



CHAPTER OUTLINE

- Early China, 2000–221 B.C.E.
- Nubia, 3100 B.C.E.–350 C.E.
- Celtic Europe, 1000–50 B.C.E.
- First Civilizations of the Americas: The Olmec and Chavín, 1200–250 B.C.E.
- Conclusion

ENVIRONMENT + TECHNOLOGY *Divination in Ancient Societies*

DIVERSITY + DOMINANCE *Human Nature and Good Government in the Analects of Confucius and the Legalist Writings of Han Fei*



Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

Wall Painting of Nubians Arriving in Egypt with Rings and Bags of Gold, Fourteenth Century B.C.E. This image decorated the tomb of an Egyptian administrator in Nubia.



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New Civilizations in the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, 2200–250 B.C.E.

Around 2200 B.C.E. an Egyptian official named Harkhuf (**HAHR-koof**) set out from Aswan (**AS-wahn**), on the southern boundary of Egypt, for a place called Yam, far to the south in the land that later came to be called Nubia. He brought gifts from the Egyptian pharaoh for the ruler of Yam, and he returned home with three hundred donkeys loaded with incense, ebony, ivory, and other exotic products from tropical Africa. Despite the diplomatic fiction of exchanging gifts, we should probably regard Harkhuf as a brave and enterprising merchant. He returned with something so special that the eight-year-old boy pharaoh, Pepi II, could not contain his excitement. He wrote:

Come north to the residence at once! Hurry and bring with you this pygmy whom you brought from the land of the horizon-dwellers live, hale, and healthy, for the dances of the god, to gladden the heart, to delight the heart of king Neferkare [Pepi] who lives forever! When he goes down with you into the ship, get worthy men to be around him on deck, lest he fall into the water! When he lies down at night, get worthy men to lie around him in his tent. Inspect ten times at night! My majesty desires to see this pygmy more than the gifts of the mine-land and of Punt!¹

Scholars identify Yam with Kerma, later the capital of the kingdom of Nubia, on the upper Nile in modern Sudan. For Egyptians, Nubia was a wild and dangerous place. Yet it was developing a more complex political organization, and this illustration demonstrates how vibrant the commerce and cultural interaction between Nubia and Egypt would later become.

The complex societies examined in this chapter emerged later than those in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley and in more varied ecological conditions, sometimes independently, sometimes under the influence of older centers. Whereas the older river-valley civilizations were largely self-sufficient, most of the new civilizations discussed in this chapter and the next were shaped by networks of long-distance trade.

In the second millennium B.C.E. a civilization based on irrigation agriculture arose in the valley of the Yellow River and its tributaries in northern China. In the same epoch, in Nubia (southern Egypt and northern Sudan), the first complex society in tropical Africa continued to develop from the roots observed earlier by Harkhuf. The first millennium B.C.E. witnessed the spread of Celtic peoples across

- How did early Chinese rulers use religion to justify and strengthen their power?
- How did the technological and cultural influences of Egypt affect the formation of Nubia?
- What were the causes behind the spread of Celtic peoples across much of continental Europe, and the later retreat of Celtic cultures to the western edge of the continent?
- What role did interaction between humans and the environment play in the development of early civilizations in the Americas?

much of continental Europe, as well as the flourishing of the earliest complex societies of the Western Hemisphere, the Olmec of Mesoamerica and the Chavín culture on the flanks of the Andes Mountains in South America. These societies had no contact with one another, and they represent a variety of responses to different environmental and historical circumstances. However, they have certain features in common and collectively point to a distinct stage in the development of human societies.

EARLY CHINA, 2000–221 B.C.E.



AP* Exam Tip Be prepared to compare at least two of the early civilizations discussed in Chapters 1 and 2: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Indus Valley, Shang, Olmec, and Chavin.

On the eastern edge of the vast Eurasian landmass, Neolithic cultures developed as early as 8000 B.C.E. A more complex civilization evolved in the second and first millennia B.C.E. Under the Shang and Zhou dynasties, many of the elements of classical Chinese civilization emerged and spread across East Asia. As in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley, the rise of cities, specialization of labor, bureaucratic government, writing, and other advanced technologies depended on the exploitation of a great river system—the Yellow River (Huang He [**hwahng-HUH**]) and its tributaries—to support intensive agriculture.

Geography and Resources

China is isolated by formidable natural barriers: the Himalaya (**him-uh-LAY-uh**) mountain range on the southwest; the Pamir (**pah-MEER**) and Tian Mountains and the Takla Makan (**TAH-kluh muh-KAHN**) Desert on the west; and the Gobi (**GO-bee**) Desert and the treeless, grassy hills and plains of the Mongolian steppe to the northwest and north (see Map 2.1). To the east lies the Pacific Ocean. Although China's separation was not total—trade goods, people, and ideas moved back and forth between China, India, and Central Asia—in many respects its development was distinctive.

Most of East Asia is covered with mountains, making overland travel and transport difficult. The great river systems of eastern China, however—the Yellow and the Yangzi (**yang-zuh**) Rivers and their tributaries—facilitate east-west movement. In the eastern river valleys dense populations practiced intensive agriculture; on the steppe lands of Mongolia, the deserts and oases of Xinjiang (**shin-jyahng**), and the high plateau of Tibet sparser populations lived largely by herding. The climate zones of East Asia range from the dry, subarctic reaches of Manchuria in the north to the lush, subtropical forests of the south, and a rich variety of plant and animal life are adapted to these zones.

Within the eastern agricultural zone, the north and the south have quite different environments. Each region developed distinctive patterns for land use, the kinds of crops grown, and the organization of agricultural labor. The monsoons that affect India and Southeast Asia (see Chapter 1) drench southern China with heavy rainfall in the summer, the most beneficial time for agriculture. In northern China rainfall is much more erratic. As in Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley, Chinese civilization developed in relatively adverse conditions on the northern plains, a demanding environment that stimulated important technologies and political traditions as well as the philosophical and religious views that became hallmarks of Chinese civilization. By the third century C.E., however, the gradual flow of population toward the warmer southern lands caused the political and intellectual center to move south.

The eastern river valleys and North China Plain contained timber, stone, scattered deposits of metals, and, above all, potentially productive land. Winds blowing from Central Asia deposit a yellowish-brown dust called **loess** (**less**) (these particles suspended in the water give the Yellow River its distinctive hue and name). Over the ages a thick mantle of soil has accumulated that is extremely fertile and soft enough to be worked with wooden digging sticks.

In this landscape, agriculture required the coordinated efforts of large numbers of people. Forests had to be cleared. Earthen dikes were constructed to protect nearby fields from recurrent floods on the Yellow River. To cope with the periodic droughts, reservoirs were dug to store river water and rainfall. Retaining walls partitioned the hillsides into flat arable terraces.

The staple crops in the northern region were millet, a grain indigenous to China, and wheat, which had spread to East Asia from the Middle East. Rice, which requires a warmer climate,

The East Asian Environment

loess A fine, light silt deposited by wind and water. It constitutes the fertile soil of the Yellow River Valley in northern China.

Intensive Agriculture

CHRONOLOGY				
	China	Nubia	Celtic Europe	Americas
	8000–2000 B.C.E. Neolithic cultures	4500 B.C.E. Early agriculture in Nubia		3500 B.C.E. Early agriculture in Mesoamerica and Andes
2500 B.C.E.				2600 B.C.E. Rise of Caral
2000 B.C.E.	2000 B.C.E. Bronze metallurgy	2200 B.C.E. Harkhuf's expeditions to Yam		
1500 B.C.E.	1750–1045 B.C.E. Shang dynasty	1750 B.C.E. Rise of kingdom of Kush based on Kerma 1500 B.C.E. Egyptian conquest of Nubia		1200–900 B.C.E. Rise of Olmec civilization, centered on San Lorenzo
1000 B.C.E.	1045–221 B.C.E. Zhou dynasty	1000 B.C.E. Decline of Egyptian control in Nubia	1000 B.C.E. Origin of Celtic culture in Central Europe	900–600 B.C.E. La Venta, the dominant Olmec center
		750 B.C.E. Rise of kingdom based on Napata		900–250 B.C.E. Chavín civilization in the Andes
500 B.C.E.	600 B.C.E. Iron metallurgy	712–660 B.C.E. Nubian kings rule Egypt		600–400 B.C.E. Ascendancy of Tres Zapotes and Olmec decline
			500 B.C.E. Celtic elites trade for Mediterranean goods	500 B.C.E. Early metallurgy in Andes
	551–479 B.C.E. Life of Confucius		500–300 B.C.E. Migrations across Europe	
	356–338 B.C.E. Lord Shang brings Legalist reforms to Qin state		390 B.C.E. Celts sack Rome	
		300 B.C.E.–350 C.E. Kingdom of Meroë		



AP* Exam Tip The impact of agriculture on the local environment is an important point to understand.

prospered in the Yangzi River Valley. The cultivation of rice required a great outlay of labor. Rice paddies—the fields where rice is grown—must be flat and surrounded by water channels to bring and lead away water according to a precise schedule. Seedlings sprout in a nursery and are transplanted to the paddy, which is then flooded. Flooding eliminates weeds and rival plants and supports microscopic organisms that keep the soil fertile. When the crop is ripe, the paddy is drained; the rice stalks are harvested with a sickle; and the edible kernels are separated out. The reward for this effort is a harvest that can feed more people per cultivated acre than any other grain, which explains why the south eventually became more populous than the north.

The Shang Period, 1750–1045 B.C.E.

Early Societies

Archaeological evidence shows that the Neolithic population of China grew millet, raised pigs and chickens, and used stone tools. They made pottery on a wheel and fired it in high-temperature kilns. They pioneered the production of silk cloth, first raising silkworms on the leaves of mulberry trees, then carefully unraveling their cocoons to produce silk thread. They built walls of pounded earth by hammering the soil inside temporary wooden frames until it

Shang The dominant people in the earliest Chinese dynasty for which we have written records (ca. 1750–1045 B.C.E.).

Oracle Bones and Shang Religion

became hard as cement. By 2000 B.C.E. they had begun to make bronze (a thousand years after the beginnings of bronze-working in the Middle East).

In later times legends depicted the early rulers of China as ideal and benevolent masters in a tranquil Golden Age. They were followed by the first dynasty, called Xia (**shah**), who were in turn succeeded by the **Shang (shahng)** dynasty. Since scholars are uncertain about the historical reality of the Xia, Chinese history really begins with the rise of the Shang.

Little is known about how the Shang rose to dominance ca. 1750 B.C.E., since written documents only appear toward the end of Shang rule. These documents are the so-called oracle bones, the shoulder bones of cattle and the bottom shells of turtles employed by Shang rulers to obtain information from ancestral spirits and gods (see Environment and Technology: Divination in Ancient Societies). The writing on the oracle bones concerns the king, his court, and religious practices, with little about other aspects of Shang society. The same limitations apply to the archaeological record, primarily treasure-filled tombs of the Shang ruling class.

The earliest known oracle bone inscriptions date to the thirteenth century B.C.E., but the system was already so sophisticated that some scholars believe writing in China could be considerably older. In the Shang writing system the several hundred characters (written symbols) were originally pictures of objects that become simplified over time, with each character representing a one-syllable word for an object or idea. It is likely that only a small number of people at court used this system. Nevertheless, the Shang writing system is the ancestor of the system still used in China and elsewhere in East Asia today. Later Chinese writing developed thousands of more complex characters that provide information about both the meaning of the word and its sound.

Scholars have reconstructed the major features of Shang religion from the oracle bones. The supreme god, Di (**dee**), who resides in the sky and unleashes the power of storms, is felt to be distant and unconcerned with the fate of humans, and cannot be approached directly. When people die, their spirits survive in the same supernatural sphere as Di and other gods of nature. These ancestral spirits, organized in a heavenly hierarchy that mirrors the social hierarchy on earth, can intervene in human affairs. The Shang ruler has direct access to his more recent ancestors, who have access to earlier generations, who can, in turn, intercede with Di. Thus the ruler is the crucial link between Heaven and earth, using his unrivaled access to higher powers to promote agricultural productivity and protect his people from natural disasters. This belief, which persisted throughout Chinese history, has been an extremely effective rationale for authoritarian rule.


The king was often on the road, traveling to the courts of his subordinates to reinforce their loyalty, but it is uncertain how much territory in the North China Plain was effectively controlled by the Shang. Excavations at sites elsewhere in China show artistic and technological traditions so different that they are probably the products of independent groups. Both the lack of writing elsewhere in early China

Shang Period Bronze Vessel Vessels such as this large wine jar were used in rituals by the Shang ruling class to make contact with their ancestors. As both the source and the proof of the elite's authority, these vessels were often buried in Shang tombs. The complex shapes and elaborate decorations testify to the artisans' skill.




Arthur M. Sacklet Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, USA/
Bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop/The Bridgeman Art Library

King and Elite

 **AP* Exam Tip** The political structure of each early civilization is an important comparison point to understand.

Cities

 Interactive Map

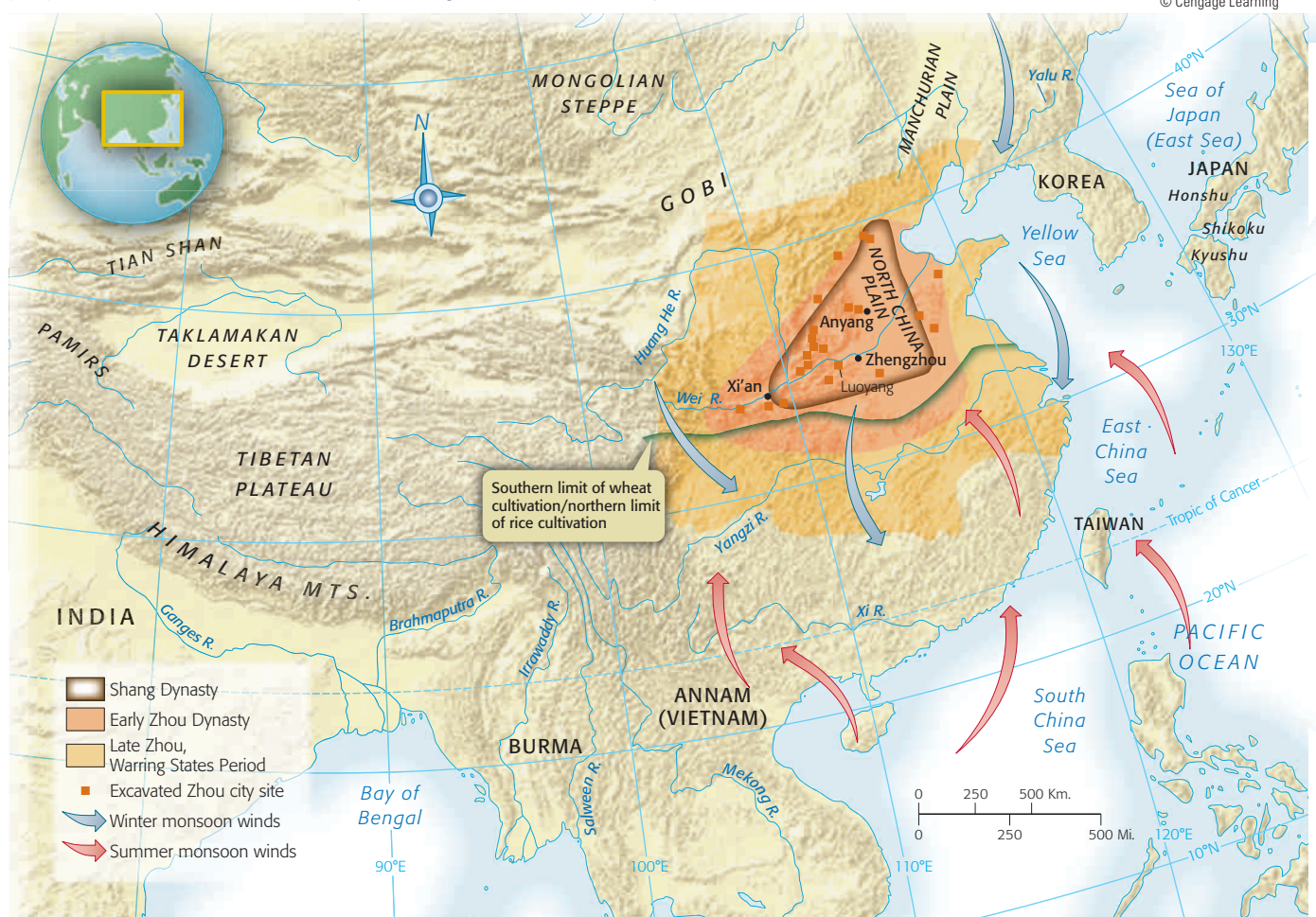
and the Han-era conception that China had always been unified obscure from us the probable ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of early China.

The Shang elite were a warrior class reveling in warfare, hunting, exchanging gifts, feasting, and drinking. They fought with bronze weapons and rode into battle on horse-drawn chariots, a technology that originated in western Asia. Frequent military campaigns provided these warriors with a theater for brave achievements and yielded considerable plunder. Many prisoners of war were taken in these campaigns and made into slaves and sacrificial victims.

Excavated tombs of Shang royal and elite families, primarily from the vicinity of Anyang (ahn-yahng) (see Map 2.1), contain large quantities of valuable objects made of metal, jade, bone, ivory, shell, and stone, including musical instruments, jewelry, mirrors, weapons, and bronze vessels. These vessels, intricately decorated with stylized depictions of real and imaginary animals, were used to make offerings to ancestral spirits. Possession of bronze objects was a sign of status and authority. The tombs also contain the bodies of family members, servants, and prisoners of war who were killed at the time of the burial. It appears that the objects and people were intended to serve the main occupant of the tomb in the afterlife.

Shang cities are not well preserved in the archaeological record, partly because of the climate of northern China and partly because of the building materials used. With stone in short supply, cities were protected by massive walls of pounded earth, and buildings were constructed with wooden posts and dried mud. A number of sites appear to have served at different times as centers of political control and religion, with palaces, administrative buildings and storehouses, royal tombs, shrines of gods and ancestors, and houses of the nobility. The common people lived in agricultural villages outside these centers.

MAP 2.1 China in the Shang and Zhou Periods, 1750–221 B.C.E. The Shang dynasty arose in the second millennium B.C.E. in the floodplain of the Yellow River. While southern China benefits from the monsoon rains, northern China depends on irrigation. As population increased, the Han Chinese migrated from their eastern homeland to other parts of China, carrying with them their technologies and cultural practices. Other ethnic groups predominated in more outlying regions, and the nomadic peoples of the northwest constantly challenged Chinese authority.



Divination in Ancient Societies

Many ancient peoples believed that the gods controlled the forces of nature and shaped destinies. Starting from this premise, they practiced various techniques of divination—the interpretation of phenomena in the natural world as signs of the gods’ will and intentions. Through divination the ancients sought to communicate with the gods and thereby anticipate—even influence—the future.

The Shang ruling class in China frequently sought information from ancestors and other higher powers. The Shang monarch himself, with the help of religious experts, often functioned as the intermediary, since he had access to his own ancestors, who had a high ranking in the hierarchy of the spirit world. Chief among the tools of divination were oracle bones. Holes were first drilled in the shoulder bone of an ox or the bottom shell of a turtle to weaken it, and a red-hot pointed stick was applied, causing the bone or shell to crack. The cracks were then “read” by skilled interpreters as answers, on the part of the ancestor who was being consulted, to whatever questions had been asked. The questions, answers, and, often, confirmation of the accuracy of the prediction were subsequently incised on the shell or bone, providing a permanent record of matters of importance to the ruler, such as imminent weather, the yield of the upcoming harvest, the health of the king and his family, the proper performance of rituals, the prospects of military campaigns and hunting expeditions, and the mood of powerful royal ancestors and other divine forces. Tens of thousands of oracle bones survive as a major source of information about Shang life.

In Mesopotamia in the third and second millennia B.C.E. the most important type of divination involved close inspection of the form, size, and markings of the organs of sacrificed animals. Archaeologists have found models of sheep’s livers

labeled with explanations of the meaning of various features. Two other techniques of divination were following the trail of smoke from burning incense and examining the patterns that resulted when oil was thrown on water.

From about 2000 B.C.E. Mesopotamian diviners also foretold the future from their observation of the movements of the sun, moon, planets, stars, and constellations. In the centuries after 1000 B.C.E. celestial omens were the most important source of predictions about the future, and specialists maintained precise records of astronomical events. Mesopotamian mathematics, essential for calculations of the movements of celestial bodies, was the most sophisticated in the ancient Middle East. Astrology, with its division of the sky into the twelve segments of the zodiac and its use of the position of the stars and planets to predict an individual’s destiny, developed out of long-standing Mesopotamian attention to the movements of celestial objects. Horoscopes—charts with calculations and predictions based on an individual’s date of birth—have been found from shortly before 400 B.C.E.

Greeks and Romans frequently used divination before making decisions. Most famous among the many oracle sites in Greece was Delphi, in a stunning location overlooking the Gulf of Corinth, where advice was sought from the god Apollo. A private individual or the official envoy from a Greek community, after leaving the customary gift for the god and entering the temple, had his question conveyed to the priestess, who fell into a trance (recent geological studies have discovered that the temple lay directly above a fissure, and scholars speculate that a gas rising up into the chamber may have put the priestess into an intoxicated state) and delivered a wild utterance that was then “translated” and written down by the priests who administered the shrine. Information and advice from

The Zhou Period, 1045–221 B.C.E.

Zhou The people and dynasty that took over the dominant position in north China from the Shang and created the concept of the Mandate of Heaven to justify their rule. The Zhou era, particularly the vigorous early period (1045–771 B.C.E.), was remembered in Chinese tradition as a time of prosperity and benevolent rule.

The Mandate of Heaven

In the mid-eleventh century B.C.E. the Shang were overthrown by the **Zhou (joe)**, whose homeland lay several hundred miles to the west, in the valley of the Wei (**way**) River. While the ethnic origin of the Zhou is unclear (their traditions acknowledged that their ancestors had lived for generations among the western “barbarians”), they took over many elements of Shang culture. The Zhou line of kings was the longest lasting and most revered of all dynasties in Chinese history. The two founders were Wen, a vassal ruler who, after being held prisoner for a time by his Shang overlord, initiated a rebellion of disaffected Shang subjects; and his son, Wu, who mounted a successful attack on the Shang capital and was enthroned as the first ruler of the new dynasty.

Wu justified his achievement in a manner that became the norm throughout subsequent Chinese history. Claiming that the last Shang ruler was depraved and tyrannical, neglecting to honor gods and ancestors and killing and abusing his subjects, he invoked the highest Zhou deity, Tian (**tyehn**) (“Heaven”), who was more compassionate than the aloof Di of the Shang. Wu declared that Heaven granted authority and legitimacy to a ruler as long as he looked out for the welfare of his subjects; the monarch, accordingly, was called the “Son of Heaven.” The proof of divine favor was the prosperity and stability of the kingdom. But if the ruler persistently failed

Chinese Divination Shell After inscribing questions on a bone or shell, the diviner applied a red-hot point and interpreted the resulting cracks as a divine response.

the god at Delphi helped Greek communities choose where to place new settlements during the centuries of colonization throughout the Mediterranean and Black Seas, and Delphic priests may have collected information from the many travelers who came their way and then dispensed it by means of oracles.

Greek and Roman sources report on practices of divination among the Celts. Predicting the future is one of the many religious functions attributed to the Druids, as well as to a specialized group of “seers.” Among their methods were careful observation of the flight patterns of birds and of the appearance of sacrificial offerings. In Ireland a ritual specialist ate the meat of a freshly killed bull, lay down to sleep on the bull’s hide, and then had prophetic dreams. The most startling form of Celtic divination is described by the geographer Strabo:

The Romans put a stop to [the] customs . . . connected with sacrifice and divination, as they were in conflict with our own ways: for example, they would strike a man who had been consecrated for sacrifice in the back with a sword, and make prophecies based on his death-spasms.



Courtesy of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica

Such horrifying reports were used by the Romans to justify the conquest of Celtic peoples in order to “civilize” them.

Little is known about the divinatory practices of early American peoples. The Olmec produced polished stone mirrors whose concave surfaces gave off reflected images that were thought to emanate from a supernatural realm. Painted basins found in Olmec households have been compared to those attested for later Mesoamerican groups. In the latter, women threw maize kernels onto the surface of water-filled basins and noted the patterns by which they floated or sank. By this means they ascertained information useful to the family, such as the cause and cure of illness, the right time for agricultural tasks or marriage, and favorable names for newborn children.

It may seem surprising that divination is being treated here as a form of technology. Most modern people would regard such interpretations of patterns in everyday phenomena as mere superstition.

However, for ancient peoples who believed that the gods directly controlled events in the natural world, divination amounted to the application of these principles of causation to the socially beneficial task of acquiring information about the future. These techniques were usually known only to a class of experts whose special training and knowledge gave them high status in their society.

Mandate of Heaven Chinese religious and political ideology developed by the Zhou, according to which it was the prerogative of Heaven, the chief deity, to grant power to the ruler of China and to take away that power if the ruler failed to conduct himself justly and in the best interests of his subjects.

Zhou Government



PRIMARY SOURCE: The Book of Documents

Read this Confucian classic to discover how rulers gain or lose the right to rule, an authority known as the Mandate of Heaven.

in these duties and neglected the warning signs of flood, famine, invasion, or other disasters, Heaven could withdraw this “Mandate” and transfer it to another, more worthy ruler and family. This theory of the **Mandate of Heaven**, which validated the institution of monarchy by connecting the religious and political spheres, served as the foundation of Chinese political thought for three thousand years.

Much more is known about the early centuries of Zhou rule (the Western Zhou Period, 1045–771 B.C.E.) than the preceding Shang era because of the survival of written texts, above all the *Book of Documents*, a collection of decrees, letters, and other historical records, and the *Book of Songs*, an anthology of 305 poems, ballads, and folksongs that illuminate the lives of rulers, nobles, and peasants. Additionally, members of the Zhou elite recorded their careers and cited honors received from the rulers in bronze inscriptions.

To consolidate his power, King Wu distributed territories to his relatives and allies, which they were to administer and profit from so long as they remained loyal to him. These regional rulers then apportioned pieces of their holdings to their supporters, creating a pyramidal structure of political, social, and economic relations often referred to as “feudal,” borrowing terminology from the European Middle Ages.

When Wu died, his son and heir, Cheng (**chung**), was too young to assume full powers, and for a time the kingdom was run by his uncles, especially the Duke of Zhou. The Duke of Zhou is

one of the most famous figures in early Chinese history, in large part because the philosopher Confucius later celebrated him as the ideal administrator who selflessly served as regent for his young nephew at a delicate time for the new dynasty, then dutifully returned power as soon as the lawful ruler came of age.

The early Zhou rulers constructed a new capital city in their homeland (near modern Xi'an), and other urban centers developed in succeeding centuries. Cities were laid out on a grid plan aligned with the north polar star, with gates in the fortification walls opening to the cardinal directions and major buildings facing south. This was in keeping with an already ancient concern, known as *feng shui* (**fung shway**) (“wind and water”), to orient structures so that they would be in a harmonious relationship with the terrain, the forces of wind, water, and sunlight, and the invisible energy perceived to be flowing through the natural world.

Religion and Daily Life

Alongside the new primacy of the Zhou deity Tian and continuation of religious practices inherited from the Shang era, new forms of divination developed. One increasingly popular method involved throwing down a handful of long and short stalks of the milfoil or yarrow plant and interpreting the patterns they formed. Over time a multilayered text was compiled, called the *Book of Changes*, that explained in detail the meanings of each of the sixty-four standard patterns formed by the stalks. In later ages this practice and the accompanying text also came to be used as a vehicle for self-examination and contemplation of the workings of the world.

The *Book of Songs* provides extraordinary glimpses into the lives, activities, and feelings of a diverse cross-section of early Chinese people—elite and common, male and female, urban and rural. We can glean much from these poems about the situation of women in early China. Some describe men and women choosing each other and engaging in sex outside of marriage. Other poems tell of arranged marriages in which the young woman anxiously leaves home and birth family behind and journeys to the household of an unknown husband and new family. One poem describes the different ways that infant boys and girls were welcomed into an aristocratic family. The male was received like a little prince: placed on a bed, swaddled in expensive robes, and given a jade scepter to play with as a symbol of his future authority; the female was placed on the floor and given the weight from a weaving loom to indicate her future obligations of subservience and household labor.

Fragmentation and Rivalry

Over the period from the eleventh to eighth centuries B.C.E. the power of the Zhou monarch gradually eroded, largely because of the feudal division of territory and power. In 771 B.C.E. the Zhou capital was attacked by a coalition of enemies, and the dynasty withdrew to a base farther east, at Luoyang (**LWoe-yahng**). This change ushers in the Eastern Zhou Period (771–221 B.C.E.), a long era in which the Zhou monarchs remained as figureheads, given only nominal allegiance by the rulers of many virtually independent states scattered across northern and central China.

The first part of the Eastern Zhou era is called the Spring and Autumn Period (771–481 B.C.E.) because of the survival of a text, the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, that provides a spare historical record of events in the small eastern state of Lu. Later writers added commentaries that fleshed out this skeletal record. The states of this era were frequently at odds with one another and employed various tactics to protect themselves and advance their interests, including diplomatic initiatives, shifting alliances, and coups and assassinations as well as conventional warfare. The overall trend was gradual consolidation into a smaller number of larger and more powerful kingdoms.

Warfare was a persistent feature of the period, and there were important transformations in the character and technology of war. In the Shang and early Zhou periods, warfare largely had been conducted by members of the elite, who rode in chariots, treated battle as an opportunity for displays of skill and courage, and adhered to a code of heroic conduct. But in the high-stakes conflicts of the Eastern Zhou era, there was a shift to much larger armies made up of conscripted farmers who fought bloody battles, unconstrained by noble etiquette, in which large numbers were slaughtered. Some men undertook the study of war and composed handbooks, such as Sunzi's *Art of War*. Sunzi (**soon-zuh**) approaches war as a chess game in which the successful general employs deception, intuits the energy potential inherent in the landscape, and psychologically manipulates both friend and foe. The best victories are achieved without fighting so that one can incorporate the unimpaired resources of the other side.

Technological advances also impacted warfare. In the last centuries of the Zhou, the Chinese learned from the nomadic peoples of the northern steppes to put fighters on horseback. By 600 B.C.E. iron began to replace bronze as the primary metal for tools and weapons. There is mounting evidence that ironworking also came to China from the nomadic peoples of the

northwest. Metalworkers in China were the first in the world to forge steel by removing carbon during the iron-smelting process.

Another significant development was the increasing size and complexity of the governments that administered Chinese states. Rulers ordered the careful recording of the population, the land, and its agricultural products so that the government could compel peasants to donate labor for public works projects (digging and maintaining irrigation channels and building roads, defensive walls, and palaces), conscript them into the army, and collect taxes. Skilled officials supervised the expanding bureaucracies of scribes, accountants, and surveyors and advised the rulers on various matters. Thus there arose a class of educated and ambitious men who traveled from state to state offering their services to the rulers—and their theories of ideal government.



AP* Exam Tip Be prepared to identify and discuss the diffusion of the major religious systems of the classical civilizations.

Confucianism

Confucius Western name for the Chinese philosopher Kongzi (551–479 B.C.E.). His doctrine of duty and public service had a great influence on subsequent Chinese thought and served as a code of conduct for government officials.

Daoism Chinese school of thought, originating in the Warring States Period with Laozi. Daoism offered an alternative to the Confucian emphasis on hierarchy and duty.

Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Society

The Eastern Zhou era, despite being plagued by political fragmentation, frequent warfare, and anxious uncertainty, was also a time of great cultural development. The two most influential “philosophical” systems of Chinese civilization—Confucianism and Daoism—had their roots in this period, though they would be further developed and adapted to changing circumstances in later times.

Kongzi (**kohng-zuh**) (551–479 B.C.E.), known in the West by the Latin form of his name, **Confucius**, withdrew from public life after unsuccessful efforts to find employment as an official and adviser to a number of rulers of the day. He attracted a circle of students to whom he presented his wide-ranging ideas on morality, conduct, and government. His sayings were handed down orally by several generations of disciples before being compiled in written form as the *Analects* (see Diversity and Dominance: Human Nature and Good Government in the *Analects* of Confucius and the Legalist Writings of Han Fei). This work, along with a set of earlier texts that were believed (probably wrongly) to have been edited by Confucius—the *Book of Documents*, the *Book of Songs*, the *Book of Changes*, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*—became the core texts of Confucianism.

Confucius drew upon traditional institutions and values but gave them new shape and meaning. He looked back to the early Zhou period as a Golden Age of wise rulers and benevolent government, models to which the people of his own “broken” society should return. He also placed great importance on the “rituals,” or forms of behavior, that guide people in their daily interactions with one another, since these promote harmony in human relations.

For Confucius the family was the fundamental component of society, and the ways in which family members regulated their conduct in the home prepared them to serve as citizens of the state. Each person had his or her place and duties in a hierarchical order that was determined by age and gender. The “filiality” of children to parents, which included obedience, reverence, and love, had its analogue in the devotion of subjects to the ruler. Another fundamental virtue for Confucius was *ren* (**ruhn**), sometimes translated as “humaneness,” which traditionally meant the feelings between family members and which was expanded into a universal ideal of benevolence and compassion that would, ideally, pervade every activity. Confucianism placed immense value on the practical task of making society function smoothly at every level. It provided a philosophical and ethical framework for conducting one’s life and understanding one’s place in the world. But it was not a religion. While Confucius urged respect for gods, ancestors, and religious traditions, he felt that such supernatural matters were unknowable.

Confucius’s ideas were little known in his own time, but his teachings were preserved and gradually spread to a wider audience. Some disciples took Confucianism in new directions. Mengzi (**muhng-zuh**) (known in the West as Mencius, 371–289 B.C.E.), who did much to popularize Confucian ideas in his age, believed in the essential goodness of all human beings and argued that, if people were shown the right way by virtuous leaders, they would voluntarily do the right thing. Xunzi (**shoon-zuh**) (ca. 310–210 B.C.E.), on the other hand, concluded that people had to be compelled to make appropriate choices. (This approach led to the development of a school of thought called Legalism, discussed later in this chapter.) As we shall see in Chapter 5, in the era of the emperors a revised Confucianism became the dominant political philosophy and the core of the educational system for government officials.

If Confucianism emphasized social engagement, its great rival, **Daoism (DOW-ism)**, urged withdrawal from the empty formalities, rigid hierarchy, and distractions of Chinese society. Laozi (**low-zuh**) is regarded as the originator of Daoism, although virtually nothing is known

Human Nature and Good Government

in the Analects of Confucius and the Legalist Writings of Han Fei

While monarchy (the rule of one man) was the standard form of government in ancient China and was rarely challenged, political theorists and philosophers thought a great deal about the qualities of the ideal ruler, his relationship to his subjects, and the means by which he controlled them. These considerations about how to govern people were inevitably molded by fundamental assumptions about the nature of human beings. In the Warring States Period, as the major states struggled desperately with one another for survival and expansion, such discussions took on a special urgency, and the Confucians and Legalists came to represent two powerful, and largely contradictory, points of view.

The Analects are a collection of sayings of Confucius, probably compiled and written down several generations after he lived, though some elements may have been added even later. They cover a wide range of matters, including ethics, government, education, music, and rituals. Taken as a whole, they are a guide to living an honorable, virtuous, useful, and satisfying life. While subject to reinterpretation according to the circumstances of the times, Confucian principles have had a great influence on Chinese values and behavior ever since.

Han Fei (280–233 B.C.E.), who was, ironically, at one time the student of a Confucian teacher, became a Legalist writer and political adviser to the ruler of the ambitious state of Qin. Eventually he lost out in a power struggle at court and was forced to kill himself.

The following selections illuminate the profound disagreements between Confucians and Legalists over the essential nature of human beings and how the ruler should conduct himself in order to most effectively govern his subjects and protect his kingdom.

Confucius

4:5 Confucius said: “Riches and honors are what all men desire. But if they cannot be attained in accordance with the *dao* [the way] they should not be kept. Poverty and low status are what all men hate. But if they cannot be avoided while staying in accordance with the *dao*, you should not avoid them. If a Superior Man departs from *ren* [humaneness], how can he be worthy of that name? A Superior Man never leaves *ren* for even the time of a single meal. In moments of haste he acts according to it. In times of difficulty or confusion he acts according to it.”

16:8 Confucius said: “The Superior Man stands in awe of three things: (1) He is in awe of the decree of Heaven. (2) He is in awe of great men. (3) He is in awe of the words of the sages. The inferior man does not know the decree of Heaven; takes great men lightly and laughs at the words of the sages.”

4:14 Confucius said: “I don’t worry about not having a good position; I worry about the means I use to gain position. I don’t worry about being unknown; I seek to be known in the right way.”

7:15 Confucius said: “I can live with coarse rice to eat, water for drink and my arm as a pillow and still be happy. Wealth and honors that one possesses in the midst of injustice are like floating clouds.”

13:6 Confucius said: “When you have gotten your own life straightened out, things will go well without your giving orders. But if your own life isn’t straightened out, even if you give orders, no one will follow them.”

12:2 Zhonggong asked about the meaning of *ren*. The Master said: “Go out of your home as if you were receiving an important guest. Employ the people as if you were assisting at a great ceremony. What you don’t want done to yourself, don’t do to others. Live in your town without stirring up resentments, and live in your household without stirring up resentments.”

1:5 Confucius said: “If you would govern a state of a thousand chariots (a small-to-middle-size state), you must pay strict attention to business, be true to your word, be economical in expenditure and love the people. You should use them according to the seasons.”

2:3 Confucius said: “If you govern the people legalistically and control them by punishment, they will avoid crime, but have no personal sense of shame. If you govern them by means of virtue and control them with propriety, they will gain their own sense of shame, and thus correct themselves.”

12:7 Zigong asked about government. The Master said, “Enough food, enough weapons and the confidence of the people.” Zigong said, “Suppose you had no alternative but to give up one of these three, which one would be let go of first?” The Master said, “Weapons.” Zigong said, “What if you had to give up one of the remaining two, which one would it be?” The Master said, “Food. From ancient times, death has come to all men, but a people without confidence in its rulers will not stand.”

12:19 Ji Kang Zi asked Confucius about government saying: “Suppose I were to kill the unjust, in order to advance the just. Would that be all right?”

Confucius replied: “In doing government, what is the need of killing? If you desire good, the people will be good. The nature of the Superior Man is like the wind, the nature of the inferior man is like the grass. When the wind blows over the grass, it always bends.”

2:19 The Duke of Ai asked: “How can I make the people follow me?” Confucius replied: “Advance the upright and set aside the crooked, and the people will follow you. Advance the crooked and set aside the upright, and the people will not follow you.”

2:20 Ji Kang Zi asked: “How can I make the people reverent and loyal, so they will work positively for me?” Confucius said, “Approach them with dignity, and they will be reverent. Be filial and compassionate and they will be loyal. Promote the able and teach the incompetent, and they will work positively for you.”

Han Fei

Past and present have different customs; new and old adopt different measures. To try to use the ways of a generous and lenient government to rule the people of a critical age is like trying to drive a runaway horse without using reins or whips. This is the misfortune that ignorance invites. . . .

Humaneness [*ren*] may make one shed tears and be reluctant to apply penalties, but law makes it clear that such penalties must be applied. The ancient kings allowed law to be supreme and did not give in to their tearful longings. Hence it is obvious that humaneness cannot be used to achieve order in the state. . . .

The best rewards are those that are generous and predictable, so that the people may profit by them. The best penalties are those that are severe and inescapable, so that the people will fear them. The best laws are those that are uniform and inflexible, so that the people can understand them. . . .

Hardly ten men of true integrity and good faith can be found today, and yet the offices of the state number in the hundreds. . . . Therefore the way of the enlightened ruler is to unify the laws instead of seeking for wise men, to lay down firm policies instead of longing for men of good faith. . . .

When a sage rules the state, he does not depend on people's doing good of themselves; he sees to it that they are not allowed to do what is bad. If he depends on people's doing good of themselves, then within his borders he can count fewer than ten instances of success. But if he sees to it that they are not allowed to do what is bad, then the whole state can be brought to a uniform level of order. Those who rule must employ measures that will be effective with the majority and discard those that will be effective with only a few. Therefore they devote themselves not to virtue but to law. . . .

When the Confucians of the present time counsel rulers, they do not praise those measures that will bring order today, but talk only of the achievements of the men who brought order in the past. . . . No ruler with proper standards will tolerate them. Therefore the enlightened ruler works with facts and discards useless theories. He does not talk about deeds of humaneness and rightness, and he does not listen to the words of scholars. . . .

Nowadays, those who do not understand how to govern invariably say, “You must win the hearts of the people!” . . . The reason you cannot rely on the wisdom of the people is that they have the minds of little children. If the child's head is not shaved, its sores will spread; and if its boil is not lanced, it will become sicker than ever . . . for it does not understand that the little pain it suffers now will bring great benefit later. . . .

Now, the ruler presses the people to till the land and open up new pastures so as to increase their means of livelihood, and yet they consider him harsh; he draws up a penal code and makes the punishments more severe in order to put a stop to evil, and yet the people consider him stern. . . . He makes certain that everyone within his borders understands warfare and sees to it that there are no private exemptions from military service; he unites the strength of the state and fights fiercely in order to take its enemies captive, and yet the people consider him violent. . . . [These] types of undertaking all ensure order and safety to the state, and yet the people do not have sense enough to rejoice in them.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What do Confucius and Han Fei believe about the nature of human beings? Are they intrinsically good and well-behaved, or bad and prone to misbehave?
2. What are the qualities of an ideal ruler for Confucius and Han Fei?
3. By what means can the ruler influence his subjects in Confucian thought? How should the ruler compel obedience in the people in Legalist thought?
4. What do Confucians and Legalists think about the value of the past as a model for the present?
5. Why might Confucius's passionate concern for ethical behavior on the part of officials and rulers arise at a time when the size and power of governments were growing?

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Daoism

yin/yang In Chinese belief, complementary factors that help to maintain the equilibrium of the world. Yang is associated with masculine, light, and active qualities; yin with feminine, dark, and passive qualities.

Male and Female Roles

about him, and some scholars doubt his existence. Laozi is credited with the foundational text of Daoism, the *Classic of the Way of Virtue*, a difficult book full of ambiguity and paradox, beautiful poetic images, and tantalizing hints of “truths” that cannot be adequately explained with words. It raises questions about whether the material world in which we operate is real or a kind of dream that blocks us from perceiving a higher reality. It argues that education, knowledge, and rational analysis are obstacles to understanding and that we would be better off cultivating our senses and trusting our intuitions. The primal world of the distant past was happy and blessed before civilization and “knowledge” corrupted it. The Daoist sage strives to lead a tranquil existence by retreating from the stresses and obligations of a chaotic society. He avoids useless struggles, making himself soft and malleable so that the forces that buffet people can flow harmlessly around him. He chooses not to “act” because such action almost always leads to a different outcome from the one desired, whereas inaction may bring the desired outcome. And he has no fear of death because, for all we know, death may be merely a transformation to another plane of existence. In the end, in a world that is always changing and lacks any absolute morality or meaning, all that matters is the individual’s fundamental understanding of, and accommodation to, the *Dao*, the “path” of nature.

Daoism, like Confucianism, would continue to evolve for many centuries, adapting to changes in Chinese society and incorporating many elements of traditional religion, mysticism, and magic. Although Daoism and Confucianism may appear to be thoroughly at odds regarding the relationship of the individual and the larger society, many Chinese through the ages have drawn on both traditions, and it has been said that the typical Chinese scholar-official was a Confucian in his work and public life but a Daoist in the privacy of his study.

The classical Chinese patterns of family and property took shape in the later Zhou period. The kinship structures of the Shang and early Zhou periods, based on the clan (a relatively large group of related families), gave way to the three-generation family of grandparents, parents, and children as the fundamental social unit. Fathers had absolute authority over women and children, arranged marriages for their offspring, and could sell the labor of family members. Only men could conduct rituals and make offerings to the ancestors, though women helped maintain the household’s ancestral shrines. A man was limited to one wife but was permitted additional sexual partners, who had the lower status of concubines. A man whose wife died had a duty to remarry in order to produce male heirs to keep alive the cult of the ancestors, whereas women were discouraged from remarrying.

In Chinese tradition the concept of **yin/yang** represented the complementary nature of male and female roles in the natural order. The male principle (yang) was equated with the sun: active, bright, and shining; the female principle (yin) corresponded to the moon: passive, shaded, and reflective. Male toughness was balanced by female gentleness, male action and initiative by female endurance and need for completion, and male leadership by female supportiveness. In its earliest form, the theory considered yin and yang as equal and alternately dominant, like day and night, creating balance in the world. However, as a result of the changing role of women in the Zhou period and the pervasive influence of Confucian ideology, the male principle came to be seen as superior to the female.

The Warring States Period, 481–221 B.C.E.

The second half of the Eastern Zhou era is conventionally called the Warring States Period (481–221 B.C.E.) because the scale and intensity of rivalry and warfare between the states accelerated. More successful states conquered and absorbed less capable rivals, and by the beginning of the third century B.C.E. only seven major states remained. Each state sought security by any and all means: building

Warring States Period Bronze Figurine The figurine of a youth, made of bronze, was produced in the Warring States Period, but the jade birds perched atop the staffs were originally carved in the Shang era. The youth has braided hair and is wearing boots and an elaborately decorated robe. The chain may indicate that these were live birds rather than images.



Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Maria Antoinette Evans Fund. Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 31.976



walls to protect its borders; putting into the field the largest possible armies; experimenting with military organization, tactics, and technology; and devising new techniques of administration to produce the greatest revenues. Some wars were fought against non-Chinese peoples living on the margins of the states' territories or even in enclaves within the states. In addition to self-defense, the aim of these campaigns was often to increase the territory available for agriculture, since cultivated land was, ultimately, the source of wealth and manpower. The conquered peoples assimilated over time, becoming Chinese in language and culture.

The Qin and Legalism

The most innovative of all the states of this era was Qin (**chin**), on the western edge of “the Central States” (the term used for the Chinese lands of north and central China). Coming from the same Wei River Valley frontier region as the Zhou long before, and exposed to barbarian influences and attacks, the Qin rulers commanded a nation of hardy farmers and employed them in large, well-trained armies. The very vulnerability of their circumstances may have inspired the Qin rulers of the fourth and third centuries B.C.E. to take great risks, for they were the first to put into practice the philosophy and methods of the Legalist school of political theorists. In the mid-fourth century B.C.E. Lord Shang was put in charge of the Qin government. He maintained that the Confucians were mistaken in looking to an idealized past for solutions and naïve in thinking that the ruler should worry about his subjects' opinions. In Lord Shang's

view, the ruler should trust his own judgment and employ whatever means are necessary to compel obedience and good behavior in his subjects. In the end, Legalists were willing to sacrifice individual freedom to guarantee the security and prosperity of the state. To strengthen the ruler, Lord Shang moved to weaken the Qin nobility, sending out centrally appointed district governors, abolishing many of the privileges of the nobility, and breaking up large estates by requiring property to be divided equally among the surviving sons. Although he eventually became entangled in bitter intrigue at court and was killed in 338 B.C.E., the Qin rulers of the third century B.C.E. continued to employ Legalist advisers and pursue Legalist policies, and, as we shall see in Chapter 5, they converted the advantages gained from this approach into a position of unprecedented power.

SECTION REVIEW

- The challenges of engaging in agriculture in the varied environments of East Asia led to the formation of complex, hierarchical societies.
- The Shang and Zhou rulers of early China developed religious ideologies (oracle bone divination, Mandate of Heaven theories) that justified monarchic systems of government.
- The feudal organization of the Zhou state led, over time, to the weakening of the monarch's authority and the rise of many essentially independent states.
- The rivalry and conflict of Chinese states in the later Zhou era led to the rise of bureaucracies, administrative experts, and more deadly forms of warfare.
- This era also saw the rise and rivalry of major philosophical systems: Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism.
- Although yin/yang theory regarded the male and female principles as interdependent, men were dominant in the family, and the influence of Confucianism led to a reduction in women's status and rights.

NUBIA, 3100 B.C.E.–350 C.E.

Since the first century B.C.E. the name *Nubia* has been applied to a thousand-mile (1,600-kilometer) stretch of the Nile Valley lying between Aswan and Khartoum (**kahr-TOOM**) and straddling the southern part of the modern nation of Egypt and the northern part of Sudan (see Map 2.2). Nubia is the only continuously inhabited territory connecting sub-Saharan Africa (the lands south of the Sahara Desert) with North Africa. For thousands of years it has served as a corridor for trade between tropical Africa and the Mediterranean. Nubia was richly endowed with natural resources such as gold, copper, and semiprecious stones.

Nubia's location and natural wealth, along with Egypt's hunger for Nubian gold, explain the early rise of a civilization with a complex political organization, social stratification, metallurgy, monumental building, and writing. Scholars have moved away from the traditional view that Nubian civilization simply imitated Egypt, and they now emphasize the mutually beneficial interactions between Egypt and Nubia and the growing evidence that Nubian culture also drew on influences from sub-Saharan Africa.



MAP 2.2 Ancient Nubia The land route alongside the Nile River as it flows through Nubia has long served as a corridor connecting sub-Saharan Africa with North Africa. Centuries of Egyptian occupation, as well as time spent in Egypt by Nubian hostages, mercenaries, and merchants, led to a marked Egyptian cultural influence in Nubia. (Based on Map 15 from *The Historical Atlas of Africa*, ed. by J. F. Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder. Reprinted by permission of Addison Wesley Longman Ltd.)



Early Cultures and Egyptian Domination 2300–1100 B.C.E.

The central geographical feature of Nubia, as of Egypt, is the Nile River. This part of the Nile flows through a landscape of rocky desert, grassland, and fertile plain. River irrigation was essential for agriculture in a climate that was severely hot and, in the north, nearly without rainfall. Six cataracts, barriers formed by large boulders and rapids, obstructed boat traffic. Boats operating between the cataracts and caravans skirting the river made travel and trade possible.

In the fifth millennium B.C.E. bands of people in northern Nubia made the transition from seminomadic hunting and gathering to a settled life based on grain agriculture and cattle herding. From this time on, the majority of the population lived in agricultural villages alongside the river. Even before 3000 B.C.E. Egyptian craftsmen worked in ivory and in ebony wood—products of tropical Africa that came through Nubia.

Nubia enters the historical record around 2300 B.C.E. in Old Kingdom Egyptian accounts of trade missions to southern lands. At that time Aswan, just north of the First Cataract, was the southern limit of Egyptian control. As we saw with the journey of Harkhuf at the beginning of this chapter, Egyptian officials stationed there led donkey caravans south in

search of gold, incense, ebony, ivory, slaves, and exotic animals from tropical Africa. This was dangerous work, requiring delicate negotiations with local Nubian chiefs to secure protection, but it brought substantial rewards to those who succeeded.

During the Middle Kingdom (ca. 2040–1640 B.C.E.), Egypt adopted a more aggressive stance toward Nubia. Egyptian rulers sought to control the gold mines in the desert east of the Nile and to cut out the Nubian middlemen who drove up the cost of luxury goods from the tropics. The Egyptians erected a string of mud-brick forts on islands and riverbanks south of the Second Cataract. The forts regulated the flow of trade goods and protected the southern frontier of Egypt against Nubians and nomadic raiders from the desert. There seem to have been peaceable relations but little interaction between the Egyptian garrisons and the indigenous population of northern Nubia, which continued to practice its age-old farming and herding ways.

Farther south, where the Nile makes a great U-shaped turn in the fertile plain of the Dongola Reach (see Map 2.2), a more complex political entity was evolving from the chiefdoms of the third millennium B.C.E. The Egyptians gave the name **Kush** to the kingdom whose capital was located at Kerma, one of the earliest urbanized centers in tropical Africa. Beginning around 1750 B.C.E. the kings of Kush built fortification walls and monumental structures of mud brick. The dozens or even hundreds of servants and wives sacrificed for burial with the kings, as well as the rich objects found in their tombs, testify to the wealth and power of the rulers of Kush and imply a belief in an afterlife in which attendants and possessions would be useful. Kushite craftsmen were skilled in metalworking, whether for weapons or jewelry, and produced high-quality pottery.

Egyptian Domination

Kush An Egyptian name for Nubia, the region alongside the Nile River south of Egypt, where an indigenous kingdom with its own distinctive institutions and cultural traditions arose beginning in the early second millennium B.C.E.



Gebel Barkal This model of Gebel Barkal, the “Holy Mountain” of Nubia, made of sandstone and with traces of the original paint, was deposited in the Temple of Amon at Gebel Barkal by a Nubian king. The original door is missing, as well as a seated figurine inside, possibly an image of Amon. Resting on a band representing a swamp with papyrus reeds, the doorway is flanked on either side by relief images of a winged goddess and a king wearing a short kilt.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Harvard University Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition, Maria Antoniette Evans Fund. Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Z1.3234

During the expansionist New Kingdom (ca. 1532–1070 B.C.E.) the Egyptians penetrated more deeply into Nubia (see Chapter 3). They destroyed Kush and its capital and extended their frontier to the Fourth Cataract. A high-ranking Egyptian official called “Overseer of Southern Lands” or “King’s Son of Kush” ruled Nubia from a new administrative center at Napata (**nah-PAH-tuh**), near Gebel Barkal (**JEB-uhl BAHR-kahl**), the “Holy Mountain,” believed to be the home of a local god. Exploiting the mines of Nubia, Egypt supplied gold to the states of the Middle East. Fatalities were high among native workers in the brutal desert climate, and the army had to ward off attacks from desert nomads.

Five hundred years of Egyptian domination in Nubia left many marks. The Egyptian

government imposed Egyptian culture on the native population. Children from elite families were brought to the Egyptian royal court to guarantee the good behavior of their relatives in Nubia; they absorbed Egyptian language, culture, and religion, which they later carried home with them. Other Nubians served as archers in the Egyptian armed forces. The manufactured goods that they brought back to Nubia have been found in their graves. The Nubians built towns on the Egyptian model and erected stone temples to Egyptian gods, particularly Amon. The frequent depiction of Amon with the head of a ram may reflect a blending of the chief Egyptian god with a Nubian ram deity.

The Kingdom of Meroë, 800 B.C.E.–350 C.E.

Egypt’s weakness after 1200 B.C.E. led to the collapse of its authority in Nubia. In the eighth century B.C.E. a powerful new native kingdom emerged in southern Nubia. Its history can be divided into two parts. During the early period, between the eighth and fourth centuries B.C.E., Napata, the former Egyptian headquarters, was the primary center. During the later period, from the fourth century B.C.E. to the fourth century C.E., the center was farther south, at **Meroë (MER-oh-ee)**, near the Sixth Cataract.

For half a century, from around 712 to 660 B.C.E., the kings of Nubia ruled all of Egypt as the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. They conducted themselves in the age-old manner of Egyptian rulers. They were addressed by royal titles, depicted in traditional costume, and buried according to Egyptian custom. However, they kept their Nubian names and were depicted with the physical features of sub-Saharan Africans. They inaugurated an artistic and cultural renaissance, building on a monumental scale for the first time in centuries and reinvigorating Egyptian art, architecture, and religion. The Nubian kings resided at Memphis, the Old Kingdom capital, while Thebes, the New Kingdom capital, was the residence of a celibate female member of the king’s family who was titled “God’s Wife of Amon.”

The Nubian dynasty made a disastrous mistake in 701 B.C.E. when it offered help to local rulers in Palestine who were struggling against the Assyrian Empire. The Assyrians retaliated by invading Egypt and driving the Nubian monarchs back to their southern domain by 660 B.C.E.

Meroë Capital of a flourishing kingdom in southern Nubia from the fourth century B.C.E. to the fourth century C.E. In this period Nubian culture shows more independence from Egypt and the influence of sub-Saharan Africa.

Nubian Domination of Egypt

Napata again became the chief royal residence and religious center of the kingdom. However, Egyptian cultural influences remained strong. Court documents continued to be written in Egyptian hieroglyphs, and the mummified remains of the rulers were buried in modestly-sized sandstone pyramids along with hundreds of shawabti (**shuh-WAB-tee**) figurines.

The Shift South to Meroë

By the fourth century B.C.E. the center of gravity had shifted south to Meroë, perhaps because Meroë was better situated for agriculture and trade, the economic mainstays of the Nubian kingdom. As a result, sub-Saharan cultural patterns gradually replaced Egyptian ones. Egyptian hieroglyphs gave way to a new set of symbols, still essentially undeciphered, for writing the Meroitic language. People continued to worship Amon as well as Isis, an Egyptian goddess connected to fertility and sexuality, but those deities had to share the stage with Nubian deities like the lion-god Apedemak. Meroitic art combined Egyptian, Greco-Roman, and indigenous traditions.

Women of the royal family played an important role in Meroitic politics, another reflection of the influence of sub-Saharan Africa. In their matrilineal system the king was succeeded by the son of his sister. Nubian queens sometimes ruled by themselves and sometimes in partnership with their husbands. They played a part in warfare, diplomacy, and the building of temples and pyramid tombs. They are depicted in scenes reserved for male rulers in Egyptian imagery, smiting enemies in battle and being suckled by the mother-goddess Isis.

Meroë was a huge city for its time, more than a square mile in area, dominating fertile grasslands and converging trade routes. Great reservoirs were dug to catch precious rainfall, and the city was a major center for iron smelting. Although much of the city is still buried under the sand, in 2002 archaeologists using a magnetometer to detect buried structures discovered a large palace. The Temple of Amon was approached by an avenue lined with stone rams, and the walled precinct of the “Royal City” was filled with palaces, temples, and administrative buildings. The ruler, who may have been regarded as divine, was assisted by a professional class of officials, priests, and army officers.

Meroë collapsed in the early fourth century C.E., overrun by nomads from the western desert who had become more mobile because of the arrival of the camel in North Africa. Already weakened when profitable commerce with the Roman Empire was diverted to the Red Sea and to the rising kingdom of Aksum (**AHK-soom**) (in present-day Ethiopia), the end of the Meroitic kingdom was as closely linked to Nubia’s role in long-distance commerce as its beginning.



AP* Exam Tip Gender roles in each of the classical civilizations are an important issue for the exam.

SECTION REVIEW

- Nubia’s natural wealth and location on the trade route between Egypt and sub-Saharan Africa, along with Egypt’s hunger for Nubian gold, explain the early rise of a complex civilization there.
- During long periods of Egyptian domination, as well as a period in which Nubian rulers controlled Egypt, Nubian culture and technology were strongly influenced by Egyptian practices.
- During the Meroitic period, Nubia came under stronger cultural influences stemming from sub-Saharan Africa, as seen in the prominent role of queens.
- The city of Meroë was large and impressive, with monumental palaces, temples, and boulevards. It controlled agriculture and trade and was a center of metallurgy.
- Nubia’s collapse in the early fourth century C.E. was due to shifting trade routes and attacks by desert nomads.

CELTIC EUROPE, 1000–50 B.C.E.

Continental Europe


The southern peninsulas of Europe—present-day Spain, Italy, and Greece—share in the mild climate of all the Mediterranean lands and are separated from “continental” Europe to the north by high mountains (the Pyrenees and Alps). Consequently, the history of southern Europe in antiquity is primarily connected to that of the Mediterranean and Middle East, at least until the Roman conquests north of the Alps (see Chapters 3, 4, and 5).

Continental Europe (including the modern nations of France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania—see Map 2.3) was well suited to agriculture and herding. It contained broad plains with good soil and had a temperate climate with cold winters, warm summers, and ample rainfall. It was well endowed with natural resources such as timber and metals, and large, navigable rivers facilitated travel and trade.



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MAP 2.3 The Celtic Peoples Celtic civilization originated in central Europe in the early part of the first millennium B.C.E. Around 500 B.C.E. Celtic peoples began to migrate, making Celtic civilization the dominant cultural style in Europe north of the Alps. The Celts' interactions with the peoples of the Mediterranean, including Greeks and Romans, involved both warfare and trade. (From *Atlas of Classical History*, Fifth Edition, by Michael Grant. Copyright © 1994 by Michael Grant. Used by permission of Oxford University Press, Inc.)

 Interactive Map

Celts Peoples sharing common linguistic and cultural features that originated in Central Europe in the first half of the first millennium B.C.E.

Humans had lived in this part of Europe for many thousands of years (see Chapter 1), but their lack of any system of writing severely limits our knowledge of the earliest inhabitants. Around 500 B.C.E., as Celtic peoples spread from their original homeland across a substantial portion of Europe, they came into contact with the literate societies of the Mediterranean and thereby entered the historical record. Information about the early **Celts (kelts)** comes from the archaeological record, the accounts of Greek and Roman travelers and conquerors, and the oral traditions of Celtic Wales and Ireland that were written down during the European Middle Ages.

The Spread of the Celts

The term *Celtic* refers to a branch of the large Indo-European family of languages found throughout Europe and in western and southern Asia. Scholars link the Celtic language group to archaeological remains first appearing in parts of present-day Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic after 1000 B.C.E. (see Map 2.3). Many early Celts lived in or near hill-forts—lofty natural locations made more defensible by earthwork fortifications. By 500 B.C.E. Celtic elites were trading with Mediterranean societies for crafted goods and wine. This contact may have stimulated the new styles of Celtic manufacture and art that appeared at this time.

These new cultural features coincided with a period in which Celtic groups migrated to many parts of Europe. The motives behind these population movements, the precise timing, and the manner in which they were carried out are not well understood. Celts occupied nearly all of France and much of Britain and Ireland, and they merged with indigenous peoples to create

Homeland and Migrations



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Celtic Hill-Fort in England Hundreds of these fortresses have been found across Europe. They served as centers of administration, gathering points for Celtic armies, manufacturing centers, storage depots for food and trade goods, and places of refuge. The natural defense offered by a hill could be improved, as here, by the construction of ditches and earthwork walls. Particularly effective was the so-called Gallic Wall, made of a combination of earth, stone, and timber to create both strength and enough flexibility to absorb the pounding from siege engines.

the Celtiberian culture of northern Spain. Other Celtic groups overran northern Italy (they sacked Rome in 490 B.C.E.), raided into central Greece, and settled in central Anatolia (modern Turkey). By 300 B.C.E. Celtic peoples were spread across Europe north of the Alps, from present-day Hungary to Spain and Ireland. Their traces remain in many place names in Europe today.

These widely diffused Celtic groups shared elements of language and culture, but there was no Celtic “nation,” for they were divided into hundreds of small, loosely organized kinship groups. In the past scholars built up a generic picture

Mediterranean Observers

of Celtic society derived largely from the observations of Greek and Roman writers. Current scholarship is focusing attention on the differences as much as the similarities among Celtic peoples. It is unlikely that the ancient Celts identified themselves as belonging to anything akin to our modern conception of “Celtic civilization.”

Greek and Roman writers were struck by the appearance of male Celts—their burly size, long red hair, shaggy mustaches, and loud, deep voices—and by their strange apparel, trousers (usually an indication of horse-riding peoples) and twisted gold neck collars. Particularly terrifying were the warriors who fought naked and made trophies of the heads of defeated enemies. Surviving accounts describe the Celts as wildly fond of war, courageous, childishly impulsive and emotional, and fond of boasting and exaggeration, yet quick-witted and eager to learn.

Celtic Society

Warriors, Druids, and Commoners

One of the best sources of information about Celtic society is the account of the Roman general Gaius Julius Caesar, who conquered Gaul (present-day France) between 58 and 51 B.C.E. Many Celtic groups in Gaul had once been ruled by kings, but by the time of the Roman invasion they periodically chose public officials, perhaps under Greek and Roman influence.

Celtic society was divided into an elite class of warriors, professional groups of priests and bards (singers of poems about glorious deeds of the past), and commoners. The warriors owned land and flocks of cattle and sheep and monopolized both wealth and power. The common people labored on their land. The Celts built houses (usually round in Britain, rectangular in France) out of wattle and daub—a wooden framework filled in with clay and straw—with thatched straw roofs. Several such houses belonging to related families might be surrounded by a wooden fence for protection.

The warriors of Welsh and Irish legend reflect a stage of political and social development less complex than that of the Celts in Gaul. They raided one another’s flocks, reveled in drunken feasts, and engaged in contests of strength and wit. At banquets warriors would fight to the death just to claim the choicest cut of the meat, the “hero’s portion.”

Druids, the Celtic priests in Gaul and Britain, formed a well-organized fraternity that performed religious, judicial, and educational functions. Trainees spent years memorizing prayers, secret rituals, legal precedents, and other traditions. The priesthood was the one Celtic institution that crossed tribal lines. The Druids sometimes headed off warfare between feuding groups and served as judges in cases involving Celts from different groups. In the first century C.E. the Roman government attempted to stamp out the Druids, probably because of concern that they

Druids The class of religious experts who conducted rituals and preserved sacred lore among some ancient Celtic peoples.

The Gundestrup Cauldron This silver vessel was found in a peat bog in Denmark, but it must have come from elsewhere. It is usually dated to the second or first century B.C.E. On the inside left are Celtic warriors on horse and on foot, with lozenge-shaped shields and long battle-horns. On the inside right is a horned deity, possibly Cernunnos.



The National Museum of Denmark

might serve as a rallying point for Celtic opposition to Roman rule and also because of their involvement in human sacrifices.

The Celts supported large populations by tilling the heavy but fertile soils of continental Europe. Their metallurgical skills probably surpassed those of the Mediterranean peoples. Celts on the Atlantic shore of France built sturdy ships that braved ocean conditions, and they developed extensive trade networks along Europe's large, navigable rivers. One lucrative commodity was tin, which Celtic traders from southwest England brought to Greek buyers in southern France. By the first century B.C.E. some hill-forts were evolving into urban centers.

Celtic Women

Women's lives were focused on child rearing, food production, and some crafts. Their situation was superior to that of women in the Middle East and in the Greek and Roman Mediterranean. Greek and Roman sources depict Celtic women as strong and proud. Welsh and Irish tales portray clever, self-assured women who sit at banquets with their husbands and engage in witty conversation. Marriage was a partnership to which both parties contributed property. Each had the right to inherit the estate if the other died. Celtic women also had greater freedom in their sexual relations than did their southern counterparts.

Tombs of elite women have yielded rich collections of clothing, jewelry, and furniture for use in the next world. Daughters of the elite were married to leading members of other tribes to create alliances. When the Romans invaded Celtic Britain in the first century C.E., they sometimes were opposed by Celtic tribes headed by queens, although some experts see this as an abnormal circumstance created by the Roman invasion itself.

Belief and Knowledge

Celtic Religion

Historians know the names of more than four hundred Celtic gods and goddesses, mostly associated with particular localities or kinship groups. More widely revered deities included Lug (**loog**), the god of light, crafts, and inventions; the horse-goddess Epona (**eh-POH-nuh**); and the horned god Cernunnos (**KURN-you-nuhs**). "The Mothers," three goddesses depicted together holding symbols of abundance, probably played a part in a fertility cult. Halloween and May Day preserve the ancient Celtic holidays of Samhain (**SAH-win**) and Beltaine (**BEHL-tayn**), respectively, which took place at key moments in the agricultural cycle.

The early Celts did not build temples but instead worshiped wherever they felt the presence of divinity—at springs, groves, and hilltops. At the sources of the Seine and Marne Rivers

SECTION REVIEW

- Around 500 B.C.E. Celtic-speaking peoples from Central Europe began to spread across much of “continental” Europe.
- Most of what we know about the ancient Celts comes from archaeological discoveries and the written reports of Greek and Roman observers, who depict them as impulsive and fond of war.
- Celts lived in relatively small kinship (tribal) groups that were dominated by warrior elites. Hill-forts served as places of assembly and refuges.
- The Celts worshiped many gods in natural settings. The Druids, a priestly class in Gaul (France) and Britain, played a major role in religion, education, and intertribal legal matters.
- The Roman Empire’s conquest of Celtic lands, followed later by Germanic invasions, pushed Celtic language and culture to the western edge of the European continent.

Conquest and Assimilation

still further, and the English language has a Germanic base. Only on the western fringes of the European continent—in Brittany (northwest France), Wales, Scotland, and Ireland—did Celtic peoples maintain their language, art, and culture into modern times.

in France, archaeologists have found huge caches of wooden statues thrown into the water by worshippers.

The burial of elite members of early Celtic society in wagons filled with extensive grave goods suggests belief in some sort of afterlife. In Irish and Welsh legends, heroes and gods pass back and forth between the natural and supernatural worlds much more readily than in the mythology of other cultures, and magical occurrences are commonplace. Celtic priests set forth a doctrine of reincarnation—the rebirth of the soul in a new body.

The Roman conquest from the second century B.C.E. to the first century C.E. of Spain, southern Britain, France, and parts of Central Europe curtailed the evolution of Celtic society. The peoples in these lands were largely assimilated to Roman ways (see Chapter 5). That is why the inhabitants of modern Spain and France speak languages that are descended from Latin. From the third century C.E. on, Germanic invaders weakened the Celts

FIRST CIVILIZATIONS OF THE AMERICAS: THE OLMEC AND CHAVÍN, 1200–250 B.C.E.

New theories about the peopling of the Americas suggest that the process may have been more complex than previously suspected and may have involved people traveling by sea as well as trekking across a land bridge between Siberia and Alaska. It is generally held that humans reached the Western Hemisphere through a series of migrations from Asia (see Chapter 1). Some scholars believe that the first migrations occurred as early as 35,000 to 25,000 B.C.E., but most accept a later date of 18,000 to 14,000 B.C.E. Thus, the peoples in the Western Hemisphere were virtually isolated from the rest of the world for at least fifteen thousand years.

Over thousands of years the population of the Americas grew and spread throughout the hemisphere, adapting to environments that included polar extremes, tropical rain forests, and high mountain ranges as well as deserts, woodlands, and prairies. Well before 1000 B.C.E. the domestication of new plant varieties, the introduction of new technologies, and a limited development of trade led to greater social stratification and the beginnings of urbanization in several regions. By 1000 B.C.E. a number of centers had begun to project their political and cultural power over broad territories. Two of the hemisphere’s most impressive cultural traditions developed in Mesoamerica (Mexico and northern Central America) and in the mountainous Andean region of South America. The cultural legacies of the Olmec and Chavín would persist for more than a thousand years.


The Mesoamerican Olmec, 1200–400 B.C.E.

Mesoamerica is a region of great geographic and climatic diversity. It is extremely active geologically, experiencing both earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Mountain ranges break the region into microenvironments, including the temperate climates of the Valley of Mexico and the Guatemalan highlands, the tropical forests of the Peten and Gulf of Mexico coast, the rain forest of the southern Yucatán and Belize, and the drier scrub forest of the northern Yucatán (see Map 2.4).

Within these ecological niches, Amerindian peoples developed specialized technologies that exploited indigenous plants and animals, as well as minerals like obsidian, quartz, and jade. Early settlements depended on the region’s rich plant diversity and on fishing. By 3500 B.C.E. the



MAP 2.4 Olmec and Chavín Civilizations The regions of Mesoamerica (most of modern Mexico and Central America) and the Andean highlands of South America have hosted impressive civilizations since early times. The civilizations of the Olmec and Chavín were the originating civilizations of these two regions, providing the foundations of architecture, city planning, and religion.

 Interactive Map



staples of the Mesoamerican diet—corn (maize), beans, and squash—had been domesticated. Manioc, a calorie-rich root crop, was also grown in the floodplains. The ability of farmers to produce dependable surpluses of these products permitted the first stages of craft specialization and social stratification. Eventually, contacts across environmental boundaries led to trade and cultural exchange. Enhanced trade, increasing agricultural productivity, and rising population led, in turn, to urbanization and the gradual appearance of powerful political and religious elites. As religious and political elites emerged, they used their prestige and authority to organize the population to dig irrigation and drainage canals, develop raised fields in wetlands that could be farmed more intensively, and construct monumental religious and civic buildings.

The most influential early Mesoamerican civilization was the **Olmec**, flourishing between 1200 and 400 B.C.E. (see Map 2.4). The center of Olmec civilization was located near the tropical Atlantic coast of what are now the Mexican states of Veracruz and Tabasco. The earliest major center was located at San Lorenzo (1200–900 B.C.E.; the names of early American sites are modern, since, in the absence of written records, the ancient names are unknown). La Venta (**LA BEN-tah**), which developed at about the same time, became the most important Olmec center after 900 B.C.E., when San Lorenzo was abandoned or destroyed. Tres Zapotes (**TRACE zah-POE-tace**) was the last dominant center, rising to prominence after La Venta collapsed or was destroyed around 600 B.C.E. The relationship among these centers is unclear. Scholars have found little evidence to suggest that they were either rival city-states or dependent centers of a centralized political authority. It appears that each center developed independently to exploit and exchange specialized products like salt, cacao (chocolate beans), clay for ceramics, and

Origins of Olmec Civilization

Olmec The first Mesoamerican civilization. Between ca. 1200 and 400 B.C.E., the Olmec people of central Mexico created a vibrant civilization that included intensive agriculture, wide-ranging trade, ceremonial centers, and monumental construction.

limestone. Each major Olmec center was eventually abandoned, its monuments defaced and buried and its buildings destroyed. Archaeologists interpret these events differently; some see them as evidence of internal upheavals or military attacks by neighboring peoples, whereas others suggest that they were rituals associated with the death of a ruler.

Ceremonial Centers

Large platforms and mounds of packed earth dominated Olmec urban centers. Because of the absence of dense housing precincts, scholars believe these centers primarily accommodated the collective ritual and political activities that brought the rural population to the cities at special times in the year. Some of the platforms also served as foundations for elite residences, in effect lifting the elite above the masses. Since these centers had small permanent populations, the Olmec elite evidently was able to require and direct the labor of thousands of people from surrounding settlements for low-skill tasks like moving dirt and stone construction materials. Skilled artisans who lived in or near the urban core decorated the buildings with carvings and sculptures. They also produced high-quality crafts, such as exquisite carved jade figurines, necklaces, and ceremonial knives and axes. There is also evidence for a class of merchants who traded with distant peoples for obsidian, jade, and pottery.

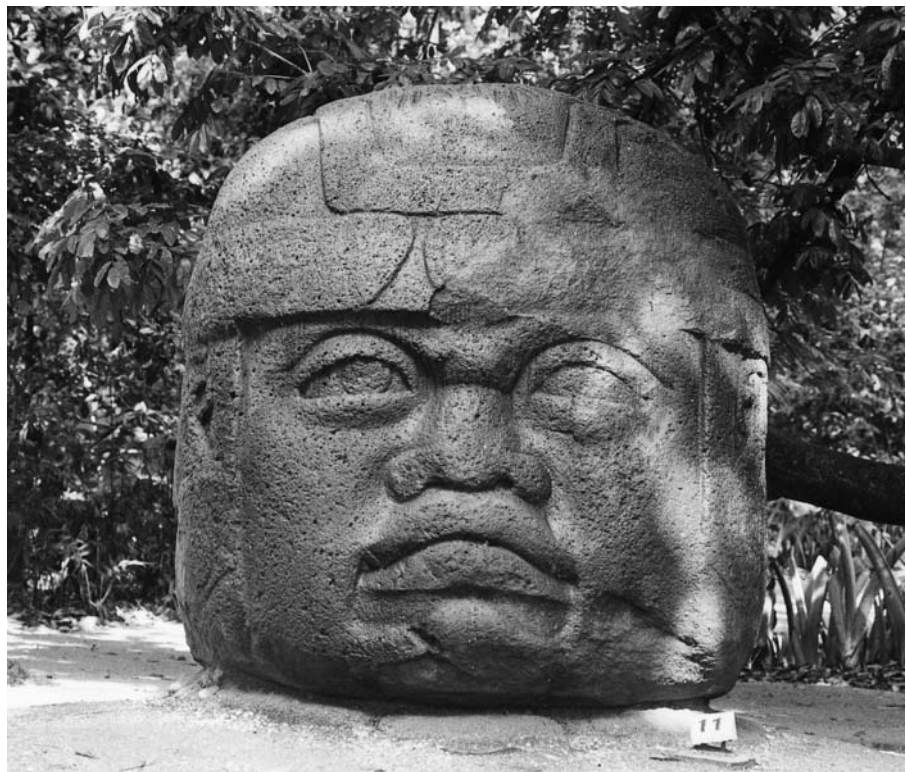
While the elite lived in houses decorated with finely crafted objects and wore elegant clothing and jewelry, the commoners lived in small structures constructed of sticks and mud. The organization of collective labor by the Olmec elites benefited the commoners by increasing food production and making it more reliable. People also enjoyed a more diverse diet. Utilitarian pots and small ceramic figurines as well as small stone carvings associated with religious belief have been found in commoner households. This suggests that at least some advantages gained from urbanization and growing elite prosperity were shared broadly in the society.

Religion and Power

Little is known about Olmec political structure, but it seems likely that the rise of major urban centers coincided with the appearance of a form of kingship that combined religious and secular roles. The authority of the rulers and their kin groups is suggested by a series of colossal carved stone heads, some as large as 11 feet (3.4 meters) high. Since each head is unique, most archaeologists believe they were portraits carved to memorialize individual rulers. This theory is reinforced by the location of the heads close to the major urban centers, especially San Lorenzo. These remarkable stone sculptures are the best-known monuments of Olmec culture.

The Olmec elite used elaborate religious rituals to control this complex society. Thousands of commoners were drawn from the countryside to attend awe-inspiring ceremonies at the cen-

Olmec Head Giant heads sculpted from basalt are a widely recognized legacy of Olmec culture. Sixteen heads have been found, the largest approximately 11 feet (3.4 meters) tall. Experts in Olmec archaeology believe the heads are portraits of individual rulers, warriors, or ballplayers.



Georg Gerster/Photo Researchers, Inc.



ters. The elevated platforms and mounds with carved stone veneers served as potent backdrops for these rituals. Rulers and their close kin came to be associated with the gods through blood-letting and human sacrifice, evidence of which is found in all the urban centers.

The Olmec were polytheistic, and most of their deities had both male and female natures. Human and animal characteristics were also blended. The ability of humans to transform themselves into powerful animals, such as jaguars, crocodiles, snakes, and sharks, is a common decorative motif. Rulers were especially associated with the jaguar.

Shamans (individuals who claimed the ability to make direct contact with supernatural powers) attached to the elite organized religious life and provided practical advice about the periodic rains essential to agricultural life. From their close observation of the stars, they produced a calendar that was used to organize ritual life and agriculture, and they laid out the ceremonial centers in alignment with the paths of certain stars. They probably were responsible for developing a form of writing (as yet undeciphered) that may have influenced later innovations among the Maya (see Chapter 11). The Olmec were also the likely originators of a ritual ball game that became an enduring part of Mesoamerican ceremonial life.

Cultural Legacy

There is little evidence for an Olmec empire. Given the limited technological and agricultural capacity of the society, it is unlikely that the power of the Olmec could have been projected militarily over significant distances. However, the discovery of Olmec products and images, such as jade carvings decorated with the jaguar-god, as far away as the Pacific coast of Central America and the Central Plateau of Mexico shows that the Olmec exercised cultural influence over a wide area. This influence would endure for centuries. All subsequent Mesoamerican civilizations shared fundamental elements of material culture, technology, religious belief and ritual, political organization, art, architecture, and sports.

Early South American Civilization: Chavín, 900–250 B.C.E.

Geography and environment played a critical role in the development of human society in the Andes. The region's diverse environments—a mountainous core, arid coastal plain, and dense interior jungles—challenged human populations, encouraging the development of specialized regional production as well as widespread social institutions and cultural values that facilitated interregional exchanges and shared labor responsibilities.

Trade and the Rise of Chavín

The earliest urban centers in the Andean region were villages of a few hundred people built along the coastal plain or in the foothills near the coast. The abundance of fish and mollusks along the coast of Peru provided a dependable food supply, while the introduction of corn (maize) cultivation from Mesoamerica increased the food supplies of the coast and interior foothills, allowing greater levels of urbanization. The coastal populations traded fish, shellfish, and decorative shells for corn, other foods, and eventually textiles produced in the foothills. The two regions also exchanged ceremonial practices, religious motifs, and aesthetic ideas.

Recent discoveries demonstrate that as early as 2600 B.C.E. the vast site called Caral in the Supe Valley had developed many of the characteristics now viewed as the hallmarks of later Andean civilization, including ceremonial plazas, pyramids, elevated platforms and mounds, and extensive irrigation works. The scale of the public works in Caral suggests a population of thousands and a political structure capable of organizing the production and distribution of maritime and agricultural products over a broad area.

Chavín The first major urban civilization in South America (900–250 B.C.E.).

Chavín (see Map 2.4) inherited many of the cultural and economic characteristics of Caral. Its capital, Chavín de Huantar (**cha-BEAN day WAHN-tar**), was located at 10,300 feet (3,139 meters) in the eastern range of the Andes north of the modern city of Lima. Between 900 and 250 B.C.E. Chavín dominated a densely populated region that included large areas of the Peruvian coastal plain and Andean foothills. Chavín de Huantar's location at the intersection of trade routes allowed the city's rulers to organize and prosper from trade among distinct ecological zones and gain an advantage over regional rivals. As Chavín grew, its trade linked the coastal economy with the inland producers of quinoa (a local grain), corn, and potatoes, with the herders of llamas in the high mountain valleys, and, to a lesser extent, with the producers of coca (the leaves were chewed, producing a mild narcotic effect) and fruits in the tropical lowlands on the eastern flank of the Andes.

The development of these trade networks led to reciprocal labor obligations that permitted the construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, temples, palaces, and large irrigation and drainage projects as well as textile production. The exact nature of these reciprocal labor

Llama A hooved animal indigenous to the Andes Mountains in South America. It was the only domesticated beast of burden in the Americas before the arrival of Europeans.

obligations at Chavín is unknown. In later Andean civilizations groups of related families who held land communally and claimed descent from a common ancestor organized these labor obligations. Group members thought of themselves as brothers and sisters and were obligated to aid one another, providing a model for the organization of labor and the distribution of goods at every level of Andean society.

Llamas, first bred in the mountainous interior of Peru, were the only domesticated beasts of burden in the Americas, and they played an important role in the integration of the Andean region. Llamas provided meat and wool and decreased the labor needed to transport goods. A single driver could control ten to thirty animals, each carrying up to 70 pounds (32 kilograms); a human porter could carry only about 50 pounds (22.5 kilograms). By moving goods from one ecological zone to another, llamas promoted specialization of production and increased trade. Thus, they were crucial to Chavín's development, not unlike the camel in the evolution of trans-Saharan trade (see Chapter 7).

Class distinctions appear to have increased in this period. Modern scholars see evidence that both local chiefs and a more powerful chief or king dominated Chavín's politics. A class of priests directed religious life. The most common decorative motif in sculpture, pottery, and textiles was a jaguar-man similar in conception to the Olmec symbol. In both civilizations and in many other cultures in the Americas, this powerful predator provided an enduring image of religious authority.

Chavín housed a large complex of multilevel platforms made of packed earth or rubble and faced with cut stone or adobe (sun-dried brick made of clay and straw). Small buildings used for ritual purposes or as elite residences were built on these platforms. Nearly all the buildings were decorated with relief carvings of serpents, condors, jaguars, or human forms. The largest building at Chavín de Huantar measured 250 feet (76 meters) on each side and rose to a height of 50 feet (15 meters). Its hollow interior contained narrow galleries and small rooms that may have housed the remains of royal ancestors.

Metallurgy in the Western Hemisphere was first developed in the Andean region ca. 500 B.C.E. The later introduction of metallurgy in Mesoamerica, like the appearance of maize agriculture in the Andes, suggests sustained trade and cultural contacts between the two regions. Archaeological investigations of Chavín de Huantar and smaller centers have uncovered remarkable silver, gold, and gold alloy ornaments that represent a clear advance over earlier technologies. Improvements in both the manufacture and decoration of textiles are also associated with the rise of Chavín. Excavations of graves reveal that superior-quality textiles as well as gold crowns, breastplates, and jewelry distinguished rulers from commoners. These rich objects, the quality and abundance of pottery, and the monumental architecture of the major centers all suggest the presence of highly skilled artisans as well. The sheer quality of Chavín's products contributed to the reputation and prestige of the culture.

The enormous scale of the capital and the dispersal of Chavín's pottery styles, religious motifs, and architectural forms over a wide area have led some scholars to claim that Chavín imposed some form of political and economic control over its neighbors by military force. Most scholars believe, however, that, as in the case of the Olmec civilization, Chavín's influence depended more on the development of an attractive religious belief system and related rituals. Chavín's most potent religious symbol, a jaguar deity, was dispersed over a broad area, and archaeological evidence suggests that Chavín de Huantar served as a pilgrimage site.

There is no convincing evidence, like defaced buildings or broken images, that the eclipse of Chavín (unlike the Olmec centers) was associated with conquest or rebellion. However, recent

Society and Technology

SECTION REVIEW

- Well before 1000 B.C.E. newly domesticated plants, new technologies, and trade led to greater social stratification and the beginnings of urbanization in Mesoamerica and the Andean region of South America.
- The Olmec of Mesoamerica (1200–400 B.C.E.) and the Chavín civilization (900–250 B.C.E.) in the Andes coordinated exchanges of goods between different ecological zones. Their styles were widely emulated and persisted long afterward.
- Ruling elites residing in urban centers staged elaborate religious ceremonies designed to impress subjects and enhance their prestige.
- Olmec societies were probably ruled by kings, who were depicted by giant stone heads. Olmec shamans communicated with the spirit world, supervised the calendar, and may have created a system of writing.
- Chavín depended on llamas, the only domesticated beasts of burden in the hemisphere, to transport goods between regions.
- Metallurgy originated in the Andean region and later spread to Mesoamerica.

Decline

investigations have suggested that increased warfare throughout the region around 200 B.C.E. disrupted Chavín's trade and undermined the authority of the governing elite. Regardless of what caused the collapse of this powerful culture, the technologies, material culture, statecraft, architecture, and urban planning associated with Chavín influenced the Andean region for centuries.

CONCLUSION

Environment and Organization

The civilizations of early China, Nubia, the Celts, the Olmec, and Chavín emerged in very different ecological contexts in widely separated parts of the globe, and the patterns of organization, technology, behavior, and belief that they developed were, in large part, responses to the challenges and opportunities of those environments.

In the North China Plain, as in the river-valley civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt, the presence of great, flood-prone rivers and the lack of dependable rainfall led to the formation of powerful institutions capable of organizing large numbers of people to dig and maintain irrigation channels and build dikes. An authoritarian central government has been a recurring feature of Chinese history from at least as early as the Shang monarchy.

In Nubia, the initial impetus for the formation of a strong state was the need for protection from desert nomads and from the Egyptian rulers who coveted Nubian gold and other resources. Control of these resources and of the trade route between sub-Saharan Africa and the north, as well as the agricultural surplus to feed administrators and specialists in the urban centers, made the rulers of Kerma, Napata, and Meroë wealthy and powerful.

The Celtic peoples of continental Europe never developed a strong state. They occupied fertile lands with adequate rainfall for agriculture, grazing territory for flocks, and timber for fuel and construction. Kinship groups dominated by warrior elites and controlling compact territories were the usual form of organization. The Celtic elites of Central Europe initially traded for luxury goods with the Mediterranean, and when they began to expand into lands to the west and south after 500 B.C.E. they came into even closer contact with Mediterranean peoples. Eventually many Celtic groups were incorporated into the Roman Empire.

Although the ecological zones in Mesoamerica and South America in which the Olmec and Chavín cultures emerged were quite different, both societies created networks that brought together the resources and products of disparate regions. Little is known about the political and social organization of these societies, but archaeological evidence makes clear the existence of ruling elites that gathered wealth and organized labor for the construction of monumental centers.

Religion and Power

In all these societies the elites used religion to bolster their position. The Shang rulers of China were indispensable intermediaries between their kingdom and powerful and protective ancestors and gods. Bronze vessels were used to make offerings to ancestral spirits, and divination by means of oracle bones delivered information of value to the ruler and kingdom. Their Zhou successors developed the concept of the ruler as divine Son of Heaven who ruled in accord with the Mandate of Heaven. In its religious practices, as in other spheres, the civilization that developed in Nubia was powerfully influenced by its interactions with the more complex and technologically advanced neighboring society in Egypt. Nubian rulers built temples and pyramid tombs on the Egyptian model, but they also synthesized Egyptian and indigenous gods, beliefs, and rituals. Olmec and Chavín urban centers were the sites of dazzling ritual displays that reinforced the authority of the elites who resided in them. Olmec shamans attached to the elite made contact with supernatural powers, organized religious life, and directed the planning of the ceremonial centers to be aligned with the stars. Among the Celtic peoples of Gaul and Britain, the Druids constituted an elite class of priests who performed vital religious, legal, and educational functions. However, unlike the other civilizations surveyed in this chapter, the Celts did not construct temples and ceremonial centers, and instead worshiped hundreds of gods and goddesses in natural surroundings, where they felt the presence of divinity.

A Tale of Two Hemispheres

Scholars have debated why powerful civilizations appeared many centuries later in the Western Hemisphere than in the Eastern Hemisphere. Recent theories have focused on environmental differences. The Eastern Hemisphere was home to a far larger number of wild plant and animal species that were particularly well suited to domestication. In addition, the natural east-west axis of the huge landmass of Europe and Asia allowed for the relatively rapid spread of domesticated plants and animals to climatically similar zones along the same latitudes. Settled agriculture led to population growth, more complex political and social organization, and increased technological sophistication. In the Americas, by contrast, there were fewer wild plant and animal species that could be domesticated, and the north-south axis of the continents made it more difficult for domesticated species to spread because of variations in climate at different latitudes. As a result, the processes that foster the development of complex societies evolved somewhat more slowly.

KEY TERMS

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EBOOK AND WEBSITE RESOURCES

Primary Source

The Book of Documents

Interactive Maps

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Map 2.2 Ancient Nubia

Map 2.3 The Celtic Peoples

Map 2.4 Olmec and Chavín Civilizations

Plus flashcards, practice quizzes, and more. Go to:
www.cengage.com/history/bulletearthpeople5e

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- Hansen, Valerie. *The Open Empire: A History of China to 1600*. 2000. Devotes substantial attention to ancient China and emphasizes China's connections with other cultures.
- James, Simon. *The World of the Celts*. 1993. A concise, well-illustrated introduction to ancient Celtic civilization.
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- Taylor, John H. *Egypt and Nubia*. 1991. Emphasizes the fruitful interaction of the Egyptian and Nubian cultures.
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NOTES

1. Quoted in Miriam Lichtheim, ed., *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

AP* REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 2

- Shang cities served as
 - military and economic centers.
 - political and religious centers.
 - ceremonial centers and markets.
 - economic and ceremonial centers.
- Shang China developed
 - the concept of an aristocracy.
 - the earliest known divination techniques.
 - the first known bureaucracy.
 - bronze metallurgy.
- Early Zhou monarchs justified their rule by
 - claiming a direct lineage to Shang rulers.
 - enforcing rigid military rule over the people.
 - citing Confucian texts on governing.
 - claiming that they held the Mandate of Heaven.
- Decentralization was a weakness in the Zhou state because
 - ambitious local rulers tended to operate on their own and become a threat to Zhou rule.
 - trade was fragmented under this system.
 - bureaucrats could not maintain accurate records of tribute payments.
 - the Zhou kings had to maintain several capital cities to enforce discipline on their subjects.
- The idea that human beings are essentially evil and will behave in an orderly fashion only if compelled to by harsh laws and harsh punishments is most closely associated with the ideas of
 - Taoism.
 - Legalism.
 - Confucianism.
 - animism.
- The idea that there is a hierarchy in life that includes family and society is a part of
 - Confucian teachings.
 - Shang culture.
 - customs of the Zhou people.
 - the teachings of Laozi.
- Which of the following is an example of five centuries of Egyptian domination of Nubia?
 - Nubian towns built on the Egyptian model
 - Stone temples erected to Egyptian gods in Nubia
 - Nubian archers serving in Egypt's military
 - All of the above
- After the collapse of Nubia, Meroë became the center of power in southern Egypt because
 - its armies defeated Nubia.
 - the Meroitic leaders allied with Egypt against Nubia.
 - it was at the conflux of several major trade routes.
 - it controlled Nubia's gold fields.
- As in early Mesopotamia, Olmec leaders were able to control
 - construction of irrigation canals.
 - trade with the nearby Maya.
 - agricultural surpluses.
 - the religion.
- One of the earliest South American civilizations, it is likely that the Chavín located their capital in the Andes north of the modern city of Lima to
 - avoid contact with other cultures.
 - gain control of key trade routes.
 - herd their animals on mountain plains.
 - control water for irrigation canals.
- Unlike the civilizations of the Middle East, the Olmec and the Chavín
 - were polytheistic.
 - educated all of their citizens.
 - lived in virtual isolation from the rest of the world.
 - were a trade empire and did not grow their own food.