



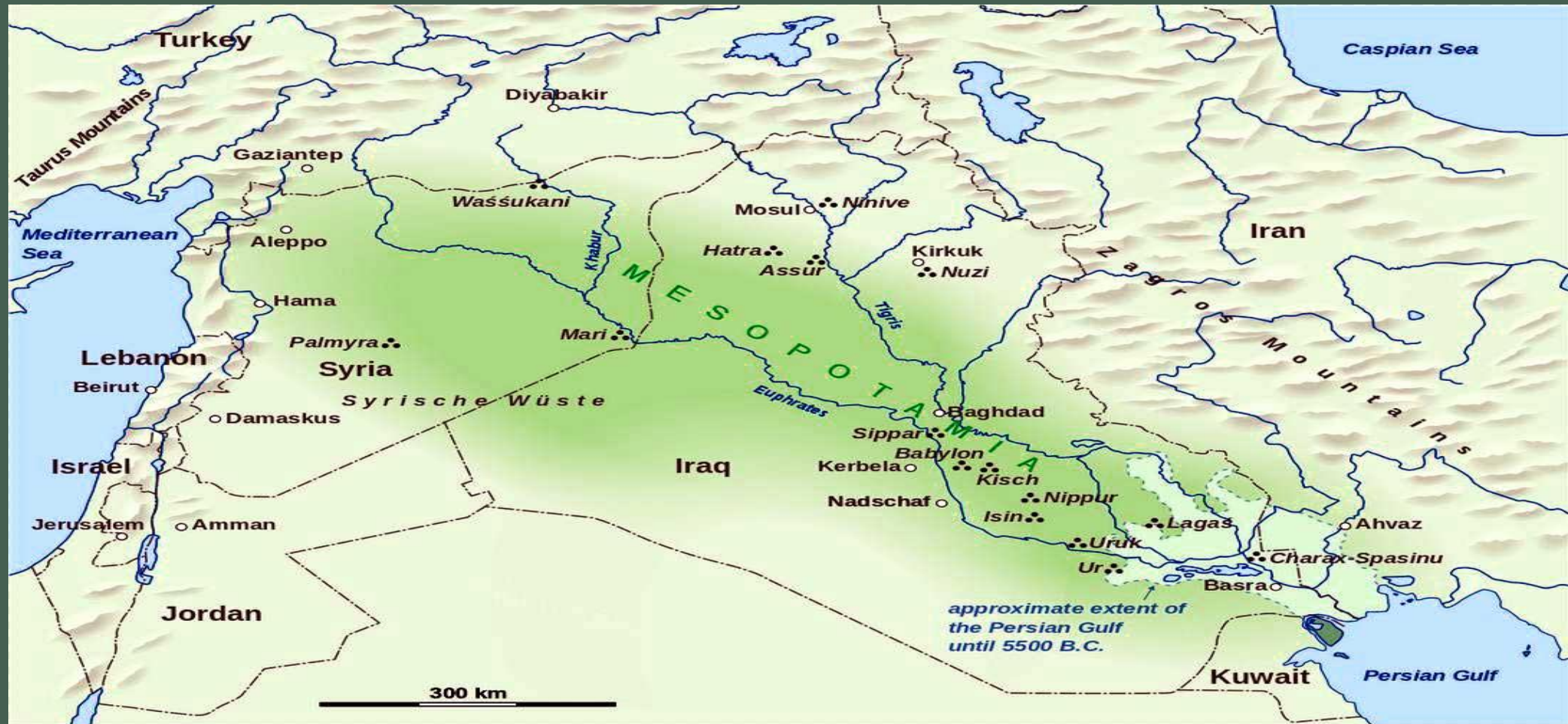
THE MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATION

Birth of civilizational story of hominids

A stone relief carving of a Mesopotamian deity's head, featuring a large eye, a beard with a circular pattern, and a headdress with a crescent moon and stars. The text "MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATION" is overlaid in the center.

MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATION

Geographical location



Upland Villages: First settled farmers

- In Assyria the first settlement of farmers discovered
- Distinguished by their pottery and its unique patterns and designs.
- A) hand made pottery (হাতের তৈরি মৃৎপাত্র)
- B) coarse clay patterns (অমসৃণ মৃৎপাত্র অঙ্কন)
- C) dots, circles and other designs (বিভিন্ন অঙ্কন চিত্র)
- The pattern is named **Hassunan pottery** after the name of the site where the village of such pattern was first discovered- Upper Tigris Valley to the pains west of modern city of Mosul
- Earliest site: **Tell Magzaliyah**
- **Fringes (সিমান্ত) of Mesopotamian civilization: irrigational Samara village, Choga mami,**

Hassunan Pottery



Samaran village settlement

- Were farmers
- Used irrigation from the rivers running alongside
- Lived in substantial village settlements
- Cultivated wheat, barley and linseed crops (ময়দা, বার্লি, তীল)
- Forged community and external social & economic bonds

Chronology of flourishing village chiefdoms: Kent Flannery & Robert Adam

- Halafian 6000 BCE (complex social system with elite class based on consumption of superior luxury items. Fagan believes chiefdom had developed by the time Halafian settlement flourished. Often pottery was shared to reinforce their authority.)
- Ubaid 5800 BCE (using Adam and Flanner's theory one can say Ubaid intermingled well food resources with the development of a complex social network)
- Tell al Ouelli 5800 BCE
- Eridu 4750 BCE
- Uruk 4600 BCE

Halafian Pottery



Ubaid Pottery (theory of Flannery and Adams)



Ubaid



Eridu



Eridu temple



Uruk



Uruk



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Epic of Gilgamesh



Uruk- the first city

- Epitomizes cultural development just before and during the early stage of development of Sumerian civilization
- Ziggurat complex and satellite temples formed the core of Uruk life.
- People worked in such complexes who did not till the land- new elite class
- Mining, trade, such relations revolved around the temple-ruler was En-both religious and secular leader
- Inter-personal relations between core and periphery/village settlements for material co-existence and for security. Temples as centres of collection and redistribution
- Hyperurbanism in Sumer. Beginning of the usage of token
- Scripts – Cuneiform – recorded not just material transaction but the life of Sumerians
- Use of copper and bronze tools

















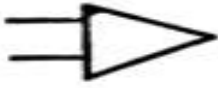







Ziggurat temples

Anu Ziggurat, Uruk



- Ziggurat: stepped temple tower comprised of superimposed shrines.
- first form of monumental architecture in the world in the greater sense of the word.
- Forms a man made (artificial) mountain—many Sumerian ziggurats feature the word “mountain” in their name.
- Shows that man on top is important because they are “looking down” on everyone else.

Cuneiform

MEANING		OUTLINE CHARACTER, B. C. 3500	ARCHAIC CUNEIFORM, B. C. 2500	ASSYRIAN, B. C. 700	LATE BABYLONIAN, B. C. 500
1.	The sun				
2.	God, heaven				
3.	Mountain				
4.	Man				
5.	Ox				
6.	Fish				

Sumerian tools



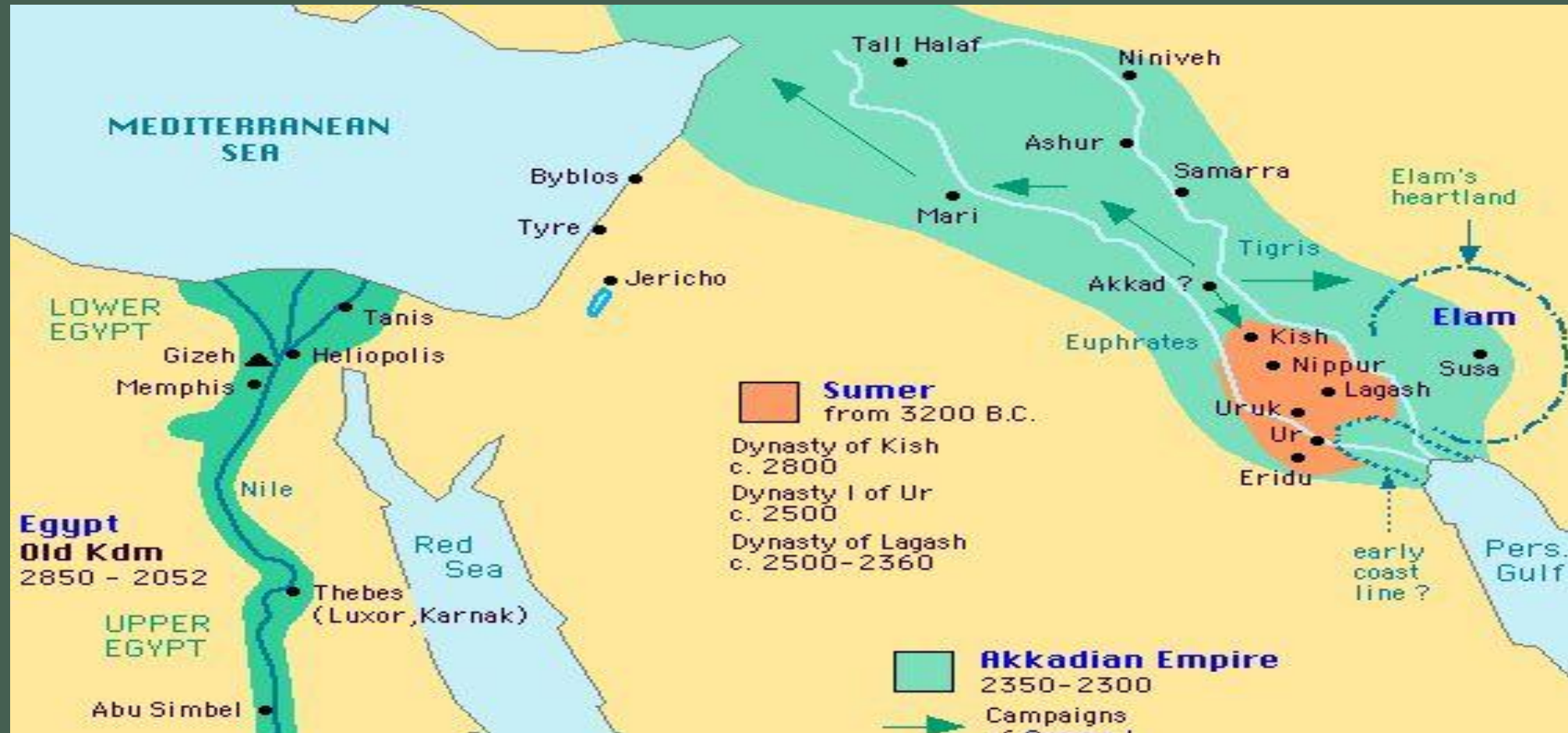
Copper ornaments



Transition: from city to civilization

- Artefacts and weapons suggest the coming of the age of warfare
- Uneasy neighbours like **Lagash** and **Umma** engaged in border strifes
- In order to rein their political exuberance wars had to be fought against them
- Political centralization born from it
- Cities brought together under one –Panoptican – control
- Rise of the Sumerian civilization

Sumerian civilization 3000-2334 B.C.E.



Genesis of a civilization

- Pre-historic Sumer's unrecorded history has been weaved from archaeological remains
- It tells us about the development of village settlements
- These settlements as hubs of agrarian community and pastoralists
- Sedentary lifestyle allowed super-exploitation of food resources
- People once assured of food supply began to engage in other services that did not involve production of food
- A complex web of socio-economic relations began to emerge from this arrangement
- Optimum exploitation of resources led to social stratification

Economy

- A world system of trade linkage
- Demand for non-local raw materials
- Trade was in the hands of temples
- Those who laboured for the temples food was rationed to them
- Other officials were allotted lands for their economic upkeep
- Contacts with other civilization encouraged two innovations:
- Alloying of bronze by mixing copper with tin
- Introduction of plough- agriculture flourished
- Can be divided into few sections: agriculture, pastoralism, trade, craft production

Agriculture

- Agrarian product was the main source of prosperity
- Agricultural goods main tradable good
- Fertile crescent and flood plains of Euphrates and Tigris responsible for this
- 12 clay tablet holds reference to Farmer's almanac
- They used seeder's plough to plant seeds in the field
- Offered prayers to Goddess Ninkilim to protect the plants from wild beasts and ants, and to Ninuarta to turn barren lands into fertile tracts
- Why is the Mesopotamian civilization considered as the gift of Euphrates?

Domestication of animals

- Hybridization (প্রজনন প্রক্রিয়া) of wild donkeys and domesticated donkeys as beasts of burden
- Provided milk and meat
- Used for transportation
- End of bronze age horses and camels began to be used for transportation
- Wool from sheep (পশম) formed an important part of the economy

Craft production

- Melting of metal (ধাতু গলন) casting (ছাঁচে ঢালাই) shaping through hammering (পেটাই করে ধাতব পাতকে প্রয়োজনীয় আকার দেওয়া) and creation of alloy (ধাতু সংকর পদ্ধতি)
- Jewelry making using gold, silver, lapis lazuli, cornelia, topaz.
- Filigree work সূক্ষ্ম ধাতব তারের কাজ
- Lost wax method মোমের ছাঁচের ব্যবহার
- Weapons like arrow heads, spears, swords, knives and harpoons made of copper and bronze (তীরের ফলা, বল্লম, তরোয়াল, ছোরা ও হার্পুন)
- Head gear of bronze, shaft hole axe, animal skin made armour (ব্রোঞ্জের তৈরি শিরস্ত্রাণ, হাতে ধরা যায় এমন ছোরা, চামড়ার বর্ম)
- Textile in Lagash using wool and cotton

Trade and unit of measurement

- Cities served as a centre of trade and commerce
- Both the producer and traders dealt in trade of goods
- Used both waterways and land-ways for trade
- Boats called gufa were used remnants of which have been discovered in Eridu
- South eastern Sahar-e-Sokta centre of production of Lapis Lazuli
- South western Tepe yaheya centre of chlorite
- Cedar production in Zagros mountains
- Sumerian trade with Dilman (Bahrain), Magan (Oman), and Meluhar (Indus valley)
- Dilman- fish, shells, pearls; Magan- bronze; Meluha- lumber, ivory, gold, agate and cornelian
- Meluha traders settled in Lagash who traded in tin and lapis lazuli from Afghanistan
- Mode of exchange- gold, copper, tin, food grains

Temple/Divine Household (case study Temple of Anu)

- During the Uruk phase Temple of Anu at the centre of Iranian Plateau
- In the background stands Ziggurat built of burnt bricks, timber (imported) and pottery and goblet in the walls when wet
- The procedure demanded large amount of labour resource
- Gordon Childe is of the opinion that none of the labourer served out of religious enthusiasm; they received food supply from the temple
- Presence of a section of priestly class: perhaps a secret society
- Cities were considered the property of the patron God/Goddess
- Agricultural land in the surrounding of the temple was treated as the property of the temple. Labourers who tilled these lands paid rent to the temple. Lands were mostly cultivated on a communitarian level. Few private individuals could afford to till it alone.
- Officials of the temple cultivated the lands without the payment of any rent

Social stratification

- Surplus production and its unequal distribution led to social stratification
- Divided into two sets: **Awilum**-people who had house, animals, etc. Included aristocrats (অভিজাত শ্রেণী), government officials (সরকারি আধিকারিক), clerics (পূজারি), warriors, wealthy merchants, small farmers, independent craftsmen (স্বনিযুক্ত কারিগর);
Mushkennum- received ration in lieu of work done for temple or the state. Included farmers and craftsmen who did not have any utensils and capitals of their own (means of production); **Wardum**- slaves

Slaves

- Slave mode of production: not of the similar order as in Classical Age- Graeco-Roman Civilization.
- Slave labour did not form the backbone of the economy.
- Wealthy landed estate men used slave labour for their personal usage; hence, it was more like a luxury item.
- Slave labour, like the use of copper and bronze, was a status symbol (পদ মৰ্জাদার চিহ্ন)।
- Causes of slavery: Inability to pay a debt; criminal or prisoner of war; poverty.
- Slaves had legal bindings and rights.
- They could be manumitted.
- Children borne of union between a slave and a free person were considered free borns.

Position of women

- Families were patriarchal in nature
- Women had to live in her husband's family after marriage
- Divorce was common for a man, but a woman would be severely punished if she deserted her husband
- There was a tradition of bridal and groom dowry (দেনা পাওনা)
- Till the Akkadian times women had property rights, and could buy or sell property
- Unmarried women had the right to run inns, business and invest in commercial activities.
- Female slaves were present in the society till 2000 BCE

State Structure

temple State

- Temple run
- Free citizens

Unken

- City councillor or Ensi (নগর প্রশাসক)
- Free citizens

King

- Hereditary position
- Standing army; state buildings; endowed with divinity



Religion

- Philosophical engagement with the world and means to understand it
- World divided into An-Ki (Heaven-Hell)
- World surrounded by a metallic sphere, considered as divine metal- most probably Tin
- The in between gaseous space was known as Lil
- Pantheon comprised of- An/Nintu (God of Heaven or father/progenitor); Enlil (God of space); Enki (God of knowledge); Ninhursag/Ki (Mother Goddess or consort of An); Nanna (God of Moon); Utu (God of Sun); Inanna/Ishtar (daughter of Nanna)
- Lesser gods called Aniku or children of An
- Iggigu were another genre of Gods

Conclusion

- The Mesopotamian civilization laid the foundation of the legal coding (Hammurabi code), patriarchal divine-monarchical state structure (Sargon), slave mode of production,