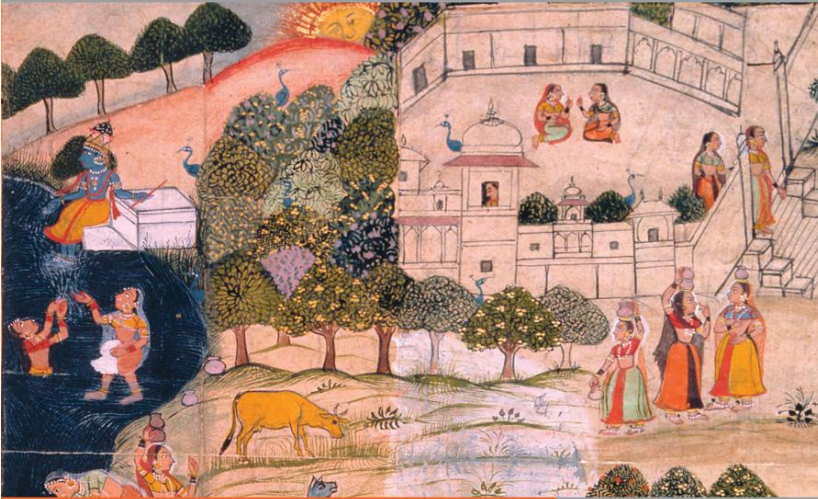


PHILIP J. ADLER / RANDALL L. POWELS

WORLD CIVILIZATIONS



Seventh Edition

Chapter 2 Mesopotamia

c. 15,000 – 10,000 B.C.E.	End of the last Ice Age
c. 10,000 B.C.E.	First evidence of agriculture in the Levantine Corridor
c. 5000 B.C.E.	Sumerians arrive in Mesopotamia
c. 3500 B.C.E.	Cuneiform writing
c. 3000 B.C.E.	Sumerian city-states develop
c. 2300 B.C.E.	Sargon of Akkad
1700s B.C.E.	Hammurabi/Oldest surviving law code
c. 1500 B.C.E.	Hittites conquer Mesopotamia
c. 900 B.C.E.	Rise of Assyria
539 B.C.E.	Conquest by Persia



Neolithic Southwest Asia

Global Warming – 15,000 BCE

- Grasslands replaced by oak and pistachio forests
- Natufians, stalked antelope, gazelle and harvested wild nuts and grasses
- Dryas Event led to first farming settlements
 - Cooler, drier climate in Europe, SW Asia
 - Abundant water, food disappeared
 - Small groups congregated together
 - There, scarcity compelled birth of agriculture



Neolithic Southwest Asia

- Focus of events-Levant Corridor
 - By 8000BCE, cereal agriculture was widespread
 - Domestication of livestock followed
 - Led to an abundance in supply
 - Results in growth in populations
 - People began to congregate in towns and cities
 - Earliest recorded civilizations



Sumerian Civilization

Sumerians in lower Mesopotamia 5000 BCE

First:

- large cities
 - City State: Urban center + agricultural land that supports it.
 - Priestly dominated
 - Emergence of lugal or kingship
- sophisticated system of writing (cuneiform)
- monumental buildings
- use of the wheel for transportation
 - Chariots
- irrigation system using gravity
- use of plow
- Use of bronze
- Short and long distance trade

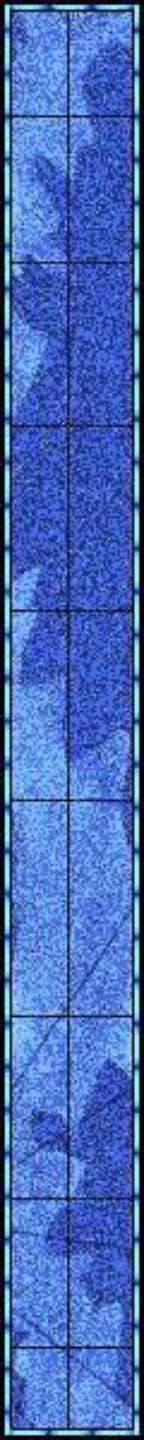




Mesopotamia

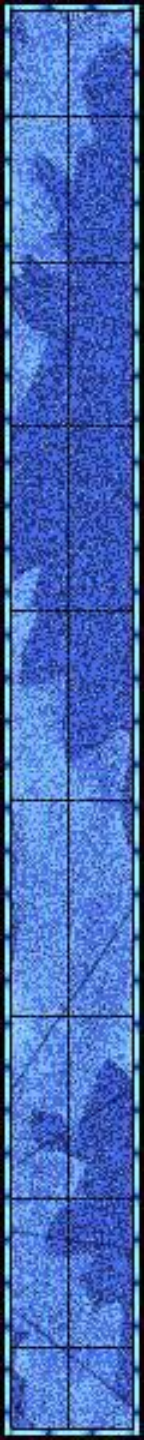
- Under the Sumerians:
 - Technological and cultural advances
 - Strife, disunion, unceasing wars, trade and water disputes
 - Constant struggle for mastery over resources
- Effective, unified rule over Mesopotamia occurs by 2300 BCE with Sargon the Great
 - Semitic Origins
 - Capital at Akkad, near modern-day Baghdad
 - Spread Sumerian culture far and wide across the Fertile Crescent





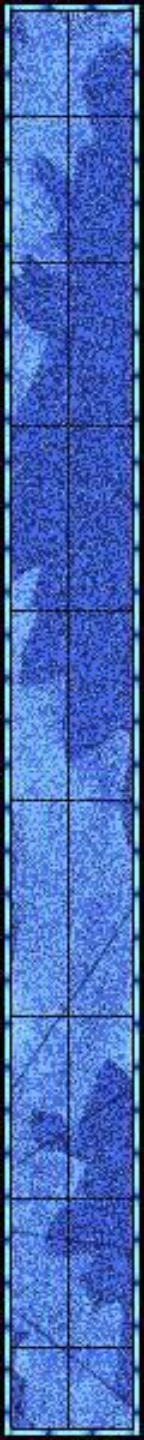
Earning a Living

- Livelihood came from land
 - directly (farmers, herders)
 - indirectly (carters, wine pressers, millers)
 - Trade in foodstuffs – grain – but forced to import other commodities
- Some occupations required education, formal training and apprenticeships:
 - Scribes, priesthood, metalworking
 - shopkeepers, clerks, laborers, clothing and textiles
- Obtaining water was a crucial task
 - Performed by women, children



Religion and the Afterlife

- Polytheism – belief in many gods
- Nature gods: Innana (love and fertility) and Enki (water-god)
- Human-like
- Ziggurats – stepped pyramids served as temple complexes
 - Most famous in Babylon (Biblical Tower of Babel)
- Like nature, Mesopotamian gods frequently cruel, unpredictable
 - Reflected unpredictability of nature
 - Men, women viewed as slaves of god-creators
 - priests appease the gods to avoid natural catastrophes
- No trace of ethics
- No clear sense of afterlife, immortality



Religion and the Afterlife

Epic of Gilgamesh – creation myth

- First epic poem in world literature
- A king's desire for the secret of immortal life
- Gods jealous of king's power defeat him
- Many major western “myths” originated in Mesopotamian religion, literature
 - Example: The flood myth and Noah's ark





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Chronology and Mathematics

Chronology

- Time - cyclic nature of seasonal change
- Calendar –
 - Lunar months between full moons, and
 - A solar calendar almost as accurate as our own

Mathematics - influential in western science

- Based on units of 60 (60 seconds and 60 minutes)
- Basic geometry and trigonometry (360°circle)

The Evolution of Writing

- Modern forms of speech from 80,000 BCE?
- Written Communication from 4th millennium
- Need for good records
 - Seasonal changes and calendars
 - Taxation
 - Contracts
- Symbols derived from pictures (**pictography**)
- Conventional signs for abstractions and tenses followed
- **In Mesopotamia:**
 - **Cuneiform** - script in wedge-shaped characters
 - Basic script in the Near East until about 1000 BCE
 - Phoenitic languages appear later

© Accounts Table with cuneiform script, c. 2400 BC (terracotta), Mesopotamian. Louvre, Paris, France/The Bridgeman Art Library International





Law

Hammurabi Code, 1700 BCE

- Oldest surviving law code
- Derived from earlier, lost works
- Two distinct principles –
 - Punishment depends on social rank
 - “An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth”
- Other aspects –
 - Government should act as impartial referee
 - Dealt with social, family problems

Government and Social Structure

- Two types
 - Theocracy (priestly dominated) early city-states
 - Kingdom-empires beginning with Sargon the Great
- Two different structures
 - City, with king as head and class distinctions
 - Villages more egalitarian
- Three classes of Mesopotamian civilization
 - Priests and noble landlords
 - Freeman (majority)
 - Performed bulk of work, trading
 - Protected by Hammurabi's Law Code
 - Slaves
 - Often possessed considerable skills and some responsibilities
 - No Political Rights
 - Slave status resulted from wars or from debts

HAMMURABI'S EMPIRE





Status of Women

Change in status over time

- Status of women declines due to:
 - Growing militarization
 - Use of the heavy plow leads to smaller role for women in agriculture
 - Growth of long distance trade
 - Changes become irreversible

Household

- Marriages arranged
- Dowries and bride money stipulated in contracts
- Adultery – defined by martial status of the woman
 - Put parentage of children in question
 - Punishment? Death for wife and lover

Trade and an Expansion of Scale

- Sumerians extended domain into Semite-language regions by 3000 BCE
- Semitic-speaking peoples such as the Akkadians, Babylonians, Assyrians - united Mesopotamia and expanded it
- Trade stretched from the Indus Valley to Nile Valley and eastern Mediterranean
 - Exported grain
 - Imported obsidian, wood and later copper
- Sumerian culture followed with trade

Successors to Sumeria

- Successors
 - Amorites, or Old Babylonians (Semitic empire established under leadership of Hammurabi in 1700s BCE)
 - Hittites (Indo-Europeans, from modern-day Turkey)
 - First to smelt iron
 - Took over river plains by 1500 BCE
 - Skilled administrators of first multi-ethnic state
 - Conquered by invaders by 1200 BCE
 - Assyrians: Rose to power by 900 BCE
 - Center at Nineveh
 - Hebrews
 - Tanakh (“Old Testament”)
 - Originated in Mesopotamia
 - Settled in Canaan (Palestine)
 - Chaldees or New Babylonians
 - Ruled until Persian Empire conquered them, 500s BCE



Decline of Mesopotamia

- Ceased to be important after Persian conquest
 - Did not adopt ideas, cultural models of Sumeria
- Growing Environmental degradation
 - Lands could no longer supply large harvests
 - Growing salt deposits from evaporation in canals, ditches
 - City-states gradually abandoned
- Slowly receded into background until rise of Islam in region during 800s CE