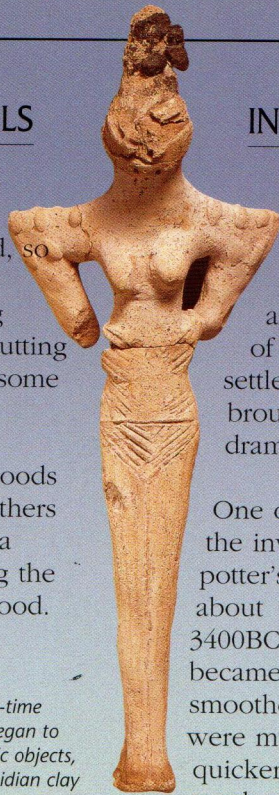


## NEW CRAFTS AND SKILLS

Learning how to irrigate the land was an amazing step forward. It meant extra food, so that not everyone had to spend all their time planting crops, raising animals and cutting irrigation channels. Instead some people became full-time craftsmen, making tools, ornaments and household goods for the rest of the village. Others became priests, praying for a good harvest and overseeing the storage and distribution of food.

*The new full-time craftsmen began to create artistic objects, like this Ubaidian clay figure of a woman.*



## INVENTIONS

From about 4000BC, a new phase began - named after Uruk, one of the earliest settlements - which brought some dramatic changes.

One of these was the invention of the potter's wheel in about 3400BC. Pots became smoother and were much quicker to produce.

Even more important, the wheel was adapted for transport - to produce the first wheeled carts. So farmers could now carry three times as much as they could on the back of a donkey. But the most significant change of all was probably the invention of writing in about 3000BC (see pages 18-19).

*This is a decoration from a temple at Tell al-Ubaid, showing bulls which were often used in sacrifices as they were a symbol of power.*



## THE FIRST CITY

About this time, Uruk began to mushroom into the world's first substantial city. At its height, it covered a huge area, surrounded by a high wall, with wide streets, grand public buildings and two religious areas with large temples.

Uruk stayed an important city for thousands of years. The people who lived there are known as Sumerians, and it was with them that Mesopotamian civilization really took off.



### INTERNET LINK

For links to websites where you can become a Sumerian farmer and find out how the Sumerians invented the wheel, go to [www.usborne-quicklinks.com](http://www.usborne-quicklinks.com)