

Chapter 3: The Fertile Crescent



SECTION 2:

THE FIRST EMPIRES

THE FIRST LAWS

Background

- City-states in Sumer often fought each other.
 - Eventually strong rulers conquered the whole region
- Empire: a state containing several countries or territories



New King in Town...

- Sargon
 - Akkadian man
 - Became King of the Sumerian city-state of Kish
 - Changed the language to Akkadian
 - Placed Akkadian's in government & religious positions
 - He created the world's first empire
 - Sargon ruled for 56 years—city-states rebelled
- 500 years later the Babylonians gained control
 - Hammurabi became the king of Babylon around 1792 B.C.
 - Establish what today is known as the Old Babylonian empire
 - Mesopotamia became united, rich & powerful under his rule
 - Best remembered for establishing a set of laws that governed life



Hammurabi's Law

- Also called Code of Law
- Over 4,000 years old
- About 300 laws (Ex: "If he break another man's bone, his bone shall be broken")
- Written in cuneiform
- King Hammurabi wanted to make sure everyone knew the laws
- Encouraged social order throughout his empire



Legacy of Sumer

- After Hammurabi's death in 1750 B.C.
 - Babylonia falls apart
 - City-states rebelled **AGAIN!**
- Nineveh (northern Meso) destroyed Babylon
 - Later Babylonians rebuilt and made it the capital of a stronger empire
- The civilization of Sumer slowly faded
 - Influence: technology, farming, writing, learning, and law lived on



New Babylon

- Became the world's largest city:
 - famous for beauty & technology
 - massive walls & moat protected it
 - split in 2 by Euphrates; connected by moveable bridge and underwater tunnel
 - Center of city: HUGE Ziggurat (200 yards wide/100 yards into sky)

