



CHAPTER OUTLINE

- The Cosmopolitan Middle East, 1700–1100 B.C.E.
- The Aegean World, 2000–1100 B.C.E.
- The Assyrian Empire, 911–612 B.C.E.
- Israel, 2000–500 B.C.E.
- Phoenicia and the Mediterranean, 1200–500 B.C.E.
- Failure and Transformation, 750–550 B.C.E.
- Conclusion

DIVERSITY + DOMINANCE *Protests Against the Ruling Class in Israel and Babylonia*

ENVIRONMENT + TECHNOLOGY *Ancient Textiles and Dyes*



Courtesy, Lorenzo Camillo

The Harbor Area of Ancient Carthage The military and civilian harbors, with their central location in the city, were at the heart of Carthage's naval and commercial power.



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The Mediterranean and Middle East, 2000–500 B.C.E.

Ancient peoples' stories—even when not historically accurate—provide valuable insights into how they thought about their origins and identity. One famous story concerned the founding of the city of Carthage (**KAHR-thuhj**) in present-day Tunisia, which for centuries dominated the commerce of the western Mediterranean. Tradition held that Dido and her supporters fled the Phoenician city-state of Tyre (**tire**) in southern Lebanon after her husband was murdered by her brother, the king. Landing on the North African coast, they made contact with local people, who offered them as much land as a cow's hide could cover. Cleverly cutting the hide into narrow strips, they marked out a substantial territory for Kart Khadasht, the “New City” (called *Carthago* by their Roman enemies). The photo at the beginning of this chapter shows the harbor.

This story highlights the spread of cultural patterns from older centers to new regions, as well as the migration of Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age peoples in the Mediterranean lands and western Asia. Trade, diplomatic contacts, military conquests, and the relocation of large numbers of people spread knowledge, beliefs, practices, and technologies.

By the early first millennium B.C.E. many societies of the Eastern Hemisphere were entering the **Iron Age**, using iron instead of bronze for tools and weapons. Iron offered several advantages. It was a single metal rather than an alloy, and there were many sources of iron ore. Once the technology had been mastered—iron has to be heated to a higher temperature than bronze, and its hardness depends on the amount of carbon added during the forging process—iron tools were found to have harder, sharper edges than bronze tools.

The first part of this chapter resumes the story of Mesopotamia and Egypt in the second millennium B.C.E.: their relations with neighboring peoples, the development of a prosperous, “cosmopolitan” network of states in the Middle East, and the period of destruction and decline that set in around 1200 B.C.E. We also look at how the Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations of the Aegean Sea were inspired by the technologies and cultural patterns of the older Middle Eastern centers and prospered from participation in long-distance trade networks. The remainder of the chapter examines the resurgence of this region in the Early Iron Age, from 1000 to

- How did a cosmopolitan civilization develop in the Middle East during the Late Bronze Age, and what forms did it take?
- What civilizations emerged in the Aegean world, and what relationship did they have to the older civilizations to the east?
- How did the Assyrian Empire rise to power and eventually dominate most of the ancient Middle East?
- How did the civilization of Israel develop, following both cultural patterns typical of other societies and its own religious tradition?
- How did the Phoenicians use trade and commerce to gain an important place in the Mediterranean world?
- Between 750 and 550 B.C.E., how did changing political structures transform the ancient Middle East?

Iron Age Historians' term for the period during which iron was the primary metal for tools and weapons. The advent of iron technology began at different times in different parts of the world.

AP* Exam Tip The development of iron metallurgy is a highlight in the AP* Course Outline.



500 B.C.E. The focus is on three societies: the Assyrians of northern Mesopotamia; the Israelites of Israel; and the Phoenicians of Lebanon and their colonies in the western Mediterranean, mainly Carthage. After the decline of the ancient centers dominant throughout the third and second millennia B.C.E., these societies evolved into new political, cultural, and commercial centers.


THE COSMOPOLITAN MIDDLE EAST, 1700–1100 B.C.E.

Both Mesopotamia and Egypt succumbed to outside invaders in the seventeenth century B.C.E. Eventually the outsiders were either ejected or assimilated, and conditions of stability and prosperity were restored. Between 1500 and 1200 B.C.E. a number of large states dominated the Middle East (see Map 3.1), controlling the smaller states and kinship groups as they competed with, and sometimes fought against, one another for control of valuable commodities and trade routes.

The Late Bronze Age in the Middle East was a “cosmopolitan” era of widely shared cultures and lifestyles. Diplomatic relations and commercial contacts between states fostered the flow of goods and ideas, and elite groups shared similar values and enjoyed a relatively high standard of living. The peasants in the countryside, who constituted the majority of the population, saw some improvement in their standard of living but reaped fewer benefits from the increasing contacts and trade.



MAP 3.1 The Middle East in the Second Millennium B.C.E. Although warfare was not uncommon, treaties, diplomatic missions, and correspondence in Akkadian cuneiform fostered cooperative relationships between states. All were tied together by extensive networks of exchange centering on the trade in metals, and peripheral regions, such as Nubia and the Aegean Sea, were drawn into the web of commerce.

 Interactive Map

CHRONOLOGY				
	Western Asia	Egypt	Syria–Palestine	Mediterranean
2000 B.C.E.	2000 B.C.E. Horses in use	2040–1640 B.C.E. Middle Kingdom	1800 B.C.E. Abraham migrates to Canaan	2000 B.C.E. Rise of Minoan civilization on Crete; early Greeks arrive in Greece
	1700–1200 B.C.E. Hittites dominant in Anatolia	1640–1532 B.C.E. Hyksos dominate northern Egypt 1532 B.C.E. Beginning of New Kingdom		1600 B.C.E. Rise of Mycenaean civilization in Greece
1500 B.C.E.	1500 B.C.E. Hittites develop iron metallurgy	1470 B.C.E. Queen Hatshepsut dispatches expedition to Punt	1500 B.C.E. Early “alphabetic” script developed at Ugarit	
	1460 B.C.E. Kassites assume control of southern Mesopotamia	1353 B.C.E. Akhenaten launches reforms 1290–1224 B.C.E. Reign of Ramesses the Great	1250–1200 B.C.E. Israelite occupation of Canaan	1450 B.C.E. Destruction of Minoan palaces in Crete
	1200 B.C.E. Destruction of Hittite kingdom	1200–1150 B.C.E. Sea Peoples attack Egypt 1070 B.C.E. End of New Kingdom	1150 B.C.E. Philistines settle southern coast of Israel	1200–1150 B.C.E. Destruction of Mycenaean centers in Greece
1000 B.C.E.	1000 B.C.E. Iron metallurgy begins		1000 B.C.E. Jerusalem made Israelite capital	1000 B.C.E. Iron metallurgy
	911 B.C.E. Rise of Neo-Assyrian Empire		969 B.C.E. Hiram of Tyre comes to power	
	744–727 B.C.E. Reforms of Tiglathpileser	750 B.C.E. Kings of Kush control Egypt	960 B.C.E. Solomon builds First Temple 920 B.C.E. Division into two kingdoms of Israel and Judah	814 B.C.E. Foundation of Carthage
	668–627 B.C.E. Reign of Ashurbanipal	671 B.C.E. Assyrian conquest of Egypt	721 B.C.E. Assyrian conquest of northern kingdom 701 B.C.E. Assyrian humiliation of Tyre	
600 B.C.E.	626–539 B.C.E. Neo-Babylonian kingdom			
	612 B.C.E. Fall of Assyria		587 B.C.E. Capture of Jerusalem 515 B.C.E. Deportees from Babylon return to Jerusalem 450 B.C.E. Completion of Hebrew Bible; Hanno the Phoenician explores West Africa	550–300 B.C.E. Rivalry of Carthaginians and Greeks in western Mediterranean

Western Asia

Babylonia and Assyria

By 1500 B.C.E. Mesopotamia was divided into two distinct political zones: Babylonia in the south and Assyria in the north (see Map 3.1). The city of Babylon had gained political and cultural ascendancy over the southern plain under the dynasty of Hammurabi in the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries B.C.E. (see Chapter 1). Subsequently Kassites (**KAS-ite**) from the Zagros (**ZAH-groes**) Mountains to the east migrated into southern Mesopotamia, and by 1460 B.C.E.



Institute of Nautical Archaeology

Remains of a Sunken Cargo Ship from the Late Bronze Age

Underwater archaeologists excavate a merchant vessel that went down off the coast of southern Turkey ca. 1300 B.C.E. To the left of the wooden keel and planking is a stone anchor, to the right a row of copper ingots. The vessel was carrying a cargo of copper and tin ingots, as well as Canaanite pots that probably contained incense, fine pottery from Cyprus, sub-Saharan ebony wood and elephant tusks, and some Mycenaean Greek objects, illustrating the wide-ranging seaborne trade in the eastern Mediterranean in that era.

The Hittites of Anatolia

Hittites A people from central Anatolia who established an empire in Anatolia and Syria in the Late Bronze Age. With wealth from the trade in metals and military power based on chariot forces, the Hittites vied with New Kingdom Egypt for control of Syria-Palestine before falling to unidentified attackers ca. 1200 B.C.E.

The Spread of Mesopotamian Culture



AP* Exam Tip Be prepared to compare how different political and cultural concepts spread.

a Kassite dynasty ruled in Babylon. The Kassites retained names in their native language but otherwise embraced Babylonian language and culture and intermarried with the native population. During their 250 years in power, the Kassite rulers of Babylonia defended their core area and traded for raw materials, but they did not pursue territorial conquest.

The “Old Assyrian” kingdom in northern Mesopotamia was more ambitious. As early as the twentieth century B.C.E. the city of Ashur (**AH-shoor**) on the northern Tigris anchored a busy trade route stretching across the northern plain to the Anatolian Plateau. Assyrian merchant families settled outside the walls of Anatolian cities and exchanged textiles and tin (a component of bronze) for Anatolian silver. After 1400 B.C.E. a resurgent “Middle Assyrian” kingdom engaged in campaigns of conquest and expansion of its economic interests.

Other dynamic states emerged on the periphery of the Mesopotamian heartland, including Elam in southwest Iran and Mitanni (**mih-TAH-nee**) in the broad plain between the upper Euphrates and Tigris Rivers. Most formidable of all were the **Hittites (HIT-ite)**, who became the foremost power in Anatolia from around 1700 to 1200 B.C.E. From their capital at Hattusha (**haht-tush-SHAH**), near present-day Ankara (**ANG-kuh-ruh**) in central Turkey, they deployed the fearsome new technology of horse-drawn war chariots. The Hittites exploited Anatolia’s rich metal deposits to play a key role in international commerce.

The Hittites also first developed a technique for making tools and weapons of iron. Heating the ore until it was soft enough to shape, they pounded it to remove impurities and then plunged it into cold water to harden. They kept knowledge of this process secret because it provided military and economic advantages. In the disrupted period after 1200 B.C.E., blacksmiths from the Hittite core area may have migrated and spread iron technology.

During the second millennium B.C.E. Mesopotamian political and cultural concepts spread across western Asia. Akkadian (**uh-KAY-dee-uhn**) became the language of diplomacy and correspondence between governments. The Elamites (**EE-luh-mite**) and Hittites, among others, adapted the cuneiform system to write their own languages. In the Syrian coastal city-state of Ugarit (**OO-guh-reet**), thirty cuneiform symbols were used to write consonant sounds, an early use of the alphabetic principle and a considerable advance over the hundreds of signs required in conventional cuneiform and hieroglyphic writing. Mesopotamian myths, legends, and styles of art and architecture were widely imitated. Newcomers who had learned and improved on the lessons of Mesopotamian civilization often put pressure on the old core area. The small, fractious city-states of the third millennium B.C.E. had been concerned only with their immediate

neighbors in southern Mesopotamia. In contrast, the larger states of the second millennium B.C.E. interacted politically, militarily, and economically in a geopolitical sphere encompassing all of western Asia.

New Kingdom Egypt

After flourishing for nearly four hundred years (see Chapter 1), the Egyptian Middle Kingdom declined in the seventeenth century B.C.E. As officials in the countryside became increasingly independent and new groups migrated into the Nile Delta, central authority broke down and Egypt entered a period of political fragmentation and economic decline. Around 1640 B.C.E. Egypt came under foreign rule for the first time, at the hands of the Hyksos (**HICK-soes**), or “Princes of Foreign Lands.”

The Hyksos

Historians are uncertain who the Hyksos were and how they came to power. Semitic peoples had been migrating from the Syria-Palestine region (present-day Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, and the Palestinian territories) into the eastern Nile Delta for centuries. In the chaotic conditions of this time, various groups may have cooperated to establish control, first in the delta and then in the middle of the country. The Hyksos possessed advantageous military technologies, such as the horse-drawn war chariot and a composite bow, made of wood and horn, that had greater range and velocity than the simple wooden bow. The Hyksos intermarried with Egyptians, used the Egyptian language, and maintained Egyptian institutions and culture. Nevertheless, in contrast to the easy assimilation of outsiders such as the Kassites in Mesopotamia, the Egyptians, with their strong ethnic identity, continued to regard the Hyksos as “foreigners.”

New Kingdom Expansion

As with the formation of the Middle Kingdom five hundred years earlier, the reunification of Egypt under a native dynasty was accomplished by princes from Thebes. After three decades of warfare, Kamose (**KAH-mose**) and Ahmose (**AH-mose**) expelled the Hyksos from Egypt and inaugurated the New Kingdom, which lasted from about 1532 to 1070 B.C.E.

A century of foreign domination had injured Egyptian pride and shattered the isolationist mindset of earlier eras. New Kingdom Egypt was an aggressive and expansionist state. By extending its territorial control north into Syria-Palestine and south into Nubia, Egypt won access to timber, gold, and copper (bronze metallurgy took hold in Egypt around 1500 B.C.E.), as well as taxes and tribute payments from the conquered peoples. The occupied territories provided a buffer zone, protecting Egypt from attack. In Nubia, Egypt imposed direct control and pressed the native population to adopt Egyptian language and culture. In the Syria-Palestine region, in contrast, the Egyptians stationed garrisons at strategically placed forts and supported cooperative local rulers.

Hatshepsut Queen of Egypt (r. 1473–1458 B.C.E.). She dispatched a naval expedition to Punt (possibly northeast Sudan or Eritrea), the far-away source of myrrh. There is evidence of opposition to a woman as ruler, and after her death her name and image were frequently defaced.

In this period of innovation, Egypt fully participated in the diplomatic and commercial networks linking the states of western Asia. Egyptian soldiers, administrators, diplomats, and merchants traveled widely, bringing back new fruits and vegetables, new musical instruments, and new technologies, such as an improved potter’s wheel and weaver’s loom.

One woman held the throne of New Kingdom Egypt. When her husband died, Queen **Hatshepsut** (**hat-SHEP-soot**) claimed the royal title for herself (r. 1473–1458 B.C.E.). In inscriptions she often used the male pronoun for herself, and drawings and sculptures show her wearing the long, conical beard of the Egyptian ruler.

Unconventional Rulers

Akhenaten Egyptian pharaoh (r. 1353–1335 B.C.E.). He built a new capital at Amarna, fostered a new style of naturalistic art, and created a religious revolution by imposing worship of the sun-disk.

Around 1470 B.C.E. Hatshepsut sent a naval expedition down the Red Sea to the fabled land of Punt (**poont**), probably near the coast of eastern Sudan or Eritrea. Hatshepsut was seeking the source of myrrh (**murr**), a reddish-brown resin from the hardened sap of a local tree, which the Egyptians burned on the altars of their gods and used in medicines and cosmetics. When the expedition returned with myrrh and sub-Saharan luxury goods—ebony, ivory, cosmetics, live monkeys, panther skins—Hatshepsut celebrated the achievement in a great public display and in words and pictures on the walls of her mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri (**DARE uhl-BAH-ree**). She may have used the success of this expedition to bolster her claim to the throne. After her death, her image was defaced and her name blotted out wherever it appeared, presumably by officials opposed to a woman ruler.

Another untraditional ruler ascended the throne as Amenhotep (**ah-muhn-HOE-tep**) IV, but he soon began to refer to himself as **Akhenaten** (**ah-ken-AHT-n**) (r. 1353–1335 B.C.E.), meaning “beneficial to the Aten” (**AHT-n**) (the disk of the sun). Changing his name was one way to spread his belief in Aten as the supreme deity. He closed the temples of other gods, challenging



Robert Frerck/Woodfin Camp & Associates

The Mortuary Temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri, Egypt, ca. 1460 B.C.E. This beautiful complex of terraces, ramps, and colonnades featured relief sculptures and texts commemorating the famous expedition to Punt. Hatshepsut, facing resistance from traditionalists opposed to a woman ruling Egypt, sought to prove her worth by publicizing the opening of direct contact with the source of highly prized myrrh.

the age-old supremacy of the chief god Amon (**AH-muhn**) and the power and influence of his priests. Some scholars have credited Akhenaten with the invention of monotheism—the belief in one exclusive god. It is likely, however, that Akhenaten was attempting to reassert the superiority of the king over the priests and to renew belief in the king’s divinity. Worship of Aten was confined to the royal family: the people of Egypt were pressed to revere the divine ruler.

Akhenaten built a new capital at modern-day Amarna (**uh-MAHR-nuh**), halfway between Memphis and Thebes (see Map 3.1). He transplanted thousands of Egyptians to construct the site and serve the ruling elite. Akhenaten and his artists created a new style that broke with the conventions of earlier art: the king, his wife Nefertiti (**nef-uh-TEE-tee**), and their daughters were depicted in fluid, natural poses with strangely elongated heads and limbs and swelling abdomens.

Akhenaten’s reforms were strongly resented by government officials and priests whose privileges and wealth were linked to the traditional system. After his death the temples were reopened; Amon was reinstated as chief god; the capital was returned to Thebes; and the institution of kingship was weakened to the advantage of the priests. The boy-king Tutankhamun (**tuht-uhnk-AH-muhn**) (r. 1333–1323 B.C.E.), famous solely because his was the only royal tomb found by archaeologists that had not been pillaged by robbers, reveals both in his name (meaning “beautiful in life is Amon”) and in his insignificant reign the ultimate failure of Akhenaten’s revolution.

The rulers of a new dynasty, the Ramessides (**RAM-ih-side**), returned to the policy of conquest and expansion that Akhenaten had neglected. The greatest of these monarchs, **Ramesses II (RAM-ih-seez)**, ruled for sixty-six years (r. 1290–1224 B.C.E.) and dominated his age. Ramesses undertook monumental building projects all over Egypt. Living into his nineties, he had many

Ramesses II A long-lived ruler of New Kingdom Egypt (r. 1290–1224 B.C.E.). He reached an accommodation with the Hittites of Anatolia after a standoff in battle at Kadesh in Syria. He built on a grand scale throughout Egypt.



Susan Lapidus/Woodfin Camp & Associates

Colossal Statues of Ramesses II at Abu Simbel Strategically placed at a bend in the Nile River so as to face the southern frontier, this monument was an advertisement of Egyptian power. A temple was carved into the cliff behind the gigantic statues of the pharaoh. Within the temple, a corridor decorated with reliefs of military victories leads to an inner shrine containing images of the divine ruler seated alongside three of the major gods. In a modern marvel of engineering, the monument was moved to higher ground in the 1960s c.e. to protect it from rising waters when a dam was constructed.

wives and may have fathered more than a hundred children. Since 1990 archaeologists have been excavating a network of corridors and chambers carved deep into a hillside near Thebes, where many sons of Ramesses were buried.

Commerce and Communication

International Trade

Early in his reign Ramesses II fought the Hittites to a draw in a major battle at Kadesh in northern Syria (1285 B.C.E.). Subsequently, diplomats negotiated a treaty, which was strengthened by Ramesses' marriage to a Hittite princess. At issue was control of Syria-Palestine, strategically located between the great powers of the Middle East and at the end of the east-west trade route across Asia. Inland cities—such as Mari (**MAH-ree**) on the upper Euphrates and Alalakh (**UH-luh-luhk**) in western Syria—received overland caravans. Coastal towns—particularly Ugarit and the Phoenician towns of the Lebanese seaboard—extended commerce to the lands ringing the Mediterranean Sea.



AP* Exam Tip The development of inter-regional trading systems is a major comparison point.

Any state seeking to project its power needed metals for tools, weapons, and ornamentation. Commerce in metals energized the long-distance trade of the time. We have seen the Assyrian traffic in silver from Anatolia (above) and the Egyptian passion for Nubian gold (see Chapter 2). Copper came from Anatolia and Cyprus, tin from Afghanistan and possibly the British Isles. Both ores had to be carried long distances and pass through a number of hands before reaching their final destinations.

Horses and Camels

New modes of transportation expedited communications and commerce across great distances and inhospitable landscapes. Horses, domesticated by nomadic peoples in Central Asia, were brought into Mesopotamia through the Zagros Mountains around 2000 B.C.E. and reached Egypt before 1600 B.C.E. The speed of travel and communication made possible by horses

SECTION REVIEW

- In the Late Bronze Age trade and diplomatic contacts between states fostered the flow of goods and ideas, and elite groups enjoyed similar lifestyles and a relatively high standard of living.
- Immigrant groups that came to power in Babylonia (Kassites) and Egypt (Hyksos) assimilated to Babylonian and Egyptian language and culture.
- New peoples in western Asia who learned and improved on the technologies and culture of Mesopotamian civilization challenged the old core area.
- The Hittites used the technologies of chariot warfare and iron metallurgy to dominate Anatolia.
- New Kingdom Egypt abandoned traditional isolationism and extended control over Syria-Palestine and Nubia. The era was marked by rulers who challenged tradition—Hatshepsut, Akhenaten, and Ramesses.
- Long-distance trade networks were based on metals and expedited by the advent of horses and camels.

contributed to the creation of large states and empires, enabling soldiers and government agents to cover great distances quickly. Swift, maneuverable horse-drawn chariots became the premier instrument of war. The team of driver and archer could run up and unleash a volley of arrows or trample terrified foot-soldiers.

Sometime after 1500 B.C.E. in western Asia, but not for another thousand years in Egypt, people began to make common use of camels, though the animal may have been domesticated a millennium earlier in southern Arabia. Thanks to their strength and ability to go long distances without water, camels were able to travel across barren terrain. Their physical qualities eventually led to the emergence of a new kind of desert nomad and the creation of cross-desert trade routes (see Chapter 7).

THE AEGEAN WORLD, 2000–1100 B.C.E.

The influence of Mesopotamia, Syria-Palestine, and Egypt was felt as far away as the Aegean Sea, a gulf of the eastern Mediterranean. The emergence of the Minoan (**mih-NO-uhn**) civilization on the island of Crete and the Mycenaean (**my-suh-NEE-uhn**) civilization of Greece is another manifestation of the fertilizing influence of older centers on outlying lands and peoples, who then struck out on their own unique paths of cultural evolution. With few deposits of metals and little timber, Aegean peoples had to import these commodities, as well as additional food supplies, from abroad. As a result, the rise, success, and eventual fall of the Minoan and Mycenaean societies were closely tied to their commercial and political relations with other peoples in the region.

Minoan Crete

By 2000 B.C.E. the island of Crete (see Map 3.2) was home to the first European civilization to have complex political and social structures and advanced technologies like those found in western Asia and northeastern Africa. Archaeologists named this civilization **Minoan** after King Minos, who, in Greek legend, ruled a naval empire in the Aegean and kept the monstrous Minotaur (**MIN-uh-tor**) (half-man, half-bull) in a mazelike labyrinth built by the ingenious inventor Daedalus (**DED-ih-luhs**). Thus later Greeks recollected a time when Crete had been home to many ships and skilled craftsmen.

The ethnicity of the Minoans is uncertain, and their writing has not been deciphered. But the distribution of Cretan pottery and other artifacts around the Mediterranean and Middle East testifies to widespread trading connections. Egyptian, Syrian, and Mesopotamian influences can be seen in the design of the Minoan palaces, centralized government, and system of writing. The absence of identifiable representations of Cretan rulers, however, contrasts sharply with the grandiose depictions of kings in the Middle East and suggests a different conception of authority. Also noteworthy is the absence of fortifications at the palace sites and the presence of high-quality indoor plumbing.


Statuettes of women with elaborate headdresses and serpents coiling around their limbs may represent fertility goddesses. Colorful frescoes (paintings done on the moist plaster sur-

Minoan Prosperous civilization on the Aegean island of Crete in the second millennium B.C.E. The Minoans engaged in far-flung commerce around the Mediterranean and exerted powerful cultural influences on the early Greeks.



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MAP 3.2 Minoan and Mycenaean Civilizations of the Aegean The earliest complex civilizations in Europe arose in the Aegean Sea. The Minoan civilization on the island of Crete evolved in the later third millennium B.C.E. and had a major cultural influence on the Mycenaean Greeks. Palaces decorated with fresco paintings, a centrally controlled economy, and the use of writing for recordkeeping are conspicuous features of these societies.

 Interactive Map

faces of walls) in the palaces portray groups of women in frilly skirts conversing or watching performances. We do not know whether pictures of young acrobats vaulting over the horns and back of an onrushing bull show a religious activity or mere sport. The stylized depictions of scenes from nature on vases—plants with swaying leaves and playful octopuses winding their tentacles around the surface of the vase—communicate a delight in the beauty and order of the natural world.

All the Cretan palaces except at Cnossus (**NOSS-suhs**), along with the houses of the elite and peasants in the countryside, were deliberately destroyed around 1450 B.C.E. Because Mycenaean Greeks took over at Cnossus, most historians regard them as the culprits.

Mycenaean Greece

Speakers of an Indo-European language ancestral to Greek migrated into the Greek peninsula around 2000 B.C.E. Through intermarriage, blending of languages, and melding of cultural practices, the indigenous population and the newcomers created the first Greek culture. For centuries this society remained simple and static. Farmers and shepherds lived in Stone Age conditions, wringing a bare living from the land. Then, sometime around 1600 B.C.E., life changed relatively suddenly.

A Sudden Rise

Mycenae Site of a fortified palace complex in southern Greece that controlled a Late Bronze Age kingdom. In Homer's epic poems, Mycenae was the base of King Agamemnon, who commanded the Greeks besieging Troy. Contemporary archaeologists call the complex Greek society of the second millennium B.C.E. "Mycenaean."

Mycenaean Palaces

shaft graves A term used for the burial sites of elite members of Mycenaean Greek society in the mid-second millennium B.C.E. At the bottom of deep shafts lined with stone slabs, the bodies were laid out along with gold and bronze jewelry, implements, weapons, and masks.

International Commerce and Contacts

Linear B A set of syllabic symbols, derived from the writing system of Minoan Crete, used in the Mycenaean palaces of the Late Bronze Age to write an early form of Greek. It was used primarily for palace records, and the surviving Linear B tablets provide substantial information about the economic organization of Mycenaean society and tantalizing clues about political, social, and religious institutions.

In 1876 a German businessman, Heinrich Schliemann (**SHLEE-muhn**), discovered a circle of graves at **Mycenae** (**my-SEE-nee**), in southern Greece. These deep, rectangular **shaft graves** contained the bodies of men, women, and children and were filled with gold jewelry and ornaments, weapons, and utensils. Clearly, some people in this society had acquired wealth, authority, and the capacity to mobilize human labor. Subsequent excavation uncovered a large palace complex, massive walls, more shaft graves, and other evidence of a rich and technologically advanced civilization that lasted from around 1600 to 1150 B.C.E.

How can the sudden rise of Mycenae and other centers in mainland Greece be explained? These early Greeks were clearly influenced by the Minoan palaces, centralized economy, and administrative bureaucracy, as well as the writing system. They adopted Minoan styles of architecture, pottery, and fresco and vase painting. The sudden accumulation of power and wealth may have resulted from the profits from trade and piracy and perhaps also from pay and booty brought back by mercenaries (soldiers who served for pay in foreign lands).

This first advanced civilization in Greece is called "Mycenaean" because Mycenae was the first site excavated. Other excavated centers reveal similar features: a hilltop location and high, thick fortification walls made of stones so large that later Greeks believed the giant, one-eyed Cyclopes (**SIGH-kloe-pees**) of legend had lifted them into place. The fortified citadel provided refuge for the entire community in time of danger and contained the palace and administrative complex. A large central hall with an open hearth and columned porch was surrounded by courtyards, living quarters for the royal family and their retainers, offices, storerooms, and workshops. Palace walls were covered with brightly painted frescoes depicting scenes of war, the hunt, and daily life, as well as decorative motifs from nature.

Nearby lay the tombs of the rulers and leading families: shaft graves at first; later, grand beehive-shaped structures made of stone and covered with a mound of earth. Large houses belonging to the aristocracy lay just outside the walls. The peasants lived on the lower slopes and in the plain below, close to the land they worked.

Additional information is provided by over four thousand baked clay tablets written in a script called **Linear B**, which uses pictorial signs to represent syllables and is recognizably an early form of Greek. Palace administrators kept track of people, animals, and objects in exhaustive detail, listing the number of chariot wheels in storerooms, the rations paid to workers, and the gifts dedicated to various gods. The government exercised a high degree of control over the economy, organizing grain production and the wool industry from raw material to finished product. The tablets reveal little, however, about the political and legal system, social structure, gender relations, and religious beliefs. They tell nothing about historical figures (not even the name of a single Mycenaean king), particular historical events, or relations with other Mycenaean centers or foreign peoples.

Long-distance contact and trade were made possible by the seafaring skill of Minoans and Mycenaean. Commercial vessels depended primarily on wind and sail. In general, ancient sailors preferred to sail in daylight hours and keep the land in sight. Their light, wooden vessels with low keels could run up onto the beach, allowing the crew to go ashore to eat and sleep at night.

Cretan and Greek pottery and crafted goods are found not only in the Aegean but also in other parts of the Mediterranean and Middle East. The oldest artifacts are Minoan; then Minoan and Mycenaean objects are found side by side; and eventually Greek wares replace Cretan goods altogether. Such evidence indicates that Cretan merchants pioneered trade routes and established trading posts and were later joined by Mycenaean traders, who supplanted them in the fifteenth century B.C.E.

The numerous Aegean pots found throughout the Mediterranean and Middle East once contained such products as wine and olive oil. Other possible exports include textiles, weapons, and other crafted goods, as well as slaves and mercenary soldiers. Aegean sailors also may have transported the trade goods of other peoples.

As for imports, amber (a translucent, yellowish-brown fossilized tree resin used for jewelry) from northern Europe and ivory carved in Syria have been discovered at Aegean sites, and the large population of southern Greece may have relied on imports of grain. Above all, the Aegean lands needed metals, both gold and the copper and tin needed to make bronze. Several sunken ships carrying copper ingots have been found on the floor of the Mediterranean. Only the elite classes owned metal goods, which may have been symbols of their superior status.

Mycenaean were tough, warlike, and acquisitive. They traded with those who were strong and took from those who were weak. This led to conflict with the Hittite kings of Anatolia in the

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fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C.E. Documents in the archives at the Hittite capital refer to the king and land of Ahhijawa (**uh-key-YAW-wuh**), most likely a Hittite rendering of *Achaeans* (**uh-KEY-uhns**), a term used by Homer for the Greeks. They indicate that relations were sometimes friendly, sometimes strained, and that the people of Ahhijawa took advantage of Hittite preoccupation or weakness. The *Iliad*, Homer's tale of the Achaeans' ten-year siege and eventual destruction of Troy, a city on the fringes of Hittite territory controlling the sea route between the Mediterranean and Black Seas, should be seen against this backdrop of Mycenaean belligerence and opportunism. Archaeology has confirmed a destruction at Troy around 1200 B.C.E.

Migration and Destruction

The Fall of Late Bronze Age Civilizations

Hittite difficulties with Ahhijawa and the Greek attack on Troy foreshadowed the troubles that culminated in the destruction of many of the old centers of the Middle East and Mediterranean around 1200 B.C.E. In this period, for reasons not well understood, large numbers of people were on the move. As migrants swarmed into one region, they displaced other peoples, who then joined the tide of refugees.

Around 1200 B.C.E. unidentified invaders destroyed the Hittite capital, Hattusha, and the Hittite kingdom in Anatolia came crashing down. The tide of destruction moved south into Syria, and the great coastal city of Ugarit was swept away. Egypt managed to beat back two attacks: an assault on the Nile Delta around 1220 B.C.E. by "Libyans and Northerners coming from all lands," and a major invasion by the "Sea Peoples" about thirty years later. Although the Egyptian ruler claimed a great victory, the Philistines (**FIH-luh-steen**) occupied the coast of Palestine (this is the origin of the name subsequently used for this region). Egypt soon surrendered all its territory in Syria-Palestine and lost contact with the rest of western Asia. The Egyptians also lost

their foothold in Nubia, opening the way for the emergence of the native kingdom centered on Napata (see Chapter 2).

The Mycenaean Fall and Consequences

Among the invaders listed in the Egyptian inscriptions are the Ekwesh (**ECK-wesh**), who could be Achaeans—that is, Greeks. In these troubled times it is easy to imagine the participation of opportunistic Mycenaeans. The Mycenaean centers also saw trouble coming; at some sites they began to build more extensive fortifications and took steps to guarantee the water supply of the citadels. But their efforts were in vain, and nearly all the palaces were destroyed in the first half of the twelfth century B.C.E.

SECTION REVIEW

- The Minoan civilization on the island of Crete and the Mycenaean civilization of Greece were strongly influenced by the older centers in Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia, yet they followed unique paths of cultural evolution.
- By 2000 B.C.E. Crete was home to the first European civilization with complex political and social structures and advanced technologies.
- The sudden rise to wealth and power of Mycenae and other centers in mainland Greece ca. 1600 was due to the influence of Minoan Crete and the Mycenaeans' insertion into trade networks.
- The Linear B tablets reveal how the Mycenaean palaces exerted centralized control over the economy, and Hittite documents show the Mycenaeans to be aggressive and acquisitive.
- The economic interdependence of Late Bronze Age states increased their vulnerability to attacks by migrating peoples ca. 1200 B.C.E. The region descended into a centuries-long “Dark Age.”

How these events came about is unclear. The archaeological record contains no trace of foreign invaders. An attractive explanation combines external and internal factors, since it is likely to be more than coincidence that the demise of Mycenaean civilization occurred at roughly the same time as the fall of other great civilizations in the region. Since the Mycenaean ruling class depended on the import of vital commodities and the profits from trade, the destruction of major trading partners and disruption of trade routes would have weakened their position. Competition for limited resources may have led to internal unrest and, ultimately, political collapse.

The end of Mycenaean civilization illustrates the interdependence of the major centers of the Late Bronze Age. It also highlights the consequences of political and economic collapse. The destruction of the palaces ended the domination of the ruling class. The massive administrative apparatus revealed in the Linear B tablets disappeared.

Neo-Assyrian Empire An empire extending from western Iran to Syria-Palestine, conquered by the Assyrians of northern Mesopotamia between the tenth and seventh centuries B.C.E. They used force and terror and exploited the wealth and labor of their subjects. They also preserved and continued the cultural and scientific developments of Mesopotamian civilization.

The technique of writing was forgotten, since it had been known only to a few palace officials and was no longer useful. Archaeological studies indicate the depopulation of some regions of Greece and an inflow of people to other regions that had escaped destruction. The Greek language persisted, and a thousand years later people were still worshiping gods mentioned in the Linear B tablets. People also continued to make the vessels and implements that they were familiar with, although with a marked decline in artistic and technical skill in a much poorer society. The cultural uniformity of the Mycenaean Age gave way to regional variations in shapes, styles, and techniques, reflecting increased isolation of different parts of Greece.

Thus perished the cosmopolitan world of the Late Bronze Age in the Mediterranean and Middle East. Societies that had long prospered through complex links of trade, diplomacy, and shared technologies now collapsed in the face of external violence and internal weakness, and the peoples of the region entered a centuries-long “Dark Age” of poverty, isolation, and loss of knowledge.

THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE, 911–612 B.C.E.


A number of new centers emerged in western Asia and the eastern Mediterranean in the centuries after 1000 B.C.E. The most powerful and successful was the **Neo-Assyrian Empire** (911–612 B.C.E.). Compared to the flat expanse of Babylonia to the south, the Assyrian homeland in northern Mesopotamia is hillier and has a more temperate climate and greater rainfall.

Peasant farmers, accustomed to defending themselves against raiders from the mountains to the east and north and the arid plain to the west, provided the foot-soldiers for the revival of Assyrian power. The rulers of the Neo-Assyrian Empire led a ceaseless series of campaigns: westward across the plain and desert as far as the Mediterranean, north into mountainous Urtu (**ur-RAHR-too**) (modern Armenia), east across the Zagros range onto the Iranian Plateau,



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MAP 3.3 The Assyrian Empire From the tenth to the seventh century B.C.E. the Assyrians of northern Mesopotamia created the largest empire the world had yet seen, extending from the Iranian Plateau to the eastern shore of the Mediterranean and containing a diverse array of peoples.

 Interactive Map

and south along the Tigris River to Babylonia. These campaigns provided immediate booty and the prospect of tribute and taxes. They also secured access to vital resources such as iron and silver and gave the Assyrians control of international commerce. Driven by pride, greed, and religious conviction, the Assyrians defeated all the great kingdoms of the day. At its peak their empire stretched from Anatolia, Syria-Palestine, and Egypt in the west, across Armenia and Mesopotamia, and as far as western Iran. The Assyrians created a new kind of empire, larger in extent than anything seen before (see Map 3.3) and dedicated to the enrichment of the imperial center at the expense of the subjugated periphery.

God and King

The king was literally and symbolically the center of the Assyrian universe. All the land belonged to him, and all the people, even the highest-ranking officials, were his servants. Assyrians believed that the gods chose the king as their earthly representative. Normally the king selected one of his sons to succeed him, a choice confirmed by divine oracles and the Assyrian elite. In the revered ancient city of

Ashur the high priest anointed the new king's head with oil and gave him the insignia of kingship: a crown and scepter. The kings also were buried in Ashur.

Messengers and spies brought the king information from every corner of the empire. The king appointed officials, heard complaints, dictated correspondence to an army of scribes, and received foreign envoys. He was the military leader, responsible for planning campaigns, and was often away from the capital commanding operations in the field.

The king devoted much of his time to supervising the state religion, attending elaborate public and private rituals, and overseeing the upkeep of the temples. He made no decisions of state without consulting the gods through rituals of divination. All actions were carried out in the name of Ashur, the chief god. Military victories were cited as proof of Ashur's superiority over the gods of the conquered peoples.

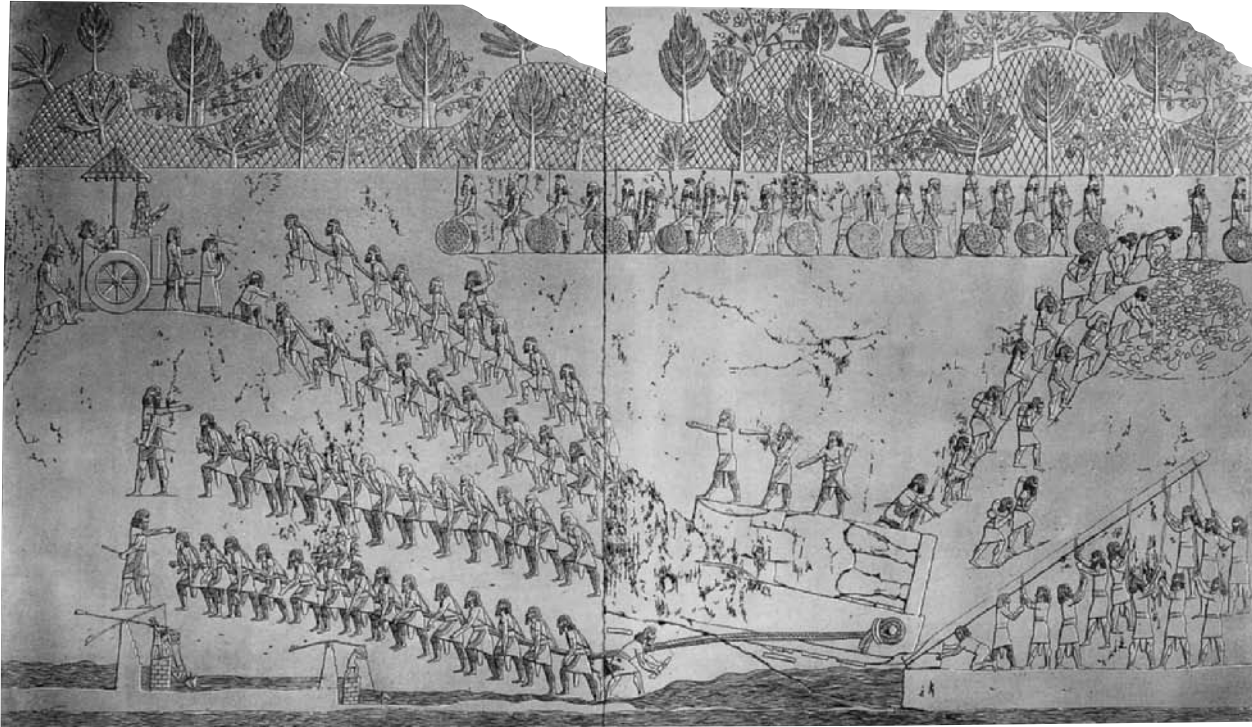
Relentless government propaganda secured popular support for military campaigns that mostly benefited the king and the nobility. Royal inscriptions posted throughout the empire catalogued recent victories, extolled the unshakeable determination of the king, and promised ruthless punishments to anyone who resisted. Relief sculptures depicting hunts, battles, sieges, executions, and deportations covered the walls of the royal palaces. Looming over most scenes was the king, larger than anyone else, muscular and fierce. Few visitors to the Assyrian court could fail to be awed—and intimidated.

Conquest and Control

Superior military organization and technology lay behind Assyria's unprecedented conquests. Early armies consisted of men who served in return for grants of land and peasants and slaves contributed by large landowners. Later, King Tiglathpileser (**TIG-lath-pih-LEE-zuhr**) (r. 744–727 B.C.E.) created a core army of professional soldiers made up of Assyrians and the most formidable subject peoples. At its peak the Assyrian state could mobilize a half-million troops, including

Religion and Propaganda

Military Might and Terror Tactics



Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

Wall Relief from the Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh Against a backdrop of wooded hills representing the landscape of Assyria, workers are hauling a huge stone sculpture from the riverbank to the palace under the watchful eyes of officials and soldiers. They accomplish this task with simple equipment—a lever, a sledge, and thick ropes—and a lot of human muscle power.

mass deportation The forcible removal and relocation of large numbers of people or entire populations. The mass deportations practiced by the Assyrian and Persian Empires were meant as a terrifying warning of the consequences of rebellion. They also brought skilled and unskilled labor to the imperial center.

light-armed bowmen and slingers who launched stone projectiles, armored spearmen, cavalry equipped with bows or spears, and four-man chariots.

Iron weapons gave Assyrian soldiers an advantage over many opponents, and cavalry provided speed and mobility. Assyrian engineers developed machinery and tactics for besieging fortified towns. They dug tunnels under the walls, built mobile towers for archers, and applied battering rams to weak points. Couriers and signal fires provided long-distance communication, while a network of spies gathered intelligence.

The Assyrians used terror tactics to discourage resistance and rebellion, inflicting harsh punishments and publicizing their brutality: civilians were thrown into fires, prisoners were skinned alive, and the severed heads of defeated rulers hung on city walls. **Mass deportation**—the forced uprooting of entire communities and resettlement elsewhere—broke the spirit of rebellious peoples. Although this tactic had a long history in the ancient Middle East, the Neo-Assyrian monarchs used it on an unprecedented scale, and up to 4 million people may have been relocated. Deportation also shifted human resources from the periphery to the center, where the deportees worked on royal and noble estates, opened new lands for agriculture, and built palaces and cities.

The Assyrians never discovered an effective method of governing an empire of such vast distances, varied landscapes, and diverse peoples. Control tended to be tight at the center and in lands closest to the core area, and less so farther away. The Assyrian kings waged many campaigns to reinstate control over territories subdued in previous wars. Provincial officials oversaw the collection of tribute and taxes, maintained law and order, raised troops, undertook public works, and provisioned armies and administrators passing through their territory. Provincial governors were subject to frequent inspections by royal overseers.

The Assyrians ruthlessly exploited the wealth and resources of their subjects. Military campaigns and administration were funded by plunder and tribute. Wealth from the periphery was funneled to the center, where the king and nobility grew rich. Triumphant kings expanded the ancestral capital and religious center at Ashur and built magnificent new royal cities encircled by high walls and containing ornate palaces and temples. Dur Sharrukin (**DOOR SHAH-roo-**

Administration and Exploitation

PRIMARY SOURCE: An Assyrian Emperor's Resume: Ferocious Conquests a Specialty

Read the inscription left behind by Ashurnasirpal, in which he promotes himself as an especially effective—and brutal—military leader.

keen), the “Fortress of Sargon,” was completed in a mere ten years by a massive labor force composed of prisoners of war and Assyrian citizens who owed periodic service to the state.

Nevertheless, the Assyrian Empire was not simply parasitic. There is some evidence of royal investment in provincial infrastructure. The cities and merchant classes thrived on expanded long-distance commerce, and some subject populations were surprisingly loyal to their Assyrian rulers.

Assyrian Society and Culture

The elite class was bound to the monarch by oaths of obedience, fear of punishment, and the expectation of rewards, such as land grants or shares of booty and taxes. Skilled professionals—priests, diviners, scribes, doctors, and artisans—were similarly bound.

Surviving sources primarily shed light on the deeds of kings and elites. Only a little is known about the lives and activities of the millions of Assyrian subjects. The government did not distinguish between native Assyrians and the increasingly large number of immigrants and deportees in the Assyrian homeland. All were referred to as “human beings,” entitled to the same legal protections and liable for the same labor and military service. Over time the inflow of outsiders changed the ethnic makeup of the core area.

The vast majority of subjects worked on the land. The agricultural surpluses they produced allowed substantial numbers of people—the standing army, government officials, religious experts, merchants, artisans, and other professionals in the towns and cities—to engage in specialized activities.

Individual artisans and small workshops in the towns manufactured pottery, tools, and clothing, and most trade took place at the local level. The state fostered long-distance trade, since imported luxury goods—metals, fine textiles, dyes, gems, and ivory—brought in substantial customs revenues and found their way to the royal family and elite classes. Silver was the basic medium of exchange, weighed out for each transaction in a time before the invention of coins.

Assyrian scholars preserved and built on the achievements of their Mesopotamian predecessors. When archaeologists excavated the palace of Ashurbanipal (**ah-shur-BAH-nee-pahl**) (r. 668–627 B.C.E.), one of the last Assyrian kings, at Nineveh (**NIN-uh-vuh**), they discovered more than twenty-five thousand tablets or fragments. The **Library of Ashurbanipal** contained official documents as well as literary and scientific texts. Some were originals that had been brought to the capital; others were copies made at the king’s request. The “House of Knowledge” referred to in some documents may have been an academy that attracted learned men to the imperial center. Much of what we know about Mesopotamian art, literature, science, and earlier history comes from discoveries at Assyrian sites.

Elite and Common People

Library of Ashurbanipal

A large collection of writings drawn from the ancient literary, religious, and scientific traditions of Mesopotamia. It was assembled by the seventh-century B.C.E. Assyrian ruler Ashurbanipal. The many tablets unearthed by archaeologists constitute one of the most important sources of present-day knowledge of the long literary tradition of Mesopotamia.

Scholarship

SECTION REVIEW

- Tough farmers in northern Mesopotamia provided the foot-soldiers for the rise of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, which dominated western Asia from the late tenth to seventh centuries B.C.E.
- Ceaseless campaigns of conquest brought booty, tribute and taxes, and control of international commerce and valuable resources.
- The all-powerful Assyrian king, claiming the support of the god Ashur, was at the center of government and the state religion.
- The Assyrians employed military might, propaganda, and state terrorism to intimidate their subjects, but they never developed an effective system of political control and frequently had to reconquer territory.
- The Assyrians ruthlessly funneled the wealth and resources of their subjects to the center, where the king and nobility grew rich. Frequent mass deportations provided manpower to build royal cities and work the lands of the elite.
- Assyrian scholars preserved and added to the long intellectual and scientific legacy of Mesopotamian civilization.

ISRAEL, 2000–500 B.C.E.



AP* Exam Tip Judaism is one of the major belief systems that it is important to understand for success on the exam.

Land and People

Israel In antiquity, the land between the eastern shore of the Mediterranean and the Jordan River, occupied by the Israelites from the early second millennium B.C.E. The modern state of Israel was founded in 1948.

The Hebrew Bible

Hebrew Bible A collection of sacred books containing diverse materials concerning the origins, experiences, beliefs, and practices of the Israelites. Most of the extant text was compiled by members of the priestly class in the fifth century B.C.E. and reflects the concerns and views of this group.

Early Pastoralists

e PRIMARY SOURCE: Moses Descends Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments Find out why the god of the Old Testament issued the Ten Commandments and what he promised Moses's people in return for keeping—or violating—them.

Egypt and the Exodus

The small land of Israel probably appeared insignificant to the Assyrian masters of western Asia, but it would play an important role in world history. Two interconnected dramas played out here between around 2000 and 500 B.C.E. First, a loose collection of nomadic groups engaged in herding and caravan traffic became a sedentary, agricultural people, developed complex political and social institutions, and became integrated into the commercial and diplomatic networks of the Middle East. Second, these people transformed the austere cult of a desert god into the concept of a single, all-powerful, and all-knowing deity, in the process creating ethical and intellectual traditions that underlie the beliefs and values of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The land and people at the heart of this story have gone by various names: Canaan, Israel, Palestine; Hebrews, Israelites, Jews. For the sake of consistency, the people are referred to here as *Israelites*, the land they occupied in antiquity as **Israel**.

Israel is a crossroads, linking Anatolia, Egypt, Arabia, and Mesopotamia (see Map 3.4). Its natural resources are few. The Negev Desert and the vast wasteland of the Sinai (**SIE-nie**) lie to the south. The Mediterranean coastal plain was usually in the hands of others, particularly the Philistines, throughout much of this period. Galilee to the north, with its sea of the same name, was a relatively fertile land of grassy hills and small plains. The narrow ribbon of the Jordan River runs down the eastern side of the region into the Dead Sea, so named because its high salt content is toxic to life.

Origins, Exodus, and Settlement

Information about ancient Israel comes partly from archaeological excavations and documents such as the royal annals of Egypt and Assyria. Fundamental, but also problematic, are the texts preserved in the **Hebrew Bible** (called the Old Testament by Christians), a compilation of several collections of materials that originated with different groups and advocated particular interpretations of past events. Traditions about the Israelites' early history were long transmitted orally. Not until the tenth century B.C.E. were they written down in a script borrowed from the Phoenicians. The text that we have today dates from the fifth century B.C.E., with a few later additions, and reflects the point of view of the priests who controlled the Temple in Jerusalem. The Hebrew language of the Bible reflects the speech of the Israelites until about 500 B.C.E., when it was supplanted by Aramaic. Historians disagree about how accurately this document represents Israelite history. However, it provides a foundation to be used critically and tested against archaeological discoveries.

The history of ancient Israel follows a familiar pattern in the ancient Middle East: Nomadic pastoralists, occupying marginal land between the inhospitable desert and settled agricultural areas, sometimes engaged in trade and sometimes raided the farms and villages of settled peoples, but eventually they settled down to an agricultural way of life and later developed a unified state.

The Hebrew Bible tells the story of Abraham and his descendants. Born in the city of Ur in southern Mesopotamia, Abraham rejected the idol worship of his homeland and migrated with his family and livestock across the Syrian desert. Eventually he arrived in the land of Israel, which had been promised to him and his descendants by the Israelite god, Yahweh.


These “recollections” of the journey of Abraham (who, if he was a real person, probably lived around 1800 B.C.E.) may compress the experiences of generations of pastoralists who migrated from the grazing lands between the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers to the Mediterranean coastal plain. They camped by a permanent water source in the dry season, then drove herds of sheep, cattle, and donkeys to a well-established sequence of grazing areas during the rest of the year. The animals provided them with milk, cheese, meat, and cloth.

The nomadic Israelites and the settled peoples were suspicious of one another. This friction between herders and farmers permeates the story of the innocent shepherd Abel, who was killed by his farmer brother Cain, and the story of Sodom (**SOE-duhm**) and Gomorrah (**guh-MORE-uh**), two cities that Yahweh destroyed because of their wickedness.

In the Hebrew Bible, Abraham's son Isaac and then his grandson Jacob became the leaders of this wandering group of herders. In the next generation the squabbling sons of Jacob's several wives sold their brother Joseph as a slave to passing merchants heading for Egypt. Through luck



MAP 3.4 Phoenicia and Israel The lands along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea—sometimes called the Levant or Syria-Palestine—have always been a crossroads, traversed by migrants, nomads, merchants, and armies moving between Egypt, Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia.

 Interactive Map

and ability Joseph became a high official at the pharaoh’s court. Thus he was in a position to help his people when drought struck and forced the Israelites to migrate to Egypt. The sophisticated Egyptians looked down on these rough herders and eventually enslaved them and put them to work on royal building projects.

Several points need to be made about this biblical account. First, the Israelite migration to Egypt and later enslavement may have been connected to the rise and fall of the Hyksos. Second, although surviving Egyptian sources do not refer to Israelite slaves, they do complain about *Apiru* (**uh-PEE-roo**), a derogatory term applied to caravan drivers, outcasts, bandits, and other marginal groups. Some scholars believe there may be a connection between the similar-sounding terms *Apiru* and *Hebrew*. Third, the period of alleged Israelite slavery coincided with the ambitious building programs launched by several New Kingdom pharaohs. However, there is little archaeological evidence of an Israelite presence in Egypt.

According to the Hebrew Bible, the Israelites were led out of captivity by Moses, an Israelite with connections to the Egyptian royal family. The narrative of their departure, the Exodus, is overlaid with folktale motifs, including the ten plagues that Yahweh inflicted on Egypt to persuade the pharaoh to release the Israelites, and the miraculous parting of the waters of the Red Sea that enabled the refugees to escape. Oral tradition may have embellished memories of a real emigration from Egypt followed by years of wandering in the wilderness of Sinai.

During their forty years in the desert, as reported in the Hebrew Bible, the Israelites entered into a “covenant” or pact with their god, Yahweh: They would be his “Chosen People” if they promised to worship him exclusively. This was confirmed by tablets that Moses brought down from the top of Mount Sinai, inscribed with the Ten Commandments that set out the basic tenets of Jewish belief and practice. The Commandments prohibited murder, adultery, theft, lying, and envy and demanded respect for parents and rest from work on the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week.

The biblical account proceeds to tell how Joshua, Moses’s successor, led the Israelites from the east side of the Jordan River into the land of Canaan (**KAY-nuhn**) (modern Israel and the Palestinian territories), where they attacked and destroyed Canaanite (**KAY-nuh-nite**) cities. Archaeological evidence confirms the destruction of some Canaanite towns between 1250 and 1200 B.C.E., though not precisely the towns mentioned in the biblical account. Shortly thereafter, low-land sites were resettled and new sites were established in



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Settlement in Canaan

the hills. The material culture of the new settlers was cruder but continued Canaanite patterns. Most scholars doubt that Canaan was conquered by a unified Israelite army. In a time of widespread disruption, movements of peoples, and decline and destruction of cities throughout this region, it is more likely that Israelite migrants took advantage of the disorder and were joined by other groups and even refugees from the Canaanite cities.

The new coalition of peoples invented a common ancestry. The “Children of Israel,” as they called themselves, were divided into twelve tribes supposedly descended from the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Each tribe was installed in a different part of the country and led by one or more chiefs. Such leaders usually had limited power and were primarily responsible for mediating disputes and seeing to the welfare and protection of the group. Certain charismatic figures, famed for their daring in war or genius in arbitration, were called “Judges” and enjoyed a special standing that transcended tribal boundaries. The tribes also shared access to a shrine in the hill country at Shiloh (**SHIE-loe**), which housed the Ark of the Covenant, a sacred chest containing the tablets that Yahweh had given Moses.

Rise of the Monarchy

The troubles afflicting the eastern Mediterranean around 1200 B.C.E. also brought the Philistines to the coastal plain of Israel, where they came into frequent conflict with the Israelites. Their wars were memorialized in Bible stories about the long-haired strongman Samson, who toppled a Philistine temple, and the shepherd boy David, whose slingshot felled the towering warrior Goliath. A religious leader named Samuel recognized the need for a strong central authority and anointed Saul as the first king of Israel around 1020 B.C.E. When Saul perished in battle, the throne passed to David (r. ca. 1000–960 B.C.E.). Many scholars regard the biblical account for the period of the monarchy as more historically reliable than the earlier parts, although some maintain that the archaeological record still does not match up very well with that narrative and that the wealth and power of the early kings have been greatly exaggerated.

David and Solomon

A gifted musician, warrior, and politician, David oversaw Israel’s transition from tribal confederacy to unified monarchy. He strengthened royal authority by making the captured hill city of Jerusalem his capital. Soon after, David brought the Ark to Jerusalem, making the city the religious as well as political center of the kingdom. A census was taken to facilitate the collection of taxes, and a standing army, with soldiers paid by and loyal to the king, was established. These innovations enabled David to win military victories and expand Israel’s borders.

The reign of David’s son Solomon (r. ca. 960–920 B.C.E.) marked the high point of the Israelite monarchy. Alliances and trade linked Israel with near and distant lands. Solomon and Hiram, the king of Phoenician Tyre, dispatched a fleet into the Red Sea to bring back gold, ivory, jewels, sandalwood, and exotic animals. The story of the visit to Solomon by the queen of Sheba may be mythical, but it reflects the reality of trade with Saba (**SUH-buh**) in south Arabia (present-day Yemen) or the Horn of Africa (present-day Somalia). The wealth gained from military and commercial ventures supported a lavish court life, a sizeable bureaucracy, and an intimidating chariot army that made Israel a regional power. Solomon undertook an ambitious building program employing slaves and the compulsory labor of citizens. To strengthen the link between religious and secular authority, he built the **First Temple** in Jerusalem. The Israelites now had a central shrine and an impressive set of rituals that could compete with other religions in the area.

The Temple priests became a powerful and wealthy class, receiving a share of the annual harvest in return for making animal sacrifices to Yahweh on behalf of the community. The expansion of Jerusalem, new commercial opportunities, and the increasing prestige of the Temple hierarchy changed the social composition of Israelite society. A gap between urban and rural, rich and poor, polarized a people that previously had been relatively homogeneous. Fiery prophets, claiming revelation from Yahweh, accused the monarchs and aristocracy of corruption, impiety, and neglect of the poor (see Diversity and Dominance: Protests Against the Ruling Class in Israel and Babylonia).

First Temple A monumental sanctuary built in Jerusalem by King Solomon in the tenth century B.C.E. to be the religious center for the Israelite god Yahweh. The Temple priesthood conducted sacrifices, received a tithe or percentage of agricultural revenues, and became economically and politically powerful.

Israelite Society

The Israelites lived in extended families, several generations residing together under the authority of the eldest male. Male heirs were of paramount importance, and first-born sons received a double share of the inheritance. If a couple had no son, they could adopt one, or the husband could have a child by the wife’s slave attendant. If a man died childless, his brother was expected to marry his widow and sire an heir.



Ritmeyer Archaeological Design

Artist's Rendering of Solomon's Jerusalem Strategically located in the middle of lands occupied by the Israelite tribes and on a high plateau overlooking the central hills and the Judean desert, Jerusalem was captured around 1000 B.C.E. by King David, who made it his capital (the City of David is at left, the citadel and palace complex at center). The next king, Solomon, built the First Temple to serve as the center of worship of the Israelite god, Yahweh. Solomon's Temple (at upper right) was destroyed during the Neo-Babylonian sack of the city in 587 B.C.E. The modest structure soon built to take its place was replaced by the magnificent Second Temple, erected by King Herod in the last decades of the first century B.C.E. and destroyed by the Romans in 70 C.E.

monotheism Belief in the existence of a single divine entity. Some scholars cite the devotion of the Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten to Aten (sun-disk) and his suppression of traditional gods as the earliest instance. The Israelite worship of Yahweh developed into an exclusive belief in one god, and this concept passed into Christianity and Islam.

Division and Disaster

In early Israel, because women provided vital goods and services that sustained the family, they were respected and had some influence with their husbands. Unlike men, however, they could not inherit property or initiate divorce, and a woman caught in extramarital relations could be put to death. Peasant women labored with other family members in agriculture or herding in addition to caring for the house and children. As the society became urbanized, some women worked outside the home as cooks, perfumers, wet nurses, prostitutes, and singers of laments at funerals. A few women reached positions of power, such as Deborah the Judge, who led troops in battle against the Canaanites. "Wise women" composed sacred texts in poetry and prose. This reality has been obscured, in part by the male bias of the Hebrew Bible, in part because the status of women declined as Israelite society became more urbanized.

Fragmentation and Dispersal

After Solomon's death around 920 B.C.E., resentment over royal demands for money and labor and the neglect of tribal prerogatives split the monarchy into two kingdoms: Israel in the north, with its capital at Samaria (**suh-MAH-ree-yuh**); and Judah (**JOO-duh**) in the southern territory around Jerusalem (see Map 3.4). The two were sometimes at war, sometimes allied.

This period saw the final formulation of **monotheism**, the belief in Yahweh as the one and only god. Nevertheless, many Israelites were attracted to the ecstatic rituals of the Canaanite storm-god Baal (**BAHL**) and the fertility goddess Asherah (**uh-SHARE-uh**). Prophets condemned the adoption of foreign ritual and threatened that Yahweh would punish Israel severely.

The two Israelite kingdoms and other small states in the region laid aside their rivalries to mount a joint resistance to the Neo-Assyrian Empire, but to no avail. In 721 B.C.E. the Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel and deported much of its population to the east.

Protests Against the Ruling Class in Israel and Babylonia

Israelite society underwent profound changes in the period of the monarchy, and the new opportunities for some to acquire considerable wealth led to greater disparities between rich and poor. A series of prophets publicly challenged the behavior of the Israelite ruling elite. They denounced the changes in Israelite society as corrupting people and separating them from the religious devotion and moral rectitude of an earlier, better time. The prophets often spoke out on behalf of the uneducated, inarticulate, illiterate, and powerless lower classes, and they thus provide valuable information about the experiences of different social groups. Theirs was not objective reporting, but rather the angry, anguished visions of unconventional individuals.

The following excerpt from the Hebrew Bible is taken from the book of Amos. A herdsman from the southern kingdom of Judah in the era of the divided monarchy, Amos was active in the northern kingdom of Israel in the mid-eighth century B.C.E., when Assyria threatened the Syria-Palestine region.

1:1 The following is a record of what Amos prophesied. He was one of the herdsmen from Tekoa. These prophecies about Israel were revealed to him during the time of King Uzziah of Judah and King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel. . . .

3:1 Listen, you Israelites, to this message which the Lord is proclaiming against you. This message is for the entire clan I brought up from the land of Egypt:

3:2 “I have chosen you alone from all the clans of the earth. Therefore I will punish you for all your sins.” . . .

3:9 Make this announcement in the fortresses of Ashdod and in the fortresses in the land of Egypt. Say this: “Gather on the hills around Samaria! [capital of the northern kingdom] Observe the many acts of violence taking place within the city, the oppressive deeds occurring in it.” . . .

3:11 “Therefore,” says the sovereign Lord, “an enemy will encircle the land. Your power, Samaria, will be taken away; your fortresses will be looted.”

3:12 This is what the Lord says: “Just as a shepherd salvages from the lion’s mouth a couple of leg bones or a piece of an ear, so the Israelites who live in Samaria will be salvaged. They will be left with just a corner of a bed, and a part of a couch.” . . .

4:1 Listen to this message, you “cows of Bashan” who live on Mount Samaria! You oppress the poor; you crush the needy. You say to your husbands, “Bring us more to drink so we can party!”

4:2 The sovereign Lord confirms this oath by his own holy character: “Certainly the time is approaching! You will be carried away in baskets, every last one of you in fishermen’s pots.

4:3 Each of you will go straight through the gaps in the walls; you will be thrown out toward Harmon.” . . .

5:11 “Therefore, because you make the poor pay taxes on their crops and exact a grain tax from them, you will not live in the

houses you built with chiseled stone, nor will you drink the wine from the fine vineyards you planted.

5:12 Certainly I am aware of your many rebellious acts and your numerous sins. You torment the innocent, you take bribes, and you deny justice to the needy at the city gate. . . .

5:21 I absolutely despise your festivals. I get no pleasure from your religious assemblies.

5:22 Even if you offer me burnt and grain offerings, I will not be satisfied; I will not look with favor on the fattened calves you offer in peace.

5:23 Take away from me your noisy songs; I don’t want to hear the music of your stringed instruments.” . . .

6:4 They lie around on beds decorated with ivory, and sprawl out on their couches. They eat lambs from the flock, and calves from the middle of the pen.

6:5 They sing to the tune of stringed instruments; like David they invent musical instruments.

6:6 They drink wine from sacrificial bowls, and pour the very best oils on themselves.

6:7 Therefore they will now be the first to go into exile, and the religious banquets where they sprawl out on couches will end.

7:10 Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent this message to King Jeroboam of Israel: “Amos is conspiring against you in the very heart of the kingdom of Israel! The land cannot endure all his prophecies.

7:11 As a matter of fact, Amos is saying this: ‘Jeroboam will die by the sword and Israel will certainly be carried into exile away from its land.’”

7:12 Amaziah then said to Amos, “Leave, you visionary! Run away to the land of Judah! Earn money and prophesy there!

7:13 Don’t prophesy at Bethel any longer, for a royal temple and palace are here!”

7:14 Amos replied to Amaziah, “I was not a prophet by profession. No, I was a herdsman who also took care of sycamore fig trees.

7:15 Then the Lord took me from tending flocks and gave me this commission, ‘Go! Prophesy to my people Israel!’” . . .

8:8 “Because of this the earth will quake, and all who live in it will mourn. The whole earth will rise like the River Nile, it will surge upward and then grow calm, like the Nile in Egypt.

8:9 In that day,” says the sovereign Lord, “I will make the sun set at noon, and make the earth dark in the middle of the day.

8:10 I will turn your festivals into funerals, and all your songs into funeral dirges. I will make everyone wear funeral clothes and cause every head to be shaved bald. I will make you mourn as if you had lost your only son; when it ends it will indeed have been a bitter day.” . . .

9:8 “Look, the sovereign Lord is watching the sinful nation, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth. But I will not completely destroy the family of Jacob,” says the Lord.

9:9 “For look, I am giving a command and I will shake the family of Israel together with all the nations. It will resemble a sieve being shaken, when not even a pebble falls to the ground. . . .

9:11 In that day I will rebuild the collapsing hut of David. I will seal its gaps, repair its ruins, and restore it to what it was like in days gone by.”

A document from Babylon, which may have been composed around 1000 B.C.E., reveals the prevalence of similar inequities and abuses in that society. It is presented as a dialogue between a man in distress (who, despite his claim of low status, is literate and presumably comes from the urban middle class) and his compassionate friend.

Sufferer

I have looked around in the world, but things are turned around.

The god does not impede the way of even a demon.

A father tows a boat along the canal,

While his son lies in bed.

The eldest son makes his way like a lion,

The second son is happy to be a mule driver.

The heir goes about along the streets like a peddler,

The younger son (has enough) that he can give food to the destitute.

What has it profited me that I have bowed down to my god?

I must bow even to a person who is lower than I,

The rich and opulent treat me, as a younger brother, with contempt. . . .

Friend

O wise one, O savant, who masters knowledge,

Your heart has become hardened and you accuse the god wrongly.

The mind of the god, like the center of the heavens, is remote;

Knowledge of it is very difficult; people cannot know it.

Among all the creatures whom Aruru formed

Why should the oldest offspring be so . . . [text uncertain]?

In the case of a cow, the first calf is a runt,

The later offspring is twice as big.

A first child is born a weakling,

But the second is called a mighty warrior.

Though it is possible to find out what the will of the god is, people do not know how to do it.

Sufferer

Pay attention, my friend, understand my clever ideas,

Heed my carefully chosen words.

People extol the words of a strong man who has learned to kill

But bring down the powerless who has done no wrong.

They confirm (the position of) the wicked for whom what should be an abomination is considered right

Yet drive off the honest man who heeds the will of his god.

They fill the [storehouse] of the oppressor with gold,

But empty the larder of the beggar of its provisions.

They support the powerful, whose . . . [text uncertain] is guilt, But destroy the weak and trample the powerless.

And, as for me, an insignificant person, a prominent person persecutes me.

Friend

Narru, king of the gods, who created mankind,

And majestic Zulummar, who pinched off the clay for them,

And goddess Mami, the queen who fashioned them,

Gave twisted speech to the human race.

With lies, and not truth, they endowed them forever.

Solemnly they speak favorably of a rich man,

“He is a king,” they say, “riches should be his,”

But they treat a poor man like a thief,

They have only bad to say of him and plot his murder,

Making him suffer every evil like a criminal, because he has no . . . [text uncertain].

Terrifyingly they bring him to his end, and extinguish him like glowing coals.

Sufferer

You are kind, my friend; behold my trouble,

Help me; look on my distress; know it.

I, though humble, wise, and a suppliant,

Have not seen help or aid even for a moment.

I have gone about the square of my city unobtrusively,

My voice was not raised, my speech was kept low.

I did not raise my head, but looked at the ground,

I did not worship even as a slave in the company of my associates.

May the god who has abandoned me give help,

May the goddess who has [forsaken me] show mercy,

The shepherd, the sun of the people, pastures (his flock) as a god should.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. For whom is Amos's message primarily intended? How does the ruling class react to Amos's prophetic activity, and how does he respond to their tactics?
2. What does Amos see as wrong in Israelite society, and who is at fault? Why are even the religious practices of the elite criticized?
3. What will be the means by which God punishes Israel, and why does God punish it this way? What grounds for hope remain?
4. What are the main complaints of the Babylonian Sufferer, and where does he look for a solution? Do the Babylonian gods seem to be less directly involved in human affairs than the Israelite deity?

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Diaspora Greek word meaning “dispersal,” used to describe the communities of a given ethnic group living outside their homeland. Jews, for example, spread from Israel to western Asia and Mediterranean lands in antiquity and today can be found throughout the world.

Diaspora and Identity

SECTION REVIEW

- Because of its strategic location, the small, resource-poor land of Israel has played an important role in world history.
- The history of the ancient Israelites can be reconstructed by critically comparing information in the Hebrew Bible with archaeological discoveries.
- The early Israelites were nomadic pastoralists, but eventually they settled down as farmers and herders in Canaan.
- As a result of their rivalry with the coastal Philistines, the once loosely organized Israelite tribes united under a monarchy, with Jerusalem as the capital.
- Urbanization, wealth from trade, and the status of the Temple priesthood created divisions within Israelite society. Fiery prophets railed against the greed and corruption of the elite.
- Following conquests by the Assyrian Empire and Neo-Babylonian kingdom, many Israelites were taken from their homeland. Diaspora communities created new institutions, a distinctive way of life, and a strong Jewish identity.

New settlers were brought in from Syria, Babylon, and Iran, changing the area’s ethnic, cultural, and religious character. The kingdom of Judah survived more than a century longer, sometimes rebelling, sometimes paying tribute to the Assyrians or the Neo-Babylonian kingdom (626–539 B.C.E.) that succeeded them. When the Neo-Babylonian monarch Nebuchadnezzar (**NAB-oo-kuhd-nez-uhr**) captured Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E., he destroyed the Temple and deported to Babylon the royal family, the aristocracy, and many skilled workers such as blacksmiths and scribes.

The deportees prospered so well in their new home “by the waters of Babylon” that half a century later most of their descendants refused the offer of the Persian monarch Cyrus (see Chapter 4) to return to their homeland. This was the origin of the **Diaspora** (**die-ASS-peh-rah**)—a Greek word meaning “dispersion” or “scattering.” This dispersion outside the homeland of many Jews—as we may now call these people, since an independent Israel no longer existed—continues to this day. To maintain their religion and culture, the Diaspora communities developed institutions like the synagogue (Greek for “bringing together”), a communal meeting place that served religious, educational, and social functions.

Several groups of Babylonian Jews did make the long trek back to Judah in the later sixth and fifth centuries B.C.E. They rebuilt the Temple in modest form and edited the Hebrew Bible into roughly its present form.

The loss of political autonomy and the experience of exile had sharpened Jewish identity. With an unyielding monotheism as their core belief, Jews lived by a rigid set of rules. Dietary restrictions forbade the eating of pork and shellfish and mandated that meat and dairy products not be consumed together. Ritual baths were used to achieve spiritual purity. The Jews venerated the Sabbath (Saturday, the seventh day of the week) by refraining from work and from fighting, following the example of Yahweh, who, according to the Bible, rested on the seventh day after creating the world (this is the origin of the concept of the week and the weekend). These strictures and others, including a ban on marrying non-Jews, tended to isolate the Jews from other peoples, but they also fostered a powerful sense of community and the belief that the Jews were protected by a watchful and beneficent deity.

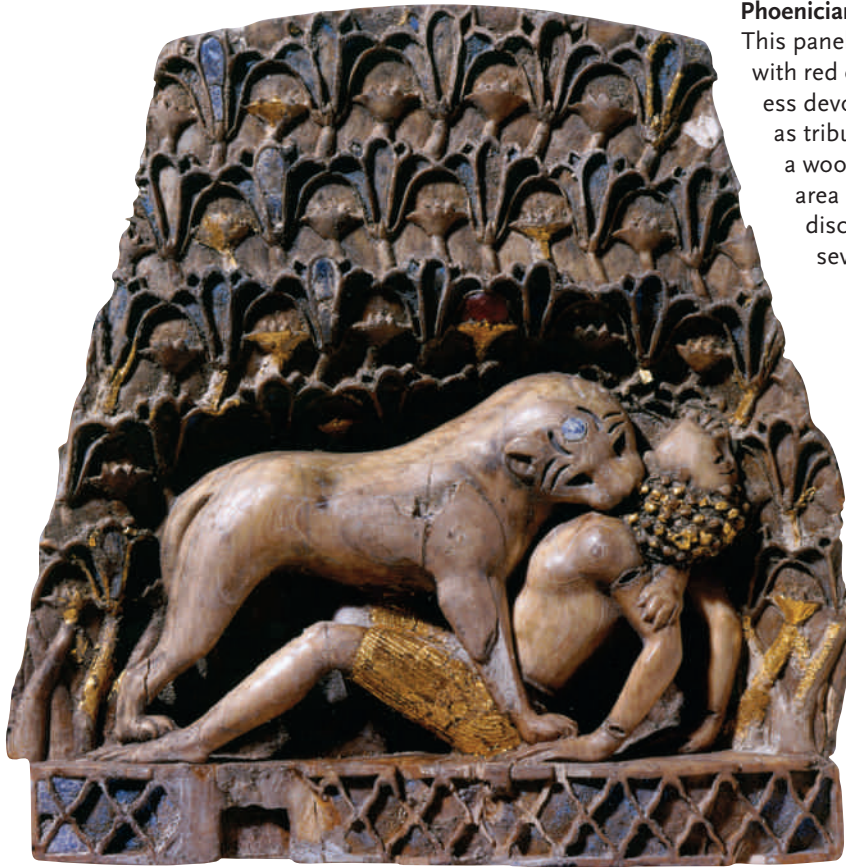
PHOENICIA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN, 1200–500 B.C.E.

Phoenicians Semitic-speaking Canaanites living on the coast of modern Lebanon and Syria in the first millennium B.C.E. From major cities such as Tyre and Sidon, Phoenician merchants and sailors explored the Mediterranean, engaged in widespread commerce, and founded Carthage and other colonies in the western Mediterranean.

While the Israelite tribes were forging a united kingdom, the people who occupied the Mediterranean coast to the north were developing their own distinctive civilization. Historians follow the Greeks in calling them **Phoenicians** (**fi-NEE-shun**), though they referred to themselves as “Can’ani”—Canaanites. Despite few written records and archaeological remains disturbed by frequent migrations and invasions, some of their history can be reconstructed.

The Phoenician City-States

When the eastern Mediterranean was disturbed by violent upheavals and mass migrations around 1200 B.C.E., many Canaanite settlements in the Syria-Palestine region were destroyed. Aramaeans (**ah-ruh-MAY-uhn**)—nomadic pastoralists similar to the early Israelites—migrated into the interior portions of Syria. Farther south, Israelite herders and farmers settled in the interior of present-day Israel. The Philistines occupied the southern coast and introduced iron-based metallurgy to this part of the world.



Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

Phoenician Ivory Panel, Ninth to Eighth Century B.C.E.

This panel, originally covered with gold leaf and inlaid with red carnelian and blue lapis lazuli, depicts a lioness devouring a boy. Produced in Phoenicia, perhaps as tribute for the Assyrian king, it was probably part of a wooden throne. It was found in a well in the palace area of the Assyrian capital Nimrud, where it was discarded when the city was destroyed in the late seventh century B.C.E.

Political and Economic Development

By 1100 B.C.E. Canaanite territory had shrunk to a narrow strip of present-day Lebanon between the mountains and the sea (see Map 3.4). Rivers and rocky spurs of Mount Lebanon sliced the coastal plain into a series of small city-states, chief among them Byblos (**BIB-loss**), Berytus (**buh-RIE-tuhs**), Sidon (**SIE-duhn**), and Tyre. The inhabitants of this densely populated area adopted new political forms and turned to seaborne commerce and new kinds of manufacture for their survival. A thriving trade in raw materials (cedar and pine, metals, incense, papyrus), foodstuffs (wine, spices, salted fish), and crafted luxury goods (carved ivory, glass, and textiles colored with a highly prized purple dye extracted from the murex snail) brought considerable wealth to the Phoenician city-states and gave them an important role in international politics (see Environment and Technology: Ancient Textiles and Dyes).

The Phoenicians developed earlier Canaanite models into an “alphabetic” system of writing with about two dozen symbols, in which each symbol represented a sound. (The Phoenicians represented only consonants, leaving the vowel sounds to be inferred by the reader. The Greeks later added symbols for vowel sounds, creating the first truly alphabetic system of writing—see Chapter 4.) Little Phoenician writing survives, however, probably because scribes used perishable papyrus.

The Ascendancy of Tyre

Before 1000 B.C.E. Byblos was the most important Phoenician city-state. It was a distribution center for cedar timber from the slopes of Mount Lebanon and for papyrus from Egypt. King Hiram, who came to power in 969 B.C.E., was responsible for Tyre’s rise to prominence. According to the Hebrew Bible, he formed a close alliance with the Israelite king Solomon and provided skilled Phoenician craftsmen and cedar wood for building the Temple in Jerusalem. In return, Tyre gained access to silver, food, and trade routes to the east and south. In the 800s B.C.E. Tyre took control of nearby Sidon and dominated the Mediterranean coastal trade.

Located on an offshore island, Tyre was practically impregnable. It had two harbors connected by a canal, a large marketplace, a magnificent palace complex with treasury and archives, and temples to the gods Melqart (**MEL-kahrt**) and Astarte (**uh-STAHHR-tee**). Some of its thirty

Ancient Textiles and Dyes

Throughout human history the production of textiles—cloth for clothing, blankets, carpets, and coverings of various sorts—required an expenditure of human labor second only to the work necessary to provide food. Nevertheless, textile production in antiquity has left few archaeological traces. The plant fibers and animal hair used for cloth quickly decompose except in rare circumstances. Some textile remains have been found in the hot, dry conditions of Egypt, the cool, arid Andes of South America, and the peat bogs of northern Europe. But most of our knowledge of ancient textiles depends on the discovery of equipment used in textile production—such as spindles, loom weights, and dyeing vats—and on pictorial representations and descriptions in texts.

Cloth production usually has been the work of women for a simple but important reason. Responsibility for child rearing limits women's ability to participate in other activities but does not consume all their time and energy. In many societies textile production has been complementary to child-rearing activities, for it can be done in the home, is relatively safe, does not require great concentration, and can be interrupted without consequence. The growing and harvesting of plants such as cotton or flax (from which linen is made) and the shearing of wool from sheep and, in the Andes, llamas are outdoor activities, but the subsequent stages of production can be carried out inside the home. The basic methods of textile production did not change much from early antiquity until the late eighteenth century C.E., when the fabrication of textiles was transferred to mills and mass production began.

When textile production has been considered “women’s work,” most of the output has been for household consump-



Private collection

Ancient Peruvian Textiles The weaving of Chavín was famous for its color and symbolic imagery. Artisans both wove designs into the fabric and used paint or dyes to decorate plain fabric. This early Chavín painted fabric was used in a burial. Notice how the face suggests a jaguar and the head-dress includes the image of a serpent.

laborious process. The spiny dye-murex snail lives on the sandy Mediterranean bottom at depths ranging from 30 to 500 feet (10 to 150 meters). Nine thousand snails were needed to produce 1 gram (0.035 ounce) of dye. The dye was made from a colorless liquid in the snail’s hypobranchial gland. The gland sacs were removed, crushed, soaked with salt, and exposed to sunlight and air for some days; then they were subject to controlled boiling and heating.

Huge mounds of broken shells on the Phoenician coast are testimony to the ancient industry. The snail may have been rendered nearly extinct at many locations, and some scholars speculate that Phoenician colonization in the Mediterranean was motivated in part by the search for new sources of snails.

tion. However, women weavers in Peru developed new raw materials, new techniques, and new decorative motifs around three thousand years ago. They began to use the wool of llamas and alpacas in addition to cotton. Three women worked side by side and passed the weft from hand to hand in order to produce a fabric of greater width. Women weavers also introduced embroidery and decorated garments with new religious motifs, such as the jaguar-god. Their high-quality textiles were given as tribute to the elite and were used to trade for luxury goods.

More typically, men dominated commercial production. In ancient Phoenicia, fine textiles with bright, permanent colors became a major export product. Most prized was the red-purple known as Tyrian purple because Tyre was the major source. Persian and Hellenistic kings wore robes dyed this color, and a white toga with a purple border was the sign of a Roman senator.

The production of Tyrian purple was an exceedingly

thousand inhabitants lived in suburbs on the mainland. Its one weakness was its dependence on the mainland for food and fresh water.

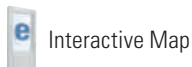
Little is known about the internal affairs of Tyre and other Phoenician cities. The names of a series of kings are preserved, and the scant evidence suggests that the political arena was dominated by leading merchant families. Between the ninth and seventh centuries B.C.E. the Phoenician city-states contended with Assyrian aggression, followed in the sixth century B.C.E. by the expansion of the Neo-Babylonian kingdom and later the Persian Empire (see Chapter 4). The Phoenician city-states preserved their autonomy by playing the great powers off against one another when possible and by accepting a subordinate relationship to a distant master when necessary.

Expansion into the Mediterranean

The Western Settlements

After 900 B.C.E. Tyre turned its attention westward, establishing colonies on Cyprus, a copper-rich island 100 miles (161 kilometers) from the Syrian coast (see Map 3.4). By 700 B.C.E. a string of settlements in the western Mediterranean formed a “Phoenician triangle” composed of the North African coast from western Libya to Morocco; the south and southeast coast of Spain, including Gades (**GAH-days**) (modern Cadiz [**kuh-DEEZ**]) on the Strait of Gibraltar, controlling passage between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean; and the islands of Sardinia, Sicily, and Malta off the coast of Italy (see Map 3.5). Many settlements were situated on promontories or offshore islands in imitation of Tyre. The Phoenician trading network spanned the entire Mediterranean.

Frequent and destructive Assyrian invasions of Syria-Palestine and the lack of arable land to feed a swelling population probably motivated Tyrian expansion. Overseas settlement provided an outlet for excess population, new sources of trade goods, and new trading partners. Tyre



MAP 3.5 **Colonization of the Mediterranean** In the ninth century B.C.E., the Phoenicians of Lebanon began to explore and colonize parts of the western Mediterranean, including the coast of North Africa, southern and eastern Spain, and the islands of Sicily and Sardinia. The Phoenicians were primarily interested in access to valuable raw materials and trading opportunities.



maintained its autonomy until 701 B.C.E. by paying tribute to the Assyrian kings. In that year it finally fell to an Assyrian army that stripped it of much of its territory and population, allowing Sidon to become the leading city in Phoenicia.

Carthage's Commercial Empire

The City of Carthage

Carthage City located in present-day Tunisia, founded by Phoenicians ca. 800 B.C.E. It became a major commercial center and naval power in the western Mediterranean until defeated by Rome in the third century B.C.E.

Historians know far more about **Carthage** and the other Phoenician colonies than they do about the Phoenician homeland. Much of this comes from Greek and Roman reports of their wars with the western Phoenician communities. For example, the account of the origins of Carthage that begins this chapter comes from Roman sources but probably is based on a Carthaginian original. Archaeological excavation has roughly confirmed the city's traditional foundation date of 814 B.C.E. The new settlement grew rapidly and soon dominated other Phoenician colonies in the west.

Located just outside the present-day city of Tunis in Tunisia, on a promontory jutting into the Mediterranean, Carthage stretched between the original hilltop citadel and a double harbor. The inner harbor could accommodate 220 warships. A watchtower allowed surveillance of the surrounding area, and high walls made it impossible to see in from the outside. The outer commercial harbor was filled with docks for merchant ships and shipyards. In case of attack, the harbor could be closed off by a huge iron chain.

Government offices ringed a large central square where magistrates heard legal cases outdoors. The inner city was a maze of narrow, winding streets, multistory apartment buildings, and sacred enclosures. Farther out was a sprawling suburban district where the wealthy built spacious villas amid fields and vegetable gardens. This entire urban complex was enclosed by a wall 22 miles (35 kilometers) in length. At the most critical point—the 2-1/2-mile-wide (4-kilometer) isthmus connecting the promontory to the mainland—the wall was over 40 feet (13 meters) high and 30 feet (10 meters) thick and had high watchtowers.

With a population of roughly 400,000, Carthage was one of the largest cities in the world by 500 B.C.E. The population was ethnically diverse, including people of Phoenician stock, indigenous peoples ancestral to modern-day Berbers, and immigrants from other Mediterranean lands as well as sub-Saharan Africa. The Phoenicians readily intermarried with other peoples.

Each year two “judges” were elected from upper-class families to serve as heads of state and carry out administrative and judicial functions. The real seat of power was the Senate, where members of the leading merchant families, who sat for life, directed the affairs of the state. An inner circle of thirty or so senators made the crucial decisions. The leadership occasionally convened an Assembly of the citizens to elect public officials or vote on important issues, particularly when they were divided or wanted to stir up popular enthusiasm for some venture.

There is little evidence at Carthage of the kind of social and political unrest that plagued Greece and Rome. A merchant aristocracy (unlike an aristocracy of birth) was not a closed group, and a climate of economic and social mobility allowed newly successful families and individuals to push their way into the circle of influential citizens. Insofar as everyone benefited from the riches of empire, the masses were usually ready to defer to those who made prosperity possible.

Carthaginian power rested on its navy, which dominated the western Mediterranean for centuries. Phoenician towns provided a network of friendly ports. The Carthaginian fleet consisted of fast, maneuverable galleys (warships propelled by oars). Each bore a sturdy, pointed ram in front that could pierce the hull of an enemy vessel below the water line, while marines (soldiers aboard a ship) fired weapons. Innovations in the placement of benches and oars eventually made room for as many as 170 rowers. The Phoenicians and their Greek rivals set the standard for naval technology in this era.

Carthaginian foreign policy, reflecting the economic interests of the dominant merchant class, focused on protecting the sea lanes, gaining access to raw materials, and fostering trade. Indeed, Carthage claimed the waters of the western Mediterranean as its own. Foreign merchants were free to sail to Carthage to market their goods, but if they tried to operate on their own, they risked having their ships sunk by the Carthaginian navy. Treaties between Carthage and other states included formal recognition of this maritime commercial monopoly.

The archaeological record provides few clues about the commodities traded by the Carthaginians. These may have included perishable goods—foodstuffs, textiles, animal skins, slaves—and raw metals whose Carthaginian origin would not be evident. Carthaginian ships carried

Naval Power and Commerce

goods manufactured elsewhere, and products brought to Carthage by foreign traders were reexported.

There is also evidence for trade with sub-Saharan Africa. Hanno (**HA-noe**), a Carthaginian captain of the fifth century B.C.E., claimed to have sailed through the Strait of Gibraltar into the Atlantic Ocean and to have explored the West African coast (see Map 3.5). Other Carthaginians explored the Atlantic coast of Spain and France and secured control of an important source of tin in the “Tin Islands,” probably Cornwall in southwestern England.

War and Religion

A Different Kind of Empire

The Carthaginian state did not directly rule a large territory. A belt of fertile land in northeastern Tunisia, owned by Carthaginians but worked by native peasants and imported slaves, provided a secure food supply. Beyond this core area the Carthaginians ruled most of their “empire” indirectly and allowed other Phoenician communities in the western Mediterranean to remain independent. These Phoenician communities looked to Carthage for military protection and followed its lead in foreign policy. Only Sardinia and southern Spain were put under the direct control of a Carthaginian governor and garrison, presumably to safeguard their agricultural, metal, and manpower resources.

Carthage’s focus on trade may explain the unusual fact that citizens were not required to serve in the army: they were of more value in other capacities, such as trading activities and the navy. Since the indigenous North African population was not politically or militarily well organized, Carthage had little to fear close to home. When Carthage was drawn into a series of wars with the Greeks and Romans from the fifth through third centuries B.C.E., it relied on mercenaries from the most warlike peoples in its dominions or from neighboring areas. These well-paid mercenaries were under the command of Carthaginian officers. In contrast to most ancient states, the Carthaginians separated military command from civilian government. Generals were chosen by the Senate and kept in office for as long as they were needed.

Carthaginian Religion

Like the deities of Mesopotamia (see Chapter 1), the gods of the Carthaginians—chief among them Baal Hammon (**BAHL ha-MOHN**), a male storm-god, and Tanit (**TAH-nit**), a female fertility figure—were powerful and capricious entities who had to be appeased by anxious worshippers. Roman sources report that members of the Carthaginian elite would sacrifice their

The Tophet of Carthage

Here, from the seventh to second centuries B.C.E., the cremated bodies of sacrificed children were buried. Archaeological excavation has confirmed the claim in ancient sources that the Carthaginians sacrificed children to their gods at times of crisis. Stone markers, decorated with magical signs and symbols of divinities as well as family names, were placed over ceramic urns containing the ashes and charred bones of one or more infants or, occasionally, older children.



Martha Cooper/Peter Arnold, Inc.

SECTION REVIEW

- Following the upheavals ca. 1200 B.C.E., Canaanite communities on the coast of Lebanon adopted the city-state political form and turned to seaborne commerce and new kinds of manufacture for their survival.
- In the tenth century B.C.E., Tyre, located on a practically impregnable offshore island and led by a king and merchant aristocracy, became the dominant Phoenician state.
- A string of settlements in the western Mediterranean formed a “Phoenician triangle” comprising the coasts of North Africa and Spain and islands off the coast of Italy.
- Carthage, founded in present-day Tunisia a little before 800 B.C.E., led the coalition of Phoenician communities in the western Mediterranean.
- Carthaginian power rested on its navy, which enforced a Carthaginian commercial monopoly in the western Mediterranean. For land warfare, Carthage relied on mercenaries from the most warlike peoples in the region, under the command of Carthaginian officers.
- The religion of the Carthaginians, which included the sacrifice of children in times of crisis, was perceived as different and despicable by their Greek and Roman rivals.

own male children in times of crisis. Excavations at Carthage and other western Phoenician towns have turned up *tophets* (**TOE-fet**)—walled enclosures where thousands of small, sealed urns containing the burned bones of children lay buried. Originally practiced by the upper classes, child sacrifice became more common and involved broader elements of the population after 400 B.C.E.

Plutarch (**PLOO-tawrk**), a Greek who lived around 100 C.E., long after the demise of Carthage, wrote the following on the basis of earlier sources:

The Carthaginians are a hard and gloomy people, submissive to their rulers and harsh to their subjects, running to extremes of cowardice in times of fear and of cruelty in times of anger; they keep obstinately to their decisions, are austere, and care little for amusement or the graces of life.¹

We should not take the hostile opinions of Greek and Roman sources at face value. Still, it is clear that the Carthaginians were perceived as different and that cultural barriers, leading to misunderstanding and prejudice, played a significant role in the conflicts among these peoples of the ancient Mediterranean. In Chapter 5 we follow the protracted and bloody struggle between Rome and Carthage for control of the western Mediterranean.

FAILURE AND TRANSFORMATION, 750–550 B.C.E.**Assyrian Pressure**

The extension of Assyrian power over the entire Middle East had enormous consequences for all the peoples of the region. In 721 B.C.E. the Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel and deported a substantial portion of the population, and for over a century the southern kingdom of Judah faced relentless pressure. Assyrian threats and demands for tribute spurred

the Phoenicians to explore and colonize the western Mediterranean. Tyre’s fall to the Assyrians in 701 B.C.E. accelerated the decline of the Phoenician homeland, but the western colonies, especially Carthage, flourished. Even Egypt, for so long impregnable behind its desert barriers, fell to Assyrian invaders in the mid-seventh century B.C.E. Southern Mesopotamia was reduced to a protectorate, with Babylon alternately razed and rebuilt by Assyrian kings of differing dispositions. Urartu and Elam, Assyria’s nearby rivals, were destroyed.

By 650 B.C.E. Assyria stood unchallenged in western Asia. But the arms race with Urartu, the frequent expensive campaigns, and the protection of lengthy borders had sapped Assyrian resources. Assyrian brutality and exploitation aroused the hatred of conquered peoples. At the same time,

SECTION REVIEW

- The extension of Assyrian power over the entire Middle East had enormous consequences for all the peoples of the region.
- The costs of frequent military campaigns, the hatred of conquered peoples aroused by Assyrian brutality, and changes in the ethnic composition of the army and the population of the homeland weakened the Assyrian state.
- The Neo-Babylonians and the Medes of northwest Iran launched a series of attacks on the Assyrian homeland that destroyed the chief cities by 612 B.C.E. and led to the depopulation of northern Mesopotamia.
- The Neo-Babylonian kingdom took over much of the territory of the Assyrian Empire and fostered a cultural renaissance.

The Neo-Babylonian Kingdom

Neo-Babylonian kingdom
Under the Chaldeans (nomadic kinship groups that settled in southern Mesopotamia in the early first millennium B.C.E.), Babylon again became a major political and cultural center in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.E. After participating in the destruction of Assyrian power, the monarchs Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar took over the southern portion of the Assyrian domains.

changes in the ethnic composition of the army and the population of the homeland had reduced popular support for the Assyrian state.

Two new political entities spearheaded resistance to Assyria. First, Babylonia had been revived by the Neo-Babylonian, or Chaldaean (**chal-DEE-uhn**), dynasty (the Chaldeans had infiltrated southern Mesopotamia around 1000 B.C.E.). Second, the Medes (**MEED**), an Iranian people, were extending their kingdom on the Iranian Plateau in the seventh century B.C.E. The two powers launched a series of attacks on the Assyrian homeland that destroyed the chief cities by 612 B.C.E. The destruction systematically carried out by the victorious attackers led to the depopulation of northern Mesopotamia.

The Medes took over the Assyrian homeland and the northern plain as far as eastern Anatolia, but most of the territory of the old empire fell to the **Neo-Babylonian kingdom** (626–539 B.C.E.), thanks to the energetic campaigns of kings Nabopolassar (**NAB-oh-poe-lass-uhr**) (r. 625–605 B.C.E.) and Nebuchadnezzar (r. 604–562 B.C.E.). Babylonia underwent a cultural renaissance. The city of Babylon was enlarged and adorned, becoming the greatest metropolis of the world in the sixth century B.C.E. Old cults were revived, temples rebuilt, festivals resurrected. The related pursuits of mathematics, astronomy, and astrology reached new heights.

CONCLUSION

The Late Bronze Age in the Middle East was a “cosmopolitan” era of shared lifestyles and technologies. Patterns of culture that had originated long before in Egypt and Mesopotamia persisted into this era. Peoples such as the Amorites, Kassites, and Chaldeans, who migrated into the Tigris-Euphrates plain, were largely assimilated into the Sumerian-Semitic cultural tradition, adopting its language, religious beliefs, political and social institutions, and forms of artistic expression. Similarly, the Hyksos, who migrated into the Nile Delta and controlled much of Egypt for a time, adopted the ancient ways of Egypt. When the founders of the New Kingdom finally ended Hyksos domination, they reinstated the united monarchy and the religious and cultural traditions of earlier eras.

The Late Bronze Age expansion of commerce and communication stimulated the emergence of new civilizations, including those of the Minoans and Mycenaean Greeks in the Aegean Sea. These new civilizations borrowed heavily from the technologies and cultural practices of Mesopotamia and Egypt, creating dynamic syntheses of imported and indigenous elements.

Ultimately, the very interdependence of the societies of the Middle East and eastern Mediterranean made them vulnerable to the destructions and disorder of the decades around 1200 B.C.E. The entire region slipped into a “Dark Age” of isolation, stagnation, and decline that lasted several centuries. The early centuries after 1000 B.C.E. saw a resurgence of political organization and international commerce, as well as the spread of technologies and ideas. The Assyrians created an empire of unprecedented size and diversity through superior organization and military technology, and they maintained it through terror and deportations of subject peoples.

The Israelites began as nomadic pastoralists, then settled permanently in Canaan. Conflict with the Philistines forced them to adopt a more complex political structure, and under the monarchy Israelite society grew more urban and economically stratified. While the long, slow evolution of the Israelites from wandering groups of herders to an agriculturally based monarchy followed a common pattern in ancient western Asia, the religious and ethical concepts that they formulated were unique and have had a powerful impact on world history.

After the upheavals of the Late Bronze Age, the Phoenician city-states along the coast of Lebanon flourished. Under pressure from the Neo-Assyrian Empire, the Phoenicians, with Tyre in the lead, began spreading westward into the Mediterranean. Carthage became the most important city outside the Phoenician homeland. Ruled by leading merchant families, it extended its commercial empire throughout the western Mediterranean, maintaining power through naval superiority.

The far-reaching expansion of the Assyrian Empire was the most important factor in the transformation of the ancient Middle East. The Assyrians destroyed many older states and, directly or indirectly, displaced large numbers of people. Their brutality, as well as the population shifts that resulted from their deportations, undercut support for their state. The Chaldeans and Medes led resistance to Assyrian rule. After the swift collapse of Assyria, the Chaldeans expanded the Neo-Babylonian kingdom, enlarged the city of Babylon, and presided over a cultural renaissance.

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EBOOK AND WEBSITE RESOURCES

Primary Sources

An Assyrian Emperor's Resume: Ferocious Conquests a Specialty

Moses Descends Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments

Interactive Maps

Map 3.1 The Middle East in the Second Millennium B.C.E.

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Map 3.5 Colonization of the Mediterranean

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

SUGGESTED READING

Barber, Elizabeth Wayland. *Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years: Women, Cloth, and Society in Early Times*. 1994. An intriguing account of textile manufacture in antiquity, with emphasis on the social implications and primary role of women.

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dle East, with nearly two hundred articles by contemporary experts and bibliography on a wide range of topics.

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NOTES

1. Plutarch, *Moralia*, 799 D, trans. B. H. Warmington, *Carthage* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1960), 163.

AP* REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 3

- Many historians believe that the Hittites were the first civilization to develop the use of
 - iron.
 - cuneiform.
 - step pyramids.
 - ceramics.
- Akhenaten's attempts to reform Egypt and reaffirm the power of the king over the priests have led many historians to believe that he supported
 - exiling the priests.
 - making the king a divine being.
 - returning the capital to Thebes.
 - making a truce with the Hittites.
- In Mycenaean society, the government bureaucracy
 - maintained a high degree of control over the economy.
 - recorded daily events.
 - maintained no financial records.
 - contained no scribes.
- The Assyrian Empire is considered the first true empire because
 - it was one cohesive group of people.
 - it conquered Egypt, which had been the greatest civilization up to that time.
 - its use of iron technology was the most sophisticated for the time.
 - it was the first to rule over far-flung lands and diverse peoples.
- As a way to break up rebellious communities, the Assyrians
 - encouraged defeated communities to intermarry with the Assyrians.
 - employed mass deportations from one portion of the empire to another.
 - allowed for significant amounts of self-determination among the conquered people.
 - traded them as slaves.
- While ancient Israel was a crossroads of trade, it had an inherent weakness because
 - it was too close to Egypt.
 - it was located in Semitic lands.
 - it had few natural resources.
 - its people spoke a different language than those around it.
- The Israelite monarchy reached its peak with the reign of
 - David.
 - Sargon.
 - Solomon.
 - Moses.
- The capture of Jerusalem, the destruction of Solomon's temple, and the beginning of the Diaspora took place at the hands of the
 - Philistines.
 - Egyptians.
 - Carthaginians.
 - Babylonians.
- The movement of the Phoenicians into the coastal region of the western Mediterranean Sea was likely caused by
 - Assyrian aggression and the growth of the Assyrian Empire.
 - good trade relations with Greece and Carthage.
 - access to water resources.
 - access to Egyptian trade routes.
- Trade was such an important aspect of Carthaginian life that
 - it was not taxed.
 - the Carthaginians ruled their empire indirectly.
 - the Carthaginians did not require military service.
 - the Carthaginians did not conquer neighbors for fear of upsetting trade relationships.

11. Which of the following is an accurate assessment of the Assyrians?
- (A) While they were a large empire, they did not impact trade in the region.
 - (B) They were the most important factor in the transformation of the ancient Middle East.
 - (C) Their collapse was swift, indicating their weakness as a military power.
 - (D) They conquered mainly pastoralist societies and were not able to defeat more advanced peoples.

ANIMAL DOMESTICATION

Because the earliest domestication of plants and animals took place long before the existence of written records, we cannot be sure how and when humans first learned to plant crops and make use of tamed animals. Historians usually link the two processes as part of a Neolithic Revolution, but they were not necessarily connected.

The domestication of plants is much better understood than the domestication of animals. Foraging bands of humans primarily lived on wild seeds, fruits, and tubers. Eventually some humans tried planting seeds and tubers, favoring varieties that they particularly liked, and a variety that may have been rare in the wild became more common. When such a variety suited human needs, usually by having more food value or being easier to grow or process, people stopped collecting the wild types and relied on farming and further developing their new domestic type.

In the case of animals, the basis of selection to suit human needs is less apparent. Experts looking at ancient bones and images interpret changes in hair color, horn shape, and other visible features as indicators of domestication. But these visible changes did not generally serve human purposes. It is usually assumed that animals were domesticated for their meat, but even this is questionable. Dogs, which may have become domestic tens of thousands of years before any other species, were not eaten in most cultures, and cats, which became domestic much later, were eaten even less often. As for the uses most commonly associated with domestic animals, some of the most important, such as milking cows, shearing sheep, and harnessing oxen and horses to pull plows and vehicles, first appeared hundreds and even thousands of years after domestication.

Cattle, sheep, and goats became domestic around ten thousand years ago in the Middle East and North Africa. Coincidentally, wheat and barley were being domesticated at roughly the same time in the same general area. This is the main reason historians generally conclude that plant and animal domestication are closely related. Yet other major meat animals, such as chickens, which originated as jungle fowl in Southeast Asia, and pigs, which probably became domestic separately in several parts of North Africa, Europe, and Asia, have no agreed-upon association with early plant domestication. Nor is plant domestication connected with the horses and camels that became domestic in western Asia and the donkeys that became domestic in the Sahara region around six thousand years ago. Moreover, though the wild forebears of these species were probably eaten, the domestic forms were usually not used for meat.

In the Middle East humans may have originally kept wild sheep, goats, and cattle for food, though wild cattle were large and dangerous and must have been hard to control. It is questionable whether, in the earliest stages, keeping these animals captive for food would have been more productive than hunting. It is even more questionable whether the humans who kept animals for this purpose had any reason to anticipate that life in captivity would cause them to become domestic.

Human motivations for domesticating animals can be better assessed after a consideration of the physical changes involved in going from wild to domestic. Genetically transmitted tameness, defined as the ability to live with and accept handling by humans, lies at the core of the domestication process. In separate experiments with wild rats and foxes in the twentieth century, scientists found that wild individuals with strong fight-or-flight tendencies reproduce poorly in captivity, whereas individuals with the lowest adrenaline levels have the most offspring in captivity. In the wild, the same low level of excitability would have made these individuals vulnerable to predators and kept their reproduction rate down. However, early humans probably preferred the animals that seemed the tamest and destroyed those that were most wild. In the rat and fox experiments, after twenty generations or so, the surviving animals were born with much smaller adrenal glands and greatly reduced fight-or-flight reactions. Since adrenaline production normally increases in the transition to adulthood, many of the low-adrenaline animals also retained juvenile characteristics, such as floppy ears and pushed-in snouts, both indicators of domestication.

Historians disagree about whether animal domestication was a deliberate process or the unanticipated outcome of keeping animals for other purposes. Some assume that domestication was an understood and reproducible process. Others argue that, since a twenty-generation time span for wild cattle and other large quadrupeds would have amounted to several human lifetimes, it is unlikely that the people who ended up with domestic cows had any recollection of how the process started. This would also rule out the possibility that people who had unwittingly domesticated one species would have attempted to repeat the process with other species, since they did not know what they and their ancestors had done to produce genetically transmitted tameness.

Historians who assume that domestication was an understood and reproducible process tend to conclude that

humans domesticated every species that could be domesticated. This is unlikely. Twentieth-century efforts to domesticate bison, eland, and elk have not fully succeeded, but they have generally not been maintained for as long as twenty generations. Rats and foxes have more rapid reproduction rates, and the experiments with them succeeded.

Animal domestication is probably best studied on a case-by-case basis as an unintended result of other processes. In some instances, sacrifice probably played a key role. Religious traditions of animal sacrifice rarely utilize, and sometimes prohibit, the ritual killing of wild animals. It is reasonable to suppose that the practice of capturing wild animals and holding them for sacrifice eventually led to the appearance of genetically transmitted tameness as an unplanned result.

Horses and camels were domesticated relatively late, and most likely not for meat consumption. The societies within which these animals first appeared as domestic spe-

cies already had domestic sheep, goats, and cattle for meat, and they used oxen to carry loads and pull plows and carts. Horses, camels, and later reindeer may represent successful experiments with substituting one draft animal for another, with genetically transmitted tameness an unexpected consequence of separating animals trained for riding or pulling carts from their wilder kin.

Once human societies had developed the full range of uses of domestic animals—meat, eggs, milk, fiber, labor, transport—the likelihood of domesticating more species diminished. In the absence of concrete knowledge of how domestication had occurred, it was usually easier for people to move domestic livestock to new locations than to attempt to develop new domestic species. Domestic animals accompanied human groups wherever they ventured, and this practice triggered enormous environmental changes as domestic animals, and their human keepers, competed with wild species for food and living space.