

'Scarlet Ware' Jar **The British Museum**

From Khafajeh, eastern Iraq
Early Dynastic II period, about 2700-2500 BC

Chariots and Banquets



The jar is decorated in red and black paint with chariot and banquet scenes and attendant musicians (one plays a bull-headed lyre, similar to the 'Queen's Lyre' from Ur) It is the earliest object so far known to combine these two recurring themes in Sumerian art.

It is a type of pottery known as 'Scarlet Ware', typical of sites along the River Diyala. The Diyala is a major tributary of the River Tigris and forms one of the most important trade routes linking southern Mesopotamia with the Iranian plateau.

The jar comes from Khafajeh, one of several sites in the region excavated by a team from the University of Chicago in the 1930s. It was purchased from a dealer in Baghdad, and was reputedly found by illicit diggers at Khafajeh before the Chicago excavations had begun. It is possible that the jar came from near a temple building which may have been dedicated to Sin, the moon god.

The discoveries the excavators made at Khafajeh allowed one of them, Henri Frankfort, to divide much of the third millennium BC into three periods - Early Dynastic I, II and III - based on the stylistic developments evident in cylinder seals, sculpture, architecture and ceramics. Scarlet Ware is typical of Early Dynastic I. This pot is a late example and, based on comparisons with designs on cylinder seals, it probably dates to Early Dynastic II.

Source URL: http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/me/s/scarlet_ware_jar.aspx
Saylor URL: <http://www.saylor.org/courses/arth201>

P.P. Delougaz, *Pottery from the Diyala region* (University of Chicago, 1952)

D. Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern art* (London, The British Museum Press, 1995)

Source URL: http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/me/s/scarlet_ware_jar.aspx
Saylor URL: <http://www.saylor.org/courses/arth201>