Throughout the millennia, overspill from the Tigris and Euphrates has created vast networks of permanent marsh, 6,000 or more square miles in southern Iraq. To understand the people of this region, one must begin with the peculiarities of the physical geography of the Mesopotamian delta. The population dwelling within this region was of mixed and obscure origins. These peoples never fully coalesced, but rather were, in great part, split into numerous separate and independent tribal fragments, while the remoteness of their abodes placed them beyond the reach of government. Geography has defined the parameters within which social organization and economic enterprise have had to conform. The ingenuity of how the ancients used these resources in their manufacturing, preserved in their artifacts, is fascinating. It is in these aspects that the various elements in the marsh population coalesced most. Yet differences in attitude persisted and were reflected in occupational pursuits and manner of use.