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Ancient Egypt

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology

Ancient Egypt was a civilization in eastern North Africa concentrated along the middle to lower reaches of the Nile River in what is now the modern nation of Egypt. The civilization began around 3150 BC with the political unification of Upper and Lower Egypt under the first pharaoh, and it developed over the next three millennia. Its history occurred in a series of stable periods, known as *kingdoms*, separated by periods of relative instability known as Intermediate Periods. After the end of the last kingdom, known as the New Kingdom, the civilization of ancient Egypt entered a period of slow, steady decline, during which Egypt was conquered by a succession of foreign powers. The rule of the pharaohs officially ended in 31 BC when the early Roman Empire conquered Egypt and made it a province.

The pyramids are among the most recognizable symbols of the civilization of ancient Egypt.

The civilization of ancient Egypt thrived from its adaptation to the conditions of the Nile River Valley. Controlled irrigation of the fertile valley produced surplus crops, which fueled social development and culture. With resources to spare, the administration sponsored mineral exploitation of the valley and surrounding desert regions, the early development of an independent writing system, the organization of collective construction and agricultural projects, trade with surrounding regions, and a military that defeated foreign enemies and asserted Egyptian dominance. Motivating and organizing these activities was a bureaucracy of elite scribes, religious leaders, and administrators under the control of a divine pharaoh who ensured the cooperation and unity of the Egyptian people through an elaborate system of religious beliefs.

The many achievements of the ancient Egyptians included a system of mathematics, quarrying, surveying and construction techniques that facilitated the building of monumental pyramids, temples, obelisks, faience and glass technology, a practical and effective system of medicine, new forms of literature, irrigation systems and agricultural production techniques, and the earliest known peace treaty. Egypt left a lasting legacy: art and architecture were copied and antiquities paraded around the world, and monumental ruins have inspired the imaginations of tourists and writers for centuries. A newfound respect for antiquities and excavations in the early modern period led to the scientific investigation of Egyptian civilization and a greater appreciation of its cultural legacy for Egypt and the world.

History

By the late Paleolithic period, the arid climate of northern Africa became increasingly hot and dry, forcing the populations of the area to concentrate along the Nile valley, and since nomadic hunter-gatherers began living in the region during the Pleistocene some 1.8 million years ago, the Nile has been the lifeline of Egypt. The fertile floodplain of the Nile gave humans the opportunity to develop a settled agricultural economy and a more sophisticated, centralized society that became a cornerstone in the history of human civilization.

Map of ancient Egypt, showing major cities and sites of the Dynastic period (c. 3150 BC to 30 BC)

History of Ancient Egypt

Predynastic Egypt
Protodynastic Period
Early Dynastic Period
Old Kingdom
First Intermediate Period
Middle Kingdom

A typical Naqada II jar decorated with gazelles. (Predynastic Period)

Predynastic Period

Second Intermediate Period
New Kingdom
Third Intermediate Period
First Persian Period
Late Period
Second Persian Period
Ptolemaic Dynasty

By about 5500 BC, small tribes living in the Nile valley had developed into a series of unique cultures demonstrating firm control of agriculture and animal husbandry. The earliest were established in Lower Egypt at el-Omari, Merimda, and in the Faiyum. At the intersection of routes from the Sahara, the Nile valley, and the Near East, the Faiyum Neolithic culture displayed characteristics of each and was noted for advanced stone tools which shaped the prehistoric lithic industry in Egypt. Merimda was one of the largest northern communities, and was unique for its sophisticated forms of vases and pottery ring-stands and ladles, and the stone maceheads that became popular during the Old Kingdom.

The earliest cultures in southern Egypt, the Badari, were established a few centuries after their northern counterparts. Contemporaneous with the Maadi, Buto and Heliopolitan cultures to the north, the Badari culture was known for its high quality ceramics, stone tools, and its use of copper. Badarian burials, simple pit graves with signs of social stratification, suggest that the culture was coming under the control of more powerful leaders. In the north, Maadian pottery was occasionally decorated with birds and *serekhs* bearing the first Horus names, a sign of increasing cultural sophistication. Maadi was also the main source of basalt vessels, whose distribution becomes more widespread in the south after northern Egypt falls under the control of the Upper Egyptian rulers.

In the south, the Naqada culture gradually developed into a civilization along the Nile by about 4000 BC. It had power centers at Nekhen and Abydos and it expanded its control of Egypt northwards. The people of Naqada manufactured painted pottery, high quality decorative stone vases, cosmetic palettes, and jewelry made of gold, lapis, and ivory. They also engaged in trade with Nubia, the oases of the western desert, and the Levant. Naqada developed a ceramic glaze known as faience, which was used well into the Roman Period to decorate cups, amulets, and figurines. During the last phase of the predynastic, the Naqada culture began using written symbols that evolved into a full system of hieroglyphs for writing the Egyptian language.

Early Dynastic Period

The ancient Egyptians chose to begin their official history with a king named "Meni" (or Menes in Greek) who they believed had united the two kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt. The transition to a unified state actually happened more gradually than the ancient Egyptian writers would have us believe, and there is no contemporary record of Menes. Scholars now believe, however, that the mythical Menes may have actually been the pharaoh Narmer, who is depicted wearing royal regalia on the ceremonial Narmer Palette in a symbolic act of unification. The third century BC Egyptian priest Manetho grouped the long line of pharaohs following Menes into 30 dynasties, a system still in use today.

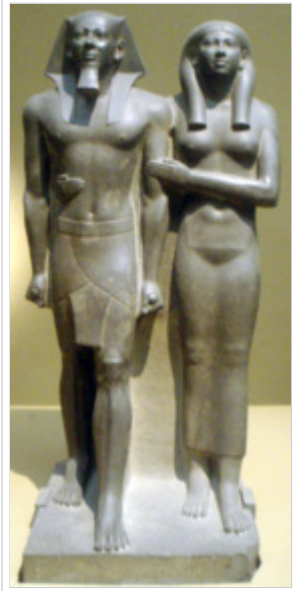
The Narmer Palette depicts the unification of the Two Lands.

In the Early Dynastic Period about 3150 BC, the first pharaohs solidified their control over lower Egypt by establishing a capital at Memphis, from which they could control the labor force and agriculture of the fertile delta region as well as the lucrative and critical trade routes to the Levant. The increasing power and wealth of the pharaohs during the early dynastic period was reflected in their elaborate mastaba tombs and mortuary cult structures at Abydos, which were used to celebrate the

deified pharaoh after his death. The strong institution of kingship developed by the pharaohs served to legitimize state control over the land, labor, and resources that were essential to the survival and growth of ancient Egyptian civilization.

Old Kingdom

Stunning advances in architecture, art, and technology were made during the Old Kingdom, fueled by the increased agricultural productivity made possible by a well developed central administration. Under the direction of the vizier, state officials collected taxes, coordinated irrigation projects to improve crop yield, drafted peasants to work on construction projects, and established a justice system to maintain peace and order. With the surplus resources made available by a productive and stable economy, the state was able to sponsor construction of colossal monuments and to commission exceptional works of art from the royal workshops. The pyramids built by Djoser, Khufu, and their descendants are the most memorable symbols of ancient Egyptian civilization, and power of the pharaohs that controlled it.



Menkaura and his consort Queen Khamerernebty II

Along with the rising importance of a central administration arose a new class of educated scribes and officials who were granted estates by the pharaoh in payment for their services. Pharaohs also made land grants to their mortuary cults and local temples to ensure that these institutions would have the necessary resources to worship the pharaoh after his death. By the end of the Old Kingdom, five centuries of these feudal practices had slowly eroded the economic power of the pharaoh, who could no longer afford to support a large centralized administration. As the power of the pharaoh diminished, regional governors called nomarchs began to challenge the supremacy of the pharaoh. This, coupled with severe droughts between 2200 and 2150 BC, ultimately caused the country to enter a 140-year period of famine and strife known as the First Intermediate Period.

Middle Kingdom

The pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom restored the country's prosperity and stability, thereby stimulating a resurgence of art, literature, and monumental building projects. Mentuhotep II and his 11th Dynasty successors ruled from Thebes, but the vizier Amenemhet I, upon assuming kingship at the beginning of the 12th Dynasty around 1985 BC, shifted the nation's capital to the city of Itjtawy located in Faiyum. From Itjtawy, the pharaohs of the 12th Dynasty undertook a far-sighted land reclamation and irrigation scheme to increase agricultural output in the region. Moreover, the military reconquered territory in Nubia rich in quarries and gold mines, while laborers built a defensive structure in the Eastern Delta, called the " Walls-of-the-Ruler", to defend against foreign attack.

Mentuhotep II, the founder of the Middle Kingdom

Having secured military and political security and vast agricultural and mineral wealth, the nation's population, arts, and religion flourished. In contrast to elitist Old Kingdom attitudes towards the gods, the Middle Kingdom experienced an increase in expressions of personal piety and what could be called a democratization of the afterlife, in which all people possessed a soul and could be welcomed into the company of the gods after death. Middle Kingdom literature featured sophisticated themes and characters written in a confident, eloquent style, and the relief and portrait sculpture of the period captured subtle, individual details that reached new heights of technical perfection.

The last great ruler of the Middle Kingdom, Amenemhat III, allowed Asiatic settlers into the delta region to provide a sufficient labor force for his especially active mining and building campaigns. These ambitious building and mining activities, however, combined with inadequate Nile floods later in his reign, strained the economy and precipitated the slow decline into the Second Intermediate Period during the later 13th and 14th dynasties. During this decline, the foreign Asiatic settlers began to seize control of the delta region, eventually coming to power in Egypt as the Hyksos.

New Kingdom

The New Kingdom pharaohs established a period of unprecedented prosperity by securing their borders and strengthening diplomatic ties with their neighbors. Military campaigns waged under Tuthmosis I and his grandson Tuthmosis III extended the influence of the pharaohs into Syria and Nubia, cementing loyalties and opening access to critical imports such as bronze and wood. The New Kingdom pharaohs began a large-scale building campaign to promote the god Amun, whose growing cult was based in Karnak. They also constructed monuments to glorify their own achievements, both real and imagined. The female pharaoh Hatshepsut used such propaganda to legitimize her claim to the throne. Her successful reign was marked by trading expeditions to Punt, an elegant mortuary temple, a colossal pair of obelisks and a chapel at Karnak. Despite her achievements, Hatshepsut's nephew-stepson Tuthmosis III sought to erase her legacy near the end of his reign, possibly in retaliation for usurping his throne.

Around 1350 BC, the stability of the New Kingdom was threatened when Amenhotep IV unexpectedly ascended the throne and instituted a series of radical and chaotic reforms. Changing his name to Akhenaten, he touted the previously obscure sun god Aten as the supreme deity, suppressed the worship of other deities, and attacked the power of the priestly establishment. Moving the capital to the new city of Akhetaten (modern-day Amarna), Akhenaten turned a deaf ear to foreign affairs and absorbed himself in his new religion and artistic style. After his death, the cult of the Aten was quickly abandoned, and the subsequent pharaohs Tutankhamun, Aye, and Horemheb quietly erased all mention of Akhenaten's heresy, now known as the Amarna Period.

Four colossal statues of Ramesses II flank the entrance of his temple Abu Simbel.

The 18th Dynasty ended when its last three kings—Tutankhamun, Aye, and Horemheb—all died without an heir. Ramesses II, also known as Ramesses the Great, ascended the throne around 1279 BC at the age of 18 and built more temples, erected more statues and obelisks, and sired more children than any other pharaoh in history. A bold military leader, Ramesses II led his army against the Hittites in the Battle of Kadesh and, after fighting to a stalemate, finally agreed to the first recorded peace treaty around 1258 BC. Egypt's wealth, however, made it a tempting target for invasion, particularly by the Libyans and the Sea Peoples. Initially, the military was able to repel these invasions, but Egypt eventually lost control of Syria and Palestine. The impact of external threats was exacerbated by internal problems such as corruption, tomb robbery and civil unrest. The high priests at the temple of Amun in Thebes accumulated vast tracts of land and wealth, and their growing power splintered the country during the Third Intermediate Period.

Around 730 BC Libyans from the west fractured the political unity of the country.

Late Period

With no permanent plans for conquest, the Assyrians left control of Egypt to a series of vassals who became known as the Saite kings of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty. By 653 BC, the Saite king Psamtik I was able to oust the Assyrians with the help of Greek mercenaries, who were recruited to form Egypt's first navy. Greek influence expanded greatly as the city of Naukratis became the home of Greeks in the delta. The Saite kings based in the new capital of Sais witnessed a brief but spirited resurgence in the economy and culture, but in 525 BC, the powerful Persians, led by Cambyses II, began their conquest of Egypt, eventually capturing the pharaoh Psamtik III at the battle of Pelusium. Cambyses II then assumed the formal title of pharaoh, but ruled Egypt from his home of Susa, leaving Egypt under the control of a satrapy. A few successful revolts against the Persians marked the 5th century BC, but Egypt was never able to permanently overthrow the Persians.

Following its annexation by Persia, Egypt was joined with Cyprus and Phoenicia in the sixth satrapy of the Achaemenid Persian Empire. This first period of Persian rule over Egypt, also known as the Twenty-Seventh dynasty, ended in 402 BC, and from 380–343 BC the Thirtieth Dynasty ruled as the last native royal house of dynastic Egypt, which ended with the kingship of Nectanebo II. A brief restoration of Persian rule, sometimes known as the Thirty-First Dynasty, began in 343 BC, but shortly after, in 332 BC, the Persian ruler Mazaces handed Egypt over to Alexander the Great without a fight.

Ptolemaic Dynasty

In 332 BC, Alexander the Great conquered Egypt with little resistance from the Persians and was welcomed by the Egyptians as a deliverer. The administration established by Alexander's successors, the Ptolemies, was based on an Egyptian model and based in the new capital city of Alexandria. The city was to showcase the power and prestige of Greek rule, and became a seat of learning and culture, centered at the famous Library of Alexandria. The Lighthouse of Alexandria lit the way for the many ships, which kept trade flowing through the city, as the Ptolemies made commerce and revenue-generating enterprises, such as papyrus manufacturing, their top priority.

Cleopatra VII adopted the ancient traditions and language of Egypt.

Greek culture did not supplant native Egyptian culture, as the Ptolemies supported time-honored traditions in an effort to secure the loyalty of the populace. They built new temples in Egyptian style, supported traditional cults, and portrayed themselves as pharaohs. Some traditions merged, as Greek and Egyptian gods were syncretized into composite deities, such as Serapis, and classical Greek forms of sculpture influenced traditional Egyptian motifs. Despite their efforts to appease the Egyptians, the Ptolemies were challenged by native rebellion, bitter family rivalries, and the powerful mob of Alexandria which had formed following the death of Ptolemy IV. In addition, as Rome relied more heavily on imports of grain from Egypt, the Romans took great interest in the political situation in the country. Continued Egyptian revolting, ambitious politicians, and powerful Syrian opponents made this situation unstable, leading Rome to send forces to secure the country as a province of its empire.

Roman domination

Egypt became a province of the Roman Empire in 30 BC, following the defeat of Marc Antony and Ptolemaic Queen Cleopatra VII by Octavian (later Emperor Augustus) in the Battle of Actium. The Romans relied heavily on grain shipments from Egypt, and the Roman army, under the control of a prefect appointed by the Emperor, quelled rebellions, strictly enforced the collection of heavy taxes, and prevented attacks by bandits, which had become a notorious problem during the period. Alexandria became an increasingly important centre on the trade route with the orient, as exotic luxuries were in high demand in Rome.

Although the Romans had a more hostile attitude than the Greeks towards the Egyptians, some traditions such as mummification and worship of the traditional gods continued. The art of mummy portraiture flourished, and some of the Roman emperors had themselves depicted as pharaohs, though not to the extent that the Ptolemies had. The former lived outside Egypt and did not perform the ceremonial functions of Egyptian kingship. Local administration became Roman in style and closed to native Egyptians.

From the mid-first century AD, Christianity took root in Alexandria and spread. Incompatible with paganism, Christianity sought to win converts and threatened popular religious traditions. This led to persecution of converts to Christianity, culminating in the great purges of Diocletian starting in 303 AD, but eventually Christianity won out. As a consequence, Egypt's pagan culture was continually in decline. While the native population continued to speak their language, the ability to read hieroglyphic writing slowly disappeared as the role of the Egyptian temple priests and priestesses diminished. The temples themselves were sometimes converted to churches or abandoned to the desert.

Government and economy

Administration and commerce

The pharaoh was the absolute monarch of the country and, at least in theory, wielded complete control of the land and its resources. The king was the supreme military commander and head of the government, who relied on a bureaucracy of officials to manage his affairs. In charge of the administration was his second in command, the vizier, who acted as the king's representative and coordinated land surveys, the treasury, building projects, the legal system, and the archives. At a local level, the country was divided into as many as 42 administrative regions called nomes each governed by a nomarch, who was accountable to the vizier for his jurisdiction. The temples formed the backbone of the economy. Not only were they houses of worship, but were also responsible for collecting and storing the nation's wealth in a system of granaries and treasuries administered by overseers, who redistributed grain and goods.

The pharaoh was usually depicted wearing symbols of royalty and power.

Much of the economy was centrally organized and strictly controlled. Although the ancient Egyptians did not use coinage until the Late period, they did use a type of money-barter system, with standard sacks of grain and the *deben*, a weight of roughly 91 grams (3 oz) of copper or silver, forming a common denominator. Workers were paid in grain; a simple laborer might earn 5½ sacks (200 kg or 400 lb) of grain per month, while a foreman might earn 7½ sacks (250 kg or 550 lb). Prices were fixed across the country and recorded in lists to facilitate trading; for example a shirt cost five copper deben, while a cow cost 140 deben. Grain could be traded for other goods, according to the fixed price list. During the 5th century BC coined money was introduced into Egypt from abroad. At first the coins were used as standardized pieces of precious metal rather than true money, but in the following centuries international traders came to rely on coinage.

Social status

Egyptian society was highly stratified, and social status was expressly displayed. Farmers made up the bulk of the population, but agricultural produce was owned directly by the state, temple, or noble family that owned the land. Farmers were also subject to a labor tax and were required to work on irrigation or construction projects in a corvée system. Artists and craftsmen were of higher status than farmers, but they were also under state control, working in the shops attached to the temples and paid directly from the state treasury. Scribes and officials formed the upper class in ancient Egypt, the so-called "white kilt class" in reference to the bleached linen garments that served as a mark of their rank. The upper class prominently displayed their social status in art and literature. Below the nobility were the priests, physicians, and engineers with specialized training in their field. Slavery was known in ancient Egypt, but the extent and prevalence of its practice are unclear.

The ancient Egyptians viewed men and women, including people from all social classes except slaves, as essentially equal under the law, and even the lowliest peasant was entitled to petition the vizier and his court for redress. Both men and women had the right to own and sell property, make contracts, marry and divorce, receive inheritance, and pursue legal disputes in court. Married couples could own property jointly and protect themselves from divorce by agreeing to marriage contracts, which stipulated the financial obligations of the husband to his wife and children should the marriage end. Compared with their counterparts in ancient Greece, Rome, and even more modern places around the world, ancient Egyptian women had a greater range of personal choices and opportunities for achievement. Women such as Hatshepsut and Cleopatra even became pharaohs, while others wielded power as Divine Wives of Amun. Despite these freedoms, ancient Egyptian women did not take part in official roles in the administration, served only secondary roles in the temples, and were not as likely to

be as educated as men.

Scribes were elite and well educated. They assessed taxes, kept records, and were responsible for administration.

Legal system

The head of the legal system was officially the pharaoh, who was responsible for enacting laws, delivering justice, and maintaining law and order, a concept the ancient Egyptians referred to as Ma'at. Although no legal codes from ancient Egypt survive, court documents show that Egyptian law was based on a common-sense view of right and wrong that emphasized reaching agreements and resolving conflicts rather than strictly adhering to a complicated set of statutes. Local councils of elders, known as *Kenbet* in the New Kingdom, were responsible for ruling in court cases involving small claims and minor disputes. More serious cases involving murder, major land transactions, and tomb robbery were referred to the *Great Kenbet*, over which the vizier or pharaoh presided. Plaintiffs and defendants were expected to represent themselves and were required to swear an oath that they had told the truth. In some cases, the state took on both the role of prosecutor and judge, and it could torture the accused with beatings to obtain a confession and the names of any co-conspirators. Whether the charges were trivial or serious, court scribes documented the complaint, testimony, and verdict of the case for future reference.

Punishment for minor crimes involved either imposition of fines, beatings, facial mutilation, or exile, depending on the severity of the offense. Serious crimes such as murder and tomb robbery were punished by execution, carried out by decapitation, drowning, or impaling the criminal on a stake. Punishment could also be extended to the criminal's family. Beginning in the New Kingdom, oracles played a major role in the legal system, dispensing justice in both civil and criminal cases. The procedure was to ask the god a "yes" or "no" question concerning the right or wrong of an issue. The god, carried by a number of priests, rendered judgment by choosing one or the other, moving forward or backward, or pointing to one of the answers written on a piece of papyrus or an ostracon.

Agriculture

A combination of favorable geographical features contributed to the success of ancient Egyptian culture, the most important of which was the rich fertile soil resulting from annual inundations of the Nile river. The ancient Egyptians were thus able to produce an abundance of food, allowing the population to devote more time and resources to cultural, technological, and artistic pursuits. Land management was crucial in ancient Egypt because taxes were assessed based on the amount of land a person owned.

A tomb relief depicts workers plowing the fields, harvesting the crops, and threshing the grain under the direction of an overseer.

Farming in Egypt was dependent on the cycle of the Nile River. The Egyptians recognized three seasons: *Akhet* (flooding), *Peret* (planting), and *Shemu* (harvesting). The flooding season lasted from June to September, depositing on the river's banks a layer of mineral-rich silt ideal for growing crops. After the floodwaters had receded, the growing season lasted from October to February. Farmers plowed and planted seeds in the fields, which were irrigated with ditches and canals. Egypt received little rainfall, so farmers relied on the Nile to water their crops. From March to May, farmers used sickles to harvest their crops, which were then threshed with a flail to separate the straw from the grain. Winnowing removed the chaff from the grain, and the grain was then ground into flour, brewed to make beer, or stored for later use.

The ancient Egyptians cultivated emmer and barley, and several other cereal grains, all of which were used to make the two main food staples of bread and beer. Flax plants, uprooted before they started flowering, were grown for the fibers of their stems. These fibers were split along their length and spun into thread, which was used to weave sheets of linen and to make clothing. Papyrus growing on the banks of the Nile River was used to make paper. Vegetables and fruits were grown in garden plots, close to habitations and on higher ground, and had to be watered by hand. Vegetables included leeks, garlic, melons, squashes, pulses, lettuce, and other crops, in addition to grapes that were made into wine.

Sennedjem plows his fields with a pair of oxen, used as beasts of burden and a source of food.

Animals

The Egyptians believed that a balanced relationship between people and animals was an essential element of the cosmic order; thus humans, animals and plants were believed to be members of a single whole. Animals, both domesticated and wild, were therefore a critical source of spirituality, companionship, and sustenance to the ancient Egyptians. Cattle were the most important livestock; the administration collected taxes on livestock in regular censuses, and the size of a herd reflected the prestige and importance of the estate or temple that owned them. In addition to cattle, the ancient Egyptians kept sheep, goats, and pigs. Poultry such as ducks, geese, and pigeons were captured in nets and bred on farms, where they were force-fed with dough to fatten them. The Nile provided a plentiful source of fish. Bees were also domesticated from at least the Old Kingdom, and they provided both honey and wax.

The ancient Egyptians used donkeys and oxen as beasts of burden, and they were responsible for plowing the fields and trampling seed into the soil. The slaughter of a fattened ox was also a central part of an offering ritual. Horses were introduced by the Hyksos in the Second Intermediate Period, and the camel, although known from the New Kingdom, was not used as a beast of burden until the Late Period. Dogs, cats and monkeys were common family pets, while more exotic pets imported from the heart of Africa, such as lions, were reserved for royalty. Herodotus observed that the Egyptians were the only people to keep their animals with them in their houses. During the Predynastic and Late periods, the worship of the gods in their animal

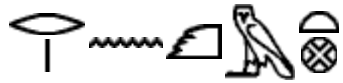
form was extremely popular, such as the cat goddess Bastet and the ibis god Thoth, and these animals were bred in large numbers on farms for the purpose of ritual sacrifice.

Language

Historical development

The Egyptian language is a northern Afro-Asiatic language closely related to Berber and Semitic. It has the longest documented history of any language, having remained in written use from c. 3200 BC to the Middle Ages and as a spoken language for longer. Two major phases of the language are identified: *Earlier Egyptian* comprising Old and Middle Egyptian (Classical Egyptian), and *Later Egyptian*, which includes the Late, Demotic and Coptic stages of the language. While pre-Coptic writing does not convey dialectal differences, it is likely that Egyptian was spoken in several regional dialects centered around Memphis and later Thebes.

r n kmt
'Egyptian language'
in hieroglyphs



The transition from Earlier to Later Egyptian displays a number of innovations, namely a change from synthetic to more analytic patterns that undergo grammaticalization, and the development of different scripts for writing the language. Later Egyptian develops prefixal definite and indefinite articles, which replace the earlier suffix markers of inflectional categories, and undergoes a change from the older VSO word order to SVO. The older Egyptian writing systems, namely the native hieroglyphic, hieratic, and demotic scripts, eventually give way to the more phonetic Coptic alphabet. The last phase of Egyptian, Coptic, continues to be used in the liturgy of the Egyptian Orthodox Church, and traces of it are found in modern Egyptian Arabic.

Sounds and grammar

Egyptian has a phonemic inventory of about 25 consonants similar to those of other Afro-Asiatic languages. These include the characteristic pharyngeal and to a lesser extent emphatic consonants, in addition to voiced and voiceless stops, voiceless fricatives and voiced and voiceless affricates. Three long and three short vowels, which expanded in Later Egyptian to about nine, are distinguished. The basic word in Egyptian, similar to Semitic and Berber, is a triliteral or biliteral root made up of a sequence of consonants and semiconsonants to which affixes are attached to indicate grammatical categories. Finite verbs correspond to the forms of the person markers, yielding a paradigm of 11 in Earlier Egyptian. The triconsonantal skeleton **S-D̲-M** is the semantic core of the word 'hear'; its basic conjugation is *sḏm=f* 'he hears'. In most cases, a non-finite verb heads a clause if the subject is nominal: *sḏm ḥmt* 'the woman hears'.

Adjectives are formed derivationally from a noun through a process that Egyptologists call *nisbation* due to its similarity with that of Arabic. The typical order of constituents is PREDICATE-SUBJECT in sentences with verbal and adjectival predicates, and SUBJECT-PREDICATE in sentences in which the predicate is a noun phrase or an adpositional phrase. Verb arguments can be topicalized at the beginning of sentences if they are long noun phrases, and are followed by a coreferential pronoun. Negation in Middle Egyptian is usually expressed through the addition of the particle *n* before a verb form or a noun phrase, or *nn* to negate a clause with an adverbial or adjectival predicate. Stress falls on the ultimate or penultimate syllable, which can be open (CV) or closed (CVC).

Writing

Hieroglyphic writing dates to c. 3200 BC, and is composed of some 500 symbols. A hieroglyph can represent a word, a phoneme, or a silent determinative; and the same symbol can serve different purposes in different contexts. Hieroglyphs were a formal script, used on stone monuments and in tombs, that could be as detailed as individual works of art. In day-to-day writing, scribes used a cursive form of writing, called hieratic, which was quicker and easier. While formal hieroglyphs may be read in rows or columns in either direction (though typically written from right to left), hieratic was always written from right to left, usually in horizontal rows. A new form of writing, Demotic, became the prevalent writing style, and it is this form of writing—along with formal hieroglyphs—that accompany the Greek text on the Rosetta Stone.

The Rosetta stone enabled linguists to begin the process of hieroglyph decipherment.

Around the 1st century AD, the native demotic script gave way to the Coptic alphabet, a modified Greek alphabet with the addition of demotic graphemes. Although formal hieroglyphs were used in a ceremonial role until the 4th century AD, towards the end only a small handful of priests could still read them. As the traditional religious establishments were disbanded, knowledge of hieroglyphic writing was mostly lost. Attempts to decipher them date to the Byzantine and Islamic periods in Egypt, but only in 1822, after the discovery of the Rosetta stone and years of research by Thomas Young and Jean-François Champollion, were hieroglyphs almost fully deciphered.

The Edwin Smith surgical papyrus describes anatomy and medical treatments and is written in hieratic.

Literature

Writing first appeared in association with kingship on labels and tags for items found in royal tombs. It was primarily an occupation of the scribes, who worked out of the *Per Ankh* institution or the House of Life. The latter comprised offices, libraries (called House of Books), laboratories and observatories. Some of the best-known pieces of ancient Egyptian literature, such as the Pyramid and Coffin Texts, were written in Classical Egyptian, which continued to be the language of writing until about 1300 BC. Later Egyptian was spoken from the New Kingdom onward and is represented in Ramesside administrative documents, love poetry and tales, as well as in Demotic and Coptic texts. During this period, the tradition of writing had evolved into the tomb autobiography, such as those of Harkhuf and Weni. The genre known as *Sebayt* (*Instructions*) was developed to communicate teachings and guidance from famous nobles; the Ipuwer papyrus, a poem of lamentations describing natural disasters and social upheaval, is a famous example.

The Story of Sinuhe, written in Middle Egyptian, might be the classic of Egyptian literature. Also written at this time was the Westcar Papyrus, a set of stories told to Khufu by his sons relating the marvels performed by priests. Towards the end of the New Kingdom, the vernacular language was more often employed to write popular pieces like the Story of Wenamun and the Instructions of Ani. The former tells the story of a noble who is robbed on his way to buy cedar from Lebanon and of his struggle to return to Egypt. From about 700 BC, narrative stories and instructions, such as the popular Instructions of Onchsheshonqy, as well as personal and business documents were written in the demotic script and phase of Egyptian. Many stories written in demotic during the Graeco-Roman period were set in previous historical eras, when Egypt was an independent nation ruled by great pharaohs such as Ramesses II.

Culture

Daily life

The ancient Egyptians maintained a rich cultural heritage complete with feasts and festivals accompanied by music and dance.

Most ancient Egyptians were farmers tied to the land. Their dwellings were restricted to immediate family members, and were constructed of mud-brick designed to remain cool in the heat of the day. Each home had a kitchen with an open roof, which contained a grindstone for milling flour and a small oven for baking bread. Walls were painted white and could be covered with dyed linen wall hangings. Floors were covered with reed mats, while wooden stools, beds raised from the floor and individual tables comprised the furniture.

The ancient Egyptians placed a great value on hygiene and appearance. Most bathed in the Nile and used a pasty soap made from animal fat and chalk. Men shaved their entire bodies for cleanliness, and aromatic perfumes and ointments covered bad odours and soothed skin. Clothing was made from simple linen sheets that were bleached white, and both men and women of the upper classes wore wigs, jewelry, and cosmetics. Children went without clothing until maturity, at about age 12, and at this age males were circumcised and had their heads shaved. Mothers were responsible for taking care of the children, while the father provided the family's income.

The staple diet consisted of bread and beer, supplemented with vegetables such as onions and garlic, and fruit such as dates and figs. Wine and meat were enjoyed by all on feast days while the upper classes indulged on a more regular basis. Fish, meat, and fowl could be salted or dried, and could be cooked in stews or roasted on a grill. Music and dance were popular entertainments for those who could afford them. Early instruments included flutes and harps, while instruments similar to trumpets, oboes, and pipes developed later and became popular. In the New Kingdom, the Egyptians played on bells, cymbals, tambourines, and drums and imported lutes and lyres from Asia. The sistrum was a rattle-like musical instrument that was especially important in religious ceremonies.

The ancient Egyptians enjoyed a variety of leisure activities, including games and music. Senet, a board game where pieces moved according to random chance, was particularly popular from the earliest times; another similar game was mehen, which had a circular gaming board. Juggling and ball games were popular with children, and wrestling is also documented in a tomb at Beni Hasan. The wealthy members of ancient Egyptian society enjoyed hunting and boating as well.

Architecture

Karnak temple's hypostyle halls are constructed with rows of thick columns supporting the roof beams.

The architecture of ancient Egypt includes some of the most famous structures in the world: the Great Pyramids of Giza and the temples at Thebes. Building projects were organized and funded by the state for religious and commemorative purposes, but also to reinforce the power of the pharaoh. The ancient Egyptians were skilled builders; using simple but effective tools and sighting instruments, architects could build large stone structures with accuracy and precision.

The domestic dwellings of elite and ordinary Egyptians alike were constructed from perishable materials such as mud bricks and wood, and have not survived. Peasants lived in simple homes, while the palaces of the elite were more elaborate structures. A few surviving New Kingdom palaces, such as those in Malkata and Amarna, show richly decorated walls and floors with scenes of people, birds, water pools, deities and geometric designs. Important structures such as temples and tombs that were intended to last forever were constructed of stone instead of bricks. The architectural elements used in the world's first large-scale stone building, Djoser's mortuary complex, include post and lintel supports in the papyrus and lotus motif.

The earliest preserved ancient Egyptian temples, such as those at Giza, consist of single, enclosed halls with roof slabs supported by columns. In the New Kingdom, architects added the pylon, the open courtyard, and the enclosed hypostyle hall to the front of the temple's sanctuary, a style that was standard until the Graeco-Roman period. The earliest and most popular tomb architecture in the Old Kingdom was the mastaba, a flat-roofed rectangular structure of mudbrick or stone built over an underground burial chamber. The step pyramid of Djoser is a series of stone mastabas stacked on top of each other. Pyramids were built during the Old and Middle Kingdoms, but later rulers abandoned them in favour of less conspicuous rock-cut tombs.

Art

The ancient Egyptians produced art to serve functional purposes. For over 3500 years, artists adhered to artistic forms and iconography that were developed during the Old Kingdom, following a strict set of principles that resisted foreign influence and internal change. These artistic standards—simple lines, shapes, and flat areas of colour combined with the characteristic flat projection of figures with no indication of spatial depth—created a sense order and balance within a composition. Images and text were intimately interwoven on tomb and temple walls, coffins, stelae, and even statues. The Narmer Palette, for example, displays figures which may also be read as hieroglyphs. Because of the rigid rules that governed its highly stylized and symbolic appearance, ancient Egyptian art served its political and religious purposes with precision and clarity.

The Bust of Nefertiti, by the sculptor Thutmose, is one of the most famous masterpieces of ancient Egyptian art.

Ancient Egyptian artisans used stone to carve statues and fine reliefs, but used wood as a cheap and easily carved substitute. Paints were obtained from minerals such as iron ores (red and yellow ochres), copper ores (blue and green), soot or charcoal (black), and limestone (white). Paints could be mixed with gum arabic as a binder and pressed into cakes, which could be moistened with water when needed. Pharaohs used reliefs to record victories in battle, royal decrees, and religious scenes. Common citizens had access to pieces of funerary art, such as shabti statues and books of the dead, which they believed would protect them in the afterlife. During the Middle Kingdom, wooden or clay models depicting scenes from everyday life became popular additions to the tomb. In an attempt to duplicate the activities of the living in the afterlife, these models show laborers, houses, boats, and even military formations that are scale representations of the ideal ancient Egyptian afterlife.

Despite the homogeneity of ancient Egyptian art, the styles of particular times and places sometimes reflected changing cultural or political attitudes. After the invasion of the Hyksos in the Second Intermediate Period, Minoan-style frescoes were found in Avaris. The most striking example of a politically driven change in artistic forms comes from the Amarna period, where figures were radically altered to conform to Akhenaten's revolutionary religious ideas. This style, known as Amarna art, was quickly and thoroughly erased after Akhenaten's death and replaced by the traditional forms.

Religious beliefs

Beliefs in the divine and in the afterlife were ingrained in ancient Egyptian civilization from its inception; pharaonic rule was based on the divine right of kings. The Egyptian pantheon was populated by gods who had supernatural powers and were called on for help or protection. However, the gods were not always viewed as benevolent, and Egyptians believed they had to be appeased with offerings and prayers. The structure of this pantheon changed continually as new deities were promoted in the hierarchy, but priests made no effort to organize the diverse and sometimes conflicting creation myths and stories into a coherent system.

The book of the dead was a guide to the deceased's journey in the afterlife.

The Ka statue provided a physical place for the Ka to manifest.

Gods were worshiped in cult temples administered by priests acting on the king's behalf. At the centre of the temple was the cult statue in a shrine. Temples were not places of public worship or congregation, and only on select feast days and celebrations was a shrine carrying the statue of the god brought out for public worship. Normally, the god's domain was sealed off from the outside world and was only accessible to temple officials. Common citizens could worship private statues in their homes, and amulets offered protection against the forces of chaos. After the New Kingdom, the pharaoh's role as a spiritual intermediary was de-emphasized as religious customs shifted to direct worship of the gods. As a result, priests developed a system of oracles to communicate the will of the gods directly to the people. An oracle could be a statue of a god that could be asked a yes or no question, to which it would "respond" by hidden manipulations of a priest, who could also pose questions behind closed doors. Oracles became very popular for appealing legal verdicts or for justifying military actions and political decisions.

The Egyptians believed that every human being was composed of physical and spiritual parts or *aspects*. In addition to the body, each person had a *šwt* (shadow), a *ba* (personality or soul), a *ka* (life-force), and a *name*. The heart, rather than the brain, was considered the seat of thoughts and emotions. After death, the spiritual aspects were released from the body and could move at will, but they required the physical remains (or a substitute, such as a statue) as a permanent home. The ultimate goal of the deceased was to rejoin his *ka* and *ba* and become one of the "blessed dead", living on as an *akh*, or "effective one". In order for this to happen, the deceased had to be judged worthy in a trial, in which the heart was weighed against a "feather of truth". If deemed worthy, the deceased could continue their existence on earth in spiritual form.

Burial customs

The ancient Egyptians maintained an elaborate set of burial customs that they believed were necessary to ensure immortality after death. These customs involved preserving the body by mummification, performing burial ceremonies, and interring, along with the body, goods to be used by the deceased in the afterlife. Before the Old Kingdom, bodies buried in desert pits were naturally preserved by desiccation. The arid, desert conditions continued to be a boon throughout the history of ancient Egypt for the burials of the poor, who could not afford the elaborate burial preparations available to the elite. Wealthier Egyptians began to bury their dead in stone tombs and, as a result, they made use of artificial mummification, which involved removing the internal organs, wrapping the body in linen, and burying it in a rectangular stone sarcophagus or wooden coffin. Beginning in the Fourth Dynasty, some parts were preserved separately in canopic jars.

Pharaohs' tombs were provided with vast quantities of wealth, such as this golden mask from the mummy of Tutankhamun.

Anubis was the ancient Egyptian god associated with mummification and burial rituals; here, he attends to a mummy.

By the New Kingdom, the ancient Egyptians had perfected the art of mummification; the best technique took 70 days and involved removing the internal organs, removing the brain through the nose, and desiccating the body in a mixture of salts called natron. The body was then wrapped in linen with protective amulets inserted between layers and placed in a decorated anthropoid coffin. Mummies of the Late Period were also placed in painted cartonnage mummy cases. Actual preservation practices declined during the Ptolemaic and Roman eras, while greater emphasis was placed on the outer appearance of the mummy, which was decorated.

Wealthy Egyptians were buried with larger quantities of luxury items, but all burials, regardless of social status, included goods for the deceased. Beginning in the New Kingdom, books of the dead were included in the grave, along with shabti statues that were believed to perform manual labor for them in the afterlife. Rituals in which the deceased was magically re-animated accompanied burials. After burial, living relatives were expected to occasionally bring food to the tomb and recite prayers on behalf of the deceased.

Foreign relations

Trade

The ancient Egyptians engaged in trade with their foreign neighbors to obtain rare, exotic goods not found in Egypt. In the Predynastic Period, they established trade with Nubia to obtain gold and incense. They also established trade with Palestine, as evidenced by Palestinian-style oil jugs found in the burials of the First Dynasty pharaohs. By the Second Dynasty, the ancient Egyptians had established trade with Byblos, a critical source of quality timber not found in Egypt. In the Fifth Dynasty, trade was established with the Land of Punt, which provided gold, aromatic resins, ebony, ivory, and wild animals such as monkeys and baboons.

Egypt relied on trade with Anatolia for essential quantities of tin as well as supplementary supplies of copper, both metals being necessary for the manufacture of bronze. The ancient Egyptians prized the blue stone lapis lazuli, which had to be imported from far-away Afghanistan. Egypt's Mediterranean trade partners also included Greece and Crete, which provided, among other goods, supplies of olive oil. In exchange for its luxury imports and raw materials, Egypt mainly exported grain, gold, linen, and papyrus, in addition to other finished goods including glass and stone objects.

Military

The ancient Egyptian military was responsible for defending Egypt against foreign invasion, and for maintaining Egypt's domination in the ancient Near East. The military protected mining expeditions to the Sinai during the Old Kingdom and fought civil wars during the First and Second Intermediate Periods. The military was responsible for maintaining fortifications along important trade routes, such as those found at the city of Buhen on the way to Nubia. Forts also were constructed to serve as military bases, such as the fortress at Sile, which was a base of operations for expeditions to the Levant. In the New Kingdom, a series of pharaohs used the standing Egyptian army to attack and conquer Kush and parts of the Levant.

Wooden figures of Egyptian soldiers, from the tomb of Mesehti, 11th Dynasty

Typical military equipment included bows and arrows, spears, and round-topped shields made by stretching animal skin over a wooden frame. In the New Kingdom, the military began using chariots that had earlier been introduced by the Hyksos invaders. Weapons and armor continued to improve after the adoption of bronze: shields were now made from solid wood with a bronze buckle, spears were tipped with a bronze point, and the Khopesh was adopted from Asiatic soldiers. The pharaoh was usually depicted in art and literature riding at the head of the army, and there is evidence that at least a few pharaohs, such as Seqenenre Tao II and his sons, did do so. Soldiers were recruited from the general population, but during, and especially after, the New Kingdom, mercenaries from Nubia, Kush, and Libya were hired to fight for Egypt.

Technology, medicine, and mathematics

In technology, medicine and mathematics, ancient Egypt achieved a relatively high standard of productivity and sophistication. Traditional empiricism, as evidenced by the Edwin Smith and Ebers papyri (c. 1600 BC), is first credited to Egypt, and the roots of the scientific method can also be traced back to the ancient Egyptians. The Egyptians created their own alphabet and decimal system.

Glassmaking was a highly developed art.

Faience and glass

Even before the Old Kingdom, the ancient Egyptians had developed a glassy material known as faience, which they treated as a type of artificial semi-precious stone. Faience is a non-clay ceramic made of silica, small amounts of lime and soda, and a colorant, typically copper. The material was used to make beads, tiles, figurines, and small wares. Several methods can be used to create faience, but typically production involved application of the powdered materials in the form of a paste over a clay core, which was then fired. By a related technique, the ancient Egyptians produced a pigment known as Egyptian Blue, also called blue frit, which is produced by fusing (or sintering) silica, copper, lime, and an alkali such as natron. The product can be ground up and used as a pigment. The ancient Egyptians could fabricate a wide variety of objects from glass with great skill, but it is not clear whether they developed the process independently. It is also unclear whether they made their own raw glass or merely imported pre-made ingots, which they melted and finished. However, they did have technical expertise in making objects, as well as adding trace elements to control the colour of the finished glass. A range of colors could be produced, including yellow, red, green, blue, purple, and white, and the glass could be made either transparent or opaque.

Medicine

This wood and leather prosthetic toe was used by an amputee to facilitate walking.

The medical problems of the ancient Egyptians stemmed directly from their environment. Living and working close to the Nile brought hazards from malaria and debilitating schistosomiasis parasites, which caused liver and intestinal damage. Dangerous wildlife such as crocodiles and hippos were also a common threat. The life-long labors of farming and building put stress on the spine and joints, and traumatic injuries from construction and warfare all took a significant toll on the body. The grit and sand from stone-ground flour abraded teeth, leaving them susceptible to abscesses (though caries were rare). The diets of the wealthy were rich in sugars, which promoted periodontal disease. Despite the flattering physiques portrayed on tomb walls, the overweight mummies of many of the upper class show the effects of a life of overindulgence. Adult life expectancy was about 35 for men and 30 for women, but reaching adulthood was difficult as about one-third of the population died in infancy.

Ancient Egyptian physicians were renowned in the ancient Near East for their healing skills, and some, like Imhotep, remained famous long after their deaths. Herodotus remarked that there was a high degree of specialization among Egyptian physicians, with some treating only the head or the stomach, while others were eye-doctors and dentists. Training of physicians took place at the *Per Ankh* or "House of Life" institution, most notably those headquartered in Per-Bastet during the New Kingdom and at Abydos and Saïs in the Late period. Medical papyri show empirical knowledge of anatomy, injuries, and practical treatments. Wounds were treated by bandaging with raw meat, white linen, sutures, nets, pads and swabs soaked with honey to prevent infection, while opium was used to relieve pain. Garlic and onions were used regularly to promote good health and were thought to relieve asthma symptoms. Ancient Egyptian surgeons stitched wounds, set broken bones, and amputated diseased limbs, but they recognized that some injuries were so serious that they could only make the patient comfortable until he died.

Mathematics

The earliest attested examples of mathematical calculations date to the predynastic Naqada period, and show a fully developed number system. The importance of mathematics to an educated Egyptian is suggested by a New Kingdom fictional letter in which the writer proposes a scholarly competition between himself and another scribe regarding everyday calculation tasks such as accounting of land, labor and grain. Texts such as the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus and the Moscow Mathematical Papyrus show that the ancient Egyptians could perform the four basic mathematical operations—addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division—use fractions, compute the volumes of boxes and pyramids, and calculate the surface areas of rectangles, triangles, circles and even spheres. They understood basic concepts of algebra and geometry, and could solve simple sets of simultaneous equations.

⅔ in hieroglyphs


Mathematical notation was decimal, and based on hieroglyphic signs for each power of ten up to one million. Each of these could be written as many times as necessary to add up to the desired number; so to write the number eighty or eight hundred, the symbol for ten or one hundred was written eight times respectively. Because their methods of calculation could not handle most fractions with a numerator greater than one, ancient Egyptian fractions had to be written as the sum of several fractions. For example, the fraction two-fifths was resolved into the sum of one-third + one-fifteenth; this was facilitated by standard tables of values. Some common fractions, however, were written with a special glyph; the equivalent of the modern two-thirds is shown on the right.

Ancient Egyptian mathematicians had a grasp of the principles underlying the Pythagorean theorem, knowing, for example, that a triangle had a right angle opposite the hypotenuse when its sides were in a 3–4–5 ratio. They were able to estimate the area of a circle by subtracting one-ninth from its diameter and squaring the result:

$$\text{Area} \approx [(^{8}\!/_{9})D]^2 = (^{256}\!/_{81})r^2 \approx 3.16r^2,$$

a reasonable approximation of the formula πr^2.

The golden ratio seems to be reflected in many Egyptian constructions, including the pyramids, but its use may have been an unintended consequence of the ancient Egyptian practice of combining the use of knotted ropes with an intuitive sense of proportion and harmony.

Legacy

The culture and monuments of ancient Egypt have left a lasting legacy on the world. The cult of the goddess Isis, for example, became popular in the Roman empire, as obelisks and other relics were transported back to Rome. The Romans also imported building materials from Egypt to erect structures in Egyptian style. Early historians such as Herodotus, Strabo and Diodorus Siculus studied and wrote about the land which became viewed as a place of mystery. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Egyptian pagan culture was in decline after the rise of Christianity and later Islam, but interest in Egyptian antiquity continued in the writings of medieval scholars such as Dhul-Nun al-Misri and al-Maqrizi.

Dr. Zahi Hawass is the current secretary general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, European travelers and tourists brought back antiquities and wrote stories of their journeys, leading to a wave of Egyptomania across Europe. This renewed interest sent collectors to Egypt, who took, purchased, or were given many important antiquities. Although the European colonial occupation of Egypt destroyed a significant portion of the country's historical legacy, some foreigners had more positive results. Napoleon, for example, arranged the first studies in Egyptology when he brought some 150 scientists and artists to study and document Egypt's natural history, which was published in the *Description de l'Ėgypte*. In the 19th century, the Egyptian Government and archaeologists alike recognized the importance of cultural respect and integrity in excavations. The Supreme Council of Antiquities now approves and oversees all excavations, which are aimed at finding information rather than treasure. The council also supervises museums and monument reconstruction programs designed to preserve the historical legacy of Egypt.

Ancient Greece

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology

The term **ancient Greece** refers to the period of Greek history in Classical Antiquity, lasting from ca. 750 BC (the archaic period) to 146 BC (the Roman conquest). It is generally considered to be the seminal culture which provided the foundation of Western Civilization. Greek culture had a powerful influence on the Roman Empire, which carried a version of it to many parts of Europe.

The Parthenon is the most iconic symbol of the culture and sophistication of the ancient Greeks.

The civilization of the ancient Greeks has been immensely influential on the language, politics, educational systems, philosophy, science, and arts, giving rise to the Renaissance in Western Europe and again resurgent during various neo-Classical revivals in 18th and 19th century Europe and the Americas.

Chronology

There are no fixed or universally agreed upon dates for the beginning or the end of the ancient Greek period. In common usage it can refer to all Greek history before the Roman conquest, but historians use the term more precisely. The Greek-speaking Mycenaean (Helladic) civilization that collapsed about 1150 BC, and which preceded the Hellenic culture is generally excluded from the Ancient Greek era. Traditionally, historians took the date of the first recorded Olympic Games in 776 BC as the beginning of the ancient Greek period. Between the end of the Mycenaean period, and the first Olympics is a period known as the Greek Dark Ages, because there are no written records, and few archaeological remnants. This period is now often included in the term Ancient Greece.

The end of the Ancient Greek period was traditionally seen as the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, which was seen to begin the Hellenistic period. However, Ancient Greece is often taken to include the following period, until to the Roman conquest of 146 BC. Some writers treat the ancient Greek civilization as a continuum running until the advent of Christianity in the 3rd century; this, however, is unconventional.

The Ancient Greek period is subdivided into four periods on a pragmatic basis of pottery styles and political events. The Greek Dark Ages (c.1150-c.800 BC) features the use of geometric designs on pottery; it is followed the by archaic period (c.800-c.500BC), in which artists made larger free-standing sculptures in stiff, hieratic poses with the dreamlike ' archaic smile'. The Archaic period is often taken to end with the overthrow of the last tyrant of Athens in 510 BC. The Classical period (c.500-323 BC) is characterised by a style which was considered by later observers to be exemplary (i.e. 'classical') - for instance the Parthenon. The death of Alexander in 323 BC is used to mark the beginning of the Hellenistic period, when Greek culture and power expanded into the near and middle east; a period which finishes with the Roman conquest of 146 BC.

History

Pre-Hellenic civilisation

The tribes who would become the Greeks are believed to have migrated southward into the Balkan peninsula in several waves beginning in the Middle Bronze Age (roughly 2000 BC). The Proto-Greek language would date to the period just preceding these migrations, either to the late 3rd millennium BC, or to the 17th century BC at the latest. The Bronze Age civilisation of the proto-Greeks is generally referred to as Helladic.

This period culminated in the so-called Mycenaean Culture, which features in the famous epics of Homer, the Iliad and the Odyssey. For reasons which are unknown, this culture collapsed spectacularly around 1150 BC, with cities being sacked and massive depopulation. This Bronze Age collapse approximately coincides with the apparent arrival of the last group of proto-Greeks into Greece proper, the Dorians. The two events have traditionally been causally linked, but this is by no means certain. With the Bronze Age collapse, Greece entered into a period of obscurity, or 'dark age'.

Greek Dark Ages

The period from 1100 BC to the 8th century BC is a " Dark Age" following the Bronze Age collapse from which no primary texts survive, and only scant archaeological evidence remains. Secondary and tertiary texts such as Herodotus' *Histories*, Pausanias' *Description of Greece*, Diodorus' *Bibliotheca*, and Jerome's *Chronicon* contain brief chronologies and king lists for this period.

Archaic period

8th century

In the 8th century BC, Greece began to emerge from the Dark Ages which followed the fall of the Mycenaean civilization. Literacy had been lost and Linear B, the Mycenaean script forgotten, but the Greeks adopted the Phoenician alphabet, modifying it to create the Greek alphabet. From about the 9th century BC written records begin to appear. Greece was divided into many small self-governing communities, a pattern largely dictated by Greek geography, where every island, valley and plain is cut off from its neighbours by the sea or mountain ranges.

7th century

The first half of the 7th century saw the Lelantine War (c.710-c.650 BC), an ongoing conflict with the distinction of being the earliest documented war of the ancient Greek period. Fought between the then important *poleis* (city-states) of Chalcis and Eretria over the fertile Lelantine plain of Euboea, both cities seem to have suffered a decline as result of the long war, though Chalcis was the nominal victor.

The first half of the 7th century also seems to have seen the rise of a mercantile class (shown by the introduction of coinage in about 680 BC). This seems to

have introduced tension to many city states. The aristocratic regimes which generally governed the *poleis* were threatened by the new-found wealth of merchants, who in turn desired political power. From 650 BC onwards, the aristocracies had to fight not to be overthrown and replaced by populist tyrants. The word derives from the non-pejorative Greek τύραννος *tyrannos*, meaning "illegitimate ruler", although this was applicable to both good and bad leaders alike.

A growing population and shortage of land also seems to have created internal strife between the poor and the rich in many city states. In Sparta, the Messenian Wars resulted in the conquest of Messenia and enserfment of the Messenians, beginning in the latter half of the 8th century BCE, an act without precedent or antecedent in ancient Greece. This practice allowed a social revolution to occur. The subjugated population, thenceforth known as helots, would farm and labour for Sparta, whilst every Spartan male citizen became a soldier of the Spartan Army in a permanently militarized state. Even the elite were obliged to live and train as soldiers; this equality between rich and poor served to diffuse the social conflict. These reforms, attributed to the shadowy Lycurgus of Sparta were probably complete by 650 BC.

Early Athenian coin, 5th century BC. British Museum.

Athens suffered a land and agrarian crisis in the late 7th century, again resulting in civil strife. The Archon (chief magistrate) Draco made severe reforms to the law code in 621 BC (hence Draconian), but these failed to quell the conflict. Eventually the moderate reforms of Solon (594 BC), improving the lot of the poor, but firmly entrenching the aristocracy in power, gave Athens some stability.

6th century

By the 6th century BC several cities had emerged as dominant in Greek affairs: Athens, Sparta, Corinth, and Thebes. Each of them had brought the surrounding rural areas and smaller towns under their control, and Athens and Corinth had become major maritime and mercantile powers as well.

Greek influence in the mid 6th century BC.

Rapidly increasing population in the 8th and 7th centuries had resulted in emigration of many Greeks to form colonies in Magna Græcia (Southern Italy and Sicily), Asia Minor and further afield (see below). The emigration effectively ceased in the 6th century by which time the Greek world had, culturally and linguistically, become much larger than the area of present-day Greece. Greek colonies were not politically controlled by their founding cities, although they often retained religious and commercial links with them.

In this period, huge economic development occurred in Greece and also her overseas colonies which experienced a growth in commerce and manufacturing. There also was a large improvement in the living standards of the population. Some studies estimate that the average size of the Greek household, in the period from 800 BC to 300 BC, increased five times, which indicates a large increase in the average income of the population.

In the second half of the 6th century, Athens fell under the tyranny of Peisistratos and then his sons Hippias and Hipparchus. However, in 510 BC, at the instigation of the Athenian aristocrat Cleisthenes, the Spartan king Cleomenes I helped the Athenians overthrow the tyranny. Promptly turning on each other Cleomenes I then installed Isagoras as a pro-Spartan archon. Eager to prevent Athens becoming a Spartan puppet, Cleisthenes responded by proposing to his fellow citizens that Athens undergo a revolution; that all citizens shared in the power, regardless of status; that Athens become a ' democracy'. So

enthusiastically did the Athenians take to this idea, that, having overthrown Isagoras and implemented Cleisthenes's reforms, they were easily able to repel a Spartan-led three-pronged invasion aimed at restoring Isagoras. The advent of the democracy cured many of the ills of Athens, and led to a 'golden age' for the Athenians.

Classical Greece

5th century

Athens and Sparta would soon have to become allies in the face of the largest external threat ancient Greece would see until the Roman conquest. After suppressing the Ionian Revolt, a rebellion of the Greek cities of Ionia, Darius I of Persia, King of Kings of the Achaemenid Empire, decided to subjugate Greece. His invasion in 490 BC was ended by the heroic Athenian victory at the Battle of Marathon under Miltiades the Younger. Xerxes I of Persia, son and successor of Darius I, attempted his own invasion 10 years later, but was, despite his overwhelmingly large army, defeated after the famous rearguard action at Thermopylae, and victories for the allied Greeks at the Battles of Salamis and Plataea. The Greco-Persian Wars continued until 449 BC, led by the Athenians and their Delian League, during which time the Macedon, Thrace, the Aegean Islands and Ionia were all liberated from Persian influence.

The now dominant position of the maritime Athenian 'Empire' threatened Sparta and the Peloponnesian League of mainland Greek cities. Inevitably, this led to conflict, resulting in the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC). Though effectively a stalemate for the vast majority of its length, Athens suffered a number of setbacks during the war. A great plague in 430 BC, followed by the Sicilian Expedition, a disastrous military expedition to Sicily, severely weakened Athens. Sparta was able to ferment rebellion amongst Athens's allies, further reducing the Athenian ability to wage war. The decisive moment came in 405 BC when Sparta cut off the grain supply to Athens from the Hellespont. Forced to attack, the crippled Athenian fleet was decisively defeated by the Spartans under the command of Lysander at Aegospotami. In 404 BC Athens sued for peace, and Sparta dictated a predictably stern settlement: Athens lost her city walls (including the Long Walls), her fleet, and all of her overseas possessions.

Delian League ("Athenian Empire"), immediately before the Peloponnesian War in 431 BC.

4th century

Greece thus entered the 4th century under a Spartan hegemony, but it was clear from the start that this was weak. A demographic crisis meant Sparta was overstretched, and by 395 BC Athens, Argos, Thebes, and Corinth felt able to challenge Spartan dominance, resulting in the Corinthian War (395-387 BC). Another war of stalemates, it ended with the status quo restored, after the threat of Persian intervention on behalf of the Spartans.

The Spartan hegemony lasted another 16 years, until, when attempting to impose their will on the Thebans, the Spartans suffered a decisive defeat at Leuctra (371 BC). The brilliant Theban general Epaminondas then led Theban troops into the Peloponnese, whereupon other city-states defected from the Spartan

cause. The Thebans were thus able to march into Messenia and free the population. Deprived of land and its serfs, Sparta declined to a second-rank power. The Theban hegemony thus established was short-lived; at the battle of Mantinea in 362 BC, Thebes lost her key leader, Epaminondas, and great loss of manpower, even though they were victorious in battle. In fact such were the losses to all the great city-states at Mantinea that none could establish dominance in the aftermath.

The weakened state of the heartland of Greece coincided with the rising power of Macedon, led by Philip II. In twenty years, Philip had unified his kingdom, expanded it north and west at the expense of Illyrian tribes, and then conquered Thessaly and Thrace. His success was partly due to his innovative reforms to the army. Phillip intervened repeatedly in the affairs of the southern city-states, culminating in his invasion of 338 BC. Decisively defeating an allied army of Thebes and Athens at the Battle of Chaeronea, he became *de facto* hegemon of all of Greece. He compelled the majority of the city-states to join the League of Corinth, allying them to him, and preventing them from warring with each other. Philip then entered into war against the Achemaenid Empire, but was assassinated by Pausanias of Orestis early on in the conflict.

Alexander, son and successor of Philip, continued the war. Alexander defeated Darius III of Persia and completely destroyed the Achaemenid Empire, annexing it to Macedon and earning himself the epithet 'the Great'. When Alexander died in 323 BC, Greek power and influence was at its zenith. However, there had been a fundamental shift away from the fierce independence and classical culture of the *poleis* - and instead towards the developing Hellenistic culture.

Hellenistic Greece

The Hellenistic period lasts from 323 BC to the annexation of the Greece by the Roman Republic in 146 BC. Although the establishment of Roman rule did not break the continuity of Hellenistic society and culture, which remained essentially unchanged until the advent of Christianity, it did mark the end of Greek political independence.

During the Hellenistic period the importance of "Greece proper" (that is, the territory of modern Greece) within the Greek-speaking world declined sharply. The great centers of Hellenistic culture were Alexandria and Antioch, capitals of Ptolemaic Egypt and Seleucid Syria respectively. See Hellenistic civilization for the history of Greek culture outside of Greece in this period.

The conquests of Alexander had a number of consequences for the Greek city-states. It greatly widened the horizons of the Greeks, and led to a steady emigration, particularly of the young and ambitious, to the new Greek empires in the east. Many Greeks migrated to Alexandria, Antioch and the many other new Hellenistic cities founded in Alexander's wake, as far away as what are now Afghanistan and Pakistan, where the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom and the Indo-Greek Kingdom survived until the end of the 1st century BC.

After the death of Alexander his empire was, after quite some conflict, divided amongst his generals, resulting in the Ptolemaic Kingdom (based upon Egypt), the Seleucid Empire (based on the Levant, Mesopotamia and Persia, and the Antigonid dynasty based in Macedon. In the intervening period, the poleis of Greece were able to wrest back some of their freedom, although still nominally subject to the Macedonian Kingdom. The city states formed themselves into two leagues; the Achaean League (including Thebes, Corinth and Argos) and the Aetolian League (including Sparta and Athens). For much of the period until the Roman conquest, these leagues were usually at war with each other, and/or allied to different sides in the conflicts between the Diadochi (the successor states to Alexander's empire).

The Antigonid Kingdom became involved in a war with the Roman Republic in the late 3rd century. Although the First Macedonian War was inconclusive, the Romans, in typical fashion continued to make war on Macedon until it was completely absorbed into the Roman Republic (by 149 BC). In the east the unwieldy Seleucid Empire gradually disintegrated, although a rump survived until 64 BC, whilst the Ptolemaic Kingdom continued in Egypt until 30 BC, when it too was conquered by the Romans. The Aetolian league grew wary of Roman involvement in Greece, and sided with the Seleucids in the Roman-Syrian War; when the Romans were victorius, the league was effectively absorbed into the Republic. Although the Achaean league outlasted both the Aetolian league and Macedon, it was also soon defeated and absorbed by the Romans in 146 BC, bringing an end to the independence of all of Greece.

Roman Greece

Colonies

During the Archaic period, the population of Greece grew beyond the capacity of its limited arable land (according to one estimate, the population of Ancient Greece increased by a factor larger than ten during the period from 800 BC to 400 BC, increasing from a population of 800,000 to a total estimated population of 10 to 13 million). From about 750 BC the Greeks began 250 years of expansion, settling colonies in all directions. To the east, the Aegean coast of Asia Minor was colonized first, followed by Cyprus and the coasts of Thrace, the Sea of Marmara and south coast of the Black Sea. Eventually Greek colonization reached as far north-east as present day Ukraine and Russia (Taganrog). To the west the coasts of Illyria, Sicily and Southern Italy were settled, followed by Southern France, Corsica, and even northeastern Spain. Greek colonies were also founded in Egypt and Libya. Modern Syracuse, Naples, Marseille and Istanbul had their beginnings as the Greek colonies Syracusae *(Συρακούσαι)*, Neapolis *(Νεάπολις)*, Massalia *(Μασσαλία)* and Byzantion *(Βυζάντιον)*. These colonies played an important role in the spread of Greek influence throughout Europe, and also aided in the establishment of long-distance trading networks between the Greek city-states, boosting the economy of ancient Greece.

Greek cities & colonies circa 550 BC.

Ruins of Greek Theatre in the colony at Taormina in present day Italy

Politics & Society

Political Structure

Ancient Greece consisted of several hundred more-or-less independent city states (*poleis*). This was a situation unlike that in most other contemporary societies, which were either tribal, or kingdoms ruling over relatively large territories. The most comparable situation is probably to be found in the great maritime cities-states of Phoenicia. Undoubtedly the geography of Greece, divided and sub-divided by hills, mountains and rivers contributed to the

fragmentary nature of Ancient Greece. However, there is also a degree to which the situation was something inherently Greek. The ancient Greeks had no doubt that they were 'one people'; they had the same religion, same basic culture, and same language. Yet the independence of the *poleis* was fiercely defended; unification was something rarely contemplated by the Ancient Greeks. Thus, the major peculiarities of the Ancient Greek political system were; firstly, its fragmentary nature, and that this does not particularly seem to have tribal origin; and secondly the particular focus on urban centres within otherwise tiny states. The peculiarities of the Greek system are further evidenced by the colonies that they set up throughout the Mediterranean Sea, which, though they might count a certain Greek *polis* as their 'mother' (and remain sympathetic to her), were completely independent of the founding city.

Inevitably smaller *poleis* might be dominated by larger neighbours, but conquest or direct rule by another city state appears to have been quite rare. Instead the *poleis* grouped themselves into leagues, membership of which was in a constant state of flux. Later in the Classical period, the leagues would become fewer and larger, be dominated by one city (particularly Athens, Sparta and Thebes); and often *poleis* would be compelled to join under threat of war (or as part of a peace treaty). Even after Philip II of Macedon 'conquered' the heartlands of Ancient Greece, he did not attempt to annex the territory, or unify it into a new province, but simply compelled most of the *poleis* to join his own Corinthian League.

Government & Law

Initially many Greek-city states seem to have been petty kingdoms; there was often a city official carrying some residual, ceremonial functions of the king (*basileus*), e.g. the *archon basileus* in Athens. However, by the Archaic period and the first historical consciousness, most had already become aristocratic oligarchies. It is unclear exactly how this change occurred. For instance, in Athens, the kingship had been reduced to a hereditary, life-long chief magistracy (*archon*) by c. 1050 BC; by 753 BC this had become a decennial, elected archonship; and finally by 683 BC an annually elected archonship. Through each stage more power would have been transferred to the aristocracy as a whole, and away from a single individual.

Inevitably, the domination of politics and concommitant aggregation of wealth by small groups of families was apt to cause social unrest in many *poleis*. In many cities a tyrant (not in the modern sense of repressive autocracies), would at some point seize control, and govern according to their own will; often a populist agenda would help sustain them in power. In a system racked with class conflict, government by a 'strongman' was often the best solution.

Athens fell under a tyranny in the second half of the 6th century. When this tyranny was ended, as a radical solution to prevent the aristocracy regaining power, the Athenians founded the world's first democracy. A citizens' assembly (the *Ecclesia*), for the discussion of city policy had existed since the reforms of Draco in 621 BC; all citizens were permitted to attend after the reforms of Solon (early 6th century), but the poorest citizens could not address the assembly, or run for office. With the establishment of the democracy, the assembly became the *de jure* mechanism of government; all citizens now had equal privileges in the assembly. However, non-citizens, such as metics (foreigners living in Athens), or slaves, had no political rights at all.

After the rise of the democracy in Athens, other city-states founded democracies. However, many retained more traditional forms of government. As so often in other matters, Sparta was a notable exception to the rest of Greece, ruled through the whole period by not one, but two hereditary monarchs. This was a form of diarchy. The Kings of Sparta belonged to the Agiads and the Eurypontids, descendants respectively of Eurysthenes and Procles. Both dynasty founders were believed to be twin sons of Aristodemus, a Heraclid ruler. However, the powers of these kings was trammeled by both a council of elders (the *Gerousia*) and magistrates specifically appointed to watch over the kings (the *Ephors*).

Warfare

Social Structure

Only free, land owning, native-born men could be citizens entitled to the full protection of the law in a city-state (later Pericles introduced exceptions to the native-born restriction). In most city-states, unlike Rome, social prominence did not allow special rights. For example, being born in a certain family generally brought no special privileges. Sometimes families controlled public religious functions, but this ordinarily did not give any extra power in the government. In Athens, the population was divided into four social classes based on wealth. People could change classes if they made more money. In Sparta, all male citizens were given the title of equal if they finished their education. However, Spartan kings, who served as the city-state's dual military and religious leaders, came from two families. Slaves had no power or status. They had the right to have a family and own property, however they had no political rights. By 600 BC chattel slavery had spread in Greece. By the 5th century BC slaves made up one-third of the total population in some city-states. Slaves outside of Sparta almost never revolted because they were made up of too many nationalities and were too scattered to organize.

Most families owned slaves as household servants and labourers, and even poor families might have owned a few slaves. Owners were not allowed to beat or kill their slaves. Owners often promised to free slaves in the future to encourage slaves to work hard. Unlike in Rome, freedmen (slaves who were freed) did not become citizens. Instead, they were mixed into the population of *metics*, which included people from foreign countries or other city-states who were officially allowed to live in the state.

City-states legally owned slaves. These public slaves had a larger measure of independence than slaves owned by families, living on their own and performing specialized tasks. In Athens, public slaves were trained to look out for counterfeit coinage, while temple slaves acted as servants of the temple's deity.

Sparta had a special type of slaves called *helots*. Helots were Greek war captives owned by the state and assigned to families where they were forced to stay. Helots raised food and did household chores so that women could concentrate on raising strong children while men could devote their time to training as hoplites. Their masters treated them harshly and helots often resorted to slave rebellions.

Education

For most of Greek history, education was private, except in Sparta. During the Hellenistic period, some city-states established public schools. Only wealthy families could afford a teacher. Boys learned how to read, write and quote literature. They also learned to sing and play one musical instrument and were trained as athletes for military service. They studied not for a job, but to become an effective citizen. Girls also learned to read, write and do simple arithmetic so they could manage the household. They almost never received education after childhood.

Boys went to school at the age of seven, or went to the barracks, if they lived in Sparta. The three types of teachings were: grammatistes for arithmetic, kitharistes for music and dancing, and Paedotribae for sports.

Boys from wealthy families attending the private school lessons were taken care by a *paidagogos*, a household slave selected for this task who accompanied the

boy during the day. Classes were held in teachers' private houses and included reading, writing, mathematics, singing, and playing of the lyre and flute. When the boy became 12 years old the schooling started to include sports as wrestling, running, and throwing discus and javelin. In Athens some older youths attended academy for the finer disciplines such as culture, sciences, music, and the arts. The schooling ended at the age of 18, followed by military training in the army usually for one or two years.

A small number of boys continued their education after childhood, as in the Spartan agoge. A crucial part of a wealthy teenager's education was a mentorship with an elder, which in few places and times may have included pederastic love. The teenager learned by watching his mentor talking about politics in the *agora*, helping him perform his public duties, exercising with him in the gymnasium and attending symposia with him. The richest students continued their education by studying with famous teachers. Some of Athens' greatest such schools included the Lyceum (the so-called Peripatetic school founded by Aristotle of Stageira) and the Platonic Academy (founded by Plato of Athens). The education system of the wealthy ancient Greeks is also called Paideia.

Economy

At its economic height, in the 5th and 4th centuries BC, ancient Greece was the most advanced economy in the world. According to some economic historians, it was one of the most advanced preindustrial economies. This is demonstrated by the average daily wage of the Greek worker which was, in terms of wheat, about 12 kg. This was more than 3 times the average daily wage of an Egyptian worker during the Roman period, about 3.75 kg.

Culture

Philosophy

Greek philosophy focused on the role of reason and inquiry. In many ways, it had an important influence on modern philosophy, as well as modern science. Clear unbroken lines of influence lead from ancient **Greek** and Hellenistic philosophers, to medieval Muslim philosophers and scientists, to the European Renaissance and Enlightenment, to the secular sciences of the modern day.

Neither reason nor inquiry began with the Greeks. Defining the difference between the Greek quest for knowledge and the quests of the elder civilizations, such as the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians, has long been a topic of study by theorists of civilization.

Literature

Alfred North Whitehead once claimed that all of philosophy is but a footnote to Plato. To suggest that all of Western literature is no more than a footnote to the writings of ancient Greece is an exaggeration, but it is nevertheless true that the Greek world of thought was so far-ranging that there is scarcely an idea discussed today not already debated by the ancient writers.

Science & Technology

Art

Religion and mythology

Greek mythology consists of stories belonging to the Ancient Greeks concerning their gods and heroes, the nature of the world and the origins and significance of their religious practices. The main Greek gods were the twelve Olympians, Zeus, his wife Hera, Poseidon, Ares, Hermes, Hephaestus, Aphrodite, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Demeter, and Hestia. Other important deities included Hebe, Helios, Hades, Dionysus, Persephone and Heracles (a demi-god). Zeus' parents were Kronos and Rhea who also were the parents of Poseidon, Hades, Hera, Hestia, and Demeter.

Apollo and Nike in marble, a Roman copy from the 1 st century CE of the original hellenistic work

Ancient Rome

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology; General history

Ancient Rome was a civilization that grew from a small agricultural community founded on the Italian Peninsula in the 9th century BC to a large empire straddling the Mediterranean Sea. In its twelve centuries of existence, Roman civilization shifted from a monarchy, to a republic based on a combination of oligarchy and democracy, to an increasingly autocratic empire. It came to dominate Western Europe and the area surrounding the Mediterranean Sea through conquest and assimilation.

The Roman empire went into decline in the 5th century AD. Plagued by internal instability and attacked by various migrating peoples, the western part of the empire, including Hispania, Gaul, and Italy, broke up into independent kingdoms in the 5th century. The eastern part of the empire, governed from Constantinople, survived this crisis, and would live on for another millennium, until its last remains were finally annexed by the emerging Ottoman Empire. This eastern, medieval stage of the Empire is usually referred to as the Byzantine Empire by historians.

Roman civilization is often grouped into " classical antiquity" with ancient Greece, a civilization that inspired much of the culture of ancient Rome. Ancient Rome contributed greatly to the development of law, war, art, literature, architecture, technology and language in the Western world, and its history continues to have a major influence on the world today.

The Roman Empire reached its greatest extent in the year 116.

History

Monarchy

According to legend, Rome was founded on April 21, 753 BC by twin descendants of the Trojan prince Aeneas, Romulus and Remus. The Latin King Numitor of Alba Longa was ejected from his throne by his cruel brother Amulius and Numitor's daughter, Rhea Silvia, gave birth to Romulus and Remus. Rhea Silvia was a Vestal Virgin who was raped by Mars, making the twins half-divine. The new king feared that Romulus and Remus would take back the throne, so they were to be drowned. A she-wolf (or a shepherd's wife in some accounts) saved and raised them, and when they were old enough, they returned the throne of Alba Longa to Numitor. The twins then founded their own city, but Romulus killed Remus in a quarrel over which one of them was to reign as the King of Rome, though some sources state the quarrel was about who was going to give their name to the city. Romulus became the source of the city's name. As the city was bereft of women, legend says that the Latins invited the Sabines to a festival and stole their unmarried maidens, leading to the integration of the Latins and the Sabines.

According to legend, Rome was founded in 753 BC by Romulus and Remus, who were raised by a she-wolf.

The city of Rome grew from settlements around a ford on the river Tiber, a crossroads of traffic and trade. According to archaeological evidence, the village of Rome was probably founded sometime in the 8th century BC, though it may go back as far as the 10th century BC, by members of the Latin tribe of Italy, on the top of the Palatine Hill. The Etruscans, who had previously settled to the north in Etruria, seem to have established political control in the region by the late 7th century BC, forming the aristocratic and monarchial elite. The Etruscans apparently lost power in the area by the late 6th century BC, and at this point, the original Latin and Sabine tribes reinvented their government by creating a republic, with much greater restraints on the ability of rulers to exercise power.

Republic

The Roman Republic was established around 509 BC, according to later writers such as Livy, when the last of the seven kings of Rome, Tarquin the Proud, was deposed, and a system based on annually elected magistrates and various representative assemblies was established. A constitution set a series of checks and balances, and a separation of powers. The most important magistrates were the two consuls, who together exercised executive authority in the form of *imperium*, or military command. The consuls had to work with the senate, which was initially an advisory council of the ranking nobility, or patricians, but grew in size and power over time. Other magistracies in the Republic include praetors, aediles, and quaestors. The magistracies were originally restricted to patricians, but were later opened to common people, or plebeians. Republican voting assemblies included the *comitia centuriata* (centuriate assembly), which voted on matters of war and peace and elected men to the most important offices, and the *comitia tributa* (tribal assembly), which elected less important offices.

Gaius Marius, a Roman general and politician who dramatically reformed the Roman military.

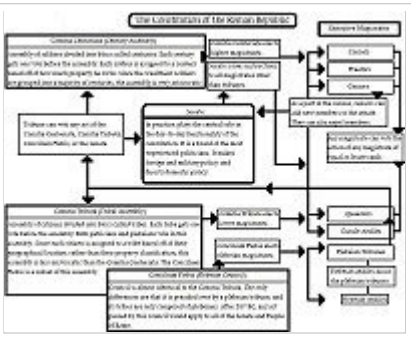


Chart Showing the Checks and Balances of the Roman Constitution.

The early 5th Century BCE saw an influx of Gauls (Gallic Celts) push south of Cisalpine Gaul into Etruscan territory, which they took by force of arms. The Gauls were led by Brennus of the Senones tribe, and the Romans sent an envoy of three delegates to meet with him and determine his intentions and, covertly, the strength of his army. The meeting did not go well, and ended in violence. Brennus, taken aback by what he referred to as a violation of the **Laws of War**, demanded the three **Romans** be handed over to him for punishment. The Romans refused, leading the Gauls to march on Rome in July, 387 BC. In response, the Romans, under A.Quintus Sulpicius, attempted to form a defense against the approaching Gauls. The result was a crushing defeat of the Romans near the River Allia, and the subsequent sack of Rome. The Romans retreated to the citadel on the Capitoline Hill, and remained in relative safety as they watched the looting and burning of the city. After a period of seven months of Gallic occupation of the city, the Romans approached Brennus for terms of peace. Brennus settled on the sum of one-thousand pounds of gold, and the Gauls subsequently departed Rome.

The Romans gradually subdued the other peoples on the Italian peninsula, including the Etruscans. The last threat to Roman hegemony in Italy came when Tarentum, a major Greek colony, enlisted the aid of Pyrrhus of Epirus in 281 BC, but this effort failed as well. The Romans secured their conquests by founding Roman colonies in strategic areas, establishing stable control over the region. In the second half of the 3rd century BC, Rome clashed with Carthage in the first of three Punic Wars. These wars resulted in Rome's first overseas conquests, of Sicily and Hispania, and the rise of Rome as a significant imperial power. After defeating the Macedonian and Seleucid Empires in the 2nd century BC, the Romans became the dominant people of the Mediterranean Sea.

Foreign dominance led to internal strife. Senators became rich at the provinces' expense, but soldiers, who were mostly small-scale farmers, were away from home longer and could not maintain their land, and the increased reliance on foreign slaves and the growth of *latifundia* reduced the availability of paid work. Income from war booty, mercantilism in the new provinces, and tax farming created new economic opportunities for the wealthy, forming a new class of merchants, the equestrians. The *lex Claudia* forbade members of the Senate from engaging in commerce, so while the equestrians could theoretically join the Senate, they were severely restricted in terms of political power. The Senate squabbled perpetually, repeatedly blocking important land reforms and refusing to give the equestrian class a larger say in the government. Violent gangs of the urban unemployed, controlled by rival Senators, intimidated the electorate through violence. The situation came to a head in the late 2nd century BC under the Gracchi brothers, a pair of tribunes who attempted to pass land reform legislation that would redistribute the major patrician landholdings among the plebeians. Both brothers were killed, but the Senate passed some of their reforms in an attempt to placate the growing unrest of the plebeian and equestrian classes. The denial of Roman citizenship to allied Italian cities led to the Social War of 91–88 BC. The military reforms of Gaius Marius resulted in soldiers often having more loyalty to their commander than to the city, and a powerful general could hold the city and Senate ransom. This led to civil war between Marius and his protegé Sulla, and culminated in Sulla's dictatorship of 81–79 BC.

In the mid-1st century BC, three men, Julius Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus, formed a secret pact—the First Triumvirate—to control the Republic. After Caesar's conquest of Gaul, a stand-off between Caesar and the Senate led to civil war, with Pompey leading the Senate's forces. Caesar emerged victorious, and was made dictator for life. In 44 BC, Caesar was assassinated by senators who opposed Caesar's assumption of absolute power and wanted to restore constitutional government, but in the aftermath a Second Triumvirate, consisting of Caesar's designated heir, Octavian, and his former supporters, Mark Antony and Lepidus, took power. However, this alliance soon descended into a struggle for dominance. Lepidus was exiled, and when Octavian defeated Antony and Cleopatra of Egypt at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, he became the undisputed ruler of Rome.

Empire

With his enemies defeated, Octavian took the name *Augustus* and assumed almost absolute power, retaining only a pretense of the Republican form of government. His designated successor, Tiberius, took power without serious opposition, establishing the Julio-Claudian dynasty, which lasted until the death of Nero in 68. The territorial expansion of what was now the Roman Empire continued, and the state remained secure, despite a series of emperors widely viewed as depraved and corrupt (for example, Caligula is argued by some to have been insane and Nero had a reputation for cruelty and being more interested in his private concerns than the affairs of the state). Their rule was followed by the Flavian dynasty. During the reign of the " Five Good Emperors" (96–180), the Empire reached its territorial, economic, and cultural zenith. The state was secure from both internal and external threats, and the Empire prospered during the Pax Romana ("Roman Peace"). With the conquest of Dacia during the reign of Trajan, the Empire reached the peak of its territorial expansion; Rome's dominion now spanned 2.5 million square miles (6.5 million km²).

The period between 193 and 235 was dominated by the Severan dynasty, and saw several incompetent rulers, such as Elagabalus. This and the increasing influence of the army on imperial succession led to a long period of imperial collapse and external invasions known as the Crisis of the Third Century. The crisis was ended by the more competent rule of Diocletian, who in 293 divided the Empire into an eastern and western half ruled by a tetrarchy of two co-emperors and their two junior colleagues. The various co-rulers of the Empire competed and fought for supremacy for more than half a century. On May 11, 330, Emperor Constantine I firmly established Byzantium as the capital of the Roman Empire and renamed it Constantinople. The Empire was permanently divided into the Eastern Roman Empire (later known as the Byzantine Empire) and the Western Roman Empire in 395.

The Western Empire was constantly harassed by barbarian invasions, and the gradual decline of the Roman Empire continued over the centuries. In the 4th century, the westward migration of the Huns caused the Visigoths to seek refuge within the borders of the Roman Empire. In 410, the Visigoths, under the leadership of Alaric I, sacked the city of Rome itself. The Vandals invaded Roman provinces in Gaul, Spain, and northern Africa, and in 455 sacked Rome. On September 4, 476, the Germanic chief Odoacer forced the last Roman emperor in the west, Romulus Augustus, to abdicate. Having lasted for approximately 1200 years, the rule of Rome in the West came to an end.

The Eastern Empire, by contrast, would suffer a similar fate, though not as drastic. Justinian managed to briefly reconquer Northern Africa and Italy, but Byzantine possessions in the West were reduced to southern Italy and Sicily within a few years after Justinian's death. In the east the Byzantines were threatened by the rise of Islam, whose followers rapidly conquered territories in Syria and Egypt and soon presented a direct threat to Constantinople. The Byzantines, however, managed to stop Islamic expansion into their lands during the 8th century, and beginning in the 9th century reclaimed the conquered lands. In 1000 AD the Eastern Empire was at its height: Basileios II reconquered Bulgaria and Armenia, culture and trade flourished. However, soon after the expansion was abruptly stopped in 1071 at the Battle of Manzikert. This finally lead the empire into a dramatic decline. Several centuries of internal strife and Turkic invasions ultimately paved the way for Emperor Alexius I Comnenus to send a call for help to the West in 1095. The West responded with the Crusades, eventually resulting in the Sack of Constantinople by participants in the Fourth Crusade. The conquest of Constantinople in 1204 would see the fragmentation of what little remained of the empire into successor states, the ultimate victor being that of Nicaea. After the recapture of Constantinople by imperial forces, the empire was little more than a Greek state confined to the Aegean coast. The Eastern Empire came to an end when Mehmed II conquered Constantinople on May 29, 1453.

Society

The Roman Forum was the central area around which ancient Rome developed, and served as a hub for daily Roman life.

Life in ancient Rome revolved around the city of Rome, located on seven hills. The city had a vast number of monumental structures like the Colosseum, the Forum of Trajan and the Pantheon. It had fountains with fresh drinking-water supplied by hundreds of miles of aqueducts, theatres, gymnasiums, bath complexes complete with libraries and shops, marketplaces, and functional sewers. Throughout the territory under the control of ancient Rome, residential architecture ranged from very modest houses to country villas. In the capital city of Rome, there were imperial residences on the elegant Palatine Hill, from which the word *palace* is derived. The low and middle classes lived in the city centre, packed into apartments, which were almost like modern ghettos.

The imperial city of Rome was the largest urban centre of its time, with a population of about one million people (about the size of London in the early 19th century, when London was the largest city in the world), with some high-end estimates of 14 million and low-end estimates of 450,000. The public spaces in Rome resounded with such a din of hooves and clatter of iron chariot wheels that Julius Caesar had once proposed a ban on chariot traffic during the day. Historical estimates indicate that around 20 percent of the population under jurisdiction of ancient Rome (25–40%, depending the standards used, in Roman Italy) lived in innumerable urban centers, with population of 10,000 and more and several military settlements, a very high rate of urbanization by pre-industrial standards. Most of these centers had a forum and temples and same type of buildings, on a smaller scale, as found in Rome.

Government

Initially, Rome was ruled by kings, who were elected from each of Rome's major tribes in turn. The exact nature of the king's power is uncertain. He may have held near-absolute power, or may also have merely been the chief executive of the Senate and the people. At least in military matters, the king's authority (*Imperium*) was likely absolute. He was also the head of the state religion. In addition to the authority of the King, there were three administrative assemblies: the Senate, which acted as an advisory body for the King; the Comitia Curiata, which could endorse and ratify laws suggested by the King; and the Comitia Calata, which was an assembly of the priestly college which could assemble the people in order to bear witness to certain acts, hear proclamations, and declare the feast and holiday schedule for the next month.

Bust of Julius Caesar, whose rise to power and assassination set the stage for Augustus to establish himself as the first *Princeps*.

The class struggles of the Roman Republic resulted in an unusual mixture of democracy and oligarchy. The word republic comes from the Latin *res publica* which literally translates to public business. Roman laws traditionally could only be passed by a vote of the Popular assembly (Comitia Tributa). Likewise, candidates for public positions had to run for election by the people. However, the Roman Senate represented an oligarchic institution, which acted as an advisory body. In the Republic, the Senate held great authority (*auctoritas*), but no actual legislative power; it was technically only an advisory council. However, as the Senators were individually very influential, it was difficult to accomplish anything against the collective will of the Senate. New Senators were chosen from among the most accomplished patricians by Censors (*Censura*), who could also remove a Senator from his office if he was found "morally corrupt"; a charge that could include bribery or, as under Cato the Elder, embracing one's wife in public. Later, under the reforms of the dictator Sulla, Quaestors were made automatic members of the Senate, though most of his reforms did not survive.

The Republic had no fixed bureaucracy, and collected taxes through the practice of tax farming. Government positions such as quaestor, aedile, or praefect were funded from the office-holder's private finances. In order to prevent any citizen from gaining too much power, new magistrates were elected annually and had to share power with a colleague. For example, under normal conditions, the highest authority was held by two consuls. In an emergency, a temporary dictator could be appointed. Throughout the Republic, the administrative system was revised several times to comply with new demands. In the end, it proved inefficient for controlling the ever-expanding dominion of Rome, contributing to the establishment of the Roman Empire.

In the early Empire, the pretense of a republican form of government was maintained. The Roman Emperor was portrayed as only a *princeps*, or "first citizen", and the Senate gained legislative power and all legal authority previously held by the popular assemblies. However, the rule of the emperors became increasingly autocratic over time, and the Senate was reduced to an advisory body appointed by the emperor. The Empire did not inherit a set bureaucracy from the Republic, since the Republic did not have any permanent governmental structures apart from the Senate. The Emperor appointed assistants and advisers, but the state lacked many institutions, such as a centrally planned budget. Some historians have cited this as a significant reason for the decline of the Roman Empire.

The territory of the Empire was divided into provinces. The number of provinces increased with time, both as new territories were conquered and as provinces were divided into smaller units to discourage rebellions by powerful local rulers. Upon the rise of Augustus and the Principate, the provinces were divided into imperial and senatorial provinces, depending on which institution had the right to select the governor. During the Tetrarchy, the provinces of the empire were divided into 12 dioceses, each headed by a *praetor vicarius*. The civilian and military authority were separated, with civilian matters still administered by the

governor, but with military command transferred to a *dux*.

On a local level, towns were divided into colonia, colonies composed of former soldiers or members of the Roman underclass, and *municipia*, towns composed of enfranchised provincials. These cities were given constitutions based on the Roman model, with the elected *duovirs* and *aediles* serving as magistrates, and with the local *curia*, appointed from men of property for life, serving in an advisory capability, similar to the Senate.

Law

The roots of the legal principles and practices of the ancient Romans may be traced to the law of the twelve tables (from 449 BC) to the codification of Emperor Justinian I (around 530 AD). Roman law as preserved in Justinian's codes continued into the Byzantine Empire, and formed the basis of similar codifications in continental Western Europe. Roman law continued, in a broader sense, to be applied throughout most of Europe until the end of the 17th century.

The major divisions of the law of ancient Rome, as contained within the Justinian and Theodosian law codes, consisted of *Ius Civile*, *Ius Gentium*, and *Ius Naturale*. The *Ius Civile* ("Citizen law") was the body of common laws that applied to Roman citizens. The *Praetores Urbani* (*sg. Praetor Urbanus*) were the individuals who had jurisdiction over cases involving citizens. The *Ius Gentium* ("Law of nations") was the body of common laws that applied to foreigners, and their dealings with Roman citizens. The *Praetores Peregrini* (*sg. Praetor Peregrinus*) were the individuals who had jurisdiction over cases involving citizens and foreigners. *Ius Naturale* encompassed natural law, the body of laws that were considered common to all being.

Economy

Ancient Rome commanded a vast area of land, with tremendous natural and human resources. As such, Rome's economy remained focused on agriculture and trade. Agricultural free trade changed the Italian landscape, and by the 1st century BC, vast grape and olive estates had supplanted the yeoman farmers, who were unable to match the imported grain price. The annexation of Egypt, Sicily and Tunisia in North Africa provided a continuous supply of grains. In turn, olive oil and wine were Italy's main exports. Two-tier crop rotation was practiced, but farm productivity was overall low, around 1 ton per hectare.

A Roman denarius, a standardized silver coin.

Industrial and manufacturing activities were smaller. The largest such activity were the mining and quarrying of stones, which provided basic construction materials for the buildings of that period. In manufacturing, production was on a relatively small scale, and generally consisted of workshops and small factories that employed at most dozens of workers. However, some brick factories employed hundreds of workers.

Some economic historians (like Peter Temin) argue that the economy of the Early Roman Empire was a market economy and one of the most advanced agricultural economies to have existed (in terms of productivity, urbanization and development of capital markets), comparable to the most advanced economies of the world before the Industrial Revolution, namely the economies of 18th century England and 17th century Netherlands. There were markets for every type of good, for land, for cargo ships; there was even an insurance market.

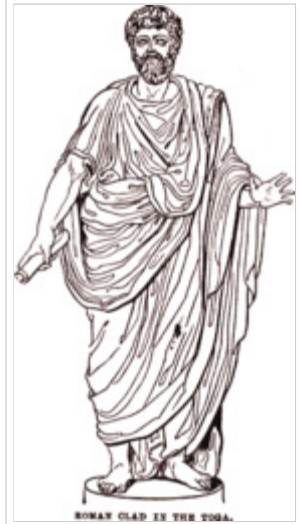
The economy of the early Republic was largely based on smallholding and paid labor. However, foreign wars and conquests made slaves increasingly cheap and plentiful, and by the late Republic, the economy was largely dependent on slave labor for both skilled and unskilled work. Slaves are estimated to have constituted around 20% of the Roman Empire's population at this time and 40% in the city of Rome. Only in the Roman Empire, when the conquests stopped and the prices of slaves increased, did hired labor become more economical than slave ownership.

Although barter was used in ancient Rome, and often used in tax collection, Rome had a very developed coinage system, with brass, bronze, and precious metal coins in circulation throughout the Empire and beyond—some have even been discovered in India. Before the 3rd century BC, copper was traded by weight, measured in unmarked lumps, across central Italy. The original copper coins (*as*) had a face value of one Roman pound of copper, but weighed less. Thus, Roman money's utility as a unit of exchange consistently exceeded its intrinsic value as metal. After Nero began debasing the silver denarius, its legal value was an estimated one-third greater than its intrinsic.

Horses were too expensive, and other pack animals too slow, for mass trade on the Roman roads, which connected military posts rather than markets, and were rarely designed for wheels. As a result, there was little transport of commodities between Roman regions until the rise of Roman maritime trade in the 2nd century BC. During that period, a trading vessel took less than a month to complete a trip from Gades to Alexandria via Ostia, spanning the entire length of the Mediterranean. Transport by sea was around 60 times cheaper than by land, so the volume for such trips was much larger.

Class structure

Roman society is largely viewed as hierarchical, with slaves (*servi*) at the bottom, freedmen (*liberti*) above them, and free-born citizens (*cives*) at the top. Free citizens were themselves also divided by class. The broadest, and earliest, division was between the patricians, who could trace their ancestry to one of the 100 Patriarchs at the founding of the city, and the plebeians, who could not. This became less important in the later Republic, as some plebeian families became wealthy and entered politics, and some patrician families fell on hard times. Anyone, patrician or plebeian, who could count a consul as his ancestor was a noble (*nobilis*); a man who was the first of his family to hold the consulship, such as Marius or Cicero, was known as a *novus homo* ("new man") and ennobled his descendants. Patrician ancestry, however, still conferred considerable prestige, and many religious offices remained restricted to patricians.



A Roman clad in a toga, the distinctive garment of ancient Rome.

A class division originally based on military service became more important. Membership of these classes was determined periodically by the Censors, according to property. The wealthiest were the Senatorial class, who dominated politics and command of the army. Next came the equestrians (*equites*, sometimes translated "knights"), originally those who could afford a warhorse, who formed a powerful mercantile class. Several further classes, originally based on what military equipment their members could afford, followed, with the *proletarii*, citizens who had no property at all, at the bottom. Before the reforms of Marius they were ineligible for military service and are often described as being just barely above freed slaves in terms of wealth and prestige.

Voting power in the Republic was dependent on class. Citizens were enrolled in voting "tribes", but the tribes of the richer classes had fewer members than the poorer ones, all the *proletarii* being enrolled in a single tribe. Voting was done in class order and stopped as

soon as a majority of the tribes had been reached, so the poorer classes were often unable even to cast their votes.

Allied foreign cities were often given the Latin Right, an intermediary level between full citizens and foreigners (*peregrini*), which gave their citizens rights under Roman law and allowed their leading magistrates to become full Roman citizens. While there were varying degrees of Latin rights, the main division was between those *con suffrage* ("with vote"; enrolled in a Roman tribe and able to take part in the *comitia tributa*) and *sans suffrage* ("without vote"; unable to take part in Roman politics). Some of Rome's Italian allies were given full citizenship after the Social War of 91–88 BC, and full Roman citizenship was extended to all free-born men in the Empire by Caracalla in 212. Women shared some basic rights with their male counterparts, but were not fully regarded as citizens and were thus not allowed to vote or participate in politics.

Family

The basic units of Roman society were households and families. Households included the head (usually the father) of the household, *pater familias* (father of the family), his wife, children, and other relatives. In the upper classes, slaves and servants were also part of the household. The head of the household had great power (*patria potestas*, "father's power") over those living with him: He could force marriage (usually for money) and divorce, sell his children into slavery, claim his dependents' property as his own, and even had the right to punish or kill family members (though this last right apparently ceased to be exercised after the 1st century BC).

A group portrait depicted on glass, dating from c.250 A.D., showing a mother, son and daughter. It was once considered to be a depiction of the family of Valentinian III.

Patria potestas even extended over adult sons with their own households: A man was not considered a *paterfamilias*, nor could he truly hold property, while his own father lived. During the early period of Rome's history, a daughter, when she married, fell under the control (*manus*) of the *paterfamilias* of her husband's household, although by the late Republic this fell out of fashion, as a woman could choose to continue recognizing her father's family as her true family. However, as Romans reckoned descent through the male line, any children she had would belong to her husband's family.

Groups of related households formed a family (*gens*). Families were based on blood ties or adoption, but were also political and economic alliances. Especially during the Roman Republic, some powerful families, or *Gentes Maiores*, came to dominate political life.

Ancient Roman marriage was often regarded more as a financial and political alliance than as a romantic association, especially in the upper classes. Fathers usually began seeking husbands for their daughters when they reached an age between twelve and fourteen. The husband was almost always older than the bride. While upper class girls married very young, there is evidence that lower class women often married in their late teens or early twenties.

Education

In the early Republic, there were no public schools, so boys were taught to read and write by their parents, or by educated slaves, called *paedagogi*, usually of Greek origin. The primary aim of education during this period was to train young men in agriculture, warfare, Roman traditions, and public affairs. Young boys

learnt much about civic life by accompanying their fathers to religious and political functions, including the Senate for the sons of nobles. The sons of nobles were apprenticed to a prominent political figure at the age of 16, and campaigned with the army from the age of 17 (this system would still be in use among some noble families well into the imperial era). Educational practices were modified following the conquest of the Hellenistic kingdoms in the 3rd century BC and the resulting Greek influence, although it should be noted that Roman educational practices were still significantly different from Greek ones. If their parents could afford it, boys and some girls at the age of 7 were sent to a private school outside the home called a *ludus*, where a teacher (called a *litterator* or a *magister ludi*, and often of Greek origin) taught them basic reading, writing, arithmetic, and sometimes Greek, until the age of 11. Beginning at age 12, students went to secondary schools, where the teacher (now called a *grammaticus*) taught them about Greek and Roman literature. At the age of 16, some students went on to rhetoric school (where the teacher, almost always Greek, was called a *rhetor*). Education at this level prepared students for legal careers, and required that the students memorize the laws of Rome. Pupils went to school every day, except religious festivals and market days. There were also summer holidays.

Culture

Language

The native language of the Romans was Latin, an Italic language the grammar of which relies little on word order, conveying meaning through a system of affixes attached to word stems. Its alphabet was based on the Etruscan alphabet, which was in turn based on the Greek alphabet. Although surviving Latin literature consists almost entirely of Classical Latin, an artificial and highly stylized and polished literary language from the 1st century BC, the actual spoken language of the Roman Empire was Vulgar Latin, which significantly differed from Classical Latin in grammar and vocabulary, and eventually in pronunciation.

The Duenos inscription, a Latin text from c. 6th century BC, is one of the earliest known examples of Roman writing.

While Latin remained the main written language of the Roman Empire, Greek came to be the language spoken by the well-educated elite, as most of the literature studied by Romans was written in Greek. In the eastern half of the Roman Empire, which later became the Byzantine Empire, Latin was never able to replace Greek, and after the death of Justinian Greek became the official language of the Byzantine government. The expansion of the Roman Empire spread Latin throughout Europe, and over time Vulgar Latin evolved and dialectized in different locations, gradually shifting into a number of distinct Romance languages.

Although Latin is an extinct language with very few remaining fluent speakers, it remains in use in many ways, such as through Ecclesiastical Latin, the traditional language of the Roman Catholic Church and the official language of the Vatican City. Additionally, even after fading from common usage Latin maintained a role as western Europe's *lingua franca*, an international language of academia and diplomacy. Although eventually supplanted in this respect by French in the 19th century and English in the 20th, Latin continues to see heavy use in religious, legal, and scientific terminology—it has been estimated that 80% of all scholarly English words derive directly or indirectly from Latin.

Religion

Archaic Roman religion, at least concerning the gods, was made up not of written narratives, but rather of complex interrelations between gods and humans. Unlike in Greek mythology, the gods were not personified, but were vaguely-defined sacred spirits called *numina*. Romans also believed that every person, place or thing had its own *genius*, or divine soul. During the Roman Republic, Roman religion was organized under a strict system of priestly offices, which were held by men of senatorial rank. The College of Pontifices was uppermost body in this hierarchy, and its chief priest, the *Pontifex Maximus*, was the head of the state religion. Flamens took care of the cults of various gods, while augurs were trusted with taking the auspices. The sacred king took on the religious responsibilities of the deposed kings. In the Roman empire, emperors were held to be gods, and the formalized imperial cult became increasingly prominent.

As contact with the Greeks increased, the old Roman gods became increasingly associated with Greek gods. Thus, Jupiter was perceived to be the same deity as Zeus, Mars became associated with Ares, and Neptune with Poseidon. The Roman gods also assumed the attributes and mythologies of these Greek gods. The transferral of anthropomorphic qualities to Roman Gods, and the prevalence of Greek philosophy among well-educated Romans, brought about an increasing neglect of the old rites, and in the 1st century BC, the religious importance of the old priestly offices declined rapidly, though their civic importance and political influence remained. Roman religion in the empire tended more and more to centre on the imperial house, and several emperors were deified after their deaths.

Under the empire, the Romans absorbed the mythologies of their conquered subjects, often leading to situations in which the temples and priests of traditional Italian deities existed side by side with those of foreign gods. Numerous foreign cults grew popular, such as the worship of the Egyptian Isis and the Persian Mithras. Beginning in the 2nd century, Christianity began to spread in the Empire, despite initial persecution. Beginning with Emperor Nero, Roman official policy towards Christianity was negative, and at some points, simply being a Christian could be punishable by death. Under Emperor Diocletian, the persecution of Christians reached its peak. However, it became an officially supported religion in the Roman state under Constantine I and became exponentially popular. After a brief and unsuccessful pagan revival by the emperor Julian the Apostate Christianity became the permanent religion of the empire. All religions except Christianity were prohibited in 391 by an edict of Emperor Theodosius I.

Art, music and literature

Roman painting styles show Greek influences, and surviving examples are primarily frescoes used to adorn the walls and ceilings of country villas, though Roman literature includes mentions of paintings on wood, ivory, and other materials. Several examples of Roman painting have been found at Pompeii, and from these art historians divide the history of Roman painting into four periods. The first style of Roman painting was practiced from the early 2nd century BC to the early- or mid-1st century BC. It was mainly composed of imitations of marble and masonry, though sometimes including depictions of mythological characters. The second style of Roman painting began during the early 1st century BC, and attempted to realistically depict three-dimensional architectural features and landscapes. The third style occurred during the reign of Augustus (27 BC – 14 AD), and rejected the realism of the second style in favor of simple ornamentation. A small architectural scene, landscape, or abstract design was placed in the centre with a monochrome background. The fourth style, which began in the 1st century AD, depicted scenes from mythology, while retaining architectural details and abstract patterns.

Portrait sculpture during the period utilized youthful and classical proportions, evolving later into a mixture of realism and idealism. During the Antonine and Severan periods, more ornate hair and bearding became prevalent, created with deeper cutting and drilling. Advancements were also made in relief sculptures, usually depicting Roman victories.

Latin literature was from its very inception influenced heavily by Greek authors. Some of the earliest extant works are of historical epics telling the early military history of Rome. As the Republic expanded, authors began to produce poetry, comedy, history, and tragedy.

Roman music was largely based on Greek music, and played an important part in many aspects of Roman life. In the Roman military, musical instruments such as the *tuba* (a long trumpet) or the *cornu* (similar to a French horn) were used to give various commands, while the *bucina* (possibly a trumpet or horn) and the *lituus* (probably an elongated J-shaped instrument), were used in ceremonial capacities. Music was used in the amphitheaters between fights and in the *odea*, and in these settings is known to have featured the *cornu* and the *hydraulis* (a type of water organ). The majority of religious rituals featured musical performances, with *tibiae* (double pipes) at sacrifices, cymbals and tambourines at orgiastic cults, and rattles and hymns across the spectrum. Some music historians believe that music was used at almost all public ceremonies. Music historians are not certain as to whether or not Roman musicians made a significant contribution to the theory or practice of music.

The graffiti, brothels, paintings, and sculptures found in Pompeii and Herculaneum suggest that the Romans had a very sex-saturated culture.

Games and activities

The youth of Rome had several forms of play and exercise, such as jumping, wrestling, boxing, and racing. In the countryside, pastimes for the wealthy also included fishing and hunting. The Romans also had several forms of ball playing, including one resembling handball. Dice games, board games, and gamble games were extremely popular pastimes. Women did not participate in these activities. For the wealthy, dinner parties presented an opportunity for entertainment, sometimes featuring music, dancing, and poetry readings. Plebeians sometimes enjoyed such parties through clubs or associations, although recreational dining usually meant patronizing taverns. Children entertained themselves with toys and such games as leapfrog.

A popular form of entertainment were gladiatorial combats. Gladiators fought either to the death, or to "first blood" with a variety of weapons and in a variety of different scenarios. These fights achieved their height of popularity under the emperor Claudius, who placed the final outcome of the combat firmly in the hands of the emperor with a hand gesture. Contrary to popular representations in film, several experts believe the gesture for death was not "thumbs down". Although no one is certain as to what the gestures were, some experts conclude that the emperor would signify "death" by holding a raised fist to the winning combatant and then extending his thumb upwards, while "mercy" was indicated by a raised fist with no extended thumb. Animal shows were also popular with the Romans, where foreign animals were either displayed for the public or combined with gladiatorial combat. A prisoner or gladiator, armed or unarmed, was thrown into the arena and an animal was released.

The *Circus Maximus*, another popular site in Rome, was primarily used for horse and chariot racing, and when the circus was flooded, there were even sea battles. It was also used in many other events. It could hold up to 385,000 people; people all over Rome would visit it. Two temples, one with seven large eggs and one with seven dolphins, lay in the middle of the track of Circus Maximus, and whenever the racers made a lap, one of each would be removed. This was done to keep the spectators and the racers informed on the race statistics. Other than sports, the Circus Maximus was also an area of marketing and gambling. Higher authorities, like the emperor, also attended games in the Circus Maximus, as it was rude not to. They, knights, and many other people who were involved with the race sat in reserved seats located above everyone else. It was also found rude for emperors to root for a team. The Circus Maximus was created in 600 BC and hosted the last horse-racing game in 549 AD, lasting for over a millennium.

Technology

Ancient Rome boasted the most impressive technological feats of its day, using many advancements that would be lost in the Middle Ages and not be rivaled again until the 19th and 20th centuries. But though adept at adopting and synthesizing other cultures' technologies, the Roman civilization was not especially innovative or progressive. Many practical Roman innovations were adopted from earlier Greek designs. New ideas were rarely developed. Roman society considered the articulate soldier who could wisely govern a large household the ideal, and Roman law made no provisions for intellectual property or the promotion of invention. The concept of "scientists" and "engineers" did not yet exist, and advancements were often divided based on craft, as groups of artisans jealously guarded new technologies as trade secrets. Nevertheless, a number of vital technological breakthroughs were spread and thoroughly used by Rome, contributing to an enormous degree to Rome's dominance and lasting influence in Europe.

Engineering

Roman engineering constituted a large portion of Rome's technological superiority and legacy, and contributed to the construction of hundreds of roads, bridges, aqueducts, baths, theaters and arenas. Many monuments, such as the Colosseum, Pont du Gard, and Pantheon, still remain as testaments to Roman engineering and culture.

Architecture

The Romans were particularly renowned for their architecture, which is grouped with Greek traditions into " Classical architecture". During the Roman Republic, it remained stylistically almost identical to Greek architecture. Although there were many differences from Greek architecture, Rome borrowed heavily from Greece in adhering to strict, formulaic building designs and proportions. Aside from two new orders of columns, composite and Tuscan, and from the dome, which was derived from the Etruscan arch, Rome had relatively few architectural innovations until the end of the Republic.

Then, in the 1st century BC, Romans started to widely use concrete, invented in the late 3rd century BC. It was a powerful cement derived from pozzolana, and soon supplanted marble as the chief Roman building material and allowed many daring architectural schemata. Also in the 1st century BC, Vitruvius wrote *De architectura*, possibly the first complete treatise on architecture in history. In late 1st century BC, Rome also began to use glassblowing soon after its invention in Syria about 50 BC. Mosaics took the Empire by storm after samples were retrieved during Lucius Cornelius Sulla's campaigns in Greece. Article on history of Roman concrete

Roads

Concrete made possible the paved, durable Roman roads, many of which were still in use a thousand years after the fall of Rome. The construction of a vast and efficient travel network throughout the Empire dramatically increased Rome's power and influence. It was originally constructed to allow Roman legions to be rapidly deployed. But these highways also had enormous economic significance, solidifying Rome's role as a trading crossroads—the origin of the saying "all roads lead to Rome". The Roman government maintained way stations which provided refreshments to travelers at regular intervals along the roads, constructed bridges where necessary, and established a system of horse relays for couriers that allowed a dispatch to travel up to 800 kilometers (500 mi) in 24 hours.

The Appian Way (*Via Appia*), a road connecting the city of Rome to the southern parts of Italy, remains usable even today.

Aqueducts

The Romans constructed numerous aqueducts to supply water to cities and industrial sites and to assist in their agriculture. The city of Rome was supplied by 11 aqueducts with a combined length of 350 kilometres (220 mi). Most aqueducts were constructed below the surface, with only small portions above ground supported by arches. Sometimes, where depressions deeper than 50 metres (165 ft) had to be crossed, inverted siphons were used to force water uphill.

Pont du Gard in France is a Roman aqueduct built in c. 19 BC. It is one of France's top tourist attractions and a World Heritage Site.

Sewers

The Romans also made major advancements in sanitation. Romans were particularly famous for their public baths, called *thermae*, which were used for both hygienic and social purposes. Many Roman houses came to have flush toilets and indoor plumbing, and a complex sewer system, the *Cloaca Maxima*, was used to drain the local marshes and carry waste into the Tiber river. Some historians have speculated that the use of lead pipes in the sewer and plumbing systems led to widespread lead poisoning which contributed to the decline in birth rate and general decay of Roman society leading up to the fall of Rome. However, lead content would have been minimized because the flow of water from aqueducts could not be shut off; it ran continuously through public and private outlets into the drains, and only a small number of taps were in use.

Military

The early Roman army (c. 500 BC) was, like those of other contemporary city-states influenced by Greek civilization, a citizen *militia* which practiced hoplite tactics. It was small (the population of free males of military age was then about 9,000) and organized in five classes (in parallel to the *comitia centuriata*, the body of citizens organized politically), with three providing hoplites and two providing light infantry. The early Roman army was tactically limited and its stance during this period was essentially defensive. By the 3rd century BC, the Romans abandoned the hoplite formation in favour of a more flexible system in which smaller groups of 120 (or in some cases 60) men called *maniples* could maneuver more independently on the battlefield. Thirty maniples arranged in three lines with supporting troops constituted a legion, totaling between 4,000 and 5,000 men. The early Republican legion consisted of five sections, each of which was equipped differently and had different places in formation: the three lines of manipular heavy infantry (*hastati*, *principes* and *triarii)*, a force of light infantry (*velites*), and the cavalry (*equites*). With the new organization came a new orientation toward the offensive and a much more aggressive posture toward adjoining city-states.

Roman soldiers on the cast of Trajan's Column in the Victoria and Albert museum, London.

At nominal full strength, an early Republican legion would have included 3,600 to 4,800 heavy infantry, several hundred light infantry and several hundred cavalrymen, for a total of 4,000 to 5,000 men. Legions were often significantly understrength from recruitment failures or following periods of active service due to accidents, battle casualties, disease and desertion. During the Civil War, Pompey's legions in the east were at full strength because recently recruited, while Caesar's legions were in many cases well below nominal strength after long active service in Gaul. This pattern also held true for auxiliary forces.

As described by Goldsworthy, both the Greek and Roman phalanx and the early Republican legions were intended to fight large scale battles involving a single quick, decisive clash with the enemy. At this they were generally very successful. At the time of the Marian reforms in the late Republic (c. 100 BC), further organizational change created a more flexible, resilient and versatile force. The legion was now divided into ten cohorts of 480 men each, comprising three of the old maniples (now called *centuriae* or "centuries" commanded by a centurion). Moreover, the *velites* (light infantry) and (probably) the *equites* were eliminated and replaced by *auxilia* (auxiliary units of cavalry, archers and slingers, and light infantry, usually recruited from non-citizens). There were no other subdivisions within a legion, but many men with specialized skills—medics, engineers, technicians, artillerymen—were included among the legionaries. The centuries in a cohort had a unified command structure and were experienced at working with the other centuries in the cohort as a unit. A legion organized in cohorts was easier to control, and cohorts could easily be detached and act independently where that was useful on the battlefield or a separate smaller force was needed. Accordingly, legions organized in cohorts could conduct operations of almost any scale.

Three long-term trends characterized the development of the Roman army over its history: increasing professionalization, a widening of the base for recruitment, and an increase in the variety and flexibility of military units. Until the late Republican period, the typical legionary was a property-owning citizen farmer from a rural area (an *adsiduus*) who served for particular (often annual) campaigns, and who supplied his own equipment and, in the case of *equites*, his own mount. Harris suggests that down to 200 BC, the average rural farmer (who survived) might participate in six or seven campaigns. Freedmen and slaves (wherever resident) and urban citizens did not serve except in rare emergencies. After 200 BC, economic conditions in rural areas deteriorated as manpower needs increased, so that the property qualifications for service were gradually reduced. Beginning with Gaius Marius in 107 BC, citizens without property and some urban-dwelling citizens (*proletarii*) were enlisted and provided with equipment, although most legionaries continued to come from rural areas. Terms of service became continuous and long—up to twenty years if emergencies required it although Brunt argues that six or seven years was more typical. Beginning in

the 3rd century BC, legionaries were paid *stipendium* (amounts are disputed but Caesar famously "doubled" payments to his troops to 225 *denarii* a year), could anticipate booty and donatives (distributions of plunder by commanders) from successful campaigns and, beginning at the time of Marius, often were granted allotments of land upon retirement. Cavalry and light infantry attached to a legion (the *auxilia*) were often recruited in the areas where the legion served. These troops were familiar with local conditions and fought in a style adapted to the local terrain. Caesar formed a legion, the Fifth Alaudae, from non-citizens in Transalpine Gaul to serve in his campaigns in Gaul. During the Civil War when large armies were required, both sides raised legions from non-citizens, as Goldsworthy notes, "without bothering with the formality of granting citizenship to the men on enlistment." By the time of Caesar Augustus, the ideal of the citizen-soldier had been abandoned and the legions had become fully professional. Legionaries were paid 900 *sesterces* a year and could expect a payment of 12,000 *sesterces* on retirement.

At the end of the Civil War, Augustus reorganized Roman military forces, discharging soldiers and disbanding legions. He retained 28 legions, which were now based in permanent camps on the frontier along the Rhine and Danube Rivers and in Syria. Composed of about 150,000 citizen legionaries, an approximately equal number of *auxilia* and a navy of unknown size, this establishment remained the standard until late in the history of the Empire. During the Principate, with a few exceptions, warfare was conducted on a smaller scale. The *auxilia* were not organized into larger units but remained independent cohorts, and legionary troops themselves often operated as groups of cohorts rather than as full legions. A new versatile type of unit, the *cohortes equitatae*, combining cavalry and legionaries in a single formation could be stationed at garrisons or outposts, could fight on their own as balanced small forces or could combine with other similar units as a larger legion-sized force. This increase in organizational flexibility over time helped ensure the long-term success of Roman military forces.

The Emperor Gallienus (253–268 AD) began yet another reorganization that created the final military structure of the late Empire. Withdrawing some legionaries from the fixed bases on the border, Gallienus created mobile forces (the *Comitatenses* or field armies) and stationed them behind and at some distance from the borders as a strategic reserve. This reduced the need to move troops from one province to another to reinforce the border in case of attacks. The border troops (*limitanei*) stationed at fixed bases continued to be the first line of defense. The Emperor Diocletian (284–305 AD) reversed this reorganization but it became the norm by the middle of the 4th century AD. Diocletian also introduced the so-called Tetrarchy under which the Eastern and Western halves of the Empire were each governed by an "Augustus" (Emperor) and a "Caesar" (junior Emperor), who resided at different locations near the borders and commanded troops within their respective regions. The basic unit of the field army was the "regiment", *legiones* or *auxilia* for infantry and *vexellationes* for cavalry. Evidence suggests that nominal strengths may have been 1,200 men for infantry regiments and 600 for cavalry, although many records show lower actual troop levels (800 and 400). Many infantry and cavalry regiments operated in pairs under the command of a *comes*. In addition to Roman troops, the field armies included regiments of "barbarians" recruited from allied tribes and known as *foederati*. By 400 AD, *foederati* regiments had become permanently established units of the Roman army, paid and equipped by the Empire, led by a Roman tribune and used just as Roman units were used. In addition to the *foederati*, the Empire also used groups of barbarians to fight along with the legions as "allies" without integration into the field armies. Under the command of the senior Roman general present, they were led at lower levels by their own officers.

The nature of military leadership evolved greatly over the course of the history of Rome. Under the monarchy, the hoplite armies would have been led by the kings of Rome. During the early and middle Roman Republic, military forces were under the command of one of the two elected consuls for the year. During the later Republic, members of the Roman Senatorial elite, as part of the normal sequence of elected public offices known as the *cursus honorum*, would have served first as *quaestor* (often posted as deputies to field commanders), then as *praetor* (sometimes posted as provincial governors in charge of military forces in the relevant province), then as consul (supreme command of all military forces). Following the end of a term as praetor or consul, a Senator might be

appointed by the Senate as a *propraetor* or *proconsul* (depending on the highest office previously held) to govern a foreign province. More junior officers (down to but not including the level of centurion) were selected by their commanders from their own *clientelae* or those recommended by political allies among the Senatorial elite. Under Augustus, whose most important political priority was to place the military under a permanent and unitary command, the Emperor was the legal commander of each legion but exercised that command through a *legatus* (legate) he appointed from the Senatorial elite. In a province with a single legion, the legate would command the legion (*legatus legionis*) and also serve as provincial governor, while in a province with more than one legion, each legion would be commanded by a legate and the legates would be commanded by the provincial governor (also a legate but of higher rank). During the later stages of the Imperial period (beginning perhaps with Diocletian), the Augustan model was abandoned. Provincial governors were stripped of military authority, and command of the armies in a group of provinces was given to generals (*duces*) appointed by the Emperor. These were no longer members of the Roman elite but men who came up through the ranks and had seen much practical soldiering. With increasing frequency, these men attempted (sometimes successfully) to usurp the positions of the Emperors who had appointed them. Decreased resources, increasing political chaos and civil war eventually left the Western Empire vulnerable to attack and takeover by neighboring barbarian peoples.

Comparatively less is known about the Roman navy than the Roman army. Prior to the middle of the 3rd century BC, officials known as *duumviri navales* commanded a fleet of twenty ships used mainly to control piracy. This fleet was given up in 278 AD and replaced by allied forces. The First Punic War required that Rome build large fleets, and it did so largely with the assistance of and financing from allies. This reliance on allies continued to the end of the Roman Republic. The quinquireme was the main warship on both sides of the Punic Wars and remained the mainstay of Roman naval forces until replaced by the time of Caesar Augustus by lighter and more maneuverable vessels. As compared with a trireme, the quinquireme permitted the use of a mix of experienced and inexperienced crewmen (an advantage for a primarily land-based power), and its lesser maneuverability permitted the Romans to adopt and perfect boarding tactics using a troop of approximately 40 marines in lieu of the ram. Ships were commanded by a *navarch*, a rank equivalent to a centurion, who were usually not citizens. Potter suggests that because the fleet was dominated by non-Romans, the navy was considered non-Roman and allowed to atrophy in times of peace.

Available information suggests that by the time of the late Empire (350 AD), the Roman navy comprised a number of fleets including both warships and merchant vessels for transportation and supply. Warships were oared sailing galleys with three to five banks of oarsmen. Fleet bases included such ports as Ravenna, Arles, Aquilea, Misenum and the mouth of the Somme River in the West and Alexandria and Rhodes in the East. Flotillas of small river craft (*classes*) were part of the *limitanei* (border troops) during this period, based at fortified river harbors along the Rhine and the Danube. The fact that prominent generals commanded both armies and fleets suggests that naval forces were treated as auxiliaries to the army and not as an independent service. The details of command structure and fleet strengths during this period are not well known although it is known that fleets were commanded by prefects.

Scholarly studies

The interest in studying ancient Rome arose presumably during the Age of Enlightenment in France. Charles Montesquieu wrote a work *Reflections on the Causes of the Grandeur and Declension of the Romans*. The first major work was *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbon, which encompassed the period from the end of 2nd century to the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453. Like Montesquieu Gibbon paid high tribute to the virtue of Roman citizens. Barthold Georg Niebuhr was a founder of the criticism and wrote *The Roman History*, carried until the First Punic war. Niebuhr has made an attempt to determine the way the Roman tradition appeared. According to him, Romans, like other people, had a historical ethos which was

preserved mainly in the noble families. During the Napoleonic period the work titled *The History of Romans* by Victor Duruy appeared. It highlighted the Caesarean period popular at the time. *History of Rome*, *Roman constitutional law* and *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, all by Theodor Mommsen, became very important milestones. Later the work *Greatness and Decline of Rome* by Guglielmo Ferrero was published. The Russian work *Очерки по истории римского землевладения, преимущественно в эпоху Империи* (*The Outlines on Roman Landownership History, Mainly During the Empire*) by Ivan Grevs contained information on the economy of Pomponius Atticus, one of the greatest landowners during the end of the Republic.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Rome"

Assyria

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology

Assyria was originally (in the Middle Bronze Age) a region on the Upper Tigris river, named for its original capital, the ancient city of Assur (Akkadian: *Aššur*; Arabic: أشور *Aššûr*; Hebrew: אַשּׁוּר *Aššûr*; Aramaic: *Ashur*).

Later, as a nation and empire that came to control all of the Fertile Crescent, Egypt and much of Anatolia, the term "Assyria proper" referred to roughly the northern half of Mesopotamia (the southern half being Babylonia), with Nineveh as its capital.

The Assyrian kings controlled a large kingdom at three different times in history. These are called the **Old** (20th to 15th c. BC), **Middle** (15th to 10th c. BC), and **Neo-Assyrian** (911–612 BC) kingdoms, or periods, of which the last is the most well known and best documented.

The Assyrian homeland was located near a mountainous region, extending along the Tigris as far as the high Gordiaean or Carduchian mountain range of Armenia, sometimes known as the "Mountains of Ashur".

Assyrians invented excavation to undermine city walls, battering rams to knock down gates, as well as the concept of a corps of engineers, who bridged rivers with pontoons or provided soldiers with inflatable skins for swimming.

Early history

The most neolithic site in Assyria is at Tell Hassuna, the centre of the Hassuna culture.

Of the early history of the kingdom of Assyria, little is positively known. According to some Judaeo-Christian traditions, the city of Ashur (also spelled Assur or Aššur) was founded by Ashur the son of Shem, who was deified by later generations as the city's patron god.

The upper Tigris River valley seems to have been ruled by Sumer, Akkad, and northern Babylonia in its earliest stages; once a part of Sargon the Great's empire, it was destroyed by barbarians in the Gutian period, then rebuilt, and ended up being governed as part of the Empire of the 3rd dynasty of Ur.

Ancient Mesopotamia

Euphrates · Tigris

Empires / Cities

Sumer

Old Assyrian city-states and kingdoms

The first inscriptions of Assyrian rulers appear after 2000 BC. Assyria then consisted of a number of city states and small Semitic kingdoms. The foundation of the Assyrian monarchy was traditionally ascribed to Zulilu, who is said to have lived after Bel-kap-kapu (Bel-kapkapi or Belkabi, ca. 1900 BC), the ancestor of Shalmaneser I.

City state of Ashur

The city-state of Ashur had extensive contact with cities on the Anatolian plateau. The Assyrians established "merchant colonies" in Cappadocia, *e.g.,* at Kanesh (modern Kültepe) circa 1920 BC– 1840 BC and 1798 BC– 1740 BC. These colonies, called *karum*, the Akkadian word for 'port', were attached to Anatolian cities, but physically separate, and had special tax status. They must have arisen from a long tradition of trade between Ashur and the Anatolian cities, but no archaeological or written records show this. The trade consisted of metal (perhaps lead or tin; the terminology here is not entirely clear) and textiles from Assyria, that were traded for precious metals in Anatolia.

Kingdom of Shamshi-Adad I

The city of Ashur was conquered by Shamshi-Adad I (1813 BC– 1791 BC) in the expansion of Amorite tribes from the Khabur river delta. He put his son Ishme-Dagan on the throne of a nearby city, Ekallatum, and allowed the former Anatolian trade to continue. Shamshi-Adad I also conquered the kingdom of Mari on the Euphrates putting another of his sons, Yasmah-Adad on the throne there. Shamshi-Adad's kingdom now encompassed the whole of northern Mesopotamia. He himself resided in a new capital city founded in the Khabur valley, called Shubat-Enlil.

Ishme-Dagan inherited the kingdom, but Yasmah-Adad was overthrown, and Mari was lost. The new king of Mari allied himself with Hammurabi of Babylon. Assyria now faced the rising power of Babylon in the south. Ishme-Dagan responded by making an alliance with the enemies of Babylon, and the power struggle continued for decades.

Assyria reduced to vassal states

Hammurabi eventually prevailed over Ishme-Dagan, and conquered Ashur for Babylon. With Hammurabi, the various *karum* in Anatolia ceased trade activity —probably because the goods of Assyria were now being traded with the Babylonians' partners.

Assyria was ruled by vassal kings dependent on the Babylonians for a century. After Babylon fell to the Kassites, the Hurrians dominated the northern region, including Assur.

There are dozens of Mesopotamian cuneiform texts from this period, with precise observations of solar and lunar eclipses, that have been used as 'anchors' in the various attempts to define the chronology of Babylonia and Assyria for the early second millennium (i.e., the 'high', 'middle', and 'low' chronologies).

Eridu · Kish · Uruk · Ur
Lagash · Nippur · Ngirsu

Elam

Susa

Akkadian Empire

Akkad · Mari

Amorites

Isin · Larsa

Babylonia

Babylon · Chaldea

Assyria

Assur · Nimrud
Dur-Sharrukin · Nineveh

Hittites · Kassites
Hurrians / Mitanni

Chronology

Mesopotamia
Sumer (king list)
Kings of Assyria
Kings of Babylon

Mythology

Enûma Elish · Gilgamesh
Assyro-Babylonian religion

Language

Sumerian · Elamite
Akkadian · Aramaic
Hurrian · Hittite

Middle Assyrian period

(Scholars variously date the beginning of the "Middle Assyrian period" to either the fall of the Old Assyrian kingdom of Shamshi-Adad I, or to the ascension of Ashur-uballit I to the throne of Assyria.)

Ashur-uballit I

In the 15th century BC, Saushtatar, king of *Hanilgalbat* (Hurrians of Mitanni), sacked Ashur and made Assyria a vassal. Assyria paid tribute to Hanilgalbat until Mitanni power collapsed from Hittite pressure from the north-west and Assyrian pressure from the east, enabling Ashur-uballit I (1365 BC– 1330 BC) to again make Assyria an independent and conquering power at the expense of Babylonia; and a time came when the Kassite king in Babylon was glad to marry the daughter of Ashur-uballit, whose letters to Akhenaten of Egypt form part of the Amarna letters. This marriage led to disastrous results, as the Kassite faction at court murdered the Babylonian king and placed a pretender on the throne. Assur-uballit promptly marched into Babylonia and avenged his son-in-law, making Kurigalzu of the royal line king there.

Map of the Ancient Near East during the Amarna period, showing the great powers of the day: Egypt (green), Hatti (yellow), the Kassite kingdom of Babylon (purple), Assyria (grey), and Mitanni (red). Lighter areas show direct control, darker areas represent spheres of influence. The extent of the Achaean/Mycenaean civilization is shown in orange.

Assyrian expansion

Hanilgalbat was finally conquered under Adad-nirari I, who described himself as a "Great-King" (*Sharru rabû*) in letters to the Hittite rulers. The successor of Adad-nirari I, Shalmaneser I (c. 1300 BC), threw off the pretense of Babylonian suzerainty, made Kalhu his capital, and continued expansion to the northwest, mainly at the expense of the Hittites, reaching Carchemish and beyond.

Shalmaneser's son and successor, Tukulti-Ninurta I, deposed Kadashman-Buriash of Babylon and ruled there himself as king for seven years, taking on the old title "King of Sumer and Akkad". Another weak period for Assyria followed when Babylon revolted against Tukulti-Ninurta, and later even made Assyria tributary during the reigns of the Babylonian kings Melishipak II and Marduk-apal-iddin I.

The correct chronology of these Assyrian kings is still is much debated. There are some crucial solar eclipse records. Wikipedia's Assyrian eclipse page refers to four such eclipses. For example, the Assyrian eclipse associated with June 15, 763 BC is widely accepted by the defenders of a middle chronology, but three ignored solar eclipses from the reign of Esarhaddon would affect the calculation drastically.

Tiglath-Pileser I reaches the Mediterranean Sea

As the Hittite empire collapsed from onslaught of the Phrygians (called Mushki in Assyrian annals), Babylon and Assyria began to vie for Amorite regions, formerly under firm Hittite control. When their forces encountered one another in this region, the Assyrian king Ashur-resh-ishi I met and defeated

 Nebuchadnezzar I of Babylon.

The son of Ashur-resh-ishi's, Tiglath-Pileser I, may be regarded as the founder of the first Assyrian empire. In 1120 BC, he crossed the Euphrates, capturing Carchemish, and defeated the Mushki and the remnants of the Hittites— even claiming to reach the Black Sea. He advanced to the Mediterranean, subjugating Phoenicia, where he hunted wild bulls. He also marched into Babylon twice, assuming the old title "King of Sumer and Akkad", although he was unable to depose the actual king in Babylonia, where the old Kassite dynasty had now succumbed to an Elamite one.

Society in the Middle Assyrian period

Assyria had difficulties with keeping the trade routes open. Unlike the situation in the Old Assyrian period, the Anatolian metal trade was effectively dominated by the Hittites and the Hurrians. These peoples now controlled the Mediterranean ports, while the Kassites controlled the river route south to the Persian Gulf.

The Middle Assyrian kingdom was well organized, and in the firm control of the king, who also functioned as the High Priest of Ashur, the state god. He had certain obligations to fulfill in the cult, and had to provide resources for the temples. The priesthood became a major power in Assyrian society. Conflicts with the priesthood are thought to have been behind the murder of king Tukulti-Ninurta I.

The main Assyrian cities of the middle period were Ashur, Kalhu (Nimrud) and Nineveh, all situated in the Tigris River valley. At the end of the Bronze Age, Nineveh was much smaller than Babylon, but still one of the world's major cities (population ca. 33,000). By the end of the Neo-Assyrian period, it had grown to a population of some 120,000, and was possibly the largest city of that time.

All free male citizens were obliged to serve in the army for a time, a system which was called the *ilku*-service. The Assyrian law code, notable for its repressive attitude towards women in their society, was compiled during this period.

Neo-Assyrian Empire

The Neo-Assyrian Empire is usually considered to have begun with the accession of Adad-nirari II, in 911 BC, lasting until the fall of Nineveh at the hands of the Babylonians in 612 BC.

Map of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and its expansions.

In the Middle Assyrian period, Assyria had been a minor kingdom of northern Mesopotamia, competing for dominance with Babylonia to the south. Beginning with the campaigns of Adad-nirari II, Assyria became a great regional power, growing to be a serious threat to 25th dynasty Egypt. It began reaching the peak of its power with the reforms of Tiglath-Pileser III (ruled 745– 727 BC). This period, which included the Sargonic dynasty, is well-referenced in several sources, including the *Assyro-Babylonian Chronicles* and the *Hebrew Bible*. Assyria finally succumbed to the rise of the neo-Babylonian Chaldean dynasty with the sack of Nineveh in 612 BC.

Language

The ancient people of Assyria spoke an Assyrian dialect of the Akkadian language, a branch of the Semitic languages. The first inscriptions, called Old Assyrian (OA), were made in the Old Assyrian period. In the Neo-Assyrian period the Aramaic language became increasingly common, more so than Akkadian - this was thought to be largely due to the mass deportations undertaken by Assyrian kings, in which large Aramaic-speaking populations, conquered by the Assyrians, were relocated to other parts of the empire. The ancient Assyrians also used the Sumerian language in their literature and liturgy, although to a more limited extent in the Middle- and Neo-Assyrian periods, when Akkadian became the main literary language.

The utter and complete destruction of the Assyrian capitals of Nineveh and Assur by the Babylonians and Medes ensured that the bilingual elite, perhaps the few remaining still competent in Akkadian, were wiped out. By the 6th century B.C., much of the Assyrian population that survived used Aramaic and not the cuneiform Akkadian. In time, Akkadian would no longer be used by the Assyrians, although many aspects of the culture associated, such as naming with Assur, continued, and do so today.

Arts and sciences

Assyrian art preserved to the present day predominantly dates to the Neo-Assyrian period. Art depicting battle scenes, and occasionally the impaling of whole villages in gory detail, was intended to show the power of the emperor, and was generally made for propaganda purposes. These stone reliefs lined the walls in the royal palaces where foreigners were received by the king. Other stone reliefs depict the king with different deities and conducting religious ceremonies. A lot of stone reliefs were discovered in the royal palaces at Nimrud (Kalhu) and Khorsabad (Dur-Sharrukin). A rare discovery of metal plates belonging to wooden doors was made at Balawat (Imgur-Enlil).

Relief from Assyrian capital of Dur Sharrukin, showing transport of Lebanese cedar (8th century BC)

Assyrian sculpture reached a high level of refinement in the Neo-Assyrian period. One prominent example is the winged bull *Lamassu*, or shedu that guard the entrances to the king's court. These were apotropaic meaning they were intended to ward off evil. C. W. Ceram states in *The March of Archaeology* that *lamassi* were typically sculpted with five legs so that four legs were always visible, whether the image were viewed frontally or in profile.

Since works of precious gems and metals usually do not survive the ravages of time, we are lucky to have some fine pieces of Assyrian jewelry. These were found in royal tombs at Nimrud.

There is ongoing discussion among academics over the nature of the Nimrud lens, a piece of rock crystal unearthed by Austen Henry Layard in 1850, in the Nimrud palace complex in northern Iraq. A small minority believe that it is evidence for the existence of ancient Assyrian telescopes, which could explain the great accuracy of Assyrian astronomy. Other suggestions include its use as a magnifying glass for jewellers, or as a decorative furniture inlay. The Nimrud Lens is held in the British Museum.

Legacy and rediscovery

Achaemenid Assyria retained a separate identity for some time, official correspondence being in Imperial Aramaic, and there was even an attempted revolt of the two provinces of Mada and Athura in 520 BC. Under Seleucid rule, however, Aramaic gave way to Greek as the official language. Aramaic was marginalised, but remained spoken in Judea (Biblical Aramaic), the Syrian Desert (Nabataeans) and Khuzestan (Mandaic).

Classical historiographers had only retained a very dim picture of Assyria. It was remembered that there had been an Assyrian empire predating the Persian one, but all particulars were lost. Thus Jerome's *Chronicon* lists 36 kings of the Assyrians, beginning with Ninus, son of Belus, down to Sardanapalus, the last king of the Assyrians before the empire fell to Arbaces the Median. Almost none of these have been substantiated as historical, with the exception of the Neo-Assyrian and Babylonian rulers listed in Ptolemy's Canon, beginning with Nabonassar.

With the rise of Syriac Christianity, Aramaic enjoyed a renaissance as a classical language in the 2nd to 8th centuries AD, and the modern Assyrian people continue to speak Neo-Aramaic dialects.

The modern discovery of Babylonia and Assyria begins with excavations in Nineveh in 1845, which revealed the library of Ashurbanipal. Decipherment of cuneiform was a formidable task that took more than a decade, but by 1857, the Royal Asiatic Society was convinced that reliable reading of cuneiform texts

was possible. Assyriology has since pieced together the formerly forgotten history of Mesopotamia. In the wake of the archaeological and philological rediscovery of ancient Assyria, Assyrian nationalism has come to strongly identify with ancient Assyria.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assyria"

Babylonia

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology

Babylonia was a state in southern Mesopotamia, in modern Iraq, combining the territories of Sumer and Akkad. The earliest mention of the city of Babylon can be found in a tablet from the reign of Sargon of Akkad, dating back to the 23rd century BC.

History

The Akkadians, a Semitic people, had early on come to dominate the region around Kish — including Babylon and the parts of Mesopotamia just north of Sumer, whose civilization deeply influenced that of Akkad. An area intensely irrigated, and strategically located for trade routes and commerce, it was often under threat from outsiders throughout its history.

By the "neo-Sumerian" or Ur-III period, Babylon had become a centre for Amorite migrants from west of the Euphrates who had settled north of Sumer. The Amorites were another Semitic-speaking people, who were at first regarded as uncivilized and nomadic shepherds by the more settled, crop-growing, Akkadians.

Old Babylonian period

At around 2000 BC, following the collapse of the " Ur-III" dynasty at the hands of the Elamites, Semitic Amorites from west of the Euphrates River gained control over most of Mesopotamia, where they formed a series of small kingdoms. During the first centuries of what is called the "Amorite period", the most powerful city state was Isin, although Shamshi-Adad I came close to uniting the more northern regions. One of these Amorite dynasties was established in the city-state of Babylon, which would ultimately take over the others and form the first Babylonian empire, during what is also called the Old Babylonian Period.

Ancient Mesopotamia

Euphrates · Tigris

Empires / Cities

Sumer
Eridu · Kish · Uruk · Ur
Lagash · Nippur · Ngirsu

Elam
Susa

Akkadian Empire
Akkad · Mari

Amorites
Isin · Larsa

Babylonia
Babylon · Chaldea

Assyria
Assur · Nimrud
Dur-Sharrukin · Nineveh

Hittites · Kassites
Hurrians / Mitanni

Chronology
Mesopotamia
Sumer (king list)

The city of Babylon obtained hegemony over Mesopotamia under their sixth ruler, Hammurabi (c. 1780– c. 1750 BC; dates highly uncertain). He was a very efficient ruler, writing an influential law code, Hammurabi's Code and giving the region stability after turbulent times, thereby transforming it into the central power of Mesopotamia.

Kings of Assyria
Kings of Babylon

Mythology

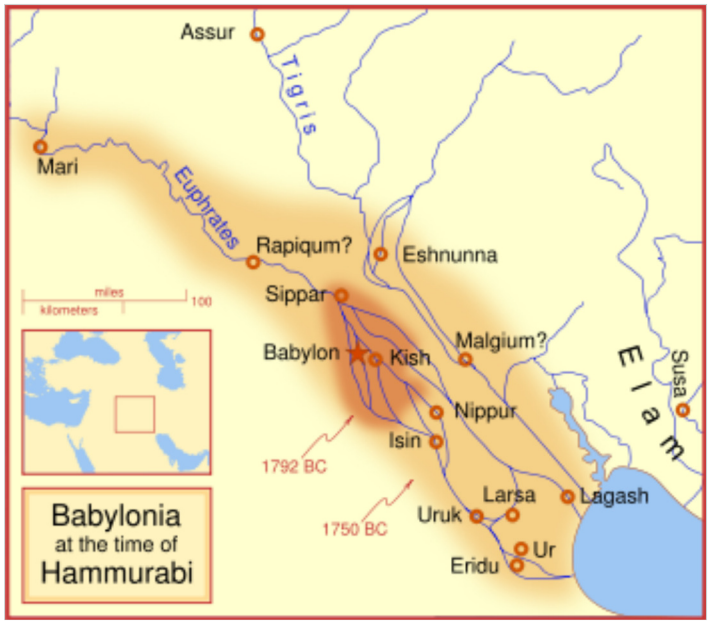
Enûma Elish · Gilgamesh
Assyro-Babylonian religion

Language

Sumerian · Elamite
Akkadian · Aramaic
Hurrian · Hittite

Babylonian beliefs held the king as an agent of Marduk, and the city of Babylon as a "holy city" where any legitimate ruler of Mesopotamia had to be crowned. A natural development was the establishment of a bureaucracy, with taxation and centralized government, to allow the king to exert his control.

A great literary revival followed the recovery of Babylonian independence. One of the most important works of this " First Dynasty of Babylon", as it was called by the native historians, was the compilation of a code of laws. This was made by order of Hammurabi after the expulsion of the Elamites and the settlement of his kingdom. In 1901, a copy of the Code of Hammurabi was discovered by J. De Morgan and V. Scheil at Susa, where it had been taken as plunder. That copy is now in the Louvre.



The extent of the Babylonian Empire at the start and end of Hammurabi's reign

The Babylonians engaged in regular trade with city-states to the west; with Babylonian officials or troops sometimes passing to Syria and Canaan, and Amorite merchants operating throughout Mesopotamia. The Babylonian monarchy's western connections remained strong for quite some time. An Amorite named Abi-ramu or Abram was the father of a witness to a deed dated to the reign of Hammurabi's grandfather; Ammi-Ditana, great-grandson of Hammurabi, still titled himself "king of the land of the Amorites". Ammi-Ditana's father and son also bore Canaanite names: Abi-Eshuh and Ammisaduqa.

The armies of Babylonia were well-disciplined, and they conquered the city-states of Isin, Eshnunna, Uruk, and the kingdom of Mari. But Mesopotamia had no natural, defensible boundaries, making it vulnerable to attack. Trade and culture thrived for around 150 years until Babylon was sacked by the Hittites in the reign of Samsu-Ditana, ushering in the age of the Kassites who filled in the power vacuum.

The date of the sack of Babylon by the Hittite king Mursilis I is considered crucial to the various calculations of the early Chronology of the ancient Near East, since both a solar and a lunar eclipse are said to have occurred in the month of Sivan that year, according to ancient records. The event has been variously calculated to dates ranging from 1499 BC to 1659 BC; the "Middle Chronology" most widely used today places it in 1595 BC.

Kassite period

The extent of the Babylonian Empire during the Kassite dynasty

The 15th king of the dynasty was Samsu-Ditana, son of Ammisaduqa. He was overthrown following the **sack of Babylon** by the Hittite king Mursili I, and Babylonia was turned over to the Kassites (Kossaeans) from the mountains of Iran, with whom Samsu-Iluna had already come into conflict in his 6th year.

The fall of Babylon is taken as a fixed point in the discussion of the chronology of the Ancient Near East. Suggestions for its precise date vary by as much as 150 years, corresponding to the uncertainty regarding the length of the "Dark Age" of the ensuing Bronze Age collapse, resulting in the shift of the entire Bronze Age chronology of Mesopotamia with regard to the chronology of Ancient Egypt. Possible dates for the sack of Babylon are:

- ultra-short chronology: 1499 BC
- short chronology: 1531 BC
- middle chronology: 1595 BC
- long chronology: 1651 BC

The Kassite dynasty was founded by Kandis or Gandash of Mari. The Kassites renamed Babylon "*Kar-Duniash*", and their rule lasted for 576 years. With this foreign dominion — that offers a striking analogy to the contemporary rule of the Hyksos in ancient Egypt — Babylonia lost its empire over western Asia. The high-priests of Ashur made themselves kings of Assyria. Most divine attributes ascribed to the Semitic kings of Babylonia disappeared at this time; the title of God was never given to a Kassite sovereign. However, Babylon continued to be the capital of the kingdom and the 'holy' city of western Asia, where the priests were all-powerful, and the only place where the right to inheritance of the old Babylonian empire could be conferred.

The Kassite period lasted for several centuries, until 1125 BC, when Babylon was conquered by Shutruk-Nahhunte of Elam, and re-conquered a few years later by Nebuchadrezzar I.

Early Iron Age

In the Early Iron Age, from 1125 to 732 BC, Babylon was again ruled by native dynasties, beginning with Nebuchadrezzar I of Isin (Dynasty IV). Dynasty IX begins with Nabonassar, whose rule (from 748 BC) heads Ptolemy's Canon of Kings. In 729 BC, Babylon was conquered into the Neo-Assyrian Empire by Tiglath-Pileser III and remained under Assyrian rule for a century, until the 620s BC revolt of Nabopolassar.

Neo-Babylonian Empire (Chaldean Era)

Through the centuries of Assyrian domination, Babylonia enjoyed a prominent status, or revolted at the slightest indication that it did not. The Assyrians always managed to restore Babylonian loyalty, however, whether through granting of increased privileges, or militarily. That finally changed in 627 BC with the death of the last strong Assyrian ruler, Ashurbanipal, and Babylonia rebelled under Nabopolassar the Chaldean the following year. With help from the Medes, Nineveh was sacked in 612 BC, and the seat of empire was again transferred to Babylonia.

The Middle East, c. 600 BC, showing extent of Chaldean rule.

Nabopolassar was followed by his son Nebuchadnezzar II, whose reign of 43 years made Babylon once more the mistress of the civilized world, including the conquering of Phoenicia in 585 BC. Only a small fragment of his annals has been discovered, relating to his invasion of Egypt in 567 BC, and referring to "Phut of the Ionians".

Of the reign of the last Babylonian king, Nabonidus (*Nabu-na'id*), and the conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus, there is a fair amount of information available. This is chiefly derived from a chronological tablet containing the annals of Nabonidus, supplemented by another inscription of Nabonidus where he recounts his restoration of the temple of the Moon-god at Harran; as well as by a proclamation of Cyrus issued shortly after his formal recognition as king of Babylonia. It was in the sixth year of Nabonidus (549 BC) that Cyrus, the Achaemenid Persian "king of Anshan" in Elam, revolted against his suzerain Astyages, "king of the Manda" or Medes, at Ecbatana. Astyages' army betrayed him to his enemy, and Cyrus established himself at Ecbatana, thus putting an end to the empire of the Medes. Three years later Cyrus had become king of all Persia, and was engaged in a campaign in the north of Mesopotamia. Meanwhile, Nabonidus had established a camp in the desert, near the southern frontier of his kingdom, leaving his son Belshazzar (*Belsharutsur*) in command of the army.

In 539 BC Cyrus invaded Babylonia. A battle was fought at Opis in the month of June, where the Babylonians were defeated; and immediately afterwards Sippara surrendered to the invader. Nabonidus fled to Babylon, where he was pursued by Gobryas, and on the 16th of *Tammuz*, two days after the capture of Sippara, "the soldiers of Cyrus entered Babylon without fighting." Nabonidus was dragged from his hiding-place, where the services continued without interruption. Cyrus did not arrive until the 3rd of *Marchesvan* (October), Gobryas having acted for him in his absence. Gobryas was now made governor of the province of Babylon, and a few days afterwards the son of Nabonidus died. A public mourning followed, lasting six days, and Cambyses accompanied the corpse to the tomb.

Cyrus now claimed to be the legitimate successor of the ancient Babylonian kings and the avenger of Bel-Marduk, who was assumed to be wrathful at the impiety of Nabonidus in removing the images of the local gods from their ancestral shrines, to his capital Babylon. Nabonidus, in fact, had excited a strong feeling against himself by attempting to centralize the religion of Babylonia in the temple of Merodach (Marduk) at Babylon, and while he had thus alienated the local priesthoods, the military party despised him on account of his antiquarian tastes. He seems to have left the defense of his kingdom to others, occupying himself with the more congenial work of excavating the foundation records of the temples and determining the dates of their builders.

The invasion of Babylonia by Cyrus was doubtless facilitated by the existence of a disaffected party in the state, as well as by the presence of foreign forced exiles like the Jews, who had been planted in the midst of the country. One of the first acts of Cyrus accordingly was to allow these exiles to return to their own homes, carrying with them the images of their gods and their sacred vessels. The permission to do so was embodied in a proclamation, whereby the conqueror

endeavored to justify his claim to the Babylonian throne. The feeling was still strong that none had a right to rule over western Asia until he had been consecrated to the office by Bel and his priests; and accordingly, Cyrus henceforth assumed the imperial title of "King of Babylon."

A year before Cyrus' death, in 529 BC, he elevated his son Cambyses II in the government, making him king of Babylon, while he reserved for himself the fuller title of "king of the (other) provinces" of the empire. It was only when Darius Hystaspis acquired the Persian throne and ruled it as a representative of the Zoroastrian religion, that the old tradition was broken and the claim of Babylon to confer legitimacy on the rulers of western Asia ceased to be acknowledged.

Immediately after Darius seized Persia, Babylonia briefly recovered its independence under Nidinta-Bel, who took the name of Nebuchadnezzar III, and reigned from October 522 BC to August 520 BC, when Darius took the city by storm. A few years later, probably 514 BC, Babylon again revolted under Arakha; on this occasion, after its capture by the Persians, the walls were partly destroyed. E-Saggila, the great temple of Bel, however, still continued to be kept in repair and to be a centre of Babylonian patriotism, until at last the foundation of Seleucia diverted the population to the new capital of Babylonia and the ruins of the old city became a quarry for the builders of the new seat of government.

Persian Babylonia

Chaldean Babylonia was absorbed into the Achaemenid Empire in 539 BC. The name of the satrapy was changed to Asuristan in the Sassanid period. Excepting brief interludes of Roman conquest (Roman Assyria, Roman Mesopotamia; AD 116 to 118), and a longer period of Hellenistic rule (the Seleucid Empire, 330 to 250 BC), Mesopotamia remained under Persian control until the Islamic conquest in the 630s AD.

Achievements

Art and Architecture

In Babylonia, an abundance of clay, and lack of stone, led to greater use of mudbrick; Babylonian temples are massive structures of crude brick, supported by buttresses, the rain being carried off by drains. One such drain at Ur was made of lead. The use of brick led to the early development of the pilaster and column, and of frescoes and enamelled tiles. The walls were brilliantly coloured, and sometimes plated with zinc or gold, as well as with tiles. Painted *terra-cotta* cones for torches were also embedded in the plaster.

In Babylonia, in place of the bas-relief, there is greater use of three-dimensional figures in the round — the earliest examples being the statues from Telloh, that are realistic if somewhat clumsy. The paucity of stone in Babylonia made every pebble precious, and led to a high perfection in the art of gem-cutting.

The legendary Hanging Gardens of Babylon and the Tower of Babel are seen as symbols of luxurious and arrogant power respectively.

Astronomy

Among the sciences, astronomy and astrology occupied a conspicuous place in Babylonian society. Astronomy was of old standing in Babylonia, and the

standard work on the subject, written from an astrological point of view, later translated into Greek by Berossus, was believed to date from the age of Sargon of Akkad. The zodiac was a Babylonian invention of great antiquity; and eclipses of the sun and moon could be foretold. There are dozens of cuneiform records of original Mesopotamian eclipse observations (see Wikipedia's "Chronology of Babylonia and Assyria"). Observatories were attached to the temples, and reports were regularly sent by astronomers to the king. The stars had been numbered and named at an early date, and we possess tables of lunar longitudes and observations of Venus. Great attention was naturally paid to the calendar, and we find a week of seven days and another of five days in use.

Babylonian astrology was based on the belief that the entire universe was created in relation to the earth. Thus the ancients saw it as no accident that the stars and planets were set in a certain divine order at the time of creation.

The first evidence of recognition that astronomical phenomena are periodic and of the application of mathematics to their prediction is Babylonian. Tablets dating back to the Old Babylonian period document the application of mathematics to the variation in the length of daylight over a solar year. Centuries of Babylonian observations of celestial phenomena are recorded in the series of cuneiform tablets known as the 'Enūma Anu Enlil'. The oldest significant astronomical text that we possess is Tablet 63 of 'Enūma Anu Enlil', the Venus tablet of Ammi-saduqa, which lists the first and last visible risings of Venus over a period of about 21 years and is the earliest evidence that the phenomena of a planet were recognized as periodic. The oldest rectangular astrolabe dates back to Babylonia *ca.* 1100 BC. The MUL.APIN, contains catalogues of stars and constellations as well as schemes for predicting heliacal risings and the settings of the planets, lengths of daylight measured by a water-clock, gnomon, shadows, and intercalations. The Babylonian GU text arranges stars in 'strings' that lie along declination circles and thus measure right-ascensions or time-intervals, and also employs the stars of the zenith, which are also separated by given right-ascensional differences.

During the 8th and 7th centuries BC, Babylonian astronomers developed a new approach to astronomy. They began studying philosophy dealing with the ideal nature of the early universe and began empoying an internal logic within their predictive planetary systems. This was an important contribution to astronomy and the philosophy of science and some scholars have thus referred to this new approach as the first **scientific revolution**. This new approach to astronomy was adopted and further developed in Greek and Hellenistic astronomy.

In Seleucid and Parthian times, the astronomical reports were of a thoroughly scientific character; how much earlier their advanced knowledge and methods were developed is uncertain. The Babylonian development of methods for predicting the motions of the planets is considered to be a major episode in the history of astronomy.

The only Babylonian astronomer known to have supported a heliocentric model of planetary motion was Seleucus of Seleucia (b. 190 BC). Seleucus is known from the writings of Plutarch. He supported the heliocentric theory where the Earth rotated around its own axis which in turn revolved around the Sun. According to Plutarch, Seleucus even proved the heliocentric system, but it is not known what arguments he used.

Babylonian astronomy was the basis for much of what was done in Greek and Hellenistic astronomy, in classical Indian astronomy, in Sassanian, Byzantine and Syrian astronomy, in medieval Islamic astronomy, and in Central Asian and Western European astronomy.

Mathematics

The Babylonian system of mathematics was sexagesimal, or a base 60 numeral system (see: Babylonian numerals). From this we derive the modern day usage of 60 seconds in a minute, 60 minutes in an hour, and 360 (60 x 6) degrees in a circle. The Babylonians were able to make great advances in mathematics for two reasons. First, the number 60 has many divisors (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 15, 20, and 30), making calculations easier. Additionally, unlike the Egyptians and Romans, the Babylonians had a true place-value system, where digits written in the left column represented larger values (much as in our base-ten system: 734 = 7×100 + 3×10 + 4×1). Among the Babylonians' mathematical accomplishments were the determination of the square root of two correctly to seven places (YBC 7289 clay tablet). They also demonstrated knowledge of the Pythagorean theorem well before Pythagoras, as evidenced by this tablet translated by Dennis Ramsey and dating to ca. 1900 BC:

> 4 is the length and 5 is the diagonal. What is the breadth? Its size is not known. 4 times 4 is 16. And 5 times 5 is 25. You take 16 from 25 and there remains 9. What times what shall I take in order to get 9? 3 times 3 is 9. 3 is the breadth.

The *ner* of 600 and the *sar* of 3600 were formed from the unit of 60, corresponding with a degree of the equator. Tablets of squares and cubes, calculated from 1 to 60, have been found at Senkera, and a people acquainted with the sun-dial, the clepsydra, the lever and the pulley, must have had no mean knowledge of mechanics. A crystal lens, turned on the lathe, was discovered by Austen Henry Layard at Nimrud along with glass vases bearing the name of Sargon; this could explain the excessive minuteness of some of the writing on the Assyrian tablets, and a lens may also have been used in the observation of the heavens.

The Babylonians might have been familiar with the general rules for measuring the areas. They measured the circumference of a circle as three times the diameter and the area as one-twelfth the square of the circumference, which would be correct if π were estimated as 3. The volume of a cylinder was taken as the product of the base and the height, however, the volume of the frustum of a cone or a square pyramid was incorrectly taken as the product of the height and half the sum of the bases. Also, there was a recent discovery in which a tablet used π as 3 and 1/8. The Babylonians are also known for the Babylonian mile, which was a measure of distance equal to about seven miles today. This measurement for distances eventually was converted to a time-mile used for measuring the travel of the Sun, therefore, representing time. (Eves, Chapter 2)

Medicine

The oldest Babylonian texts on medicine date back to the First Babylonian Dynasty in the first half of the 2nd millennium BC. The most extensive Babylonian medical text, however, is the *Diagnostic Handbook* written by the physician Esagil-kin-apli of Borsippa, during the reign of the Babylonian king Adad-apla-iddina (1069-1046 BC).

Along with contemporary ancient Egyptian medicine, the Babylonians introduced the concepts of diagnosis, prognosis, physical examination, and prescriptions. In addition, the *Diagnostic Handbook* introduced the methods of therapy and a etiology and the use of empiricism, logic and rationality in diagnosis, prognosis and therapy. The text contains a list of medical symptoms and often detailed empirical observations along with logical rules used in combining observed symptoms on the body of a patient with its diagnosis and prognosis.

The symptoms and diseases of a patient were treated through therapeutic means such as bandages, creams and pills. If a patient could not be cured physically, the Babylonian physicians often relied on exorcism to cleanse the patient from any curses. Esagil-kin-apli's *Diagnostic Handbook* was based on a logical set of axioms and assumptions, including the modern view that through the examination and inspection of the symptoms of a patient, it is possible to determine the

patient's disease, its aetiology and future development, and the chances of the patient's recovery.

Esagil-kin-apli discovered a variety of illnesses and diseases and described their symptoms in his *Diagnostic Handbook*. These include the symptoms for many varieties of epilepsy and related ailments along with their diagnosis and prognosis.

Literature

There were libraries in most towns and temples; an old Sumerian proverb averred that "he who would excel in the school of the scribes must rise with the dawn." Women as well as men learned to read and write, and in Semitic times, this involved knowledge of the extinct Sumerian language, and a complicated and extensive syllabary.

A considerable amount of Babylonian literature was translated from Sumerian originals, and the language of religion and law long continued to be the old agglutinative language of Sumer. Vocabularies, grammars, and interlinear translations were compiled for the use of students, as well as commentaries on the older texts and explanations of obscure words and phrases. The characters of the syllabary were all arranged and named, and elaborate lists of them were drawn up.

There are many Babylonian literary works whose titles have come down to us. One of the most famous of these was the Epic of Gilgamesh, in twelve books, translated from the original Sumerian by a certain Sin-liqi-unninni, and arranged upon an astronomical principle. Each division contains the story of a single adventure in the career of Gilgamesh. The whole story is a composite product, and it is probable that some of the stories are artificially attached to the central figure.

Philosophy

The origins of Babylonian philosophy can be traced back to early Mesopotamian wisdom, which embodied certain philosophies of life, particularly ethics, in the forms of dialectic, dialogs, epic poetry, folklore, hymns, lyrics, prose, and proverbs. Babylonian reasoning and rationality developed beyond empirical observation.

It is possible that Babylonian philosophy had an influence on Greek, particularly Hellenistic philosophy. The Babylonian text *Dialog of Pessimism* contains similarities to the agonistic thought of the sophists, the Heraclitean doctrine of contrasts, and the dialogs of Plato, as well as a precursor to the maieutic Socratic method of Socrates. The Milesian philosopher Thales is also known to have studied philosophy in Mesopotamia.

Technology

Babylonians invented many technologies, which include metalworking, copper-working, glassmaking, lamp making, textile weaving, flood control, water storage, as well as irrigation. Earlier on they used copper, bronze and gold, and later they used iron. Palaces were decorated with hundreds of kilograms of these very expensive metals. Also, copper, bronze, and iron were used for armor as well as for different weapons such as swords, daggers, spears, and maces.

Babylonia in culture

Babylonia, and particularly its capital city Babylon, has long held a place in Abrahamic religions as a symbol of excess and dissolute power. Many references are made to Babylon in the Bible, both literally and allegorically. The mentions in the Tanakh tend to be historical or prophetic, while New Testament references are more likely figurative, or cryptic references to pagan Rome. The legendary Hanging Gardens of Babylon and the Tower of Babel are seen as symbols of luxurious and arrogant power respectively.

A 16th century depiction of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon (by Martin Heemskerck). The Tower of Babel is visible in the background.

Bronze Age

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology

Bronze Age
↑ Neolithic
Near East (3300-1200 BC) Caucasus, Anatolia, Aegean, Levant, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Elam, Sistan Bronze Age collapse India (3000-1200 BC) Europe (2300-600 BC) Beaker culture Unetice culture Urnfield culture Hallstatt culture Atlantic Bronze Age Bronze Age Britain Nordic Bronze Age China (2000-700 BC) Korea (800-400 BC)
arsenical bronze writing, literature sword, chariot
↓Iron age

The term **Bronze Age** refers to a period in human cultural development when the most advanced metalworking (at least in systematic and widespread use) included techniques for smelting copper and tin from naturally-occurring outcroppings of copper ores, and then smelting those ores to cast bronze. These naturally-occurring ores typically included arsenic as a common impurity. Copper/tin ores are rare, as reflected in the fact that there were no tin bronzes in western Asia before 3,000 B.C. The Bronze Age forms part of the three-age system for prehistoric societies. In this system, it follows the Neolithic in some areas of the world. On the other hand, in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the Neolithic is directly followed by the Iron Age. In some parts of the world, a Copper Age follows the Neolithic and precedes the Bronze Age.

Ceremonial giant dirk of the Plougrescant-Ommerschans type, Plougrescant, France, 1500-1300BC.

Origins

The place and time of the invention of bronze are controversial and it is possible that bronzing was invented independently in multiple places. The earliest known tin bronzes are from what is now Iran and Iraq and date to the late 4th millennium BC. Arsenical bronzes were made in Anatolia and on both sides of the Caucasus by the early 3rd millennium BC. Some scholars date some arsenical bronze artifacts of the Maykop culture in the North Caucasus as far back as the mid 4th millennium BC, which would make them the oldest known bronzes, but others date the same Maykop artifacts to the mid 3rd millennium BC. Arsenic bronze however is a naturally occurring alloy, in contrary to the later used tin bronze. Tin had to be delved and smelted separately (mainly as the tin ore cassiterite), and added to the molten copper to make the alloy.

Near East

Periodization for the Bronze Age in the Ancient Near East is as follows:

Bronze Age (3300 BCE - 1200 BCE)	Early Bronze Age (3300 BCE - 2000 BCE)	Early Bronze Age I	3300 BCE - 3000 BCE
		Early Bronze Age II	3000 BCE - 2700 BCE
		Early Bronze Age III	2700 BCE - 2200 BCE
		Early Bronze Age IV	2200 BCE - 2000 BCE
	Middle Bronze Age (2000 BCE - 1550 BCE)	Middle Bronze Age I	2000 BCE - 1750 BCE
		Middle Bronze Age II	1750 BCE - 1650 BCE
		Middle Bronze Age III	1650 BCE - 1550 BCE

	Late Bronze Age (1550 BCE - 1200 BCE)	Late Bronze Age I	1550 BCE - 1400 BCE
		Late Bronze Age II A	1400 BCE - 1300 BCE
		Late Bronze Age II B	1300 BCE - 1200 BCE

Mesopotamia

In Mesopotamia, the Bronze Age begins in the late Uruk period, spanning the Early Dynastic period of Sumer, the Akkadian Empire, the Old Babylonian and Old Assyrian periods and the period of Kassite hegemony.

Ancient Egypt

In Ancient Egypt, the Bronze Age begins in the Protodynastic period.

- Early Bronze Age
  - Early Dynastic Period of Egypt
  - Old Kingdom
  - First Intermediate Period of Egypt
- Middle Bronze Age
  - Middle Kingdom of Egypt
  - Second Intermediate Period of Egypt (Hyksos)
- Late Bronze Age
  - New Kingdom

Levant

- Early Bronze Age
  - Ebla
- Middle Bronze Age
  - Amorites
- Late Bronze Age
  - Mitanni
  - Ugarit
  - Aramaeans

Anatolia

- Hittite Empire
- Arzawa
- Assuwa

Aegean

The Aegean Bronze Age begins around 3000 BC when civilizations first established a far-ranging trade network. This network imported tin and charcoal to Cyprus, where copper was mined and alloyed with the tin to produce bronze. Bronze objects were then exported far and wide, and supported the trade. Isotopic analysis of the tin in some Mediterranean bronze objects indicates it came from as far away as Great Britain.

Bronze Age copper ingot found in Crete.

Knowledge of navigation was well developed at this time, and reached a peak of skill not exceeded until a method was discovered (or perhaps rediscovered) to determine longitude around 1750 AD, with the notable exception of the Polynesian sailors.

The Minoan civilization based from Knossos appears to have coordinated and defended its Bronze Age trade.

One crucial lack in this period was that modern methods of accounting were not available. Numerous authorities believe that ancient empires were prone to misvalue staples in favour of luxuries, and thereby perish by famines created by uneconomic trading.

Persian Plateau

- Elam
- Konar Sandal
- Kulli culture
- Tappeh Sialk
- BMAC

Collapse

How the Bronze Age ended in this region is still being studied. There is evidence that Mycenaean administration of the regional trade empire followed the decline of Minoan primacy. Evidence also exists that supports the assumption that several Minoan client states lost large portions of their respective populations to extreme famines and/or pestilence, which in turn would indicate that the trade network may have failed at some point, preventing the trade that would have previously relieved such famines and prevented some forms of illness (by nutrition). It is also known that the breadbasket of the Minoan empire, the area north

of the Black Sea, also suddenly lost significant portions of its population, and thus probably some degree of cultivation in this era.

Mycenaean sword found in Eastern Europe

Recent research has discredited the theory that exhaustion of the Cypriot forests caused the end of the bronze trade. The Cypriot forests are known to have existed into later times, and experiments have shown that charcoal production on the scale necessary for the bronze production of the late Bronze Age would have exhausted them in less than fifty years.

One theory says that as iron tools became more common, the main justification of the tin trade ended, and that trade network ceased to function as it once did. The individual colonies of the Minoan empire then suffered drought, famine, war, or some combination of these three factors, and thus they had no access to the far-flung resources of an empire by which they could easily recover.

Another family of theories looks to Knossos itself. The Thera eruption occurred at this time, 110 kilometers (70 mi) north of Crete. Some authorities speculate that a tsunami from Thera destroyed Cretan cities. Others say that perhaps a tsunami destroyed the Cretan navy in its home harbour, which then lost crucial naval battles; so that in the LMIB/LMII event (c. 1450 BC) the cities of Crete burned and the Mycenaean civilization took over Knossos. If the eruption occurred in the late 17th century BC (as most chronologists now think), then its immediate effects belong to the Middle Bronze to Late Bronze Age transition, and not to the end of the Late Bronze Age; but it could have triggered the instability which led to the collapse first of Knossos and then of Bronze Age society overall. One such theory looks to the role of Cretan expertise in administering the empire, post-Thera. If this expertise was concentrated in Crete, then the Mycenaeans may have made crucial political and commercial mistakes when administering the Cretans' empire.

More recent archaeological findings, including on the island of Thera (more commonly known today as Santorini), suggest that the center of Minoan Civilization at the time of the eruption was actually on this island rather than on Crete. Some think that this was the fabled Atlantis (a map drawn on a wall of a Minoan palace in Crete depicts an island similar to that described by Plato and similar too to the form Thera very likely had prior to its explosion). According to this theory, the catastrophic loss of the political, administrative and economic centre by the eruption as well as the damage wrought by the tsunami to the coastal towns and villages of Crete precipitated the decline of the Minoans. A weakened political entity with a reduced economic and military capability and fabled riches would have then been more vulnerable to human predators. *Indeed, the Santorini Eruption is usually dated to c. 1630 BC. And, the Mycenaean Greeks first enter the historical record a few decades later c. 1600 BC. Thus, the later Mycenaean assaults on Crete (c.1450 BC) and Troy (c.1250 BC) are revealed as but continuations of the steady encroachments of the Greeks upon the weakened Minoan world.*

Each of these theories is persuasive, and aspects of all of them may have some validity in describing the end of the Bronze Age in this region.

Indus valley

The Bronze Age on the Indian subcontinent began around 3300 BCE with the beginning of the Indus Valley civilization. Inhabitants of the ancient Indus Valley, the Harappans, developed new techniques in metallurgy and produced copper, bronze, lead and tin. The Indian Bronze Age ends at the start of the Iron Age Vedic Period (1500 BCE - 500 BCE). This is during the Harappan culture, which dates from 1700 BCE to 1300 BCE, that overlaps the transition period

between the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age period. As a result, it is difficult to pinpoint the true end of the Indian Bronze Age.

East Asia

China

A two-handled bronze *gefuding gui*, from the Chinese Shang Dynasty (1600–1046 BCE).

Historians disagree about the dates that should be attached to a "Bronze Age" in China. The difficulty lies in the term "Bronze Age" itself, as it has been applied to signify a period in European and Middle Eastern history when bronze tools replaced stone tools, and were later replaced by iron ones. In those places, the medium of the new "Age" made that of the old obsolete. In China, however, any attempt to establish a definite set of dates for a Bronze Age is complicated by two factors: the early arrival of iron smelting technology and the persistence of bronze in tools, weapons and sacred vessels. The earliest bronze artifacts are found in the Majiayao culture site, and from then on the society gruadually grew into the Bronze Age

Bronze metallurgy in China originated in what is referred to as the Erlitou (also Erh-li-t'ou) period, which some historians argue places it within the range of dates controlled by the Shang dynasty. Others believe the Erlitou sites belong to the preceding Xia (also Hsia) dynasty. The U.S. National Gallery of Art defines the Chinese Bronze Age as the "period between about 2000 BC and 771 BC," a period which begins with Erlitou culture and ends abruptly with the disintegration of Western Zhou rule. Though this provides a concise frame of reference, it overlooks the continued importance of bronze in Chinese metallurgy and culture. Since this is significantly later than the discovery of bronze in Mesopotamia, bronze technology could have been imported rather than discovered independently in China.

Iron is found in the Zhou period, but its use is minimal. Chinese literature dating to the 6th century BC attests a knowledge of iron smelting, possibly making iron a Chinese invention, yet bronze continues to occupy the seat of significance in the archaeological and historical record for some time after this. Historian W. C. White argues that iron did not supplant bronze "at any period before the end of the Zhou dynasty (481 BC)" and that bronze vessels make up the majority of metal vessels all the way through the Later Han period, or through 221 AD.

The Chinese bronze artifacts generally are either utilitarian, like spear points or adze heads, or ritualistic, like the numerous large sacrificial tripods. However, even some of the most utilitarian objects bear the markings of more sacred items. The Chinese inscribed all kinds of bronze items with three main motif types: demons, symbolic animals, and abstract symbols. Some large bronzes also bear inscriptions that have helped historians and archaeologists piece together the history of China, especially during the Zhou period.

The bronzes of the Western Zhou period document large portions of history not found in the extant texts, and often were composed by persons of varying rank and possibly even social class. Further, the medium of cast bronze lends the record they preserve a permanence not enjoyed by manuscripts. These inscriptions can commonly be subdivided into four parts: a reference to the date and place, the naming of the event commemorated, the list of gifts given to the artisan in exchange for the bronze, and a dedication. The relative points of reference these vessels provide have enabled historians to place most of the vessels within a certain time frame of the Western Zhou period, allowing them to trace the evolution of the vessels and the events they record.

Chinese *pu* bronze vessel with interlaced dragon design, Spring and Autumn Period (722–481 BC)

Southeast Asia

In Ban Chiang, Thailand, (Southeast Asia) bronze artifacts have been discovered dating to 2100 BC.

In Nyaunggan, Myanmar bronze tools have been excavated along with ceramics and stone artefacts. Dating is still currently broad (3500–500 BC).

Song Da bronze drum's surface, Dong Son culture, Vietnam

Korean peninsula

The Middle Mumun pottery period culture of the southern Korean Peninsula gradually adopted bronze production (c. 700–600? BC) after a period when Liaoning-style bronze daggers and other bronze artifacts were exchanged as far as the interior part of the Southern Peninsula (c. 900–700 BC). The bronze daggers lent prestige and authority to the personages who wielded and were buried with them in high-status megalithic burials at south-coastal centres such as the Igeum-dong site. Bronze was an important element in ceremonies and as for mortuary offerings until 100.

Europe

Central Europe

In Central Europe, the early Bronze Age Unetice culture (1800–1600 BC) includes numerous smaller groups like the Straubing, Adlerberg and Hatvan cultures. Some very rich burials, such as the one located at Leubingen with grave gifts crafted from gold, point to an increase of social stratification already present in the Unetice culture. All in all, cemeteries of this period are rare and of small size. The Unetice culture is followed by the middle Bronze Age (1600–1200 BC) Tumulus culture, which is characterised by inhumation burials in tumuli (barrows). In the eastern Hungarian Körös tributaries, the early Bronze Age first saw the introduction of the Mako culture, followed by the Ottomany and Gyulavarsand cultures.

The late Bronze Age Urnfield culture, (1300–700 BC) is characterized by cremation burials. It includes the Lusatian culture in eastern Germany and Poland (1300–500 BC) that continues into the Iron Age. The Central European Bronze Age is followed by the Iron Age Hallstatt culture (700–450 BC).

Important sites include:

- Biskupin (Poland)
- Nebra (Germany)
- Vráble (Slovakia)
- Zug-Sumpf, Zug, Switzerland

Bronze Age weaponry and ornaments

Caucasus

Some scholars date some arsenical bronze artifacts of the Maykop culture in the North Caucasus as far back as the mid 4th millennium BC.

Great Britain

In Great Britain, the Bronze Age is considered to have been the period from around 2100 to 750 BC. Migration brought new people to the islands from the continent. Recent tooth enamel isotope research on bodies found in early Bronze Age graves around Stonehenge indicate that at least some of the migrants came from the area of modern Switzerland. The Beaker culture displayed different behaviours from the earlier Neolithic people and cultural change was significant. Integration is thought to have been peaceful as many of the early henge sites were seemingly adopted by the newcomers. The rich Wessex culture developed in southern Britain at this time. Additionally, the climate was deteriorating, where once the weather was warm and dry it became much wetter as the Bronze Age continued, forcing the population away from easily-defended sites in the hills and into the fertile valleys. Large livestock farms developed in the lowlands which appear to have contributed to economic growth and inspired increasing forest clearances. The Deverel-Rimbury culture began to emerge in the second half of the Middle Bronze Age (c. 1400–1100 BC) to exploit these conditions. Cornwall was a major source of tin for much of western Europe and copper was extracted from sites such as the Great Orme mine in northern Wales. Social groups appear to have been tribal but with growing complexity and hierarchies becoming apparent.

Also, the burial of dead (which until this period had usually been communal) became more individual. For example, whereas in the Neolithic a large chambered cairn or long barrow was used to house the dead, the Early Bronze Age saw people buried in individual barrows (also commonly known and marked on modern British Ordnance Survey maps as Tumuli), or sometimes in cists covered with cairns.

The greatest quantities of bronze objects found in England were discovered in East Cambridgeshire, where the most important finds were recovered in Isleham (more than 6500 pieces).

Ireland

The Bronze Age in Ireland commenced in the centuries around 2000 BC when copper was alloyed with tin and used to manufacture Ballybeg type flat axes and associated metalwork. The preceding period is known as the Copper Age and is characterised by the production of flat axes, daggers, halberds and awls in copper. The period is divided into three phases: Early Bronze Age (2000–1500 BC), Middle Bronze Age (1500–1200 BC), and Late Bronze Age (1200 – c. 500 BC). Ireland is also known for a relatively large number of Early Bronze Age burials.

One of the characteristic type of artifact of the Early Bronze Age in Ireland is the flat axe. There are five main types of flat axes: Lough Ravel (c. 2200 BC), Ballybeg (c. 2000 BC), Killaha (c. 2000 BC), Ballyvalley (c. 2000–1600 BC), Derryniggin (c. 1600 BC), and a number of metal ingots in the shape of axes.

History of Greece

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology

The **History of Greece** traditionally encompasses the study of the Greek people, the areas they ruled historically, and the territory now composing the modern state of Greece.

The scope of Greek habitation and rule has varied significantly through the ages, and as a consequence the history of Greece is similarly elastic in what it includes. Each era has its own related sphere of interest.

The first Greeks arrived in Europe some time before 1500 BC, and at its peak, Greek civilization spread from Greece to Egypt and to the Hindu Kush mountains. Since then Greek minorities have remained in former Greek territories (e.g., Turkey, Italy, and Libya, Levant, etc.), and Greek emigrants have assimilated into differing societies across the globe (e.g. North America, Australia, Northern Europe, South Africa etc.). However, today most Greeks live in the modern states of Greece (independent since 1821) and Cyprus (independent since 1960).

Aegean civilization: prehistoric Greece

The earliest civilization to appear around Greece was the Minoan civilization in Crete, which lasted approximately from 2700 (Early Minoan) BC to 1450 BC, and on the Early Helladic period on the Greek mainland from ca. 2800 BC to 2100 BC.

Little specific information is known about the Minoans (even the name is a modern appellation, from Minos, the legendary king of Crete). They have been characterized as a pre-Indo-European people, apparently the linguistic ancestors of the Eteo-Cretan speakers of Classical Antiquity, their language being encoded in the undeciphered Linear A script. They were primarily a mercantile people engaged in overseas trade, taking advantage of the land's rich natural resources. Timber at that time was an abundant natural resource that was commercially exploited and exported to nearby lands such as Cyprus, Egypt and the Aegean Islands.

Although the causes of their demise are uncertain, they were eventually invaded by the Mycenaeans from mainland Greece. Their invasion took place around 1400 BCE, and in conjunction with the Thera eruption, they present a likely scenario for the final end of the Minoan civilization. According to this theory, the Minoan fleet and ports were irrevocably destroyed by the colossal Mediterranean waves. Possible climatic changes affected crops for many years, which in turn could have led to famine and social breakdown. The Mycenaean invaders wrote the final chapter to a civilization that flourished for some 1600 years.

Mycenaean Greece (Bronze Age)

Mycenaean Greece, also known as Bronze Age Greece, is the Late Helladic Bronze Age civilization of Ancient Greece. It lasted from the arrival of the Greeks in the Aegean around 1600 BC to the collapse of their Bronze Age civilization around 1100 BC. It is the historical setting of the epics of Homer and much other Greek mythology. The Mycenaean period takes its name from the archaeological site Mycenae in the northeastern Argolid, in the Peloponnesos of southern Greece. Athens, Pylos, Thebes, and Tiryns are also important Mycenaean sites.

Mycenaean civilization was dominated by a warrior aristocracy. Around 1400 BC the Mycenaeans extended their control to Crete, centre of the Minoan civilization, and adopted a form of the Minoan script called Linear A to write their early form of Greek. The Mycenaean era script is called Linear B.

The Mycenaeans buried their nobles in beehive tombs (*tholoi*), large circular burial chambers with a high vaulted roof and straight entry passage lined with stone. They often buried daggers or some other form of military equipment with the deceased. The nobility were frequently buried with gold masks, tiaras, armour, and jeweled weapons. Mycenaeans were buried in a sitting position, and some of the nobility underwent mummification.

Around 1100 BC the Mycenaean civilization collapsed. Numerous cities were sacked and the region entered what historians see as a dark age. During this period Greece experienced a decline in population and literacy. The Greeks themselves have traditionally blamed this decline on an invasion by another wave of Greek people, the Dorians, although there is scant archaeological evidence for this view.

Greek Dark Ages

The *Greek Dark Ages* (ca. 1200 BC– 800 BC) refers to the period of Greek history from the presumed Dorian invasion and end of the Mycenaean civilization in the 11th century BC to the rise of the first Greek city-states in the 9th century BC and the epics of Homer and earliest writings in alphabetic Greek in the 8th century BC.

The collapse of the Mycenaean coincided with the fall of several other large empires in the near east, most notably the Hittite and the Egyptian. The cause may be attributed to an invasion of the sea people wielding iron weapons. When the Dorians came down into Greece they also were equipped with superior iron weapons, easily dispersing the already weakened Mycenaeans. The period that follows these events is collectively known as the Greek Dark Ages.

Archaeology shows a collapse of civilization in the Greek world in this period. The great palaces and cities of the Mycenaeans were destroyed or abandoned. The Greek language ceased to be written. Greek dark age pottery has simple geometric designs and lacks the figurative decoration of Mycenaean ware. The Greeks of the dark age lived in fewer and smaller settlements, suggesting famine and depopulation, and foreign goods have not been found at archaeological sites, suggesting minimum international trade. Contact was also lost between foreign powers during this period, yielding little cultural progress or growth of any sort.

Kings ruled throughout this period until eventually they were replaced with an aristocracy, then still later, in some areas, an aristocracy within an aristocracy—an elite of the elite. Warfare shifted from a focus on cavalry to a great emphasis on infantry. Due to its cheapness of production and local availability, iron replaced bronze as the metal of choice in the manufacturing of tools and weapons. Slowly equality grew among the different sects of people, leading to the dethronement of the various Kings and the rise of the family.

Families began to reconstruct their past in attempts to link their bloodlines with heroes from the Trojan War, more specifically Heracles. While most of this was legend, some were sorted by poets of the school of Hesiod. Most of these poems are lost, though, but some famous "storywriters", as they were called, were Hecataeus of Miletus and Acusilaus of Argos.

It is thought that the epics by Homer contain a certain amount of tradition preserved orally during the Dark Ages period. The historical validity of Homer's writings is vigorously disputed; see the article on Troy for a discussion.

At the end of this period of stagnation, the Greek civilization was engulfed in a renaissance that spread the Greek world as far as the Black Sea and Spain. Writing was relearned from the Phoenicians, eventually spreading north into Italy and the Gauls.

Ancient Greece

Image:Ac.sounion.JPG
Cape Sounion in Attica, looking out to the Aegean islands.

There are no fixed or universally agreed dates for the beginning or the end of the Ancient Greek period. In common usage it refers to all Greek history before the Roman Empire, but historians use the term more precisely. Some writers include the periods of the Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations, while others argue that these civilizations were so different from later Greek cultures that they should be classed separately. Traditionally, the Ancient Greek period was taken to begin with the date of the first Olympic Games in 776 BC, but most historians now extend the term back to about 1000 BC. The traditional date for the end of the Ancient Greek period is the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC. The following period is classed as Hellenistic. Not everyone treats the Ancient and Hellenic periods as distinct, however, and some writers treat the Ancient Greek civilization as a continuum running until the advent of Christianity in the third century AD.

Ancient Greece is considered by most historians to be the foundational culture of Western Civilization. Greek culture was a powerful influence in the Roman Empire, which carried a version of it to many parts of Europe. Ancient Greek civilization has been immensely influential on the language, politics, educational systems, philosophy, art and architecture of the modern world, particularly during the Renaissance in Western Europe and again during various neo-Classical revivals in 18th and 19th century Europe and The Americas.

The basic unit of politics in Ancient Greece was the polis, sometimes translated as city-state. "Politics" literally means "the things of the polis." Each city was independent, at least in theory. Some cities might be subordinate to others (a colony traditionally deferred to its mother city), some might have had governments wholly dependent upon others (the Thirty Tyrants in Athens was imposed by Sparta following the Peloponnesian War), but the titularly supreme power in each city was located within that city. This meant that when Greece went to war (e.g., against the Persian Empire), it took the form of an alliance going to war. It also gave ample opportunity for wars within Greece between different cities.

Most of the Greek names known to modern readers flourished in this age. Among the poets, Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, and Sappho were active. Famous politicians include Themistocles, Pericles, Lysander, Epaminondas, Alcibiades, Philip II of Macedon, and his son Alexander the Great. Plato wrote, as did Aristotle, Heraclitus of Ephesus, Parmenides, Democritus, Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon. Almost all of the mathematical knowledge formalized in Euclid's *Elements* at the beginning of the Hellenistic period was developed in this era.

Two major wars shaped the Ancient Greek world. The Persian Wars (500–448 BC) are recounted in Herodotus's *Histories*. Ionian Greek cities revolted from the Persian Empire and were supported by some of the mainland cities, eventually led by Athens. (The notable battles of this war include Marathon, Thermopylae, Salamis, and Plataea.)

In order to prosecute the war, and subsequently to defend Greece from further Persian attack, Athens founded the Delian League in 477 BC. Initially, each city in the League would contribute ships and soldiers to a common army, but in time Athens allowed (and then compelled) the smaller cities to contribute funds so that it could supply their quota of ships. Revolution from the League could be punished. Following military reversals against the Persians, the treasury was moved from Delos to Athens, further strengthening the latter's control over the League. The Delian League was eventually referred to pejoratively as the Athenian Empire.

In 458 BC, while the Persian Wars were still ongoing, war broke out between the Delian League and the Peloponnesian League, comprising Sparta and its allies. After some inconclusive fighting, the two sides signed a peace in 447 BC.

That peace, it was stipulated, was to last thirty years: instead it held only until 431 BC, with the onset of the Peloponnesian War. Our main sources concerning this war are Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War* and Xenophon's *Hellenica*.

The war began over a dispute between Corcyra and Epidamnus; the latter was a minor enough city that Thucydides has to tell his reader where it is. Corinth intervened on the Epidamnian side. Fearful lest Corinth capture the Corcyran navy (second only to the Athenian in size), Athens intervened. It prevented Corinth from landing on Corcyra at the Battle of Sybota, laid siege to Potidaea, and forbade all commerce with Corinth's closely situated ally, Megara (the Megarian decree).

There was disagreement among the Greeks as to which party violated the treaty between the Delian and Peloponnesian Leagues, as Athens was technically defending a new ally. The Corinthians begged Sparta for aid. Fearing the growing might of Athens, and witnessing Athens' willingness to use it against the Megarians (the embargo would have ruined them), Sparta declared the treaty to have been violated and the Peloponnesian War began in earnest.

The first stage of the war (known as the Archidamian War for the Spartan king, Archidamus II) lasted until 421 BC with the signing of the Peace of Nicias. The Athenian general Pericles recommended that his city fight a defensive war, avoiding battle against the superior land forces led by Sparta, and importing everything needful by maintaining its powerful navy: Athens would simply outlast Sparta, whose citizens feared to be out of their city for long lest the helots revolt. This strategy required that Athens endure regular sieges, and in 430 BC it was visited with an awful plague which killed approximately a quarter of its people, including Pericles. With Pericles gone, less conservative elements gained power in the city and Athens went on the offensive. It captured 300–400 Spartan hoplites at the Battle of Pylos. This represented a significant fraction of the Spartan fighting force which the latter decided it could not afford to lose. Meanwhile, Athens had suffered humiliating defeats at Delium and Amphipolis. The Peace of Nicias concluded with Sparta recovering its hostages and Athens recovering the city of Amphipolis.

Those who signed the Peace of Nicias in 421 BC swore to uphold it for fifty years. The second stage of the Peloponnesian War began in 415 BC when Athens embarked on the Sicilian Expedition to support an ally (Segesta) attacked by Syracuse and to conquer Sicily. Initially, Sparta was not going to aid its ally, but Alcibiades, the Athenian general who had argued for the Sicilian Expedition, defected to the Spartan cause upon being accused of grossly impious acts and

convinced them that they could not allow Athens to subjugate Syracuse. The campaign ended in disaster for the Athenians.

Athens' Ionian possessions rebelled with the support of Sparta, as advised by Alcibiades. In 411 BC, an oligarchical revolt in Athens held out the chance for peace, but the Athenian navy, which remained committed to the democracy, refused to accept the change and continued fighting in Athens' name. The navy recalled Alcibiades (who had been forced to abandon the Spartan cause after reputedly seducing the wife of Agis II, a Spartan king) and made him its head. The oligarchy in Athens collapsed and Alcibiades proceeded to reconquer what had been lost.

In 407 BC, Alcibiades was replaced following a minor naval defeat at the Battle of Notium. The Spartan general Lysander, having fortified his city's naval power, won victory after victory. Following the Battle of Arginusae, which Athens won but was prevented by bad weather from rescuing some of its sailors, Athens executed or exiled eight of its top naval commanders. Lysander followed with a crushing blow at the Battle of Aegospotami in 405 BC which virtually destroyed the Athenian fleet. Athens surrendered one year later, ending the Peloponnesian War.

The war had left devastation in its wake. Discontent with the Spartan hegemony that followed (including the fact that it ceded Ionia and Cyprus to the Persian Empire at the conclusion of the Corinthian War (395–387 BC); see Treaty of Antalcidas) induced the Thebans to attack. Their general, Epaminondas, crushed Sparta at the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BC, inaugurating a period of Theban dominance in Greece. In 346 BC, unable to prevail in its ten year war with Phocis, Thebes called upon Philip II of Macedon for aid. Macedon quickly conquered the exhausted cites of Greece. The basic unit of politics from that point was the empire, and the Hellenistic Age had begun.

Hellenistic Greece

The Hellenistic period of Greek history begins with the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC and ends with the annexation of the Greek peninsula and islands by Rome in 146 BC. Although the establishment of Roman rule did not break the continuity of Hellenistic society and culture, which remained essentially unchanged until the advent of Christianity, it did mark the end of Greek political independence. During the Hellenistic period the importance of "Greece proper" (that is, the territory of modern Greece) within the Greek-speaking world declined sharply. The great centres of Hellenistic culture were Alexandria and Antioch, capitals of Ptolemaic Egypt and Seleucid Syria respectively. (See Hellenistic civilization for the history of Greek culture outside of Greece in this period.)

Philip V of Macedon, "the darling of Hellas", wearing the royal diadem.

Athens and her allies revolted against Macedon upon hearing that Alexander had died, but was defeated within a year in the Lamian War. Meanwhile, a struggle for power broke out among Alexander's generals, which resulted in the break-up of his empire and the establishment of a number of new kingdoms (see the Wars of the Diadochi). Ptolemy was left with Egypt, Seleucus with the Levant, Mesopotamia, and points east. Control of Greece, Thrace, and Anatolia was contested, but by 298 BC the Antigonid dynasty had supplanted the Antipatrid.

The restored Stoa of Attalus, Athens.

Macedonian control of the Greek city-states was intermittent, with a number of revolts. Athens, Rhodes, Pergamum and other Greek states retained substantial independence, and joined the Aetolian League as a means of defending it. The Achaean League, while nominally subject to the Ptolemies was in effect independent, and controlled most of southern Greece. Sparta also remained independent, but generally refused to join any league.

In 267 BC Ptolemy II persuaded the Greek cities to revolt against Macedon, in what became the Chremonidean War, after the Athenian leader Chremonides. The cities were defeated and Athens lost her independence and her democratic institutions. This marked the end of Athens as a political actor, although it remained the largest, wealthiest and most cultivated city in Greece. In 225 Macedon defeated the Egyptian fleet at Cos and brought the Aegean islands, except Rhodes, under its rule as well.

Sparta remained hostile to the Achaeans, and in 227 BC invaded Achaea and seized control of the League. The remaining Acheans preferred distant Macedon to nearby Sparta, and allied with the former. In 222 BC the Macedonian army defeated the Spartans and annexed their city—the first time Sparta had ever been occupied by a foreign power.

Philip V of Macedon was the last Greek ruler with both the talent and the opportunity to unite Greece and preserve its independence against the ever-increasing power of Rome. Under his auspices the Peace of Naupactus (217 BC) brought conflict between Macedon and the Greek leagues to an end, and at this time he controlled all of Greece except Athens, Rhodes and Pergamum.

In 215 BC, however, Philip formed an alliance with Rome's enemy Carthage. Rome promptly lured the Achaean cities away from their nominal loyalty to Philip, and formed alliances with Rhodes and Pergamum, now the strongest power in Asia Minor. The First Macedonian War broke out in 212, and ended inconclusively in 205, but Macedon was now marked as an enemy of Rome.

In 202 BC Rome defeated Carthage, and was free to turn her attention eastwards. In 198 the Second Macedonian War broke out for obscure reasons, but basically because Rome saw Macedon as a potential ally of the Seleucids, the greatest power in the east. Philip's allies in Greece deserted him and in 197 he was decisively defeated at the Battle of Cynoscephalae by the Roman proconsul Titus Quinctius Flaminius.

Luckily for the Greeks, Flaminius was a moderate man and an admirer of Greek culture. Philip had to surrender his fleet and become a Roman ally, but was otherwise spared. At the Isthmian Games in 196, Flaminius declared all the Greek cities free, although Roman garrisons were placed at Corinth and Chalcis. But the freedom promised by Rome was an illusion. All the cities except Rhodes were enrolled in a new League which Rome ultimately controlled, and aristocratic

constitutions were favoured and actively promoted.

Roman Period

Militarily Greece itself declined to the point that the Romans conquered the land (187 BC onwards), though Greek culture would in turn conquer Roman life. Although the period of Roman rule in Greece is conventionally dated as starting from the sacking of Corinth by the Roman Lucius Mummius in 123 BC, Macedonia had already come under Roman control with the defeat of its king, Perseus, by the Roman Aemilius Paullus at Pydna in 168 BC. The Romans divided the region into four smaller republics, and in 146 BC Macedonia officially became a Roman province, with its capital at Thessalonica. The rest of the Greek city-states gradually and eventually paid homage to Rome ending their *de jure* autonomy as well. The Romans left local administration to the Greeks without making any attempt to abolish traditional political patterns. The agora in Athens continued to be the centre of civic and political life.

Caracalla's decree in 212 AD, the Constitutio Antoniniana, extended citizenship outside of Italy to all free adult males in the entire Roman Empire, effectively raising provincial populations to equal status with the city of Rome itself. The importance of this decree is historical rather than political. It set the basis for integration where the economic and judicial mechanisms of the state could be applied throughout the entire Mediterranean as was once done from Latium into all of Italy. In practice of course, integration did not take place uniformly. Societies already integrated with Rome, such as Greece, were favored by this decree, in comparison with those far away, too poor or just too alien such as Britain, Palestine or Egypt.

Caracalla's decree did not set in motion the processes that lead to the transfer of power from Italy and the West to Greece and the East, but rather accelerated them, setting the foundations for the rise of Greece as a major power in Europe and the Mediterranean in the Middle Ages.

Byzantine Empire

The history of the Byzantine Empire is described by scholar August Heisenberg as the history "of the Roman state of the Greek nation, that turned Christian". The division of the empire into East and West and the subsequent collapse of the Western Roman Empire were developments that constantly accentuated the position of the Greeks in the empire and eventually allowed them to become identified with it altogether. The leading role of Constantinople began when Constantine the Great turned Byzantium into the new capital of the Roman Empire, henceforth to be known as Constantinople, placing the city at the centre of Hellenism a beacon for the Greeks that lasted to the modern era.

The figures of Constantine the Great and Justinian dominated during 324–610. Assimilating the Roman tradition, the emperors sought to provide the basis for subsequent developments and for the formation of the Byzantine Empire. Efforts to secure the borders of the Empire and to restore the Roman territories marked the early centuries. At the same time, the definitive formation and establishment of the Orthodox doctrine, but also a series of conflicts resulting from heresies that developed within the boundaries of the empire marked the early period of Byzantine history.

Image:Theodora ravenna.jpg
Empress Theodora and her retinue (fresco from Basilica of San Vitale, 6th century).

In the first period of the middle Byzantine era (610–867) the empire was attacked both by old enemies (Persians, Langobards, Avars and Slavs) as well as by

new ones, appearing for the first time in history (Arabs, Bulgarians). The main characteristic of this period was that the enemy attacks were not localized to the border areas of the state but they were extended deep beyond, even threatening the capital itself. At the same time, these attacks lost their periodical and temporary character and became permanent settlements that transformed into new states, hostile to Byzantium. Those states were referred by the Byzantines as *Sclavinias*. Changes were also observed in the internal structure of the empire which was dictated by both external and internal conditions. The predominance of the small free farmers, the expansion of the military estates and the development of the system of themes, brought to completion developments that had started in the previous period. Changes were noted also in the sector of administration: the administration and society had become immiscibly Greek, while the restoration of Orthodoxy after the iconoclast movement, allowed the successful resumption of missionary action among neighbouring peoples and their placement within the sphere of Byzantine cultural influence. During this period the state was geographically reduced and economically damaged, since it lost wealth-producing regions; however, it obtained greater lingual, dogmatic and cultural homogeneity.

From the late 8th century, the Empire began to recover from the devastating impact of successive invasions, and the reconquest of Greece began. Greeks from Sicily and Asia Minor were brought in as settlers. The Slavs were either driven out or assimilated and the Sclavinias were eliminated. By the middle of the 9th century, Greece was Greek again, and the cities began to recover due to improved security and the restoration of effective central control.

Economic prosperity

When the Byzantine Empire was rescued from a period of crisis by the resolute leadership of the three Komnenoi emperors Alexios, John and Manuel in the twelfth century, Greece prospered. Recent research has revealed that this period was a time of significant growth in the rural economy, with rising population levels and extensive tracts of new agricultural land being brought into production. The widespread construction of new rural churches is a strong indication that prosperity was being generated even in remote areas. A steady increase in population led to a higher population density, and there is good evidence that the demographic increase was accompanied by the revival of towns. According to Alan Harvey in his book ‘’Economic expansion in the Byzantine Empire 900-1200’’, towns expanded significantly in the twelfth century. Archaeological evidence shows an increase in the size of urban settlements, together with a ‘notable upsurge’ in new towns. Archaeological evidence tells us that many of the medieval towns, including Athens, Thessaloniki, Thebes and Corinth, experienced a period of rapid and sustained growth, starting in the eleventh century and continuing until the end of the twelfth century. The growth of the towns attracted the Venetians, and this interest in trade appears to have further increased economic prosperity in Greece. Certainly, the Venetians and others were active traders in the ports of the Holy Land, and they made a living out of shipping goods between the Crusader Kingdoms of Outremer and the West while also trading extensively with Byzantium and Egypt.

Artistic revival

The 11th and 12th centuries are said to be the Golden Age of Byzantine art in Greece. Many of the most important Byzantine churches in around Athens, for example, were built during these two centuries, and this reflects the growth of urbanisation in Greece during this period. There was also a revival in the mosaic art with artists showing great interest in depicting natural landscapes with wild animals and scenes from the hunt. Mosaics became more realistic and vivid, with an increased emphasis on depicting three-dimensional forms. With its love of luxury and passion for colour, the art of this age delighted in the production of masterpieces that spread the fame of Byzantium throughout the whole of the Christian world.

Beautiful silks from the work-shops of Constantinople also portrayed in dazzling colour animals -lions, elephants, eagles, and griffins- confronting each other, or representing Emperors gorgeously arrayed on horseback or engaged in the chase. In the provinces, regional schools of Architecture began producing many distinctive styles that drew on a range of cultural influences. All this suggests that there was an increased demand for art, with more people having access to the necessary wealth to commission and pay for such work.

Byzantine Church in the Agora, Athens

Yet the marvellous expansion of Byzantine art during this period, one of the most remarkable facts in the history of the empire, did not stop there. From the tenth to the twelfth century Byzantium was the main source of inspiration for the West. By their style, arrangement, and iconography the mosaics of St. Mark's at Venice and of the cathedral at Torcello clearly reveal their Byzantine origin. Similarly those of the Palatine Chapel, the Martorana at Palermo, and the cathedral of Cefalu, together with the vast decoration of the cathedral at Monreale, demonstrate the influence of Byzantium on the Norman Court of Sicily in the twelfth century. Hispano-Moorish art was unquestionably derived from the Byzantine. Romanesque art owes much to the East, from which it borrowed not only its decorative forms but the plan of some of its buildings, as is proved, for instance, by the domed churches of south-western France. Princes of Kiev, Venetian doges, abbots of Monte Cassino, merchants of Amalfi, and the Norman kings of Sicily all looked to Byzantium for artists or works of art. Such was the influence of Byzantine art in the twelfth century, that Russia, Venice, southern Italy and Sicily all virtually became provincial centres dedicated to its production.

The Fourth Crusade

The year 1204 marks the beginning of the late Byzantine period, when probably the most important event for the Empire occurred. Constantinople was lost for the Greek people for the first time, and the empire was conquered by Latin crusaders and would be replaced by a new Latin one, for 57 years. In addition, the period of Latin occupation decisively influenced the empire's internal development, as elements of feudality entered aspects of Byzantine life. In 1261 the Greek empire was divided between the former Greek Byzantine Comnenos dynasty members (Epirus) and Palaiologos dynasty (the last dynasty until the fall of Constantinople). After the gradual weakening of the structures of the Greek Byzantine state and the reduction of its land from Turkish invasions, came the fall of the Greek Byzantine Empire, at the hands of the Ottomans, in 1453, when the Byzantine period is considered to have ended.

It must be pointed out that the term "Byzantine" is a contemporary one established by historians. People used to call the Empire from the 10th century on as the Greek Empire as well as Romeo-Greek before that time; that's why Greeks call themselves sometimes as Romioi in a colloquial form. The Romeo term was used sometimes because of the legal tradition left in many aspects of the political administration of the Empire. It must also be added that many empires all around Europe had been using this term, in addition to the Greek Byzantines, like the Carolingians, or the Heiliges Römisches Reich (Latin Sacrum Romanum Imperium) of the Germans looking themselves as the legitimate heirs of the Roman Empire.

Ottoman Rule and the Rise of Modern Greece

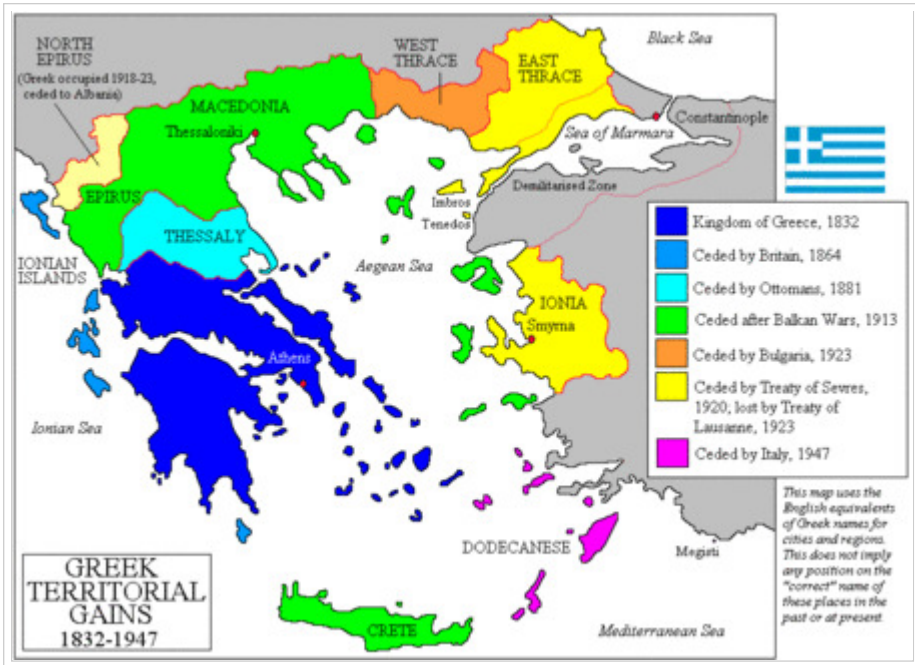
The Battle of Navarino, in October 1827, marked the effective end of Ottoman Rule in Greece.

When the Ottomans arrived, two Greek migrations occurred. The first migration entailed the Greek intelligentsia migrating to Western Europe and influencing the advent of the Renaissance. The second migration entailed Greeks leaving the plains of the Greek peninsula and resettling in the mountains. Greece being mostly mountainous, the Ottomans could not conquer the entire Greek peninsula since they created neither a military nor an administrative presence in the mountains. There existed many Greek mountain clans all across the peninsula and islands. The Sfakiots of Crete, the Souliots of Epirus, and the Maniots of the Peloponnese were the most resilient mountain clans throughout the Ottoman Empire. By the end of the 16th century up until the 17th century, many Greeks began to migrate from the mountains to the plains. The millet system contributed to the ethnic cohesion of Orthodox Greeks by segregating the various peoples within the Ottoman Empire based on religion. The Greek Orthodox Church, an ethno-religious institution, helped the Greeks from all geographical areas of the peninsula (i.e., mountains, plains, and islands) to preserve their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage during the years of Ottoman rule. The Greeks living in the plains during Ottoman occupation were either Christians who dealt with the burdens of foreign rule or Crypto-Christians (Greek Muslims who were secret practitioners of the Greek Orthodox faith). Many Greeks became Crypto-Christians in order to avoid heavy taxes and at the same time express their identity by maintaining their secret ties to the Greek Orthodox Church. However, Greeks who converted to Islam and were not Crypto-Christians were deemed Turks in the eyes of Orthodox Greeks, even if they didn't adopt Turkish language. On the other hand, this population has played an immense role for the creation of modern Greek culture, as Turkish traditions and customs were learned during the entire occupation period. The most obvious traces of Ottoman influence on Greek culture today are reflected in Greek music and in the Greek kitchen.

The modern Greek state

The Ottomans ruled Greece until the early 19th century. On March 25, 1821 (also the same day as the Greek Orthodox day of the Annunciation of the Theotokos), the Greeks rebelled and declared their independence, but did not achieve it until 1829. The big European powers saw the war of Greek independence, with its accounts of Turkish atrocities, in a romantic light (see, for example, the 1824 painting *Massacre of Chios* by Eugène Delacroix). Scores of non-Greeks volunteered to fight for the cause, including Lord Byron. At times the Ottomans seemed on the point of suppressing the Greek revolution but for the threatened direct military intervention of France, England or Russia. The Russian minister for foreign affairs, Ioannis Kapodistrias, himself a Greek, returned home as President of the new Republic following Greek independence. That republic disappeared when the European powers helped turn Greece into a monarchy; the first king, Otto came from Bavaria and the second, George I from Denmark.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, in a series of wars with the Ottomans, Greece sought to enlarge its boundaries to include the ethnic Greek population of the Ottoman Empire. (The Ionian Islands were returned by England upon the arrival of the new king from Denmark in 1863, and Thessaly was ceded by the Ottomans without a fight). As a result of the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 Epirus, southern Macedonia, Crete and the Aegean Islands were annexed into Greece. Greece reached its present configuration in 1947.



The expansion of Greece from 1832 to 1947, showing territories awarded to Greece by the Treaty of Sèvres but lost in 1923 under the Treaty of Lausanne (click to enlarge)

World War I and the Greco-Turkish War

In World War I, Greece sided with the entente powers against Turkey and the other Central Powers. In the war's aftermath, the Great Powers awarded parts of Asia Minor to Greece, including the city of Smyrna (known as İzmir today) which had a majority Greek population. At that time, however, the Turkish nationalists led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, overthrew the Ottoman government, organised a military assault on the Greek troops, and defeated them. Immediately afterwards, over one million native Greeks of Turkey had to leave for Greece as a population exchange with hundreds of thousands of Muslims living in the Greek state (see Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922).

World War 2

Despite the country's numerically small and ill-equipped armed forces, Greece made a decisive contribution to the Allied efforts in World War II. At the start of the war Greece sided with the Allies and refused to give in to Italian demands. Italy invaded Greece on 28 October 1940, but Greek troops repelled the invaders after a bitter struggle (see Greco-Italian War). This marked the first Allied victory in the war. Hitler then reluctantly stepped in, primarily to secure his strategic southern flank: troops from Germany, Bulgaria and Italy successfully invaded Greece, overcoming Greek, British, Australian and New Zealand units.

However, when the Germans attempted to seize Crete in a massive attack by paratroops—with the aim of reducing the threat of a counter-offensive by Allied forces in Egypt— the Cretan civilians and Allied Forces, offered fierce resistance. The Greek campaign delayed German military plans against Russia and it is argued that German invasion of the Soviet Union started fatally close to winter.

During the years of Occupation of Greece by Nazi Germany, thousands of Greeks died in direct combat, in concentration camps or of starvation. The occupiers murdered the greater part of the Jewish community despite efforts by the Greek Orthodox Church and many Christian Greeks to shelter Jews. The economy was devastated. After liberation, Greece experienced an equally bitter civil war—between communist insurgents and government forces (that encompassed republicans, liberals, royalists and conservatives) ; it lasted until 1949.

Postwar recovery

In the 1950s and 1960s, Greece developed rapidly, initially with the help of the U.S. Marshall Plans' grants and loans, and later through growth in the tourism sector. In 1967, the Greek military seized power in a coup d'état, overthrew the centre right government of Panagiotis Kanellopoulos and established the Greek military junta of 1967-1974 which became known as the *Régime of the Colonels*. The Central Intelligence Agency was involved in the coup and President Clinton later apologised for the interference. In 1973, the régime abolished the Greek monarchy. In 1974, dictator Papadopoulos denied help to the U.S. and rumor has it that as a result the U.S., through Kissinger's efforts, initiated a second coup. Colonel Ioannides was appointed as the new head-of-state.

Many hold Ioannides responsible for the coup against President Makarios of Cyprus—the *coup* seen as the pretext for the first wave of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 (see Greco-Turkish relations). The Cyprus events and the outcry following a bloody suppression of Athens Polytechnic uprising in Athens led to the implosion of the military régime. A charismatic exiled politician, Konstantinos Karamanlis, returned from Paris as interim prime minister and later gained re-election for two further terms at the head of the conservative Nea Dimokratia party.

Restoration of democracy

In 1975, following a referendum to confirm the deposition of King Constantine II, a democratic republican constitution came into force. Another previously exiled politician, Andreas Papandreou also returned and founded the socialist PASOK party, which won the elections in 1981 and dominated the country's political course for almost two decades.

Since the restoration of democracy, the stability and economic prosperity of Greece have remarkably grown. Greece joined the European Union in 1981 and adopted the Euro as its currency in 2001. New infrastructure, funds from the EU and growing revenues from tourism, shipping, services, light industry and the telecommunications industry have brought Greeks an unprecedented standard of living. Tensions continue to exist between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus and the delimitation of borders in the Aegean Sea but relations have considerably thawed following successive earthquakes—first in Turkey and then in Greece—and an outpouring of sympathy and generous assistance by ordinary Greeks and Turks.

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Iron Age

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology; British History 1500 and before (including Roman Britain)

In archaeology, the **Iron Age** was the stage in the development of any people in which tools and weapons whose main ingredient was iron were prominent. The adoption of this material coincided with other changes in some past societies often including differing agricultural practices, religious beliefs and artistic styles, although this was not always the case.

In history, the Iron Age is the last principal period in the three-age system for classifying pre-historic societies, preceded by the Bronze Age. Its date and context vary depending on the country or geographical region.

No firm ending date is set for the Iron Age in any particular society; there is simply a point where archaeology becomes less important than surviving history and traditions. Iron alloys remain popular as the steels in most metallic objects.

Iron Age
↑ Bronze Age
Bronze Age collapse
Ancient Near East (1300-600 BC)
Aegean, Anatolia, Assyria, Caucasus, Egypt, Levant, Persia
India (1200-200 BC)
Painted Grey Ware Northern Black Polished Ware Mauryan period
Europe (1000 BC-400 AD)
Novocherkassk Hallstatt C Villanovan culture British Iron Age Greece, Rome, Celts Scandinavia
China (600-200 BC)
Warring States Period
Japan (500 BC-300 AD)
Yayoi period
Korea (400-60 BC)
Nigeria (400 BC-200 AD)

Dates

Axial Age
Classical Antiquity
Zhou Dynasty
Vedic period
alphabetic writing, metallurgy

↓ Historiography

Greek, Roman, Chinese, Islamic

Dun Carloway broch, Lewis, Scotland

Classically, the Iron Age is taken to begin in the 12th century BC in the ancient Near East, ancient Persia, ancient India (with the post-Rigvedic Vedic civilization), and ancient Greece (with the Greek Dark Ages). In other regions of Europe, it started much later. The Iron Age began in the 8th century BC in Central Europe and the 6th century BC in Northern Europe. Iron use, in smelting and forging for tools, appears in West Africa by 1200 BC, making it one of the first places for the birth of the Iron Age.

An Iron Age thatched roof, Butser Farm, Hampshire, England

The Iron Age is divided into two subsections, Iron I and Iron II. Iron I (1200-1000) illustrates both continuity and discontinuity with the previous Late Bronze Age. There is no definitive cultural break between the thirteenth and twelfth century throughout the entire region, although certain new features in the hill country, Transjordan and coastal region may suggest the appearance of the Aramaean and Sea People groups. There is evidence, however, that shows strong continuity with Bronze Age culture, although as one moves later into Iron I the culture begins to diverge more significantly from that of the late second millennium.

The Iron Age is usually said to end in the Mediterranean with the onset of historical tradition during Hellenism and the Roman Empire, in India with the onset of Buddhism and Jainism, in China with the onset of Confucianism, and in Northern Europe with the early Middle Ages.

The arrival of iron use in various areas is discussed in more detail below, broadly in chronological order.

Iron use in the Bronze Age

By the Middle Bronze Age, increasing numbers of smelted iron objects (distinguishable from meteoric iron by the lack of nickel in the product) appeared throughout Anatolia, Mesopotamia, the Indian subcontinent, the Levant, the Mediterranean, and Egypt. In some places, their use appears to have been ceremonial, and during the Bronze Age iron was an expensive metal, more expensive than gold. Some sources suggest that iron was being created in some places then as a by-product of copper refining, as sponge iron, and was not reproducible by the metallurgy of the time.

The earliest systematic production and use of iron implements originates in Anatolia. West African production of iron began at around the same time, and seems to have been clearly an independent invention (see Stanley J. Alpern's work in *History in Africa*, volume 2). Recent archaeological research at Ganges Valley, India showed early iron working by 1800 BC. By 1200 BC, iron was widely used in the Middle East but did not supplant the dominant use of bronze for some time.

Transition from bronze to iron

Bronze was previously used to make tools because its melting point is lower than that of iron. The Iron Age began with the development of higher temperature smelting techniques..

During the Iron Age, the best tools and weapons were made from steel, an alloy consisting of iron with a carbon content between 0.02% and 1.7% by weight. Steel weapons and tools were nearly the same weight as those of bronze, but stronger. However, steel was difficult to produce with the methods available. Therefore, many Iron Age tools were fashioned of wrought iron. Wrought iron is weaker than bronze, but because it was less expensive, and more easily sharpened, people used it anyway. Iron is by itself an adequately strong metal without additional alloys (although it could be further strengthened by case-hardening or forge welding small amounts of steel to areas subject to wear such as edges). Bronze, on the other hand, requires copper and tin which are less common than iron. Additionally, iron can be sharpened by grinding whereas bronze must be reforged.

Around 1800 BC, for reasons yet unknown to archaeologists, tin became scarce in the Levant, causing a decline in bronze production. Copper, also, came to be in short supply. As a result, pirate groups around the Mediterranean, from around 1800-1700 BC onward, began to attack fortified cities in search of bronze, to remelt into weaponry.

Bronze was much more abundant in the period before the 12th to 10th century and Snodgrass suggests that a shortage of tin, as a result of the trade disruptions in the Mediterranean at this time, forced peoples to seek an alternative to bronze. That many bronze items were recycled and made from implements into weapons during this time, is evidence of this.

Ancient Near East

Transition

The Iron Age in the Ancient Near East is believed to have begun with the discovery of iron smelting and smithing techniques in Anatolia or the Caucasus in the late 2nd millennium BC (circa 1300 BC).

The use of iron weapons instead of bronze weapons spread rapidly throughout the Near East by the beginning of the 1st millennium BC. Anatolians had begun forging weapons out of iron, which was a superior metal to bronze by 1500 BC at the latest.

The use of iron weapons by the Hittites was believed to have been a major factor in the rapid rise of the Hittite Empire. Because the area in which iron technology first developed was near the Aegean, the technology expanded into into both Asia and Europe simultaneously, aided by Hittite expansion. The Sea Peoples and the related Philistines are often associated with the introduction of iron technology into Asia, as are the Dorians with respect to Greece.

Finds of Iron *Early examples and distribution of non precious metal finds.*

Date	Crete	Aegean	Greece	Cyprus	Total	Anatolia	Grand total
1300-1200 BC	5	2	9	0	16	33	65

1200-1100 BC	1	2	8	26	37	N.A.	74
1100-1000 BC	13	3	31	33	80	N.A.	160
1000-900 BC	37	30	115	29	1.40	N.A.	211
Total Bronze Age	5	2	9	0	16	33	65
Total Iron Age	51	35	163	88	337	N.A.	511

Assyria

Levant

Anatolia

Aegean

Egypt

Indian subcontinent

Archaeological sites in India, such as Malhar, Dadupur, Raja Nala Ka Tila and Lahuradewa in present day Uttar Pradesh show iron implements in the period between 1800 BC - 1200 BC. Some scholars believe that by the early 13th century BC, iron smelting was practiced on a bigger scale in India, suggesting that the date the technology's inception may be placed earlier.

The beginning of the 1st millennium BC saw extensive developments in iron metallurgy in India. Technological advancement and mastery of iron metallurgy was achieved during this period of peaceful settlements. An iron working centre in east India has been dated to the first millennium BC.

In Southern India (present day Mysore) iron appeared as early as 11th to 12th centuries BC; these developments were too early for any significant close contact with the northwest of the country.

The Indian Upnishads have mentions of weaving, pottery, and metallurgy.

The Mauryan period in India saw advancements in technology; this technological change involved metallurgy.

Perhaps as early as 300 BC, although certainly by AD 200, high quality steel was being produced in southern India also by what Europeans would later call the crucible technique. In this system, high-purity wrought iron, charcoal, and glass were mixed in crucible and heated until the iron melted and absorbed the carbon.

East Asia

China

In 1972, near the city of Gaocheng (藁城) in Shijiazhuang (now Hebei province), an iron-bladed bronze tomahawk (铁刃青铜钺) dating back to the 14th century BC was excavated. After a scientific examination, the iron was shown to be made from meteoric siderite. The Iron Age in East Asia began in earnest, however, when cast-iron objects appeared in Yangzi Valley toward the end of the 6th century BC. The few objects were found at Changsha and Nanjing. According to the mortuary evidence suggests that the initial use of iron in Lingnan belongs to the mid to late Warring States period (from about 350 BC).

Silla chest and neck armour from National Museum of Korea.

The techniques used in Lingnan is a combination of bivalve moulds of distinct southern tradition and the incorporation of piece mould technology from the *Zhongyuan* The products of the combination of these two periods are bells, vessels, weapons and ornaments and the sophisticated cast.

An Iron Age culture of the Tibetan Plateau has tentatively been associated with the Zhang Zhung culture described in early Tibetan writings.

Japan

The **Yayoi period** (弥生時代 *Yayoi-jidai* [?]) is an era in the history of Japan from about 500 BC to 300 AD. Distinguishing characteristics of the Yayoi period include the appearance of new pottery styles and the start of an intensive rice agriculture in paddy fields. The Yayoi followed the Jōmon period (14,000 BC to 500 BC) and Yayoi culture flourished in a geographic area from southern Kyūshū to northern Honshū.

The succeeding **Kofun period** (古墳時代 *Kofun-jidai* [?]) lasts from around 250 to 538. The word *kofun* is Japanese for the type of burial mounds dating from this era. The Kofun and the subsequent Asuka periods are sometimes referred to collectively as the Yamato period.

Korea

Iron objects were introduced to the Korean peninsula through trade with chiefdoms and state-level societies in the Yellow Sea area in the fourth century BC, just at the end of the Warring States Period but before the Western Han Dynasty began. Yoon proposes that iron was first introduced to chiefdoms located along

North Korean river valleys that flow into the Yellow Sea such as the Cheongcheon and Taedong Rivers. Iron production quickly followed in the 2nd century BC, and iron implements came to be used by farmers by the 1st century AD in southern Korea. The earliest known cast-iron axes in southern Korea are found in the Geum River basin. The time that iron production begins is the same time that complex chiefdoms of Proto-historic Korea emerged. The complex chiefdoms were the precursors of early states such as Silla, Baekje, Goguryeo, and Gaya Iron ingots were an important mortuary item and indicated the wealth or prestige of the deceased in this period.

Europe

Iron working was introduced to Europe around 1000 BC, probably from Asia Minor and slowly spread northwards and westwards over the succeeding 500 years.

Eastern Europe

The early 1st millennium BC marks the Iron Age in Eastern Europe. In the Pontic steppe and the Caucasus region, the Iron Age begins with the Koban and the Chernogorovka and Novocherkassk cultures from ca. 900 BC. By 800 BC, it was spreading to Hallstatt C via the alleged " Thraco-Cimmerian" migrations.

Along with Chernogorovka and Novocherkassk cultures, on the territory of ancient Russia and Ukraine the Iron Age is to a significant extent associated with Scythians, who developed iron culture since the 7th century BC. The majority of remains of their iron producing and blacksmith's industries from 5th to 3rd century BC was found near Nikopol in Kamenskoe Gorodishche, which is believed to be the specialized metallurgic region of the ancient Scythia.

From the Hallstatt culture, the Iron Age spreads west with the Celtic expansion from the 6th century BC. In Poland, the Iron Age reaches the late Lusatian culture in about the 6th century, followed in some areas by the Pomeranian culture.

The ethnic ascriptions of many Iron Age cultures has been bitterly contested, as the roots of Germanic, Baltic and Slavic peoples were sought in this area.

Central Europe

In Central Europe, the Iron Age is generally divided in the early Iron Age Hallstatt culture (HaC and D, 800- 450) and the late Iron Age La Tène culture (beginning in 450 BC). The Iron Age ends with the Roman Conquest.

Italy

In Italy, the Iron Age was probably introduced by the Villanovan culture but this culture is otherwise considered a Bronze Age culture, while the following Etruscan civilization is regarded as part of Iron Age proper. The Etruscan Iron Age was then ended with the rise and conquest of the Roman Republic, which conquered the last Etruscan city of Velzna in 265 BC.

British Isles

In the British Isles, the Iron Age lasted from about 800 BC until the Roman conquest and until the 5th century AD in non-Romanised parts. Structures dating from this time are often impressive, for example the brochs and duns of northern Scotland and the hill forts that dotted the islands.

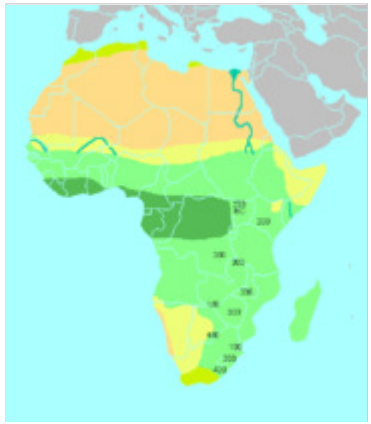
Northern Europe

The Iron Age is divided into the Pre-Roman Iron Age and the Roman Iron Age. This is followed by the migration period. Northern Germany and Denmark was dominated by the Jastorf culture, whereas the culture of the southern half of the Scandinavia was dominated by the very similar *Gregan Iron Age*.

Early Scandinavian iron production typically involved the harvesting of bog iron. Scandinavian peninsula, Finland and Estonia show sophisticated iron production very early, but further dating is currently impossible. The range varies from 3000 BP - 2000 BP. This knowledge is associated with the non-Germanic part of Scandinavia. Metalworking and Asbestos-Ceramic pottery are somewhat synonymous in Scandinavia due to the latter's capacity to resist and retain heat. The iron ore used is believed to have been iron sand (such as red soil), because its high phosphorus content can be identified in slag. They are sometimes found together with asbestos ware axes belonging to the Ananjino Culture. The Asbestos-Ceramic ware remains a mystery, because there are other adiabatic vessels with unknown usage.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Inhabitants at Termit, in eastern Niger became the first iron smelting people in West Africa and among the first in the world around 1500 BC, according to "a formidable new scientific work from UNESCO Publishing that challenges a lot of conventional thinking on the subject.". Iron and copper working then continued to spread southward through the continent, reaching the Cape around AD 200. The widespread use of iron revolutionized the Bantu-speaking farming communities who adopted it, driving out and absorbing the rock tool using hunter-gatherer societies they encountered as they expanded to farm wider areas of savannah. The technologically superior Bantu-speakers spread across southern Africa and became wealthy and powerful, producing iron for tools and weapons in large, industrial quantities.



Iron Age finds in East and Southern Africa, corresponding to the early 1st millennium AD Bantu expansion

Mahābhārata

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology

The ***Mahābhārata*** (Devanāgarī: महाभारत) is one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India, the other being the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Manuscript illustration of the Battle of Kurukshetra

With more than 74,000 verses, long prose passages, and about 1.8 million words in total, the *Mahābhārata* is one of the longest epic poems in the world. Including the *Harivaṃśa*, the *Mahabharata* has a total length of more than 90,000 verses.

It is of immense importance to the culture of the Indian subcontinent, and is a major text of Hinduism. Its discussion of human goals (*artha* or purpose, *kāma* or pleasure, *dharma* or duty, and *moksha* or liberation) takes place in a long-standing tradition, attempting to explain the relationship of the individual to society and the world (the nature of the 'Self') and the workings of karma.

The title may be translated as "the great tale of the Bhārata Dynasty", according to the *Mahābhārata*'s own testimony extended from a shorter version simply called *Bhārata* of 24,000 verses The epic is part of the Hindu *itihāsa*, literally "history", which includes the *Ramayana* but not the *Purāṇas*.

Traditionally, Hindus ascribe the authorship of the *Mahābhārata* to Vyasa. Because of its immense length, its philological study has a long history of attempts to unravel its historical growth and composition layers. Its earliest layers probably date back to the late Vedic period (ca. 8th c. BC) and it probably reached its final form by the time the Gupta period began (ca. 4th c. AD).

Scope

Besides its epic narrative of the Kurukshetra War and the fates of the Kauravas and the Pandavas, the *Mahabharata* contains much philosophical and devotional material, such as the Bhagavad Gita (6.25-42), or a discussion of the four "goals of life" or *purusharthas* (12.161). The latter are enumerated as *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (pleasure), and *moksha* (liberation).

The *Mahabharata* claims all-inclusiveness at the beginning of its first *parvan* ("book"): "What is found here, may be found elsewhere. What is not found here, will not be found elsewhere." Among the principal works and stories that are a part of the *Mahabharata* are the following (often considered isolated as works in their own right):

- the Bhagavad Gita in book 6 (Bhishmaparvan): Krishna advises and teaches Arjuna when he is ridden with doubt.
- the Damayanti or Nala and Damayanti in book 3 (Aranyakaparvan), a love story.
- An abbreviated version of the Ramayana, in book 3 (Aranyakaparvan)
- Rishyasringa, the horned boy and rishi, in book 3 (Aranyakaparvan)

Textual history and structure

The epic is traditionally ascribed to Vyasa, who is also one of the major dynastic characters within the epic. The first section of the *Mahabharata* states that it was Ganesha who, at the request of Vyasa, wrote down the text to Vyasa's dictation. Ganesha is said to have agreed to write it only on condition that Vyasa never pause in his recitation. Vyasa agreed, providing that Ganesha took the time to understand what was said before writing it down. The epic employs the story within a story structure, otherwise known as frametales, popular in many Indian religious and secular works. It is recited to the King Janamejaya who is the great-grandson of Arjuna, by Vaisampayana, a disciple of Vyasa.

It is usually thought that the full length of the *Mahabharata* has accreted over a long period. The *Mahabharata* itself (1.1.61) distinguishes a core portion of 24,000 verses, the *Bharata* proper, as opposed to additional secondary material, while the *Ashvalayana Grhyasutra* (3.4.4) makes a similar distinction. According to the *Adi-parvan* of the *Mahabharata* (shlokas 81, 101-102), the text was originally 8,800 verses when it was composed by Vyasa and was known as the *Jaya* (Victory), which later became 24,000 verses in the *Bharata* recited by Vaisampayana, and finally over 90,000 verses in the *Mahabharata* recited by Ugrasravas.

As with the field of Homeric studies, research on the *Mahabharata* has put an enormous effort into recognizing and dating various layers within the text. The state of the text has struck early 20th century Indologists as "chaotic" or "unordered".

The earliest known references to the *Mahabharata* and its core *Bharata* date back to the *Ashtadhyayi* (sutra 6.2.38) of Pāṇini (fl. 4th century BC), and in the *Ashvalayana Grhyasutra* (3.4.4). This may suggest that the core 24,000 verses, known as the *Bharata*, as well as an early version of the extended *Mahabharata*, were composed by the 4th century BC. Parts of the *Jaya*'s original 8,800 verses possibly may date back as far as the 9th-8th century BC.

The Greek writer Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40- 120) reported, "it is said that Homer's poetry is sung even in India, where they have translated it into their own speech and tongue. The result is that...the people of India...are not unacquainted with the sufferings of Priam, the laments and wailings of Andromache and Hecuba, and the valor of both Achilles and Hector: so remarkable has been the spell of one man's poetry!" Despite the passage's evident face-value meaning—that the *Iliad* had been translated into Sanskrit—some scholars have supposed that the report reflects the existence of a *Mahabharata* at this date, whose episodes Dio or his sources syncretistically identify with the story of the *Iliad*. Christian Lassen, in his *Indische Alterthumskunde*, supposed that the reference is ultimately to Dhritarashtra's sorrows, the laments of Gandhari and Draupadi, and the valor of Arjuna and Suyodhana or Karna. This interpretation, endorsed in such standard references as Albrecht Weber's *History of Indian Literature*, has often been repeated without specific reference to what Dio's text says.

Later, the copper-plate inscription of the Maharaja Sharvanatha (533-534) from Khoh (Satna District, Madhya Pradesh) describes the *Mahabharata* as a

"collection of 100,000 verses" (*shatasahasri samhita*). The redaction of this large body of text was carried out after formal principles, emphasizing the numbers 18 and 12. The addition of the latest parts may be dated by the absence of the *Anushasana-parvan* from *MS Spitzer*, the oldest surviving Sanskrit philosophical manuscript dated to the first century, that contains among other things a list of the books in the *Mahabharata*. From this evidence, it is likely that the redaction into 18 books took place in the first century. An alternative division into 20 parvans appears to have co-existed for some time. The division into 100 sub-parvans (mentioned in Mbh. 1.2.70) is older, and most parvans are named after one of their constituent sub-parvans. The *Harivamsa* consists of the final two of the 100 sub-parvans, and was considered an appendix (*khila*) to the *Mahabharata* proper by the redactors of the 18 parvas.

The 18 parvans

The division into 18 parvans is as follows:

parvan	title	sub-parvans	contents
1	*Adi-parvan* (The Book of the Beginning)	1-19	How the Mahabharata came to be narrated by Sauti to the assembled rishis at Naimisharanya. The recital of the Mahabharata at the Sarpasatra of Janamejaya by Vaishampayana at Takṣaśilā. The history of the Bharata race is told in detail and the parvan also traces history of the Bhrigu race. The birth and early life of the Kuru princes. (*adi* means first)
2	*Sabha-parvan* (The Book of the Assembly Hall)	20-28	Maya Danava erects the palace and court (*sabha*), at Indraprastha. Life at the court, Yudhishthira's Rajasuya Yajna, the game of dice, and the eventual exile of the Pandavas.
3	*Aranyaka-parvan (also Vana-parvan, Aranya-parvan)* (The Book of the Forest)	29-44	The twelve years of exile in the forest (*aranya*).
4	*Virata-parvan* (The Book of Virata)	45-48	The year in incognito spent at the court of Virata.
5	*Udyoga-parvan* (The Book of the Effort)	49-59	Preparations for war and efforts to bring about peace between the Kurus and the Pandavas which eventually fail (*udyoga* means effort or work).
6	*Bhishma-parvan* (The Book of Bhishma)	60-64	The first part of the great battle, with Bhishma as commander for the Kauravas and his fall on the bed of arrows.
7	*Drona-parvan* (The Book of Drona)	65-72	The battle continues, with Drona as commander. This is the major book of the war. Most of the great warriors on both sides are dead by the end of this book.
8	*Karna-parvan* (The Book of Karna)	73	The battle again, with Karna as commander.

9	*Shalya-parvan* (The Book of Shalya)	74-77	The last day of the battle, with Shalya as commander. Also told in detail is the pilgrimage of Balarama to the fords of the river Saraswati and the mace fight between Bheema and Duryodhana which ends the war.
10	*Sauptika-parvan* (The Book of the Sleeping Warriors)	78-80	Ashvattama, Kripa and Kritavarma kill the remaining Pandava army in their sleep (*sauptika*). Only 7 warriors remain on the Pandava side and 3 on the Kaurava side.
11	*Stri-parvan* (The Book of the Women)	81-85	Gandhari, Kunti and the women (*stri*) of the Kurus and Pandavas lament the dead.
12	*Shanti-parvan* (The Book of Peace)	86-88	The crowning of Yudhisthira as king of Hastinapura, and instructions from Bhishma for the newly anointed king on society, economics and politics. This is the longest book of the Mahabharata (*shanti* means peace).
13	*Anusasana-parvan* (The Book of the Instructions)	89-90	The final instructions (*anusasana*) from Bhishma.
14	*Ashvamedhika-parvan* (The Book of the Horse Sacrifice)	91-92	The royal ceremony of the Ashvamedha (Horse sacrifice) conducted by Yudhisthira. The world conquest by Arjuna. The Anugita is told by Krishna to Arjuna.
15	*Ashramavasika-parvan* (The Book of the Hermitage)	93-95	The eventual deaths of Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti in a forest fire when they are living in a hermitage in the Himalayas. Vidura predeceases them and Sanjaya on Dhritarashtra's bidding goes to live in the higher Himalayas.
16	*Mausala-parvan* (The Book of the Clubs)	96	The infighting between the Yadavas with maces (*mausala*) and the eventual destruction of the Yadavas.
17	*Mahaprasthanika-parvan* (The Book of the Great Journey)	97	The great journey of Yudhisthira and his brothers across the whole country and finally their ascent of the great Himalayas where each Pandava falls except for Yudhishthira.
18	*Svargarohana-parvan* (The Book of the Ascent to Heaven)	98	Yudhishthira's final test and the return of the Pandavas to the spiritual world (*svarga*).
khila	*Harivamsa-parvan* (The Book of the Genealogy of Hari)	99-100	Life of Krishna which is not covered in the 18 parvans of the Mahabharata.

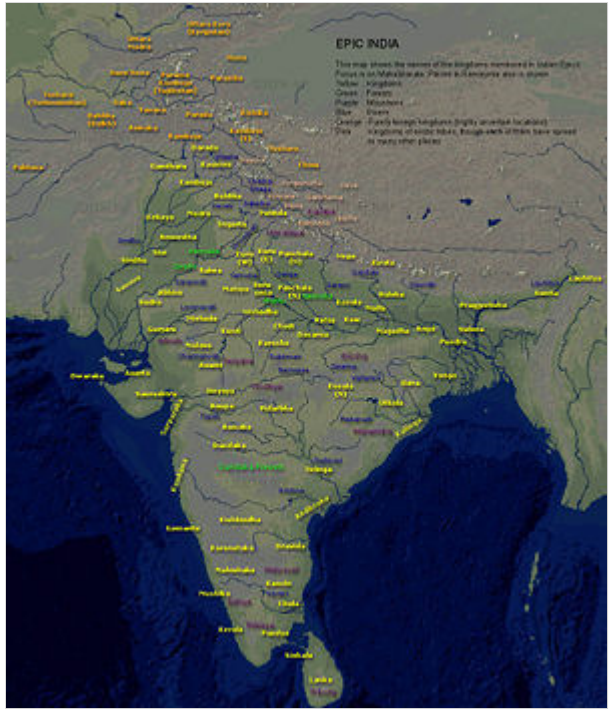
The Adi-parvan includes the snake sacrifice (*sarpasattra*) of Janamejaya, explaining its motivation, detailing why all snakes in existence were intended to be destroyed, and why in spite of this, there are still snakes in existence. This sarpasattra material was often considered an independent tale added to a version of the *Mahabharata* by "thematic attraction" (Minkowski 1991), and considered to have particularly close connection to Vedic (Brahmana) literature, in particular the Panchavimsha Brahmana which describes the Sarpasattra as originally performed by snakes, among which are snakes named Dhrtarashtra and Janamejaya, two main characters of the *Mahabharata*'s sarpasattra, and Takshaka, the name of a snake also in the *Mahabharata*. The Shatapatha Brahmana gives an

account of an Ashvamedha performed by Janamejaya Parikshita.

According to what one character says at Mbh. 1.1.50, there were three versions of the epic, beginning with *Manu* (1.1.27), *Astika* (1.3, sub-parvan 5) or *Vasu* (1.57), respectively. These versions would correspond to the addition of one and then another 'frame' settings of dialogues. The *Vasu* version would omit the frame settings and begin with the account of the birth of Vyasa. The Astika version would add the Sarpasattra and Ashvamedha material from Brahmanical literature, introduce the name *Mahabharata*, and identify Vyasa as the work's author. The redactors of these additions were probably Pancharatrin scholars who according to Oberlies (1998) likely retained control over the text until its final redaction. Mention of the Huna in the *Bhishma-parvan* however appears to imply that this parvan may have been edited around the 4th century.

Historical context

The historicity of the Kurukshetra War is unclear. Inasmuch as it does have a historical precedent, it would best fit into the context of Iron Age India of the 9th century BC or so.



Map of *Bharatvarsha* (Kingdom of India) during the time of *Mahabharata* and Ramayana. (Title and location names are in English.)

Regardless of the historicity of the Kurukshetra War in particular, the general setting of the epic certainly does have a historical precedent in Iron Age (Vedic) India, where the Kuru kingdom was the centre of political power during roughly 1200 to 800 BC. A dynastic conflict of the period could have been the inspiration for the *Jaya*, the core on which the Mahabharata corpus was built, with a climactic battle eventually coming to be viewed as an epochal event.

Pauranic literature presents genealogical lists associated with the Mahabharata narrative. The evidence of the Puranas is of two kinds. Of the first kind, there is the direct statement that there were 1015 (or 1050) years between the birth of Parikshita (Arjuna's grandson) and the accession of Mahapadma Nanda, commonly dated to 382 B.C., which would yield an estimate of about 1400 B.C. for the Bharata battle. However, this would imply improbably long reigns on average for the kings listed in the genealogies. Of the second kind are analyses of parallel genealogies in the Puranas between the times of Adhisimakrishna (Parikshita's great-grandson) and Mahapadma Nanda. Pargiter accordingly estimated 26 generations by averaging 10 different dynastic lists and, assuming 18 years for the average duration of a reign, arrived at an estimate of 850 B.C. for Adhisimakrishna, and thus approximately 950 B.C. for the Bharata battle.

B. B. Lal used the same approach with a more conservative assumption of the average reign to estimate a date of 836 B.C., and correlated this with archaeological evidence from Painted Grey Ware sites, the association being strong between PGW artifacts and places mentioned in the epic.

Attempts to date the events using methods of archaeoastronomy have produced, depending on which passages are chosen and how they are interpreted, estimates ranging from the late 4th to the mid 2nd millennium B.C. The late 4th millennium date has a

precedent in the calculation of the Kaliyuga epoch, based on planetary conjunctions, by Aryabhata (6th century). His date of February 18, 3102 B.C., has become widespread in Indian tradition (for example, the Aihole inscription of Pulikeshi II, dated to Saka 556 = 634 A.D., claims that 3,735 years have elapsed since the Bharata battle.) Another traditional school of astronomers and historians, represented by Vriddha-Garga, Varahamihira (author of the *Brhatsamhita*) and Kalhana (author of the *Rajatarangini*), place the Bharata war 653 years after the Kaliyuga epoch, corresponding to 2449 B.C.

Synopsis

The core story of the work is that of a dynastic struggle for the throne of Hastinapura, the kingdom ruled by the Kuru clan. The two collateral branches of the family that participate in the struggle are the Kaurava and the Pandava. Although the Kaurava is the senior branch of the family, Duryodhana, the eldest Kaurava, is younger than Yudhisthira, the eldest Pandava. Both Duryodhana and Yudhisthira claim to the first in line to inherit the throne.

The struggle culminates in the great battle of Kurukshetra, in which the Pandavas are ultimately victorious. The battle produces complex conflicts of kinship and friendship, instances of family loyalty and duty taking precedence over what is right, as well as the converse.

The *Mahabharata* itself ends with the death of Krishna, and the subsequent end of his dynasty, and ascent of the Pandava brothers to heaven. It also marks the beginning of the Hindu age of Kali (Kali Yuga), the fourth and final age of mankind, where the great values and noble ideas have crumbled, and man is heading toward the complete dissolution of right action, morality and virtue.

The elder generations

Janamejaya's ancestor Shantanu, the king of Hastinapura has a short-lived marriage with the goddess Ganga and has a son, Devavrata (later to be called Bhishma), who becomes the heir apparent.

Many years later, when the king goes hunting, he sees Satyavati, and asks to marry her. She is the daughter of a fisherman, and already has a son, Vyasa. Her father refuses to consent to the marriage unless Shantanu promises to make any future son of Satyavati the king upon his death. To solve the king's dilemma, Devavrata agrees not to take the throne. As the fisherman is not sure about the prince's children honouring the promise, Devavrata also takes a vow of lifelong celibacy to guarantee his father's promise. Shantanu has two sons by Satyavati, Chitrangada and Vichitravirya. Upon Shantanu's death, Chitrangada becomes king. After his death Vichitravirya rules Hastinapura. In order to arrange the marriage of the young Vichitravirya, Bhishma goes to Kāśī for a swayamvara of the three princesses Amba, Ambika and Ambalika. He wins them on strength, rather than by their will and Ambika and Ambalika are married to Vichtravirya. Amba wishes to marry Shalvaraj(king of Shalv) who Bhishma defeated at their swayamvar, but informs this to Bhishma only after reaching Hastinapur. Bhishma lets her but Shalvaraj refuses, as she had already left with Bhishma and had gone to Hastinapur from the swayamvar. Amba asks Bhishma to marry her but he can not. So Amba becomes Bhishma's bitter enemy,holding him responsible for her plight.

The Pandava and Kaurava princes

When Vichitravirya dies young without any heirs, Satyavati asks her first son Vyasa to father children on the widows. Ambika shuts her eyes when she sees him

and her son Dhritarashtra is born blind. Ambalika turns pale and bloodless, and her son Pandu is born pale (the term Pandu may also mean 'jaundiced'). Vyasa fathers a third son Vidura, by a serving maid, who is born normal.

Dhritarashtra marries Gandhari, who blindfolds herself when she finds she has been married to a blind man. Pandu takes the throne because of Dhritarashtra's blindness. Pandu marries twice, to Kunti and Madri. Pandu is however cursed by sage Kindama that if he engages in a sexual act, he will die. He then retires to the forest along with his two wives, and his brother rules thereafter, despite his blindness.

Pandu's elder queen Kunti however, asks the gods Dharma, Vayu, and Indra for sons, by using a boon granted by Durvasa. She gives birth to three sons Yudhishtira, Bhima, and Arjuna through these gods. Kunti shares her boon with the younger queen Madri, who bears the twins Nakula and Sahadeva through the Ashwini twins. However Pandu and Madri, indulge in sex and Pandu dies. Madri dies on his funeral pyre. Kunti raises the five brothers, who are from then usually referred to as the Pandava brothers.

Dhritarashtra has a hundred sons through Gandhari, all born after the birth of Yudhishtira. These are the Kaurava brothers, the eldest being Duryodhana, and the second Dushasana. There is rivalry and enmity between them and the Pandava brothers, from their youth and into manhood.

Lākṣagṛha (The House of Lac)

Duryodhana plots to get rid of the Pandavas. He has a palace built of flammable materials (mostly Lac), and arranges for them to stay there, with the intention of setting it alight. However, the Pandavas are warned by their uncle, Vidura, who sends them a miner to dig a tunnel. They are able to escape to safety and go into hiding, but after leaving others behind, whose bodies are mistaken for them. The Pandavas and Kunti go into hiding.

Marriage to Draupadi

During the course of their hiding the Pandavas learn of a swayamvara which is taking place for the hand of the Pāñcāla princess Draupadī. The Pandavas enter the competition in disguise as Brahmins. The task is to string a mighty steel bow and shoot a target on the ceiling, which is the eye of a moving artificial fish, while looking at its reflection in oil below. Most of the princes fail, many being unable to lift the bow. Arjuna succeeds however. The Pandavas return home and inform their mother that Arjuna has won a competition and to look at what they have brought back. Without looking, Kunti asks them to share whatever it is Arjuna has won among themselves. Thus Draupadi ends up being the wife of all five brothers.

Indraprastha

After the wedding, the Pandava brothers are invited back to Hastinapura. The Kuru family elders and relatives negotiate and broker a split of the kingdom, with the Pandavas obtaining a new territory. Yudhishtira has a new capital built for this territory at Indraprastha. Neither the Pandava nor Kaurava sides are happy with the arrangement however.

Shortly after this, Arjuna kidnaps and then marries Krishna's sister, Subhadra. Yudhishtira wishes to establish his position as king; he seeks Krishna's advice.

Krishna advises him, and after due preparation and the elimination of some opposition, Yudhishthira carries out the *rājasūya yagna* ceremony; he is thus recognised as pre-eminent among kings.

The Pandavas have a new palace built for them, by Maya the Danava. They invite their Kaurava cousins to Indraprastha. Duryodhana walks round the palace, and mistakes a glossy floor for water, and will not step in. After being told of his error, he then sees a pond, and assumes it is not water and falls in. Draupadi laughs at him, and he is humiliated.

The dice game

Sakuni, Duryodhana's uncle, now arranges a dice game, playing against Yudhishtira with loaded dice. Yudhishtira loses all his wealth, then his kingdom. He then even gambles his brothers, himself, and finally his wife into servitude. The jubilant Kauravas insult the Pandavas in their helpless state and even try to disrobe Draupadi in front of the entire court, but her honour is saved by Krishna who miraculously creates lengths of cloth to replace the ones being removed.

Dhritarashtra, Bhishma, and the other elders are aghast at the situation, but Duryodhana is adamant that there is no place for two crown princes in Hastinapura. Against his wishes Dhritarashtra orders for another dice game. The Pandavas are required to go into exile for 13 years, and for the 13th year must remain hidden. If discovered by the Kauravas, they will be forced into exile for another 12 years.

Exile and return

The Pandavas spend twelve years in exile; many adventures occur during this time. They also prepare alliances for a possible future conflict. They spend their final year in disguise in the court of Virata, and are discovered at or after the end of the year.

At the end of their exile, they try to negotiate a return to Indraprastha. However, this fails, as Duryodhana objects that they were discovered while in hiding, and that no return of their kingdom was agreed. War becomes inevitable.

The battle at Kurukshetra

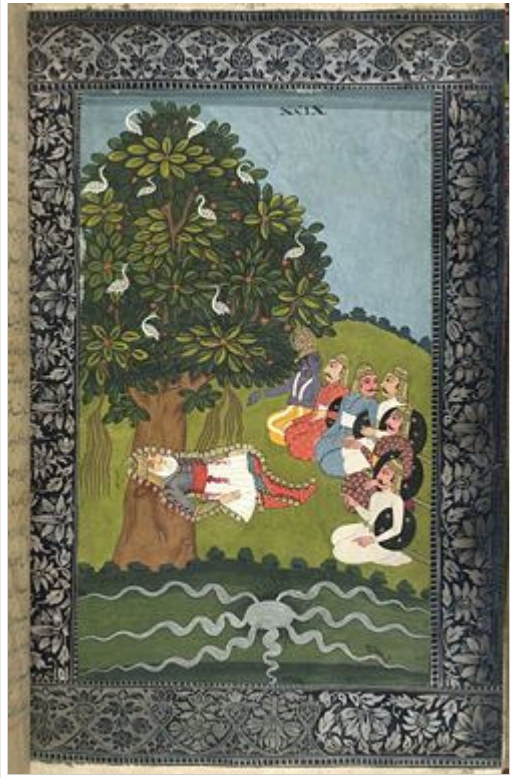
The two sides summon vast armies to their help, and line up at Kurukshetra for a war. The Kingdoms of Panchala, Dwaraka, Kasi, Kekaya, Magadha, Matsya, Chedi, Pandya and the Yadus of Mathura and some other clans like the Parama Kambojas were allied with the Pandavas. The allies of the Kauravas included the kings of Pragjyotisha, Anga, Kekaya, Sindhudesa (including Sindhus, Sauviras and Sivis), Mahishmati, Avanti in Madhyadesa, Madra, Gandhara, Bahlikas, Kambojas and many others. Prior to war being declared, Balarama, had expressed his unhappiness at the developing conflict, and left to go on pilgrimage, thus he does not take part in the battle itself. Krishna takes part in a non-combatant role, as charioteer for Arjuna.

Before the battle, Arjuna, seeing himself facing great-uncle Bhishma and his teacher Drona on the other side, has doubts about the battle and he fails to lift his Gandiva bow. Krishna wakes him up to his call of duty in the famous Bhagavad Gita section of the epic.

Though initially sticking to chivalrous notions of warfare, both sides soon adopt dishonourable tactics. At the end of the 18-day battle, only the Pandavas, Satyaki, Kripa, Ashwathama, Kritavarma and Krishna survive.

The end of the Pandavas

After "seeing" the carnage, Gandhari who had lost all her sons, curses Krishna to be a witness to a similar annihilation of his family, for though divine and capable of stopping the war, he had not done so. Krishna accepts the curse, which bears fruit 36 years later.



Bhishma on his death-bed of arrows with the Pandavas and Krishna - Folio from the *Razmnama*(1761 - 1763), Persian translation of the Mahabharata, commissioned by Mughal emperor Akbar. The Pandavas are dressed in Islamic armour and robes.

The Pandavas who had ruled their kingdom meanwhile, decide to renounce everything. Clad in skins and rags they retire to the Himalaya and climb towards heaven in their bodily form. A stray dog travels with them. One by one the brothers and Draupadi fall on their way. As each one stumbles, Yudhishitra gives the rest the reason for their fall (Draupadi was partial to Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva were vain and proud of their looks, Bhima and Arjuna were proud of their strength and archery skills, respectively). Only the virtuous Yudhisthira who had tried everything to prevent the carnage and the dog remain. The dog reveals himself to be the god Yama (also known as Yama Dharmaraja), and then takes him to the underworld where he sees his siblings and wife. After explaining the nature of the test, Dharma takes Yudhishtira back to heaven and explains that it was necessary to expose him to the underworld for the one lie he had said during his entire life. Dharma then assures him that his siblings and wife would join him in heaven after they had been exposed to the underworld for measures of time according to their vices.

Arjuna's grandson Parikshita rules after them and dies bitten by a snake. His furious son, Janamejaya, decides to perform a snake sacrifice (*sarpasttra*) in order to destroy the snakes. It is at this sacrifice that the tale of his ancestors is narrated to him.

Versions, translations, and derivative works

Many regional versions of the work developed over time, mostly differing only in minor details, or with verses or subsidiary stories being added. These include some versions from outside the Indian subcontinent, such as the Kakawin Bharatayuddha from Java.

Critical Edition

Between 1919 and 1966, scholars at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, compared the various manuscripts of the epic from India and abroad and produced the *Critical Edition* of the *Mahabharata*, on 13,000 pages in 19 volumes, followed by the Harivamsha in another two volumes and six index volumes. This is the text that is usually used in current *Mahabharata* studies for reference. This work is sometimes called the 'Pune' or 'Poona' edition of the Mahabharata.

Modern interpretations

The Kannada novelist S.L. Bhyrappa wrote a novel in Kannada (now translated to most Indian languages and English) titled *Parva*, giving a new interpretation to the story of Mahabharata. He tried to understand the social and ethical practices in these regions and correlate them with the story of Mahabharata.

In the late 1980s, the *Mahabharata* TV series was televised and shown on India's national television (Doordarshan). The series was written by Dr. Rahi Masoom Reza and directed by B. R. Chopra and his son Ravi Chopra. The concept was by Pt. Narendra Sharma.

Many film versions of the epic exist, dating from 1920..

In the West, a well known presentation of the epic is Peter Brook's nine hour play premiered in Avignon in 1985 and its five hour movie version *The Mahabharata* (1989) .

Among literary reinterpretations of the Mahabharata the most famous is arguably Sashi Tharoor's major work entitled " The Great Indian Novel", an involved literary, philosophical, and political novel which superimposes the major moments of post-Independence India in the 20th century onto the driving events of the Mahabharata epic. An acclaimed book, "The Great Indian Novel" also contemporized well-known characters of the epic into equally well-known politicians of the modern era (e.g. Indira Gandhi as the villainous Duryodhana).

Krishna as depicted in Yakshagana from Karnataka which is based largely on stories of Mahabharata

Mahabharata was also reinterpreted by Shyam Benegal in Kalyug. Kalyug is a modern-day replaying of the Mahabharata, with the Pandava industrial family being locked in a titanic battle with their Kaurava rivals. But the times are different from the original Mahabharat's, and external forces impinge on feudal values causing disconcerting results.

Western interpretations of the Mahabharata include William Buck's *Mahabharata* and Elizabeth Seeger's *Five Sons of King Pandu*.

English translations

Lal version

A poetic translation of the full epic into English, done by the poet P. Lal is complete, and in 2005 began being published by Writers Workshop, Calcutta. The P. Lal translation is a non-rhyming verse-by-verse rendering, and is the only edition in any language to include all slokas in all recensions of the work (not just those in the *Critical Edition*). The completion of the publishing project is scheduled for 2008. Fourteen of the eighteen volumes are now available:

Vol 1: Adi Parva, 1232 pages, 2005, ISBN 81-8157-370-6
Vol 2: Sabha Parva, 520 pages, 2005, ISBN 81-8157-382-X
Vol 3: Vana Parva, 1580 pages, 2005, ISBN 81-8157-448-6
Vol 4: Virata Parva, 400 pages, 2006, ISBN 81-8157-382-X
Vol 5: Udyoga Parva, 970 pages, 2006, ISBN 81-8157-530-X
Vol 6: Bhishma Parva, 920 pages, 2006, ISBN 81-8157-548-2
Vol 7: Drona Parva, 1522 pages, 2007, ISBN 81-8157-640-3
Vol 8: Karna Parva, 1025 pages, 2008, ISBN 978-81-8157-711-5
Vol 10: Sauptika Parva, 173 pages, 2008, ISBN 978-81-8157-723-8
Vol 11: Stri Parva, 173 pages, 2008, ISBN 978-81-8157-729-0
Vol 14: Asvamedhika Parva, 2008, In Progress
Vol 15: Asramavasuka Parva, 157 pages, 2007, ISBN 81-8157-606-3
Vol 16: Mausala Parva, 60 pages, 2006, ISBN 81-8157-550-4
Vol 17: Mahaprasthana Parva, 30 pages, 2006 ISBN 81-8157-552-0
Vol 18: Svargarohana Parva, 80 pages, 2006 ISBN 81-8157-554-7

Clay Sanskrit Library version

A project to translate the full epic into English prose, translated by various hands, began to appear in 2005 from the Clay Sanskrit Library, published by New York University Press. The translation is based not on the *Critical Edition* but on the version known to the commentator Nīlakaṇṭha. Currently available are portions of books 2-4 and 7-9.

Maha·bhárata II: The Great Hall: 588 pp, Paul Wilmot, 2006, ISBN 978-0-8147-9406-7
Maha·bhárata III: The Forest (volume four of four): 374 pp, William J. Johnson, 2005, ISBN 978-0-8147-4278-5
Maha·bhárata IV: Viráta: 516 pp, Kathleen Garbutt, 2007, ISBN 978-0-8147-3183-3
Maha·bhárata V: Preparations for War (volume one of two): 450 pp, Kathleen Garbutt, 2008, ISBN 978-0-8147-3191-8
Maha·bhárata V: Preparations for War (volume two of two): forthcoming
Maha·bhárata VI: Bhishma (volume one of two): forthcoming

Maha·bhárata VII: Drona (volume one of four): 473 pp, Vaughan Pilikian, 2006, ISBN 978-0-8147-6723-8
Maha·bhárata VIII: Karna (volume one of two): 604 pp, Adam Bowles, 2007, ISBN 978-0-8147-9981-9
Maha·bhárata VIII: Karna (volume two of two): 450 pp, Adam Bowles, 2008, ISBN 978-0-8147-9995-6
Maha·bhárata IX: Shalya (volume one of two): 371 pp, Justin Meiland, 2005, ISBN 978-0-8147-5706-2
Maha·bhárata IX: Shalya (volume two of two): 470 pp, Justin Meiland, 2007, ISBN 978-0-8147-5737-6

Chicago version

Another English prose translation of the full epic, based on the *Critical Edition*, is also in progress, published by University Of Chicago Press, initiated by Chicago Indologist J. A. B. van Buitenen (books 1-5) and, following a 20-year hiatus caused by the death of van Buitenen, is being continued by D. Gitomer of DePaul University (book 6), J. L. Fitzgerald of The University of Tennessee (books 11-13) and W. Doniger of Chicago University (books 14-18):

Vol. 1: Parvan 1, 545 pages, 1980, ISBN 0-226-84663-6
Vol. 2: Parvans 2-3, 871 pages, 1981, ISBN 0-226-84664-4
Vol. 3: Parvans 4-5, 582 pages, 1983, ISBN 0-226-84665-2
Vol. 4: Parvan 6 (forthcoming)
Vol. 7: Parvan 11, first half of parva 12, 848 pages, 2003, ISBN 0-226-25250-7
Vol. 8: Second half of Parvan 12 (forthcoming)

Ganguli version

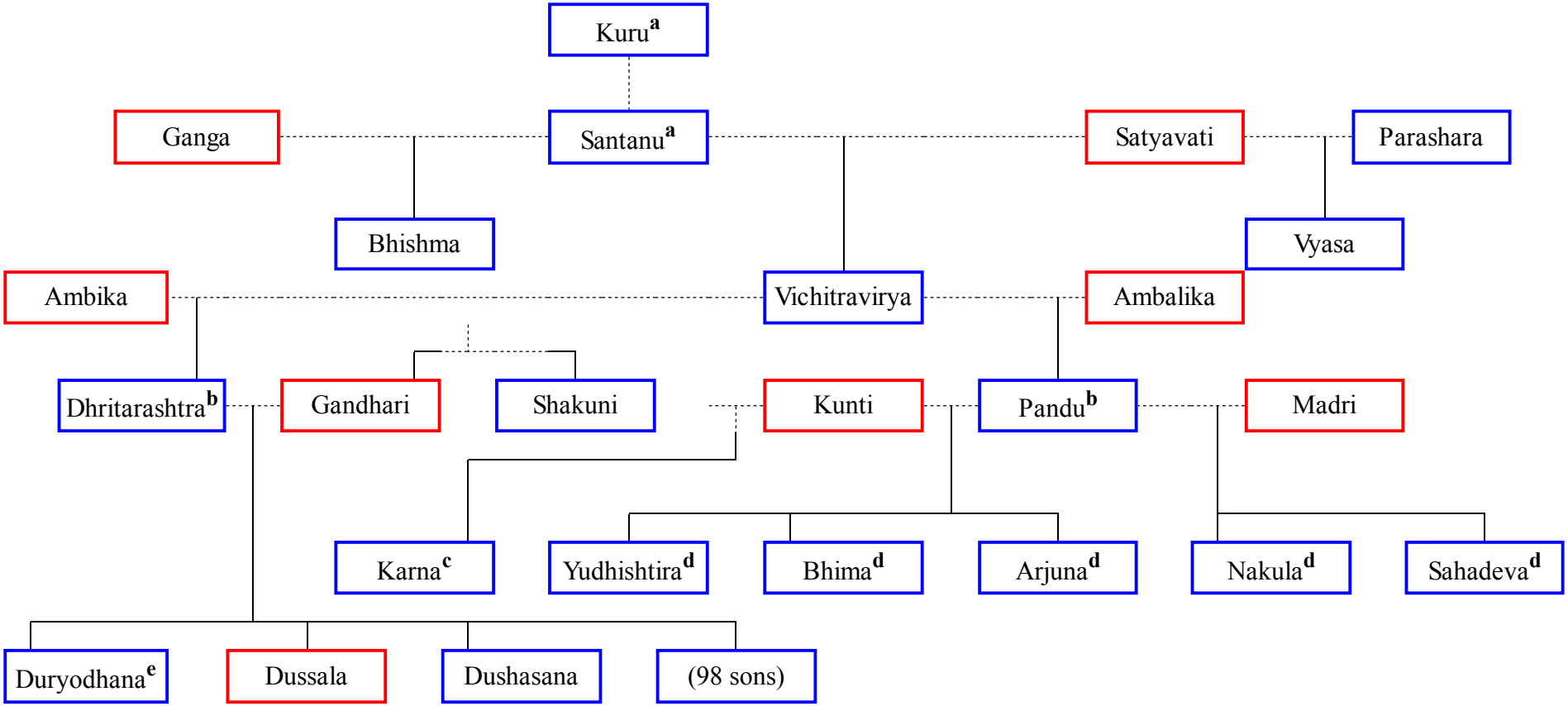
Until these three projects are available in full, the only available complete English translations remain the Victorian prose versions by Kisari Mohan Ganguli, published between 1883 and 1896 (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers) and by M. N. Dutt (Motilal Banarsidass Publishers). Most critics consider the translation by Ganguli to be faithful to the original text. The complete text of Ganguli's translation is available online (see External Links).

Indonesian version

This is a Kawi version that is found on the Indonesian island of Bali and was translated by Dr. I. Gusti Putu Phalgunadi. Of the eighteen parvans, only eight Kawi manuscripts remain.

Vol 1: Adi Parvan - The First Book, 305 pages, 1990, ISBN 81-85179-50-6
Vol 2: Virataparvan - The Fourth Book, 197 pages, 1992, ISBN 81-85689-05-9
Vol 3: Udyogaparvan, 345 pages, 1994, ISBN 81-85689-96-2
Vol 4: Bhishmaparvan, 283 pages, 1995, ISBN 81-86471-05-7
Vol 5: Asramavasaparvan, Mosalaparvan, Prasthanikaparvan, Svargarohanaparvan, 161 pages, 1997, ISBN 81-86471-11-1

Kuru family tree



Key to Symbols

- Male: ***blue border***
- Female: ***red border***
- Pandavas: ***green box***
- Kauravas: ***red box***

Notes

- **a**: Santanu was a king of the Kuru dynasty or kingdom, and was some generations removed from any ancestor called Kuru. His marriage to Ganga preceded his marriage to Satyavati.

- **b**: Pandu and Dhritarashtra were fathered by Vyasa after Vichitravirya's death. Dhritarashtra, Pandu and Vidura were the sons of Vyasa with Ambika, Ambalika and a maid servant respectively.
- **c**: Karna was born to Kunti through her invocation of Surya, before her marriage to Pandu.
- **d**: The Pandavas were acknowledged sons of Pandu but were begotten by Kunti's invocation of various deities. In particular:
  - Dharma (Dharmadeva), for Yudhishtira
  - Vayu, for Bhima
  - Indra or Varuna for Arjuna
  - The twins, Nakula and Sahadeva were born to Madri through her invocation of the The Ashvins
- **e**: Duryodhana and his siblings were born at the same time, and they were of the same generation as their Pandava cousins.

The birth order of siblings is correctly shown in the family tree (from left to right), except for Vyasa and Bhishma whose birth order is not described, and Vichitravirya who was born after them. The fact that Ambika and Ambalika are sisters is not shown in the family tree. The birth of Duryodhana took place after the birth of Karna and Yudhishtira, but before the birth of the remaining Pandava brothers.

Some siblings of the characters shown here have been left out for clarity; these include Chitrangada, the eldest brother of Vichitravirya. Vidura, half-brother to Dhritarashtra and Pandu. The family tree continues through the descendants Arjuna, and these have also not been shown here.

Mesopotamia

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology

Mesopotamia (from the Greek meaning "The land between the two rivers") is an area geographically located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, largely corresponding to modern Iraq, northeastern Syria, southeastern Turkey, and the Khūzestān Province of southwestern Iran.

Commonly known as the " Cradle of civilization", Bronze Age Mesopotamia included Sumer and the Akkadian, Babylonian, Assyrian Empires. In the Iron Age, it was ruled by the Neo-Assyrian Empire and Neo-Babylonian Empire, and later conquered by the Achaemenid Empire. It mostly remained under Persian rule until the 7th century Islamic conquest of the Sassanid Empire. Under the Caliphate, the region came to be known as Iraq.

Ancient Mesopotamia

Euphrates · Tigris

Empires / Cities

Sumer

Eridu · Kish · Uruk · Ur
Lagash · Nippur · Ngirsu

Elam

Susa

Akkadian Empire

Akkad · Mari

Amorites

Isin · Larsa

Babylonia

Babylon · Chaldea

Assyria

Assur · Nimrud
Dur-Sharrukin · Nineveh

Hittites · Kassites
Hurrians / Mitanni

Chronology

Mesopotamia
Sumer (king list)

History

Kings of Assyria
Kings of Babylon

Mythology

Enûma Elish · Gilgamesh
Assyro-Babylonian religion

Language

Sumerian · Elamite
Akkadian · Aramaic
Hurrian · Hittite

Overview map of ancient Mesopotamia

The history of Mesopotamia begins with the emergence of urban societies in southern Iraq in the 5th millennium BC, and ends with either the arrival of the Achaemenid Empire in the 6th century BC, when Mesopotamia began being colonized by foreign powers, or with the arrival of the Islamic Caliphate, when the region came to be known as Iraq.

A cultural continuity and spatial homogeneity for this entire historical geography ("the Great Tradition") is popularly assumed, though the assumption is problematic. Mesopotamia housed some of the world's most ancient states with highly developed social complexity. The region was famous as one of the four riverine civilizations where writing was first invented, along with the Nile valley in Egypt, the Indus Valley in the Indian subcontinent and Yellow River valley in China (Although writing is also known to have arisen independently in Mesoamerica and the Andes).

Mesopotamia housed historically important cities such as Uruk, Nippur, Nineveh, and Babylon as well as major territorial states such as the Akkadian kingdom, Third Dynasty of Ur, and Assyrian empire. Some of the important historical Mesopotamian leaders were Ur-Nammu (king of Ur), Sargon (who established the Akkadian Kingdom), Hammurabi (who established the Old Babylonian state), and Tiglath-Pileser I (who established the Assyrian Empire).

Archaeological sites of Mesopotamia

"Ancient Mesopotamia" begins in the late 6th millennium BC, and ends with either the rise of the Achaemenid Persians in the 6th century BC or the Islamic conquest of Persian Mesopotamia in the 7th century AD. This long period may be divided as follows:

- Pre-Pottery Neolithic:
  - Jarmo (ca. 7000 BC-? BC)
- Pottery Neolithic:
  - Hassuna (ca. 6000 BC-? BC), Samarra (ca. 5500 BC-4800 BC) and Halaf (ca. 6000 BC-5300 BC) "cultures"
- Chalcolithic:
  - Ubaid period (ca. 5900 BC–4000 BC)
  - Uruk period (ca. 4000 BC–3100 BC)
  - Jemdet Nasr period (ca. 3100 BC–2900 BC)
- Early Bronze Age
  - Early Dynastic Sumerian city-states (ca. 2900 BC–2350 BC)
  - Akkadian Empire (ca. 2350 BC–2193 BC).
  - Third dynasty of Ur ("Sumerian Renaissance" or "Neo-Sumerian Period") (ca. 2119 BC–2004 BC)
- Middle Bronze Age

- Early Assyrian kingdom (20th to 18th c. BC)
- First Babylonian Dynasty (18th to 17th c. BC)

- Late Bronze Age
  - Kassite dynasty, Middle Assyrian period (16th to 12th c. BC)
  - Bronze Age collapse (12th to 11th c. BC)

- Iron Age
  - Neo-Hittite or Syro-Hittite regional states (11th–7th c. BC)
  - Neo-Assyrian Empire (10th to 7th c. BC)
  - Neo-Babylonian Empire (7th to 6th c. BC)

- Classical Antiquity
  - Achaemenid Assyria (6th to 4th c. BC)
  - Seleucid Mesopotamia (4th to 1st c. BC)
  - Parthian Mesopotamia (3rd c. BC to 3rd c. AD)
    - Roman Mesopotamia (2nd c. AD)
  - Sassanid Mesopotamia (3rd to 7th c. AD)
  - Islamic conquest of Persian Mesopotamia (7th c. AD)

Dates are approximate for the second and third millennia BC; compare Chronology of the Ancient Near East.

Geography

Mesopotamia is a semi-arid environment which ranges from the northern areas of rain fed agriculture, to the south where irrigation of agriculture is essential if a surplus energy returned on energy invested (EROEI) is to be obtained. This irrigation is aided by a high water table and by melted snows from the high peaks of the Zagros and from the Armenian cordillera, the source of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, that give the region its name. The usefulness of irrigation depends upon the ability to mobilize sufficient labor for the construction and maintenance of canals, and this, from the earliest period, has assisted the development of urban settlements and centralized systems of political authority. Agriculture throughout the region has been supplemented by nomadic pastoralism, where tent dwelling nomads move herds of sheep and goats (and later camels) from the river pastures in the dry summer months, out into seasonal grazing lands on the desert fringe in the wet winter season. The area is generally lacking in building stone, precious metals and timber, and so historically has relied upon long distance trade of agricultural products to secure these items from outlying areas. In the marshlands to the south of the country, a complex water-borne fishing culture has existed since pre-historic times, and has added to the cultural mix.

Periodic breakdowns in the cultural system have occurred for a number of reasons. The demands for labour has from time to time led to population increases that push the limits of the ecological carrying capacity, and should a period of climatic instability ensue, collapsing central government and declining populations can occur. Alternatively, military vulnerability to invasion from marginal hill tribes or nomadic pastoralists have led to periods of trade collapse and neglect of

irrigation systems. Equally, centripetal tendencies amongst city states has meant that central authority over the whole region, when imposed, has tended to be ephemeral, and localism has fragmented power into tribal or smaller regional units. These trends have continued to the present day in Iraq.

Language and writing

The earliest language written in Mesopotamia was Sumerian, an agglutinative language isolate. Scholars agree that other languages were also spoken in early Mesopotamia along with Sumerian. Later a Semitic language, Akkadian, came to be the dominant language, although Sumerian was retained for administration, religious, literary, and scientific purposes. Different varieties of Akkadian were used until the end of the Neo-Babylonian period. Then Aramaic, which had already become common in Mesopotamia, became the official provincial administration language of the Achaemenid Persian Empire. Akkadian fell into disuse, but both it and Sumerian were still used in temples for some centuries.

In Early Mesopotamia (around mid 4th millennium BC) cuneiform script was invented. Cuneiform literally means "wedge-shaped", due to the triangular tip of the stylus used for impressing signs on wet clay. The standardized form of each cuneiform sign appear to have been developed from pictograms. The earliest texts (7 archaic tablets) come from the E-anna super sacred precinct dedicated to the goddess Inanna at Uruk, Level III, from a building labeled as Temple C by its excavators.

The early logographic system of cuneiform script took many years to master. Thus only a limited number of individuals were hired as scribes to be trained in its reading and writing. It was not until the widespread use of a syllabic script was adopted under Sargon's rule that significant portions of Mesopotamian population became learned in literacy. Massive archives of texts were recovered from the archaeological contexts of Old Babylonian scribal schools, through which literacy was disseminated.

Literature and mythology

In Babylonian times there were libraries in most towns and temples; an old Sumerian proverb averred that "he who would excel in the school of the scribes must rise with the dawn." Women as well as men learned to read and write, and for the Semitic Babylonians, this involved knowledge of the extinct Sumerian language, and a complicated and extensive syllabary.

A considerable amount of Babylonian literature was translated from Sumerian originals, and the language of religion and law long continued to be the old agglutinative language of Sumer. Vocabularies, grammars, and interlinear translations were compiled for the use of students, as well as commentaries on the older texts and explanations of obscure words and phrases. The characters of the syllabary were all arranged and named, and elaborate lists of them were drawn up.

There are many Babylonian literary works whose titles have come down to us. One of the most famous of these was the Epic of Gilgamesh, in twelve books, translated from the original Sumerian by a certain Sin-liqe-unninni, and arranged upon an astronomical principle. Each division contains the story of a single adventure in the career of Gilgamesh. The whole story is a composite product, and it is probable that some of the stories are artificially attached to the central figure.

Philosophy

The origins of philosophy can be traced back to early Mesopotamian wisdom, which embodied certain philosophies of life, particularly ethics, in the forms of dialectic, dialogs, epic poetry, folklore, hymns, lyrics, prose, and proverbs. Babylonian reasoning and rationality developed beyond empirical observation.

The earliest form of logic was developed by the Babylonians, notably in the rigorous nonergodic nature of their social systems. Babylonian thought was axiomatic and is comparable to the "ordinary logic" described by John Maynard Keynes. Babylonian thought was also based on an open-systems ontology which is compatible with ergodic axioms. Logic was employed to some extent in Babylonian astronomy and medicine.

Babylonian thought had a considerable influence on early Greek philosophy and Hellenistic philosophy. In particular, the Babylonian text *Dialog of Pessimism* contains similarities to the agonistic thought of the sophists, the Heraclitean doctrine of contrasts, and the dialectic and dialogs of Plato, as well as a precursor to the maieutic Socratic method of Socrates. The Phoenician philosopher Thales is also known to have studied philosophy in Mesopotamia.

Science and technology

Astronomy

The Babylonian astronomers were very interested in studying the stars and sky, and most could already predict eclipses and solstices. People thought that everything had some purpose in astronomy. Most of these related to religion and omens. Mesopotamian astronomers worked out a 12 month calendar based on the cycles of the moon. They divided the year into two seasons: summer and winter. The origins of astronomy as well as astrology date from this time.

During the 8th and 7th centuries BC, Babylonian astronomers developed a new approach to astronomy. They began studying philosophy dealing with the ideal nature of the early universe and began employing an internal logic within their predictive planetary systems. This was an important contribution to astronomy and the philosophy of science and some scholars have thus referred to this new approach as the first **scientific revolution**. This new approach to astronomy was adopted and further developed in Greek and Hellenistic astronomy.

In Seleucid and Parthian times, the astronomical reports were of a thoroughly scientific character; how much earlier their advanced knowledge and methods were developed is uncertain. The Babylonian development of methods for predicting the motions of the planets is considered to be a major episode in the history of astronomy.

The only Babylonian astronomer known to have supported a heliocentric model of planetary motion was Seleucus of Seleucia (b. 190 BC). Seleucus is known from the writings of Plutarch. He supported the heliocentric theory where the Earth rotated around its own axis which in turn revolved around the Sun. According to Plutarch, Seleucus even proved the heliocentric system, but it is not known what arguments he used.

Babylonian astronomy was the basis for much of what was done in Greek and Hellenistic astronomy, in classical Indian astronomy, in Sassanian, Byzantine and Syrian astronomy, in medieval Islamic astronomy, and in Central Asian and Western European astronomy.

Mathematics

The Mesopotamians used a sexagesimal (base 60) numeral system. This is the source of the current 60-minute hours and 24-hour days, as well as the 360 degree circle. The Sumerian calendar also measured weeks of seven days each. This mathematical knowledge was used in mapmaking.

The Babylonians might have been familiar with the general rules for measuring the areas. They measured the circumference of a circle as three times the diameter and the area as one-twelfth the square of the circumference, which would be correct if p were estimated as 3. The volume of a cylinder was taken as the product of the base and the height, however, the volume of the frustum of a cone or a square pyramid was incorrectly taken as the product of the height and half the sum of the bases. Also, there was a recent discovery in which a tablet used p as 3 and 1/8 (3.125 for 3.14159~). The Babylonians are also known for the Babylonian mile, which was a measure of distance equal to about seven miles (11 km) today. This measurement for distances eventually was converted to a time-mile used for measuring the travel of the Sun, therefore, representing time.

Medicine

The oldest Babylonian texts on medicine date back to the Old Babylonian period in the first half of the 2nd millennium BC. The most extensive Babylonian medical text, however, is the *Diagnostic Handbook* written by the physician Esagil-kin-apli of Borsippa, during the reign of the Babylonian king Adad-apla-iddina (1069-1046 BC).

Along with contemporary ancient Egyptian medicine, the Babylonians introduced the concepts of diagnosis, prognosis, physical examination, and prescriptions. In addition, the *Diagnostic Handbook* introduced the methods of therapy and a etiology and the use of empiricism, logic and rationality in diagnosis, prognosis and therapy. The text contains a list of medical symptoms and often detailed empirical observations along with logical rules used in combining observed symptoms on the body of a patient with its diagnosis and prognosis.

The symptoms and diseases of a patient were treated through therapeutic means such as bandages, creams and pills. If a patient could not be cured physically, the Babylonian physicians often relied on exorcism to cleanse the patient from any curses. Esagil-kin-apli's *Diagnostic Handbook* was based on a logical set of axioms and assumptions, including the modern view that through the examination and inspection of the symptoms of a patient, it is possible to determine the patient's disease, its aetiology and future development, and the chances of the patient's recovery.

Esagil-kin-apli discovered a variety of illnesses and diseases and described their symptoms in his *Diagnostic Handbook*. These include the symptoms for many varieties of epilepsy and related ailments along with their diagnosis and prognosis.

Technology

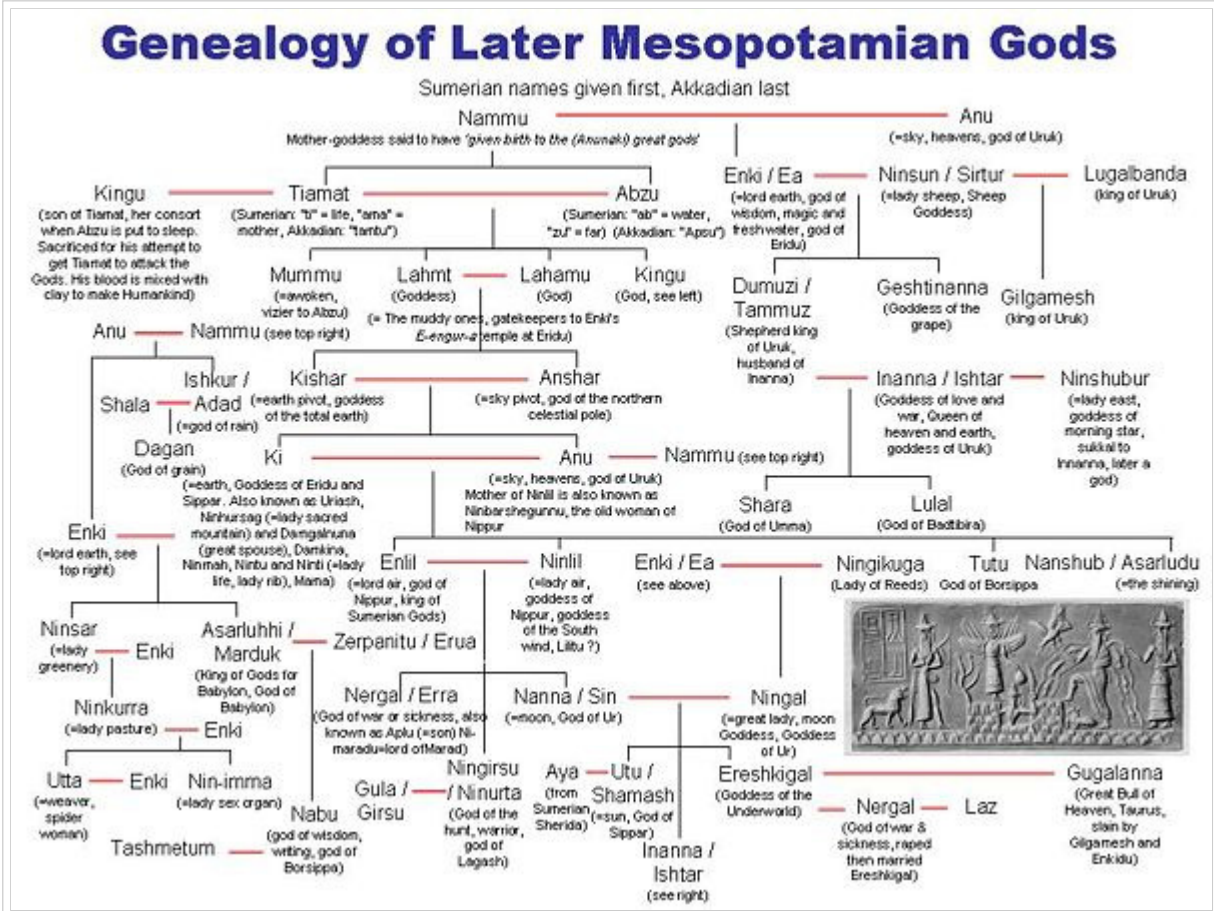
Mesopotamian people invented many technologies, most notably the wheel, which some consider the most important mechanical invention in history. Other Mesopotamian inventions include metalworking, copper-working, glassmaking, lamp making, textile weaving, flood control, water storage, as well as irrigation. They were also one of the first Bronze age people in the world. Early on they used copper, bronze and gold, and later they used iron. Palaces were decorated

with hundreds of kilograms of these very expensive metals. Also, copper, bronze, and iron were used for armor as well as for different weapons such as swords, daggers, spears, and maces.

Religion

Mesopotamian religion was the first to be recorded. Mesopotamians believed that the world was a flat disc, surrounded by a huge, holed space, and above that, heaven. They also believed that water was everywhere, the top, bottom and sides, and that the universe was born from this enormous sea. In addition, Mesopotamian religion was polytheistic.

Although the beliefs described above were held in common among Mesopotamians, there were also regional variations. The Sumerian word for universe is an-ki, which refers to the god An and the goddess Ki. Their son was Enlil, the air god. They believed that Enlil was the most powerful god. He was the chief god of the Pantheon, as the Greeks had Zeus and the Romans had Jupiter. The Sumerians also posed philosophical questions, such as: Who are we?, Where are we?, How did we get here?. They attributed answers to these questions to explanations provided by their gods.



Sumerian religion was based on a series of sacred marriages between divine couples

Primary gods and goddesses

- Anu was the Sumerian god of the sky. He was married to Ki, but in some other Mesopotamian religions he has a wife called Uraš. Though he was considered the most important god in the pantheon, he took a mostly passive role in epics, allowing Enlil to claim the position as most powerful god.
- Enlil was initially the most powerful god in Mesopotamian religion. His wife was Ninlil, and his children were Iškur (sometimes), Nanna - Suen, Nergal, Nisaba, Namtar, Ninurta (sometimes), Pabilsag, Nushu, Enbilulu, Uraš Zababa and Ennugi. His position at the top of the pantheon was later usurped by Marduk and then by Ashur.
- Enki (Ea) god of Eridu. He was the god of rain.

- Marduk was the principal god of Babylon. When Babylon rose to power, the mythologies raised Marduk from his original position as an agricultural god to the principal god in the pantheon.
- Ashur was god of the Assyrian empire and likewise when the Assyrians rose to power their myths raised Ashur to a position of importance.
- Gula or Utu (in Sumerian), Shamash (in Akkadian) was the sun god and god of justice.
- Ishtar or Inanna was the goddess of sex and war.
- Ereshkigal was goddess of the Netherworld.
- Nabu was the Mesopotamian god of writing. He was very wise, and was praised for his writing ability. In some places he was believed to be in control of heaven and earth. His importance was increased considerably in the later periods.
- Ninurta was the Sumerian god of war. He was also the god of heroes.
- Iškur (or Adad) was the god of storms.
- Erra was probably the god of drought. He is often mentioned in conjunction with Adad and Nergal in laying waste to the land.
- Nergal was probably a plague god. He was also spouse of Ereshkigal.
- Pazuzu, also known as Zu, was an evil god, who stole the tablets of Enlil's destiny, and is killed because of this. He also brought diseases which had no known cure.

Burials

Hundreds of graves have been excavated in parts of Mesopotamia, revealing information about Mesopotamian burial habits. In the city of Ur, most people were buried in family graves under their houses (as in Catalhuyuk), along with some possessions. A few have been found wrapped in mats and carpets. Deceased children were put in big "jars" which were placed in the family chapel. Other remains have been found buried in common city graveyards. 17 graves have been found with very precious objects in them ; it is assumed that these were royal graves.

Culture

Music, songs and instruments

Some songs were written for the gods but many were written to describe important events. Although music and songs amused kings, they were also enjoyed by ordinary people who liked to sing and dance in their homes or in the marketplaces. Songs were sung to children who passed them on to their children. Thus songs were passed on through many generations until someone wrote them down. These songs provided a means of passing on through the centuries highly important information about historical events that were eventually passed on to modern historians.

The Oud (Arabic:العود) is a small, stringed musical instrument. The oldest pictorial record of the Oud dates back to the Uruk period in Southern Mesopotamia over 5000 years ago. It is on a cylinder seal currently housed at the British Museum and acquired by Dr. Dominique Collon. The image depicts a female crouching with her instruments upon a boat, playing right-handed. This instrument appears hundreds of times throughout Mesopotamian history and again in ancient Egypt from the 18th dynasty onwards in long- and short-neck varieties.

The oud is regarded as a precursor to the European lute. Its name is derived from the Arabic word العود al-ʿūd 'the wood', which is probably the name of the tree from which the oud was made. (The Arabic name, with the definite article, is the source of the word 'lute'.)

Games

Hunting was popular among Assyrian kings. Boxing and wrestling feature frequently in art, and a form of polo was probably popular, with men sitting on the shoulders of other men rather than on horses. They also played a board game similar to senet and backgammon, now known as the " Royal Game of Ur."

Family life

Mesopotamia across its history became more and more a patriarchal society, in which the men were far more powerful than the women. As for schooling, only royal offspring and sons of the rich and professionals such as scribes, physicians, temple administrators, and so on, went to school. Most boys were taught their father's trade or were apprenticed out to learn a trade. Girls had to stay home with their mothers to learn housekeeping and cooking, and to look after the younger children. Some children would help with crushing grain, or cleaning birds. Unusual for that time in history, women in Mesopotamia had rights. They could own property and, if they had good reason, get a divorce.

The Babylonian marriage market, in the Royal Holloway College.

Economy

Sumer developed the first economy, while the Babylonians developed the earliest system of economics, which was comparable to modern post-Keynesian economics, but with a more "anything goes" approach.

Agriculture

Food supply in Mesopotamia was quite rich due to the location of the two rivers from which its name is derived, Tigris and Euphrates. The Tigris and Euphrates River valleys formed the northeastern portion of the Fertile Crescent, which also included the Jordan River valley & that of the Nile. Although land nearer to the rivers was fertile and good for crops, portions of land further from the water were dry and largely uninhabitable. This is why the development of irrigation was very important for settlers of Mesopotamia. Other Mesopotamian innovations include the control of water by dams and the use of aqueducts. Early settlers of fertile land in Mesopotamia used wooden plows to soften the soil before planting crops such as barley, onions, grapes, turnips, and apples. Mesopotamian settlers were some of the first people to make beer and wine. The unpredictable Mesopotamian weather was often hard on farmers; crops were often ruined so backup sources of food such as cows and lambs were also kept. As a result of the skill involved in farming in the Mesopotamian, farmers did not depend on slaves to complete farm work for them, with some exceptions. There were too many risks involved to make slavery practical (i.e. the escape/ mutiny of the slave).

Government

Kings

The Mesopotamians believed their kings and queens were descended from the city gods, but, unlike the ancient Egyptians, they never believed their kings were real gods. Most kings named themselves “king of the universe” or “great king”. Another common name was “ shepherd”, as kings had to look after their people.

Notable Mesopotamian kings include:

Eannatum of Lagash who founded the first (short-lived) empire.

Sargon of Akkad who conquered all of Mesopotamia and created the first empire that outlived its founder.

Hammurabi founded the first Babylonian empire.

Tiglath-Pileser III founded the neo- Assyrian empire.

Nebuchadnezzar was the most powerful king in the neo-Babylonian Empire. He was thought to be the son of the god Nabu. He married the daughter of Cyaxeres, so the Median and the Babylonian dynasties had a familial connection. Nebuchadnezzar’s name means: Nabo, protect the crown!

Belshedezzar was the last king of Babylonia. He was the son of Nabonidus whose wife was Nictoris, the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar.

Power

When Assyria grew into an empire, it was divided into smaller parts, called provinces. Each of these were named after their main cities, like Nineveh, Samaria, Damascus and Arpad. They all had their own governor who had to make sure everyone paid their taxes; he had to call up soldiers to war, and supply workers when a temple was built. He was also responsible for the laws being enforced. In this way it was easier to keep control of an empire like Assyria. Although Babylon was quite a small state in the Sumerian, it grew tremendously throughout the time of Hammurabi's rule. He was known as “the law maker”, and soon Babylon became one of the main cities in Mesopotamia. It was later called Babylonia, which meant "the gateway of the gods." It also became one of history's greatest centers of learning.

Warfare

As city-states began to grow, their spheres of influence overlapped, creating arguments between other city-states, especially over land and canals. These arguments were recorded in tablets several hundreds of years before any major war - the first recording of a war occurred around 3200BC but was not common until about 2500BC. At this point warfare was incorporated into the Mesopotamian political system, where a neutral city may act as an arbitrator for the two rival cities. This helped to form unions between cities, leading to regional states. When empires were created, they went to war more with foreign countries. King Sargon, for example conquered all the cities of Sumer, some cities in Mari, and then went to war with northern Syria. Many Babylonian palace walls were decorated with the pictures of the successful fights and the enemy, whether desperately escaping, or hiding amongst reeds. A king in Sumer, Gilgamesh, was thought two-thirds god and only one third human. There were legendary stories and poems about him, which were passed on for many generations, because he had many adventures that were believed very important, and won many wars and battles.

Assyrian soldiers, from a plate in *THE HISTORY OF COSTUME* by Braun & Schneider (ca. 1860).

Laws

King Hammurabi, as mentioned above, was famous for his set of laws, The Code of Hammurabi (created ca. 1780 BC), which is one of the earliest sets of laws found and one of the best preserved examples of this type of document from ancient Mesopotamia. He made over 200 laws for Mesopotamia *For more information, see Hammurabi and Code of Hammurabi.*

Architecture

The study of ancient Mesopotamian architecture is based on available archaeological evidence, pictorial representation of buildings and texts on building practices. Scholarly literature usually concentrates on temples, palaces, city walls and gates and other monumental buildings, but occasionally one finds works on residential architecture as well. Archaeological surface surveys also allowed for the study of urban form in early Mesopotamian cities. Most notably known architectural remains from early Mesopotamia are the temple complexes at Uruk from the 4th millennium BC, temples and palaces from the Early Dynastic period sites in the Diyala River valley such as Khafajah and Tell Asmar, the Third Dynasty of Ur remains at Nippur (Sanctuary of Enlil) and Ur (Sanctuary of Nanna), Middle Bronze Age remains at Syrian-Turkish sites of Ebla, Mari, Alalakh, Aleppo and Kultepe, Late Bronze Age palaces at Bogazkoy (Hattusha), Ugarit, Ashur and Nuzi, Iron Age palaces and temples at Assyrian (Kalhu/Nimrud, Khorsabad, Nineveh), Babylonian (Babylon), Urartian (Tushpa/Van Kalesi, Cavustepe, Ayanis, Armavir, Erebuni, Bastam) and Neo-Hittite sites (Karkamis, Tell Halaf, Karatepe). Houses are mostly known from Old Babylonian remains at Nippur and Ur. Among the textual sources on building construction and associated rituals, Gudea's cylinders from the late 3rd millennium are notable, as well as the Assyrian and Babylonian royal inscriptions from the Iron Age.

Houses

The materials used to build a Mesopotamian house were the same as those used today: mud brick, mud plaster and wooden doors, which were all naturally available round the city, although wood could not be naturally made very well during the particular time period described. Most houses had a square centre room with other rooms attached to it, but a great variation in the size and materials used to build the houses suggest they were built by the inhabitants

themselves . The smallest rooms may not have coincided with the poorest people; in fact it could be that the poorest people built houses out of perishable materials such as reeds on the outside of the city, but there is very little direct evidence for this.

The Palace

The palaces of the early Mesopotamian elites were large scale complexes, and were often lavishly decorated. Earliest examples are known from the Diyala River valley sites such as Khafajah and Tell Asmar. These third millennium BC palaces functioned as a large scale socio-economic institutions, therefore, along with residential and private function, they housed craftsmen workshops, food storehouses, ceremonial courtyards, and often associated with shrines. For instance, the so-called "giparu" (or Gig-Par-Ku in Sumerian) at Ur where the Moon god Nanna's priestesses resided was a major complex with multiple courtyards, a number of sanctuaries, burial chambers for dead priestesses, a ceremonial banquet hall, etc. A similarly complex example of a Mesopotamian palace was excavated at Mari in Syria, dating from the Old Babylonian period.

Assyrian palaces of the Iron Age, especially at Kalhu/ Nimrud, Dur Sharrukin/ Khorsabad and Ninuwa/ Nineveh, have become famous due to the pictorial and textual narrative programs on their walls, all carved on stone slabs known as orthostats. These pictorial programs either incorporated cultic scenes or the narrative accounts of the kings' military and civic accomplishments. Gates and important passageways were flanked with massive stone sculpture of apotropaic mythological figures. The architectural arrangement of these Iron Age palaces were also organized around large and small courtyards. Usually the king's throneroom opened to a massive ceremonial courtyard where important state councils met, state ceremonies performed.

Massive amounts of ivory furniture pieces were found in many Assyrian palaces pointing out an intense trade relationship with North Syrian Neo-Hittite states at the time. There is also good evidence that bronze repousse bands decorated the wooden gates.

Ziggurats

Ziggurats (Akkadian *ziqquratu* from the verb zaqāru) were massive stepped cult platforms found in certain Mesopotamian sanctuaries. The idea seems to have originated in early Mesopotamian temples which were built successively, one building over another on the same site over centuries, creating a massive mound that raised the new temples over the rest of the city. A good example of such structure was the temple dedicated to Ea at Eridu (Tell Abu Shahrain) excavated by Fuad Safar and Seton Lloyd in 1940s, or the "White" Temple dedicated to Anu at Uruk in the Late Uruk period. Ur-Nammu's ziggurat, built at the height the Third Dynasty of Ur, at the site of Ur (Tell al Mugayyar) in the sanctuary of the Moon God Nanna, is also believed to be encasing earlier temples of the Early Dynastic Period. Ur-Nammu's ziggurat is considered one of the earliest of all planned ziggurats. After that time Kassites and Elamites of the Late Bronze Age, and Assyrians and Babylonians of the Iron age continued to build artificially erected ziggurats. Examples of such structures were found in Dur Kurigalzu (Aqar Quf), Dur-Untash (Tschoga Zanbil), Kalhu (Nimrud), Dur-Sharrukin (Khorsabad) and Babylon among others.

It has been suggested that ziggurats were built to resemble mountains, but there is little textual or archaeological evidence to support that hypothesis.

Ur-Nammu's ziggurat at Ur was designed as a three-stage construction, today only two of these survive. This entire mudbrick core structure was originally given a facing of baked brick envelope set in bitumen, circa 2.5 m on the first lowest stage, and 1.15 m on the second. Each of these baked bricks were stamped with

the name of the king. The sloping walls of the stages were buttressed. The access to the top was by means of a triple monumental staircase, which all converges at a portal that opened on a landing between the first and second stages. The height of the first stage was about 11 m while the second stage rose some 5.7 m. Usually a third stage is reconstructed by the excavator of the ziggurat (Leonard Woolley), and crowned by a temple. At the Tschoga Zanbil ziggurat archaeologists have found massive reed ropes that ran across the core of the ziggurat structure and tied together the mudbrick mass.

Etymology

The regional toponym Mesopotamia (< meso (μέσος) = middle and potamia < ποταμός = river, literally means "between two rivers") was coined in the Hellenistic period without any definite boundaries, to refer to a broad geographical area and probably used by the Seleucids. The term *biritum/birit narim* corresponded to a similar geographical concept and coined at the time of the Aramaicization of the region. It is however widely accepted that early Mesopotamian societies simply referred to the entire alluvium as **kalam** in Sumerian (lit. "land"). More recently terms like "Greater Mesopotamia" or "Syro-Mesopotamia" have been adopted to refer to wider geographies corresponding to the Near East or Middle East. The later euphemisms are Eurocentric terms attributed to the region in the midst of various 19th century Western encroachments.

Portal:Ancient Greece

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology; History; Portals

The Ancient Greece Portal

The ancient Greeks refers to the people of Greek history in Classical Antiquity (ca. 750 BC(the archaic period) to 146 BC (the Roman conquest). It is generally considered to be the seminal culture which provided the foundation of Western Civilization. Greek culture had a powerful influence on the Roman Empire, which carried a version of it to many parts of Europe. The civilization of the ancient Greeks has been immensely influential on the language, politics, educational systems, philosophy, science, and arts, giving rise to the Renaissance in Western Europe and again resurgent during various neo-Classical revivals in 18th and 19th century Europe and the Americas.There are no fixed or universally agreed upon dates for the beginning or the end of the ancient Greek period. In common usage it refers to all Greek history before the Roman Empire, but historians use the term more precisely. Some writers include the periods of the Greek-speaking Mycenaean civilization that collapsed about 1150 BC, though most would argue that the influential Minoan was so different from later Greek cultures that it should be classed separately.

Greek influence in the mid 6th century BC.

More...

Selected article

Slavery was an essential component of the development of **Ancient Greece** throughout its history. Most ancient writers considered slavery not only necessary but natural; neither the Stoics nor the Early Christians questioned the practice. However, some isolated debate began to appear, notably in Socratic dialogues, as early as the 4th century BC.In conformity with modern historiographical practice, this article will discuss

Selected picture

Portal:Ancient Rome

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology; History; Portals

THE ANCIENT ROME PORTAL

Ancient Rome was a civilization that grew from a small agricultural community founded on the Italian Peninsula in the 9th century BC to a large empire straddling the Mediterranean Sea. In its 12 centuries of existence, Roman civilization shifted from a monarchy, to a republic based on a combination of oligarchy and democracy, to an autocratic empire. It came to dominate Western Europe and the area surrounding the Mediterranean Sea through conquest and assimilation.

The Roman empire went into decline in the 5th century AD. Plagued by internal instability and attacked by various migrating peoples from beyond its borders, the western part of the empire, including Hispania, Gaul, and Italy, broke up into independent kingdoms in the 5th century. The eastern part of the empire, governed from Constantinople, survived this crisis, and would live on for another millennium, until its last remains were finally annexed by the emerging Ottoman Empire. This eastern, medieval stage of the Empire is usually referred to as the Byzantine Empire by historians.

Roman civilization is often grouped into " classical antiquity" with ancient Greece, a civilization that inspired much of the culture of ancient Rome. Ancient Rome contributed greatly to the development of law, war, art, literature, architecture, technology and language in the Western world, and its history continues to have a major influence on the world today.

Read more on Ancient Rome...

Selected article

The **Roman Legion** (from Latin *legio* "military levy, conscription", from *lego* — "to collect") is a term that can apply both as a transliteration of *legio* ("conscription" or "army") to the entire Roman army and also, more

Quotes

- *The terror of the Roman arms added weight and dignity to the moderation of the emperors. They preserved peace by a constant preparation for*

narrowly (and more commonly), to the heavy infantry that was the basic military unit of the ancient Roman army in the period of the late Roman Republic and the Roman Empire. In this latter meaning, it consisted of several cohorts of heavy infantry known as legionaries. It was almost always accompanied by one or more attached units of auxiliaries, who were not Roman citizens and provided cavalry, ranged troops and skirmishers to complement the legion's heavy infantry

The size of a typical legion varied widely throughout the history of ancient Rome, with complements of 4,200 legionaries in the republican period of Rome (split into 35 maniples of 120 legionaries each), to around 5,500 in the imperial period (split into 10 cohorts of 480 men each, with the first cohort at double strength.

Selected picture

war; and while justice regulated their conduct, they announced to the nations on their confines, that they were as little disposed to endure, as to offer an injury.

- *Trajan was ambitious of fame; and as long as mankind shall continue to bestow more liberal applause on their destroyers than on their benefactors, the thirst of military glory will ever be the vice of the most exalted characters.*

- *The Roman people gave you to Caesar to fight against the Gauls and Britons, and your valiant deeds call for recognition and recompense. But Caesar, taking advantage of your military oath, led you against your country much against your desire.*

Edward Gibbon, English historian, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776)

Did you know

- ...Contrary to the belief of early archaeologists, many **Roman sculptures** were large polychrome terra-cotta images?
- ...According to Suetonius, **Caligula**, "often sent for men whom he had secretly killed, as though they were still alive, and remarked off-handedly a few days later that they must have committed suicide"?
- ... Did you know that Mark Antony, who avenged Julius Caesar, was killed by Julius

Caesar's grand nephew (Octavian) Augustus Caesar?

- ... That Sulla's grave read *No friend ever surpassed him in kindness, and no enemy in ill-doing*

Selected biography

Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (15 December 37 – 9 June 68), born *Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus*, also called *Nero Claudius Caesar Drusus Germanicus*, was the fifth and last Roman Emperor of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. Nero was adopted by his grand-uncle Claudius to become heir to the throne. As Nero Claudius Caesar Drusus, he succeeded to the throne on 13 October 54, following Claudius' death.

Nero ruled from 54 CE to 68 CE. During his rule, Nero focused much of his attention on diplomacy, trade, and increasing the cultural capital of the empire. He ordered the building of theatres and promoted athletic games. His reign included a successful war and negotiated peace with the Parthian Empire (58–63), the suppression of the British revolt (60–61) and improving diplomatic ties with Greece.

Ramesses II

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology

Ramesses II (also known as **Ramesses The Great** and alternatively transcribed as **Ramses** and **Rameses** **Riʕmīsisu*; also known as **Ozymandias** in the Greek sources, from a transliteration into Greek of a part of Ramesses' throne name, *User-maat-re Setep-en-re*) was the third Egyptian pharaoh of the Nineteenth dynasty. He is often regarded as Egypt's greatest and most powerful pharaoh. Ancient Greek writers such as Herodotus attributed his accomplishments to the semi-mythical Sesostris. He is traditionally believed to have been the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

He was born around 1303 BC and at age fourteen, Ramesses was appointed Prince Regent by his father Seti I. He is believed to have taken the throne in his early 20s and to have ruled Egypt from 1279 BC to 1213 BC for a total of 66 years and 2 months, according to Manetho. He was once said to have lived to be 99 years old, but it is more likely that he died in his 90th or 91st year. If he became king in 1279 BC as most Egyptologists today believe, he would have assumed the throne on May 31, 1279 BC, based on his known accession date of III Shemu day 27. Ramesses II celebrated an unprecedented 14 sed festivals during his reign—more than any other pharaoh. On his death, he was buried in a tomb in the Valley of the Kings; his body was later moved to a royal cache where it was discovered in 1881, and is now on display in the Cairo Museum.

As king, Ramesses II led several expeditions north into the lands east of the Mediterranean (the location of the modern Israel, Lebanon and Syria). He also led expeditions to the south, into Nubia, commemorated in inscriptions at Beit el-Wali and Gerf Hussein.

The early part of his reign was focused on building cities, temples and monuments. He established the city of Pi-Ramesses in the Nile Delta as his new capital and main base for his campaigns in Syria. This city was built on the remains of the city of Avaris, the capital of the Hyksos when they took over, and was the location of the main Temple of Set.

Ramesses II

Ramesses the Great
alternatively transcribed as Ramses and Rameses

Ramesses II: one of four external seated statues at Abu Simbel

Pharaoh of Egypt

Reign	1279–1213 BC, 19th Dynasty
Predecessor	Seti I
Successor	Merneptah
Royal titulary	[Hide]
Consort(s)	Henutmire, Isetnofret, Nefertari, Maathorneferure

Family and life

Ramesses II was the third king of the 19th dynasty, and the second child of Seti I and his Queen Tuya. His

only definite sibling was Princess Tia, although Henutmire, one of his Great Royal Wives, may have been his younger half-sister.

Ramesses had numerous consorts, the most famous being Nefertari. During his long reign, eight women held the title Great Royal Wife (often simultaneously): Nefertari and Isetnofret, whom he married early in his reign; Bintanath, Meritamen and Nebettawy, his own daughters who replaced their mothers Nefertari and Isetnofret when they died or retired; Henutmire; Maathorneferure, Princess of Hatti and another Hittite princess whose name is unknown.

The writer Terence Gray stated in 1923 that Ramesses II had as many as 20 sons and 20 daughters but scholars today believe his offspring numbered over 100. In 2004, Dodson and Hilton noted that the monumental evidence "seems to indicate that Ramesses II had around 110 children, [with] 48–55 sons and 40–53 daughters." His children include Bintanath and Meritamen (princesses and their father's wives), Sethnakhte, Amun-her-khepeshef the king's first born son, Merneptah (Ramesses' 13th son, who would eventually succeed him), and Prince Khaemweset. Ramesses II's second born son, Ramesses B, sometimes called Ramesses Junior, became the crown prince from Year 25 to Year 50 of his father's reign after the death of Amen-her-khepesh.

Children	Khaemweset, Merneptah, Amun-her-khepsef, Meritamen. See also: List of children of Ramesses II
Father	Seti I
Mother	Queen Tuya
Born	1303 BC
Died	1213 BC
Burial	KV7
Monuments	Abu Simbel, Ramesseum, Luxor and Karnak temples

Campaigns and battles

Early in his life, Ramesses II embarked on numerous campaigns to return previously held territories back to Egyptian hands and to secure Egypt's borders. He was also responsible for suppressing some Nubian revolts and carrying out a campaign in Libya. Although the famous Battle of Kadesh often dominates the scholarly view of Ramesses II's military prowess and power, he nevertheless enjoyed more than a few outright victories over the enemies of Egypt.

Battle against Sherden sea pirates

In his second year, Ramesses II decisively defeated the Shardana or Sherden sea pirates who were wreaking havoc along Egypt's Mediterranean coast by attacking cargo-laden vessels travelling the sea routes to Egypt. The Sherden people probably came from the coast of Ionia or possibly south-west Turkey. Ramesses posted troops and ships at strategic points along the coast and patiently allowed the pirates to attack their prey before skillfully catching them by surprise in a sea battle and capturing them all in a single action. A stela from Tanis speaks of their having come "in their war-ships from the midst of the sea, and none were able to stand before them". There must have been a naval battle somewhere near the mouth of the Nile, as shortly afterwards many Sherden are seen in the Pharaoh's body-guard where they are conspicuous by their helmets with horns with a ball projecting from the middle, their round shields and the great Naue II swords with which they are depicted in inscriptions of the Battle of Kadesh.

First Syrian campaign

The immediate antecedents to the Battle of Kadesh were the early campaigns of Ramesses II into Canaan and Palestine. His first campaign seems to have taken place in the fourth year of his reign and was commemorated by the erection of a stela near modern Beirut. The inscription is almost totally illegible due to weathering. His records tell us that he was forced to fight a Palestinian prince who was mortally wounded by an Egyptian archer, and whose army was subsequently routed. Ramesses carried off the princes of Palestine as live prisoners to Egypt. Ramesses then plundered the chiefs of the Asiatics in their own lands, returning every year to his headquarters at Riblah to exact tribute. In the fourth year of his reign, he captured the Hittite vassal state of Amurru during his campaign in Syria.

Second Syrian campaign

The Battle of Kadesh in his fifth regnal year was the climatic engagement in a campaign that Ramesses fought in Syria, against the resurgent Hittite forces of Muwatalli. The pharaoh wanted a victory at Kadesh both to expand Egypt's frontiers into Syria and to emulate his father Seti I's triumphal entry into the city just a decade or so earlier. He also constructed his new capital, Pi-Ramesses where he built factories to manufacture weapons, chariots, and shields. Of course, they followed his wishes and manufactured some 1,000 weapons in a week, about 250 chariots in 2 weeks, and 1,000 shields in a week and a half. After these preparations, Ramesses moved to attack territory in the Levant which belonged to a more substantial enemy than any he had ever faced before: the Hittite Empire.

Although Ramesses's forces were caught in a Hittite ambush and outnumbered at Kadesh, the pharaoh fought the battle to a stalemate and returned home a hero. Ramesses II's forces suffered major losses particularly among the 'Re' division which was routed by the initial charge of the Hittite chariots during the battle. Once back in Egypt, Ramesses proclaimed that he had won a great victory, but in reality all he had managed to do was to save his army from destruction. In a sense, however, the Battle of Kadesh was a personal triumph for Ramesses, as after blundering into a devastating Hittite ambush, the young king courageously rallied his scattered troops to fight on the battlefield while escaping death or capture. While the pharaoh claimed that he had won the battle, the victory was a pyrrhic one, and he was unable to occupy the city or territory around Kadesh.

Ramesses decorated his monuments with reliefs and inscriptions describing the campaign as a whole, and the battle in particular as a major victory. Inscriptions of his victory decorate the Ramesseum, Abydos, Karnak, Luxor and Abu Simbel. For example, on the temple walls of Luxor the near catastrophe was turned into an act of heroism:

> His majesty slaughtered the armed forces of the Hittites in their entirety, their great rulers and all their brothers ... their infantry and chariot troops fell prostrate, one on top of the other. His majesty killed them ... and they lay stretched out in front of their horses. But his majesty was alone, nobody accompanied him ...

Third Syrian campaign

Egypt's sphere of influence was now restricted to Canaan while Syria fell into Hittite hands. Canaanite princes, seemingly influenced by the Egyptian incapacity to impose their will, and goaded on by the Hittites, began revolts against Egypt. In the seventh year of his reign, Ramesses II returned to Syria once again. This time he proved more successful against his Hittite foes. During this campaign he split his army into two forces. One was led by his son, Amun-her-khepeshef,

and it chased warriors of the Šhasu tribes across the Negev as far as the Dead Sea, and captured Edom-Seir. It then marched on to capture Moab. The other force, led by Ramesses, attacked Jerusalem and Jericho. He, too, then entered Moab, where he rejoined his son. The reunited army then marched on Hesbon, Damascus, on to Kumidi, and finally recaptured Upi.

Later campaigns in Syria

Ramesses extended his military successes in his eighth and ninth years. He crossed the Dog River (Nahr el-Kelb) and pushed north into Amurru. His armies managed to march as far north as Dapur, where he erected a statue of himself. The Egyptian pharaoh thus found himself in northern Amurru, well past Kadesh, in Tunip, where no Egyptian soldier had been seen since the time of Thutmose III almost 120 years earlier. He laid siege on the city before capturing it. His victory proved to be ephemeral. In year nine, Ramesses erected a stela at Beth Shean. After having reasserted his power over Canaan, Ramesses led his army north. A mostly illegible stela near Beirut, which appears to be dated to the king's second year, was probably set up there in his tenth. The thin strip of territory pinched between Amurru and Kadesh did not make for a stable possession. Within a year, they had returned to the Hittite fold, so that Ramesses had to march against Dapur once more in his tenth year. This time he claimed to have fought the battle without even bothering to put on his corslet until two hours after the fighting began. Six of Ramesses' sons, still wearing their side locks, took part in this conquest. He took towns in Retenu, and Tunip in Naharin, later recorded on the walls of the Ramesseum. This second success here was equally as meaningless as his first, as neither power could decisively defeat the other in battle.

Relief from Ramesseum showing the siege of Dapur

Peace treaty with the Hittites

Tablet of treaty between Hattusili III of Hatti and Ramesses II of Egypt, at the Istanbul Archaeology Museum

The deposed Hittite king, Mursili III fled to Egypt, the land of his country's enemy, after the failure of his plots to oust his uncle from the throne. Hattusili III responded by demanding that Ramesses II extradite his nephew back to Hatti.

This demand precipitated a crisis in relations between Egypt and Hatti when Ramesses denied any knowledge of Mursili's whereabouts in his country, and the two Empires came dangerously close to war. Eventually, in the twenty-first year of his reign (1258 BC), Ramesses decided to conclude an agreement with the new Hittite king at Kadesh, Hattusili III, to end the conflict. The ensuing document is the earliest known peace treaty in world history.

The peace treaty was recorded in two versions, one in Egyptian hieroglyphs, the other in Akkadian, using cuneiform script; both versions survive. Such dual-language recording is common to many subsequent treaties. This treaty differs from others however, in that the two language versions are differently worded. Although the majority of the text is identical, the Hittite version claims that the Egyptians came suing for peace, while the Egyptian version claims the reverse. The treaty was given to the Egyptians in the form of a silver plaque, and this "pocket-book" version was taken back to Egypt and carved into the Temple of Karnak.

The treaty was concluded between Ramesses II and Hattusili III in Year 21 of Ramesses' reign. (c. 1258 BC) Its 18 articles call for peace between Egypt and Hatti and then proceeds to maintain that their respective gods also demand peace. The frontiers are not laid down in this treaty but can be inferred from other documents. The Anastasy A papyrus describes Canaan during the latter part of the reign of Ramesses II and enumerates and names the Phoenician coastal towns under Egyptian control. The harbour town of Sumur north of Byblos is mentioned as being the northern-most town belonging to Egypt, which points to it having contained an Egyptian garrison.

No further Egyptian campaigns in Canaan are mentioned after the conclusion of the peace treaty. The northern border seems to have been safe and quiet, so the rule of the pharaoh was strong until Ramesses II's death, and the waning of the dynasty. When the King of Mira attempted to involve Ramesses in a hostile act against the Hittites, the Egyptian responded that the times of intrigue in support of Mursili III, had passed. Hattusili III wrote to Kadashman-Enlil II, King of Karduniash (Babylon) in the same spirit, reminding him of the time when his father, Kadashman-Turgu, had offered to fight Ramesses II, the king of Egypt. The Hittite king encouraged the Babylonian to oppose another enemy, which must have been the king of Assyria whose allies had killed the messenger of the Egyptian king. Hattusili encouraged Kadashman-Enlil to come to his aid and prevent the Assyrians from cutting the link between the Canaanite province of Egypt and Mursili III, the ally of Ramesses.

Campaigns in Nubia

Ramesses II also campaigned south of the first cataract into Nubia. When Ramesses was about 22, two of his own sons, including Amun-her-khepeshef, accompanied him in at least one one of those campaigns. By the time of Ramesses, Nubia had been a colony for two hundred years, but its conquest was recalled in decoration from the temples Ramesses II built at Beit el-Wali (which was the subject of epigraphic work by the Oriental Institute during the Nubian salvage campaign of the 1960s), Gerf Hussein and Kalabsha in northern Nubia.

Photo of the free standing part of Gerf Hussein temple, originally in Nubia

Campaigns in Libya

During the reign of Ramesses II, there is evidence that the Egyptians were active for a 300-kilometre (190 mi) stretch along the Mediterranean coast, at least as far as Zawiyet Umm el-Rakham. Although the exact events surrounding the foundation of the coastal forts and fortresses is not clear, some degree of political and military control must have been held over the region to allow their construction.

There are no detailed accounts of Ramesses II undertaking large military actions against the Libyans, only generalised records of his conquering and crushing them, which may or may not refer to specific events, otherwise unrecorded. It may be that some of the records, such as the Aswan Stela of his year 2, are harking back to Ramesses' presence on his father's Libyan campaigns. Perhaps it was Seti I who achieved this proposed control over the region, and it was he who planned to establish the defensive system, in a manner similar to which he rebuilt those to the east, the Ways of Horus across Northern Sinai.

Religious impact

Ramesses was the pharaoh most responsible for erasing the Amarna period from history. He, more than any other pharaoh, sought deliberately to deface the Amarna monuments and change the nature of the religious structure and the structure of the priesthood, in order to try to bring it back to where it had been prior to the reign of Akhenaten.

Sed festival

After reigning for 30 years, Ramesses joined a selected group that included only a handful of Egypt's longest-lived kings. By tradition, in the 30th year of his reign Ramesses celebrated a jubilee called the *Sed festival*, during which the king was ritually transformed into a god. Only halfway through what would be a 66-year reign, Ramesses had already eclipsed all but a few greatest kings in his achievements. He had brought peace, maintained Egyptian borders and built great and numerous monuments across the empire. His country was more prosperous and powerful than it had been in nearly a century. By becoming a god, Ramesses dramatically changed not just his role as ruler of Egypt, but also the role of his firstborn son, Amun-her-khepsef. As the chosen heir and commander and chief of Egyptian armies, his son effectively became ruler in all but name.

Building activity and monuments

Ramesses built extensively throughout Egypt and Nubia, and his cartouches are prominently displayed even in buildings that he did not actually construct. There are accounts of his honour hewn on stone, statues, remains of palaces and temples, most notable the Ramesseum in the western Thebes and the rock temples of Abu Simbel. He covered the land from the Delta to Nubia with buildings in a way no king before him had done. He also founded a new capital city in the Delta during his reign called Pi-Ramesses; it had previously served as a summer palace during Seti I's reign.

The Younger Memnon part of a colossal statue of Ramesses from the Ramasseum, now in the British Museum

His memorial temple Ramesseum, was just the beginning of the pharaoh's obsession with building. When he built, he built on a scale unlike almost anything before. In the third year of his reign Ramesses started the most ambitious building project after the pyramids, that were built 1,500 years earlier. The population was put to work on changing the face of Egypt. In Thebes, the ancient temples were transformed, so that each one of them reflected honour to Ramesses as a symbol of this divine nature and power. Ramesses decided to eternalize himself in stone, and so he ordered changes to the methods used by his masons. The elegant but shallow reliefs of previous pharaohs were easily transformed, and so their images and words could easily be obliterated by their successors. Ramesses insisted that his carvings were deeply engraved in the stone, which made them not only less susceptible to later alteration, but also made them more prominent in the Egyptian sun, reflecting his relationship with the sun god, Ra.

Ramesses constructed many large monuments, including the archeological complex of Abu Simbel, and the mortuary temple known as the Ramesseum. He built on a monumental scale to ensure that his legacy would survive the ravages of time. Ramesses used art as a means of propaganda for his victories over foreigners and are depicted on numerous temple reliefs. Ramesses II also erected more colossal statues of himself than any other pharaoh. He also usurped many existing statues by inscribing his own cartouche on them.

Pi-Ramesses

Here once stood some of the greatest monuments and buildings that Ramesses was building all across Egypt. The city was called *Pi-Ramesses Aa-nakhtu*, meaning "Domain of Ramesses II, Great in Victory" Although Pi-Ramesses was mentioned and named in the Bible, as a site where the Israelites were forced to work hard for the pharaoh, for many centuries it was lost, considered nothing more than a myth. For a time it was misidentified as being in Tanis, due to the amount of statuary and other material from Pi-Ramesses found there. But after 20 years of excavation, it was finally found in the eastern Delta. Its foundations lie hidden several feet beneath lush farmland. The colossal feet of the statue of Ramesses are almost all that remains above ground today, the rest is buried in the fields. The ancient city was dominated by huge temples and the king's vast residential palace, complete with its own zoo. The city also had a massive chariot base, as described in the Bible.

Ramesseum

The temple complex built by Ramesses II between Qurna and the desert has been known as the Ramesseum since the 19th century. The Greek historian Diodorus Siculus marveled at the gigantic and famous temple, now no more than a few ruins.

Oriented northwest and southeast, the temple itself was preceded by two courts. An enormous pylon stood before the first court, with the royal palace at the left and the gigantic statue of the king looming up at the back. Only fragments of the base and torso remain of the syenite statue of the enthroned pharaoh, 17 metres (56 ft) high and weighing more than 1,000 tonnes (980 LT/1,100 ST). The scenes of the great pharaoh and his army triumphing over the Hittite forces fleeing before Kadesh, represented on the pylon. Remains of the second court include part of the internal facade of the pylon and a portion of the Osiride portico on the right. Scenes of war and the rout the Hittites at Kadesh are repeated on the walls. In the upper registers, feast and honour of the phallic god Min, god of fertility. On the opposite side of the court the few Osiride pillars and columns still left can furnish an idea of the original grandeur.


Ramesseum courtyard

Scattered remains of the two statues of the seated king can also be seen, one in pink granite and the other in black granite, which once flanked the entrance to the temple. Thirty-nine out of the forty-eight columns in the great hypostyle hall (m 41x 31) still stand in the central rows. They are decorated with the usual scenes of the king before various gods. Part of the ceiling decorated with gold stars on a blue ground has also been preserved. Ramesses' children appear in the procession on the few walls left. The sanctuary was composed of three consecutive rooms, with eight columns and the tetrastyle cell. Part of the first room, with the ceiling decorated with astral scenes, and few remains of the second room are all that is left. Vast storerooms built in mud bricks stretched out around the temple. Traces of a school for scribes were found among the ruins.

A temple of Seti I, of which nothing is now left but the foundations, once stood to the right of the hypostyle hall.

Abu Simbel

In 1255 BC Ramesses and his queen Nefertari had traveled into Nubia to inaugurate a new temple, a wonder of the ancient world, the great Abu Simbel. It is an ego cast in stone; the man who built it intended not only to become Egypt's greatest pharaoh but also one of its gods.

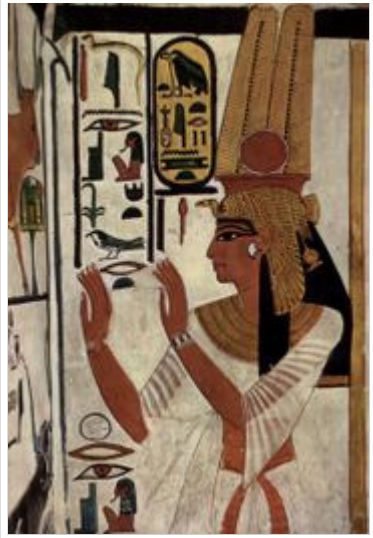
The great temple of Ramesses II at Abu Simbel was discovered in 1813 by the famous Swiss Orientalist and traveler Johann Ludwig Burckhardt. However, four years passed before anyone could enter the temple, because an enormous pile of sand almost completely covered the facade and its colossal statues, blocking the entrance. This feat was achieved by the great Paduan explorer Giovanni Battista Belzoni, who managed to reach the interior on 4 August 1817.

Other Nubian monuments

As well as the famous temples of Abu Simbel, Ramesses left other monuments to himself in Nubia. His early campaigns are illustrated on the walls of Beit el-Wali (now relocated to New Kalabsha). Other temples dedicated to Ramesses are Derr and Gerf Hussein (also relocated to New Kalabsha).

Tomb of Nefertari

The important and famous of Ramesses' consorts was discovered by Ernesto Schiaparelli in 1904. Although it had been looted in ancient times, the tomb of Nefertari is extremely important, because its magnificent wall painting decoration is regarded as one of the greatest achievements of ancient Egyptian art. A flight of steps cut out of the rock gives access to the antechamber, which is decorated with paintings based on chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead. This astronomical ceiling represents the heavens and is painted in dark blue, with a myriad of golden five-pointed stars. The east wall of the antechamber is interrupted by a large opening flanked by representation of Osiris at left and Anubis at right; this in turn leads to the side chamber, decorated with offering scenes, preceded by a vestibule in which the paintings portray Nefertari being presented to the gods who welcome her. On the north wall of the antechamber is the stairway that goes down to the burial chamber. This latter is a vast quadrangular room covering a surface area of about 90 square metres (970 sq ft), the astronomical ceiling of which is supported by four pillars entirely covered with decoration. Originally, the queen's red granite sarcophagus lay in the middle of this chamber. According to religious doctrines of the time, it was in this chamber, which the ancient Egyptians called the golden hall that the regeneration of the deceased took place. This decorative pictogram of the walls in the burial chamber drew inspirations from chapters 144 and 146 of the Book of the Dead: in the left half of the chamber, there are passages from chapter 144 concerning the gates and doors of the kingdom of Osiris, their guardians, and the magic formulas that had to be uttered by the deceased in order to go past the doors.



Tomb wall depicting Nefertari

Tomb KV5

In 1995, Professor Kent Weeks, head of the Theban Mapping Project rediscovered Tomb KV5. It has proven to be the largest tomb in the Valley of the Kings, and originally contained the mummified remains of some of this king's estimated 52 sons. Approximately 150 corridors and tomb chambers have been located in this tomb as of 2006 and the tomb may contain as many as 200 corridors and chambers. It is believed that at least 4 of Ramesses' sons including Meryatum, Sety, Amun-her-khepeshef (Ramesses' first born son) and "the King's Principal Son of His Body, the Generalissimo Ramesses, justified" (ie: deceased) were buried there from inscriptions, ostracas or canopic jars discovered in the tomb. Joyce Tyldesley writes that thus far

> "no intact burials have been discovered and there have been little substantial funeral debris: thousands of potsherds, faience *shabti* figures, beads, amulets, fragments of Canopic jars, of wooden coffins ... but no intact sarcophagi, mummies or mummy cases, suggesting that much of the tomb may have been unused. Those burials which were made in KV5 were thoroughly looted in antiquity, leaving little or no remains."

Colossal statue

The colossal statue of Ramesses II was reconstructed and erected in Ramesses Square in Cairo in 1955. In August 2006, contractors moved his 3,200-year-old statue from Ramesses Square, to save it from exhaust fumes that were causing the 83-tonne (82 LT/91 ST) statue to deteriorate. The statue was originally taken from a temple in Memphis. The new site will be located near the future Grand Egyptian Museum.

Death and legacy

By the time of his death, Ramesses was suffering from severe dental problems and was plagued by arthritis and hardening of the arteries. When he finally died, he was about 90 years old. He had outlived many of his wives and children and left great memorials all over Egypt, especially to his beloved first queen Nefertari. Nine more pharaohs would take the name Ramesses in his honour, but few ever equalled his greatness. Nearly all of his subjects had been born during his reign and thought the world would end without him. Ramesses II did become the legendary figure he so desperately wanted to be, but this was not enough to protect Egypt. New enemies were attacking the empire which also suffered internal problems and it could not last. Less than 150 years after Ramesses died, the Egyptian empire fell, his descendants lost their power and the New Kingdom came to an end.

Mummy

Ramesses II was buried in the tomb KV7 in the Valley of the Kings. His mummy was placed in Cairo's Egyptian Museum, where it can be found today.

The pharaoh's mummy features a hooked nose and strong jaw, and is below average height for an ancient Egyptian, standing some 1.7 metres (5 ft 7 in). His successor was ultimately to be his thirteenth son: Merneptah.

Mummy of Ramesses II

In 1974, Egyptologists visiting his tomb noticed that the mummy's condition was rapidly deteriorating. They decided to fly Ramesses II's mummy to Paris for examination. Ramesses II was issued an Egyptian passport that listed his occupation as "King (deceased)". The mummy was received at Le Bourget airport, just outside Paris, with the full military honours befitting a king.

In Paris, Ramesses' mummy was diagnosed and treated for a fungal infection. During the examination, scientific analysis revealed battle wounds and old fractures, as well as the pharaoh's arthritis and poor circulation.

For the last decades of his life, Ramesses II was essentially crippled with arthritis and walked with a hunched back, but a recent study excluded ankylosing spondylitis as a possible cause of the pharaoh's arthritis. A significant hole in the pharaoh's mandible was detected while "an abscess by his teeth was serious enough to have caused death by infection, although this cannot be determined with certainty." Microscopic inspection of the roots of Ramesses II's hair revealed that the king may have been a redhead. After Ramesses' mummy returned to Egypt, it was visited by the late President Anwar Sadat and his wife.

President Sadat visiting Ramesses II's mummy

The results of the study concluded that "the anthropological study and the microscopic analysis" of the pharaoh's hair showed that Ramesses II was "a fair-skinned man related to the Prehistoric and Antiquity Mediterranean peoples, or briefly, of the Berber of Africa".

Pharaoh of the Exodus

At least as early as Eusebius of Caesarea, Ramesses II was identified with the pharaoh of whom the Biblical figure Moses demanded his people be released from

 slavery.

This identification has often been disputed, though the evidence for another solution is likewise inconclusive as critics point out that Ramesses II was not drowned in the Sea. The primary Exodus account itself makes no specific claim that the pharaoh was with his army when they were "swept ... into the sea"; only Psalm 136 makes this claim.

Critics of the theory also emphasize that there is nothing in the archaeological records from the time of Ramesses' reign to confirm the existence of the Plagues of Egypt. However, this is not surprising since few pharaohs wished to record natural disasters or military defeats in the same manner that their rivals documented these events (as in the Biblical narratives).

In the 1960s and 1970s, several scholars such as George Mendenhall associated the Israelites' arrival in Canaan more closely with the Hapiru mentioned in the Amarna letters which date to the reign of Amenhotep III and Akhenaten and in the Hittite treaties with Ramesses II. Most scholars today, however, view the Hapiru or Apiru instead as bandits who attacked the trade and royal caravans that travelled along the coastal roads of Canaan. Ramesses II's late 13th-century BC stela in Beth Shan mentions two conquered peoples who came to "make obeisance to him" in his city of Raameses or Pi-Ramesses but mentions neither the building of the city nor, as some have written, the Israelites or Hapiru.

Connection with the Biblical king Shishak

The Shishak of the Bible has generally been associated with Shoshenq I of Egypt instead. A fragment of a stela bearing Shoshenq I's name has been found at Megiddo which affirms this king's claim, in several Karnak temple walls, that he invaded the land of Israel and conquered 170 towns there. Shoshenq's Karnak triumphal inscription goes on to list the towns in alphabetical order including Megiddo. Jerusalem is not seen among this list of towns but the Karnak reliefs are damaged in several sections and some town's names were lost, so many scholars suggest that Jerusalem is mentioned in the damaged part.

However, David Rohl, controversially proposed a massive revision of the traditional chronology of the ancient Near East, and attempted to identify Shishaq with **Ramesses II**. A few scholars, such as Peter James, who accept Rohl's criticism of identifying Shishaq with Shoshenq I while not his other theories, have sought to identify Shishaq with one of the other Ramesses kings of this period with varying success. The so-called "James" chronology was first developed by Michael Sanders and published in "Catastrophism and Ancient History" in 1985 many years before James published his revision.

Popular legacy

Ramesses was considered the inspiration for Percy Bysshe Shelley's famous poem " Ozymandias". Diodorus Siculus gives an inscription on the base of one of his sculptures as: " King of Kings am I, Osymandias. If anyone would know how great I am and where I lie, let him surpass one of my works." This is paraphrased in Shelley's poem.

The life of Ramesses II has inspired a large number of fictional representations, including the historical novels of the French writer Christian Jacq, the *Ramsès,*

series, the graphic novel *Watchmen*, the character of Adrian Veidt uses Ramesses II to form part of the inspiration for his alter-ego known as 'Ozymandias' and Norman Mailer's novel *Ancient Evenings* is largely concerned with the life of Ramesses II, though from the perspective of Egyptians living during the reign of Ramesses IX, and Ramesses was the main character in the Anne Rice book *The Mummy* or *Ramses the Damned*. Although not a major character, Ramesses appears in Joan Grant's *So Moses Was Born*, a first person account from Nebunefer, the brother of Ramoses, which paints the picture of the life of Ramoses from the death of Seti, with all the power play, intrigue, plots to assassinate, following relationships are depicted: Bintanath, Queen Tuya, Nefertari, and Moses.

In film, Ramesses was played by Yul Brynner in the classic film *The Ten Commandments* (1956). Here Ramesses was portrayed as a vengeful tyrant, ever scornful of his father's preference for Moses over "the son of [his] body". The animated film *The Prince of Egypt*, also featured a depiction of Ramesses (voiced by Ralph Fiennes), portrayed as Moses' adoptive brother.

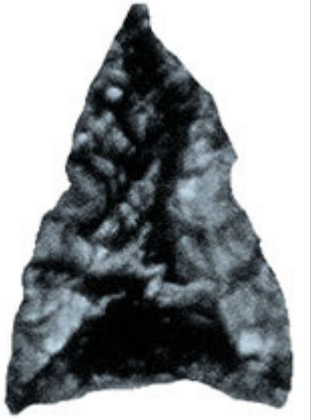
Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramesses_II"

Stone Age

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology

The **Stone Age** is a broad prehistoric time period during which humans widely used stone for toolmaking.

Stone tools were made from a variety of different kinds of stone. For example, flint and chert were shaped (or *chipped*) for use as cutting tools and weapons, while basalt and sandstone were used for ground stone tools, such as quern-stones. Wood, bone, shell, antler and other materials were widely used, too. During the most recent part of the period, sediments (like clay) were used to make pottery. A series of metal technology innovations characterize the later Chalcolithic (Copper Age), Bronze Age and Iron Age.



Obsidian projectile point

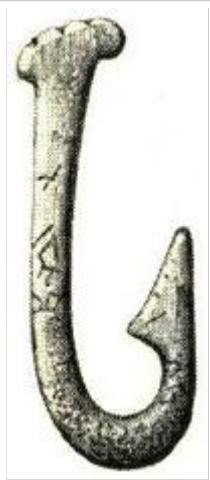
The period encompasses the first widespread use of technology in human evolution and the spread of humanity from the savannas of East Africa to the rest of the world. It ends with the development of agriculture, the domestication of certain animals and the smelting of copper ore to produce metal. It is termed *pre*historic, since humanity had not yet started writing -- the traditional start of history (i.e., recorded history).

The term "Stone Age" was used by archaeologists to designate this vast pre-metallurgic period whose stone tools survived far more widely than tools made from other (softer) materials. It is the first age in the three-age system. A division of the Stone Age into an older and younger part was first proposed by Jens Jacob Worsaae in 1859 through his work with Danish kitchen middens that began in 1851. The subdivision into the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods that still is in use today, was made by John Lubbock in his now classic 1865 book *Pre-historic Times*. These three periods are further subdivided. In reality, the succession of phases differs enormously from one region (and culture) to another, indeed, humanity continued to expand into new areas even during the metal ages. Therefore, it is better to speak of *a* Stone Age, instead of *the* Stone Age. As a description of people living today, the term *stone age* is controversial. The Association of Social Anthropologists discourages this use.

Stone Age
↑ before *Homo* (Pliocene)
Paleolithic Lower Paleolithic *Homo* control of fire, stone tools Middle Paleolithic *Homo neanderthalensis* *Homo sapiens* out of Africa Upper Paleolithic behavioural modernity, atlatl, dog Mesolithic microliths, bow, canoes Neolithic Pre-Pottery Neolithic farming, animal husbandry, polished stone tools Pottery Neolithic pottery Chalcolithic metallurgy, horse, wheel

The Stone Age in archaeology

The date range of this period is ambiguous, disputed, and variable according to the region in question. While it is possible to speak of a general 'stone age' period for the whole of humanity, some groups never developed metal- smelting technology, so remained in a 'stone age' until they encountered technologically developed cultures. However, in general, it is believed that this period began somewhere around 3 million years ago, starting with the first hominid tool-making in Africa. Most australopithecines probably did not use stone tools (although they seem to be invented by *Paranthropus robustus*) but the study of their remains still falls within the remit of archaeologists studying the period.


Stone Age fish hook

Due to the prevalence of stone artefacts, which are frequently the only remains which still exist, lithic analysis is a major, and specialised, form of archaeological investigation for the period. This involves the measurement of the stone tools to determine their typology, function and the technology involved. This frequently involves an analysis of the lithic reduction of the raw materials, examining how the artefacts were actually made. This can also be examined through experimental archaeology, by attempting to create replica tools. This is done by flintknappers who reduce flintstone to a flint tool.

Modern use of the term


A variety of stone tools

One problem with the term is that it implies that human advancement and time periods in prehistory are only measured by the type of tool material most widely used, rather than, for example, type of social organisation, food sources exploited, or adaption to harsh climates. This is a product of the level of knowledge of the distant past during the nineteenth century when the three age system was developed, a time when finds of artefacts were the main goal of an archaeological excavation. Modern archaeological techniques stress a wider collection of information that has expanded our knowledge of prehistory and rendered neat divisions such as the term 'Stone Age' increasingly obsolete. We now know that the changes in past societies over the millennia were complex and involved multiple factors such as the adoption of agriculture, settlement or religion and that tool use is just one unrepresentative indicator of a society's practices and beliefs.

Another problem connected with the term Stone Age is that it was created to describe the archaeological cultures of Europe, and that it is inconvenient to use it in relation to regions such as some parts of the Americas and Oceania, where farmers or hunter-gatherers used stone for tools until European colonisation began. Metal-working was a much less important part of people's lives there and it is more useful to use other terms when dividing prehistory in those areas. The same incongruence applies to the Iron Age worldwide, because in the Americas iron (but not copper, silver or gold) was unknown until 1492, in Oceania until the 17th century.

A Stone Age was usually followed by a Bronze Age, during which metalworking technology allowed bronze (copper and tin or other metals) tools to become more common. The transition out of the Stone Age occurred between 6000 BC and 2500 BC for much of humanity living in North Africa, Asia and Europe. In some regions, such as Subsaharan Africa, the Stone Age was followed directly by an Iron Age. It is generally believed that the Middle East and southeastern Asian regions progressed past Stone Age technology around 6000 BC. Europe, and the rest of Asia became post-Stone Age societies by about 4000 BC. The proto-Inca cultures of South America continued at a Stone Age level until around 2000 BC, when gold, copper and silver made their entrance, the rest following

later. Australia remained in the Stone Age until the 17th century.

We also now know that the transition from a Stone Age to a Bronze Age was not a neat switch but a long, gradual process involving the working of gold and copper at what are technically Neolithic sites. This "transition" period is known as the Copper age or Chalcolithic. It was a short and more a regional development, because alloying tin with copper began quite soon, except in regions lacking tin. Ötzi the Iceman for instance, a mummy from about 3300 BC carried with him a copper axe and a flint knife. Stone tool manufacture also continued long into the succeeding metal-using ages, possibly even until the Early Middle Ages. In Europe and North America, millstones were in use until deep the 20th century, and still are in many parts of the world.

Chronology

The three-age system divides human technological prehistory into three periods:

- The **Stone Age**
- The Bronze Age
- The Iron Age

New ages and subages were added as new archaeological discoveries were made, and different schemes were developed to describe conditions in different places. A more modern periodization of the Stone Age stretches from the Paleolithic to the Neolithic in the following scheme (crossing an epoch boundary on the geologic time scale):

- Pleistocene epoch (highly glaciated climate)
  - Paleolithic age
- Holocene epoch (modern climate)
  - Mesolithic or Epipaleolithic age
  - Neolithic age
  - Copper Age
  - Bronze Age
  - Iron Age
- Historical period (written record begins)

Paleolithic

The **Paleolithic** (or **Palaeolithic**) (from Greek: παλαιός, *palaios*, " old"; and λίθος, *lithos*, "stone" lit. "old age of the stone"; was coined by archaeologist John Lubbock in 1865.) is a prehistoric era distinguished by the development of stone tools. It covers the greatest portion of humanity's time (roughly 99% of human history) on Earth, extending from 2.5 or 2.6 million years ago, with the introduction of stone tools by hominids such as *Homo habilis*, to the introduction of agriculture and the end of the Pleistocene around 10,000 BC. The Paleolithic era ended with the Mesolithic, or in areas with an early

neolithisation, the Epipaleolithic.

During the Paleolithic humans were grouped together in small scale societies such as bands and gained their subsistence from gathering plants and hunting wild animals. The Paleolithic is characterized by the use of knapped stone tools, although at the time, humans also used wood and bone tools. Other organic commodities were adapted for use as tools, including leather and vegetable fibers; however, given their nature, these have not been preserved to any great degree. Humankind gradually evolved from early members of the genus *Homo* such as *Homo habilis* who used simple stone tools into fully behaviorally and anatomically modern humans (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) during the Paleolithic era. During the end of the Paleolithic specifically the Middle and or Upper Paleolithic humans began to produce the earliest works of art and engage in religious and spiritual behaviour such as burial and ritual. The climate during the Paleolithic consisted of a set of glacial and interglacial periods in which the climate periodically fluctuated between warm and cool temperatures.

Lower Palaeolithic

Near the end of the Pliocene epoch in Africa, an early ancestor of modern humans, called *Homo habilis*, developed the earliest known stone tools. These were relatively simple tools known as choppers. *Homo habilis* is presumed to have mastered the Oldowan era tool case which utilized stone flakes and cores. This industry of stone tools is named after the site of Oldupai Gorge in Tanzania. These humans likely subsisted on scavenged meat and wild plants, rather than hunted prey. Around 1.5 million years ago, a more evolved human species, *Homo erectus*, appeared. *H. erectus* learned to control fire and created more complex chopper tools, as well as expanding out of Africa to reach Asia, as shown by sites such as Zhoukoudian in China. By 1 million years ago, the earliest evidence of humans in Europe is known, as well use of the more advanced handaxe tool.

Middle Palaeolithic

This period began about 200,000 years ago and is most well-known as being the era during which the Neanderthals lived (c. 120,000–35,000 years ago). The stone artefact technology of the Neanderthals is generally known as the Mousterian. The Neanderthals eventually disappeared from the archaeological record, replaced by modern humans who first appeared in Ethiopia around 100,000 years ago. Although often identified in the public's mind as primitive, there is evidence that Neanderthals nursed their elderly and practised ritual burial indicating an organised society. The earliest evidence of settlement in Australia dates to around 40,000 years ago when modern humans likely crossed from Asia by hopping from island to island. Middle Palaeolithic peoples demonstrate the earliest undisputed evidence for art and other expressions of abstract thought such as intentional burial of the dead.

Upper Palaeolithic

From 35,000 to 10,000 years ago (the end of the last ice age) modern humans spread out further across the Earth during the period known as the Upper Palaeolithic. After the arrival of the first modern humans (Cro-Magnons) in Europe a relatively rapid succession of often complex stone artefact technologies took place during this period, including the Châtelperronian, Aurignacian, Solutrean, Gravettian and Magdalenian.

The cave art of Lascaux is an example of Upper Palaeolithic culture

The Americas were colonised via the Bering land bridge which was exposed during this period by lower sea levels. These people are called the Paleo Indians, and the earliest accepted dates are those of the Clovis culture sites, some 13,500 years ago. Globally, societies were hunter-gatherers but evidence of regional identities begins to appear in the wide variety of stone tool types being developed to suit different environments.

Epipalaeolithic/Mesolithic

The period between the end of the last ice age, 10,000 years ago to around 6,000 years ago, was characterised by rising sea levels and a need to adapt to a changing environment and find new food sources. The development of microlith tools began in response to these changes. They were derived from the previous Palaeolithic tools, hence the term Epipalaeolithic. However, in Europe the term Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) is used, as the tools (and way of life) were imported from the Near East. There, microlith tools permitted more efficient hunting, while more complex settlements, such as Lepenski Vir developed based around fishing. Domestication of the dog as a hunting companion probably dates to this period.

The earliest known battle occurred during the Mesolithic period at a site in Egypt known as Cemetery 117.

Neolithic

The Neolithic, New Stone Age, was characterized by the adoption of agriculture, the so-called Neolithic Revolution, the development of pottery and more complex, larger settlements such as Çatal Hüyük and Jericho. The first Neolithic cultures started around 7000 BC in the fertile crescent. Agriculture and the culture it led to spread to the Mediterranean, the Indus valley, China and Southeast Asia.

Skara Brae, Scotland. Europe's most complete Neolithic village

Due to the increased need to harvest and process plants, ground stone and polished stone artifacts became much more widespread, including tools for grinding, cutting, and chopping. The first large-scale constructions were built, including settlement towers and walls, eg: Jericho and ceremonial sites, eg: Stonehenge. These show that there was sufficient resources and co-operation to enable large groups to work on these projects. To what extent this was a basis for the development of elites and social hierarchies is a matter of on-going debate. Although some late Neolithic societies formed complex stratified chiefdoms similar to Polynesian societies such as the Ancient Hawaiians, most Neolithic societies were relatively simple and egalitarian though Neolithic cultures were noticeably more hierarchical than the Paleolithic cultures that preceded them and Hunter-gatherer cultures in general. The earliest evidence for established trade exists in the Neolithic with newly settled people importing exotic goods over distances of many hundreds of miles. Skara Brae located on Orkney island off Scotland is one of Europe's best examples of a Neolithic village. The community

contains stone beds, shelves and even an indoor toilet linked to a stream.

Material culture

Food and drink

Food sources of the hunter-gatherer humans of the Stone Age included both animals and plants that were part of the environment in which these humans lived. These humans liked animal organ meats, including the livers, kidneys and brains. They consumed little dairy product or carbohydrate-rich plant foods like legumes or cereal grains. They also ate leaves and roots. They hunted animals. Large seeded legumes were part of the human diet long before the neolithic agricultural revolution as evident from archaeobotanical finds from the Mousterian layers of Kebara Cave, in Israel. Moreover, recent evidence indicates that humans processed and consumed wild cereal grains as far back as 23,000 years ago in the Upper Paleolithic.

Near the end of the Wisconsin glaciation, 15,000 to 9,000 years ago, the Megafauna occurred in Asia, Europe, North America and Australia. This was the first Holocene extinction event. This event possibly forced modification in the dietary habits of the humans of that age and with the emergence of agricultural practices, plant-based foods also became a regular part of the diet. This extinction may have been caused by humans over hunting wild game animals such as the Wooly mammoth although other scientists believe that the megafauna extinction was instead caused by climate change.

> “ The first wine-tasting may have occurred when Paleolithic humans slurped the juice of naturally fermented wild grapes from animal-skin pouches or crude wooden bowls. ”
>
> —William Cocke, National Geographic News

Shelter and habitat

Around 2 million years ago, Homo habilis is believed to have constructed the first man-made structure in East Africa, consisting of simple arrangements of stones to hold branches of trees in position. A similar stone circular arrangement believed to be around 500 thousand years old was discovered at Terra Amata, near Nice, France. Several human habitats dating back to the Stone Age have been discovered around the globe, including:

Poulnabrone dolmen in County Clare, Ireland

- A tent-like structure inside a cave near the Grotte du Lazaret, Nice, France.
- A structure with roof supported with timber, discovered in Dolni Vestonice, Czechoslovakia, dates to around 23,000 BC. The walls were made of packed clay blocks and stones.
- Many huts made of mammoth bones were found in Eastern Europe and Siberia. The people who made these huts were expert mammoth hunters. Examples have been found along the Dniepr river valley of Ukraine, including near Chernihiv, in Moravia, Czech Republic and in southern Poland.

- An animal hide tent dated to around 15000 to 10000 BC, in the Magdalenian, was discovered at Plateau Parain, France.
- Megalithic tombs, multi-chambered and dolmens, single-chambered, were graves with a huge stone slab stacked over other similarly large stone slabs. They have been discovered all across Europe and Asia and were built in the Neolithic. Several tombs with copper and bronze tools have also been discovered, illustrating the problems of attempting to define periods based on technology.

Art

Pre-historic art can only be traced from surviving artefacts. Prehistoric music is inferred from found instruments, while parietal art can be found on rocks of any kind. The latter are petroglyphs and rock paintings. The art may or may not have had a religious function.

Petroglyphs

Petroglyphs appeared in the New Stone Age, commonly known as Neolithic period. A Petroglyph is an abstract or symbolic image recorded on stone, usually by prehistoric peoples, by means of *carving*, pecking or otherwise incised on natural rock surfaces. They were a dominant form or pre-writing symbols used in communication. Petroglyphs have been discovered in different parts of the world, including Asia (Bhimbetka, India), North America (Death Valley National Park), South America (Cumbe Mayo, Peru), and Europe (Finnmark, Norway).

Rock paintings

A rock painting at Bhimbetka, India, a World heritage site

Rock paintings were *painted* on rock and were more naturalistic depictions than petroglyphs. In paleolithic times, the representation of humans in cave paintings was rare. Mostly, animals were painted: not only animals that were used as food but also animals that represented strength like the rhinoceros or large cats (as in the Chauvet Cave). Signs like dots were sometimes drawn. Rare human representations include handprints and half-human/half-animal figures. The Cave of Chauvet in the Ardèche *département*, France, contains the most important preserved cave paintings of the paleolithic era, painted around 31,000 BC. The Altamira cave paintings in Spain were done 14,000 to 12,000 BC and show, among others, bisons. The hall of bulls in Lascaux, Dordogne, France, is one of the best known cave paintings from about 15,000 to 10,000 BC.

The meaning of the paintings remains unknown. The caves were not in an inhabited area, so they may have been used for seasonal rituals. The animals are accompanied by signs which suggest a possible magic use. Arrow-like symbols in Lascaux are sometimes interpreted as calendar or almanac use. But the evidence remains inconclusive. The most important work of the Mesolithic era were the marching Warriors, a rock painting at Cingle de la Mola, Castellón in Spain dated to about 7,000–4,000 BC. The technique used was probably spitting or blowing the pigments onto the rock. The paintings are quite naturalistic, though stylized. The figures are not three-dimensional, even though they overlap.

Stone Age rituals and beliefs

Modern studies and the in-depth analysis of finds dating from the Stone Age indicate certain rituals and beliefs of the people in those prehistoric times. It is now believed that activities of the Stone Age humans went beyond the immediate requirements of procuring food, body coverings, and shelters. Specific rites relating to death and burial were practiced, though certainly differing in style and execution between cultures. Several Stone Age-dated sites of the in different parts of the world indicate traces of dancing, dancing in files, and initiation rites.

Popular culture

As a slang term, "Stone Age" is sometimes used to describe living tribal peoples, to imply "backwardness". In 2007, the Association of Social Anthropologists called the term "offensive" when applied to any living peoples, saying such language has been used "as a pretext for depriving such peoples of land and other resources".

> “ All anthropologists would agree that the negative use of the terms "primitive" and "stone age" to describe tribal peoples has serious implications for their welfare. ”

The image of the caveman is commonly associated with the Stone Age. For example, the 2003 documentary series showing the evolution of humans through the Stone Age was called *Walking with Cavemen*, although only the last programme showed humans living in caves. While the idea that human beings and dinosaurs coexisted is sometimes portrayed in popular culture in cartoons, films and computer games, such as *The Flintstones* and *One Million Years B.C.*, the notion of primates and dinosaurs co-existing is not supported by any scientific evidence.

Other depictions of the Stone Age include the best-selling *Earth's Children* series of books by Jean M. Auel, which are set in the Palaeolithic and are loosely based on archaeological and anthropological findings. The 1981 film *Quest for Fire* by Jean-Jacques Annaud tells the story of a group of humans searching for their lost fire.

The phrase "bomb them back into the Stone Age", was made by then Chief of Staff, US Air Force General Curtis E. Lemay, when in 1965, he made the statement towards the North Vietnamese, during the Vietnam War; "They've got to draw in their horns and stop their aggression, or *we're going to bomb them back into the stone age*." The gist of that statement implied a fierce aerial attack that would have utterly destroyed its target's infrastructure, forcing its survivors to revert to primitive technology in order to survive.

Sumer

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology

Sumer (Sumerian: 𒆠𒂗𒆠 *ki- en-ĝir15*, Akkadian: *Šumeru*; possibly Biblical *Shinar*), located in southern Mesopotamia, is one of the earliest known civilizations in the world. It lasted from the first settlement of Eridu in the Ubaid period (late 6th millennium BC) through the Uruk period (4th millennium BC) and the Dynastic periods (3rd millennium BC) until the rise of Babylon in the early 2nd millennium BC. The term "Sumerian" applies to all speakers of the Sumerian language.

Although other cities pre-date Sumer (Jericho, Çatalhöyük and others, either for seasonal protection, or as year-round trading posts) the cities of Sumer were the first to practice intensive, year-round agriculture (from ca. 5300 BC). The surplus of storable foodstuffs created by this economy allowed the population to settle in one place instead of migrating after crops and herds. It also allowed for a much greater population density, and in turn required an extensive labor force and division of labor. This organization led to the necessity of record keeping and the development of writing (ca. 3500 BC).

Origin of Name

The term "Sumerian" is the common name given to the ancient inhabitants of southern Mesopotamia by their successors, the Semitic Akkadians. The Sumerians called themselves *sag-giga*, literally meaning "the black-headed people". The Akkadian word *Shumer* may represent this name in dialect, but it is unknown why the Akkadians called the southern land *Shumeru*. Biblical *Shinar*, Egyptian *Sngr* and Hittite *Šanhar(a)* could be western variants of *Šumer*.

City states

Ancient Mesopotamia

Euphrates · Tigris

Empires / Cities

Sumer
Eridu · Kish · Uruk · Ur
Lagash · Nippur · Ngirsu

Elam
Susa

Akkadian Empire
Akkad · Mari

Amorites
Isin · Larsa

Babylonia
Babylon · Chaldea

Assyria
Assur · Nimrud
Dur-Sharrukin · Nineveh

Hittites · Kassites
Hurrians / Mitanni

Chronology
Mesopotamia
Sumer (king list)

By the late 4th millennium BC, Sumer was divided into about a dozen independent city-states, whose limits were defined by canals and boundary stones. Each was centered on a temple dedicated to the particular patron god or goddess of the city and ruled over by a priestly governor (ensi) or by a king (lugal) who was intimately tied to the city's religious rites.

Kings of Assyria
Kings of Babylon

Mythology

Enûma Elish · Gilgamesh
Assyro-Babylonian religion

Language

Sumerian · Elamite
Akkadian · Aramaic
Hurrian · Hittite

The five "first" cities said to have exercized pre-dynastic kingship:

1. Eridu (*Tell Abu Shahrain*)
2. Bad-tibira (probably *Tell al-Madain*)
3. Larsa (*Tell as-Senkereh*)
4. Sippar (*Tell Abu Habbah*)
5. Shuruppak (*Tell Fara*)

Other principal cities:

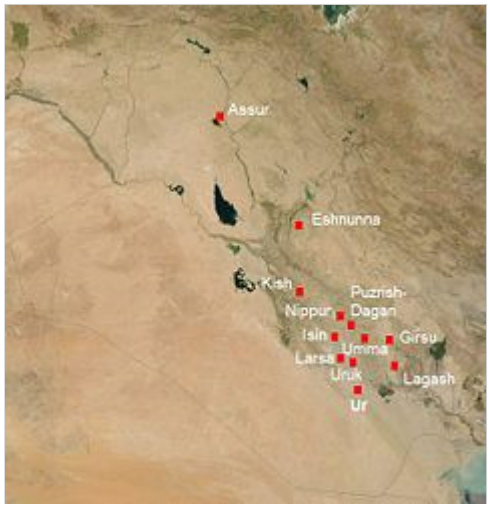
6. Kish (*Tell Uheimir & Ingharra*)
7. Uruk (*Warka*)
8. Ur (*Tell al-Muqayyar*)
9. Nippur (*Afak*)
10. Lagash (*Tell al-Hiba*)
11. Ngirsu (*Tello or Telloh*)
12. Umma (*Tell Jokha*)
13. Hamazi [1]
14. Adab (*Tell Bismaya*)
15. Mari (*Tell Hariri*) [2]
16. Akshak [1]
17. Akkad [1]
18. Isin (*Ishan al-Bahriyat*)

([1]location uncertain)
([2]an outlying city in northern Mesopotamia)

Minor cities (from south to north):

1. Kuara (*Tell al-Lahm*)
2. Zabala (*Tell Ibzeikh*)
3. Kisurra (*Tell Abu Hatab*)
4. Marad (*Tell Wannat es-Sadum*)
5. Dilbat (*Tell ed-Duleim*)
6. Borsippa (*Birs Nimrud*)
7. Kutha (*Tell Ibrahim*)
8. Der (*al-Badra*)
9. Eshnunna (*Tell Asmar*)
10. Nagar (*Tell Brak*) [2]

([2]an outlying city in northern Mesopotamia)



Map of Sumer

Apart from Mari, which lies full 330 km northwest of Agade, but which is credited in the king list as having “exercised kingship” in the Early Dynastic II period, and Nagar, an outpost, these cities are all in the Euphrates-Tigris alluvial plain, south of Baghdad in what are now the Bābil, Diyala, Wāsit, Dhi Qar, Al-Muthannā and Al-Qādisiyyah governorates of Iraq.

History

The Sumerian city states rose to power during the prehistorical Ubaid and Uruk periods. Sumerian history reaches back to the 29th century BC and before, but the historical record remains obscure until the Early Dynastic III period, ca. the 26th century BC, when a now deciphered syllabary writing system was developed, which has allowed archaeologists to read contemporary records and inscriptions. Classical Sumer ends with the rise of the Akkadian Empire in the 23rd century. Following the Gutian period, there is a brief " Sumerian renaissance" in the 21st century, cut short in the 20th century BC by Amorite invasions. The Amorite "dynasty of Isin" persisted until ca. 1700 BC, when Mesopotamia was united under Babylonian rule.

- Ubaid period: 5300 – 4100 BC (Pottery Neolithic to Chalcolithic)
- Uruk period: 4100 – 2900 BC (Late Chalcolithic to Early Bronze Age I)
  - Uruk XIV-V: 4100 – 3300 BC
  - Uruk IV period: 3300 – 3000 BC
- Jemdet Nasr period (Uruk III): 3000 – 2900 BC
- Early Dynastic period (Early Bronze Age II-IV)
  - Early Dynastic I period: 2900 – 2800 BC
  - Early Dynastic II period: 2800 – 2600 BC (Gilgamesh)
  - Early Dynastic IIIa period: 2600 – 2500 BC
  - Early Dynastic IIIb period: ca. 2500 – 2334 BC
- Akkadian Empire period: ca. 2334 – 2218 BC (Sargon)
- Gutian period: ca. 2218 – 2047 BC (Early Bronze Age IV)
- Ur III period: ca. 2047 – 1940 BC

Ubaid period

The Ubaid period is marked by a distinctive style of fine quality painted pottery which spread throughout Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf. During this time, the first settlement in southern Mesopotamia was established at Eridu, ca. 5300 BC, by farmers who brought with them the Samarran culture from northern Mesopotamia. It is not known whether or not these were the actual Sumerians who are identified with the later Uruk culture. Eridu remained an important religious centre when it was gradually surpassed in size by the nearby city of Uruk.

Uruk period

The archaeological transition from the Ubaid period to the Uruk period is marked by a gradual shift from painted pottery domestically produced on a slow wheel, to a great variety of unpainted pottery mass-produced by specialists on fast wheels.

By the time of the Uruk period (ca. 4100 – 2900 BC calibrated), the volume of trade goods transported along the canals and rivers of southern Mesopotamia facilitated the rise of many large stratified, temple-centered cities (with populations of over 10,000 people) where centralized administrations employed

specialized workers. It is fairly certain that it was during the Uruk period that Sumerian cities began to make use of slave labor captured from the hill country, and there is ample evidence for captured slaves as workers in the earliest texts. Artifacts, and even colonies of this Uruk civilization have been found over a wide area - from the Taurus Mountains in Turkey, to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, and as far east as Central Iran.

The Uruk period civilization, exported by Sumerian traders and colonists (like that found at Tell Brak), had an effect on all surrounding peoples, who gradually evolved their own comparable, competing economies and cultures. The cities of Sumer could not maintain remote, long-distance colonies by military force.

Sumerian cities during the Uruk period were probably theocratic and were most likely headed by a priest-king (ensi), assisted by a council of elders, including both men and women. It is quite possible that the later Sumerian pantheon was modelled upon this political structure.

The ancient Sumerian king list includes the early dynasties of several prominent cities from this period. The first set of names on the list is of kings said to have reigned before a major flood occurred. These early names may be fictional, and include some legendary and mythological figures, such as Alulim and Dumizid.

The end of the Uruk period coincided with the Piora oscillation, a dry period from c. 3200 – 2900 BC that marked the end of a long wetter, warmer climate period from about 9,000 to 5,000 years ago, called the Holocene climatic optimum.

Notable Sumerians

History of Sumer • Mythology • King list

Pre-dynastic kings:	Alulim • Dumuzid, the Shepherd • En-men-dur-ana
1st Dynasty of Kish:	Etana • En-me-barage-si • Aga of Kish
1st Dynasty of Uruk:	Enmerkar • Lugalbanda • Gilgamesh
1st Dynasty of Ur:	Meskalamdug • Mesh-Ane-pada • Puabi • Mesilim of Kish
2nd Dynasty of Uruk:	En-shag-kush-ana
1st Dynasty of Lagash:	Ur-Nanshe • Eannatum • Entemena • Urukagina
Dynasty of Adab:	Lugal-Ane-mundu
3rd Dynasty of Kish:	Kug-Bau
3rd Dynasty of Uruk:	Lugal-zage-si
Dynasty of Akkad:	Sargon • En-hedu-ana • Man-ishtishu • Naram-Suen of Akkad • Shar-kali-sharri • Dudu of Akkad • Shu-Durul
2nd Dynasty of Lagash:	Puzer-Mama • Gudea
5th Dynasty of Uruk:	Utu-hengal
3rd dynasty of Ur:	Ur-Namma • Shulgi • Amar-Suena • Shu-Suen • Ibbi-Suen

Early Dynastic Period

The Dynastic period begins ca. 2900 BC and includes such legendary figures as Enmerkar and Gilgamesh—who are supposed to have reigned shortly before the historic record opens ca. 2700 BC, when the now decipherable syllabic writing started to develop from the early pictograms. The centre of Sumerian culture remained in southern Mesopotamia, even though rulers soon began expanding into neighboring areas, and neighboring Semitic groups adopted much of Sumerian culture for their own.

The earliest Dynastic king on the Sumerian king list whose name is known from any other legendary source is Etana, 13th king of the first Dynasty of Kish. The earliest king authenticated through archaeological evidence is Enmebaragesi of Kish (ca. 26th century BC), whose name is also mentioned in the Gilgamesh epic—leading to the suggestion that Gilgamesh himself might have been a historical king of Uruk.

1st Dynasty of Lagash

Fragment of Eannatum's Stele of the Vultures

ca. 2500 – 2270 BC

The dynasty of Lagash, though omitted from the king list, is well attested through several important monuments and many archaeological finds.

Although short-lived, one of the first empires known to history was that of Eannatum of Lagash, who annexed practically all of Sumer, including Kish, Uruk, Ur, and Larsa, and reduced to tribute the city-state of Umma, arch-rival of Lagash. In addition, his realm extended to parts of Elam and along the Persian Gulf. He seems to have used terror as a matter of policy—his stele of the vultures has been found, showing violent treatment of enemies. His empire collapsed shortly after his death.

Later, Lugal-Zage-Si, the priest-king of Umma, overthrew the primacy of the Lagash dynasty in the area, then conquered Uruk, making it his capital, and claimed an empire extending from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean. He was the last ethnically Sumerian king before the arrival of the Semitic king, Sargon of Akkad.

Akkadian Empire

ca. 2270 – 2083 BC (short chronology)

The Semitic Akkadian language is first attested in proper names of the kings of Kish ca. 2800 BC, preserved in later king lists. There are texts written entirely in Old Akkadian dating from ca. 2500 BC. Use of Old Akkadian was at its peak during the rule of Sargon the Great (ca. 2270 – 2215 BC), but even then most administrative tablets continued to be written in Sumerian, the language used by the scribes. Gelb and Westenholz differentiate three stages of Old Akkadian: that of the pre-Sargonic era, that of the Akkadian empire, and that of the " Neo-Sumerian Renaissance" that followed it. Speakers of Akkadian and Sumerian coexisted for about one thousand years, until ca. 1800 BC, when Sumerian ceased to be spoken. Thorkild Jacobsen has argued that there is little break in historical continuity between the pre- and post-Sargon periods, and that too much emphasis has been placed on the perception of a "Semitic vs. Sumerian" conflict. However, it is certain that Akkadian was also briefly imposed on neighboring parts of Elam that were conquered by Sargon.

Gutian period

ca. 2083 – 2050 BC (short chronology)

2nd Dynasty of Lagash

ca. 2093 – 2046 BC (short chronology)


Gudea of Lagash

Following the downfall of the Akkadian Empire at the hands of Gutians, another native Sumerian ruler, Gudea of Lagash, rose to local prominence and continued the practices of the Sargonid kings' claims to divinity. Like the previous Lagash dynasty, Gudea and his descendents also promoted artistic development and left a large number of archaeological artifacts.

Sumerian renaissance


Ziggurat at Ur

ca. 2047 – 1940 BC (short chronology)

Later, the 3rd dynasty of Ur under Ur-Nammu and Shulgi, whose power extended as far as northern Mesopotamia, was the last great "Sumerian renaissance", but already the region was becoming more Semitic than Sumerian, with the influx of waves of Martu (Amorites) who were later to found the Babylonian Empire. The Sumerian language, however, remained a sacerdotal language taught in schools, in the same way that Latin was used in the Medieval period, for as long as cuneiform was utilised.

Decline

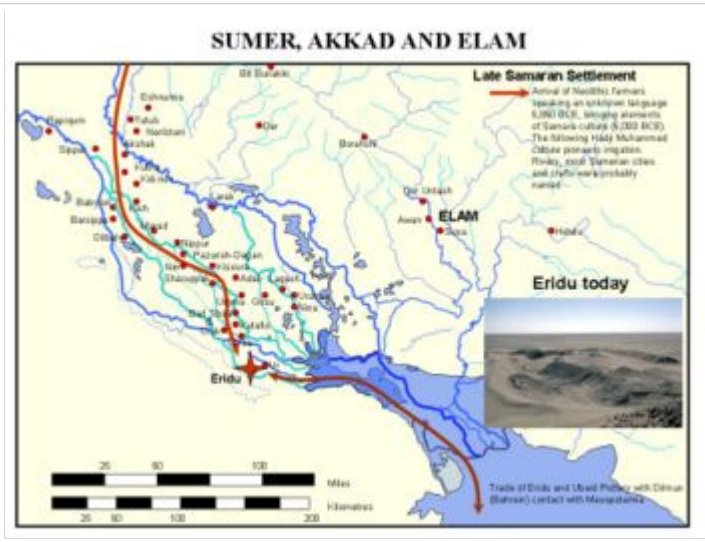
This period is generally taken to coincide with a major shift in population from southern Iraq toward the north. Ecologically, the agricultural productivity of the Sumerian lands was being compromised as a result of rising salinity. Soil salinity in this region had been long recognised as a major problem. Poorly drained irrigated soils, in an arid climate with high levels of evaporation, led to the buildup of dissalved salts in the soil, eventually reducing agricultural yields severely. During the Akkadian and Ur III phases, there was a shift from the cultivation of wheat to the more salt-tolerant barley, but this was insufficient, and during the period from 2100 BC to 1700 BC, it is estimated that the population in this area declined by nearly 3/5ths. This greatly weakened the balance of power within the region, weakening the areas where Sumerian was spoken, and comparatively strengthening those where Akkadian was the major language. Henceforth Sumerian would remain only a literary and liturgical language, similar to the position occupied by Latin in medieval Europe.

Following an Elamite invasion and sack of Ur during the rule of Ibbi-Sin (ca. 1940 BC), Sumer came under Amorite rule (taken to introduce the Middle Bronze Age). The independent Amorite states of the 20th to 18th centuries are summarized as the " Dynasty of Isin" in the Sumerian king list, ending with the rise of Babylonia under Hammurabi ca. 1700 BC.

Population

The Sumerians were a non-Semitic people and were at one time believed to have been invaders, as a number of linguists believed they could detect a substrate language beneath Sumerian. However, the archaeological record shows clear uninterrupted cultural continuity from the time of the Early Ubaid period (5300 – 4700 BC C-14) settlements in southern Mesopotamia. The Sumerian people who settled here farmed the lands in this region that were made fertile by silt deposited by the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers.

Despite the lack of corroborating written records, it is generally agreed that Sumerian speakers were farmers who moved down from the north, after perfecting irrigation agriculture there. The Ubaid pottery of southern Mesopotamia has been connected via *Choga Mami Transitional* ware to the pottery of the Samarra period culture (c. 5700 – 4900 BC C-14) in the north, who were the first to practice a primitive form of irrigation agriculture along the middle Tigris River and its tributaries. The connection is most clearly seen at Tell Awayli (*Oueilli*, *Oueili*) near Larsa, excavated by the French in the 1980s, where 8 levels yielded pre-Ubaid pottery resembling Samarran ware. Farming peoples spread down into southern Mesopotamia because they had developed a temple-centered social organization for mobilizing labor and technology for water control, enabling them to survive and prosper in a difficult environment.



First farmers from Samarra arrive in Sumer, and build shrine and settlement at Eridu

Alternatively, the Sumerians may have been an indigenous culture of hunter-fishers who lived in the reedy marshlands at the mouth of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, as the Marsh Arabs do today. This culture contributed to a cultural fusion with northern agriculturists, creating Sumerian language and civilisation.

Culture

Sumerian culture may be traced to two main centers, Eridu in the south and Nippur in the north may be regarded as a contrasting poles of Sumerian religion.

The deity Enlil, around whose sanctuary Nippur had grown up, was considered lord of the ghost-land, and his gifts to mankind were said to be the spells and incantations that the spirits of good or evil were compelled to obey. The world he governed was a mountain (E-kur from E=house and Kur=Mountain); the creatures that he had made lived underground.

Eridu, on the other hand, was the home of the culture god Enki (absorbed into Babylonian mythology as the god Ea), the god of beneficence, ruler of the freshwater depths beneath the earth (the Abzu from Ab=water and Zu=far), a healer and friend to humanity who was thought to have given us the arts and sciences, the industries and manners of civilization; the first law-book was considered his creation. Eridu had once been a seaport, and it was doubtless its foreign trade and intercourse with other lands that influenced the development of its culture. Its cosmology was the result of its geographical position: the earth, it was believed, had grown out of the waters of the deep, like the ever widening coast at the mouth of the Euphrates. Long before history is recorded, however, the cultures of Eridu and Nippur had coalesced. While Babylon seems to have been a colony of Eridu, Eridu's immediate neighbour, Ur, may have been a colony of Nippur, since its moon god was said to be the son of Enlil of Nippur. However, in the admixture of the two cultures, the influence of Eridu was

 predominant.

Historian Alan Marcus has been quoted as saying that "Sumerians held a rather dour perspective on life." One Sumerian wrote: "Tears, lament, anguish, and depression are within me. Suffering overwhelms me. Evil fate holds me and carries off my life. Malignant sickness bathes me." Another wrote, "Why am I counted among the ignorant? Food is all about, yet my food is hunger. On the day shares were allotted, my allotted share was suffering."

There is much evidence that the Sumerians loved music. It seemed to be an important part of religious and civic life in Sumer. Lyres were popular in Sumer; see Sumerian music.

According to inscriptions describing the reforms of king Urukagina of Lagash (ca. 2300 BC), he is said to have abolished the former custom of polyandry in his country, on pain of the woman taking multiple husbands being stoned with rocks upon which her crime is written.

Though women were protected by late Sumerian law and were able to achieve a higher status in Sumer than in other contemporary civilizations, the culture was male-dominated. The Code of Ur-Nammu, the oldest such codification yet discovered, dating to the Ur-III "Sumerian Renaissance", reveals a glimpse at societal structure in late Sumerian law. Beneath the *lu-gal* ("great man" or king), all members of society belonged to one of two basic strata: The "*lu*" or free person, and the slave (male, *arad*; female *geme*). The son of a *lu* was called a *dumu-nita* until he married. A woman (*munus*) went from being a daughter (*dumu-mi*), to a wife (*dam*), then if she outlived her husband, a widow (*numasu*) who could remarry.

Language and writing

The most important archaeological discoveries in Sumer are a large number of tablets written in Sumerian. Sumerian pre- cuneiform script has been discovered on tablets dating to around 3500 BC.

The Sumerian language is generally regarded as a language isolate in linguistics because it belongs to no known language family; Akkadian belongs to the Afro-Asiatic languages. There have been many failed attempts to connect Sumerian to other language groups. It is an agglutinative language; in other words, morphemes ("units of meaning") are added together to create words.

Sumerians invented picture- hieroglyphs that developed into later cuneiform, and their language vies with Ancient Egyptian for credit as the oldest known written human language. An extremely large body of hundreds of thousands of texts in the Sumerian language has survived, the great majority of these on clay tablets. Known Sumerian texts include personal and business letters and transactions, receipts, lexical lists, laws, hymns and prayers, magical incantations, and scientific texts including mathematics, astronomy, and medicine. Monumental inscriptions and texts on different objects like statues or bricks are also very common. Many texts survive in multiple copies because they were repeatedly transcribed by scribes-in-training. Sumerian continued to be the language of religion and law in Mesopotamia long after Semitic speakers had become the ruling race.

Understanding Sumerian texts today can be problematic even for experts. Most difficult are the earliest texts, which in many cases don't give the full grammatical structure of the language.

Religion

Like other cities of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean, Sumer was a polytheistic, or henotheistic, society. Their lives were spent serving the gods in the form of man-made statues. There was no organized set of gods; each city-state had its own patrons, temples, and priest-kings. The Sumerians were probably the first to write down their beliefs, which were the inspiration for much of later Mesopotamian mythology, religion, and astrology.

The Sumerians worshipped An as the full time god, equivalent to "heaven"—indeed, the word "an" in Sumerian means "sky." His consort Ki, means "Earth". Collectively the gods were known as Anunna ((d)an-unna = "offspring of the lord"). An's closest cohorts were Enki in the south at the E'abzu temple in Eridu, Enlil in the north at the E'kur temple of Nippur, and Inanna, the deification of Venus, the morning (eastern) and evening (western) star, at the E'anna temple (shared with An) at Uruk. The sun-god Utu was worshipped at Sippar, the moon god Nanna, was worshipped at Ur. These deities were probably the original matrix; there were hundreds of minor deities. The Sumerian gods (Sumerian *dingir*, plural *dingir-dingir* or *dingir-re-ne*) thus had associations with different cities, and their religious importance often waxed and waned with those cities' political power. The gods were said to have created human beings from clay for the purpose of serving them. If the temples/gods ruled each city it was for their mutual survival and benefit—the temples organized the mass labor projects needed for irrigation agriculture. Citizens had a labor duty to the temple which they were allowed to avoid by a payment of silver only towards the end of the third millennium. The temple-centered farming communities of Sumer had a social stability that enabled them to survive for four millennia.

Sumerians believed that the universe consisted of a flat disk enclosed by a tin dome. The Sumerian afterlife involved a descent into a gloomy netherworld to spend eternity in a wretched existence as a Gidim (ghost).

Ziggurats (Sumerian temples) consisted of a forecourt, with a central pond for purification. The temple itself had a central nave with aisles along either side. Flanking the aisles would be rooms for the priests. At one end would stand the podium and a mudbrick table for animal and vegetable sacrifices. Granaries and storehouses were usually located near the temples. After a time the Sumerians began to place the temples on top of multi-layered square constructions built as a series of rising terraces, giving rise to the later Ziggurat style.

Agriculture and hunting

The Sumerians adopted the agricultural mode of life which had been introduced into Lower Mesopotamia and practiced the same irrigation techniques as those used in Egypt. Adams says that irrigation development was associated with urbanization, and that 89% of the population lived in the cities .

They grew barley, chickpeas, lentils, wheat, dates, onions, garlic, lettuce, leeks and mustard. They also raised cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs. They used oxen as their primary beasts of burden and donkeys or equids as their primary transport animal. Sumerians caught many fish and hunted fowl and gazelle.

Sumerian agriculture depended heavily on irrigation. The irrigation was accomplished by the use of shadufs, canals, channels, dykes, weirs, and reservoirs. The frequent violent floods of the Tigris, and less so, of the Euphrates, meant that canals required frequent repair and continual removal of silt, and survey markers and boundary stones continually replaced. The government required individuals to work on the canals in a corvee, although the rich were able to exempt themselves.

After the flood season and after the Spring Equinox and the Akitu or New Year Festival, using the canals, farmers would flood their fields and then drain the water. Next they let oxen stomp the ground and kill weeds. They then dragged the fields with pickaxes. After drying, they plowed, harrowed, and raked the ground three times, and pulverized it with a mattock, before planting seed. Unfortunately the high evaporation rate resulted in a gradual increase in the salinity of the fields. By the Ur III period, farmers had switched from wheat to the more salt-tolerant barley as their principal crop.

Sumerians harvested during the dry fall season in three-person teams consisting of a reaper, a binder, and a sheaf arranger. The farmers would use threshing wagons to separate the cereal heads from the stalks and then use threshing sleds to disengage the grain. They then winnowed the grain/chaff mixture.

Architecture

The Tigris-Euphrates plain lacked minerals and trees. Sumerian structures were made of plano-convex mudbrick, not fixed with mortar or cement. Mud-brick buildings eventually deteriorate, so they were periodically destroyed, leveled, and rebuilt on the same spot. This constant rebuilding gradually raised the level of cities, which thus came to be elevated above the surrounding plain. The resultant hills, known as tells, are found throughout the ancient Near East.

The most impressive and famous of Sumerian buildings are the ziggurats, large layered platforms which supported temples. Some scholars have theorized that these structures might have been the basis of the Tower of Babel described in Genesis. Sumerian cylinder seals also depict houses built from reeds not unlike those built by the Marsh Arabs of Southern Iraq until as recently as 400 AD. The Sumerians also developed the arch, which enabled them to develop a strong type of roof called a dome. They built this by constructing several arches.

Sumerian temples and palaces made use of more advanced materials and techniques, such as buttresses, recesses, half columns, and clay nails.

Economy and trade

Discoveries of obsidian from far-away locations in Anatolia and lapis lazuli from northeastern Afghanistan, beads from Dilmun (modern Bahrain), and several seals inscribed with the Indus Valley script suggest a remarkably wide-ranging network of ancient trade centered around the Persian Gulf.

The Epic of Gilgamesh refers to trade with far lands for goods such as wood that were scarce in Mesopotamia. In particular, cedar from Lebanon was prized.

The Sumerians used slaves, although they were not a major part of the economy. Slave women worked as weavers, pressers, millers, and porters.

Sumerian potters decorated pots with cedar oil paints. The potters used a bow drill to produce the fire needed for baking the pottery. Sumerian masons and jewelers knew and made use of alabaster (calcite), ivory, gold, silver, carnelian and lapis lazuli.

Military

The almost constant wars among the Sumerian city-states for 2000 years helped to develop the military technology and techniques of Sumer to a high level. The first war recorded was between Lagash and Umma in ca. 2525 BC on a stele called the *Stele of Vultures*. It shows the king of Lagash leading a Sumerian army consisting mostly of infantry. The infantrymen carried spears, wore copper helmets and carried leather or wicker shields. The spearmen are shown arranged in what resembles the phalanx formation, which requires training and discipline; this implies that the Sumerians may have made use of professional soldiers.

Early chariots on the Standard of Ur, ca. 2600 BC.

Battle formations on a fragment of the Stele of Vultures.

The Sumerian military used carts harnessed to onagers. These early chariots functioned less effectively in combat than did later designs, and some have suggested that these chariots served primarily as transports, though the crew carried battle-axes and lances. The Sumerian chariot comprised a four or two-wheeled device manned by a crew of two and harnessed to four onagers. The cart was composed of a woven basket and the wheels had a solid three-piece design.

Sumerian cities were surrounded by defensive walls. The Sumerians engaged in siege warfare between their cities, but the mudbrick walls failed to deter some foes.

Technology

Examples of Sumerian technology include: the wheel, cuneiform, arithmetic and geometry, irrigation systems, Sumerian boats, lunisolar calendar, bronze, leather, saws, chisels, hammers, Brace (tool)s, bits, nails, pins, rings, hoes, axes, knives, lancepoints, arrowheads, swords, glue, daggers, waterskins, bags, harnesses, armor, quivers, war chariots, scabbards, boots, sandals and harpoons.

The Sumerians had three main types of boats:

- clinker-built sailboats stitched together with hair, featuring bitumen waterproofing
- skin boats comprising of animal skins and reeds
- wooden-oared ships, sometimes pulled upstream by people and animals walking along the nearby banks

Legacy

Most authorities credit the Sumerians with the invention of the wheel, initially in the form of the potter's wheel. The new concept quickly led to wheeled vehicles and mill wheels. The Sumerians' cuneiform writing system is the oldest for which there is evidence (excluding proto-writing such as the Vinča signs and the even older Jiahu signs). The Sumerians were among the first astronomers, mapping the stars into sets of constellations, many of which survived in the zodiac and were also recognized by the ancient Greeks. The five planets that are visible to the naked eye have Sumerian names.

They invented and developed arithmetic using several different number systems including a Mixed radix system with an alternating base 10 and base 6. This sexagesimal system became the standard number system in Sumer and Babylonia. They may have invented military formations and introduced the basic divisions between infantry, cavalry and archers. They developed the first known codified legal and administrative systems, complete with courts, jails, and government records. The first true city states arose in Sumer, roughly contemporaneously with similar entities in what is now Syria and Israel. Several centuries after the invention of cuneiform, the use of writing expanded beyond debt/payment certificates and inventory lists to be applied for the first time, about 2600 BC, to messages and mail delivery, history, legend, mathematics, astronomical records and other pursuits. Conjointly with the spread of writing, the first formal schools were established, usually under the auspices of a city-state's primary temple.

Finally, the Sumerians ushered in the age of intensive agriculture and irrigation. Emmer wheat, barley, sheep (starting as moufflon) and cattle (starting as aurochs) were foremost among the species cultivated and raised for the first time on a grand scale.

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Sun Tzu

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology

A classical ink portrait of Sun Tzu.

Sun Tzu (Chinese: 孫 子; pinyin: **Sūn Zǐ**) ("Master Sun") is an honorific title bestowed upon **Sūn Wǔ** (孫 武; c. 544—496 BC), the author of *The Art of War*, an immensely influential ancient Chinese book on military strategy. He is also one of the earliest realists in international relations theory.

In the author's name, Sūn Wǔ, the character *wu*, meaning "military", is the same as the character in *wu shu*, or martial art. Sun Wu also has a courtesy name, **Chang Qing** (長 卿; Cháng Qīng).

Biography

Historians debate whether or not Sun Tzu was a real historical figure. In some histories, such as the biography written in the 2nd century BC by the historian Sima Qian, Sun Tzu is born in the state of Ch'i, during the Spring and Autumn Period of China (722–481 BC), and becomes a heroic general for the King of Wu. His victories inspire him to write the Art of War. Other historians place the writing of the Art of War to the Age of Warring States (403–221 BC), based on its description of warfare. It was a time of constant war between seven nations (Chao, Ch'i, Ch'in, Ch'u, Han, Wei and Yen) seeking to control all of China.

This article contains Chinese text.
Without proper rendering support, you may see question marks, boxes, or other symbols instead of Chinese characters.

According to Sima Qian, the king of Wu tested Sun Tzu's skill, commanding him to train a harem of three hundred sixty concubines. Sun Tzu divided them into two companies, appointing the two concubines most favored by the king as the company commanders. Sun Tzu received giggles when he first commanded the companies, telling them in response that the general is at fault if his soldiers do not understand. He taught the maneuver to them again, and again they laughed and tittered. Sun Tzu ordered the execution of the two favored concubines, to the king's vigorous protest. He explained that if his soldiers understand but do not obey, it is the fault of the officers. Sun Tzu also said once a general receives his orders, it is his duty to carry them out perfectly, even if the king protests. New officers were named and the two companies performed their maneuvers flawlessly thereafter. According to this biography, Sun Tzu further proved his theories on the battlefield with a successful military career and wrote the Art of War based on his tested expertise. His grandson, Sun Bin, also became a famous scholar of the military arts.

The Art of War

Pictured here is a bamboo version of *The Art of War*.

The Art of War is said to have been penned by Sun Tzu and was originally called the *Sun Tzu Ping Fa* (Pinyin: *Sunzi Bingfa*), or simply the *Sun Tzu*. It presents a complete philosophy for managing conflicts and winning clear victories. Contrary to popular perceptions, it contains not only the writing of the original author, but also commentary and clarifications from later military philosophers, such as Li Ch'uan and Tu Mu. It is widely accepted as a masterpiece on strategy and has been referenced by generals and theorists throughout history.

The book was not only popular among military theorists, but also among political leaders and business management. The book addresses strategy in a broad fashion, despite the title and popular perceptions, touching upon statecraft and general overarching plans. Theories of battle are essential in times of war, but the text also advocates diplomacy and cultivating relationships with other nations as essential to the health of the state.

Of the texts written before the unification of China, six major works survived, including Sun Tzu's classic. During the Sung Dynasty, these six works were combined with a T'ang Dynasty text into the collected called the Seven Military Classics. As part of that compilation, the *Art of War* formed the foundations of orthodox military theory in China and was required reading to pass the tests needed for imperial appointment to military positions.

Related text

During the early 1970s, scholars uncovered a large collection of ancient texts written in amazingly preserved bamboo books. Among them was the Art of War and Sun Bin's *Military Methods*. Although *Military Methods* was noted by Han Dynasty bibliographies as extant and written by a descendent of Sun Tzu, it had since been lost. The finding of Sun Bin's work was considered an extremely important find, due to a variety of factors including Sun Bin's relation to Sun Tzu and the work's illustration of military thought in late Chinese antiquity. The discovery as a whole expanded the total known Chinese military works by hundreds, though Sun Bin's text is the only known additional surviving text from the ancient period.

Influence and importance

Sun Tzu's *Art of War* has been deeply influential. It is said the first emperor of a unified China, Qin Shihuang, thought the book invaluable in ending the Age of Warring States. Japan was introduced to Sun Tzu's work c. AD 760, quickly becoming popular among her generals. It is considered an important influence on the unification of Japan. Mastery of its teachings was considered a mark of respect among the samurai and several influential samurai both exhorted and exemplified its teachings, such as Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu.

In recent times, Napoleon is said to have studied Sun Tzu's military writings and used them to successfully wage war against the rest of Europe. Napoleon's disregard for some of the central principles, such as attentiveness to temporal conditions, is largely credited for his eventual defeat in Russia. Admiral Togo, who led Japan's forces to victory against Russia in the Russo-Japanese War, was famous disciple of the *Art of War*'s teachings.

Mao Zedong partially credited his defeat of Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists in 1949 to the *Art of War*. It strongly influenced Mao's writings about guerrilla

warfare, which further influenced communist insurgencies throughout the world. A further example of its explicit modern influence is its use by General Norman Schwartzkopf during Desert Storm, where the general put to practice Sun Tzu's principles of deception, speed, and attacking the enemy's weakness.

A modern interpretation of Sun Tzu and his importance throughout Chinese history is critical in understanding China's push to become a superpower in the 21st century. Hundreds of modern Chinese scholars explicitly rely on historical strategic lessons and the *Art of War* in developing their theories. They perceive a direct relationship between their modern struggles and those of China in Sun Tzu's time. There is a great perceived value in the teachings of Sun Tzu, and other traditional Chinese writers, and they are used regularly in developing the strategies of the Chinese state and its leaders.