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Hittite Limestone Stele with a God



An ancient Hittite limestone stele with an enthroned god, possibly Tarhunna, in profile pictured in a horned miter and belted robe with his feet on a rest. In one hand, he holds an axe above his shoulder while he sips from a long straw feeding into a beer vessel. A bird perches on the straw, while a dog stands behind the throne, looking onto the scene, florettes in lower right and left corners, with traces of red pigment throughout.

Anatolia.
Ca. 1800 - 1200 BC.
Height: 12 1/4 in. (31.1 cm).

Brewing and drinking beer was an essential part of Hittite life and religion. Often times, a group of people, as many as eight, could sit around a large vessel of beer during rituals such as funerals of religious feasts. The participants would use a long straw, over a meter long, to sip the beer from their seats around the communal vessel. This straw would also help filter out some of the particulate that was leftover from brewing the beer. Although they were most commonly made from reeds, there are several examples of decorated silver and gold straws.

Formerly in a Japanese private collection; previously Malter Auction, December, 1988, lot 203.

inventory number: 8682

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