
Sumer And The Sumerians

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Sumer and the Sumerians *Cambridge University Press*

This work reviews the social and technological developments in Mesopotamia from 3800 to 2000 BC.

Sumer and the Sumerians *Cambridge University Press*

Reviews the social and technological developments in Mesopotamia, from 3800 to 2000 BC.

The Sumerians

Their History, Culture, and Character *University of Chicago Press*

The Sumerians, the pragmatic and gifted people who preceded the Semites in the land first known as Sumer and later as Babylonia, created what was probably the first high civilization in the history of man, spanning the fifth to the second millenniums B.C. This book is an unparalleled compendium of what is known about them. Professor Kramer communicates his enthusiasm for his subject as he outlines the history of the Sumerian civilization and describes their cities, religion, literature, education, scientific achievements, social structure, and psychology. Finally, he considers the legacy of Sumer to the ancient and modern world. "There are few scholars in the world qualified to write such a book,

and certainly Kramer is one of them. . . . One of the most valuable features of this book is the quantity of texts and fragments which are published for the first time in a form available to the general reader. For the layman the book provides a readable and up-to-date introduction to a most fascinating culture. For the specialist it presents a synthesis with which he may not agree but from which he will nonetheless derive stimulation."—American Journal of Archaeology "An uncontested authority on the civilization of Sumer, Professor Kramer writes with grace and urbanity."—Library Journal

The Sumerians

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Character *University of Chicago Press*

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The Sumerian World *Routledge*

The Sumerian World explores the archaeology, history and art of southern

Mesopotamia and its relationships with its neighbours from c.3,000 - 2,000BC. Including material hitherto unpublished from recent excavations, the articles are organised thematically using evidence from archaeology, texts and the natural sciences. This broad treatment will also make the volume of interest to students looking for comparative data in allied subjects such as ancient literature and early religions. Providing an authoritative, comprehensive and up to date overview of the Sumerian period written by some of the best qualified scholars in the field, The Sumerian World will satisfy students, researchers, academics, and the knowledgeable layperson wishing to understand the world of southern Mesopotamia in the third millennium.

Sumer and the Sumerians

The Sumerians

A Complete Guide to Sumerian History and the Sumerian Civilization. Sumer in the Akkadian Empire and the Ancient City of Babylon

These people, the Sumerians, influenced not only all the other civilizations which arose in Mesopotamia but virtually every other human society which followed. Without the Sumerians, the world today would be a very different place. However, although we know a great deal about these people, there are fundamental mysteries about the Sumerians which have still not been solved by historians or archaeologists.

For example, the Sumerians seemed to appear in Mesopotamia with a complex and developed society and skills and technologies which no other culture possessed, yet there is no agreement where they came from. They created a complex language, but no-one knows what it sounded like. There are striking examples of similarities between the art of the civilization of Sumer and the art of other ancient civilizations, yet we know that these cultures had no contact with each other. The Sumerians were able to observe and record astronomical and celestial phenomena in very advanced ways which are still not understood. In this book you will about: * Sumerian Culture * Sumerian Inventions * How long were they around * What they looked like * Fascinating insight into

their everyday life

The Sumerians

Lost Civilizations *Reaktion Books*

The Sumerians are widely believed to have created the world's earliest civilization on the fertile floodplains of southern Iraq from about 3500 to 2000 BCE. They have been credited with the invention of nothing less than cities, writing, and the wheel, and therefore hold an ancient mirror to our own urban, literate world. But is this picture correct? Paul Collins reveals how the idea of a Sumerian people was assembled from the archaeological and textual evidence uncovered in Iraq and Syria over the last one hundred fifty years. Reconstructed through the biases of those who

unearthed them, the Sumerians were never simply lost and found, but reinvented a number of times, both in antiquity and in the more recent past.

The Sumerians *Ams PressInc*

In this book Professor Woolley, one of the world's foremost archaeologists, shows quite clearly that when Egyptian civilization began the civilization of the Sumerians had already flourished for at least 2,000 years. The idea that Egypt was the earliest civilization has been entirely exploded. The Sumerians had reached a very high level of culture by 3500 B.C.E., and may be said with some justice to be the forerunners of all the Old World civilizations of Egypt, Assyria, Asia Minor, Crete, and Greece. This book will appeal to everyone interested in the

early history of humankind.

Daily Life in Ancient Sumer *Capstone*

This book explores what life was really like for everyday people in ancient Sumer. Using primary sources and information from archeological discoveries, it uncovers some fascinating insights and explodes some myths. Supported by timelines, maps, and references to important events and people, children will really feel they are on a time-traveling journey when reading this book.

Sumerians

A Captivating Guide to Ancient Sumerian History, Sumerian Mythology and the Mesopotamian

Empire of the Sumer Civilization

This civilization is single-handedly responsible for some of the most major innovations in nearly every field relevant to maintaining a civilized society - this includes religion, lawmaking, architecture, schooling, art, literature, and even entertainment.

First Writers—The Sumerians

They Wrote On Clay *iUniverse*

Sumerians were the first people to write. Using a sharp three-cornered stylus, they wrote on clay—small wedge-shapes called cuneiform. With writing, Sumerians turned the corner from prehistory to history! After at least two million years of humans telling stories, the Sumerians introduced literacy. Most

civilizations passed down their heritage through orally recited traditions—stories were passed from one generation to another by word of mouth. The Sumerians were the first to write down their oral traditions. To make the historical record easier, the Sumerians invented calendars with exact dates of events and contracts often corroborated by astronomy. Since Sumerian farmers invented irrigation and created a surplus, other Sumerians could choose to specialize in law, education, architecture, engineering, marketing, and politics—all of which were accompanied by written records. Using the writings of the Sumerians and modern archaeology, this book will trace the story of the Sumerians, the world's first writers.

History Begins at Sumer

Sumerians

A History From Beginning to End

A legendary civilization vanished under the Fertile Crescent and escaped a fate worse than death until Sumerologists questioned widely accepted truths. The Sumerians reemerged onto the extraordinary timeline of human history. Their tales of kings and gods, including the Epic of Gilgamesh, and their fearless trade in distant lands, during the remarkable Bronze Age, centered in the world's first city-states that chronicled ancient rivalries and their enduring impact. Inside you will read about... ✓ How We Know What We Know About Sumerians ✓ The Bronze Age - Sumer

And Its Contemporaries ✓ How Did The Sumerians Become Civilized? ✓ How Long Were They Around ✓ Primer Of Impact Of Sumerian Ancient Civilization On Our World ✓ What Did They Look Like? ✓ What Shaped Their Worldview? And much more! Our journey relies on excavated and historical evidence to explore their productive fascinations with order and man's place in the universe. Their application of impressive knowledge helps us unfold their mysterious civilization.

Sumer

Cities of Eden *Time Life Medical*

Surveys what is known about the ancient Babylonian civilization, looks at ruins and artifacts, and describes the work of

archaeologists in the region

Sumerians

A History From Beginning to End

A legendary civilization vanished under the Fertile Crescent and escaped a fate worse than death until Sumerologists questioned widely accepted truths. The Sumerians reemerged onto the extraordinary timeline of human history. Their tales of kings and gods, including the Epic of Gilgamesh, and their fearless trade in distant lands, during the remarkable Bronze Age, centered in the world's first city-states that chronicled ancient rivalries and their enduring impact. Inside you will read about... ✓ How We Know What We Know About Sumerians ✓ The Bronze Age – Sumer

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The Sumerians *W. W. Norton & Company*

Describes the civilization of the Sumerians, who inhabited the land which today is Iraq, in the beginning of the fourth millennium B.C.

Sumeria

The Earliest Western Civilization

Createspace Independent Publishing Platform

Sumer was the first ancient urban civilization in the historical region of southern Mesopotamia, modern-day southern Iraq, during the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze ages, and arguably the first civilization in the world. Proto-writing in the region dates back to c. 3500 BC. The earliest texts come from the cities of Uruk and Jemdet Nasr and date back to 3300 BC; early cuneiform writing emerged in 3000 BC. Modern historians have suggested that Sumer was first permanently settled between c. 5500 and 4000 BC by a West Asian people who spoke the Sumerian

language (pointing to the names of cities, rivers, basic occupations, etc., as evidence), a language isolate. These conjectured, prehistoric people are now called "proto-Euphrateans" or "Ubaidians", and are theorized to have evolved from the Samarra culture of northern Mesopotamia (Assyria). The Ubaidians (though never mentioned by the Sumerians themselves) are assumed by modern-day scholars to have been the first civilizing force in Sumer, draining the marshes for agriculture, developing trade, and establishing industries, including weaving, leatherwork, metalwork, masonry, and pottery. However, some scholars contest the idea of a Proto-Euphratean language or one substrate language. It has been suggested by them and others, that the

Sumerian language was originally that of the hunter and fisher peoples, who lived in the marshland and the Eastern Arabia littoral region, and were part of the Arabian bifacial culture. Reliable historical records begin much later; there are none in Sumer of any kind that have been dated before Enmebaragesi (c. 26th century BC). Professor Juris Zarins believes the Sumerians were settled along the coast of Eastern Arabia, today's Persian Gulf region, before it flooded at the end of the Ice Age. Sumerian civilization took form in the Uruk period (4th millennium BC), continuing into the Jemdat Nasr and Early Dynastic periods. During the 3rd millennium BC, a close cultural symbiosis developed between the Sumerians, who spoke a language

isolate, and Akkadian-speakers, which included widespread bilingualism. The Sumerian culture seems to have appeared as a fully formed civilization, with no pre-history. This book presents a thorough history and background of the Sumerian civilization.

The Sumerians *Capstone Classroom*

Presents an overview of the ancient Sumerian culture, discussing government, recreation, trade, travel, family life, food, occupations, and entertainment.

Dilmun and Its Gulf Neighbours *Cambridge University Press*

A scholarly account of the archaeology of the Arabian Gulf from c.4500-1500 BC.

In the World of Sumer

An Autobiography *Wayne State University Press*

Samuel Noah Kramer is the leading authority on the interpretation and reading of civilization's oldest literature. His life and life's work are so thoroughly intertwined that his autobiography is also the story of the recovery of the language and literature of the Sumerians. From young Talmudist to the patriarch of Sumerology, Kramer recounts his long and distinguished career. Writing for the non-specialist, he paints a panoramic view of Sumerian literature and provides thumbnail sketches of the individuals with whom he collaborated.

Sumer

The History of the Cities and Culture That Established Ancient Mesopotamia's First Civilization

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*Includes pictures *Includes ancient accounts *Includes online resources and a bibliography for further reading When American archaeologists discovered a collection of cuneiform tablets in Iraq in the late 19th century, they were confronted with a language and a people who were at the time only scarcely known to even the most knowledgeable scholars of ancient Mesopotamia: the Sumerians. The exploits and achievements of other Mesopotamian peoples, such as the Assyrians and

Babylonians, were already known to a large segment of the population through the Old Testament and the nascent field of Near Eastern studies had unraveled the enigma of the Akkadian language that was widely used throughout the region in ancient times, but the discovery of the Sumerian tablets brought to light the existence of the Sumerian culture, which was the oldest of all the Mesopotamian cultures. Although the Sumerians continue to get second or even third billing compared to the Babylonians and Assyrians, perhaps because they never built an empire as great as the Assyrians or established a city as enduring and great as Babylon, they were the people who provided the template of civilization that all later Mesopotamians built upon. The

Sumerians are credited with being the first people to invent writing, libraries, cities, and schools in Mesopotamia (Ziskind 1972, 34), and many would argue that they were the first people to create and do those things anywhere in world. For a people so great it is unfortunate that their accomplishments and contributions, not only to Mesopotamian civilization but to civilization in general, largely go unnoticed by the majority of the public. Perhaps the Sumerians were victims of their own success; they gradually entered the historical record, established a fine civilization, and then slowly submerged into the cultural patchwork of their surroundings. They also never suffered a great and sudden collapse like other peoples of the ancient Near East,

such as the Hittites, Assyrians and Neo-Babylonians did. A close examination of Sumerian culture and chronology reveals that the Sumerians set the cultural tone in Mesopotamia for several centuries in the realms of politics/governments, arts, literature, and religion. Even today, the world owes the Sumerians a tremendous amount. When Western Europe was still in the Stone Age, it was the Sumerians who invented writing and the wheel, divided time into minutes and seconds, tamed nature, and built gigantic cities. They embraced culture and the arts, and their caravans crossed the desert, opening up the first trade routes. Their myths and legends inspired various origin stories, and their memory lives on in the Old Testament. They wrote the history of the birth of mankind. The

heritage of the Sumerian civilization and their successors is everywhere. Sumer: The History of the Cities and Culture that Established Ancient Mesopotamia's First Civilization chronicles the most important people, places, and events that took place across Sumer. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Sumer like never before.

The Sumerians *Capstone Classroom*

This book shows how people lived in ancient Sumeria, a land now known as Iraq, by describing their social, economic, political, religious, and cultural life, as well as their contributions to later civilizations.

Black Sumer: the African Origins of

Civilisation

The Sumerian Problem HAS BEEN SOLVED! And the solution is African! According to mainstream historians the Sumerians of ancient southern Iraq founded the world's first civilization. They are supposed to have spoken a language which is not genetically related to any known language. This is known as the Sumerian Problem. This book represents the greatest discovery in ancient history for the last hundred years. It demonstrates that Sumerian was genetically related to the Niger-Congo languages of West Africa. Their descendants are the African Diaspora of North and South America and the Caribbean. Many claimed to have solved the Sumerian problem in the past. Hermsstein's differs from previous

attempts by first showing the reader how to identify genetically related languages through recurrent sound correspondences in basic vocabulary. He then gives examples from acknowledged genetic relationships such as Germanic to show the reader what the evidence should look like. The author also shows what false correspondences look like and how to tell the difference. He also makes use of a number of tests that would determine whether languages are related using probability. This is CLEARLY UNLIKE ANY PREVIOUS ATTEMPT at solving the Sumerian problem. The author reconstructs the epic voyage that took the ancestors of the Sumerians from a homeland in West Africa to Djibouti before making a journey by sea, around Oman and to the

head of the Persian Gulf. The other major discovery in the book is that the Sumerians had a much more advanced system of astronomy than has been supposed. The constellations had geographic associations in the Classical period through myth. Hermstein shows how the geographic coordinates of the associated places closely correspond to the celestial coordinates of certain points within the constellations. It is impossible to develop such a system without knowing the earth is round. The text supplying the point of origin for the system of geo-celestial coordinate correspondence is from the Sumerian period. Two amazing discoveries in one book. Both humanity and civilization have an African origin! The ancients knew a lot more than we realized!

Wisdom of Ancient Sumer *Capital Decisions Limited*

Discussion of the nature of Sumerian wisdom literature and complete editions of many Sumerian wisdom texts, including the Instructions of Shuruppak, Instructions of Ur-Ninurta, Counsels of Wisdom, Sumerian fables, Nothing Is of Value, Ballade of Early Rulers, and more. This unusual book describes the Sumerian literature and many of their proverbs featured in speeches of wise men of that time.

The Literature of Ancient Sumer *Oxford University Press on Demand*

This anthology of Sumerian literature constitutes the most comprehensive collection ever published, and includes examples of most of the different types

of composition written in the language, from narrative myths and lyrical hymns to proverbs and love poetry. The translations have benefited both from the work of many scholars and from our ever-increasing understanding of Sumerian. In addition to reflecting the advances made by modern scholarship, the translations are written in clear, accessible English. An extensive introduction discusses the literary qualities of the works, the people who created and copied them in ancient Iraq, and how the study of Sumerian literature has evolved over the last 150 years.

Egyptian Civilization Its Sumerian Origin and Real Chronology *Read Books Ltd*

This fantastic volume explores the

mysterious origins of the Egyptian civilization, looking at its relationship to ancient Samaria and subsequent history. "Egyptian Civilization - Its Sumerian Origin and Real Chronology" is highly recommended for those with an interest in ancient Egypt, especially the historical development of theories and evidence relating thereto. Laurence Austine Waddell (1899 - 1938) was a British Explorer, professor of Tibetan, and Indian army surgeon. Other notable works by this author include: "Among the Himalayas", "The Birds of Sikkim" (1893), and "Some Ancient Indians Charms from the Tibetan" (1895). Many vintage books such as this are increasingly scarce and expensive. It is with this in mind that we are republishing this volume now in an

affordable, modern, high-quality edition complete with a specially-commissioned new biography of the author.

The Prince of Eridu *Createspace Independent Publishing Platform*

When the jealous High Priest of Enki murders the King during a holy festival and stages a takeover of the palace, the Crown Prince, Ammon-shur, must flee for his life with nothing more than the clothes on his back. His faithful bodyguard, Balashi, saves him from capture and death at the hands of his enemies, and together the two make their way to the ancient city of Uruk, home of the ancient and powerful temple of Inanna. Ammon goes to the temple to seek allies that he might recruit to his cause to unseat the High

Priest of Enki and retake his throne. While at the temple he meets Iltani, the fascinating and beautiful High Priestess of Inanna. Ammon scarcely gets to know the High Priestess before discovering that she is enmeshed in her own struggles against the members of the temple council, who maintain her as a powerless figurehead. Far from finding aid for his own cause, Ammon finds himself promising to help Iltani free herself from the influence of the temple council as well as to help her investigate a darker plot...

Signs from Silence

Charles University in Prague, Karolinum Press

The monograph *Signs from Silence: Ur of*

the first Sumerians tells the story of the Sumerian city of Ur at the beginning of the third pre-Christian millennium (c. 2,900–2,700). In terms of research focusing on the emergence of one of the first statehood foci of human history—the pristine state of ancient Mesopotamia—the author takes up evidence on a critical phase of early Mesopotamian social development. At the beginning of the third pre-Christian millennium, the men and women of Ur took up actions that decided whether the material and spiritual heritage of the preceding Late Uruk cultural-development phase (c. 3,500–3,200), when the first state, organized religion, sciences and the arts had emerged in ancient Mesopotamia, will stand up to the test of time, or whether it will vanish

into thin air, as it happened in other civilizational complexes. The author has based his conclusions on the testimony of written texts, archaeology and iconography. Guided by this evidence, he portrays the ways and means by which the men and women of Ur treated the material and spiritual heritage of the Late Uruk civilization. Their activities defined the coordinates system within which the early Mesopotamian state subsequently developed through the nearly three millennia of its existence.

Sumerian Mythology

Captivating Myths of Gods, Goddesses, and Legendary Creatures of Ancient Sumer and Their Importance to the Sumerians

This book includes tales of gods and goddesses, both major and minor, as well as kings and heroes, both historical and mythical. One such king is the hero of what many scholars believe to be the first written epic: Gilgamesh.

Sumer

The History of the Cities and Culture That Established Ancient Mesopotamia's First Civilization
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*Includes pictures *Includes ancient accounts *Includes online resources and a bibliography for further reading When American archaeologists discovered a collection of cuneiform tablets in Iraq in the late 19th century, they were

confronted with a language and a people who were at the time only scarcely known to even the most knowledgeable scholars of ancient Mesopotamia: the Sumerians. The exploits and achievements of other Mesopotamian peoples, such as the Assyrians and Babylonians, were already known to a large segment of the population through the Old Testament and the nascent field of Near Eastern studies had unraveled the enigma of the Akkadian language that was widely used throughout the region in ancient times, but the discovery of the Sumerian tablets brought to light the existence of the Sumerian culture, which was the oldest of all the Mesopotamian cultures. Although the Sumerians continue to get second or even third billing compared to

the Babylonians and Assyrians, perhaps because they never built an empire as great as the Assyrians or established a city as enduring and great as Babylon, they were the people who provided the template of civilization that all later Mesopotamians built upon. The Sumerians are credited with being the first people to invent writing, libraries, cities, and schools in Mesopotamia (Ziskind 1972, 34), and many would argue that they were the first people to create and do those things anywhere in world. For a people so great it is unfortunate that their accomplishments and contributions, not only to Mesopotamian civilization but to civilization in general, largely go unnoticed by the majority of the public. Perhaps the Sumerians were victims of

their own success; they gradually entered the historical record, established a fine civilization, and then slowly submerged into the cultural patchwork of their surroundings. They also never suffered a great and sudden collapse like other peoples of the ancient Near East, such as the Hittites, Assyrians and Neo-Babylonians did. A close examination of Sumerian culture and chronology reveals that the Sumerians set the cultural tone in Mesopotamia for several centuries in the realms of politics/governments, arts, literature, and religion. Even today, the world owes the Sumerians a tremendous amount. When Western Europe was still in the Stone Age, it was the Sumerians who invented writing and the wheel, divided time into minutes and seconds, tamed nature, and built gigantic cities.

They embraced culture and the arts, and their caravans crossed the desert, opening up the first trade routes. Their myths and legends inspired various origin stories, and their memory lives on in the Old Testament. They wrote the history of the birth of mankind. The heritage of the Sumerian civilization and their successors is everywhere. Sumer: The History of the Cities and Culture that Established Ancient Mesopotamia's First Civilization chronicles the most important people, places, and events that took place across Sumer. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Sumer like never before.

The Ancient Orient

An Introduction to the Study of the Ancient Near East *Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing*

This book represents the first comprehensive, interdisciplinary presentation of ancient Near Eastern civilization. The author's study includes treatments of the history of language and systems of writing, the state and society, nutrition and agriculture, artisanry, economics, law, science, religion and magic, art, music, and more.

A Companion to Ancient Near Eastern Languages *John Wiley & Sons*

Covers the major languages, language families, and writing systems attested in the Ancient Near East Filled with enlightening chapters by noted experts in the field, this book introduces Ancient

Near Eastern (ANE) languages and language families used during the time period of roughly 3200 BCE to the second century CE in the areas of Egypt, the Levant, eastern Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Iran. In addition to providing grammatical sketches of the respective languages, the book focuses on socio-linguistic questions such as language contact, diglossia, the development of literary standard languages, and the development of diplomatic languages or “linguae francae.” It also addresses the interaction of Ancient Near Eastern languages with each other and their roles within the political and cultural systems of ANE societies. Presented in five parts, *The Companion to Ancient Near Eastern Languages* provides

readers with in-depth chapter coverage of the writing systems of ANE, starting with their decipherment. It looks at the emergence of cuneiform writing; the development of Egyptian writing in the fourth and early third millennium BCE; and the emergence of alphabetic scripts. The book also covers many of the individual languages themselves, including Sumerian, Egyptian, Akkadian, Hittite, Pre- and Post-Exilic Hebrew, Phoenician, Ancient South Arabian, and more. Provides an overview of all major language families and writing systems used in the Ancient Near East during the time period from the beginning of writing (approximately 3200 BCE) to the second century CE (end of cuneiform writing). Addresses how the individual languages interacted with each other and how they

functioned in the societies that used them. Written by leading experts on the languages and topics. The Companion to Ancient Near Eastern Languages is an ideal book for undergraduate students and scholars interested in Ancient Near Eastern cultures and languages or certain aspects of these languages.

How the Sumerians Became Rich

With Sumerian Cuneiform Sign List and Sign Readings Index

Sumerian Mythology *University of Pennsylvania Press*

An authoritative sketch of the great myths of the Sumerians, their myths of origins, of creation, the nether world, and the deluge.

A Companion to the History of the Book *John Wiley & Sons*

From the early Sumerian clay tablet through to the emergence of the electronic text, this Companion provides a continuous and coherent account of the history of the book. Makes use of illustrative examples and case studies of well-known texts Written by a group of expert contributors Covers topical debates, such as the nature of censorship and the future of the book

In the Garden of the Gods

Models of Kingship from the Sumerians to the Seleucids *Routledge*

Examining the evolution of kingship in the Ancient Near East from the time of

the Sumerians to the rise of the Seleucids in Babylon, this book argues that the Sumerian emphasis on the divine favour that the fertility goddess and the Sun god bestowed upon the king should be understood metaphorically from the start and that these metaphors survived in later historical periods, through popular literature including the Epic of Gilgameš and the Enuma Eliš. The author's research shows that from the earliest times Near Eastern kings and their scribes adapted these metaphors to promote royal legitimacy in accordance with legendary exempla that highlighted the role of the king as the establisher of order and civilization. As another Gilgameš and, later, as a pious servant of Marduk, the king renewed divine favour for his subjects,

enabling them to share the 'Garden of the Gods'. Seleucus and Antiochus found these cultural ideas, as they had evolved in the first millennium BCE, extremely useful in their efforts to establish their dynasty at Babylon. Far from playing down cultural differences, the book considers the ideological agendas of ancient Near Eastern empires as having been shaped mainly by class — rather than race-minded elites.

Sumerians: The Great Civilization of Ancient Mesopotamia *Creek Ridge Publishing*

The Sumerians were a civilization of firsts, sowing the seeds of human heritage and legacy that would serve as the building blocks of subsequent civilizations Apart from being generally

considered the first developed civilization in human history, the Sumerians were first in many other important ways. In fact, Sumer was the fountainhead of what some scholars refer to as "the thirty-nine firsts." These civilizational breakthroughs included educational institutions and professions as we know them today, the functional wheel incorporated into a vehicle, the first libraries, aquariums, organized religion, forms of democracy, and much else. The Sumerians were also the creators of the oldest known piece of literature, which is the famous Epic of Gilgamesh.

The Epic of Gilgamesh

The Early History of the Ancient

Near East, 9000-2000 B.C. *University of Chicago Press*

Hans J. Nissen here provides a much-needed overview of 7000 years of development in the ancient Near East from the beginning of settled life to the formation of the first regional states. His approach to the study of Mesopotamian civilization differs markedly from conventional orientations, which impose a sharp division between prehistoric and historic, literate, periods. Nissen argues that this approach is too rigid to explain the actual development of that civilization. He deemphasizes the invention of writing as a turning point, viewing it as simply one more phase in the evolution of social complexity and as

the result of specific social, economic, and political factors. With a unique combination of material culture analysis written data, Nissan traces the emergence of the earliest isolated settlements, the growth of a network of towns, the emergence of city states, and finally the appearance of territorial states. From his synthesis of the prehistoric and literate periods comes a unified picture of the development of Mesopotamian economy, society, and culture. Lavishly illustrated, *The Early History of the Ancient Near East, 9000-2000 B.C.* is an authoritative work by one of the most insightful observers of the evolution and character of Mesopotamian civilization.