



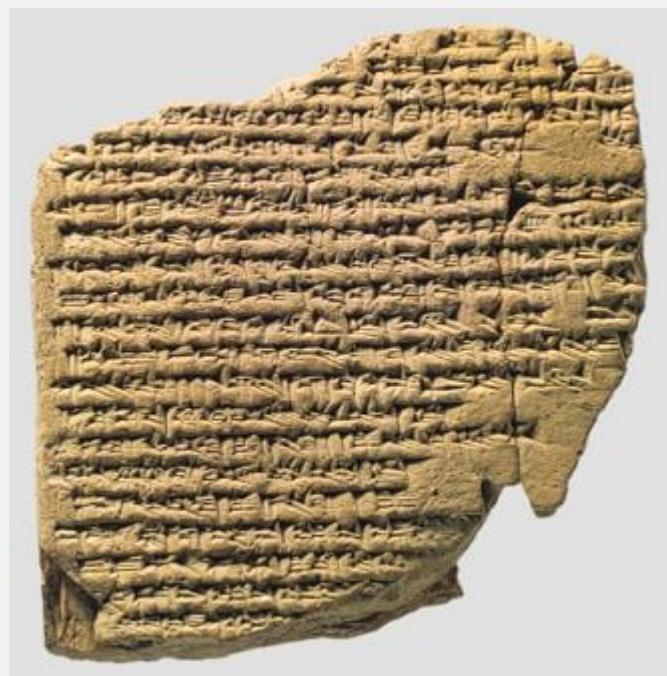
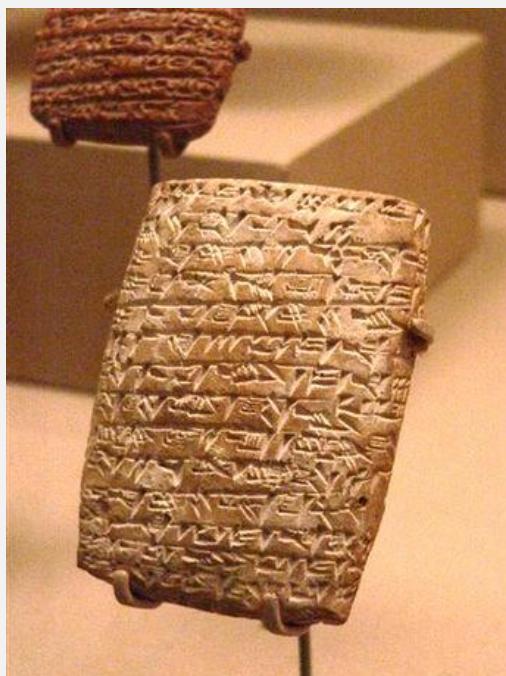
Sumerian Civilization



In the south eastern region of Mesopotamia between the mighty Euphrates and Tigris Rivers lay the ruins of the Sumerian City-States. The history of the Sumerians is shrouded in mystery.

No one knows where they came from or the origins of their language. However the Sumerians are revered as one of the oldest civilizations in world history dating back to the 5th millennium BCE.

Boasting the creation of the oldest writing system (cuneiform) in world history the Sumerians left a written legacy of their achievements for future generations to follow.



The 5th millennium BCE saw the rise of a human civilization. The Sumerians gave rise to one of the world's oldest civilizations. With their system of writing they left a legacy behind for all to marvel at and remember their prestige.

Sumerians controlled their physical environments.

To understand a culture you must understand the geography of the region in which they live. The name Mesopotamia literally translates to the land between the rivers. To the west of where the Sumerian-City states would lie was the Euphrates and to the east was the Tigris.

Similar to the Nile (albeit less predictable) the rivers flooding left deposits of fertile soil making agriculture a possibility. The Sumerians knew that they had to control the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. In spring the rivers flooded, and when they receded, they left natural levees behind. The Sumerians built the levees higher and used them to keep back the floodwaters. In the summer when the land was dry, the Sumerians poked holes in these levees - the river water ran through the holes and along irrigation channels in the soil.

The Sumerians' crops were: barley, wheat, sesame, flax, fruit trees, date palms, and many types of vegetables. Soon the people of that region began to trade low scale animal husbandry for sedentary farming and thus the idea of permanent settlements.

The Sumerian City-States

With the onset of permanent settlements came the emergence of centralized authority as a result of the City-States of Sumer emerged. The City-States of Ur (believed to be the birthplace of the biblical Patriarch Abraham), Kish, Lagash, Adab, Nippur, Umma, and Uruk (believed to be the home of the legendary hero Gilgamesh) came to be the most preeminent of the Sumerian City-States.

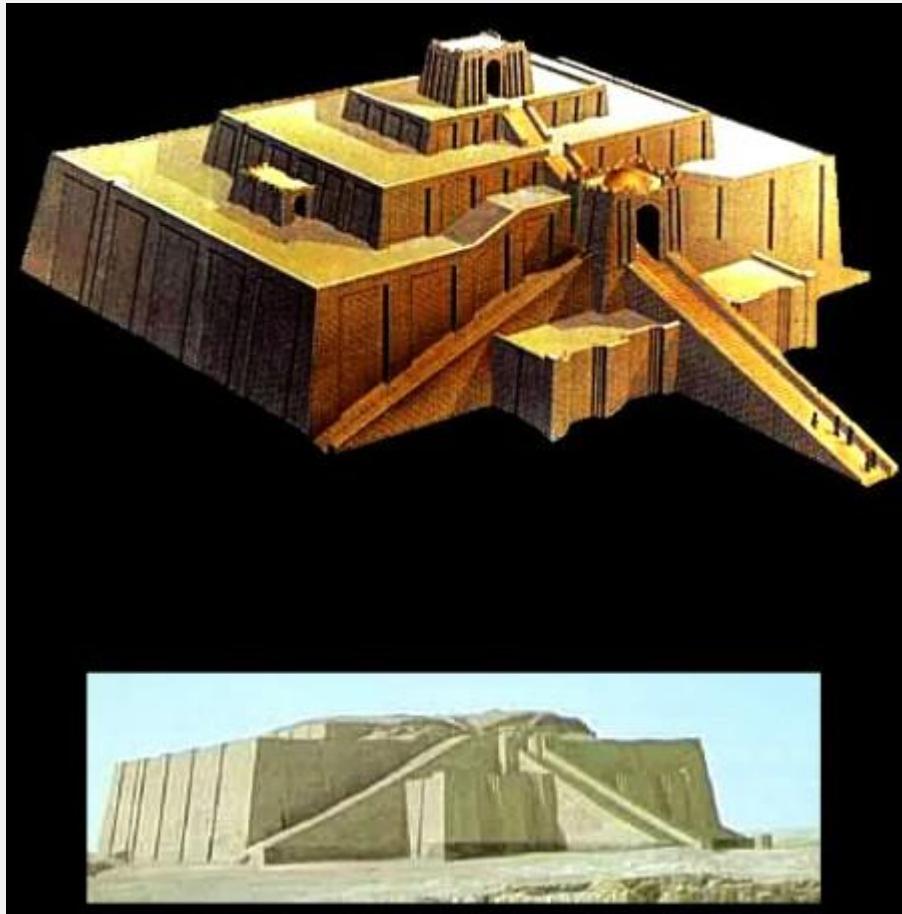
Each city rose to dominate the region militarily and commercially for a period. The societal culture of the City-States was divided into a hierarchy with Nobility, Priests, and State Officials at the top of the pecking order and Farmers and Slaves at the bottom. The economies of all of the City-States were agriculturally based - However, each city sported a substantial number of Architects and Craftsmen.



Uruk City

There was no building stone and very little lumber in the desert at Sumer. Sumerians used mud from the river mixed with crushed reeds to make bricks. They baked the bricks in the sun, and then used them to build their cities. Some great cities of Sumer were Ur and Uruk.

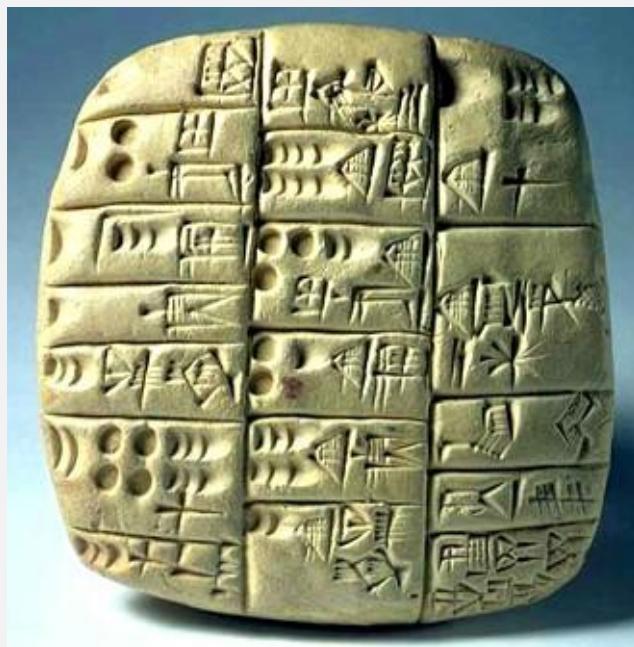
Each of the Sumerian City-States consisted of the city and surrounding farmland. Walls of sun-dried brick surrounded all cities and the walls had bronze gates that were opened at daylight and closed at night to keep out animals and bandits. Narrow winding streets went from the gates to the city centre. The houses of the upper class were in the centre of town. The upper class was priests and merchants. Their houses were two stories high with wooden balconies that looked out over courtyards. The courtyards provided light and air for the rooms. Outside walls were windowless to keep out the heat. Behind the upper class's houses were the houses of the middle class. The middle class was government officials, shopkeepers, and artisans. These houses were built around open courtyards, but were only one story high. Further behind was where the lower class lived (farmers, unskilled workers, and fisherman).



At the centre of each Sumerian city was a temple, called a ziggurat. The word "ziggurat" meant "mountain of god" or hill of heaven. Each ziggurat was made up of a series of square levels. Each level was smaller than the one below it. Stairways led to the top of the colossal ziggurats that were believed to be the home of the City's Chief God. Only priests could enter this sacred area. Around the ziggurat were courtyards, the centre of Sumerian life. Artisans worked there, children went to school there, farmers, artisans, and traders stored their goods there, and the poor were fed there.

Schools were for the sons of the rich only. Poorer boys worked in the fields or they learned a trade. Schools were rooms off the ziggurat courtyards. They were called tablet houses because they were built to teach children how to write. The children wrote with sharp-ended reeds on clay tablets the size of a postcard.

Sumerian writing was called cuneiform. It was made up of hundreds of wedge-shaped markings.



The smiths of Sumer were renowned for their skill with bronze.

The armies of Sumer were largely infantry armies armed with bronze weapons and leather armour with lames of bronze inner woven into the leather. The average Sumerian soldier was armed with a spear, dagger, or sickle sword. Stone maces were used early in the history of Sumer but eventually fell out of use due to innovations in the helmet by Sumerian artisans.

The anomaly of the armies of Sumer was the chariot. It was essentially a four wheeled wagon pulled by onagers (also known as the Asian Wild ass). The chariot was used more as a form of transport than an implement of war.



Sumerian Beliefs and Values

The Sumerians of the ancient world were a highly influential and fascinating people. They were pioneers and visionaries. Their participation in the development of early civilization led to a system of values and beliefs that set them apart from all other ancient cultures. In the aspects of religion, law and education they were particularly distinct.

The Sumerian religion was not a happy one. There was no shining golden afterlife, only pain and suffering in Kur (Cosmically located between the earth's crust and the primeval sea, and incredibly similar in description to the Greek Hades). It is in Kur that the first resurrection story takes place. An idea that reappears in later religions, but this account is most assuredly Sumerian. There were more than 3,000 Sumerian Gods and Goddesses. The story is of Inanna, a goddess seeking to hold sway in both the "Great Above" and "Great Below". One uniquely Sumerian aspect of her descent into the netherworld is that, along with her jewels and finery, she gathers divine laws in preparation for the journey. This shows the underworld to be a place still governed by a strict law code. Even in death, Sumerians could not escape the law. This coincides with the Sumerian belief in the inherently evil nature of man, in that even after death men still require laws they must adhere to.

Sumerian kings were bound to the same Kur as all mortals.

Another facet of Sumerian religion that is unique to their culture is the absolute inferiority of men to their gods. In most other religions of the region the faithful believer is generally afforded some comfort upon death, though not necessarily equally applied to all those who practice it. Beginning with the Sumerian creation story, man is never seen as able of attaining any sort of paradise. The Sumerian paradise, similar to the Hebrew Eden, was never a place where men dwelled. Only the immortal could dwell in paradise, never mortal men. Another effect of the Sumerian belief is that men were born evil and would remain so. No salvation or even an original divine state exists in Sumerian religion. A belief uncommon in many ancient religions!

The laws of Sumer were also a deeply ingrained part of Sumerian culture. They put great value in the laws that gave civility to this first civilization. Their use of legal precedent is particularly impressive. This concept would not reappear in common use for centuries.

Although Sumerian women did not go to school, they did have many rights. They could buy and sell property, run businesses, and own and sell slaves. Woman handled the house's affairs when the man was away, the men were the head of the Sumerian household. He could divorce his wife by saying, "You're not my wife." If he needed money, he could sell or rent his family into slavery for up to three years. The man also arranged the marriages of his children. Children were expected to support their parents - they were also expected to obey older family members. When a pupil graduated from school, he became a scribe. The ziggurat, the palace, the government, or the army employed him.



Everyone was to obey the gods and priests.

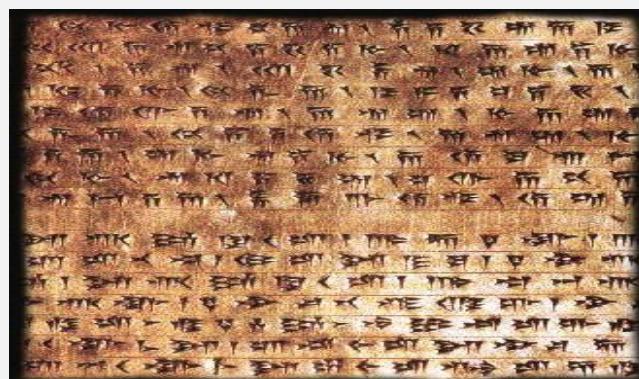
Only priests could know the gods' will. Because of this, Sumerian priests were very powerful - The city's god owned all land. But the priests administered the land in the god's name and also ran the schools. At first, Sumerian priests were kings of City-States. One of the most famous priest kings was Gilgamesh of Uruk. The Sumerian Priest-Kings received advice from a general assembly made up of free men. When war broke out, the assembly would choose one of its members to serve as leaders until the war was over, but often these leaders stayed in power even when peace had returned. By about 3000 B. C., they took their place as permanent kings. At the same time, kingship became heredity, and the world's first monarchies were established.

The gradual realization that there was a vast network of City-States before the Akkadians came as a true shock, especially since the Sumerians were not Semitic as the later Akkadians were. This was proven by the language they spoke, which is still being deciphered from the thousands of clay tablets found in the area.

The Sumerians likely had contacts as far as Egypt and Ethiopia to the west and India to the east. Many elements of their myths found their way into Biblical literature, from The Flood to Job. They had law courts, judges and councils of local men that the King's called upon (but didn't always listen to) when making major decisions. This was a far more complex civilization than people believed possible 5000 years ago.

The Sumerians did seem to be a contentious people who seemed to favour acerbic debate, at least from some of the works that have been deciphered. And here is the true glory of the Sumerian civilization and what kept it from being completely lost to the world - They wrote out everything from lists of natural world to copies of essays, myths, proclamations and laws. Thousands of these clay tablets have been found in the ruins of palaces, also sometimes in the ruins of an edubba (schools).

The Sumerians bequeathed their great gifts of civilization to the Akkadians who conquered them, but held on to much of what the Sumerians had created, including the complex form of writing called cuneiform. The Sumerian language, through cuneiform, became the 'Latin' of the distant ancient Near East - A language that continued to be used in written documents that could be read by educated people no matter what their native tongue might be.

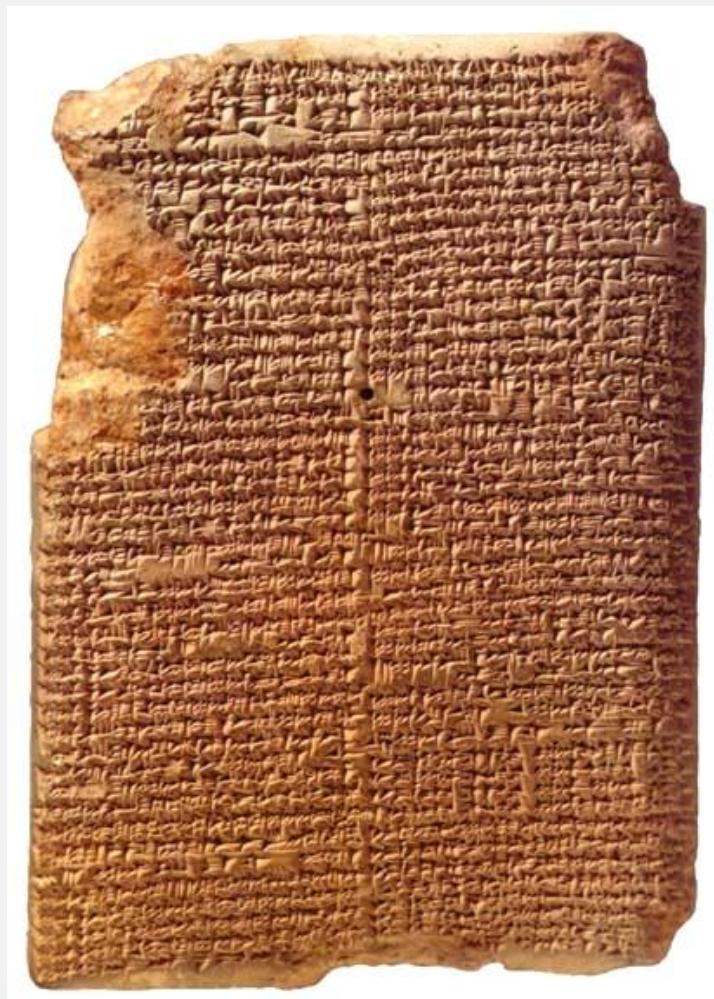


Until the mid 1800's no one knew of the existence of a land called Sumer in the ancient Mesopotamian (Iran and Iraq) area. Finally, the gradual gathering of information and the incredible deciphering of cuneiform lead archaeologists to realize that they had discovered a lost civilization - And a huge, important one that had affected not only the civilizations that succeeded them, but still has influence on the world today.

The Myth of a Sumerian 12th Planet: “Nibiru” According to the Cuneiform Sources.

Many experts in their field now theorise: That the Anunnaki (Sumerian: “those who came down from the heavens”; Old testament Hebrew, Anakeim, Nefilim, Elohim; Egyptian: Neter), an advanced civilization from the tenth planet in our solar system, splashed down in the Persian gulf area around 432,000 years ago, colonized the planet, with the purpose of obtaining large quantities of gold.

Some 250,000 years ago, (the recovered documents tell us) their lower echelon miners rebelled against the conditions in the mines and the Anunnaki directorate decided to create a creature to take their place. Enki, their chief scientist and Ninhursag their chief medical officer, (after getting no satisfactory results splicing animal and Homo Erectus genes) merged their Anunnaki genes with that of Homo Erectus and produced Homo Sapiens.



One of the more important sources of cuneiform astronomy that mentions Nibiru ("The Plough Star") is MUL.APIN.

[cosmic]