

CUNEIFORM

- The Sumerians were important inventors. They created a system of writing called **cuneiform (wedge-shaped)**. They used a reed stylus to make wedge-shaped markings on clay tablets. Writing was for record keeping, teaching, and law.

REED STYLUS



SCRIBES

- A new class of people who wrote and made copies were called scribes.
- Like in Egypt, being a scribe was the key to a successful career for an upper-class Mesopotamian boy.
- Writing also passed on cultural knowledge from generation to generation, sometimes in new ways.



LITERATURE

- The *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the most important piece of Mesopotamian literature, teaches the lesson that only gods are immortal. Gilgamesh is wise and strong, a being who is part human and part god.
- Gilgamesh befriends a hairy beast named Enkidu. When Enkidu dies, Gilgamesh feels the pain of his friend's death, and he searches for the secret of immortality. He fails.

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

- The Sumerians invented important technologies, such as the **wagon wheel**.
- In **mathematics** they invented a **number system based on 60**, and they made **advances in applying geometry to engineering**.
- In **astronomy**, the Sumerians charted the constellations using their number system of 60.

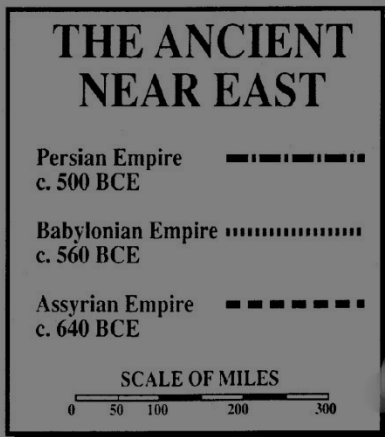
OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS:

- Sundial
- potter's wheel
- 1st to make bronze out of copper and tin, creating finely crafted metalworks



SECOND EMPIRE: BABYLONIA

- The rise and fall of empires is an important part of history.
- In 1792 B.C.E. Hammurabi of Babylon, a city-state south of Akkad, established a new empire over much of both Akkad and Sumer.



The background of the slide is a dark, textured image of the Code of Hammurabi stone tablet. It shows the top portion with the famous relief of King Hammurabi standing before the gods, and the beginning of the cuneiform text columns below. The image is somewhat faded and serves as a backdrop for the text.

MAJOR CONTRIBUTION: FIRST SYSTEM OF WRITTEN LAW

- The **Code of Hammurabi** is one of the world's most important early systems of law.
- It calls for harsh punishments against criminals.
- The principle of retaliation; “**an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,**” is fundamental in Hammurabi's code.

THE LAW

- Hammurabi's code punished public officials who failed in their duties or were corrupt.
- It also had consumer protection provisions, for example, holding builders responsible for the quality of their work.
- If a building collapsed and killed anyone other than a slave, the builder was executed.
- Damages had to be paid to people injured.

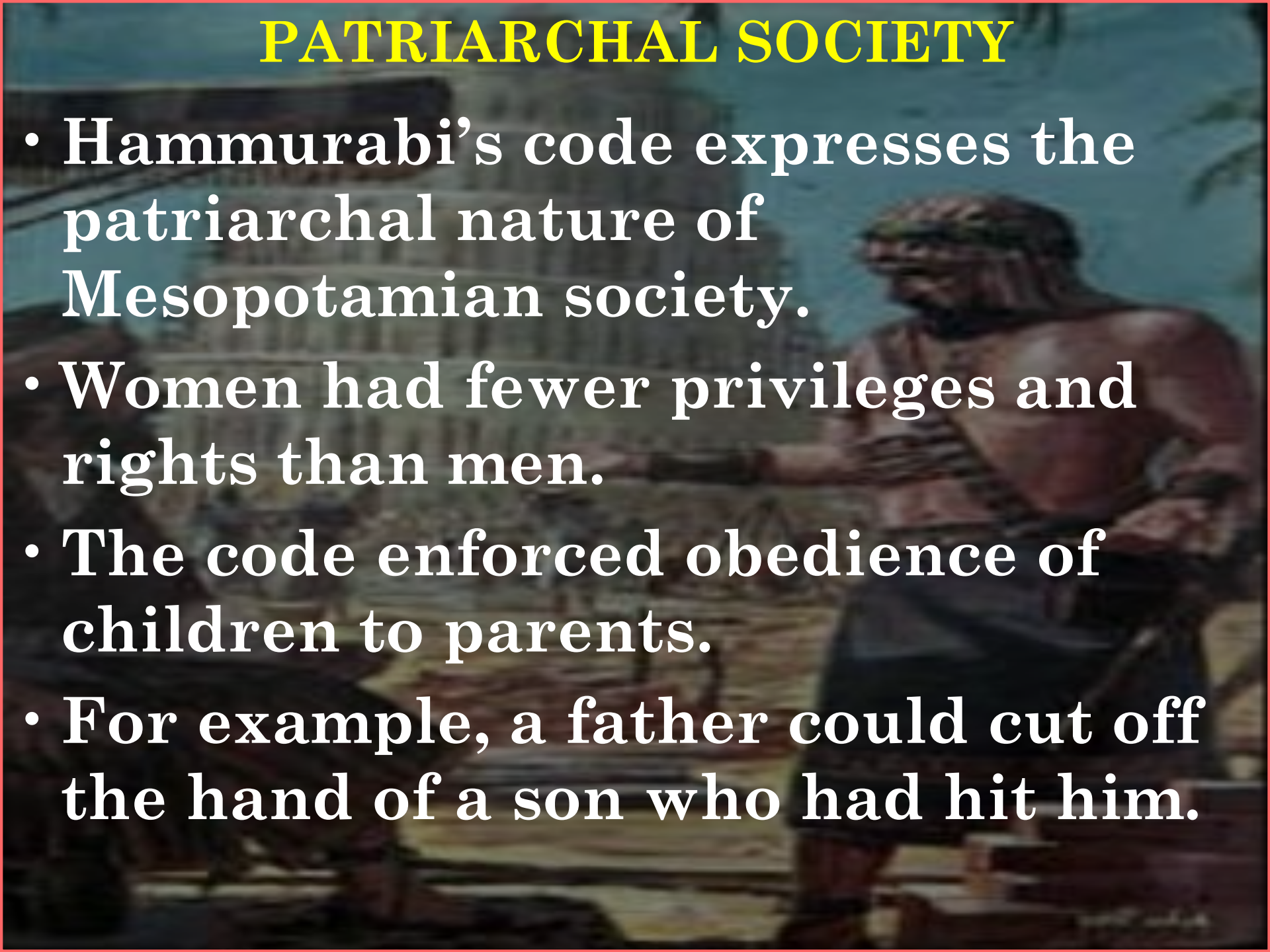
FAMILY LAW

- The largest group of laws in the code covered marriage and the family.
- Parents arranged marriages, and the bride and groom had to sign a marriage contract to be officially married.



PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY

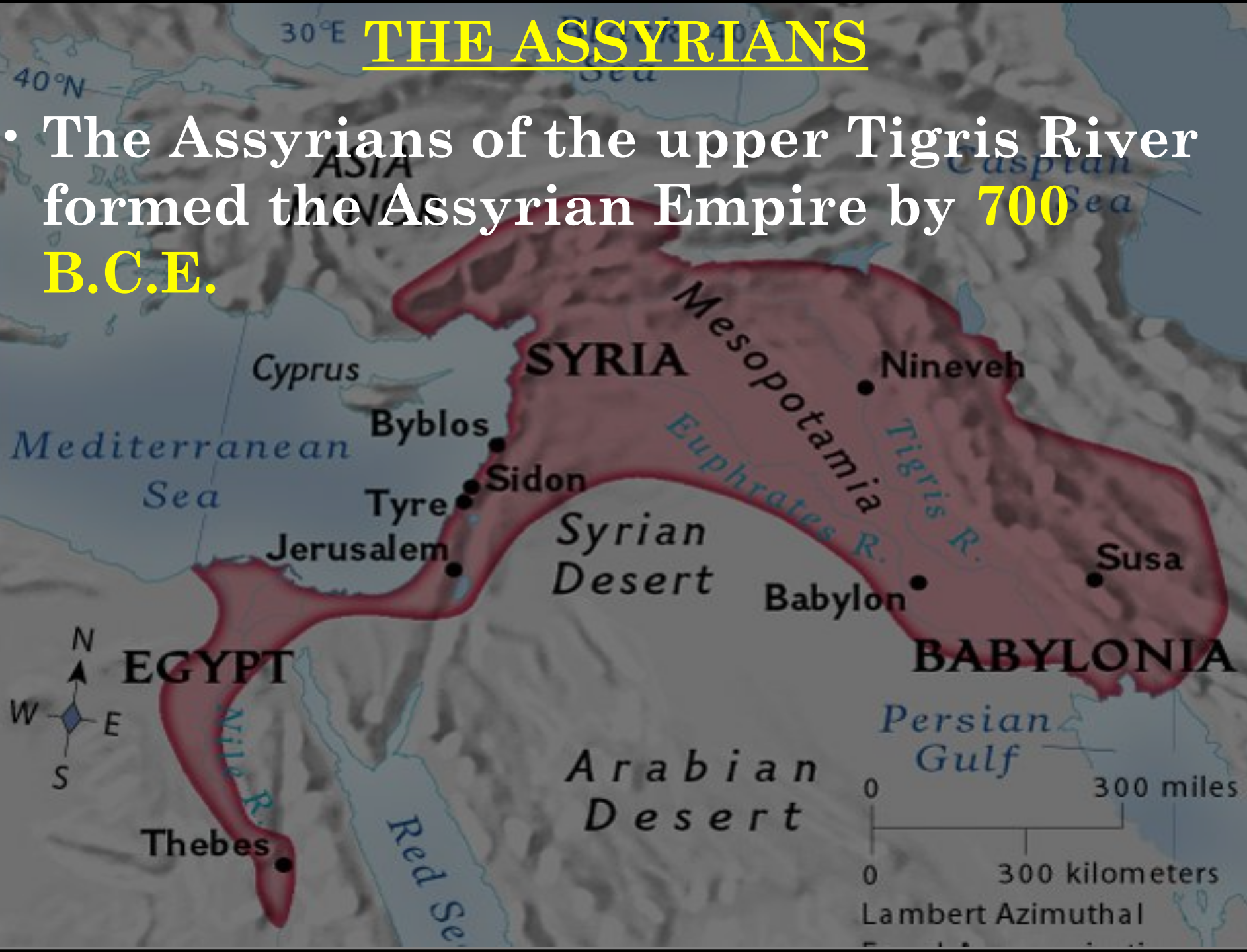
- Hammurabi's code expresses the patriarchal nature of Mesopotamian society.
- Women had fewer privileges and rights than men.
- The code enforced obedience of children to parents.
- For example, a father could cut off the hand of a son who had hit him.



THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

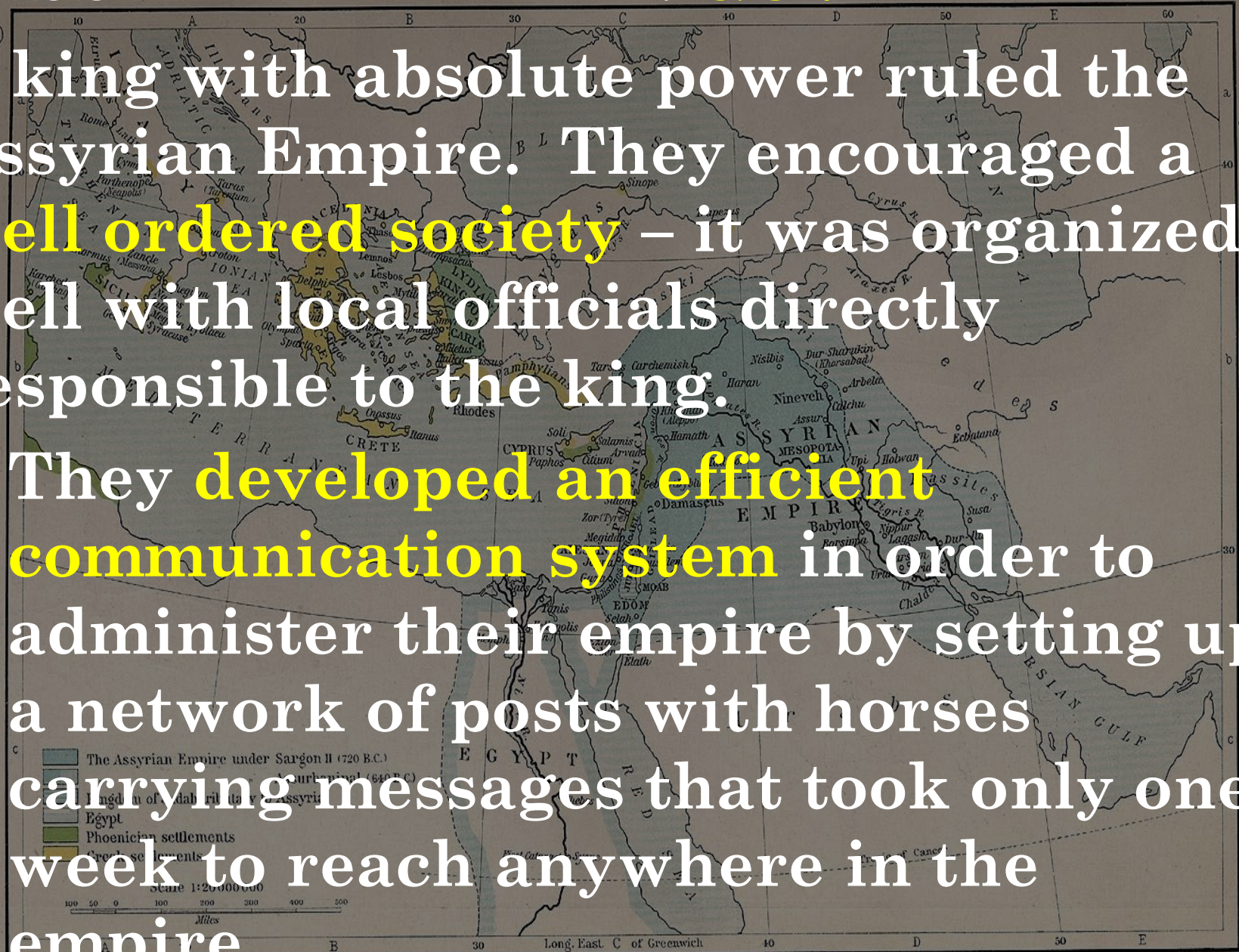
THE ASSYRIANS

- The Assyrians of the upper Tigris River formed the Assyrian Empire by **700 B.C.E.**



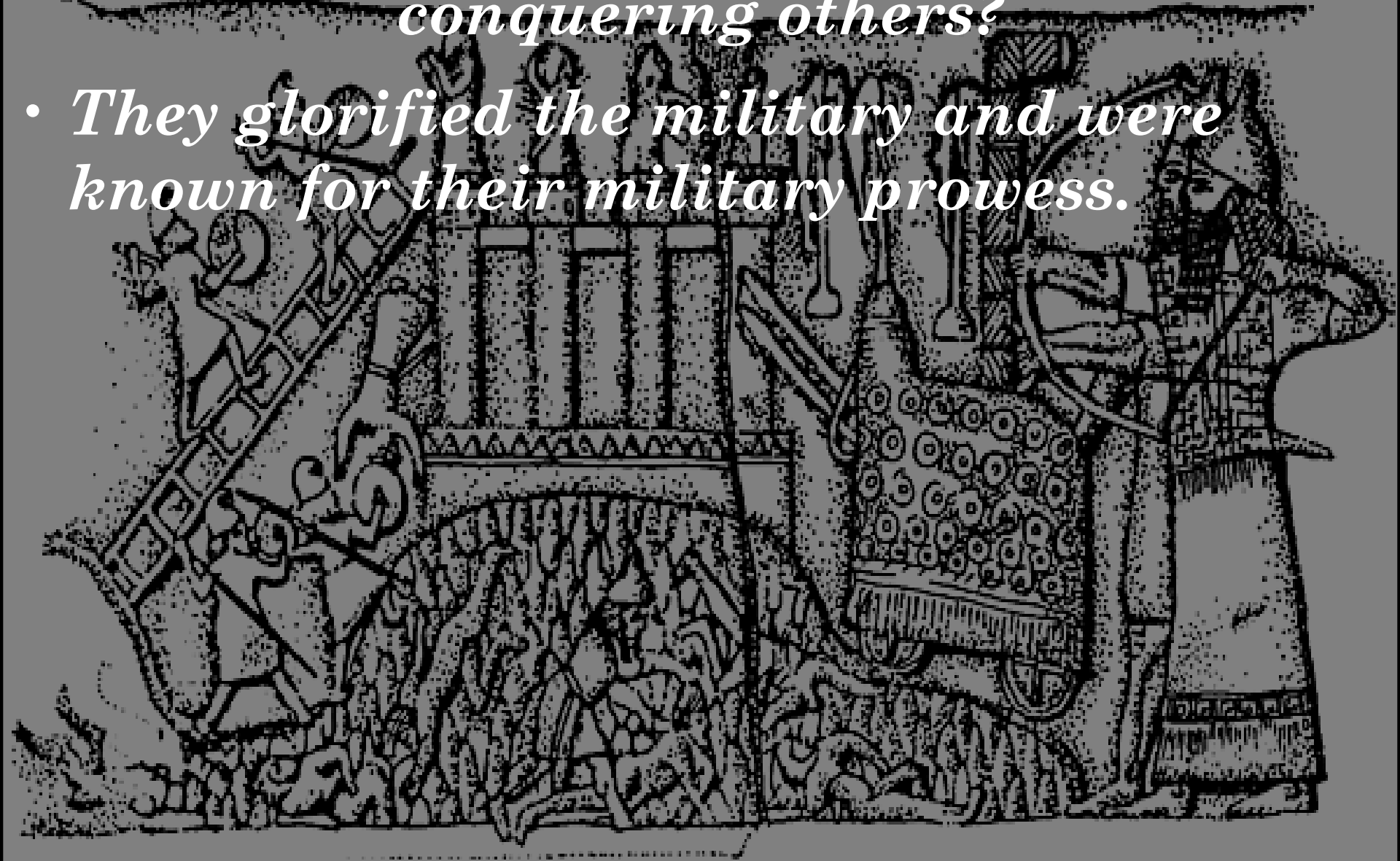
ASSYRIAN EMPIRE: GOVERNMENT

- A king with absolute power ruled the Assyrian Empire. They encouraged a **well ordered society** – it was organized well with local officials directly responsible to the king.
 - They **developed an efficient communication system** in order to administer their empire by setting up a network of posts with horses carrying messages that took only one week to reach anywhere in the empire.

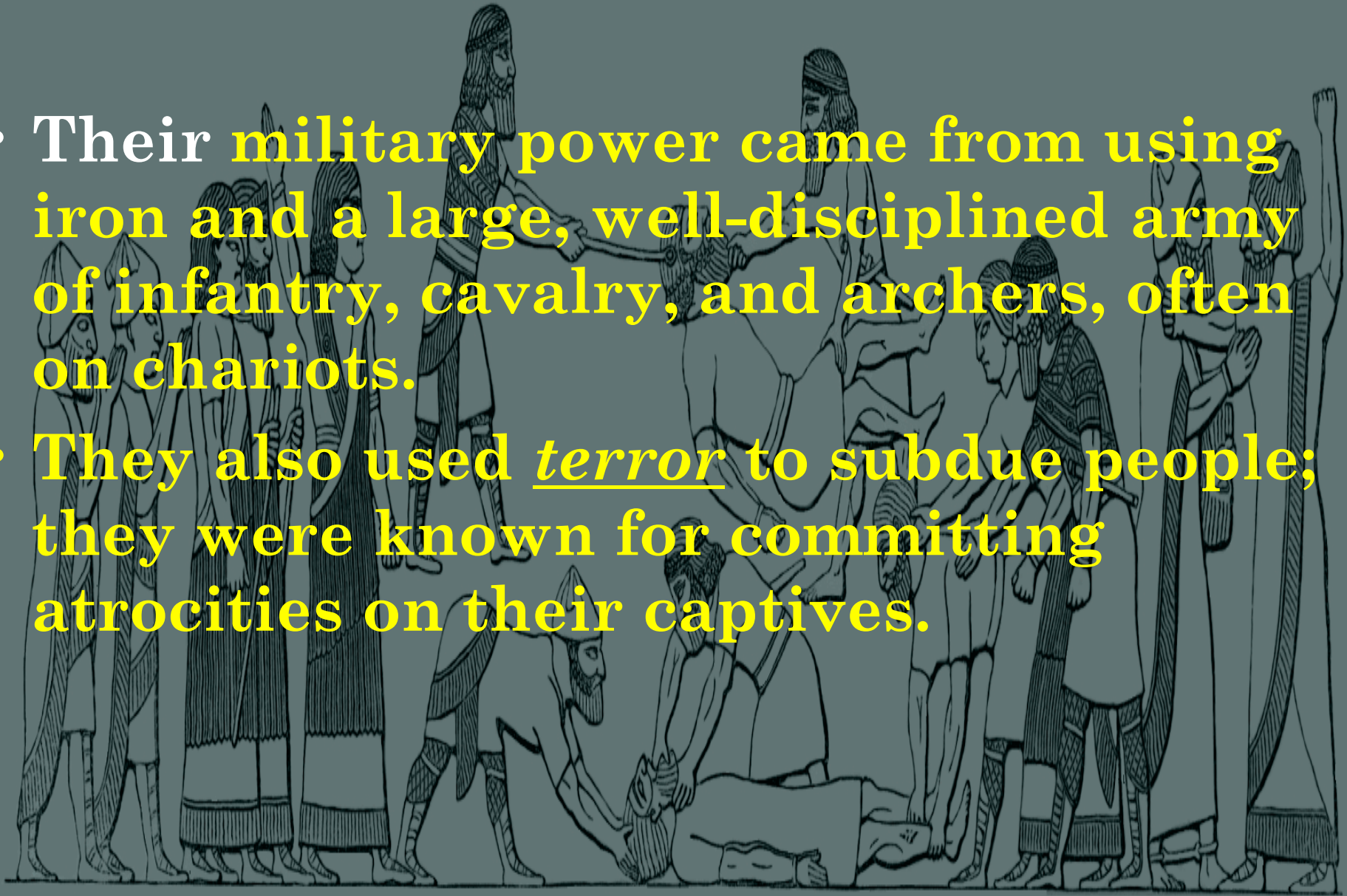


Why were the Assyrians so successful at conquering others?

- They glorified the military and were known for their military prowess.*



- Their military power came from using iron and a large, well-disciplined army of infantry, cavalry, and archers, often on chariots.
- They also used terror to subdue people; they were known for committing atrocities on their captives.



SOCIETY & RELIGION:

- Riches from trade & war paid for splendid palaces
- Women were confined in secluded quarters and had to be veiled when they appeared in public.

MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS:

- Learned to extract iron from ore
- Created state of the art weapons
- Nineveh held one of the ancient world's largest libraries

The Empire Crumbles

- The cruelty displayed by the Assyrians had earned them many enemies.
- In 612 B.C.E., combined army of Medes, Chaldeans, and others rammed open the city's gates and burned and leveled Nineveh.
- The fire glazed the tablets in the library, which preserved them for archaeologists to study centuries later.

Rebirth of **Babylon** under the Chaldeans

- After the Assyrian Empire collapsed, the Chaldean king Nebuchadnezzar made Babylonia the leading state of western Asia.
- Babylon became one of the greatest cities of the ancient world.

- Nebuchadnezzar II conquers Jerusalem, destroys their temple, and enslaves the Jews.
- Babylonia did not last long; the Persians conquered it in 539 B.C.E.



NEBUCHADNEZZAR AND THE GARDENER.

EXIT

Exit Ticket

Why were the Assyrians able to conquer other cultures?