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Babylon & Assyria

Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, was first settled by the Sumerians around 5000 BCE. At first, they were farmers, but around 3000, the Sumerians began to form large city-states along the two rivers. About 1,000 years after the Sumerians settled in Mesopotamia, two new civilizations arose. One was Babylon to the south. The other was Assyria in the north.

Assyria

The Assyrians built their first city on the banks of the Tigris River in modern-day Iraq. They named it Assur after their chief god. For hundreds of years, between 2400 to 612 BC, they fought with and conquered their neighbors. As they added land to their territory, expanding their empire from the Mediterranean Sea across Arabia and Armenia, Assyria became a rich and powerful empire in the Mesopotamian region.

The City of Nineveh

The Assyrian capital city was Nineveh, north of Babylon. The goddess Ishtar was the chief goddess of the city. Nineveh was one of the world's greatest cities in ancient times. The city walls stretched for 3 miles along the Tigris River.

Within the city, there were many beautiful buildings and temples, decorated with sculptures of huge demons to protect the city from evil spirits. Some have survived to this day. Researchers know a great deal about life in Assyria because they have discovered artifacts made by long-ago artisans, who carefully depicted scenes of battles, war heroes, and every day occurrences on painted ceramics.

The Assyrians were traders. Their donkey caravans were known throughout Mesopotamia. They carried cloth from Assyria and tin from beyond the Tigris and traded it in southern Turkey for gold, silver, and other metals.

Babylon

In approximately 1780 BCE, King Hammurabi established the city of Babylon as the political and commercial center of Mesopotamia. Marduk, the god of thunderstorms, was the chief god of Babylon. The massive city gates were designed with dragons and bulls in honor of Marduk.

Hammurabi brought stability to the region and had a very strict code of law written down. These laws applied to everyone in the kingdom. They were placed in public places so everyone would know what they were.



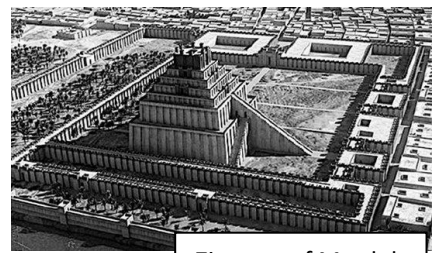
Code of Hammurabi

The courts of Babylon oversaw administering justice and making sure the Code of Hammurabi was followed. Each court had one to four judges. Punishment included capital punishment, mutilation, flogging, fines, and banishment.

Splendid City

The Babylonians were impressive builders. Ancient Greek historian Herodotus describes Babylon as the most splendid city in the known world. It was impressive for both its size and its beauty. Babylon's outer walls were 56 miles in length, 80 feet thick, and 320 feet high.

A 300-foot ziggurat (temple) loomed over the city. It was built in honor of the god Marduk and could be seen from miles away across the wide plain. During Hammurabi's reign, trade thrived. Babylonian trading caravans traveled far and wide.



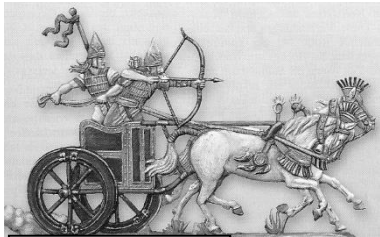
Ziggurat of Marduk

The Babylonians used lumps of silver for money and kept business records on cuneiform tablets. Many visitors traveled to Babylon to buy gold, jewelry, fruits and vegetables, clothing, date wine, and other goods, such as slaves.

Thousands of people lived inside the city. There were large inns for travelers, taverns for food and drink, and prisons for those who broke the law. There were skilled laborers, bankers, carpenters, rope makers, stone and brick masons, potters, and even sailors, who manned the boats on the rivers.

Fierce Warriors

The Assyrians had the most powerful army in Mesopotamia. They were the first to use iron-tipped spears and arrows. They made war chariots and protective armor. They



Assyrian Chariot

used battering rams to knock down the walls of the cities they attacked.

Around 1200 BC,

the Assyrians conquered Babylon and burned down the city. With their strong armies, they conquered and ruled the entire Mesopotamian region. Because of their cruel and unfair treatment of other peoples, they were despised (hated) throughout the region. They forced the Babylonians to move to other towns and cities throughout the Mesopotamian region. Then, fearful that the great god Marduk would be angry with them for destroying a city that had been dedicated to him, the Assyrians rebuilt Babylon.

By 900 BC, the Assyrian army dominated the entire region. The Assyrians continued to burn cities and torture their enemies. They earned a reputation for extreme cruelty among those they conquered and were despised (hated) by other people in the region. By 650 BC, the Assyrians had conquered a vast empire, stretching between the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, and the Caspian Sea.

Long Lost Empire

Great Assyrian kings include Sargon II, who ruled around 700 BC and Sennacherib, who ruled after Sargon II. Ashur-Bani-Pal

was king from 688 to 625 BCE. He assembled the first known library in Nineveh. More than 20,000 clay tablets have been found among its ruins.



King Sargon II

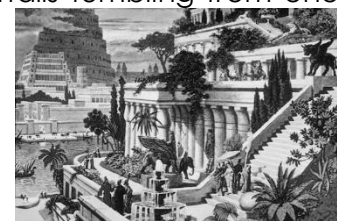
In addition to the clay tablets, archaeologists have also found artifacts that indicate the Assyrians believed in an afterlife. They buried their dead with the dead person's favorite possessions, such as weapons, drinking cups, and other small personal items. An oil lamp was kept burning near or at the gravesite, perhaps to light the way between worlds for the deceased.

Destroyed and Restored

In 612 BC, a desert tribe known as the Chaldeans formed an alliance with the Medes to overthrow the Assyrians, bringing their empire to an end. The Chaldean king Nebuchadnezzar restored the city of Babylon to its former glory. He reigned for 43 years.

Nebuchadnezzar built the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world. It was an engineering marvel, built like a stadium with garden terraces and waterfalls tumbling from one level to the next.

Nebuchadnezzar also had the massive ziggurat dedicated to Marduk rebuilt.



Hanging Gardens of Babylon

The Babylonians studied the moon, the sun, and the stars. They came up with the idea of seven days in a week, naming one day for the sun, one for the moon, and the other five for the planets they knew about. King Nabonidus was the last ruler of Babylon before it was conquered by Cyrus the Great, the king of Persia, in 539 BC.

Babylon Crossword Puzzle

Across

5. burnt to the ground by this group
6. Hammurabi's code was put in _____ places so everyone knew it.
8. business records kept with this type of writing
9. manned the boats on rivers
10. Hammurabi had a very strict code of _____
12. King who rebuilt Babylon
14. joined together with the Medes to overthrow the Assyrians
15. 7 days of the _____

Down

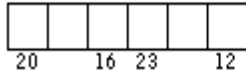
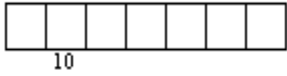
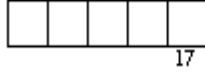
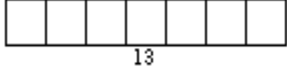
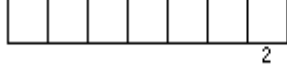
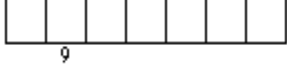
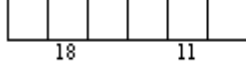
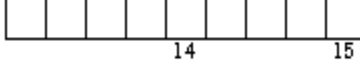
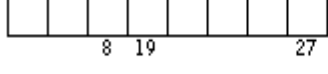
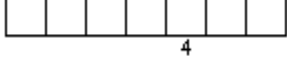
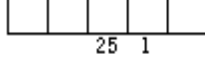
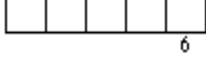
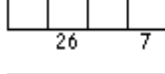
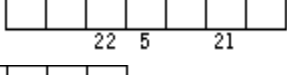
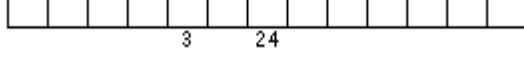
1. King who created the city
2. civilization south of Sumer
3. One of the 7 wonders of the world
4. built a giant _____ around the city-state
6. Babylon eventually conquered by _____
7. One punishment (means beating) in Hammurabi's code
11. chief god of Babylon
13. 300 feet tall and in the center of Babylon

The crossword puzzle grid consists of 15 numbered starting points for clues. The grid is partially filled with black squares. Clue 1 is a 10-letter word starting at (1,1). Clue 2 is a 10-letter word starting at (8,1). Clue 3 is a 6-letter word starting at (9,4). Clue 4 is a 3-letter word starting at (10,3). Clue 5 is a 7-letter word starting at (5,4). Clue 6 is a 4-letter word starting at (6,3). Clue 7 is a 10-letter word starting at (12,4). Clue 8 is a 10-letter word starting at (8,1). Clue 9 is a 6-letter word starting at (9,4). Clue 10 is a 3-letter word starting at (10,3). Clue 11 is a 1-letter word starting at (11,6). Clue 12 is a 10-letter word starting at (12,4). Clue 13 is a 4-letter word starting at (13,7). Clue 14 is a 10-letter word starting at (14,1). Clue 15 is a 4-letter word starting at (15,5).

Assyria Word Scramble

Directions: Unscramble the letters for each correct answer. Then fill in the numbered boxes at the bottom with the correct letters to discover the hidden message.

- SIRGIT 1. built their first city on the banks of this river
- RUSSA 2. first city in Assyria
- VHNEINE 3. capital of Assyria
- ONDSME 4. many sculptures decorated with huge _____ for protection
- MACCISRE 5. We know a lot about life in Assyria because of discovered scenes of battles and daily life painted on this
- COLHT 6. traded this for gold and silver
- YRMA 7. had the most powerful _____ in Mesopotamia!
- NIGTASRERBAMT 8. used these to knock down walls of cities they attacked
- BOABYLN 9. In 1200 BC the Assyrians burned this city to the ground
- LYECUTR 10. earned a reputation for extreme _____ with lands they conquered
- BAYLIRR 11. King Ashur-Bani-Pal built the first _____ in Nineveh
- FEELARFIT 12. artifacts show that the Assyrians believed in this
- MOLLIPA 13. kept near Assyrian's gravesites to light the way between worlds for dead
- ESDME 14. This group helped the Chaldeans overthrow the empire
- PASIERN 15. In the end, all of Mesopotamia became part of this empire

1. 	9. 
2. 	10. 
3. 	11. 
4. 	12. 
5. 	13. 
6. 	14. 
7. 	15. 
8. 	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	W	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	W	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
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