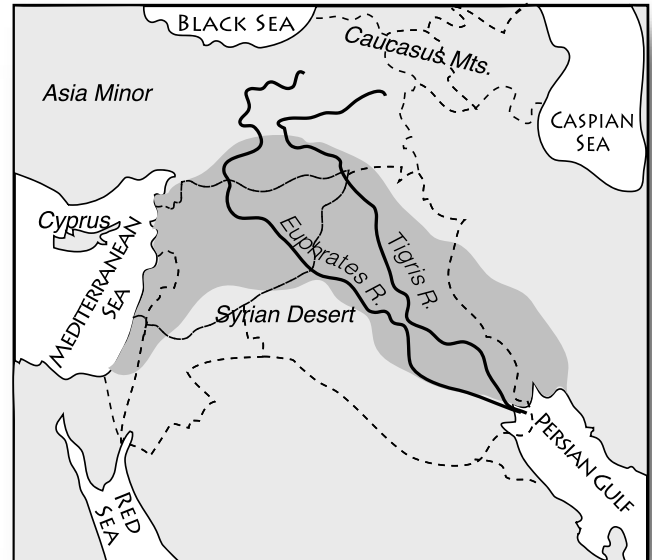


The Fertile Crescent

Fertile Crescent

There is an area in the Middle East called the “**Fertile Crescent.**” This is where the first civilizations of the world began. Can you guess how the area got its name? The soil is **fertile**, or rich. The region is shaped like a **crescent**. The Fertile Crescent is like a huge arch. It starts in the east at the Persian Gulf. The area extends through the Tigris and Euphrates River valleys. It ends along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Some people call the eastern part of the Fertile Crescent Mesopotamia. The western part of the Fertile Crescent is the Mediterranean section.

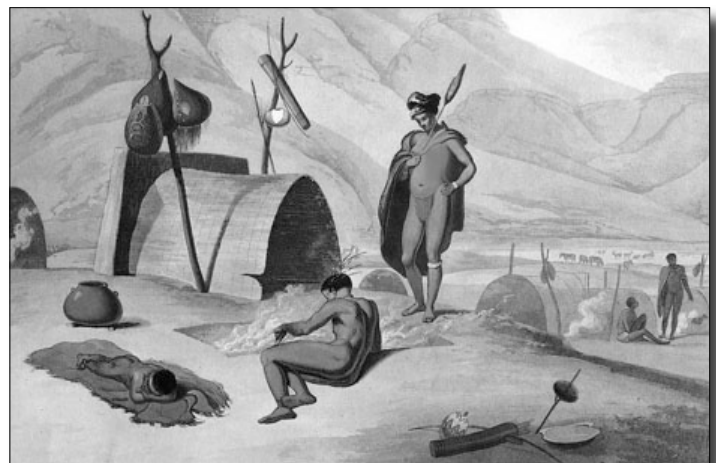


Nomads Settle in the Fertile Crescent

The Fertile Crescent was an ideal place for **nomadic** people to settle. They stopped wandering. They built cities and formed civilizations. Sheep, goats, and many kinds of grains were available in the wild. This was a permanent food source. There was no need to move around to find food. It was easier to grow crops in the rich soil and to raise animals for food. People living in the Fertile Crescent were able to grow more crops than they could eat. They also raised more animals than they needed. This allowed them to **trade** the excess crops and animals with others. As trading increased, the population grew. The people needed to develop laws. They needed a way to keep records. They had to invent ways to deal with their new way of life. There was a need for a written language, mathematics, laws, medicine, **agriculture**, and so on. This was because many people were now living close to one another.

The First Civilizations Develop

Humans changed their lifestyle from hunters and fishers. They became farmers about 5,000 years ago in the Fertile Crescent. The way of life that came from this change helped to create the world’s first **civilizations**. These civilizations have affected world history. They were important in social and business areas and in religion as well. Many of today’s religions began in the area known as the Fertile Crescent.



Later Civilizations

The Fertile Crescent was the home of the world’s first civilizations. However, many later civilizations also developed in the area. Some of these include the Assyrians, Sumerians, Canaanites, Philistines, Phoenicians/Carthaginians, Akkadians, Hittites, Babylonians, Egyptians, and Israelites.

Mesopotamia

The Land Between Two Rivers

Mesopotamia is a Greek word. It means “between two rivers.” The two rivers are the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. They begin in what is now Turkey. They flow southeast and come together in what is now Iraq. The combined rivers empty into the Persian Gulf. The climate of Mesopotamia was hot and dry. But there was seasonal flooding from the rivers. This made farming a challenge. Farmers in ancient Mesopotamia learned to build levees to control the floods. They also had irrigation systems for the dry times. This allowed them to produce wheat, barley, sesame, and flax. They were also able to grow many different kinds of fruits and vegetables.

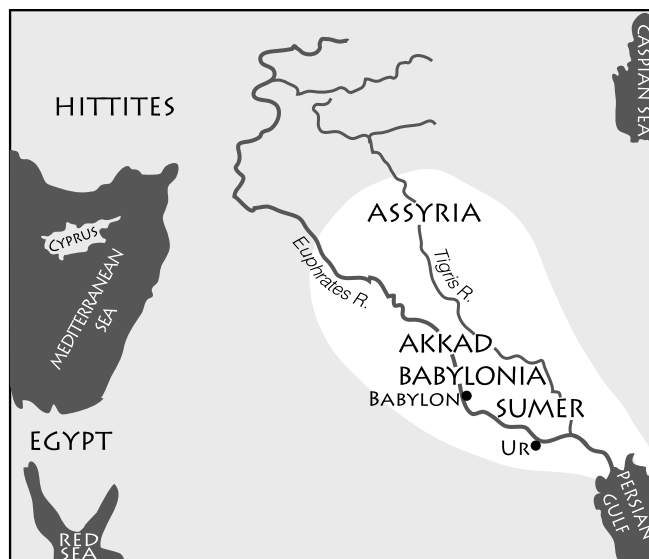
Mesopotamia was actually an area. It was not a civilization. It was made up of several independent city-states. Each city-state had its own religion, laws, language, and government. Many civilizations have existed in Mesopotamia. Some of them were active at the same time. Some of the cultures that were in this area include Sumeria, Assyria, Babylon, and Iraq.

The Sumerians

The first group of people to live in Mesopotamia was the **Sumerians**. They originally lived in the mountains. They moved to the Plain of Shinar near the Persian Gulf. This was an area with fertile soil. First, they drained the marshes. Then they controlled the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers by building levees and irrigation canals. As a result, the Sumerians had a stable food supply. Not everyone was needed to farm, hunt, or fish. Some Sumerians became tradesmen, merchants, soldiers, priests, government officials, and artisans. Their country was called **Sumer**.



Cuneiform Written on a Clay Tablet



SUMERIAN CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: In the Middle East, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers

WHEN: 3500 B.C.–2000 B.C.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- The world's first civilization where people lived together in a city-state
- Invented a written language
- Developed science and mathematics to a high degree; were able to divide the year and the circle into 360 parts
- Developed a twelve-month calendar based on lunar cycles
- Used the wheel and made vehicles
- Invented the plow and the sailboat

Sumerian Inventions

The Sumerians invented many things. One of the most important was a written language. Writing was invented so the Sumerians could keep records. Their writing was very simple. It was made up of pictures called **pictographs**. **Scribes** were professional writers. They drew the pictures on clay tablets. They used a wedge-shaped instrument, or **stylus**, to draw

the pictures. Over a period of time, the writing changed. The pictures were replaced with shapes and lines. This type of writing is called **cuneiform**.

They also invented the wheel. It was first created for making pottery. It was later used to make vehicles. Other inventions included the water clock, the twelve-month calendar, the plow, and the sailboat.

The Sumerians had a number system based on the number 60. We still use the Sumerian system today for measuring time. For example, sixty seconds make a minute. Sixty minutes make an hour. It is also used when measuring a circle with 360 degrees.

Sumerian Cities

Between 3500 and 2000 B.C., the Sumerians were living in large villages. The villages became self-governing city-states. The buildings in these city-states were made of sun-dried mud bricks. There was plenty of mud from the rivers. There was very little stone or timber to use for building. The buildings in Sumer were different from other civilizations, such as the Egyptians. Sumerians learned how to use a keystone to make arches. A **keystone** is a wedge-shaped stone in an arch. It causes the arch to lock together. The doorways, gates, and other openings in buildings in the Sumerian cities had arches. Egyptian buildings had square openings.

Sumerian Religion

Religion was important to the Sumerians. At the center of each city-state was a temple. It was surrounded by courts and public buildings. These temples were called **ziggurats**. Ziggurats eventually became temple-towers. They were brightly decorated with glazed bricks. They were like huge pyramids. The sides were terraced, and they were flat on the top.



This ancient ziggurat in present-day Iraq has been reconstructed.

The Sumerians had many gods. They believed the gods spoke to them through their priests. The priests had a great deal of power in Sumer. The people believed that a priest's command was actually coming from one of their gods. They obeyed the priests without question. The priests eventually became priest-kings. They ruled large areas.

Dealing With Invaders

There was one great disadvantage in Mesopotamia. The land did not provide any natural protection from invaders. Enemies could easily march into Sumer from almost any direction. This left Sumerians open to attack. Both foreign armies and other Sumerian cities could attack easily. Wars between Sumerian cities were common.

The Akkadians

The **Akkadians** moved into Sumeria from the Arabian Peninsula. They were a Semitic people. This means they spoke a **Semitic** language related to Arabic and Hebrew. The Akkadians formed their own country. This was located where the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers were close together. Their country was called **Akkad**. The Akkadians adopted much of the Sumerian culture. After many clashes, more Semites invaded Sumeria. The invaders eventually absorbed the Sumerian culture. This combined civilization lasted until about 1950 B.C. At that time, Amorites and the Elamites captured Ur. This was Mesopotamia's most important city.

Babylonia

The Rise of Babylonia

One Akkadian town that developed in approximately 1900 B.C. was the small town of Babylon. It was located by the Euphrates River. Babylon grew in size and importance. Its ruler was King Hammurabi. He conquered all of Mesopotamia. This kingdom came to be known as **Babylonia**.

The Babylonian culture was similar to the Sumerian culture. The Sumerians had been in Mesopotamia before the Babylonians arrived. In fact, many people refer to the Babylonians as just a later development of the Sumerian culture. The two civilizations had many things in common. The Babylonians adopted the religion, literature, inventions, and practices of the Sumerians. Scholars and priests spoke the Sumerian language. Most common Babylonians did not speak this language. There is one thing that Babylonia is known for developing on its own. This was a code of laws known as the ***Code of Hammurabi***.



Reconstruction of the Gate of Ishtar

The Code of Hammurabi

Hammurabi was king of Babylonia from 1792 to 1750 B.C. He was a powerful leader with strong armies. He expanded Babylon by conquering other kingdoms. Hammurabi was also an efficient administrator. He was not just concerned with his own comfort. He wanted everyone in his kingdom to have enough food, good housing, and to be treated fairly. In order to make sure that everyone was treated fairly, he had his scribes draw up a code of laws. The laws are known as the *Code of Hammurabi*. Many of the laws were borrowed from the written laws of the Sumerians. Hammurabi's code was a little different, however. Hammurabi's code added the element of revenge. In Sumeria, most who committed a crime were fined. The *Code of Hammurabi* did not impose a fine on criminals. Instead there was the ancient punishment of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." In other words, if someone did something bad to a person, the court would do the same thing to the wrongdoer.

Some laws in the code seem extreme and cruel. For example, if a son slapped his father, the son's hands would be cut off. If a man killed another man's son, then

his son would be killed. While this may seem harsh by today's standards, it was trying to be fair. Before the code was written and followed, punishment was often decided by priests and judges. They gave out even harsher punishments. Death was a common punishment for even the most minor offenses. So these laws were not meant to be cruel, but to be fair.

The Code did have differences for the classes of people involved. A person's punishment depended on who was wronged. For example, if a man put out the eye of another man, his eye would be put out. But if he put out the eye of a



The Code of Hammurabi engraved on a stele.

BABYLONIAN CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: On the Euphrates River

WHEN: 2000–1155 B.C.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Devised a code of laws, known as the *Code of Hammurabi*, designed to protect the weak
- Studied astronomy
- Built beautiful buildings as well as the Gate of Ishtar and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon

freed man (a former slave), he would pay one gold mina. If he put out the eye of a man's slave, he would then have to pay one-half of the slave's value.

Astronomy

Law was not the only interest of the Babylonians. They studied astronomy. **Astronomy** is the study of the universe, including the movement of the stars and planets. They also believed in astrology. **Astrology** is the belief that the positions and movements of the planets and stars can affect or predict life on Earth. We usually think of these as two separate areas today. The Babylonians did not.

The Babylonians watched the stars and heavens. They kept records of events, such as when an eclipse occurred. They were able to measure time by studying the movements of the celestial bodies. The priests used their knowledge of planets and the stars as part of their religion. The priests claimed that by studying the celestial bodies, they could tell the future. They were constantly looking at the skies. They made horoscopes and predictions based on what they saw. A **horoscope** is a prediction of a person's future. It is based on a diagram of the planets and stars at a given moment, such as birth.

Nebuchadnezzar II

About 1,000 years after the death of Hammurabi, King Nebuchadnezzar II came to power. By this time, Babylon was part of the Chaldean Empire. It came to power after the Assyrian Empire was destroyed. Nebuchadnezzar ruled Babylon from 605 to 562 B.C. Under his leadership, Babylon grew. At this time, Babylon had two famous structures. They were so impressive they were known throughout the civilized world. The first was the beautifully decorated wall surrounding Babylon. On top of the wall were towers for guards who could watch for approaching enemies. This wall was wide enough for a four-horse chariot to be driven on it. The most impressive gate in the wall was the **Gate of Ishtar**. Ishtar was a goddess. The gate named in her honor was made of colorful glazed enamel bricks. The bricks had pictures of animals. The gate was so beautiful that at one time it was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. It was later replaced on the list by the Lighthouse at Alexandria.

The second structure built by Nebuchadnezzar to gain worldwide fame was the **Hanging Gardens of Babylon**. The Hanging Gardens is still considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. It was built to please Nebuchadnezzar's wife, Amytis. It was a building consisting of several terraces. One was built above the other. Each terrace was planted with trees and flowers from around the country. Pools and fountains were also built into the structure. The Babylonians developed an irrigation system to water the Gardens. It raised water from the Euphrates River to the Gardens. Exactly how this irrigation system worked is unknown. Later writers referred to the system as "water engines."



The Hanging Gardens of Babylon

Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by his son in 562 B.C. He was assassinated three years later. Within a few years, the Persians invaded Babylon. Babylon then became part of the Persian Empire.

The Assyrians

Assyria was a civilization in Mesopotamia. It was on the upper Tigris River. Assyria lasted many centuries. It was greatest between 1600 and 612 B.C. The Assyrians were a Semitic-speaking people. They came to Mesopotamia in about 2000 B.C. Assyria was named after its original capital, **Ashur**. Ashur became a free city in about 1365 B.C.

Assyrian Advantages and Disadvantages

Life in Assyria was better than in Babylonia in several ways. Assyrians could farm without having to irrigate as was needed in Babylonia. The land got water from the Tigris River and other smaller streams and rivers. It also got a good amount of rainfall each year. Also, Assyria had rocks and stones that could be used for building. There were two disadvantages, however. The Assyrian land was harder to till for farming. It was also attacked often by barbarians who raided their villages.



An Assyrian Lamassu

Assyrians had a thriving trade in Anatolia (Asia Minor). Eventually, the Hittites drove the Assyrians out of Anatolia. During the time of the Babylonian Kingdom, the Assyrians grew weaker. By 1550 B.C., Assyria was part of the Mitanni Kingdom. The **Mitanni Kingdom** was known for introducing trained horses and chariots into this part of the world.

The Assyrian Army

Gradually, Assyrian power grew. It expanded by 1100 B.C. The Assyrians had a **standing army**. This is made up of soldiers who choose the army as their career. When the soldiers are not fighting, they are still in the army, training to fight. This was a new idea in this period. Other countries fought their wars with citizen-soldiers. A **citizen-soldier** fights a war for his king or nation. After the war is over, he returns home. He resumes his life working at his craft or career. The Assyrian soldiers were fierce and cruel warriors. They had weapons made of iron rather than copper or bronze. They also had battering rams. They had foot soldiers, archers, chariots, and a cavalry. Captured enemies would either be killed or made slaves.

The Assyrian Kingdom

Captured cities were looted. The defeated people had to pay taxes and **tribute** to the Assyrians. The Assyrians built forts close to these cities. A governor was appointed for each fort. The governor reported to the king. He sent reports by messengers on horseback. This was the first mail service.

The kingdom finally became too large to maintain. There were too few soldiers. Mercenaries were hired to serve in the army. A **mercenary** is a foreign soldier hired by another country to fight in its army. Eventually, the Assyrians were defeated by the Medes, Chaldeans, and the Babylonians. The capital city of **Nineveh** was destroyed.

ASSYRIAN CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: Northern Mesopotamia

WHEN: 1600 B.C.–612 B.C.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

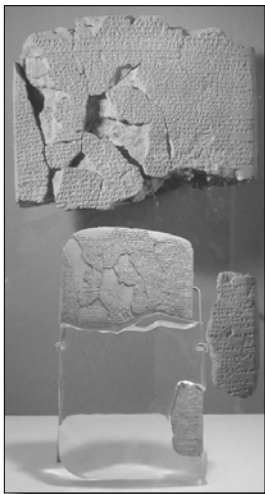
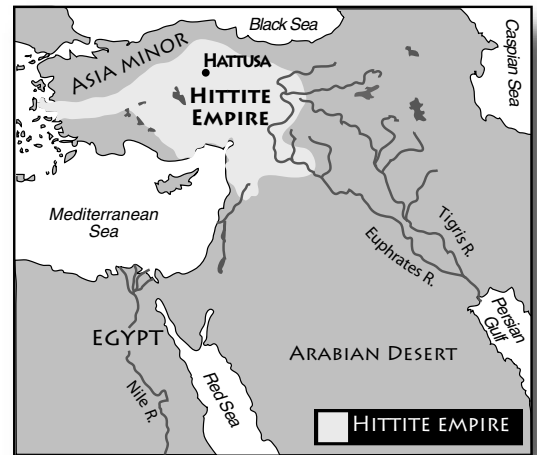
- Created the first library
- Built a system of roads
- Ruled their extended kingdom with appointed governors
- First to develop a standing army
- Developed a mail service

The Hittites

The **Hittites** were originally peasants who moved from place to place. They lived north of the Black Sea. About 2300 B.C. they moved into **Anatolia**. This is the ancient name for Asia Minor. It is known as Turkey today. The land was rocky, but they could grow grain and graze animals. The land also held many metal ores.

Hittite City-States Become an Empire

The Hittite Civilization began in 1750 B.C. It lasted until 1200 B.C. It was not a very organized civilization. The Hittite city-states were spread throughout Asia Minor and Syria. They were often separated by mountains. Many city-states had their own languages and religions. The city-states often fought with each other until Labarnas became king. Under his leadership, the Hittite empire grew to include most of Turkey. His son, Hattusilis I, expanded the empire into Syria. Hattusilis made the city of **Hattusa** the capital of the Hittite Kingdom. For protection, Hattusa was built high in the mountains. It was protected by a stone wall 26 feet thick. Hattusilis' grandson, Mursilis, invaded and defeated Babylon. The crowds cheered and celebrated his great victory. However, he was assassinated by his brother-in-law.



The Hittite and Egyptian treaty

Iron

The Hittite civilization borrowed many ideas from other cultures. However, they did come up with two great ideas of their own. The first was the use of iron. Weapons and tools had been made from copper or bronze. These metals are soft and bend easily. Iron is much harder. However, extracting the metal for use is more complicated than it is for other metals. The process of extracting ore is called **smelting**. Exactly when and where iron was first smelted is a mystery. It is generally agreed that real iron **metallurgy** began with the Hittites. This happened some time between 1900 and 1400 B.C.

The First Treaty

The second great feat of the Hittite Empire occurred in the 1200s B.C. It was a treaty. The Hittites and the Egyptians decided that fighting each other was costly and inefficient. They signed a treaty pledging not to fight each other. If one was attacked by someone else, the other pledged to help defend it. The treaty was engraved on a silver plaque. Clay copies were placed in

the Hittite library. The Egyptians etched the treaty on walls. This was the first recorded treaty by two great powers.

Fair Laws

Hittite laws were considered the fairest of the time. The Hittite law tried to **compensate** the person who was wronged. This meant paying them back for an injury. In Babylonian law, if a man injured another, the man who caused the injury would be injured the same way. In the Hittite civilization, however, he would have to pay a fine to the person he injured.

HITTITE CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: Anatolia, the ancient name for Asia Minor

WHEN: 1750 B.C.—1200 B.C.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- One of the first civilizations to use iron
- Signed peace treaties
- Established a set of laws considered the fairest of the time

Ancient Egypt

Civilization Beside the Nile River

The **Nile River** floods and spills over its banks each year between July and October. This is in the **Delta Region** before it empties into the Mediterranean Sea. This leaves behind a layer of **silt**. This soil is rich in nutrients. It makes it possible to grow crops in this otherwise desert-like land.

This is the fertile land that people began to settle in 3300 B.C. The area had plenty of food provided by the Nile. People began to settle, farm, and build cities. This became the Egyptian Civilization. The Egyptians called their country the **Black Land**. This was because of the fertile soil. The desert surrounding their country was called the **Red Land**. The Red Land provided a natural barrier. It protected Egypt from invaders. This is one of the reasons that the Egyptian civilization lasted over 3,000 years. It was the longest-lasting civilization in history.

Writing and Paper

The Egyptians influenced many other ancient civilizations. Its writing system was called **hieroglyphics**. This and other cultural elements were widely adapted by others. The Egyptians also developed a paper-like material from **papyrus** reed. They also used papyrus to make mats, ropes, toys, boats, and other items.

Building Skills

Egyptians were excellent architects, builders, craftsmen, and artisans. They built huge pyramids. These were used as tombs in which to bury their pharaohs. The **Great Pyramid of Giza** was so large and magnificent it was listed as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. It is the only one of these wonders that still stands today. The Great Pyramid was built over 5,000 years ago. They used no modern machines or tools. Each stone block weighed about 2.5 tons. Over 2.3 million of these stone blocks were brought from a stone quarry on the other side of the Nile. They were built into a pyramid about as high as a 42-story skyscraper. All of this was done with manpower alone. The Sphinx was also built near the Great Pyramid of Giza. This was a huge stone sculpture of a creature. It had the face of a human and the body of a lion.

The Egyptians were superb engineers as well. They built canals, dams, and a reservoir to control the flood waters of the Nile. They even built a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea. This helped to improve trade.



The Great Pyramid of Giza and the Sphinx

EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: Along the Nile River in northeast Africa

WHEN: 3100 B.C.–332 B.C.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Built the pyramids, the sphinx, canals, and temples
- Invented a calendar with 365 days
- Made a paper-like material from the papyrus plant
- Used a loom to weave cloth
- Invented a system of writing called hieroglyphics

Treatment of the Dead

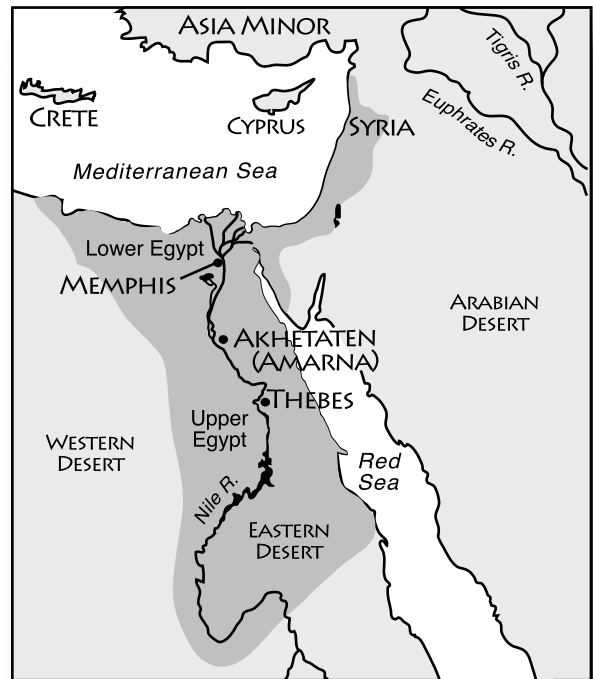
Egyptians believed in life after death. A person's soul would live as long as the body was preserved. The Egyptians practiced **mummification** of the dead. When someone died, his or her body was dried so it would not decay. The bodies of the wealthy were wrapped in linen with jewels and protective charms. The poor were generally buried naked in shallow graves.

Egypt's Three Kingdoms

The Egyptian Civilization is generally divided into three periods. There is the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom.

THE OLD KINGDOM

The first period of the Egyptian Civilization is called the **Old Kingdom**. It lasted from 3100 until 2040 B.C. Before 3100 B.C., Egypt was really two different kingdoms. There was Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. These names are sometimes confusing. If you look at a map of this ancient country, you will see that **Lower Egypt** was located in the north. It is at the top of the map. **Upper Egypt** was located in the south at the bottom of the map. This is because the Nile flows from south to north. The area where the Nile begins is called the Upper Nile. The river flows parallel to the Red Sea. It empties into the Mediterranean Sea. The area where it flows into the sea is called the Lower Nile. So the kingdoms took their names from their locations on the Nile.



The First Dynasty

In about 3100 B.C., King Menes was a king from the south. He was credited with combining the Upper and Lower Kingdoms to unite Egypt. Menes became the first pharaoh of Egypt. **Pharaoh** was the term given to the king or ruler in Egypt. Menes was the first king of the first dynasty of Egypt. Eventually there would be thirty dynasties to rule Egypt. A **dynasty** is a series of rulers from the same family or line.

During the Old Kingdom, pharaohs were considered gods. They owned the land and everything in the country. They could do anything they wanted. They could make any law they wanted to. This was called the “divine rights of kings.” Many pyramids were built during the Old Kingdom. These were tombs for the pharaohs. One of the most important pyramids was the Great Pyramid of Giza. It was built for the pharaoh called Khufu or Cheops.



The Book of the Dead

Menes made Memphis the capital of Egypt. He needed help to run the large country. Menes assigned people he trusted to govern different sections of Egypt. These governors were called **nomarchs**. They worked to be sure that all of the commands of the pharaoh were obeyed.

They needed to find a way to communicate. Messages needed to be sent between the pharaoh in Memphis and the nomarchs in various parts of the kingdom. The Egyptians developed a written

language called hieroglyphics. **Hieroglyphics** uses pictures of objects, such as animals or plants, to represent words. The Egyptian writers were called scribes. They wrote their messages and kept records on a paper-like material made from the papyrus reed.

The Nomarchs Gain Power

About 2200 B.C., the nomarchs began to act more for themselves. They obeyed the king less. Many broke away from Egypt. They set up their own provinces. Some of the nomarchs fought each other over territory. Eventually, there were two separate kingdoms.

THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

In 2040 B.C., King Mentuhotep of the 11th dynasty reunited Egypt. He created a monarchy with central control. This began the period known as the **Middle Kingdom**. He made Thebes his capital. The nomarchs lost power. Egypt again became a centralized government. The pharaoh had all of the power in the country.

Things went well for the Egyptians during this time. Egypt became wealthy. New quarries were developed in order to build more temples and other structures. They built dams and a reservoir to manage the floodwater. They expanded their kingdom south to Nubia. Egyptians brought gold, ivory, and slaves from Nubia. They also expanded trade during this period. The Egyptians traded with those living in the Middle East. They also traded along the Mediterranean and in other locations. This trade brought peace and wealth to Egypt. Egyptians had time to create works of art, build temples, develop crafts, and practice their religion.

The Middle Kingdom ended in about 1800 B.C. At that time, Egypt was conquered by the **Hyksos** from Canaan. The Hyksos were good soldiers. They also had better weapons. The Hyksos had horse-drawn chariots. They had curved swords called scimitars. These were made of bronze. The Egyptians only had wooden weapons.



Artifact from King Tut's Tomb

THE NEW KINGDOM

The third period of the Egyptian Civilization is called the **New Kingdom**. It lasted from 1600 until 1100 B.C. This is considered the last great period in Egyptian history. You probably noticed that the Middle Kingdom ended about 1800 B.C. The New Kingdom did not begin until about 1600 B.C. What happened to those 200 years in between? Did Egypt cease to exist? In a way it did. During this time, the Hyksos conquered Egypt. Eventually, the Egyptians began using the same weapons as the Hyksos. They were able to win their country back from the Hyksos. Egypt was united once more. This was when the New Kingdom began. It is sometimes called the Golden Age of Egypt or the Age of Empire. Egyptian armies conquered Syria, Canaan, and the area west of the Euphrates River. Egypt became wealthy again.

Pharaoh Amenhotep IV forced the people to worship only one god. This was the sun god Aten. He closed the temples of other gods. He had workmen remove the plural word “gods” from buildings and from other structures. He changed his own name to Akhenate, which means “spirit of Aten.” He created a new capital named Akhetaton. It was devoted to the god Aten. When Akhenate died, Pharaoh Tutankhamen (Tut) restored the old gods. He made Thebes the capital again.

Beginning in 1070 B.C., the Egyptian Empire began to decline. There was a civil war. Egypt also had to defend itself from many different invasions over the years. Egyptians fought the Hittites, the Lybians, and the Nubians. They also fought the “sea peoples.” These were invaders from somewhere in the Mediterranean. The Egyptians were invaded by the Assyrians in 671 B.C. The Persians invaded in 525 B.C. Alexander the Great conquered Egypt in 332 B.C. He made Ptolemy, who was not Egyptian, the Pharaoh. Ptolemy’s dynasty ruled for 300 years. Then the Romans invaded in 32 B.C. and made Egypt a Roman province.

The Far East: China

Civilization Develops Along Chinese Rivers

Ancient China was one of the world's earliest civilizations. Others had developed in Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt, and the Indus Valley. The Chinese civilization began on the banks of major rivers. The fertile land beside rivers provided rich soil for farming and hunting. There was also water for drinking, irrigating crops, and fishing. People settled along the Huang He (Hwang Ho), or Yellow River. The Huang He is the second longest river in China. It flows east from the Tibetan highlands to the Yellow Sea in north China. It is about 3,000 miles long. Villages also sprang up along the Chang Jiang (Yangtze). It is the longest river in China.

The **Huang He** is sometimes called the Yellow River. It is colored by the yellow mud it carries. Like the Nile, each year the Huang He overflows its banks. When the floodwater recedes, fertile mud is left behind. Crops grow well in this fertile soil. By around 5000 B.C., farming villages began to spring up along this river.

The Xia (Hsia) Dynasty

The Chinese civilization began about 8000 years ago and still exists today. Since China's history is so long, we will only be able to consider its early history in this space. The **Xia (Hsia) Dynasty** is considered to be the first dynasty of kings to rule China. The Xia Dynasty lasted from around 2205 to 1766 B.C. The Chinese civilization formed in a manner similar to the civilizations in the Near East. The Chinese built irrigation canals to water their crops. They made bronze and used the potter's wheel. Chinese soldiers used chariots.

The Shang Dynasty

The Xia Dynasty was replaced with the **Shang Dynasty**. The Shang Dynasty lasted from about 1766 to 1122 B.C. During this period, cities were carefully planned. The people were divided into social ranks that ranged from royalty and nobles to slaves. Most people during this dynasty were farmers. But craftsmen became more popular. Bronze-casting was developed at about this time.

Silk and the Trade Routes

During the ten major dynasties that followed the Shang Dynasty, trade flourished. Trade routes between Asia and the West were set up. Silk became the main export of China. **Silk** is a very thin cloth made from cocoons spun by silkworms. The trade routes to West Asia and Europe became known as the **Silk Roads**. Other countries wanted to be able to make silk. However, the Chinese kept their methods of producing this cloth a secret until the fourth century A.D.

CHINESE CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: Valleys of the Huang He and Chang Jiang Rivers in Asia

WHEN: Beginning about 5000 B.C.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Discovered and cultivated silk
- Built the Great Wall of China
- Invented gunpowder, rockets, magnetic compass, book printing, paper money, porcelain, and many more
- Two great teachers lived in China—Confucius and Lao-tzu



Preparing Newly Woven Silk

Chinese Religion

In ancient China, there were many gods. There was an earth god, a rain god, and a river god. The one god that was revered above all others was **Shang Ti**. This name meant “the Ruler Above.” The Chinese made sacrifices to the gods. They wanted to ensure good crops, success in battle, and good fortune. Poor people could only present food and wine to the gods in their temples. The rich sacrificed animals. On special occasions, such as the death of a king, humans were sacrificed. The human sacrifices were often prisoners of war or slaves.

The ancient Chinese believed that when a person died, he or she went to live with Shang Ti. They believed their dead ancestors had powers in the afterlife. The ancestors could help them make wise decisions or punish them. Therefore, the Chinese worshipped their ancestors. To please them, the Chinese built temples. They held many celebrations to honor their ancestors.

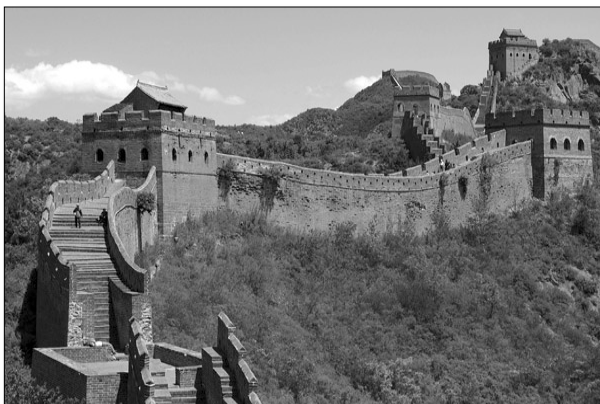
Chinese Philosophers

The Chinese made great contributions to the world in philosophy. These were made by two teachers who lived in China. One was **Confucius**. He lived from 551 to 479 B.C. Confucius taught politeness, sincerity, unselfishness, respect for laws, and hard work. His beliefs were written down. His philosophy has become a religion called **Confucianism**.

Another philosopher who lived at about the same time was **Lao-tzu**. His beliefs were quite different from Confucius. Confucius thought people should improve society. Lao-tzu taught that people should withdraw from society. He believed that people should live very simple lives. They should try to be in harmony with nature. He thought people should not try to be famous or rich. They should be happy with what they had. He also thought people should sit quietly and meditate. His philosophy is called **Taoism**. It comes from the word “tao,” which means “way.”



Confucius



The Great Wall of China

The Great Wall of China

One of the great feats of the ancient Chinese Civilization was the **Great Wall of China**. It was built to keep out invaders. It consists of two stone walls that average about ten feet apart. These outer walls run parallel to each other. The area between the walls is filled with earth and lined with stone, forming a road. The wall ran along the border between China and the territories in the north. It is about 30 feet high and 1,500 miles long.

Many separate walls were built over 2,000 years. It began as an earthen wall held up by planks. It was built in segments by different states. Each segment was only a few miles long. **Shi Huang Ti** was the first emperor of China. In about 221 B.C., he had these walls linked into one long wall. The stone wall as we know it today began

during the **Ming Dynasty**. This lasted from A.D. 1368 to 1644. This wall was strong. It was over 4,500 miles long. It was patrolled by 100,000 soldiers. However, over the years, parts of the wall have been taken down and used to build other structures.

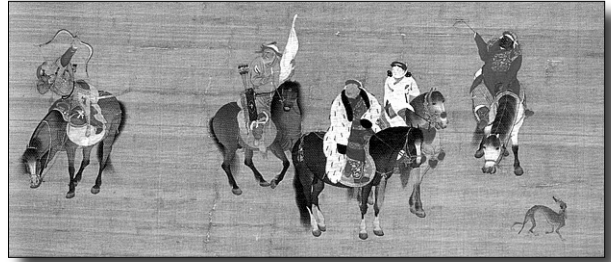
Chinese Inventions

The Chinese invented many things. Some of these include the magnetic compass, crossbow, matches, movable type, and paper money. They developed the use of acupuncture, gunpowder, porcelain, the umbrella, the propeller, and paper. They also invented the wheelbarrow, seismograph, kite, cast iron, abacus, rocket, brandy, whiskey, the game of chess, and many others.

The Mongols

Living on the Steppes

Just north of the Gobi Desert in Asia is a large area called the steppes. It is between Siberia and northwest China. The word **steppe** is a Slavic word that means “grasslands.” The steppe is a harsh land. It is very hot in the summer and very cold in the winter. Temperatures range from 40 degrees below zero in the winter to over 100 degrees in the summer. In the 11th century A.D., the steppe was home to several nomadic tribes. One of these tribes was the **Mongols**. As **nomadic** people, they moved as the seasons changed. They needed grass for grazing their sheep and horses.



Mongol Hunters, Including Kublai Khan, one of Genghis Khan's Grandsons

For many centuries, the Mongols were a number of independent tribes. They often fought with one another. All of the Mongol tribes were made up of excellent horsemen. Some included hunters. With their horses, they chased deer and antelope. They were able to either kill them with arrows or lasso them. All of these qualities made the Mongols outstanding warriors.

The Mongols Unite Under Genghis Khan

The Chinese feared the Mongol warriors. They built a great wall to keep them out. However, the Mongols often climbed over the wall and attacked them anyway. Early in the 13th century, China's greatest fear came to pass. The independent Mongolian tribes became united. Genghis Khan formed them into a powerful nation eager to expand its empire.



Genghis Khan

At birth he was called **Temujin**. He gave himself the title “**Genghis Khan**” when he became chief of his tribe. Genghis Khan means “mighty lord.” Genghis Khan was an excellent general. He was one of the greatest conquerors of all time. He was disciplined. He was well organized. He planned his **strategy** carefully. Several things allowed the Mongol armies to win even when they faced larger armies in battle. Genghis Khan had great ability, and the Mongols used modern weapons for the time.

In 1211, Genghis Khan led the Mongols in an invasion of the Chin Empire in northern China. This first raid led to many others. Eventually, the empire covered an area that included the countries that today are known as Mongolia, China, Korea, Russia, and India. The empire covered most of the Middle East and all the area in between there and the Far East.

The Mongols were known for being brutal. They destroyed everything that stood in their path. Everyone was the enemy. They not only killed soldiers, but also women, children, and animals. They would sometimes conquer a town, kill everyone in it, and then burn it down.

Genghis Khan died in 1227. The empire was divided among his four sons. It continued to expand. The grandsons of Genghis Khan successfully conquered most of Asia and parts of Europe. The Mongol Empire became the largest empire the world has ever known. This enormous empire was difficult to control, though. Eventually, the conquered people became stronger. They were able to drive the Mongols out of their lands.

MONGOL CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: Steppe region between
Siberia and northwest China

WHEN: A.D. 1206–1368

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Had the largest contiguous empire in world history (9,300,000 sq. mi)
- Excellent horsemen
- Fierce warriors

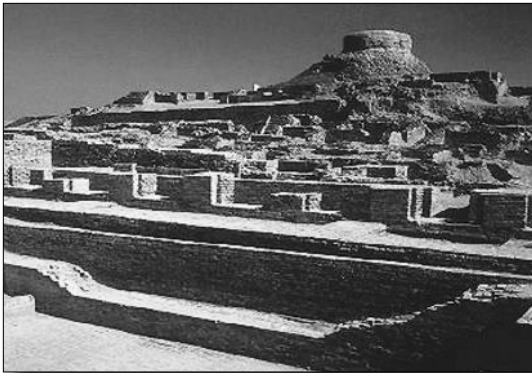
The Indus Valley

The Harappan or Indus Civilization

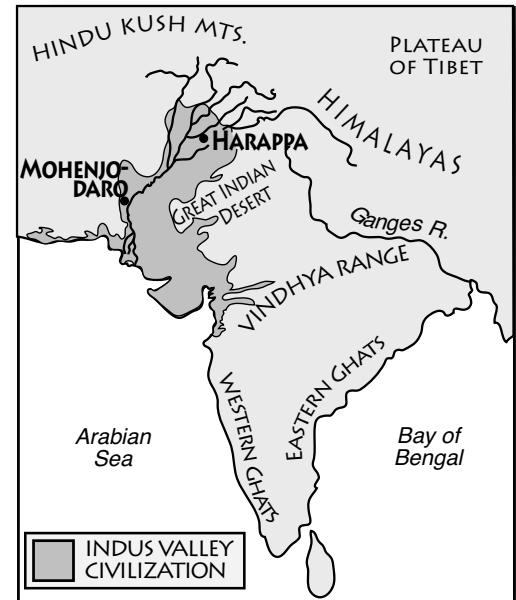
The **Indus Valley** was a fertile area. It lured farmers to the banks of the Indus River in about 2500 B.C. This became one of the world's first great urban civilizations. It was based around cities. Archaeologists call this civilization the **Harappan Culture**. It is also called the **Indus Valley Civilization**. It began in what is today Pakistan and western India. It developed at about the same time as the early city-states of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Very little was known about the Indus Valley Civilization until recently. In 1921, an Indian archaeologist found remnants of a large city named Harappa.

Harappa and Mohenjo-daro

Harappa was one of the centers of the Indus Valley Civilization. The other center was located about 350 miles away. It was **Mohenjo-daro**. These two large cities were the homes of merchants and craftsmen. Ruins from these cities tell us about the culture. They indicate the people of this culture planned their cities carefully before they built them. The buildings and streets were neatly arranged in a grid pattern. Each city had a large **granary** and water tank. There were homes made of bricks and plaster. The houses were large with several rooms that led into a courtyard. Some of the homes had wells for drinking water and bathing. They had bathrooms with toilets and a system for drainage. In fact, the builders of Mohenjo-daro designed and built one of the world's first drainage and sewage systems for a city.



Mohenjo-daro today



Farming

The people of the Indus Valley Civilization built a complex system of canals and dams. These were used for irrigation and flood management. They practiced **communal** farming. People shared in the duties of working the farms. On these large farms, they grew barley, rice, wheat, dates, and cotton. They were one of the first civilizations known to have tame livestock animals. They raised cattle, chickens, and buffalo. The farmers used wheeled carts drawn by oxen. They hauled their grain to the cities. There it was stored in large granaries.

INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION

AT A GLANCE

WHERE: Western part of South Asia in what is now Pakistan and western India

WHEN: 2500 B.C.–1750 B.C.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Built dams and canals for irrigation
- Well-planned cities
- One of the world's first drainage and sewer systems for a city
- Among the first people to cultivate cotton
- Among the first people to tame animals

Trading

Those who did not farm or hunt were either tradesmen or craftsmen. They bought gold from southern India. Turquoise came from Iran. Silver and copper were bought in Afghanistan. Jade came from India. With these goods, craftsmen were able to make pottery, jewelry, sculptures, spears, and knives.

The Civilization Declines

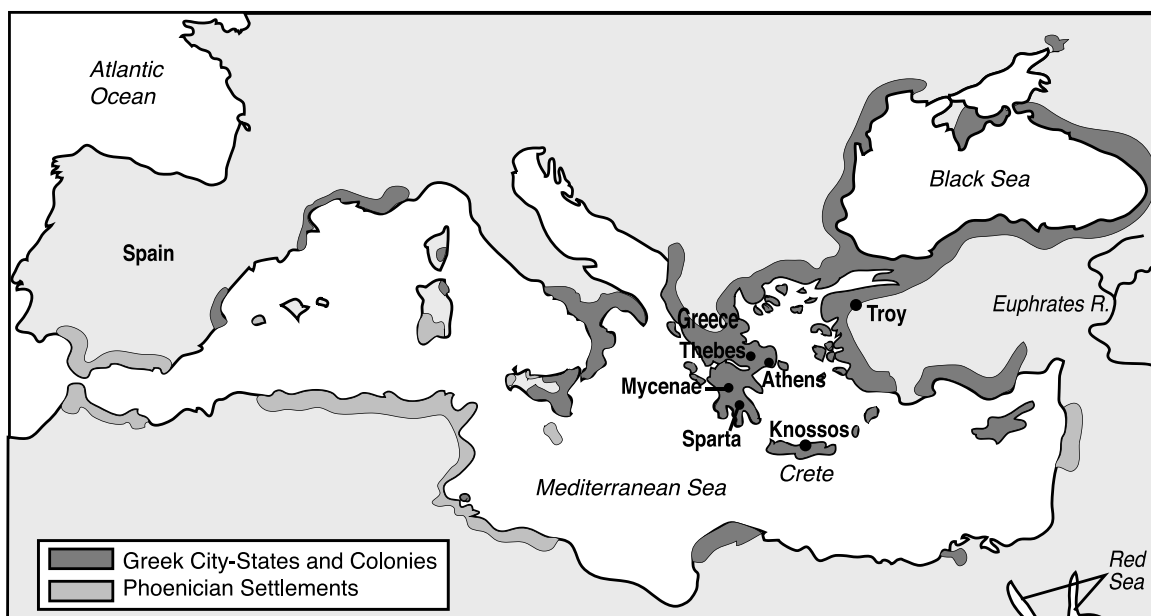
About 1750 B.C., the civilization began to decline. Earthquakes and floods destroyed the irrigation system. Many buildings were also destroyed. For some reason, the people did not rebuild. Invaders caused many to leave the Indus Valley. Then nomads lived in the region for a while. Hundreds of years would pass before new cities were built.

The Aegean Civilizations

Greece and the Aegean Sea

Several civilizations formed in and around Greece. They were also on the islands in the Aegean Sea. These are often called the **Aegean Civilizations**. There is evidence that humans lived in Greece over 8,000 years ago. However, it wasn't until about 3000 B.C. that the earliest signs of civilization actually began. Greek civilization can be divided into three periods.

1. The **Early Period**. This is sometimes called the Bronze Age. This period lasted from 3000 to 1150 B.C. The legends written by Homer were supposed to have taken place in this period.
 - The **Minoan** culture thrived on the island of Crete. It lasted from sometime before 2000 to 1450 B.C.
 - The **Mycenaean** culture developed on the Greek mainland. It reached its height about 1600 B.C. It lasted for about 400 years.
2. The **Middle Period**. This is sometimes called the Dark Ages. It lasted from about 1100 until about 800 B.C. During the Middle Period, the culture declined. The people living in what we call Greece organized themselves into several city-states. There was no one Greek nation. Each city-state was a separate unit that governed itself.
3. The **Classical Period**. This began about 800 B.C. It lasted until 323 B.C. This is the period that includes the Golden Age of Greece. Greek democracy, drama, philosophy, science, and literature reached their peaks. The city-states of Athens and Sparta thrived at this time. Each of these cities represented very different ideals. The period ended with the death of Alexander the Great. He conquered Persia and spread the Greek culture from Egypt to India. Eventually, the Romans took over all of the land that had belonged to Greece.



The Early Period: The Minoans

The **Minoan Civilization** was named after their king Minos. It was the first civilization in Europe. It was located on the island of Crete and other islands in the Aegean Sea. It lasted from sometime before 2000 B.C. to 1450 B.C. Crete is an island, and it is relatively isolated from the rest of the world. So the Minoan Civilization did not have to worry much about invasion. They did not have to spend their time and resources raising armies and making weapons. They were free to focus on economic growth. This made it possible for the Minoans to grow plenty of food. Not everyone had to farm or hunt. Some were free to create art, fashion jewelry, or to make items that people used. Still others became merchants. They traded food and items with those living on other Aegean islands. They also traded with those living on the continent. Minoans **exported** oil, wine, jewelry, and crafts. They **imported** many raw materials.

MINOAN CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: Crete, a large island between Asia Minor and Greece

WHEN: 2000 B.C.—1450 B.C.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- The first civilization in Europe
- One of the first social cultures with social equality
- Built elaborate palaces and large homes for its citizens
- Women were treated more fairly than in other cultures of the time

Social Equality

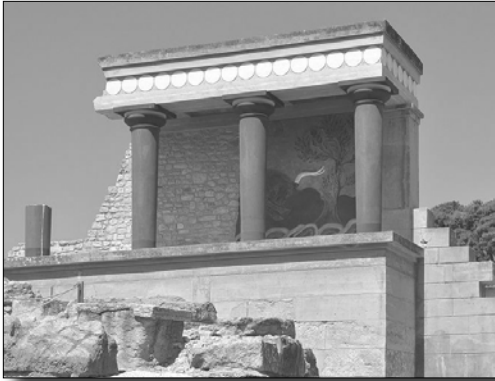
The wealth produced by trade had two effects. These were very unusual in the ancient world. The first was **social equality**. In most ancient civilizations, there were distinct classes. There were divisions such as the nobility, the priests, and the poor. On Crete, most people were prosperous. Some were wealthier than others, but everyone had enough food. Most people lived in fairly large homes. Even women seemed to be treated well. This was rare in the ancient world.

Leisure Time

The second benefit of wealth was that the Minoans had **leisure time**. They could spend time on activities not directly related to survival. They were free from the worries of finding food and shelter. Many Minoans became interested in activities and sports. Boxing and bull-jumping were popular. **Bull-jumping** involved a jumper taking a charging bull by the horns. The jumper either jumped onto the bull's back or leaped over the bull. The jumper turned a somersault in the air and then landed on his or her feet behind or beside the bull. Both young men and young women participated in this sport.



Minoan children boxing



**Part of the Palace of
Knossos Reconstructed**

Building Palaces and Homes

The Minoans also had enough wealth to build many towns. Each one had a large palace at its center. The island's main city was **Knossos**. It had one palace that covered over three acres and had over 1,000 rooms. Some of the Minoan palaces even had simple plumbing systems with toilets. Minoans also built large comfortable homes for all the people, including the poor. Most homes were two stories. Some of the homes were up to five stories high.

The Defeat of the Minoans

The Minoans thrived on Crete for about five centuries. Then in 1450 B.C., the Mycenaeans conquered them. The Mycenaeans had developed a civilization on the Greek mainland. No one is quite sure why the Minoans were conquered. Some think an earthquake, volcano, or tsunami damaged Crete. This may have ruined their agriculture and trade.

The Early Period: The Mycenaeans

The **Mycenaeans** arrived in Greece about 2000 B.C. They lived on the mainland. Their civilization actually began around 1650 B.C. However, they did not take over the area until about 1450 B.C. They ruled for only about 200 years. In about 1200 B.C., they were attacked. Their palaces were destroyed. We do not know who conquered the Mycenaeans.



The city of Mycenae was protected by huge stone walls.

Mycenaean Cities Prepared for War

The best-known city of this civilization was **Mycenae**. The Mycenaeans traded heavily with the Minoans on Crete. They were strongly influenced by the Minoan culture. In 1450 B.C., the Mycenaeans conquered the Minoans. They adopted much of the Minoan culture. One major difference between the Minoans and the Mycenaeans was the style of their cities. The Minoan cities and palaces had no protective walls. The Mycenaean cities were heavily **fortified** and protected by huge stone walls. Invaders were common in Greece. There were many wars.

Trade

Mycenaeans became rich by trading. They produced excess food that could be traded. Mycenaeans traded with various islands and cities on the mainland around the Mediterranean. In return, the Mycenaeans imported copper, tin, gold, and other items. They traded as far away as Mesopotamia and Western Europe. There is even evidence their trade may have extended as far away as Scandinavia and Russia. In addition to traders, they were warriors and mercenaries.

Homer's Epic Poems

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are long poems called **epic poems**. They were written by **Homer**. He was a blind Greek poet who lived in about 800 B.C. These poems are about Mycenaean heroes. The Greeks believed these stories had actually happened. There may have been some truth in the stories. However, it is likely that each generation added to the stories to make them more interesting and heroic. Homer was the first to write down the stories. There had been no alphabet before the Greeks learned the Phoenician alphabet.

The *Iliad*

The *Iliad* tells of King Agamemnon of Mycenae.



Mask of Agamemnon

He and a group of Greek heroes went to war with Troy. This was a city on the coast of what is now Turkey. Legend says the war was fought over the kidnapping of Helen. She was the beautiful queen and wife of Menelaus. He was

MYCENAEAN CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: On the mainland of Greece

WHEN: 1650 B.C.–1200 B.C.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

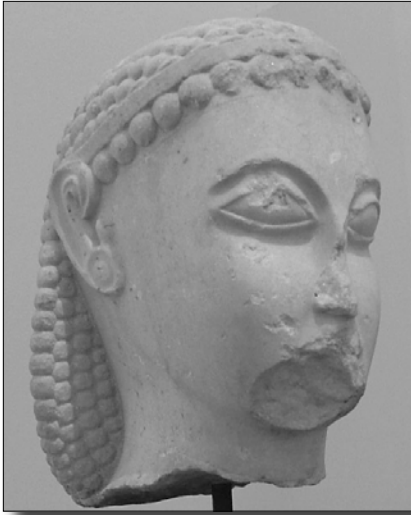
- Their leaders, warriors, and wars serve as the basis for much of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*
- The first Greek-speaking people
- Excellent traders and craftsmen

Agamemnon's brother and the King of Sparta. Historians believe the war was fought over land. The Trojan War lasted for ten years. Finally, the Greeks tricked the Trojans. They got them to bring a large wooden horse into the city. Greek soldiers hidden in the horse opened the gates to the city. The Greek army then entered the city and defeated the Trojans.

The *Odyssey*

The ***Odyssey*** is the story of Odysseus. It tells of his long journey home after the Trojan War. His journey lasted ten years. He had many adventures that involved gods, goddesses, and mortals.

The Middle Period: Athens and Sparta



This Athenian sculpture dates to 600 B.C.

The Dark Ages

After the fall of Mycenaea, Greece entered the **Middle Period**. This is sometimes called the **Dark Ages**. It lasted from about 1100 until about 800 B.C. The culture declined during the Middle Period. Little is known about this period in Greek history. There are no written records from this time.

The Polis

We do know there were various groups of people living in villages on the mainland. There were also people on the islands in the Aegean Sea. These villages were separated by mountains and the sea. There was little contact among the various villages. As a result, each village was concerned with its own needs. The people in one village did not care at all about those living in other villages. Gradually, the people organized themselves into several small city-states. These were almost like separate nations. Each city-state was called a **polis**. Each polis was a separate unit that had its own government. It included the city and the area surrounding the city. Each polis had a marketplace called an **agora**. There was also an area on a hill that was higher than the rest of the polis. This was called an **acropolis**. They often built a wall to protect the polis.

Greek Civilization

We think of all of the city-states in Greece to be the Greek Civilization. They shared the same language, religion, and culture. However, the Greeks living in this time were not loyal to Greece as a nation. They were loyal to the city-state in which they lived. Many city-states began to develop during the Middle Period. The best known and most powerful were Athens and Sparta. People from Athens were called **Athenians**. Those living in Sparta were **Spartans**. Sparta was located on the **Peloponnesian Peninsula** of Greece. Athens was located on the **Attic Peninsula** in a region called Attica.

Government in Greece

Athens and Sparta got their starts during the Middle Period. They could not have been more different. For example, the ways in which they governed themselves were very different. First, it is important to understand how government developed in the Greek city-states. The Greeks tried several types of government over the years. At one time, they had leaders like a king. The people then thought they could govern better than one person. So they established an aristocracy. An **aristocracy** is a government by a ruling class. The ruling class in this case was the landowners. This type of government



This figure made in Sparta in approximately 1400 B.C. shows a woman in a typical costume from Crete.

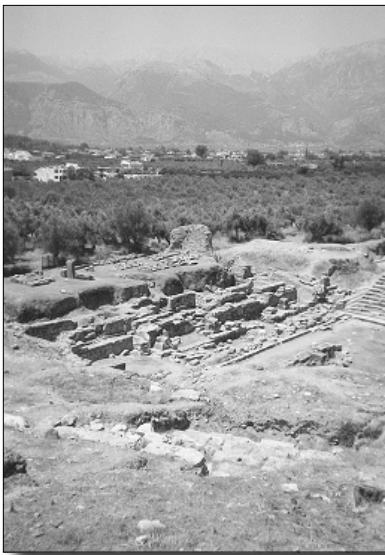
was replaced by an oligarchy. An **oligarchy** is run by only a few people. In Greece, the rulers were the richest people in town. Many city-states then dropped this type of government and set up a democracy. A **democracy** is a government run by the people who are being governed. *Demos* is a Greek word that means “people.” In the Greek democracy, all citizens were able to vote. They could decide how the city-state was to be run. However, slaves and women were not allowed to vote or participate.

Athens

Athens had a democracy. Every Athenian man, rich or poor, was a member of an assembly. This group met to discuss issues concerning Athens. Each citizen was allowed to speak and give his opinion at these assemblies. Each year a council consisting of 500 citizens was chosen by lot. The council managed the city. It decided what should be discussed at the assemblies. Citizens also took turns as judges and public officials. This open-minded attitude extended into other aspects of Athenian life. Artists, writers, philosophers, architects, and scientists flourished in Athens.



The Areopagus, on the Acropolis in Athens, was where Athenian democracy was born.



Ruins of Ancient Sparta

Sparta

Sparta was ruled by two kings and a council. They did not have a democracy. This type of government worked well for Spartans. They were not interested in the “finer things in life” that the Athenians valued. Spartan life was simple. There was no art, music, poetry, or fine clothing. They cared little for ideas or new invention. Their whole existence was built around war and military discipline. Beginning at age seven, all men were trained as soldiers. They were given little food and were treated harshly. This was to make them ready for the hardships of war. Even women were required to become strong and healthy so that they could have strong and healthy children. The Spartan army was strong and feared throughout the area.

The Classical Period: The Golden Age of Greece

The **Classical Period** of Greece began about 800 B.C. It lasted until 323 B.C. There were wars among the city-states now and then. But life was pretty good. There was plenty of food. Craftsmen and artists produced objects that could be traded. The Greeks had enough wealth to devote time to the arts, education, architecture, philosophy, and science. This is the period in which Greek culture reached its peak. It is sometimes called the Golden Age of Greece.

Government

Greeks in Athens had created the world's first democracy. All citizens were members of the governing body called the **assembly**. A citizen was a free man over 21 who was born to Athenian parents. The assembly met every nine days. It made decisions on laws, building, and other matters of interest. Each citizen was able to vote on the matters that came before the assembly. He also had a right to speak at the assembly in order to influence others.

Education

The Greeks understood that education was important. It helped them improve their culture and keep their good life. However, only young men from wealthy families received an education. When a boy was seven, he was sent to a school. His education was divided into three sections. There was letters, music, and athletics.

CLASSICAL GREEK CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: On the mainland of Greece and surrounding islands. Their influence was expanded to colonies around the Mediterranean Sea.

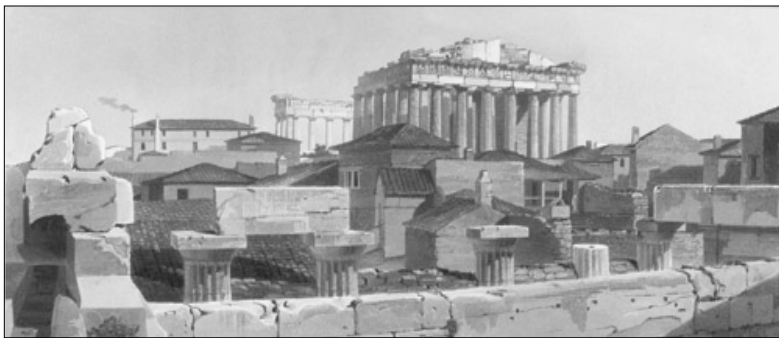
WHEN: 800 B.C.–323 B.C.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Formed the world's first democracy
- Produced the first dramas and developed drama as art
- Built magnificent buildings
- Created beautiful statues
- Wrote literature, poetry, and drama that are so outstanding they are still studied today
- Took a scientific approach to the study of medicine
- Were the first to write histories
- Developed a method of classifying plants
- Developed rules for geometry and made other mathematical contributions



This stele shows the personification of Demos crowned by Democracy.



The Parthenon

The first section of a boy's education was called the **letters**. This is what we would call the basics today. Students learned to read, write, and do arithmetic. They also memorized poetry. They learned the skill of debating.

Music education consisted of learning about music. They also learned to sing and play a musical instrument.

Greeks played the flute and stringed instruments. Girls were also trained to play these instruments.

At age 14, boys began their **athletic training**. They practiced wrestling, jumping, running, and throwing a discus and javelin. This training prepared boys to fight in the army. At age 18, boys were trained as soldiers for two years.

Children of poor parents and those of slaves were not educated. They began working early in their lives. Girls did not go to school either. Some parents taught them at home. Wealthy parents might hire tutors to teach their daughters to read and write. For the most part, a girl's education consisted of learning to run a home and developing domestic skills.

Religion

The Greeks valued religion. They had many gods who ruled every aspect of their lives. There was a god of war, a god of music, and so on. The king of the gods was **Zeus**. It was thought that Zeus and all of the other gods lived on Mount Olympus in the northern part of Greece. The Greeks built magnificent temples in which to worship their gods. They made beautiful statues to honor them. They thought their gods were similar to humans. The gods were said to have the same emotions and qualities as humans. The stories of their gods are called **myths**. These myths are still studied in school.

Drama

Drama was another important part of Greek life. It grew out of religion. Greek playwrights developed the art of drama. This was telling stories through actors and dialog. They wrote both humorous **comedies** and serious **tragedies** in the honor of the gods. These dramas were performed at religious festivals. Some famous Greek playwrights were Euripides, Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Aristophanes.



The Theater of Dionysus

Athletic Games

Athletic contests were held at religious festivals. There were even contests at funerals of famous people. The Greeks believed a person should have a healthy mind in a healthy body. Champion athletes were treated as national heroes. The **Olympic Games** began in Olympia, Greece, in 776 B.C.

Science and Medicine

The Greeks also valued science and medicine. The Greeks believed that sickness was a punishment of the gods. However, they did try to find cures. They studied sick people and diseases and came up with treatments based on their research. A famous Greek physician was Hippocrates. He is known as the "Father of Modern Medicine." He is remembered today for the **Hippocratic Oath**. It was named after him. It is an oath that deals with ethics in medicine. Modern doctors still take the Hippocratic Oath before they begin their practices.

Beauty and Knowledge

There were many amazing artistic creations in Greece. Temples, sculpture, painting, music, pottery, and dance flourished during the Classical Period of Greece. Knowledge was as important as beauty. Famous Greek mathematicians and scientists included Pythagoras, Heraclitus, and Euclid. They greatly expanded knowledge of the physical world. There were many great philosophers during this period. Some of the more famous were Socrates, Aristotle, and Plato.

Conflict Between Athens and Sparta

The city-states of Athens and Sparta both reached their peaks during this period. However, they represented two very different ideals. Both had strong military forces. Athens had the best navy. Sparta had the best army. Athens tried to protect itself from the Persians. The Athenians suggested the various city-states unite into a league. It was named the **Delian League**. The members of the league provided money for an even stronger navy. This navy defeated the Persians in 486 B.C. Athens then sent their navy to attack smaller Greek city-states. This was done to expand their empire. Sparta had joined forces with many of the smaller city-states. They formed the **Peloponnesian League**. In 431 B.C., the Peloponnesian League declared war on the Delian League.

The **Peloponnesian War** lasted for 27 years. It was costly to all involved. Eventually, Sparta received help from the Persians. Together, they defeated the Athenians. Sparta began ruling over all of the city-states. Democracy had ended. The Spartans were not good at ruling, however. For 30 years, there were many battles and wars. Greece became so weak that a force from Thebes was able to defeat the Spartans.

The Macedonians: Alexander the Great

Thebes

For a time, the city-state of Sparta ruled Greece. Surprisingly, the smaller army from **Thebes** was able to defeat them in 371 B.C. The Theban army was able to use a military move to defeat them. The Thebans arranged their formation into the shape of a crescent. When the Spartans attacked, the Theban army surrounded them.

Macedonia

Thebes only ruled for a few years, however. In 359 B.C., **Philip II** became king of Macedonia.

Macedonia is sometimes called Macedon. It was a large area north of Greece. It was a rugged country full of mountains. The people living there were much different from the Greeks. The Greeks thought of themselves as cultured and civilized. They thought the Macedonians were barbarians.

Philip worked to make his army stronger. Eventually, he defeated all of the Greek city-states to form one large country. He became the leader of Greece. His goal was to combine the strength of all of the Greeks. They would then go after the Persians. But in 336 B.C., Philip was assassinated. His son, **Alexander**, became king.

Alexander

Alexander was a great warrior. But he was also a scholar. His tutor was Aristotle. He trained Alexander in rhetoric, philosophy, history, and literature. He also helped Alexander as he studied medicine and science.

Alexander rose to power in 336 B.C. The empire was in disorder. Alexander and Macedonia had many enemies. His first act was to order the execution of those who had killed his father. Then he began to restore order to his small empire. He stopped a revolt in Thessaly. Then he was chosen to be general of the Greek forces. Alexander was only 20 years old at the time.

Alexander united the old city-states of Greece. He then decided to attack Persia, Greece's old enemy. This was just as his father had planned. Alexander and his army were successful. The Persian leader was King Darius III. He and his army were defeated. Alexander went on to expand his empire. He invaded Egypt, the Indus Valley, and eastern Iran.

ALEXANDER'S EMPIRE AT A GLANCE

WHERE: From Greece to India

WHEN: 336 B.C.–323 B.C.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Established the largest empire of the time, which included almost all of the known world
- Established large cities, including Alexandria, Egypt
- Spread Greek culture to a large part of the world



Alexander's image engraved on coins

Greek Colonies

Alexander knew that he could not rule his empire from one central location. The empire was just too large. He established several **Greek colonies** in countries he had just defeated. These colonies were run by Alexander's soldiers.

Alexander had decided to return to Greece from his conquests in India. However, he died of a fever in 323 B.C. He was only 32 years old. In only ten years, he had taken control of almost the entire known world. Sadly, with Alexander dead, the empire began to crumble. His generals killed Alexander's son. Then they fought over who would control the empire. Eventually it was divided into three kingdoms. There was Persia, Macedonia, and Egypt. Each kingdom was ruled by one general. The Greek language and culture remained a major part of these areas. This lasted for several hundred years after the death of Alexander the Great.

Ancient Europe: The Etruscans

Etruria

The **Etruscans** were an ancient people in Italy. They lived in what is now central Italy. This region was called **Etruria**. They lived between the Tiber River in the south and the Arno River in the north. This is the area Italians call **Tuscany** today. At its height, the Etruscan Culture stretched from Campania in the south to the Po Valley in the north. The Etruscans were in power from about 800 until 300 B.C. It was the first great civilization on the Italian Peninsula. It greatly influenced the Romans. The Romans overthrew the Etruscan king in about 500 B.C.

Influenced by the Greeks

We do not know where the Etruscans came from. Some believe they came from Asia. Others feel they had always lived in Italy. It is certain the Etruscans took some of their culture from the Greeks. The major Etruscan gods were similar to those of Greece. The Etruscan **alphabet** is based on the Greek alphabet. The Etruscans even decorated their tombs with scenes from Greek mythology. The Etruscans then passed much of their culture to the Romans.

Etruscan Trade

Etruria was very wealthy. It had fertile land and rich mineral ore resources. Etruscans traded with the Greeks and Phoenicians. They also traded with people as far away as France, Spain, and Africa. They had great harbors for ships. That helped increase trade. However, most Etruscan cities were several miles inland from the ocean. This protected them from piracy.

Etruscan Government

The Etruscans were more advanced than the Romans in the seventh century B.C. They conquered Rome and ruled them for about 100 years. However, they had no strong central government. Instead there were a number of city-states. The Etruscans formed a league of 12 cities. Each city was ruled by a priest-king called a **lucomon**. The lucomon was elected each year. He was selected from the nobility that governed each city.

Etruscan Cities

The Etruscans were excellent **engineers**. Their cities were well planned. They had bridges, canals, and temples. They had paved streets and brick houses. The cities were often surrounded by walls for protection. The streets were well drained. They were designed to stand up to heavy traffic. Rome had a drain and a pattern of underground water tunnels throughout the city.



Etruscan warrior
500 B.C.

ETRUSCAN EMPIRE AT A GLANCE

WHERE: Central Italy in what is now called Tuscany

WHEN: 800 B.C.–300 B.C.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Cities were well planned with paved streets and brick houses
- Skilled craftsmen
- Women had more freedom than the women in Greece or Rome
- Excellent sailors
- Built drains and underground water tunnels to remove excess water

The Roman Republic Takes Over

By the third century B.C., the Romans had become more powerful. The Roman Republic absorbed the Etruscan Civilization. The Etruscan culture gradually faded. Their language did continue to be used for some religious ceremonies. The Romans were influenced by Etruscan art, architecture, and religion. The Etruscans also gave the Romans the alphabet, writing, and many different crafts.

The Celts

The **Celts** were people of Indo-European stock. They first appeared in Central Europe in the eighth century B.C. They lived in the countries we now call Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, Hungary, and Switzerland. They were the first people in Northern Europe to make **iron**. Iron tools made it possible for these early Celts to clear and farm more land than ever before. This allowed for growing more food. This led to a bigger population and overcrowding. The Celts then spread to France, Belgium, Portugal, Spain, and the British Isles. Some Celtic groups moved to what are now Bulgaria and Greece. Some even settled in Northern Italy.

Classes in Celtic Society

By 500 B.C. the Celts had developed into a civilization. However, the Celts were not united under one leader. Their culture was divided into independent tribes. Within each tribe, the Celts were split into three classes. There were the nobles or aristocrats, which included warriors. The **Druids** were the priests or learned class. They were also noblemen. The peasants or common people included farmers and craftsmen. There was some overlap. Members of one group would sometimes perform the functions of another.

Skilled Artisans and Workers

The Celts were some of the most skillful artisans of their time. They created intricate gold and metal works. These were valued throughout the civilized world. They mainly used local materials to make pottery, enamel work, and jewelry. They were excellent farmers, herders, weavers, miners, and traders. They were also skilled road builders. These roads allowed them to expand into other countries.

The Two Sides of the Celts

Celts were a puzzle to outsiders. They were ruthless warriors. They often went into battle naked to show they were unafraid. They raided and looted, sacrificed humans, and took slaves. When they killed their enemies, they collected their skulls. However, they were kind to those who were not their enemies. There is evidence that in 300 B.C. some tribes had built and maintained a **hospital**. This was a place where they cared for those who could not care for themselves.

Oral History

The Celts were an artistic and musical people. But they had no written language. Their history and literature was memorized. Then they passed it down **orally** from generation to generation. The Druids preserved this knowledge. They served as teachers, judges, and doctors.



Celtic parade helmet, 350 B.C.

CELTIC CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: Europe

WHEN: 800 B.C. TO A.D. 200

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Skillful artisans, artists, musicians
- Excellent farmers
- Fearless warriors
- Built roads to expand into other countries
- First people in Northern Europe to make iron

Clashes With the Romans

The Romans called the Celts Gauls. They considered the Celts a race of barbarians. The Romans wanted the land the Celts controlled. About 390 B.C., the armies of the Celts and the Romans clashed. The Celts won a decisive victory. The Celts went to Rome and looted it. The Celtic victory did not last long. For the next several centuries, the Romans conquered most of Europe. Today, only traces of the Celtic culture remain. They can be found in the British Isles and in northwest France.

Ancient Rome

The Founding of Rome

Like the Greeks, Romans had myths, legends, and gods. They used these to explain the world, their history, and their heritage. One famous Roman legend explains how Rome was founded. According to the story, Rome was founded by **Romulus** and **Remus**. They were twin brothers who were the sons of Mars. He was the Roman god of war. Shortly after birth, a wicked relative tried to drown the twins by throwing them into the Tiber River. They were washed ashore.



Then a female wolf rescued them and fed them as if they were her own. The boys were found and raised by a shepherd and his wife. When the boys grew up, they founded Rome. They fought over who would be king. Romulus killed Remus. Romulus was the first of Rome's seven kings. He reigned from 753 to 716 B.C.

Roman history can be divided into three periods. There is the Monarchy, the Republic, and the Empire.

THE MONARCHY

Rome was first ruled by kings. The kings are sometimes called **monarchs**. The city was governed by six kings after Romulus. During this period, the city grew. The Roman religion was established. Roads, aqueducts, and bridges were built. The last of the kings was Tarquinius the Proud. He was a tyrant who was hated by the people. He was thrown out in 509 B.C. After that, the wealthy landowners in Rome set up a Republic.

THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

A **republic** is a political system in which a group of citizens elects representatives and officers to run the government. A republic is sometimes a democracy. However, the one established in Rome was not a democracy. Only people from powerful, wealthy families belonged to the senate. The **senate** was the assembly of aristocrats who elected or appointed many people to perform public jobs. The two most important people they appointed were called **consuls**. The consuls were given authority to make decisions for Rome. When Rome had an extreme emergency, the senate could appoint a **dictator**. He was given power to deal with the crisis.

Roman Social Classes

The wealthy class in Rome was known as the **patricians**. **Plebeians** were the common people in Rome. They were the traders, workers, and peasants. The Republic worked well for the patricians. They were able to make decisions in the

ROMAN EMPIRE AT A GLANCE

WHERE: Italy

WHEN: 500 B.C.—A.D. 1453

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- United many people and established peace over a great area
- Established laws that served as a basis for legal systems for many countries
- Latin, its language, is the basis for many other languages such as Italian, French, Portuguese, and Spanish.
- Built magnificent structures such as the Colosseum and the Pantheon; their architects made extensive use of the dome and arch
- Built paved roads, bridges, and aqueducts to carry water
- Invented the numbering system called Roman numerals, which is still used
- Developed the Julian calendar, which is still used today
- Introduced concrete and road signs

senate. However, the plebeians felt they were no better off. They could not hold office and had no voice in the government. The friction caused by this unequal treatment continued until 493 B.C. Finally, the plebeians were given representatives in the senate. These men were called **tribunes**. The plebeians were able to have the tribunes pass a set of protective laws.

Wars



Hannibal crossing the Alps during the Second Punic War

The conflict between the patricians and the plebeians was always present. The Roman Republic also had to deal with a series of wars with its neighbors. Fortunately, Rome had a large, strong army. There was a plentiful food supply. They had metals to make weapons. There were also slaves to do much of the work. Each war brought new power and new land under Roman control. Eventually, the Romans took over all of Italy and most of the land facing the Mediterranean Sea. Greece, part of Spain, and Gaul, now known as France, were all under Roman control. The main enemy of Rome was Carthage in North Africa. Rome and Carthage fought three wars over a 100-year period. These were called the **Punic Wars**.

Roman Provinces

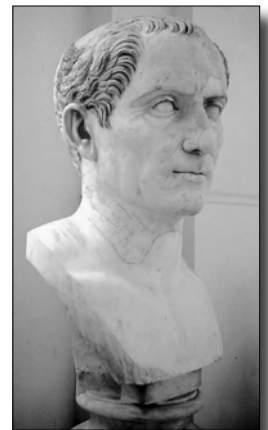
Each new land acquired by the Romans became a **province**. The Romans signed a treaty with each defeated nation. It required them to pay taxes to Rome. In exchange, the important people of the conquered nation could become Roman citizens. They could vote in elections and be elected to public office. Those who became Roman citizens had to take a Roman name and wear Roman clothes. Even people who did not become citizens often adopted the Roman language and its customs.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The Romans kept winning military victories. This made some Roman generals very powerful. Soldiers began to give their loyalty to the generals. They didn't care much about the senate or Rome. Some generals used this loyalty to try to become dictators. They tried to take power away from the senate. There was chaos in Rome. No one was able to stay in power for very long. In 46 B.C. **Julius Caesar**, a general and hero, became dictator.

Julius Caesar

Caesar got many things done in the short time he was dictator. He reduced taxes, built buildings, and reformed the calendar. The Julian calendar was named after him. With a few minor changes, it is still used today. The changes Caesar made in Rome improved the lives of the plebeians. They liked him. His soldiers liked him too. It was the patricians who did not like Caesar. He had become too powerful. Several senators decided to kill him. On March 15, 44 B.C., Caesar was assassinated.



Julius Caesar

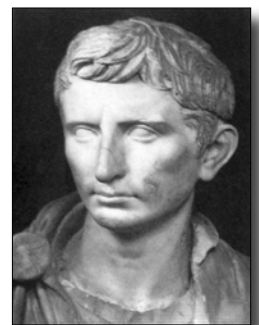
Rome's Golden Age

Eventually, Octavian assumed power. He was Caesar's adopted son. He became the first **emperor** of Rome. He called himself **Augustus**. This name meant "great." This was the beginning of the Roman Empire. It is sometimes called the Age of Emperors. Another name for this time is Rome's Golden Age. Consuls were still elected every year, but the emperor was the absolute ruler.

Map of the Roman Empire A.D. 284



Augustus was a good ruler. He kept peace and built roads and buildings. He encouraged the arts and sciences. He ruled from 27 B.C. until A.D. 14. After Augustus, there were other emperors. Some were better than others. There was a period of unbroken peace. The empire continued to grow. There were occasional rebellions against Roman rule. However, the conquered people came to accept being part of the Roman Empire. In A.D. 212, the Emperor Caracalle decreed that all free men and women were Roman citizens. This also included those who had once been slaves. Current slaves could not claim citizenship.



Augustus

The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire

About A.D. 180, the Roman Empire began to decline. The Empire was so large that it was hard to manage. It was finally divided into two parts. There was the **Latin Western Empire**. Rome was still its capital. The **Greek Eastern Empire** was formed in the east. The Greek Eastern Empire was also called the **Byzantine Empire**. Constantinople was its capital. It was named after the Emperor Constantine. The Western Empire was invaded by various Germanic tribes. It was also attacked by Mongols called Huns. It fell in A.D. 476. The Eastern Empire was toppled in 1453. At that time, the Turks conquered Constantinople. The Romans called all these invaders **barbarians**. This meant they lived outside the empire. The fall of ancient Rome was complete. But many parts of its culture still exist. For example, its buildings, ideas of government, and remnants of its language affect us today.

The Vikings

“The Vikings are coming! The Vikings are coming!” This warning spread terror throughout Europe from the late 8th to the 11th century A.D. The Vikings attacked and raided cities all across Europe. They even attacked London and Paris. **Monasteries** were often the targets of raids. A region’s wealth was usually stored in the monastery. The Vikings would raid a monastery and steal its treasures. They kidnapped the monks and sold them as slaves in the East.

Swift Raids

The key to the success of the Viking raids was surprise and swiftness. They often planned their attacks for Sunday. They knew the people and the monks would be in church. Their longships were very shallow. This made it possible for them to sail right onto the beach. They could even go inland into the rivers. Then they quickly got off their ship, raided the monastery, and put their loot on the ship. They could escape before the people could even respond.

Viking History Told in Sagas

Vikings is a word that means “pirates.” But they were not all ruthless plundering soldiers. In fact, until the end of the eighth century, most Vikings lived peacefully. They were originally known as Norsemen or Danes. The Vikings were hunters, farmers, fishermen, and craftsmen. They lived in the **Scandinavian** countries we now call Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. They were excellent seamen, navigators, craftsmen, shipbuilders, and traders. They were also great storytellers. We know a great deal of their history through the stories they told. The Viking stories of their adventures were called **sagas**.

The Viking population grew, and land became scarce. Many Vikings had to leave their homes and become seamen and soldiers. Some explored other lands. They established settlements in places like Greenland, Iceland, England, Scotland, Spain, France, and Ireland. Some sailed into the Mediterranean. Others traveled to what is now America. This was hundreds of years before Columbus. Others chose to raid towns and monasteries for treasures, food, and slaves.



A Berserker

VIKING CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: Scandinavian countries we now call Norway, Denmark, and Sweden

WHEN: Late 8th to 11th century A.D.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- They were excellent seamen, navigators, craftsmen, shipbuilders, traders, explorers, and great storytellers.
- We know a great deal of their history through stories of their adventures that are called sagas.
- Many of the names of the days of the week are taken from the Norse language.

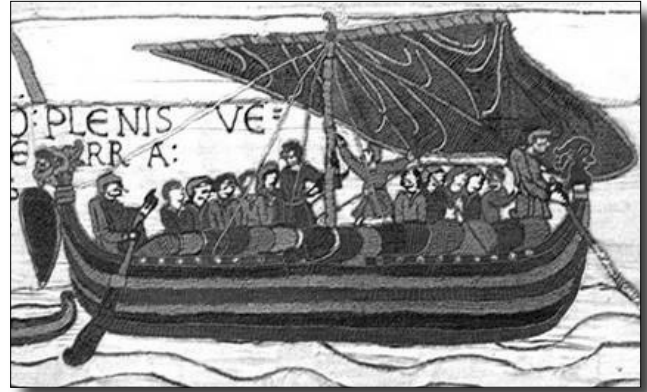
Berserkers

The Vikings were known to be fierce. In fact the word *berserk* comes from the Viking word *berserkr*. It meant “bear-shirt.” A **berserker** was a brave warrior who would put on a bear skin before a battle. He would work himself into a frenzy to prepare for the fight. It is said that a

berserker was a madman in battle. It was a great honor for a Viking to die in battle. Those who did were transported to Valhalla. The Vikings believed **Valhalla** was a paradise. The dead would enjoy themselves by fighting and feasting.

Shipbuilding and Sailing

The Vikings had great shipbuilding and sailing skills. Other Europeans kept close to shore when they sailed. The Vikings crossed the Atlantic Ocean without a compass or other modern instruments. Archaeologists believe they were able to navigate these great distances by looking at many clues. They observed the sun, stars, and the different species of birds and sea animals they would see. They even tasted seawater as they were sailing. If the water was less salty, they knew that land was close by. Fresh water from land empties into the ocean, so it would make it less salty.



A Viking Longship

The Vikings had different sizes of ships. One kind only held four men. The fighting ships, called **longships**, were up to 90 feet long. They held 50 warriors. All ships were designed in a similar manner. They were long, thin, and light. They had a curve at each end. They were flexible so they wouldn't break up on the rough ocean. A large, square sail moved the ship when the wind was strong enough. When it wasn't, the men rowed. In bad weather, the sail was lowered. It was used as a tent to protect the sailors.

Their ships could sail inland on rivers. They had a keel that cut through the water quickly. It also made the ship stable. The prow of a longship was carved into a menacing figure. It was often a dragon or snake. They were very fast. Their rudders made them easy to steer.

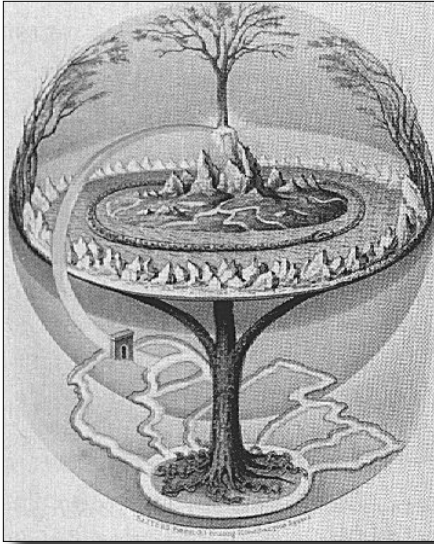
A great deal of the Vikings' culture involved their ships. They were important for raids, trading, and moving to new settlements. Many rich Vikings were either buried or cremated in ships. These ships were stuffed with items the dead might need on their journey to the next world. Ordinary people were sometimes buried in graves marked with stones in the shape of a ship.

Viking Religion

The Vikings believed there were many gods who lived in **Asgard**. The main god was Odin or Wodan. He was the ruler of Valhalla. **Valhalla** was a hall in Asgard. Dead warriors were brought back to life there. Odin's son was Thor. He was the god of thunder and of law and order. Thor would throw his hammer at monsters. He drove his chariot pulled by goats across the sky. This made the noise of thunder. Freya was a fertility goddess. Tiu was a god of war.

Social Classes

The Vikings had three different classes of people. They were aristocrats, freemen, and slaves. The aristocrats were nobles and were called **jarls**. They owned land, ships, and slaves. A jarl could eventually become a king of his region. Freemen were **karls**. They were freeborn peasants. They often owned land. Some were traders, craftsmen, or worked on farms owned by others. The slaves were **thralls**. They were prisoners of war or children whose parents were thralls. All freemen attended open-air meetings called **things**. This is where they discussed problems and settled disputes.



Asgard

Days of the Week

The Viking influence is still with us today. Shown below are the origins of the days of the week. Many are taken from the Norse language.

Sunday: Day of the sun (Germanic)

Monday: Day of the moon (Germanic)

Tuesday: Day of Tiu or Tyr, the Norse god of war

Wednesday: Day of Odin or Woden, the chief Norse god

Thursday: Day of Thor, the Norse god of thunder

Friday: Day of Freya, the Norse goddess of love

Saturday: Day of Saturn, the Roman god Saturn

The Middle East: The Phoenicians

The **Phoenicians** lived in small independent city-states. They were located along the Mediterranean coast in what is now Lebanon. This was from about 2000 to 800 B.C. Two of their best-known cities are Tyre and Sidon. The people were originally Canaanites. The Greeks named them Phoenicians. It is thought the name Phoenician comes from the Greek word *phoinikes*. This meant “purple men.” The Greeks gave them that name because of a purple dye the Phoenicians developed. It was so expensive that only the wealthy could afford it. Roman emperors wore purple togas. Over time, the color purple was associated with royalty.

Phoenician Trade Goods

Other Phoenician products were also prized in the Mediterranean region. The Phoenicians made fine glassware. It was made into vases, bottles, goblets, and beads. The Phoenicians learned glassmaking from the Egyptians. They improved the process. The Phoenicians used sand rich in **quartz** from their own country. This made the glass clear instead of cloudy. They made both clear and colored glassware. These were treasured objects. Other trade items were beautiful ivory and wood carvings, pottery, cedar wood, wine, wrought metal objects, and embroidered cloth. These items made Phoenician traders wealthy.

Sailors and Navigators

By 1250 B.C., the Phoenicians were known as outstanding navigators and sailors. They gained their sailing skill by sailing all over the Mediterranean world. They were looking for new markets and raw materials for their products. According to a Greek historian, they may have even sailed around Africa. This was about 2,000 years before Europeans were able to do it. Phoenicians were among the first people to learn to sail at night. They navigated by the stars.



A Phoenician Ship

Trading Posts

The Phoenicians set up trading posts in many places in the Mediterranean. The most famous trading post was in **Carthage**. This was in northern Africa. Carthage became a power in the region by the seventh century B.C. There were other important trading posts. Utica was near Carthage. Cadiz was in southern Spain. There were also posts on the islands of Cyprus and Rhodes.

The Alphabet

Perhaps the greatest thing the Phoenicians did was to invent the alphabet. Earlier civilizations had developed forms of writing. These were based on pictures called **pictographs**. In the Phoenician **alphabet**, each symbol stood for a sound. There are about 30 different sounds in speech. This means that any word can be written using a system of 30 letters or less. The Phoenicians used 22 letters. The Greeks adapted the Phoenician letters. They called the first letter “alpha” and the second letter “beta.” This is where we get the word “alphabet.” Today all modern European languages are written with the alphabetic system.

PHOENICIAN CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: West Asia

WHEN: 2000 B.C.—800 B.C.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Invented the alphabet and a writing system; most early writing systems were based on pictures
- The greatest traders of the ancient world
- Talented craftsmen known for their ivory carvings
- Developed the technique of glassblowing
- Excellent navigators, sailors, and shipbuilders.

The Hebrews

The **Hebrews** were a nomadic group of **Semitic** people. They originally came from Mesopotamia about 2000 B.C. They settled in an area close to the Mediterranean Sea in the Middle East. Most of the migration occurred between the 14th and 12th centuries B.C. Hebrews were the ancestors of today's Jews. They called the area where they settled **Israel**.

The Exodus

Some of the Hebrews moved to Egypt. They were in search of more fertile land. Eventually, the pharaohs of Egypt made the Israelites slaves. **Moses** was a man of Hebrew descent. He had lived as an Egyptian for part of his life. He finally got the Israelites released from slavery. Moses led the Hebrews out of Egypt. They continued on a journey through the wilderness. Their escape from Egypt is known as the **Exodus**. This word means "to leave." Joshua was the Hebrew leader after Moses. He led the Hebrews as they conquered Canaan. They made **Jerusalem** their capital.

Hebrew Religion

An important element of the Hebrew culture was its religion. Hebrews developed the idea of **monotheism**. This means they believed there was only one god. Most other cultures believed the world was created and ruled by many gods. This philosophy is called **polytheism**. The Hebrews believed that one God created and controlled the world. They believed that people could talk to God by praying. They also believed that the image of God should not be made into a statue and worshipped. Many of these beliefs were radical at the time.



The Twelve Tribes of Israel

HEBREW CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: The Middle East

WHEN: 2000 B.C.–30 B.C.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Believed in one god
- Established a set of moral laws called the "Ten Commandments"
- Their religious beliefs strongly influenced many modern-day religions
- Recorded their history, laws, and beliefs in the Torah and Old Testament

Hebrew Laws

Their laws also set the Hebrews apart. In most cultures, the king or a group of nobles made strict laws. These were usually for governing the common people. Often, the kings and noblemen did not obey the laws. The Hebrews, however, had a set of laws based on their religion. They applied the laws to everyone, including the rulers. Some of their laws were called the "Ten Commandments." They are found in the Jewish scriptures called the **Torah**. They are also found in Exodus in the Old Testament of the Christian **Bible**.

Hebrew History

The Hebrew tribes rose to power. They were led by kings Saul, David, and Solomon. The kingdom eventually split into two small states. These were called Israel and Judah. These states were eventually destroyed. Israel was conquered by Assyria in 721 B.C. Judah was conquered by Babylonia in 587 B.C. This region has been controlled by several foreign powers. This includes the Persians, Alexander the Great, the Hellenistic Ptolemies, and the Romans.

World Religions Develop in Jerusalem

Three major religions developed in Jerusalem. **Judaism** is the Jewish religion. The followers of Jesus Christ developed **Christianity**. **Islam** is the religion followed in the Muslim world.

The Persians

The **Persian Empire** was located east of the Fertile Crescent. It was on the east side of the Persian Gulf. It was one of the largest empires of the ancient world. Persia occupied land that today is known as Iran and Afghanistan. Persians were not Semitic, as many of the early civilizations in that part of the world had been. These were people like the Hebrews and the Arabs. The Persians were Indo-European. They called themselves **Aryans**. The name Iran is based on the name Aryan.

Cyrus and the Persians Rise to Power

The Persians and the Medes came to this area about 1300 B.C. The **Medes** were warriors who raided cities and caravans. In 550 B.C., **Cyrus the Great** was a Persian province ruler. He led an army to defeat the Medes. Cyrus united the Medes and the Persians. They formed a strong army.



Cyrus the Great

Cyrus and his army were very successful. The army included archers and cavalrymen. In only 15 years, his army conquered almost all of the ancient world. This included Asia Minor, the Fertile Crescent, the Indus Valley, and Egypt. The Persians treated those they defeated fairly and kindly. In fact, there is some evidence that many Babylonians liked the idea of the Persians conquering them. They were unhappy with their own king. Cyrus freed the Jewish captives in Babylonia. He led them back to Jerusalem. The Persians allowed the kingdoms they defeated to keep their own cultures. They did not make them adopt the Persian culture. Conquered people did have to pay tribute to Persia. Cyrus was killed in battle in 530 B.C.

Managing the Persian Empire

The Persian Empire gained power under the leadership of Darius I. He ruled from 522 to 486 B.C. Darius was a good administrator and organizer. The Persian Empire was very large. The challenge was to maintain and govern the lands it had taken over. Darius divided this huge empire into 20 provinces. These provinces were called **satrapies**. Each of these satrapies was managed by a governor called a **satrap**. Other leaders were Persians appointed by the emperor. These leaders included judges and tax collectors. The emperor also had an inspector. He would make surprise visits to the satrapies. This made sure the officials were doing their jobs well and being loyal to the emperor. The Persians connected their empire with well-paved roads. These roads led to more international trade.

PERSIAN CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: East of the Fertile
Crescent in the Middle East

WHEN: 550 B.C.—330 B.C.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Built roads and canals
- Divided the empire into provinces so that it could be governed better
- Wrote the *Avesta*, the Persian holy book, based on the views of Zoroaster, a prophet
- Did not invent coinage, but were the first to put it to wide use

Zoroastrianism

One new development in Persia was the religion called **Zoroastrianism**. **Zoroaster** was a Persian prophet. He had seven visions. These visions were the basis for the religion. Zoroastrianism became the official religion of the Persian Empire. It flourished for many years. It is still practiced in some places today. The **Avesta** is the Persian holy book. It is based on the views of Zoroaster. The book teaches that there is one supreme god who was the god of life. This god created everything that is good in the world. Another god created everything that was evil and bad. He was the god of death.

The Persian Empire Ends

Persia fought several wars with the Greeks. The Persian Empire lasted until 330 B.C. This is when it was conquered by Alexander the Great.

The Byzantine Empire

The Roman Empire Split in Two

The Roman Empire was large and hard to manage. In A.D. 284 it was divided in two. The part in the west was called the Latin Western Empire. The part in the east was called the Greek Eastern Empire. The Greek Eastern Empire was also called the **Byzantine Empire**. The center of the Greek Eastern part of the Roman Empire was the old Greek city of **Byzantium**. It lay on both sides of the **Bosporus**. This is a narrow strait of water between Europe and Asia. Byzantium was a valuable port. Its location was important for trade and military purposes. It controlled the sea route between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. It also controlled the trade routes from Europe to the East. Emperor **Constantine the Great** rebuilt Byzantium as a capital city. It was then renamed **Constantinople** after the emperor. The city became as great as Rome. Today, the city is called Istanbul.



Constantine the Great

The Spread of Christianity

In the second and third centuries A.D., Christianity was spreading throughout the Roman Empire. However, Christians were tormented and put to death for their religion. In Byzantium, things changed. Constantine became a Christian after he had a vision. He issued an order that allowed others to worship as Christians. He wanted Christianity to spread. It was important for the growth of the Byzantine Empire. Over time, Christianity became the official religion of the empire. It was also the official religion for medieval Western Europe.

Culture of the Eastern Roman Empire

The word *Byzantium* refers to the Eastern Roman Empire during the Middle Ages. It also refers to the culture of this empire. In 476, the Latin Western Empire was conquered by Germanic invaders. What was left of the Roman Empire was now ruled from Constantinople. In the sixth century, the Byzantine Empire stretched from southern Spain in the West to the borders of Sassanian Iran in the East. The Byzantine Empire was a diverse culture. It combined many ethnic groups, languages, religions, and creeds. The Byzantines considered themselves Romans. They kept up many of the traditions of Rome and Greece. When the Arabs conquered Egypt and Syria in 634, Byzantium changed. It became more Greek and less Roman. The Latin Romans in the Western part of the Roman Empire did not think very highly of those in the Greek Eastern part.

Byzantine Art and Architecture

Byzantium was known for its art. Art created during this period is called Byzantine. Architecture, mosaics, enamel work, ivory carving, and metal work were all forms of art that developed in new and distinctive ways. Many of

BYZANTINE CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: Europe—The eastern section of the Roman Empire

WHEN: A.D. 284–1453

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Preserved Greek and Roman culture and law
- Produced great works of art including architecture, mosaics, enamel work, ivory carving, and metal work
- Lasted about 1,000 years
- Spread of Christianity



**The Siege of Constantinople
in 1453**

the works of art were created for altars of churches. They were also used in imperial courts. The great architectural work of the time was the church of **Hagia Sophia**. It was also known as Saint Sophia. It was built in Constantinople between A.D. 532 and 537. Today it is a mosque used by Muslims.

The Ottomans Conquer Byzantium

The Ottomans came to power by the end of the sixth century. So the Byzantine Empire was being squeezed from all sides. The empire began to shrink. Arabs, Avars, Persians, Slavs, and Turks all conquered parts of Byzantium. By 1453, all that was left of the Byzantine Empire was Constantinople. In May of that year, the Ottoman Turks captured the city. They changed the name of Constantinople to **Istanbul**. Losing Constantinople to the Ottoman Empire was a great blow to Western Europe. It ended Roman history. Christian power in the Eastern Mediterranean came to an end. It also meant the Ottomans dominated trade through this important area.

The Byzantine Empire set a standard of cultural excellence for both halves of the Roman Empire. The culture that came out of the Byzantine Empire has had a lasting impact on modern nations.



The Muslim and Ottoman Empires

Islam

In the seventh century A.D., a prophet named **Muhammad** founded a new religion in Arabia. The people who lived in Arabia were called **Arabs**. This new religion was called **Islam**. Those who practiced this religion were called **Muslims**. Islam means “surrender to the will of Allah.” *Allah* is the Arabic name for God. The Muslims thought their religion was the only true religion. They felt it was their duty to tell everyone.

The Muslim Empire

With Muhammad as leader, the **Muslim Empire** began to grow. It took land from the Persian Empire and the Byzantine Empire. The first capital of the Muslim Empire was Damascus in Syria. Baghdad in Iraq later became its capital. Muhammad died in 632. But the empire kept expanding. By the eighth century, it extended from Spain to India. The Muslim rulers were called **caliphs**. They did not force people to accept their faith. Those who did become Muslims paid lower taxes and were given other benefits. Many Christians and Jews refused to give up their own faith.

MUSLIM AND OTTOMAN EMPIRES AT A GLANCE

WHERE: The Near East, Balkans, Southern Russia, and Northern Africa

WHEN: A.D. 800–1923

ACHIEVEMENTS:

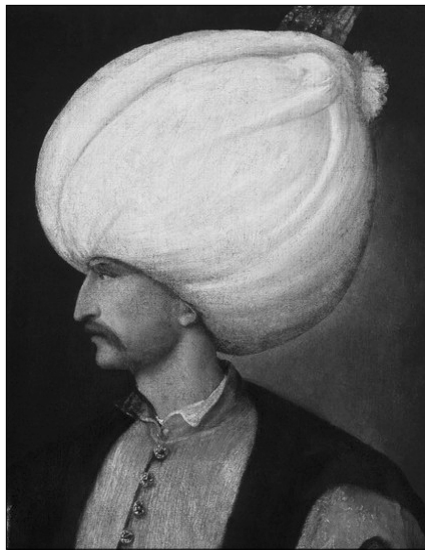
- Built many libraries, mosques, and schools
- Produced many great literary works
- Advanced the study of mathematics
- Developed and spread the Muslim religion
- Performed surgery and used chemicals to make medicine

The Muslim Empire began to decline. It was divided into several independent kingdoms. The Turks were led by a man named Seljuk. They conquered most of the Near East. In 1258, the **Seljuk Turks** were defeated by the Mongols.

The Ottoman Empire

The Ottomans were related to a certain group of Turks. These Turks had originally been mercenary soldiers of the Seljuks. They took over the old Seljuk states. They set up a new Muslim Empire called the **Ottoman Empire**. The Ottoman Empire was named after their leader, Osman I. Osman’s family ruled for almost 700 years. The empire was located in northwestern Anatolia near the Byzantine Empire.

The Ottomans felt it was their duty to defend their religion against those who were not Muslims. Osman and his son Orkhan conquered most of the Byzantine Empire. They fought a number of **jihads**. These were holy wars. Eventually, their empire expanded around Constantinople. However, they were not able to capture Constantinople. Orkhan became sultan of the Ottoman Empire. **Sultan** is the Turkish name for “emperor.” Constantinople was finally captured in 1453 by Mehmet II. He was called the Conqueror. He ordered the largest Christian church, the Hagia Sophia, to become a **mosque**. This is a place where Muslims worship.



Suleiman I

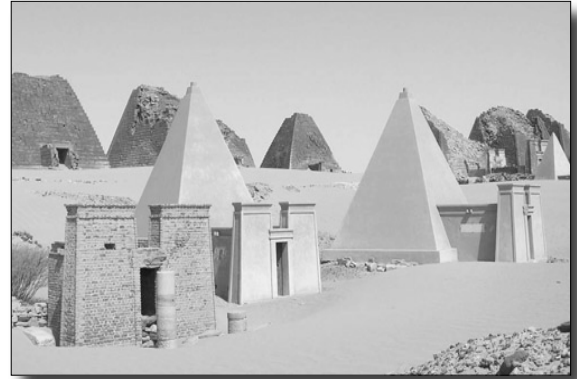
The Ottoman Empire reached its greatest power under Suleiman the Magnificent. He ruled from 1520 to 1566. During his reign, the Ottomans conquered the Balkans, southern Russia, and northern Africa. The empire now included much of Eastern Europe and western Asia. Suleiman did not just have feats of military power. He had mosques, monuments, bridges, roads, and schools built. He also encouraged the arts and sciences.

The empire became weaker during the 18th and 19th centuries. It came to an end after the First World War in 1923.

Africa

KUSH

Egypt is what one usually thinks of when talking about great civilizations or cultures in Africa. But there were many other important civilizations that existed in Africa. This should not surprise anyone. Archaeologists claim the earliest humans lived in East Africa. Africa may well be the cradle of all humanity.



The Kush Pyramids at Meroe in Sudan

About 12,000 years ago, the area we now call the **Sahara Desert** was not a desert at all. It was a fertile area. Lush vegetation extended across the continent. Within this rich area, there were humans who fished, hunted, and gathered. Eventually, they began to herd animals and farm. The Egyptian culture flourished between 3100 B.C. and 332 B.C. Civilizations to the south and to the west of Egypt were just beginning to develop. They were quite different from what most people think of as “civilization.” They did have music, art, and an oral history. They also traded gold, silver, copper, and ivory. One important African culture was known as the Kush.

The **Kush Civilization** was a very old civilization just south of Egypt. It was along the Nile River. It was in an area we now call Sudan. The Kush Civilization began about 2000 B.C. It lasted until A.D. 350. The people of Kush were mainly fishermen and farmers. There were some tradesmen. Some of the people built and sailed boats. The Egyptians were stronger than the Kush. They conquered them and took their precious metals, cattle, and ivory. The Egyptians also enslaved the people of Kush. They took them back to Egypt. Eventually, the Kush grew stronger, and the Egyptians grew weaker. About 752 B.C., the Kush conquered the Egyptians. For about a century, Kush kings governed Egypt.

The Kush ruled Egypt until the Assyrians conquered them. The Assyrians had iron weapons. Their defeat did not end the Kush civilization, however. They relocated their capital to Meroe. It became a powerful culture. They mined and forged weapons and tools out of iron. The Kush spread their knowledge of iron-making to other parts of Africa. They developed a writing system, created art, and tamed elephants for use. About A.D. 350, the Axum army defeated the Kush.

GHANA

On the opposite side of the continent is the area called West Africa. Several kingdoms developed there. The first of these West African empires was **Ghana**. Ghana was originally bordered on the west by the Senegal River and on the east by the Niger River. The Sahara Desert was on the north. On the south was the jungle. It was this location that allowed Ghana to become

AFRICAN EMPIRES AT A GLANCE

WHERE: Africa

WHEN: 2000 B.C. to present

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Archaeological evidence shows this is where humans first lived.
- Kushites spread the knowledge of iron-making to other parts of Africa.
- Ghana controlled the gold and salt trade, established vital trade routes, and became wealthy by controlling trade routes and charging taxes.
- Zimbabweans were excellent builders who built a great walled city.

rich and powerful. Ghana did not have as many resources as others in Africa. It was able to control the roads. It charged taxes on **caravans** passing through the kingdom. The main items traded in this area were iron, gold, and salt.

Ghana was a center for the iron industry. Its people made and traded iron weapons. It had large numbers of warriors with iron weapons. This helped expand the kingdom. It also allowed Ghana to keep order so other tribes could trade and prosper. Ghana had some gold, but the area to the south had much more. Ghana was able to control its trade. It is estimated that between the years A.D. 450 and 1230, more gold was traded in Ghana than at any other place in the world. While not as showy as gold, salt was also an important trade item in this era. Salt was mined in the Sahara Desert. It was highly prized for its ability to preserve food.

The Ghana Kingdom became prominent around the eighth century. It flourished during the 10th and 11th centuries. Around 1200, its kingdom extended from central Senegal to Timbuktu. At that time, Ghana's capital, Koumbi, was conquered by Berber Muslims. The kingdom of **Mali** followed the kingdom of Ghana. Mali included the area that once was Ghana. It became even larger.

ZIMBABWE

The city of Great Zimbabwe was located between the Zambezi and the Limpopo Rivers. **Zimbabwe** means "great stone houses." Bantu-speaking people settled there in about the year A.D. 600. Those living in Zimbabwe mined gold and copper. They began trading the metals with people in Asia. Between 950 and 1450, Zimbabwe became important as a religious center. It was trade, however, that created great wealth in the 12th century. It enabled the Zimbabweans to begin a building period that lasted several centuries. African buildings were usually made from mud-brick. **Great Zimbabwe** is an exception. A huge stone wall was built to enclose the city. Inside the city, other walls were built to divide one area from another.

It took several centuries to build the wall around the Great Zimbabwe. When it was finished, the structure was one of the greatest things created during the Iron Age in Africa. The massive stone walls are spread over an area of about 60 acres. The size of the walls is remarkable. They were sixteen feet thick at the bottom and 35 feet high. The granite bricks were cut and shaped precisely. No mortar or cement was needed to hold them in place.

The people eventually left the Great Zimbabwe city. It was destroyed by invaders. Today, only ruins remain. The Zimbabwe Empire lasted until the 19th century. The Africans living in this region are respectful of their ancestors and their culture. When they gained their independence in 1980, they named their country Zimbabwe.

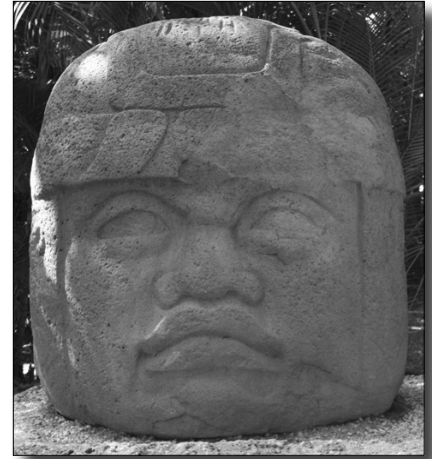


The city of Great Zimbabwe

The Americas: The Olmecs

Early People in the Americas

There were people living in America when the Europeans first arrived. We call these people Native Americans. These early people arrived in North America over 20,000 years ago. It took many centuries for them to spread across North and South America. The area between North and South America is called **Central America**. The northern part of Central America is known as **Mesoamerica**. This includes the central and southern parts of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, western Honduras, and El Salvador.



Giant carved stone heads are ruins of the Olmec civilization.

The Spanish explored Central and South America. They found highly developed civilizations. These groups were all similar. Many built pyramids. They had a hieroglyphic type of writing. They created accurate calendars. They were also excellent mathematicians and astronomers. They had similar religions and gods. Many also practiced human sacrifice. There were four major cultures in Mesoamerica and South America. They were the Olmecs, Mayas, Aztecs, and Incas.

The Olmecs

One of the first civilizations in Mesoamerica was called the **Olmec Civilization**. In Mesoamerica, there is a wide variety of altitudes, rainfalls, and climates. Some areas are **arid**. They are deserts. Others are **lush** and get a lot of rainfall. They can be called rain forests. The Olmec Civilization began within this diverse area.

Olmecs Discover Corn

The Olmec civilization formed around 1200 B.C. It was located along the southern Gulf coast of Mexico. It began when they found out how to grow maize. **Maize** is the native word for corn. It was a farming society. At first there were a number of small settlements. Each one was built around an Olmec temple. These grew into cities. Over time, the Olmec Culture dominated the Mexican lowland. The civilization lasted until about 100 B.C. It dissolved for some unknown reason. The influence of the Olmec civilization reached from the Gulf coast to the central highlands in Mexico. It also reached southeast along the Pacific coast to El Salvador.

Olmec Temples and Stone Heads

The Olmecs were very religious. They built large temples, monuments, and pyramids. These honored their gods and leaders. The Olmecs were noted for the huge carved **stone heads** they made. Two things make these carved stone heads remarkable. First, the Olmecs were a stone-age

OLMEC CIVILIZATION AT A GLANCE

WHERE: Southern Gulf coast of Mexico; influence reached from the Mexican highlands, along the Pacific coast to El Salvador

WHEN: 1200 B.C.–100 B.C.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Built temples, monuments, and pyramids
- Developed first calendar in the Americas
- Carved huge stone heads
- Built stone pavements and drainage systems
- Had a counting system
- Influenced later civilizations

people. They only had stone tools. Carving the stone heads must have been very difficult. Second, no Native American culture used the wheel for moving things. We do not know how they moved these 40-ton carvings.

Olmec Achievements

The Olmecs also had stone pavements and drainage systems. They had a counting system and the first calendar in the Americas. They may be most well known for the influence they had on later civilizations. Many Mesoamerican groups can be traced back to the Olmec.



The Mayas built observatories to aid in their study of astronomy. This observatory is in Chichén Itzá.

Mayas were farmers. They grew cotton, corn, and squash. They lived in small villages. They built large ceremonial centers. These had palaces and large pyramids.

Writing, Mathematics, and Astronomy

The Mayas were an intelligent people. They made a complex **hieroglyphic** writing system. They also created an advanced system of mathematics. Many feel it was superior to that of the Europeans. They were able to predict **solar eclipses**. They also gained knowledge in astronomy from studying the stars, planets, sun, and moon. Using astronomy and mathematics, they were able to develop a **solar calendar**. It had 365 days. The Mayan calendar was more accurate than the calendar created in Europe in 1582. The Mayas used their solar calendar to plant and harvest their crops. They also developed a second 260-day calendar. It was used to mark their religious ceremonies.

Mayan Pyramids

The Mayas were also artists. They created sculptures, pottery, monuments, and buildings. The most impressive of their structures were the pyramids. Many of these still stand today. The pyramids were 200 feet high. They were made of stone blocks joined with mortar made of lime. Mayan pyramids were mostly used as temples. They often had a base of rubble. They were sometimes enlarged at a later date. If you were to take a Mayan pyramid apart, you might find several smaller pyramids inside. The Mayas used astronomy to build their pyramids with the bases facing north and south. The exterior of Mayan pyramids had staircases. These began at the base and rose to the temple chamber at the top.

Ball Courts

The Mayas did not just build temples and pyramids. They also built **ball courts** in every large city. Young Mayas, covered with padding, used these courts to play a game with a rubber ball. This was a ceremonial game. It was not just the Mayas who played this game. Other civilizations in Mesoamerica and South America also played the same game on similar courts.

Mayas Abandon Their Cities

It is unclear what happened to the Mayan civilization. It came to an end in A.D. 900. The people appear to have just left their villages. Buildings being built were left unfinished. Their cities and palaces were abandoned. The rain forest swallowed what was left of this once great civilization.

The Mayas

The Mayas were one of the early civilizations in Mesoamerica. It was one of the most highly developed in the area. The **Mayan Civilization** was located east of the Olmec Civilization. It was in the tropical rain forest in the Yucatán, Guatemala, and western Honduras. It lasted from 1000 B.C. until A.D. 900. It reached its peak about A.D. 300. Most of the

MAYAN EMPIRE AT A GLANCE

WHERE: In the Yucatán, Guatemala, and western Honduras

WHEN: 1000 B.C.—A.D. 900

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Created many sculptures, paintings, and carvings of stone, jade, and turquoise
- Built huge pyramids
- Developed a complex hieroglyphic writing system
- Developed a system of mathematics
- Had an advanced understanding of astronomy
- Developed a 365-day solar calendar

The Aztecs

At first, the **Aztecs** were a small, nomadic tribe. They settled in Mesoamerica. The Aztecs had come from the north. They spent several years wandering around the Mexican Valley. Sometime during the 13th century, they stopped their wandering. They settled on the border of Lake Texcoco. The Aztecs drained the swamps. They built artificial islands to make gardens. They founded the town of **Tenochtitlán**. This is now the site of Mexico City.

Expanding the Aztec Empire

During the 15th century, the Aztecs made their empire bigger. They conquered several tribes to the south. They ruled across Mesoamerica. When the Aztecs conquered a tribe, they did not try to destroy them. They did not burn their villages. They made them part of the Aztec Empire. However, those who were conquered by the Aztecs had to pay them **tribute**. This was in the form of food, precious metals, jewels, textiles, pottery, decorative feathers, cocoa, and rubber. They might be forced to send other items to support the Aztec priests and rulers of Tenochtitlán.

Human Sacrifice

The defeated tribes also had to provide victims for **human sacrifice**. The Aztecs sacrificed humans to please the gods. This was common in Mesoamerican cultures. It is estimated that 20 to 50 thousand people were sacrificed each year. Many were slaves or war prisoners. Sometimes, Aztecs were used. They thought it was an honor to be chosen. The victim felt that he or she would be granted eternal life in return. The sacrificial ceremony was performed by priests. They did this at altars on top of layered pyramids. Great crowds would gather to watch the ceremony.

Aztec Crafts and Knowledge

The Aztecs borrowed a lot from the Mayas and other cultures. Parts of their religion, science, calendar, building style, irrigation, astronomy, mathematics, the arts, sculpture, and weaving can all be traced to earlier civilizations. The Aztecs had the wheel. It was not used to make vehicles. They used copper and bronze for tools. They did not use iron or steel. Their artisans made beautiful jewelry from gold, silver, and from their alloys. They did not have glass, plows, gunpowder, or alphabetic writing. They kept written records of their history, religious practices, and other details of their empire. These were written in books called **codexes** or **codices**. The books were made of tree bark or leaves. Their writing was a kind of hieroglyphic.

The Aztecs created art and architecture that were very complex and finely done. They were also efficient farmers. They used irrigation, terracing, and fertilization in their fields. In the 16th century, the Spanish arrived. They were impressed by the capital city, Tenochtitlán.



The Sun god Tonatiuh is carved in the center of the Aztec calendar stone. Others carvings represent the Aztec days and religious symbols.

AZTEC EMPIRE AT A GLANCE

WHERE: Mesoamerica

WHEN: A.D. 1200–1521

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Created art and architecture
- Efficient farmers who used irrigation, terracing, and fertilization
- Schooling and training in martial arts was compulsory for boys
- A centralized government controlled every aspect of the Aztecs' lives

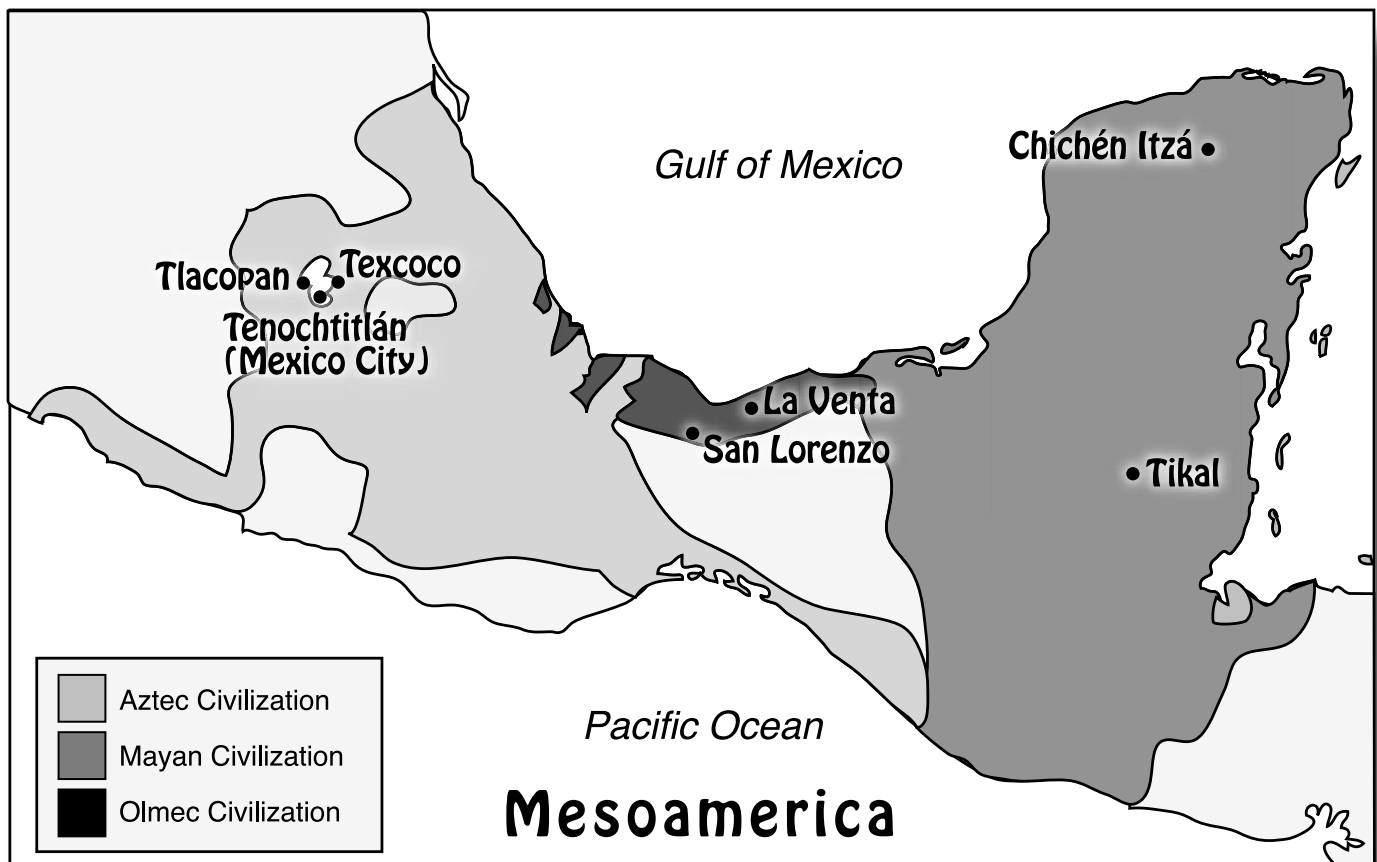
The Spanish Arrive and Conquer

The arrival of the Spanish brought an end to the Aztec Empire. Christopher Columbus reached the Caribbean in 1492. This gave the Spanish a base in Cuba and other islands. Other Spanish soldiers came to Mexico. They were called **conquistadors**. They continued their exploration in search of gold and land. They also wanted to convert people to Christianity. One of the Spanish conquistadors was **Hernando Cortés**.

Cortés landed on the Yucatán Peninsula in 1519. He had 600 men. This was a small force. It was not nearly as many as the Aztecs had. Cortés marched toward Tenochtitlán looking for gold. He was able to get natives who had been conquered by the Aztecs to join him. These natives hated the Aztecs. They wanted to be free from them. Cortés had over 150,000 natives helping him.

Cortés and his army arrived in Tenochtitlán. At first, the Aztecs were cautious, but they welcomed them. The Aztec emperor was **Montezuma II**. He gave them gold and other valuable gifts. Cortés took Montezuma hostage anyway. Montezuma was killed. This was supposedly done by the Aztecs during an attack. The Spanish then attacked Tenochtitlán. Cortés' huge army had gunpowder, armor, and horses. It was too much for the Aztecs. However, they kept resisting. Then Tenochtitlán became infected with smallpox. The **epidemic** wiped out half of the city. Cortés seized Tenochtitlán in 1521.

Within five years, Cortés had taken over all of the Aztec territories. The Aztec civilization was over. The Spanish destroyed much of Tenochtitlán. They then put up many new buildings. They changed the name of Tenochtitlán to Mexico City. Spanish rule soon spread throughout the land.



The Incas

The Aztecs and other groups were thriving in Mesoamerica. In South America, a unique civilization was developing in the Andes Mountains. It was the largest civilization during this period. Its population was about twice that of England. This was the **Inca civilization**. It lasted from about A.D. 1400 to 1532.



Incan Temple of the Sun in Ingapirca, Ecuador

Origins of the Incas

The origins of the Inca civilization are not clear. The Incas had no written language. What we know about their history is based on what the Incas told the Spanish conquistadors. Some of this may have been a mixture of fantasy and legend. It is likely that the Inca civilization began in about 1100. A small tribe settled in the Cuzco Valley in the Andes Mountains of South America. They spoke a language called **Quechua**. In their language, the word *Inca* was what they called their rulers. Today, **Inca** refers to their civilization. For many years, the Incan culture was similar to other cultures in the area. They had a strong state. The city of **Cuzco** was its capital. However, in the late 1300s, the Incan Empire began to expand from the Cuzco region of the Andes Mountains. Their leader at this time was Pachacuti.



Incan metalwork

Expanding the Empire

Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui was a great ruler and military leader. He reorganized the government and rebuilt the capital. He also began to attack and defeat nearby tribes. The battles were brutal. The enemies were crushed. Some tribes realized they were not strong enough to defeat the Incas. They joined them and fought on their side. Eventually, the Incan army was so large that most tribes offered little resistance. As the empire grew, the Incas built roads and established military posts. This helped them control their newly gained territory.

After about ten years, Pachacuti's son took over the army. His name was Topa Inca Yupanqui. He continued to make the Incan Empire larger. With Topa Yupanqui as the leader, the Incan Empire grew along the western coast of South America. It even reached into the rain forests. The Incas forced those they defeated to accept the Incan culture. They had to learn the Quechua language. They had to worship the Incan gods. They were subject to the Incan laws. The Incas supplied teachers to instruct the conquered people in Incan culture. They taught them such things as how to grow crops and how to build villages the Inca way. If they did not comply,

INCA EMPIRE AT A GLANCE

WHERE: The Andes Mountains of South America

WHEN: A.D. 1100–1532

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Created beautiful art
- Developed a method of counting and record keeping by using a process of tying knots in strings
- Great advances in medicine
- Built a large network of stone roads
- Expert builders who cut stones by hand and built structures without mortar

the Incas made them slaves or sent them somewhere else to live. Those who had to leave gave up their land. The Incas gave that land to those who accepted the Incan culture.

Ruling the Empire

The Incas did not directly rule the conquered tribes. They would let local rulers retain their positions. They needed to be loyal to the Incas and fight on their side. Each tribe was independent. It was ruled by a council of elders. The tribe was loyal to the ruler of the empire. This ruler was called the “Inca.” They believed he was descended from the sun god. The conquered tribe became an Incan tribe. However, they still had local control. The Incan Empire was more like a group of tribes that shared the same culture.

Incan Medicine

The Incas were known for their achievements in the field of medicine. The Incas had a primitive view of disease. However, their medical treatments were effective. They believed that sickness was either a punishment from the gods or the result of evil magic. When someone was sick, the first treatment was to make a sacrifice to please the gods. They also used amulets, spells, and chants to rid the patient of evil. This often worked. We know today that it is important for a patient to believe in his doctor and his treatment. This helps in a person’s recovery.

The Incas also used herbs to treat many diseases. These included diseases like dysentery and ulcers. The Incas used **quinine** to cure fever. It is used today to treat malaria and heart irregularities.

The Incas also performed many medical feats that were remarkable for their time. Surgeon-priests were able to perform brain surgery. They also amputated limbs. Before the surgery, the surgeons would have patients chew coca leaves. This would dull the pain. **Coca** is a shrub native to South America. After the surgery, the surgeon would burn or cauterize the wound. This deadened the nerves and prevented infection. Then they would bite off the heads of large ants. They used the jaws of the ants to clamp the wound shut. Surgeon-priests also performed blood transfusions. This was hundreds of years before scientists in other parts of the world did so. Many Incas shared the same blood group. These transfusions were usually successful.

The Spanish Arrive

In the early part of the 16th century (1500s), Spaniards started exploring the Americas. The Incan Empire was at its height. **Francisco Pizarro** was a wealthy Spaniard living in Panama. He knew how Hernando Cortés had conquered the Aztecs in 1521. Pizarro also wanted to gain more wealth and fame. He had heard of a rich empire that existed on the coast of South America. King Charles V of Spain made Pizarro the governor of Peru. Pizarro took about 200 soldiers into the Andes Mountains. He was searching for this wealthy civilization. He found the Incan Empire in turmoil. Over 250,000 Incas had died of smallpox. This disease had not been in their land before Europeans had arrived. There had also been a civil war between two brothers. Huascar and Atahualpa had fought to become the ruler of the Incan Empire. Atahualpa had won, but the empire had been weakened.

In 1532, Pizarro marched into the Incan city called Cajamarca. He met with **Atahualpa**, the new Incan leader. There were few Spanish and many Incas. Atahualpa felt he had nothing to fear. When he arrived, however, Pizarro's men attacked and killed the Incas. This was easy to do. The Incas were unarmed. Pizarro had cannons, muskets, steel swords and spears, and soldiers on horseback. They took Atahualpa as a hostage. The Spaniards then looted the Incan camp.

The End of the Incan Empire

Atahualpa offered to buy his freedom. He would give the Spaniards a room full of gold. Pizarro agreed. However, after the ransom arrived, Pizarro broke his promise. He put the Incan ruler on trial. Atahualpa was charged with killing his brother, worshipping idols, and having several wives. Atahualpa was found guilty. He was executed. Without a leader, the Incas were unable to organize well enough to defend themselves. Pizarro was eventually able to conquer the Incas.



Atahualpa paid a huge ransom, but the Spanish executed him anyway.