

Chapter 1

Writing and City Life

EXERCISE-1.1

1-mark

1. Why do we say that it was not natural fertility and high levels of food production that were the causes of early urbanization?

Answer:

It is often said that natural fertility and high levels of food production were the causes of early urbanization. It is because of the following reasons:

- Natural fertility encourages settled life and agricultural production.
- It paved the way for animal husbandry.
- Fertility of the soil was also helpful in the beginning of new occupations.
- Flourishing trade and commerce is also another major factor for urbanization.
- The development of art of writing and administration played a very critical role in the development of urbanization.

2. Which of the following were necessary conditions and which the causes of early urbanization, and which would you say were the outcome of the growth of cities:

(a) highly productive agriculture

(b) water transport

(c) the lack of metal and stone

(c) the division of labor

(e) the use of seals

(f) the military power of kings that made labor compulsory?

Answer:

Following were the necessary conditions for urbanization:

- Highly productive agriculture
- Water transport
- The division of labor

Causes of early urbanization:

- Lack of metal and stones

History

- The use of the seals
- The military power of the kings made labor compulsory.

The outcome of the growth of cities:

- Efficient transport system.
- Trade and services developed.

3. Why were mobile animal herders not necessarily a threat to town life?

Answer:

Mobile animal herders were required to exchange ghee, metal tools, grains, etc. So they were not a threat to town life.

4. Why would the early temple have been much like a house?

Answer:

Early settlers began to build temples at selected spots in their villages. The earliest known temple was a small shrine made of unbaked bricks. These early temples were much like a house because they were small in size. There used to be an open courtyard around which rooms were constructed. Temples were the residence of various gods. Temples also had their outer wall going in and out at regular intervals, which no ordinary building ever had.

5. Of the new institutions that came into being once city life had begun, which would have depended on the initiative of the king?

Answer:

Temple, trade, seal making, sculpture and the art of writing were the new institutions that came into being with the beginning of the city life. These institutions depended on the initiative of the king.

6. What do ancient stories tell us about the civilization of Mesopotamia?

Answer:

Ancient stories of Mesopotamia are valuable sources of information. As per the stories, Mesopotamia is situated between two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates. Mesopotamia was one of the advanced civilizations of its time. Its society was divided into three classes, i.e.

1. The upper class
2. The middle class and
3. The lower class

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People belonging to upper classes led a life full of comforts and luxury and enjoyed special privileges. Agriculture was the main occupation of the people. Their life was normally prosperous. Religion was an important part of their life and people worshiped many gods and goddesses. Shamas was their main God. It was the Sun. Ziggurat was the name given to Sumerian temples.

Another description from the Bible: According to the Bible, the flood was meant to destroy all forms of life on the earth. However, God chose a man, Noah, to ensure that life could continue after devastating flood on the earth. Noah, built a huge boat, an ark. He took a pair each of all known species of animals and birds on the board, the arks which survived the flood. When other things were destroyed by the flood, his boat remained safe along with all the species. Thus began a new life on the earth. There was a similar striking story in Mesopotamian tradition, where the principal character was called Ziusudra or Utnapishtim.

EXERCISE-1.2

2-mark

1. Where is Mesopotamia?

Answer:

Mesopotamia is in the republic of Iraq. It is situated between two world-famous rivers; Euphrates and Tigris. The ancient Mesopotamian civilization also flourished in this region.

2. For which reason the Mesopotamian river is well known?

Answer:

It is well known for its development of city life, rich literature, and mathematics.

3. When and where did archaeological work begin in Mesopotamia first of all?

Answer:

First of all, archaeological work began in Mesopotamia in 1840 at the given sites.

- Uruk
- Mari

4. What is the meaning of the word 'Mesopotamia'?

Answer:

The word 'Mesopotamia' is derived from two Greek words 'Mesos' and 'Potamos'. The word 'Mesos' means the middle and 'Potamos' means river. Hence, the land lying or situated between two rivers (Tigris and Euphrates) is called Mesopotamia.

5. What does the Bible depict about floods?

Answer:

According to the Holy book of Christian, i.e. the Bible, the flood was meant to destroy all forms of life on the earth. However, God chose a human being Noah to ensure that life must go on after the flood.

6. Where was city life developed first of all in the world? Name the cities also.

Answer:

The city life developed or came into being first of all in the world in Mesopotamia. These earliest developed cities were:

- Ur
- Uruk
- Kish.

7. Which type of cities came into prominence in Mesopotamian civilization?

Answer:

These types of cities came into prominence in Mesopotamian civilization. These were:

- Religious Town
- Trading Town
- Imperial Town

8. Which were the major crops produced during Roman civilization?

Answer:

The major crops grown during the Roman civilization were wheat, peas, lintel and barley.

9. What were the reasons behind the development or growth of urbanization in Mesopotamia?

Answer:

The reasons behind the growth of urbanization in Mesopotamia were the following;

- Growth of agriculture
- Flourishing trade
- Use of seals
- The military strength of the ruler who made labor compulsory to all.

10. When did ancient town begin to flourish in Mesopotamia?

Answer;

The ancient town flourished in Mesopotamia dated back to bronze age, i.e. c. 3000 BCE.

11. Which was the ancient town of Mesopotamia? Name its capital also.

Answer:

Uruk was the ancient town of Mesopotamia. Its capital was Baghdad. It was one of the magnificent towns of that time.

12. (i) Name two rulers of Uruk.

(ii) Name the archaeologist who excavated it.

Answer:

(i) Two rulers of Uruk were Enmerkar and Gilgamesh.

(ii) The city of Uruk was excavated by Julius Jordan in 1913.

13. Who founded Ur and when?

Answer:

Ur was founded by Mesanepada. It was founded in 2670 BCE. This town was a famous part as well as a trading town.

14. List some items which are essential for urban development.

Answer:

Efficient transport network, trade, crafts, services, etc.

15. Name the archaeologists who carried out excavation work at Ur.

Answer:

J.E. Taylor, Sir Leonard Woolley, R.C. Thompson and H.R. Hall carried out excavation work at Ur.

16. What do you know about Mari?

Answer:

Mari was a famous town of Mesopotamia. This city flourished between 2900 BCE to 1759 BCE. It was destroyed by Akkad ruler Sargon in 2350, but regained her lost glory after 2000 B.C.E. when it was made the capital of Amorite Empire.

17. Who was the famous ruler of Mari?

Answer:

The famous ruler of Mari was Zimrilion who constructed a beautiful palace which was spread over 204 hectares and having 260 rooms.

18. Where is Nimrod? By which name Nimrod was also known as? By whom and when was it excavated?

Answer:

Nimrod was a famous town in Mesopotamia. It was situated on the southern bank of the river Tigris. In ancient period, it was also known as Kalhu. This town was first excavated by Herry Austen Layard in 1845.

19. Who founded Nimrod? Where was it founded?

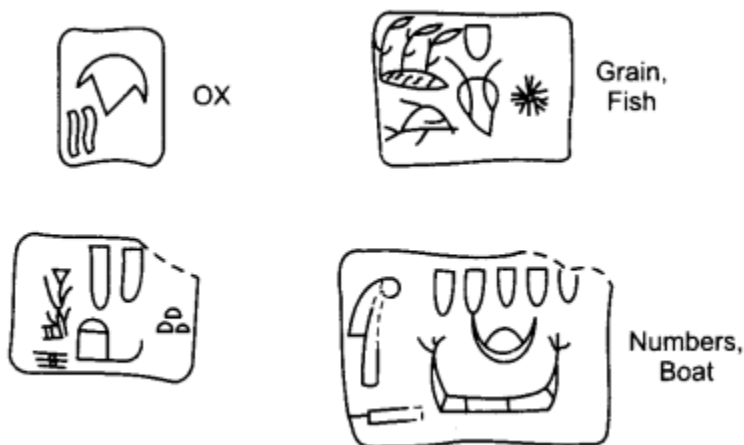
Answer:

Nimrod was founded by Shalmanesar-I in 1295 BCE. This city was also made the capital of his empire by another ruler Asur-Narispal in 880 BCE.

20. What did Mesopotamian tablets contain? When were these tablets written?

Answer:

The Mesopotamian tablets contained only symbols and numbers. These tablets contained the signs/symbols of fish, bread, leaves and were written around 3200 BCE.



21. What do you know about the script used by Mesopotamia's?

Answer:

The Mesopotamian script was pictographic. It represented signs, symbols, and pictures to depict objects. It was around 2600 BCE when a system of writing known as cuneiform developed.

22. Which was the earliest language known to Mesopotamia's? By which language was it replaced? (HOTS)

Answer:

The earliest language known to Mesopotamia's was Sumerian. This was replaced by Akkadian language around 2400 BCE.

23. What is the meaning of Cuneiform?

Answer:

The word 'Cuneiform' is derived from two Latin words. These words are 'Cuneus' meaning 'wedge' and 'forma' meaning 'Shape'. Thus, the wedge shaped symbols which represent the syllable and sound of a word is called cuneiform.

24. What were the main social classes of early cities?

Or

How was Mesopotamian society divided?

Answer:

Society was divided into three classes. These classes included:

1. The upper class
2. The middle class
3. The lower class

The upper class consisted of priest, king and officials. The middle class consisted of traders, merchants, landlords, etc. while the lower class consisted of peasants, laborers and slaves.

25. What was the status of women during early states?

Answer:

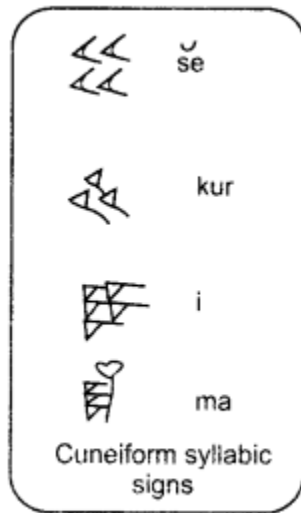
The status of women was very good during early states. They participated in social and religious festivals without any dissemination's. They were free from social restrictions and could hold any desirable post with her ability.

26. Which two things indicate that 'only a few Mesopotamia's could read and write'?

Answer:

Two things indicate that only a few' Mesopotamia's could read and write are:

1. 300 signs were available to read and write. It was a very lengthy procedure.
2. Reading and writing of these signs were very complicated.



27. Which was the center of main urban institution?

Answer:

Temple was the main center of urban institution where all kinds of things related to daily uses of the commoners were carried out.

28. “In spite of natural fertility, agriculture was the subject to hazards.” Why.

Answer:

In spite of natural fertility, agriculture was subject to hazards because:

- River Tigris was overflowed during the particular month of a year.
- The river often changed its course which causes water scarcity in a particular region.

29. How did the chiefs increase their influence?

Answer:

During the warfare those chiefs who emerged as victorious, distributed their loot among their followers and also took prisoners from defeated groups and employed them as their guards. Thus the victorious chiefs increased their influence by the need of their followers and showing kindness towards the defeated.

30. Which was the earliest temple town of Egypt? How did it become reliable?

Answer:

Uruk was the earliest temple town of Egypt. It became reliable from the depictions of armed heroes and their victims.

31. Why was literacy rate so slow in Mesopotamia?

Answer:

The large number of symbols coupled with the complexity of the language led to low literacy rate in Mesopotamia.

32. Which type of family system was prevalent in Mesopotamian society?

Answer:

A nuclear family system was prevalent in Mesopotamian society. This type of family comprises a man, his wife and children.

33. How many types of slaves were there in Mesopotamian society?

Answer:

These types of slaves were there in Mesopotamian society. They were ;

- War prisoners.
- Children sold by their parents.
- Debt trapped persons (Persons who were not able to pay back their loan).

34. What were the modes of entertainment of the people?

Answer:

The various modes of entertainment of the people were dancing, singing, playing flute, hunting of wild animals, watching wrestling, etc.

35. Name some famous temples constructed by the people of early cities.

Answer:

The main temples constructed by the people of early cities were the following.

- Nanne
- Anu
- Enki
- Inanna

36. Which types of community resided in Mari kingdom?

Answer:

Communities of the farmers and pastoralists resided in Mari kingdom. Most of the kingdom was covered by pastoralists.

37. Who built a beautiful palace at Mari? How many rooms were there in this palace?

Answer:

The Great Palace of Mari was built by Zimrilim (1810 – 1760 BCE). There were 260 rooms in this palace and was spread over an area of 2.4 hectares.

38. What were the three unique characteristics of town planning of Mesopotamia? (HOTS)

Answer:

The three unique characteristics of Mesopotamian civilization were:

1. Towns were constructed according to pre-planned strategy.
2. Baked bricks were used for construction.
3. Most of the houses were of single story having a courtyard.

39. Which was the famous epic of Sumerian literature?

Answer:

The famous epic of Sumerian literature was ‘Gilgamesh’. It also occupies a unique place in the world of literature.

40. When and how Gilgamesh was composed?

Answer:

‘Gilgamesh’ was composed during 2000 BCE in 12 tablets. It was written about Uruk ruler Gilgamesh who occupied the throne around 2700 BCE.

41. When and where Mesopotamian script was discovered?

Answer:

Mesopotamian script was discovered in Summer in 3200 BCE.

42. Describe any two features of Mesopotamian script.

Answer:

Two features of Mesopotamian script were:

1. It was written on clay tablets.
2. It was written from left to right.

43. Which was the earliest language known to Mesopotamian? Which language replaced it and when?

Answer:

The earliest language known to Mesopotamian was the Sumerian. It was replaced by 'Akkad' around 2400 BCE.

44. Describe in brief the importance of writing.

Answer:

- Writing helped in the spread of education,
- It helped in the promotion of trade and also about the contemporary condition of the society at that particular time.

45. What do you know about steles?

Answer:

Stone slabs with inscription or carving are called steles.

EXERCISE-1.3

4-mark

1. Why Mesopotamia is considered important by Europeans? Give reasons. (VBQ)

Answer:

Europeans considered Mesopotamian important on account of the following reasons:

- In Old Testament, there are references about it, which refer to 'Shimar', meaning the Sumer (the land of brick-built cities). It clearly refers to Mesopotamia, because early planned cities existed there.
- European scholars and travelers referred to Mesopotamia as their ancestral land.
- Archaeological discoveries also depict that Europeans had a keen interest in this region.

2. "Rivers play crucial role in the emergence of civilization". Justify this statement in context to Mesopotamia. (HOTS)

Answer:

Mesopotamia is situated between the land of two rivers, i.e. Euphrates and Tigris. Both these rivers originated from Armenia mountain in present-day Turkey. They drained a vast mountain region. Although the climate of this area is dry yet agriculture is possible because of irrigation facilities. The favorable agricultural condition encouraged the people to reside in this region. The surplus food production of crops enabled the agriculturist communities to feed those people such as craftsmen, priests, rulers, soldiers, etc. who were not practicing agriculture. The nomadic pastoralist communities provided with other essential needs of daily use to these people. Thus the settlement of all these in this region paved the way for the rise of civilization.

3. Give some facts to show geographical diversities that existed in Iraq.

Answer:

Geographical diversity existed in Iraq. Some of these arguments that support it are the following:

- North-east region is lush green region. It is also covered with mountain ranges with clear streams.
- There is plentiful rainfall in the region which is sufficient for growing crops.

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- In Northern region there is a vast track of upland, called steppe. In this region, animal herders reside who provides better livelihood than agriculture.
- In the east, River Tigris and its tributaries flows which provides routes of communication into the mountain region of Iran.

4. Write in brief about the importance of southern and north-east regions of Mesopotamia.

Answer:

Mesopotamian southern region is desert, but the rivers Euphrates and Tigris support the city life here. These rivers deposit their silt by flooding in the region and make the soil fertile. When the river Euphrates enters the desert, it gets divided into small channels. These river channels provided irrigation facilities in the past. Crops such as wheat, barley, peas or lentils were grown here, though there did not happen sufficient rainfall. In the north-east region, sheep and goats were grazed on steppe by the Mesopotamians. In this region milk, wool and meat was produced in bulk. Fish was also available in plenty. Date-palm provided fruit in summer. Considering these facts we can conclude that these regions were of utmost importance for Mesopotamians.

5. “The use of seals played significant role in the development of trade in urbanization in Mesopotamia.” Discuss.

Answer:

A number of seals have been excavated from Mesopotamia. These were made of stone and were cylindrical in shape. These seals were fitted with a stick and then rolled over wet clay so that a continuous picture got engraved over it. This work was done by skilled craftsmen. The name of the owner, his God, his official, ranks, etc. were also engraved on it. Seals were used by merchants to send their goods from one place to another. Goods were first packed and a seal was put at the head of the pack to ensure its authenticity. In case seals were found tampered with, it meant the pack had been pilfered on the way otherwise it was safe and secure. Undoubtedly, we can say that the use of seals played a significant role in the growth of urbanization.

6. “The Euphrates river of ancient Mesopotamia was world-renowned trade route”. How will you justify it? (HOTS)

Answer:

Earlier the task of transportation of goods, food grains and other essential commodities were carried by the beasts of burden or bullock-carts. It was a time-consuming activity and a lengthy process. The river Euphrates helped the people to

History

get rid of this task. It flows almost through the entire region of Mesopotamia. It provided people one of the cheapest means of transport, which made possible to transport bulk goods with any difficulty. The boats guided by the direction of winds were available free of cost. Several stream emerging of it provided an excellent source of water transportation. Most of the trade began to carry out on this route. Hence, we can say that the river of Euphrates was a well-renowned trade-route.

7. Explain with the help of an example, how did compulsory labor make possible the construction of temples, palaces, buildings, etc.

Answer:

Mesopotamian king enjoyed the supreme status in the society and also enjoyed extensive power. The king made labor compulsory to all inhabiting in his empire for rendering their services to town's deities and to construct temples. For example, the construction of temple in Uruk city was done by 1500 people working 10 hours a day. This work continued for five years. No person could seek immunity from compulsory labor. The people who were engaged in compulsory labor were paid grains in lieu of their services.

8. How pictographic script came into prominence?

Answer:

The trace of written language has come up from Sumer in Mesopotamia. They are dated back to 3200 BCE. It is believed that the written language was evoked by temple priests, who were assigned to look after temples independently by the king. They had to keep the records of the expenditure and income of the temples. So they began to paint the items donated to the temples on clay tablet. In this, they began to keep these records. The temple of Uruk has revealed a list of 5000 such tablets. They engraved the pictures like signs and numbers of oxen, fish, etc. Now, it became easier to remember the things. In this way, the pictographic script came into prominence.

9. What do you know about the ancient town Ur of Mesopotamia?

Answer:

- This city was founded by Mesapnanda about 2670 BCE. It was a well-known commercial centre and a port was destroyed by Elamites around 2200 BCE.
- Ur was re-established under Ur-Nammu in 2100 BCE.
- It was first excavated by British excavator J.E. Taylor in 1854-55.
- This city was designed without planning as the excavation depicted.

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- Excavation was carried out on a large scale during 1920's and 1930's, under the supervision of Sir Leonard Woollsey.

10. Which factors suggest that Ur was an unplanned city?

Answer:

Ur was an unplanned city because excavation here reveals that people used to throw domestic garbage in the street. As a result of this, the level of the streets began to increase. Holders had to raise the level of their house for proper arrangement of light inside their rooms. It was made possible through doors, rather than windows. Several superstitious beliefs were also prevalent among Ur people regarding their houses under consideration. For example, they raised threshold of a house that brought prosperity. They believed that the first door that did not open towards another house was good and praiseworthy. In case, the door opened outward, it is believed that their strained relations between the husband and the wife residing in it.

11. Discuss the features of town planning of early urban society.

Or

Discuss the essential values of Mesopotamian's town planning.

Answer:

Features of town planning of early urban societies:

- The Mesopotamian cities were designed according to a definite plan. Hammurabi had issued a special order to construct cities according to a definite plan.
- Special attention was paid towards the strength of the building.
- Baked bricks were used for constructing buildings.
- Any violation regarding the construction rules were dealt with severely.
- Most of the buildings, i.e. the houses were of single story. There used to be an open courtyard in these houses. Along with this courtyard rooms were constructed.
- Some people also built basement in their houses to beat heat.
- There was also well adequate provision for roads in towns.

12. What do you know about ancient Mesopotamian town Kish?

Answer:

Ancient Mesopotamian town Kish was situated 12 kilometers east of Babylon. This city flourished around 3000 BCE under the ruler Urtung, who invaded Iran and subjected it to loot and plunder. This town reached its zenith of prosperity

History

during the period from 2800 to 2300 BCE. It continued to flourish till 600 BCE. The first woman ruler of the Kish was Ku-baba, who ascended the throne, in 2450 BCE. The excavation work here was carried out by French archaeologist, between 1912 to 1914 CE. There Ziggurates, a temple and extensive palaces were excavated here by archaeologists.

13. Name any two French archaeologists who carried out excavation at Lagish. Describe in short about its ruler Gudea.

Answer:

Lagish, the important city of Mesopotamia was discovered by two French archaeologists Ernest de-Sarzec and Gaston Cross. Gudea, the greatest ruler of Lagish ruled from 2144 to 2104 BCE. He was very popular among his people due to his religious deeds, liberal attitude and being a justice-lover ruler. He also contributed a lot in the field of architecture and constructed many temples and several of his own statues. He also encouraged trade. As a result of his efforts, i.e. promotion of trade, people became affluent during his reign. This city began to lose its glory after the death of Gudea.

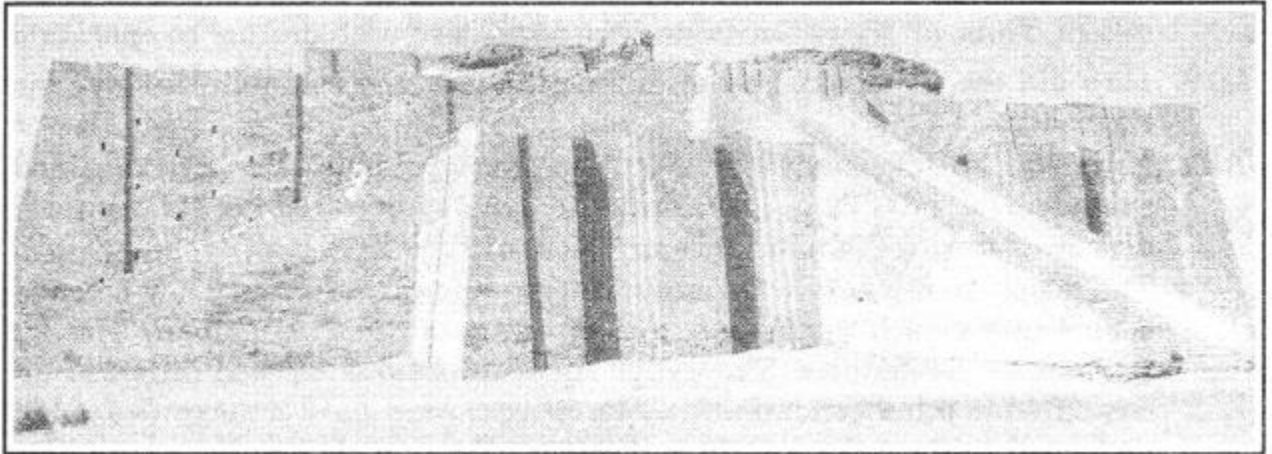
14. What do you know about sacred temples of Mesopotamia? What were they called?

Answer:

Mesopotamian religion was polytheistic. Each city worshipped different gods and goddesses such as Enlil, Marduk, Ashur, etc.

They worshipped their gods and goddesses in temples known as Ziggurats.

Ziggurats represented a sacred mountain where gods and men could meet. Early constructed atop a small earthen platform; as the time passed away these platforms became larger and larger giving rise to the classical Mesopotamian Ziggurats. They resembled steep pyramids with a flatfoot on which a shrine would be built. People could reach to this shrine by broad staircase or a ramp.



15. What do you know about the emergence of Nineveh?

Answer:

Nineveh was situated on the eastern bank of the river Tigris. It was founded by Ninus in 1800 BCE. It was then spread over an area of 1800 hectares. Under Assyrian rulers Sennacharets, Nineveh made tremendous progress. He ruled from 700-681 BCE and constructed a beautiful palace here. The size of this palace was 210 meters in length and 200 meters in breadth. The palace was adorned with beautiful images and paintings. He also constructed many temples and buildings. He got many canals constructed which provided water for irrigation. To secure the peace of Nineveh, he constructed the wall around the city.

16. Describe in brief the achievements of Ashurbanipal.

Answer:

Ashurbanipal was the well-known ruler of Nineveh. He ruled from 668 to 627 BCE. He made all efforts for outstanding artisans and artists from across his empire to settle at Nineveh. He constructed many beautiful temples and buildings. He also got repaired old buildings and temples. Several gardens built by him, add beauty to his capital. He also patronised literature and constructed a massive library in the temple of Nabu. All the literary works available in the library were arranged subject-wise. But its prestige began to lose after his death.

17. Describe the status of women in Mesopotamian society.

Answer:

Women enjoyed a respectable position in society. They enjoyed equal status with men in religious and social affairs of life.

History

- Women were free to set up their own trade and could even keep slaves for either male or female.
- They were allowed to remarry in case of death of her husband.
- Devdasi system was also prevalent in society but was not considered inimical to healthy social value.
- In case of the death of her husband, they became the custodian of his property.

18. How is the division of labor believed to be the main factor behind the growth of urbanization? Explain with an example.

Answer:

The division of labor is believed to be the major factor behind the growth of urbanization; because, the people of towns were not self-sufficient. They depended on other people for several kinds of services. Consider the following example: A person engaged in making stone seals requires bronze metal for engraving it. He could not make tools of his own. Beside this he also had to depend on other person for color stones required for making seals. He did know trade, and had to depend on trades or other people who rendered this services to him. In short, he had to depend on others. Thus, all these functions were performed with mutual co-operation.

19. How did the amalgamation of different castes and communities give birth to a new civilization?

Answer:

Mari was an important city of ancient Mesopotamia. The city regained its ancient splendor in 2000 BCE, when Amorite dynasty declared her its capital. It was again destroyed during Hammurabi's invasion in 1759 BCE.

The people living here were agriculturists and pastoralists. They belonged to various communities such as Akkadi, Amorite, Asyran and Armenian. The king belonged to Amorite community. The entire Amorite community had different dress-codes as compared to other communities. The King of Mari built a magnificent temple at Mari dedicated to the deity known as Dagens. Thus amalgamation of different castes and communities gave birth to new civilization at Mari. As people belonging to different communities resided at Mari, the king had always to remain vigilant.

20. “The script of Mesopotamia helped the historians to throw light on this ancient civilization”. Justify the statement.

Answer:

The earliest language known to the Mesopotamians was Sumerian. It was replaced by Akkadi around 2400 BCE. Gradually, the Aramaic came into prominence by 1400 BCE. The use of Aramaic became widespread by 1000 BCE. Irrespective of the fact that there had originated a script in Mesopotamia, still the rate of literacy was very low. The logic behind low literacy rate was that there were more than 2000 symbols used to decipher. Besides this, the language was itself very complicated. But truly speaking, the languages of the Mesopotamian have given a very long way in helping the historians, who after carefully examining and analyzing it throws a floodlight on this ancient civilization.

EXERCISE-1.4

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What do you know about Uruk?

Answer:

Situated on the bank of the river Euphrates, about 2500 kilometers south-east of modern capital city of Baghdad, Uruk is an ancient Mesopotamian city. It came into existence around 3000 BCE, and was reckoned to be the most extensive town in the contemporary world. Uruk spread over an area of 250 hectares. It was twice in size when compared to Indus valley civilization. The city expanded around 2800 BCE. This area increased to about 400 hectares. Nearly 50,000 to 80,000 people resided here at that time.

Sumerian king Ermerkar was the founder of this town. He also constructed here the temple of a well-known goddess Inanna. Another famous ruler of this town was Gilgamesh. He declared Uruk as the capital city of his empire. To safeguard ground from any invasion he constructed a massive town around it. Here in Uruk the war prisoner had to do compulsory labour either for the ruler or for construction of temple. They were paid in grains in return. The common people were engaged in the extraction of stones, making mud-bricks, etc. as per the order of their ruler.

Uruk had also made unprecedented progress in the field of technology. The invention of potter's wheel led to a revolutionary change in the field of technology and also helped in utensil making on a large scale.

2. Describe the main features of the city of Babylon.

Answer:

The city of Babylon had played an outstanding role in the ancient history of Mesopotamia. It was Akkad ruler, Sargon, who ruled from 2370 to 2315 BCE. Being situated on the north-west bank of river Tigris it made tremendous progress under Humurabiera. Babylon witnessed the emergence of glorious era of its history under Keldian ruler Nabopolassor. At that time, it covered an area of more than 850 hectares. Some magnificent features of Babylon were as follows:

- A triple wall was constructed all-around the city to safeguard it from any foreign threat.
- A massivq Ziggurat was the main center of attraction in Babylon.

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- It was also a famous commercial center.
- The city had also made tremendous progress in the field of language, literature, science, medicine, etc.

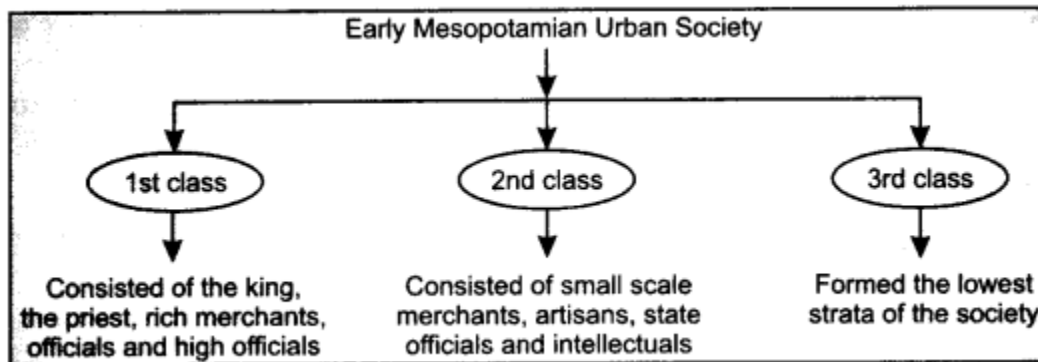
3. Describe the nature of early urban society under Mesopotamia.

Or

“There was a great disparity among the different sections of the Mesopotamian society”. Explain.

Answer:

The early urban society was divided into three classes. The first class or group of the people coming from elites and consisted of the king (Monarch), the priest, the officials, rich merchants and businessmen, high military officials, etc. They led a luxurious life and lived in magnificent buildings and palaces. They wore expensive clothes and used to eat sumptuous foods. The people of this class were served by several men and women slaves. The people belonging to second class consisted of the people such as small scale merchants, artisans, state officials, intellectuals, etc. Like upper or 1st class they also led a life of luxury. The third estate or class people constituted the lowest strata of the society. Their life was very miserable. The dead bodies of the upper class people were buried along with precious items such as gold vessels, oyster shell, lapis lazuli, etc. On the other hand, the dead bodies of common people were buried along with ordinary pots, etc. It clearly indicates that there was great disparity among the different sections of society.



4. Illustrate the construction of temple and gradual increasing of activities of temples in Mesopotamia.

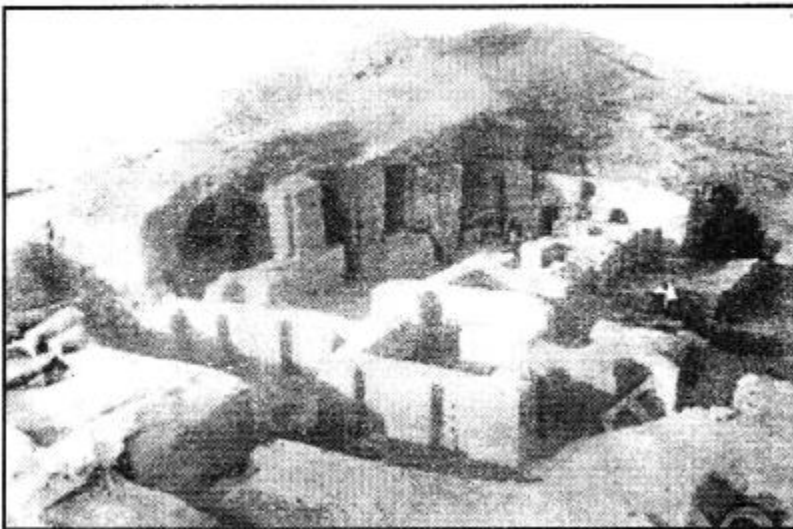
Answer:

Mesopotamian temples have played a significant role in the history of Mesopotamia. They constructed temples and dedicated them to their different gods and goddesses. Their temples were dedicated to Nanna, Anu, Enki and Inanna. Besides these four deities, each town had its own deity who was considered to be the protector of the respective town.

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Temples of early Mesopotamia were comparatively smaller in size. They were also made of unbaked bricks. With the passage of time, the temple began to take new shape. Their importance as well as size began to increase. They used to build their temples on the hill tops because they believed that God (deities) dwell on the hill-top. These temples were made of baked bricks.

One of the peculiar features of these temples was that their outer walls had inward and outward bend at regular intervals. The temple had a courtyard and there were several rooms around it. The image of the deity was placed in the main room. Some rooms served as dwelling places for priests and other rooms were meant to stay for the pilgrims.



Increasing Activities of the Temples:

- Temples served as center of imparting education, where the priests used to serve as teachers.
- Land attached to temples was also used for industrial purposes.
- Temples were also engaged in sales and purchases of goods and also used to provide advance loans to the traders and charge interest thereon.
- The people offered grains, curd, dates, etc. to serve their deities. They also sacrificed ox, sheep, goat, etc. to offer their blessings.
- Temples also served as the centers for entertainment and provided a common platform for the people to meet each other and get a new boost.

5. What do you know about Gilgamesh? Explain in detail.

Answer:

The Gilgamesh epic occupies a special place not only in Sumerian literature, but also in world history. It was written by Uruk ruler Gilgamesh, who ruled there about 2700 BCE. It was written on 12 tablets. This epic is about the achievements of Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh was a famous ruler of Uruk. He was a great ruler and laid the foundation of a vast empire. To secure the Uruk against any threat of the foreign ruler he constructed a wall around it with a view to end his tyrannical rule. People prayed to deity, Anu. As a result of this, God Anu ordered the goddess Arur to create such a God who could surpass Gilgamesh. The goddess created Enkidu who fought with Gilgamesh. He was impressed by his bravery and became a fast friend.

“They both performed several commendable works and decided to kill a demon of Elam known as Humbaba. After a terrible war, Gilgamesh finally killed Humbaba. Impressed by the bravery of Gilgamesh, Ishtar fell in love with her.

Gilgamesh’s friend Enkidu fell in love with a beautiful dancing girl. This enraged the deities. So they decided to end the life of Enkidu. Soon after he fell ill and died. The death of Enkidu deeply hurt Gilgamesh. He began to think one day that he will also die. Thus he began his search to attain immortality, but no one could ever become immortal. At the time of creation of a human being God gave him (the man) death and kept life with them. Despite this he did his best to become immortal.

Finally, he thought about Utnapishtim. Being impressed by his efforts Utnapishtim revealed the secret of immortality through the plant lying at the bottom of an ocean (sea). Gilgamesh accepted this challenge and jumped into the sea to bring the said plant. On his return he was very tired and fell asleep. Meanwhile a snake came here and took away that plant. When he woke up he saw the desired plant was missing. Finally, he understood the fact that the man can never become immortal. He came back to his native city. After many years he became emotional on seeing his city. He realised the fact that his sons will continue to enjoy the vast empire built by him after his death.

Read the following passages and answer the questions that follow:

Passage 1.

In India, early stone seals were stamped. In Mesopotamia until the end of the first millennium BCE, cylindrical stone seals, pierced down the center, were fitted with a stick and rolled over wet clay so that a continuous picture was created. They were carved by very skilled craftsmen, and sometimes carry writing; the name of the owner, his god, his official position, etc. A seal could be rolled on clay covering the string knot of a cloth package or the mouth of a pot, keeping the contents safe. When rolled on a letter written on a clay tablet, it became a mark of authenticity. So the seal was the mark of a city dweller's role in public life.

Questions:

- (i) Which type of material was used to make seals?**
- (ii) What were the various types of seals?**
- (iii) Who carved these seals? Write a few features of these seals (Mesopotamian seals).**

Answers:

(i) Seals were made of stones. It is evident from the fact that until the end of the first millennium BCE, cylindrical stone seals were prevalent in society.

(ii) There were two types of seals. These were:

- Stamp seals
- Cylindrical seals

(iii) These seals were carved by skilled craftsmen.

Features

- Artistically the carving of the seals was of excellent quality.
- Engraving on these seals depict the scene of every day life.
- The inscribed sign describes the authenticity of the seal.

History

Passage 2.

Today, Mesopotamian excavators have much higher standards of accuracy and care in recording than in the old days, so that few dig huge areas the way Ur was excavated. Moreover, few archaeologists have the funds to employ large teams of excavators. Thus, the mode of obtaining data has changed.

Take the small town at Abu Salabikh, about 10 hectares in area in 2500 BCE with a population less than 10,000. The outlines of walls were at first traced by scraping surfaces. This involves scraping off the top few millimetres of the mound with the sharp and wide end of a shovel or other tool. While the soil underneath was still slightly moist, the archaeologist could make out different colours, textures and lines of brick walls or pits or other features.

A few houses that were discovered were excavated. The archaeologists also sieved through tons of earth to recover plant and animal remains, and in the process identified many species of plants and animals and found large quantities of charred fish bones that had been swept out on to the streets. Plant seeds and fibres remained after dung cakes had been burned as fuel and thus kitchens were identified.

Living rooms were those with fewer traces. Because they found the teeth of very young pigs on the streets, archaeologists concluded that pigs must have roamed freely here as in any other Mesopotamian town. In fact, one house burial contained some pig bones—the dead person must have been given some pork for his nourishment in the afterlife! The archaeologists also made microscopic studies of room floors to decide which rooms in a house were roofed (with poplar logs, palm leaves, straw, etc.) and which were open to the sky.

Questions:

- (i) Explain in brief the procedure adopted to discover Abu Salabikh? Why had Mesopotamian excavators much higher standards of accuracy?**
- (ii) What do you know about Abu Salabikh?**
- (iii) What does the presence of pig bones along with burial indicate?**

Answers:

- (i)** The procedure involves the scraping off the top few millimeters of the mound with the sharp and wide end of a shovel or other tools. The digging work was carefully carried out with high standards for accuracy. A few archaeologists

History

employed large team of excavators to carry out excavation work. The mode of data collecting was totally different.

(ii) Abu Salabikh was a famous Mesopotamian town. It was spread over an area of 10 hectares in 2500 BCE with a population of less than ten thousand.

(iii) The presence of pig bones along with burial indicates that the dead person must have been given some pork for his nourishment.

Passage 3.

An Early Library:

In the iron age, the Assyrians of the north created an empire, at its height between 720 and 610 BCE, that stretched as far west as Egypt. The state economy was now a predatory one, extracting labor and tribute in the form of food, animals, metal and craft items from a vast subject population.

The great Assyrian kings, who had been immigrants, acknowledged the southern region, Babylonia, as the center of high culture and the last of them, Ashurbanipal (668-627 BCE), collected a library at his capital, Nineveh in the north. He made great efforts to gather tablets on history, epics, omen literature, astrology, hymns and poems. He sent his scribes south to find old tablets. Because scribes in the south were trained to read and write in schools where they all had to copy tablets by the dozen, there were towns in Babylonia where huge collections of tablets were created and acquired fame. And although Sumerian ceased to be spoken after about 1800 BCE, it continued to be taught in schools, through vocabulary texts, sign lists, bilingual (Sumerian and Akkadian) tablets, etc. So even in 650 BCE, cuneiform tablets written as far back as 2000 BCE were intelligible – and Ashurbanipal's men knew where to look for early tablets or their copies.

Copies were made of important texts such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, the copier stating his name and writing the date. Some tablets ended with a reference to Ashurbanipal. I, Ashurbanipal, king of the universe, king of Assyria, on whom the gods bestowed vast intelligence, who could acquire the recondite details of scholarly erudition, I wrote down on tablets the wisdom of the gods ... And I checked and collated the tablets. I placed them for the future in the library of the temple of my god, Nabu, at Nineveh, for my life and the well-being of my soul, and to sustain the foundations of my royal throne.

History

More important, there was cataloguing: a basket of tablets would have a clay label that read: 'n number of tablets about exorcism, written by X'. Ashurbanipal's library had a total of some 1,000 texts, amounting to about 30,000 tablets, grouped according to subject.

Questions:

- (i) Which type of state economy was prevalent at that time?**
- (ii) Who established a huge library at Nineveh?**
- (iii) (a) Name the place acknowledged as the center of high culture by Assyrian.**
- (b) Who helped Ashurbanipal to collect huge tablets of different literary texts and how?**
- (iv) How many texts were in Ashurbanipal's library?**
- (v) Describe the achievements of Ashurbanipal.**

Answers:

(i) At that time state economy was predatory. It was focused on extracting labour in the form of food, animals, metals and craft items, etc. from a large section of population.

(ii) The great Assyrian king Assurbanipal established a huge library at Nineveh.

(iii)

- Babylonia
- Skilled scribes of the south helped him to collect huge tablets of different literary texts. These scribes were trained to read and write in schools where huge collection of tablets were created and acquired fame.

(iv) There were one thousand texts in his library.

(v) Assurbanipal was the famous ruler of Nineveh, who played an important role in its development. He constructed several buildings and temples and also got repaired old buildings and monuments. He took keen interest in the development of literature and established a massive library in the temple of Nabu at Nineveh. The main subjects were history, epics, astrology, philosophy, science and poetry. He himself wrote many texts and got back the lost glory and prestige of Nineveh.

Passage 4.

And, an Early Archaeologist!:

A man of the southern marshes, Nabopolassar, released Babylonia from Assyrian domination in 625 BCE. His successors increased their territory and organized building projects at Babylon. From that time, even after the Achaemenids of Iran conquered Babylon in 539 BCE and until 331 BCE when Alexander conquered Babylon, Babylon was the premier city of the world, more than 850 hectares, with a triple wall, great palaces and temples, a ziggurat or stepped tower, and a processional way to the ritual centre. Its trading houses had widespread dealings and its mathematicians and astronomers made some new discoveries.

Nabonidus was the last ruler of independent Babylon. He writes that the God of Ur came to him in a dream and ordered him to appoint a priestess to take charge of the cult in that ancient town in the deep south. He writes: 'Because for a very long-time the office of High Priestess had been forgotten, her characteristic features nowhere indicated, I bethought myself day after day.

Then, he says, he found the stele of a very early king whom we today date to about 1150 BCE and saw on that stele the carved image of the Priestess. He observed the clothing and the jewelry that was depicted. This is how he was able to dress his daughter for her consecration as Priestess.

On another occasion, Nabonidus's men brought to him a broken statue inscribed with the name of Sargon, king of Akkad. (We know today that the latter ruled around 2370 BCE.) Nabonidus, and indeed many intellectuals, had heard of this great king of remote times. Nabonidus felt he had to repair the statue. 'Because of my reverence for the gods and respect for kingship,' he writes, 'I summoned skilled craftsmen, and replaced the head.'

Questions:

- (i) Name the last independent ruler of Babylon.**
- (ii) Who released Babylonia from Assyrian domination and when?**
- (iii) Who came into the dream of Nabonidus and what did he say to him? How did he consecrate his daughter?**

Answers:

- (i) The last independent ruler of Babylon was Nabonidus.**

History

(ii) Nabopolassar released Babylonia from Assyrian domination in 625 BCE.

(iii) The God of 'Ur' came into the dream of Nabonidus. He ordered him to appoint a priestess to take charge of the cult in the ancient town in the deep south.

Nabonidus describes in his words, "Because for a very long time the office of High priestess had forgotten her characteristic features". He further stated that he found the stele of a very early king and observed on that stele the carved image of the priestess. He also observed the clothing and the jewellery that was depicted. This is how he was able to dress his daughter for her consecration as priestess.

Passage 5.

The Warka Head:

This woman's head was sculpted in white marble at Uruk before 3000 BCE. The eyes and eyebrows would probably have taken lapis lazuli (blue) and shell (white) and bitumen (black) inlays, respectively. There is a groove along the top of the head, perhaps for an ornament. This is a world-famous piece of sculpture, admired for the delicate modelling of the woman's mouth, chin and cheeks. And it was modeled in a hard stone that would have been imported from a distance.

Questions:

(i) Where was the woman's head sculpture discovered? What was it called?

How old was this?

(ii) What were its unique characteristics?

(iii) Why is it a world famous sculpture? Which qualities of this sculpture made him so famous?

Answers:

(i) The woman's head was sculpted in white marble at Uruk. It was called the Warka Head. It was 3000 BCE old.

(ii) The Warka Head had some unique characteristics. These were:

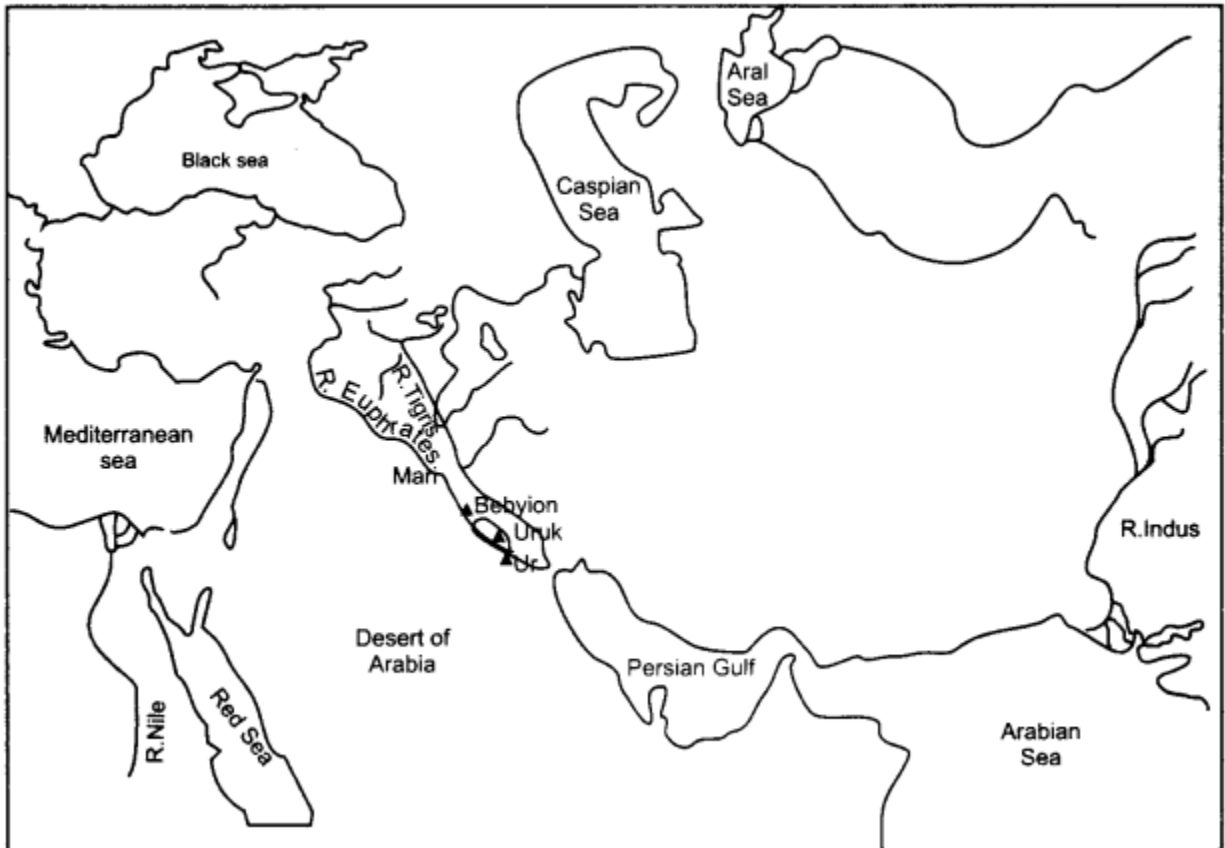
- The eyes and eyebrows had taken lapis lazuli (blue) and shell (white) and bitumen (black) inlays.
- There is a groove along the top of the head, perhaps for an ornament.

Map Skills

1.

On the map of West Asia mark and locate the famous cities of Mesopotamia.

Answer:



History

2. On the map given below mark and locate the following

(i) Zone of agricultural productivity

(ii) Southern limit of zone of rain-fed agriculture

(iii) Mountainous region

Answer:

