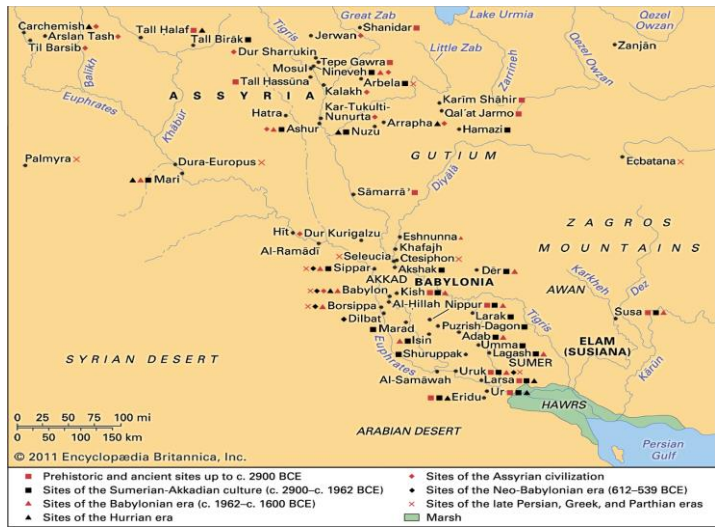


BABYLONIAN CIVILIZATION

Location and Sources



- The splendid city of Babylon, located between the Euphrates and the Tigris some 95 km south of Baghdad.
- The site of Babylon was first identified in the 1800s in what is now Iraq.
- Later excavations, undertaken by the German archaeologist Robert Koldewey in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, established that the city had been built and rebuilt several times.
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- The Babylonian **woman** had certain important legal rights.
- She could **hold property, engage in business, and qualify as a witness.**
- The **husband, however, could divorce her on relatively light grounds**, or, if she had borne him no children, he could marry a second wife.
- Husbands could **divorce wives who were undutiful** by returning them to their families as well as **wives could similarly divorce their husbands** for cause and take their dowries with them as they left.
- A man could sell his wife to discharge a debt.
- In **Hammurabi's Code**, a woman was considered the property of her father or husband, who administered her dowry.
- If a woman died, her dowry would go back to her father, to her brothers, or to her sons.
- If a married woman were found **guilty of adultery, she could be drowned** (or only saved at the mercy of her husband).
- **Women were afforded some protections in the society, particularly if they were mothers.**
- **Widows** were also given some **protections**, such as the **right to**

stay in their husband's houses for as long as they wanted (unless they chose to remarry).

- **Children** were under the absolute authority of their parents, who could disinherit them or could sell them into slavery.
- In the normal course of events children were loved and, at the death of the parents, inherited their property.
- **Devadasis** (married to god) were respected in the Babylonian society.
- **Unmarried women of the upper class was prominent in Devadasis.**
- After becoming a devadasi, the girl was spending money received from her father as personal property.
- She could marry after spending a few days as a devadasi.
- She had to live separately from her husband when she became a Devadasi.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

- When we speak of the **economy of a country**, we mean the system which that country uses to **produce, distribute, and consume goods.**
- The economy of Babylonia was **based**, like that of Sumer, **on agriculture.**
- **Bartering was used** in Babylonia, too, but money gradually replaced it as a means of exchange.

- The **wool went out from the stores to be spun and woven** in the villages and towns which was a predominantly female occupation.
- In addition to **woollen cloth**, **linen** was also produced, though on a smaller scale, is mentioned in the archive we have referred to.
- The **woollen cloth produced covered a wide range** of quality-suited for king and slave.
- Another material extensively used in the ancient Babylon was **leather**. There is frequent mention of leather-workers.
- Amongst the things for which leather was used were items of **clothing**, shoes, shields and helmets, horse harness, the tyres of chariots etc.
- One of the most important aspects of ancient Babylonian industry was its **metal technology**.
- **Copper ores are of widespread occurrence in the mountains** north of Mesopotamia, from Anatolia to the Caspian Sea that began copper technology.
- After this, the general use of **bronze** began.
- Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin, and has the advantage of being both harder than pure copper and easier to cast.
- Several **objects of bronze**, such as **vases, swords and axes**, occur in the Royal Tombs of Ur.
- **Iron was not-used** to any extent in Mesopotamia.

- **Another very ancient craft was that of the potter**, to whom we possibly owe the invention of the wheel.
- **Ornaments made of beads of metals and stones were also a developed industry.**
- Many objects made of **ivory and precious woods** have found from many cities which would have an important craft.

Trade

- **Trade was an integral part of their life** and of Babylonian civilization.
- The **canals were also used for traffic and transportation.**
- **Import-export of grains, dates, oil, wood and other commodities was done through waterways only.**
- The use of big boats and small ships is also mentioned in Hammurabi's law code and Command letters.
- Hammurabi's law code has given details of **the laws to determine the limits of liability between the owner of the ship, the head seafarer and the owner of the goods.**
- Probably a **special officer was appointed by the state to manage water traffic.**
- Trade was the **key to wealth.**
- The **kings** knew that to preserve their own wealth they had to **promote trade.**
- **They supported the merchants and would often ransom them if**