**#3—Crash Course World History**

**Mesopotamia**

1. So 5,000 years ago in the land meso, or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the Tigris and Euphrates potomoi, or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, cities started popping up. These early Mesopotamian cities engaged in a form of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, where farmers contributed their crops to public storehouses out of which workers, like metalworkers or builders would be paid uniform "wages" in grain.
2. One of the legacies of Mesopotamia is the enduring conflict between country and city. You see this explored a lot in some of our greatest art such as in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, one of the oldest known works of literature.
3. Uruk was a walled city with an extensive \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ system and several monumental temples, called \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The priests of these temples initially had all the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, because they were able to communicate directly with the gods who were moody and vindictive.
4. The Tigris and Euphrates are decent as rivers go, but had certain disadvantages:
* A lot of slave labor was needed to make the Tigris and Euphrates useful for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_;
* they're difficult to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; and
* flood \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and violently.
1. So I mean given that the region tends to yo-yo between devastating flood and horrible \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it follows that one would believe that the gods are kind of random and capricious, and that any priests who might be able to lead \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that placate those gods would be very useful individuals.
2. But about 1000 years after the first temples we find in cities like Uruk, a rival structure begins to show up, the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This tells us that kings are starting to be as important as priests in Mesopotamia.
3. These kings, who probably started out as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ leaders or really rich landowners, took on a quasi-religious role. So the priests were overtaken by kings, who soon declared themselves priests.
4. Mesopotamia gave us a form of writing called \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, which was initially created to record transactions like how many bushels of wheat were exchanged for how many goats.
5. I don't think you can overestimate the importance of writing but let's just make two points:
* Writing and reading are things that not everyone can do. So they create a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ distinction, one that in fact survives to this day.
* Once writing enters the picture, you have actual \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ instead of just a lot of guesswork and archaeology.
1. So why did this writing happen in Mesopotamia? Well the Fertile Crescent, while it is fertile, is lacking the pretty much everything else. In order to get metal for tools or stone for sculptures or wood for burning, Mesopotamia had to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This trading eventually led Mesopotamia to develop the world's first territorial \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. So the city state period in Mesopotamia ended around 2,000 BCE, probably because drought and a shift in the course of rivers led to pastoral \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ coming in and conquering the environmentally weakened cities.
3. These new Mesopotamian city states were similar to their predecessors but they were different in some important ways.
* First, that early proto-socialism was replaced by something that looked a lot like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ enterprise, where people could produce as much as they would like as long as they gave a cut, also known as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the government.
* Things were also different \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because the tribal chiefs became full-blown kings, who tried to extend their power outside of cities and also tried to pass on their power to their sons.
1. The most famous of these early monarchs is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who ruled the new kingdom of Babylon from 1792 BCE to 1750 BCE. His main claim to fame is his famous \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_which established everything from like the wages of ox drivers to the fact that the punishment for taking an eye should be having an eye taken.
2. In the law code Hammurabi tried to portray himself in two roles that might sound familiar: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. So again we see the authority for protection of the social order shifting to men, not gods, which is important, but don't worry, it'll shift back.
3. The thing about Territorial kingdoms is that they relied on the poorest people to pay taxes, and provide \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and serve in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, all of which made you not like your king very much so if you saw any nomadic invaders coming by you might just be like "Hey nomadic invaders! Come on in; you seem better than the last guy."
4. Well, that was the case until the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, who have a deserved reputation for being the brutal bullies of Mesopotamia came along.
5. The Assyrians did give us an early example of probably the most important and durable form of political organization in world history the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, which is the extension by conquest of control over people who do not belong to the same group as the conquerors. The biggest problem with empires is that by definition they're diverse and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, which makes them hard to unify.
6. Beginning around 911 BCE, the neo-Assyrian Empire grew from its hometowns of Ashur and Nineveh to include the whole of Mesopotamia, the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_of the Mediterranean and even, by 680 BCE, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_! They did this thanks to the most brutal, terrifying and efficient army the world had ever seen. For one thing the army was a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Generals weren't chosen based on who their dads were, they were chosen based on if they were good at “Generalling”.
7. The armies also used \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ weapons and chariots and they were massive. Like the neo-Assyrian Empire could field 120,000 men. Also, they were super MEAN. Like they would \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ hundreds of thousands of people to separate them from their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and their families and also moved skilled \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ around where they were most needed. Also the neo-Assyrians loved to find would-be rebels and lop off their appendages; particularly their noses for some reason.
8. So what happened to the Assyrians? Well, first they extended their empire beyond their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, making administration impossible. But maybe even more importantly, when your whole world view is based on the idea that the apocalypse will come if you ever lose a battle, and then you lose one battle, the whole world view just blows up. That eventually happened and in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ BCE, the city of Nineveh was finally conquered, and the neo-Assyrian Empire had come to its end. But the idea of Empire was just getting started.