

History – Autumn Term introduction – Ancient Mesopotamia

Enquiry Question: How far was control of land the most important way of gaining and maintaining power in the Ancient World?



Ancient

3600 BC – 500 AD



Medieval

500 – 1500 AD



Early Modern

1500 – 1800 AD

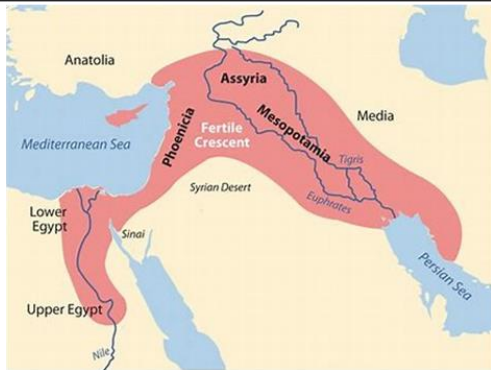


Modern

1800 – present

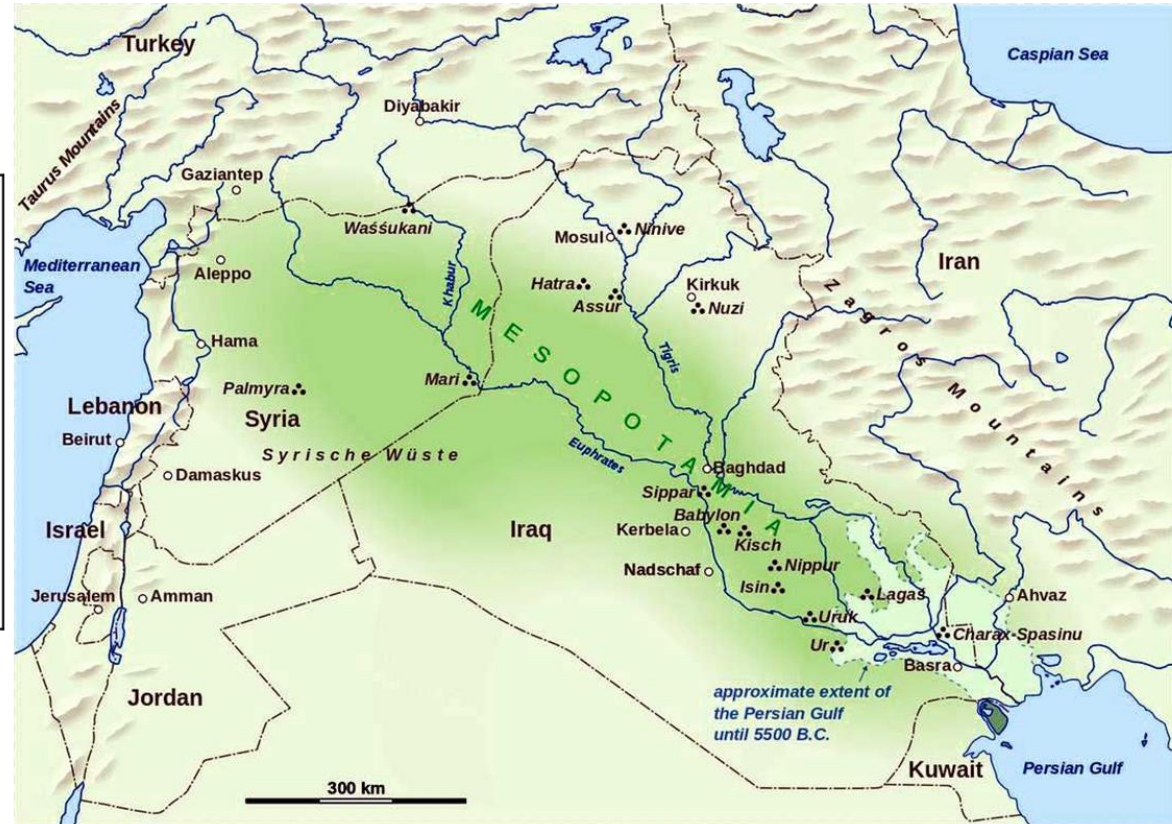
Background Knowledge:

- Scientists believe the world came into existence through the **Big Bang**. Over millions of years life evolved and Humans came into existence.
- Mesopotamia** was one of the first cities and was next to the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. The rivers allowed people to begin to farm and settle into civilisation.
- Farmers in **Mesopotamia** were able to grow more than they needed. The spare food was called **surplus**.
- Surplus helped the kings become powerful, as they used it to pay soldiers. This allowed king to get more land and build their empire.
- Mesopotamians were the first to invent writing and this helped build religion, and to trade with others..



Cities in Mesopotamia:

The people in Mesopotamia built cities such as **Ur**. The cities were rich and busy so the kings would protect the cities by building special walls around to defend them.



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BC Dates –
Big Comes
first.



AD Dates-
These dates
Add up

Key words	Definition
Hunter-gatherers	People who got their food by hunting wild animals, and gathering plants for food.
Nomads	People who moved around. They followed animals to hunt. They didn't settle (live) in one place
Farming	Planting crops to grow, then harvest as food
Harvest	Collect crops that were grown for food
Surplus	Having grown more food than is needed. This 'surplus' could be used to feed soldiers, or sold to other groups of people
Storehouses	Where surplus food was kept to keep it fresh
Tigris and Euphrates	Two rivers which flooded
Silt	Left over soil from a flooded river. Silt was rich and helped crops to grow
Crops	Food that can be eaten.
Agricultural land	Land that is used to grow crops
Irrigation	Where water from rivers is diverted, and used to water land and provide water for settlements
Settlements	Places where buildings and towns grow.

Agricultural Surplus

Agricultural surplus means having more than you need. It could be created in Mesopotamia because of the rivers Tigris and the Euphrates, which left silt on the land when they flooded. This silt would then fertilise the land, making it better for growing crops. The farmers also used irrigation to transport water to the farms in the dry season. This meant that even when it didn't rain, the crops could still have water to grow. This produced a surplus as it meant that lots of crops would grow all through the year, giving the people of Mesopotamia even more than they needed.

The kings took this surplus in return for protecting the farmers. They used the surplus to pay the soldiers in their armies (they paid them in food as there was no money at this time). This gave the kings more power because the armies could then fight for him. If they won a battle they would take over more land. The king could then persuade farmers on this new land to work for him, growing even more agricultural surplus. He could use this to pay more soldiers who would win more land, where farmers would grow even more surplus, so this worked as a cycle.

Summary Questions

Read the information and answer the 5 questions below.

1. How did 'hunter-gatherers get their food'?
2. How did some human beings change the way they lived?
3. How did the first cities grow?
4. What is agricultural surplus?
5. How did surplus make kings more powerful?

