**A1379-ME-Mesopotamia-Sumeria-**Gudea-Foundation Nail-terracotta-2144–2124 BCE

  

**Formal Label: Mesopotamia-Sumeria-**Gudea-Foundation Nail-terracotta-2144–2124 BCE

**Accession Number:** PJ4070.A1

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**Display Description:**

Foundation nail dedicated by Gudea (r ca 2144–2124 BCE ) who named himself *ensi* or lord of plowland (but not *lu-gal* “man-big” or “big man”) of Lagash in S Mesopotamia. He became part of the royal house by marrying the daughter of the *lugal* of Lagash. Gudea built a temple to the city-god of Lagash [D](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dingir)[NIN](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NIN_%28cuneiform%29).[ĜIR2.SU](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Girsu) (Ningirsu) and that is the origin of this foundation nail that was placed in its walls as a dedication: "*For Ningirsu, the powerful hero of Enlil, his king, Gudea, prince of Lagash, accomplished what had to be; his temple of E-innu, the shining thunder-bird, he built and restored.*"

**Date or Time Horizon:** ca. 2144 - 2124 BCE

**Geographical Area:** Southern Mesopotamia

**Cultural Affiliation:** Sumerian

**Medium:** original, fired clay.

**Dimensions:** H 112.36 mm, 4.423 in; Dia 48.54 mm,1.911 in

**Weight:** 174 g, 6 1/8 oz

**Provenance:** old French collection

**Discussion:**

Ningirsu was a Sumero-Babylonian god of rain, irrigation, and fertility that evolved into Ninurta. He was the patron deity of the ancient Sumerian city of Girsu (Lagash) where king Gudea constructed a temple for him called the Eninnu. He had a field here where all sorts of plants flourished. He is a son of Enlil and a she-goat, and his consort is Baba. His name means "Lord of Girsu", and his symbol is the lion-headed eagle.

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