

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS CLASS – 11 HISTORY

CHAPTER- 1 | WRITING AND THE CITY LIFE

Question 1.

What do you know about Uruk?

Answer:

Situated on the bank of the river Euphrates, about 2500 kilometers south-east of modern capital city of Baghdad, Uruk is an ancient Mesopotamian city. It came into existence around 3000 BCE, and was reckoned to be the most extensive town in the contemporary world. Uruk spread over an area of 250 hectares. It was twice in size when compared to Indus valley civilization. The city expanded around 2800 BCE. This area increased to about 400 hectares. Nearly 50,000 to 80,000 people resided here at that time.

Sumerian king Ermerkar was the founder of this town. He also constructed here the temple of a well-known goddess Inanna. Another famous ruler of this town was Gilgamesh. He declared Uruk as the capital city of his empire. To safeguard ground from any invasion he constructed a massive town around it. Here in Uruk the war prisoner had to do compulsory labour either for the ruler or for construction of temple. They were paid in grains in return. The common people were engaged in the extraction of stones, making mud-bricks, etc. as per the order of their ruler.

Uruk had also made unprecedented progress in the field of technology. The invention of potter's wheel led to a revolutionary change in the field of technology and also helped in utensil making on a large scale.

Question 2.

Describe the main features of the city of Babylon.

Answer:

The city of Babylon had played an outstanding role in the ancient history of Mesopotamia. It was Akkad ruler, Sargon, who ruled from 2370 to 2315 BCE. Being situated on the north-west bank of river Tigris it made tremendous progress under Humurabiera. Babylon witnessed the emergence of glorious era of its history under Keldian ruler Nabopolassor. At that time, it covered an area of more than 850 hectares. Some magnificent features of Babylon were as follows:

- A triple wall was constructed all-around the city to safeguard it from any foreign threat.
- A massivq Ziggurat was the main center of attraction in Babylon.

- It was also a famous commercial center.
- The city had also made tremendous progress in the field of language, literature, science, medicine, etc.

Question 3.

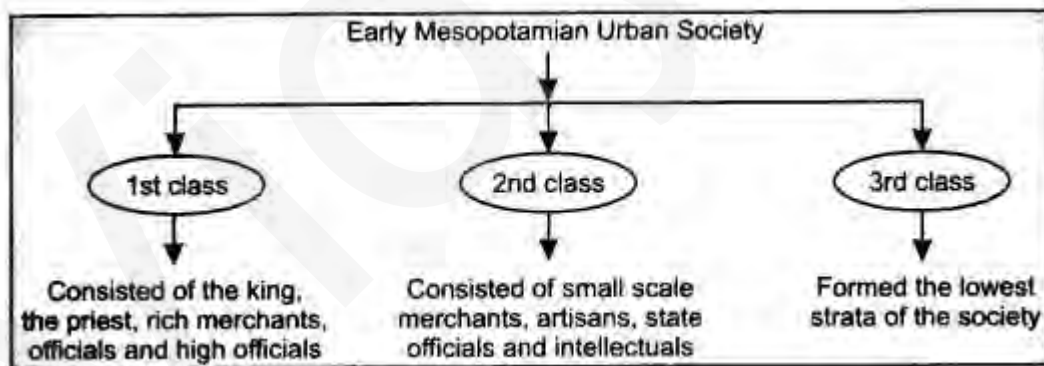
Describe the nature of early urban society under Mesopotamia.

Or

“There was a great disparity among the different sections of the Mesopotamian society”. Explain.

Answer:

The early urban society was divided into three classes. The first class or group of the people coming from elites and consisted of the king (Monarch), the priest, the officials, rich merchants and businessmen, high military officials, etc. They led a luxurious life and lived in magnificent buildings and palaces. They wore expensive clothes and used to eat sumptuous foods. The people of this class were served by several men and women slaves. The people belonging to second class consisted of the people such as small scale merchants, artisans, state officials, intellectuals, etc. Like upper or 1st class they also led a life of luxury. The third estate or class people constituted the lowest strata of the society. Their life was very miserable. The dead bodies of the upper class people were buried along with precious items such as gold vessels, oyster shell, lapis lazuli, etc. On the other hand, the dead bodies of common people were buried along with ordinary pots, etc. It clearly indicates that there was great disparity among the different sections of society.



Question 4.

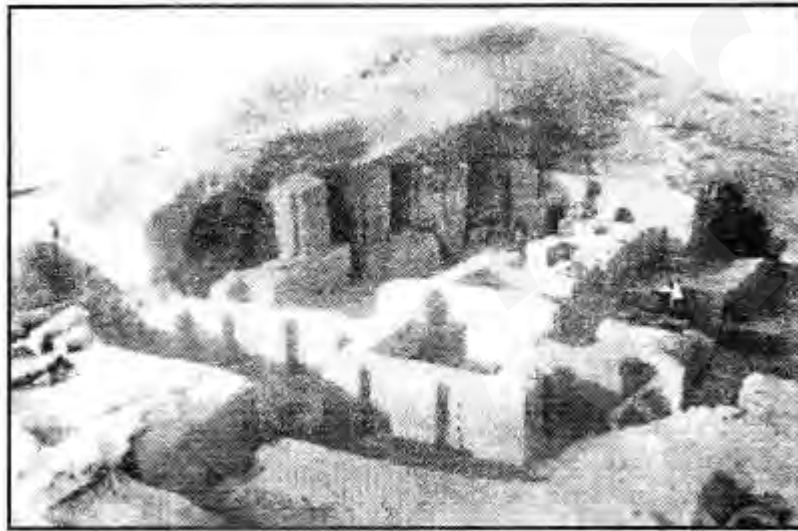
Illustrate the construction of temple and gradual increasing of activities of temples in Mesopotamia.

Answer:

Mesopotamian temples have played a significant role in the history of Mesopotamia. They constructed temples and dedicated them to their different gods and goddesses. Their temples were dedicated to Nanna, Anu, Enki and Inanna. Besides these four deities, each town had its own deity who was considered to be the protector of the respective town.

Temples of early Mesopotamia were comparatively smaller in size. They were also made of unbaked bricks. With the passage of time, the temple began to take new shape. Their importance as well as size began to increase. They used to build their temples on the hill tops because they believed that God (deities) dwell on the hill-top. These temples were made of baked bricks.

One of the peculiar features of these temples was that their outer walls had inward and outward bend at regular intervals. The temple had a courtyard and there were several rooms around it. The image of the deity was placed in the main room. Some rooms served as dwelling places for priests and other rooms were meant to stay for the pilgrims.



Increasing Activities of the Temples:

- Temples served as center of imparting education, where the priests used to serve as teachers.
- Land attached to temples was also used for industrial purposes.
- Temples were also engaged in sales and purchases of goods and also used to provide advance loans to the traders and charge interest thereon.
- The people offered grains, curd, dates, etc. to serve their deities. They also sacrificed ox, sheep, goat, etc. to offer their blessings.
- Temples also served as the centers for entertainment and provided a common platform for the people to meet each other and get a new boost.

Question 5.

What do you know about Gilgamesh? Explain in detail.

Answer:

The Gilgamesh epic occupies a special place not only in Sumerian literature, but also in world history. It was written by Uruk ruler Gilgamesh, who ruled there about 2700 BCE. It was

written on 12 tablets. This epic is about the achievements of Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh was a famous ruler of Uruk. He was a great ruler and laid the foundation of a vast empire. To secure the Uruk against any threat of the foreign ruler he constructed a wall around it with a view to end his tyrannical rule. People prayed to deity, Anu. As a result of this, God Anu ordered the goddess Arur to create such a God who could surpass Gilgamesh. The goddess created Enkidu who fought with Gilgamesh. He was impressed by his bravery and became a fast friend.

“They both performed several commendable works and decided to kill a demon of Elam known as Humbaba. After a terrible war, Gilgamesh finally killed Humbaba. Impressed by the bravery of Gilgamesh, Ishtar fell in love with her.

Gilgamesh’s friend Enkidu fell in love with a beautiful dancing girl. This enraged the deities. So they decided to end the life of Enkidu. Soon after he fell ill and died. The death of Enkidu deeply hurt Gilgamesh. He began to think one day that he will also die. Thus he began his search to attain immortality, but no one could ever become immortal. At the time of creation of a human being God gave him (the man) death and kept life with them. Despite this he did his best to become immortal.

Finally, he thought about Utnapishtim. Being impressed by his efforts Utnapishtim revealed the secret of immortality through the plant lying at the bottom of an ocean (sea). Gilgamesh accepted this challenge and jumped into the sea to bring the said plant. On his return he was very tired and fell asleep. Meanwhile a snake came here and took away that plant. When he woke up he saw the desired plant was missing. Finally, he understood the fact that the man can never become immortal. He came back to his native city. After many years he became emotional on seeing his city. He realised the fact that his sons will continue to enjoy the vast empire built by him after his death.

Question 6.

State the points of similarities and differences between Indus valley and Mesopotamia a n civilization.

Answer:

Similarities:

- Both are river valley civilizations. Indus valley civilization flourished along the bank of river Indus, while Mesopotamian civilization flourished along the banks of Tigris and Euphrates.
- Both are known for their excellent town planning.
- Baked bricks were used for construction.

Differences	Mesopotamian Civilization	Indus valley Civilization
Regarding town planning	• Lack of town planning	• Excellent town planning
	• Streets were narrow	• Streets were wider and straight.
	• No uniformity was followed while constructing houses.	• Uniformity was followed in the construction of houses. City was divided into a number of blocks.
Regarding drainage system	Drainage system was not efficient. Drains were not covered and water flowed from it through clay pipes.	Drainage system was very efficient. It was far excellent when compared to other contemporary civilizations.

Question 7.

What do you know about the palace at Mari of King Zimrilim?

Answer:

The Great Palace of Mari was the residence of royal family. This palace was the hub of administration and a centre of production of beautiful ornaments. It was a famous palace of his time. Many minor kings from north Syria came to see it, carrying with him a letter of introduction from royal friends of the king of Mari. The king met all of them and shared food with them. The palace had only an entrance from the north and had a large courtyard such as 131 were beautifully paved. The king also met foreign delegates in 132 rooms, which were decorated with wall paintings and illustrations. This sprawling structure was spread over an area of 2.4 hectares having 260 rooms.

Question 8.

Why were there often clashes between the animal herders and farmers of Mari?

Answer:

There were a number of factors responsible for their conflicts. Some of them are given below:

- The shepherds of Mari used to take their herds through the standing crops on their way when going out in search of water. It caused immense damage to the crops of the farmer.
- The shepherds (animal herders) used to invade the inhabitants of the villages by farming communities and indulged into loot and plunder.
- Sometimes the farmers used to their (animal herder's) way, which hampered their access to sources of water. It also led to clashes between them.
- Some groups of the herders used to serve as agricultural laborers or helpers in assisting in harvest. With the passage of time their income increased and they became prosperous. Then they began to live a settled life, which was not acceptable to farmers. It also led to the emergence of struggle or clashes between them.

Question 9.

How did the amalgamation of different castes and communities give birth to a new civilization?

Answer:

Mari was an important city of ancient Mesopotamia. The city regained its ancient splendor in 2000 BCE, when Amorite dynasty declared her its capital. It was again destroyed during Hammurabi's invasion in 1759 BCE.

The people living here were agriculturists and pastoralists. They belonged to various communities such as Akkadi, Amorite, Asyran and Armenian. The king belonged to Amorite community. The entire Amorite community had different dress-codes as compared to other communities. The King of Mari built a magnificent temple at Mari dedicated to the deity known as Dagens. Thus amalgamation of different castes and communities gave birth to new civilization at Mari. As people belonging to different communities resided at Mari, the king had always to remain vigilant.

Question 10.

“The script of Mesopotamia helped the historians to throw light on this ancient civilization”. Justify the statement.

Answer:

The earliest language known to the Mesopotamians was Sumerian. It was replaced by Akkadi around 2400 BCE. Gradually, the Aramaic came into prominence by 1400 BCE. The use of Aramaic became widespread by 1000 BCE. Irrespective of the fact that there had originated a script in Mesopotamia, still the rate of literacy was very low. The logic behind low literacy rate was that there were more than 2000 symbols used to decipher. Besides this, the language was itself very complicated. But truly speaking, the languages of the Mesopotamian have given a very long way in helping the historians, who after carefully examining and analyzing it throws a floodlight on this ancient civilization.