PLAINVIEW-OLD BETHPAGE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SOCIAL STUDIES

AP WORLD HISTORY 10

SUMMER TRANSITION ACTIVITY

Create a detailed double entry log for each of the following textbook segments. Each entry should follow the format described on the attached sheet. Try to capture key facts and details. Be as detailed as possible. The entries are grouped by folders.

FOLDER ONE

"Early Complex Societies," unit essay, pp. 2-3. AFFIX THIS SHEET TO THE COVER OF THE FOLDER

"Eyewitness: Lucy and the Archaeologists," pp. 5-6

"Eyewitness: Gilgamesh: The Man and the Myth," pp. 25-26

"Eyewitness: Herodotus and the Making of a Mummy," pp. 49-50

"Eyewitness: Indra, War God of the Aryans," pp. 71-72

"Eyewitness: King Yu and the Taming of the Yellow River," pp. 87-88

"Eyewitness: Chan Bahlum Spills Blood to Honor the Gods," pp 107-108

FOLDER TWO

"The Formation of Classical Societies," unit essay, pp. 128-129. AFFIX THIS SHEET TO THE COVER OF THE FOLDER

"Eyewitness: King Croseus and the Tricky Business of Predicting the Future," pp. 131-132.

"Eyewitness: Sima Qian: Speaking the Truth to Power in Han China," pp. 149-150.

"Eyewitness: Megasthenes: A Greek Perspective on Classical India," pp. 169-170.

"Eyewitness: Homer: A Poet and the Sea," pp. 189-190.

"Eyewitness: Paul of Tarsus and the Long Arm of Roman Law," pp. 211-212.

"Eyewitness: Zhang Qian: An Earlier Traveler on the Silk Roads," pp 233-234.

FOLDER THREE

"The Postclassical Era," unit essay, pp. 256-257. AFFIX THIS SHEET TO THE COVER OF THE FOLDER

"Eyewitness: Season of the Mecca Pilgrimage," pp. 259-260.

"Eyewitness: Xuanzang: A Young Monk Hits the Road," pp. 281-282.

"Eyewitness: Buzurg Sets his Sights on the Seven Seas," pp. 305-306.

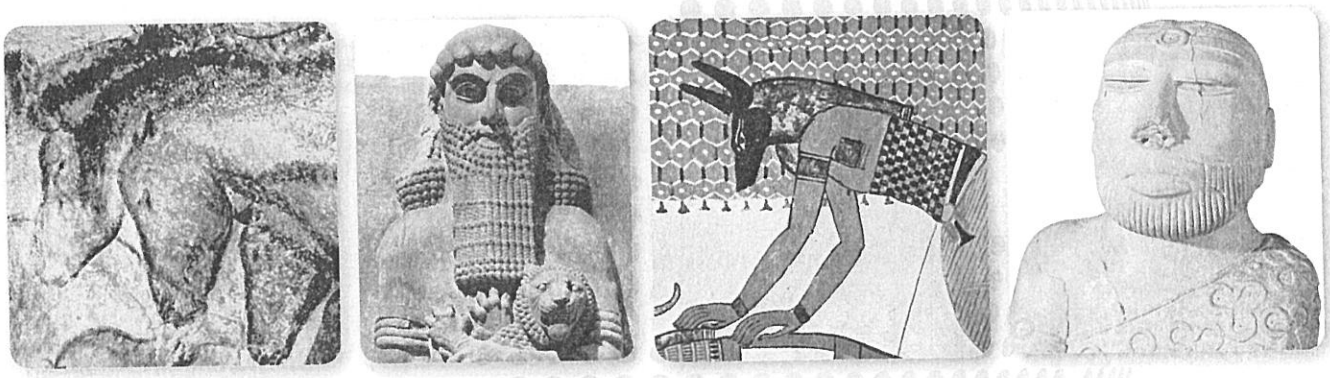
Due Date: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Double-entry log

Powerful quotes from the segment	What this means in my own words… A question I would ask is…. I disagree because…

part 1

THE EARLY COMPLEX SOCIETIES, 3500 TO 500 B.C.E.



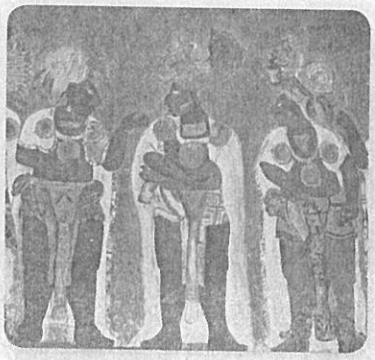
For thousands of years after the emergence of the human species, human beings lived in tiny communities with no permanent home. They formed compact, mobile societies, each consisting of a few dozen people, and they traveled regularly in pursuit of game and edible plants. From the vantage point of the fast-moving present, that long first stage of human experience on the earth might seem slow paced and almost changeless. Yet intelligence set human beings apart from the other members of the animal kingdom and enabled human groups to invent tools and techniques that enhanced their ability to exploit the natural environment. Human beings gradually emerged as the most dynamic species of the animal kingdom, and even in remote prehistoric times they altered the face of the earth to suit their needs.

Yet humans' early exploitation of the earth's resources was only a prologue to the extraordinary developments that followed the introduction of agriculture. About twelve thousand years ago human groups began to experiment with agriculture, and it soon became clear that cultivation provided a larger and more reliable food supply than did foraging. Groups that turned to agriculture experienced rapid population growth, and they settled in permanent communities. The world's first cities, which appeared about six thousand years ago, quickly came to dominate political and economic affairs in their respective regions. Indeed, since the appearance of cities, the earth and its creatures have fallen progressively under the influence of complex societies organized around cities.

The term *complex society* refers to a form of large-scale social organization that emerged in several parts of the ancient world. Early complex societies all depended on robust agricultural economies in which cultivators produced more food than they needed for their subsistence. That agricultural surplus enabled many individuals to congregate in urban settlements, where they devoted their time and energy to specialized tasks other than food production. Political authorities, government officials, military experts, priests, artisans, craftsmen, and merchants all lived off that surplus agricultural production. Through their organization of political, economic, social, and cultural affairs, complex societies had the capacity to shape the lives of large populations over extensive territories.

During the centuries from 3500 to 500 B.C.E., complex societies arose independently in several widely scattered

regions of the world, including Mesopotamia, Egypt, northern India, China, Mesoamerica, and the central Andean region of South America. Most complex societies sprang from small agricultural communities situated either in river valleys or near sources of water that cultivators could tap to irrigate their crops. All established political authorities, built states with formal governmental institutions, collected surplus agricultural production in the form of taxes or tribute, and distributed it to those who worked at tasks other than agriculture. Complex societies traded enthusiastically with peoples who had access to scarce resources, and, in an effort to ensure stability and economic productivity in neighboring regions, they often sought to extend their authority to surrounding territories.



Complex societies generated much more wealth than did hunting and gathering groups or small agricultural communities. Because of their high levels of organization, they also were able to preserve wealth and pass it along to their heirs. Some individuals and families accumulated great personal wealth, which enhanced their social status. When bequeathed to heirs and held within particular families, this accumulated wealth became the foundation for social distinctions. The early complex societies developed different kinds of social distinctions, but all recognized several classes of people, including ruling elites, common people, and slaves. Some societies also recognized distinct classes of aristocrats, priests, merchants, artisans, free peasants, and semifree peasants.

All complex societies required cultivators and individuals of lower classes to support the more privileged members of society by paying taxes or tribute (often in the form of surplus agricultural production) and also by providing labor and military service. Cultivators often worked not only their lands but also those belonging to the privileged classes. Individuals from the lower classes made up the bulk of their societies' armies and contributed the labor for large construction projects such as city walls, irrigation and water control systems, roads, temples, palaces, pyramids, and royal tombs.

The early complex societies also created sophisticated cultural traditions. Most of them either invented or borrowed a system of writing that made it possible to record information and store it for later use. They first used writing to keep political, administrative, and business records, but they soon expanded on those utilitarian applications and used writing to construct traditions of literature, learning, and reflection.

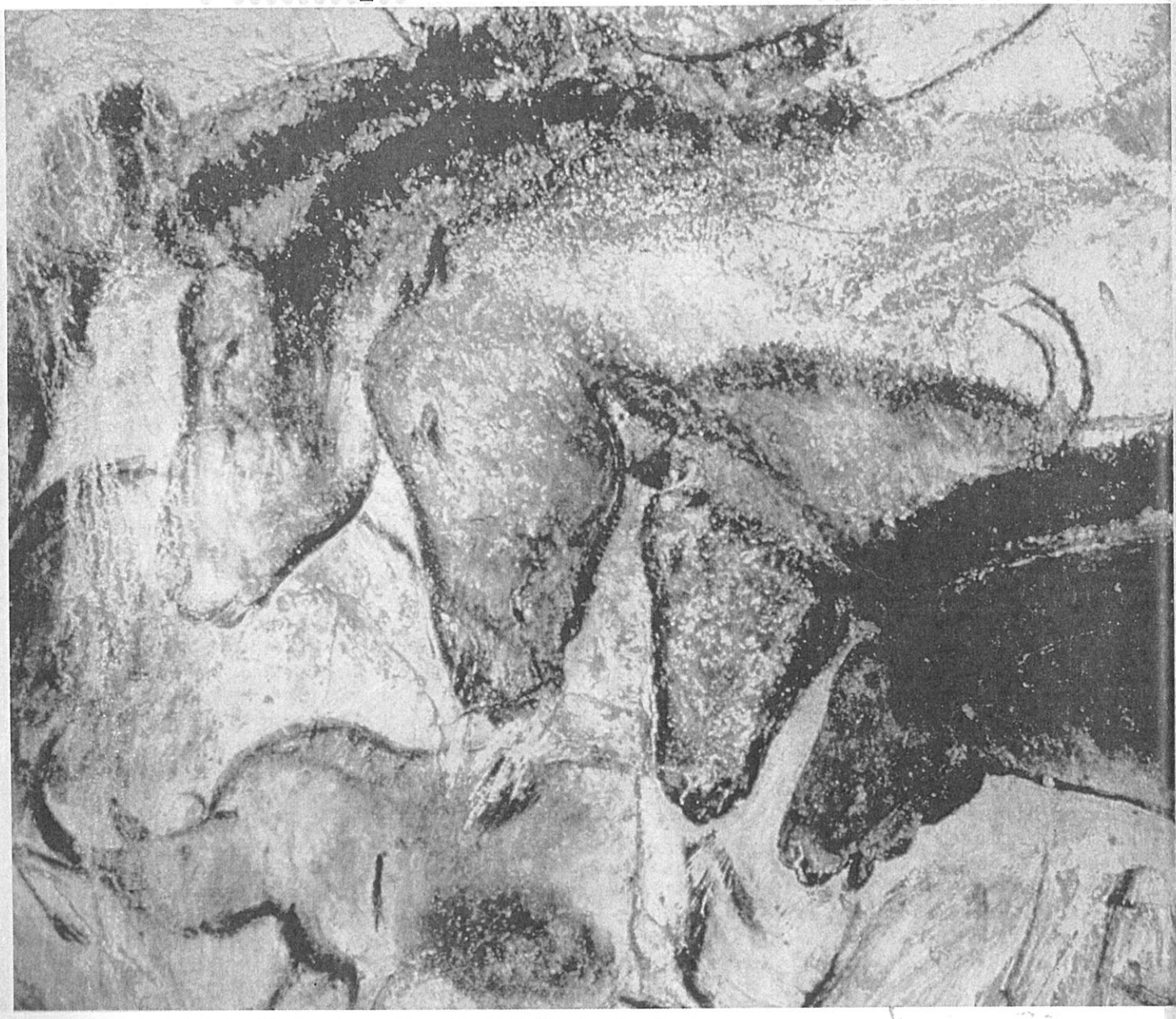
Cultural traditions took different forms in different complex societies. Some societies devoted resources to organized religions that sought to mediate between human communities and the gods, whereas others left religious observances largely in the hands of individual family groups. All of them paid close attention to the heavens, however, since they needed to gear their agricultural labors to the changing seasons.

All the complex societies organized systems of formal education that introduced intellectual elites to skills such as writing and astronomical observation deemed necessary for their societies' survival. In many cases reflective individuals also produced works that explored the nature of humanity and the relationships among human beings, the world, and the gods. Some of those works inspired religious and philosophical traditions for two millennia or more.

Complex society was not the only form of social organization that early human groups constructed, but it was an unusually important and influential type of society. Complex societies produced much more wealth and harnessed human resources on a much larger scale than did bands of hunting and gathering peoples, small agricultural communities, or nomadic groups that herded domesticated animals. As a result, complex societies deployed their power, pursued their interests, and promoted their values over much larger regions than did smaller societies. Indeed, most of the world's peoples have led their lives under the influence of complex societies.

Before History

chapter 1



A quartet of horses depicted about thirty thousand years ago in a painting from the Chauvet cave in southern France.

PART 1

EYEWITNESS:
Lucy and the Archaeologists

Throughout the evening of 30 November 1974, a tape player in an Ethiopian desert blared the Beatles' song "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" at top volume. The site was an archaeological camp at Hadar, a remote spot about 320 kilometers (200 miles) northeast of Addis Ababa. The music helped fuel a spirited celebration: earlier in the day, archaeologists had discovered the skeleton of a woman who died 3.2 million years ago. Scholars refer to this woman's skeleton as AL 288-1, but the woman herself has become by far the world's best-known prehistoric individual under the name Lucy.

At the time of her death, from unknown causes, Lucy was age twenty-five to thirty. She stood just over 1 meter (about 3.5 feet) tall and probably weighed about 25 kilograms (55 pounds). After she died, sand and mud covered Lucy's body, hardened gradually into rock, and entombed her remains. By 1974, however, rain waters had eroded the rock and exposed Lucy's fossilized skeleton. The archaeological team working at Hadar eventually found 40 percent of Lucy's bones, which together form one of the most complete and best-preserved skeletons of any early human ancestor. Later searches at Hadar turned up bones belonging to perhaps as many as sixty-five additional individuals, although no other collection of bones from Hadar rivals Lucy's skeleton for completeness.

Analysis of Lucy's skeleton and other bones found at Hadar demonstrates that the earliest ancestors of modern human beings walked upright on two feet. Erect walking is crucial for human beings because it frees their arms and hands for other tasks. Lucy and her contemporaries did not possess large or well-developed brains—Lucy's skull was about the size of a small grapefruit—but unlike the neighboring apes, which used their forelimbs for locomotion, Lucy and her companions could carry objects with their arms and manipulate tools with their dexterous hands. Those abilities enabled Lucy and her companions to survive better than many other species. As the brains of our human ancestors grew larger and more sophisticated—a process that occurred over a period of several million years—human beings learned to take even better advantage of their arms and hands and established flourishing communities throughout the world.

According to geologists the earth came into being about 4.5 billion years ago. The first living organisms made their appearance hundreds of millions of years later. In their wake came increasingly complex creatures such as fish, birds, reptiles, and mammals. About forty million years ago, short, hairy, monkeylike animals began to populate tropical regions of the world. Humanlike cousins to these animals began to appear only four or five million years ago, and our species, *Homo sapiens,* about two hundred thousand years ago.

Even the most sketchy review of the earth's natural history clearly shows that human society has not developed in a vacuum. The earliest human beings inhabited a world already well stocked with flora and fauna, a world shaped for countless eons by natural rhythms that governed the behavior of all the earth's creatures. Human beings made a place for themselves in this world, and over time they demonstrated remarkable ingenuity in devising ways to take advantage of the earth's resources. Indeed, it has become clear in recent years that the human animal has exploited the natural environment so thoroughly that the earth has undergone irreversible changes.

A discussion of such early times might seem peripheral to a book that deals with the history of human societies, their origins, development, and interactions. In conventional terminology, *prehistory* refers to the period before writing, and *history* refers to the era after the invention of writing enabled human communities to record and store information. It is certainly true that the availability of written documents vastly enhances the ability of scholars to understand past ages, but recent research by archaeologists and evolutionary biologists has brightly illuminated the physical and social development of early human beings. It is now clear that long before the invention of writing, human beings made a place for their species in the natural world and laid the social, economic, and cultural foundations on which their successors built increasingly complex societies.

Early Societies in Southwest Asia and the Indo-European Migrations

chapter 2

A wall relief from an Assyrian palace of the eighth century B.C.E. depicts Gilgamesh as a heroic figure holding a lion.

PART

EYEWITNESS:
Gilgamesh: The Man and the Myth

By far the best-known individual of ancient Mesopotamian society was a man named Gilgamesh. According to historical sources, Gilgamesh was the fifth king of the city of Uruk. He ruled about 2750 B.C.E.—for a period of 126 years, according to one semilegendary source—and he led his community in its conflicts with Kish, a nearby city that was the principal rival of Uruk. Historical sources record little additional detail about Gilgamesh's life and deeds.

But Gilgamesh was a figure of Mesopotamian mythology and folklore as well as history. He was the subject of numerous poems and legends, and Mesopotamian bards made him the central figure in a cycle of stories known collectively as the *Epic of Gilgamesh.* As a figure of legend, Gilgamesh became the greatest hero figure of ancient Mesopotamia. According to the stories, the gods granted Gilgamesh a perfect body and endowed him with superhuman strength and courage. He was "the man to whom all things were known," a supremely wise individual who "saw mysteries and knew secret things." The legends declare that he constructed the massive city walls of Uruk as well as several of the city's magnificent temples to Mesopotamian deities.

The stories that make up the *Epic of Gilgamesh* recount the adventures of this hero and his cherished friend Enkidu as they sought fame. They killed an evil monster, rescued Uruk from a ravaging bull, and matched wits with the gods. In spite of their heroic deeds, Enkidu offended the gods and fell under a sentence of death. His loss profoundly affected Gilgamesh, who sought for some means to cheat death and gain eternal life. He eventually found a magical plant that had the power to confer immortality, but a serpent stole the plant and carried it away, forcing Gilgamesh to recognize that death is the ultimate fate of all human beings. Thus, while focusing on the activities of Gilgamesh and Enkidu, the stories explored themes of friendship, loyalty, ambition, fear of death, and longing for immortality. In doing so they reflected the interests and concerns of the complex, urban-based society that had recently emerged in Mesopotamia.

Productive agricultural economies supported the development of the world's first complex societies, in which sizable numbers of people lived in cities and extended their political, social, economic, and cultural influence over large regions. The earliest urban societies so far known emerged during the early fourth millennium B.C.E. in southwest Asia, particularly in Mesopotamia.

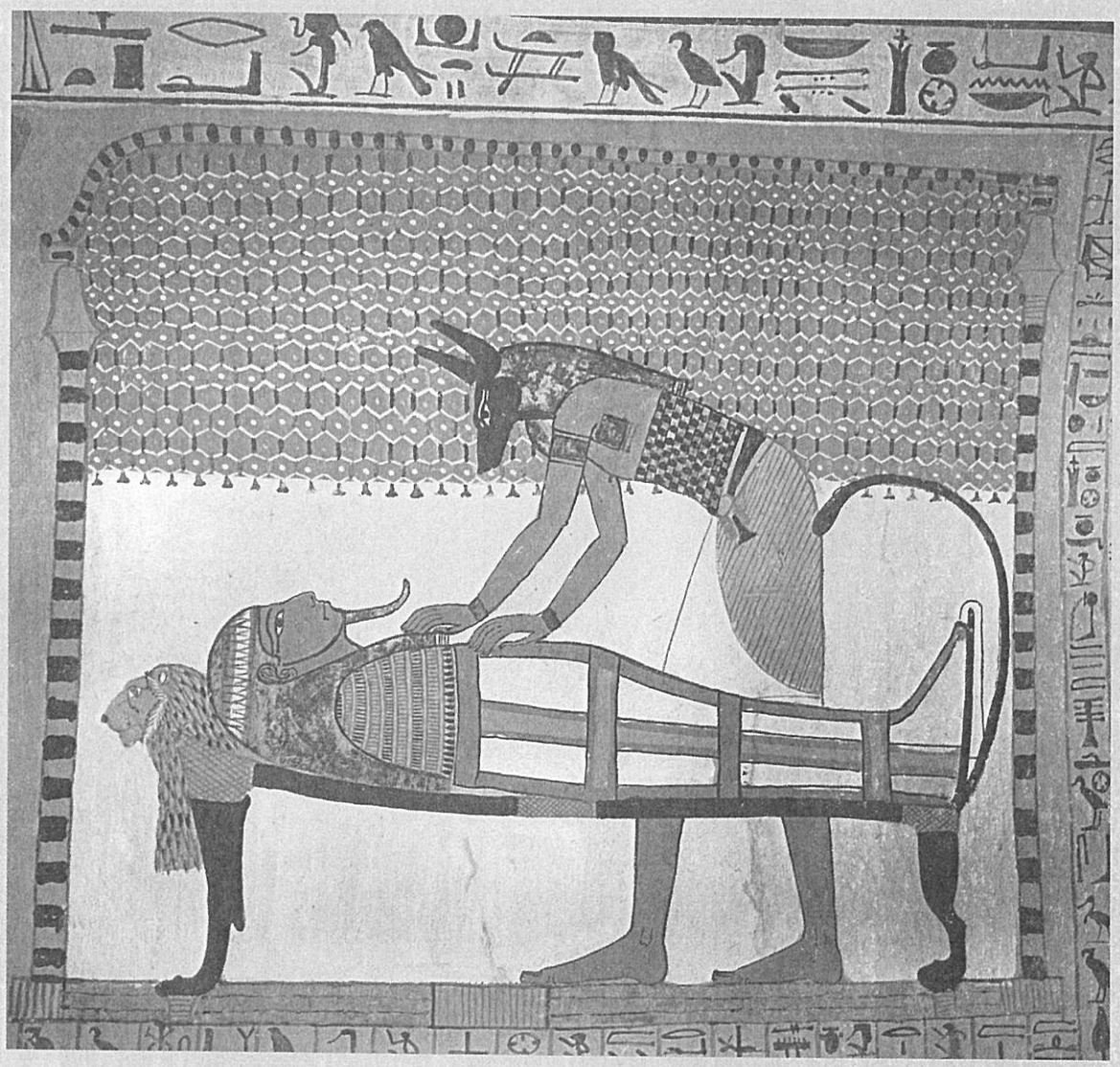
As people congregated in cities, they needed to find ways to resolve disputes—sometimes between residents within individual settlements, other times between whole settlements themselves—that inevitably arose as individual and group interests conflicted. In search of order, settled agricultural peoples recognized political authorities and built states throughout Mesopotamia. The establishment of states encouraged the creation of empires, as some states sought to extend their power and enhance their security by imposing their rule on neighboring lands.

Apart from stimulating the establishment of states, urban society in Mesopotamia also promoted the emergence of social classes, thus giving rise to increasingly complex social and economic structures. Cities fostered specialized labor, and the resulting efficient production of high-quality goods in turn stimulated trade. Furthermore, early Mesopotamia also developed distinctive cultural traditions as Mesopotamians invented a system of writing and supported organized religions.

Mesopotamian and other peoples regularly interacted with one another. Mesopotamian prosperity attracted numerous migrants, such as the ancient Hebrews, who settled in the region's cities and adopted Mesopotamian ways. Merchants such as the Phoenicians, who also embraced Mesopotamian society, built extensive maritime trade networks that linked southwest Asia with lands throughout the Mediterranean basin. Some Indo-European peoples also had direct dealings with their Mesopotamian contemporaries, with effects crucial for both Indo-European and Mesopotamian societies. Other Indo-European peoples never heard of Mesopotamia, but they employed Mesopotamian inventions such as wheels and metallurgy when undertaking extensive migrations that profoundly influenced historical development throughout much of Eurasia from western Europe to India and beyond. Even in the earliest days of city life, the world was the site of frequent and intense interaction between peoples of different societies.

Early African Societies and the Bantu Migrations

chapter 3



Anubis, the jackal-headed Egyptian god of mummification, prepares the mummy of a deceased worker for burial. This painting comes from the wall of a tomb built about the thirteenth century B.C.E.

EYEWITNESS:
Herodotus and the Making of a Mummy

For almost three thousand years, Egyptian embalmers preserved the bodies of deceased individuals through a process of mummification. Egyptian records rarely mention the techniques of mummification, but the Greek historian Herodotus traveled in Egypt about 450 B.C.E. and briefly explained the craft. The embalmer first used a metal hook to draw the brain of the deceased out through a nostril and then removed the internal organs through an incision made alongside the abdomen, washed them in palm wine, and sealed them with preservatives in stone vessels. Next, the embalmer washed the body, filled it with spices and aromatics, and covered it for about two months with natron, a naturally occurring salt substance. When the natron had extracted all moisture from the body, the embalmer cleansed it again and wrapped it with strips of fine linen covered with resin. Adorned with jewelry, the preserved body then went into a coffin bearing a painting or sculpted likeness of the deceased.

Careful preservation of the body was only a part of the funerary ritual for prominent Egyptians. Ruling elites, wealthy individuals, and sometimes common people as well laid their deceased to rest in expensive tombs equipped with furniture, tools, weapons, and ornaments that the departed would need in their next lives. Relatives periodically brought food and wine to nourish the deceased, and archaeologists have discovered soups, beef ribs, pigeons, quail, fish, bread, cakes, and fruits among those offerings. Artists decorated some tombs with elegant paintings of family members and servants, whose images accompanied the departed into a new dimension of existence.

Egyptian funerary customs were reflections of a prosperous agricultural society. Food offerings consisted mostly of local agricultural products, and scenes painted on tomb walls often depicted workers preparing fields or cultivating crops. Moreover, bountiful harvests explained the accumulation of wealth that supported elaborate funerary practices, and they also enabled some individuals to devote their efforts to specialized tasks such as embalming. Agriculture even influenced religious beliefs. Many Egyptians believed

fervently in a life beyond the grave, and they likened the human experience of life and death to the agricultural cycle in which crops grow, die, and come to life again in another season.

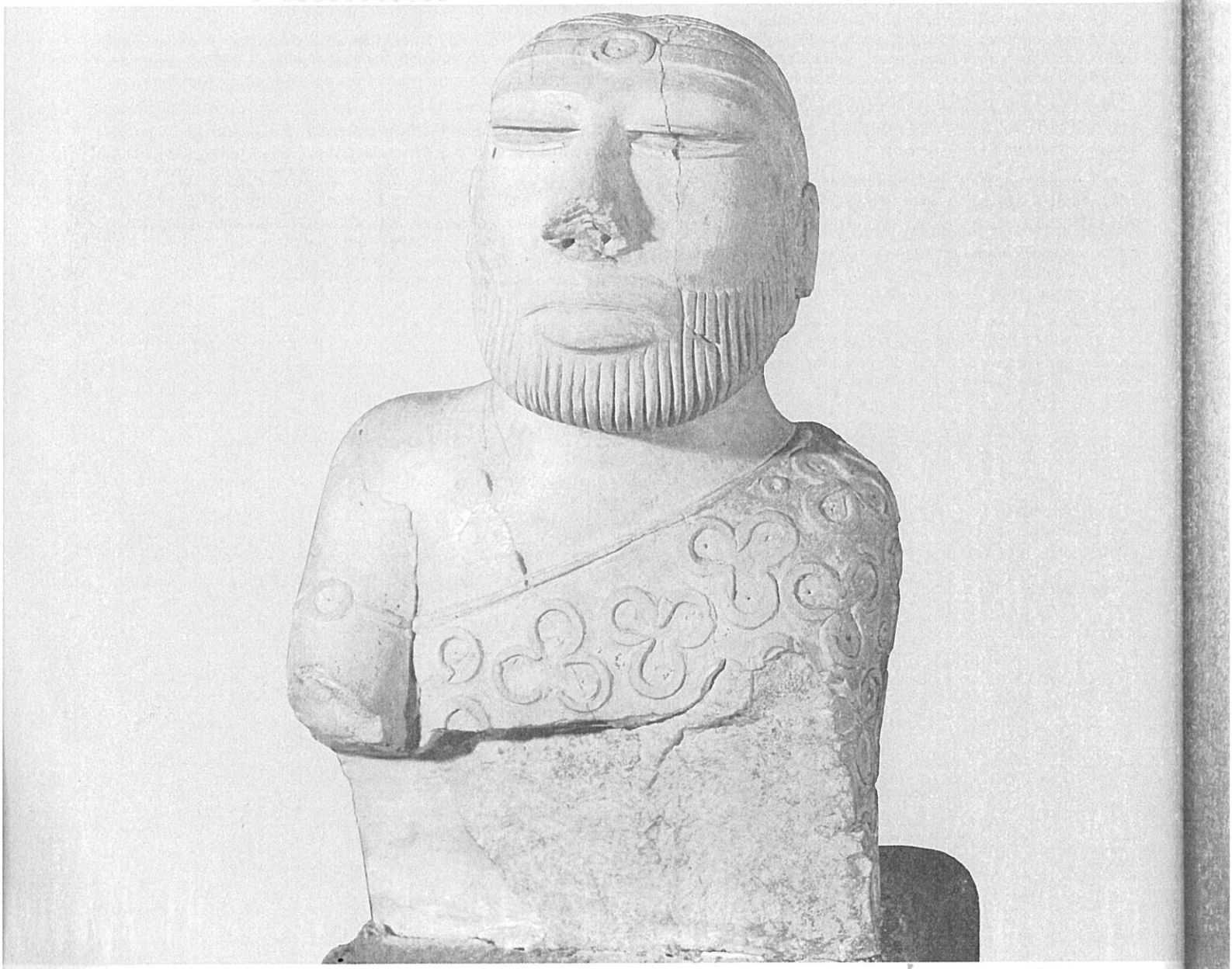
As Mesopotamians built a productive agricultural society in southwest Asia and as Indo-European peoples introduced domesticated horses to much of Eurasia, cultivation and herding also transformed African societies. African agriculture first took root in the Sudan, then moved into the Nile River valley and also to most parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Agriculture flourished particularly in the fertile Nile valley, and abundant harvests soon supported fast-growing populations. That agricultural bounty underwrote the development of Egypt, the most prosperous and powerful of the early agricultural societies in Africa, and also of Nubia, Egypt's neighbor to the south.

Distinctive Egyptian and Nubian societies began to take shape in the valley of the Nile River during the late fourth millennium B.C.E., shortly after the emergence of complex society in Mesopotamia. Like their Mesopotamian counterparts, Egyptians and Nubians drew on agricultural surpluses to organize formal states, support specialized laborers, and develop distinctive cultural traditions. Like Mesopotamians again, Egyptian and Nubian residents of the Nile valley had regular dealings with peoples from other societies. They drew inspiration for political and social organization both from Mesopotamia and from their African neighbors to the south. They also traded actively with Mesopotamians, Phoenicians, Africans, and others as well. Political and economic competition sometimes led to military conflicts with peoples of other societies: on several occasions when they enjoyed great wealth and power, both Egyptians and Nubians embarked on campaigns of imperial conquest, but when their power waned, they found themselves intermittently under attack from the outside.

Indeed, like their counterparts in Mesopotamia, Egyptian and Nubian societies developed from their earliest days in a larger world of interaction and exchange. Just as Mesopotamians, Hittites, Hebrews, and Phoenicians influenced one another in southwest Asia, inhabitants of the Nile valley mixed and mingled with Mesopotamians, Phoenicians, and other peoples from the eastern Mediterranean, southwest Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. Just as Indo-European peoples migrated to new lands and established communities that transformed much of Eurasia, Bantu peoples migrated from their original homeland in west Africa and established settlements that brought profound change to much of sub-Saharan Africa. By no means were Egypt and Nubia isolated centers of social development. Like Mesopotamia, Egypt in particular was a spectacularly prosperous society, but like Mesopotamia again, Egypt was only one part of a much larger world of interacting societies.

Early Societies in South Asia

chapter 4



Sandstone bust of a distinguished man, perhaps a priest-king, from Mohenjo-daro.

PART 1

EYEWITNESS:
Indra, War God of the Aryans

For a god, Indra was quite a rambunctious fellow. According to the stories told about him by the Aryans, Indra had few if any peers in fighting, feasting, or drinking. The Aryans were a herding people who spoke an Indo-European language and who migrated to south Asia in large numbers after 1500 B.C.E. In the early days of their migrations they took Indra as their chief deity. The Aryans told dozens of stories about Indra and sang hundreds of hymns in his honor.

One story had to do with a war between the gods and the demons. When the gods were flagging, they appointed Indra as their leader, and soon they had turned the tide against their enemies. Another story, a favorite of the Aryans, had to do with Indra's role in bringing rain to the earth—a crucial concern for any agricultural society. According to this story, Indra did battle with a dragon who lived in the sky and hoarded water in the clouds. Indra first slaked his thirst with generous drafts of *soma,* a hallucinogenic potion consumed by Aryan priests, and then attacked the dragon, which he killed by hurling thunderbolts at it. The dragon's heavy fall caused turmoil both on earth and in the atmosphere, but afterward the rains filled seven rivers that flowed through northern India and brought life-giving waters to inhabitants of the region.

The Aryans took Indra as a leader against earthly as well as heavenly foes. They did not mount a planned invasion of India, but as they migrated in sizable numbers into south Asia, they came into conflict with Dravidian peoples already living there. When they clashed with the Dravidians, the Aryans took the belligerent Indra as their guide. Aryan hymns praised Indra as the military hero who trampled enemy forces and opened the way for the migrants to build a new society.

For all his contributions, Indra did not survive permanently as a prominent deity. As Aryan and Dravidian peoples mixed, mingled, interacted, and intermarried, tensions between them subsided. Memories of the stormy and violent Indra receded into the background, and eventually they faded almost to nothing. For a thousand years and more,

however, Aryans looked upon the rowdy, raucous war god as a ready source of inspiration as they sought to build a society in an already occupied land.

Tools excavated by archaeologists show that India was a site of human occupation at least two hundred thousand years ago, long before the Aryans introduced Indra to south Asia. Between 8000 and 5000 B.C.E., cultivators built a neolithic society west of the Indus River, in the region bordering on the Iranian plateau, probably as a result of Mesopotamian influence. By 7000 B.C.E. agriculture had taken root in the Indus River valley. Thereafter agriculture spread rapidly, and by about 3000 B.C.E. Dravidian peoples had established neolithic communities throughout much of the Indian subcontinent. The earliest neolithic settlers cultivated wheat, barley, and cotton, and they also kept herds of cattle, sheep, and goats. Agricultural villages were especially numerous in the valley of the Indus River. As the population of the valley swelled and as people interacted with increasing frequency, some of those villages evolved into bustling cities, which served as the organizational centers of Indian society.

Early cities in India stood at the center of an impressive political, social, and cultural order built by Dravidian peoples on the foundation of an agricultural economy. The earliest urban society in India, known as Harappan society, brought wealth and power to the Indus River valley. Eventually, however, it fell into decline, possibly because of environmental problems, just as large numbers of Indo-European migrants moved into India from central Asia and built a very different society. For half a millennium, from about 1500 to 1000 B.C.E., the Indian subcontinent was a site of turmoil as the migrants struggled with Dravidian peoples for control of the land and its resources. Gradually, however, stability returned with the establishment of numerous agricultural villages and regional states. During the centuries after 1000 B.C.E., Aryan and Dravidian peoples increasingly interacted and intermarried, and their combined legacies led to the development of a distinctive society and a rich cultural tradition.

Early Society in East Asia

chapter 5

A rectangular bronze cooking vessel from the Shang dynasty features human faces as decorations on all four sides.

EYEWITNESS:
King Yu and the Taming of the Yellow River

Ancient Chinese legends tell the stories of heroic figures who invented agriculture, domesticated animals, taught people to marry and live in families, created music, introduced the calendar, and instructed people in the arts and crafts. Most important of these heroes were three sage-kings—Yao, Shun, and Yu—who laid the foundations of Chinese society. King Yao was a towering figure, sometimes associated with a mountain, who was extraordinarily modest, sincere, and respectful. Yao's virtuous influence brought harmony to his family, the larger society, and ultimately all the states of China. King Shun succeeded Yao and continued his work by ordering the four seasons of the year and instituting uniform weights, measures, and units of time.

Most dashing of the sage-kings was Yu, a vigorous and tireless worker who rescued China from the raging waters of the flooding Yellow River. Before Yu, according to the legends, experts tried to control the Yellow River's floods by building dikes to contain its waters. The river was much too large and strong for the dikes, however, and when it broke through them it unleashed massive floods. Yu abandoned the effort to dam the Yellow River and organized two alternative strategies. He dredged the river so as to deepen its channel and minimize the likelihood of overflows, and he dug canals parallel to the river so that floodwaters would flow harmlessly to the sea without devastating the countryside.

The legends say that Yu worked on the river for thirteen years without ever returning home. Once, he passed by the gate to his home and heard his wife and children crying out of loneliness, but he continued on his way rather than interrupt his flood-control work. Because he tamed the Yellow River and made it possible to cultivate rice and millet, Yu became a popular hero. Poets praised the man who protected fields and villages from deadly and destructive floods. Historians reported that he led the waters to the sea in a manner as orderly as lords proceeding to a formal reception. Eventually, Yu succeeded King Shun as leader of the Chinese people. Indeed, he founded the Xia dynasty, the first ruling house of ancient China.

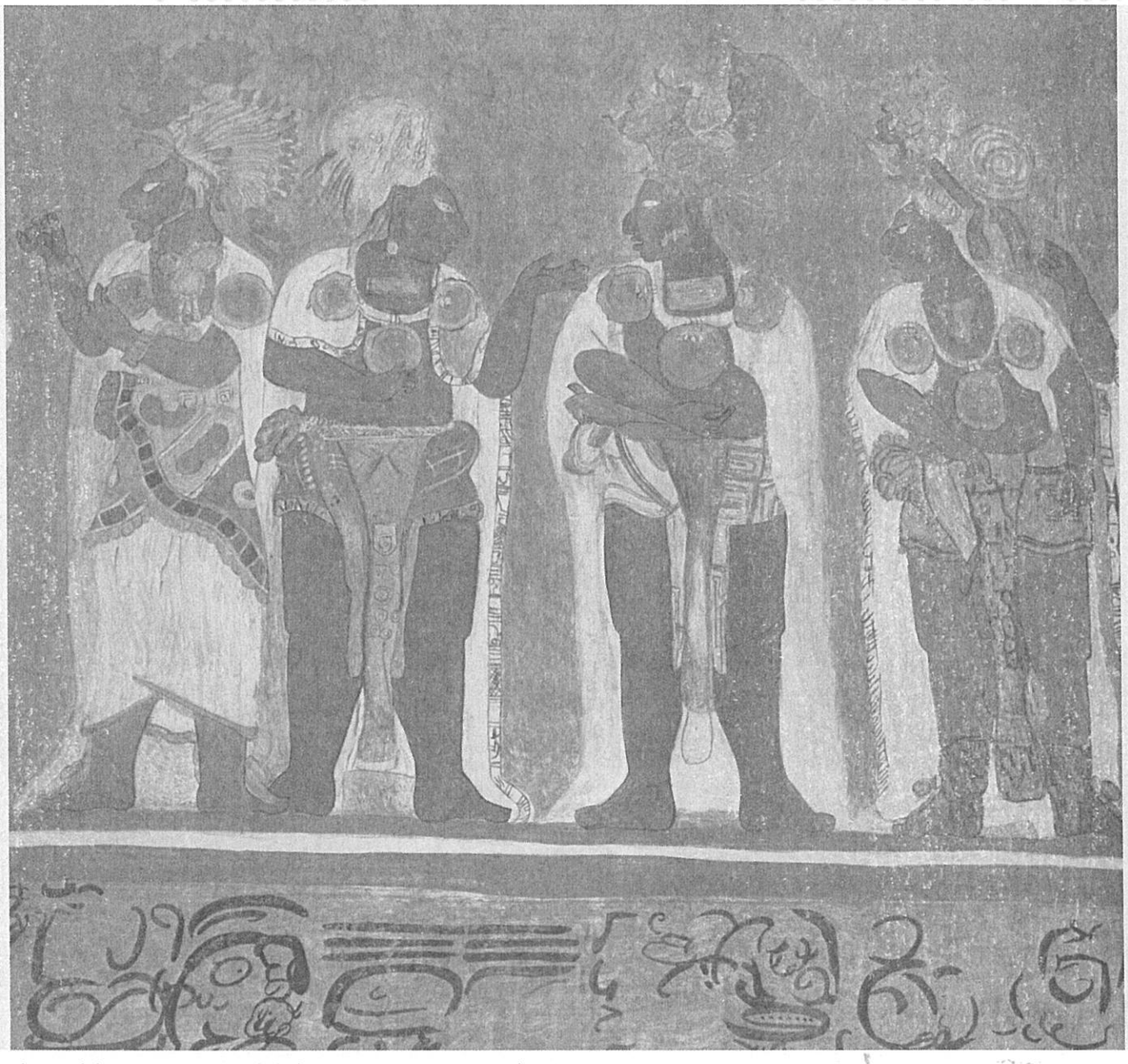
The legends of Yao, Shun, and Yu no doubt exaggerated the virtues and deeds of the sage-kings. Agriculture, arts, crafts, marriage, family, government, and means of water control developed over an extended period of time, and no single individual was responsible for introducing them into China. Yet legends about early heroic figures reflected the interest of a people in the practices and customs that defined their society. At the same time, the moral thinkers who transmitted the legends used them to advocate values they considered beneficial for their society. By exalting Yao, Shun, and Yu as exemplars of virtue, Chinese moralists promoted the values of social harmony and selfless, dedicated work that the sage-kings represented.

Groups of the early human species *Homo erectus* made their way to east Asia as early as eight hundred thousand years ago. At that early date they used stone tools and relied on a hunting and gathering economy like their counterparts in other regions of the earth. As in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and India, however, population pressures in east Asia encouraged communities to experiment with agriculture. Peoples of southern China and southeast Asia domesticated rice after about 7000 B.C.E., and by 5000 B.C.E. neolithic villages throughout the valley of the Yangzi River (Chang Jiang) depended on rice as the staple item in their diet. During the same era, millet came under cultivation farther north, in the valley of the Yellow River (Huang He), where neolithic communities flourished by 5000 B.C.E. In later centuries wheat and barley made their way from Mesopotamia to northern China, and by 2000 B.C.E. they supplemented millet as staple foods of the region.

Agricultural surpluses supported numerous neolithic communities throughout east Asia. During the centuries after 3000 B.C.E., residents of the Yangzi River and Yellow River valleys lived in agricultural villages and communicated and traded with others throughout the region. During the second millennium B.C.E., they began to establish cities, build large states, and construct distinctive social and cultural traditions. Three dynastic states based in the Yellow River valley brought much of China under their authority and forged many local communities into a larger Chinese society. Sharp social distinctions emerged in early Chinese society, and patriarchal family heads exercised authority in both public and private affairs. A distinctive form of writing supported the development of sophisticated cultural traditions. Meanwhile, Chinese cultivators had frequent dealings with peoples from other societies, particularly with nomadic herders inhabiting the grassy steppes of central Asia. Migrating frequently on the steppes, nomadic peoples linked China with lands to the west and brought knowledge of bronze and iron metallurgy, horse-drawn chariots, and wheeled vehicles to east Asia. As in early Mesopotamia, Egypt, and India, then, complex society in east Asia promoted the development of distinctive social and cultural traditions in the context of cross-cultural interaction and exchange.

Early Societies in the Americas and Oceania

chapter 6



In this wall painting from a Maya temple, dignitaries converse among themselves during a ceremony.

EYEWITNESS:

Chan Bahlum Spills Blood to Honor the Gods

In early September of the year 683 C.E., a Maya man named Chan Bahlum grasped a sharp obsidian knife and cut three deep slits into the skin of his penis. He inserted into each slit a strip of paper made from beaten tree bark so as to encourage a continuing flow of blood. His younger brother Kan Xul performed a similar rite, while other members of his family also drew blood from their bodies.

The bloodletting observances of September 683 C.E. were political and religious rituals, acts of deep piety performed as Chan Bahlum presided over funeral services for his recently deceased father, Pacal, king of the Maya city of Palenque in the Yucatan peninsula. The Maya believed that the shedding of royal blood was essential to the world's survival. Thus, as Chan Bahlum prepared to succeed his father as king of Palenque, he let his blood flow copiously.

Throughout Mesoamerica, Maya and other peoples performed similar rituals for a millennium and more. Maya rulers and their family members regularly spilled their blood by opening wounds with obsidian knives, stingray spines, or sharpened bones. Men commonly drew blood from the penis, like Chan Bahlum, and women often drew from the tongue. Both sexes occasionally drew blood also from the earlobes, lips, or cheeks, and they sometimes increased the flow by pulling long, thick cords through their wounds.

This shedding of blood was so crucial to Maya rituals because of its association with rain and agriculture. According to Maya priests, the gods had shed their blood to water the earth and nourish crops of maize, and they expected human beings to honor them by imitating their sacrifice. By spilling human blood the Maya hoped to please the gods and ensure that life-giving waters would bring bountiful harvests to their fields. By inflicting painful wounds not just on their enemies but on their own bodies as well, the Maya demonstrated their conviction that bloodletting rituals were essential to the coming of rain and the survival of their agricultural society.

Early societies in the Americas and Oceania developed independently and differed considerably from their counterparts in the eastern hemisphere. Human migrants reached

both regions long after human groups had established populations in most other world regions. In fact, migrations to the Americas and Oceania represented some of the last episodes in the long process by which *Homo sapiens* established populations in all habitable parts of the world.

Human foragers reached the Americas, Australia, and New Guinea during ice ages when glaciers locked up much of the earth's water, causing sea levels all over the world to decline precipitously—sometimes by as much as 300 meters (984 feet). For thousands of years, temporary land bridges linked regions that both before and after the ice ages were separated by the seas. One land bridge linked Siberia with Alaska. Another joined the continent of Australia with the island of New Guinea, while low sea levels also exposed large stretches of land connecting Sumatra, Java, and other Indonesian islands to the peninsula of southeast Asia. The temporary land bridges enabled human migrants to walk right into previously unpopulated regions and start new communities.

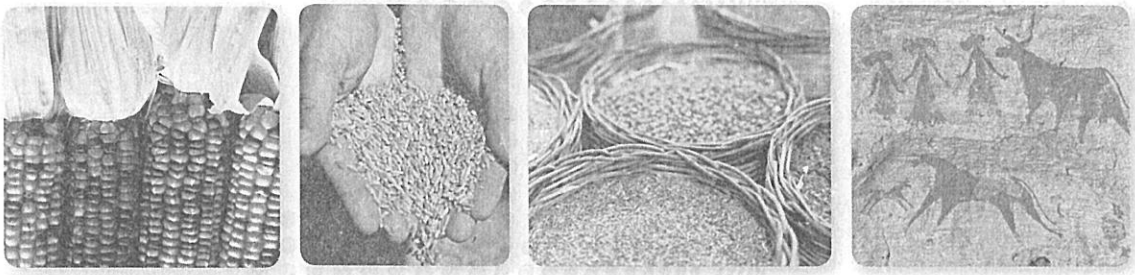
The establishment of human populations in the Pacific islands was a much later development. Only about six thousand years ago did the ancestors of the Polynesians invent highly maneuverable sailing canoes and build a body of nautical expertise that allowed them to populate the islands of the vast Pacific Ocean. By about 700 C.E. these remarkable sailors had found their way to every speck of land in the world's largest ocean, which covers one-third of the earth's surface.

Oceans separated the Americas and Oceania from the eastern hemisphere and from each other. By no means, however, did the early human inhabitants of the Americas and Oceania lead completely isolated lives. To the contrary, there were frequent and sometimes regular interactions between peoples of different societies within the Americas and within Oceania. Moreover, there were sporadic but significant contacts between Asian peoples and Pacific islanders and also between Pacific islanders and native peoples of the Americas. It is likely that at least fleeting encounters took place as well between peoples of the eastern and western hemispheres, although little evidence survives on the nature of encounters in early times. Yet even as they dealt frequently with peoples of other societies, the first inhabitants of the Americas and Oceania established distinctive societies of their own, like their counterparts in the eastern hemisphere.

Indeed, despite their different origins and their distinctive political, social, and cultural traditions, peoples of the Americas and Oceania built societies that in some ways resembled those of the eastern hemisphere. Human communities independently discovered agriculture in several regions of North America and South America, and migrants introduced cultivation to the inhabited Pacific islands as well. With agriculture came increasing populations, settlement in towns, specialized labor, formal political authorities, hierarchical social orders, long-distance trade, and organized religious traditions. The Americas also generated large, densely populated societies featuring cities, monumental public works, imperial states, and sometimes traditions of writing as well. Thus, like their counterparts in the eastern hemisphere, the earliest societies of the Americas and Oceania reflected a common human tendency toward the development of increasingly complex social forms.

State of the World

A World with Crops and Herds, Cities and States, Writing and Religion



High intelligence and sophisticated language enabled *Homo sapiens* to establish communities throughout the world. *Homo sapiens* made adjustments that were necessary to survive and flourish in almost every terrestrial environment: mountain, valley, coastline, grassland, desert, rain forest, tundra, and more. Everywhere they went, human beings found ways to exploit locally available resources and use them in the interests of their communities. By about fifteen thousand years ago, *Homo sapiens* already ranked as a highly successful competitor among the species inhabiting the earth.

Yet the paleolithic era was only the beginning of human prominence in the world. After the adoption of agriculture, human beings dramatically increased their presence and influence in the world. They progressively claimed lands and devoted them to the cultivation of plants and the maintenance of domesticated animals. They made many plant and animal species dependent upon human masters, and they exploited those species for purposes of satisfying human needs and making human life more agreeable.

The implications of agriculture were enormous. With abundant supplies of food available to them, human populations surged, and the size of human communities grew to proportions that would have been inconceivable to paleolithic foragers. Villages dotted the landscapes of early agricultural societies, and towns emerged at strategic sites where trading was convenient or valuable resources were readily available. In regions of high agricultural production and large populations, cities served as nerve centers guiding political, economic, and cultural affairs both within their own limits and in neighboring territories. These cities were the first sites of experimentation in the art of organizing large numbers of people living together in densely populated spaces. The implications of agriculture extended further to the organization of sizable regions under the supervision of formal states. Only with surplus foods produced by cultivators were states able to provide for the rulers, armies, administrators, and other specialists who were essential to their survival.

Food surpluses also made it possible for agricultural societies to support intellectual specialists. The invention of writing magnified human intelligence by enabling the precise communication of information, ideas, and reflections. By 500 B.C.E. scribes and scholars in several world regions had generated libraries of written works and used writing to expand intellectual boundaries by engaging in speculation about the nature of reality, the meaning of life, and the relationship between human beings and the various gods recognized in their different societies.

The invention of agriculture ranks alongside the mastery of fire and the process of industrialization as one of the most important turning points in human history. Within a few thousand years, agriculture transformed a world in which small, foraging bands of *Homo sapiens* competed directly with other animal species into a world in which human groups claimed ever larger shares of the earth's resources for their own use.

3000 B.C.E. | 2000 B.C.E. | 1000 B.C.E. | 0 | 1000 C.E.

SOUTHWEST ASIA

Early Mesopotamia, 3000–2000 B.C.E.

Hittite, Assyrian, and Babylonian empires, 1800–600 B.C.E.

AFRICA

Nile Valley, 3000–2000 B.C.E.

Imperial Egyptian empire (New Kingdom) 1500–1070 B.C.E.

ASIA

Harappan society, South Asia, ca. 2500–1500 B.C.E.

Aryan migrations in India, 1500–500 B.C.E.

Xia dynasty, 2200–1766 B.C.E.; Shang dynasty, 1766–1122 B.C.E.; Zhou dynasty, 1122–256 B.C.E.

SOUTH AMERICA

Early Mesoamerican societies, 1200 B.C.E.–1100 C.E.

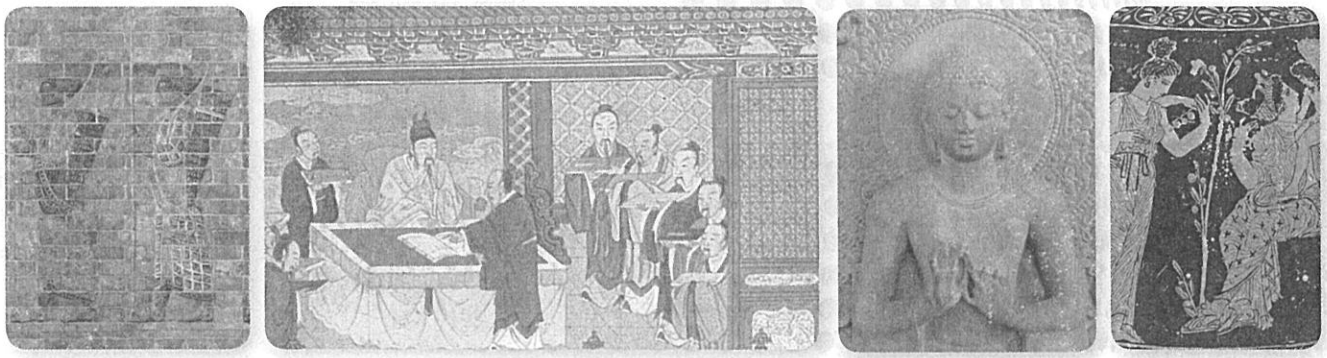
Early Andean South American societies, 1000 B.C.E.–700 C.E.

OCEANIA

Early societies of Oceania, ca. 1500 B.C.E.–700 C.E.

part 2

THE FORMATION OF CLASSICAL SOCIETIES, 500 B.C.E. TO 500 C.E.



Shortly after *Homo sapiens* turned to agriculture, human communities began to experiment with methods of social organization. In several cases the experimentation encouraged the development of complex societies that integrated the lives and livelihoods of peoples over large regions. These early complex societies launched human history on a trajectory that it continues to follow today. States, social classes, technological innovation, specialization of labor, trade, and sophisticated cultural traditions rank among the most important legacies of these societies.

Toward the end of the first millennium B.C.E., several early societies achieved particularly high degrees of internal organization, extended their authority over extremely large regions, and elaborated especially influential cultural traditions. The most prominent of these societies developed in Persia, China, India, and the Mediterranean basin. Because their legacies have endured so long and have influenced the ways that literally billions of people have led their lives, historians often refer to them as classical societies.

The classical societies of Persia, China, India, and the Mediterranean basin differed from one another in many ways. They raised different food crops, constructed buildings out of different materials, lived by different legal and moral codes, and recognized different gods. Classical China and India depended on the cultivation of rice, millet, and wheat, whereas in Persia and the Mediterranean wheat was the staple food crop. In China, packed earth and wood served as the principal construction material even for large public buildings; in India, wood was the most common building material; and in Persia and the Mediterranean, architects designed buildings of brick and stone. The classical societies differed even more strikingly when it came to beliefs and values. They generated a wide variety of ideas about the organization of family and society, the understanding of what constituted proper public and private behavior, the nature of the gods or other powers thought to influence human affairs, and proper relationships among human beings, the natural world, and the gods.

Despite those differences, these societies faced several common problems. They all confronted the challenge, for example, of administering vast territories without advanced technologies of transportation and communication. Rulers built centralized imperial states

on a scale much larger than their predecessors in earlier societies. They constructed elaborate systems of bureaucracy and experimented with administrative organization in an effort to secure influence for central governments and extend imperial authority to the far reaches of their realms. To encourage political and economic integration of their lands, classical rulers built roads and supported networks of trade and communication that linked the far-flung regions under their authority.

The classical societies all faced military challenges, and they raised powerful armies for both defensive and offensive purposes. Military challenges frequently arose from within classical societies themselves in the form of rebellion, civil war, or conflict between powerful factions. External threats came from nomadic and migratory peoples who sought to share in the wealth generated by the productive agricultural economies of classical societies. Sometimes, mounted nomadic warriors charged into settlements, seized what they wished, and departed before the victims could mount a defense. In other cases, migratory peoples moved into classical societies in such large numbers that they disrupted the established political and social order. In hopes of securing their borders and enhancing the welfare of their lands, rulers of most classical societies launched campaigns of expansion that ultimately produced massive imperial states.

The bureaucracies and armies that enabled classical societies to address some problems effectively created difficulties as well. One pressing problem revolved around the maintenance of the bureaucracies and armies. To finance administrative and military machinery, rulers of the classical societies all claimed some portion of the agricultural and industrial surplus of their lands in the form of taxes or tribute. Most of them also required their subjects to provide uncompensated labor services for large-scale public projects involving the building and maintenance of structures such as defensive walls, highways, bridges, and irrigation systems.

The classical societies also faced the challenge of trying to maintain an equitable distribution of land and wealth. As some individuals flourished and accumulated land and wealth, they enjoyed economic advantages over their neighbors. Increasingly sharp economic distinctions gave rise to tensions that fueled bitter class conflict. In some cases, conflicts escalated into rebellions and civil wars that threatened the very survival of the classical societies.

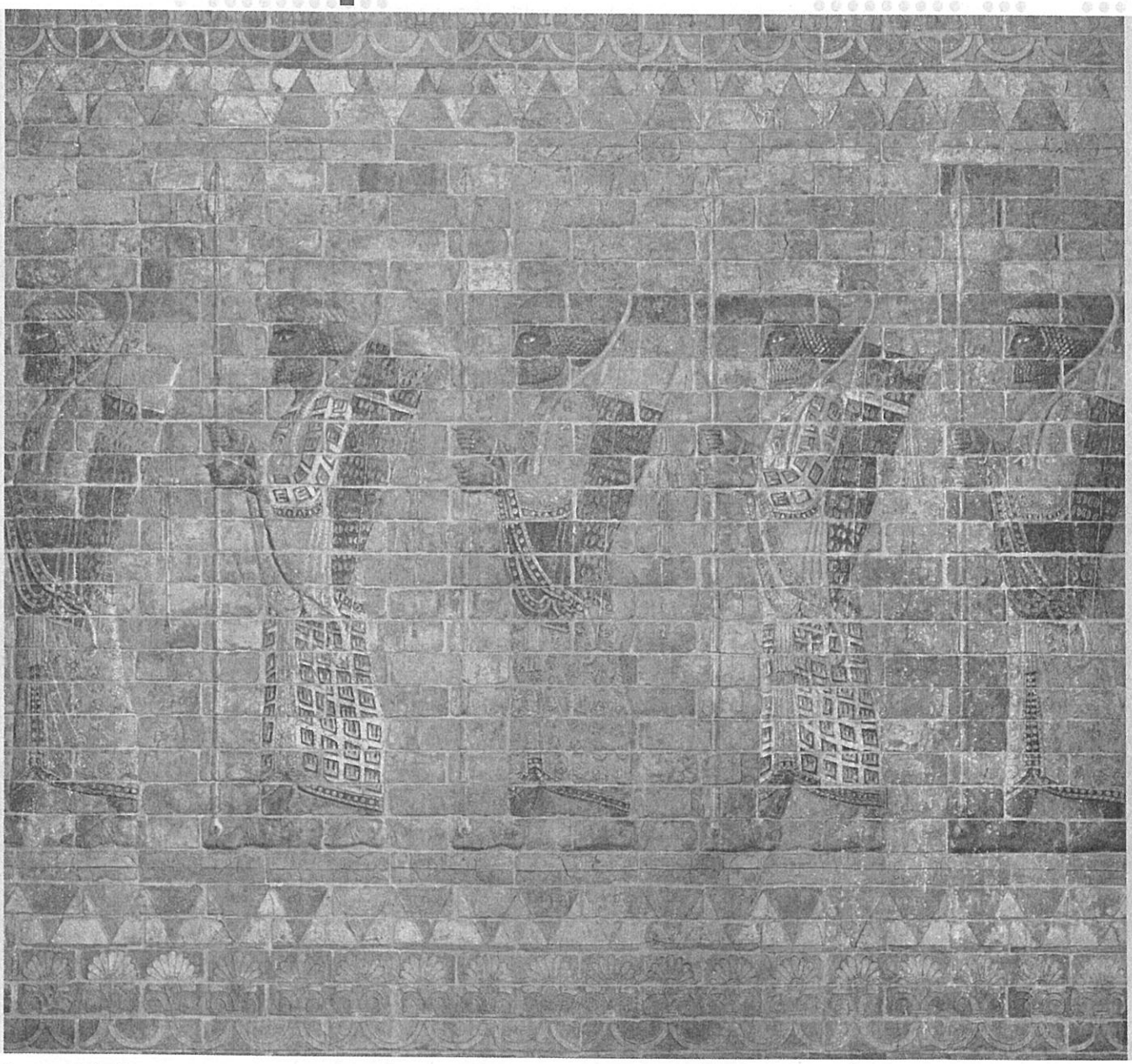
All the classical societies engaged in long-distance trade. This trade encouraged economic integration within the societies, since their various regions came to depend on one another for agricultural products and manufactured items. Long-distance trade led also to the establishment of regular commerce between peoples of different societies and cultural regions. The volume of trade increased dramatically when classical empires pacified large stretches of the Eurasian landmass. Long-distance trade became common enough that a well-established network of land and sea routes, known collectively as the silk roads, linked lands as distant as China and Europe.

All the classical societies generated sophisticated cultural and religious traditions. Different societies held widely varying beliefs and values, but their cultural and religious traditions offered guidance on moral, religious, political, and social issues. Those traditions often served as foundations for educational systems that prepared individuals for careers in government. As a result, they shaped the values of people who made law and implemented policy. Several cultural and religious traditions also attracted large popular followings and created institutional structures that enabled them to survive over a long term and extend their influence through time.

Over the centuries, specific political, social, economic, and cultural features of the classical societies have disappeared. Yet their legacies deeply influenced future societies and in many ways continue to influence the lives of the world's peoples. Appreciation of the legacies of classical societies in Persia, China, India, and the Mediterranean basin is crucial for the effort to understand the world's historical development.

The Empires of Persia

chapter 7



An enameled tile frieze created about 515 B.C.E. depicts a group of life-size Persian archers at the palace of King Darius in Susa.

EYEWITNESS:
King Croesus and the Tricky Business of Predicting the Future

The Greek historian Herodotus relished a good story, and he related many a tale about the Persian empire and its conflicts with other peoples, including Greeks. One story had to do with a struggle between Cyrus, leader of the expanding Persian realm, and Croesus, ruler of the powerful and wealthy kingdom of Lydia in southwestern Anatolia. Croesus noted the growth of Persian influence with concern and asked the Greek oracle at Delphi whether to go to war against Cyrus. The oracle, which had a reputation for delivering ambiguous predictions, responded that an attack on Cyrus would destroy a great kingdom.

Overjoyed, Croesus lined up his allies and prepared for war. In 546 B.C.E. he launched an invasion and seized a small town, provoking Cyrus to engage the formidable Lydian cavalry. The resulting battle was hard fought but inconclusive. Because winter was approaching, Croesus disbanded his troops and returned to his capital at Sardis, expecting Cyrus to retreat as well. But Cyrus was a vigorous and unpredictable warrior, and he pursued Croesus to Sardis. When he learned of the pursuit, Croesus hastily assembled an army to confront the invaders. Cyrus threw it into disarray, however, by advancing a group of warriors mounted on camels, which spooked the Lydian horses and sent them into headlong flight. Cyrus's army then surrounded Sardis and took the city after a siege of only two weeks. Croesus narrowly escaped death in the battle, but he was taken captive and afterward became an advisor to Cyrus. Herodotus could not resist pointing out that events proved the Delphic oracle right: Croesus's attack on Cyrus did indeed lead to the destruction of a great kingdom—his own.

The victory over Lydia was a major turning point in the development of the Persian empire. Lydia had a reputation as a kingdom of fabulous wealth, partly because it was the first land to use standardized coins with values guaranteed by the state. Taking advantage of its coins and its geographic location on the Mediterranean, Lydia conducted maritime trade with Greece, Egypt, and Phoenicia as well as overland trade with Mesopotamia and

Persia. Lydian wealth and resources gave Cyrus tremendous momentum as he extended Persian authority to new lands and built the earliest of the vast imperial states of classical times.

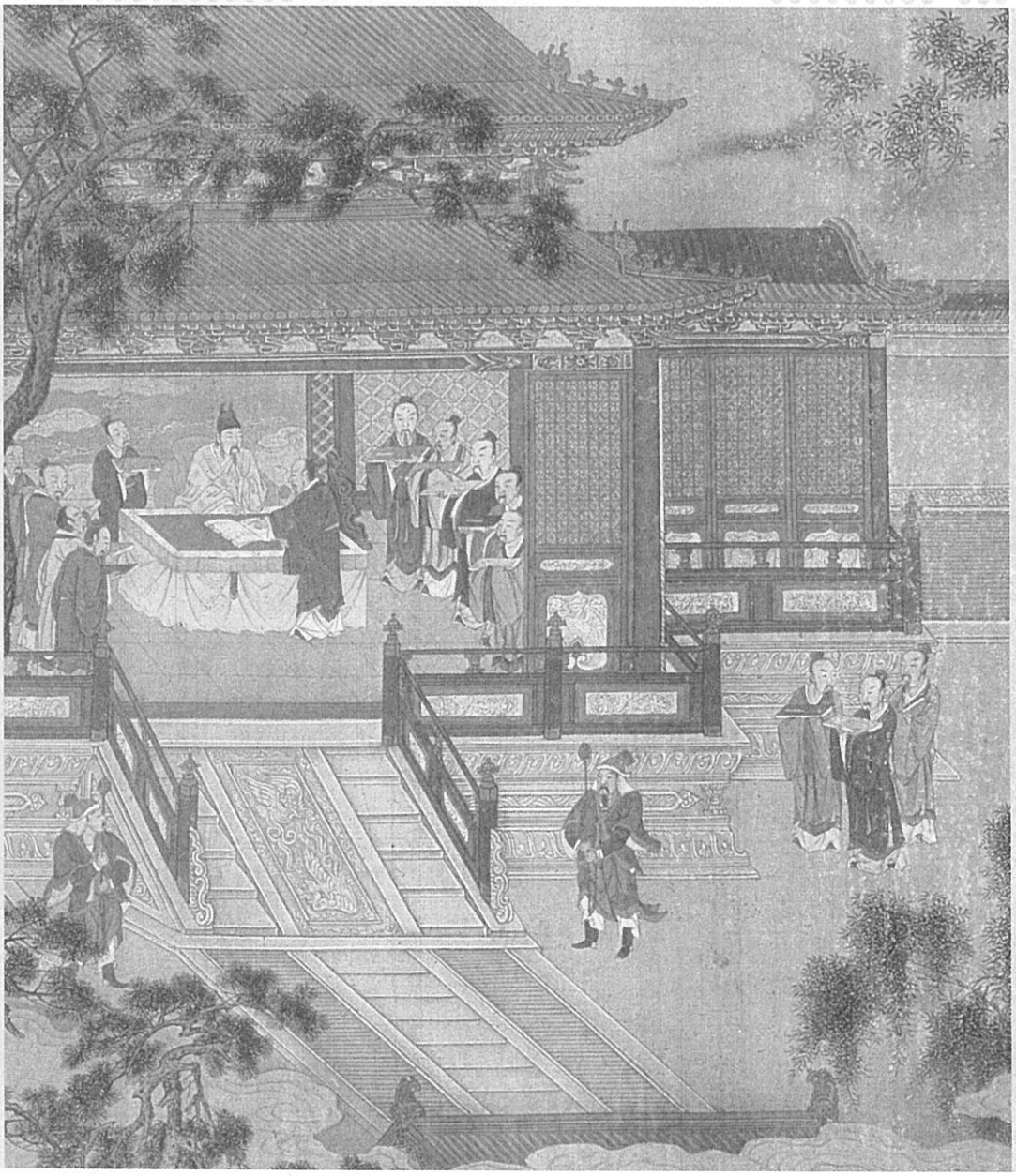
Classical Persian society began to take shape during the sixth century B.C.E. when warriors conquered the region from the Indus River to Egypt and southeastern Europe. Their conquests yielded an enormous realm much larger than the earlier Babylonian or Assyrian empires. The very size of the Persian empire created political and administrative problems for its rulers. Once they solved those problems, however, a series of Persian-based empires governed much of the territory between India and the Mediterranean Sea for more than a millennium—from the mid-sixth century B.C.E. until the early seventh century C.E.—and brought centralized political organization to many distinct peoples living over vast geographic spaces.

In organizing their realm, Persian rulers relied heavily on Mesopotamian techniques of administration, which they adapted to their own needs. Yet they did not hesitate to create new institutions or adopt new administrative procedures. In the interest of improved communications and military mobility, they also invested resources in the construction of roads and highways linking the regions of the empire. As a result of those efforts, central administrators were able to send instructions throughout the empire, dispatch armies in times of turmoil, and ensure that local officials would carry out imperial policies.

The organization of the vast territories embraced by the classical Persian empires had important social, economic, and cultural implications. High agricultural productivity enabled many people to work at tasks other than cultivation: classes of bureaucrats, administrators, priests, craftsmen, and merchants increased in number as the production and distribution of food became more efficient. Meanwhile, social extremes became more pronounced: a few individuals and families amassed enormous wealth, many led simple lives, and some fell into slavery. Good roads fostered trade within imperial borders, and Persian society itself served as a commercial and cultural bridge between Indian and Mediterranean societies. As a crossroads, Persia served not only as a link in long-distance trade networks but also as a conduit for the exchange of philosophical and religious ideas. Persian religious traditions did not attract many adherents beyond the imperial boundaries, but they inspired religious thinkers subject to Persian rule and also influenced Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The Unification of China

chapter 8



An eighteenth-century painting depicts the Han emperor discussing classical texts with Confucian scholars.

PART 2

EYEWITNESS:
Sima Qian: Speaking Truth to Power in Han China

In the year 99 B.C.E., Chinese imperial officials sentenced the historian Sima Qian to punishment by castration. Like his father before him, Sima Qian was the official astrologer and historian at the court of the Han dynasty in Chang'an. For more than a decade, he had worked diligently on a project that he had inherited from his father—a history of China from earliest times to his own day. This project brought Sima Qian high prominence at the imperial court. When he spoke in defense of a dishonored general, his views attracted widespread attention. The emperor reacted furiously when he learned that Sima Qian had publicly expressed opinions that contradicted the ruler's judgment and ordered the historian to undergo his humiliating punishment.

Human castration was by no means uncommon in premodern times. Thousands of boys and young men of undistinguished birth underwent voluntary castration in China and many other lands as well in order to pursue careers as **eunuchs**. Ruling elites often appointed eunuchs, rather than nobles, to sensitive posts because eunuchs did not sire families and so could not build power bases to challenge established authorities. As personal servants of ruling elites, eunuchs sometimes came to wield enormous power because of their influence with rulers and their families.

Exemplary punishment was not an appealing alternative, however, to educated elites and other prominent individuals: when sentenced to punitive castration, Chinese men of honor normally avoided the penalty by taking their own lives. Yet Sima Qian chose to endure his punishment. In a letter to a friend, he explained that an early death by suicide would mean that a work that only he was capable of producing would go forever unwritten. To transmit his understanding of the Chinese past, then, Sima Qian opted to live and work in disgrace until his death about 90 B.C.E.

During his last years Sima Qian completed a massive work consisting of 130 chapters, most of which survive. He consulted court documents and the historical works of his

eunuchs (YOO-nihks)

predecessors, and when writing about his own age he supplemented those sources with personal observations and information gleaned from political and military figures who played leading roles in Chinese society. He composed historical accounts of the emperors' reigns and biographical sketches of notable figures, including ministers, statesmen, generals, empresses, aristocrats, scholars, officials, merchants, and rebels. He even described the societies of neighboring peoples with whom Chinese sometimes conducted trade and sometimes made war. The work of the disgraced but conscientious scholar Sima Qian provides the best information available about the development of early imperial China.

A rich body of political and social thought prepared the way for the unification of China under the Qin and Han dynasties. Confucians, Daoists, Legalists, and others formed schools of thought and worked to bring political and social stability to China during the chaotic years of the late Zhou dynasty and the Period of the Warring States. Legalist ideas contributed directly to unification by outlining means by which rulers could strengthen their states. The works of the Confucians and the Daoists did not lend themselves so readily to the unification process, but both schools of thought survived and profoundly influenced Chinese political and cultural traditions.

Like the Achaemenid rulers of classical Persia, the Qin and Han emperors built a powerful, centralized state on the foundation of a productive agricultural society. Like the Achaemenids, the Qin and Han emperors ruled through an elaborate bureaucracy, and they built an extensive network of roads that linked the various regions of their empire. The Qin and Han emperors went even further than their Persian counterparts in their efforts to foster cultural unity. They imposed a common written language throughout China and established an educational system based on Confucian thought and values. For almost 450 years the Qin and Han dynasties guided the fortunes of China and established a strong precedent for centralized imperial rule.

Especially during the Han dynasty, political stability was the foundation of economic prosperity. High agricultural productivity supported the development of iron and silk industries, and Chinese goods found markets in central Asia, India, the Persian empire, and even the Mediterranean basin. In spite of economic prosperity, however, later Han society experienced deep divisions between the small class of extremely wealthy landowners and the masses of landless poor. Those divisions eventually led to civil disorder and the emergence of political factions, which ultimately brought the Han dynasty to an end.

State, Society, and the Quest for Salvation in India

chapter 9

A limestone sculpture depicts a serene Buddha as he preaches a sermon to his followers.

EYEWITNESS:
Megasthenes: A Greek Perspective on Classical India

The earliest description of India by a foreigner came from the pen of a Greek ambassador named Megasthenes. As the diplomatic representative of the Seleucid emperor, Megasthenes lived in India for many years during the late fourth and early third centuries B.C.E., and he traveled throughout much of northern India. Although Megasthenes' book, the *Indika,* has long been lost, many quotations from it survive in Greek and Latin literature. These fragments clearly show that Megasthenes had great respect for the Indian land, people, and society.

Like travel writers of all times, Megasthenes included a certain amount of spurious information in his account of India. He wrote, for example, of ants the size of foxes that mined gold from the earth and fiercely defended their hoards from any humans who tried to steal them. Only by distracting them with slabs of meat, Megasthenes said, could humans safely make away with their treasure. He also reported races of monstrous human beings: some with no mouth who survived by breathing in the odors of fruits, flowers, and roots, others with feet pointing backward and eight toes per foot, and yet others with the heads of dogs who communicated by barking.

Beyond the tall tales, Megasthenes offered a great deal of reliable information. He portrayed India as a fertile land that supported two harvests of grain per year. He described the capital of Pataliputra as a rectangle-shaped city situated along the Ganges River and surrounded by a moat and a massive timber wall with 570 towers and sixty-four gates. He mentioned large armies that used elephants as war animals. He pointed out the strongly hierarchical character of Indian society (although he incorrectly held that there were seven instead of four main castes). He noted that two main schools of "philosophers" (Hindus and Buddhists) enjoyed special prominence as well as exemption from taxes, and he described the ascetic lifestyles and vegetarian diets followed by particularly devout individuals. In short, Megasthenes portrayed India as a wealthy land that supported a distinctive society with well-established cultural traditions.

In India as in Persia and China, the centuries after 500 B.C.E. witnessed the development of a classical society whose influence has persisted over the centuries. Its most prominent features were a well-defined social structure, which left individuals with few doubts about their position and role in society, and several popular religious traditions that helped to shape Indian beliefs and values. Two religions, Buddhism and Hinduism, also appealed strongly to peoples beyond the subcontinent.

Efforts to maintain an imperial government did not succeed nearly as well in India as they did in Persia and China. For the most part, classical India fell under the sway of regional kingdoms rather than centralized empires. Imperial regimes were crucial for the consolidation of Indian cultural traditions, however, because they sponsored cultural leaders and promoted their ideals throughout the subcontinent and beyond. The spread of Buddhism is a case in point: imperial support helped the faith secure its position in India and attract converts in other lands. Thus, even in the absence of a strong and continuing imperial tradition like that of Persia or China, the social and cultural traditions of classical India not only shaped the lives and experiences of the subcontinent's inhabitants but also influenced peoples in distant lands.

Mediterranean Society: The Greek Phase

chapter 10

An Athenian vase produced in the late fifth century B.C.E. depicts Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love (seated), with attendants at a garden party.

EYEWITNESS:
Homer: A Poet and the Sea

For a man who perhaps never existed, Homer has been a profoundly influential figure. According to tradition, Homer composed the two great epic poems of ancient Greece, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey.* In fact, scholars now know that bards recited both poems for generations before Homer lived—the mid-eighth century B.C.E., if he was indeed a historical figure. Some experts believe that Homer was not a real man so much as a convenient name for several otherwise anonymous scribes who committed the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to writing. Others believe that a man named Homer had a part in preparing a written version of the epics, but that others also contributed significantly to his work.

Whether Homer ever really lived or not, the epics attributed to him deeply influenced the development of classical Greek thought and literature. The *Iliad* offered a Greek perspective on a campaign waged by a band of Greek warriors against the city of Troy in Anatolia during the twelfth century B.C.E. The *Odyssey* recounted the experiences of the Greek hero Odysseus as he sailed home after the Trojan war. The two works described scores of difficulties faced by Greek warriors—not only battles with Trojans but also challenges posed by deities and monsters, conflicts among themselves, and even psychological barriers that individuals had to surmount. Between them, the two epics preserved a rich collection of stories that literary figures mined for more than a millennium, reworking Homer's material and exploring his themes from fresh perspectives.

Quite apart from their significance as literary masterpieces, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* testify to the frequency and normality of travel, communication, and interaction in the Mediterranean basin during the second and first millennia B.C.E. Both works portray Greeks as expert and fearless seamen, almost as comfortable aboard their ships as on land, who did not hesitate to venture into the waters of what Homer called the "wine-dark sea" in pursuit of their goals. Homer lovingly described the sleek galleys in which Greek warriors raced across the waters, sometimes to plunder the slower but heavily laden cargo vessels that plied the Mediterranean sea lanes, more often to launch strikes at enemy targets. He

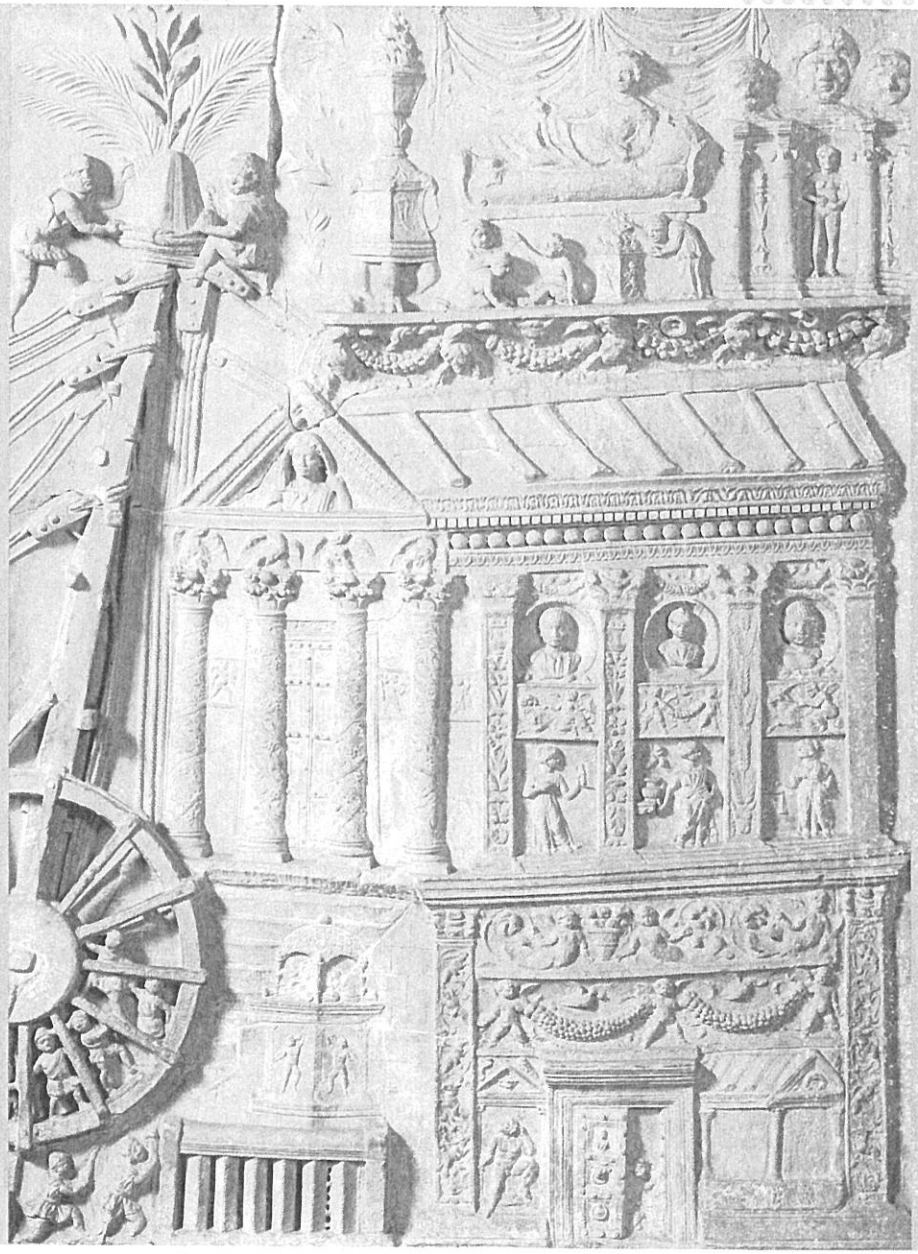
even had Odysseus construct a sailing ship single-handedly when he was shipwrecked on an island inhabited only by a goddess. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* make it clear that maritime links touched peoples throughout the Mediterranean basin in Homer's time and, further, that Greeks were among the most prominent seafarers of the age.

Already during the second millennium B.C.E., Phoenician merchants had established links between lands and peoples at the far ends of the Mediterranean Sea. During the classical era, however, the Mediterranean basin became much more tightly integrated as Greeks, and later Romans as well, organized commercial exchange and sponsored interaction throughout the region. Under Greek and Roman supervision, the Mediterranean served not as a barrier but, rather, as a highway linking Anatolia, Egypt, Greece, Italy, France, Spain, north Africa, and even southern Russia (by way of routes through the Black Sea).

Ancient Greece differed from classical societies in other lands. Early in the classical era, the Greeks lived in autonomous city-states. Only after the late third century B.C.E. did they play prominent roles in the large, centralized empire established by their neighbors to the north in Macedon. Yet from the seventh through the second centuries B.C.E., the Greeks integrated the societies and economies of distant lands through energetic commercial activity over the Mediterranean sea lanes. They also generated a remarkable body of moral thought and philosophical reflection. Just as the traditions of classical Persia, China, and India shaped the cultural experiences of those lands, the traditions of the Greeks profoundly influenced the long-term cultural development of the Mediterranean basin, Europe, and southwest Asia as well.

Mediterranean Society: The Roman Phase

chapter 11



A marble relief sculpture of about 100 C.E. depicts a crew of men working in a treadmill that powers a crane used in construction of a Roman temple.

EYEWITNESS:
Paul of Tarsus and the Long Arm of Roman Law

About 55 C.E. Roman guards transported a prisoner named Paul of Tarsus from the port of Caesarea in Palestine to the city of Rome. The journey turned out to be more eventful than the travelers had planned. The party boarded a sailing ship loaded with grain and carrying 276 passengers as well. The ship departed in the fall—after the main sailing season, which ran from May through September—and soon encountered a violent storm. For two frightening weeks crew and passengers alike worked furiously to keep the ship afloat, jettisoning baggage, tackle, and cargo to lighten the load as wind and rain battered the vessel. Eventually, the ship ran aground on the island of Malta, where storm-driven waves destroyed the craft. Yet most of the passengers and crew survived, including Paul and his guards, who spent three months on Malta before catching another ship to Rome.

Paul had become embroiled in a dispute between Jews and early proponents of the fledgling Christian religion. Christianity first emerged as a sect of Judaism accepted by only a small number of individuals who regarded Jesus of Nazareth as a savior for the Jewish community. By the mid-first century C.E., Christianity was attracting numerous converts throughout the Mediterranean basin. Paul himself was a devout Jew from Anatolia who accepted Christian teachings and became a zealous missionary seeking converts from outside as well as within the Jewish community. Indeed, he was the principal figure in the development of Christianity from a Jewish sect to an independent religious faith. When a crowd of Paul's enemies attacked him in Jerusalem, where he was promoting his recently adopted faith, the resulting disturbance became so severe that authorities of the Roman imperial government intervened to restore order. Under normal circumstances Roman authorities would deliver an individual like Paul to the leaders of his ethnic community, and the laws and customs of that community would determine the person's fate.

Paul's case, however, was different. Knowing that Jewish leaders would condemn him and probably execute him, Paul asserted his rights as a Roman citizen. Although he had never traveled west of Greece, Paul had inherited Roman citizenship from his father. As a result, he had the right to appeal his case to Rome, and he did so. His appeal did not

succeed. No record of his case survives, but tradition holds that imperial authorities executed him out of concern that Christianity threatened the peace and stability of the Roman state.

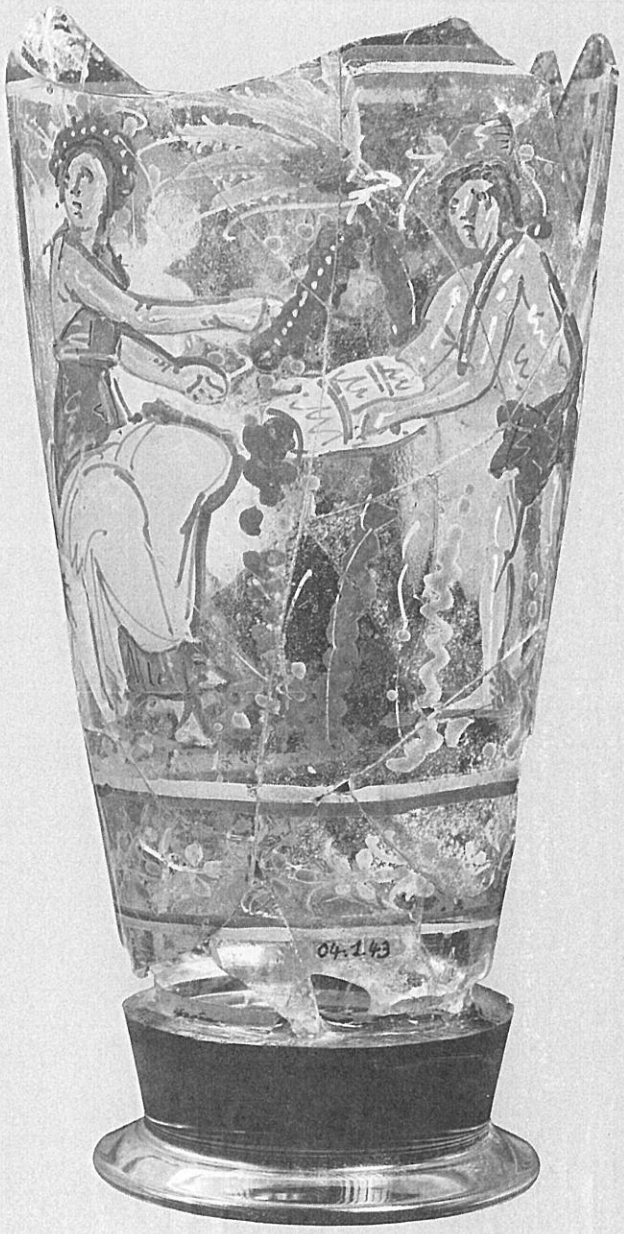
Paul's experience reflects the cosmopolitan character of the early Roman empire, which by the first century C.E. dominated the entire Mediterranean basin. Roman administrators oversaw affairs from Anatolia and Palestine in the east to Spain and Morocco in the west. Roman military forces maintained order in an empire with scores of different and sometimes conflicting ethnic and religious groups. Like many others, Paul of Tarsus traveled freely through much of the Roman empire in an effort to attract converts to Christianity. Indeed, except for the integration of the Mediterranean basin by the Roman empire, Paul's message and his faith might never have expanded beyond the small community of early Christians in Jerusalem.

Like the Phoenicians and the Greeks before them, the Romans established close links between the various Mediterranean regions. As they conquered new lands, pacified them, and brought them into their empire, the Romans enabled merchants, missionaries, and others to travel readily throughout the Mediterranean basin. The Romans differed from their Phoenician and Greek predecessors, however, by building an extensive land empire and centralizing the administration of their realm. At its high point the Roman empire dominated the entire Mediterranean basin and parts of southwest Asia, including Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, and north Africa, besides much of continental Europe, and even parts of Britain.

The Roman empire also served as a forum for the communication of philosophical ideas and religious beliefs. Educated elites often embraced sophisticated Hellenistic philosophies, particularly Stoicism, which found adherents throughout the Roman empire. The larger population took comfort in popular religious beliefs, many of which promised personal salvation to devout followers. Over the long term, Christianity was the most successful of the popular religions of salvation. The early Christians encountered harsh opposition and persecution from Roman officials. Yet the new faith took advantage of the Romans' well-organized imperial holdings and spread rapidly throughout the Mediterranean basin and beyond. Eventually, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman empire, and imperial sponsorship enabled Christianity to spread more effectively than before.

Cross-Cultural Exchanges on the Silk Roads

chapter 12



An enameled glass goblet produced about the second century C.E. in Begram (modern-day Afghanistan) depicts a party harvesting dates in a grove of palms. The production technique is Roman, testifying to Mediterranean influence in central Asia.

EYEWITNESS:
Zhang Qian: An Early Traveler on the Silk Roads

In the year 139 B.C.E., the Chinese emperor Han Wudi sent an envoy named Zhang Qian on a mission to lands west of China. The emperor's purpose was to find allies who could help combat the nomadic Xiongnu, who menaced the northern and western borders of the Han empire. From captives he had learned that other nomadic peoples in far western lands bore grudges against the Xiongnu, and he reasoned that they might ally with Han forces to pressure their common enemy.

The problem for Zhang Qian was that to communicate with potential allies against the Xiongnu, he had to pass directly through lands they controlled. Soon after Zhang Qian left Han territory, Xiongnu forces captured him. For ten years the Xiongnu held him in comfortable captivity: they allowed him to keep his personal servant, and they provided him with a Xiongnu wife, with whom he had a son. When suspicions about him subsided, however, Zhang Qian escaped with his family and servant. He even had the presence of mind to keep with him the yak tail that Han Wudi had given him as a sign of his ambassadorial status. He fled to the west and traveled as far as Bactria, but he did not succeed in lining up allies against the Xiongnu. While returning to China, Zhang Qian again fell into Xiongnu hands but managed to escape after one year's detention when the death of the Xiongnu leader led to a period of turmoil. In 126 B.C.E. Zhang Qian and his party returned to China and a warm welcome from Han Wudi.

Although his diplomatic efforts did not succeed, Zhang Qian's mission had far-reaching consequences. Apart from political and military intelligence about western lands and their peoples, Zhang Qian brought back information of immense commercial value. While in Bactria about 128 B.C.E., he noticed Chinese goods—textiles and bamboo articles—offered for sale in local markets. Upon inquiry he learned that they had come from southwest China by way of Bengal. From that information he deduced the possibility of establishing trade relations between China and Bactria through India.

Han Wudi responded enthusiastically to that idea and dreamed of trading with peoples inhabiting lands west of China. From 102 to 98 B.C.E., he mounted an ambitious campaign

that broke the power of the Xiongnu and pacified central Asia. His conquests simplified trade relations, since it became unnecessary to route commerce through India. The intelligence that Zhang Qian gathered during his travels thus contributed to the opening of the silk roads—the network of trade routes that linked lands as distant as China and the Roman empire—and more generally to the establishment of relations between China and lands to the west.

China and other classical societies imposed political and military control over vast territories. They promoted trade and communication within their own empires, bringing regions that had previously been self-sufficient into a larger economy and society. They also fostered the spread of cultural and religious traditions to distant regions, and they encouraged the construction of institutional frameworks that promoted the long-term survival of those traditions.

The influence of the classical societies did not stop at the imperial boundaries. Nearby peoples regarded their powerful neighbors with a mixture of envy and suspicion, and they sought to share the wealth that those neighbors generated. They pursued that goal by various means, both peaceful and violent, and relations with neighboring peoples, particularly nomadic peoples, became a major preoccupation of all the classical societies.

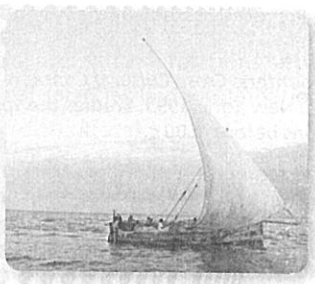
Beyond their relations with neighboring peoples, the classical societies established a broad zone of communication and exchange throughout much of the earth's eastern hemisphere. Trade networks crossed the deserts of central Asia and the breadth of the Indian Ocean. Long-distance trade passed through much of Eurasia and north Africa, from China to the Mediterranean basin, and to parts of sub-Saharan Africa as well.

This long-distance trade profoundly influenced the experiences of peoples and the development of societies throughout the eastern hemisphere. It brought wealth and access to foreign products, and it enabled peoples to concentrate their efforts on economic activities best suited to their regions. It facilitated the spread of religious traditions beyond their original homelands, since merchants carried their beliefs and sometimes attracted converts in the lands they visited. It also facilitated the transmission of disease: pathogens traveled the trade routes alongside commercial wares and religious faiths. Indeed, the transmission of disease over the silk roads helped bring an end to the classical societies, since infectious and contagious diseases sparked devastating epidemics that caused political, social, and economic havoc. Long-distance trade thus had deep political, social, and cultural as well as economic and commercial implications for classical societies.

State of the World

A World with Capitals and Empires, Roads and Sea Lanes, Philosophies and Churches





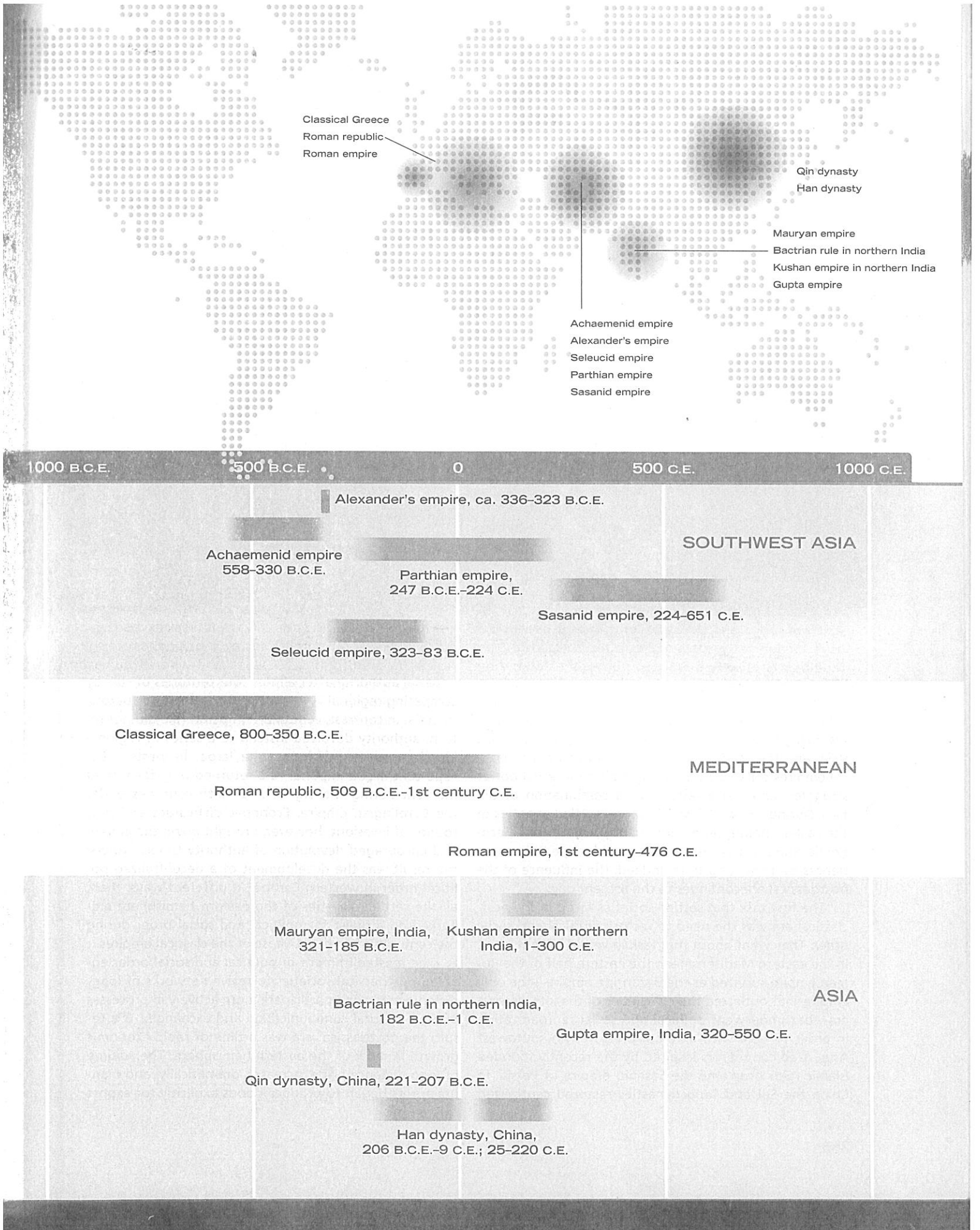

Following the adoption of agriculture, the early complex societies demonstrated the remarkable potential of the human species. Building on foundations laid by the early complex societies, the classical societies scaled the size of human communities and the range of human influence up to dimensions that their ancestors could hardly have imagined. They inherited forms of social organization and techniques of statecraft from the early complex societies, but they made adjustments that enabled them to extend their reach far beyond individual regions to distant lands and peoples. The Achaemenid, Han, and Roman empires, for example, all borrowed forms of social organization from their predecessors, but all of them also dwarfed their forerunners and built impressive capital cities from which they supervised sprawling empires and held enormous territories together for centuries at a time.

The classical societies grew to such large geographic proportions that they all found it necessary to devote resources to the construction of roads and the discovery of reliable routes over the neighboring seas. Although expensive to build and maintain, transportation and communications networks served the rulers of classical societies as links between their capitals and the distant reaches of their empires. Roads and sea lanes functioned as the nerves of the classical societies.

Transportation and communications networks were not captives of individual societies. They eventually pointed beyond the boundaries of individual societies and offered access to a larger world. Rulers originally built roads to facilitate communications between their capitals and their provinces—and, if necessary, to send their armed forces to put down rebellions or ensure implementation of their policies. It is possible, however, that merchants made better use of the magnificent road systems of classical societies than did the rulers themselves. Merchants tied regions of the classical societies together by linking producers and consumers. Moreover, they put the classical societies in communication with one another by jumping their frontiers and creating trading relationships across much of the eastern hemisphere.

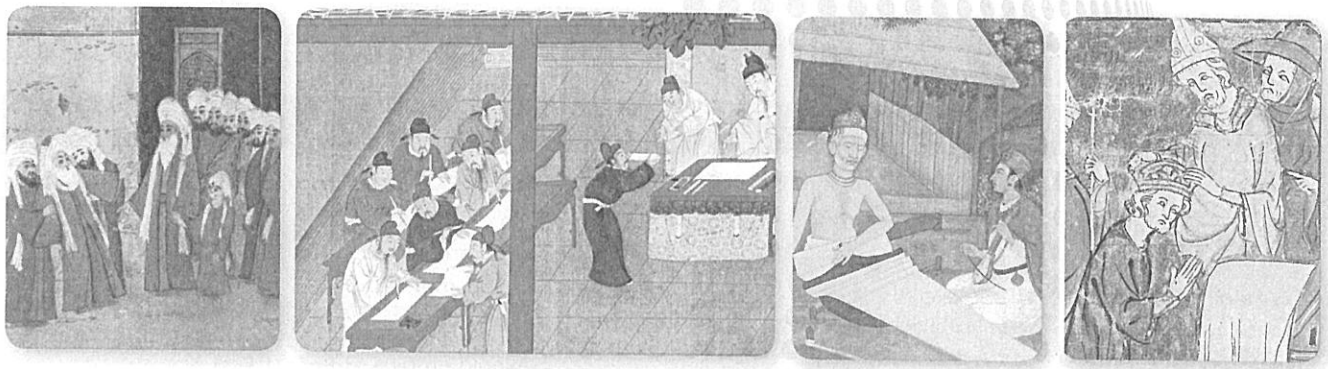
Merchants and their trade goods shared the roads and the sea lanes with other travelers, including agricultural crops, domesticated animals, and disease pathogens. Some of their more prominent traveling companions, though, were missionaries spreading the word about their beliefs. Building on traditions of writing and reflection inherited from their forerunners, the classical societies all generated cultural and religious traditions whose influences resonate more than two thousand years later. Confucianism, Buddhism, Greek science, rational philosophy, and Christianity have all changed dramatically since the time of their founders, none of whom would recognize their modern-day descendants. Nevertheless, their cultural and religious traditions have profoundly shaped the course of world history.

Rulers of the classical empires built the roads and sponsored exploration of the sea lanes, but merchants and missionaries were equal partners in the construction of the classical era of world history.


Classical Greece
Roman republic
Roman empire
Qin dynasty
Han dynasty
Mauryan empire
Bactrian rule in northern India
Kushan empire in northern India
Gupta empire
Achaemenid empire
Alexander's empire
Seleucid empire
Parthian empire
Sasanid empire
1000 B.C.E.
500 B.C.E.
0
500 C.E.
1000 C.E.
Alexander's empire, ca. 336–323 B.C.E.
SOUTHWEST ASIA
Achaemenid empire
558–330 B.C.E.
Parthian empire,
247 B.C.E.–224 C.E.
Sasanid empire, 224–651 C.E.
Seleucid empire, 323–83 B.C.E.
Classical Greece, 800–350 B.C.E.
MEDITERRANEAN
Roman republic, 509 B.C.E.–1st century C.E.
Roman empire, 1st century–476 C.E.
Mauryan empire, India,
321–185 B.C.E.
Kushan empire in northern
India, 1–300 C.E.
ASIA
Bactrian rule in northern India,
182 B.C.E.–1 C.E.
Gupta empire, India, 320–550 C.E.
Qin dynasty, China, 221–207 B.C.E.
Han dynasty, China,
206 B.C.E.–9 C.E.; 25–220 C.E.

part 3

THE POSTCLASSICAL ERA, 500 TO 1000 C.E.



The postclassical era was a period of major readjustment for societies throughout the eastern hemisphere. The early centuries C.E. brought turbulence and instability to classical societies in China, India, southwest Asia, and the Mediterranean basin. Most of the classical empires collapsed under the strain of internal power struggles, external invasions, or a combination of the two. During the postclassical era the settled societies of the eastern hemisphere underwent political, social, economic, and cultural change that would shape their experiences over the long term. Indeed, the influence of the postclassical era continues to the present day.

The first task that settled societies faced in the postclassical era was the need to restore political and social order. They went about that task in very different ways. In the eastern Mediterranean the eastern half of the Roman empire survived as the Byzantine empire—the only empire that outlasted the difficulties of the late classical era—but underwent political and social reorganization in order to deal with external pressures. In southwest Asia, Arab conquerors inspired by the recently founded Islamic faith overcame the Sasanid empire of Persia. In China the Sui and Tang dynasties restored centralized imperial authority after almost four centuries of rule by competing regional kingdoms and nomadic conquerors. In India, in contrast, centralized imperial rule did not return: authority devolved instead to a series of regional kingdoms, some of them quite large. In western Europe centralized imperial rule returned only for a brief moment during the eighth and ninth centuries under the Carolingian empire. Economic difficulties and new rounds of invasions, however, brought down the empire and encouraged devolution of authority to local rulers: the result was the development of a decentralized political order in western Europe. In different ways, then, all the settled societies of the eastern hemisphere embarked on a quest for political and social order during the centuries after the collapse of the classical empires.

The reestablishment of political and social order enabled postclassical societies to revive networks of long-distance trade and participate more actively in processes of cross-cultural communication and exchange. As a result, the postclassical era was a time of rapid economic growth in most of the eastern hemisphere. The volume of long-distance trade increased dramatically, and manufacturers began to produce goods explicitly for export

rather than local consumption. Meanwhile, increased trade facilitated biological and technological as well as commercial exchanges: agricultural crops migrated far beyond the lands of their origin, and improved techniques of irrigation and cultivation spread through much of Eurasia. New crops and improved agricultural techniques led to enlarged harvests and enriched diets particularly in China, India, and southwest Asia.

As agricultural production increased, so did human population. Growing numbers of people devoted their efforts to trade and manufacturing rather than cultivation. China, India, and the eastern Mediterranean region were especially prominent sites for the production of textiles, ceramics, and metal goods. Increased trade and manufacturing activity encouraged a remarkable round of technological invention and innovation. The magnetic compass, printing technologies, and gunpowder, for example, first appeared in postclassical China and then diffused to other lands. These inventions and others of the era have profoundly influenced the course of human history since their first appearance.

The postclassical era was also crucially important for the formation and development of cultural and religious traditions. Islam first appeared during the postclassical era, and it soon became the cultural and religious foundation of an expansive empire stretching from north Africa to northern India. Buddhism expanded beyond the Indian subcontinent and central Asia, attracting converts in China, Korea, Japan, and southeast Asia. Christianity was the official religion of the Byzantine empire, where the Eastern Orthodox church emerged and gave shape to a distinctive form of Christianity. Orthodox missionaries also spread their faith to formerly pagan lands throughout much of eastern Europe and Russia. Farther west, Christianity spread from the Mediterranean basin to western and northern Europe, where papal leadership guided the emergence of the Roman Catholic church. For a millennium and more, Roman Catholic Christianity served as the foundation for cultural unity in the politically disunited world of western and northern Europe. Meanwhile, quite apart from the expansion of religious traditions, the postclassical era witnessed the spread of literacy and formal education throughout much of the eastern hemisphere.

The empires and regional states of the postclassical era disappeared long ago, but the social, economic, and cultural legacies of the age are noticeable even today. Long-distance trade surged in postclassical times and helped to structure economic and social development throughout much of the eastern hemisphere. Even more notable, perhaps, religious and cultural traditions continue to flourish in lands where they first attracted converts in postclassical times. In some ways, then, the postclassical age survives even in the modern world.

PART 3

EYEWITNESS:
Season of the Mecca Pilgrimage

In 632 C.E. the prophet Muhammad visited his native city of Mecca from his home in exile at Medina, and in doing so he set an example that devout Muslims have sought to emulate ever since. Today the *hajj*—the holy pilgrimage to Mecca—draws Muslims by the hundreds of thousands from all parts of the world to Saudi Arabia. Each year Muslims travel to Mecca by land, sea, and air to make the pilgrimage and visit the holy sites of Islam.

In centuries past the numbers of pilgrims were smaller, but their observance of the hajj was no less conscientious. By the ninth century, pilgrimage had become so popular that Muslim rulers went to some lengths to meet the needs of travelers passing through their lands. With the approach of the pilgrimage season—the last month of the Islamic lunar calendar—crowds gathered at major trading centers such as Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo. There they lived in tent cities, surviving on food and water provided by government officials, until they could join caravans bound for Mecca. Muslim rulers invested considerable sums in the maintenance of roads, wells, cisterns, and lodgings that accommodated pilgrims—as well as castles and police forces that protected travelers—on their journeys to Mecca and back.

The hajj was not only solemn observance but also an occasion for joy and celebration. Muslim rulers and wealthy pilgrims often made lavish gifts to caravan companions and others they met en route to Mecca. During her famous hajj of 976–977, for example, the Mesopotamian princess Jamila bint Nasir al-Dawla provided food and fresh green vegetables for her fellow pilgrims and furnished five hundred camels for handicapped travelers. She also purchased freedom for five hundred slaves and distributed fifty thousand fine robes among the common people of Mecca.

Most pilgrims did not have the resources to match Jamila's generosity, but for common travelers, too, the hajj became a special occasion. Merchants and craftsmen made acquaintances and arranged business deals with pilgrims from other lands. Students and scholars exchanged ideas during their weeks of traveling together. For all pilgrims, participation in ritual activities lent new meaning and significance to their faith.

The word *Islam* means "submission," signifying obedience to the rule and will of Allah, the only deity recognized in the strictly monotheistic Islamic religion. An individual who accepts the Islamic faith is a *Muslim,* meaning "one who has submitted." Though it began as one man's expression of unqualified faith in Allah, Islam quickly attracted followers and took on political and social as well as religious significance. During its first century, Islam reached far beyond its Arabian homeland, bringing Sasanid Persia and parts of the Byzantine empire into its orbit. By the eighth century the realm of Islam and the Byzantine empire stood as political and economic anchors of the postclassical world.

Early Islamic religious beliefs reflected the deep influence of Jewish and Christian traditions, while early Muslim society reflected the nomadic and mercantile Arabian society from which Islam arose. Over time, Muslims also drew inspiration from other societies and other cultural traditions. After toppling the Sasanid dynasty, Muslim conquerors adopted Persian techniques of government and finance to administer their lands. Persian literature, science, and religious values also found a place in Islamic society. During later centuries Muslims drew inspiration from Greek and Indian traditions as well. Thus Muslims did not invent a new Islamic society but, rather, fashioned it by blending elements from Arab, Persian, Greek, and Indian societies.

While drawing influence from other societies, however, Islam thoroughly transformed the cultural traditions that it absorbed. The expansive realm of Islam eventually provided a political framework for trade and diplomacy over a vast portion of the eastern hemisphere, from west Africa to the islands of southeast Asia. Many lands of varied cultural background thus became part of a larger society often called the *dar al-Islam*—an Arabic term that means the "house of Islam" and that refers to lands under Islamic rule.

The Resurgence of Empire in East Asia

chapter 14

A painting on silk depicts anxious candidates taking the civil service examinations at the time of the emperor Song Renzong (reigned 1023–1031).

PART 3

EYEWITNESS:
Xuanzang: A Young Monk Hits the Road

Early in the seventh century C.E., the emperor of China issued an order forbidding his subjects to travel beyond Chinese borders into central Asia. In 629, however, in defiance of the emperor, a young Buddhist monk slipped past imperial watchtowers under cover of darkness and made his way west. His name was **Xuanzang,** and his destination was India, homeland of Buddhism. Although educated in Confucian texts as a youth, Xuanzang had followed his older brother into a monastery where he became devoted to Buddhism. While studying the Sanskrit language, Xuanzang noticed that Chinese writings on Buddhism contained many teachings that were confusing or even contradictory to those of Indian Buddhist texts. He decided to travel to India, visit the holy sites of Buddhism, and study with the most knowledgeable Buddhist teachers and sages to learn about Buddhism from the purest sources.

Xuanzang could not have imagined the difficulties he would face. Immediately after his departure from China, his guide abandoned him in the Gobi desert. After losing his water bag and collapsing in the heat, Xuanzang made his way to the oasis town of Turpan on the silk roads. The Buddhist ruler of Turpan provided the devout pilgrim with travel supplies and rich gifts to support his mission. Among the presents were twenty-four letters of introduction to rulers of lands on the way to India, each one attached to a bolt of silk, five hundred bolts of silk and two carts of fruit for the most important ruler, thirty horses, twenty-five laborers, and another five hundred bolts of silk along with gold, silver, and silk clothes for Xuanzang to use as travel funds. After departing from Turpan, Xuanzang crossed three of the world's highest mountain ranges—the Tian Shan, Hindu Kush, and Pamir ranges—and lost one-third of his party to exposure and starvation in the Tian Shan. He crossed yawning gorges thousands of meters deep on footbridges fashioned from rope or chains, and he faced numerous attacks by bandits as well as confrontations with demons, dragons, and evil spirits.

Xuanzang (SHWEN-ZAHNG)

Yet Xuanzang persisted and arrived in India in 630. He lived there for more than twelve years, visiting the holy sites of Buddhism and devoting himself to the study of languages and Buddhist doctrine, especially at Nalanda, the center of advanced Buddhist education in India. He also amassed a huge collection of relics and images as well as 657 books, all of which he packed into 527 crates and transported back to China to advance the understanding of Buddhism in his native land.

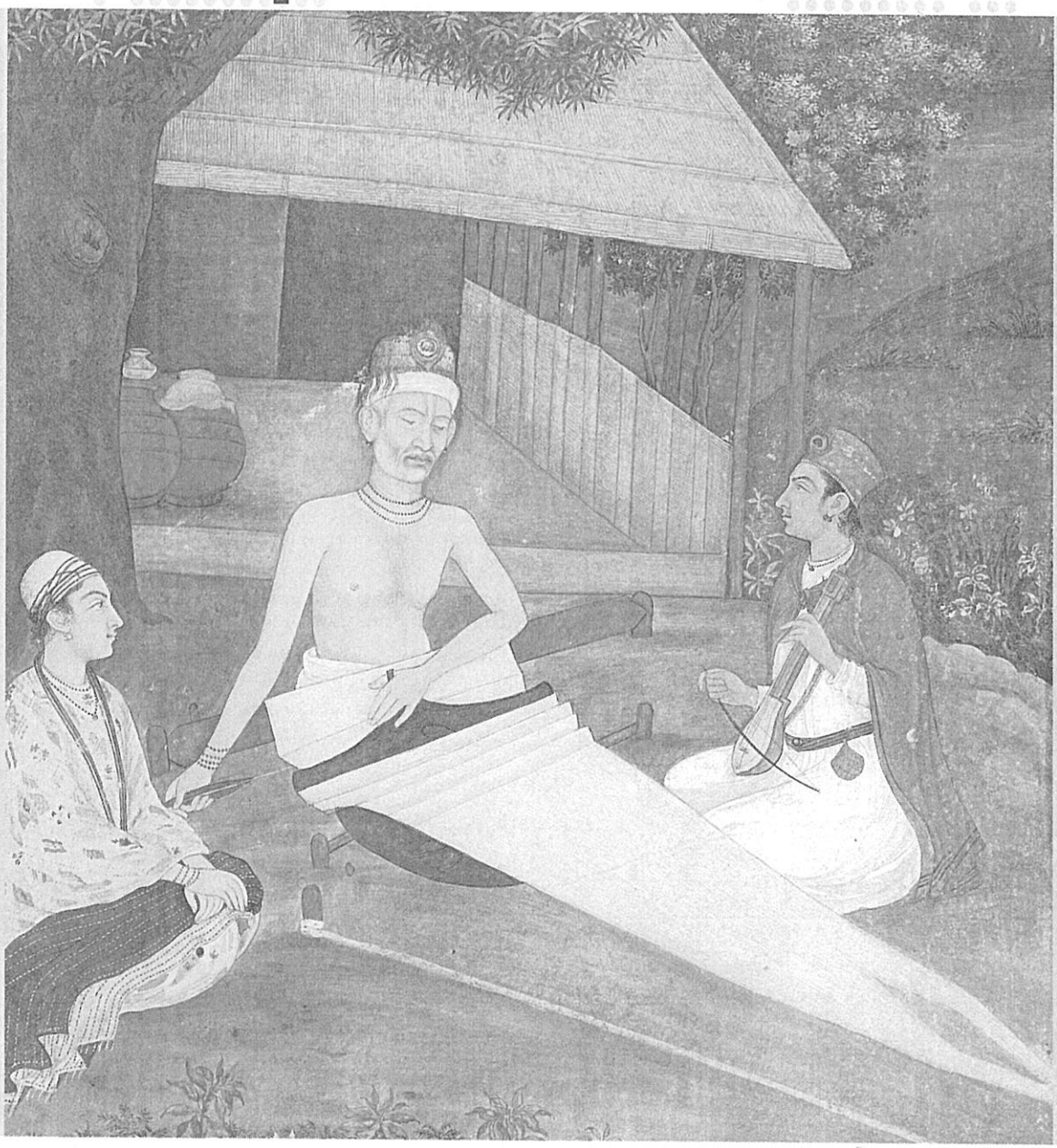
By the time of his return in 645, Xuanzang had logged more than 16,000 kilometers (10,000 miles) on the road. News of the holy monk's efforts had reached the imperial court, and even though Xuanzang had violated the ban on travel, he received a hero's welcome and an audience with the emperor. Until his death in 664, Xuanzang spent his remaining years translating Buddhist treatises into Chinese and clarifying their doctrines. His efforts helped to popularize Buddhism throughout China.

Xuanzang undertook his journey at a propitious time. For more than 350 years after the fall of the Han dynasty, war, invasion, conquest, and foreign rule disrupted Chinese society. Toward the end of the sixth century, however, centralized imperial rule returned to China. The Sui and Tang dynasties restored order and presided over an era of rapid economic growth in China. Agricultural yields rose dramatically, and technological innovations boosted the production of manufactured goods. China ranked with the Abbasid and Byzantine empires as a political and economic anchor of the postclassical world.

For China the postclassical era was an age of intense interaction with other peoples. Chinese merchants participated in trade networks that linked most regions of the eastern hemisphere. Buddhism spread beyond its homeland of India, attracted a large popular following in China, and even influenced the thought of Confucian scholars. A resurgent China made its influence felt throughout east Asia: diplomats and armed forces introduced Chinese ways into Korea and Vietnam, and rulers of the Japanese islands looked to China for guidance in matters of political organization. Korea, Vietnam, and Japan retained their distinctiveness, but all three lands drew deep inspiration from China and participated in a larger east Asian society centered on China.

India and the Indian Ocean Basin

chapter 15



Kabir, the blind guru, weaves cloth while discussing religious matters with disciples.

PART

EYEWITNESS:
Buzurg Sets His Sights on the Seven Seas

Buzurg ibn Shahriyar was a tenth-century shipmaster from Siraf, a prosperous and bustling port city on the Persian Gulf coast. He probably sailed frequently to Arabia and India, and he may have ventured also to Malaya, the islands of southeast Asia, China, and east Africa. Like all sailors, he heard stories about the distant lands that mariners had visited, the different customs they observed, and the adventures that befell them during their travels. About 953 C.E. he compiled 136 such stories in his *Book of the Wonders of India.*

Buzurg's collection included a generous proportion of tall tales. He told of a giant lobster that seized a ship's anchor and dragged the vessel through the water, of mermaids and sea dragons, of creatures born from human fathers and fish mothers who lived in human society but had flippers that enabled them to swim through the water like fish, of serpents that ate cattle and elephants, of birds so large that they crushed houses, of a monkey that seduced a sailor, and of a talking lizard. Yet alongside the tall tales, many of Buzurg's stories accurately reflected the conditions of his time. One recounted the story of a king from northern India who converted to Islam and requested translations of Islamic law. Others reported on Hindu customs, shipwrecks, encounters with pirates, and slave trading.

Several of Buzurg's stories tempted readers with visions of vast wealth attainable through maritime trade. Buzurg mentioned fine diamonds from Kashmir, pearls from Ceylon, and a Jewish merchant who left Persia penniless and returned from India and China with a shipload of priceless merchandise. Despite their embellishments and exaggerations, his stories faithfully reflected the trade networks that linked the lands surrounding the Indian Ocean in the tenth century. Although Buzurg clearly thought of India as a distinct land with its own customs, he also recognized a larger world of trade and communication that extended from east Africa to southeast Asia and beyond to China.

Just as China served as the principal inspiration of a larger east Asian society in the postclassical era, India influenced the development of a larger cultural zone in south and southeast Asia. Yet China and India played different roles in their respective spheres of influence. In east Asia, China was the dominant power, even if it did not always exercise

authority directly over its neighbors. In south and southeast Asia, however, there emerged no centralized imperial authority like the Tang dynasty in China. Indeed, although several states organized large regional kingdoms, no single state was able to extend its authority to all parts of the Indian subcontinent, much less to the mainland and islands of southeast Asia.

Though politically disunited, India remained a coherent and distinct society as a result of powerful social and cultural traditions: the caste system and the Hindu religion shaped human experiences and values throughout the subcontinent during the postclassical era. Beginning in the seventh century Islam also began to attract a popular following in India, and after the eleventh century Islam deeply influenced Indian society alongside the caste system and Hinduism.

Beyond the subcontinent, Indian traditions helped to shape a larger cultural zone extending to the mainland and islands of southeast Asia. Throughout most of the region, ruling classes adopted Indian forms of political organization and Indian techniques of statecraft. Indian merchants took their Hindu and Buddhist faiths to southeast Asia, where they attracted the interest first of political elites and then of the popular masses. Somewhat later, Indian merchants also helped to introduce Islam to southeast Asia.

While Indian traditions influenced the political and cultural development of southeast Asia, the entire Indian Ocean basin began to move toward economic integration during the postclassical era, as Buzurg ibn Shahriyar's stories suggest. Lands on the rim of the Indian Ocean retained distinctive political and cultural traditions inherited from times past. Yet innovations in maritime technology, development of a well-articulated network of sea lanes, and the building of port cities and entrepôts enabled peoples living around the Indian Ocean to trade and communicate more actively than ever before. As a result, peoples from east Africa to southeast Asia and China increasingly participated in the larger economic, commercial, and cultural life of the Indian Ocean basin.

The Two Worlds of Christendom

chapter 16

Pope Leo III crowns Charlemagne emperor in a manuscript illustration. The coronation symbolized the firm alliance between the Franks and the western Christian church.

PART 3

EYEWITNESS:
Emperor Charlemagne and His Elephant

In the year 802 C.E., an unusual traveler arrived at Aachen (in modern Germany), capital of the western European empire ruled by Charlemagne. The traveler was a rare albino elephant, a diplomatic gift from the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid to Charlemagne. The elephant—whom Harun named Abu al-Abbas, in honor of the Abbasid dynasty's founder—was born in India and went to Baghdad with his trainer in about 798. From Baghdad the animal accompanied an embassy overland through Syria and Egypt to a port on the Tunisian coast, then sailed across the Mediterranean to Portovenere (near Genoa in northern Italy), and finally trekked across the Alps and overland to Charlemagne's court. Abu al-Abbas must have shivered through the cold, damp winters of Europe. Yet he enjoyed swimming in the Rhine River, and until his death in 810, he amazed and delighted all who beheld him.

Charlemagne was not a friend of Islam. At the battle of Tours (732 C.E.), his grandfather, Charles Martel, had defeated a Muslim army that ventured into Frankish territory after Muslim forces had conquered most of the Iberian peninsula. Charlemagne himself fought Muslims in an unsuccessful effort to restore Christian rule in northern Spain. One of the battles from his campaign provided the raw material for a popular poetic work called the *Song of Roland.* Nevertheless, in spite of his personal religious preferences, Charlemagne found it both necessary and convenient to have diplomatic dealings with Harun al-Rashid.

Charlemagne dispatched at least three embassies to Baghdad and received three in return. The embassies dealt with several issues: the safety of Christian pilgrims and merchants traveling in Abbasid-controlled Syria and Palestine, Charlemagne's relations with Muslim neighbors, and policy toward the Byzantine empire, which stood between western Europe and the Abbasid caliphate. Charlemagne's realm was weak and poor compared with the Abbasid empire, but for about half a century, it seemed that Charlemagne and his successors might be able to reestablish a centralized imperial state in western Europe. His dealings with Harun al-Rashid—and the unusual odyssey of the elephant Abu al-Abbas—reflected a general recognition that Charlemagne had the potential to establish a western European empire similar to the Byzantine and Abbasid realms.

Historians refer to the period from about 500 to 1500 C.E. as the medieval period of European history—the "middle ages" falling between the classical era and modern times. During the early medieval period, from about 500 to 1000 C.E., European peoples recovered from the many problems that plagued the later Roman empire—epidemic disease, declining population, economic contraction, political turmoil, social unrest, and invasions by Germanic peoples. In doing so, they laid the foundations of European Christendom—a region that never experienced political unity but that adopted Christianity as the dominant source of cultural authority.

The two very different halves of medieval Christendom were the Byzantine empire in the eastern half of the Mediterranean basin and the Germanic states that succeeded the western Roman empire after its collapse in the fifth century C.E. The Byzantine empire was in fact a direct continuation of the Roman empire in the east. It did not extend its authority to the entire Mediterranean basin, but it inherited the most prosperous and productive regions of the classical Roman empire. Even after Muslim conquerors seized the wealthy provinces of Egypt and Syria in the seventh century, the Byzantine empire remained a political and economic powerhouse of the postclassical world. As a centralized imperial state like the Abbasid empire in southwest Asia or the Tang and Song dynasties in China, the Byzantine empire dominated the eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea regions. As an urbanized center of manufacturing, the Byzantine empire was also a highly productive society that both supported and benefited from trade throughout the eastern hemisphere.

Meanwhile, lands to the west of the Byzantine empire fell under the sway of invading peoples who dismantled the western part of the Roman empire and established a series of Germanic successor states. Charlemagne made heroic efforts to unify the western half of Christendom and establish a western counterpart to the Byzantine empire, but internal tensions and new rounds of invasions brought an early end to his own imperial creation. Thus, during the era 500 to 1000 C.E., western Christendom resembled postclassical India, where a restoration of imperial unity also turned out to be a fleeting experience, more than the Abbasid, Tang, Song, and Byzantine realms. When Charlemagne's empire dissolved, western European peoples fashioned alternatives to imperial rule by creating new decentralized forms of government that vested public authority mostly in local or regional rulers. At the same time, they also began a process of economic recovery by dramatically boosting agricultural production.

Both the Byzantine empire and the European states to the west inherited Christianity from the Roman empire, and rulers in both regions promoted Christianity as a cultural and moral foundation for their rule. After the eighth century C.E., however, political and religious tensions increasingly complicated relations between the two halves of the former Roman empire. Byzantine rulers bristled at the claims to empire made by Charlemagne and other western Christian rulers, and theologians in the two regions developed differing views on proper religious doctrine and practice. By the mid-eleventh century, the Byzantine and Roman churches had publicly and formally condemned each other. Byzantine missionaries promoted their brand of Christianity in Russia and other Slavic lands, while western Christians following the leadership of the popes in Rome spread their own views from the British Isles to Scandinavia and eastern Europe. Just as Abbasid leaders helped consolidate Islam as the principal cultural influence in the Muslim world, Byzantine and western Christians expanded the religious and moral authority of Christianity throughout Europe. In doing so, they created two worlds of Christendom.