

Midterm Exam Post-Mortem

A. 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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **cuneiform:** The pictographic writing system developed by the Sumerians during the early Bronze Age. One of the first writing systems, its use spread through Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and elsewhere. Over time its symbols became more abstract, making the system harder to learn and concentrating the wealth of information in the hands of fewer and fewer people.
- **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.
- **Indo-Europeans:** A pastoral people originating in the lands north of the Black Sea (what is now Ukraine) in the early Bronze Age. The Indo-Europeans were decentralized and nonurban, living in spread-out tribes. Entire nations of them would migrate seeking new grazing lands, encountering the indigenous city-state populations of the Mediterranean and Indus Valley. They would emulate, surpass, and absorb these peoples, becoming the Hittites, the Greeks, the Hindus, the Persians, the Latins, and others.
- **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.
- **Minoans:** The urban, industrial, sea-trading people inhabiting Crete in the early Bronze Age. Their economy was highly centralized, empowering the few. We know little about their civilization because we cannot read their writing system, Linear A. They were absorbed by the Mycenaean Greeks before the collapse of the Bronze Age.
- **Nile River:** The great river of Egypt. Not only does the Nile provide a means of trade and conquest along its length, its annual flood lays down fertile soil that makes Egypt agriculturally abundant. Because of this flood, the Egyptians saw their gods as benevolent, and their all-powerful king as their agent; this also meant they believed in the unchanging cyclical nature of the universe.
- **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.
- **satrap:** Provincial governor in the Persian Empire during the Iron Age. Satraps were go-betweens between subjects and the Great King and were part of a system designed to prevent uprisings through just rule.
- **Zoroastrianism:** the traditional religion of the Persians, named for a prophet known as Zoroaster (or Zarathustra). Zoroastrianism is dualist and holds that there two gods, Ahuramazda (god of light and order) and Ahriman (god of dark and chaos), and both were necessary and in balance. This meant that Persians believed good and evil was a matter of choice.

B. 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. 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.

C. Multiple Choice

- The Indo-European people who built an empire in central Anatolia and were early masters of bronze were the
 - Mennonites
 - Canaanites
 - Hittites
 - Stalactites
- 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 in Babylon
- 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 were 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
- The Bronze Age lawgiver whose Code ensured a consistent application of justice in the Old Babylonian Empire was
 - Humbaba
 - Horus
 - Hammurabi
 - Hatshepsut
- The early forms of Hinduism and Buddhism both had all of the following elements in common EXCEPT:
 - An emphasis on the followers' behavior and their role in society more than mortals' relationships with the gods
 - A cycle of rebirth (samsara)
 - The achievement of ultimate enlightenment and understanding bringing escape from this cycle (nirvana)
 - The quality of one's actions determines one's destiny (karma)

E. Map

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

