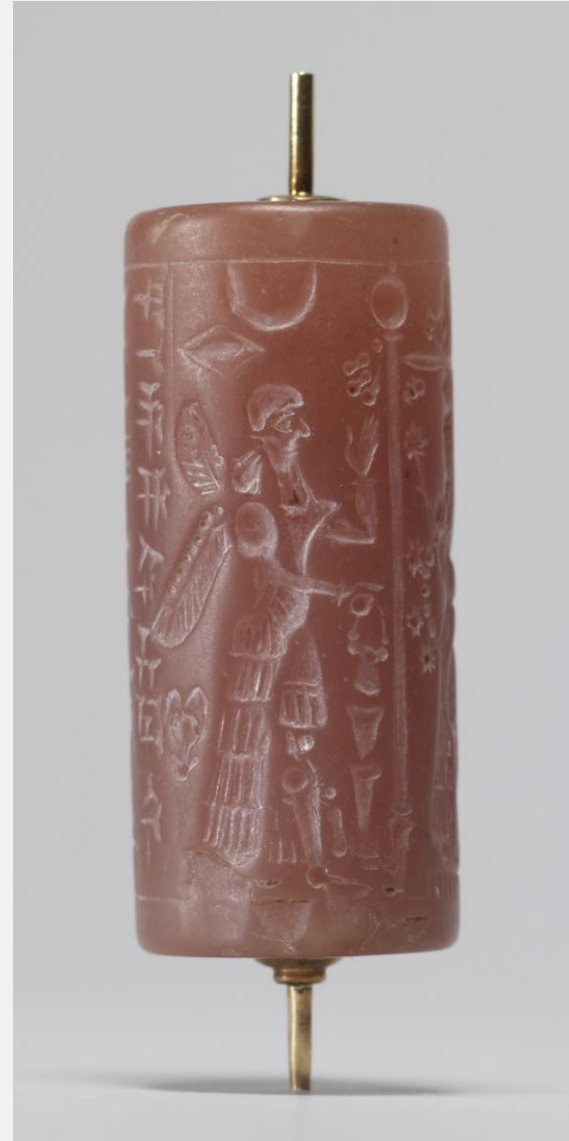
Bull-Headed Harps

- Music played a central role in the civilization at Ur – as noted by the musician on the *Standard of Ur*.
- Do we have evidence of what a musical instrument looked like in this city-state? YES!
- Within the tomb of “Queen” Pu-abi fragments of a harp were discovered.
- What is on this work?
A magnificent bull’s head made of gold leaf over a wood core.
The hair on the bull is made of lapis lazuli.
The soundbox is inlaid with shell with the figures established using heraldic composition.
- Read pg. 38-39 Bull-Headed Harps



The Importance of Cylinder Seals

- ♦ **Cylinder Seal:** A cylindrical piece of stone usually about an inch or so in height, decorated with an incised design, so that a raised pattern is left when the seal is rolled over soft clay.
- ♦ The images are always carved **intaglio**: an engraving or incised figure in stone or other hard material depressed below the surface so that an impression from the design yields an image in relief.
- ♦ These seals were used to provide information to the people.



Neo-Assyrian
Cylinder Seal
(Walters Art
Museum)

Why are these works important to Art Historians?



- Art Historians believe these seals are important/interesting because:
 1. The seals accurately reflect the artistic styles of a particular region.
 2. They offer important information concerning the development of artistic styles in the Ancient Near East.
 3. The iconography given in these works reflects the owner of the seal, and sometimes provides the name and rank of the owner.

The Akkadians

- **2332 BCE:** Sargon of Akkad dominated the region of Sumer.
- **Do we know where the city-state of Akkad was?** NO – but we think it was close to Babylon.
- **What do we know about this group?**

They were a semitic people who spoke a language related to Hebrew and Arabic.

Their language (Akkadian) was different from that of Sumer.

Sargon (“true king”) – introduced the new concept of an absolute ruler to the region.

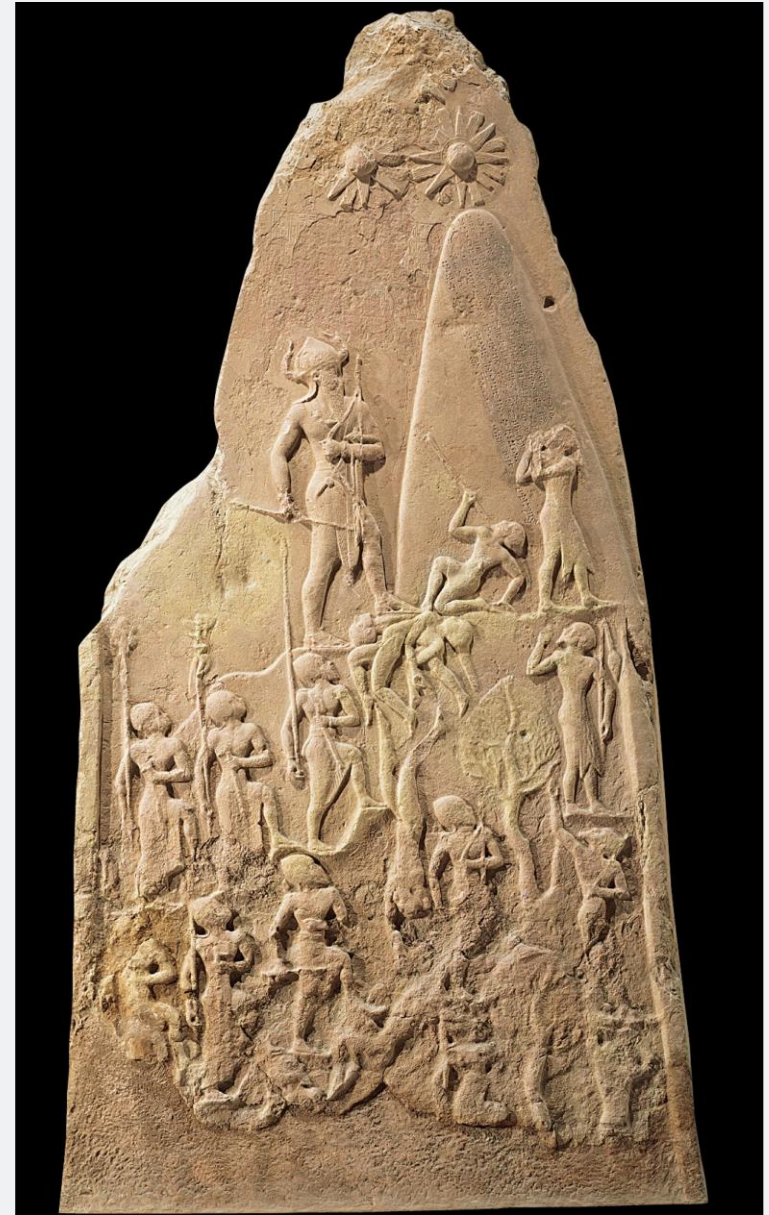
Loyalty was to the king over the city-state.

Sargon’s grandson – Naram-Sin regarded governors of his cities as royal servants.



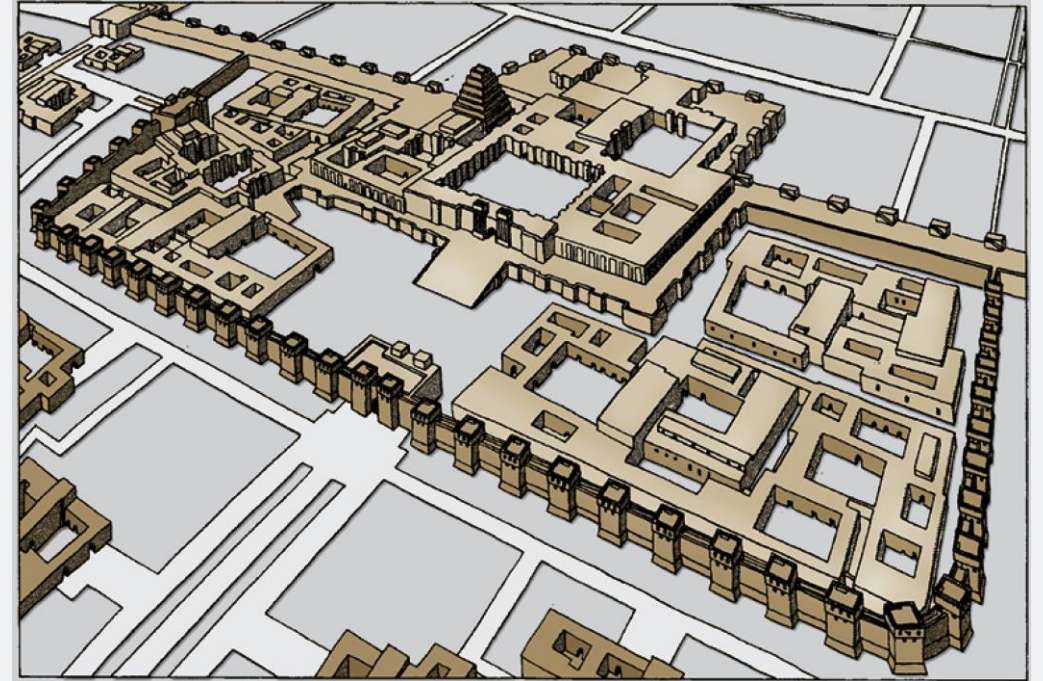
Stele of Naram-Sin

PLEASE READ PGS. 40-41
AKKADIAN PORTRAITURE
AND NARAM-SIN STELE



Assyria: The Palace of Sargon II

- Successive city-states continued to become powerful in this region.
- During the first half of the 1st millennium BCE, the Assyrians destroyed Babylon, the Hittites, and the Elamites (pg. 80: Thebes).
- Assyrian kings were viewed as merciless. Palaces were constructed as fortified citadels. Dur Sharrukin (the Citadel of Sargon II) reconstruction drawing provides a detailed understanding of palace structure.
This citadel (stronghold) was guarded by monstrous guardian figures (Lamassu).
- Read pgs. 46-48: Palace of Ashurnasirpal II through Ishtar Gate.



Lamassu

(Smarthistory)

