

History of Architecture and Culture – I

Lecture 4

Welcome to UGC lecture series architecture, I will now take through History of Architecture and Culture I which is AR6101, in this particular lecture you will be going through the unit three which is Ancient River Valley Civilizations: Mesopotamia. In this particular presentation you will be seeing

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Mesopotamia Influence and Growth

Moving on influences of particular Mesopotamia civilization happens way way way where can happen actually Mesopotamia is consider to be the cradle of human civilization as in that was when humans decided to civilize, human decided to make settlements and settle down somewhere and become one group as are live as one particular group, so the earlier civilization of Western Asia flourishes in the fertile plains of twin rivers, Tigris and Euphrates. So the reason why Tigris and Euphrates is very important because in between this two particular reverse only this valley where you know this Mesopotamia the Fertile Crescent was there where the recreated the particular civilization called Mesopotamia. And Mesopotamia became a civilization because agriculture became prominent then, then people realize the importance of agriculture they created the particular methodology of irrigation which actually made them decide to split the land create agriculture, create irrigation provide water to the plants and then that kind of the concept you know actually begin in the Mesopotamian Era. Mesopotamia is also important because that is when writing, literature came into existence for the first time for the literature writing was first of all, first in for most you know as a script came in Mesopotamian civilization. This particular region if you see it was both the cradle and the tomb of nations in empires. A lot of empires came it formed there it also grew and got diminished there, so it was both the cradle as well as the doom or tomb of nations and civilizations that was Mesopotamia, the size at the plane of Mesopotamia was irrigated by canals from river to river and that made this land really fertile. So this particular Mesopotamian land if you see had

a lot of you know river, you know both sides you have river and you know in between the lot of rivers, small channels this particular rivers flowing through so that actually provide you know became the basis of this irrigation and the canal system that they created.

This particular civilization meant the land between to reverse because mesos means middle, potamos means river. Mesopotamia means land between two rivers, literally meaning what that was the size at was earliest of all the permanent settlements that was ever made by human see, as of now the Mesopotamia lies in the presented Baghdad that area and there was no particular what to say, evidence we says that you know this is now Mesopotamia a mean particular ruins of the settlement I cannot you nobody can say that exist right now, a lot of small small small you know heartening of small small small details gave rise to end of as stipulation how this particularly this area would have looked back then. So this lasted for almost 3000+ yrs. as I said it kind of flourished as well as it diminished, as I said they were the first to create the system of writing. So as expected Mesopotamia is an alluvial district of thick mud and clay definitely did expected because on either side they were reversed, so alluvial it had to be. So this particular soil was apt to make brick, so there was no much stones or wood available that particular area, so brick became the particular mode of construction of Mesopotamia architecture because, so this soil was you know apt to make bricks because as you know there was two reverse on either side, there were lot of swamps and floods, weeks at a time there were torrents of floods in rains happened. Instead of even then people found out way how to settle down in that particular place they had so they made elevated platform in on the elevated platform they created houses and buildings which actually make sure that this could stand the particular flood or swamp of land or whatever happened because of the rain and flooding of the area. From around 3000 BC onwards many cities like Ur, Uruk, Eridu, Mari etc. many many particular cities, different different names, they actually had names of particular cities and different different types of cities that actually grew in this particular area that was like really really knew on how the human settlement came and how it became. Mesopotamia was kind of a change from what it was and what it was goanna be like a transition, actually it was a very modern for its age and then actually many of the techniques were used then is even used now and this kind of thing when and came back and that's how you know civilization grew, moving on the climate really hot and dry and as it said there was no timber resources. So there was you know they worship of heavenly bodies and you know there was polytheism as an like you know many many gods they had not just one particular god they worshiped so based on their architecture also evolved

There were there three main periods of this particular Mesopotamian Era that was the Babylonian Period, Assyrian Period and the Persian Period

Babylonian Period was between BC 4000 – 1275 that was like actually the longest period that was there, After the Babylonian period they came the Assyrian period which was 1275 -538 BC and Persian period which is the least period came in 538 -333 BC.

The Babylonian period came in Sargon of Akkad which is like first in foremost period of architecture there, so it declined under the attacks of Hittites and the Kassites.

So after that they came from Assyrian Period which was like a great military power that particular time until BC 606 and why BC 606 is slowly as an Assyrian Era started coming to an end by 538 in ended

So again in Persian period which is 538-333, this was like one of the famous period because this was the period of Alexander the Great one of the most famous emperor in all times and there was the very big struggle for the further extension of power and made Baghdad new capital of the great magnificent area. So the Baghdad real day present day Baghdad, so architecture that particular area was slow development of the Mesopotamian Era

Ziggurats

Ziggurats was the first and foremost architecture piece which like a more a wonder of architecture that particular time

- Ziggurats was remarkable pyramidal towers, known as Ziggurats and Ziggurats were holy mountains if we seen this picture it was like pyramids but there was a stepped pyramids,
- So there were ramps are particular steps leads to the top most part of Ziggurats
- Ziggurats mean holy mountain nothing else
- So they were huge temples and they were Ziggurats around 3600 gods because as I said the religion there is Polytheistic and there is no one particular god, there were many gods so there were Ziggurats for many many gods, do you have to come up the top of the Ziggurats to have the strain there on the top and that is where you pray.
- So actually the particular Ziggurats is made by you know layer by layer by mud bricks and you know they stop in particular tiers. So they were beautifully decorated because they were considered the gods home they make sure the particular you know stress or pressure to detailing and you know creation of decoration of that area

Ziggurat of Ur

- Ziggurat of Ur was the most famous Ziggurat of all times and this was constructed in to 2125 BC

- So as I said the Sumerians grew powerful under the third dynasty under the ruler Ur-Nammu and Ur-Nammu constructed the Ziggurat of Ur
- Ziggurat of Ur was on a platform was standing on a particular platform 200m feet long and 150ft wide and this particular Ziggurat rose about 70 feet above the plain it was like a huge height for the particular area that was like a skyscraper of that Era. So to understand the importance of height is you know very very important because that showed how much amount of development they had brought in the you know understanding of architecture in that particular time, you know to understand the actually went up so much without cranes or anything actually construct the particular feet is like huge huge thing
- It was built on a platform called a parraku which is designed to dominate the horizon and also protection from the floods. As I said the area was flooded so plinth or platform very important and the plinth was particularly under which each and every building was constructed in particular area
- So each king would add to the temple with numerous stairways leading to different levels, see every Ziggurat if you see it had different different different layer, so each kings that came in added one one layer to the Ziggurat that particularly gave up to the when shine up to the particular Ziggurat
- So it was made of rectangular mud bricks size because they didn't have stone or timber, in the background it can say the present day of Ziggurat how much you know it came down and you know it gave up front of following civilization and you know climatic changes.
- So this was how the Ziggurat of Ur used to look back then you had front ramps as I said ramp is like the approach was always the ramp low Ziggurat and there was a doom in front and in the front of the doom there was a ramp again to the temple you come up, you reach this area from the ramp up again to the temple, ramp as I said very very important part of the Ziggurat architecture and this is the square temple structure which has the shine of this particular gods and there were outer walls these were the outer walls this particular Ziggurat
- So the city of Ur had three levels you know every city in that particular Mesopotamian Era especially the city of Ur had three levels of you know people
- The first level had the rich people like the government officials, priests and soldiers were all at the top most level that's like towards the closer to the Ziggurat
- After that the second level had teachers, merchants, laborers, farmers and craft makers people like that the second level of people, they were like a more like you know salary level and the third level had the slaves doom the you know they got some slaves from battle they capture, after the battle they capture slaves they consider the third layer

- Moving on the Ziggurat or Ur was decorated with clay cones which were dipped into red, black or buff paint and then inserted into the plaster to form zigzags or geometric designs, if you see there is a lot of zigzag of geometric design you know because of this
- There were weep holes were square or rectangular shaped holes placed at different levels in the temple to provide drainage, so if you see these are the weep holes and these are the stairs to the levels, this is the weep holes this small small holes we find here that is what drainage
- So Sumerians believed blind obedience and constant gifts and sacrifices to the particular dt would give them protection and success to on earth, it was like now they decided you know bribing this particular god would give them enough you know source to restrain in life for protection from the enemies etc. So they you know every Ziggurat was a central shrine and they had the gods emblem of statue used to give offering to the god there and this is how the Ziggurat would have looked at now Ziggurat looks like this the present day Iraq

The City Of Babylon

City of Babylon was one of the most famous cities of all time may be because of the presence of hanging gardens in which one of the ancient wonders of the world.

- Babel Means the gate of God and you can see the background shows how the Babylon would have looked it just an artistic representation or an understanding of an how the particular area would have looked back then
- This was the capital of the empire and long long back, it had huge size and it had amazing construction even back then and the system of town planning well existed particular time, almost like garden pattern which is like you know they had a particular understanding of town planning even back then.
- So it had about 250 towers besides bronze gates in its immense encircling city walls
- And around 3 to 4 stories houses even back they had 4 stories houses that's like extraordinary architecture for the particular area and that particular era
- So the palace of Nebuchadnezzar became very very famous maybe because of the presence of the hanging gardens. So you can see the pictures it is like a artistic representation of how the hanging garden would look back then
- So these gardens were probably raised on an series of supporting arches some around 75ft high
- And this carried out the desire of the Babylonians to break the monotony of their featureless, level country, if you seen this particular pictures, this Babylon was consider

to be completely brown mud brick architecture with you know very very similar kind of building which is like very monotonous they thought this could break the monotony of this area by bringing in the hanging garden

- See there is no particular evidence of hanging garden as of now but you know the people believe that very well existed and this is might have look

Palace of Sargon, Khorsabad

- See this was very important because this was the senior architecture at his best this happened in BC 722-705
- 10 miles north-east of Nineveh, excavated in 1864 by place. Provides the best idea of Assyrian palaces. As I said this was the senior architecture at its best so that's why this particular palace complex is very much understood and learned about
- This appears to have occupied around 25 acres which is again an assumption because where have no particular idea on exactly how much this would have covered but 25 is the assumption
- They were 700 rooms
- Some rooms were 50ft above the plain on a platform of sun dried bricks faced with stone. Exactly I like a told before because they use to make platforms so around 50ft height they use to give the platform and on that they use to make this rooms of the particular palace
- You see the three courtyard of the particular palace and that became the major part of the palace and how the palace would have look back then
- There were three entrance portals to the principal court and they were flanked by great towers and was guarded by man-headed winged bulls or lions particular feature is one of the most prominent feature you know Mesopotamian architecture because it was seen in the senior architecture as well as the Persian architecture which you will know later
- So this supported a bold semicircular arch and that is the entry would have look and the most impressive creations of the Assyrian architecture were concentrated on the palace portals if you see
- So this particular man headed winged bull were you know considered to war the approach of evil, so this is how they that's why they made this things, moving on
- The palace had 3 distinct groups of apartments :
- The Sergio or palace proper the harem and the corn
- The Sergio had the king's residence, the state halls, men's apartments and reception rooms. Court rooms etc. and the Harem were the private family apartments and the

corn was the service chambers. So this were the three major part of the particular palace

- So the dadoes in the royal apartment were 2m high just imagine, 2m high dadoes back then that happen then
- At the end was the throne room, throne room was around 49m cross 11m in size , so it was more very very rectangular court room with you know for areas were people to sit down
- The high plinths of the temple were decorated with polychrome glazed brick to understand the polychrome glazed brick was architecture is huge and there was also a Ziggurat on the west side of the platform
- Any palace complex of that particular era had Ziggurat which was like a temple insides he right now if you see a Hindu palace concept in India always had a small temple within or something like that exactly the same way this Mesopotamian architecture they had a particular Ziggurat inside each you know palace complex
- The very very you know surprising part of this particular architecture were they couldn't find any use of windows anywhere so understood the light reach the interiors may be without the use of windows because they couldn't find any
- So various terracotta pipes have been found though which were probably inside in the dooms walls of walls, in order to provide lighting an air to this particular you know system, because there was no windows the maximum possibilities that this terracotta pipes were used in the same reason that of window
- Moving on this particular the Ziggurat stood on a square based an had around it was raised up to seven tiers and it up to height of 45m with the shrine at the top
- It had a winding ramp of 1.8m wide by which one could reach the top as I said and each tire back then maintained in different different colors was not one particular monotonous tire it had each tire was painted in different different colors
- The method of roofing was always debated has been seen from the plan that only you know only open courts were planned in squares, while covered in rooms are narrow and long
- Furthermore if you see every wall was like really thick you know thicker than would have been thicker than it needed to be you know even to protect if you thinks to protect from the climate if you see the walls were like really thick that you know it needed in that thick protect from the climate.
- So that might that gave an assumption that this might have been in order to keep the particular roof on to which is like really heavy vaulted roof that was like the assumption of particular palace

Palace Of Persepolis

Palace of Persepolis was like wonder of Persian architecture again and this was how the plan could have looked back then

- This was constructed around 1000BC and Aryans from Caucasus region settled in Medes and Persia
- The founder of the particular empire, Cyrus the great – captured Medians and Assyrians and that's how the Persian Empire kind of came into existence. In that particular area giving rights to the Persian architecture which
- His great successor Darius founded two new capitals one at Susa and one at Persepolis and this Persepolis you know palace became like an example of the architecture because Persepolis was one of the capitals I said.
- So the palace is a remarkable structure if you see behinds like the reminds of the Persepolis palace you can find. It's a remarkable structure 1500ft by 100ft. in extent and around 40ft above the plain
- It is partly hewn out of solid rock and partly buildup of large blocks of local stone laid without mortar, but held together by metal cramps was one which held this stones together not mortar that is like one major features of the particular architecture. So the approach on the north west was by magnificent flight of steps, 22ft wide very very wide shallows even horses through the steps, it was like more of a you know ramp because horses has to ascend through the sheaf were like even though it was steps they were like very very very shallow and it was executed by Caucasus into 486-465BC and was completed in 460BC by Artaxerxes I
- Moving on the gateways were flanked by imposing towers and guarded by man headed winged bulls exactly like that of the Assyrian palace, they also had the man headed winged bulls
- So between this stood the hall of 100 columns built by Darius, which according to the Plutarch, was burnt by the Alexander the Great. This particular hall of 100 columns this is kind of visualization of how it would have looked, so this particular features was the most wonderful feature of the particular palace but you know it is believe that Alexander the Great burned this thing down so it is probably the audience hall or throne room or anything which is 225ft square enclosed in brick wall 11ft thick in which there were 44 doorways and windows that like a huge huge thing
- So the wall flanking entrance portico was enlivened with bas-reliefs representing the king you know the king receiving ambassadors, so this even the Assyrian architecture had kind of this carving this particular walls which actually showed the King and how the king assemble and like that

- So this also the same kind of a Bas-reliefs culture in a you know worse representing the king and receiving the ambassadors
- So the throne room was set on a high platform with supporting flat roofs
- The palace of Darius, the earliest which was built on this particular platform was rectangular in plan with a portico of 16 columns which is like a very very very beautiful part of this particular palace.
- The palace of Xerxes, though it only consisted of a central column and three columned porticos was around 24000sq ft. you can understand the you know extend to with the construction went off, so this is how the palace of Persepolis would have looked and this is the this would have been the 100 pillar hall.