

**Class 11<sup>th</sup> | History**



**Section : A**

Writing and  
**& City life**

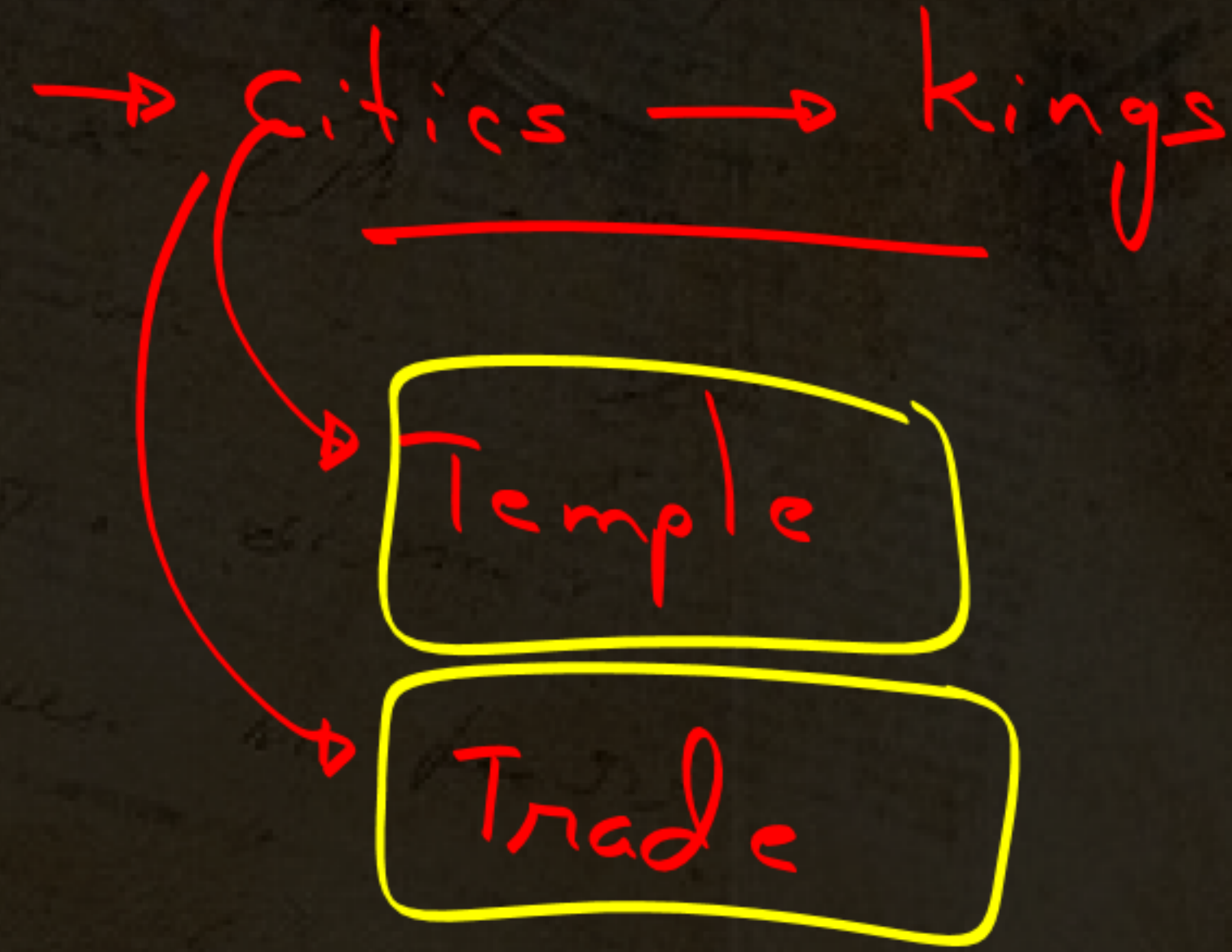
**Lecture -04**



## Part I

### RECAP

- Mesopotamian - Geography.
- Significance of urbanism
- Movement of goods into Cities
- The Development of writing
- The System of writing → Literacy
- The use writing.



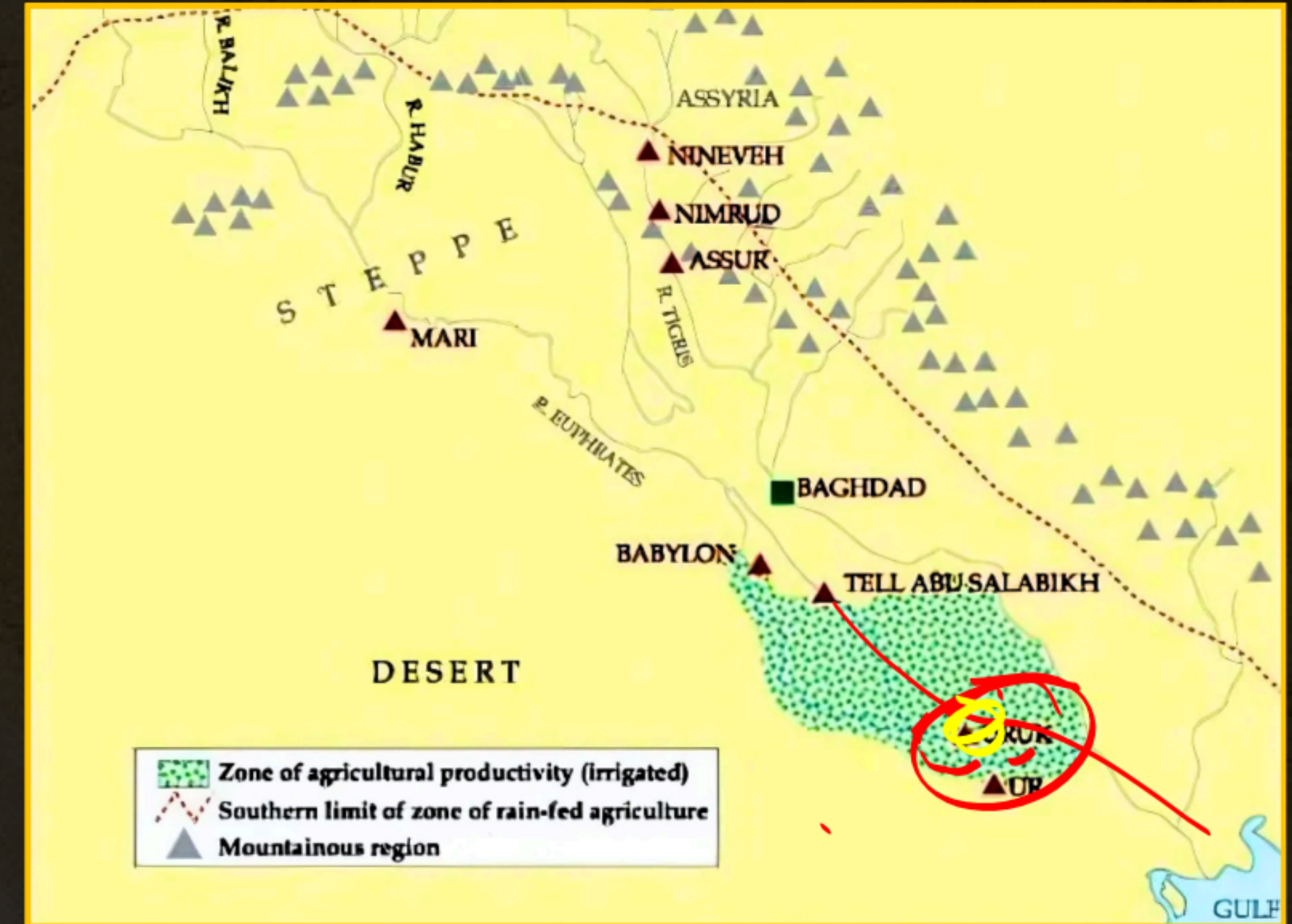


# URBANISATION IN SOUTHERN MESOPOTAMIA: TEMPLES AND KINGS

From 5000 BCE - Settlement begun to develop in southern mesopotamia

## Cities of various kinds:

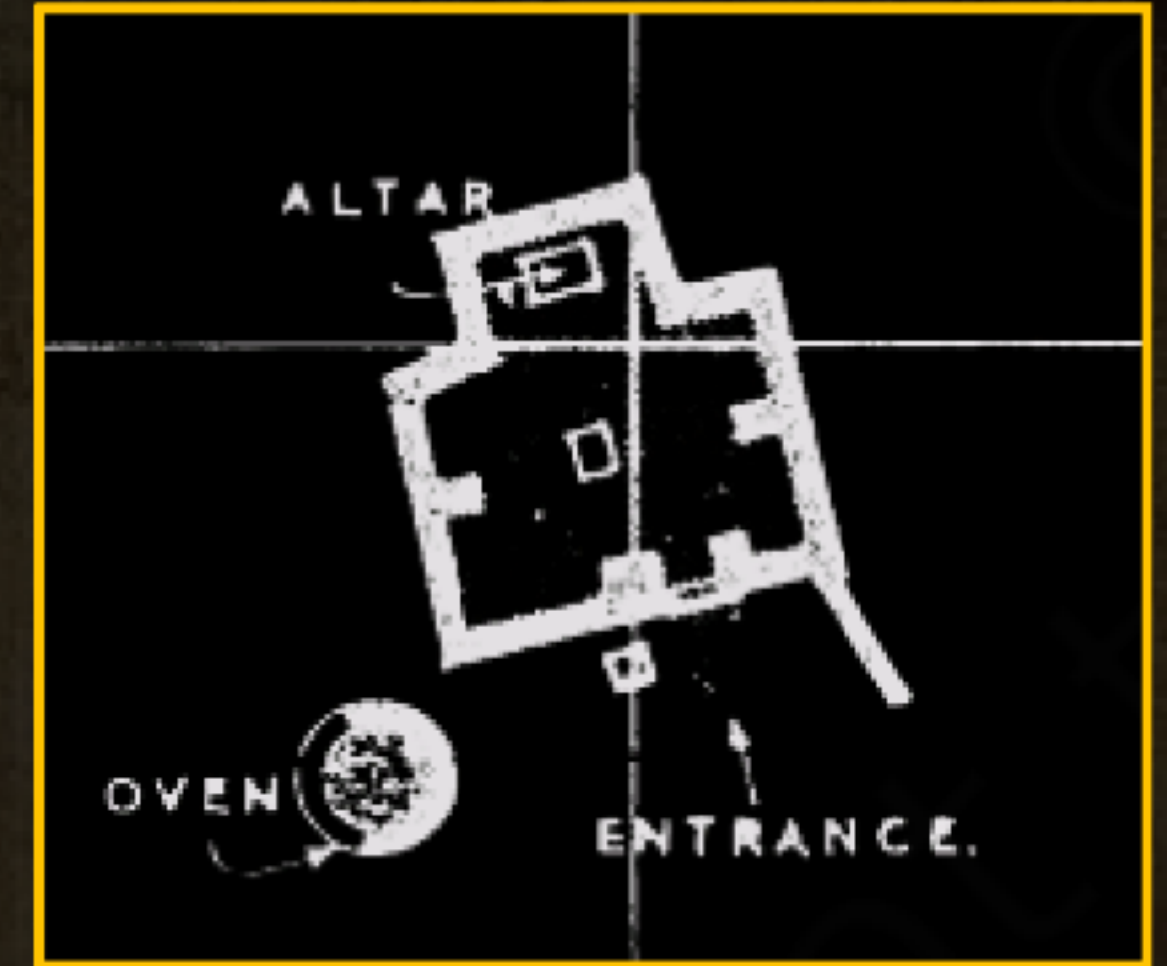
1. **Temples cities** - ( Developed around temples ) - Uruk
2. **Trade cities** - ( Developed as centres of Trade ) - Mari
3. **Imperial cities**





## Temple Cities :

- **Earliest:** Small shrines of unbaked bricks around **5000 BCE**.
- **Evolution:** By **3000 BCE**, temples grew into large brick complexes with courtyards, distinct from ordinary houses by their in-and-out walls.
- **Functions:**
  - Residences of gods (e.g., Moon God of Ur, Inanna of Love and War). - Focus of worship ( Brought grains, curd and fish )
  - Centers of production (oil pressing, weaving) and trade.
  - Stored and distributed grain, fish, and other goods, keeping written records.



The earliest known temple of the south, c.5000 BCE (plan).



A temple of a later period, c.3000 BCE. with an open courtyard and in-and-out façade (as excavated).



# Problems

## Natural Problems

- Outlet channels of the Euphrates would have too much water one year and flood the crops, and sometimes they would change course altogether due to which villages were periodically relocated in Mesopotamia.

## Man - Made Problems

- Those who lived on the upstream stretches of a channel could divert so much water into their fields that villages downstream were left without water.
- Or they could neglect to clean out the silt from their stretch of the channel, blocking the flow of water further down



Conflicts

CONNECT THE DOTS :



Problems

## KINGS

- **Origins:** Emerged from successful war chiefs who distributed loot and enslaved captives.
- **Role and Functions:** Gained authority by enhancing community welfare-  
building temples, fetching resources, and managing labour.
  - Leaders encouraged the settlement of villagers close to themselves, get an army together, people get safe living in close proximity to one another.
- **Example:** Enmerkar's trade expeditions and temple beautification at Uruk



## EXAMPLE OF URUK AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

- Around 3000 BCE, grew to → 250 hectares.
- ✓ • Have a defensive wall
- Was occupied from about 4200 BCE to 400 CE,
- ✓ • About 2800 BCE → 400 hectares.
- War captives and local people were put to work for the temple, or directly for the ruler, rather than agricultural tax, which was compulsory.
- These employees were paid rations.
- As Hundreds of ration lists have been found, with people's names, and the quantities of grain, cloth or oil allotted to them.
- It has been estimated that one of the temples took 1,500 men working 10 hours a day, five years to build.



## EXAMPLE OF URUK AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

- Rulers commded people to do everything in the name of Temple.
  - Bronze tools came into use for various crafts.
  - Architects learnt to construct brick columns, as wood was not suitable to bear the weight of the roof of large halls.
  - Clay cones were pushed into temple walls, painted in different colours, creating a colourful mosaic.
  - The potter's wheel-enables a potter's workshop to 'mass produce' dozens of similar pots at a time.







- Steles are stone slabs with inscriptions or carvings.
- Basalt stele showing a bearded man twice. Notice his headband and hair, waistband and long skirt. In the lower scene he attacks a lion with a huge bow and arrow.
- In the scene above, the hero finally kills the rampant lion with a spear (c.3200 BCE).





- Impression of a cylinder seal, c.3200 BCE. The bearded and armed standing figure is similar in dress and hairstyle to the hero in the stele shown above. Note three prisoners of war, their arms bound, and a fourth man beseeching the war leader.



## The Seal – An Urban Artefact

In India, early stone seals were stamped. In Mesopotamia until the end of the first millennium BCE, cylindrical stone seals, pierced down the centre, were fitted with a stick and rolled over wet clay so that a continuous picture was created. They were carved by very skilled craftsmen, and sometimes carry writing: the name of the owner, his god, his official position, etc. A seal could be rolled on clay covering the string knot of a cloth package or the mouth of a pot, keeping the contents safe. When rolled on a letter written on a clay tablet, it became a mark of authenticity. So the seal was the mark of a city dweller's role in public life.



*Five early cylinder seals and their impressions.*

Describe what you see in each of the impressions. Is the cuneiform script shown on them?



# LIFE IN MESOPOTAMIAN CITIES

## Two sections of society

### Ruling Elites

- Jewellery, gold vessels, wooden musical instruments inlaid with white shell and lapis lazuli, ceremonial daggers of gold, etc.) buried with some kings and queens at Ur.

### Ordinary people

- the legal texts -disputes, inheritance matters, etc.)



## FAMILY

- Nuclear family was the norm, although a married son and his family often resided with his parents.
- The father was the head of the family- Patriarchial society.

## MARRIAGES:

1. A declaration was made about the willingness to marry, the bride's parents giving their consent to the marriage.
2. gifts-were given by the groom's people to the bride's family, families ate together and made offerings in a temple.
3. When her mother-in-law came to fetch her, the bride was given her share of the inheritance by her father. The father's house, herds, fields, etc., were inherited by the sons.



# LIFE IN MESOPOTAMIAN CITIES

Ur was a town whose ordinary houses were systematically excavated in the 1930s.

## ABSENCE OF TOWN PLANNING

1. **Narrow winding streets and the irregular shapes of house** indicate that wheeled carts could not have reached many of the houses. Sacks of grain and firewood would have arrived on donkey-back.

### 2. No street drains

Drains and clay pipes were instead found in the inner courtyards of the houses and it is thought that house roofs sloped inwards and rainwater was channelled via the drainpipes into sumps. To prevent the unpaved streets from becoming excessively slushy after a downpour.



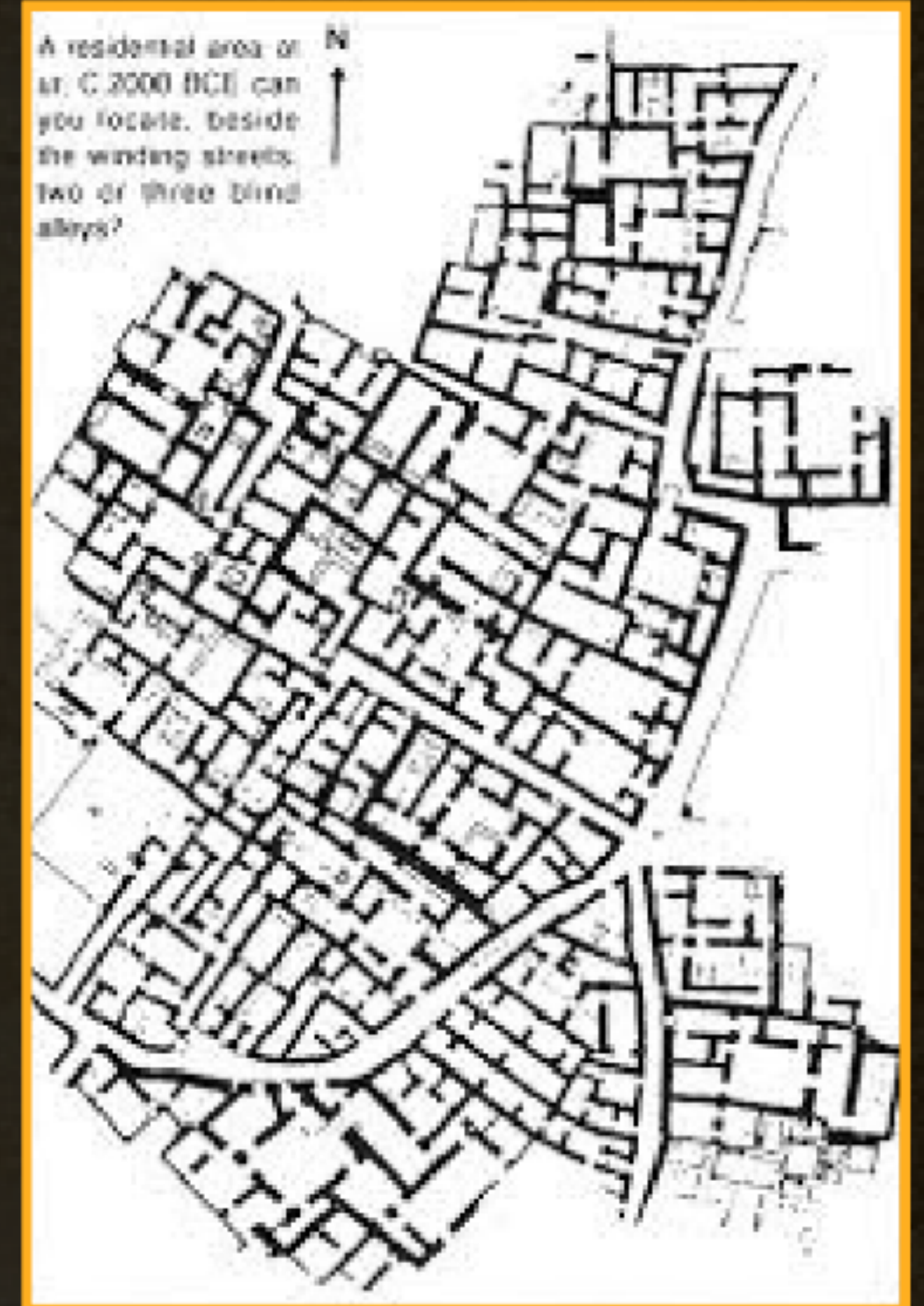
# LIFE IN MESOPOTAMIAN CITIES

## 3. Improper disposal of waste

People seem to have swept all their household refuse into the streets, This made street levels rise, and over time the thresholds of houses had also to be raised so that no mud would flow inside after the rains.

4. **Light** came into the rooms not from windows but from doorways opening into the courtyards: this would also have given families their privacy.

5. **Burials** There was town cemetery at Ur. The graves of royalty and commoners have been found, but a few individuals were found buried under the floors of ordinary houses.

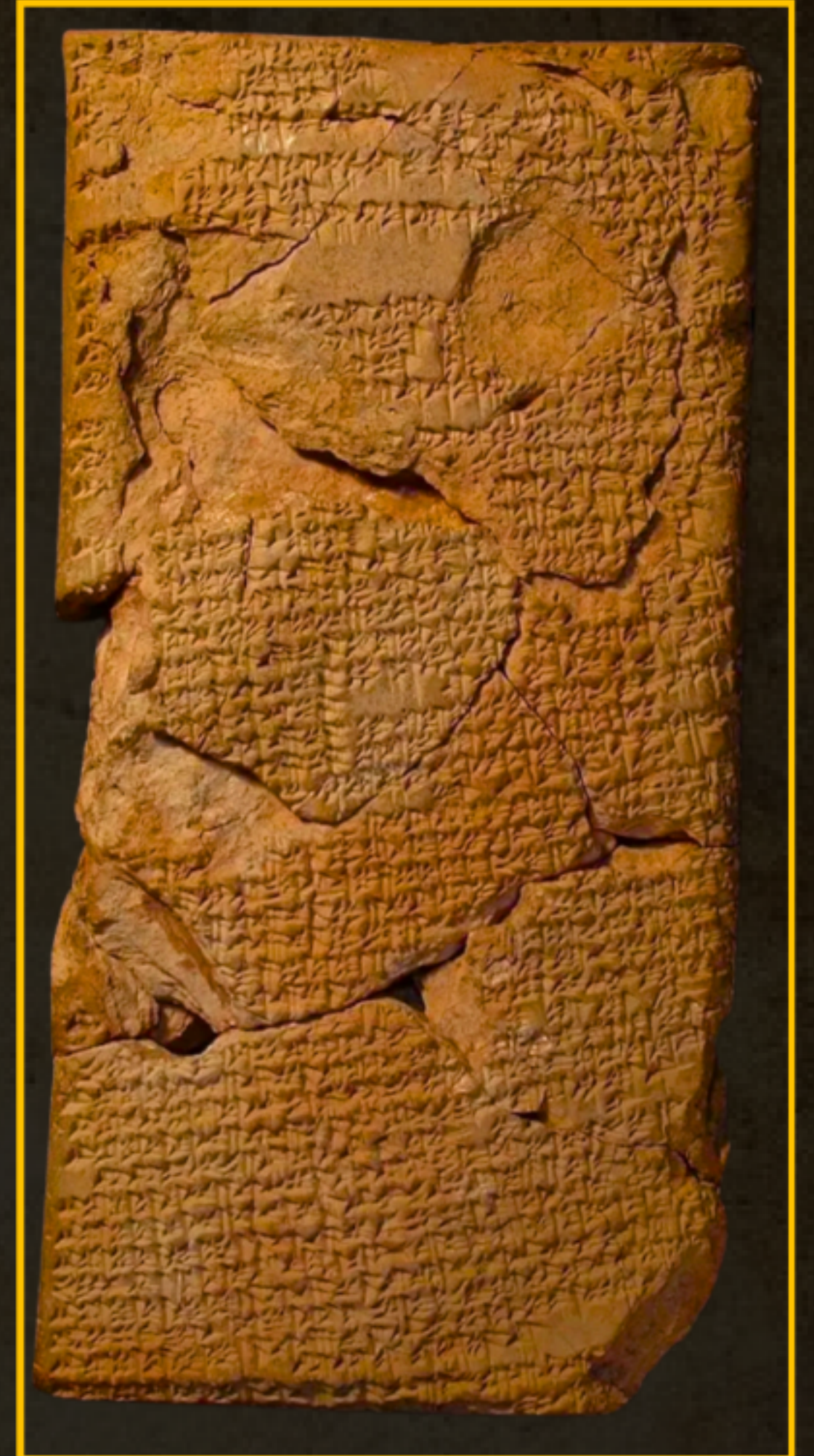




# LIFE IN MESOPOTAMIAN CITIES

Superstitions about houses-recorded in omen tablets at Ur:

- A raised threshold brought wealth;
- A front door that did not open towards another house was lucky;
- But if the main wooden door of a house opened outwards (instead of inwards), the wife would be a torment to her husband





## MCQ'S

01. Name two gods for whom temples were built.

- (a) Moon God of Ur
- (b) Inanna, the Goddess of Love and War
- (c) Apollo
- (d) Both (a) and (b)



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**Ans.** (d) Both (a) and (b)



# STAY CONNECTED

## KEEP LEARNING

*Thank You*



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