

Early River Civilizations

Vocabulary

- **City-State**: Political unit made up of a city and the surrounding lands. Each city state has its own government, even when it shares a culture with neighboring city states.
- **Dynasty**: Series of rulers from the same family.
- **Cultural Diffusion**: Idea or product spreading from one culture to another.
- **Polytheism**: Belief in many gods.

Overview of river valley civilizations

- The river valley civilizations develop from small farming villages.
- The civilizations create laws, centralized governments, writing systems, and advanced technologies.
- The process of trade spreads new ideas from one civilization to another.



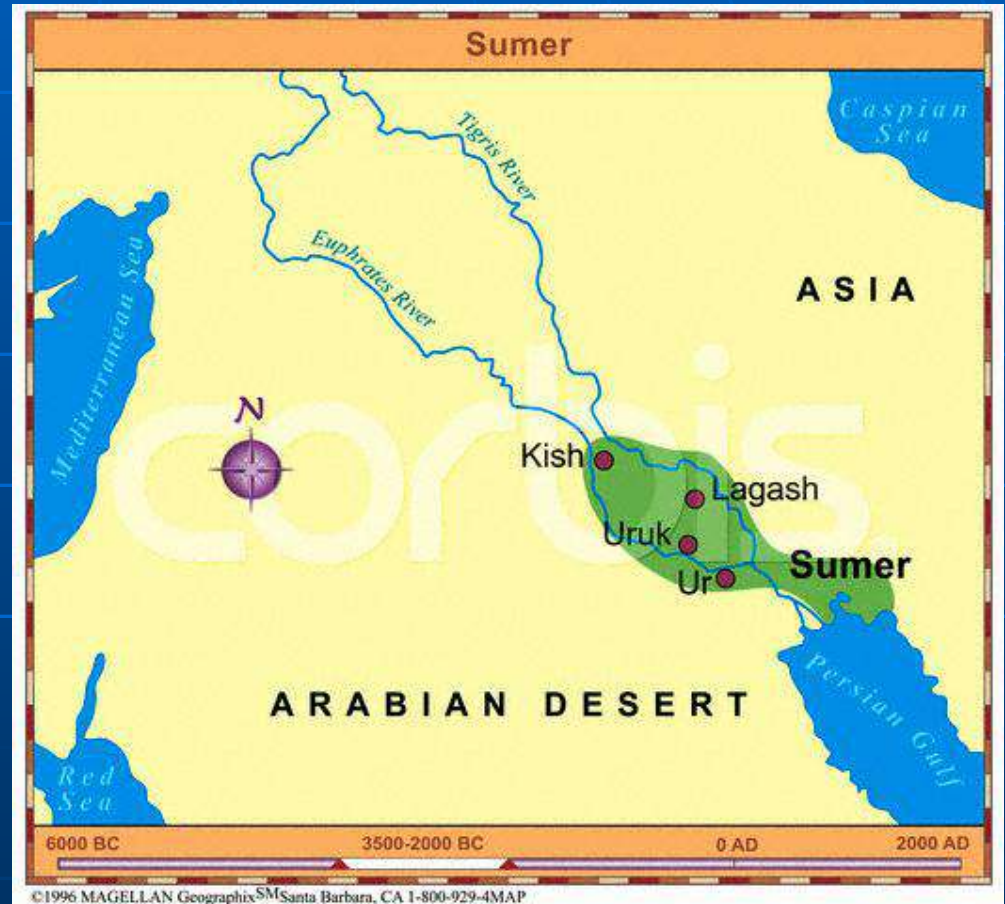
4 Early River Valley Civilizations

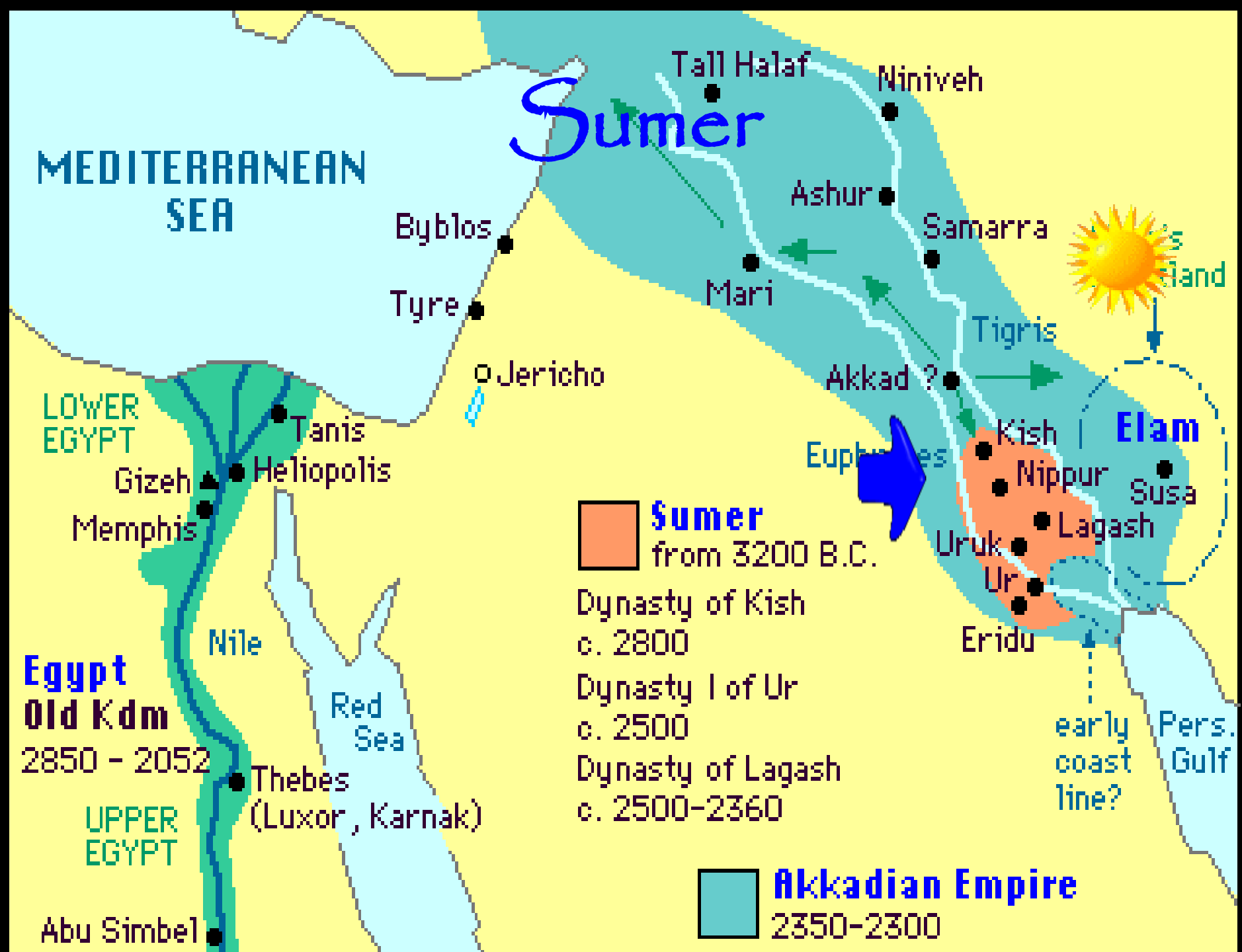


The Mesopotamian River Valley Civilization

Mesopotamia – Fertile Crescent

- Sumer – The Earliest of the River Valley Civilizations
- Sumerian Civilization grew up along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in what is now **Kuwait**.





An aerial photograph of the Tigris River. The river is a wide, light-brown channel flowing from the top right towards the bottom left. It is flanked by dense green vegetation. On the left bank, there is a small settlement with several white buildings and a dirt road. A large, oval-shaped island is situated in the middle of the river. On the right bank, there are more buildings and a road. The overall scene is a mix of natural greenery and human development.

Tigris River

Current times

Euphrates River – current times



Sumerians invented:

- Brick technology
- Wheel
- Base 60 – using the circle . . . 360 degrees
- Time – 60 minutes in an hour, 60 seconds in a minute
- 12 month lunar calendar
- arch
- ramp
- ziggurat

Sumerian Writing: cuneiform



<http://www.upennmuseum.com/cuneiform.cgi>

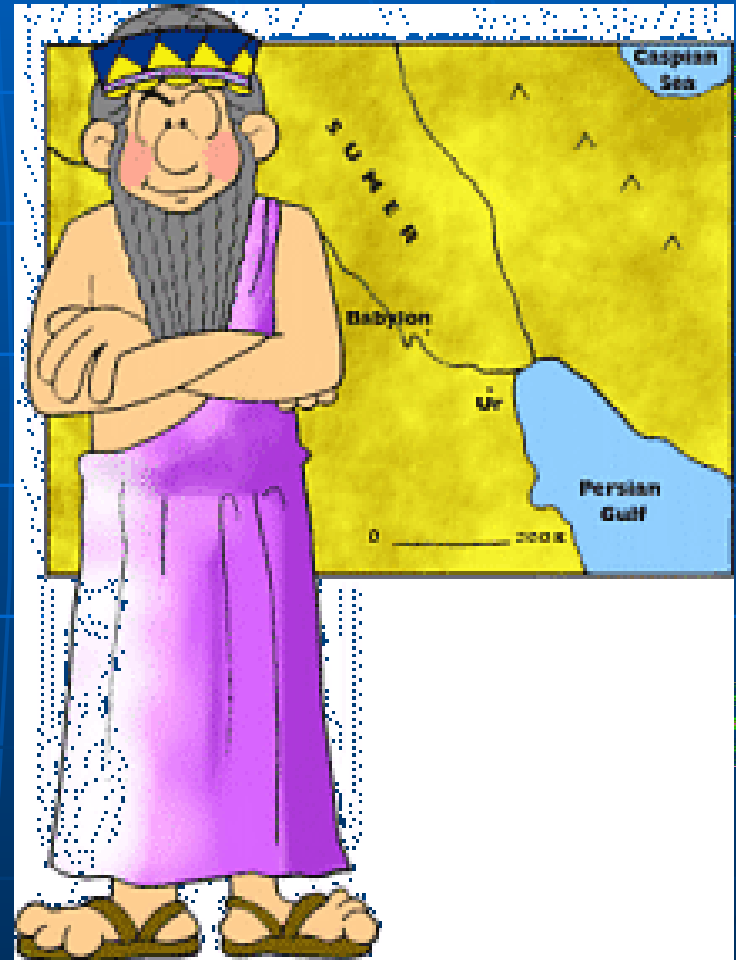
Cuneiform is created by pressing a pointed stylus into a clay tablet.

Ziggurat – Holy Mountain



Babylonians

■ Hammurabi's Code of Law

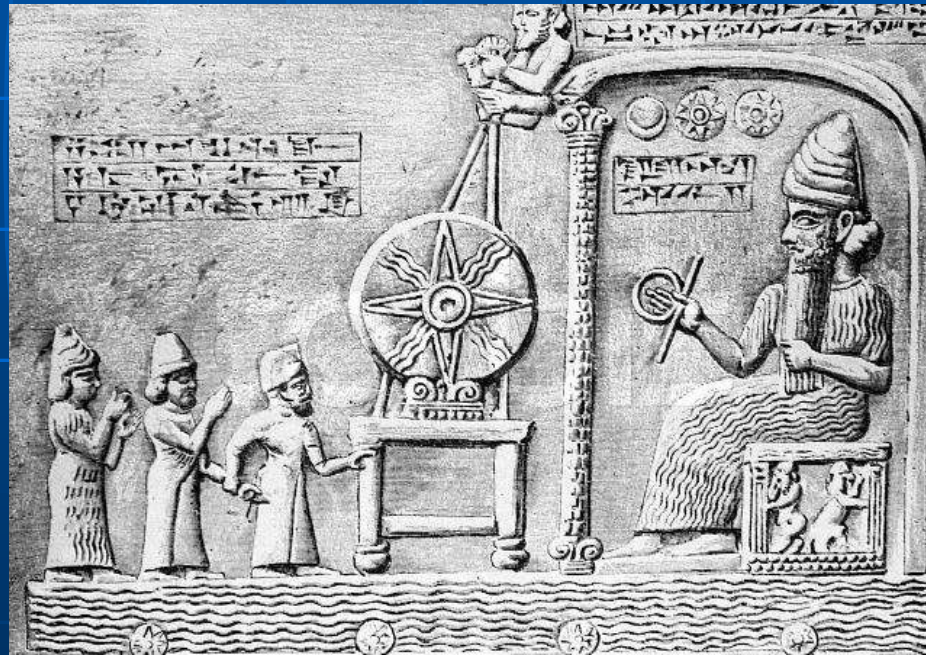


Hammurabi's Code

- History's first known written laws
- 300 laws
- An "eye for an eye"
- Punishments varied according to social status.



“If a man stole the property of church or state, that man shall be put to death; also the one who received the stolen goods from his hand shall be put to death.”



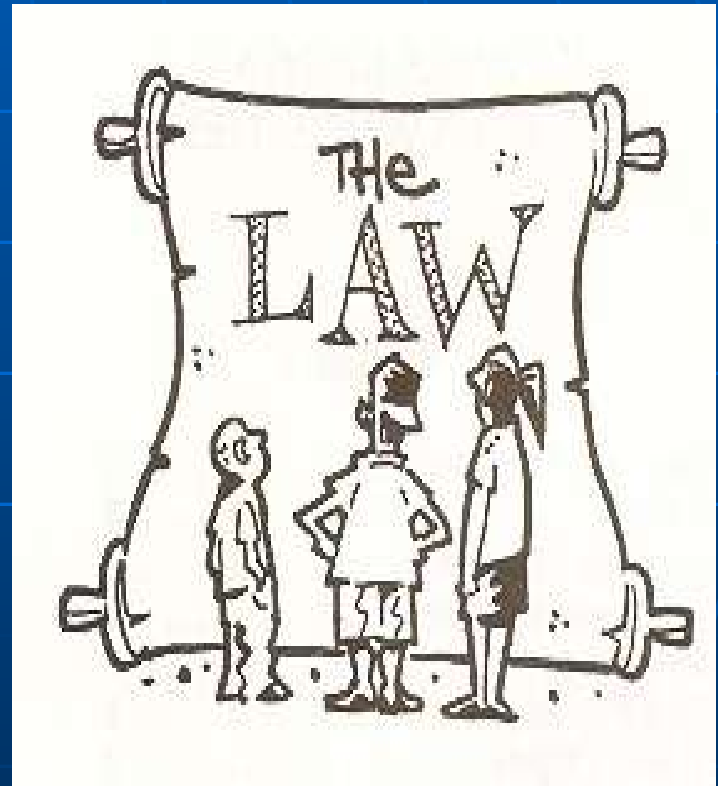
Political Impact of Hammurabi's Code

- First written code of laws,
 - It created a sense of order
 - Established a coherent “rule of law” which was independent of ethnic or tribal custom or even familial or monarchical whim.



Legal Impact of Hammurabi's code

- For the first time, the notion of a separate judiciary as part of the overall government
 - This is a modern hallmark of modern democratic governments the world over.



Egyptians invented:

- Hieroglyphics
- Pyramids
- Geometry
- Advances in medicine and surgery



Hieroglyphics

Early Egyptian writing found on tombs was indecipherable.

Hieroglyphics

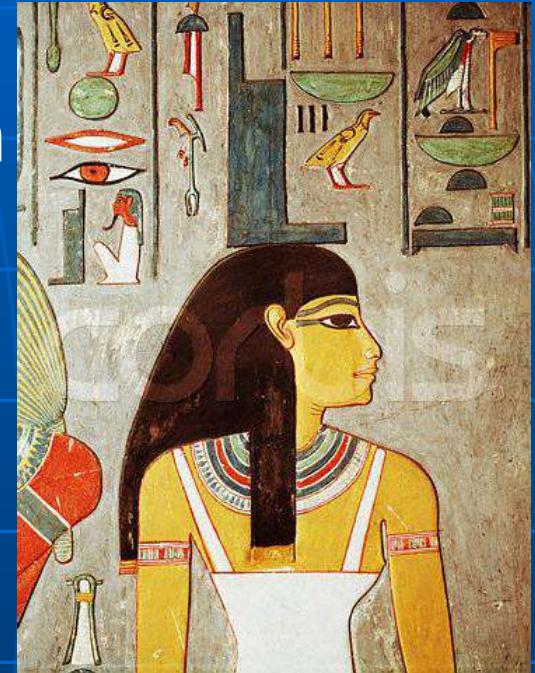


Sacred

Carving

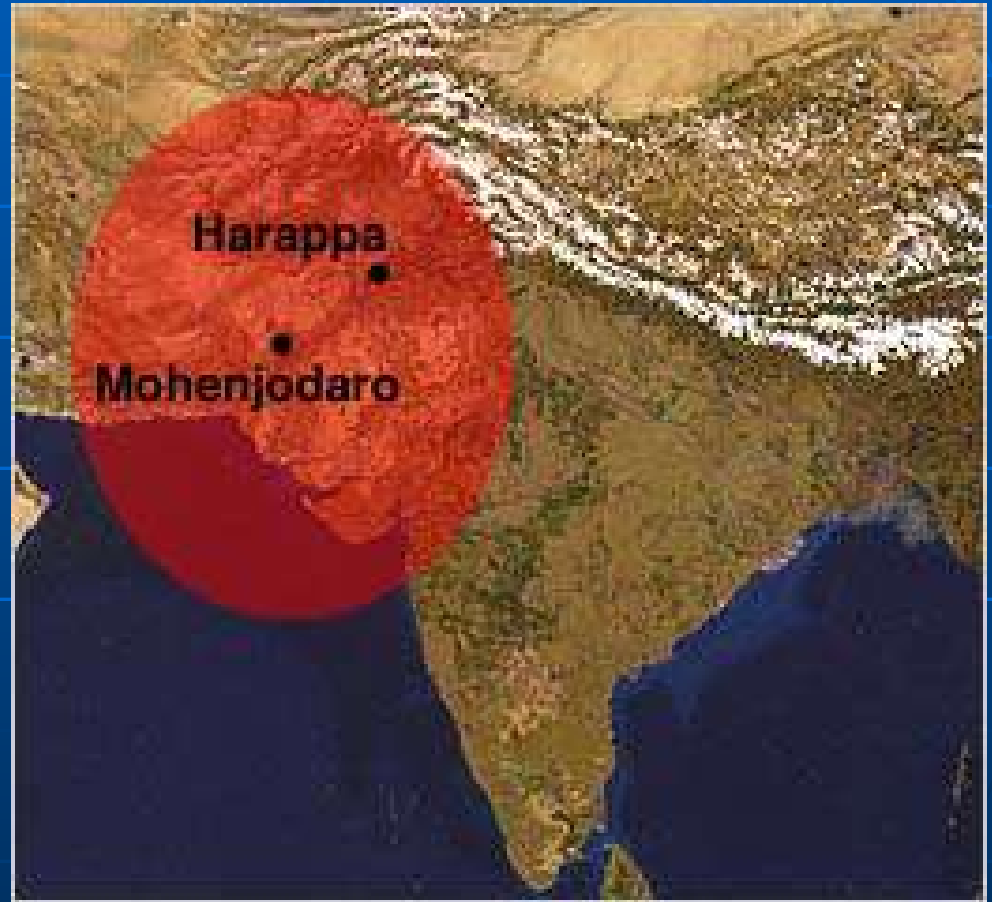
No one could read these sacred carvings until Napoleon invaded Egypt and his archaeologists found the **Rosetta Stone**.

<http://www.ancientegypt.co.uk/writing/rosetta.html>



Indus River Valley 2500 BC – 1500 BC

Around 2600 B.C. the various regional cultures were united in what is called the Indus Valley Civilization. It is also commonly referred to as the **Harappan** culture after the town of **Harappa** (where it was first discovered.)



Comparative Timeline



Excavations at the ancient Harappan and Mohenjo Daro mounds revealed well planned cities and towns built on massive **mud brick** platforms that protected the inhabitants against seasonal floods. In the larger cities the houses were built of baked brick while at smaller towns most houses were built of sun-dried mud brick. Each city is laid out in a **grid pattern** and shows signs of stunningly **modern plumbing systems**.

Much writing has been found at these sites, but it has not yet been translated.



Physical Geography

- Indian subcontinent extends southward from central Asia into the Indian Ocean.
- **North**→separated by the rest of Asia by mountain ranges (Himalayas)
 - Made it difficult for immigrants and invaders to enter India
 - Khyber Pass→one of the few paths that permitted people to cross the mountains into India
- Two Rivers→ Ganges River and Indus River
- **South**→high plateau called the Deccan
- **West**→Western Ghats mountain range
- **East**→ coastal plain faces the Bay of Bengal

Early Civilizations in the Indus River Valley

■ 2500 BC until 1500 BC

- Harappan Civilization
 - Two important cities: Harappa and Mohenjo Daro
 - Both of these cities are large and carefully planned.
 - Wide streets cross at right angles
 - Each city had a water system with public baths and brick sewers
 - Each city had a citadel (strong central fortress) built on a brick platform. They were also used storehouses for grain.
 - Long-range planning → store and distribution of crops may suggest crop-destroying floods or threat of invaders
 - Probably organized around a strong central government

Early Civilizations in the Indus River Valley (cont.)

- Rich farmlands surrounded these two cities
 - Grew cotton, wheat, barley, and rice
 - Raised cattle, sheep, pigs, and goats
 - Built canals and ditches to irrigate fields
 - Surplus crops were stored or used for trade
- Written language → pictographs
 - Scholars today still cannot read these

Early Civilizations in the Indus River Valley (cont.)

■ Religion→

- Probably worshipped a great god
- Used the bull, buffalo, and tiger in religious rituals
- Mother goddess→ fertility
- May have held religious ceremonies in their homes or in outdoor locations like sacred trees.
- We have not been able to find any temples, shrines, or religious writings

Early Civilizations in the Indus River Valley (cont.)

■ Why did this civilization disappear?

- Evidence → Several unburied skeletons are found along with homes and possessions being abandoned.
- Do not know for sure however there are some theories:
 - Floods could have destroyed this settlement or made it difficult to grow food.
 - Some evidence suggests possible violence from invading forces
 - Some evidence suggests a major earthquake in 1700 BC

Fertile Crescent Changes Hands

- This area was taken over numerous times due to its lack of natural barriers
- It was first taken over by the Hittites, then by the Assyrians
- After the Assyrians, came the Chaldeans

Assyrian Contributions

- Established many permanent roads to facilitate troop movement.
- Established the first postal system to facilitate communications.
- Hired many of its soldiers from foreign lands and paid them based on success (Mercenaries)





Chaldeans

- Famous for the Hanging Gardens
- Most famous King was Nebuchadnezzar
- Studied astronomy
- Conquered by the Persians

Phoenicians

- Prominent traders
- Seafarers
- Developed an alphabet that was passed on to the Greeks
- Famous for “purple”
- Absorbed into other cultures

I'm
hooked on
Phonics!



- The Phoenicians needed a way of recording transactions clearly and quickly.
- So they developed a writing system that used symbols to represent sounds.