

**The Rise of Inequality and the Birth  
of the State in the Mesopotamian World  
(5th - 4th Millennium BCE).**

**Different models and evolutionary paths**

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*Abstract*

*The article deals with the emergence of inequality in the Greater Mesopotamian world at the time of the formation of the first states and centralised economies by comparing the different yet related trajectories of Southern Mesopotamia, Northern Mesopotamia and the 'peripheral' areas of the Anatolian Upper Euphrates valley, exemplified by the site of Arslantepe. The peculiarities and shared features are analysed to investigate the political and economic reasons leading to those similar but different developments and the dynamics of change in the encounter/confrontation between egalitarian, hierarchical and unequal societies.*

**Keywords:** Greater Mesopotamia; social inequality; economic inequality; production systems; centralisation.