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the dynastic period begins c. 2500 BCE and was associated with a shift from the temple establishment headed by a priest (Enki) to a male figure when it was a temple for a goddess, or a female figure when headed by a male god (Enlil) towards a more secular, secular (Lu = man, great and includes such legendary figures as Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Epic of Gilgamesh). The Sumerian language was first attested in proper names of the kings of Kish. c. 2800 BCE [57] preserved in later king lists. There are texts written entirely in Old Akkadian dating from c. 2500 BCE. Use of Old Akkadian was at its peak during the rule of Sargon the Great (c. 2333–2279 BCE), but even then most administrative tablets continued to be written in Sumerian, the language used by the scribes. Gelb and Westenholz differentiate three stages of Old Akkadian: that of the pre-Sargonic era, that of the Akkadian empire, and that of the Ur III period that followed it.[58] Akkadian and Sumerian coexisted as vernacular languages for about one thousand years, but by around 1800 BCE, Sumerian was becoming more of a literary language familiar mainly only to scholars and scribes. Thorkild Jacobsen has argued that there is little break in historical continuity between the pre- and post-Sargonic periods, and that too much emphasis has been placed on the perception of a "Semitic vs. Sumerian" conflict.[59] It is certain that Akkadian was also briefly imposed on neighboring parts of Elam that were previously conquered, by Sargon. Main article: Gutian dynasty of Sumer c. 2193–2119 BC (middle chronology) Gudea of Lagash, the Sumerian ruler who was famous for his numerous portrait sculptures that have been recovered. A portrait of Ur-Ningirsu, son of Gudea, c. 2100 BC. Louvre Museum. Main article: Lagash c. 2200–2110 BC (middle chronology) Following the downfall of the Akkadian Empire at the hands of Gutians, another native Sumerian ruler, Gudea of Lagash, rose to local prominence and continued the practices of the Sargonic kings' claims to divinity. The previous Lagash dynasty, Gudea and his descendants also promoted artistic development and left a large number of archaeological artifacts. Main article: Third Dynasty of Ur Later, the Third Dynasty of Ur under Ur-Nammu and Shulgi (c. 2112–2004 BC, middle chronology), whose power extended as far as southern Assyria, has been erroneously called a "Sumerian renaissance" in the past.[59] Already, the region was becoming more Semitic than Sumerian, and the language was being replaced by Akkadian. The Sumerian language was still used in the south of Mesopotamia, but it was being replaced by Akkadian in the north. The Sumerian language continued as a sacerdotal language taught in schools in Babylonia and Assyria, much as Latin was used in the Medieval period, for as long as cuneiform was used. This period is generally taken to coincide with a major shift in population from southern Mesopotamia toward the north. Ecologically, the agricultural productivity of the Sumerian lands was being compromised as a result of rising salinity. Soil salinity in this region had been long recognized as a major problem.[60] Poorly drained irrigated soils, in an arid climate with high levels of evaporation, led to the buildup of dissolved salts in the soil, eventually reducing agricultural yields severely.[61] During the Akkadian and Ur III phases, there was a shift from the cultivation of wheat to the more salt-tolerant barley, but this was insufficient, and during the period from 2100 BC to 1700 BC, it is estimated that the population in this area declined by nearly three-fifths.[61] This greatly upset the balance of power within the region, weakening the areas where Sumerian was spoken, and comparatively strengthening those where Akkadian was the major language. Henceforth, Sumerian remained only a literary and liturgical language, similar to the position occupied by Latin in medieval Europe. Following an Elamite invasion [61] and sack of Ur during the rule of Ibbi-Sin (c. 2028–2004 BC), [citation needed] Sumer came under Amorite rule (taken to introduce the Middle Bronze Age). The independent Amorite states of the 20th to 18th centuries are summarized as the "Dynasty of Isin" in the Sumerian king list, ending with the rise of Babylonia under Hammurabi c. 1800 BC. Later rulers who were not Sumerians continued to use the language. The Sumerian language was still used in the south of Mesopotamia, but it was being replaced by Akkadian in the north. The Sumerian language continued as a sacerdotal language taught in schools in Babylonia and Assyria, much as Latin was used in the Medieval period, for as long as cuneiform was used. This period is generally taken to coincide with a major shift in population from southern Mesopotamia toward the north. Ecologically, the agricultural productivity of the Sumerian lands was being compromised as a result of rising salinity. 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