

# Mesopotamia civilization



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Mesopotamia, the birthplace of civilization, comes with an overwhelmingly rich history. Due to its wealth in contributions to many religions and ethnic groups and its strong religious influence in the area, the history behind Mesopotamia comes with a lot of stories. “ No development has been more momentous, or fraught with consequence, than the emergence of civilization”. First were the urban development of Mesopotamia, the development of writing and the culture of Sumer. Mesopotamia was established in an area known as the Fertile Crescent.

At this point in history, people settled wherever there was an exceeding amount of natural resources. The crescent was an ideal area. Mesopotamia was the name given to the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Mesopotamia means ‘ between the rivers’. The Ubaid cities Mesopotamia were founded by the Ubaid peoples. This dates around 5900 B. C. E Some of the Ubaid settlements bordered on fertile marshlands, which enabled them to develop irrigation systems.

Although these began as relatively simple channels and collection pools, Ubaid farmers quickly learned to build more sophisticated canals and to line some pools with stone (Western Civilization). They also constructed dikes and levees to control the seasonal flooding canals. Despite the hostility of the environment, Ubaid communities were soon producing surpluses sufficient to support specialists in constructs, weaving, pottery making, metalwork, and trade: the typical attributes of Neolithic village life. Totlani Totlani

Even though there is early evidence of something quite new to the central structures that served religious, economic and administrative functions, they

started out as shrines. These structures soon became impressive temples built of dried mud brick, and plentiful stone used at Jericho. The scarcity of stone meant that building in this region had to be more resourceful. Each large settlement had such a temple, from which a priestly class acted as managers of the community's stored wealth and of complex irrigation systems that would make the civilization of Sumer possible.

C. E, Ubaid settlements developed larger, more prosperous, and more highly organized communities. The most famous of these sites, Uruk, became the first Sumerian city- state (Western Civilization 8). Massive platform looms nearly forty feet above the surrounding flatlands, and its four corners are oriented toward the cardinal points of the compass. Atop the platform stands the temple proper, dressed in brick and originally painted a brilliant white (Western Civilization 8). Such temples were eventually constructed in every Sumerian city, reflecting the central role that worship played in civic life.

Uruk in particular seems to have owed its rapid growth to its importance as a religious center. By its rapid growth to its importance as a religious center. By 3100 B. C. E. it encompassed several hundred acres, enclosing a population of 40, 000 people within its massive brick walls. The larger villages of Sumer were also growing rapidly, attracting immigrants just as the great cities did. Grain and cloth production grew tenfold. Trade routes expanded dramatically and to manage this increasingly complex economy, the Sumerians invented the technology on which most Totlani Totlani historians rely: Writing (Western Civilization 8).

This is similar to other civilizations advancing in the future. Mesopotamia had a form of government known as the Code of Hammurabi. This dates back to

1795 -1750 B. C. E (Perspective from the Pasts 24). The laws of Hammurabi are not the earliest Mesopotamian compilation of legal rulings but they are the longest and most diverse collection and undoubtedly constitute and single most informative document yet discovered regarding concepts of justice and social regulation in Mesopotamian society.

These laws also produced extremely important evidence about the status and rights of women of various social classes in Babylonian society in the early second millennium B. C. E (Perspective from the Past 24). Noting its importance and significance to detail the basic ethics and morals founded in the code of Hammurabi found the building blocks of America's current judicial system. Mesopotamia also developed their form of writing. Back in 4000 B. C. E the peoples of the Near East were already using clay tokens to keep their inventories.

Within a few centuries they developed a practice of placing tokens inside hollow clay balls and inscribing on the outside of each ball (Western Civilization 9). By 3300 B. C. E, scribes had replaced these balls with flat clay tablets which they inscribed symbols representing tokens. These tablets made keeping the tokens themselves unnecessary, and they could be archived for future reference or sent to other settlements as receipts or requests for goods (Western Civilization 9). Kind of like today when we go shopping for items and we need some sort of receipt.

Writing evolved as a practical recording technology to support economic pursuits. A system of symbols known as pictograms resembled the thing it represented. However, over time a pictogram might be used not only to symbolize a physical object but also to evoke an idea associated with that

object. “ For example, the symbol for a bowl of food, ninda, might be used to express something more abstract, such as “ nourishment” (Western Civilization 9). Pictograms also came to be associated with particular spoken sounds, or phonemes.

When a Sumerian scribe needed to employ the sound ninda, even as part of another word, he would use the symbol for a bowl of food to represent the phoneme (Western Civilization 9). Later on in the development of pictograms, special marks were added so that a reader could tell whether the writer meant to represent the object itself, a larger concept, or a sound used in a context might having nothing to do with food (Western Civilization 9). Totlani Totlani By 3100 B. C. E, Sumerian scribed also developed a specialized tool suited to the task of writing, a stylus made of reed.

This stylus leaves an impression shaped like a wedge; this script is called cuneiform (Western Civilization 9). These symbols could now be impressed more quickly into clay and because the new stylus was not suited to drawing pictograms, those accurately representing things, the symbols became even more abstract (Western Civilization 9). Even back then they had some sort of writing system, like what we have today. During Mesopotamian times The culture of Sumer, one of the great centers of Sumerian civilization shared a common culture and a common language.

They also shared a set of beliefs. But, this common religion did not produce peace. The residents of each city considered themselves to be the servants of a particular god, whom they sought to glorify by exalting their own city above others. Overall the intense competition frequently escalated into

warfare. Also there was an economic dimension to these conflicts, since water rights and access to arable land and trade routes were often at stake.

As you can see here many cultures such as the Europeans had developed somewhat similar to this. When we look back on our history something similar to the culture of Sumer happened almost everywhere. Totlani Totlani As we examine through history and the developments of religion, culture, civilizations and etc. many of those events are similar from what the Mesopotamians had to go through. Also to present day our fundamentals of our civilization is similar to theirs, for example writing and a form of government.