

## 6. CATALOGUE B: THE URUK STANCE

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SINCE SO PIVOTAL TO ALL OTHER CHAPTERS IN THE **CANEA** STORY THIS PARTICULAR CATALOGUE IS DEDICATED

*Firstly, to my parents, who first introduced me to Persepolis on two occasions during the time they worked for the UN in Iran;  
Secondly to my ex-husband Professor Muhammad Abdel-Wahhāb Abdel-Haleem who locked me into the Middle East for ever  
(though in the end I preferred to travel much further back in time), and  
Last, but not least, Professor A D H Bivar, who set me off on the road to research, unaware of the goldmine he gave me!*

### DEFINITION OF THE URUK STANCE ATTACK IN REAL-LIFE

***From behind the prey the lioness rears on her hind legs, raising her forepaws to grasp it from behind.***

This form of attack is so called because it was most common on artefacts from protohistoric Uruk at the height of its power, and probably invented there, as the catalogue reveals. In real life it is the most usual type of attack from the rear when the prey is larger than the lion, whereby the lion or lioness (in some cases substituted by griffin or leopard) rears up onto its standing victim (usually a bull, but sometimes deer, antelope or goat) from behind, making an arc of its forelegs as it rears up so that its paws are just about to, and mostly do, seize the prey's spinal ridge and/or hind haunch zone. The photographs below come close to capturing this move, even though in both the paws reach further forward than the basic type:

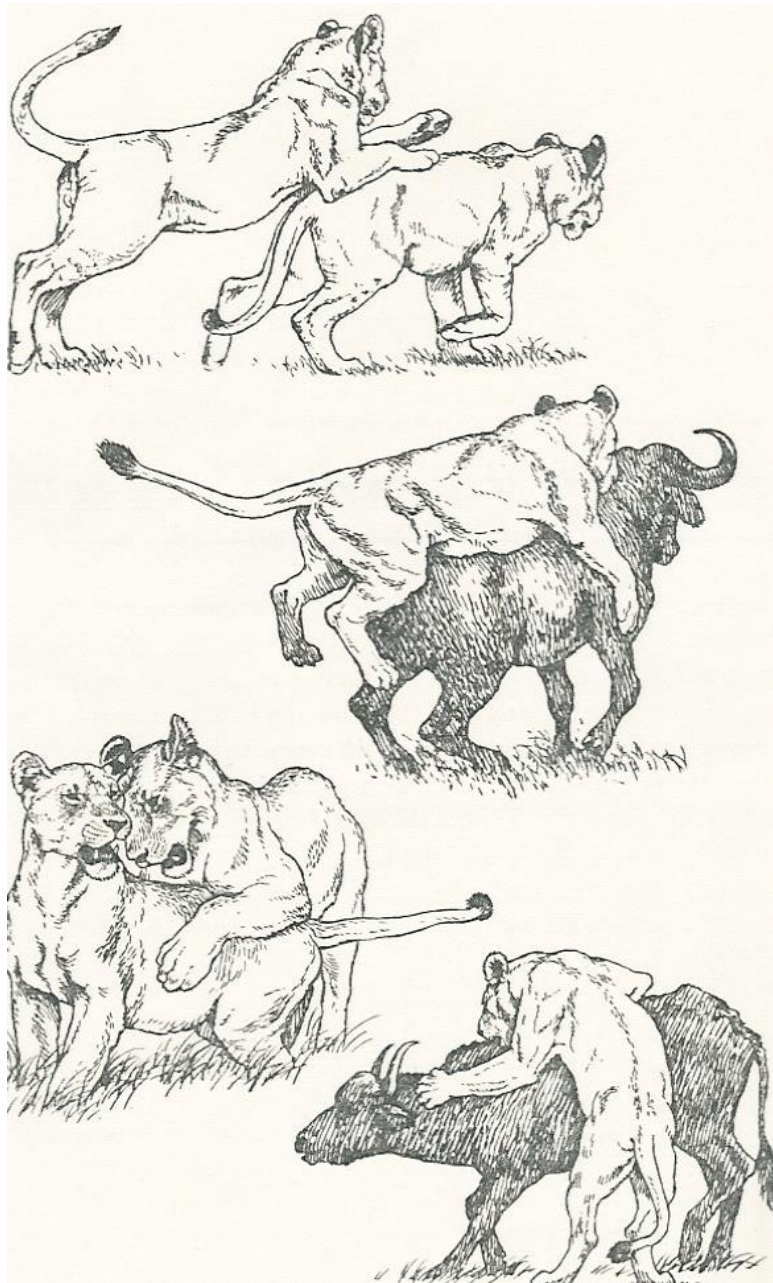


***III.6- 1: Photos Martin Harvey (L) and Dereck & Beverly Joubert (R), Nat. Geog. Magazine Sep 2005/Dec 2010***

On artefacts the attack in *Uruk Stance* mode was at times stylised into a balletic, even heraldic, icon of arrested movement. From watching this common type of lion attack in real life (or on film and TV), the prey is immobilised from behind while still upright, with the lion or lioness almost at a loss where to start - whether to pounce on its back, trip it up, or start biting it (see lower drawing in **III.6- 2**, where George Schaller 's study of lionesses at play and with prey records the basic action). In real life if the predatress (males rarely hunt) has been chasing from behind (the usual case) she still has to reach her prey's throat or face

to deal the death bite, but immobilisation is the first half of the battle, sometimes done by biting the back leg tendons before getting to the head.

There are other types of Attack from the rear as the drawings below suggest – two of which are treated separately from the *Uruk Stance* in the next two catalogues. There is a more general type of **Rear Attack**, studied in **Catalogue C**, where the lion does not rear up, being a vaguer, diagonal version of the *Uruk Stance* because the prey is either smaller, or crouching. On the other hand in the **Back Lunge** (the subject of **Catalogue D**) portrayed in the second drawing below, the leaping lion leaves the ground, landing on the back of its victim.



**Ill.6- 2: Lions hunting or at play - from: G B Schaller: *The Serengeti Lion: A Study of Predator-Prey Relations* 1972**

The *Uruk Stance* swung round to the side, as it were – as in the bottom group of Schaller's drawing - is seen once or twice on Mycenaena seals (**Urusta-29**), usually with the lion facing, from behind the bull.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE CATALOGUE

In this Catalogue we study a distinctive composition which started in the Susa and Uruk region, in the original cluster of 4M stone pots an iconostasis with cultic meaning. The Catalogue entries show how, by the end of its history over two and a half millennia later, the image endured in the region to enjoy a second lease of life, now in the archaeo-astronomical context of Persepolis to the south-east.

The material in this catalogue is the most distinctive of all the lion and prey material, not only because of its use in both Egypt and Sumer in predynastic times and then millennia later under the Achaemenids, but also because of the high standard of workmanship on the key pieces. We choose the latter period for the next *Chronological Focus*, given the Predynastic period has already been scrutinised in the *Chronological Focus* for **Catalogue A**, also very much pertinent to the material in this one. The reader will have their own opinions on the often contradictory dating allotted to many items for the former (all dates are BC) but these can more or less be ironed out in our art historical and iconographical assessments of the material, because for the bigger panorama of the Fourth and Third Millennia the main story is self-evident despite differences of absolute dates - as long as sequencing and matches retain their order.

Compared to the *Belly Landing* there is a vast increase in the number of items to assess under this compositional type. As in **Catalogue A** the key items, chosen because they are of known provenance, are given a separate catalogue number and then grouped with it are similar examples whose provenance is often unknown: these are given the same number with f, ff, etc. on following pages to indicate they are being grouped with the master item acting as benchmark for the group. Again the principal artefact is prefaced by a table<sup>1</sup> summarising key information such as find-spot, date (or approximate date), material, object type, find and/or museum numbers and essential publication details. The *Master Bibliography* will come at the end of the book eventually, but in the meantime we have placed a short bibliography of the main seal catalogues consulted at the end for fuller information on references cited in our catalogue entries. For the 4-2M period *Bibliographies 1 & 2* given at the end of **Catalogue A** applies, while a basic list of books covering the *Chronological Focus* for the *Uruk Stance* in the Achaemenid period is given as *Bibliography 3* (still very much work in progress) - though the most important references are given in the footnotes of the main text. From this data the three *Distribution Maps* (roughly one for each millennium) give at a glance the geographical scatter for the material by catalogue number, indicating their spread in rough chronological order, whilst the *Frequency Chart* highlights at which periods the *Uruk Stance* was most used.

In this particular catalogue it has not always been straightforward for the earliest millennia to lay out the material in *strict* chronological order<sup>2</sup>, and sometimes the comparative material under an entry jumps back and forward several centuries to establish short lines of evident linkage before doubling back to where we had originally got to on the main time-line. The central evidence is by implication Group A, constituting the archetypal *Uruk Stance* and simply left as the main content of the catalogue - against which three temporary variations based on fresh observation stand out. They occur in clusters over a short time-span, reverting to type after a few centuries - thus between the Protohistoric and Akkadian periods we have three brief sub-groups:

- B: a lunge with paws and torso well over the prey's back, often reaching as far as its neck;
- C: a two-way grip of one of the lion's forepaws on the rump and the other on back leg of the prey;
- D: human intervention in the attack by holding the lion's tail.

<sup>1</sup> When coming back to this document a decade later my upgraded software did not 'like' the old version, so some tables do not show grid lines, try as I might to get them back!

<sup>2</sup> For instance, we could have interspersed the large vases with what seem to be contemporary seals and sealings, but in the end found it more coherent to group the stone vases together and then double back to deal with most related seals, other than in a few instances.



We think this tracks new developments on the earliest material more intelligibly in that these short-term variations help with dating. The core *Uruk Stance* design (the A material) from its initial invention persisted all the way up to the Gutian invasions, though in fact even in the mature Akkadian period before that, use of the lion-prey symbolism was already going out of use. A quick look at the last page of the *Chronological Table* for **Catalogue A** (reproduced in this catalogue's *Art History* Section for ease of reference) shows this 'barbarian invasion' to have been a major watershed - marking (as also in the case of the Belly Landing) the complete cessation of the use of the lion and prey image in any form - even in Syria - lasting two or three centuries. If its imagery is about what I think it is, then this hiccup would be an indicator of all kinds of calendrical and administrative chaos during that time, until the Ur III and Old Babylonian dynasties reasserted control, in the process devising a simpler, more formulaic pictography that moved on from the strongly animal-based iconography of Sumer and Elam.

When things pick up from the Ur III and Old Babylonian Period onwards we do try in our catalogue entries to keep to a stricter chronological order despite slight further compositional variations not different or numerous enough to be grouped separately: divisions into further sub-groups would obscure the main perspective on, and understanding of, the subsequent development of the main iconic version of the *Uruk Stance*. Once we reach the Archaic period in Greece and Persia there is again such a large amount of material that it is easier to make sense of it by grouping it into clusters that seem closely related by stylistic treatment or individual quirks: they reveal how the lion-prey attack briefly became paramount on the monuments of both lands - in a contradictory period of both cooperation *and* conflict.

#### STAND-OUT GROUPS

Getting clear and informative images is always a problem. Since the two main groups of material from Uruk and Persepolis are pivotal, in the case of the Uruk-related stone pots I have tried to handle as many of them as possible and take my own photographs. Unexpected and revealing details emerge when looked at closely in the round and I hope, again, that these make up for the absence of good pictures of artefacts difficult to access because stored in the Iraq Museum in a time of upheaval for the country. In these cases I had to fall back on some very poor images for the smaller stone pot fragments, taken from already almost unintelligible images in one or two of the older middle-eastern journals lacking funds for good publication production - such as **Sumer** - but at least the existence of such pieces is flagged up, indicating their quantity. From amongst the collection of Uruk pieces in the Iraq Museum one masterpiece - reproduced in all the mainline books - I will never be able to look at in real life even in a more peaceful future, and that is the famous large Uruk spouted pot notoriously looted from the Iraq Museum in April 2003 (**Urusta-8**): the fragments of the other pots I mention above may also by now have suffered the same fate. In the case of Achaemenid Persia, featuring as our *Chronological Focus*, I have been fortunate enough to be able visit the vast natural observatory that is Persepolis twice, so that the current and past literature I have relied on is certainly intelligible from first-hand experience in its references both to the orientation of the entire complex in relation to planet and star risings - and the iconographical programme of its sculptural adornment.

Seals make up a huge proportion of the evidence in every catalogue and, again, obtaining as clear a picture as possible of individual items is often a major problem. Looking at the original is nearly always a surprise, given the distortions that have arisen simply from bad lighting and primitive photographic and publishing quality in the oldest books - or even the unintentional emphases given by graphic artists when translating a shallow relief into a line drawing. As knowledge about the significance of the seals has improved over time, and more respect accorded to their documentary significance (in contrast to earlier supremacy given to texts), so their presentation in publications has improved, but nothing can replace looking at the original if at all possible. Thus especial gratitude is offered to the late Dr P R S Moorey who generously allowed me an afternoon photographing seals in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, which is particularly rich in 3M and 2M seals using the lion-prey subject. These I was permitted to roll out onto yellow plasticine and photograph, resulting in monochrome pictures often brighter



than the black and white photos in the official catalogues. These particular photos will stand out in the catalogues because they are all yellow, some with fine gradations of detail! By seeing them in the flesh, one also gets a sense of the diagnostic variety of materials and sizes used for seal in different periods. Usually in the catalogue entries it is the sealing, and not the seal, that is illustrated, and if the actual seal that made the impression exists these entries tend to term them 'seals' nonetheless - but when only the sealing survives they are catalogued as 'sealings'. Again, I hope the instances of clear photography will make up for the under-par images which still have to be included because they at least give information about the existence of the other examples not so accessible.

**FIRST ATTEMPTS TO UNLOCK ICONOGRAPHY**

Where **Catalogue A** on the *Belly Landing* was exploratory and kept simple, not only because it is a small sample of material but also because the method of presenting information about the evidence was being tried out, **Catalogue B** on the *Uruk Stance* in using the same framework on a much larger sample of material is able, in its *Iconography* Section, to really start getting down to tackling what the lion-prey subject is fundamentally about. One could almost claim that, if the other catalogues on the other compositional types did not follow after it to amplify its findings further, sufficient proofs are unearthed in this catalogue to give enough of the story to enable anyone coming across a lion-prey group on any artefact of any period to get the drift of its core significance. (In fact, every catalogue unearths unexpected new angles on this multi-level *symplegma*.)

We should also point out that not all iconographical interpretation is held back until the *Iconography* Section, since minor points crop up in passing within the catalogue entries or *Art History* Section, not just because it is simply impossible to keep art history and iconography strictly watertight from each other all the time, but partly with the intention of laying down preparatory markers to lay the ground for the stronger points made in full later. All this is by way of saying that it is worth reading the entries to take on board the minor themes and asides that crop up within the major sweep, since in a later catalogue those little indications can end up becoming a major theme picked up and made more definite by a different compositional type!

**ADDITIONAL NOTE**

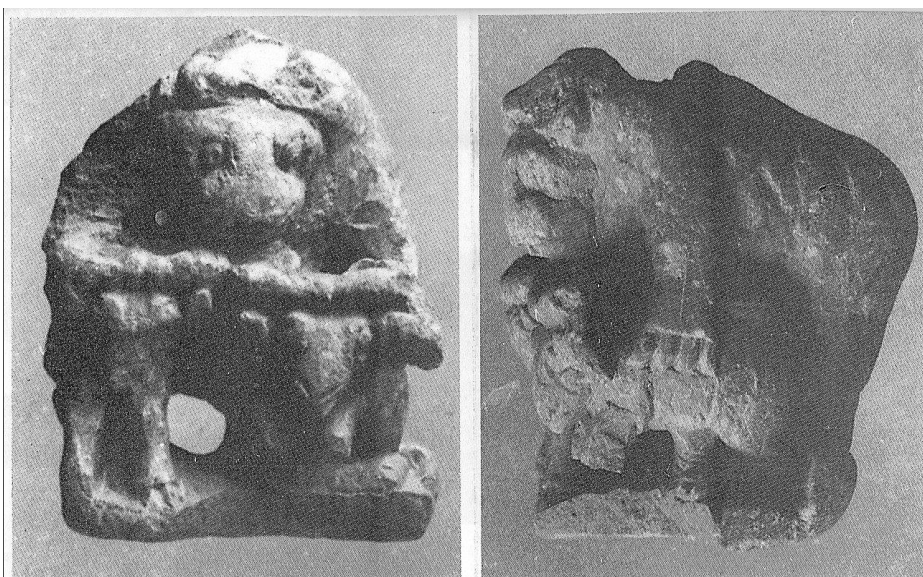
In tightening up the editing of this catalogue some five years on, in hindsight some naïveties and mistakes just have to be left in, signalling an odyssey of learning as one went along. Tempting though it was to stop and completely rewrite **Catalogues A and B**, in the end if I was to make progress in finishing this huge task it became obvious I had to leave a truthful trail of how it actually went, both in terms of the more primitive software used - and in terms of as yet half-formed thinking.

## CATALOGUE OF URUK STANCE ARTEFACTS

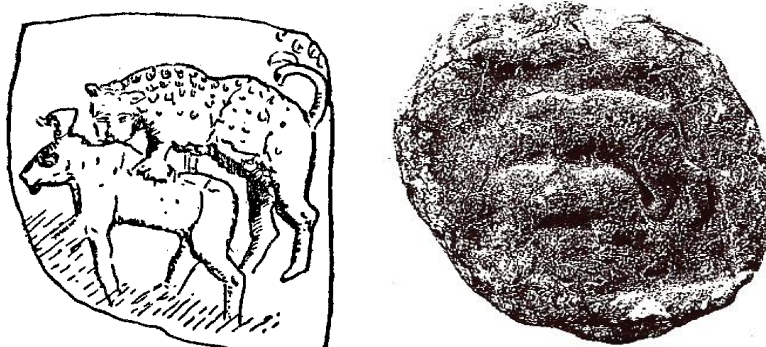
### Urusta-1 B GROUP

|                          |  |           |
|--------------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Uruk, in the 'Suchgraben vor dem Südost Aussenzingel des Bit Reš, 20cm über den grossvornartigen Lehmigeln in jüngerem Schutt' |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Possible small vase stand  |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Serpentine   |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | W17165   |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Iraq Museum  |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | IM 45617   |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Becker 1993 <b>AUWE VI</b> <sup>3</sup> pl. xciv 1044  |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Ubaid-Early Uruk/Naqada II/Susa II   | 4100-3600 |

The humping of the lioness' shoulders as she *reaches far along the rump of her prey from an upright position* (our sub-Group B) is distorted and exaggerated in this tiny stone vase stand as she rears up to rest her forelegs on the backs of two rams. Looking at a larger, more complete version of the type in the Berlin Museum (next page) which has a vase hollowed out on top, possibly there was also a small vase on the nape of this felid's neck, later broken off, since there is an awkward indentation at just the right place. *Notable for its precise archaeological context, this item is placed first because it provides a benchmark for origins at Uruk (tying in with Boehmer's carbon-dating chart given in the Belly Landing Chronology).* It is from the same period as the next items attested for Susa - and Abydos which Boehmer's table dates to *slightly later*.



The stance is akin to that on the sealing on a rhomboid bulla from Susa, in the Louvre (**MDP XVI 179/GSCat-458**):



<sup>3</sup> Abbreviations for original excavation reports and later summary reports will ultimately be drawn up in a separate *Bibliography of Excavation Reports* to appear at the end of *Catalogue G: The Crossover Attack* - and of course in the *Master Bibliography*

**Urusta-1f B GROUP**

This vase in the Berlin Museum (VA 12986, bought on the market –photo author) is discussed by Anton Moortgat in 'Ein frühsumerische Kultgefäß' (**ZA II** 1939 (nf) pls iii/iv). The middle forelegs of the bull calves are subsumed into a symbolic mountain, its central axis under the lion's chin (the mane is textured with drilled circles).



The Uruk culture spread into ancient Syria by the riverine route of the Euphrates, to which the unprovenanced serpentine Syrian seal below (**MarcoCat** 325) attests (again note in crude form what became standard layout: the reared-up lion with erect tail arching over bull with vertical tail hanging down:



Biting at the bull's rump was evidently observed in real life as far back as the time this fragmentary Neolithic cave painted relief was made on a rock shelter wall at Covacha de las Cabras (SW Spain) using the rugged texture of the rock as a ready-made outline, the lion filled in with ochre (start with the round eye to see the felid head and foreleg running along the raised rock forming the back end of the imagined prey):



We include the next sealing from the foundation offering of the Temple of Inshushinak, God of Susa (**LouvCat**-Sb5323/**GSCat**-1967) in the same sub-group, even though the lunge of the feline with exaggerated arched, muscular neck over the bull stops short with a bite at the rump. Again it depicts what we see as the characteristics of the core *Uruk Stance*: the right-angle of the rearing lion's forelegs and upcurved tail contrasting with the pendent, tasselled tail of the passive, standing bull.





**Urusta-2**

|                          |  |                      |
|--------------------------|--|----------------------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Said to be from Gebel-Tarif, near Abydos   |                      |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Flint ceremonial knife   |                      |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Engraved gold foil handle-wrap   |                      |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   |  | Bought on the market |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Cairo Museum   |                      |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       |  |                      |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Boehmer <b>AMI VII</b> 15-40 (1974) pl.3 and fig. 5/Dreyer <b>AUWE VI</b> 1999 pl. xciv 1044 |                      |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Naqada IIa/b/Early Susa II/Early Uruk  | 4100-3600            |

The awkward hunched shoulders of the lion in the cult vases of **Urusta-1** are echoed by the leopard attacking an antelope at the top of the Gebel-Tarif knife found near Abydos (possibly from Abydos itself - Dreyer) though the angle of the forelegs qualifies it as a standard *Uruk Stance* attack. The metal of the handle would have been secured to the haft of the long flaked blade by gold wire threaded through tiny holes. Dated by Boehmer to the Protohistoric period as above, its iconography may at first look wholly African (the poinsettia flowers, anteater and Kudu antelope) yet the *Uruk Stance* attack and griffin add strong Sumero-Susan overtones.



On closer inspection, the top pair might better be read as a **Bilateral Attack**, and is also included in **Catalogue F** given there appears to be the remains of an attacking lion on the other side of the prey. Pairs of animals then follow boustrophedon, with the second definitely an *Uruk Stance* attack by a lone maned lion, followed by the lower two *Rear Attack* pairs assigned to **Catalogue C**.

Note the texturing of the animal bodies in distinct sections, a style also used on some Susan seals (see **Urusta-2f** or **ForAtt-1**). The group iconography of the knife, including, on the back, the entwined serpents round Susan flowers (so-called – in this case probably African poinsettias) is discussed fully once we come to assess all such artefacts together in for full **CANON OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART** in the final sector. The Sumero-Susan subject matter (including the entwined serpents) indicates, Boehmer believes, a visiting Susan craftsman's work to clad a local flint knife with Egyptian gold foil for a Susan colonial prince - or even indicates an Egyptian vassal adopting Susan motifs in his own way using local Egyptian gold.

**Urusta-2f**

Both Boehmer and Dreyer discuss the Gebel-Tarif knife-handle in the sequence of other predynastic Egyptian knife handles as belonging in the earliest group, and influenced by Proto-Elamite seals like the one below where separate sections of animal anatomy are subdivided into differently patterned textures - but the influence could be the other way round, since Proto-Elamite seals are usually seen as later than the core Uruk Period (other instances are given under **ForAtt-1**):



Although it could be dated to Naqada IIc, the knife's general primitive quality - simply a piece of gold foil wrapped round the top end of a flint knife, entirely without human figures and flatly engraved with pairs of animals on one side and the serpents and poinsettias on the other - to my mind positions it as the earliest of all the Egyptian decorated knife handles, dating even to before Naqada IIc/d. The decorative hatching of the animals is a feature of indigenous Amratian decorated pottery (=Naqada I), an idea which could have been taken *back* to Susiana and used on their seals in imitation (Boehmer and Drey consider that the borrowing was the other way round, but we should allow for a two-way exchange of styles and symbols between the countries).

The square snouts of the middle maned lion and dog on the knife handle not only compare with that of the lion's muzzle of **Urusta-4** from Susa, but also with the earlier, Amratian treatment of the hippos on the bowl below, so that I place this knife handle in late Naqada I/Naqada IIa/b, which as regards early Naqada II both Dreyer and Boehmer did admit could be the case. We can only go on stylistic interpretation, but if correct, it means this knife-handle is more or less contemporary with **Urusta-1**.



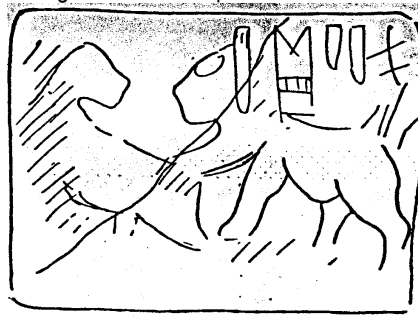
*Amratian bowl decorated with hatched hippos, Petrie Museum, London*

These pieces need to be considered under the general heading of animal processions in protohistoric Sumero-Egyptian art, which we look at in detail in the **Amalgamated Catalogue (Chapter 13)**.

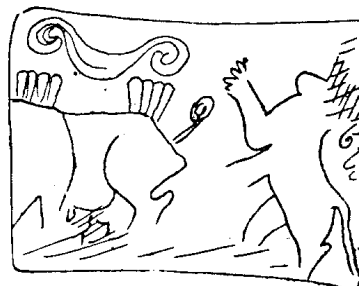
**Urusta-3 C GROUP**

|                                      |   |           |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>                      | Susa, Acropolis level III                         |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>                   | Sealing on label with Susan numeral signs on back |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>                      | Clay  |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>               |   |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>              | Iran Bastan Museum                                |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>                   |   |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>                  | Scheil 1935 <b>MDP XXVI</b> , pl. xxiv, 212       |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b>             | Susa II   | 3700-3235 |
| <b>INSCRIPTION: NUMERALS on back</b> |   |           |

Found at Susa itself, these two docketts - with numbers from a primitive accounting system gouged on the back by sticks or finger nails - are Susa's answer to recording goods and transactions in the trading network between Sumer, Susiana and the Iranian Crescent. Being less time-consuming and simpler to do than the Uruk system (**Urusta-5**) of information-registration, these flat labels gradually superseded Sumer's hollow balls and mark the beginning of writing, its system of abstract marks and symbolic pictures apparently invented in Susiana before being taken up almost immediately in both Egypt and Sumer. *The forward-walking prey looking back in balletic contrapposto towards its attacker is characteristic of the Susan version of the Uruk Stance*, but more importantly the docket shows the earliest of an *Uruk Stance* subgroup (**Group C** type) whereby the lioness' front legs at right angles now forcefully *grip her prey's haunch with one forepaw and its proffered back leg with the other*. This particular stance endures even into Mithraism, where it has been shown to have precise astronomical significance – the question is whether it already had such a level of meaning at this earliest period.



The second clay sealing below (published in the same volume, pl. xxiii, 209) also has gouges representing numerals on the back, its extravagant style dating it to Late Susa II or Early Susa III/Proto-Elamite. Such gouged transaction records were also used on a large number of labels recently found in Egypt at the U Cemetery at Umm el-Qa'ab by the Deutsches Archaeologisches Institut - Abteilung Kairo (see Dreyer **AVDAIK LXXXVI**). The double volute on later images is known to represent Ninhursag, Mountain Goddess and Great Womb: its juxtaposition with the lion and prey subject should be kept in mind for future reference. Somewhat bizarrely, the tails of the two beasts have been swapped over and the lioness's forelegs are cursorily shown, suggesting the approach from behind, but with the double grip *in potentia* only!



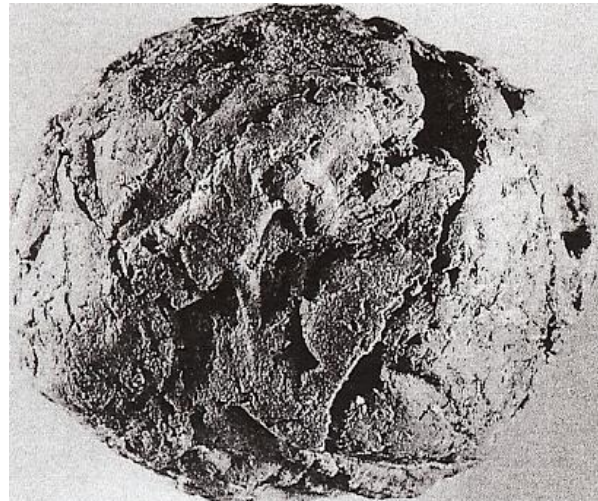
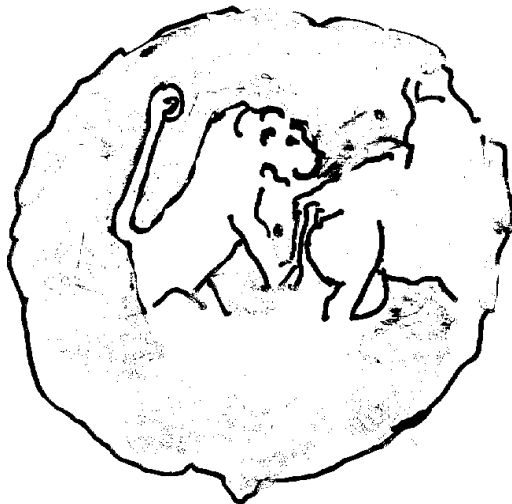
We jump to an early snap conclusion to hold on to for the time being that the lion & prey image is linked to trade transactions, possibly representing the God or Goddess's 'coat of arms' used by the authorities of the temple clearing house to indicate the point of origin for the goods the label was attached to, the numerals referring to their quantity and/or date – there is a huge literature on the matter of deciphering these labels, on which in fact pictures do not often appear – and even amongst them the lion & prey motif is uncommon.



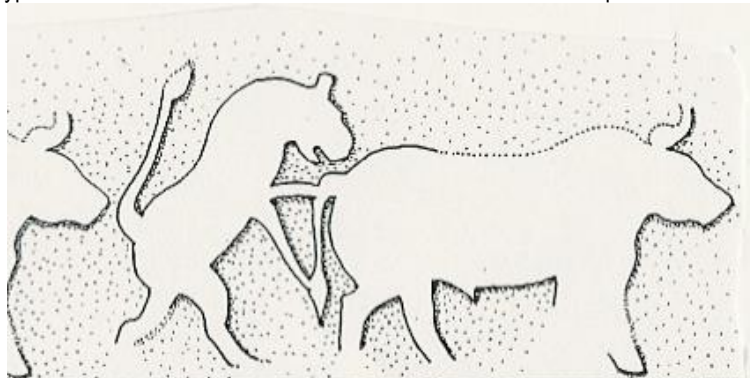
**Urusta-4 C GROUP**

|                          |  |                          |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Uruk, near town wall of Eanna precinct, NW of Limestone temple/Red Temple  |                          |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Sealings on fragments of hollow spheres containing coded clay counters   |                          |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Clay   |                          |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | The best impressions are this one (the most complete), W20 987 10 in Heidelberg, and W20 987 23 in the Iraq Museum |                          |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Heidelberg University Uruk Collection<br>Iraq Museum   |                          |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | See <i>UrukCatBoeh</i> Konkordanz D  |                          |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | <i>UrukCatBoeh</i> no.41a-d; <i>UVB XXI</i> , pl. 18; Brandès 1979 p.39, 4   |                          |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Early Uruk= Early Susa II<br>[Boehmer, however, dates these to Late Uruk IVa]                                      | 3655-3500<br>[3500-3100] |

This hollow ball containing geometrically shaped counters was used in a primitive accounting system within the trading network connecting riverine Sumer with Syria (as we have already seen Susa came up with a less complicated solution). The lion and prey sealing on it has to do with this system (it is one among 26 impressions appearing on fragments of other such balls: impressions 1-6, 14 and 19-25 are in the Iraq Museum and the remainder in the Uruk Collection at Heidelberg University).

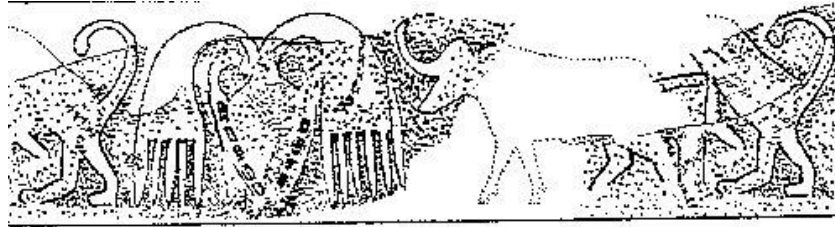


The composite drawing below made from all the impressions in *UrukCatBoeh* shows the lion firmly clutching the top and bottom ends of the bull's pendent tail with diamond-shaped tuft contrasting with the upright, almost walking-stick outline of the lion's tail (its tuft is a restoration), typical of its treatment on artefacts from Uruk - as further examples below will show.



**Urusta-4f C GROUP**

Another *Uruk Stance* sealing was found in the robbery shaft of the Stone Cone Temple and dated by Boehmer to the Uruk V period (i.e. earlier than Uruk IVa). This has been numbered by Boehmer in his same Catalogue as no. 23 (next drawing). The main piece out of 3 separate fragments shows two rolls of this seal on a clay stopper (find no. W18914, probably either Iraq Museum no. 60453 or 60452h). This time the motif is associated with two swathes of tasselled cloth stuffed into the opening of a web-handled jar:



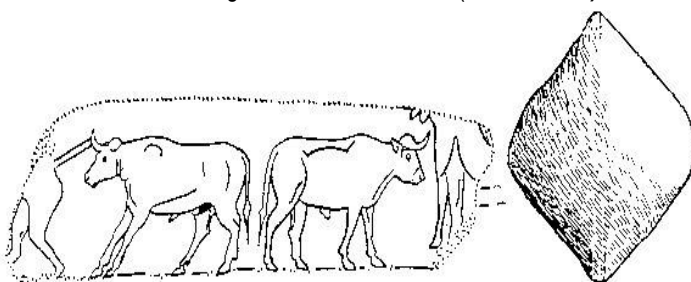
This compares interestingly with a version showing a Susan griffin in the *Uruk Stance* (c.f. **Urusta-3** – as if the lion and eagle of **Urusta-13** were merged) stamped on four different items (one bulla and three tablets) from Level 18 on the Acropolis I excavation (Le Brun & Valtat **CDFI** 8, fig.5,1):



See also their fig. 5,10 – a double *Uruk Stance* from the same stratum (note the exaggerated reared neck of the lioness on the right, a characteristic noted as early as **Urusta-1**):



Contemporary, but solid bullae (rather than hollow, as in our main example) were found at Habuba Kabira, Syria, on it a herd of sheep with rutting ewe and ram in the centre (Strommenger 1980 Abb.56) - and contemporary Nineveh ((BM ME127389 below, photo author) where *potential* for attack is expressed (see Campbell-Thompson **AAA XVIII** 1931 pl.xxii,10/11, or Collon & Reade 1983) – the back of the lion on the left could be read as the remains of an *Uruk Stance*, though in the end more likely to be the back of the lion on the right in a Forward Attack (see **ForAtt-3**):



The tendency of the front legs to form an arc, or a rough (or even exact) right-angle, over the rump of the prey is distinctive of the main *Uruk Stance* group. This core composition, from a time before humans are woven in, is almost caricatured in this seal in the Iraq Museum (ref IM12048/**GMACat** 413). For future reference in **Chapter 19**, note the star or planet in the sky.





**Urusta-5 C GROUP**

|                          |  |           |
|--------------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Nippur, débris above North Temple                    |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Ceremonial twin vase                                 |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Limestone  |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | 3N.511   |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Philadelphia Museum                                  |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | 53-11-7  |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | McCown et al. 1978 [ <i>OIP XC VII</i> ] pl. 69, 3-5 |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Early Uruk   | 3655-3500 |

This double vase with high-relief *Uruk Stance* forming its base falls into the family of other *Uruk Stance* vases itemised in this catalogue. On this one, viewable frontally only, a crouching bull sustains the lioness grasping its rear in the characteristic *Uruk Stance* arc made by its forelegs. In this somewhat clumsy variation of the vase design each animal has a vase on its shoulders, with both their heads aligned to look out in the same direction. Discounting its heavily abraded state, due to the awkward placing of the vases it looks like a forerunner to the Aššur and Louvre examples following under **Urusta-7**. On the other hand it could even be contemporary with **Urusta-1**, or even earlier, given its primitive workmanship. Nippur was a key religious centre at Sumer - in the same league as Uruk, Ur and Eridu – so to suggest it might be a provincial copy of similar vases from those centres does not seem as plausible as viewing it as an early attempt at working out the design of a libation vessel for Venus rites.



The main temple complex at Nippur was dedicated to Enlil (*OIP LXXVI*), though it is not known to which God/Goddess the North Temple was dedicated (McCown et al., reference above). Since the vase was found in North Temple rubbish out of context, it could well have been an item of cult equipment carried away during looting of the nearby temple of Inanna of Duranki (evident in the archaeological record) to the S-W of the Enlil Temple where many lion & prey sealings were also found (see Hansen 1962 & 1971) with other compositional types on them such as the Forward Attack (q.v.).



**Urusta-6 C GROUP**

|                          |   |           |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Aššur, Ishtar Temple, level G (burnt level), near SE entrance |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Ceremonial vase   |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Steatite  |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | 5.22408/?S.22408  |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Berlin Museum ( <i>photos Berlin Museum</i> )                 |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | VA 7887, renumbered VA 3698                                   |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Andrae 1922 pl.50a-e; Moortgat 1939 pp. 1-8                   |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Early Uruk  | 3655-3500 |

On this vase a new approach has been taken to the design problem of placing a vase or vases on the necks of a lion-bull sculpture: now the object is itself a vase with lion and prey carved round it in high relief (coming examples show increasingly successful solutions). This piece shows the first stage, in that the conical vase is surrounded by two scenes *to be viewed on the long sides from the front or back*, one side carved with the *Uruk Stance* attack (left), the other a damaged Master of the Beasts figure (right).

Although badly damaged, it appears the figures on this broken bowl consisting of the bull/ram attacked by a lioness on one long side, heads facing out, would have been meant as the front. The lioness's forelegs forming a clumsy rectangle grasping the bull's haunch with paws treated as stumps are signs of a first stage in dealing with the naturalistic presentation (as also the use of steatite). Note also the circles decorating the mane of a fragmentary lion on the top register (left), exactly the same as the treatment of the lion's mane in *Urusta-1f*. The back view of the vase presents a new juxtaposition in its contrasting scene of a Master of the Beasts group, from now on often repeated (see next entry).



The same arc made by the front legs (slightly softened down from the gauche rectangle of the Aššur example) appears on two fragments of similar, though unprovenanced, limestone goblets in the Iraq Museum, both reported by F Basmahji in his article, 'Sculptured stone vases in the Iraq Museum', *Sumer* VI, 165-76. As we have not been able to inspect and photograph these pieces for ourselves (and it will be some time before it is possible to find out if these survived the Iraq Museum looting of April 2003) we can only give his already poor reproductions for basic information – this is the first (his pl.iii, 1, Iraq Museum IM 13532):



**Urusta-6f C GROUP**

This unprovenanced, two-tier vase of yellow limestone in the Louvre is close in appearance to the Aššur vase, though front and back both show an *Uruk Stance* attack this time – but on one prey. Originally cited in Contenau 1928, fig.445 and 1934 pls vi and vii, I was able to photograph it in the museum case (though the lighting was too bright). On the upper register four small lions or lionesses are seated round a small conical vase further hemmed in, as it were, by two functionless 'basket handles'.



This time one central, benign bull (or ram) stands peaceably as it submits to the attack *on either side of its rump* by two lionesses in the *Uruk Stance*, visible at the short back end of the vase (above right) where the side-by-side rear ends of the lions have been broken off (their sideways turned heads, however, are better viewed in this photo than in the frontal view above left). In both the front and side views we see the bull's remarkable bushy, curled beard (the bulls of *Urusta-10* and *Urusta-11* also have plaited beards). This vase uses the same stance as the vase from Aššur – our main entry – or could have been made just before it, both of them temple vases. Note how in all these examples the lion heads face out, intentionally staring at us in the same way the human form of Inanna is shown - in what the Hindus would call a *darshana*, or deliberate display of a divine being to his/her worshippers.

The second of Basmahji's fragments (his pl.ii, 7, Iraq Museum no. IM 18279) seems closely related, though simpler, with the vase nestling inside the group uncluttered by a second tier (on it, two lions in procession attack a ram).



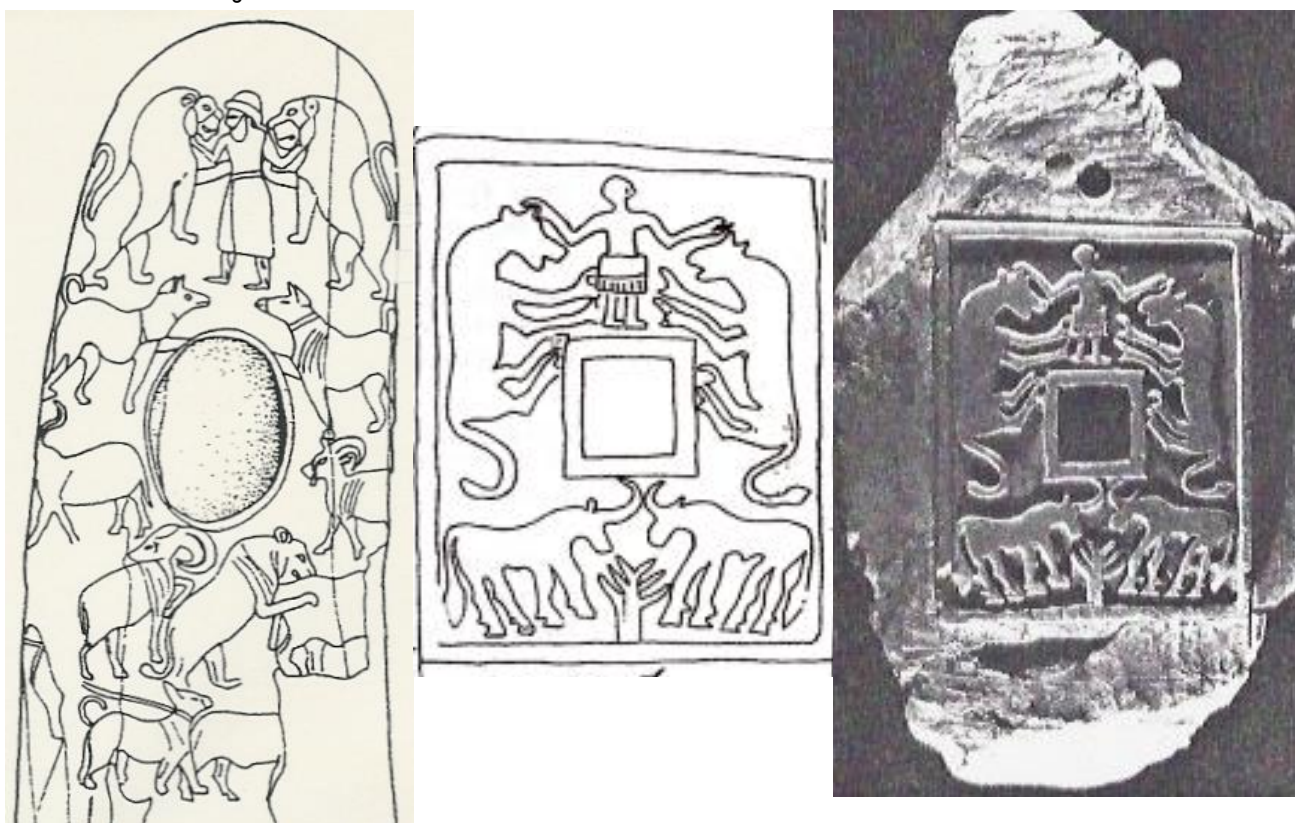
'Other specimens of more or less importance also exist', Basmahji then writes.



**Urusta-7**

|                          |  |                      |
|--------------------------|--|----------------------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Egypt, said to be from Gebel el-Arak (at the mouth of the Wadi Hammamet) |                      |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Handle for ceremonial flint knife  |                      |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Hippo ivory  |                      |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   |  | Bought on the market |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Louvre   |                      |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       |  |                      |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Boehmer 1974 <i>AMI VII</i> 15-40 pl.vi,1; Dreyer 1999                   |                      |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Naqada III   | 3500-3335            |

The two top lions with untextured manes hold up their forelegs at right angles either side of a male ruler in Sumerian garb (if the man were animal prey we would label it a *Bilateral Attack*, but here he stands as Master of the Beasts). A pair of dogs below flank the central boss with their front legs in the same position. It is the lioness (her tail down this time) below the central boss (with somewhat weak treatment of the forelegs) that has adopted the *Uruk Stance* in her attack on a prey whose forequarters and head are missing:



Gebel-el-Arak is some 30 miles away from Abydos and the knife and handle (in separate pieces) was sold to Bénédict at the very time Peet was excavating at the U Cemetery at Abydos. Dreyer (1999) therefore hints it did not come from Gebel-el-Arak at all, but from Abydos itself, sold by a digger – see the *Rear Attack Catalogue C*. 'Arak' gives an uncanny echo as to the origin of the knife handle's design and workmanship in Uruk, certainly ascribed on style to the *Late Uruk* period, so later than the Gebel-Tarif knife-handle. The appearance onto the scene of humans withstanding lions (which we have grouped as an *Uruk Stance* Group D type - as on the upper seal under *Urusta-1f*) indicates strength of rulership – see *Urusta-7f* on the following page) and is the new ingredient coming onto most *Uruk Stance* artefacts at a stage later than the very earliest Uruk or Susa periods.

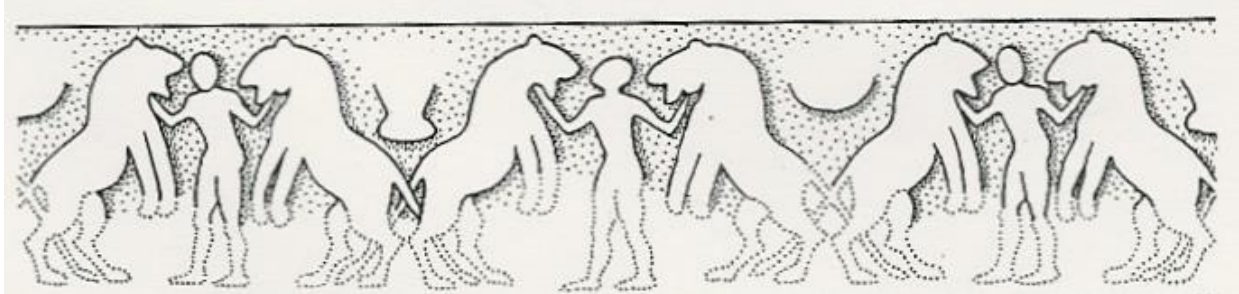
I have contrasted the overall *Gestalt* of the knife decoration on this side with a dedicatory plaque from Nippur (Boese *Weihplatten* N1 – see also Hansen<sup>4</sup>) – where apart from the Master of the Beasts motif the central boss is echoed by the square hole on all such Sumerian plaques of roughly the same period – in contrast, on dedicatory ceremonial slate palettes in Egypt the circular makeup mixing centre also corresponds to the fixing hole of the plaques. The two items taken together surely underline the links between the two regions.

<sup>4</sup> D P Hansen 'New Votive Plaques from Nippur' *JNES XXII* 1963 145-166 + 6 plates;



**Urusta-7f**

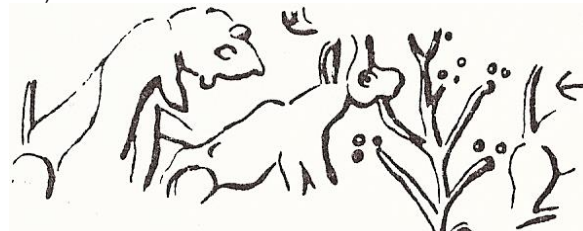
Sievertson (1992) gives a useful up-to-date assessment of the Gebel-el-Arak knife-handle, and Boehmer (*ibid.*) tellingly discusses all related ivory knife-handles. The full iconography of both its front and back is discussed under our **SYNTHESES** section), so for the moment we simply note how the Master of the Beasts on it is a polished version of the group also used on an Early Uruk sealing (Boehmer **AUWE XXIV** no.14 - W18917a-z) this time showing lions with both forelegs dangling down. This is usually labelled as the Master of the Beasts or Gilgamesh-type lion-tamer group. With the lion's prey dropped, it further emphasises the heroism qualifying the lion-tamer to rulership, and celebrating his strength of authority:



If we compare the knife handle *Uruk Stance* with label sealings with gouged numbering from Susa (**LouvCat-** Sb2315; **MDP XXIX** fig. 18; **GSCat** 521) the lioness is shown in the classic *Uruk Stance* with forelegs forming a right-angle over the rump, but with the added elegance of the head looking backwards in a graceful *contrapposto* to the main direction of her body - the Susa double serpent forming a proto-guilloche behind and matching the double serpent on the Gebel-el-Tarif knife handle:



Overall the close linkages between the Gebel el-Arak knife handle and Sumero-Susan imagery are manifold. Compare also this partial sealing from Susa (**GSCat**-507):



The same awkward rendition of the stance is found on a fragmentary two-register sealing (U14516, in the BM) from Ur (**UEIII** 246/SIS 4) – a useful continuity item, therefore, showing its uptake further afield:



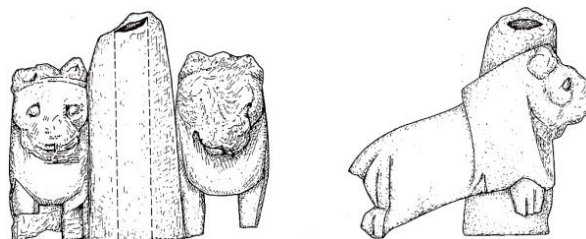
**Urusta-8 C GROUP**

|                          |  |           |
|--------------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Uruk, found in the Sammelfund intruded into Level III near S wall of Eanna ziggurat, near doorway of outbuilding |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Ceremonial spouted vase  |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Yellow limestone   |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | W1486g3 c.f. also 2 broken-off spouts also flanked by small lions from the same cache [W15068a & W14653h] below  |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Iraq Museum  |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | IM 19169   |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Heinrich 1936 pls.22a/b & 23a [2 spout fragments pl.23b/c];<br>Lindmeyer <b>AUWE IX</b> 1993, pl. 57, 523        |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Late Uruk  | 3500-3235 |

This famous vase is the culmination of the *Uruk Stance* stone vase production, so widespread in 4M Sumer, arriving at a definitive and well-executed solution to all those earlier attempts at interlocking the bodies of lion and bull with a vase. The top lions either side of the spout are well-proportioned with untextured manes: the two below, each attacking a bull from the rear, appear to be lionesses with arched, muscular necks and the same stumpy, pousy bodies as on the Gebel-al-Arak knife handle and related seals (*Urusta-7*). At the back of the vase their upright curled tails and rumps meet (as in *Urusta-6f*) while at the front under the spout the two bulls' heads come together.



There were remains of other spouts, still also with lions attached, for at least two more, seemingly similar, vases in the Sammelfund (W15068a and W14653h mentioned by Heinrich *ibid.*) and recatalogued by Lindmeyer (*ibid.*, her pl. 57 nos. 524-5):



The Uruk spouted vase tapers down to a narrow calyx at the base, and had been the only two-tier vase to have survived intact. Where previous vases/goblets range from 6-12cm high, the Sammelfund vase is 20.3cm high, the only one with a spout, and evidently used for ritual libations of some kind. Scholars mostly agree that, although found on a Jemdet Nasr level, the Sammelfund items must have been made in the Late Uruk period and thrown out at the start of a new régime at Uruk when cultic changes took place. Along with the Nippur and Aššur vases, it provides us with a certain provenance against which to judge the likely extent of territory to which all the other unprovenanced cups/vases or their fragments, as itemised in the previous and following entries, can be ascribed.

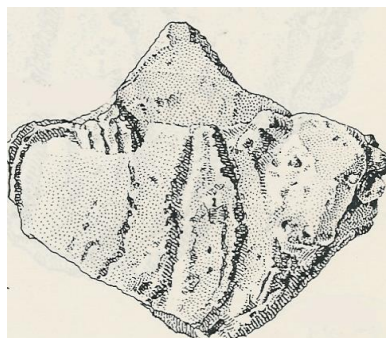
**Urusta-8f C GROUP**

What remains of the damaged small yellow limestone ceremonial drinking cup of the Late Uruk period below shows its main composition to be a miniature version of the Uruk spouted vase, though without a spout - and little remains of the upper register. Again two lion(esses) attack a bull each, and they have the same stumpy bodies, erect tails and oversized heads staring out frontally (the second attack on the other side is rougher (bottom right – photo author).

Unprovenanced, it was acquired by a private collector and on loan indefinitely to the British Museum (and in the end purchased). My thanks to Dr T C Mitchell when Keeper of the West Asiatic Antiquities Department for letting me look at the vase and photograph it in colour, and also for providing me with the further official black and white BM photos of it. Because it is almost a caricature of the Uruk spouted vase, some argue it is a forgery, yet looking at the other pieces of cups or vases that follow, certainly on stylistic grounds there is no reason why it should not be genuine, from a time when a large number of cups and vases were made in and around Uruk.



Compare this with the unprovenanced fragment bought from a dealer in Baghdad now in the Carsten Niebuhr Oriental Institute, of greyish limestone, published by Møller 1983, fig.2. Just this small piece - with just the suggestion of an original *Uruk Stance* betrayed by one lion paw gripping the bull's spine - is sufficient to provide an idea of its original context, though here the carving of bull's head and lion's paw seems more naturalistic. The separated midriff section also marks it stylistically as belonging to the larger group.

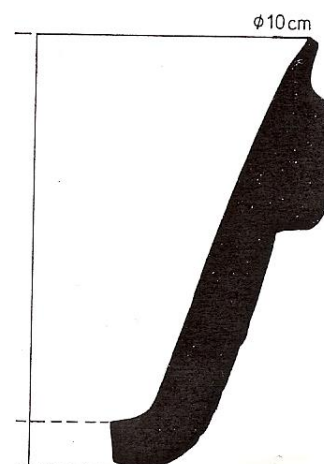
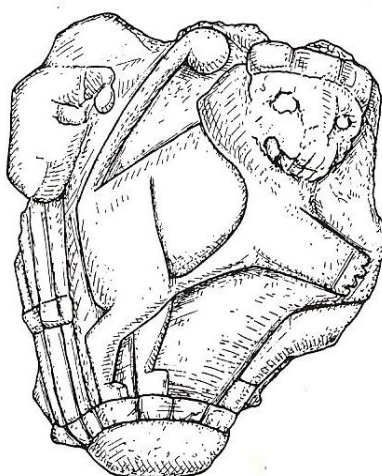




**Urusta-9 C GROUP**

|                          |  |           |
|--------------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Uruk, or Uruk area – casual finds  |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Fragments of ceremonial cups akin to the Uruk spouted vase and related cup |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Yellow or grey limestone   |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Late Uruk (on stylistic grounds)   | 3500-3235 |

Several broken cups in the Berlin Museum from the time of the German excavations at Uruk fit into this group but have no precise stratigraphy because they were casual finds, sometimes purchased from the locals with the caveat they could be fakes. This one (VA8771) is the same type as the BM **Urusta-8f** cup, tapering down to a calyx, carved in even higher relief and likely to be contemporary. The lion's mane (or neck muscle), like the main Uruk spout vase, has not been textured as in earliest examples (**Urusta-1**) but stands out as a separate section; the tail is true to the Uruk convention of the time, and the treatment of the forepaws as pegs is another standard characteristic seen on other, crude examples. An updated assessment and drawing was made by Lindmeyer (below centre and right) in **AUWE IX** 1993 no. 189a-c - to which she also associated a further fragment (VA14875A).



Like the one above, the damaged yellow limestone ceremonial cup in the British Museum (BM116705 below – photo author), also tapering to a narrow calyx base, is carved in such high relief that the vessel's sides are buried from view. The top level is taken up by a procession of caprids, calves and a lion with upright curled tail, giving an idea of the type of occupation missing on the upper register of the **Urusta 8f** cup (and **Urusta-9** main entry above). The lower level shows three walking bulls, one attacked by the lioness, head turned out towards us in the by now recognisable *Uruk Stance* with the forelegs creating the same arc framing the rump of the bull.



**Urusta-9f C GROUP**

Privately purchased by the BM, the cup above was originally published by V Christian in his *Altertumskunde des Zweiströmlandes* (Leipzig 1900) and contrasted on the same plate with the spouted Uruk Vase (*Urusta-8*, implying contemporaneity. H R Hall illustrates it as a new acquisition for the British Museum from Uruk in 1928 in *Ars Asiatica XI* pl.ii,1 along with a fragment from a similar vase (BM115313) on pl.iii,1 and described by him as coming from Uruk. The latter, showing the rear of a lion with upright tail followed by a bovid (he misinterpreted the hind quarters of the lion as part of another bull) could have depicted an *Uruk Stance* attack when complete: an Uruk fragment (VA8772 - Lindmeyer *ibid.* no. 290) has the same animal parts remaining, and also likely to have been an *Uruk Stance* cup - as the following fragments definitely were.

First, this limestone vase fragment in the Berlin Museum [VA 8771] shows enough of the attacking lion's erect stance and curled tail to see it was part of an *Uruk Stance* group on a two-tiered vase-type with livestock walking round the upper register in the same way. The textures of mane and whiskers are, for a change, engraved realistically so that the lion looks more like a pussycat than most renditions.



Most of the Berlin Museum-owned fragments were first reported by Moortgat in *Frühe Bildkunst in Sumer* (1935) pl. xxix, and since definitively catalogued where considered genuine by Lindmeyer in the *Uruk Endberichte (AUWE IX)*. The one below is her no. 190 (this and the next one had been listed by Moortgat in *MVAG XL* as fragments of stone pots carved in high relief with animal scenes, but were not illustrated):



Chance saved the lioness forequarters in the same *Uruk Stance* clutch round the bull's hindquarters on yet another cup fragment (VA8773 - Lindmeyer no. 1097a-c), this time with a more menacing outward stare:

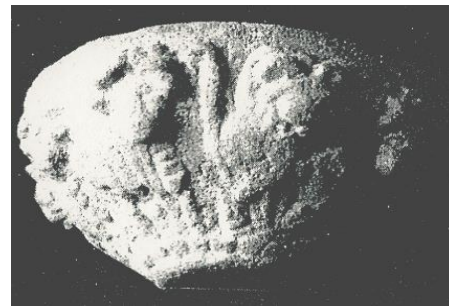




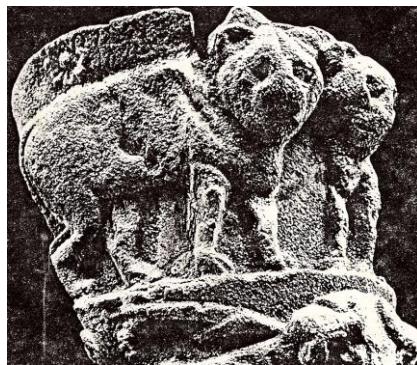
**Urusta-10 C GROUP**

|                          |   |           |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Jemdet Nasr grave no. 120   |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Shallow cup   |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | 'coarse grey limestone'   |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | U18524  |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Iraq Museum   |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | IM 16494  |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | <i>UEIV</i> pl.31; Woolley, <i>AJ</i> xiii pl. lxvi; Basmahji <i>ibid.</i> pl.i, 8; |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Late Uruk   | 3500-3235 |

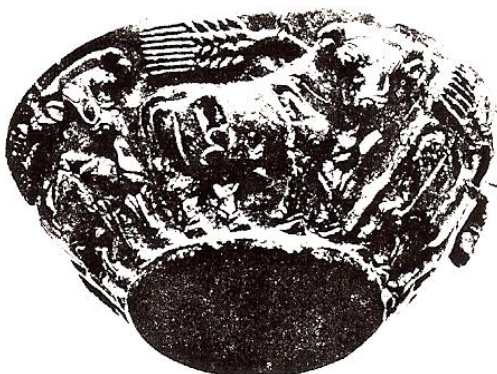
This tiny, delicate cup, only 4cm high and 8cm across at the top, with five pairs of lion-bull attacks in procession taking up the full height of the sides, was found in a Jemdet Nasr grave at Ur along with plainer stone vases, clay pots, and a copper pin. The bulls have plaited beards, as in the bottom left example on this page. Although of similar profile to a later Jemdet Nasr steatite bowl also from Ur (bottom row below left) its material and archaic style might proclaim this piece an heirloom from the Uruk Period. The granularity of



of the poor limestone is akin to that on the early two-tier vases - another example in the Louvre (below) with bulls on the lower register and two doggy-looking lionesses on the top level is illustrated in André Parrot's *Sumer* (1960), as also more completely now on the Louvre website (right):



Woolley in his *Development of Sumerian Art* (1935) illustrated with it a common unadorned cup of the same period from Ur (U19378) with similar calyx base (below centre), maybe for day-to-day use, alongside a small fragmentary vase (below right) which probably had a full *Uruk Stance* on it (he described the carving as 'a procession of oxen' but the upcurled tail of the lion is a giveaway):

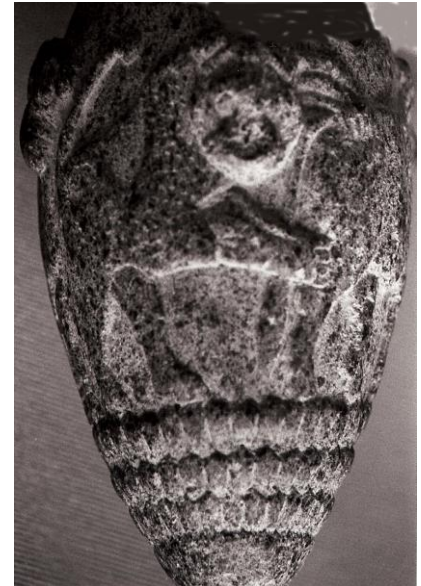




**Urusta-11 C GROUP**

|                          |   |           |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Unprovenanced, said to be from the Uruk region                  |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Ceremonial cup [photos author]                                  |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Basalt  |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   |   |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | British Museum - Purchased at the same time as <b>Urusta 8f</b> |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | BM128886, <i>Funded by the Art Fund</i>                         |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Smith <b>BMQ XI</b> 1936 p.116-17, pl.xxxi, a                   |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Late Uruk   | 3500-3235 |

Like **Urusta-10** this egg-shaped cup, here with a triple-calyx base, gives the *Uruk Stance* back and front round the vessel, taking up one register. The four heads of the animals are placed at exactly 90° to each other. The manes of both Asiatic lions continue under the belly and have a pocked texture. The second is clumsier (bottom right), stretching further along the vase to fill in the remaining space. The by now familiar arc of the lions' front legs reaches out to clutch both rump and hind leg of the bull (the second more forcefully) and both have the characteristic walking stick tail. Close inspection when photographing revealed each bull has a long, plaited beard, as they do on the **Urusta-10** example.



This is an interesting vase, not only because of its iconography, but also because it is made of basalt, which does not occur naturally in Sumer. The stone could have been imported from Egypt (such pieces have been found on Falaika island, a trading way-station). The base narrows to such an extent that the vase is top-heavy standing on its own (hence the holes at the top in a later adaptation in order to suspend it). Like all the other vases of cup or glass size, it was probably made to be held in both hands in a drinking ceremony.

Although we do not have a precise find-spot for the green steatite seal below (Geneva Museum no. 20305, **GenevaCat-3**), its iconography quite clearly belongs to the same family of objects as the vases (the plain, unadorned design with no humans present is characteristic of the earliest Uruk products).



**Urusta-11f C GROUP**

The above seal design is echoed on another unprovenanced seal (**GMACat-416**/Iraq Museum IM 21080) discussed by Gordon (1957 - his Seal 3 shown below) where the predator looks closer to a bear than a lion: were they interchangeable predators according to locality? This could account for the claw-like treatment of the lion's paws in early renditions if the carver had not seen a lion before. An eagle soars above and the bull at the moment of death sprouts a shrub on its back (in other examples such as **Urusta-10** bottom row left) it is an ear of wheat), an important prehistoric precedent for an image that endured into Mithraic iconography.



Recently recatalogued by Lindmeyer in **AUWE IX** (no. 524) and quoted as found 'in the [Uruk] city area' is a badly worn cup fragment described as made of grey sandstone, but also as 'shimmering yellow' which sounds more like *limestone* (previous photos show how artefacts will sometimes show up as yellow, sometimes grey, according to lighting). Illustrated by Jordan in **UVB I** pl.21b as find W1042, from the tell-tale arc of the lion's forelegs, it clearly belongs to the same family of ritual cups that we have brought together in the C Group.



A provincial rendering of an Early Dynastic lion attack scene from North Syria (**GMACat-1738**) shows the often distinctive Syrian *horror vacui* and disregard for adherence to the main ground-line, with vacant spaces filled in by upside-down creatures if necessary, often in contorted poses. There is no doubt the pose of the lion captures in seal form the primitive stage of the *Uruk Stance* design on the C Group vases we have been cataloguing here, demonstrating how closely contemporary seals can be matched to them:



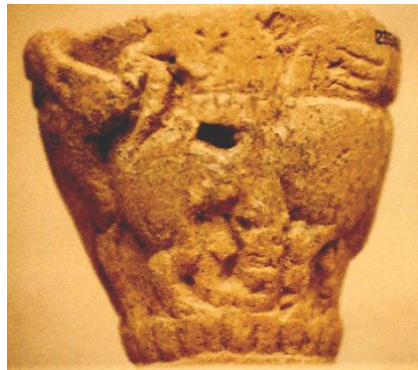
In time, as the next few entries will show, they become the predominant vehicle for the lion and prey group in the Early Dynastic era as the stone bowls fell out of use, no doubt reflecting changes in cult behaviour – and possibly of a more secular nature as the population increased.



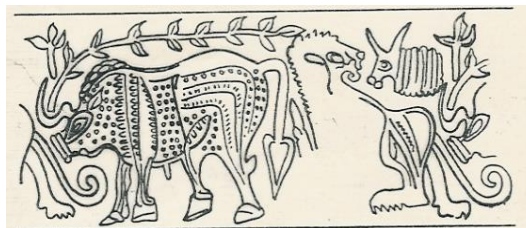
**Urusta-12 C GROUP**

|                          |   |           |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Ur, Jemdet Nasr Grave                                   |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Small goblet  |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Yellow limestone  |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | U20000  |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | British Museum  |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | BM123563  |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | <i>UEIV</i> pl.31; Woolley <i>AJ</i> XIV pl.xiv, 2 left |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Jemdet Nasr   | 3235-3105 |

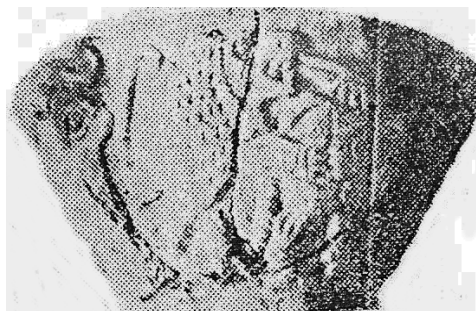
Since found in a specific Jemdet Nasr grave, this object is a useful chronological benchmark marking the change in period. This is the last stone cup with lion & prey carved on it (still with the distinctive, one-row calyx) from the very end of the Uruk Period which overlaps with the Jemdet Nasr period in the rest of Sumer. It shows one predator and two bulls (described by Woolley in *UEIV* as 'two cows and a calf', but the upcurled tail identifies the lioness). Once more a crudely delineated wheat-ear sprouts over the back of bull being attacked. It has all the hallmarks of the transitional Jemdet Nasr style just preceding the Early Dynastic kingdoms of Sumer, since although the lioness still seizes her prey in typical *Uruk Stance* pose and retains her upright curved tail, compared to the primitive and serious stolidity of the carving on earlier stone vases the lioness' head is now self-consciously turned backwards to counterbalance the forward movement of her body in 'the Susa contrapposto' (seen in purest form on the second seal of *Urusta-7f*, often used on Elamite seals too), making the attack look balletic, almost playful.



This is borne out on the Elamite seal below of the same period (published in *LouvCat*-Sb1488, and in a paper in *RA* XLIV ill.8) which has the same reverse-turned head of the lion, its front paw raised in token attack, and with the archaic, deliberately exaggerated symbolic treatment of bull and lion tails:



As the **C Group** stone vase fashion ends the falling off in quality can be picked up from another of Basmahji's (*ibid.*) examples from the Iraq Museum (IM 10785) – his reproduction is so bad, it simply cannot be enhanced – but look for the lion paws and bull's back leg, then the lion mane and upcurved tail in the main pair of animals centre and right:





**Urusta 13 B GROUP**

|                          |                        |           |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Susa                   |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Sealing, in two pieces |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Clay                   |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   |                        |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Louvre                 |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | Sb2153/2257            |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | GSCat 1419/1428        |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Jemdet Nasr/EDI        | 3235-3000 |

The continuous rolling of the original seal making this sealing would have created a lion attacking its prey in the *Uruk Stance* symmetrically on either side of the eagle with outstretched wings, in the arrangement of the Entemena Vase (**ForAtt-4**) though with both attacks facing the same way.



The same is true for the next, unprovenanced, seal from the Erlenmeyer collection (Erlenmeyers 1959 pl.xli 35). We class these as **B Group** because there is no characteristic **C Group** gripping of bull's rump and legs but more the sloping lunge over the bull's back as the lion's head lunges forward to reach the stag's neck:



The next, similar, seal comes from Tell Agrab (Ag.35:121/**SCSCat**-882) in a grotesque, borderline form of the attack – shown beneath the eagle this time (compare the style to the Southesk seal of **ForAtt-1**):



On all these early seals no humans are present, the Master of the Beasts group being treated as a separate icon (**Urusta-7f**) because he does not intervene. The equal space taken up by the eagle and lion-prey group on all the seals points to the central role played by the Sky God Ningirsu in the Jemdet Nasr/Early Dynastic period – during which time on maceheads and dedication plaques the eagle's head is replaced by a lion head (see the many examples discussed in **Catalogue E: The Forward Attack** in relation to **ForAtt-4**).

**Urusta-14 C GROUP**

|                          |   |           |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Ur, Royal Cemetery Rubbish Heap, SIS levels 4-5 Pit W |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Fragments of sealings                                 |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Clay  |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | U18406  |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Philadelphia University/British Museum                |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | ?   |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Legrain <i>UEIII</i> 245; Karg 1984 pl.2,7            |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Jemdet Nasr/EDI                                       | 3235-3000 |

In contrast to **B Group** seals the following are clearly linked to **C Group** cups and vases in their use of the *Uruk Stance* with double grip – but we cannot always discern the precise order of succession to pinpoint how the alternation between the two types of artefact decoration must have gone. Note as we move into the Early Dynastic period the human hunter enters the scene (note that we only class such a seal as **D Group** when the hunter grips the lion's tail) so this seal is probably later than the following two.



Compare with the hunting mode the poetic rendition on a greenstone cylinder seal in the Brussels Museum (*BrussCat II-1480*) from Khafaje - unfortunately of no stratigraphical context - probably Late Uruk:



It is similar to the next, also unprovenanced, white marble seal, also possibly from Uruk, where the bull even proffers its back leg for the lion to grip. Note again the wheat ear behind the bull. It is almost the oldest seal in the Bibliothèque Nationale (*BNCat-2*):



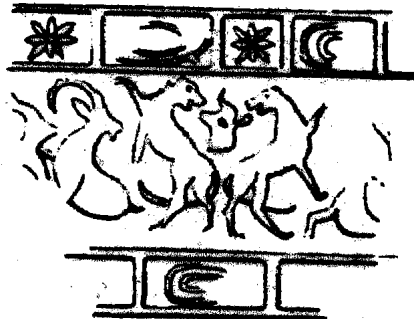
The lion approaches a reindeer in the classic Uruk manner on this 'red-brown serpentine' seal, bought in Aleppo by Woolley (Ashmolean ref. 1914.163/*AshCat-1023*) framed with the decorative strips top and bottom characteristic of some Uruk sealings (see *Urusta-15*). There were on-off swings of influence on Syria from Sumer proper and the Susa hinterland that can be linked to the fluctuating relations between Uruk and Susa themselves, and also the different routes of transmission into Syria. Note the crescent moon in the sky above and again the proffered back leg of the prey.



**Urusta-15 B GROUP**

|                          |   |           |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Uruk, Kleinfundschicht, Levels II/III                   |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Sealing on two fragments                                |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Clay  |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | Find nos. 7159a and 7159c                               |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Berlin Museum   |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | VA000   |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | UVB II fig.13; UVB V fig.27d; UVB IX pl.29d; GMACat-212 |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Jemdet Nasr   | 3235-3105 |

This seal shows the Jemdet Nasr contrapposto lioness applied to a sealing from Uruk more usually seen on Susan designs like **Urusta-12**, with head turned back over the shoulder, heraldically self-mirrored either side of a central axis, soon to be a permanent hallmark of ancient near eastern design. The elegant rendition of the predator must be the felicitous invention of one particularly sophisticated designer. The band of symbols above and below was adopted in Syria as a common feature on seals to give commentary on the main scene.



In contrast on two Susan sealings the predator faces forward, sliding his foreleg along the prey's back to lean over it, matching the earliest stone vase of **Urusta-1** (**MDP XVI** pls x/176 & xi/178; **GSCat**-509/601):



A related seal from Susa (**MDP XVI** 246/293; **GMACat**-1129) interposes a cub between hunter and attacking lion – starkly emphasising life and death contrasts (see also the subsidiary seals of **Urusta-17**), an idea taken up later in Greek art (e.g. **Belland-18**, which has a lioness with cubs on the back of the sarcophagus):



The Susan hunter above shoots with bow and arrow, as also in another sealing repeated on a damaged rectangle of clay from Susa reported in **GSCat**-601, so the prey, rather than the attacking lion this time, is shafted with arrows at the front and assailed by the predator from behind (**LouvCat**-Sb1976bis), so here the lion is ambiguously portrayed as both as foe and helper:

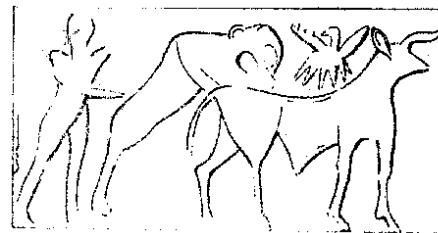




**Urusta-16 B GROUP**

|                          |  |           |
|--------------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Kish, YWN at -1m                                     |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Cylinder seal  |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Decayed buff limestone [photo and rolling by author] |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | KM135  |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Ashmolean Museum, Oxford                             |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | 1930.123   |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | AshCatI 124; Karg pl.ii 12                           |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | EARLY DYNASTIC I/II                                  | 3105-2700 |

On this firmly provenanced seal, the bird of prey hovers over the group as in **Urusta-13**, and a human strides onto the scene. This version of the *Uruk Stance*, with the head of the lion turned out to look towards us (as in the photograph in the **National Geographic** we used to define the stance) is no more than a summary notation, indeed, a hieroglyph so familiar that further definition is not needed:



Borowski (1952, pl. xxii, 6) published a dark red steatite seal showing the same scenario in more poetic mode from the Layard Collection with the cow (possibly with a blobby crescent moon between it and the stockman) attacked as it suckles its calf with a star over it (if it were not for the convention already noted of straight tail for the cow and upcurled tail for the lioness, it would be easy to confuse it as a mating scene). What look like the seven stars of the Great Bear echo the curve of the attacking lioness' tail beneath, while the eight-pointed star usually associated with Venus is placed between the two animals:



An unprovenanced 'white porphyry' seal in the de Clercq collection (**Southesk** pl.I, 13) might show the same idea: cited by Keel in 'Das Böcklein' he interprets it as a calf suckling its mother saved by the stockman from attack by a lion, though to me the calf looks like a dog. Note again the crescent moon against the bull/cow:



The idea of the chain of hunter-predator-prey is repeated in the Old Babylonian period on this provincial seal from Tell-I-Malyan/Anshan (Sumner 1974, fig. 12g) this one definitely also including the hunter's dog:



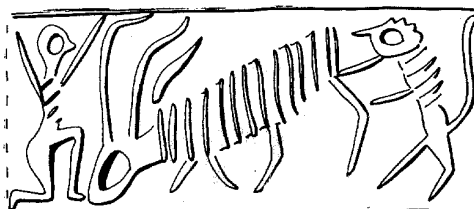
**Urusta-17 B GROUP/D GROUP**

|                          |   |   |           |
|--------------------------|---|---|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Ur, Royal Cemetery Rubbish Heap SIS levels 4-5 of Pits D or W |   |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Sealings  |   |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Clay  |   |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | U8833; U18406; U14516   | see also U13981; U12551; U13872; U18407 |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | British/Philadelphia/Iraq Museums                             |   |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | Ur references above   |   |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | <b>UEIII</b> 228; 226; 246 <b>UEIII</b> 230; 227; 261 234     |   |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | EDI   |   | 3105-3000 |

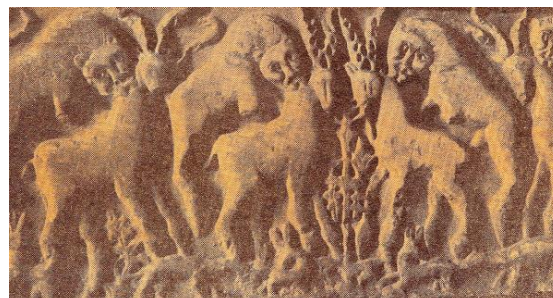
As Uruk declined in importance during the Jemdet Nasr period, the city state most using the Lion & Prey theme was Ur, and some of the designs found on clay sealings thrown on the rubbish heap just outside the Royal Cemetery copy the Uruk or Susa prototypes over and over again almost as a cliché (frequent use of the *Forward Attack* on these Ur sealings is also documented in *Catalogue E*).



Earliest seals from Fara of the Jemdet Nasr period such as that below in the Istanbul Museum (excavation no. 898; *MartinCat*-155) show the same primitive stage of development as the Syrian seal in *Urusta-20* with a stripy, primitive style and the reaction (rather than action) of a kneeling human responding to the scene (the kneeling figure continued to be favoured in Syrian seals during the 2M):



The next seal (below left), bought in Syria (*BMCat* pl.17b) shows a plant under the bull's neck this time, and the two hunters with spears have the large hole eyes of the EDI period. For an astonishing contrast revealing the durability of the image, next to it we place a section of plaster frieze from Umayyad Spain (Granada, 12C A.D) where the forward-turned head and straining neck of the lion faithfully replicates *Urusta-16* (and the seal below left). Since the Umayyad heartland was Islamic Iran and Iraq, evidently the symbol still had live meaning for them in the mediaeval period – as contemporary monuments in the region also testify.



The hunter in the seal above left *impedes the lion attack by holding its tail at the root*, introducing a new theme in the coming few entries under a shortlived **Group D** (apart from the Tell Agrab seal, placed next for chronological reasons). Evidently it was a method of lion control when protecting the herd (a practice still sometimes followed by the Masai of East Africa) for a man to impede the lion's depredations, demonstrating his virile power over the destructive influences that threaten settled life - and qualifying him to be a leader.

**Urusta-18 B GROUP**

|                          |                                    |           |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Tell Agrab, Shara Temple           |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Cylinder seal                      |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Calcite                            |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | Ag.36.156                          |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | A21580                             |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | <b>SCSCat-800; GMACat-756</b>      |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Early Dynastic II                  | 3000-2700 |

Tell Agrab was a key temple town east of the Tigris further up from the chain of Sumerian cities along the Euphrates such as Ur, Fara, Nippur and Kish on the land *between* the two rivers. As can be seen from the *Distribution Map*, it is equally reachable from Susa along the Zagros foothills as from the river plain cities of Sumer. That this seal was found in the Temple of Shara, child of Inanna, adds one more clue that the two lion & prey scenes on it (the other dealt with under **Catalogue E, ForAtt-6**) refer to this Goddess. In this B Group type the lioness' paws are treated like forks tentatively testing the prey's back, and the eyes have been made with a very large drill bit – note also the head turned back in the Susan manner. The decapitated goat head features as the central axis of the design, and consistent graphic conventions are used to represent body part outlines and inner musculature (again, decapitated heads continued to be favoured in Syrian seals designs during the 2M).



The way the lioness in the *Uruk Stance* perches both paws on the bull's spine rather than gripping at the rump is also a feature of some seals from Ur (as in the one below from Pit D, SIS 4/U14604, **UEIII** 216). This may simply be down to the artist's limited technique – but gauging the exact detail from Legrain's rough drawings or the poor photos of the bloody impressions themselves can be misleading, since the originals are often more clear-cut:



This familiar stance was even in use on seals as far north as Nimrud in the Early Dynastic period (Parker 1955, pl. x, 1 - Nimrud excavation ref. ND1016): the very rough seal below was found in topsoil against the inner side of the city wall, broken, and with no stratigraphy. The remaining, rough *Uruk Stance* is rolled out three times:





**Urusta-19 D GROUP**

|                          |  |           |
|--------------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Kish   |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Seal   |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Yellow limestone   |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | Y435   |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Ashmolean Museum (rolled by the author in the museum on yellow plasticine) |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | 1928.463   |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | AshCat 293   |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | EDIII/Akkadian   | 2700-2200 |

A strong example in our collection of seals featuring hunters gripping at the lion's tail root, for chronological reasons we place this seal first in order to position EDIII seals chronologically, but will then jump back and forwards within the Early Dynastic period for other **Group D** seals, following the small points of similarity that link them. It could be said Kish further upriver used the *Uruk Stance* on its seals from the Jemdet Nasr period onwards even more than Ur: this fine seal in the Ashmolean Museum shows continuity of the Early Dynastic Group D type at this site into the early Akkadian period (not attested in the other towns so late). A serpent zig-zags past the bull's mouth (in the next entry a snake is associated with a goat):



It is often confused with an almost identical seal made of shell in the Iraq Museum, also from Kish (IM13239), where the zig-zag snake in front of the bull is replaced by a bush like the last seal in the previous entry:



On a limestone seal found 'in the vicinity of N' at Kish (Mackay 1925 pl.VI, 16/ Chicago Field Museum find 1117/ **GMA-1250**), the plant in front of the prey (a reindeer this time) is blended with the more twisted serpents familiar on designs from Susa, and has a crescent and a bird over it (the hollow-eyed hunter dates it to EDI/II):



**Urusta-20 D GROUP**

|                          |                               |           |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Kish - precise site not given |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Cylinder seal [photo author]  |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Sandstone                     |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | K1604                         |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Ashmolean Museum, Oxford      |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | 1925.100                      |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | AshCat 125                    |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Jemdet Nasr/EDI               | 3235-3000 |

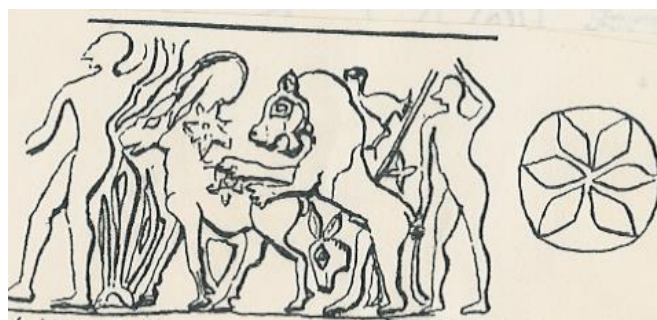
Because of the seal's material the impression is rough and grainy. Many of the cluster of hunter groups on seals in the next entries come from Kish, but others from Fara, Ur, Susa and as far afield as Syria, during the Early Dynastic Period indicate how these towns shared themes and styles, and the compositional type seems to have been so commonplace that at times it becomes no more than a generalised ideogram, like this one (here the crescent is placed on a standard). While the body remains in side-view, the lion's arching neck is exaggerated in the act of seizing its prey as with the **Group B** items, but a hunter grips its tail, a weapon in the other hand.



Another, badly abraded, grey calcite Kish seal (**AshCatI-121**; **Karg** pl.ii, 13) not worth reproducing, has the same *dramatis personae*. A further worn limestone seal also from Kish, is much like it (**AshCatI-122**), with a similar trio to the previous entry showing an ibex with serpent at its mouth, *Uruk Stance* lion attack (its head seemingly in two positions) and a man this time holding its tail with both hands (rolled by the author).



In an example from Ur (**UEIII** 254 – in composite drawing of six fragments from SIS 4 and Pit W, SIS 4-5), behind the lion's head is a bird as the nude hunters tries to stall the predator by piercing its back with a spear - a four-pointed star at the insertion point. He clutches the lion at the root of its tail with the other hand as the lion claws the bull's back with both paws; a star floats between the goat's neck and horns, while the top of the cylinder seal was used separately to stamp the rosette of the Goddess (like those on the knife handles of Egypt). A sprouting bush grows in front of the prey and a decapitated calf-head faces its rump:

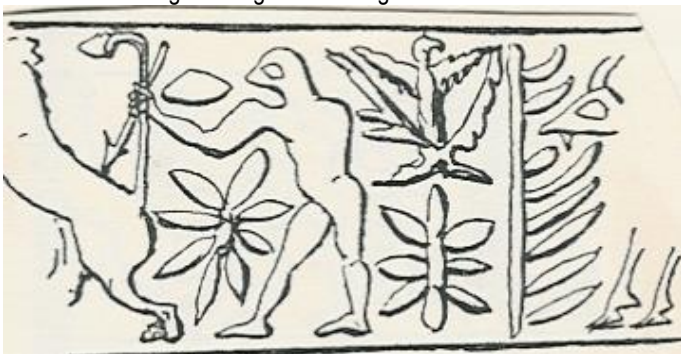




**Urusta-21 D GROUP**

|                          |   |           |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Ur, Royal Cemetery Rubbish Heap, SIS levels 4-5 Pit W |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Sealings  |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Clay  |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | U13979  |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | University of Philadelphia Museum                     |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | CBS 31.16.641   |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | <b>UEIII</b> 244                                      |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Early Dynastic I                                      | 3105-3000 |

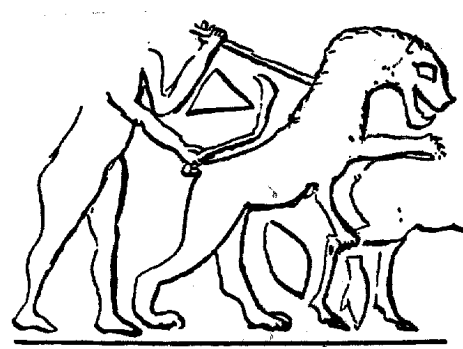
The Group D variation on the *Uruk Stance* seems to have been as popular in Ur as it was in Kish. Our main entry, the seal ing below left, shows the remains of the lion's rear, the hunter holding spear and tail in one grip, whilst the one below right (**UEIII** 241/U14853 from SIS 4 level) shows him using spear in one hands while holding the tail with the other, similar eagle and rosettes again filling in the background.



The theme of hunters pre-empting the predations of the lion to keep the victim for themselves is earliest seen on the Hunter's Palette in Egypt (see **CANEA Amalgamated Catalogue**) and the idea lies behind the decorative scheme of the knife-handle in **Urusta-7**. The image of a man specifically holding the lion's tail is actually now known to be first attested on Uruk IV sealings (the clearest being W20875,1 below - **UrukCatBoeh** no.26):



Thus the inclusion of the prey, rescued by the hunter by impeding the lion at the moment of attack, in the specific detail of holding the lion by its tail indicates continuity of thought with, and development out of, the Uruk picture store. Other sealings from Ur match our main **Group D** example from Philadelphia such as **UEIII** 252 and 249 below, as well as **UEIII** 250/256 (not illustrated) - shared between the Philadelphia and British Museums:





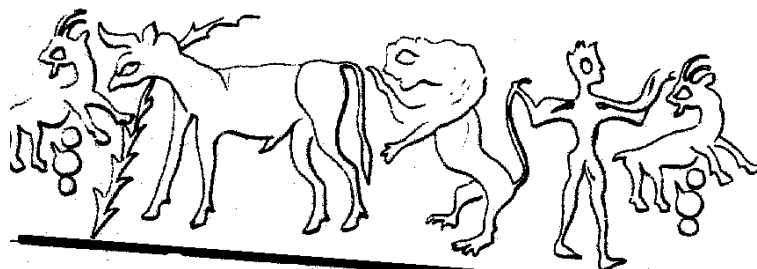
**Urusta-22 D GROUP**

|                          |   |           |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Fara, Findspot VII a.v.   |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Fragments of four sealings (from which the composite drawing below is made) |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Clay  |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | F125/F858   |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Berlin Museum   |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | VA6486/6507/6635/6691   |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | <b>MartinCat-214; GMA-811</b>   |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Early Dynastic I  | 3105-3000 |

For Fara (between Ur and Kish) the hallmark of the Early Dynastic I style is the large holes for eyes in humans and animals. This Fara EDI style is applied in many classic renditions of the key lion & prey compositional types using a flattened imagery where the ratio between background and foreground is perfectly balanced (the relevant part of the seal here is the group to the right). For the man holding the lion's tail with one hand and spear in the other on the left see **Ratt-12** (as the lion does not rear up, it is not an *Uruk Stance*!).



We remind ourselves of the less controlled renditions of this theme in the Jemdet Nasr/ED I period on an unprovenanced seal (below) in the Iraq Museum (Gordon 1957, Seal 2), reproduced in Basnadschi's 'Landschaftliche Elemente' pl.vi 260/**GMA-614**:



When well photographed the oft-repeated stance of the hunter clutching the lion's tail at its root and raising his spear with the other is clearly discernible on another well-rolled seal from Kish (**AshCatI** 123), confirming the detail of what we can just make out on other, more worn seals from Kish.



In textual backup from the **Epic of Gilgamesh** (Andrew George's translation) we note how Enkidu 'took up his weapon to do battle with lions' (P111) and that 'even the lions were afraid' of him (II, 238) - indeed, he and Enkidu on their way to kill Humbaba had not only slaughtered the Bull of Heaven but also 'killed lions in the mountain passes' (X, 38). After Enkidu's death 'lion-eyed' Gilgamesh, now dressed 'in the skin of a lion', sets off to 'wander the wild' (VII, 147) and seeing a pride of lions 'he smote them... killed and scattered them' (IX, 18).

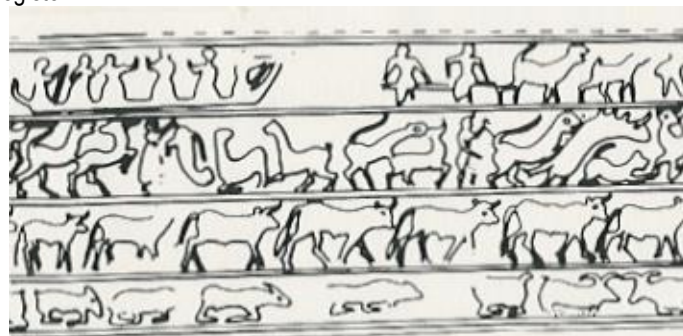
**Urusta-23 D GROUP**

|                          |   |  |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Alalakh, Level VI, below top of N-S short wall on House Site square N10, above Level VII palace |  |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Seal  |  |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | 'Black stone' – worn  |  |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | AT/39/65  |  |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Antakya Museum  |  |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | Antakya 8012  | c.f. <b>Belland 8ff</b> from Alalakh/Atchana   |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Woolley 1955 pl.lxi, 28 & 30: <b>AtchCatWooll.</b> no.4   |  |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Import in the style of Kish seals of the time/Early Akkadian                                    | 2500-2000 on iconography [but M H C Gates (1981) dates Level VI to 5 centuries later!] |

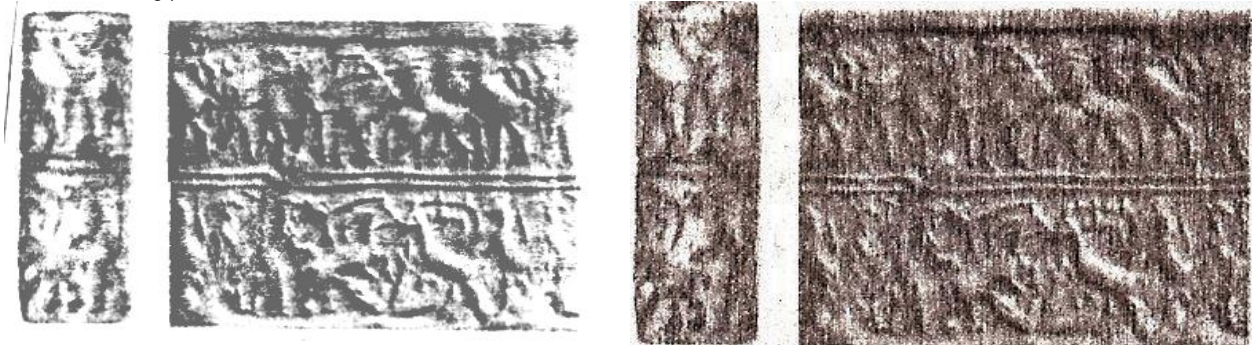
The sealing below, excavated by Woolley, is one of the earliest seals found at Alalakh, founded as an outpost of Greater Mesopotamia. It is just clear enough to show, first, the current theme of the hunter holding the lion's tail, and second, the fact that the antelope prey has just given birth to a kid, both reasons for this approximate dating.



During Early Dynastic II and III some seals adopt several levels of imagery as used to be seen on many Predynastic items of the Susa and Egyptian Empires, where processions of animals are topped by a band of lion & prey activity and over them all boat and hunting scenes, as below on the composite drawing of 3 clay sealing fragments from Fara in the Berlin Museum (VA6473; excavation nos F90/F816/F831; **MartinCat-** 182/**GMACat-**735) – on which, again, the a holding the lion's tail can just be made out in the second register:



We saw how in Early Dynastic times the double-tiered seal was favoured at Ur: this unprovenanced white marble seal in the Redpath Library, McGill University, Canada (Meek 1944, 4) also depicts Ur's favoured **Crossover Attack** (see **Catalogue G**) on the top register, while on the lower two antelopes with heavily-textured horns confront each other *across their kids*. The one on the left is attacked by a lion with arched mane; the one on the right by a lioness with herdsman holding her tail (he stands between the two lions' rear-ends - the back of the lioness repeats at the extreme left). Unfortunately despite enhancing the picture as much as is possible with two attempts, with poor original material it is hard to tell which way he is facing, and which tail he is holding!):





**Urusta-24**

|                          |                               |           |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Kultepe, Cappadocia, Level Ib |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Sealing                       |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Clay                          |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | Not given                     |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Ankara Museum                 |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | Kt.10                         |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Özgüc 1965 ill.82             |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Old Anatolian/Cappadocian     | 1900-1800 |

With the rise of the textile trade network based at Aššur, through associated seal procedures the lion & prey theme percolated into Anatolia, often via Syria waystations, most notably as far as the merchants' emporium of Kültepe in Cappadocia which operated as an independent emporium run from Aššur. Alongside imported Old Babylonian and Old Syrian sealings, crucial for understanding the contemporaneity of different regional styles (see Özgüc 1958), the local home-made sealings of native merchants - termed by the experts Old Anatolian or Cappadocian - were found in scores on tablets and their envelopes in their trading house storecupboards – much as one might find letter-headings and signatures on correspondence held in filing cabinets today.

The sealing below was found in such a trading house within a mixed collection, and at the centre has the familiar grouping of *Uruk Stance* attack with intervening spear-bearing hunter surrounded by wild game. Above them, star and sun in crescent (either side of a floating lion facing the hunter) conjure up the familiar astronomical backdrop found on mainline seals. Cappadocian design follows Syrian examples in the lack of an overall groundline or firm division into upper and lower registers: instead, an overall flat, decorative effect is gained (once the astronomical background is taken care of) by filling in empty spaces with floating ox-heads or goat skulls and little fronds or leaves in the smaller interstices.



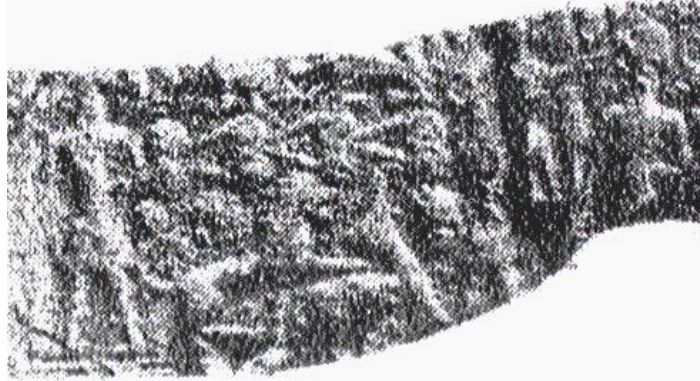
Within the eastern Mediterranean trading nexus during the second half of the Second Millennium, as the International Style developed towards a climax of sophistication (brought to an end by the depredations of the Sea Peoples c.1200), seal iconography in more provincial areas adopted features from different localities in a mongrel mixture, such as on this seal from Cyprus (no. 35 in the Jantzen Collection, Hamburg Museum - see Béran 1968 ill. 12). Here some by now familiar visual clichés of the time are assembled, including the exaggeratedly balletic lion with contrapposto head of the *Uruk Stance* - perhaps inspired directly by the Kültepe style for this carver - forming a distinctive, if short-lived Cypriote seal type where the separation between the smaller items in a line along the top – possibly also of an astronomical nature – and the lower combat scene is moving towards a sharper distinction between the two registers later made on Syrian seals:





**Urusta-24f**

A provincial style from further east with a similar mix of native and Old Babylonian ingredients is evident on other seals and sealings featuring the *Uruk Stance* found at Nuzi and Tell Rimah dating from the 16-15C: the first is in the Oriental Institute of Chicago (**NuziCat**-808), showing again the goat with reversed head - other hallmarks of the Old Babylonian period being the round helmet of the standing figure to the right and summary profile consisting of a huge nose and barely any chin:



Other Nuzi seals with the *Uruk Stance* are **NuziCat** 420/422/503/508A/ and 659.

The other sealing, from Assyrian Tell Rimah (Parker 1965, no.33/TR3730), is in the Ashmolean Museum and has a similar helmeted standing figure with large nose, this time facing right. Note the circle of six or seven blobs round the upright tail of the lion making the *Uruk Stance* gesture behind the enthroned figure, in this case standing on the bull. Parker herself identifies this pattern of blobs as Ursa Major - which by the end of our study (see **Chapter 19**) will be shown as associated with *The Sibitti*, or Seven-God.



A simpler sealing from Kültepe (Özgüç *ibid.* ill.47/Ankara Museum Kt.115) shows two groups firmly placed on the ground-line, but in the treatment of the lion shows the same Syro-Anatolian tendency to float figures off the baseline - and fill in gaps with decapitated heads. Here the hunter holding the lion's tail is dealt with as a separate pair, upending the lion so that he can place his foot on its head - a visual cliché on Old Babylonian seals, thus diagnostic of a provincial centre copying a core Old Babylonian design (see next entry). More of these seals are considered in **Catalogues C & D** and dating considerations looked at in their *Chronology* and *Art History* sections.

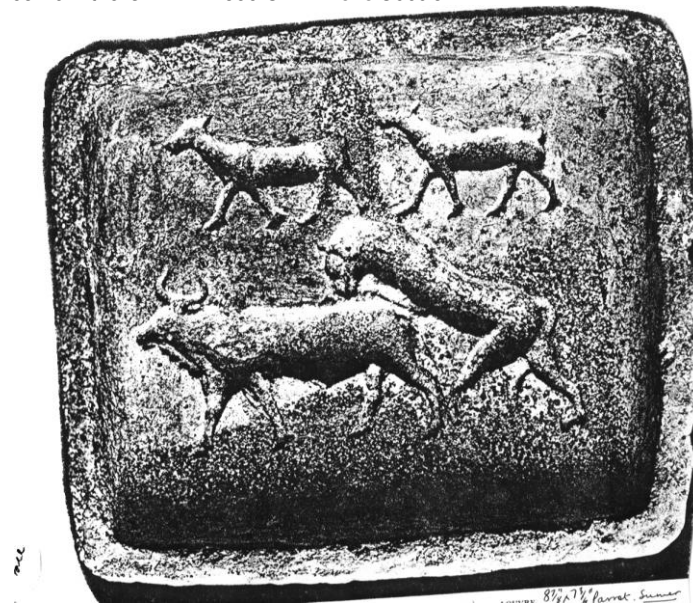


**Urusta-25**

|                          |  |           |
|--------------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Mari, Palace kitchen                             |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Food mould                                       |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Terracotta                                       |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | Not given  |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Louvre   |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | AO18902  |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Parrot 1959 pl.xviii, 1037; Parrot 1960, ill.362 |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Old Babylonian                                   | 1900-1600 |

From 2180, following the barbarian invasions of Sumer and Akkad, government and/or temple use of the *Uruk Stance* on seals and other carvings lapsed – it had already been more or less dropped by the Akkadians – but it was gradually reintroduced by the Old Babylonian dynasties, though more abroad than at home - the Mari food moulds being a case in point in this archaising, pure version of the earliest Sumerian prototype.

Places like Mari or Ebla in the Sumerian Empire in Syria during the Early Dynastic Period were in times contemporary to the Old Babylonian hegemony 'old-fashioned' Sumerophiles who kept the old culture and mythology alive, serving to radiate its 'parting glow' long after Sumer and Akkad themselves had fallen to Babylon. This is one of many food moulds found in the palace which would have shaped jellies, terrines or similar items for feasts (the design would have come out in reverse) – perhaps even for the annual New Year festival, since the imagery is appropriate. Most of them were plain, but a dozen or more were figured like this one, using several themes from the **CANEA** - see **SYNTHESES Section**.



The Susa-Sumer-Syria link is confirmed by comparing the mould design with contemporary Old Babylonian seals from Susa where a well-worn, archaic scene from ancient Sumer/Susa is now executed with the clumsiness often associated with the wearing down of an image to its stereotype under less vigorous government. This seal comes from a collection put in a foundation offering under the Temple of Inshushinak, God of Susa – unusually made of local bituminous limestone (**LouvCat-Sb1338/GSCat-1966**):





**Urusta-26**

|                          |  |           |
|--------------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Tepe Giyan, Trench B under corner of burned brick wall, Necropolis Level III, though possibly fallen from higher level |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Bell-shaped sculpture, right side broken off and missing   |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Dark green steatite  |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | Not given  |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Louvre   |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | ?  |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Contenau & Ghirshman 1935, pl viii   |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Old Babylonian   | 1900-1600 |

The route for the spread of the *Uruk Stance* during the Second Millennium was to sites along the north banks of the Tigris from places in the Iranian Crescent like Tepe Giyan, the find spot for this bell-shaped sculpture. This curious fragment, probably a throne decoration slotted over a wooden upright held in place by pegs, has two ladies on the top, arms linked, with below the same mainline imagery known to earlier empires of the *Uruk Stance* with human hunter attempting to intercept the attack. For now we concentrate on the sides showing the lion rearing up behind a goat or ibex to seize the horns on its reversed head, while aimed at further round by a hunter with bow and arrow over a much smaller man in between. That it was part of a throne decoration is significant in the light of the frequent association of the lion-prey attack behind or in front of an enthroned Ruler or God.



Many Old Babylonian seals show the lion reared up on its hindlegs with wide-open snarling jaws, as in this seal from the Musée Guimet (*GuimetCat*-59). Though this stretches the concept of the *Uruk Stance* beyond its limit, it solves a design problem in having all figures the same height. In this instance the lion-prey group stands immediately behind a representation of the God Shamash, stepping up the mountain in the way the Sun rises and greeted by a worshipper.





**Urusta-26f**

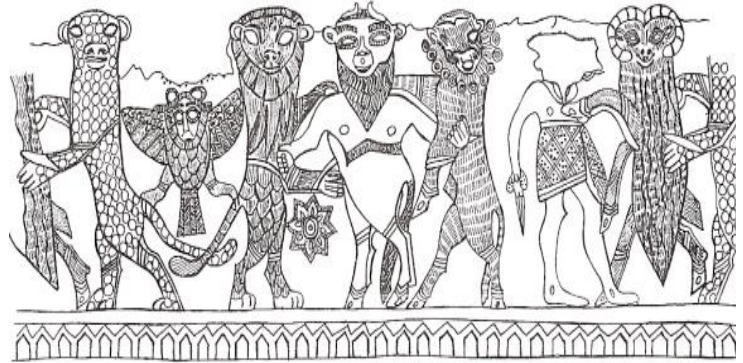
The juxtaposition of large- and small-scale images seen on the throne post appears again on an unprovenanced haematite cylinder seal in the Bibliothèque Nationale (**BNCat-444**) where the hunter holds up the lion's cub by the hind legs. It is a straight mix of Babylonian and Syro-Cappadocian pictographs influenced by Syro-Sumer (compare the use of ribbons of small figures in the seal from Fara in **Urusta-23f**). The running guilloche is all that remains of the intertwined snakes of Susa, serving as a decorative boundary demarcating these abrupt changes of scale.



Cappadocia, of course, runs into Anatolia from Western Syria in a seamless continuum separated only by mountains, and gradually took up the use of the cylinder seal during the Old Assyrian period as traders moved ever westwards to operate in trading posts such as Kültepe. A Syro-Cappadocian rust-coloured serpentine seal in the Louvre (D124/**LouvCat** pl.xliii, 20) again shows the period's favoured upright-rearing lion with head at human head-height behind cow with head leaning back to the lion and itself rearing in an *Uruk Stance* over its calf. The scene takes place before a throned ruler or God (or behind, depending on how the seal is rolled) - the two groups separated by a standing figure approaching the seated figure:



Only on the strength of the way the creatures stand up on their hindlegs in the Old Babylonian fashion (which can be traced back to EDIII seal compositions - see **Catalogue G: the Crossover Attack**) do we place here this damaged small gold (formerly spouted) vase, said to have been fished out of the Euphrates in 1804 (though the fact it was made in two halves soldered together gives rise to some suspicion that it is a fake). It has the calyx foot of the Uruk/Ur 3M stone vases (Bellelli in **Iranica Antiqua XXIV** compares it to the vase in our **Urusta-11** entry) but its provincial stylistic characteristics align it more to the treasure of Hasanlu round the turn of the 2M. Because of the presence of the lion-headed eagle god, Imdugud, Bellelli also compares it to the Entemena vase (**ForAtt-4**) - and also to a gold cup from the lost Astrabad treasure (said to consist of Sumerian artefacts) but we do not know enough about that lost hoard to be able to comment.



**Urusta-27**

|                          |   |           |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Minet el-Beida (port of Ras Shamra-Ugarit), Necropolis Tomb III   |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Pyx, damaged, with no bottom, and decoration not completed  |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Section of elephant tusk, not yet hollowed out  |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   |   |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Louvre  |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | AO 11 602   |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Gachet 1987, pl.6/7, 56; Metzger 1985, 1161; Schaeffer 1929; Dunand & Schaeffer 1930; Barnett 1982 p.29 |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Canaanite   | 1800-1500 |

A throne scene with a plainly rendered, naturalistic lion and prey group, reminiscent of some of the seals from Ugarit, is roughly sketched out on a cylindrical ivory container: most of the surfaces are still flat and unadorned, apart from the Egyptianising lion-foot throne which has some modelling. Though damaged, enough of the scene remains to identify it as the type of presentation scene seen in the previous entry – the grouping Barnett has referred to as ‘honouring a Goddess’. This was amongst the very first artefacts discovered by Schaeffer when invited to do preliminary exploratory work at Ras Shamra by Dunand in 1929, from which a life-long involvement with the site ensued. In Tomb III there were two cylindrical containers cut from sections of elephant tusk. It had been robbed long before in antiquity and the bones of its three inhabitants disarticulated and scattered (there was a further retainer’s skull found at the entrance to the Cypriote-type dromos that, in Ur Royal Tombs style, led down to the dressed stone vaulted interior). Ras Shamra/Minet el-Beida’s cosmopolitanism by the time the tomb was built now extended to the Mycenaean world, yet the iconography and unfinished nature of this pyx indicates local manufacture. What remained of the tomb’s contents in the corners consisted of a cultural mix of Cypriote and Mycenaean-decorated pottery, a haematite cylinder seal with a Rear Attack on it, and New Kingdom Egyptian alabaster krater and duck-shaped ivory make-up containers.



The undecorated second pyx (broken into three, of which one piece had disappeared) still had a bottom and according to Schaeffer went with the now famous lid decorated with a bare-breasted and enthroned Minoan-Mycenaean goddess flanked by rearing goats shown below – another familiar, old-fashioned Sumerian-type motif found even on the oldest Susan seals, where the Goddess replaces the usual central bush or male hero:



Yet there is no reason for the lid not to have belonged to the *Uruk Stance* pyx, particularly as the combination of Goddess with lion and prey image occurs several times on artefacts in the region, including the throne-room presentation scenes following on the next page. Although her skirt is Mycenaean, and the group highly finished in comparison to the box part, it is of the right diameter and its iconography showing Goddess as Mistress of Animals ties in with the overall scheme of ‘honouring the Goddess’ in the throne scene on the container itself.

**Urusta-27f**

For additional evidence of this combination, albeit from rather poor samples difficult to photograph clearly, we see a sparer rendition on an unprovenanced cylinder seal from the Musée Guimet (**GuimetCat-111**) with eagle flying overhead, between lion and prey directly behind the seated figure on the throne facing the same way, intercepted, it appears, by a tree or bush:



Of further importance for the eventual deciphering of the lion & prey symbol, however, is the next, unprovenanced, haematite Hittite seal in the Philadelphia Museum Babylonian Collection [CBS 7327] catalogued by Legrain as **CBSCat-500** (the bare legs of the War God Teshub in short tunic indicates the Hittite warrior dress preference copied by the Greeks later). He interprets the large standing figure with club and familiar OB helmet and nasal profile as the Sun-God, adored by a worshipper, and reads the female behind him actually standing on the *Uruk Stance* as the War Goddess Ishharra (a variant of Ishtar). The crouching griffin before her face is seized by Teshub-Adad (usually known as Baal), just such a grouping as seen in **Ratt-18** (second row) without the lion-prey element. It is Anatolian or Hittite convention to stand their Gods and Goddesses on their animal familiars, so that here we are pointed to the equivalence between Venus and the lion and prey motif without any doubt – a rare and valuable example for art historians that spells it out plainly (another example is seen on the Tyskiewicz Cylinder Seal (**Ratt-28**)).



Another haematite seal, below, bought by Laurence of Arabic in Aleppo and now in the Ashmolean Museum (1913.165/**AshCatI-864**), though not showing a lion and prey group, reveals a turning point in style and motif as second-phase Egyptian influence on local Syrian carvers adopting its imagery now appears – here a winged sphinx rears up to greet a local ruler wearing a pharaonic headdress with Sun-in-Crescent between them, meaning the enthroned figure could instead represent Shamash – or even Ishtar. Certainly the association of the Goddess with a throne flanked by winged sphinxes as the arms was later an enduring icon in Syria - to the extent that during the First Millennium that type of throne standing alone in the temple precinct without anyone in it was sufficient to suggest Her hidden presence.





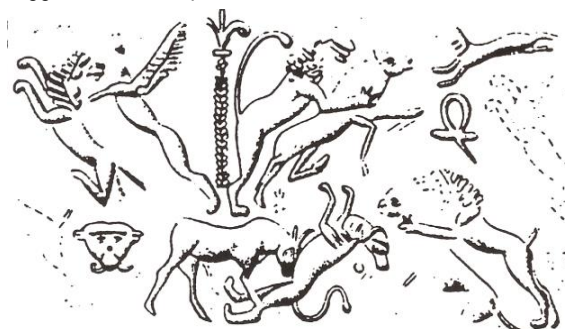
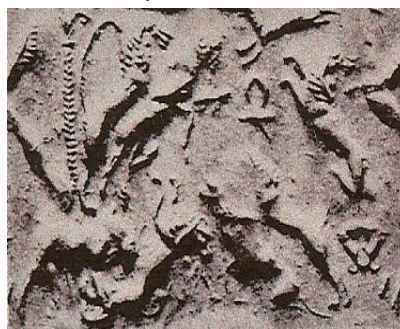
Urusta-28

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Serse Hill, near Gercüs, Cappadocia                  |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Cylinder seal  |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | 'hard black stone'                                   |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   |  |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Formerly Mardin Museum [now lost]                    |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       |  |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Erkanal-Öktü in <b>ZA</b> 64 (1979) 234-243          |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Assessed as Old Syrian - but more likely Late Syrian |
|                          | 1700-1600  |

This fascinating seal reflects the jumble of influences coming together in Syria and eastern Anatolia during Egypt's Middle Kingdom, where many petty kingdoms had similar levels of power. This gave rise in the arts to a general mix of Egyptian and Mesopotamian themes with some unconventional variations that again help to throw light on what the lion-prey group signified by spelling it out more graphically. First, we have a winged sphinx attacking a lion in the *Uruk Stance*, paws perched on the on back and body at a diagonal, just as in the Membij seal lower on the page; then, next to a bearded, decapitated head, two heraldically confronted seated sphinxes are separated by a bird flying down beak first over a small child; above them, next to a stylised palm-tree, a Babylonian-type hero upends a bull, holding its tail and placing his foot on its head; the Egyptian Ankh symbol is twice clearly held out by vultures or Horus eagles, and the Sun-in-Crescent is quartered by a cross. Finally top right we have a straightforward but upside down running *Uruk Stance/Rear Attack*, suggesting one more phase of a four-part cycle:



Erkatan-Öktü related the upside-down pair of lion and bull to the top right pair on the unprovenanced greyish haematite seal below (the drawing from Kantor pl.xxiii/B shows it best) – though it can in its diagonal stance be compared to the pairs top left and bottom right on it as well. Bought by Lawrence of Arabia at Membij, Syria, and now in the Ashmolean Museum (1913.251/**AshCatl**-897E/Hogarth 185, it is not only shallowly carved but also worn and similarly includes a palm tree, decapitated head and ankh sign. The ruptures to the familiar iconography of two of the animal pairs in this seal (bull attacking lion in *Belly Landing* mode and griffin attacking lion - as on the Gercüs seal - appear to refer to strength or weakness of the Sun in the cycle of the Four Seasons, as suggested in the repeat of this seal under **Belland-10**.



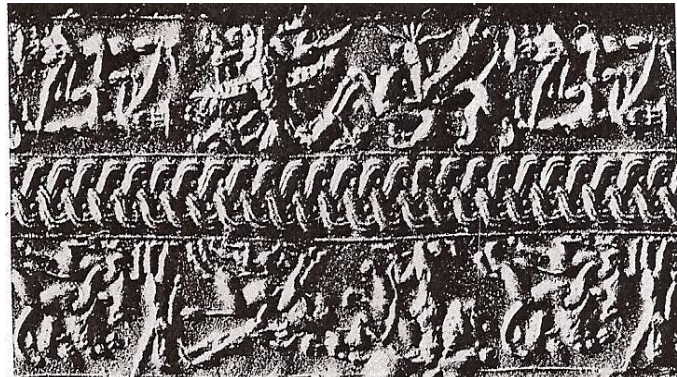
Compare both these seals with the last seal under the **BaLu-12** entry, which also consists of a circle of lion-prey attacks, seeming again to express the cycle of the Four Quarters of the Year summarised in the annual leaf growth levels of the Palm.

**Urusta-28f**

In content, there are related seals of roughly the same period: the first, of limonite (showing six scene, two of them duplicated), bought in Smyrna and said to have come from Cos (Ashmolean Museum 1911.288/**AshCat**-906 which I was able to roll, inspect and photography myself) - shows two *Uruk Stance* attacks at the left, one by a griffin and one by a lion on goats or ibexes. On the rest of the top row in separate boxes are a hero with upended bull, then a tier of three roses before a seated divinity or ruler with a looped post behind him that for Sumerians symbolised Tammuz. The other two scenes on the bottom row, in a heraldic arrangement if taken together, show two crested and winged sphinxes confronting tiny ibex prey rearing on their hind legs.



The second seal - of outstanding interest because of its bull-leaping scene - from the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (1972.317.15 – further described in Seyrig **Syria XXXII**) shows on the top register (left picture, provided with thanks by the BN) a bull-leaping scene and standing adjudicator, followed by a running *Uruk Stance/Rear Attack* with animal heads meeting (as on the Gercüs seal above), then a kneeling Gilgamesh-type hero grappling with a lion over his shoulder. Below the double guilloche divider (upside down, but shown right way up in the right picture taken from Seyrig *ibid.* for ease of reference) a crested, Minoan-type griffin in *Rear Attack* mode tramples over a lion followed by a spreadeagled lion-headed, winged fish clutching two horned creatures below, with another goat thrown over its shoulders - while *sideways* next to it two counterchanged warriors wrestle. These miniature scenes are inspected again in **Catalogue C: The Rear Attack (Ratt-26)** with clearer drawings of the iconography, but shown at this point for key matches with the other seals in this entry. Either photo has deficiencies, showing how hard it is to capture it well.



A minor third example to add to this repertoire (from a heartland town now reduced, like Tepe Giyan, to a Babylonian province) is reproduced in Collon 1987 no. 417, a greenstone cylinder seal from Grave 15, B Necropolis at Tepe Sialk now in the Teheran Museum - originally published by Ghirshman 1939 pl.xcvi, 810 - where both bull and attacking lion are extravagantly winged - fashionable for a while to indicate divinity, and a different solution to incorporating the sky/eagle element into the iconography (note the floating, decapitated game heads and the lozenge usually seen on Kassite seals):



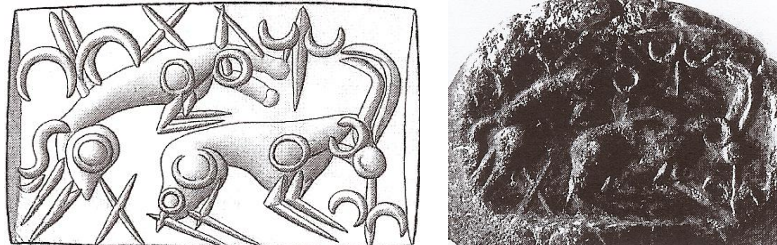
We note the winged animals for future reference on Mitanni seals – especially since it is from a territory known to feed in to Mitanni culture.



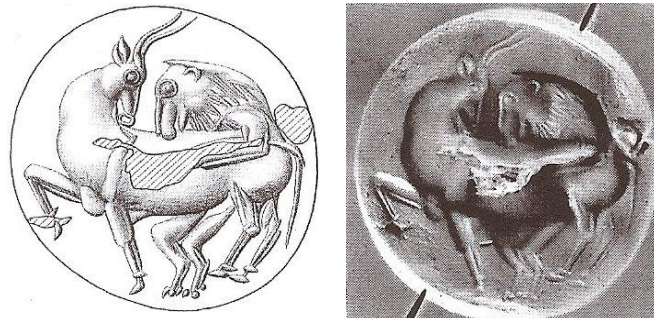
**Urusta-29**

|                          |                                 |                              |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Kato Zakros, Crete              |                              |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Several sealings                |                              |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Clay                            |                              |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | House A, Room vii               |                              |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Herakleion Museum               |                              |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | HMs 64/1-6 & 95/1-6             |                              |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | <b>CMS II,7-99</b>              |                              |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Middle Minoan III-Late Minoan I | 1600-1575 'Talismanic Style' |

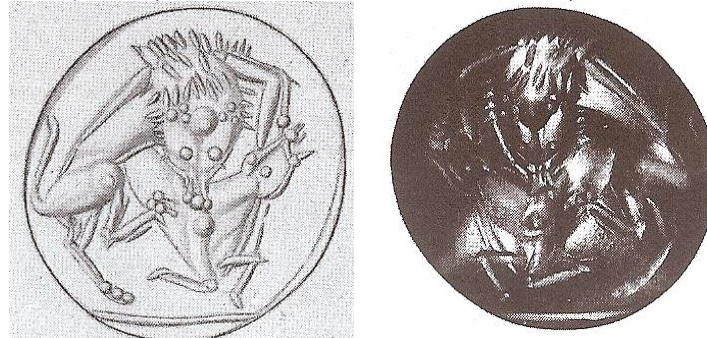
There is evidence for Crete's contacts with Old Kingdom Egypt in the 3M but given Crete was probably settled by people from Anatolia or northern Syria, their earliest iconography then is on stamp seals, mostly geometric shapes or animal processions, sometimes with circular processions of lions and the odd crude depiction of a hunter engaging with them. Only after seal production in Cappadocia and Old Babylonia had taken off in the first half of the 2M was the lion and prey subject adopted during the Middle Minoan period (roughly at the time of MK Egypt) – the one here drilled with large tube or disc bits creating a crude style.



This LM 1-II biconvex blue-banded agate lentoid stamp seal (**CMS V S3-310** – Poros-Galatas Museum no. 952, c.1550-1450) from the second half of the 2M is the most characteristic shapes devised by the Minoans, and the type of seal we perhaps most associate with Crete (because of its texture and damage we give the impression from, *and* drawing of it). Found in Tholos grave 2 at the site of Magoula, the style now has much more refined detailed in the more specific delineation of snouts, legs and paws or hooves, and shows the characteristic Minoan grace of the bull's head turned back; the carver has attempted to show the lion in the *Uruk Stance* coming onto the bull from its far side (compare the neater solution of **Urusta-30**).



We could perhaps read a decline in workmanship as well as a more histrionic treatment of the subject in this onyx lentoid from Palaekastro, found in a hole at Kap Plaka (**CMS II,3-283** - Heraklion Museum no. 561).



The three seals nicely sum up the development in treatment of the *Uruk Stance* in Crete during the 2M up to the time of the destruction of Knossos and its subsequent takeover by the Mycenaeans. There are many more seals of this lentoid type for the same period using the *Back Lunge* in **Catalogue D**.



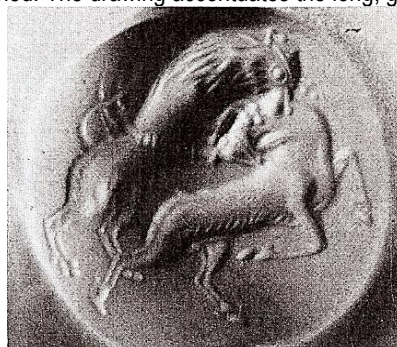
**Urusta-30**

|                          |   |             |
|--------------------------|---|-------------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Orchomenos, Mycenaean Greece  |             |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Lentoid stamp seal  |             |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Grey-brown agate framed in gold, with a gold-lined thread-hole granulated at each end |             |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | Level A1 west of the Skripou church   |             |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Thebes (Greece) Museum  |             |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | Museum Inventory no. 2708   |             |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | <b>CMS V-688</b>  |             |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Middle to Late Minoan/Helladic  | c.1550-1450 |

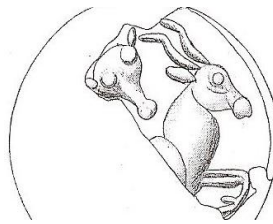
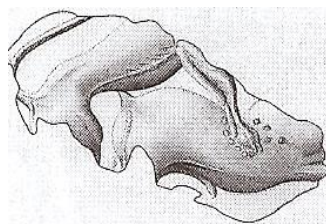
The find-spot for this seal tells its own story – that the Mycenaeans took advantage of the destruction of Crete's palaces, occupied Crete in the first instance and then developed their own strongholds on mainland Greece where they blended Minoan traditions into their culture, including the use of lentoids – here with the *Uruk Stance* (did it have the same meaning for them?). Being a Minoan seal type, it could have been imported to Orchomenos, made by a Minoan craftsman in exile there - or made by a Mycenaean copying a Minoan prototype such as the middle seal in the previous entry: here one pair of hind quarters cleverly does service for both lion and bull:



The lion and prey subject also appears on several seals found in the tombs of Midea, not far from Mycenaean Athens, the most impressive of which we deal with in **Catalogue D: The Back Lunge** (where also the chronological period studied will deal in more detail with the differentiations between Minoans and Mycenaeans during the 2M). This most unusual agate stamp seal from Tomb 10, now in the Athens Museum (no.8754), is tetrahedral in form: the second facet has two seated ibex on it - and the third facet is blank. The thread-hole of the prism is gold-lined. The drawing accentuates the long, gnarled horns of the ibex.



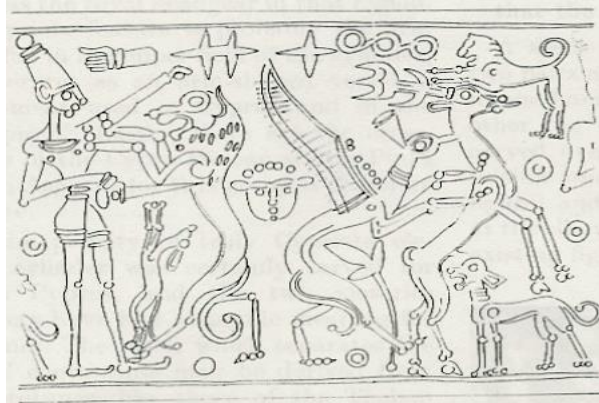
The carving of these seals, usually no more than 2cm across, shows a level of observation, gradated modelling and detail not achieved in the Near East itself, thanks to the use of bits as fine as dental drills, in increasingly mannered designs. We see this especially in the blood drops under the lion's paw in the left-of two fragments of two more stamp seals below (the one on the left is a sealing on a *Schnurplombe* (**CMS II,8-343**); the fragment on the right is a pale lilac agate seal fragment from Knossos itself (**CMS V S1A-388**).



Urusta-31

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Thebes, Mycenaean room, 'probably of the rebuilt Cadmeion'           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Cylinder seal with string hole                                       |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Lapis lazuli (deep blue)   |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | Find no. 203   |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Thebes Museum  |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       |  |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Symeonoglou 1973, fig 225b & pl.69; Porada 1981/2, no.6; Crowley 536 |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Cypro-Minoan 1500 [Porada 1400 1350]                                 |

The excavation of Thebes in Greece did more than any other mainland Greek site to prove the far-flung international links enjoyed by the Mycenaeans throughout the Near East, with gifts and booty coming thence to their home territory as their international status increased. The hoard of seals from which this one comes is analysed and discussed as a group in the *Chronology* and *Art History* sections of **Catalogue D: The Back Lunge**. Worked in the most prized cylinder seal material of all, it has several decorative drilled holes in the background, while other holes are left in as part of the style on the figures. In the sky float a clenched fist, three stars, a chain of three round links, or small guilloche harking back to the twisted serpents of old, all of which Porada interprets as Cypriote hieroglyphs – though the hand is often seen on Hittite artefacts. The griffin with peacock crest daintily attacks a reindeer in the *Uruk Stance*, helped (as often at this period) by a smaller leaping lion and hunting dog, while the lion-tamer has the pharaonic helmet of a petty Syrian ruler as he poignards a rearing lion, its falling long-eared prey (? a baby deer) squeezed in between them. Separating the two groups is the by now familiar apotropaic head already seen from other traditions – including the Syrian seals discussed under **Urusta-28** in this catalogue.



It makes sense to look at it against a further haematite seal bought by Lawrence at Aleppo (Ashmolean Museum - 1913.165/**AshCat**-864) where we have a similar group, Minoan in its gracefulness, again with the griffin as predator rather than a lion (and, strictly speaking, in *Rear Attack* mode given the prey is crouching - discussed fully under **Ratt-25**), separated by a double guilloche from two ibex addorsed to a palm. Next to these is a full-height throne scene in old-fashioned Akkadian mode, where the figures still wear tasselled Sumerian-style fleece skirts, framed top and bottom by the familiar twisted snakes reduced to a stylised guilloche (it ended up as the most effective and common scene divider in the 2M). It represents the half-clothed Venus being led by the divine double-faced Vizier Usmu (holding her hand as well as a fish) presenting her to Ea, God of Wisdom, as water streams from his shoulders (Venus being exalted in Pisces):



Rolled and photographed by the author in the Ashmolean Museum



**Urusta-32**

|                          |  |                        |
|--------------------------|--|------------------------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Ras Shamra-Ugarit, South Palace Room 232 on wall, perhaps from robbing of two royal funerary cellars underneath the palace |                        |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Cylinder Seal  |                        |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Reddish-brown stone  |                        |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | RS27.065   | Topological point 4560 |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Damascus Museum  |                        |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | 3003   |                        |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Amiet <i>RasShamCat</i> _405; <i>Ugaritica IV</i> pp 123/131   |                        |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Late Ugarit III  | 1350-1300              |

This fine seal from the well-recorded site of Ras Shamra, 'cross-road of civilisations' *par excellence*, reveals all the hall-marks of the thalassocratic international style with prominent griffin and gracefully leaping animals distributed in a balanced, flat pattern. It has most of the ingredients and combinations of **Urusta-28** and **Urusta-31**: lion and prey with scorpion, griffin, fallen man, sun-disc inside crescent, and a spare lion:



Four other Ras Shamra seals from the period just before (Late Ugarit II, 1450-1350) show the same more static versions of the *Uruk Stance* as carved on the Minet el-Beida pyx (**Urusta-27**) demonstrating the symbol's considerable continuity in the region. They are from all over the site - this one of grey steatite was found in "the House of Ovens" in 1968 (*RasShamCat*-166/RS30.259). It shows the familiar theme of the armed guardian of the herd - or Baal himself, so often paired with the lion-prey group of Ishtar - threatening the lion with spear and axe, two serpents in the sky, a winged scarab/sun-disc, crescent, and many blobs in the sky which could be astral or just decorative (see **Chapter 19** for possible astronomical significance):



The next, of green steatite (*RasShamCat*-333/RS 8.319) now in the Louvre (AO19154) was found in 1936 to the east of the lower town and again incorporates a floating scorpion and pots with two men either side of an axial plant, one brandishing a harpé:





**Urusta-32f**

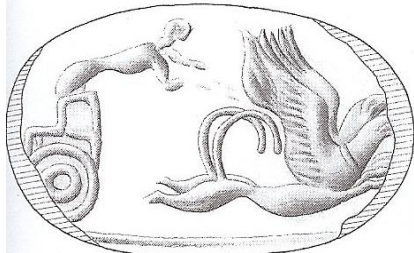
The third, possibly also steatite (described only as 'black stone') and showing the primordial quaternary of griffin attacking bull or ibex in the *Uruk Stance*, with scorpion and polar eagle - perhaps with stellar/planetary dots - was a surface find on the site in 1939 (**RasShamCat-80/RS11.231**).



Finally, on the Acropolis itself a green chlorite seal with chariot scene shows what could be read as a prancing horse pulling the chariot interrupting an *Uruk Stance* attack on a fearful goat - intercepted also from behind by a second person leaning from the chariot - found in 1933 in Trench 24 III, Topo 407 I (**RasShamCat-307/RS5.085** - Louvre AO17243):



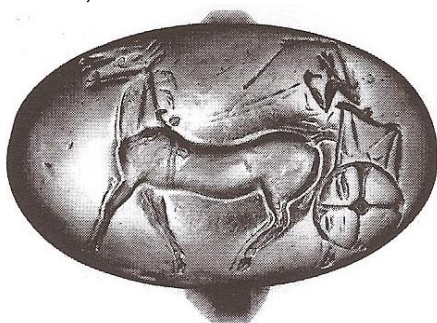
To digress briefly, the horse and chariot (here taking over the role of the hunter in earlier seals) was a specifically Canaanite item of warfare transport used by the Hyksos when they occupied Egypt in the Second Intermediate Period. The Late Helladic Mycenaeans soon added it to their group of warrior status symbols to proclaim their *own* prestige and international standing, though we have to distinguish in the seals or sealings found in Crete or Greece below between those imported from Canaan into Mycenaean Crete or Greece and, as in the case of the seal-ring and seal-ring sealings, those later home-crafted in emulation. The ring sealing showing griffins pulling the chariot is especially noteworthy – though there are no lion-prey incidents.



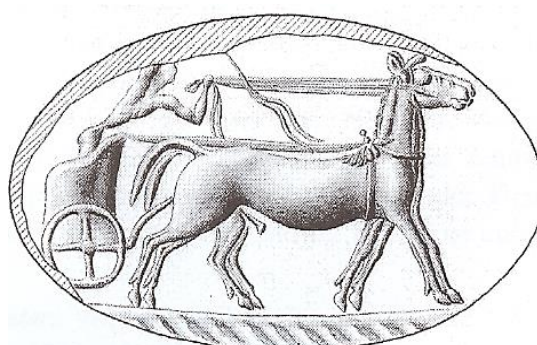
Ring sealing on a pyramidal nodule from Knossos Eastern Temple Repository: Herakleion Museum 347/**CMS II,8** no.193



Amethyst cylinder seal (with chariot drawn by two lions) from a tholos grave at Kasarma: Nauplion Museum/**CMS V** no.585



Mycenaean red-gold seal ring from the Aidonia treasure: Nemea Museum 1005/**CMS V S.3** no.244

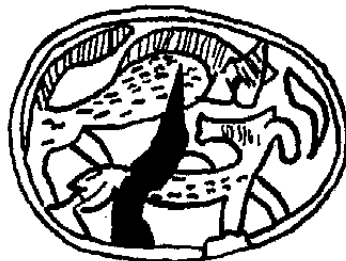


Composite drawing of 3 seal-ring sealings found at Akrotiri, Room Δ: Thera Museum nos A888-90/**CMS V S.3** no.391

An entire section on the Mitanni introduction of horse and chariot to the Levant and Egypt is considered in **Catalogue E: the Forward Attack** (some theories entertain the idea that the Hurrians were in fact the Hyksos, though this is hotly disputed).

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Tell el-Farah, Palestine (Beth Pelet), Tomb 563 (Cemetery of local Palestinian rulers under Egyptian Late New Kingdom hegemony] |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Scarab seal   |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Steatite  |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | T53   |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge   |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | E.12/1929   |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Petrie, <i>Beth Pelet I</i> , pl.xii, 125; Tufnell <i>ScSeal/Cat</i> -pl.XXXVI, 2492  |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | XVIID (Hyksos)to XVIIIID (pre-Amarna) c.1500-1350   |

Petrie's excavation at Beth-Pelet provided what was then new information about successive waves of Egyptian influence and occupation, and corresponding fluctuations in local Hyksos or Palestinian imagery adopted from Mesopotamia: obviously here the choice of subject points to use by a local, rather than an Egyptian. Also recorded by Petrie in tomb 563 were typical Hyksos-type bronze toggle pins to secure clothing, local and Hyksos pottery, and small pieces of ivory, either beads or parts of veneer. This scarab Petrie analysed as degenerate in execution and belonging to a tomb-owner at a time of political uncertainty where not only Egypt, but local petty rulers also, were losing their hold and subject to outside attack as Egypt's imperial protection receded in the time of Akhenaten.



Tell el-Ajjul (ancient Gaza) is within sight of the Egyptian border on the coast, some 18 miles north of Beth-Pelet, and its graves revealed a similar story when Petrie went on to excavate this site. Amongst a preponderance of Egyptianising scarabs, again a local exception with lion and prey, a symbol definitely not native to Egypt, was found in a building in the EKI area of the dig, 785 feet above sea-level (Petrie, *Ancient Gaza IV*, pl.v, 108 (RES 320 = RAM 35.3954). Olga Tufnell catalogued it with other figured Hyksos seals as *ScSeal/Cat*-2513:



The use of the lion & prey on a scarab at this time indicates the user's loyalties to a well-known Mesopotamian theme which had a long pedigree in the Levant itself – its meaning probably unrecognised by any Egyptian official. Because the tomb in which it was found was simply a hollowed out tunnel, as opposed to the kidney shape of the larger ruler tombs in that particular cemetery, Petrie *ibid.* [pls. XVIII/LXIV] thought it indicated ownship by a wife or vizier, rather than a ruler who would be more likely to have a scarab imitating original XVI/XVII Dynasty Hyksos seals using a mixture of often meaningless Egyptian hieroglyphs fitted inside Syro-Minoan-style spirals, as below:



**Urusta-33f**

In the norther Syrian provinces (especially amongst the Hittites) a native round stamp seal became popular, sometimes with scarab-like top. The unprovenanced hemispheroid granite seal below (**AshCatIII-209**/Ashmolean Museum 1914.557) is carved with an *Uruk Stance* with scorpion and crescent. Bought in Aleppo by Leonard Woolley, it could be viewed as Syro-Hittite version of a scarab, the top of this one carved with the initial wing grooving but then not proceeding to the further definition of legs, head or wings:



Just how widespread the use of scarabs became throughout the Mediterranean (always a sign of Egyptian influence) was realised by Humphrey Payne at the temple site of Hera Limenia at 9-8C Perachora near Corinth - a trading crossroad between East and West in mainland Greece. The votive scarab below is a typical example (see Payne 1962, Fig.36/540):



Most other scarabs found in the deepest, Proto-Corinthian level at Perachora (Payne *ibid.* fig.36) portray single animals, notably griffins, bulls or lions, with gaps filled in by the odd Egyptian hieroglyph. Although Payne puts them as late as 750-650 (i.e. the Egyptian XXVD/Late Period), the Aegean appearance of the iconography could place them earlier by two or three centuries - see for example his no. 506 in Fig. 36 below. Dating at the turn of the millennium is problematic in that we have to contend with a 300-year hole in chronology in the centuries 1200-900 which should perhaps be closed up from either end to around 1000-700, as Peter James (1991) and David Rohl (1995) argue, so that putting these in the right chronological slot almost becomes guesswork. We consider this again in the specialist *Chronological Foci* of later Catalogues.





**Urusta-34**

|   |  |           |
|---|--|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>   | Unprovenanced                                |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>  | Cylinder seal                                |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>   | Black-flecked brown jasper                   |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>  |  |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>   | Louvre                                       |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>  | A620   |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>   | <i>LouvCatII</i> -A620; Weber 356; Ward 1091 |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b>  | Late Kassite                                 | 1400-1250 |
| <b>INSCRIPTION:</b> <i>[above]</i> Marduk, Great Lord, look down on me and take pity!<br><i>[below]</i> Shamash, Great Lord, look down on me and take pity! |  |           |

This late Kassite seal has two lines of text running sideways to the picture creating a framing band and such an arrangement served as one of the models for 14C Assyrian seal designs when the fallen Old Assyrian Empire was revived during the reigns of Eriba-Adad and Ashur-u-Ballit, alongside the expiring Kassite kingdom, to establish what we now call the Middle Assyrian Empire. The Kassites feature prominently in the Amarna correspondence, being responsible for sending vast amounts of lapis lazuli not only to Egypt, but several high quality lapis lazuli Kassite seals feature in the Mycenaean Thebes Hoard. The palm tree is treated realistically, and the lozenges, grasshopper and dog in the spaces round the lion and prey and palm are particularly diagnostic of Kassite seals:



Of black serpentine (BM 89862 purchased on the market/Moortgat 1942 fig.4), the inscription on the next seal reads, 'Ashur-me, son of Amu-ganni'. Although some scholars date it to as late as the 7C because the nude looks so Greek, this Middle Assyrian period seal perfectly follows the Kassite pattern for the 14-13C of the sideways running inscription, framing the much older, well-established scene of the intervening hunter staving off the lion with young reindeer in its clutches. It can be compared to a seal impression on a clay tablet of 14C Aššur showing an archer defending a goat from a lion (VAT 8581) which Moortgat (1942, fig. 12) assigns to the 13C, Bérán (1957) to the 14C. Overall the group shows some of the same finesse of Kassite prototypes, but with the inclusion of the Arabian ostrich so beloved during the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I:



The higher and more rounded relief of animal musculature, along with the coarse hatching of the lion's mane and belly hair - as opposed to the refined and shallow modelling of Kassite seal - were to remain the hallmark of 13C Middle Assyrian seals, evident in the next catalogue entry.

**Urusta-35**

|                          |                                     |           |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Unprovenanced: bought on art market |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Cylinder seal                       |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Red and grey-flecked milky agate    |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   |                                     |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Collection E Oppenländer, Stuttgart |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       |                                     |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Moortgat-Correns 1964 pl.xxi,1      |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Middle Assyrian                     | 1300-1200 |

This seal (dateable to the following century since no longer using the convention of inscriptions top and bottom) can be ranked with several other Middle Assyrian seals using a similar *Uruk Stance* composition. Even though in some ways the style looks softer than the one we compare it with, Moortgat-Correns believes this is because the carving is unfinished (look, for example, at the tree, and head of the goat):



Moortgat (1942) allocates the seal below (*PierMorCat*-603/*Weber*-357, carved in pink agate and unprovenanced, to the 13C which covers the reigns of Adad-Nirari I, Shalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I overall, but Béran (1957) looking at the almost crude simplicity of carving (which we could read as a decline from the standard of the previous entry) places it at the turn of the 14C:



Overall, the coarsely hatched carving of the lion's mane and belly hair, echoed in the patterning of mountain and tree, are considered by Moortgat to be the hallmark of most 13C Middle Assyrian seals of either Shalmaneser I or Tukulti-Ninurta I (see Moortgat 1962 figs 5; 32; 34-36], where Mayer-Opificius (1986) would place them in the second half of the 13C and Béran (1957) in the 14C.



**Urusta-36**

|                          |   |           |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Aššur, Tiglathpileser Archive               |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | One of 650 sealings found in 10 jars        |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Clay  |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | Aššur 18764n and 18764a/e                   |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Berlin Museum                               |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | VAT 14474 and VAT 15479                     |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Moortgat 1944 figs 10 & 13                  |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Middle Assyrian, reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I | 1116-1090 |

The drawings of the two sealings below were made from a huge cache forming part of the Tukulti-Ninurta archive and therefore datable to the end of the 12C/early 11C *if* our dating of the early Assyrian Kings is correct (as already mentioned all 14C-9C dates could be adrift by 300 years - see especially James' and Rohl's arguments in the *Chronological Focus* for both **Catalogues E & F**). Into the bargain, as all the key commentators note, it is difficult to distinguish the carving style of the twelfth century from that of the one before. Without the archaeological context and the alignment of *limmu*-names on some of the sealings with known reigning kings of the time, one could be forgiven for dating many of them to the previous century.



Note in the next seal the  $\text{𒌷}$  symbol (discussed in **Chapter 19**) which has been variously interpreted as (Weidner) the North Node of the Dragon of the Lunar Nodes Axis (as for astrologers today) or the symbol of Ninhursag, Goddess of Womb and Mountain (Seidl):





**Urusta-36f**

The cylinder seal that made the impression below (BM 129572, of pink chalcedony, but unprovenanced) may through its finesse of style and similarity of appearance to the seals of **Urusta-35** date back to the 14C (technically it should really be included in **Catalogue E: The Forward Attack** but the stance of the lion for comparative purposes fits in more usefully here). Note the appearance again of the protected young (in this case the foal) as if in a real-life situation contrasting with the mythological or astral treatment of the horse with added wings. In other ways it is comparable to the second 12C sealing on the previous page by its inclusion again of the  $\odot$  sign in association with the lion attack, here actually attached to the symbol for a mountain and topped by the lightning fork of Adad:



The Neo-Elamite seal below, made of sintered quartz, can be read as a provincial version of Kassite or Middle Assyrian seals from a time when both kingdoms vied for control of Elam (Amiet 1966 ill. 416 – **LouvCat-Sb6178**): but its clumsy style could, like **Urusta-37**, even put it in the later context of the 11-10C.



We will not look at the detailed chronology of Assyria and Babylon until **Catalogue H: Maneater** – or even a more general outline of its chronology in relation to Greece and Babylon until **Catalogue F: The Bilateral Attack** - but to gain a general picture, for the time being it is sufficient through this handful of seals from the end of the 2M to have roughly sketched in how Kassite and Middle Assyrian seals fit into the overall context of the ending of an International period that was instrumental in connecting the Mycenaean world with Mesopotamia and Egypt via the melting pot of the Levant.

**Urusta-37**

|                          |   |            |
|--------------------------|---|------------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Tell Halaf and Aššur                    |            |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Cylinder seals (provenanced)            |            |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Grey limestone/'black shiny stone'      |            |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | Tell Halaf ?/Aššur 8844                 |            |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Berlin Museum                           |            |
| <b>MUSEUM REFS.</b>      | VA 12843/VA.Ass1686                     |            |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Moortgat VR 648 & 649                   |            |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Late Middle-Assyrian/Early Neo-Assyrian | c.1050-900 |

These two seals from identifiable excavated sites, with images merely scratched in, are not so much indicators of the falling-off in workmanship in the proto-Assyrian empire when centralised imperial mechanisms waned briefly, as pointing forward to the Neo-Assyrian style already discernible in earlier Middle Assyrian prototypes. They do at least indicate continuity of some kind of rudimentary official activity at both Aššur, capital of the empire, and Tell Halaf, one of its leading provincial centres in Syria at the turn of the 1M - often understood as a Dark Age. In the background of the seal on the right is a large star (without circle, so more likely to refer to Venus than to the Sun). The seal on the left from Aššur not only shows a large star and crescent between predator and prey, but over the curled-up tail of the predator are seven star-blobs, unlikely to be random (see the middle seal of **Urusta-24f**, probably half a century older). The quaternity of Sun, Venus, Moon and Ursa Major became common on Neo-Assyrian seals and the rarer texts mention that Venus is exalted in Ursa Major (see **Chapter 19**).



The next, unprovenanced, black steatite seal from the Pierpoint Morgan Library (**PierMorCat**-629) shows a similar lack of the crisp definition seen in 14C-12C Middle Assyrian seals. In the sky we again have the crescent over the bull, and star/rosette and seven-star group over the attacking lion:



We can probably include in this late Middle Assyrian/early Neo-Assyrian group for the turn of the 1M another unprovenanced serpentine seal in the Ashmolean Museum (Ref. 1889.356) bought in Tartus, Syria, by Chester (**AshCatI**-585) with stylised tree and crescent at the side, and other possible stars difficult to distinguish:





**Urusta-38**

|                          |   |         |
|--------------------------|---|---------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Nimrud, Northwest Palace of Aššurnasirpal II, room G, panel 8                 |         |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | King and Genie panel  |         |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Gypsum  |         |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   |   |         |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  |         |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | 33.143.4  |         |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Layard <i>Mon.Nin.I</i> pl.8; Sheeler 1946, frontis; Imhof-Blumer et al. 1889 |         |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Neo-Assyrian  | 883-859 |

This distinctive Assyrian version of the *Uruk Stance* is carved as embroidery running over the arc of the king's shoulder (left) on a panel formerly cladding one of the inner rooms in Aššurnasirpal's N-W Palace, where on the very top of the shoulder under the King's hair the lion attacks a horned *lamassu* in a heraldic arrangement with another on the other side of the bull - so the lion is at one remove from his prey. Usually no-one other than the King wore robes with scenes from the eternal cosmic iconography, though once or twice eunuchs do. The programmes of the Assyrian Palace reliefs will be considered in **Catalogue H: The Maneater**, with clearer pictures.





**Urusta-38f**

Just as the sculpture above co-opted the detail of the seal carver to create embroidery on large-scale reliefs, so some Neo-Assyrian seals of the time in turn repeat the layout of the great reliefs on a small scale, and look like embroidery, as in this rough two-tier scene on an unprovenanced black serpentine seal (*PierpointCat*-647) of 800-700. Parallel to our main example the seal shows a calendrical scene above, with robed figures beneath Crescent and Ursa Major next to a stylised tree and enthroned ruler or God. Below, watched at the sides by priestly figures, is a procession of griffin and lion attacking a beast suckling its young with Crescent and rosette in the sky (we are by now familiar with the precedents). The Tree of Life which in Kassite seals was a real palm tree is treated as an abstract design, much as the detail of embroidery on the Aššurbanipal robe above - a clue to their contemporaneity:



We can compare to this two more seals of black steatite, the second very worn, found in the Ninurta Temple Cache at Nimrud (Parker 1962 pl. xiii 2&3, ND 5364/5368) dated by her to the 9-8C BC. On the left, due to its short curly tail we probably have a dog, rather than a lion, while the kneeling archer is diagnostic for Neo-Assyrian seals of this period - later taken up by the Persians on their own seals and coins (and we cannot rule out that it is a reference to Sirius/The Arrow). On both, the prey turns its head to face its attacker - as in the old Elamite compositions, and on the right-hand seal we have yet another example of the juxtaposition of lion-prey attack next to the king's throne (as in *Urusta-27/27ff*).





**Urusta-39**

|                          |  |         |
|--------------------------|--|---------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Kelermes, S Russia – Barrow 1                              |         |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Inner bowl of two bowls                                    |         |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Gold   |         |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   |  |         |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg                            |         |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | Ki. 1903 2/37  |         |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Piotrovsky et al 1987 ills 24-7; Rostovtzeff 1922 pl.vii,1 |         |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Neo-Assyrian, made for Scythians                           | 850-700 |

The tribes of central Asia may have tried to keep the incursions of occupying empires at bay, but at the same time they exchanged commodities, learned their ways and began to try to emulate them. This golden bowl is a fascinating mixture of Assyrian and Scythian styles, the lion and prey group and running ostriches being purely Assyrian contributions. Later, as will be seen in 6-5C examples that borrowed more from Greek iconography than Babylonian, Scythians fully absorbed the lion and prey theme and regurgitated it in their own ornamental style, as used on the reindeer to the left of the *Uruk Stance* group in this bowl.



The unprovenanced agate cylinder seal below from the Louvre (**LouvCat** pl.lxxxvii, 17), although Assyrian in appearance, from the dress of the hunter is thought to be Median. Keen horsemen and hunters like the Scyths, the Medes on the fringes of the Assyrian Empire were amongst the many Central Asian tribes to devise their own versions of Assyrian royal art, setting the precedents for their Persian cousins to copy Assyrian palace art on a grander scale at Susa and Persepolis. Note, again, the planetary/stellar references in the sky, much in Assyrian scratched mode.

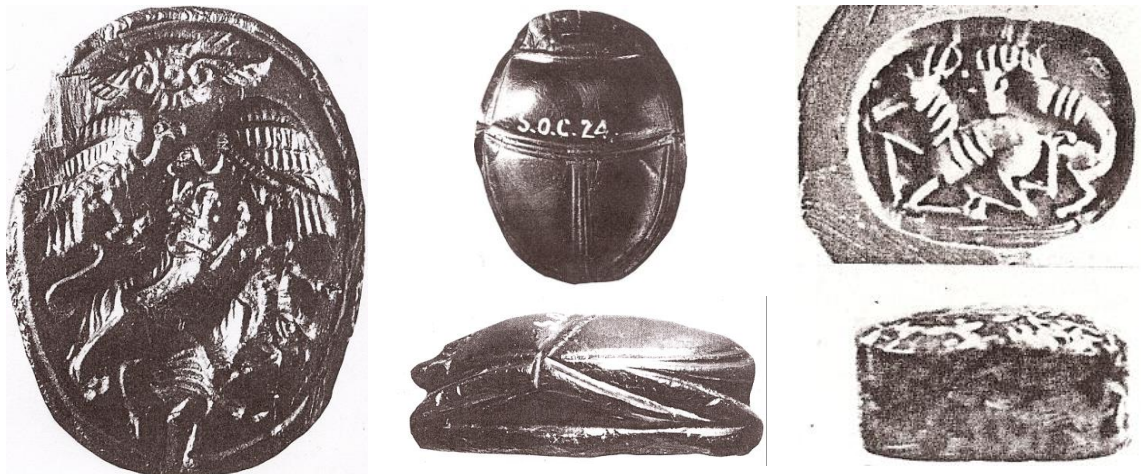


The seal can be compared with **PierpointCat**-830E which shows a Mede in trousers aiming his bow and arrow at an ibex, with an Achaemenid royal figure beyond doing the same (no lion attack in this one). At Persepolis both tribes are shown intermingled as the Court élite, leading tribute bearers up the staircases in brotherly pairs.

**Urusta-40**

|                          |   |           |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Unprovenanced, of the type from the Yunus/Djerablus Cemetery, Karkemish             |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Scarab seal   |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Haematite   |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | S.O.C. 24   |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | British Museum  |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | WAA 103292  |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Boardman & Moorey 1964, no.14, close to no.12 found in the Yunus/Djerablus Cemetery |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Late Hittite  | 850-650BC |

The huge scarab below left/middle shows the mix of Egyptian and Mesopotamian symbols typical of the eclecticism of provincial Hittite rulers in the Levant in the early 1M when scarab and hammer seals were equally used (and in rare cases combined, by carving a scarab on the top of the hammer handle!). While the two vultures are Egyptian, the winged sun and hatched carving have Assyrian overtones. The lion prances forward almost with the abandon of earlier Minoan prototypes, while the bull bends its head downwards and backwards to fit into the field. The up-down contrast between their tails had been canonical since the 3M.



The scaraboid stamp seal from Cyprus (above right), 'probably from the Kourion region' (Karageorghis 1964 p.293 fig.5, Cyprus Museum 1963/X-7/1) shows a compacted *Uruk Stance* with the lion's head frontal, from above. Kourion was a Phoenician outpost, and the lion and prey group was often used there, especially when under the influence of occupying Assyrians or Persians. The figures on both seals are carved in roughly hatched zones as on Middle Assyrian seals.

The unprovenanced cubical stamp seal of the Hittite hammer type (below) of serpentinite (in the Bibliothèque Nationale, unnumbered, published by Gübel 1987 fig.15) shows a mixture of Egyptian, Syrian and Mesopotamian motifs on its five decorated facets (the handle is plain and pierced to take a thong for suspension). Gübel describes similar cubical seals of the same period found on other sites in the Eastern Mediterranean, including Cyprus, Rhodes and Greece, suggesting a link with Cypro-Phoenician sea trading routes run on behalf of ruling empires of the time, whether Hittite, Phoenician or Assyrian (he dates this one to c.825-700). The images on the other facets will come under the **SYNTHESES** Section.

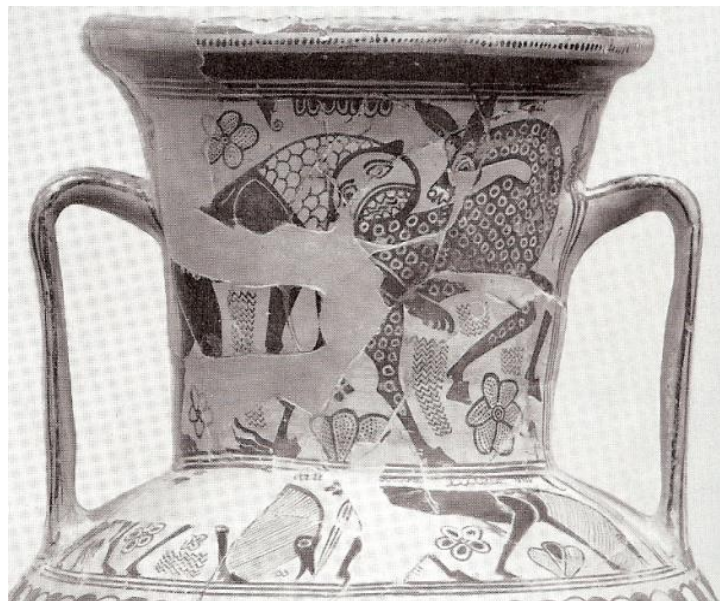
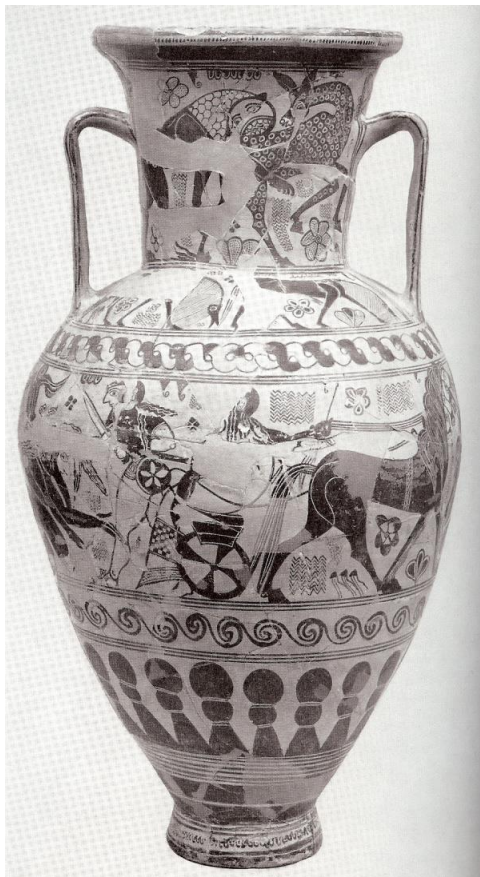




**Urusta-41**

|                          |                                      |       |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Unprovenanced, Attica, Greece        |       |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Neck Amphora                         |       |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Clay                                 |       |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   |                                      |       |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York |       |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | 11.210.1                             |       |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Schefold 1967 pl.174                 |       |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Early Attic                          | c.670 |
| <b>INSCRIPTION: NONE</b> |                                      |       |

The Greeks, like the Scyths, inherited the lion and prey symbol by indirect contacts with middle-eastern empires, the Trojan War forming the initial background at the turn of the 1M. Boeotia and Attica in particular were at the receiving end of a land bridge created by the Aegean islands to Lydian Anatolia and eastwards. The drawing of the animals on the neck is crude, with body zones divided up into areas of pattern. The lion's crudely rendered face is seen frontally from above, and the emphasis on his semicircular mouth lined with teeth can be compared with Neo-Hittite representations of the lion in the heartlands of Anatolia. The bunched legs and back-turned head of the prey follow the templates set in some of the types seen on seals under **Urusta-35-38f** - and the front-facing head of the lion seen from above follows the second two **Urusta-40** pieces.



Separating the neck zone from the main body under a frieze of single striding animals, the guilloche is reminiscent of Syro-Hittite entwined snakes on seals, and the scattered flowers go all the way back to the earliest Mesopotamian background infills. However, at its base the band of spirals is Minoan, and the Heka frieze beneath Egyptian. But the narrative representation on the belly of the vase with a scene from Greek mythology (Herakles punishing Nessos for making advances to Deianeira, seated in the chariot) is the distinctive Greek contribution to the Levantine shaping of the amphora. The presence of the *Uruk Stance* on the neck reminds us of the very earliest stone vases from Uruk, where vases or goblets were often dedicated to Inanna/Venus – by implication this one could have been dedicated to Artemis or Athena.

**Urusta-42**

|                          |   |         |
|--------------------------|---|---------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Assos, Anatolia (Ionian west coast)               |         |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Doric Temple of Athena                            |         |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Limestone   |         |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   |   |         |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Louvre [photo author]                             |         |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | 2835  |         |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Finster-Holz 1984 pl.xvi,30; Clarac II pl. 116B,5 |         |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Archaic   | 625-600 |

We will see from the remains of frieze pieces from this Troadic temple scattered in different museums that nearly every type of lion attack was carved for it, all to be looked at together in the **SYNTHESES** Section. Much as on the Early Attic amphora of **Urusta-41**, again the head of the lion is shown from above, here more realistically - and strangely reminiscent of the Uruk stone vase prototypes of **Urusta-6** to **Urusta-11**.



The exaggerated arching of the lion's neck, back in favour in the region after two and a half millennia, can be compared in a general way with this unprovenanced chalcedony tabloid stamp seal (known to be an Anatolian material) in the Baltimore Museum (42.460/**GkGFr**-977): here the prey bunches its legs awkwardly and turns its head back as in the other roughly contemporary examples just shown above.



We do not attempt a strict understanding of the chronology of Greek art and the place of the lion and prey subject in it until **Catalogue F: The Bilateral Attack**. The examples that follow are therefore in fairly loose order of manufacture, subject to correction until then, the overall aim in *this* Catalogue being to confirm the chronology of Achaemenid Persian artefacts against which to set Archaic Greek practice during the time Persian royalty was employing craftsmen from the Greek world (Ionia in particular) at Persepolis.



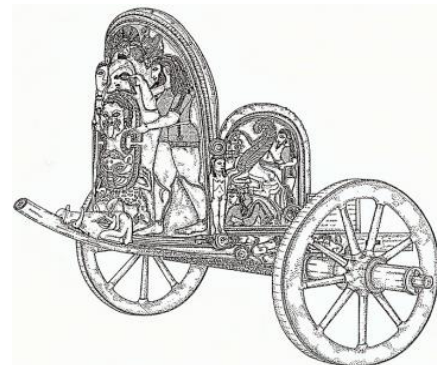
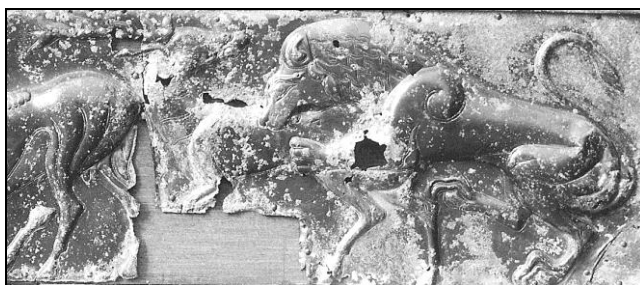
Urusta-43

|                          |   |         |
|--------------------------|---|---------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Tomb at Monteleone di Spoleto, Italy – probably made in Chiusi or Picenum |         |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Biga (small chariot) – bottom border, left side                           |         |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Bronze-clad wood  |         |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   |   |         |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York                                      |         |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | 03.23.1   |         |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Ducati 1927 pl.108, 288; Schefold 1967 pl.401                             |         |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Archaic Etruscan  | 550-540 |
| <b>INSCRIPTION: NONE</b> |   |         |

The *Belly Landing* on the main central front panel of this chariot (**Belland-19**) has already been catalogued. This much smaller *Uruk Stance* panel appears on the lower border on one side of the chariot along with a *Forward Attack*, also listed in the **Catalogue D: Forward Attack** entry. The programme of iconography of the whole chariot is discussed the **SYNTHESES** Section.



The lion attacks a reindeer with long horns on the horizontal, turning its face to look at its attacker - as on the seal in **Urusta-42**. The figures are picked out in a mixture of repoussé and incised lines, some more decorative than true to actual musculature.



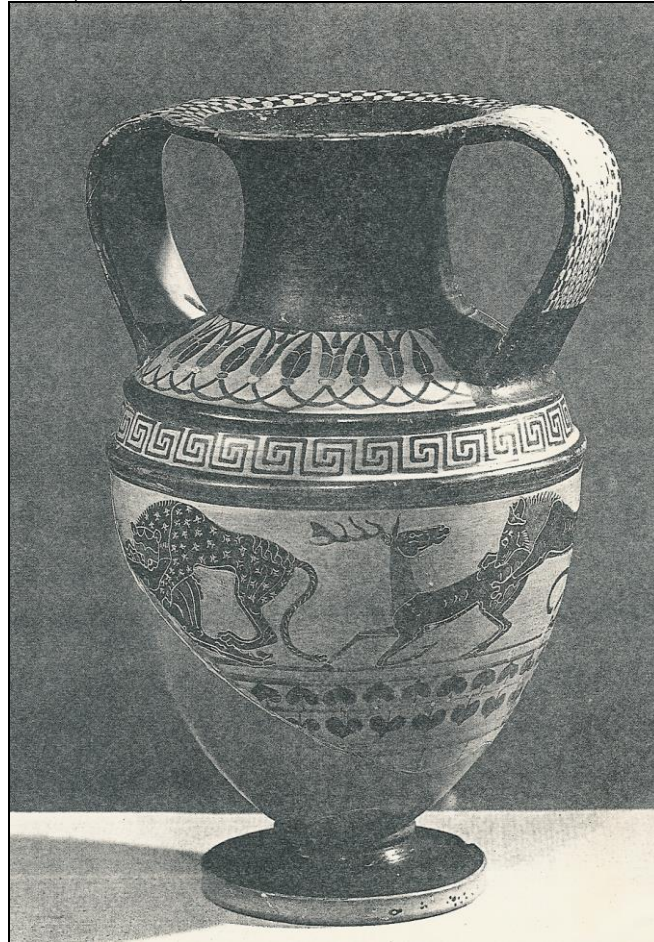
The subject is more crudely shown (possibly with a dog rather than a lion - on the side of an Etruscan limestone cippus from Chiusi in the British Museum (GR1873.8-20751) published in Pryce's **Catalogue of Greek Sculpture** D13/fig.16. There are parallels in Etruscan pottery of the time, as the next item shows.



**Urusta-43f**

The incised line used to pick out the detail on the Monteleone chariot is close to the technique used to bring to life the black silhouettes of Attic Black Figure pottery which continued to be popular in Etruscan Italy for some time after the Red Figure style was adopted on the Greek mainland from 530.

Looking at the *Uruk Stance* groups on this unprovenanced Etruscan painted-handle amphora in the Berlin Museum (Antikensammlung Inv. F1885) by the Paris Painter (565-50 – see L. Hannestad *The Paris Painter* 1974 no.37), it is debateable which way round the imitation would have occurred, not only in drawing technique, but also in the perpetuation of such details as the back-turned reindeer's head with horns laid along the horizontal, the treading of hind-leg on hind-leg and the profile of the felids munching the prey's spine at the back. The head of the spotted panther on the left is viewed from above, as on the panel from the Temple of Athena at Assos (*Urusta-42*):



On an Athenian Black-Figure Band Cup signed by Neandros of c.560-30 (inspected more closely in *Catalogue F: The Bilateral Attack*), in a detail on its border we have the same group of animals and stylistic features - seen also on a very similar cup in the Ashmolean Museum (below) by the Oakshott painter (c.540 –Boardman 1973 Fig. 83) - here the arched neck of the female panther attacking a mule is even more exaggerated and elongated:





**Urusta-44**

|   |   |           |
|---|---|-----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>   | Tomb, Vulci, Italy  |           |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>  | Black Figure Panathenaic Prize Amphora                                    |           |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>   | Painted clay, by the Euphiletos painter                                   |           |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>                                    |   |           |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>                                   | Rijksmuseum, Leiden ex-Canino Collection                                  |           |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>  | P.C.8; 1681.13  |           |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>                                       | <b>CVA Netherlands 3</b> pl.44; Brauchitsch 1910 fig.8; Reinach 1924 p.68 |           |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b>                                  | Archaic Etruscan  | c.530-520 |
| <b>VERTICAL INSCRIPTION IN GREEK: TONATHENETHENATHLON</b> |   |           |

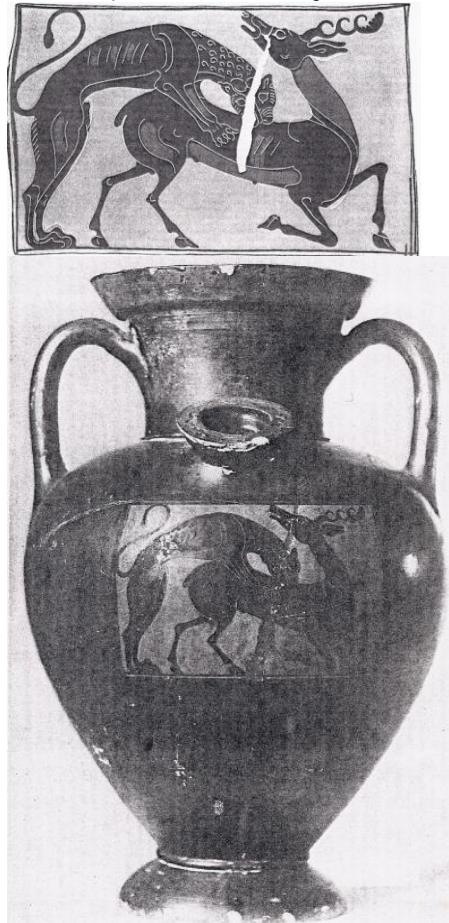
The back of the vase shows four athletes engaged in the activities of the Pentathlon, for which this vase was a prize to the winner - who evidently travelled from Etruria to take part in the four-yearly Athenian Games. The Black Figure style was retained for the Athenian Prize Amphorae long after it had gone out of fashion for the main market, but although this is a Black Figure vase overall, the *Uruk Stance* group on Athena's shield is reversed out in the new Red Figure technique using the red clay of the vase itself. It shows all the mannerisms of the late 6C depiction of the group as analysed in the previous entries. It is the strongest suggestion so far that the lion attack as the coat of arms of the Great Goddess - in this case Athena - was indeed adopted from the Near East.



Although the *Uruk Stance* is associated with one other Prize Amphora (see Reinach *Monum.I* pl.xxii no.5), Athena's shield on other vases shows a variety of other symbols, such as Pegasus, the Gorgon's head, a star, or three circles (*ibid.*), all linked to the Perseus and Andromeda myth which has certain important astronomical connotations (see **Chapter 19**). We will finally bring together all the evidence for how the lion and prey group is also astronomical in nature in **Chapter 22**, but already in this catalogue the iconography of the *Uruk Stance* at Persepolis will already point to such an interpretation.

***Urusta-44f***

This broken psykter amphora (now reassembled), painted in Cholchis, Boeotia, in the last half of the 6C and exported to Etruria is a clear example of the Black Figure Chalcidician vases that were so popular in Italy perhaps because of their old-fashioned style and iconography compared to the sophisticated new inventions of the mainland centres. This one was found in Tarquinia and is in the Tarquinia Museum (Inv. No. R.C. 6830) – published in Rumpf 1927 pl.cxxii/iv. Again the prey is an antlered deer with its head reversed, and as in the previous examples the felid leans right over its rump to bite it mid-back.



The *Uruk Stance* appears on an unprovenanced, conservatively painted Attic Black Figure Band Cup with Eyes in the Bucharest Museum (Inv. No. 18728 – **CVA Roumania 2** Bucharest 2 pl.xv) from the end of the century. As in the last item of the previous entry the prey is a mule with long ears, diagnostic, the experts tell us, of the last two decades of the 6C/first decade of the 5C.

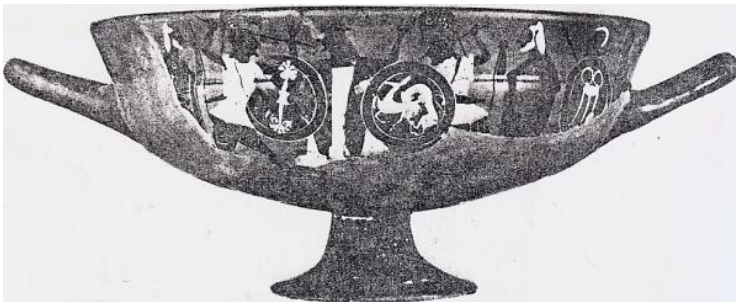




**Urusta-45**

|                          |  |         |
|--------------------------|--|---------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Tomb in Via dei Palma, Taranto, Italy                      |         |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Two-handled Attic Black Figure Cup (fragmentary, restored) |         |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Painted clay, attributed to the Lydos painter              |         |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   |  |         |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Taranto Museum   |         |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | No. 20137  |         |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | <b>CVA Italy 35</b> Taranto Museo Nazionale 3 pl.22/23     |         |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Archaic  | 520-490 |

On the back of the vase Heracles, accompanied by Hermes and escorted by Athena, rides in a chariot pulled by Pegasi to Olympia. On what remains of the scene on the front, shown here, two warriors confront each other on either side of an umpire, the significant item for us being the warrior holding a shield with a mannered *Uruk Stance* on it of lion attacking mule or doe, reversed out in Red Figure, as on the Athenian Prize Amphora (**Urusta-44**). The *Iliad* describes Athena as protecting the Greek side in the Trojan War, so the two warriors are probably Achilles and Hector before their final confrontation, a perennially favourite subject in the Troad and Lydia. The Lydos painter has been so called because he was probably a visiting painter from Lydia (just as the Amasis painter is thought to have come from an Egypt under the rule of the Persian Pharaoh, Amasis).



As shown in **Urusta-43f/44f** this *Uruk Stance* group is typical of those on cups or vases painted after 530, as also on the one (below left) from Vulci in the Fogg Art Museum (Gallatin Collection - **CVA USA 8** pl.48) attributed by Beazley to the Euergides painter c. 510, with the inscription EOGAI[S]KALOS near the fawn. On the back, athletes make ready to throw the discus. There is a nearly identical one in the Louvre (below right) with the same group, and its treatment on a Red Figure Krater in the Ferrara Museum (No. 2739) is the same (**CVA Italy 37** pls 5/6).



A common Egyptian element on Etruscan cups, often understated, comes in the form of palmettes, lotus or lotus-bud friezes, but can be more overt, as in this XXVI<sup>th</sup> Dynasty scarab found at Tarquinia (Höbl 1979 pl.77, 2a-d), which because of its subject is likely, nonetheless, to have come from the Levant.



**Urusta-45f**

The conoid shape was favoured by the Assyrians and then the Persians, but this unprovenanced chalcedony stamp seal, bought in Nizip, Syria (Ashmolean Museum 1920.21) has been categorised as Syro-Phoenician (530-500) in the entry **AshcatIII-511**. The prey on this occasion is a boar, and like recent previous entries heavenly bodies are shown in the sky above. In parallel with previous examples, the Crescent Moon tends to be placed over the prey – whether bull or - in this case, boar.



The lion and prey symbol had always seen domestic use in Syria and Phoenicia from centuries before and, when found on artefacts further west, is an indicator of that vital link between the ancient near east and the Graeco-Persian world through diplomatic or trade links. The design on an unprovenanced Black Figure oinoche in the Benghazi National Library (530-500) below shows the *Uruk Stance* group with a horse as prey, while a nomadic Mede (perhaps unhorsed), cousin of the Persians, adopts a stance of astonishment and flight, rather than the confident stance an Achaemenid king would take. The Persians had by the end of the 6C risen to prominence in the ancient near east, and by now entertained plans to extend their empire beyond Lydia and Ionia to mainland Greece itself (Reinach 1922 p.131, 7). Compare this design with **PierpointCat-830E** which shows a Mede in trousers aiming his bow and arrow at an ibex, with an Achaemenid royal figure on the other side doing the same.



On a Red Figure cup in the Vienna Museum (Inv. 3695) from Caere (**CVA Österreich 11**, Wien Kunsthistorische Mus.I pl.11) by the Douris painter c.500 (illustrated in Boardman 1975 figs. 285.1 and 285.2) on the outside Athena presides over the distribution of Achilles' armour after his death, while on the medallion in the interior it is shown being handed over to Odysseus who, apart from the helmet, greaves and breastplate, takes possession of an old-fashioned figure-of-eight shield with the same mannered *Uruk Stance* in the Black Figure style showing the lioness attacking what must be a doe (not a long-eared mule) – implying his allegiance to the same Goddess.

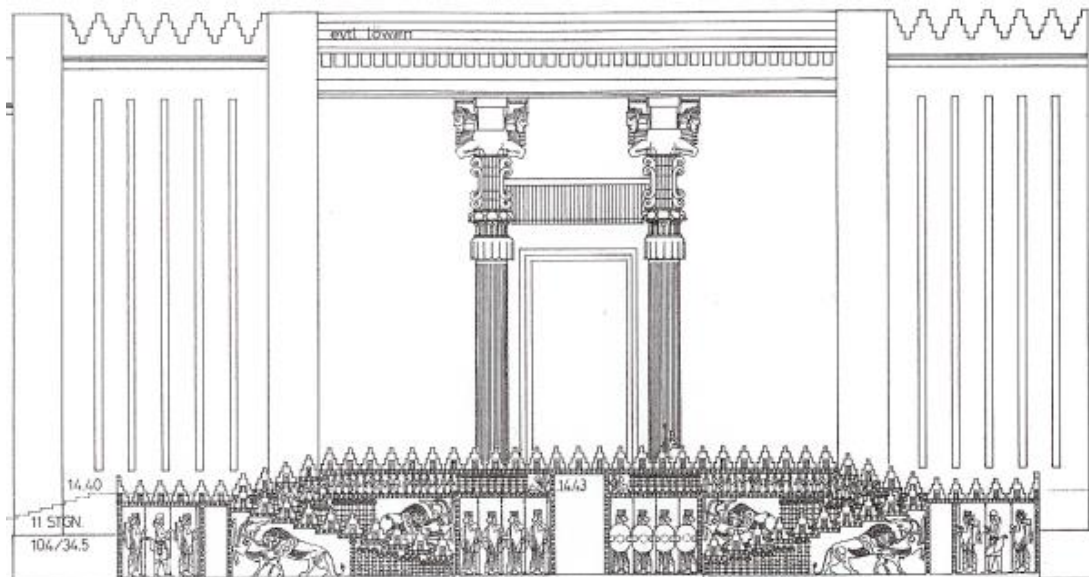




**Urusta-46**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>  | Persepolis   |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>   | On 26/28 stairway spandrels  |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>  | White or black local limestone   |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   |  |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Most in situ   |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>   |  |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>  | Schmidt 1953; Tilia 1971; Krefter 1971; Gropp 1971   |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b>   | Early Achaemenid 520-420 (first building phase under Darius I; further staircases and buildings added later under Xerxes and Artaxerxes I & III) |
| <b>INSCRIPTION:</b> Several inscriptions were carved or placed on or in the buildings of Persepolis, none referring overtly to this image, but the foundation inscription of Artaxerxes II from <i>Susa</i> may be relevant. |  |

The lion attacking the bull in the *Uruk Stance* occurs no less than 26-28 times in the spandrels of stairways at Persepolis (Tilia/Gropp *ibid.*). Their positioning on specific buildings within its overall layout is discussed in detail in the **Art Historical Context** and *Iconography* sections of this Catalogue. Suffice it to say here that aspects of its composition indicate that originals going back to the 3M from nearby Susa, Ur or Uruk are likely to have been more immediately known to carvers adapting the image to fit into the triangular spandrels of all staircases than more recent Assyrian prototypes. Below is one of many drawings from Krefter (*ibid.*) reconstructing from the ruins how Persepolis looked when in mint condition - in this case the NW-facing double staircase to the Tripylon, or Gate of Kings, beyond the East portico of the Apadana.

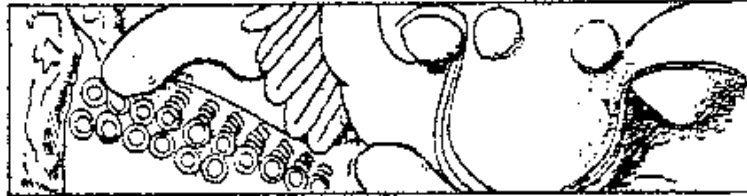


The prominent use of this symbol in the public areas of Persepolis could hardly be meaningless, and though perhaps apotropaic, it has that power due to its regal and astronomical connotations (see *Iconography* Section).



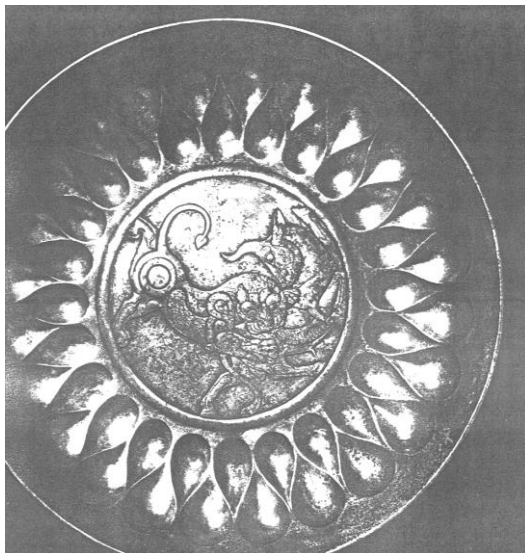
**Urusta-46f**

Just previous to the construction of Persepolis, Darius had started to build a palace complex at Susa made almost entirely of brick set on stone foundations and decorated with enamelled colours in the style of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon that the Medes and Persians had just conquered. Chaldaean Babylon and Median Ecbatana became the Achaemenid Autumn and Summer capitals, and Susa and Persepolis their Winter and Spring court abodes, not only for climatic reasons but also, in the case of Persepolis, for calendrical ones. Apart from the complete panels of brightly coloured brick reliefs surviving from Susa that show the Persian Immortals or bearded sphinxes, a few glazed bricks with the remains of lion and prey groups were found, of which the most distinctive is this one in the Louvre (Mecquenem *MDP XXX* p.82 fig 52,6), no doubt made for the brick stairway spandrels corresponding to those in stone at Persepolis<sup>5</sup>.



Darius' first buildings at Susa were started a few years before Persepolis, and was a rehearsal in brick for the grander stone version at Persepolis for whose execution the Persians could now commandeer stone-masons from Egypt and the Greek world as their empire expanded. As Boardman puts it in *Persia and the West*, once the Persian mix of technique and iconography had been decided upon during Darius' reign - carried out by an international team of craftsmen - the forms and idioms of Achaemenid art remained as fixed as Egyptian art, barely changing thereafter. However, it is Artaxerxes II's inscription in a later development of the *Susa* site under his reign (there is little of his fingerprint at Persepolis) that is most relevant to the *Uruk Stance* meaning, explored in our main commentary.

Smaller artefacts of the period, such as the silver bowl (below left) in the Faroughi collection (publ. Ghirshman 1964 ill.313) – no doubt made in the royal workshops at Persepolis - used the *Uruk Stance* icon for decoration much as Attic pottery repeated the group from the Hecatompedon and Pre-Parthenon at Athens. Another Persepolitan artefact – highly reminiscent of the Uruk cult stone vases (comparatively local to Susa) of two and a half millennia earlier, even if in a different material - is the handle fragment from a damaged glass vase (below right) found at Persepolis in 1959, and in the Iran Bastan Museum (poorly, but preciously, illustrated in Ali Sami's *Guide to Persepolis*):



Other gold and silver items decorated with the fully-fledged *Uruk Stance* have continued from time to time to be found in caves and other hiding places in and around Persia. Though some may be fakes, certainly the Oxus Treasure in the British Museum is considered a genuine hoard looted or hidden for safekeeping during one of the many dramatic events surrounding Achaemenid rule, ending in the torching of Persepolis by Alexander in 332 (its roof-beams of cedar, carpets and textile hangings fed the flames – Balcer 1964).

<sup>5</sup> Sabrina Maras of the University of California, Berkeley, reported at the World of Achaemenid Persia Conference (held at the British Museum in 2005) that, as well as fragments of processions and pieces of an unidentifiable winged creature already noted, further study of the collection of hundreds of brick fragments still held in the Louvre revealed further iconographic pointers such as a lion's paw - and lion's rear leg - probably from a hero-grappling scene, and a downward-pointing lion's ear likely to be from a lion attack.



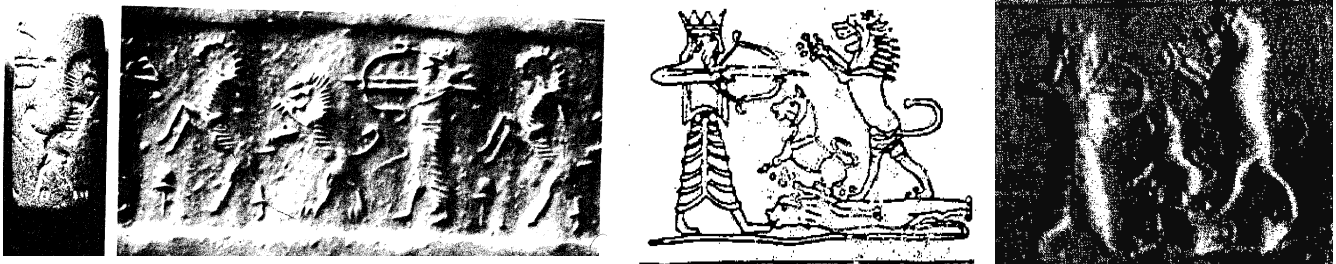
Urusta-47

|   |   |         |
|---|---|---------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>   | Probably Tello, Iraq  |         |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>  | Sealing on labels (best two out of 8 known examples)  |         |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>   | Clay  |         |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>  |   |         |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>   | Yale Babylonian Collection (left)/Crozier Theological Seminary (right)  |         |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>  | 9901(left)/200 (right)  |         |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>   | Goetze 1944 pl.xi,a/c; Scheil 1901 fig.2<br>c.f. <b>BNCat-H981b/a</b> and <b>LouvCat-A801a/b</b> ; Scheil 1901 figs 5/6 |         |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b>  | Early Achaemenid  | 520-480 |
| <b>INSCRIPTION:</b> 5 letters in Aramaic (originally read as <b>SH.S.H.M.R</b> ) over the lion's back could be a name but probably refers to the lion and prey group itself, in which case the words are likely to be <b>SHamS/QaMaR</b> = <b>Sun/Moon</b> – c.f. the Sasanian seal ring (III.6- 39) and our commentary on <b>Urusta-37</b> /conoid seal of <b>Urusta-45f</b> . |   |         |

These are likely to be sealings made by a high official's seal in the central Persian administration from the reign of Darius that reached Sumer, from its characteristic shape probably to be ranked with other Fortification Tablets from Persepolis itself. They replicate the typical *Uruk Stance* in use on the staircases of Darius' palaces of the time at Persepolis and Susa. The prey here is a stag with head turned over its back, as in **Urusta-43f/44f**, while the human-headed eagle (much on the lines of the lion-headed eagle Sky-God of Sumerian times) soars above, here the symbol of Ahuramazda. Goetze reads the inscription over the lion's back as referring to the 'Imperial Chamber of Accounts' - others that the first three letters could be part of the word 'Xerxes'. However, just taking the Aramaic letters as the roots of two words - reinforced by matching Sun/Venus and Moon indicators in comparanda cited in this catalogue alone - the probability of my decipherment as the most likely is high.

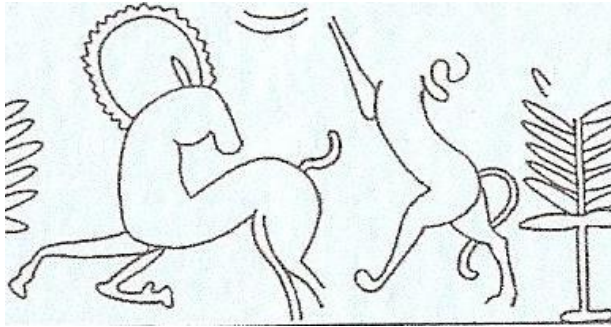


The first Achaemenid King adopted some royal iconography from Assyria as used long before in the former lands of Sumer and Akkad - where the lion is most associated with the feats of the King as Hero overcoming the lion, in Mazdean cosmology standing for the evil powers of Ahriman to be overcome. The unprovenanced limestone seal (below left) from Vienna (Museum Ref KHM AS X 63) echoes several Middle Assyrian seals (**Urusta-34/38f**) and shows the King as hunter, with bow and arrow aimed at the lion in upreared *Uruk Stance* clawing at the haunches of an ibex (c.f. **PierpointCat-832a**). Compare also with **PierpointCat-829** and a sealing also from Vienna (Lajard **Culte de Mithra** xix 3 pers I3/**Weber-504**, below right) where the lion has killed a bull lying prostrate under him, the cub rearing up with its father to fend off the king's arrow –we have seen earlier the precedents for celebrating the simultaneous moment of death and new life.



**Urusta-47f**

The *Uruk Stance* on its own appears on other Fortification Tablet sealings from Persepolis with different astronomical symbols in the sky - the characteristic contrapposto of the heads looking back bearing witness to the debt owed by the early Achaemenid designers to both Susa's Elamite tradition and Sumerian Uruk. Indeed, one wonders whether ancient artefacts (like those of **Urusta-3** to **Urusta-5** or **Urusta-12** to **Urusta-15**) from 4M Susa/Uruk, or Early Dynastic cities such as Ur, were used as prototypes, though the seals below have the added ingredient of Assyrian heraldic posturing:

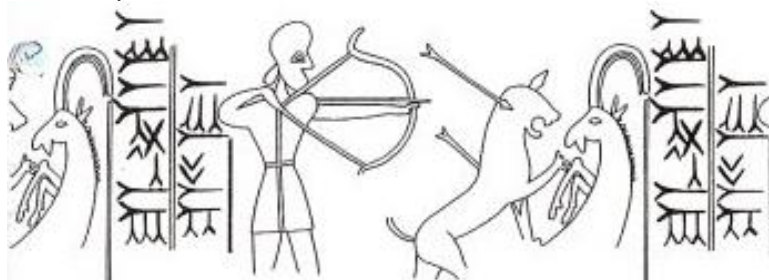


PFUTS 0017 – Root in **Briant 2001** figs 18/19

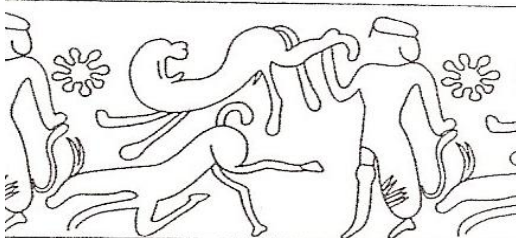


PFS 0453 – Root in **Briant 2001** fig.13

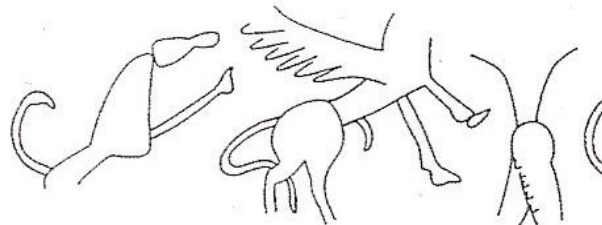
The theme of King as successful hunter with *Uruk Stance* lion attack occurs as well on one or two items in the Fortification Tablets archive at Persepolis. Usually the ibex, with its particularly Iranian resonance, replaces the bull or stag as prey. The archer in the top design (most likely the remains of a *Belly Landing*, but usefully included in this group) wears Median dress whilst the bottom two protagonists wear an Assyrian-style long robe that leaves one leg free. The lion impaled with arrows on the top seal is possibly another Assyrian echo:



PFS 35 – Garrison in **Uehlinger 2000** fig.8: The Elamite inscription is not yet deciphered



PFS 114 - **Garrison & Root PFTCat.I-284**, 499 BC



PFS 1119 - **Garrison & Root PFTCat.I-283**, 505-04 BC

Note on these seals the specific appearance of seven-pointed star, crescent moon or rosette in the background. Achaemenid seals are discussed more comprehensively under **Catalogue F: The Bilateral Attack**, given examples of that type are more numerous.



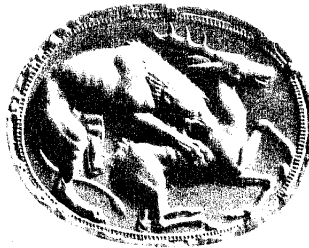
**Urusta-48**

|                          |   |          |
|--------------------------|---|----------|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Pazyryk, Barrow 1   |          |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Appliqué decoration from horse saddle                                     |          |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Leather   |          |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   | Excavation by M P Gryaznov, 1929  |          |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg   |          |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       | 1295/250  |          |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Rudenko 1970 fig.108; B.M. Frozen Tombs Exhibition catalogue 1978, No. 49 |          |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Scythian  | Early 5C |

The exhibition catalogue describes the group as a tiger attacking an elk. In the period during which this was made, the Achaemenids, of nomad stock themselves, had contended with the Scythians to their north, sometimes as enemies threatening their borders, sometimes as allies enlisted to help guard them. Their adoption of this near eastern icon is therefore makes sense in terms of a borrowing from Persia, not Greece.



From around its fringes and within the Persian Empire, artefacts were made with the distinctive symbol of the lion attacking its prey. In contrast, this Greek rock crystal scaraboid seal of the 4C (unprovenanced) in the British Museum (**GkGFr-507**) must either be Phoenician, or generally Levantine in ownership – unless a nostalgic memory on the part of a Greek owner of its common reference to Athena in Greece up to the Persian Wars:



Probably from Persia itself, a sealing made from a now lost seal that survives in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, is discussed in Boardman 1970 (his no. 55) as dating from the time of the building of Persepolis:



The involvement of the Phoenicians in the Persian war machine at this time is attested by a conoid rock crystal stamp seal found at Saida in the Levant, catalogued in SoutheskCat as no. 77.



That Perso-Phoenician connection is confirmed in monumental sculpture, as the next catalogue item shows.

**Urusta-49**

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>FINDSPOT</b>          | Obulco (Modern Porcuña), S Spain            |
| <b>ON ARTEFACT</b>       | Sculptures decorating heroön of local ruler |
| <b>MATERIAL</b>          | Limestone                                   |
| <b>EXCAVATION REF.</b>   |   |
| <b>PRESENT LOCATION</b>  | Jaen Museum                                 |
| <b>MUSEUM REF.</b>       |   |
| <b>PUBLISHED IN</b>      | Blazquez et al. 1985                        |
| <b>PERIOD &amp; DATE</b> | Phocaian 600-450                            |

The authors describe this group as a lion attacking a lamb, but the head of the predator is that of a griffin, with pointed ears and bird's beak (there is something important to say about the griffin as predator, in place of the usual lion, in our astronomical study of Persepolis (which, only rarely, used griffin-head capitals). Though they conclude Phocaian immigrants from Anatolia were responsible (which means their 5C date could go back much earlier to the Archaic period), just as strong a case could be made for its Perso-Phoenician identity, tying in with contemporary work at their stronghold on Motya. It forms part of a group of sculptural decoration that includes Artemis holding two deer, a sphinx, hunters with dogs, a lion, a bull, possibly a horse, and several male and female figures – familiar accompaniments to a cycle of images containing a lion/griffin and prey group which can be looked at further in the **SYNTHESES** Section.



The Phoenicians, quite apart from a Persian overlay signalling their alliance with them, were of course already familiar with the lion and prey icon of their own territory on the Levantine coast, and roving the seas within and beyond the western Mediterranean. The unprovenanced scarab seal of green jasper below (in the Geneva Museum, **GenevCat I-161**) could date any time between the 7C and 4C BC. With it can be grouped a copper seal ring, described as Greek, from the Hotel Drouot sale in Paris of 20/11/1961 (**DrouotCat-119**) showing a tiny *Uruk Stance* group (not illustrated) – but one should bear in mind again that it is more likely to be Perso-Phoenician.





## **DISTRIBUTION AND ART HISTORY OF CATALOGUE ITEMS**

The artefacts arranged in chronological order in the catalogue fall into similar historical clusters as for the Belly Landing but there are many more of them using this compositional type.

### **FREQUENCY OF USE**

Since so many are unprovenanced, the **Frequency Table B** below has *all* provenanced items under every entry counted in,

| PERIOD          | 4000-3500 | 3500-3000 | 3000-2500 | 2500-2000 | 2000-1500 | 1500-1000 | 1000-600 | 600-500 | 500-0 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|---------|-------|
| NO OF ARTEFACTS | 25        | 30        | 28        |           | 24        | 27        | 11       | 52      | 5     |

**III.6- 3: Frequency Table B - for the Uruk Stance items in this Catalogue**

amounting to two main peaks of highest use - the first in the 4-3M BC, and the second during Greece's Archaic/Persia's Achaemenid Period. In between, at a time of 2M internationalism there was also widespread use centring on Syro-Sumer, but less obviously centred on any single site. In other words, it was highly used when first invented, survived as it spread through the Levant in the 2M - and spectacularly revived in pure Uruk form about three millennia later in the same geographical region, centring on Susa and Persepolis. The two highest-frequency periods deserve further scrutiny: already in the *Chronological Focus* for the **Belly Landing** we studied the Predynastic period, which is relevant also to the earliest *Uruk Stance* artefacts. So clearly for this Catalogue we should cover the Achaemenid Period for a deeper enquiry into the use and meaning of the *Uruk Stance* material during its second high-peak period. (The second millennium material is better tied in with our detailed focus on three more compositional types in the next three catalogues.)

### **DISTRIBUTION**

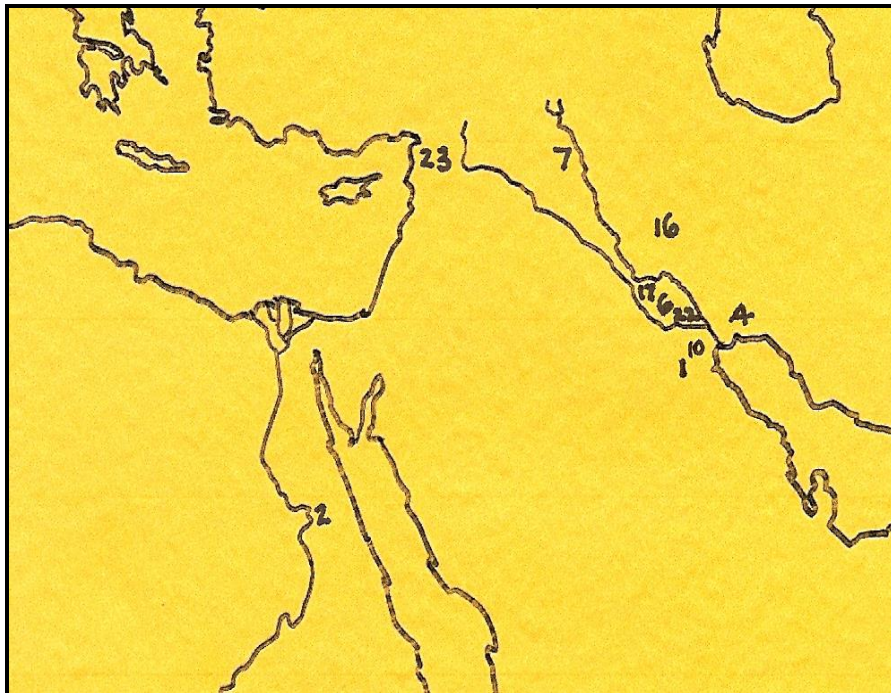
Because of the much larger amount of material we have phased the distribution process on three different maps: the very earliest material, Second Millennium examples and finally First Millennium artefacts.

## **URUSTA-1 TO URUSTA-22: 5/4M ORIGINATION AND 3M FLORUIT OF THE URUK STANCE**

There is a comparatively large number of Protodynastic examples of the *Uruk Stance* - and the *Chronological Table* below (repeated from **Catalogue A**, where the reasons for the dating used is given) is useful in its application to this early *Uruk Stance* material, giving a general timeline for the material which I will stick to in all catalogues despite subsequent refinements in dating these early centuries - still subject to further shift! As with all other predynastic artefacts, it is difficult to strictly sequence the *Uruk Stance* material from such an early period in any more than a general way - in blocks of centuries, or even half-millennia, and we stick mainly to the pointers given by archaeological context as well as expert opinion on dating (most notably Boehmer et al. 1993 and, later, Michael Dee et al.).

Certainly one can say that the stone vase as a ritual vessel appears to have been initiated in Uruk at the end of the 5M in tandem with seals echoing the same motif from the same site, followed shortly by Susa. Its appearance on objects from as far west as Syria and as far north as Tell Agrab, Aššur and Nineveh - and places in between such as Fara, Nippur, Kish and Ur - gives a rough indication of the spread of the Inanna cult throughout what is sometimes called Greater Mesopotamia, and whose tentacles even briefly reached Predynastic Egypt (**Urusta-2** and **Urusta-7**). The items of definite provenance provide sufficient

anchor points against which to set all the unprovenanced pieces (especially those stored in the Berlin, Iraq and British Museums) which fill out the general picture further.



**Ill. 6- 4: Uruk Stance Distribution Map 1 with overview of earliest sites for the Uruk Stance to the end of the 3M (by Catalogue no.). Urusta-23 has been put on this map on stylistic grounds but could belong to the 2M map**

For sorting purposes, in the catalogue entries text we also take into account uncouthness of style as opposed to sophisticated finish on the one hand, as well as the execution of what seems to be an embryonic version of an idea in contrast to versions where the design seems to be presented in a more developed and fluent way after trial and error – bearing in mind also that provincial versions of a theme are not necessarily any earlier because of their rough appearance! Although we understand that the reader would want in certain details to rearrange the earliest stone pots and seals in a different order, I do not think this would radically alter the general conclusions that the material points to for this period. This compositional type provides much fuller information and intriguing detail with which to map dissemination trends in the earliest period than does the *Belly Landing*. Indeed, since there is so much more material we only plot on the **4-3M Uruk Stance Map** above the *main entry* from any one site of the use of the type using the relevant catalogue number. For non-stratified material (much of which is unprovenanced anyway) the reader will gain most by reading the catalogue entries.

Although Susa's strategic position in the Susa II period was to act as middle man between Sumer and the Iranian Crescent beyond, our map shows that up to the end of the 3M *no* instances of the *Uruk Stance* were discovered east of it (though **Catalogue C** gives instances of the *Rear Attack* beyond Susa). This much larger sample of material still confirms the general picture we had for the *Belly Landing* - that the lion-prey group was a motif first devised in Susa, Syro-Sumer and Egypt - since all the earliest *Uruk Stance* examples dating to the 4-3M BC come from these territories. Originally the composition must have been coined from first-hand observation of such a lion attack seen in real life, but on later artefacts it is easy to see how it could then be passed down almost as a cliché without further reference to nature – with every now and again an added new detail or variation observed from life by a different carver later in time (see **Chapter 14**).



# THE CANON OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART

## CATALOGUES OF EVIDENCE

B: THE URUK STANCE ART HISTORY

### Ancient Near Eastern Chronology 5000-2180

ACCORDING TO MANETHO, FOR EGYPT

DYNASTIES I-VIII LASTED 955YRS 10days

DYNASTIES III-VIII 532Y

DYNASTIES I-II 550Y

DATES OF OTHER LANDS ARE SET AGAINST THE EGYPT BENCHMARKS

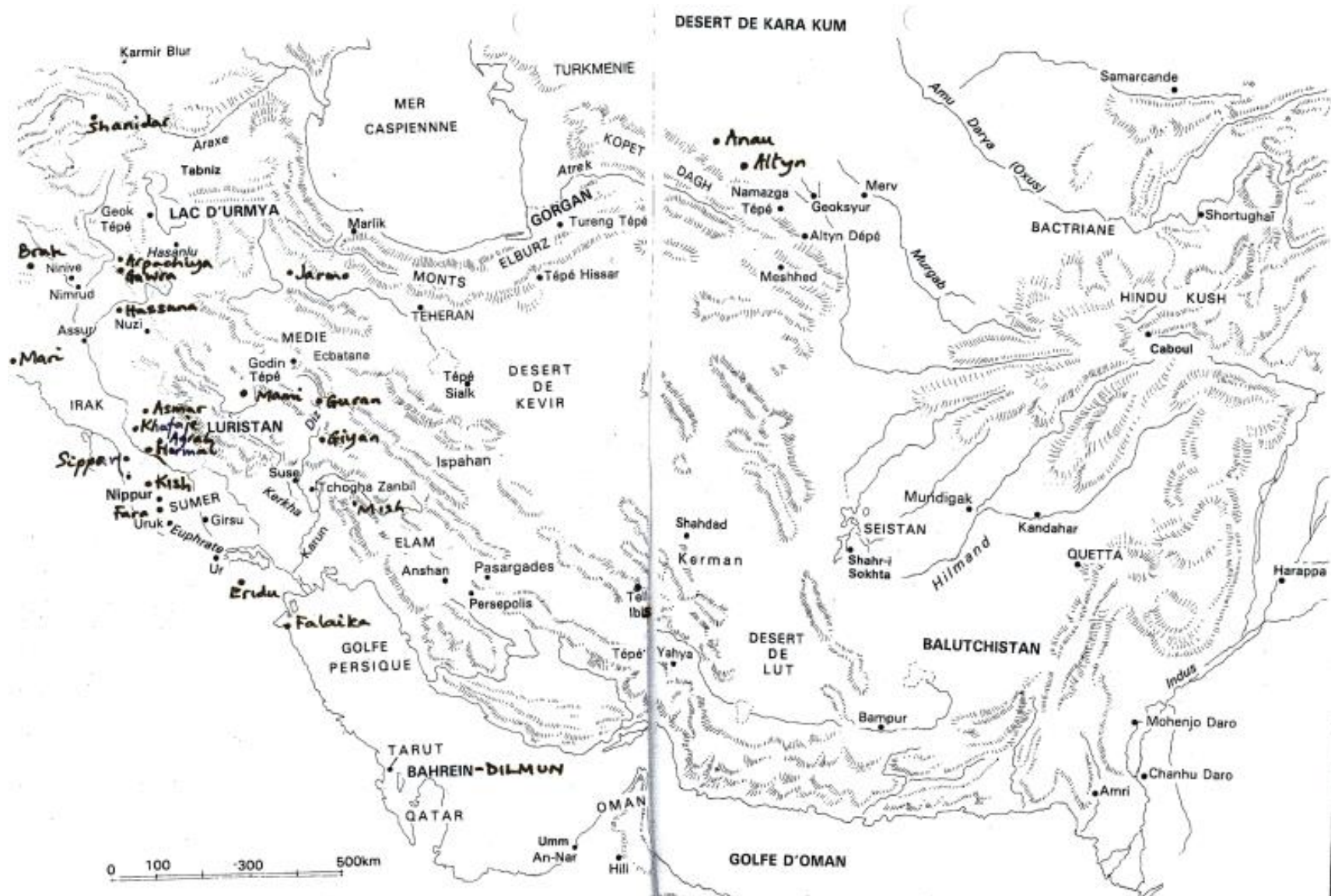
| Centuries BC | EGYPT  | Pharaoh               | MESOPOTAMIA                                | Leader/King     | Cntl Asia/Susa            | Canaan                   | Greek World  |
|--------------|--|-----------------------|--|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 5000         | BADARIAN                                     |                       | UBAID I                                    |                 |                           | PN-A                     |  |
| 4900         | AMRATIAN/<br>NAQADA I                        |                       | UBAID II                                   |                 |                           | PN-A                     |  |
| 4800         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 4700         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 4600         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 4500         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 4400         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 4300         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 4200         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 4100         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 4000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3900         | EARLY<br>GERZEAN/NA<br>QADA II 4000-<br>3500 |                       | UBAID III                                  |                 | SUSA I                    | PN-B                     |  |
| 3800         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3700         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3600         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3500         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3400         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3300         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3200         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3100         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         | Proto-Dynastic/<br>NAQADA III<br>3500-3300   |                       | UBAID IV<br>TO 3750<br>UR FLOOD<br>to 3655 |                 | SUSA II                   | Ghassoulian              |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         | Dynasty 0<br>3300-3265                       | Narmer/<br>Neithhotep | LATE URUK<br>[Levels 5-4]<br>3500-3235     | Enmerkar/Nimrud | SUSA II                   | EARLY<br>BRONZE<br>AGE I | Early<br>Minoan/Helladi<br>c I<br>[= Egyptian<br>Dynasties I-III]<br>3300-2613 |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         | Dynasty 0<br>3300-3265                       | Narmer/<br>Neithhotep | JEMDET NASR<br>3235-3105                   | Lugalbanda      | SUSA III<br>Proto-Elamite | EARLY<br>BRONZE<br>AGE I | Early<br>Minoan/Helladi<br>c I<br>[= Egyptian<br>Dynasties I-III]<br>3300-2613 |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |
| 3000         |  |                       |  |                 |                           |                          |  |

| Centuries BC | EGYPT                                 | Pharaoh   | MESOPOTAMIA                           | Leader/King | C Asia/Susa                                      | Canaan      | Greek World  |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|-------------|--|-------------|--|
| 3200         | Dynasty I<br>3265-3002                | Hor-Aha/ 62Y<br>Meryt-Neith<br>3203                                   | JEMDET NASR<br>[Level 3]<br>3235-3105 | Dumuzi      | <b>SUSA III</b><br><br>[Proto-Elamite]<br>cont'd | EB I cont'd | <b>Early Minoan/Helladic I</b><br>[= Egyptian Dynasties I-III] 3300-2613 |
| 3150         |                                       | Djer 57Y<br>3146  |                                       |             |  | EB I        |  |
| 3100         |                                       | Meryt-Neith 31Y   |                                       |             |  |             |  |
| 3100/3114    |                                       | 3115<br>Djet 23Y  | Early Dynastic I<br>3105-3000         |             | <b>SUSA IV</b>                                   |             |  |
| 3000         |                                       | 3092 Den 20Y<br>3072 Anedjib 26Y<br>3046 Semerkhet18<br>3028 Ka'a 26Y | SHURUPPAK<br>FLOOD                    | Gilgamesh   |  | EB I        |  |
| 2900         | <b>DYNASTY II</b><br><b>3002-2700</b> | 3002 Peribsen 38Y<br>3964 Ra-Neb 39Y<br>2925 Neteren 47Y              | Early Dynastic II<br>3000-2700        |             | <b>SUSA IV</b>                                   | EB I        |  |
| 2800         |                                       | 2878 Sekhemib 17<br>2861 Sendji 41Y<br>2820 Neterka 17Y               |                                       |             |  |             |  |
| 2700         |                                       | 2803 Neferkara 25<br>2778 Khasekhem 48<br>2730 Khasekemwi 30          |                                       |             |  | EB I        |  |
| 2600         |                                       | Sanakht 18Y<br>DJOSER 19Y<br>Sekhemkhet 6Y<br>Khaba 6Y<br>Huni 38Y    | Early Dynastic III<br>2700-2300       |             | <b>SUSA IV</b>                                   | EB I        |  |

| Centuries BC | EGYPT  | Pharaoh  | MESOPOTAMIA                                 | Leader/King   | C Asia/Susa            | Canaan | Greek World  |
|--------------|--|--|---|---------------|------------------------|--------|--|
| 2500         | D IV<br>2613-2498<br>9 KINGS IN<br>115/120 YRS   | Sneferu 24Y<br>KHUFU 22Y<br>RaDjedef 8Y<br>KHAEFRA 28Y<br>MENKAURA 28Y<br>Shepseskaf 4<br>Ptahdjedef 2-2498  | Early Dynastic III<br>2700-2500<br>(CONT'D) |               | SUSA IV<br><br>SUSA IV | EB II  | EARLY MINOAN/HELLADIC II<br>[= Egyptian Dynasties IV-VI] |
| 2400         | D V<br>2498-2345<br>8 KINGS IN<br>140/150YRS   | Sahura'14<br>Djedkara' 39<br>Neferirkara' 10<br>Neferefra'<br>Userkaf 7<br>Shepseskaf 7<br>?Shepseskara'<br>Menkauhor 8<br>Unas 30<br>Niuserra' 31 | AKKADIAN<br>2500-2180                       | Sargon I      | SUSA IV                | EB III |  |
|              |  |  |   | Naramsin      | SUSA IV                |        |  |
|              |  |  |   |               | SUSA IV                |        |  |
| 2300         | D VI<br>2345-2180<br>165 YRS   | Userkara' + Iput,<br>Pepi I & Merienra'53 tog.<br>PEPI II 94Y<br>Meryenra' Antiemsaf +<br>Netjerikara' 10 tog.<br>Menkara'(Nitocris)2              |   | Sharkalishari |                        | EB IV  |  |
| 2200         |  |  |   |               |                        |        |  |
| STARTS 2180  | <b>First Intermediate Period</b><br><b>DVII (8½y) &amp; DVIII(14y)</b><br>15 MEMPHITE RULERS, 11 & 6 |  | <b>GUTI</b><br><b>over 22 years</b>         |               |                        |        |  |

III.6- 5: Basic Date Chart for Catalogue A Chronological Focus, subject to modification in later commentaries

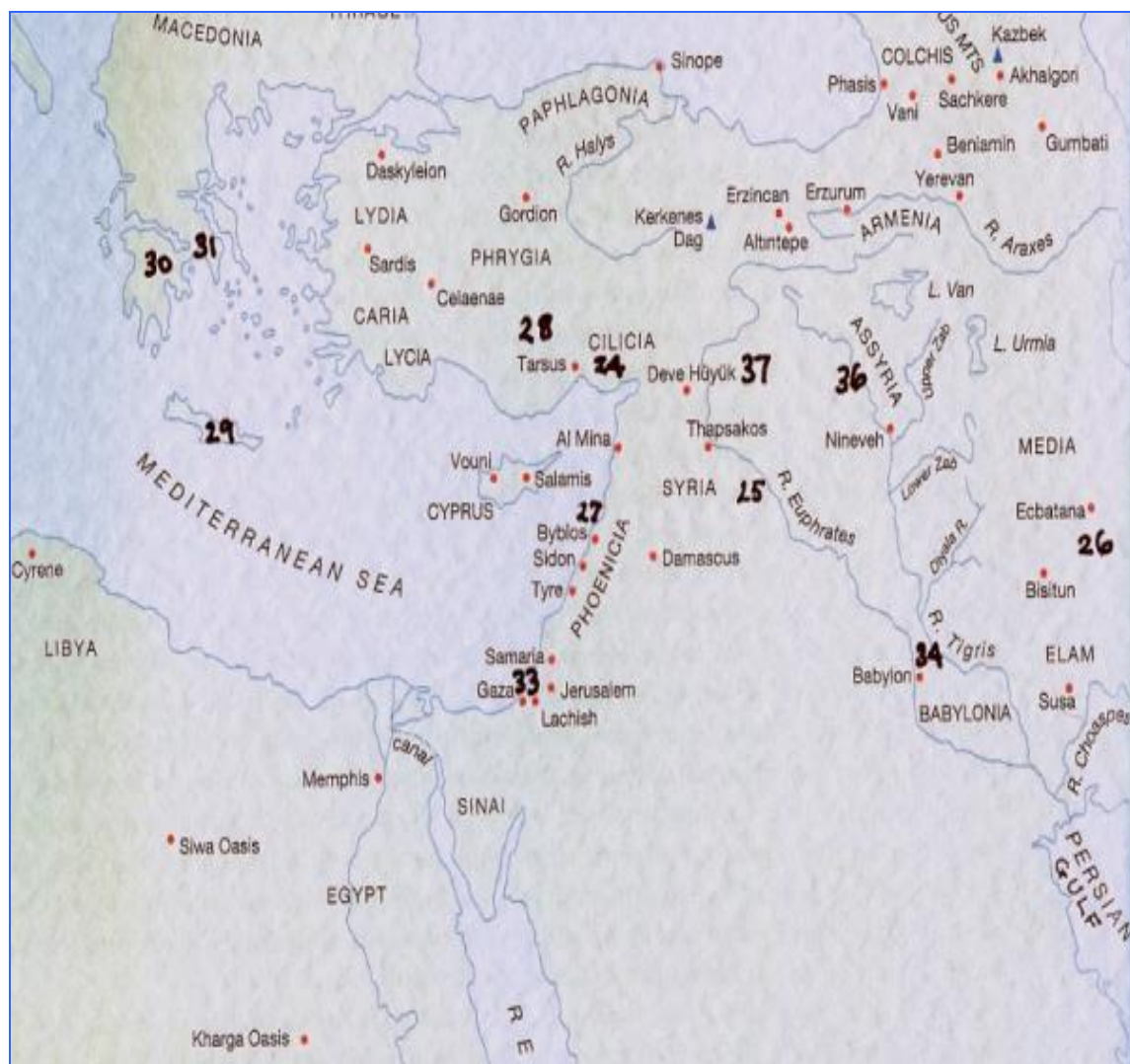




III.6- 6: Map of the 'Iranian Crescent' from Amiet *L'AGE DES ÉCHANGES INTERIRANIENS* - with additions relevant to this catalogue's entries

**URUSTA-24 TO URUSTA-37: 2M INTERNATIONALISM AND THE SPREAD OF THE URUK STANCE IN THE LEVANT:**

As with the Belly Landing, after a hiatus of some centuries the *Uruk Stance* reappears at the very end of the 3M and into the beginning of the 2M BC in several places in and via the Levant, arriving as far west as Crete and Mycenae – roughly during Egypt's Middle Kingdom, Hyksos and XVIIIID periods, and the rise in Mesopotamia of Aššur, the Mitanni in Nuzi - and the Kassites in Babylon. As our second *Distribution Map* shows, in this period the motif's adoption persists more at the northern end of the Fertile Crescent and is now absent in Egypt and Sumer: it is successively borrowed by other peoples ever further westwards round the Mediterranean and down the Levantine coast - often as an innocuous decorative device but more often still as a sign of palace power or administrative authority. Why it should become almost a 'rubber stamp' symbol of government, we will need to explore through further background information as we bring in the other compositional types.



**III.6- 7: Uruk Stance Distribution Map 2 with the main items in this Catalogue from the 2M, using Allen's map (2005)**

On our first *Distribution Map* we saw how all through the second half of the 3M the *Uruk Stance* on seals and sealings had been commonly used in the Early Dynastic city states of Sumer (Nippur, Kish, Tell Agrab, Fara and Ur), reaching the Levant at Alalakh

(**Urusta-23**) - and to a lesser extent remaining in use on Proto-Elamite (Susa III) seals in its home area of Susa/Susiana itself. The second *Distribution Map* above plots how the motif was picked up westwards more frequently over the Syrian route to Anatolia and beyond, early on reaching the Old Assyrian trading post of Kültepe in Anatolia (**Urusta-24**) via the kingdom of Mari - like most Syrian cities run on traditional Sumerian lines (**Urusta-25**) - while reaching an eastward extreme at Old Babylonian Tepe Giyan (**Urusta-26**). We then see an almost predictable spread to places within and beyond these zones, down the Levantine coast (**Urusta-27-28/Urusta-32-33**) or through Anatolia. Interestingly, since the *Uruk Stance* appears in new combinations with other images, other angles of interpretation are opened up for us to pursue fully for that period, and in **Catalogues C & D** on the **Rear Attack** and **Forward Attack** we shall be in a better position to analyse the different regional styles in stricter chronological relation to each other. We will make better sense of this fascinating, polyglot time after adding in the examples from the next two catalogues which from the very start of the millennium sowed the seeds of the International Style that came to fruition by its end, even impacting back on Tutankhamun's Egypt. With the creative input of Crete and Mycenae (**Urusta-29-30**), most notably during the Amarna period and reign of the Kassites in Mesopotamia ((**Urusta-34**) cross-currents between regions reached a crescendo of activity, with artefacts from Kassite Babylon even arriving as a gift to the small kingdom of Thebes (Greece) (**Urusta-31**).

Conventional dating goes awry by two or three hundred years as the Second Millennium joins up with the First, but we do know at least that at the end of two centuries of chaotic mass movements of populations in the Near East c.1200-1000BC, Tiglath-Pileser I (1114-1076) tried to take advantage of the chaos to temporarily occupy parts of Syria at a time when the Sea Peoples were causing a so-called Dark Age in mainland Mycenaean Greece (the background for the Trojan War between Greece and Anatolia, featuring in our *Chronological Focus* in **Catalogue E**). Gradually over the centuries Assyria was to swallow up all these petty kingdoms into one Empire, at its fullest extent reaching as far as Egypt and Cyprus. At the start of this process from c.1200, following the kaleidoscopic changes and breakdown of kingdoms throughout the wider region shown in this map, the rise of Middle Assyria is marked by quite frequent use of this compositional type on seals, usually as the sole motif (**Urusta-35-36**) like the Kassite seal – a notable contrast to its relegation and minimal use in embroidery detail on Neo-Assyrian reliefs a few centuries later. The rise of petty kingdoms in the buffer zones between former Hittite Anatolia, Mitanni-occupied Syria and embryonic Assyria is briefly signalled by the use of the two almost identical low-grade seals found at Tell Halaf and Aššur (**Urusta-37**).

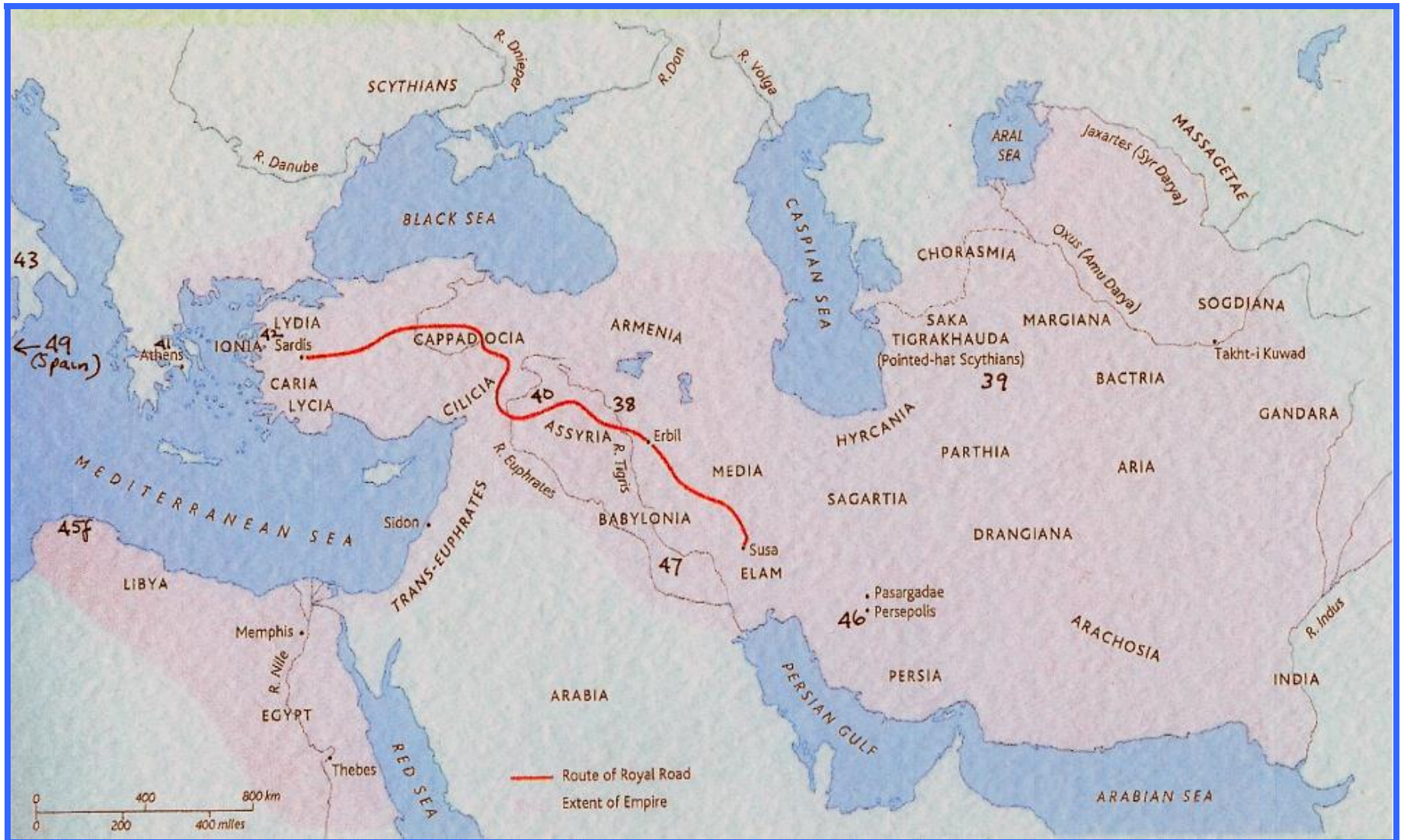
## URUSTA-38 TO URUSTA-49: THE 1M URUK STANCE - GREECE -V- PERSIA

By the turn of the First Millennium we see only rare instances of the *Uruk Stance* in the Levant, though it survived in derivative versions in provinces like Scythia or Neo-Hittite Karkemish (**Urusta-38f-40**).The renewed aggressive expansionist policy two centuries later under Ashurnasirpal II (**Urusta 38**) finally secured the permanent presence of the emerging Neo-Assyrian Empire on the Mediterranean coast. Further appropriation of territories beyond Assyria continued on the part of his successors, finally extending to Egypt and resulting in the Sack of Thebes (Egypt) in 664. These depredations dismantled the former Mitanni- Hittite- and Egypt--occupied territories in the Levant, bringing most of the small local kingdoms under Assyrian hegemony. The result in art was that Syrian craftsmen with new designs and materials were brought back in large numbers to work at Ashurnasirpal's new palace at Nimrud, and the embroidery added to the robes of key figures (usually only those of the king) and in the case of **Urusta 38** only on the orthostat limestone reliefs of Room G<sup>6</sup> -is so finely detailed that workers accustomed to the finer media of seal or ivory carving

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<sup>6</sup> Sheeler 1946





**Ill.6- 8: Uruk Stance Distribution Map 3 with items of the mid-1M using the map of the entire Persian Empire marked with the Royal Road from Susa to Sardis from Curtis (2005)**

probably added this intricate decoration to the sculptors' relief work. The tall polished figures are engaged in rituals on the walls of what was probably a cult chapel celebrating the New Year Festival, the time of year relevant to the use of the lion and prey symbol. This is the only *Uruk Stance* appearing in Assyrian art, though there is the occasional appearance of other compositional types. The Assyrians preferred to depict the king hunting lions or in close combat with a single lion at close quarters to signify royal heroism – a type to be imitated by the Achaemenid kings at Persepolis on several door jambs and on seals (**Urusta-47f**). Despite the importance of such reliefs as prototypes for the royal art of the Achaemenids, given the rare use of the lion-prey subject by the Assyrians and Babylonians (who concentrated more on the interaction between lion –v- man) we put off detailed consideration the Assyrians' iconographical programmes on their palace reliefs in relation to the lion-prey motif until **Catalogue H**.

Our third *Distribution Map* above, demonstrates in a nutshell how the *Uruk Stance* on items preceding Persepolis were associated with the Neo-Assyrian Empire (**Urusta-38**) and territories on its fringes (**Urusta-39/40**) – an empire whose administration and art Persia at first copied in several ways when setting up Persepolis. Then from the next items we realise the Trojan War, whose memory was kept alive in Greek literature during the first half of the 1M, was but the preamble to the great wars roughly a thousand years later between Persia and Greece at the turn of the 5C BC until 480. Up to this time – in continuity with its Mycenaean roots alone – both mainland Greece and Greek-influenced Lydia or Italy constantly made use of the lion-prey subject (**Urusta-41-45**). But once this second major conflict between West and East was over, as Greece cut its ties with the Orient and developed its own iconography, the lion-prey group was never used again in Greek mainland art: the absence of Greek items using the *Uruk Stance* post 480 speaks louder than words, since the subject was now solely associated with the Persians – and their allies, the Phoenicians, and often the Scythians (**Urusta-46-49**).

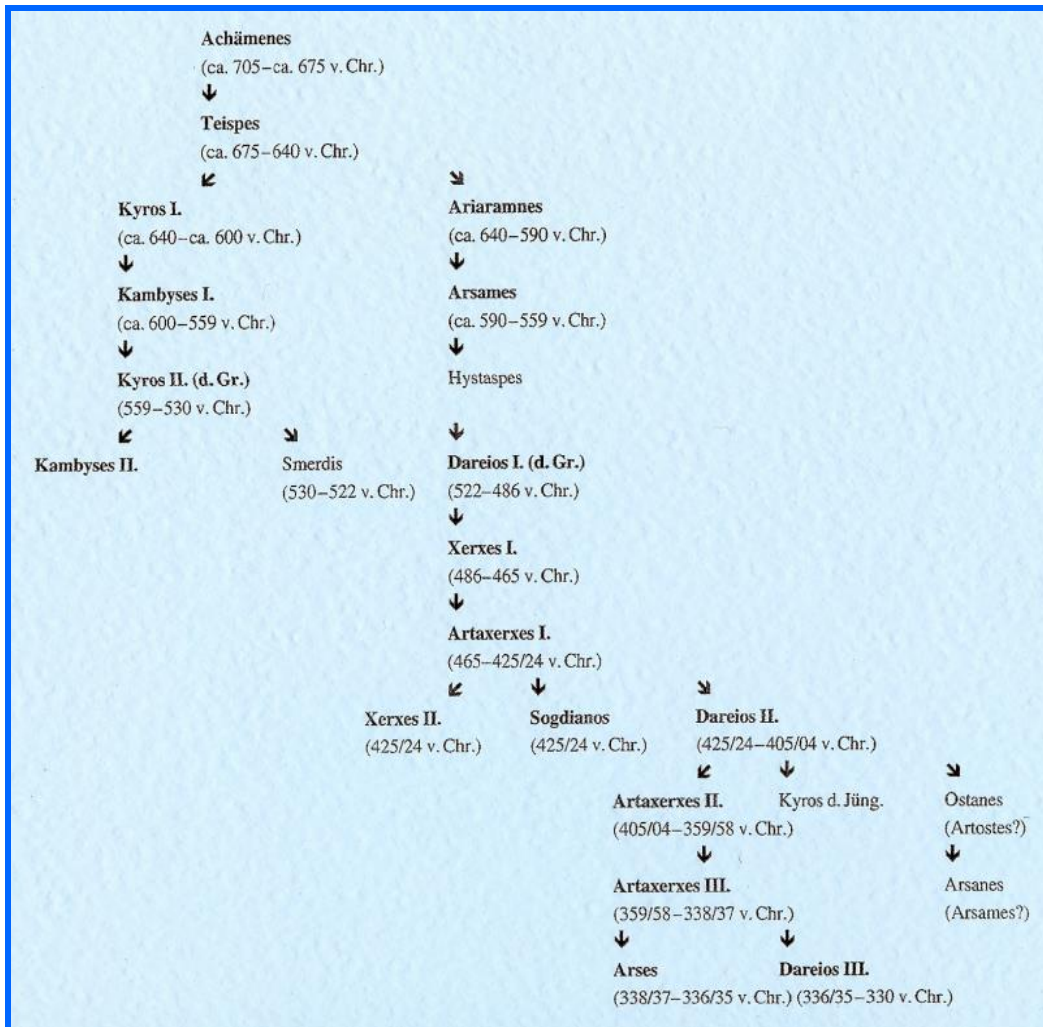
Thus the remaining catalogue entries (**Urusta 41-49**) are evidence of how before - and certainly after – the building of Persepolis the *Uruk Stance* attack starts to appear in regions as far apart as Scythia and even North Africa and Phoenician Spain, as an expression of the *Persian* Empire (other compositional types also crop up as a mark of imperial influence as we will see especially in **Catalogues C-F**). It was at the turn of the 1M that widespread population movements across the Cyclades after the fall of Crete and then Mycenae laid the foundation in the Iron Age history of Greece and Lydia for continued infiltration of western peoples to Lydia on the west coast of Anatolia<sup>7</sup> (and *vice versa*), meaning the Orientalising period in the art of the Archaic Greek world (coming to Italy as Etruscan art) was simply the culmination of a long two-way process. Greece's own adoption of the lion attack in her own art and architecture occurred in just this period when links with Persian-influenced Lydia are well exemplified in the use of the *Uruk Stance* on Etruscan and Greek pottery (**Urusta-41-45**), and it is striking that after their victory over Persia in the battles of Marathon (490) and Plataea (479) its use in Greece ceased completely and utterly when a firm line was drawn between East and West. In the case of Phoenician use of the symbol during Achaemenid rule, their use of the lion and prey motif as Persia's marine ally in war directly refers to its mercenary relationship with Persia (particularly noticeable at the Battle of Plataea when they provided and captained ships on behalf of Xerxes). However, that people was already the symbol's direct Canaanite inheritor in its own right with its own long history of local use in the Levant, and no doubt being aware of its native implications its adoption would not have been alien to them. We therefore sometimes see its use as an indicator of the Phoenicians' role as trading middlemen throughout the Archaic Greek Empire with outposts as far as Spain (**Urusta-49**) so the question, as with Scythian art, is to separate out these examples from those which have an Achaemenid imperial overlay - this we can do with other compositional types in due course.

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<sup>7</sup> See Huxley 1966

## CHRONOLOGY OF A KEY PERIOD LINKED TO HIGH USE OF THE URUK STANCE

The *Frequency Table* showed the highest peak for use of the *Uruk Stance* in the early Achaemenid period (late 6C to early 5C BC), half of the total being accounted for by the 26/28 lion and prey motifs carved in the triangular spandrels of the numerous staircases leading up to raised buildings on the west side of the platform (*Takht*) at Persepolis (**Urusta-46**) along with a handful of associated early Achaemenid sealings (**Urusta-47**). It is because the *Uruk Stance* version of the lion attacking its prey was used so prolifically under Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes that we wanted to consider their background history and iconography in depth, concentrating only on the Achaemenids and leaving out the Greek side of the story for the time being (we concentrate on them separately over a longer time perspective under **Catalogue F: The Bilateral Attack**).



**III.6- 9: The Male Achaemenid Family Tree- from Koch 2001**

Our first *Distribution Map* located *Uruk Stance* use at sites important to the beginnings of civilisation in the Fertile Crescent where just over the Zagros Mountains from Susa places like Anshan (near present-day Shiraz) and Sialk on the edge of the Iranian Crescent fed in goods for Sumer via Susa. Three millennia later, moving back south from the Median territory he had married into, and then conquered - control of the Iranian Crescent once again centred on Susa and Anshan through the person of Cyrus, King of



Anshan (a title inherited from his immediate ancestors) though his Medean relatives remained centred on Ecbatana and Babylon in former territories of the Neo-Assyrian Empire<sup>8</sup>. Elam had already started to feature under Cyrus as more or less the centre of gravity in an ever-widening empire, but his new capital in Fars, Pasargadae, was not taken up by Darius, since he needed to assert his own branch of Achaemenid lineage (see the genealogy above) as spelled out in his declarations at Bisutun and Persepolis, and to set his own imprimature on the territories gathered for him by Cyrus and Cambyses. This gave him a strong reason - just as the Assyrians moved capital from Aššur to build new ones at Nimrud, Khorsabad or Nineveh - to erect a purpose-built imperial capital at Persepolis<sup>9</sup> validated by his own pedigree. The early Achaemenids had done a low-key revamping of the palace and temple site at Susa using the Babylonian glazed-brick style of wall-covering, though these were later given more magnificent treatment under Darius' great-great-grand-son, Artaxerxes II, whose inscription, echoing those of his forbears at Persepolis, we will study later. Persepolis itself, built by Darius as the first king of a dynasty descended from Hystaspes, had the advantage of no archaeological prehistory, though in this Anshanite hinterland it did have a mythical one in its name of *Takht-e-Jamshid*. It was intentionally placed in the midst of a plain encircled by mountains with a panoramic view of the sky, isolated from the royal Susa-Sardis Road.

**THE LION AND PREY GROUP AT SUSA AND PERSEPOLIS**

Both the Persepolis and Susa sites used the newly devised imperial iconography which included many renditions of the *Uruk Stance* in stone and glazed brick (**Urusta-46/46f**). The Achaemenid administration in this area had simply adopted the Elamite infrastructure already ticking over at Susa (and Uruk<sup>10</sup>) over the centuries (Hinz 1971) so it is not surprising that use of the lion and prey image as symbol of administrative authority was taken over as part of that inheritance to express the Zoroastrian pantheon (Persian religious policy was always to merge with local religious forms). The fact that the *Uruk Stance*, invented all those years ago in this very region, was again revived so forcefully shows the symbol must still have had strong local impact as well as international meaning, which had probably never died out. It is a testament to the perennial value imbued in it, despite the waxing and waning of the many other empires which had borrowed it and called it theirs elsewhere, that the symbol should undergo such a spectacular indigenous overhaul, evidently with a strong thread of continuity of meaning. This reinforces our quest to find out just what it represented for the Persian Empire; why it had been significant in the area three millennia before – and in the end what commonality of use there could be between the two eras.

To recapitulate: founded by Darius I, the special case of Persepolis with its outstanding occurrence of up to 28 separate renderings of the well-known Achaemenid version of the lion attacking bull (**Urusta-46**) offers an multi-valent focal point for deep study of the significance of the *Uruk Stance* grouping. Quite evidently for Darius it was *not* merely a decorative device but an Achaemenid 'coat of arms' full of meaning, pointing directly to Persepolis' purpose. Along with other versions of the lion-bull attack in other compositional types used on buildings and artefacts associated with its imperial administration, its impact as a restated stamp of authority all over the Empire was immediately understood. We are now in a position to take the Achaemenid period as our *Chronological Focus*, laying in relevant factual information about the Achaemenids in Persepolis before proceeding to the site's

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<sup>8</sup> Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* describes the skirmishes Cyrus and his father-in-law Cyaxares undertook against armies of the expiring Assyrian Empire, nicely exemplified by the seal in **Urusta-39** showing a Mede aiming his bow and arrow at a lion attack.

<sup>9</sup> Only later so called by Alexander's Greeks after the burning of Persepolis in 332 in revenge for the Persians' destruction of the sacred Archaic Period buildings on the Acropolis of Athens in the run-up to the Battle of Marathon decades earlier in 490 (Balcer 1964).

<sup>10</sup> See Matthew Stolper "'No-one has Exact Information Except for you": Communication between Babylon and Uruk in the first Achaemenid Reigns' in *Achaemenid History XIII* 267-287

iconographical interpretation. Whatever the specialised message at Persepolis itself was intended to be, we start with the historical background from a few decades beforehand.

### **CHRONOLOGICAL FOCUS: RISE OF ACHAEMENID RULE IN ELAM AND FARS**

This period provides the anchor point for the *end* of our study on lion and prey compositional types - in direct contrast to the *Belly Landing* material which we used to establish time pegs for its very beginning! Historically we are on firmer ground because most dates are factual, rather than speculative, based on written records. Since on and round the site of Persepolis the *Uruk Stance* was used even more in the early the Achaemenid period than even the 4-3M, without going into more detail than necessary for our particular aims we will concentrate on the historical overview summarised graphically in the *Chronological Table* which follows in the next four pages. It starts in the 660s BC when the Assyrian Empire under Aššurbanipal, overextended since the looting of Thebes, was coming to an end. During the ensuing twilight period that ended in the rise of the Neo-Babylonians, the ancestors of Darius I in the original Persian homeland of Central Asia (see III.6- 9), the Medes to the east of Assyria round Ecbatana, and Gyges in Lydia, were rising into prominence alongside the Neo-Babylonians, initially acting as their allies.

The picture the table below gives of different kingdoms competing with each other is more complex than in the 3M - we not only have exponentially more information, but territories had fragmented into a larger number of separate kingdoms. However, it is useful to read it as divided up into three main blocks of columns: Egypt on the right, Babylonia and the Levant at the centre, and the Lydians, Medes and Persians on the left. The Medes under Cyrus' ancestors had begun their rise to power after Assyria destroyed Thebes, and over two generations a gradual domino effect was set off – a process which finally ends up with the three main blocks in the Table coalescing under Cyrus, Cambyses and Darius, their varied colours all becoming Achaemenid purple. Indeed, we can coordinate the founding of Persepolis at the accession of Darius with the first row in the table where *everything* has changed to purple, even Lydian Greece! Assyria itself fell to the Babylonians at the sack of Nineveh in 612 BC, and then it was only a matter of decades before the horse-loving Medes and Persians had filtered right into the territory and the Achaemenid branch of the Aryan tribes began to mop up the decayed old régimes, starting with the capture of Media in 550 and Babylon itself by Cyrus II (the Great) in 539. He released back to Jerusalem to rebuild Solomon's temple the Jews brought into exile in Babylon in 586 under Nebuchadrezzar - and united by a policy of oecumenism, the entire Levant came under Achaemenid sway (see map following).

# THE CANON OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART

## CATALOGUES OF EVIDENCE

### B: THE URUK STANCE ART HISTORY

| YR BC | LYDIA-<br>GREECE A | MEDEA B   | PERSIA C             | DARIUS<br>BRANCH D   | ASSYRIA/LEV<br>ANT E | BABYLON/<br>LEVANT F     | ISRAEL/ JUDAH K        | EGYPT G                  | EGYPT H            | EGYPT I                     | EGYPT J            |
|-------|--------------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 665   | 682-644            |           | TEISPES c.675-640    |                      | AŠŠURBANIPAL         | 9D of Babylon            | 685-642                | 664 SACK OF THEBES       | 664 SACK OF THEBES | 664 SACK OF THEBES          | 664 SACK OF THEBES |
| 660   | GYGES              |           | TEISPES c.675-640    |                      | 668-627              | 671-626                  | MANASSEH               | PINEDJEM II              | DXXVI              | DXXI vi 19y SIAMUN          | DXXII              |
| 655   | 682-644            | DEIOKES   | TEISPES c.675-640    |                      | AŠŠURBANIPAL         | 9D of Babylon            | 685-642                | 674-654                  | SAITE i            | DXXI vi 19y SIAMUN          | SHESHONQ III 52Y   |
| 650   | GYGES              | Phraortes | TEISPES c.675-640    |                      | 668-627              | 671-626                  | MANASSEH               | LAST                     | PSAMMETICUS I 54y  | DXXI vi 19y SIAMUN          | 684-608            |
| 645   | Sadyates           | 647-625   | TEISPES c.675-640    |                      | AŠŠURBANIPAL         | 9D of Babylon            | 685-642                | HIGH                     | 664-610            | DXXI vi 19y SIAMUN          | SHESHONQ III 52Y   |
| 640   | 644-617            | Phraortes | CYRUS I c.640-600    | ARIARAMNES c.640-590 | 668-627              | 671-626                  | JOSIAH                 | PRIESTS OF               | PSAMMETICUS I 54y  | DXXI HOR-PSUSENES II 14y    | 684-608            |
| 635   | Sadyates           | 647-625   | CYRUS I c.640-600    | ARIARAMNES c.640-590 | AŠŠURBANIPAL         | 9D of Babylon            | 640-609                | AMUN PSUSENES III TO 630 | 664-610            | End of DXXI 631             | SHESHONQ III 52Y   |
| 630   | 644-617            | Phraortes | CYRUS I c.640-600    | ARIARAMNES c.640-590 | 668-627              | 671-627                  | JOSIAH                 |                          | PSAMMETICUS        | DXXIII i                    | 684-608            |
| 625   | Sadyates           | Cyaxares  | CYRUS I c.640-600    | ARIARAMNES c.640-590 | 626 FALL OF BABYLON  | 626 FALL OF BABYLON      | 640-609                |                          | DXXVI              | PEDIBASTET 630-06           | SHESHONQ III 52Y   |
| 620   | 644-617            | 625-585   | CYRUS I c.640-600    | ARIARAMNES c.640-590 |                      | 625-539 Chaldeans i      | JOSIAH                 |                          | SAITE i            | PEDIBASTET 630              | 684-608            |
| 615   | Sadyates           | Cyaxares  | CYRUS I c.640-600    | ARIARAMNES c.640-590 |                      | NABOPOLASSAR 625-606     | JOSIAH                 |                          | PSAMMETICUS        | PEDIBASTET 630              | SHESHONQ III 52Y   |
| 610   |                    | 625-585   | CYRUS I c.640-600    | ARIARAMNES c.640-590 | 626 FALL OF NINEVEH  | NABOPOLASSAR             | JEHOIAKIN              |                          | 664-610            | PEDIBASTET 630-06           | 684-608            |
| 605   |                    | Cyaxares  | CYRUS I c.640-600    | ARIARAMNES c.640-590 |                      | Chaldeans ii             | 608-598                |                          | ii NECHO           | SHESHONQ IV 6Y              | viii PAMI 6Y       |
| 600   |                    | 625-585   | CAMBYSES I c.600-559 | ARIARAMNES c.640-590 |                      | NEBUCHADREZAR II 605-562 | ZEDEKIAH 597-586       |                          | 610-595            | iii OSORKON III 28Y 599-572 | DXXII ix 601-663   |
| 590   |                    | Cyaxares  | CAMBYSES I c.600-559 | ARSAMES C.590-559    |                      | NEBUCHADREZAR II 605-562 | 589-6 FALLOF JERUSALEM |                          | PSAMMETICUS II 6Y  | iii OSORKON III 28Y 599-572 | SHESHONQ V 37Y     |
| 585   |                    | 625-585   | CAMBYSES I c.600-559 | ARSAMES C.590-559    |                      | NEBUCHADREZAR II 605-562 | BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY   |                          | iv APRIES 19Y Y    | iii OSORKON III 28Y 599-572 | DXXII ix           |
| 580   |                    |           | CAMBYSES I c.600-559 | ARSAMES C.590-559    |                      | NEBUCHADREZAR II 605-562 | 586-539                |                          | 589-570            | iii OSORKON III 28Y 599-572 | SHESHONQ V 37Y     |



# THE CANON OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART

## CATALOGUES OF EVIDENCE

### B: THE URUK STANCE ART HISTORY

| YR BC | LYDIA-<br>GREECE A    | MEDEA B              | PERSIA C                 | DARIUS<br>BRANCH D    | ASSYRIA/LEV<br>ANT E   | BABYLON/<br>LEVANT F        | ISRAEL/ JUDAH K         | EGYPT G        | EGYPT H         | EGYPT I                        | EGYPT J                   |
|-------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 575   |                       |                      | CAMBYSES I<br>c. 600-559 | ARSAMES C.590-<br>559 |                        | NEBUCHADREZAR II<br>605-562 | BABYLONIAN<br>CAPTIVITY |                | APRIES 19y      | iii OSORKON III 28Y<br>599-572 | DXXII ix                  |
| 570   |                       |                      | CAMBYSES I<br>c. 600-559 | ARSAMES C.590-<br>559 |                        | NEBUCHADREZAR II<br>605-562 | 586-539                 |                | v AMASIS 49y    | iv TAKELOT III 7Y 571-<br>565  | SHESHONQ V 37Y            |
| 565   |                       |                      | CAMBYSES I<br>c. 600-559 | ARSAMES C.590-<br>559 |                        | NEBUCHADREZAR II<br>605-562 | BABYLONIAN<br>CAPTIVITY |                | 570-526         | v RUDAM 3Y                     | 601-565                   |
| 560   |                       |                      | CYRUS II C.559-<br>530   | ARSAMES C.590-<br>559 |                        | MERODACH/<br>NERIGLISSAR    | 586-539                 |                | v AMASIS 49y    | DXXIII vi IUPUT<br>39Y         | X OSORKON IV 15Y          |
| 555   |                       |                      | CYRUS II C.559-<br>530   | HYSTASPES             |                        | v NABONIDUS                 | BABYLONIAN<br>CAPTIVITY |                | 570-526         | 561-522                        | X OSORKON IV 15Y          |
| 550   |                       | FALL OF MEDIA<br>550 | FALL OF MEDIA<br>550     | HYSTASPES             |                        | 555-539                     | 586-539                 |                | v AMASIS 49y    | IUPUT 39Y                      | X OSORKON IV 15Y          |
| 545   | 545 FALL OF<br>SARDIS |                      | CYRUS II C.559-<br>530   | HYSTASPES             |                        | NABONIDUS                   | BABYLONIAN<br>CAPTIVITY |                | 570-526         | 561-522                        | XI HARSIESE 10Y<br>THEBES |
| 540   |                       |                      | CYRUS II C.559-<br>530   | HYSTASPES             | 539 FALL OF<br>BABYLON | 539 FALL OF BABYLON         | SECOND TEMPLE           |                | v AMASIS 49y    | IUPUT 39Y                      | 539 END OF DXXII          |
| 535   |                       |                      | CYRUS II C.559-<br>530   | HYSTASPES             |                        |                             | SECOND TEMPLE           |                | 570-526         | 561-522                        |                           |
| 530   |                       |                      | CAMBYSES II<br>SMERDIS   | HYSTASPES             |                        |                             |                         |                | END OF<br>DXXVI | END OF DXXIII                  |                           |
| 525   |                       |                      | CAMBYSES II 530-<br>522  | HYSTASPES             |                        |                             |                         | DXXVII 523-404 |                 |                                |                           |
| 520   |                       |                      |                          | Darius 522-<br>486    |                        |                             |                         | FIRST          |                 |                                |                           |
| 515   |                       |                      |                          | Darius 522-<br>486    |                        |                             |                         | PERSIAN        |                 |                                |                           |
| 510   |                       |                      |                          | Darius 522-<br>486    |                        |                             |                         | DYNASTY        |                 |                                |                           |
| 505   | DARIUS                | DARIUS               | DARIUS                   | Darius 522-<br>486    | DARIUS                 | DARIUS                      | DARIUS                  | DXXVII 523-404 | DARIUS          | DARIUS                         | DARIUS                    |
| 500   |                       |                      |                          | Darius 522-<br>486    |                        |                             |                         | FIRST PERSIAN  |                 |                                |                           |
| 495   |                       |                      |                          | Darius 522-           |                        |                             |                         | PERSIAN        |                 |                                |                           |

# THE CANON OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART

## CATALOGUES OF EVIDENCE

### B: THE URUK STANCE ART HISTORY

| YR BC | LYDIA-<br>GREECE A    | MEDEA B | PERSIA C | DARIUS<br>BRANCH D | ASSYRIA/LEV<br>ANT E | BABYLON/<br>LEVANT F | ISRAEL/ JUDAH K | EGYPT G          | EGYPT H | EGYPT I         | EGYPT J |
|-------|-----------------------|---------|----------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
|       |                       |         |          | 486                |                      |                      |                 |                  |         |                 |         |
| 490   | BATTLE OF<br>MARATHON |         |          | Darius 522-<br>486 |                      |                      |                 | DYNASTY          |         |                 |         |
| 485   | 490-479               |         |          | Darius 522-<br>486 |                      |                      |                 | DXXVII 523-404   |         |                 |         |
| 480   | BATTLE OF<br>PLATAEA  |         |          | Xerxes 486-<br>465 |                      |                      |                 | DXXVII 523-404   |         |                 |         |
| 475   |                       |         |          | Xerxes 486-<br>465 |                      |                      |                 | FIRST PERSIAN    |         |                 |         |
| 470   |                       |         |          | Xerxes 486-<br>465 |                      |                      |                 | DYNASTY          |         |                 |         |
| 465   |                       |         |          | Xerxes 486-<br>465 |                      |                      |                 | DXXVII 523-404   |         |                 |         |
| 460   |                       |         |          | Arta-Xerxes I      |                      |                      |                 | DXXVII 523-404   |         |                 |         |
| 455   |                       |         |          | 465-425/4          |                      |                      |                 | FIRST PERSIAN    |         |                 |         |
| 450   |                       |         |          | Arta-Xerxes I      |                      |                      |                 | DYNASTY          |         |                 |         |
| 445   |                       |         |          | 465-425/4          |                      |                      |                 | DXXVII 523-404   |         |                 |         |
| 440   |                       |         |          | Arta-Xerxes I      |                      |                      |                 | DXXVII 523-404   |         |                 |         |
| 435   |                       |         |          | 465-425/4          |                      |                      |                 | FIRST PERSIAN    |         |                 |         |
| 430   |                       |         |          | Arta-Xerxes I      |                      |                      |                 | DYNASTY          |         |                 |         |
| 425   |                       |         |          | 465-425/4          |                      |                      |                 | DXXVII 523-404   |         |                 |         |
| 420   |                       |         |          | Darius II          |                      |                      |                 | FIRST<br>PERSIAN |         |                 |         |
| 415   |                       |         |          | 425/4-405          |                      |                      |                 | DYNASTY          |         |                 |         |
| 410   |                       |         |          | Darius II          |                      |                      |                 | DXXVII 523-404   |         |                 |         |
| 405   |                       |         |          | 425/4-405          |                      |                      |                 |                  |         | DXXVIII 403-399 |         |

# THE CANON OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART

## CATALOGUES OF EVIDENCE

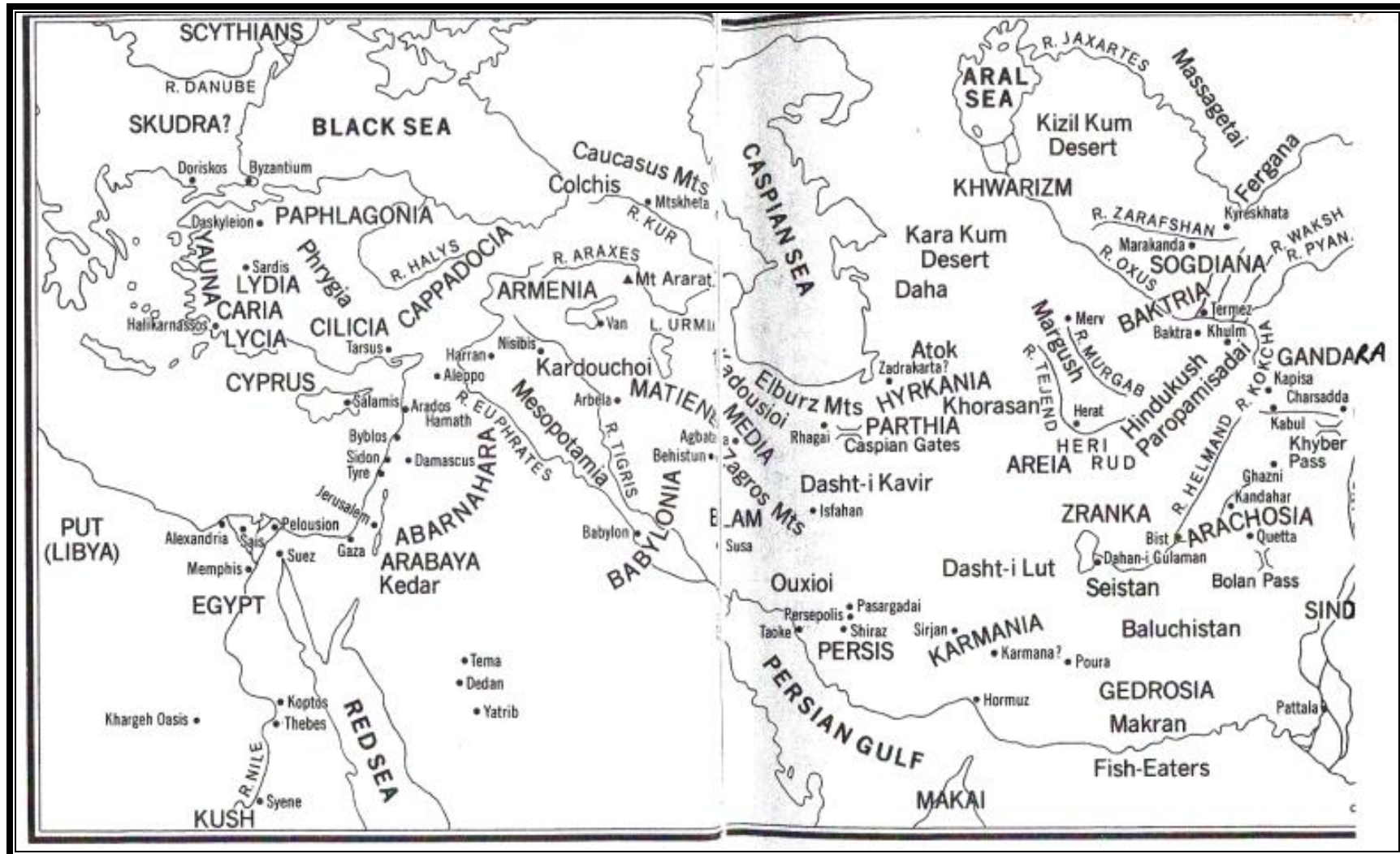
### B: THE URUK STANCE ART HISTORY

| YR BC | LYDIA-<br>GREECE A  | MEDEA B | PERSIA C | DARIUS<br>BRANCH D         | ASSYRIA/LEV<br>ANT E | BABYLON/<br>LEVANT F | ISRAEL/ JUDAH K | EGYPT G                 | EGYPT H | EGYPT I               | EGYPT J |
|-------|---|---------|----------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------|-----------------------|---------|
| 400   |   |         |          | Arta-Xerxes II             |                      |                      |                 |                         |         | DXXIX<br>399-380      |         |
| 395   |   |         |          | 405-359                    |                      |                      |                 |                         |         | DXXIX                 |         |
| 390   |   |         |          | Arta-Xerxes II             |                      |                      |                 |                         |         | DXXIX<br>399-380      |         |
| 385   |   |         |          | 405-359                    |                      |                      |                 |                         |         | DXXIX<br>399-380      |         |
| 380   |   |         |          | Arta-Xerxes II             |                      |                      |                 |                         |         | DXXX<br>380-343       |         |
| 375   |   |         |          | Arta-Xerxes II             |                      |                      |                 |                         |         | Nectanebo I           |         |
| 370   |   |         |          | 405-359                    |                      |                      |                 |                         |         | 380-362<br>DJEDHOR 2Y |         |
| 365   |   |         |          | Arta-Xerxes II             |                      |                      |                 |                         |         | Nectanebo II          |         |
| 360   |   |         |          | 405-359                    |                      |                      |                 |                         |         | 360-343               |         |
| 355   |   |         |          | ArtaXerxes III             |                      |                      |                 |                         |         | Nectanebo II          |         |
| 350   |   |         |          | 359-338                    |                      |                      |                 |                         |         | 360-343               |         |
| 345   |   |         |          | ArtaXerxes III             |                      |                      |                 |                         |         | Nectanebo II          |         |
| 340   | RISE OF<br>MACEDON  |         |          | ARTAXERXES IV<br>337 ARSES |                      |                      |                 | DXXXI SECOND<br>PERSIAN |         |                       |         |
| 335   |   |         |          | Darius III 336-<br>332     |                      |                      |                 | 342-330                 |         |                       |         |
| 330   | ALEXANDER ALEXANDER ALEXANDER ALEXANDER ALEXANDER ALEXANDER ALEXANDER ALEXANDER ALEXANDER ALEXANDER ALEXANDER |         |          |                            |                      |                      |                 |                         |         |                       |         |

III.6- 10: Chronological Table B: Imperial Chronologies of the Ancient World in relation to the rise and fall of the Medes and Persians.

The demonstration of rulership through colour graphically illustrates the way the Persian Empire by 521 had gradually swallowed up former kingdoms





III.6- 11: Satrapies of the Persian Empire at its fullest extent - from J M Cook GREECE AND PERSIA

This process of amalgamation had taken place over the comparatively short period of a century and a half, as the great old empires of the ancient Near East, already undermined a century earlier by the Assyrians and Babylonians, themselves fell one after the other in fairly quick succession into the hands of the Medes, Achaemenids and their allies. Now the conquered territories of the Empire were governed through Persian or Medean Satraps, whilst Ionia and Aeolia were governed by Persian controlled tyrants. Ultimately under Darius and Xerxes a firm line was finally drawn between East and West at the Battles of Marathon (490) and Plataea (479) when relations between Greece and Persia finally polarised. It is important to mention here the Persian view on this, for us to discuss in detail later: Xanthus the Lydian reported the Zoroastrian view that Zoroaster lived '6,000 years before Xerxes crossed the Dardanelles' (Kingsley 1995). Implicit in this line is the idea that the crossing into Greece led to the contamination of the Persians, to the Magoi a most regrettable event<sup>11</sup>.

Although the Saïtes were solidly in control in the north, Egypt between 664 and 526 was no longer the united Egypt of the ancient world - fragmented claimant dynasties operating from different locations had already been at civil war with each other and this worsened after the Sack of Thebes: thus four columns are needed for the right-hand block of the table to represent Egypt at this time. The Saite Dynasty had held out in Memphis until Cambyses II occupied all Egypt in 526, the first time for centuries: all sub-dynasties were subsumed into Dynasty XXVII by the Achaemenid line to form the First Persian Dynasty.

The gift of Cambyses, this was the last big acquisition completing the Persian Empire that Darius I was to inherit only four years later. Before Cambyses most of the Empire had already been strung together by Cyrus, so the four columns in the left block of **Chronological Table B** came to Darius ready merged on his accession, whilst the Babylonian and Levantine block in the centre was also handed to him on a plate. Thus the Table summarises in its first two pages how by the time Darius came to the throne, apart from a few fringe tribal areas later absorbed, his predecessors had already overcome Media (c.550), Lydia (545), Babylon (539) and Egypt (525/6). Thus on embarking on the sculptural programme of Persepolis from 521 the representative Achaemenid purple in the table blending all formerly separate kingdoms is fully embodied in the processions of the diverse peoples of his realm bringing in gifts and tribute. The spectrum of both administrative *and* artistic influences put to use at Persepolis was correspondingly international and eclectic. Yet, even if reusing foreign prototypes, at the new site an as yet unknown mastermind was able to devise a sculptural programme deliberately drawn up to project its specifically Persian nature. The design of Persepolis's *Uruk Stance* symbol did not change at all over time (Artaxerxes III was the last king to add a pair to the complex), being repeated exactly as before on successively added individual stairways by the 5C Achaemenid kings and after that not at all by the 4C ones using the site, as the Empire entered into free-fall.

The overall view given us by this **Chronological Focus** is that the Achaemenid Empire, in reoccupying the orbit of the protohistoric Suso-Sumerian empire more or less secured exactly those territories of the Fertile and Iranian Crescents that had been within the orbit of Susa and Uruk in the 4th-3rd millennia BC, so was administering the same territory, though possibly on a more consensual basis than the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires of the 1M. But 300 years later in 332 it all fell to Alexander, dramatically bringing the same countries under the sway of Persia's long-standing enemy – Greece: we take our *Table* up to the end of the Achaemenid dynasty up to the year 332 where we indicate by the change of colour to red right across the board how the entire purple domain of Darius III, last of the Achaemenids, came under Alexander, ready-made.

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<sup>11</sup> I propose in a future paper to revisit the relationship known to have existed between Plato and the Magoi - as pursued by Kingsley.

## INITIAL THOUGHTS ON THE ICONOGRAPHY OF CATALOGUED ITEMS

Before dealing specifically with Achaemenid iconography, following our usual method we make one or two generalisations about the material leading up to it, in chronological order. In placing the *Uruk Stance* version of lion attacking prey within the **Canon of Ancient Near Eastern Art (CANEA)**, like the *Belly Landing* scenario, we came across many instances where it is juxtaposed to other images, which should again help to open up or confirm its meanings, examples being

THE APPEARANCE OF THE MASTER OF THE BEASTS GROUP, THEREAFTER CONSTANTLY COUPLED WITH THE LION AND PREY:

- the Gebel-Tarif and Gebel-el-Arak knife-handles (**Urusta-2** and **Urusta-7**;
- the Aššur stone vase (**Urusta-6**).

ASSOCIATION OF THE LION-PREY GROUP WITH AN ENTHRONED GOD OR RULER:

- Now and again on polyglot Levantine and Minoan seals of the 2M showing audience scenes, the lion-prey group appears next to the enthroned figure (e.g. **Urusta-27**) – to be studied in more detail in **Catalogues C, D** and **E**;

EMERGENCE OF GREEK MYTHOLOGICAL ELEMENTS IN RELATION TO THE *URUK STANCE*

- The archaic Greek and Etruscan artefacts showing oriental influence (**Urusta-40** to **Urusta-45**) adopt the lion attack in relation to their own pantheon - explored further in **Catalogue F**.

However, as regards placement with other images in the two peak periods, with one or two exceptions the *Uruk Stance* is usually used on its own as the centrepiece – first on stone vases and then on staircase reliefs. Because of its ubiquitous appearance at Persepolis in the 6-5C BC (including on sealings) the site takes centre stage in the *Iconography* Section since its appearance on the staircases all over the temenos punctuates the sculptural programme of the main buildings like a mantra. Compared to the sparse instances listed in the *Belly Landing* catalogue, study of the *Uruk Stance* roster provides a much richer factual platform for making a positive leap forward in our *Iconography* Section to look at the real possibilities for a cosmological interpretation – – with the help of the work of others so far mostly ignored in mainline scholarship. Thus our exploration of the *Uruk Stance* iconography within the period of the *Chronological Focus* will almost completely centre on the rise and fall of Persepolis itself, the newest religious capital since the much older cities of Jerusalem, Thebes, Memphis, Sardis, Susa, Eridu, Uruk and Ur - whose remains would have been evident to the Achaemenids as they mopped up, and even continued to use, their exhausted administrations some thousands of years after their initial foundation.

Quickly skimming the earliest material, we simply make a few preliminary generalisations as prelude to a concentrated exploratory effort focused on Persepolis.

### 4-3M SUMER, SUSAN AND EGYPT

Apart from the two Egyptian knife handles likely to come from burials (**Urusta-2/3**), the earliest stone vases or cups and seals/sealings with firm provenance (**Urusta-1** and **4-22**) come from temple precincts associated with Inanna/Ishtar and the Uruk/Susa network. The later Early Dynastic material is centred on the city states of Sumer, where again the seals and sealings with provenance seem to be associated with temple sites (though in fact there are few examples compared to the major use on seals at these cities in this period of, say, the **Forward and Crossover Attacks (Catalogues E & G)**. We tried to include as many of the *Uruk Stance* examples we came across, even when fragmentary, to give an idea of the expansion of its use in what we might call the Mother Territory in connection with processes and rituals going on in temple and palace administrative centres, seemingly under the protection of particular astronomical divinities.



Although we can point to certain African elements in the Egyptian examples that must be local, however varied the media, the synchronicities between Egypt, Susa and Sumer highlighted in **Catalogue A** for before, during and after the time of Narmer/Enmerkar dovetail with the similarities we see between them and these early *Uruk Stance* artefacts. On balance, the comparatively lesser use of the *Uruk Stance* in Egypt quite simply confirms how it must have been used under the temporary influence of rulers and their artists coming in from – or influenced by – Uruk and Susa in the Late Uruk/Susa I/II periods. This is because later in Dynastic times all through the rest of the 3M the *Uruk Stance* motif had multiple and continued usage on cylinder seals *only* in Susiana and Sumer (especially at Ur, Fara and Kish **Urusta-13-22**) – indicating the automatic deployment of the group was not native to Egypt – despite the profuse presence of lions in both countries. We must bear in mind the difference between Asiatic and African lions, and that usually it is the smaller Asiatic lion with its belly fringe, local to Mesopotamia, that is depicted. It is also worth noting that one great difference between Mesopotamia and Egypt is that cattle production in Africa lagged far behind compared to its natural progress in Mesopotamia, for reasons which hold good even today, dealt with in the BACKGROUND.

The relationship between Uruk and Susa (and its hinterland in the Iranian Crescent as characterised in **Catalogue A**) is very much the backdrop for the events described in the Sumerian myth of **Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta** (and its variation in the related myth of **Lugalbanda and the Thunderbird**), underlining how closely Uruk and Susa in the 3-4M BC reciprocated through the barter of farming products from the former in exchange for the raw materials and craftsmanship provided by the latter. The story gives down-to-earth clues about their respective influence in terms of the sending and bringing of goods between Uruk and Susa (not only trade in barley for lapis lazuli, but also how this led to the sharing in the cult of Inanna. This mutually beneficial trade network in the end moved West on a permanent basis as far as the Levant (e.g. to Ebla in North Syria, explored in **Catalogue E: The Forward Attack**), in contrast to its more experimental and short-lived duration in Egypt, around Abydos and Hieraconpolis where – as suggested in the Belly Landing commentary – Narmer, the first Pharaoh, and Enmerkar could have been one and the same person. We have seen how at first the *Uruk Stance* was used on trading labels and administrative seals whose precise function we cannot always pin down, but of prime interest is its use ritually on an entire series of Sumerian stone vases and cups and on two Egyptian flint knives, one with handle end clad in gold foil and the other with an ivory handle. Can we discern the implications of its use on **Urusta-1** to **Urusta-23** briefly?

#### **THE URUK STONE VASES AND RELATED SEALS**

Using all the criteria for logical sequencing that we can, we still cannot decide with complete certainty the chronology of the stone vases, though they were clearly made during one era, possibly no more than three or four generations between the Late Uruk and Jemdet Nasr periods. In terms of clumsiness of style and execution we have to a large extent ordered the vases according to the way the arc made by the forelegs of the attacking lion has been carved. The best-known is the spouted vase from Uruk (**Urusta-8**): it is the most intact of the vases since it was protected in the Uruk *Sammelfund*, but it has not usually been considered alongside all the other vases and cups we have brought together on paper. The competence of its design solution in comparison to the variations attempted on the other vessels places it as the culmination point of this group of ritual vessels evidently being used in a distinctive temple culture holding sway along the southern reaches of the Euphrates and upper Tigris. Apart from the Uruk examples, those of known provenance were found in temple precincts at Ur, Nippur, Aššur and Nineveh, indicating that the lion attacking the bull had a cultic meaning, while over the whole of Sumer numerous fragments of other vases or cups sold on the market are associated with these prototypes by style and subject and must also come from the same territory, with similar intention for use

(even if one or two could be fakes, surely not all of them are!). The overwhelming suggestion is that these vessels are connected to the cult of Inanna-Venus – did the *Uruk Stance* have the same connotation on the Egyptian artefacts?

The Uruk Period stone vessels are echoed in matching seals made over the same period, similarly uncluttered by much additional subject matter other than quiescent herd animals standing or lying. Some are sealings on accounting balls or labels from Uruk and Susa<sup>12</sup>, the latter with signs for numerals gouged on them. Probably the image added by a seal not only referred to the point of origin for the goods they were attached to, but also to the authority vested in the temple administration under the aegis of its presiding deity. On these earliest examples the bull does not struggle –in some cases it willingly proffers its back leg to the lion's grasp.

#### ENMERKAR AND INANNA

Moorgat wrote of the stone vases carved with the *Uruk Stance*, 'Its meaning is undoubtedly related to the cult ceremony in which these valuable vessels were used', and Sumerian myth provides further background. Closer inspection of the wording of the myth of **Enmerkar** can help us understand why the *Uruk Stance* (probably a symbol of Inanna, which we cannot yet prove) was given such prominence in Uruk, and why it was used during the same era in Susa, a city acting as the funnel for goods coming through from the small hill sites all round the Iranian Crescent (Hole 1987). The story itself confirms the importance to Sumer at the onset of the 3M BC of the mountain country lying to its east for the provision of stones and metals, named Aratta, its gateway down on the plain no doubt being Susa (substitute the words 'Iranian Crescent' for Aratta to understand where it was, described as 'seven mountain chains beyond Elam' (Cohen 1973) – which takes us as far as Afghanistan. These materials were understood as the gift of Aratta's Goddess Inanna and her father Utu the Sun and it seems there was a commonly run central institution at Susa and Uruk that indicated its authority by using the *Uruk Stance* on the labels, seals and cups that spread to the provinces - or was it a symbol of *Iranian* origin that was taken up by Sumerian urban centres and put to use by officialdom, raising it to high standards of artistic execution? In the story we seem to have an answer, as it is quite clearly says that Enmerkar's mission was to bring Inanna down to Uruk *from* mountainous Aratta. The essentials of the story run thus.

At the opening, although Inanna is said to be the divine consort of both the Lord of Aratta and of Enmerkar in Uruk, she is domiciled in Aratta. Enmerkar wishes to embellish temples to her in Uruk and Eridu and covets the costly materials to be found in the mountainous regions owned by the Lord of Aratta, sending threatening messages demanding that Inanna's statue be sent down to Uruk, accompanied by the necessary materials and labour. A war of minds proceeds for some time, with an interchange of messengers, demands and counter demands, all the time Enmerkar believing he is now favoured by Inanna, and the Lord of Aratta that she has abandoned him in the Sumerians' favour. At the last moment the Lord of Aratta is saved by the germination of the barley harvest in Enmerkar's terrain, so when Enmerkar visits his city the idea is put forward that they could all have what they want by simply bartering the goods of the plain for the minerals of Aratta. The myth perfectly sums up the relationship between Sumer and the Iranian Crescent all through their history: an alternation between separation, coercion and spasmodic mutual cooperation. The distribution, use (or non-use) of the lion and prey symbol in these two areas perfectly marks the fluctuations in this state of affairs.

Reactivated by Enmerkar, Inanna, as Queen of Uruk as well as - at a distance now - of Aratta, enables him after his long and perilous journey there to take back not only the raw materials he needs to embellish Uruk's temples, but also the craftsmen to work

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<sup>12</sup> These were most common when Sumer and Susa were pulling together in perfect mutual interchange inventing primitive systems of accounting, weighing and measuring. According to Amiet<sup>12</sup>, Susa labelling soon showed itself superiority to the more clumsy hollow balls containing tiny geometrically-shaped clay counters made in the Uruk region (one or two ended up in Syria that we know of) - and led to the development of writing slightly ahead of Protodynastic Egypt which in turn - quick on the uptake - devised its own system of writing.

them. This affords an interesting clue about itinerant craftsmen who could equally have been taken to Egypt to work local materials and traditional forms such as ivory and slate. The highly prized lapis lazuli is mentioned as the prime target of Enmerkar's expedition, but though not specified in the closely similar **Lugalbanda** epic, humble materials such as chlorite and steatite seem also to have been sent over and down to the Sumerian plain from the mins of Tepe Yahya (see **Belland-4**).

Inanna/Venus, who we already suspect from the *Uruk Stance* vases in her temples is directly associated with the lion & prey symbol on them, is described as a supreme Goddess, both in the mountains and down on the Sumerian plain, and it looks as if this tradition lasted into Achaemenid times even if under her names in other languages (such as Ishtar or Anahita), but we will not be able to clinch that idea until we have gathered more evidence through later catalogues.

**SUMER AND SUSA'S BRIEF COOPERATION WITH EGYPT**

Mostly from the Early Dynastic period, on seals displaying the *Uruk Stance* the composition was developed to include the presence of the hunter restraining the attacking lion, often by holding the base of its tail (sub-labelled in the Catalogue as GROUP D), perhaps intentionally telescoping into the *Uruk Stance* the idea of the lion-tamer in local practice - usually dealt with as a separate, more heraldic image of Master of the Beasts ) as at Uruk itself, or Aššur (**Urusta- 6**) (in Egypt seen on the Gebel el-Arak knife handle (**Urusta-7**) and Tomb 100 at Hierakonpolis. The lion-tamer theme is taken up again by the earliest Achaemenid Kings (**Urusta-47f**). We look in detail at Early Dynastic seals in the *Chronological Focus* for **Catalogue G**.

As already demonstrated in **Catalogue A**, the *Uruk Stance* vases have elements of iconography in common with the ritual knife handles and slate palettes found in Egypt. Whether the main route of interchange was by sea and the Wadi Hammamet - or from the north via Syria - is still under debate, though the main body of archaeological and geographical evidence points to the former as the main route at this time. Their at times idiosyncratic shared imagery throws a specific searchlight onto the significance of the lion and prey symbol under what we could either call the Susan Empire - or Greater Sumeria - given it is juxtaposed with scenes from the **CANEA** of specifically Mesopotamian character – Tomb 100 at Hierakonpolis being a case in point, depicting as it does a Master of the Beasts group against African savannah terrain, studded with scenes of what we today call 'big game'. The Gebel-el-Arak knife handle (**Urusta-7**) in the same way shows a Late Uruk Master of the Beasts standing over an *Uruk Stance* lion and prey close in stance to that on the Uruk stone vases and seals: conversely the stone vase from Aššur with lion and prey (**Urusta-6**) has a Master of Beasts on the other side of it carved uncouthly. The gold foil-covered Gebel-el-Tarif knife-handle (**Urusta-2**) from Upper Egypt (the more primitive, and African, of the two knife-handles) has *Uruk Stance* attacks on the top two registers, followed below by two rear attacks of the milder kind (see **Rear Attack Catalogue C**). The other side of the Gebel-el-Arak knife handle has further scenes on it of a narrative character, not part of the **CANEA** but more in the category of War and Peace contrasts as later seen on the *Standard of Ur*, probably showing a battle with invaders. On these protodynastic examples we have in a nutshell proof of the short-lived interchange between Egypt and Susa that completely died down at the onset of their Dynastic periods. After the Susa II period each region drew in on itself in succeeding centuries, drawing on the re-use and elaboration of the residues of that visual cross-fertilisation that had occurred during what seems to have been a short-lived administrative experiment of two to three hundred years.

Near the end of the 3M the barbarian Guti moved down from the mountains, looting the cities on the Sumerian plain now under Akkadian rule, and bringing that dynasty to an end. As far as the archaeological record goes, the *Uruk Stance* motif then falls out of use for a few hundred years, corroborated by the material in the other catalogues.



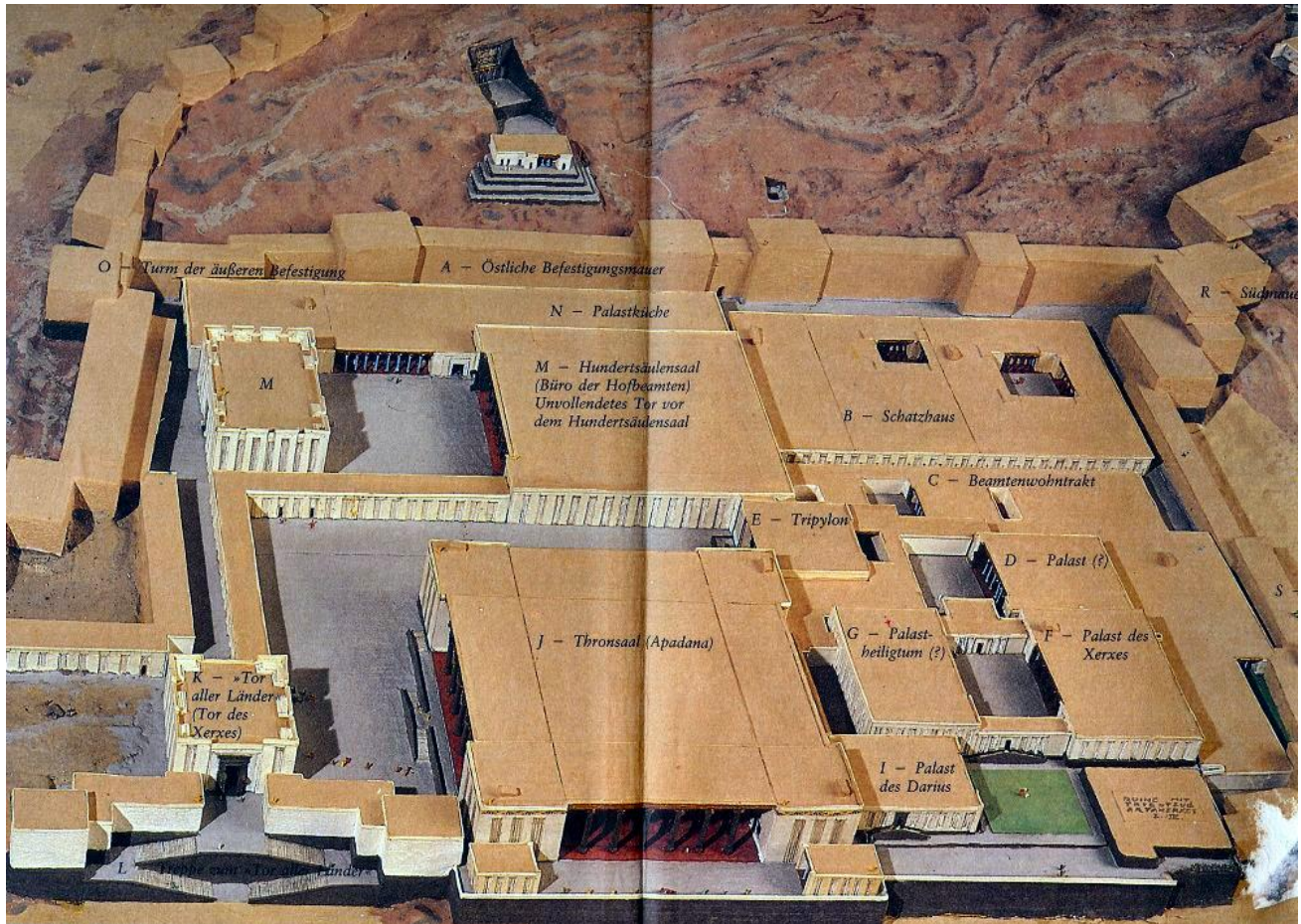
**2M- INTERNATIONALISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: ANATOLIA, THE LEVANT, CRETE AND MYCENAE**

The Levant is an area where the fluctuating authority of occupying Egypt or Mesopotamia criss-crossed in its common middle ground (interestingly, no Hittite influence from Anatolia seeps in from the north for the *Uruk Stance* type, again indicating its source in the Sumero-Elamite culture). The adoption of the *Uruk Stance* group by lands round the Mediterranean rim and the Aegean during this period (***Urusta-23-40***) can partly be seen as the conscious use of the symbol by petty kingdoms, on the one hand to deliberately ape the authority of the Superpowers, but also to signify vassalship. Later in the millennium some of the short-lived local Levantine kingdoms come to life for us briefly through the Amarna Letters, a few of which we could loosely associate with particular seals of the time by place of origin. But its use could simply mean these were kingdoms who revered the Goddess, as one or two of the seals indicate this was the level at which the symbol was pitched (***Urusta-27***) – the question is whether this holds true for the Minoan and Mycenaean examples too (***Urusta-29/30***). New, local seal carvers injected a lyricism and inventiveness of design that could be superficial and bordering on the merely decorative: yet if in some cases deeper aspects of the bureaucratic messages of the lion and bull attack as used by the Superpowers might have been misunderstood, certain seals with multiple scenes are iconographically useful in spelling out meanings of the lion and prey group in ancillary images previously not thought necessary to ‘unwrap’ – some of these meanings are mentioned in passing in the catalogue entries. In the *Chronological Focus* and *Iconographical* analysis of ***Catalogues C, D and E*** such seals taken against larger samples will eventually help us unravel those further nuances.

### URUSTA-41-URUSTA-49: THE URUK STANCE IN LYDIA AND PARSA

Now with the *Chronological Focus* material we can undertake a detailed analysis of those aspects of the site's function that should enable us to arrive at an informed understanding of why the *Uruk Stance* lion-bull attack, referring to Venus, was used there.

It appears there were different stages of iconography and surces of craftsmanship in play on the buildings of Persepolis which were down to known influences coming in from territories such as Assyria, Babylon, Egypt and Lydia, all occupied by the Persians, one by one. Lying at the end of the famous route from Susa to Sardis, the palace-temple complex at Sardis (most likely captured by Cyrus in 545<sup>13</sup>) is also built down the slope of a rocky hillside (see contour maps in Hanfmann 1977) - and the national temples of Memphis and Karnak in Egypt or the early Hecatompedon on the Acropolis of Athens would no doubt have further inspired Achaemenid royalty to emulate them in setting up their own national imperial capital in their local territory of Fars: they certainly made use of the same families of Egyptian and Ionian stonemasons - or Babylonian brickmakers and enamellers - already experienced and able to turn their skills to similar operations. The overall concept of a *Takht*, or temenos platform holding sacred buildings would already have been known in the reign of Cyrus from the sacred precinct of ziggurat and temples at Babylon (captured 539) and also the



Ill.6- 12: Krefter's bird's-eye view of the Persepolis site from the West looking towards Kuh-i-Rahmat: note Schmidt's original alphabetic lettering for identification, maintained by him (1971) in his reconstructions (and also by Gropp for the positioning of the staircases) -von Zabern Persepolis exhibition catalogue 1989

<sup>13</sup> David Stronach 'The Building Programme of Cyrus the Great at Pasargadae and the Date of the Fall of Sardis' in Darbandi et al. 2008

abandoned Temple of Solomon whose rebuilding he encouraged when he brought the Babylonian Exile to an end and sent the Jews back to Jerusalem to rebuild it. Appropriate for the founding of the new Persian Empire's tribal capital, *Takht-e-Jamshid*, the local name of the site of Persepolis, referred to the original mythical ruler of Fars, suggesting it was an already ancient place known from centuries before (a nearby site bears the name of the original builder of the Jewish Temple, Solomon himself: *Takht-e-Suleiman*).

Through the remarkable programme of decoration by foreign sculptors, covered by Nylander (1970), Root (1979) and Roaf (1983), the temple observatory complex of Persepolis set out to project a series of propaganda messages about itself for those using it (it was hardly for the use of the general population, but for its royal, religious and administrative élites). We need not reiterate these authors' work here in spelling out that programme in detail, since our task is simply to concentrate on the repeated use of the lion and prey symbol on the staircases of the complex - built over several centuries - that frame it. We will take it for granted the reader is aware of it, and that going by earlier imperial precedents it was used in connection with imperial religious *and* administrative concerns whose intertwined modes were established at the very start of Darius' reign, its messages remaining valid to the end of the reign of Artaxerxes II, during which period each new king added at least one more staircase, until use of the site waned.

The association of the *Uruk Stance* with the Goddess Athena (in Persia Anahita) in **Urusta-41 to Urusta-45** is significant, since it appears that it was under Her aegis the temenos of Persepolis was laid out. Why is this? A bird's-eye view of the complex is reconstructed above as viewed *from the West looking in the direction of the rising sun at the top*.

**DISTRIBUTION OF LION AND PREY ICONOGRAPHY ON THE PERSEPOLIS STAIRCASES**

It is difficult for a newcomer poring through the archaeological reports, plans and papers on Persepolis - covering over 50 years of exposition and commentary from Schmidt to Razmjou - to work out where all 26-28 examples of the lion and prey motif were placed and what their message was, given that interpretation of the principal buildings has changed over time<sup>14</sup>. Thankfully, the groundwork for that particular task was done in a paper by Gerd Gropp (1971) who had the benefit of Tilia's work on the latest restoration surveys done at Persepolis also published in that year<sup>15</sup>. If we look at Krefter's reconstruction above of the main layout of Persepolis as coded alphabetically by Schmidt in his excavations at the site, we note first of all that the complex is built against the ridge of Kuh-i-Rahmat<sup>16</sup> rising up behind it, against which the temenos walls cling in rising stepped sections, encircling the *Takht* to create a fortress. The 1000-metre-high rocky outcrop thus provides a protective bastion on its Eastern side *which delays sighting of the rising sun on the horizon by two hours*. We will discuss below in due course the orientation of the entire Persepolis site to the Summer Solstice sunrise and sunset - to which the lion and prey symbol is absolutely central.

Resited from the original small south entrance of Darius I's initial layout (**III.6- 22**) the grand entry to the Persepolis acropolis completed by Xerxes was up the double staircase at the NW corner (bottom left on Krefter's reconstruction above) to the Propylaeon named the 'Gate of All Nations' (K) through which armies would have trooped straight ahead to their quarters. Before reaching the army quarters a dog-leg turn right, through a further gate (never finished) would lead to the Hundred-Columned Audience Hall (M,

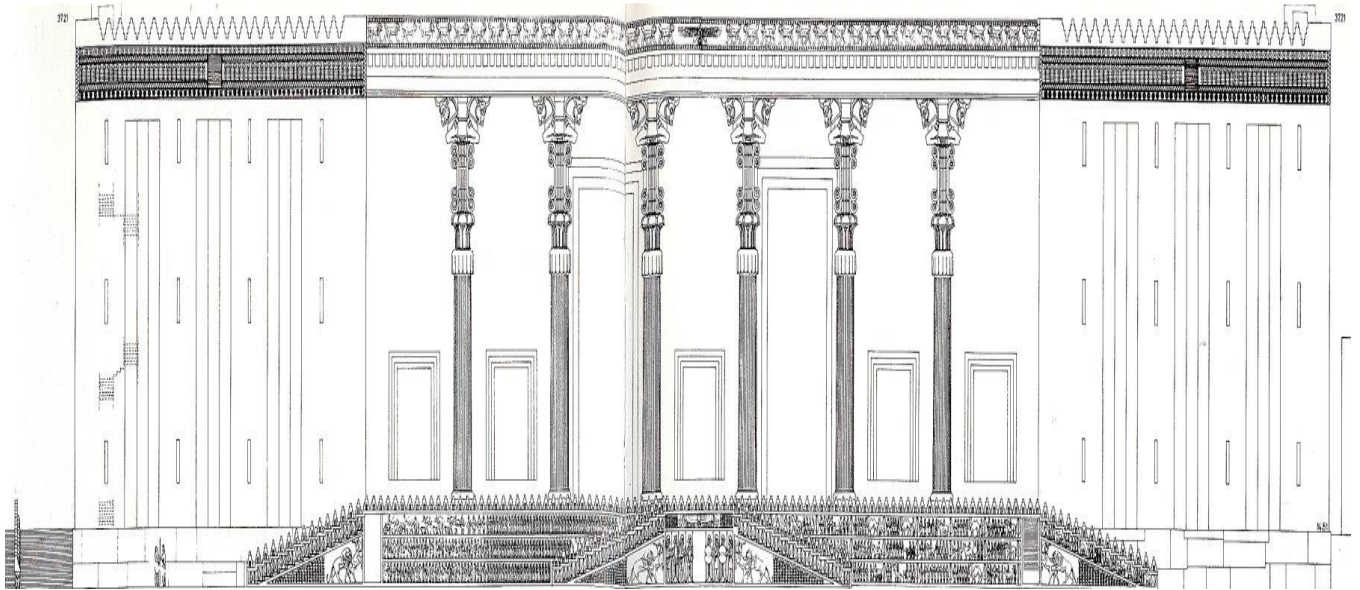
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<sup>14</sup> For ease of identification, however, in coming pages we will continue to use the original names adopted by the first scholars in the field for most buildings on the site, even though by the end of our consideration of Persepolis we will see from the latest thinking and evidence that the actual function of some of them is likely to have been different from how originally imagined.

<sup>15</sup> M. Roaf (1983) admirably discusses the sculptures of Persepolis in relation to their carvers - but does not particularly concern himself with the lion and prey symbol and, as far as I can see, does not refer to Gropp's work.

<sup>16</sup> Mécquenem mentions that the Acropolis at Susa probably served as a Tower of Silence while the eternal flame would burn in ritual areas of the Palace beneath - the ruined tower in the walls of Persepolis has been interpreted as having the same function.

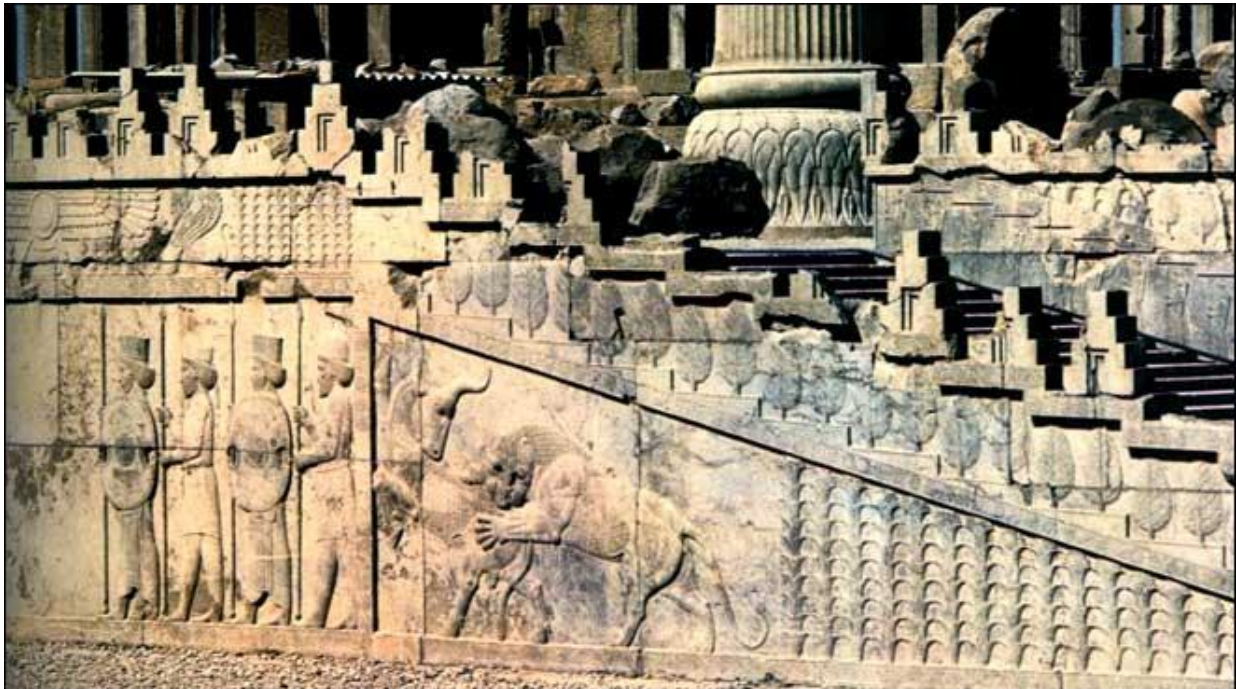




**Ill.6- 13: Dignitaries' view from the Gate of Nations of the main portico of the Apadana, its columns topped by double-bull- capitals. The double staircase depicts them in their own processions bearing offerings from surrounding regions of the Empire - with lion and prey groups in the spandrels bracketed by papyrus plants**

not built until Xerxes' time) with its human-headed capitals in the north portico. On either route they would have not have seen a single instance of the lion and prey image on any stairway: thus clearly not relevant for that sector of the Persepolis personnel.

Visitors arriving for the annual presentation of taxes or regional ambassadors of the Empire reporting to redeclare their oath of loyalty, on the other hand, on reaching the top of the stairs would have immediately turned right *inside* the Gate of All Nations (K) so as to proceed across a rectangular courtyard to the two-sided double stairways of the Apadana (J) decorated on the side panels

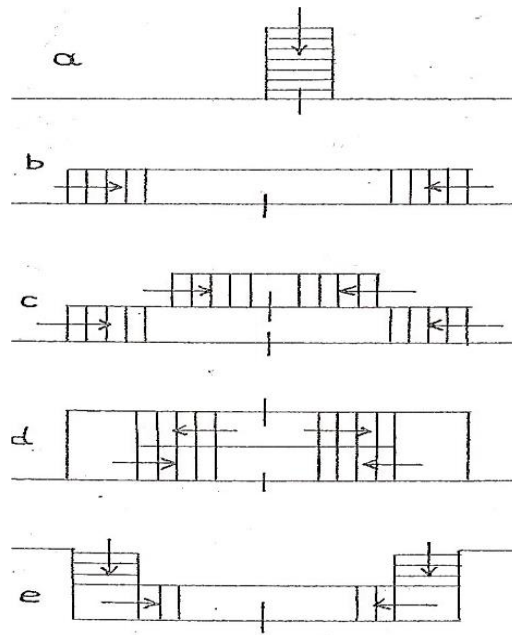


**Ill.6- 14: Close-up of one of the four lion and prey groups in one spandrel of the North Apadana staircase: note its scenery of rows of reeds - and a row of incense trees along an angled pelmet under the steps**

(illustration above) with processions of people and lion and prey groups (*III.6- 13*) flanking a central image of the enthroned king (later moved to the Treasury where it slotted into a similar East Portico rendition (*III.6- 20*). Walking up those stairs they would proceed through the North portico - whose bull-headed capitals held up the ceiling of cedar beams all the way through into the interior - into the Apadana, originally interpreted as the throne-room where VIPs would assemble before the King, and where religious rituals probably took place.

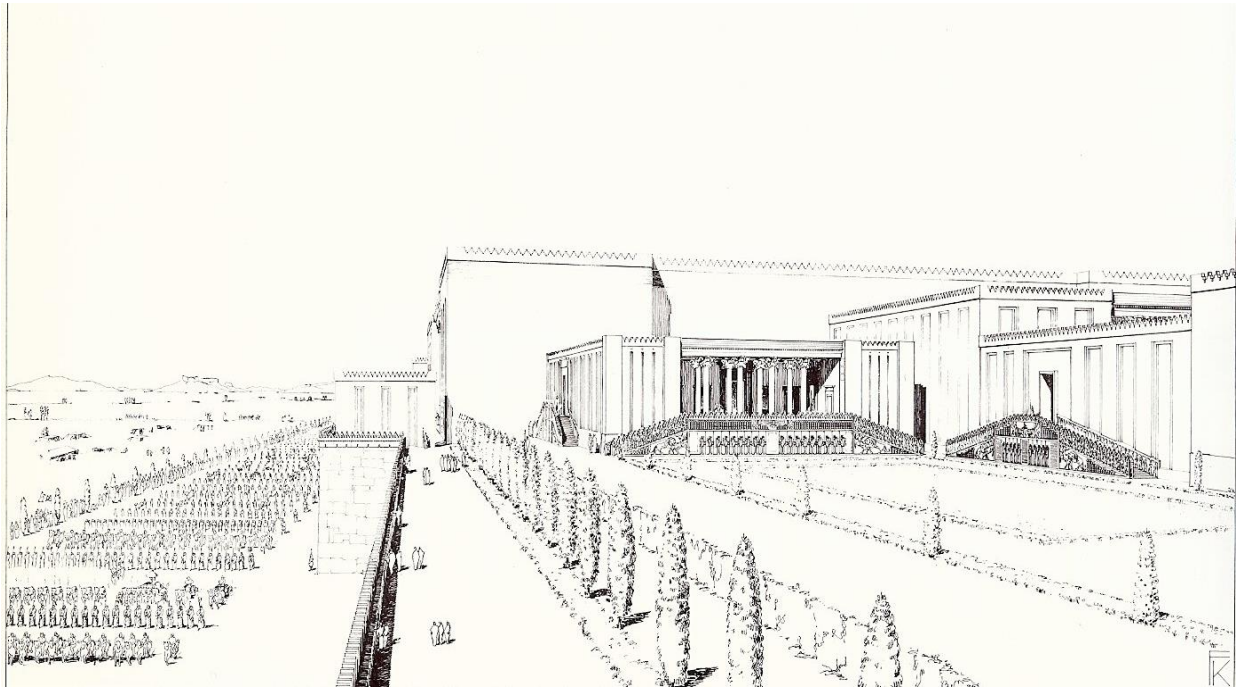
**LOCATION OF ALL URUK STANCE STAIRCASE SPANDRELS**

On inspection all but one of the staircases at Persepolis included the lion and prey symbol in their decorative programme. These were needed in order to gain access to the complex of buildings on the West side of the site, which were all raised on an artificially constructed 3-metre-high platform on top of the main terrace (buildings towards the south were raised even higher, one or two in a double storey). This compares with the treatment of the army and treasury areas on the Eastern side of the terrace, left at the existing lower level in order not to block the view from buildings further behind for observational reasons, as we shall see. Gropp analysed the layout of all the staircases, lengthened or shortened according to the extent of facade to be covered, and adapted



**III.6- 15: Gropp's Staircase layouts a-e**

to the variety of messages to be conveyed by the surrounding reliefs according to the purpose of the building they led up to. Of all these only the single flight of steps (a) leading from the south side of the Tripylon (E, sometimes called The Gate of Kings) has *no* representations of the lion and prey on its sides – all instances of the other four types do. Gropp realised that overall they are attached to only five buildings on the fully complete complex: the Apadana (J); the royal 'Palaces' of Darius, the evolving complex of Xerxes and Artaxerxes I/III (D/F/G/H/I); and the bi-directional gatehouse of the Tripylon (E) nearby. They were combined and distributed not only according to how they would fit the spaces available, but in obvious cases the mixture proclaims the function of the building to which they lead. Staircases were later added to a predecessor's building by a son or grandsons (Xerxes or Artaxerxes I/III), and all face onto public areas where visiting dignitaries could not avoid the visual propaganda of their Mazdean, calendrical or imperial message.



**III.6- 16: Courtyard between the South side of Darius I's palace and the West portico of Xerxes' palace (each with single staircases with 2 representations of the lion and prey group) viewed from corner of zone H -Krefter**

In the same paper Gropp usefully drew out summary diagrams of the (restored on paper, at least) varied iconographic schemes used on the staircases - framed by the ubiquitous ziggurat balustrade crenellations. These scenes he broke down into components of no more than a dozen motifs (*italic additions are mine*):

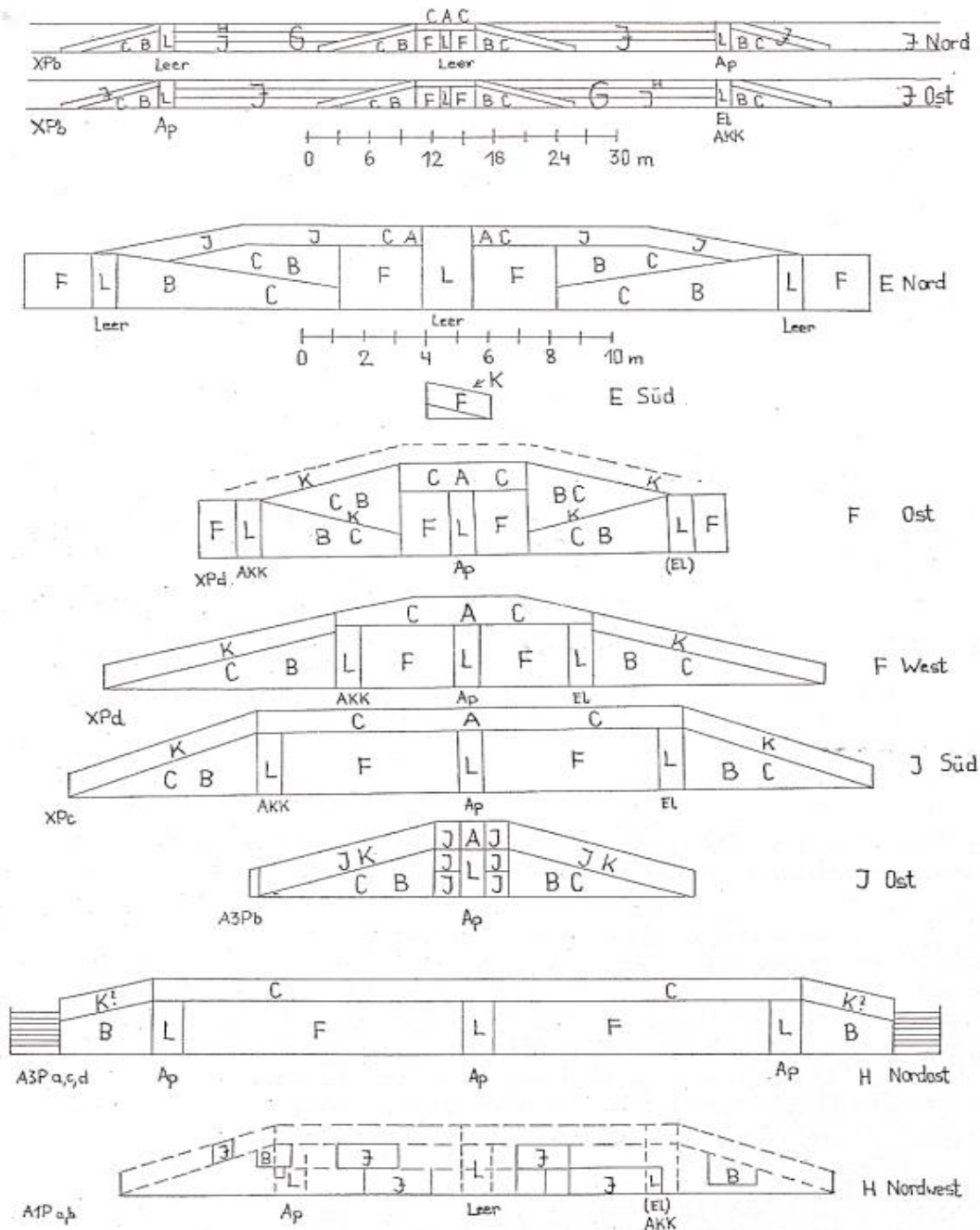
- A. Winged Sun between sphinxes
- B. Lion attacking Bull
- C. Papyrus/Reeds
- D. Incense Trees
- E. Rosettes
- F. Guard with shield
- G. Immortal with spear
- H. Royal horse and wagon
- I. Royal household porters/*temple personnel*
- J. Tribute/*gift*-bearers
- K. Servants bearing items for the Royal Feast/*temple acolytes*
- L. Rectangular inscription panels, some empty

Some of these components may be more concerned with religious ritual than originally realised, but our main concern is to consider the use of the lion-bull symbol (B in the list above) – noting that the male lion is the attacker, and not the lioness<sup>17</sup>. The advisers

<sup>17</sup> In the myth of Inanna and the Me, she is described as *pirig.zu<sub>2</sub>.ŠEŠ* (lion of sharp tooth) suggesting she can as much be represented by male, as female, of the species (see J.J. Glassner 'Inanna et les Me' in Ellis, M de J (ed.) *Nippur at the Centennial (RAI 35)* 1992. Indeed in the same paper attributes in the Me concerning her bisexuality (depending on whether she is in Love or War mode) are also discussed.



originally responsible for planning Persepolis adhered to the *Uruk Stance* composition local to the region<sup>18</sup> (see especially **Urusta-3/4f** showing the prey's head turned back in Susa style - or **Urusta-8-11** for the frontal view of the lion's head) and later kings did not



### III.6- 17: Gropp's Staircase motif analysis

change it: they all match each other in pose and presentation, so their dating is only to be determined by related inscriptions or slight changes in carving style over the generations - though we do not need that level of chronological detail.

<sup>18</sup> We are reminded that reliefs of tribute bearers at Persepolis include Elamites bringing lions and lion-cubs - an indication that Elam was still very much 'lion country'.

| SCHMIDT MAP  | BUILDING AND PERIOD          | STAIRCASE TYPE | POSITION AND NO. OF LION & PREY UNITS |           |                 |           |
|--|------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
| J  | <b>APADANA (Darius I)</b>    | c & c          | North side                            | 4         | East side       | 4         |
| E  | <b>TRIPYLON (Darius I)</b>   | d & a          | North side                            | 4         | South side      | 0         |
| I  | <b>DARIUS I PALACE</b>       | b & b          | South side                            | 2         | West side       | 2         |
| F  | <b>XERXES PALACE</b>         | d & b          | East side                             | 4         | West side       | 2         |
| H  | <b>ARTAXERXES III PALACE</b> | e & b          | North-East side                       | 2         | North-West side | 2         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   |                              |                |                                       | <b>16</b> |                 | <b>10</b> |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b> (including the ARTAXERXES I demolished staircase similar to the Darius I Palace stairways (a few blocks remain in H zone) |                              |                |                                       | 2         |                 | <b>28</b> |

**III.6- 18: Summary of positioning of lion and prey groups on the Persepolis staircases**

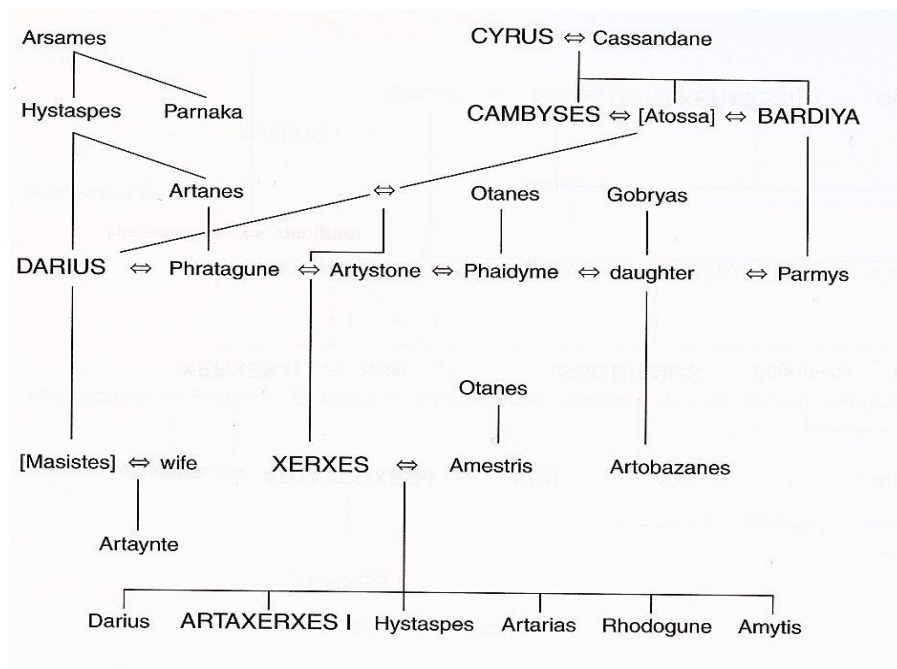
Counting up the instances of the lion and prey motif (B) gives a total of 26/28, as summarised in the table above (one or two writers disagree with that figure, preferring to limit the total to a definite 24 or 26), but we are counting in the staircase built by Artaxerxes I, later broken up and reused in and beyond Persepolis: fragments of its lion and prey components are either still displayed outside on the platform at H on Schmidt's plan (**III.6- 23**) or in the Persepolis Museum - whilst one large fragment of attacked bull found its way to the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh in 1887 (Tilia *ibid.* I, figs 62-65 and 163). It is not fully clear how many blocks of Artaxerxes I's palace were absorbed into Artaxerxes III's building, itself now in a ruinous state and squeezed in between the 'Harem' quarters (C) and early versions of buildings D and G.

As far as use of the lion and prey image goes, we have now gathered all the information possible for a 95% accurate perspective on their main locations on the plan. Just from doing this it has become clear that, although the orientation of the five buildings served by the staircases is crucial to the way Persepolis works, the lion and prey groups themselves face towards all four cardinal points. Thus their purpose appears more to be to proclaim and celebrate the divine dedication of the site (and in particular the five buildings whose staircases they serve) than to be directional pointers. But first, some practical considerations.

**THE EXTENT OF OCCUPATION OF PERSEPOLIS**

The function of Persepolis has been thoroughly discussed since first disinterred by Herzfeld and Schmidt, and the documentary evidence found at the site, along with the varied iconography of column capitals, door jambs and staircases, have all after much scholarly interchange contributed to ever new angles on its overall purpose, some of whose more neglected aspects particularly germane to the *Uruk Stance* coat of arms we need to look at further. Gropp argued that clues in the chronological development of the site indicate Persepolis must surely have had *several* functions: we can run through the more obvious ones below.

- Persepolis was the gathering point for the King's equals and vassals (the equivalent of an Indian *Durbar* or Afghan *Loya Jirga*);
- On top of this, Persepolis is likely to have been the theatre for the enactment of an Imperial Cult ritual focusing on the divinised person of the King - in accord with his Mazdean stance as a noble Man of Truth (level 7 of the Zoroastrian Heptad, *III.6- 34*).
- As well as receiving diplomatic gifts and reasserting royal power the gathering of the clans – much on the lines of earlier annual tribute presentation assemblies in places such as 2M Mari or Ebla in Syria - would simultaneously have fulfilled the practical purpose of taking in taxes in the form of animal and food produce, which is how the main staircase reliefs have usually been interpreted. Did this exercise necessarily take place all in one go, as conflated in the reliefs, or were there several separate sessions, phased to fit in with months when crops or herds were ready for hand over?
- Further than this, Persepolis has commonly been read as a Festival complex for the celebration of the New Year: Hinz (1971) refers to Fortification Tablet PF 701 requisitioning the equivalent of over one thousand litres of flour which points, he says, to something like 'zehntausend Gäste des Darius zehn Tage lang mit Brot zu versorgen' - pointing to such a gathering. It has usually been seen as the time of Year the three purposes just described above were combined into one event.
- Hintz similarly interprets the huge quantities of wine ordered for Darius' Queen and sheep for his daughter on other tablets (such as PF 1795) as possibly New Year presents for equivalent female celebrations. These tablets give orders for the goods to be sent to sequestered royal female-owned country estates *outside* Persepolis (below we show an outline Achaemenid family tree that includes the names of the influential royal women related to the founding Kings). This information led to the realisation that it is unlikely the royal women would have spent time at Persepolis at all, meaning the buildings called the Harem (C) were probably used for something different.



**III.6- 19: Outline Achaemenid Family Tree from Kuhrt (2007) with influential Royal Females included**



Even if there was one event lasting several days it surely would not have been worth the work and expense of fashioning Persepolis' buildings out of permanent stone (in contrast to the mud-brick generally used at Susa) for one annual seasonal cult ceremony held at the Spring Festival alone (it is not proved that it *did* take place every year anyway), so we will need to look more deeply into two of Persepolis' functions that bring into better focus its paramount role as the Empire's 'Westminster Abbey' and 'Whitehall' combined.

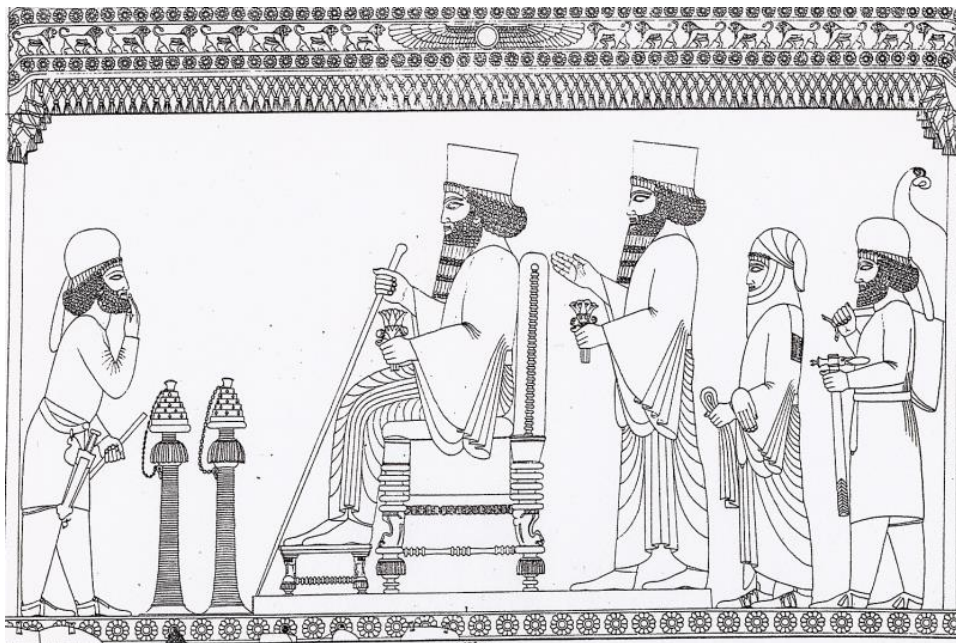
The evidence of the clay tablets and huge number of military weapon remains found on the site means we know there were administrative and army quarters on the acropolis, indicating Persepolis was at first quite the opposite of a one-event tent city, and until the move to the new technology of ink on papyrus from the end of Xerxes' reign (due to which possible later papyrus records there have perished) we know from the clay tablets (usually in the characteristic tongue shape of those coming under **Urusta 47/47f**) that it was certainly a bureaucratic administrative centre issuing permissions and orders for rations for workers and craftsmen around the local domain - and travel rations for officials journeying much further afield. If we go by the evidence of the dates on the Fortification Tablets (Briant et al. 2008; D M Lewis 1990; Hallock 1985) and Treasury Tablets (Cameron 1948) some were issued during at least nine sequential months of any one year. One or two of these tablets are sealed by officials with the Susa-type *Uruk Stance* design on them, echoing that on the Persepolis staircases (**Urusta-47/47f**), defining them as from Darius' reign. Variations in its drawing are closer to Susa prototypes in the use of the stylised back-turned- head of lion or stag, so it is not surprising Hinz (1971) pointed to Susa and Persepolis' reliance on many of the old Elamite modes of administration, as Henkelman (2008) further demonstrated four decades later.

Since Persepolis is mentioned in the sources as one of four seasonal capitals which the King and his Court visited in rotation, it means they could have been in full residence at Persepolis for up to three months in any year, if not longer in some years – during which period its ritual function would also have come into play as the crowning event. But the actual documentary evidence in Greek and Persian sources shows the procedure of shifting between capitals every three months was not followed as a hard and fast rule, and there is no reason to assume the King came *every* year (in the year of the Battle of Marathon, for instance, we know he did not – Tuplin 1998) and therefore it may not be that high royal ritual was meant to happen annually at Persepolis – after the section on Venus' synodic cycle we could just as well argue for it taking place only every four, or every eight, years (much as the phasing of the Olympic Games in Greece). In completing the work initiated by the late D M Lewis one question explored by Tuplin (*ibid.*) in his detailed analysis of Court movements between the so-called four capitals, based not only on the Fortification Tablets but also on all other historical evidence available, such as Greek and Babylonian commentary, was 'during *which* three months was the Court actually at Persepolis?'. After marrying up the conflicting accounts the only sure facts he was able to arrive at were that the Court always spent the summer in Ecbatana –the coolest of the four (Babylon was down on the hot plain)-- and 'the cold months' at Susa/Persepolis which, being the furthest south offered most warmth. In between, it appears likely the Persepolis administration (and perhaps rituals) were kept ticking over by the permanent staff all year, possibly with a Summer Recess when it was too hot to do anything other than spot the Summer Solstice.

Although the lion and bull group was used on a handful of Persepolis' administrative seals in the way it had been on early seals for centuries before, if we are to understand the particular reason for the *Uruk Stance* reliefs on its staircases we need to look at Persepolis' prime function more deeply.

## THE LION -BULL ATTACK AND THE ZOROASTRIAN ROLE OF PERSEPOLIS

From its earliest disinterment, a handful of writers thought it obvious that Persepolis must have been an astronomical observatory for underpinning the liturgical year of the Mazdean rituals followed by the royal family at Persepolis and concurred in reading the lion-bull attack groups as having some kind of astro-religious meaning. Gropp himself wrote '*Man hielt sie meist für ein Symbol des Jahresbeginns oder ein Gestirnconstellation*'. In **Chapters 19** and **22** we build up the precise astronomical evidence to show how the lion and prey symbol in *previous* ages appeared to allude to the New Year, and its ubiquity at Persepolis points to a similar conclusion – that it is astronomical in nature and of such high cultic import that its image could only be used on Royal State seals or by Astronomer-Priests. As Erdmann put it in a conference paper<sup>19</sup>, the subject of the New Year at Persepolis was '*ein Thema, das auch in den 26 Kampfgruppen von Löwe und Stier immer wieder angeschlagen wird*', and in a further paper three years later (1960) he said once more, '*... Löwe und Stier, die an allen Treppen wiederkehren, den Bezug auf den Frühlingsanfang*', though he does not say *why* this animal group should symbolise it. Indeed, Hinz (1971) describes how he and Schlosser at one stage tried to get to the bottom of the symbolism of the entire sculptural programme of Persepolis in terms of calendrical phenomena, including the lion and prey staircases, but in the end felt unable to get beyond intuition to pin down their precise significance. But overall they concluded the sculptural programme amounted to a celebration of '*König als Kalendarmacher*'.



**Ill. 6- 20: The East Portico Treasury Relief (c.490-480) with priest behind enthroned Darius and Xerxes -Tilia**

Thus from quite early on the conclusions of Gropp, Erdman, Hinz & Schlosser – confirmed and added to by others as recently as Razmjou (2010) – that Persepolis's cultic function was more deeply rooted in the early Achaemenid belief system than would at first seem obvious – were leading to an increasingly successful decoding of the site. Remains in the Treasury building of several pestles and mortars for grinding up the *haoma*, smashed by Alexander's army – as well as metal and glass vessels in other parts of the site using exactly the same motif (**Urusta-46f**) suggesting a similar use to their 4-3M stone vase prototypes – are the tantalisingly fragmentary traces of ritual equipment that would have included fire censers or incense burners as represented in the two Treasury Reliefs that originally filled the central staircase panels of the north and east porticos of the Apadana (see next illustration). In both,

<sup>19</sup> Akten des XXIV Internationalen Orientalisten Kongresses München 1957, 469-71

the presence of a Zoroastrian priest<sup>20</sup> standing behind Darius enthroned and heir apparent Xerxes is a hugely strong indicator of the central position accorded to the astronomer-priest as the power behind the throne, above even that of the flanking Medes on either side - usually interpreted as the vizier or treasurer, and general Gobryas.

We can now follow through on these general indications with a deeper scrutiny of Persepolis from the archaeoastronomical point of view and how it dovetails with purely religious considerations, to secure a more fundamental understanding of the lion and bull group.

### **PERSEPOLIS AS A CALENDRIAL SITE**

Whilst Babylon, Susa and Ecbatana already existed, the new fourth capital of Persepolis was set up from *tabula rasa* with specific methods in mind for running the Empire that the long-established centres of Sumer and Akkad evidently could not offer. Considering that within the Empire itself both Babylon in Mesopotamia and Memphis in Egypt were still operating with millennia-long experience in astronomical matters, why should Persepolis be founded with an astronomical purpose in mind, unless it was because of new knowledge being applied to the calendrical regulation of the entire Persian Empire, based on its own Zoroastrian cosmology? Boyce (2005) in her Achaemenid section dwells on Cambyses' recent inclusion of Egypt into the Empire only three years before Darius' accession as an important stage in Achaemenid calendar reform, due to their emphasis on the Solar, rather than rolling Lunar Year usually followed by the Zoroastrians. Thus at the very time Darius came to the throne, his predecessor had not long before added Egypt to the Persian Empire, and their astronomical traditions at this watershed in time offered a unique opportunity to change over to their practice of calendar regulation by cutting the year into two halves at the Solstices<sup>21</sup>, while still following the Babylonian practice of the Greater and Lesser *Akītu* festivals held at the Equinoxes.

Despite the fact that the Babylonians had by now known for some time how to square the Lunar with the Solar cycles to avoid the slippage of the seasons, the striking factor in Darius I's Calendar reform was the adoption of Egypt's New Year Day, for thousands of years taken from the Summer Solstice at the rising of Sirius, followed in a known number of weeks by the inundation of the Nile (see Egypt's VD **Belly Landing/Rear Attack** reliefs in **Catalogues A & C** announcing it). For the centrally placed Kingdom of Fars isolated in harsh climatic conditions at the heart of the new Empire, this could have been seen as a more convenient hiatus point in the year - when agriculture and administrative tasks were slack - for astronomers to get down to work and establish the precise solstitial point without other distractions - and could explain the importance of Sirius/Tishtrī in the cosmology of the Zoroastrians. Certainly the site is ideal for taking both summer *and* winter solstice measurements, for which it is deliberately orientated, as we shortly describe. Furthermore, the association of the solstice with Water (as in Egypt's Inundation) would explain the dedication of the site to Anahita - for Persia always the divinity of pure water.

However, measuring the Solstice point does not mean it was counted as Day One of the Year, but simply helped to calculate the equinoctial points of Spring and Autumn which astronomically are harder to pin down on any one day from Sunrise observations. As Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1991) describes, rather than from any concrete evidence from Persepolis itself, scholars such as Herzfeld

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<sup>20</sup> According to Razmjou (2010), similar heads of priests from Susa on glazed brick, wearing the characteristic balaclava headdress that would be pulled up to protect their breath during rites, show they would have been dressed in white, with short swords at their waist, both the signature of priests in other representations - other signs being a tasselled scarf falling down the back, and clean-shaven faces.

<sup>21</sup> Boyce (2005) usefully summarises as follows: '...in 1996 de Blois wrote providing further evidence in support of Bickerman's arguments including tables which showed that the unintercalated Sasanian civil calendar was in exactly the same relationship to the unintercalated Egyptian one - as the Achaemenian one would have been in the 5C BC'. Scaliger also spotted the Egyptian infrastructure of the Persian calendar.



and Schmidt jumped to the conclusion from much later Sasanian accounts - and current practice of local people giving presents to the Governor of Shiraz or the Shah on his birthday - that Persepolis *must* have been built with the *celebration* (not necessarily the astronomical *observation*) of New Year's Day in the month of *Now Ruz* at the Spring Equinox in mind. But she quotes Nylander's assertion that there was *no record* from anywhere else within the Achaemenid period itself for the celebration of the Spring Equinox as *Day One* of the New Year. She also repeats Widengren's assertion that the Indo-European mythology of the New Year had to involve a ritual combat between the king and a dragon, along with a *hieros gamos*. Actually these two criteria do not sound particularly Aryan since they fit the familiar mythology of the the Assyrian *akītu* festivals celebrated at the Equinoxes by the Assyrians and Babylonians (the Zoroastrians did believe in such a ritual struggle at *Mithragān* the month of the Autumn Equinox, and there *are* images on Persepolis door jambs of the King in combat with mythological creatures - as in Mesopotamian art stepping into the role of Gilgamesh as sky hero).

In support of Nylander's observation, two further points can be made about the assumption the Spring Equinox was the starting point for Darius' Calendar. It is a well-known fact that it is difficult for astronomers using naked-eye observation to precisely pin down the exact day of either Equinox, whereas Solstices are easy to spot, because they are at the extremes of the Sun's cycle on the two days of the year when the Sun stands on its station, turns and changes direction. Al-Biruni's statement that the Persian New Year in ancient times began at the Summer Solstice is often quoted in this regard<sup>22</sup>, though he goes on to say that later the *festival* as such was moved to the Spring Equinox (but whether he meant in the Sasanid period, or before, is not made clear). Despite the fact that the majority of Persepolis specialists have avoided the site's astronomical implications, other than as handed-down in clichés (often simply because they have no experience of observational astronomy<sup>23</sup> either today or in the ancient world), thanks to Sancisi-Weerdenburg's questioning of the whole issue we think it worth trying to show in the next section just how easily Persepolis' clear astronomical alignments in themselves reveal answers about 'the right time of year to be there', showing that calculating – as opposed to celebrating - the New Year were two different moments. Taqizadeh (1938) and Boyce (2005) both discuss in detail what they discern as an Achaemenid reform of the calendar under Artaxerxes I around 440, but I argue below that it was Darius I who laid down the early foundations for that reform by building Persepolis in the first place. There are many indications that after the decline of Persepolis by the end of the reign of Artaxerxes III, a grip on the upkeep of the Zoroastrian calendar was lost because different branches of the religion practised in earlier homelands kept to different traditions dating back to different points in time. I put this down mainly to a split between religion and astronomy where the role of astronomer-priest was not maintained after early Achaemenid times, the Magoi being the only ones who continued to combine both roles. This means separate lay communities stuck to old habits instead of adjusting to the benchmarks provided by the factual realities of astronomy. The later dynasties of Zoroastrians such as the Arsacids, Parthians and Sasanids all had huge problems with the slippage of the calendar<sup>24</sup> by not applying the necessary intercalations – or applying the intercalations but still celebrating festivals at both the former *and* newly designated times, ending in the present-day situation where there are still different calendars in operation depending on which present-day Zoroastrian community is speaking - in India, Persia or their many places of exile. All this is gone into by Taqizadeh, Boyce and de

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<sup>22</sup> See Sachau (1879)

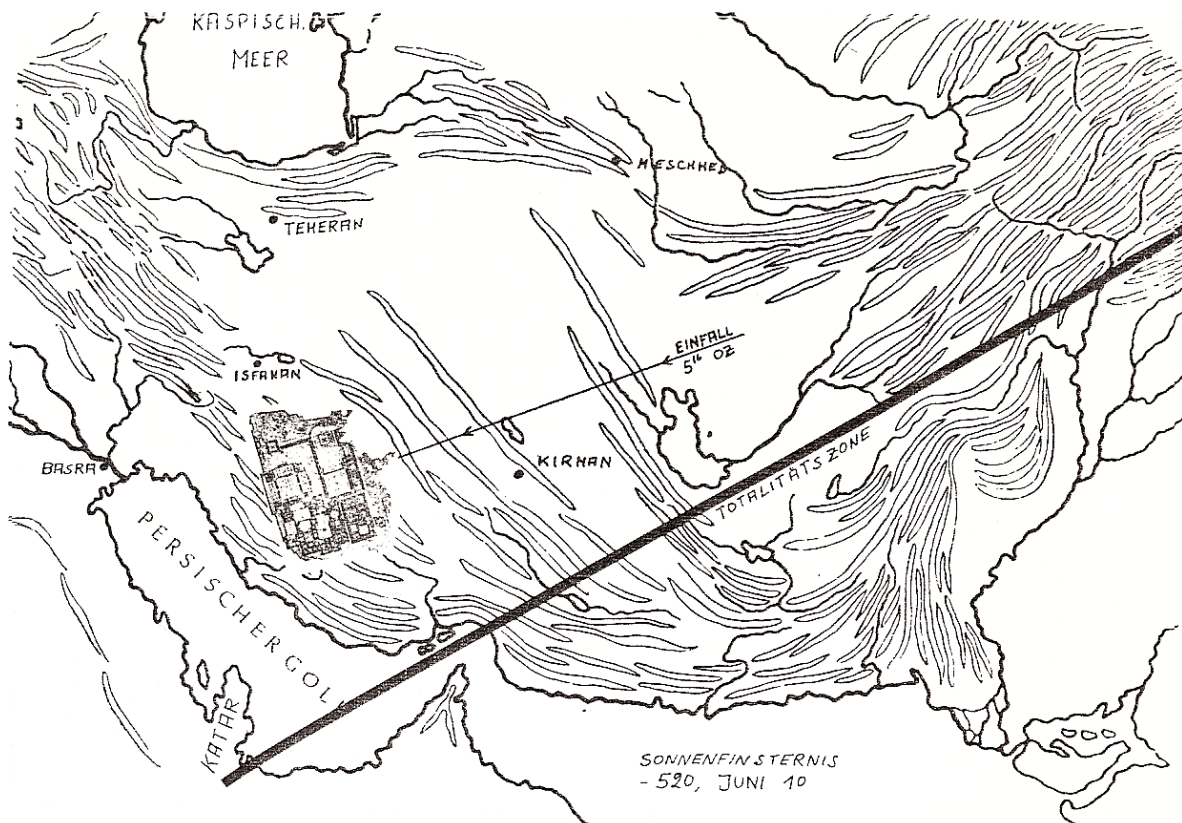
<sup>23</sup> After checking and double-checking astronomical alignments at Persepolis with Schlosser and Gropp, Hinz (1971) wrote: 'Dabei stosse ich immer wieder in Reaktionen von Fachgenossen - oder dem Ausbleiben von solchen - auf einen erstaunlichen Mangel an Vertrautheit mit den einfachsten Himmels- und Kalendartatsachen. Dementsprechend fehlt es an Anschauungsvermögen für Einrichtungen, die der Fixierung solcher Tatsachen dienen.'

<sup>24</sup> Boyce (2005) writes: 'By the beginning of the Sasanian period Fravardin ... had receded to being the equivalent of early September'.

Blois (1996), the confusing details of which can only be followed by specialists and practising Zoroastrians. Why the Zoroastrians lost their grip on the calendar is quite simply down to not knowing whether to follow the lunar or the solar calendar, how to combine them, and to have enough knowledge from generation to generation to know when to apply intercalation to keep the festivals in their right season: fortunately we only need to find out what the evidence of Persepolis and the Lion and Prey staircases there tell us, and assess what astronomical usage they point to for that particular time.

**ASTRONOMICAL PHENOMENA IN THE FOUNDING YEAR OF PERSEPOLIS (521-20)**

Lenz & Schlosser (1969) spotted significant astronomical events heralding (and possibly deciding) the foundation and layout of Persepolis. By 520 the Achaemenids had long been in possession of Babylon where the astronomer-diviners were masters not only of eclipse prediction according to the so-called Metonic Cycle (of which more later) but also just in this period, according to Boyce (2005) they were concerned with calculations of long aeons of Time (*Zurvan*) in the form of The Great Year (lasting around 26,800 years) - the time it takes for the Sun to slip backwards, or precess, through the zodiac until it returns to its original starting point at the Vernal Point (see **Chapter 19**). Boyce explains that Magian thinking around Darius' time favoured sub-divisions of 3,000- or 6,000-year units within the Great Year - to whose cosmic pattern they attempted to fit their history to (I read 3,000 years as their rule-of-thumb unit of time for the Sun to precess through one zodiac sign). Part of this process was to look for the death of a great man and the rise of a new, special ruler who would mark the end of one period and the beginning of the next. Kingsley (1995) well describes how they fitted Zoroaster himself, Xerxes and then Plato into this matrix (and finally Christ), taking into account the infinitesimal 'drag' of the Sun against the Signs of the heavens.



**III.6- 21: Schlosser's diagram of the axis of totality on 10 June 521 - almost parallel to the axis of visible sunrise at Persepolis, at the exact angle of the orientation of the East and West sides of the first buildings laid out there within the year**

Shortly after Darius' accession, and just preceding the probable foundation of the site in 520 Lenz & Schlosser (*ibid.*) spotted that there had been a triple Jupiter-Saturn conjunction in Virgo over a period of around ten months between Autumn 521 and Autumn 520, in the middle of which an almost total solar eclipse took place over the Marv Dasht plain – at dawn on 10 June 521, just 11 days away from the Summer Solstice (next illustration). We are reminded that the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction astrologically has always traditionally been taken as the portent of the rise of a new ruler<sup>25</sup>, and in stellar terms Virgo signified the Goddess Athena/Anahita in the Graeco-Persian world, bestower of the Rod and Circle of Kingship. Cyrus had conquered Sardis on the strength of an eclipse, and Lenz wrote: *'Eine derart verfinsterte Sonne sieht aus wie eine extreme schmale Mondsichel. Die Erscheinung muss sehr beeindruckend gewesen sein, zumal die Sonne schon stark verfinstert aufging (Sonnenaufgang an diesem Tage: 4.59h Ortszeit). Um 5.16h war die Verfinsterung maximal. Der Azimut der verfinsterten Sonne betrug 114.9° und fiel somit annähernd in die Richtung der Querachse des späteren Bauwerks (110.5°)'* (the difference in angle is seen on the diagram above).

For these two scholars these astronomical/astrological implications account for the setting up of Persepolis as the capital for the ruler of a new era - and for its orientation and layout - explaining why it needed to be built from scratch in accordance with recent portents which underlined how the Magoi must have deemed Darius as the new, good ruler (Jupiter-Saturn conjunction) to be expected at the start of the next 3,000-year phase, overcoming (as he recorded in the Bisutun inscription) the malefic powers of *Drug/Ahriman* (what better symbol than an eclipse), given they perceived the Sun was leading up to a Sign change from Aries to Pisces (even if premature by 500 years!). A few decades later, according to Xanthus of Sardis they assigned to Xerxes the role of the bad ruler leading Persia to pollution 6,000 years after Zoroaster, and then according to Eudoxus transferred to Plato the role of *Saošyant*, or Saviour born of a Virgin, as Kingsley (*ibid.*) so well analyses. Their view of Darius is not recorded in writing, and has to be deduced by reading between the lines, but all the circumstances surrounding the set-up of Persepolis make it strongly plausible.

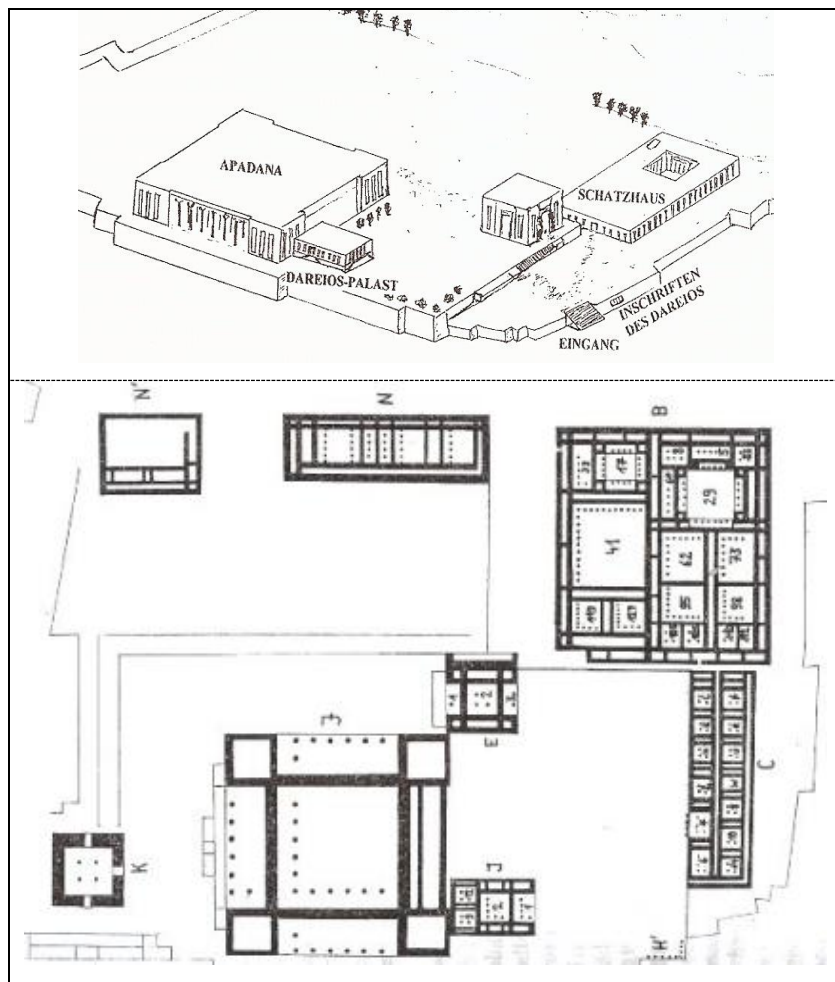
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<sup>25</sup> This conjunction, which takes place roughly once a generation, is for the time it occurred at the birth of Christ often taken as the herald star known as the Star of Bethlehem - the combination of two very bright planets is eyecatching, and could not have been overlooked. In that instance we are told the visiting Magoi knew what they were looking for.



**FIRST STRUCTURES AND ASTRONOMICAL ORIENTATION OF PERSEPOLIS (521-20)**

If we visualise Persepolis as first laid out in the time of Darius I (Gropp's drawing below, top) it simply consisted of the Apadana (J), the small 'royal palace' behind it (I - now thought more likely to have been a Mazdean temple) and a three-doorway gatehouse (E, the Tripylon) with doorways opposite each other on the North-South axis, and an Eastern doorway leading to the Phase I of the Treasury lower down. These are deemed to have been the very first buildings on the terrace – all protected within fortress walls. The plan below adds the later entrance at Gate of Nations (K) and staircase to it, Treasury Building (B) Phase 2 and separate 'Harem' quarters (C) initiated or finished off by Darius' successor, Xerxes - N and N' being either small barracks or kitchen quarters. Even on the completed site, the Eastern doorway of the Tripylon (E) always seems to have had a passage view between the later phases of the Treasury building and the Hundred Columned Hall (M) on the other side, also added later by Xerxes. If we relate the Apadana (J) on the plan above to its position on Schmidt's plan (below) of the entire site at its fullest extent, we see how these first buildings



**Ill.6- 22: (Top) the Persepolis of Darius I with original entrance to the South - from Gropp; (below) plan of the Darius I buildings at a later stage with entry now at the Gate of Nations (K) to the North, and army barracks and additions to the Treasury added (Schmidt's reference letters are used, as on all plans)**

formed the basis of the orientation of all later buildings added by Xerxes and Artaxerxes to 18° West of exact North, since they all keep to the same grid. As was usual in the ancient near east, initial orientation on the bare site was likely to have been through key sun positions - as well as star alignments - so when academic attention turned to Persepolis it was not novel, amongst other avenues of enquiry, to try to make sense of astronomical factors in play at the new capital.

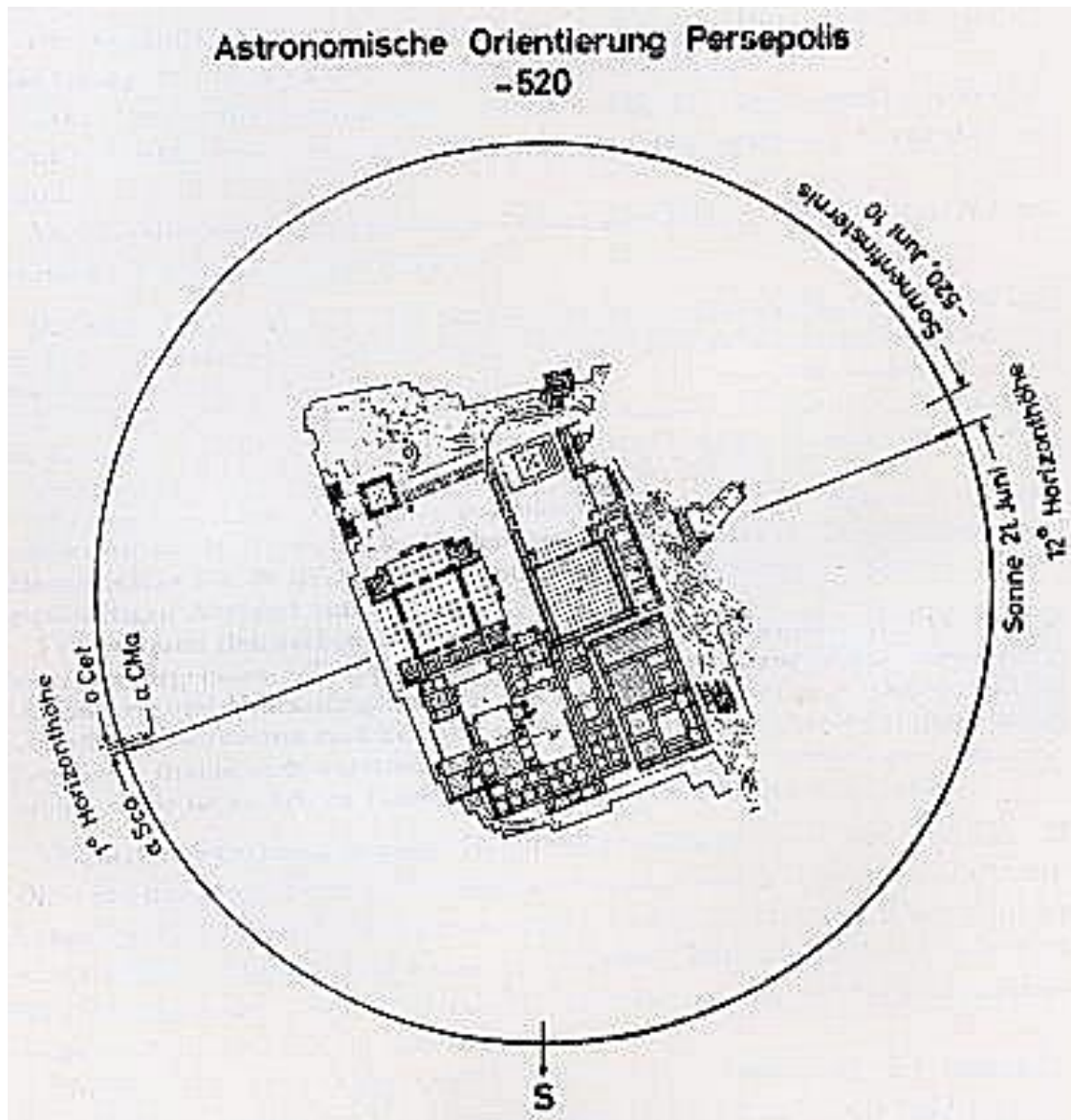


*Ill.6- 23: Schmidt's plan of Persepolis with positioning of staircases with lion & prey spandrels marked in red*

Why should all the buildings be raked sideways on the terrace if not to fit in with particular alignments which, through the indisputable information collected by predecessors, I will now summarise.

#### THE SOLAR ALIGNMENTS OF PERSEPOLIS

Lenz & Schlosser's rendition of Schmidt's plan set within the circle of the four cardinal points (below) shows how its northern facades are aligned NNW to 20° off North (James George later corrected it to 18°) when the building was begun under Darius I – evidently in accordance with the actual, slightly delayed appearance of the rising Summer Solstice Sun on 21 June over the Kuh-i-Rahmat ridge - such that (as Gropp in Hinz et al.



**Ill.6- 24: Direction at Persepolis of Solstitial Sunrise in the East - in relation both to the position of the solar eclipse on 11 June 521) and the setting of Sirius (αCMa) at sunset exactly opposite on the same day in the West**

(1971) confirmed) the rising Sun's rays run at precisely 90° to the eastern sides of the building complex, meeting the East portico of the Apadana (and East door of the Tripylon) first<sup>26</sup> then running through the rows of columns with their shadows falling precisely onto each other<sup>27</sup> in succession in a striking visual domino effect (see photograph below from Lenz and Schlosser (1969) which for logistic reasons had to be taken five weeks earlier than the actual Summer Solstice from a helicopter, so the shadows had not quite reached the precise 90° position.

<sup>26</sup> This explains why the observatory buildings on the West side of the site are raised on a high platform, otherwise the delay in the sun reaching them would be even longer than the two hours it takes for the sun to rise over the ridge of Kuh-i-Rahmat. Later with the addition of Xerxes' Palace (G) its Eastern portico would also have been illuminated at the Solstice sunrise. The army barracks and Hundred Columned Hall had to be kept on a lower level in order not to get in the way of the rising or setting Sun's rays.

<sup>27</sup> This effect is very obvious without the rooves in place: it would of course be lessened with them on, but sunlight would still penetrate the porticos either way, creating lines of shadows.





*Ill. 6- 25: Photo taken 15 May, 5 weeks before the Summer Solstice, showing falling shadows of the few remaining columns in the Apadana (left) at 0718 a.m. (top is North: Kuh-i-Rahmat/Sunrise in the East is at right - as in Schmidt's plan)*

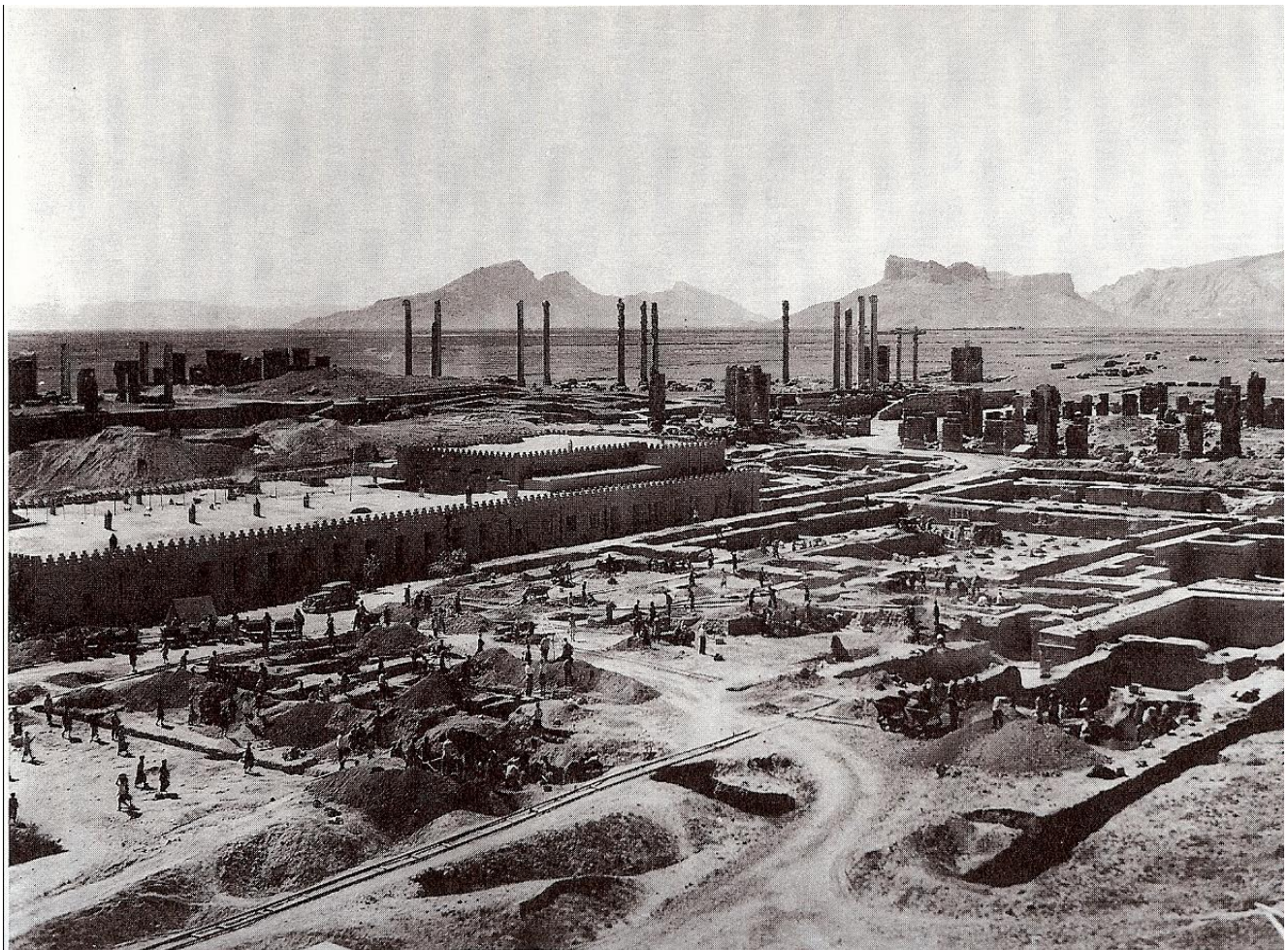
The findings of their first paper were tested at the Hamburg Planetarium by a discussion group formed of knowledgeable men from relevant disciplines: orientalists, archaeologists, astronomers and scientists so that they could factually check which stars were rising and setting at the time of the solstice (they make the point several times that precession had made less than half of one degree difference for all positions between then and now, meaning present-day observations would not be too far out of kilter with the original sightings).

For their second paper (1971) which checked and summarised their findings, Gropp was sent by the two to catch the solstice sunrise and take more photographs (he was delayed by three days, so his photos for that paper were taken on 24 June). This is his description of the stages of the sunrise on that morning:



*Auf der Terrasse wurde 6,10h zuerst der Dariuspalast (I) von den Sonnenstrahlen getroffen - das Apadanagebäude (J) lag zu dieser Zeit noch im Schatten. Die Strahlen fielen durch eine Tür vom Raum 16 (nach Schmidt) in den Raum 2, den zentralen Säulensaal des Dariuspalastes. Vielleicht hatte die Ostmauer des Palastes zum Raum 16 ein Fenster für den Lichteinfall. Von der Freitreppe und dem Portiko (I) gesehen, erschien dann der im Säulensaal thronende König seitlich angestrahlt.*

*Sieben Minuten später erreichten die Sonnenstrahlen den Apadanasaal (J). Da die Sonne genau östlich der Gebäudeachse stand, fielen die Schatten der Säulen aufeinander und liessen 'Lichtwege' frei, auf deren einem, in der Achse der Osttür, der König gethront haben könnte... Ein Lichteffekt wäre also nur vom östlich gelegenen Hof, dem Ostportiko, oder aber innerhalb des mittelsaales für die dort versammelten Zuschauer zu beobachten gewesen... die übrigen grossen Gebäude, Hundertsäulensaal (M) und Schatzhaus (B), liegen noch einiger Zeit im Schatten....*

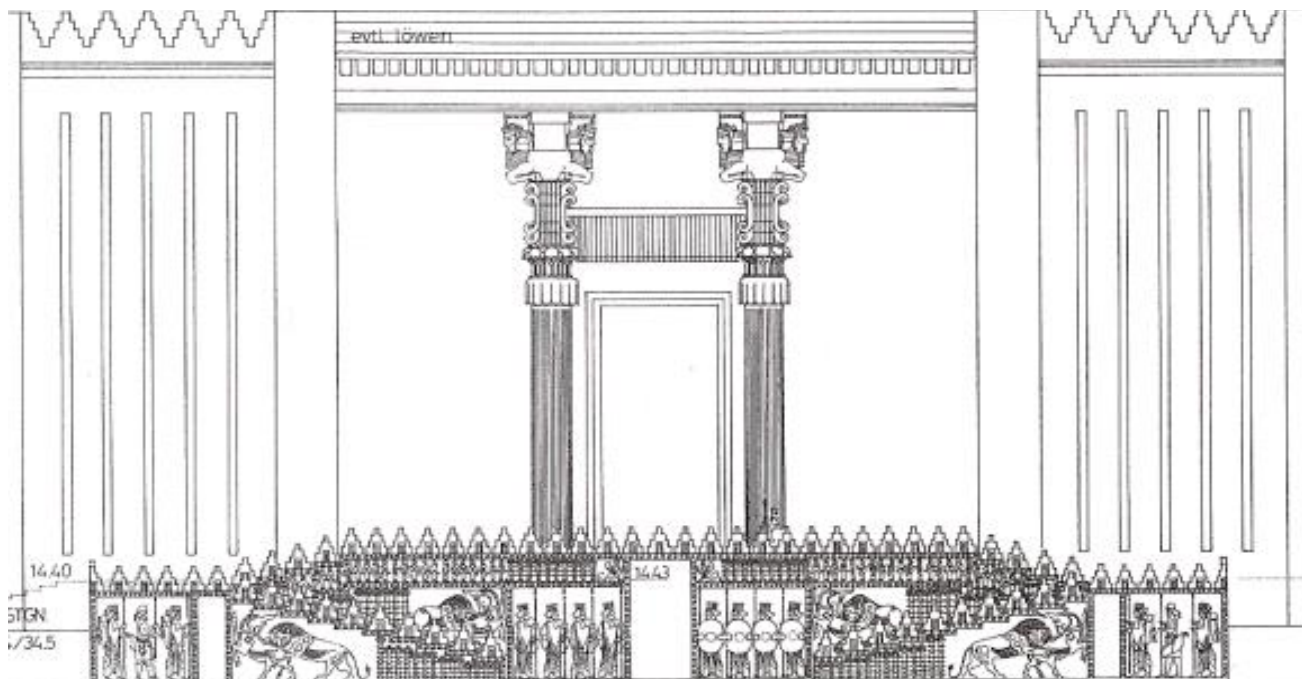


**Ill.6- 26: Vista from the SE corner of Persepolis at a diagonal over East side of the Treasury and across the Apadana towards the Marv Dasht plain - one of Schmidt's photos archived at the Oriental Institute, Chicago**

*Die Verzögerung des Sonnenaufgangs durch die abschirmende Bergwand gestattet den Beobachtern noch beim Tagesanbruch umfangreiche Vorbereitungen in Ruhe zu treffen... So treffen die Sonnenstrahlen zuerst den Dariuspalast und erst sieben Minuten später den Apadanasaal. (p.255)*



In the time of Darius I and early Xerxes the core buildings with their staircases on the raised platform massed together - with the even higher 'Harem' area behind<sup>28</sup> - would have given the cumulative impression of an architectonic, irregular ziggurat with several observational platforms with different angles of view, some of which can only be guessed at (we do not know, for instance, whether there were noon and midnight observations taken, and from where – let alone overall observation of the night sky). For anyone used to astro-archaeology it is obvious that astronomical observation from it and through it was intended from the beginning, since the deliberate choice of Persepolis at that particular latitude and longitude against the ridge made its use as an observatory using column shadows work just at that particular place. It must have been a deliberate choice on the part of experts<sup>29</sup>, whether *Magoi* or visitors from elsewhere in the Empire, in the same way the best craftsmen were drawn from all over the realm to work on the construction and decoration of the buildings on the site. Taqizadeh (1938) writes, 'Darius, who had accompanied Cambyses to Egypt and had stayed there for some years before his accession to the Persian throne, returned to that country after he became king, in 517BC.... it is possible he took a good many Persian nobles, sages and religious leaders with him to Egypt, and he brought with him, or summoned, to Susa the high priest of the famous Sais temple *Uzahor* by name (according to an inscription now in the Vatican<sup>30</sup>)'. The expanse of the Marv Dasht with the odd mountain sticking up on the West side of the site meant that viewing of the horizon in the evening gives an uninterrupted sighting of setting stars at night against fixed reference points.



**Ill.6- 27: North side of the Tripylon with human-headed capitals on bull bodies inside and out, approached by a double stairway where in the centre square the Treasury Relief (Ill.6- 20) used to fit: the rest is filled with processions of tribute bearers and guards with shields and 4 Uruk Stance groups;**

Five years later James George (1979) after checking Persepolis as a solstitial instrument for himself and taking his own photographs, learned about Lenz & Schlosser's work. Using further factual information shared by them (he claimed not to understand everything in their own two papers due to not being familiar with German) he gave a paper in 1976 at the VIIth Iranian

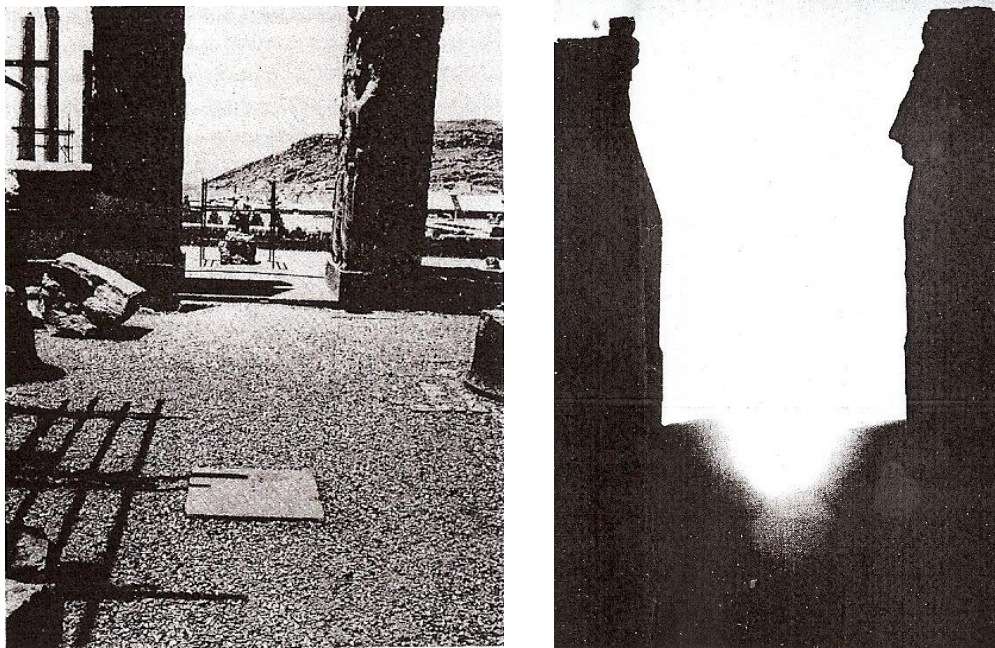
<sup>28</sup> Thought by the authors to be observation chambers or short-term 'bedsits' for visiting astronomers or cultic personnel - no woman of the royal harem would live in such pokey boxes, it is now believd.

<sup>29</sup> Magoi were always willing to update their knowledge from 'outsiders' (Kingsley 1995).

<sup>30</sup> [cited in E.Meyer's entry for Darius in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*]



Art Congress in Berlin, focusing in particular on the primacy of the Tripylon (E, photos from inside it below) arguing that the alignment of Persepolis to the solstitial axis depends on an observer standing inside the Tripylon (E) looking out at Summer sunrise through the Eastern door, Winter sunrise through the Southern door -and Summer sunset through the Northern door. He visualises the palaceastronomer standing inside the Tripylon on the stone slab with a circle drawn on it (below left) – already spotted by Herzfeld and brought to George's attention by Shahpur Shahbazi, then Director at Persepolis of the Institute for Achaemenid Studies. Amazingly still *in situ*, this circle had evidently been deliberately marked as the centre-point from which all the other buildings invisibly radiate, and George in his paper calls it 'Zero Persepolis'. From this spot the astronomer-priest would be able to know when it was the one day when the Sun/Ahuramazda rose exactly through the East doorway at sunrise (above right) lighting its jambs with reliefs of the enthroned King on them, and also illuminating the East portico of the Apadana, the only portico with lioness-headed capitals and therefore also with Venus implications.



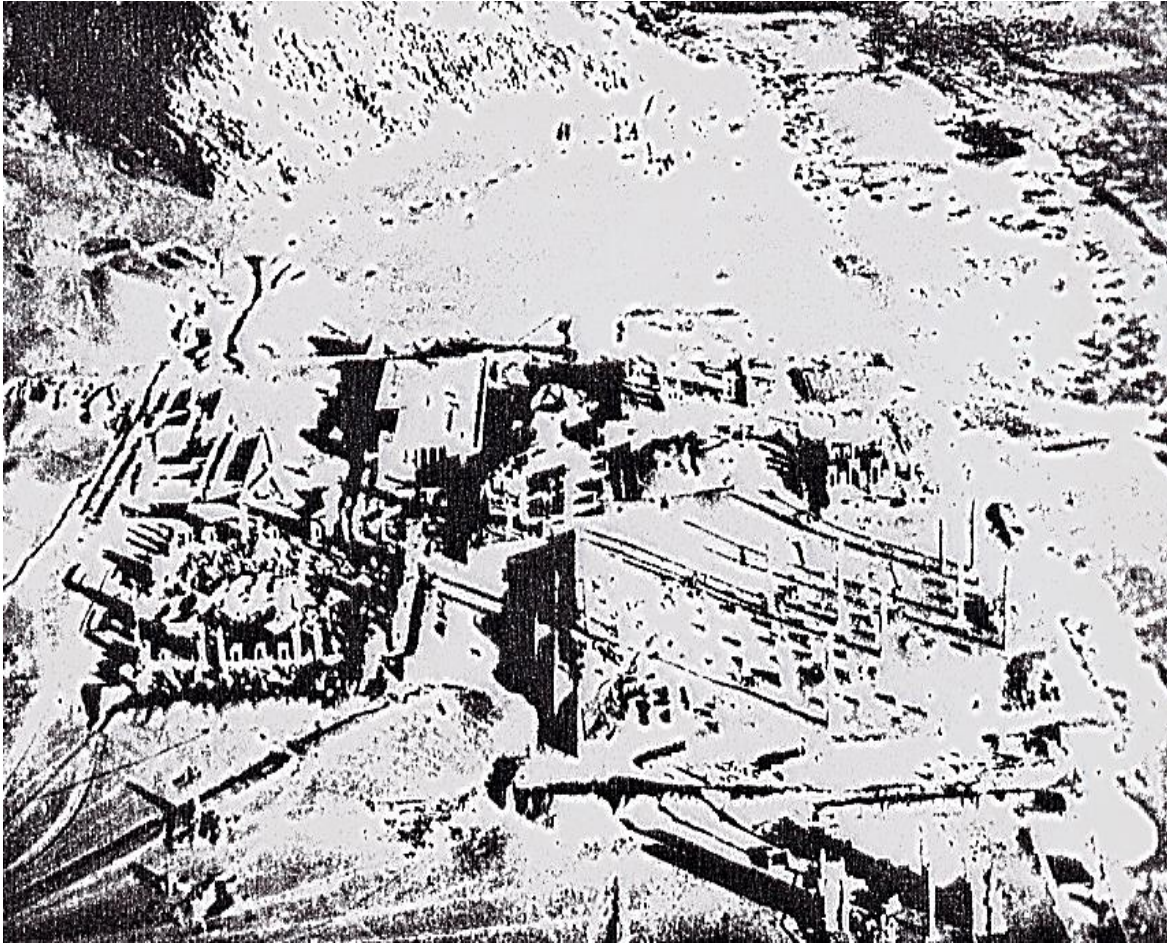
**Ill.6- 28: Tripylon zero stone at Persepolis facing North (L); and (R) Sunrise on 21 June through its East door**

As James George summed it up, 'the orientation of Persepolis is solstitial, related both to sunrise and to sunset on the longest day of the year: the Sun rises on June 21 at exactly 90° to the longitudinal axis of the complex of buildings viewed from the central stone in the middle of the Tripylon... the central axis of this building points to the rising sun of the summer solstice' (viewed on Schmidt's plan the Sun's rays pass down the narrow corridor between the exterior walls of the Treasury and Hundred Columned Hall and through the Tripylon East doorway). Lenz (1969) imagined the Court would gather early in the morning in the Apadana in anticipation of the event (the time-lapse caused by the Kuh-i-Rahmat obstruction giving them time to foregather during almost two hours of dawn) until the sun's rays penetrated the Eastern portico. Then in the interior they would see the corridors of light between the columns hitting the back wall, and possibly even the King himself enthroned in person against it, bathed in light, united with Ahuramazda.

Such a function for the Tripylon would explain why this small gatehouse with human-headed capitals placed between the much larger assembly buildings has a double staircase on its North side (illustration above) with similar sculptural layouts to the North and East porticos of the Apadana – thus showing processions and four lion and prey groups on three staircases. Furthermore, looking

out of its North doorway along the *North-South* axis, as James puts it, 'From the same zero point, on the same day the sun *sets* almost in line with the columns forming the diagonal of the Apadana and cutting its north-western corner'. The resultant effect at the ending of the day is illustrated in Gropp's photo (below) taken for Lenz & Schlosser's second paper on 16 June, one week before true Solstice at 1810hrs.

They then point out that the sun at the *Winter* Solstice *rising* from the South-East further round Kuh-i-Rahmat, across the corner of the Treasury (precisely from the viewpoint of *III.6- 26*) casts shadows along that same angle, but falling in the opposite direction (for which phenomenon we have no photo – a task remaining



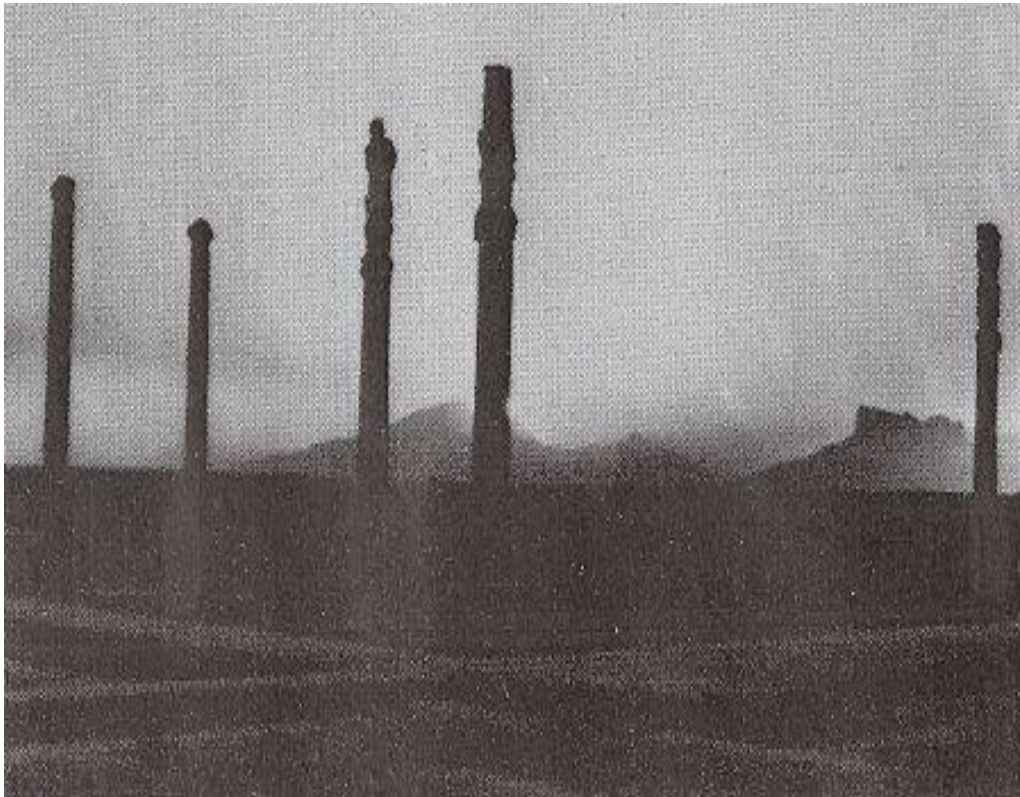
***III.6- 29: Summer sunset at the end of the afternoon at Persepolis viewed by helicopter from the North, with the Apadana columns creating diagonal shadows across the temenos: at Winter sunrise the shadows would fall in exactly the opposite direction***

for some fortunate person to carry out one day). The *only* South-facing staircase which would have caught the illumination of the Sun at Winter Solstice sunrise is that on the south facade of Darius' 'Palace' (probably added later by Artaxerxes I – see *III.6- 16*).

James George's own illustrative photo (below) shows his ground-level photo (and therefore less panoramic) of the actual Summer Solstice sunset moment at last twilight on 21 June viewed from the Tripylon with the sun about to disappear behind the horizon. Now the Eastern portico of the Apadana with its lioness-headed columns would have been in complete darkness, while the bull-headed capitals on its North portico and human-headed columns of the Tripylon North front would have caught the last rays of the Sun –

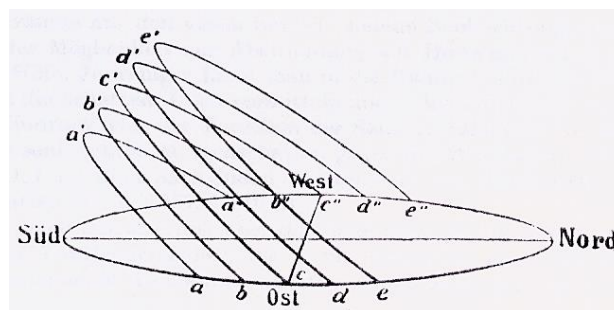


while at the same time as the sky darkened Sirius (having risen conjunct the Sun that morning) would briefly become visible on the Western horizon before setting below it.



**Ill.6- 30: Summer Solstice Sunset at Persepolis (the Sun is behind the column nearest to us) - James George**

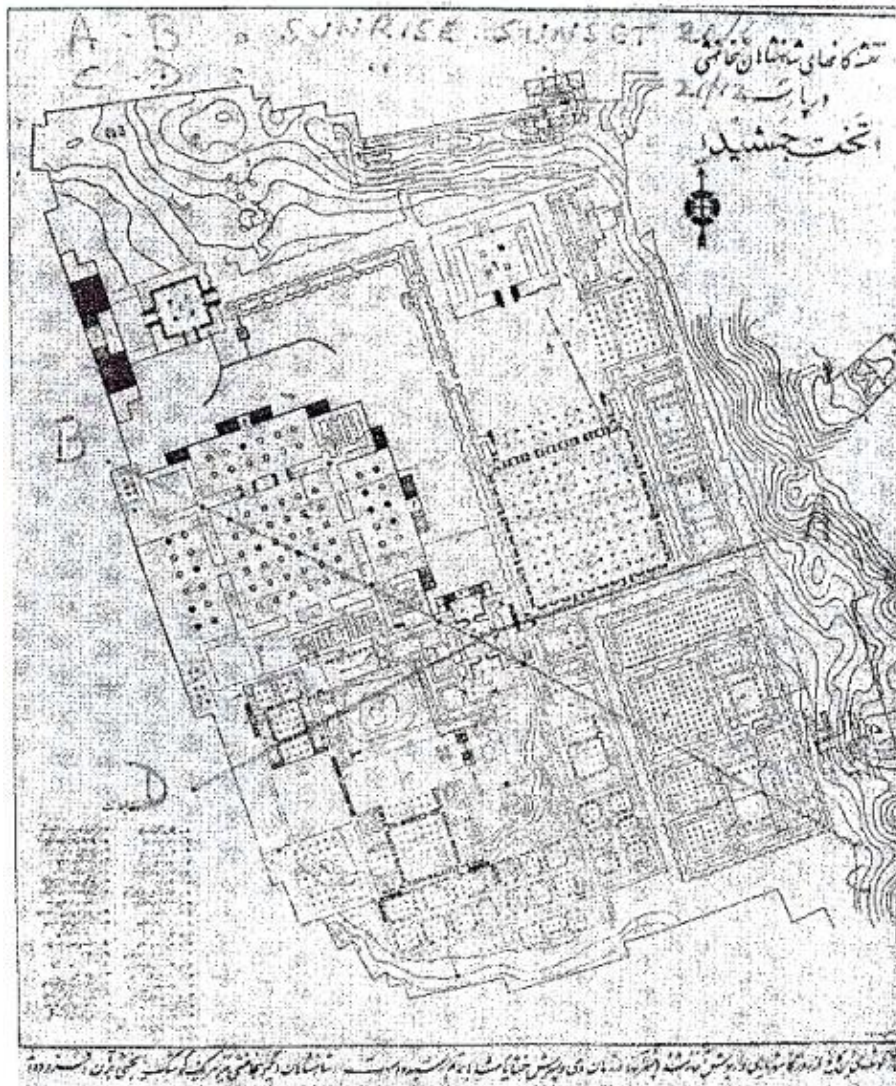
At Summer Solstice sunset, the setting sun's extreme position has slipped back sufficiently to fully illuminate



**Ill.6- 31: Slippage to its solstitial extremes of the sun's position either side of true E and W - from Lenz et al. 1969**

from the West-South-West the Gate of Nations and the bull-headed capitals of the West porticos of the Apadana, and Darius' and Xerxes 'Palaces' (I, G) - the latter two provided with staircases on this side also to catch the light marking the turning point for the onset of the 'dark half' of the year (inasmuch as the Sun from now on starts a 'downward' journey in relation to Earth, with the days becoming shorter).





**III.6- 32: George's note at the top of the tourist map of Persepolis available at the time reads: A-B = SUNRISE-SUNSET 21/6; C-D = SUNRISE-SUNSET 21/12 (the A direction slips due to the time-lapse for sunrise to reach the top of the ridge - which the alignment of Persepolis allows for exactly. IN FACT HE MUST HAVE MEANT TO WRITE A-D = SUNRISE-SUNSET 21/6; C-B = SUNRISE-SUNSET 21/12!**

Coming back to the centre- point of the Tripylon, Gropp believed its platform at the top of its North staircase **III.6- 27**), especially at the North doorway frame at its centre, could have been used, in Egyptian terms, as a 'Window of Appearance' in accordance with the Kingship Cult, comparing it with the kiosk used for that purpose by Akhenaten at Amarna. Certainly one of the most appropriate times for such a *darshan* (the Hindu term for a God's appearance before his worshippers) would have been at sunset on that shortest day of the Winter Solstice, when its dying rays, running exactly diagonally between the columns of the Apadana, would have shone directly on the King standing at the doorway, lighting him up like a divine apparition in an embodiment of his *Khvaernah* – certainly a good iconographic reason for putting such a grand staircase on a three-way interchange point to highlight the astronomical symbolism of kingship, and the renewal of light as the days would start to get longer. Even though the north Apadana staircase, being similarly lit at that time of day, could just as well have been used, this building had a different purpose, and its North front was furthest away from the temple and observation zone. Gropp surmised that the empty central panel on the North Tripylon

staircase could have deliberately been left undecorated in order to serve as a blank background for a censer burning the sacred flame placed in front of it on such a ritual occasion (most central panels on the other staircases had inscriptions).

**PERSEPOLIS AS SOLSTITIAL CENTRE OF THE EMPIRE**

As seen in the illustration above, Shahpur Shahbazi, then in charge of the Persepolis site, helped George check his sightings which ended in a summary diagram of the rising and setting positions on the then current map of Persepolis labelled in Farsi<sup>31</sup> (George had visited the site at the Summer Solstice: Shahbazi checked the Winter Solstice directions). George confirmed: 'On the winter solstice, December 21, the sun rises (from the same vantage point) over the south-east corner of Darius' Treasury, the first building to be erected at Persepolis (*III.6- 22*).' He points out that the 'St Andrew's Cross' created by the crossed lines of the solstitial axes<sup>32</sup> is reminiscent of the metaphysical layout in the Avestan Mandala of the ideal Aryan/Mazdean kingdom divided into seven Keshvars, six zones round a centre - exemplified on the physical plane by Persepolis - to mirror the Zoroastrian Heptad of Ahuramazda with the three female and three male Ameshaspentas either side of him on the spiritual level (next illustration, top). He thus saw Persepolis at the centre of surrounding lands as built to manifest the *axis mundi* on earth within the Empire, and a land manifestation of the Keshvars. The solstitial extremes of the *geographical* empire named in the foundation inscriptions found at either end of the staircase of the North porch area of the Apadana (the NW and NE corners) are, as Nimchuck points out, Sogdia (Scythia) to Ethiopia/Nubia - and Sind to Sardis - all countries rich in gold, the metal of Ahuramazda. If two lines are drawn between these areas - as on the map below - they cross at Persepolis (next illustration, below).

**SUSA AND PERSEPOLIS AS WINTER/SPRING CAPITALS**

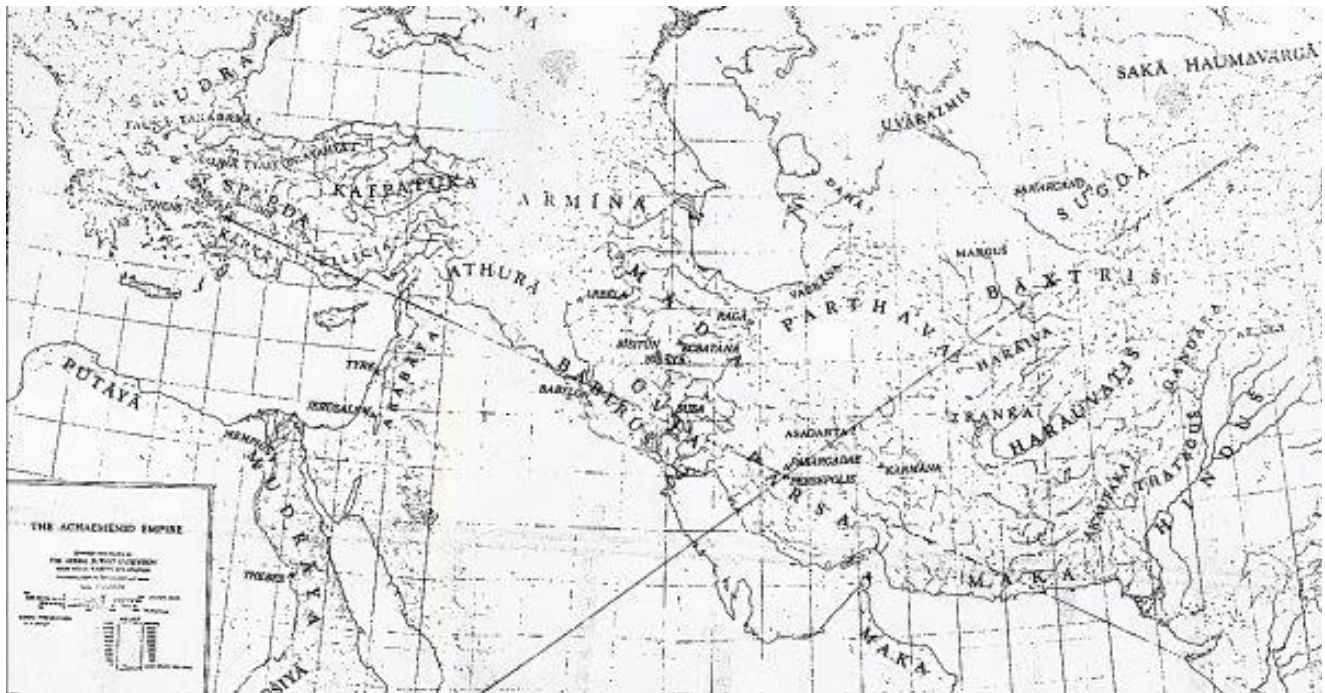
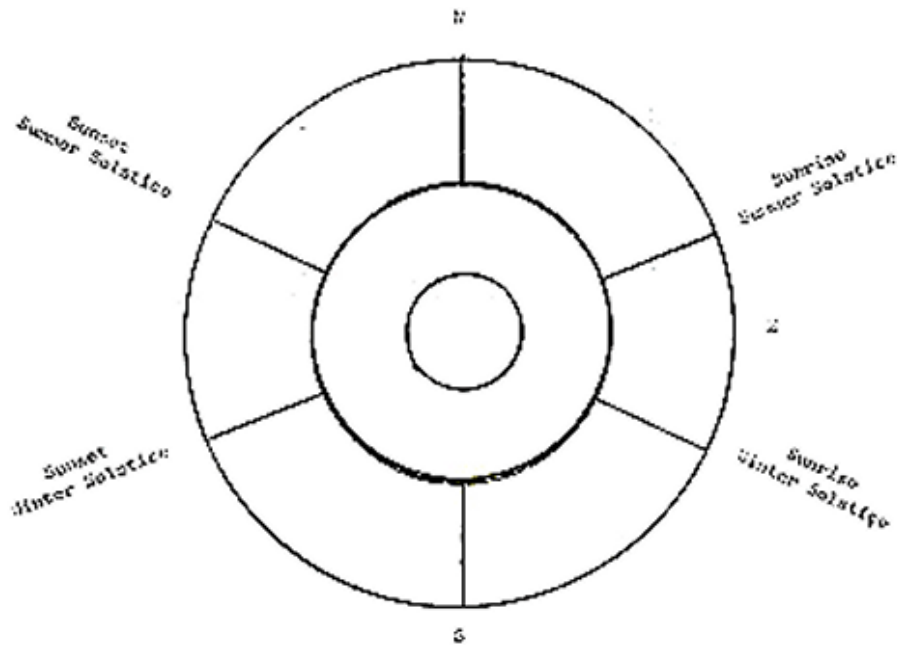
Since the orientation of Persepolis makes obvious sense, as George states, for calculating either the Summer or Winter Solstice, this presents what seems to be a contradiction since the assumption has usually been that the complex of buildings was meant to be the Spring residence of the King and his retinue, and that the purpose of the processional reliefs on the staircases was to show the celebration of the *Now Ruz* festival there, presided over by the King. But as already mentioned above, Sancisi-Weerdenburg (*ibid.*) exhaustively tested this assumption, stating there was no contemporary evidence at all from the Achaemenid period itself for the celebration of a New Year festival at Persepolis at the Spring Equinox, since in fact the Equinoxes are best calculated from the firmly establishable Solstice days. This still does not rule out *Now Ruz* being *celebrated* at the start of Month One of the Ritual Year (our March) when plants and animals burst into life.

Practically speaking, even if the calendar was calculated from the Summer Solstice, despite the importance of Sirius in the Avesta it seems unlikely the Summer Solstice would actually be celebrated as the New Year starting point at Persepolis at the hottest time of the year (as hot as Egypt, but without the benefit of a river like the Nile close by). One point we should remember, though, is that for Egypt the Summer Solstice was associated with the Inundation of that mighty river, and the rise of Sirius especially was linked to the idea of the arrival of life-giving water. At Persepolis the 'Anahita dimension' of the site, though understated, is central to the celebration of the life-giving and virginal element of Water also, and we may indeed underestimate today what water supply was available to refresh the site (Briant 2001).

<sup>31</sup> I have my own copy of this map, from two visits to Persepolis in the 1970s when I was not well informed enough about the site to take full advantage of checking views from the Tripylon!

<sup>32</sup> Compare in *Chapter 19* the same diagram on Section 0 of Astrolabe K/Icon B (*III. 19-121* and on the Nebra Planisphere (*III. 19-131*)).





**III.6- 33: George's rendition of the Avestan Mandala of the Seven Keshvars (L) and its application to the extremes of the Persian empire as described in the foundation tablet inscriptions of the Apadana**

Having just demonstrated that Persepolis is a solstitial site, it is highly likely the Winter Solstice was both measured *and* celebrated there, given the tenth month of Dey (our December) was particularly associated with Ahura Mazda<sup>33</sup>. Tying it in with the Babylonian astronomical tradition and pinning it down as much by stellar observation as the Winter Solstice sunrise, this day would then have

<sup>33</sup> Nyberg (1931), (apud. Boyce 2005), suggested the allocation under the Great King of four feasts to Ahuramazda in this month was 'an esoteric way of honouring Zurvān, *Mainyu* of Time'.



served as the point *from* which the date of the Now Ruz festival on 21 March at the Spring Equinox could be fixed for three months later. This would then give time for three months' preparation to be put in train for a Now Ruz gathering, a more temperate time of year for a gathering of peoples. Lenz raised the practical question of the logistics of bringing animals and foodstuffs as offerings/tax - which may be the deciding factor. Could the produce and animals be brought from countries as far afield as Sind or Arachosia in the summer, or winter months, or would it have made more sense to bring the offering of hundreds of foals from the Medes, and harvested crops, in late Spring and Autumn, some at Now Ruz, others at Mithragan? Fixing the Summer Solstice date could equally well give the benchmark for three months preparation for the latter. The more one considers it, the more likely is Calmeyer's idea, quoted by Sancisi-Weerdenberg: that the processions of tribute bearers *summarise* the transactions recorded in the Fortification Tablets that took place over any nine months of any year, and that the King was not necessarily always present to receive routine taxes in person.

There is no doubt the time of year for *giving presents* was the Winter Solstice – symbolically the Festival of the Return of the Light/Ahuramazda - and if Persepolis was built in alignment with it, for the procession of gift-givers the significant day (as we know is the case for Stonehenge, or for Karnak in Egypt) would have been the day of the *Winter Solstice Sunrise* on the shortest day (**III.6-26**) over the corner of the Treasury when the battle with the dark powers of Ahriman was finally won, making most sense of the door jambs illustrating the King grappling with zodiacal lion, bull, scorpion and griffin monsters as Sirius rose in the evening (rather than rising in the morning as at the Summer Solstice) to blaze all night in the sky.

The processions at Persepolis are of two types - some illustrate the on-going *tax-giving process* showing tribute bearers (a time we still keep to in Britain at the Spring date of April 6) whilst others could well show the specific date of the gift-giving process at the Winter Solstice with the elite group of Medes and Persians only (as on the south stairs to the Tripylon). It is most likely the King would be there in person for the appropriate Mazdean rituals (the equivalent of our Christmas celebrations), at court level not only receiving but also giving out gifts to his Peers – at a season not only calendrically significant, but to which the King's divinised birthday might also be made to coincide, as it was later in Mithraic and Christian ritual. The minutes during the *Winter Solstice Sunset* would have been the fitting moment for him make his appearance at the top of the north-facing staircase of the Tripylon, when he would have been fully lit up by the last rays of the disappearing Sun – as reconstructed earlier. The question is really wide open to thoughts that Persia may not only have learned solstitial measuring techniques from Egypt, but also that it was possible to run ritual, administrative and purely astronomical calendars simultaneously, in order to timetable different levels of seasonal and religious action. As the farthest south of the four court residences, it certainly makes sense for Persepolis to have been in use at the coldest time of the year between the Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox, when the climate would have been pleasantly mild<sup>34</sup>.

### **DEDICATION OF PERSEPOLIS AS A TEMPLE OF THE ZOROASTRIAN HEPTAD**

Razmjou<sup>35</sup> reminds us that the Treasury did not only issue silver currency to part replace rations in kind (issued as described in the Fortification Tablets) but also stored a small clay tablet archive (the Treasury Tablets); museum pieces (booty or gifts) from different parts of the Empire; the two obsolete throneroom reliefs formerly on the Apadana staircases – and also a collection of

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<sup>34</sup> Taqizadeh (1952) writes, 'the Egyptian calendar... was perhaps adopted by the Zoroastrian community of Iran at a time when the Egyptian New Year (the first day of the month Thoth) corresponded with the winter solstice, [so] the same day was made the beginning of the Iranian year and the first day of the Month Dai). This was the case in or about 504 BC on 26-27 December'. Taqizadeh (1938) places the reform of the Zoroastrian calendar at 441: de Blois (1996) to the reign of Xerxes but, taking Persepolis as witness, but why not from the reign of Darius himself?

<sup>35</sup> Shahrokh Razmjou 'Persepolis: a Reinterpretation of Palaces and their Function' in Curtis and Simpson (eds) 2010, 231-47

decommissioned green chert pestles, mortars and plates with inscriptions indicating their use in the preparation of the haoma plant for the haoma ritual. In other words after Darius and Xerxes the Treasury building, on the back of its original paymaster activity became a multi-purpose secure vault, warehouse for obsolete or booty items and museum. Like Lenz, Razmjou argues that the area known as the Harem (C) linked to it was surely unsuitable for the residence of royal women (and we know from the Fortification Tablets that the top royal women had their own separate estates outside Persepolis). He saw the many small rooms as short-term guest-rooms for visiting priest personnel visiting to enact Zoroastrian ritual on high days: he suggests the name 'Second Tachara'<sup>36</sup> for it. Lenz had already suggested these might be chambers for astronomer-priests to use.

Thus, despite keeping to the conventional labelling for the principal buildings of Persepolis here for ease of cross-reference to the main publications, overall we should remain aware their respective functions are still very much under review. If, for instance, the buildings immediately south of the Apadana such as Darius' Palace (I) and buildings F/G/H were made for Mazdean/Zoroastrian religious services, the jamb sculptures leading into the Apadana showing attendants carrying towels and other items for purification make more sense – they would surely not warrant representation if they were just servants carrying the domestic appurtenances of everyday life – even if for a grand feast. Razmjou (*ibid.*) also points out that the Medes and Persians, some with faces ritually half-covered, shown tramping up the back Hadish stairs of the Tripylon are more likely to be priests carrying ritual offerings and animal sacrifices en route to the Apadana from the back, than country representatives bringing in tribute/tax by the front entrance as shown on the North staircases of the *Āpadāna* and Tripylon.

As already described, the buildings are oriented to 18° west of North, and foundation inscription on gold and silver sheets were found intact at the South East and North-East corners of the *Āpadāna* whose shadow directions pointing to Summer and Winter solstitial risings or settings we have just described. Each foundation deposit had one silver and one gold trilingual text (**DPh**) declaring the extent of Darius' Kingship to the four corners of the Persian world, for ease of reference repeated below:

DARIUS, GREAT KING; KING OF KINGS; KING OF LANDS/PEOPLES; SON OF VISHTASPA,  
THE ACHAEMENID. THUS SAYS DARIUS THE KING: THIS IS THE EXTENT OF MY DOMAIN  
FROM THE SAKA BEYOND SOGDIANA AS FAR AS KUSH (NUBIA);  
FROM HIND AS FAR AS SPARDA (LYDIA).  
MY RULERSHIP THE GREATEST GOD AHURAMAZDA ACCORDED ME,  
MAY HE PROTECT ME AND MY DYNASTY

The choice of places for the four corners of the Empire fits in with James George's assertion that they stand at the ends of the extended solstitial lines pointing to those very extremes of the Persian Empire in accordance with the Avestan world view. As he pointed out, the solstitial alignment of the *Āpadāna* meant that at the Summer Solstice the sun rose in the NE from the direction of the Saka and set in the SW in the direction of Egypt: whilst at the Winter solstice the sun rose in the SE from the direction of Hind/Sind and set in the NW in the direction of Sparta. Nimchuk<sup>37</sup> points out that the four territories mentioned in the Declaration were particularly associated with gold mines (to a lesser extent with silver too).

<sup>36</sup> He points out that the word *Tachara* in Old Armenian means 'temple'.

<sup>37</sup> Cindy Nimchuk 'The Persepolis Apadana Foundation Deposits' in Curtis and Simpson (eds) *the World of Achaemenid Persia* 2010, 221-30): this was the topic of her PhD thesis supervised by Margaret Cool Root.

## THE CANON OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART

### CATALOGUES OF EVIDENCE

#### B: THE URUK STANCE ICONOGRAPHY

These foundation deposits in fact confirm the *Āpadāna* must have been intended as a temple, since the procedure of putting in foundation deposits is a Mesopotamian temple tradition never used for secular buildings. Archaeologists seemed to expect deposits under the other two corners, believing them to be robbed out, but this may not have been so if it is only the sunrise side of the *Āpadāna* that needed accentuation. In the North-East Deposit, as well as the Gold and Silver sheets with the Declaration of Rulership of the Four Quarters placed inside a limestone box, six coins were found beneath it – four gold coins of the lion and bull Croesid type now actually believed to be Persian<sup>38</sup>); one silver griffin *tetradrachm* from Abdera, and one silver turtle *stater* from Aegina. The deposit at the South-East corner was the same, except that the silver coins were Cypriot double-sigloi (one of the coins was found some way from the box but on balance considered to have been part of this deposit).

| HEPTAD LEVEL | LEVEL OF CREATION ELEMENT    | CORRESPONDING AVESTAN DEITY                      | REPRESENTED IN THE PERSEPOLIS FOUNDATION DEPOSIT BY   |
|--------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| 1            | SKY<br>AETHER                | KHSHATHRA<br>(VAIRYA)                            | STONE (stone box containing deposit)  |
| 2            | LIGHT/FIRE - DAY<br>SUN      | ASHA (VAHISHTA)<br>(MITHRA)                      | GOLD (Gold Sheet with trilingual Darius Declaration of Rulership of the Four Quarters/four lion and bull Croesids)  |
| 3            | WATER - NIGHT<br>MOON/SIRIUS | HAURVATAT<br>(APAM NAPĀT/<br>VARUNA)<br>ANAHITA* | SILVER (Silver Sheet with trilingual Darius Declaration of Rulership of the Four Quarters/one silver Griffin tetradrachm from Abdera; one silver Turtle stater from Aegina) |
| 4            | EARTH<br>EARTH               | SPENTA ARMAITI                                   | CAVE/HOLLOW/MOUND<br>the hollow foundation holding the stone box  |
| 5            | PLANTS                       | AMERETAT   | PLANTS, embodied in the Haoma ceremony  |
| 6            | ANIMALS                      | VOHU MANAH                                       | ANIMALS, especially Cattle  |
| 7            | MANKIND                      | AHURA MAZDA<br>SPENTA MAINYU                     | JUST MEN, especially King and Priest  |

**III.6- 34: The Zoroastrian Heptad as represented in the NE Persepolis Foundation Deposit (the constituents of the SE Foundation Deposit were similar, but with different silver coins) - information compiled from Nimchuk (2010).** \*Anahita combined the virginity of Virgo with the connection to Water made through Sirius, Venus and the Moon

Although the text on the metal sheets may expressly allude to the extent of Darius' sovereignty, due to the long-held Zoroastrian system of correspondences between substances and the divine presences they embody<sup>39</sup>, it is in relation to the materials used for the items making up both deposits that Nimchuk (*ibid.*) puts forward the idea of the deliberate evocation of the Zoroastrian Heptad at Persepolis on the part of those who dedicated the *Āpadāna*. She posits that The Seven Levels of Creation are consciously alluded to

<sup>38</sup> Considered in detail under *Catalogue D: the Forward Attack*.

<sup>39</sup> The Babylonians had a more complex system, corresponding to the Signs of the Zodiac (see Book 7A on [www.cosmokrator.com](http://www.cosmokrator.com)).



by substances acting as the key Zoroastrian divinities, as summarised in the table I have drawn up above using her data. She sees Darius' inner circle (which must have included those represented on the Darius Treasury Relief, for instance) as 'consciously setting his empire into both Mesopotamian royal traditions and a Mazdaean cosmological system' centred on Persepolis 'where at the Summer Solstice the victory of Light/Aša/Truth over Darkness/Drug/Ignorance is symbolised by the longest day'<sup>40</sup>. In the foundation deposits and at Persepolis in general, all seven levels of creation in the Mazdean system are represented: aether/air/sky by the stone box; fire/light/Sun by Ahuramazda (and implicitly Mithra, though it is the symbol of Ahuramazda as a bearded man inside the winged sun-disc that predominates in keystone positions all over Persepolis); water/Moon/virginity by Anahita; Earth by the hollow in which the stone box is placed - then plant-life, cattle and mankind actually present in the rituals enacted there. As she puts it, 'earth was the ritual precinct; water and fire were present in vessels; a pestle and mortar represented the stone of the sky; the *haoma* pressed by the mortar and pestle signified plant creation; cattle were symbolically present in terms of the sacrificial animal or its products; and man was represented by the priest', while the divinised King represented the 'glory' of Ahuramazda at the pinnacle of the Seventh Level. Thus Nimchuk, like George, sees the *Āpadāna* foundation deposits as enshrining the Heptad to mark Persepolis as the Axis of the Creation of the World, just as Egyptian temples consciously symbolised the Ben-Ben Mound emerging from the primeval reed-marsh – and it is not too farfetched, given all the other Egyptian connections, to see this idea may also be behind the many rows of upright reeds filling in the spaces surrounding the lion-bull groups throughout the site – a reminder also of Iran's own reed marshes on Elam's Gulf doorstep.

### PERSEPOLIS AS A TEMPLE TO ANAHITA

Razmjou (*ibid.*) considers the etymology of the word, *Apadana* as in actual fact *āpadāna*, or *Place of the Waters* whose deity is Anahita, the Persian version of Venus blended with the Moon, Sirius and Virgo. He mentions that in texts the word *Āpadāna* is associated with Anahita first and foremost, though sometimes also in association with Mithra<sup>41</sup>), but always linked to the element water, explaining, he believes, the lioness column capitals which appear only on the *Āpadāna* East portico (the reason why Anahita must also refer to Venus). He goes so far as to say the entire *Āpadāna* could indeed be a Temple of Anahita and concludes, 'I believe it is difficult to continue to describe the Tachara and Hadish as residential palaces as they have a strong religious significance'. We can thus hold in mind without contradiction the idea that the Lion and Prey symbol, so strongly associated with Inanna in Third millennium Sumer, in Achaemenid times became associated with the Aryan female equivalent, Anahita, in yet another form of continuity with local culture - especially taking into account the triple Jupiter-Saturn conjunction had taken place against the constellation of Virgo in 522-1. Despite occupation by the Assyrians and Babylonians, Elamite culture had ticked over in the background over the centuries, suppressed but never completely dying out. Recent scrutiny of the Aramaic texts in the Fortification archive by Henkelman (2008) points to what he calls a 'long process of Elamite-Iranian acculturation in the region' initiated in relations with the Medes long before the Achaemenids came to power there. Quoting from the tablets, he shows the many instances of how the Medes and Persians co-opted the Elamite Gods and rituals on their own doorstep into their belief system, much as they cherry-picked information, materials and craftsmen from their conquered lands further afield.

<sup>40</sup> I argued earlier that it is more likely Ahuramazda's victory would be celebrated at the Winter Solstice, the Summer Solstice being the day from which the days become shorter and the darkness of Ahriman eats into Ahuramazda's Light.

<sup>41</sup> Venus/Anahita is understated in the Heptad: she was associated with pure water in her Moon aspect, seemingly conflated with the other female heavenly bodies in the eyes of the Achaemenid cosmologists (to the Egyptians Sirius was both Isis and Horus). Note that though Mithra is equated with the Sun, Herotodus famously confused Mithra with Venus, possibly with good reason, as unfolds later.

It is made particularly clear in the famous Dedication Inscription of Darius' descendant Artaxerxes II<sup>42</sup> in his inscription on the refurbished *Āpadāna* at Susa, how for the first time for thousands of years the Achaemenids revived in their own terms the sky religion of Anu (in the form of Ahuramazda) and Venus/Inanna (in the form of Anahita)<sup>43</sup>. The dedications of previous Kings at both Susa and at Persepolis usually only mentioned the High God of the Heptad, Ahuramazda, but here for the first time it expounds a more explicit version of the Persian religion than at Persepolis itself. First published by Mécquenem in **MDAI XXX**, it runs as follows:

*THUS SAITH ARTAXERXES II, GREAT KING, KING OF KINGS, KING OF ALL COUNTRIES ON THIS EARTH:*

*SON OF KING DARIUS II, HE BEING THE SON OF ARTAXERXES I, HE BEING THE SON OF XERXES, AND XERXES BEING THE SON OF DARIUS I, SON OF HYSTASPES, THE ACHAEMENID:*

*THIS APADANA WAS MADE BY DARIUS I, THEN UNDER ARTAXERXES I (MY GRANDFATHER), IT WAS PULLED DOWN. WITH THE AID OF AHURAMAZDA, ANAHITA AND MITRA I REBUILT THIS APADANA.*

*MAY AHURAMAZDA, ANAHITA AND MITRA GUARD IT AGAINST ALL EVIL – MAY THEY NEVER ALLOW IT TO BE DESTROYED AGAIN.*

Their reinclusion also shows up in the allocation of the months of the year to the Heptad and other Gods in the Zoroastrian calendar.

#### **ZOROASTRIAN ALLOCATION OF THE MONTHS TO THE GODS**

As I understand it from Boyce (2005) apart from months assigned by the turn of the 5C BC to the six *Mainyus* of the Heptad and All Souls (*Fravashis*), every third month was put under the aegis of a key God of the Mazdean pantheon, to incorporate these older Aryan Gods initially put to one side by the early Achaemenids, which appear to mark the Solstice and Equinox months, as follows,

- Month 4 was assigned to Tishtrya/Sirius (Summer Solstice);
- Month 7 was Mithra's month (Autumn Equinox festival of Mithragan);
- Month 10 was presided over by Ahuramazda (Winter Solstice); leaving
- The borderline *intercalary period* between Month 12 and Month 1 to Anahita at the festival of Now Ruz, immediately after All Souls dedicated to Month 1 marking the Spring Equinox - the reason for which I hope will become clear as we enter the final sections of this commentary.

Given that the Courtyard south of Darius' Palace (I) up to zone H ( ) is often reconstructed as a garden, there must have been some kind of water supply running down from the ridge to this area of the terrace, and building on the association of both *Āpadānas* (at Susa and Persepolis) with Anahita, if we refer again to the table above, according to Zoroastrian thinking It appears Anahita combined both Moon, governing Water (*exalted* in Taurus) and Venus (*ruler* of Taurus); whilst the Sun, ruler of Leo, embodied the Light of Ahuramazda. Here we are beginning to look for the first time at the two *constellations* (as opposed to *planets*) which some writers consider relevant to the lion-bull symbol, and this leads us on to consider whether night sky observation was as important at Persepolis as dawns and sunsets.

#### **THE LION AND PREY GROUP IN RELATION TO CONSTELLATIONS IN THE NIGHT SKY AT PERSEPOLIS**

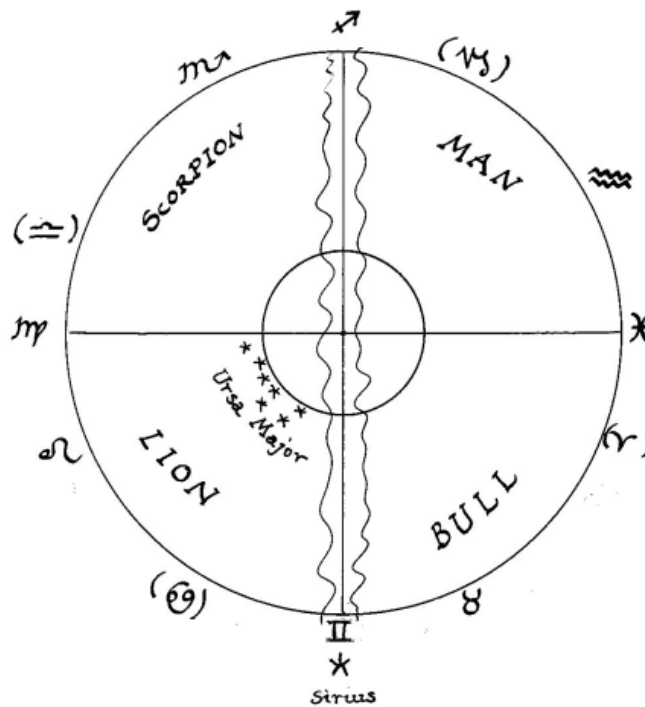
With the allocation of the four solstitial and equinoctial months to the key Gods of Persepolis still in mind, we can look here at the choice of capitals for the columns of the of buildings, mostly on the raised west side of the site but also in the Hundred Columned Hall (M).

<sup>42</sup> We may remember that the ruins of two more staircases of a building of his remain in zone H at Persepolis with parts of the lion-bull attack from it scattered in various places, as also a fragment of the subject on glazed bricks from Susa (*Urusta-46/47f*).

<sup>43</sup> Kuhrt in Sancisi-Weerdenburgh 1987

**LIONESSE CAPITALS**

Razmjou (2010), in noting that only the East portico of the Apadana at Persepolis has lioness capitals (next illustration), put forward the proposition that its lioness portico - as Gropp observed the first to be touched by the Summer Solstice Sun - indicates the courtyard in front of it was dedicated to Anahita, and that her sacred rites were probably enacted in what is now interpreted as a temple precinct around the Apadana, which included Darius' 'Palace' as a part of it (possibly as a 'presbytry'). Since we indicate in the final chapters of this work how the mother lioness represents Venus (as opposed to the maned lion very much representing her warlike aspect, and sometimes the male Sun) this brings Venus to the forefront as the hidden third planet crucial for calendar regulation which we go into shortly (explained in full detail in **Chapter 19**).



**Ill.6- 35: The Sky Quaternary marked by the Lion, Bull, Man (Aquarius) and Scorpion/Eagle constellations**

**GRIFFIN CAPITAL**

The sole double-griffin capital found on the site probably supported a central column in the Treasury (in Classical sources several references to the griffin link it with guardianship of treasure), the telling view of Stanford University's Dr Patrick Hunt on his website. Astronomically in later times it has long been taken as a symbol of the solstitial Cancer-Capricorn axis that in crossing the Polar Centre takes in Aquila. A synthesis between a lion body and eagle's head and wings<sup>44</sup>, in European mediaeval and renaissance zodiacs the griffin is the accepted symbol of the Vernal Point and 0° meridian – and thereby of the Intercalary Period. In fact its prototype was used on many seals from 4M Susa - which invented it - and in this catalogue it appears on the Gebel-Tarif knife from Egypt (**Urusta-2**) and then enjoyed common currency in the 2M Levant. It would certainly make sense if it had the same meaning

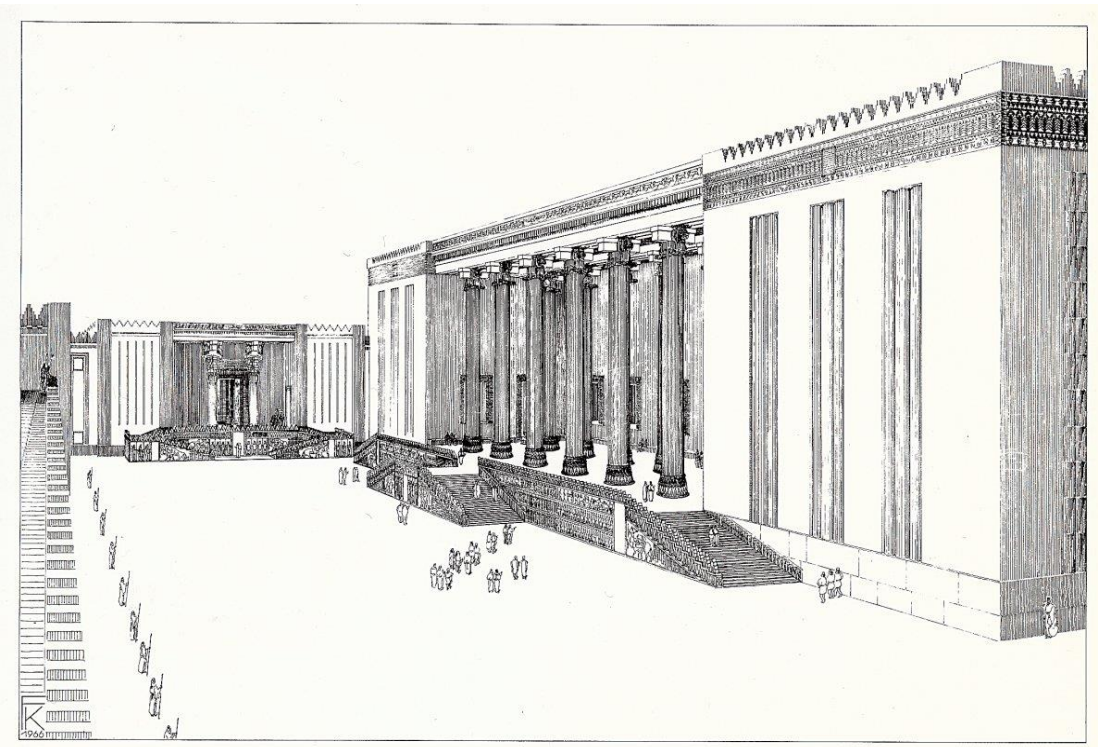
<sup>44</sup> The combination enjoyed a long life in Sumer as the lion-headed eagle, Imdugud - see especially **Catalogue E: the Forward Attack**



then, and in Achaemenid times when it was often used on the highest quality metalwork, as also in mythological tales painted on Greek vases.

**HUMAN-HEADED CAPITALS**

The human-faced capitals all face north, and were on all columns (interior as well as exterior) of the Tripylon (E, see next illustration), as well as the north portico of Xerxes' Hundred Columned Hall (M). If the four types of column head represent the four cardinal points and Signs, then these must refer to the human figure of Aquarius on the Leo-Aquarian axis of the Solstices – or even to Ahuramazda as the Sun in Aquarius in Winter. Darius chose Ahuramazda as the sole God aiding his rise to power and protecting Persepolis (the cipher of his human form standing inside the winged Sundisc is repeated at keystone positions all over the site), tying in perfectly with his solstitial function (at the expense of Mitra and Anahita until Artaxerxes II), with four sacred days dedicated to the God during Dey/December.



**III.6- 36: The Eastern Courtyard (Anahita's precinct) viewed from the North, defined by the Tripylon on its shorter South side (with human headed capitals) and the East portico of the Apadana with lioness-head capitals on its longer side: both have double staircases with 4 lion and prey groups in the spandrels**

**BULL CAPITALS**

We are thus left with the majority of column capitals throughout the site capped with double bull protomes, its symbolism being the most multivalent: it can be read as the constellation Taurus, as Cattle in the Zoroastrian Heptad, or (going by their symbolism in early *Uruk Stance* seals – e.g. **Urusta-11f**) the embodiment, in Mesopotamian thinking, of Earth and its vegetation. Taurus is commonly associated with the Taurus-Scorpio axis of the Equinoxes (the fourth cardinal direction for Scorpio does not feature as a capital, but the scorpion tail appears on the composite zodiacal beasts Xerxes grapples with in the Hundred Columned Hall (M)). By association, as with the Apis Bull in Egypt, the Bull throughout the ancient near East could symbolise the Year: the **Bundahishn** clearly states the Bull of the Year must be killed before Time can start moving (similar to the modern expression that you can't make an omelette

without breaking an egg!). Since Mithra was the presiding God of the Autumn Equinox festival of Mithragan in Month 7 it would appear the Bull is especially to be associated with that God. Certainly the iconography of later (Roman) Mithraic bull-slaying icons inspired by the Parthians celebrate the equinoctial New Year axis by explicitly depicting the moment of setting Time into motion for another year as Mithra stabs the Bull in the shoulder with his dagger (the iconostasis is fully analysed in Haleem 2010)<sup>45</sup>.

#### STELLAR OBSERVATION AND INTERCALATION AT PERSEPOLIS

We have discussed how although Persepolis is primarily a solstitial site this consequentially enabled the calculation of the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes, but over and above consideration of the Four Cardinal Signs which we argue are represented in its capitals, we should look at any likely important stellar observations for the site (only a handful of people have done so). Whilst George showed how the Tripylon must have been the observation point from which to clock Sun behaviour, Lenz speculated the small rooms of the 'Harem' buildings could have been small observatory chambers for specific star sighting tasks. As background for that it is important to read **Chapter 19** in this work which establishes the intercalary mechanisms used by civilisations preceding the Achaemenid to keep the calendar from slipping. This had to rely on star observation because they provided comparatively fixed benchmarks, against which not only Sun and Moon, but most especially in Babylon the triple coincidence of Sun, Moon and Venus cycles against a particular stellar starting point such as Sirius or Orion. Links between the King fighting astronomical hybrid monsters on the jambs of the Persepolis buildings and Sky Hero Gilgamesh/Orion/Perseus (see **Chapter 19**) are seldom made, but for a temple using intercalation with Hero King as Calendar-Maker in the person of Orion (or more likely his precessed successor for Achaemenid times lying above Aries - Perseus<sup>46</sup>), such a role is appropriate.

We reported Hinz & Schlosser's (1971) conclusion that overall the sculptural programme on Persepolis amounted to a celebration of 'König als Kalendarmacher' (our page 108), and in refining their inspection of the site onwards from solar considerations did look at the stellar aspects of the site, building on their conclusion in their 1969 paper that on the day of the Summer Solstice, Sirius, α Ceti and Antares would set at the same point on the western horizon in succession at different times during the night (as labelled in **III.6-24**). Given the importance in the *Bundahishn* of Sirius/Tishtrya and the 'Four Generals' marking the cardinal points it must be clear that although Sirius, Perseus and Orion would rise with the sun in the morning of the *Summer* Solstice at Persepolis, they would not be visible in the dawn twilight because blocked by Kuh-i-Rahmat, and by the time full daylight arrived two hours later though high in the sky would certainly be drowned out by the Sun by then – so they were evidently not stellar factors for Summer Solstice measurement there. However, during the *Winter* Solstice they would rise spectacularly *in the evening* over the Kuh-i-Rahmat ridge and go higher and higher up in the sky as the night went on, culminating at midnight as the stellar prototype of the Mithraic Bull-slaying scene, surely a deciding factor for saying that Persepolis must have been the theatre for the Ahuramazda New Year celebrations at that point in the year.

Thus because of the spectacular nature of the stars rising in the midnight sky at the Winter Solstice, a further *raison d'être* for Persepolis centres on Sirius (which makes complete sense in relation to the renewed close contacts with Egypt and to me confirms that the starting point for its *astronomical* year would be at this juncture, in the month of Ahuramazda. On the day of the *Winter*

<sup>45</sup>For ease of reference, this is the link to that paper: [http://layish.co.uk/astromical\\_iconography\\_of\\_5\\_icons.pdf](http://layish.co.uk/astromical_iconography_of_5_icons.pdf) - see Icon A.

<sup>46</sup> By the 6C BC the Babylonians knew that Spring began with Sunrise against the meridian running through Perseus and Aries, rather than the previous Taurus- Orion meridian (Haleem 2010). The very name, Perseus, gives us its use as marker of the Vernal Point in an era when Persia ruled the Ancient Near East.

Solstice sunrise itself, that same night Tishtrya/Sirius would rise over the top of Kuh-i-Rahmat in the East<sup>47</sup> underlining its central importance for Zoroastrian cosmology, reminding us, too, how at the *Summer* Solstice in the month dedicated to Tishtrya, Sirius would briefly be seen *setting* in the evening, disappearing for the rest of the night – but not a long enough stellar event to build a great ritual around!

Although we do not have the huge amount of information about specific star observation by Achaemenid astronomers as we do for the Babylonians, we do have several precise statements in historical sources about intercalation in the Persian calendar<sup>48</sup>. The more we read about the ever-increasing disarray the Zoroastrian calendar fell into *after* the Achaemenid period, it appears only the true Magoi/*Astrotheutes* (astronomer-priests) knew what they were doing during the second half of the 1M, precisely because they were using Babylonian methods - as Peter Kingsley (1990) explains:

*In 539 BC Cyrus took Babylon, and Mesopotamia became Persian territory. Naturally this led to the Zoroastrian religion being practised in Babylon; Persian Magi went there to maintain the religion – and to learn. For centuries, they and the ‘Chaldaean’ astronomer-priests interacted, living and working side by side. As a result the religious ideas of at least some of the Magi underwent a profound change. The Zoroastrian dualism of good and evil transformed itself into a drama acted out in the setting of cosmic Time: and this principle of Time – Zurvan – was acknowledged not only as a god in its own right but as the highest god of all.... There is little doubting that the famous Iranian dualism of cosmic light and darkness represents a genuine tenet of Zoroastrianism in at least its Babylonian form.’ (pp. 254/5)*

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<sup>47</sup> Perseus and Orion would precede it higher up (see under Icon A in the paper for which I have just given the link (previous footnote but one).

<sup>48</sup> As far as we know, the 120-year intercalation of one month famously referred to by Al-Biruni was actually only applied once, long after the Achaemenid and Arsacid dynasties were over. Boyce (2005) describes how already at the accession of the Arsacids Fravardin had slipped back to late January/early February, and that by the beginning of the Sasanian era it was in late August/early September!



## SUGGESTED INTERPRETATIONS FOR THE LION-BULL ATTACK IN THE LIGHT OF THE RELIGIOUS AND ASTRONOMICAL FUNCTIONS OF PERSEPOLIS

We are now in a position to put forward several possibilities for the more precise astronomical implications in observational practice for the layout and decoration of the Persepolis temenos as summed up by the lion-prey metaphors on the staircases - some or all of which may apply, each possibility having a large section letter. This will be a process of unexpectedly long and far-reaching escalation, to be taken one step at a time.

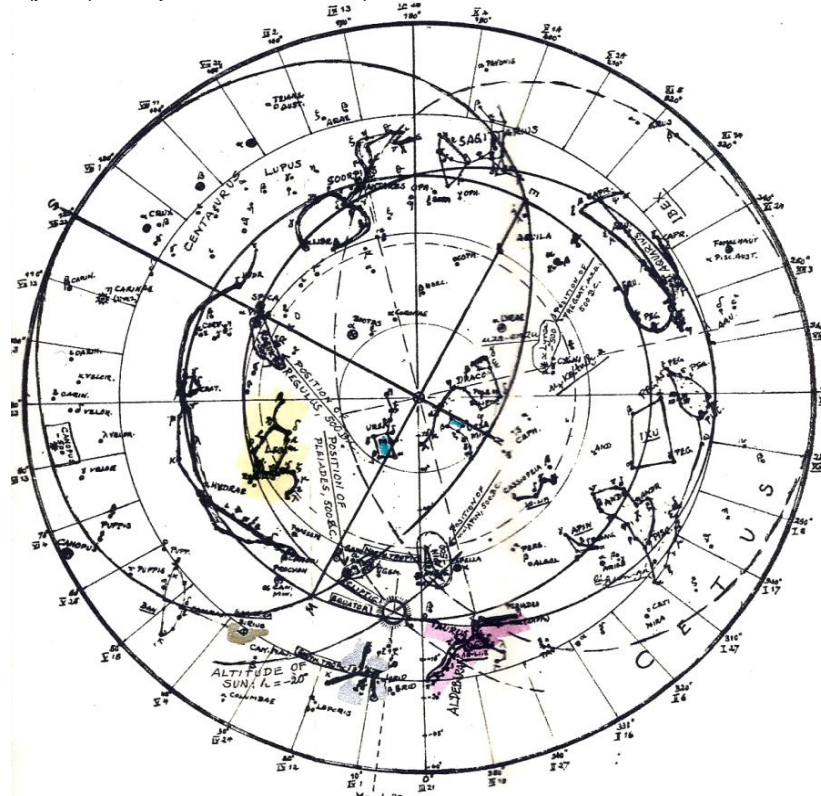
### HARTNER'S INTERPRETATION

The first person to take the stellar background at Persepolis fully into account was Willy Hartner (1965)<sup>49</sup> - and, moreover, directly in relation to the lion-bull combat symbol. Lenz and George were aware of Hartner's approach to a constellational view of the lion-bull combat reliefs at Persepolis but neither was convinced he succeeded in making his argument stick, referring to it fairly dismissively. Let us consider his argument.

A

*Homing in on the sky at the time of the Spring Equinox, three months on from the Winter Solstice, Hartner described how the sky at twilight then would show Leo at the zenith swinging down and falling over Taurus as it disappeared below the Western horizon (see his chart below) as if attacking it - a vivid constellational cipher for Now Ruz (not far-fetched - we have seen suggestions of this idea in the seals of Urusta-28, and Stokley's map next page bears out the argument more clearly).*

Leo (yellow) over Hydra ↓ crosses the ellipse's median diameter



Taurus (red) sets on the horizon ↑ just after Sirius and Orion

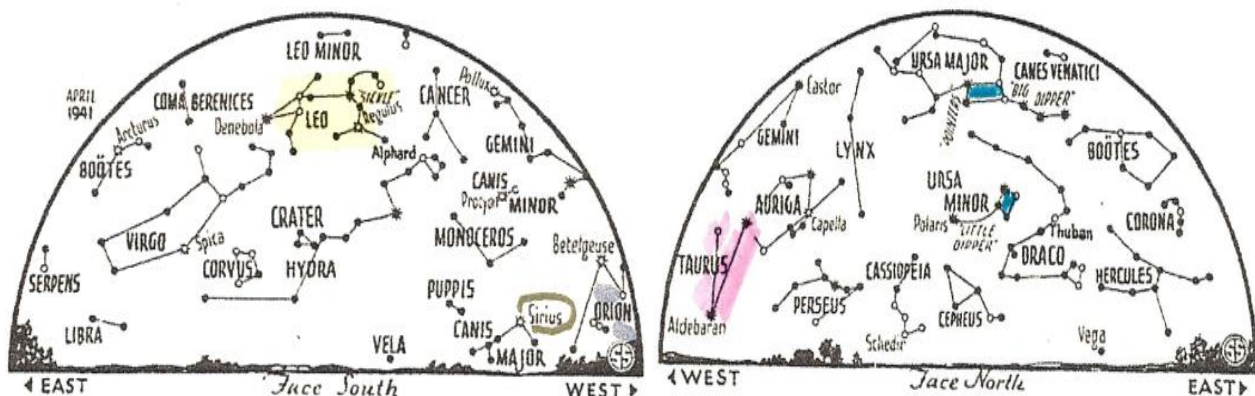
<sup>49</sup> His paper on the subject was later canonised in a section of Chapter 16 in *The Cambridge History of Iran II* (1985)

**III.6- 37: (Top) Hartner's fifth sky chart with the horizon for the Spring Equinox at Elam: Leo over Hydra lies in the centre of the viewable sky with Taurus sinking on the horizon at the edge.**

Given it was a first attempt to come to grips with a stellar understanding of the lion and bull motif one has to forgive the flaws that hamper the reader's understanding of the case Hartner puts, and is certainly an angle to be taken into account given the idea is not without pedigree<sup>50</sup>. Nonetheless, 50 years on, with hindsight we can now say it is not well enough thought through or presented, on the following counts:

- His hand-drawn sky-maps are clumsy and unprofessional (the formalised clean-up of his original chart in the *CHI vol II* actually makes it even more unintelligible!). Appalling graphics are a big disincentive to the reader to read further without clear visual backup (especially one inexperienced in ancient astronomy), when conventional star maps using the familiar zodiac outlines would have helped clarify his message (as in Stokley's map beneath Hartner's scribbles, above). Perhaps in an age of precessional star map computer software this is an unkind thing to say, but his sketchy drawings are so graphically clumsy that the reader trying to decipher them is hard put to discern even the well-known constellational outlines and thus properly follow his case in the text.
- Like all who write about astronomical matters for general ancient near eastern scholarship, much of his paper is spent explaining astronomical terms – notably the vocabulary for the different times of the day used in observing star risings and settings. This is understandable, and probably necessary, but another impediment to cutting to the chase, better placed in an appendix at the end. The idea of Leo seeming to fall down over sinking Taurus takes only a paragraph to explain.
- He considers morning and evening risings and settings of the constellations of the cardinal points, but gives no attention to the vital midnight (ziqpu) star sightings so important in Babylon for ascertaining the time of the year precisely (via the position of the Two Bears in relation to the Polar Centre - see **Chapter 19** – showing why, in the earliest *Uruk Stance* artefacts, the exaggerated upended and curled tail of the lion must refer to Ursa Major, adding credence to Hartner's idea). Twilight settings may indeed have been significant, but apart from omitting the midnight culmination positions of particular stars, his overall theory does not even give the observation time of his sky maps, as Stokley does (though for further West).
- He spends too long on a diversion about early examples (of any compositional type) of artefacts bearing the lion and bull combat before Persepolis, again taking the reader off the main argument, when it would be better dealt with more briefly, using only a handful of stepping stone examples spread over the millennia - and simplifying his case by using *Uruk Stance* versions only, as the prototypes for its use at Persepolis. Nonetheless, credit to him for recognising the long history of the motif and looking far outside the box for its beginnings.

↓ Taurus sets in the West on the horizon



Leo strides across the top of ↑ the sky beneath Ursa Major

**III.6- 38: Stokley's Sky at Night map for the Spring Equinox at 2200hrs shows the same phenomenon more clearly (the two squares of Ursae Majoris and Minoris are marked blue)**

<sup>50</sup> See Pfundstein (2003, p.403) discussing Agamemnon's words in the eponymous play by Euripides as he stands outside Troy the night before its fall, watching the Pleiades setting and equating its disappearance with the fate of Troy: '...a shield-bearing people making a rushing leap during the setting of the Pleiades - and savage Leo, mounting over the city, licks its fill of kingly blood'.

Our assessment of Hartner's work on this important symbol may not only relieve readers who have found his paper difficult to follow, but also indicates his core idea should nonetheless be included as indeed a valid contribution towards understanding its significance. But in the rest of our own commentary below we must now build up a list of its many other, initially more obvious, meanings. Given its long history on a variety of artefacts the lion-bull group is unlikely to be intended simply as the realistic portrayal of a natural event - as modern man might look at it in terms of its animal behavioural realism - but as a metaphor. Like many lion-gate predecessors, from its positioning at gateways or on stairs, just as the bull is killed by the lion, so the group can generally be taken as apotropaic, protecting sacred thresholds and warning interlopers of the divine or royal power that will exact the death penalty if crossed. Why should that be?

SYMBOL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POWER

B

*If the first kings of the dynasty responsible for the building and sculptural programme at Persepolis dwelt on the lion and prey symbol so much – using it even on small artefacts like ritual metal bowls<sup>51</sup> and administrative seals – it must have at its very heart such deep astro-religious connotations that it acts also as the stamp of royal authority.*

ZOROASTRIAN RELIGIOUS SYMBOL

G

*It is particularly in Darius' time at the start of a new administration that it was picked by his 'planning committee' as the leitmotif of the site. Lenz, Schlosser and Gropp all tried to understand the Zoroastrian dimension of the group, and with Hartner's interpretation as his starting point Gropp came to one conclusion: 'Man hielt sie meist für ein Symbol des Jahresbeginns oder ein Gestirnconstellation.... Als Iranist wird man aber bestrebt sein ... die altiranischen Literatur zu berücksichtigen, und dort hat der Stier... [die Seele des Rindes] eine zentrale Bedeutung'. He points out how in Gatha Yasna 29 the Soul of the Bull in conversation with Truth complains at being subject to 'Mordrausch und Rohheit'. Gropp expressed his understanding of the symbol thus: 'Es scheint mir nicht unwahrscheinlich dass ein Zarathustrier in dem Relief die vom zornigen mordenden Löwen angegriffene Stierseele weidererkannte.' In other words the Bull as Matter in the form of the Year is with the passing of Time inevitably subject to Destruction and ultimate Death – a dualist concept particularly emphasised in Zoroastrianism.*

This struggle between Drug/Dark (Bull) and Ahuramazda/Light (Lion) is the Zoroastrian dimension of the symbol, the implications of which lead to a multiplicity of astronomical valencies. This is why George (1979) writes, 'In the cosmic struggle between Light and Darkness, between Ahuramazda and ... Ahriman, June 21 [the Summer Solstice] was the most sacred day of the year – the day when there was the most light and the least darkness... For the Achaemenids... it would have been... the holiest, and sunrise on that day perhaps the supreme moment of the solar year'. Conversely, we have argued that the Winter Solstice day would have been seen as equally - if not more - holy because from that day onward in their interminable struggle Ahuramazda/Light starts to gain ascendancy over Ahriman/Darkness as the days start to lengthen again.

<sup>51</sup> Many are sectioned deliberately to look like poppy seed-heads.

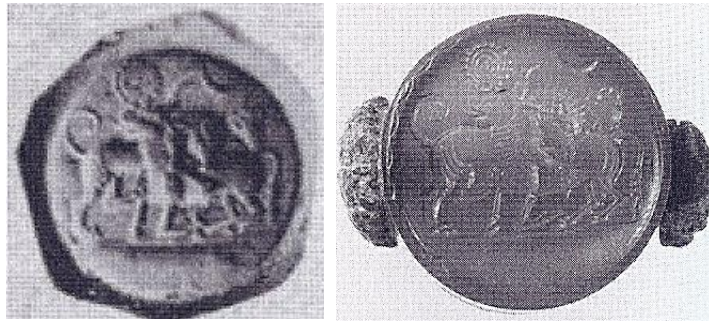


LEVELS OF SUN-MOON SYMBOLISM IN THE LION-BULL GROUP

Like Britain's royal coat of arms today, where the lion represents the Sun and the unicorn the Moon, it is one of those *Gestalt* arrangements accepted as so obvious that the need to spell it out is hardly ever felt.

D

However, we have already had intimations and indication from many entries in this catalogue, even from the earliest times but, most recent to the time of Persepolis, in the conoid seal under Urusta-45f and the Fortification Tablet seal of Urusta-47, that the Bull simply represents the Moon and the Lion the Sun. Soudavar (2010) reiterates this most commonly held idea<sup>52</sup>, backing it up by showing a much later Sasanian ring illustrated in Dusinberre (2003) whose lion-bull attack seal design below says it in full with a Sun over the attacking Lion and Crescent Moon over the Bull. Whatever the constellational relationship between Leo and Taurus might be, then, the Lion and Bull often embodied the opposition between Day and Night or the Light and Dark halves of the Year in terms of 'The Two Lights'.



Ill.6- 39: Sasanian seal ring (Dusinberre Fig.93) - (only the seal is in focus - apologies)

E

In calendrical terms, however, there is more to it than that: and that is the State's eternal 'struggle' for a perfect fit between Solar and Lunar years. By association its representation on seals and other artefacts conveys the idea that the user has the astronomical knowledge to cope with that struggle - and apply it when drawing up the administrative calendar – hence it becomes a stamp of authority.

F

Following on from this contrast on an annual level, on a day-to-day level it could simply refer to any Neomenia (conjunction of Sun and Moon at the start of every new month, when the Moon is blacked out for three days) since the months are the bread and butter of the passing year. Then the two interwoven cycles in accumulated months are the main factor to take into account for counting the year and working out at what point of their interaction the New Year begins.

G

Lenz and Schlosser (1969) had long before homed in on this basic interpretation, but thought their grouping could refer specifically to the conjunction of Sun and Moon at an Eclipse. For Persia, this could even be a specific reference to the particular eclipse in the year of the founding of Persepolis (Ill.6- 21) - or even to the founding of the Achaemenid dynasty itself under Cyrus, who conquered Lydia thanks to the prediction of an eclipse whose temporary darkness during the battle confused the enemy. (How would this fit the earliest use of the symbol at Uruk and Susa?)

<sup>52</sup> Although Cool Root (2003) refers in passing to the Sun/Moon interpretation of the lion-bull group (reminding us its surrounding reed-bed decoration is an Egyptian motif), she mostly reads the lioness as a symbol of fruitfulness, and politically representing Elam since that is the offering the Elamites bring on the Persepolis relief.

[H]

*The Lion-Bull group could refer to knowledge of the entire Saros cycle - the 18½-year lunar eclipse cycle of 222/223 lunar months it takes for the return of the lunar nodes to exactly the same points on the Ecliptic which again then self-repeats and whereby the prediction of eclipses is made possible. Given the predominance of Moon Temples in 3M Sumer (which continued working under Achaemenid rule) it is clear to me this cycle was already long known.*

[I]

*The symplegma could equally refer to the 19-year Metonic cycle of 235 lunar synodic months, equalling 254 sidereal months, also certainly known in Babylon before the 5C BC after which time the Greeks tried to take credit for it (it was made famous by Meton of Athens c.432 BC). It is measurable by the return of the sequence of lunar phases in relation to the Sun to precisely the same sidereal longitude – at which point the sequence starts again, recurring every 235 months. As Powell<sup>53</sup> puts it, ‘The date of the Moon’s phase can shift by one day either way – or on rare occasions by two days – over a 19-year period, but often it is exactly the same calendar date as 19 years previously’. Knowledge of Eclipse cycles was vital for predicting such an omen in order to be prepared for it.*

[J]

*Given the long history of the symbol since the 4M, in instances where the male lion features the Uruk Stance group is readable as a straightforward allusion to the interplay of the Sun and Moon, in months, years or the longer Saros and Metonic cycles. But by association the Lion stands also for the Sun’s Path - the Ecliptic -and predatory Time (Zurvan). In this scenario the Bull stands for the Year (or Years), since originally measured by the Sun rising at dawn against the Vernal Point on the Ecliptic against the stars of Taurus. The destruction of the Bull of the Year begins from that moment until the cycle starts all over again with the new Year Bull. Hence the last entry in Catalogue A: The Belly Landing uses the Lion-Bull attack in Byzantine art as a symbol of Resurrection and Rebirth under the figure of Christ: and given the Zoroastrian view of the return of the Good Man after long aeons we could get away with applying this meaning also to Darius’ Persepolis.*

[K]

*The symplegma can therefore also be read as an oxymoronic symbol, not only for Passing Time and the Year (Tempus Fugit) but also simultaneously for Eternity – much like the Egyptian hieroglyph of Heh, Lord of Millions of Years. In this case it is an expression of Zurvan/Time itself - by association indicating the King’s enduring authority and power over the Calendar as the agent of Zurvan (Zurvan being revered by the Zoroastrians as standing even beyond Ahuramazda and the Amesha Spentas<sup>54</sup>).*

Most can easily accept the Sun-Moon factors inherent in the Lion and Bull group on this rising scale of symbolism, yet as a corrective to the ultimately unsatisfactory nature of the imprecise Sun-Moon relationship there are *sidereal* factors - in themselves of a more fixed and eternal nature and used to maintain an accurate calendar over generations looking back over aeons of past history - which may also be indicated by the symbol, and which Hartner himself tried to pinpoint.

#### INTERCALATION, PRECESSION AND THE STELLAR BACKGROUND

Do we know what kinds of intercalation were used by the Persians? Intercalation methods were probably kept alive at Uruk and Susa since first practised there in the Protohistoric period, and in the Early Dynastic period through most of the Second Millennium different cities had individual calendars that differed from each other (the variety being well documented - fully discussed in **Chapter**

<sup>53</sup> Robert Powell, *Hermetic Astrology* 1987

<sup>54</sup> See R C Zaehner *Zurvan: a Zoroastrian Dilemma* Oxford 1955

22). Achaemenid and Seleucid documents from Ur and Uruk continuing the tradition of intercalation are well known, an intercalary month being inserted at that time roughly every 3-4 years<sup>55</sup>. Achaemenid adoption of the Luni-Solar calendar was the first corrective to the original Zoroastrian Lunar Calendar (which slips backwards by eleven days every solar year) and was probably used as early as Cyrus' time using Babylonian temple practice after Babylon had entered the Empire in 539. Certainly use of the Babylonian calendar is usually cited as the first stage of Zoroastrian calendar reform, and would have involved that incalation that at least more or less squared Moon with Sun cycles.

**[L]**

*Lenz (1971) believed a key dimension of the lion-bull attack referred specifically to Intercalation which takes into account the stellar backdrop to planetary movements – meaning that the symbol refers both to knowledge of that procedure for keeping the seasons in the right place and thus the authority of the government maintaining the calendar by it.*

The Egyptian approach to intercalation was (as we in fact do today in the West) to insert five extra days every year to roughly make up the gap between the 360-day lunar and 365-day solar year<sup>56</sup>, avoiding lurches in month length. However, as we know ourselves from the way our own calendar today is kept on track, over longer periods it is not sufficient to use whole-number days based on the interrelationship between Sun and Moon to keep the calendar accurate, due to that quarter-day discrepancy not allowed for. The more advanced observatories of Sumer and Egypt had long worked out that to attain long-term accuracy, watching the return of these planets to a *sidereal* benchmark such as Sirius, Orion<sup>57</sup>, or the Two Bears gave a much more accurate result. However, by the 6C BC, the Vernal Point had not only slipped backwards through Taurus and entered Aries, but it had reached the last quarter of Aries (not so far off from entering Pisces in the Christian Era), and if it had not been known about before it had certainly become clear now that despite the relative permanence of the sidereal background, yet another factor to take into account was the Sun's seeming slippage, or precession, against it - since even the star benchmarks could not be relied upon not to slip infinitesimally out of line from their fixed seasonal positions.

**[M]**

*Lenz therefore mentions the likelihood that the lion-bull group at Persepolis is a cipher for Precession itself, mastery of which fine-tunes the administration of intercalation and keeps the calendar in synchronisation with the actual solar seasons for centuries on end. But if the Bull also refers to Taurus (the Moon being its Ruler), then the anachronistic use of the symbol from 2,500 years before by the Persians was a deliberate marker celebrating the starting point of their own era (why they should want to do this, we come to shortly).*

Given other Egyptian factors already spotted as lying behind Darius' calendar reform, concerns about Precession could have made the founding of Persepolis a *necessity* given the vast Empire would require calendrical coordination, and it is highly likely that along with Babylonian or even Egyptian methods of intercalation, up-to-date methods of the application of the realities of precession were in the time of Darius picked up from the more recently acquired temple administrations of Egypt<sup>58</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> The fact that extra month intercalation rules are known from the time of Shulgi (see **Chapter 22**) vitiates the ridiculous assertion that only the Greeks were clever enough to introduce the world to the phenomenon.

<sup>56</sup> The intercalary days were dedicated to Isis and Osiris; Nephthys and Seth; and Horus respectively.

<sup>57</sup> In the Classical World the Pleiades and Perseus - parantellonta to Aries - became more popular than Antares and Orion - see my paper read at the Oriental Institute Oxford in 2010 at [http://layish.co.uk/astronomical\\_iconography\\_of\\_5\\_icons.pdf](http://layish.co.uk/astronomical_iconography_of_5_icons.pdf).

<sup>58</sup> Kingsley (1995) repeatedly asserts that a certain class of Magoi was 'extraordinarily outward-going and free, travelling sometimes within the bounds of the Persian Empire and sometimes to and beyond its edges... and ... the motive for their wandering would seem to have been at least in part the search for knowledge. Yet... there can be little doubt that they sometimes used their apparent wish to learn as a disguise to conceal their deeper intention to influence and teach.



**PERSEPOLIS AND THE GREAT YEAR**

To fully understand the implications of the Lion-Bull groups on all the staircases, we need to look at them again in relation to the concept of the Four Quarters and Four Cardinal Signs represented by the types of capitals used on the columns (already discussed above), especially the lioness protomes of the Anahita porch. We will move on to build up a view of Venus connections with the other planets over vaster-time units in order to see how easily countable mega-cycles of Venus made it possible to gauge - in units of either 1200 years (roughly eighths of a millennium) or 243 years (roughly quarters of a millennium) – intermediate stages of the Sun's Precessional cycle of 26,800 years (in round numbers 9 x 3,000-year units – the two numbers most highly favoured in Zoroastrian numerology concerning the Great Year.

Certainly at this time there is ample material on record of an interest in calculating long aeons of time, especially the concept of the Great Year of around 26,800 years - the time it takes for the Sun to slip backwards through each Sign of the Zodiac until it finally returns to its starting point. Western scholars are most aware of the preoccupation with the Great Year from *Plato's Timaeus*, where he calculates the duration of the Great Year of the Universe. We in the West call it the Platonic Year, whereby over 26,800 Solar years the Sun gradually slips back through the entire zodiac, its Vernal Point taking roughly 2,330 years to precess backwards through each Sign until it returns to the original Vernal Point at dawn sunrise against the same star it set out from. Plato's numbers are slightly different and other sources vary on the total length of the Great Year but it consistently hovers around plus or minus 26,000 depending not only on whether Lunar or Solar Years are used, but also according to how rough the rounding up or down is to simplify the case.

Without getting too caught up in the precise numbers, which nonetheless will be explained in terms of Venus cycles below, it is important to be aware of the general idea how very large cycles of time marked by Sun, Moon and Venus movements when tied in with those of other planets and stars (notably Sirius) were being used by the astronomers of ruling civilisations to measure great epochs – whether in round numbers or down to the exact year as Powell (*ibid.*) tries to pin down below. The reason we stop to do this is the evidence coming from the Achaemenid period of how both Persia and Greece were preoccupied with that concept of The Great Year, filtered down not only through Babylon and Egypt, but also from within the age-old Zoroastrian tradition itself - because it seems to have at least a subliminal, if not a conscious, bearing on the timing of the founding of Persepolis.

By 500BC three millennia had passed since the time of Uruk and Susa c. 3500BC, and the Sun's Precession had had to be taken into account as a factor in intercalation since the Sun's Vernal Point had moved (around 1800) from Taurus into Aries -and by 50 BC would be on the brink of changing Sign once again, into Pisces. Through their study of Sirius behaviour the Egyptians had from that earliest period of interchange with Uruk and Susa already started to understand the Sothic cycle of 1460 (roughly 1500) years - two of which in round numbers add up to the time it takes for the Sun to precess through one Sign, and equating to the 3,000-year unit so much cited by the Magoi. Egypt's gift to the Zoroastrians after its absorption into the Empire was a renewed reverence for Sirius and its use for astronomical calibration, whilst the Babylonians' gift, redelivered to Parsa, was their understanding of the Venus measures, large and small, to help calculate Solar long-term Precession over so many generations that intermediate markers were needed if a civilisation was not to lose count.

Kingsley (1995) states the Zoroastrians were more interested in an era roughly equivalent to *half* a Great Year (12,000 years) which they divided up into four phases of 3,000, and Darius/Xerxes' reigns were first made to correspond to the borderline between two 3,000-year long periods – but later readjusted to dovetail with the lifetime of Plato a generation later. Xanthus of Sardis famously

stated that Zoroaster was born '6,000 years before Xerxes' crossing' [of the Dardanelles at the Graeco-Persian Wars]. This means the Uruk-Susa era had covered a similar such period at the start of Zoroastrianism, *coming to an end* c.3500 BC. Both these chronological anchors were taken as end-points of 3,000-year phases within the Great Year, given they believed great men would either die or rise to power at such junctures (Plato's own writings, of course, give calculations for the duration of the Great Year). Consciously or unconsciously, therefore, the arrival of Darius in power, relating to his son Xerxes much as a John the Baptist to Jesus, heralded such a cusp point which demanded accurate astronomical measurement to pin it down. When the prophecy about Xerxes was seen to be a failure for Persia, Eudoxus a century later under the influence of later Magoi stated instead that Zoroaster was born '6,000 *before the Death of Plato*'. Kingsley (*ibid.*) pieces together from the classical sources the reports of contacts between the Magoi and Plato's Academy, from which three facts are established: Plato in his time was now revered as the 'Top Wise Man' by the Zoroastrians who knew him; that a Magus spent Plato's last night on earth in his company as he died; and that a Magus known as Mithradates had a commemorative statue of Plato made at the Academy to which people could pay their respects.

These two recorded statements about the date of Zoroaster prove the Zoroastrians under the first Achaemenid Kings were involved in such calculations in order to understand what point the Achaemenids had reached in their own dynastic history since the beginning of the purported original Age of Zoroaster c. 6500 BC. When Darius I came to the throne, in founding Persepolis and reforming the calendar, he was likely to have been directly guided by the portents of the triple Jupiter-Saturn conjunction in Virgo, and the Eclipse already described above. This was a point of astronomical significance since the Sun had by then precessed by a whole zodiac sign and a half since it had reached high cultic use in Sumer and Elam two and a half to three thousand years before, and had reached a cleavage point in the Sun's Great Year which coincided with the end of a 3,000 year-long Grand Cycle unit. But how could these long phases have been measured, or continue to be measured in the future, give one century alone covers three generations of astronomers? Understanding of the Venus cycles was the main instrument to deal with this.

### **★ THE VENUS (LIONESS) FACTOR**

To be able to explain the high status tacitly given to Venus/Anahita by Darius' Magoi at Persepolis, and thus gain even further understanding of the Lion-Bull combat, we start with Babylonian practices (their origins Sumerian) centring on Venus cycles as interwoven with those of the Sun and Moon (fully spelled out in **Chapter 19**). Not only was Venus' synodic cycle of 580 days used for short-term calendrical calibration every four or eight years, but her mega-cycles, gradually clocked up over centuries, were indispensable in measuring long aeons of Time to keep up with sections of the progress of the Sun's Precession within the Great Year. We have already pointed out Persian interest in the concept of the Great Year and its 3,000-year divisions which could well have a bearing on why Persepolis was erected as a self-aware astronomical and dynastic centre at this particular point in Persian history, at a time the Second Temple with its own specific Abrahamic identity was being rebuilt in Jerusalem *with the permission of all the Achaemenid Kings* mentioned in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, the latter two featuring in events at Susa itself.

Hartner in **CHI<sup>2</sup>** summarises the calendrical situation on Darius' accession to the throne, saying the Babylonian method of checking intercalation by the octaeteris (the 8-year solar cycle fitting almost exactly into 5 Venusian synodic cycles - see **SKY ANCHOR 5** in **Chapter 19**), a procedure already taken up by the Lydians and Athenian Greeks<sup>59</sup>, was also adopted by the Achaemenids. Venus is great harmoniser presiding over the Octaeteris and this would further explain her implicit presence in the form of Anahita throughout the site of Persepolis. As- Razmjou suggests, she is only overtly signposted by the lioness-headed capitals of the Apadana East

<sup>59</sup> The most well-known four-yearly celebrations of this period, of course, were the Olympic Games and Panathenaic Festival in Greece.

Portico which happens to be the only one facing East to receive the direct rays of the rising Sun (it is Venus' conjunctions with Lunar and Solar cycles that make Her so crucial).

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*It may therefore follow that the solar lion and lunar bull staircases were the way of indirectly pointing to the presence of Anahita throughout the site (which Razmjou's own comments (ibid.) point to), deepening the intercalation idea implicit in the lion-bull group that involved the hidden presence of Venus as the key factor in its workings. We have pointed in this catalogue to the rare handful of precedents where Venus/Ishtar is shown actually standing on the lion-prey group (Urusta-27f and referring forward also to Ratt-18/28), indicating it is indeed one of her representative symbols in terms of both Intercalation and Precession! This is due not simply to Venus' return after 5 synodic periods<sup>60</sup> to the same point in the sky every 8 Solar years (the reason why the Babylonians put Sun, Moon and Venus together at the top of their Pantheon) but, more crucial to the Achaemenids, because from larger Venus repeating cycles built up of these, the Great Year could be measured (the Mesopotamians had probably long used the lioness-bull attack to refer to it).*

#### **VENUS IN RELATION TO OTHER KEY PLANETS**

Let us look systematically at the ways Venus cycles 'fit' with those of other heavenly bodies, one by one.

##### **VENUS:SUN**

As stated above, the basic synodic cycle of Venus lasting 580 days means **5 SYNODIC CYCLES CORRESPOND TO 8 EARTH (SOLAR) YEARS** - exact by two days. Being an inferior planet, its synodic period as it revolves round the Sun involves a Superior Conjunction behind the Sun and an Inferior Conjunction in front of the Sun.

#### **THE TRANSIT OF VENUS CYCLE OF 243/250 YEARS**

On the rare occasion when at Inferior Conjunction Venus actually passes over the Sun's orb - in the same fashion as the Moon does at Solar eclipse - this particular Inferior Conjunction is known as a Transit of Venus - which in itself also repeats in a recurring cycle:

- ☼ Two Venus transits take place eight years apart at the ascending node, and then after an interval of over a century are followed by two similar transits at the descending node. The intervals between the individual transits are: 8 years; 212.5 years; 8 years and 105.5 years.
- ☼ These transits repeat themselves in the same pattern at the same intervals. As mentioned above, the nodes themselves wander so slowly through the zodiac that their movement is negligible.
- ☼ The entire cycle for a recurring **Venus on Sun transit** is, therefore, 243 years and 2 days (roughly **250 years**, tying in with the Venus-Sirius precessional slippage, as we will describe shortly).

**★ THE TRANSIT OF VENUS CYCLE THEREFORE PROVIDES A ROUND-FIGURE LARGE UNIT OF MEASURE, OF ALMOST A QUARTER-CENTURY, USABLE FOR RULE-OF-THUMB CALCULATION OF WORLD AGES ★**

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<sup>60</sup> We have a document from Nippur (AO 17630) describing observations of both Mercury and Venus for the years 41 and 41 of Artaxerxes II (see Francis Joannès 'Les Archives de Ninurta-Ahhe-Bullit' in Ellis, M de J (ed.) **Nippur at the Centennial (RAI 35)** 1991, p.94



To be practical, these large units of Venusian time are accrued gradually in relation to the recurrence of Venus' interplay with the shorter cycles of Moon and Sun which would initially have been measured from a starting point when all three were lined up in the same part of the sky.

- ✧ The exactitude of a precise triple conjunction of Sun/Moon/Venus (to the day and hour) is increased over longer periods if the Metonic and Saros cycles of the Moon are taken into account: a 47-year period allows an even closer dovetailing of Venus: Moon: Sun to less than a day.
- ✧ The 19-year Metonic cycle of 235 synodic lunar months, equalling 254 sidereal lunar months, was certainly known in Babylon before the 5C BC. It is measurable by the return of the sequence of lunar phases in relation to the Sun to precisely the same sidereal longitude – at which point the sequence starts again, recurring every 235 months. Powell (*ibid.*) writes ( p. 317), 'The date of the Moon's phase can shift by one day either way – or on rare occasions by two days – over a 19-year period, but often it is exactly the same calendar date as 19 years previously'. This was the cycle made famous by Meton of Athens c.432 BC, probably learned from Babylonian sources.
- ✧ The Saros cycle, on the other hand, is the 18½-year lunar eclipse cycle of 222/223 lunar months calculated on the return of the lunar nodes to exactly the same points on the Ecliptic which again then self-repeats, and enables the prediction of eclipses. Brown mentions the BM cuneiform text which lists 19 lunar cycles of 18 years, a table that combines the Metonic Cycle with the Saros period - 120 Saros last 2220 years – very close to the time taken for the Sun's precession through any one Sign.

**★ THIS MEANS THE LARGE VENUS TIME UNITS OF 250 AND 1200 YEARS (EXPLAINED BELOW) COULD IN TURN BE BROKEN DOWN BY COUNTING METONIC/SAROS PERIODS, MOST NOTABLY IN 47/50-YEAR GROUPINGS MORE OR LESS EQUATING TO THE JEWISH JUBILEE PERIOD OF 49/50 YEARS ★**

**LARGER VENUS TIME UNITS AGAINST SUN-SIRIUS PRECESSIONAL CYCLES**

It was conventional to measure the slippage of the Sun against the Zodiac by observing the stars against which the Sun rises at dawn at one of the cardinal points of the year – these days the slippage of the Vernal Point is taken as the benchmark, though it may have been taken from one of the other Royal Stars at the four cardinal points. From our perspective today most people are aware that the Sun rose against Taurus for roughly 2,233 years, and then back through the degrees of Aries for a further 2,233 years. Since the time of Christ it has been slipping back through Pisces, and today is on the brink of entering Aquarius. But these phases cover several generations of observation, and a rule of thumb check by other means would have been useful for continuity of calculation across the generations. Certainly between 3500 and 500 BC the Sun's VP had changed by one entire Sign. The neat interrelationship between the Sun, Moon and Venus cycles – and also the much longer Sothic Period based on Sirius, knowledge of which must have just been refreshed by Egypt - enabled any Mesopotamian astronomer, including Magoi, to check intermediate stages of Solar Precession over the centuries and therefore the progress of the Zoroastrian Great Year.

**VENUS' PRECESSIONAL PERIOD of 1199/1200 years IN RELATION TO SOLAR PRECESSION**

- ✧ Venus' own precessional cycle back to its starting point takes 1199 years (call it 1200 in round figures). Put in other terms, 1199 solar years equal 750 synodic periods of Venus (or 1949 sidereal revolutions).

Translated into days, Powell gives the following figures:

750 synodic periods of Venus = 437,940.3750 days

1199 sidereal Solar years = 437,942.3756 days (the Sun's sidereal cycle is 365.25636 days)

1949 sidereal revolutions of Venus = 437,941.8592 days

- ✧ This means that an entire sidereal cycle of Venus is short of its initial starting point from any particular fixed star (using the same star from which the Sun's sidereal cycle is calculated – probably Sirius) by only 0.5164 of a day. This is so close as to be a negligible difference, so that the 1199-year Venus cycle (**in round numbers 1200**) is even more accurate in its repetitions than intermediate 8-year cycles which has a 1.8-day margin of error between the Venus synodic and sidereal periods.

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- ✧ Since it takes the Sun roughly 2,400 years to precess through one Zodiac Sign, roughly two Venus precessional cycles of 1200 years each covers the length of time the Sun's Vernal Point takes to travel through any one Sign, even if erring on the side of shortfall.
- ✧ Thus if astronomers were trying over many generations to keep track of the Sun's precessional cycle, then one precessional cycle of Venus is usefully matchable to one half of the Sun's journey through any one Sign since for the Sun's 26,000-year precessional cycle, Venus does  $21\frac{1}{2}$  of its own precessional cycles within it (taking 25,779, plus 140 epagomenal years).

★ *THE VENUS PRECESSIONAL PERIOD OF 1199/1200 YEARS IS THEREFORE ANOTHER, LARGER, RELIABLE UNIT OF MEASURE THAT CAN BE USED TO ASSESS THE PROGRESS OF THE SUN'S OWN PRECESSION* ★

#### *WHEN WAS THE STARTING BENCHMARK MADE FOR AN INTERACTIVE PLANETARY CALENDAR?*

These interlocking large units of time all at some far point in history (probably during the 4M during the Age of Taurus, usually taken as the period when the Calendar in its complexity was first mastered) needed all to be taken from one benchmark. The Egyptians had used Sirius from time immemorial, and from the 5C the Persians laid particular store by this star, for which their more recent scriptures give ample evidence.

#### *SOLAR AND VENUSIAN PRECESSION IN RELATION TO THE SOTHIC PERIOD*

- ✧ The Moon's Saros period of 19 years fits into the Sirius cycle of 1460 years – 71 times. This was another way of measuring  $1^\circ$  of the Sun's precession. In other words, very roughly this period is close to the Sirius period of precession of 1460 years and almost exactly half the precessional period the Sun takes to slip back through one whole sign of the zodiac, even if erring on the side of overrun.
- ✧ Taking the cycle of the Moon as 29.2 days adds up to 1460 over the 50 weeks of the Lunar Year and 1460/1461 is the number of days in a four-year cycle, including the Leap Year day. This total matches  $5 \times 292$  Venus half-synodic periods = 1460 days.
- ✧ The starting point for the calculation of Venus' synodic period was probably originally taken either from the ancient Egyptian benchmark of her rising with Sirius at dawn in Leo at the Summer Solstice, or rising/setting with it at night at the Winter Solstice at Mesopotamian New Year: certainly in Egypt Isis was identified with both Hathor/Venus and Sirius, just as in the Mesopotamian tradition Inanna/Ishtar (*Ish-shtar* simply means The Star) can refer both to Venus and to Sirius. Both are close also in scintillating brightness, earning the title, 'Queen of Heaven'.
- ✧ 6 **Venus Transit** cycles of 243 years (roughly **250 years**) are equal to 6 Sothic cycles of 1471 years<sup>61</sup> Every time a Sirius cycle completes there is a 1-day lag before returning to the starting point, as compared to 2 for Venus.
- ✧ In **760** synodic periods the Venus Transit cycle in its own mini-precession completes a full revolution around the zodiac in 1215 years ( $5 \times 243$ ). This is not far off the Sirius cycle of 1471 years (the Sothic Period).



*So if we count Venus' slippage backwards not in relation to the Sun, but in relation to any fixed star, the slippage every year against (to take the obvious example) Sirius is only 0.94 in every 8-year cycle, such that in every generation the constancy of Venus returns is experienced as all but fixed. This is why they were so often considered as one and the same Goddess (as in the case of Isis in Egypt).*

★ *THERE ARE THEREFORE PROFOUND ASTRONOMICAL FOUNDATIONS UNDERPINNING THE VENUS/SIRIUS DIMENSIONS OF PERSEPOLIS: HENCE THE IMPORTANCE OF ANAHITA/ISIS* ★

<sup>61</sup> Herbert Chatley in his review of I E S Edwards' *The Pyramids of Egypt*, JEA XXXIV 1948 126-8

## CONCLUSION

Having now gone through the exercise of showing Venus' crucial importance for calendar regulation, and even more so as Anahita in the hands of the Achaemenid Magoi – now inheritors of many centuries of improvement in the discipline of naked eye calendrical astronomy combined with accrued mathematical knowledge of the interacting cycles of the key heavenly bodies - we come to our final thoughts about the implications of the Lion-Bull group at Persepolis:

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*Not only does it simply refer to Sun-Moon harmonisation, but supremely also to Venus as Grand Harmoniser in calculating the Great Year of the Persians. Due to Her role in both Intercalation and measuring Precession the power of Time and Eternity are presented for the year Persepolis was founded, announcing the arrival of the new Saoshyant, Darius I, Ruler of the World.*

Because of its prevalence throughout the site, the *Uruk Stance* has served as a focus for the exploration of Persepolis' function. It repeats the 4-3M *Uruk Stance* motif used on seals and stone vases in Susa, Uruk and the rest of Sumer, though in the protohistoric examples the lioness is the predator more often than the lion, a detail true to life. The lioness is the creature of Venus, whilst the lion is Solar in meaning, but it is easy to see at Persepolis how they have been blended. The *Uruk Stance* compositional type, out of all the others, has the strongest significance due to the close association of the archaeological items with the cult of one and the same female divinity, often called The Great Mother of the Universe, over time given many names according to country and region.

Indo-European pantheons such as the Greek and Persian replaced Goddesses by male equivalents, but for Venus they followed convention in seeing her in combination with both Virgo and the Moon, a Virgin Goddess associated with Water –Anahita/Athena (Allāt in Persian-occupied Levant). Worship of her Egyptian equalent, Neith, was particularly practiced in the Mediterranean city of Saïs where she was associated with the famous inscription of Isis the Invisible (*Sopdet* Mother of *Sopdu*/Horus-Sirius, Star of the Inundation and New Year). Anahita was treated in the same terms as that invisible divine power no-one has seen face to face, and without whom the Gods cannot operate. The implicit power of Anahita at Persepolis and her lioness-headed porch suffuses the place, while the lion-bull staircases point to the many levels of astronomical meaning cited above, on the surface mostly involving the Sun and Moon, but really all about Venus and Sirius behind them.



| <b>ABBREVIATION</b>                      | <b>AUTHOR/EDITOR</b>          | <b>YEAR</b>           | <b>PUBLICATION</b>  |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <b>AshCatI</b>                           | BUCHANAN, B                   | 1966                  | Catalogue of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in the Ashmolean Museum I: Cylinder Seals Oxford  |
| <b>AshCatII</b>                          | BUCHANAN, B with P R S MOOREY | 1985                  | Catalogue of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in the Ashmolean Museum II: the Prehistoric Stamp Seals Oxford  |
| <b>AshCatIII</b>                         | BUCHANAN, B with P R S MOOREY | 1988                  | Catalogue of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in the Ashmolean Museum III: The Iron Age Stamp Seals, Oxford   |
| <b>AtchCat</b>                           | COLLON, D                     | 1975                  | The Seal Impressions from Tell Atchana/ Alalakh (2 vols) AOAT XXVII Newkirchen-Vluyn  |
| <b>CMS</b>                               | I PINI & W MÜLLER (eds)       | 1964-2012 and ongoing | Corpus der Minoischen und Mykenischen Siegel (Many Vols - with Supplements - as quoted)   |
| <b>GGFR</b>                              | BOARDMAN, J                   | 1981                  | Greek Gems and Finger Rings London  |
| <b>GMACat</b>                            | AMIET, P                      | 1961/ up-dated 1980   | La Glyptique Mesopotamienne archaïque CNRS Paris  |
| <b>GSCat</b>                             | AMIET, P                      | 1972                  | La Glyptique Susienne, des origines à l'époque des Perses Achéménides (2 vols) MDP XLIII, Paris   |
| <b>MartinCat</b>                         | MARTIN, H                     | 1972                  | Fara: an Archaeological Study of a Third Millennium City Chicago  |
| <b>MooreEisenCat</b>                     | EISEN, G                      | 1940                  | Ancient Oriental Cylinder and other Seals with a description of the collection of Mrs William H Moore OIP XLVII Chicago                                     |
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| <b>PierMorCat</b>                        | PORADA, E                     | 1948                  | Corpus of Ancient Near-Eastern Seals in North American Collections: the Collection of the Pierpoint Morgan Library (2 vols) Böllingen Series XIV Washington |
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