



Babylon

The Babylonian Empire rose to power after the fall of the Akkadian Empire. The Babylonian Empire was the first to include all of Mesopotamia. Babylon, located on the banks of the Euphrates river, had long been a Mesopotamian city-state. It was taken over by the Amorites when the Akkadian Empire fell. When King Hammurabi became Babylon's ruler in 1792 BC, he set out to conquer the surrounding city-states. It only took him a few years to conquer all of Mesopotamia, including the northern lands of Assyria. Hammurabi's Babylon was the largest and most powerful city in the world at the time, a hub for the trade of both products and culture. Science, music, mathematics, astronomy, and literature flourished here.

In the center of the city there was a large temple called a ziggurat. A ziggurat was a steep pyramid with flat tops where priests would conduct religious rituals and sacrifices. Archeologists believe the ziggurat in Babylon to have been 300 feet tall. Babylon was also known for its gardens, palaces, towers, and artwork.

The law in Babylon was known as Hammurabi's Code. There were 282 laws, governing commerce, criminal behavior, adoption, marriage, and divorce. Hammurabi's Code, recorded on clay tablets and tall pillars of stones called steles, was the first law that was ever written down.

Hammurabi was succeeded by his sons, but they did not have their father's leadership skills. The Babylonian Empire began to falter and was eventually conquered by the Kassites in 1595.

What was the Babylonian Empire the first to do?
