

Cats & Archaeology

Iraq's Lion Antiquities by GREG BALAGIAN

The Addition of Iraq's South Marshes and Antiquities of Southern Iraq to the UNESCO's World Heritage List is the title of a set issued by Iraq on December 1, 2016. Two stamps and the souvenir sheet display images of lions.

The 250f (Scott 2010) stamp depicts the limestone bas-relief sculpture of the *Hero Overpowering a Lion*, presently in the Louvre Museum in Paris.

This colossal sculpture, over 16 feet high, is often identified with the hero Gilgamesh, the legendary and historical

king of Uruk thought to be omnipotent as he chokes the lion. "The lion is lifting its head and baring its teeth. Its muzzle is stylized with a series of radiating folds."*

Protector of the Sumerian temple of the powerful god Ea, the second lion statue is on the 500d stamp (Scott 2011). Dating from the 5th or 6th millennium BCE, the lion is carved in black basalt (volcanic rock), with a partially open mouth. The statue is currently in the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad.

The temple was located in the city of Eridu, considered by some historians to be the oldest city in the world.

Both lion statues are pictured on the souvenir sheet (Scott 2014).🐾

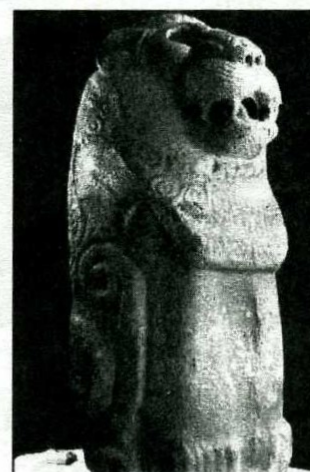
*Beyer, Dominique. *The Hero Overpowering a Lion*. Dept. of Near Eastern Antiquities: Mesopotamia, louvre.fr.



Iraq 2010 (2016)



Iraq 2011 (2016)



Lion sculptures are on two stamps and a souvenir sheet in Iraq's set of UNESCO World Heritage stamps (Scott 2010-2014). *Hero Overpowering a Lion* is on the 250f stamp. The second lion is the protector of the temple of the god Ea, on the 500d stamp (Scott 2011). *The Mew Listing is on page 78.*