

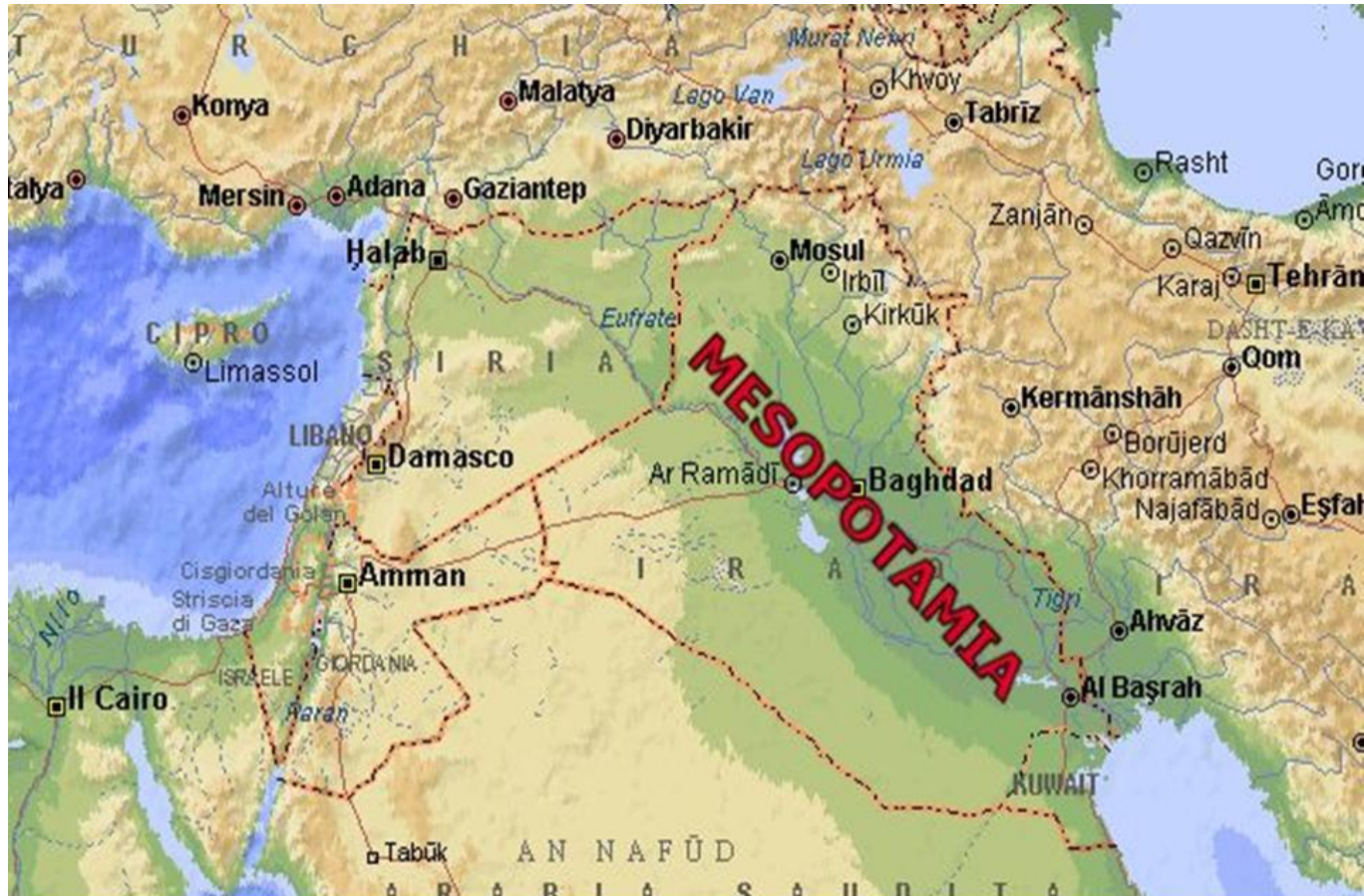
Mesopotamian Civilization

Cradle of Civilizations

General features

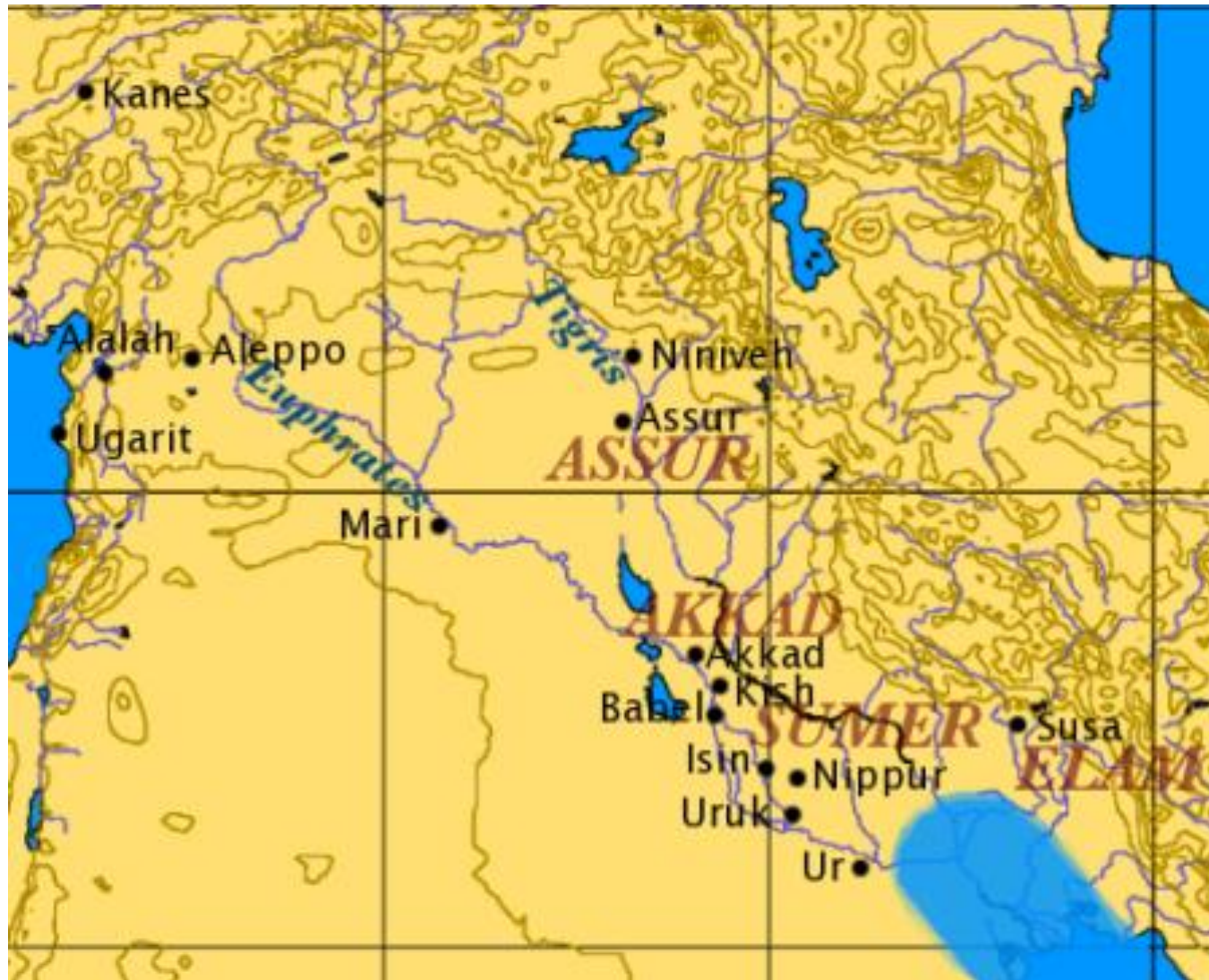
- It is widely considered as the cradle of civilizations.
- It flourished in bronze and iron age from 5300BC to 6th century BC along Tigris and Euphrates rivers also known as fertile crescent.
- This area lies in Iraq, Iran, Syria and some parts of turkey.
- Bronze Age Mesopotamia included **Sumer** and the **Akkadian**, **Babylonian** and **Assyrian** empires.
- In the Iron Age, it was ruled by the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires, and was later conquered by the Persian Empire and in 7th century came under Islamic conquest.

Map of Mesopotamian Civilization



A contemporary map of Iraq and the surrounding region showing Mesopotamia (literally, “between rivers”).

Empires of Mesopotamia



Fertile Crescent



Urban Settlements in Mesopotamia

- Mesopotamia consist of many city-states with similar language, religion, social organization and material culture.
- Each city-state was ruled by a king who was also the chief priest.
- The land that supported the city was considered the domain of the chief religious figure.
- The surplus agriculture was stored in the main temple of the city, provided the main sustenance of the ruling group.

Geography and Economy

- Mesopotamia encompasses the land between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, both of which have their head waters in the mountains of Armenia in modern Turkey.
- The climate of the region is semi-arid with a vast desert expanse in the north which gives way to a 6,000 square mile region of marshes, lagoons, mud flats, and reed banks in the south.
- In the extreme south the Euphrates and the Tigris unite and empty into the Persian Gulf.
- Sumer developed the first economy, while the Babylonians developed the earliest system of economics.
- The geography of Mesopotamia is such that agriculture is possible only with irrigation and good drainage, a fact which has had a profound effect on the evolution of Mesopotamian civilization.

Geography and Economy

- The need for irrigation led the Sumerians and later the Akkadians to build their cities along the Tigris and Euphrates and the branches of these rivers.
- The rivers provided the further benefits of fish , reeds and clay (for building materials).
- With irrigation the food supply in Mesopotamia was quite rich with the Tigris and Euphrates River valleys forming the northeastern portion of the Fertile Crescent.
- Although land nearer to the rivers was fertile and good for crops, portions of land farther from the water were dry and largely uninhabitable. This is why the development of irrigation was very important for settlers of Mesopotamia.
- Other Mesopotamian innovations include the control of water by dams and the use of aqueducts.

Geography and Economy

- The unpredictable Mesopotamian weather was often hard on farmers; crops were often ruined so backup sources of food such as cows and lambs were also kept.
- Farmers grew food to feed the people of Mesopotamia, but the wealth of the cities of Mesopotamia came from merchants and craftspeople. The Mesopotamians placed great value on commerce.
- Mesopotamia didn't have many natural resources. So they needed to trade with the countries beside them to get what they needed to live. They traded goods as far as Africa, Asia, and Europe
- They didn't use money to trade goods and services. They used the barter system.
- Mesopotamians created the first wheeled vehicles in about 3500 B.C.

Layout of Mesopotamian Cities



Layout of Mesopotamian Cities



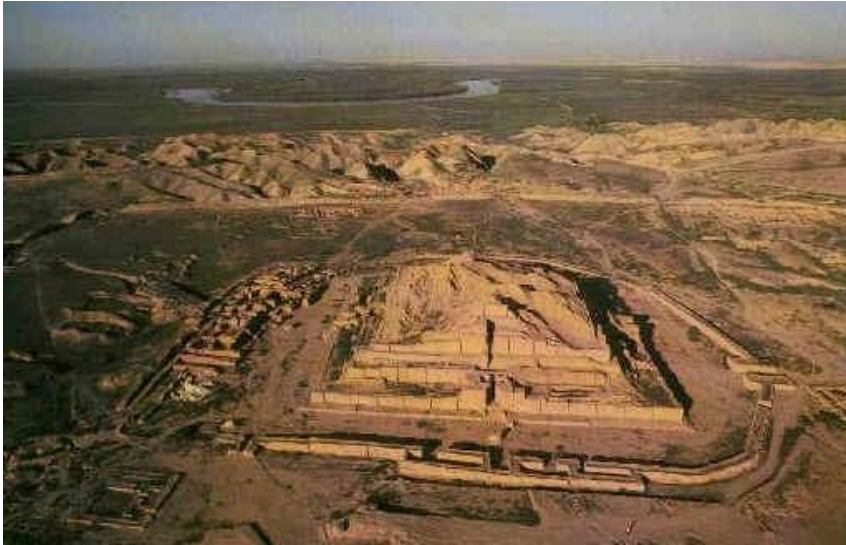
Ancient Mesopotamia

- **Sumer** Eridu • Kish • Uruk • Ur
Lagash • Nippur • Ngirsu
- **Elam** Susa • Anshan
- **Akkadian Empire** Akkad • Mari
- **Amorites** Isin • Larsa
- **Babylonia** Babylon • Chaldea
- **Assyria** Assur • Nimrud
Dur-Sharrukin • Nineveh

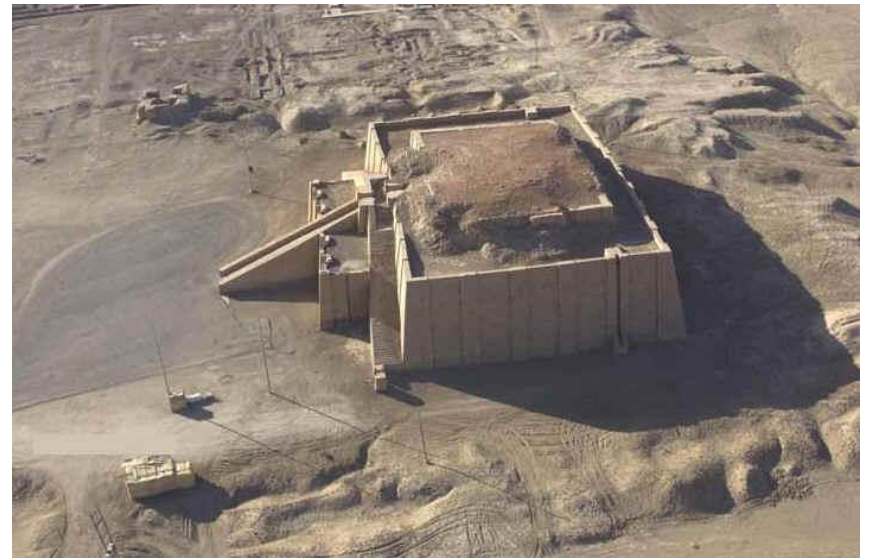
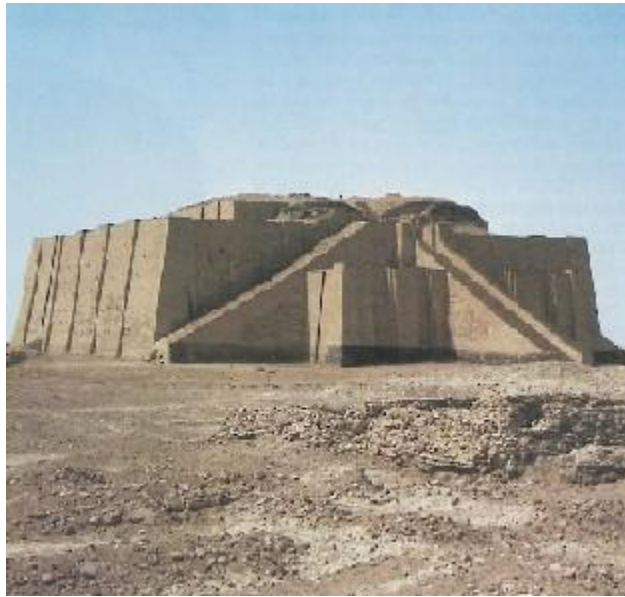
Planning of Cities

- Cities were built around a 100 ft high pyramid-shaped building called Ziggurat, which was the temple and astronomical observatory.
- In the basic plan a massive wall surrounded the entire city in the center of which located the ziggurat, palace and various public buildings.
- At the foot of Ziggurat there was an extensive rectangular Teminas, it was administrative center constructed with grandeur on massive scale and were fortified separately
- The lower walls of all public buildings were highly decorated.
- the Mesopotamians also standardized the bricks. The size of the brick was $1' \times 1' \times 3''$

Ziggurats



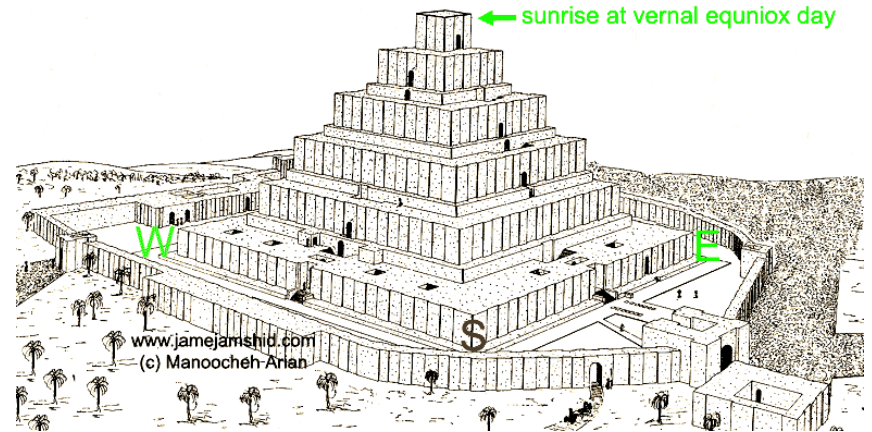
Ziggurats



Ziggurats



Tower of Babylon



Planning of Cities

- The walls were built of fired or sun dried bricks.
- The houses of common people were one or two storey high.
- Houses were jumbled together in an irregular mass that was interrupted by public open spaces in the vicinity of temples and other public buildings.
- Streets were narrow lanes without surfacing or drainage and only wide enough to allow for the passage of a man and his donkey.
- The streets were intersecting each other at right angle and their corners were made rounded to facilitate the movement of loaded donkeys.

Planning of Cities

- These lanes became the places where refuse accumulated and the extreme of this condition probably existed in Ur where excavations disclosed that refuse had gradually raised the level of streets to such a point that houses had to have entrances out on the second level.
- Among the clusters of the houses were chapels, small shops and rows of booths that probably used by artisans and merchants.
- Near the outer margin of the city was a zone where the poorest elements of the population lived in mud and reed huts.
- Most houses had a square center room with other rooms attached to it, but a great variation in the size and materials used to build the houses suggest they were built by the inhabitants themselves.
- On the periphery of cities there existed large number of agriculturists, it facilitated the movements of products to market in the heart of the city and providing a more assured food supply.

City Areas and Population

- The cities did not occupy large amounts of land area nor the had large populations.
- Karkemish on the Euphrates river covered 24 acres Ur 200 acres, Uruk 1200 acres, Khersaband in Assyria 740 acres and Ninveh 1800 acres.
- No consensus of population for earliest cities is available.
- For cities of forth millennium BC range between 5000 – 20000 .
- In third millennium BC, when cities were more firmly established the population of Ur was 24000, Lagash 19000, Umma 16000, and Khafaja 12000.
- The population densities must have been 10000 per square mile which is considerably higher than cities o comparable sizes in western world today.

Social Structures

- **Priestly class dominated the society who guided both economical and ritualistic aspects of the society and they owned much of the land around the cities.**
- **They did not farm themselves but paid others to do it.**
- **There was a division of labor in Sumer**
- **Below the rulers and priests were people themselves, many of them were farmers who tended small plots of land.**
- **Skilled workers included doctors, builders, artisans and scribes.**
- **The farmers and workers of Sumer all had the chances to better their lives by hard work and being clever.**
- **They believed in large number of gods and they tried to please them by special prayers and offerings in the form of animals and crops.**
- **There was a man to whom Muslims and Christians trace their religion i.e. Hazrat Ibrahim.**

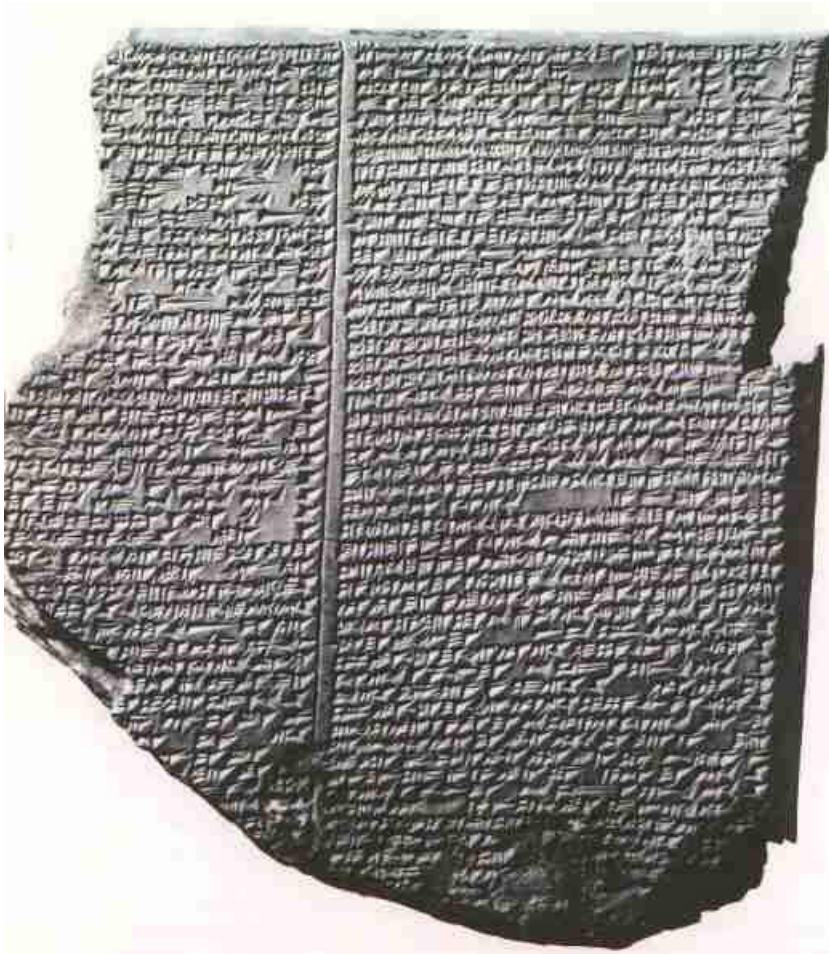
Art Work of Mesopotamia



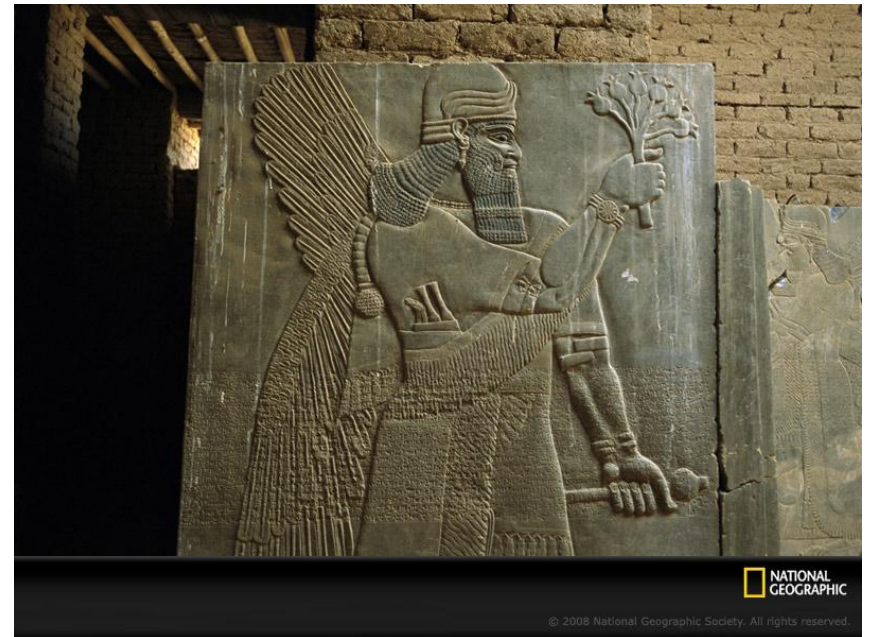
Art Work of Mesopotamia



Art Work of Mesopotamia



Art Work of Mesopotamia



Kings of Mesopotamia

Some notable Mesopotamian kings include:

- Eannatum of Lagash
- Sargon of Akkad
- Hammurabi of Babylonian empire.
- Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyrian empire.
- Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonian

Kings of Mesopotamia



Sargon



Adad Nirari



Tiglath
Pileser



Assurbanipal

Contribution in Law

Code of Hummarabi the sixth Babylonian king

- If a builder builds a house for someone, and does not construct it properly, and the house which he built falls in and kills its owner, then the builder shall be put to death. (Another variant of this is, If the owner's son dies, then the builder's son shall be put to death.)
- If a son slaps his father, his hand shall be cut off.
- a man puts out the eye of an equal, his eye shall be put out.
- If a man knocks the teeth out of another man, his own teeth will be knocked out.

Code of Hummarabi

- If the slave of a freed man strikes the body of a freed man, his ear shall be cut off.
- If anyone commits a robbery and is caught, he shall be put to death.
- If anyone opens his ditches to water his crop, but is careless, and the water floods his neighbor's field, he shall pay his neighbor corn for his loss.
- There are 282 such laws in the Code of Hammurabi, each usually no more than a sentence or two.

Code of Hummarabi

