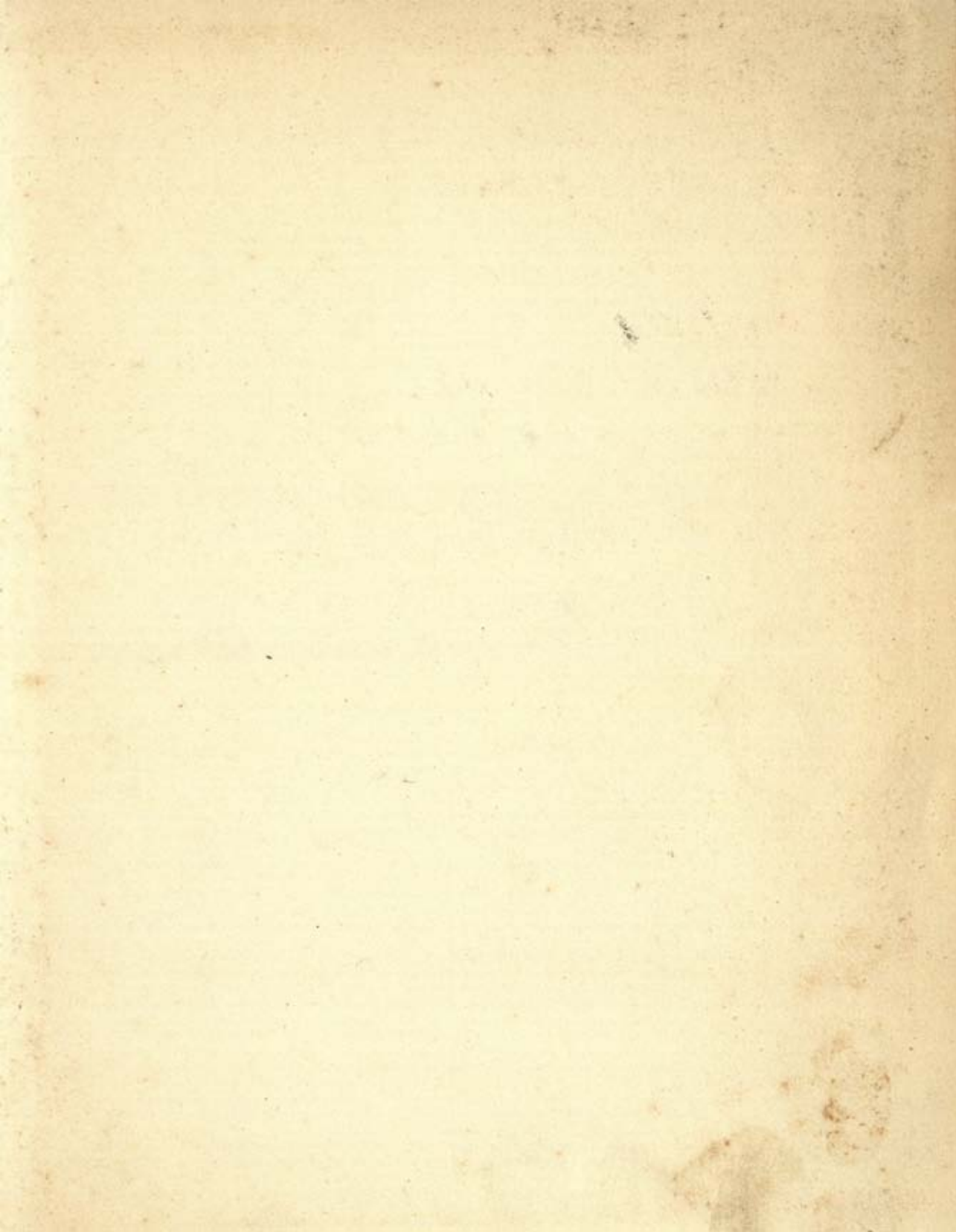


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AND THE MIDDLE EAST

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MESOPOTAMIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST



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*Title-page: Two bull's heads, probably from a large
cauldron. A typical example of Urartian bronze work
from Toprak-kale (Tushpa). 8th century B.C. Cf. p. 170.
British Museum.*

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FOREWORD

When the publishers paid me the compliment of asking me to write this book I was induced to accept by the fact that it was to be lavishly illustrated throughout in full colour. Now that the text is written I have the unhappy conviction that for the public too the attraction will consist in the illustrations alone.

To many readers a large proportion of the pictures will be familiar. That was inevitable, because those objects which best represent the art of their period have necessarily figured in other books; their being reproduced here in colour may redeem them from banality. Some readers may be shocked by the omission of their favourite masterpieces; but room had to be left for monuments illustrating the art of times or regions less well known. In the wide field which the book attempts to cover there are familiar tracts and tracts of which we are more or less ignorant: where actual remains are abundant and of artistic merit it is tempting to go overmuch into detail and the risk is that we miss seeing the wood for the trees; where objects happen to be few and of less intrinsic worth it is only too easy to overlook the importance they may possess for the history of art — perhaps the art of another age and of a different land. I have tried to select such documents as best illumine my text, even at the cost of rejecting much that was in itself attractive.

For some of the photographs I am indebted to the generosity of my friend Sir Julian Huxley, for many I have to thank the technical skill of Mr. J. Skeel and M. J. A. Lavaud and, not least, the kindness of the Directors of the museums who have allowed the objects in their charge to be photographed for me — the Directors of the British Museum, of the Louvre, of the Museums of Damascus, Baghdad, Beirut, Ankara, Istanbul, Philadelphia, Kansas, Chicago, Yale and the Villa Giulia.

Lastly I would express my gratitude to Herr Holle for the labour he has spent upon a book which in its production at any rate is a model of what such a book should be.

Leonard Woolley

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Only a few weeks after Sir Leonard Woolley completed the manuscript of the present volume came the sad news of his illness, followed by that of his death. We thus found ourselves entrusted with the grave responsibility of seeing Sir Leonard's last work through the press without having the opportunity to consult him. We have endeavoured to produce a volume that would be worthy of its author, but for technical reasons some minor changes have had to be made in Sir Leonard's original selection of plates. We have been anxious to comply with the author's wishes so far as possible by choosing particularly fine and characteristic objects for reproduction, and our special thanks are due to all those who have supplied the plates and captions, or otherwise helped in the production of this volume. If there should be any shortcomings, despite all the care taken, they should be ascribed to the publishers, not to the author.

CHAPTER I

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND ITS HISTORY DOWN TO 500 A.D.

The title of this volume calls for explanation, if not for apology. The term 'The Middle East' is used here to include the countries later known as Anatolia, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Elam, which is part of Persia, together with the whole of the Arabian peninsula. Those countries differ widely from one another in character and climate; from the outset they were inhabited by peoples of very different stock, and in most of them the original inhabitants had, by the close of our period, been replaced by wholly alien folk; it might therefore be objected that there can be here no unity, that we are dealing with a congeries of independent cultures and should treat of them *seriatim*, that, in fact, 'The Art of the Middle East' is a misnomer, and 'The Arts of the Middle Eastern Countries' would be our only proper title.

The diversity of the countries is indeed obvious, and it would be foolish to disregard it. On the contrary, it should be emphasised by the historian because it was so marked that the different areas became to a large extent complementary one to another. Economically and politically their inhabitants were forced to collaborate if they were to make real advance; for any of them isolation, even if it were possible, meant stagnation. The Middle East as a whole provided everything that man required to achieve civilisation, but that was not true of any one of the areas that comprised it; none were self-sufficient. Great civilisations came to birth there, but each was obliged to acquire, by trade or by war, some or other essentials to progress which in their own land were lacking.

Although in dealing with the development of the arts we are obliged to employ such terms as Anatolian, Syrian, Mesopotamian, etc., implying a certain cultural unity, it must yet be insisted that none of these is a geographical unit. The deeply-indented western coast of Asia Minor, with its fertile river valleys, looks towards and by its chain of islands is connected with the Aegean rather than with the Asiatic hinterland from which it is cut off by mountain ranges. The central high plateau, parched in summer-time and in winter bitterly cold, is at best an inhospitable land, and only where it breaks down to the Halys basin do the conditions of life become more easy; but beyond

Anatolia

this again the wild tangle of mountains stretching up to the Caucasus was more likely to shelter savagery than to encourage culture. Cut off on its southern side by Taurus and Anti-Taurus from the Mediterranean Sea and from easy access to Syria, Anatolia might seem an isolated country with little prospect of advance. But there was alluvial gold in the western rivers, and the eastern mountains were astonishingly rich in metallic ores — silver, copper and iron, all essential to man's progress; the value of these was bound to outweigh the difficulties of transport across the mountain ranges. The narrow straits at either end of the Sea of Marmora brought the peninsula into touch with eastern Europe, and the coastal track along the eastern end of the Black Sea afforded a link with southern Russia; Anatolia indeed was to play the part of a land-bridge for commercial traffic and, at times, of a highway for invading armies.

Syria

Syria was the continuation of that land-bridge, whose southern abutment was Egypt. But here too there is great diversity. The Amanus and Lebanon ranges (in antiquity densely afforested) sometimes fall abruptly into the sea, sometimes leave along its marge a narrow strip of very fertile ground. Behind the mountains the Aleppo steppe and the long valley of the Orontes, including the Beka'a, is pre-eminently an agricultural land; but behind this stretches the Syrian desert with only the garden oasis of Damascus to relieve its vast expanse of barren gravel, where settlement was impossible and alone the Beduin nomads passed in springtime seeking a scanty pasturage for their herds. To the south the hill country of Judaea enclosed a few fertile valleys such as that of Megiddo and the coastal plain that was to be Philistia, but the Jordan rift was for the most part unfit for cultivation and the open country round Beersheba allowed only of chance crops; to the east, beyond the mountains of Moab, lay the desert. In this long narrow land the manner of men's lives differed perforce. In the north a dense population could exist by tillage and on the sea coast a few cities could prosper; in the economy of the greater part of the country sheep and goats counted for more than agriculture and small towns served as centres for the semi-settled farming clans. Here there was no chance of unity, no common interest could bind together these disparate elements; even the sporadic raids of the desert peoples could not do that, because they were on a small scale and mere raids; either they could be met and driven off by the local levy or, if successful, they were over and the raiders had vanished before help could arrive from any distance; and against organised invasion from Egypt no

coalition could stand. As a geographical term 'Syria' has a quite definite connotation; but there is no corresponding cultural entity; in the discussion of 'Syrian' art we shall deal severally with a whole number of provinces and peoples.

Mesopotamia continues eastwards the steppe country of northern Syria and then, with the bend of the river Euphrates, turns south to complete what has been called 'The Fertile Crescent', the great arc of grass-land and arable that encloses the Syrian desert. In this vast area there are no such striking natural differences as we have noted in Anatolia and in Syria; the whole plain bounded by the two rivers Euphrates and Tigris and the foot-hills of Anti-Taurus is a geographical unit and has often figured in history as a political unit; the one distinction that can be drawn, and it was to be one of supreme importance, was that in the north the farmer could depend for his crops upon the winter rains, usually sufficient for his needs, whereas in the hotter south rain is lacking and the fields must be watered by irrigation but, with irrigation, give two crops of unparalleled richness every year.

Mesopotamia

The long mountain chain that divides Mesopotamia from Persia, the rich valley of the Two Rivers from the arid desert, is broken down at its southern end by the watershed of the Karun. Here is Elam, an alluvial plain closed in on all sides except the western, but there open to the Gulf; it is really a part of Mesopotamia rather than of Persia, and whereas the wild tribes of the northern mountains were a constant threat to the Mesopotamian city states the Elamites, whether subject to the Sumerians or successfully at war with them, were always more intimately concerned with their western neighbours than with any to the north or east.

Elam

Finally, the term 'The Middle East' includes Arabia. Although during the last six thousand years the process of desiccation has been constant, yet even so long ago the country must have been but little more suited for human occupation than it is today. Then, as now, only the Yemen was fertile. There were oases to serve as centres for the nomad tribes, and along the coast of the Hadramaut and as far as Oman there were small low-lying plains with enough water and light soil to provide for a sedentary population; but for the rest it was a barren land where no grain could grow and the wandering herdsmen lived on the milk and flesh of their scranny beasts.

Arabia

The introduction of agriculture signalled one of the greatest revolutions in man's history. Inevitably, it has left little in the way of

THE EARLIEST
CULTURES

monuments, and we do not know, and perhaps shall never know, exactly when and where people first grew grain and lived on bread. The sedentary life led to culture of a sort, but for culture to develop to any extent something more than a knowledge of primitive tillage was necessary. Up to the present archaeology has provided only two or three sites of little settlements of neolithic man still at the beginning of the agricultural age; but the pre-pottery communities of Jarmo and Hassuna in northern Mesopotamia may fairly be regarded as typical; probably there were thousands such scattered over the Middle East wherever natural conditions favoured the cultivator, and probably many were, in point of time, far older, for the *tempo* of man's advance was still very slow and centuries might make little difference in his conditions. Startling evidence is given by the discoveries at Jericho where, long before he learnt how to make and fire clay pots, neolithic man fortified his settlement with massive walls of stone and, for some occult purpose, modelled in plaster upon human skulls the features of the living man with uncanny verisimilitude. The one spring in the Jordan rift, the one patch of rich soil, which had attracted man to Jericho, also exposed him to the attacks of jealous land-grabbers, so that in self-defence he embarked upon a feat of building which to us seems almost incredible and is certainly unparalleled. It is a case of adaptation to circumstances. There may have been other neolithic fortresses unknown to us, where risks were urgent; certainly in the open country where opportunities were equal and there was no need to fear violent dispossession the primitive settlements were not walled. The precocious 'township' of Jericho does not really imply cultural advance, and so far as we can see it was a barren development; civilisation owes nothing to the people of Jericho or to the Palestinians who in the end stormed their defences and seized their land.

PLATE P. 19

Tell Halaf

It was at least two millennia later, towards the close of the neolithic age, that the first cultures developed in which the continuous history of Middle Eastern art has its roots.

FIG. 1

In northern Mesopotamia we find a hand-made¹ painted pottery of high quality, fired in well-designed kilns giving a heat of more than 800 degrees. Called after Tell Halaf, a site in the Khabur valley where it first came to light, this ware spread far and wide; it was made as far west as Carchemish, was exported to the Amq plain near Antioch, comes in early levels at Nineveh, and has been found in the neighbourhood of Lake Van, while a related, but not identical, type



Skull from Jericho, in which the features of a living human being are modelled in plaster. Neolithic period, approx. 7th millennium B.C. Cf. pp. 18, 102.

occurs lower down the Euphrates valley at Samarra. Early in the chalcolithic period the potters of Arpachiyah in the Khabur valley carried on the Tell Halaf tradition with a technical ability and with a sense of artistry far superior to that attained by the earlier masters; their polychrome designs, executed in lustrous paint, show a richness of invention and a painstaking skill in draughtsmanship which is unrivalled in the ancient world.

PLATE P. 23

Meanwhile another and a quite independent school of painted pottery was at work in Elam or its neighbourhood. The splendid vases from Susa represent a late stage in the history of a ware whose earlier phases are illustrated by the neolithic pottery from the Persepolis area and, less directly, by the painted pottery of Anau. It may well be that Elam was the westernmost branch of a Central Asiatic school, called into being by a migratory movement of peoples who settled down in the Karun valley but subsequently sent out fresh waves of migrants to the west.

Susa

PLATE P. 28

Certain it is that the first settlers in the southern delta of the Tigris

Al 'Ubaid

and Euphrates came from the east, bringing with them a painted pottery which was closely connected — though not identical — with that of Susa. In the lowest levels of the city mounds of Sumer this pottery is invariably found. It had been developed elsewhere, for in Sumer it has no previous history; it is at its best at the beginning and degenerates in later centuries. In the course of time it spread widely; it reached the north and at first competed with the much superior Tell Halaf ware and later ousted it, apparently by violence, and was familiar to the natives of the Amq plain on the lower Orontes; but it is a decadent style that travels so far afield. Called, somewhat unfortunately, the al 'Ubaid ware (actually it was first found at Eridu, the southernmost and by tradition the oldest of the Sumerian cities), this painted pottery, with its designs in black upon a white, greenish or brownish ground, is the hall-mark of the earliest settlers in the delta, and its wide distribution testifies to the energy of the people who were to initiate the world's first civilisation.

Sumer

So far as we know, that first civilisation arose in the land later called Sumer, that is, in the Euphrates delta. It is pertinent to ask why that should have been the case. The people were newcomers from the east, their primitive arts and crafts had been learnt elsewhere; yet they were destined to outstrip the kinsfolk whom they had left behind in their former home and to make their new land the cradle of a higher culture: why was this?

The delta was of recent formation. The vast deposits of silt carried down by the Karun river formed across the upper end of the Persian Gulf a bar which held up the flood waters of the Tigris and Euphrates so that their silt was deposited against the bar instead of being swept out to sea, and with the slackened current much was dropped higher up and gradually filled in the marshes, forming dry land through which the Euphrates cut its bed. The sedimentary soil was immensely fertile, and invited settlement; and from the east the settlers flocked into the valley. But rich as the soil was, and easy as was the tillage, yet to profit by its richness required much labour, and that on a big scale. It was not a land in which the isolated farmer could prosper. The seed had, of course, to be sown in winter; and in spring, just as the young corn sprouted, the river came down in flood, overran and scoured out the fields and destroyed all hopes of harvest. The river had to be kept in check by artificial banks; the land, if it was to yield a second crop, had to be irrigated by canals; the need was obvious, but the task was beyond the powers of any one landowner.

Only by co-operative labour could prosperity be assured, and that meant organisation and discipline. It was the communal, not the individual interest that had to be served, and this could best be done when men were congregated together at close quarters, ready for common action and obedient to authority; the township was more effective than the hamlet or the village. In time the delta was parcellled out into units of irrigation, a large part of the population of each concentrated in an urban centre; it became a patchwork of city states. The system assured great agricultural wealth; the soil would yield far more foodstuffs than the people required for their sustenance, and they could therefore enjoy the freedom from anxiety for the means of livelihood, and also the leisure, which are the first essentials of the good life. But beyond this the land yielded nothing. There was no stone in all the alluvial country — even the flints for the field-adzes had to be imported; there was no decent timber; there were no minerals. The farmers could stagnate in well-fed ease; if they were not content to do that, it must have been because of some quality in themselves that demanded progress.

City states

Actually the wide distribution of al 'Ubaid pottery shows that in the course of time the people had set themselves to make good the land deficiencies; apart from food, everything had to be imported, and the painted vessels had a certain value for barter. Even with such materi-

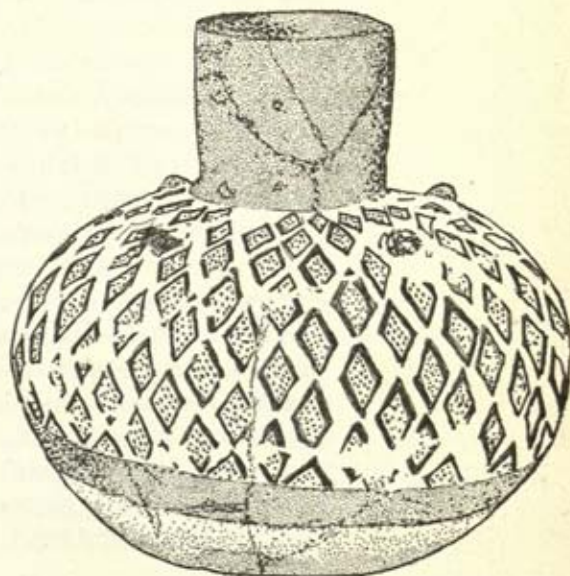


FIG. 1 — Hand-made jar from Tell Halaf. Clay, painted in black and dark red. The invention of a kiln capable of producing a heat of over 800° C., from which the smoke could be drawn off without affecting the vessels, gave a great stimulus to the production of this multi-coloured pottery, which was diffused over much of Western Asia. Middle of 4th millennium B.C. Cf. pp. 18, 37. Oriental Seminar, Cologne University. Height 23 cm.

als as lay to hand they had made considerable progress, as we shall see when dealing with architecture; but suddenly a stop was put to it which might well have been fatal. As the Sumerian historians succinctly observe: "Then came the Flood"; it was a disaster which spared the main cities, already raised high on the ruins of their past phases, but overwhelmed the entire countryside, drowning the villagers and laying waste the fields; only an impoverished remnant escaped.

To replenish the population there came settlers from the north; they were people accustomed to working in stone, and they brought with them the knowledge of metallurgy (the al 'Ubaid people had had at most a few imported copper objects), but they were content to live side by side with the old stock and to profit by their arts, and this hybridisation was all-important for progress. So completely did the old traditions survive that the king of Erech could, on historic grounds, claim suzerainty over Elam, and to the north and north-west the boundaries of the deltaic power were pushed steadily forward. It would seem that there was, later in what we call the Uruk period, an infiltration of easterners, from the mountains north of Elam, who eventually secured for themselves the leadership of what was now the Sumerian State, but shortly after 3000 B.C. the Sumerian element re-asserted itself and there began the Early Dynastic period in which Sumer was divided up into a large number of city states, each claiming independence and any one of them at times attempting to secure hegemony over the rest, as did Ur in about 2600 B.C.

Semites

Meanwhile in northern Mesopotamia, beyond the apex of the delta, the Semitic population, profoundly influenced by Sumerian culture, was being welded into a formidable power. About 2350 B.C. its king, Sargon of Akkad, established himself as suzerain of Sumer and extended his power westward beyond the Euphrates to the shores of the Mediterranean. A century and a half later the Guti, barbarians

Guti

from the mountains of the Persian frontier, invaded Mesopotamia and destroyed the Sargonid dynasty but, being themselves incapable of forming a government other than in name, were content to leave the old city states more or less in independence. The lack of any central authority allowed these to prosper and even to assert claims to overlordship in the traditional way; in the end they were able to rid themselves of their Guti masters and Ur-Nammu of Ur made himself king of Sumer and Akkad, founding, in 2112 B.C., the Third Dynasty of Ur.



Painted pottery from Arpachiyah, Khabur valley. Close of 5th millennium B.C. Cf. p. 19. *British Museum*. Bowl: height 8.2 cm., diameter 6.5 cm. Plate: height 2.5 cm., diameter 14 cm.

The expansion of Sumerian culture during the Early Dynastic period had not only resulted in the establishment of such centres as Mari and (probably) Haran far away to the west; it had also profoundly influenced non-Sumerian peoples in northern Mesopotamia. Beyond the boundaries of Akkad and north of the Amorite territory lay the country of the Hurri.

The Hurri are, at various times, found spread over so vast an area as that from the Persian mountains to the Mediterranean, and from Armenia to Palestine. Not organised under any central government, and mixing freely with Amorites, Canaanites and the Semitic inhabitants of what was to be Assyria, they might form merely a minority in a non-Hurrian state, as seems to have been the case at Ugarit on the Syrian coast and in the Canaanite towns, or they might, in territory more properly their own, found small city states such as Yamkhad, Alalakh and Aleppo in the west and Kirkuk in the east. In any case they were ready to assimilate the superior culture of Sumer, and from the Sumerians they learned the art of writing and much mythological lore, learning which they in their turn handed on to their neighbours. So it was with the Hittites.

Hurri

Hittites The Anatolian Hittites were immigrants of Caucasian stock whose earliest home seems to have been in the Araxes valley, where their settlements have been traced back to neolithic times. Sometime in the third millennium B.C. a great body of them (perhaps preceded by others at a yet earlier date) moved through the Hurri country to the Amq plain, which they occupied in force; later, hard pressed by the Hurri, they crossed the mountain barrier into Anatolia and gradually made their way northwards, conquering some of the small states amongst which the country was parcelled out and making allies of others. The invaders were an Aryan-speaking people, and some of the ten or more principalities which they absorbed were likewise Aryan-speaking, presumably earlier immigrants, but others seem to have been non-Indo-European and indigenous; amongst the latter was the principality of Hattusas, in the Halys basin, and it was the conquest of this that gave to the conquerors the name of Hatti, or Hittite, by which they were subsequently to be known. King Anittas, after securing and destroying Hattusas, carried his victories further to the east and added to his dominions Kanesh (c. 1900 B.C.) where a colony of Akkadian merchants had long been established; he transferred his seat from Kussura to Nesa, but put a curse upon the site of Hattusas, and it was only in the seventeenth century that king Hattusil made that the capital of what was then an empire, stretching from Malatya to the Ionian coast.

Syria At the same time as the al 'Ubaid culture was developing in the Mesopotamian delta, before 3500 B.C., the chalcolithic people of Palestine showed a promise which proved to be illusory. The painted model-house burial-chests from Khudheirah and, still more, the actual house-remains at Ghassul with their mud-brick walls adorned with polychrome designs in *tempera* seem to have no parallels or development in the Bronze Age.

In northern Syria there was a large Hurri element in the population; in the south the Semitic strain, constantly reinforced by immigrants from the desert, was predominant from the beginning. One such immigration — its date is quite unknown — resulted in the foundation of the coastal towns which later were to be called Phoenician; according to their own tradition the Phoenicians came into Syria from the Persian Gulf: certainly that would satisfactorily account for their choice of seaside sites, and it may well be that the increasing desiccation of the eastern coast of the Arabian peninsula compelled their move. That the Phoenician harbour-towns throughout history jeal-

Phoenicians

ously preserved their independence is characteristic of Syria as a whole; little towns, walled for defence against their neighbours and against Bedouin raiders, were content to exist under local sheikhs or petty princes. Never was there any centralised power; consequently there was but little uniformity of culture. At the beginning of the Bronze Age, c. 3200 B. C., the country as a whole came very much under the cultural influence of Mesopotamia; at about that date Mesopotamian seals of Jamdat Nasr type occur freely at Byblos, in the south, while in the north Alalakh witnesses to trade relations with Sumer. In the northern and eastern parts of the country this influence continued for a very long time, so much so that at a place like Mesh-rifeh there was by the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur a resident Sumerian colony and temples were built to Mesopotamian gods, while the law was based on Mesopotamian codes. This was due to trade. It was in the interests of trade that Sargon of Akkad invaded northern Syria, his object being to secure control of the sources of supply of hard timber. Precisely the same timber trade brought the southern country into close relation with Egypt. From the time of the First Dynasty Egyptian objects found in Palestine and Palestinian pottery found in Egypt prove a regular exchange of goods, while at Byblos gold-mounted stone vases bearing the cartouche of the Pharaoh witness to more important connections; it is indeed likely that the Pharaohs of the Thinite dynasty extended their dominions into Asia. A stela found at Balu'ah in Transjordan, which should belong to the close of the third millennium B.C., seems to echo the contemporary art of Egypt as influenced by Jamdat Nasr originals. Certainly in the time of the Sixth Dynasty Palestine and south Syria passed under the control of Egypt, though such control was interrupted by the invasion of the 'Hittite' tribes responsible for the introduction of the Khirbet Kerak pottery originating in the Araxes valley. By 2400 B.C. that invasion had spent its force (it is indeed possible that conquest and destruction had been confined to the villages, while the more important towns of the Canaanites held out) and with the Twelfth Dynasty of Egypt Pharaoh's authority was extended far to the north, including even Ugarit, the northernmost of the 'Phoenician' city states.

Thus at the beginning of the second millennium the position was that the kings of the Third Dynasty of Ur controlled the whole of Mesopotamia proper, had made themselves masters of Elam and were the dominant influence in north Syria. The rest of Syria was subject

FIG. 2

Trade with Egypt

Third Dynasty of Ur



FIG. 2 — Sacred barque. In the centre a priest is standing in front of an altar-like superstructure supported by a bull. Impression of a lapis lazuli cylinder seal from Uruk (Warka). Jamdat Nasr period, beginning of 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. p. 25. Staatliche Museen, Berlin. Height of the seal 43 mm.

to Pharaoh, who kept his official representatives in the courts of the local princes, who were suffered to remain as chiefs of the states. In Anatolia the Hittites were consolidating their position in the central area and thanks to the conquest of Arzawa by Labarnas had, at least temporarily, extended their western frontier to the Aegean Sea; but the confederacy of the disparate tribes was still precarious. The position was indeed far from being stable. In Mesopotamia the Semitic north, centred on Babylon, was growing more and more powerful and self-conscious, while the Assyrians were building themselves up into a considerable power. But the first blow was dealt by Elam. The Elamites invaded the Euphrates valley, overthrew the Third Dynasty of Ur and set up at Larsa an Elamite dynasty which they hoped — but without reason — would assure their suzerainty. Babylon, beyond the reach of the Elamites, now grew in strength until after a long-drawn struggle the great king Hammurabi made himself master of all that had been Sumer and Akkad, including Assyria in the north and Mari in the west, in the Babylonian empire; his conquest of Rim-Sin of Larsa came about the year 1754. Meanwhile the once strong Twelfth Dynasty of Egypt had come to an inglorious end, and soon after 1700 B.C. Egypt was invaded and conquered by Syrians.

Egyptian raids

The records of early Egyptians raids into Palestine, with their lists of booty, imply that the southern towns were richer and more prosperous than the results of excavation suggest; but for some reason or other the country had deteriorated, and while Transjordan had become almost entirely a nomad land the Canaanite towns, except for those on the coast, were much reduced in status. A movement into the Nile valley had already started from southern Syria when, as the scanty evidence seems to show, a wave of Hurri and Indo-European migrants from the north reached the Canaanite territory and, reinforced by the Palestinian population, by malcontents from the coast-

al towns resentful of Egypt's past control, and by Bedouin from the eastern desert, invaded Egypt and, under the name of Hyksos, took over the government of the country. Syrian control of Egypt was no less potent than government of the country. Syrian control of Egypt was no less potent than government by Pharaoh had been in the Egyptianising of Canaan, the evidence for which is never more marked than under the brief rule of the Hyksos, followed as it was in due course by the reconquest of Syria and the establishment of the New Empire by the Pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

In north Syria the collapse of the Twelfth Dynasty of Egypt had meant, for the time being at least, local independence, and the city states such as Yamkhad, Ugarit and Aleppo enjoyed a century or so of unexampled prosperity. But the Hittite Old Kingdom was by now firmly established and, tempted perhaps by the wealth of the north Syrian towns, began to expand southwards. Hattusil led his forces through the passes of the Taurus range and seized Aleppo and Yamkhad, and soon after 1600 B.C. his successor Mursilis raided and sacked Babylon, so putting an end to the First Dynasty of Babylon which Hammurabi had made the supreme power of the Middle East. It was but a raid, from which Mursilis returned home only to be murdered, and for three generations the Hittite kingdom was in anarchy; but the effects of the raid were lasting, for the throne of Babylon was seized by usurpers from the north-east, the Kassites — probably an Indo-European stock — whose dull and uneventful government was to endure through good fortune and bad for more than five hundred years.

*Hittite Old
Kingdom*

Kassites

Not very long after the Kassite invasion of Babylonia another Indo-European people infiltrated into the Hurri territories of northern Mesopotamia and (apparently by peaceful rather than by violent methods) imposed themselves as a ruling aristocracy over the Hurri tribes; their kingdom of Mitanni had, by the middle of the fifteenth century, spread from the Zab valley to the Amanus, and where their rule was not direct it was exercised effectively enough through vassal princes of the old city states. A new power had thus arisen which threatened the growing kingdom of Assyria, denied Syria to the Hittites and endangered the Egyptian dominions in Asia. The Hurri had recently been defeated by Thothmes III, and at about the same time the Hittites, perhaps in league with Egypt, had raided south and sacked Aleppo; but with the rise of the Mitanni now the principalities subject to the Hittites fell away, and Dushratta, the Mitanni king,

*Kingdom of
Mitanni*



Fired clay beaker from Susa. 4th millennium B.C. Cf. p. 19. *Louvre, Paris*. Height 28.5 cm.

while professing the deepest friendship for the Pharaoh Amenhotep, now an old man and feeble, actively fostered rebellion in the Egyptian provinces of Syria. The accession, in 1375, of the incompetent Akhenaten to the throne of Egypt precipitated events. Five years before this the great soldier and statesman Suppiluliumas had become king of the Hittites, and after spending some years in consolidating his position in Anatolia he led his forces through the Taurus; his first attack was repulsed, but a second attack, taking the Mitanni in the rear, was completely successful, Carchemish being the only north Syrian state which did not at once submit to him; — it was to fall to him later, and then the Great King's brothers were installed as kings of Carchemish and Aleppo. With the elimination of Mitanni Suppiluliumas' southern border marched with that of his 'friend' Akhenaten; fortunately for him the king of Kadesh, a faithful subject of Egypt, ventured to come out to battle, and with his defeat the Hittite frontier could be pushed south to the outskirts of Damascus, and even some of the coastal cities made treaties with the victor. Faced with intrigue and rebellion and with the incursions of the nomad Habiru the Egyptians had evacuated the whole of southern Syria; petty states, the chief of them being the Amurru kingdom of Damascus, now formed a buffer between Egypt and the Hittite empire: Suppiluliumas was content to leave them alone.

Carchemish

Actually, in pursuance of the same policy, he recreated a kingdom of Mitanni, under the son of Dushratta (who had been murdered by a political faction) to act as buffer against the menace of Assyria; evidently the king was satisfied with his conquests. The succeeding reigns experienced troubles enough to prove the old man's wisdom, but although Assuruballit of Assyria destroyed the Mitanni buffer and advanced to the Euphrates, he attempted nothing more. The real danger came from an Egyptian revival.

About 1300 Seti I recovered south Syria as far as Kadesh, a challenge which Muwatallis the Hittite could not disregard. In 1286/5 B.C. the two powers met in the battle of Kadesh; each side claimed the victory, but the Hittites actually advanced their frontier, while Pharaoh strengthened his hold upon the southern Canaanite states. In 1269 a treaty was signed between Hattusil and Ramses II guaranteeing peace and security throughout the Levant.

This halcyon interval, marred only so far as the Hittites were concerned by an unsuccessful war with the 'Achaean' of western Anatolia and by apprehensions regarding Assyria, whose rulers, after

'Achaean'

their almost continuous campaigns against Urartu in the north and the peoples of the Zagros mountains in the east, finally turned their arms to the south; Tukulti-Enurta defeated and sacked Babylon. The Assyrian victory, soon followed by attacks from Elam, resulted in the final collapse of the long-lived Kassite dynasty of Babylon.

But such distant rumours of trouble could be disregarded. What broke the peace of the Levant was actual disaster on a colossal scale and from a quite different quarter.

Just after 1200 B.C. there flowed into Asia Minor, from the north, a vast horde of land-seeking immigrants, warriors armed with iron weapons more effective than anything the bronze-users had known, who swarmed across the country killing those who opposed them and forcing into their ranks those who surrendered; their wives and children came with them, carried in heavy covered waggons, for they were seeking a new home in the land of their choice. Hattusas fell before them and was burned, and the Hittite power in Anatolia was wiped out. The invaders crossed the Taurus and marched south, their fleet keeping pace with the land army. Already 'the islands had been disturbed'² and the northern sea-captains, hiring themselves out as mercenaries, had served under the king of Libya in war against Egypt; but now they came with their kinsfolk and their allies, and their aim was not to sack but to seize for themselves that rich Nile land which was a paradise for landless men. They were a mixed crowd, Danaans from Cilicia Peleset or Philistines, some of whom had come from Crete, the Sherden and the Shekelesh, Turshu and Ekweh, Lycians and many others unknown, 'their hearts relying on their arms'. They burned Aleppo and Alalakh, Carchemish and Ugarit; they sailed to Cyprus and wasted it, and they made havoc of the Amorite kingdom of southern Syria; only on the borders of Egypt were they defeated, the glory of the day going to the Egyptian bowmen, who shot the enemy down in swathes before they could come to close quarters with their iron rapiers. Egypt was saved, but the invasion, though it failed, had changed the face of the whole Middle East. The epic of Troy deals with one incident of the wars that shook the Aegean world, but the real drama was set upon a far wider stage and had consequences that Homer could not guess.

In Syria the Philistines, beaten back from Egypt but not broken, settled down in the fertile coastland of Palestine, leaving only the hill country to the Israelites, who had arrived with the Habiru in the time of Akhenaten and were in possession of the uplands during

the reign of Merneptah. In the sea-port towns the old Canaanite-Phoenician population remained, but with a strong leavening of Mycenaeans; the latter, inheriting the traditions of Minoan and Mycenaean sea power, virtually took command in such matters and persuaded the Phoenicians to abandon the modest cabotage which had contented them in the past, when Egypt was their main market, and to risk the oversea routes that led to the western Mediterranean, establishing commercial exchanges in Marseilles, Cartagena and Carthage. In north Syria, where there had always been a pro-Hittite element, refugees from Anatolia founded a galaxy of Syro-Hittite states which flourished exceedingly through the next five hundred years, subject only to sporadic attacks by the Assyrians made when Assyria was strong but interrupted when she was involved in war with, or reduced to vassalage by, her more formidable neighbour Babylon. In Anatolia there was a complete change. The Hittites had disappeared except one principality in Cilicia, whose capital was at Adana; it was only an extension of the Syro-Hittite area in north Syria; its mixed character is best shown by the fact that the Hittite hieroglyphic and the Phoenician scripts were equally employed and that its king claimed descent from the Greek Mopsos. On the Aegean coast, which had been 'Achaean', Ionian Greek colonies were to grow up. In the centre the Phrygians took the place of the Hittites and were themselves supplanted in the course of time by the Lydians, while in the east arose the kingdom of Urartu, enriched by the metal ores of the Lake Van district. In the eighth and seventh centuries conditions in Anatolia were further complicated by waves of Cimmerian invaders who, c. 680 B.C., put an end to Phrygia as an independent power. When therefore the Lydians conquered the Cimmerian hordes the way was open for them to take over what had been Phrygian territory: active kings, Alyattes and Croesus, succeeded in extending their suzerainty over the entire plateau west of the Halys river, even making themselves masters of the Greek colonies on the Ionian coast, so that Lydia was the supreme power in Asia Minor at the time of Croesus' defeat by Cyrus, King of Persia, in 546 B.C.

*Mediterranean
trade*

From 1200 to 606 B.C. the main part in Middle Eastern history was played by Assyria. Lying off the line of march of the Peoples of the Sea, itself therefore undisturbed and freed from Hittite rivalry, it could employ its military machine against any weaker powers that it chose; thus, about 1100 B.C., Tiglath-pileser I could extend his

Assyria

dominions northwards to the sources of the Tigris, could reduce to vassalage some of the Syro-Hittite states up to the Mediterranean coast, could overrun the western edges of the Iranian plateau and finally could obtain possession of Babylon. An Aramaean invasion brought the Old Assyrian Empire to an end, but after 900 B.C. the rulers of the Middle Kingdom recovered most of the lost territories, though Babylon retained its independence until captured in 722 B.C. by the Assyrian usurper Tiglath-pileser IV, who had already subdued Damascus and threatened Palestine; Samaria was captured by his successor Sargon. The following years were mainly taken up by wars against Elam, now in alliance with Babylon. In 689 B.C. Babylon fell and was completely destroyed, only to be rebuilt by the Assyrians as a bulwark against Elam, and in 670 B.C. Esarhaddon added Egypt to his dominions; further campaigns against Elam,

Painted al 'Ubaid ware from Ur. This term is misleading, since al 'Ubaid is on the lower reaches of the Euphrates but this ware was actually first found at Eridu, the southernmost, and by tradition the oldest, of the Sumerian cities. Early 4th millennium B.C. Cf. p. 20. *British Museum. Height of beaker 11.2 cm., diameter 8.2 cm.; height of bowl 5.7 cm., diameter 22.2 cm.*



which included a great battle in which Teumman, king of Elam, was killed by Assur-bani-pal's forces, brought on one more rebellion on the part of Babylon and the city's second destruction, and, in 645 B.C., the capture and sack of Susa. Assur-bani-pal had reached the summit of his ambition and now rested on his laurels. Such inertia encouraged the Medes, wild warriors living in the Iranian mountains north of Elam. They raided Assyria and were crushed; but their king Cyaxares, having profited by the defeat to reorganise his army on Assyrian lines, achieved better success, only to have victory snatched from his hands at the last moment by a Scythian invasion. Those raiders plundered much of Media, then the country districts of Assyria, swept westwards, plundering as they went, to the Mediterranean and into Anatolia, and for about a generation were in loose control of the lands they had overrun; then, their numbers depleted by constant warfare, they — that is, the remnant of them — were driven back across the Caucasus. Cyaxares meanwhile renewed his attack on Assyria, this time in alliance with Chaldaean Babylon, and this time with success. The victors divided between them the provinces of the fallen empire; Cyaxares held the north, and actually extended his power beyond the farthest limits ever reached by Assyria; as champion against the Scyths he secured the whole of eastern Anatolia, including Cappadocia and Armenia, and made the river Halys the boundary between himself and the Lydian kingdom. Not unnaturally, war followed, but after some six years of indecisive combat, in which Babylon intervened on behalf of the Medes, peace was made between the three powers, a peace embracing the whole of the Levant which lasted for fifty years.

Medes

Scyths

The weakness and the downfall of Assyria had encouraged Egypt to try to regain her old position in Syria. Psammetichus began the adventure with the capture of Ashdod, and Necho followed; he defeated Josiah, king of Judah, advanced to and took Carchemish, and received the submission of Palestine, Idumea, Phoenicia and most of Syria. But in 604 B.C. he was defeated at Carchemish by Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon, who recovered the whole country as far as the borders of Egypt. When, soon afterwards, Egyptian intrigue persuaded Jehoiakim of Judah to rebel, a fresh expedition, supported by a Median contingent, put an end to the Jewish kingdom and the bulk of the Jewish population was transplanted to Babylonia. From the Levantine point of view this was a mere incident which only emphasised the general peace.

*Downfall of
Assyria*

Persians

The successful revolt of Cyrus against Astyages the Mede and the substitution of the Persians for the Medes as the governing people upset the equilibrium of the Middle East. Lydia was the first victim; Croesus was defeated, Sardes captured (546 B.C.), and with the fall of the Greek cities the Persian empire extended to the Ionian coast. Unfortunately for himself, Nabonidus of Babylon had allied himself with Croesus and with Pharaoh against the Persians; that justified an attack and in due course Cyrus, who had long been busy with conquests in the far east, decided, in 539 B.C., to take vengeance. Babylon fell, and with Babylonia, Susiana, Syria and Palestine included in his dominions Cyrus became the sole master of the Middle East.

That vast empire, to which Egypt and later the Punjab were added, was not seriously disturbed either by palace conspiracies such as caused the death of Cambyses and by the subsequent local mutinies or by what must have seemed the minor accidents of the war with Athens. Well organised, and run with due regard to the temper of diverse races, the ponderous machine functioned smoothly enough until it was smashed by the hammer-blows of Alexander the Great. The Hellenistic period meant a break with tradition such as the Levant had never known. Under the Diadochi the Middle East was once more split up into distinct and often warring states, but on all alike the Greek imprint was indelible and the old national characteristics survived merely as different interpretations of the Greek or as new motives for Greek treatment. So vast were the territories conquered by Alexander that so far as the Middle East was concerned interference from outside was almost impossible; alone, an incursion by Gauls into Anatolia, eventually subdued by Attalus of Pergamon, introduced a non-Greek element into a world uniformly Hellenistic. The advent of the Romans meant a political but not a cultural change; it rather emphasised the classical formula that had been imposed on the Orient. It is significant that when the Nabataeans, grown rich by desert traffic and living outside the limits of Roman control, set up a kingdom and built a capital of their own, they expressed themselves in terms of Hellenistic architecture; so too did the Palmyrenes, in similar circumstances, though, as if to insist upon their independence of their great neighbour, they infused Hellenistic art with an exotic taste that was peculiarly their own.

Greek influence

Pax Romana

After the constant wars carried on between the rival monarchs of the Hellenistic world the *Pax Romana* ushered in a period of unexampled prosperity for the Middle East. Actually the wars had been

less destructive than might have been expected; they had been dynastic struggles in which the peoples were little concerned, and it was to the interest of neither ruler to destroy what he hoped to acquire. But guaranteed tranquillity meant wealth and progress. Of course there were breaches of the peace, but they were few and were dealt with rigorously. The siege and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. was but a local incident; the defeat of Zenobia and the fall of Palmyra in 272 A.D. was a minor event that had no repercussions in Syria generally; the real danger, that of the Parthians, was too far away to disturb men's hearts.

It was none the less real. The wars between the Seleucids and Ptolemy Euergetes had given the Parthians their first chance to proclaim their independence and they gradually extended their power into Media; although defeated in 209 B.C. by Antiochus the Great they finally concluded an alliance with him and, profiting by Antiochus' unsuccessful war with Rome, added Hyrcania to Parthia proper, and, in 144 B.C., Babylon as well. In 129 B.C. the last of the Seleucids drove the Parthians out of Babylon and Media but was then defeated and killed by Phraates, the Parthian king, at Ecbatana, and all Syria lay at Phraates' mercy, when suddenly Parthia itself was invaded by the Yue-chi nomads and reduced to anarchy. Mithridates II (124—88 B.C.) restored the kingdom of his forefathers, but in the meanwhile conditions had changed. Rome had entered Asia Minor, as inheritor of the kingdom of Attalus of Pergamon (129 B.C.), and had left in power, as an ally of Rome, Mithridates VI of the petty kingdom of Pontus. Mithridates however started to enlarge his kingdom at the eastern end of the Black Sea, and made an advantageous alliance with Tigranes of Armenia, whose country had long been in the Parthian sphere of influence. When Rome was obliged to put a stop to the aggrandisement of Pontus and Sulla marched through Asia to the banks of the Euphrates the Parthians also intervened, proposing an alliance with Rome; it was not accepted. But after the long wars with Pontus and the final defeat of Mithridates and of Tigranes of Armenia, who had supported him, the victorious Roman general Pompey, who had on his own initiative concluded an alliance with Parthia against Armenia, refused to honour his agreement; Parthian enmity against Rome was thus assured at the very moment when the two powers marched together with no recognised frontier between them. In 53 B.C. Crassus invaded Parthia and was utterly defeated. Spasmodic invasions of Syria followed, and thereafter the

Parthians

*Expansion of
Roman Empire*

campaigns of Mark Antony, with varying fortune; but with the accession of Augustus peace was made and was kept for a hundred years. When war did break out, over the ever-vexed question of Armenia, neither side was obviously victorious, and Nero was glad to make peace, even at the cost of setting an Arsacid on the Armenian throne; Trajan's attack (A.D. 116), again due to quarrels over Armenia, did gain Adiabene and Mesopotamia as new provinces of the empire, but in A.D. 122 Hadrian abandoned these and made peace with the Parthian king. From 161 to 217 A.D. there was intermittent warfare, each side invading the territories of the other, at the end of which Parthia seemed to have won a signal victory but was in truth exhausted; in 226 A.D. a revolt by Ardeshir, the vassal king of Persia, put an end to the Arsacid dynasty and to the Parthian empire and substituted for it the empire of the Sassanians.

The first major clash with Rome resulted in the capture of the Emperor Valerian (260 A.D.); Rome had her revenge when Galerius defeated Narses in 297 A.D. and advanced the Roman frontier to the Tigris. But with the accession of Shapur II (309 A.D.) Parthia was again successful, and Julian's disastrous invasion in 363 A.D. resulted in the surrender of the five disputed provinces and of Nisibis to Shapur. The Sasanian dynasty was now well established and was to endure until the Moslem conquest.

1) Without the aid of a potter's wheel.

2) According to Egyptian chronicles.

CHAPTER II

ELAM BEFORE THE COMING OF THE INDO-EUROPEANS

In our first chapter the al 'Ubaid people, the earliest settlers in the Euphrates delta, were described as 'newcomers from the east'. The statement derives a certain support from tradition — "as they journeyed from the east they found a plain in the land of Shinar (= Babylon) and they dwelt there";¹) but it is based on the material evidence of the pottery of al 'Ubaid and of Susa respectively, and on that evidence it is generally agreed that the al 'Ubaid people were related, culturally and presumably ethnically, to the early inhabitants of Elam.

The Susa pottery does not stand alone. In the late neolithic and in the chalcolithic periods painted pottery was produced over a vast area of Asia. In a Stone Age site near Persepolis, at Nihavend and at Tepe Siyalk south of Teheran; at Tepe Hissar south of Astrabad; eastward, near Ashkhabad, at Anau and Ak-Tepe and at Namazgah-Tepe; on the edge of the Kara Kum desert at Jeitun and Chopan-Tepe; as far away as Baluchistan, where we have the Kulli painted wares, and up in Mongolia where the finest of all the decorative schemes were evolved; in all these and in many other intermediate sites excavation has produced painted pottery which is not indeed the same everywhere (different local schools can easily be distinguished), but shows a similarity of technique and parallels in design and motive which are sufficiently close to suggest, if not a common source, at least contacts and exchanges resulting in something like cultural uniformity. Naturally, in different areas development might follow independent lines. Thus, at Namazgah-Tepe, where the stratification yielded a very definite sequence, the wares of Level III are not only much more sophisticated than those of the lowest Level I but include new designs not unlike those of the Tell Halaf pottery, while Level IV finds parallels at Susa; independence and something like cross-fertilisation seem to go together. Because of these local differences, and also because our knowledge of the various Iran schools of ceramics is still very imperfect, we cannot point to any one area from which the al 'Ubaid people migrated into the delta. We cannot even say that their pottery is derived from that of Susa — many authorities indeed hold that its early phases antedate the real Susa ware — but it is related;

POTTERY

Al 'Ubaid, Susa

PLATE P. 39

Development

FIG. 1



FIG. 3 — Stylised saluki. Detail of a decorated beaker from Susa. This figure is very skilfully adapted to the round shape of the vessel. Painted in a brownish colour on clay. Cf. below. Circa 2000 B.C. Louvre, Paris. Approx. half original size.

and since Elam is not only the nearest to Sumer of all the eastern painted pottery areas but also is geographically a branch of the Mesopotamian delta rather than a part of Iran the cultural connection of Sumer and Elam in the earliest days may safely be assumed.

The al 'Ubaid painted ware is at its best in its earliest phase, but even then it never approaches the quality of Susa. There we have a highly-stylised self-conscious art for which the decoration of a vessel must be conditioned by the vessel's form so as to create a real unity. Mrs. Groenewegen-Frankfort ¹) has analysed particularly well such a goblet as is illustrated in the Plate on p. 28. "The ibexes . . . are so superbly characterised by the taut curve of the resilient body, the tense contraction of the legs, the exuberant swing of the horns, that, though by no means projections of actual forms, they appear to have inner coherence and are not built up out of geometric abstractions. But they also form an intricate pattern which harmonises with the decorative scheme and the essential forms of tall slender beakers and which on round bowls accentuates circumference and radius. The result is that these animals seem neither moving nor at rest: they are pure form, all temporal connotation is absent."

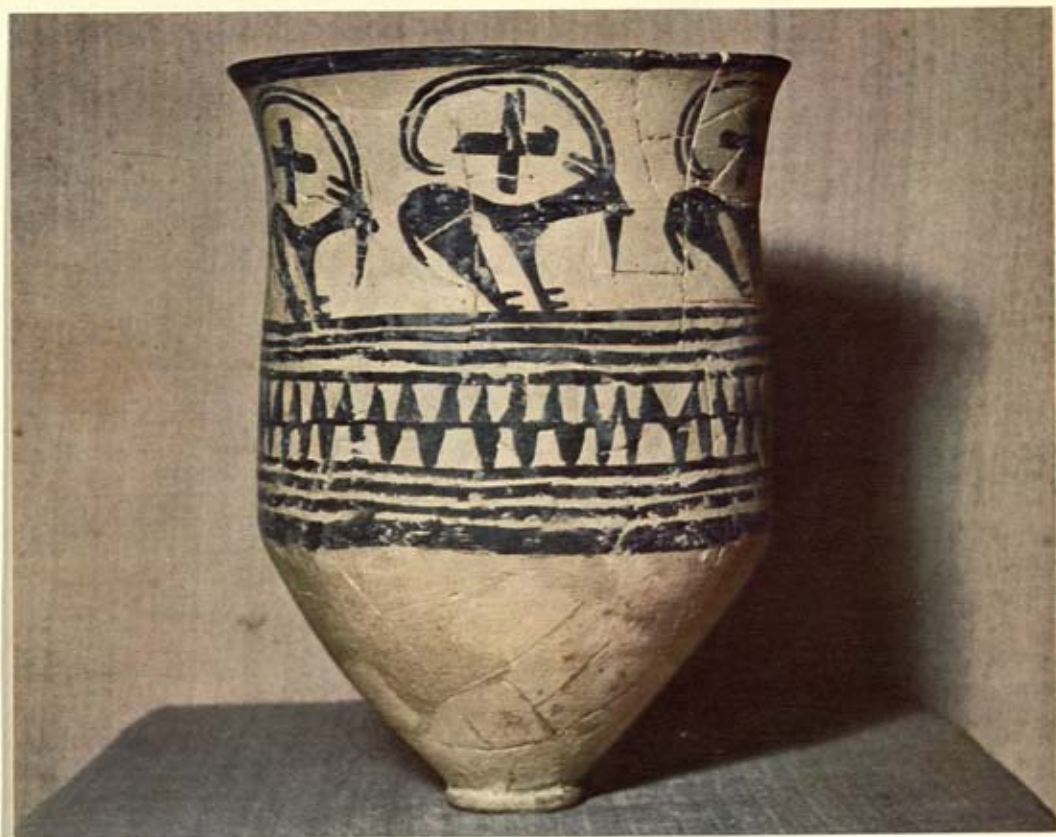
*Tepe-Siyalk,
Nihavend*

PLATE P. 39

This is high praise, but almost as much might be given to the best examples of Namazgah III ware, and if the pottery of Tepe Siyalk and of Nihavend does not quite rise to such heights it at least shows more taste and more imagination than the al 'Ubaid potter ever possessed. Assuming, as we must, that all alike started from the same humble level, we must realise that the Iranian peoples in the chalcolithic period had, at least so far as their pottery is concerned, and we have no other criterion, a finer artistic sense than had the settlers in Mesopotamia.

But in Elam or the neighbouring areas there is no sign of such cultural progress as was made by the Sumerians: the early promise does not seem to have been fulfilled.

There are historical reasons for this. We have seen how and why civilisation developed in Sumer, and in Elam the same operative conditions did not exist. If, as the Aratta legend implies, Elam was



Painted pottery from Tepe Siyalk, south of Teheran. Latter half of 4th millennium B.C. Cf. p. 38.
Archaeological Museum, Teheran.

under the suzerainty of the kings of Erech it was already but an appanage of Sumer, and certainly in later days it was subjected by the Akkadian dynasty of Sargon and again reduced to provincial status by the Third Dynasty of Ur. Elam did indeed take its revenge when it overthrew that dynasty by force of arms and set up at Isin and afterwards at Larsa an Elamite government over the whole of southern Mesopotamia; but this was a military and political success which does not connote any artistic accomplishment; and when at length Hammurabi of Babylon suppressed the Elamite kingdom there followed a brief respite before the Indo-European invaders seized Elam and all Iran.

If on the political side Elam was so closely involved with Mesopotamia, economic connections were also close. Not only was Elam the channel through which passed much of the Mesopotamian trade with the east, but to some extent it was itself a source of supply; where such a relation exists between neighbours the supplier is prone to adopt the fashions of his client rather than *vice versa*. It is therefore not surprising that in art Elam should have been content to copy Mesopotamia rather than to initiate anything of her own. In the third millennium B.C. the Elamite scribes invented a hieroglyphic script for business purposes; but nearly all Elamite texts are written in cuneiform and in the Akkadian language. Monuments of art are so few and far between that we have to call in evidence some which are not Elamite at all but the work of Elam's northern neighbours; one of these, a rock-cut relief celebrating a victory by a king of the Lullubi, would seem to be a lamentable pastiche of the stela of Naram-Sin; the second, also a rock carving, shows the victorious king Annubanini with the goddess Ninni holding in leash eight naked prisoners; in composition and in style it frankly imitates the Sumerian, the king wears the Sumerian *kaunakes* kilt, and most of the gods invoked in the cuneiform inscription are Akkadian. It is fair to assume that the art of Elam proper was equally unoriginal. When we do have, in the fourteenth century B.C., an authentic Elamite work, a bronze statue of queen Napir-asu (the head and one arm are lacking), it is in Mesopotamian style: the figure is conceived, as in Sumerian sculpture, in terms of a cone supported by a cylinder; the drapery is a mere sheath unrelated to the bodily form beneath it, but the modelling of the flesh is excellent and the statue must have been a really fine thing. But without the inscription giving the queen's name we should have had no reason to think that it was an Elamite statue.

FIG. 4

Ziggurat

At Tchoga-Zanbil, not far from Susa, there are the well-preserved remains of a brick ziggurat.³ It dates from the thirteenth century B.C., the 'golden age' of Elam, when king Shutruk-Nahhunte overthrew the Kassite dynasty of Babylon and carried off the statue of Marduk to Susa: the ziggurat as such belongs, of course, to ancient Sumerian architecture, and to that extent Elam is here following the experiment with modifications of the original design, and the Elamite ziggurat, though it is conventional in having the seven stages which characterise the ziggurat at Ur of Late Babylonian times, is in some respects unlike any other known to us. Instead of the triple stairway against the façade of the building, its three flights converging at the

FIG. 4 — Bronze statue of Queen Napir-asu from Elam, 14th century B.C. Cf. p. 40. Louvre, Paris. Height 1.29 m.



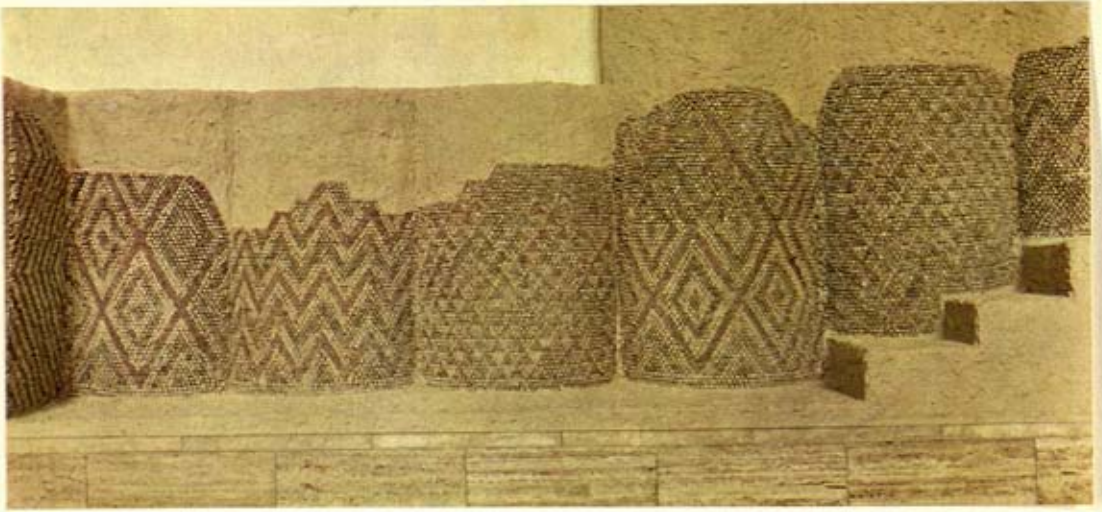
centre, the Elamite ziggurat has single stairways on three of its faces, and these have monumental vaulted gate-towers behind which the flights run through vaulted passages contrived inside the brick mass of the building. Here, apparently, we have evidence of originality on the part of Elamite architects; but even so their originality does not go beyond playing a variation on an old theme.

It might be urged that if there is indeed so little of Elamite art to be discussed, and that little is imitative, any discussion is otiose and unnecessary to a history of art. But for the history of art Elam is essential. The creative imagination which was manifest in the prehistoric pottery of Susa may have lain dormant for many centuries, or may have found adequate expression in the art of the kindred but more advanced civilisation of the Euphrates valley; but it was not dead. Revitalised by the incoming of the Indo-Europeans that imagination was to find expression in Achaemenid art, and subsequently in the art of Persia. What we find most admirable in Persian art is the perfect harmony of decoration and form: the decorative motives may have been borrowed, the forms too may claim no originality, but they are combined with such unerring taste that each seems indispensable to the other: it is the quality which had distinguished the clay vessels of prehistoric Susa.

¹) Genesis XI, 2.

²) H. A. Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement*, p. 6.

³) Cf. E. Parada, *Ancient Iran* (Art of the World).



Columns in the temple area at Uruk (Warka), with a mosaic facing of red, black and white pencil-like terra-cotta cones. The cones were thrust into the mud plaster of the walls or columns, giving a bright and colourful effect. Latter half of 4th millennium B.C. Cf. pp. 47, 51. *Staatliche Museen, Berlin*.

CHAPTER III

SUMER: FROM THE BEGINNINGS OF ART TO THE END OF THE EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD

Civilisation began in the Euphrates delta. It has already been explained how the very limitations of that country led to the development of urban life and to foreign trade; the wealth and leisure, and the differentiation of classes that resulted, made of lower Mesopotamia a natural forcing-bed of art.

The earliest settlers were possessed of a neolithic culture of no mean order. As farmers, they were breeders of domestic cattle and growers of domesticated grain; their pottery was excellent, and their hand-modelled clay figurines, the only free works of art of the period that are known to us, have distinct merit. The figures, nearly always nude female figures, are very carefully made and highly finished; the bodies, subject to certain conventions, such as the marked angularity of the shoulders, are realistic, whereas the heads, with their high head-dresses of bitumen, are more reptilian than human, a quality which is perhaps due to the artist's lack of skill, but may equally well have been intentional.

These minor arts are characteristic of the al 'Ubaid period only and, so far as we can see, had no direct influence upon later ages, though they do bear witness to an artistic sense without which Sumerian art would not have come to fruition. It was to architecture that the al 'Ubaid people made an immediate and a lasting contribution.

In a land with no stone and no hard timber the only building materials supplied by nature were mud and reeds. Such might seem a poor basis for a school of architecture. The immigrants into the delta appear to have brought with them the knowledge of the making of mud bricks¹ — crude mud bricks were used for the earliest of the sixteen superimposed al 'Ubaid temples excavated at Eridu — and had they employed only those they might well never have progressed beyond the primitive hut. But a nimble-minded people took advantage of the immensely tall and stout reeds that cover the Mesopotamian marshlands, and most of their building was done with those. Of this there is no doubt. In the Sumerian legend of Gilgamesh the hero lives in a reed house: remains of reed houses were found at Ur below

THE AL 'UBAID
PERIOD

FIG. 5

Architecture



So-called 'cult vase of Uruk'. Alabaster vase with decoration in relief representing an offering scene. Found by the German expedition to Warka, in the shrine of the goddess Inanna in the Jamdat Nasr level. Cf. p. 52 *Iraq Museum, Baghdad*. Height approx. 1.20 m.

FIG. 5 — Female idol from Ur, of fired clay. Al 'Ubaid period, 4th millennium B.C. Cf. p. 43. British Museum. Slightly reduced scale.



the Flood deposit: reed huts are represented in reliefs of the Uruk period and of that of the First Dynasty of Ur; similar reed buildings are constructed by the Marsh Arabs of the present day. For architecture the technique was of supreme importance.

The method employed is that a number of reeds are tied together in bundles, and these fascines are planted firmly in the ground in two rows, at equal distances, facing each other, and in each row lighter fascines are lashed horizontally to the uprights so as to make a rigid framework; — obviously this means that the rows must be straight and that the building will consequently be rectangular. Then the tops of the uprights are bent inwards and each is tied to the head of its opposite number, forming a series of arches. Next, reed matting is attached to the inside of the framework, made fast to uprights and cross-bars, and the result is a tunnel open at either end. One end is then blocked with fascines and matting; at the other end two specially tall and thick bundles of reeds make door-jambs which, for the sake of ornament, may be carried up like pylons above the roof-line, and the space on either side and above the lintel is filled with matting. The modern Marsh-Arab house is a dignified and impressive building, and the prehistoric one was like it.

For better protection the Sumerian covered the outside of his reed dwelling with a thick coat of mud plaster; fragments of such plaster

Technique of construction

FIG. 7

FIG. 6

Brick buildings

were found in the pre-Flood levels at Ur. Since the framework was on the outside, the plaster would give the effect of a wall relieved by a row of half-columns in the round and divided horizontally into panels. Temples built for the gods were built of bricks; but because the half-columns of the reed building were pleasing, they were imitated in brickwork; generally the curves were faithfully reproduced, sometimes, because the rectangular brick made curves difficult, square buttresses were substituted for the half-round, to give a somewhat similar effect. Down to the very last days of Babylon the walls of sacred buildings (and of none other) were decorated with the half-round or square ornamental buttresses which recalled the prehistoric age.

Barrel vault

The reed house was normally a long tunnel, i.e., it was a vaulted room. If one of these were accidentally burnt, some of the thick mud plaster of the roof, hardened by the heat, might well be left standing, and there was an arch. To construct a real arch it was only necessary to lay bricks over a reed centring. The same thing could be done for a vault; but very soon the builders discovered that for the vault no centring was required; a barrel vault could be made by leaning bricks against the end wall, and then more bricks until a complete ring was formed, sharply sloped so that its key-brick rested against the end wall, and so on, each new ring leaning against and supported by the last; again, a technique that was to be used throughout Babylonian history and found its most extravagant fulfilment in the great court of the Sassanian palace at Ctesiphon, where the vault, built without centring, measures no less than 25.80 metres in span.

Dome

Where the reed hut was a small affair, no longer than it was wide, needing only four uprights, one at each corner, then the tops of all four could be bent in together to the centre, lashed together and covered with matting and mud plaster, and the result was in effect a dome. Here again the early builder was quick to profit by experience. In the First Dynasty cemetery at Ur one of the royal tomb-chambers was roofed with a dome (found by us intact) built of stone rubble set in mud mortar over a timber centring; it was a true dome with pendentives rounding off the angles of the square chamber. A small brick dome covered a magazine in the courtyard of Ur-Nammu's ziggurat, and in several later buildings, e.g. the shrine of Dublal-makh and the temple of Nin-gal of Kuri-galzu's time, the fourteenth century B.C., the ground-plan shows unmistakably that the dome had been employed. As regards the arch, we have examples of this (as of

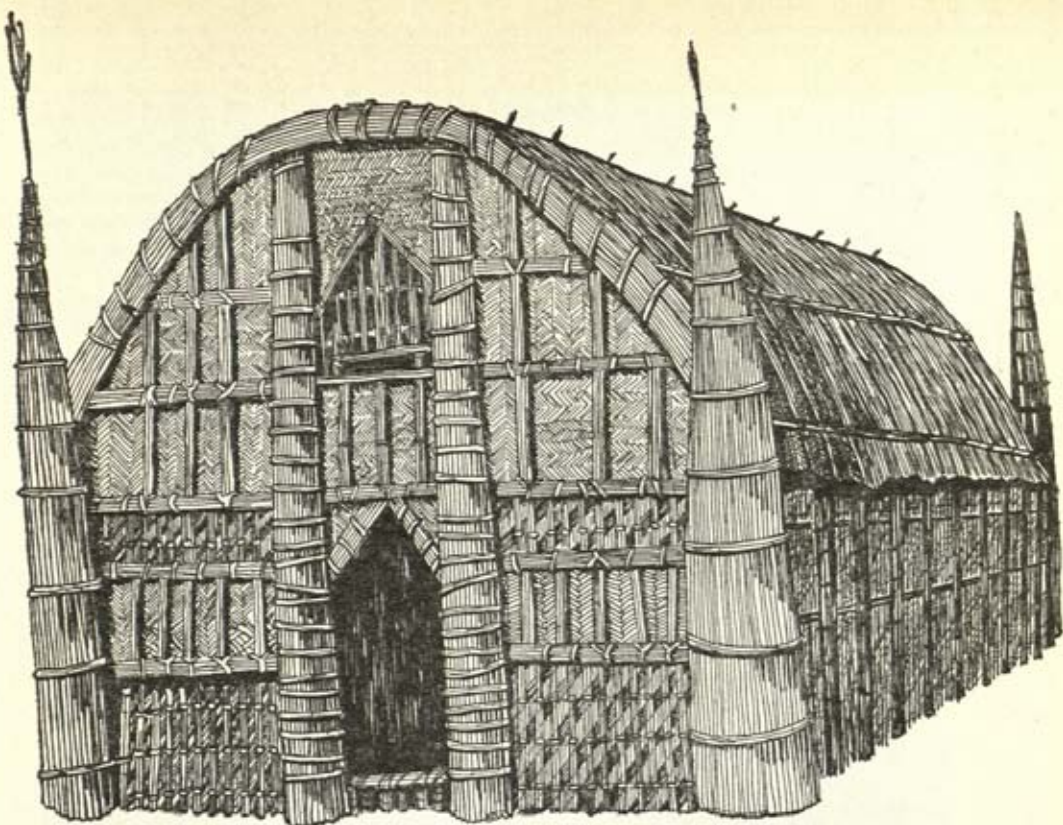


FIG. 6 — Marsh Arab reed house in southern Iraq. Remains of similar reed houses have been found at Ur. Cf. p. 45. After photo by Wilfried Thesiger.

the barrel vault) in the Royal Cemetery, and it was regularly used in private houses of the Larsa period, the eighteenth century B.C.

Lastly, the column. Until recently it had been confidently assumed that the column was unknown in Mesopotamian architecture prior to the classical period. The assumption was an unreasonable one, for in a land where the palm-tree grows man could hardly fail to adopt it for building purposes; it was based on the negative evidence that no columns had been found: but if the columns were of wood their disappearance was inevitable. Now we have the huge brick columns of Warka, whose mosaic sheathing may well have been suggested by the triangular frond-bases of the palm trunk; there are at Kish brick columns of the Early Dynastic period, and in the al 'Ubaid temple of the First Dynasty of Ur the columns were actual palm-trunks, either sheathed in copper or covered with a polychrome incrustation which

Column

PLATE P. 42

PLATE P. 57

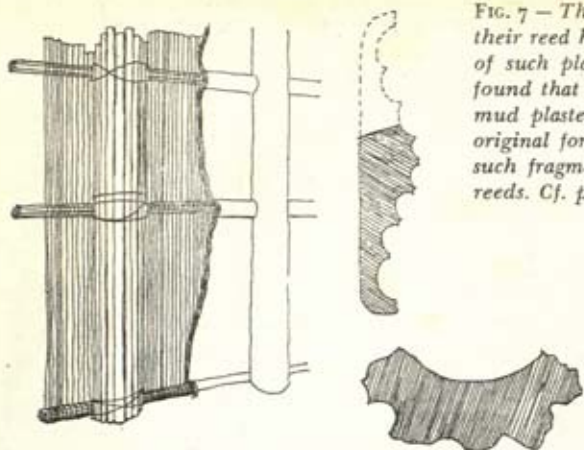


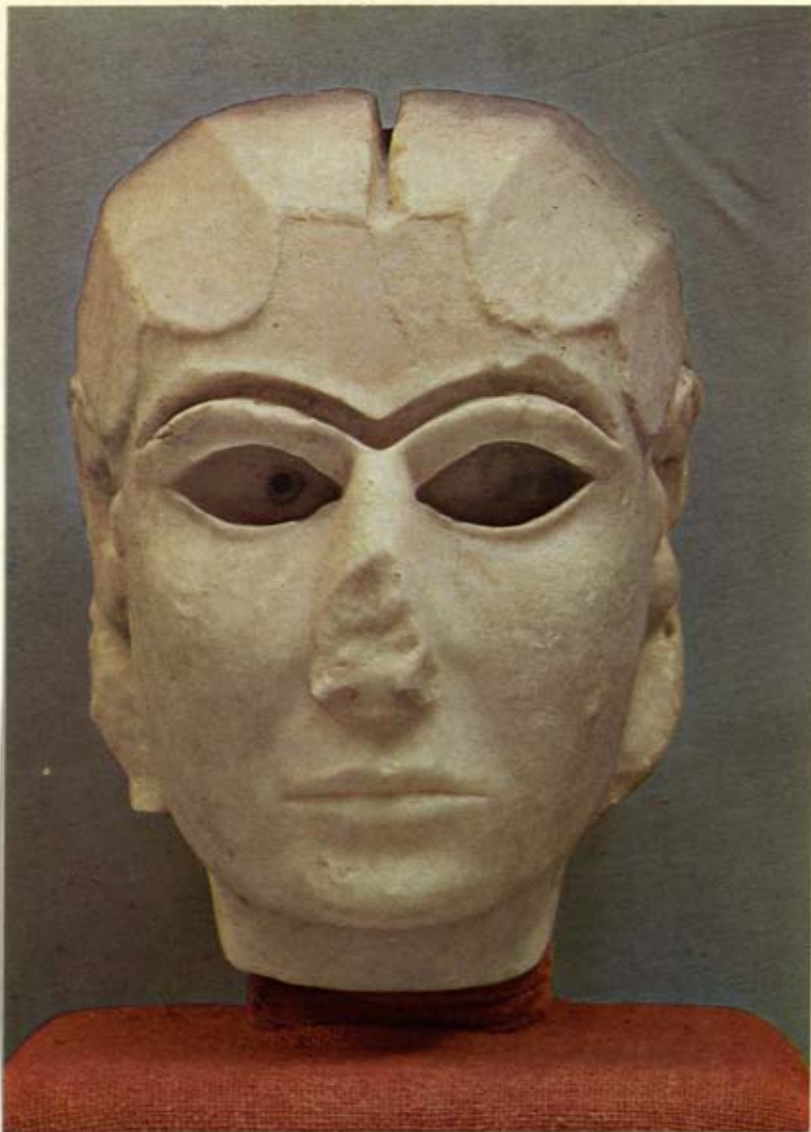
FIG. 7 — The Sumerians occasionally covered the walls of their reed houses with a coat of mud plaster; fragments of such plaster from the al 'Ubaïd period have been found that had apparently been destroyed by fire. The mud plaster had been baked by the heat so that the original form was preserved. This section through one such fragment shows the impressions of the bundle of reeds. Cf. p. 45.

again reproduced the texture of the natural trunk. At Ur there is a brick column of the date of the Third Dynasty of Ur, and a column of Warad-Sin (c. 1800 B.C.) is built with bricks specially moulded to reproduce the frond-bases.

Very little has been found in the way of buildings of the al 'Ubaïd period, and even so no more than the foundations are preserved; one cannot expect to recover upstanding architectural features. But when such are seen to be in use in periods not very much later, and are obviously derived from constructions which we know to have been employed by the al 'Ubaïd people, we can fairly credit them with the invention. Primitive as those people were, they turned the materials provided by nature to such account that before disaster overtook them they had evolved all the basic forms of architecture: the column, the arch, the vault and the dome. These inventions they handed on to their successors, who made full use of them throughout history and spread the knowledge of them far afield; we see them in their later and more sophisticated forms, but the genesis of them must be sought in the mud and reeds of the Mesopotamian delta.

THE URUK PERIOD

The northerners who, after the Flood, helped to repopulate the devastated country were in some ways more advanced than the people of the al 'Ubaïd period. They understood the use of the potter's wheel, and their wheel-turned vases of plain clay, black, grey or red, well shaped and for the most part finely burnished, soon supplanted the decadent painted ware of the older inhabitants. Before very long they extended the use of the wheel and introduced the wagon, drawn by oxen or asses, for draught purposes. Moreover, they were metal-work-



Female head from Uruk, of translucent white marble, formerly probably provided with a head-dress. The eyes and eyebrows were originally inlaid. Found at Warka in the Jamdat Nasr level (approx. 2800-2600 B.C.), but it may possibly be assigned to the close of the 4th or the beginning of the 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. p. 53. *Iraq Museum, Baghdad. Height 22 cm.*

Metal implements

ers. In their former home they had been more closely in touch with the copper-miners of eastern Anatolia; now, in the delta, the raw material had to be imported over a greater distance, but their own smiths, by casting and by hammering, had the skill to make all such metal objects as the culture of the time required. It is true that copper tools or weapons of the Uruk period are relatively few; but that is because the metal was costly and was therefore economically used; objects of any size would seldom be deposited in graves, and worn-out implements would not be thrown away but re-cast. That they were freely used is, however, certain. The al 'Ubaid sickles had been made of clay, fired at a very high temperature; they were effective, up to a point, but brittle, so that sites of that period are littered with an astonishing number of broken sickles. In the Uruk period the clay sickle hardly ever appears; it had been replaced by the metal type; but not a single copper sickle of that date has yet come to light. The Uruk period therefore saw the full development of the copper industry, and where the metal was employed for farming implements it was surely used for objects of luxury as well.

Stone

Lastly, the newcomers were accustomed to working in stone. In their changed conditions, with no stone available, its free use had to be abandoned, and only occasionally did they try to keep to tradition by laying foundations of limestone rubble for the walls of some particularly sacred building; on the other hand, their technical skill could be exercised on fine stone — dolerite, steatite or alabaster — imported for the purpose, so that in the temples and in the houses of the rich stone vessels began to take the place of earthenware.

But the same newcomers were quick to recognise the good work of the old al 'Ubaid people, with whom they lived on friendly terms, and to profit by their example. Thus in building construction, where the materials were necessarily the same, the same principles were observed although a more wealthy community demanded greater



FIG. 8 — *Cylinder-seal impression from Uruk. The individual figures stand out particularly well against the plain background. The same technique was applied in the case of the cult vase from Uruk (Plate p. 44). Cf. p. 53. Jamdat Nasr period. Staatliche Museen, Berlin.*



Steatite ritual vessel from Ur, decorated with bulls and ears of corn in relief. Beginning of 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. p. 55. *Iraq Museum, Baghdad. Height 6 cm., diameter 13.5 cm.*

elaboration in detail. The most striking example of this is afforded by the façade of the temple courtyard at Uruk (Warka), part of which was discovered by Loftus in 1854 and thoroughly excavated by the German Warka expedition in 1932. This façade and the terraced hypostyle hall is relieved by the half-columns which derive from reed construction; but both this wall and the huge brick columns of the temple entry are enriched with a mosaic of geometrical patterns executed in red, black and cream-colour. The technique is a curious one. The brickwork was coated with a mud plaster some ten centimetres thick, and into the wet mud were thrust pencil-like terra-cotta cones whose butt ends were either plain or had been dipped in paint; it was a laborious process, but the brilliant result fully repaid the labour. Something of the same sort was done on a larger scale by the Uruk builders of the earliest ziggurat platform; at intervals between the

PLATE P. 42

Mosaic work

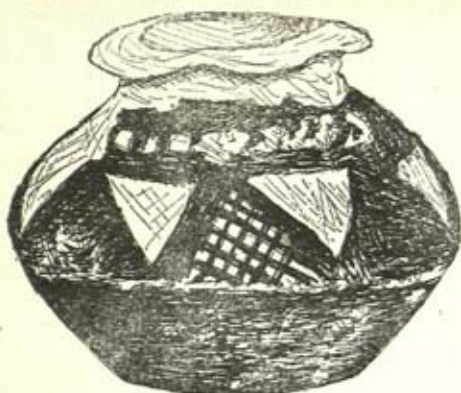


FIG. 9 — *Three-colour pottery of the Jamdat Nasr period. Almost invariably the design is geometric, painted upon a reserved ground of the natural clay, while the rest of the vessel is painted red. Cf. p. 55.*

brick courses they laid large empty clay jars with their mouths flush with the wall surface, so that the whitewashed expanse was broken by horizontal bands of black circles; it was a rough-and-ready method aimed at obtaining a broad effect satisfactory enough when seen from a distance. Because the coloured cone technique was costly, and also limited in its possibilities, a variant was later introduced; large terra-cotta figures in silhouette with lightly modelled interior detail were pegged to the mud plaster of the wall and only the interstice between them filled in with cones; the figures might be human or animal figures, or even architectural, and since these would naturally be arranged in horizontal rows their use led directly (as we shall see) to the invention of the architectural frieze.

Stone carving

PLATE P. 44

If mural decoration was an outstanding feature of Uruk art, another was the carving of stone vessels. The most remarkable of these is a great alabaster vase, standing about 1.20 m. high, found by the German expedition at Warka; it lay, together with other stone vases, in the Jamdat Nasr level, in the shrine of the goddess Inanna, but as it had been broken and mended in antiquity it may be attributed to the Uruk period. From a technical point of view the carving, in very



FIG. 10 — *Cylinder-seal impression of the Jamdat Nasr period. Since the design is repetitive, the effect given is that of a continuous frieze. Cf. p. 55. Louvre, Paris. Height of the seal 38 mm.*

FIG. 11 — Steatite cylinder-seal impression from Khafaje. Example of the so-called 'Brocade' style, where a pure pattern is repeated ad libitum. Cf. p. 55. Oriental Institute, Chicago. Height of the seal 51 mm.



low relief in two planes with silhouetted figures relieved by extremely delicate internal modelling, is masterly; the spacing of the three bands of decoration is admirably in keeping with the shape of the vase, and in each band the open ordering of the figures against a plain background gives to each its full value — it is an artistic principle which is equally noticeable in the pictorial cylinder-seals of the period. The draughtsmanship too is excellent; whereas in the bottom registers the symbolic figures of goats and of palms and barley-ears are repeated with formal exactitude, the offering-bearers in the middle register, for all their similarity of pose, are individuals, and one can almost see the anxious care with which each handles his sacred burden.

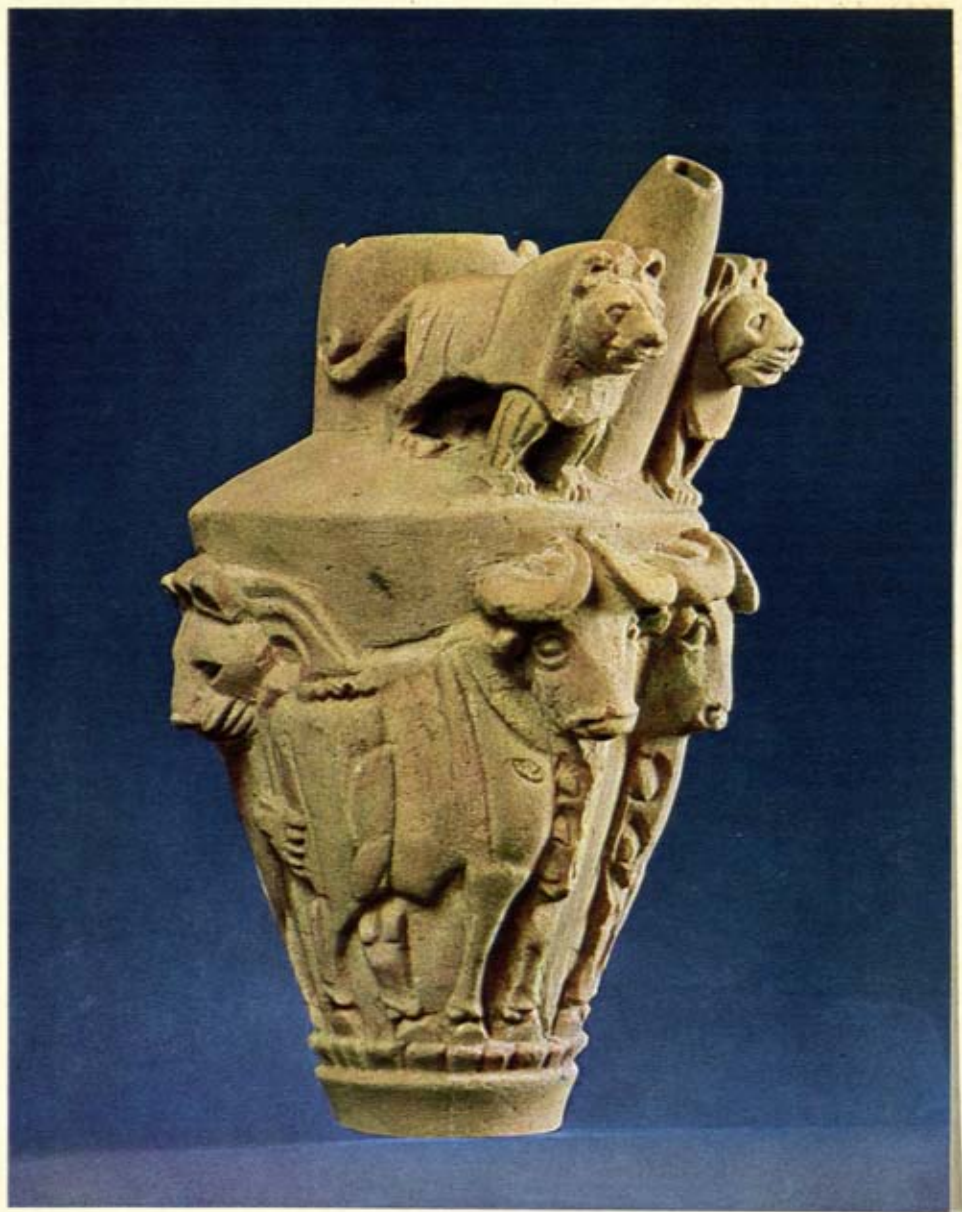
FIG. 8

With this magnificent vase we cannot but associate an equally fine piece of sculpture in the round, the 'Lady of Warka'. This too was found in the Jamdat Nasr level, but seems to have been discarded in that period; if it is not actually of Uruk date, it must certainly be in the Uruk tradition and may serve to illustrate the art of that time. Already we have the inlaid eyes and eyebrows which were to be characteristic of all Sumerian sculpture, and the exaggerated size of the eyes anticipates later convention; the carving of the head-dress too suggests that this was completed in some other material, perhaps metal, possibly bitumen on the analogy of the al 'Ubaid figurines. The head is undeniably beautiful, sympathetically modelled and full of character; unique in this early period, it must rank with the few examples of later Sumerian sculpture that can be called works of genius.

PLATE P. 49

If it be with a certain hesitation that we attribute a work of art to the Jamdat Nasr rather than to the Uruk period it is because there is between the two periods no hard-and-fast distinction; the Uruk tradi-

THE JAMDAT
NASR PERIOD



Limestone offering pitcher from Uruk, with figures of bulls and lions in the round. Jamdat Nasr period (2800–2600 B.C.). Cf. p. 55. *Iraq Museum, Baghdad*. Height 20.3 cm., diameter 11.5 cm.

tion continues unbroken. The newcomers did introduce a new type of painted pottery which with its three-colour decoration was pleasing, but technically poor in that the colours were ill fixed; almost always the design is geometric, in black upon a reserved ground of the natural clay while the rest of the vessel is painted red; when, as rarely happens, the potter attempts a pictorial design, his efforts are curiously inept. Judging from the cylinder seals the art of the period was decadent. Writing had been invented in, probably, the later Uruk times, and before that time seals had been used merely as marks of ownership. In the Jamdat Nasr period writing became more general and seals, now used for signing documents, became more numerous; for the most part, they no longer show the sense of pictorial design and the skill in the carving in *intaglio* that are so striking in the preceding age; the treatment of animal forms is at the best but summary, the field tends to be overcrowded and the details to be repetitive, so that if the seal were only partly rolled out the design would still appear complete, while if it were rolled out too far the repetition would give the effect of a continuous frieze. Towards the close of the Jamdat Nasr period the seal-cutter had evolved what has been called the "Brocade" style, where there is no subject but a pure pattern which can be repeated *ad libitum*.

It is to the Jamdat Nasr period then that we may assign the stone vases from Warka which are built up from parts made of differently coloured stones, objects more curious than beautiful, and those inlaid with coloured stone or mother-of-pearl. Undoubtedly there was still good work done; a steatite bowl with figures of oxen in relief found at Ur is a fine example of what was, as crude and botched specimens (dated to the period) prove, a favourite motive. But the level of taste had declined. A limestone vase from Warka, dated by its shape, which in terra-cotta is typical of the period, has round its

FIG. 9

Seals

FIG. 10

'Brocade' style

FIG. 11

PLATE P. 51

PLATE P. 54

FIG. 12 — Steatite figure of a wild boar from the Jamdat Nasr level at Ur. Rare example of a sculpture in the round from this period. Cf. p. 56.





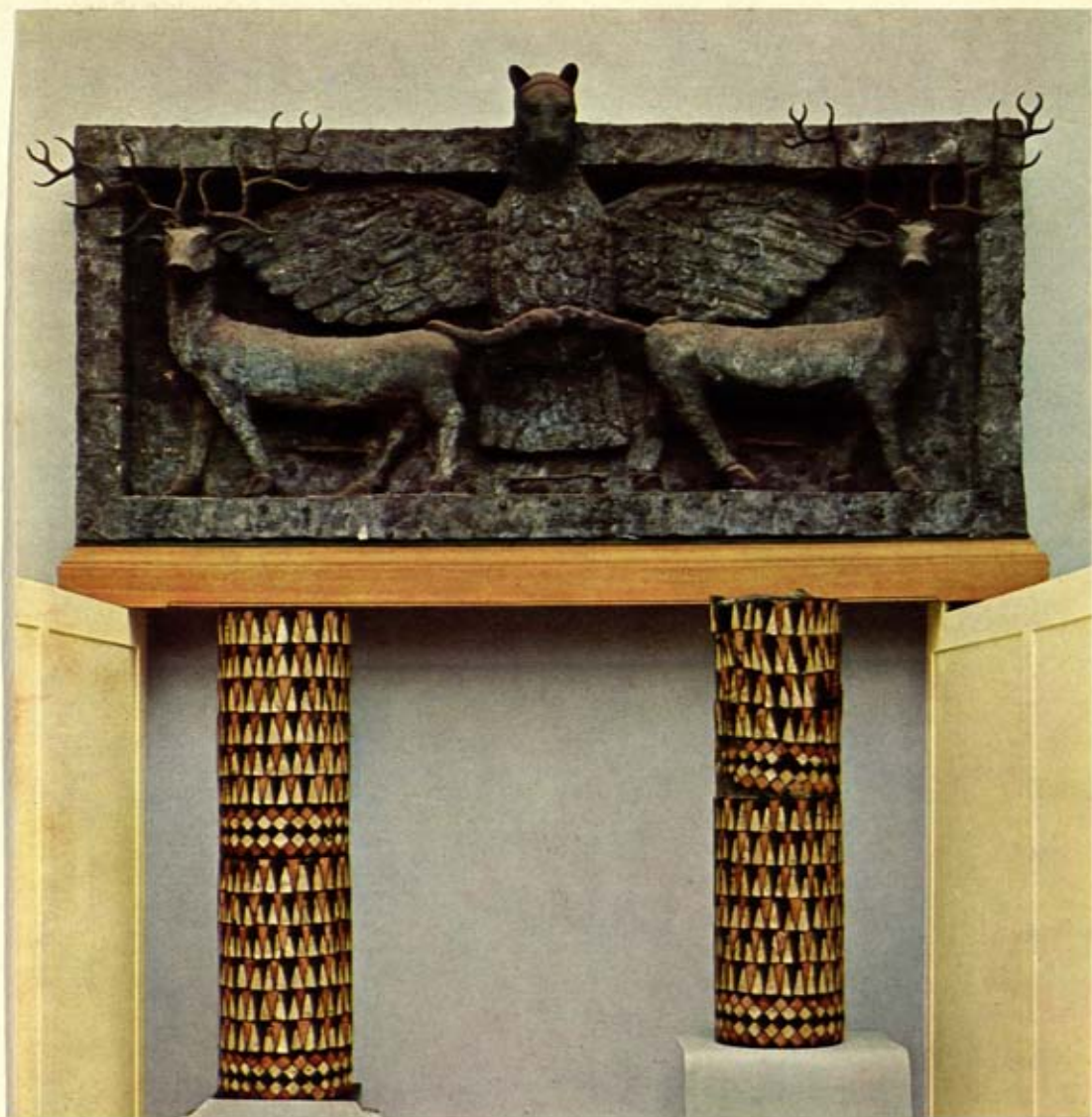
FIG. 13 — Impression of a lapis lazuli cylinder seal from Ur. The subject, a ritual banquet with seated figures drinking through tubes, is typical of this period. Cf. p. 60. British Museum.

FIG. 12

body bulls and lions carved in high relief and, flanking the spout, two figures of lions in the round; nothing could be less in keeping with the severe outline of the vase, which is ruined by this misapplied ornament. An alabaster lamp from Ur, made in the form of a shell, has a head added to it so that from below it resembles a bat in flight — a harmless piece of virtuosity, but artistically bad. But at the same time the stone-cutters were doing admirable work. Amongst the many hundreds of stone vessels from the Jamdat Nasr cemetery at Ur some show real feeling, as when the broad rim of an alabaster vase is cut to almost paper thinness so as to take full advantage of its translucence, or a great jar of grey diorite is given a shape well-nigh Greek in its perfect proportions. Some of their animal carving too is excellent; a couchant wild boar in steatite, found at Ur, is a fine piece of miniature sculpture, and from Brak comes a whole series of animal amulets which not only show a keen observation of animal life but possess real style. Forms are simplified by the omission of the unessential but there is no sacrifice of truth to nature or of vitality; within the space of three or four centimetres the intrinsic character of deer or rabbit, monkey or pig is faithfully rendered, but each little figure is so schematised as to give us not an individual but a type. There is a curious unevenness about Jamdat Nasr art. Perhaps the grotesquely carved stone vases were made to the taste of an alien ruling

Copper relief from the temple of Nin-khursag at al 'Ubaid, built about 2600 B.C. by King A-anni-pad-da of the First Dynasty of Ur. The relief represents the lion-headed eagle Im-dugud with two stags.

Below: two columns of palm-trunks whose mosaic sheathing consists of black, red and white triangles of mother-of-pearl, red sandstone and asphalt. The column on the left is in its original state, but the one on the right has been restored. ▶



Some scholars have recently again expressed doubt whether these columns did in fact serve to support the relief. Cf. pp. 47, 61. *British Museum*. Height of relief 1.07 m., width 2.37 m.

class which could not appreciate the Uruk standards; or we may say that it was a rich period and riches sometimes beget vulgarity; but the craftsmen have not forgotten the old traditions and could still do admirable work.

Influence upon Egypt

To the Jamdat Nasr period must be given credit for the formative influence exercised upon Egypt. It was at this time, shortly before the rise of the Egyptian First Dynasty, that Egyptian stone-carvers took as their models the works of art produced in the Mesopotamian delta. The Egyptian slate palettes borrow their technique, their style and even some of their motives from the Mesopotamian; the fact is undeniable, but the explanation of it is not obvious. Seeing that they imported stone vases from as far away as Mehi in Baluchistan the Jamdat Nasr people may well have had business connections with the Nile valley; but, in any case, it was they who laid the foundations of Egyptian art.

EARLY DYNASTIC
PERIOD

The transition from the Jamdat Nasr period to the Early Dynastic is signalised by only two definite changes; — the painted pottery goes suddenly and completely out of use, and for the normal flat-topped brick there is suddenly and uniformly substituted the 'plano-convex' brick, a most unpractical brick, rectangular in plan but with a top sharply rounded. The present writer's theory that the change was a violent one, due to a 'nationalist' uprising against a foreign régime, and that the plano-convex brick was adopted as a symbol of the complete break with that régime is not generally accepted; but it is a fact that a certain religious or sentimental significance was attached to the plano-convex brick down to the end of Babylonian history, that the Early Dynastic period does carry on the cultural traditions

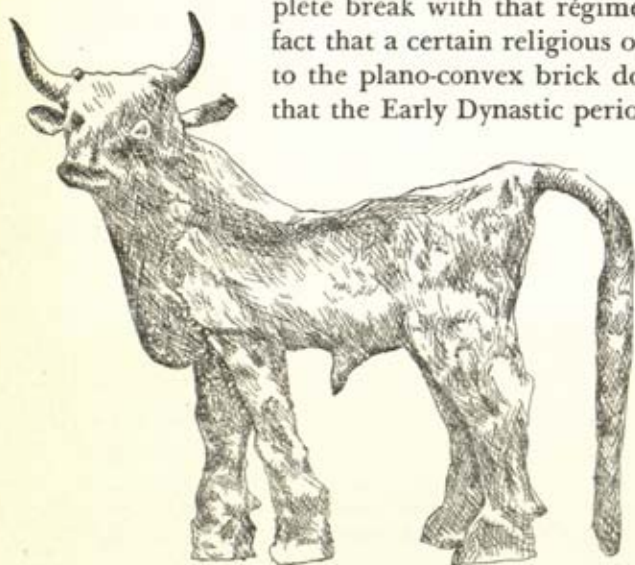


FIG. 14 — Statue of ox of copper sheeting from a temple at al 'Ubaid. The figures were made of copper sheeting over bitumen covering a wooden core. Cf. p. 62. British Museum. Height approx. 1.20 m.



Group of praying figures from the temple of Abu at Tell Asmar. These are probably votive statuettes. The group of twelve statues in 'Mosul marble' was found in a cache under the floor of the temple. The excessive size of the eyes, which were originally inlaid with stones, was intended to give the impression of absorbed attention to the deity. Early Dynastic period, 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. p. 70. The four figures above are in the Iraq Museum, Baghdad, and the others in the Oriental Institute, Chicago. Height of figures approx. 25–50 cm.



FIG. 15 — Frieze representing the sacred cattle-farm of the goddess Nin-khursag. Copper borders. Background of black shale; some figures are carved from fragments of shell but the majority are in limestone. Al 'Ubaid. Cf. p. 63. Iraq Museum, Baghdad. Height of frieze 22 cm.

Subjects featured
on seals

FIG. 13

of al 'Ubaid and of Uruk with renewed enthusiasm, and that some of the Uruk kings appear, immediately after the close of the Jamdat Nasr age, as semi-divine cult heroes. Possibly we may associate with these facts a change in the fashion of the cylinder seals. In the Early Dynastic period the purely decorative 'Brocade' style is dropped, and the pictorial style is re-introduced, but with a restricted repertoire; two subjects are specially favoured, the ritual banquet, with seated figures drinking through tubes, and scenes of Gilgamesh, or of Gilgamesh and his friend Enkidu, in combat with lions or bulls. These two subjects are repeated with infinite variations and sometimes, in the case of the combat scenes, with a very forceful realism, and the cutting is extremely fine; but the tendency is to overcrowd the narrow field of the cylinder; the cylinders, carved in shell, are sometimes very large, up to 44 m. in length and 29 m. in diameter (these were apparently presented to soldiers as medals rather than intended for use on documents), and the greater size gave the glyptic artist more scope for his intricate battle-pictures, while by a deeply-cut *intaglio* he could make his design as effective on the actual seal as in the rolled-out impression. On the other hand, the personal character of the seal is now emphasised by the owner's name being engraved upon it; at first the written signs are interspersed between the figures, wherever there is room for them, but later the inscription has a space to itself, as an essential part of the design; when, towards the close of the period, there was introduced the 'presentation' scene, which was to be characteristic of the next age, the name-panel is needed to complete the sense of the picture.



Comparatively little remains to illustrate architecture in the Early Dynastic period. At Kish a great hypostyle hall with columns built of specially moulded radial mud bricks carries on the precedent of Warka, though without the cone inlay; presumably the columns were painted. In the Royal Cemetery at Ur we have, as has already been said, examples of the arch, the vault and the dome. As regards decoration, the painting of internal walls seems to have been usual; traces of *tempera* painting with formal geometrical designs have been found at Warka in the Jamdat Nasr period, but in the Early Dynastic period we have animal figures, such as the leopard on the side of the brick throne-base at Tell Uqair and sufficient remains to show that the walls proper were adorned with lifesize human figures in colour. A different method of decorating a wall is illustrated by discoveries at Kish; here figures cut in silhouette from flat pieces of mother-of-pearl, with details added in incised lines, are set in slabs of black slate which were fixed to the wall's surface; the technique is clearly reminiscent of that of Uruk, when the silhouettes were of terra-cotta with a clay-cone background; this is a more sophisticated version. A variant of it occurs in the (slightly later) temple at al 'Ubaid, built about 2550 B.C. by the second king of the First Dynasty of Ur, A-anni-pad-da. The little temple stood on a high platform of burnt brick below and mud brick above, its walls relieved by shallow buttresses, approached by a flight of stairs with limestone treads and side walls panelled with wood. The temple entrance, facing the stair-head, seems to have had a porch, its roof supported on columns of palm-logs sheathed in copper; the doorway was flanked by copper figures (or *protomoi*) of lions, the eyes, teeth and tongues inlaid with white, black and red stone; against the jambs were columns also of palm-logs, overlaid with a mosaic in red and black stone and mother-of-pearl, set in bitumen, the triangular tesserae recalling the texture of the tree-trunk, and

Architecture

Temple at al 'Ubaid

PLATE P. 57



Female head of sandstone from Khafaje. Eyes inlaid with shell and lapis lazuli. Cf. p. 72. *William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Atkins Museum, Kansas City. Height 7 cm.*

FIG. 14

these supported a huge copper relief of the eagle Im-dugud grasping two stags.²) The temple itself was whitewashed; against the foot of the wall, standing on the edge of the platform, was a row of statues of oxen, made (like the lions) of copper sheeting over bitumen covering a wooden core; the statues were 1.20 m. high and were remarkably well executed, though now the decay and distortion of the metal has made them little more than caricatures of the original; behind the

oxen the wall was decorated with large clay cones driven into the brickwork, their heads flower-shaped and bearing petals and corolla of red, white and black stone attached with copper wire and bitumen: here a development of the Uruk tradition is obvious. Higher up on the wall face there ran a frieze 0.25 m. wide of reclining heifers in copper, the bodies of repoussé work, the heads hollow-cast in the round. Above this was a second frieze, altogether 0.22 m. wide, in which, between raised copper borders, the sacred cattle-farm of the goddess Nin-khursag is represented — lines of advancing cows, cows with their calves, the byre, a milking scene, and priests straining and storing the milk, and one mythological scene of a human-headed bull and the bird-god Zu. The figures are set against a mosaic background of black shale; some of them are very finely carved from fragments of white shell, with a delicacy of relief which is quite extraordinary, the majority in rather coarse white limestone, which very probably was finished with stucco and painted; in spite of the difference of material the connection of this frieze with that of Kish is clear. Still higher up on the wall face was a third frieze, again of limestone figures set against a black background and framed with copper, giving a row of birds, apparently doves.

FIG. 15

Because the temple had been violently destroyed, its walls undermined and pushed down from the inside, so that great blocks of mud-brickwork were found lying intact with the decorative elements still adhering to them in position, the reconstruction was in most points beyond question. The result is a building of a surprising sort, a unique illustration of the architectural style of the Early Dynastic period. Other buildings, *e.g.* at Khafaje and at Tell Asmar show the ground-plan and internal arrangements of a temple of that age, but tell us little or nothing about their appearance; we can, however, hardly be wrong if we assume that they were no less gay in colour and rich in works of art than that of al 'Ubaid.

The extravagant virtuosity of the Jamdat Nasr vase-carvers may have seemed to have exhausted the possibilities of sculpture as an

Sculpture

FIG. 16 — Limestone trough from Uruk, with figures of animals on either side of a byre. Cf. p. 64. British Museum. Approx. length 1 m.



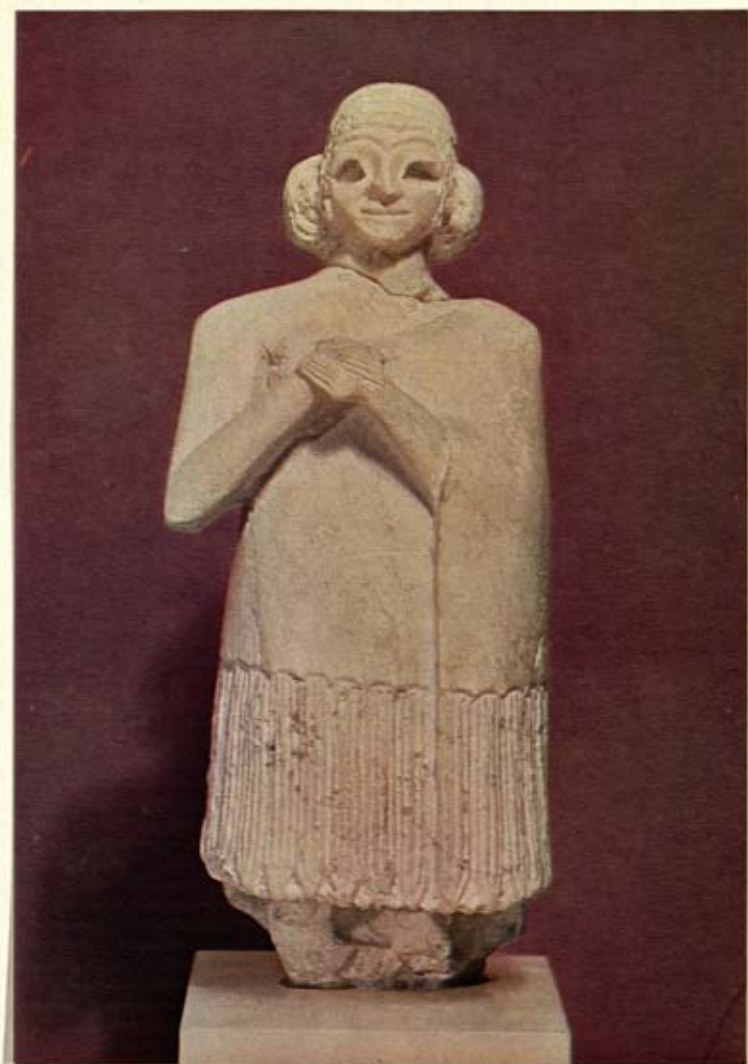
FIG. 16

FIG. 18

FIG. 19

FIG. 17

applied art: at any rate we possess few stone vases of Early Dynastic date decorated with reliefs, and those possess little merit. A rare exception is a limestone trough with figures of cows on either side of a byre; the composition is almost identical with that of the al 'Ubaid temple frieze, and it is a good piece of craftsmanship. The independent reliefs are generally disappointing. A promising start had been made with a basalt relief of early but uncertain date found at Warka in the Jamdat Nasr level, showing a king engaged in a lion-hunt; he shoots at the beast with bow and arrow, and again he transfixes it with a spear. The two figures are casually grouped one above the other with no idea of space or perspective; there is here a freedom and a vigour which are far removed from mere decoration, and though the drawing is primitive it is the work of an artist in embryo. But it seems to have led to nothing. The commonest reliefs of the Early Dynastic period are square limestone plaques, with a hole in the centre, which served as bases for such offerings as votive maces; — they were therefore temple furniture commemorating a pious dedication; they were personal and individual, in that it is the piety of an individual person that is commemorated — very often his name is carefully inscribed; they were conventional in that the subjects to be treated were strictly limited. The dedication of a temple, symbolised by the figure of the ruler bearing on his head a basket of mortar; the ceremonial banquet; the empty chariot; these are repeated again and again, varied only by the number of the ruler's children who accompany him; so stereotyped are the plaques that an incomplete example found at Khafaje could be restored by an identical fragment found at Ur. The reliefs are in two flat planes, the edges of the figures rounded and the details incised with no attempt at modelling; technically therefore they link up with the limestone-and-mosaic friezes of the al 'Ubaid temple and are much inferior to the shell-and-mosaic frieze figures of the same building. The Sumerian stone-carver had not yet mastered the secret of relief modelling; this is clear from a vase bearing the name of Entemena (*c.* 2500 B.C.) on which is carved the figure of a goddess; it is a frontal view and the features of the face are rendered in relief, but the body is still in two planes, the whole figure being thereby so distorted that body and head scarcely seem to belong together. The only relief of the period that has any claim to artistic endeavour is the great stela of Eannatum of Lagash (*c.* 2550 B.C.) which celebrates his victory over Umma; it was a round-topped slab 1.30 m. wide and at least 1.80 m. high; it is in



Votive statuette of white marble, probably from Ur. Early Dynastic period, approx. 2500 B.C. (?). Cf. p. 72. *British Museum*. Height 22.5 cm.

the archaic style in that the carving is on two planes and, for composition, the field is divided into horizontal registers; but there is a certain amount of modelling of the figures. The obverse has two registers only, in the upper of which Nin-girsu, the god of Lagash, grasps the net in which his diminutive enemies have been caught; in the lower the same god was seen in his war chariot. Here the glory is given to the god; in the four registers of the reverse the human king claims his share in the victory. Eannatum advances at the head of his phalanx of heavy-armed infantry over ground strewn with enemy corpses, while in front of him lions and vultures tear the bodies of the dead; in the next register the king in his chariot leads his light-armed infantry while the men of Umma flee before him; below that the Lagash dead, heaped in piles, are being covered by their comrades under the earth of a tumulus while the king pours a libation and prepares to sacrifice a bull in their honour; in the lowest register it would seem that the fate of the prisoners of war is being decided, and Eannatum touches with his outstretched spear the head of the king of Umma, pronouncing the death sentence.

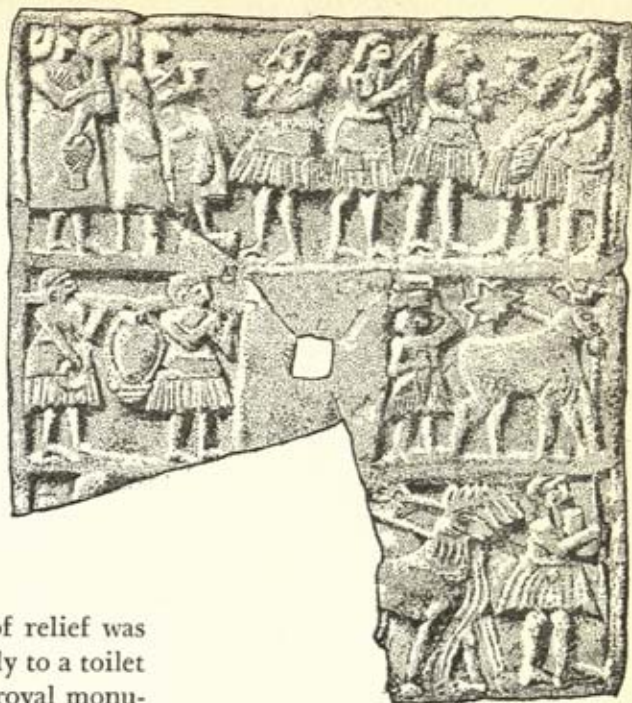
Here is something very different from the dull votive tablets. Here is pictorial art expressing itself with the most vivid realism of which the artist was capable — he even makes an attempt at perspective to show the serried ranks of the soldiers. But there is no actual fighting; as the obverse proclaims, it is a god-given victory, and the king and his men are merely executing, in almost ritual fashion, the divine decision: the whole thing is symbolic and deserves the title of 'monumental' art, the first of its kind known to us from Mesopotamia.

In Sumerian art there is a peculiar distinction between stone reliefs and stone sculp-



FIG. 17 — Detail of the so-called vulture stela, in limestone, celebrating the victory of King Eannatum of Lagash over the neighbouring city of Umma. First half of 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. p. 64. Louvre, Paris. Height 1.88 m.

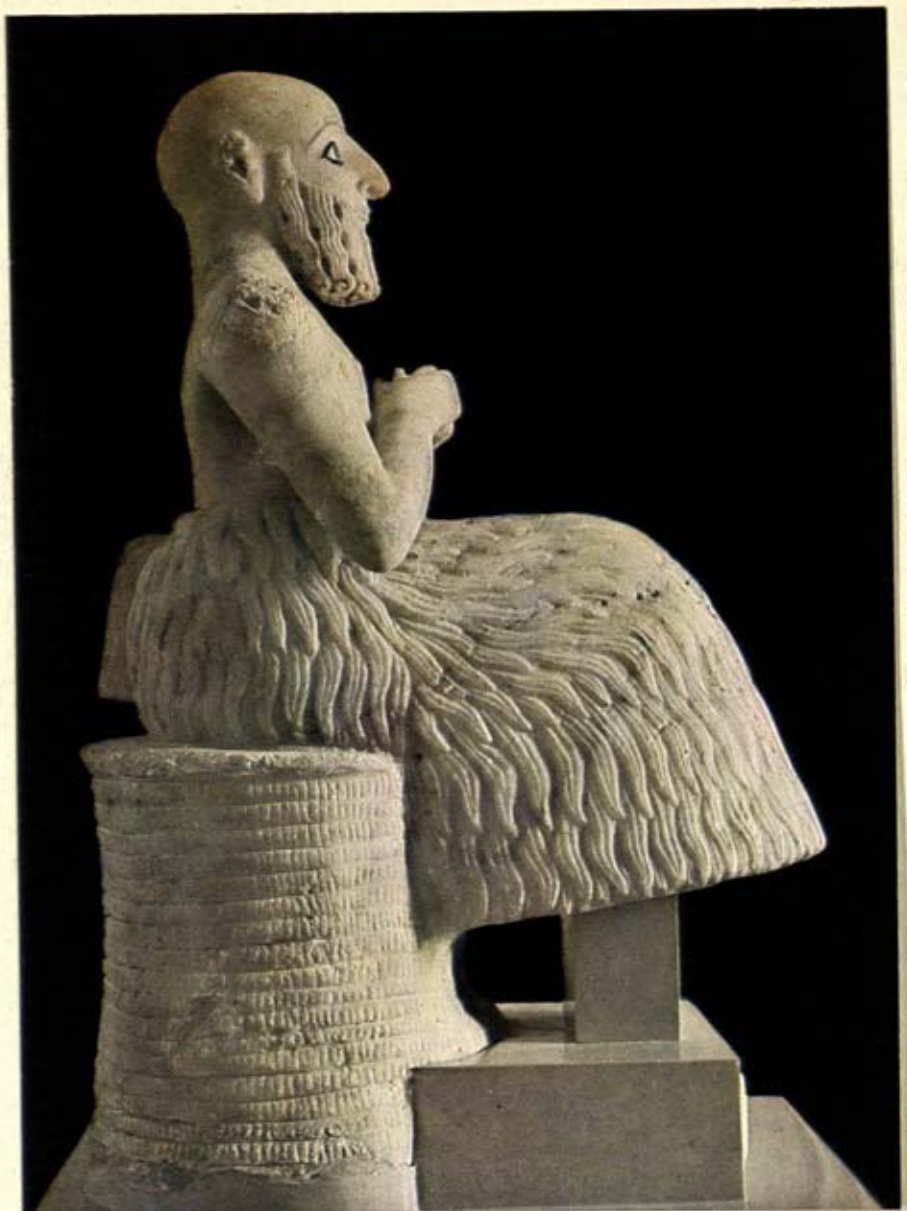
FIG. 18 — Votive tablet from Khafaje representing a cult banquet. First half of 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. p. 64. Iraq Museum, Baghdad. Height 29.5 cm.



ture in the round. The field of relief was wide; it could be applied equally to a toilet vase, to a votive tablet or to a royal monument. The stone statue, on the other hand, was made for temple use exclusively; it represented either the deity or the deity's worshipper. What the older cult statues were like we do not know; probably most of them were executed not in stone but in precious metal, or at least were acrolithic, and therefore have perished. Of the statues of worshippers many survive.

In judging the work of the Sumerian sculptor two things have to be borne in mind — the purpose of the statue, and the material.

Throughout Sumerian history the sole purpose of a human statue was that it should be placed in a temple sanctuary, where the cult statue also stood, to symbolise the perpetual adoration of the man in the presence of his god. It had therefore to be in some measure a portrait — very often the man's name was inscribed upon it to remove any doubt as to its identity; but because it was a portrait of the man as an adorant he must be shown in the proper attitude of worship, and he should be represented as he would wish the god to see him, idealised perhaps, expressing no passing emotion but concentrated upon the contemplation of the divine. We should therefore expect to see in the face a certain realism, in the attitude a fixed convention, and in the body an immobility which has no relation to space or time; no



Alabaster statue of the dignitary Ebih-il, from Mari. Eyes of lapis lazuli. Approx. 2500 B.C. Cf. p. 74.
Louvre, Paris. Height 52 cm.

hint of action, or indeed of the physical element, must intrude upon the eternal absorption of the spirit.

There is no stone in Sumer. In the north there is the soft 'Mosul marble' and fairly fine-grained limestone; the majority of the statues are in such material, and probably most of them were made by northern sculptors; certainly it is in the north that new inventions in technique and in style were introduced. The hard stones, basalt, diorite and dolerite, were imported from the Persian Gulf, and would come first to the hands of artists of the southern school, to which we may assign most of the hard-stone sculptures. The diorite was not quarried but arrived in the form of boulders, and this had a marked effect upon art. A stela might preserve the shape of the natural boulder (there are several examples of this), but for a statue the boulder's form might be decisive; this accounts for the large proportion of seated figures, in some of which, *e.g.*, the statue of Kur-lil from al 'Ubaid, the contours of the figure are quite evidently dictated by the stone. It was rarely that a piece of basalt was long enough for a full-scale statue of a man; the Sumerian statue consequently tends to be short and stumpy; but since from the patron's point of view the portrait aspect of the figure was the most important the sculptor is most concerned with the head of his figure, so much so that by the time he has done it justice there is not enough of the stone left for the proportionate treatment of the body and the over-large head emphasises the figure's squatness. To these general observations we shall have to recur often. The Early Dynastic period has produced few hard-stone statues; the Kur-lil figure already mentioned, another seated figure from al 'Ubaid, and a standing figure, headless, of King Entemena of Lagash, found at Ur, are the principal ones, of which the last is the most interesting. It stands 0.76 m. high without the head; it wears the shapeless sheath of the fleecy *kaunakes* kilt and the hands are clasped in the conventional gesture of adoration; the broad shoulders and pointed elbows are in the archaic tradition, but in the modelling of the bare torso, of the hands and of the feet there is already some approach to what was being attempted by the northern school and was to be developed by the Lagash sculptors of Gudea's time.

A group of twelve statues in 'Mosul marble' found together in a cache under the floor of a Tell Asmar temple, together with other figures from the same site and from Khafaje, a neighbouring town, illustrates if not the beginning at least an early stage in the history of northern sculpture. Granted that they are of provincial work — for

Material

Tell Asmar group



FIG. 19 — Relief. Fragment of a basalt cult vase bearing the engraved name of Entemena of Lagash. The relief represents a goddess of growing vegetation. Approx. 2500 B.C. Cf. p. 64. Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin. Height 25 cm.

PLATE P. 59

the Tell Asmar group comes from a small temple in a second-class town, and of the Khafaje statues some were found in the actual workshop of the local sculptor — they do represent a definite school, with principles of art already established. The canon aims at a geometric unity for the three-dimensional representation of the human body, effecting this by reducing all masses to the cone and the cylinder. The head is the apex of a cone whose base is given by the points of the elbows; below this the sheath of the skirt forms a second more slender cone or else a plain cylinder. Where there is a seated figure the whole thing is a cone. This is a purely artistic convention; for the rest, the sculptor follows those general principles for the making of temple statues which have been discussed above.

The faces are varied and individual in a naive and sometimes almost comic fashion; the artist has done his best to produce portraits. By the different tilting of the heads, and by the use of inlay for the eyes,



Gypsum statue of Urnanshe, leader of the Ishtar temple choir at Mari Approx. 2500 B.C. Cf. p. 74.
National Museum, Damascus. Height 26 cm.

he renders that absorbed attention to the godhead which is the prime motive of the statue; the exaggerated size of the eyes serves the same purpose.³) Too inexperienced to recognise the fragility of his soft marble the sculptor undercuts the arms of his figures and even the legs, trusting them to carry without the help of a supporting pillar the none-too-well balanced weight of the solid bodies, though sometimes he thinks it best to thicken the legs and ankles to a ludicrous extent. He has no interest in the garments as stuff, and his modelling of the exposed flesh is summary in the extreme. One figure, that of a nude kneeling man, is quite unlike the rest, but is no exception to the rule because it does not belong to the same class of sculpture; the top of the head is hollowed like a candlestick and in the back there are two copper loops for attachment; it is not a votive statue but a piece of furniture, and therefore not subject to the same conventions; actually, with its greater freedom and naturalness, it shows that the sculptor was more of an artist than the conventions generally allowed him to appear.

PLATE P. 62

PLATE P. 65

In most of the other figures we see progress in the sense of greater refinement of detail, but always within the same limits. For the simple sheath of the primitive dress there is substituted a more or less realistic fleece, though still with no suggestion of the bodily form beneath it; the modelling of the flesh becomes more sensitive and the face can even be pleasing, as in a head from Tell Agrab. A little figure of a woman (probably from Ur) now in the British Museum comes near to being the ideal at which the art of the period aimed. A more restrained use of the chisel for undercutting had emphasised the quietude of the engrossed worshipper and added dignity to the figure; the real danger was that with the constant repetition of the same type the craftsman, trying for variety in expression at least, should lose the spirit of the dedication; in only too many of the later statues wrapt adoration has given place to a meaningless smirk that could please neither god nor man.

Mari

That the artist should chafe at the limitations imposed on him was natural, especially as his stone was so easily worked. In the northern school centred on Mari — the westernmost outlier of the genuine Sumerian civilisation — he does at length shake himself free to some extent of the old conventions. From the twenty-fourth century B.C. we find there statues which do no more than pay lip-service to tradition; they might have scandalised the religious-minded of the south country, but to the modern eye they are vastly superior to anything that



Gold head of bull from the Royal Cemetery at Ur, with eyes of lapis lazuli. Ornament on a lyre. First half of 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. pp. 75, 175. *Iraq Museum, Baghdad.* Height of head 29.5 cm.



FIG. 20 — Copper stand from Khafaje, in the shape of a naked man. First half of 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. below. Iraq Museum, Baghdad. Height 55.5 cm.

PLATE P. 68

PLATE P. 71

Metal-work

FIG. 20

FIG. 21

the south attempted in the same *genre*. The figure of Ebih-il, small as it is, gives the impression of size and dignity; the careful detail of the (still shapeless) fleece skirt throws into relief the smooth flesh with its delicately realistic modelling; the face is a real portrait — not of a humble adorant but of a high official satisfied with himself and his rank. The figure of Urnanshe, leader of the temple choir, is even more frankly unconventional; the tilt of the head and the easy pose of the flexed legs make it astonishingly vital; she might be a temple servant, but she was a live woman, and the artist presents her to us as such.

A few human figurines cast in copper are in striking contrast to the stone figures because, being not independent statues but parts of furniture, they were not bound by any canon. A nude standing man from Khafaje, the support of a metal vase, is well-proportioned and naturalistically modelled — the little kneeling figure from Tell Asmar is the only parallel to him in stone. Two wrestlers, also from Khafaje, who have jars balanced on their heads, are rougher in workmanship but no less realistic in their strained pose; they prove, what otherwise we might not have suspected, that the sculptor did not shrink from representing violent action and was not incapable of doing so.

But the Sumerian metal-worker was most successful with animal subjects. Equally adept in hammered work, in solid casting and in hollow casting by the *cire perdue* process, he could suit his technique to the size of his figures and in each medium and on any scale do admirable work. The reclining heifers of the al 'Ubaid temple frieze show the formalism proper to architectural statuary but are none the less true to nature: an electrum donkey (decorating a rein-ring found in the tomb of Queen Shubad at Ur) is delightfully naturalistic: a great bull's head in gold, from a lyre, is strictly conventionalised but has all the strength of the living animal and all its latent energy: and the tiny stags and antelopes, bulls and rams of gold that adorned the queen's diadem are charming.

The Royal Cemetery at Ur provided a wealth of objects in precious metal enabling us to assess the skill of the Sumerian goldsmith. One can assume that only the better craftsmen were entrusted with so valuable a material, and that they would put their best work into it; and because gold is incorruptible the object is preserved for us just as it left the maker's hands.

The goldsmith's technique was already fully developed. Apart from casting and hammering (*repoussé* work) he was familiar with *cloisonné*, filigree and granulation, chasing and gold-soldering, and the making of electrum alloys, including in the latter the trick of sweat-

Animal figures

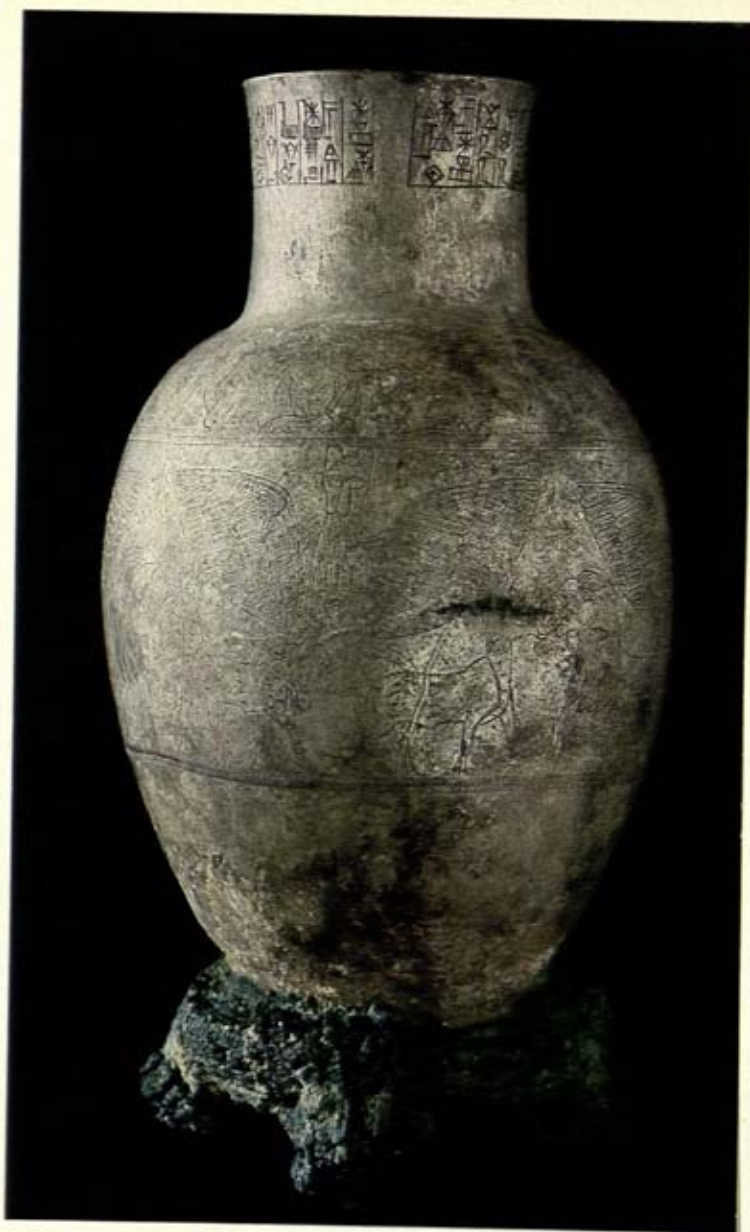
FIG. 22

PLATE P. 73

Jewellery and goldsmiths' work



FIG. 21 — Copper statuette from Khafaje representing two wrestlers with jars balanced on their heads. First half of 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. p. 74. Iraq Museum, Baghdad. Height 10 cm.



Silver vase of the priest-king Entemena of Lagash. The vase bears a votive inscription and engraved figures. In the middle a lion-headed eagle with two stags (Cf. Plate p. 57). Bronze base. First half of 3rd millennium B.C. *Louvre, Paris. Height of vase 35 cm.*

ing out the silver by means of salt or saltpetre and burnishing the surface to produce the effect of gold plating; the use he made of those arts has not been surpassed in any later age. While the golden helmet of Mes-kalam-dug is remarkable for its technical excellence rather than for any originality of invention, the golden dagger-sheath is a brilliant translation of simple grass-weaving into a decorative pattern, and many of the gold vessels are masterpieces of design and proportion. If a gold goblet may by the purity of its outline remind us of classical Greek art, it is to the Italian Renaissance that we must turn to find a parallel to the polychrome figure of a goat made of gold, silver, lapis lazuli, polished shell and red sandstone, a pair of which supported, perhaps, an offering-table; over-ornate as we may judge it to be, it is a triumph of virtuosity which would have appealed to Benvenuto Cellini.

Amongst the minor works of art of the Early Dynastic period the engraved shell plaques deserve special mention, if only because they are the nearest approach to drawings that can ever be obtained. The material is shell, where a later age would have used ivory, and the design is incised, the incised lines being filled with black or red paste; sometimes the ground round the figure was cut back and covered with a coat of black paste, leaving the figure silhouetted against it. Clearly, incision in so hard a substance as shell cannot have the freedom of a drawing, and the more just comparison would be with a mediaeval woodcut, but the engraver did manage to get a very flexible line and had no hesitation in choosing the most difficult subjects.

FIG. 23

PLATE P. 78

PLATE P. 79

PLATE P. 81

Shell engraving



FIG. 22 — Silver rein-ring with electrum top in the shape of a mule. Found in the tomb of Queen Shubad at Ur. Cf. p. 75. British Museum. Height 13.5 cm., width 10 cm.



Dagger with sheath from the Royal Cemetery at Ur. The golden sheath has a decorative weaving pattern; the haft is of lapis lazuli. First Dynasty of Ur. First half of 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. p. 77. *Iraq Museum, Baghdad. Length of dagger 36.8 cm.*



Various gold objects from the Royal Cemetery at Ur. The beaker and bowl (right) come from the grave of Queen Shubad, of the First Dynasty of Ur. First half of 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. p. 77. *University Museum, Philadelphia. Height of beaker 15.5 cm.; height of bowl 4 cm.*

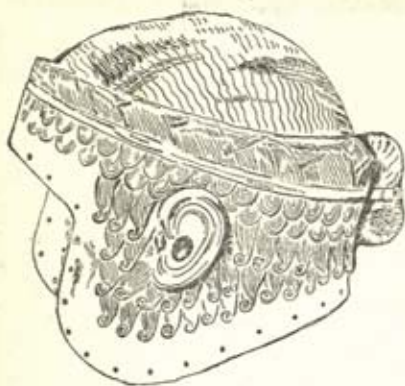


FIG 23 — Gold helmet of Mes-kalam-dug from Ur. First half of 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. p. 77. Iraq Museum, Baghdad. Height 23 cm., width 26 cm.

PLATES PP. 83, 84

The plaques were used for inlay in caskets, gaming-boards and, specially, in the sounding-boards of lyres; in the former, a single animal is the favourite motive, in the last there may be complicated scenes involving numerous figures. The finest of those combines the familiar Gilgamesh group with what would almost seem to be caricatures, comic scenes, drawn with astonishing verve, in which animals play the parts of men — illustrations, possibly, of incidents in folk-lore; but while the drawing is admirable, the studied balance of black and white is the mark of a real artist.

The engraved shell has taken the place of the old-fashioned mosaic of mother-of-pearl inlaid in black stone. That fashion still survived, and a splendid example is given by the 'Standard' of Ur, with its figures of cut shell set in lapis lazuli. As a mosaic it is a masterpiece, but it suffers from the limitations of a laborious craft, and while the individual figures are skilfully cut and in some cases lively the general effect tends to be rather mechanical. The composition is indeed but an elaboration of those limestone plaques which have been described above as stereotyped and dull, and although here the narrative character of the design relieves it of the charge of dullness yet a com-

Ram with tree of life from the Royal Cemetery at Ur. The animal's body and legs are of gold; small engraved pieces of shell were used for the fleece of the body, and lapis lazuli for the fleece of the shoulder, as well as for the eyes, horns and beard. The figure is mounted on a core of asphalt. First half of 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. p. 77. *British Museum (a companion piece is in the University Museum, Philadelphia).* Height 48 cm.



parison of the 'Standard' with the shell plaques from the lyre shows at once how great an advance had been made by the Sumerian; when he was commissioned to produce no more than a variation on a traditional theme his work was a notable improvement upon the old: but when he could plan for himself and use his imagination he could achieve a real work of art.

- 1) These bricks were almost exclusively sun-baked and unfired.
- 2) Although the columns were found near the relief some authorities have recently challenged the accuracy of this description (even in the British Museum it is still shown in this way). Owing to the author's death it has not been possible to clarify this point. (*Publisher's note*).
- 3) Dr. Henri Frankfort, the discoverer of the statues, thinks that the two largest figures are those of a god and a goddess and that their grotesquely big eyes are an attribute of divinity. I cannot believe that gods would be represented in the conventional attitude of adoration, and regard the figures as those of worshippers, perhaps richer and more important than the rest. The divine symbol carved on the base of the male figure I take to be a dedication, not a description of the statue.

Gaming-board from the Royal Cemetery at Ur. A total of 13 plaques were found scattered about, 12 of which were used for the reconstruction above. The plaques and borders consist of pieces of shell, lapis lazuli and red limestone, probably mounted on wood by means of bitumen. Approx. 2500 B.C. Cf. p. 80.
University Museum, Philadelphia. Actual size. ▶





Engraved shell plaques. The incised lines were filled with black or red paste. The plaques were used for inlay. Approx. 2500 B.C. (?). Cf. p. 80. *British Museum. Height of lower plaque 4.4 cm.*

CHAPTER IV

SUMER AND AKKAD; THE SARGONID AGE AND THE THIRD DYNASTY OF UR TO THE TIME OF HAMMURABI

The success of the Amorite Sargon of Akkad in establishing his suzerainty over the whole of Mesopotamia must have had a profound effect upon the people, for art, not merely the court art of the palace but the popular art, undergoes a sudden and a drastic change. Sargon's short-lived dynasty (c. 2380–2223 B.C.) has left few major monuments, but the cylinder seals are so numerous as to make comparison with the past as easy as it is informative, and for art in general the seals are an admirable criterion.

In the first place there is a change of subject. The ritual banquet scene preferred in the Early Dynastic period is dropped altogether; the 'Gilgamesh' motive continues; but there is now introduced a whole range of lively religious scenes, mythological subjects treated in a dramatic way. In the second place there is a change of style. In the previous period the gem-cutter overcrowded his composition, so much so that it was difficult, especially in the 'Gilgamesh' scenes, to disentangle the figures. In the Sargonid seals, which are often exquisitely engraved, the figures gain immensely in individual importance and acquire a new spatial value by being shown isolated against a plain background. Essentially this is pictorial as against decorative art. In the case of the 'Gilgamesh' scenes, where the subject is traditional, the contrast with the Early Dynastic seals is most obvious; each figure, whether of the demigod or of the beast he subdues, stands out as something having value in itself; and because it is not merely part of a pattern but the representation of real creatures it must be made as lifelike as possible, and therefore the modelling of the relief becomes much more intricate and naturalistic. With the mythological scenes the subject is necessarily more complex and the gem-cutter has to build up his picture with greater detail, and that within the narrow limits of his cylinder; thus in the Etana legend, a goatherd driving his beasts out from the byre sets the scene, the eagle carries Etana up to heaven, his fellow-herdsman looks up in distress, shading his eyes, his two dogs sit and bay the moon, and while one man runs to tell the news we have a seated figure with a row of vases which perhaps signify the farm. The story, so fully told,

THE SARGONID PERIOD

Cylinder seals

FIG. 24



FIG. 24 — *Serpent-stone cylinder-seal impression representing the myth of Etana. Akkad period. Latter half of 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. p. 85. Staatliche Museen, Berlin. Height 45 mm.*

FIG. 25

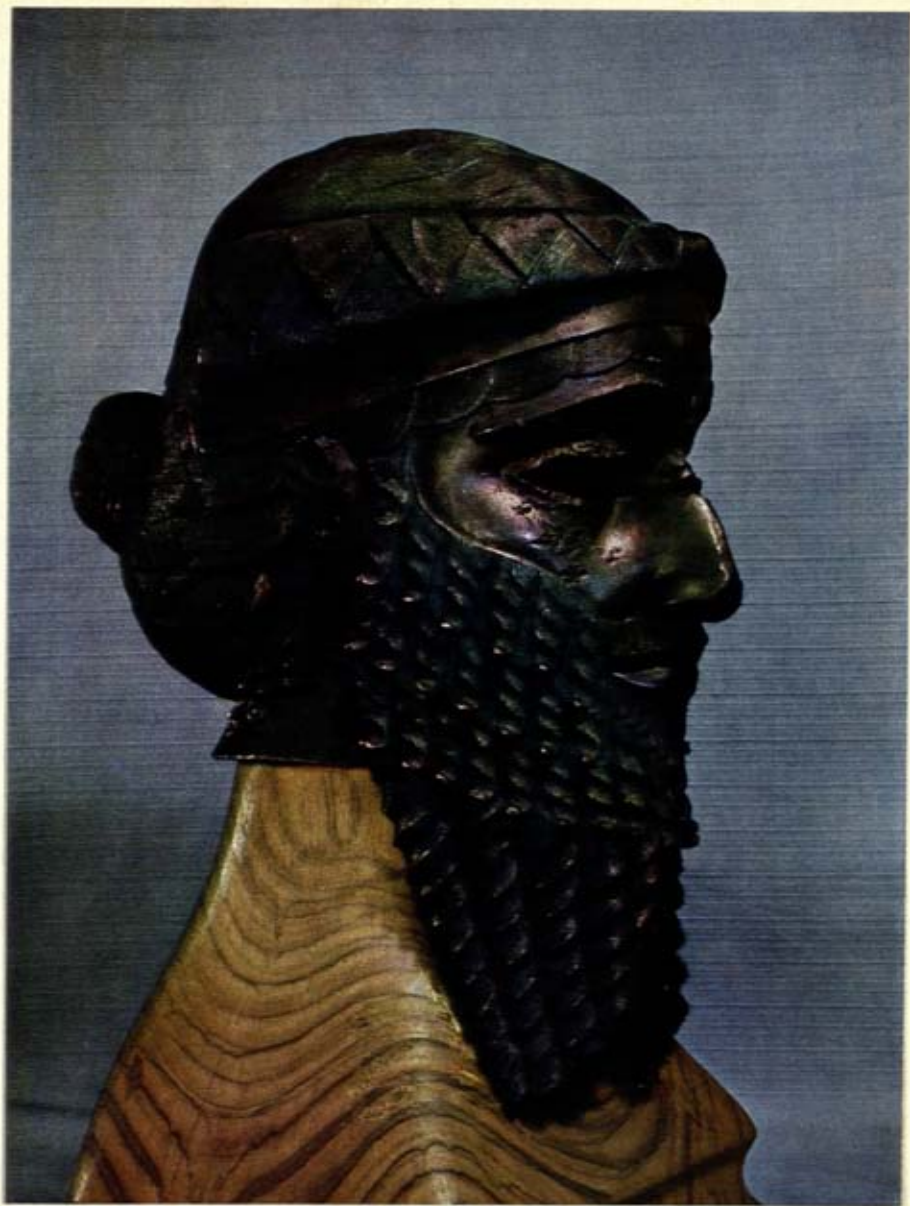
occupies a space only four centimetres by seven, but every little figure is clear-cut against the plain ground. On another seal-impression, 3.2 centimetres by 5.5, there is Enki in his shrine surrounded by the waters of the abyss, a kneeling figure embraces the buckled shaft which marks the shrine, and there are two solar gods, one perhaps, the Akkadian Shamash, treading upon a lion climbs between the mountains, the other, perhaps the Sumerian Utu, mounts a ziggurat. It is tempting to think that such scenes as these are illustrations derived from the ritual dramas performed in the temples upon feast-days, for they possess all the assurance of things seen; they tell a story, and in order that it may be immediately recognisable everything in the picture must be individually manifest for what it is, and individuality is gained by isolation.

Sculpture

FIG. 26

We see the same principle followed in a fragment of a limestone relief found at Lagash. It is a battle scene of which only four figures remain, but they are widely spaced, each an individual study. But the finest example of the new style in art is given by the stela of Naram-Sin, Sargon's great-grandson. This is a rough slab of diorite carved on one face only with a relief which is altogether pictorial in treatment and monumental in conception; a single historical incident is made typical and symbolic. The artist has dispensed with the old-fashioned registers and works on a single field in order to assure the unity of his subject. Eannatum's stela had shown on one side the triumph of the city's god, and on the other, on a smaller scale, the

FIG. 17



Bronze head from Nineveh, probably a portrait of Sargon of Akkad but possibly of his grandson Naram-Sin. Inlay once filled the eye-sockets. Akkad period, latter half of 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. pp. 88, 91. *Iraq Museum, Baghdad. Height 30 cm.*

human aspect. On Naram-Sin's stela the artist celebrates a victory won, it is true, by the will of the god, but none the less a personal victory of the king of Akkad. The monument has been well described by Mrs. Groenewegen-Frankfort:¹) "The actuality of the scene", she writes, "is enhanced by the setting of the event. The topography, though partly formalised, has convincingly concrete details, and both it and the incidents of the battle hold a subtle balance between the decorative and the dramatic. The roughly triangular grouping, for instance, fits the shape of the stone, but it also underlines the climax of the action; and the upward surge of the conquerors is balanced by the falling and collapsing figures, halted by the rigidity of the four doomed survivors on the right. The smooth cone of the mountain top, rising well above the impressive figure of the king, does not dwarf him in any way but seems to emphasise his human stature and at the same time check the impetuosity of his stride. But the king's posture epitomises the movement of his soldiers, yet he appears almost immobile at the moment of his triumph, holding the enemy transfixed with fear, and though his towering figure has a symbolic quality, the spatial relation between him and his prospective victims has been made more concrete by the tilting of their heads at different angles, the lower ones looking increasingly upwards. The king is thus not only the symbolic and decorative but also the actual dramatic centre of the whole composition, and the empty surface surrounding him emphasises his spatial isolation. This aloofness is enhanced, not minimised, by the divine symbols at the top of the stela. This victory, blessed by the heavenly powers, was a solitary achievement".

For sculpture in the round, a limestone head of a young woman, found at Assur, is in the direct line of descent from the Early Dynastic series of worshippers; it shows a more delicate technique and a more lifelike air than most, but is not very far removed from the best work of the Mari school. The head of a bearded prince from Adab, now in Chicago, is however inspired by a new spirit. Here is no worshipper, wrapped in adoration of the deity, but a living portrait of a worldly ruler, self-reliant and self-confident: it is the work of a new school of sculpture. But more striking is a bronze head from Nineveh which may well be a portrait of Sargon himself. The bronze-casting technique is of course inherited from the Sumerians and the stylistic conventions too are Sumerian, so much so that the treatment of the hair and the fashion of the hair-dressing might have been copied from that of Mes-kalam-dug's golden helmet of four centuries before, and

FIG. 27

PLATE P. 87

FIG. 23



FIG. 25 — Cylinder-seal impression in stone from Ur. Mythological scene representing the god Enki in his shrine. Akkad period, latter half of the 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. p. 86. Iraq Museum, Baghdad. Height 36 mm.

the formal beard is traditional; all that is true, and yet we know of nothing like this head in any earlier period. It has been badly damaged, and it lacks the coloured inlay that once filled the eye-sockets, but none the less does it seem a living thing instinct with majesty. It is not easy to define precisely the means whereby the author of this great work of art has made it so different from the work of the older school to which, for non-essentials, he still adheres; his success may be judged by this, that although it bears no inscription, nor was there anything in the conditions of its discovery to identify its subject, no critic has failed to recognise in it the actual portrait of Sargon, the greatest man that Mesopotamia had yet produced.

The Amorite dynasty collapsed and the country was overrun and for a time misgoverned by the barbarous and incompetent Guti; it was not unnatural therefore that when Ur-Nammu of Ur made himself master of Sumer and Akkad and re-established order there should be something in the nature of a Sumerian revival. The Third Dynasty artist profited by some of the lessons taught him by Sargonid art, but for his inspiration he turned back to the older tradition.

There are preserved fragments of a great stela set up by Ur-Nammu to commemorate the deeds of his reign, and since the best artists would presumably be employed on so important a royal monument these may fairly represent the highest level of contemporary art. In its composition the stela reverts to the true Sumerian tradition, the entire field being divided into horizontal registers the subject of each of which is complete in itself, the only link between them being the constantly recurring figure of the king. On the other hand the

THE THIRD DYNASTY
OF UR

PLATE P. 90

FIG. 17

figures are well spaced and stand out clearly against the plain background, and they are far more rounded than, *e.g.*, the figures in the Eannatum stela, resembling closely those on the fragment of the stela of Sargon mentioned above. One scene, showing the building of the ziggurat of Ur, spread over two registers (though even here the line of the top of the finished brickwork divides the figures into two rows connected only by the sloping lines of the ladders) is dramatically composed, but in the other registers the individual figures may be

Fragment of a limestone stela set up by Ur-Nammu of Ur. The king is pouring libations to the moon god Nannar. Ur-Nammu made himself master of Sumer and Akkad and founded the Third Dynasty of Ur in approx. 2050 B.C., thereby bringing about a Sumerian revival Cf. pp. 89, 94, 180. *University Museum, Philadelphia. Height of the detail shown approx. 46 cm.*



shown in action; yet the scene lacks any sense of drama; in some the duplication of the subject and the counterbalancing of the figures — as when the king makes his offering on the one hand to Nannar and on the other to Nin-gal — is mechanical; it is symbolism without actuality. Taken as a whole the stela falls far short of the real artistry of that of Naram-Sin; it was impressive and not unbeautiful; but when we find that not only in style and treatment but in what at first appear to be its most imaginative features, such as the scene wherein winged 'angels' pour the life-giving waters upon the earth, it is identical with a stela set up by Gudea of Lagash, then we must needs recognise that this is a standardised design and that Ur-Nammu's artist, however skilful, can claim neither originality nor inspiration.

FIG. 26

For sculpture in the round the artist did not venture beyond the traditional limitations, whereby a statue was meant to stand in the god's temple to symbolise the donor's perpetual contemplation of the divinity, but he did improve upon his models. Now that the political and therefore the artistic centre had shifted again to the south the natural material for the sculptor was imported diorite instead of the soft northern stone, and the challenge of the more difficult medium was triumphantly met. The style is illustrated by the whole series of statues of Gudea, the contemporary of Ur-Nammu, and of his son, unearthed at Lagash. Perhaps because Gudea was not a king but a governor enjoying only limited authority, in his portrait statues piety takes the place of the virile force that we saw in the Naram-Sin stela and of the supreme majesty of Sargon's portrait in bronze: certainly the intense vitality of the best Akkadian works is lacking in these essentially Sumerian effigies, but they possess the same firmness and precision of modelling, and the richness in the play of light provoked by the stone is not equalled even by the bronze head of Sargon. The diorite is indeed carved with complete mastery and brought by grinding and polishing to an extraordinary perfection of finish. The technique then is superb, and with it goes real observation of nature, not only in the sensitive treatment of the bare flesh but also in the character-drawing of the features. The statues show Gudea at different times in his life; they are idealised, certainly, purged of the accidentals of humanity and expressing no emotion other than serenity and strength of mind, just as the powerful bodies obey that cylindrical canon which combines spatial actuality with perfect composure; but they are unmistakably portraits of the real man.

*Sculpture in
the round*

PLATE P. 87

PLATES PP. 92, 95



Votive statue of Prince Gudea of Lagash, carved in bluish-black diorite. After the collapse of the Gutí interregnum and the foundation of the Third Dynasty of Ur the political and cultural centre of the country moved from north to south. Although he was no doubt a vassal of Ur, Gudea succeeded in retaining a comparatively independent position at Lagash. The large number of statues of Gudea ►

FIG. 26 — Stela of reddish sandstone representing King Naram-Sin of Akkad celebrating a victory over the mountain peoples of the east. The artist has dispensed with registers. The stela was found at Susa but originates from Babylon. Latter half of 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. p. 91. Louvre, Paris. Height 2 m., width 1.50 m.



The art of the Third Dynasty sculptor did not perish at once when Ur fell. Two small heads of goddesses found at Ur, one carved in diorite and one in marble, belong either to late in the Third Dynasty or to the Larsa period, and both can be called beautiful in very different ways — the artist was not simply reproducing a familiar type. A higher level is reached by a much-damaged but still magnificent diorite head (found at Susa) which may well represent the great king Hammurabi himself in his old age; in striking contrast with the formal beard the drawn and haggard features express, as does no other piece of sculpture from the ancient world, the still royal spirit battling with weariness and disillusionment. It is interesting to compare this personal portrait with the well-known relief carved at the top of the stela bearing Hammurabi's famous code of law, where the king is shown standing in the presence of Shamash, the fount of law.

PLATE P. 97

FIG. 28

date from his reign and testify to the great skill attained by the sculptors of this period. Approx. 2100 B.C. Cf. p. 91. Louvre, Paris. Height 0.93 m.

That relief has been highly praised. It is indeed a finely executed work, and it is easy to read a dramatic effect into the isolation in space of the two figures, with no suggestion of place and no hint of action other than the submission of the mortal to the transcendent majesty of the god; but in fact the group only reproduces that on the Ur-Nammu stela and on the stela of Gudea and is in line with the 'presentation scene' on countless cylinder seals; whatever it expresses it does so by an old-established convention, sincerely perhaps but with no originality.

The inspiration of the Third Dynasty Sumerian revival had exhausted itself. In various sculptures from Mari, dated to the Isin-Larsa period, the outward forms are preserved and the technical skill is undoubted, but the artists have no real creative power and can only disguise the repetitive character of their work by the over-elaboration of detail; virtuosity takes the place of genius.

In glyptic art decadence sets in earlier. The dramatic episodes of mythology which had been popular with the gem-cutters of the Sargonid age are no longer represented upon the cylinder seals of Ur-Nammu's day; with them disappears the best opportunity afforded to the artist for original and creative work. The Gilgamesh motive seldom recurs, and then in debased form. Nearly all the seals are now of one type, which apparently reflected a more personal religious outlook prevalent at the time; this is the 'presentation scene', in which the seal's owner is introduced by his personal or family god to one or other of the major gods of the pantheon. Because the seal (which did not necessarily bear the owner's name) had to be distinctive, no two could be absolutely identical; the private citizen would of course require that the god of his choice be represented, and in the way that seemed to him best — we commonly find trial-pieces engraved on potsherds or bits of smooth limestone, which presumably were submitted by the gem-cutter to his client for approval — but many thousands of seals had to be made, and the maker had to ring the changes upon a single theme. Royal seals, such as those of Bur-Sin and Ibi-Sin, are finely cut in a style that closely resembles the libation scene on Ur-Nammu's stela: but too often the monotony of the task led to bad workmanship, and for as long as the public asked for the same subject the degradation of the seal continued. It is seldom that we find a cylinder possessed of artistic merit.

As befitted the founder of a new dynasty and the restorer of Sumerian traditions, Ur-Nammu was a great builder, and one who built in a



Votive statue of Gudea of Lagash, in bluish-black diorite. The position of the hands is characteristic of almost all statues of Gudea. The various statues show the prince at different times in his life. Approx. 2100 B.C. Cf. p. 91. *Louvre, Paris*. Height 1.5 m.



FIG. 27 — Gypsum head of a prince from Adab. Eyeballs of ivory. Akkad period, latter half of 3rd millennium B.C. Cf. p. 88. Oriental Institute, Chicago. Height 9.5 cm.

style that should symbolise the permanence of his house. In the past mud brick had been the standard material for buildings of every sort; burnt bricks had indeed been known since the early days of al 'Ubaid, but they were employed exceptionally and only for a few special features. So far as we know, Ur-Nammu was the first to use them on a large scale, and to make his construction yet more lasting he had the bricks laid in bitumen mortar, with the result that not only the ground-plans but sometimes the superstructure of his buildings are preserved today and enable us to pass judgement on Sumerian architecture.

Principles of construction

So far as the main principles of construction were concerned there could be no new departure, for, as we have seen, all those principles — arch and vault, dome and column — had been evolved long before, but in the Third Dynasty buildings there is an architectural finesse for which no precedent can be cited nor is likely to have existed in earlier times. In the great mausoleum built by Shulgi, where the walls and pavements of the vaults and of the superstructure alike are of burnt brick set in bitumen, the tomb chambers and the underground stairways are roofed with corbel vaulting supported by timb-

Diorite head, probably of King Hammurabi of Babylon. After the Third Dynasty of Ur had been overthrown by Elam, in alliance with the Western Semites, a new dynasty came into existence in Babylon which reached its zenith under King Hammurabi. He codified the laws (cf. the stela bearing this code) and conquered Assyria in the north, Mari in the west and Larsa in the south. It has been suggested that



the head found at Susa represents the king in old age. The features express disillusionment and resignation. 18th century B.C. Cf. p. 93. *Louvre, Paris. Height 15 cm.*

er,²) which might be thought to imply a lack of technical knowledge on the builder's part; but, on the other hand, the massive outer wall of the superstructure, very slightly battered and relieved by purely decorative buttresses, is an example of first-class bricklaying, and the rounded corners are deliberately designed to give an air of strength and solidity which is almost Normaneseque.

The ziggurat at Ur

But the finest monument of the time is Ur-Nammu's ziggurat at Ur.³) The original ziggurat was simply a platform supporting a temple, such as we have seen in the First Dynasty temple at al 'Ubaid. Subsequently, perhaps before the time of the Third Dynasty, this was elaborated into a three-staged tower which better simulated the Mountain of God on whose summit the temple stood; — trees planted on the terraces would recall the wooded mountain sides, and there had to be a staircase whereby the priests could ascend to the topmost shrine for their service to the deity. Clearly there is no architectural merit in building a solid cube of brickwork, setting on that a smaller cube and on that again a third; but on that childish crude construction Ur-Nammu's builders brought to bear all the refinements of mature architecture.

The building is an oblong, 62.50 m. x 43.00 m., (with a core of mud brick enshrining older ziggurats) enclosed by a 2.50 m. thick casing of burnt bricks and bitumen. The walls of the first stage, admirably preserved, stand to about their full height of 11.30 m.; of the upper stages little remains. The interest of the building lies in this, that throughout it there is no single straight line, vertical or horizontal. Thus the back wall, relieved by shallow buttresses with wider buttresses at the corners to tie up the design and emphasise its unity, has a curve of 0.50 m. in the 62.50 m. length; it is inclined inwards with a batter of 1.77 m. in 10.00 m., but even so it is not straight but has a curve of 0.11 m. in a vertical rise of 10.00 m.; and the same is true, in proportion, of the other walls. The architect had realised that the towering mass crowned by the temple proper might seem to sit too heavily upon the base and produce an appearance of its sagging under the load: to counteract this he employed the principle of entasis, as it was to be used later by the builders of the Parthenon at Athens, with curves indistinguishable to the eye but producing an illusion of strength. The entire ziggurat is designed with an eye to a visual effect which is almost dramatic. Seen from in front, the inward batter of the successive stages exaggerates the perspective and seems to add to the building's height, while at the same time it leads the eye

FIG. 28 — Stela of black basalt bearing the code of law of Hammurabi (1728—1686 B.C.). The Sun God is presenting the ring and staff, symbols of his sovereignty. Cf. p. 93. Louvre, Paris. Overall height 2.25 m.



upwards and inwards to the shrine which gives meaning to the whole: the great projecting staircase leading directly to the shrine emphasises the fact that everything is centred on that: the sharply-sloping lines of the side staircases starting from the extreme corners of the building and converging under a gate-tower on the central flight, knit the whole solid mass together as but a means of approach to the Holy of Holies to which the upper staircase climbs directly; that Holy of Holies was but a small single chamber, but to it the entire huge structure is made subordinate.

The ziggurat was no more than a platform. It was built of brick, and the material virtually precludes any attempt at decoration, so that it had to rely for effect upon line alone. The Sumerian architects of the Third Dynasty of Ur had so mastered the art and mystery of their profession that from this dull formula they could create one of the great buildings of antiquity.

¹⁾ In *Arrest and Movement*, (London, 1951), p. 164.

²⁾ Whether the timbering was constructional only and removed when the work was finished, or was permanent, it is impossible to say; but since the gaps in the brickwork of the side walls which served as lodgements for the balks were not filled in the latter assumption seems the more probable.

³⁾ The ziggurat at Warka is fine, but having been robbed of its burnt-brick is less informative.



Obelisk Temple at Byblos (Jebel). The primitive form of building with monoliths is characteristic of the early phase of Phoenician art (beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.). A large number of offerings, ►

CHAPTER V

SYRIA AND PALESTINE: FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES UNTIL THE CONQUEST OF ALEXANDER

Until very recent times the writer on Phoenician art was wont — and indeed was obliged — to illustrate his thesis by means of objects found not in Phoenicia itself but in Cyprus, a Phoenician colony, in Greece and Etruria and as far away as Utica and Carthage. In all those countries antiquities abound which bear unmistakably the mark of Phoenician style and technique, and yet there is a certain disadvantage in employing them as illustrations of Phoenician handiwork. The Cypriote colony was relatively small but extremely active in manufacture, and since Cyprus had a culture of its own the products of the Phoenician factories were likely to show certain modifications of the styles prevalent upon the Asiatic mainland — and where Asiatic evidence was lacking the extent of such modification could not well be determined. A Phoenician bowl discovered in an Etruscan tomb might have been made in Cyprus or on the North African coast (a silver platter from Praeneste is almost certainly the work of a Carthaginian engraver) and might show features characteristic of the colony and not of the mother country. Because the present history is arranged on a territorial basis, and because modern excavations — especially those of Ugarit and Byblos — have produced a mass of material of unquestionably Phoenician origin, the following chapter deals almost exclusively with objects discovered in Phoenicia itself.

The brief description of the country given in our first chapter sufficiently explains its art history. In so far as it was the land-bridge between Asia Minor and Africa, it was necessarily exposed to the cultural influences of its neighbours at either end of that bridge, and because both of those neighbours alike regarded it as a thoroughfare not only for their traders but also for their armies, the sphere of cultural influence was apt to become one of political subjection. Although the Syrian desert was a barrier minimising contact with Sumer, yet the trade-route along the Fertile Crescent was continued by the road running south from Aleppo, so that in the time of the Third Dynasty

THE SETTING

mainly of metal, were found in the temple, some of which show an astonishing degree of craftsmanship and artistic ability. Cf. pp. 105, 114.



FIG. 29 — Polychrome wall-paintings in tempera from Teleilat el-Ghassul, in the Jordan valley. The design recalls the painted designs on the pottery of Tell Halaf. Close of the 4th millennium B.C. Cf. p. 104. Diameter of the star 1.85 m.

of Ur the upper Orontes valley lay within the Mesopotamian cultural province, and in later days the Assyrian armies, following the same track, could reduce to vassalage the small Syrian states.

Already we have had to deal with north Syria, where the population was predominantly Hurri. In the east, Damascus was to develop only at a late date as capital of an Aramaean kingdom; of its culture there is little to be said. In south Syria the petty city states did undoubtedly flourish in the early part of the second millennium B.C., as is proved by the immense amount of treasure which conquering Pharaohs boast of having taken from them, but there is little left to witness to their riches or their art. Only the coast towns of what was afterwards to be known as Phoenicia have made a recognisable contribution to the history of the art of the Middle East.

Two or three isolated objects of very early date could scarcely be omitted from this survey, in spite of the fact that they bear no obvious relation to the art of later periods. From Jericho, in the pre-pottery phase of the neolithic period, there come the astonishing heads modelled in plaster over actual human skulls. The fact of the eyes being inlaid with cowrie-shells might seem to imply that these are primitive grotesques, but nothing could be farther from the truth; the delicate

Pre-pottery phase

PLATE P. 19

Above, left: Bronze statuette of the god Ba'al, covered with gold foil. Megiddo. Approx. 13th century B.C. Oriental Institute, Chicago. Height 25.6 cm. ▶



Above, right: Statue of a god in gilt bronze from Byblos. The technique is Phoenician, but the motives are borrowed — a characteristic feature of Phoenician art. The body is very flat. It appears that the statue was only meant to be seen frontally. The posture, proportions and modelling of the figure show Egyptian influence. The head-dress in that of a Hurri deity. Approx. 1900 B.C. Cf. p. 105. National Museum, Beirut. Height 34 cm.

and sensitive modelling of the flesh is such that it would be disturbing but for the eyes, where the inlay gives just that touch of convention which a true work of art requires. A slightly later level of the neolithic period at Jericho has yielded a painted terra-cotta head with shell-inlaid eyes; remarkable as it is, it is but a decadent descendant of the plaster-modelled heads which must nevertheless be reckoned a unique phenomenon, isolated and inexplicable.

A steatite figurine from the Amq plain, unfortunately not accurately dated but belonging to the early part of the neolithic period, shows a seated woman of the steatopygous type so characteristic of the Stone Age but is rather more plastically modelled than most. To the first half of the fourth millennium B.C. must be assigned the mud-brick houses of Teleilat el-Ghassul, in the Jordan valley south-east of Jericho, with their polychrome wall-paintings *in tempera*; the main design, an elaborate eight-pointed star, is strongly reminiscent of the painted designs on the pottery of Tell Halaf. Associated with the star there were other geometrical patterns and highly-stylised dragons; but there are also remains of human figures more or less realistically portrayed, and a drawing of a bird is frankly naturalistic in its detail. But here too nothing that has been preserved for us suggests that this early art persisted into or influenced in any way that of succeeding generations.

FIG. 29

Jamdat Nasr
period

In the Jamdat Nasr period, *i.e.*, about 3200 B.C., Mesopotamian influence was strong in Syria and Palestine, as is shown by numerous impressions of cylinder seals found in Megiddo and in Byblos; as this was the time during which the art of late Predynastic Egypt was being assimilated to Mesopotamian models it is but natural that the country which formed the bridge between the two cultures should itself come within the sphere of the predominant power. But very soon afterwards the tide set in the opposite direction; Syrian pottery, decorated with linear or network patterns in red and brown paint, had been freely exported into Egypt up to and during the First Dynasty and is found in the royal tombs at Abydos: but now, in the twenty-ninth century B.C., Egyptian vases begin to appear in Palestine and it is even probable that the Pharaohs of the Thinite dynasty invaded and ruled over southern Syria; the Byblos stone vases with gold lids bearing cartouches of the period may be evidence of suzerainty. It is to the Pyramid age that we can, perhaps, assign a stela found at Shihan in Transjordan; its mixture of Egyptian and Jamdat Nasr styles is just what the political history of the time would lead us to expect. At Ai,

overlooking the Jordan rift, alabaster vases of the Third Dynasty bear witness to Egyptian influence, as does a stone tomb at Taanach, near Megiddo; but the south country was still poor and the more prosperous north was, about 2600 B.C., overrun by the barbarous makers of the Khirbet Kerak pottery whom we have seen occupying by force the Amq plain on the lower Orontes; and they were a purely destructive force. The result of all this, and of Egyptian raids, is that very little remains whereby we can follow the progress of early Syrian culture, and of art objects practically nothing has survived.

Only at the beginning of the second millennium does Phoenician art make its first appearance. To this date can be assigned the Obelisk Temple at Byblos, and however curious it may be for its bearing on the religious ideas of the early Phoenicians (if it is legitimate to use that term for the Giblytes of 1900 B.C.) it is woefully disappointing as an example of architecture. The obelisks are for the most part undressed monoliths, and the actual building is of the crudest type of rubble masonry; it may be that the walls were carried up in mud brick, and in any case they were certainly plastered, but neither in plan nor in construction can the temple claim any merit. But the objects found in it are of a very different order. Vast numbers of votive offerings were found here, some presumably given by the rulers of the city, many more by private individuals, especially by the workers in metal who dedicated examples of their craft, often unfinished castings. Innumerable bronze figurines, sometimes cast in the round, sometimes flat silhouettes, illustrate the industry rather than the artistic powers of the smiths, but others do full credit to their skill. A statuette of a god in gilt bronze shows the deity advancing majestically, his right arm rigid against his side, his left forearm stiffly extended — the hand probably held a spear or similar symbol; he wears the high pointed mitre of a Hurrite divinity and otherwise is naked; the features are finely worked, and although the head is disproportionately small for the elongated body the head-dress atones for this. Seen from in front the anatomy of the body is well rendered, but in profile the torso is curiously flattened, being scarcely thicker than the arm,

PHOENICIAN ART

PLATE P. 100

PLATE P. 103



FIG. 30 — Bronze statuette of the god Ba'al. Although this statuette was found at Ugarit, it shows close stylistic affinities with the Byblos figure. Approx. 1400 B.C. Cf. p. 108. National Museum, Aleppo. Height 11.5 cm.



Gold dagger with sheath from Byblos. A typical example of the high level of craftsmanship and the imitative character of Phoenician art. The general effect is Cretan. A figure of a god (*not visible*) embossed upon the casing of the haft shows a combination of northern Hurri and southern Egyptian influences, whereas the two goats are a familiar Sumerian motive. 18th century B.C. *National Museum, Beirut.*
Length 40 cm.

Egyptian influences

so that one feels that the artist was interested only in the frontal view; but what did interest him he has done remarkably well.

Even in this, the earliest known example of Phoenician art, there can be seen something of what was to be the characteristic of that art throughout history. The admirable technique is Phoenician, but the inspiration is borrowed. The head-dress, as has been remarked, is Hurri, and the flatness of the body is also typical of the northern school, but the attitude, the proportions and the modelling of the figure are thoroughly Egyptian. Two or three other bronze figurines might be direct copies of Egyptian originals, even to the details of the dress, and figurines in glazed frit, probably of local manufacture, are equally Egyptian in treatment and include a standing figure of Ta'urt, the hippopotamus goddess, which is no more than a clumsy imitation. A truly magnificent gold dagger from the Obelisk Temple epitomises the imitative character of the art. The general effect is Cretan — and fragments of Middle Minoan painted pottery vessels found at Byblos prove early connections with the island. A figure of a god embossed upon the casing of the grip shows the same mixture

PLATE P. 106

of northern (Hurri) and Egyptian influences that was apparent in the bronze statuette; two rampant goats back to back with their heads turned to face each other are a familiar Sumerian motive; the line of animals, men and fish upon the sheath again show the combined influences of Egypt and of Mesopotamia. On the other hand it is true that however derivative may be the design, the various elements are not only skilfully worked together but translated by the Syrian artist into a whole which can almost be called original, so distinctive is it of Phoenician art; it is quite unmistakably the work of that particular school.

What is noteworthy in these early works is the admirable technique. Where the craftsman does not look abroad for inspiration but is content to let mere workmanship commend his goods he can succeed to perfection. A number of gold lunate axe-heads affords striking examples of this. The bold simplicity of the design (the type is perhaps native to Syria) is contrasted with the elaborate granulated decoration of the gold casing of the shaft, where this shows through the openings in the blade, and the effect is very fine. Granulation was not indeed a Phoenician invention, but it was a technique which the Phoenician made peculiarly his own, and he exercised it with a finesse which only the Etruscans were to rival. Where however the maker of axe-heads tries to invent something original, he fails; the figure of an animal worked in relief upon the blade not only is distorted in an attempt to secure balance and symmetry but clashes with the severity of the blade's outline and ruins the design.

If the Byblos statuette shows the influence of Egyptian art, two silver figurines found at Ugarit and dated by Schaeffer to 2100—1900 B.C.

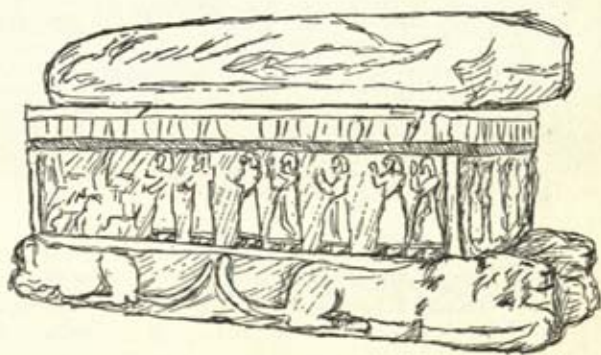
Technique

PLATE P. 109

PLATE P. 103

PLATE P. 112

FIG. 31 — Limestone sarcophagus of Ahiram, king of Byblos. Approx. 975 B.C. Cf. p. 110. National Museum, Beirut. Length of sarcophagus 2.86 m.



may be taken as illustrating the work of the Phoenician craftsman in northern Syria, beyond the reach of that influence. They are grotesquely crude pieces of purely local manufacture. At a slightly later date, contemporary with the Byblos Obelisk Temple, two copper statuettes, of a standing god and a seated goddess, prove that Ugarit has now passed under the influence of the Hurri. One quality these have in common with the Byblos figure, namely their frontality; from the front they appear rounded and well-modelled, whereas seen from the side they are thin and quite flat. In the case of the goddess this served a practical purpose because, copper being difficult to cast, it might have been beyond the craftsman's powers to produce a seated figure; it was made therefore in a long straight strip which was afterwards bent to fit the throne on which the goddess sat. In the case of the god the flatness cannot be explained on such grounds and must be due to the fact that the statuette was meant to be seen only *en face*. Both figures had inlaid eyes and were more or less covered with gold foil, now missing; the head-dresses are Hurrite, and the drapery has the heavy rolled border which we have seen in the statue of King Idri-mi; undoubtedly of Ugarit manufacture, they belong stylistically to the Hurrite rather than to any Canaanite school; perhaps, because Ugarit had shortly before freed itself from a short-lived Egyptian domination, the artists were anxious to avoid any suspicion of subservience to Egyptian art. Such influence was, however, to re-assert itself in due course, and a gold-encased copper statuette of Ba'al, dating from the fifteenth century, comes much closer to the Byblos figure though, being more recent, it is more free and lifelike, a really fine and vigorous work.

FIG. 42

FIG. 30

Carving in stone

Gifted craftsmen though the Phoenicians were, they seem never to have mastered the art of carving in stone. They had models in plenty, for both at Ugarit and at Byblos (to mention only excavated sites) imported Egyptian statues and reliefs are common, but of native



FIG. 32 — Ivory casket from Megiddo, a combination of Hurri style and Egyptian motives. The raw ivory was exported to Syria from Egypt. Cf. p. 113. 13th century B.C. Jerusalem Museum. Width 13 cm.



Gold ceremonial axe. The Phoenician artist achieved great perfection in granulation, a technique employed by goldsmiths in which minute particles of gold and silver are soldered on to the object. This technique was also popular with the Etruscans. Cf. p. 107. *National Museum, Beirut.* Length of shaft 14.2 cm.



FIG. 33 — Ivory tablet from Megiddo. This work, too, is a combination of Hurri style and Egyptian motives. 13th century B.C. Cf. p. 113. Jerusalem Museum.

FIG. 31

work there is surprisingly little. Four stelae from Ugarit, dated by the discoverer between 2000 and 1800 B.C., show Phoenician gods, Anath, Aley-Bel, Môt and Ba'al; the dress and attributes of each are Canaanite, but the flat two-plane reliefs in style and technique but an indifferent imitation of the Egyptian. Later reliefs show no improvement, and even when we come to the famous sarcophagus of Ahiram, King of Byblos (c. 975 B.C.), where the best workmanship was to be expected, the carving is lamentably bad. Stelae of about the same date found at Salahiye and another site, both showing Assyrian influence, are equally bad; one from Amrit, probably of the ninth century, an essay in the Syro-Hittite style, is technically far superior and might have been carved by a peripatetic artist who had worked at Tell Barsip; certainly in the case of the Sinjirli basalt orthostats (730 B.C.) and the Neirab stelae of the sixth century, although the inscriptions are in Aramaic, the sculpture cannot be considered as Phoenician; these are works of a north Syrian school which can hardly be distinguished from the Syro-Hittite. Admittedly there is in central and south Syria no good stone suitable for carving, so that there was nothing to encourage the Phoenician; possibly too because he was essentially a tradesman, making goods primarily for export, for which sculpture in stone was ill-suited, he was not at pains to acquire the art; it was as a goldsmith and a carver in ivory that he gained his reputation.

Goldsmiths' work

PLATE P. 115

In those branches he was already, in the 15th—14th century B.C., a past master. Contemporary with the copper statuette of Ba'al mentioned above are a shallow gold dish and a gold bowl from Ugarit which better than anything else reflect Phoenician style as it was then and was to continue to be for centuries. The dish has on its flat base two concentric registers; in the inner, four animals advance in procession, in the outer is a hunting scene, an archer in a chariot pur-

suing his quarry, an ibex, two wild bulls and a cow, while his two dogs join in the chase; the figures are embossed in fairly high relief. The bowl, of which the decoration is on the outside, has three registers with bands of guilloche round the rim and between the upper registers and a rayed disk on the base; in the bottom register are five goats, two pairs rampant against sacred trees and one isolated; above are two bulls and two lions separated by sacred trees with pomegranates above them; in the top register there are men fighting a lion, lions attacking a bull, ibex or gryphon, a winged sphinx and a winged bull — the disparate scenes have no logical connection but are arranged simply to form a pattern in which every free space is filled with branches of trees, rayed disks and an elaborate 'sacred tree'; the figures are in relief, but the repoussé work is combined with chasing for the details of the figures and for the guilloche patterns.

The effect of the two vessels is astonishingly rich, the workmanship is excellent and the design, alike of the more open hunting scene of the dish and the over-all decoration of the bowl, is extremely skilful, but nowhere is there any originality of invention. All the motives are borrowed. Egypt, Mesopotamia and Crete have all been laid under contribution, and whatever meaning the scenes may once have had it is here disregarded. Even if the hunting scene refers, as Dr. Schaeffer holds, to the hunting exploits of the king of Ugarit, it does no more than symbolise those exploits by a conventional design borrowed from Crete; and on the bowl the various motives, however distorted by the copyist, are reduced to mere ornament. If we look at the fairly numerous engraved bowls in bronze or silver which have been found in foreign countries such as Cyprus and Etruria, vessels which, although not necessarily made in Syria, illustrate the later phases of Phoenician art, we shall find no two duplicates but a constant repetition of motives. It is evident that the craftsman possessed a 'pattern-book' of motives derived from all the sources available to him and combined them indiscriminately into a design. Just as in later times the Phoenician goldsmith would string together meaningless Egyptian hieroglyphs as background ornament, so too he would from the outset adapt for decorative purposes religious scenes or symbols whose significance he ignored or misunderstood; he was a decorative artist only, but as such excelled.

Phoenician goods travelled far and wide, and to their often barbarous or backward customers appeared to be of unparalleled merit. But it must be admitted that they were seldom, if ever, of the highest quality.



One of two silver figurines found at Ugarit (Ras Shamra), a typical example of northern Syrian art uninfluenced by Egypt. The figure is executed in silver, the kilt in gold. Approx. 2000 B.C. Cf. p. 107.
National Museum, Damascus. Height of figure 28 cm.

The eighteenth-century king of Byblos who wanted a gold pectoral of Egyptian style would certainly have commissioned his best goldsmith, but the pectoral, very splendid though it be, cannot compare with the workmanship of an Egyptian royal piece; similarly the Ugarit gold vessels, for technical finish, fall very far short of Egyptian standards. Working for a different and a less discriminating clientele the Phoenician goldsmith was content to gain a superficial effect rather than to achieve technical perfection.

The worker in ivory aimed higher — possibly because Egyptian ivories were exported and he had therefore to meet keener competition in the Mediterranean market, but was equally imitative, because he had to satisfy the tastes of clients in different areas. Ugarit has produced a magnificent ivory roundel of the fourteenth century carved with a figure of a seated goddess between two wild goats which is so truly Cretan in style that it might be mistaken for a genuine Minoan piece; toilet-boxes in the shape of a duck with its head turned back over its wings are precise replicas of those made in Egypt; ivories from Megiddo (13th century) are in the northern (Hurri) taste, but combine this with Egyptian motives. Because Pharaoh exported his surplus raw ivory to Syria the Phoenician craftsmen could build up a flourishing trade. Not only is carved ivory found in large quantities at sites in Syria such as Megiddo, later at Arslan Tash, Samaria and Lachish, but a very large proportion of the innumerable ivories from the palaces of the Assyrian kings are of Phoenician manufacture. Inlay for furniture was sometimes engraved, sometimes worked in relief, sometimes cut *au jour*; the ivory might be stained, inlaid with coloured stones, partly gold-plated, so that the effect was brilliant in the extreme, and upon those royal commissions the workers lavished their utmost skill. Some motives were frankly Syrian, such as the familiar 'Woman at the Window'; many were copied from Assyrian reliefs; many were Egyptian, these being for the most part derivative rather than directly imitative, and something of the Mycenaean tradition still survived even in the eighth century B.C. Throughout the centuries the ivory-carver's art was conservative; an innovation generally results from the copying of a motive supplied by a fresh client, but the same motives tend to be repeated, so that it is difficult to date a single carving on internal evidence, and to trace any development is impossible. In the course of time however the carver's repertoire became very large, and by ingenious combinations and modifications of standard motives a clever man could devise something essentially

Ivory work

FIGS. 32, 33

original. Such is the finest of all the ivories known to us, a plaque from Nimrud (8th—7th century) showing, against a background of flowering reeds, a young negro being killed by a lioness — a work exquisite in composition and technique and with a dramatic intensity rarely to be found in Phoenician art.

Glyptic art

In the glyptic art there is the same mixture of foreign styles as in metallurgy. The actual form of the cylinder seal is of course borrowed from Mesopotamia, while the scarab is native to Egypt. The Phoenicians cut cylinder seals, often employing Egyptian motives to the exclusion of any other, often a combination of north Syrian and Mesopotamian motives; but they greatly preferred the scarab, which incidentally gave scope for their skill in the use of coloured glaze. In neither case did they make any noteworthy invention or achieve any advance.

It was north Syria, the Hurri country, that produced all the best of the countless cylinders which our museums have acquired from Syrian dealers; glyptic had few attractions for the Phoenician craftsman. A seal is a personal thing which must be made to the order of an individual customer; its maker needs to possess invention and adaptability; the Phoenician on the other hand liked to make things for export, things which would commend themselves to an unknown client and could be taken from pattern-books; seal-engraving therefore he could leave to others.

Architecture

The fact that the Temple of Solomon at Jerusalem was built for him by the skilled workmen of Hiram, king of Tyre, surely implies that the Phoenicians were good architects and masons. Nothing remains in their country to substantiate this. We have seen that the early Obelisk Temple at Byblos was but a crude affair. We must disregard the magnificent corbel-vaulted tomb-chambers of Ugarit, because those are due not to the natives of Ugarit but to the Aegean merchants resident in the port; the walls of Ugarit, with the postern gate and corbel-vaulted passage in the wall's thickness, are indeed impressive but they too are not Phoenician in origin, and as rough rubble structures they cannot rank very high by architectural standards. The huge blocks of stone in the walls of Arvad bespeak a triumph of engineering, but the construction is unsound, since they rest upon far smaller

Above, right: Shallow gold dish from Ugarit, with figures embossed in fairly high relief and arranged in two registers. The work of Phoenician goldsmiths, showing Cretan influence. Approx. 14th century B.C.

National Museum, Damascus. Diameter 17 cm. ▶



Below: Gold bowl from Ugarit, with three registers and bands of guilloche round the rim. The figures are in relief; the details and guilloche patterns are chased. Approx. 1400 B.C. Cf. p. National Museum, Damascus. Diameter 19 cm.

blocks; and the same is true of the immense stones in the podium wall of Ba'albek which, even if of late date, are in the Phoenician megalithic tradition. The only monuments of pre-Classical days that can be cited as illustrating Phoenician architecture are the megalithic Ma'abed or tabernacle at Amrit, Egyptian in design and with an Egyptian cornice, but with a monolithic roof trimmed inside to simulate a barrel vault, and a somewhat similiar (ruined) monolithic tabernacle at Ain al Hayât close to Amrit with a uraeus cornice. The well-known Amrit tombs, dating from the first centuries B.C. and A.D., are in the same monolithic tradition but while the forms may be Phoenician such decoration as there is has been borrowed from Assyria. From Sidon we have two architectural fragments which again show the lack of originality characteristic of Phoenician art; one is part of a column-base in Syro-Hittite style, the other a column-capital composed of two bull *protomoi* which is a painstaking copy of those at Persepolis.

At Megiddo there were found two 'proto-Ionic' pilaster capitals, one of which is of the time of Solomon of Judaea and the other perhaps a generation older; they are the earliest known. It would be surprising if this architectural form, so popular in later times, originated in a Canaanite town of secondary importance.¹⁾ Similar capitals occur in Cyprus in the sixth century B.C., and it is not unreasonable to suppose that those at Megiddo were also due to the Phoenicians. King Solomon may well have employed Hiram's masons and architects for work in other towns of his realm besides Jerusalem; the building of the Astarte temple at Megiddo, from which one of the capitals comes, was as much beyond the powers of the Hebrews of that date as was that of the more ambitious temple of Yahwe, so that foreign labour would have been needed; and it is noteworthy that the technique of wall construction used for the principal buildings (the walls are in sections divided by wooden uprights resting on a sleeper wall; the footings for the uprights are of ashlar masonry with rubble masonry between them) is one that was not normal in Palestine. If this supposition be justified then it must be admitted that the Phoenicians did make at least one important contribution to architecture.

But that most of their work in this as in other fields was imitative is undoubtedly true; even in the Hebrew description of the temple at Jerusalem, with its "Walls carved with cherubims and palm-trees and open flowers", we can recognise the Syro-Hittite orthostats, which

were capable of far more elaborate work than any architectural remains in Phoenicia itself would lead us to attribute to them; its quality we must take on trust, but a little basalt lion from Byblos, now in the Louvre, a work of the Persian period, typically Phoenician in its resolution of animal forms into decorative patterns, gives a very favourable impression of what their stone-carving may have been at its best.

So constantly has it been necessary to insist upon the derivative character of Phoenician art that it might be thought that such an art does not deserve the space here given to its description, for obviously it contributed little or nothing that was new to the art of the ancient world. The answer to this objection is that in spite of their lack of originality the Phoenicians played an indispensable part in the history of art. Being from the outset in touch with the greater powers, Sumer and Egypt, the Hittities and the Hurri and (to some extent) with Minoan Crete, they not only borrowed from each and all but also supplied to each more or less faithful imitations of the works of art of the others; it was thanks to the Phoenicians that by the fourteenth century B.C. there had been established something like a *koine* of the eastern Mediterranean. We have only to look at the development of Egyptian art as illustrated by the treasures of Tutankhamen's tomb to realise how much was due to that artistic commonwealth.

When, just after 1200 B.C., thanks to the displacement of peoples which destroyed the Hittite empire and brought the Philistines to the borders of Egypt, the Phoenician harbour towns received contingents of Mycenaean seamen and under their guidance embarked on oversea voyages such as they had not attempted before, the Phoenician contribution to art history became yet more important. Their impact upon Etruscan civilisation was such that while in many cases we can recognise Phoenician imports, in many it is hard to decide whether a work of art is Phoenician or Etruscan made under Phoenician influence. In Greece they were responsible for the phase of 'Orientalising' art which in the late eighth and seventh centuries prevailed both in the islands and on the mainland, at Corinth and at Athens, and helped to mould Greek art of the great age.

The Phoenicians had no creative imagination, and if they had exported manufactures fashioned after their own crude ideas their international trade would have had no effect upon the art of their clients. Because they were inveterate copyists and so disseminated styles that



Ivory plaque from Nimrud (Kalhu), possibly the decoration on a stool. Against a background of reeds a young negro is being killed by a lioness. The finest of all ivories found hitherto. Ivory inlaid with lapis lazuli and carnelian, partly gilded and plated with gold. Cf. p. 114. *British Museum. Height 10.5 cm.*

were not their own they became the middlemen of the art world and by hybridisation promoted the aesthetic development of peoples who, but for them, would have remained isolated and perhaps sterile.

- 1) A Syro-Hittite relief from Carchemish, which may be earlier in date than the Megiddo fragments, shows two man-headed bulls grasping a staff (or tree?), the head of which is curiously like the proto-Ionic capital, though the side elements are really curved fronds, not full volutes. The Phoenician claim to the invention of the capital is therefore liable to challenge.



Stag, probably top of a 'standard'. Proto-Hittite work. Bronze inlaid with electrum; muzzle and horns in electrum. Approx. 2200 B.C. Alaca Höyük. Cf. p. 124. *Archaeological Museum, Ankara*. Height of 'standard', including base, 52.5 cm.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HURRI AND THE HITTITES

In tracing the history of the art of Sumer and Akkad down to about 1800 B.C. we have said nothing about the peripheral countries, only insisting that from them came much of the material upon which that art depended. The imports that Sumer required had to be paid for; this meant the constant exchange of goods and often personal contacts, and since Sumer led the way in the development of civilisation it was always setting a cultural example to the neighbouring peoples with whom it did trade. Amongst these were the Hurri people, living to the north and north-west of that part of Mesopotamia in which the Sumerian civilisation was at home. It was through Hurri territory that there came to Sumer the cedar and hardwoods of the Amanus mountains, and in the villages of the Amq plain, at the foot of the Amanus, first the painted pottery of al 'Ubaid and then the burnished wares of Uruk bear witness to the fact that the timber trade was active even in those early days; soon after 2700 B.C. the king of Alalakh, who controlled the trade-route, adorned the façade of his palace with huge columns built of specially-moulded mud bricks, a fashion set by his eastern clients such as those who built the colonnades of Warka and Kish. Further to the east the evidence for Sumerian contacts is, as might be expected, far more plentiful. At Brak, in the fertile valley of the Khabur, the walls of the 'Eye Temple', which is at least as early as the late Jamdat Nasr period, were enriched with mosaics of clay cones like those of Warka, and the altar had a frieze of gold, white limestone and grey shale, while the wall was decorated with eight-petalled stone rosettes like those of the First Dynasty temple at al 'Ubaid; moreover, there were found in the temple innumerable stone amulets in the form of animals — they are really stamp seals, engraved underneath — for the most part identical with those found in Sumer in the Jamdat Nasr levels. All this is borrowed art: but side by side with it come the curious 'eye idols' from which the temple takes its name, little alabaster figures with an almost square body and a neck supporting not a face but two (or sometimes three, four or six) big eyes, with perhaps a *polos* head-dress above. These have nothing to do with Sumer but are native to the land. Native also are two or three alabaster heads from acrolithic statues which, like the

Brak

'Eye idols'



FIG. 34 — Small figure of a boy. Torso of bronze, legs of iron. This combination is characteristic of Hittite art. Cf. p. 124.

'eye idols', are dated by the discoverer to c. 2200 B.C.; primitive as they naturally are, they none the less show a formal stylisation which implies a school of sculpture rather than any individual experiment, and although they cannot rank high as works of art yet for the history of art they are important documents, for, produced at a time when

Sumerian influence was so predominant, they are the first to demonstrate that independent genius which in later ages differentiates Hurri art.

ALACA HÖYÜK

The Hattians of north-eastern Anatolia, the predecessors of the Hittites, were the authors of the earliest Anatolian art worthy of the name. In close touch with the sources of copper, silver and, to a lesser degree, of gold, but too far away to have any direct contacts with early Sumer, their culture was likely to be advanced, independent and original. The treasures found in the royal tombs of Alaca Höyük, together with later discoveries at Horoztepe and Kayapinar Höyük, i.e., in the fertile district of Tokat — Amasya, show that they were skilled workers in metal and could turn that skill to good account. Gold vessels, jugs and goblets, are decorated with elaborate geometrical patterns in repoussé work, the shapes and to some extent the patterns being taken over from pottery originals; personal ornaments are executed in gold filigree or in granulated technique. Very remarkable are the animal figures solid-cast in copper and sometimes inlaid with silver, sometimes partly plated by dipping the copper core in an alloy of silver and lead; these oxen and stags are highly conventionalised but still vigorous and true to nature; here again a bull's head in burnished clay with incised detail shows a similar style in a different medium. Animal figures are in many cases associated with the curious —

Metal-work



Painted pottery from Kanesh (Kültepe). 19th century B.C.

Above: Vase with handles. Red and black bands on a yellow and red slip. Height 36 cm., width 24 cm.

Below: Bowl with handles. Polychrome and burnished slip decorated with wavy parallel lines. Cf. p. 127.

Both in the Archaeological Museum, Ankara. Diameter 27 cm., height 13 cm.



FIG. 35 — Cylinder-seal impression from Bogazköy. The god standing on a stag is a frequent motive in Hittite iconography. Cf. p. 128. After K. Bittel and H. G. Güterbock.

PLATE P. 120

FIG. 34

Tombs

and as yet unexplained — 'standards' of cast copper, flat circles, half-circles and squares filled in with an open network of criss-cross bars, swastikas, etc., through which may come a stag or a bull; an example from Horoztepe (which is certainly a *sistrum*) has a procession of deer, ibexes and lions round its rim. Horoztepe has also produced a copper statuette of a nude woman suckling an infant; two rather more crude female figures and one of a child come from a tomb at Alaca Höyük; in all of them there is a very definite feeling for the human body, a naturalness of posture and a softness of curves quite unusual in the primitive figurines of the Middle East; but those are qualities which, like the sympathetic realism of the animal figures, will be recognised again in later Hittite art.

The Alaca Höyük tombs date from about 2200 B.C. and seem to belong to the end of a period, as marked by a stratum of destruction and the burning of the citadel. The culture which the tomb objects illustrate does not continue into the next historical phase, that of Kültepe, but the break does not mean that the ancient Hattians were an isolated phenomenon which had no influence upon other peoples then or afterwards; amongst the objects from Alaca Höyük a fair number of parallels with objects from Sumer of the Early Dynastic period and of considerably earlier date may be explained as being based upon trade imports long treasured by the more primitive Hattians; parallels with objects from Troy II should also imply trade, and where the types of metal weapons are the same at Alaca Höyük and in north Syria or Cyprus one must attribute the invention to the smiths working close to the source of metal supply; — it is a case of the Hattians influencing their business clients; and when a bull figurine exactly like those of the Hattian tombs turns up in the treasure-hoard of Maikop, beyond the Caucasus, we must suppose that Hattian culture had ramifications to the north also.

'Treasure of Priam'

The 'Treasure of Priam' discovered by Schliemann in Troy II is contemporary with Alaca Höyük and contains connected objects, but is not in itself a product of the same culture; the metal-working technique is much less advanced and the types most characteristic of Hat-

tian art are here lacking. The Anatolian states, isolated by their geographical features, were bound to be largely independent in their cultures, as is shown by the discoveries at Beycesultan; and Troy is as individual as Maikop, at any rate in most of its aspects, though, as will appear later, it shared its architecture with other Anatolian sites. Throughout the history of the Middle East it is common to find a petty state achieving for a time wealth and independence, developing an art which may imitate that of the leading centres (with local variations that give it a certain individuality) and then sinking into insignificance and becoming sterile.

Certainly the excavations at Kültepe have revealed a civilisation which, while not very far removed from that of Alaca Höyük in place or in time (its date is 2000 — 1700 B.C., but the first and last phases are unimportant, so that the period 1950—1800 B.C. is that which concerns us here) seems to have no connection with it at all. It is true that the greater part of the excavations has been confined to the *karum*, a commercial suburb inhabited by Akkadian merchants, while relatively little has been done in the walled town of Kanesh proper, and the domestic interiors of the foreigners might be expected to reflect their own civilisation rather than the Anatolian, but even so the latter is illustrated by many discoveries of objects of art.

The finding in a palace building in Kanesh of a dagger bearing the name of Anittas, who was king of Kussura and conqueror of Hattusas, proves that we are concerned with a time when the Indo-European Hittites were already in Anatolia and making their way northwards to the Halys basin, which later was to be the seat of their kingdom. It is therefore the more interesting to find such objects as bull's head rhytons in burnished brown clay which carry on the precedent of Alaca Höyük; it means that the older Hattians had not been exter-

KÜLTEPE

Pottery



FIG. 36 — Detail of Hittite cylinder-seal impression. Cf. p. 128. Louvre, Paris.



Mural from the palace at Mari. After the fall of the Third Dynasty of Ur the Western Semitic empire, of which Mari was the capital, enjoyed great importance until the city and palace were completely destroyed by Hammurabi of Babylon. The style of the murals shows a combination of Hurri and Mesopotamian influences. 18th century B.C. Cf. p. 133. *National Museum, Aleppo.*

minated but survived under their new overlords to influence with their traditions the historic art of the Hittites. To this tradition we must ascribe the remarkable pottery of the nineteenth century B.C. found in the *karum*; magnificent red burnished-ware vessels which clearly owe much to metal prototypes, as when loop handles end in dragon's heads which grip with their teeth the vessel's rim; vases of more truly ceramic shapes with geometrical patterns in black on a reserved buff ground set off by the general red-painted and burnished surface; and a polychrome ware with black and red patterns on white slip, the vases being often theriomorphic, the animals represented with the understanding and sympathy which is characteristic of Anatolian art. Alike in style and in technique these last are unlike anything known from other regions of the Middle East in the early periods; occasionally they show a whimsical spirit, as when the vase takes the form of a shoe: but in the best of the animal pieces the potter seems to base his design on some more ambitious and even monumental work in another material such as copper or gold.

PLATE P. 123

From the *karum* and from the city ruins there have been recovered vast numbers of seals and seal-impressions. Many of them, belonging to the Akkadian merchants, are, as one would expect, cylinder seals of purely Akkadian type; such need not concern us here. Many others however are locally cut, and these can be classified into two main schools characterised by very different styles.

Seals

On the one hand there are both stamp and cylinder seals which are distinctively Anatolian. In them the workmanship is generally crude, and in their subjects animal motives preponderate. On the stamp seals (i.e., seals which are Anatolian in form as well as in content and have no Mesopotamian connections) a single animal is most often represented or, where there are several, they are combined in a single schematic pattern, such as four or more heads revolving round a common axis like the arms of a swastika: on the cylinder seals the stock subjects are files of animals, hunting scenes, war scenes and, less commonly, processions of gods or scenes of worship, and here the design tends to be grossly overcrowded. In both cases the gem-cutter is employing native motives and treats them in a native style; his individual figures owe little or nothing to any foreign models: but for engraving on this minute scale he is still a tyro, experimenting with no definite principles of design to guide him.

The third class of seals consists of the cylinders in what is called the 'Syro-Cappadocian' style, i.e., of the sort that is common in northern

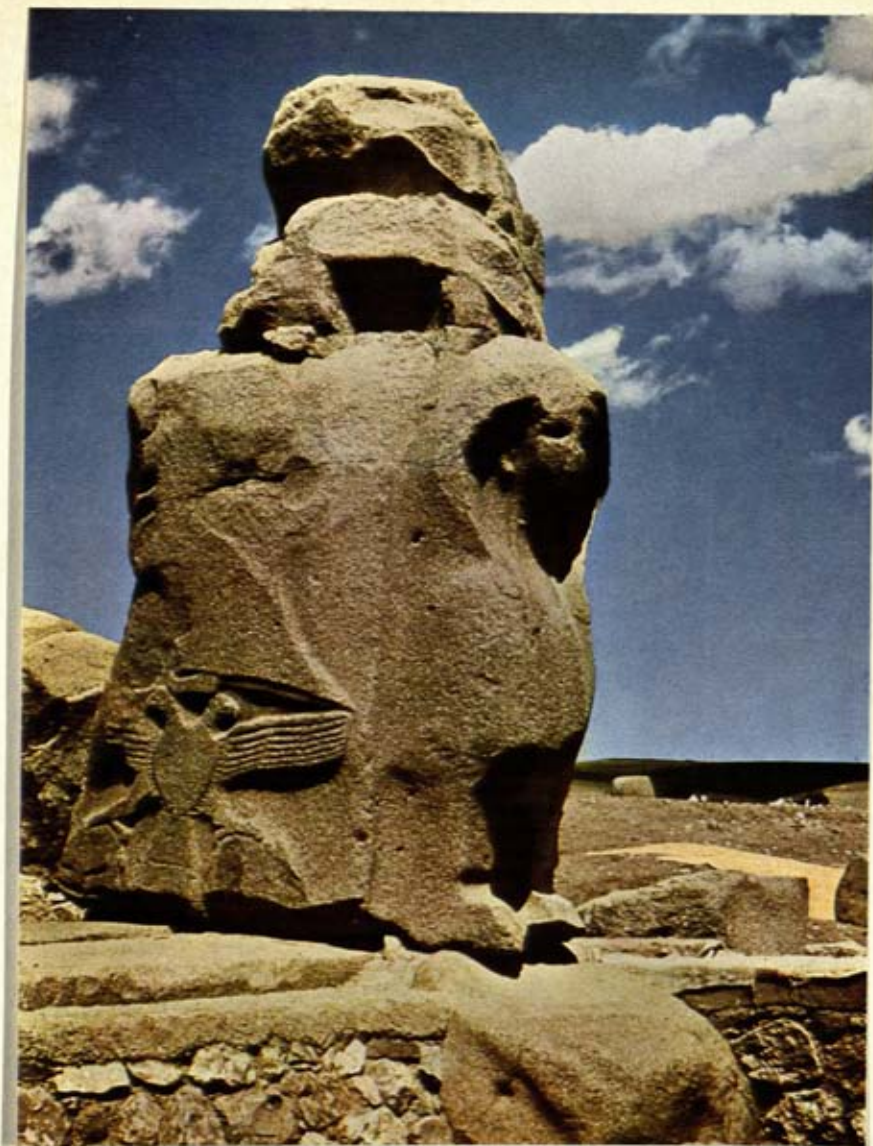


FIG. 37 — Lion sculpture in basalt from Alalakh (Tell Atchana). 14th century B.C. Cf. pp. 134, 142. Hatay Museum.

FIG. 35 Syria throughout the territory of the Hurri. Often very finely cut, they have scenes which are on the whole derived from Mesopotamian glyptic, but the characters portrayed may wear Hittite dress; between the principal figures small secondary figures are introduced, especially animals, including the monkey, and there may be secondary scenes on a small scale, arranged in two registers, and often these are divided by a band of guilloche pattern; gods are frequently shown standing upon the backs of animals, in Hittite fashion. The Hurri were in close touch with Mesopotamia and had learned much from both Sumer and Akkad; and they were in close touch also with the Hittites, to whom they passed on what they had learned from their southern neighbours. The Kültepe seals bear witness to this intermediary rôle played by the Hurri at an early date; their influence was to persist throughout Hittite history. We do not possess sufficient material to enable us to define Hurri art as such and to treat of it separately; the Anatolian connections were so close that we are justified in dealing with the art of both peoples, Hurri and Hittite, together, drawing our illustrations from both indiscriminately where objects from the Hurri area are clearly not dependent either upon Mesopotamia or upon central and southern Syria for their inspiration.

Architecture

In architecture of the early periods it is the northern country that seems to take the lead. The *megaron* type of domestic building, the large hall with four columns to support its roof clustered round a central hearth, is found in the later phase of Troy II, at Alishar in eastern Anatolia and at Beycesultan in the west; thus widely diffused and clearly therefore native to Anatolia, whence it was to spread west-



Sphinx from the gateway at Alaca Höyük. The sphinx is hewn out of a huge monolithic block. As was customary with Anatolian gate sculptures, the façade alone is carved in relief, with only the head and front feet projecting. Cf. p. 136.



FIG. 38 — So-called 'Warrior' relief from the Royal Gateway at Bogazköy (Hattusas). This is probably not a representation of a warrior, but of a deity. The figure shows some affinity with the small bronze figure from Bogazköy (Plate p. 132). Cf. pp. 136, 142. Archaeological Museum, Ankara.

*Half-timber
construction*

wards and serve as model for the Homeric house, it never penetrated south of the Taurus range. Similarly the postern gate tunnelled through the stonework of the city wall, which is a feature of the defences of Bogazköy and of Alishar, and also, in a modified form, of Troy II C, reappears on Greek soil at Tiryns and Mycenae, but not in Syria, with the sole exception of Ugarit on the Syrian coast, where it is more likely to have come from the Mycenaeans than directly from Asia Minor.

Half-timber construction, that in which the foundations of the wall were of stone and the upper part of mud brick or of rubble strengthened by a wooden framework, is certainly native to Anatolia, for in that country nature supplied in abundance all the necessary materials; it was the obvious way in which to build, the dry-stone foundations being needed in a rainy country, the timber framework giving greater solidity than could be obtained with rubble building and being also a precaution dictated by the prevalence of earthquakes. This is in fact the normal method of construction throughout Asia Minor. In Syria it was used only in the Hurri area or (later) where Hittite influence was strong, and then only for important structures such as temples and palaces: it was indeed a luxury beyond the reach of the ordinary citizen, so much so that in a private house of the fourteenth century B.C. at Alalakh (Tell Atchana) the walls were frescoed with a design of basalt orthostats and heavy cedar beams whereas the wall itself was of mud brick throughout and contained neither wood nor stone; it was a pretence aping the splendour of kings.

The best-preserved examples of such buildings are found in the Hurri city of Alalakh. The early eighteenth-century palace of King Yarim-Lim is formed of two blocks, the official offices and the domestic quarters, separated by a large walled courtyard, and was of two storeys. Polished basalt orthostats make a dado along the footings of the walls, and above them the construction is in timber and mud brick — only in the servants' rooms are the interior walls of brick alone. Floors were of concrete overlaid with fine white cement. Round cushion-shaped basalt column-bases supported tapered wooden shafts, thicker at the top than at the bottom. In the domestic block the great reception-room was on the first floor, built over magazines; it was approached by a newel staircase and had a three-light window with stone embrasures; it was planned on the lines of the 'chambers of audience' in the official block, being a long room divided into two unequal parts by two columns set between pilaster-buttresses projecting from the side walls; the room was decorated with designs in real fresco. No other palace building of this date and in this style has yet been found, but it is not likely to have been unique. Yarim-Lim's city gate, with its great gate-towers and its triple gates set between heavy stone piers and its entry-passage roofed with a corbel vault, is in plan identical with the contemporary southern gateway of Carchemish and only a little more elaborate than the main gate of Bogazköy. The palace itself in some details of its plan and in all its constructional features finds a parallel in the (later) palace of Minos at Knossos in Crete — and in its decoration also, for the Alalakh fresco fragments suggest similar subjects to those of the famous Cretan frescoes — bull's heads and wind-blown grasses treated in the most

Yarim-Lim's palace



FIG. 39 — Figure from the Lion Gateway at Bogazköy. The eyes were originally inlaid. Cf. p. 136.



Bronze figure from Bogazköy, probably representing a deity. It shows a close affinity with the so-called 'Warrior' relief from the Royal Gateway at Bogazköy (Hattusas). Cf. p. 142. *Staatliche Museen, Berlin.*
Height 12.5 cm.

FIG. 40 — Diorite head, probably a portrait of King Yarim-Lim, from Alalakh. Approx. 1760 B.C. Cf. p. 140. Hatay Museum. Height 16.5 cm.



naturalistic way — and the technique of their painting, their colour range and the chemical composition of the colours are identical. That architectural styles were readily copied we know from a letter written to Yarim-Lim by the king of Ugarit; he has heard that the king of Mari has just completed a wonderful palace, and asks for an introduction to that monarch as he is thinking of a new palace for himself and would like to get suggestions from the Mari building. Actually the Mari palace was, as one would expect from the history of the city, laid out on a Mesopotamian plan and built of mud brick, but the wall paintings, executed in tempera on mud plaster, are remarkable. Both in technique and in style they show a curious mixture. The principal scenes are formal and stereotyped — the rectangular framed picture of the king's investiture might almost be an enlargement from a cylinder seal, and it is to be noticed that the outlines of the figures were impressed with a pointed instrument in the wet plaster — the technique of an engraver rather than of a painter. The gryphons, sphinxes and human-headed bulls in compartments alongside are all in a convention long since grown stale, and the frieze with scenes of sacrifice by water and by fire might have been borrowed by an indifferent copyist from the stela of Gudea and Ur-Nammu. On the other hand the subsidiary figures — a man leading a bull to the sacrifice, a fisherman, a soldier and men climbing tall palm-trees to gather dates — are naturalistic, free and vivacious, and here the outlines were sketched in black paint with an ease and surety that bespeaks practised skill and original invention. The freshness and humour of these scenes — which are unlike anything in Mesopotamian art — may be thought to show the Hurrian artist following his natural bent when his subject did not force him to conform to Mesopotamian tradition.

Wall paintings

PLATE P. 129

Fragments of coloured wall-plaster have been found at Bogazköy, and it is at least probable that even in older Hatti architecture there was decoration of a kind not likely to leave traces of itself in the scanty ruins of the buildings. Thus, at various sites in the Halys basin there have been found fragments of eighteenth-century clay vases adorned with painted figures in relief; the best of them, called 'the Bitik Vase', has in separate registers processional figures and a scene of a temple (?) interior with architectural details and gods seated under a canopy or balcony. It has been plausibly suggested that such are copies of painted stucco reliefs that formed friezes on temple or palace walls; the suggestion is supported by Mesopotamian analogies of older date, and the (presumably painted) terra-cotta reliefs of the A-anni-pad-da temple at al 'Ubaid give us a very close parallel.

Architectural reliefs

The fifteenth-century palace of Niqmepa at Alalakh preserves most of the architectural features of that of Yarim-Lim but adds an imposing monumental entry with a broad flight of steps leading up to a two-columned hypostyle entrance-chamber; the general continuity shows that this style of building is endemic to the country. It is probably to the middle of the next century that we must assign a series of lion sculptures (found re-used in a later building) which had flank-

ed the doorways of some temple; in that case they would be — as indeed their widely different styles suggest — the first experiments in what was to be the characteristic adornment of Syro-Hittite architecture, adopted later by the Assyrians and the Persians. At about the same time the defences of Hattusas were enlarged by Suppiluliumas, and



FIG. 41 — Basalt head from Jabbul, near Aleppo. 16th century B.C. (?). Cf. p. 140. Louvre, Paris. Height 35 cm.



Very small funerary figures from Carchemish. They are either of gold or are carved in steatite or lapis lazuli set in gold caissons. *Below, left:* A figure in gold, bearing on its head a winged sun disk and in its hand what may be a Minoan double axe. Cf. p. 146. *British Museum. Height of gold figure 1.75 cm.*



FIG. 42 — Statue of King Idri-mi, carved in a white dolomite, Alalakh. Inlaid eyes. Early 14th century B.C. Cf. pp. 108, 140, 151, British Museum. Height 1.3 m.

FIG. 38

PLATE P. 129

FIG. 39

the three gateways of the new wall give us the first Anatolian examples of gate sculpture. It is noticeable that of the three the most famous, the 'Warrior' relief, is simply a relief carved upon the door-jamb; the lions are no more than *protomoi*; only the sphinxes resemble the Alalakh lions in having their bodies carved on the side of the block, in the reveal of the doorway, with their heads and front feet projecting from the façade; — the sphinxes of the Alaca Höyük gateway are of the same sort, imitating at a very slightly later date that Hattusas model which was architecturally most successful.

Another innovation which was to be followed by all later Hittite builders is illustrated by the Alaca Höyük ruins. The stone foundation which originally was purely utilitarian had been developed into an architectural feature by the use of large cut and polished orthostats such as those in Yarim-Lim's palace; these were now elaborated by being carved in relief. Thus in the new architecture the façade of a building, the front of its gate-tower and the sides of the gate recess, would show a continuous line of carving, usually about one metre in height, which might be prolonged into the entry passage; the door-jambs, and sometimes the tower angles, would be carved with lion figures, their heads projecting in the round. The innovation must be credited to the Hittite New Kingdom, but owing to the destruction of the Anatolian city sites it is best illustrated by remains in Syria where the tradition persisted throughout the Syro-Hittite period,

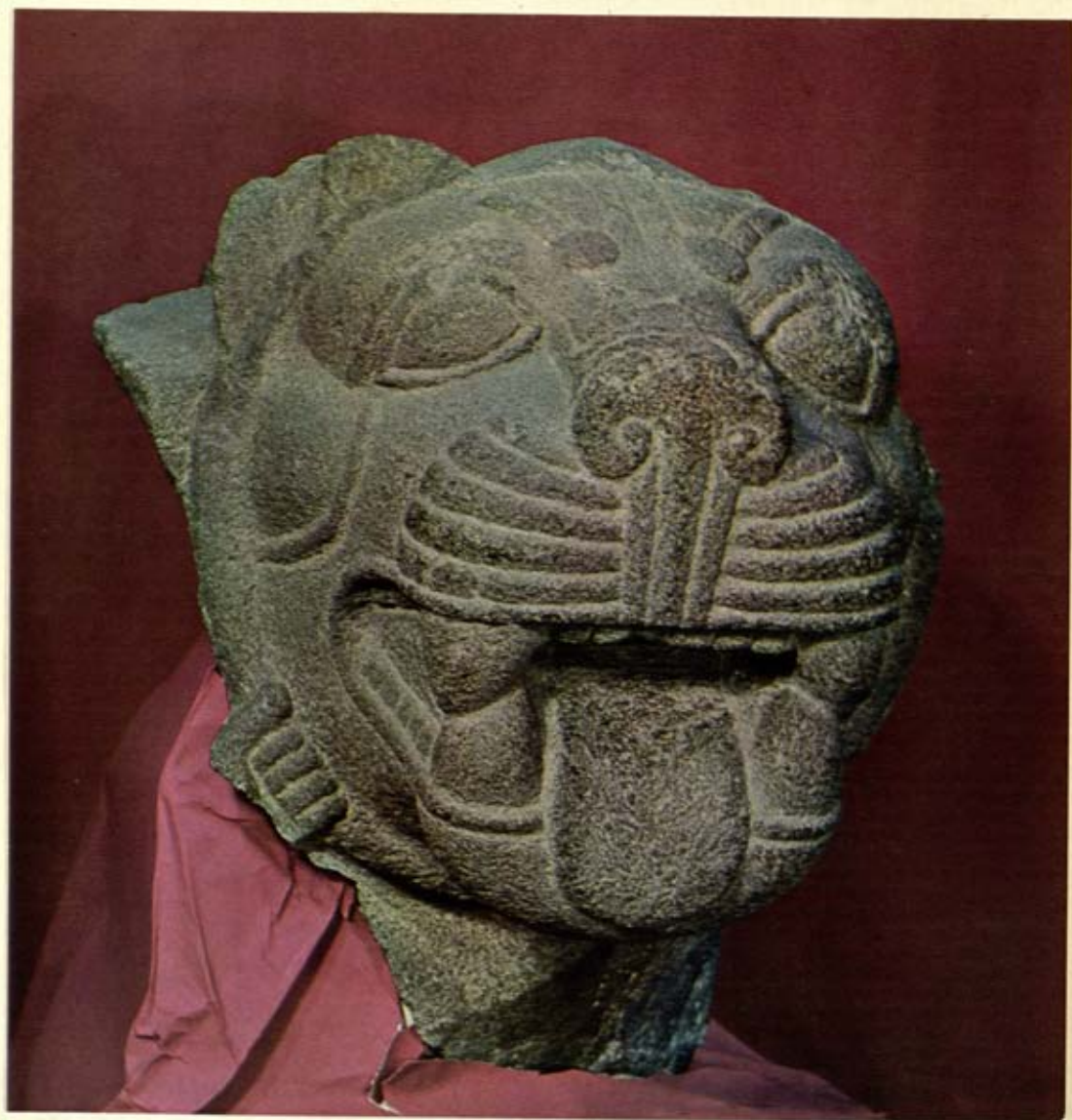
from the tenth to the seventh centuries B.C.; at Malatya and Carchemish, at Sinjirli, Sakje-geuzi, Tell Halaf and Karatepe it is the leading architectural feature.

The *Bît Hilani*, so admired by the Assyrians, was unknown in Anatolia; it was a Hurri invention whose evolution can be followed in north Syria from early times until it was perfected by the Syro-Hittites. The examples that can be cited differ in detail but are alike in essentials. The *Hilani* is a palace building complete in itself, its plan not modified by any architectural complex of which it may form a part: its standing features are a one-storeyed portico, often approached by steps, with an open front flanked by heavy walls or towers between which would be one, two or three columns of wood (except in the case of Tell Halaf) resting on stone bases; the effect would be rather that of a temple *in antis*. Behind the portico, entered by a wide doorway (which might have columns dividing the passage) lies the throne-room, in which the throne platform and the rails for a movable hearth sometimes remain: behind this again are at least two rooms forming a suite of bedroom and bath-room, or two such suites (except at Carchemish, where they are missing), and there is always a staircase, generally placed at one end of the portico, for there was a second storey over the throne-room and the rooms in the rear of it.¹) This type of building, though unquestionably secular in purpose, may have been evolved from an earlier temple form, for the upper chamber overlooking the entrance-hall is actually found in a temple at Alalakh of c. 2500 B.C., while the columned portico is seen in the fifteenth-century palace of Niqmepa. The columns were still of wood, following the ancient tradition, but for the stone column-base the Syro-Hittite architect was prone to substitute something more ornate; the cushion-shape circular base may be preserved but is carved in relief like a flower-calyx with incurving petals, or the plain drum may be set between two lions or two sphinxes which seem to support the shaft, and the best of these are astonishingly fine. At Tell Halaf however a provincial (and bad) sculptor has gone further and has ventured to set up, instead of wooden columns, stone caryatid

Bît Hilani



FIG. 43 — Bronze statuette from Meshrifeh, near Homs. A particularly characteristic feature is the heavily rolled edging of the dress. Cf. p. 141.



Basalt lion's head from the base of the statue of Atarluhas at Carchemish. One of the earliest examples of Syro-Hittite sculpture in the round. Approx. 900 B.C. Cf. p. 151. *The restored statue is now in the Archaeological Museum, Ankara, except for the lion's head, which is in the British Museum. Height 40 cm.*

figures, grotesque deities mounted on beasts equally grotesque. Above the orthostats the wall was carried up either in mud brick or, more often, in the traditional half-timber construction with mud-brick filling; the wall face might be simply whitewashed or faced (partially or entirely) with glazed bricks with polychrome designs, or sometimes, apparently, might be masked by cedar panelling; the top of the wall might be capped with stepped battlements such as were used in Assyria. At one time it was customary to form the dado with orthostats of white limestone and dark basalt alternately; later only basalt was used; but the carved reliefs were touched up with colour and the limestone slabs were generally coated with stucco (to conceal the roughness of the stone) and liberally painted; the effect therefore must have been far more gay than the slabs in our museums would lead us to expect.

Hittite and Hurri architecture was almost entirely rectilinear, and with the exceptions of the corbel-arched gateways of Hattusas and of Alalakh, the sallyport passages of Hattusas and Ugarit, also corbel-vaulted in rough rubble, and Ugarit's finely-dressed tomb-chamber roofs, we know only of flat roofs and lintels; neither in the ground-plan nor in the elevation of its buildings is there any curved line to relieve the rigidity of the design. How far that rigidity was redeemed by balance and proportion it is impossible to say, for nowhere are the walls left standing for more than a metre or two in height, and any reconstruction is therefore problematic. On the other hand, it is clear that in his lay-out the architect aimed at a monumental effect: thus at Carchemish a wide open space faced on the broad flight of stairs that climbed the terraced slope of the citadel mound, passing under a succession of sculptured gateways to the towering mass of the temple and palace on the summit; the façade of the lower buildings and the staircase recesses were richly carved, and on the spectator's left a long wall bearing huge slabs of limestone and basalt with a continuous relief of chariots and infantry soldiers advancing to the temple stairs shut off the scene and emphasised the importance of the stairway as the centre of the composition; the planning is admirable, and with the colour supplied by the glazed tiles on the walls the effect must have been splendid.

It is to be noted that, except for such details as door-lintels, sculptured decoration was confined to the lowest courses of the walls: — it was at, or below, eye level; while therefore they were designed to add to the general appearance of the building, the carvings were also

*Rectilinear
architecture*

Sculpture

FIG. 40

FIG. 41

FIG. 42

meant to be inspected at close quarters, just as the inscriptions which might accompany or take the place of figure subjects had to be within reading distance of the eye. To that extent the architectural sculpture of the Hittites can fairly be judged on its intrinsic merits, not merely as a subordinate branch of architecture; and, owing to the rarity of free sculpture, it is our main criterion for Hittite plastic art. Apart from a small fragment of a basalt lion's head found at Kültepe, which does no more than prove the existence of sculpture there at the beginning of the second millennium, the earliest object to which attention should be drawn is a small diorite head (0.165 m. high) from Alalakh, probably a portrait of King Yarim-Lim, *c.* 1760 B.C. The head is a thing of real beauty, and its style is so distinctive that any parallel to it could not be overlooked, but 'there are no close parallels', says Professor Frankfort; 'it is the only piece of statuary found in Syria which was made by a thoroughly competent artist. This sureness of hand, the coherence of the work, betray a hand trained in a well-established school'. A central or south Syrian origin then can be ruled out; the contemporary sculptures of the Mari school have nothing in common with it, and one can but conclude that it belongs to an independent school of art which must be called Hurri. But it has no antecedents and really no successors, unless we reckon as such a fine basalt head, now in the Louvre, found at Jabbul near Aleppo, which is perhaps two centuries later in date but, coming from the territory of the king of Yamkhad, whose capital Aleppo was, should also be a Hurri work. In the fifteenth century there is evidence, again from Alalakh, of a local school of sculpture. The seated statue of King Idri-mi, carved in a smooth-grained white dolomite,



FIG. 44 — *Assembly of the gods. Relief from the rock sanctuary of Yasilikaia. On the left: the god Teshub, the weather-god in the Hurri pantheon; opposite him: the goddess Hepat on her lion, followed by her son, the war-god Sharrumma, armed with a spear and an axe. Cf. p. 144. Staatliche Museen, Berlin.*

FIG. 45 — Cartouche of King Tudkhalia IV. Cf. p. 144. Staatliche Museen, Berlin.



has very little artistic merit. The sculptor has made free use of the drill, did the final shaping with the grinder, employed inlay for the eyes and eyebrows, in the traditional Sumerian manner, and probably relied largely upon paint for the detail; but his style marks a new departure. Simplification is carried to an extreme; detail is for the most part suppressed, and the figure is schematised without respect to reality; but this unrealistic mass is given life by a very skilful use of light upon the planes of the polished stone surface. That the sculptor belonged to a school seems to be implied by the fact that the heavy rolled edging of the king's dress (which is purely schematic and could not be produced by any cut of garment) is reproduced in a bronze figure found at Meshrifeh but certainly coming from a northern workshop; and simplification is carried even further in the only other stone sculpture of the period as yet known, a ram's head (possibly a gargoyle) found in the palace of Ilim-ilimma, Idri-mi's father. The head is carved in the same white stone, and although the character of the animal is unmistakable there is a complete absence of naturalism. The face is on two planes which meet at a very slight angle, the eyes and ridiculously small ears are in so low relief as to be scarcely noticeable in a frontal light, and only the great ringed horns are boldly cut; everything is made to depend upon the play of light on the polished surface, and with that the head takes on an appearance of life that owes nothing to any representational modelling. The ram is

FIG. 43

in its way a masterpiece, far more successful than the Idri-mi statue of a generation later.

FIG. 37

It is to the middle of the fourteenth century that we may perhaps attribute the Alalakh lions already mentioned. The interest of them lies not only in their being probably the earliest known examples of what was to be a standard feature of Hittite and Syro-Hittite architecture, but also in their diversity. The motive was not altogether new, for the arms of Idri-mi's throne had been supported by lions whose bodies were carved in relief on the throne's side while their heads projected in the round; but the artists had not yet arrived at any fixed convention, and the Alalakh lions are still in the experimental stage. Whether or not these particular sculptures anticipate the Bogazköy gates it is impossible to say, but the carvers of those gates were certainly influenced by what they had seen in Syria or had got from Syrian associations, for the sphinxes, unknown hitherto in Anatolia, are Egyptian sphinxes translated from male to female by Phoenician imitators.²) Those gateways too are, as we have seen (p. 136), experimental. Only the sphinxes have the body carved in relief on the side of the block, in Alalakh fashion, and the relief is of the flat type, in two planes separated by sharply-cut edges, which we see at Alalakh, in the Alaca Höyük orthostats and in many Syro-Hittite monuments; it may well have been that here a Hurri artist was employed. But the

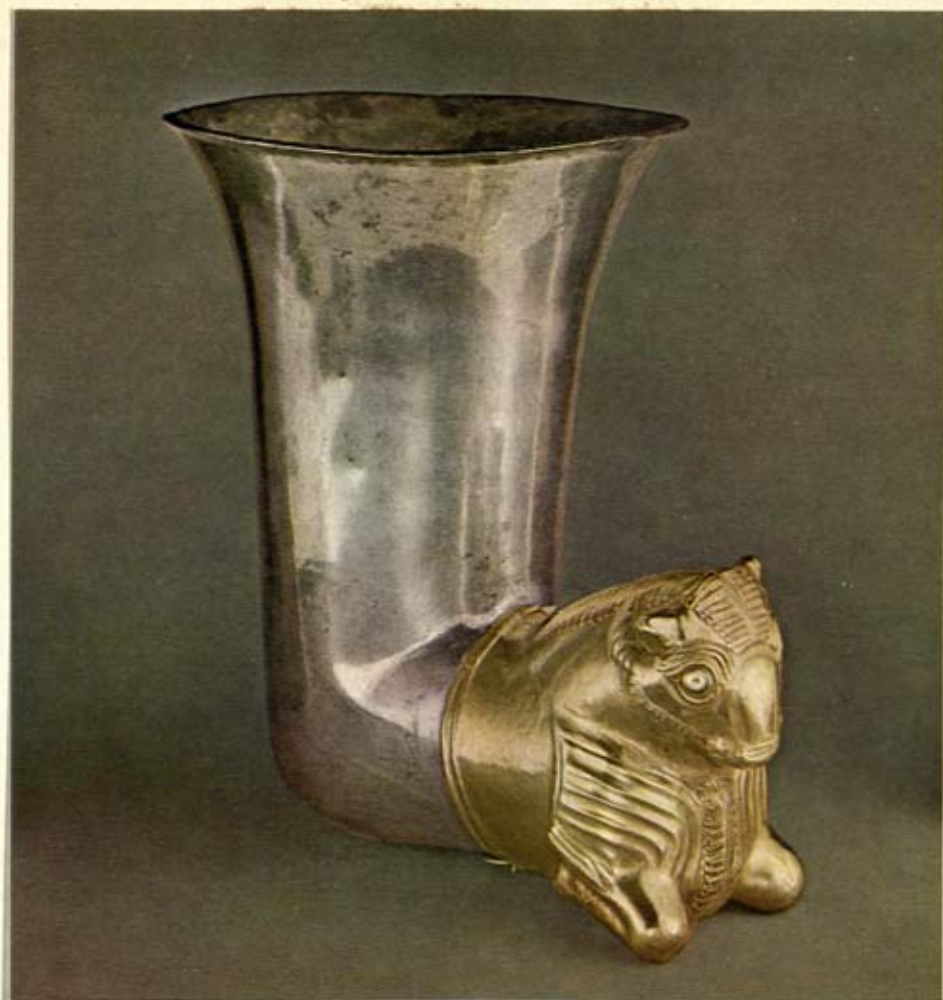
FIG. 38

Warrior relief is utterly different. The relief is very high, so much so that the head is almost in the three-quarter round, even the left eye and cheek being visible, the contours are rounded throughout, the musculature is meticulously rendered and such details as the hair on the warrior's chest and the patterns on his embroidered kilt are faithfully engraved. It is an astonishingly vigorous work, unlike anything in Syria. A parallel to it is afforded by a copper statuette found at Bogazköy which is almost a miniature replica in the round of the gateway relief; less detailed, it has the same lively vigour, the same anatomical exactness and the same real artistry. If it be compared with a statuette from Lattaqiya which is a Syrian version, if not an actual copy, of the Bogazköy figure then it becomes evident that the Warrior owes nothing to Syrian art but is essentially Anatolian.

PLATE P. 132

Yasilikaia

The famous rock carvings of Yasilikaia may be a century later, c. 1260 B.C. and, as a royal monument, show the final development of Hittite art in the time of the New Kingdom. They are the work of several hands and in different styles. The reliefs in the main chamber represent Hurri gods whose Hurri names are given in hieroglyphs,



Syro-Hittite rhyton. The funnel of this drinking vessel is of silver; the stand is of gold, in the form of the fore part of a kneeling bull. A very fine example of the work produced by Anatolian goldsmiths. Marash. Approx. 7th century B.C. Cf. p. 157. *British Museum. Height of the part in silver 22.9 cm.; height of the part in gold 10.2 cm.*



FIG. 46 — 'Jugglers'. Relief from the Sphinx Gateway at Alaca Höyük. Cf. p. 145. Archaeological Museum, Ankara.

FIG. 45

FIG. 44

and their representation is necessarily conventional; they are enlargements of the figures engraved on seals from the Hurri area of north Syria. In the smaller gallery both subject and style are in marked contrast. The great group of the king being embraced by the god Sharrumma reappears on the seals of the Hittite kings Muwatallis and Tudkhalia IV, and although the god bears a Hurri name the conception may well be Hittite, not uninspired by Egypt. The sword-god in the same gallery is most likely to be Hittite; — a contemporary spear-head from Alalakh flanked by lions, found in a temple, may be due to Hittite influence, and a somewhat similar axe from Ugarit must surely be Anatolian because the blade is of iron.³) Lastly, the small running soldiers are definitely Hittite. In all these sculptures the relief is high and rounded, and in the soldiers there is the liveliness and vigour which characterises the Warrior of the Bogazköy gate. If Yasilikaia dates from the reign of Tudkhalia IV then the Hurri names given to the gods might be due to the influence of Pudu-hepa, the king's Hurri mother; and she might have called upon a Hurri artist to do the work in the main gallery while Hittite artists were responsible for the rest. But the stylistic differences may not be thought to demand such an assumption. It must be admitted that the Alaca Höyük reliefs throw no light upon the problem. Here too we have two categories distinguished by subject and by treatment. There is a scene of sacrifice, in which the principal figures look like a provincial version of the figures in the Yasilikaia Great Gallery but the subord-

FIG. 47 — Hunting scene in relief from Alaca Höyük. The naturalistic treatment of the animals differs completely from the traditional style and recalls the animal statuettes of the pre-Hittite period. Cf. below. Archaeological Museum, Ankara.



inate figures, 'jugglers' and musicians, are less formal, as befits *genre* subjects; then there is a group of hunting scenes, done by another hand, in which the treatment of the animals is the reverse of formal — there is an observation of nature, a sympathy and an expression of free movement which in some ways recalls the animal figures of the pre-Hittite tombs. The technique is poor, the relief flat, and whereas the bodies of the stags are decorated with incised ornaments of a conventional sort (curiously Scythian in appearance) the human figures, those of the huntsmen, are but silhouettes without internal detail.

The Hittite sculptures that we possess, *i.e.* those that date from before 1200 B.C. — and even if we include certain pieces from Carchemish whose date is disputed the total number is small — belong to the latter part of the New Kingdom and by their stylistic and technical variety seem to imply that stone-carving on a large scale had no long history behind it and was still a matter of experiment by individual artists. Work on a small scale, such as that on cylinder or stamp seals (and the latter are more characteristic of the Hittites) shows more assurance. The cylinders are often very finely cut; they give (as, for instance, does the cylinder seal of Ini-Teshub, king of Carchemish, a contemporary of Tudkhaliya IV) purely Hittite scenes, with figures of gods and kings exactly like those of the Yasilikaia reliefs; they even give the bull-legged monsters, or again a hero mounted on a bull and spearing a lion, a scene which has no parallel at Yasilikaia but is surely

FIG. 46

FIG. 47

Cylinder seals

Hittite. But on the other hand on some seals (*e.g.*, that of Lat-Kur, a Hittite scribe of Carchemish) Hittite figures are combined with the guilloche pattern which seems typical of Hurri art and occurs on the official seal of a king of Amurru, whose personal seal was Hittite, and on that of Ini-Teshub, whereon the inscription is not in hieroglyphic but in Akkadian cuneiform. The *bulla* stamp seals are more informative, for those of the kings of Hattusas seem to reflect the history of Hittite sculpture. The seal of Suppiluliumas and his wife Tawananna is beautifully engraved with the hieroglyphs giving their names, but has no figures at all; the same is true of Mursilis II and of Hattusil III and his wife Pudu-hepa; only with the advent of Tudkhaliya IV do we get figures on the seal, and then they reproduce those of Yasilikaia. It is fair to conclude that architectural sculpture begins, for the Hittites, with Suppiluliumas and his invasion of Syria, that it was for some time only sparingly used, and that when it did become more popular the artists employed were either Hurri (or Hurri-trained) or those accustomed to such small-scale work as seal-engraving or jewelry. From Carchemish comes a set of minute figures exquisitely carved in steatite or lapis lazuli set in gold caissons which, if it does not actually belong to the latter days of Hattusas, preserves its tradition, for the figures are those of the Yasilikaia rock-cut reliefs: similarly a gold amulet 0.025 m. high, found at Yuzgat and now in the British Museum, reproduces a Yasilikaia god. It may even be the

PLATE P. 135



FIG. 48 — Basalt war-chariot. Relief from the Long Wall of Sculpture at Carchemish, 9th century B.C. Cf. p. 148. Archaeological Museum, Ankara.

case that the sculptor borrowed from the goldsmith and not *vice versa*. Hittite art was to flourish again after the destruction of Hattusas under the patronage of the kings of the various Syro-Hittite states which in northern Syria and the southern fringes of Anatolia maintained a precarious independence until the end of the seventh century B.C. For geographical and political reasons the artists were liable to be subject in a greater or lesser degree to the influence either of Assyria or of Phoenicia, but they did their best to adhere to Hittite tradition; in what had been the centres of Hittite colonial rule, such as Carchemish, Malatya and Marash, or within the frontiers of Hittite Anatolia, as at Bor and Ivriz, the Hittite style was likely to be preserved in its strictly classical form, while in provincial towns of later foundation the sculptor was more uninhibited, so that we get the crude and bizarre innovations of Tell Halaf and the unconventional but lively *genre* reliefs of Karatepe.

SYRO-HITTITES

Many of the Syro-Hittite orthostats are still in the old technique, the relief consisting of two planes with the edges less or more rounded and internal detail rendered by incised lines, if at all. This was quite satisfactory so long as the subjects were mythological or symbolic. Although along the façades of the buildings there was a continuous line of such sculptures there was no unity binding the scenes together; on the contrary, the common practice of setting black and white stones alternately was a deliberate denial of unity; each slab was com-

Relief



FIG. 49 — Woman with child, in basalt. Relief from the Royal Buttress at Carchemish showing the entry procession of King Araras. Approx. 770 B.C. Cf. p. 150. Archaeological Museum, Ankara.

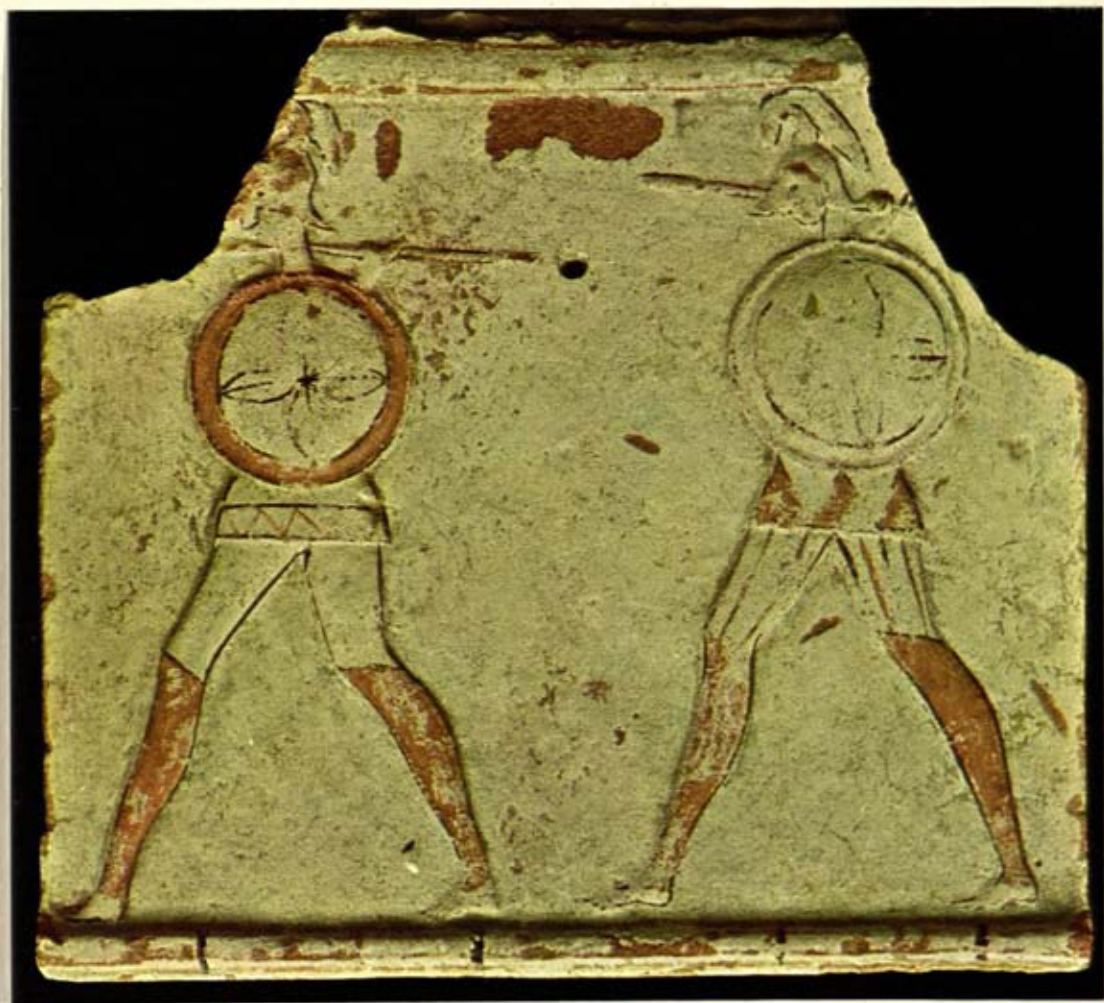
plete in itself and was meant to be seen by itself. A two-dimensional picture agrees best with this isolation because the figures, even though shown in violent action, are by their flatness made merely pictorial and confined within the frame of the slab's border. But very soon after 900 B.C. a new idea was introduced; wall-reliefs, instead of being mythological, took on a historical character. This meant that a single scene might extend over a number of slabs; each orthostat, instead of being isolated, was part of a continuous whole: and the change of purpose involved a change of treatment.

The innovation is an important one, and it has often been attributed to Assyrian influence, the Syro-Hittite sculptors borrowing the idea of historical relief from the wall decorations of Assur-nasir-apal or one of his predecessors. Syro-Hittite art was at times strongly influenced by Assyria, and this may well be a case in point. It can however be urged that the evidence rather favours the opposite view. In the first place, whereas the Syro-Hittite and the Assyrian reliefs are both historical they are so in essentially different ways; the Syro-Hittite are illustrative, picturing a single event; the Assyrian are narrative, figuring a sequence of events; the former is not likely to have been derived from the latter. As regards style, the earliest Syro-Hittite series, set up by Katuwas, king of Carchemish (c. 900 B.C.), has little or nothing in common with Assyrian art; a later king, Asadaruas (c. 840 B.C.) who was a vassal and tributary of Assur-nasir-apal, adopted a frank imitation of his overlord's style, but King Araras (c. 780 B.C.) developed the native style with only a minor indebtedness to Assyria. The dates are certainly in favour of Syro-Hittite invention, for the Katuwas reliefs preceded those of Nimrud by a quarter of a century. Assur-nasir-apal's magnificent carvings appear 'out of the blue', with, as is explained in Chapter VIII, no real precedent and no apprentice phase; in the case of the Syro-Hittite reliefs we can trace at least a measure of development which implies originality.

Carchemish

FIG. 48

At Carchemish there survive two historical friezes of King Katuwas, the first of which is the Long Wall of Sculpture, celebrating the rebuilding of the storm-god's temple and the return of the gods to its shrine; a line of infantry and chariotry (the latter still on the field of battle, treading down the enemy) advance towards the temple, the gods at their head, and on the stairway at the wall's end the procession of welcome awaits them. Because it was a new departure the artist has not risen fully to the occasion; there is a mixture of basalt and limestone slabs upsetting the continuity of the scene, and although there is



Phrygian painted tile from Pazarli. Such tiles were combined to form a frieze that would run below the eaves of a building. These tiles were of fired clay and were moulded in flat relief. Cf. p. 166. *Archaeological Museum, Ankara.*

a certain amount of modelling the figures are still very flat. A century later, in the reign of King Araras, *c.* 780 B.C., the implications of the historical frieze have been realised. The whole process is clearly shown by the composite structure of the King's Gate. Here the building had a façade decorated with the old-style mythological and symbolic scenes treated individually on alternate slabs of basalt and limestone; even if they are not of the second millennium B.C., as I and others have held them to be, they are very much older than the time of Katuwas. To this façade Katuwas added on his Processional Entry, of which there remain the slabs of soldiers advancing towards the temple and, further on, the long file of temple servants and priestesses coming from the temple in the wake of the goddess; the slabs are alternately black and white and the relief is for the most part very flat — only in the case of the temple servants, where the upper plane is broken up into smaller areas, does the rounding of its edges produce the effect of sculptured relief. Interpolated in the middle of Katuwas' work is the Royal Buttress of King Araras, showing the officers at the head of the infantry, and the king and his family meeting them. The whole thing is carried out in basalt, and this alone suffices to give unity. The character of the relief has changed; although the dresses are still flat and unrelieved (except for slight vertical folds very cleverly introduced) the faces and limbs are moulded

with extreme delicacy so that they stand out from the stone in the half-round, and their liveliness ties them together into a single composition. The aim of the artist is evident; he is combining the static dignity of monumental sculpture with the vividness of representational art, and the contrast between his work and the dullness of the long procession adjoining it is sufficient proof of his mastery.



FIG. 50 — King Urpalla standing in a ritual posture in front of the weather-god Tarhund. Rock carving near Ivriz, in the Taurus Mts. Latter half of 8th century B.C. Cf. p. 151. Height of the god approx. 4.20 m., of the king 2.40 m.

We do not find on other sites such developed artistry as distinguishes the work of Araras' sculptor at Carchemish. The older reliefs at Malatya are more in the spirit of the thirteenth-century Anatolian rock-carvings, and those of later date, *e.g.*, the hunting scenes, are scarcely up to the Katuwas level; only at Marash does the stela of a scribe, Tarhunpijas, show, though with less finished technique, the sense of genuine relief that we have in the Royal Buttress. At Sinjirli the workmanship of the later slabs is admirable, but the style is too profoundly influenced by Assyrian models for them to rank as representative of Hittite art, and the same is true of the Sakje-geuzi reliefs; in both cases we are dealing with sculpture of the ninth century and cannot therefore expect to find the fully developed style of the Royal Buttress, but may well doubt whether the local artists would have rid themselves of the foreign mannerisms. It is true that at Carchemish some of the work of Asadaruas' time, especially certain figures on the staircase walls, betray Assyrian elements, but only at Carchemish are such eliminated by the artists of the following century; most of the Syro-Hittite sculptors were too indoctrinated in the style of the foreign overlords to regain freedom. Thus the rock-carving at Ivriz, the most famous of the huge out-door reliefs of the Syro-Hittite period, combines the figure of the Luvian weather-god Tarhund, represented for the most part in traditional fashion, with that of his worshipper, King Urpalla (*c.* 750 B.C.), which is unmistakably Assyrian.

The earliest examples of Syro-Hittite sculpture in the round are two statues from Carchemish and one from Sinjirli, all from the time of Katuwas, *i.e.*, the early ninth century B.C.; they show two distinct contemporary styles. The seated statue of the god Atarluhas at Carchemish is quite definitely in the tradition of the Idri-mi statue of four hundred years before; the basic design is that of a solid triangle set upon a cube; there is no suggestion of any bodily shape underlying the geometrical contours of the drapery, all detail is eliminated and the schematisation is carried to the point of abstraction. At the same time the artist, by a skilled manipulation of plane surfaces, does succeed in imbuing with brute strength and life⁴) the almost shapeless mass of stone and so suggests divinity. The second statue was a replica of that found at Sinjirli; — it might well have been the work of the same journeyman sculptor, employed on both sites. This ill-proportioned figure, having no claim to artistic merit, seems to be an attempt to translate into Hittite idiom the formula for the rigid

FIG. 51

FIG. 50

Sculpture in the round

FIG. 53

FIG. 52

column-like statues of Assyria. For political rather than for artistic reasons it was the latter style that was to prevail. Whereas Atarluhas has no better successor than the monstrous goddess of provincial Tell Halaf, the colossal figure of the king from Malatya, which belongs to the last few years of the eighth century, is imposing not only in virtue of its bulk but also of a dignity which the exaggerated size of the head cannot altogether dispel; and the workmanship of it is excellent; but in this Assyrian pastiche there is left nothing typically Hittite. The small Syro-Hittite states were indeed bound to be overshadowed by the culture of the powerful empire which was in the end to absorb them; only those too remote or too insignificant to be in touch with the great power might provide stone-cutters unaware of the art tendencies of their time. But in such backwaters only indifferent workers would be found. At Karatepe we find side by side with conventional Hittite themes some which are borrowed not from Assyria but *via* the Phoenicians from Egypt, while some show originality and even invention; but the execution is lamentable. At Tell Halaf it is worse. In the major centres however the technical skill of the craftsmen does merit admiration. They were hampered by the qualities of their material.

FIG. 54

The coarse white limestone could seldom be worked to a good finish and therefore had to be stucco-coated, and as both stucco and paint have disappeared it is impossible for us to judge the final effect.⁵) Basalt has a pitted surface and is difficult to cut, but the better sculptors accepted the challenge. The two sphinxes of the column-base at Sinjirli have plumage of breast and wings which is a marvel of stone-cutting; and if that meticulously detailed work goes ill with the hard and almost archaic silhouette of the flat bodies it is artistry, not craftsmanship, that is lacking. The lion column-base from Tell Taynat is, on the contrary, a masterpiece of design, and the virtuosity of the beasts' heads and manes is matched by the delicate musculature of the bodies; we may detect Assyrian influence, but the artist has transformed his model into something entirely his own.

FIG. 55

It is perhaps true to say that the history of Hittite sculpture is one of promise rather than of fulfilment. In Anatolia the New Kingdom had no sooner arrived at the point when it could produce the Yasili-kaia carvings than the incursion of the Peoples of the Sea swept the Hittites out of Asia Minor. The Syro-Hittites, combining Anatolian tradition with something of the old Hurri culture, developing too a finer technique than Anatolia had known, achieved such mastery

as is illustrated by Araras' work at Carchemish, and a generation later were finally crushed by Assyria. But their art was not sterile. Before it had matured it had set an example which was not merely to influence but virtually to create the sculpture of Assyria and that of the Persian Achaemenids.

There is but little material for assessing the Syro-Hittite performance in the minor arts. Cylinder seals are indeed numerous, and the cutting of many of them is excellent, especially when the stone used is haematite — as in basalt sculptures, the gem-cutter seems to have welcomed the challenge to his skill made by the stone's hardness. There is sometimes a strong Egyptian influence — Egyptian gods are represented, Egyptian symbols occur and the human characters may wear Egyptian dress, so that the history of the past, when Pharaoh disputed with Mitanni or Hittite in the north Syrian provinces, has here its visible reminder. Here indeed, as in all else, the better-class Syro-Hittite glyptic is conservative; it is the old Hurri art, borrowing motives from its neighbours north and south but consistently preserving its own style. If we look back to the seals of the fourteenth-century north Syrian kinglets found in the archives of Ugarit, the parentage of the Syro-Hittite seals is at once apparent. In both, the Hittite gods are represented in the same fashion, treading upon beasts or mountains, similarly dressed and armed; in both, there are groups of minor figures arranged in two registers separated by a guilloche band; in both there may be pairs of animals, lions or stags, facing each other or back to back beneath a palm-tree; in both the ground is apt to be crowded with small subsidiary figures or symbols, stars, the winged disk, etc.

Cylinder seals



FIG. 51 — Basalt stela of the scribe Tarhunpiyas. Marash. 8th century B.C. Cf. p. 151. Louvre, Paris. Height 75 cm.

The main difference is that the Syro-Hittite cylinders are relatively speaking poorly engraved, the work is scratchy, and in the few well-dated examples of the latter part of the period (eighth-seventh century B.C.; e.g., those from Carchemish) lamentably bad. This is true even of the best seals; in the case of those which belonged to the ordinary middle-class citizen, where the material was often glazed frit, the drawing is crude and the subjects tend to be more Assyrian than traditional Hittite: the half-dozen examples found in the later eighth-seventh century cemetery at Yunus by Carchemish might pass as Assyrian products. For the history of Hittite art such things have only a negative significance.

Ceramics

Ceramics also have small importance, and such interest as there is is confined to the Hurri rather than to the Hittite element of the north Syrian population. In early times, that is, in the first half of the second millennium, there was in common use a painted pottery that deserves mention. The painted ornament was virtually confined to two types of vessel only, a small stemmed bowl and a slender-necked jug;

the latter, generally having an eye painted on the spout and a band round the shoulder with *metopes* of bird or animal figures framed between geometrical panels, are well-designed and quite effective, and they continued in favour for a long time; but towards the middle of the millennium they lost quality and disappeared. Then, by a curious freak of fashion, their place was taken by the primitive hand-made bowls and jugs familiar to archaeologists as the characteristic pottery of Cyprus in the later Bronze Age; in fact it was not by origin a Cypriote ware at all but was made by some backward Anatolian tribe and exported first to north Syria and later to Cyprus, where it was freely imitated. The bowls are covered with a



FIG. 52 — Statue of a king from Malatya, showing strong Assyrian influence. First half of 8th century B.C. Cf. p. 152. Archaeological Museum, Ankara. Height 3.18 m.

white meerschaum slip on which is a stitch pattern in black and red paint imitating the seams of a leather bowl: the jugs (for these vastly preponderate, though a few other shapes were made) are of grey clay with an almost black surface decorated either with simple stripes in red or white paint or with a curvilinear design, like horns, in applied slip; a favourite variant was a jug in the form of a cow. For some reason this foreign pottery, and local copies of it, obtained so great a vogue that in the second half of the fifteenth century it was the official table-ware of the king of Alalakh; but by 1400 B.C. it was being replaced by a different type which was essentially Hurri. This 'Nuzi' ware, which becomes a regular symbol of the authority of the Mitanni rulers, was made chiefly in one shape, a tall slender goblet with a very small foot; the vessel was covered with a white slip and then a part or the whole of the bowl's outer surface was painted black, and on this black ground the decoration was done in white paint; the most common patterns were bands of scale-pattern or rosettes, guilloches, hatched triangles or birds. It is a gay and pleasing type of pottery which is found throughout the whole area from Nuzi, east of the middle Tigris, to the Amq plain in the neighbourhood of Antioch, and although there must have been several centres of manu-



FIG. 53 — Statue of the god Atarluhas. Royal Gateway, Carchemish. The identity of the deity is authenticated by the inscriptions on the edging of his attire. This statue was probably carved during the reign of King Katuwas. The column-base is of particular interest (cf. Plate p. 138). Approx. 900 B.C. Cf. p. 151. The statue was made up of several pieces and is in the Archaeological Museum, Ankara; only the head of the lion on the right is in the British Museum. Height of the column-base 82 cm.

facture it is remarkably uniform, the potters everywhere producing identical designs. The sole exception noted hitherto is Alalakh. There was more variety of form, bowls, jars, bottles and even zoomorphic vases being occasionally produced; but there is also a unique addition to the repertoire of design: some potter seems to have got hold of a Cretan Minoan vase decorated in the 'Palace' style of the seventeenth century, a veritable museum piece, and reproduced the pattern, with minor modifications, wholesale. While these vases can scarcely claim the originality of the original 'Nuzi' ware, they must rank artistically as greatly superior to it, and their popularity at the time was well deserved.

*Imported Mycenaean
pottery*

The next phase in Syrian ceramics was the imitation of imported Mycenaean vases. Magnificent examples of the latter have been found at Ugarit, where there was a prosperous colony of Mycenaean merchants, but the local potters were not able to produce vessels of such high quality, nor did they discover the secret of the Mycenaean glaze; they copied, indifferently, only the cheaper and rougher wares. Because Mycenaean pottery came to Syria mainly from or *via* Cyprus, the Iron-Age pottery of the island shows a close connection with the Syro-Hittite school of ceramics. The graves of the Yunus cemetery at Carchemish, covering the period from c. 1200 to 600 B.C., contained quantities of cinerary urns and two-handled craters (sometimes on



FIG. 54 — Column-base from Sinjirli. Probably produced during the reign of Bar Rekub, approx. 730 B.C. Cf. p. 152. Istanbul Museum.

loop feet) whose form and geometric decoration at once recall Cypriote types, and juglets ornamented with concentric circles in black on red which are sometimes imports and sometimes well-made local imitations. If the level of ceramic art is not high, that may in part be due to the fact that this was a wealthy time, and for those who could afford luxury and appreciated art table-ware was not of clay but of metal. Bowls of gold-coloured bronze (*i.e.*, of bronze alloyed with gold), plain or finely godrooned, came from the Yunus cemetery; beautiful examples of such were common at Deve Höyük in the Sajur valley, and since that was a poor sixth-century B.C. cemetery we must conclude that then, and probably in the preceding centuries, bronze bowls with godrooned, fluted, rosette or lotus patterns were in quite general use. One vase in precious metal, found in the Marash district and now in the British Museum, shows the type of work that the Syro-Hittite goldsmith could produce. This is a rhyton — and the rhyton was a typically Anatolian form from the earliest times — of which the cup part is of silver, a perfectly plain funnel which is bent round below virtually at a right angle; the stand is of gold, in the form of the fore part of a kneeling bull. The treatment of the bull is formal in the extreme; everything is reduced to a pattern which is scarcely related to life, and yet the figure gives an impression of latent force in repose and of dignity which suits its subject; this sublimation of the animal is really more appropriate to the stand of a drinking-horn than is the liveliness of the magnificent ibex of the silver rhyton from Erzincan now in the British Museum, a piece of later date and different origin but ultimately in much the same tradition. It is true that the bull shows some signs of Assyrian influence — particularly in the formal leaf-shaped muscle of the upper leg — and that the folds

Metal-work

PLATE P. 143

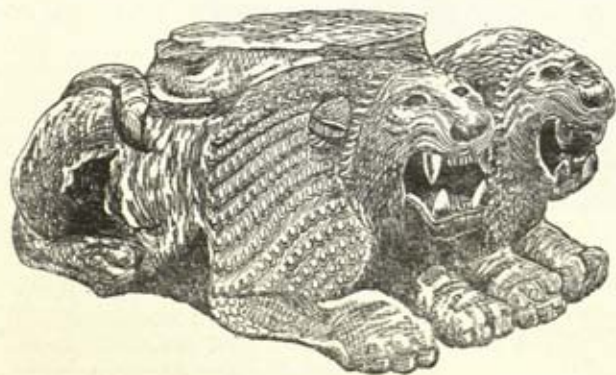


FIG. 55 — *Lion column-base from Tell Taynat. Probably 9th century B.C. Cf. p. 152.*

of the shoulder muscles find an analogy in the drawings of bulls on an embossed and engraved bronze shield from Van, in which connection it must be remembered that Marash had at one time in the eighth century been subject to the kingdom of Urartu. The Syro-Hittite goldsmith, like his fellow-worker in sculpture, was subject to various influences — he did not work in a cultural vacuum — but he was faithful to his own forebears; and in this strong and rather heavy figure, with its technical skill and its sober repression of detail, as also in that combined use of different metals which first strikes us at Alaca Höyük, we can recognise the quality of the artist.

- 1) H. Frankfort, "The Origin of the Bit Hilani", *Iraq*, XIV, p. 120 (1952), omits to mention the second storey. At Carchemish the portico is really a porch and no more, and the staircase lies behind the main room.
- 2) The female sphinx appears in Egypt for the first time in the reign of Hatshepsut.
- 3) The possibly imitative axes from Luristan are of much later date; moreover, none of these has the god's head implying a cult figure, and the mere association of lion and weapon is but a piece of natural symbolism.
- 4) It is perhaps worth recording that the Arab workmen employed on the excavations recognised this latent force and were terrified of the figure. This accounts for its subsequent destruction.
- 5) In the Carchemish excavations it was often found necessary to apply a coat of fine mud to the face of the slab and then rub it down until the surface of the stone was reached and mud left only in the hollows; only so could a good photograph be obtained.



Urartian bronze cauldron. The base is embossed, but the lion and gryphon heads projecting from the cauldron are cast. Urartian metal-work was very popular, much of it being exported. The piece above was found in the Barberini tomb, Palestrina (Etruria). Middle of 7th century B.C. Cf. p. 172. *Villa Giulia Museum, Rome. Height 87 cm.*

CHAPTER VII

ANATOLIA, 1200—330 B.C.

The study of Anatolian art during this period requires as background a rather more detailed account of the country's political history than was given in the brief summary in Chapter I.

The invasion of the 'Peoples of the Sea' which swept over Asia Minor just after 1200 B.C. completely transformed the political map of the country. Of the actual events of the time we know nothing; but when the fog clears we find that the great Hittite Empire has disappeared once and for all. Its place has been taken by the Phrygians, an Indo-European people coming from south-eastern Europe. We hear of them first from Assyrian sources in about 1100 B.C., when they were already firmly installed in the Halys basin and the lands west of it, and under the name Muski or Moschoi were a menace to the outlying provinces of Assyria. Further to the west were the Lydians, a kindred stock to the Phrygians and at the outset their dependents, occupying much of what had been the kingdom of Ahhijawâ, the 'Achaecans'; these latter, who had themselves formed part of the host of the Sea-Peoples, cannot have been altogether ousted but seem to have withdrawn to the Ionian coast and to Caria, which was to maintain its independence until its conquest by Croesus. Another of the invading peoples, the Danuna, had settled in Cilicia. Eastwards of the Phrygians, in the mountainous country round Lake Van, the centre of Anatolia's mineral wealth, there were presumably already the people who, perhaps under foreign masters, were to become under the name Urartu an empire that could vie with Assyria.

This state of affairs was not to last. At the beginning Phrygia prospered greatly under the Midas dynasty; but in the first half of the eighth century a fresh wave of south European invaders, the Cimmerians, attacking with a pincer movement across the Bosphorus and by way of the Caucasus, broke the Phrygian resistance so completely that King Midas committed suicide in his capital, Gordion. War with Assyria brought the country to a yet lower ebb, and about 696 B.C. a second Cimmerian invasion put an end to Phrygia as an independent power. Lydia then took over the hegemony: the Cimmerians were driven out of Asia by the victories of Ardys and his successor Alyattes, and the conquest of the Greek cities Miletus, Smyrna and Magnesia,

HISTORICAL SKETCH

*Invasion of the
'Peoples of the Sea'*

Phrygia

carried the Lydian dominions to the shore of the Ionian Sea. In the time of Croesus the kingdom attained its apogee and with the occupation of Caria extended its sway over the entire peninsula; but the king ventured to challenge Cyrus the Persian, and his daring proved fatal.

Urartu Meanwhile Urartu had prospered. Probably to secure an outlet over-sea for the trade on which its wealth had been built up, it gradually won suzerainty over the minor states, mostly Syro-Hittite, which in north Syria lay along the Assyrian frontier and in the first half of the eighth century could boast an empire reaching to the mouth of the river Orontes, *i.e.*, to the Mediterranean Sea. But in 742 B.C. Tiglath-pileser of Assyria seized those outlying provinces; the second Cimmerian invasion affected Urartu disastrously, so weakening it that Sargon, in 714 B.C., had little difficulty in reducing it to impotence; it lingered on in a decadent state only to be destroyed utterly by Cyaxares the Mede in 585 B.C. Under Cyaxares the Medes had grown so strong that after a preliminary defeat they could invade Assyria and lay siege to Nineveh itself, this in 614 B.C.; it was perhaps in answer to an appeal for help from the king of Assyria that the Scyths

Scyths of south Russia, who apparently had for some time past been infiltrating peacefully into Asia Minor, suddenly swept down in arms and began to devastate the whole of Anatolia. Urartu again suffered; Lydia was hard-pressed and for a quarter of a century anarchy seems to have prevailed over much of the country. Then Cyaxares, having finally disposed of Assyria and having by agreement left the Mesopotamian lowlands to Babylon, could turn his attention to the enemy nearer home. He crushed the Scyths, destroyed Urartu (585 B.C.), but after six years of indecisive warfare in the end came to terms with Lydia, dying a year later. His successor Astyages was overthrown by Cyrus, king of Persia, who profited by the inertia of the monarch and the discontent of his subjects. It was because Astyages was his ally that Croesus ventured upon war with the Persians, now installed upon his frontier, but he was defeated and Sardes, the Lydian capital, fell; in 547–6 B.C. Lydia ceased to exist; Harpagus, Cyrus' general, overran Caria, reduced the Greek cities one after another, and Asia Minor became a Persian satrapy.

It is not necessary to study individually all the shifting pieces in this kaleidoscopic world, nor indeed would our scanty knowledge make such a study possible. In the first place, the cultures and the arts to some extent overlap; thus, the painted pottery which is for us the most

distinctive product of Phrygia is found far beyond the Phrygian boundaries — not only at Gordion but at Lake Van, at Samsun and at Carchemish: again, of bronze vessels found at Gordion some would seem to be actual imports from Urartu while others were produced by a contemporary local school working under Urartian influence. In the second place it must be remembered that political changes need not imply complete social or cultural change. The Hittite Empire had vanished, but not all the Hittites had been killed, and the Hittite farmer clung obstinately to his fields: the conquerors imposed their rule upon the survivors of the old régime and were not ashamed to learn from them. Thus, the Phrygians continued to use the old Hittite hieroglyphic script; the Urartians wrote for the most part in Akkadian cuneiform, but also had their own hieroglyphic script adapted from the Hittite and sometimes even employed the Hittite itself. In the sphere of the arts we shall find the same thing. A certain proportion of the old population of the land survived, and with and through them survived some of the old traditions, and because political boundaries had changed such traditions disregarded frontiers and might instil a measure of unity into the superimposed cultures. From the point of view of the history of art, to assess the contribution to art made by Anatolia it is therefore better to deal with this hotchpotch of peoples as a whole. It will be convenient to describe any particular invention or activity under the heading of the region in which it is, to our knowledge, best exemplified, but we shall find that examples often must and should be drawn from other regions indiscriminately because all were in fact Anatolian.

Of the early stages of Urartian civilisation and art nothing is yet known. When we first hear of these mountain people they are already organised as a power formidable enough to challenge the might of Assyria and as metal-workers and traders they were, by the export of manufactured goods, already exercising a profound influence upon the arts not only of their Anatolian neighbours but also of lands far distant. They were keen agriculturalists who by elaborate works of irrigation had greatly increased the fertility of their soil, and they were builders on a grand scale with an architectural style quite unlike that of the Mesopotamian countries or of Syria.

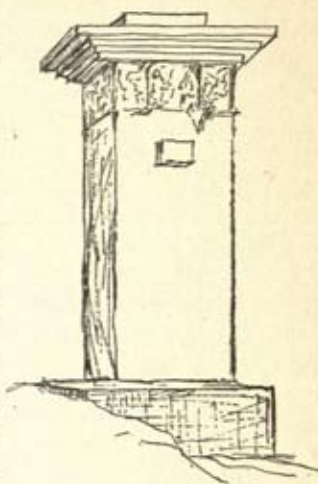
Within fifty kilometres of the shores of Lake Van there have been noted over forty fortresses or walled towns of the Urartu period. The defence walls are of cyclopean masonry, very large squared blocks built as a rule dry-stone, though mortar was used in some eighth-

Architecture

century walls at Toprak-kale; each course was set back a few centimeters behind the line of the course below, giving a slight slope to the wall face. Obviously this method of stone-laying constitutes a weakness for the defence in that it affords finger- and toe-holds for anyone attempting to scale the wall,¹⁾ and it might be interpreted as a sign of inexperience on the part of builders who distrusted the stability of their work; but it might have been rather a sensible precaution against the earthquakes so prevalent in that region, and certainly in other respects the Urartian architect shows no lack of competence.

Apart from defence-works building construction was generally in mud brick on heavy rubble foundations. Shallow buttresses relieved the wall face and were carried up to a projecting cornice, often decorated with open-work composed of bricks laid diagonally, and capped with stepped battlements. The town's main building, palace or citadel, might be very large, measuring as much as eighty metres in either direction; its basement would consist entirely of magazines — of the seventy magazines beneath the citadel of Karmir-Blur seven were for wine and contained 360 huge clay vessels holding in all more than 350,000 litres! — with the living-rooms above, approached by a ramp or staircase; and the building might have three or more storeys. Doorways were sometimes flat-topped, sometimes arched; the roofs and flat ceilings were supported by columns — one large room at Arin-berd had no less than thirty columns, and the Russian excavators may well be right in suggesting that we have here the prototype of the *apadana*, the columned hall of Achaemenid architecture. For interior decoration the Urartians seem to have relied for the most part upon painting, but from Toprak-kale come fragments of a marble frieze with an incised design of cattle, and from Toprak-kale again (from the temple of Haldiš) we have basalt floor-slabs inlaid with concentric circles of white limestone and marble, a form of decoration curiously reminiscent of that used at Brak, in the Khabur valley, in the Jamdat Nasr period, more than two millennia before.²⁾ Much of our knowledge of the domestic architecture of Urartu is based on a bronze relief from Toprak-kale now in the British Museum. A further source of information is an Assyrian relief illustrating the campaign of Sargon against Urartu (714 B.C.) and his capture of the city of Musasir: there are shown house façades exactly like that in the bronze relief, and also a front view of the temple of the god Bagbartu. The temple stands on a podium. It has a gabled roof, apparently tiled, the gable tip surmounted by an acroterion in the

FIG. 56 — So-called Harpy Tomb from Lycia. Cf. p. 169.



Pazarli

form of a colossal spear-head. The roof is supported in front by four (or six) pillars; two of these, like the wall behind them, are adorned with the concentric circles known to us from Toprak-kale; the two innermost have against them huge spears whose points rise just above the temple eaves. The 'pillars', drawn as such by the Assyrian artist, may well be in fact columns: if so, the Bagbartu temple bears a striking resemblance to a Greek temple *in antis*; but it has no parallel in the architecture of any of the Middle Eastern countries which we have considered so far. But there is a reasonably close analogy to be found in the Phrygian buildings at Pazarli: there too we see the raised podium, the columned porch, the pediment-like gable-end and the tiled sloping roof: moreover, a sixth-century building, probably a temple, found at Gordion is described by the excavators as *tristyle in antis*, consisting of a *cella* and a six-columned portico, which would correspond fairly closely with the Musasir temple. In that case it would seem that a type of temple not unlike the Greek was used over a large part of Anatolia in the 8th–6th centuries B.C. Certainly the constructional methods employed at Karmir-Blur, Pazarli, Gordion and Sardes are the same; this results partly from the materials provided by the country and partly from the old Hittite tradition which still persisted there. Although the ruling classes of the new Anatolian states were newcomers, a large part of the population was still the same as that which had formerly constituted the lower orders of the Hittite empire — as indeed has been demonstrated by the Pazarli excavators — and in many respects we can recognise a survival of old traditions. Sometimes those traditions go back amazingly far; a Jamdat Nasr parallel for the circular inlays of wall-slabs has already been cited; not less surprising is a floor-decoration at Pazarli, a mosaic made of terra-cotta cones with painted butts driven into the mud plaster — the system used on the walls and columns of the palace at Erech in Mesopotamia towards the end of the fourth millennium B.C. Similar cones have been found as far to the west as Gordion. It would therefore be a mistake to treat of the arts and crafts of Urartu, Phrygia, Lydia and even Caria in isolation; regional var-

iants undoubtedly there were, but on the whole there was sufficient homogeneity to justify the use of the term 'Anatolian art'. That art was to a large extent traditional: to some extent — but it is difficult as yet to say how far — old traditions were modified by those of the Indo-European invaders, and in the case of goods manufactured for export the demands of foreign clients introduced alien fashions; but the basic characteristics of it are native to the soil.

Decorative tiles

PLATE P. 149

An outstanding feature of 'Anatolian' architecture is the practice of revetting the walls of buildings with decorative tiles. Such have not yet been found in Urartu, but at Akalan (near Samsun), at Pazarli, at Gordion and Sardes, *i.e.*, over the whole length of the peninsula, evidence of the practice has been forthcoming. Below the eaves of a building there would run a broad frieze of terra-cotta tiles nailed to the wall face. The tiles were moulded in relief and coloured: some have simple geometrical designs, others show warriors on the march, groups of wild animals, gryphons or heraldic goats facing each other or rampant against a sacred tree; on a white or cream-coloured ground the figures are outlined in black and touched up with red or brown: above these, a row of semicircular antefixes similarly decorated covered the ends of the tile-ridges. The effect must have been extremely gay.

PLATE P. 160

Greek influence

The warriors on the tiles look remarkably Greek and can be paralleled with those on a Mycenaean vase; galloping centaurs carrying branches might be thought purely Greek, and even the sphinxes and the gryphons might be matched on Corinthian pottery of the 'Orientalising' period; accordingly the Phrygian painted tiles have often been held to show the influence of Greece upon Asia Minor, and that being so their importance for the student of Anatolian art is relatively small. It is a conclusion natural enough for anyone to arrive at who is familiar with Greek art and approaches similar but new and alien material with that unconscious bias.

The warriors seem to wear Greek armour, but it is the armour of the Syro-Hittites as pictured on the Carchemish reliefs and of the Lycians as shown on a relief from Isinda now in the Istanbul Museum; moreover, the Greeks themselves say that the armour of their hoplites was derived from Caria. The goats (or chamois) with the sacred tree are definitely oriental; the centaurs, carrying branches as in the oldest Greek pictures, are not necessarily borrowed from Greece; according to Greek legend they came from Thessaly, *i.e.*, from the regions north of Greece proper, the regions from which the Phrygians

came; in later Greek legend they are associated with Dionysus, and therefore with Asia Minor: lastly, it is only in the 'Orientalising period' of the eighth — seventh centuries that the sphinxes and gryphons are taken over by Greek art from the art of Asia. In short, the subjects of the Phrygian wall tiles are not necessarily borrowed, and their technique can be proved to be local.³) Contemporary pottery is decorated in red or black upon a white or cream-coloured ground, generally with geometric designs but sometimes with figure compositions, and such pottery goes back (at Kara Höyük) to the early days of the Phrygian occupation: it is indeed a direct descendant, so far as the technique is concerned, of the polychrome pottery of Kanesh of the nineteenth century B.C. Moreover, although painted tiles have not been found in Urartu, yet at Arin-berd the interior walls of the big *apadana*-like building are painted with designs including human figures, gods, trees and rosettes outlined in black and touched up with



FIG. 57 — Goddess between two male musicians. Sculptured limestone group from a Phrygian castle gateway at Bogazköy. Probably close of 7th or beginning of 6th century B.C. Cf. p. 170. Overall height 1.34 m.

red on a white ground, these forming a frieze not unlike the out-door tile friezes of Phrygia.

Dating

There is also the question of date. The Gordion tiles (not found *in situ*) have been assigned to the sixth century B.C., which might accord with a Greek origin. At Pazarli the tiles belong to the earliest of the three Phrygian occupation levels and must be as early as the eighth century — the destruction of the building by fire may be associated with the Cimmerian invasion at the beginning of the seventh century. At Akalan the upper Phrygian level is of the sixth century but the lower, in which the tiles occurred, was assigned by Makridy to "a very remote antiquity". The painted building at Arin-berd was deserted in the late eighth or early seventh century B.C. The Phrygian wall-tiles are therefore at least as early as the eighth century, which was the time when Phrygia reached the zenith of its prosperity; their genesis may be earlier. In any case they are contemporary with or earlier than any parallels to them that can be found in Greek art. That eighth-century Greece should have influenced in any way the interior of Asia Minor is inherently unlikely; but it is a recognised fact that at that date Greece was strongly influenced by oriental art, through the two channels of Phoenician trade and trade with the Greek cities of the Ionian coast: it is fair to conclude that this striking architectural feature of faced walls was an Anatolian invention, and that any Greek parallels result from borrowing by the Greeks, not *vice versa*.

In the Samsun region there have come to light two tombs each consisting of a *dromos* and a vaulted stone chamber whose painted decoration bears a striking resemblance to the Etruscan; they too are of late date, probably of the first century B.C., but they may well result from a tradition going back for many centuries; like the Phrygian painted tiles they seem to represent at least 'a collateral branch of Greek ancestral art',⁴) and it is still possible that fresh discoveries may link them more intimately with Etruria. Thus, of the very fragmentary remains of wall-paintings *in tempera* found in the 'Painted House' at Gordion, dating from "round about 500 B.C.", the excavator remarks: "The style of painting recalls East Greek art . . . stylistically too there is much in common with some of the archaic Etruscan tomb paintings, perhaps because both spheres were subject to a common influence; . . . but in all probability it will be found that the iconography behind the Phrygian paintings is entirely different from that of Etruria." The old idea that Phrygian art, in painting at

least, was due to Greek influence must certainly be discarded. At Gordion work has been carried down to the eighth century levels and "there is little or no evidence of intercourse with Greece at this early time, or of influence from one direction or the other; rather, the Phrygians and the Greeks would seem to have had a common tradition which was developed independently on the high interior plateau of Asia Minor and on the coastal lands of Greece and the Aegean." The other problem, that of Etruscan connections, is quite independent of the first and must still be considered *sub judice*⁵) so far as any explanation of how the connection came about is concerned; but the fact of connection can hardly be disputed.

At Gordion there has been found an astonishing screen of boxwood inlaid with yew in a geometrical pattern which recalls the decoration of the rock shrines at 'Midas City' where many of the same or similar motives are used. Inlaid wooden furniture has a long history in Anatolia, but these geometric designs seem to mark a new departure and to be distinctively Phrygian. From the same tumulus burial come small animal figures exquisitely carved in boxwood, but amongst them is one of "a horse decorated with grooved concentric circles, in style very reminiscent of the bronze figures inlaid with silver from the royal tombs of the Early Bronze Age at Alaca Höyük." Here, as in the case of the painted tiles, Phrygian art carries on the techniques, if not the styles, of the older population of Anatolia whom the newcomers had enslaved.

Inlay work

The Lycian tombs in the Xanthus region are well known to classical scholars. "The Lycians", wrote Professor Gardner in 1924, "developed an art more nearly akin to that of Greece than did the Carians or Lydians; later it fell completely under Greek influence so that from the 6th century B.C. downwards Lycian monuments like the Harpy Tomb are commonly quoted as typical specimens of Greek sculpture." Now not only is the type of tomb alien to Greek practice but the architecture is definitely un-Greek, the obvious parallel being the tomb of Cyrus the Great at Pasargadae, and in one case at least, the so-called 'Tomb of the Satrap', the relief is both in subject and in style purely Persian. Even where the sculptures seem reminiscent of Greek art it is difficult to believe that models from Greece proper were available to artists of the Xanthus area, and as regards Ionian influence they are hardly likely to have been inspired by such examples of Ionian art as the Branchidae statues. Professor Gardner went on to say: "But there are some few monuments which probably be-

Lycian tombs

FIG. 56

long to a period earlier than the rise of Greek sculpture; and so far as they may appear to resemble archaic Greek works this is not due to the influence of Greece upon Lycia but to an independent development of similar types and resources." If the fourteenth-century Ahhijawâ of western Anatolia are rightly identified as Achaeans, and if their descendants still occupied the south-western corner of the peninsula, then the 'Greek' tradition may have been just as much theirs as it was that of the Ionian coast-dwellers and the style of their sculpture may signify not a borrowed but a common culture.

FIG. 57

In 1957 there was found in the Phrygian level at Bogazköy a sculptured limestone group of three figures, a goddess between two male musicians. Of this Professor Bittel, the discoverer, says, "in detail one cannot fail to recognise connections with archaic Greek art: the pleated skirt, the lower hem of the skirt with the protruding feet in their shoes, also the mouth. There is, however, a remarkable contrast between the goddess and her attendants, who are shown in easy movement, and this, together with the generally un-Greek head of the goddess, indicates that the work cannot be derived directly from any known school of art." He would date the group "at the latest to the middle of the 6th century B.C." No Ionian influence is likely to have penetrated so far to the east as Bogazköy at that date; on the other hand the 'unknown school' to which the group must be assigned may be derived from an 'Achaean' tradition which was behind the Xanthus monuments also. Asia Minor was always important as the melting-pot wherein the arts of east and west were amalgamated; but that may have been due not so much to foreign influences as to the fact that its population combined European and oriental elements.

Metal-work

PLATE P. 5

So far as we know, the most original and the most fruitful contribution to art was made by the metal-workers of Urartu. The technique of the Urartu bronzes shows that the craftsmen were complete masters of their craft, but in addition they were admirable designers and real artists. From sites in the neighbourhood of Lake Van there have been recovered quantities of vases, weapons and parts of furniture of bronze richly decorated sometimes with a combination of incised and repoussé work, sometimes cast; these are of different dates, as certified by inscriptions, some being of the eighth and many more of the seventh century, so that they illustrate the output of the Urartu workshops over a considerable period. It can safely be assumed that Urartu art had developed a good deal earlier than the time of Rusas I (c. 733-714 B.C.), the earliest of the kings to whose reigns any of the



Kudurru, or boundary-stone, of Melishipak II, king of Babylon, of the Kassite Dynasty, carved in black limestone. Susa. Approx. 1200 B.C. Cf. pp. 179, 197. *Louvre, Paris*. Height 0.68 m.



FIG. 58 — War-chariot and horseman from Karmir-Blur. Engraving in bronze. Urartu. Cf. p. 174.

objects from Toprak-kale can be assigned; when Sargon II captured the Urartian town of Musasir in 714 B.C. the Assyrian soldiers were amazed at the quantity and quality of the metal-work which they carried off as booty — besides such vessels as are familiar to us there were even life-size cast statues and groups of figures which imply a higher degree of skill than we should otherwise have attributed to the Urartian school and, also, a very long experience. After Sargon's victory the level of art certainly declined, as is shown by the relatively poor workmanship of the decorated shields dedicated by King Rusas III (c. 600 B.C.), and with the destruction of the kingdom by Cyaxares the Mede in 585 B.C. it loses all importance.

Export

Urartian metal-work was largely made for export. When Urartu, in the eighth century, extended its power over north Syria the value of that territorial expansion lay in the fact that it secured a harbour on the Mediterranean, and through the port at the mouth of the Orontes Urartian goods could go direct to Cyprus, to Greece and to Etruria. Actually, the finest examples of metal-work from Urartu that we possess were found not in the country of their origin but abroad, for instance, the great cauldron from the Barberini tomb, now in the Villa Giulia Museum in Rome; the base, with its winged human-headed lions confronting each other on either side of a sacred tree, shows the craftsman's skill in embossed work while the lion and

gryphons' heads that project from the bowl are fine pieces of casting and thoroughly characteristic of Urartian art. It is worth nothing here that in Etruria, side by side with such imported vessels, there are found local imitations, such as the cauldron from the Regolini Galassi tomb, in which the Etruscan smith has reproduced the original design exactly but has treated the details in a non-Asiatic fashion. The same thing occurs in other countries; thus at Gordion out of a hoard of bronze vessels some — ram or lion *situlae* and bowls with human busts at the handles — are attributed by the excavators to a local school of metallurgy, whereas others are described as Assyrian imports but appear rather to be of Urartu make. A very large proportion of the Urartu bronzes naturally went to the nearest and richest client, Assyria, either as merchandise or as tribute, and here a certain difficulty arises. Bronzes of 'Urartu' type are found in the ruins of Assyrian palaces and are figured on the wall reliefs and are taken to be characteristically Assyrian; decorative motives on 'Urartu' bronzes sometimes reproduce those of Assyrian carvings; thus while some authorities have maintained that Urartu art was a native aboriginal creation which influenced Assyrian art others, recalling the fact that the earliest Urartu inscription is Assyrian and that cuneiform continued to be the script of the country, regard Urartian art as merely modelled on that of Assyria: Barnett⁶) follows a middle course but with a bias in favour of the latter view when he summarises the matter by saying: "The Urartians owed something to the Empire of Hurri, but as much or more to Assyria."

In Chapter V attention was drawn to the skill and readiness of the Phoenician ivory-carvers in adopting foreign fashions to meet the demands of foreign markets. Precisely the same thing has been observed of the ivory-carvers of Alalakh in the fourteenth century B.C. It is safe to assume that the Urartian craftsman was no less adaptable. Considering the political supremacy of Assyria, especially after 714 B.C. — and it is to this late period that the bulk of our evidence for Assyrian influence on Urartian art belongs — it would be strange indeed if those craftsmen were not at pains to supply just the kind of thing that the Assyrians would appreciate. Nor would this be difficult for them. From Toprak-kale come carved ivories precisely of the style of those found at Nimrud; these are not likely to have been carved in Urartu, since the raw material would not have been available there; they are Syrian or Phoenician, like the Nimrud ivories, done for the Assyrian market in Assyrian style, purchased by the Urartians either

Ivory-carving



FIG. 59 — Gryphon's head in gold.
From the Treasure of Sakiz at
Ziwiye. Cf. below.

FIG. 58

Scythian influence

FIG. 59

for their own use or for inlay in the bronze furniture in which they specialised. Such objects as these would serve as models, and designs based upon them might well pass as Assyrian.

The fact is that Urartu had a style of its own, in part at least derived from old Anatolian traditions, in part peculiar. Their outstanding works are individual — nowhere else had there been produced the great bowls with animal *protomoi* on elaborately embossed bases or on tripods whose feet are animal feet — but for commercial reasons the Urartians were perfectly ready to borrow popular motives. The shields of King Argisti found at Karmir-Blur with their concentric rows of animals might have been copied from, but might equally well have inspired, the Ionian shields carried by Greek mercenaries into Syria and Anatolia. The Russian excavators of Karmir-Blur emphasise the number of objects found there which show Scythian influence. Those wild horsemen from south Russia during their brief tenure of Anatolia made a marked impression on the country, so that even a village site such as Deve Höyük in northern Syria produced horse-bits and scabbard-chapes with characteristically Scythian ornament. By no means a barbarous people, the Scythians, at the western end of the vast belt of steppe country, were neighbours of and mingled with the Mongols of the eastern end and fragments of silk found at Toprak-kale, the earliest yet known in the west, afford a link between Urartu and distant China. The Scythian motives adopted by Urartu account for the decoration of the great Treasure of Sakiz brought to light on the south shore of Lake Urmia.⁷)

It was an eclectic art, but it reached a very high level. Although near-

ly all the objects now surviving are parts of vessels or of furniture (many belonged to a magnificent royal throne) and may therefore be classed as objects of applied art, yet in themselves they are admirable. Two bull's heads in the British Museum, from Toprak-kale, are in their feeling for the force and dignity of the animal altogether in keeping with sympathetic treatment of the animal world which we have seen in the earliest Anatolian bronzes (from Alaca Höyük) and also in the early Sumerian works in bronze, silver or gold from the Royal Cemetery at Ur; conventions have changed indeed, and the heads are formalised as befits their purely decorative purpose, but the natural inspiration remains and stamps them as the work of a real artist. Not all are of the same merit; the head of a snarling lion is a grotesque — an ornament with no life behind it, and in those cases where the Assyrian element is strongest the artist is least successful; he elaborates his detail, but his heart was not in his work; his composite monsters, winged bull-women and bull-lions, leave us as cold as do the artificial demons of the Assyrian palace reliefs.

It was not merely metallurgical skill that made Urartu so important for the history of art. Had they been executants only, the bronze-workers and goldsmiths of that remote region would have contributed little to the world, nor would they have done much more if they had only copied Assyrian models, for the palace art of Assyria did not survive the Assyrian empire. As it was, they influenced profoundly the art of Media and of the Achaemenids; their exported goods — vessels made after their own style, not borrowed from Assyria — coming overseas in the eighth century B.C. helped to mould the art of classical Greece, and at least as early as that — probably a century or more earlier — reached Etruria and inspired Etruscan art. It has been suggested⁸) that Urartian smiths migrated to Etruria, perhaps when their own country was suffering from the effects of defeat; but even without that suggestion we cannot but admit the debt that Etruria owed to Urartu, at least so far as its metal-work was concerned.

Our knowledge of Anatolia in the early Iron Age is still sadly limited, and what we do possess in the way of illustration is not always easy to evaluate. The one or two examples of Urartu rock-carving, *e.g.*, the Adilcevaz relief, are little better than provincial imitations of the Assyrian; but they are of late date, belonging to the decadence of Urartu, and they are not necessarily characteristic of Urartian sculpture. Similarly some examples of Lydian goldsmiths' work show admirable technique but are not distinctive stylistically; further discov-

PLATE P. 5

PLATES PP. 73, 79

Rock-carving

eries may establish a connection with Ionia, but at present our material is too scanty to afford a basis for judgement. The treasures of King Croesus, which dazzled the imagination of the Greeks, may well have included objects of local make and style which served as models for the goldsmiths of other lands whose originality has not been called in question; but of such treasures there remains nothing.

- 1) One is tempted to suggest that a similar constructional weakness enabled Cyrus' soldiers to climb the seemingly impregnable walls of Sardes.
- 2) M. E. L. Mallowan in *Iraq*, vol. IX (1947), Pl. 1, 3 & 30.
- 3) If the excavators are correct in believing that such vases as the 'Bitik vase' (*v. supra*, Ch. VI, p. 134) with painted decoration in relief were copies of stucco wall plaques then the Phrygian tiles have a local pedigree going back to the second millennium B.C.
- 4) Seton Lloyd, *Early Anatolia*, London, Penguin Books, 1956, p. 197.
- 5) Italian scholars have in recent years discarded the traditional view still generally held that the Etruscans were immigrants to Italy from Asia Minor. The archaeological evidence favours tradition, as does the new anthropological evidence cited by Sir Gavin de Beer in *Révue des Arts*, No. 3, 1955: Cf. also G. A. Wainwright in *Anatolian Studies*, vol. IX, p. 197.
- 6) *Iraq*, vol. XII (1950), p. 38.
- 7) E. Girshman, in *Iran* (London, Penguin Books, 1954), says of this Treasure that one group is undoubtedly Assyrian in inspiration and execution, the second typically Scythian, the third is Assyro-Scythian in inspiration but was probably executed by Assyrian artists, and the fourth group consists of products of local workshops, probably Mannian. For 'Assyrian' I would read 'Urartian'.
- 8) K. R. Maxwell-Hyslop, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

CHAPTER VIII

ASSYRIA AND NEO-BABYLONIA

Throughout the long period of Kassite domination of Babylonia, which ended with the sack of the city by Tukulti-Enurta of Assyria in about 1230 B.C., and throughout the succeeding period of constant warfare waged with alternate success between the two powers, and of frequent inroads by the Elamites, art in Mesopotamia seems to have been dead. Most of the few Babylonian monuments that remain to us are boundary-stones, *kudurrus*, carved in dull repetition with the symbols of the tutelary gods; of aesthetic interest there is nothing at all. The Kassites were presumably barbarous at the time of their arrival in Babylonia and to whatever extent they assimilated the culture of the country they never had the imagination to carry on its art traditions.

The Assyrians also must have been a relatively barbarous people, and they were for long too engrossed in the struggle to obtain mastery by force of arms to have the leisure, or the inclination, to develop what they had learned about art from their early contacts with Sumer; certainly very little remains to suggest any such development.

A stone altar of Tukulti-Enurta I (1250–1210 B.C.), found at Assur, is in the Assyrian spirit in that the god whom the king worships is represented by a symbol only — a foretaste of that 'cold formalism which did not allow a man to meet the gods face to face but only to perform the established rites before their statues and emblems';¹) but although the Assyrian features are faithfully rendered the style of the sculptor is not distinctively Assyrian. A second altar or plinth from Assur, of about the same date, has figures of a king and two tutelary deities which are almost purely Babylonian, but beneath these there is a band of relief with men and horses climbing over mountains which is very much in keeping with later Assyrian art. A torso of a nude goddess, of the time of Ashur-bel-kala (1092–1079 B.C.), is probably not Assyrian at all. The 'Broken Obelisk' of Adad-nirari II (911–899 B.C.) bears a relief showing a king (perhaps Tiglath-pileser I) holding in one hand a cord made fast to the nostrils of four suppliant prisoners; above him are the symbols of the five chief gods; from the sun's disk a hand comes out presenting a bow and arrows to the king. In this we can see Egyptian influence, but both

PLATE P. 171

Sculpture

the subject and the style anticipate the art of Assur-nasir-apal; it implies that that art goes further back in time than we should otherwise suppose, but it does nothing to explain its origin. Without any further prelude we have, in the next generation, the countless reliefs that adorned the palace at Nimrud of Assur-nasir-apal (885–860 B.C.), and there we find ourselves faced with an art already mature and confident: the technique is perfected as if by long experience; the style is consistent, that of a fully developed school; and the whole series of reliefs is of a character unlike anything of earlier times. This is an astonishing phenomenon. It might be argued that the paucity of monuments leading up to the flowering of sculptural art is due only to the accidents of discovery; but considering how much archaeological excavation has been done upon the most promising sites of Assyria it is unlikely that much material to fill the hiatus exists but has been overlooked; we have to accept the facts as they are known to us, and try to explain the sudden emergence of Assyrian sculpture.

FIG. 60

In this connection 'sculpture' means sculpture in relief. Assyrian sculpture in the round is rare, and has none of the quality of the reliefs. The stocky, rigid figures, which cannot excite admiration, are clearly the last uninspired descendants of the old Sumerian tradition as handed down through the Babylonians; the details of dress and hair bring them up to date, but they are lay figures drawn from the storehouse of the dead past. The genius of Assyrian sculpture was in its reliefs. With the exception of the great man-headed bulls, etc., that flank the gateways of the palaces, they are in very low relief, and the artist has taken full advantage of the fine-grained easily-worked 'Mosul marble' to produce the most delicate modelling of a surface almost entirely flat, and to enrich his panels with an elaboration of detail that recalls the work of the gem-cutter. Nothing of the sort had been done before in the Middle East.

FIG. 26
PLATE P. 90

This on the technical side; but the difference between traditional and Assyrian art was much more profound. The old art, starting with the Sumerian, had had a religious basis and had been circumscribed by religious conventions. This was always true of sculpture in the round; in relief there had been an exception to this rule in the case of the stela of Naram-Sin, and, though less markedly so, of the stela of Ur-Nammu, but in general the rule holds good. In the Assyrian reliefs the religious element is small, and where it does appear it is curiously inoperative. The gods themselves are rarely represented, and they

never play an active role; for the most part they are reduced to symbols. The 'presentation' scene, once so popular, is banished altogether, and where an 'adoration' scene is represented — which is rare — the style loses much of its Assyrian character and becomes an obvious imitation of the Babylonian. The one important concession made to religion is the introduction of a new motive, the huge winged monsters which preside over the ritual scenes — and in the whole range of Assyrian sculpture these figures are the least convincing. Rigidly fixed in formal attitudes, so that they perform their functions symbolically only, the colossal demons are treated with the same wealth of minute detail that is lavished on king and warrior, and the result is but to emphasise their lifelessness. The artist had been commissioned to portray them, and he did so conscientiously but without conviction; his work here was not a confession of faith but an exercise in virtuosity.

Apart from these tiresome demons Assyrian art is secular and narrative, and shows an interest in actuality for which no incident seemed too trivial. The reliefs were meant for the adornment not of temples but of palaces, and they therefore deal with the two things dearest to the heart of an Assyrian king, war and hunting. What was required for such subjects was not symbolism but the utmost realism; wars were not guided by a superhuman ruler to a foregone conclusion but had to be fought; half the interest of the chase lay in its dangers. So the carved scenes in a continuous series record the actual vicissitudes of battle or hunt wherein the king participates as a man on the level of his followers. The need to fill the whole area of the slab — the *horror vacui* — and

PLATE P. 186

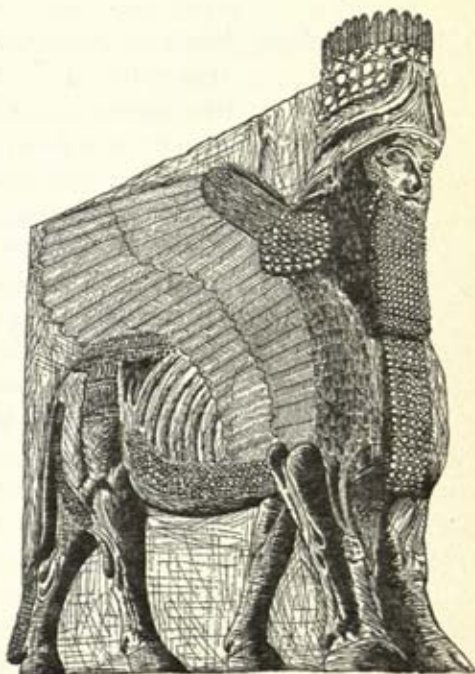


FIG. 60 — Winged man-headed bull in gypsum from the gateway of the palace of Sargon II at Dur Sharrukin. One of the few examples of high relief in Assyrian art. The figure should rather be seen en face or from the side: in the former case two forelegs are visible and in the latter case four. Close of 8th century B.C. Cf. p. 180. Louvre, Paris. Height 4 · 20 m.

the artist's ignorance of perspective may result in a rather childish composition with seemingly uncoordinated figures placed one above another, and yet the spectator is not worried thereby; the dramatic unity which ties together the successive episodes of the long frieze embraces its height as well as its length. Every figure, wherever it be set, is necessary to the scene, and the pictorial sense of the artist is vivid enough to disguise much that is really primitive in his composition. There are weaknesses and inconsistencies; natural objects such as trees are conventionalised out of all recognition whereas horses are portrayed with a naturalism born of knowledge and affection; there is no perspective; the warriors who man a city wall are ludicrously out of proportion to the building; figures are invariably drawn in profile; but only occasionally does such a blemish strike the eye at the first glance, and when it is detected its ingenuousness may call for indulgence.

If we had to deal with only one or two monuments of such striking novelty we might assume the rise of some individual artist of genius; but the reliefs of Assur-nasir-apal's palace amount to acres of carved stone, and since the Assyrian king was not one to brook delay in the execution of his plans a whole army of sculptors must have been at work simultaneously, all of them adepts in the new style. The art historian must needs ask how this could be.

It is quite clear that the general scheme of Assyrian architectural decoration is derived from the Syro-Hittite. Assur-nasir-apal had waged war to the west of Assyria, in the Khabur valley and along the Euphrates, and in his campaign of 877 B.C. he had received the submission of Sangara, king of Carchemish. He had seen, therefore, the façades of Syro-Hittite palaces with their gate lions and long rows of carved orthostats, and it needed little imagination to decide that such, suitably magnified, could minister to his own glorification. To requisition Syro-Hittite sculptors was of course the prerogative of the victor. But that did not solve the problem, for the sculptors had no experience in the kind of work demanded of them.

Orthostats

Syro-Hittite orthostats were constructional, solid blocks of limestone or basalt which formed the lowest course above ground of the wall of the façade. As we know from the discoveries at Yesemek, near Islahiye, the blocks were roughly carved in the quarry, so that the builders should know how the stone was to be fitted into place, and the final carving was done after the block was in position in the wall — as is proved by evidence from Carchemish, where the lower part

of a relief which was to be hidden by a statue is left in the rough. In the Assyrian scheme the gate-sculptures are constructional but the reliefs are not; they are thin slabs of stone applied to the face of a mud-brick wall, a mere veneer, and whereas the orthostat was only about a metre high the Assyrian slab measured nearly two and a half metres in height, giving a field more adequate to the king's majesty. The Syro-Hittite craftsman had the tradition of flat relief in two planes and could quite well have roughed out the design for his slab; but in the coarse limestone or pitted basalt to which he was accustomed fine detail was impossible; the kind of carving that was natural to him would certainly not have suited the Assyrian king's taste, but it was the only kind he knew. It may be that there was here a division of labour. In 877 B.C. not only Carchemish but also all the Phoenician cities had professed submission to Assyria and they had sent gifts of every sort, obviously determined to secure commercial relations with the new power; amongst the gifts were objects in boxwood, ebony and ivory. Now the Phoenician ivory-worker was used to carving in minute detail, and the soft Mosul marble was a material as well suited to his skill as was ivory; it is at least probable that ivory-carvers from the Phoenician cities were enrolled as decorators to put the fine finish on the figures roughly sketched by Syro-Hittite sculptors.

There remains the question of subject. The Hittite friezes of that date normally consisted of (what seem to us) disconnected scenes of mythology or ritual, and such would not by themselves have satisfied the vanity of Assur-nasir-apal. He may have seen at Carchemish the continuous historical friezes recently set up by King Katuwas, but these although more to his purpose, were still not satisfactory, because they figured only a single episode instead of a chronicle covering years of his reign. For the kind of personal narrative that he would like there was a precedent in the huge sprawling battle-scenes with which Ramses II had covered the walls of his Ramesseum at Thebes and Ramses III had adorned Medinet Habu; even if no story about them had reached the ears of Assur-nasir-apal at least the Phoenician craftsmen would have known of them, and anything Egyptian was for them a model to be imitated. But it would be impossible to ascribe to them the actual figures of the reliefs; they were copyists who never drew from nature or even observed nature; a comparison between the animals of a hunting-scene or the horses of the warriors on an Assyrian palace wall with the same creatures as represented on a Phoenician bowl is enough to prove that the draughtsmen of the reliefs were not

Subject

Phoenicians. On the other hand it has always been remarked that the north Syrian reliefs, however roughly executed, and north Syrian cylinder seals do show a real interest in animals and a degree of realism superior to what is found in the human figures: and it is precisely that that we see in the Nimrud reliefs.

Demon figures

The case of the huge demon figures is different again; they are of a type purely Assyrian, which would have been unknown to Phoenician and Syro-Hittite (or Hurri) alike. There are many of these, and they vary hardly at all but follow in detail a single model. It would appear certain that a royal scribe made the drawing, with all its necessary conventions, which was simply copied by the sculptors. The decoration of the palace was a matter of mass production and almost inevitably of team work. That it reached so high a level was probably due in no small degree to the quality of the material employed; — the sculptor, relieved of the ungrateful task of working in basalt, could translate his observation into an art form with all the enjoyment of a creative act; if the motive was one that pleased him, a galloping horse or a wounded lion, he might finish it himself; if it was a royal figure, the embroidery on whose garments had to be rendered faithfully, that could be left to the Phoenician.

Are we then to believe that the Assyrians themselves had virtually nothing to do with Assyrian sculpture?

Assyrian glyptic

The answer to this must to some extent depend upon the view which we take of Assyrian glyptic. Before 1200 B.C. gem-cutting amongst the Mitanni was thoroughly decadent and in Babylonia equally so; but with the first rise of Assyria the cylinder seals of that country show a remarkable change. The stock religious scenes tend to drop



FIG. 61 — Ostrich hunt. Assyrian cylinder-seal impression in grey marble. Cf. p. 185, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Height 3.1 cm.

out of favour and are replaced by scenes of hunting, or of animals in violent movement, which are extraordinarily vivacious and realistic; — an ostrich hunt, a stag leaping through a forest, are drawn with keen observation and sympathy. This is precisely what we have noted in the case of the reliefs, and that parallel might at first sight seem to clinch the matter. Without any doubt Middle Assyrian glyptic does in this respect foreshadow Late Assyrian sculpture, and without any doubt the motives of those seals were to the taste of the Assyrians, though in the Late Assyrian period they go out of fashion. But, on the other hand, the style of the seals has nothing to do with the reliefs, nor is it typically Assyrian; rather is it reminiscent of the old Akkadian period when the preference was for naturalism with figures in violent action silhouetted against a clear background. Again we have to put the question, were the gem-cutters Assyrians?

FIGS. 61, 62

It is somehow difficult to associate those fierce warriors with the peaceful art of engraving. But of the non-military population of Assyria a large proportion must have been Hurrite; the Hurri, whose love of animals has already been noted (they were famous horse-masters) were experienced in gem-cutting, and they may well have turned their gifts to good account in the service of appreciative patrons. The seals show that from the Middle Assyrian period there were on the spot capable craftsmen who might have been called in to help on the palace reliefs; but on the question whether those craftsmen were actual Assyrians or only Assyrian subjects their evidence is not conclusive. For that we need evidence of another sort.

The uniformity of the sculptures must have resulted from diligent supervision, and that part must surely have been played by Assyrians, who could best appreciate the king's wishes; the actual workers on the contrary were probably impressed from peoples of older culture with few Assyrians amongst them. For of one thing we can be sure; Assyrian sculpture was not the art of the Assyrian people. It was purely a court art, created by the command of an autocrat for his exclusive benefit; it is found only in royal buildings; no subject, however high his rank, decorated his house with reliefs.²⁾

Sculpture a court art

When the kingdom perished the art which it had fostered perished with it, for it had no roots in the country. Had it been in the wider sense Assyrian some traces of it would have survived, but none did. Even if we suppose that the victorious Medes carried off the best of the artists and craftsmen to their own land, some would have been left behind and, if the art was endemic, would still have worked in a

recognisably Assyrian style, but in the whole of Assyria no such work is found. In Phoenicia the metal-workers might for a time reproduce mechanically upon a golden or a bronze bowl the kind of hunting-scene which they had learned by rote when they had been commissioned by the Assyrian monarchs, but apart from this dwindling repetition nothing remained. An artificial creation dependent upon the monarchy, Assyrian art had, apart from the monarchy, no reason for existence.

From the moment of their sudden appearance the reliefs show a mature and consistent style, that of a fully developed school. The statement made earlier in this chapter is strictly true, but does not imply that Assyrian art was stagnant throughout the term of its existence. The technique indeed had been perfected already: it maintains its

Lion hunt. Relief from the palace of Assur-bani-pal at Nineveh. In contrast to early Sumerian art, which was mainly religious in character, Assyrian reliefs are secular. Assyrian sculpture was an art practised exclusively at court, and when the kingdom came to an end the art died out also. Approx. 650 B.C. Cf. pp. 181, 190. *British Museum.*



FIG. 62 — Stag in a forest. Assyrian cylinder-seal impression in grey chalcedony. Cf. p. 185. After Delaporte, *Catalogue des cylindres orientaux de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris. Height 2.8 cm.



high level without any sign of degeneration, but there was no room for improvement. But in succeeding reigns the artist is no longer content with the simple composition of the Assur-nasir-apal school: he begins to experiment with such problems as perspective and spatial illusion which the pioneers of his art had carefully avoided. If Shalmaneser's Balawat gates seem to mark a retrogression that is due to different craftsmen working in a different medium; while the fundamental designs were those of the stone reliefs, partaking of their pictorial character, the bronze-caster was hampered in their execution by the difficulties of his trade, and when he does for once attempt a landscape the task is quite beyond his powers. The new tendency is better seen in a relief of Tiglath-pileser III (735–726 B.C.), where a fortress in the background starts not at the bottom of the slab but well above the bottom register, along which is a line of ox-wagons in the foreground; here too, while the slab is divided into registers, one above another, in the old convention, those registers are not horizontal but sloped or waved, and there is no actual ground-line, so that a real spatial effect is obtained, not by perspective but by skilful placing. Spatial illusion was sought by another device, that of background. An isolated attempt at this is indeed found in the time of Assur-nasir-apal, when war-chariots are shown passing in front of the walls of a fortress, but artistic progress is made when figures are not merely set *against* a background but are included *in* it. Thus a Sargonid relief of a hunt in a forest shows the hunters against a solid mass of trees of different sizes; there is no perspective, and the trees and the men are all on the same plane, but because the entire ground is covered the effect produced is really that of figures in a wood. This was carried farther by Sennacherib's artists (705–681 B.C.); they aban-

FIG. 63

Spatial illusion

FIG. 64

done altogether the old convention of registers and incorporated their figures in a background whose all-over character gives unity to what would otherwise have been incoherent. A good example of this is the relief of a battle in wooded and mountainous country.

The greater part of the slab's surface is covered with the reticulated pattern which from time immemorial had been the convention symbolising rocks or mountains; over this there are scattered more or less at random highly stylised trees, and between these there are the little figures of the fighting men, each an individual study of a man in violent action, no two of them alike but each one lively and purposeful. Towards the top of the slab the reticulated pattern ends with an irregular zigzag line, and on this line, against the clear background, silhouetted, as it were, against the sky, more fighting men contest the mountain peaks. Here is a deliberate and elaborate attempt at landscape, and it is not altogether unsuccessful; at least it is self-explanatory. That was, apparently, the chief aim of the artist, faced as he was with a difficult composition; in order to accentuate the jagged outline of the mountain-top (which gives meaning to the otherwise uniform rock-pattern) he has made the figures on it larger than the rest, although they are of course the most distant. What he has done is to bind together all his scattered figures into an organic whole. This is an actual scene in which the fight takes place; the fight is, of course, his proper subject, and his vividly realistic figures do justice to it; realism in his background would have broken up the unity and detracted from his theme, but the strictly conventional all-over design of rocks and trees suggests not only space but the kind of space that gave the fight its character; realism and convention combine successfully in a picture.

FIG. 65

We find an even better pictorial effect, achieved by the same means, in another relief from the same palace of Sennacherib. This shows a fight between the royal troops and marsh-dwellers, the combatants afloat in reed canoes. The uniform background here is water, represented by fine wavy lines, with fish and crabs to leave no doubt as to its nature, and reed-grown islands, clumps of high reeds conventionally treated but with plenty of variety, as the reeds stand rigidly upright or are bent with the wind or branch out from a single root centre; between them the canoes make their way. The design may perhaps owe something to Egypt, but if so it is skilfully adapted, and it fully achieves its object of composing a definite picture, a unity in which all the individual elements are brought into due relation one



FIG. 63 — Scenes from the campaign of Shalmaneser III. Relief on a bronze gateway at Balawat. Cf. p. 187. British Museum.

to another. As in the mountain scene, there is no real perspective, but a substitute for that modern convention is found in the artful arrangement of the canoes between the islands, something approaching a 'bird's-eye view', which does suggest focal depth.

A very different experiment at scenic landscape is illustrated by a slab showing the transport of a colossal gate-sculpture. A river runs in the foreground, with a boat on it and men hoisting water from it with *shadufs*; on the far bank there are mounds or hillocks down and up which the stone has to be dragged; seen between the mounds is a flat plain (its flatness emphasised by a file of soldiers set along a horizontal register-line) and beyond that woods and wooded hills. No such picture had been attempted by the artists of the previous century. The novelty was not due to imitation; — the same subject on an Egyptian relief is treated with a mechanical reduplication of ranks of labourers one above another, which has nothing in common with the vivid realism of the Assyrian artist; it was an original attempt, made with (from our point of view)³) inadequate means, to represent an episode as it really happened. The attempt did not always succeed. When the sculptor, dealing with an assault upon an enemy city, shows the assailants mounting scaling-ladders or advancing up the mound thrown up against the city wall, the sloping lines are faithfully drawn, but, knowing nothing about gravity, he sets his figures

FIG. 66



FIG. 64 — *Battle in a wooded and mountainous country. Relief from the palace of Sennacherib (705—681 B.C.). Cf. p. 188. British Museum.*

at right angles to the slope, so that they seem to be tumbling backwards, and the effect is ludicrous. The tangle of diagonal lines fails to give any idea of perspective, i.e., that they lead away from the spectator, or that they lead up to the wall, and the realism which the artist sought escapes him altogether.

It would seem that blunders of this sort led to a revulsion. Certainly in the reign of Assur-bani-pal (668—626 B.C.), although the subjects of the reliefs are similar and the sculptor is still aiming at a pictorial effect, he eschews all such experiments and falls back on the older and simpler tradition which contented itself with a single plane and did not attempt the illusion of recession in space. But the illusion of space he does achieve, and that not by any technical trick but by dramatic emotion. The finest of all the Assur-bani-pal reliefs, the finest of all Assyrian reliefs of any date, are, by common consent, the hunting scenes; and here we cannot but recognise the hand of one



FIG. 65 — Battle in a marshy country. Relief from the palace of Sennacherib. Cf. p. 188. British Museum.

man, supreme master of his art. The hunted beasts, lions, horses or gazelles are treated with an astonishing sympathy; each one of them is a *tour de force* of understanding realism; there is no suggestion of background, no scenic effect to localise the incident, for this slaughter of the animals is one of the universal verities and requires no setting: instead, they are scattered over the blank ground seemingly at random, and in the case of the lions their isolation is emphasised by the short register-line beneath each figure. In fact, however, their disposition is most carefully calculated, and although each is a study complete in itself yet all are bound together into an artistic unity by the sheer stress of emotion. No rules of perspective apply here; what ties the picture together is the common feeling of rage, agony and defeat; the Assyrian monarch wanted to have portrayed in detail his prowess in the hunt, but the artist's summary is '*Sunt lacrymae rerum*'.

Today, while we can appreciate the technical excellence of the Assyrian



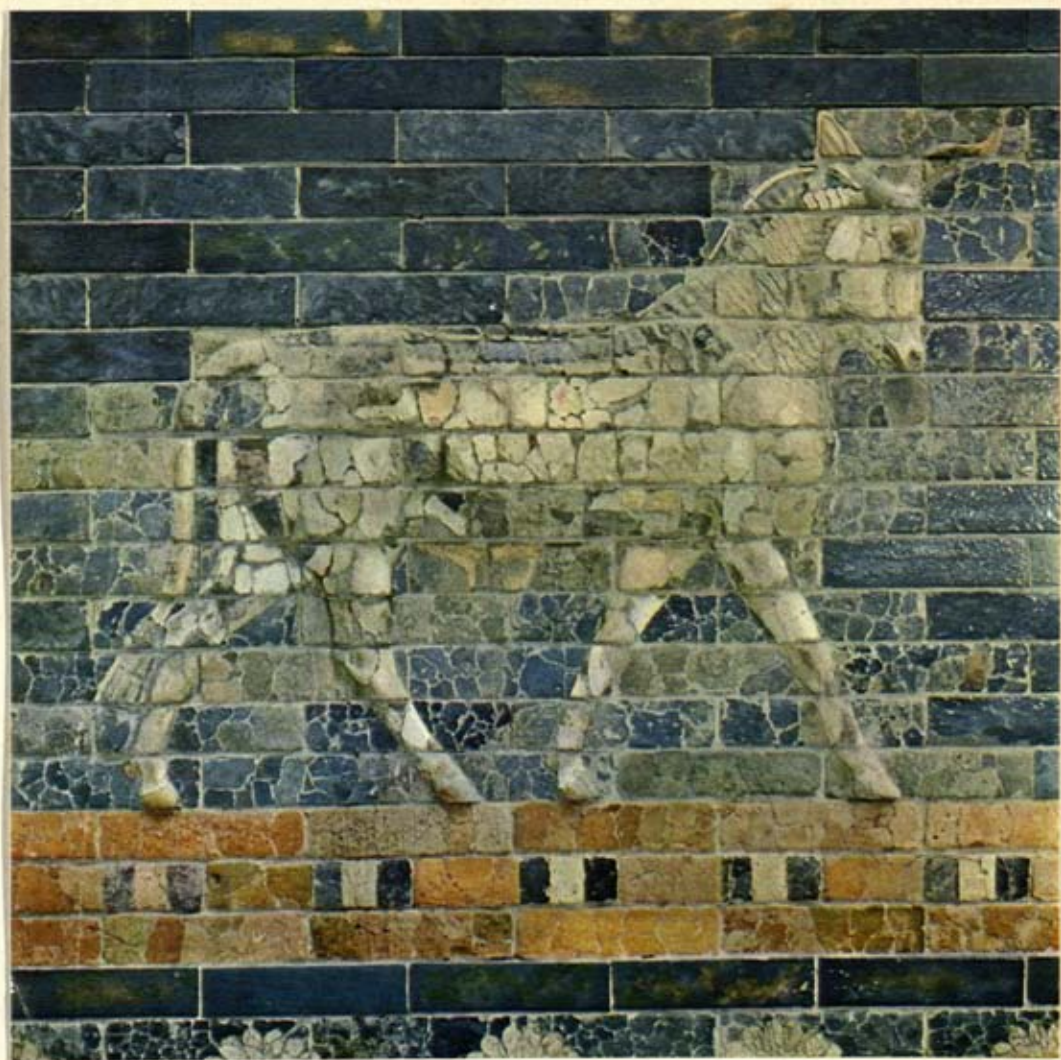
FIG. 66 — *Storming of a town wall. Relief from the palace of Sennacherib. Cf. p. 189. British Museum.*

Colour

PLATE P. 193

ian reliefs, it is not easy to judge of their effect as they were originally seen. They were always touched up with colour, and sometimes, probably, were painted all over — in the Sargonid reliefs the whole background was tinted yellow. The existing evidence does not enable us to determine to what extent colour was employed, but we may bear in mind the polychrome glazed tiles which appear first in the reign of Assur-nasir-apal, in which against a yellow ground captives are shown wearing yellow tunics and blue upper garments with white fringes, while the outlines and the details are in black. The Sargonid tiles from Dur Sharrukin have a blue ground with figures predominantly in yellow, anticipating the famous animals of Nebuchadnezzar's Ishtar Gate in Babylon. The colour scheme is kept simple because the tiles which, like the reliefs, served a purely architectural purpose, were generally set higher up in the wall and therefore called for less detailed treatment,⁴) but the famous frieze of the Archers from Susa, which is in the Assyrian tradition, shows coloured relief at its best. The sculptured slabs of the dado were then coloured to a greater or a less extent, and above them the palace walls were painted in *tempera*, either with conventional patterns in bright colours or with figures.

Naturally very little of such painting survives; its character is best



Bull in relief, in glazed brick. Ishtar Gate, Babylon, from the time of Nebuchadnezzar II (approx. 570 B.C.). Cf. pp. 192, 198. *Staatliche Museen, Berlin*.

illustrated by the (much damaged) examples from Tell Barsip where there were no stone reliefs but the entire wall was adorned with court scenes executed *in tempera*. Tell Barsip was a provincial centre only, and the craftsmen employed upon the decoration of the governor's palace were not likely to rank artistically with the painters of the royal capital, and it must be admitted that their work was slick but slipshod and none too well finished; its effect is striking, but one must not look too closely into its detail. Such fragments as are preserved from the royal palaces of Assyria proper, *e.g.* from Shar-rukin, are technically far superior to the provincial efforts and of a quality worthy of the sculptured reliefs below them; indeed, when one regards the exquisite workmanship of the stones one can scarcely believe that the paintings would have been executed with any less care and skill.

Architecture

The interior of an Assyrian palace must have been magnificent indeed, with its walls enriched from floor to ceiling with polychrome decoration, but in its architecture there was little to admire. It was constructed almost entirely in mud brick, the stone being only a veneer; the ground-plan was unimaginative, for what the king demanded was extravagant size, and this meant that block was added to block, unit to unit, with no really coherent scheme but a mere repetition of the traditional domestic plan. The vault was employed for the long passages, the arch for some of the doors, and the reliefs show that the column might be used to decorate a façade or a gateway, the capital being sometimes of the 'Proto-Ionic' type known to the Phoenicians — a case of borrowing. Another case of borrowing was the *Bit Hilani*, which the Assyrians took over from the Syro-Hittites; but while they admired the façade they had no use for the building as such and therefore adopted only part of the plan, *i.e.* its columned portico, making of this a gatehouse and nothing more. Otherwise the huge squat palace complex itself was unoriginal and dull; it could boast of no architectural feature that was not swamped into insignificance by the building's bulk, apart from the traditional ziggurat which religious ritual demanded; if it embodied any idea at all it was that the visitor, or the foreign envoy, should be oppressed by the solidly-based and enduring might of the Assyrian monarch (a fallacy exposed time after time by the facts of Assyrian history), just as when he entered it he should be terrified by the pictured record of that monarch's personal prowess and invariable triumph over such as opposed him.

There is indeed little to admire in Assyrian architecture. Based upon the traditional architecture of Babylon it can supply no other inspiration than that of the megalomaniac. A ruler might plan — and in an amazingly short time build — an entirely new city; but in the casual aggregate of huge structures there is neither balance nor proportion and no regard for monumental effect; the lay-out of such a city as Nimrud demonstrates an utter failure to grasp an architectural opportunity. In Andrae's reconstructions of Assur we find indeed imposing strength, as in the Gurgurri gateway, and the river frontage shows a long and massive line of battlemented walls broken by lofty towers (the temples and their ziggurats), the very bulk of which is impressive; but the effect is accidental, not calculated, and not resulting from any master plan. In Assyria builders, rather than architects, were responsible for carrying out the king's orders.

The one striking architectural innovation is the design of the Khorsabad ziggurat. Here, in place of the monumental stairways of the Third Dynasty type of ziggurat, the ascent was by a continuous ramp, about two metres wide, provided with a crenellated parapet, running spirally round the building; there were therefore no proper stages, but a succession of vertical faces separated from each other by the turns of the ramp. The vertical intervals, which were painted in different colours (starting from the bottom, white, black, red and blue survive in that order), probably numbered seven in all, in which case the total height of the structure would have been equal to the length of its square base, 44.50 m., evidence of very careful planning. No precedent, and indeed no second example of such a ziggurat is known, so that the credit for it must be given to the Assyrians, but it would scarcely seem to have been an improvement on the orthodox type.

Khorsabad ziggurat

A prominent feature of the palace's magnificence was the wealth of ivory carving which it contained. Not only were the thrones, the couches, the tables and the beds encrusted with ivory, but evidence at Nimrud suggests that entire rooms were panelled with slabs of the same precious material; today the excavation of a single chamber may result in the collection not of hundreds but of thousands of carved fragments, and that despite the wilful destruction of the furniture and the firing of the building. Reviewing the collected examples of ivories from Nimrud we can at once distinguish those of Egyptian or Syrian or perhaps of Hurri type, the counterparts of ivories found at Megiddo or Arslan Tash, and with them others which are purely

Ivories



Assyrian in subject and in style, repetitions in miniature of the palace wall reliefs. But even of these last, some have engraved upon their backs Phoenician characters showing that they too are the work not of Assyrian craftsmen but of the adaptable Phoenician plagiarists. The ivories were made by foreigners, Phoenicians and Syrians, imported for the purpose, and the description of them therefore properly comes not here but in Chapter V. So too with another of the minor arts: the cast and engraved metal-work, the platters and the drinking-cups, were manufactured by foreigners to the Assyrian taste, and it is in our account of the Phoenicians and of the Urartians that they are in place. Most definitely there was an Assyrian artistic style, evolved under the patronage of successive Assyrian kings, which, however derivative in its elements, did consistently represent an Assyrian point of view in a manner acceptable to them; but the sculptors, the painters and the engravers were not Assyrians.

*Excudent alii spirantia mollius aera
Credo equidem, vivos ducent de marmore voltus;
Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento;
Hae tibi erunt artes . . .*

Virgil's dictum for Rome would have applied equally to the savage empire which for its greater glory enslaved the arts but never practiced them.

After the fall of the First Dynasty of Babylon there ceased to be any Babylonian art. Of all the Kassite kings only one seems to have attempted anything at all, and he failed. Kuri-galzu II (c. 1400 B.C.), building a temple at Erech (Warka), adorned its façade with figures of deities in moulded brick which, like caryatids, support the architrave. The design may have been original; more probably it was borrowed from Elam; but in either case it is a lamentable monstrosity. The *kudurrus*, or boundary-stones, bearing in relief the symbols of the attesting gods and sometimes an actual figure of a god in a feebly archaistic style, are the only other monuments surviving from that long dull period. From the post-Kassite period we have the well-known stone tablet of Nabu-apal-iddina (c 885 B.C.); the god Sham-

PLATE P. 178

Post-Kassite period

Wall painting in *tempera* from the governor's palace at Tell Barsip (Tell Achmar). Only a few examples of Assyrian painting have survived. The walls of palaces were chiefly adorned with stone reliefs, which were probably originally also painted in colour or decorated with glazed bricks, as in the royal palace at Dur Sharrukin. Cf. p. 194. *National Museum, Aleppo*.

ash is seated in his shrine and on an altar in front of him is the solar disk supported by attendant deities issuing from the shrine's roof, while the king, with a priest and his personal goddess, presents himself before the god. The relief is a pastiche of a Third Dynasty work, only the disk and the deities supporting it being a later addition; the carving is quite good, but the composition is extremely poor, and the relief is mentioned here because of its rarity, not its merit.

Nebuchadnezzar II

PLATE P. 193

Of Nebuchadnezzar II (604–561 B.C.), who could boast: 'Is not this great Babylon which I have builded?', we might expect much, but excavation has brought to light only the Ishtar Gate. That gateway, with its lofty towers decorated with bulls, lions and dragons in glazed bricks, against a blue background studded with white and yellow rosettes, is indeed magnificent; but it can scarcely be called Babylonian, for it is borrowed from Assyrian art. The polychrome decoration of the throne-room has exact parallels in the northern cities and is therefore equally unoriginal. So far as we know, the only architectural innovation of the period was the fashion of building a mud-brick wall in short sections set at an angle to the frontage with right-angle offsets between the sections, giving to the wall-face the effect of the edge of a toothed saw; presumably the idea was to break up the monotony of a blank wall into a series of vertical bands alternately light and dark, and broad or narrow as determined by the angle of the sun's rays. It was a fashion widely adopted for private houses and may have produced a not unpleasing effect; but it was constructionally unsound and was soon abandoned.

Ziggurat at Ur

The temples of the gods were generally rebuilt by Nebuchadnezzar on strictly traditional lines, but it is to the Late Babylonian period, probably to Nabonidus (555–539 B.C.), that we may credit a new style in ziggurats. The best preserved of these, that at Ur, which like the ziggurat at Babylon was definitely Nabonidus' work, had seven stages instead of the three that it had had in the days of the Third Dynasty of Ur, an addition not remarkable in itself but giving rise to an ingenious piece of planning which greatly enhanced the architectural quality of the structure. The original triple staircase leading to the first stage of the tower was retained, the stage itself being raised to the level of the top of the stairways (which originally had ended between the first stage and the second) and there, against the front of the second storey, a flight of steps, starting a little to one side of the centre, and running to the corner, led to an ambulatory which went, at the same level, right round the building to the centre of the

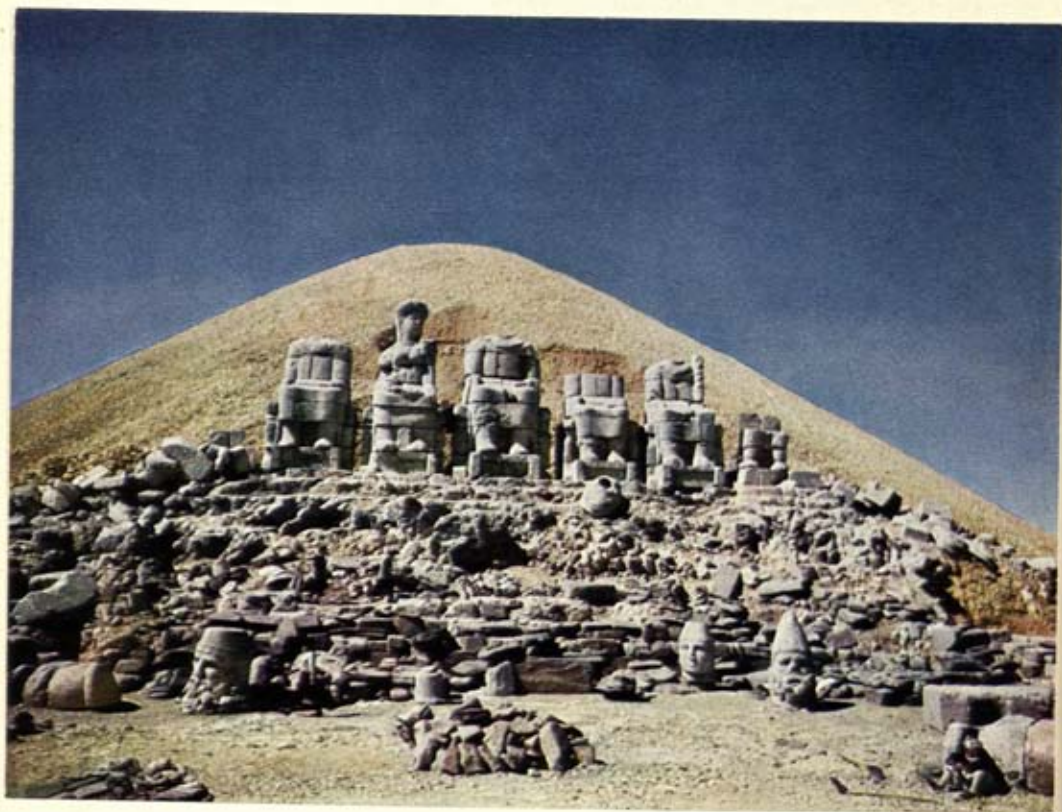
façade, where another flight of steps, in the reverse direction, led to a second ambulatory which brought one to a third stairway above and corresponding to the first; and so on up to the topmost platform on which stood the shrine. Seen from the front of the ziggurat the symmetrical arrangement of the stairs, sloping alternately to left and right, must have been most effective, and could easily have produced the illusion of a spiral, as described by Herodotus in his account of the similar ziggurat at Babylon. Whether or not there was a colour scheme throughout, as Herodotus says, we have not the evidence to determine; but the lowest stage was certainly painted black with bitumen and the shrine at the top was built with blue-glazed bricks, so that we may well accept the Greek traveller's report. In any case we have here a monument of real architectural importance, and one which seems to be original; but it is the only instance known to us of novel and successful invention in late Babylonian art.

1) Frankfort, p. 65.

2) A curious parallel is furnished by Benin. There the brass-founders, a closed guild occupying a single street close to the royal palace, were on pain of death permitted to work only for the Oba or ruler, and only he could grant (which he rarely did) to a lesser chief the privilege of owning a bronze altar-piece or other important work of the guild. Cf. E. Leuzinger, *Africa: the Art of the Negro Peoples* (Art of the World), 1960, pp. 118 ff.

3) It would be instructive to analyse this Assyrian relief in the light of the Chinese principles of perspective, to us equally alien and indeed inadequate.

4) Though this may have been due also to technical difficulties. The tiles from the front of a *podium* in the Adad temple at Assur, showing chariotry in mountainous country, seem not to have been very detailed, but their condition was too bad for any proper judgment to be based on them. The same was true of the other Assur tiles.



Terrace of sculptures from the sepulchral sanctuary of Antiochus I of Kommagene (69–34 B.C.) at Nimrud-Dagh. *From left to right:* Apollo - Mithras, the Sun God; Tyche, the fertility goddess of Kommagene; Zeus - Oromasdes; Antiochus, who was deified already during his lifetime; and Herakles - Artagnes. Cf. p. 203.

CHAPTER IX

GRAECO-ROMAN ART IN THE MIDDLE EAST

In Chapter I it was pointed out how unstable the conditions of the Middle East had always been, how by internecine warfare and by the incursion of enemies from without not only did the mastery of any one area change from time to time but the population of a region might be radically altered in character and in race. Notwithstanding these convulsions, however, the art of the several countries and peoples often persisted true to type; in studying those arts we have seen that while they were enriched, or modified, by foreign influences yet they retain the recognisable stamp of their origin and at each stage of their development can still be called by the name of their originators. But with the conquests of Alexander the Great this continuity breaks down.

The Greeks were firmly convinced of the superiority of their civilisation to that of peoples whom they termed 'barbarians'. Alexander himself was ready enough to assimilate whatever he found good in the conquered lands, but he aimed quite definitely at the Hellenisation of the East, a potent instrument for which was the foundation of Macedonian soldier-colonies throughout his new empire; and although he wished to establish a partnership between Greece and Asia there was no question but that Greece was to be senior partner. The war-lords who succeeded him were less statesmanlike, but carried out the same policy by more autocratic methods, imposing Greek culture upon peoples for the most part only too anxious to gratify the desires of their masters: proselytism advanced by rapid strides, and when Rome took over the Middle East Hellenisation was an accomplished fact.

Hellenisation

The Roman occupation did nothing to upset this. Apart from their genuine admiration for Greek culture the Romans recognised that for the administration to accept and utilise Hellenism was to follow the line of least resistance. As the countries grew prosperous under Roman rule and increasing wealth found a natural outlet in new buildings, the Graeco-Roman style was adopted automatically, so that from the Hellespont to the borders of the Negeb, from the Mediterranean to the eastern frontiers of Mesopotamia, towns and cities proliferated whose grandiose architecture and sculptured monuments

Roman occupation

were supposed by the natives to rival the glories of Rome. Old tradition in so far as this is true the Graeco-Roman art of Asia lies outside the classical art became the natural expression of the Asiatic provinces. In so far as this is true the Graeco-Roman art of Asia lies outside the scope of this book; it belongs to the history of the arts of Greece and Rome. But when we pass in review the monuments of that period in Anatolia or in Syria we cannot fail to see that these, even where the artist set himself to be most orthodox, are not quite the same as we should find on European soil; and this not necessarily because ignorance or ineptitude has botched what was meant to be a faithful copy, but because an oriental mentality has impressed itself upon the western model. In different regions there arose different schools of architecture and sculpture which are easily recognisable, and some of them at least cannot be lightly dismissed as merely provincial; they introduced new elements of real value which were to affect the art of a wider field and of later times. Rather than anticipate the arguments to be put forward in this chapter, let us illustrate the general truth by the most obvious instance, which because it does not belong to the Middle East will not beg the question. The sculptures of the Gandhāra School¹) in north-west India, are unmistakably an offshoot of classical art; occasionally, in details where Buddhism did not prescribe the norm, as in the head of a demon or a foreigner, one might mistake it for classical work; but the whole is inspired by a purely Indian sentiment, and this affects the style so strongly that no-one could imagine that here a European sculptor has been commissioned by an Indian patron. If for purposes of further comparison we turn to the Roman sculptures of, say, Rumania, where the idiosyncrasies are perhaps less marked but still apparent, and entirely unlike those of Gandhāra, then the effect of different national mentalities being brought to bear upon the same or similar foreign models is indeed manifest. And something of the same sort is to be found in the Middle East. What we shall have to observe is not the influence of Greek and Roman art upon the Asiatic world, but that of the Asiatic world upon Greek and Roman art.

ANATOLIA

Thanks to the string of Greek cities along the Ionian coast Greek art was at home in the western fringe of Anatolia long before Alexander. It is however worthy of remark that on Asiatic soil Greek architecture developed features not known in Greece proper. The sixth-century temple of Artemis at Ephesus had, in the sculptured drums at the base of its columns, something wholly un-Greek in char-

FIG. 67 — Cult statue of Diana of Ephesus.
Cf. below. Archaeological Museum, Izmir.

acter; yet when in the fourth century the temple was rebuilt by a Greek architect and adorned by Skopas of Paros, the leading sculptor of his time (c. 356 B.C.), the sculptured drums reappear in defiance of convention. The Mausoleum of Halicarnassos was built (c. 353 B.C.) by two Greek architects and was admired by the Greeks as one of the seven wonders of the world, yet nothing could be less Greek in character. Undoubtedly it was designed to order; there was no Greek precedent for a structural tomb of any kind, whereas the lion tomb at Knidos affords a close parallel and the Lycian tombs suggest a local parentage; but that is precisely the point — Asia is seen setting its individual stamp upon the work of Greek artists.

It cannot be said that the result was always satisfactory. Sometimes there is no real assimilation, but elements of the two diverse arts are arbitrarily forced into incongruous wedlock. Thus the Diana of Ephesus familiar to us now through various copies of the cult statue shows a regular Greek face surmounting the many-breasted body, which was traditional in Asiatic iconography but would have shocked any Greek artist just as it shocks us. Mere juxtaposition means failure, but there are many cases where eastern and western styles are successfully reconciled. The *Hierothesion* of Mithridates of Kommagene is a particularly interesting example because it is in the district of Malatya, where the Hittite tradition of sculpture was strong and the Achaemenid descent of the royal family introduced yet another oriental element. Undoubtedly Antiochus I (69–34 B.C.) who set up the huge monument to his deified father and to the other gods meant to produce a classical work of art and employed sculptors trained on classical lines, and at first sight the row of giant statues aligned along the terrace might seem to be purely Hellenistic. They are Greek gods presented in traditional guise, and the very idea of their alignment might seem to come from the older Ionian tradition exemplified in the avenue of seated priestesses at Branchidae; the only new departure is that each statue, instead of being a single block, is carved out of built-up masonry. But on a closer view the figures are not quite



FIG. 56

FIG. 67

PLATE P. 200

in the Greek manner; even more in the reliefs — which are more detailed — the difference is manifest: an Achaemenid ancestor is portrayed, and the portrait is in the style of Pasargadae; Herakles, superficially familiar, turns out to be Herakles orientalised, if not a Hittite god converted to Hellenism. The 'Lion Horoscope' has a lion which is not Hellenistic at all; it is not Hittite, but might perhaps claim mixed Hittite and Scythian descent, while the 'Guardian Lion' seems to have affinities with the older art of central Anatolia and stands out as a splendid creation wherein Greek technique is inspired by an ideal which we cannot well classify but must recognise as native to the soil.

It is therefore not surprising that a new school of Greek sculpture should arise at Pergamon. The occasion was the victory of King Attalus (241—197 B.C.) over the Gauls, a victory to be commemorated by the building of a temple and a huge altar (*c.* 183—174 B.C.), for the adornment of which Greek sculptors were employed.²⁾

Long before the end of the third century B.C. Greek sculpture, keeping to the tradition of the great fifth-century masters, had exhausted its inspiration; the technique remained, but generation after generation of artists had explored and exploited all the possibilities of the Attic and Argive schools, and even Lysippos the bronze-worker, in the second half of the fourth century, who ventured to modify the canon of the proportions of the human body, still adhered to the classical conception of plastic art. That conception demanded proportion and balance and eschewed violence; — where action was to be represented the figure must be shown not in movement but in that momentary pause that comes between two movements and suggests action but is in itself static, as when the discus-thrower has swung his missile to its uppermost limit and has not yet begun to bring it down for the throw; it was the potential, not the actual movement that was held to be art's legitimate subject. There could be no more flagrant violation of the rule than that we have in the sculptures of the Great Altar of Pergamon. That turbulent confusion of writhing bodies with strained muscles and contorted limbs is the very negation of the Attic spirit, giving us not the purgation of pity and terror but their reality. This is an emotional art, and even in the single figures, such as that of the Dying Gaul, both subject and treatment make a direct appeal to the emotions; intensely realistic in detail (the body of the dying Gaul is not that of a Greek athlete but leaner, more fine-drawn and individual), it employs that realism to heighten the illusion of mov-



Guardian lion from the sepulchral sanctuary of Antiochus I of Kommagene. This very dynamic statue was accompanied by an eagle figure, also carved in the round, and shows stylistic affinities with sculptures from southern Anatolia and northern Syria of the 8th and 9th centuries B.C. This sandstone figure in the round stood at the end of the Western Terrace at Nimrud-Dagh. Cf. p. 204. *Height approx. 2 m.*

ement and tension; it has not ineptly been compared with the Baroque art of Europe.

But at least two of the artists responsible for this revolutionary monument were Athenians, and Athens would have been the last place to initiate so heretical a school. Its birth-place was Pergamon, and its inspiration is unquestionably Asiatic. King Eumenes II, who commissioned the altar, may have decided on the subject of the reliefs but could not have prescribed their style; that must have accorded with the character of the Pergamenes — and we may remember that, in later times, it was the people of this region who broke away from the orthodox ritual of the Christian Church and founded the exciting and emotional sect of the Montanists. In Pergamene art we can see an alien spirit imposing itself upon the established art of Greece, remoulding it to something with which the East could sympathise and effecting not perhaps a betterment but an innovation.

SYRIA

PLATE P. 208

FIG. 68

Over the greater part of Syria, where Roman rule was direct, the Roman style of architecture prevailed almost exclusively. Of Hellenistic building little remains; very occasionally do we have a survival of some native style, such as the Amrit tombs, or the altar at Kala'at Fakra, or the Dana temple-tomb or the 'Grave of Absalom' in the Kedron valley, and even then the Roman influence is obvious; but the vast majority of the ruins give us buildings which were set up to Roman order and under Roman supervision. Ground-plans and elevations must have been the work of Roman architects, or at least of Syrians well trained in the Roman school, and betray nothing of the Orient. Only in one special case was a native form adopted: the bath establishment with its cluster of small domes and barrel vaults which the Roman army built wherever it went, in North Africa or in northern Britain, was of Asiatic origin; but the rest, temples and fora and colonnaded streets, theatres and amphitheatres, were all repetitions of the Roman model.

But because the actual craftsmen were Syrians, and because there had to be limits to official supervision, details in which the worker was left more to his own devices show an individuality independent of classical canons. The most important of these was the lavish use of the drill in relief-carving.

FIG. 69

Greeks and Romans alike had used such motives as the anthemion for entablatures, etc., the honeysuckle or palmette being carved for the most part in low and rather flat relief; the flower-garland also might be used, though in this case the relief was higher. The Syrian

loved the ornate and preferred his ornament to be as prominent as possible. He saw that by a rounder treatment of the surface and by deep drill-holes and undercutting (which too might be done with the drill) he could obtain a strong chiaroscuro with a colouristic effect that was eminently satisfying. With little extra work he could make more lively a Corinthian capital, as in the temple of Bacchus at Ba'albek, could turn a conventional into a naturalistic garland, and on a figured sarcophagus produce a play of light and shade that animated the dullest relief. This drill technique was copied in other countries and profoundly affected European sculpture.

PLATE P. 213

The same love of the ornate made popular the carved coffer ceiling. The stone roofs of Greek temples had of course been coffered in imitation of wood; the Syrians elaborated this, either with geometric patterns of octagons and squares in combination, as at Ba'albek, or with a central figure or bust in an intricately carved frame. A fairly simple form of this appears in Rome first in the temple of Castor and Pollux (A.D. 6), but the more complicated figure type seems to have been developed in Syria and served as a model for late Roman buildings elsewhere. Somewhat in the same style was a design of twisting or interlaced vine-branches whose curves enclose human busts, small complete figures such as Amorini, or animals or birds; since this was a running design it could be used horizontally for a narrow frieze or vertically for a door-jamb or pilaster, the last being an innovation in that the Greek and Roman pilaster, as an architectural element, had been plain, whereas its embellishment made it a decorative rather than a functional feature. The door-jamb of the Temple of Bacchus at Ba'albek illustrate this style, as do pilasters in the same temple. Pilasters closely resembling to the latter are found in the Basilica of Leptis Magna, and it has been suggested that Syrian stone-carvers were brought to North Africa by Diocletian to work on the great buildings with which he enriched his native city. The fashion spread to Italy, and late Roman examples inspired the artists of the Renaissance.

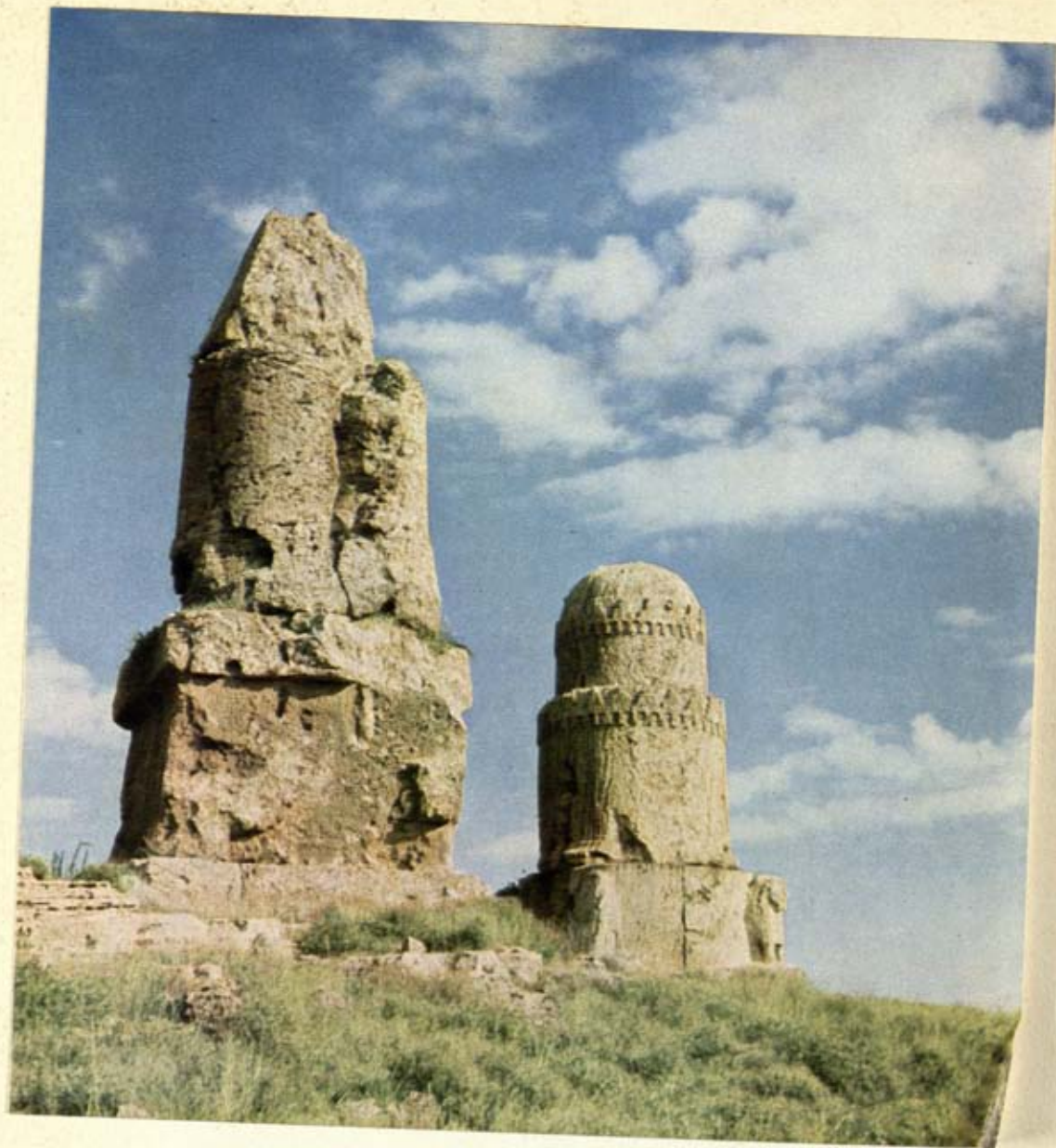
FIG. 70

FIG. 71

We may admit that the exuberant decoration of a Syrian temple is apt to overstep the limits of good taste as when, at Palmyra, the columns of the great colonnade are provided with brackets on which were put statues of benefactors, a vulgar outrage on the constructional character of the column. On the other hand we cannot but recognise the splendour and the gaiety of much of the Syrian work as exemplified, for instance, in the Temple of Bacchus at Ba'albek; granted that

PLATE P. 216

PLATE P. 213



Phoenician sepulchral monuments at Amrit. The architecture is Phoenician, but the ornaments show Assyrian influence. Approx. 1st century B.C. - 1st century A.D. Cf. p. 206.

Heliopolis, as we know it, was a Roman foundation, yet over its classical lines the East has thrown a charm that distinguishes it from all the Roman buildings in Europe that were not directly affected by that gracious miracle.

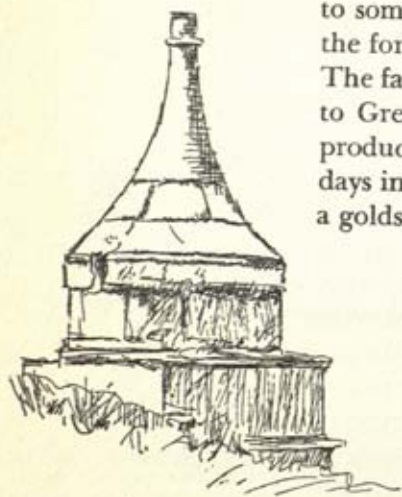
The case of Palmyra is different. Originally a Parthian station, it became in the Seleucid period a caravan centre and, in the time of Augustus, a buffer and a link between Parthia and Rome — a neutral, semi-independent town, already in 32 B.C. prosperous enough to lay the foundations of its huge temple; in a very short time it had become one of the wealthiest, most luxurious and most elegant towns in Syria. Throughout the wars between Rome and Parthia Palmyra, always friendly to Rome (for a time she admitted a Roman garrison, and many of her leading aristocrats became Roman citizens) maintained her own form of government and the command of her own militia. When the Emperor Valerian was defeated and captured by the Persian Shapur, who had succeeded to the decadent kingdom of the Parthians, Odenathus, the uncrowned king of Palmyra, utterly crushed Shapur and put down a rebellion of Roman troops in Syria against Gallienus; as a result, he could take the title of King of Kings, pose as the independent legate of Gallienus in the East, and, extending his conquests, reigned from Armenia to Memphis in Egypt. His successor Vaballath added Asia Minor and the rest of Egypt to his dominions, and when he was assassinated his mother Zenobia carried on the same policy of friendship with Rome combined with sovereign independence. The queen earned the gratitude of the Emperor Aurelian by crushing the rebellion against him headed by Proatus; but Rome could not afford to see Egypt in alien hands. Aurelian decided to expel the Palmyrenes from the Nile valley, and in the war that ensued (271 A.D.) Zenobia was defeated at Antioch and finally captured by the legions, to figure in the emperor's triumph and die in a Roman prison. Palmyra was plundered and deliberately and ruthlessly destroyed; it never recovered.

Palmyra

It is then in the light of political independence that we must examine Palmyrene art. At first sight the ruins of the city might seem to be as truly Graeco-Roman as are those of Ba'albek, and undoubtedly the Palmyrenes admired classical architecture and employed Graeco-Roman architects; they had, indeed, no such traditions of their own as would have enabled them to rival with a native style the glories of the Seleucid and Roman towns of Syria. The great temple was, in its plan, a rather clumsy mixture of Greek and Mesopotamian temple

building, but it and the other temples were dedicated not to the gods of Greece or Rome but to the Palmyrene deities Bel, Ba'al Samin, Yarhibol, Aglibol, Arsu, Azizu Hadad and Atargatis, deities who might be represented in Parthian dress and had nothing to do with Olympus. Behind the classical façade there is the oriental spirit, and when, as in sculpture, art becomes more personal that spirit expresses itself unmistakably. Of course the technique is borrowed. The Palmyrenes had no precedents of their own to follow, Mesopotamian art was too long dead to afford inspiration, and indeed was almost as alien as was Roman art; the sculptors who carved the hundreds of statues, busts and reliefs known to us had learnt their craft in Graeco-Roman schools and probably thought that they were carrying on the Greek tradition. But in fact they were doing something very different. Viewed from the Greek standpoint their work was bad; the modelling of the human body is slurred and inept, limbs and hands are soft and flaccid, the drapery corresponds to nothing in nature — it is often but a poor copy of a standardised Greek type, and when it departs from the Greek model it might be judged to be a purely mechanical scheme of inconsequent decoration. If however we look at these sculptures with an open mind we shall discover in them original and attractive qualities. But we shall appreciate them better if we first pass in review an isolated work which cannot itself be claimed as Palmyrene but is undoubtedly a forerunner of Palmyrene art.

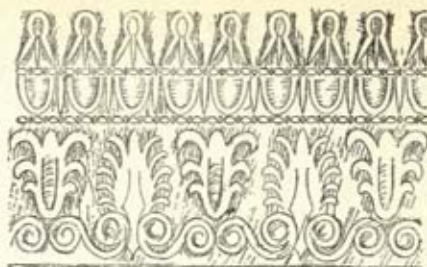
PLATE P. 218



From the neighbourhood of Homs there comes a helmet, fashioned of iron, silver and gold, which early in the first century A.D. belonged to some high-born general of the Sampsigirami, a parade helmet in the form of a man's head with a visor which gives the complete face. The face is obviously a portrait, naturalistic and of a type quite alien to Greek sculpture: the use of different metals in combination to produce a rich colouristic effect is in a tradition that goes back to early days in Anatolia; the technique is as skilful as we might expect from a goldsmith in touch with the master-craftsmen of Phoenicia. With-

FIG. 68 — 'Grave of Absalom' in the Kedron valley.
Cf. p. 206.

FIG. 69 — *Anthemion* motive from the frieze of the Erechtheum, Athens. Cf. p. 206.



out any question it is a local, *i.e.*, a Syrian piece, made perhaps at Homs and at the time when it was made Palmyra, Homs' eastern neighbour only 150 kilometers away, was one of the leading cities of Syria: rather than assume two distinct schools of art we may consider that the Homs helmet illustrates an early phase of Palmyrene art. Certainly it anticipates the characteristics of that art, imposing upon the Hellenistic model just the same stamp of Asiatic individuality, and it resembles it too in its insistence on colour.

Turning from this to Palmyrene art proper we should first remark that the scope allowed to the artist was not wide. There are a few religious reliefs, but the vast majority of his works were done for funerary purposes — statues, busts sometimes in the round but more often in high relief against a background, and reliefs showing two or more figures; and all these were meant to give portraits of the persons commemorated by them. A funerary portrait is not likely to betray any vivid emotion, and we should expect the long series of Palmyrene busts to be repetitive and dull; in fact, the characterisation is often extremely successful and nearly every bust has the stamp of individual likeness. That was the first aim of the artist; his second aim was to produce a pictorial effect. This he does partly by the use of *chiaroscuro*; his relief is deeply cut, often with rather hard edges which give firm and heavy shadows — the principle employed, as we have seen, by Syrian sculptors; then there is, in dress and furniture, an astonishing elaboration of detail which would have shocked a Greek but appealed to the oriental mind in Palmyra just as it had appealed to the Assyrian; the embroidered clothes of the men, the rich jewellery of the women, all are faithfully and lovingly reproduced as an essential part of the picture: but with drapery the effect had to be obtained otherwise. If a male client had to be represented wearing Graeco-Roman dress then the tunic and toga must be obvious, but that did not require naturalism; the general lines of an accepted classical model could be followed, but within those lines the detailed

fold of the stuffs could be manipulated at pleasure to form a pattern pictorially effective though unrelated to any possible cut of garment. If we look at a row of such busts our first impression is one of repetition; looking again we shall see that the closely-set folds, with their arbitrary curves and quirks, have reduced classical realism to an oriental design. Native dress, with its cloak, long girdled tunic and baggy trousers, tied to no classical convention, lent itself more readily to schematisation, and the entire figure is sheathed in a pattern of fine corrugated lines which, contrasting with the plain background, give it emphasis and an almost colouristic value.

In the adornment of Palmyra painting played a part scarcely less important than that of sculpture, but of the painted portraits and wall frescoes very little remains; for that branch of art we must turn to Dura-Europos.

Dura-Europos

Dura-Europos was in turn a Macedonian colony, a Parthian town, and finally a Roman military station; soon after 250 A.D. it was destroyed and its site abandoned. Its history was therefore not unlike that of Palmyra, with which, as a caravan town, it was normally in close touch: in character it was more Parthian than was Palmyra, although the Hellenistic art of the Macedonian colonists had a lasting influence upon the artists of the Parthian period; yet the temples, constructed in the latter period, were purely oriental in type, with none of the Graeco-Roman admixture which we see in Palmyra. Excavations at Dura have yielded a rich harvest both of sculpture and of painting, and it is interesting to observe how closely the two arts are allied — a painted cult picture merely reproducing in colour the corresponding stone relief. In general, the same qualities and the same conventions prevail in both — figures are represented full face, bodily forms are slurred and drapery is reduced to a linear pattern, backgrounds are usually kept clear, outlines are firm and heavy, composition is childish and movement and gesture lack any real life, accessory details are treated with minute elaboration; and yet the artist so far achieves his purpose that we may discover in his clumsy hieratic work an emotion which amounts to spirituality. It must be borne in mind that Dura was a small provincial town in which the artists employed were themselves provincial, rather to be described as craftsmen; also, some of the works that we possess may have been imported from Palmyra or elsewhere, or made by itinerant practitioners such as that 'Titus' who signed his frescoes on the wall of a Buddhist shrine as far away as Miran in the Takla-makan desert of Chinese Turkestan:³) actually



Temple of Bacchus at Ba'albek (Heliopolis). The deeply incised Corinthian capitals are characteristic of the Hellenistic - Oriental style. Cf. p. 207.



FIG. 70 — Door jamb with deeply incised relief from the Temple of Bacchus at Ba'albek. Cf. pp. 207, 227.

the signed frescoes in one private house at Dura were painted in 194 A.D. by two painters, one a Jew and one a Palmyrene, and a battle piece showing a victory of Sassanians over Romans (c. 260 A.D.) is likely to have been drawn by an Iranian artist, seeing that the names of the Sassanian warriors are written above their heads in Pehlevi. The art of Dura therefore, second-rate

though it be, is of prime importance because it is the art not of one local school but of the oriental, western Mesopotamian region which was in touch with the classical world and, combining the traditions of east and west, created a style peculiar to itself.

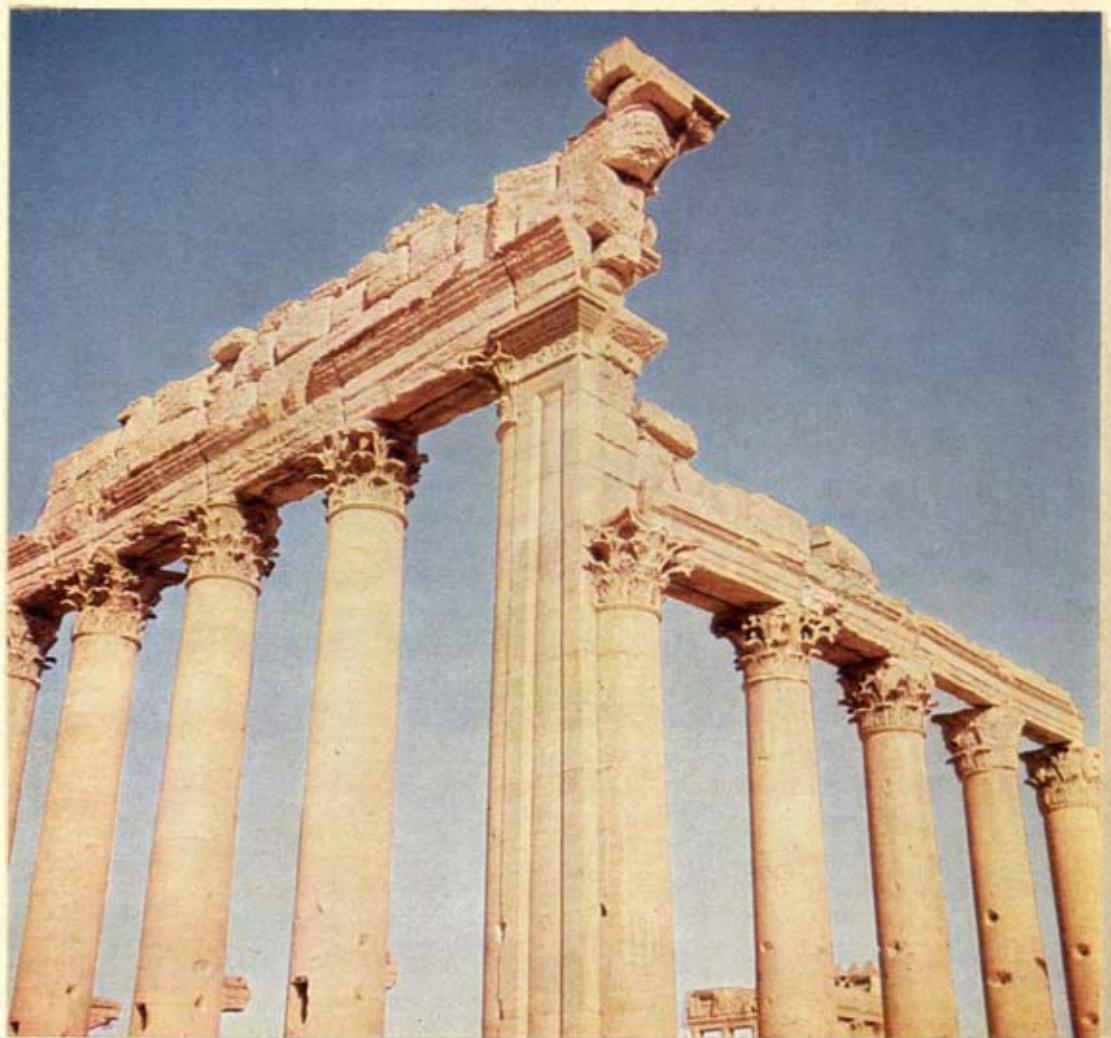
Although a fixed or at any rate a relative date can be assigned to the majority of the Dura paintings it is not possible to trace the development of the Dura style. It meets us, in the Conon fresco of c. 60 A.D., fully-fledged, and such stylistic modifications as occur later may be due not to the progress of a school but to such mixed authorship as has been suggested above. The main distinction that can be drawn is between the temple frescoes on the one hand, with hieratic conventions proved by their recurrence in different buildings, and the freer style of paintings in private houses and in the Christian church and Jewish synagogue; but here again it is a matter not so much of date as of circumstance. The whole of the material is comprised within a time limit of two centuries, and it is better to treat it as a whole.

That the Dura artists were familiar with and ultimately dependent on Graeco-Syrian art of the late Hellenistic period is obvious. It is equally obvious that their pictorial style has nothing to do with Greece. The attitudes of figures may be borrowed from Greek models (this is particularly true of the position of the feet, where the weight of the body is on one foot only and the heel of the other is raised, something unknown in earlier eastern art); the figures may wear the

dress of the Romano-Syrian, but the folds of the drapery do not at all suggest the form of the body which it covers — they are a mere exercise in linear pattern, without depth or meaning. Such intrusive elements of classical art do not mean that we have at Dura classical art misunderstood and barbarised by incompetent provincials; what we have is an eclectic oriental art modified — we might almost say corrupted — by contact with the west, with its principles and its techniques. If we ask how that art arose it is difficult to find an answer. The love of meticulously-rendered detail is typically oriental; it is prominent in Assyrian reliefs, but Dura does not derive from Assyria, for the consistent frontality of its figures is in the most striking contrast with the inevitable profile of Assyrian sculptors. Its relation to Parthian art is clear, not least in the character of its drapery, but if we take into account the date of the Conon fresco, c. 60 A.D., we can find for it no Sassanian precedent. It is safest to assume that the school was a local, that is to say, a regional one, centred in western Mesopotamia, extending at least as far as Edessa. At Edessa a remarkable mosaic of about 200 A.D.⁴) represents this school: within an elaborate border of normal Roman style there is a group of seven people, whose names are recorded in Syriac, all in native dress of bright colours, all facing frontally, which might well have been the work of a Dura artist; if it be compared with contemporary mosaics from Antioch or Daphne its complete independence of classical art will be immediately manifest. In one important respect the Dura paintings show real invention. Whereas the scenes on the temple walls are representational, the pictures of a sacrifice offered by the pious donor of the painting being but



FIG. 71 — Detail of a relief on a pilaster from Leptis Magna, showing close resemblance to the reliefs found at Ba'albek. It has been suggested that Syrian stone-carvers were brought to Africa by Diocletian. Cf. p. 207.



Detail of the colonnade of the great temple of Bel at Palmyra. As in the temple of Bacchus at Ba'albek, the Corinthian capitals were deeply incised with borer and chisel. On some columns one may still see the brackets on which statues of the donors were placed. Cf. pp. 207, 210.

repetitions of a formula and the more elaborate scene such as that of Conon and of Julius Terentius illustrating a single incident, so that the picture is complete in itself, the artists who were called upon to decorate the walls of the synagogue were faced with an entirely novel problem. The pictures were not to be simply representational; they were to be narrative paintings which should illustrate not one incident but a complete story: like the church frescoes of mediaeval Europe they were to instruct the catechumen, and whereas for some subjects a straightforward picture might suffice, for others there had to be a continuity of incident explaining the whole history. This might be done by a kind of *prolepsis*, different parts of the narrative being combined in one picture; thus, to record the capture of the Ark of Jehovah by the Philistines and its subsequent restoration, the ark occupies the centre of the composition and high up on the right is the temple of the god Dagan with his statue upon its pedestal and his furnished altar visible within; but at the same time the fragments of the statue and the altar vessels are seen littering the ground in front of the temple door; the ark too is in a waggon drawn by two kine, so it is no longer in Ashdod but already at Ekron and starting for Beth-shemesh, watched by the lords of the Philistines: the different parts of the picture are not contemporary but consecutive. Continuity can be obtained in another way, with consecutive scenes linked together by the recurrence in each of the principal character. For the story of Moses in the bulrushes we have Moses' mother and sister bringing the naked infant to the Nile bank; then there is the ark floating on the water; the princess and her two maidens come to the river-side, walking sedately, but at the same time one has undressed and entered the water and is holding up to view the child she has found; then we have Pharaoh sitting outside the gate of his city and the three young women come before him, the princess falling on her knees to ask mercy for Moses whom (apparently, but the painting here is broken away) she has laid at his feet. The use of different methods to achieve the same result would seem to show that the artist was experimenting in a strange medium; certainly he had no precedents to guide him, and what he has done, however ingenuous it may be, has the merit of originality.

There is no reason to suppose that the paintings of the Dura synagogue were literally the first of their kind, but they are the product of a definite oriental school which at that time, between 245 and 250 A.D., was in the experimental stage, laying the foundations of an art

PLATE P. 222

PLATE P. 222



Parade helmet in the form of a man's head with a visor which gives the complete face. In Anatolia the use of various metals such as iron, silver and gold is in a tradition that goes back to early days. We may consider that the helmet anticipates Palmyrene art. 1st century A.D. Cf. p. 210. *National Museum, Damascus. Height 23 cm.*

FIG. 72 — *Bronze lion's head from the Yemen. Cf. p. 229. British Museum.*



that was yet to come. For one cannot but recognise here the genesis of Byzantine art; indeed, such a figure as that of a prophet reading a scroll of the Law might well be supposed to have come from a Greek iconostasis and finds an even closer parallel in Byzantine mosaics. The frescoes of the Christian church, though they may be the work of local artists, are not original in the same degree, but both in the scheme of the decoration and in the style of the paintings show a western influence, reflecting a tradition already established in Roman Syria. The synagogue frescoes, for which western models were lacking (the relaxing of the rule against 'painted images' laid down in Exodus xx, 4 had not been generally approved) represents far better the oriental school which, disregarded by the Graeco-Roman world, was to spread from Mesopotamia and Persia through Anatolia in the service of the Christian churches until it became the standard art of Byzantium.

We have seen how Hellenistic and Roman architecture, imposed upon the people of Syria, was in detail modified by Syrian taste, and again how Roman architecture, freely adopted by the Palmyrenes, who had no traditions of their own, preserved its classical character except in so far as it was vulgarised by desert-dwellers with whom it was really out of sympathy. Petra, the capital of the Nabataeans, gives us a different picture.

Petra

The Assyrian empire did much to regularise and control the merch-



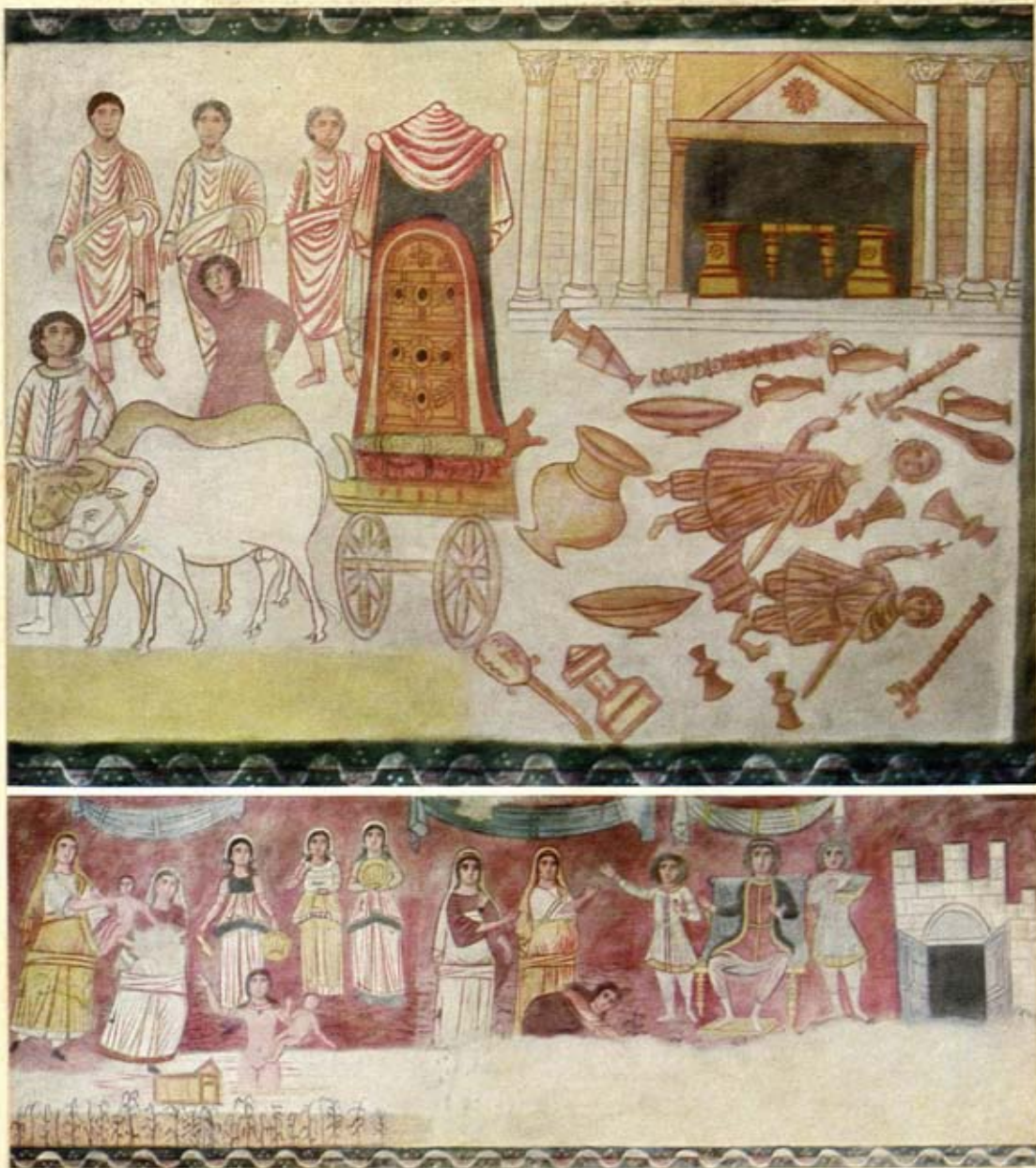
Funerary bust from Palmyra. The Palmyrene busts, of which there are many, bear the stamp of individual likenesses. In spite of some Hellenistic features the deeply cut relief, with the elaboration of detail of dress and furniture, does not give the impression of a Greek work. Cf. p. 212. *National Museum, Damascus.*

ant traffic between Mesopotamia and Syria and Egypt, and the policy entailed security measures in Arabia also, through whose deserts the caravans brought not only the spices and incense of Saba but the goods landed on the south Arabian and Red Sea coasts by ships coming from the Far East. Assur-bani-pal by a series of campaigns and the imposition of tribute secured free conduct for his merchants from the Minaeans and the Sabaeans, and the Edomites of the Petra region paid taxes as subjects of the Assyrian king. Nabonidus of Babylon (555—539 B.C.) sent expeditionary forces against the Edomites and the Amorites, and when the Persians succeeded to the empire of Babylon their interest in the trans-desert trade was no less. A trade which so deeply concerned the rulers of empires was bound to bring in big profits for the caravan-leaders and the middlemen along its route.

It was probably in the Persian, or perhaps in the Late Babylonian period that the Nabataean Arabs installed themselves in the rocky crater of Petra, which had been an Edomite centre — a holy place rather than a city. They were encouraged by the Persians, who looked to them to curb the dangerous power of the Sabaeen kingdom in south Arabia, and could thus make their new settlement the centre of a lucrative caravan trade.

They were not by tradition city dwellers. For worship they were accustomed to 'high places', not temples, and the symbols of their worship were not statues but baetylic stones (*Mazzeboth*), rough untrimmed monoliths like the obelisks of the temple of Byblos; now when they exchanged their nomad life for a more sedentary one, they quarried for themselves cave-dwellings in the sides of the ravines and in the crater itself set up a 'temple', little more than an enclosed court wherein stood the sacred monoliths; — but the peaks of the crater's lip were still their real place of devotion. As men's wealth increased they built houses of a more and more ambitious sort, market-places and two temples which were a concession to the civilised life, and out of the rock they hewed tombs for their dead. The older tombs are in 'Assyrian' style, massive cubes like giant altars decorated with bands of 'dog-tooth' ornament in relief or with plain fillets making a double frieze, and surmounting them there may be obelisks also cut from the living rock. Then the Greek influence makes itself felt, and the tomb façade may show a pedimented door and a row of pilasters; and finally come the magnificent temple-like tombs which are the peculiar glory of Petra.

PLATE P. 100



Above: Capture of the Ark of Jehovah by the Philistines. Mural from a synagogue at Dura-Europos. Cf. p. 217.

Admittedly the beauty of Petra is immensely enhanced by the varied colours of the rock out of which it was carved; but the designers have deliberately and most skilfully taken advantage of the brilliantly-hued strata to emphasise the lines of their architecture: that alone stamps them as artists of no mean rank. But the architecture itself is astounding.

Whether the Nabataean sculptors based themselves on Hellenistic or on Graeco-Roman models is still a matter of dispute, as indeed is the date of the main monuments,⁵) but the question is of small importance because the art of Petra is neither Graeco-Roman nor Hellenistic but original. It is too airy and fanciful to be Roman, and it violates all Greek canons. The Arab architects have dissected classical architecture and then played with the pieces, re-arranging them at pleasure with a sublime disregard for the function they had been meant to serve. No Greek could have designed the pedimental lower stage of the Khazne and have capped it with the fantastic upper storey wherein all architectural principles are set at nought; no Greek, even had he accepted the broken pediment, could have imagined its five-fold division as we have it on the 'Urn Tomb'. The Romans never did anything like this, anything so light-hearted and wilful; and if anyone, pleading the Roman cause, cites the fantastic architecture of the earlier Pompeian wall-paintings, the answer is that buildings of the sort remained as painter's fancies and were never translated into stone. Politically the Nabataeans preserved their independence against the Greeks and although reduced by Rome to vassalage yet managed to retain until the time of Trajan a measure of autonomy and all their economic importance. Artistically they freely borrowed what and whence they pleased, and transformed their borrowings beyond all knowledge. With a courage and a perseverance equal to that of the Indians who out of the solid rock carved the temples of Ellora, and inspired not, it would seem, by religious enthusiasm but by the love of extravagant display characteristic of their race, with borrowed motives but with an imagination untrammelled by conventional rules, they created in their barren fastness a wonderland of art.

PLATE P. 225

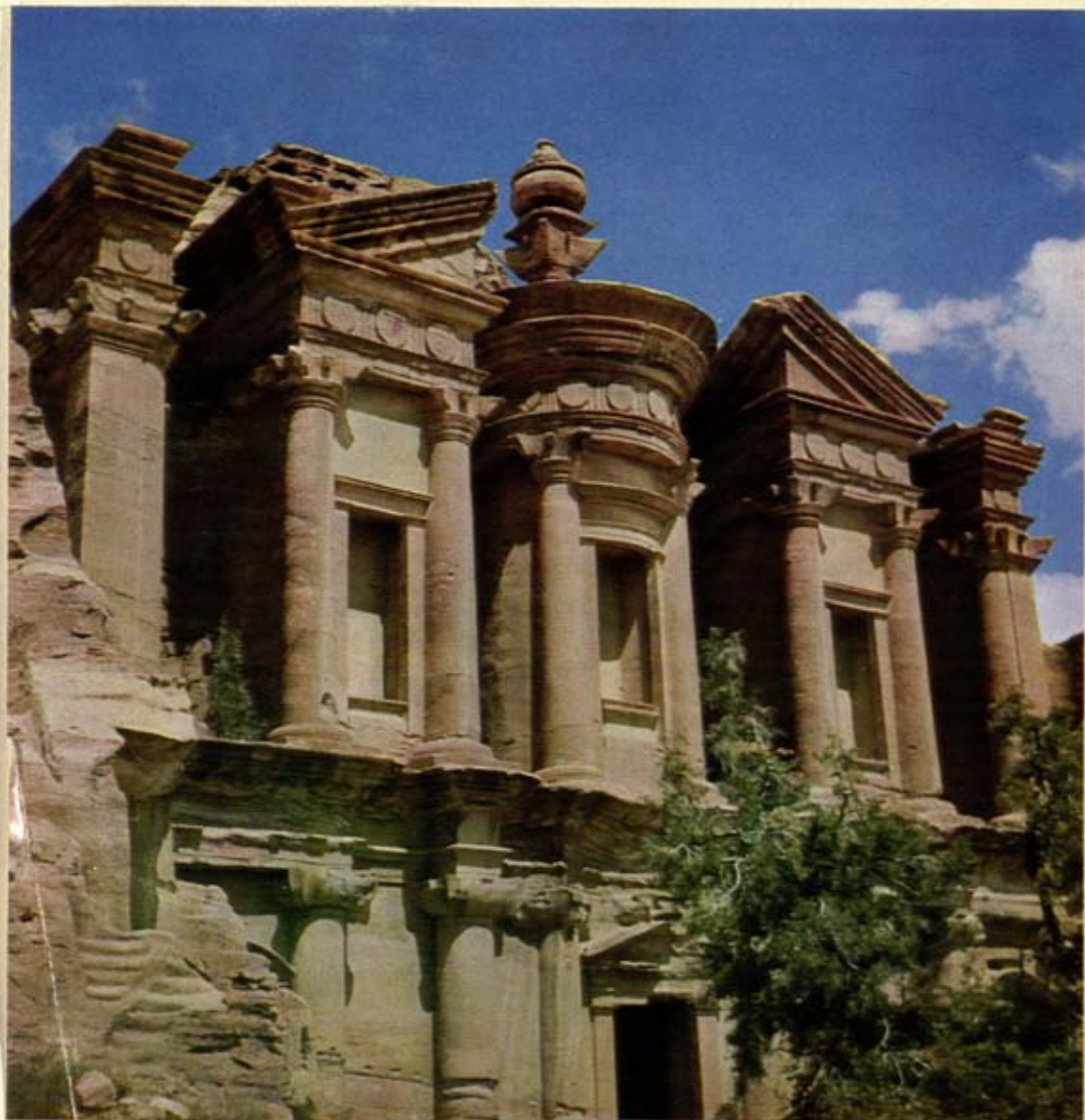
Below, left: Pharaoh and Moses in the bulrushes. Mural from a synagogue at Dura-Europos. Both murals are the product of a distinctly Oriental school, which probably anticipated Byzantine art. Approx. 250 B.C. Cf. p. 217. Yale University Art Gallery. After a copy by Herbert Gute.

Nabataean art is not exclusively confined to Petra. At Medinet Salih, on their northern caravan route, there are some fine rock-cut tombs and at least one feature unparalleled at Petra, column-drums decorated with bands of animals carved in relief; there are also there — and at Hereikeh in the close neighbourhood — remains of statues in the round, but these add little to our appreciation of the carver's quality. Bosra had started as a colony of Petra, and its ruins are imposing; but the existing remains date only from the Trajan period and are like those of other Roman frontier and caravan towns, Jerash and Amman, showing the standardised architecture of Rome unadulterated by Nabataean fantasy. Petra may be reckoned as unique.

Long before Petra was founded the Arabian caravan trade had been successfully developed by the Arabs of what is now the Yemen — successfully because in their case it was a matter not merely of carriage but of production; the gums and spices of Arabia Felix were the merchandise carried northwards to the markets of Egypt and Syria. Civilisation began early; inscriptions have been found going back to c. 1000 B.C. (according to the evidence of stratification), when the Minaeans, and soon after them the Sabaean, were already building cities and fortresses; it was early in the first millennium B.C. that the huge Marib dam was constructed, and by that time Marib must have been an ancient city. The government of the country seems to have been then in the hands of the *mukarribs* or priestly rulers of Saba, but



FIG. 73 — Bronze statue of a horse from the Yemen. The Himyaritic inscriptions suggest the close of the 5th or beginning of the 6th century B.C. It is, however, possible that this statue dates from a much earlier period. Cf. p. 230. Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Harvard University, Washington, D.C.



'Urn tomb' (el Deir) from Petra. Although the architecture shows classical influence, the divided upper storey and the five-fold division of the façade give a distinctly non-classical impression. Petra was a city in southern Jordan, the residence of the Nabataean kings; it played an important part in the caravan trade between southern Arabia and Syria. Cf. p. 223.

in the seventh century hereditary kings rose to power, possibly because the political conditions called for a strong rule. Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria (746–728 B.C.) had invaded Arabia and brought to heel the Minaeans and the Sabaeans; Sargon and Assur-bani-pal both fought campaigns in the Yemen, and later Nabonidus of Babylon (555–539 B.C.) from his central Arabian hunting-lodge at Teima controlled the incense-route. This implies that the Mesopotamian trade was on a very large scale, explaining the prosperity of Marib, and it also means that Mesopotamia must have exercised influence on Saba; thus the square box-like incense-burners of limestone or clay with four squat legs and with geometric ornaments on their sides, which are common in the Yemen right down to the first century B.C., are faithful copies of a type prevalent in Mesopotamia in Late Babylonian times.

Unfortunately it is not possible to trace the development of Sabaean art. Vast numbers of statues and reliefs are in museums and private collections, but nearly all of these have been purchased from the natives who have plundered the ancient sites, so that they afford no evidence for dating, and their provenance is seldom known. Of scientific excavation in a jealously guarded land very little has been done. The order, and to some extent the chronology of the kings has been established, the foundations of a pottery sequence have been laid, a certain number of important objects have been found which can be accurately dated, for the most part to the later Hellenistic and Roman periods, and a succession of buildings seems to show a definite sequence in the fashion of stone-dressing from plain through various types of drafted and 'pecked' or rusticated work back to plain again, this covering a period from *c.* 650 to *c.* 150 B.C.; but this does not amount to art history.

Such excavation as has been done at Hureidha, Timna and Marib shows that the great period of Sabaean civilisation was between 350 and 50 B.C. during which time Hellenistic influence prevailed, reaching the Yemen from Alexandria. The relations with Egypt were purely commercial, maintained by the caravan service, and contacts therefore were indirect; consequently we find that the effect was one-sided, for whereas Greek models of works of art could be and were imported, to be copied by local craftsmen, architecture was in a different position and the builders of south Arabia remained sublimely ignorant of what the classical style might be. In the Temple of the Moon at Marib the place of columns is taken by enormously long and

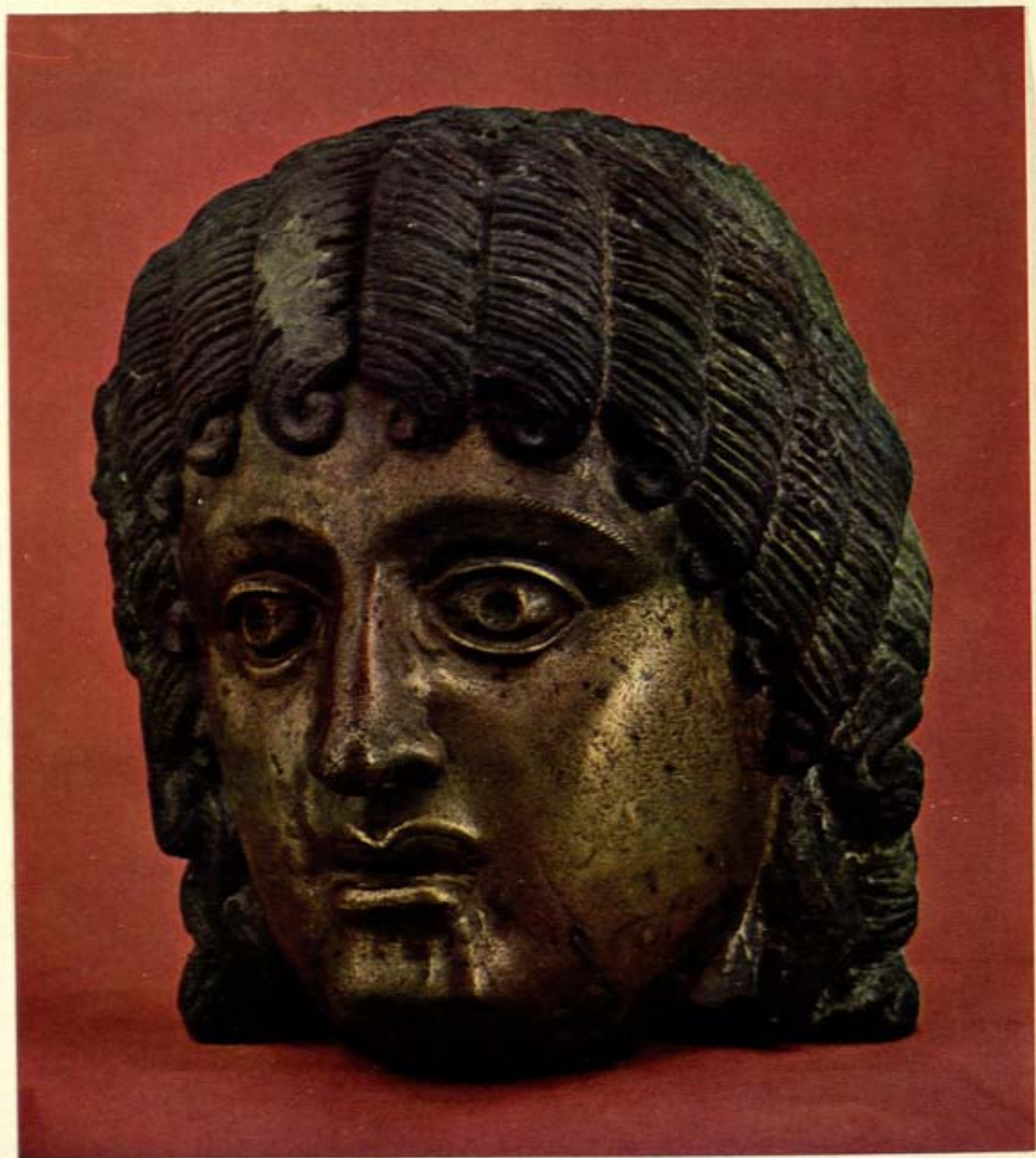
disproportionately slender monolithic sandstone posts, square in section: at Hugga (near Shabwa) the shaft is hexagonal; only at San'â, re-used in a mosque, do we know of a circular shaft with shallow flutings; the capitals consist of from three to six rows of slightly overlapping squares, apparently a reproduction in stone of the wooden post-capitals still in use in southern Iraq and elsewhere, made by nailing small pieces of wood together against the sides of the post. In the peristyle entrance-hall of the same temple the plain masonry surface is relieved by a row of false windows, again imitating wooden lattice-work; no other kind of decoration was noted, but at Hugga there seem to have been along the temple eaves stone gargoyles in the form of bulls' heads to carry off the water. The native style would seem to have been very simple, not to say primitive; it shows considerable skill in stone-cutting and dressing but little constructional ability — the tall stone posts, for instance, were not properly bedded — and no real artistic sense, for the proportions even of an important building like the peristyle court were thoroughly bad. Seen from the inside the thirty-foot posts, twelve of them in a total length of sixty feet, the intervals between them no wider than twice the nineteen-inch thickness of the posts, looked frankly ridiculous.

Hellenism had no influence upon the buildings of southern Arabia. But in the Istanbul Museum four stones from an unknown Arabian source prove that at a later time foreign styles did penetrate into the desert country. Two of these are parts of a column (or columns) with fluted shafts round which wind vine-branches, carved in high relief, with figures of birds and of men between the branches. The other two are from posts, square in section, on the face of which are reliefs of vine-branches, again with figures of animals. Recalling the pilasters at Ba'albek we must recognise here the influence of Rome in the second century A.D. or later, but that influence reaches the Yemen from Syria, along the caravan routes, not directly from Rome. There is nothing to show that foreign styles affected architecture in general; probably details alone were thus copied, whereas the main lines remained unchanged. A model building, also in Istanbul, unfortunately not dated, gives us a façade with the very long and slender square posts that we have seen at Marib, close-set and supporting a railed architrave; the latter is interrupted by three high gables projecting from the sharply-sloped roof. Set back alongside the upright posts are other posts which form double T-shaped recesses, a treatment which may well have been borrowed in the late Babylonian period from the

Foreign influences

PLATE P. 213

FIG. 70



Female head in bronze, Sabaean work. The style of hairdress bears a certain resemblance to that on Arabic coins of the 2nd century A.D. Cf. p. 229. *British Museum. Height 22 cm.*

temple-wall decoration normal in Mesopotamia since Sumerian times; the back of the recess, *i.e.*, the real wall face, is slotted with what may be small windows, but under each of the gables is a doorway (?) topped by a heavy lintel. A somewhat similar fenestration can be seen in some of the mud-built sky-scraper houses of the modern Hadramaut.

The Sabaeans were skilled workers in metal, which was freely used even in architecture, doors and sometimes floors being cased in bronze, but all their best work was strongly influenced by foreign models brought back to Arabia by the caravan merchants. Bronze lamps with handles in the form of springing ibexes are faithfully reproduced from Achaemenid originals; two statues of cupids riding upon lions, excavated at Timna, were locally cast, for they bear the names of their makers, but they reproduce Alexandrian statues of the second century B.C. A woman's head, now in the British Museum, of about the same date if we may judge by the style of hair-dressing, which resembles that on Arabian coins of the second century, is based upon a classical original but has none the less a certain local character which raises it from the merely provincial Roman into the sphere of Arabian art. A lion's head, also in the British Museum, betrays a more oriental influence, but is a very fine piece. If we compare this eclectic art with what we may suppose to be examples of the purely native school we shall find that while the technique of bronze-casting is good the artistic level attained is not high. A statuette (about half a metre high) unearthed at Marib in the moon-god's temple, where it had been dedicated by one Ma'adkarib, is attributed by the excavators to the sixth century B.C. It represents a man advancing slowly with outstretched hands, the left hand apparently having held a spear or staff; he has a short beard and a mop of hair, curled in front, giving almost the effect of a turban, and wears a plain kilt and over his back a lion's skin of which the hind paws enwrap his thighs and the front paws are crossed over his chest. The figure has a certain amount of dignity but in spite of the movement suggested by the backward-drawn right leg is curiously lifeless. The arms are weak and flabby; the only modelling of the legs is a deep groove outlining the calf muscle, which might have been suggested by an Assyrian lion relief; the breasts are flat, defined by a sharp edge separating the two planes; the drapery is a sheath devoid of all modelling. A second figure is rather more vivacious in that the fingers of the right hand are extended instead of being clenched, and the chiton

Metal-work

PLATE P. 228

FIG. 72

which it wears, girdled by a belt in which a knife is stuck, is relieved by a few diagonal folds symmetrically arranged on either side of the central join: a third is even more dead than the Ma'adkarib statue. The amount of evidence that we possess is small, but it would seem that the Sabaeen craftsmen, competent but uninspired, had at least as early as the sixth century B.C. evolved what may be called a native style in sculpture; but even so they may have been in some measure indebted to Egypt and to Mesopotamia. As they became acquainted with the arts of the Hellenistic, the Achaemenid and the Roman world they were quick to imitate and to adapt each in turn. The results were not always happy, as is shown by the examples already cited — an even lower depth is reached by a female statue, that of the lady Bar'at, of the second century B.C., found at Timna, where the voluminous drapery is ludicrously inept; but the Arabian sculptor seems to have grown more and more dependent upon his foreign models, so that when he was left to his own devices he was more helpless than had been his untutored predecessor of the sixth century B.C.; only in this way can we account for the childish monstrosities of the Himyaritic period, which lasted down to the Moslem conquest.

Himyaritic period

FIG. 73

A history of art need scarcely concern itself with the Himyaritic statues, of which vast numbers have come upon the market. Carved for the most part in soft alabaster, they seem to have been produced *en masse*, presumably as votive offerings; they are either comically or distressingly bad. Of rather more interest, at least from the anthropological point of view, are the reliefs of the same period. These are in flat two-plane relief, the edges rounded slightly or not at all, the detail incised. The subjects are varied — horsemen, camel-riders, the ploughman with his team of oxen, the funeral banquet, single warriors, fantastic animals; as illustrating the lives of the people these grave stelae have real value. But the drawing is very poor and the workmanship very rough, and even the best examples can claim little artistic merit. Only in one branch did the Sabaeen, and after him the Himyaritic stone-carver excel, that of inscriptions. The characters of the south Arabian scripts are finely designed and lend themselves admirably to decorative use. Even on the grave stelae the lettering gives a touch of distinction to the crude relief; the temple inscriptions, whether cut in stone or cast in bronze, with the characters well formed and beautifully spaced, sometimes severely isolated, sometimes with borders of bucrania or vine-pattern, with deep carving to yield a colouristic effect, are genuine works of art. With

the advent of the iconoclastic faith of Islam the decadent sculpture of south Arabia came to an end, and its loss is not to be deplored. But in the splendid Kufic inscriptions that enriched mosque and palace in the succeeding centuries we have an art directly inherited from pagan times, and by them the Sabaeen and Himyaritic artists stand justified.

1) Cf. H. Goetz, *India* (Art of the World), 1959, pp. 69 ff.

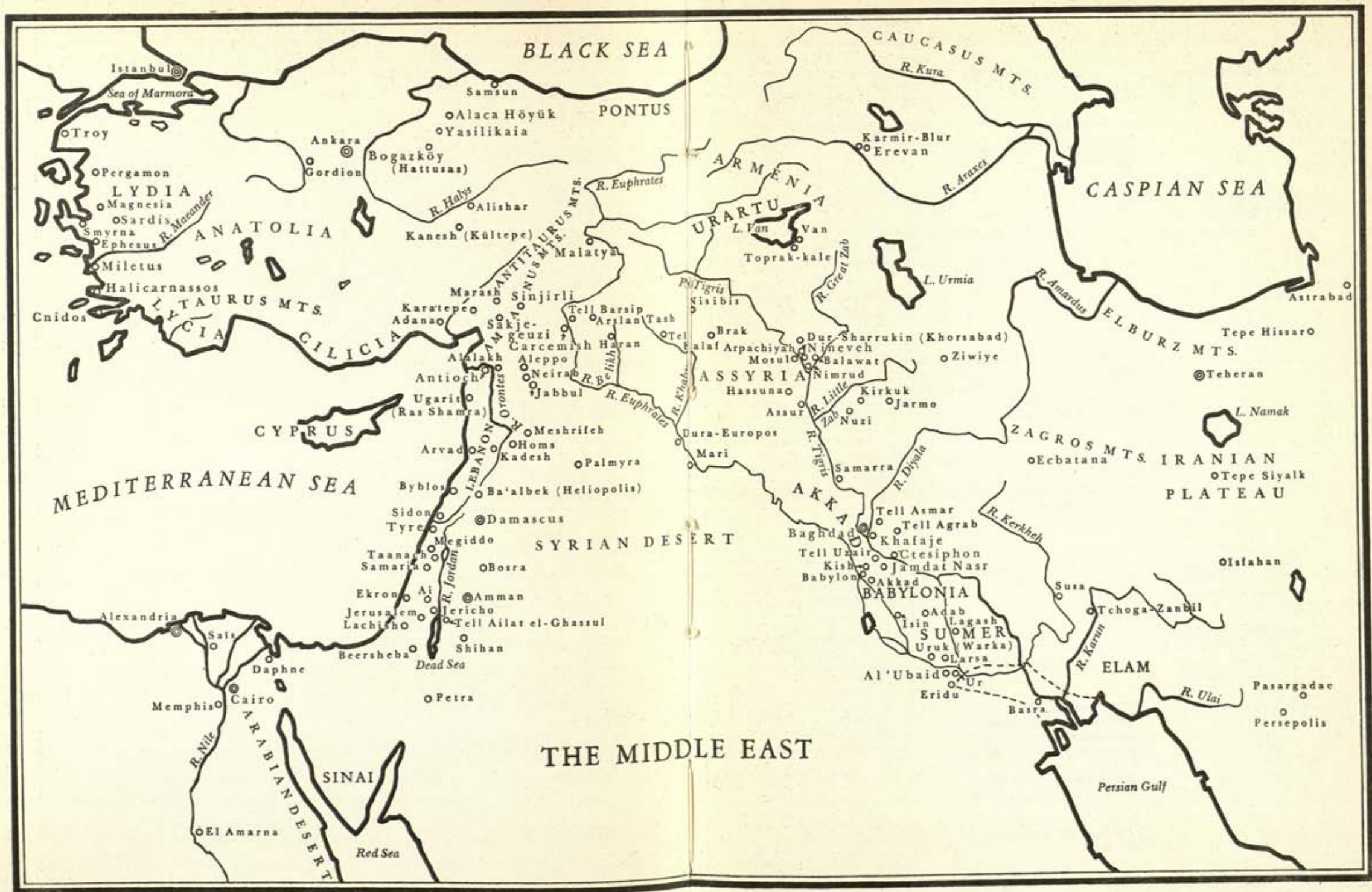
2) These were Isigonos, Phyromachos, Stratonikos and Antigonos, according to Pliny, but the first may have been the Epigonos to whom Pliny attributes a Pergamene figure, perhaps the well-known Dying Gaul in the Capitol Museum.

3) M. Aurel Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, Vol. I, London, 1912, p. 492.

4) J. B. Segel in *Anatolian Studies*, Vol. III, (1953), Pl. XII.

5) Thus Rostovtzeff would date the Khazne to the late Hellenistic period, and thinks it was designed by Greek artists, while other authorities would assign it to the second or even the third century A.D.

APPENDICES



CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

B.C.	IRANIAN PLATEAU	MESOPOTAMIA	
		SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL	NORTHERN (ASSYRIA)
6000		Village settlements Domesticated animals and grain cultivation	Village settlements Jarmo, Hassuna
5000			
4000	Siyalk (<i>painted pottery</i>)		
3700			Tell Halaf culture Tell Halaf, Nineveh Samarra (<i>pottery</i>)
3500		Al 'Ubaid, Eridu, Uruk, Kish, Ur <i>Cultural relations with Elam: clay figures and sickles</i>	Arpachiyah pottery Al 'Ubaid culture
3200			Uruk period <i>Use of the potter's wheel; metal sickles; alabaster vase and 'Lady of Warka'</i>
3000	<i>Pottery at Susa (Elam); Tepe Hissar Cultural relations with Sumer</i>	<i>Cylinder seal in 'Brocade' style</i>	Jamdat Nasr period <i>Semitic population influenced by Sumer</i>
2900	Kingdom of Elam		
2600		Early Dynastic period. Sumer divided into several city states, with Ur the most prominent. <i>Columned hall of Kish</i> . First Dynasty of Ur (A-anni-pad-da and others). <i>Terra-cotta reliefs in Temple of Al 'Ubaid</i> <i>Royal Cemetery at Ur</i> <i>'Vulture stela' of Eannatum of Lagash</i>	

PHOENICIA, SOUTH
SYRIA, PALESTINE
AND ARABIA

Jericho (*earliest city
walls*)

Pottery

*Polychrome wall paintings
at Teleilat el-Ghassul
near Jericho. Burial-
chests from Khudheirah*

Foundation of the
coastal cities

*Strong cultural influence
of Mesopotamia*

*Jamdat Nasr seals
at Byblos*

Close commercial links
with Egypt

NORTH SYRIA AND
ANATOLIA

*Clay vessels of the
Tell Halaf culture at
Carchemish, on the Amq
plain, and at L. Van*

Alalakh maintaining
trade links with Sumer
(*Al 'Ubaid pottery*)

Jamdat Nasr period

*Palace of King of
Alalakh*

*Khirbet Kerak pottery
in north Syria*

EGYPT

B.C.

6000

5000

Badari period

3700

3600

Amrah period

3400

3200

Gerzeh period
(Trade links
with Palestine)

3100

*Egyptian art
influenced by
Jamdat Nasr style*

3000

Menes (Thinite
dynasties)

2900

Old Kingdom
*Building of the
Pyramids*

2700

Fourth Dynasty (2540)

2600

	IRANIAN PLATEAU	SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL	MESOPOTAMIA NORTHERN (ASSYRIA)
2400	Incorporation of Elam into the Akkadian kingdom of Sargon; art influenced by Mesopotamia	<i>Semitic influence on Sumerian culture increases</i> Akkadian Dynasty (Sargon I); Naram-Sin (2334-2297)	
2200		Sargonid Dynasty of Akkad overthrown by Gutí invasion Lagash: Gudea (2120) Ur-Nammu of Ur becomes king of Sumer and Akkad (2112) (Third Dynasty of Ur) <i>Use of burnt bricks</i> Ziggurat at Ur	Expansion of Assyria to the north
2000		Elamite invasion Ur destroyed; dynasties of Isin and Larsa (Elamite influence)	
1900		Babylon becomes supreme in Mesopotamia	
1800	Elamite kingdom incorporated by Babylon	Hammurabi of Babylon (1793-1750). Hammurabi defeats King Rim-Sin of Larsa (1754)	First Babylonian dynasty Hurri invasion in the north
1700	Infiltration of Indo-European tribes into Persia		
1600		Babylon destroyed by King Mursilis of the Hittites (1595)	Kassite invasion from the north
1500		Babylon occupied by the Kassites	Kingdom of Mitanni
1400		Babylon under Kassite rule (Kuri-galzu II); <i>Temple of Nin-gal</i>	'Nuzi' ware among the Mitanni Dushratta (1390-1352) King of Mitanni. Suppiluliumas overthrows kingdom of Mitanni (c. 1350), but is shortly afterwards conquered by Assuruballit <i>Import of Phoenician ivories</i> . Kingdom of Assyria independent under Assuruballit (1366-1330)

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Foundation of Mari	Foundation of Haran		2500
Palestine and south Syria under Egyptian rule	North Syria ruled by Sargonid dynasty	End of the Old Kingdom (2220)	2300
	<i>Royal Cemetery of Alaca Höyük. Horoztepe Troy II. Immigration of (Indo-European) Hittites</i>		2200
Sumerian colony at Meshrifeh		Middle Kingdom (2050-1650)	2100
<i>Obelisk Temple of Byblos</i>		Twelfth Dynasty (1991-1778)	2000
Phoenicia and south Syria as far as Ugarit under Egyptian rule. Mari under Babylon	Anittas, Hittite king of Kussura, destroys Hattusas (c. 1850) and conquers Kanesh		1900
<i>Invention of Phoenician alphabet (c. 1750) Efflorescence of gold- smiths' craft</i>	North Syria becomes independent (Mesopot- amian influence) <i>Palace of King Yarim-Lim at Alalakh (half-timber construction)</i>		1800
	Labarnas king of the Hittites. The Hittite king Hattusil I makes Hattusas his capital and conquers Yamkhad and Aleppo	Hyksos invasion (1650)	1700
	Mursilis I consolidates his authority; anarchy after his death	New Kingdom (1550) Eighteenth Dynasty	1600
Syria reconquered by Egypt	Hurri conquered by Thothmes III; Aleppo plundered by the Hittites	Thothmes III (1504-1450) Amenhotep III (1406-1370)	1500
South Syria evacuated by the Egyptians (raids by the Habiru). Amorite kingdom in region of Damascus. <i>Ivory-carving. Hurri style with Egyptian motives</i>	<i>Ivory-carving in Alalakh</i> Suppiluliumas, king of the Hittites (1385-1345), conquers north Syria as far as Damascus (1375) <i>Lions of Alalakh</i> Muwatallis (1313-1285)	Akhenaton (Ameno- phis V (1370-1352) Tutankhamen (1330-1322) Nineteenth Dynasty Seti I (1305-1290) <i>Export of ivory to Syria</i>	1400

		MESOPOTAMIA	
	IRANIAN PLATEAU	SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL	NORTHERN (ASSYRIA)
1300		Babylon conquered by Tukulti-Enurta I (c. 1230)	Tukulti-Enurta I (1250- 1210) king of Assyria
1200	'Golden age' of Elam; ziggurat at Tchoga-Zanbil	Elamite incursions. Fall of Kassite dynasty	Tiglath-pileser I (1116- 1077) king of Assyria
1100	Some parts of the western Iranian plateau under Assyrian rule	Babylon conquered by Tiglath-pileser I	Tiglath-pileser I extends his rule far to the north
1000		Aramaeans incursions Babylon independent of Assyria	Assyrian Old Kingdom brought to an end by Aramean invasion
900	<i>Efflorescence of ivory-carving</i>		Resurgence of Assyria Shalmaneser III (859-827) <i>Royal Palace at Balawat</i>
800	Invasion by Cimmerians from beyond the Caucasus	Babylon conquered by Tiglath-pileser III (729)	Tiglath-pileser III (746- 727); Sargon II (722-705); Sennacherib (705-681)
700	Scythian invasion of Media. Elam frequently attacked by Assur-bani-pal, Susa destroyed (645). Cyaxares 625-585) estab- lishes Media as a Great Power	Babylon razed to the ground by Sennacherib (689) Babylon freed from Assyrian rule (626) Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon (604-561)	Esarhaddon (681-668) Assur-bani-pal III (668- 626). Cyaxares besieges Nineveh (614). Scythian incursions. Assyria con- quered by Chaldeans and Medes (612) and partitioned
600	Astyages (585-550) conquered by Cyrus II of Persia (550) Under Cyrus II (559-529) Persia be- comes an imperial power. Cambyses II (529-522). Darius I (521-485) <i>Palaces at Susa</i>	Nabonidus (555-539); alliance with Lydia and Egypt against Persia. Babylon conquered by Cyrus II (539); Mesopotamia becomes a province of the Persian Empire	

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South Syria as far as
Kadesh occupied by Seti I
(1286). Battle near Kadesh
between Muwatallis and
Ramses II (1269). Israelites
migrate to hill country
from Palestine

Invasion by the 'Peoples of
the Sea'; Ugarit destroyed;
Amorite kingdom laid waste;
Philistines on the coast-
lands of Palestine
(*Mycenaean influence*)

Solomon (963-925); *Temple
of Solomon built in
Jerusalem*
Hiram I of Tyre (969-936)

Tiglath-pileser III conquers
Damascus (722). Sargon II
seizes Samaria (721)

Psammetichus I conquers
Ashdod (620); Josiah, king
of Judah, defeated by
Necho. Defeat of Necho
by Nebuchadnezzar II
Jehoiakim of Judah
(608-597)

Nebuchadnezzar II (597-
587) repeatedly subjugates
Judah. Large numbers of
people taken into captivity
Syria a Persian province
(539)

Hattusil III (1278-1250)
king of the Hittites.
Rock-carvings of Yasilikaia

Invasion by the 'Peoples of
the Sea'; Hittite kingdom
destroyed; Hattusas,
Alalakh, Carchemish and
Aleppo destroyed

Foundation of Syro-Hittite
states in north Syria
Phrygians in Halys basin,
Lydians in west, Urartians
near L. Van

Last Hittite principality
in Cilicia. *Hittite-Ara-
maean culture (Sinjirli,
Carchemish, Malatya)*

Kingdom of Urartu in east;
Ionian colonies on coast
of Asia Minor

Phrygian kingdom in Asia
Minor
Cimmerian invasion

Phrygia destroyed by
Cimmerian invasion (680)
Lydian kings Ardys (652-
610) and Alyattes drive
out the Cimmerians
Ascendancy of Lydia

Scythian incursions
Cyaxares destroys Urartu
(585). Croesus (560-546)
conquered by Cyrus II
(546). Asia Minor a Persian
province

Ramses II
(1290-1223)

Attack by the
'Peoples of the
Sea' beaten off

Twenty-first
Dynasty (1085)

Esarhaddon con-
quers Egypt (670)
Liberation of
Egypt by Psam-
metichus I (663-609)

Twenty-seventh
Dynasty (525)

1300

1200

1100

1000

900

800

700

600

	IRANIAN PLATEAU	SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL	MESOPOTAMIA NORTHERN (ASSYRIA)
400		332-330 Conquest by Alexander the Great 321 Seleucid Empire	
300	Parthians declare themselves independent of Seleucid Empire (247) Parthians conquered by Antiochus the Great (209)		
200	Phraates II, king of the Parthians, defeats the Seleucids near Ecbatana (129) Raids by Yue-chi nomads on Parthia; anarchy. Mithridates II (124-88) consolidates the Empire	Conquest of Babylon by the Parthians (Arsacid dynasty)	Conquest by the Parthians
100	Crassus defeated and killed by the Parthians		
A.D.			
100		Mesopotamia becomes a Roman province under Trajan (116), but under Hadrian (122) is again abandoned	
200	Parthian Empire destroyed by Ardeshir (226) Foundation of Sassanian Empire Emperor Valerian taken prisoner (260) Narses (293-302) defeated by Emperor Galerius (297)	<i>Sassanian palace at Ctesiphon</i>	Roman Empire extends as far as the R. Tigris (297)
300	Shapur II again consolidates Sassanian rule after the death of Emperor Julian (309-379)		

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334-331 Conquest by Alexander the Great 320 Ptolemean rule	<i>Building of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassos (353)</i>	Reconquest by the Persians (341)	400
Ptolemy III Euergetes advances to the Euphrates (240)	Attalus of Pergamon victorious over the Gauls (241-197)	Ptolemean rule (320)	300
Antiochus the Great conquers Palestine Kingdom of the Nabataeans (Petra)	<i>Building of the Pergamon altar (186-174)</i> Attalus III of Pergamon leaves his kingdom to Rome. Mithridates VI of Pontus (120-63) carries on long drawn out wars against Rome, in alliance with Tigranes II of Armenia	Egypt a Roman province (31)	200
Jerusalem destroyed by Titus (A.D. 70)	Antiochus I of Kommagene (69-34); Hierrothesion of Mithridates Mithridates VI and Tigranes II defeated by Pompey (63) <i>Tombs of Amrit</i>	Egypt a Roman province (31)	100
Palmyra conquered in 272 during reign of Aurelian (270-275). Zenobia defeated	Arsacid dynasty in Armenia (66 A.D.)		A.D.
			100
			200

GLOSSARY

Achaemenids

Persian dynasty which ruled until 330 B.C. (Cyrus 546 B.C.).

acroliths

(Greek: *akros*, tapering; *lithos*, stone): statues of which the clothed parts are of wood and those parts left bare (head, feet, etc.) are of stone.

acroterion

(Greek): pinnacles on the horizontal coping or parapets of a gable, to be found on buildings, reliefs or sepulchral stelae.

anthemion

(Greek: decorative cluster of flowers): ornament of palmettes and a cluster of flowers.

apadana

columned hall (audience hall) of Achaemenid rulers.

baetylic stones

unhewn stones.

basalt

rock of igneous origin formed by consolidation of molten rock-material. The colour varies from black to a darkish grey according to the mineral composition, which also determines the grainy texture of the rock.

Bīt Hilani

Assyrian temple-like type of palace with columned hall, adopted from the Syro-Hittites.

cartouche

(French): panel enclosing the name or symbol of a ruler (e.g., on vases and pitchers, but also on monuments).

cella

enclosed chamber in a temple, containing the idol.

chalcolithic

final phase of the neolithic.

chiaroscuro

(Italian): light and dark (term used in painting).

chiton

(Greek): a tunic of Semitic and Babylonian origin. It is made of linen or wool, sewn together along the sides and either sewn or fastened on the shoulders.

cire perdue

metal casting by the 'waste mould' process. The wax model is covered with clay. The wax is then melted out and molten metal poured into the cavity. Casting is completed by breaking away the mould.

cylinder seal

cylinder-shaped seal measuring some 1–6 cm. in length, bearing hieroglyphs or pictorial representations in *intaglio*, which is rolled out on to a soft material to make an impression.

Diadochi

(Greek: successors): generals of Alexander the Great among whom his empire was divided after his death, Babylon being allotted to Seleucus.

diorite

greyish-green plutonic igneous rock.

dolerite

a mineral allied to basalt of which the texture is medium-grained.

dromos

(Greek: race-course): entrance-passage to a sepulchral chamber.

electrum

alloy of gold and silver.

Enki

God of the Waters.

entasis

(Greek: strain): a term used in architecture to denote the curvature added to the taper of the shaft of a column in the Greek style.

Etana

figure in Mesopotamian mythology, frequently represented as a shepherd seized by an eagle.

fascine

faggot of brushwood bound together to support loose walls of earth, used in the construction of dikes, fortresses, etc.

frit

term used in glass-making to denote the calcination of the materials of which glass is made.

gem

precious or semi-precious stone bearing a deeply engraved image, hieroglyph, symbol, etc., in *intaglio*. The gem was used not only

as an ornament, but in particular as a sealing device: the impression leaves a positive relief on the seal. The converse of the *intaglio* is the cameo, in which the engraving is executed in positive relief.

Gilgamesh

early Sumerian king of Uruk. The Gilgamesh legend arose in approx. 2000 B.C.

granulation

decoration of pieces of jewellery by soldering on small particles of gold and silver.

guilloche

engraving of geometric figures twisted over one another on objects of metal, ivory or wood.

hierothesion

(Greek): sanctuary, sacred area.

hoplite

(Greek): heavily armed soldier.

iconostasis

(Greek: *eikon*, image; *stasis*, position): screen separating the sanctuary from the main body of a church, on which numerous icons are placed.

intaglio

cf. *gem*.

karum

part of the city of Kültepe (Kanes) inhabited by Akkadian merchants.

kaunakes

in Sumer, a kilt or straight skirt, worn in such a manner as to leave the knee free. It was made of narrow fleecy strips with a zigzag-like hem.

koine

(Greek: universal): used here in the sense of a common language.

kudurru

in Babylonia, a boundary stone with carved symbols.

lapis lazuli

blue precious stone, not translucent, generally with specks of a metallic gold colour.

meerschau

a mineral, the product of weathering, which occurs for the most part in Asia Minor. It is fine-grained, porous, and therefore very light.

megaron

(Greek: hall): term to designate the hall of a

prince's palace, as well as the building itself. The hall is usually rectangular, with an entrance and portico on one latitudinal side of the building; the roof is supported by four columns.

metope

(Greek: *meta*, with; *ope*, hole for beam): term used in architecture and monumental sculpture to denote the spaces between the triglyphs in the Doric order. Originally these were left blank, but later they were filled in with plaques of clay or reliefs. In common usage the term denotes recurring independent elements in ornaments that are arranged horizontally.

monolith

(Greek: *monolithos*): memorial stone, either worked or unworked, or alternatively a fairly large architectural detail consisting of a single stone.

orthostat

(Greek): tall upright block of stone, frequently decorated in relief, forming the lowest course above ground of a wall.

pax romana

the peaceful conditions prevailing under Roman rule in the imperial period.

polos

head-dress, broadening towards the top and with a band at the bottom.

presentation scene

scene on a seal or relief in which the owner or donor is introduced to the god.

prolepsis

(Greek: anticipation): term used here to denote the simultaneous representation on a single picture of events that took place at different times.

protomos

(Greek): upper part of an animal figure. Vessels, and in particular vases, are frequently decorated with *protomoi* of lions, gryphons, etc.

rhyton

(Greek): drinking vessel in the shape of an animal's head or horn.

saluki

Arab greyhound.

shaduf

contrivance for drawing water.

scarabaeus

dung-beetle (pill-chaffer).

situla

(Latin): bucket or kettle.

steatite

talc, a very soft mineral, light in colour.

stela

(Greek): upright free-standing slab or pillar, of stone or less frequently of metal, used as boundary-stone or gravestone, or to bear inscriptions.

temple in antis

temple, the side-walls of which (*antae*) were carried out to form a portico; the walls were

thickened at the end and served as pillars, other columns being placed between the two *antae*. Some smaller temples have no columns.

tempera painting

(Latin: *temperare*, to mix): painting with pigments which are dissolved in a liquid binder and are applied as a glaze by means of a brush.

tristyle in antis

temple *in antis* (*q.v.*) with three columns between the *antae*.

uraeus

serpent (a kind of hooded snake), a symbol of Egyptian kings and gods.

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IX. GRAECO-ROMAN ART IN THE MIDDLE EAST

PERGAMON

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