

UNIT 2

-THE ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS: MESOPOTAMIA AND EGYPT.



The first great civilizations appeared in **Mesopotamia, Egypt, India and China** around 5000 years ago.

The word "Mesopotamia" means "The land between the rivers". In this case, the rivers **Tigris and Euphrates**.

Ancient Egypt emerged more than 5000 years ago along the river **Nile** in North-East of Africa.

1- ART AND RELIGION IN MESOPOTAMIA:

In Mesopotamia, the temple was the center of every city. The city was protected by its god.



Around the year 2000 B.C., temple towers began to be built to link heaven and earth. These towers are called **ZIGGURAT**.

THE ZIGGURAT was a very large tower like a mountain. On the top, there is a temple with three, four, five, six or seven terraced levels.

The ziggurats are also decorated with pillars and other ornamentation.

People of Mesopotamia had many **GODS**. These gods had supernatural powers. People looked at religion to answer the questions about life, death, evil, and the forces of nature.

About **ART**, Mesopotamian invented the **ARCH** and the **VAULT**. Brick and adobe were used for construction.

2- THE PHARAOHS AND THE RELIGION IN EGYPT:

Egyptians had a king and they were polytheistic. They believed in many gods as certain animals (sheeps, bulls, cats and crocodiles), as natural forces, such as the sun, the river Nile, or people such as the pharaoh. So, some gods of Egypt come in many forms: animals, humans and natural elements



THE KING OF EGYPTIANS IS CALLED PHARAOH. HE IS CONSIDERED THE "OWNER" OF ALL EGYPT. HE WAS DIVINE, WITH DIRECT CONTACT WITH GODS. THE PHARAOH GOVERNED HIS KINGDOM WITH HIS FAMILY AND SOME OFFICIALS AND CIVIL SERVANTS.

The Egyptian worked for the Pharaoh and obeyed him because HE was a living god.

The Pharaohs and some nobles preserved their bodies in a process of MUMMIFICATION: a dead body was dried to make a MUMMY, what was put in a SARCOPHAGUS. At first, they thought that only Pharaohs could have eternal life.



3-THE TOMBS AND THE PYRAMIDS:

The pyramids were the most important tombs for the pharaohs. Keops, Kefrén and Micerinos are three of them. The main entrance to the pyramid was hidden because there were lots of treasures inside.

The Pharaoh was a sacrosanct monarch who served as the intermediary between the gods and men.

In general, tombs were decorated with paintings, food and even sailing vessels for the voyage to heaven.

