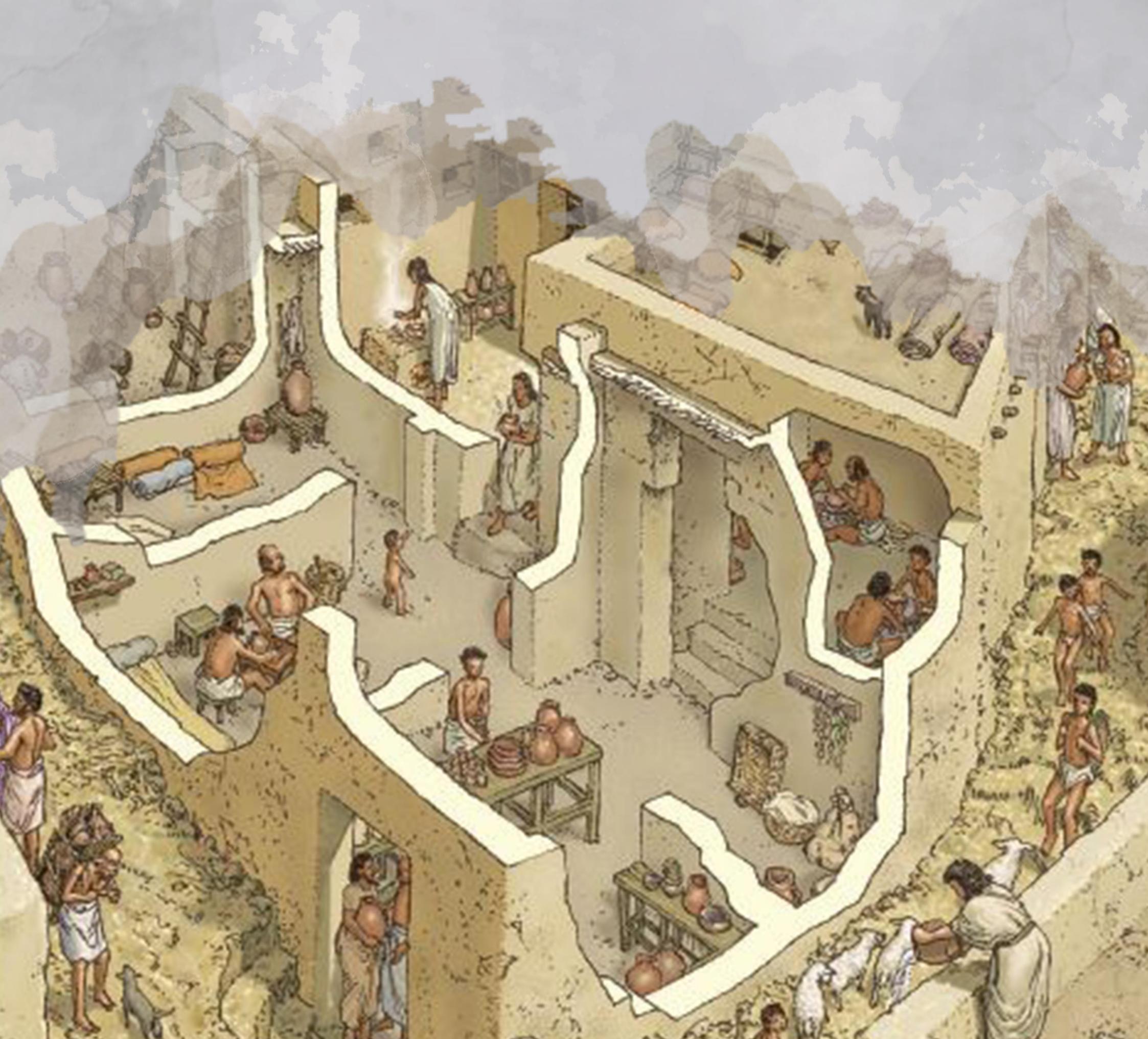


# The Sumerian

Cradles of Civilization

TEAM 02



# The Ubaid period (5000-4100 BCE)

Kiran Mandepudi 19AR10018

**ABSOLUTE TIME PERIOD:** C. 8000-6000

**RELATIVE TIME PERIOD:** It Follows the Aceramic Neolithic tradition and lead upto the Late Chalcolitic Mesopotamia tradition. In southern Mesopotamia, the Ubaid represents the earliest-known culture. In central Mesopotamia and Khuzistan, it follows the Samarran period, from that the tradition might have originally emerged, and precedes the Uruk period. In northern Mesopotamia, it follows the Halaf period, that it replaces. It precedes the late Chalcolithic amount, diagrammatical by Tepe Gawra, that is closely associated with the Uruk tradition of southern Mesopotamia.

**LOCATION :** parts of western Iran and Iraq , which are referred as Mesopotamia and Khuzistan, respectively. The earliest-known sites extend from southern Mesopotamia and Khuzistan (southern Iraq and southwestern Iran, respectively) to as far north as the Hamrin basin in east-central Iraq. By the Ubaid 2 period, it can be observed that Ubaid era was beginning to spread out of its actual homeland, from presence along the Arabian coast. During the Ubaid 3 period, the Ubaid tradition expands into northern Mesopotamia, where it first exists side by side with and eventually replaces sites of the late Halaf Tradition.

**MATERIAL ATTRIBUTES:** Hard-fired ceramic vessels consisting of buff or red paste and decorated with geometric designs in black to purplish-black or red paint. Other distinctive objects include bent-elay nails, clay sickles, and reptilian-headed figurines.

**IMPORTANT SITES:** al Ubaid, Chogha Mami, Eridu, Tell Abada , Tepe Gawra, Tell Madhur. Tell Queili.

**ARCHITECTURE:** The houses at Tell al Queili (from Ubaid 0 and Ubaid 1 ,from the Early Period) show some similarities to the T-shaped houses built by the Samarra culture. From this we can infer that these early Ubaid houses and the Samarra structures shared a common antecedent, Might be due to dating to the earlier Hassuna culture. The later Ubaid periods Houses were different, conforming to the more typical tripartite Ubaid style found at other Ubaid sites. Architectural Features include large T-shaped hall is flanked by a series of rooms on each side in temples and tripartite structures

**Urbanisation & Culture :** Ubaid period was also known as transitional period in which greater villages gradually turned into small cities and small irrigation agriculture in a way of rapid urbanisation. Ubaid culture unfolded quickly outwards to displace the pre-existing Halaf culture in northern Mesopotamia, even when there existed difference between the decline of the one and the arrival of the other. Ubaid commodities also began to appear along the Persian coast to the south , in Arabia, letting out the spread outwards from southern Mesopotamia of a trading network. Fishing boats were also introduced freshly during this time. The Ubaid culture may be described as the crossover point between the threshold of early urban civilisation and the prehistory

**Settlement System.** The Ubaid settlement system consisted of small villages averaging 1-2 ha. organized around larger centers of up to 10 ha. In contrast to the smaller settlements, the large centers contained religious architecture. These centers probably served both ritual and economic functions for chiefdoms based on the mobilization of staple goods. These large centers also appear to have been the focus of important cemeteries used by elites from the surrounding region. By the end of the Ubaid 4 period, this two-level site hierarchy is replaced by a three-level hierarchy.

## ERIDU

Eridu is one of the permanent earliest settlements in Mesopotamia however it never had any political significance.

From the Sumerian texts, Eridu was on the seashore. It is seen that all the temples successive in Eridu were dedicated to that god or goddess that they were the house of Enki. Since every temple in Eridu were built from mudbrick basic questions arise: what was the design principle and how they had applied it? How were the temples in Eridu furnished and embellished? The design elements mainly in these successive temples were buttresses. During the Ubaid period of a long span , sites with size increased and monumental architecture became the dominant structure of the new cities, at least sites such as Eridu at the south and Tepe Gawra.

Eridu's temples are the good sequence for the precision of this assumption. we can observe a significant development of the temple plan, from the one-room building of level XVI to a sophisticated plan of level VI



# TEMPLE LAYOUTS

## (2038-5400 BCE)

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According to this research, the Ubaid Era architects were the first to use proportional relationships, which are now used by many architects for the two dimensions of a façade or the three dimensions of an interior room. As indicated by the Ubaid buildings, the basic convention was that significant buildings were designed and laid out from the outside, from the faces of exterior walls to the central lines of interior walls. As witnessed by the Eridu temples, this is particularly shown to be true in the design of temples. The use of such a design discipline, as we shall see, helped Ubaid architects create monumental buildings with a material as unpretentious as mud. It also clarifies the obvious contradictions that we notice in the interior dimensions and proportions of some of the rooms that were governed to some degree by this discipline, while at the same time giving the overall layout the appearance of careful planning and symmetry.

### The merits of using such a system are numerous :

1. It is simple to hire and transparent. This implies that even large structures were built with just a few measurements. For the walls, the architect just had to decide the base lines. He'd then give the builder simple instructions on how many "modules" a room should have, or how many brick courses to lay on either side of each base line

2. Using a grid or modular design discipline in architectural design can be a big benefit because it simplifies and improves the design/building process . Such a framework also helps to produce a sense of uniformity and power in buildings. Similarly, it helps on-site construction work to progress more rapidly and unabated.

3. In Late Ubaid buildings, rhythm was one of the governing factors and the architects of the Late Ubaid carefully measured the effect of buttresses (particularly in temple construction, as in Tepe Gawra XIII and Uruk's Ubaid Temples), as well as the dimensions of rooms and buildings.

An study of various Late Ubaid buildings clearly demonstrates that one of the most significant elements of architectural design in Ubaid was the square. In temple layouts such as Tepe Gawra Level XIII and Eridu VII and VI Temples, the square was frequently used as a module for proportional grids. While it seems, significantly later, the square was a major element and played an important role in Egypt, it was also used as a "module" in architectural designs (5).

Taking into account how cultural influences changed back and forth between Mesopotamia and Egypt, not only during the early dynasties but also in the Predynastic periods, it seems possible that for several centuries such mathematical knowledge would have been difficult to isolate, although such knowledge was probably sacred and protected by the priests, in the same way as it was guarded by a special "brotherhood" in ancient Greece .

In building design, triangles played an important role (especially in religious buildings), and where they appear, it is either alone (usually consisting of more than one creating a scissor-like structure on the layout of the plan), or as a complement to the square.

### Inference

From our study, we have seen abundant evidence for the use of a 72 cm Ubaid Cubit. Many wide spaces (e.g. central halls, cellars, etc.) as well as overall building dimensions - especially temples (such as Eridu IX-VI and Uruk Temple II) - can be rationalised as precise multiples of this 72 cm cubit. The use of a cubit, measuring 72 cm, was also discovered at Tepe Yahya, which dates from a later time (15). In addition, we have found signs of the presence of a specific method of design for the first time. It is hoped that this research would prompt further research to see whether, for example, later measuring systems evolved from the Ubaid system, or whether they evolved independently . This research also clearly identifies the urgent need for more precise and detailed measurements and excavation data, so that it is possible to attempt a more rigorous and practical synthesis to corroborate (or otherwise) the results of such research



# The Uruk period (4000-2900 BCE)

— Namita Senthil 19AR10020 —

-The Uruk period (also known as Proto literate period) existed from the protohistoric Chalcolithic to Early Bronze Age period in the history of Mesopotamia.

-The Uruk period saw the emergence of urban life in Mesopotamia and led to the full civilization of the Early Dynastic period. It was by far the largest settlement with Hierarchization of settlements, at least a settlement system of cities, mid-sized towns and villages and hamlets. -The emergence of the temple as an economic institution.

-New economic, social, political organization, approaching the idea of a “state”?

-New bureaucratic tools: cylinder seals, hollow clay balls, invention of cuneiform writing, development of a pictorial repertoire of representation, visual narration and division of labor, craft specialization, evidence long distance trade.

## Engineering and Architecture:

-Monumental architecture at Uruk, innovative building technologies. The idea of the city wall at the end of the Uruk Period.

-The pyramid temples (ziggurats) could have been a means of connection between heaven and earth and thus, the purpose of ziggurat is to get the temple closer to god and human and provide access from the ground, although it could also serve as shelter from floods. And since, they had a theocratic type of government, it could have not only served as a focal point, but the residents of the city could make a visual connection with the deities and recognize its political authority. Also, it could've acted as a lighthouse or a means of recognition to the travelers or outsiders.

-Temples had a typical tri-partite plan: a long rectangular central hall with rooms on either side and likely had the interior made in a “bent axis” approach, a typical arrangement for Ancient Near Eastern temples.

-A characteristic form of decoration involves the use of clay cones with painted tops pressed into the mud plaster facing the buildings - a technique known as clay cone mosaic in the temple-structures. Ziggurats consisted of mud-brick and covered with burnt brick as a means of protection. Square shaped holes, that acted as a way for excess moisture to escape structures.

## Cultural Semantics:

-In the epic of Gilgamesh, gilgamesh who goes around the world to find “eternal glory” but can’t escape death, this can be considered as a reference to the story of “Alexander- The great” who also, tries to conquer the world to attain fame and glory over the world, but learns that none can escape death and that you carry nothing after you die. Also, another interesting part in the epic is that Gilgamesh, during his conquest, comes across a person named Utnapishtim, who helps survive a massive flood, which is a reference to Noah’s ark, in the old testament of the Bible.

-The spread of signature aspects of “Uruk” material culture: cylinder seals, that designated personal property, which can be related to seals from other civilizations that indicated trade or possession or authority. Similarly, Uruk wheel made, mass produced, undecorated pottery, especially large quantities of bevelled rim bowls, particular architectural forms that involve niching. Which could draw a question that Is “Uruk expansion” phenomenon by means of “world systems theory”, or through the idea of “colonization” of marginal landscapes, or as Uruk “enclaves”. Are we dealing with a Mesopotamia-centric world-view here?



# Early Dynastic period

(2900-2344 BCE)

Kshitij Ranjan 19AR10016



- EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD can be considered as an important period according to me under the sumerians.

This is so because we can see a lot of changes coming up in temples, sculptures and many new materials were being invented.

- Techniques or the architectural forms of the temples remained the same but the elements used to build those differed as we can see during sin temple transformation.

- More complex elements were being added up as we move further.

- The temples could have been built on without any platform(ziggurats) but according to me they built those platforms(ziggurats) so that they could rise up by some distance and be closer to the GOD.

- As we see during this period, ziggurats started taking a form of stepped pyramid because ziggurats were a platform where the temple was built on so according to my opinion, they would have wanted to climb from

- Why so much transformation in the temples??

1. More rooms might have been added according to the need as periods passed on so plans could have been expanded.

2. Courtyard was expanded so that more people could be accommodated.

3. Plan of temples might have changed due to some services that were not used.

4. More luxurious items were being discovered so they might have wanted to introduce those in temples which may have led to some changes.

5. New building materials could have been discovered so they might have wanted to build the temple with new building materials.

6. They may have raised the platform on which the temple was built so transformation could have taken place.

- From the oval temple layout, I can understand that temples could have been main administrative and authoritative centers that also provided shelters to priests, the poor and the homeless. As I can see the form they thought of (i.e., oval shape), the materials they used to build it, and the functions they provided inside proves how modern their thinking was and how modern those people were.

# Akkadian Period

(2334-2218 BCE)

— Diya Sarawagi 19AR10013 —



The Akkadian Empire existed from 2234-2154 B.C and was considered the world's first multicultural empire with a central government. Sargon expanded his empire through military means, conquering all of Sumer.

## How it Began

The Sumerians lived in the south Mesopotamia while the Akkadians

lived in the north. They had a similar culture and government as the Sumerians, but spoke a unique language. The individual city-states constituted the government. At that time every town had its own ruler that controlled the surrounding area and the town. These city-states weren't united and often had conflicts with one another. The Akkadian rulers began to see the advantage over the time of uniting several of their cities beneath single nation. They began to make alliances and work together.

## CHRONOLOGY OF RULERS-

Akkadian period (2334–c.2160)

Sargon I 2334–2279

Rimush 2278–2270

Manishtushu 2269–2255

Naram-Sin 2254–2218

Shar-kali-sharri 2217–2193

The Akkadians were successful merchants, traders, and craftsmen. Their capital city, Akkade, was a thriving commercial centre and in its harbour ships indicating the presence of sharp mind of rulers. Akkadian sculpture is considered as one of the "classical" sculptures of ancient Mesopotamia as we can witness various scriptures having significant importance and individual storyline.

## ARCHITECTURE-

The archaeological record is in depth though distracted with major issues of disagreement over what belongs to the Akkadian period and what does not. The more I read about such matters as floor plans, architecture, pottery, and collections of implements, the more I came to appreciate the importance of this phase of Mesopotamian history. Few points which I inferred after reading about Akkadian Architecture is mentioned below-

The archaeology of the Akkadian era mainly falls into two main phases: Classical and early. The early phase, from the reigns of Sargon, Rimush, and Manishtusu to the first decade or so of Naram-Sin, continues the pre-Akkadian (or Early Dynastic IIIb) period, so it is difficult to distinguish from it without epigraphic evidence. The Classical phase, from Naram-Sin through Shar-kali-sharri, is characterized by innovations in art, architecture, and writing that can be readily identified.

Akkadian fortified administrative building at Nagar is the outstanding example of greater scale and symmetry.

The renovations of existing Akkadian structures tended to make them larger and more imposing, and with massive walls. For eg. Single-Shrine Temple

According to the Archaeological evidence and floor plans drawn on tablets that infer that the basic modular house unit of rooms arranged around a courtyard remained the fundamental element of Akkadian design.

The use of rectangular bricks in preference to the plano-convex bricks typical of the pre-Akkadian period is a helpful dating criterion, but early Akkadian buildings were sometimes constructed in plano-convex bricks and Akkadian administrators sometimes continued to use earlier buildings. As a result, the transition from plano-convex to rectangular bricks is not a definitive marker for the onset of the Akkadian period, but only for new construction in the Classical phase, when plano-convex bricks were no longer used.



# Gutian period

(2199-2119 BCE)

Devaraj S 19AR10012

## Introduction

After displacing the Akkadian Empire, the Gutian dynasty, also recognised as Kutians or Kutians, rose to power in Mesopotamia about 2199-2119 BC (centre), or probably c. 2135-2055 BC (short).

It ruled for around a century; some versions of the Sumerian King List (SKL) range from 4 to 25 years, however.

The conclusion of the Gutian dynasty was marked by accession of Ur-Nammu

As part of the horde that toppled the kingdom of Akkad, the Gutians were described as (or Agade). It was a conglomeration of peoples, probably attracted to the plains for their prosperity, descending from the Zagros Mountains.

Since they declined to obey civilization's rituals and laws, the ancient Mesopotamians viewed them as peculiar creatures.

The Gutians were portrayed as barbarians in Chronicles written around the end of the third millennium BC, with the intellect of dogs and the presence of monkeys, speaking a language that sounded like a confused babble.

## Gutium in inscriptions

Lugalannatum is known from a deposit tablet now housed in the Louvre Museum, in which he mentions Si'um, the Gutians' king.

The tablet was first written in 1941, and the presence of the Gutian dynasty of Sumer was first revealed.

Following the influence of the former Akkadian Dynasty, the tablet is written in Akkadian and uses Sumerian cuneiform characters for their phonetic meaning.

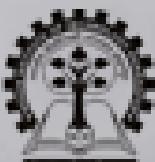
This reads: Lugal-an-na-tum/ pa-te-si/ GIS UH KI-ge/ GIS UH KI/ ba-ba-a/ 30 + 5 mu/ sal-la-ba/ é pa GIS UH KI/ sal-sal/ temen-bi/ ki-a ni-si-si/ me-bi sag-ba/ si-ba-ni-sa/ ud Ba-si-û-um/ lugal Gu-ti-um kam

The name of the temple, historically considered "E PA Temple," is now understood as "Scepter Temple," and E.GIDRU reads it.

The text reveals Lugalannatum's loyalty to the Gutian king of Sumer as a simple Governor of Umma.

There is also a Lugalannatum inscription dedicated to Urgigir's life.

- DEVERAJ S  
19AR10012



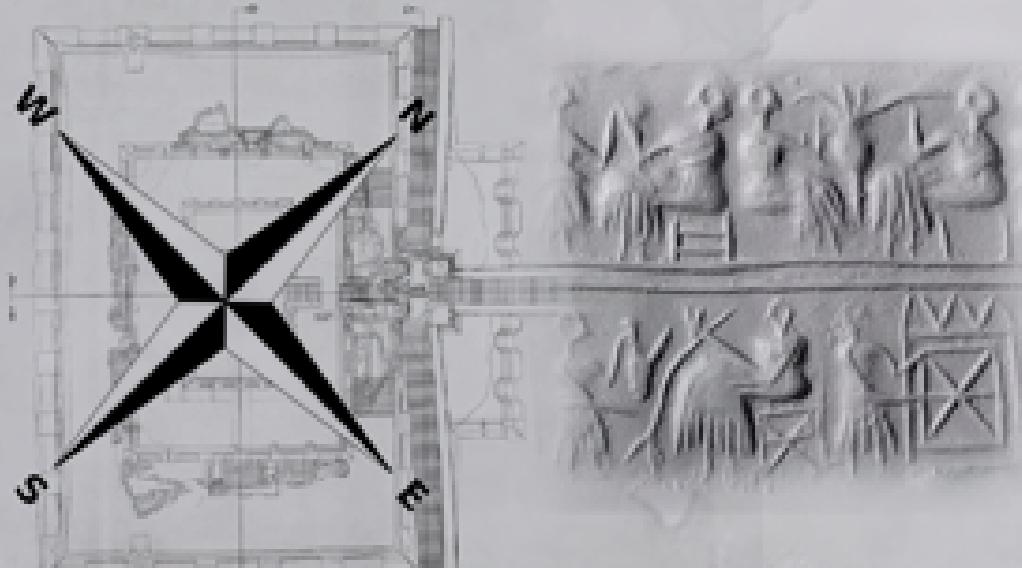
# The Third Dynasty of Ur

(2193–2004 BCE)

Kethokhruto Kapuh 19AR10015

The third dynasty of Ur (22nd to 21st century BC) is a ruling dynasty in the city of Ur which was a short-lived territorial political state which is considered to have been a young empire. It was also known as the Neo-Sumerian empire.

- The city of Ur also indeed been planned carefully such that from every part, its Ziggurat can be visible.
- If we overlap four cardinal directions with its plan, we get a rectangle and the cardinal directions somewhat close to the diagonal lines of the rectangle which according to me in the cylindrical seal shown below, it might represent the plan of the structure.



I think the base wall has been sloped to gain more stability as the structure itself is enormously huge.

• The grooved niches in the terraces allowed the strong interplay of light and shadow in the harsh sun.

• The reason that the ziggurat was built very tall was to protect the people from flood.

• What made the ziggurat so innovative is that the elements, three staircases, platform and the temple/shrine were no longer arranged as a general common shape and form and were unified with an appreciable color coded design.

- KETHOKHRUTO KAPUH  
19AR10015

