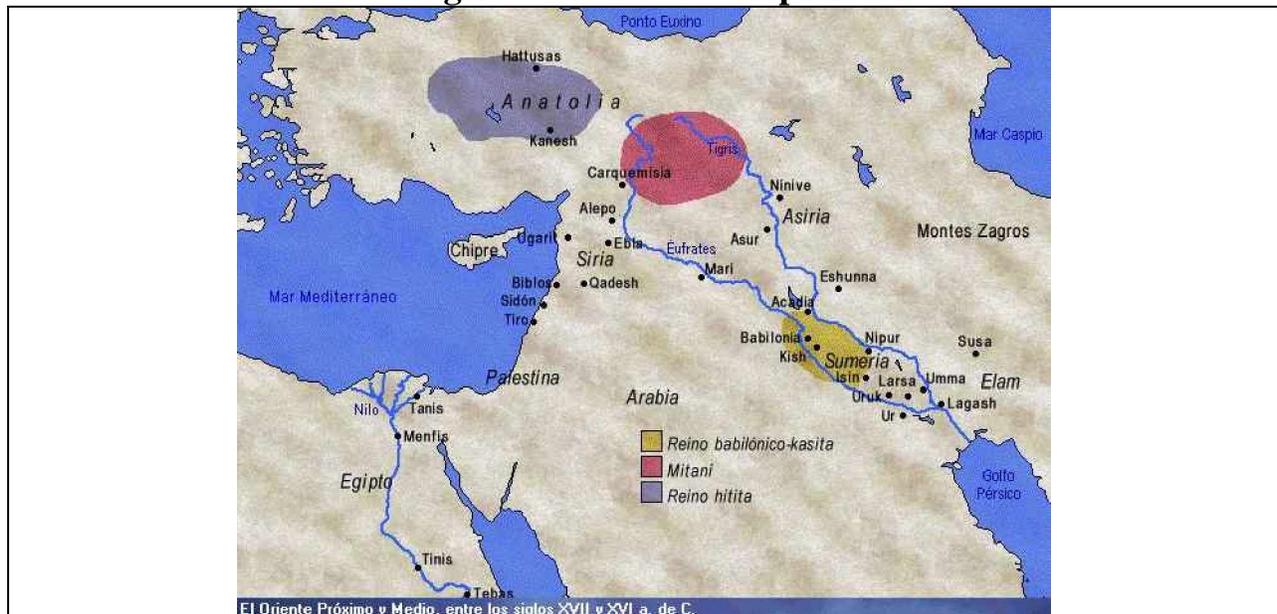


## Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia



El Oriente Próximo y Medio, entre los siglos XVII y XVI a. de C.

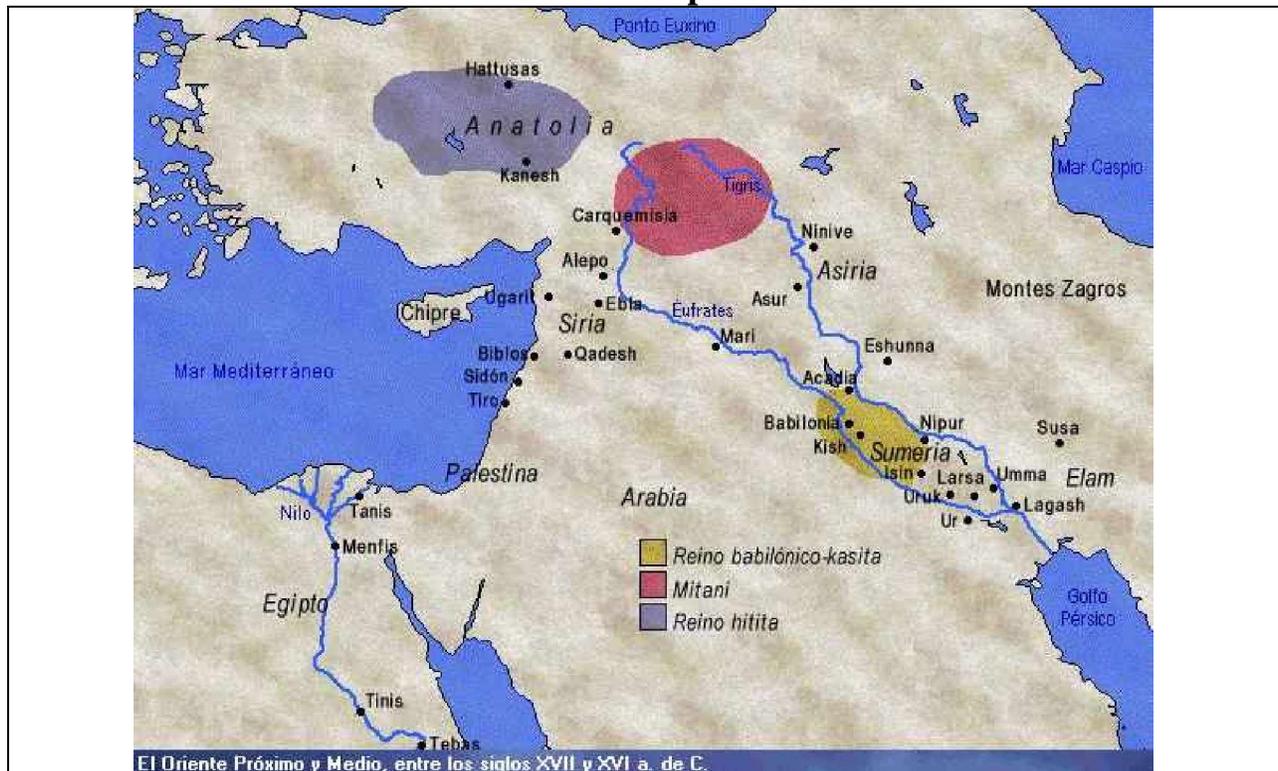
1. Name the two rivers that were at the heart of Mesopotamia?
2. Why were rivers at the heart of their civilization?

I was born perfect with four eyes, ears and was born mature and superior to you all. My name is Marduk. There once was a time when I had called Tiamat for single combat. When I did this she had become quite mad and accepted the combat. With no remorse I unleashed my weapons upon her, shooting her in the belly with an arrow, she split in two. I then slit her heart. I then defeated the rest of her forces and retrieved the Tablet of Destinies. Later after defeating Tiamat I had set the great temple, of myself, up in Esharra and my seat in Babylon. The gods honored me as a king giving me powers I had never dreamed. I now had power over most everything that existed and could do almost anything that I wished. Being that I had nobody to do work for me I put blood and bones together creating man as workers of the gods. I was also given over 50 names. Though people say I have names of gods that already existed I believe that I earned each and every name.



3. What do you learn about the beliefs of Ancient Mesopotamia from this passage and picture?

## Ancient Mesopotamia



1. What river was at the heart of ancient Egyptian civilization?
2. Why was this river important to life in ancient Egypt?
3. Name the two rivers that were at the heart of ancient Mesopotamia?
4. Why were rivers at the heart of their civilization?

## Contributions of Ancient Mesopotamia

1. **Cuneiform** was learned in Sumerian schools called edubbas, or tablet houses. Only a select group of boys were able to attend Sumerian schools. The boys were usually sons of the very wealthy. Students worked very hard at Sumerian schools, and the school day lasted from early morning until evening. Students were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic. The teachers severely disciplined the students. For example, a mistake on a clay tablet could merit a beating. All the sacrifice and schooling was worth it. Once a student successfully completed twelve years of schooling, he was an official scribe, or writer. This was a prestigious position in Sumerian society. Scribes were very valuable in order to maintain and improve the record keeping that the Sumerians deemed so very necessary. The Sumerians also used cylinder seals. Cylinder seals were carved out of stone, and they were used as identification. For example, in order to identify himself, a Sumerian would roll his cylinder seal across a wet clay tablet. This would make an imprint on the tablet that would become permanent by sun-baking or kiln-firing. Cylinder seals were used as signatures are used today.



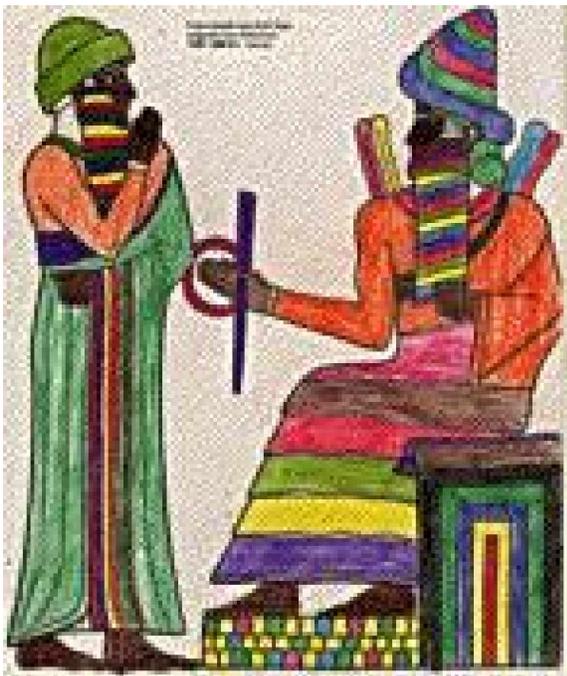
## Contributions of Ancient Mesopotamia

2. In early Sumerian history, priests were also the kings of the city-states. **Gilgamesh** was one of the most heroic priest-kings of this time. He was the priest-king of Uruk which was located on the Euphrates River approximately fifty miles northwest of Ur. The oldest written story in the world delineates Gilgamesh's legendary deeds. In the story, Gilgamesh is characterized as being both human and divine. Gilgamesh and his companion Enkidu travel the world performing heroic acts.



## Contributions of Ancient Mesopotamia

3. One of the city-states built was named Babylon, and it was ruled by a king named **Hammurabi**. As Hammurabi rose to power, he began conquering the city-states of Mesopotamia. He, too, began uniting the city-states, but he was much more successful than Sargon I because he made many new reforms that improved society. For example, he improved the irrigation system, tax system, and government housing system. He also united the people under one religion, but the reform for which Hammurabi became renowned was his code of law. Hammurabi provided uniformity among the city-states by enacting a code of law. The code of law provided consistent justice and covered many aspects of daily life. Hammurabi of Babylon was a great ruler; the time he reigned is often referred to as the "Golden Age of Babylon" due to the many accomplishments and reforms.



4. The **contributions** affecting the modern world from our ancient ancestors in Mesopotamia are numerous. The ancient Sumerians created the world's first civilization where people settled together in one area known as the city-state. For this accomplishment, ancient Mesopotamia is often referred to as the "cradle of civilization." Another contribution vastly affecting the modern era was the Sumerians' creation of a writing system. Although we do not use the same writing system today, it spawned the many different writing models that led to today's writing. Other inventions include the water clock, the twelve-month calendar based on lunar cycles, the wheel, the plow, and the sailboat. All these inventions improved the daily life of the Sumerians.

