

FROM VILLAGE COMMUNITY TO CITY-STATE

FOOD FIRST: THE AGRICULTURAL VILLAGE 10,000 B.C.E.–750 B.C.E.

KEY TOPICS

- The Agricultural Village
- The First Cities
- Sumer: The Birth of the City
- The Growth of the City-State

Until about 12,000 years ago humans hunted and gathered their food, following the migrations of animals and the seasonal cycles of the crops. They established temporary base camps for their activities, and caves served them for homes and meeting-places, but they had not established permanent settlements. They had begun to domesticate some animals, especially the dog and the sheep, but they had not yet begun the systematic practice of agriculture. Then, about 10,000 B.C.E., people began to settle down, constructing the first agricultural villages.

Why did they do it? Is food production through agriculture easier than hunting and gathering? Surprisingly, the answer seems to be “no.” Research suggests that, with the technology available at that time, adult farmers had to work an equivalent of 1000–1300 hours a year for their food, while hunter-gatherers needed only 800–1000 hours. Moreover, agricultural work was more difficult.

Why did they change? An appealing, although unproved, answer is that increasing population pressure, perhaps accompanied by worsening climatic conditions, forced people to take on the more productive methods of agriculture. Scientists estimate that even in a lush tropical environment, 0.4 square miles of land could support only nine persons through hunting and gathering; under organized, sedentary agricultural techniques, the same area could support 200–400 people. In the less fertile, sub-tropical and temperate climates into which the expanding populations were moving at the end of the last ice age, after about 13,000 B.C.E., hunting and gathering were even less productive. To survive, sedentary agriculture became a necessity.

The memory of this transition survives in myth. For example, the myth of Shen Nung, whom the ancient Chinese honored as the inventor of agriculture and its wooden tools (and of poetry), captures the transformation:

The people of old ate the meat of animals and birds. But in the time of Shen Nung, there were so many people that there were no longer enough animals and birds to supply their needs. So it was that Shen Nung taught the people how to cultivate the earth. (Bairoch, p. 6)

In addition to increasing agricultural productivity, villages facilitated an increase in creativity of all kinds. It may have taken longer to raise food than to hunt and gather it, but the sedentary farmers did not stop work when they had secured their food supply. In their villages they went on to produce textiles, pottery, metallurgy, architecture, tools, and objects of great beauty, especially in sculpture and painting. Did the

Opposite Sumerian ruins, Uruk, present-day Iraq, c. 2100 B.C.E. A man and child stand amid what is left of the ancient city of Uruk.

AT A GLANCE: VILLAGE COMMUNITIES AND CITY-STATES

DATE	POLITICAL	RELIGION AND CULTURE	SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
4500 B.C.E.	■ Ubaid people in Mesopotamia		
3500 B.C.E.	■ Sumerians (3300–2350) ■ Ziggurats built	■ Cuneiform writing ■ Sumerian pantheon	■ Urbanization in Mesopotamia
3000 B.C.E.	■ Hereditary kings emerge		■ Invention of the wheel ■ Bronze casting ■ Sumerian city-states (2800–1850)
2500 B.C.E.	■ Ur, First Dynasty (2500–2350) ■ Akkadian kingdoms (2350–2150); Sargon of Akkad (2334–2279) ■ 3rd Dynasty of Ur (c. 2112–2004)	■ Akkadian language used in Sumer ■ <i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> (c. 2113–1991)	■ Sumerian Laws
2000 B.C.E.	■ Semitic rulers gain control of Mesopotamia ■ 1st dynasty of Babylon (c. 1894–1595) ■ Hammurabi (1792–1750) ■ Hittites in Asia Minor		■ Mycenaean traders in Aegean 1800–1000 B.C.E. ■ Hammurabi's Code of Law
1500 B.C.E.	■ Hittite Empire (c. 1460–1200)	■ "Golden age" of Ugarit	
1000 B.C.E.	■ Assyrian Empire (900–612)	■ Hebrew Scriptures recorded	
750 B.C.E.	■ Sargon II (d. 705) ■ Sennacherib (c. 705–681) ■ Ashurbanipal (d. 627) ■ Fall of Nineveh (imperial capital) (612) ■ Nebuchadnezzar (605–562)	■ <i>Gilgamesh</i> (complete version) ■ Homer (fl. 8th century) ■ Hesiod (fl. 700)	
600 B.C.E.	■ Neo-Babylonian Empire	■ Library at Nineveh	
500 B.C.E.	■ Persian Empire in control of Mesopotamia		

agriculturists work comparatively harder than the hunter-gatherers simply to survive under greater population pressure, or because they craved the added rewards of extra labor, or both? We can never know for sure, but the agricultural village opened new possibilities for economic, social, political, and artistic creativity—while closing others. It changed forever humanity's concepts of life's necessities and potentials.

THE AGRICULTURAL VILLAGE

The first agricultural villages that archaeologists have discovered date to about 10,000 B.C.E. They are located in the "fertile crescent," which curves from the Persian Gulf in the east and south, on the border of today's Iraq and Iran, and then turns northwest into Anatolia, present-day Turkey, and then turns south and west through present-day Syria, Lebanon, and Israel on the Mediterranean Sea. In this region, wild grains and grasses—the ancestors of modern wheat and barley—provided the basic grains, used for gathering, and later for cultivation. By 8000 B.C.E. the Natufians, named for the village in northern Israel, and the peoples immediately to the south, in the Jordan River valley near Jericho, were growing fully domesticated cereals. Peas and lentils and other pulses and legumes followed. The peoples of the fertile crescent hunted gazelle

and goats. Later, they domesticated the goat and the sheep. In Turkey they added pigs; around the Mediterranean, there were cattle.

In other parts of the world, agriculture and animal domestication focused on other varieties. In the western hemisphere, these included maize, especially in Mesoamerica, and rootcrops such as manioc and sweet potatoes in South America. Amerindians domesticated the llama, the guinea pig, and the turkey. Domesticated dogs probably accompanied their migrant masters across the Bering Straits about 15,000 years ago. Perhaps the process of domestication was then repeated with the dogs found in the Americas.

In southeast Asia and in tropical Africa, wild roots and tubers, including yams, were the staple crops. In the Vindhya Mountain areas of central India, rice was among the first crops to be cultivated, about 5000 B.C.E. Anthropologists are uncertain when rice was first cultivated, rather than just being harvested from the wild, in southeast and east Asia, but a date similar to India's seems likely. From earliest times, as today, China's agriculture seems to have favored rice in the south and millet in the north. Some crops, including cotton and gourds, were brought under cultivation in many locations around the globe.

Our knowledge of early agriculture continues to grow as the archaeological record is expanded and revised. European sedentary agriculture, for example, that was once thought to have been borrowed from the Near East, may have been a local response to changing climate conditions.

The era in which villages took form is usually called **Neolithic**, or **New Stone Age**, named for its tools rather than its crops. Farming called for a different toolkit from hunting and gathering. For cutting, grinding, chopping, scraping, piercing, and digging, village artisans fashioned new tools from stone. Archaeological digs from Neolithic villages abound with blades, knives, sickles, adzes, arrows, daggers, spears, fish hooks and harpoons, mortars and pestles, and rudimentary plows and hoes.

As villages expanded their economic base these stone tools often became valued as items of trade. Obsidian—a kind of volcanic glass with very sharp edges—was traded from Anatolia and is found in hundreds of digs from central Turkey to Syria and the Jordan valley. Among other items of trade, recognized by their appearance in digs a long distance away from their point of origin, are seashells, jade, turquoise, and ceramics.

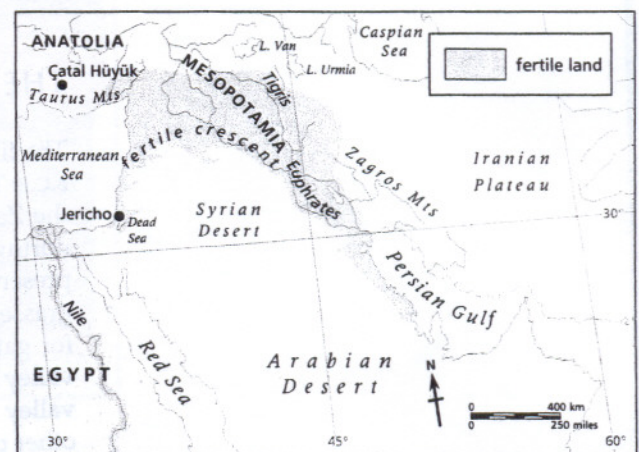
Although ceramics occasionally appear among nomadic populations, the weight and fragility of clay make pottery essentially a creation of the more established Neolithic village. As a vessel for storage, pottery further reflected the sedentary character of the new village life. The fine designs and colors decorating its pottery became the most distinctive identifying mark of the Neolithic village, and archaeologists often designate eras, locations, and groups of people by descriptions of their pottery—the “grayware,” the “red glazed,” or the “cord-marked,” for example.

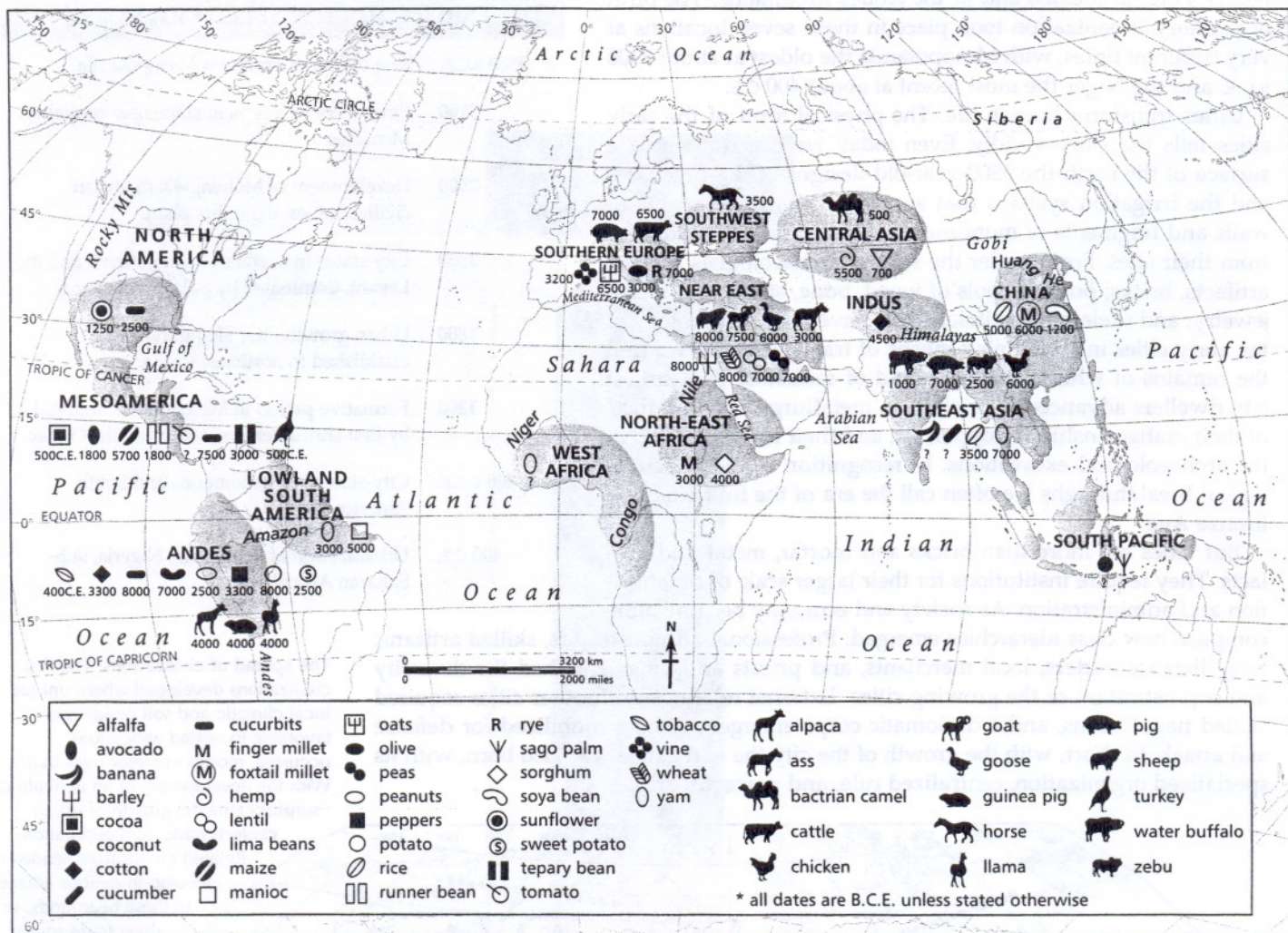
Simple pottery is easy to make and accessible to anyone, but specialized craftspeople developed ceramics into a medium of artistic creativity. Fine ceramic jewelry, statuary, and figurines attained great beauty and were frequently used in religious rituals.

Historical change, however, does not proceed in a uniform, straight line. Historians must be alert not only to general patterns, but also to exceptions. Some villages did form on an economic base of hunting-and-gathering. In southern Japan, for example, a non-agricultural village society appeared among the Jomon people along with some of the earliest and most beautiful of

Neolithic “New Stone Age”—the last division of the Stone Age, immediately preceding the development of metallurgy and corresponding to the ninth–fifth millennia B.C.E. It was characterized by the increasing domestication of animals and cultivation of crops, established agricultural communities, and the appearance of such crafts as pottery and weaving.

The Fertile Crescent. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers gave life to the first known agricultural villages, about 10,000 years ago, and the first known cities in human history, about 5000 years ago. Fertile land extended to the Mediterranean and some contact apparently continued on to the Nile Valley. Its borders were defined to the south by arid regions receiving less than 10 inches of rainfall per year, and to the north by mountains and semi-arid plateaus.





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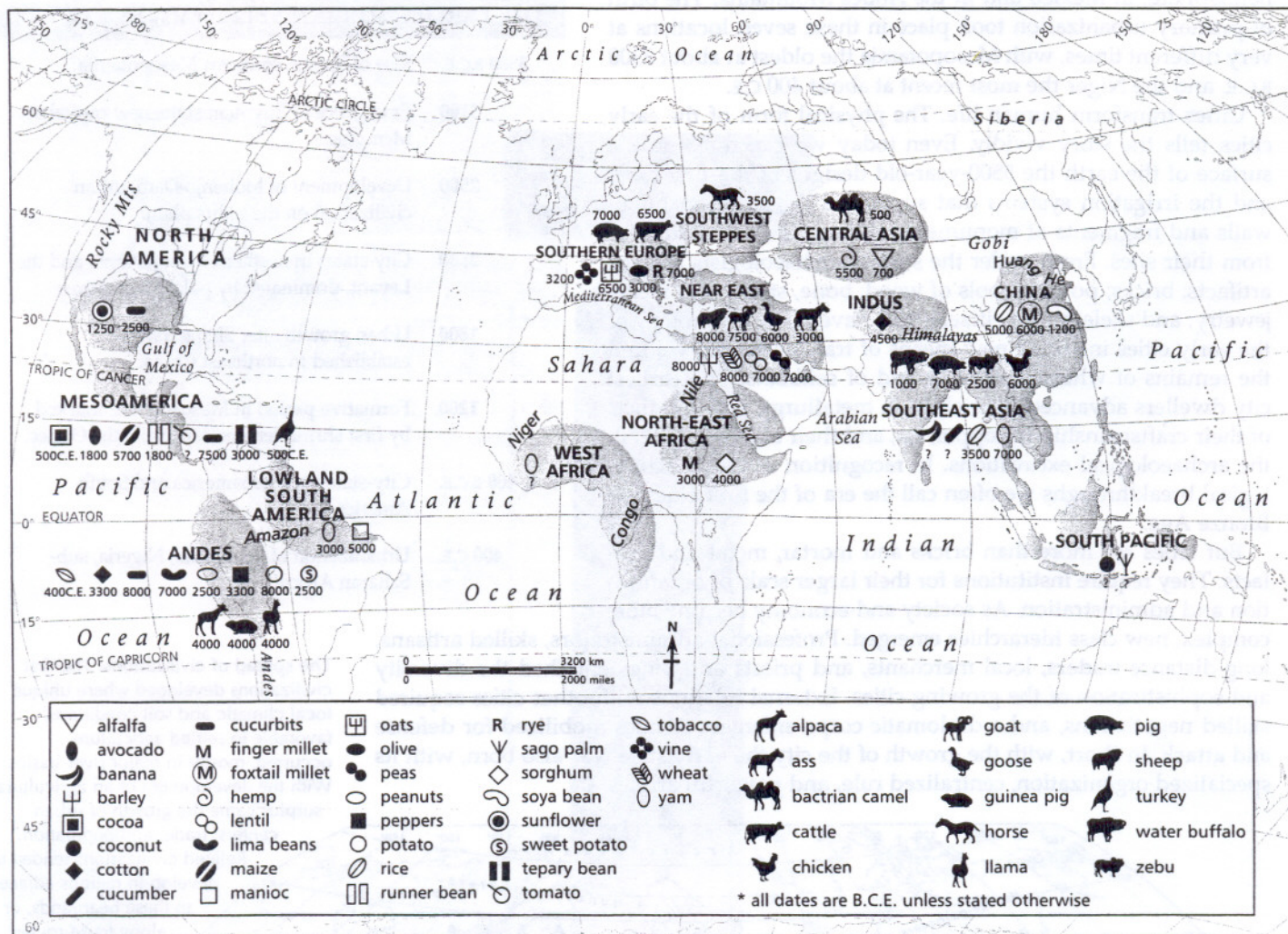
pottery. Jomon pottery, which is marked by distinctive cord lines, dates back to 10,500 B.C.E. and spread from the southern island of Kyushu, northward through Honshu, reaching Hokkaido by 6500 B.C.E. The Jomon villagers supported themselves from fishing, hunting deer and wild boar, and gathering and storing nuts. They created stone tools and lived in caves and in pit-houses in settled villages with central, communal buildings. Yet the Japanese did not develop agricultural cultivation for another several thousand years.

THE FIRST CITIES

The first cities were constructed on the economic base of sedentary village agricultural communities. In excavating these earliest cities around the globe, archaeologists ask which city forms were invented indigenously, by their own inhabitants, and which were borrowed from earlier examples or, perhaps, imposed from outside on local rural populations. Technically, the question is one of **innovation** versus **diffusion**. Thus far, most experts agree that innovative primary urbanization, not borrowed or imposed from outside, took place in seven places: five river valleys in the eastern hemisphere—Mesopotamia, the Nile, the Indus, the Huang He, and the Niger—and, in the western

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hemisphere, in Mexico and in the Andes Mountains. The birth of primary urbanization took place in these seven locations at very different times, with Mesopotamia the oldest at about 3300 B.C.E. and the Niger the most recent at about 400 C.E.

Cities transform human life. The physical form of the early cities tells the story vividly. Even today we can trace on the surface of the earth the 5500-year-old designs of the first cities and the irrigation systems that supported them. Remnants of walls and fragments of monuments of these first cities still rise from their sites. From under the surface archaeologists salvage artifacts: bricks; pottery; tools of wood, bone, stone, and metal; jewelry; and skeletons of citizens and slaves. The technology of the early cities included new means of transportation; we find the remains of wheeled vehicles and of sailboats. The earliest city dwellers advanced their skills in metallurgy, and products of their craftsmanship in copper, tin, and their alloys abound in the archaeological excavations. In recognition of these technological breakthroughs we often call the era of the first cities the Bronze Age.

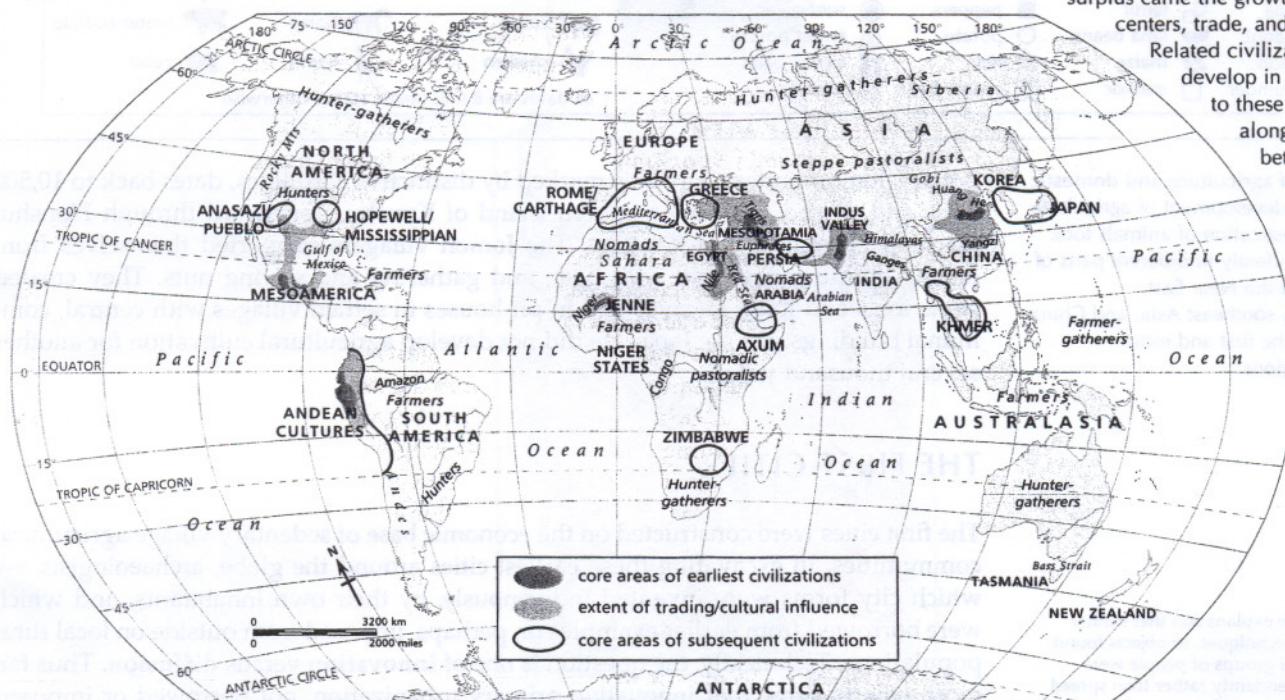
But cities are more than bricks and mortar, metal and artifacts. They require institutions for their larger scale of organization and administration. As society and economy became more complex, new class hierarchies emerged. Professional administrators, skilled artisans, long-distance traders, local merchants, and priests and kings enriched the diversity and sophistication of the growing cities. External relations with other cities required skilled negotiations, and a diplomatic corps emerged. Armies mobilized for defense and attack. In short, with the growth of the city the early state was also born, with its specialized organization, centralized rule, and powerful armies.

THE EARLIEST URBAN SETTLEMENTS

3500 B.C.E.	Rise of Sumer, southern Mesopotamia.
3100	Emergence of Egyptian state; new capital at Memphis.
2500	Development of Mohenjo-Daro, urban civilization on the Indus plain.
2500	City-states in northern Mesopotamia and the Levant, dominated by palace complexes.
1800	Urban growth after Shang dynasty established in northeast China.
1200	Formative period in Mesoamerica, marked by first shrine centers, especially the Olmec.
c. 400 B.C.E.	City-states in Mesoamerica and South America.
400 C.E.	Urbanization of Jenne-jeno, Nigeria, sub-Saharan Africa.

The spread of civilizations. The first civilizations developed where unique local climatic and soil conditions, favorable to settled agriculture, occurred, mostly in major river basins. With the development of an agricultural surplus came the growth of urban centers, trade, and population.

Related civilizations tended to develop in regions adjacent to these heartlands, or along trade routes between them.



For an interactive version of this map, go to: <http://www.prenhall.com/spodek/map2.3>

Stone tower and wall, Jericho, c. 8000 B.C.E. Before Sumer, a Neolithic community based at Jericho in the Jordan valley, Palestine, was the first to develop cereals of a fully domesticated type. In 8000 B.C.E. these farmers, keen to secure their settlement in the arid environment, constructed a stone perimeter wall 10 feet thick that was strengthened at one point by a circular stone tower over 30 feet high. This wall is one of the earliest such defenses known.



To keep track of business transactions and administrative orders, the proclamations of rulers and the rituals of priests, the legends of gods and the histories of the city, new methods of record keeping were developed. At first these were tokens, pictures, seals, personalized markings, and, in the Andes, *quipu*, knots made in special lengths of string. By about 3300 B.C.E., in Sumer, which is geographically equivalent to today's southern Iraq, the world's first system of writing had evolved. This was one of the most revolutionary inventions in human history. The prestigious occupation of scribe was born, and schoolteachers soon followed.

From earliest times, city dwellers and analysts understood and commented on the significance of the first urban revolution. Today, we have more reason than ever to value and to evaluate its 5000-year-old heritage, for in modern times we are living through two new urban revolutions. By 1800 the industrial revolution opened a new era of urban development that re-invented the cities of western Europe and North America (see Chapter 17). In the twentieth century peasants streamed by the millions and tens of millions from rural villages to mammoth cities, creating massive, unprecedented urban environments around the globe (see Part 5). So we search humanity's earliest experiences with cities not only to understand our ancestors but also to understand ourselves.

SUMER: THE BIRTH OF THE CITY

A people called the Sumerians pioneered the world's first urban revolution in Mesopotamia, literally "between the rivers"—that is, the region between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, approximately modern Iraq. They migrated into southern Mesopotamia about 4000 B.C.E., perhaps from around the Caspian Sea, but no one knows for sure. They faced uncertain odds. While the area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers became known as the fertile crescent for its high agricultural productivity, high temperatures and unpredictable floods constantly challenged the Sumerians. To succeed in building cities in the region, peoples had to construct irrigation ditches and intricate canals.

The Sumerians were not the first to inhabit this land. Archaeological excavations of pottery show the earlier presence in Mesopotamia of the Ubaid, a Semitic-speaking people, beginning about 4500 B.C.E. The Ubaidians drained marshes and developed an early irrigation system. Although the language the Sumerians spoke was not Semitic, their use of Semitic word forms and names also suggests that Semitic-speaking people may have preceded them in the area.

Gradually, the Sumerians began to dominate the region, supplanting the Semitic-speaking populations. They dug better canals for irrigation, improved roads, and expanded urban developments. For a millennium, from 3300 B.C.E. until 2350 B.C.E., the Sumerians lived in warring city-states—Kish, Uruk, Ur, Nippur, Lagash, Umma, and dozens of smaller ones. Each of these city-states included a central city with a temple and the agricultural region surrounding it. The city controlled and protected the fields of grain, orchards, and land for livestock, which, in turn, provided enough food to support the cities' growing populations.

Map of Nippur, 1500 B.C.E. This plan of Nippur, the ancient cultural center of Sumer, is the oldest known city map. Inscribed in a well-preserved clay tablet, 8¼ by 7 inches in size, the map is drawn accurately to scale and shows several of the city's key temples and buildings, its central park, its rivers and canals, and especially its walls and gates. The script is mostly Sumerian with a few words of Akkadian, the language of the Semitic people who eventually conquered the Sumerians. (Hilprecht Collection, Friederich-Schiller University, Jena)

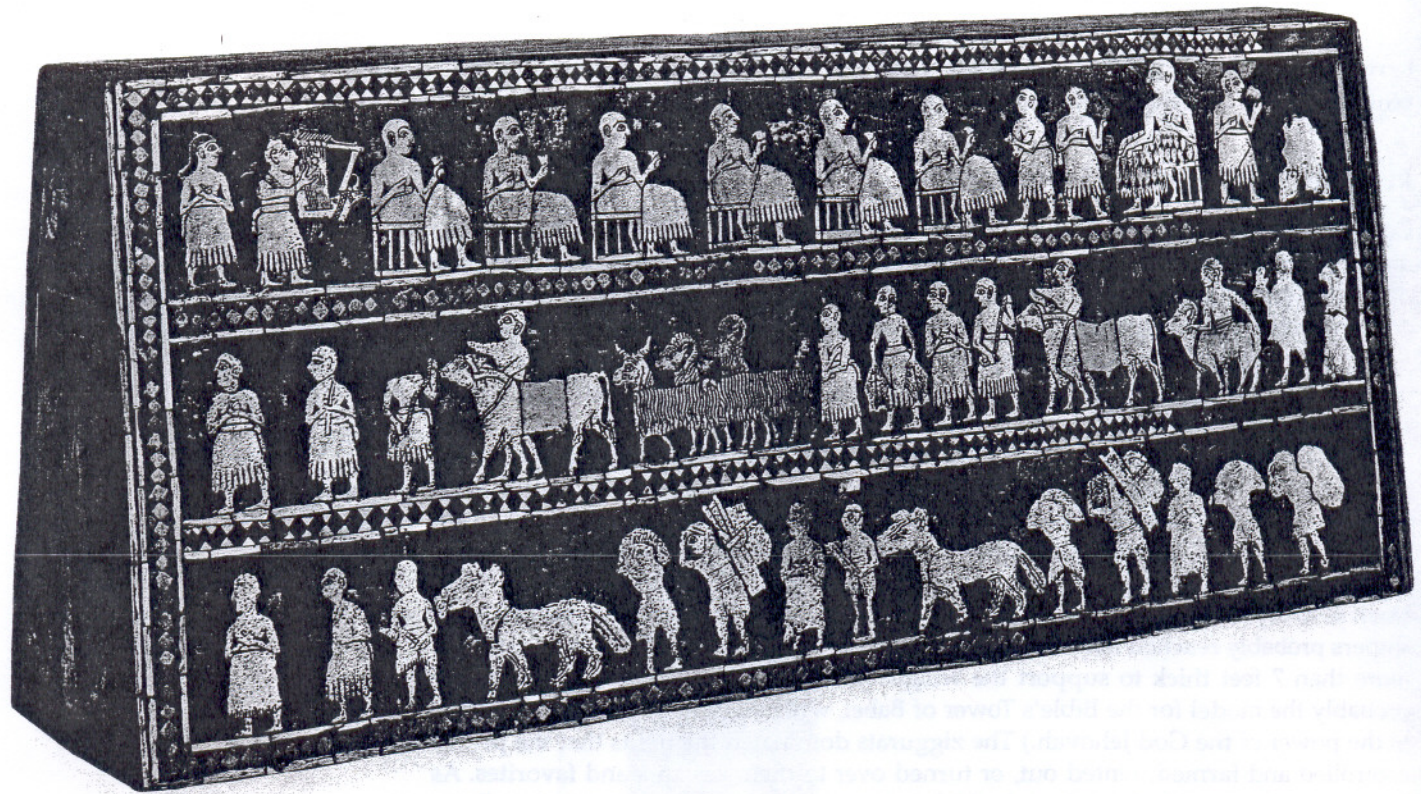


With the city-states constantly at war with each other, their leaders began to think in terms of conquering others to create large empires. In c. 2350 B.C.E., Sargon, king of the city of Akkad, conquered the Sumerian cities one by one, allowing the Semitic-speaking Akkadians to overshadow the Sumerians. Calling himself the “king of Sumer and Akkad,” Sargon was the first to unite the city-states under a single, powerful ruler. After some 200 years under Akkadian rule, the Mesopotamian city-states regained their independence under the third dynasty of Ur (2112–2004 B.C.E.), but they resumed their inter-urban warfare, which weakened them. Eventually, Hammurabi (1792–1750 B.C.E.), king of “Old Babylonia,” launched a series of aggressive military campaigns. He extended his control over much of Mesopotamia, including Sumer and Akkad, and Sumerian influence waned. The cities they had built died out, having fought each other to exhaustion. A series of foreign powers—Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians again, Achaeminid Persians, and Greeks under Alexander the Great—variously conquered and controlled Mesopotamia. The Sumerian cultural legacy lived on, however, assimilated into their conquerors’ literature, philosophy, religion, law, and patterns of urbanization.

THE GROWTH OF THE CITY-STATE

What were the characteristics of the urban revolution in Mesopotamia? How did its cities differ from the earlier villages? The most obvious feature was that the scale of the city-state—its physical size, population, and territorial control—was much greater than that of the village.

The Neolithic village housed a few dozen or a few hundred residents on a few acres. The largest Neolithic site in the Near East, Çatal Hüyük in Anatolia, grew by 5500 B.C.E.



Standard of Ur, from Iraq. Sumerian, Early Dynastic II. c. 2800–2400 B.C.E. In Sumer the city-state was created as strong kings came to rule over walled cities and the surrounding countryside. This banqueting scene, found in a tomb in the royal cemetery at Ur, shows the court drinking to the health of the king. The boxlike “standard” is thought to have rested on top of a long pole during festive processions. (British Museum, London)

to occupy slightly more than 30 acres. It became a town. By comparison, the first cities of Mesopotamia were ten times larger, accommodating about 5000 people.

Over time, the larger cities reached populations of 35,000–40,000 and covered more than 1000 acres or $1\frac{1}{2}$ square miles. The major cities were walled. The ramparts of Uruk (modern Warka, biblical Erech), the city of the king-god-hero Gilgamesh, stretched to a circumference of 6 miles, engirdling a population of 50,000 by 2700 B.C.E. By 2500 B.C.E. the region of Sumer held 500,000 people, four-fifths of them in its cities and villages! Urbanism in Sumer became a way of life.

To support these growing urban populations, the range of control of the Sumerian cities over the surrounding countryside, and its agricultural and raw material resources, continued to expand. For example, the total sway of Lagash, one of the major cities, probably extended over 1200 square miles. The king, priests, and private citizens controlled the fields of this area.

Networks of irrigation canals supported agriculture in this arid region and expanded Sumerian control over the land and its productivity. Irrigation permitted settlement to extend southward to central Mesopotamia, where cities would later emerge about 3300 B.C.E. The construction and maintenance of the canals required larger gangs of workers than the work teams that were based on family and clan alone. Loyalties that had been limited to blood relatives now extended beyond kinship to civic identity. In organizing these public works projects, a sense of citizenship, based on a shared space rather than on blood kinship, was born. It was enshrined in legal principles that made geographical residence the basis of citizenship. These new loyalties and laws marked the beginning of city life.

Organizing the canal systems required more powerful leaders than villages had known. At first, this leadership appears to have been exercised by councils of aristocratic elders, who worked closely with religious leaders. In times of crisis, especially during warfare with other cities, the council appointed a temporary single leader, but after about 2800 B.C.E., these men began to assume the position of hereditary kings and

to rule in conjunction with temple priests. Political power and organization were both centralized and sanctified. Thus was the state born and consolidated.

Religion: The Priesthood and the City

Considerable power rested with the priests of the many deities of Sumer, because residents believed that their survival in the harsh environment of ancient Mesopotamia depended partly on the will of the gods. In contrast to modern patterns, in which the countryside is often considered more religious than the secular city, the authority of the ancient temple community gave the religious establishment enormous prestige and power in the city, and urban ritual practice was more fully elaborated than was its rural counterpart.

To consolidate their temporal and supernatural influences, the city priests built great temples, called **ziggurats**. Found throughout the region, ziggurats were a form of stepped temple built on a square or rectangular platform of small, locally produced, sun-baked bricks. The baked bricks were covered by glazed bricks, which may have had religious significance. A small sanctuary rested atop the structure, which could reach as many as ten stories high. The ziggurat lacked any internal chambers, and worshipers probably reached the sanctuary via external ramps. The walls themselves were more than 7 feet thick to support the weight of the massive edifice. (Ziggurats are probably the model for the Bible's Tower of Babel, which was depicted as a challenge to the power of the God Jehovah.) The ziggurats dominated the fields that the priests controlled and farmed, rented out, or turned over to their servants and favorites. As their power increased, the priests built the ziggurats taller and more massive. From within these vast temple complexes, they controlled huge retinues, including artisans and administrators, and retained gangs of field workers to farm the temple's estates. Temples employed and fed multitudes. The chief temple in the city of Lagash in Mesopotamia, for example, provided daily food and drink (ale) to some 1200 people by about 3000 B.C.E. The leading temples became virtual cities within cities.

Rituals, especially those of the priests and kings, suggest further the significance of religious thought in the minds of Sumerians. On New Year's day the king of Ur in Sumer proceeded to the top of the city's major ziggurat, where he was symbolically married to the goddess of fertility, Inanna. The entire population witnessed this affirmation of his divinity.

Royal burials also asserted the divinity and authority of the king. Royal tombs were elegant. Their arches, vaults, and domes suggesting new levels of architectural skill, were built of brick and stone, and many of the funeral objects interred with the dead were of gold and silver. As in the other ancient civilizations we shall encounter in later chapters, some of the royal dead were accompanied by attendants who might have been sacrificed for the purpose and were buried nearby. They, too, were adorned with jewelry of gold and silver. The British archaeologist Sir Leonard Woolley described the death pit adjacent to the royal burial place in Ur, which he excavated in the 1920s:

Six men servants carrying knives or axes lay near the entrance lined up against the wall; in front of them stood a great copper basin, and by it were the bodies of four women harpists, one with her hands still on the strings of her instrument. Over the rest of the pit's area there lay in ordered rows the bodies of sixty-four ladies of the court. All of them wore some sort of ceremonial dress ... Clearly these people were not wretched slaves killed as oxen might be killed, but persons held in honor, wearing their robes of office, and coming, one hopes, voluntarily to a rite which would in their belief be but a passing from one world to another, from the service of a god on earth to that of the same god in another place. (pp. 70–2)

ziggurat A temple tower of ancient Mesopotamia, constructed of square or rectangular terraces of diminishing size, usually with a shrine on top built of blue enamel bricks, the color of the sky.

In contrast to these elaborate royal burials, most common people were buried in small brick vaults in basement chambers of their own houses, and some were interred in cemeteries outside the city walls.

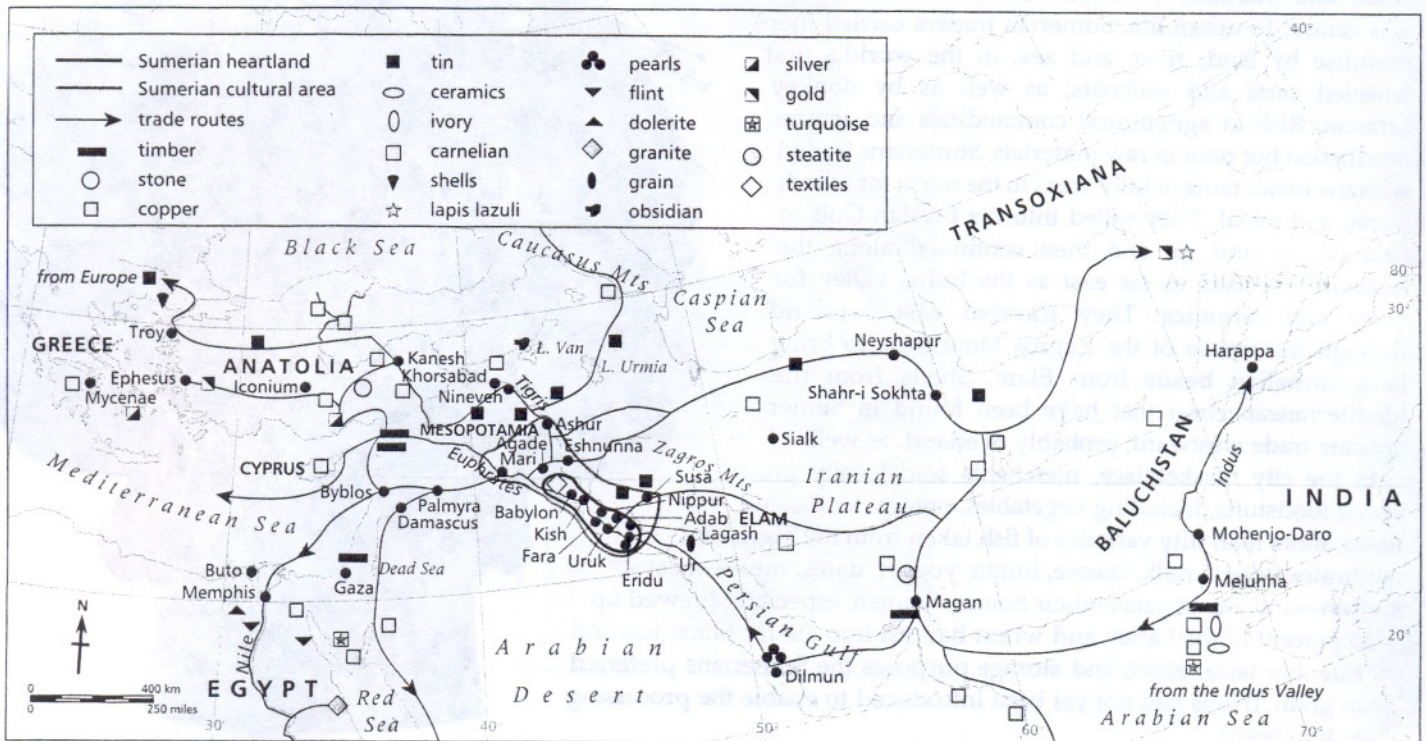
Occupational Specialization and Class Structure

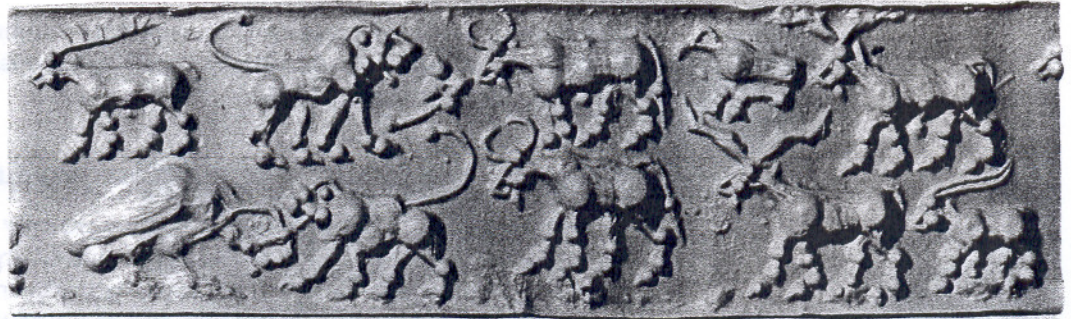
The priests and the political-military rulers were only the most powerful of the new classes of specialists that emerged in the complex, large cities. Managers, surveyors, artisans, astronomers, brewers, warriors, traders, and scribes—all in addition to the farmers working their own fields and those of the temples and landowners—gave the cities a far more sophisticated hierarchical class structure than villages possessed.

Arts and Invention. Creativity flourished. Artisans crafted works of art in terra cotta, copper, clay, and colors surpassing village standards in their beauty and technical skill. Cylinder seals (small cylinders of stone engraved with designs for stamping clay tablets and sealing jars) became a common form of practical art in Sumer and spread as far as Anatolia and Greece. Astronomers established an accurate calendar based on lunar months that enabled them to predict the onset of seasons and to prepare properly for each year's planting and harvesting. Musicians created, designed, and played the lyre and composed and chanted songs, often dedicated to gods. Designers and architects, supervising armies of workers, built the canals of the countryside and the monuments of the cities.

Sumerians apparently invented the first wheels, the potter's wheel for ceramics and wagon wheels for transportation. They dramatically improved the plow, learning how to harness it to oxen. Metallurgists, smelting their new alloy of copper and tin, ushered in the Bronze Age. From the new metal they fashioned tips for the plow and an array of new tools: hoes, axes, chisels, knives, and saws. They turned their attention to

Mesopotamian trade. The Sumerian trading network, revealed by the wide range of valuable and exotic materials used by Mesopotamian craftsmen, was both extensive and sophisticated, drawing on resources often well over 2000 miles distant. Egyptian tomb paintings show Semitic merchants with donkey caravans, while some of the earliest writing is found on Sumerian clay tablets recording commercial transactions.





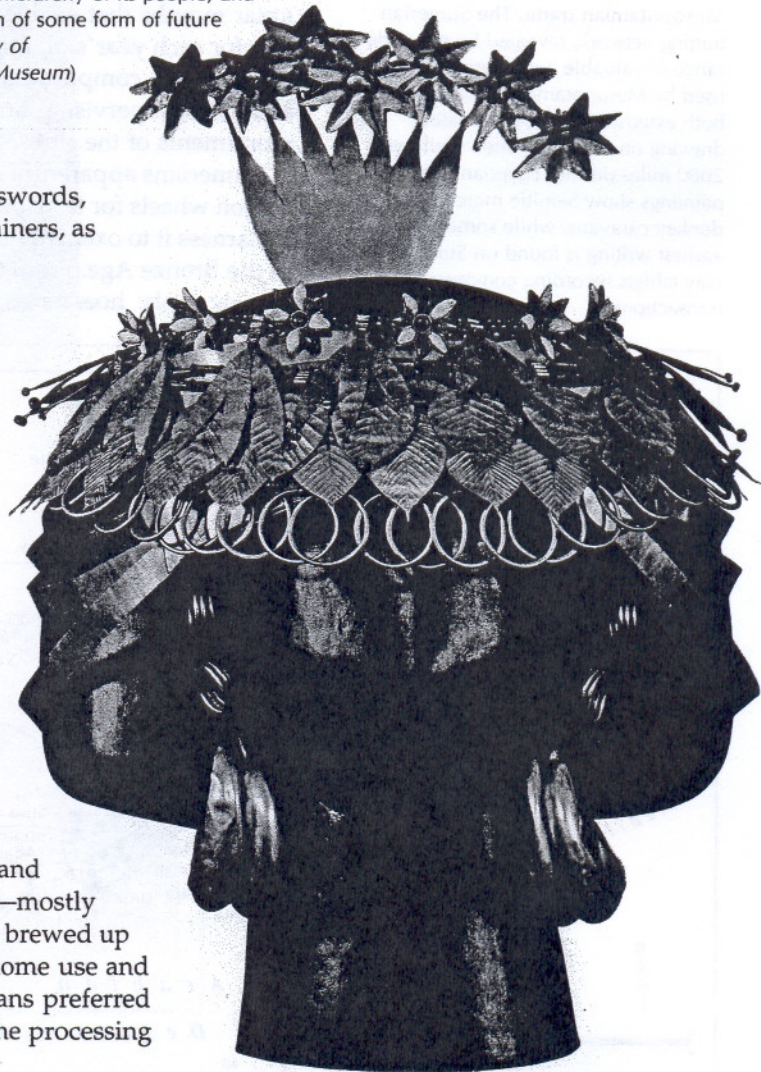
Engraved cylinder seal (left) and impression (right). Seals were first used as signatures before the invention of writing. The cylinders produce continuous patterns that are repetitive, but the figures themselves are remarkably naturalistic.

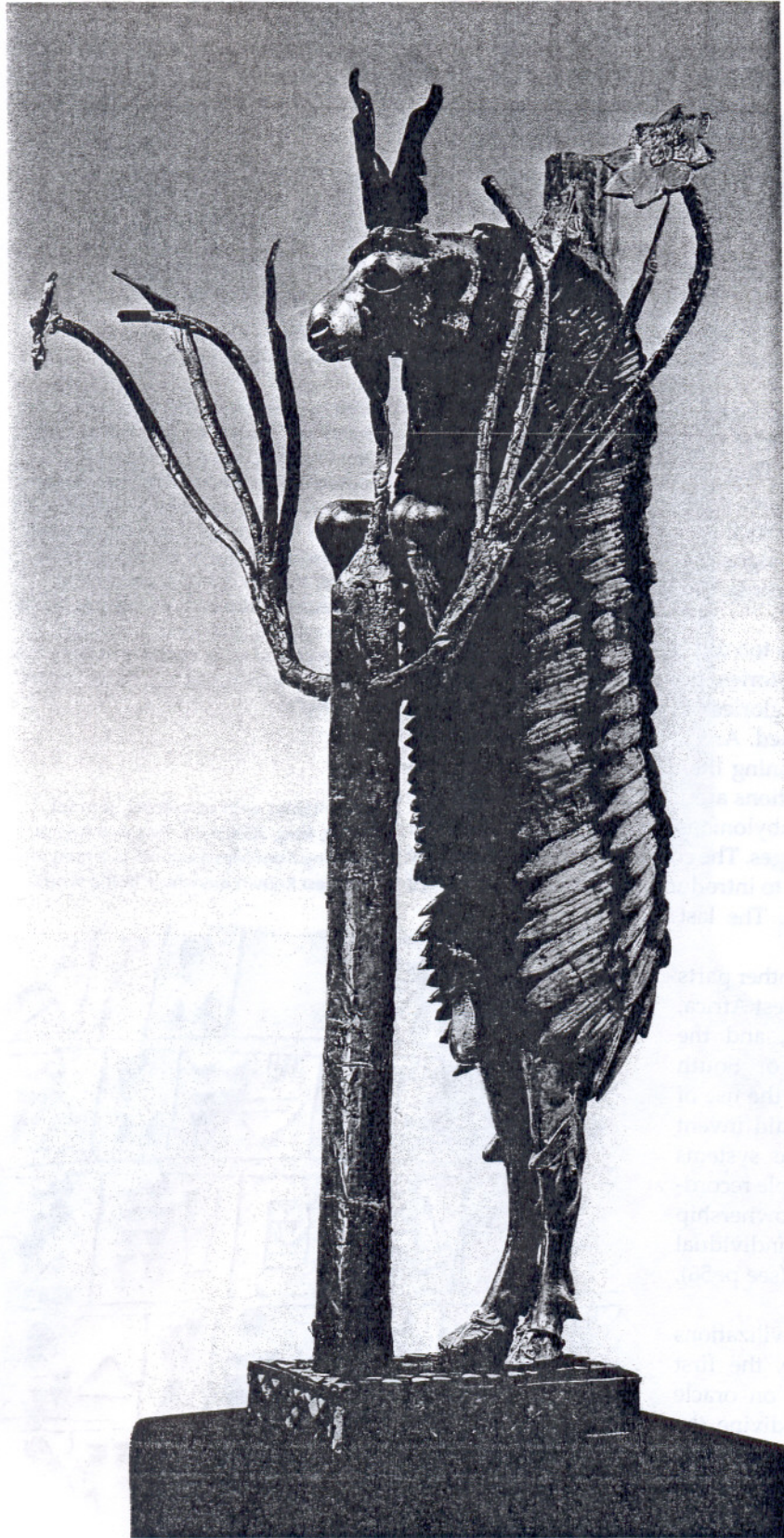
Lady Pu-abi's headdress (below). The splendor of this gold ornament, discovered in the 1920s in the royal burial place of Ur, reflects the wealth of this Mesopotamian urban society, the skill of its craftsmen, the hierarchy of its people, and the anticipation of some form of future life. (University of Pennsylvania Museum)

weapons and produced lance points and arrowheads, swords, daggers, and harpoons. They made bronze vessels and containers, as well as smaller items such as nails, pins, rings, and mirrors.

Trade and Markets: Wheeled Cart and Sailboat. Trade was central to urban life. Sumerian traders carried merchandise by land, river, and sea, in the world's first wheeled carts and sailboats, as well as by donkey caravan. Rich in agricultural commodities and artisan production but poor in raw materials, Sumerians traded with the inhabitants of hilly areas to the north for wood, stone, and metal. They sailed into the Persian Gulf to find copper and tin and then continued along the Arabian Sea coast as far east as the Indus valley for ivory and ceramics. They traveled east overland through the passes of the Zagros Mountains to bring back carnelian beads from Elam. Shells from the Mediterranean coast that have been found in Sumer indicate trade westward, probably overland, as well.

In the city marketplace, merchants sold locally produced foodstuffs, including vegetables, onions, lentils and beans, more than fifty varieties of fish taken from the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, dates, meat—mostly mutton—and ale. In vats in their homes, women, especially, brewed up to 40 percent of the barley and wheat harvest into ale for home use and for sale. For taste, effect, and storage purposes the Sumerians preferred ale to grain. (Hops had not yet been introduced to enable the processing of ale into beer.)





Thus, from king and priest through professionals, artisans, craftsmen, farmers, and laborers, specialization and division of labor and a hierarchical class structure marked the city's social and economic life as far more complex than that of the smaller, simpler village.

Monumental Architecture and Adornment

For the Sumerians, the size and elegance of their cities and monuments were a source of great pride. The earliest introduction to Gilgamesh, hero of the greatest surviving Sumerian epic, proclaims his excellence as city builder: "In Uruk he built walls, a great rampart, and the temple of blessed Eanna for the god of the firmament Anu, and for Ishtar the goddess of love. Look at it still today: the outer wall where the cornice runs, it shines with the brilliance of copper; and the inner wall, it has no equal."

Artwork adorned the city, especially the temple precincts. Sculptures, murals, mosaics, and especially stone **bas reliefs** (see p. 56) provided not only beauty and elegance, but represented pictorially key scenes in the history of the cities and their rulers. The magnificence of this monumental architecture and art defined the city's image, impressing residents and giving warning to enemies.

Writing

The Sumerians invented writing, thereby altering human history. Indeed historians so value writing as a means of communication and of recording events that they often call all the events prior to the invention of writing prehistory. For these historians, only when events are recorded in writing can they be called history since without writing we cannot know directly what people thought and said.

He-Goat and Flowering Tree. Offering stand for fertility god. Sumerian, from Ur, c. 2500 B.C.E. This offering stand was created with a magical as well as a functional purpose in mind, being intended to work as a fertility charm too. The goat, an ancient symbol of male sexuality, is shown rearing up against a flowering tree, emblem of nature's fecundity. (*British Museum, London*)

Pictographic c. 3000 B.C.E.										
Early cuneiform representation c. 2400 B.C.E.										
Late Assyrian c. 650 B.C.E.										
Sumerian phonetic equivalent and meaning	k eat	mūsen bird	sag head	gu ⁴ ox	še barley	ud day	sū hand	ku ⁶ fish	a water	b cow

The earliest Sumerian scribes first used writing, beginning about 3300 B.C.E., for business purposes, to note the contents of commercial packages, the names of their owners, and to catalog this information into lists. They employed styluses made of bone or of hollow reed stems to incise **pictograms** (see p. 56), picture representations of the objects of their writing, onto clay tablets. By 3000 B.C.E. they were representing the key features of the pictures in wedge-shaped signs that we call **cuneiform** (see p. 56). Some cuneiform signs represented whole words, but others represented individual phonetic sounds based on words.

As the cuneiform became more sophisticated, so too did the subject matter, and by c. 2400 B.C.E. Sumerian writing began to transmit stories, proclaim political and military victories, sing the poetry of lovers, praise the glories of gods, and lament the fall of cities. Written literature took form and flourished. Archaeologists have excavated tens of thousands of Sumerian clay tablets, containing literature as well as business notations, and transferred them to research institutions around the world.

Many later peoples in the region—Elamites, Babylonians, Assyrians, and Akkadians—adopted cuneiform to write their own languages. The conquests of Alexander the Great in the fourth century B.C.E., however, helped to introduce alphabetic writing—of the Aramaic language—and cuneiform died out. The last known cuneiform text was written in 75 C.E.

Although some of the earliest town dwellers in other parts of the world—the settlers of the Niger valley of West Africa, the Olmec and Teotihuacanos of Mesoamerica, and the Chavin and Inca of the Andes Mountains of South America—achieved urban form and size without the use of any form of writing, most of the earliest cities did invent some system of recording. As in Sumer, these systems moved “from token to tablet”—that is, from a simple recording of business transactions and registration of ownership through designated tokens, often marked with individual notations, through picture writing, to **ideograms** (see p. 56), and finally to phonetic, alphabetical writing.

As we shall see in Chapters 3 to 5, not all civilizations followed this sequence. In China, for example, the first writing seems to have been symbols inscribed on oracle bones. They seem to have been an attempt to divine the future. Chinese as a written language has only recently been transliterated into a phonetic alphabet; its basic script is still ideographic. The Chavin and Inca developed a form of

Writing was invented in west Asia in the fourth millennium B.C.E. and developed from the need to keep a record of business transactions. From the wedge-shaped marks formed by a hollow-shaped reed, or stylus, cuneiform script evolved gradually. In this pictographic script, stylized drawings are used to represent words; each pictograph stands for a syllable, and abstract concepts are conveyed by using concrete notions that are close in meaning (e.g. “open mouth” for “eat”).

Clay tablet with cuneiform, Jemdet Nasr, Iraq, 3000 B.C.E. This example of writing from Mesopotamia is among the earliest known anywhere in the world.



HOW DO WE KNOW?

Decoding Sumerian Writing

The Sumerians wrote no historical interpretive accounts of their accomplishments, but at least five kinds of written materials help us to reconstruct their past. King lists give us not only the names and dates of many of the principal kings of the major cities but also some chronology of their continuing warfare. Royal correspondence with officials illuminates relations with neighbors. Epics transmit Sumerian values and their sense of the heroic, and lamentations recount the continuing devastation wrought by their inter-city religious warfare. Finally, legal codes suggest the principles and hierarchies of their everyday life.

Despite Sumerian accomplishments, historians lost access to the Sumerians and their literature for at least 2000 years. The locations of even the grandest of the historic sites passed from memory. Biblical scholars, however, kept alive an interest in the region, searching for locations mentioned in Scripture, and British officials arriving with the British East India Company's outpost in Baghdad revived this interest. They began to investigate the ruins of Babylon and its

artifacts, and they dispatched artifacts, including written tablets, back to London. Still, no one knew what the wedge-shaped symbols meant.

Then, in the 1830s and 1840s, at Behistun, near Kermanshah, Persia, a British army officer began to copy a huge inscription that had been incised into a 300 foot high cliff to announce the military victories of the Persian king Darius I about 500 B.C.E. The officer, H. C. Rawlinson, had a scaffolding constructed so that he could reach the ancient writing, sometimes while hanging suspended from a rope 300 feet high above the surface of the earth. Rawlinson and other scholars found that the inscription actually included three scripts that represented different, but related languages: Old Persian, Babylonian, and Elamite. Old Persian and the Elamite were written in cuneiform scripts; the Babylonian in alphabetic script. The stone had probably been prepared to publicize Darius's triumphs in three of the major languages of his empire. The three inscriptions were translations of one another, enabling linguists who could already read the alphabetic script to crack the cuneiform—although it took several

generations before scholars completed this task.

Later archaeological digs in Mesopotamia uncovered tens of thousands of tablets and fragments. One especially rich cache was the royal library of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (r. 668–627 B.C.E.) at Nineveh. Through texts and digs, scholars resurrected the Sumerian economy, belief systems, and culture. Most of the texts deal with practical, everyday business transactions and administration. One contains the first known recipe for the ale that Sumerians enjoyed so much. Others recorded the world's first written literature.

- Why do you think the ancient language and literature of Sumer, like those of Egypt, were lost for 2000 years?
- How might the written records, once deciphered, complement the archaeological record known from excavations?
- How do the five kinds of records discovered in Sumerian writing differ from "historical interpretive accounts"? How do they contribute to an understanding of history even though they themselves may not be "historical interpretive accounts"?

bas relief In sculpture, relief is a term for any work in which the forms stand out from the background. In bas (or low) relief, the design projects only slightly from the background and the outlines are not undercut.

pictogram (alternative: pictograph) A pictorial symbol or sign representing an object or concept.

cuneiform A writing system in use in the ancient Near East from around the end of the fourth millennium to the first century B.C.E. The earliest examples are in Sumerian. The name derives from the wedge-shaped marks (Latin: *cuneus*, a wedge) made by pressing the slanted edge of a stylus into soft clay.

ideogram (alternative: ideograph) A character or figure in a writing system in which the idea of a thing is represented rather than its name. Languages such as Chinese use ideograms.

recording transactions and chronology through knots made in strings called *quipu*, but they did not develop an independent system of writing. Nor did the people of the Niger valley.

Writing facilitated communication, commerce, administration, religious ritual, and, later, the recording and transmission of literature. It enabled society to enlarge to a scale never seen before and it encouraged a self-consciousness and historical analysis previously unknown. It created a "knowledge industry," transmitted through systems of formal education and headed by scribes. By 2500 B.C.E., Sumerians had apparently established a number of schools where students could master the skill of writing. In a sense, this textbook had its origins in Sumer some 5000 years ago.

Achievements in Literature and Law

Much of what we know about the ancient Sumerian imagination and world vision comes from its literary works. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the most famous of the remaining literature, weaves together a series of tales about the hero Gilgamesh. Its most complete version comes from various shorter stories found in the library at Nineveh from about 750 B.C.E., but earlier fragments in the Sumerian excavations corroborate the antiquity of the core legends going back to the time when Gilgamesh ruled Uruk, about 2600 B.C.E.

SOURCE

The Epic of Gilgamesh

Like all epics, Gilgamesh recounts the deeds of a larger-than-life hero. The Sumerian epic introduces the first hero in written literature:

I will proclaim to the world the deeds of Gilgamesh. This was the man to whom all things were known; this was the king who knew the countries of the world. He was wise, he saw mysteries and knew secret things. ... When the gods created Gilgamesh they gave him a perfect body. Shamash the glorious sun endowed him with beauty, Adad the god of the storm endowed him with courage, the great gods made his beauty perfect, surpassing all others, terrifying like a great wild bull. Two-thirds they made him god and one-third man.

Aruru, the goddess of Uruk, who had also created Gilgamesh, created Enkidu, a forest dweller, who became Gilgamesh's friend and played a central role in the epic. Gilgamesh highlights the suggestive myth of Enkidu's seduction by an urban harlot who lures him from the wilderness to the pleasures of the city as well as to his wrestling match with Gilgamesh. The implication is that sexuality is experienced very differently in the city—more intensely and in more sophisticated fashion—than in the countryside. So, too, is friendship:

the harlot and the trapper sat facing one another and waited for the game to come ... on the third day the herds came; they came down to drink and Enkidu was with them ... The trapper spoke to her: "There he is. Now, woman, make your breasts bare, have no shame, do not delay but welcome his love. Let him see you naked, let him possess your body. When he comes near uncover yourself and lie with him; teach him, the savage man, your woman's art, for when he murmurs love to you the wild beasts that shared his life in the hills will reject him." She was not afraid to take him, she made herself naked and welcomed his eagerness; as he lay on her murmuring love she taught him the woman's art.

For six days and seven nights they lay together, for Enkidu had forgotten his home in the hills; but when he was satisfied he went back to the wild beasts. Then, when the gazelle saw him, they fled. Enkidu

would have followed, but his body was bound as though with a cord, his knees gave way when he started to run, his swiftness was gone. And now the wild creatures had all fled away; Enkidu was grown weak, for wisdom was in him, and the thoughts of a man were in his heart. So he returned and sat down at the woman's feet, and listened intently to what she said. "You are wise, Enkidu, and now you have become like a god. Why do you want to run wild with the beasts in the hills? Come with me. I will take you to the strong-walled Uruk, to the blessed temple of Ishtar and of Anu, of love and of heaven: there Gilgamesh lives, who is very strong, and like a wild bull he lords it over men." When she had spoken Enkidu was pleased; he longed for a comrade, for one who would understand his heart. "Come, woman, and take me to that holy temple, to the house of Anu and of Ishtar, and to the place where Gilgamesh lords it over the people. I will challenge him boldly."

With Enkidu's first encounter with Gilgamesh in the city, the epic also recounts the first example of male bonding, forged through a test of physical strength. When Gilgamesh and Enkidu first meet, they engage in a mighty wrestling match:

They broke the doorposts and the walls shook, they snorted like bulls locked together. They shattered the doorposts and the walls shook. Gilgamesh bent his knee with his foot planted on the ground and with a turn Enkidu was thrown. Then immediately his fury died ... So Enkidu and Gilgamesh embraced and their friendship was sealed.

The epic also unveils the hero's driving ambition for fame and glory, both for himself and for his city, as Gilgamesh courageously chooses to enter the strongholds of Humbaba, guardian of the forest, and, with Enkidu, to fight him.

I will go to the country where the cedar is cut. I will set up my name where the names of famous men are written; and where no man's name is written I will raise a monument to the gods ... I, Gilgamesh, go to see that creature of whom such things are spoken, the rumour of whose name fills the

world. I will conquer him in his cedar wood and show the strength of the sons of Uruk, all the world shall know of it.

The importance of metallurgy and metals, especially for weapons, is highlighted:

He went to the forge and said, "I will give orders to the armorers: they shall cast us our weapons while we watch them." So they gave orders to the armorers and the craftsmen sat down in conference. They went into the groves of the plain and cut willow and box-wood; they cast for them axes of nine score pounds, and great swords they cast with blades of six score pounds each one, with pommels and hilts of thirty pounds. They cast for Gilgamesh the axe "Might of Heroes" and the bow of Anshan; and Gilgamesh was armed and Enkidu; and the weight of the arms they carried was thirty score pounds.

The victory of Gilgamesh and Enkidu over Humbaba parallels the massive assault by urbanites on the natural resources of the world, turning the products of nature into objects of trade and commerce, and using them to build cities.

Now the mountains were moved and all the hills, for the guardian of the forest was killed. They attacked the cedars, the seven splendours of Humbaba were extinguished. So they pressed on into the forest ... and while Gilgamesh felled the first of the trees of the forest Enkidu cleared their roots as far as the banks of Euphrates.

Lower Mesopotamia has no stone, wood, or metal. To get these raw materials, Sumerians had to send parties over long distances to quarry, cut, and dig; to trade; and to conquer. The mixed responses of the gods to the murder of Humbaba suggest the deep ambivalence of the Sumerians to their own increasing power:

[Gilgamesh and Enkidu] set [the corpse of] Humbaba before the gods, before Enlil; they kissed the ground and dropped the shroud and set the head before him. When he saw the head of Humbaba, Enlil raged at them, "Why did you do this thing? From henceforth may the fire be on your faces, may it eat the bread that you eat, may it drink where you drink."

SUMER: KEY EVENTS AND PEOPLE

- c. 3300 (B.C.E.) Sumerians invent writing.
- c. 3000 (B.C.E.) Sumerians become dominant power in southern Mesopotamia.
- c. 2800–2340 Sumerian city-states: early dynastic period sees spread of Mesopotamian culture to the north.
- c. 2350 Sargon captures Sumer and establishes Semitic dynasty at Akkad, the new capital.
- c. 2112–2004 Third dynasty of Ur.
- c. 1900 Amorites at Babylon.
- 1792–1750 Reign of Hammurabi; Babylon is the new capital of Mesopotamia.
- c. 1600 Invasion by Hittites and Kassites, destroying Hammurabi's dynasty.

The Epic of Gilgamesh presents a world of many gods before whom humans are passive and frightened subjects. Gilgamesh, however, defers neither to human nor to god. Devastated by the death of his closest friend Enkidu, he sets off to the underworld in search of eternal life. Along the way he encounters the Sumerian prototype of Noah. This man, Utnapishtim, tells him of a flood that destroyed all human life except his family. A god who counseled him to build a boat had saved them. In the bleak underworld of the dead, Gilgamesh obtains a plant that will give eternal youth, but on his return voyage a snake rises from the water and snatches it from him. Gilgamesh recognizes a fundamental truth: Misery and sorrow are unavoidable parts of human life. Resigned to his losses, Gilgamesh returns to Uruk. Finally, he dies at a ripe old age, honored and mourned by his fellow citizens.

A second form of written document that marks the evolution to a more complex society is the legal code. Archaeologists discovered at Ur fragments of a legal code that dates to the twenty-first century B.C.E., and legal systems must have already existed even before this. Legal systems remained crucial for all Mesopotamian urban societies. The post-Sumerian code of the

stele of vultures. This limestone tablet, or stele, depicts in bas relief Enlil's victory over Umma, in about 2500 B.C.E. Some 3600 of the enemy were slaughtered by King Enlilatum of Umma and his soldiers, who are seen marching into battle. (Louvre, Paris)



SOURCE

The Code of Hammurabi

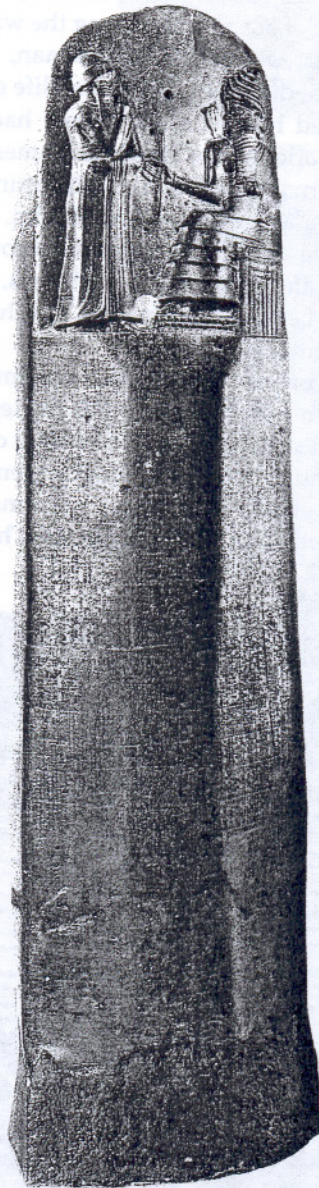
As states grew larger, formal, written law codes replaced the customs and traditions of the farming villages. Around 1750 B.C.E., the Babylonian ruler Hammurabi conquered Mesopotamia, uniting the warring city-states under his rule. To reinforce that unity he set forth a code of laws that covered many aspects of daily life and business.

The code provides a marvelous insight into the problems and nature of urban life at the time. It provides a detailed insight into property rights and urban crime, as well as the social and gender divisions in the society. Finally, it gives students and scholars some idea of how justice was perceived in Hammurabi's world. The code is a list of 282 laws; only some of them are represented here. In the original list, they are not particularly organized so we have reorganized them here.

Property

Property laws incorporated laws of consumer protection for house buyers, boat renters, contractors for services. In one case, a brutal punishment for faulty workmanship indicates that common people, too, were viewed as commodities. The sins of the fathers may be taken out on the children. Some of the specific laws included:

- If [the collapse of a building] has caused the death of a son of the owner of the house, they shall put the son of that builder to death.
- If any one steal the property of a temple or of the court, he shall be put to death, and also the one who receives the stolen thing from him shall be put to death.



Stele of Hammurabi, from Susa, Iran, c. 1760 B.C.E. Hammurabi, the great king of Babylon, is the first known ruler to have created a detailed legal code; other societies with unknown rulers developed much earlier codes. On this commemorative stone slab, he is shown receiving the Babylonian laws from the sun-god Shamash. The laws themselves are inscribed below on the stele. (Louvre, Paris)

Urban Crime

Many laws provided for punishment for robbery and for personal injuries. Many of the latter varied according to the social class of the person inflicting the injury as well as the person suffering the injury:

- If any one is committing a robbery and is caught, then he shall be but to death.
- If a gentleman has destroyed the eye of a member of the aristocracy, they shall destroy his eye.
- If he has broken another gentleman's bone, they shall break his bone.
- If he has destroyed the eye of a commoner or broken the bone of a commoner, he shall pay one mina of silver.
- If he has destroyed the eye of a gentleman's slave or broken the bone of a gentleman's slave, he shall pay one half his value.

Gender in Ancient Babylonia

Numerous laws governed marriage, bride price, dowry, adultery, and incest. Although women did own the dowries given them, their rights of ownership were limited. Marriage is presented in large part as a commercial transaction, in which the groom's family pays a bride-price to the bride's father, while the bride's father gives her a dowry. Childlessness is grounds for divorce but the husband must return his wife's dowry. Behavioral restraints in marriage are unequal: if the husband "has been going out and disparaging her greatly," the wife may leave, taking her dowry; if the wife is "a gadabout, thus neglecting her house (and) humiliating her husband," he may have her drowned.

- If a woman quarrels with her husband, and says: "You are not congenial to me," the reasons for her prejudice must be presented. If she is guiltless, and there is not fault on her part, but he leaves and neglects her, then no guilt attaches to this woman, she shall take her dowry and go back to her father's house.
- If she is not innocent, but leaves her husband, and ruins her house, neglecting her husband, this woman shall be cast into the water.

Babylonian King Hammurabi, formulated c. 1750 B.C.E. (but rediscovered only in 1901–2), seems to have been built on the earlier concepts.

The modern critiques of Mumford, Marx, and Lerner remind us how seriously the past, and our preconceptions—or myths—about it, have influenced our thinking. They urge us to rethink the past in order to redirect our future from repeating some terrible mistake—for example, making warfare into a religious obligation, isolating city from countryside, establishing oppressive class distinctions, and institutionalizing patriarchal suppression of women.

Underlying these warnings, however, is yet another myth. The pre-urban agricultural village, it is widely believed, was more egalitarian, less warlike, and more integrated into nature. We do not know if this was so. Pre-urban villagers produced no written records, and their artifactual remains are thin, inconclusive, and subject to widely divergent interpretation. Scholars draw many of their conclusions concerning pre-urban life from observing isolated groups in today's world, such as the !Kung people of the African Kalahari desert of a generation ago. But here, too, both observations and interpretations differ.

THE FIRST CITIES WHAT DIFFERENCE DO THEY MAKE?

We do know that early cities facilitated some of the accomplishments that people then and now considered vitally important: increases in human population (a questionable asset under today's conditions, but not then); economic growth; effective organization for common tasks; creative breakthroughs in technology, art, and, perhaps most significantly, in writing and literature; the inauguration of a rule of law; and the formation of a non-kin-based community with a sense of purpose and humanity.

They did not always succeed, however. The city-states could not work out a system of government and regulation that would enable them to live in peace. At the same time powerful and vulnerable, oscillating between psalms of victory and lamentations of defeat, they seemed to fall into one of two painful alternatives: inter-state warfare or conquest by imperial rulers. Their shortcomings cost them dearly. As long as each political entity was a law unto itself—as were the city-states of Sumer, pre-Han China, classical Greece, medieval Europe, and of India during much of its history—war was the likely result. This problem of warfare among competitive states persists to our own day, although the scale has escalated from the city-state to the independent nation-state.

The evolution of the large, complex city implies the evolution of a state capable of organizing and administering it. In aristocratic and monarchical Sumer, much depended on the disposition of the king. Even the legendary Gilgamesh ended his royal career devoted to, and honored by, his people, but his career had begun differently. The epic tells us that in Gilgamesh's youth, "the men of Uruk muttered in their houses" about his faults:

his arrogance has no bounds by day or night. No son is left with his father, for
Gilgamesh takes them all, even the children ... his lust leaves no virgin to her lover,
neither the warrior's daughter nor the wife of the noble.

They realized that it should have been different—"The king should be a shepherd to his people"—but they apparently had to submit. The only recourse they saw was muttering in their houses and praying to their gods.

This question of the proper organization of the state became the key question of urbanization. Two thousand years after Gilgamesh might have ruled—and two

thousand years before our own day—in the city-states of ancient Greece, the philosopher Aristotle summed up the issue:

When several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life ... man is by nature a political animal [a creature of the polis or city-state] ... the association of living beings who have this sense makes a family and a state ... justice is the bond of men in states, for the administration of justice, which is the determination of what is just, is the principle of order in political society.

s The city-state of ancient Greece. It comprised not only the town, which was usually walled with a citadel (acropolis) and market place (agora), but also the surrounding countryside. Ideally, the *polis* comprised the citizens, who could reside in either town or country.

From the time of Sumer, the political questions, the questions of how to organize and administer the *polis* or city-state to achieve a good life, have been central to the process of urbanization. In Sumer the answers depended on the edicts of the king and the priests. In the next two chapters, we shall see how these questions and answers evolved in other primary cities and city-states around the world.

Review Questions

- Why did people create the earliest cities? Note that several of the reasons that are usually given are disputed. Which of the reasons seems to be most convincing to you? Why?
- Why did Sumer become the site of the first cities? Why did the Nile and Indus valleys become the next two sites?
- What is the connection between the creation of the first cities and the creation of the first states?
- What was the importance of writing to the creation of the first cities? Please consider all the uses of writing in your answer. Later we will encounter cities that had no writing. What do you think that they will lack in comparison to the cities of the fertile crescent that did have it?
- When ancient cities were defeated in warfare, lamentations were often composed over their loss. What was the nature of the losses that were lamented?
- In what ways are our modern cities like the ancient cities of Sumer? In what ways are they different?

Suggested Readings

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- Past Worlds: The Times Atlas of Archaeology* (Maplewood, NJ: Hammond Inc., 1988). Excellent for its maps, pictures, time lines, brief discussions, and generally attractive presentation. Slightly dated.
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