

Introduction to Art History

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From the Dawn of Civilization to the
Rituals of Death

Lecture 3

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, 21.59 x 49.5 x 12 cm British Museum, London.



Akkadian civilization – 2300 BC

Victory stele of Naram-Sin, from Susa,
Iran, 2254–2218 BCE. Pink sandstone,
Louvre, Paris.



Babylonian civilization – 1800 BC



Stele with law code of Hammurabi, from Susa, Iran, ca. 1780 BCE. Basalt, approx. 225 cm high. Louvre, Paris.



The Code of Hammurabi is a Babylonian legal text composed between 1755 and 1750 BC. It is the most extensive, systematic, and best-preserved legal document from the ancient Near East.



Assyrian civilization – 900 BC

Lamassu (winged, human-headed bull), from the citadel of Sargon II, Dur Sharrukin (modern Khorsabad), Iraq, ca. 720–705 BCE. Limestone, approx. 420 cm high. Louvre, Paris.





Digital reconstruction of the Northwest palace of Nimrud,
Metropolitan Museum

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VCldg1TdHc>



Mesopotamian Art

- Sumerian civilization – 4500 BC



- Akkadian civilization – 2300 BC



- Babylonian civilization – 1800 BC



- Assyrian civilization – 900 BC



Contemporary example influenced by Mesopotamian art



Zohar Gotesman, Disturbed Layer, 2022-24, Israel Museum

Ancient Egypt

- The Nile flows northward from east-central Africa to the Mediterranean Sea.
- Annual flooding deposits rich soil brought thousands of miles from the African hills.
- The Nile enters Egyptian culture as a symbol of life



Ancient Egypt

- The ancient kingdoms of Egypt were based around the Nile.
- In prehistoric times the land was divided into Lower Egypt and Upper Egypt



Upper
Egyptian
crown



Lower
Egyptian
crown

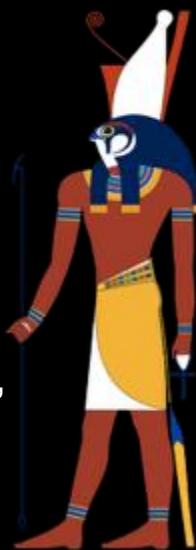


Some of the Important Deities

- Creation Myth:
The brothers Osiris and Seth were rivals.
- Seth murdered Osiris and dismembered. Osiris was reassembled by his wife Isis, and his body resurrected.
- The son of Osiris and Isis – is Horus, god of kingship and healing. He is represented with the head of a falcon



Ra –
sun god



Horus
God of
kingship,
healing,
sky god

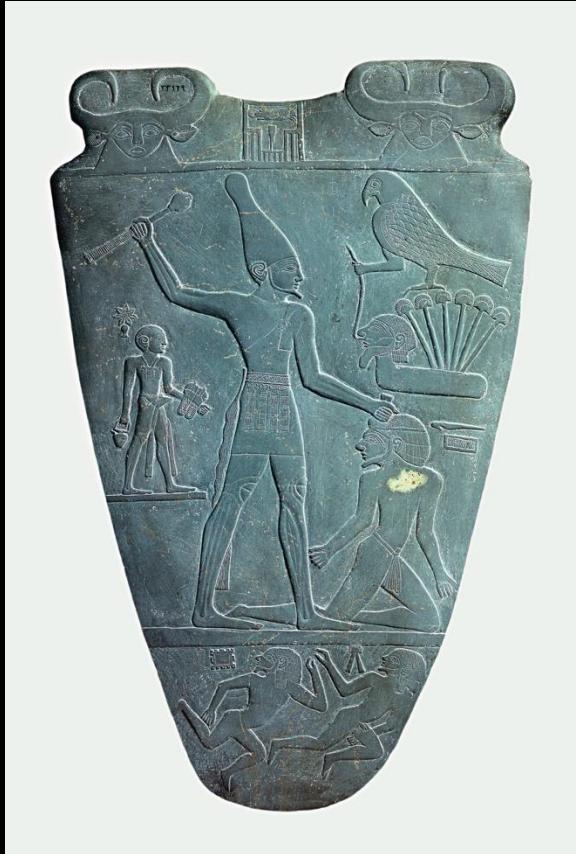


Osiris – god of
death,
resurrection
and the cycle
of the Nile

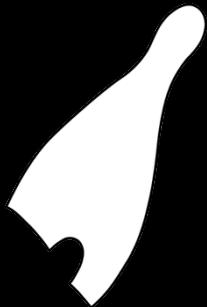


Set – god of
desert, storms,
disorder, chaos
and violence

Palette of King Narmer (left, back; right, front),
from Hierakonpolis, Egypt, Predynastic, ca.
3000–2920 BCE. Slate, Egyptian Museum,
Cairo.



- Ancient Egypt was united into one kingdom under the rule of King Narmer (sometimes called Menes)
- In the Narmer palette we see a celebratory relief of the unification



Upper Egypt crown



Horus
God of
kingship,
healing,
sky god



- Registers
- Hierarchical size



Victory stele of Naram-Sin, from Susa, Iran, 2254–2218 BCE



Lower
Egyptian
crown

