

## Arsitektur & Seni



Marble (granite) figure

More than 4,000 years ago the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers began to teem with life--first the Sumerian, then the Babylonian, Assyrian, Chaldean, and Persian empires. Here too excavations have unearthed evidence of great skill and artistry. From Sumeria have come examples of fine works in marble, diorite, hammered gold, and lapis lazuli.

Dating from about 2400 BC, they have the smooth perfection and idealized features of the classical period in Sumerian art.

Clay was the Sumerians' most abundant material. Stone, wood, and metal had to be imported.

Art was primarily used for religious purposes. Painting and sculpture was the main median used.

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This system of writing developed before the last centuries of the 4th millennium B.C. in the lower Tigris and Euphrates valley, most likely by the Sumerians. The characters consist of arrangements of wedge-like strokes, generally on clay tablets. The history of the script is strikingly like that of the Egyptian hieroglyphic.

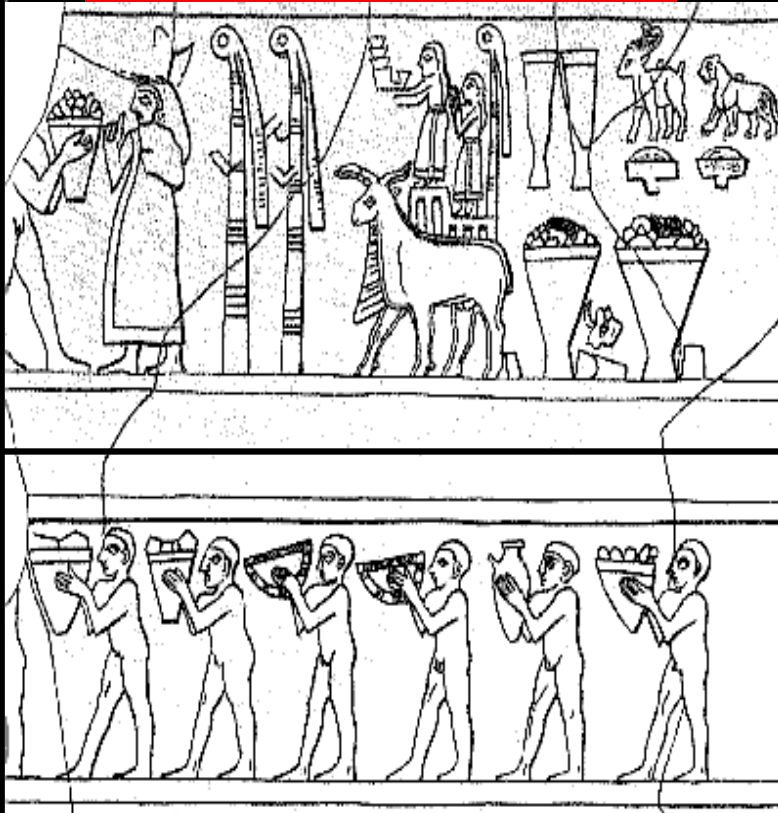
The famous votive stone/ marble sculptures from Tell Asmar represent tall, bearded figures with gigantic, staring eyes and long, pleated skirts.

**Enlarged eyes were found on many figure**  
The tallest figure is about 30 inches in height. He represents the god of vegetation. The next tallest represents a mother goddess-mother goddesses were common in many ancient cultures. They were worshipped in the hope that they would bring fertility to women and to crops. (Another connection to African culture.)



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The detailed drawing above was made from tracing a photograph (from Campbell, Shepsut) of the temple vase found at Uruk/Warka, dating from approximately 3100 BCE. It is over one meter (nearly 4 feet) tall.

On the upper tier is a figure of a nude man that may possibly represent the sacrificial king. He approaches the robed queen Inanna. Inanna wears a horned headdress.

The Queen of Heaven stands in front of two looped temple poles or "asherah," phallic posts, sacred to the goddess. A group of nude priests bring gifts of baskets of gifts, including, fruits to pay her homage on the lower tier. This vase is now at the Iraq Museum in Bagdad.

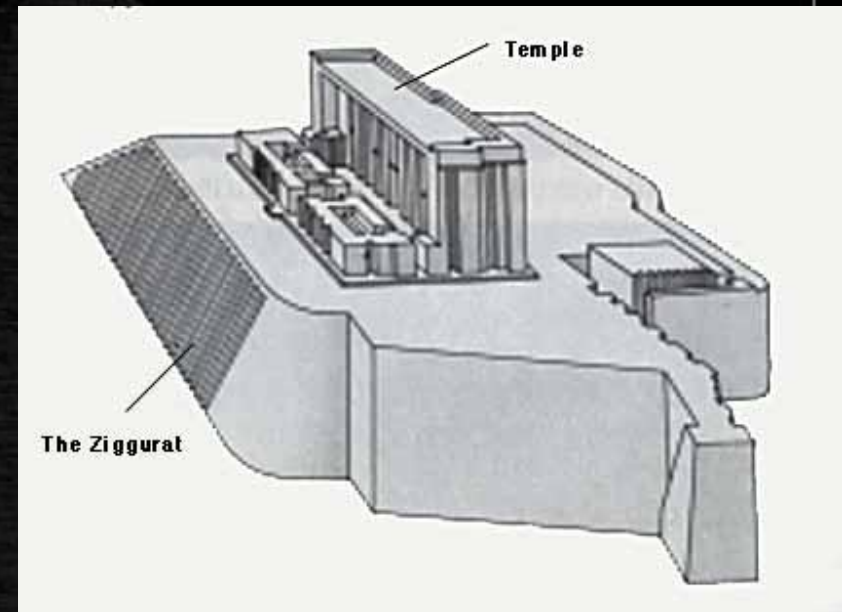
"The Warka Vase, is the oldest ritual vase in carved stone discovered in ancient Sumer and can be dated to round about 3000 B.C. or probably 4th-3rd millennium B.C. It shows men entering the presence of his gods, specifically a cult goddess Innin (Inanna), represented by two bundles of reeds placed side by side symbolizing the entrance to a temple.

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The Sumerian temple was a small brick house that the god was supposed to visit periodically. It was ornamented so as to recall the reed houses built by the earliest Sumerians in the valley. This house, however, was set on a brick platform, which became larger and taller as time progressed until the platform at Ur (built around 2100 BC) was 150 by 200 feet (45 by 60 meters) and 75 feet (23 meters) high. These Mesopotamian temple platforms are called ziggurats, a word derived from the Assyrian ziqquratu, meaning "high."

They were symbols in themselves; the ziggurat at Ur was planted with trees to make it represent a mountain. There the god visited Earth, and the priests climbed to its top to worship.

Most cities were simple in structure, the ziggurat was one of the world's first great architectural structures.



White Temple and Ziggurat, Uruk (Warka), 3200 -3000 B.C.

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This temple was erected at Warka or Uruk (Sumer), probably about 300 B.C. It stood on a brick terrace, formed by the construction of successive buildings on the site (the Ziggurat). The top was reached by a staircase. The temple measured 22 x 17 meters (73 x 57 feet). Access to the temple was through three doors, the main located at its southern side.





