



# Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia

By Stephen Bertman

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Modern-day archaeological discoveries in the Near East continue to illuminate our understanding of the ancient world, including the many contributions made by the people of Mesopotamia to literature, art, government, and urban life. *The Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* describes the culture, history, and people of this land, as well as their struggle for survival and happiness, from about 3500 to 500 BCE. Mesopotamia was the home of a succession of glorious civilizations--Sumeria, Babylonia, and Assyria--which flourished together for more than three millennia. Sumerian mathematicians devised the sixty-minute hour that still rules our lives; Babylonian architects designed the famed Tower of Babel and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon; Assyrian kings and generals, in the name of imperialism, conducted some of the shrewdest military campaigns in recorded history. Readers will identify with the literary works of these civilizations, such as the Code of Hammurabi and the Epic of Gilgamesh, as they are carried across centuries to a period in time intimately entwined with the story of the Bible. Maps and line drawings provide examples of Mesopotamian geography, while other chapters present the Mesopotamian struggle to create civilized life in a fertile land racked by brutal conquest.

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### Editorial Review

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Bertman, professor emeritus of classics at the University of Windsor, has made a useful contribution to Facts On File's Handbook to Life series. Covering the lives of Assyrians, Babylonians, and Sumerians from around 3500 to 500 B.C.E., the book is arranged topically, with chapters on geography, archaeology, government, religion, language and literature, arts, and daily life, among other subjects. Each chapter has citations to the extensive bibliography. Most of the works in the larger bibliography are technical and specialized, but a "Note to the Reader" lists several popular works that could be found in a larger public library. Bertman's writing is formal but accessible, with touches of dry humor.

Subsections within the chapters deal with more specific topics. In the chapter on government, there are capsule biographies of political leaders, mostly kings. The chapter on archaeology provides a list of archaeologists who have made major discoveries in the region. Gods and goddesses are described in the chapter on religion. There is an interesting concluding chapter about the legacy of Mesopotamia and how it endures. A brief section on Aramaic-speaking Chaldeans who migrated from an ancient village in Iraq to Detroit in the twentieth century suggests that the legacy is more alive than we realize. Bertman notes, too, how many archaeological sites have been put at risk by recent political and military actions in the region.

The book is illustrated with black-and-white photographs and line drawings, which should copy well. Appendixes include a chronological table and a list of museums with major Mesopotamian collections. A useful purchase for medium-sized to large public libraries and academic libraries with undergraduate Middle Eastern ancient history classes.

*RBB*

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#### Review

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#### About the Author

**Stephen Bertman** is Professor Emeritus of Classical Studies at the University of Windsor, Ontario and adjunct lecturer in art history at the University of Michigan, Dearborn. His publications include *Doorways Through Time: The Romance of Archaeology*.

### Users Review

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**Gary Lopez:**

Precisely why? Because this Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia is an unordinary book that the inside of the guide waiting for you to snap it but latter it will surprise you with the secret that inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who have write the book in such amazing way makes the content inside of easier to understand, entertaining technique but still convey the meaning totally. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This amazing book will give you a lot of benefits than the other book have such as help improving your skill and your critical thinking method. So , still want to hesitate having that book? If I had been you I will go to the guide store hurriedly.

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