

Periods of Art History I: from Prehistory to Trajan

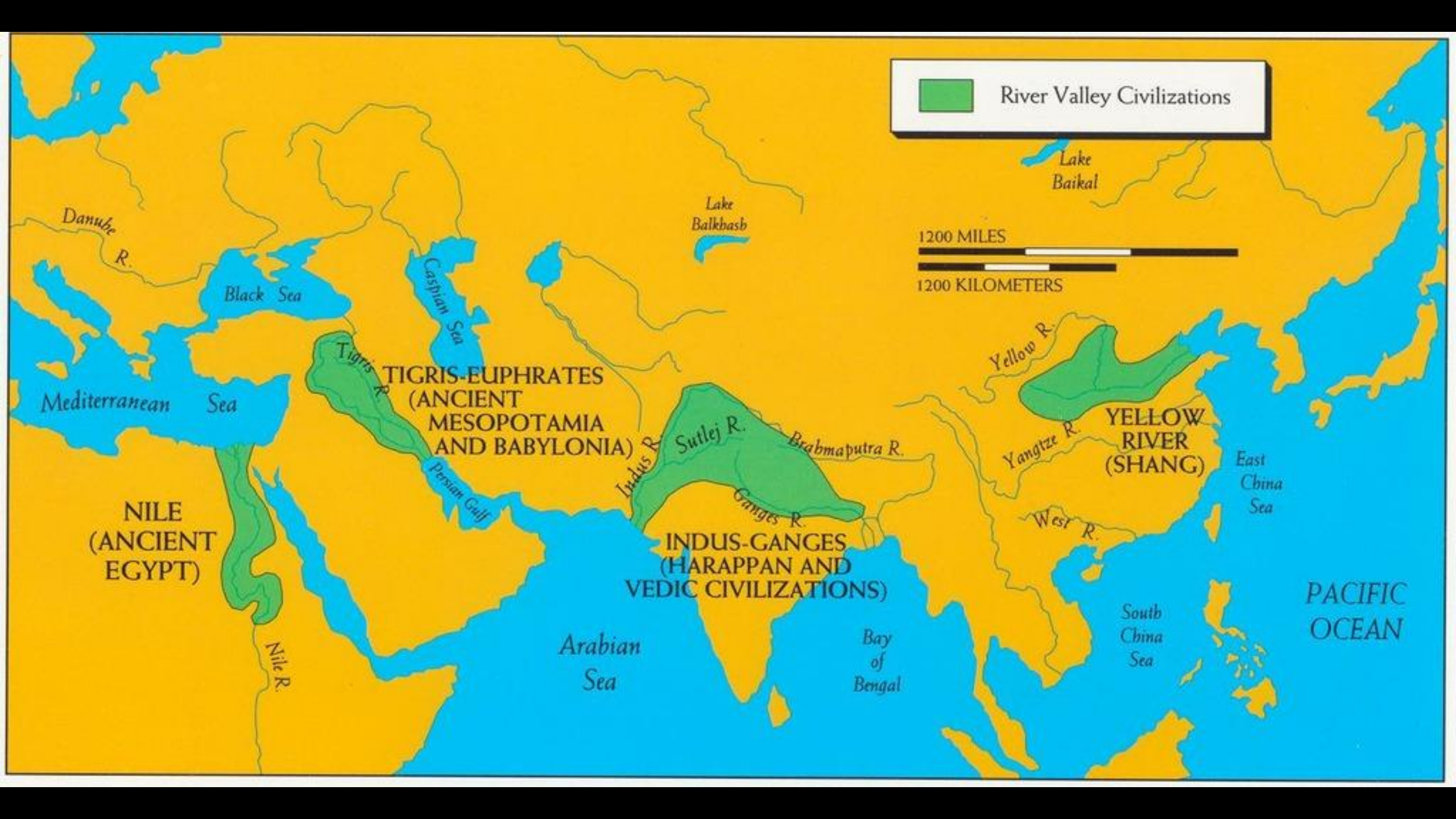


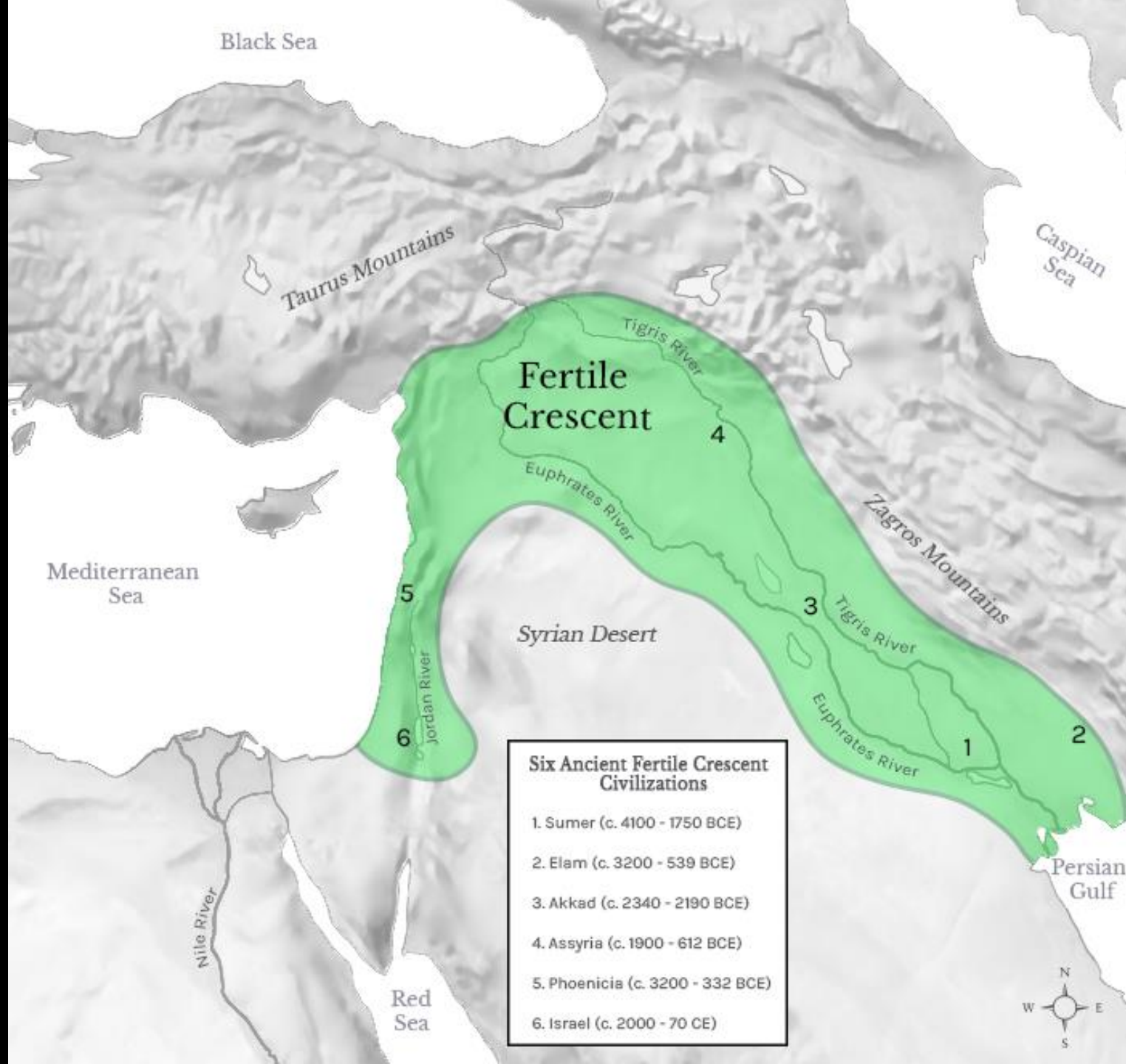
IV. Ancient Mesopotamia  
The Cradle of Civilization



## Plan of the Lesson

1. Introduction: the politics and culture of Mesopotamia
2. The earliest art in Uruk: ziggurats, sculpture
3. Votive sculptures of Eshnunna, Nippur and Mari
4. The Royal Tombs of Ur and its treasures





Black Sea

Taurus Mountains

Caspian Sea

Fertile Crescent

Tigris River

Euphrates River

Zagros Mountains

Mediterranean Sea

Syrian Desert

Tigris River

Euphrates River

5

4

3

1

2

6

Jordan River

Persian Gulf

Nile River

Red Sea

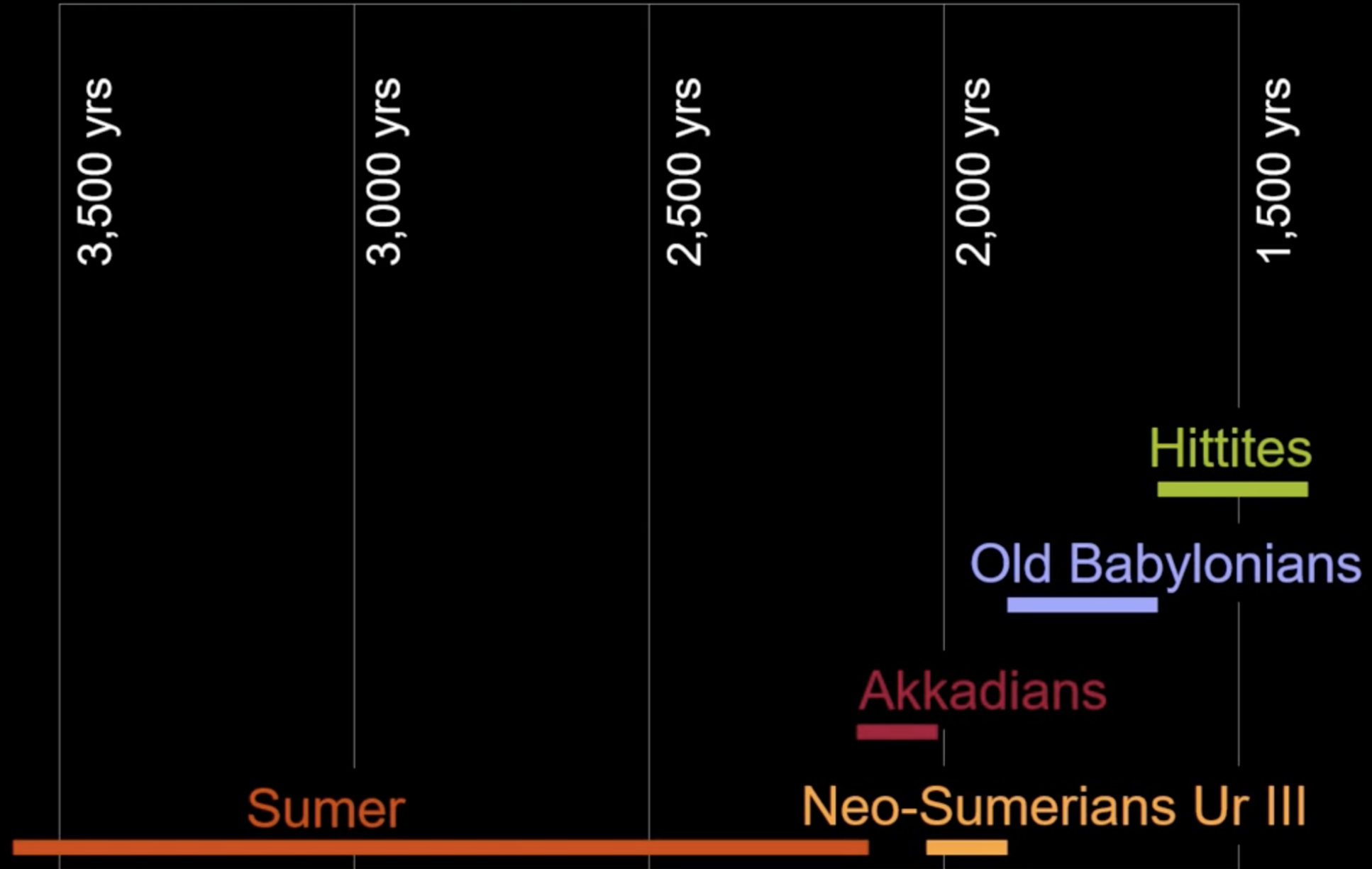
**Six Ancient Fertile Crescent Civilizations**

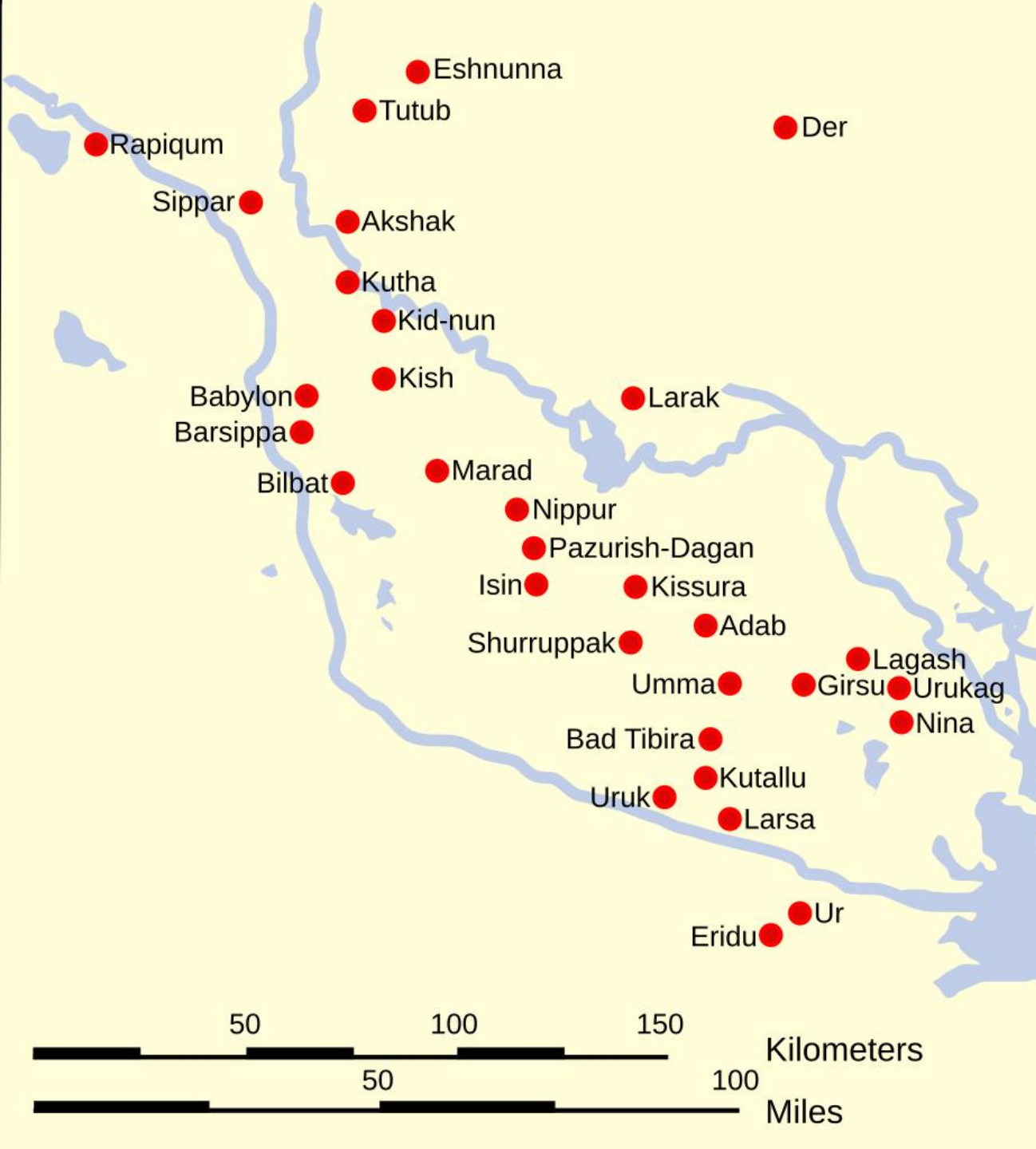
- 1. Sumer (c. 4100 - 1750 BCE)
- 2. Elam (c. 3200 - 539 BCE)
- 3. Akkad (c. 2340 - 2190 BCE)
- 4. Assyria (c. 1900 - 612 BCE)
- 5. Phoenicia (c. 3200 - 332 BCE)
- 6. Israel (c. 2000 - 70 CE)



# Early Bronze Age

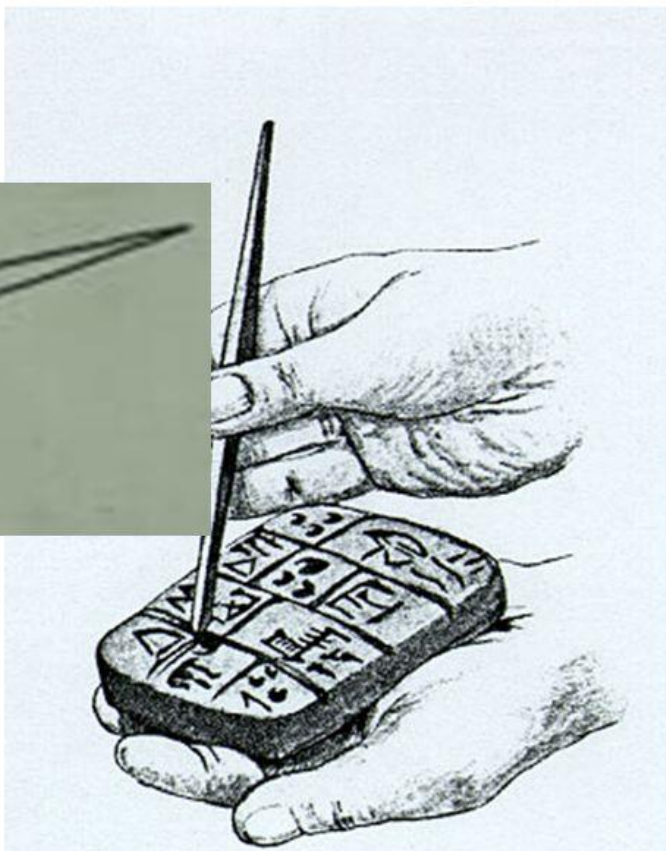
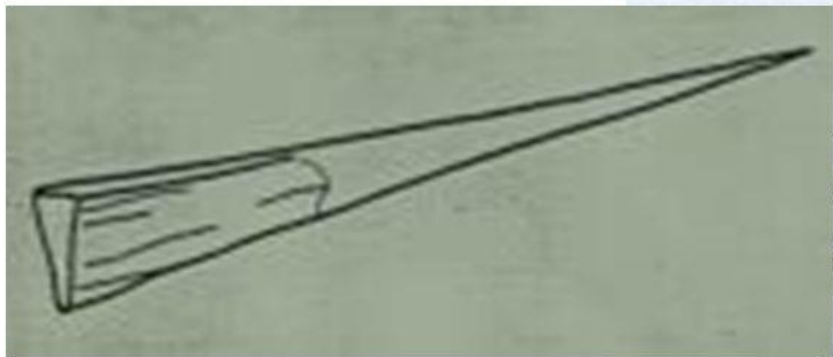
# | Middle Bronze Age





## Essential principles of cohesion

1. Strict social hierarchy
2. Religion
3. Written culture and trade



▲ Writing on a soft clay tablet with a reed pen.

	SUMERIAN (Vertical)	SUMERIAN (Rotated)	EARLY BABYLONIAN	LATE BABYLONIAN	ASSYRIAN
star					
sun					
month					
man					
king					
son					
head					
lord					
his					
reed					
power					
mouth					
ox					
bird					
destiny					
fish					
gardener					
habitation					
Nineveh					
night					

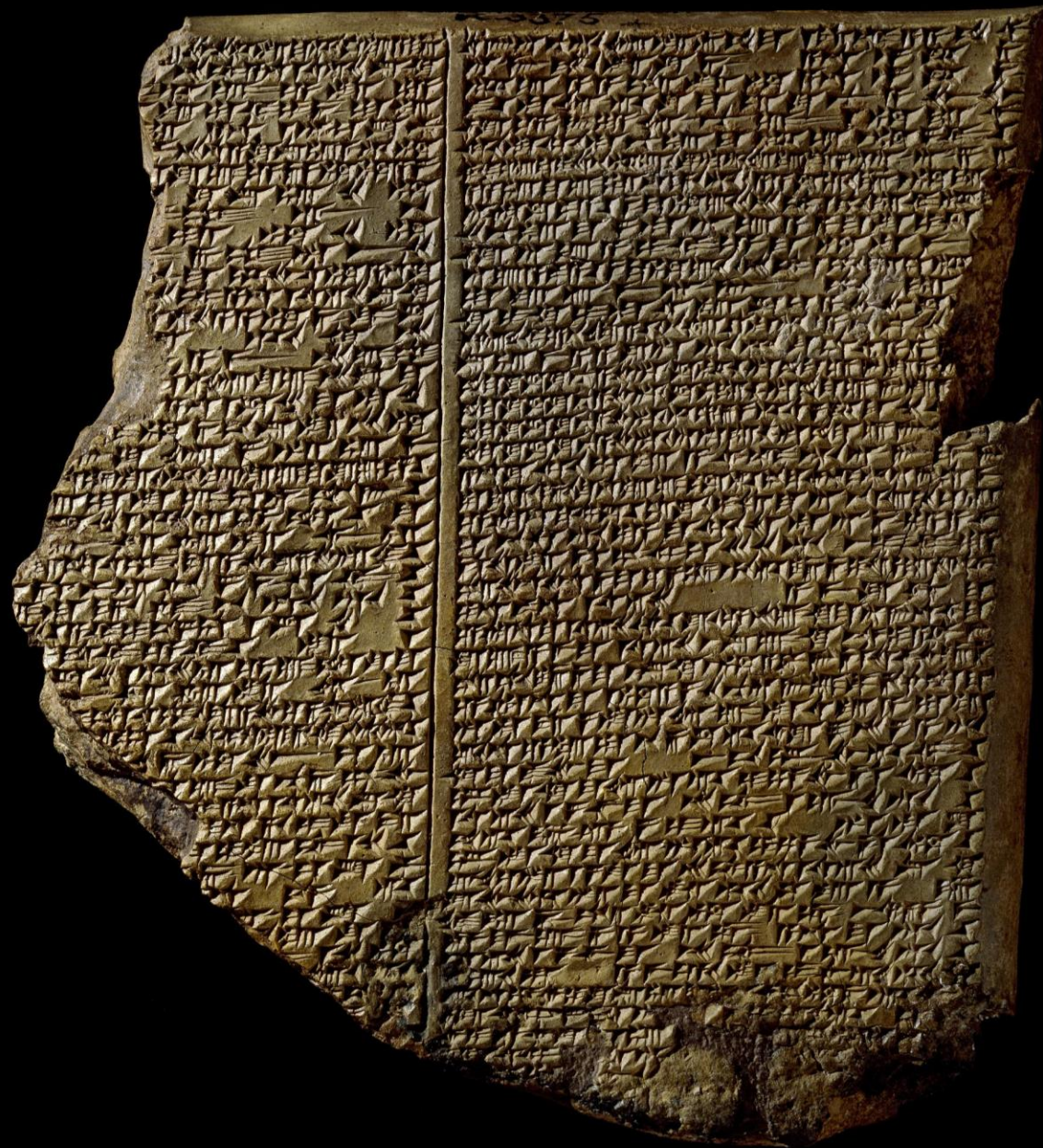


Proto-cuneiform tablet recording the allocation of beer,  
c. 3100-3000 BC, British Museum



Deed of sale of a slave and a house at Shuruppak, c. 2,500 BCE  
Musée du Louvre, Paris





Part of a clay tablet, neo-Assyrian, ca. 600 BCE, Epic of Gilgamesh, tablet 11, story of the Flood, British Museum, London

# Epos of Gilgamesh

In Akkadian language,  
Oldest existing version c. 2000 BCE

King Gilgamesh lived c. 2700 BCE

Possible representation of Gilgamesh  
as Master of Animals, in an Assyrian  
palace relief (713–706 BC), from Dur-  
Sharrukin, Musée du Louvre



# Master of the Animals



"Master of the Animals" stamp seals, Tepe Giyan, Iran, 5000-4000 BCE

Master of animals, Susa I (4200-3800 BC), Louvre





Hero (Gilgamesh?) master of animals, from the Shara temple, Tell Agrab, Iraq, early Dynastic period, ca. 2,600-2,370 BCE  
National Museum of Iraq, Baghdad

## Master of the Animals: civilisation vs. the untamed world



Gebel el-Arak knife, hippopotamus ivory, silex, Egypt,  
Naqada II d period, ca. 3,300–3,200 BCE  
Musée du Louvre, Paris



Seal carved in raw steatite and then burned to harden the mineral  
from 2,500 to 1,900 BCE  
Mohenjo-daro Indus valley



URUK

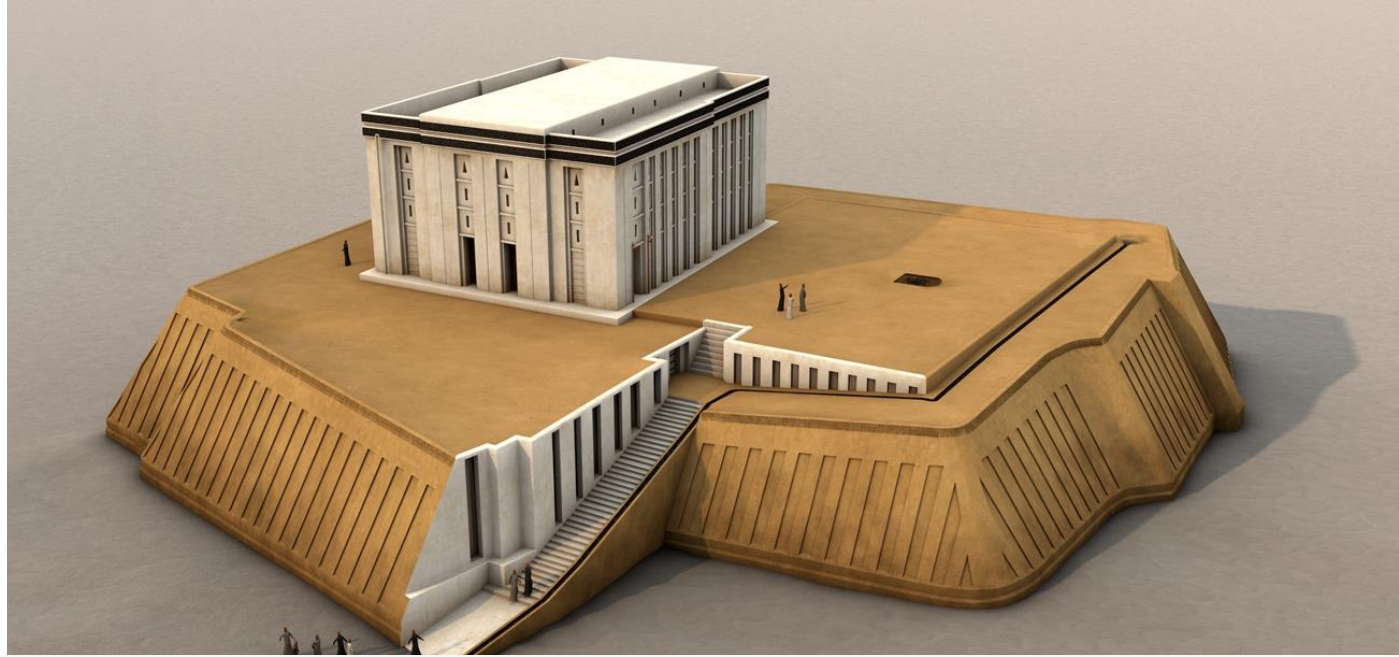
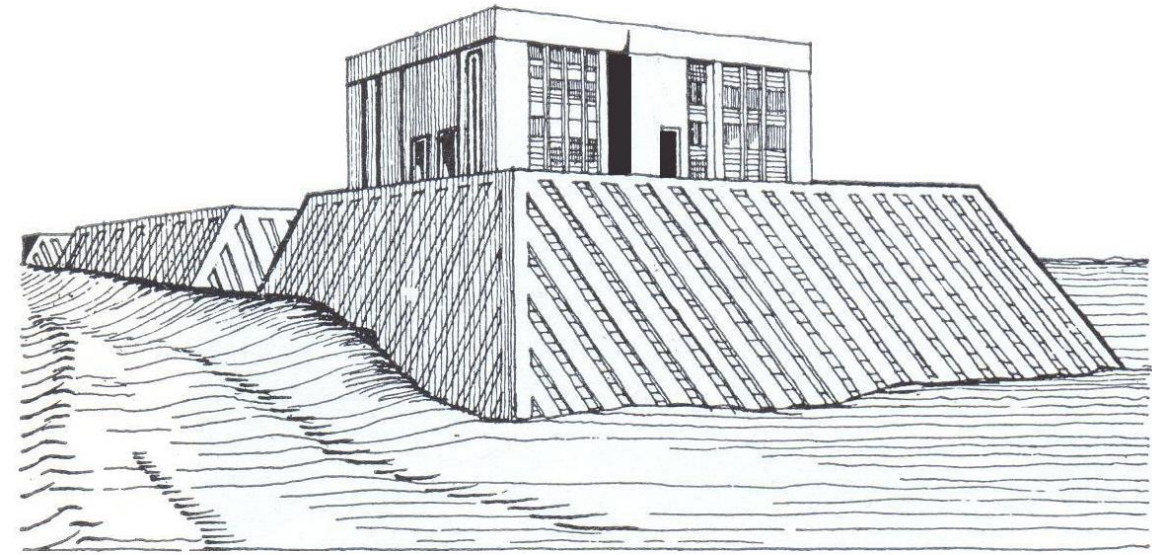


# Anu Ziggurat and White Temple at Uruk

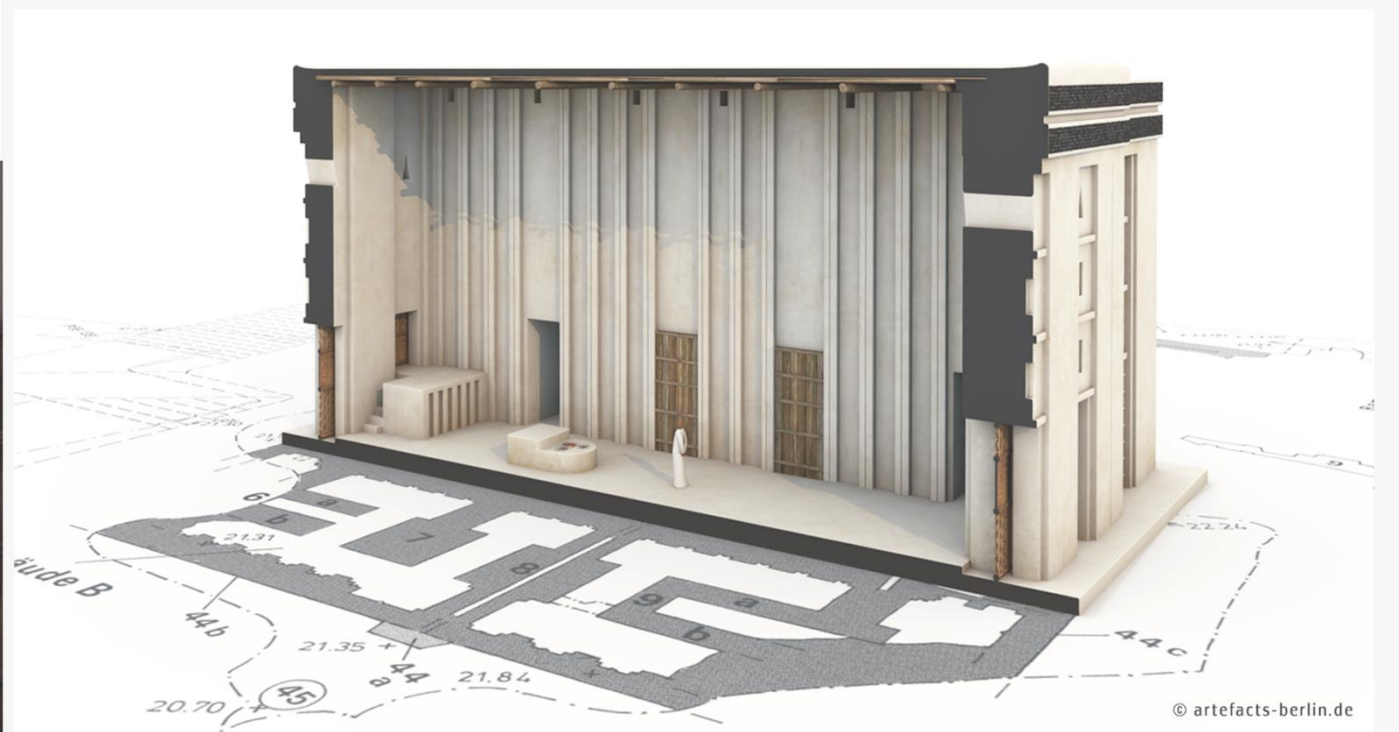
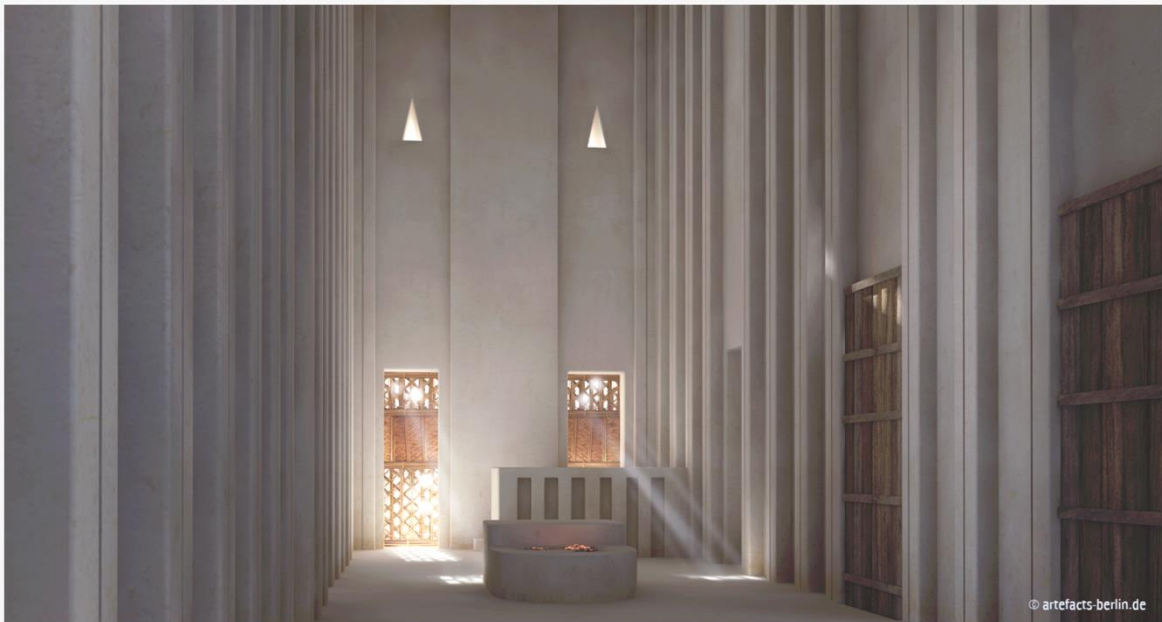


Ziggurat of Uruk, 3d reconstruction, c. 4000 BCE





THE WHITE TEMPLE & ZIGGURAT,  
AT WARKA ARCHAIC PERIOD B.C. 3500-3000



» Section through the middle-hall of the "White Temple". Wooden doors were reconstructed in two doorways of the temple.



Wall cone mosaic of the White Temple in Uruk, c. 3500-2800 BCE,  
**Mesopotamia**, Iraq.

# Great Ziggurat of Ur



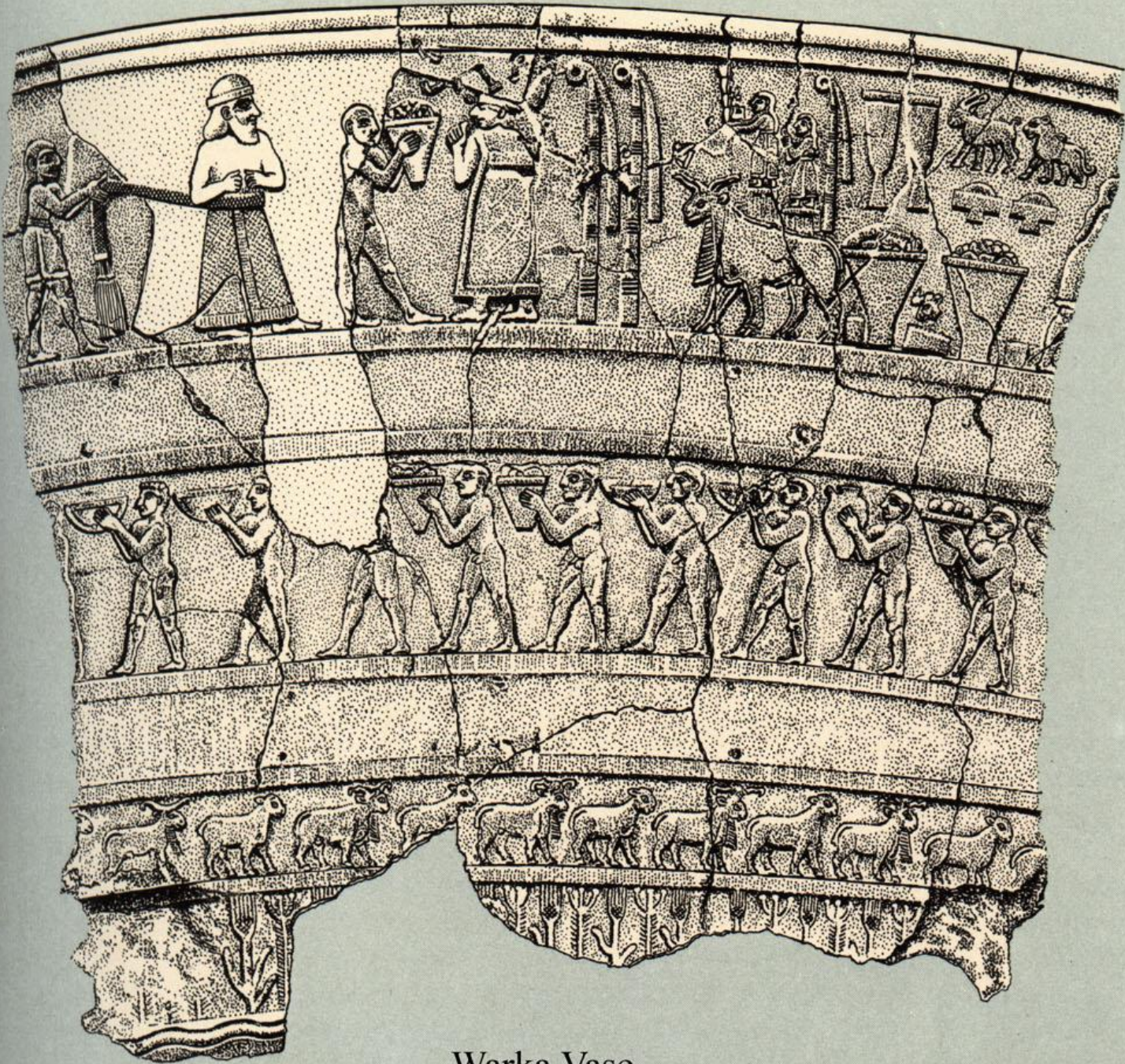


BASED ON ANCIENT SUMERIAN STATUES  
HISTORIA MAXIMUM CHANNEL © 2021

Mask of Warka, or “Lady of Uruk”, 3200–3000 BC, National Museum of Iraq



Warka Vase, c. 3200–  
3000 BC. National  
Museum of Iraq



Warka Vase

Standing male worshiper, Mesopotamia, Eshnunna (Tell Asmar), gypsum alabaster, shell, black limestone, bitumen, 29.5 x 12.9 x 10 cm, ca. 2,900–2,600 BCE



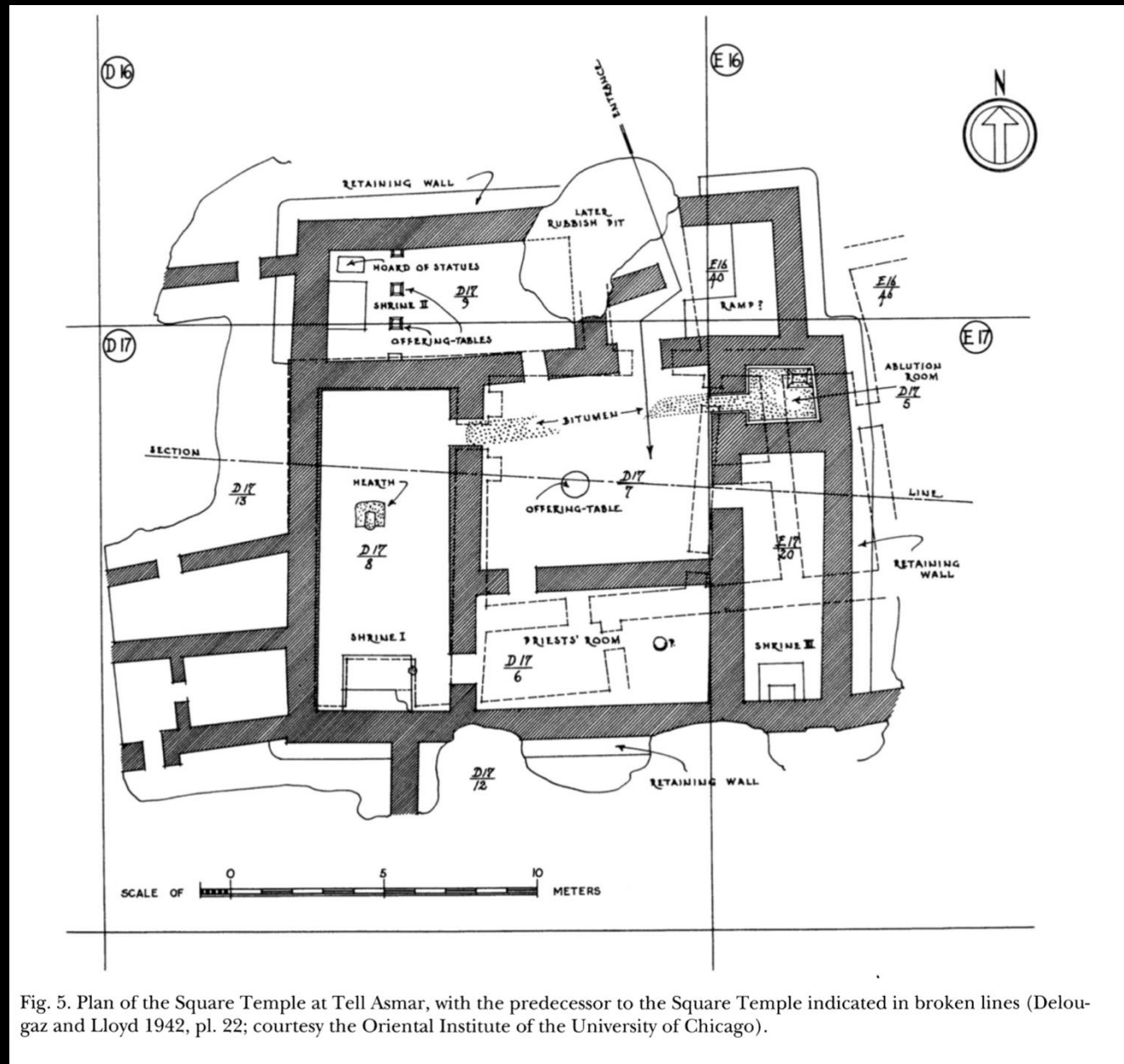


Fig. 5. Plan of the Square Temple at Tell Asmar, with the predecessor to the Square Temple indicated in broken lines (Delou-gaz and Lloyd 1942, pl. 22; courtesy the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago).







Standing worshipers, Mesopotamia, Eshnunna (Tell Asmar), gypsum alabaster, shell, black limestone, bitumen, 29.5 x 12.9 x 10 cm, ca. 2,900–2,600 BCE, National Iraq Museum, Baghdad



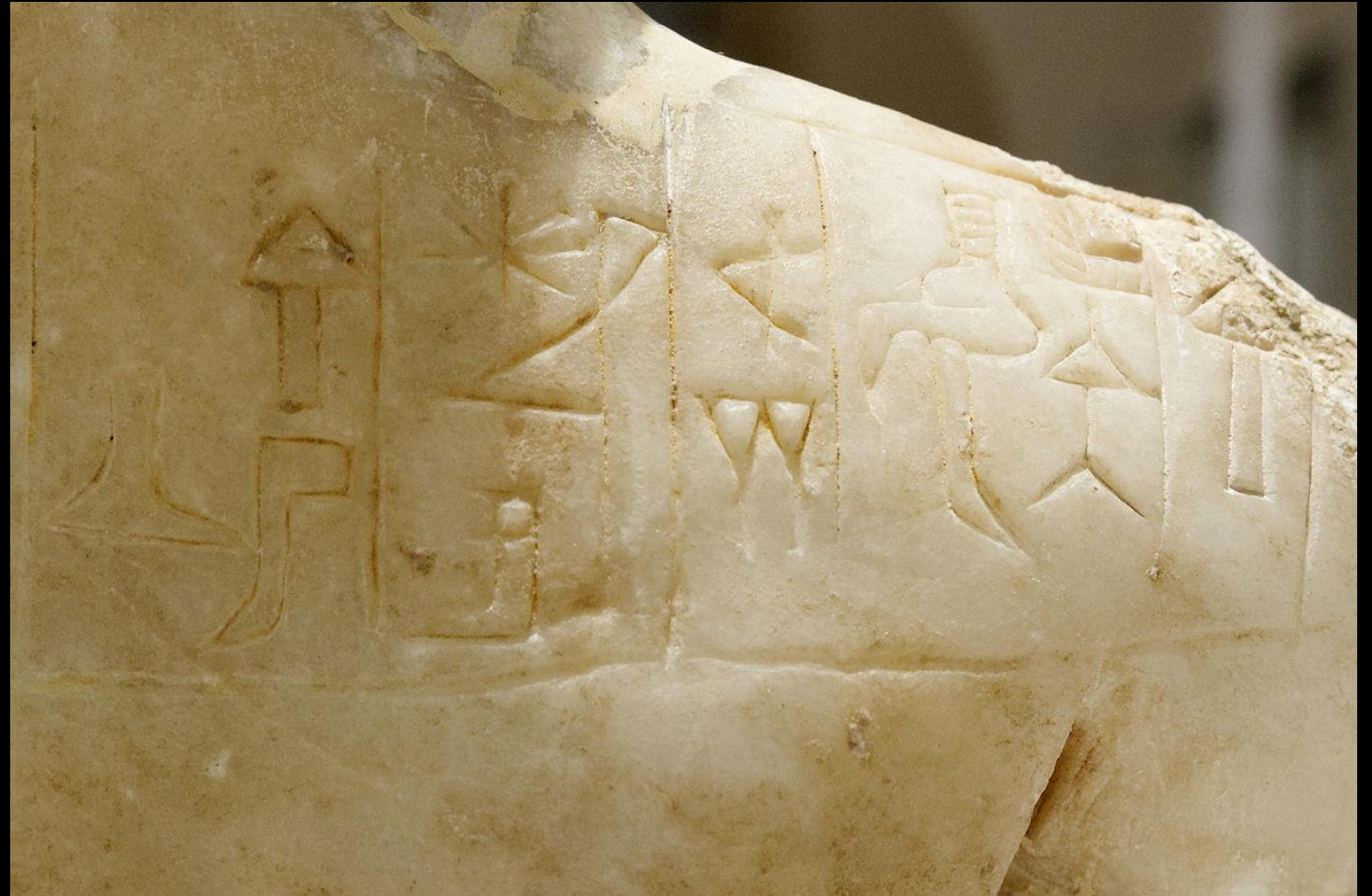
Silver and copper feet vase of Enmetena, Iraq, ca. 2400 BCE

Standing worshiper, Mesopotamia, Nippur, limestone, inlaid with shell and lapis lazuli  
25.2 x 8.5 x 5.2 cm, ca. 2,600–2,500 BCE, Metropolitan Museum, New York





Seated worshipper from Mari, temple of Ishtar (Syria), alabaster, lapis lazuli, shells, bitumen, proto cuneiform inscriptions, 52,5 x 20,6 x 30 cm ca. 2,450 BCE, Musée du Louvre, Paris



“dul, Ebih-il, nu-banda, Ištar Nita, sarig”

“This statue, Ebih-il, the overseer, to Ishtar (?), he dedicated.”



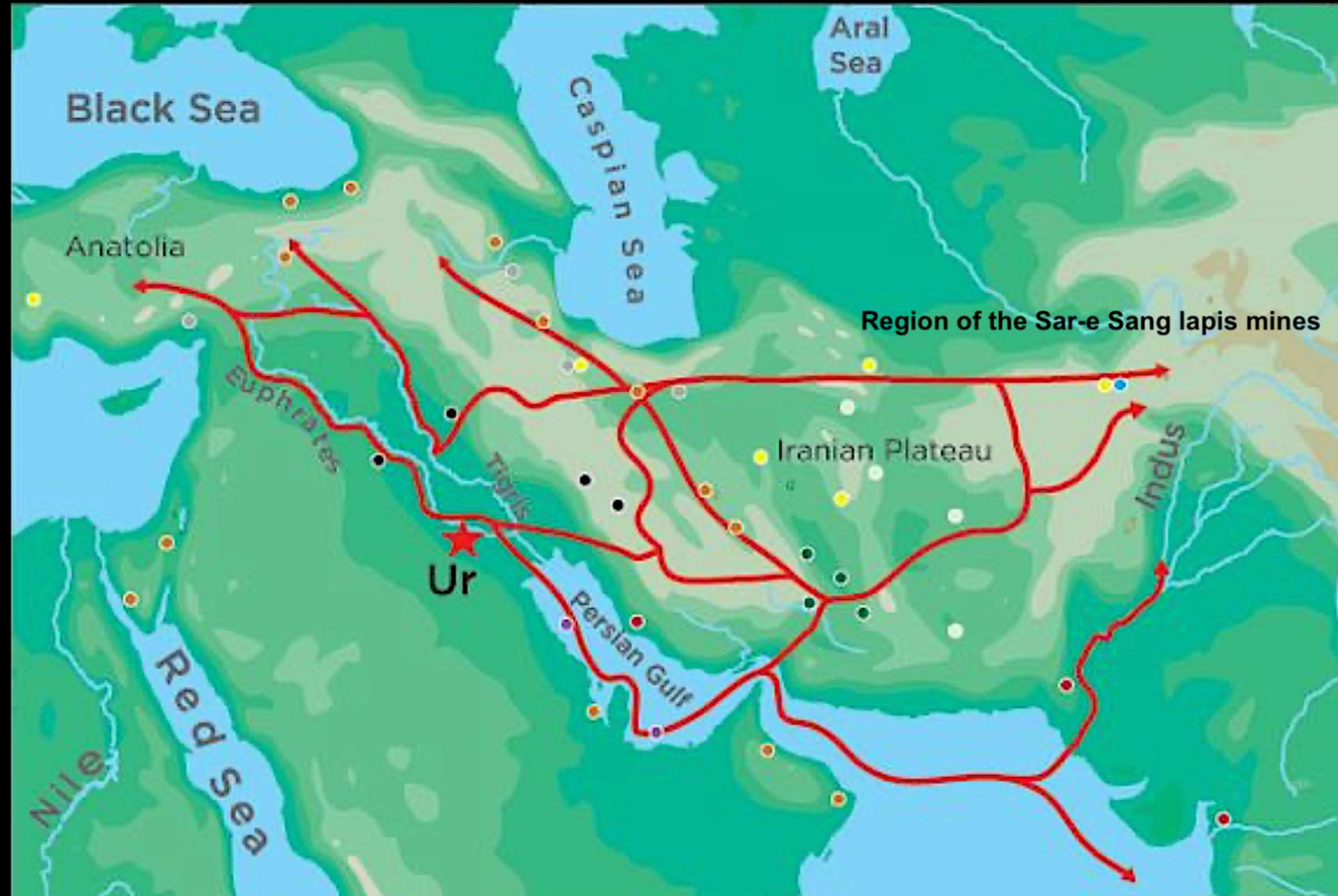
Seated worshipper from Mari, temple of Ishtar (Syria), alabaster, lapis lazuli, shells, bitumen, proto cuneiform inscriptions, 52,5 x 20,6 x 30 cm ca. 2,450 BCE, Musée du Louvre, Paris



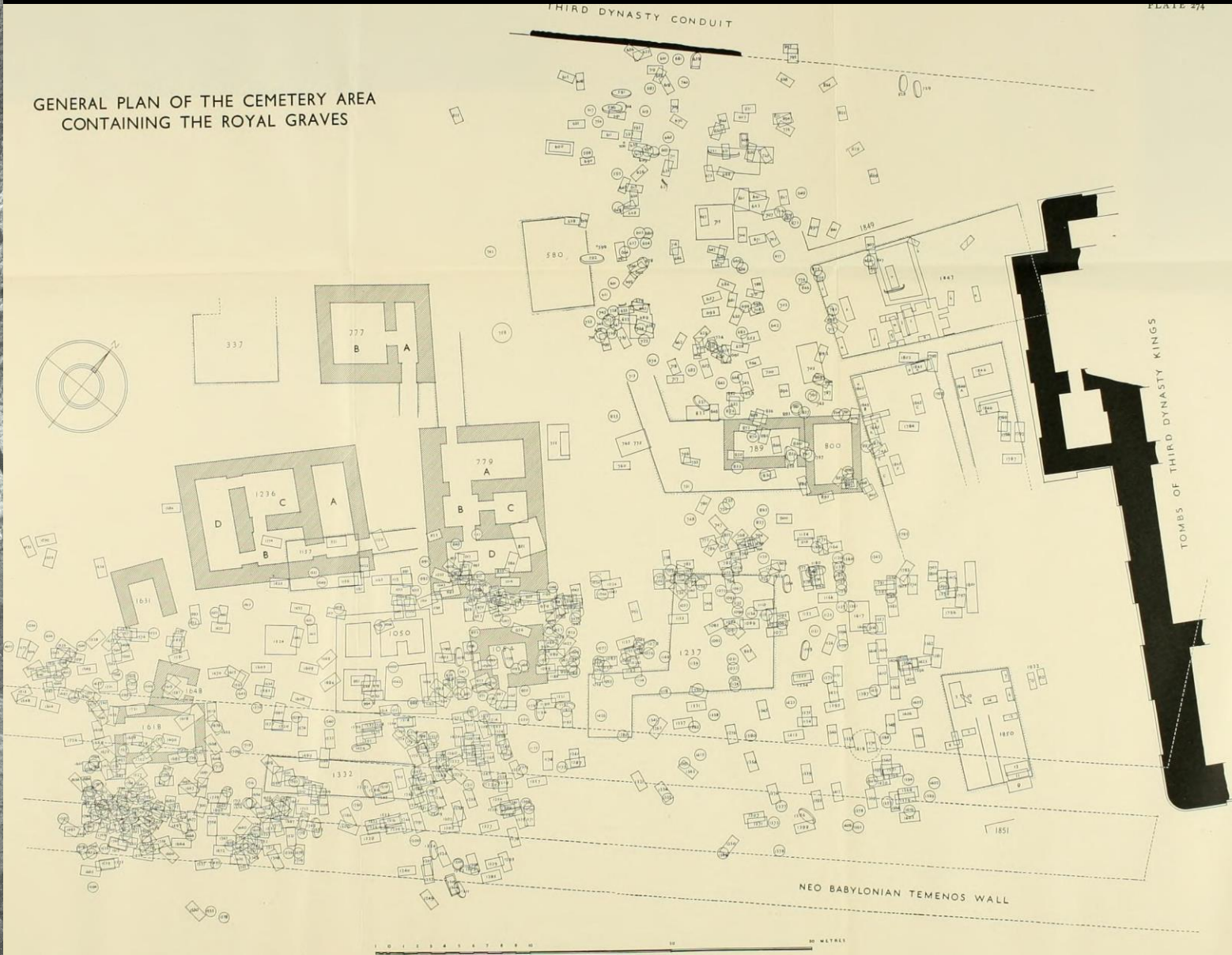


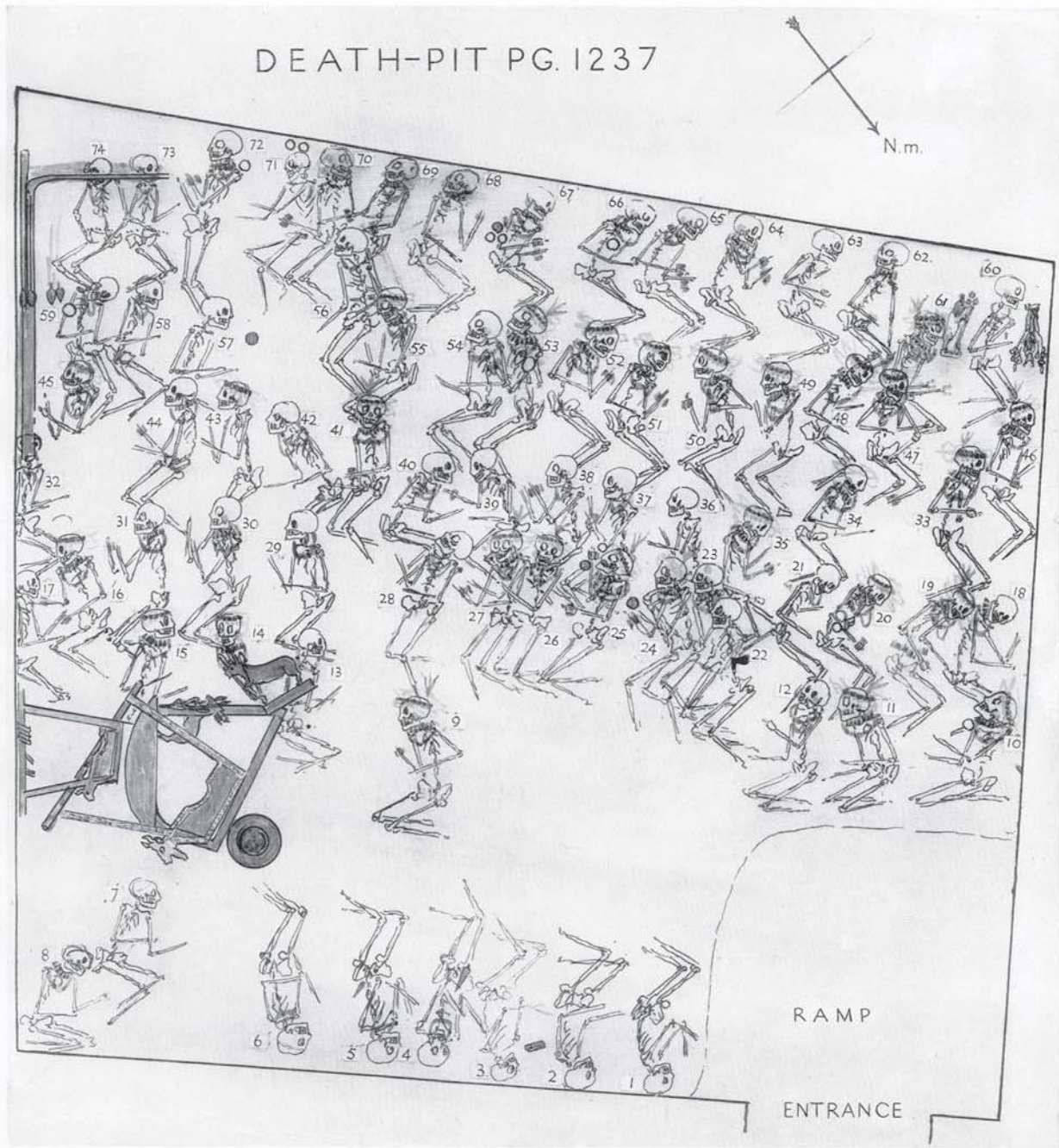
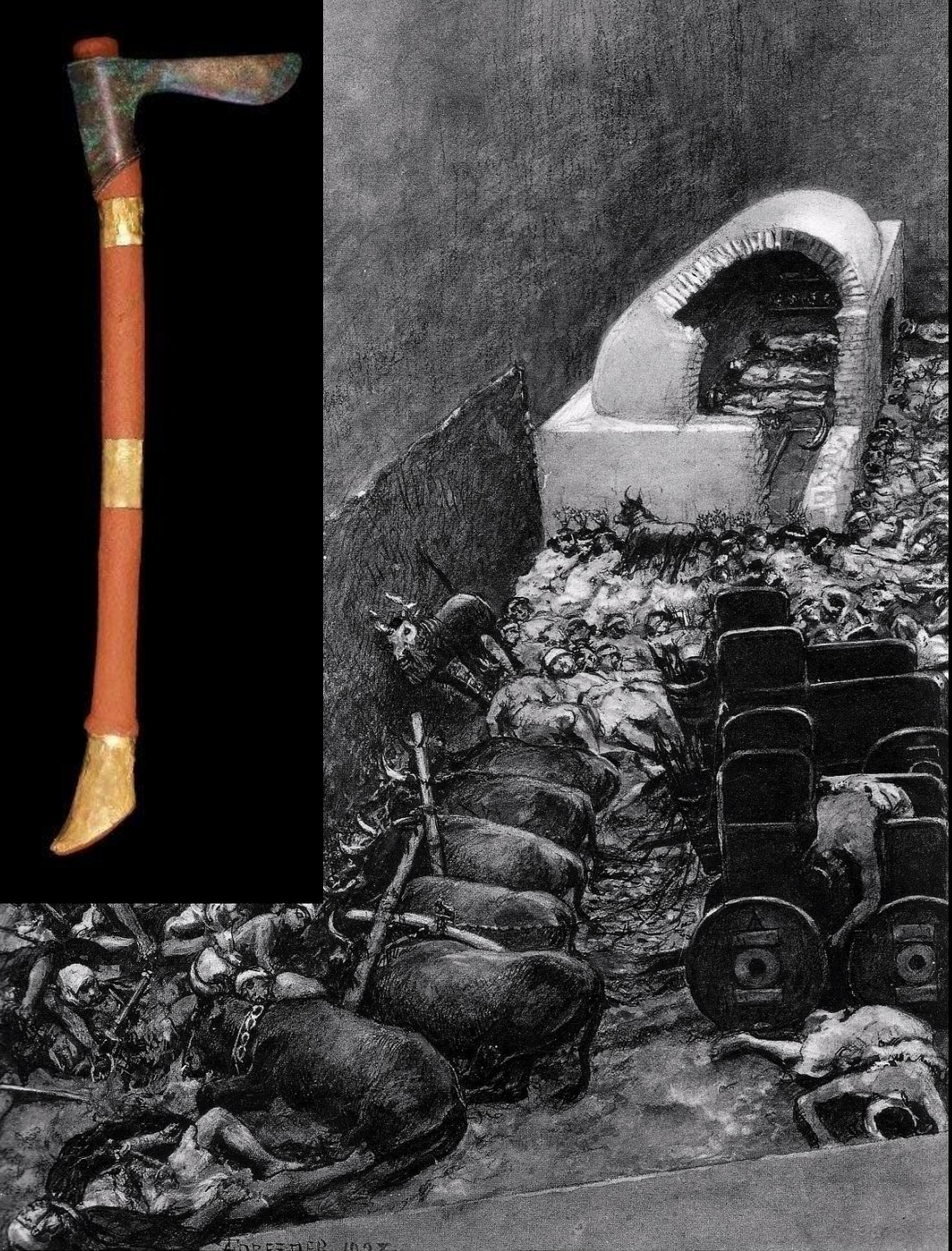
## Lapis Lazuli

Main source for over 6000 years: Sar-e Sang mines in North-eastern Afghanistan



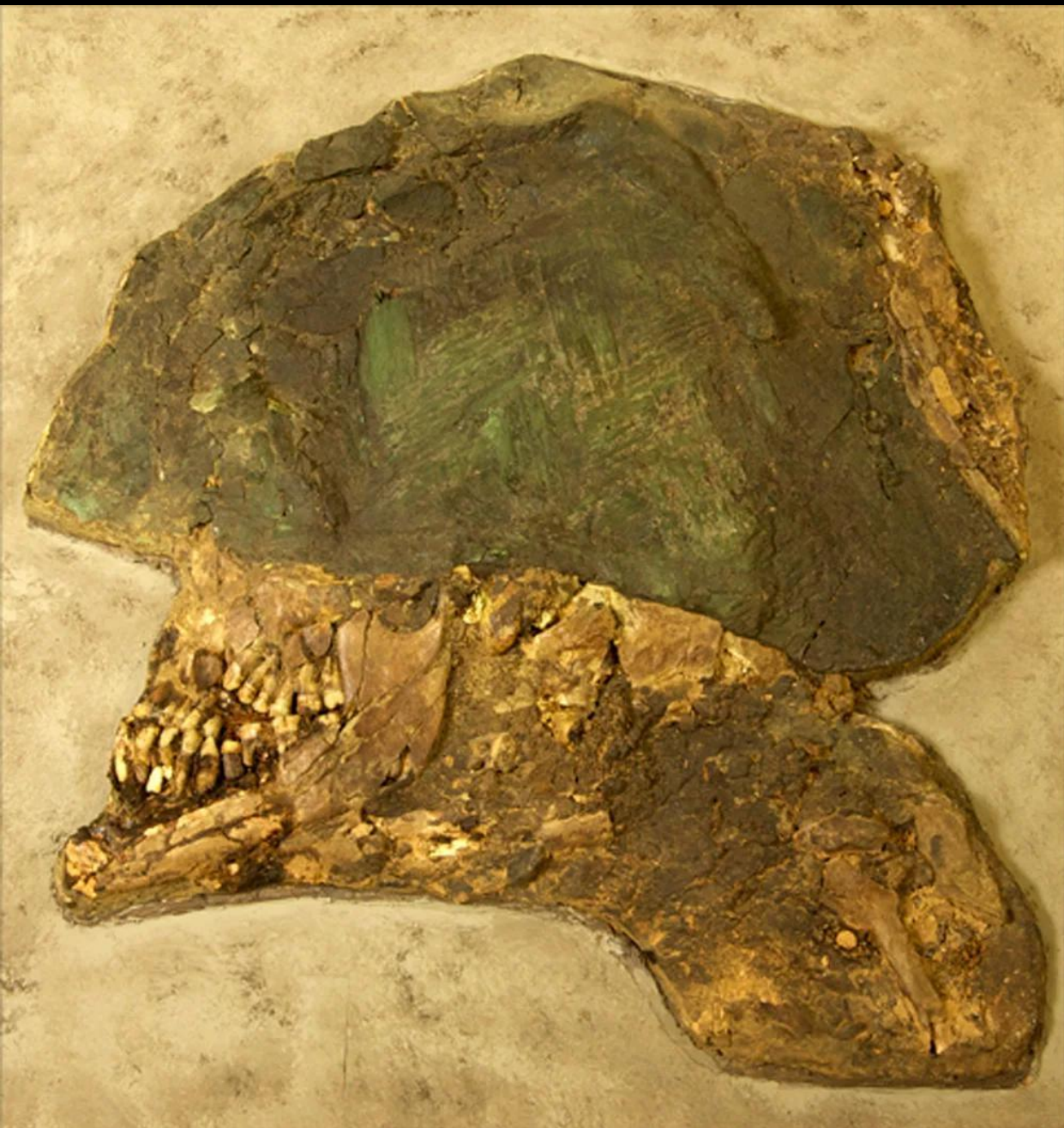
# Royal Tombs of Ur, c. 2600-2500 BCE





THE BODIES IN POSITION IN THE GREAT DEATH-PIT PG/1237







Queen Puabi's funerary ensemble, found at Ur. Gold, lapis lazuli, carnelian, silver, and agate, Sumerian, Early Dynastic period, c.2500 BC.



Statue of a Ram in a Thicket, from Ur (Iraq), gold, silver, lapis lazuli, shells, 42,5 x 18 x 27 cm





Standard of Ur, Royal Cemetery, Ur, ca. 2,600 BCE, shell, limestone, lapis lazuli, bitumen, 21,7 x 50,4 x 11,6 (base) – 5,6 (top) cm  
British Museum, London













Inlay, shells, black bitumen paste, from the Royal Cemetery, Ur (Iraq),  
4,4 x 4,4 cm, c. 2,600 BCE / British Museum, London





Lyre fragments with bull head and shell inlay plaques, Ur (Iraq), Royal Cemetery, gold, shell, lapis lazuli, bitumen, ca. 2,450 BCE, Penn Museum, Philadelphia



QUARTZITE STATUE OF HORUS  
THE GREAT SEED



## Death in Ancient Mesopotamia

- Netherworld: shadowy counterpart of life
- No punishment or reward afterlife
- Immortality: fame through earthly deeds
- Death: transformation into a spirit





Boundary stone (called Kudurru), limestone, detail of scorpion-man next to the goddess Guda, from Sippar (Abu Habba, Iraq), 64 x 21 x 18 cm, 1,125–1,104 BCE  
British Museum, London