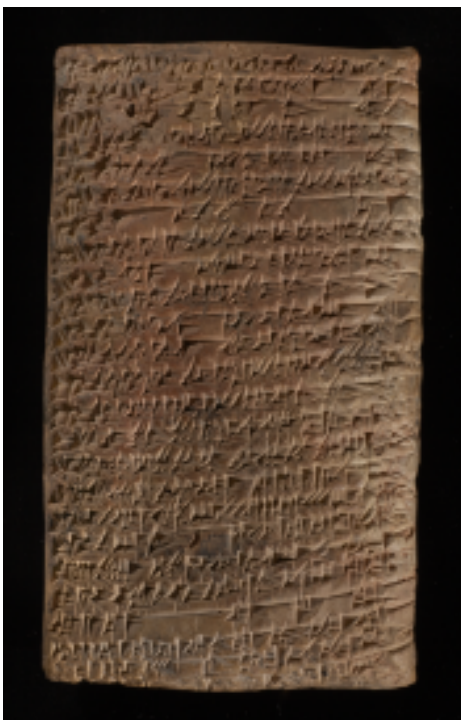


ENHEDUANNA

HIGH PRIESTESS OF UR

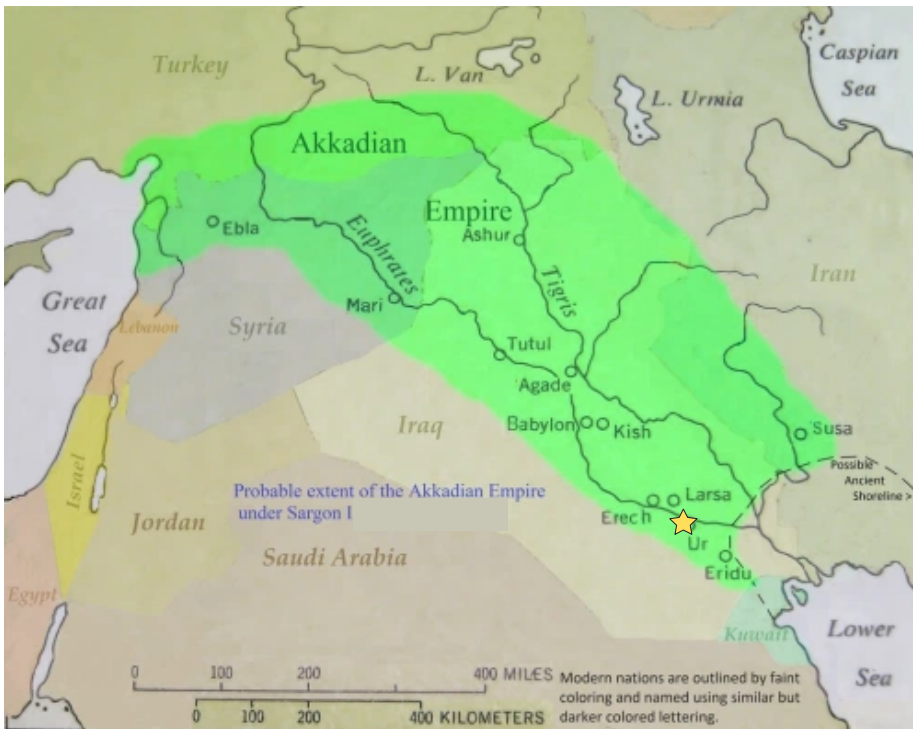
CA. 2285-2250 BCE

Enheduanna was a high priestess in the ancient Mesopotamian city of Ur, located in present-day Iraq. Her father, Sargon the Great, established the Akkadian empire around 2334 BCE by conquering the Sumerians. While her father tried to control his unruly empire through military force, he appointed Enheduanna as high priestess in order to achieve religious and social harmony amongst the city states.



Enheduanna was also the first named author in history. She wrote in cuneiform, a writing system invented by the Sumerians. Until Enheduanna's poetry, cuneiform had been reserved for official and business record keeping only. Her poems were addressed to the patron gods and goddesses of the conquered city states in an effort to unite the Akkadian empire culturally. She also frequently wrote about the goddess Inanna, the Akkadian goddess of love and war.

LIFE IN THE AKKADIAN EMPIRE



Enheduanna's father, Sargon, conquered many city states in Mesopotamia to create the Akkadian empire. This empire lasted approximately 180 years, from 2334 BCE to 2154 BCE.



The Ziggurat of Ur, constructed approximately 200 years after Enheduanna's death

Women had very few opportunities outside their own homes. Becoming a priestess was one of the only avenues for social advancement, but the job was often only available to women from higher class families. Priestesses served both a religious and political role, and the names of high priestesses in the Akkadian Empire were recorded along side the names of their kings.

PRIMARY SOURCE 1: SCULPTURAL DISC



Image courtesy of the Penn Museum

Guiding Questions

1. What do we see?
2. Who do you think the important figure in this sculpture is?
3. Why do you think the artist represented them this way?

PRIMARY SOURCE 2: THE EXHALTATION OF INANNA

Be it known that you are lofty as the heavens! Be it known that you are broad as
the earth!

Be it known that you destroy the rebel lands!

Be it known that you roar at the foreign lands! Be it known that you crush heads!

Be it known that you devour corpses like a dog! Be it known that your gaze is
terrible!

Be it known that you lift your terrible gaze!

Be it known that you have flashing eyes!

Be it known that you are unshakeable and unyielding!

Be it known that you always stand triumphant! That Nanna has not yet spoken
out, and that he has said "He is yours!" has made you greater, my lady; you have
become the greatest!

My lady beloved by An, I shall tell of all your rages! I have heaped up the coals in
the censer, and prepared the purification rites. The Ecdam-kug shrine awaits you.

Might your heart not be appeased towards me?

Since it was full, too full for me, great exalted lady,

I have recited this song for you.

May a singer repeat to you at noon that which was recited to you at dead of night:

"Because of your captive spouse, because of your captive child, your rage is
increased, your heart unassuaged."

The powerful lady, respected in the gathering of rulers, has accepted her offerings
from her.

Inanna's holy heart has been assuaged.

The light was sweet for her, delight extended over her, she was full of fairest
beauty.

Like the light of the rising moon, she exuded delight.

Nanna came out to gaze at her properly, and her mother Ningal blessed her.

The door posts greeted her. Everyone's speech to the mistress is exalted.

Praise be to the destroyer of foreign lands, endowed with divine powers by An,
to my lady enveloped in beauty, to Inana!