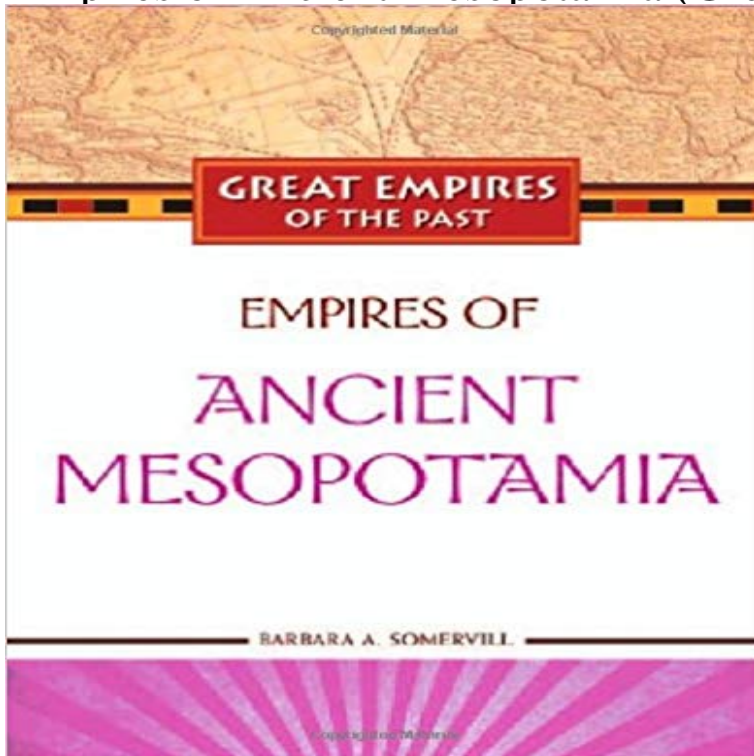


Empires of Ancient Mesopotamia (Great Empires of the Past)



Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers, was the site of the world's first stable civilizations, including Sumer, Babylonia, and Assyria. As people settled permanently along the Fertile Crescent, they built irrigation systems to bring water to crops and constructed levees as protection against the flooding rivers. For the first time, humans had some control over the natural world around them, providing them with the stability and time needed to develop governments, religion, and legendary heroes such as Gilgamesh. As various city-states sprang up along the rivers, the first trade routes were laid among them. Cuneiform, the first writing system, eventually developed into various dialects and spread throughout western Asia and beyond. Although the empires of ancient Mesopotamia ended with the Persian conquest in the sixth century BCE, their importance cannot be underestimated. From a legal system to a school system, these ancient inhabitants of modern-day Iraq pioneered the groundwork that forms the basis for modern societies. *Empires of Ancient Mesopotamia* details the development of this area, the growth of its city-states, the daily life of its peoples, and how their influence is still felt today.

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