Chapter Guide #2: Mesopotamia & Persia

**CONTEXT:**

**HISTORY** Constant political ***change*** in the region due to geography being open to constant invasion **(Sumerian > Akkadian > Neo-Sumerian > Babylonian > Hittite > Assyrian > Neo-Babylonian > Persian)**

**POLITICS:**  Slow to construct unified communities because of different racial groups and invasion

**RELIGION:** King/ ruler was *not* god-king but god’s delegate - patron deities for eachcity states

**GEOLOGY:** Building restricted by available materials, no stone quarries/ forests = sun-baked brick

**ART HISTORY** Interest in the Ancient Middle East heightened with the discoveries of treasure by

Leonard Woolley in 1920 at the Royal Cemetery at Ur

**CONCEPTS:**

* Know the Sumerian view of the afterlife? (as evidenced in Epic of Gilgamesh)
* Explain how the idea of sacred space is expressed in the Ziggurat of Ur?
  + 1: exclusivity **How do make a building or parts of at building “exclusive”?**
  + 2: material wealth/decoration **What is the role of ornament and/or “luxury”?**
  + 3: ritual and ceremony (liturgy) **How does the building’s design respond to the religious events and liturgy of the religion it is built for?**
  + 4: history of location adding importance to site **How is the design of the building determined by historic and religious symbolism?**
* Explain how availability of architectural materials determined engineering in the Ziggurat of Ur?
* Explain how narrative devices used in the Standard of Ur make meaning?
  + **registers**
  + **hierarchy of scale**
  + **sequential ordering of story**
* Why was twisted perspective used in two dimensional work (painting/sculptural relief) in ancient times?

**ART WORK CARDS: 3D (Yellow), 2D (Red), Architecture (Green)**

* Eshunna Statuettes (3D)
* Standards of Ur (2D)
* Victory stele of Naram-Sin (3D)
* Ziggurat or Ur (Architecture)
* Stele of Hammurabi (3D)
* Lamassu (3D)
* Ishtar Gate (Architecture)
* Persepolis (Architecture)

**VOCABULARY:**

**pictograph**

**cuneiform**

**polytheism**

**conical**

**stele**

**votive**

**surrogate**

**registers**

**KEY PERIODS:**

**Sumerian 3000 - 2000 BCE**

**Akkadian 2300 - 2150 BCE**

**Neo-Sumerian 2150 - 2000 BCE**

**Babylonian 2000 - 1750 BCE**

**Hittite 1750 – 1200 BCE**

**Assyrian 1200 - 612 BCE**

**Neo-Babylonian 612 - 539 BCE**

**Achaemenid/Persian 539 - 330 BCE**

**STYLISTIC ANAYLSIS:**

**ARCHITECTURE:** Sumerian: Architecture was created for religious purposes

Babylonian: World Wonder: Hanging Gardens

Hittitan: Used stone blocks rather than baked mudbricks

Persian: Persepolis

{ziggurat, mud brick, bitumen, bent axis**}**

**2D:** Sumerian: Human figures are actively portraying narratives

{profile, frontal, register, twisted perspective, register, hierarchical, “cookie cutter”, mosaic }

**3D*:*** Sumerian: Size of sculpture increases- shows permanence of cities

Sumerian: Large scale reliefs within palaces

Sumerian: Stelai commemorating the achievements of rulers

Akkadian: Deification of rulers

Babylonian: Stele of Hammurabi- new set of laws

Assyrian: Rulers are portrayed as stoic

Assyrian: Cuneiform takes a leap

{additive, subtractive, bas relief, gypsum, lapis lazuli}

**WAYS OF LOOKING AT ART:**

**CONTEXT CARDS: Blue**

* Sumerian
* Akkadian
* Neo-Summerian
* Babylonian
* Assyrian
* Neo-Babylonian
* Achemenid/Persian

**1: Phenomenologically:**

Experiencing the work of art unencumbered by previous knowledge or experience. Responding to a work of art without bias.

**2: Historically:**

Studying a work of art as an historical document or record, using facts about the artist, relevant historical events, and cultural/religious ideas/beliefs to help determine meaning and intention. Also, the consideration of the art work’s place of origin (and provenance), the subject matter or theme of the work and contemporary art movements and theories can be useful in understanding and interpreting the intention of the art work.

**3: Formally:**

Analyzing the artist’s use of the Elements of Art (line, shape, form, texture, value, color) and the Principles of Design (unity, balance, contrast, rhythm/repetition, scale/proportion, emphasis/focal point, axis/plane, movement) in the making of a work of art.

**4: Stylistically:**

Articulation of shared characteristics of a group of art works from the same period, place, artist and/or group of artists, by studying the group or individual artist’s technique, sensibilities, choice of subject matter, personal philosophy and theoriesof art*.*

**Comparative stylistic analysis** *between* works of art of different periods) is also instructive because:

1) Identifies similarities (shared sensibilities, content, techniques)

2) Articulating differences - what they mean, their significance to the chronological study of the history of art and the development of culture.

**5: Iconographically:**

The study of images and symbols specific to a culture, religion or individual that are used in works of art in order to understanding a work of art’s meaning or significance within the culture and/or religion or philosophical belief of the time.