#### **Ancient Near East (ANE):**

Time periods in order from oldest: (SABHAP)

Sumerian Akkadian

Babylonian

Hittite

Assyrian

Persian

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING 2-1. Artistic traditions of the ancient Near East and dynastic Egypt focused on representing royal figures and divinities and on the function of funerary and palatial complexes within their cultural contexts. Works of art illustrate the active exchange of ideas and reception of artistic styles among the Mediterranean cultures and the subsequent influence on the classical world.

► Essential Knowledge 2-1a. The art of the ancient Near East is associated with successive city-states and cultural powers: Sumerian, Akkadian, Neo-Sumerian and Babylonian, Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian. (continued under Time Periods in Egypt review)
► Essential Knowledge 2-1b. The study of artistic innovations and conventions developed in the ancient Near East and dynastic Egypt (facilitated by recorded information from the time) provides a foundation for comparative understanding of subsequent artistic traditions within the region and beyond.

**ENDURING UNDERSTANDING 2-2.** Religion plays a significant role in the art and architecture of the ancient Near East, with cosmology guiding representation of deities and kings who themselves assume divine attributes.

- ►Essential Knowledge 2-2a. Artists created fully developed, formal types, including sculptures of human figures interacting with gods and stylistic conventions representing the human form with a combined profile and three-quarter view. In these combinations, important figures are set apart using a hierarchical scale or by dividing the compositions into horizontal sections or registers, which provide significant early examples of historical narratives.
- ►Essential Knowledge 2-2b. Architectural representations include towering ziggurats that provide monumental settings for the worship of many deities, as well as heavily fortified palaces that increased in opulence over the centuries, proclaiming the power and authority of rulers.

# **Historical Background:**

 The ANE is attributed to where "civilization began;" the first cities, writing, religion (organized), government (organized), laws, agriculture, and the wheel.

## **VOCAB / Terms:**

Apadana inlay stylus cuneiform cylinder seal façade crenelations

- area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (fertile river valley) gave rise to large populations of people.
- A lot of overtaking of power by different groups of people and cultures - melting pot of cultures / layering of cultures and meshing

ground line ground plan negative space register relief sculpture bas relief stele votive ziggurat pylon

# Artistic Life & Patronage:

- Kings sought to be glorified by artists for the first time in history and created images in their own likeness.
- Artists were able to present and preserve the spirit of a god/king and keep them "alive" through creating images of them in sculpture
- Cuneiform was central to society
- Artists used art to record stories and tales (narratives) of important events for all of eternity

## The Art Itself:

- Stone and wood were expensive and scarce, so clay was used because it was abundant (river valley remember!)
- Ziggurats & Temples mudbrick, man-made mountains (high up to reach the sky = place where gods lived)
- Images of humans become central to art (in prehistory, animals were central, remember cave paintings!)
- the scale of the art becomes huge and permanent - the people of Mesopotamia were settlers, not nomads like prehistoric people, so they didn't have to carry their stuff (think lamassus and the Ishtar Gate)
- Cuneiform is considered (for our purposes) as important as the images artists produced.
- Mesopotamians are attributed with starting a popular tradition of combining animals and humans (again lamassus)

# **Sumerian Art:**

- realistic figures acting out identifiable narratives
- figures cut from stone with negative space hollowed out under their arms and between their legs
- eyes are very wide and always open
- men are bare-chested wearing a kilt
- womens' left shoulder is covered and right is bare
- nudity is used for depictions of prisoners and slaves
- Humans mixed with animals
- Humans are depicted emotionless
- Hierarchy of scale is used to represent importance
- Each city was representative of a particular god, represented in the flesh as the king; it was important to preserve and serve this god/king as best as possible and the temple was the center of civic and religious

# Sumerian Works:

- White Temple & Ziggurat
- Statues of Votive Figures
- Standard of Ur

pride.	
Well-ordered society with a strict code of laws handed down from the god Shamash     Babylon was ornately decorated and also one of the largest city-states in Mesopotamia.	Babylonian Works:
Art praised the greatness of their king     Art also demonstrated pride and power through military victories and masculinity     Animals are shown in great emotion (lions growling and curling upper lips and in pain being hunted and killed     power over nature was used as an example that the king possessed the ultimate authority     Art is covered with cuneiform messages     shallow relief sculpture is abundant and done with great skill (even great lamassus are attached to a wall and are considered relief)	Assyrian Works:  • Lamassu
Persian Art:  The largest empire in the world at the time Monumental architecture was built to impress the many dignitaries from across the empire and show the power/strength United many cultures from around the empire and architecture displays a variety of styles and artistic conventions from across the empire.  Persian architecture is marked by the bull/lion column capitals that would hold up a wooden roof.	Persian Works:  • Audience Hall (apadana) of Darius & Xerxes in Persepolis

#### Periods:

Old Kingdom Middle Kingdom New Kingdom \*Amarna Period

The art of dynastic Egypt (present-day Egypt and Sudan, from 3000 to 30 B.C.E.) generally includes coverage of predynastic Egypt and Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms. The Amarna period (New Kingdom) was also important because of its cultural reform and stylistic revolution.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING 2-3. The art of dynastic Egypt embodies a sense of permanence. It was created for eternity in the service of a culture that focused on preserving a cycle of rebirth.

# ► Essential Knowledge 2-3a.

The culture of dynastic Egypt represents an elaborate funerary sect whose devotees created numerous ka statues (to house the ka, or spirit, after death), artifacts, decorations, and furnishings for tombs.

Egyptian art incorporates mythological and religious symbolism, often centered on the cult of the sun.

Development of monumental stone architecture culminated with the pyramids and with innovative designs for rock-cut tombs and pylon (massive sloped gateway) temples, each demonstrating the importance of the pharaoh — a god-king with absolute power, descended directly from the sun god. The Egyptian architectural construction of the clerestory is particularly important for the history of architecture.

► Essential Knowledge 2-3b. Representations of humans make clear distinctions between the deified pharaoh and people in lower classes, using representational and stylistic cues such as hierarchical proportion and idealization versus naturalism.

Approaches to portraiture depend on a figure's rank in society.

The artistic canon of dynastic Egypt, with strict conventions of representation, use of materials, and treatment of forms, was followed for many centuries with only short-lived periods of experimentation and deviation.

Innovations in art and architecture tended to occur within the basic and established scheme.

#### **Historical Background:**

- Egypt was once divided into Upper (South) and Lower (North) Egypt, unified under King Narmer.
- Egypt developed along the Nile (similar to the fertile river valleys in Mesopotamia)
- Egypt went through three major periods of development known as the old, middle and new kingdoms.
- Egypt, like Mesopotamia, was polytheistic, and pharaohs (like Mesopotamian kings) were living gods.

#### Vocabulary / Terms:

ankh Amarna style axial plan clerestory engaged column hieroglyphics hypostyle In situ Ka mastaba necropolis papyrus peristyle pylon reserve column sarcophagus stylized sunken relief funerary temple valley temple funerary mask nemes headdress scarab canopic jar

canon of proportions	nw jar
maat	cult

# **Artistic Life & Patronage:**

- architecture was built by highly trained and skilled workers (not slaves)
- mummification was an important ritual and lasted 70 days, and was done by very specialized embalmers
- Imhotep was the first recorded artist; artists were more supervisors who oversaw the work being done, and were likely high priests of the god Ptah
- Imhotep erected the first pyramid for King Djoser (stepped pyramid)

#### The Art Itself:

- Architecture, painting and sculpture were done by artists who were not celebrated any more than any other craftsman.
- Art was a way to create permanence of existence, and was created both to be seen (palaces, temples) and unseen (tombs)
- gold was highly prized and used for elaborate funerary rituals and artwork --and was looted and taken from many tombs, so later pharaohs sought to be buried in hidden tombs in the Valley of the Kings.
- Egyptian's established a canon of proportions which exemplified the image of the ideal human form. The ratios between the figure's height and all of its component parts were clearly prescribed mathematically.

#### Architecture:

- Egyptians began burying their dead in mastabas (a simple four sided mound with an entrance for mourners to bring offerings to the dead)
- Later rulers with grand ambitions built larger tombs which peaked with the building of the great pyramids at Giza.
- pyramids would be a part of a tomb complex called a necropolis which included temples, sanctuaries and chapels.
- Egyptians developed techniques of building and carving into living rock. Works like the Great Sphinx and the Temple of Hatshepsut are fine examples.
- Complexes grew more elaborate and New Kingdom sites included massive pylons, hypostyle halls and huge central courtyards with elaborate gardens of exotic plants and trees.
- Pyramids are known for their sleek smooth surfaces and their monumental scale. They are oriented to the 4 cardinal directions. The pyramid complexes are all on the west side of the Nile so the pharaoh was interred in the direction of the setting sun. The temples are all on the east side of the pyramids facing the rising sun.
- Columns of the New Kingdom were based

# Painting & Sculpture:

- Egyptians used enormous stones in their sculpture to protect the dead from thieves and vandals.
- Hieroglyphics (like cuneiform) was used in artwork to describe the narrative or accomplishments of the deceased in great detail. It was believed that every detail needed to be recorded to assure success in the afterlife.
- Writing appears on both sculpture and on papyrus (paper made from a reed that grows in abundance along the Nile).
- Egyptians represented the human figure as completely as possible to ensure that life would continue uninterrupted from this life to the next. (hence why some aspects of the body face forward and others in profile, to show a complete form --so the dead would not be missing anything in their next life).
- Art in Egypt was to represent the ideal, peaceful, content and prosperous moments in life; violence is only shown in sacrificial scenes or scenes in which evil is overthrown.
- Figures rest on ground lines in the front of the picture plane.
- Registers are used to show progression of

on plant shapes: the lotus, the palm and the papyrus.

- time and/or space
- Unfinished images of figures or animals would mean the deceased would be incomplete in the afterlife.
- Amarna period artwork demonstrates a relaxed attitude toward these strict proportions; figures are shown elongated with pot bellies, thin arms and a relaxed face and jaw.
- Sculpture in Egypt is done in a variety of sizes, from works that would be worn as jewelry to massive statues of pharaohs and of course the Great Sphinx.
- Individualism is sacrificed for idealistic monuments.
- Monumental carvings were often done in situ from living rock.
- Sculpture in the round of figures followed the same canon of proportions as relief sculpture or paintings.

# **Old Kingdom:**

- Featured massive monuments to the dead (pyramids) which acted as a stairway to the heavens (similar to zigguarts in design, but for the dead)
- developed the ideal canon of proportions which would be used up to the Amarna period and again after.
- collapse of the Old Kingdom resulted in 150 years of political turmoil

# **Old Kingdom Works:**

- Narmer Palette
- Seated Scribe
- The Great Pyramids
- The Great Sphinx
- Menkaura and Queen

# Middle Kingdom:

- Egypt was again unified under the pharaoh Menthutop, who centralized the 12th dynasty.
- Arts and writing flourished, and reflected the overwhelming awareness of political turmoil the country had overcome.
- Pyramid buliding was abandoned in favor of smaller rock-cut tombs
- By the 13th dynasty, Egypt again began to weaken.

# Middle Kingdom Works:

# None Required for APAH

## **New Kingdom:**

- A second period of turmoil erupted as the Hyksos invaded northern Egypt. It wasn't until Egypt's 18th dynasty, when control of the region was regained and unified once again.
- Thutmose III was the first to refer to himself as pharaoh (meaning great house).
- The New Kingdom offered a period of

## **New Kingdom Works:**

- Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut
- Queen Hatshepsut with Offering Jars
- Innermost Coffin of King Tut
- Last Judgment of Hu-Nefer

- great advancement and splendor.

  During this time, kings in the Near East contracted marriages with Egypt's ruling
- contracted marriages with Egypt's ruling families and solidified a "generally cooperative network"

# \*Amarna Period (occurred during the New Kingdom for only a short time):

- Created during the rule of Akhenaton (married to Queen Nefertiti, Egypt's "beautiful" queen), who abandoned the worship of multiple gods for only one god --Aten and moved the capital to Amarna.
- Akhenaton (who's original name was Amenhotep IV) portrayed himself as Aten's human representation
- Aten is represented as a sun disk with sun rays emanating from it, ending with human hands sometimes holding an ankh. This is a change from gods being represented as an animal or human.
- Stylistically Amarna period artwork is much more lifelike and organic as opposed to rigid and stiff.
- Divine truth known as Maat was a driving philosophical principle of the Amarna period.

# **Amarna Period Works:**

• Akhenaton, Nefertiti and Three Daughters