

## Lecture 2: Empires in Mesopotamia

WC 16-21

PP 24-29: Code of Hammurabi

### Chronology:

2350-2160 BCE

#### Akkadian Empire

- 2350 Sargon topples Lugalzagesi
- 2250 Reign of Naram-Sin

2160-2100

#### Post-Akkadian Period

- Gutians
- Lagash

2100-2000

#### Ur III (Sumerian Revival)

- Ur-Nammu
- Shulgi is deified
- Ziggurat of Ur

2000-1800

#### Amorite and Elamite Invasions

#### Star Terms:

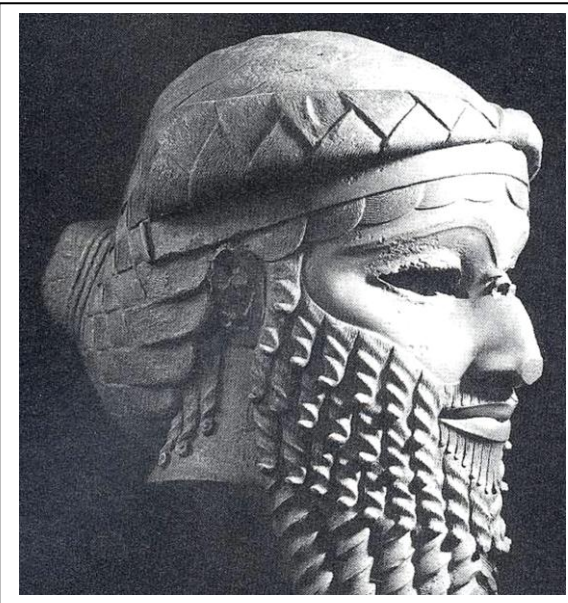
- Sargon
- Naram-Sin
- Ur III (Sumerian Revival)

#### Geog. Terms:

- **Zagros Mountains**
- **Arabian Desert**
- **Syrian Plain**

### A. Head of an Akkadian ruler (Ninevah, Iraq), c. 2350-2200 BCE, copper

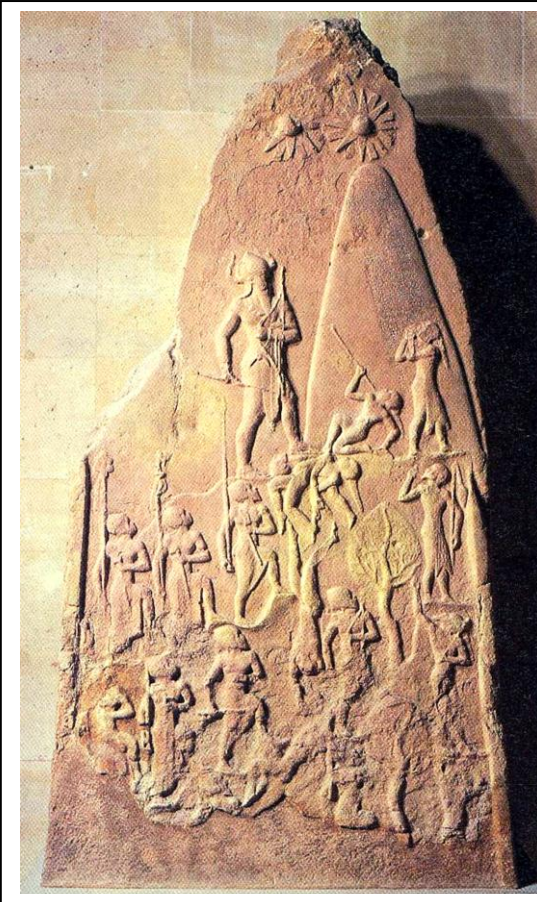
- balance of naturalism and stylization
- introduction of cast sculpture
- Akkadian concept of imperial power



When first found, this work was thought to represent Sargon... The head epitomizes physical ideals of Akkadian kingship, stressing as it does by means of the beard and elaborate hairstyle the heroic, masculine importance of hair. It displays the perfect blend of varied patterns of beard and hair that set off the lips, nose, and eyes of the ruler, a combination that imbues the king with a real sense of serene, yet powerful and all-knowing majesty. It is possible that the head was symbolically mutilated to destroy its power, for the ears appear to have been deliberately removed, as have the inlays that would have filled the eye sockets.

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- B. Victory Stele of Naram-Sin (from Susa, Iran), 2254-2218 BCE, pink sandstone, Louvre Museum,
- power-art, propaganda



Sargon I's grandson, **Naram-Sin**, recorded his victory over a mountain people, the Lullubians (Guti), in a commemorative stele—an upright stone marker. The stele of Naram-Sin is a good example of so-called *Machtkunst* (German for 'power art'), for it proclaims the military, political, and religious authority of Naram-Sin. The focus of the composition is Naram-Sin, who appears as god-hero-king, his divinity signaled by his horned helmet, his heroic magnificence suggested by the perfection of his body, and his role as gallant king and warrior intimated by his stance with one foot slightly raised, crushing the broken bodies of the defeated enemy. Ichnographically, Naram-Sin is depicted as much larger than everyone else. This iconographic idea would persist in several civilizations, even ones that were isolated from one another. This type of public representation would also influence Neo-Assyrian art 1500 years later.

### Old Babylonia and the Power of Law

#### Chronology:

- 1800-1595 Old Babylonian Empire
- 1792-50 BCE Reign of Hammurabi
  - 1595 Sack of Babylon by Hittites

#### Star Terms:

- Code of Hammurabi
- Shamash
- Marduk

#### Geog. Terms:

- **Babylon**
- **Mari**

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### C. Stele with law code of Hammurabi (Susa, Iran), c. 1780 BCE, basalt

- use of law to establish a central government
- god (Shamash) and ruler linked in justice

**Hammurabi** (c. 1817-1750 BCE) was approximately twenty-five years old when he became ruler of Babylon. During the first thirty years of his reign, Hammurabi waged a series of successful military campaigns against neighboring tribes. The *Code of Hammurabi* was issued at the end of the king's reign (9-10). The relief sculpture at the top shows the king standing before the supreme judge, the sun god Shamash. The figures were executed in smooth, rounded forms with a minimum of linear surface detail. Shamash wears the four-tiered, horned headdress that marks him as a god and a robe that bares one shoulder and ends in a stiff, flounced skirt. Rays of the sun rise from behind his shoulders, and in his right hand he holds a measuring rod and a rope ring, symbols of justice and power. Hammurabi faces Shamash confidently, his hand raised in a gesture of greeting. Any suggestion of familiarity in the lack of distance is offset by the formality of the pose. The smaller, earthly law enforcer remains standing in the presence of the much larger divine judge, seated on his ziggurat throne

