

Chapter 9

BELLWORK

- 1.. The City of Nippur was home to which particular Mesopotamian god/goddess?
2. True or False: King Sargon's daughter, Enheduanna, was high priestess in the temple of Mami.
3. According to Mesopotamians, how many “forms” did each of their gods/goddesses take?



ENHEDUANNA

King Sargon's daughter: Enheduanna, high priestess in the temple of Nanna (god of moon)
city of Ur, one that Sargon had conquered

Enheduanna lived “shut away” from everyday life, she was not allowed to marry. She lived in luxury yet was a servant in Nanna's house

Each day she sang praises to Nanna, chanted prayers, asking for support (for her father), writing hymns (she is the world's first known author)

More than 50 cuneiform copies of her hymns have been found.

She also honored other gods including Inanna (goddess of love)




BELIEFS OF GODS AND GODDESSES

Each god/goddess had 2 forms: spirit of god as it lived in nature, spirit of god as it lived in a statue (cult statue) in temples. Statues had the same needs as human beings (bathed, fed, etc)

To be fed: statues “absorbed” smell of food, priests and priestesses ate it after they had decided that the statue had been fed

No complete statues have survived. They were probably made from bronze and gold, decorated with semi-precious stones. They wore clothes, seated on thrones

Why did Sargon send Enheduanna so far away? Wanted control of region so he put his daughter in the city of Ur to better-represent him



GODS AND GODDESSES

Each city “home” to a particular god

City of Nippur was the city of Enlil

Temples, like palaces, owned fields, grazing lands, orchards and irrigation canals

people lived/worked on lands

Cuneiform shows us workers swept floors, carried buckets of water, worked as security guards





PRIESTS AND PRIESTESSES

Priests/Priestesses: most important job of all → serve and glorify the god or goddess. They each had particular duties

Purification priest: temple free of (ordinary) dirt, but also wickedness and evil

Diviners: priests who were supposed to figure out will of gods from signs (such as shooting star)

They studied “innards” of sacrificed animals. Will of gods “read” from bumps, hollows, deformities.

The wealthy had statues of themselves placed before the statue of the god; was supposed to signify the god was watching over them (only possible for wealthy)

Most practiced religion in their own homes saying prayers

POETS

Poem: “I will praise the lord of wisdom” (PRIMARY SOURCE)

Describes man whose string of bad luck convinced him that he had neglected/angered gods

Poets followed daily rituals, celebrated public holy days and festivals

Teach children to honor gods, never swear to a false statement in the name of any of the gods



CULTURE OF THE GODS AND GODDESSES

Festival days: priests carried statues of gods through streets of city, people felt “blessed” for attending. They would get the day off from work

Highlight of year: gods go “visiting.” Their statues carried by boat to neighboring city to express friendship. It is a huge celebrations, dancing feasting,

Enheduanna's position of high priestess stayed in her family for years, other kings appointed their own daughters or sisters to the position, following Sargon's example.

When they died: buried in special chamber under palace. Grave robbers stripped tombs of riches.

