completely carved in the round and is probably the best and the oldest piece in the collection. The Sabean art is reminiscent of the Sumerian sculpture of the lower Euphrates—as is well illustrated by the very interesting head shown in Plate IX. The statuettes are always symbols, never real portraits; they, together with the other sculptures and the inscriptions on them, present an important addition to our knowledge of Sabean art and history.

A Collection from Tell Billa and Tepe Gawra

Some of the outstanding specimens which have been obtained by the expedition to Tell Billa and Tepe Gawra, in Mesopotamia, are now on display in the gallery to the left of the center hall on the upper floor. Pottery, clay figurines, and copper and bronze objects of various periods form a representative collection and evince the high degree of culture that was attained by the different peoples who successively inhabited these sites.

Of the objects on exhibition, few have greater historical significance than the painted incense burner and the model shrine from Tell Billa, the discovery of which was reported in the Bulletin for December, 1931. Both belong to the same period, about 1500 B.C., having been recovered from the stratum assigned to the Hurrians, who were the early inhabitants of the region, preceding the Assyrians. The incense burner is especially important in that its decoration links up with the art of western Syria and of the Aegean basin, proving that the Hurrians formed a cultural bridge between Asia and Europe. As for the shrine, the almost intact condition in which it was recovered enables us to gain valuable insight into the architectural conventions of the period, while of added interest are the incised decorations on the individual bricks. The relative positions of the two objects when found were especially noteworthy: the censer was discovered resting on top of the shrine, an arrangement undoubtedly of religious significance.
Two other objects are of outstanding importance. One brings us down to the Persian period of Tell Billa: that is, the second half of the first millennium B.C. It represents an exquisitely carved miniature heifer; the material is red and blue hematite and the object is ornamented with gold trappings. In spite of the unusual hardness of the material and the appealingly small size of the animal, no detail of physical nature or of expression has been overlooked. More than three thousand years older is an ivory plaque from Tepe Gawra. On a well-framed field there are two juxtaposed, but reversed, groups, each consisting of an ibex attacked by a rapacious bird; the ibex turns its head pathetically to its tormentor. In this little plaque of nearly six thousand years ago we have the prototype of one of the most important motives in animal art which influenced the artists of two continents for thousands of years.

Peruvian Pottery Whistles

Among the most interesting objects secured by the late Dr. William C. Farabee on his last trip to Peru (see "Dr. Farabee's Last Journey," Museum Journal, Volume XVII, 2) are four small figurine whistles of painted pottery now on display in the central hall on the lower floor of the Museum. Although obtained in 1923, these whistles have not previously been published. Their proveniences are not known, owing to Dr. Farabee's fatal illness which resulted from his trip, but the polychrome decoration identifies them incontestably as belonging to the Nazca culture. Probably they were excavated from an ancient grave in the Nazca Valley by treasure-hunters from whose hands they passed eventually into Dr. Farabee's. Historically, nothing is known of the early inhabitants of this valley, though it is generally believed that they were among the earliest highly civilized peoples of Peru and probably flourished in the first five centuries of the Christian era.