

Early Cities: Hierarchy vs. Heterarchy



- 🌀 Introduction: What is a City?
- 🌀 Hierarchy vs. Heterarchy
- 🌀 Mesopotamia: Hierarchy in the First Cities
- 🌀 Niger River Valley: Heterarchy in Jenne-Jeno
- 🌀 Group Activity: Primary Sources from the Indus River Valley

Discussion Questions



- ❧ What do you think of when you hear the word “city”?
- ❧ What do you think are the most important defining attributes of a city?

One Definition of “City”



- ❧ “A large and heterogeneous unit of settlement that provides a variety of services and manufactures to a larger hinterland.”
 - ❧ Quoted in Robert J. McIntosh, “Different Cities: Jenne-jeno and African Urbanism,” p. 367

Discussion Question:

- ❧ How do you think early cities were organized? Why types of governments do you think they had?

Two Types of Power Distribution in Early Cities



- ❧ **Hierarchy:** Top-down power distribution, often with centralized power and decision making.
- ❧ **Heterarchy:** Power distributed amongst different groups and hierarchies within the city. The relative power between different groups often is flexible.
- ❧ All cities have some combination of these two types of power distribution.

Discussion Questions: Hierarchy and Heterarchy



- ❧ What are the advantages and disadvantages of these two types of power distribution?
- ❧ Which type of power distribution do you think is most common throughout history in urban societies?

Hierarchy vs. Heterarchy

- ❧ “...*not* generating hierarchies takes work, and ... the long-term durability of distributed power relations requires both ideological commitments and material benefits to the actors involved.”

❧ Sinopoli, McIntosh, Morris et al., “The Distribution of Power: Hierarchy and its Discontents,” pg. 391

- ❧ **Discussion Questions:**

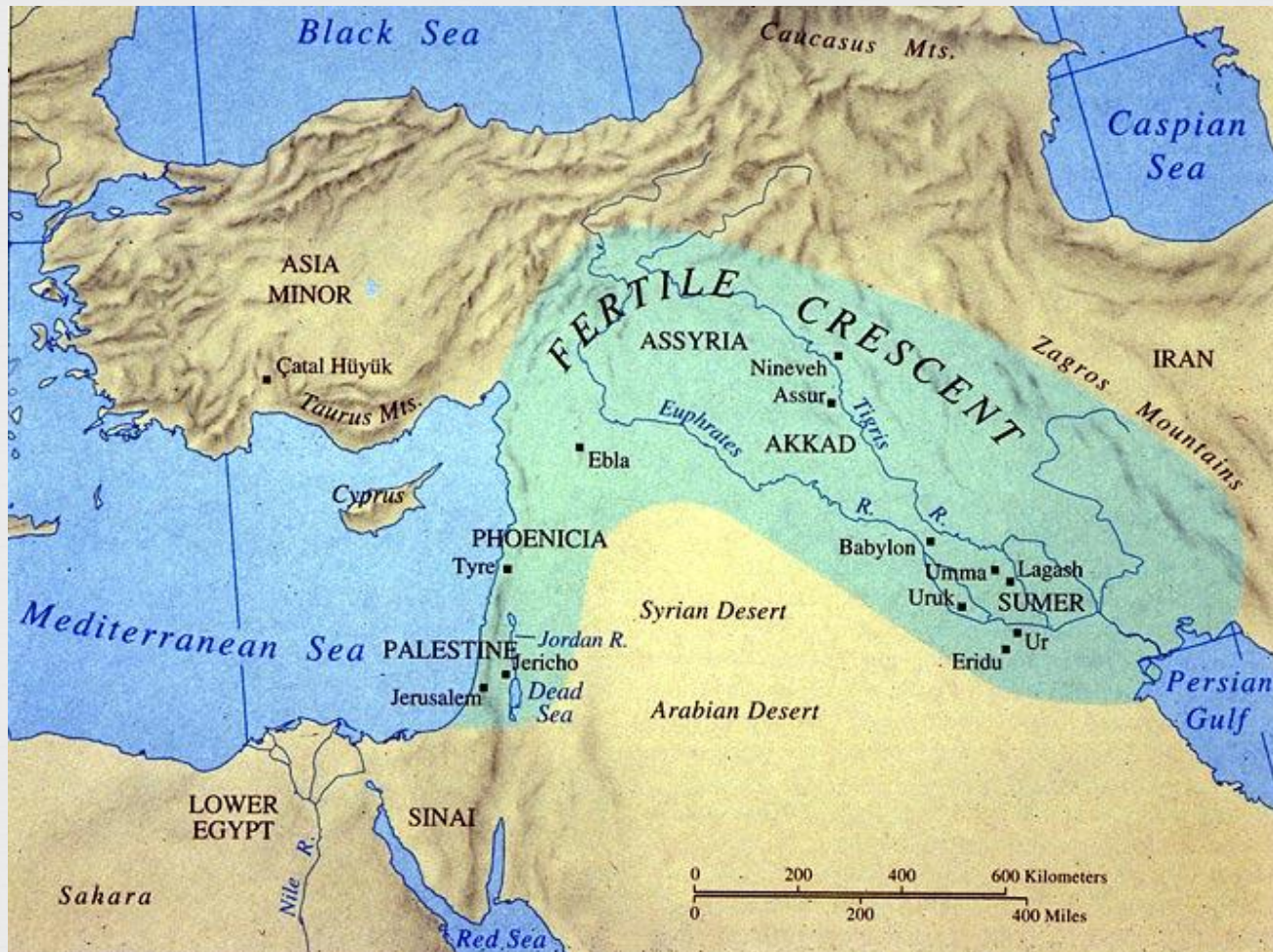
- ❧ What does this argument claim about how less hierarchical power structures are maintained?
- ❧ Do you see the authors’ arguments reflected in the present day? Why or why not?

City-States, Centralization, and Hierarchy



Mesopotamia
and the Earliest City-States

Mesopotamia 4300–1500 BCE



The Development of Mesopotamian City-States 4300-3000 BCE

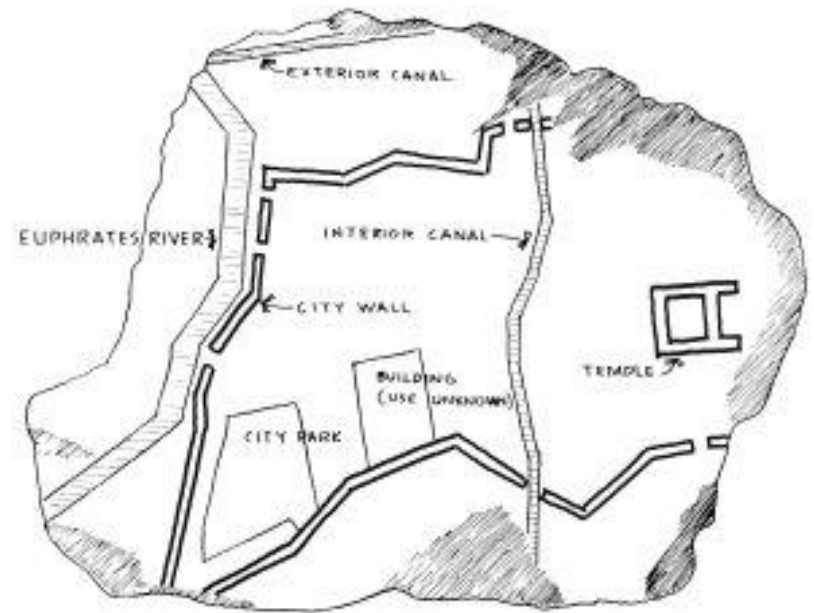


- Around 4300 BCE, settlements become larger, more prosperous, and more organized.
- Uruk: the first city-state (40,000 people by 3100 BCE)
- Temples acted as the center of government until c. 2900 BCE

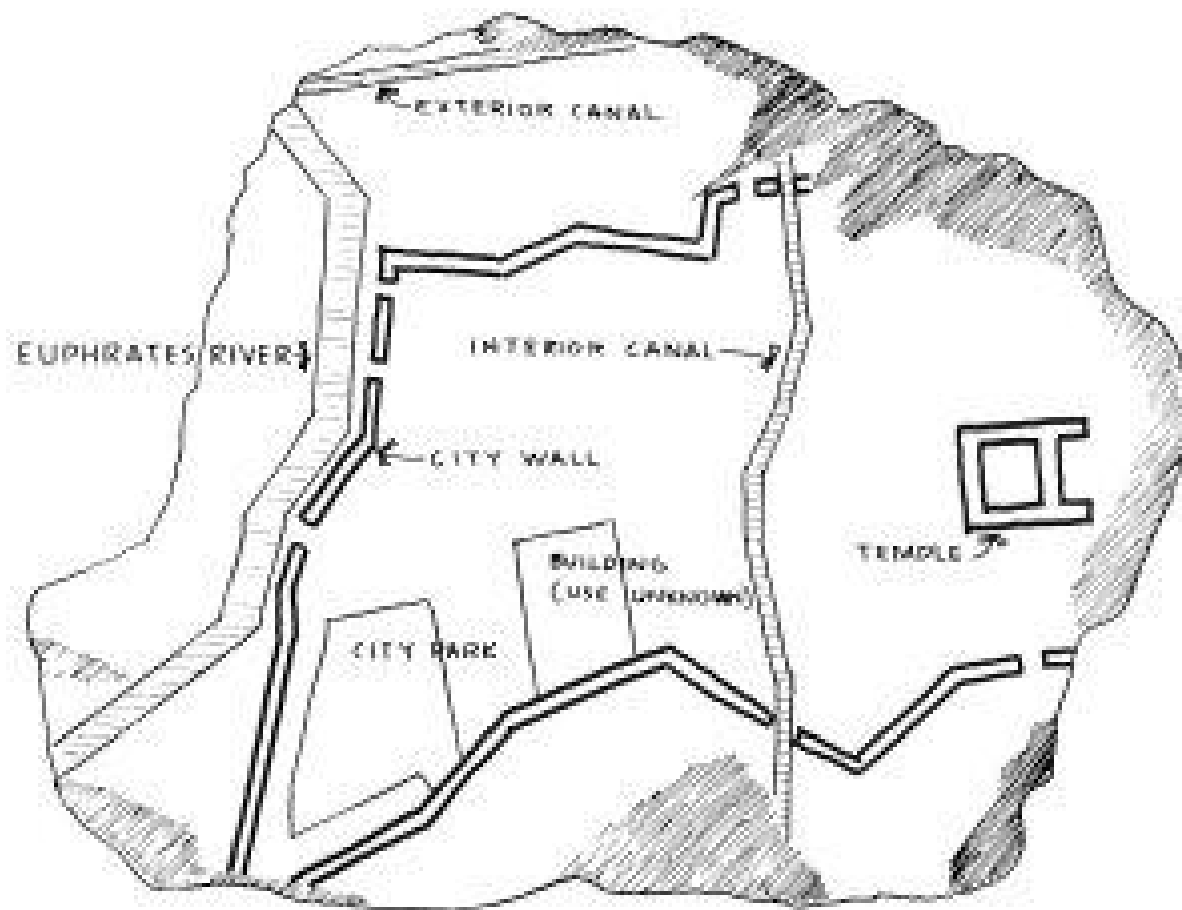


Around 3000 BCE, Sumerian city states began to be dominated by family dynasties headed by a war leader, called a “lugal” (“big man”)

Map of Nippur c. 1500 BCE



THE FIRST CITY MAP
MAP OF NIPPUR ON A CLAY TABLET
DATES FROM 1500, B.C.



THE FIRST CITY MAP

MAP OF NIPPUR ON A CLAY TABLET
DATES FROM 1500, B.C.

The Standard of Ur
From Ur, southern Iraq, about 2600-2400 BCE



Discussion:

The Code of Hammurabi

Nelson and Strayer, *Ways of the World*, vol. I, Source 2.1



- ❧ Based on this source, what do you think were Hammurabi's reasons for creating this law code?
- ❧ What evidence is there for governmental and social hierarchy in this source?
- ❧ To what extent do you think this source reflects the reality of life in ancient Mesopotamia?



Early Cities: Examples of Distributed Power



The Niger River Valley and Jenne-Jeno
(Djenne-Djeno)

Along the Niger River: Cities without States? 300 BCE-1400 CE



- ☞ Drying of the Niger Valley area c. 200 BCE allowed for permanent settlements
- ☞ Urban based society
- ☞ City of Jenne-jeno with 40,000 people acted as a transshipment point.
- ☞ Need for stone, copper, gold, iron ore, salt and other resources made long-distance trade important
- ☞ Exported iron, rice, and terra-cotta pottery

Government in Jenne-Jeno



- ❖ No evidence of a centralized state
 - ❖ “archeologists have found in their remains few signs of despotic power, widespread warfare, or deep social inequalities.” (*Ways of the World*, pg. 271)

Discussion Question:

If Jenne-Jeno did not have a centralized government, how else could the city be organized and managed?

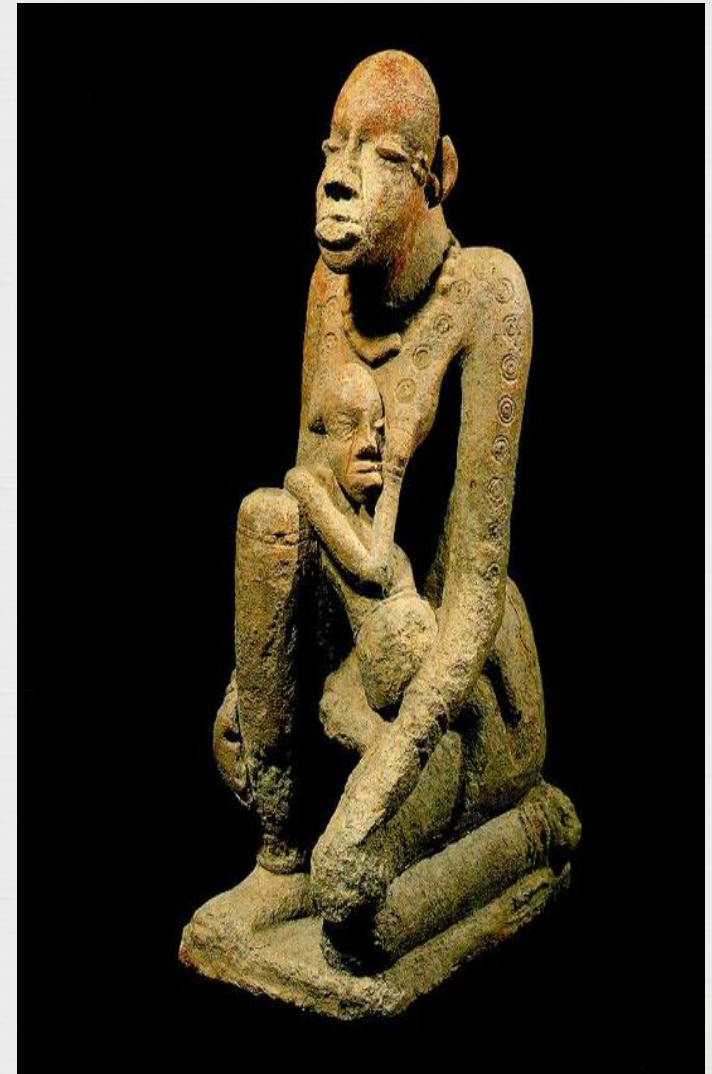
Jenne-Jeno



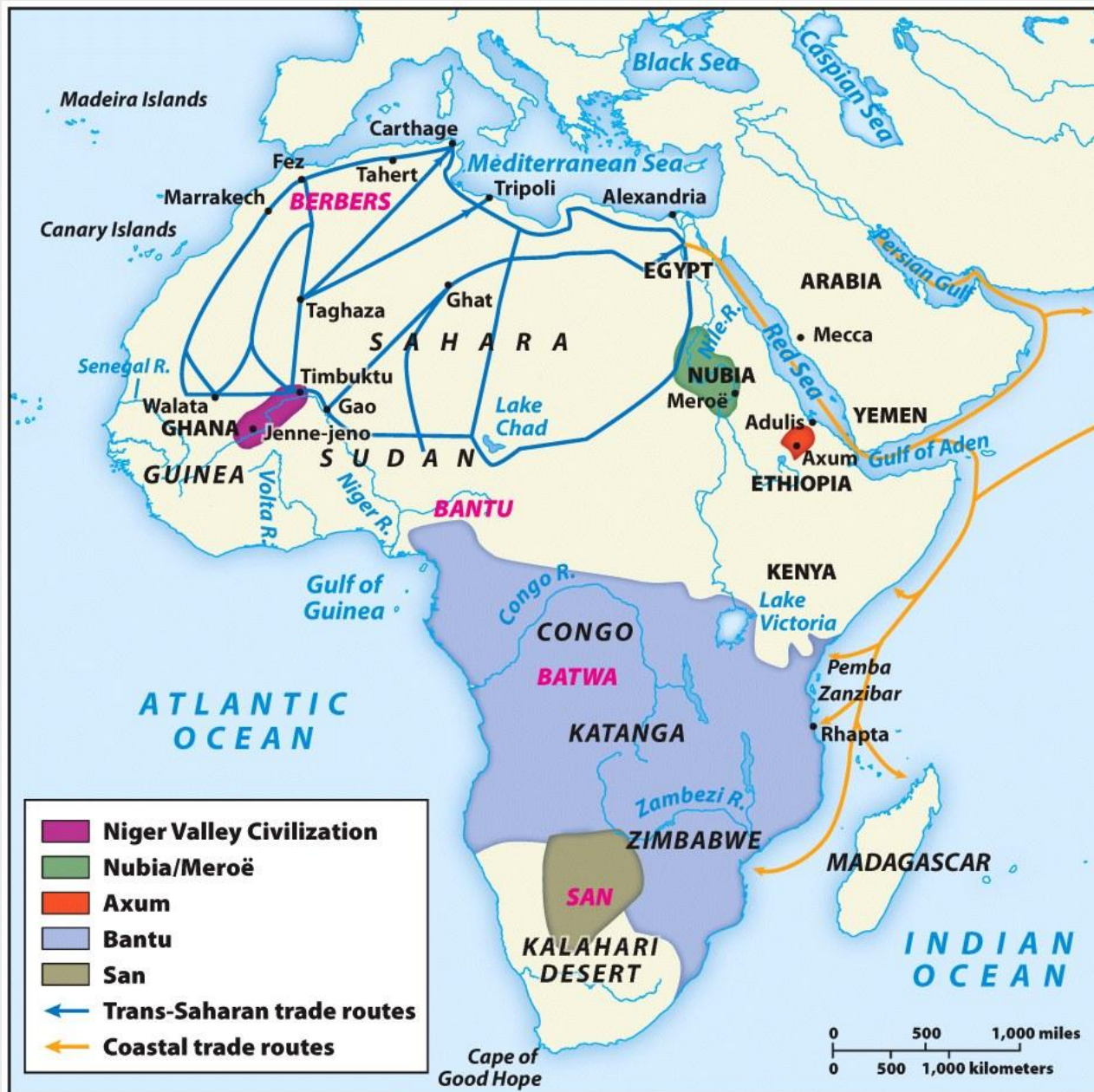
- ❧ Jenne-jeno had a city wall, but no elite residences or monuments (McIntosh, pg. 369)
- ❧ Archeologists have found evidence of “clustering,” where settlements around a central area were economically specialized
- ❧ No evidence for centralized government
 - ❧ Instead different economic groups managed themselves
 - ❧ Co-operation between different economic groups

Urban Organization Along the Niger River

- ❧ Most prestigious craft iron-working
- ❧ Terra-cotta sculpting also important
- ❧ Gradual transition from artisan communities to occupational castes where children inherited the specialization of their parents and married within their economic specialization.



Terra-cotta figure from
Jenne-jeno



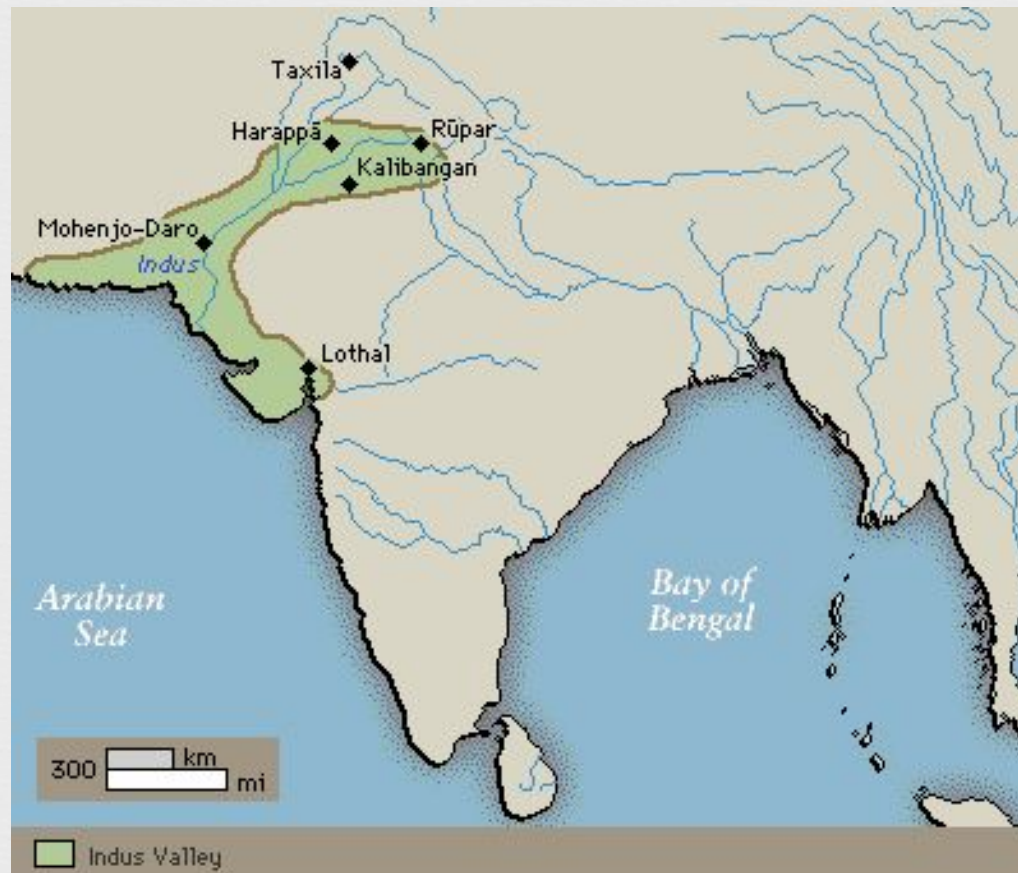
Map 7.1 Africa in the Classical Era
 Chapter 7, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources*, First Edition
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Group Activity: The Indus Valley Civilization



Indus Valley Civilization

2600–1600 BCE



Group Discussion

Strayer and Nelson, *Ways of the World*, vol. I, “Indus Valley Civilization, Description and Visual Sources 2.1-2.3

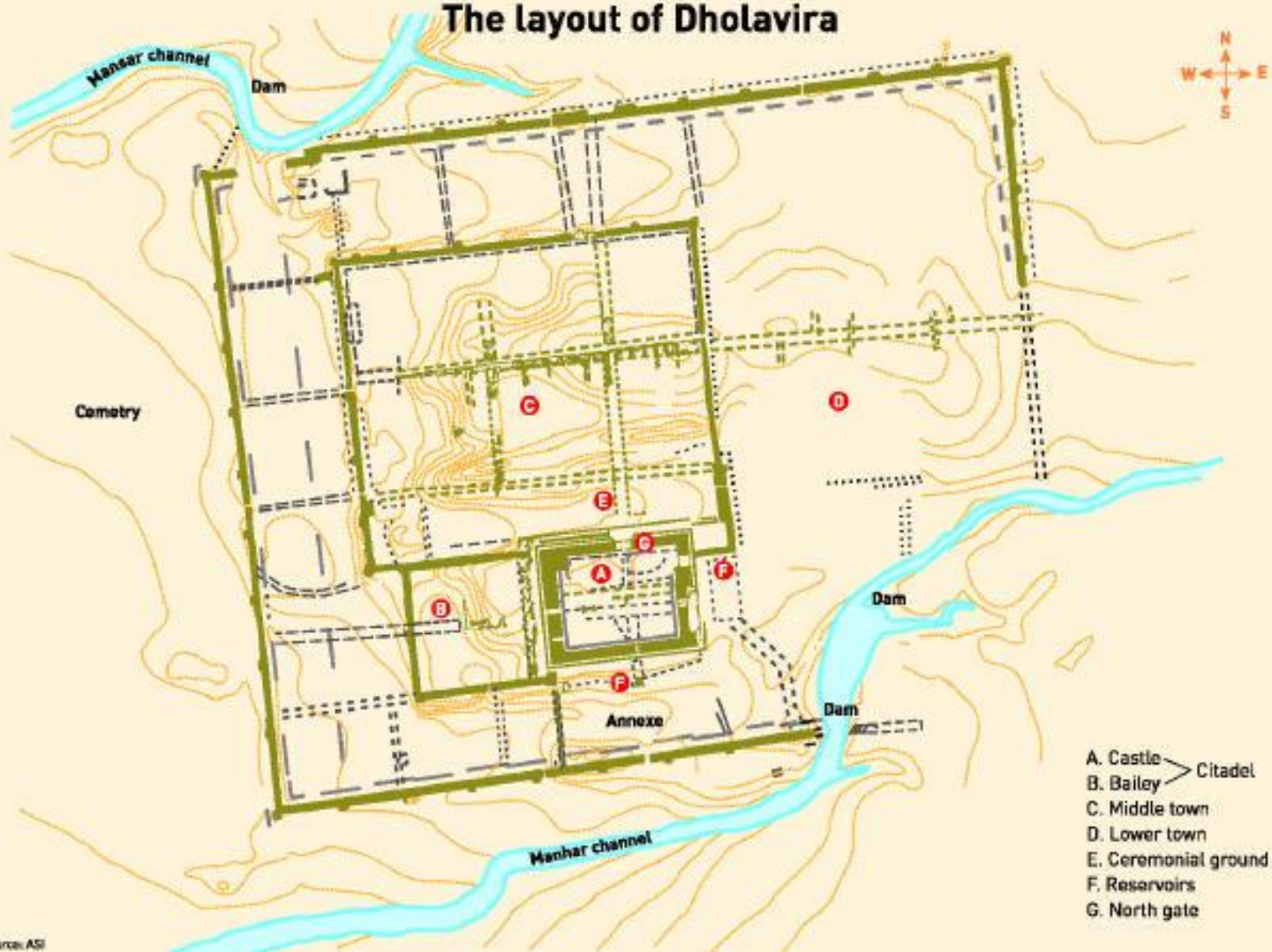


- Based on the evidence in your textbook, including the text of Chapter 2 and the visual primary sources:
- Was the governmental and/or social structure of the Indus Valley Civilization more hierarchical or heterarchical?
- Briefly write down evidence that supports your claims and be prepared to share your findings with the class.

The “Great Bath” at Mohenjo Daro
(in the center of the Citadel)
c. 2000 BCE
39.3 feet by 23 feet and 9.8 feet deep



The layout of Dholavira



Dholavira: Location and Images

