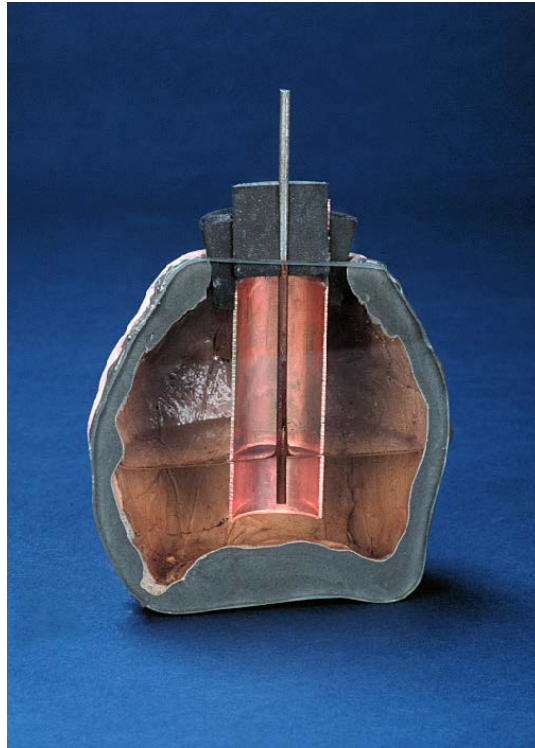
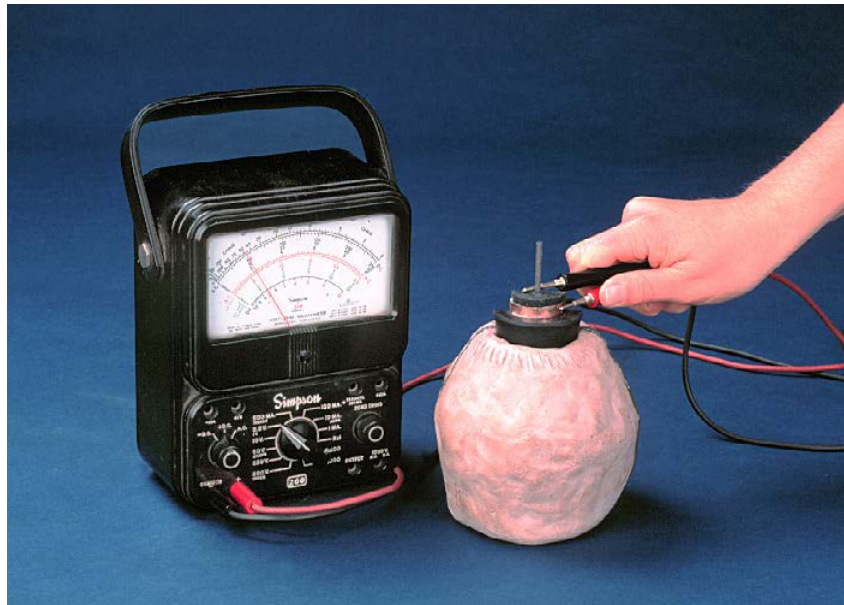


Battery, Baghdad, 250 BCE

by Dennielle Downs, '00 and Ava Meyerhoff, '99



The Baghdad Battery is believed to be about 2000 years old (from the Parthian period, roughly 250 BCE to CE 250). The jar was found in Khujut Rabu just outside Baghdad and is composed of a clay jar with a stopper made of asphalt. Sticking through the asphalt is an iron rod surrounded by a copper cylinder. When filled with vinegar - or any other electrolytic solution - the jar produces about 1.1 volts.



There is no written record as to the exact function of the jar, but the best guess is that it was a type of battery. Scientists believe the batteries (if that is their correct function) were used to electroplate items such as putting a layer of one metal (gold) onto the surface of another (silver), a method still practiced in Iraq today.

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