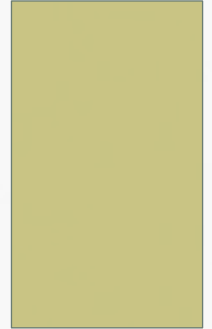




INTRODUCTION TO MESOPOTAMIA



MESOPOTAMIA

- **(Essential Questions)**
- What do you know about Mesopotamia?
 - Where was it located?
- What happened to that Civilization?
 - Was it successful?

MESOPOTAMIA



- The earliest known cities grew out of small agricultural villages and towns located in the valleys of the **Tigris** and **Euphrates** Rives in Mesopotamia (Iraq)

MESOPOTAMIA

- Around 3100 B.C.E. human population increased rapidly in this area.



- This increase presented the inhabitants with the challenge of keeping order in a large society.

MESOPOTAMIA

- Over time, by experimentation and adaptation, they created states and early forms of government.



- This rudimentary government brought political and social order to the territories of Mesopotamia.

MESOPOTAMIA

- This effective political and military organization enabled the people of Mesopotamia to build the first local empires.



- These early empires would eventually extend to neighboring people in surrounding areas...most cases involved acts of war.

MESOPOTAMIA



- Lets think about this...
- Humanities first large civilizations became organized and their first act was to force control over small settlements...
- Sound familiar...is this just human nature???

MESOPOTAMIA

- Mesopotamia is a Greek term which means “**Land between two Rivers**”.



- This area receives very little rainfall...like today however, the Tigris and Euphrates brought large volumes of needed fresh water to the region.

MESOPOTAMIA



MESOPOTAMIA

- Early cultivators realized that by tapping these rivers, building reservoirs and digging canals they could create the first forms of **irrigation**.



- **Irrigation** - Supplying dry land with water by means of ditches.

MESOPOTAMIA

- This artificial irrigation led to increased food supplies, which led to increased human population.



- This abundance of food also attracted migrants from outside regions...much like in today's world

MESOPOTAMIA

- Human populations grew incredibly fast in **Sumer**, the southern region of Mesopotamia.



- By 3000 B.C.E. the Sumerian's population approached one hundred thousand...an unprecedented concentration of people in ancient times.

MESOPOTAMIA

- The Sumerians quickly become the dominate people of Mesopotamia.



- Beginning in about 3000 B.C.E. the Sumerians built the worlds first cities.

MESOPOTAMIA



- These cities were centers of political and military authority...however more important...they were economic centers as well.

MESOPOTAMIA



- From 3200 to 2350 B.C.E. a dozen Sumerian Cities dominated public affairs and became hubs for trade and religious practices.

MESOPOTAMIA

- Lets look at some of the Ancient cities that are still standing.



- Ur

MESOPOTAMIA



MESOPOTAMIA



- Uruk, which later becomes Babylon

MESOPOTAMIA



MESOPOTAMIA



MESOPOTAMIA



- Lagash

MESOPOTAMIA



MESOPOTAMIA



MESOPOTAMIA



- There was a central theme with these cities...Palaces, temples and defensive walls could be found throughout every Sumerian city. (Babylon)

MESOPOTAMIA

- Particularly impressive at this time was the construction of the **Ziggurats**.



- **Ziggurats** – Stepped pyramids that housed religious temples and pillars, typically devoted to the principal local deity...ancient skyscrapers.

MESOPOTAMIA



- There are 32 Ziggurats known... twenty eight of which are located in Iraq and four of them are in Iran.

MESOPOTAMIA



- The 4100 year old Great Ziggurat of Ur in Iraq...most well preserved of the bunch ... 170ft tall

MESOPOTAMIA



- As the wealth of Sumerian cities grew, they began to face external problems from raiders, thieves, scum and villainy.

MESOPOTAMIA

- The cities responded to the treat by building defensive walls, gates and organizing military forces.



- This required recruitment, training, equipping and deployment of military forces

MESOPOTAMIA

- These early militaries created another demand...a recognized supreme authority.



- Early Sumerian Governments began to assemble with groups prominent community members making decisions on behalf of the whole community.

MESOPOTAMIA



By about 3000 B.C.E. most Sumerian cities became more like city states.

These city states were taken over by Kings who demanded absolute authority.

We can all see where this is headed.



MESOPOTAMIA

- Conflicts between city-states led to war between aggravated kings ...



- However in 2350B.C.E. conquerors put an end to these conflicts by building empires that supervised and bullied the affairs of smaller cities.

MESOPOTAMIA



- The first of these conquerors was **Sargon of Akkad**.
- Sargon was a talented administrator and brilliant warrior who began his career under the king of **Kish**.
- Sargon would actually go down in history as the worlds first badass.

MESOPOTAMIA

- He organized a coup against the King of Kish, recruited an army and went on the offensive waging war against Sumerian city states.



- One by one he conquered city after city...destroying their defensive walls and placed his own governors and administrators in charge.

MESOPOTAMIA

- Sargon financed his empire by seizing control of trade routes and taxing the goods that traveled along them.



- This allowed him to transform his capital at **Akkad** into the wealthiest and most powerful city in the world.

MESOPOTAMIA



- At the high point of his reign Sargon's empire embraced all of Mesopotamia

MESOPOTAMIA



- By 2150 B.C.E. Sargon's Empire had collapsed in the midst of rebellion from within and an onslaught of invading outsiders.

THE CODE OF HAMMURABI

- Sargon's insanity actually inspired later conquerors, the most important was the Babylonian Hammurabi.



- Hammurabi improved on Sargon's administrative techniques by relying on a central government and regular taxation rather than suppression and plunder.

THE CODE OF HAMMURABI

- Hammurabi was able to maintain his empire by providing it with a “**Code of Law**”.



- This code became the most extensive and complete Mesopotamian law code up to this point.

THE CODE OF HAMMURABI

- In the prologue to his laws, Hammurabi proclaimed that the gods had chosen him...
 - “to promote the welfare of the people”
 - “to cause justice to prevail in the land”
 - “to destroy the wicked and evil...so the strong may not oppress the weak”
 - “to rise like the sun over the people to light up the land”.

THE CODE OF HAMMURABI



- This **Stele** (stone pillar) bears the inscription of the Code of Hammurabi, and it has shed light on the laws, culture and life in Babylonia.
- It's 7 feet tall and clearly, it was meant for public display

THE CODE OF HAMMURABI

- At the top is an engraved depiction of Hammurabi with the god of justice, Shamash.



- This really makes Hammurabi look almost like a god, which would have put fear into the people of Babylon

THE CODE OF HAMMURABI

- The Code of Hammurabi contains an extensive list of laws that depict a highly sophisticated society of Babylonia.



- There were 300 laws, all in a conditional if/then format.

THE CODE OF HAMMURABI

- About 100 of these laws concern matters of property and business, including debt, interest and collateral.



- **For instance**, if a dam broke and flooding destroyed crops, the laws chalked it up to the negligence of the dam's owner, who had to pay damages to the farmers who lost crops.

THE CODE OF HAMMURABI

- Another set of approximately 100 laws concerns family and issues ranging from marriage and children to inheritance, adultery and incest.
 - Incest was punishable by exile or death.
- Until a child married, the father had legal rights to use them for labor for himself or people he owes money to.
 - Fathers could even choose to sell their children off.
- Not only that, but were a child to strike a father, the child's hands were cut off.

THE CODE OF HAMMURABI

- Physical mutilation was one common option for punishment, whether that meant a child's hands or a slaves hands cut off.



- Death was another punishment...the code explicitly mentions about 28 crimes that warrant death, including robbery, adultery and casting spells of witchcraft

THE CODE OF HAMMURABI

- Lets look at some of the codes...

MESOPOTAMIA



- Eventually the wealth of the Babylonian empire attracted evaders, among which were the **Hittites** who had built a powerful empire in Anatolia (modern day Turkey)

MESOPOTAMIA



MESOPOTAMIA

- By 1595 B.C.E. the Babylonian Empire had crumbled before Hittite assaults...



- Their advancement in weapons and Chariots were the downfall of Babylon

MESOPOTAMIA



- For several centuries after the fall of Babylon, southwest Asia was an absolute mess.

MESOPOTAMIA

- Small city states competed for power...



- While invaders plundered what was left of the great empire in an attempt to gain a foothold over the area.