HISTORY OF WORLD CIVILISATION UPTO 1453 A.D
(EXCULDING INDIA)

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Content

UNIT - I

1. Culture and Civilization

A civilization is generally defined as an advanced state of human society containing highly developed forms of government, culture, industry, and common social norms. The word itself comes from the Latin root civilis, meaning civil. The word 'civilization' first began appearing during the Enlightenment. If you're familiar with the Enlightenment, this is not surprising. The Enlightenment was all about civilizing humankind, using reason, education, and science to bring people up to a high state of human functioning.

The word civilization has its foundations in the French language, deriving from words such as civil and civilite, which in turn derive from the Latin civitas. Prior to the appearance of civilization, words such as poli or polite, police (which broadly meant law and order, including government and administration), civilize, and civilité had been in wide use, but none could adequately meet the evolving and expanding demands on the French language. Upon the appearance of the verb civilizer sometime in the sixteenth century, which provided the basis for the noun, the coining of civilization was only a matter of time, because it was a neologism whose time had come. As Emile Benveniste states, a static term, was no longer sufficient," requiring the coining of a term that "had to be called civilization in order to define together both its direction and continuity".

The first known recorded use of civilization in French gave it a meaning quite different than what is generally associated with it today. For some time civilizer had been used in jurisprudence to describe the transformation of a criminal matter into a civil one; hence civilization was defined in the Trevoux Dictionaries universal of 1743 as a "term of jurisprudence, an act of justice or judgement that renders a criminal trial civil. Civilization is accomplished by converting information's into inquests or by other means". Just when the written word civilization first appeared in its more modern sense is open to conjecture.

Toynbee's argument concerning the organization of society as marked by the specialization of skills, the move toward elite professions, and the effective use of leisure time has long been held in connection with the advancement of civilization (and civilized society). Such accounts of the relationship among civilization, society, and government fit with Anthony Pagden's claim that the "philosophical history of civilization was, then, a

history of progressive complexity and progressive refinement which followed from the free expression of those faculties which men possess only as members of a community."

R.G. Collingwood has outlined three aspects of civilization: economic, social, and legal. Economic civilization is marked not simply by the pursuit of riches which might actually be inimical to economic civilization but by "the civilized pursuit of wealth." The realm of "social civilization" is the forum in which humankind's sociability is satisfied by "the idea of joint action," or what we might call community. The final mark of civilization is "a society governed by law," and not so much by criminal law as by civil law -"the law in which claims are adjusted between its members" in particular. For Collingwood, "Civilization is something which happens to a community. Civilization is a process of approximation to an ideal state". In essence, Collingwood is arguing that civilized society and thus civilization itself is guided by and operates according to the principles of the rule of law. When we combine these three elements of civilization, what they amount to is what we would call socio-political civilization, or the capacity of a collective to organize and govern itself under some system of laws or constitution.

Meaning and Definition of Culture and Civilization

The word culture simply means a way of living of human group. It includes daily needs of man such as food, clothing and shelter: and also his customs, habits, manners, attitudes ideas and perceptions. The English word 'Culture' is derived from the Latin term 'cult or cultus' meaning tilling, or cultivating or refining and worship. In sum it means cultivating and refining thing to such an extent that its end product evokes our admiration and respect.

This is practically the same as 'Sanskriti' of the Sanskrit language. The term 'Sanskriti' has-been derived from the root 'Kri (to do) of Sanskrit language. Three words came from this root 'Kri; prakriti' (basic matter or condition), 'Sanskriti' (refined matter or condition) and 'vikriti' (modified or decayed matter or condition) when 'prakriti' or a raw material is refined it becomes 'Sanskriti' and when broken or damaged it becomes 'vikriti'. Culture is a way of life. The food you eat, the clothes you wear, the language you speak in and the God you worship all are aspects of culture. In very simple terms, we can say that culture is the embodiment of the way in which we think and do things. It is also the things Culture is inherited from the society in which we live as members. All the achievements of human beings as members of social groups can be called culture. Art, music, literature,

architecture, sculpture, philosophy, religion and science can be seen as aspects of culture. However, culture also includes the customs, traditions, festivals, ways of living and one's outlook on various issues of life.

Culture thus refers to a human-made environment which includes all the material and non-material products of group life that are transmitted from one generation to the next. There is a general agreement among social scientists that culture consists of explicit and implicit patterns of behaviour acquired by human beings. These may be transmitted through symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment as artefacts. The essential core of culture thus lies in those finer ideas which are transmitted within a group-both historically derived as well as selected with their attached value. More recently, culture denotes historically transmitted patterns of meanings embodied in symbols, by means of which people communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and express their attitudes towards life. Culture is the expression of our nature in our modes of living and thinking. It may be seen in our literature, in religious practices, in recreation and enjoyment. Culture has two distinctive components, namely, material and non-material. Material culture consists of objects that are related to the material aspect of our life such as our dress, food, and household goods. Non-material culture refers to ideas, ideals, thoughts and belief. Culture varies from place to place and country to country. Its development is based on the historical process operating in a local, regional or national context. For example, we differ in our ways of greeting others, our clothing, food habits, social and religious customs and practices from the West. In other words, the people of any country are characterised by their distinctive cultural traditions.

The word 'culture' and 'civilization' are often used synonymously. However, they have clearly defined meanings in differentiating them. 'Civilization' means having better ways of living and sometimes making nature bend to fulfil their needs. It also includes organizing societies into politically well-defined groups working collectively for improved conditions of life in matters of food, dress, communication, and so on. Thus some groups consider themselves as civilized and look down upon others. This disposition of certain groups has even led to wars and holocausts, resulting in mass destruction of human beings. On the other hand 'culture' refers to the inner being, a refinement of head and heart. This includes arts and sciences, music and dance and various higher pursuits of human life which are also classified as cultural activities. One who may be poor and wearing cheap clothes may be considered 'uncivilized', but still he or she may be the most cultured person.

One possessing ostentatious wealth may be considered as ‘civilized’ but he may not be ‘cultured’ therefore, when we think of culture, we have to understand that it is different from civilization. As we have seen, culture is the ‘higher levels of inner refinement’ of a human being. Humans are not merely physical beings. They live and act at three levels: physical, mental and spiritual. While better ways of living socially and politically and better utilization of nature around us may be termed as civilization. This is not enough to be cultured. Only when the deeper levels of a person’s intellect and consciousness are brought into expression can we call him/her as ‘cultured’.

Differences between Culture and Civilization

The following points are noteworthy, so far as the difference between culture and civilization is concerned: The term ‘culture’ refers to the embodiment of the manner in which we think, behave and act. On the contrary, the improved stage of human society, where members have the considerable amount of social and political organisation and development, is called Civilization. Our culture describes what we are, but our civilization explains what we have or what we make use of. Culture is an end; it has no measurement standards. As against this, civilization has precise measurement standards, because it is a means the culture of a particular region can be reflected in religion, art, dance, literature, customs, morals, music, philosophy, etc. On the other hand, the civilization is exhibited in the law, administration, infrastructure, architecture, social arrangement, etc. of that area.

Culture denotes the greatest level of inner refinement, and so it is internal. Unlike, civilization which is external, i.e. it is the expression of state of the art technology, product, devices, infrastructure and so forth.

Change in culture is observed with time, as in the old thoughts and traditions lost with the passage of time and new ones are added to it which are then transmitted from one generation to another. On the flip side, civilization is continuously advancing, i.e. the various elements of civilization like means of transportation, communication, etc. are developing day by day. Culture can evolve and flourish, even if the civilization does not exist. In contrast, civilization cannot grow and exist without culture.

Causes for the Growth of 'Civilization'

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries CE, it was widely believed among European scholars that all human communities were involved in a process of straightforward

progression by which the conditions of a society were gradually improving. As part of these changes, it was believed, societies experienced different stages: savagery, barbarism and, finally, civilization. Civilization, in this context, was understood as the last stop in the long journey of human society. The different stages of this social evolution were equated to specific human communities: Palaeolithic and Mesolithic hunter-gatherer communities were considered part of the savagery stage, Neolithic and Bronze Age farmers as part of the barbarism stage, and finally Bronze Age urban communities (particularly those in the Near East) were considered an early phase of the civilized world. Today, this approach is no longer valid since it is linked to an attitude of cultural superiority, by which human communities which are not yet "civilized" are seen as somehow inferior.

It has been noted as a curious fact that the majority of the ancient civilizations developed precisely where nature imposed the condition of artificial irrigation upon the husbandman, who supplies the prime necessaries of life.

Thousands of years ago, millions of treasures were spent upon irrigation works, as has been again done in modern times; yet, in the rainy, forested districts we find even yet large areas tenanted mainly by wild beasts. In Central Asia, as well as in Asia Minor, the ruins of ancient cities are seen where at the present time only the herds of nomads' pasture. The khanates of southern Turkestan, with their historic cities, do not illustrate the same obstinate bias in favour of the arid climates nor is it otherwise in the New World. It was not the moist, exuberantly fertile forest regions of the Orinoco and Amazon, but the arid western slopes of the Andes, that developed the civilization of the Incas.

Wherever abundant rains occur more or less regularly throughout the year, these water-soluble compounds are leached out of the land, passing into the sub-drainage, and thence through springs, streams and rivers into the sea. But where the rainfall is scanty, this leaching can take place only partially or not at all; and we frequently find, during the rainless season, the salts of potassium, sodium and magnesium appearing as a superficial "bloom" or efflorescence on the land surface, being brought up by the evaporation of the soil moisture, Sometimes in such amounts as to prevent the growth of ordinary vegetation, and permitting only that of "saline" plants. For, with the useful, nutrient substances, of course also the useless or injurious ones, such as common and Glauber's salt, and sal-soda, are left in the land. These "alkali" lands form the extreme contrast to the intensely leached, usually "red," lands of the tropics, known as laterite soils; which are extremely poor in plant-food ingredients. But, while an excess of these salts is injurious to useful vegetation, it is obvious

that, where such excess does not occur, there must be formed in the soils of the arid regions accumulations of plant food which may render it possible to defer for a long time the need of artificial fertilization, to which the farmer of the humid regions must devote so much money and energy.

Therefore, one should not confuse culture for civilization. However, both are created by human beings and expresses, the way we led our lives. These two gives us the ideas, ideals, values and ways to live a decent and lavish life.

2. PRE- HISTORIC MAN

Stone Age, prehistoric cultural stage, or level of human development, characterized by the creation and use of stone tools. The Stone Age, whose origin coincides with the discovery of the oldest known stone tools, which have been dated to some 3.3 million years ago, is usually divided into three separate periods

Palaeolithic Period

Mesolithic Period, and

Neolithic Period

These three periods based on the degree of sophistication in the fashioning and use of tools. Palaeolithic archaeology is concerned with the origins and development of early human culture between the first appearance of human beings as tool-using mammals (which is believed to have occurred sometime before 3.3 million years ago) and about 8000 BCE (near the beginning of the Holocene Epoch [11,700 years ago to the present]). It is included in the time span of the Pleistocene, or Glacial, Epoch—an interval lasting from about 2,600,000 to 11,700 years ago. Modern evidence suggests that the earliest proto-human forms had diverged from the ancestral primate stock by the beginning of the Pleistocene. In any case, the oldest recognizable tools were found in rock layers of Middle Pliocene Epoch (some 3.3 million years ago), raising the possibility that tool making began with Australopithecus or its contemporaries. During the Pleistocene, which followed directly after the Pliocene, a series of momentous climatic events occurred. The northern latitudes and mountainous areas were subjected on four successive occasions to the advances and retreats of ice sheets (known as Günz, Mandela, Rids, and Wurm in the Alps), river valleys and terraces were formed, the present coastlines were established, and great changes were induced in the fauna and flora of the globe. In large measure, the development of culture during Palaeolithic times seems to

have been profoundly influenced by the environmental factors that characterize the successive stages of the Pleistocene Epoch.

Throughout the Palaeolithic, humans were food gatherers, depending for their subsistence on hunting wild animals and birds, fishing, and collecting wild fruits, nuts, and berries. The art factual record of this exceedingly long interval is very incomplete; it can be studied from such imperishable objects of now-extinct cultures as were made of flint, stone, bone, and antler. These alone have withstood the ravages of time, and, together with the remains of contemporary animals hunted by our prehistoric forerunners, they are all that scholars have to guide them in attempting to reconstruct human activity throughout this vast interval approximately 98 percent of the time span since the appearance of the first true hominine stock. In general, these materials develop gradually from single, all purpose tools to an assemblage of varied and highly specialized types of artefacts, each designed to serve in connection with a specific function. Indeed, it is a process of increasingly more complex technologies, each founded on a specific tradition that characterizes the cultural development of Palaeolithic times. In other words, the trend was from simple to complex, from a stage of no specialization to stages of relatively high degrees of specialization, just as has been the case during historic times.

In the manufacture of stone implements, four fundamental traditions were developed by the Palaeolithic ancestors:

(1) pebble-tool traditions;

(2) bifacial-tool, or hand-axe, traditions;

(3) flake-tool traditions; and

(4) blade-tool traditions.

Only rarely are any of these found in “pure” form, and this fact has led to mistaken notions in many instances concerning the significance of various assemblages. Indeed, though a certain tradition might be superseded in a given region by a more advanced method of producing tools, the older technique persisted as long as it was needed for a given purpose. In general, however, there is an overall trend in the order as given above, starting with simple pebble tools that have a single edge sharpened for cutting or chopping. In southern and eastern Asia, pebble tools of an early type continued in use throughout Palaeolithic times.

French place names have long been used to designate the various Palaeolithic subdivisions, since many of the earliest discoveries were made in France. This terminology has been widely applied in other countries, notwithstanding the very great regional differences that do in fact exist. But the French sequence still serves as the foundation of Palaeolithic studies in other parts of the old World.

There is reasonable agreement that the Palaeolithic ended with the beginning of the Holocene geologic and climatic era about 11,700 years ago (about 9700 BCE). It is also increasingly clear that a developmental bifurcation in human cultural history took place at about this time. In most of the world, especially in the temperate and tropical woodland environments or along the southern fringes of Arctic tundra, the older Upper Palaeolithic traditions of life were simply readapted toward more or less increasingly intensified levels of food collection. These cultural readaptations of older food procedures to the variety and succession of post-Pleistocene environments are generally referred to as occurring in the Mesolithic Period. But also by 8000 BCE (if not even somewhat earlier) in certain semi-arid environments of the world's middle latitudes, traces of a quite different course of development began to appear. These traces indicate a movement toward incipient agriculture and (in one or two instances) animal domestication. In the case of south-western Asia, this movement had already culminated in a level of effective village-farming communities by 7000 BCE.

In Mesoamerica, a comparable development somewhat different in its details and without animal domestication was taking place almost as early. It may thus be maintained that in the environmentally favourable portions of south-western Asia, Mesoamerica, the coastal slopes below the Andes, and perhaps in south-eastern Asia (for which little evidence is available), little if any trace of the Mesolithic stage need be anticipated. The general level of culture probably shifted directly from that of the Upper Palaeolithic to that of incipient cultivation and domestication.

The culture history of the earlier portion of the Holocene Period is thus one of two generalized developmental patterns: (1) the cultural re-adaptations to post-Pleistocene environments on a more or less intensified level of food collection; and (2) the appearance and development of an effective level of food production. It is generally agreed that this latter appearance and development was achieved quite independently in various localities in both the Old and New Worlds. As the procedures and the plant or animal domesticates of this new food-producing level gained effectiveness and flexibility to adapt to new environments, the

new level expanded at the expense of the older, more conservative one. Finally, it is only within the matrix of a level of food production that any of the world's civilizations have been achieved.

Human Races and their Movements

Races of Mankind

Before we proceed to study the historic age, it is necessary to know mankind is classified according to well defined races. In India we have the mixture of Aryans and Dravidians. Similarly, we find mixture of Aryans and American continent. Taking the colour and physical features into considerations, the present mankind is broadly divided into three races:

(a) The black or Negroid,

(b) The yellow or Mongoloid, and

(c) The white or the Caucasian.

(a) Those, which belong to the Negroid race have black skin, woolly hair, broad nose and thick lips. Among the Negroid, there are two main types, namely, the short statured Negroes who are found in Malaya's, the Philippines, and some parts of Australia, and the normal statured Negroes who are found in central and western Africa.

(b) The people of Tibet, Nepal, Indo-china, Japan, and Formosa belong to the Mongoloid race. They have yellow skin, flat face with high cheek bones and slanting eyes. Even the American Indians belong to a branch of Mongoloid race. So also the Eskimos of the Northern American Arctic and Indians of South America.

(c) The majority of the people who live in Europe. Northern Africa, Arabic, some Pacific islands, New Zealand, South India and Ceylon belong to the Caucasoid race. There are many types of Caucasoid, like the Nordics are tall, long-headed, and blond and with blue eyes. The east Baltic's are short with blue eyes. The east Baltic's are short with a round head and round face. The Mediterranean's have dark skin, dark eyes, wavy hair, and a long head. Most of the Slavs in Russia belong to the Alpines sub-race.

It is better to note that we hardly come across any ethnically pure race or races in view of constant migration of people from one region to the other. Further, it is to be mentioned here that no single culture at present could be associated to any particular race.

UNIT – II

1. MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATION

Mesopotamia and its Geography

Ancient Mesopotamian civilization was situated in the Fertile Crescent, where the countries of Iraq, Kuwait, Turkey, and Syria now lie. It was first settled by humans during the Palaeolithic era, and within thousands of years became home to some of the world's first formal civilizations and cities formed by the Sumerian people, who controlled most of the region. This then gave way to a series of rulers and empires, some more infamous than others, including Gilgamesh, Sargon, and the Akkadians, the Babylonians, and the Assyrians. Throughout this time Mesopotamia became a tremendous output for art, literature, religion, and many other scientific or cultural pursuits.

A great civilization flourished in Mesopotamia around 3000 B.C.E. Mesopotamia is now part of the Republic of Iraq. Originally Mesopotamia is a Greek word which means the land between two rivers. Tigris and Euphrates were the two rivers between which the civilization of Mesopotamia flourished. The Civilization of Mesopotamia is known for its city life, prosperity, voluminous and rich literature, Astronomy and Mathematics. It left its influence on world civilizations in a number of ways. Mesopotamia is a flat plain. The excavation work started here about 150years ago. Mesopotamia can be broadly divided into two distinct different environments. Northern Mesopotamia was frequently referred to as Assyria during the ancient times. Southern Mesopotamia is the region lying roughly between the Middle Tigris and the Persian Gulf. In the west there is an unending stretch of desert merging with the Arabian Desert. Southern Mesopotamia was sub-divided into two parts i.e., Sumer and Akkad during the ancient times.

From 2000 B.C. onwards Akkad and Sumaria together came to be referred to as Babylonia because Babylon (an important city) became the political centre of the major empire in southern Mesopotamia. From about 1100 B.C. when the Assyrians established their kingdom in the North, the region came to be known as Assyria. Sumerian was the first known language of the land. Later on, Sumerian was replaced by Akkadian and Aramaic languages respectively. Mesopotamia witnessed the growth of three civilizations –

The Sumerian Civilization,

The Babylonian Civilization and

The Assyrian Civilization.

It was in southern Mesopotamia (Sumer) that the first cities came into emergence and the art of writing registered a growth. The Significance of Urbanism the earliest cities in Mesopotamia started growing in the Bronze Age in C. 3000B.C. Eridu, Ur, Uruk, Larsa, Lagash, Nippur, Nisin etc were important cities of ancient Sumer. Babylon, Nineveh, Nimrud, Assur, Mari etc, were other well known cities of Mesopotamia. Cities not only served as a living place for a large number of people but also as centres of various important economic activities. Initially, natural fertility and high standard of food production were the major factors leading to urbanization. Availability of water resources for transportation also played a significant role in the development of urbanization. Division of labour, the use of seals for trade and the military power of king etc. were also responsible factors for the growth of towns. As per excavations, there were three types of cities in Mesopotamia. They were religious, commercial and royal cities. Cities occupied a very significant place in the life of Mesopotamian people. The valued the city life highly. Cities were centres of various cultures. People of many communities and cultures lived side by side in cities.

The Sumerian civilization

The Sumerian civilization emerged upon the flood plain of the lower reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers about 4000 B.C. The social structure of the Sumerians was decidedly different from other societies of that and later times. The Sumerian communities were city states organized around a temple and ruled by priesthood. The bulk of the people of the community were considered to be the servant-slaves of the god of the temple. The insecurities of life justified the role of the priesthood. When calamities occurred despite the best efforts of the priesthood this was explained as being the result of the actions of other gods acting in concert which over-ruled the wishes of the local god.

There was a class of craftsmen in addition to the priests and peasants. The craftsmen devoted most of their time to producing things for either the temples or the warrior-soldiers which protected the temple community. The people were to devote their lives to propitiating the gods to prevent calamities from befalling the community.

The political structure of Sumer was independent city-states. The map shows the important communities. Note that in Sumerian times the Persian Gulf extended to the area of the city-states. Since then the rivers have filled in hundreds miles of Gulf and Ur which was once almost on the coast is hundreds of miles from the sea. Along with the map of Sumer there is a schematic depiction of the layout of the city of Ur with a branch of the Euphrates River running through the city with a protected harbour at the city walls. There was another protected harbour at the city walls. The temple grounds were separated from the rest of the city.

The temple community city-states of Sumer did not form leagues and alliances until after the glory of the era of Sumer. With wars of defence the role of the priesthood declined relative to the role of the warriors. Eventually the dominance of the warriors was manifested in the rule of kings. The origin of the Sumerians is uncertain. They apparently came from the south through the Persian Gulf. Their literature speaks of their homeland being Dilmun, which could have been one of the islands in the Persian Gulf such as Bahrain. But no ruins comparable in age and complexity to those of Sumer have been found in the proposed locations of Dilmun. However the balance of the evidence is that Dilmun was the island of Bahrain.

The Sumerians apparently had practiced trading in their original homeland. The frequency of animal beings in the pantheon of their gods suggests some previous pastoral history. The Sumerian language is of no help in identifying their origins because it appears to be unrelated to any other language in the world. It is an agglutinating language like Turkish, Hungarian, Finnish and Inuit (Eskimo); i.e., statements are constructed by adding prefixes and suffixes onto the core word.

The Sumerians disappeared from history about 2000 B.C. as a result of military domination by various Semitic peoples. In particular, in about 2000 B.C. Sargon established an empire in Mesopotamia which included the area of Sumer. But long before Sargon's conquest Semitic peoples had been entering the area of Sumer. Many technical innovations are attributed to the Sumerians. Among these are:

Writing (the cuneiform script on clay tablets)

Arguably history’s most important inventions, the Mesopotamians were responsible for the introduction and development of the written word, which has its origins in the latter half of the 4th millennium BC. Cuneiform, which literally means ‘wedge shape’ and refers to

the tools used to inscribe letters onto the writing surface, was invented by the Sumerians in Mesopotamia. It began as a pictographic system, with each symbol representing a specific object, person, action or idea, but later developed into a combination of alphabetic, syllabic, and pictographic symbols. It is even thought that Cuneiform influenced later Egyptian hieroglyphics.

The most famous and widely-studied of the Cuneiform texts is the Epic of Gilgamesh, a great poem generally considered the earliest extant work of literature. The story has been found written across various tablets, discovered across the region, and tells the story of King Gilgamesh, who encounters and defeats a range of enemies before the death of his closest companion drives him to uncover the secrets of eternal life. Although Gilgamesh never succeeds in finding immortality, his name and glory live on in posterity, largely thanks to the Mesopotamian invention of writing.

Cuneiform writing was not created with the direct intention of producing some of the world's greatest literature. On the contrary, the driving force behind the invention of the written word was far less exciting: the earliest records indicate that it came about because of the need to keep accurate records of sheep sales.

As opportunities for travel increased and trade subsequently expanded, merchants and farmers needed a more reliable way of keeping track of their produce. Using a wedge-shaped stylus and a tablet made of clay, stone, metal, or wax, early traders would take note of their produce and sales, listing what were sold, the quantity, date, and buyer. Later, in larger cities, the uses of Cuneiform extended to urban planning, contracts and taxation. And so, while it may be associated with epic poetry and mysterious runes, the earliest writings found in Mesopotamia are actually just the first example of accounting.

From the wheel to the sailboat, the Mesopotamians were responsible for countless inventions still used today. This article unpacks ten of the most surprising inventions from this ancient civilization. Ancient Mesopotamia was a powerhouse of agriculture and trade, giving rise to some of the most powerful empires and kingdoms the world had ever seen. During the third and second centuries BC, a huge number of inventions emerged out of Mesopotamian civilization, many counting among the most important developments in human history. This article covers ten of the most significant, and most surprising, Mesopotamian inventions that arose from their ancient culture.

The Mesopotamians were the first people to mass-produce bricks, which allowed them to build up the greatest civilization the world had yet seen. The earliest examples of this Mesopotamian invention go as far back as the seventh millennium BC when the people of what is now Northern Iraq formed settlements with buildings constructed out of blocks of clay, shaped by hand and dried in the sun. These primitive building blocks continued to be used throughout the subsequent millennia, even though they limited the size and stability of their structures.

Thousands of years later, during the mid-first millennium BC, ovens (or kilns) came into use as a means of mass-producing much stronger and more uniform bricks. King Nebuchadnezzar II, who ruled Babylon from 605 to 564 BC, and famously led the conquest of Judah recorded in the Bible, was a great patron of the kilns. Determined to build the greatest city on earth, he sponsored the creation of thousands of bricks, many of which were inscribed with his name and a message of protection. With all those bricks, the building potential of the Mesopotamians was practically endless, and they applied it on a scale never before seen. Cities may seem like a natural and ubiquitous part of human life now, but they only came into existence when natural shifts forced disparate and nomadic peoples to band together into larger groups. Out of this necessity was born not only the settlements themselves but also many of the trappings of urban life that persist today.

These larger groups that settled together gradually organized governments, made laws, and began to form a social hierarchy. The cities themselves became more than just collections of houses, constructing temples, public gardens, trading places, and administrative centers, with the surrounding lands used mainly for farming to provide the inhabitants with food. The greatest Mesopotamian city was without a doubt Babylon, which dates back to around 1800 BC and soon after expanded its boundaries to become a highly powerful city-state. It is perhaps most famous for its Hanging Gardens, built by Nebuchadnezzar II for his wife, which was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

After they had figured out how to capture and convey the concept of space, the Mesopotamians moved onto time. They developed the sexagesimal system by which units of time are divided into 60 parts and its factors, which eventually gave us our minute of 60 seconds and an hour of 60 minutes. It is also from the Mesopotamians that we inherit the 24 hours of the day and the 12 signs of the zodiac, corresponding to the lunar months. To make these fit with the number of days in the solar year, the Mesopotamians added not leap days but leap months.

The most surprising thing about the greatest Mesopotamian, the wheel, is that it was initially designed to be horizontal. Instead of the upright at the bottom of a cart or chariot, the earliest wheel was actually positioned on its side and used to help craftsmen shape their pottery. The potter's wheel has its origins around the same time as Cuneiform, in the latter half of the 4th millennium, proving that this was a time of huge innovation in human thought and design.

The potential of the wheel must have been apparent to the Mesopotamians almost immediately, as they soon invented the first wheeled vehicles in the form of rudimentary wooden carts. The wheels too were made of wood, sometimes simply solid discs cut straight from tree trunks, but they gradually developed to become more efficient: by cutting out much of the material and leaving only a cross-beam and spokes to connect the centre to the rim, the Mesopotamians made their wheels much lighter. Eventually, they also created the axle, which saved a great deal of time and energy by turning both wheels simultaneously, with force applied to the central rod. From simple carts, the Mesopotamians could then make chariots, which made them a formidable force in military conflicts.

Social and economic organization

The Sumerian civilization influenced other civilization, notably that of Babylon to the north. Egypt was also influenced by the Sumerians. Upper Egypt would have been influenced through the sea routes from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea. Lower Egypt could have had contact with the Sumerians by that same route or by way of the overland route along the coast of the eastern Mediterranean. The Sumerian civilization became known to the modern world as a result of references to Sumer in writings found through the investigation of the ruins of Babylon and related cities. These Babylonian references were to a civilization that was ancient even in Babylonian.

The story of Sumer is like the plot to a science fiction story. The modern world learns of its existence through references in an ancient literature to still more ancient times. The Sumerian appeared at the dawn of history as a fully developed society with a technology and organization that was different and superior to the other societies of the time. And civilization itself seems to have stemmed from this alien and mysterious people. Communists proposed what they claimed was a new and progressive structure of society but what they seemed to be trying to create was basically the same sort of society that the Sumerians created with a priesthood controlling the society and its economy five thousand years ago.

Social Life

Kings in Mesopotamia were thought to have a special relationship with gods and goddesses, which allowed them to act as an intermediary between common people and divine powers. This was reflected in how successful they were at running the country. Priests and priestesses ranked as highly as the nobility. In addition to presiding over religious services, they were the individuals people turned to when they needed healing. Priests and priestesses were usually highly educated and able to read and write.

The upper classes were usually made of merchants, artisans, tutors and other affluent individuals. Normally, they owned slaves, and were able to afford an education for their children. Women in the upper classes usually enjoyed the same rights as men, with the exception of receiving formal education.

The lower classes were made of people working in occupations that made cities run smoothly. These included fishermen, chariot drivers and basket makers. Some occupations intersected with the upper classes, like jewellery makers. It was possible for people to move between classes, but women usually occupied the less desirable lower class occupations.

Slaves were at the bottom of the Mesopotamian hierarchy. They performed a number of tasks, ranging from manual labour to tutoring their masters' children. People would become slaves either after being captured during war, being punished for a crime or being kidnapped and sold into slavery from another region. Some slaves were able to work hard enough to buy their freedom.

Babylonian Civilization

Southern Mesopotamia – Babylonia – suffered even more than Assyria during the "Age of Confusion", as Babylonian scribes called the centuries around 1000 BCE. From the west, large numbers of Arameans peoples invaded, and from the south, a nomadic people called the Kaldu moved in to the coastal area of Babylonia. These people are known to history as the Chaldeans.

In this dark period of Babylonia's history, a social revolution seems to have taken place. For centuries, the temples had been gradually losing wealth and influence, as powerful kings kept them in their place and large royal estates had come to overshadow the temples' land holdings. A class of private merchants and landowners had risen in numbers, wealth and influence, rivalling the temple's economic position.

With the chaos of the centuries on either side of 1000 BCE, however, the peasants of Mesopotamia, with the royal authorities in disarray, seem to have turned to the temples for protection. By the time southern Mesopotamia re-emerges into the light of history, the temples have regained a degree of power and wealth they had not known for more than a thousand years.

The Chaldeans in particular represented a continual threat to the cities of Babylonia. They established their base in the coastal area of Mesopotamia, from where they emerged to raid neighbouring territory. The extensive marshes of the area provided an ideal shelter from reprisals.

The Assyrian domination

From the 9th century BCE the Assyrians of northern Mesopotamia posed as protectors of Babylon, for which they had an enduring and genuine reverence as the cultural and spiritual centre of Mesopotamian civilization. They mostly treated the Babylonian kings with great respect and campaigned against their enemies, principally the Chaldeans and the kingdom of Elam. Even so, on at least two occasions the Chaldeans were able to capture Babylon itself, and hold it for years at a time.

In return for their aid the Assyrian kings expected the allegiance of the king of Babylon and his subjects, who was usually forthcoming as the urban populations of Babylonia saw the Assyrians as their best protection against raiders and invaders. However, they did occasionally rebel. Once, in the early 7th century, this led to the destruction of the city of Babylon by an Assyrian army. The city was soon rebuilt, however, and the general Assyrian policy towards Babylonia was resumed. This involved the Assyrian kings confirming the temples in their predominant position, showering them with favours, not only from feelings of religious deference, but also as a way of keeping the local population happy. Nevertheless, these monarchs also kept the temples firmly in their place, and when need arose they had not hesitation in levying tribute (or forced loans) on them.

The Assyrian kings also regularly followed the practice of installing one of their sons as king of Babylon, subordinate to the king of Assyria.

The rise of the Babylonian empire

In the late 7th century, events began to unfold which would lead to the collapse of the Assyrian empire. The death of the last of the great Assyrian kings, Ashurbanipal, in 627

BCE, was shortly followed by civil war between two of his sons, the king of Assyria and the king of Babylon. The king of Babylon was victorious, but by then the Chaldeans had taken Babylon again (626 BCE). They were led by one of their chiefs called Nabopolassar, who now became one of the key players in the great events which now took place. With the Assyrians' civil war over and the former king of Babylon now king of Assyria, Nabopolassar now faced a strenuous Assyrian attempt to regain control of Babylonia. The war raged on for seven years, but the Assyrians had also to deal with events on their northern frontier, where Scythian and Cimmerian raiders from the steppes north of the Black Sea mounted devastating raids through Assyrian territory. By 616 BCE the Chaldeans had repelled the Assyrians and were in full control of Babylonia.

The end of Assyria

In 616 BCE the Chaldeans under Nabopolassar, who had styled himself king of Babylon for the past 10 years, invaded Assyria itself. In the following year, the Medes also invaded Assyria, and captured the Assyrian holy city of Ashur. Here, the Medes (who had be now united much of Iran under their king, Cyaxes) and the Babylonians agreed to act in unison (614 BCE), and, after a year's slow campaigning, they besieged the Assyrian capital, Nineveh (612 BCE). After three months, the great city fell, and was utterly destroyed. All the other cities of Assyria were also taken and raised to the ground. Only Harran remained, and it fell in 610 BCE. Only villages were left in the land. Two hundred years later a Greek army would march through Assyria and have no idea that the heaps of rubble they saw had once been the greatest cities in the world.

The huge Assyrian empire was shared out amongst its victorious enemies, the Babylonians and Medes. The Medes took Iran, from where they would later expand into Armenia and Cappadocia. Nabopolassar held all Mesopotamia that is, Babylonia and Assyria and claimed Syria and Palestine. These were under Egyptian control, and in 607 BCE, Nabopolassar sent his crown prince, Nebuchadnezzar, to drive them out. After two years of hard campaigning he was able to dislodge the Egyptians from the strategic city of Carchemish, in northern Syria. This opened the way for the Babylonians to swiftly take the whole of Syria and Palestine from the Egyptians. Nebuchadnezzar may well have been planning on invading Egypt itself but just at that point he heard of his father's death. He therefore hurried back to Babylon to claim the throne (605 BCE).

King Nebuchadnezzar

This was the opportunity for the peoples of Syria and Palestine to rebel against their new masters. All the cities of the Philistines joined in this rebellion, and Nebuchadnezzar made an example of Ascelon by raising it to the ground and exiling its entire people. As an exemplary punishment, this clearly did not work: Nebuchadnezzar had to send armies to put down rebellions in his western provinces virtually every year, at least until 573 BCE. The Egyptians were of course keen to stir up trouble and on two occasions the Babylonians had again to drive Egyptian armies back to their borders. In one of these campaigns, in 597, he had to put down a rebellion in the kingdom of Judaea. He captured Jerusalem, deporting 3000 of its leading citizens to Babylon. In 589 the people of Jerusalem rebelled again, and Nebuchadnezzar visited his full fury on that city. After an 18 month siege the city was sacked, its walls pulled down and its temple burnt. The last king of Judah, Zedekiah, was blinded and taken prisoner, and many thousands more people deported. Others took refuge in Egypt. In 586 Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre, which had refused to pay tribute to him. This siege would last thirteen years. Finally, in 573, Tyre agreed to submit to Babylonian rule and pay tribute; and this seems to have brought peace to Nebuchadnezzar's western provinces.

Nebuchadnezzar and Babylonia

At home, Nebuchadnezzar lavished attention on Babylonia. He paid close attention to the economic welfare of the people, taking seriously the traditional duty of Mesopotamian kings to repair and maintain the canals, dykes and pools on which their wellbeing depended. Indeed, he expanded the irrigation system of southern Mesopotamia as never before, bringing much new land under cultivation. Babylon was rebuilt, enlarged and beautified, becoming the largest and most magnificent city in the world at that time. Other cities in southern Mesopotamia also received great attention, with all the ancient Sumerian cities having their temples restored and enlarged.

This period, indeed, marked the high point of the temples' wealth and influence in Babylonian society; they were the predominant social and economic institutions of the time. The Chaldean kings, being of foreign descent and having no deep roots in the sympathies of the native population, were critically dependent upon the support of the immensely powerful Babylonian priesthood. When this support was withdrawn, as it seems to have been under the last king, Nabonidus, then the foundations of their rule were undermined.

Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 BCE. Three obscure kings then followed one another in quick succession, each brought down by palace coups. Then, in 556 BCE, a man called Nabonidus came to the throne (reigned 556-539 BCE).

The fall of the Babylonian empire

Nabonidus was not of royal birth, and he was over sixty years old when he came to the throne. His mother (who, remarkably for that time, was still alive at the time of his accession) had been a priestess of the god Sin, in the city of Harran in northern Mesopotamia, which had been under the control of the Medes since the fall of Assyria, and Nabonidus himself was a devotee of the god Sin. From the outset of his reign he harboured an ambition to regain Harran and rebuild the sanctuary of Sin there. Sin was not widely worshipped amongst the Babylonians, who were loyal to their national god, Marduk; however, the god's cult was widespread amongst both the Arameans and Chaldeans. Given the wealth and influence of the Babylonian temples and their priesthoods, and given to the central role played by the kings in the religious life of the Babylonians, Nabonidus' devotion to the god Sin was likely to give rise to religious and political tensions.

The monarch was certainly in need of resources. As his reign progressed the international situation deteriorated rapidly for the Babylonian empire. To some extent this may have been instigated by Nabonidus himself. As we have seen he had a burning wish to restore the temple to Sin in Harran, which was in the hands of the Medes. He may well have had strategic reasons as well. A struggle with the Medes, the other great power in the region, was bound to come sooner or later, and Harran was very strategically situated astride the major routes leading into Syria, Iran and Asia Minor. Its possession would have given Nabonidus a military advantage in any conflict with the Medes.

Legacy of Babylonia

The Babylonian civilization blossomed during the time of Hammurabi. He was the first to build an empire in Mesopotamia and govern it efficiently with his code of laws, a sign of civilized state. From modern point of view, his laws were severe and harsh, for it prescribed heavy penalties for the guilty even for petty offences. However, more benign aspects of the code included certain rights for women, contractual obligations, and safeguards of public morality. One salient principle included in the criminal code was the distinction made between the premeditated crime and accidental crime and it is no surprise that we have

adopted this principle in our modern code. The code provided for dispensation of justice to the poor.

The Babylonians, like their contemporaries, had full faith to the efficacy of a strong monarchy. The divine origin of their king was hardly challenged .A shaft of stone raising to eight feet in height discovered at Susa in 1901 contains the picture of Hammurabi receiving the code of laws from the Sun-God.

Hammurabi divided his empire in to number of provinces and appointed able governors to administer them efficiently .he always kept himself in touch with these governors through his letters fifty five of these letters show his keen interest in the welfare of the governed .he built a big canal and improved the irrigation system in order to help the farmers to grow more food and vegetables. Date-palm was cultivated. The people reared flocks and goats. They used oxen and camels for transport purpose.

Economic Life

The code of Hammurabi gives an insight in the high state of commerce that had existed in Babylon, the seat of Hammurabi's capital, in the early days a kind of barrier system developed. Later, it was replaced by the use of fixed weights and measures. The only coinage was silver lumps of fixed weights and in standard shapes. The city temples became centers of business and number of banks, shops and markets located in its premises. A loan normally carried 20 percent rate of interest. Taxes to the government were paid in kind and the temples contained ware houses to store food grains. Merchants came from neighbouring countries to Babylon to sell their products in its street markets. Thus, it became a centre of international commerce. The steadily growing commerce required a system of keeping accounts. Professional accountants were appointed by traders and businessmen who were well-versed in the cuneiform writing. The discovery of private-letters, royal edicts and business contracts show a glimpse of the economic life of that great city.

Society

The Babylononian society could be broadly divided into three classes .The first was composed of the ruling class like the king and his family, priest, nobles, officers and rich merchants. The middle class included artisans, peasants, shopkeepers and other free men. The lowest class was that of slaves. They were mostly prisoners of war and bought from conquered countries. Slaves were better off in Babylonia because they enjoyed certain rights

as owning of property, marrying with free men ,and right to buy their freedom with their savings ,the code of Hammurabi favoured the upper-classes , for it imposed harsh penalties if crimes were committed against them . Correspondingly similar crimes committed against the slaves were let off with late punishment. During the age of Hammurabi woman enjoyed rights such as owning and disposing of property and freedom to pursue the profession of their choice. They were also given the right to divorce. Widows were protected. But the code prescribed desertion if a woman happened to neglect her house and husband.

Religion

Religion played an important role in the lives of people; the priestly class enjoyed a position of status for they considered themselves as agents of gods. The principal God of the Sumerians was relegated to the background, and the Babylonians worshipped Marduk as their supreme god besides others like Ishtar and Tammuz. At the time of the Chaldeans or the new Babylonians, seven main gods came to be worshipped in rotation based on the principle of each god a day like the sun on the first day, and the Moon God on the second day etc.

Babylonian cities were full of temples, and the capital itself had at one time 53 temples, 55 shrines and 180 altars for different gods and minor deities. The priest offered prayers and sacrifices on behalf of their clientele and predicted the future after looking at the livers of sacrificed animals and at the stars. They gave talismans to ward off evil spirits. The people were superstitious and developed faith in magical remedies.

Architecture and Art

The most imposing buildings in the Babylonian cities were the ziggurats and the Palaces. The construction of ziggurats was tower temples built in the form of small pyramids but divided by tower terraces at each stage. On the top of this structure stood the main shrine one of their famous ziggurats rose to a height of 650ft. It was built in seven stages. A large number of seals, a few sculptures, and their decorations on the bricks walls reveal their artistic achievements.

Learning and Literature

The Babylonians took pride in learning and one of their tablets says that ‘’he shall shine like the sun ‘’. Most of the schools were attached to the temples were the students learnt cuneiform reading, 350 signs writing, arithmetic, keeping of accounts and religious literature. The literature that has survived relating to the Babylonians is historical and mythological.

The most famous is the story of Gilgamesh, an epic which mentions, among other things, about the creation of the world and the great flood. There are the other copy books which contain moral sayings.

Sciences

As mentioned earlier, the Sumerians had left behind them their legacy in science. Their interest in astronomy resulted in the making of a lunar-calendar. Their invention of writing and the division of time into sixty minutes and each minute into sixty seconds, enabled the Babylonians to make considerable progress in astronomy .Along with astronomy, astrology also developed. The Chaldeans or the new Babylonians made rapid progress in astronomy. The Chaldean kings encouraged the development of science by building observatories for astronomers. All astronomical observations including the eclipses were duly recorded. The two great astronomers ho lived during the days of Chaldeans were Naburimannu and kidinnu. The Chaldean engineers created a wonder when they built a hanging garden on the terraced roof of the royal palace and supplied water through hydraulic pumps. The Babylonian civilisation, in spite of numerous wars, flourished for centuries till it was overthrown by Medes and, the Persians about the middle of sixth century B.C.

Hanging Garden

The gardens that Nebuchadnezzar made for his wife have been accounted in many lists as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The other part of ancient Babylon that made it on the list was its incredible walls. The ancient ruins of this famous city lie about 50 miles to the south west of Bagdad in Iraq. The hanging gardens of Babylon were a present to Nebuchadnezzar's wife that contained exotic plants and animals which were imported from all over the world.

Babylon during the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar had conquered and controlled virtually all of the then known world and he made use of these conquests in furnishing his garden with decor which made it become one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Ancient Greek historians, Strabo and Philo, gave us this description of the hanging gardens of Babylon. "The Garden is quadrangular, and each side is four plethora’s long. It consists of arched vaults which are located on chequered cube-like foundations. The ascent of the uppermost terrace-roofs is made by a stairway"**.** ”The Hanging Garden has plants cultivated above ground level, and the roots of the trees are embedded in an upper terrace rather than in the earth. The whole mass is supported on stone columns. Streams of water emerging from

elevated sources flow down sloping channels. These waters irrigate the whole garden saturating the roots of plants and keeping the whole area moist. Hence the grass is permanently green and the leaves of trees grow firmly attached to supple branches. This is a work of art of royal luxury and its most striking feature is that the labour of cultivation is suspended above the heads of the spectators."

People- Government- the code of Hammurabi

Hammurabi's Code was an important law code made in Mesopotamia during the reign of the Babylonians. The code was a list of laws written by the king Hammurabi during his reign as king. This code was special because it was the first law code that included laws to deal with everyone in the current society. The most complete and perfect extant collection of Babylonian laws, developed during the reign of Hammurabi (1792–1750 BCE) of the 1st dynasty of Babylon. It consists of his legal decisions that were collected toward the end of his reign and inscribed on a diorite steal set up in Babylon's temple of Marduk, the national god of Babylonia. These 285 case laws include economic provisions (prices, tariffs, trade, and commerce), family law (marriage and divorce), as well as criminal law (assault, theft) and civil law (slavery, debt). Penalties varied according to the status of the offenders and the circumstances of the offenses.

The background of the code is a body of Sumerian law under which civilized communities had lived for many centuries. The existing text is in the Akkadian (Semitic) language, but, even though no Sumerian version is known to survive, the code was meant to be applied to a wider realm than any single country and to integrate Semitic and Sumerian traditions and peoples. Moreover, despite a few primitive survivals relating to family solidarity, district responsibility, trial by ordeal, and the lex talionis (i.e., an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth), the code was advanced far beyond tribal custom and recognized no blood feud, private retribution, or marriage by capture.

The world of mathematics and astronomy owes much to the Babylonians for instance, the sexagesimal system for the calculation of time and angles, which is still practical because of the multiple divisibility of the number 60, the Greek day of 12 "double-hours"; the zodiac and its signs. A large number of seals, a few sculptures, and their decorations on the bricks walls reveal their artistic achievements.

2. EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION

Ancient Egypt -- A Land of Mysteries.

Bounded on the south, east and west by an impenetrable desert and on the north by the sea, ancient Egypt was protected from outside influences, which allowed it to evolve in its own unique way.

The long, narrow flood plain was a magnet for life, attracting people, animals and plants to its banks. In pre-dynastic times, nomadic hunters settled in the valley and began to grow crops to supplement their food supply. Seen as a gift from the gods, the annual flooding of the river deposited nutrient rich silt over the land, creating ideal conditions for growing wheat, flax and other crops. The first communal project of this fledgling society was the building of irrigation canals for agricultural purposes. The sun was a principal deity whose passage across the sky represented the eternal cycle of birth, death and rebirth. The pharaohs were seen as gods, divine representatives on earth who, through rituals, ensured the continuation of life. After death, they became immortal, joining the gods in the afterward.

The Egyptians also believed that the body and soul were important to human existence, in life and in death. Their funerary practices, such as mummification and burial in tombs, were designed to assist the deceased find their way in the afterward. The tombs were filled with food, tools, domestic wares, and treasures all the necessities of life to ensure the soul's return to the body so that the deceased would live happily ever after.

The most imposing tombs are the famous pyramids, shaped like the sacred mound where the gods first appeared in the creation story. These were incredibly ambitious projects, the largest structures ever built. Their construction was overseen by highly skilled architects and engineers. Paid labourers moved the massive limestone blocks without the use of wheels, horses or iron tools. The conscripts may have been motivated by a deep faith in the divinity of their leaders and a belief in immortality. Perhaps they thought that their contributions would improve their own prospects at the final judgement in the afterward.

The gigantic pyramids were conspicuous targets for tomb robbers, whose plundering jeopardized the hope for eternal life. Subsequent generations of kings hid their tombs in the Valley of the Kings in an attempt to elude the robbers. In the desert valley near the ancient capital of Thebes, now called Luxor, they prepared their royal tombs by cutting into the side

of the mountain. Despite efforts to hide the entrances, thieves managed to find the tombs, pillaging and emptying them of their treasures.

Today, Egyptian archaeologists are still making important discoveries, and the scientific study of royal mummies is shedding new light on the genealogy of the pharaohs. The ongoing deciphering of hieroglyphic writings and research on the life of the peasants are also answering many questions related to the evolution of Egyptian culture. The pharaonic religion gives the impression that the Egyptians were preoccupied with death; however, there are ample indications that they were a happy lot who knew how to enjoy life.

Government and religion were inseparable in ancient Egypt. The pharaoh was the head of state and the divine representative of the gods on earth. Religion and government brought order to society through the construction of temples, the creation of laws, taxation, and the organization of labour, trade with neighbours and the defence of the country's interests. The pharaoh was assisted by a hierarchy of advisors, priests, officials and administrators, who were responsible for the affairs of the state and the welfare of the people.

Catherine Fitzpatrick Ancient Egypt could not have achieved such stability and grandeur without the co-operation of all levels of the population. The pharaoh was at the top of the social hierarchy. Next to him, the most powerful officers were the viziers, the executive heads of the bureaucracy. Under them were the high priests, followed by royal overseers (administrators) who ensured that the 42 district governors carried out the pharaoh's orders. At the bottom of the hierarchy were the scribes, artisans, farmers and labourers.

The word "pharaoh" comes from the Bible. It was first used by Joseph and Moses in the "Second Book of Kings" (ch.17). Although we use this word without distinction, it is an anachronism when used to refer to the Egyptian kings prior to the eighteenth dynasty.

The pharaohs began ruling Egypt in 3000 B.C., when Upper and Lower Egypt were united. During the Old Kingdom (2575-2134 B.C.), they considered themselves to be living gods, which means they ruled with absolute power. They built pyramids as testimony of their greatness but left no official records of their achievements. By the Middle Kingdom, the pharaohs no longer considered themselves to be living gods, but rather the representatives of the gods on earth. They left records of their deeds, but these were no more than a string of titles and laudatory epithets.

The pharaonic period spans over 3,000 years, beginning when kings first ruled Egypt. The first dynasty started in 3000 B.C. with the reign of King Narmer. Throughout the centuries, the power of the pharaohs increased and decreased numerous times before Egypt came under Roman rule in the Greco-Roman Period (332 B.C. - A.D. 395). The pharaonic period ended with the death of the last Cleopatra during the thirty-second dynasty. When the Roman Empire was divided in A.D. 395, Egypt was controlled from Byzantium until the Arab conquest in A.D. 641. The history of the pharaohs is divided into dynastic periods, starting with the Early Period and ending with the Greco-Roman Period. Manetho, a scribe in the fourth century B.C., was the first person to group the reigns of Egyptian kings according to dynastic periods.

To reinforce their image as powerful divine rulers, the pharaohs represented themselves in writings and sculptured reliefs on temple walls. They often depicted themselves as warriors who single-handedly killed scores of enemies and slaughtered a whole pride of lions. Similar depictions were repeated by one pharaoh after another, which leads one to question the validity of the scenes. For example, the war pictures of Rameses III at Karnack are exact copies of those of Rameses II. These deeds of heroism were, in part, designed for propaganda purposes. They reinforced the position of the king as head of state rather than reflecting historical reality.

In the fourth century B.C, a high priest and scribe of the sacred shrines of Egypt named Manetho compiled the first comprehensive list of the pharaohs. He grouped their reigns into dynastic divisions that to a large degree are still considered accurate today. The dynasties are grouped into several periods, starting with the Early Period (3000-2575 B.C.) and ending with the Greco-Roman Period (332 B.C- A.D. 395). The first dynasty began with the legendary King Menes (who is believed to have been King Narmer), and the last one ended in 343 B.C. when Egypt fell to the Persians. Nectanebo II was the last Egyptian-born pharaoh to rule the country.

Not all the pharaohs were men, nor were they all Egyptian. Before the Greco-Roman Period, at least three women ascended the throne, the most important being Queen Hatshepsut. Over several periods, Egypt was dominated by foreign powers that appointed a king from their own ranks. Exactly how successive pharaohs were chosen is not entirely clear. Sometimes a son of the pharaoh, or a powerful vizier (head priest) or feudal lord assumed the leadership, or an entirely new line of pharaohs arose following the collapse of the former monarchy.

Royal mothers, wives and daughters derived their status from their relationship with the king. Kings had many wives and royal families were large. The most prolific was Rameses II, who had eight wives and over a hundred children. To keep the royal bloodline pure, kings often married within their family, a sister or half sister, for example. In a few cases, they married their daughters, although it is not clear whether or not these marriages were true conjugal unions.

The status of royal women is evident in Egyptian art. One of the oldest royal insignia worn by queens is the vulture headdress. The vulture's wings and body were spread over a tightly fitted cap, and the head jutted out at the front. The uraeus (cobra) head could be substituted for the vulture head. Both the vulture and the cobra served to protect the wearer from harm. They were the most characteristic marks of kingship and may have also been, by association, a symbol of divine queen ship.

Another royal symbol worn by women from the thirteenth dynasty onward was a pair of falcon plumes mounted on a circular support. Similar double-feather headdresses were worn by Min, the fertility god, Amun, the creator god, and Hathor, the powerful goddess who controlled the cycles of nature. Like deities and kings, royal women are seen holding symbols such as the ankh (symbol of life), the sistrum (rattle) and the menit necklace.

Girls born to royal wives were given the title "king's daughters" to distinguish them from those of non-royal wives. Royal wives were called the king's principal wives to distinguish them from the others, although the principal wife was not always of royal birth. An example is Queen Tiy, the wife of Amenhotep III, Tutankhamun's grandfather. Daughters of foreign kings were sometimes wed to the pharaohs in diplomatic marriages. Not all these women had children by the king, however. Many were engaged in spinning, weaving and other household duties within the various palaces throughout Egypt.

Little is known about the queens, but there are exceptions. Ahmose-Nefertari, the wife, and sister, of the first pharaoh of the eighteenth dynasty, King Ahmose, became a very powerful queen. She was the first in the history of Egypt to be given the title of God's Wife. When her son died, there was no obvious heir to the throne, so an army general, Thutmose I, became king. Upon his death, his son, Thutmose II, ruled with his half sister Hatshepsut. When he died, Hatshepsut took command and ruled Egypt as a pharaoh for 20 years. This was the first time a woman wielded such power and influence over the affairs of the state.

Nefertari, the beautiful wife of Rameses the Great, was an exceptional woman who played an important role in state and religious affairs. Loved by her people, she was called "mistress of two lands", a title normally reserved for the king, the "lord of two lands". She died in her late forties and was buried in a magnificent house of eternity in the Valley of the Queens. The portraits on the walls of Nefertari's tomb depict her as an elegant and radiant young woman. The tomb's dazzling paintings, a world treasure, have been restored by The Getty Conservation Institute because they had been damaged by centuries of water seepage.

The goddess Isis leads Queen Nefertari in the land of the gods. Nefertari wears a vulture headdress, which identifies her as a royal wife. Nefertari makes an offering to Isis. She is wearing a white robe in the New Kingdom style with a red belt tied at a high waistline.

During the Greco-Roman period, Cleopatra VII was the most illustrious queen. Since the rulers of this period were of Macedonian (Greek or Roman) descent, they are not included in the list of Egyptian rulers of the pharaonic era. Egyptian art is rich in symbols related to royalty and its religious beliefs. By learning to read these symbols, one can gain a better understanding and appreciation of Egyptian art. Below are a few of the most common symbols.

In the shape of a mirror or a knot, the ankh is a symbol of life. It was often carried by deities or people in a funeral procession, or offered to the king as the breath of life. A cartouche is an elliptical outline representing a length of rope that encloses the names of royal persons in hieroglyphs. It symbolized the pharaoh's status as ruler of all that the sun encircled. Napoleon's soldiers gave the cartouche its name. The word is derived from the Italian cartoccio, meaning a cornet of paper (a piece of paper rolled into the shape of a cone). In Italian art, the names of the people represented in paintings were enclosed in a drawing of a cartoccio. The crook and flail are two of the most prominent items in the royal regalia. Kings held them across their chest. The crook, in the shape of a shepherd's staff, is a sceptre symbolizing government and that may be related to the concept of a good shepherd leading his flock.

Egyptian kings and gods are depicted wearing different crowns and headdresses. Before 3000 B.C, there was the white crown of Upper Egypt and the red crown of Lower Egypt. When Egypt was united, these two crowns were amalgamated into the Double Crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. Starting in the eighteenth dynasty, kings also wore the blue crown and the white crown with a plume on either side or a small disk at the top. Kings are

often represented wearing the names head cloth, a piece of cloth pulled tight across the forehead and tied at the back, with two flaps hanging on the sides. Cobra (uraeus) and vulture heads were worn on the forehead. Kings shaved their heads but had a prominent beard.

The Egyptian symbol for gold (nebu) is a collar with beads along the lower edge. Gold has long been associated with the gods and royalty. This imperishable metal reflects the brilliance of the sun and the hope of eternal life. Isis and Nephthys, two of the goddesses who protected the dead, are often shown kneeling on the gold sign at the ends of royal coffins.

The Isis Knot is similar to the ankh sign, but rather than having a horizontal bar, it has two arms that are bent downward. It is closely associated with the died pillar that represents Osiris, Isis's husband, and symbolizes the binary nature of life itself.

The blue lotus was a symbol of the sun god and the pharaohs. Like the sun that sets in the evening and rises in the morning, the lotus flower blooms in the day and closes each night. In one version of the creation myth, the sun first rose out of a giant lotus flower that bloomed on the primordial mound. The lotus thus became a symbol of rebirth, the renewal of life and the promise of everlasting life. This heavy beaded necklace with a crescent front piece and a counterweight at the back is associated with the goddess Hathor. It serves as a medium to transfer the goddess's power to the pharaoh. The pharaoh's wife is sometimes depicted offering the necklace to her husband, since she is the earthly representative of Hathor.

A water plant, the papyrus symbolizes the primeval marshes of the creation story. The heraldic plant of Lower Egypt, it was used to decorate columns in temples built by the pharaohs. The Egyptian word new (he who belongs to the reed) is a symbol for Upper Egypt, and the word bit (he who belongs to the bee) is a symbol for Lower Egypt. When placed together, they represent the domain of the pharaoh, ruler of Upper and Lower Egypt. The scarab's habit of laying its eggs in a ball of dung, which is then rolled along the ground and dropped into a hole, made it an obvious symbol for the sun god. It represented the rising sun god and, through association, the pharaohs.

The sceptre, or rod, is one of the oldest and most enduring symbols associated with royalty and the deities. Two types of sceptres are found in Egyptian art. The symbol of power and dominion has a straight shaft, a crooked handle in the shape of an animal head and a forked base. The sekhem symbolizes divine power and has a straight shaft with an enlarged cylindrical end. The circular shen ring represents the concept of eternity, having no beginning

and no end. It is associated with the solar disk, the serpent that bites its tail, and divine birds that are often shown holding the sign in their claws.

A ceremonial instrument, the sistrum is a rattle that is often shaped like the ankh symbol. It is associated with the goddess Hathor, and its sound is thought to bring protection and divine blessing through fertility and rebirth.

The uraeus represents a rearing cobra with a flared hood. The cobra is associated with the sun god, the kingdom of Lower Egypt, the kings and their families, and several deities. A symbol of protection, it guards the gates of the underworld, wards off the enemies of the royals and guides the deceased pharaohs on their journey through the underworld.

The vulture was the symbol of Upper Egypt. Pharaohs wore the uraeus (cobra) and the head of a vulture on their foreheads as symbols of royal protection. The goddess Nekhbet was also portrayed as a vulture. Bureaucracy is not a modern invention; it was conceived by the Egyptians over 5,000 years ago. The creation of a bureaucracy in the Old Kingdom was a key factor in the inception of the Egyptian civilization. The king was the supreme head of state. Next to him, the most powerful officer in the hierarchy was the vizier, the executive head of the bureaucracy. The position of vizier was filled by a prince or a person of exceptional ability. His title is translated as "superintendent of all works of the king".

As the supreme judge of the state, the vizier ruled on all petitions and grievances brought to the court. All royal commands passed through his hands before being transmitted to the scribes in his office. They in turn dispatched orders to the heads of distant towns and villages, and dictated the rules and regulations related to the collection of taxes.

The king was surrounded by the court, friends and favoured people who attained higher administrative positions. The tendency was to fill these positions on the basis of heredity. One of the most ardent wishes of these administrators was to climb the bureaucratic ladder through promotions and to hand their offices to their children.

Many concepts in modern bureaucracies can be traced to the Egyptians. The hierarchical structure and code of ethics of the Egyptian bureaucracy are echoed in modern governments. Ancient Egyptian bureaucrats, who aspired to higher positions, were counselled to obey their superiors and keep silence in all circumstances, in other words, not to contradict or challenge the wisdom of those in charge. They were expected to have tact and good manners, be faithful in delivering messages, and display humility that verged on

subservience. It is perhaps for these reasons that Egyptian officials were called civil servants, a designation that governments have adopted down through the ages.

The Military

The ancient Egyptians remained very conscious of social stratification, and barriers between the classes were quite rigid. Climbing the social ladder was difficult, but it could be achieved through outstanding accomplishments in professions such as that of the scribes and the military.

The military took part in warfare and trade missions, helping to maintain Egypt's sovereignty and expand its territories. The deserts and the Mediterranean gave the country a natural means of protection. Still, invasions did occur. In the Old Kingdom, the small military units were reinforced by farmers when necessary. During times of internal instability, private armies were established, which included non-Egyptian mercenaries. During the reign of Rameses II (New Kingdom), vast improvements were made in military technology and tactics. The Narmer palette is the earliest artefact depicting an Egyptian king wearing the crowns of both Upper and Lower Egypt. It commemorates King Narmer's victory over Lower Egypt and the subsequent union of Upper and Lower Egypt in the late Pre-dynastic Period (3000 B.C.).

Egyptian Society: Socio- Economic Condition- Art – Religion and Literature

The majority of the population of ancient Egypt were peasants who played a vital role within the country's strict hierarchical society. Artefacts related to daily activities remain as a testament to the labours of the workers who transformed ancient Egypt into an earthly paradise.

Agriculture

Each summer, (starting in July), the Nile River rose, and flooding the low-lying plains on either side. Swollen by the monsoon rains of Ethiopia, it deposited a layer of black soil over the land, rich in nutrients needed for growing crops. The river rose about 8 metres (27 feet) on average. If it rose 2.5 metres (8 feet) higher or lower, disaster struck. When it rose too high, villages were flooded, causing extensive damage and loss of life. When it did not rise high enough, the fields did not receive sufficient nutrients and moisture to support the crops, which resulted in famine.

Under normal conditions, the flood plains supported a rich variety of plants and animals that provided food for the ancient Egyptians. The vast majority of the people were involved in farming. When the flood waters began to recede in mid-September, farmers blocked canals to retain the water for irrigation. Still used today, the shaduf is a mechanical irrigation device used to conduct water from the canals to the fields. One person can operate it by swinging the bucket of water from the canal to the field.

Livestock was important to the Egyptian economy, supplying meat, milk, hides, and dung for cooking fuel. Draft animals such as oxen increased agricultural productivity. Herdsmen and shepherds lived a semi-nomadic life, pasturing their animals in the marshes of the Nile. Although the land was worked by the peasants, it was owned by the king, his officials and the temples. Farmers had to meet grain quotas, which were handed over to the owners as a form of taxation. They were allowed to keep a portion of the crops for their own benefit. If they did not produce the quantity expected, however, they were severely punished.

Food staples

The principal food crops, barley and emmer, were used to make beer and bread, the main staples of the Egyptian diet. Grains were harvested and stored in granaries until ready to be processed. The quantities harvested each season far exceeded the needs of the country, so much was exported to neighbouring countries, providing a rich source of income for the Egyptian treasury. A large variety of vegetables were grown, including onions, garlic, leeks, beans, lentils, peas, radishes, cabbage, cucumbers and lettuce. There were also fruits, such as dates, figs, pomegranates, melons and grapes, and honey was produced for sweetening desserts. The Egyptian diet was supplemented by fish, fowl and meat, although peasants probably enjoyed meat only on special occasions. Domesticated animals rose for food included pigs, sheep and goats. Grapes were processed into wine for the noble class, but beer was the favourite drink of the common people. Food was served in pottery bowls, but no utensils were used for eating.

Pharaohs and nobles participated in hunting, fishing and fowling expeditions, a means of recreation that had ritualistic and religious significance. Hunting scenes often depicted on temple walls and tombs reinforce the prowess of kings and nobles. Rabbits, deer, gazelles, bulls, Oryx, antelopes, hippopotamuses, elephants and lions were among the wild animals hunted for their meat and skins.

Assisted by his wife, Tutankhamen hunts birds in the marshes along the Nile. In accordance with artistic convention, the end of the bow string and the butt of the arrow are concealed behind his head. His left arm is protected by an archer's leather brace, and he sits on a folding stool, accompanied by his tame lion. The vulture hovering above the king's head indicates that this is a ritual hunting scene, and the birds symbolize enemies in the land of the gods. Fishing allowed the working class to add variety to its diet. The poor substituted fish for meat, which they could not afford. The Nile, the marshes of the delta and the Mediterranean Sea offered them a rich variety of species. Fishing methods included the use of a hook and line, harpoons, traps and nets. Birds, including geese and ducks, were also hunted in the marshes and papyrus thickets along the Nile. Small fishing boats (skiffs) were made from papyrus reeds, which are naturally filled with air pockets, making them particularly buoyant. Skiffs were also used for hunting game in the Nile marshes.

Shelter

Most houses were made of brick. The banks of the Nile provided the mud used to make bricks. Brick makers collected mud, added straw and water to it as needed, and stomped it with their feet until it reached the right consistency. The mixture was then placed in a mould. Once shaped, the bricks were removed from the mould and left on the ground to dry in the sun. Egyptian peasants would have lived in simple mud-brick homes containing only a few pieces of furniture: beds, stools, boxes and low tables. Cross-section of a typical house in the workers' village at Deir el-Medina. The workers who built the tombs in the Valley of the Kings lived in this village.

Craft workers lived in one- or two-storey flat-roofed dwellings made of mud bricks. The walls and roof would have been covered with plaster and painted. Inside, there was a reception room, a living room, bedrooms and a cellar in which food and beverages were stored. Food was prepared in an outdoor kitchen equipped with a mud-brick oven. Stairs on the exterior of the house led to a roof-top terrace.

The homes of the wealthy were larger and more luxurious. Spacious reception and living rooms opened onto a central garden courtyard with a fish pond and flowering plants. Each bedroom had a private bathroom, and the walls, columns and ceilings were painted with beautiful designs inspired by nature. Elaborate and highly decorated furniture included beds, chairs, boxes and tables. Painted clay pots and vessels, as well as alabaster bowls and jars, were also found in the homes of the nobles.

Transportation

The Nile River was the highway that joined the country together. Up until the nineteenth century, travel by land was virtually unknown. Ships and boats were the main means of transporting people and goods around the country. Egyptian watercraft had a high stern and bow, and by the New Kingdom, they were equipped with cabins at both ends. The prevailing winds blew south, propelling boats travelling in that direction, while boats heading north relied on the current and oars. The simplest type of boat used in ancient Egypt was the skiff, made from papyrus reeds that were tied together. Since the reeds are filled with air pockets, they are particularly buoyant. Skiffs were used for fishing and hunting game in the marshes, or for travelling short distances. Large wooden ships were equipped with square sails and oars. Their planks, held together with rope, expanded in the water, making the vessel watertight. Acacia wood was used in Lower Nubia to build the ships that transported massive blocks of stone from the Aswan district to the building sites of the pyramids, temples and cities along the Nile. Ships could travel with ease up and down the Nile from the delta region to the First Cataract at Aswan.

Boats also served a ceremonial purpose. They were used to move images of gods from temple to temple, and to transport the mummified bodies of royals and nobles across the Nile to their tombs on the west bank. Even, the sun god travelled by boat (the solar bark), on his daily journey across the sky. Today, the Egyptians still cross the Nile by boat. The vessel they use is the felucca, a small boat with a large triangular sail.

The roads in ancient Egypt were little more than paths. To get around on land, people walked, rode donkeys or travelled by wagon. They carried goods on their head, but the donkeys and wagons hauled heavier loads. Camels were almost unknown in Egypt until the end of the pharaonic period. The wheel was probably introduced into Egypt by the Hyksos, an Asiatic people who invaded the country and ruled it in the fifteenth and sixteenth dynasties. The Hyksos most likely had horse-drawn chariots, which were used in warfare. New Kingdom pharaohs and nobles adopted this mode of transportation for hunting expeditions, but it was not used for travel by the common people.

Trades and crafts

Stone and clay pots comprise one of the most important categories of Egyptian artefacts. They help us understand the evolution of the culture from the Pre-dynastic Period to the end of the pharaonic era. The banks of the Nile provided the mud and clay used to make

ceramic ware. Food was cooked in clay pots, which also served as containers for grains, water, wine, beer, flour and oils. Baskets were the other type of container found in the home. They were made from reeds and the leaves of date palms that grew along the Nile. Skilled artisans were considered socially superior to common labourers. They learned their art from a master who ensured stylistic continuity in the beautiful objects they created for the living and the dead. Women engaged in weaving, perfume making, baking and needlework. Very few artistic creations were signed, and exceptional ability was rewarded through increased social status.

Carpenters

Skilled carpenters manufactured a wide range of products, from roofing beams to furniture and statues. Their tools included saws, axes, chisels, adzes, wooden mallets, stone polishers and bow drills. Since wood suitable for building was scarce in ancient Egypt, it was imported from countries such as Lebanon. Sculptors had to adhere to very strict stylistic rules. The stone was first shaped and smoothed by masons using stone hammers. For bas-reliefs, draftsmen outlined images on the stone before a team of sculptors began carving them with copper chisels. A fine abrasive powder was used to polish the stone before the images were painted.

The ancient Egyptians produced numerous monumental and life-size stone statues of pharaohs, nobles, gods and goddesses. They presented themselves as proud self-confident people capable of ruling their land and defying their enemies. Stone vessels were made by shaping the stone and smoothing its exterior with abrasives such as quartz sand. A crank-shaped drill was used to hollow out the interior. Various types of semi-precious stones were used in jewellery. To make beads, artisans broke stones and rolled them between other stones to shape them. A bow drill was used to drill a hole through the beads, which were then rolled in a recessed receptacle containing an abrasive to refine their shape.

Brick makers and potters

The word iqdou (Nile mud) was used to designate the profession of the brick maker and the potter, who used mud from the Nile to make their products. The brick maker had one of the more menial occupations in ancient Egypt. To make bricks, Nile mud was mixed with sand, straw and water, slapped into wooden moulds and then slapped out onto the ground to dry in the sun. Bricks were used extensively in ancient Egypt for building everything from peasants' homes to the pharaoh's palaces. Potters produced vast quantities of utilitarian

vessels. Cow dung, water and straw were mixed with mud to produce clay ready for the potter's wheel. The exterior surface of pots was often covered with a reddish slip and decorated using a stylus or comb before the pots were fired in kilns.

Merchants and Trade

In a good year, the quantity of grain harvested in Egypt far exceeded the needs of the country. The grain exported to neighbouring countries provided a rich source of revenue for the Egyptian Treasury. Egypt's economy functioned on a barter system. In the marketplace, stone weights were used to determine the value of grain and other rations. Egyptian merchants developed an extensive trade network for procuring goods from other countries. Gold from the mines of eastern Nubia, for example, was traded for raw materials or manufactured goods.

Mistress of the House

Women of all classes could earn wages, own property and employ workers, but their main role was within the family. The title most women had was "mistress of the house". They were considered equal with men before the law, and could sue for damages and divorce. Musical scenes on murals seem to indicate a predominance of female musicians during the New Kingdom. Music served both secular and religious purposes, with many high-status New Kingdom women holding the position of "chanters'" to a local god. Harps, lutes, flutes, oboes, tambourines and sistra (rattles) were the main instruments used.

The ancient Egyptians were very particular about cleanliness and personal appearance. People who were poorly groomed were considered inferior. Both men and women used cosmetics and wore jewellery. One item of jewellery, the amulet, was believed to protect the owners and give them strength. Flax grown by farmers was woven into fine linen for clothing. Working-class men wore loincloths or short kilts, as well as long shirt-like garments tied with a sash at the waist. Kilts were made from a rectangular piece of linen that was folded around the body and tied at the waist. Wealthy men wore knee-length shirts, loincloths or kilts and adorned themselves with jewellery – a string of beads, armlets and bracelets. Working-class women wore full-length wraparound gowns and close-fitting sheaths. Elite women enhanced their appearance with make-up, earrings, bracelets and necklaces. Both men and women wore sandals made of papyrus. Sandals made of vegetable fibres or leather were a common type of footwear. Nevertheless, men and women, including the wealthy, were frequently portrayed barefoot.

When royalty, gods and goddesses were portrayed in statues, temple carvings and wall paintings, it was the beauty and self-confidence of the subject that was conveyed. Egyptian artistic conventions idealized the proportions of the body. Men are shown with broad shoulders, slim bodies, and muscular arms and legs; and women have small waists, flat stomachs and rounded busts. Both wear elegant clothing and jewellery, and stand tall with their heads held high. Their stately appearance commands the respect of all who gaze upon their portraits.

In the Old Kingdom, goddesses and elite women were portrayed wearing a sheath with broad shoulder straps. In the New Kingdom, they wore sheaths decorated with gold thread and colourful beadwork, and a type of sari; the sheath had only one thin strap. These dresses were made of linen, and decorated with beautifully coloured patterns and beadwork.

The men wore knee-length shirts, loincloths or kilts made of linen. Leather loincloths were not uncommon, however. Their garments were sometimes decorated with gold thread and colourful beadwork. The priests, viziers and certain officials wore long white robes that had a strap over one shoulder, and semi-priests (one of the ranks in the priesthood) wore leopard skins over their robes.

The Egyptian elite hired hairdressers and took great care of their hair. Hair was washed and scented, and sometimes lightened with henna. Children had their heads shaved, except for one or two tresses or a plait worn at the side of the head. This was called the side lock of youth, a style worn by the god Horus when he was an infant. Both men and women sometimes wore hairpieces, but wigs were more common. Wigs were made from human hair and had vegetable-fibre padding on the underside. Arranged into careful plaits and strands, they were often long and heavy. They may have been worn primarily at festive and ceremonial occasions, like in eighteenth-century Europe. Priests shaved their heads and bodies to affirm their devotion to the deities and to reinforce their cleanliness, a sign of purification.

The Egyptians used mineral pigments to produce make-up. Galena or malachite was ground on stone palettes to make eye paint. Applied with the fingers or a kohl pencil (made of wood, ivory or stone), eye paint emphasized the eyes and protected them from the bright sunlight. During the Old Kingdom, powdered green malachite was brushed under the eyes. Rouge to colour the face and lips was made from red ochre. Oils and fats were applied to the skin to protect it, mixed into perfumes, and added to the incense cones worn on top of the

head. Both men and women wore perfumed cones on their heads. It has been suggested that the cones were made of tallow or fat, which melted gradually, releasing fragrance. No examples of the cones have been found.

From the earliest times, jewellery was worn by the elite for self-adornment and as an indication of social status. Bracelets, rings, earrings, necklaces, pins, belt buckles and amulets were made from gold and silver inlaid with precious stones such as lapis lazuli, turquoise, carnelian and amethyst. Faience and glass were also used to decorate pieces of jewellery.

The elegant design of Egyptian jewellery often reflected religious themes. Motifs included images of the gods and goddesses; hieroglyphic symbols; and birds, animals and insects that played a role in the creation myth. Commonly seen were the scarab; the Eye of Re; lotus and papyrus plants; the vulture and the hawk; the cobra; and symbols such as the Isis knot, the shen ring (symbol of eternity) and the ankh (symbol of life). A person's jewellery was placed in his or her grave to be used in the after world, along with many other personal items.

Hieroglyphs

The Egyptian language was one of the earliest languages to be written down, perhaps only the Sumerian language is older. First appearing on stone and pottery dating from 3100 B.C. to 3000 B.C., it remained in use for almost 3,000 years; the last inscription was written in A.D. 394.

The word hieroglyph literally means "sacred carvings". The Egyptians first used hieroglyphs exclusively for inscriptions carved or painted on temple walls. This form of pictorial writing was also used on tombs, sheets of papyrus, wooden boards covered with a stucco wash, potsherds and fragments of limestone.

Hieroglyphics are an original form of writing out of which all other forms have evolved. Two of the newer forms were called hieratic and demotic. Hieratic was a simplified form of hieroglyphics used for administrative and business purposes, as well as for literary, scientific and religious texts. Demotic, a Greek word meaning "popular script", was in general use for the daily requirements of the society. In the third century A.D., hieroglyphic writing began to be replaced by Coptic, a form of Greek writing. The last hieroglyphic text was written at the Temple of Philae in A.D. 450. The spoken Egyptian language was superseded by Arabic in the middle Ages.

Hieroglyphs and their cursive equivalents

Rosetta stone replica, British Museum It was not until the nineteenth century that Egyptian hieroglyphs were deciphered. Several people had been trying to crack the code when the brilliant young Frenchman, Jean-François Champollion discovered the secret to this ancient writing. A decree issued at Memphis, Egypt, on March 27, 196 B.C. was inscribed on the Rosetta stone in three scripts: hieroglyphics, demotic and Greek. After Thomas Young deciphered the demotic text, Champollion used the information to break the code of the hieroglyphic text in 1822. In 1828, he published the famous "Précis" that marked the first real breakthrough in reading hieroglyphs.

The ancient language was written by scribes who, from a young age, went through a long apprenticeship before they mastered the skill of writing. The ability to write guaranteed a superior rank in society and the possibility of career advancement. Climbing the social ladder was difficult, but it could be achieved through outstanding accomplishments in professions such as that of the scribes and the military.

A scribe's equipment consisted of a stone or wooden palette containing two cakes of ink, usually red and black, a leather bag or pot filled with water, and a set of reed brushes (pens). Pigments were produced from mineral compounds. Red and yellow were obtained from iron oxide or ochre, black from carbon, and white from calcium carbonate or calcium sulphate. Blue and green were produced from a compound of silica, copper and calcium. The compounds were mixed with a variety of binders, including water, gum, gelatine, wax and egg whites. Paint was applied with brushes, and fine lines were often drawn with wooden sticks. To make the paper-like writing material, the exterior of the papyrus stems was discarded and the interior was cut into thin strips. The strips were soaked in water and beaten to break down and flatten the fibres. They were then layered crosswise and lengthwise to produce a sheet, which was beaten again to mesh the strips together. Weights were placed on the sheets while they dried. Once dry, the sheets were rolled up and stored until needed.

Draftsmen

Draftsmen were scribes who specialized in drawing. Some tombs contain unfinished paintings illustrating the stages involved in producing tomb paintings. Junior draftsmen drew the scenes in red ochre directly on the walls and senior draftsmen made corrections in black. Depending on the project, the figures were sculpted in relief and painted.

Sacred Pyramid Texts

The earliest funerary texts inscribed on a pharaoh's pyramid are found at Saqqara. These sacred texts, known as the Pyramid Texts, were written on the inner passages and the walls of the burial chamber. They were intended to help the pharaohs travel through the world, to secure the regeneration and eternal life of the king. The Pyramid Texts are considered the oldest body of religious writings in the world. Towards the end of the third millennium B.C., new funerary texts appeared, with greater emphasis on the afterlife and helping the deceased find their way in the afterward Known as the Coffin Texts because they were inscribed inside the coffins of Middle Kingdom high officials, they consist of over 1,000 spells (prayers for protection and empowerment) highlighting life beneath the earth in the kingdom of Osiris, in which the deceased worked in the Fields of offerings and of Rushes. A new feature included the judgement of the dead as a way of attaining new life. The deceased were taken before Osiris and their hearts were weighed on a scale, against a feather representing Maat, the goddess of truth and justice. Those who were good passed through to the new life as transfigured spirits. Those who were judged as wicked, were tossed to the goddess Amemet, "the swallower", who was portrayed as having the rear of a hippopotamus, the fore of a lion and the head of a crocodile.

During the New Kingdom, the entire corpus of funerary texts became known as the "spell coming forth by day" (known today as the Book of the Dead). It contains approximately 190 chapters of magical and ritual spells, illustrated with drawings to assist the deceased on their voyage to eternity. Texts were written on papyrus and placed near the dead. One spell was inscribed on a heart scarab, an amulet that was placed over the heart, either within the mummy's bandages or inside the body. In the Late Period, they were written on strips of linen that were wrapped around mummies.

Herodotus

Herodotus (c. 485-430 B.C.) is the author of the first comprehensive history of Egypt. He is nicknamed the "Father of History" for his writings on various nations. Around 450 B.C., he travelled for several months up the Nile to the first cataract, recording his impressions in a highly anecdotal and entertaining manner. Since he did not read hieroglyphs or speak the Egyptian language, he relied heavily on native interpreters and the temple underlings whom he mistook for priests. His travel journal on Egypt was written in Greek and published in Athens in 446 B.C.

Although there are many inaccuracies in Herodotus' work, his eyewitness accounts give valuable glimpses into life in Egypt at the end of the pharaonic period. His writings tell how "sacred, how unspeakable" was the name of Osiris, the great god of Egypt. The festivals that were held to honour gods and other local customs are also described in great detail. For example, he gives a full account of the mummification process, the only description that has survived from the period.

The ancient Egyptians built their pyramids, tombs, temples and palaces out of stone, the most durable of all building materials. Although earthquakes, wars and the forces of nature have taken their toll, the remains of Egypt's monumental architectural achievements are visible across the land, a tribute to the greatness of this civilization. These building projects took a high degree of architectural and engineering skill, and the organization of a large workforce consisting of highly trained craftsmen and labourers.

Apart from the pyramids, Egyptian buildings were decorated with paintings, carved stone images, hieroglyphs and three-dimensional statues. The art tells the story of the pharaohs, the gods, the common people and the natural world of plants, birds and animals. The beauty and grandeur of these sites are beyond compare. How the ancient Egyptians were able to construct these massive structures using primitive tools is still a mystery.

The first royal tombs, called mastabas, were built at Abydos during the first and second dynasties. They were marked with a stele inscribed with the kings' names. The burial chambers were cut into the rock, lined with sun-baked bricks and faced with wooden boards that have long since disappeared. Beside the chambers were rooms containing jars, small objects, and offerings of food and drink. The tombs were surrounded by a large number of graves of women and dwarves. These people may have been servants of the kings who were sacrificed to serve them in their afterlife.

Pyramids were built as royal burials until 1640 B.C. The most famous is the Great Pyramid at Giza. To prevent robbery, the kings, queens and nobles of the New Kingdom built their tombs in a remote valley west of the Theban capital known as the Valley of the Kings. The tombs of Egypt are one of the greatest tourist attractions in the world. They are indeed a world treasure. Mastaba tombs surround the pyramids of the Old Kingdom. Courtiers and families of the monarch were buried in these low rectangular brick or stone structures. Like the pyramids, they were built on the west side of the Nile (symbol of death, where the sun falls into the underworld).

During the Old Kingdom, Egyptians believed that only the souls of kings went on to enjoy life with the gods. The souls of the nobles, on the other hand, continued to inhabit the tomb and needed to be nourished by daily offerings of food and drink. When people died, their ka (the life force or soul of the deceased) was released. To encourage the soul to return to the body, the body was preserved and a statuette in the likeness of the deceased was placed in the tomb. Statuettes called shabti or shawabti; (slaves for the soul) were also placed in the tombs to perform work on behalf of the deceased in the afterlife.

The actual burial chamber was at the base of a deep vertical shaft below a flat-roofed stone structure. A false door was carved on the interior tomb wall near the entrance to the shaft. Often an image of the deceased was carved in the false door in order to entice the soul to enter the body. For the comfort and well-being of the deceased, the burial chamber was filled with material goods and food offerings, and the walls were decorated with scenes of daily activities. The mastabas were designed to ensure the well-being of the deceased for all eternity.

Pyramids

The spectacular pyramids that have made Egypt so famous are truly one of the world's greatest architectural wonders. One of the oldest mysteries surrounding ancient Egypt concerns the building of the pyramids. How did humans move such massive blocks of stone using only Stone Age tools? The Egyptians left thousands of illustrations depicting daily life in the Old Kingdom. Curiously enough, none of them show how pyramids were built.

Pyramids - Giza Plateau

A pyramid is a tomb, a four-sided stone structure that symbolizes the sacred mountain, humanity's universal striving to reach the heavens. The ancient belief in raising the human spirit towards the gods is the quintessential purpose behind the construction of pyramids. Even today, pyramids are metaphors for humanity's search for higher consciousness. They are surrounded by smaller pyramids, mastabas (tombs of nobles and courtiers), funerary temples, processional ramps and the Great Sphinx. Several theories attempt to explain the construction of the pyramids, but no one knows for sure how they were built. This is one of the great mysteries of ancient Egypt.

The First Pyramids

Giza Pyramids and Sphinx

Pyramid Construction

The Last Pyramids

Metaphor of the Human Psyche

The Valley of the Kings is famous for its royal tombs. These beautifully painted tombs have been designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. For over a thousand years, the kings, queens and nobles of the New Kingdom (1500-1070 B.C.) were buried in this valley, which is the world's most magnificent burial ground.

The tombs were cut into the limestone rock in a remote wadi (a dried-up river valley) on the west side of the Nile, opposite the present day city of Karnack. Their walls were painted and sculpted with magnificent murals depicting scenes of daily life and the land of the gods. The chambers were filled with treasures -- everything from furniture to food, statues, boats and jewels, which a person needed to, sustain life into eternity. The royals and their courtiers hoped to find refuge from robbers and their enemies, who caused such havoc in the pyramid tombs of their predecessors. The Valley of the Kings was located in the ancient necropolis of Thebes, the capital of Egypt during the New Kingdom. Two branches separate the valley into the Western Valley and the Valley of the Monkeys. The Theban Peak, shaped like a pyramid, can be seen high above the burial grounds. This is perhaps one of the reasons the pharaohs chose this remote location. The awe-inspiring beauty of Tutankhamen's treasures has generated enormous interest in the history of Egypt. These treasures are the quintessential symbol of this remarkable civilization.

Temples

Over a long period of time, the Egyptians built numerous temples along the Nile. Two of the most famous, at Karnack and Luxor, are featured in the IMAX film Mysteries of Egypt. These impressive structures, with their huge columned halls and pylon gateways, were built to honour the dead and venerate local and national gods.

Temples were places where the gods and their divine energy could reside, separated from everything else in the world. According to the Egyptian creation legend, the first temple came into existence on a mound of land that rose up from the primeval sea, called Nun. The first form of life to appear on that mound was a plant on which the falcon, Horus, first perched. Another version of this story describes the lotus flower as the first plant on which the sun emerged. Following this, human beings were created. This moment was called the

First Occasion. As sentient beings, the Egyptians reciprocated by building temples to revere and nourish the gods. The design of the first temple was laid down by the gods, and each successive temple was a copy of the first one. The design encouraged the gods to bring divine energy into the earth's plane. Priests worked at the temples, conducting the daily rituals in honour of the deities and pharaohs to whom the temples were dedicated.

Palaces

Palaces were the residences of the pharaohs and their entourage. They consisted of a complex of buildings designed to house the headquarters of power and the temples for worshipping the gods. There were two main sections, one to accommodate the needs of the pharaoh and the other to meet the requirements of administration. Palaces took on a distinctive architectural form around the end of the fourth millennium B.C., a form that was repeated for most of the third millennium. They were essentially rectangular structures consisting of high walls topped with towers. The tops of the towers were often decorated with a rich cornice or panels.

By the end of the third millennium B.C., the palace had evolved into a palace-temple complex. And by the second millennium, it became even more elaborate, with the addition of a hypostyle hall with gigantic columns that led to the throne room. Rooms to accommodate the needs of the court were located to one side of the hall. Government buildings, lakes and gardens were also added to these complexes, creating magnificent residences for the kings of Egypt.

One such palace-temple is found at Massive Abu, across from the former site of Thebes, on the other side of the Nile. It was built by Rameses III during the twentieth dynasty, around 1150 B.C. When he came to visit from his main residence in the delta region, he stayed in the royal palace located next to the temples. The complex consists of a palace, a temple for the worship of Rameses III and one dedicated to Amun, storehouses, and lodging for the priests. There are two pylons, one depicting scenes of Rameses III's victory over the Libyans and the other his celebrated victory over the Sea Peoples. This is the best-preserved Theban temple.

Religion and Beliefs

One of the most interesting aspects of ancient Egypt is its religion. The depth of Egyptian thinking and the rich imagination displayed in the creation of ideas and images of

the gods and goddesses are beyond compare. In elaborating their beliefs, the Egyptians were working on the cosmic plane, searching for an understanding of the most basic laws of the universe. They developed the first thought forms of the Godhead - the beginnings of a religion. Their beliefs evolved slowly over the centuries and gradually developed into a comprehensive world view shared by the people of the Nile. Religion is the glue that binds local communities into nationhood and creates common understandings and shared values that are essential to the growth of a civilization. No religion is fully formed at its inception. By looking at ancient Egypt, one can see how belief systems evolved to become the driving force of cultural expressions. In the early stages of human thought, the concept of God did not exist. Our early ancestors were concerned about natural phenomena and the powers that controlled these phenomena; they did not worship a personalized form of God. This stage of religious development is referred to as "magical".

Egypt, before the concept of God existed; magical power was encapsulated in the hieroglyph of a sceptre (or rod or staff). This is one of the most enduring symbols of divine power, ever present in images of the pharaohs and the gods. As human society evolved, people gradually gained a degree of personal identity. With a higher sense of individuality, humans began to conceive the gods in a personalized form. This stage in development is called "mythical". In Egypt, this process began during the late prehistoric period, when writing was being invented and myths were being formulated.

At that stage, every Egyptian town had its own particular deity, manifested in a material fetish or a god represented in the shape of an animal, such as a cat-goddess, cobra-goddess, ibis-god or jackal-god. As the pantheon grew in cohesiveness, these gods and goddesses were given human bodies and credited with human attributes and activities. The temples in the major cities throughout the land were constructed to venerate local gods. During the New Kingdom, these temples honoured a triad of gods based on the pattern established by the mythical family of Osiris, Isis and Horus.

Like all religions, that of ancient Egypt was complex. It evolved over the centuries from one that emphasized local deities into a national religion with a smaller number of principal deities. Some theologians think that Egypt was moving towards a monotheistic faith in a single creator, symbolized by the sun god. There was no single belief system, but the Egyptians shared a common understanding about the creation of the world and the possibility of reverting to chaos if the destructive forces of the universe were unleashed.

When the Greeks and the Romans conquered Egypt, their religion was influenced by that of Egypt. Ancient pagan beliefs gradually faded and were replaced by monotheistic religions. Today, the majority of the Egyptian population is Muslim, with a small minority of Jews and Christians.

Myths are stories that become part of humanity's collective memory. They are said to represent the dreams of a society. It is possible to interpret them from a variety of perspectives to explain natural phenomena, such as how the earth was formed. At another level, they are a rich source of insights into society and human behaviour. In this depiction of a myth, the Great Cat performs a heroic deed by killing Apophasis, the evil snake. The snake symbolizes hostile forces that cause problems for the deceased during their journey to paradise. Myths, particularly creation myths, have had a profound effect on ancient cultures. They form the foundation of religious beliefs that influenced all forms of cultural expression, as well as values and attitudes. Nowhere is this truer than in Egypt. Myths are rich in symbolic meaning. Their settings may seem strange and their characters larger than life, but by learning to understand their meaning, we can unlock their secrets. Capable of amazing feats, such as changing shape, the characters in myths often represent aspects of human behaviour such as love and jealousy, or phenomena such as order and destruction.

Gods and Goddesses

The holy family is easy to get confused when trying to identify the Egyptian gods. There are a large number of them and they are not always depicted the same way. For example, Thoth, the god of writing and messenger of the sun god, is seen as an ibis, a baboon or the moon. Like the Greek gods, the Egyptian gods symbolized aspects of life, human emotions and the physical world. Gods and goddesses are often grouped in pairs to represent the dual nature of life, the negative and positive forces of the cosmos. An example is Osiris representing life and order, and Seth representing death and destruction.

The concept of kingship is a key to understanding the development of Egyptian civilization. In the Old Kingdom, kings were viewed as incarnate gods, the physical manifestation of the divine. They were the builders of pyramids, an enduring symbol of the pharaohs' absolute power. In the Middle Kingdom, the concept of kingship was revised. Rather than being gods, kings were considered divinely appointed representatives of the gods on earth. They were responsible for guiding their people. If they did not conduct the affairs of

state in a wise and just manner, they would not be admitted into the celestial realm when they died.

Three papyrus fragments, written no earlier than the end of the eighteenth dynasty, give insight into the role and responsibility of a pharaoh. The text, addressed to King Merykare, recommends that he be just and kind towards the oppressed, since all his actions will be examined on the Day of Judgement. The citation urges the king to be earnest and industrious, reminding him that the "hidden creator" is the supreme judge of all.

Priests

Priests worked at the temples, conducting the daily rituals of clothing, feeding and putting to bed the sculpted images that represented the deities to whom the temples were dedicated. The innermost sanctuary of the temple was regarded as the bedroom of the god or goddess, where his or her domestic needs were taken care of. In mortuary temples, priests conducted similar ceremonies to nourish the ka (soul-spirit) of a deceased pharaoh or noble. The priests shaved their heads and body hair, and washed their bodies twice daily as a ritual act of purification. They wore gowns or kilts of pure white linen. The higher-ranking priests were called the first servants of the god. Lower-ranking ones performed various duties, such as studying and writing hieroglyph texts, teaching new recruits and performing many of the routine duties associated with the temple.

Sacred music and dancing were an important part of the rituals and celebrations conducted by priests and priestesses. A common title for many women in the 18th dynasty (New Kingdom) was "singer [in the temple] of Amman". Many high-status New Kingdom women held the position of "chanter's" to a local god.

Mummification

The ancient Egyptians believed in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. This belief was rooted in what they observed each day. The sun fell into the western horizon each evening and was reborn the next morning in the east. New life sprouted from grains planted in the earth, and the moon waxed and waned. As long as order was maintained, everything was highly dependable and life after death could be achieved provided certain conditions were met. For example, the body had to be preserved through mummification and given a properly furnished tomb with everything needed for life in the after world.

Mummification, the preservation of the body, was described in the ancient Pyramid Texts. With the death of Osiris, god of the dead, the cosmos fell into chaos and the tears of the gods turned into materials used to mummify his body. These materials included honey, resins and incense. Before mummification evolved, the corpse was placed in a sleeping fetal position and put into a pit, along with personal items such as clay pots and jewellery. The pit was covered with sand, which absorbed all the water from the body, thus preserving it. Burial pits were eventually lined with mud bricks and roofed over, and the deceased were wrapped in animal skins or interred in pottery, basket ware or wooden coffins. With these "improvements", decay was hastened because the body no longer came in contact with the hot sand. To solve this problem, the internal organs of the deceased were removed and drying agents were used to mummify the body.

The practice of mummification began in Egypt in 2400 B.C. and continued into the Greco-Roman Period. During the Old Kingdom, it was believed that only pharaohs could attain immortality. Around 2000 B.C., attitudes changed, however: everyone could live in the afterworld as long as the body was mummified and the proper elements were placed in the tomb. But since mummification was expensive, only the wealthy were able to take advantage of it. Although mummification was not a strict requirement for resurrection in the next world, it was certainly regarded as a highly desirable means of attaining it. The prayers in the Book of the Dead were intended to help the deceased make a successful transition to the afterlife. The art of mummification was perfected in the Third Intermediate Period (1070-712 B.C.). Around 450 B.C. (Later Period), the Greek historian Herodotus documented the process:

The corpse was then washed, wrapped in linen (as many as 35 layers) and soaked in resins and oils. This gave the skin a blackened appearance resembling pitch. The term "mummification" comes from the Arabic word mummiya, which mean bitumen, a pitch substance that was first used in the preservation process during the Late Period. The family of the deceased supplied the burial linen, which was made from old bed sheets or used clothing.

The Egyptians mummified animals as well as humans -- everything from bulls and hawks to ichneumons and snakes. Some have been found in large quantities, while others are rare. Many species were raised in the temples to be sacrificed to the gods. Autopsies on cats show that most had had their necks broken when they were about two years old. Cats were highly valued members of the ancient Egyptian household. They destroyed the rats and mice that would otherwise infest granaries, and assisted in hunting birds and fishing. In the

nineteenth century, vast quantities of cat mummies were sent to England to be used as fertilizer.

This practice reached its height during the eleventh and twelfth centuries B.C. in Thebes, where the present-day cities of Luxor and Karnack are located. The purpose of mummification was to keep the body intact so it could be transported to a spiritual afterlife.

The ancient Egyptians' attitude towards death was influenced by their belief in immortality. They regarded death as a temporary interruption, rather than the cessation of life. To ensure the continuity of life after death, people paid homage to the gods, both during and after their life on earth. When they died, they were mummified so the soul would return to the body, giving it breath and life. Household equipment and food and drink were placed on offering tables outside the tomb's burial chamber to provide for the person's needs in the after world. Written funerary texts consisting of spells or prayers were also included to assist the dead on their way to the after world.

To prepare the deceased for the journey to the after world, the "opening of the mouth" ceremony was performed on the mummy and the mummy case by priests. This elaborate ritual involved purification, censing (burning incense), anointing and incantations, as well as touching the mummy with ritual objects to restore the senses -- the ability to speak, touch, see, smell and hear. The "opening of the mouth" ceremony dates back to at least the Pyramid Age. It was originally performed on statues of the kings in their mortuary temples. By the 18th dynasty (New Kingdom), it was being performed on mummies and mummy cases.

Instruments such as these were used to restore the senses of the deceased. They were derived from sculptors' tools. Near the end of the Greco-Roman Period, the tool kit usually contained only miniature versions of tools.

The journey to the afterward was considered full of danger. Travelling on a solar bark, the mummy passed through the underworld, which was inhabited by serpents armed with long knives, fire-spitting dragons and reptiles with five ravenous heads. Upon arriving in the realm of the Duat (Land of the Gods), the deceased had to pass through seven gates, reciting accurately a magic spell at each stop. If successful, they arrived at the Hall of Osiris, the place of judgement. Here the gods of the dead performed the "weighing of the heart" ceremony to judge whether the person's earthly deeds were virtuous. The weighing of the heart was overseen by the jackal-headed god Anubis, and the judgement was recorded by Thoth, the god of writing.

Forty-two gods listened to the confessions of the deceased who claimed to be innocent of crimes against the divine and human social order. The person's heart was then placed on a scale, counterbalanced by a feather that represented Maat, the goddess of truth and justice. If the heart was equal in weight to the feather, the person was justified and achieved immortality. If not, it was devoured by the goddess Amemet. This meant that the person would not survive in the afterlife. When a pharaoh passed the test, he became one with the god Osiris. He then travelled through the underworld on a solar bark, accompanied by the gods, to reach paradise and attain everlasting life.

Decline of Ancient Egypt

Although Egypt was sometimes ruled by foreign princes during the pharaonic period, it continued to maintain its independence. Over the centuries, the power of the pharaohs increased and decreased numerous times before Egypt came under foreign rule. Around 1000 B.C., Egypt was virtually bankrupt and its strength began to decline. The Persians and the Macedonian Greeks were the first foreign powers to rule the country. In 350 B.C., a new Persian ruler, Artaxerxes III, attempted to invade the country but failed. Seven years later, Egypt did fall to the Persians, during the reign of Nectanebo II, the last Egyptian pharaoh. According to Greek accounts, the Persians were cruel masters, robbing temples, killing sacred animals and burdening the people with taxes.

The Macedonian Greek emperor Alexander the Great waged a campaign to destroy the Persian Empire. When he entered Egypt in 332 B.C., he was hailed as a divine being and saviour. He hastened to Memphis, performed a sacrificial ceremony to the Apis Bull and was accepted as the new pharaoh. The founding of the city of Alexandria, on the Mediterranean coast, marked the beginning of the end for ancient Egypt.

The world is deeply indebted to Egypt not only for their contribution to civilization but also for their excellent arts and crafts. Their paintings, beautiful jewellery, pottery, musical instruments, fine linen cloth, weapons and tools, enchanting, glassware, and excellent sea-going vessels have evoked our great admiration. Much of what they did influenced others like the Hebrews, Greeks and Phoenicians. Egyptian civilisation was a great gift to the entire mankind.

4. Ancient Chinese Civilization

China is a vast country with a huge range of terrains and climates within it: mountains, deserts and coastlands and above all, the great river systems of China, the Yellow River to the north and the Yangtze to the south. All these have helped shape Chinese civilization. The civilization of ancient China first developed in the Yellow River region of northern China, in the 3rd and 2nd millennia BCE. This is a very fertile region; however the land needs irrigation to make the crops grow, and well-built river embankments to prevent catastrophic flooding. In ancient times, the main crop in northern China was millet, a food still grown in many parts of the world as a major crop. This region is regarded as the Cradle of China's Civilization. It was here that the earliest Chinese dynasties were based. Throughout the ancient period of China's history it formed the heart of the Chinese world, and it was from here that Chinese civilization spread out across the rest of China.

The Yangtze Valley region

To the south, the great Yangtze valley, with its warm, wet climate, was the first area in the world where rice was grown, sometime before 5000 BCE. Rice is one of the most nutritious plants in the world. From this region rice cultivation spread far and wide across southern China and into south-east Asia. For much of ancient times, the Yangtze region remained outside the Chinese culture area. However, from about 700 BCE, the kingdoms and peoples here began to be gradually absorbed into the Chinese world. The Chinese only expanded into the mountains and coastland of southern China in the later ancient period, after the rest of China had been unified under the rule of emperors. It remained a largely frontier region until later centuries.

The Steppes of Central Asia

To the north and west of the Yellow River region are the wide plains of central Asia. This landscape here is generally unsuitable for farming, and the people have mostly followed a nomadic way of life as herders of cattle, sheep and horses. Modern scholars believe that various cultural influences travelled along this route in ancient times to help shape China's civilization. For example, skills in working with metals, and in particular, making bronze objects, seem to have come to China from the Middle East across central Asia. Later, the chariot also apparently arrived in China from the same direction. The peoples of the steppe were tough warriors, and the mobility that their nomadic lifestyle gave them enabled them to

raid swiftly into territory populated by more settled farming populations. They were a regular scourge to the Chinese in ancient times, as well as late

Origins of Ancient China

Legends

The Xia Dynasty (2070 BCE – 1600 BCE) is the first dynasty in China to be described in ancient historical chronicles. The Records of the Grand Historian and the Classic of Rites say that Yu the Great, the founder of the Xia dynasty, was the grandson of Zhuanxu, one of the legendary "Five Emperors" who were the first rulers of China. Yu was successful in stopping devastating floods and increasing the yields from farming (since the floods usually destroyed the crops), and the Xia tribe's influence strengthened. He was made the leader of the surrounding tribes, and soon afterwards was sent with an army to suppress a tribe which was causing trouble on the kingdom's borders. He won a great victory, which further strengthened his power. Shun, the last of the "Five Emperors", was getting old, and abdicated the throne in favour of Yu, whom he deemed worthy. Yu's succession as the king marked the start of the Xia dynasty. Shortly before his death, instead of passing power to the person deemed most capable to rule (as had been the case in the past), Yu passed power to his son, setting the precedence for dynastic rule.

The archaeological evidence

Prior to the coming of cities and literacy (the hallmarks of Ancient Chinese civilization), major Stone Age farming cultures had been growing up in China since the 7th millennium BCE. One was located in the Yellow River region, the other in the Yangtze region. The Yellow River region was the setting for the emergence of Chinese civilization into the light of history. By 4000 BCE, walled and moated towns had appeared. They continued to grow in size. What looks very much like primitive Chinese characters had also appeared, inscribed on pottery. These characters became more complex as time went by. Other technical advances included the introduction of the potter's wheel (sometime after 3500 BCE), and the production of high quality jade ornaments (after c. 2500 BCE). Finds of luxury grave goods and the remains of large and complex buildings show that a wealthy ruling elite stood out from the population at large level.

Metallurgy reached China sometime around 2500 BCE, almost certainly from the Middle East via central Asia. At first this was restricted to copper work, but by c. 1800 BCE,

knowledge of bronze casting had entered the Yellow River Valley. At around the same time there was a dramatic increase in the size and density of some walled settlements in that region. These are the earliest-known cities in East Asia. The region had in fact seen the appearance of a fully urban, literate, Bronze Age civilization, and ancient China finally emerges into the full light of history with the first of its historic dynasties, the Shang. Most of the history of Chinese civilization, including the ancient period, has traditionally been divided into dynasties, lines of kings or emperors from a single family, following each other on the throne from generation to generation.

During much of the ancient period, what would later be known as "Chinese civilization" was only gradually spreading across the area which today we know as "China". Thus the early dynastic rulers of China are known as kings, rather than emperors. It is only after the time of the First Emperor, who reigned over a united China from 221 BCE that the imperial period of Chinese history began.

The early dynasties of ancient China

Archaeologists have uncovered urban sites, bronze implements, and tombs that point to the possible existence of the semi-legendary Xia Dynasty at locations cited in ancient Chinese historical texts. In 1959, a site located in the city of Yanshi was excavated containing large palaces which some archaeologists have identified as the capital of the Xia dynasty. Unlike the oracle bones of the Shang dynasty, there are no written records from the period to help confirm the Xia dynasty's existence. Through the 1960s and 1970s, archaeologists have continued to uncovered urban sites, bronze implements, and tombs at locations linked to the Xia in ancient Chinese historical texts. At a minimum, the Xia dynasty seems to have marked an evolutionary stage between the late Neolithic cultures and the later Chinese urban civilization of the Shang dynasty.

The Shang dynasty period saw further strides in material culture, and some of the finest bronzes in world history were produced by Chinese craftsmen of the period. In due course, the Shang dynasty was succeeded by a new line of kings, of the Zhou dynasty. Under the early Zhou (or "Western Zhou") the cultural and political reach of ancient Chinese civilization expanded enormously. This, however, eventually resulted in fragmentation amongst numerous territorial princes. The authority of the Zhou kings declined, and the princes effectively became independent rulers. The later Zhou (or "Eastern Zhou") dynasty period was characterized by constant warfare between increasingly large and powerful

regional states. It was also a time when important innovations began to emerge, which was to characterize Chinese civilization down to the 20th century. It was at this time that the great philosophies which would shape the Chinese world, including Confucianism, emerged; and it was also the period to which the roots of that distinctly Chinese style of bureaucratic government can be traced.

The imperial dynasties of ancient China

The final phase of ancient China's history was characterized by the rise of strong, centralized states, which unified the Chinese people under a single imperial dynasty. The Qin dynasty emerged when one of the states into which China was divided conquered all the others and unified China under its rule. Its king took the title Qin Shih Huang, "First Emperor". The Qin dynasty is famous for imposing a rigid unity on Chinese society, and in building an early version of the Great Wall of China. The Qin regime's very rigidity, however, made it a short-lived dynasty. It was brought down by regional forces which it had failed to tame and by a peasantry which it had ruthlessly exploited.

The Han dynasty

The next of these unifying dynasties, however, would rule China for some 400 years. This was the Han dynasty, arguably the most important of all China's dynasties. Under the Han emperors the Chinese became so used to being ruled as a single nation that to this day they call themselves the Han people. It was under the Han that Confucianism triumphed to become the ruling ideology of China. At the same time, an empire-wide bureaucracy, staffed to a large extent by officials recruited and promoted on merit, and imbued with Confucian thought, came to govern China. Even the examination system for recruiting officials, which would come to play such an important role in Chinese life can trace its roots back to this period.

The end of ancient China

The Han dynasty lasted until 220 CE, when it broke up into several successor states. Thus began a period of weakness for China, when no single dynasty was able to establish its rule over the whole country for several centuries. This opened the way for non-Chinese people's from surrounding regions to establish their own states within China. This was a dark period in Chinese history, but by no means as dark as the period which followed the collapse of the Western Roman Empire in Europe. Society was disrupted, trade declined and many

cities shrank, but even in barbarian-occupied areas, administrations staffed by Confucian-educated officials continued to govern. Chinese civilization was preserved intact until, a few centuries later; new dynasties would once again rule the whole of China.

The Civilization of Ancient China

The State

The Confucian bureaucratic state which governed China for more than two thousand years of history first evolved in Ancient China. All of the key governing institutions of imperial China came into being at this time.

The Emperor

China's pre- 20th century state was associated above all else with the rule by emperors, monarchs who ruled the whole of China, and often neighbouring regions as well. They belonged to different dynasties, lines of rulers who followed each other on the throne from generation to generation. China's history is traditionally divided into such dynasties, and this was just as true of ancient China as later periods, as we see in the historical summary above. As we noted, the early rulers, of the Shang and Zhou dynasties, styled themselves "kings". From the late 3rdcentury BCE, however, the monarchs of the Qin and Han dynasties ruled over a united China, and as a result they styled themselves "emperors". In this they were followed by rulers of China until the end of the last imperial dynasty, in the early 20th century CE. Chinese rulers bore the title "Son of Heaven". They claimed to be Heaven's representatives on Earth. Emperors were viewed as sacred figures: to disobey them was to disobey Heaven. The concept of the "Son of Heaven" was closely linked to the idea, very influential in Chinese history, of the "Mandate of Heaven". By this, a dynasty received divine authority to rule. However, it was believed that if emperors ruled badly or unjustly, their dynasty was liable to lose this mandate. In these circumstances, it was legitimate for rebels attempt to replace the dynasty with a new one, which (by dint of successfully seizing the throne) had shown that it now enjoyed the Heaven's favour.

The Court

Emperors were surrounded by courts. These consisted of the royal family and its attendants, as well as ministers and officials responsible for helping the emperor in governing the huge country. The court was housed in the royal palace, located in the capital. It was the political centre of the state, and what went there ultimately affected the entire empire. In

particular, the decline of dynasties – the Han dynasty is a very clear example – can often be traced to events at court.

The Civil Service

The ancient period of China's history saw the emergence of one of the most impressive governing institutions in world history, the Chinese civil service. This astonishing organization pre-dated Western civil services by some two thousand years. The roots of Chinese bureaucracy go back to the later Zhou dynasty, when the territorial princes were centralizing the government of their states. It came to maturity under the Han dynasty. During Han times, the civil service became a huge organization, employing many thousands of officials. It was responsible for keeping law and order, collecting taxes, maintaining irrigation systems and flood defences, and a host of other tasks to do with keeping China governed effectively. More remarkably still, the Han dynasty inaugurated a revolutionary new system of recruiting public officials, by examining candidates for public posts. The examination system was established one of the most revered institutions in Chinese history.

Defence

Ancient China saw the transformation of armed forces from feudal forces based around aristocratic warriors, in Shang and early Zhou times, to mass armies composed largely of infantry troops, in the late Zhou, Qin and Han periods. These armies were made up of different kinds of recruits: long service, professional soldiers, peasant conscripts, and non-Chinese tribesmen.

The Great Wall of China

The defences of China never relied solely on military manpower, however. In the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, the northern and western Border States most exposed to raids by steppe nomads had begun to build long walls made of beaten earth to help keep these raids out. After the unification of China under the Qin, the new imperial regime merged these walls into a single system of defence. These walls were the ancestors of the famous Great Wall of China, refurbished into its present form under the Ming dynasty, in the 15th century CE.

Economy and Society in Ancient China

During the ancient period, the Han (as the Chinese would later call themselves) spread, through settlement and the assimilation of indigenous peoples, across northern China

and down into the Yangtze region (this process is covered in the article Society in Ancient China). Population censuses began being taken during the Han Empire, which record a population of about 50 or 60 million. This makes it, along with the Roman Empire, the largest state in the Ancient World. Even by the end of the Han dynasty the heart of Chinese civilization lay in the Yellow River region of northern China. It was here that the two capital cities, first Chang'an, and then Louyang, were located. The Yangtze region, and even more the far south and southwest, remained under-populated frontier regions inhabited largely by non-Chinese peoples.

While the great majority of people remained engaged in agriculture and lived in farming villages, the ancient period saw towns and cities spread across China. Most of these were administrative centres, where provincial officials were based along with their staffs. Many were tiny by modern standards. The Han censuses show only twelve cities of more than 50,000 inhabitants; most of the rest would have been far smaller. Nevertheless, the capital of Han China was always among the largest cities in the world, at times the largest. Chang'an, the capital of the early Han emperors, had a quarter of a million inhabitants, and the later Han capital, Louyang, half a million.

Farming and farmers

Ancient China's economy and society was based on agriculture. The vast majority of Chinese families lived in small farming villages, dotted across intensively cultivated landscapes. Chinese agriculture possessed, from ancient times, its own characteristics. Almost everywhere, it was dependent on the careful and unremitting management of water to irrigate the fields of millet in North China, keep back the river floods near the great rivers, and swamp the paddy fields of southern China. Their social position and economic condition of farmers has been different at different time. In early times, under the Shang and early Zhou, they were serfs, semi-servile bondsmen tied to their particular lords. From middle Zhou times, as the old feudal aristocracy disappeared, more and more of them became free owners of their small farms. Later again, in later Han times, their status declined again. Whatever the farmers' condition, as the centuries went by Chinese agriculture became more and more productive, new crops and the spread of iron tools and new techniques led to more intensive farming. From later Zhou times, government became active in promoting agriculture, especially by bringing new land under irrigation, these various factors resulted in population growth.

Trade and industry in Imperial China

As agriculture became more productive and population increased, trade and industry also grew. The introduction of coinage in later Zhou time's facilitated trade, and technological innovations such as the development of steel-making contributed to industrial expansion. Another major factor was state intervention. Under the Qin and Han, the standardization in such things as weights and measures and road building would have had a major impact.

International trade

International trade first gained prominence under the Han dynasty. By gaining control over the eastern steppes of central Asia, the Han enabled the Silk Road, that great trade route across Asia to the Middle East and Europe, to become established. At the same time, the conquest of south China opened up the maritime trade to south East Asia. Although the south remained an under populated frontier zone in ancient times, a few important ports were established on the coast. It was in this period that Canton began its long history as a centre of international commerce

Merchants and craftsmen in Chinese society

Craftsmen must have formed a privileged class in early China. Their products including some of the finest bronzes ever produced must have been highly valued by the ruling elite in Shang and early Zhou times, and this must have conferred a certain status on their makers. In middle and later Zhou times, merchants became more influential as a class, and the economic expansion under the Han dynasty especially benefitted the urban classes. Government policies designed to keep merchants in their place could not halt them from growing in numbers and wealth.

The Ruling Classes

The societies of early China, under the Shang and early Zhou dynasties, were dominated by a hereditary feudal aristocracy. Later, however, the position of this group declined, and a new social class emerged, that of the gentry, small landowners who provided rulers with their growing number of officials. By the time of the Qin and Han dynasties, a career in government was effectively open only to members of the gentry's class. By mid-Han times, however, a new super-elite of great landowners was emerging, its members

enriched by holding high office. This new class would dominate Chinese society and politics in the centuries that followed.

The Family

In pre-modern China, the family was of almost sacred significance, an attitude giving rise to, and reinforced by, the practice of ancestor veneration. The existence of ancestor veneration is attested in the earliest texts from ancient China, the Shang dynasty oracles, and throughout China's long history the rise and decline of "higher" religions and modes of thought Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism and so on, never undermined the practice, which might with some justification be thought of as the basic sacred tradition of China. Women had a subordinate place in the Chinese family from ancient times. Their duty was to obey, first their fathers, then their husbands, and then, after their husbands' deaths, their eldest sons. This should not be exaggerated, however: children of both sexes were taught to obey and respect their parents.

Culture in China

It seems clear that many of traditional Chinese religious and philosophical ideas and practices were already present when written records begin, and probably for long before. Such elements as divination, ancestor veneration, feng-shui, the Dao and the supreme god Di are all evidenced in the Shang oracle bones inscriptions. It was in mid- and late-Zhou periods, however, that the schools of thought developed which were so profoundly to influence Chinese thinking down to the 20th century. Four of these stand out as by far the most influential.

Confucianism

This taught that people must accept their place in society if society is to be harmonious. However, social relationships should be reciprocal. Thus, while a son should obey his father, the father should act considerately towards the son. (More on Confucianism)

Taoism

The Taoists believed that a person must live in accordance with the flow of nature; trying to change the way things are is futile.(More on Daoism)

Mohism

The philosopher Mozi (c. 468-382) believed that anything that helped people's welfare and contributed to peace was good; anything that did not was bad. People should practice universal love, and not live selfishly. (More on Mohism)

Legalism

The legalists said that the most important thing was that the state should be strong. To achieve this, all people should obey the ruler and his officials without question. For his part, the ruler should do whatever it takes to strengthen the state, whether it is immoral or not. (More on Legalism) Throughout China's long history these philosophical strands have never been mutually exclusive. Many educated Chinese have been Confucians in public life, Taoists in the privacy of their own homes, and when serving in an official post have happily pursued Legalist policies. The different philosophies have also deeply influenced each other so that, for example, the dominant of the three, Confucianism, has had strong Taoist and Legalist elements within it. At first, though, these four schools seem to have regarded themselves as exclusive rivals for people's allegiances. The Qin dynasty came to power through the application of Legalist principles, and sought to eliminate all other schools of thought. After that dynasty fell, however, the Han dynasty enshrined Confucianism as the official ideology of the state. As such, it was probably forced to take in ideas from other schools, particularly Legalism and Daoism, in order to remain relevant to the needs of government and officials. In late Han times and after, Daoism, and even more, Buddhism, came to prominence. Buddhism was the first belief-system from outside China to have a widespread impact on the Chinese people.

Literature

Apart from works on divination and religious rites, literature in Ancient China really got going in mid-Zhou times – the time of Confucius and other philosophers. A number of works, dating to Zhou and Han times, gained the status of "Classics", and came to be viewed almost as religious texts. They embodied the foundations of Confucian thought, and would have a profound influence on Chinese civilization. The other major strand of Chinese prose literature was history. The Han historian Sims Qian (c. 145-87 BC) set the standard for historical writing for the next two thousand years. Henceforth, history would be a major feature of Chinese literature.

So far as poetry was concerned, here again the Han period set in place foundations which would be followed and elaborated upon for hundreds of years. Two strands became popular: the first, Shih, consisted of short poems written in a compact, spare style; the second, Fu consisted of longer, more ornate verses. The interaction between these two styles would give a particular character to Chinese verse, reflecting a varying mix of the discipline of Shih with the expressiveness of Fu.

Apart from the beautiful bronzes dating to Shang and early Zhou times, few works of art have come down to us from Ancient China. Nevertheless, wonderful small clay models of houses, horses and people designed to be placed in graves show that Han artists strove for realism as well as lively movement. Also, writings from the Han period mention lively paintings adorning the walls of fine houses.

UNIT – III

1. IRANIAN CIVILIZATION

Early Iran

The heartland of ancient Persian civilization as is true for its Islamic successor is the modern country of Iran. In ancient times, Iran bordered the land of Mesopotamia (in modern Iraq), and was deeply influenced by Ancient Mesopotamian civilization. This was the first urban and literate culture in world history, and it is hardly surprising that the earliest kingdom which arose in Iran, that of Elam, appeared very early in the historical record, in the late 3rd millennium BCE.

In kingdom of Elam was located in south-west Iran. It was extremely long-lasting, but its power was eventually sapped by the coming of new groups into the region. These were the Persians, a tribe of the Iranian people who formed a branch of the Indo-European speaking peoples. These had originated in central Asia and then spread out across a vast area of Eurasia between the fourth and second millennia BCE. Large numbers of them settled in Iran in the 2nd and 1st millennia BCE, and the Persians were the group that settled in the region which had been occupied by the kingdom of Elam. It was the Medes, however, who formed the first powerful Iranian state. From around 700 BCE, they ruled a kingdom which played a major part in Middle Eastern international politics, including the downfall of the Assyrian empire.

The Medes kingdom then formed one of the leading states in the Middle East. It was based in west-central Iran, but its power extended to the south-west, being overlords of the small Persian kingdom.

The first great Persian empire

In the mid-6th century BCE, however, the Persian king Cyrus rebelled against his overlord defeated the Medes and took over their kingdom. He then expanded its borders to take in the whole of Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia. The last three regions had belonged to the Babylonian empire before succumbing to Cyrus' forces.

Cyrus thus founded one of the greatest empires of the ancient world, and is known to history as Cyrus the Great. His successor, Cambyses, conquered Egypt, and his successor, Darius the Great, brought the Persian Empire to the height of its power by conquering a large

slice of central Asia and western India. Darius also reorganized the empire's government and placed it on firm foundations.

Largely as a result of Darius' reforms, this first Persian Empire lasted down to 330 BCE. This empire is sometimes known as the Achaemenid Empire, after the line of kings who ruled it and who belonged to the Achaemenid dynasty. Under them, an international culture emerged, which combined features of many of the conquered peoples who lived within the empire's bounds. Its main cultural debt, however, was to the ancient Mesopotamians, who had transmitted their art, architecture, religion and literature to the Babylonians and from them to the Persians.

The first Persian Empire was brought to an end by Greek-Macedonian forces under Alexander the Great, between 333 and 323 BCE. Alexander's early death ended any hopes for another enduring state to take the place of the Persian Empire. From the long wars between Alexander's generals which followed, the Seleucid kingdom emerged, which initially covered Asia Minor, Syria, Iran, Iran and eastwards into western India. Under the Seleucids, Persian culture (an amalgam of ancient Mesopotamia with other western Asian styles) mingled with that of the New Greek ruling class to form a hybrid civilization which modern scholars have labelled Hellenistic.

The Parthians

The Seleucid kingdom had fragile foundations, however. Almost as soon as it had been established, it began shedding territory. Several small kingdoms appeared, but the main beneficiaries were the Parthians. These were an Iranian people closely related to the Persians, who from c. 150 BCE began building their own empire. This soon covered Iran and Iraq, and came to form the most powerful opponent to the new Roman Empire to the west. Although of Iranian origin, the Parthian elite adopted Hellenistic culture wholesale.

The second great Persian Empire

The Parthian empire lasted for more than three centuries. The Romans made several attempts to conquer it, but never succeeded. They did, however, contribute to weakening it, and in c. 220 CE the Parthian rulers were overthrown by a new Persian dynasty, called the Sasanians. Under the Sasanians, ancient Persian civilization reached its peak. Iranian elements became much more dominant, though many Greek features were retained. A rich new cultural fusion emerged, and the characteristically "Persian" civilization came to

maturity. This would come to form the most important cultural strand within the new Islamic civilization which was about to appear.

The Sasanian monarchs were more aggressive than their Parthian predecessors had been, and more formidable opponents for the Romans. Nevertheless, they were never really able to conquer much more territory than the Parthians had done. A long-lasting stalemate characterized relations between the Roman and Sasanian empires, until, in the early 6th century CE, one of the fiercest wars of the ancient world broke out. These powerful empires nearly destroyed one another, and the war left them both exhausted. This opened the gate to desert tribesmen from Arabia. In the 630s and 640s, the Sasanian Empire was completely overrun by Arab forces. Iran, and with it, Persian civilization, were incorporated wholesale into the new Islamic empire.

The rise of the Persians under Cyrus II

The ruling dynasty of the Persians that was settled in Fars in south-western Iran (possibly the Parsumash of the later Assyrian records) traced its ancestry back to an eponymous ancestor, Haxamanish, or Achaemenes. There is no historical evidence of such a king's existence. Traditionally, three rulers fell between Achaemenes and Cyrus II: Teispes, Cyrus I, and Cambyses I. Teispes, freed of Median domination during the so-called Scythian interregnum, is thought to have expanded his kingdom and to have divided it on his death between his two sons, Cyrus I and Ariaramnes. Cyrus I may have been the king of Persia who appears in the records of Ashurbanipal swearing allegiance to Assyria after the devastation of Elam in the campaigns of 642–639 BC, though there are chronological problems involved with this equation. When Median control over the Persians was supposedly reasserted under Cyaxares, Cambyses I is thought to have been given a reunited Persia to administer as a Median vassal. His son, Cyrus II, married the daughter of Astyages and in 559 inherited his father's position within the Median confederation.

Cyrus II certainly warranted his later title, Cyrus the Great. He must have been a remarkable personality, and certainly he was a remarkable king. He united under his authority several Persian and Iranian groups who apparently had not been under his father's control. He then initiated diplomatic exchanges with Nabonidus of Babylon (556–539 BC), which justifiably worried Astyages. Eventually he openly rebelled against the Medes, who were beaten in battle when considerable numbers of Median troops deserted to the Persian standard. Thus in 550 the Median Empire became the first Persian Empire and the

Achaemenian kings appeared on the international scene with a suddenness that must have frightened many.

Cyrus immediately set out to expand his conquests. After apparently convincing the Babylonians that they had nothing to fear from Persia, he turned against the Lydians under the rule of the fabulously wealthy Croesus. Lydian appeals to Babylon were to no avail. He then took Cilicia, thus cutting the routes over which any help might have reached the Lydians. Croesus attacked, and an indecisive battle was fought in 547 BC on the Halys River. Since it was late in the campaigning season, the Lydians thought the war was over for that year, returned to their capital at Sardis, and dispersed the national levy. Cyrus, however, kept coming. He caught and besieged the Lydians in the citadel at Sardis and captured Croesus in 546. Of the Greek city-states along the western coast of Asia Minor, heretofore under Lydian control, only Miletus surrendered without a fight. The others were systematically reduced by the Persian armies led by subordinate generals. Cyrus himself was apparently busy elsewhere, possibly in the east, for little is known of his activities between the capture of Sardis and the beginning of the Babylonian campaign in 540.

Nowhere did Cyrus display his political and military genius better than in the conquest of Babylon. The campaign actually began when he lulled the Babylonians into inactivity during his war with Lydia, which, since it was carried to a successful conclusion, deprived the Babylonians of a potential ally when their turn came. Then he took full advantage of internal disaffection and discontent within Babylon. Nabonidus was not a popular king: he had paid too little attention to home affairs and had alienated the native Babylonian priesthood. The writer of Deutero-Isaiah, speaking for many of the captive Jews in Babylon, undoubtedly represented the hopes of many of Nabonidus's subjects that Cyrus was a potential deliverer. With the stage thus set, the military campaign against Babylon came almost as an anticlimax. The fall of the greatest city in the Middle East was swift; Cyrus marched into town in the late summer of 539 BC, seized the hands of the statue of the city god Marduk as a signal of his willingness to rule as a Babylonian and not as a foreign conqueror, and was hailed by many as the legitimate successor to the throne. In one stride Cyrus carried Persian power to the borders of Egypt, for with Babylon came all that it had seized from the Assyrians and gained in the sequel.

Little is known of the remainder of Cyrus's reign. The rapidity with which his son and successor, Cambyses II, initiated a successful campaign against Egypt suggests that preparations for such an attack were well advanced under Cyrus. But the founder of Persian

power was forced to turn east late in his reign to protect that frontier against warlike tribes who were themselves in part Iranians and who threatened the plateau in the same manner as had the Medes and the Persians more than a millennium earlier. One of the recurrent themes of Iranian history is the threat of peoples from the east. How much Cyrus conquered in the east is uncertain. What is clear is that he lost his life in 529 BC, fighting somewhere in the region of the Oxus (Amu Darya) and Jaxartes (Syr Darya) rivers.

The Achaemenian dynasty

Cambyses

On the death of Cyrus the Great, the empire passed to his son, Cambyses II (reigned 529–522 BC). There may have been some degree of unrest throughout the empire at the time of Cyrus's death, for Cambyses apparently felt it necessary to secretly kill his brother, Bardiya (Smerdis), in order to protect his rear while leading the campaign against Egypt in 525. The pharaoh Ahmose II of the 26th dynasty sought to shore up his defences by hiring Greek mercenaries but was betrayed by the Greeks. Cambyses successfully managed to cross the hostile Sinai Desert, traditionally Egypt's first and strongest line of defence, and brought the Egyptians under Psamtik III, son and successor of Ahmose, to battle at Pelusium. The Egyptians lost and retired to Memphis, which subsequently fell to the Persians. Three subsidiary campaigns were then mounted, all of which are reported as failures: one against Carthage, though the Phoenician sailors, who were the backbone of the Persian navy, declined to sail against their own colony; one against the oasis of Amon (in the Egyptian desert west of the Nile), which, according to Herodotus, was defeated by a massive sandstorm; and one led by Cambyses himself to Nubia. This latter effort was partly successful, but the army suffered badly from a lack of proper provisions on the return march. Egypt was then garrisoned at three major points: Daphnae in the east delta, Memphis, and Elephantine, where Jewish mercenaries formed the main body of troops.

In 522 BC news reached Cambyses of a revolt in Iran led by an impostor claiming to be Bardiya, Cambyses' brother. Several provinces of the empire accepted the new ruler, who bribed his subjects by remitting taxes for three years. Cambyses died possibly by his own hand but more probably from infection following an accidental sword wound as he hastened home to regain control. Darius, a leading general in Cambyses' army and one of the princes of the Achaemenid family, raced homeward with the troops in order to crush the rebellion in a manner profitable to him.

Cambyses has been rather mistreated in the sources, partly because of the prejudices of Herodotus' Egyptian informers and partly because of the propagandist motives of Darius I. Cambyses is reported to have ruled the Egyptians harshly and to have desecrated their religious ceremonies and shrines. His military campaigns out of Egypt were all reported as failures. He was accused of suicide in the face of revolt at home. It was even suggested that he was mad. There is, however, little solid contemporary evidence to support these charges.

Darius I

Darius I, called the Great, tells in detail the story of the overthrow of the false Bardiya and of the first year of his own rule in his famous royal inscription cut on a rock face at the base of Mount Bisotun, a few miles east of modern Kermanshah. Some historians consider Darius's account to be mere propaganda and argue instead that Bardiya was not an imposter. According to Darius, six leading Achaemenian nobles assisted in slaying the imposter and together proclaimed Darius the rightful heir of Cambyses. Darius was a member of the Achaemenian royal house. His great-grandfather was Ariaramnes, son of Teispes, who had shared power in Persia with his brother Cyrus I. Ariaramnes' son, Arsames, and his grandson, Hystaspes (Darius's father), had not been kings in Persia, as unified royal power had been placed in the hands of Cambyses I by Cyaxares. Neither is named a king in Darius's own inscriptions. Hystaspes was, however, an important royal prince and apparently the governor of Persis. Darius himself was in the mold of Cyrus the Great a powerful personality and a dynamic ruler.

It took more than a year (522–521 BC) of hard fighting to put down the revolts associated with Bardiya's claim to the throne and Darius's succession to power. Almost every province of the empire was involved in the conflict, including Persia and, most particularly, Media. A balanced policy of clemency backed by the swift and thorough punishment of any captured rebel leader, in combination with a well-coordinated and carefully timed distribution of loyal forces, eventually brought peace to the empire and undisputed power to Darius. He then turned his attention to the organization and consolidation of his inheritance, and it was for this role that of lawgiver and organizer that he himself, to judge from his inscriptions, most wished to be remembered.

Such activities, however, did not prevent Darius from following an active expansionist policy. Campaigns to the east confirmed gains probably made by Cyrus the Great and added large sections of the northern Indian subcontinent to the list of Persian-

controlled provinces. Expansion in the west began about 516 BC when Darius moved against the Hellespont as a first step toward an attack on the Scythians along the western and northern shores of the Black Sea. The real strategic purpose behind this move probably was to disrupt and, if possible, interrupt Greek trade with the Black Sea area, which supplied much grain to Greece. Crossing into Europe for the first time, Darius campaigned with comparatively little success to the north of the Danube River. He retreated in good order, however, with only limited losses, and a bridgehead across the Hellespont was established.

Perhaps partly in response to these developments or perhaps for more purely internal reasons, the Ionian Greek cities on the west coast of Asia Minor revolted against Persian rule in 500 BC. The Persians were apparently taken by surprise, and at first the rebellion prospered. The Ionians received some limited assistance from the Athenians and in 498 felt strong enough to make another offensive. With one hand Darius negotiated; with the other he assembled a counterattack. The first Persian military efforts proved only partially successful, however, and the Ionians enjoyed another respite in the years 496–495. A renewed Persian offensive in 494 was successful. The Greek fleet was badly beaten off Miletus, and the Persian land army began a systematic reduction of the rebel cities. About 492 Mardonius, a son-in-law of Darius, was made special commissioner to Ionia. He suppressed local tyrants and returned democratic government to many cities. In time the wounds caused by the revolt and its suppression healed and by 481 Xerxes was able to levy troops in this region with little trouble.

By 492 BC Mardonius had also recovered Persian Thrace and Macedonia, first gained in the campaign against the Scythians and lost during the Ionian revolt. There followed the Persian invasion of Greece that led to Darius’s defeat at the Battle of Marathon late in the summer of 490 BC. The great king was forced to retreat and to face the fact that the Greek problem, which had probably seemed to the Persians a minor issue on the western extremity of the empire, would require a more concerted and massive effort. Thus began preparations for an invasion of Greece on a grand, coordinated scale. These plans were interrupted in 486 by two events: a serious revolt in Egypt, and the death of Darius.

Xerxes I

Xerxes (reigned 486–465 BC), Darius’s eldest son by Queen Atossa, was born after his father had come to the throne; he had been designated official heir perhaps as early as 498, and while crown prince he had ruled as the king’s governor in Babylon. The new king

quickly suppressed the revolt in Egypt in a single campaign in 484. Xerxes then broke with the policy followed by Cyrus and Darius of ruling foreign lands with a fairly light hand, and, in a manner compatible with local traditions, he ruthlessly ignored Egyptian forms of rule and imposed his will on the rebellious province in a thoroughly Persian style. Plans for the invasion of Greece begun under Darius were then still further delayed by a major revolt in Babylonia about 482 BC, which also was suppressed with a heavy hand.

Xerxes then turned his attention westward to Greece. He wintered in Sardis in 481–480 and thence led a combined land and sea invasion of Greece. Northern Greece fell to the invaders in the summer of 480, the Greek stand at Thermopylae in August of 480 came to naught, and the Persian land forces marched on Athens, taking and burning the Acropolis. But the Persian fleet lost the Battle of Salamis, and the impetus of the invasion was blunted. Xerxes, who had by then been away from Asia rather long for a king with such widespread responsibilities, returned home and left Mardonius in charge of further operations. The real end of the invasion came with the Battle of Plataea, the fall of Thebes (a stronghold of pro-Persian forces), and the Persian naval loss at Mycale in 479. Of the three, the Persian loss at Plataea was perhaps the most decisive. Up until Mardonius was killed, the issue of the battle was probably still in doubt, but, once leaderless, the less organized and less disciplined Persian forces collapsed. Time and again in later years this was to be the pattern in such encounters, for the Persians never solved the military problem posed by the disciplined Greek hoplites.

The formation of the Delian League, the rise of Athenian imperialism, troubles on the west coast of Asia Minor, and the end of Persian military ambitions in the Aegean followed rapidly in the decade after Plataea. Xerxes probably lost interest in the proceedings and sank deeper and deeper into the comforts of life in his capital cities of Susa, Ecbatana, and Persepolis. Harem intrigues, which were steadily to sap the strength and vitality of the Achaemenian Empire, led to the king’s assassination in 465 BC.

Artaxerxes I to Darius III

The death of Xerxes was a major turning point in Achaemenian history. Occasional flashes of vigour and intelligence by some of Xerxes’ successors were too infrequent to prevent eventual collapse but did allow the empire to die gradually. It is a tribute to Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius that the empire they constructed was as resilient as it proved to be after Xerxes.

The three kings that followed Xerxes on the throne—Artaxerxes I (reigned 465–425 BC), Xerxes II (425–424), and Darius II Ochus (423–404)—were all comparatively weak as individuals and as kings, and such successes as the empire enjoyed during their reigns were mainly the result of the efforts of subordinates or of the troubles faced by their adversaries. Artaxerxes I faced several rebellions, the most important of which was that of Egypt in 459, not fully suppressed until 454. An advantageous peace (the Peace of Callias) with Athens was signed in 448 BC, whereby the Persians agreed to stay out of the Aegean and the Athenians agreed to leave Asia Minor to the Achaemenid. Athens broke the peace in 439 in an attack on Samos, and in its aftermath the Persians made some military gains in the west. Xerxes II ruled only about 45 days and was killed while in a drunken stupor by the son of one of his father's concubines. The assassin was himself killed by Darius II, who rose to the throne through palace intrigue. Several revolts marred his reign, including one in Media, which was rather close to home.

The major event of these three reigns was the Peloponnesian War between Sparta and Athens, which was fought, with occasional pauses, over the latter decades of the 5th century BC. The situation was ripe for exploitation by the famous "Persian archers," the gold coins of the Achaemenid that depicted an archer on their obverse and that were used with considerable skill by the Persians in bribing first one Greek state and then another. Initially the Persians encouraged Athens against Sparta and from this gained the Peace of Callias. Then, after the disastrous Athenian campaign against Sicily in 413, the Persians intervened on Sparta's side. By the treaty of Miletus in 412, the Persians recovered complete freedom in western Asia Minor in return for agreeing to pay for seamen to man the Peloponnesian fleet. Persian gold and Spartan soldiers brought about the fall of Athens in 404 BC. Despite the fact that the Persians played the two sides against each other to their own advantage, they should have done better. One observes a certain lack of control from Susa by the king in these proceedings, and the two principal governors in Asia Minor who were involved, Tissaphernes of Sardis and Pharnabazus of Hellespontine Phrygia, seemed to have permitted a personal power rivalry to stand in the way of a really coordinated Persian intervention in the Greek war. When Egypt revolted in 405 BC, Persia was unable to do much about it, and from that point forward Egypt remained essentially an independent state.

Artaxerxes II came to the throne in 404 and reigned until 359 BC. The main events of his long rule were the war with Sparta that ended with a peace favourable to the Persians; the

revolt and loss to the empire of Egypt; the rebellion of Cyrus the Younger, brother of the king; and the uprising known as the revolt of the satraps.

Sparta, triumphant over Athens, built a small empire of its own and was soon involved in a war against the Persians, the principal issue again being the Greek cities of Asia Minor. While Sparta played one Persian governor in Anatolia against the other, the Persians spent gold in Greece to raise rebellion on Sparta's home ground. The Persians rebuilt their fleet and placed a competent Athenian admiral, Conon, in command. The contest continued from 400 to 387, with Sparta forced to act on an ever-shrinking front. A revitalized Athens, supported by Persia, created a balance of power in Greece, and eventually Artaxerxes was able to step in, at the Greeks' request, and dictate the so-called King's Peace of 387–386 BC. Once again the Greeks gave up any claim to Asia Minor and further agreed to maintain the status quo in Greece itself.

Cyrus the Younger, though caught in an assassination attempt at the time of Artaxerxes' coronation, was nevertheless forgiven and was returned to the command of a province in Asia Minor. But he revolted again in 401 BC and, supported by 10,000 Greek mercenaries, marched eastward to contest the throne. He was defeated and killed at the Battle of Cunaxa in Mesopotamia that summer. The Greek mercenaries, however, were not broken and, though harried, left the field in good order and began their famous march, recorded in the Anabasis of Xenophon, north to the Black Sea and home. Probably no other event in late Achaemenian history revealed more clearly to the Greeks the essential internal weakness of the Achaemenian Empire than the escape of so large a body of men from the very heart of the Persian domain.

Since 379 BC Artaxerxes had been gathering Greek mercenaries in order to mount a campaign against Egypt. An attack in 373 failed against the native Egyptian 30th dynasty. On the heels of this failure came the revolt of the satraps, or provincial governors. Several satraps rose against the central power, and one, Aroandas (Orontes), a satrap of Armenia, went so far as to stamp his own gold coinage as a direct challenge to Artaxerxes. The general plan of the rebels appears to have been for a combined attack. The rebel satraps were to coordinate their march eastward through Syria with an Egyptian attack, under the king Tachos, and support by Greek mercenaries. The Egyptian attack was called off because of a revolt in Egypt by Tachos's brother, and Artaxerxes managed to defeat the satraps who were left alone to face the king's wrath. Several of the satraps, including Aroandas, were actually forgiven and returned to their governorships. In general the impression is that, in the end, rather than fight

the central authority, the satraps were willing to return to their own provinces and plunder there in the name of Artaxerxes. Perhaps they saw that they actually had more authority and more control over real events in their own provincial territories than Artaxerxes had in his empire.

Plot and counterplot, harem intrigue, and murder brought Artaxerxes III to the throne in 359 BC. He promptly exterminated many of his relatives who might have challenged his rule—all to no avail, for revolts continued to rock the empire. A fresh attempt to win back Egypt was repulsed in 351. This setback encouraged revolt in Sidon and eventually in all of Palestine and Phoenicia. Parts of Cilicia joined the rebellion, but the revolt there was crushed in 345, the same year it had begun. Peace was achieved only temporarily; mercenaries from Thebes and the Argives, as well as from the Greek cities of Asia Minor, gathered for a new attempt on Egypt. Led by Artaxerxes III himself, it succeeded in 343 BC. But the local Egyptian dynasty fled south to Nubia, where it maintained an independent kingdom that kept alive the hopes of a dynastic revival. Persia then misplayed its hand in Greece by refusing aid to Athens against the rising power of Philip II of Macedon. In 339 BC Persian troops were fighting alone in Thrace against the Macedonians, and in the following year, at the Battle of Chaeronea, Philip extended his hegemony over all of Greece—a united Greece that was to prove impervious to Persian gold.

Artaxerxes was poisoned by his physician at the order of the eunuch Bagoas. The latter made Artaxerxes' youngest son, Arses, king (338–336 BC) in hopes of being the power behind the throne, but Arses did not bend easily to Bagoas's will. He attempted to poison the kingmaker but was himself killed in retaliation. Bagoas then engineered the accession of Darius III, a 45-year-old former satrap of Armenia. So many members of the royal house had been murdered in the court intrigue that Darius probably held the closest blood claim to the throne by virtue of being the grandnephew of Artaxerxes II. Darius was able to put down yet another rebellion in Egypt under Khababash in 337–336 BC, but the beginning of the end of the Achaemenian Empire came soon afterward, in May 334, when he lost the Battle of Granicus to Alexander the Great. Persepolis fell to the invader in April 330, and Darius, the last Achaemenid, was murdered in the summer of the same year while fleeing the conqueror. His unfinished tomb at Persepolis bears witness to his lack of preparation.

Alexander did not win his victories easily, however, and the catalogue of troubles that marked the latter part of the Achaemenian Empire rebellions, murders, weak kings trapped in the harems, missed chances, and foolish policies cannot be the whole story. The sources,

mostly Greek, are often prejudiced against the Persians and tend to view events from but a single point of view. No government could have lasted so long, found its way somehow through so many difficulties and in the end actually have fought so hard against the conqueror without having much virtue with which to balance its vices.

Achaemenian society and culture

The culture that developed under the Achaemenes was in reality the collective societies and cultures of the many subject peoples of the empire. From this mosaic it is sometimes difficult to sort out that which is distinctively Persian or distinctively a development of the Achaemenian period and therefore perhaps an early Iranian contribution to general Middle Eastern society and culture.

Language

The languages of the empire were as varied as its peoples. The Persians, at least originally, spoke Old Persian, a south-western dialect of Iranian (Median was a north-western Iranian dialect), and were a no literate society. Their language was first written when Darius commanded that a script suitable for this purpose be invented so that he might inscribe the record of his rise to power at Bisotun (the inscriptions in Old Persian attributed to earlier kings were likely written during the reign of Darius or are later historical forgeries). That few could read Old Persian might be the reason why Darius at Bisotun established the tradition that royal inscriptions should be trilingual in Old Persian, Babylonian, and Elamite. Old Persian was never a working written language of the empire. Elamite, written on clay tablets, appears to have been the language of many of the administrators in Persis and, it may be assumed, in Elam. Archives of administrative documents in Elamite have been found at Persepolis. Aramaic, however, was the language of much of the empire and was probably the language most used in the imperial bureaucracy. The beginnings of the strong influence of Aramaic on Persian, which is so evident in the Middle Persian of Sasanian times, can already be seen in the Old Persian royal inscriptions of late Achaemenian times. (See also Iranian languages.)

Social organization

Little is known of Iranian social organization in the period. In general, it was based on feudal lines that were drawn in part by economic and social functions. Traditional Indo-Iranian society consisted of three classes: the warriors or aristocracy, the priests, and the

farmers or herdsmen. Crosscutting these divisions was a tribal structure based on patrilineal descent. The title king of kings, used even in the 20th century by the shahs of Iran, implies that the central authority exercised power through a pyramidal structure that was controlled at levels below the supreme authority by individuals who were themselves, in a certain sense, kings. Traditionally, the king was elected from a particular family by the warrior class; he was sacred, and a certain royal charisma attached to his person.

Such a method of organizing and controlling society undoubtedly changed under the influences and demands of imperial power and underwent much modification as Iranians increasingly borrowed social and political ideas from the peoples they ruled. Even in later times, nevertheless, there is evidence that the original Iranian concepts of kingship and social organization were still honoured and remained the ideals of Persian culture.

Religion

Iranian religion in the pre-Achaemenian and Achaemenian periods is a subject on which there is little scholarly agreement. When the Iranians first entered the dim light of the proto-historic period, they were certainly polytheists whose religious beliefs and practices closely paralleled other Indo-Iranian and Indo-European groups at the same stage in history. Their gods were associated with natural phenomena, with social, military, and economic functions, and with abstract concepts such as justice and truth. Their religious practices included, among others, animal sacrifice, a reverence for fire, and the drinking of the juice of the haoma plant, a natural intoxicant.

Probably about 600 BC there arose in the northeast of the plateau the great Iranian religious prophet and teacher Zoroaster (Zarathushtra). The history of the religion that he founded is even more complicated and controversial than the history of pre-Zoroastrian Iranian religion. Yet certain features of his religious reform stand out. He was an ethical prophet of the highest rank, stressing constantly the need to act righteously and to speak the truth and abhor the lie. In his teaching, the lie was almost personified as the Druj, chief in the kingdom of the demons, to which he relegated many of the earlier Indo-Iranian deities. His god was Ahura Mazd, who, it seems likely, was a creation, in name and attributes, of Zoroaster. Though in a certain sense technically monotheistic, early Zoroastrianism viewed the world in strongly dualistic terms, for Ahura Mazd and the “Lie” were deeply involved in a struggle for the human soul. Zoroaster, as might be expected, attempted to reform earlier Iranian religious practices and beliefs. He first rejected and then perhaps allowed in a

modified form the practice of the haoma cult, clearly condemned the practice of animal sacrifice, and elevated to central importance in the ritual a reverence for fire. Fire worship, however, is a misnomer, because the Zoroastrians have never worshiped fire but rather have revered it as the symbol par excellence of truth.

The god of the Achaemenian kings was the great Ahura Mazd, from whom they understood they had received their empire and with whose aid they accomplished all deeds. Xerxes and his successors mention other deities by name, but Ahura Mazd remains supreme. Darius names only Ahura Mazd in his inscriptions. More significant, however, is Darius's tone, which is entirely compatible with the moral tone of Zoroaster and, in some instances, even compatible with details of Zoroaster's theology. During the reigns of Darius and Xerxes, the archaeological record reveals that religious rituals were in forces that were also compatible with an evolved and evolving Zoroastrianism. The haoma cult was practiced at Persepolis, but animal sacrifice is not attested. More important, fire clearly played a central role in Achaemenian religion.

There may have been religious overtones in the quarrel between Cambyses and Darius on the one hand and the false Bardiya—a magus or Median priest—on the other. Certainly there were religious as well as political motivations behind Xerxes' suppression of the daeva (deva) worshipers and the destruction of their temple. It is possible that there was some conflict among the royal Achaemenes, who were followers of one form of Zoroastrianism, the supporters of a different version of Zoroastrianism as practiced by other Iranians, believers in older forms of Iranian religion, and believers in foreign religions, which in the light of Zoroaster's teachings were reprehensible. Compromises and syncretism, however, probably could not be prevented. Though the Zoroastrian calendar was adopted as the official calendar of the empire in the reign of Artaxerxes I, by the time of Artaxerxes II the ancient Iranian god Mithra and the goddess Anahita (Anahiti) had been accepted in the royal religion alongside Ahura Mazda.

Thus, in a sense, the Achaemenian kings were Zoroastrians, but Zoroastrianism itself was probably no longer exactly the religion Zoroaster had attempted to establish. What the religion of the people beyond court circles may have been is almost impossible to say. One suspect that a variety of ancient Iranian cults and beliefs were prevalent. The magi, the traditional priests of the Medes, may have wielded more influence in the countryside than they did at court, and popular beliefs and practices may have been more deeply influenced by contact with other peoples and other religions. Later classical Zoroastrianism, as known in

the period, was an amalgam of such popular cults, of the religion of the Achaemenian court, and of the teachings of the prophet in their purer form. (See also Zoroastrianism.)

Art

Achaemenian art, like Achaemenian religion, was a blend of many elements. In describing, with justifiable pride, the construction of his palace at Susa, Darius says,

Persepolis, Iran: sculpture

Persepolis, Iran: sculpture

Armenian tribute bearer carrying a jar decorated with winged griffins, detail of relief sculpture on the stairway leading to the Apadana of Darius at Persepolis, Iran, Achaemenian period, and late 5th century BC.

Michael Roaf

The cedar timber a mountain by name Lebanon from there it was brought the yaka-timber was brought from Gandhara and from Carmania. The gold was brought from Sardis and from Bactria the precious stone lapis-lazuli and carnelian was brought from Sogdiana. The turquoise from Chorasmia, the silver and ebony from Egypt, the ornamentation from Ionia the ivory from Ethiopia and from Sind and from Arachosia. The stone-cutters who wrought the stone, those were Ionians and Sardians. The goldsmiths were Medes and Egyptians. The men who wrought the wood, those were Sardians and Egyptians. The men who wrought the baked brick, those were Babylonians. The men who adorned the wall, those were Medes and Egyptians.

This was an imperial art on a scale the world had not seen before. Materials and artists were drawn from all the lands ruled by the great king, and thus tastes, styles, and motifs became mixed together in an eclectic art and architecture that in itself mirrored the empire and the Persians' understanding of how that empire ought to function. Yet the whole was entirely Persian. Just as the Achaemenes were tolerant in matters of local government and custom as long as Persians controlled the general policy and administration of the empire, so also were they tolerant in art so long as the finished and total effect was Persian. At Pasargadae, the capital of Cyrus the Great and Cambyses in the Persian homeland and at Persepolis, the neighbouring city founded by Darius the Great and used by all his successors, one can trace to a foreign origin almost all the details in the construction and embellishment

of the architecture and the sculptured reliefs, but the conception, planning, and overall finished product are distinctly Persian and could not have been created by any of the foreign groups who supplied the king of kings with artistic talent. This was true also of the decorative arts, at which the Persians excelled: fine metal tableware, jewellery, seal cutting, weaponry and its decoration, and pottery.

It has been suggested that the Persians called on the subject peoples for artists because they were themselves crude barbarians with little taste and needed quickly to create an imperial art to match their sudden rise to political power. Yet excavations at sites from the proto-historic period show this not to have been the case. Cyrus may have been the leader of Persian tribes not yet as sophisticated nor as civilized as the Babylonians or Egyptians, but, when he chose to build Pasargadae, he had a long artistic tradition behind him that was probably already distinctly Iranian and that was in many ways the equal of any. To show this, two examples suffice: the tradition of the columned hall in architecture and fine gold work. The former can now be seen as belonging to an architectural tradition on the Iranian plateau that extended back through the Median period to at least the beginning of the 1st millennium BC. The rich Achaemenian gold work, which inscriptions suggest may have been a specialty of the Medes, was in the tradition of the delicate metalwork found in Iron Age II times at Hasanlu and still earlier at Marlik. Persepolis, primarily the creation of Darius and Xerxes, is one of the great artistic legacies of the ancient world, with its carefully proportioned and well-organized ground plan, rich architectural ornament, and magnificent decorative reliefs.

The organization and achievement of the Achaemenian Empire

At the centre of the empire sat the king of kings. Around him was gathered a court composed of powerful hereditary landholders, the upper echelons of the army, the harem, religious functionaries, and the bureaucracy that administered the whole. This court lived mainly in Susa but went in the hot summer months to Ecbatana (modern Hamadasan), probably in the spring to Persepolis in Fars, and perhaps sometimes to Babylon. In a smaller version it travelled with the king when he was away in the provinces.

The provinces, or satrapies, were ruled by satraps (governors), technically appointed by the central authority but who often became hereditary sub-kings, particularly in the later years of the empire. They were surrounded and assisted in their functions by a court modelled on that of the central government and were powerful officials. The great king was nevertheless theoretically able to maintain considerable control in local affairs. He was the

last court of appeal in judicial matters. He directly controlled the standing military forces stationed in the provinces, though as time went on the military and civil authority in the provinces tended to become combined under the satrap. The king was also aided in keeping control in the provinces by the so-called king's eyes or, better, the king's ears officials from the central government who travelled throughout the empire and who reported directly back to the king on what they learned. The number of provinces and their boundaries varied greatly from time to time; at the beginning of Darius's reign there were 20 provinces. In general, as time went on, the number increased, partly because of the need to reassert control over the satraps by decreasing their power base, partly because the feudal structure that underlay Persian society required rewarding more and more people with a role in government, and partly because the original 20 provinces were undoubtedly simply too large to permit efficient administration.

The army was a particularly important element within the empire. It, too, developed and changed with time. After Cyrus the Persian tribal levy, based on the responsibility of all male Persians to fight for the king, was replaced by a professional standing army supplemented by a troop levy from the subject peoples in times of intensive military activity. The elite of the standing army were the 10,000 "immortals," composed of Persians and Medes, 1,000 of whom were the personal guard of the king. The person, who controlled this elite guard, as did Darius on the death of Cambyses, usually controlled all. The troops of the imperial levy fought alongside the regular army in national units, were armed according to their individual customs, but were usually officered by Persians. Permanent bodies of troops were stationed at strategic points throughout the empire, and, to judge from the garrison at Elephantine in Egypt, these were actually military colonies, firmly settled into the local countryside. Greek mercenaries were used with increasing frequency in later years, and many Greeks fought faithfully for Persian silver.

The civil and the military administration, as well as public and private trade, were greatly facilitated by the famous royal Achaemenian road system. Communications throughout the empire were better than any previous Middle Eastern power had maintained. The famous road from Susa to Sardis in western Asia Minor is the best known of these imperial highways. It was an all-weather road maintained by the state. Over it ran a governmental postal system based on relay stations with remounts and fresh riders located a day's ride apart. The speed with which a message could travel from the provinces to the king at Susa was remarkable.

On the whole, Persian rule sat lightly on the subject peoples, at least under the early Achaemenid. It was a conscious policy of Cyrus and Darius to permit conquered nations to retain their own religions, customs, methods of doing business, and even to some extent forms of government. This policy was exemplified by Cyrus's attitude toward the Babylonians, which led to his being accepted as the rightful successor of Nabonidus, his willingness to permit the Jews to return to Palestine and to their own way of life, and his successors' concern that this promise be honoured; Cambyses' behaviour in Egypt and his acceptance by the Egyptians as founder of a legitimate new Egyptian dynasty; and the policy adopted under Mardonius toward the Ionian cities following their rebellion. Perhaps even in the later empire, rebellious peoples, governments, and leaders were too often forgiven and not suppressed with the thoroughness sometimes characteristic of other regimes. Lapses in this policy, such as Xerxes' violent reaction to rebellion in Babylon, stand out in the record.

Law played an important role in the administration of the empire, and stories of Persian justice abound in the Greek sources. Darius particularly wished to be remembered as the great lawgiver, and law reform was one of the cornerstones in his program for reorganizing the empire. To judge from the Babylonian evidence, two sets of law, possibly administered by two sets of courts, were in force in the provinces. One was the local law, undoubtedly based on custom and previous local codifications; the other was the Persian, or imperial, law, based ultimately on the authority of the great king. A new word for law appeared in the Middle East in Achaemenian times, the Iranian data, and was borrowed by the Semitic languages used in the empire. In Babylonian and Aramaic, sources give evidence for Persian judges called by the Iranian word data-bar. These were probably the judges of the imperial courts.

With legal reform came reform and unification of tax structures. The tax structure of the empire was apparently based on the principle that all of the conquered lands were the actual property of the king. Thus taxes were rather rents, and the Persians and their land by virtue of not being a conquered people or land, were always tax-free. Each province was required to pay yearly a fixed amount in gold or silver, and each vassal state paid a fixed tribute in kind. Again going on the Babylonian evidence, in previous times agricultural taxes had been levied in fixed amounts regardless of the fluctuating quality of the harvest, but under Darius all land was surveyed, an estimate of its yield (based on an average of the harvests over several years) was from time to time established, and taxes were levied in fixed amounts based on a percentage of that average yield. This was not quite an income tax, since

it was not based on a percentage of each year's production, but it was at least a reasonable figure based on a reasonable production average.

Breakdowns often occurred in the Achaemenid's effort to maintain a productive balance between local social structures, customs, laws, and government and the demands of the empire. The failure of the Persians to find such a balance when dealing with what was for them an extremely strange system of social and political organization, the Greek polis, or city-state, probably lay at the heart of their never-ending troubles in Ionia as much as did the power and ambitions of mainland Greeks. Yet even the Ionians, at the best of times, often realized the mutual advantages and benefits of the king's peace and a unified western Asia under a tolerant central administration.

The economy of the empire was very much founded on that king's peace; it was when the peace broke down with ever-increasing frequency during the last century of Achaemenian rule that the economy of the empire went into a decline that undoubtedly contributed significantly to the eventual political and military collapse. Wealth in the Achaemenian world was very much founded on land and on agriculture. Land was the principal reward that the king had available for those who gave service or who were in positions of great political or military power in the empire. Under Darius there was a measure of land called a "bow" that was originally a unit considered sufficient to support one bowman, who then paid his duty for the land in military service. At the other end of the scale were enormous family estates, which often increased in size over the years and which were or became hereditary holdings. They were often administered by absentee landlords. Such major landholdings were, as one would expect, usually in the hands of Iranians, but non-Iranians were also able to amass similar wealth and power, thereby testifying once again to the inherent tolerance with which the empire was administered. The Achaemenids themselves took a positive role in encouraging agriculture by investing state funds and effort in irrigation and the improvement of horticulture.

They also invested in and endeavoured to promote trade, a major source of imperial wealth. The effect of the state-maintained road system on the encouragement of trade has already been mentioned. Equal attention was paid to developing seaborne trade. State-sponsored voyages of exploration were undertaken in order to search for new markets and new resources. Darius completed a project, begun by the Egyptians that connected the Nile to the Red Sea by a canal, so that routes across the Arabian Sea and into the Persian Gulf could be used to link the eastern and western ends of his empire. As part of the same program, port

development on the Persian Gulf coast was encouraged. Imperial standardized weights and measures, efforts to develop and use coinage, and standardizing that coinage in the king's name were all policies intended to encourage commerce and economic activity within the realm.

Banking also played a role in the economy. Documents have survived from a family banking business in Babylonia the house of Murashu and sons of Nippur covering the years c. 455–403 BC; the firm evidently prospered greatly by lending money and by acting as a middleman in the system of tax collection. Interest rates were high, but borrowers were numerous.

As time went on, there were clearly more and more such borrowers, for the later empire is marked by a general economic decline. The principal cause of this decline was the unsettled political conditions, but other, more indirect causes were unwise government interference in the economy, over taxation, and the removal of too much hard money from the economy. Gold and silver tended to drain into the treasury of the central government from the provinces, and too little found its way back into general circulation. Disastrous inflation was the result. The large sums of money paid to foreign mercenaries and as bribes to foreign governments must also have contributed to an unfavourable balance of payments that in turn stimulated inflation. Such conditions hardly strengthened the empire and must have contributed, in ways that cannot be documented with certainty, to the political unrest that was their own main cause.

Ultimately, the achievement of the Achaemenian Persians was that they ruled with such creative tolerance over an area and a time that, for both the Middle East and for Europe, included the end of the ancient and the beginning of the modern world. In one sense, the ancient Middle East died when Cyrus marched into Babylon. Others would argue that its death came when Alexander burned Persepolis. The question remains open. What is clear is that the Achaemenian Empire the largest anyone had ever yet tried to hold together and one that was not surpassed until Rome reached its height was a profound force in western Asia and in Europe during an important period of ferment and transition in human history. That era was one of major developments in art, philosophy, literature, historiography, religion, exploration, economics, and science, and those developments provided the direct background for the further changes, along similar lines, that made the Hellenistic period so important in history. Hellenism probably would not have been possible, at least not in the form we know it, if it had had to build directly on the rather narrower and less ambitious bases of the

individual civilizations of Babylon, Egypt, or Greece. In a sense, the Achaemenian Persians passed on a concept of empire that, much modified by others, has remained something of a model of how it is possible for diverse peoples with variant customs, languages, religions, laws, and economic systems to flourish with mutual profit under a central government. In narrower terms, but for the Iranians themselves no less important, the Achaemenian Empire is seen as the beginning of the Iranian nation, one of the pivotal peoples in the modern Middle East.

2. Ancient Greek Civilization features

Philip of Macedon's defeat of the Greek city-states is traditionally seen as drawing down the curtain on "Classical Greece" and ushering in the "Hellenistic Age". This includes the conquests of Alexander the Great, and ends with the conquests of the different Hellenistic states by Rome (146-31 BC).

The history of Ancient Greece falls into four major divisions. The Archaic period, when the civilization's main features were evolving, lasted from the 8th to the 6th centuries BC. Classical Greece flourished during the 5th to 4th centuries BC. This was marked by the period of the Persian Wars (c. 510-479 BC), the Golden Age of Athens (c. 479-404 BC), and the later Classical era (404-338 BC).

Greek civilization had a powerful influence on the Roman civilization. Indeed, some modern scholars see the Roman era as a continuation of the same civilization, which they label "Greco-Roman". In any case, the Roman conquest carried many features of Greek civilization to far-flung parts of the Mediterranean world and Western Europe. Through the mediation of the Romans, therefore, Greek civilization came to be the founding culture of Western civilization.

The geographical coverage of Ancient Greek civilization changed markedly during its history. Its origins were in the land of Greece and the islands of the Aegean Sea, plus the west coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey). This is a landscape of mountains and sea. Land useful for farming is found in valley bottoms, hedged in by steep slopes, or on small islands, confined by water. As a result, ancient Greece consisted of many small territories, each with its own dialect, cultural peculiarities, and identity. Cities tended to be located in valleys between mountains, or on narrow coastal plains, and only dominated a limited area around them. These "city-states" were fiercely independent of each other.

From about 750 BC the Greeks began sending out colonies in all directions, settling the coasts and islands of the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea. By around 600 BC Greek city-states could be found, "like frogs round a pond", as one Greek writer put it, from the coasts of Spain in the west to Cyprus in the east, and as far north as present day Ukraine and Russia and as far south as the Egypt and Libya. Sicily and Southern Italy above all became a major locus for Greek colonization, and this region was known to the Romans as "Magna Graeca". Later, the conquests of Alexander the Great took Greek civilization right across the Middle East. There it mingled with the more ancient cultures of that region to form a hybrid civilization which scholars label "Hellenistic" civilization. This is described in a separate article; here we shall focus on the original Greek civilization.

Society in Ancient Greece

The ancient Greeks certainly thought of themselves as 'one people' – they had the same religion, language and culture. Every four years all Greek city-states sent their young men and women to compete in the Olympic Games. Politically, however, Ancient Greece was divided amongst several hundred independent city states (poleis). These city-states fiercely defended their independence from one another. Political unity was not an option, unless imposed from outside (which first occurred when Philip II, king of Macedonia, conquered the city-states of Greece in the mid-4th century BC.)

The City-State

A typical Greek city was built around a fortified hill, called an "acropolis". Here was located the city's chief temple, the city's treasury, and some other public buildings. At the centre of the city was the "Agora" – the central space where public meetings were held, and where traders set up their stalls. The agora was often flanked by colonnades. Most industrial production took place in small workshops. Family members plus some slaves would make up the workforce in most of these. However, one workshop in Athens for manufacturing shields was said to have 120 workers, mostly slaves. Different trades were concentrated in different parts of the city, but mostly near the agora, the main trading centre in the city. Potters, blacksmiths, bronze workers, carpenters, leather workers, cobblers, and other craft workshops would all have their own streets or (in large cities) districts.

As a city outgrew its local water supply, water was brought in from neighbouring hills by means of channels cut in the rocks, and clay pipes. These fed fountains, from which the poorer people could collect water; and also private wells situated in the larger houses.

The city was surrounded by high, wide walls. In later times these were made of stone, brick and rubble. Towers were built at regular interval, and fortified gateways pierced the walls to allow roads to pass through. Outside these wall was another public space, the gymnasium. This is where athletes trained; covered porticoes allowed training to continue in bad weather, and also provided shaded areas for activities such as music, discussion and social meetings. Many gymnasia had public baths attached. Also outside the walls would be the theatre, built into a hillside and semicircular in shape. The audience would sit on the tiered seats looking down on to a space called the "orchestra", where the performances took place. This space would be backed by columns and behind them, small buildings where actors changed clothing and masks, and for the props.

Surrounding the city was the farmland of the city-state. Many of the citizens lived within the city walls and walked out to their fields each day to work. Those whose land was further away, however, lived in the countryside, in the hamlets and villages which doted the landscape, and walked into the city for special occasions. They were as much citizens of the city-state as those who actually lived in the city itself.

In many cases this farmland only stretched for a few miles before sloping upwards to the hills and mountains which divided one city-state from the next. Here, with the land less suitable for growing crops, grain fields and olive groves gave way to pasturage for sheep and goats.

Many Greek city-states were situated on the coast, or on a small island. The city itself would often be located some distance inland, cantered on a hill where the acropolis was built for defence. On the seashore would be a harbour, consisting of wooden quays for loading and unloading ships and beaches were the ships could be drawn up onto dry land for repair. In many cases there would also be ship-sheds, where the city's war galleys were housed when not in use.

Agriculture

Like all pre-modern societies, the Greeks were primarily an agricultural people. They practiced the agriculture of the ancient Mediterranean region. Involving the cultivation of grains, vines and olives, and the keeping of sheep, goat and cattle. Farms were very small mere plots of land of a few acres. Aristocrats and other landowners would own larger farms, worked by slaves; but an estate of 100 acres was considered large.

The main challenge facing Greek farmers was that there was too little good farming land in Greece and the Aegean. This forced them to take to sea-borne trade on a scale unmatched by most other ancient peoples. However, land shortages continued to be a problem throughout the ancient times. They were a source of the social tensions between rich and poor which led, in Athens, to the rise of democracy, and in several other cities, to violent clashes between the different classes.

Trade

Very many Greek city-states were located by the sea. Also, many of them, confined as they were by steep hills and mountains, or by the sea itself (if they were on islands), suffered from a shortage of agricultural land. From an early stage in their history, therefore, many Greeks looked to the sea for their livelihood. For a period of about 150 years after 750 BC, many city-states sent out groups of their citizens to found colonies on distant shores of the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea. These established strong trading ties with their mother city. Greek traders soon dominated maritime trade of the Mediterranean, edging out the Phoenicians who had preceded them. The adoption of metal coinage must have facilitated this process.

Some Greek cities became large and wealthy trading centers. Athens, the largest Greek city-state of all, was only able to feed her large population through trade. The poor soil of Attica (the area of Greece where Athens was located) was ideal for growing olives on, and so from an early date the Athenians concentrated on growing olives for export. They imported almost all their grain from other states. The Athenians built up a large merchant fleet, and their city became the leading commercial centre of Greece. At the height of its glory, almost a third of its population may have been made up of “alien” businessmen and their households, mostly Greeks from other cities. The wealth that this commerce brought Athens enabled it to become the leading city of Greece, both in politics and culture.

Athens also became the major banker to the Greek world. In the fifth century BC the Athenian coinage became the international currency of the Mediterranean. Bankers operated from long tables set up in the agora, making loans at very high rates of interest.

Society

The social framework varied significantly from city-state to city-state. Most cities, however, had a large class of free, native-born peasant farmers. These owned small farms to

subsist on. The adult males formed the citizen body of the state. They were entitled to vote in elections, participate in trials in the law courts, and hold public office; they also had a duty to fight in the city's army. They had a real say in how their city was run and what decisions were made.

Within this group of citizens were a smaller number of wealthier families, who owned more land than the rest. They were the aristocrats. As they could afford to keep horses, they were distinguished from the bulk of the citizens by fighting in the army of horse-back. Their older men were often the leading office-holders in the city, the magistrates and military commanders; they could often trace their families back through generations of office-holders, who had helped shape the city's history. They had a disproportionate influence on affairs of state. Indeed, in many city-states they formed an aristocratic council who played a leading role in the direction of the state. In those city-states which were democracies, however, it was the bulk of the citizens who held the power, through their assembly. At the bottom of society was a large class of slaves – modern scholars estimating that in some city-states such as Athens they may have made up almost half the population.

These were people who had been captured in war, or been condemned to slavery as a result of debts which they could not pay; or for crimes. Since the children of slaves were also slaves, many had been born into slavery. In law they were the property of their owners. They worked as household servants or farm labourers for the wealthy, or miners and industrial workers for businessmen. Trained slaves could act as skilled craftsmen, or perhaps secretaries.

As the Greek cities grew in size and wealth, their societies became more complex. New classes appeared, of prosperous craftsmen, sailors and traders, to stand alongside the older classes of aristocrats, peasants and slaves. These new groups became the natural opponents of the aristocrats, and their influence in politics helped undermine aristocratic power. It is no coincidence that those cities with the largest commercial sectors moved furthest along the road to democracy.

Most city-states also had numbers of "aliens" living within their walls. These were free men and women who had homes in the city, but had been born elsewhere (or their parents and grandparents had), usually in another Greek city-state. They were often merchants or craftsmen. They were not enrolled amongst the citizens and did not have their privileges; they were deemed to have the citizenship of the city they or their families had

originally come from. In most cities, citizenship was jealously guarded by a hereditary group of native families.

The Family

As in many pre-modern societies, unwanted children were exposed in the countryside to die. Sons were preferred over daughters, so it was baby girls who tended to suffer this fate. Exposure was not illegal, though once the baby was more than 10 days old it was fully protected by law. Exposed babies were often rescued and brought up as slaves. Babies in wealthy families were usually breast-fed by a household slave. Older children had toys to play with, as in all societies: rattles and balls were popular, as were dolls. Boys from wealthier families went to school (see the section on education, below), and some girls were also educated. Poorer boys would be trained in a craft, on the job. This often involved picking up the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic. Women lived very sheltered lives, first under the authority of their father or another male relative, and then under that of their husband. Marriages were arranged by the parents. The man was very much the dominant partner in a marriage (at least in law). The role of the woman was to cook, weave, and raise her children. In poorer families, a woman might also help her husband in his work, especially if he worked on a farm (which the majority of men did); or she herself might keep a market stall or do some other kind of work. Divorce was easy for men – they could divorce their wives without justification – and almost impossible for women.

Houses

The majority of the poor lived in what we would regard as squalid rural hovels, or crowded urban slums crowded together in narrow, filthy lanes. In a large city like Athens, some of the poor lived in multi-story blocks of apartments. Larger houses were constructed around a courtyard, with rooms leading off. Some of these were quite modest, for well-to-do craftsmen or farmers; some were large and luxurious, with accommodation for a large household including many slaves. These houses were of two stories, and were equipped with bathrooms and toilets. The walls of the reception rooms and family quarters were painted with large, colourful scenes.

Clothing

Men wore tunics, over which a large piece of cloth could be draped. Women wore long tunics falling to their ankles, and they too could drape large pieces of cloth over

themselves. These tunics and cloaks were mostly made of wool. Children's clothing consisted of short tunics. Leather sandals were worn on the feet. Young men tended to be clean shaven, with hair cropped short. Older men often wore beards. Women grew their hair long, and then tied it into a bun or pony tail with ribbons.

Government and Politics in Ancient Greece

The English word "politics" comes from the Greek word for city-state, "polis". For the Greeks, the city-state was essentially a community of citizens making decisions together about matters of communal concern. This is why the Greeks never referred to the name of a city, "Athens", for example but always to its citizens , "the Athenians".

Citizens were the free members of the community who had been born to native families (those who had lived in the city-state for generations). From the earliest days of the city-states the adult male citizens would regularly meet together in public assembly to decide matters of importance for the state. This was made possible by the fact that most city-states would have no more than a few thousand such citizens.

In contrast to political developments in Mesopotamian city-states, more than two thousand years before, kings early on lost most of their power in Greek city-state, and in many cases vanished altogether. From that time onwards these city-states were republics rather than kingdoms.

In all the states, a small group of aristocrats initially had a controlling position. They formed a small council of men who frequently met to discuss public matters in depth something that a large assembly of several thousand citizens could not do.

Democracy

Many citizens' assembly gained more and more power, however, and in the fifth century BC many states were full-blown democracies (the word "democracy" is based on the Greek word for common people, "demos".)

Athens was by far the largest and most famous of these democracies, and we know a great deal about how Athenian democracy worked. The citizens not only met in a full assembly, but chose (by lot) some of their members to form a much smaller council, which discussed public matters more fully before laying them before the full assembly. Public officials were also chosen by lot (except military commanders, who were elected). All

citizens were liable to be selected for public office or membership of the governing council, and would serve for a year. In this way, office-holding was constantly rotating, and the majority of citizens gained some direct experience of government.

Public finances and administration

Taxation seems not to have been highly developed by the Greeks. Taxes were levied in times of emergency; otherwise, government was supported financially by duties on goods being bought and sold, or on property.

In fact, Greek government was not expensive by later standards. There was no bureaucracy to speak of. Some cities kept public slaves for various tasks (rudimentary police force, or a small corps of public scribes, for example), but their numbers were very small. Public officials and soldiers were largely unpaid; serving their cities voluntarily (Athens was an exception, paying citizens for undertaking public duties; but it was an exceptionally wealthy city). Moreover, the wealthy were expected not only to serve as magistrates or generals, but to contribute funds from their own pockets for the upkeep of warships, theatres and other public assets.

Law

We know surprisingly little about Greek law. No law codes have survived, except in small fragments; enough has survived, however, tell us that the Greek city-states wrote down their laws on stone tablets and set them up in public places (presumably the open space known as the Agora). Greek histories tell us much the same thing when dealing with such famous law givers as the Athenian Solon.

Each polis had its own law code. We know most about the legal system of Athens, as in most things. Here, there were many courts, each trying different kinds of case. Very serious crimes against the state came before the entire assembly of citizens. Capital punishment was inflicted for blasphemy, treason and murder – the method differing for each crime but including beheading, poisoning and stoning. For other serious crimes, including manslaughter, exile was a common punishment. For lesser crimes, fines or confiscation of property were used.

In all courts, cases were tried by large juries of citizens, selected by lot, and presided over by a magistrate. Any citizen could bring charges against another. – But to limit the bringing of false accusations any accuser who failed to convince a fifth of the jurors was

heavily fined. The accuser put his case, and the accused then defended him. The jurors cast their vote as they left court by each dropping a pebble into a jar for guilty or for innocent.

A board of eleven magistrates was responsible, with the help of a body of slaves, for maintaining law and order, arresting wrong-doers and supervising prisons (which were mainly used for condemned prisoners awaiting execution). Although we know little about Greek law, there can be no doubt that Greek law would have a profound influence on Roman law, not least in the fact that the earliest laws of the Romans were inscribed on stone tablets and set up in a public place.

As time went by, most city-states of Greece did in fact give up a measure of their much-prized independence to form alliances with one another, against joint enemies. They did this often voluntarily, but sometimes under coercion. The most famous of these alliances were the Delian League and the Peloponnesian League, led by Athens and Sparta respectively. The Delian League originated as a defensive alliance against the Persian threat, being founded in the early fifth century. However, as time went by, Athens became more and more dominant, treating the other league cities more as subjects than as equals. This behaviour eventually helped lead to the downfall of the League

The Peloponnesian league was founded much earlier than the Delian, in the 7th century BC, and endured much longer. Its chief city, Sparta, had achieved its position of leadership largely through military means; however, the League served the interests of the other cities by offering them effective protection from non-League enemies. Also, Sparta made sure that League cities were under aristocratic regimes which tended to be in favour of Spartan values

Warfare

The city-states relied on their own citizens to fight in their armies. Each citizen had to have his own armour and weapons, and spend a certain amount of time undergoing military training. The fact that the Greek world was fragmented into hundreds of small city-states, with only a few thousand citizens each, meant that wars, though frequent, were limited the scale. The duration of campaigns was determined by the need for most of the citizens to return to their farms for harvest time. Campaigns would therefore often be restricted to summer. Battles were fought between large formations of foot soldiers, fighting at close quarters: the majority of the casualties in a set-piece battle would obviously occur at the front

of the two formations; if one of the sides turned and ran (a not infrequent occurrence) the all were in danger. Cavalry played a comparatively minor role in Greek warfare.

A hoplite, or heavy-armed infantry soldier, was armed with a spear, large shield, and helmet. Swords might also be carried, but as a secondary weapon. Better-off hoplites would have in addition a bronze breastplate and greaves. These would tend to fight in the front line, the place of most honour.

The scale of Greek warfare increased somewhat in the 6th century BC, when groups of city-sates formed alliances. The most famous of these was the Peloponnesian League, under the leadership of Sparta. During the Persian Wars, the Delian League emerged, under the leadership of Athens. These and other leagues (the Achaean, the Aetolian) increased the scale of Greek warfare further in the 5th and 4th centuries. Large armies were fielded, forces were deployed further from their homes, and campaigns grew longer. Naval warfare became more important, with several city-sates maintaining large fleets of galleys (the rowers of these galleys were usually the poorest of the citizens, who could not afford to pay for their own armor). Blockades and sieges became common. In Hellenistic times the scale of Greek-style warfare would become much larger still.

Ancient Greek Religion

The Greeks worshipped a pantheon of gods and goddesses, headed by the chief of the gods, Zeus. Other gods included Hera, Zeus's wife; Athena, goddess of wisdom and learning; Apollo, god of music and culture; Aphrodite, goddess of love; Dionysus, god of wine; Hades, god of the underworld; and Diana, goddess of the hunt. Greek religion placed little emphasis on ethical conduct – stories about the gods portrayed often them as lying, cheating, being unfaithful, and getting drunk and so on. As in many traditional religions, a Greek god or goddess was seen more as a potential source of help, rather than as a focus of devotion.

Each city-state had its own festivals, but certain festivals were common to all the Greeks. The most famous of these were the Olympic Games, held in honour of Zeus every four years (starting traditionally in 776 BC). There were much fewer events than in a modern Olympics, and there were competitions in music and poetry as well as in athletics. The winner of an Olympic event was awarded an olive wreath and won great honour in his home city. The Greeks often consulted oracles – priests or priestesses at certain shrines who, in a trance, uttered messages from the gods. People would go to oracles for advice and guidance on specific matters. The most famous of these was the oracle at the shrine of Apollo at

Delphi. Advice was sought by private individuals as well as by politicians and military commanders.

The Greek religion was not something to engage a person's spirituality, and various cults grew up to fill that void. The Eleusian Mysteries and the cult of Orpheus injected emotional elements into worship. One joined these through initiation, and their beliefs were secret. Hence we know little about them. However, they stressed the importance of the afterlife – initiates were promised immortality – and the need for ethical standards of behaviour were emphasized. Numerous myths have come down to us about the Greeks gods, goddesses and semi-divine heroes. They also have much to say about the origins and nature of the world. Many of these myths contradict one another, something that the Greeks found no problem with.

Ancient Greek Education

Most Greek cities did not have publicly-funded schools – Sparta was the exception. Education was therefore a private affair. Wealthy families would put a boy under the care of a slave who would accompany him everywhere. The boy (and the accompanying slave) would attend a small school run by a private teacher, who would have a few pupils in his charge. Here, the boy would learn to read and write, and do arithmetic. Later, they learned to sing and play music (which for the Greeks included poetry). A slave accompanies his two charges to school. After the age of 12 boys focussed on physical education. They trained in such sports as the throwing the discus and javelin, running and wrestling. Some wealthy families would also have their girls educated. They would be taught to read, write, and play music; and they were also given also some physical education.

After school, older boys underwent military training. The family bought armour and weapons for them, and the young men learnt how to fight effectively in military camps. From this age they were expected to serve in the state's army, if needed.

For boys from wealthy families, training in public speaking would round off their education. In Athens, some of the first higher education institutions recorded in history was founded: Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lycaeum. Here, courses involving logic, literature and philosophy were taught.

Meanwhile, girls from wealthy families were trained in managing the household. This would have involved account-keeping, as well as more domestic tasks such as weaving. In

fact, how educated a young woman actually became would have depended entirely on her family, and of course her own motivation.

The Cultural Life of the Ancient Greeks

Literature

Even while the Greeks were emerging from their Dark Ages after the fall of Mycenae (c. 1200-750 BC), when they produced their greatest poet, Homer. Most modern scholars think that Homer's two epic poems, the Iliad and the Odyssey, were composed around 750 BC. It was almost certainly first composed in oral form before being written perhaps a hundred years later. These poems have been studied by western scholars ever since.

Later poets included Hesiod (7th century BC), whose "Works and Days" portrays the tough life of an ordinary farmer; Sappho (6th century BC), whose love poetry uses beauty of language to explore intense personal feelings; and Pindar (late 6th century – early 5th century BC), who expressed emotion in lyrical poems praising famous athletes or gods, and mourning the dead.

The Greeks were the first to pioneer the art form of drama. This had its origins in the dances and songs of sacred rites, and was always associated with religious festivals. A chorus chanting words or singing songs replaced the dancers, and originally only one solo actor stood out from the rest. Actors wore different masks to depict various standard moods or characters. Greek drama included both tragedy and comedy. It reached maturity in 5th century Athens. Aeschylus (525-456 BC) reduced the importance of the chorus, and increased the role of individual actors and dialogue. Sophocles (496-406 BC) took these innovations further, while Euripides (484-406 BC) used dialogue to portray deep human emotions.

The Greeks also pioneered the writing of history as not merely the chronicling of events, but in striving for accuracy, objectivity and meaning in their accounts. Herodotus (c. 485-425 BC) is known the "father of history" (in the West), and was the first to develop a coherent historical narrative (in his case, of the Persian Wars); but it was his successor, Thucydides (c.460-396 BC), who was the one to first write what we today would call proper history.

Art and Architecture

Greek architecture is known for its grace and simplicity. The finest buildings the Greeks erected were their temples; and the most famous of these is the Parthenon, in Athens. The centre of each temple was space known as the "cella". Here was located the statue if the god. In front of the cella was the porch, and both porch and cella were surrounded by a colonnade of columns. Each column was topped by a "capitals", a carved block of stone. On top of these rested the "entablature", a band of carved stone on which, in turn, rested the roof. These elements went together to form a simple yet gracious building.

Sculpture and Painting

Greek sculpture – usually in stone and bronze; sometimes in gold and ivory – was solid and formal, much like that of the ancient Middle East. In the Classical period, sculptures strove for realism, and their work became more graceful and elegant. They applied mathematical ratios to achieve aesthetic beauty. As time went by, and their skills improved still more, they sought to represent movement and emotion. In their best works they achieved fluidity in stone which has seldom been matched.

In ancient times, statues would have been painted with vibrant, lifelike colours. Virtually no trace of this survives. The only paintings that have come down to us are on vases, where the images are of necessity simple and economic. We know of other painting as well from literary sources, for example on walls of palaces; and some painters achieved wide fame. However, none of their work has come down to us.

Philosophy

The earliest school of Greek philosophers were those of the Ionian tradition (7th-5th centuries BC). Ionia was in what is today western Turkey, and it is tempting to see the influence of the ancient Middle East on their work. Much of these involved quasi-religious speculations about the origins and structure of the universe: but this led them on to quasi-scientific propositions, such as that all matter comes from water (reminiscent of Mesopotamian beliefs).

The Pythagoreans were another group of early Greek thinkers (6th-5th century BC). They formed a curious combination of philosophical school and religious brotherhood. They believed that all things could be explained by numbers. As a result, they did much

mathematical speculation (see below, section on Science). However, they believed in such religious ideas as the transmigration of the soul. They lived simple, ascetic lives.

By the 5th century, Greek thinkers such as Parmenides (c.504-456 BC) were advocating the idea that reason is the best way to reaching truth.

The Sophists – "teachers of wisdom" – were travelling teachers prominent in the 5th century, after the Persian Wars. They preferred to study man and worldly problems rather than speculate about universal truths. In fact, some claimed that truths were only meaningful when placed in a particular context, and seen from a particular point of view. They rejected the notion of the supernatural and universal standards of morality and justice. Some went on the state that nothing really exists; the material world is just an illusion. Some taught that all the meaning there is in the universe resides in the words we use. Language is therefore a tool to give things meaning. In due course sophists came to be associated with specious reasoning, using words to mean whatever one wants them to mean.

Greek philosophy reached its high point in the careers of three thinkers who lived and worked in Athens, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

Socrates (469-399 BC) challenged the thinking of his contemporaries by posing penetrating questions. In this way he aimed to strip away the prejudices we all bring to our thinking. He developed the "Socratic method", based on questions and discussion, rather than on lectures and received teaching. He believed that reason and clear thinking could lead men to truth and happiness. In 399 BC, he was put on trial in Athens for "corrupting the minds of the youth" and not revering the gods. He was executed by poisoning.

Plato (427-347 BC) was a disciple of Socrates; it is through him we know of Socrates' teaching. Plato believed that the material world is not real, but an imperfect image of the real, or ideal. He founded the "Academy", the first known institute of higher education in the West.

Aristotle (384-322 BC) was a student of Plato's. He spent some time as tutor to the future king of Macedon, who would become known to history as Alexander the Great. After this, he founded the Lyceum in Athens. Aristotle left behind a vast body of work. To help clear thinking, he developed a system of formal rules of logic. These became extremely influential in future Western thought. He believed ideas were indistinguishable from matter, in that they could exists only through material objects. He believed that God was the "first

cause" of all things, and that the good life can be achieved through moderation. Greek thought would continue to evolve in Hellenistic times, with the Stoics and Epicureans becoming particularly prominent.

Mathematics and Science

For the Greeks, science was indistinguishable from philosophy (in fact, science was called "natural philosophy" in the West right up to the 18th century).

Thales of Miletus is usually regarded as the first prominent Greek mathematician, and he is credited with developing the methodologies of observation, experimentation and deduction, which are still used today. Thales' younger contemporaries, Pythagoras and his school, developed geometry as a branch of knowledge. They uncovered Pythagoras' theorem, that the sum of any three angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles.

One of the main concerns for Greek philosophers was the nature of the universe, and their thinking about this had theological dimensions – Heraclitus (533-475 BC), for example, believed that the universe pervaded by Logos, or divine will, and Xenophanes (540-485 BC) taught that was a supreme being, and attacked the idea of a pantheon of gods – and some was more along what we today would recognize as scientific lines.

Empedocles (495-430 BC) proposed that all matter was indestructible and eternal. He was the first to come up with the idea that matter exists in only four basic forms – earth, air, fire and water. Different balances lead to different kinds of materials. Democritus (c.460-362) developed this idea and anticipated modern physics by proposing that all matter consists of minute and indivisible units called atoms.

Anaximander (611-547 BC) asserted the theory of organic evolution, with the earliest animals being fish, which later adapted to different environments to become land animals and human beings.

In medicine, the Greeks dissected animals to refine their ideas on anatomy. They located the optic nerve and recognized the brain as the locus of thought. They discovered that blood flows to and from the heart. Hippocrates (c.460-377 BC) argued that diseases had natural rather than supernatural causes, and that they therefore could be treated by natural means. He advocated rest, proper diet, and exercise for a healthy life; he knew the uses of many drugs, and he helped improve surgical practices. He is considered one of the key

figures in the history of Western medicine. In astronomy, the first three-dimensional models to explain the apparent motion of the planets were developed in the 4th century BC.

Aristotle advanced the scientific method by his insistence on observation of the material world being an important root to knowledge. Together with his rules of logic, this laid some important foundations for the scientific method in the West. He put this method into action himself by classified many plants and animals, so making a great contribution to botany and zoology. He developed Empedocles' ideas on matter by adding a fifth element, ether, to the other four.

The Legacy of Ancient Greece

The civilization of ancient Greece has been immensely influential on subsequent world history. The language, politics, educational systems, philosophy, science, and the arts of the ancient Greeks were crucial in laying the foundations of Western civilization. Through the Roman Empire, much Greek culture came to Western Europe. The Byzantine Empire inherited Classical Greek culture from the Hellenistic world, without Latin intermediation, and the preservation of classical Greek learning in medieval Byzantine tradition further exerted strong influence on the Slavs and later on the Islamic civilization of the Golden Age. Through these channels it came again to Western European in renewed force, and was hugely instrumental in stimulating the Italian Renaissance.

The art and architecture of ancient Greece have had an enormous impact on later cultures, from ancient times to the present day. This is particularly the case with sculpture and architecture. Roman art was largely a continuation of Greek – in fact, in many cases it was actually executed by Greek artists. In the East, Alexander's conquests led to the rise of the hybrid Hellenistic civilization in which Greek and Asian styles mingled. The distinctive Persian art of the medieval period incorporated the plasticity of Greek art and solidity of Mesopotamian. The Ghandara style of northern India similarly embodied the artistic heritage of two quite different civilizations, ancient India and Greece, and had a large impact on the Buddhist art of northern India, central Asia and Eastern Asia.

Ancient Greek mathematics contributed many important developments, including the basic rules of geometry, the idea of formal mathematical proof, and discoveries in number theory and applied mathematics. It is now increasingly recognized that Greek mathematics owed a great deal to Mesopotamia; however, the Greeks made many advances of their own. The discoveries of Greek mathematicians are foundational to modern mathematics.

Greek science provided Islamic and medieval European thought with its world view. The Greeks came up with a huge range of rationally argued propositions about nature and the universe, which, even when dramatically wrong, provided hypotheses which modern Western thinkers have been able to test, often demolish, and in some cases corroborate.

The rise and fall of Ancient Rome formed a crucial episode in the rise of Western civilization. Through Rome the achievements of ancient Greek civilization passed to Medieval Europe with unique Roman contributions added. In the West, following the Italian Renaissance (after c. 1400), the technical brilliance of Greek (and its offspring, Roman) art and architecture stimulated artists to look to these ancient models for inspiration. From that time until well into the 19th century, the classical tradition derived from Greece and Rome was the dominant strand in Western civilization.

3. Roman Civilization

Rome must be considered one of the most successful imperial powers in history. In the course of centuries Rome grew from a small town on the Tiber River in central Italy into a vast empire that ultimately embraced England, all of continental Europe west of the Rhine and south of the Danube, most of Asia west of the Euphrates, northern Africa, and the islands of the Mediterranean. Unlike the Greeks, who excelled in intellectual and artistic endeavours, the Romans achieved greatness in their military, political, and social institutions. Roman society, during the republic, was governed by a strong military ethos. While this helps to explain the incessant warfare, it does not account for Rome's success as an imperial power.

Roman Civilization

The ancient Romans built one of the greatest empires in world history. However, whereas the Roman Empire lasted from about 30 BCE to 476 CE, Ancient Roman civilization emerged long before, in the centuries after 800 BCE.

The term Ancient Rome refers to the city of Rome, which was located in central Italy; and also to the empire it came to rule, which covered the entire Mediterranean basin and much of Western Europe. At its greatest extent in stretched from present-day northern England to southern Egypt and from the Atlantic coast to the shores of the Persian Gulf.

Rome's location in central Italy placed it squarely within the Mediterranean cluster of civilizations. The most famous of these was that of the Ancient Greeks, but others included those of the Phoenicians, the Carthaginians and the Etruscans, plus several lesser-known

peoples such as the Lycians. The civilization of Ancient Rome was rooted, directly or indirectly, in all these earlier culture.

In its early centuries Rome was particularly influenced by the powerful Etruscan civilization to its north, from which it acquired many aspects of its culture. As Rome's reach expanded, it came into direct contact with the Greeks. From then on Greek influence would become an increasingly important element within Roman life. However, the Romans would give Greek culture their own slant, giving it a new grandeur which can be seen in Roman remains throughout the empire.

The Society and Economy

Ancient Roman society originated as a society of small farmers. However, as it grew more powerful and more extensive, it became one of the most urbanized societies in the pre-industrial world. At the height of its empire, Rome was probably the largest city on the planet, with more than a million inhabitants. The empire had a handful of other cities with several hundred thousand inhabitants, and many other large and wealthy urban settlements. These cities had some features which would have looked very familiar to us: high rise apartment blocks, overcrowded slums, busy streets, plazas, imposing public administrative buildings, and so on.

Roman Cities

The Roman Empire contained around 2000 "cities". For the Romans, cities were communities which ran their own affairs, and constituted the main building-blocks of the empire. Every free person in the empire belonged to a city – which may not necessarily have been where he or she was living at any given time, but was his or her "home town".

The Roman city was built around a forum. This was an open space surrounded by colonnades and public buildings. It functioned as a market place, political meeting point and social centre. The public buildings surrounding it would include the main temple, the basilica (the main government building where the town council met and town administration was carried on), the law courts (if separate from the Basilica), and the main public baths of the city. Stretching away from the forum were the city's streets, forming a grid pattern so that a map of a city would look like a multitude of square blocks. Here would be situated the homes of rich and poor, the shops, cafes and workshops of the town, more temples and public baths,

and a theatre, maybe two. Unlike Greek theatres, Roman ones were large, free-standing buildings of semi-circular design, containing tiered ranks of seats.

The city would be surrounded by walls, usually made of stone. Fortified gateways pierced the walls to allow people and traffic to pass in and out. Water was brought to the city, sometimes from miles away, along aqueducts. It was fed into public fountains dotting the city, from which poorer families drew their water; and also into private wells in the houses of the rich. The amount of fresh water available in an average Roman town was far greater than in later centuries, right up to two hundred years ago. Roman cities also had public drains and sewers to take the city's waste away, and public toilets were available. Outside the walls was the amphitheatre. Here, wild animal shows and gladiatorial fights were shown. Amphitheatres were built like the theatres, but were circular rather than semi-circular in design. Many cities were located on the coast or by a large, navigable river. Here, a harbour would be situated, consisting of quays built of wood or stone for loading and unloading vessels, and docks for repairing or building ships.

Surrounding the city was the territory which it controlled. Hamlets and villages were scattered across the landscape, whose people came to the city for market or other special occasions. Villas of the rich were also to be found – large farmhouses set in country estates worked by slaves or tenant farmers. Some villas were truly magnificent, palaces set in beautiful parks.

Agriculture

As in all pre-modern societies, the Roman economy was based primarily on agriculture. For the Romans, this was then typical Mediterranean farming of the ancient world, cultivating grains, vines and olives, and keeping sheep, goat and cattle. Landholdings were very small by modern standards, the majority no more than a few acres in size. An estate of 100 acres was considered large. In the late Republic, however, many wealthy Romans developed huge slave-run plantations.

As the city of Rome grew into a huge imperial capital, its population was fed by grain imported from overseas. However, there was still a great demand for vegetables, olives, wine and other farm produce. As a result, the countryside near Rome was given over to intensive farming and market gardening. Manuals on agriculture were written to spread efficient methods of food production.

Trade and Industry

Economically, the "Pax Romana" which the Romans established around the Mediterranean was very favourable to trade. Long-distance maritime trade was more extensive at the time of the empire than at any time before the nineteenth century. This expansion in trade encouraged the development of farms and estates growing crops for export, of craftsmen specializing in export goods, and the growth of highly organized trading operations spanning the empire. One fact which had a major impact on trade was the system of grain fleets which carried grain from Egypt and North Africa to Rome, to feed the population of the capital. This was set up by the emperor Augustus, so that the Roman poor hundreds of thousands of them could get free bread each day.

Augustus, the First Roman Emperor

Scholars used to think that this massive operation acted as a drain on the economy of the empire – it was, after all, paid for out of taxes. More recently, they have begun to view it as having acted as a huge stimulus to trade. The ships which carried the grain would also have carried other goods, which would have subsidized the long-distance trade of the empire. Quite apart from the grain supply, the sheer wealth which flowed into the enormous imperial capital would have boosted commerce and industry right around the empire. The volume of trade in the empire brought into being the most advanced financial system in the ancient world. Banking had been practiced in Rome since at least the days of the 2nd Punic War (218-202 BCE). The large-scale military operations of the later Republic also brought into being firms of contractors which were involved in supplying armies and undertaking tax-farming operations in the provinces. Associated with this was the rise of high finance, and what appears to be the arrival of modern-style stocks and shares: the firms of financiers were joint-stock companies issuing bonds and shares which apparently fluctuated in price, just as modern stocks do. This financial industry continued to be active into the imperial period, financing the grain fleets, large-scale mining and other major business operations.

This scale of Roman commercial activity would have facilitated an expansion in industrial output, and there is strong evidence that this, too, was at a level not seen again in Europe until the Nineteenth century. The copper mines which developed in Spain, for example, were huge by pre-modern standards.

Most industrial production took place in the small workshops of potters, blacksmiths, bronze workers, carpenters, leather workers, cobblers, lamp makers and other craftsmen.

Family members plus some slaves would make up the workforce in most of these. However, some workshops were much larger. The armoires which supplied the Roman army employed hundreds of workers, mostly slaves.

Social Classes

Roman society changed enormously over time as Rome expanded from small city-state to huge empire throughout almost all Roman history, however, the basic class distinctions of Roman society remained in place. At the top stood the senators – members of the senate (the council of state) – and their families. In early Rome, these were probably all members of the class of Patricians, a group of hereditary aristocrats; as time went by, however, membership of the senate became more broadly based, as men from Plebeian families were enrolled. Below the senatorial class came the equates. These were originally those in the army who could afford to own a horse (equus). Over time, however, they became a numerous "middle class" between senators and the rest of the citizen body. Below them were the ordinary Roman citizens. Their numbers grew vastly over time, from a few thousand to many millions; and spread right around the empire. A ubiquitous feature of Roman society was slavery. In fact, as Rome's conquests multiplied, she became the most slave-based society before the rise of Atlantic slavery in the 17th century.

Slaves would have been found everywhere, in the cities and in the country, and of course in the home. They worked in all kinds of businesses, and did all kinds of work – from unskilled labouring through to high level professional jobs. They had no legal rights – they were property, like cattle. But one thing they could, with luck, look forward to: freedom. Generation by generation, millions of slaves were freed and joined the main body of citizens, with all their rights. Some freedmen became very rich; many others made a moderate living in their trade. But all swelled the ranks of citizens.(Take a more detailed look at how Roman society and economy changed over time as it grew from single city state to huge empire.)

The Family

The father – the Pater Families – was the head of the Roman family. In early law, he had complete control over his wife and children, with power of life and death over them. Even as adults, his sons remained under his authority. Later, the laws governing family life were greatly relaxed, and discipline in most homes became much milder. In fact, from late Republican times onward, Roman women lived much freer lives than their Greek predecessors had done. For example, whereas Greek wives had been unable to eat with her

husband's guests, a Roman wife was free to do so. Also, women could initiate divorce as easily as men. Young Roman men came of age about the age of 17, when he became liable for military service. In early times all men would be expected to fight in the army, and could be called up to do so for some of each year, until he was 40 years old. From the late Republic onward, however, serving in the army became a full-time profession, so unless they volunteered, ordinary citizens would not expect to serve.

Parents arranged the marriages of their children. A man would usually move to his own house when he married. Although boys could marry 14, and girls at 12, most did not do so until they were older. After marriage, in well-off marriages the wife's responsibility was to look after the home, and bring up the children, while the husband worked. In poorer households they would be needed in the family workshop.

Dress

Roman clothing was almost identical to that of the Greeks. Men wore a tunic tied at the waste. On formal occasions they would also drape a large piece of cloth, called a toga, around them. Only Roman citizens were allowed to wear this. For most citizens, the toga was a plain white cloth. The only exception was for senators, whose togas were bordered with a purple stripe, and for emperors, whose toga was colored purple (thus when a man became emperor he was said to "take the purple".)

Towards the end of the Roman Empire, although togas continued to be worn by senators and high officials, they went out of fashion for everyone else (by this time all free people were Roman citizens, so it had ceased to be a mark of distinction). Barbarian influences began to be felt, with long-sleeved tunics and trousers became popular. Highly decorated cloaks fastened by a broach also came into vogue.

Most men wore their hair short. Throughout the republic and early empire, they were clean shaven. From the second century onward, older men adopted the Greek fashion for growing a beard. In the later Empire men of all ages wore beards.

Women wore a stola, a long tunic tied at the bust and falling to the ankles. They too could drape large pieces of cloth, looking like a toga but called a palla, over them. Women's hairstyles varied over the long period of Rome's history. In earlier times, women grew their hair long, and then gathered it into a bun. Under the early empire, upper class women's

hairstyles became more elaborate, with the hair often braided before being gathered back into a bun. Later, hair styles were more elaborate still, with many curls piled high on the head.

Wealthy Roman women also wore a lot of make-up, at least during the empire; face creams and perfumes, red ochre for the lips and cheek and soot for eyeliners were all applied with the aid of a polished metal mirror (plus slave).

Romans of all classes, like people of all races and times, enjoyed dining with friends, eating, drinking and chatting in the privacy of their own homes. In wealthy household, large and elaborate banquets were the norm under the Empire.

For educated Romans, reading was a common habit: leisured learning (otium) was an important part of the idealized gentleman's life. Books – or rather, scrolls – were expensive. They were copied by hand (this was long before the days of printing) by groups of slaves labouring in the workshop of a book publisher. In Roman times, only the well-off could afford this pastime. All Roman, of both sexes and all classes, enjoyed visiting the public baths. These were not just places to go and bathe, but also to take exercise, have a massage and above all to socialize. Drinking and gambling with friends in the many inns was also popular with many men. Public entertainment was to be had at theatres, where plays by Greek and Latin playwrights were staged. Chariot races were put on at the racecourse, or circus (the most famous of these was the Circus Maximums, at Rome).

At frequent intervals, bloody shows were put on at the amphitheatre. Here, armed men fought animals, or gladiators (swordsmen) fought each other; or unarmed criminals condemned to death were put into the arena to be eaten by lions. It was only with the coming of Christianity as the official religion of the empire, towards the end of the Roman period, that the worst of these shocking shows – gladiatorial combats – were abolished.

Political Legacy

The Roman Republic governed Rome as it changed from single city-state to enormous empire. As its power expanded, the republic's leaders met new challenges by adapting old institutions to meet unforeseen challenges. The stresses and strains of growth eventually led to the breakdown of the Republic, but the Augustan settlement which opened the curtain on the Empire was a masterpiece of practical adaptation.

The Republican government involved a mix of different institutions – the magistrates, above all the two annually elected consuls; the senate, a council of state composed of the

most important men in Rome (senators); and the popular assemblies, which elected the magistrates and had the final say as to whether Rome went to war or not.

Most of these institutions carried over into the Empire. However, they were adapted to give the emperor supreme command over the army, as well as the final say in what legislation was permitted. They were also fine-tuned more to the needs of governing a large empire than of running a single city-state, which is how they had originated.

Warfare

The Roman army was the most formidable fighting force of its day. It changed considerably over the long period of Roman history, but for most of this time it was based around the legion. This was a body of some 4000-6000 infantry soldiers (depending on the period), divided into units of 100 men (centuries). This division into small formations gave the legion flexibility unmatched by its opponents; and combined with innovative tactics and sound discipline, it endured as an unmatched fighting force for many centuries.

Roman law

The Greeks had developed legal codes, and the Romans followed their example. In the mid-fifth century BCE they published 12 tables of laws, which were put up for public display in the Forum. From these early laws there developed, over the centuries, a huge body of law, dealing with every aspect of public and private life.

Roman law guaranteed all citizens a fair trial. There were several courts, each presided over by different magistrates and each dealing with different kinds of cases, some civil, some criminal. In some courts, juries, made up of ordinary citizens, could by too strong. In criminal cases, it was up to the victim to bring an accusation of wrongdoing, there being no public prosecutor. Punishments for the most serious crimes were execution, and for lesser ones, flogging. The law protected a whole range of basic rights for citizens. The Romans developed the principle that all citizens were equal in the eyes of the law, and that their persons and property were protected from arbitrary demands by the state.

These rights, originating and evolved within the Republic, were not taken away under the emperors, at least for the majority of the population who were not within the personal reach of the emperor. Even a Jew in a far away province who happened to possess Roman citizenship could cry, “I appeal to Caesar”, and to Caesar he was taken. The great legal

digests of the Late Empire enshrined these principles and passed them on to future European civilization.

Roman Religion

Roman religion was very similar to that of the Greeks. Like the Greeks, the Romans worshiped a pantheon of gods and goddesses, headed by the chief of the gods, Jupiter. Other gods included Minerva, goddess of wisdom and learning; Mars, god of war; Venus, goddess of love; Ceres, goddess of the Earth; and Pluto, god of the underworld. As well as these major gods, numerous lesser deities, gods of hearth and home, and forest and field, populated the spirit world. Roman religion placed great emphasis on proper rituals – it was important to do things right. Roman priests were, by and large, not professional, full-time religious practitioners. They tended rather to be the leading people in their community, magistrates and senators. Unlike Greek religion, Roman religion had a strong moral dimension. This was to do with behaving in an honest and dignified way towards others, keeping oaths and agreements on the shake of a hand, and in displaying courage and fortitude when misfortune struck. The Romans were very superstitious, always looking for good or bad omens before embarking on a course of action. Like the Greeks, they also consulted famous oracles – priests or priestesses at certain shrines who, in a trance, uttered messages from the gods.

One innovation that the emperors introduced was their own cult, emperor-worship. To what extent this was a real religion rather than an outward show of loyalty is difficult to say; however, in most Roman towns a temple to the emperor would be among the larger buildings. As with Greek religion, Roman religion was not aimed at meeting private spiritual needs – it was a public, outward thing. As time went by, new religions and cults became popular in the Roman world: the Eleusian Mysteries and cult of Orpheus from Greece; the cult of the Egyptian goddess Isis; the religion of Mithras, from beyond the empire, in Iran; and later, Christianity.

Despite often fierce persecution, Christianity spread around the empire, and by the third century Christians probably made up a sizable minority of the population. However, it was the conversion to Christianity of the emperor Constantine, and the favour bestowed on the Christian Church by succeeding emperors, that turned it into the most popular religion in the empire. In the 380s it was made the official religion of the empire, a development which would have a huge impact on the future history of Europe.

Art and Architecture

Roman art was closely related to Late Greek art – indeed, as the Romans conquered more and more Greek cities, more and more Greet art found its way to Rome. The same is true of Greek artists, who found in the Roman ruling classes keen patrons of their work. Culturally, the Roman period is to a large extent an extension of the Hellenistic period, especially in the eastern parts of the empire. Nevertheless, Roman sculpture in particular has an unmissable characteristic all its own. The sculptural portraits of leading Romans of the late Republic and early Empire are simple and dignified, and above all startlingly realistic. We really do know what Julius Caesar looked like, to see them "in the flesh", so to speak, is an awe-inspiring experience.

One can see Greek influences powerfully at work in the buildings of Ancient Rome, but transformed into a uniquely Roman style. There was nothing in Greek architecture similar to the arched facades of the Coliseum or of the theatre of Pompey; nor to the arched construction of the great Roman aqueducts, or the triumphal arches which adorn many Roman cities. The arch is a new innovation in Roman architecture, reflecting Roman engineering capabilities in solving the problem of carrying greater weight. The same is true for the dome, which appeared most famously in the Pantheon, in Rome, and which allowed Roman architects and builders to span much greater spaces than before. The theme here is size and grandeur, the Romans built big to reflect their power and confidence.

Literature

Roman literature is written in the Latin language. The Latin's were a people who had settled in central Italy some centuries before Rome was founded; Rome was originally one of their towns, and although the Romans came to be of somewhat mixed Italian stock (Latin, Sabine, Etruscan), they spoke the Latin dialect. Writing came to the Latin's (as for other Italians) via the Greeks, and early Latin writers modelled themselves on Greek precursors (when they were not actually translating Greek works into Latin). However, as the Republic neared its end, and the Empire lived through its first century, a group of Roman writers turned Latin into a great literary language in its own right, which later ages admired enormously, and sought to emulate.

One of the extraordinary features of much Latin writing is that, to a degree probably without precedent in any other literature, much of it was produced by busy politicians. Some of these reached the highest eminence in their own turbulent lifetimes: Cicero, Caesar,

Seneca (all these died violent political deaths). Other writers did not make quite the same mark, but still had successful careers in public service: Sallust, Varro, Tacitus and Pliny the younger, all successful senators; and Suetonius and the Pliny the elder, both senior civil servants. They found time in their busy lives to produce a great volume of writing – commentaries on philosophy and politics, histories, biographies, satires, speeches, letters, drama, and works on science and nature. Throughout all this literature there permeates a realism and reflectiveness which comes from the practical lives these men led.

Other Latin writers of the period lived more conventional literary lives: the poets Virgil, Catallus, Horace, Ovid, Martial and Juvenal; the historian Livy. In fact these too were all near the seat of power, but as writers, not as politicians.

Later writes continued the tradition of combining politics with writing – most notably an emperor, Marcus Aurelius, who jotted down his thoughts on philosophy. Right at the end of the Roman period, Ausonius the poet, Symmachus the man of letters and Boethius, the philosopher, all held high office while producing literature which is still read today.

Meanwhile, in a completely different social setting, an entirely different genre was being produced. This was the writings of early Christian thinkers. Most of these spoke and wrote Greek, but from the third century onward some major Christian Latin writers appeared. Their works, of encouragement and exhortation, theology and pastoral concern, are still regarded as classics of Christian literature.

The elegant, "upper class" literature of Rome and the more urgent literature of the Christian Church come together in the works of St Augustine of Hippo. He was a man right at the top of Roman society, and a deeply committed Christian. He wrote works reflecting on his life and times, and in doing so greatly influenced western thinking for centuries to come.

Philosophy

Roman thinkers looked to Hellenistic philosophy for inspiration. The Stoic school of thought, who taught that it was duty for individuals to bear life's trials with dignity and calm, was particularly popular in Rome. From Cicero, in the late Republic, though Seneca and later Marcus Aurelius, under the Empire, Stoicism continued to exercise a strong attraction over Roman minds. Epicureanism was also popular in some circles, with poets such as Lucretius championing its teachings. Like Stoics, Epicureans believed that life is ultimately without hope, and that one should focus on living daily life in a positive spirit.

A major philosophical strand of thought in the later Roman Empire was Neo-Platonism. This taught that there was a "being beyond being" who created and ordered all things, and that humans should strive to become one with this being through practicing virtue and asceticism

Education and Science

Young children of both sexes, and from a wide range of social backgrounds, attended small schools run by slaves or ex-slaves; in better-off households, they were taught at home, also by a slave or freedman. Schools were held in public places, such as the portico (open colonnaded area) of the forum. Children were taught reading, writing and arithmetic, by rote learning – reinforced by regular beatings! Older girls were excluded from formal education – though some Roman women were noted for their learning, and must have continued their education at home. For boys, schooling continued with mastering Latin and Greek grammar. Often, cities paid for a public teacher to perform this task – this was a well-respected post (even if often occupied by an ex-slave), and such teachers sometimes went on to take important jobs in the civil service.

The sons of wealthy families who wanted them to take up a career in public life then progressed onto higher education. Here they would learn the art of public speaking – a vitally important skill if they were to persuade citizens to vote for them, or sway juries in court, or influence decisions taken in city councils or even the Roman senate.

Large cities often paid for a teacher of "rhetoric" (as public speaking is called) to fulfil this task. Like grammar teachers, these were important men in the city, and could go on to high government office later on. Some teachers attracted students from all over the empire, with their schools becoming a kind of university. The two institutions of higher education in Athens, in Greece, the Academy (originally founded by Plato) and the Lycaeum (by Aristotle), continued to flourish under Roman rule, and specialized in the study of Greek philosophy.

The earliest Roman houses were essentially small wattle-and-daub cottages with thatched roofs. This is hardly surprising as Rome originated as a collection of rural villages. By the time of the end of the monarchy, however, houses designed along Etruscan lines were being built. Early Roman dwellings were one-story buildings erected around a courtyard. The main reception room (the atrium) gave out onto smaller rooms – dining room (triclinium), office (tablinum), bedrooms, kitchens and other domestic areas. Many of the family rooms

had painted walls. Later, under Greek influence, the courtyards of larger houses became small colonnaded (peristyle) gardens, complete with fountains and ponds.

Later, some houses became larger in size and more complex in design, with two stories. The area around the atrium expanded to become a main block, and the garden was moved to the back (but still surrounded by wings with kitchens, servant's quarters, storerooms and so on). All Roman town houses had toilets, which were built above sewers which discharged into a large public sewer to take the waste away from the town.

In the cities, the poor lived in rooms above or behind their places of work. Craftsmen and shopkeepers rented out shops, workshops or cafes, plus the living accommodation which went with them. Some large houses were completely converted into either workshops or apartments. In large cities such as Rome, apartment blocks as high as five stories (or even more, before the emperor Augustus imposed housing regulations) were built, divided into many rooms. These would have had no water or toilets above the first floor, and life in them would have resembled living in the mid-19th century slums of London or New York. The lower stories were sometimes divided into larger suites of rooms, for well-off families.

The main building material for houses was fired brick. Stone, marble and even an early form of concrete were used in the palatial mansions of the rich. Roofs were made of wood covered with terracotta tiles (terracotta is a type of clay).

Houses had small windows, without glass but with wooden shutters. In apartment blocks, however, the windows were larger, as they were usually the only source of light. They sometimes had glass panes in them.

The rooms were furnished with sparse furniture, mostly wooden chairs, couches, stools, benches and tables. Cupboards similar to those of today were also to be found, as well as chests of various sizes. The dwellings of the rural poor were small huts and cottages, with tile or thatched roofs. They were normally huddled together in hamlets or villages. The focus of Roman community life was always in the city, and so country villages were low-status places to live, despised by the city-dwellers.

However, one type of country house was very desirable: the villa. Many of these were more or less large farmhouses, the centre of a working farm. Indeed, most villas were the headquarters of a large farm or country estate. Some, however, were mansions designed

primarily for a leisured lifestyle. Such houses, owned by wealthy families, were often located within easy reach of a city, and were used as retreats from the stresses of urban living.

Villas were similar in design to large urban dwellings, but were more spacious. Some were laid out with three wings; others completely enclosed a large inner space. This was often used as a luxurious garden. The rooms were likely to boast mosaic floors and painted walls.

Roman Technology and Science

Given the large overlap between the Hellenistic and Roman civilizations, it is sometimes hard to disentangle which civilization took some technological steps. In a sense it does not matter, as Rome rose to power within a Hellenistic context, and carried forward the Hellenistic culture a further few centuries. Some of the greatest technological achievements of the Roman period were in construction engineering. These rested on the development of the first form of concrete in history, a step that took place in southern Italy in the 2nd century BCE. This material (which used volcanic lava as its base) was crucial to Roman architectural innovations such as the arch and the dome. These allowed Roman engineers to span much larger spaces than ever before. Huge stone bridges, the first of their kind, were thrown across rivers; multi-storeyed aqueducts marched across valleys; and awe-inspiring buildings such as the Pantheon in Rome, and much later the Cathedral of St.Sophia in Constantinople, used domed roofs to enclose larger areas than any other building until the 16th century.

The Romans were clearly adventurous and highly skilled engineers. More than anything else, this is seen in their roads, which ran for hundreds of miles across all sorts of terrain, and played an important part in knitting the empire together so effectively. Laying out these roads involved advanced surveying techniques, using instruments which were adapted from those used by astronomers to measure angles. The Romans seem to have been the first to use mechanical means for the ubiquitous task of grinding corn, which previously, had always been done by hand. Dating from the second century BCE, heavy millstones have been found which would have ground grain with the aid of animal power.

The Roman world saw the next major step along this path with the building of the first water mills recorded by history. These were used from the first century BCE to grind grain, and were described by Roman writers such as Vitruvius and Pliny the Elder. They probably originated in the Greek-speaking eastern empire, but in the first century CE, one mill, in southern France, had no less than sixteen overshot water wheels, fed by the main aqueduct to

Arles. It has been estimated that this mill could supply enough bread for the entire 12,500-strong population of Arles at that time.

Science in the Roman World

Roman science was an extension of the Hellenistic scientific activity – indeed, most of the scientific thinkers of the Roman period were Greeks (or Greek speakers) living in the Greek-speaking eastern part of the empire. One exception was Pliny the Elder, a senior Roman official writing in Latin. He compiled a huge collection of facts (interspersed with many fictions) about the natural world. In many cases he sought to explain natural phenomena – for example, he was the first to realize that amber is the fossilized resin of pine trees. Ptolemy of Alexandria (one of the great cities of the Hellenistic world) systematized Greek knowledge of astronomy. His theories of the movements of the heavenly bodies would have a profound influence on later European thinkers. The doctor Galen also systematized Hellenistic anatomical knowledge; but he also extended this knowledge considerably, based on his own careful dissections of animals. He was the first to assert that veins carried blood, not air; and his writings formed the primary foundation for medieval medical theory and practice.

UNIT -IV

1. Byzantine Civilization

The Byzantine Empire was a vast and powerful civilization with origins that can be traced to 330 A.D., when the Roman emperor Constantine I dedicated a "New Rome" on the site of the ancient Greek colony of Byzantium. Though the western half of the Roman Empire crumbled and fell in 476 A.D., the eastern half survived for 1,000 more years, spawning a rich tradition of art, literature and learning and serving as a military buffer between Europe and Asia. The Byzantine Empire finally fell in 1453, after an Ottoman army stormed Constantinople during the reign of Constantine XI.The Byzantine Empire, also known as the Eastern Roman Empire, was the continuation of the Roman Empire which began in 330 AD and lasted until 1453 AD. During most of its existence, the empire was the most powerful economic, cultural, and military force in Europe before its eventual decline. The Byzantine Empire left a profound legacy that would shape human history in the centuries to come.

Origin of the Byzantine Empire

The term "Byzantine" has its origins from the Greek colony of Byzantium. It was located on the European side of the Bosporus, a strait that links the Black sea to the Mediterranean. In time Byzantium would be an ideal trade and transit route between Europe and Asia. In 330 AD, Roman Emperor Constantine I chose Byzantium as the site of his new capital. Although there are many reasons why he did this, the most likely possibilities are as follows: The Roman Empire had become too large to be administered from a single capital – Rome. Barbarian invasions, external aggression from the Sassanid Empire from the East or usurpations by rival claimants to the imperial throne meant that the Emperor was always away from Rome most of the time. Thus, a new capital was needed for a flexible administration and as a backup of sorts in case either of them was lost to either war or intrigue

The new capital would be named after Constantine I – Constantinople. The Council of Nicaea formed by Constantine had established Christianity as Rome's official religion. As such the people of Constantinople and the Eastern Roman Empire identified themselves as Romans and Christians, although they spoke Greek instead of Latin. One of the most

extraordinary aspects of the Byzantine Empire was its longevity: It was the only organized state west of China to survive without interruption from ancient times until the beginning of the modern age.

The term “Byzantine Empire” came into common use during the 18th and 19th centuries, but it would’ve been completely alien to the Empire’s ancient inhabitants. They called themselves ‘Romanoi’ or Romans. Byzantium owed much of its military success to Greek fire, a mysterious incendiary liquid that was used to set enemy troops and ships ablaze. The formula for it has been lost to history.

Although Constantine ruled over a unified Roman Empire, this unity was shattered after his death in 337 AD. In 364 Emperor Valentinian I divided the empire into two with his brother Valens with him taking over the western half. The last emperor to rule over a united Roman Empire was Theodosius I from 392 to 395 AD. The fate of the Western and Eastern Roman Empire would diverge in the late 4th Century AD. The Western Roman Empire would be beset from corrupt administration, infighting among the rulers, and pressure of barbarian invasions. Finally it would fall at the hands of Odoacer, a Germanic chief in 476 AD when he would depose the last Roman Emperor, Romulus Augustus. The Survival of the Byzantine Empire can be attributed to the following factors. Due to its geographical location, Eastern Empire was far less vulnerable to attack in comparison to its Western counterpart. Constantinople was located on a strait and thus had superb defences against conventional siege weapons (Battering rams, siege towers etc.). Defensive factors aside, economically Constantinople was located at the extreme end of the fabled Silk Road. Thus more revenue found its way into the imperial coffers and the Emperor himself had better control over economic resources. These economic resources would be used to muster sufficient manpower to combat invasions and pay for a standing army. As a result of these advantages, the Eastern Roman Empire was able to survive for centuries after the fall of Rome. Though Byzantium was ruled by Roman law and Roman political institutions, and its official language was Latin, Greek was also widely spoken, and students received education in Greek history, literature and culture.

Rise of the Byzantine Empire

It was under the rule of Emperor Justinian I from 527 to 565 that the Byzantine Empire reached its greatest extent. Under his general Belisarius, the Byzantine army conquered much of the former territories of the Roman Empire including North Africa.

During Justinian's rule many monuments were built including the famous Hagia Sophia. Justinian also reformed and codified Roman law establishing a system of legal code that would form the nucleus of civil law in many European countries. At the time of Justinian's death, the Byzantine Empire reigned supreme as the largest and most powerful state in Europe. Debts incurred through war had left the empire in dire financial straits, however, and his successors were forced to heavily tax Byzantine citizens in order to keep the empire afloat. But the Byzantine Empire would find itself stretched too thin trying to defend invasions from Burglars, Sassanids and later Arab armies. The Arabs would conquer the Levant and even managed to assail Constantinople twice (Once in 674–678 the other from 717–718) but without success. By the end of the 7th century, Byzantium would lose Syria, the Holy Land, Egypt and North Africa (among other territories) to Arab forces.

The Byzantine Empire was another name for the surviving eastern half of the Roman Empire. As you read in a previous chapter, the weaker western half of the Roman Empire, including the city of Rome, fell to barbarian invaders. What was left of the Roman Empire was ruled by the emperor in Constantinople. The Byzantine Empire survived for another 1,000 years, finally falling to the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

Emperor Justinian

One famous Byzantine Emperor was Justinian I. Justinian ruled from AD 527 to 565. Justinian created a set of laws called the Justinian Code. This code said that the emperor made all of the laws and interpreted the laws as well. The Justinian Code was law throughout the empire. Many of our modern laws can be traced back to the Justinian Code.

Justinian I

Justinian I, who took power in 527 and would rule until his death in 565, was the first great ruler of the Byzantine Empire. During the years of his reign, the empire included most of the land surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, as Justinian's armies conquered part of the former Western Roman Empire, including North Africa. Many great monuments of the empire would be built under Justinian, including the spectacular domed Church of Holy Wisdom, or Hagias Sophia. Justinian also reformed and codified Roman law, establishing a Byzantine legal code that would endure for centuries and help shape the modern concept of the state. One famous Byzantine Emperor was Justinian I. Justinian ruled from AD 527 to 565. Justinian created a set of laws called the Justinian Code. This code said that the emperor made all of the laws and interpreted the laws as well. The Justinian Code was law throughout

the empire. Many of our modern laws can be traced back to the Justinian Code. Justinian had a goal of re-uniting the Roman Empire. He sent out armies to battle the barbarians who had taken control in the West. Justinian's Roman armies were very successful, taking back parts of Africa and most of Italy.

Justinian had a goal of re-uniting the Roman Empire. He sent out armies to battle the barbarians who had taken control in the West. Justinian's Roman armies were very successful, taking back parts of Africa and most of Italy. On these two maps, you can see the conquests of the Byzantine armies during the reign of Emperor Justinian. Belisarius was the commander who led these armies in an attempt to win back the old Western Roman Empire.

The war effort to take back the western part of the empire forced Justinian to raise taxes on the people of the Byzantine Empire. The Roman citizens were angry with Justinian about the high taxes for the war effort, and he was becoming unpopular. Even more unpopular was Empress Theodora, Justinian's wife, because she was originally a circus performer and came from the lower class of Romans. "Who was this woman, who had such control over the decisions of her husband?" They thought to themselves. Not one to take a back seat to her husband, Theodora proposed laws that protected the rights of women in the empire. The Byzantines, like the old Romans in the West, enjoyed chariot races at the hippodrome, a large oval stadium designed for races. Like our modern sports, the Byzantines had teams they supported. The Byzantine chariot teams were named after colours: The Blues, Reds, Greens, and Whites. After a race, riots would, at times, break out in the stands and overflow into streets, as the fans got into arguments. During Justinian's reign, the Blues and Greens were the dominant teams. After a particular riot, a fan of the Blues and a fan of the Greens were arrested. Justinian, noticing how unhappy people were with him, decided to free these two people and hold a chariot race on January 13, 532. During the race, fans got out of control, and started to shout insults at the emperor. Rather than cheering for their teams, fans of both the Greens and Blues shouted Nika, meaning win or conquer. Next, the fans stormed Justinian's luxury box, which was connected to his palace grounds. Justinian fled to the palace as the Nika Riot spilled out into the streets. The palace was under siege as most of the city, including the church called the Hagia Sophia (Church of Holy Wisdom), and was destroyed.

A prisoner in his own palace, Justinian decided to board a ship and sail away from Constantinople, stepping down as emperor, but saving his life. As he started to leave, he looked behind him to find his wife, Theodora, stubbornly refusing. "I would rather die an

empress, than live on the run, and besides, purple makes a wonderful burial veil," she said. Seeing his wife's courage, Justinian decided to stay. The riot was controlled, and Justinian continued to rule the Byzantine Empire.

At the time of Justinian's death, the Byzantine Empire reigned supreme as the largest and most powerful state in Europe. Debts incurred through war had left the empire in dire financial straits, however, and his successors were forced to heavily tax Byzantine citizens in order to keep the empire afloat. In addition, the imperial army was stretched too thin, and would struggle in vain to maintain the territory conquered during Justinian's rule. During the seventh and eighth centuries, attacks from the Persian Empire and from Slavs, combined with internal political instability and economic regression, threatened the vast empire. A new, even more serious threat arose in the form of Islam, founded by the prophet Muhammad in Mecca in 622. In 634, Muslim armies began their assault on the Byzantine Empire by storming into Syria. By the end of the century, Byzantium would lose Syria, the Holy Land, Egypt and North Africa (among other territories) to Islamic forces.

Decline of the Byzantine Empire

The Crusades began in the late 11th century. There were a series of wars waged by the Christians of Europe against the Muslims of the Near East from 1095 to 1291. In the first Crusade, Emperor Alexius I turned to the West for help against the Seljuk Turks barrelling their way towards Constantinople. Pope Urban II obliged by calling in armies from France, Germany and Italy to fight in a holy war. But there would be animosity between the Byzantines and their Western Allies regarding the rights of territory. The Schism between the Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches that had occurred centuries before did not help. The animosity finally culminated when during the Fourth Crusade in 1204, the Crusaders sacked and looted Constantinople. The Latin regime which established control could not hold onto their gains as a hostile population and lack of money made their position untenable. Many refugees from Constantinople fled to Nicaea, site of a Byzantine government-in-exile that would retake the capital and overthrow Latin rule in 1261. But the empire had begun its terminal decline at this point. The economy of the once-mighty Byzantine state was crippled, and never regained its former stature. Eventually in 373 Emperor John V was forced to become a vassal of a rising Turkish Ottoman Sultanate.

As a vassal state, Byzantium paid tribute to the sultan and provided him with military support. Under John's successors, the empire gained sporadic relief from Ottoman

oppression, but the rise of Murad II as sultan in 1421 marked the end of the final respite. His successor Mohamed II laid siege to and conquered Constantinople by May 29 1453. Mohamed triumphantly entered the Hagias Sophia, which would soon be converted to the city's leading mosque. The fall of Constantinople marked the end of the Byzantine Empire. Emperor Constantine XI died in battle that day, and the Byzantine Empire collapsed, ushering in the long reign of the Ottoman Empire.

Legacy of the Byzantine Empire

In the centuries leading up to the final Ottoman conquest in 1453, the culture of the Byzantine Empire–including literature, art, architecture, law and theology–flourished even as the empire itself faltered. Byzantine culture would exert a great influence on the Western intellectual tradition, as scholars of the Italian Renaissance sought help from Byzantine scholars in translating Greek pagan and Christian writings. (This process would continue after 1453, when many of these scholars fled from Constantinople to Italy.)

Long after its end, Byzantine culture and civilization continued to exercise an influence on countries that practiced its Eastern Orthodox religion, including Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece, among others. Modern historians use the term Byzantine Empire to distinguish the state from the western portion of the Roman Empire. The name refers to Byzantium, an ancient Greek colony and transit point that became the location of the Byzantine Empire's capital city, Constantinople.

Socio- Economic condition- Art – Religion and Literature

During the late 10th and early 11th centuries, under the rule of the Macedonian dynasty founded by Michael III's successor, Basil, the Byzantine Empire enjoyed a golden age. Though it stretched over less territory, Byzantium had more control over trade, more wealth and more international prestige than under Justinian. The strong imperial government patronized Byzantine art, including now-cherished Byzantine mosaics. Rulers also began restoring churches, palaces and other cultural institutions and promoting the study of ancient Greek history and literature. Greek became the official language of the state, and a flourishing culture of monasticism was centred on Mount Athos in north-eastern Greece. Monks administered many institutions (orphanages, schools, hospitals) in everyday life, and Byzantine missionaries won many converts to Christianity among the Slavic peoples of the central and eastern Balkans (including Bulgaria and Serbia) and Russia.

The Crusades

The end of the 11th century saw the beginning of the Crusades, the series of holy wars waged by European Christians against Muslims in the Near East from 1095 to 1291. With the Seljuk Turks of central Asia bearing down on Constantinople, Emperor Alexius I turned to the West for help, resulting in the declaration of "holy war" by Pope Urban II at Clermont, France, that began the First Crusade. As armies from France, Germany and Italy poured into Byzantium, Alexius tried to force their leaders to swear an oath of loyalty to him in order to guarantee that land regained from the Turks would be restored to his empire. After Western and Byzantine forces recaptured Nicaea in Asia Minor from the Turks, Alexius and his army retreated, drawing accusations of betrayal from the Crusaders. During the subsequent Crusades, animosity continued to build between Byzantium and the West, culminating in the conquest and looting of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade in 1204. The Latin regime established in Constantinople existed on shaky ground due to the open hostility of the city's population and its lack of money. Many refugees from Constantinople fled to Nicaea, site of a Byzantine government-in-exile that would retake the capital and overthrow Latin rule in 1261.

2. Christianity

Christianity is one of the most important events of the World history. Rise and spread of Christianity had and continues to have its impact on the whole world. The early Roman religion had not offered any spiritual satisfaction to the Romans. The worship of Pagan Gods became boring and the Romans for a time 'sought comfort in Persian, Egyptian, and other Eastern religious cults and philosophies.'' Finally, Christianity offered them high spiritual satisfaction and great ideals to cherish. Christianity laid stress on fatherhood of god and brotherhood of mankind. Further. It taught people about human virtues like love, pity, kindness, truth, chastity and humour.

Life of Jesus Christ

The first books of the New Testament and the book of the acts give a vague and brief sketch of the life of Jesus. He was born a Jew at Bethlehem, a small village near Jerusalem, in 4 B.C. When Herod the Great was ruling Judea, His father as Joseph of Nazareth and his mother was Virgin Mary. Jesus was born at a time when the Jews were under Roman control

and the corrupt rule of King Herod. They were eagerly expecting a promised Messiah who would deliver them from the Roman authority. Jesus lived in the small village-town of Nazareth for nearly for 25 years. As a bright boy he would understand and interpret Jewish texts. At that time Judaism and the mosaic laws were being interpreted in different ways. Controversies abounded in Judaism itself.

The life of Jesus came to be profoundly influenced by his cousin, john the Baptist. John the Baptist as a great preacher who told his people that a Messiah would arrive to deliver them from sinful life. He baptised those who sincerely repented for their sins. As John became popular, the authorities became jealous and executed him. Jesus was also baptised by John in 26 A.D. After his Baptism Jesus started a new life, he became a wandering preacher. He spent the rest of his life in teaching about the fatherhood of God. He talked about the kingdom of god where there would be justice, love and kindness. He collected a band of followers. As he was preaching to the people of villages, he conveyed his messages in the form of parables. True to his teachings he led a very simple life and mixed freely with the poor. He always went to help those who were and oppressed. All his disciples recognised him as the Messiah and Jesus acknowledged his title. Some of his teachings called into question some of the Jewish laws. He urged them to follow their spirit. The popularity of Jesus caused alarm and suspicion. King Herod and the Pharisees condemned him as a '' false prophet. ''In 30 A.D. Jesus visited Jerusalem on the occasion of Jewish Passover and gave opportunity to his enemies to hatch a plot to kill him. Unfortunately the Romans believed that his growing popularity was a cause of public disturbances. Jesus knowingly courted arrest when he assaulted the money-changers and traders in the temple. He celebrated his last supper with his disciples including Judas Iscariot the night before his death. When Jesus as praying in the garden of Gethsemane, the temple guard arrest him. It as Judas, who betrayed the identity of his master by kissing him on his cheek and thereby giving hint to the guard who Jesus as.

His Crucifixion

The Jews handed over the Jesus to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, and accused him of blasphemy. The Romans levelled the charge of treason. Jesus was executed by crucifixion along with two thieves at Golgotha. Gospels say those three days after his crucifixion Jesus raised from the dead, and forty days later was seen ascending to the heaven by his disciples. His followers called themselves as Christians. The followers of Jesus established Christianity based mainly upon his teachings

Teaching of Jesus Christ

While the Old Testament in the bible contains everything about Judaism, the New Testament includes the life and teachings of Jesus. Jesus taught that god is the creator of the universe and mankind. He is all merciful and kind to one and all. He further said that men should live like brothers and be devoted to God. Sinners should repent and beg God's mercy. Men should develop noble character by doing good deeds. Jesus insisted that people should do good to even those who did bad things to them. He said forgiveness is a great virtue. While being nailed to the cross, he said, ''Father forgive them for they know not what they do.''

He asked his followers to desire wealth and other comforts for life. To the poor and suffering he promised the kingdom of God where there would be justice, love and plenty. He asked his followers to develop Christian virtues like brotherly love, compassion, righteous living, meekness and humanity. The spiritual message of Jesus to his followers is given in the form of a sermon-the Sermon on the Mount. Christ was crucified, but after his Resurrection his teachings were very gladly accepted by the people. His most important teachings were:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

New Testament and Old Testament give more information about Christianity and life of Jesus Christ. The Holy Bible is the Sacred Book of Christians. Christianity contributed

significantly to social, economic and cultural life of the people of the world all over. Its teachings had their own impact and influence and the whole world is indebted to Christianity for giving the followers a sense of unity and also for raising moral life of the people.

UNIT -V

1. RISE OF TOWNS AND CITIES

Factors influencing Growth of Cities around the World

Some of the main factors that have led to grow of cities are: (i) Surplus Resources (ii) Industrialization and Commercialization (iii) Development of Transport and Communication (iv) Economic Pull of the City (v) Educational and Recreational Facilities."Like the origin of civilization itself, the origin of the city is lost in the obscurity of the past" said Gist and Halbert. In every great civilization there has been migration from the village Lo the city.

The first cities seem to have appeared sometime between 6000 and 5000 B.C. These cities were however small and hard distinguished from lawns. By 3000 B.C., there was in existence what may be called "true" cities. After that there was a lull, for some 2000 years. It was not until Greco-Roman times that cities came into existence.It are curious that the cities in the regions where city life had originated eventually went into eclipse and cities appeared in new regions. After sometime the cities of Mesopotamia, India and Egypt, of Persia, Greece and Rome fell mostly for the reason that they had all been Lied Lo an economy that was primarily agricultural.

In Western Europe the cities became more numerous and the growth of cities kept going on. The nineteenth century was a period of true urban revolution and since 1800 urbanization has gone ahead much faster and reached proportions far greater than at any previous Lime in world history.

The factors led to the growth of cities

(i) Surplus Resources:

"Cities grow wherever a society, or a group within it, gains control over resources greater than are necessary for the mere sustenance of life." In ancient times these resources were acquired through subjugation of man by man. Slavery, forced labour or Taxation by the ruling or conquering class supplied the foundations of the growth of city life. In modern Limes man has won over nature and extended his power.

He has exploited the natural resources Lo such a great extent through technological improvements that now relatively few people can supply the basic needs of many. The extension of man's power over nature, especially in the western countries, has been the primary condition of the modern growth of cities and city population.

(ii) Industrialization and Commercialization:

The urban growth has also been greatly stimulated by the new techniques of production associated with industrial revolution. The invention of machinery, the development of steam power, and the application of huge capital in industrial enterprises led to the establishment of gigantic manufacturing plants which brought about the mobility of immobile groups of workers hastening their concentration around a factory area.For the sake of working with others and of high wages men abandoned rural work and streamed into the industrial cities. Thus, Jamshedpur, a steel centre in India, Chicago, Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow became the big industrial cities of the world. With the coming of mechanical power, a new geographical shift has been made.

Formerly, aggregations of peoples were found along the river valleys, where the land was fertile and flat. But today they are found near the sources of coal and iron. The use of scientific methods and of machinery driven by electricity or the combustion engine in production of goods has now enabled one-quarter of population to support the other three quarters, whereas a century ago three-quarters were required to feed one-quarter. Cities now grow without much reference to the agricultural lands. While industrialization has stimulated city growth, trade and commerce also have played an important part in urban expansion. In ancient civilizations too cities grew wherein goods were distributed and commercial transactions were carried. Thus, Athens, Sparta, Venice, Pataliputra (Modern Patna) were great trading centres.

In modern times, the development of modern marketing institutions and of methods of exchange has greatly contributed to the growth of cities. Today face to face commercial transactions need not be carried in big cities but the mere fact that a large percentage of their residents are engaged in "paper" enterprises is a significant factor to add to the city growth.

(iii) Development of Transport and Communication:

The development in methods of transportation and communication and the facilities which cities offer for satisfying the desire for communication also explain urban growth.

Industrialization depends upon transportation so that raw material and manufactured goods can be carried in large volume. In an industrial city the means of transport and communication are essentially developed.

The city is connected not only with other parts in and outside of the country but through developed means of local transportation the different parts of the city as well are connected to each other. At the time factory was introduced, local transportation facilities were poor. The factory workers were compelled to live near their place of employment. Congestion of housing resulted.

The local transport added to the population of the city by extending its boundaries. The city was divided into different areas, a market area, a dwelling area, a slum area, a factory area and so on. In earlier cities lack of adequate local transportation prevented such a marking off of natural areas. The modern city is a community which has become highly differentiated in its parts.

(iv) Economic Pull of the City:

Cities provide more opportunity for personal advancement than do the rural areas. Modern business and commerce pull young men to the cities where they are paid munificent salaries. People live in cities not because they like them as place of residence but because they can get jobs there. Employment opportunities are more in the city than in the village.

Even businessmen come to the city from the village to avail of better opportunities for making higher profits. As the standard of living in the country rises, there is an increasing demand for the kind of commodities which are supplied in and by cities.This increased demand means that people can earn livelihood in a larger percentage in the cities. It is in the city that leaders, religious or educational, receive special and high recognition. In short, the possibilities of greater achievement and better living in the city account for a good deal for urban expansion.

(v) Educational and Recreational Facilities:

Until recently all high schools were in cities in India. The elementary schools in a city are better equipped than in the village. Most training schools, colleges, and technical schools are urban. Most big libraries are situated in cities. Examination Centres for competitive examinations are located in cities and the recruiting agencies are also urban located. Art galleries and museums are urban. Prominent educationists give their talks in cities. Naturally,

on account of all these facilities young men and women are attracted to the cities for higher education. Recreational facilities are available in cities. Amusement theatres and operas are urban. By making appeals to the feelings and play impulses of children and adults alike they draw them to the cities.

2. MEDIEVAL CITIES AND GUILDS

Conditions in Europe after the fall of Roman Empire

With the fall of the Roman Empire a number of cities and towns in Europe began to pale into insignificance. A few towns or cities which enjoyed natural protection of the sea or the rivers or the swamps survived the holocaust. Fortunately, towns likes Paris, Marseilles, Tours, Naples, Florence, London and Winchester had grown commercially important since the old Roman days. They survived despite the decline of the Roman Empire because they lay on the trade routes. During the early middle Ages, this is sometimes described as the Dark Age. These towns could not flourish because all the trade came to a stand-still and gangs of bandits roamed about on the main roads to harass travellers and merchants. Merchants could not carry on trade because they had to pay heavy tools on the borders. As precious metals became scarce, trade had to be carried on by barter system. The Europeans lost control over the Mediterranean sea and in their place came the Mohammedans. The church looked upon profit-making by Christian merchants as a great sin and so the Jews flourished as big merchants and money lenders in Europe. Because of their trade, the Jews came to be hated (known as anti-Semitism) by the European Christians.

The whole picture began to gradually change when the invasions of the barbarians stopped by the ninth tenth centuries, and the feudalism began to gain a foothold in Europe offering security to the merchants and the common people. Old and new cities began to dot the map of Europe at the beginning of the eleventh century. Some cities began to grow where strong castles offered protection. Others grew around some famous monasteries. Some port cities began to grow along the coast of Italy, France, Spain and England.

Crusades caused the growth of towns*:* The Crusades of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries acted as a great catalyst and transformed life in Europe. First the indirectly brought about the end of feudalism. The destruction of the power of nobles allowed towns and cities to play their legitimate role. Secondly, trade with original countries gave fresh lease of life. Thirdly, the crusades gave opportunities to enterprising persons to purchase lands from Barons and establish free towns. It was however, the trade with the east which gave a great

impetus to the revival of the old cities and towns and subsequently there occurred the birth of new towns. The European Christians who became accustomed to the luxuries of the orient demanded oriental products such as perfumes, silks, precious stones, spices, fruits, sugar, glass, muslin, drugs.

Role of European cities*:* The Italian cities like Venice, Genoa, Pisa lost no time establishing trade links with the orient at the time of Crusades. Their merchants brought goods from the oriental cities on land and by sea and distribute them to the towns of Europe. In northern Europe Flanders became a great centre of commerce and exchanged goods with other Baltic countries and England. These two centres in the south and the north that is Venice and Flanders catered to the needs of people living inland. So inland trade routes developed and gave rise to the birth of new towns. The Italian port cities maintained contact with the port cities of France (like Marseilles), Christian Spain and England. A number of port cities like Alexandria, Venice, Marseilles, London, Cologne, Hamburg, Nuremberg, Bremen, Lubeck and Briges along the Mediterranean the North and the Baltic Sea coasts grew in importance. The French and Spanish towns came in contact with the Moorish towns like Cardoba and Granada. Every medieval town began to hold fairs during religious festivals like Christmas and Easter and attracted a large number of merchants from far off places like Constantinople. One of such famous fairs was regularly held at Champagne in France where people gathered in large number not only to buy things from the colourful stalls but to enjoy the pleasures and entertainments provided by the city.

Hanseatic League*:* A group of about seventy German cities formed an association called the Hanseatic League with the main aim of protecting their shipping from the pirates operating on the North and the Baltic Seas. In those days many Norsemen became pirates and preyed upon unwary merchant ships for plunder. The ships belonging to the Hanseatic League sailed in convoys and reached their destination safely. In the course of time the merchants of Hanseatic League became extremely wealthy and powerful and even compelled kings to bow to their demands. The Hensa grew enormously rich and cosmopolitan in character.

Political role of the cities*:* It must be remembered that during the height of feudalism many towns and cities sprung up on the territories belonging to the feudal lords. These feudal lords extended their control over them and the people had to pay taxes. The lords were indeed alarmed at the growing wealth of the towns and also for providing shelter to run-away serfs (a runaway serf became free if he was not caught after one year and one day). To be free from the clutches of the feudal lords, a town or a city paid huge sums of money ransom. It received

a charter in return which allowed her to have self-government and self-regulation of trade and industry. At the time of crusades many nobles gave charter of freedom to the cities and towns and collected huge sums of money. They required this amount to wage the holy war against the Muslims. After the crusades, the cities and towns helped their respective kings to destroy the power of nobles. Thus they helped in paving the way for the growth of national monarchies in Europe. Even the Popes felt the urge to organize some cities into a league to fight the foreign enemy. One such famous league which was organized for the defence was the Lombard League in the twelfth century.

The Rise of the new Middle Class in towns and cities: With the growth of towns and cities in medieval Europe, we see the rise of a new Middle Class. They played an important role in making their city wealthy and powerful by working hard. They were educated and broad-minded. They loved freedom and gaiety. It was to them that the ancient Greek and Roman classics came to be introduced during the later medieval age. The middle-class of townspeople came to be called the bourgeoisie. In the course of time the leading members of the Middle-Class took active part in the deliberations of the Town Council. These members came either from the merchant section or from the master-craftsmen.

Guilds and Crafts*:* With the growth of the population of cities and towns, there arose a demand for products and their proper distribution. Merchants and craftsmen formed associations called guilds to control the business of a particular town or city. Guilds came to be from the twelfth century. The purpose of the merchant guild was to protect and promote the interests of their members. For example, the merchant guild of a city regulated the quality of goods, prices, weights and measures, working conditions, wages and to supervise business-ethics. Each member who joined the guild was bound by an oath taken at the time of his admission. The merchant guilds in the town monopolized trade for themselves, excluded middlemen, prevented unhealthy competition and provided escorts for their travelling merchant-members. As mentioned earlier, the Hanseatic League controlling seventy German cities provided armed-convoys to its travelling members. The merchant guilds rendered great service to the economic development of the towns and cities.

Craft Guilds: When the towns grew big, the craftsmen established their own guilds. In Paris there were more than hundred guilds. Each guild consisted of members or craftsmen belonging to a particular profession like bakers, butchers, weavers, carpenters and so on. The members of the guild were mostly master craftsmen who regulated quality, price and supply of their products. They trained boys who worked as apprentices. The guilds helped craftsmen

in many other ways by caring for their needs and providing social security. The guilds joined to help the town or city government in building a great wall for protection from foreign invaders.

Guilds formed by towns*:* Like the merchant guilds and craft guilds, a group of towns also formed their own guild for catering to mutual interests and protection. One such guild was the famous Hanseatic League with as many as seventy German towns joining. The traders of the member-towns opened a number of branches in Russia, Sweden, Denmark and England. Its influence was felt on the countries situated around the North and the Baltic seas.

Decline of Guilds*:* With the passage of time guilds began to decline in power and wealth. It may be remembered that each guild had practiced a kind of monopoly and did not allow competition. Therefore each member of the guild became wealthy and opened a factory. He employed wage-earners and paid them less. Not many journeymen (graduated apprentices) could hope to become master craftsmen. When the states grew disappeared after the advent of the Industrial Revolution.

Medieval European Guilds

By the 11th century in Europe, associations of merchants had begun to form for the protection of commerce against the feudal governments. Those merchant guilds became extremely powerful as trade in the Mediterranean and across Europe increased. Some of the Italian merchant guilds, such as those in Genoa and Florence, became dominant in local government. In England and in Germany the merchant guilds also exercised enormous power in the growing towns. Commerce was becoming less and less a local affair, and the guilds in some cases developed into intercity leagues for the promotion and protection of trade. The most striking example was the Hanseatic League of N Europe, which established and controlled some of its own trading cities. The merchant guilds had vast influence in the development of commerce during that period.

No less important were the craft guilds, the associations of artisans of a particular industry, e.g., the weaver's guild. These grew with great rapidity as towns developed in the 12th century and tended to share power with the merchants or even, in some cases, to supplant them in power. Generally the members were divided into masters, apprentices, and journeymen. The masters were the owners of the shops and instructors of the apprentices. The apprentices were bound to the masters; they were accepted for a stipulated sum paid to the masters for training and were given a subsistence wage for a number of years; the amount

paid and the length of time varied from one craft to another and one place to another. The apprentices were strictly under the control of the masters, but the conditions of control were set by guild regulation. The journeymen were men who had finished their training as apprentices but could not attain the status of masters, the number of masters being limited.

The guild reflected a predilection for ordering society. Each guild set the terms of its craft: the forms of labour, standard of product, and methods of sale. With the rise of nationalism in the West, those things were increasingly subject to royal and national law. The relationship of the feudal ruler to the guilds was ideally one of cooperation. Actually the wealthy guilds were able to gain some immunity from interference by noble or king either by paying them large sums of money or by intimidating them. Sometimes, as in the weaving towns of Flanders, the guilds led revolts against feudal authority (e.g., in Bruges and Ghent). The tendency in the industrial towns was for the guilds to assume dominance in municipal government, and traces of that control have persisted in the local governments of Western Europe. The guilds of London (see livery companies) had wide social obligations and prominence in the city government.

The strengthening of the power of nations in the 15th and 16th century tended to increase royal power, and the king in some instances was able to reduce the guilds to subservience. The improvement of communications, the expansion of trade, with the introduction of foreign-made goods, and finally the appearance of the capitalist and the entrepreneur hastened the end of the guild system. The guilds, with their rigorous controls and emphasis on stability and quality, were not equipped to cope with the expanding production of a more capitalistic age. They tended to guard their monopolies jealously and to oppose change.

As time went on, the guild system became increasingly rigid, and the trend toward hereditary membership grew very marked. Thus the development of new trade and industry fell to the capitalists, who adapted themselves to new demands in an age of exploration and expansion. By the 17th century the power of the guilds had withered in England, and their privileges were officially abolished in 1835. In France the guilds were abolished (1791) in the French Revolution. The German and Austrian guilds were abolished in the 19th century as were those in the Italian cities. In Eastern Europe guilds grew numerous in the great market cities, and the power of some long persisted, notably in Novgorod and Krakow.

Constantinople

The city of Constantinople, built on a peninsula surrounded by three bodies of water: the Bosporus, Sea of Marmara, and the Golden Horn. Notice the iron chain, called a boom, across the Golden Horn; it prevented enemy ships from sailing into that area.

Although the people of the Byzantine Empire considered themselves Roman, the East was influenced by Greek culture, rather than the Latin of the West. People spoke Greek and wore Greek-styled clothing. The emperors and empresses wore beautiful silk and purple-dyed clothing, with expensive slippers. The Byzantine Empire was influenced by the Hellenistic culture created by the conquests of Alexander the Great. Learning and trade thrived in the Byzantine Empire. As you read in a previous chapter, Emperor Constantine ended the persecution of Christians, and Emperor Theodosius made Christianity the official state religion of the Roman Empire. Christianity had a major influence on the Byzantine Empire. Byzantine art featured beautiful mosaics of Christian themes.

The beginnings of the Byzantine Empire lay in the decision of Roman emperor Constantine I to relocate the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Byzantium on 11 May 330. The popular name Constantinople or 'City of Constantine' soon replaced the emperor's own official choice of 'New Rome'. The new capital had an excellent natural harbour on the Golden Horn inlet and, straddled on the border between Europe and Asia, could control the passage of ships through the Bosphorus from the Aegean to the Black Sea, linking lucrative trade between west and east. A great chain stretched across the Golden Horn's entrance, and the construction of the massive Theodosian Walls between 410 and 413 meant that the city was able to withstand time and again concerted attacks from both sea and land. Over the centuries, as more spectacular buildings were added, the cosmopolitan city became one of the finest of any epoch and certainly the richest, most lavish and most important Christian city in the world.

Fall of Constantinople

During the rule of the Palaiologan emperors, beginning with Michael VIII in 1261, the economy of the once-mighty Byzantine state was crippled, and never regained its former stature. In 1369, Emperor John V unsuccessfully sought financial help from the West to confront the growing Turkish threat, but he was arrested as an insolvent debtor in Venice. Four years later, he was forced–like the Serbian princes and the ruler of Bulgaria–to become a vassal of the mighty Turks. As a vassal state, Byzantium paid tribute to the sultan and

provided him with military support. Under John's successors, the empire gained sporadic relief from Ottoman oppression, but the rise of Murad II as sultan in 1421 marked the end of the final respite. Murad revoked all privileges given to the Byzantines and laid siege to Constantinople; his successor, Mohamed II, completed this process when he launched the final attack on the city. On May 29, 1453, after an Ottoman army stormed Constantinople, Mohamed triumphantly entered the Hagias Sophia, which would soon be converted to the city's leading mosque. The fall of Constantinople marked the end of a glorious era for the Byzantine Empire. Emperor Constantine XI died in battle that day, and the Byzantine Empire collapsed, ushering in the long reign of the Ottoman Empire.

3. Genesis of Renaissance

The word is French for 'rebirth'. Historians first use it (from about 1840) for the period from the 14th to the 16th century, implying a rediscovery of rational civilization (exemplified by Greece and Rome) after the medieval centuries - seen as superstitious and artistically primitive. The term 'Middle Ages', also coined by historians, makes the same point in a different way - defining the medieval period merely as the gap between classical and modern civilization. The first problem with this scenario is that the Middle Ages have a vivid cultural identity of their own, different from the classical pattern but not necessarily inferior. And the later medieval centuries, in particular the 12th and 13th, are unmistakably civilized. The second difficulty is that it is impossible to establish clear dividing lines between medieval and Renaissance. In art (particularly sculpture) stylistic hints of the coming Renaissance can be seen well before 1300. But there is one field in which a new start is consciously made in the 14th century. This is the revival of the study of classical literature.

Petrarch the Laureate: 1341

On the Capitol in Rome, in 1341, a ceremony deliberately echoes the ancient Roman Empire. The king of Naples, ruling in Rome on behalf of the pope in Avignon, places a laurel wreath on the brow of Petrarch, honouring him just as Augustus might have honoured Virgil. The event deliberately symbolizes a renewed interest in classical culture, a movement in which Petrarch is a leading figure. But the new poet laureate adds a contemporary touch. He immediately goes to the tomb of St Peter and places on it his wreath. This blending of the old and the new Rome, using the classical tradition in the service of Christianity, becomes a characteristic of Renaissance painting and sculpture. Christian saints are sculpted with the freshness of classical boys (Donatello's Saint George, for example), and painters place the

gospel scenes in ancient Roman settings. The roots of these artistic developments are too complex to be explained by a simple interest in classical culture. Only in the world of learning is the link between the Renaissance and the ancient world unmistakably clear. Only among Petrarch and his followers in the 14th and 15th century is the rebirth of the past (rinascimento in Italian) a conscious aim.

In Florence, in April 1350, Petrarch makes his first influential convert to the cause of classical studies. He is visited by an admirer, Boccaccio, nine years younger than himself, who has written a biography of Petrarch but has not previously met him. The encounter changes Boccaccio's life. He is in the middle of writing the work for which he is now famous, the Decameron. After completing it, probably in the following year, he abandons Italian literature - writing henceforth only in Latin and devoting himself to tracking down original manuscripts of classical texts. Boccaccio is just one of the many followers of Petrarch who visit ancient monastery libraries in search of forgotten Latin manuscripts. They travel to Constantinople to bring back trunk loads of Greek parchments. They clamber among ancient ruins to note the inscriptions. They copy out their findings and present their manuscripts to friends (soon the invention of printing will greatly speed up the spread of these texts). They form academies (echoing Plato's academy) in which they read learned papers on classical themes. They attempt performances of music and drama in what they believe to be the classical style. The members of one academy in Rome are even arrested for indulging in pagan classical rites. Scholars of this kind become known as humanists, implying an admiration for the finest achievements of the human race. Human excellence and virtue is now seen as valuable in itself, in this present world of ours, rather than as a necessary qualification for entry to a world beyond.

An emphasis on the next world has characterized medieval teaching, broadly described as scholasticism. Humanism, in contrast to scholasticism, represents the cast of mind of the Renaissance. Beginning as a movement in Italy in the 14th century, it finds some of its greatest adherents in northern Europe as late as the 16th century in influential figures such as Erasmus and Thomas More.

Italian scholars of the 14th and 15th century, followers of Petrarch in their reverence for classical culture, search through libraries for ancient texts. Copying out their discoveries, they aspire also to an authentic script. They find their models in beautifully written manuscripts which they take to be Roman but which are in fact Carolingian. The error is a fortunate one. The script devised for Charlemagne's monastic workshops in the 8th century is

a model of clarity and elegance. It is adapted for practical use, in slightly different ways, by two Florentine friends, Poggio Bracciolini and Niccolò Niccoli. Bracciolini, employed as secretary at the papal court in Rome from 1403, uses the ancient script for important documents. To the rounded lower-case letters of the Carolingian script he adds straight-edged capital letters which he copies from Roman monuments. By contrast his friend Niccoli adapts the Carolingian script to the faster requirements of everyday writing. To this end he finds it more convenient to slope the letters a little (the result of holding the pen at a more comfortable angle), and to allow some of them to join up. Joining up is not in itself new. In several forms of medieval hand-writing the letters flow together to become what is known as a 'cursive' hand.

Printers in Venice later in the century, attempting to reflect the classical spirit of humanism, turn to the scripts of Bracciolini and Niccoli. The rounded but upright style of Bracciolini is first used by the French printer Nicolas Jenson shortly after his arrival in the city in 1470. This type face is given the name roman, reflecting its ancient origins. In 1501 another great Venetian printer, Aldus Manutius, needs a contrasting and smaller type for a 'pocket edition' of Virgil. He turns to the script of Niccoli, in everyday use by fashionable Italians, and calls it accordingly italic. Roman and italic eventually become a standard part of every printer's repertoire.

Art and architecture in Florence: 1411-1430

Three Florentine friends, an architect, a sculptor and a painter, are recognized in their own time as being the founders of a new direction in art subsequently known as the Renaissance. In the preface to an influential book on painting, published in 1436, Alberti says that the work of these three has convinced him that the ancient arts can be revived.

They differ considerably in age. The architect, Brunelleschi, is the oldest. The sculptor, Donatello, is about ten years younger. The painter, Masaccio, is about fifteen years younger again, though he is by a wide margin the first to die. Brunelleschi is the pioneer who first consciously applies a Renaissance curiosity to the arts. Where the humanists visit Rome and other ancient cities to copy inscriptions, he notes the dimensions and sketches the details of the ruins and surviving buildings of classical antiquity. These include the columns and arches of Rome, but also the domes of Byzantine Ravenna and even of the baptistery in Florence, a Romanesque building of the 11th or 12th century which Brunelleschi and his contemporaries believe to be a temple of Mars adapted for Christian worship.

His aim is to abandon entirely the medieval heritage, even if lack of historical knowledge makes the break less absolute than he intends. Brunelleschi is a painter and sculptor, as well as architect, and his interest in classical buildings leads him into pioneering work of another kind. He is the first to evolve a scientific theory of perspective, which he is said to have used to startling effect in murals in the Baptistery and the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence.

This newly discovered skill is adopted by Masaccio and becomes of absorbing interests to Renaissance artists after Alberti has described the technique in detail in his book of 1436, crediting Brunelleschi as its originator. Brunelleschi's first biographer (Antonio Manetti, writing in the 1480s) states that Donatello accompanies the older man on trips to Rome to study the style of the ancients. Whether true or not - and scholars tend to doubt the story - it is undeniable that between 1411 and 1417 Donatello carves two free-standing figures in a more purely classical style (and with much greater artistry) than anything attempted by predecessors such as Nicola Pisano. These figures, profoundly significant in the story of sculpture, are commissioned by two of Florence's guilds. The linen drapers and the armourers need statues of their patron saints.

Renaissance man: 15th - 16th century, Man has come to mean someone with exceptional skills in a wide range of fields. The description applies to many people during the Renaissance (a period when it is assumed that artistic talent can be easily adapted to differing crafts), but there are two outstanding candidates for the title.

They are Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. The older man, Leonardo, is exceptional in that he excels in two entirely different disciplines - experimental science and the visual arts. But on the artistic side alone, Michelangelo must be the man. He creates works, all of the highest quality, in the four distinct fields of sculpture, painting, architecture and poetry.

Leonardo da Vinci: 1482-1519

Leonardo trains in Florence as a painter, almost certainly with Verrocchio, and he becomes a member of the painters' guild in 1472. But in about 1482 he sends a letter to Ludovico Sforza, the duke of Milan. In it he offers the duke his skills, which he lists under ten headings. The first nine are all to do with war. The 30-year-old genius declares that he can provide the duke with original designs for portable bridges, siege engines, mining and explosive equipment, mortars to spray the enemy with small stones, and even a cannon-proof

vehicle to transport troops safely into the midst of the enemy in other words a tank. In the tenth and final clause Leonardo adds that he is also a talented architect, sculptor and painter. This imbalance may be Leonardo's guess at the duke's priorities, but it also reflects to some extent his own interests. His famous notebooks show his hand and his eye and his feverish mind working ceaselessly together to observe and to analyze the physical world, and then to develop the ideas and designs which emerge from that process of observation.

Leonardo is ahead of his time in the notions which he dreams up (his flying machines, like the tank, are useless until there is an engine to propel them). But he is also the pioneer of new scientific principles. In his anatomical researches, as with Vesalius half a century later, observation takes precedence over theory and tradition.

The draughtsmanship in Leonardo's notebooks and sketches would in itself rank him among the world's greatest artists. So would the quality of his surviving paintings, few though they are.

Little remains of his two most ambitious projects, a large mural in Milan and another in Florence. The Last Supper in Santa Maria della Grazie in Milan has been so much restored (because Leonardo used a new but defective technique) that only its linear design is authentic. The scene of the victory at Anghiari for the council chamber in Florence was never completed and was subsequently painted over. Only a few sketches survive, some of them showing skirmishes in the battle.

Art historians can demonstrate the influence of both these works. Leonardo is a pioneer in his treatment of the human drama between Jesus and the apostles at the Last Supper, and in his depiction of movement in battle.

But no expert guidance is required to appreciate Leonardo's panel paintings. They introduce a subtlety in the use of paint, and in the treatment of light, which adds a new technique to the painter's repertoire. Leonardo gently blurs his colours, one into another, to avoid hard lines. The effect is known as sfumato (smoky) - or in Leonardo's words 'without lines or borders, in the manner of smoke'. Leonardo's smoky style is seen in the portrait of a young woman which he paints in Florence in about 1505. She smiles at the viewer, with her hands folded serenely on a ledge in front of her. Her gaze is wonderfully mysterious; so is the dream-like rocky background; so even is her identity.

It is probable that the sitter is Lisa Gherardini, the wife of Francesco Del Giocondo, so the portrait is variously known now as La Gioconda or the Mona Lisa (from monna, an old Italian word for 'lady'). Now in the Louvre, she has been in France since 1517 - when Francis I makes the elderly Leonardo his court painter, and takes Monna Lisa into the royal collection.

Michelangelo the sculptor: 1499-1516

Early in 1499 a sculpture of the Virgin Mary, holding on her lap the dead Christ, is placed in one of the chapels of old St Peter's in Rome. This Pietà is still one of the most beautiful works of art in the mighty new St Peter's, completed a century later. It is by a sculptor who has just turned twenty-four - Michelangelo.

The precocious genius receives a commission two years later in his home city of Florence. The authorities want a marble statue of David. Michelangelo, using a vast slab of marble abandoned by another sculptor, presents the biblical hero (more than twice life-size, about 13 feet high) as a naked youth standing with petulant confidence, sling thrown over his shoulder, before the encounter with Goliath. Michelangelo works on David from September 1501 until January 1504. In 1505 the pope, Julius II, summons him to Rome with a commission to provide a sculpted tomb, with many figures, for the pope's own memorial. The vast project hangs over Michelangelo for the next four decades. Some of his best known works are later carved to form part of it (the great marble Moses and the two tormented Slaves of 1513-6). But the project is doomed to remain unfinished. Part of the reason is that Julius II has an even more challenging task for this multi-talented artist. In 1508 he commissions Michelangelo to paint the ceiling of the Sistine chapel.

Michelangelo the painter: 1504-1550

Michelangelo's reputation as a painter derives, almost entirely, from his work in one building, the Sistine chapel. A few panel paintings possibly survive from his hand from the period 1495-1508, though only one of them is accepted by scholars beyond any doubt. This is the circular Virgin and Child commissioned by Angelo Doni in about 1504, now in the Uffizi. Two panel paintings in the National Gallery in London have long been attributed to Michelangelo by some and rejected by others. At the end of his life there are frescoes for another Vatican building, the Pauline chapel, which Michelangelo completes in 1550. But all the rest of his painting is done in two creative bursts on the ceiling of the Sistine chapel (1508-12) and on the wall above the altar (1536-41). Michelangelo's concept for the ceiling

of the chapel is as bold as his execution of the figures. An elaborate architectural perspective draws the eye up past alcoves, in which huge figures sit, to ever-receding panels which eventually display a series of narrative scenes.

These vast but distant-seeming panels along the centre of the ceiling (each about 10 by 18 feet) tell the story at the start of Genesis - from God's creation of the universe to the famous spark of life (from the Creator's finger to the languid Adam), and on through the expulsion from Eden to the more conventional form of human frailty in the drunkenness of Noah.

The attendant figures, many of them cramped in the available spaces, twist and turn with convincing flexibility. They seem to have a muscular certainty, even where distortion is involved, deriving from Michelangelo's skills as a sculptor. The colours, revealed afresh in a cleaning programme during the 1990s, are vibrantly bright, in often startling combinations. (With these surprises, of posture and colour, Michelangelo inspires a younger generation to develop the style known as mannerism).

The effect of the Sistine ceiling is exuberant, optimistic. It fits with the confident papacy of Julius II. The end wall of the chapel is very different. But it too reflects its times.

In 1527 Rome is sacked by an unruly army of German mercenaries, while Clement VII shelters helplessly in the Castel Sant'Angelo. In the aftermath of this appalling event, Clement commissions Michelangelo to paint the end wall of the Sistine chapel. The subject is to be the Last Judgement. Again Michelangelo captures the mood perfectly, giving this traditional cautionary tale a dark and dramatic violence (though the anguished nudity proves too much for some - twenty years later Daniele da Volterra is employed to paint in some loincloths).

From the Creation to the Last Judgement, the Sistine chapel forms a single masterpiece. Giotto's chapel in Padua is the only other building to express so thoroughly one painter's vision.

Michelangelo the architect and poet: 1520-1564

From the 1520s, when Michelangelo is indisputably Italy's greatest artist (Leonardo and Raphael have died in 1519 and 1520), he is frequently commissioned to provide architecture as well as sculpture and painting.

His first major architectural project, in Florence, is a commemorative chapel for the Medici family. Michelangelo designs it from 1520, providing both the architectural setting and sculptures for the tombs. The full scheme is never completed, for the chapel contains only two tombs - on which recline the famous pairs of allegorical figures, Day and Night, Dawn and Dusk. Another commission begun in Florence a few years later is the Laurentian Library (or Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana).

In Rome in the 1530s Michelangelo designs the buildings on the Capitol, together with the steps leading up to them, much as they are today. In the centre of the piazza of the Capitol he builds a plinth and moves on to it the magnificent equestrian statue, from Roman times, of the emperor Marcus Aurelius.

The final architectural commission of Michelangelo's long life comes in 1546. Much against his will, he is put in charge of the new St Peter's. With a sure touch he simplifies the project (bringing it back towards Bramante's original conception). The great drum supporting the dome is completed, to his own design, before his death in 1564.

From his early days in Florence, when his talent is encouraged by Lorenzo de' Medici, Michelangelo also takes a keen interest in literature and philosophy. About 250 of his poems survive. A few are madrigals, others are religious, but the majority are sonnets, written with platonic passion to a female poet, Vittoria Colonna, and a young boy, Tommaso de' Cavalieri. Published first in a bowdlerized form in 1623, they only become fully known and appreciated after an edition of 1863. They have subsequently won Michelangelo a reputation among Italy's leading poets, to add to his other distinctions.

While Michelangelo is painting the ceiling of the Sistine chapel, Raphael - his junior by eight years was working on another commission from Julius II just a few hundred yards away. Raphael may be described as the boy wonder of the Italian Renaissance. Born in Urbino in 1483, the son of a minor painter (Giovanni Santi), Raphael makes his way in about 1504 to Florence. Over the next few years he paints the serenely beautiful Madonnas and Holy Families, set in luxuriant landscapes, which first reveal his genius. The style derives from Perugino, in whose studio Raphael probably learnt his craft, but in these paintings there is a new certainty of composition, modelling and colour. News of his talent must have spread rapidly among the patrons of the day, because towards the end of 1508 he is summoned to Rome and is given a papal commission of great importance. Julius II wants frescoes for a series of rooms in the Vatican which he intends to use as his own apartment. This sensitive

task is entrusted, in 1509, to the 26-year-old Raphael. It occupies him for the rest of his life. Raphael's astonishing achievement in the Stanze (Italian for 'rooms', and the simple name by which they are still known) is a triumph over many different problems, all new to him when he begins.

The themes to be depicted for the pope are often intellectual and thematic, and thus much harder to bring to life than the intimacy of the Holy Family. They involve large numbers of characters, requiring compositional skills similar to those of a director presenting a scene on a stage. And the vaulted rooms, with walls interrupted by doors or alcoves, present irregular and difficult surfaces. Raphael triumphs over these obstacles. In the very first room which he undertakes, the Stanza della Segnatura, he creates with great confidence two crowded and contrasted scenes - the School of Athens, featuring Plato, Aristotle and many others, and the Dispute in which biblical figures and saints discuss the Christian sacrament.

Raphael's work on the Stanze is interrupted from 1515 by another important papal commission. Pope Leo X, elected in 1513, wants a set of ten tapestries to hang around the lower walls of the Sistine chapel. He asks Raphael to design ten scenes from the New Testament, to be sent north to Europe's best weavers in Brussels. Raphael, by now a master of large narrative compositions, paints the scenes as full-size cartoons in gouache on paper. In spite of hazardous journeys to Brussels and back to Rome, and then to England in 1623 (after being bought for Charles I's tapestry factory in Mortlake), seven of these cartoons survive in surprisingly good condition in the Victoria and Albert Museum. During these same years Raphael has been developing formidable skills as a male portraitist, painting his subjects more informally than has been the tradition, with a soft play of light on fabric and flesh, usually against neutral backgrounds, to focus all attention on the man's character. His sitters include his papal patrons, Julius II and Leo X, and his friend the writer Baldassare Castiglione. The brilliant portrait of Castiglione, with its muted range of blacks and greys and browns, is the perfect example of this new style. It is a style which will be developed with great flair during the 16th century by the portrait painters of Venice, in particular Titian. When Raphael is painting Castiglione's portrait, in 1515, Michelangelo has recently finished the Sistine ceiling and Leonardo da Vinci is also in Rome - not painting, but busy with scientific experiments. A mere six years after beginning the Stanze, Raphael is as much admired as the two older men. He has a thriving studio, with a great number of assistants. He has been appointed architect of St Peter's (in 1514) and is busy with other architectural projects.

These three artists are already seen as the outstanding figures of the time, a period subsequently regarded as the High Renaissance in Florence and Rome. Five years later, after a brief illness in 1520, Raphael dies. He is thirty-seven. His career has spanned just sixteen years.

Venetian painting: 1475-1576

During the 15th century, the great formative period of the Italian Renaissance, Venice lags far behind Florence and Rome in responding to the spirit of the time. The reason is partly the long centuries of Byzantine influence; Venetian patrons still expect a painting to be an object of solemn formality, preferably against a gilded background in the tradition of icons.

It is also true to say that in architecture, at this same period, the Venetians are enjoying a magnificent late flowering of the earlier Gothic tradition. The mood of the Renaissance has less immediate appeal here. But in terms of painting this changes rapidly after 1475. In 1475 a Sicilian painter, Antonello da Messina, arrives in Venice, where he spends about eighteen months. He is expert in the northern technique of oil painting, and the rich glowing quality of his work greatly impresses Venice's leading painter, Giovanni Bellini.

After Antonello's visit, the figures in Bellini's paintings evolve towards the rounded and richly human style of the Italian High Renaissance. The grouping of the figures in his altarpieces becomes solidly three-dimensional; his Virgins sit at ease with their infants in enchantingly natural landscapes; his portraits (such as the superb image of Venice's doge in 1501) are of flesh-and-blood people, even if in their Sunday best.

In the last years of Bellini's long life there are two young painters in Venice capable of more than equalling his genius. They add to the Venetian palette the richness of colour which becomes the outstanding characteristic of the school. The first of the two is Giorgione. He dies young in 1510 (though only two or three years younger than Raphael), and his work is only known from a very small number of richly glowing masterpieces. The second is Titian, whose life is as long as Giorgione's is short. Titian establishes a dominant position in northern Italian painting equal to that of Leonardo, Michelangelo and Raphael in Florence and Rome. Like any other good painter of the time, Titian receives commissions for church altarpieces (his Assumption of the Virgin for the church of the Frari in Venice, in 1518, is by far the largest yet seen in the city), but he also produces large secular paintings for delivery to an impressive clientele of princely customers.

Titian's customers also include the two great rivals of the era, Francis I of France and the emperor Charles V. He has no need to enter their service abroad. He despatches works to them from his studio in Venice.

Charles V and his son, Philip II, become Titian's most persistent patrons. They particularly like his mythological subjects, or poesie. Mythology provides many opportunities to display the naked female form, and these paintings build upon a rich new tradition in western art. Botticelli has pioneered the theme of the nude, but Giorgione and then Titian develop it seductively in the art of Venice. (Cranach is doing so at much the same time, with less subtlety, in Germany.)

Titian also has an extremely busy career as a portrait painter, particularly in the 1530s and 1540s. During his long life (into his mid-80s) he paints in an increasingly free style, until his brush strokes become bold short cuts to the depiction of reality.

A similar freedom of execution is characteristic of Tintoretto, the next of Venice's great masters. Veronese, arriving from Verona in 1555, completes the trio who together give this Venetian school such distinction. Veronese paints his vast canvases in a more measured and controlled style than Titian or Tintoretto. But the richness and colour remain unmistakable, as with so many other painters in the studios of Venice at this time.

4. Reformation,

Reformation, the religious revolution that took place in the Western church in the 16th century. Its greatest leaders undoubtedly were Martin Luther and John Calvin. Having far-reaching political, economic, and social effects, the Reformation became the basis for the founding of Protestantism, one of the three major branches of Christianity.

The world of the late medieval Roman Catholic Church from which the 16th-century reformers emerged was a complex one. Over the centuries the church, particularly in the office of the papacy, had become deeply involved in the political life of Western Europe. The resulting intrigues and political manipulations, combined with the church’s increasing power and wealth, contributed to the bankrupting of the church as a spiritual force. Abuses such as the sale of indulgences (or spiritual privileges) by the clergy and other charges of corruption undermined the church’s spiritual authority. These instances must be seen as exceptions, however, no matter how much they were played up by polemicists. For most people, the church continued to offer spiritual comfort. There is some evidence of anticlericalism, but the

church at large enjoyed loyalty as it had before. One development is clear: the political authorities increasingly sought to curtail the public role of the church and thereby triggered tension.

Martin Luther claimed that what distinguished him from previous reformers was that while they attacked corruption in the life of the church, he went to the theological root of the problem, the perversion of the church's doctrine of redemption and grace. Luther, a pastor and professor at the University of Wittenberg, deplored the entanglement of God's free gift of grace in a complex system of indulgences and good works. In his Ninety-five Theses, he attacked the indulgence system, insisting that the pope had no authority over purgatory and that the doctrine of the merits of the saints had no foundation in the gospel. Here lay the key to Luther's concerns for the ethical and theological reform of the church: Scripture alone is authoritative (sola scriptura) and justification is by faith (sola fide), not by works. While he did not intend to break with the Catholic Church, a confrontation with the papacy was not long in coming. In 1521 Luther was excommunicated; what began as an internal reform movement had become a fracture in western Christendom.

The Reformation movement within Germany diversified almost immediately, and other reform impulses arose independently of Luther. Huldrych Zwingli built a Christian theocracy in Zürich in which church and state joined for the service of God. Zwingli agreed with Luther in the centrality of the doctrine of justification by faith, but he espoused a different understanding of the Holy Communion. Luther had rejected the Catholic Church's doctrine of transubstantiation, according to which the bread and wine in Holy Communion became the actual body and blood of Christ. According to Luther's notion, the body of Christ was physically present in the elements because Christ is present everywhere, while Zwingli claimed that entailed a spiritual presence of Christ and a declaration of faith by the recipients.

Another group of reformers, often though not altogether correctly referred to as "radical reformers," insisted that baptism be performed not on infants but on adults who had professed their faith in Jesus. Called Anabaptists, they remained a marginal phenomenon in the 16th century but survived despite fierce persecution as Mennonites and Hutterites into the 21st century. Opponents of the ancient Trinitarian dogma made their appearance as well. Known as Socinians, after the name of their founder, they established flourishing congregations, especially in Poland.

Another important form of Protestantism (as those protesting against their suppressions were designated by the Diet of Speyer in 1529) is Calvinism, named for John Calvin, a French lawyer who fled France after his conversion to the Protestant cause. In Basel, Switzerland, Calvin brought out the first edition of his Institutes of the Christian Religion in 1536, the first systematic, theological treatise of the new reform movement. Calvin agreed with Luther's teaching on justification by faith. However, he found a more positive place for law within the Christian community than did Luther. In Geneva, Calvin was able to experiment with his ideal of a disciplined community of the elect. Calvin also stressed the doctrine of predestination and interpreted Holy Communion as a spiritual partaking of the body and blood of Christ. Calvin's tradition merged eventually with Zwingli's into the Reformed tradition, which was given theological expression by the (second) Helvetic Confession of 1561.

The Reformation spread to other European countries over the course of the 16th century. By mid century, Lutheranism dominated northern Europe. Eastern Europe offered a seedbed for even more radical varieties of Protestantism, because kings were weak, nobles strong, and cities few, and because religious pluralism had long existed. Spain and Italy were to be the great centres of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, and Protestantism never gained a strong foothold there.

In England the Reformation's roots were both political and religious. Henry VIII incensed by Pope Clement VII's refusal to grant him an annulment of his marriage, repudiated papal authority and in 1534 established the Anglican Church with the king as the supreme head. In spite of its political implications, the reorganization of the church permitted the beginning of religious change in England, which included the preparation of a liturgy in English, the Book of Common Prayer. In Scotland, John Knox, who spent time in Geneva and was greatly influenced by John Calvin, led the establishment of Presbyterianism, which made possible the eventual union of Scotland with England.