

## Deciphering evidence from early riverine societies in Mesopotamia, South Asia, and East Asia.

Sargon Akkad was the first leader to unite Mesopotamia under one state system in the second millennium BCE. While his empire was short lived, he laid the foundation for greater cultural, political, and economic unity for the region. His reputation as a great conqueror and leader had great influence on later rulers of the region. Indeed, much of the evidence we have today of Sargon comes from Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian records from the first millennium BCE (see Chapter 4), centuries after Sargon's death. These descriptions of this Mesopotamian legend offer historians today a glimpse at his reputation and his legacy to the culture of the region.

Text

Sargon, the mighty king, the King of Agade, am I,  
My mother was lowly, my father I knew not,  
And the brother of my father dwells in the mountain.  
My city is Azupiranu, which lies on the bank of the  
Euphrates.  
My lowly mother conceived me, in secret she brought me  
forth.  
She set me in a basket of rushes, with bitumen she closed  
my door;  
She cast me into the river, which rose not over me.  
The river bore me up, unto Akki, the irrigator, it carried  
me.  
Akki, the irrigator, with . . . lifted me out,  
Akki, the irrigator, as his own son . . . reared me,  
Akki, the irrigator, as his gardener appointed me.  
While I was a gardener the goddess Ishtar loved me,  
And for . . . -four years I ruled the kingdom,  
the black-headed peoples I ruled, I governed;  
Mighty mountains with axes of bronze did I destroy.  
I climbed the upper mountains;  
I burst through the lower mountains.  
The Country of the Sea three times did I besiege;  
Dilmun did . . .  
Unto the great Dur-ilu I went up, I ...  
I altered . . .  
Whatsoever [AUQ1] king shall be exalted after me,  
Let him rule, let him govern the black-headed peoples;  
Mighty mountains with axes of bronze let him destroy.

**Let him climb the upper mountain; Let him burst through the lower mountains.**

**The country of the Sea let him three times besiege And Dilmun . . . To the great  
Dur-ilu let him go up ... from my city of Akkad.**

Source *The legend of Sargon, King of Agade*, p.91 (first millennium BCE). *The Sacred  
Books and Early Literature of the East: With Historical Surveys of the Chief Writings ...*