

Finch & C^o



ANCIENT NEAR EAST IRON AGE BRONZE MODEL OF A BULL OR AUROCH

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LITERATURE

STRETCHING FROM MESOPOTAMIA, ANCIENT EGYPT AND IRAN TO ANATOLIA, THE ARMENIAN HIGHLANDS AND THE LEVANT, THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE CRADLES OF CIVILISATION. IN THIS VAST AREA WAS INVENTED THE PRACTICE OF INTENSIVE YEAR ROUND AGRICULTURE WHICH LED TO THE RISE OF THE FIRST DENSE URBAN SETTLEMENTS. MANY OF THE INSTITUTIONS THAT WE KNOW TODAY WERE DEVELOPED, SUCH AS CENTRALISED GOVERNMENT, ORGANISED RELIGION AND WARFARE, AND THE FIRST SYSTEM OF WRITING, ALPHABET AND CURRENCY. EARLY ADVANCES WERE MADE IN THE FIELDS OF ASTRONOMY AND MATHEMATICS, CODES OF LAW WERE DRAWN UP, AND THE WHEEL WAS INVENTED.

MANY ANIMALS INCLUDING DOGS, CATS, SHEEP, GOATS, DONKEYS AND PIGS WERE FIRST DOMESTICATED IN THE NEAR EAST. AMULETS HAVE BEEN FOUND WITH IMAGES OF DOMESTIC ANIMALS THAT DEMONSTRATE THEY WERE THOUGHT TO HAVE PROTECTIVE FUNCTIONS AS WELL AS BEING USED TO EXPRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF FERTILITY AND FECUNDITY IN THE NATURAL WORLD. THE IMPRESSIVE LARGE AUROCHS, HUMPED BULLS, THAT SURVIVED INTO THE IRON AGE IN ANATOLIA AND THE NEAR EAST WERE WORSHIPPED AS SACRED ANIMALS. FROM EARLY TIMES THE BULL WAS A HOLY ANIMAL LINKED TO THE GOD OF MAGIC AND INCANTATION. RITUAL OBSERVANCE INVOLVED SACRIFICE, A CEREMONIAL HUNT OR THE USE OF SACRED OBJECTS, CAREFULLY CRAFTED TO FUNCTION AS TEMPLE EQUIPMENT OR OFFERINGS. ANIMALS WERE LINKED TO THE GODS WHOSE QUALITIES THEY SHARED: IN MESOPOTAMIA THE STORM GOD ADAD WAS LINKED TO THE BULL, PARTLY BECAUSE OF THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE RUMBLE OF THUNDER AND THE ROAR OF A VIGOROUS MIGHTY BULL.

PROVENANCE

EX PRIVATE CAMBRIDGE COLLECTION OF THE JONES FAMILY

ACQUIRED 1971