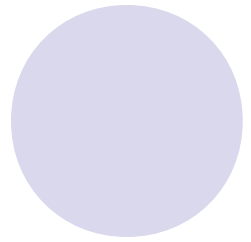
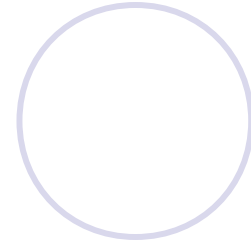
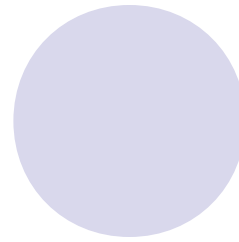


Key Terms

- **Mesopotamia:**
means “land
between the
rivers”.
- Mesopotamia was
a river valley
civilization.
 - This is how most of
all the first
civilizations started.
 - What do you think
this is?



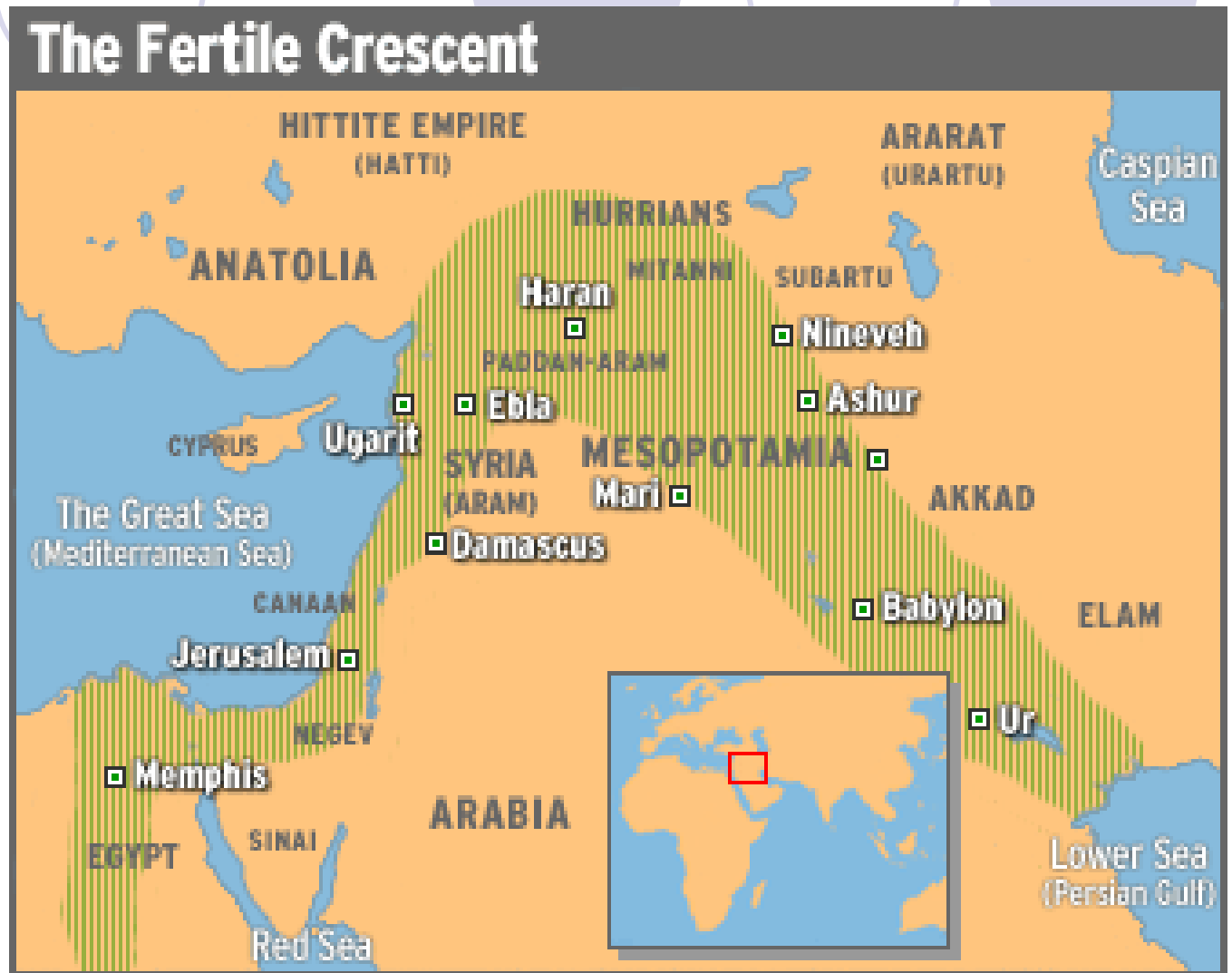
River Valley Civilizations



- All of the civilizations of Mesopotamia started along the rivers.
- Identify the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and chart and put them on your map.

Mesopotamia is located in the Fertile Crescent

- Fertile Crescent:** A region of the Middle East that is more fertile than the surrounding areas due to its rivers.



Sumerian Civilization

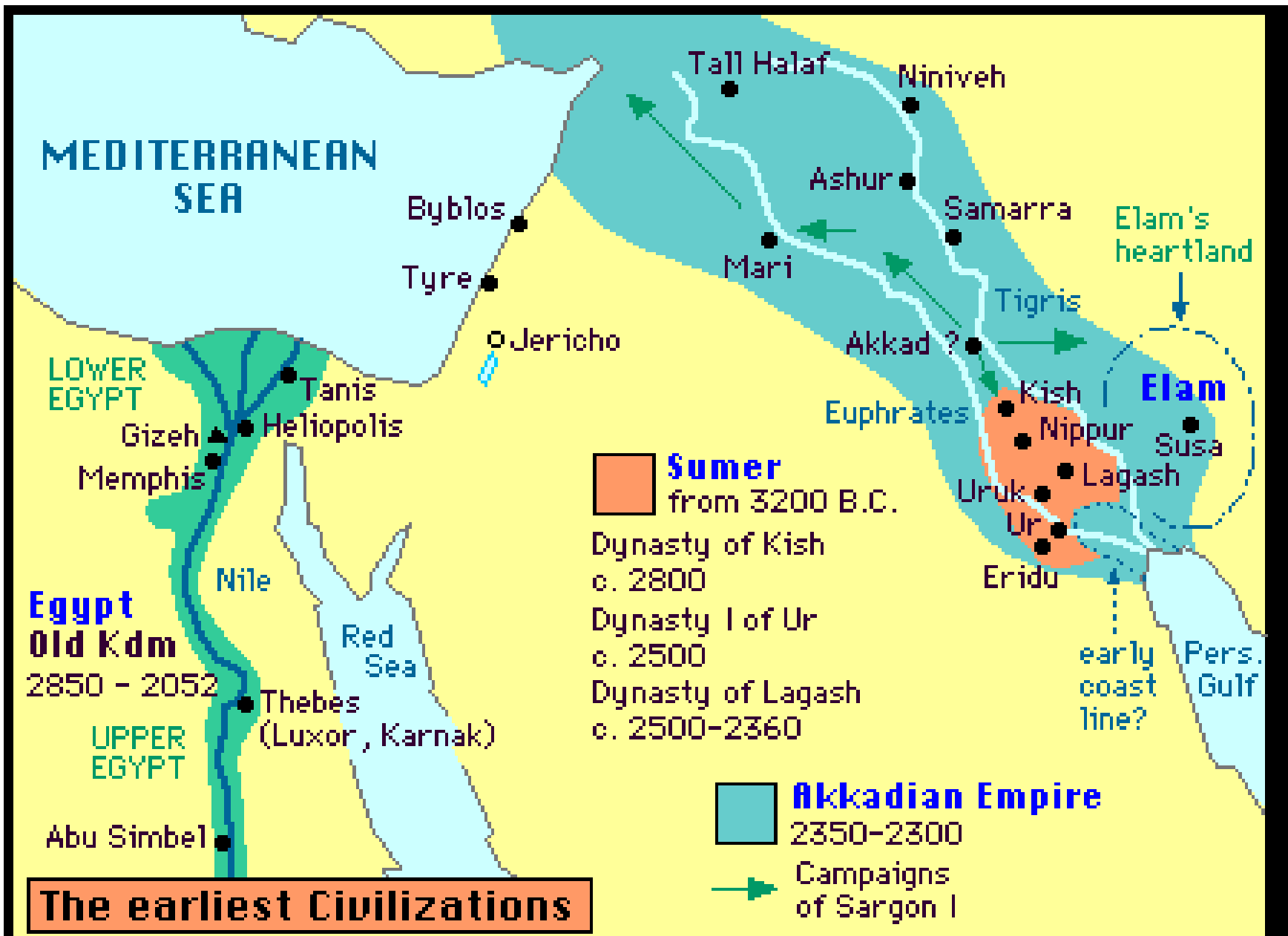


- Located on an arc of land that curves from the Persian Gulf to the eastern Mediterranean coast. The dark, rich soils and golden wheat fields earned it the name **Fertile Crescent**.
- The first known civilization in the Fertile Crescent was uncovered in the 1800s in Mesopotamia which means “between the rivers” of Euphrates and Tigris.
- **Control of these rivers was key to developments in Mesopotamia.** To survive and protect their farmland, villages along the riverbanks had to work together. **Temple priests or royal officials provided the leadership** that was necessary to ensure cooperation.



Social Structure in Sumer

- Around 3200 B.C., the first Sumerian cities emerged in the southern part of Mesopotamia. **They created bricks to build structures.**
- **Trade brought riches** to Sumerian cities. The Sumerians were the **first to make wheeled** vehicles.
- In each Sumerian city-state, the **ruler was responsible for maintaining the city walls and irrigations systems.**
- Each Sumerian city-state had a distinct social hierarchy. At the base of society were the majority of people, peasant farms.



Back to: [Worldmap](#)

Religion and Afterlife

- Sumerians practiced polytheism.
- Poly =
- Theology =
- Each city built a ziggurat, a pyramid shaped temple. At the top was a shrine to the gods.



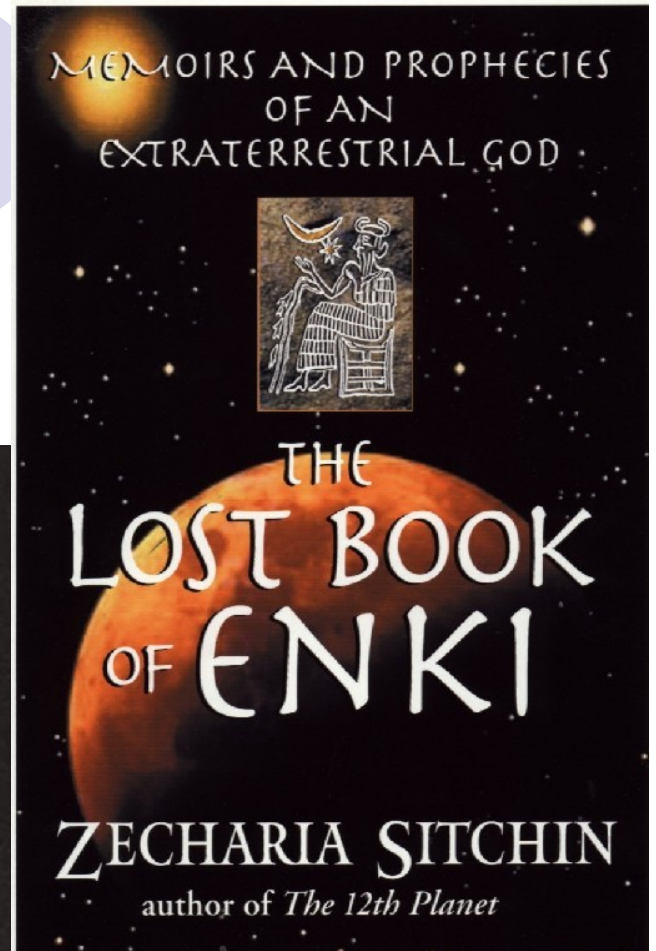
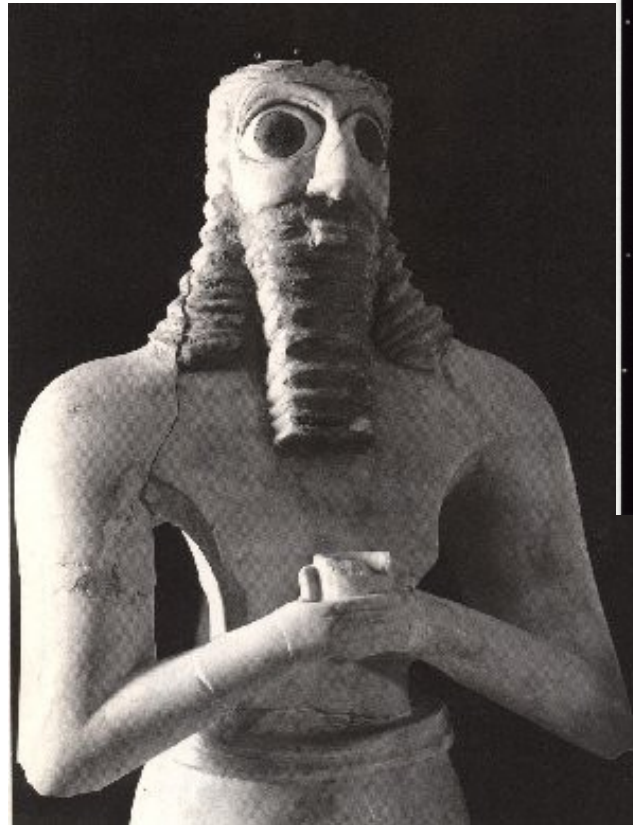


Religion

- The Sumerians believed in an afterlife, but thought the underworld was a grim place of no-release. They buried food and tools with their dead.
- Unlike the Egyptians, they did not imagine the afterlife in detail.
- They did not believe in rewards and punishments.

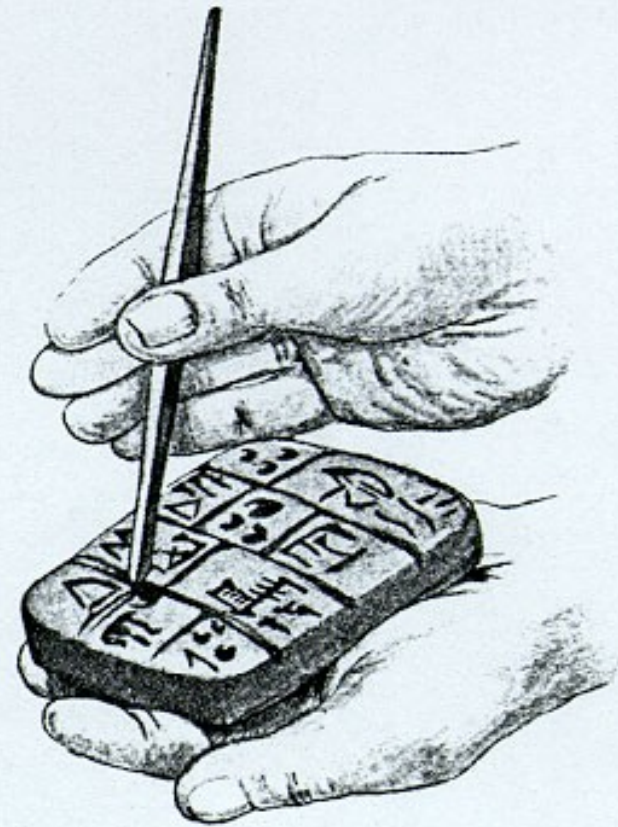
Gods

- An, lord of heaven
- Enlil, god of air and storms
- Enki, god of water and wisdom



The Evolution of Writing

- Sumerians invented the earliest known form of writing called **cuneiform** using a reed pen to make wedge-shaped marks on clay tablets.
- Cuneiform is from the Latin word for *wedge*.
- Sumerian **scribes** went through **years of** difficult **schooling** to acquire their skills.



▲ Writing on a soft clay tablet with a reed pen.



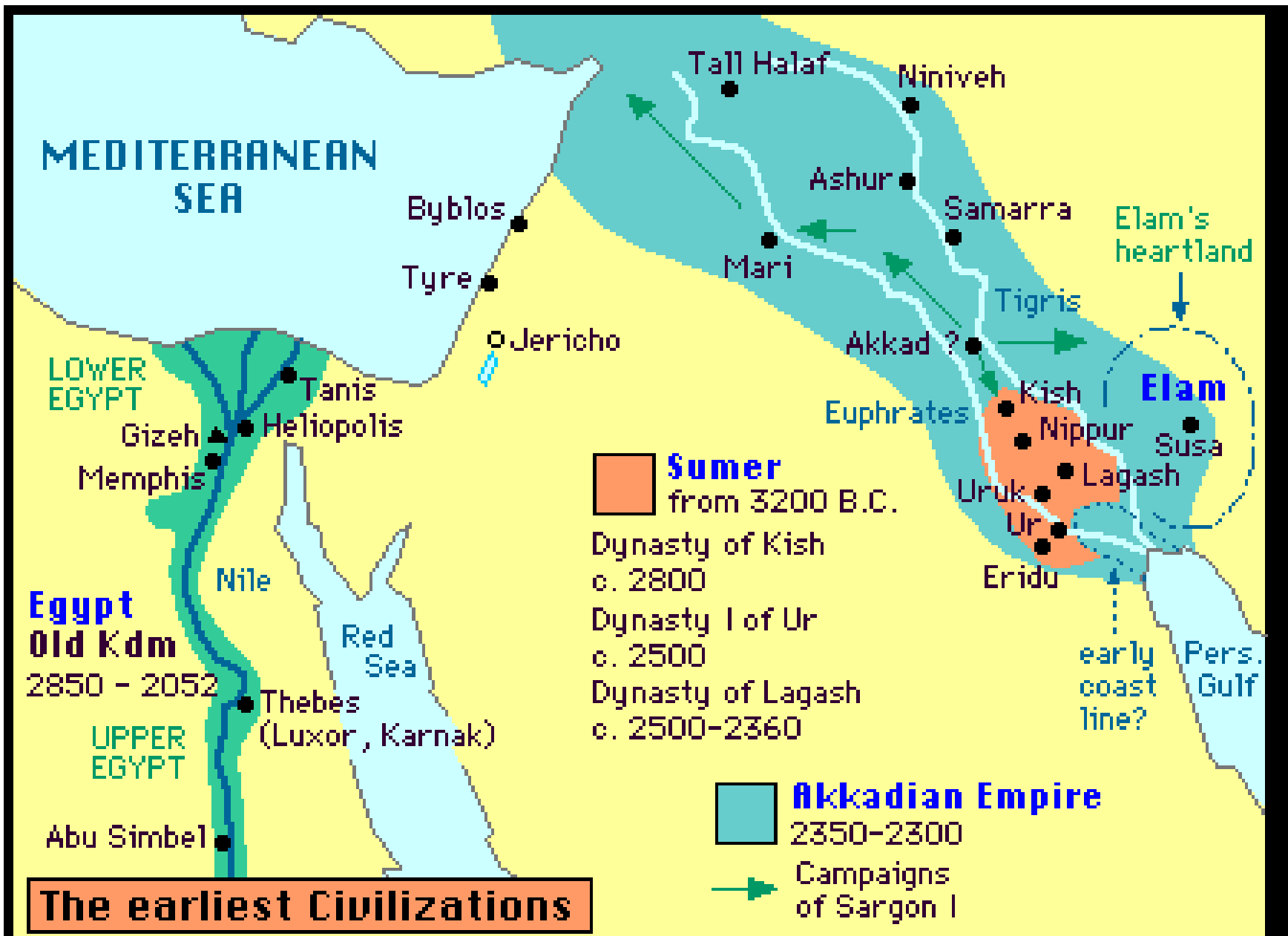
Sumerian Contribution Wheel

- Your next assignment is to read the packets at each station. Take notes of the most important facts that you and your group decide on.

Akkadians

- Sargon, King of Akkad, conquered the city-states (2300 B.C.) and built an empire.
- After his death, other invaders swept into the wide valley tumbling his empire into ruin
- Akkad were Semitic people, like the Hebrews





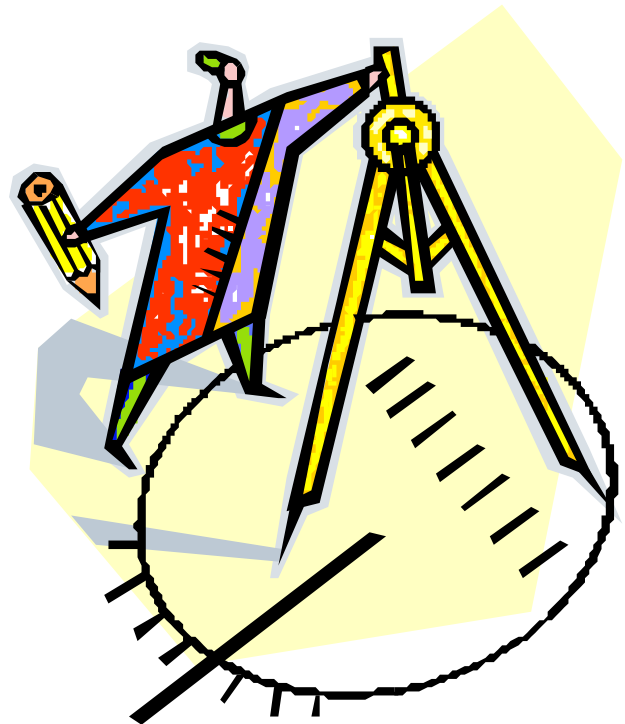
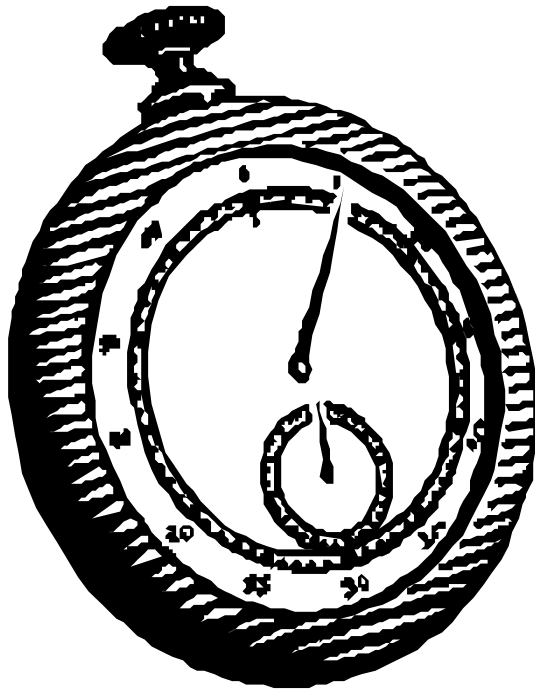
The Babylonians



- A Semitic people who spoke Akkadian, conquered Mesopotamia in about 2000 B.C. Its capital, Babylon, was on the Euphrates River
- About 1790, the king of Babylon, Hammurabi, brought the empire (much of Mesopotamia) under his control and established the first written laws, criminal and civil.

The Babylonians

- Invented the idea of a circle containing 360 degrees and the hour containing sixty minutes



Hammurabi's Code



- Hammurabi was not the author of the code. Most of the laws had been around since Sumerian Times, but Hammurabi wanted everyone in his empire to know the legal principles his government would follow.
- He had artisans carve nearly 300 laws on a stone pillar for all to see.
- This was the first time a ruler attempted to solidify all of the laws that would govern a state.

Hammurabi's Code



- **Criminal laws** dealt with offenses against others. Hammurabi's Code limited personal vengeance and encouraged social order.
- **Civil Law** dealt with private rights and matters, such as business contracts, marriage, taxes, and divorce. Much of Hummurabi's Code was designed to protect the powerless.



Law #196: “If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out.”

Does this sound familiar?

Hittites

The Babylonian empire fell to Hittite invaders

- Hittites were war-like people
- Invaded sometime in the 1600 B.C.
- Learned to extract iron ore and had a monopoly on the resource



The Assyrians



- Warlike people from northern Mesopotamia, the Assyrians began to consolidate a great empire
- For 500 years, they earned a reputation for being among the most feared warriors in history
- After Assurbanipal's death, people joined forces to destroy the Assyrian armies.

The Assyrians

- They were fierce, effective warriors
- Used chariots, and were the first to use cavalry, soldiers on horseback.
- In 700 B.C. the Assyrians captured Babylon, looted it, and destroyed it



The Assyrians



- At Nineveh, King Assurbanipal founded one of the first libraries. He ordered his scribes to collect cuneiform tablets from all over the Fertile Crescent.
- The library at Nineveh contained the Epic of Gilgamesh, one of the oldest works of literature. (we'll read this in class)
- Assyria fell in 612 B.C. due to a civil war and foreign invaders.

Babylon Revived



- Nebuchadnezzar revived the power of Babylon, rebuilt the canals, temples, walls and palaces of Babylon.
- Also called the Chaldeans
- Nebuchadnezzar built the Hanging Gardens of Babylon for his homesick wife
- In 587 B.C., he destroyed Jerusalem, sending the tribes of Judah into exile.
- Mentioned in the Book of Daniel

The Persian Empire



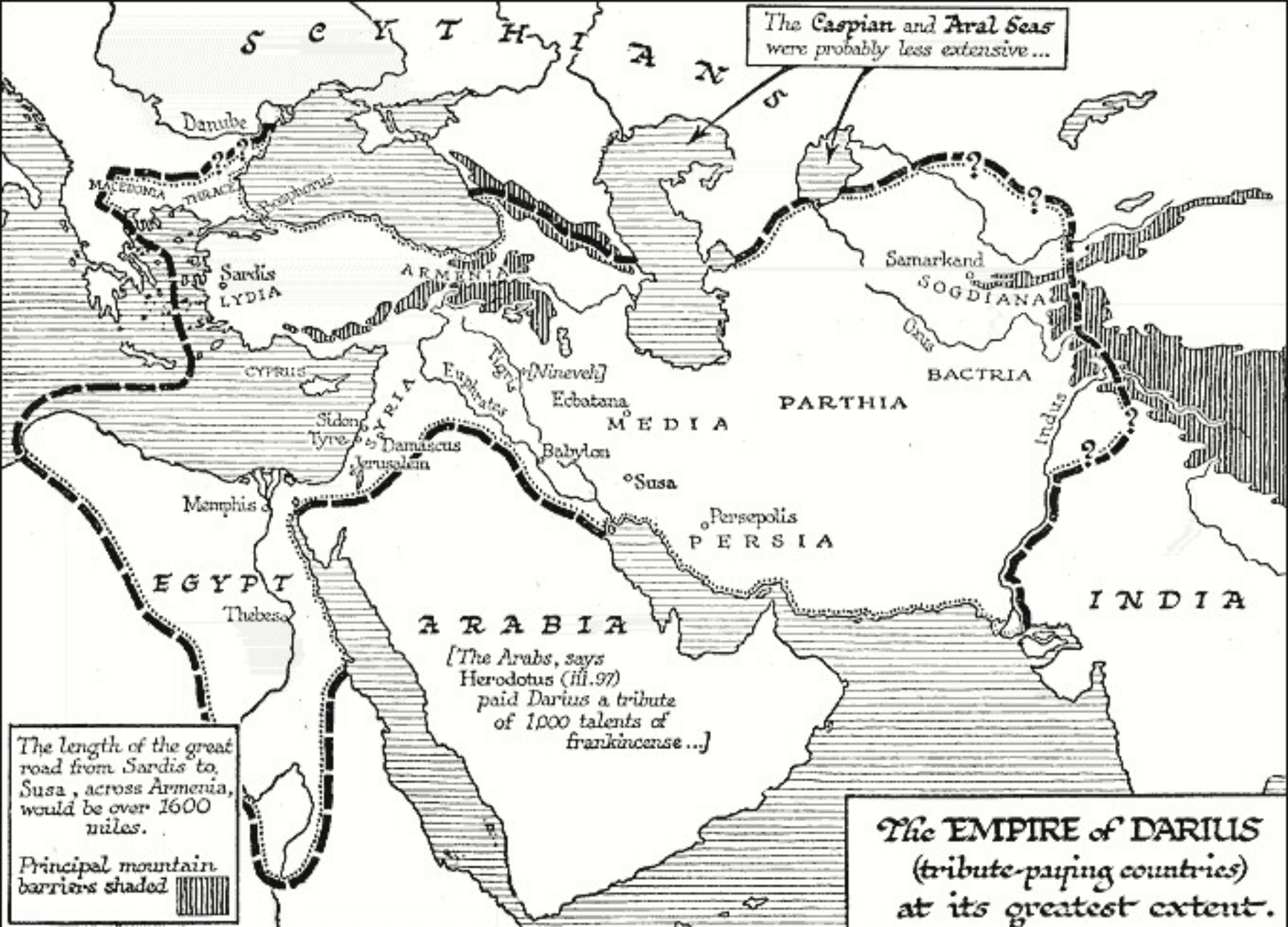
- In 539 B.C. Babylon fell to the Persian armies of Cyrus the Great. In general, Persian kings pursued a policy of tolerance.
- Darius unified the Persian Empire in 522. He adapted laws from the people he conquered.
- He had hundreds of miles of road built or repaired
- He set up a common set of weights and measures and encouraged the use of coins

Persian Rulers

- Cyrus the Great
- Darius I
- Xerxes I



Xerxes I



The Caspian and Aral Seas were probably less extensive...

The length of the great road from Sardis to Susa, across Armenia, would be over 1600 miles.

Principal mountain barriers shaded

[The Arabs, says Herodotus (iii.97) paid Darius a tribute of 1000 talents of frankincense...]

The EMPIRE of DARIUS (tribute-paying countries) at its greatest extent.

Persian Religion

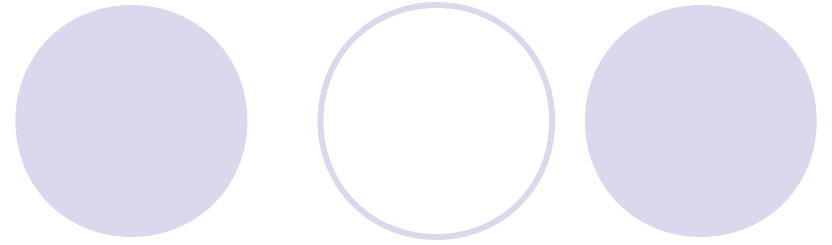
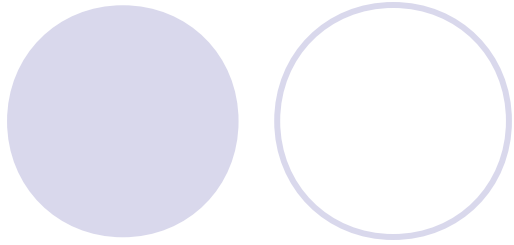
- **Zoroaster**, a Persian thinker, helped to unite the religious beliefs by teaching that a single, wise god ruled the world.
- On Judgment Day, all individuals would be judged for their actions. Those who had done good would enter paradise. Evil-doers would be condemned to eternal suffering.
- Christianity and Islam stressed similar ideas.



The Defeat of the Persian Empire

- Indians, Medes, Babylonians, Lydians, Greeks, Jews, Phoenicians, and Egyptians were for the first time all governed by one empire.
- Persia never conquered Greece.
- In 331 B.C., Alexander the Great defeated Persia





- More on Alexander the Great later...

- The End