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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The ancient world, or rather ancient *history*, is understood by scholars to encompass events from the dawn of the written record, circa 3,600 BCE, to the time of the collapse, around the middle of the first millennium CE, of several major empires including the Western Roman Empire (476), the Han Dynasty of China (220), and the Gupta Empire of India (550). The span of time *before* this roughly 4,000-year-long period the prehistoric era has no written records associated with it and therefore has fallen to the archaeologists to decipher using physical evidence. Both archaeology and document-oriented historical research, of course, complement each other in the study of much of ancient history. In the present work, the central focus tends to be on the historical era, but information from prehistory is provided to fill out the picture of the ancient world in its entirety. Indeed, in order to round out the picture at the *opposite* end of the timeline, that is, at the “near” end, we have also included here information beyond the aforementioned c. 500 CE mark to describe events to about 700 CE. This allows us to trace out in a more coherent fashion topics that warrant it. In a few cases, moreover, coverage has been extended beyond this date. For the New World, or Americas, for example, we have chosen to bring coverage up to the time of European contact in the late fifteenth/early sixteenth centuries. This only seems right for a work on ancient (in this case, pre-Columbian) peoples and cultures.

Consisting of short encyclopedia entries along with both longer topical “Overviews” that comprise biographical “Life as” essays depicting ancient lives, this work provides a unique opportunity for students and educators to explore the ancient world in all its breadth and depth. We have organized the material into eleven core regional sections: Africa, the Americas, Central Asia, Egypt, Europe, the Far East, Greece, India, the Near East, Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific), Rome. Each section features various “Overviews” that provide extensive information on the people, social organ-

ization, government, foodways, economic activities, art & architecture, religion & mythology, and so on, for that civilization or region. Similarly, the biographical essays provide individual pictures of what it might have been like to be a commoner, a tradesman, a soldier, a woman, an elite, and so on, in a given society. These latter essays help put flesh and spirit on the bone of abstract description and serve to bring light not only to what people did but how and why they did it. Our hope is that they will make learning about the ancient world all the more immediate for students. Behind the “Overviews” are encyclopedia entries that offer specific information on particular topics (people, places, events, works, traditions, etc.) pertaining to each culture or region.

The scope of the ancient world, as a whole, is staggering. It is not possible in this Introduction, therefore, to summarize all of the various points of interest. Instead, we introduce here a few notable early civilizations as a way into the rest of the work.

Mesopotamia

Most scholars agree that the first civilization for which we have adequate written and non-written records is that of the Sumerians of Mesopotamia. Between about 3,500 and 3,000 BCE, near the mouths of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, there arose several large villages that grew into walled cities. The main building in each case was a temple of mud brick, standing high above the flat landscape. Eventually, royal palaces and other sometimes elaborate structures were erected. In addition, writing developed, large-scale irrigation emerged, metallurgy was refined, sailing vessels and wheeled vehicles were constructed, the measurement of time and space were advanced, and many other new technologies appeared among the Sumerians during this 500-year period.

Debate continues as to why, exactly, such an array of achievements would have arisen in this place

at that time, the records being rather too scant to allow a definitive answer. What can be said is that, as Mesopotamian cities arose, so too did marked social differentiation between those who worked the fields or performed other daily tasks and those who claimed possession of what the commoners produced and occupied themselves with religious rituals, the cultivation of knowledge, military planning, and other specialized activities. Thus was born, particularly under Sargon of Akkad (r. 2340-2284 BCE), a hierarchical system that saw captured slaves and manual workers at the bottom and elites and royals at the top, with a variety of intermediate positions in between. Mesopotamian history thereafter consists of successive empires, differing ethnically and politically but developing along the lines set by the Sumerian-Akkadian system. Unlike in Egypt, however, the whole of Mesopotamia was rarely ruled by a single king; and neither did any one empire survive long within fixed boundaries. Throughout the era, and despite political changes, an active merchant class existed that made use of cuneiform writing on clay tablets. Works on astronomy, mathematics, and history also were produced. The greatest literary work from the region is undoubtedly the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, a 2100-BCE work about a Sumerian hero-king. Another notable work, created about 1750 BCE, is the Code of Hammurabi, a set of laws from Babylon. After numerous successive empires in the region, from the Akkadian to the Assyrian to the Babylonian, the Bronze Age civilizations of Mesopotamia began to give way to outside forces. The sack of Babylon by the Hittites sometime around 1550 BCE, and the subsequent fall of the Kassite Dynasty (or Babylonian Dynasty III) around 1200 BCE, are counted by many as the start of the decline of classical Mesopotamian civilization. The last notable king of Babylon was Nebuchadnezzar (r. 605-562 BCE), who is remembered for destroying the city of Jerusalem in 586 BCE and bringing Jewish captives back to Babylon. The Babylonian Empire was brought down by Persia in 538 BCE.

Egypt

A civilization similar to the Sumerian in structure, but completely different in content and style, arose in the Nile Valley beginning around 3150 BCE. There is unmistakable evidence of trade connections between Sumer and Egypt, and some cultural borrowing did occur, but whatever was borrowed by the Egyptians was significantly changed or adapted. For example, for a while the Egyptians employed the Sumerian technique of building large structures with bricks. Soon, however, they shifted to large stone blocks and also changed their architectural styles and methods. Pyramids became paramount, monuments to the pharaohs (deified kings). As with Mesopotamia, river floodplains were exploited for their natural fertility, even as large irrigation works enabled the Egyptians to expand their farmlands. The organized labor needed to build and maintain such works led, as in the case of Sumer, to centralization of control and to social hierarchy.

The Egyptians believed in many gods. Some of these gods, it was thought, had been kings centuries before, including Osiris with his consort Isis. The sun god, Amon, was a central god. Another was Anubis, the head of the Kingdom of the Dead. Each pharaoh, the Egyptians believed, was the offspring of the sun god hence the fear and obedience present among the people and the erection of massive pyramids to house the dead pharaohs. Other gods were represented in animal form and were sacred, as in the case of cats, which were preserved as mummies along with the pharaoh and his entourage.

The classic pattern of Egyptian civilization was established during the period known as the Old Kingdom (2664-2180 BCE). It changed comparatively little over the next two thousand years, albeit experiencing ebbs and flows. Hieroglyphic writing was applied to objects, structures, and papyrus. The *Book of the Dead*, developed between 1700 and 1600 BCE and functioning as a funerary resource, is perhaps Egypt's main claim to literary

fame. At the same time, a strong warrior class was maintained, beholden to the pharaoh. Although portions of Egypt occasionally fell to foreign conquerors, native dynasties persisted as political institutions until the Persian conquest of Cambyses II (r. 529-522 BCE). While holding the title of Pharaoh, Cambyses ruled from his home in Persia. Egypt remained under Persian rule until the arrival of the Macedonian conqueror Alexander the Great in 332 BCE.

There is evidence to support the notion that Egyptian culture played a role in launching the Minoans of Crete (3650-1450 BCE) toward their notable artistic achievements, just as there is evidence to suggest that the Minoans, in turn, influenced Old Kingdom Egypt, particularly in metallurgy. That evidence, however, is thin. Cretan kings may also once have ruled over early Greek cities, but, there too, one can only speculate. In Subsaharan Africa, meanwhile, it is possible that the traditional conceptions of kingship were borrowed from the Kushites of Upper Egypt/Sudan (1070 BCE-350 CE).

India

Evidence indicates that the peoples of the Indus Valley likely traded with the Sumerians at a time when the first modest cities in South Asia were taking shape in the third millennium BCE. Also called Harappans (after the site of the same name in the Punjab region), the early Indus peoples practiced urban planning, built water supply and drainage systems, stocked grain, engaged in metallurgy and other manufactures, employed a writing system (which has yet to be deciphered), and had a system of weights and measures. The political system is not well understood, but there is little evidence for the existence of classes of priests or warriors. Rather, those divisions would arrive later with the Indo-Aryan invasion of around 1700 BCE and subsequent build-up of ancient Indian civilization. During the Vedic Period (1500-500 BCE), Indo-Aryan influence spread to other parts of the subcontinent, along with a variety of Vedic religious traditions. These would eventually be synthesized into a

broad “way of life” or religious philosophy known as Hinduism.

Spirituality and daily living have never been rigorously separated in Indian cultural tradition. According to the Rig Veda, compiled before 1,000 BCE, the gods enforce a system of order (*rita*) on earth and in the heavens. The demons, meanwhile, live in darkness and chaos beneath the earth and seek to undermine *rita* and oppose the will of the gods. Both gods and demons are anthropomorphic figures and personifications of forces and phenomena in the world. Thus, in later literary works in ancient India, when the subject is not a direct confrontation between gods and demons, it is human characters, historic or legendary, engaging in analogous battles. The Upanishads, a series of texts written between 500 BCE and 500 CE, were the first works to develop the notion of *karma*, or the doctrine of rebirth and retribution for one's deeds in succeeding existences. In the Bhagavad Gita (first or second century CE), an extended dialogue takes place between the warrior Prince Arjuna and the charioteer Krishna, an avatar of the deity Vishnu. The Bhagavad Gita explores the nature of god and reality and offers various methods for transcending the limitations of the physical world. At the same time, hierarchy was brought to a high art by the Indians in the form the caste system, an elaborate arrangement of social statuses based on (inherited) occupation and degree of religious “pollution.”

India went on to be ruled, in part or in whole, by a variety of dynastic kingdoms and empires over the centuries, which the reader may find described in the body of the present work. Northern India was also the home of one Gautama Buddha (563-480 BCE), who taught a “middle way” between worldly indulgence and religious asceticism and saw the world as a cycle of rebirth and suffering aimed at achieving enlightenment. Buddhist philosophy gained adherents in India, notably under King Asoka (r. 269-232 BCE), but its greatest impact was in China, Tibet, and Southeast Asia in the centuries following its emergence.

China

In China, despite some hints regarding an earlier dynasty, the earliest confirmed ruling power was the Shang Dynasty, c. 1600-1046 BCE. Successive dynasties came and went over the centuries, the precise extent of their reach and degree of cultural uniformity still a subject of debate among scholars. In any case, by the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, Chinese literature and philosophy had begun to mature. Descriptions of nature, of historical events and figures, and philosophical musings were combined into pithy anecdotes and observations. Two schools of philosophy, Confucianism and Taoism, became major sources of spiritual guidance and understanding for centuries to come. The Confucianists (or followers of Confucius, 551-479 BCE) accepted humanity's fate as directed by some invisible power beyond the present world, a power little understood or even knowable except by great sages. Under Confucianism, human character is formed through correct behavior (*li*), loyalty to one's nature (*zhong*), the demonstration of reciprocity (*shu*), and filial piety (*xiao*). Confucianism became the state ideology of China in the second century BCE and remained so until very recently. Also arising about the time of Confucianism's institutionalization was the first self-proclaimed Emperor of China, Ying Zhen (r. 221-206 BCE), who effectively unified six competing regional powers.

The Taoist school, likely founded by Laozi (or Lao Tzu; c. 604-531 BCE), focused on a higher power called "the way," or *tao*. The *tao* is not a god, per se, but rather a transcendental force beyond human existence that makes itself known through the natural order of things. For the Taoist, all worldly discriminations are artificial and all common virtues are paired with common evils. Thus, Taoist-influenced thought fosters a spirit of freedom from convention but one constrained by the practice of the *tao*. Literature from this school shows poets and writers cultivating a sense of self-abandonment while also offering insights into the ordinary world.

Emperor Ying Zhen's Qin Dynasty was short-lived and was followed by the long-reigning Han

Dynasty (202 BCE – 220 CE), which represented something of a golden era in Chinese history for its evident stability and prosperity, its advance of learning and the arts, its systematization of government and bureaucracy, its extensive trade activities, and its successful military campaigns to secure the borders. The Han Dynasty is also known for its association with what became, ever after, the dominant ethnic group in China, the Han. Nevertheless, by the 200s CE the dynasty had been severely weakened by extensive military campaigns and major state projects, along with political intrigue and corruption among various elite families. By 220 CE it had ceased to rule except for a rump group in the east. The Eastern Han are noted for, among other things, fostering the growth of Buddhism in China.

The Near East and Eurasia

Surrounding most of the metropolitan centers of early civilizations were satellite groups made up of the less powerful. Mesopotamia, for example, was hedged at various times and places by Elamites, Hurrians, Hittites, Syrians, and Canaanites. Often enough, these outsiders would force themselves militarily upon the center and, in some cases, succeed in gaining power. In the ancient world, the most powerful weapon of war was the chariot horse and carriage combined with archers and vast armies of ground troops wielding spears and swords. This is what the Hittites relied on to win control of Anatolia and neighboring regions (c. 1600-c. 1200 BCE), and what the great Persian conquerors from Cyrus the Great (c. 575-530 BCE) on used to expand the Persian Empire into the Near East, Egypt, and Central Asia. The Egyptians, too, were noted chariot-eers, famously pursuing the fleeing Israelites under Moses across a miraculous channel in the Red Sea to their doom as the parted waters collapsed upon them. The story, from the biblical book of Exodus, arguably illustrates two things: that the Jews, with their one god, were the "chosen" people (as virtually all peoples have claimed for themselves); and that religious belief can be more powerful than

the sword. In any event, the exodus of the Jews from Egypt, where they had been slaves, allowed them to return to their homeland around Jerusalem and found a small, short-lived kingdom there (1050-930 BCE). It was in Israel, too, of course, that the founding figure in Christianity, Jesus of Nazareth (c. 4 B.C.E.-c. 33 CE), would later spread his message about his being the son of god and a messiah who brings eternal life to his believers.

By about 100 BCE, the expansion of cities and civilizations in Eurasia had advanced far enough to produce a broad belt of territory that ran all the way across the area, from the Mediterranean to the East China Sea. A busy caravan trade, together with southern sea routes, developed to form a complex network known as the Silk Road (for its trade in Chinese silks, among other things). Along the way, the goods were policed and taxed by the Chinese, the Kushans, the Parthians, and the Romans, among others. All manner of goods, ideas, peoples, animals, plants, and diseases traveled along these routes as urban centers and satellite groups located within the belt increasingly interacted with one another. The migration and transmutation of art styles, languages, and, indeed, ethnicities across the Silk Road trade network profoundly altered the course of human history.

Greece and Rome

Classical Greek civilization, which emerged from the ruins of Mycenaean culture after 1,000 BCE, deeply influenced later Roman civilization, and the two of them together formed the foundation of much of Western thought and culture. Or so the matter has traditionally been stated. More recently, scholars have begun to accept a broader range of Western cultural influences and a less unified picture of Greece and Rome themselves.

The Greeks left an extensive literature. In the period of the so-called city-states (500-404 BCE), Greek explanations of natural and social phenomena were essentially mythical. Myth and legend, in fact, remained central to Greek poetry, theater, philosophy, history, and even *sport* for centuries.

The method was key to the early Homeric works the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (ninth or eighth centuries BCE). These works celebrate individual action in an age when tribal traditions enmeshed the individual in a circle of clan, village, and cult. By the time of Herodotus (c. 484-430 BCE), historical writing had begun to take the form a narrative illuminated by commentaries and anecdotes. Thucydides (c. 460-400 BCE) strove to turn history into “an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the interpretation of the future.” Both authors wrote works that have stood the test of time. Xenophon (431-c. 350 BCE), too, extended the tradition, notably by injecting autobiographical elements into his first-hand historical accounts.

Philosophical developments in Greece ran parallel with various schools of thought, the best known of which is the line that connected Socrates (c. 469-399 BCE) to his disciple Plato (c. 428-347 BCE) and to Plato's student Aristotle (384-322 BCE). These philosophers, who contributed importantly to virtually all areas of thought, from metaphysics to ethics, continue to be studied widely (Socrates, however, only through what has been communicated about him by Plato); they remain sources of insight, analysis, and interpretation.

It is not possible to summarize here the complexities of Greek culture and history. Theirs was, however, a class-based society, similar to most of the others we have mentioned here but with the signal difference that a democratic leadership was in charge rather than a single divine ruler, or tyrant. Throughout Greece, distinctions of language, customs, and other matters differentiated Greeks from non-Greeks, or “barbarians,” and one Greek-speaking people from another (Dorians, Ionians, Athenians, Spartans, Thebans; and, on the “foreign” front, Macedonians, Thracians). Political alignments were equally complex: some Greeks (Thebans) fought on the side of Persia at the time of Xerxes' invasion in 480 BCE. By the time of the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE., it was not clear whether the Macedonian upper class to which Alexander belonged should count as Greek or not.

On the military front, the (Athenian) Greeks fought the Persians (three times), the Carthaginians, the Spartans, and numerous others.

The period from the death of Alexander the Great to the Roman conquest of Greece, approximately from 320 BCE to 150 BCE, is known as the Hellenistic Age. It has also been called the Alexandrian Age, however, because of the influence of the great library at Alexandria (Egypt) organized by the Ptolemies, the Greek dynastic rulers in Egypt after the death of Alexander. (Cleopatra was a Ptolemaic pharaoh.) While major cultural advances were made, toward the end of this period there was a decline in Greek literature and culture generally. One outcome was the Roman conquest of the Hellenic eastern Mediterranean between the second and first centuries BCE. During this period, some authors continued to work with established literary forms; some interpreted Greek thought for Roman (Latin) readers; and still others wrote about Roman matters in Greek. Plutarch (c. 46-120 CE) was somewhat unique in this regard in that he did all three and quite expertly. His main work, *The Parallel Lives of Greeks and Romans*, explored history and biography as demonstrations of both scholarly method and ethical learning. Numerous other Greek poets, writers, and orators remained active in this period, though by now the bulk of cultural innovation was on the Roman side.

For hundreds of years during its classical phase, Rome was the center of Western culture. Roman control brought a measure of prosperity to the vast Mediterranean, Western European, and Near Eastern lands it administered. Early historians of Rome catalogued its rise, writing primarily in Greek until Cato the Elder (234-149 BCE) made Latin fashionable in scholarly circles. Shortly after Cato's time, Rome confronted an extended social, economic, and political crisis (133-31 BCE) that led ultimately to the collapse of the early Roman Republic and the establishment of the Principate under Octavian (Emperor Augustus; 63 BCE-14 CE), which launched the period of the Roman Empire, or the Golden Age. Vergil's *Aenid* (29-19 BCE), an

epic poem often regarded as the finest example of Latin literature, explores Rome and its destiny as an imperial power at the start of this era. From the reign of Vespasian (9-79 CE; ruled 69-79) through that of Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE; ruled 161-180), the emperors kept firm control over the armies and ruled the vast empire through them. The prosperity of the empire rested on the masses of slaves, peasants, and urban poor, whose lives were often desperate. Boundaries between classes were established by law, although the system was subject to manipulation. Moreover, the apex of the Golden Age did not represent the high-water mark of Latin literature; that came earlier with Vergil as well as the philosopher-orator Cicero (106-43 BCE), the historians Livy (64 BCE-17 CE), the philosopher-statesman Seneca (4 BCE-65 CE), and the poets Horace (65-8 BCE) and Ovid (43 BCE-c. 17 CE), among others. In fact, during the Empire period Greek literature enjoyed a revival, of sorts, with Lucian (125-180 CE) and Emperor Aurelius preferring it to Latin.

All that is solid melts into air, however. After Aurelius's death and the appointment of his son Commodus as emperor, the Principate began a long decline. There were manpower shortages brought about by plague, insurgencies in the peripheries of the empire, increasing numbers of non-Roman "barbarians" in the army itself, excessive government bureaucracy, economic collapse in the peasant-farming sector, class hostilities, widespread lead poisoning (owing to the use of lead water pipes), a general breakdown of social norms, and many and sundry other ills to which historians have pointed as causes. The period from 305 to 313, in particular, was one of great confusion and political chaos, with no firm claimant to the emperorship (or "augustus"). Finally, Constantine (272-337) emerged as ruler of the western portion of the empire and introduced Christianity; he eventually became sole emperor and transferred the capital from Rome to Byzantium, or Constantinople. By the fifth century, the Roman Empire in the West had fallen to barbarian invaders (Goths, primarily).

Only the East managed to survive, as the Byzantine Empire, lasting until the fifteenth century.

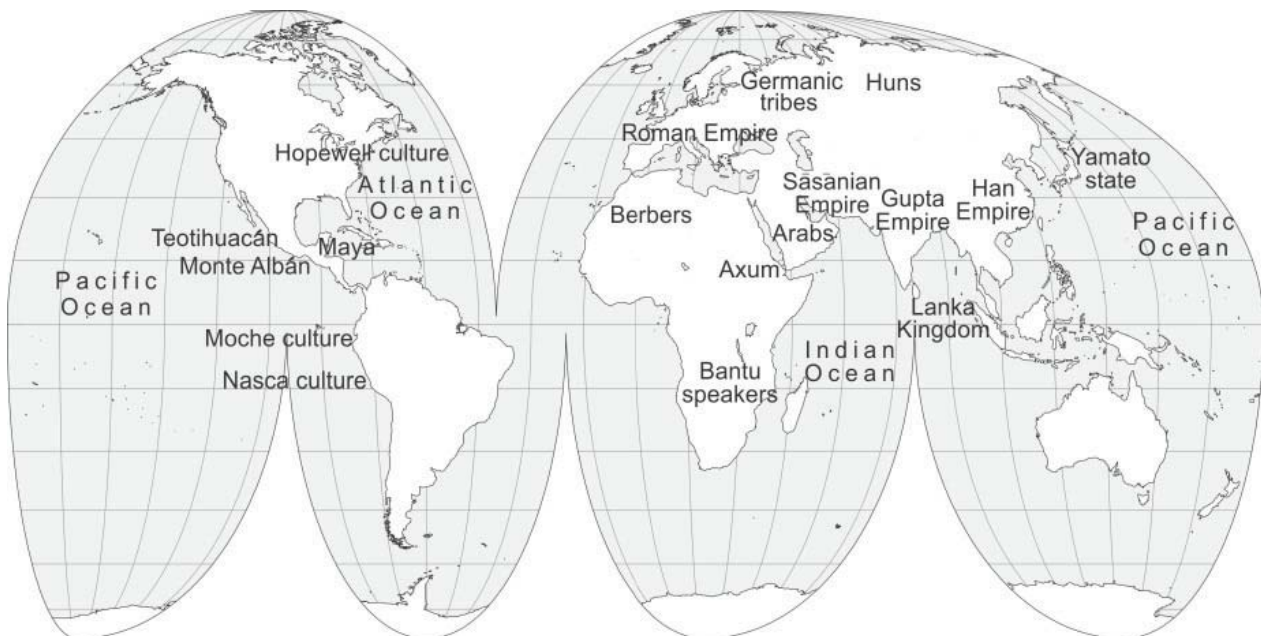
Distant Lands

The “barbarians” of Europe—Teutones, Celts, Gauls, Iberians, Goths, Vandals, Alans, Franks, and, Dalmatians, among others—were labeled as such both because they were often semi-nomadic, as opposed to having permanent settlements, and because they were either entirely nonliterate or had only a rudimentary system of symbolic inscription. In many cases, however, they were barbarians simply because they were *other than* Roman, Greek, or the like. They were also often prone to military encounters with neighboring peoples and the amassing of armies for conquering new territories. (These last two features, of course could describe Rome as well.) In the western reaches of Europe, the Celtic peoples had an oral literary tradition but left no written record other than symbolic elements in their material culture. When European provinces such as Gaul (France) came under Roman rule, the inhabitants soon learned to speak Latin. The barbarians occasionally became quite Romanized.

Still, traditional allegiances, and ethnic identities, remained strong in most cases. Europe started out as and has largely remained a patchwork of peoples, languages, and cultures.

After about 200 CE, the traditional trade routes that had connected Old World Eurasian civilizations began to wane. Cultural exchange among the peoples of Eurasia became less frequent. Even so, new kingdoms arose in Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific. The steppe peoples, ranging from Mongolia to southern Russia, became a significant force in the shaping of Eurasia and its history. Russia, with its Orthodox faith, grew in the east and Latin Christendom in the west. Japan emerged as a unique civilization at about the same time. After the seventh century CE, Islam would become a potent force in Arabia and beyond.

In the New World, the shift from small farming villages to cities took place, it seems, as much to create cult centers as to marshal resources. After the Olmec civilization of Guatemala and Mexico (1500–400 BCE), the Mayans (500 BCE–900 CE) arose and developed calendars, painted palaces, pyramids, and other significant works most related



Ancient World, 200–500 BCE

to honoring gods and kings. A strict social hierarchy was in place. Roughly contemporaneous with the Maya were the early civilizations of central Mexico and Peru, each demonstrating a different form of mastery over their world. Two later groups, the Aztecs of Mexico and the Incas of Peru, formed grand empires shortly before the Europeans arrived. Like the other extant indigenous cultures at the time, neither proved strong enough to survive the ravages of the Spanish conquest.

Michael Shally-Jensen, PhD

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KEY TO PRONUNCIATION

This provides guidelines to pronunciation for many of the unfamiliar topics throughout these volumes, to be used with the pronunciation that appears upon first mention of the topic in text. These guidelines do not purport to achieve the subtleties of the languages in question but will offer readers a rough equivalent of how English speakers may approximate the proper pronunciation.

<i>Symbols</i>	<i>Pronounced As In</i>	<i>Spelled Phonetically As</i>
a	answer, laugh, sample, that	AN-sihr, laf, SAM-pul, that
ah	father, hospital	FAH-thur, HAHS-pih-tul
aw	awful, caught	AW-ful, kawt
ay	blaze, fade, waiter, weigh	blayz, fayd, WAYT-ur, way
ch	beach, chimp	bee-ch, chihmp
eh	bed, head, said	behd, hehd, sehd
ee	believe, cedar, leader, liter	bee-LEEV, SEE-dur, LEED-ur, LEE-tur
ew	boot, lose	bewt, lews
g	beg, disguise, get	behg, dihs-GIZ, geht
i	buy, height, lie, surprise	bi, hit, li, sur-PRIZ
ih	bitter, pill	BIH-tur, pihl
j	digit, edge, jet	DIH-jiht, ehj, jeht
k	cat, kitten, hex	kat, KIH-tehn, hehks
o	cotton, hot	CO-tuhn, hot
oh	below, coat, note, wholesome	bee-LOH, coht, noht, HOHL-suhm
oo	good, look	good, look
ow	couch, how	kowch, how
oy	boy, coin	boy, koyh
s	cellar, save, scent	SEL-ur, sayv, sehnt
sh	champagne, issue, shop	sham-PAYN, IH-shew, shop
uh	about, butter, enough, other	uh-BOWT, BUH-tur, ee-NUHF, UH-thur
ur	birth, disturb, earth, letter	burth, dihs-TURB, urth, LEH-tur
y	useful, young	YEWS-ful, yuhng
z	business, zest	BIHZ-ness, zest
zh	vision	VIH-zhuhn

THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN PHARAOHS

The pharaohs of ancient Egypt ruled for over 3,000 years (about 3100–332 BCE). During their reign, they created a powerful empire that is considered one of the greatest civilizations of the ancient world.

—BACKGROUND & HISTORY—

The Age of the Pharaohs

The people of ancient Egypt referred to their early rulers as kings. It was not until the period known as the New Kingdom (and also known as the Egyptian Empire) that the honorific title of pharaoh came into use. Over time, the words “pharaoh” and “king” were used interchangeably. Today, the title of pharaoh is used to describe all of the rulers of ancient Egypt.

The pharaohs ruled ancient Egypt for nearly 3,000 years. These years have been divided into different time periods by historians. The main periods are the Early Dynastic Period, the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom. Each kingdom was followed by a period of turmoil and unrest known as an intermediate period. The last intermediate period was followed by a late period. These periods are made up of thirty-one dynasties, or periods of rule by members of the same family.

Early Dynastic Period (3100–2650 BCE)

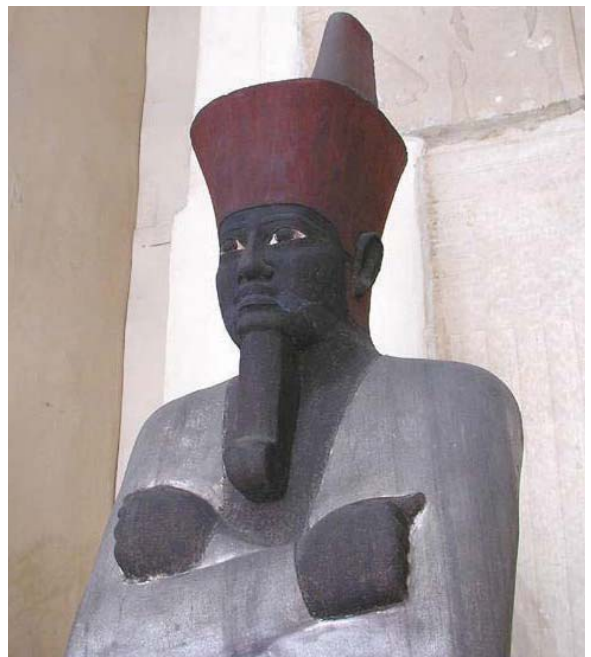
According to tradition, the first ruler of ancient Egypt was either King Menes or King Narmer (though it is possible he was the same person). He ruled Upper Egypt, a kingdom south of the Nile Delta. Around 3100 BCE, he took control of Lower Egypt, a kingdom on the Nile Delta. He united the two kingdoms as Egypt and founded its capital in Memphis. He is attributed with creating the world’s first national government, as well as its first dynasty. When he died, he was succeeded by his son, and the dynasty continued until some-

one other than a descendant of the original ruler became king. There were two dynasties during the Early Dynastic Period. Other rulers during this period include Aha, Djer, Djet, Den, Anedjib, Semerkhet, Qaa, Raneb, and Nynetjer. The rulers during this period oversaw the development of irrigation and built tombs, temples, and palaces.

Old Kingdom (2650–2150 BCE)

The Old Kingdom included the Third through the Eighth Dynasties. The pharaohs during this period built pyramids as their burial sites. The first known pyramid had six giant steps and was known as the Step Pyramid of Djoser, for whom it was built around 2650 BCE. His successors, Sekhemkhet and Khaba, also built pyramids. The Great Pyramid at Giza was built for the pharaoh Khufu. The pharaohs Khafre and Menkaure built smaller pyramids nearby.

Following the end of the Old Kingdom was a



Seated statue of Nebhepetre Mentuhotep II, in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. Painted Sandstone, 11th Dynasty. By Jon Bodsworth, via Wikimedia Commons

period called the First Intermediate Period (2150–2100 BCE). This period was ruled by kings of the Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Dynasties. However, most were weak rulers who failed to make lasting contributions.

Middle Kingdom (2100–1750 BCE)

The Middle Kingdom included rulers of the last half of the Eleventh Dynasty through the Fourteenth Dynasty. Many of the pharaohs of the Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasties helped Egypt regain its power and wealth following the tumultuous years of the First Intermediate Period. They regained power over areas that had been lost to foreign rulers, expanded into new areas, and helped to restore stability and peace. These pharaohs include Mentuhotep I, who reunited Upper and Lower Egypt following more than thirty years of turmoil and chaos; Mentuhotep II, who helped to solidify the newly won peace by successfully defending ancient Egypt's fragile borders; and Amenemhet I, a vizier (highest official to serve the pharaoh) who seized the crown, moved the capital to Itjtawy and began the Twelfth Dynasty.

Pharaohs of the Twelfth Dynasty include Senusret I, Amenemhet II, Senusret II, and Amenemhet III. They built on the gains of their predecessors and helped to solidify Egypt's power as a growing empire. They carried out extensive building campaigns; promoted the arts and trade with Palestine and Syria; and conquered Nubia, the region where gold was mined.

Ten pharaohs ruled during the Thirteenth Dynasty, which lasted about seventy years. Most had short reigns, unlike many of the earlier pharaohs who ruled for lengthy periods, sometimes up to ninety years. The Middle Kingdom was followed by the Second Intermediate Period (1750–1550 BCE), during which a group of Asiatic peoples known as the Hyksos gained power and ruled Egypt.

New Kingdom (1550–1069 BCE)

The New Kingdom included the Eighteenth through the Twentieth Dynasties. Many powerful pharaohs ruled ancient Egypt during the New

Kingdom. They regained areas lost to foreign rulers, expanded into new territories, conquered foreign kingdoms, and built Egypt into the most powerful empire in the world. They continued the tradition of the earlier pharaohs and built many temples and tombs. Thirty pharaohs ruled during this period, including many noted for their military conquests, building campaigns and civil deeds. Following are a few of the notable pharaohs of the New Kingdom:

Ahmose I was the first pharaoh of the New Kingdom. He drove the Hyksos, a group of Asiatic rulers, out of northern Egypt and reunified northern and southern Egypt after a division of about 100 years. His reign is roughly dated as 1550–1525 BCE.

Thutmose I, who reigned from 1506 to 1493 BCE, was renowned for his military expertise. He led a military campaign into southwestern Asia that helped Egypt gain control of land all the way to the Euphrates River.

Thutmose III was a warrior pharaoh who ruled from 1479 until 1425 BCE. He led over fifteen military campaigns and regained control of land that had formerly belonged to Egypt as well as new land. He regained control of Kush and Nubia and expanded Egypt's border northward along the Mediterranean Sea all the way to the southern border of the Hittite Empire in Asia Minor. During his reign, Egypt became the world's most powerful nation.

Amenhotep IV created a radical new religion based on a new sun god called the Aten. He moved the capital to Akhetaten and carried out religious reforms that resulted in discontent and chaos. His reign is given as either 1353–1336 BCE or 1351–1334 BCE.

Tutankhaten, who ruled from 1333 until 1324 BCE, restored peace following years of discord and unrest due to Amenhotep's reign. He re-established the former religion and formed diplomatic relationships with the leaders of other countries.

Ramses II constructed many buildings; built a new capital, Per-Ramses, in the Nile Delta; and conducted several military campaigns that helped

to halt the expansion of the Hittites into Egypt. He reigned from 1279 until 1213 BCE.

Ramses XI was the last pharaoh of the New Kingdom. He reigned from 1107 to 1078 or 1077 BCE. His death in marked the beginning of Egypt's decline.

The New Kingdom was followed by the Third Intermediate Period (1069–712 BCE). It marked the beginning of Egypt's rule by foreign pharaohs.

Later Period (712–332 BCE)

After the Twentieth Dynasty, foreign rulers gained power, and ancient Egypt rapidly declined. The pharaohs during this period were mainly from Nubia, Syria, and Persia. Ten dynasties ruled Egypt over the next 750 years, but they were unable to restore Egypt to its former glory. Alexander the Great of Macedonia conquered Egypt in 332 BCE, forever ending the age of the pharaohs.

—CULTURAL & HISTORICAL IMPACT—

The Role of the Pharaohs in Ancient Egypt

The people of ancient Egypt considered the pharaoh a link between the realm of the gods and the land of the humans. They perceived him as god-like and possessing divine attributes. The pharaoh was responsible for maintaining the divine order of the universe, or *maat*. He owned all the land and ruled all things. He was the judge, chief priest, and protector of the land and its people. He defended the country from invaders and foreign rulers through its army, and he determined laws and meted out justice through his vizier, or chief assistant, and other bureaucrats. He provided for the physical well-being of the people through the economy and trade. He also provided for the spiritual well-being of the people through daily sacred rituals as well as the construction of his tomb.

The ancient Egyptians believed that after a pharaoh died, he became a god and had eternal life. In order to ensure the pharaoh's eternal life, he needed a tomb where he could reenter

his body after he died. The building of this tomb often dominated a pharaoh's reign. Construction took several years and required obtaining abundant natural resources and the labor of many people. Building the tomb often was a major part of the economy and employed the country's largest workforce. Obtaining resources, such as gold and other precious metals, often involved extensive travel and excursions into foreign territories.

Why Pharaohs Built Pyramids & Tombs

The ancient Egyptians believed in an afterlife. In order for the soul to survive after death, however, it needed to be able to reenter the body. Thus the body had to be preserved, as the soul would survive as long as the body did. The pharaohs built the pyramids and elaborate tombs as places to house their mummified bodies and to ensure eternal life. They furnished them with everything they would need in the afterlife. Since this would be their home for eternity, they included every object that could possibly be desired or useful. If it was impossible to include the actual object, a picture of it was provided instead. They included paintings and statues of people, animals, and armies as well as furniture, games, and food. In addition, by ensuring their own eternal life, it was believed the pharaohs ensured the eternal life of the country.

Many of the pharaohs of the Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom were buried in pyramids. Djoser, the first pharaoh to build a pyramid, believed that the steps of the pyramid would aid his ascent into the realm of the gods. Succeeding pharaohs built larger and more massive pyramids that reached higher toward the sun and sky, where the gods resided. During the New Kingdom, the pharaohs built multi-chambered tombs deep into the desert cliffs. The tombs were hidden deep inside the cliffs and their locations were kept secret from everyone other than their builders in an effort to thwart tomb raiders and robbers. Over sixty tombs were built in a region near Thebes called the Valley of the Kings. The valley was a desolate region far from the villages and towns. Mortuary temples were constructed in nearby areas for the

family to visit. The first pharaoh to build his tomb in the Valley of the Kings was Thutmose I.

Today, the pyramids at Giza and the tombs in the Valley of the Kings are vestiges of Egypt's ancient past and symbols of the pharaohs' legacies. They are popular tourist destinations.

What Killed King Tutankhamen?

Archaeologists have studied the mummies and artifacts in their tombs to identify how the pharaohs died, but they have been unable to determine the cause of death for all of the unearthed pharaohs. Mystery surrounds the death of several of the ancient pharaohs, including King Tutankhamen, or King Tut. Often called the boy king, he was nine years old when he became a pharaoh. He ruled until his death at age eighteen. After his tomb was discovered in 1922, his body was autopsied and studied. His body showed signs of a head wound as well as a thin sliver of bone in the cranium. The hair around his head wound consisted of short stubble, suggesting it had been shaven to treat the wound and had started to grow back shortly before he died.

Scholars have speculated that the wounds on his body were caused intentionally and that Tutankhamen was murdered. Other scholars dispute these speculations and state that the wounds were as likely to be caused by an accident or battle injury. Still, other research conducted in 2005 found no evidence of a head wound, suggesting instead that the pharaoh succumbed to gangrene after sustaining a severe leg injury. Despite decades of research and countless theories, scholars today are no closer to knowing with certainty what caused Tutankhamen's death than they were in the past. Despite the lack of a definitive answer, historians and authors continue to postulate what caused Tutankhamen's death. Tutankhamen's death mask remains one of the most popular symbols of ancient Egypt.

—INTERESTING FACTS—

◆ The Great Pyramid at Giza is the only one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World still standing intact. It is surrounded by the tombs of the pharaoh's courtiers and queens. They planned to join the pharaoh Khufu in the afterlife and continue the same relationships they had shared with him on earth.

◆ Pharaohs often waged battles for reasons other than the desire for new lands and conquests. Because it was considered an offense against *maat*, or the divine order of the universe, for any part of Egypt to fall under the power of a foreign country, pharaohs fought for the country's spiritual honor as well as actual physical gains.

◆ A person who touched a pharaoh without permission could be sentenced to death.

◆ King Hatshepsut was actually a woman. While serving as a regent for a pharaoh too young to rule, she declared herself king and assumed the throne, passing herself off as a man. In official pictures and statues made during her lifetime, she had herself portrayed wearing the king's crown and his traditional false beard.

◆ One of the most prestigious jobs in ancient Egypt was that of the architect. Because architects built temples and the tomb for the pharaoh, they were held in high regard and were often treated as favored members of the royal court.

◆ Thutmose III waged a series of battles against the Syrians in the Middle East and Africa. He led the troops himself and earned such a fearless reputation that after the first round of battles, his chief enemy, the empire of Mitanni, surrendered without a fight. His military feats earned him the modern nickname of the Napoleon of Ancient Egypt.

◆ Most pharaohs had two names: the name given at birth and the name given during coronation. During periods of the Middle Kingdom, the pharaohs had five names. Each name was used in a special order. The first name was the birth name. The next was the throne name, or name given when the pharaoh was crowned. The third, fourth, and fifth names were the Golden Horus

name, the Nebti name, and the Horus. Each of these names was given during the crowning ceremony and represented relationships and protections by different gods.

◆ Marriage between brothers and sisters was common during periods in ancient Egypt. A pharaoh who married his sister helped to ensure the royal bloodline by keeping it as pure as possible.

◆ There were eleven pharaohs with the name Ramses (alternate spellings include Ramesses and Rameses). Many were considered some of the greatest pharaohs of ancient Egypt.

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—Barbara Lightner

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TIME LINE

The following is not a listing of the articles in this encyclopedia; for a chronological listing of the people, places, events, and significant writings discussed throughout this encyclopedia, see the Chronology of People, Places, and Events which follows this Time Line. Below are events and developments in the ancient world (to approximately 700 CE or somewhat later, depending on the region), selected by the editor as milestones in the early history of the nineteen regions covered: Africa, Anatolia, Arabia, Central Asia, China, Egypt, Europe, Greece, Japan, Korea, Mesoamerica, Mesopotamia, Middle/Near East, North America, Oceania, Rome, South America, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Please note that dates, particularly those before the common era (or BCE), are often approximate and may vary among sources.

AFRICA

To 8000 BCE	Afrasan, Rub, Chifumbaze complex, Aquatic and Smithfield cultures are developing.
6000 BCE	Settlements begin to appear along the Nile, Niger, and Congo Rivers.
6000 BCE	East Sahelian culture begins in northern Africa.
3500 BCE	Oldishi and Olmalenge traditions are developing.
3400-3200 BCE	Ta-Seti culture flourishes in northeast Africa.
2700 BCE	The culture of the Gash group develops near the border of modern Sudan and Ethiopia.
2500 BCE	Wawats and Yam appear in Africa.
2400 BCE	Kerma (Karmah) Empire builds a civilization on the Upper Nile.
2000 BCE	Znaga culture develops in the Sahara.
1493 BCE	The Kingdom of Kush begins to develop along the Upper Nile.
1000 BCE	Bantu migration through southern Africa begins.
800 BCE	Carthage is founded by Phoenicians from Tyre (legendarily under Queen Dido).
747 BCE	Egypt is conquered by Kashta and his son Piye (Piankhi), kings of Nubia, initiating the Twenty-fifth, or Ethiopian, Dynasty.
716 BCE	Shabaka, son of Kashta and Piye's younger brother, ascends the throne of Kush, relocating the capital to Thebes and effectively reuniting the Nile Valley civilizations.
700 BCE	The languages of the Agaw, an ancient Cushitic-speaking people that lived in the northern and central Ethiopian plateau, begin to replace Omotic tongues in northern and central Ethiopia.

c. 6th cent. BCE-79 CE	Pompeii and Herculaneum
6th cent. BCE-14th cent. CE	Ājtvikas
c. 599-c. 527 BCE	Vardhamāna
c. 595-c. 546 BCE	Croesus
c. 590-c. 500 BCE	Agariste
c. 580-c. 500 BCE	Pythagoras
Born mid-6th cent. BCE	Ibycus
Mid-6th cent.-493 BCE	Histiaeus of Miletus
c. 575-c. 500 BCE	Eupalinus of Megara
c. 570-after 507 BCE	Cleisthenes of Athens
c. 570-490 BCE	Hippias of Athens
c. 570-c. 485 BCE	Anacreon
c. 570-c. 478 BCE	Xenophanes
c. 566-c. 486 BCE	Buddha
c. 556-c. 467 BCE	Simonides
c. 555-c. 525 BCE	Amasis Painter
c. 554-489 BCE	Miltiades the Younger
551-479 BCE	Confucius
550-486 BCE	Darius the Great
c. 540-c. 478 BCE	Gelon of Syracuse
Before 535-after 501 BCE	Thespis
fl. late 6th cent. BCE	Ānanda
Late 6th cent.-1450 BCE	Thutmose III
Born late 6th or early 5th cent. BCE	Ezra
c. late 6th cent.-470 BCE	Pausanias of Sparta
c. late 6th cent.-467 BCE	Aristides of Athens
Composed c. 525 BCE	Sibylline Books
c. 525-c. 460 BCE	Themistocles
525/524-456/455 BCE	Aeschylus
Died c. 522 BCE	Polycrates of Samos
c. 520-c. 450 BCE	Bacchylides
c. 519-465 BCE	Xerxes I
c. 518-c. 438 BCE	Pindar

THE SYSTEMS OF MONTHS IN SELECTED CALENDRIAL SYSTEMS

(number of days are in parentheses; leaps and
exceptions are ignored)

GREGORIAN	HINDU	BABYLONIAN	JEWISH	MUSLIM
January (30)	Caitra (30) (March-April)	Nisanu (30) (March-April)	Nisan (30) (March-April)	Muharram (30)
February (28)	Vaisakha (30) (April-May)	Ayaru (30) (April-May)	Iyar (29) (April-May)	Safar (29)
March (31)	Jyaistha (30) (May-June)	Simanu (30) (May-June)	Sivan (30) (May-June)	Rabi\$ I (30)
April (30)	Asadha (30) (June-July)	Du'uzu (30) (June-July)	Tammuz (29) (June-July)	Rabi\$ (29)
May (31)	Sravana (30) (July-August)	Abu (30) (July-August)	Av (30) (July-August)	Jumada I (30)
June (30)	Bhadrapada (30) (August-September)	Ululu (30) (August-September)	Elul (29) (August-September)	Jumada II (29)
July (31)	Asvina (30) (September-October)	Tashritu (30) (September-October)	Tishri (30) (September-October)	Rajab (30)
August (31)	Karttika (30) (October-November)	Arakhsamna (30) (October-November)	Heshvan (29) (October-November)	Sha\$ban (29)
September (30)	Margasira (30) (November-December)	Kislimu (30) (November-December)	Kislev (29) (November-December)	Ramadan (30)
October (31)	Pausa (30) (December-January)	Tebet (30) (December-January)	Tevet (29) (December-January)	Shawwal (29)
November (30)	Magha (30) (January-February)	Shabatu (30) (January-February)	Shevet (30) (January-February)	Dhu al-Qa dah (30)
December (31)	Phalguna (30) (February-March)	Ardu (30) (February-March)	Adar (29) (February-March)	Dhu al-Hijja (29)