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Early Dynastic or Hegemonic? An Argument for  
Re-Periodization in Mesopotamian Studies

Brandon L James Bowden

This article will argue that the period currently known in Mesopotamian research as the Early Dynastic should be altered to that of the Hegemonic Period or Rival City-State Period, following Hans J. Nissen and his periodization.<sup>1</sup> Modifying this nomenclature would more accurately delineate this period of Mesopotamian history and the nature of power possessed by four primary city-states. Far from a stable, unitary succession of dynasties or dynastic houses as was present in Egypt (3200-2686) the so-called “Early Dynastic” period for Mesopotamia was distinctively characterized by conflict and city-states which imposed hegemonic rule over large areas of Mesopotamia in the period between 2900-2350 B.C. The evidence for such hegemonic domination, rather than unitary rule, means alteration of this nomenclature is almost necessary beyond question.

Periodization within historical studies is, as Dietrich Gerhard has stated, “artificial” and there is consensus that it can be regarded as a necessary evil. Periodization in some manner is a broad definition covering minor but important details and variants within them that do challenge the designations in some respects. In addition, their emerging and terminal dates are sometimes hard to define with satisfaction. However, without them the data would be overwhelming and difficult to manage. Periodization can therefore be at times imprecise but precise enough to allow those diverse elements to factor in without overt contradiction. Given that periodization is an artificial construct it follows that greater flexibility in redefining periods ought to be found within historical disciplines should new, contradictory evidence emerge. However, that is not the case; it is more often that the square peg of new evidence is forced into the round

hole of the pre-established periodization leaving the scholar and student to develop some sense of consistency. However, there are movements within various historical specialties to re-designate and more accurately articulate periodization based on new interpretations of data. Assyriology is moving in this direction with new interpretations and new discoveries being uncovered in the Northern Mesopotamian periphery.<sup>2</sup>

Northern Mesopotamia has been the focus of Assyriology over the last few decades as governments and events in the region of southern Mesopotamia have made it impossible for specialists to access that area. With this new emphasis and greater detailed analysis, formerly entrenched terminology has been undergoing intense revision; however, this has been directed at parsing the periods into ever narrower categories with some arguing for wholesale revision.<sup>3</sup> The movement towards greater specificity has slightly touched upon the southern Mesopotamian region since the ultimate goal is a much broader integrated system. The “Early Dynastic Period” nomenclature has long been regarded as unsatisfactory to specialists in this area of study since its inception in 1929. According to Marie H. Gates in *Archaeology and the Ancient Near East: Methods and Limits*, the terminology for the Early Dynastic period emerged from the Oriental Institute in Chicago following a conference held in 1929 based on work done in the Diyala region of Iraq, led by Dr. Henri Frankfort.<sup>4</sup> The Institute decided upon a framework in which the periods following the invention of writing would be designated by major components of that time period, for example; the period addressed in this paper was originally thought to have been one during which chronological successive dynasties ruled over southern Mesopotamia. This unitary nature depended greatly on Dr. Frankfort’s work in Egyptology before he arrived in Mesopotamia.<sup>5</sup>

The Egyptian Early Dynastic Period (3200-2686) clearly evi-

dences a unified political control exercised by a series of kings over the extent of the Egyptian Nile Valley. This extensive control is evidenced by seals, tags and the names of successive kings that were found on various objects that were recovered in royal household contents. These tags and jar seals consistently identify rulers and their succession leading to an effective chronology. Additional evidence consists of fortresses, monumental architecture, and art that is found throughout the region. This system was held together by an as yet not fully documented or understood language held in common. It was this strain of unified cultural elements and their consistent artifact representation in Egypt, which led Dr. Frankfort to come to a similar conclusion about the nature of Mesopotamia. In the Diyala region of Iraq, near modern Iran, he found several sites that shared many of the same elements as above only in a Mesopotamian context. This led to the inference that Mesopotamia also held a unified dynastic structure that was held together through common objects and language, which initially appeared to be confirmed by the Sumerian King List as it was then understood. The conclusion by Dr. Frankfort is further understandable in light of the fact that Frankfort was a student and disciple of Flinders Petrie who developed the method of seriation in 1899. However, evidence uncovered in different parts of Mesopotamia contemporaneous with Dr. Frankfort's research in the Diyala was pointing to a hegemonic power structure that oscillated among the primary cities of Uruk, Ur, Kish, and Lagash in a north/south dynamic over the course of the period between 2900-2350 B.C.<sup>6</sup>

### **A Definition of Hegemony**

It is important to define hegemony before proceeding into the discussion on how this period reflected such a pattern of political organization. It should be no surprise that there is no one operable

definition of hegemony and various scholars acknowledge different definitions of what constitutes hegemony as well as different levels of hegemony.<sup>7</sup>

The approach taken here is that hegemony occurs when a city-state, nation, or combination of such exerts power against other states through aggressive but not always direct military action and subtle forms of power and action rather than full occupation. Hegemonic powers tend to recognize that the other states are not completely under its authority but it can impose its will in such a way as to make dissension from that hegemony so disadvantageous that the behavior is almost automatic and assumed. The other states have no real genuine ability to resist unless they want to injure themselves in the long run.<sup>8</sup>

Hegemony is often formed as the result of an alliance to face a common threat with a leading powerful force, in this case a city-state that can organize and lead the other city-states with its own centralized government. The hegemon is usually the largest city with the biggest resources: a metropole that can sustain the efforts of the others based on its own logistical base. However, it appears that hegemonic power tends to tighten these bonds to the point that the allies are made subordinate and the influence can become as stated above, such that the withdrawal of the hegemon would cause disruptions. However, hegemons remain after the initial conflict. They continue to lead and direct after the initial threat is over and continue to exert pressure that can be economic, military, and resource-based to produce obedience to the hegemon's direction.

Hegemonies, if not allowed to proceed to the strength of an empire, can be overthrown. There is evidence that often, especially in Greece as possibly in Mesopotamia, hegemonies were overthrown if the individual participants felt like the state was becoming an empire or no longer acting in the best interest of the ones in the hegemony.

In this case, a city-state could lead others in an attempt to take the place of the metropole or leading city of the hegemony and declare itself to be the hegemon. Thus hegemony may, to a certain extent, and in some circumstances, depend on consensus, as Gramsci has postulated. However, the nature of evidence for Mesopotamia indicates that hegemony was only overthrown by city-states that were powerful enough to overcome the initial hegemon and immediately imposed hegemonic power over the others. Thus some city-states were in the position of continually changing hegemonic leaders but not being free or being hegemons themselves.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Nature of the Rival City-State / Hegemonic Period**

The archaeological record demonstrates the dominance of four primary city-states in Mesopotamia: Uruk, Ur, Kish, and Lagash in a north - south hegemonic pattern and provides the firmest evidence on which to base re-periodization in terms of hegemony and not dynasty. The evidence demonstrates a situation wherein the four city-states competed with one another for control of this area through limited military expansion and the ability to impose some type of tribute or labor extractions. The hegemonic city-states exacted tribute or indemnities from city-states in their sphere of influence but could not occupy them with military force, which correlates with the above definition of hegemonic power.<sup>10</sup>

The historiography of the period itself introduces one of the most pressing issues and that is developing a stable, relative chronology from which to even derive an agreed upon representation of political organization. Primary sources and archaeological finds in the form of inscriptions and artifacts (sometime one and the same) creates a confusing, non-succinct mass of information from which no relative chronology can be developed with satisfaction. Secondary sources are at variance on the chronology of events. Hans J. Nis-

sen's work *The Early History of the Ancient Near East, 9000-2000 B.C.* offers a conflicting chronological structure with that of Samuel N. Kramer in his much earlier work *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*. Other primary source dependent works such as Jerrold S. Cooper's *Reconstructing History from Ancient Inscriptions: The Lagash-Umma Border Conflict* and Anton Moortgat in his thick volume *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia* all provide a studied contrast. The main issues revolve around when a city-state or which city-state had the hegemonic power, however, all agree that within this period the city-states operated on a hegemonic basis. Anton Moortgat's volume provides something of a useful split when he divides his chapters chronologically between the Mesilim Period and that of the First Dynasty of Ur. The sources vary further on such fundamental aspects as to the duration and the years in which a ruler reigned and which sub-period (E. D. I, II, IIIa, and IIIb) various events or rulers should be placed. Thus what the following discussion is intended to do is provide a basis from which it can be seen that, even if we lack a precise chronology, the Sumerian sources strongly suggest a hegemonic pattern for a limited number of city-states in southern Mesopotamia and nowhere allow for a mono-dynastic succession.<sup>11</sup>

The original source for the theory of stable dynastic succession was the primary source document known as the Sumerian King List. This list has served as a primary resource for researching this period for a multitude of different subjects. Due to the intensive study of such scholars as Thorkild Jacobsen, the interpretation of the King List has modified over the years. Originally, it was approached as a systematic chronology of events, however; further archaeological discoveries and Jacobsen's prosopographical study have revealed that the Sumerian historiographic objective was not chronological history. The full objective of the list is not known and scholars are still attempting to understand it.<sup>12</sup>

The list does passively indicate that the city of Ur had hegemonic power over the majority of southern Mesopotamia in two interrupted phases losing and regaining this hegemonic dominance to and from the city of Uruk. The city-state of Larsa, according to one recension of the list had one period of hegemonic dominance, Adab one hegemonic cycle, and Uruk three hegemonic cycles, and, outside of the King List, there is evidence that the city-state of Lagash experienced at least one full hegemonic period. The city-state that appears to have had the most hegemonic power during the entire span of this period was that of Kish. Kish held hegemonic power in the Sumerian heartland in two non-successive periods. The list indicates that Kish had five dynasties; however, there is not archaeological confirmation that all five of these were hegemonic periods. The other dynasties may have been restricted to dominating only the hinterland and slightly more territory.<sup>13</sup>

### **Northern Kish-Lagash Hegemonic Powers**

The hegemonic dominance of the city of Kish can be observed through a number of archaeological and topographical evidences. The appearance of a number of ceremonial maceheads in temples in different city-states bearing the name of Mesilim and royal dedication to him as being the “King of Kish” attests that Kish was able to impose its political will upon a number of subject states for a period of time, however, undefined that time is. These city-states were Adab, Umma, Lagash, and Nippur.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, a number of separate inscriptions verify that Mesilim was regarded as a king powerful enough to arbitrate local disputes between what would be considered independent city-states, Umma and Lagash.<sup>15</sup> Arbitration by Mesilim could only have been effective if he were in a hegemonic position that was enforceable and brought with it the consequence that one or both parties could be subject to some type of retributive

action should the accord be broken or modified without consent by both parties and Mesilim himself. Secondly, the conflict between the two states shows that they had independence of action enough to still have inter-city conflict that was not sequestered by Kish indicating that local disputes could arise. This is similar to a number of Greek city-state conflicts that arose despite being under the nominal suzerainty of the same hegemonic power. Thirdly, it is in fact highly indicative of hegemonies that they tend to only get involved in local inter-city conflicts if there is a reasonable basis to suspect that the conflict may spread to a wider zone of conflict and involve more parties or that the two parties, belonging to the same organization, will appeal for arbitration on the basis of hegemonic ties.<sup>16</sup>

Retribution on the part of the hegemon against one or both of the parties was a distinct possibility. However, this threat appears to have been removed because the next ruler of Umma, after the dispute had initially been settled, broke the agreement and invaded the territory of Lagash without fear of retribution. It is therefore likely that Mesilim, or his descendent on the throne, was unable to hold onto this hegemonic position of leadership of Mesopotamia. Indeed, archaeological evidence points to this as being the beginning of the Lagashan hegemony in which the ruler, Eanatum, then engaged in a campaign that spanned the region and imposed tribute exactions on the cities of Ur, Uruk, and others.<sup>17</sup>

### **Southern Ur-Uruk Hegemonic Powers**

According to cuneiform texts and an inscription mostly identified as the Tummal Inscription, Ur has been shown to have exercised at least two hegemonic periods of power over the lower portion of southern Mesopotamia.<sup>18</sup> The inscription appears to show a rapid succession of hegemonic power that was taken and given up to Uruk. It does not provide a solid chronological timescale: howev-

er, it links certain rulers which were formerly thought of as mythical as being real and places them in a sequence with other known kings. Again, the exact chronology for this is as varied as the researcher that is consulted. Hans J. Nissen, Thorkild Jacobsen, and Samuel Kramer all have very distinctive renderings of the dynastic sequence and which was more hegemonic. From the research that has taken place at this point, it appears reasonable to conclude that Kish and Ur held hegemonic power at a contemporary point in time and slightly overlapped in the drive to bring certain city-states within their respective sphere of influence that often included the same border cities, such as Nippur. Nippur, according to all scholarly consensus was a spiritual hub for the region of Mesopotamia and the control of that city appears to have cast some type of legitimacy upon the hegemonic claimant.

It is considerably likely that Ur, in the declining years of Uruk, experienced its first hegemonic period and was able to control larger amounts of territory. Then the southern hegemonic supremacy was re-transferred to the city of Uruk through conflict and essentially the conquest of the city of Nippur. A short time later, at least according to the inscriptions, Ur was able to re-take Nippur and the surrounding area in another shift of power relations between the two cities. Indeed, at one point in the Umma-Lagash conflict Umma appears to have appealed to Ur for support against the Lagashan state. This would only be the result if Umma recognized that Ur had a powerful enough army and resources to carry the conflict in its favor against Lagash. Once again, the pattern of how hegemonic relationships are formed and stabilized appears documented in unambiguous terms. Additionally, city-state seals found in Ur indicate its hegemonic influence. The seals are jar seals which were placed on items bound for the palace or governmental distribution to the people. These bear the names of individual city-states in the southern region

and is absent from this list. This strongly suggests that Ur was in a position of power over these dependencies and that the food was a part of food exactions or tributes used to supplement Ur's own resources.<sup>19</sup>

### **Artistic References to Conflict**

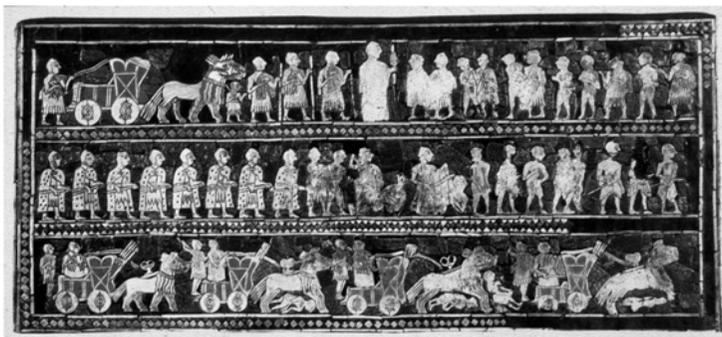
The archaeological evidence that supports the contention that this was a period of hegemonic power brought on by and sustained through war is in the form of art which depicts numerous scenes of war involving prisoners, death, and burial mounds. The already mentioned ceremonial weapons of King Mesilim and the inscriptions such as the Tummal show that war was a constant feature of Mesopotamian city-state relations during this entire period. It is also noteworthy that all of the following depictions and more that could not be included have their origin in the four cities of Ur, Uruk, Kish, and Lagash this re-enforces the notion that these four cities were the primary drivers of conflict in the period.

A gradual but definite transition from the typical artistic motifs of animals and natural phenomenon takes place between the Uruk period and this Hegemonic period, in which the art is dominated by war imagery. The primary examples of this war imagery are the Standard of Ur, the Stele of Victory, also known as the Stele of Vultures, and a number of smaller one panel art, most notably from Kish. In the Kish relief, a king of unknown identity, but most probably Mesilim, carries a macehead staff and tramples on a number of fallen combatants.<sup>20</sup> The martial nature of this relief exhibits that a martial culture may have been in existence at the time and that the king was expected to be the chief warrior of the city-state. This scene may have been dedicated after a battle or after a conflict with another city-state and its submission.<sup>21</sup>



Image in Relief. Unknown Kish king, possibly Mesilim, attacks and tramples enemies. Found near mud layer several feet beneath the ground level structures of Kish. This indicates deep antiquity. Image used by permission of the Field Museum of Natural History. Please see special note in endnotes concerning use.

Plate 1.0



The Standard of Ur. This image was discovered in the Royal Tombs (PG779) and depicts a scene from either the first or second dynasty of Ur. It demonstrates that war was frequent enough to lead to the development of regular corps and equipment. Public domain use.

Plate 1.1



The Stele of Vultures or Stele of Victory. This image depicts the conflict between Umma and Lagash. The image indicates how war was waged in Hegemonic Mesopotamia. Public domain use.

The above plates from the city-states of Lagash, Ur, and Kish may demonstrate a city-state needed to adopt imagery of success in war in order to legitimate its position as hegemonic ruler of the region. Indeed, the maceheads of Mesilim within the temples and not within the palatial context possibly indicates that Mesilim was declaring a form of spiritual or cultic, as well as political, hegemony over the city-state.<sup>22</sup> The Standard of Ur is another such example of possible royal iconography that may have been used for the purpose of enforcing the hegemonic ideology of the state. Since it was found within the royal tombs of the Ur dynasty (first or second) the role of this imagery has been speculated upon extensively. The most likely use was imagery used in the royal hall while city-state representatives presented tribute to the king, thus conveying the consequences of failure to pay proper homage. It most likely portrays an actual battle or several that had occurred. The use of such art in royal reception chambers can be found even in modern contexts in England and other countries with strong royal traditions. This practice is most often adopted to enable a single city-state or empire to influence the decisions of the subordinate city-states and their hinterlands without

having to garrison the city with troops, which may not have been practical.<sup>23</sup>

At this point, it seems evident that a pattern of northern and southern hegemonies competing for power can be clearly identified. Ur and Uruk were in the southern most portions of this region and competed for control of Nippur, northward, and its dependencies during this period. Kish and Lagash, towards the northern portion of this region, competed for dominance of this area with Nippur also functioning as a status symbol for control, along with city-states to the north of their locations. Thus two city-states, Uruk and Ur, competed to expand towards the north, whereas Kish and Lagash were seeking to expand both southwards and north into what is now Iran. This introduces more questions than answers but points to a strategy that was in operation and was not a random set of circumstances. However, it is clear that the hegemon took power because it could but had to release it on the occasion when another city-state gained enough power through collective action to overthrow the hegemonic power. This hegemonic contender in the process became the new hegemon, setting up an almost never-ending hegemonic cycle as we see in the Sumerian King List, the last two of which were Lugalzagesi and Sargon. Sargon was initially another hegemonic ruler who was able to exert just enough political and military power to finally break the hegemonic cycle by placing civilian governors and military governors and forces within the conquered city-states, thus introducing the first empire. Had he not succeeded thus in such an overwhelming manner hegemonic succession would have continued.<sup>24</sup>

A few questions remain regarding the nature of these hegemonies; were they based on consensus, were they based on pure exercise of power, or was it a combination of both? The example of Ebla in later second millennium Syria indicates that both methods

were utilized in Near East contexts based not on the nature of the hegemon but on the responsiveness of the city-state under hegemonic influence. The city-state could respond easily to the influence and coercion of the main city and would be free to pursue its own initiatives but had to pay a tribute and contribute a military contingent. Other city-states were under much more active forms of domination and were subject to military punishment for not fully cooperating.<sup>25</sup> However, in Greece, which bears a remarkable equivalency to Mesopotamia, the hegemonies were based purely on consensus and the hegemon could even be accused of not fulfilling its duties as such. In such a case, the individual members could break away from the hegemony and switch alliances. It was when Athens obtained the hegemony given away by Sparta that the hegemonic leadership turned into an empire. Athens initially held consensus hegemony but as states attempted to break away after the Persian Wars and towards the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, they found that they had no choice to leave and were brought forcibly back into it, resulting in an Athenian Empire.<sup>26</sup>

Persistent questions remain, particularly whether the Mesopotamian city-states operated in a Greek city-state league fashion. Leagues, as observed, are hegemonies but of more limited extent and are more based on consensus and not on force or the threat of such. Thorkild Jacobsen originated the idea that Mesopotamian city-states were a part of what he termed the “Kengir League.”<sup>27</sup> Although it requires more extensive comment than what can be discussed in the limited space provided, it is necessary to say that it has gained some circulation among scholars. However, the difference between league and hegemony may be very thin and more likely, based on what is known about other Near East hegemonies, like Ebla, indicate that “league” is perhaps too democratic for a region that was more subject to strong powers and centralizing tendencies.

The nature of Mesopotamian governments has never led to leagues based on mutual respect for power. The evidence leans more towards governments that were seeking power over their neighbors and did so without considering anything as philosophical as democracy and consent by the governed. These were hegemonies of power, not protection. Additionally Jacobsen relied heavily on myths and not hard archaeological evidence. His interpretation drew from myths originating at an early, but imprecise period, which may have been expressing an idealized vision of leadership by the gods against the reality of leadership in that time. In these myths, the gods selected not a secular human ruler but a god ruler of the region from the central religious city of Nippur. In the myths, this appears to rotate in a regular, collegial fashion; however, the artistic representations of war as noted above, and the Tummal inscription, show a much different picture of human war and conflict creating realities on the ground. Thus hegemonic power structures fluctuating between competing states is most likely the best model that can be adopted and would lead one to expect more in-line nomenclature.<sup>28</sup>

This consideration of the nature of the period has been necessarily brief and sketchy but it has been offered to demonstrate that there was no single political dynasty or succession of different dynastic houses operating a unified state leading to an imperial period under Akkadian rule. There was a general cultural unity but even this has proven to be ephemeral and subject to variation on a noticeable scale. Much of this evidence surfaced less than ten years after the adoption of the nomenclature and researchers who followed the adoption of the term realized that it was ineffective and misleading. The continued use of Early Dynastic nomenclature has served to more effectively obscure the reality of this period than help in elucidating the outstanding problems. Indeed, there has been no major attempt in the last couple of decades to unwind the as yet

difficult chronology of this period and set it in order.

## **Conclusion**

As demonstrated in this article the period of history between 2900-2350 B.C. in Mesopotamia was a period of intense rivalry and endemic warfare in the region and no one polity or city-state was able to effectively control the region as a whole. Instead, four city-states in a north - south dynamic competed with each other for authority over the region and held each of the others in effective check. These four city-states emerged briefly and dominated large portions of land and in particular the spiritual center of Nippur. This now favors a hegemonic framework for power relations in the Near East at this time. They shared a common language, religion, philosophy of life, literature, and many other aspects. Yet, as the Greek city-states did much later in the second half of the first millennium B.C., these did not prevent widespread conflict or produce a lasting unified structure of government.

Thus, the period does not continue to demonstrate a reasonable basis to be designated as Early Dynastic because no successive state structure was implemented until the founding of the Akkadian Dynasty. The original designation of "Early Dynastic" was adopted from Egyptology without recognition of the wider social and martial nature of the period and, even after such evidence was uncovered, the Oriental Institute made no effort to consult with specialists in the field to adjust the terminology. Frankfort's efforts at seriation, being a disciple of Petrie, led to the erroneous impression that a monolithic culture existed in Mesopotamia and had led to a successive dynastic structure. Based on this and far more evidence than can be presented within the context of a journal article, it appears more useful to change the periodization terminology towards hegemony rather than dynasty. Hegemonic Period has been the term most used in

this article and is by far the easiest to use. It more accurately circumscribes the evidence for this period and gives the historical data instant context. This may help in resolving the nature of the period, possibly re-setting or re-booting the interpretation of the data within its proper context. Rival City-State Period could be adopted but has the disadvantage of being somewhat long, thus lacking in the virtue of brevity and its aid in memory. Warring States Period or Era has been adopted by Chinese studies, although it also accurately reflects the nature of this period and development of Mesopotamian city-states at this point.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Hans J. Nissen, *The Early History of the Ancient Near East, 9000-2000 B.C.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 129.

<sup>2</sup>Dietrich Gerhard, "Periodization in European History," *The American Historical Review* 61:4 (1956), 900; Mitchell Rothman, "Introduction," in *Uruk Mesopotamia & Its Neighbors: Cross-Cultural Interactions in the Era of State Formation* ed. Mitchell S. Rothman (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2008), 8, 126.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, 9-25.

<sup>4</sup>Pinhas Delougaz, Seton Lloyd, Henri Frankfort et al., *Pre-Sargonid Temples in the Diyala Region* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), 125-35.

<sup>5</sup>Mari H. Gates, *Archaeology and the Ancient Near East: Methods and Limitations in A Companion to the Ancient Near East* ed. Daniel Snell (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 68-69. The pre-history sites were named for major patterns or their find spot, thus Al-Ubaid, Uruk, and Jamdet Nasr. The author makes it clear and it is evident in other writings that this entire scheme was not well received and has proven to be unsatisfactory for almost all researchers.

<sup>6</sup>Kathryn Bard, "The Emergence of the Egyptian State (3200-2686 B.C.)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 57-81; Nicolas Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1992), 49-67; Seton Lloyd, "Henri Frankfort:1897-1954," *Man* 54 (1954):106.

<sup>7</sup>John M Wickersham, *Hegemony and Greek Historians* (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1994) 36; Cornelia Beyer, *Violent Globalism: Conflict in Response to Empire* (Oxon: Ashgate Publishing Group, 2008), 1; Lisa Cooper, "States of Hegemony: Early Forms of Political Control in Syria during the Third Millennium B.C.," in *Development of Pre-State Communities in the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honor of Edgar Pettenberg* eds. Diane Maguire and Louise C. Bolger (Oxford UK: OxBow Books, 2010), 92.

<sup>8</sup>Cooper, *States of Hegemony*, 92.

<sup>9</sup> Beyer, *Violent Globalism: Conflict in Response to Empire*, 17. Gramsci's point is well taken and the majority of hegemonic relationships that are present historically do appear to be based on some level of consensus, particularly those of Greece, but it appears that the level was based on the individual state rather than the hegemon. At other times bellicosity appears to play the major factor.

<sup>10</sup> Cooper, *States of Hegemony*, 90.

<sup>11</sup> Nissen, *The Early History of the Ancient Near East, 9000-2000 B.C.*, 129-164; Samuel N. Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 33-58; Jerrold S. Cooper, *Reconstructing History from Ancient Inscriptions: The Lagash-Umma Border Conflict* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1983), 22-37; Anton Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia: Classical Art of the Near East* (London: Phaidon Press, 1967), 19-43; Seton Lloyd. *The Archaeology of Mesopotamia: From the Stone Age to the Persian Conquest* 2<sup>nd</sup>.Ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), 110.

<sup>12</sup> Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 62-126.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*, 53; Stephen Langdon, *Excavations at Kish* (University of Oxford and Field Museum of Natural History) 1, 1923-1924, 1, 5; Edgar J. Banks, *Bismaya, Or the Lost City of Adab....Oldest of the Buried Cities of Babylonia* (London: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1912), 244.

<sup>15</sup> Cooper, *History from Ancient Inscriptions*, 48; Nissen, *The Early History of the Ancient Near East, 9000-2000 B.C.*, 79; Benjamin R Foster, *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 36. The discussion of the city-state seals will continue for a very long time as many researchers hold differing opinions as to their use and function. To postulate a league or confederation from this evidence seems highly tentative as the only other source for this is Thorkild Jacobsen's own tentative reconstruction. Given the state of conflict between the cities and Ur's already well understood domination of the surrounding area, it is best to place these seals in the context of tribute exactions brought in by the hinterland.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 22-43.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>18</sup> Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.2.1.3#> Accessed on 1/6/2014. Reproduction of the text would be very long, however, the main of the inscription does show both Ur and Uruk in a see-saw tug-of-war where each attempted to possess the same land over successive generations. The listing of what was previously considered to be a mythic personage, Gilgamesh, along with a king of Ur, allows us to at least coordinate these two rulers with the earliest portion of Sumerian history since by 2600 B.C. Gilgamesh had already obtained a mythic standing.

<sup>19</sup> Cooper, *History from Ancient Inscriptions*, 23.

<sup>20</sup> Henry Field, *The Field Museum-Oxford University Expedition to Kish, Mesopotamia 1928-1929* (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1929), 21. Image used by permission. However, the Field Museum wished to make special note that this

piece is not in the Museum's collection and they do not know where it currently resides.

<sup>21</sup> Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia: Classical Art of the Near East*, 42-43. See also chronologically ordered pictorial display at the end of the volume. Susan Pollock, *Ancient Mesopotamia: The Eden that Never Was* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 8. In her work, she offers a differing opinion and traces the changes in art from animals to war scenes beginning in the Uruk period but what phase is unstated. Holly Pittman, "Mesopotamian Intra-regional Relations," in *Uruk Mesopotamia & Its Neighbors*, 416-417. In her work she correlates the transition of imagery with Late Uruk / LC5 which relates to the transition phase of Late Uruk and Jamdet Nasr, around 3000 B.C. (for southern Mesopotamia) which is at the horizon of the Hegemonic Period.

<sup>22</sup> Langdon, *Excavations at Kish*, 1.

<sup>23</sup> Julian Reade, "Religious Ritual in Assyrian Sculpture in Ritual and Politics in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Ritual and Politics in Ancient Mesopotamia*, edited by Barbara N. Porter (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2005), 63. Christine E. Grey, "Hegemonic Images: Language and Silence in Thai Polity," *Man* 26:1 (1991):43-65.

<sup>24</sup> Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*, 59-63.

<sup>25</sup> Cooper, "States of Hegemony," 90.

<sup>26</sup> Wickersham, *Hegemony and Greek Historians*, 54.

<sup>27</sup> Thorkild Jacobsen, "Early Political Development in Mesopotamia," in *Toward the Image of Tammuz* ed. William L. Moran (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 140.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 137-139.

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