INTRODUCTION: PREHISTORY AND THE BIRTH OF CIVILIZATION

Prehistory
• When did the study of prehistory begin?
• On what disciplines do scholars of prehistory depend?
• When did anthropologists discover the first hominid fossils?
• What term is used to designate humans’ earliest cultural period and what does it mean?
• Briefly describe how our Stone Age ancestors lived.
• How is the term “culture” defined in the textbook?
• What technology “constitutes the initial act of [humankind] extending control over nature”?
• What distinguishes Homo sapiens from other primates?
• What types of evidence have been discovered to give us insight into prehistoric human life?
• What theories regarding the purpose of prehistoric paintings are briefly discussed in this chapter?
• Briefly describe the physical form and the possible meaning and purpose of the Figurine from Willendorf (The “Venus” of Willendorf).
• What are the three cultural periods that the prehistoric era is typically divided into?
• Which development that permanently altered the course of the human experience took place at the dawn of the Neolithic period?
• What purposes might Stonehenge have served?

The Birth of Civilization
• How is the term “civilization” defined in the textbook?
• For approximately how many years have human civilizations existed?
• Of all the technologies that were developed by and influenced Mesopotamian culture, one of the most significant was writing. Why is writing an incredibly important part of human civilization?
• Name and briefly describe the three stages Sumerian writing evolved through.
• What are hieroglyphics?
• How did the development of metallurgy contribute to the growth of civilizations?
• Which method of casting is discussed in this section?
• How did ancient peoples’ views of nature influence the development of their belief systems?
• Define the term “myth”. What type of myth is the focus of the four examples provided?

CHAPTER 1: MESOPOTAMIA

Learning Objectives
The objective of Chapter 1 is to examine spiritual, political, and artistic achievements of ancient Mesopotamia. After reading this chapter, you should be familiar with the following:

1. The ways in which the natural environment influenced religious beliefs in Sumer
2. The basic features of Mesopotamian culture as reflected in its literature and art
3. The function of written law in ancient Babylon
4. The nature and significance of Hebrew culture and belief
5. The role of technology in the rise of empires in Mesopotamia
Study Questions

The Land Between Two Rivers
- How did the geography of Mesopotamia affect the development of their cultures?
- What great rivers did Ancient Mesopotamia develop around?
- What contemporary country encompasses much of the terrain of ancient Mesopotamia?

The Gods of Mesopotamia
- Who was Sumer’s most successful and inspirational king and in what text are this king’s heroic adventures immortalized?
- Which central theme is expressed in The Epic of Gilgamesh? Do you think it is still important today? Briefly explain the reasoning for your choice.

The Rulers of Mesopotamia
- How does ancient Mesopotamian mathematics affect us today?
- Briefly describe the political system of ancient Mesopotamia.
- Who was the first and greatest of the Akkadian kings?

The Social Order
- Who was the most successful leader of the Babylonians?
- What is the most important set of ancient Mesopotamian laws? What significant concepts and attitudes do we inherit from ancient Mesopotamian law?
- What is depicted in the relief sculpture at the top of the stele of The Code of Hammurabi?

The Arts of Mesopotamia
- What is a ziggurat?
- What purposes did art serve in ancient Mesopotamia?

The Iron Age and Empires of the Iron Age
- What made the Hittites such a successful warrior people?
- Briefly describe Assyrian culture. How does their art illustrate what was important in their culture?
- What did the Assyrian Human-Headed Winged Bull symbolize and what purpose did it serve?
- Which Persian religion is discussed in this section? Does its beliefs sound familiar; if so, how?

CHAPTER 2: AFRICA

Learning Objectives
The objective of Chapter 2 is to examine the spiritual, political, and artistic achievements of ancient Egypt. After reading this chapter, you should be familiar with the following:

1. The ways in which the natural environment influenced spiritual life and religious beliefs in ancient Egypt
2. The basic features of religious, political, and social life in ancient Egypt
3. The unique features of Egyptian art and literature

Study Questions

Africa: Ancient Egypt
- What great river was central to ancient Egyptian civilization and how did it influence Egyptian cultural attitudes?

The Gods of Ancient Egypt
- Who was the greatest god in ancient Egypt and what did he represent?
- What importance did the myth of Osiris and Horus play in ancient Egypt?

The Rulers of Ancient Egypt
- Which great Egyptian king unified upper and lower Egypt?
- What religious/political/economic system did ancient Egyptians follow?
- Which female pharaoh is briefly discussed in this chapter?
- On what did ancient Egyptian law depend?
- What did the pharaoh represent in ancient Egypt?
• Under whose reign was the Great Pyramid at Giza built and what purpose did it serve?
• Briefly describe the ancient Egyptian vision of the afterlife
• Briefly describe the revolutionary changes that occurred under the reign of Akhenaten (Amenhotep IV).

**The Social Order**
• Describe the social hierarchy of ancient Egypt.

**The Arts of Ancient Egypt**
• What primary purpose did art, particularly sculpture, serve in Ancient Egypt?
• What characteristics are associated with the Classical style of Egyptian sculpture? Name a work that is used in illustrate these traits.
• Briefly describe how human figures were traditionally depicted in ancient Egyptian painting.
• What purpose did music play in ancient Egypt?
• The authors Matthews, Platt, and Noble suggest that “the world's fascination with the culture of ancient Egypt has never diminished.” Why do you think that is?