

CH. 2: ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART

“In Sumer, the foundations of religious structure emerged. Major natural forces were personified—treated, that is, as though they were human, but with enormously greater power, including the power of eternal life. Each such personified force or god took his or her place in a divine political society, ruled over by Anu, god of the sky. Each year the great gods met on New Year’s day to decide what would happen that year. The god lived in a house—the temple—and inhabited a cult statue. He or she had to be fed, amused, praised, etc. The descendents of Sumeria—the Greeks, Romans, Celts, Germans, and Slavs—continued to honor gods of sky, thunder, sun, moon, and the rest whose powers and character had first been deified by the speculations of ancient Sumerian priests. In Sumer, the wheel first rolled upon a grid work of city streets and cuneiform writing was first inscribed on clay. The Sumerians were not merely master architects and super hydraulic engineers; they were also the inventors of the military phalanx, a devastating and seemingly omnipotent weapon. From out of their imaginations came deep-sea merchants, formalized schools, epic poetry (The Epic of Gilgamesh), the arch, the city, traffic jams, pollution, and the world’s first great crisis in ecology. It was here, not Egypt, or Babylon, or Greece, or Rome, that men first codified rational laws to govern human behavior. They invented democracy, crude but recognizable, and the concept of empire, brutal and familiar.”

-J. Kraft

Define or identify the following terms:

1. Apadana
2. Barrel vault
3. Cella
4. Conventionalization
5. City-state
6. Cuneiform
7. Intaglio
8. Lamassu
9. Register
10. Repousse
11. Stele

12. Votive offering

13. Ziggurat

14. When and where was domestic agriculture thought to have begun and what was its importance for art history?

15. Mesopotamia means _____

16. Name the 2 rivers that designate the Mesopotamia area.

17. Sumer occupied what modern day country?

18. What are the characteristics of Sumerian religion?

19. List at least 3 stylistic conventions used by Sumerian artists.

a.

b.

c.

20. List 6 great contributions of Sumerian culture.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

20. What materials did the Sumerians use to construct their temples?

21. How did the ziggurat function?

22. What were its structural characteristics? How was it oriented? What is meant by the “bent axis” approach?

23. What is thought to be portrayed on the *Standard of Ur*?

24. How did the Akkadian political structure differ from the Mesopotamia?

25. What was a cylinder seal and how was it used?

26. The *Head of an Akkadian Ruler* combines both naturalism and formal abstract patterning. List 3 features that you are examples of each:

Naturalism:

Abstract Patterning:

a.

a.

b.

b.

c.

c.

27. What features of the *Stele of Naram-Sin* indicate his super-human status?

28. Gudea Worshipping from Telloh, Iraq

29. Gudea was a ruler from the city of _____.

30. There are about _____ (number) of statues of Gudea that have survived.

31. These statues of Gudea were placed in the _____ to render perpetual services.

32. What type of stone was used to carve Gudea? _____

33. What is the significance of this material?

34. Describe Gudea's physical appearance.
35. Why is the statue cylindrical or conical?
36. What is the significance of the *Stele of Hammurabi*?
37. What subjects were commonly portrayed in Assyrian reliefs?
38. Name 3 cultures that influenced the style of the *Palace at Persepolis* and its reliefs.
- a.
 - b.
 - c.
39. Name the Greek who burned the *Palace at Persepolis*. Why did he destroy it?
40. Who was Ishtar/Inanna? Goddess of _____ and _____
41. Name 3 animals found on the *Ishtar Gate* and what they symbolize.