

# The ancient city of uruk

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The metropolis of Uruk was at its most influential from 4000-3000 BCE, and its rise and enlargement can be partly attributed to the absence of prestige stuffs in the southern alluvial sediment ( Joffe 1994, 512 ) . Low entree to these stuffs led to the desire for trade and the formation of extended relationships with other metropoliss, which, along with other factors, led to the enlargement of Uruk, an event which can be displayed by a rapid population addition and drastic societal alteration.

Previously, the belief that Uruk had low entree to raw stuffs was widespread, but this belief is baseless, as Uruk had about everything it needed but lumber. It has been observed that most local trees and reeds may hold served for Uruk's demand for wood, demurring the edifice of big, monumental public architecture ( Joffe 1994, 514 ) . Though the alluvial field was fertile and rich, a premier topographic point for agribusiness, and so had most resources needed for endurance, Uruk's entree to luxury stuffs was highly low. It has been argued that a chief stuff that drove the demand for trade was lumber, but this has been disputed by the fact that most monumental edifices in Uruk are composed of gypsum, which was a locally sourced rock, every bit good as the aforesaid beginning of local trees and reeds ( Joffe 1994, 513 ) . The cardinal thrust for trade was most likely the desire for luxury points such as semi-precious rocks and metals, objects which have been found within Uruk though they were sourced from rather far off. Evidence of this long-distance trade is found within entombments of a manner which moved off from that of the Ubaid period with the add-on of sedate goods ; objects such as mirrors and Cu axes were found within Gravess in Susa, the Cu imported from the mountains about 200 kilometers

off ( Jennings 2010, 59 ) . Trade would hold ab initio been instituted near by, with colonies in close propinquity to Uruk, before traveling farther out to topographic points with more alien goods. These countries, along with supplying stuffs to another metropolis, would hold had a desire for the forte points being produced in Uruk with the addition of stuffs available. Artifacts of Uruk manner have been found from Egypt to topographic points every bit distant as Pakistan, with advanced clayware from Uruk traded for cherished rocks, gold, and other such stuffs ( Jennings 2010, 67 ) . As Uruk's influence, as the trade Centre of the period, increased over clip, the desire to keep the flow of goods into the metropolis precipitated the enlargement of Mesopotamian dregss along the trade path with the constitution of trading outstations ; this development allowed goods to be ferried between colonies instead than over long distances, many of these outstations walled and supplying a safer path for the prestigiousness points ( Jennings 2010, 68 ) . The prevalence of trade made immediate the issue of travel between these outstations, and so along with the usual agencies of conveyance – by pes – more efficient agencies were discovered and put to utilize, such as boats and sleighs ; donkeys were introduced to the profession of trade, as were wheeled vehicles ( Jennings 2010, 69 ; Joffe 1994, 515 ) . Equally good as a more efficient agencies of travel, the first signifier of authorship was developed in Uruk ; this was economic, and developed because of the increasing prevalence of trade.

In response to the laterality of trade, Uruk underwent a monolithic enlargement of its boundary lines. Many colonies that have been identified by several historiographers as trading settlements were set up along

common Uruk trading paths, and architecture characteristic to Uruk has been found in little communities along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, on the outskirts of Mesopotamia ( Algaze 1989, 571-608 ; Surenhagen 1986 ) .

Some colonial outstations had become more than simple stop-overs for going bargainers, and had accumulated plenty wealth to justify protection by tall rock walls ( Jennings 2010, 68 ) . A chief cause of enlargement in Uruk was increased specialization in the production of goods. The increased handiness of prestige stuffs due to success in trade led to an inflow of people, both impermanent occupants – from trading colonies – and lasting occupants – from colonies that were incorporated into the metropolis of Uruk, under bid of the new-found elite. Equally good as external colonies, people were likely traveling into the metropolis with the hopes of thriving in their peculiar trade and providing to increased demand for luxury points. The alteration in the fabrication of fabrics, from flax to wool, is an illustration of the specialization that occurred, and is possibly one of the more important cases: woolly sheep were introduced from the North, and woollen cloths had many advantages, including the easiness with which they took dye ( Jennings 2010, 65 ) . The coloring of cloth was particularly of import in this new age of increasing societal stratification, and wool was besides far more convenient as it took far less attempt for laborers to bring forth ( Jennings 2010, 65 ) . Another root of the quickly increasing population of Uruk, unrelated to stuffs, is an inflow of refugees from fall ining city states in Sumer, but this can besides be attributed to the rise in power and influence of Uruk, its wealth and prosperity maintaining it afloat where other metropoliss failed ( Jennings 2010, 69 ) .

Equally good as trade and subsequent enlargement flowering from the desire for natural stuffs, a profound alteration in societal fortunes occurred. With a booming economic system within Uruk, as the Centre of trade during this period, societal stratification began to happen, with degrees being distinguished between the elite and the on the job category. The distribution of wealth was a major factor, those with the most holding places of power within the trading Centre. The development of composing farther separated the categories, as acquisition to compose would hold been something that was restricted to the elite, but what was most of import, as Algaze says, was economic distinction, as economic distinction leads to societal distinction ( 2001, 204 ) . There are many illustrations of differences between societal categories, one being a list of professions found widely, from Uruk to Ebla, ordered harmonizing to the rank of rubrics held by the elite ( Nissen 1986, 329 ) . This list names leaders of peculiar groups, from presidents, courtiers, and ambassadors, to priests, nurserymans, bakers and throwers ( Nissen 1986, 329 ) . Through this list and others like it – as it is the most extremely reproduced list from the period – it is possible to see the rigorous hierarchy that developed in Uruk with lifting wealth position. Another index of position can be seen in the grave goods, mentioned above. With the Uruk period came a move off from the old Ubaid period-style of entombments, and the inclusion of sedate goods began, which was another distinguishable symbol of position. With a more affluent civilization, more luxuriant entombments became common, and the more luxuriant the grave goods included, the higher the position of the resident of the grave. Another new thought displayed in this period was that of the person, and single ownership

displayed by clay seals ; these were used to track traded goods and grade ownership, and this thought was non contained to Uruk. A broad assortment of seals have been found within Uruk and without, subsequently conforming to other social manners, their visual aspect altering circumstantially but keeping the original Uruk ideals ( Nissen 1986, 320 ) .

A metropolis can merely spread out to a certain extent, and this applies to Uruk. The thrust for trade through the desire for entree to raw stuffs created the chance for Uruk to spread out its influence, its population lifting with its wealth and complexness. Over clip, the lower categories in society were pushed to spread out agribusiness, which intensified to back up the lifting population of specializers who did non bring forth their ain nutrient. This led to over-irrigation, and the one time fertile, rich land of the southern alluvial field was subjected to environmental impairment, which finally led to the prostration of agribusiness ( Algaze 2001, 218 ) . Equally good as the terrible overburdening of the land, Uruk's lessening in influence can be attributed to a supposed addition in ill will in Mesopotamia as colonies fought for connexions to the trading web ; ill will in the country can be seen in the copiousness of walled colonies, such as Habuba Kabira and Sheikh Hassan ( Jennings 2010, 60 ) . Even as Uruk declined, other countries had been influenced by Uruk's thoughts, which travelled along with trade stuffs, and little colonies became involved in widespread trade, viing with each other for the more successful trading spouse with high entree to critical stuffs and making lifting force. Equally good as ill will, it appears that Uruk decided to turn away from its dependance on an early planetary economic system based on trade and external variables, from long distance relationships

jeopardised by force and competition from and between other provinces, and towards the local economic system. Uruk's local economic system was able to be managed in a much more efficient manner since the innovation of the authorship system, and so colonies were able to distance themselves from trading and the metropolis, and develop as their ain entities ( Jennings 2010, 71 ) . But even as Uruk's methods were embraced by some, other countries such as Tepe Gawra rejected many of the rules which other topographic points were so eager to take up, and this is displayed by the low sum of Uruk-style clayware that was found in the country, while at the same clip in many other parts these types of goods were quickly go arounding ; this part besides maintained their ain distinguishable manner of entombment, non conforming to the new Uruk manner ( Jennings 2010, 72 ) .

Uruk was an country with low entree to raw stuffs, and it displayed an astonishing ability to accommodate to its fortunes and specify a new manner of life which would distribute across Mesopotamia. Trade provided it entree to the luxury stuffs it required, and this gave birth to a rapid period of enlargement and wealth, which created the first known grounds of social stratification. The limited entree to critical stuffs, though non the lone variable, was the trigger for the rise and eventual autumn of the metropolis of Uruk.