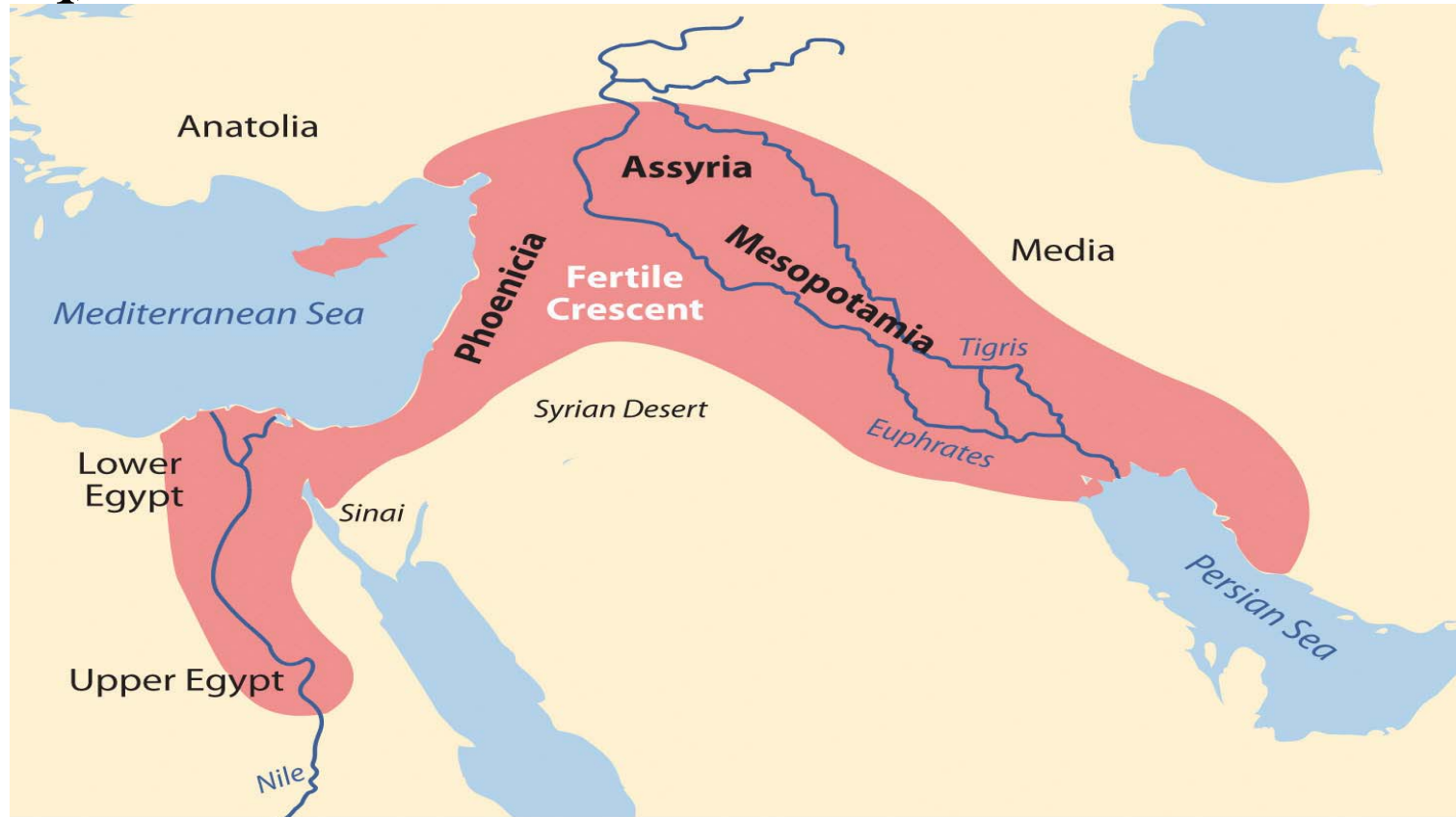


T3: Mesopotamia: Early Bronze Age

Emergence of civilization

- **Fertile Crescent:** Large strip of fertile land stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf (Modern day Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Turkey, Syria, Iraq)



Emergence of civilization (cont)

- **Mesopotamia:** ('land between the rivers') – eastern part of the Fertile Crescent – in present day Iraq – the cradle of civilization



Emergence of civilization (cont)

- The first civilization emerged in Mesopotamia c. 3500 BCE
- Major civilizations in Mesopotamia included:
 - ☐ Sumerian
 - ☐ Babylonian
 - ☐ Assyrian

Advantage (fertile soil)

Disadvantage (flood)

Challenge (protect crops)

Response (dam, canals)

Sumer

- Sumerian era: c.3,500 – c. 2000 BCE
- Located in the southern part of Mesopotamia
- Renowned cities: Ur, Uruk, Kish and Lagash



Sumerians city states

- Over 30 Sumerian cities came up and gradually became independent states with surrounding agricultural land
- The city named **Uruk** was among the first and most developed
- Period of city states (up to 3100 BCE) became known as the **Uruk period**

Uruk (re-created image)

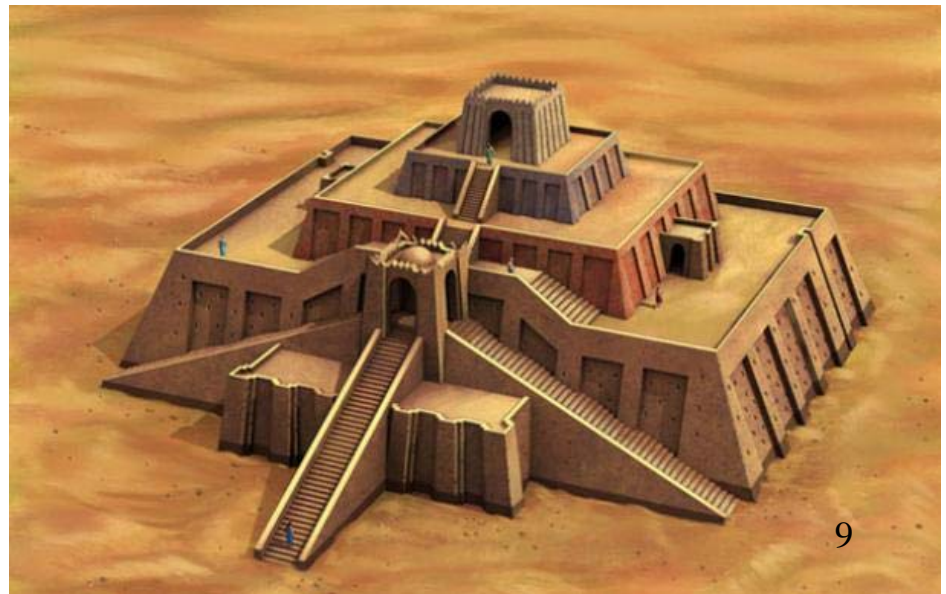
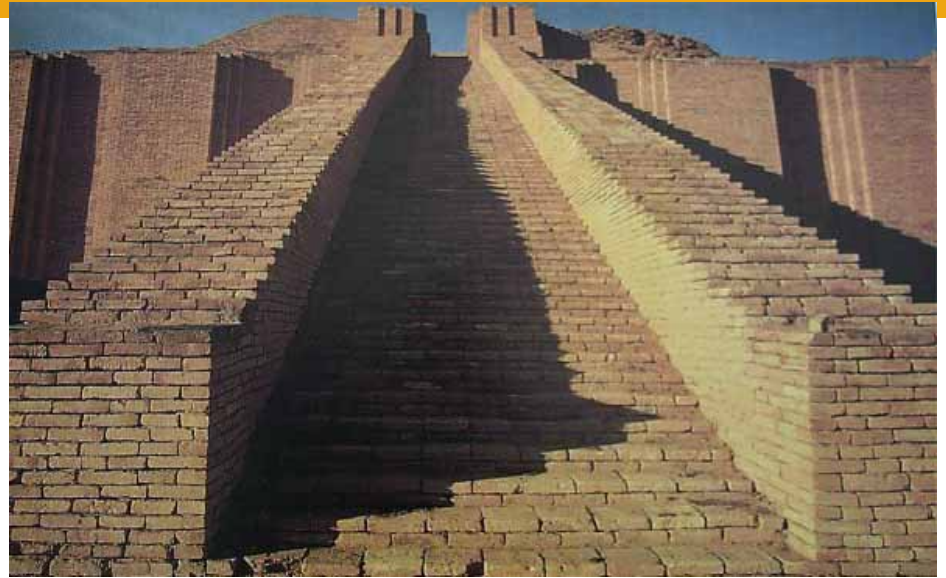


Sumerian city states (cont)

- Served as spiritual, economic and cultural centers for the people
- Surrounded by walls with enormous space within
- Accommodated temple, palace and other official and residential buildings
- Each city had its own guardian **deity**
- **Temple** was located in the center of the city
- Sumerian temples came to be known as **Ziggurat**

Ziggurat

- A stepped tower topped by a shrine.
- Accommodated the earliest known schools
- Owned agricultural land, engaged in business.
- “state within the state”, sometimes “the state”

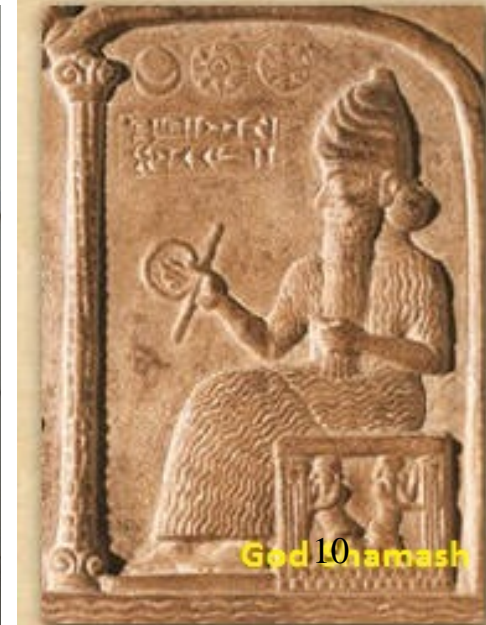
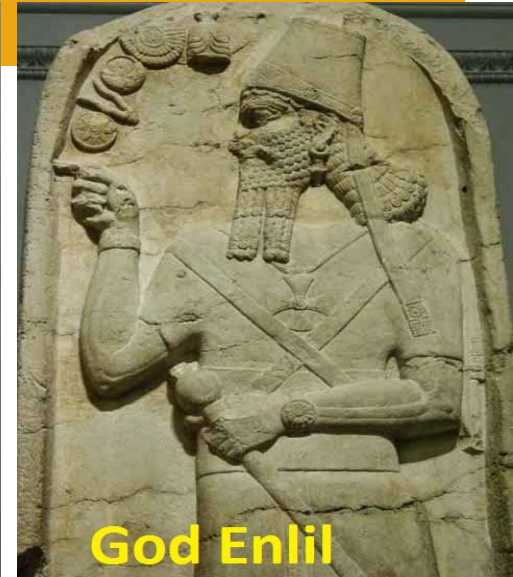


Sumerian religion

Main

characteristics:

- Polytheistic
- Anthropomorphic
- “This-worldly” (as opposed to “other-worldly”)
- Worship, sacrifice

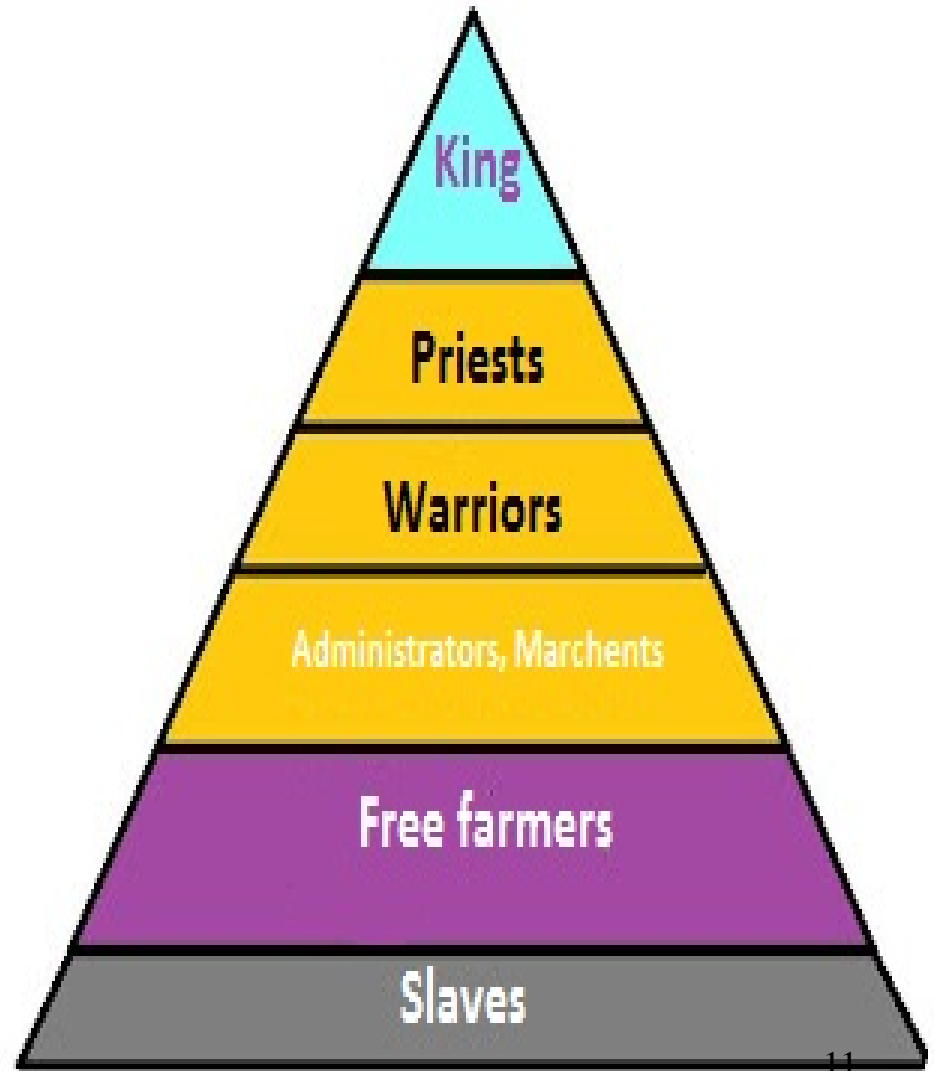


Social structure

Social structure

- Priests, Kings and prominent warriors at the top.
- Three other ranks were:
 - Specialists including administrators, merchants, artisans
 - Free farmers
 - Slaves

(Burns et al. 1997, pp. 28-34)



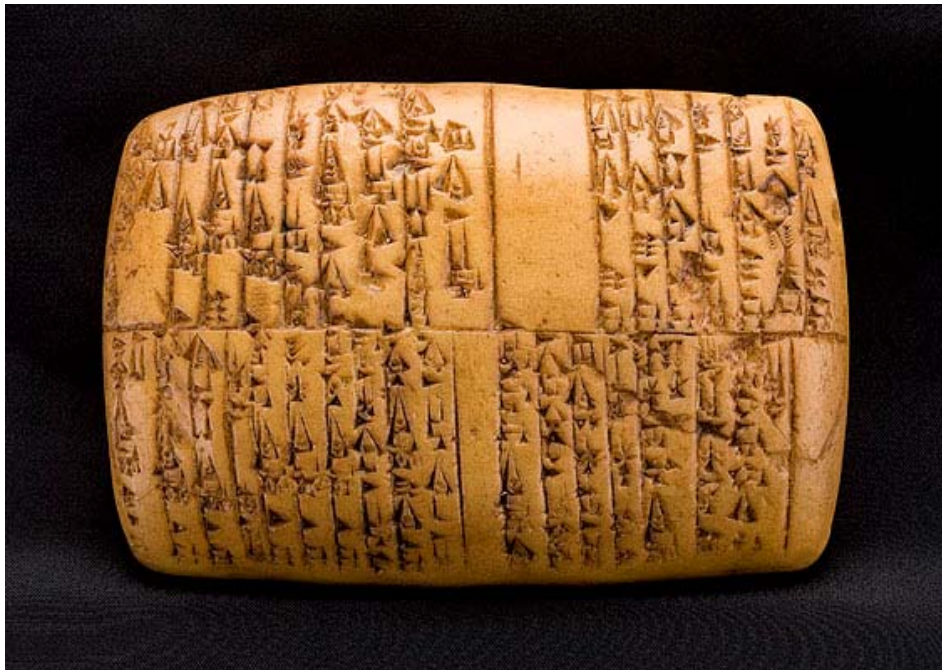
Family

- Family dominated by the eldest male member (patriarch)
- Sons inherited property in equal shares
- Monogamy prevailed and marriages were bound by contract

Sumerian inventions

writing

- Evolved gradually from pictorial to wedge-shaped characters (c. 3,500 – 2,500 BCE)



	3200 BCE	3000 BCE	2400 BCE	1000 BCE
sag 'head'				
gin 'to walk'				
bu 'hand'				
bu 'barley'				
ninda 'bread'				
a 'water'				
ud 'clay'				
mušen 'bird'				

Sumerian inventions

Wheel

- Invention of wheel or wheeled transport c.3200 BCE
- Ox-drawn two wheeled chariots and four wheeled carts
- Solid, not spoked - made of wooden slabs



Sumerian inventions (cont)

Lunar Calendar

- Essential for planting and harvesting on time
- Counted cycles of the moon
- Lunar year 11 days shorter than solar year
- Corrected by adding 1 month every few years
- Later followed by Israelites and Arabs



Study questions

- What is “Fertile Crescent”?
- Why did the first civilization emerge in Mesopotamia?
- What were the main features of Sumerian city states?
- What was a “Ziggurat”?
- What were the main characteristics of Sumerian religion?
- What was the social structure of Mesopotamian city states?
- List the main Sumerian inventions (writing, wheel, lunar calendar etc.)

Thank You