

Chapter 12



Farmers and Doctors, Barbers and Builders (Mesopotamian workers, slave and free)

Ningallam

Mesopotamian texts tell about ordinary people and not as much about kings, queens, priests who ruled over them

Ningallam: ordinary person, slave, scribes kept record of her in texts. May have been prisoner of war, or born to slave parents. Raised pigs for queen's palace in Sumerian city of Lagash around 2400 BCE. Received 18 liters of barley each month (4 and $\frac{3}{4}$ gallons), had two children who helped her work (poor children did not become educated, rather learned parents' crafts).

Rations change: Ningallam died; her children listed as orphans.

Jobs overall

Thousands worked for temples and palaces

Wove cloth, made tools and weapons, created fine jewelry, brewed beer, made furniture, carved stone statues and inscriptions, tanned leather

Some worked outside town limits (Ningallam probably did this, smelly pigs)

Metalworkers: countryside

Most workers weren't slaves, some paid better than Ningallam was paid

Some paid in silver (expected 1 shekel or less of silver per month)

What they could buy

Collection of laws list what a shekel could buy:

79 gallons of barley, $\frac{3}{4}$ gallon of best oil, $\frac{2}{3}$ gallon of pig's fat, 6 pounds of wool, 158 gallons of salt, 3 pounds of copper

Most families spent most of their income on food

grew vegetables in small gardens

Top palace and temple officials: paid in land they could farm

With help of hired workers, could become wealthier from sale of farm products

Sights and Smells

Sights/smells of street: tell you much about Mesopotamian society

bakers sweating in summer heat, potters with kilns going, neighborhood handyman melting down metal scraps to reshape them into things consumers can buy (bread, smoke, hot metal)

At corner of street: usually a tavern

owned by women, weren't respectable (criminals hung out there)

Hammurabi mentions it in law 109 “If there should be a woman innkeeper in whose house criminals gather, and she fails to... lead them off to the palace authorities, that woman innkeeper shall be killed.”

Jobs in the City

Professionals (physicians, veterinarians, builders, barbers) lived in worked in city

king's barber: king's closest advisors. Trustworthy (knife close to king's neck), had to follow certain rules. If he shaved hair he shouldn't he'd lose his hand

Biggest houses you would see in city: merchants who bought luxury materials from other lands

Where did they do their shopping?

If farmers: farms produced much of what was needed

Public squares in city; people also gathered near city gates to trade markets in these places