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Organized government in ancient mesopotamia

Bowed to the king of Assyria Mesopotamia arguably invented the centralized state and the developed kingdom. The cities were political focal points as well as the center and leadership was passed on by king dynasties. As Mesopotamian culture developed the city states fused together in realms. There were also many officials. One of the highest positions was the writer, who worked closely with the king and the bureaucracy, recording events and counting up commodities. Temples provided welfare services and protected widows and orphans. The earliest reforms protecting the poor, widows and orphans were found in your and date to around 2000 f.Kr. Mesopotamians are said to have developed imperialism. The late second millennium f.Kr. has been called the first international era. It was a time when there was increased interaction between realms. The Assyrians created a kingdom that embraced many smaller kingdoms, making up a variety of ethnic groups. 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Past Horizons : online magazine site covering archaeology and heritage news as well as news about other scientific fields; The Archaeology Canal archaeologychannel.org explores archaeology and cultural heritage through streaming media; Ancient History Encyclopedia ancient.eu: is put out by a non-profit organization and contains articles on prehistory; Best of History Websites besthistoriesites.net is a good source of links to other sites; Essential humanities essential-humanities.net: provides information on history and art history, including sections Prehistory Kudurru by Gula-Eresh Sumer was a theocracy with slaves. Each city state worshipped its own god and was ruled by a leader who is said to have served as an intermediary between the local god and the people of the city-state. The leaders led the people into wars and controlled the complex water systems. Rich rulers built palaces and were buried with precious objects for a trip to the afterlife. A citizens' council may have chosen the leaders. Some scholars have described the Mesopotamian system of government as a theocratic socialism. The center of the government was the temple, where projects such as building diaries and irrigation canals were monitored, and food was split up after harvesting. Most Sumerian in writing recorded administrative information and kept accounts. Only priests were allowed to write. Early Sumerians established a powerful priesthood that served local gods, worshipped in temples that dominated the early cities. Much of the political and religious activity was directed at gods who controlled the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and nature in general. If people respected the gods and the gods acted sympathetically the Sumerians thought the gods would provide ample sunshine and water and prevent trials. If the people went against the wishes of the local god, and the god was not so benevolent: drought, floods, famine and locusts were the result. In Uruk kings attended n important religious rituals. A vase from Uruk shows a king presenting a whole set of gifts to a temple of the city goddess Inana. Kings supported temples and were expected to turn some of the spoils from wars and raids to temples. Mesopotamias are also credited with inventing the government bureaucracy. The taxes were in the form of tithing paid by farmers. day-to-day government affairs were handled by scribes and palace officials. They kept records of farmers' tithing and transactions. Some have called Sumer the epitome of the welfare of the city-state. Sam Roberts in the New York Times, Work was a duty, but Social Security was a right. It was personified by the goddess Nanshe, the first real welfare queen immortalized in the hymn as a benefactor who brings the refugee to her lap, finding shelter for the weak. ... Nanshe, the Mesopotamian goddess, was hailed by some bards by Sumer for her compassion and no doubt condemned by others as a dupe. [Source: Sam Roberts, New York Times, July 5, 1992] Claude Hermann and Walter Johns wrote in Encyclopedia Britannica: The state claimed certain proportions of all crops, stock, etc. The king's messengers could command any subject property that provides a receipt. Further, each city had its own octroi customs, customs, ferry charges, highway and water rates. The king had long ceased to be, if he ever were, the owner of the land. He had his own royal estates, his private estate and taxes from all his subjects. The senior officials had endowments and official residences. [Source: Claude Hermann Walter Johns, Babylonian Law — Hammurabi's Code. Eleventh edition of The Encyclopedia Britannica, 1910-1911.] Assurbanipal chase Eblaite kings were responsible for looking after widows, orphans and the poor as well as keeping together a strong and Britain. If they did not take care of the disadvantaged, they were supplanted by a group of elderly people. Citizens aired their grievances for the king in the audience of the king's palace. The early Mesopotamian city-states ruled a council of elders, led by a lugal (great man) who made decisions in times of crisis. Later, when times of crisis were more prolonged and continuous, the legal evolved into a kings who, like Egyptian rulers, were elevated to god-like status and said to have been lowered from heaven. In some Mesopotamia towns every quadrant was watched by a lugal, a kind of ward boss. Rulers of relatively equal power often directed each other like brother. The more powerful are often asked to be treated by less powerful kings like your father. Some women were given positions of power. Cuneiform tablets at Cornell described a 21st century f.Kr. Sumerian princess in the city of Garsana that has made researchers rethink the role of women in the ancient kingdom of yours. According to the Los Angeles Times: Administrative records show Simat-Ishtar ruled the estate after her husband died. During her reign, women achieved remarkably high status. They monitored men, were paid equal to those of their male colleagues and worked in construction, the clay tablets reveal. It is our first real filing the discovery of an institution run by a woman, said David Owen, the Cornell who led the study of the tablets. However, as researchers do not know exactly where the tablets were found, the site of the ancient Garsana cannot be excavated for further information. [Source: Jason Felch, Los Angeles Times, November 3, 2013] Cylinder Nabonidus Morris Jastrow said: In Babylonia and Assyria people, as a whole, had no stake in the government, and as we have seen, only a limited share of the religious cult, which was largely official and centered around the general welfare and welfare of the king and his court. Slavery continued in force until recent days, and although slaves could buy their freedom and could be adopted by their masters, and had many privileges, even to the extent of owning property and participating in commercial transactions, but the moral effect of the institution in degrading the dignity of human life, and in maintaining unjust class distinctions were nevertheless visible then Than it has been ever since. The temples had great accomplishments, which gave the country's religious organization a materialistic aspect and gave the priests an undue influence. [Source: Morris Jastrow, Lecture more than ten years after publishing his book Aspects of Religious Belief and Practice in Babylonia and Assyria 1911 &t;gt;] Political power and official prestige were permanently handed over to the rulers and their families and companions. We hear occasionally, of persons of humble birth rising to high positions, but the division of the classes into higher and the lower ranks was on the whole stiff. Uprisings were not rare both in Babylonia and Assyria, and internal disagreements, followed by serious unrest, revealed dissatisfaction with the majority with the yoke imposed on them, which, especially through forced military service and through taxes for the maintenance of temples, armies and the royal court, must often have borne heavily on them. The atrocities carried out mainly by the Wartime Assyrian rulers must also have reacted negatively to the general moral tone of the people. &t;gt; But such conditions prevailed everywhere in antiquity; Nor would it be difficult to parallel them at much later ages, and even among some of the leading nations of modern times. The general judgment regarding the ethics of the Babylonians and Assyrians therefore need not be changed because of the shadows that fall on the image that has been rolled out. A country that protects all communities that impose responsibility on husbands and fathers and ensures that this responsibility is not evaded, which protects its women and children, which, in short, as Hammurabi aptly puts it, aims to safeguard the weak from the tyranny of the strong and to provide justice to all the same, can be fairly classified among civilizations which, however short they may fall off, can be fairly classified among civilisations which, however short they may fall off, are not protected. ideal of the commonwealth, but recognizes obedience to ethical principles as the basis for well-being, true culture and true religion. &t;gt; And yet how harsh is the judgment of the Hebrew prophets and salmists of both Babylonia and Assyria! Prophet and religious poet unite to accuse them of the most horrific crimes; they exhaust the Hebrew vocabulary by pronouncing curses over Assyria and Babylonia. All nature is represented as joy at their downfall, and it has often been noted that the prediction that jackals and hyenas would wander through the ruins of the palaces of Assyria and the temples of Babylonia has been fulfilled almost to that letter. The devout Jews of later ages saw the divine punishment sent for the many crimes of these empires of the East, in the annihilation of the great cities of the Euphrates Valley and the region to the north, until their very foundation stone was forgotten. &t;gt; It was natural that for the Hebrew patriots Assyria and Babylonia seem to be the embodiment of all evils: Was it not through Assyria that Israel fell, and through Babylonia, that Jerusalem was destroyed? Through double battles the national life of the Jews was threatened with total extermination. Both empires therefore appeared to the Jews as incarnations of all that were evil and cruel and sinful. &t;gt; Assyria was cruel to her enemies, and if Babylonia has a gentler record, it is because she never so much developed military prowess as did her northern cousin. Cruelly to enemies is actually the darkest stain on the escutcheon of all nations, ancient or modern. The Hebrews are no exception, and one only has to read the pages of their own chronicles to match therein some of the atrocities so vividly depicted by the Assyrians on their monuments. To judge the ethics of some people fairly, we must take them at their best. War for conquest, while it can lead to heroic feats, unfolds the worst passions of men. That has always been the case and always will be. The conqueror is always haughty and generally merciless, the conquered are always embittered and filled with hatred towards those who have humiliated them. Tested by their attitude to rivals and enemies, which modern nation can stand the verdict of an Isaiah or a Jeremiah? The culture that developed in the Euphrates Valley is full of flaws, its ethos a flawed, religion full of superstition. Assyria exhausted its vitality by incessant war; Babylonia fell into disrepair through internal disagreements and through intrigue against its rival. The pages of the annals of both nations are full of heinous stains, but the mauls all drawbacks, the tendency of culture, religion and ethics were toward higher ideals; movement was in the right direction. &t;gt; Multi-sided can be touchstones of progress. Perhaps the sharpest thing is respect for human life. Herein modern civilizations and, of course, a progress after antiquity. We have become more humane, although the lowest instincts of man remain, and can always remain unexpensive. Nevertheless, the ancient civilizations, and not least among them, have much to teach us in the Euphrates Valley and spread its influence far and wide. To the study of religion Babylonia and Assyria the call is full of promise.- i - troll, nam et hie dii sunt. Ay, so yes they are! The weather of the divine sigh through this religion, as it does through all sincere religions, no matter how different their forms, or humble and diverse their yearnings of truth. &t;gt; Babylonian tablet with administrative text Morris Jastrow said: The kings themselves, but not activated, perhaps, at the highest motives, set an example of obedience to laws that involved the recognition of the rights of others. From an oldest period has come down to us a remarkable monument record of the transport of large lands in northern Babylonia to a king of Kish. Manishtusu, (about 2700 f.Kr.), where hundreds of names are registered from whom the land was purchased, with specific descriptions of the writings belonging to each one, as well as the terms of sale. The king here appears with rights no more exclusive or predominant than a private citizen. Not only does he give full compensation to each owner, but he undertakes to find employment and support for 154 workers and 87 supervisors who had been affected by the transfer. [Source: Morris Jastrow, Lecture more than ten years after publishing his book Aspects of Religious Belief and Practice in Babylonia and Assyria 1911 &t;gt;] The many border stones that come down to us (registering the sale of fields or grant privileges), which were created as memorials to transactions, are silent but eloquent witnesses to the respect of private property. The inscriptions on these stones and with serious curses in the names of the gods against those who must create false claims, or who should change the wording of the agreement, or in any way interfere with the terms that are recorded. The symbols of the gods were engraved on these border stones as a precaution and a protection for those whose rights and privileges the stone is recorded. The Babylonians may well repeat the condemnations of the Hebrew prophets against those who removed the boundaries of their neighbors' fields. Even the Assyrian monarchs, most given for conquest and looting, boast in their annals of having restored property to the rightful owners and of having respected the privileges of their subjects and relatives. &t;gt; For example, Sargon of Assyria (721-705 f.Kr.), while parading his conquests in vain-glorious terms, and proclaiming his unparalleled skill, underlines that he the privileges of the great centers of the south, Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon, and that he protected the weak and corrected their injuries. His successor Sennacherib claims to be the guardian of justice and the lover of justice. But it is the very same monarchs who treated their enemies with unspeakable cruelty, inflicted torture on prisoners, violating women, mutilating corpses, burning and looting cities. &t;gt; More important is the attitude of a monarch like Hammurabi, who, in the prologue and epilogue to his famous code, refers to himself as a king of justice, enabled by an exalted desire to protect the weak, widow and the orphans. In the creation of copies of this code in the important centers of his kingdom, his hope is that everyone can realize that he, Hammurabi, was trying to be a father to his people. He urges all those who have a just reason to bring it to justice and gives them assurance that justice will be done, all this as early as almost four thousand years ago! &t;gt; On a tablet that resembles the privileges granted to Sippar, Nippur, and Babylon— which we have just seen, Sargon refers to in his annals — a series of warnings have been put together in the introduction that can be taken as general illustrations of the principles that rulers should be guided by: If the King does not take into account the law, his people will be destroyed; his power will drift. If he did not adefing the law of his country, Ea, the king of fate, will judge his destiny and cast him to one side. If he doesn't have his abkallu, his days will be shortened. If he does not give ade priestess, his country will rebel against him. If he gives ade to the wicked, the confusion will set in. If he gives ade to Ea's counsel, the great gods will help him in righteous decrees and decisions. If he oppresses a man of Sippar and perverse justice, Shamash, the judge in heaven and earth, will annul the law of his country, so there will be neither abkallu nor judge to do justice. If the Nippurians are brought before him to judgment, and he oppresses them with a heavy hand, Enlil, the landlord, will cause him to be sent by an enemy and his army to be overthrown; Commander and General will be humiliated and driven away. If he causes the treasury of the Babylonians to be entered for looting, if he cancels and reverses the suits of the Babylonians, then Marduk, the lord of heaven and earth, will bring his enemy against him, and will turn over to his enemy his property and possessions. If he unjustly orders a man of Nippur, Sippar, or Babylon to be thrown in prison, the city where injustice has been done will be rendered desolate, and a strong enemy will invade the prison to which he has been cast. &t;gt; &t;gt;

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