

Shelf 1: Introduction

Ancient Near Eastern societies underwent great changes from the Bronze Age through the Iron Age to the Classic Age. Even as today's problems are often identified as too much sex and violence in the media, these characteristics may well have been a perpetual part of the past. This exhibit contains artifacts that show how gender and sexuality were represented in cult images and private objects. Weapons of various types indicate the development of warfare over these centuries. The Holy Land was not only lived in – and loved in – but was often fought in. Its strategic location between Africa and Asia attracted armies from competing empires, and its Iron Age inhabitants, the Hebrews, would revolt against efforts to make them conform to the polytheism of their conquerors.