

Midterm Post-Mortem

Civilizations of the Ancient World • Fall 2022

Identification and Impact

Akhenaten—A pharaoh of New Kingdom Egypt during the 18th dynasty. After coming to the throne as Amenhotep IV, he changed his name to reflect his attempted religious reforms, which focused worship on one god, reducing the importance of the remaining pantheon, in an attempt to recover power over religion and society that pharaohs had lost to the priests. He was aided by his consort, the famous queen Nefertiti. Their reforms did not survive their deaths; priestly gods were restored under his son Tutankhamun, and Akhenaten was branded a heretic.

Aramaeans—A Semitic people living west of Mesopotamia and north of Suria in the Iron Age. Aramaeans tended to migrate throughout the Fertile Crescent, so that any city could be expected to have an enclave of Aramaeans. This meant it was useful for travelers and traders to know Aramaean when traversing foreign lands. By the time of the Persian Empire Aramaean became a common tongue in the region.

Babylonian Captivity — The resettlement of Judeans in Babylon during the 6th century BCE. During this time the Jews rigidified their customs and religion to preserve their identity and avoid the assimilation and subsequent oblivion that befell their fellow Hebrews, the Israelites, in the 8th century.

chariot — A wheeled cart used in warfare to allow fast maneuverability and envelopment on the battlefield. Originally an advantage of the Bronze Age Indo-Europeans, who had perfected strong wheel/axle technology ahead of the Mediterranean peoples (who tended to move goods/ideas by water), and so part of the supremacy of the Hittites and the Mycenaean Greeks.

city-state — A form of community in the ancient world in which an urban center is surrounded by a surrounding agricultural area—all sharing one economy, government, and identity. City-states are politically and economically independent and each has a patron deity with a temple (god-dwelling) at the heart of the city. City-states normally come in groups (a city-state culture) that share language, culture, and religion but are in fierce rivalry with each other for resources, often leading to inter-city war.

Cyrus — was the founder of the Persian Empire and the first example of the Persian Great King, a ruler abstracted from society and made unapproachable so that his symbolic form could be a focus of identity for the disparate empire. Cyrus expanded Persia to a massive empire and established a form of rule that limited oppression and the use of standing armies.

House of Dust — The Sumerian nickname for their conception of the underworld. The name comes from its inhabitants lamenting their impotence, even men who were once great and powerful in life, their ability to act come to nothing. This emphasizes the need to accomplish while alive.

Linear A — The writing system of the Minoan civilization on Crete. It was a syllabic system, each symbol representing a consonant followed by a vowel. It has not yet been deciphered

and the Minoan language remains unknown. When the Mycenaean culture developed nearby, they adapted the Minoan writing system to create Linear B; because the Mycenaean spoke early Greek, Linear B has been deciphered.

ma'at — The Egyptian concept of balance, harmony, and order. Because the gods of Egypt are benevolent and order and harmony come from them, and the pharaohs are agents of the gods, the pharaohs are expected to provide harmony and balance. This is a main limitation on pharaohs abusing their absolute power.

palace-city—Industrial urban complex characteristic of the centralized economy of the Bronze Age Minoans. The system was copied by the Mycenaean Greeks and was the foundation for their success as a manufacturing and commercial empire.

paganism — A form of polytheism, meaning a religion that has many gods. Pagan gods tend to represent the forces of the natural world, such as thunder, crop growth, and hearth fires, and areas of boundary, like crossroads and thresholds. Pagan gods are local, rooted in the territories in which they arose, so that if one traveled from Egypt through Canaan to Babylon one would leave the domain of Horus, pass through the lands of Ba'al, and arrive in the domain of Marduk.

priest-king—The monarch of a city-state whose role is to champion the needs of his people in dealings with the unpredictable and sometimes hostile gods. Usually the performer of rituals and sacrifice on behalf of the city. The kings of Sumer (e.g., Gilgamesh of Uruk) were priest-kings. — The contrast is with god-kings, such as the Egyptian pharaohs, who were seen as agents of benevolent and nurturing gods.

Sea Peoples — An Indo-European nation that suddenly arrived by sea and attacked Egyptian territory at the end of the New Kingdom in what the Egyptians called the Period of Calamities; this disaster helped collapse the New Kingdom Egyptian empire. They seem to have been a large group of refugees fleeing the Mycenaean downfall and the mass arrival of the Dorian Greeks. They took Egyptian land in southern Canaan and carved out a nation for themselves, later identified with the Philistines, and remained an Indo-European people surrounded by hostile Semites.

unintentional bias — Primary sources are an excellent form of evidence because they offer first-hand testimony, but they must be examined critically because they are always, without exception, subject to several elements that skew every document away from objective truth. These always include intentional bias (the shaping of an account to convince a reader of the author's opinion); point of view (the author only saw what he or she saw); and unintentional bias (the story any author tells is unconsciously shaped by personal values and customs). — Since all primary sources are skewed by these factors, plus others like survival of evidence, there are no facts in history. Objective truth about past events cannot be discovered and becomes a matter of interpretation, debate, and consensus among experts.

Short Answer

1. **Discuss the nature of the agricultural revolution** as a part of the emergence/invention of civilization. Your answer should discuss the positive and negative ramifications of establishing a community in one place, rather than having a migratory existence; and also the need to develop not merely subsistence, but an agricultural surplus that can provide for specialization of labor — an urban population that does not farm.
2. **Discuss the character of Shamhat** in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. Shamhat the harlot is sent to encounter Enkidu, the beast-man created by the gods as a counterpart to king Gilgamesh, and to undertake “the work of women”. Over a week-long period of sexual intercourse, Shamhat transforms Enkidu into a civilized man, so that afterwards the beasts don't know him and the gazelles won't let him

run with them. The symbolism is that the “work of women” is to bring about civilization in men, by (a) creating a connection with them through emotional intimacy, and (b) by creating future citizens through childbirth and the teaching of customs and morality that come with raising a child. In this way Shamhat acts both as a wife and as a mother to Enkidu.

3. **Discuss the role of monumental building** in the ancient world. Your answer should explore the general purposes of monumental building — to demonstrate economic and political (and by implication military) power of a community to its inhabitants and to foreigners, to attract the presence and beneficence of patron deities in monumental temples, to reinforce the superior standing of rulers and the elite, to employ the masses and keep them

occupied, and to attract the skilled and influential by demonstrating a city's cultural preeminence. Your answer should also discuss variations on these themes in the monumental buildings characteristic of different societies—ziggurats in Mesopotamia, pyramids in Egypt, the so-called Tower of Babel, the Hebrew Temple in Jerusalem, the temples of the Greeks, the walls of various great cities, etc.

4. **Discuss the arrival of the Indo-Europeans** in the Mediterranean world and its effects. Your answer should discuss the pastoral, wide-ranging, horse- and cart-oriented, nonurban, stateless, loose tribal structure of the early Indo-Europeans, information about which we can derive from the common terms found in the languages spoken by the people that descend from them — Hittites, Greeks, Medes, Persians, Philistines, and Latins; and how they contrasted with the urban, grain-growing peoples they settled among. The result is the synthesis of the indigenous urban population and the tribal Indo-Europeans, creating a new culture born of the Indo-Europeans emulating, surpassing, and subsuming the original inhabitants. This same process recurs again and again, in the Aegean (the Mycenaean Greeks, and a thousand years later the Dorian Greeks), Anatolia (the Hittites), Mesopotamia and Iran (the

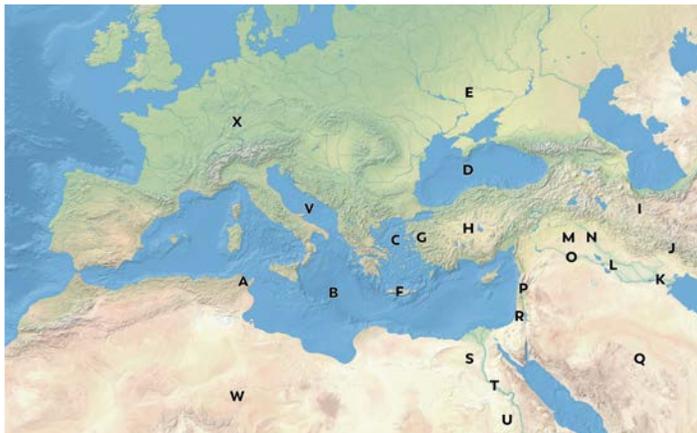
Medes and Persians), Canaan (the Philistines), the Indus River valley (the Vedic or Hindu peoples), and Italy (the Latins).

5. **Describe the contrasting symbolism of the flood** in Sumer and Egypt. In Sumer, the flood represented destruction and mortality; in Egypt, the flood was the annual gift of fertile soil, representing how nature and the gods provide for and nurture the Egyptian people. Your answer should contrast the Sumerians' emphasis on striving to accomplish and maintain stability and prosperity (with the capriciousness of nature and the gods not being counted on for help in this effort) with the Egyptians' expectation of stability and prosperity being provided to them by the cycle of nature represented by the Nile's annual floods and the cycle of custodial leadership represented by the pharaohs' identification with Horus. As a result Sumerians expect change, and feel that they each must actively work to create their legacy; while Egyptians expect permanence, and feel that there is no need for the citizen to be an active agent in public affairs, since the future will come to be like the present and the past.

Multiple Choice

- The Indo-Europeans living in Anatolia, who were early masters of bronze, were
 - The Egyptians
 - The Mycenaean
 - The Hittites
 - The Babylonians
- The Iron Age Neo-Assyrian Empire was known for all of the following EXCEPT:
 - They established a successful empire through tolerance of local customs and careful government by satraps
 - They brutally oppressed their subject peoples' customs and religions, in contrast to the later Persian Empire
 - They deported the northern Israelites from their lands, then resettled those lands with outsiders
 - They were brought down by rebellion of its conquered peoples, including the Chaldeans (Babylonians)
- All of the following describe ways in which the Jewish religion was unusual in the ancient world EXCEPT:
 - It assumed there was only one true god, and that all other gods worshiped by others were false gods
 - It associated the divine not with places or natural forces, but with a people
 - It described a god who didn't care about the deeds and fates of his followers
 - It developed many of its most important elements while the Jews were in exile
- The Iron Age people credited with spreading alphabetic writing along their Mediterranean trade routes was the
 - Phoenicians
 - Philistines
 - Hebrews
 - Akkadians
- All of the following are true about the Persian Empire EXCEPT:
 - At its height, it became the largest, most powerful state in the Mediterranean world
 - It was ruled by a domineering assembly of nobles led by a weak and unimportant king
 - The Persians' traditional religion was dualist, describing a balance of light and dark
 - Its expansion began under Cyrus the Great, who made use of the unifying symbolism of the Great King

Map



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|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|-------|
| 1. Aegean Sea | C | 13. Medes | I |
| 2. Anatolia | H | 14. Mediterranean Sea | B |
| 3. Assyrians | M | 15. Memphis | S |
| 4. Babylon | L | 16. Mesopotamia | M/L/K |
| 5. Black Sea | D | 17. Minoans | F |
| 6. Canaan | P | 18. Nile River | T |
| 7. Carthage | A | 19. Persians (Pars) | J |
| 8. Euphrates River | O | 20. Philistines | R |
| 9. Hittites | H | 21. Sumer | K |
| 10. Indo-Europ. homeland | E | 22. Troy | G |
| 11. Jerusalem | R | 23. Tyre | P |
| 12. Lower Egypt | S | 24. Upper Egypt | U |