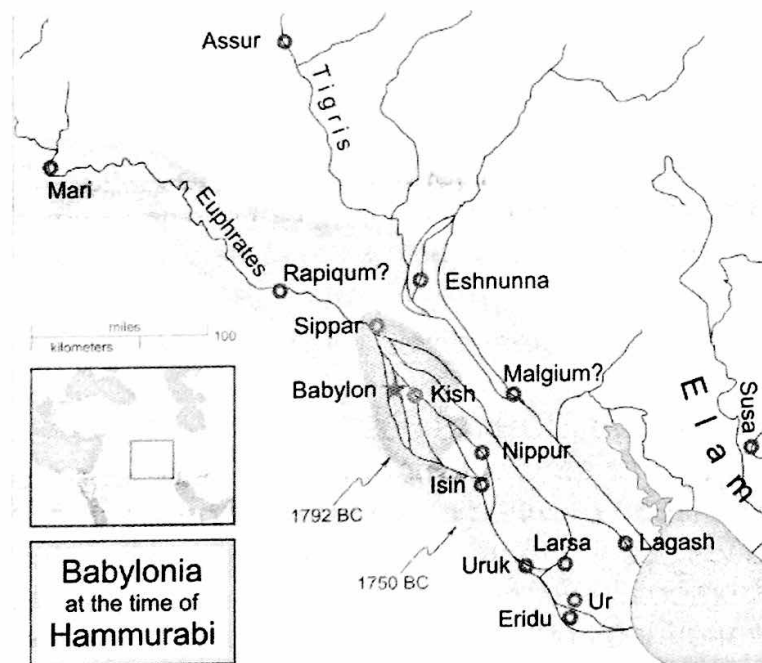


The cities of Sumer grew larger and larger as the wealth of the temples expanded. They controlled large areas of the fertile land near the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. When cities grow to be this large and wealthy and traded with each other, historians called them *city-states*. Each city-state had its own specialization of workers that promoted trade within Sumer and across Afroeurasia.

Eventually, in about 2200 BC/BCE, the rule of the Sumerian city Akkad, Sargon, conquered all of the other Sumerian city-states. His descendants who ruled after him declared themselves to be living gods. The resident gods at the cities temples became less powerful, and the entire society became subject to one ruler. Sometimes new rulers, or kings, would come from different cities and the center of power would change. About 1000 years after Sargon, Hammurabi became king of Babylon and ruled all of Mesopotamia.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hammurabi%27s_Babylonia_1.svg

Men and women lived on equal terms during Paleolithic and even Neolithic times, but in the era of agrarian civilizations these roles changed. Women became more responsible for maintaining a household, while men were responsible for work outside of the household (farming, trading, becoming a soldier). Though some early leaders in Sumer may have been women, after the city-states were conquered they rarely joined in politics.

Sumerians developed the first known form of writing called *cuneiform*. The Sumerian writing system had 3,000 characters. With so many letters to learn, being a scribe, or a person who could write Sumerian script, was a full time job.