

Lecture 4: Ancient Near East and Cities of Mesopotamia: ca. 5,000 (3,500)-1,500 B.C.E.



Nanna Ziggurat, Ur, c. 2100–2050 BCE, Present-day Muqaiyir, Iraq

Ancient Near East (Middle East):

Anatolia-Turkey
Mesopotamia-Iraq
Persia-Iran

ca. 3300-3000 BCE → cuneiform (Latin, “wedge-shaped”) writing

- **Sumer (c. 3500-c. 2000 BCE) MESOPOTAMIA**
- Akkad (c.2340/50-2180/2200 BCE) MESOPOTAMIA
- Lagash/ Neo-Sumerian (c. 2150 BCE) MESOPOTAMIA
- **Babylonia (c.2000-1600 BCE) MESOPOTAMIA**
- Hittites (c.1600-1200 BCE) ANATOLIA (will be studied later)
- Assyria (c.1000- 612 BCE) MESOPOTAMIA (will be studied later)
- Chaldea/Neo-Babylonia (612-539 BCE) MESOPOTAMIA [*Babylon/Ishtar Gate] (will be studied later)
- Persia – IRAN (*Persepolis, will be studied later)

MESOPOTAMIA

Sumer (c. 3100-c. 2000 BCE)

- * Eridu – the oldest Sumerian city, 5000 BCE (dedicated to the god of water)
- *Temple of Enki in Eridu; existed as a single chamber temple already in 5000 BCE
- * Uruk (Biblical Erech, modern Warka, Iraq)
Epic of Gilgamesh (ca. 2700-2500 BCE); legendary Sumerian king of Uruk
- first independent Sumerian city-state (polity); largest Sumerian city (2km²; ca. 40,000 inhabitants);
important polytheistic religious center
- White Temple and Anu ziggurat, ca. 3300–3000 BCE [Anu –sky]
- Eanna Precinct and Mosaic court
- E-anna? [Eanna = Inanna – love, war, fertility]
- * Ur (present-day Muqaiyir, Southern Iraq)
 - Nanna(r) ziggurat, c. 2100–2050 BCE [Nanna-moon; in our book reference to the same structure by the name of ruler Ur-Nammu]
 - royal finds
 - religious center
 - courtyard houses
- * The Temple Oval, Khafaje (north-east of Baghdad), ca. 2600 BCE
 - city temple; urban temple

Babylonia (c. 2000-1600 BCE) / Chaldea/Neo-Babylonia (612-539 BCE)

- * Round city of Mari (modern Syria), ca. 2000 BCE completely destroyed by Sargon and later by Hammurabi
- * Palace of Zimri-Lim, Mari (modern Syria), ca. 2000 BCE (more than 300 rooms)

Building practices and techniques

- * Stele showing Ur-Nammu constructing the ziggurat and presenting himself to the god Nanna(r), Ur, Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) c. 2100–2000 BCE
- * Nippur (Iraq): Map on clay tablet Nippur - Sacred City of Enlil [supreme god of Sumer and Akkad – wind]
- * Seated statue of Gudea holding a temple plan, from Girsu (modern Telloh), Iraq, ca. 2100 BCE. [Lagash/ Neo-Sumerian architecture (c. 2150 BCE)]

Terms:

Mesopotamian architecture
city architecture [capital, colonial town, sacred city]
funerary architecture
temple architecture
urban temple
public / civic buildings
courtyard houses, streets
fortification
ziggurat
mud brick construction with earth mortar
map
architectural drawing