

A
HISTORY
OF THE
ANCIENT
WORLD

CHESTER G. STARR

A HISTORY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

THIRD EDITION

CHESTER G. STARR

Bentley Professor of History
University of Michigan

New York Oxford
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
1983

Copyright © 1965, 1974, 1983 by Oxford University Press, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Starr, Chester G., 1914-

A history of the ancient world.

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

1. History, Ancient. I. Title.

D59.S75 1983 930 81-22408

ISBN 0-19-503143-1 AACR2

ISBN 0-19-503144-X (college cloth)

Printing (last digit): 9 8
Printed in the United States of America

To my wife
Gretchen
in loving token
of over
four decades

PREFACE

All the men discussed in this book have long been dead. Many of them have strange names, such as Hammurapi, Sophocles, and Cato the Censor; their customs and fundamental beliefs are often far different from ours. In their deeds and thoughts, in their hopes and fears, nonetheless, they fashioned a civilized base of life upon which the modern world directly rests. The history of the many peoples of antiquity is in itself enduringly fascinating; often it throws light upon the wide potentialities of mankind. For history, though closely bound to specific fact and date, is one of those liberating studies by which men come closer to understanding their own nature.

Those born and reared in the western world will quite properly be concerned mainly with the story of their Greco-Roman background, which occupies the largest place in this volume. Today at last, however, we are coming to realize that the civilization which streamed through the ancient Mediterranean was not the only advanced pattern which existed in early Eurasia; nor was it alone in having great effects on the modern world. Accordingly I have from time to time cast a glance at the parallel developments of the Eurasian nomads, of the historic Near East, and of the very important foundations of civilization in China and India.

To write a simple and direct account which would put in clear perspective the whole sweep of ancient times has been both an exhilarating and a sobering responsibility. The volume of modern scholarship concerned with ancient peoples is a great testimony to our abiding interest but at the same time presents an insurmountable hurdle for any one

student. Insofar as it is humanly possible, the following pages rest upon the latest investigations, without forgetting the solid work of many scholars in past generations; the ever-swelling mass of physical evidence for ancient history requires us to recast our thoughts more frequently than is true in any other field of historical development.

Yet I would not have any reader take this story as the ultimate truth or accept uncritically the interpretations which I have advanced in order to give meaning to early human history. The issues, moreover, which faced ancient men were not always so straightforward as they must be pictured in a general survey. The present work, in sum, is also an invitation to its reader to correct and deepen, by further reading, his understanding of those aspects which most interest or concern him.

Seattle, Washington, June 1964

CHESTER G. STARR

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

One review of the first edition suggested that this work was written by a Whig historian, i.e., one who believed in progress. Nowadays it is unfashionable to adopt an optimistic point of view about human development, so this charge is a grave one. Yet I shall cheerfully admit that the early story of mankind, taken as a whole, does appear to me to have been a remarkable tale of the unfolding of the promise of human capabilities, even though disasters and temporary setbacks occurred repeatedly.

Certainly the study of ancient history is a subject which changes perhaps more rapidly than any other save that of the most recent decades. Archeological investigations are always producing new and unexpected evidence; material already on hand is reinterpreted by thoughtful scholars. In this edition I have altered very extensively the account of early man but have also recast a good many pages concerned with Greek and Roman history; the bibliographies have been revised throughout.

I am grateful to friends and colleagues for their counsel. My colleagues C. S. Chang and T. R. Trautmann have given kind assistance in bringing the bibliographies for early China and India up to date.

Ann Arbor, Michigan, August 1981

CHESTER G. STARR

CONTENTS

I THE ORIGINS OF CIVILIZATION

1. THE FIRST ACHIEVEMENTS OF MAN, 3
The Paleolithic Age, 4 Transition to the Neolithic Age, 14
The Neolithic Age, 17 Summation, 22
2. THE FIRST CIVILIZATION OF MESOPOTAMIA, 27
The First Cities of Mesopotamia, 29 The Mesopotamian Outlook, 35
The Results of Civilization, 41
3. EARLY EGYPT, 51
Emergence of Egyptian Civilization, 53 The Old Kingdom, 56
The Middle Kingdom, 63 The First Civilized Societies, 66

II THE FIRST EXPANSION OF CIVILIZATION

4. THE NEAR EAST IN THE SECOND MILLENNIUM, 75
Invaders of the Early Second Millennium, 77 Mesopotamia and Syria, 82
The New Kingdom in Egypt, 88 End of the Bronze Age, 94
5. NEW CIVILIZATIONS WEST AND EAST, 99
Asia Minor and the Hittites, 100 The Minoan-Mycenaean World, 104
Early India and China, 111 Eurasia in 1000 B.C., 116

III THE RISE OF NEW OUTLOOKS

6. THE UNIFICATION OF THE NEAR EAST, 123
The Dark Ages, 124 Rise of the Assyrian Empire, 129
Culture in the Assyrian Age, 134 The Successor States, 137

7. HEBREW MONOTHEISM, 143
The Meaning of Hebrew Development, 144 Hebrew Political History, 146 Early Religious Evolution, 152 The Testing of the Faith, 156 Judaism in a Pagan World, 159
8. HISTORIC CIVILIZATIONS OF INDIA AND CHINA, 164
The Aryans and Early Hinduism, 165 Buddhism and the Expansion of Historic India, 169 Chou China and Confucius, 172 The End of Chou China, 177 Conclusion, 178

IV THE EARLY GREEK WORLD

9. THE BEGINNINGS OF GREEK CIVILIZATION, 185
Greece in the Dark Ages, 186 The First Signs of the Greek Outlook, 192 Myth and Epic, 196 The Greek World in 750 B.C., 202
10. RISE AND SPREAD OF THE GREEK CITY-STATE, 205
Nature of the *Polis*, 206 Greek Expansion Overseas, 213 Economic and Social Changes, 220 The New Greek World, 225
11. GREEK CIVILIZATION IN THE AGE OF REVOLUTION, 228
Progress of the Arts, 229 New Forms of Poetry, 234 Greek Religion, 238 The Greeks in 650 B.C., 244
12. THE SIXTH CENTURY, 247
Internal Evolution of Athens, 248 Spartan Imperialism, 256 Other Greek States, 260 Archaic Civilization, 263 The Greek World in 500 B.C., 268

V THE CLASSIC AGE OF GREECE

13. THE GREEKS AGAINST THE PERSIANS, 275
Rise of the Persian Empire, 276 The Persian Attacks, 283 The Greek Offensive, 292 The Greek Victory, 294
14. ATHENIAN DEMOCRACY AND IMPERIALISM, 298
Athenian Democracy, 299 Athenian Imperialism, 307 Economic Expansion in the Fifth Century, 313 Greek World in the Mid-Fifth Century, 317
15. FIFTH-CENTURY CIVILIZATION, 319
The Athenian Drama, 320 Letters, Philosophy, and Science, 327 Classic Art, 331 The Golden Age, 336
16. END OF THE GOLDEN AGE, 339
The Peloponnesian War, 340 The New Intellectual Outlook, 348 The Greek World in 404 B.C., 354

VI THE BROADENING OF GREECE

17. DECLINE OF THE CITY-STATE, 359
Rivalries of Sparta, Thebes, and Athens, 360 Philip of Macedonia, 366
Greece in the Fourth Century, 371
18. GREEK CIVILIZATION IN THE FOURTH CENTURY, 378
Fourth-Century Philosophy, 379 New Literary Trends, 385
Fourth-Century Art, 388 The Edge of a New World, 390
19. ALEXANDER AND THE HELLENISTIC WORLD, 394
Alexander the Great, 395 The Hellenistic States, 403
Social and Economic Aspects, 407
20. HELLENISTIC CIVILIZATION, 413
Cities and Schools, 414 Literature and the Arts, 417
Hellenistic Philosophies, 422 Hellenistic Science, 426
Major Characteristics of Hellenistic Civilization, 430

VII THE RISE OF ROME

21. THE EARLY WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN, 437
Prehistoric Development of Italy and the West, 438
The Entry of Eastern Peoples, 446 The Western Mediterranean in the
Sixth Century, 452
22. ROME IN ITALY, 456
The Roman Kingdom, 457 Roman Conquest of Italy, 463
Political Evolution of the Republic, 468 Rome in 264 B.C., 473
23. ROME IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, 477
The Duel with Carthage, 478 Roman Conquest of the Hellenistic
World, 488 Hellenistic Culture in Rome, 494

VIII THE CONSOLIDATION OF ROMAN RULE

24. DECLINE OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC, 503
The Roman World in 133 B.C., 504 The Gracchi Brothers, 512
Marius and Sulla, 516
25. THE AGE OF CICERO AND CAESAR, 525
The Ciceronian Age, 526 The Rise of Caesar, 533
Civil Wars and Dictatorship, 538
26. THE AUGUSTAN AGE, 547
The Rise of Augustus, 548 The Augustan Political System, 553
The Augustan Age, 561

IX THE ERA OF EURASIAN STABILITY

27. THE ROMAN PEACE, 575
The Unfolding of Absolutism, 576 The Economic Peak, 587
Expansion of Culture, 591
28. THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY, 603
The Preparation for Christianity, 604 The Foundations of
Christianity, 608 Christianity and the Pagan World, 613
29. THE FARTHER ORIENT, 626
The Parthian Near East, 627 Mauryan and Kushan India, 631
Han China, 636 End of the Era of Stability, 641

X DECLINE OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

30. THE FIRST SIGNS OF STRESS, 647
Foreign and Internal Threats, 648 Political History of the Third
Century, 655 Cultural and Religious Crosscurrents, 661
31. THE LATER ROMAN EMPIRE, 669
Political Reorganization, 670 Victory of Christianity, 678
Culture of the Late Empire, 685
32. THE END OF THE ANCIENT WORLD, 694
Dissolution of the Roman Empire in the West, 695
The Rest of Eurasia, 703 Old and New, 707
- General Bibliography, 715
- Index, 731

PLATES

- I Paleolithic hand-ax
- II Crouching bison from Altamira
- III Sumerian gods and worshipers
- IV King Menkaure and his wife
- V Throne room at Cnossus
- VI Gold face mask from Mycenae
- VII Ashurbanipal killing a lion
- VIII Early Greek pottery
 - A. Mycenaean *kylix*
 - B. Protogeometric amphora
 - C. Geometric amphora
 - D. Protocorinthian *oenochoe*
- IX Dipylon amphora
- X Griffin head from Olympia
- XI Archaic *kouros* from Sunium
- XII *Peplos Kore* from the Acropolis
- XIII Poseidon (or Zeus) of Cape Artemisium
- XIV Heracles metope from Olympia
- XV Athenian water carriers from the Parthenon
- XVI Persian tribute-bringers from Persepolis

after page
238

- XVII Athenian pottery
A. Black-figure: Dionysus in his ship
B. Red-figure: Leagros on horseback
XVIII Greek coins
A. "Turtle" of Aegina
B. Attic "owl"
C. Arethusa from Syracuse
D. Antimachus of Bactria
XIX Hermes by Praxiteles
XX Dying Gaul and his wife
XXI Apollo of Veii
XXII Player on the double pipes from Tarquinia
XXIII "Brutus"
XXIV "Cato and Porcia"
XXV The emperor Augustus from Prima Porta
XXVI Pont du Gard
XXVII Interior of the Pantheon
XXVIII Philosopher sarcophagus
XXIX Buddha of Gandhara type
XXX Sassanian silver dish
XXXI The emperor Valentinian (?) in Barletta
XXXII The empress Theodora in Ravenna

after page
494

MAPS

- 1 Origins of agriculture in the ancient Near East, 16
- 2 Early Mesopotamia, 29
- 3 Ancient Egypt, 52
- 4 Eastern Mediterranean about 1200 B.C., 84
- 5 Eurasian civilizations about 1600 B.C., 112
- 6 Assyrian empire, 126
- 7 Ancient Israel, 148
- 8 Expansion of Greek civilization 750-500 B.C., 214
- 9 Persian empire about 500 B.C., 278
- 10 Central Greece in the Persian wars, 284
- 11 Athenian empire about 440 B.C., 308
- 12 City of Athens, 332
- 13 Alexander and the Hellenistic world, 396
- 14 Ancient Italy, 442
- 15 City of Rome, 458
- 16 Roman world in 201 B.C., 480
- 17 Roman world in 133 B.C., 490
- 18 Roman Empire under Augustus, 562
- 19 Eurasian civilizations about A.D. 150, 628
- 20 Later Roman Empire, 658

TABLES

- 1 Early development of man, 6
- 2 The first civilizations, 34
- 3 Aegean and Near East in the second millennium, 78
- 4 Greece and the Near East 1100-500 B.C., 250
- 5 The Greek world 500-323 B.C., 300
- 6 Roman Republic 509-44 B.C., 506
- 7 Roman Empire 27 B.C.-A.D. 180, 578
- 8 Roman emperors A.D. 180-284, 649
- 9 Roman emperors A.D. 284-395, 671
- 10 Roman emperors A.D. 395-476, 695

I

THE ORIGINS OF CIVILIZATION

THE FIRST ACHIEVEMENTS OF MAN

Scientists now speculate that the age of the earth is $4\frac{1}{2}$ billion years. History is concerned with only the last few moments, relatively speaking, of this immense span of time; for its province is the story of mankind. Students of history are attempting to account to themselves for the basic qualities of human culture and for the manner in which these have developed.

To frame answers on these important issues we need go back scarcely more than a few million years, to the origin of the immediate ancestors of modern man. Through almost all this period men lived virtually as animals. Physically their bodies underwent visible changes; but these alterations, which affected chiefly the shape of the head and the size of the brain, have been refinements of a biological structure already present in early times. Culturally men developed useful tools, knew a variety of food-gathering techniques, and accommodated themselves sufficiently to social requirements to safeguard the rearing of their children. Nonetheless they long remained at the mercy of nature. Not until about 7000 B.C. did the conscious practice of agriculture first appear in a few areas.

In this chapter we shall follow mankind across its food-gathering stage, called the Paleolithic age, and into the food-raising or Neolithic age. Although the historian can now hope to trace the main phases of this evolution, much of his account must be conjectural, and many aspects still remain obscure. Even so, the geographical and cultural ex-