

Chapter 4: Early Empires

Lesson 1 Mesopotamian Empires

MAIN IDEAS

Geography Powerful city-states expanded to control much of Mesopotamia.

Government Babylon built a large empire in the Fertile Crescent.

Government Hammurabi created one of the first codes of law.

The First Empire Builders

ESSENTIAL QUESTION Who controlled Mesopotamia?

Sargon Builds an Empire

- Sumerian city-state kings fought over land from 3000 to 2000 B.C.
- Sargon of Akkad was powerful leader, creator of world's first empire
 - took over northern and southern Mesopotamia around 2350 B.C.
 - **empire**—many different peoples, lands controlled by one ruler (emperor)

The Akkadian Empire

- Sargon's empire was called Akkadian Empire
 - included **Fertile Crescent**—lands from Mediterranean Sea to Persian Gulf
 - was known for rich soil, water, and good farming
- Sargon's conquests spread Akkadian ideas, culture, writing system
- Empires encourage trade and may bring peace to their peoples
 - peoples of several cultures share ideas, technology, customs

REVIEW QUESTION

How do empires change the lives of people who live in them?

The Babylonian Empire

ESSENTIAL QUESTION Which empires ruled the Fertile Crescent?

Babylonians Expand

- Akkadian Empire lasted about 200 years
- Amorites invaded Sumer about 2000 B.C., chose Babylon as capital
- **Hammurabi**—powerful Amorite king who ruled from 1792 to 1750 B.C.
 - extended empire across Mesopotamia, Fertile Crescent
 - appointed governors, tax collectors, judges to control lands
 - watched over agriculture, trade, construction

REVIEW QUESTION

How did Hammurabi control his huge empire?

Hammurabi's Law Code

ESSENTIAL QUESTION Why did Hammurabi create a law code?

A Code of Laws

- Hammurabi wanted code of law to control vast empire of many peoples
 - **code of law**—set of written rules for people to obey
 - studied set of existing rules, combined them into single code of law

Justice For All

- Code's goal was to bring **justice**—fair treatment of people
 - listed illegal acts, had different punishments for each social class
 - gave rights to land's people, including women, children

Hammurabi's Legacy

- Code formed idea that government should provide protection, justice
 - Hammurabi wanted to end personal revenge as a way to solve problems
- Spread idea that society should be run by rule of law
 - law is applied to all people, not just a few
- Code was written in cuneiform, displayed on pillars near temple
 - suggests everyone has a right to know laws and punishments

REVIEW QUESTION

What was the purpose of Hammurabi's Code?

Lesson Summary

- Sargon of Akkad built an empire of many different peoples under one ruler and one government.
- Hammurabi expanded the Babylonian Empire and brought its peoples together by wise government.
- Hammurabi created a single code of law that set up well-defined rules of treatment for all.

Why It Matters Now...

Hammurabi's Code established the idea that rule of law is an important part of society. Rule of law that guarantees fair treatment is practiced in most countries today.