

What the Near-East knew

Piero Scaruffi

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- **Part II: Sumerians**

What the Sumerians knew



What the Sumerians knew

- Domestic animals and plants (12,000 BC)
- Irrigation
- Urbanization
- Ziggurats (monumental buildings for religious purposes) (5,000 BC)
- Wheel (3,200 BC)
- Wheeled vehicles (chariot 3,000 BC)
- Bronze (3,000 BC, weapons and tools)
- Boat
- Plow

What the Sumerians knew

- Domestication of plants
 - 8,000 BC: Cereals and legumes (easy to grow and store)
 - 2,000 BC: Fruit trees and nut trees that can be planted as cuttings (they take time to become productive),
 - 500 BC: Fruit trees that required grafting (such as apples, pears, plums and cherries)
- Domestication of animals
 - Dog (10,000 BC), sheep (8,000 BC), goat (8,000 BC), pig (8,000 BC), cow (6,000 BC)

What the Sumerians knew

- Bronze (3,000 BC, weapons and tools)
 - Copper + tin
 - Harder material than copper
 - Lowers the melting point of copper (easier to cast)
 - First used extensively in Sumerian tombs

What the Sumerians knew

- Early Sumerian pottery



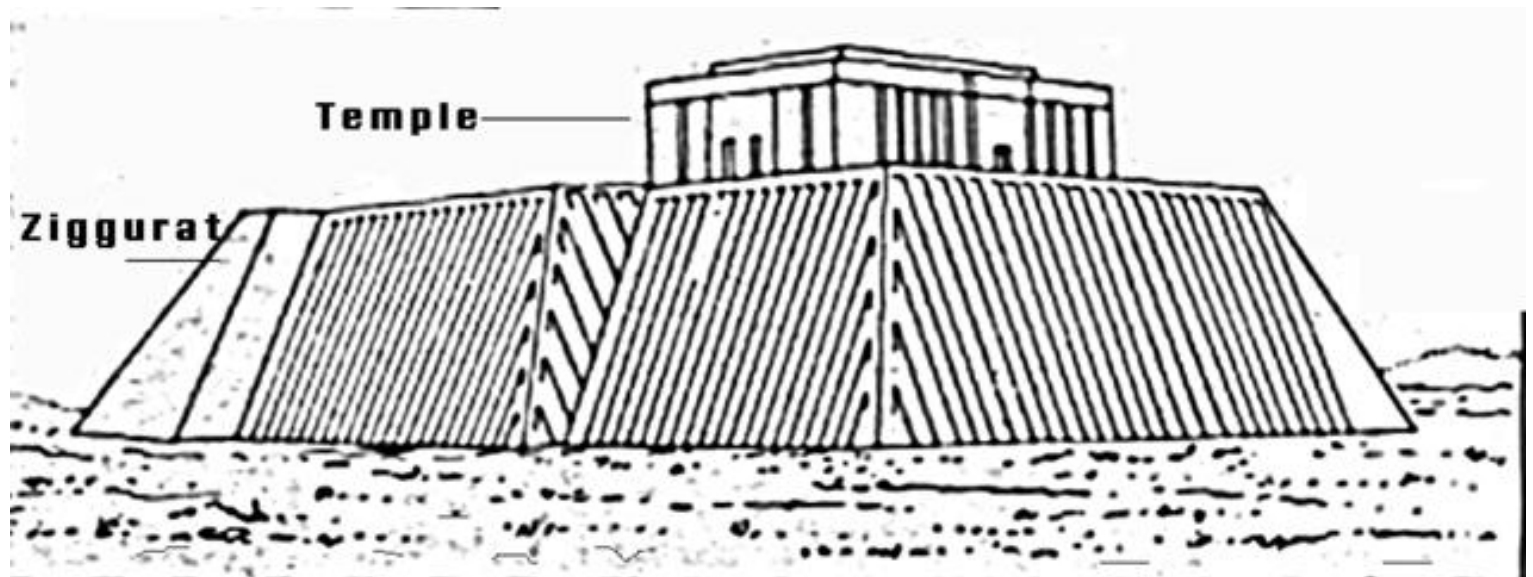
Early Sumerian pottery
(Oriental Institute, Chicago)

What the Sumerians knew

- **Sumerian architecture**
 - **Unbaked brick**
 - **Used since 2200 BC: column, arch, vault, dome**
 - **Arch and barrel vault (mostly for houses)**
 - **Houses built around a courtyard (windows on the courtyard, not on the street)**
 - **Ziggurats (higher deity, living on top of a mountain, above the city) and temples (lower deities, living among the people, modeled after houses)**
 - **Royal palace subordinate to the ziggurat**

What the Sumerians knew

- Sumerian architecture
- Uruk: Temple (3500 BC) on top of ziggurat (before the two structures diverged)

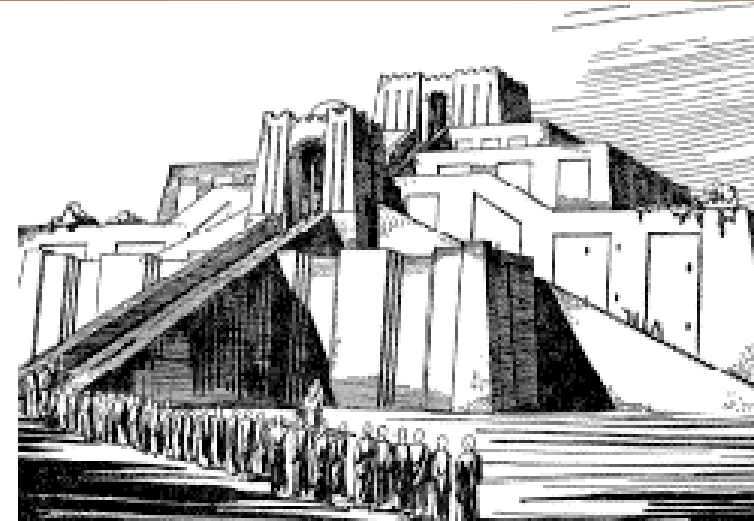
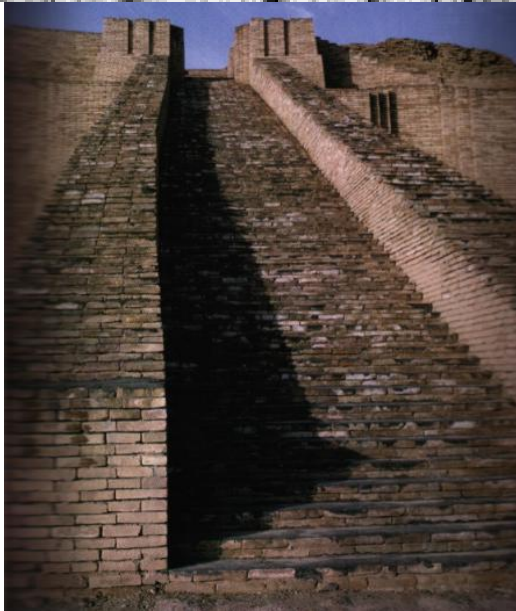
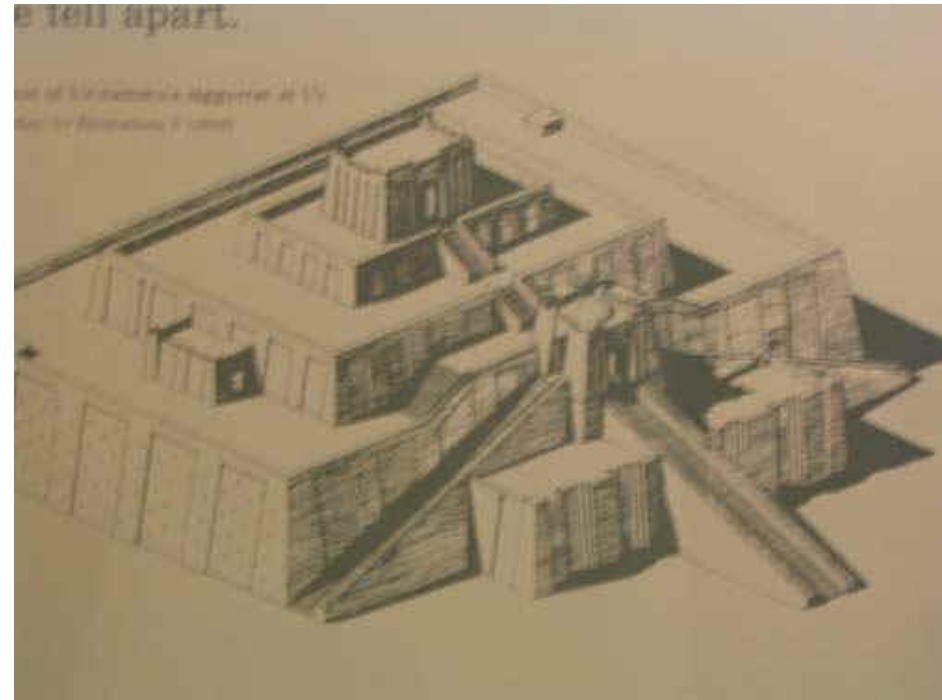


(<http://www.utexas.edu/courses/classicalarch/images1/UrukZigWTplan3000.jpg>)

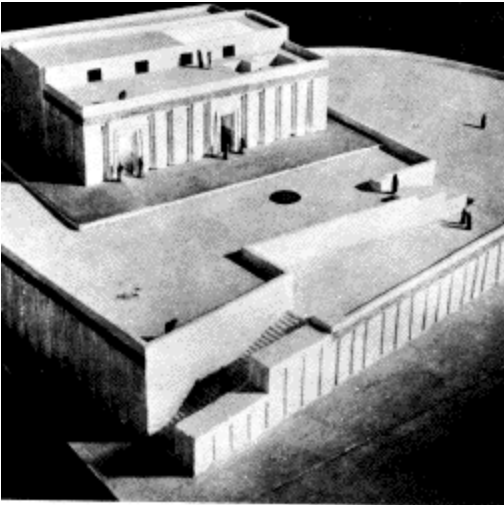
What the Sumerians knew

- Sumerian architecture
- Ziggurat
 - Little emphasis on burial and afterlife, but concern with propitiating the gods for success in this life
 - Technology of mud bricks (no fire bricks)
 - A substitute mountain (perhaps a memory of the Sumerians' ancestral home)

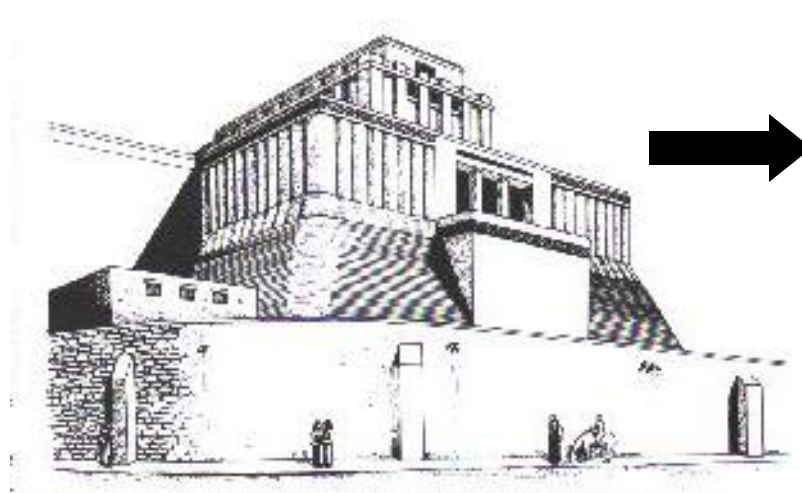
Ur's ziggurat (2250 BC)



What the Sumerians knew



The Painted Temple at Sumer
(Al-Hikma University, Baghdad)



Eridu
(Seton Lloyd)



What the Sumerians knew



Khafajah's oval temple 2,900-2,300 BC
(Oriental Institute, Chicago)



Temple furniture
(Oriental Institute, Chicago)



What the Sumerians knew

- Urbanization
 - Towns (mud-brick walls, flat roofs, no streets)
 - Cities (3,900 BC, 13 cities in 3000 BC)
- Consequences of urbanization
 - Social classes
 - Technological innovation
 - Organized religion
 - Writing
 - Monarchy
 - Bureaucracy

What the Sumerians knew

- Consequences of urbanization
 - Problem with urbanization: garbage attracts diseases
 - The transition from the small communities of hunters/gatherers to the large dense communities of city dwellers creates garbage

What the Sumerians knew

- Consequences of urbanization
 - By 3,000 BC Sumerians had domesticated most of the crop plants and livestock that would remain important for the world before the discovery of America
 - Domesticated animals create foods for humans out of what humans cannot eat: a cow eats the grass that we cannot eat but then gives us milk and eventually becomes meat
 - Some animals become varmints: rats, flies, roaches, worms

What the Sumerians knew

- Consequences of urbanization
 - Problem with domestication of animals: new kinds of diseases
 - Humans share their home with the animals they domesticate
 - The transition from the small communities of hunters/gatherers to the large dense communities of city dwellers creates new diseases

What the Sumerians knew

- Consequences of urbanization
 - Problem with agriculture: food attracts pests.
 - Some animals become competitors.
 - Some plants become weeds.
 - Water attracts mosquitoes.

What the Sumerians knew

- Consequences of urbanization
 - Invisible enemies spread: bacteria and viruses.
 - It's easier to defend a farm from foxes than to defend a home from viruses.
 - The transition from the small communities of hunters/gatherers to the large dense communities of cities helps infectious diseases spread.
 - Long-distance trade and military invasions further spread diseases.
 - Venereal diseases and airborne diseases become a major problem for humans.

What the Sumerians knew

- Tyranny
 - Centralized authoritarian regimes are the inevitable consequence of large-scale irrigation agriculture: the problem of exploiting a river's power, i.e. of building precise and timely waterworks, can only be solved by mass labor, by the mobilization and coordination of thousands of people, which is only possible in societies organized around centralized planning and capable of imposing absolute discipline.

What the Sumerians knew

- Tyranny
 - The Tigris and Euphrates (unlike the Nile) create a highly unpredictable rhythm of flooding and therefore required extensive waterworks.
 - Nor did the region enjoy the natural protection of the desert (like Egypt): it was, on the contrary, a natural crossroads of peoples, prone to commerce and warfare.
 - The rivers were easy to navigate only in one direction, downstream (unlike the Nile).
 - Instead of the monolithic Egyptian kingdom, Mesopotamia split into a number of city states.

What the Sumerians knew

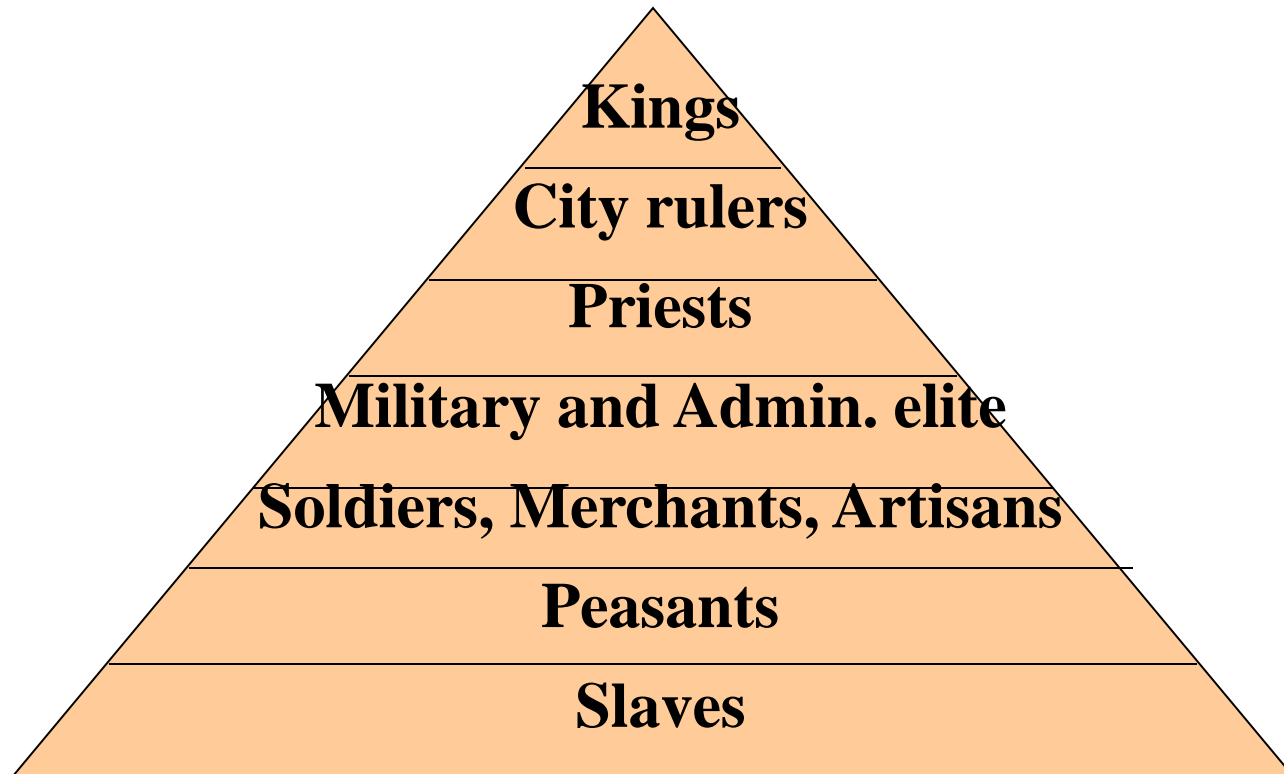
- **Tyranny**
 - **The biggest river the greater the promise of wealth the stronger the "hydraulic state" has to be.**
 - **The masses mobilized for waterworks can then be mobilized for other collective efforts, such as pyramids, temples and fortifications.**
 - **A navigable river then provided the infrastructure for interacting with other communities, i.e. for both trade and warfare.**

What the Sumerians knew

- Uruk in 2700 BC (time of Gilgamesh):
 - Six kms of ramparts protected by 900 towers
 - 10 square kms of houses, palaces, workshops and temples
 - 50,000 people, largest city in the world

What the Sumerians knew

- Social classes



Theoretically, women could be anywhere in the pyramid

What the Sumerians knew

- **Slavery**
 - **All early civilizations were built on slave labor (Mesopotamia, Babylon, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Central America, Africa)**
 - **People became slaves by being**
 - **an insolvent debtor**
 - **sold into slavery by their parents**
 - **born to slave parents**
 - **captured in war**
 - **kidnapped by pirates**
 - **The slave trade was an accepted way of life, legal, respected, recognized by all societies.**

What the Sumerians knew

- **Law**
 - **Boom of capitalism**
 - **Capitalism requires laws to regulate trade, finance and manufacturing**

What the Sumerians knew

- Writing
 - An evolution of record keeping
 - The original symbols of record keeping were clay tokens
 - From envelopes containing three-dimensional representations (clay tokens) of the objects to the surface of the envelop displaying a two-dimensional representation (the imprint) of the three-dimensional representations to cuneiform writing

What the Sumerians knew

- Writing
 - Capitalism led to the invention and diffusion of writing, the alphabet and (later) of coins.
 - Traders needed a way to keep track of their business
 - Traders traveled and thus spread their inventions

What the Sumerians knew

- Writing
 - Akkadians conquer Sumeria and use the ideograms for their own language adding phonograms
 - A combination of non-phonetic ideograms and phonetic phonograms
 - The new language can also express abstract concepts

What the Sumerians knew

- Writing



Administrative tablet of Uruk 3000 BC
(wheat and barley)



Administrative tablet of Uruk 3000 BC
(grant of land to temple official)



Blau monument (4th millennium BC)
Earliest cartoon (picture and words) - British Museum

What the Sumerians knew

- Writing



Chicago Stone of 2,600 BC
(Oriental Institute, Chicago)

















What the Sumerians knew

- Literature
 - Writing (3,400 BC)
 - Cuneiform language: 800 symbols, one per syllable
 - Scribes evolved pictures of objects into stylized representations of the objects, and eventually pure symbols
 - Function: business activities of temple and palace
 - 3,000 BC: Curved lines replaced by linear strokes and wedges
 - Written from right to left

What the Sumerians knew

- Literature
 - Cuneiform used to render Sumerian, Akkadian, Elamite (neither Semitic nor Indo-European), Hurrian, Hittite (Indo-European)
 - Decline of cuneiform in 1000 BC with Aramaic's alphabetical system (easier to learn)

What the Sumerians knew

	Original pictograph	Sumerian cuneiform	Early babylonian	Babylonian cuneiform
Bird				
Fish				
Ox				
Sun/day				

When symbols are turned on their side (about 2800 BC), writing becomes “cuneiform”

CUNEIFORM SIGNS

Sumerian transliteration	Sumerian meaning	Sumerian	Old Babylonian	Neo-Assyrian
DINGIR	god			
NAG	drink			
TUR	animal pen			
DUB	tablet			
IZI	fire			
ANŠE	donkey			
GU	ox			
ŠUR	angry			
GIŠIMMAR	date palm			
KUR	mountain			
MUŠ	serpent			
ŠA	heart			
GE	black			
KI	land			
KU	fish			

Origins of Writing

Mesopotamian Cuneiform
3200 B.C. TO A.D. 75



Egyptian Hieroglyphs
CIRCA 3200 B.C. TO A.D. 394



In 1822 Egyptologist Jean-François Champollion deciphered hieroglyphs using the Rosetta stone.

Greek	Demotic	Hieroglyphs
Α	Ϡ Ϟ ϟ	𐀀 𐀁 𐀂 𐀃
Μ	Ϡ Ϟ ϟ	𐀄 𐀅 𐀆 𐀇
Ν	Ϡ Ϟ ϟ	𐀈 𐀉 𐀊 𐀋 𐀌 𐀍 𐀎 𐀏 𐀐 𐀑
Ξ	Ϡ Ϟ ϟ	𐀒 𐀓 𐀔 𐀕
ο	Ϡ Ϟ ϟ	𐀖 𐀗 𐀘 𐀙 𐀚 𐀛 𐀜 𐀝

Chinese Logograms
1200 B.C. TO PRESENT



Indus Valley
2800 TO 1900 B.C.



Harappan writing:



Levantine Alphabets
1050 B.C. TO PRESENT



Phoenician "A" (𐤀) → Hebrew "A" (א) → Greek "A" (Α) → Arabic "A" (أ)

Maya Hieroglyphs
A.D. 250 TO 900

The Maya wrote dates in symbolic figures. On a stone lintel a monkey representing a day holds a head denoting the number 6 above a skull standing for 10, a gnawing 15 days.



Adapted from National Geographic

What the Sumerians knew

- Writing



Palace of Tiglath-pilese, Nimrud (730-727 BC)
British Museum

What the Sumerians knew

- **Writing**
 - **Counting system based on 12**

What the Sumerians knew

- Literature
 - Poetry, music and dance originated as collective expression of religious themes during rituals
 - The dance rhythm (clapping, stomping, chanting) evolved into rhythmic songs and rhymed poetry
 - Religious narratives (creation myths) evolved into epic poetry
 - Epic of Gilgamesh (2,600 BC): vain quest for immortality
 - Kings' List (2125 BC)
 - Enheduanna: poetry
 - The meaning became more important than the sound/rhythm

What the Sumerians knew

- Literature
 - Sumerian not spoken anymore in 18th century BC, but scribes still use it till the 6th c BC
 - Cuneiform still in use till 2nd century AD

What the Sumerians knew

- **Social organization**
 - Irrigated agriculture requires intensive labor and cooperation
 - Irrigated agriculture yields surpluses that can be stored, traded and taxed
 - Surpluses free a percentage of the population that can work on irrigation systems, towns, temples, palaces
 - The freeing of part of the population enables the rise of craftsmen, merchants, priests, politicians

What the Sumerians knew

- **Warfare**
 - **The great variability of the climate causes variability in surpluses**
 - **Surpluses attract neighbors and require defenses**
 - **Deficits encourage attacks against neighbors**
 - **Shifting resources cause shifting political alliances and conflicts**

What the Sumerians knew

- Trade
 - Gold from Indus valley
 - Lapis lazuli from Afghanistan
 - Silver from Anatolia
 - Copper from Arabia
 - Tin from Caspian Sea

What the Sumerians knew

- **Theocracy (4000-3000 BC)**
 - Irrigation requires cooperation because river beds tend to change
 - Changing river beds cause expanded irrigation
 - Expanding irrigation causes expanding settlements
 - The whims of rivers are ascribed to gods
 - Thus priests are natural arbiters of the community
 - Religious cults acquire political power
 - Priests are natural arbiters of the economic surplus
 - Temples become administration buildings
 - Religious cults acquire economic power
 - The irrigation society naturally creates cities, and such city-states are theocracies

What the Sumerians knew

- **Monogamy**
 - **Esther Boserup: Irrigated agriculture lowers the value of female agricultural labor (monogamy and dowry instead of polygyny and bride-purchase of sub-Saharan Africa, where female agricultural labor is essential)**

What the Sumerians knew

- **Warrior leaders (3000-2300 BC)**
 - **Territorial expansion leads to territorial disputes with other city-states**
 - **Wealth attracts immigrants (eg, Akkadians)**
 - **War becomes more relevant than administration**
 - **Priests are replaced by warriors**
 - **Cities are surrounded by walls**

What the Sumerians knew

- The Standard of Ur



(British Museum)



Soldiers leading
prisoners of war
to their king

WAR

Wheeled
vechicles

Banquet: the king
(seated at the left),
servants, harpist,
singers

Commoners bringing
gifts to the king

PEACE



Standard of Ur, 2700 BC (British Museum)

Sumerian Chariot



Copper sculpture, 2500 BC
(mainly used for transportation, not warfare)

What the Sumerians knew

- **Metalwork**
 - **Ancient metal technology: copper**
 - **Chalcolithic age (4000BC): stone and copper technology coexist**
 - **Melting of metals (3500BC): copper+tin=bronze**
 - **Peak of bronze age (3000BC): smelting, casting, alloying, soldering**
 - **Bronze warfare: Sargon, first emperor (2340BC)**

What the Sumerians knew

- Gold jewelry



Hairdresser/diadem



Poison vessel?

Tomb of Queen Puabi at the Royal cemetery of Ur (2600BC?)

The tomb contains the bodies of six men (guards?) and 68 women (court ladies?)

perhaps chosen to accompany the queen to the after life.

What the Sumerians knew



Royal game of Ur (2600 BC)

What the Sumerians knew

- **Mathematics**
 - **Sumerians employ mathematics on base 60 (360 degrees in a circle. 60 minutes in an hour)**

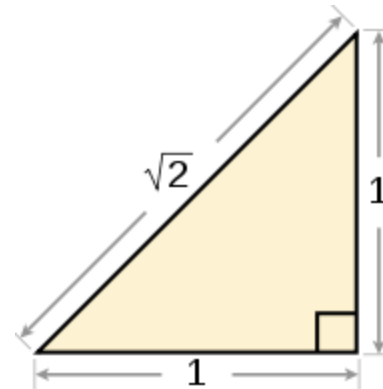


The Babylonian mathematical tablet Plimpton 322

What the Sumerians knew

The [Babylonian](#) clay tablet YBC 7289 (c. 1800–1600 BCE) gives an approximation of $\sqrt{2}$ in four [sexagesimal](#) figures, which is about six [decimal](#) figures.^[2]

$$1 + \frac{24}{60} + \frac{51}{60^2} + \frac{10}{60^3} = 1.41421\overline{296}.$$



What the Sumerians knew

- **Religion**
 - A religion for this life, not for the afterlife
 - Anthropomorphic gods, associated with the forces of nature (wind, months)
 - Deification of kings
 - Hierarchical vision of the universe (unified pantheon)
 - Each city was the property of a deity

What the Sumerians knew

- Religion
 - The goddess Nammu, who had no beginning in time, created the world and all living creatures
 - 2500 BC: Enlil, dwelling in Nippur, becomes the greatest of the gods, and the god who punishes people



What the Sumerians knew

- Religion



Mesopotamia: goddess 6-7,000 BC
(Metropolitan Museum)

What the Sumerians knew

- **Evolution of Religion/I**
 - **Evolution from alien forces to the human society**
 - **Ancient times: a nature religion of spirits/forces (sky, wind, river, etc)**
 - **Identity between the natural phenomenon and the deity**
 - **Non-human forms are then replaced by human forms**
 - **This creates a gap between the natural phenomenon (a lifeless event/object) and the deity (the force that causes/creates that event/object)**

What the Sumerians knew

- **Evolution of Religion/II**
 - **Human-like deities begin to behave like human beings**
 - **The world of natural phenomena becomes a model of the human world**
 - **The legends of deities become metaphors of natural phenomena**
 - **Deities become as a kind of aristocracy, humans become a kind of servants**
 - **Deities come to be worshipped like aristocracy, in abodes (temples) with servants (priests) and household chores (rituals)**

What the Sumerians knew

- **Evolution of Religion/III**
 - Deities come to be identified with the political leaders of the community/city/nation
 - Each city come to be dominated by a deity, and cities often grow around the main temple
 - The main deity of a city becomes a virtual ruler of the city, defending it against enemies and enforcing justice within the city (deity no longer related to natural phenomena but to human phenomena, i.e. politics)

What the Sumerians knew

- **Evolution of Religion/IV**
 - **National deities representing national aspirations**
 - **Assembly of the deities in Nippur, presided by An and Enlil, made strategic decisions (eg, capital) for the entire Sumer nation**
 - **Will of the deities communicated to the human rules via dreams, omens, natural events**

What the Sumerians knew

- **Pantheon**
 - **Anu: god of the sky, head of pantheon**
 - **Enlil: god of the wind, leader of the divine assembly (Nippur)**
 - **Ninhursaga, goddess of birth (Kesh)**
 - **Enki/Ea: god of irrigation waters (Eridu)**
 - **Nanna: god of the Moon (Ur)**
 - **Marduk: god of Babylon (2nd millennium), replacing Enlil as main god**
 - **Assur: god of Assyria (2nd millennium)**
 - **Ishtar/Inanna: god of planet Venus (2nd millennium)**
 - **Shamash: the Sun god (2nd millennium)**

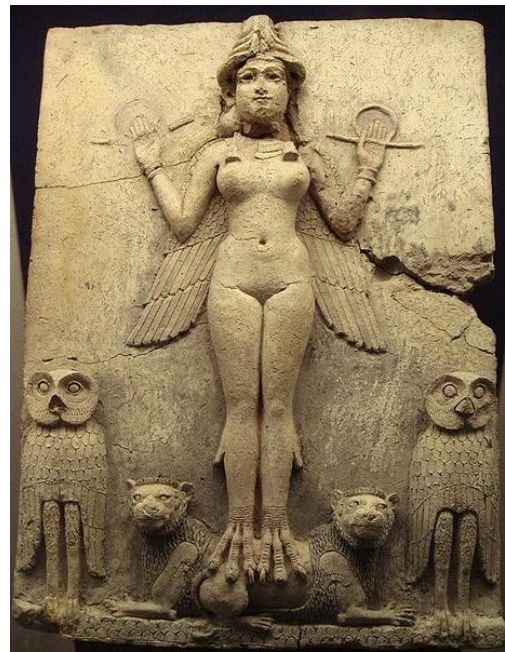
What the Sumerians knew

- Pantheon

- Anu

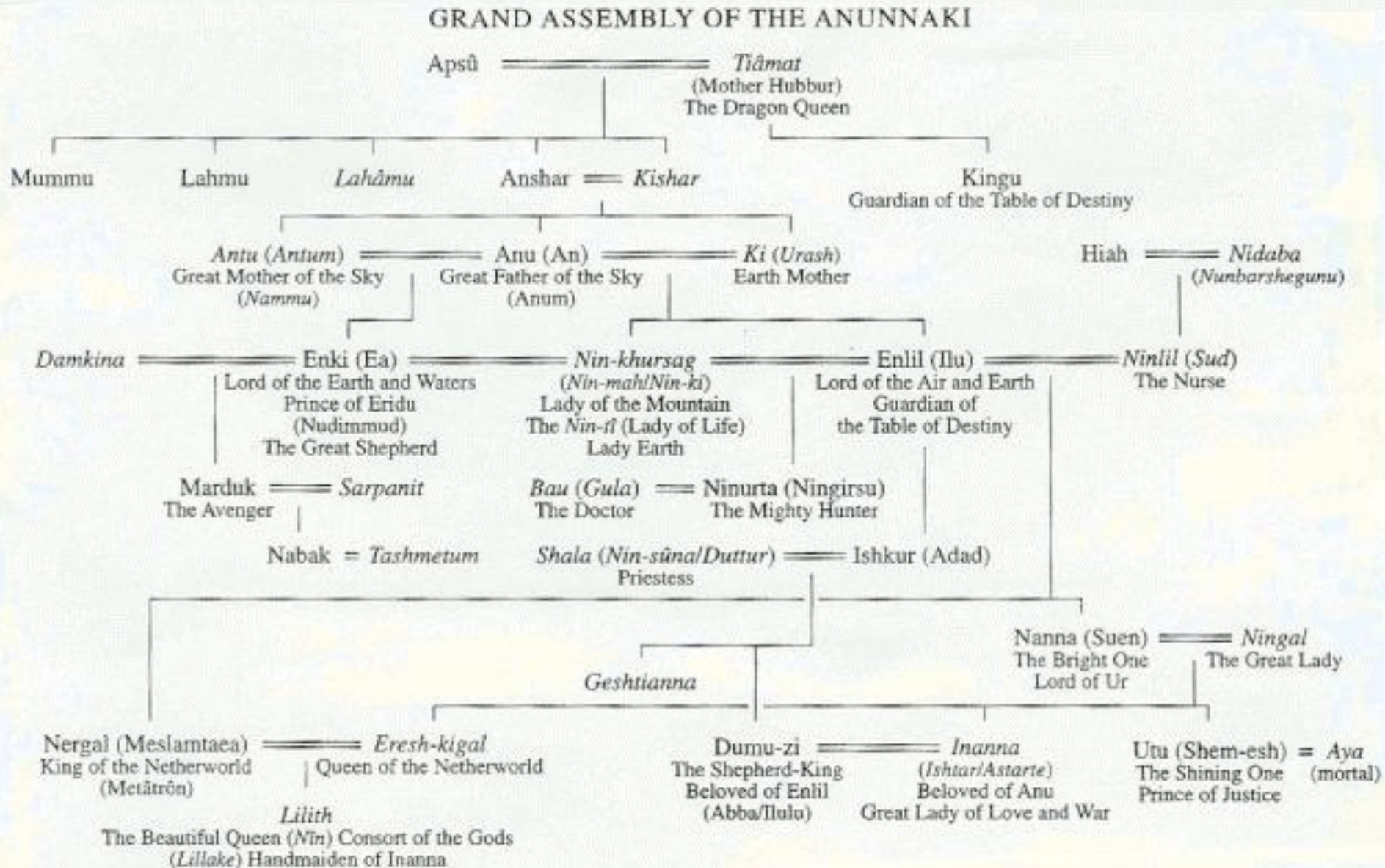


- Ishtar



The Burney Relief 62
(1800 BC - British Museum)

What the Sumerians knew



What the Sumerians knew

- Pantheon: supreme deity
 - Anu, the sky god (leading deity before 3,000BC)
 - Enlil, god of the winds/storms (leading deity in the 3rd millennium)
 - Marduk (leading deity after 2000 BC)
 - Ashur



Women in Mesopotamia

- **Mother goddess**
 - The young male god dies annually and has to be rescued by the old mother goddess every year
 - Sumeria: Inanna and Dumuzi
 - Later: Descent of Ishtar to the underworld to “resurrect” Tammuz
 - Inanna/Ishtar = source of regeneration
 - Tammuz/Dumuzi (husband of Ishtar) = agent of the regeneration
 - This event brings about the revival of life in nature (and, later, in humankind)



Women in Mesopotamia

- **Temple of the goddess Bau: Lagash, 2350 B.C.**
 - The temple was run by chief priestess Shagshag
 - 1000 persons employed year round
 - Her domestic staff consisted of:
 - 150 slave women: spinners, woolworkers, brewers, millers, and kitchen workers
 - One female singer, several musicians
 - 6 women who ground grain for feeding pigs
 - 15 cooks
 - 27 other slaves doing menial work
 - Brewery: 40 men and 6 females
 - One wet nurse, one nursemaid
 - One hairdresser



What the Sumerians knew

- Creation myth (“Eridu Genesis”)
 - Nammu: the Mother who gave birth to Heaven (An) and Earth (Ki, later Ninhursag)
 - All the gods are sons of An and his wife Ki
 - Enki, son of An and Ki, created the world
 - **The gods** created humankind and the Sumer cities
 - Humanity was created to serve the gods
 - The gods lived in **the Eden** (Bahrein island?)
 - Enki ate a forbidden plant and was cursed by his mother who cursed his rib which was cured by the goddess of life Nin-ti
 - Enlil, the god of the storm, caused **the Flood**

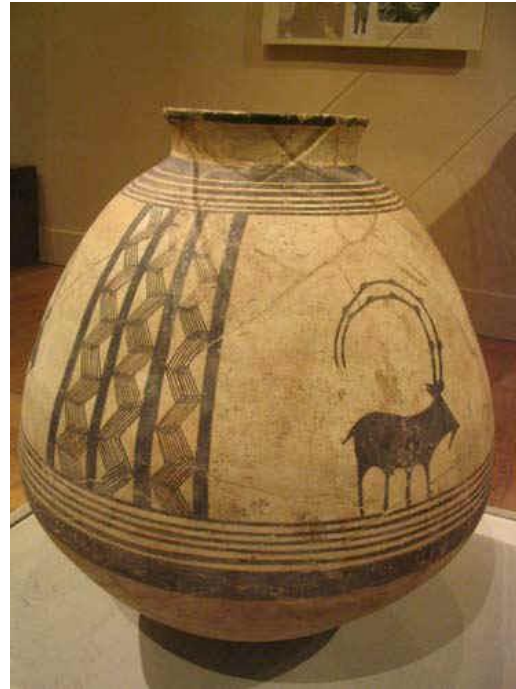
What the Sumerians knew

- **Cult of the Dead**
 - No cult of the dead
 - Main architecture is the temple and the palace, not the tomb
- **Problem of evil**
 - No concern for evil
- **Afterlife**
 - Indifference towards immortality

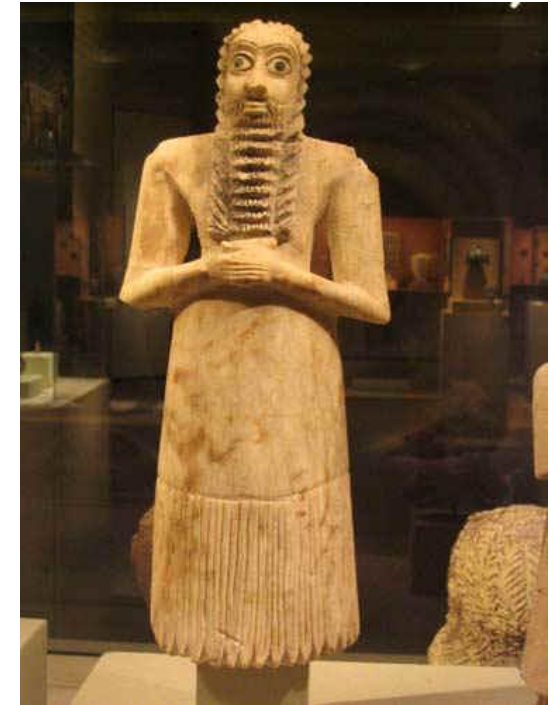
What the Sumerians knew



Uruk 3100 BC



Ceramic jar 3200 BC
from Iran



Standing male worshipping,
from temple of Abu
at Eshnunna

What the Sumerians knew



- The meaning of life
 - Top: Man delivering offerings to goddess Inanna (Ishtar)
 - Middle: Men carrying offerings
 - Bottom: Sheep, crop, water

(Warka vase, 3500 BC, Baghdad Museum)

What the Sumerians knew

- **2334 BC: Sargon of Kish unifies Akkadians and Sumerians**

What the Sumerians knew

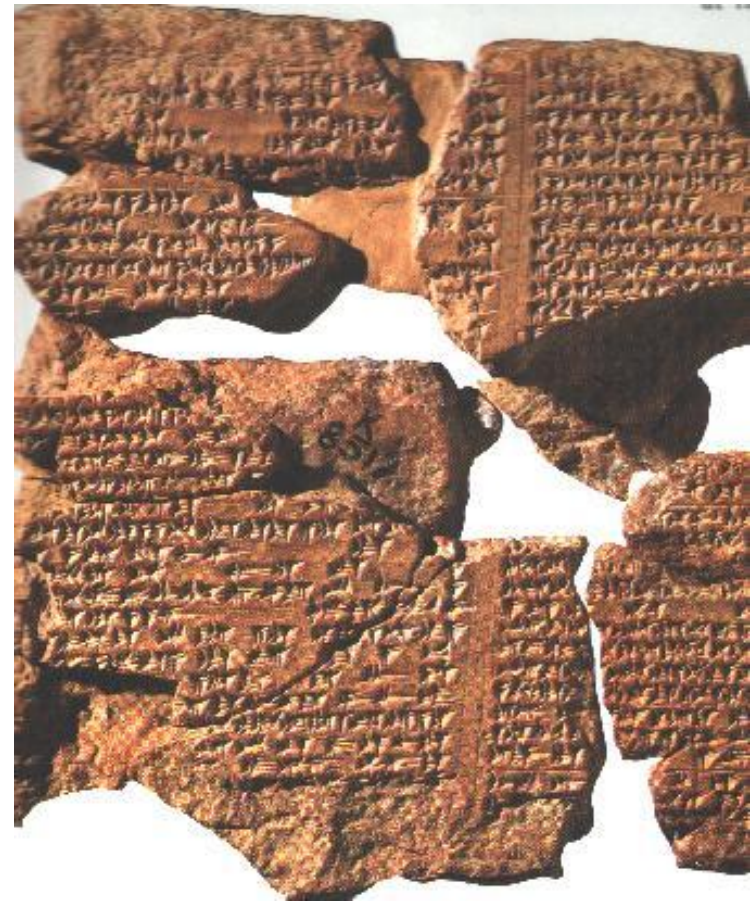
- **Royal tombs of Ur (2230 BC)**
 - **Exception in Mesopotamia**
 - **The whole entourage buried with the king (maids, guards, court ladies)**

Gilgamesh

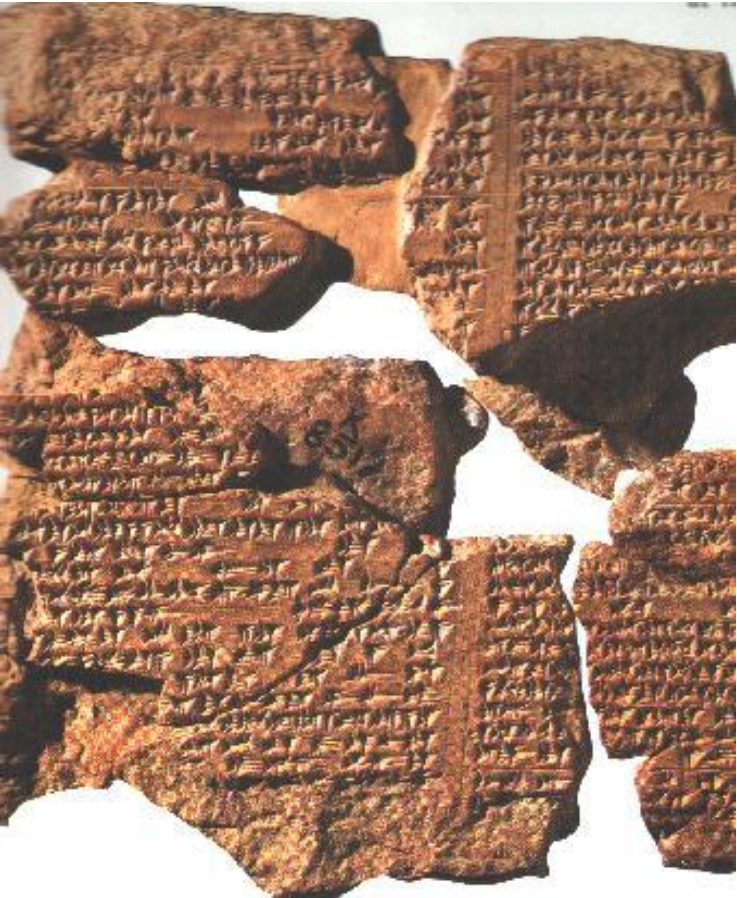
- King of Uruk (2300BC)
- Leads a military expedition to a distant place to find cedar wood
- Quest for immortality



Gilgamesh from palace of Sargon II, 721-705 BC (Louvre, Paris)



Gilgamesh



Upper-left portion
of clay tablet

Two columns in Akkadian language,
written in cuneiform script

Originally three
columns of text
on each side

15.2cm

Column 1:
Hero relates
dreams to
mother

Column 2:
Female character
takes man to
shepherd's camp

Column 5:
Description of a city and
its beautiful women

12.7cm



(Baghdad Museum)

Gilgamesh

- **Tablet 1**

"The one who saw all ...

He saw the great *Mystery*, he knew the *Hidden*:

He recovered the knowledge of all the times before the
Flood.

He journeyed beyond the distant, he journeyed beyond
exhaustion..."

Gilgamesh is two-thirds god and one-third human.

He is the most powerful king that ever existed, but is a brutal
dictator.

The people of Uruk ask god Anu for help.

Anu sends a powerful savage, Enkidu,

He has sex with one of the sacred prostitutes of the temple
and suddenly becomes civilized and knowledgeable.

Gilgamesh dreams that a meteor falls to Earth which is so great
that not even Gilgamesh can lift it.

Gilgamesh

- **Tablet 2**

Enkidu moves to the city. Enkidu briefly fights Gilgamesh over a woman but then they become friends. When Gilgamesh decides to leave on a journey and confront the demon Humbaba, Enkidu follows him to protect him.

- **Tablet 4**

Gilgamesh has several dreams, including a dream of the apocalypse:

**"The skies roared with thunder and the earth heaved,
Then came darkness and a stillness like death.**

**Lightening smashed the ground and fires blazed out;
Death flooded from the skies.**

**When the heat died and the fires went out,
The plains had turned to ash."**

Gilgamesh

- Tablet 5

Gilgamesh and Enkidu find and kill the demon.

- Tablet 6

The goddess Ishtar hears of the event and offers herself to Gilgamesh, but Gilgamesh despises her as a slut and a jinx. Ishtar then begs her father Anu to wreak vengeance on Gilgamesh and Uruk, threatening to

"...pull down the Gates of Hell itself,
Crush the doorposts and flatten the door,
And I will let the dead leave
And let the dead roam the earth
And they shall eat the living.
The dead will overwhelm all the living"

Gilgamesh

- Tablet 7

The gods condemn Enkidu to hell for helping G. kill Humbaba:

"The house where the dead dwell in total darkness,
Where they drink dirt and eat stone,
Where they wear feathers like birds,
Where no light ever invades their everlasting darkness,
Where the door and the lock of Hell is coated with thick dust.
When I entered the House of Dust,
On every side the crowns of kings were heaped,
On every side the voices of the kings who wore those crowns,
Who now only served food to the gods Anu and Enlil,
Candy, meat, and water poured from skins.
I saw sitting in this House of Dust a priest and a servant...
There sat Etana and Sumukan,
There sat Ereshkigal, the queen of Hell,
Beletseri, the scribe of Hell, sitting before her."

Gilgamesh

- **Tablet 9**
 - **Gilgamesh fears that the gods will now come after him, and decides to set out on a journey to find out the secret of immortality.**
 - **Utnapishtim and his wife are the only humans who are immortal: they are the only humans who survived the Flood and now live at the mouth of all rivers.**
 - **Gilgamesh sets out on a dangerous journey to visit Utnapishtim and acquire knowledge from him**

Gilgamesh

- **Tablet 11**
 - After many encounters (everybody telling him that his quest is futile), Gilgamesh meets Utnapishtim, who tells him the story of the Flood.
 - The Flood

Gilgamesh

- **Tablet 11/ The Flood**
 - **When the gods followed the suggestion of one of them (Enlil) and decided to punish the humans with the Flood, the goddess Ea warned Utnapishtim in time so that he could build an ark, gather all living beings and survive the Flood.**
 - **The Flood lasted for seven days and seven nights, and destroyed everything, but the gods felt remorse. The gods found Utnapishtim's ark on top of Mount Nimush, and Enlil in person granted him immortality and the right to live at the source of all the rivers.**

Gilgamesh

- Tablet 11/ The End
- Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh that he will become immortal if he too can stay awake for six days and seven nights, but Gilgamesh falls asleep and sleeps the whole time and when he wakes up he is condemned:
"What do I do now, where do I go now?
Death has devoured my body,
Death dwells in my body,
Wherever I go, wherever I look, there stands Death"
- Utnapishtim grants Gilgamesh only the secret to become young again. Gilgamesh does not trust him and brings back to Uruk the magic plant, but a snake eats the magic plant. Gilgamesh returns to Uruk and contemplates the city's splendour.

Kings List

- "After kingship had descended from heaven, Eridu became the seat of kingship. In Eridu Aululim reigned 28,800 years as king. Alalgar reigned 36,000 years. Two kings, reigned 64,800 years. Eridu was abandoned and its kingship was carried off to Bad-tabira. . . .
- Total: Five Cities, eight kings, reigned 241,200 years.
- The flood then swept over. After the Flood had swept over, and kingship had descended from heaven, Kish became the seat of Kingship. In Kish Total: twenty-three kings, reigned 24,510 years, 3 months, 3 1/2 days. Kish was defeated; its kingship was carried off to Eanna.

Kings List

- "In Eanna, Meskiaggasher, the son of (the sun god) Utu reigned as En (Priest) and Lugal (King) 324 years-- Meskiaggasher entered the sea, ascended the mountains. Enmerkar, the son of Meskiaggasher, the king of erech who had built Erech, reigned 420 years as king. Lugalbanda, the shepherd, reigned 1,200 years. Dumuzi the fisherman, whose city was Kua, reigned 100 years. Gilgamesh, whose father was a nomad (?) reigned 126 years. Urnungal, the son of Gilgamesh, reigned 30 years. Labasher reigned 9 years. Ennundaranna reigned 8 years. Meshede reigned 36 years. Melamanna reigned 6 years. Lugalkidul reigned 36 years.
- Total: twelve kings, reigned 2,130 years. Erech was defeated, its kingship was carried off to Ur...."

King List

- **Kings After the Flood**
 - **Dynasty of Kish: 23 kings ruled for 24,510 years (the first three all ruled 1,200 years, the second three ruled 960 years, the third three ruled 900 years)**
 - **Dynasty of Uruk: 12 kings ruled for 2,310 years**
 - **Dynasty of Ur: 4 kings ruled 171 years**
 - **Dynasty of Awan: 3 kings for 356 years**
 - **Kish 2: 8 kings for 3,195 years**
 - **Hamazi: 1 king for 360 years**
 - **Uruk 2: 3 kings for 187 years**
 - **Ur 2: 4 kings for 108 years**
 - **Adah: 1 king for 90 years**
 - **Mari: 6 kings for 136 years**
 - **Kish 3: 1 king for 100 years**

King List

- **Kings After the Flood**
 - **Akshak: 6 kings for 99 years**
 - **Kish 4: 7 kings for 491 years**
 - **Uruk 3: 1 king for 25 years**
 - **Akkad: 11 kings for 197 years**
 - **Uruk 4: 5 kings for 30 years**
 - **Gutian: 21 kings for 91 years**
 - **Uruk 5: 1 king for 7 years**
 - **Ur 3: 5 kings for 108 years**
 - **Isin: 14 kings for 203 years**

What the Sumerians knew

- Where is Eden?
 - Legend of a pure land that knew neither sickness nor death, that Enki, son of An/Anu and god of subterranean freshwaters, turned into a lush garden (cuneiform tablet from Nippur)
 - "A river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads" (Genesis)
 - Confluence (now at the **bottom of the Persian Gulf**) of Euphrates, Tigris, the Karum from Iran, and a dry riverbed in the Arabian desert?
 - Eden in Sumer: "uncultivated plain"
 - Adam in Sumer: "settlement on the plain"

The lost Syrian kingdoms

- Mari (2900-2480 BC), Ebla (2500-2000 BC), Ugarit (1500-1200 BC)



Mari

- Major kingdom of Syria from 2900 BC to 2480 BC
- Discovered in 1932
- Evidence of farming from 9,000 BC
- Urban center with monumental architecture, written records, and an administrative apparatus
- Conquered by Ebla around 2480 BC
- 20,000 tablets in cuneiform script
- 1900-1600 BC: Amorite kingdom of Mari

Mari

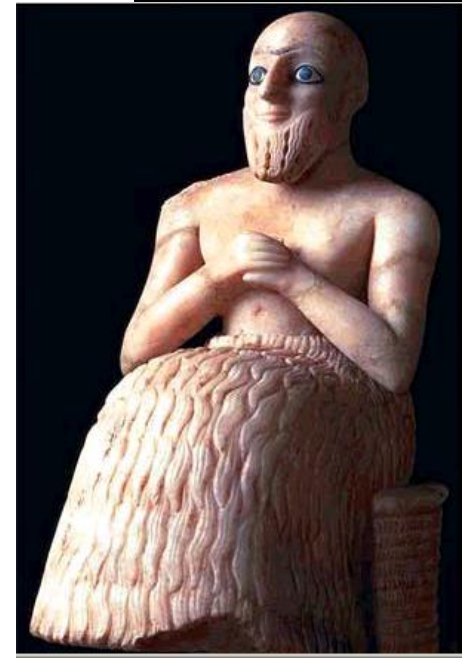


2400 BC (Damascus)



2500 BC
(Damascus)

2500 BC
(Louvre)



- **Major kingdom of Syria from 2500 BC to 1700 BC**

Royal palace of King Zimri-Lim (king from 1782 to 1759 BC)
(Louvre)



Ebla

- Major kingdom of Syria from 2500 BC to 2000 BC
- Discovered in 1975
- 10,000 tablets in cuneiform script
- Eblaite was a west Semitic language, possibly an early version of Canaanite
- Between 2500-2000 BC, Ebla's sphere of influence extended from the Orontes to , from Kanesh in Anatolia to northern Palestine, including Mari and Carchemish
- Trade in textiles, timber, copper, silver, lapislazuli
- Destroyed by Naram-Sin of Akkad around 2000 BC
- 2000-1600 BC: Amorite kingdom of Ebla

Libraries

- Ancient libraries:
 - Mari: 20,000 tablets
 - Ebla: 14,000 tablets
 - Libraries originally serve the ritualistic and propagandistic purposes of the temple

What the Sumerians Knew

- The urban world
 - By 3,000 BC Sumerians had domesticated most of the crop plants and livestock that would remain important for the world before the discovery of America
 - Domesticated animals create foods for humans out of what humans cannot eat: a cow eats the grass that we cannot eat but then gives us milk and eventually becomes meat.

What the Sumerians Knew

- The urban world
 - Problem with urbanization: garbage attracts diseases.
 - The transition from the small communities of hunters/gatherers to the large dense communities of city dwellers creates garbage.
 - Some animals become varmints: rats, flies, roaches, worms.

What the Sumerians Knew

- The urban world
 - Problem with domestication of animals: new kinds of diseases.
 - Humans share their home with the animals they domesticate.
 - The transition from the small communities of hunters/gatherers to the large dense communities of city dwellers creates new diseases.

What the Sumerians Knew

- The urban world
 - Problem with agriculture: food attracts pests.
 - Some animals become competitors.
 - Some plants become weeds.
 - Water attracts mosquitoes.
 - Invisible enemies spread: bacteria and viruses.
 - It's easier to defend a farm from foxes than to defend a home from viruses.
 - The transition from the small communities of hunters/gatherers to the large dense communities of cities helps infectious diseases spread.
 - Long-distance trade and military invasions further spread diseases

What the Sumerians Knew

- The urban world
 - Long-distance trade and military invasions further spread diseases.
 - Venereal diseases and airborne diseases become a major problem for humans.

What the Near-East knew

Piero Scaruffi

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