What country(s) does this include?
Timeline

- Sumerian art: 3500-2332 BCE
- Akkadian art: 2332-2150 BCE
- Neo Sumerian & Babylonian: 2150-1600 BCE
- Assyrian art: 900-612 BCE
- Neo Babylonian & Persian art: 612-330 BCE
Ancient Near East

• Move into historic societies. Historic societies differ from prehistoric based on *written language, social organization, development in government, science and art, and the development of agriculture.*

• Covers modern day Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran and part of Turkey.

• The major civilizations were Mesopotamian: Sumer, Akkad, Babylonia, Assyria. Persia.
Gods & Goddesses of Mesopotamia

- **Anu** (Sumerian): god of the sky & the city Uruk
- **Enlil**: Anu’s son, lord of winds & earth
- **Inanna** (Sumerian): goddess of love & war. Later known as **Ishtar** (Assyrian/Babylonian)
- **Nanna/Sin**: moon god & chief deity of Ur
- **Utu/Shamash**: sun god, chief deity of Sippar
- **Marduk/Adad**: chief god of the Babylonians, god of storms
- **Ningirsu**: local god of Lagash & Girsu
- **Ashur**: local deity of Assur, chief deity of Assyrian gods, sometimes associated with Enlil.
White Temple and ziggurat, Uruk (modern Warka), Iraq, ca. 3200–3000 BCE.
Drawing of the White Temple

Reconstruction drawing of the White Temple and ziggurat, Uruk (modern Warka), Iraq, ca. 3200–3000 BCE.

If all we have are ruins, how are reconstructions/drawings created? Are they considered accurate?
Sumerians created a system of writing called *cuneiform* (wedge-like writing). Based on pictographs.
Female head (Inanna?), from Uruk (modern Warka), Iraq, ca. 3200–3000 BCE. Marble, 8” high. Iraq Museum, Baghdad.
Presentation of offerings to Inanna (Warka Vase), from Uruk (modern Warka), Iraq, ca. 3200–3000 BCE. Alabaster, 3’ 1/4” high. Iraq Museum, Baghdad.
Mesopotamian Religion, Mythology, Gods & Goddesses

• How are ancient Near Eastern ideas about religion different from Paleolithic and earlier Neolithic ideas?

• How does the visual representation of the human form evolve in ancient Near Eastern art? Does it retain any elements of the Paleolithic and earlier Neolithic periods?
Figure 2-6
Statuettes of two worshipers, from the Square Temple at Eshnunna (modern Tell Asmar), Iraq, ca. 2700 BCE. Gypsum inlaid with shell and black limestone, male figure 2’ 6” high. Iraq Museum, Baghdad.

How do we know these statuettes are of worshippers??

Why are their eyes so large?
From 1922 to 1934, an archaeologist named C. Leonard Woolley excavated the site of the ancient Sumerian city of Ur.

He made many great discoveries about the people who lived there.

Among the 1800 graves he discovered, there were 16 tombs which had very special and valuable objects in them. He called them the 'Royal tombs'.
The Standard of Ur

War side of the *Standard of Ur*, from Tomb 779, Royal Cemetery, Ur (modern Tell Muqayyar), Iraq, ca. 2600 BCE. Wood inlaid with shell, lapis lazuli, and red limestone, 8” x 1’ 7”. British Museum, London.
The Standard of Ur

Peace side of the Standard of Ur, from Tomb 779, Royal Cemetery, Ur (modern Tell Muqayyar), Iraq, ca. 2600 BCE. Wood inlaid with shell, lapis lazuli, and red limestone, 8” x 1’ 7”. British Museum, London.
Puabi’s tomb had been untouched by looters through the millennia.

The amount of grave goods that Woolley uncovered in Puabi's tomb was staggering: a magnificent, heavy, golden headdress made of golden leaves, rings, and plates; a lyre, complete with the golden and lapis-lazuli encrusted bearded bulls head; a profusion of gold silverware, golden, carnelian, and lapis lazuli cylindrical beads for extravagant necklaces and belts; a chariot adorned with lioness' heads in silver, and an abundance of silver, lapis lazuli, and golden rings and bracelets.
Bull-headed lyre (restored) from Tomb 789 (King Grave), Royal Cemetery, Ur (modern Tell Muqayyar), Iraq, ca. 2600 BCE. Lyre: Gold leaf and lapis lazuli over a wooden core, 5’ 5” high. British Museum, London

**similar lyre found in Tomb 800, (Queen Puabi)**
Royal Cemetery at Ur

• The Royal Cemetery at Ur provides unparalleled insights into early Mesopotamian elite funerary customs. But, what exactly does it tell us?

WASHINGTON TIMES HERALD, APRIL 14, 1923.

RUINS OF ANCIENT UR REVEAL CIVILIZATION OLDER THAN THAT OF KING TUT-ANKH-AMEN

Today we are able to print an account of the explorations at Ur of the Chaldees, the City of Abraham, which was hoary in its antiquity even when Tut-Ankh-Amen sat on his throne at Thebes.

The fortunate accident that the peoples of Mesopotamia employed clay tablets for records and business transactions has saved thousands of documents which must have vanished had the Mesopotamians used such a substance as paper which consuming zeal for archaeology. Some of his adventures are recorded in his book, "Live Men and Dead Cities." F. G. Newton, another member, completes the sectional plans and is an expert sketcher of specimens. Sydney Smith gives a glance at the brick cores taken from the foundations and will tell you immediately who built it, for what god, and on what occasion.

The brother of Col. Lawrence, of Arabian fame, is also with the

Washington Times Herald, April 14, 1923.
Banquet scene, cylinder seal (left) and its modern impression (right), from the tomb of Queen Puabi (tomb 800), Royal Cemetery, Ur (modern Tell Muqayyar), Iraq, ca. 2600 BCE. Lapis lazuli, 2” high. British Museum, London.
Head of an Akkadian ruler, from Nineveh (modern Kuyunjik), Iraq, ca. 2250–2200 BCE. Copper, 1’ 2 3/8” high. Iraq Museum, Baghdad.

Notice the texture on the beard. Is this a new technique?
Victory stele of Naram-Sin, from Susa, Iran, 2254–2218 BCE. Pink sandstone, 6’ 7” high. Louvre, Paris.

What is the subject of this stele?

Try to identify the figures/images.
Law Code of Hammurabi
written law code in 3,500 lines of cuneiform

Stele with law code of Hammurabi, from Susa, Iran, ca. 1780 BCE. Basalt, 7’ 4” high. Louvre, Paris.

Who was Hammurabi?

Explain the Law Code of Hammurabi? Was it influential in its time? In history?
Is it still influential today?

Babylonian – notice the continuing cultural traditions of the region
Hammurabi and Shamash, detail of the stele of Hammurabi, (fig. 2-17), from Susa, Iran, ca. 1780 BCE

Who is Shamash?

What is different about this scene?

Shamash – Horned helmet, Flaming shoulders
Lion Gate, Hattusa (modern Boghazköy), Turkey, ca. 1400 BCE.
Power & The Assyrians

• The Citadel of Sargon II is a palace complex, within a defensive wall surrounding a 50’ high royal citadel of 25 acres and 200 rooms.

• “I built a city with (the labor of) the peoples subdued by my hand…”

• There is a ziggurat with six separate sanctuaries for six gods over 6 stories, each of a different color, 18’ in height, along a spiral ramp.
Reconstruction drawing of the citadel of Sargon II, Dur Sharrukin (modern Khorsabad), Iraq, ca. 720–705 BCE (after Charles Altman).
**Lamassu**, from the citadel of Sargon II, Dur Sharrukin (modern Khorsabad), Iraq, ca. 720–705 BCE. Limestone, 13’ 10” high. Louvre, Paris.

What is a lamassu?
Ashurnasirpal II Palace, Nimrud
Royal Lion Hunting Scenes


Discuss the subject of this relief and what is symbolizes?

** Notice the Assyrian characteristic of emphasizing muscles to show power
(detail) Dying Lioness, detail, Palace of Ashurbanipal, Nineveh, ca 650 B.C.
Ishtar Gate (restored), Babylon, Iraq, ca. 575 BCE. Staatliche Museen, Berlin.

Discuss the message(s) expressed by the architecture of Babylon such as the Ishtar Gate.
military crenellations = merlons

arches
Dragon of Marduk: a snake's head, a lion's body and eagle's claws. (water, vegetation, judgment & magic)

Bull of Adad (storm-god)

Lions were sacred to the goddess Ishtar (fertility, love, sex & war)
Persian Power & Opulence

• This is the next gigantic empire of conquest, that by 440 BCE extended from Iran to Afghanistan in the south and west to Egypt and into Europe as far as the Balkans.

• We know of it best in European history for its inability to conquer the Greeks. We should see it as a tribute collecting military elite, not a centralized, law providing government.

• It was the conquest and partial expansion of this region’s elite that created the equal but much more transitory empire of Alexander
Originally a fortified palace complex, destroyed by Alexander – why?

Persepolis

Persepolis (apadana (audience hall) in the background), Iran, ca. 521–465 BCE.
Columns with animal protomes, from the apadana of the palace, Persepolis, Iran, ca. 521–465 BCE.

Protome – an adornment found in works of art in the form of a frontal view of an animal head. Found mostly in Ancient Art.
Processional frieze (detail) on the terrace of the apadana, Persepolis, Iran, ca. 521–465 BCE.

The walls of the platform show the main ritual that takes place in the Apadana, the annual delivery of tribute from the empire’s 27 vastly dispersed satrapies. We see a procession of the regents of each region, led by guards, in their national dress with their characteristic national commodities.

*Satrapy* - in ancient Persia, a province or territory governed by a governor.
The reliefs represent processions of royal guards, Persian nobles and dignitaries, and representatives from 23 subject nations bringing the king tribute.

They are bring gifts in exchange for art and ideas
Compare + Contrast

cia. 521–465 BCE

cia. 875–860 BCE
Overview

• The rise of civilization occurred when man gave up hunting and gathering for the more controlled, stable existence for farming and herding.

• The region of the Ancient Near East, Mesopotamia in particular, created a controlled, urban environment by mastering the plow and hoe and settling in one place.
  – This allowed for a more established, a more regulated and dependable existence.

• In Mesopotamia, organized religion, politics and society were also regulated.
Conclusion

• It is important to note the focus in the historical period has moved from animals to people.
• It is also important to note how styles are the result of cultures with traditions.
  – The figurative style here, like the writing signs, express a consistent set of patterns that can be and were learned and repeated generation after generation.
  – Such consistent style use comes from *cultural continuity of traditions*. It is not one artist copying another, but entire cultures accepting and perpetuating visual patterns as they do spoken ones (language) and lived ones too.
  – As late as the Apadana at Persepolis we have formal patterns of carving (repeated silhouettes marching in low relief) and symbolisms (winged horses & etc.) established thousands of years earlier, continuing to be used....