

properly included under Biblical Archeology.

The prehistoric period ends with two events which seem to have occurred about the same time. One of these was the discovery of how to smelt copper, thus making it possible to make a great number of weapons much more quickly than could be done before. This gave a tremendous advantage to every city that acquired this skill and resulted in a series of wars that left desolation throughout most of Mesopotamia. The other event that occurred at about the same time was the invention of writing.

2. The Sumerian Period.

The Sumerians, who called themselves the Blackheaded People, speak a language unrelated to any other known language. There have been many guesses as to where they came from. Most likely they entered Mesopotamia by boat. They were a very practical people. The writing which they invented fits their language quite well, and is about as ill-adapted to Akkadian as the Latin system of writing is to our English language. The Sumerians were probably always a minority in a land in which the Akkadian people were more numerous, but with their practical skill they controlled the region for quite a time. Their writings include myths and epics, some of which have been thought to have a relation to stories in the Bible.

3. The Old Akkadian Period.

After a time the Akkadian speaking people gained their freedom from the Sumerians and established themselves in control. Some of their leaders were quite powerful, and conquering expeditions went as far west as the Mediterranean Sea. The Old Akkadian Period lasted a few centuries, and we have a considerable number of pictures, monuments, and writings from this period, but far less is known of it than of most of the later periods.