

A rich and vivid overview of ancient Mesopotamia via works of outstanding beauty and importance

LOS ANGELES, CA—Mesopotamia, in modern-day Iraq, was home to the remarkable ancient civilizations of Sumer, Akkad, Babylonia, and Assyria. From the rise of the first cities around 3500 BCE, through the mighty empires of Nineveh and Babylon, to the demise of its native culture around 100 CE, Mesopotamia produced some of the most powerful and captivating art of antiquity and led the world in astronomy, mathematics, and other sciences—a legacy that lives on today.

***Mesopotamia: Civilization Begins* (Getty Publications, hardcover, \$65.00)** presents a rich panorama of ancient Mesopotamia's history, from its earliest prehistoric cultures to its conquest by Alexander the Great in 331 BCE. Published to accompany an exhibition on view at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Villa March 18–July 27, 2020, this catalogue records the beauty and variety of the objects on display, on loan from the Louvre's unparalleled collection of ancient Near Eastern antiquities: cylinder seals, monumental sculptures, cuneiform tablets, jewelry, glazed bricks, paintings, figurines, and more. Essays by international experts explore a range of topics, from the earliest French excavations to Mesopotamia's economy, religion, cities, cuneiform writing, rulers, and history—as well as its enduring presence in the contemporary imagination.

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