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LANDSCAPE IN AKKADIAN ART*

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In the long tradition of Mesopotamian art some periods, Old Babylonian for example, seem predominantly phases for the classic consolidation and elaboration of the inheritance from earlier times. In contrast, other phases stand out as extraordinarily originative. First and foremost is the art of the formative Protoliterate period when the historical civilization of Mesopotamia took shape. The primeval character of Protoliterate art sets it apart from that of all the later cultural periods of the central Mesopotamian tradition. On the other hand, in tremendous vitality, freshness of approach, and range of achievement, Akkadian and Middle Assyrian art are reminiscent of Protoliterate work.[1] They are new beginnings, transformative outbursts of creativity.

The place of Akkadian art in this originative triumvirate of the Mesopotamian tradition is clear, despite the relative meagerness of the material evidence available for the period. The capital, Agade, has not been identified. Almost no major excavations in Akkadian levels on any site have been made; the archeology of the period remains little known. So far merely a few examples of major Akkadian art have been recovered, although copies of inscriptions and captions on Akkadian monuments still on view in the Old Babylonian period testify to the existence originally of many statues and stelas, some obviously very ambitious.[2] Only the often-cited circumstance that, in Mesopotamia, glyptic was so closely related to large-scale works as to be, to a considerable degree, representative of the varying styles of individual periods, makes it possible to reconstruct the range of Akkadian art. Fortunately, the many cylinder seals extant clarify salient characteristics of the Akkadian style, as well as its great breadth of variation.[3]

* The final touches to this token of respect and affection for Erich Schmidt were made in Iran, the country in which he was one of the great archeological explorers.—Dezful, Khuzestan, January 9, 1966.

[1] Cf. Frankfort's comparison of Akkadian and Middle Assyrian glyptic in *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, p. 72.

[2] Poebel, *Historical Texts* (Univ. of Pennsylvania: The University Museum: "Publications of the Babylonian Section," Vol. IV, No. 1), pp. 221, 235. Hirsch, "Die Inschriften der Könige von Agade," *AfO*, XX (1963), 1–81 (hereafter quoted as Hirsch): Statues: Sargon: b 1, b 2, b 9, b 16; Rimush: b 3, b 4 (?), b 7 (?); Naram-Sin: b 4, b 5, b 6; Stelas: Rimush: b 1 (?), b 5; Naram-Sin: b 8 (?).

[3] Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, Section III, Chaps. i–ii and *Stratified Cylinder Seals from the Diyala Region*, pp. 31 f. Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement*, p. 165.

The subject-matter of Akkadian glyptic ranges from the relatively rarely occurring activities of daily life to ritual scenes of offering or presentation to deities; from numerous, and frequently very agitated, mythological representations unparalleled in other periods of Mesopotamian art to animal contests and surely-patterned heraldic compositions of heroes and animals. One significant category of motifs, those commemorating the political power and achievements of the kings, is missing from the seals[4] but represented by complete or fragmentary stelas whose purpose was very conscious—as witnessed by an inscription citing the making of a gold statue of Naram-Sin "for eternity with representation of the power and battles of the king."[5]

The Akkadian style is renowned for its interest in physical detail—taut, strained muscles or shaggy locks—and in its emphasis on the unity of individual figures. Though in heraldic compositions heroes and animals combine into patterns, the figures remain solidly alive. They are not conflated or even interwoven so as to become mere subservient elements of a design, as often in Early Dynastic art. Instead their outlines, their unity as individual organisms, remain intact, emphasized on the more elaborate seals by high modeling and guarded by the considerable free background space frequently surrounding the figures. How fundamental to the style these characteristics are is emphasized by a perhaps unique Akkadian seal where the exigencies of design suggested a duplication of the hind quarters of an axial bull-man.[6] While in Early Dynastic II seals the results of such procedures only heighten the interest of the design, on this Akkadian seal the extra hind quarter, though neatly completing the symmetry of the pattern, is a disturbingly monstrous graft onto the physically organic body of the bull-man.

The solidity and immediacy of individual figures is frequently heightened by the realism of the rocks and trees, or the two combined, which commonly serve as axial, subsidiary, or filling elements.[7] This is true even in the heraldic seals whose subject-matter, whatever may be the associations of meaning, can be taken as fundamentally abstract and decorative.[8] It is no accident that on two heraldic seals with heroes and water buffaloes a setting is provided by flowing vases and a water rivulet, the latter forming a lower border (Fig. 1). To substitute lions for the buffaloes on these seals would be inconceivable. Reflected through all the schematism of their composition is the real situation—the dependence of the buffalo on water, their contentment as they wallow in the marshes or irrigation canals. On another seal antithetical contest groups of heroes and water buffalo are separated by an axial mountain and vegetation, a

[4] In general in Mesopotamian glyptic such motives were by their very nature not suitable for the seals of private individuals but could, apparently only very rarely, appear on those of official personages, as on the seals of Ilushuilia, independent ruler of Eshnunna in the late Ur III period (cf. Frankfort in Frankfort, Lloyd, and Jacobsen, *The Gimilsin Temple and the Palace of the Rulers at Tell Asmar*, ["OIP" XLIII (1940)], pp. 202 f.; 215, Fig. 101, and Amiet's discussion in *Revue archéologique*, XLI [Jan.–June 1953], 156) and Mukannishum, superintendent of the palace of Zimri-lim at Mari (Amiet in *Syria*, XXXVII [1960], 230, Fig. 12). Such representations are to be distinguished from the common Old Babylonian simplified disintegration of the theme in which the conquered enemy underfoot is merely a divine attribute (cf. Amiet's discussion in *RA*, XLI, 145 ff.; *Syria*, XXXVII, 229 ff.). The frequency of battlefield motives on Protoliterate sealings is a token of the experimental, initial nature of that period, just as in Egypt the earliest royal commemorative reliefs appear on a medium, the slate cosmetic palettes, not originally intended or particularly well-suited to be the bearer of such motives.

[5] Hirsch, Naram-Sin, b 8; cf. Thureau-Dangin in *RA*, IX (1912), 34, 35.

[6] Woolley, *Ur Excavations*, Vol. II: *The Royal Cemetery*, Pl. 213, No. 323 (U 11492).

[7] Cf. the discussion, tables, and list in Faradsch Basmadschi, *Landschaftliche Elemente in der mesopotamischen Kunst des IV. und III. Jahrtausends* (Basel, 1943). Additional examples could, of course, be given from later publications.

[8] Cf. Frankfort, *Stratified Cylinder Seals from the Diyala Region*, pp. 32 f. and n. 67.

standard type of composition.[9] However, instead of the woody tree normal to this habitat, both in reality and on glyptic, waving reeds appear in compliment to the watery world of the buffalo. Landscape elements closely linked to the central figures provide standard and vivid characterizations of the gods. Divine barks, unsupported by water on Early Dynastic seals,[10] can now appear on continuous rivulets of water.[11] The sun-god steps up between imbricated mountain peaks, sometimes with a tree on one side (Fig. 2), in representations reminiscent of the sun-disk rising over the Zagros peaks on the eastern peripheries of the Mesopotamian and Khuzestan plains.

Occasionally landscape elements form the whole framework of the composition, the horizontal register being punctuated by mountains supporting some figures at a higher level than others. Two outstanding examples are a seal in the British Museum (Fig. 3) and another from Mari (Fig. 4). The latter gives a particularly vivid impression of a rocky mountain landscape, even though the main elements are personified. But the dais of the principal god is a high mountain. From it emerge bird-like heads gushing streams of water; these both support and form the vegetation goddesses, embowered in leafy branches. There could be no better summation of the rocks, rushing springs, and abundant forests of the mountains, the antithesis to the flat Mesopotamian landscape of endless desert plains or agricultural land intersected with canals.[12] The extent to which the natural elements here are suggestive of a coherent landscape comes out clearly in comparison with an Ur III sealing where a god and a goddess sit directly on flowing water and a rocky peak respectively (Fig. 5).[13] Even though this sealing preserves a heritage of immediacy far greater than normal on Ur III seals, where thrones hieratically isolate the deities from any landscape adjuncts present (Fig. 6), it is far removed from the naturalism of the Mari seal.

Although such compositions as Figures 3 and 4 already go considerably beyond the ordinary accessorial use of landscape details on Akkadian seals, it was in works where the artists were released from the more normal subject matter, from the task of embodying plastically the personified forces of nature, that they were able to explore further the possibilities of landscape representations. Crucial is the relative size of the landscape elements and the animal or human figures. Most Akkadian seals are composed as horizontal friezes in each of which the height of the principal figures is approximately the same as that of the entire register.[14] In such cases the accessorial landscape elements can never be higher and are frequently considerably shorter than the main figures. Very rarely were rock pinnacles and trees so heightened in proportion to the living figures as to dominate the composition. Then, no longer mere accessories, they combine with each other to form, within the limitations of ancient Near Eastern conventions, landscapes. Naturally no hint of perspective, of the illusion of depth, or of impressionistic detail is to be expected, not to mention any of the more sophisticated developments of western

[9] *Ibid.*, Pl. 70, 761.

[10] Fish do occur around the boat giving some feeling of a setting; cf. Early Dynastic II (Amiet, *La glyptique mesopotamienne archaique* [henceforth abbreviated *GMA*], 1374); in Early Dynastic III (*ibid.*, 827. 823 [Ur]; 1434 [Khafaje IX 92]; 1225 [plaque]). Very small lines that could be considered water are to be seen on two Early Dynastic III seals (Amiet, *GMA*. 1429 [Khafaje III 922]; 1435 [VAR 145]).

[11] Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, Pls. XIX, *e*, *f*; XX, *f*.

[12] Cf. Amiet's discussion in *Syria*, XXXVII, 219 f.

[13] Other examples: Woolley, *Ur Excavations*, Vol. II: *The Royal Cemetery*, Pls. 214, 354 (I 11596); Legrain, *Ur Excavations*, Vol. X: *Seal Cylinders*, No. 236.

[14] Exceptions, of course, exist, as for example the Etana seals where the story demanded that the hero and eagle be above the onlookers.

landscape painting such as renderings of mood or experimentation with light effects.[15] On the other hand, when natural features, however simply or schematically rendered, are no longer individual isolated elements in the horizontal friezes, but have grown together to form a unified topographic setting within which relatively small figures play their roles, we may justifiably speak of landscape.[16]

Such a development can be traced on a few very rare cylinder seals. On a sketchily cut example in the Louvre the trees and shaduf of the gardening scene, large and relatively realistic in proportion to the men, here begin to form a setting for them.[17] More daring are the seals with activities in the mountains. On one in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 7), the man seizing a mountain sheep, the trees, and the rocky pinnacles all possess the same base level. However, the circumstances that the man is only half as high as the register, and that the crowns of the larger trees and the two moufflon on top of the crags all tower above his head, effectively break up the normal frieze composition. We remain with the impression of movement in the open on several levels. This greatly lessened importance of the horizontal ground line or level supporting a frieze of approximately equal-sized figures is intimately linked with the growing dominance of the landscape elements.

Seals in Brussels and in Boston combine a number of animal and human figures. On the first a continuous wavy band outlines two peaks (Fig. 8). In the valley between them a hunter kneels, while two other human figures can be taken as silhouetted against the sides of the mountains. Though, of course, in no way intending any illusion of recession, the relative positions of the human figures and the mountain outlines do establish various planes of depth, a step away from the single plane of the normal horizontal frieze representation, and one that was taken a number of times in ancient Near Eastern art without leading to further development.[18] Moreover, there is considerable freedom in the placing of the animal figures, hurtling down the slopes or even free in the field

[15] Cf., for example, Kenneth Clark, *Landscape into Art* (London, John Murray Ltd. [1941] or Boston, Beacon Paperback [1961]). Interest and delight in individual plants and animals shines through many vivid renderings in many phases of ancient Near Eastern art. Far rarer is any mirroring of a unified landscape, while cases interpretable as expressions of mood are practically non-existent. Unique in Egypt is a relief of Ramesses II on the west wall of the Luxor temple showing a Syrian city after the passage of the Egyptian army. There are no human and animal figures, only the gate of the city wrenched askew and the chopped-down olives and vines of the surrounding orchards. (Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Vol. II, Pl. 65). The relief seems to express the sadness and desolation of war that is in the sharpest contrast to the brash, boastful confidence of the normal Egyptian war reliefs, or to the matter-of-factness of Late Assyrian representations of analogous subjects (e.g. Hall, *Babylonian and Assyrian Sculpture in the British Museum*, Pls. XL, XLIV). It is probably too far-fetched to read into one of Ashurbanipal's Elamite war reliefs an intentionally pathetic juxtaposition between the freedom, however precarious, of the wild beasts (a lioness hunts a bull amid trees) and the captivity of the Elamite prince, pinioned and led away along the ridge of hills by Assyrian soldiers (Gadd, *The Stones of Assyria*, p. 179, 34).

[16] In western art similar divides between free-field landscape compositions and horizontal friezes with landscape elements can be found. Note the striking example discussed by Kenneth Clark, a ninth century A.D. psalm illustration in the Utrecht Psalter (*Landscape into Art* (Boston, Beacon Press [1961]), Figs. 2 a,b and p. 2). Here the development goes in the inverse direction and the situation is very complex—the landscape rendering is the earlier, deriving from the Hellenistic illusionistic tradition of late antiquity and the later copy is the flat frieze. Despite this and despite the presence, strong or weak, of perspective elements in both European works and their complete absence from both the Oriental ones, we find the same contrast in landscape representation in both the European and the ancient Oriental pairs of works.

[17] Delaporte, *Musée du Louvre: Catalogue des Cylindres . . .*, Vol. II, Pl. 72, A 156. Compare this rendering with, for example, a somewhat comparable scene as that of "date harvest," where only one tree is as tall as the human figures, not to speak of being taller (Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, Pl. XXIV, *d*.).

[18] Cf. for example the grain silhouetted against the skirt of the vegetation god, (Frankfort, *Stratified Cylinder Seals from the Diyala Region*, Pl. 58, No. 611).

without support. The Boston seal shares many of these same characteristics. It is richer in vegetation and has two types of mountains, outlines like those of the Brussels seal and an imbricated crag (Fig. 9).[19] Two planes of depth are also established here: a lion overlaps the edge of the mountain, against which other animals are silhouetted. Although the huntsmen and the conical crag do rise from approximately the same level, the formers' small size as well as the spacing of many of the animals and plants without reference to any real or imaginable ground lines have produced a notably striking free-field composition. The final impression is that of a mountainous, wooded area completely encompassing the animals and harassing lions and hunters, a remarkably far-flung composition to be achieved within the tiny compass of a cylinder seal.

Fortunately, there is preserved one major work comparable, as Frankfort has pointed out, in its use of landscape, to these seals.[20] Of course, the Naram-Sin stela in some of its essential and most important characteristics as a royal work recording "for eternity . . . the power and battles of the king," cannot be compared to such modest items as cylinder seals. In a most sophisticated and monumental way, it combines in a single rendering the significance of the event with some graphic vivid specific details.[21] There is no such important subject matter or concentration of purpose on the Boston seal, yet it displays exactly those compositional features which, when used with genius, enabled the Naram-Sin stela to achieve monumentality. The vivid rendering of the mountain setting of the battle, the not-to-be withstood advance of the Akkadian army, and the culmination of power and victory in the person of the king are all expressed by a composition in which wavy diagonal lines run upward to climax in a conical pinnacle. On the Boston seal two diagonals with animals on the left are comparable to the three diagonals up which Naram-Sin's soldiers advance. On the stela, where the focus of the movement is upward, it is natural that the other slope of the mountain is omitted. The presence of several planes of recession established by the silhouetting of figures against the mountain sides is naturally more clearly seen on the stela than on the landscape seal, while, on both the large and small works, the irregular trees bring to life the mountain setting. The culminating crag of the stela is the same element which, on the Boston seal, is covered with imbrications and may be a pattern typical for the reigns of Naram-Sin and his successors (Fig. 2).[22]

Such comparisons bring out clearly that the whole organization and form of the Naram-Sin stela, though much more complicated than anything possible on seals, were yet achieved by combinations of the same elements that are also to be found in glyptic—namely plants and mountain patterns no longer confined within horizontal registers the height of the principal figures. It is hardly likely that the seal cutters, working in their limited space, were the leaders in the development of such far-flung compositions. It is already little short of miraculous that mountains, trees, and the animals and men in their interstices could be crowded into the few millimeters of surface of the Boston seal and unimaginable that such compositions were first composed in such contexts. They presumably reflect those worked out in large-scale reliefs or perhaps wall paintings.[23]

[19] Cf. Frankfort's comment that the scale pattern was omitted when figures were to be juxtaposed against the mountains (*Cylinder Seals*, p. 140, n. 1).

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

[21] Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement*, pp. 22, 163.

[22] Cf. the following not specifically dated seals: Frankfort, *Stratified Cylinder Seals from the Diyala Region*, No. 701; Delaporte, *Musée du Louvre: Catalogue des Cylindres . . .*, Pl. 64, 6.

[23] Frankfort *Cylinder Seals*, p. 141.

Concerning the existence of the latter we can only speculate in the absence of Akkadian examples, but the discovery of fragmentary wall paintings in the Early Protoliterate period (Tell Uqair) and Early Dynastic period (Nippur),[24] and again in the Old Babylonian, Kassite, and Middle Assyrian periods,[25] suggests strongly that mural painting may actually have been one of the leading crafts of Mesopotamia throughout many centuries. Perhaps Akkadian palace or temple walls may have once displayed compositions more elaborate even than that of the Naram-Sin stela.

Fortunately, we have evidence to suggest the existence of reliefs with compositions analogous to that on the Naram-Sin stela. This could, in any case, be guessed from the circumstance that, before being carried off to Elam by Shutruk-Nahhunte I, the latter had been set up in Sippar; there is no reason why that particular provincial city should have possessed a unique stela. However, among the Akkadian inscriptions copied by later scribes are several that were originally, either certainly or probably, inscribed on stelas. The importance and relevance of one of these, in particular, has been brought out by Kraus.[26] The text in question consists of five short passages which Kraus takes as captions of a relief still standing at Ur, according to the colophon, in the reign of Siniribam, tenth king of Larsa. Each passage gives the height of a mountain between various features, namely the intervals between a river to the lowermost of three walls, and between the sets of walls, as well as the total height from the ground to the top of the uppermost wall. Following these indications Kraus reconstructed diagrammatically the representation—a triple-walled fortification on a mountain with a river on one side.[27] In fact, one can easily imagine the triple fortification projected onto the mountain on the Boston seal and, in place of the conical crag, rivulets of water as on many Akkadian seals.[28] On the seal of Ibni-sharrum the lower ground line is formed by such rivulets flowing between imbricated rocks (Fig. 1), and the same combination supports two antithetical pairs of kneeling heroes separated by a tree on a sealing from Tello.[29] The circumstance that already in the beginning of the dynasty we have at least one seal in which rockwork and a stream of water are directly combined suggests strongly that as the Akkadian period progressed more elaborate combinations of the same elements could easily have been developed. The other elements called for by Kraus's captions—the fortification walls—are as yet not exemplified on known Akkadian works, but at least the rare renderings of ziggurats, carrying on an Early Dynastic III theme, prove architecture not completely absent from the iconography of the period.[30] However, it seems reasonable to assume that, even though the preserved captions refer only to the architecture, it was not represented for its own sake but as part of a war scene, perhaps a siege. Kraus is, indeed, justified in concluding that it was well within the scope of a

[24] *JNES*, Vol. II (1943), Pls. X–XII. *Archaeology*, XV (1962), 79.

[25] Parrot, *Palais de Mari*, Vol. II: *Les peintures*. *Iraq*, Vol. VIII (1946), Pls. 11–14 (Dur Kurigalzu). Andrae, *Farbige Keramik aus Assur und ihre Vorstufen in altassyrischen Wandmalereien* (Kar Tukulti-Ninurta).

[26] "Ein altakkadisches Festungsbild," *Iraq*, X (1948), 81–92.

[27] Two features demanded by the captions have an unusual appearance in Kraus' reconstructed diagram, namely the diagonal line of one wall and the disparity in level of the water and ground lines on the right and left respectively of the mountain.

[28] Legrain, *Ur Excavations*, Vol. X: *Seal Cylinders*, No. 186.

[29] Delaporte, *Musée du Louvre: Catalogues des cylindres* . . . Vol. I, Pl. VII, 2 (T. 34).

[30] Cf. Amiet, *GMA*, Pls. 108–110. Apparently the earliest representation of many-walled cities yet known from Mesopotamia is the fragmentary Middle Assyrian seal impression on an Assur tablet (Weber, *Altorientalische Siegelbilder*, No. 531). There are also Middle Assyrian sealings showing temples with towers (Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, p. 68, Fig. 24, *A*, *B*).

school that could produce the Naram-Sin stela to represent also a fortification in its landscape setting.

The captions of the fortification relief, though copied on the same tablet as an inscription of Naram-Sin, are not themselves dated to any particular point within the Akkadian period.[31] However, the Naram-Sin stela itself and the dated seals with conical crags point to the later Akkadian period as the time when elaborate landscapes were created. Also pertinent is the contrast between the strict register composition of Sargon's stela and related pieces at the beginning of the dynasty and the free-field composition of Naram-Sin's stela.[32] Developments in landscape came after Akkadian craftsmen had thoroughly assimilated and gone on to transform the inheritance from Early Dynastic art which is still so prevalent in the iconography and composition of early Akkadian works.

Thus, evidence from a variety of sources indicates that one of the greatest achievements of Akkadian art was the exploration of landscape renderings to an extent never done before. To be sure, the developments were on several levels, not all unparalleled in earlier work. Simplest was the use as accessories of individual landscape elements, or sometimes plant and mountain combined. Already in the Protoliterate, palms, irregularly branching deciduous trees, reeds, shrubs or herbaceous clumps, and grain as well as schematic plants occur. Plant accessories are of some importance in the final phase of Early Dynastic, but tend to be schematized or small. In sharp contrast, in Akkadian work they are used with great frequency and realism, the habit and shapes of the plants being usually sharply distinguished, in this reminiscent of the Protoliterate and symptomatic of the renewed interest in features of the natural world, going beyond those of immediate economic importance.

On a more complicated level is the combination of individual elements in such a way as to suggest a landscape setting surrounding the main figures of the composition, this being a characteristic common to all three of the great originative periods of Mesopotamian art. However, despite some striking examples, there seems to have been no coherent tendency in this direction in the formative period of Sumerian art.[33] Later, in Early Dynastic III there are two vignettes, subsidiary elements, of figures on rocks

[31] *Iraq*, X, 81 f.

[32] Cf. Strommenger, *Fünf Jahrtausende Mesopotamien*, Pls. 114, 115 vs. 122.

[33] Sealings from Warka have a very simple, yet subtle, arrangement of boars silhouetted against reeds, which suggest the animals seen in their natural setting. (Amiet, *GMA*, Nos. 187, 188). Somewhat similar in effect are the four pinnate stalks and wavy water-lines which give the ibex and attacking lion of a seal in Brussels (*ibid.*, No. 415) a more elaborate setting than the bending grain stalk (*ibid.*, No. 412) or even the deciduous tree (*ibid.*, No. 416) of analogous groups. These are quite different from the designs in which plants or mountains are arranged abstractly in zigzag or diagonal alternation with animals (*ibid.*, Nos. 406, 192).

From the later, Jemdet Nasr, style of the Protoliterate period comes a remarkable seal showing a rippling water line on top of which an animal kneels to drink and a triangular rocky hill supports a branching tree (Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, Pl. VI, *d*). A similarly vivid outdoor atmosphere is a symmetrically composed seal from Susa on which conifers and flowering stems rooted in rocky peaks form the vertical axes (*ibid.*, IV, *j*. = Amiet, *GMA*, No. 537). Also of the Jemdet Nasr style is a remarkable but very crude seal in Berlin said to be from Warka (Moortgat, *Vorderasiatische Rollsiegel*, No. 1; cf. p. 85). Two sinuous lines bordered on either side by large drill holes provide a "water and rock" base strip for the hunters attacking a goat near an outcrop with a scrawny tree. Despite the ambitiousness of the subject, the seal's composition does not go beyond a simple horizontal frieze and it does not possess the immediacy of some of the Uruk style seals.

This Berlin seal is not the earliest known representation that can be considered as primitive landscape, as Professor Speiser kindly recalled to my attention at the American Oriental Society meeting of April 1962 in Cambridge, Massachussetts. A jar of the late Ubaid period at Tepe Gawra has a panel that apparently shows a hunter and his prey in a river valley bordered with mountains. Arthur J. Tobler, *Excavations at Tepe Gawra*, Vol. II, pp. 150 f.; Pls. LXXVIII, *a*, *b*; LXXXIX, 309 (Gawra XII).

piping beneath branches, one of them particularly charming, but, in contrast to the Akkadian examples, these seem to be unique, without relations or issue.[34] Only in the other great originative period of the Mesopotamian tradition, in Middle Assyrian times, are the landscape accessories so balanced with the main figures and the background space of the seals as again to suggest open country. But more thorough-going than the Middle Assyrian examples are the Akkadian ones such as Figs. 3 and 4. Akkadian genius, in summing up the essence of mountain landscape, its trees, and the rushing streams supporting the vegetation, so as to give both the nexus of supporting forces overlaid with natural impression, was incomparable. Akkadian deep feeling for nature was the basis for many later representations of mountain and vegetation gods.

On the highest level is the supreme achievement of Akkadian artists in respect of landscape, one in which they seem to be without precursors. The tyranny of horizontal registers in which no element could be taller than the principal figures of the composition was shattered by the increased size and importance of the landscape element. The results were free-field compositions representing large sweeps of terrain. There is every indication that it was the Akkadians who depicted such landscapes for the first time in Mesopotamia, developing them to a degree greater than was ever attained in Egypt,[35] and not surpassed in Asia until Late Assyrian artists, particularly those of Sennacherib, intensively explored the possibilities of landscape renderings. In the interval between it is hard to be certain of the extent, if at all, to which the Akkadian landscape tradition was carried on. Perhaps it did not die out completely. Year dates 13 and 14 of Ammizaduga, the next to the last king of the First Dynasty of Babylon, record that, "A splendid royal representation of mountains and numerous rivers he brought into the high house Enamhe as ornament," and, "Great altars with [representations] of mountains and rivers he brought into Enamtila."[36] Later, certain Kassite seals hint that compositions involving several, coherently arranged, landscape elements, may have been characteristic for the Kassite style.[37] However, whatever discoveries to come may still have in store for us, they are unlikely to prove that landscapes were ever a common feature in ancient Near Eastern art or to dislodge Akkadian artists from their position as innovators in this branch of art.

[34] Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, Pl. XIII, *h*; Amiet, *GMA*, No. 1310.

[35] Of course, Ramesses II's Kadesh reliefs (Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Vol. II, Pls. 16–25, 81–89, 92–106, 169–178) are outstanding indications of terrain, but, being without any elements of visual appearance, such as the reed-lined bank of the watercourse in the bull hunt of Ramesses III (Wolf, *Die Kunst Aegyptens*, p. 588, Fig. 590), they remain map-like diagrams rather than landscape representations.

[36] *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, II, 190, Nos. 261, 262. I am indebted to Professor Landsberger for calling these to my attention.

[37] Cf. *AfO*, XVIII (1964) 269, Fig. 14; *London Times*, Friday, July 17, 1964, p. 13. Such seals with their emphasis on personified water-mountain deities supporting forests are strikingly reminiscent of the Mari Akkadian seal, our Fig. 4.

Fig. 1.—Seal of Ibni-sharrum, Servant of Shargalisharri (De Clercq Coll.; Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, Pl. XVII, *c*). Warburg Institute Photograph.

Fig. 2.—Seal of Lugal-ushumgal, Servant of Shargalisharri (Delaporte, Musée du Louvre: *Catalogue des cylindres*, II, 12).

Fig. 3—British Museum No. 89115. Photograph Courtesy of the British Museum

FIG. 4.—SEAL FROM MARI (AFTER PARROT, *Sumer*, p. 189, Fig. 228)

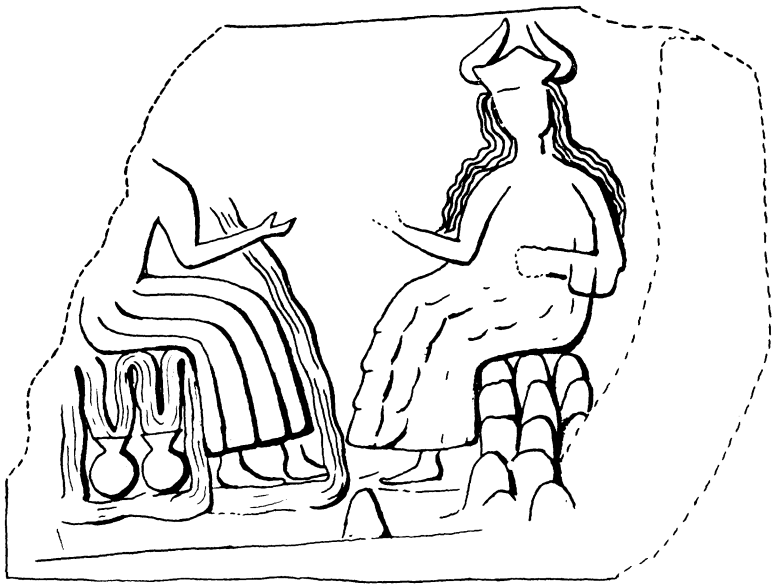

FIG. 5.—SEALING FROM UR (LEGRAIN, *Ur Excavations*. VOL. X: *Seal Cylinders*, NO. 398). DRAWING BY MRS. C. BRANDEL.

FIG. 6.—SEAL OF URDUN (DELAPORTE, *op. cit.*, p. 13)

Fig. 7.—Metropolitan Museum of Art No. 41.160.192. Photograph Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Bequest of W. Gedney Beatty, 1941.

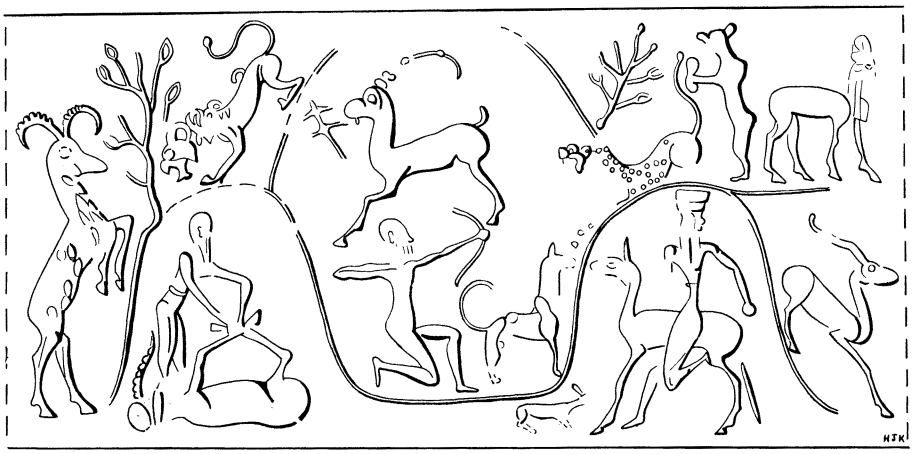

Fig. 8.—Seal in Brussels, No. 452 (After Frankfort, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXIV, *a*)

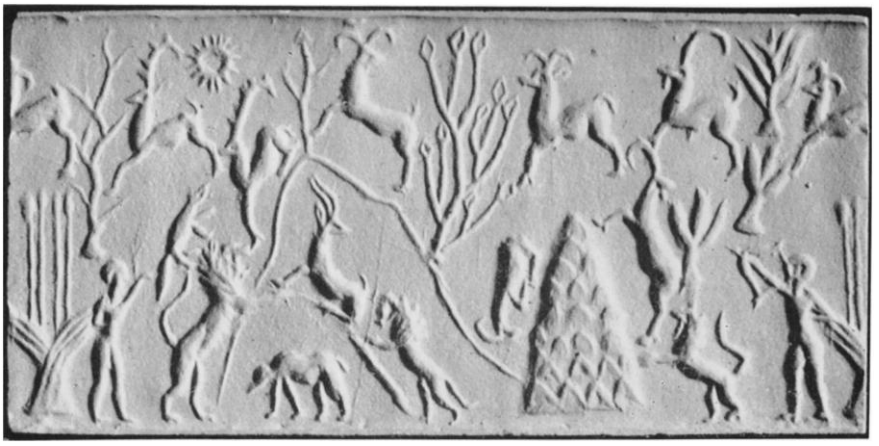

Fig. 9.—Boston Museum of Fine Arts No. 34.194. Photograph Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts.