#2 Ancient Near East Text: Art Across Time Chapter Two

**Context: (contextual handout, sculpture handout)**

History: constant political change in the region (Neolithic, Mesopotamia/Uruk, Sumerian, Akkadian, Neo Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Neo Babylonian, Achaemenid)

Politics/Geography: slow to construct unified communities because of openness to outside world, city states.

Religion: king/ruler was not god-king but merely his delegate.

Geology: Building was limited to available materials, no stone quarries or forests. The used sun-baked bricks and the Assyrians used available stone.

**Works of Art:**

Neolithic Period c. 6500-5700 BCE:

*Anotolian Goddess Giving birth,* from Çatal Hüyük, Turkey,.

Mesopotamia/Uruk c. 3500-3000 BCE:

*Carved Alabaster Vase*, from Uruk,.

*Female Head*, from Uruk.

*White Temple* on its ziggurat, Uruk, Mesopotamia, now Iraq

*Cylinder Seal and Impression*, Uruk.

Sumerian c. 2800-2300 BCE:

*Statues from Abu Temple* at Tell Asmar, Epic of Gilgamesh.

*Lyre Sound box and inlay*, from the tomb of Queen Puabi, c. 2685 BCE

Akkadian c. 2300-2100 BCE

*Head of an Akkadian ruler*, possibly Sargon I Nineveh, Mesopotamia.

*Victory Stele* from Naram-Sin c. 2254-2218 BCE

Neo Sumerian Culture c. 2100-1800 BCE

*Head of Gudea*, from Lagash, Mesopotamia.

*Gudea with Temple Plans*, Lagash, Mesopotamia.

*Ziggurat* of Ur, Iraq.

Babylonian c. 1900-539:

*The Law Code of Hammurabi*, from Susa the capital of Elam, now Iran, c. 1792-1750

The Hittites c. 1400-1200 BCE

Lion Gate or Royal Gate, Hattusas, Boghazköy, Turkey (1400 BCE )

Hittite War God from King’s Gate Hattusas, Boghazköy, Turkey (c. 1400 BCE)

Assyria (c. 1300-612 BCE)

Assurnasirpal II, from Nimrud, Iraq (c. 883-859)

King Assurnasirpal II hunting lions, from Nimrud, Iraq, (c. 883-839)

City attacked with a battering ram, Palace of King Assurnasirpal II, Nimrud, Iraq, c.883-859 BCE

Dying Lioness (detail of the Great Lion Hunt), from the Palace of King Assurbanipal II.

(c. 668-627 BCE)

Lamassu, from the gateway, Sargon II’s palace at Dur Sharrukin

(c. 720 BCE)

Neo-Babylonian Empire (612-539 BCE)

Ishtar Gate (reconstructed from Babylon) (c. 575 BCE)

Scythians (8th to 4th century BCE)

Stag from Kostromskaya, Russia, 7th century BCE

Achaemenid Persia (539-331 BCE) Palace of Persepolis

Darius Palace of Persepolis 500 BCE Stair Relief

Palace of Persepolis Column with Bull Capitals 500 BCE

Staircase Relief from the Palace, 500 BCE

Bull Capital, Persepolis 500 BCE

Achaemenid drinking vessel, Persia, 5th Century

**Assignment:**

**Art Techniques and Vocabulary:**

Architecture: Ziggurat, mud brick, column, citadel, plinth,

Two and Three dimensional art work (sculptures, and reliefs): attribute, additive vs subtractive method of sculpture, bas relief, gypsum, lapis lazuli, cuneiform, glyptic art, intaglio, profile vs. frontal, stele, twisted perspective, mosaic, high relief, polytheism, conical, reverential, supplicant, surrogate, friezes, votive offering, re-use, Lamassu, glazed brick, incised, stylized, crenellate, faced, vitreous, curvilinear, Chased Gold,

Narrative devices used in Two Dimensional art works and reliefs: registers, hierarchical proportion, sequential ordering of a story.

**Ideas and Concepts:**

1. List 1 contextual issues that helps explain the function of each of the above works
2. What was the Sumerian view of the afterlife?
3. How is it reflected in the Sumerian art work?
4. What is the idea of art as a surrogate for a sculpture of a person?
5. Explain the different ways of thinking about context introduced in class.
6. What is sacred space in ancient cultures?
7. How does availability of architectural materials determine engineering and function.
8. How are narrative devices used in Two Dimensional art and reliefs.
9. Compare the Assyrian kings to the Achaemenid Kings.
10. Why was twisted perspective, “two points of view in the representation of a single figure” used?
11. Make brief notes on one building, one sculpture and one two dimensional work, relating to the context and function of the works.

**Due: \_\_\_\_\_September 13, 2007\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**