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Lower Mesopotamia is located the modern country of Iraq, while Upper Mesopotamia is in Syria and Turkey. Mesopotamia is considered the cradle, or beginning, of civilization. Did Mesopotamia have different cultures? The Cradle of Civilization However,
Mesopotamia had many different cultures and peoples. Even so, Mesopotamia is known as the "cradle of civilization." That is mostly because of two things that happened in the Mesopotamia? Its history is marked by many important inventions
that changed the world, including the concept of time, math, the wheel, sailboats, maps and writing. Mesopotamia? Sumer had a highly organized agricultural system.
People lived in the city and left worked in the fields outside the city during the day. The cities themselves were surronded by wall. They had strong defense towers. Where is Sumeria today? Mesopotamia, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, in the area that
later became Babylonia and is now southern Iraq, from around Baghdad to the Persian Gulf. What was one important feature of the Sumerians made to civilization was their many inventions. They invented the first form of writing, a number system, the first wheeled vehicles, sun-
dried bricks, and irrigation for farming. All of these things were important for the development of human civilization. What cultures like the Sumerians, Assyrians, Akkadians, and Babylonians. Learning about this time period can be a little confusing because these cultures
interacted with and ruled over each other over the course of several thousand years. How was Mesopotamia are considered civilizations because their people: had writing, had settled communities in the form of villages, planted their own food, had domesticated animals, and had different orders of workers. Their
surplus food allowed others to specialize in new duties. Some made tools. What were the products that the Mesopotamians most probably traded? By the time of the Assyrian Empire, Mesopotamia was trading exporting grains, cooking oil, pottery, leather goods, baskets, textiles and jewelry and importing Egyptian gold, Indian ivory and pearls, Anatolian
silver, Arabian copper and Persian tin. Trade was always vital to resource-poor Mesopotamia. How did life in Sumer was very different from living in a small farming village because the city's status as a center for trade meant many people coming and going, whereas smaller
communities held a constant population of farmers. The notions of government were also much more complex in Sumer than in a village. What was the climate like in ancient Mesopotamia? Mesopotamia? Mesopotamia at first glance does not look like an ideal place for a civilization to flourish. It is hot and very dry. There is very little rainfall in Lower Mesopotamia.
However, snow, melting in the mountains at the source of these two rivers, created an annual flooding. When did the Sumerians migrate to Mesopotamia, they created a great civilization. Beginning around 5,500 years ago, the Sumerians built cities along the rivers in Lower
Mesopotamia, specialized, cooperated, and made many advances in technology. What kind of holidays did people in Mesopotamia have? Some were similar to our Thanksgiving. Others were a bit more esoteric by modern standards, like a festival devoted to sheep-shearing. Some holidays had a religious but also practical side to them, such as when
offerings of fruit and dairy from around Mesopotamia were made. What was the family like in ancient Mesopotamia? The family unit in Mesopotamia of some sort existed. In neo-Babylonian times, a measure of family consciousness appeared in
the form of ancestral family names for identification purposes. Geography & Travel Historical Places Ask the Chatbot a Question Despite the Sumerians' leading role, the historical periods require a firm chronological framework, which,
unfortunately, has not yet been established for the first half of the 3rd millennium bce. The basis for the chronology after about 1450 bce is provided by the data in the Assyrian and Babylonian king lists, which can often be checked by dated tablets and the Assyrian lists of eponyms (annual officials whose names served to identify each year). It is, however,
still uncertain how much time separated the middle of the 1st dynasty of Babylon, which is therefore variously dated to 1594 bce ("middle"), 1530 bce ("short"), or 1730 bce ("short"),
back to the beginning of the 3rd dynasty of Ur, about 2112 bce. From this point to the beginning of the dynasty of Akkad (c. 2334 bce) the interval can only be calculated to within 40 to 50 years, via the ruling houses of Lagash and the rather uncertain traditions regarding the succession of Gutian viceroys. With Ur-Nanshe (c. 2520 bce), the first king of the
1st dynasty of Lagash, there is a possible variation of 70 to 80 years, and earlier dates are a matter of mere guesswork: they depend upon factors of only limited relevance, such as the computation of occupation or destruction levels, the degree of development in the script (paleography), the character of the sculpture, pottery, and cylinder seals, and their
correlation at different sites. In short, the chronology of the first half of the 3rd millennium is to be accepted, with due caution and reservations, as the date of the
flourishing of the archaic civilization of Uruk and of the invention of writing. In Uruk and probably also in other cities of comparable size, the Sumerians led a city life that can be more or less reconstructed as follows: temples and residential districts; intensive agriculture, stock breeding, fishing, and date palm cultivation forming the four mainstays of the
economy; and highly specialized industries carried on by sculptors, seal engravers, smiths, carpenters, shipbuilders, potters, and workers of reeds and textiles. Part of the population was supported with rations from a central point of distribution, which relieved people of the necessity of providing their basic food themselves, in return for their work all day
and every day, at least for most of the year. The cities kept up active trade with foreign lands. That organized city life existence of inscribed tablets contain figures with the items they measure, as well as personal names and, occasionally, probably
professions. This shows the purely practical origins of writing in Mesopotamia: it began not as a means of magic or as a way for the ruler to record his achievements, for example, but as an aid to memory for an administration that was ever expanding its area of operations. The earliest examples of writing are very difficult to penetrate because of their
extremely laconic formulation, which presupposes a knowledge of the context, and because of the still very imperfect rendering of the spoken word. Moreover, many of the archaic signs were pruned away after a short period of use and cannot be traced in the paleography of later periods, so that they cannot be identified. One of the most important
questions that has to be met when dealing with "organization" and "city life" is that of social structure and the form of government; however, it can be answered only with difficulty, and the use of evidence from later periods carries with it the danger of anachronisms. The Sumerian word for ruler par excellence is lugal, which etymologically means "big
person." The first occurrence comes from Kish about 2700 bce, since an earlier instance from Uruk is uncertain because it could simply be intended as a personal name: "Monsieur Legrand." In Uruk the ruler's special title was en. In later periods this word (etymology unknown), which is also found in divine names such as Enlil and Enki, has a
predominantly religious connotation that is translated, for want of a better designation, as "en-priest, en-priestess." En, as the ruler's title, is encountered in the traditional epics of the Sumerians (Gilgamesh is the "en of Kullab," a district of Uruk) and many
others. It has often been asked if the ruler of Uruk is to be recognized in artistic representations. A man feeding sheep with flowering branches, a prominent personality in seal designs, might thus represent the ruler or a priest in his capacity as administrator and protector of flocks. The same question may be posed in the case of a man who is depicted on a
stela aiming an arrow at a lion. These questions are purely speculative, however: even if the "protector of flocks" were identical with the en, there is no ground for seeing in the ruler a person with a predominantly religious function. The picture offered by the literary tradition of Mesopotamia is clearer but not necessarily historically relevant. The Sumerian
king list has long been the greatest focus of interest. This is a literary composition, dating from Old Babylonian times, that describes kingship (nam-lugal in Sumerian) in Mesopotamia from primeval times to the end of the 1st dynasty of Isin. According to the theory—or rather the ideology—of this work, there was officially only one kingship in Mesopotamia,
which was vested in one particular city at any one time; hence the change in dynasties brought with it the change of the seat of kingship: Kish-Uruk-Ur-Awan-Kish-Hamazi-Uruk-Ur-Akshak-Kish-Uruk-Ur-Akshak-Kish-Uruk-Ur-Akshak-Kish-Uruk-Ur-Akshak-Kish-Uruk-Ur-Akshak-Kish-Uruk-Ur-Isin. The king list gives as coming in succession several dynasties that now are known to have ruled
simultaneously. It is a welcome aid to chronology and history, but, so far as the regnal years are concerned, it loses its value for the time before the dynasty of Akkad, for here the lengths of reign of single rulers are given as more than 100 and sometimes even several hundred years. One group of versions of the king list has adopted the tradition of the
Sumerian Flood story, according to which Kish was the first seat of kingship after the Flood, whereas five dynasties of primeval kings ruled before the Flood in Eridu, Bad-tibira, Larak, Sippar, and Shuruppak. These kings all allegedly ruled for multiples of 3,600 years (the maximum being 64,800 or, according to one variant, 72,000 years). The tradition of
the Sumerian king list is still echoed in Berosus. It is also instructive to observe what the Sumerian king list does not mention. The list dynasty of Lagash (from King Ur-Nanshe to UruKAgina) and appears to retain no memory of the archaic florescence of Uruk at the beginning of the 3rd millennium bce.
Besides the peaceful pursuits reflected in art and writing, the art also provides the first information about violent contacts: cylinder seals of the Uruk Level IV depict fettered men lying or squatting on the ground, being beaten with sticks or otherwise maltreated by standing figures. They may represent the execution of prisoners of war. It is not known from
where these captives came or what form "war" would have taken or how early organized battles were fought. Nevertheless, this does give the first, albeit indirect, evidence for the wars that are henceforth one of the most characteristic phenomena in the history of Mesopotamia. Just as with the rule of man over man, with the rule of higher powers over
man it is difficult to make any statements about the earliest attested forms of religion or about the deities and their names without running the risk of anachronism. Excluding prehistoric figurines, which provide no evidence for determining whether men or anthropomorphic gods are represented, the earliest testimony is supplied by certain symbols that
later became the cuneiform signs for gods' names: the "gatepost with streamers" for Inanna, goddess of love and war, and the "ringed post" for the moon god Nanna. A scene on a cylinder seal—a shrine with an Inanna symbol and a "man" in a boat—could be an abbreviated illustration of a procession of gods or of a cultic journey by ship. The constant
association of the "gatepost with streamers" with streamers" with streamers" with streamers" with streamers and modes of life in ancient Mesopotamia: fishermen and marsh dwellers, date palm cultivators, cowherds,
shepherds, and farmers all have their special groups of gods. Both Sumerian and non-Sumerian languages can be detected in the divine names and place-names. Since the pronunciation of the names is known only from 2000 bce or later, conclusions about their linguistic affinity are not without problems. Several names, for example, have been
reinterpreted in Sumerian by popular etymology. It would be particularly important to isolate the Subarian components (related to Hurrian), whose significance was probably greater than has hitherto been assumed. For the south Mesopotamian city HA.A (the noncommittal transliteration of the signs) there is a pronunciation gloss "shubari," and non-
Sumerian incantations are known in the languages (which belong to the Afro-Asiatic group and also include ancient Egyptian, Berber, and various African languages). This element is easier to detect in ancient Mesopotamia, but whether
people began to participate in city civilization in the 4th millennium bce or only during the Arabian fringes of the Fertile Crescent, and partly settled; and the transition to settled life can be observed in a constant,
though uneven, rhythm. There are, therefore, good grounds for assuming that the Akkadians (and other pre-Akkadian Semitic tribes not known by name) also originally led a nomadic life to a greater or lesser degree. Nevertheless, they can only have been herders of domesticated sheep and goats, which require changes of pasturage according to the time
of year and can never stray more than a day's march from the watering places. The traditional nomadic life of the Bedouin makes its appearance only with the domestication of the camel at the turn of the 2nd to 1st millennium bce. The question arises as to how quickly writing spread and by whom it was adopted in about 3000 bce or shortly thereafter. At
Kish, in northern Babylonia, almost 120 miles northwest of Uruk, a stone tablet has been found with the same repertoire of archaic signs as those found at Uruk itself. This fact demonstrates that intellectual contacts existed between northern and southern Babylonia. The dispersion of writing in an unaltered form presupposes the existence of schools in
various cities that worked according to the same principles and adhered to one and the same canonical repertoire of signs. It would be wrong to assume that Sumerian was spoken throughout the area in which writing had been adopted. Moreover, the use of cuneiform for a non-Sumerian language can be demonstrated with certainty from the 27th century
bce. Understand the how Mesopotamian civilization evolved from the Sumerian Civilization, resulting in the final conquest of the area by Muslim Arabs. Be able to identify the characteristics and developments of the Sumerian, Veo-Babylonian, Neo-Babylonian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian civilizations and empires. Sumer was an ancient
civilization in southern Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) during the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Ages. Although the historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE, modern historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE, modern historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE, modern historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE, modern historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE, modern historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE, modern historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE, modern historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE, modern historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE, modern historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE, modern historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE, modern historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE, modern historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE, modern historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE, modern historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE histor
people, now called the "Ubaidians," were the first to drain the marshes for agriculture; develop trade; and establish industries including weaving, leatherwork, metalwork, metalwork, masonry, and pottery. The Sumerian city of Eridu, which at that time bordered the Persian Gulf, is believed to be the world's first city. Here, three separate cultures fused — the peasant
Ubaidian farmers, the nomadic Semitic-speaking pastoralists (farmers who raise livestock), and fisher folk. The surplus of storable food created by this economy allowed for a much greater population density, which required an extensive labor force and a
division of labor with many specialized arts and crafts. (10) An early form of wedge-shaped writing called cuneiform developed in the early Sumerian period. During this time, cuneiform and pictograms suggest the abundance of pottery and other artistic traditions. In addition to the production of vessels, clay was also used to make tablets for inscribing
written documents. Metal also served various purposes during the early Sumerian period. Smiths used a form of casting to create the blades for daggers. On the other hand, softer metals like copper and gold could be hammered into the forms of plates, necklaces, and collars. (10) By the late fourth millennium BCE, Sumer was divided into about a dozen
independent city-states delineated by canals and other boundary makers. At each city center stood a temple dedicated to the city's religious rites. (10) Figure 2-2: Ziggurats Mesopothemia by unknown from Wikispaces.com is licensed
under CC BY-SA 3.0 One of the most remarkable achievements of Mesopotamian architecture was the development of the ziggurat, a massive structure taking the form of a terraced step pyramid, ziggurats were built by stacking and piling. Ziggurats were not
places of worship for the general public. Rather, only priests or other authorized religious officials were allowed inside to tend to cult statues and make offerings. The first surviving ziggurats date to the Sumerian culture in the fourth millennium BCE, but they continued to be a popular architectural form in the late third and early second millennium BCE.
as well. (11) Figure 2-3: Great Ziggurat of Ur by Hardnfast is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed un
Sumerian/Babylonian poetic work which pre-dates Homer's writing by 1500 years and, therefore, stands as the oldest piece of epic western literature. In The Epic of Gilgamesh, the great king is thought to be too proud and arrogant by the gods and so they decide to teach him a lesson by sending the wild man, Enkidu, to humble him. Enkidu and
Gilgamesh, after a fierce battle in which neither are bested, become friends and embark on adventures together. When Enkidu is struck with death, Gilgamesh falls into a deep grief and, recognizing his own mortality through the death of his friend, questions the meaning of life and the value of human accomplishment in the face of ultimate extinction.
Casting away all of his old vanity and pride, Gilgamesh sets out on a quest to find the meaning of life and, finally, some way of defeating death. In doing so, he becomes the first epic hero in world literature. The grief of Gilgamesh, and the questions his friend's death evoke, resonate with every human being who has wrestled with the meaning of life in the
face of death. Although Gilgamesh ultimately fails to win immortality in the story, his deeds live on through the written word and, so, does he. The Sumerian city of Eridu, which at that time bordered the Persian Gulf, is believed to be the world's first city. Key developments of this time was the strategy to drain marshes for agriculture, initiation of trade
the time of the Uruk period (ca. 4100-2900 BCE), the volume of trade goods transported along the canals and rivers of southern Mesopotamia facilitated the rise of many large, stratified, temple-centered cities where centralized administrations employed specialized workers. Artifacts of the Uruk civilization have been found over a wide area—from the
Taurus Mountains in Turkey, to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, and as far east as Central Iran. The Uruk civilization, exported by Sumerian traders and colonists, had an effect on all surrounding peoples, who gradually developed their own comparable, competing economies and cultures. Sumerian cities during the Uruk period were probably
suggesting little, if any, need for defense. During this period, Uruk became the most urbanized city in the world, surpassing for the first time 50,000 inhabitants. (10) The Akkadian Empire was the first political entity to make extensive and efficient use of bureaucracy and administration on a large scale and set the standard for future rulers and kingdoms
1,500 years after his death, Sargon the Great, founder of the Akkadian Empire, was regarded as a semi-sacred figure, the patron saint of all subsequent empires in the Mesopotamian realm" (111). Even so, where he came from and even his actual name are unknown. `Sargon'—whose name means "True King" or Legitimate King"— was not the name given
him at birth but the throne name he chose for himself. It is a Semitic, not Sumerian, name and so it is generally accepted that he was a Semite. Nothing certain is known of Sargon's birth or younger years. In fact, although his name was among the most famous in antiquity, he was unknown to the modern world until 1870 CE when the archaeologist Sir
gave birth to me in concealment. She set me in a basket of rushes, She sealed the lid with tar. She cast me into the river, but it did not rise over me, The water carried me to Akki, the drawer of water. He lifted me out as he dipped his jar into the river, but it did not rise over me, The water carried me to Akki, the drawer of water. He lifted me out as he dipped his jar into the river, but it did not rise over me, The water carried me to Akki, the drawer of water. He lifted me out as he dipped his jar into the river, but it did not rise over me, The water carried me to Akki, the drawer of water. He lifted me out as he dipped his jar into the river, but it did not rise over me, The water carried me to Akki, the drawer of water. He lifted me out as he dipped his jar into the river, but it did not rise over me, The water carried me to Akki, the drawer of water.
 either built a new city or renovated an older one, Akkad (also known as Agade) on the banks of the Euphrates River. This was a complete break with precedent in that, previously, the king of an existing city conquered for no city,
only for himself and, once he had control of the area, then built his own city to enjoy the benefits of conquest. Forming an empire is one thing; but keeping it operating is quite another. Still, in administration, Sargon proved himself as capable as he was in military conquest. The Akkadian Empire created the first postal system where clay tablets inscribed
in cuneiform Akkadian script were wrapped in outer clay envelopes marked with the name and address of the recipient and the seal of the sender. These letters could not be opened except by the person they were intended for because there was no way to open the clay envelope save by breaking it, thus ensuring privacy in correspondence. Sargon also
standardized weights and measures for use in trade and daily commerce, initiated a system of taxation which was fair to all social classes, and engaged in numerous building projects such as the restoration of Babylon (which, according to some sources, he founded - though this is not generally accepted as true). He also created, trained, and equipped a
full-time army — at least in the city of Akkad — where, as an inscription reads, 5400 soldiers "ate bread daily" with the king. After Sargon's death, the empire passed to his son Rimush, who was forced to endure what his father had and put down the rebellions which contested his legitimacy. Rimush reigned for nine years and, when he died, the kingship
passed to Sargon's other son, Manishtusu who ruled for the height of the Akkadian Empire was realized under Sargon's grandson, Naram-Sin. During his reign, the empire grew and flourished beyond the boundaries even Sargon had attained. After his death, his son Shar-Kali-Sharri became ruler and, at
this time, the empire began to unravel as city-states broke away to form their own independent kingdoms. (13)(14) Babylon was founded at some point prior to the reign of Sargon the Great) who ruled from 2334-2279 BCE and claimed to have built temples at Babylon (other ancient sources seem to indicate that Sargon the Great) who ruled from 2334-2279 BCE and claimed to have built temples at Babylon (other ancient sources seem to indicate that Sargon the Great) who ruled from 2334-2279 BCE and claimed to have built temples at Babylon (other ancient sources seem to indicate that Sargon the Great) who ruled from 2334-2279 BCE and claimed to have built temples at Babylon (other ancient sources seem to indicate that Sargon the Great) who ruled from 2334-2279 BCE and claimed to have built temples at Babylon (other ancient sources seem to indicate that Sargon the Great) who ruled from 2334-2279 BCE and claimed to have built temples at Babylon (other ancient sources seem to indicate that Sargon the Great) who ruled from 2334-2279 BCE and claimed to have built temples at Babylon (other ancient sources seem to indicate that Sargon the Great) who ruled from 2334-2279 BCE and claimed to have built temples at Babylon (other ancient sources seem to indicate that Sargon the Great) who ruled from 2334-2279 BCE and claimed to have built temples at Babylon (other ancient sources seem to indicate that Sargon temples at Babylon (other ancient sources) are sargon to the great seem to the great sources at the great seem to 
himself founded the city). At that time, Babylon seems to have been a minor city or perhaps a large port town on the Euphrates River at the point where it runs closest to the river Tigris. The known history of Babylon, then, begins with its most famous king: Hammurabi (1792-1750 BCE). This obscure Amorite prince ascended to the throne upon the
abdication of his father, King Sin-Muballit, and fairly quickly transformed the city into one of the most powerful and influential in all of Mesopotamia. So successful was he in both diplomacy and war that, by 1755 BCE, he had united all of Mesopotamia. So successful was he in both diplomacy and war that, by 1755 BCE, he had united all of Mesopotamia under the rule of Babylon that, at this time, was the largest city in the world, and named his realm
Babylonia. (15) Figure 2-5: Code of Hammurabi by an unknown artist from Louvre Museum is licensed under CC BY 2.5 The Code of Hammurabi is one of the oldest deciphered writings of length in the world, and features a code of Hammurabi is one of the oldest deciphered writings of length in the world, and features a code of Hammurabi is one of the oldest deciphered writings of length in the world, and features a code of law from ancient Babylon in Mesopotamia. Written in about 1754 BCE by the sixth king of Babylon, Hammurabi, the Code was
of Ur-Nammu, king of Ur (c. 2050 BCE), the Laws of Eshnunna (c. 1930 BCE) and the codex of Lipit-Ishtar of Isin (c. 1870 BCE). The laws were arranged in groups, so that citizens could easily read what was required of them. Some have seen the Code as an early form of constitutional government, and as an early form of the presumption of innocence, and
the ability to present evidence in one's case. Intent was often recognized and affected punishment, with neglect severely punished. Some of the provisions may have been codification of Hammurabi's decisions, for the purpose of self-glorification. Nevertheless, the Code was studied, copied, and used as a model for legal reasoning for at least 1500 years
after. The prologue of the Code features Hammurabi stating that he wants "to make justice visible in the land, to destroy the wicked person and the evil-doer, that the strong might not injure the weak." Major laws covered in the Code include slander, trade, slavery, the duties of workers, theft, liability, and divorce. Nearly half of the code focused on
contracts, such as wages to be paid, terms of transactions, and liability in case of property damage. A third of the code focused on household and family issues, including inheritance, divorce, paternity and sexual behavior. One section establishes that a judge who incorrectly decides an issue may be removed from his position permanently. A few sections
address military service. One of the most well-known sections of the Code was law #196: "If a man destroy the eye of a man's slave or break a man's bone, they shall break his bone. If one destroy the eye of a man's slave or break a
bone of a man's slave he shall pay one-half his price." (16) During the Uruk period cities were probably theocratic and likely headed by priest-kings (ensis), assisted by a council of elders, including both men and women. The Akkadian Empire was the first political entity to make extensive and efficient use of bureaucracy and administration on a large scale by a council of elders, including both men and women.
and set the standard for future rulers and kingdoms. Sargon the Great is regarded as founder of the Akkadian Empire. Babylon's success is to its most famous king, Hammurabi. Under Hammurabi's reign, there were three social classes. The amelu was
originally an elite person with full civil rights, whose birth, marriage and death were recorded. Although he had certain privileges, he also was liable for harsher punishment and higher fines. The king and his court, high officials, professionals and craftsmen belonged to this group. The mushkenu was a free man who may have been landless. He was
required to accept monetary compensation, paid smaller fines and lived in a separate section of the city. The ardu was a slave whose master paid for his upkeep, but also took his compensation. Ardu could own property and other slaves, and could purchase his own freedom. (16) Women entered into marriage through a contract arranged by her family. She
husband's house. If a wife brought action against her husband for cruelty and neglect, she could have a legal separation if the case was proved. Otherwise, she might be drowned as punishment. Adultery was punishment. Adultery was punishment with drowning of both parties, unless a husband was willing to pardon his wife. (16) The Late Bronze Age (1700-1100 BCE) saw the Kassite
Empire (from the modern-day area of Iran) replace Babylon as the regional power in Mesopotamia entered a "dark age" period following a systemic collapse in the region, most likely precipitated by a band of naval raiders, more commonly called the "Sea Peoples." The collapse of Mesopotamian Civilization allowed
for smaller states—outside of the political periphery of the Tigris and Euphrates region—to become regional powers in their own right. The Kingdom of Israel in the modern region of Palestine was one of those nations to benefit from the ebbing of Mesopotamian influence during this age. Figure 2-6: Merneptah Stele known as the Israel stela by Webscribe
is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 To be sure, the Egyptian Merneptah Stele makes clear that a collection of people identified as Israel was present in Palestine by 1200 BCE. By the tenth century, these people were able to organize a formal government around the leadership of a king, first Saul, then David (c.1040-960 BCE). David chose the Canaanite city of
son, Solomon (circa 960-920 BCE) whose rule corresponds to the height of Israelite grandeur. Solomon consolidated treaties with neighboring kingdoms such as Tyre to the north, Egypt, Sheba and sponsored building projects which made Jerusalem a great and opulent city (including, of course, the First Temple). The reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon
(but especially the latter two) have been traditionally characterized as a `golden age' of unity and prosperity. Figure 2-7: Kingdoms of Israel and Judah map by Oldtidens Israel & Judea is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 Culturally speaking, the political elite of the Kingdom of Israel promoted belief in a singular god named Yahweh. As such, the Israelites were
unique from their Mesopotamian neighbors in that they were monotheistic rather than polytheistic, at least in principle. David and Solomon, especially, seem to have used this belief to their benefit in unifying the people but, upon Solomon, especially, seem to have used this belief to their benefit in unifying the people but, upon Solomon, especially, seem to have used this belief to their benefit in unifying the people but, upon Solomon, especially, seem to have used this belief to their benefit in unifying the people but, upon Solomon, especially, seem to have used this belief to their benefit in unifying the people but, upon Solomon, especially, seem to have used this belief to their benefit in unifying the people but, upon Solomon, especially, seem to have used this belief to their benefit in unifying the people but, upon Solomon, especially, seem to have used this belief to their benefit in unifying the people but, upon Solomon, especially, seem to have used this belief to their benefit in unifying the people but, upon Solomon, especially, seem to have used this belief to their benefit in unifying the people but, upon Solomon, especially, seem to have used this belief to their benefit in unifying the people but, upon Solomon, especially, seem to have used the have 
the Kingdom of Judah in the south with Jerusalem as capital. The relationship between the two kingdoms would remain tenuous, with the two never achieving their level of influence during reigns of David and Solomon. Much of the reason for this was due to the resurgence of the Mesopotamian kingdom of Assur in the mid-tenth century, and the
 subsequent development of the Assyrian Empire. (13)(17) The Neo-Assyrian Empire (934-610 BCE or 912-612 BCE) was, according to many historians, the first true empire in the world. The Assyrians had expanded their territory from the city of Ashur over the centuries, and their fortunes rose and fell with successive rulers and circumstances in the Near
East. Beginning with the reign of Adad Nirari II (912-891 BCE), the empire made great territorial expansions that resulted in its eventual control of a region which spanned the world at that time, the first to be armed with iron weapons,
whose tactics in battle made them invincible. Their political and military policies have also given them the long-standing reputation for cruelty and ruthlessness and vigor through visual representation. Figure 2-8: Ashurbanipal's Lion Hunt by Mark.murphy is licensed under CC BY
SA 3.0 Lion hunter was one role of the Assyrian king. We know this primarily from lion hunt steles located in Nineveh dating back to the reign of Ashurnasirpal II. These steles illustrate the king through his ability to conquer the
fiercest of beasts. Figure 2-9: Jehu King of Israel giving tribute to King Shalmaneser III of Assyria cropped by Steven G. Johnson is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 The Assyrians made public their dominance over lesser nations by illustrating the kings of conquered nations bowing before the Assyrian king. In the relief above from the Black Obelisk Inscription
Mike Peel is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0 On conquering lands in rebellion, the Assyrians would regularly relocate the conquered peoples from their home territory to another portion of the empire. This became known as exile or mass deportation. The stele above represents the Assyrian deportation of the population of Lachish, following their defeat at the
hands of the Assyrians in 701 BCE. Figure 2-11: Nineveh map city walls & gates by Fredarch is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 Nineveh was an ancient Assyrian Empire. Its ruins are across the river from the modern-day major city of Mosul in Iraq. Today, Nineveh's location is
marked by two large mounds, Kouyunjik and Nabī YÅ«nus "Prophet Jonah," and the remains of the city walls. These were fitted with fifteen monumental gateways which served as checkpoints on entering and exiting the ancient city, and were probably also used as barracks and armories. With the inner and outer doors shut, the gateways were virtual
fortresses. Five of the gateways have been explored to some extent by archaeologists. Nineveh was an important junction for commercial routes crossing the Tigris. Occupying a central position on the great highway between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean, Nineveh united the East and the West, and received wealth from many sources. Thus
it became one of the oldest and greatest of all the region's ancient cities, and the capital of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. The area was settled as early as 6000 BCE, and by 3000 BCE had become an important religious center for worship of the Assyrian goddess Ishtar. It was not until the Neo-Assyrian Empire that Nineveh experienced a considerable
architectural expansion. King Sennacherib is credited with making Nineveh a truly magnificent city during his rule (c. 700 BCE). He laid out new streets and squares and built within it the famous "palace without a rival", the plan of which has been mostly recovered. It comprised at least 80 rooms, many of which were lined with sculpture. A large number
Sennacherib's men parading the spoils of war before him. Nineveh's greatness was short-lived. In around 627 BCE, after the death of its last great king Ashurbanipal, the Pabylonians and Medes. From about 616 BCE, in a coalition with the Scythians
and Cimmerians, they besieged Nineveh, sacking the town in 612, and later razing it to the ground. The Assyrian empire as such came to an end by 605 BC, with the Medes and Babylonians dividing its colonies between them. Following its defeat in 612, the site remained largely unoccupied for centuries with only a scattering of Assyrians living amid the
ruins until the Sassanian period, although Assyrians continue to live in the surrounding area to this day. (19) The Neo-Assyrian Empire (934-610 BCE or 912-612 BCE) was, according to many historians, the first true empire in the world. On conquering lands in rebellion, the Assyrians would regularly relocate the conquered peoples from their home
territory to another portion of the empire. This became known as exile or mass deportation. It was also during this period that Nebuchadnezzar supposedly built the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, although there is no definitive archeological evidence to establish their precise location. Ancient Greek and Roman writers describe the gardens in vivid detail
However, the lack of physical ruins has led many experts to speculate whether the Hanging Gardens existed at all. If this is the case, writers might have been describing ideal mythologized Eastern gardens or a famous garden built by the Assyrian king Sennacherib (704-681 BCE) at Nineveh roughly a century earlier. If the Hanging Gardens did exist, they
were likely destroyed around the first century CE. Figure 2-12: Nebuchadnezzar II inscription by Hanay is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 The Neo-Babylonian Empire, also known as the Chaldean Empire, was a civilization in Mesopotamia that began in 626 BC and ended in 539 BC. During the preceding three centuries, Babylonia had been ruled by the
Akkadians and Assyrians, but threw off the yoke of external domination after the death of Assurbanipal, the last strong Assyrian ruler. The Neo-Babylonian rulers were motivated by the antiquity of their heritage and followed a traditionalist
cultural policy, based on the ancient Sumero-Akkadian culture. Ancient artworks from the Old-Babylonian period were painstakingly restored and preserved, and treated with a respect verging on religious reverence. Neo-Babylonian art and architecture reached its zenith under King Nebuchadnezzar II, who ruled from 604-562 BC and was a great patron
of urban development, bent on rebuilding all of Babylonia's cities to reflect their former glory. It was Nebuchadnezzar II's vision and sponsorship that turned Babylon into the immense and beautiful city of legend. The city spread over three square miles, surrounded by moats and ringed by a double circuit of walls. The river Euphrates, which flowed
through the city, was spanned by a beautiful stone bridge. At the heart of the city lay the ziggurat Etemenanki, literally "temple of the foundation for the biblical story of the Tower of Babel. (20) Figure 2-13: Hanging Gardens of Babylon by Maarten van
Heemskerck is licensed under Public Domain Figure 2-14: Model of the Ishtar Gate by Gryffindor is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 Figure 2-15: Lion of Babylonian art and architecture is literary. The material evidence itself is mostly fragmentary. Some of the
most important fragments that survive are from the Ishtar Gate, the eighth gate to the inner city of Babylon. It was constructed in 575 BC by order of Nebuchadnezzar II, using glazed brick with alternating rows of bas-relief dragons and aurochs. Dedicated to the Babylonian goddess Ishtar, it was a double gate, and its roofs and doors were made of cedar,
according to the dedication plaque. Babylon's Processional Way, which was lined with brilliantly colorful glazed brick walls decorated with lions, ran through the gate. Statues of the Babylonian gods were paraded through the gate and down the Processional Way during New Year's celebrations. (20) By the 7 th century BCE, a group of
ancient Iranian people had established the Median Empire, a vassal state under the Assyria fell in 605 BCE, Cyaxares, king of the Medes, extended his rule west across Iran. (21) Figure 2-16: Cyrus II of Persia by Siamax is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 Around 550 BCE, Cyaxares, king of the Medes, extended his rule west across Iran.
Cyrus II of Persia, who became known as Cyrus the Great, rose in rebellion against the Median Empire, eventually conquering the Median Empire, also known as the Achaemenid Empire, eventually assimilate
the neighboring Lydian and Neo-Babylonian empires into the new Persian Empire. (21) Cyrus, whose rule lasted between 29 and 31 years, until his death in battle in 530 BCE, controlled the vast Achaemenid Empire through the use of regional monarchs, called satrapy. The basic rule of governance was based
upon the loyalty and obedience of the satrapy to the central power, the king, and compliance with tax laws. Cyrus also connected the various regions of the empire through an innovative postal system that made use of an extensive roadway and relay stations. Cyrus the Great was recognized for achievements in human rights and politics, having influenced
both Eastern and Western Civilization. The ancient Babylonians called him "The Liberator," while the modern nation of Iran calls Cyrus its "father." (22) The book of Isaiah in the Hebrew Bible remembers him as a savior or "messiah'. This is for good reason. Cyrus granted the descendants of the exiled kingdom of Judah to return home to Israel in 540 BCE
following Babylonian captivity (c.f. Isa 45:1). The Cyrus Cylinder original image by kourosh e kabir. Uploaded by Antoine Simonin is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 The Cyrus Cylinder is an ancient clay artifact, now broken into several
cylinder is considered by many Biblical scholars to be evidence of Cyrus's policy of repatriation of the Jewish people following that Cyrus did not make a specific decree, but rather that the cylinder articulated his general policy allowing exiles to
return to their homelands and rebuild their temples. (22) Cyrus II (Cyrus the Great) conquered the Medes to create the first Persian, or Achaemenid Empire. Cyrus was a tactical genus and used his socio-political expertise to assimilate the neighboring Lydian and Neo-Babylonian empires into the new Persian Empire. When Darius I (550-486 BCE), also
municipalities in Egypt. When Darius moved his capital from Pasargadae to Persepolis, he revolutionized the economy by placing it on a silver and gold coinage and introducing a regulated and sustainable tax system. This structure precisely tailored the taxes of each satrapy based on its projected productivity and economic potential. For example, Babylonner, and gold coinage and introducing a regulated and sustainable tax system.
Behistun Inscription, the text of which Darius wrote, came to have great linguistic significance as a crucial clue in deciphering cuneiform script. The inscription of a sequence of events following the deaths of the previous two Achaemenid emperors, Cyrus the Great and Cyrus's son,
Cambyses II, in which Darius fought 19 battles in one year to put down numerous rebellions throughout the Persian lands. The inscription, which is approximately 15 meters wide, includes three versions of the text in three different cuneiform languages: Old Persian, Elamite and Babylonian, which was a version of Akkadian.
Researchers were able to compare the scripts and use it to help decipher ancient languages, in this way making the Behistun Inscription as valuable to cuneiform as the Rosetta Stone is to Egyptian hieroglyphs. (22) Figure 2-19:Bisotun Iran Relief Achamenid Period by Hara1603 is licensed under Public Domain Between c. 500-400 BCE, Darius the Great
and his son, Xerxes I, ruled the Persian Plateau and all of the territories formerly held by the Assyrian Empire, including Mesopotamia, the Levant, and Cyprus. It eventually came to control Egypt, as well. This expansion continued even further afield with Anatolia and the Armenian Plateau, much of the Southern Caucasus, Macedonia, parts of Greece and
Thrace, Central Asia as far as the Aral Sea, the Oxus and Jaxartes areas, the Hindu Kush and the western Indus basin, and parts of northern Arabia and northern Libya. This unprecedented area of control under a single ruler stretched from the Indus Valley in the east to Thrace and Macedon on the northeastern border of Greece. At its height, the
 Achaemenid Empire ruled over 44% of the world's population, the highest such figure for any empire in history. (21) Conclusion After Cyrus II took Babylon, the bulk of Mesopotamia became part of the Persian Empire, and this period saw a rapid cultural decline, most notably in the loss of the knowledge of cuneiform script. The conquest of the Persians by
Alexander the Great in 331 BCE brought Hellenization of the culture and religion, and even though Alexander tried to again make Babylon a city of consequence, its days of glory were a thing of the past. After his death, Alexander's general Seleucus took control of the region and founded the Seleucid Dynasty which ruled until 126 BCE when the land was
conquered by the Parthians who were, in turn, dominated by the Sassanians (a people of Persian descent). By the time of the conquest by the Roman Empire (116 CE), Mesopotamia was a largely Hellenized region, lacking in any unity, which had forgotten the old gods and the old ways. The Romans improved the infrastructure of their colonies significantly
through their introduction of better roads and plumbing and brought Roman Law to the land. The entire culture of the region once known as Mesopotamia was swept away in the final conquest of the area by Muslim Arabs in the 7 th century CE which resulted in the unification of law, language, religion and culture under Islam. (13) Reading Question What
were some of the ways each civilization impacted the human world? What are some of the traces of the civilizations in today's society? Critical Thinking Question Women in the contemporary human society are different and/or still the same
compared to lives of women in Mesopotamia? Explore the challenges in human life in Mesopotamia. Which of these challenges are still prevalent, and what would you devise as solutions? Ancient Mesopotamian civilization from 5500 to 1800 BC "Sumerian civilization" and "Sumerian civilization" and what would you devise as solutions? Ancient Mesopotamian civilization from 5500 to 1800 BC "Sumerian civilization" and "Sumerian civilization" and what would you devise as solutions?
(disambiguation). Not to be confused with Summer. Sumer(c. 5500 - c. 1800 BC) The general location on a modern map, and main cities of Sumer with ancient times. ReligionSumerian religionLanguageSumerianGeographical rangeMesopotamia, Near East, Middle EastPeriodLate Neolithic, Middle
Bronze AgeDatesc. 5500 - c. 1800 BCPreceded byUbaid periodFollowed byAkkadian Empire Sumer (/'su:mər/) is the earliest known civilization, located in the historical region of southern Mesopotamia (now south-central Iraq), emerging during the Chalcolithic and early Bronze Ages between the sixth and fifth millennium BC. Like nearby Elam, it is one of
the cradles of civilization, along with Egypt, the Indus Valley, the Erligang culture of the Yellow River valley, Caral-Supe, and Mesoamerica. Living along the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, Sumerian farmers grew an abundance of grain and other crops, a surplus of which enabled them to form urban settlements. The world's earliest known texts
come from the Sumerian cities of Uruk and Jemdet Nasr, and date to between c. 3350 - c. 2500 BC. Right: cuneiform characters for Saĝ-gíg (), "Black Headed Ones", the native designation for the Sumerians. The first is the
pictographic character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "head" (, later ), the second the character for "he
the Sumerians called their land "Kengir", the "Country of the noble lords" (Sumerian: [][], romanized: ki-en-gi(-r), lit. "country" + "lords" + "noble"), and their language "Emegir" (Sumerians is not known, but the people of Sumer referred to themselves as "Black-Headed Ones" or
"Black-Headed People"[6][13][14][15] (Sumerian: \square, romanized: sa\tilde{g}-gíg, lit. "head" + "black", or \square, sa\tilde{g}-gíg-ga, phonetically /sa\eta gi ga/, lit. "head" + relative marker).[1][2][3][4] For example, the Sumerian king Shulgi described himself as "the king of the four quarters, the pastor of the black-headed people".[16] The Akkadians also called the
Sumerians "black-headed people", or salmat-gaggadi, in the Semitic Akkadians, the East Semitic-speaking people who later conquered the Sumerian city-states, gave Sumer its main historical name, but the phonological development of the term sumerû is uncertain. [17] Hebrew שׁנְעֵר Šin'ar, Egyptian Sngr, and Hittite Sanhar(a),
referring to southern Mesopotamia, could be western variants of Sumer.[17] Most historians have suggested that Sumer was first permanently settled between c. 5500 and c. 3300 BC by a West Asian people who spoke the Sumerian language (pointing to the names of cities, rivers, basic occupations, etc., as evidence), a non-Semitic and non-Indo-European
agglutinative language isolate [18][19][20][21][22] The Blau Monuments combine proto-cuneiform characters and illustrations of early Sumerians, Jemdet Nasr period, 3100-2700 BC. British Museum. Others have suggested that the Sumerians were a North African people who migrated from the Green Sahara into the Middle East and were responsible for
the spread of farming in the Middle East. [23] However, contrary evidence strongly suggested a partial North African origin for some pre-Semitic cultures of the Middle East, particularly Natufians, after testing the
genomes of Natufian and Pre-Pottery Neolithic culture-bearers. [24] Craniometric analysis has also suggested an affinity between Natufians and Urartians, and suggest the Caucasus as their homeland. [26][27][28] This is not generally accepted. [29] Based on
mentions of Dilmun as the "home city of the land of Sumer" in Sumerian legends and literature, other scholars have suggested the possibility that the Sumerian mythology, Dilmun was also mentioned as the home of deities such as Enki.
[33][34] The status of Dilmun as the Sumerians' ancestral homeland has not been established, but archaeologists have found evidence of civilization in Bahrain, namely the existence of Mesopotamian-style round disks.[35] A prehistoric people who lived in the region before the Sumerians have been termed the "Proto-Euphrateans" or "Ubaidians",[36] and
are theorized to have evolved from the Samarra culture of northern Mesopotamia. [37][38][39][40] The Ubaidians, though never mentioned by the Sumerians themselves, are assumed by modern-day scholars to have been the first civilizing force in Sumer. They drained the marshes for agriculture, developed trade, and established industries, including
weaving, leatherwork, metalwork, metalwork, masonry, and pottery. [36] Enthroned Sumerian king of Ur, possibly Ur-Pabilsag, with attendants. Standard of Ur, c. 2600 BC. Some scholars contest the idea of a Proto-Euphratean language or one substrate language; they think the Sumerian language may originally have been that of the hunting and fishing peoples who
lived in the marshland and the Eastern Arabia littoral region and were part of the Arabian bifacial culture.[41] Juris Zarins believes the Sumerians lived along the coast of Eastern Arabia, today's Persian Gulf region, before it was flooded at the end of the Ice Age.[42] Sumerian civilization took form in the Uruk period (4th millennium BC), continuing into
the Jemdet Nasr and Early Dynastic periods. The Sumerian city of Eridu, on the coast of the Persian Gulf, is considered to have been one of the oldest cities, where three separate cultures may have fused; that of peasant Ubaidian farmers, living in mud-brick huts and practicing irrigation; that of mobile nomadic Semitic pastoralists living in black tents and
following herds of sheep and goats; and that of fisher folk, living in reed huts in the marshlands, who may have been the ancestors of the Sumerians progressively lost control to Semitic states from the northwest. Sumer was conquered by the Semitic-speaking kings
of the Akkadian Empire around 2270 BC (short chronology), but Sumerian continued as a sacred language. Native Sumerian rule re-emerged for about a century in the Third Dynasty of Ur at approximately 2100-2000 BC, but the Akkadian language also remained in use for some time.[43] The Sumerians were entirely unknown during the early period of
modern archeology. Jules Oppert was the first scholar to publish the word Sumer in a lecture on 17 January 1869. The first major excavations of Sumerian cities were in 1877 at Girsu by the French archeologist Ernest de Sarzec, in 1889 at Nippur by John Punnett Peters from the University of Pennsylvania between 1889 and 1900, and in Shuruppak by
German archeologist Robert Koldewey in 1902-1903. Major publications of these finds were "Decouvertes en Chaldée par Ernest de Sarzec" by Léon Heuzey in 1884, "Les Inscriptions de Sumer et d'Akkad" by François Thureau-Dangin in 1905, and "Grundzüge der sumerischen Grammatik" on Sumerian grammar by Arno Poebel in 1923.[44] Further
information: List of cities of the ancient Near East and Geography of Mesopotamia A composite copy of a text listing cities from the late Uruk period such as: Nippur, Uruk, Ur, Eresh, Kesh, and Zabala. In the late 4th millennium BC, Sumer was divided into many independent city-states, which were divided by canals and boundary stones. Each was
centered on a temple dedicated to the particular patron god or goddess of the city and ruled over by a priestly governor (ensi) or by a king (lugal) who was intimately tied to the city's religious rites. Anu ziggurat and White TempleAnu ziggurat an
the White Temple was built on top of it c. 3500 BC.[45] The design of the ziggurat was probably a precursor to that of the Egyptian pyramids, the earliest of which dates to c. 2600 BC.[45] The design of the ziggurat was probably a precursor to that of the Egyptian pyramids, the earliest of which dates to c. 2600 BC.[45] The design of the ziggurat was probably a precursor to that of the Egyptian pyramids, the earliest of which dates to c. 2600 BC.[45] The design of the ziggurat was probably a precursor to that of the Egyptian pyramids, the earliest of which dates to c. 2600 BC.[45] The design of the ziggurat was probably a precursor to that of the Egyptian pyramids, the earliest of which dates to c. 2600 BC.[45] The design of the ziggurat was probably a precursor to that of the Egyptian pyramids, the earliest of which dates to c. 2600 BC.[45] The design of the ziggurat was probably a precursor to that of the Egyptian pyramids, the earliest of which dates to c. 2600 BC.[45] The design of the ziggurat was probably a precursor to that of the Egyptian pyramids, the earliest of which dates to c. 2600 BC.[45] The design of the ziggurat was probably a precursor to that of the Egyptian pyramids, the earliest of which dates to c. 2600 BC.[45] The design of the ziggurat was probably a precursor to ziggurat was probably a precursor to ziggurat was probably a probably 
Sumerians' sphere of influence (ordered from south to north): Eridu (Tell al-Hahm)SU Ur (Tell al-Hahm)SU U
Shuruppak (Tell Fara)SC Kisurra (Tell Abu Hatab)S Mashkan-shapir (Tell Abu Duwari)S Eresh (probably Abu Salabikh) SU Isin (Ishan al-Bahriyat)SC Adab (Tell Bismaya)SC Nippur (Afak)SH Marad (Tell Wannat es-Sadum)S Dilbat (Tell ed-Duleim)S Borsippa (Birs Nimrud)M Larak (probably Tell al-Wilayah)SCU Kish (Tell Uheimir and Ingharra)MC Kutha
(Tell Ibrahim) M Sippar (Tell Abu Habbah) MC Der (al-Badra) M Akshak (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Akkad (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) MCU Eshnunna (Tell Asmar) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad) M Awan (probably Tell Mizyad)
outlying city in northern Mesopotamia) (Wan outlying city in western Iran) (Ca city said on the Sumerian King List (SKL) to have exercised the Sumerian kingship) (Ha holy city) (Ua lost city) Apart from Mari, which lies full 330 kilometres (205 miles) north-west of Agade, but which is credited in the king list as
having exercised kingship in the Early Dynastic II period, and Nagar, an outpost, these cities are all in the Euphrates-Tigris alluvial plain, south of Baghdad in what are now the Bābil, Diyala, Wāsit, Dhi Qar, Basra, Al-Muthannā and Al-Qādisiyyah governorates of Iraq. Main article: History of Sumer Portrait of a Sumerian prisoner on a victory stelle of Sargon
of Akkad, c. 2300 BC.[47] The hairstyle of the prisoners (curly hair on top and short hair on the Standard of Ur.[48] Louvre Museum. The Sumerian written history reaches back to the 27th century BC and before, but
the historical record remains obscure until the Early Dynastic III period, c. 23rd century BC, when the language of the written records becomes easier to decipher, which has allowed archaeologists to read contemporary records and inscriptions. The Akkadian Empire was the first state that successfully united larger parts of Mesopotamia in the 23rd
century BC. After the Gutian period, the Ur III kingdom similarly united parts of northern and southern Mesopotamia. It ended in the face of Amorite "dynasty of Isin" persisted until c. 1700 BC, when Mesopotamia was united under Babylonian rule. New Stone Age: c. 10000 - c. 5000 BC
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IIIa period: c. 2600 - c. 2500 BC Ur I dynasty Awan dynasty Kish II dynasty Kish II dynasty Early Dynastic IIIb period: c. 2334 BC Uruk II dynasty Uruk III dynasty Early Bronze Age III: c. 2700 - c. 2200 BC Akkadian period: c. 2334 - c. 2154 BC Akkad dynasty III dynasty III dynasty Early Bronze Age III: c. 2700 - c. 2200 BC Akkadian period: c. 2334 BC Uruk II dynasty III dyna
(Sargon) Early Bronze Age IV: c. 2200 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2000 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 2100 - c. 2100 BC Uruk IV dynasty Middle Bronze Age II A: c. 
Age II B: c. 1750 - c. 1650 BC Old Babylonian period: c. 1736 - c. 1475 BC Sealand dynasty Main article: Ubaid period A pottery which spread throughout Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf. The oldest evidence for occupation comes from Tell el-
'Oueili, but, given that environmental conditions in southern Mesopotamia were favourable to human occupation well before the Ubaid period, it is likely that older sites exist but have not yet been found. It appears that this culture was derived from the Samarran culture from northern Mesopotamia. It is not known whether or not these were the actual
Sumerians who are identified with the later Uruk culture. The story of the passing of the gifts of civilization (me) to Inanna, goddess of Uruk period The archaeological transition from the Ubaid period to the Uruk period
is marked by a gradual shift from painted pottery domestically produced on a slow wheel to a great variety of unpainted pottery being the main visible change. [50][51] Uruk King-priest feeding the sacred herdThe king-priest and his
acolyte feeding the sacred herd. Uruk period, c. 3200 BCCylinder seal of the Uruk period, c. 3100 BC - Louvre Museum By the time of the Uruk period, c. 4100-2900 BC calibrated, the volume of trade goods transported along the canals and rivers of southern Mesopotamia facilitated the rise of many large, stratified, temple-centered
cities, with populations of over 10,000 people, where centralized administrations employed specialized workers. It is fairly certain that it was during the Uruk period that Sumerian cities began to make use of slave labour captured from the hill country, and there is ample evidence for captured slaves as workers in the earliest texts. Artifacts, and even
colonies of this Uruk civilization have been found over a wide area—from the Taurus Mountains in Turkey, to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, and as far east as western Iran. [52]: 2-3 The Uruk period civilization, exported by Sumerian traders and colonists, like that found at Tell Brak, had an effect on all surrounding peoples, who gradually evolved their
own comparable, competing economies and cultures. The cities of Sumer could not maintain remote, long-distance colonies by military force. [52] page needed | Sumerian cities during the Uruk period were probably theocratic and were most likely headed by a priest-king (ensi), assisted by a council of elders, including both men and women. [53] It is quite
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possible that the later Sumerian pantheon was modeled upon this political structure. There was little evidence of organized warfare or professional soldiers during the Uruk period, and towns were generally unwalled. During this period Uruk became the most urbanized city in the world, surpassing for the first time 50,000 inhabitants. The ancient

Sumerian king list includes the early dynasties of several prominent cities from this period. The first set of names on the list is of kings said to have reigned before a major flood occurred. These early names may be fictional, and include some legendary and mythological figures, such as Alulim and Dumizid. [53] The end of the Uruk period coincided with the Piora oscillation, a dry period from c. 3200-2900 BC that marked the end of a long wetter, warmer climate period (Mesopotamia) and First Dynasty of Ur Golden helmet of Meskalamdug, possible founder of the First Dynasty of Ur, 26th

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century BC The dynastic period begins c. 2900 BC and was associated with a shift from the temple establishment headed by a male figure when it was a temple for a goddess, or a female figure when headed by a male figure when it was a temple for a goddess, or a female figure when headed by a male figure when it was a temple for a goddess, or a female figure when headed by a male figure when headed by a male figure when headed by a male figure when it was a temple for a goddess, or a female figure when headed by a male figure when head
patriarchal figures as Dumuzid, Lugalbanda and Gilgamesh—who reigned shortly before the historic record opens c. 2900 BC, when the now deciphered syllabic writing started to develop from the early pictograms. The center of Sumerian culture remained in southern Mesopotamia, even though rulers soon began expanding into neighboring areas, and the center of Sumerian culture remained in southern Mesopotamia, even though rulers soon began expanding into neighboring areas, and the center of Sumerian culture remained in southern Mesopotamia, even though rulers soon began expanding into neighboring areas, and the center of Sumerian culture remained in southern Mesopotamia, even though rulers soon began expanding into neighboring areas, and the center of Sumerian culture remained in southern Mesopotamia, even though rulers soon began expanding into neighboring areas, and the center of Sumerian culture remained in southern Mesopotamia, even though rulers soon began expanding into neighboring areas, and the center of Sumerian culture remained in southern Mesopotamia, even though rulers soon began expanding into neighboring areas, and the center of Sumerian culture remained in southern Mesopotamia, even though rulers are soon began expanding and the context of the context o
neighboring Semitic groups adopted much of Sumerian culture for their own. The earliest dynastic king on the Sumerian king list whose name is known from any other legendary source is Etana, 13th king of the first dynastic I), whose name is
mentioned in the Epic of Gilgamesh—leading to the suggestion that Gilgamesh himself might have been a historical king of Uruk. As the Epic of Gilgamesh shows, this period was associated with increased war. Cities became walled, and increased in size as undefended villages in southern Mesopotamia disappeared. Both Gilgamesh and one of his
predecessors Enmerkar are credited with having built the walls of Uruk.[56] A fragment of Eannatum's Stele of the Vultures Main article: Lagash The dynasty of Lagash (c. 2500-2270 BC), though omitted from the king list, is well attested through several important monuments and many archaeological finds. Although short-lived, one of the first empire.
 known to history was that of Eannatum of Lagash, who annexed practically all of Sumer, including Kish, Uruk, Ur, and Larsa, and reduced to tribute the city-state of Umma, arch-rival of Lagash. In addition, his realm extended to parts of Elam and along the Persian Gulf. He seems to have used terror as a matter of policy. [57] Eannatum's Stele of the
Vultures depicts vultures pecking at the severed heads and other body parts of his enemies. His empire collapsed shortly after his death. Later, Lugal-zage-si, the priest-king of Umma, overthrew the primacy of the Lagash dynasty in the area, then conquered Uruk, making it his capital, and claimed an empire extending from the Persian Gulf to the
Mediterranean. He was the last ethnically Sumerian king Sargon of Akkadian Empire Sumerian prisoners on a victory stele of the Akkadian Empire Sumerian prisoners on a victory stele of the Akkadian Empire Sumerian prisoners on a victory stele of the Akkadian Empire Sumerian king Sargon of Akkad. The Eastern Semitic Akkadian Empire Sumerian prisoners on a victory stele of the Akkadian Empire Sumerian king Sargon of Akkad. The Eastern Semitic Akkadian Empire Sumerian king Sargon of Akkad.
language is first attested in proper names of the kings of Kish c. 2800 BC, [57] preserved in later king lists. There are texts written entirely in Old Akkadian dating from c. 2500 BC. Use of Old Akkadian was at its peak during the rule of Sargon the Great (c. 2334-2279 BC), 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 empire, and that of the pre-Sargonic era, that of the pre-Sargonic era, that of the Akkadian empire, and that of the pre-Sargonic era, that of the Dr III period that followed it.[58] Akkadian empire, and that of the pre-Sargonic era, that of the pre-Sargonic era, that of the Dr III period that followed it.[58] Akkadian empire, and that of the pre-Sargonic era, 
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-Sargon periods, and that too much emphasis has been placed on the perception of a "Semitic vs. Sumerian" conflict. [58] 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 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
with the resurgence of the Akkadian-speaking Semites in Assyria and elsewhere, and the influx of waves of Semitic Martu (Amorites), who founded several competing local powers in the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylonian Empire, justing the south of Mesopotamia as the Babylon
as the Old Assyrian Empire had already done in the north from the late 21st century BC. 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 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, 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 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
dominated Assyria and Babylonia occasionally assumed the old Sargonic title "King of Sumer and Akkad", such as Tukulti-Ninurta I of Assyria after c. 1225 BC. Uruk, one of Sumer, and the large agricultural population, a rough
estimate for Sumer's population might be 0.8 million to 1.5 million. The world population at this time has been estimated at 27 million. [63] The Great Ziggurat of Ur, c. 2100 BC, near Nasiriyah, Iraq The Sumerians spoke a language isolate. A number of linguists have claimed to be able to detect a substrate language of unknown classification beneath
Sumerian, because names of some of Sumer's major cities are not Sumerian, revealing influences of earlier inhabitants. [64] However, the archaeological record shows clear uninterrupted cultural continuity from the time of the early Ubaid period (5300-4700 BC C-14) settlements in southern Mesopotamia. The Sumerian people who settled here, farmed
the lands in this region that were made fertile by silt deposited by the Tigris and the Euphrates. Some archaeologists have speculated that the original speakers of ancient Sumerian may have been farmers, who moved down from the north of Mesopotamia has
been connected via Choga Mami transitional ware, to the pottery of the Samarra period culture (c. 5700-4900 BC C-14) in the north, who were the first to practice a primitive form of irrigation agriculture along the middle Tigris River and its tributaries. The connection is most clearly seen at Tell el-'Oueili near Larsa, excavated by the French in the 1980s,
where eight levels yielded pre-Ubaid pottery resembling Samarran ware. According to this theory, farming peoples spread down into southern Mesopotamia because they had developed a temple-centered social organization for mobilizing labor and technology for water control, enabling them to survive and prosper in a difficult environment.[citation
needed] Others have suggested a continuity of Sumerians, from the indigenous hunter-fisherfolk traditions, associated with the bifacial assemblages found on the Arabian littoral. Juris Zarins believes the Sumerians may have been the people living in the Persian Gulf region before it flooded at the end of the last Ice Age.[citation needed] A reconstruction in
the British Museum of headgear and necklaces worn by the women at the Royal Cemetery at Ur. In the early Sumerian period, the primitive pictograms suggest[65] that "Pottery was very plentiful, and the forms of the vases, bowls and dishes were manifold; there were special jars for honey, butter, oil and wine, which was probably made from dates. Some
of the vases had pointed feet, and stood on stands with crossed legs; others were flat-bottomed, and were set on square or rectangular frames of wood. The oil-jars, and probably others also, were sealed with clay, precisely as in early Egypt. Vases and dishes of stone were made in imitation of those of clay." "A feathered head-dress was worn. Beds, stools
and chairs were used, with carved legs resembling those of an ox. There were fire-places and fire-altars." "Knives, drills, wedges and an instrument that looks like a saw were all known. While spears, bows, arrows, and daggers (but not swords) were employed in war." "Tablets were used for writing purposes. Daggers with metal blades and wooden handless
were worn, and copper was hammered into plates, while necklaces or collars were made of gold." "Time was reckoned in lunar months." There is considerable evidence concerning Sumerian music. Lyres and flutes were played, among the best-known examples being the Lyres of Ur.[66] Sumerian music. Lyres and flutes were played, among the best-known examples being the Lyres of Ur.[66] Sumerian music.
Nammu, the oldest such codification yet discovered, dating to the Ur III, reveals a glimpse at societal structure in late Sumerian law. Beneath the lu-gal ("great man" or king), all members of society belonged to one of two basic strata: The "lu" or free person, and the slave (male, arad; female geme). The son of a lu was called a dumu-nita until he married. As
woman (munus) went from being a daughter (dumu-mi), to a wife (dam), then if she outlived her husband, a widow (numasu) and she could then remarry another man who was from the same tribe. [citation needed] In early Sumer women played an important public rule as priestesses. They could also own property, transact business and had their rights
protected by the courts. Sons and daughters inherited property on equal terms. The status of women deteriorated in the centuries after 2300 BC. Their right to dispose of their property was limited, and the female deities also lost their former importance. [67][68] Inscriptions describing the reforms of king Urukagina of Lagash (c. 2350 BC) say that he
abolished the former custom of polyandry in his country, prescribing that a woman who took multiple husbands be stoned with rocks upon which her crime had been written. [69] Sumerian princess of the time of Gudea c. 2150 BC. Frontal detail. Louvre Museum AO 295. Marriages were usually arranged by the parents of the time of Gudea c. 2150 BC. Frontal detail.
bride and groom; [70]: 78 engagements were usually completed through the approval of contracts recorded on clay tablets. [70]: 78 One Sumerian proverb describes the ideal, happy marriage, through the mouth of a husband, who boasts that his wife has
borne him eight sons and is still eager to have sex.[71] The Sumerians considered it desirable for women to still be virgins at the time of marriage,[72]:100-101 but did not expect the same of men,[72]:100-101 but did not 
corresponding to the English word 'virginity', and the concept was expressed descriptively, for example as a/é-nu-gi4-a (Sum.)/la nagbat (Akk.) 'un-deflowered', or giš nunzua, 'never having known a penis'.[72]:91-93 It is unclear whether terms such as šišitu in Akkadian medical texts indicate the hymen, but it appears that the intactness of the hymen was
much less relevant to assessing a woman's virginity than in later cultures of the Near East. Most assessments of virginity depended on the woman's own account.[72]:91-92 From the earliest records, the Sumerians had very relaxed attitudes toward sex.[74] Their sexual mores were determined not by whether a sexual act was deemed immoral, but rather
by whether or not it made a person ritually unclean. [74] The Sumerians widely believed that masturbation enhanced sexual potency, both for men and for women, [74] and they frequently engaged in it, both alone and with their partners. [74] The Sumerians did not regard anal sex as taboo either. [74] Enture priestesses were forbidden from producing
offspring[75][71] and frequently engaged in anal sex as a method of birth control.[75][need quotation to verify][74][unreliable source?][71][failed verification] Prostitution existed, but it is not clear if sacred prostitution did.[76]:151 Main articles: Sumerian language and Cuneiform Further information: History of writing A tablet with pictographic pre-
cuneiform writing. Late 4th millennium BC, limestone. Height: 4.5 cm, width: 4.5 cm, depth: 2.4 cm. The Louvre The most important archaeological discoveries in Sumer are a large number of clay tablets written in cuneiform script. Sumerian writing is considered to be a great milestone in the development of humanity's ability to not only create historical
records but also in creating pieces of literature, both in the form of poetic epics and stories as well as prayers and laws. Although the writing system was first hieroglyphic using ideograms, logosyllabic cuneiform soon followed. [citation needed] Triangular or wedge-shaped reeds were used to write on moist clay. A large body of hundreds of thousands of
texts in the Sumerian language have survived, including personal and business letters, receipts, lexical lists, laws, hymns, prayers, stories, and daily records. Full libraries of clay tablets have been found. Monumental inscriptions and texts on different objects, like statues or bricks, are also very common. Many texts survive in multiple copies because they
were repeatedly transcribed by scribes in training. Sumerian continued to be the language of religion and law in Mesopotamia long after Semitic speakers had become dominant. A prime example of cuneiform writing is a lengthy poem that was discovered in the ruins of Uruk. The Epic of Gilgamesh was written in the standard Sumerian cuneiform. It tells
of a king from the early Dynastic II period named Gilgamesh or "Bilgamesh" in Sumerian. The story relates the fictional adventures of Gilgamesh and his companion, Enkidu. It was laid out on several clay tablets and is thought to be the earliest known surviving example of fictional literature. The Sumerian language is generally regarded as a language
isolate in linguistics, because it belongs to no known language family. Akkadian, by contrast, belongs to the Semitic branch of the Afroasiatic languages. There have been many failed attempts to connect Sumerian to other language families. It is an agglutinative language. In other words, morphemes ("units of meaning") are added together to create words
unlike analytic languages where morphemes are purely added together to create sentences. Some authors have proposed that there may be evidence of a substratum or adstratum language for geographic features and various crafts and agricultural activities, called variously Proto-Euphratean or Proto Tigrean, but this is disputed by others. Understanding
Sumerian texts today can be problematic. Most difficult are the earliest texts, which in many cases do not give the full grammatical structure of the language and seem to have been used as an "aide-mémoire" for knowledgeable scribes. [77] Akkadian gradually replaced Sumerian as a spoken language somewhere around the turn of the 3rd and the 2nd
millennium BC.[78] Sumerian continued to be used as a sacred, ceremonial, literary, and scientific language in Babylonia and Assyria until the 1st century AD.[79] An early writing tablet for recording the allocation of beer, 3100-3000 BC, from Iraq. British Museum, London A cuneiform tablet about an administrative account, with entries concerning malt
and barley groats, 3100-2900 BC. Clay, 6.8 x 4.5 x 1.6 cm, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City A bill of sale of a field and a house, from Shuruppak, c. 2450 BC, limestone, Found in 1881 by Édouard de Sarzec in Girsu, now Tell Telloh, Iraq. The Louvre
Main article: Sumerian religion Sumerian religion Sumerian religion Sumerian religion Wall plaque showing libations to a seated god and a temple. Ur, 2500 BC The Sumerians credited their divinities for all matters pertaining to them and exhibited humility in the face of cosmic forces, such as death and divine wrath.
[70]: 3-4 Sumerian religion seems to have been founded upon two separate cosmogenic myths. The first saw creation as the result of a series of hieroi gamoi or sacred marriages, involving the reconciliation of opposites, postulated as a coming together of male and female divine beings, the gods. This pattern continued to influence regional Mesopotamian
myths. Thus, in the later Akkadian Enuma Elish, creation was seen as the union of fresh and salt water, between male Abzu, and female Tiamat. The products of that union, Lahm and Lahmu, "the muddy ones", were titles given to the gate keepers of the E-Abzu temple of Enki in Eridu, the first Sumerian city. Mirroring the way that muddy islands emerge
from the confluence of fresh and salty water at the mouth of the Euphrates, where the river deposits its load of silt, a second hieros gamos supposedly resulted in the creation of Anshar and Kishar, the "sky-pivot" (or axle), and the "earth pivot", parents in turn of Anu (the sky) and Ki (the earth). Another important Sumerian hieros gamos was that between
Ki, here known as Ninhursag or "Lady of the Mountains", and Enki of Eridu, the god of fresh water which brought forth greenery and pasture. At an early stage, following the dawn of recorded history, Nippur, in central Mesopotamia, replaced Eridu in the south as the primary temple city, whose priests exercised political hegemony on the other city-states
Nippur retained this status throughout the Sumerian period. Akkadian cylinder seal from sometime around 2300 BC or thereabouts depicting the deities Inanna, Utu, Enki, and Isimud Sumerians believed in an anthropomorphic polytheism, or the belief in many gods in human form. There was no common set of gods; each city-state had its own patrons,
temples, and priest-kings. Nonetheless, these were not exclusive; the gods of one city were often acknowledged elsewhere. Sumerian speakers were among the earliest people to record their beliefs in writing, and were a major inspiration in later Mesopotamian mythology, religion, and astrology. The Sumerians worshiped: An as the full-time god
equivalent to heaven; indeed, the word an in Sumerian means sky and his consort Ki, means earth. Enki in the south at the temple in Eridu. Enki was the god of beneficence and of wisdom, ruler of the freshwater depths beneath the earth, a healer and friend to humanity who in Sumerian myth was thought to have given humans the arts and sciences, the
industries and manners of civilization; the first law book was considered his creation. Enlil was the god of storm, wind, and rain.[80]: 108 He was the goddess of the south wind.[83]: 106 Inanna was the goddess of love, sexuality,
and war; [76]: 109 the deification of Venus, the morning (eastern) and evening (western) star, at the temple (shared with An) at Uruk. Deified kings may have re-enacted the marriage of Inanna and Dumuzid with priestesses. [76]: 151, 157-158 The sun-god Utu at Larsa in the south and Sippar in the morning (eastern) and evening (western) star, at the temple (shared with An) at Uruk. Deified kings may have re-enacted the marriage of Inanna and Dumuzid with priestesses.
pantheon These deities formed the main pantheon, and in addition to this there were hundreds of other minor gods. Sumerian gods were often associated with different cities, and their religious importance often waxed and waned with those cities' political power. The gods were said to have created human beings from clay for the purpose of serving them
The temples organized the mass labour projects needed for irrigation agriculture. Citizens had a labor duty to the temple, though they could avoid it by a payment of silver. Sumerian afterlife involved a descent into a gloomy netherworld to spend eternity in a wretched
existence as a Gidim (ghost).[84] The universe was divided into four quarters: To the north were the hill-dwelling Subartu, who were periodically raided for slaves, timber, and other raw materials.[85] To the west were the tent-dwelling Martu, ancient Semitic-speaking peoples living as pastoral nomads tending herds of sheep and goats. To the south was
the land of Dilmun, a trading state associated with the land of the dead and the place of creation. [86] To the east were frequently at war. Their known world extended from The Upper Sea or Mediterranean coastline, to The Lower Sea, the Persian Gulf and the land of Meluhha (probably the Industrial Sea).
Valley) and Magan (Oman), famed for its copper ores. Ziggurats (Sumerian temples) each had an individual name and contained a forecourt with a central pond for purification.[87] The temple itself had a central nave with aisles along either side. Flanking the aisles were rooms for the priests. At one end stood a podium and a mudbrick table for animal and contained 
vegetable sacrifices. Granaries and storehouses were usually located near the temples. After a time the Sumerians began to place the temples on top of multi-layered square constructions built as a series of rising terraces, giving rise to the Ziggurat style. [88] It was believed that when people died, they would be confined to a gloomy world of Ereshkigal,
whose realm was guarded by gateways with various monsters designed to prevent people entering or leaving. The dead were buried outside the city walls in graveyards where a small mound covered the corpse, along with offerings to monsters and a small amount of food. Those who could afford it sought burial at Dilmun. [86] Human sacrifice was found in
the death pits at the Ur royal cemetery where Queen Puabi was accompanied in death by her servants. Further information: Agriculture in Mesopotamia The Sumerians adopted an agricultural techniques, including organized irrigation, large-scale
intensive cultivation of land, monocropping involving the use of plough agricultural specialized labour force under bureaucratic control. The necessity to manage temple accounts with this organization led to the development of writing (c. 3500 BC). From the royal tombs of Ur, made of lapis lazuli and shell, shows peacetime In
the early Sumerian Uruk period, the primitive pictograms suggest that sheep, goats, cattle, and pigs were domesticated. They used oxen as their primary transport animal and "woollen clothing as well as rugs were made from the wool or hair of the animals. ... By the side of the house was an
enclosed garden planted with trees and other plants; wheat and probably other cereals were sown in the fields, and the shaduf was already employed for the purpose of irrigation. Plants were also grown in pots or vases."[65] An account of barley rations issued monthly to adults and children written in cuneiform script on a clay tablet, written in year 4 of
King Urukagina, c. 2350 BC The Sumerians were one of the first known beer-drinking societies. Cereals were plentiful and were the key ingredient in their early brew. They brewed multiple kinds of beer consisting of wheat, barley, and mixed grain beers. Beer brewing was very important to the Sumerians. It was referenced in the Epic of Gilgamesh when
Enkidu was introduced to the food and beer of Gilgamesh's people: "Drink the beer, as is the custom of the land... He drank the beer-seven jugs! and became expansive and sang with joy!"[89] The Sumerians practiced similar irrigation techniques as those used in Egypt.[90] American anthropologist Robert McCormick Adams says that irrigation
development was associated with urbanization,[91] and that 89% of the population lived in the cities. They grew barley, chickpeas, lentils, wheat, dates, onions, garlic, lettuce, leeks and mustard. Sumerians caught many fish and hunted fowl and gazelle.[92] Sumerian agriculture depended heavily on irrigation. The irrigation was accomplished by the use of
shaduf, canals, channels, dykes, weirs, and reservoirs. The frequent violent floods of the Euphrates, meant that canals required frequent repair and continually replaced. The government required individuals to work on the canals in a corvée, although
the rich were able to exempt themselves. As is known from the "Sumerian Farmer's Almanac", after the flood season and then drain the water. Next they made oxen stomp the ground and kill weeds. They then dragged the fields with pickaxes
After drying, they plowed, harrowed, and raked the ground three times, and pulverized it with a mattock, before planting seed. Unfortunately, the high evaporation rate resulted in a gradual increase in the salinity of the fields. By the Ur III period, farmers had switched from wheat to the more salt-tolerant barley as their principal crop. Sumerians
harvested during the spring in three-person teams consisting of a reaper, a binder, and a sheaf handler. [93] The farmers would use threshing sleds to disengage the grain. They then winnowed the grain/chaff mixture. See also: Stele of the Vultures and Royal
Cemetery at Ur Gold dagger from Sumerian tomb PG 580, Royal Cemetery at Ur. The Sumerians were great artists. Sumerian artefacts show great detail and ornamentation, with fine semi-precious stones imported from other lands, such as lapis lazuli, marble, and diorite, and precious metals like hammered gold, incorporated into the design. Since stones
was rare it was reserved for sculpture. The most widespread material in Sumer was clay, as a result many Sumerian objects are made of clay. Metals such as gold, silver, copper, and bronze, along with shells and gemstones, were used for the finest sculptures and inlays. Small stones of all kinds, including more precious stones such as lapis lazuli,
alabaster, and serpentine, were used for cylinder seals. Some of the most famous masterpieces are the Lyres of Ur, which are considered to be the world's oldest surviving stringed instruments. They were discovered by Leonard Woolley when the Royal Cemetery of Ur was excavated between 1922 and 1934. Cylinder seal and impression in which appears a
red limestone and lapis lazuli on wood; length: 49.5 cm; from the Royal Cemetery at Ur; British Museum of Art Main articles: Sumerian architecture, Ziggurat, and Mudhif See also: Clay nail The Great Ziggurat
of Ur (Dhi Qar Governorate, Iraq), built during the Third Dynasty of Ur (c. 2100 BC), dedicated to the moon god Nanna The Tigris-Euphrates plain lacked minerals and trees. Sumerian structures were made of plano-convex mudbrick, not fixed with mortar or cement. Mud-brick buildings eventually deteriorate, so they were periodically destroyed, leveled,
but was already cut into blocks and seals. Brick was the ordinary building material, and with it cities, forts, temples and houses were constructed. The city was provided with a door which turned on a hinge, and could be opened with a sort of key;
houses built from reeds not unlike those built by the Marsh Arabs of Southern Iraq until as recently as 400 CE. The Sumerians also developed the arch, which enabled them to develop a strong type of dome. They built this by constructing and linking several arches. Sumerian temples and palaces made use of more advanced materials and techniques, such
as buttresses, recesses, half columns, and clay nails. Main article: Babylonian mathematics The Sumerians developed a complex system of metrology c. 4000 BC onwards, the Sumerians wrote multiplication tables on clay tablets and dealt with
geometrical exercises and division problems. The earliest traces of the Babylonian numerals also date back to this period c. 2700-2300 BC saw the first appearance of the abacus, and a table of successive columns which delimited the successive orders of magnitude of their sexagesimal number system. [95] The Sumerians were the first to
 use a place value numeral system. There is also anecdotal evidence the Sumerians may have used a type of slide rule in astronomical calculations. They were the first to find the area of a triangle and the volume of a cube. [96] Main article: Economy of Sumer Bill of sale of a male slave and a building in Shuruppak, Sumerian tablet, c. 2600 BC Discoveries of
 obsidian from far-away locations in Anatolia and lapis lazuli from Badakhshan in northeastern Afghanistan, beads from Dilmun (modern Bahrain), and several seals inscribed with the Indus Valley script suggest a remarkably wide-ranging network of ancient trade centered on the Persian Gulf. For example, Imports to Ur came from many parts of the world
In particular, the metals of all types had to be imported. The Epic of Gilgamesh refers to trade with far lands for goods, such as wood, that were scarce in Mesopotamia. In particular, cedar from Lebanon was prized. The finding of resin in the tomb of Queen Puabi at Ur, indicates it was traded from as far away as Mozambique. The Sumerians used slaves,
although they were not a major part of the economy. Slave women worked as weavers, pressers, millers, and porters.[citation needed] Sumerian potters decorated pots with cedar oil paints. The potters used a bow drill to produce the fire needed for baking the pottery. Sumerian masons and jewelers knew and made use of alabaster (calcite), ivory, iron,
gold, silver, carnelian, and lapis lazuli.[97] Main article: Indus-Mesopotamia relations The etched carnelian beads with white designs in this necklace from the Royal Cemetery of Ur, dating to the First Dynasty of Ur, are thought to have been designs in this necklace from the Royal Cemetery of Ur, dating to the First Dynasty of Ur, are thought to have been designs in this necklace from the Royal Cemetery of Ur, dating to the First Dynasty of Ur, are thought to have been designs in this necklace from the Royal Cemetery of Ur, dating to the First Dynasty of Ur, are thought to have been designs in this necklace from the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in this necklace from the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in this necklace from the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in this necklace from the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in this necklace from the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in this necklace from the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in this necklace from the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in this necklace from the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in this necklace from the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are thought to have been designs in the Royal Cemetery of Ur, are tho
 significantly shorter due to lower sea levels in the 3rd millennium BC.[99] Evidence for imports from the Indus to Ur can be found from around 2350 BC.[100] Various objects made with shell species that are characteristic of the Indus to Ur can be found from around 2350 BC.[100] Various objects made with shell species that are characteristic of the Indus coast, particularly Turbinella pyrum and Pleuroploca trapezium, have been found in the archaeological sites of
Mesopotamia dating from around 2500-2000 BC.[101] Carnelian beads from the Indus were found in the Sumerian tombs of Ur, the Royal Cemetery at Ur, dating to 2600-2450.[102] In particular, carnelian beads with an etched design in white were probably imported from the Indus Valley, and made according to a technique of acid-etching developed by
the Harappans.[103][98][104] Lapis lazuli was imported in great quantity by Egypt, and already used in many tombs of the Naqada II period (c. 3200 BC). Lapis lazuli probably originated in northern Afghanistan, as no other sources are known, and had to be transported across the Iranian plateau to Mesopotamia, and then Egypt.[105][106] Several Indus
seals with Harappan script have also been found in Mesopotamia, particularly in Ur, Babylon and Kish.[107][108][109][110][111][112] Gudea, the ruler of the Neo-Sumerian Empire at Lagash, is recorded as having imported "translucent carnelian" from Meluhha, generally thought to be the Indus Valley area.[102] Various inscriptions also mention the
presence of Meluhha traders and interpreters in Mesopotamia.[102] About twenty seals have been found from the Akkadian and Ur III sites, that have connections with Harappa and often use Harappa and 
exchanges, it was a much larger entity than the Mesopotamian civilization, covering an area of 1.2 million square kilometers with thousands of settlements, compared to an area of only about 65.000 square kilometers with thousands of settlements, compared to an area of only about 65.000 inhabitants.[113] Large
institutions kept their accounts in barley and silver, often with a fixed rate between them. The obligations, loans and prices in general were usually denominated in one of them. Many transactions involved debt, for example goods consigned to merchants by temple and beer advanced by "ale women".[114] Commercial credit and agricultural consumer
loans were the main types of loans. The trade credit was usually extended by temples in order to finance trade expeditions and was nominated in silver. The interest rate was set at 1/60 a month (one shekel per mina) some time before 2000 BC and it remained at that level for about two thousand years.[114] Rural loans commonly arose as a result of unpaid
obligations due to an institution (such as a temple), in this case the arrears were considered to be lent to the debtor.[115] They were denominated in barley or other crops and the interest rate was typically much higher than for commercial loans and could amount to 1/3 to 1/2 of the loan principal.[114] Periodically, rulers signed "clean slate" decrees that
cancelled all the rural (but not commercial) debt and allowed bondservants to return to their homes. Customarily, rulers did it at the beginning of the first known ones were made by Enmetena and Urukagina of Lagash in 2400-2350 BC. According to the first full year of their reign, but they could also be proclaimed at times of military conflict or crop failure. The first known ones were made by Enmetena and Urukagina of Lagash in 2400-2350 BC. According to the first full year of their reign, but they could also be proclaimed at times of military conflict or crop failure.
to Hudson, the purpose of these decrees was to prevent debts mounting to a degree that they threatened the fighting force, which could happen if peasants lost their subsistence land or became bondservants due to inability to repay their debt.[114] Early chariots on the Standard of Ur, c. 2600 BC Phalanx battle formations led by Sumerian king Eannatum
on a fragment of the Stele of the Vultures Silver model of a boat, tomb PG 789, Royal Cemetery of Ur, 2600-2500 BC The almost constant wars among the Sumer to a high level.[116] The first war recorded in any detail was between Lagash and Umma in c.
2450 BC on a stele called the Stele of the Vultures. It shows the king of Lagash leading a Sumerian army consisting mostly of infantry. The infantry carried spears, wore copper helmets, and carried rectangular shields. The spearmen are shown arranged in what resembles the phalanx formation, which requires training and discipline; this implies that the
Sumerians may have used professional soldiers.[117] The Sumerian military used carts harnessed to onagers. These early chariots functioned less effectively in combat than did later designs, and some have suggested that these chariots functioned less effectively in combat than did later designs, and some have suggested that these chariots functioned less effectively in combat than did later designs, and some have suggested that these chariots functioned less effectively in combat than did later designs, and some have suggested that these chariots functioned less effectively in combat than did later designs, and some have suggested that these chariots functioned less effectively in combat than did later designs, and some have suggested that these chariots functioned less effectively in combat than did later designs, and some have suggested that these chariots functioned less effectively in combat than did later designs, and some have suggested that these chariots functioned less effectively in combat than did later designs, and some have suggested that these chariots functioned less effectively in combat than did later designs, and some have suggested that these chariots functioned less effectively in combat than did later designs, and some have suggested that the suggested that the suggested in the suggested less effectively in combat that the suggested in the suggested less effectively in the suggested less eff
or two-wheeled device manned by a crew of two and harnessed to four onagers. The cart was composed of a woven basket and the wheels had a solid three-piece design. Sumerian cities were able to deter some foes. Examples of
Sumerian technology include: the wheel, cuneiform script, arithmetic and geometry, irrigation systems, Sumerian boats, lunisolar calendar, bronze, leather, saws, chisels, hammers, braces, bits, nails, pins, rings, hoes, axes, knives, lancepoints, arrowheads, swords, glue, daggers, waterskins, bags, harnesses, armor, quivers, war chariots, scabbards, boots,
munINDUSVALLEYCIVILIZATIONC orded\ Ware Culture Sarazmculture Botaiculture Botaic
wheeled vehicles appeared in the mid-4th millennium BC, near-simultaneously in Mesopotamia, the Northern Caucasus (Maykop culture) and Central Europe. The wheel initially took the form of the potter's wheel. The new concept led to wheeled vehicles and mill wheels. The Sumerians' cuneiform script is the oldest (or second oldest after the Egyptian
hieroglyphs) which has been deciphered (the status of even older inscriptions such as the Jiahu symbols and Tartaria tablets is controversial). The Sumerians were among the first astronomers, mapping the stars into sets of constellations, many of which survived in the zodiac and were also recognized by the ancient Greeks.[118][unreliable source] They
were also aware of the five planets that are easily visible to the naked eye.[119] They invented and developed arithmetic by using several different number system became the standard number system in Sumer and Babylonia. They may have invented military
formations and introduced the basic divisions between infantry, cavalry, and archers. They developed the first known codified legal and administrative systems, complete with courts, jails, and government records. The first true city-states arose in Sumer, roughly contemporaneously with similar entities in what are now Syria and Lebanon. Several
centuries after the invention of cuneiform, the use of writing expanded beyond debt/payment certificates and inventory lists to be applied for the first time, about 2600 BC, to messages and mail delivery, history, legend, mathematics, astronomical records, and other pursuits. Conjointly with the spread of writing, the first formal schools were established
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work with several other projects in the development of tools and corpora. [Two] of these have useful websites; the CDLI and the ETCSL. 32°N 46°E / 32°
floodplains between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in present-day Iraq and Syria. The Sumerians learned to farm on a grand scale in the so-called Fertile Crescent, a thin, crescent-shaped sliver of Mesopotamia often tied to the dawn of farming, writing, mathematics and astronomy. And while the arid, ancient landscapes of the Middle East may not seem
like the most likely location for an agricultural breakthrough, Sumer actually had a massive advantage. By settling between two large rivers, the Sumerians benefited from rich floodplain soil and ample water to irrigate crops. Their success was accelerated by Sumerian technological innovations like canals and plows. With time, Sumer got so good at
growing food that they started to have enough resources left over to focus on building the cities and temples. Archaeologists walk the Sumerian city of Kish during excavations in 1932. (Credit: Matson Collection-Library of Congress Catalog/Wikimedia Commons) Emergence of Sumerian city of Kish during excavations in 1932. (Credit: Matson Collection-Library of Congress Catalog/Wikimedia Commons) Emergence of Sumerian city of Kish during excavations in 1932.
Mesopotamia. The people who lived in the region raised animals and grew grains, even as they continued to hunt and gather. Over time, those villages expanded and their people became increasingly dependent on farming. Archaeologists still aren't sure exactly what life was like for these early cultures. However, similarities in pottery styles and stamp
seals placed on a variety of containers suggests some level of administrative control emerged between 6,000 and 7,000 years ago. Meanwhile, people started constructing a series of temples using mud bricks at a site called Eridu. The city seems to have been founded around 5400 B.C. and it was occupied for thousands of years until it was finally
abandoned for good around 600 B.C. Eridu's status was legendary even in ancient times. Babylonians actually believed that Eridu was the oldest city on Earth, having been created by the gods themselves. That kind of reverence attracted modern researchers, too. Even before archaeologists discovered Eridu, they had read about its existence in ancient
texts. "After kinship had descended from heaven, Eridu became (the seat) of kingship," one Sumerian tablet reads. The area around Eridu was excavated a handful of times between the mid-19th century, turning up the remains of a once-sprawling metropolis that saw successive buildings constructed on the remains of temples and
other structures that had come before. Those digs did confirm Eridu as a real and truly ancient metropolis. At around 7,400 years old, Eridu is among humanity's oldest cities, but nowhere near the oldest. The current favorite contender for Earth's first city is Catalhöyük, which sat just north of the commonly accepted edge of the Fertile Crescent in
modern-day Turkey. Çatalhöyük was founded 9,600 years ago and also survived for millennia, disappearing just centuries before Eridu was founded. However, Eridu was founded in size, Sumer emerged as one of the world's first
great agricultural societies. In time, Eridu would fade in influence and Uruk would take on an outsized role. At its height some 4,800 years ago, Uruk was the largest city in the world. Some estimates suggest the city held as many as 80,000 people at a time when the total human population was somewhere around 15 million. A map of the cities of ancient
Sumer, which covered much of modern-day Iraq. (Credit: Wikimedia Commons) Sumerian Technological Innovations was one of the key factors in the Sumerians' efforts to turn the desert into an oasis. And one of their most beneficial innovations was also among the simplest: the plow. The first plow appeared about 3500 B.C. And by 1500 B.C.,
the Sumerians had also invented a seeder plow, which let farmers use beasts of burden to till and plant at the same time. The devices even came with instructions, courtesy of the Sumerian Farmer's Almanac, which told farmers how to boost their crop yields thanks to tilling and irrigation. All the efficiencies helped support a growing population, as well as
a growing system of rulers and religion. And as their cities grew, so did their efforts in writing, math and developed cuneiform, one of the earliest forms of writing. Sumerian inscriptions on clay and stone tracked the trade and movement of grain and other goods, recorded Sumerian history, and
even included cooking recipes and pornography. Thousands of Sumerian tablets still sit awaiting translation in museums around the world. The Sumerians also invented or utilized a wide-array of other more modern seeming innovations like wheeled chariots, the 60-minute hour, and even possibly the first written work of literature — The Epic of
Gilgamesh. These proto-cuneiform tablets were discovered at the Sumerian city of Uruk. (Credit: CDLI:Wiki)One clay tablet discovered at Eridu, as well as others found elsewhere in Sumer, also tells a flood story about a deluge that mirrors the one found in the Bible's Old Testament. Biblical historians call it "The Eridu Genesis" story. According to the
tablets, it was the gods who first told humans to take up living in cities in Sumer. But eventually, the gods decided to wipe out the human race with a deluge. According to the myth, one particular god, Enki, tipped off a Sumerian king named Ziusudra that he should build a boat to save his people. The idea that the flood story would've been passed down
from the Sumerians makes sense for other reasons, too. In modern times, Sumer has captivated everyone from archaeologists to ancient alien conspiracy theorists. But the fascination with Sumerian society goes back much further in human history. Both the Babylonian and Assyrian empires, which rose to control parts of the Middle East as Sumer faded
away, continued using the Sumerian language in their religious rituals for millennia. Excavations of Babylonians, who created the first star maps, seem to have inherited some of their knowledge of astronomy from the
Sumerians as well. The Babylonian people had two sets of constellations — one for tracking farming dates and another to recognize the gods. The latter was passed onto us today thanks to the Sumerian people, implying this
ancient civilization had a seriously sophisticated knowledge of much more than the Earth below their feet. So, while the Sumerians may have disappeared thousands of years ago, their influence and intrigue has continued on into the present, shaping aspects of modern society we all take for granted today. The Mysterious Origin of the Sumerians:
Unraveling the Puzzle of Ancient Civilization The Sumerians, an ancient people who laid the foundations of civilization in Mesopotamia, have long been a subject of fascination and debate among historians and archaeologists. Known for their remarkable advancements in writing, city-building, the development of the calendar, and time-keeping systems, the
Sumerians' contributions to human history are indisputable. However, the origins of these early Mesopotamian settlers remain shrouded in mystery, sparking ongoing debates and research aimed at piecing together the puzzle of this ancient civilization. Early Settlers and Innovators are credited with the development of one of the first fully
developed writing systems capable of representing language in complete sentences. This breakthrough in communication underpins much of what is known about early human societies and their evolution. Additionally, they built some of the earliest cities known to man and created the fundamental timekeeping and calendar systems that are still in use
today, demonstrating their architectural prowess. Debating Sumerian OriginsThe quest to understand where the Sumerians came from has led scholars to scour Sumerians based on physical characteristics, such as skull shapes, and iconographic evidence.
However, the racial profiling of Sumerian origins proved inconclusive, as the iconographical representations found across Mesopotamia were highly conventionalized and did not correspond with osteological data. Moreover, efforts to connect the Sumerian language families have consistently failed, adding layers of complexity to the
debate over their origins. Contrary to attempts at racial categorization, the Sumerian culture appears not to have been linked to a specific race. Interestingly, the Sumerian language shares features with diverse languages such as Basque, Georgian, and Chuchi from Siberia, suggesting a complex interplay of influences rather than a singular racial or ethnic
lineage. The Sumerians' arrival in Mesopotamia, just prior to 3600 BCE during the Uruk period, marks a significant period of cultural evolution rather than an abrupt change, suggesting that the Sumerians might have
been recent arrivals who integrated and expanded upon the existing cultures. However, the debate continues as scholars argue over the implications with neighboring peoples. An Amalgamation of Migrant GroupsCurrent theories posit that the Sumerians were likely
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an amalgamation of various migrant groups that converged in Mesopotamia. These groups, coming from different directions and speaking different languages, gradually adopted a common culture and language, weaving a rich tapestry of cultural integration that defined early Sumerian society. Genetic studies, particularly those focusing on modern Marsh
Arabs, suggest a lineage that could trace back to the Sumerians, offering tantalizing clues about the genetic continuity in the region. Despite cultural features among the Marsh Arabs that hint at South Asian influences, genetic data suggests that these influences only marginally affected their gene pool, steering the debate away from a South Asian origin
for the Sumerians. The origin and migration of the Sumerians remain one of history's great mysteries. While archaeological, linguistic, and genetic evidence provides valuable insights, the definitive origins of the Sumerians remain one of history's great mysteries. While archaeological, linguistic, and genetic evidence provides valuable insights, the definitive origins of the Sumerians remain one of history's great mysteries.
 unravel the complex history of these ancient people, the Sumerians stand as a testament to the rich, multifaceted tapestry of human history, reminding us of the Standard of Ur Showing Sumerian Warriors The Sumerians were the people of southern Mesopotamia
 whose civilization flourished between c. 4100-1750 BCE. Their name comes from the region which is frequently - and incorrectly - referred to as a "country". Sumer was the southern counterpart to the northern region of Akkad whose people gave
 Sumer its name, meaning "land of the civilized kings". The Sumerians themselves referred to their region simply as "the land" or "the land of the black-headed people". The Sumerians were responsible for many of the most important innovations, inventions, and concepts taken for granted in the present day. They essentially "invented" time by dividing day
 and night into 12-hour periods, hours into 60 minutes, and minutes into 60 seconds. Their other innovations and inventions include the first schools, the earliest version of the tale of the Great Flood and other biblical narratives, the oldest heroic epic, governmental bureaucracy, monumental architecture, and irrigation techniques. After the rise of the
 Amorities in Mesopotamia, and the invasion of the Elamites, Sumer ceased to exist and was only known through references in the works of ancient writers, including the scribes who wrote the biblical Book of Genesis. Sumer remained unknown until the mid-19th century CE when excavations in Mesopotamia unearthed their civilization and brought their
 many contributions to light. Development & 39 Firsts Throughout the 19th century CE, European archaeologists descended on the Near East in search of ancient cities because no one knew the civilization had ever existed - they were looking to excavate sites mentioned
in the Bible such as Babylon and Nineveh and a mysterious place called Shinar - but they found much more than they were expecting. No one knows where the Sumerians came from but, by c. 2900 BCE, they were firmly established in southern Mesopotamia. The history of this region is divided by modern scholars into six eras: The Ubaid Period - c. 5000.
4100 BCE The Uruk Period - 4100-2900 BCE The Early Dynastic Period -2334-2218 BCE The Akkadian Period - c. 2218-2047 BCE The Gutian Period - c. 2218-2047 BCE The Fried Uruk Period - 2334-2218 BCE The Gutian Period - c. 2218-2047 BCE The Uruk Period - 2047-1750 BCE The Fried - 2047-1750 BCE The Gutian Period - c. 2218-2047 BCE The Gutian Perio
intriguing artifacts and probably founded the first communities which grew into city-states during the Uruk Period. The Early Dynastic Period saw the rise of the kings, establishment of government and bureaucracy, and conflict between Sumerian city-states for land and water rights. The Sumerian city-states during the Uruk Period saw the rise of the kings, establishment of government and bureaucracy, and conflict between Sumerian city-states during the Uruk Period saw the rise of the kings, establishment of government and bureaucracy, and conflict between Sumerian city-states during the Uruk Period saw the rise of the kings, establishment of government and bureaucracy, and conflict between Sumerian city-states during the Uruk Period saw the rise of the kings, establishment of government and bureaucracy, and conflict between Sumerian city-states during the Uruk Period saw the rise of the kings, establishment of government and bureaucracy, and conflict between Sumerian city-states during the Uruk Period saw the rise of the kings, establishment of government and bureaucracy, and conflict between Sumerian city-states during the Uruk Period saw the rise of the kings, establishment of government and bureaucracy and conflict between Sumerian city-states during the Uruk Period saw the rise of the U
united under a single king, as in the case of Enembaragesi of Kish who led Sumer against Elam in the first recorded war in history c. 2700 BCE. The Sumerians were victorious and sacked the cities of Elam. Sumer was finally conquered by Sargon of Akkad (r. 2334-2279 BCE) who made it the core of his multinational empire. The later king Eannatum
 would reconquer parts of Elam c. 2500 BCE and Lugalzagesi would do the same c. 2330 BCE but these kings could never fully control the Sumerian city-states. Sumer was finally conquered by Sargon of Akkad (r. 2334-2279 BCE) who made it the core of his multinational empire. He maintained control of the region by placing trusted officials in powerful
positions in each city - including his daughter, Enheduanna (l. 2285-2250 BCE), the High Priestess of the goddess Inanna at Ur (famous in her own right as the world's first author known by name). The Akkadian Empire held the region until the invasion of the Gutians who ruled until they were driven out by Ur-Nammu (r. 2047-2030 BCE) and his son
 Shulgi of Ur (r. 2029-1982 BCE) who were responsible for the so-called Sumerian Renaissance which saw a rebirth of Sumerian culture following the Akkadian and Gutian conquests, grew rich from trade. The relative stability of the cities encouraged cultural growth,
 innovation, and invention. Scholar Samuel Noah Kramer, in his iconic work History Begins at Sumer, explores 39 "firsts" in the world which originated with the Sumerians: The First Bicameral Congress The First Historian The First Case of Juvenile Delinquency The First War of Nerves' The First Bicameral Congress The First Historian The First Case of Juvenile Delinquency The First War of Nerves' The First Bicameral Congress The First Historian The First Case of Juvenile Delinquency The First War of Nerves' The First Bicameral Congress The First Historian The First Case of Juvenile Delinquency The First Schools The First Schools The First War of Nerves' The First Schools The First Historian The First Case of Juvenile Delinquency The First Schools The First Schools The First War of Nerves' The First Historian The First Case of Juvenile Delinquency The First War of Nerves' The First Schools The First War of Nerves' The First Schools The First War of Nerves' The First War of Nerves' The First Schools The First War of Nerves' The First Wa
 Tax Reduction The First 'Moses' The First Legal Precedent The First Pharmacopoeia The First Experiment in Shade-Tree Gardening Man's First Cosmogony and Cosmology The First Experiment in Shade-Tree Gardening Man's First Experiment in Shade-Tree Gardening Man's First Proverbs and Sayings The First Experiment in Shade-Tree Gardening Man's First Cosmogony and Cosmology The First Experiment in Shade-Tree Gardening Man's First Proverbs and Sayings The First Proverbs Th
 First 'Noah' The First Tale of Resurrection The First 'St. George' The First Case of Literary Borrowing Man's First Love Song The First Liturgic Laments The First Love Song The First Long-Distance Champion The First Literary Imagery The First Sex Symbolism
The First Mater Dolorosa The First Lillaby The F
 Nippur Kish The heart of the city was the temple complex, marked by the great ziggurats which would inspire the later tale of the Tower of Babel. Each city had its own protective deity who lived in the temple, protecting and guiding the citizens but, for the Sumerians, the city of Eridu - and its god Enki - held a special place. The First City Although
 modern-day archaeology has established that Uruk is the oldest city in Mesopotamia, the Sumerians themselves believed the first city in the world was Eridu, presided over by their god of wisdom and water, Enki, who raised it from the watery marshes and established the concept of kingship and order in the land. The establishment of Eridu by Enki was
 seen as a kind of golden age comparable to the biblical Garden of Eden as the home of the gods and birthplace of the rules governing civilization (known as the meh). Scholar Gwendolyn Leick notes: The Mesopotamian Eden is not a garden but a city, formed from a piece of dry land surrounded by the waters. The first building is a temple...This is how
Mesopotamian tradition presented the evolution and function of cities, and Eridu provides the mythical paradigm. Contrary to the biblical Eden, from which man was banished forever after the Fall, Eridu remained a real place, imbued with sacredness but always accessible. (2) The 'fall' of Eridu had nothing to do with humanity's sins but with the
cleverness of one of the most popular Mesopotamian goddesses, Inanna. In the good of Wisdom, the goddess travels from her city of Uruk to Eridu, home of her father Enki, and invites him to sit and have a few drinks with her and, as he drinks and becomes more and more jovial, he gladly hands over the meh to his daughter. Once she
 has gathered them all, she runs to her ship and brings them to Uruk, thus making her city preeminent and diminishing Eridu. Modern-day scholars believe this myth arose in response to the shift from an agrarian culture (symbolized by Eridu) to the urban development epitomized by Uruk, among the most powerful cities in the region. Government Religion
 was fully integrated into people's lives and informed the government and the social structure. The Sumerians believed that the gods to make sure chaos would not come again. The gods themselves, however, would reverse their own work later -
returning the world to chaos - when humanity's noise and trouble became too great to bear. The Sumerian work known as the Eridu Genesis (composed c. 2300 BCE) is the earliest version of the Great Flood tale. The Sumerian work known as the Eridu Genesis (composed c. 2300 BCE) is the earliest version of the Great Flood tale.
 tale later retold in the Atrahasis, The Epic of Gilgamesh, and the Book of Genesis. It relates how the gods destroyed humanity through a flood except for one man, Ziusudra, who is saved when Enki tells him to build an ark and rescue two of every kind of animal. Afterwards, the gods relent and determine to control the human population, and limit their their through a flood except for one man, Ziusudra, who is saved when Enki tells him to build an ark and rescue two of every kind of animal.
annoying tendencies, by introducing death and disease into the world; thereby reestablishing order and this included finding a way to work together. The Sumerians took great pride in their individuality, as evidenced by the elevation of
the patron deities of each city and intermittent rivalry and conflicts, but were required by the gods to set this aside in the individual and his achievement, there was one overriding factor which fostered a strong spirit of cooperation among individuals and
communities alike: the complete dependence of Sumer on irrigation for its well-being - indeed, for its very existence. Irrigation is a complicated process requiring communal effort and organization. Canals had to be duy and kept in constant repair. The water had to be divided equitably among all concerned. To ensure this, a power stronger than the
 individual landowner or even the single community was mandatory: hence, the growth of governmental institutions and the rise of the Sumerian state. (Sumerians, 5) The Sumerian King List, a document composed c. 2100 BCE in Lagash, lists all of the kings going back to the beginning of the world when the gods first established kingship in Eridu. The
first king who is archaeologically attested was Etana, described as "he who stabilized all the lands" (Sumerians, 43) and the list then goes chronologically - often with impossibly long dates for the monarchs - down to the reign of the kings in c. 2100 BCE. Legend of the Hero Etana Inscription The Sumerian city-state was governed by a king, the Lugal
(literally "big man") who oversaw the cultivation of the land, among many other responsibilities, and was bound to the gods to ensure their will was done on earth. The Lugal was initially head of a "household" - a closely-knit community, which pooled their resources - and the household concept would continue as the underlying power structure of the
cities. With the rise of the cities and the development of agricultural innovations, the Sumerians changed the way human beings had lived, and would live, forever. The scholar Paul Kriwaczek comments: This was a revolutionary moment in human history. The [Sumerians] were consciously aiming at nothing less than changing the world. They were the very human beings had lived, and would live, forever. The scholar Paul Kriwaczek comments: This was a revolutionary moment in human history.
 first to adopt the principle that has driven progress and advancement throughout history, and still motivates most of us in the modern times: the conviction that it is humanity's right, its mission and its destiny, to transform and improve on nature and become her master. (20) Contributions & Collapse The cities of the Sumerians expanded, and when they
needed more room and greater resources, they took them from others. During the Uruk Period, the culture developed in response to the need for long-distance communication in trade and relayed basic information such as "two
 sheep - five goats - Kish" which was clear enough to the sender at the time but lacked the ability to inform a recipient whether they were alive or dead, and what their purpose was. This system would develop by the time of the Early Dynastic Period into the writing system
 which would produce such works as The Epic of Gilgamesh, Enheduanna's Hymns to Inanna, and many other great works of literature. Sign up for our free weekly email newsletter! Flood Tablet of the Epic of Gilgamesh Sumerian became the language the lingua franca of Mesopotamia and established the writing system known as cuneiform which would
later be used to record other languages. Gwendolyn Leick comments: The more homogeneous cultural horizon of the alluvial plains [of Sumer] finds expression in the development of writing is still uncertain. Mesopotamia was never linguistically or ethnically
 homogeneous and the personal names in the early texts clearly show that languages other than Sumerian were spoken at the time. (65) Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well established as the written language by the late 4th century BCE and Sumerian was well esta
 would influence later writers, notably the scribes who wrote the Bible, as their tales of The Myth of Adapa, The Eridu Genesis, and The Atrahasis would become the models for later liturgy, Mesopotamian animal fables would be
popularized by Aesop, and The Epic of Gilgamesh would inspire works such as the Iliad and Odyssey. The concept of the gods living in the city's temple, as well as the shape and size of the Sumerian ziggurat, is thought to have influenced the Egyptian development of the pyramid and their beliefs about their own gods. The Sumerian ziggurat, is thought to have influenced the Egyptian development of the pyramid and their beliefs about their own gods. The Sumerian ziggurat, is thought to have influenced the Egyptian development of the pyramid and their beliefs about their own gods.
as their writing system, was also adopted by other civilizations. The Sumerian cylinder seal - an individual's sign of personal identification - remained in use in Mesopotamia until c. 612 BCE and the fall of the Assyrian Empire. There was literally no area of civilizations the Sumerians did not make some contribution to but, for all their strengths, their culture
 began to decline long before it fell. The Sumerian civilization collapsed c. 1750 BCE with the invasion of the region by the Elamites. Shulgi of Ur had erected a great wall in 2083 BCE to protect his people from just such an invasion but, as it was not anchored at either end, it could easily be walked around - which is precisely what the invaders did. Even so,
the culture had been struggling to retain its autonomy ever since the Amorites had gained power in Babylon. A shift in cultural influence, evidenced in many respects but, notably, in the male-female ratio of the Mesopotamian pantheon, came with the rise to power of the Semitic Amorites in Babylon and, especially, during the reign of Hammurabi (r. 1792).
1750 BCE) who completely reversed the Sumerian theological model in elevating a supreme male god. Marduk, over all others, Temples dedicated to goddesses were replaced by those for gods and, even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and, even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and, even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even though the goddesses were replaced by those for gods and even the goddesses were replaced by the goddesses were 
men's - declined as did the great Sumerian cities. Overuse of the land and urban expansion, coupled with ongoing conflicts, are cited as the primary reasons for the fall of the cities and women's rights has never been adequately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - it is unknown which came first - but it is a tellinguately explained - but it is a tellinguately expl
detail in the decline of a culture which had always held women in high regard. By the time the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites simply finished the process. Discovery The Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already deteriorating and the Elamites invaded c. 1750 BCE, the Sumerian culture was already 
 history lay buried under sands for centuries and so any references to them in ancient works were misunderstood by scholars since there was no known referent for the allusions. The land of Shinar, in the biblical Book of Genesis, for example, was understood to allude to some region of Mesopotamia but the significance of that reference could not be
 understood as long as scholars had no idea any place like the land of Sumer - the biblical Shinar - had ever existed. This situation changed dramatically in the mid-19th century CE when Western institutions and societies began sending expeditions to the Near East and the Middle East in search of physical evidence to corroborate biblical narratives. If a
 land such as Shinar had ever existed, it was reasoned, its ruins - along with those of any other structures and cities mentioned in the Bible - could be uncovered. At this time, the Bible (specifically the narratives of the Old Testament) was considered the oldest book in the world and completely original. The story of the Garden of Eden, the Fall of Man, the
Great Flood were thought to be original works written directly, or inspired by, the one true God of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The archaeologists and scholars who were sent on these expeditions were supposed to find hard evidence to support this claim but, instead, found exactly the opposite: they found Sumer. Page 2 苏美尔人是源自美索不达米亚南部的一
                 ——公元前2900年-前2334年 阿卡德时期——公元前2334年-前2334年-前2334年-前2334年-前2218年 库提时期——公元前2218年-前2047年 乌尔第三王国时期(也被称为"苏美尔文艺复兴"时期)——公元前2047年-前1750年 学者们并不知道"乌拜德时期"的人们和他们的文化起源于何处,但他们留下了一些有趣的文物,很可能正是他们形成了最早一批的定居者部落,这些部落渐渐发展为村镇,并在乌鲁克时期演化成诸多城
 由于长城的两端都是开放的,人们可以很容易地绕过它。事实上,侵略者也的确是这样做的。不过即便入侵者阿摩利人获得了巴比伦的权力,苏美尔人也始终努力地维护着自身的独立性。随着闪米特背景的阿摩利人在巴比伦地区的崛起,特别是在汉谟拉比统治时期(公元前1792年-前1750年),文化影响的转变开始在许多方面凸显出来,尤其是在美索不达米亚万神殿中男女性别的比例情况。汉谟拉比大帝完全
 颠覆了苏美尔人的神学模式,将男性马杜克神的地位提升到所有其他神之上,成为至高无上之神。专门供奉女神的庙宇被替换为供奉男性神的庙宇,尽管属于女神的庙宇没有被摧毁,但却被边缘化了。 与此同时,传统上曾与男性基本平等的女性权利,也随着苏美尔这些伟大城邦的衰落而一去不复返了。土地的过度使用和城市扩张,再加上持续不断的冲突等,被认为是城邦衰落的主要原因。现在已经无从得知女
 神地位下降和妇女权利降低之间,到底孰先孰后,但它肯定是这个曾具有较高女权的文化,在衰落过程中所展现的生动细节。在公元前1750年埃兰人入侵时,苏美尔人对今天的世界文化做出了许多贡献,但知道这个事实却是一件相当晚近的事情。很多个世纪以来,他们的历史被掩埋在沙子里,即便古代典籍中
 有关于他们的线索,但也会被后世的学者们误解,因为无法为资料中的典故找到任何对应物。例如,人们知道示拿这个在圣经的《创世纪》中出现的地名,肯定暗指了某个位于美索不达米亚的地区,但只要学者们不知道作为一个地区存在过的苏美尔,那么这种指向的含义就永远无法被理解。 这种情况在19世纪中期发生了巨大的变化,当时西方的一些机构和团体开始向近东和中东派遣探险队,目的是寻找实物证
据来证实圣经中的叙述。如果像示拿这样的土地曾经存在过,那么它的废墟,以及其他任何在圣经中提到的建筑和城市等,都应该能够被发现。 在那个时候,《圣经》(特别是《旧约》中的故事,人类的堕落,大洪水等,都被认为是作者创作的一手作品,或者受到犹太教-基督教传统中唯一真神的启发。被派去探险的考古学家和学者们,他们本应
找到确凿的证据来支持这样的相反,但结果却恰恰相反:他们找到了苏美尔人。 We explore the Sumerian civilization, and discuss their main inventions. In addition, we describe their characteristics, society, and more. The Sumerians founded dozens of city-states in Mesopotamia. The Sumerians were an ancient civilization that inhabited Mesopotamia between 3500
and 1750 BC. Throughout their history, the Sumerians founded hundreds of city-states along the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, controlled by priests and military leaders seeking to secure dominance in the region. Through centralized political units, they organized agricultural production and trade, commissioned the construction of major works,
established legal systems, and formed large armies. The Sumerians are best known for the earliest writing systems, as well as for the Epic of Gilgamesh poem, which stands as the first account of the world flood myth. The main characteristics of the Sumerians were: They inhabited Mesopotamia between 3500 and 1750 BC, and
founded dozens of cities around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. They organized themselves into independent city-states, controlled by a caste of priests and warrior leaders who held political, economic, and social power. Their history was marked by constant warfare between the cities and attempts to bring other peoples under their rule and thus attain
political supremacy. Their cities were conquered by foreign peoples, but they regained independence in different time periods. They invented cuneiform writing, used to keep track of the goods and services in the city. They developed various literary, epic, and religious texts that influenced both contemporary and subsequent cultures throughout the
region. The Sumerians settled in Mesopotamia. This region encompassed nondesert areas of modern-day Iraq, and extended to the northwestern border with Syria. It was a fertile area along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, surrounded by the Arabian Desert, the Taurus Mountains, the Zagros Mountains, and the Persian Gulf. The region was divided into:
Upper Mesopotamia. The northern area, where the rivers originate. It supported natural irrigation agriculture. Lower Mesopotamia. The southern area, encompassing the slope and mouth of the rivers. Due to the dry and hot climate, the construction of canals was necessary to manage droughts and river floods. The Sumerians recorded a large number of
events of Sumarian history in written form. The Sumerians were a people of Asian origin. Though the exact time of their migration to the Mesopotamian region is unknown, archaeological remains predating 3500 BC have been linked to the later Sumerian history in the following periods: Uruk Period (c. 3500-2900 BC).
The Sumerians settled in Lower Mesopotamia, founding over 30 cities, including Ur, Uruk, Lagash, Kish, and Umma. During this period, priests were the political elite of the city-states, and temples served as religious, political, and administrative centers. The city of Uruk concentrated political and cultural hegemony in the region. Early Dynastic Period
(2900-2334 BC). Population growth and disputes over resources between cities (water, land, and raw materials) shifted political power toward military leaders, who became kings. The center of power in cities passed from temples to royal palaces. Despite constant warfare, the population growth continued due to agricultural advancements, and new cities
were founded. Akkadian Empire (2334-2218 BC). Beginning around 2400 BC, the Semitic Akkadians began to populate central Mesopotamia and founded the city of Mari. In 2334 BC, under Sargon's leadership, the Akkadians captured Kish, and launched military campaigns to take over the region. Sargon was proclaimed "King of the Four Corners of the
Universe", and established a kingdom centered in Akkad, exacting tribute from subjugated peoples. Gutian Period (2218-2047 BC). Sumerian cities began a series of rebellions that weakened Akkad's political power. At the same time, the Gutians (a people from the mountainous region of modern-day Iran) invaded Mesopotamian cities, destroying Akkad's
capital. The Gutians subjugated Sumerian cities, exacting tribute from them. They adopted Akkadian customs and language. Sumerian cities expelled the Gutians from Mesopotamia. The city of Ur spearheaded unification and alliances between
cities. During this period, cities like Ur and Lagash flourished, with ziggurats (terraced pyramids featuring temples and long staircases) being their characteristic structures. The independence of Sumarian cities lasted until the Amorite invasion of Lower Mesopotamia around 2000 BC, which destroyed buildings and seized cities and resources. Babylonian
Empire (1792-1750 BC). Hammurabi, King of Babylonian Empire sought to centralize power and unify its territories through a common legal system and the imposition of Akkadian culture in all cities. Following Hammurabi's death, rebellions and raids by
neighboring peoples led to the empire's collapse. Scribes and other specialized artisans were supported by the State. Sumerian society was hierarchical, with classes divided based on the role or occupation of citizens. Priests controlled the administration and organization of Sumerian city-states, and were considered intermediaries between the people and
the gods. In exchange for their religious services, they owned land and collected tributes. As conflicts between cities intensified, warriors gained greater political importance and, alongside priests, established themselves as the elite of Sumerian society. They came to control government administration and the distribution of goods obtained through taxes.
Additionally, certain social groups carried out specialized tasks, receiving food and other goods from the State. This class encompassed scribes, warriors, officials, merchants, and skilled artisans. Most of the population consisted of peasants living in villages, who engaged in producing food and working the land. They also had public obligations, such as
participating in major construction works, cultivating royal lands, or serving in the military. Sumerian society had slaves, who were prisoners of war. Local political organization evolved according to the historic context. During the independence period,
Sumerian city-states had a theocratic form of government. Initially, cities were government by patesi, priests in charge of religious ceremonies and offerings. With urban growth and increased and constant warfare, the political power of warrior
kings consolidated. Priests now dedicated exclusively to religious functions, and governments were taken over by lugals, military princes whose seat of power were urban palaces. These reigns were dynastic (inherited through generations of royal families), and remained tied to religious beliefs, as the lugal was considered a representative of the gods on
Earth. Scribes kept track of the goods that arrived at palaces through the payment of tributes. The economy of Sumerian city-states was based on agriculture, trade, and the collection of tributes. The economy of Sumerian city-states was based on agriculture, trade, and the collection of tributes. The economy of Sumerian city-states was based on agriculture, trade, and the collection of tributes.
construction of canals and hydraulic works was necessary to regulate the rise and fall of rivers. This prevented floods and enabled artificial irrigation during droughts. A part of what farmers produced had to be paid to the city government as tribute. These goods were stored in temples and palaces, and were used for trade with other cities, construction of
public works, maintaining social groups (scribes, warriors, and other officials), and aid during crises (droughts or wars). The Sumerian worldview influenced the beliefs of subsequent Mesopotamian cultures. The Sumerian worldview influenced the beliefs of subsequent Mesopotamian cultures.
had created humanity to carry out the tasks they did not themselves wish to perform. Each Sumerian city had a principal god: Enki (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was the patron deity of Eridu. Enlil (god of wind and storms) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was the patron deity of Eridu. Enlil (god of wind and storms) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur. Nannar (god of the moon) was venerated in Nippur.
god) was the chief deity of Uruk. They also believed that all cultural knowledge and technical achievements were gifts from the gods. Military victories as well as defeats were considered divine decisions. Therefore, it was essential to appear the heart
of Sumerian civilization throughout its history. The king of Akkad put the laws in writing in the Code of Hammurabi. The main cultural traits of the Sumerians were: Architecture was characterized by the use of fired bricks without cement. Buildings required periodic improvement, which caused cities to be elevated above the
surrounding plains. A distinctive structure of Sumerian architecture was the ziggurat, a pyramid-shaped construction built with sun-dried bricks. At the top of the structure was a sanctuary dedicated to the city's patron deity. Ziggurats were conceived to symbolize a staircase that the deity would use to descend and protect the city's patron deity. Ziggurats were conceived to symbolize a staircase that the deity would use to descend and protect the city's patron deity.
developed a writing system to keep track of the goods stored in temples and palaces. This task was performed by scribes, who were people specially educated for this purpose. Throughout its history, Sumerian writing (drawings representing objects) Ideographic writing (drawings representing objects).
Phonographic writing (symbols representing sounds combined to form words) Cuneiform writing (a more complex system with stylized signs for smoother writing). Literature. Archaeologists have discovered a large number of Sumerians' worldview.
Particularly renowned is the Epic of Gilgamesh, which stands as the earliest narrative of the world flood myth, later adopted by other religions. Legislation. Sumerians based their laws on customary law, dictated by tradition. Around 1790 BC, the King of Babylon compiled these laws into a written text known today as the Code of Hammurabi. The
compilation, containing 282 laws, addressed topics as diverse as theft, murder, commercial disputes, marriage, and slavery. These laws imposed severe punishments based on the principle of the lex talionis or law of exact retaliation: "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth". According to this principle, offenders should receive a punishment equivalent to the
damage they caused. Explore next: Byzantine Empire Roman 
Egipto (Vol. 22). Ediciones Akal.
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