



INTRODUCTION

- land between two rivers Euphrates and Tigris
 - 'Mesos', meaning 'middle', and 'potamos', meaning 'river'.
- known for its prosperity, city life, literature, mathematics & astronomy
- writing system and literature spread to the eastern Mediterranean, northern Syria, and Turkey
- Mesopotamia date back to the bronze age, 3000 BCE

HISTORY

- Sumer > Akkad (2400) > Babylonia (2000) > Assyria (1100)
- first known language of the land was Sumerian.
- From 1400 BCE, Aramaic also trickled in.

GEOGRAPHY

- NORTH
 - stretch of upland called steppe
 - animal herding offered a better livelihood than agriculture
- SOUTH
 - desert
 - first cities and writing emerged
 - rivers Euphrates & Tigris carry loads of silt
 - fish was available in rivers & date-palms gave fruit in summer
- EAST
 - tributaries of the Tigris provide routes of communication
 - undulating plains, gradually rising to tree-covered mountain ranges.
 - north-eastern plains & mountain slopes produced meat, milk and wool in abundance
- WEST
 - mediterranean region

SOCIAL LIFE

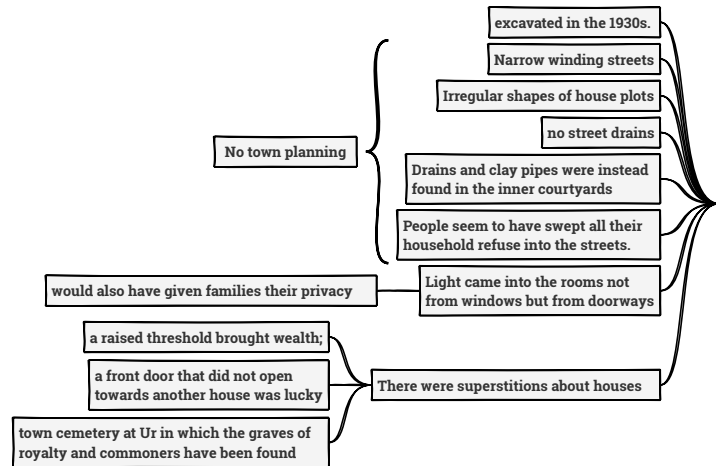
- small section of society had a major share of the wealth
 - white shell and lapis lazuli, ceremonial daggers of gold, buried with kings and queens at Ur
- nuclear family
- father was the head of the family
- marriage
 - A declaration was made about the willingness to marry
 - , gifts were exchanged by both parties.
 - bride was given her share of the inheritance
 - married son and his family often resided with his parents.

In spite of natural fertility, agriculture was subjected to hazards.

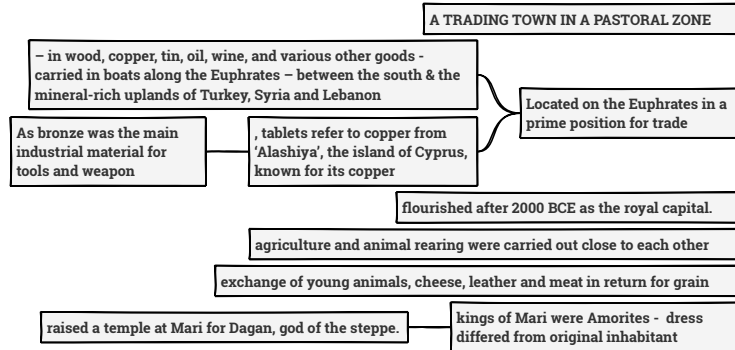
- natural channels of the Euphrates would have too much water few years and would flood crops
 - villages were periodically relocated
- Those who lived on the upstream stretches could divert so much water into their fields that villages downstream were left without water



UR



MARI



Cities and towns were not just places with large populations.

The division of labour was a mark of urban life.

TEMPLE TOWN: URUK

