



# Mesopotamia

The term "Mesopotamia" refers to the area of modern Iraq and parts of Iran, Syria, and Turkey. The word comes from ancient Greek meaning "between the rivers" and refers to the Tigris and the Euphrates. It was within this landscape that people developed some of the world's greatest achievements, including the wheel, astronomy, agriculture, plant and animal domestication, the earliest cities and states, and the invention of writing.



**Harvard Semitic Museum**

6 Divinity Ave, Cambridge, MA 02138

**HOURS**

Monday–Friday 10:00 am–4:00 pm  
Sunday 1:00–4:00 pm  
Closed Saturday and on Harvard University holidays

**ADMISSION: FREE**

For information on educational tours, group reservations, events, and rentals, email: [hsmreserve@hmsc.harvard.edu](mailto:hsmreserve@hmsc.harvard.edu)

**PARKING AND DIRECTIONS**

Visit the website for details on parking options

[semiticmuseum.fas.harvard.edu](http://semiticmuseum.fas.harvard.edu) | 617-495-4631

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# Monuments from Mesopotamia

*The Propaganda of Kings*



FLOOR

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Harvard Semitic Museum



Mesopotamian states were among the most powerful and influential in history.

Public monuments carved in stone were a regular feature in Mesopotamian tradition, and were prominently displayed in cities. They often showed scenes of rulers and gods. As royal propaganda, they displayed the ruler's greatness before both gods and mortals.

The casts of Mesopotamian monuments exhibited at the Harvard Semitic Museum cover a span of over 1,400 years. Though they represent only a selection of the monuments typical of Mesopotamian states, they provide an invaluable record of long-vanished peoples and the politics of their ancient world.



*Gudea ruled the small Sumerian city-state of Lagash in the 22nd-century BCE. Later conquerors of Lagash defaced and decapitated most of the Gudea statues. Few survive intact today.*



**ABOUT 2100 BCE**  
Gudea



**1792–1750 BCE**  
Hammurabi



**883–859 BCE**  
Ashurnasirpal II



**883–859 BCE**  
Ashurnasirpal II



**858–824 BCE**  
Shalmaneser III



**722–705 BCE**  
Sargon II

*Discovered on Cyprus, this stela of Sargon II represents the westernmost extension of Assyrian imperial power, although perhaps in a diplomatic, rather than military sense.*



**680–669 BCE**  
Esarhaddon