An Artifact Speaks • Artifact Information Sheet

Artifact Name: Statue of Gudea

Time Period of the Original: ca. 2150–2125 BCE

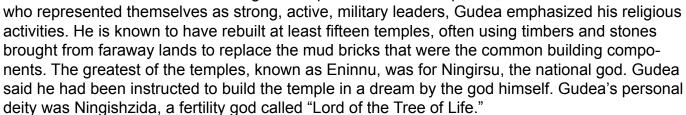
Culture/Religion Group: Neo-Sumerian

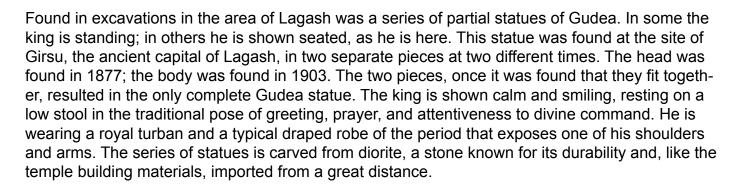
Material of the Original: Diorite

Reproduction? Yes

Background Information:

During the Neo-Sumerian period, rulers controlled large, independent city-states in southern Mesopotamia. Lagash was ruled by Gudea ca. 2150–2125 BCE. Unlike the kings of the previous Akkadian period,





The inscription on Gudea's robe translates as follows:

For Ningishzida, his god, Gudea—ruler of Lagash, builder of Ningirsu's temple Eninnu—fashioned a statue of himself. He named the statue "It befits the temple" for his sake, and he brought it to the god in his temple.

Sources on Gudea and Gudea Statues:

- "British Museum Gudea, King of Lagash (around 2130 BC)." *British Museum Gudea, King of Lagash (around 2130 BC)*. The British Museum. Web. 21 Mar. 2015. <http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/article_index/g/gudea,_king_of_lagash_around.aspx>.
- Nicolas, Benoit. "Work Gudea, Prince of Lagash, Seated Statue Dedicated to the God Ningishzida." *Gudea, Prince of Lagash, Seated Statue Dedicated to the God Ningishzida*. The Louvre. Web. 21 Mar. 2015. <http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/gudea-prince-lagash-seated-statue-ded-icated-god-ningishzida>.

(continued)



- "Ningizzida." Encyclopedia Mythica from Encyclopedia Mythica Online. http://www.pantheon.org/articles/n/ningizzida.html [Accessed March 20, 2015].
- Pitard, Wayne, Spurlock Museum Mesopotamian exhibit labels.
- "Statue of Gudea | Neo-Sumerian | Neo-Sumerian." <i>Statue of Gudea</i>. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1 Jan. 2000. Web. 20 Mar. 2015. <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/329072>.

Additional Background: Temples in Southern Mesopotamia

Large platforms called *ziggurats*, covering an acre of land and built of clay and sun-dried mud brick, served as the base structures for Mesopotamian temples. A high temple to the local god was placed at the top of these platforms. Lower temples at the base were for other gods important to the city. The platforms were solid structures, with no interior chambers or passageways.

Over time, heavy rains would penetrate the bricks, causing the walls to soften, bulge, and collapse. To delay this destruction, ziggurats had internal drainpipes to help drain the water from the building. Even with this extra care, a ziggurat often had to be rebuilt within a century. This gave kings many opportunities to show their devotion to the gods by rebuilding the structures.

Source:

• "Ziggurats." The Ancient Near East: An Encyclopedia for Students. Ed. Ronald Wallenfels and Jack M. Sasson. Vol. 4. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2000. 174-176. World History in Context. Web. 20 Mar. 2015.

Additional Background: Mesopotamian Gods

Lists of Mesopotamian gods may be found at these websites:

British Museum

http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/gods/explore/main.html

University of Pennsylvania

http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/gods/explore/main.html

Date Notes:

BCE (Before Current Era) = B.C. CE (Current Era) = A.D.