

THE HUMANITIES: The Ancient World and the Classical Past

Chapter 2 – MESOPOTAMIA: Power and Social Order in the Early Middle East

Why did cities such as Ur become hubs of great trading networks? Besides goods, what else was exchanged?

What new cultural force came to define Mesopotamia? How did this impact the region's social organization?

What connection did the priest-kings have to the arts?

What was perhaps the greatest innovation of the Bronze Age? What led to its creation?

What were ziggurats meant to evoke? Why would visitors leave a statue representing themselves?

According to the Mesopotamians, what was the connection between human society and the universe? What role did the priest-king play in this arrangement?

What is the significance of the Royal Standard of Ur? How are the two main panels labeled? How is social perspective or hierarchy of scale expressed in the Royal Standard?

Whose "rags to riches" story gave rise to a narrative genre that survives to today?

Identify the metallurgical art form the Akkadians mastered? What did this process allow sculptors to create?

What sets the Law Code of Hammurabi apart from other legal codes? What is the principle of talion? How were women considered according to Hammurabi's code? Identify the consequences of the Code.

What technological advance allowed the Assyrians to become the militant civilization of ancient Mesopotamia? How did Assyrian kings represent their might and power?

Why are epics significant when studying a culture? Who is the subject of this epic? Who is Enkidu?

How is their relationship an example of the classic struggle between nature and civilization?

Why is this epic considered an important first in literature?

How were the Hebrews different from other Near Eastern cultures? What is meant by their being the "chosen people"? How are Hebraic and Mesopotamian laws different? What led to this difference?

What role did the Hebrew prophets play in the era following Solomon's death?

Who was Zoroaster? What was perhaps his greatest contribution to religious thought?

What was the key difference between the Mesopotamian and Egyptian cultures?

Vocabulary:

composite

hierarchy of scale

pictogram

cuneiform

metallurgy

social perspective

epic

narrative genre

synoptic

epithet

phonetic writing

ziggurat