

THE HUMANISTIC TRADITION

THIRD EDITION

Gloria K. Fiero



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The First
Civilizations and the
Classical Legacy

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Gloria K. Fiero



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THE HUMANISTIC TRADITION, BOOK 1

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Front cover

Main image: Red-figure *kylix* showing man and youth debating. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1952 52.11.4. Photograph © 1984 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Insets: (top) Head of Theodora, detail of *Empress Theodora and Retinue*, ca. 547 C.E. Mosaic. San Vitale, Ravenna. Photo: © Dagli Orti, Paris.
(center) Sandro Botticelli, detail of *Birth of Venus*, after 1482. Tempera on canvas, full image 5 ft. 9 in. × 9 ft. ½ in. Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Scala, Florence.
(bottom) Detail of *Seated Buddha*, from the Gandharan region of Northwest Pakistan, ca. 200 C.E. Gray schist, 51 × 31 in. The Cleveland Museum of Art. Leonard Hanna, Jr. Bequest. CMA 61.418.

Frontispiece

Female figure. Early Cycladic II, Late Spedos type, ca. 2600-2400 B.C.E. Marble, height 24 ¼ in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Cristos B. Bastis, 1968. 68.148.

Preface

"It's the most curious thing I ever saw in all my life!" exclaimed Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland, as she watched the Cheshire Cat slowly disappear, leaving only the outline of a broad smile. "I've often seen a cat without a grin, but a grin without a cat!" A student who encounters an ancient Greek epic, a Yoruba mask, or a Mozart opera—lacking any context for these works—might be equally baffled. It may be helpful, therefore, to begin by explaining how the artifacts (the "grin") of the humanistic tradition relate to the larger and more elusive phenomenon (the "cat") of human culture.

The Humanistic Tradition and the Humanities

In its broadest sense, the term *humanistic tradition* refers to humankind's cultural legacy—the sum total of the significant ideas and achievements handed down from generation to generation. This tradition is the product of responses to conditions that have confronted all people throughout history. Since the beginnings of life on earth, human beings have tried to ensure their own survival by achieving harmony with nature. They have attempted to come to terms with the inevitable realities of disease and death. They have endeavored to establish ways of living collectively and communally. And they have persisted in the desire to understand themselves and their place in the universe. In response to these ever-present and universal challenges—*survival, communality, and self-knowledge*—human beings have created and transmitted the tools of science and technology, social and cultural institutions, religious and philosophic systems, and various forms of personal expression, the sum total of which we call culture.

Even the most ambitious survey cannot assess all manifestations of the humanistic tradition. This book therefore focuses on the creative legacy referred to collectively as *the humanities*: literature, philosophy, history (in its literary dimension), architecture, the visual arts (including photography and film), music, and dance. Selected examples from each of these disciplines constitute our *primary sources*. Primary sources (that is, works original to the age that produced them) provide first-hand evidence of human inventiveness and ingenuity. The primary sources in this text have been chosen on the basis of their authority, their beauty, and their enduring value. They are, simply stated, the great works of their time and, in some cases, of all time. Universal in their appeal, they have been transmitted from generation to generation. Such works are, as well, the landmark

examples of a specific time and place: They offer insight into the ideas and values of the society in which they were produced. The drawings of Leonardo da Vinci, for example, reveal a passionate determination to understand the operations and functions of nature. And while Leonardo's talents far exceeded those of the average individual of his time, his achievements may be viewed as a mirror of the robust curiosity that characterized his time and place—the age of the Renaissance in Italy. *The Humanistic Tradition* surveys such landmark works, but joins "the grin" to "the cat" by examining them within their political, economic, and social contexts.

The Humanistic Tradition explores a living legacy. History confirms that the humanities are integral forms of a given culture's values, ambitions, and beliefs. Poetry, painting, philosophy, and music are not, generally speaking, products of unstructured leisure or indulgent individuality; rather, they are tangible expressions of the human quest for the good (one might even say the "complete") life. Throughout history, these forms of expression have served the domains of the sacred, the ceremonial, and the communal. And even in the waning days of the twentieth century, as many time-honored traditions have come under assault, the arts retain their power to awaken our imagination in the quest for survival, communality, and self-knowledge.

The Scope of the Humanistic Tradition

The humanistic tradition is not the exclusive achievement of any one geographic region, race, or class of human beings. For that reason, this text assumes a global and multicultural rather than exclusively Western perspective. At the same time, Western contributions are emphasized, first, because the audience for these books is predominantly Western, but also because in recent centuries the West has exercised a dominant influence on the course and substance of global history. Clearly, the humanistic tradition belongs to all of humankind, and the best way to understand the Western contribution to that tradition is to examine it in the arena of world culture.

As a survey, *The Humanistic Tradition* cannot provide an exhaustive analysis of our creative legacy. The critical reader will discover many gaps. Some aspects of culture that receive extended examination in traditional Western humanities surveys have been pared down to make room for the too often neglected contributions of

Islam, Africa, and Asia. This book is necessarily selective—it omits many major figures and treats others only briefly. Primary sources are arranged, for the most part, chronologically, but they are presented as manifestations of *the informing ideas of the age* in which they were produced. The intent is to examine the evidence of the humanistic tradition thematically and topically, rather than to compile a series of mini-histories of the individual arts.

Studying the Humanistic Tradition

To study the creative record is to engage in a dialogue with the past, one that brings us face to face with the values of our ancestors, and, ultimately, with our own. This dialogue is (or should be) a source of personal revelation and delight; like Alice in Wonderland, our strange, new encounters will be enriched according to the degree of curiosity and patience we bring to them. Just as lasting friendships with special people are cultivated by extended familiarity, so our appreciation of a painting, a play, or a symphony depends on close attention and repeated contact. There are no shortcuts to the study of the humanistic tradition, but there are some techniques that may be helpful. It should be useful, for instance, to approach each primary source from the triple perspective of its *text*, its *context*, and its *subtext*.

The Text: The *text* of any primary source refers to its *medium* (that is, what it is made of), its *form* (its outward shape), and its *content* (the subject it describes). All literature, for example, whether intended to be spoken or read, depends on the medium of words—the American poet Robert Frost once defined literature as “performance in words.” *Literary form* varies according to the manner in which words are arranged. So poetry, which shares with music and dance rhythmic organization, may be distinguished from prose, which normally lacks regular rhythmic pattern. The main purpose of prose is to convey information, to narrate, and to describe; poetry, by its freedom from conventional patterns of grammar, provides unique opportunities for the expression of intense emotions. Philosophy (the search for truth through reasoned analysis) and history (the record of the past) make use of prose to analyze and communicate ideas and information. In literature, as in most kinds of expression, content and form are usually interrelated. The subject matter or the form of a literary work determines its *genre*. For instance, a long narrative poem recounting the adventures of a hero constitutes an *epic*, while a formal, dignified speech in praise of a person or thing constitutes a *eulogy*.

The visual arts—painting, sculpture, architecture, and photography—employ a wide variety of media, such as wood, clay, colored pigments, marble, granite, steel, and (more recently) plastic, neon, film, and computers.

The form or outward shape of a work of art depends on the manner in which the artist manipulates the formal elements of color, line, texture, and space. Unlike words, these formal elements lack denotative meaning. The artist may manipulate form to describe and interpret the visible world (as in such genres as portraiture and landscape painting); to generate fantastic and imaginative kinds of imagery; or to create imagery that is *nonrepresentational*—without identifiable subject matter. In general, however, the visual arts are spatial, that is, they operate and are apprehended in space.

The medium of music is sound. Like literature, music is durational: It unfolds over the period of time in which it occurs. The formal elements of music are melody, rhythm, harmony, and tone color—elements that also characterize the oral life of literature. As with the visual arts, the formal elements of music are without symbolic content, but while literature, painting, and sculpture may imitate or describe nature, music is almost always nonrepresentational—it rarely has meaning beyond the sound itself. For that reason, music is the most difficult of the arts to describe in words. It is also (in the view of some) the most affective of the arts. Dance, the artform that makes the human body itself a medium of expression, resembles music in that it is temporal and performance-oriented. Like music, dance exploits rhythm as a formal tool, but, like painting and sculpture, it unfolds in space as well as time.

In analyzing the text of a work of literature, art, or music, we ask how its formal elements contribute to its *meaning and affective power*. We examine the ways in which the artist manipulates medium and form to achieve a characteristic manner of execution and expression that we call *style*. And we try to determine the extent to which a style reflects the personal vision of the artist and the larger vision of his or her time and place. Comparing the styles of various artworks from a single era, we may discover that they share certain defining features and characteristics. Similarities (both formal and stylistic) between, for instance, golden age Greek temples and Greek tragedies, between Chinese lyric poems and landscape paintings, and between post-modern fiction and pop sculpture, prompt us to seek the unifying moral and aesthetic values of the cultures in which they were produced.

The Context: We use the word *context* to describe the historical and cultural environment. To determine the context, we ask: In what time and place did the artifact originate? How did it function within the society in which it was created? Was the purpose of the piece decorative, didactic, magical, propagandistic? Did it serve the religious or political needs of the community? Sometimes our answers to these questions are mere guesses. *Nevertheless, understanding the function of an*

artifact often serves to clarify the nature of its form (and vice versa). For instance, much of the literature produced prior to the fifteenth century was spoken or sung rather than read; for that reason, such literature tends to feature repetition and rhyme, devices that facilitate memorization. We can assume that literary works embellished with frequent repetitions, such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the Hebrew Bible, were products of an oral tradition. Determining the original function of an artwork also permits us to assess its significance in its own time and place: The paintings on the walls of Paleolithic caves, which are among the most compelling animal illustrations in the history of world art, are not "artworks" in the modern sense of the term but, rather, magical signs that accompanied hunting rituals, the performance of which was essential to the survival of the community. Understanding the relationship between text and context is one of the principal concerns of any inquiry into the humanistic tradition.

The Subtext: The *subtext* of the literary or artistic object refers to its secondary and implied meanings. The subtext embraces the emotional or intellectual messages embedded in, or implied by, a work of art. The epic poems of the ancient Greeks, for instance, which glorify prowess and physical courage in battle, suggest that such virtues are exclusively male. The state portraits of the seventeenth-century French ruler Louis XIV carry the subtext of unassailable and absolute power. In our own century, Andy Warhol's serial adaptations of soup cans and Coca-Cola bottles offer wry commentary on the supermarket mentality of postmodern American culture. Identifying the implicit message of an artwork helps us to determine the values and customs of the age in which it was produced and to assess those values against others.

Beyond *The Humanistic Tradition*

This book offers only small, enticing samples from an enormous cultural buffet. To dine more fully, students are encouraged to go beyond the sampling presented at this table; and for the most sumptuous feasting, nothing can substitute for first-hand experience. Students, therefore, should make every effort to supplement this book with visits to art museums and galleries, concert halls, theaters, and libraries. *The Humanistic Tradition* is designed for students who may or may not be able to read music, but who surely are able to cultivate an appreciation of music in performance. The clefs that appear in the text refer to the forty-five Music Listening Selections found on two accompanying cassettes, available from the publishers. Lists of suggestions for further reading are included at the end of each chapter, while a selected general bibliography of humanities resources appears at the end of each book.

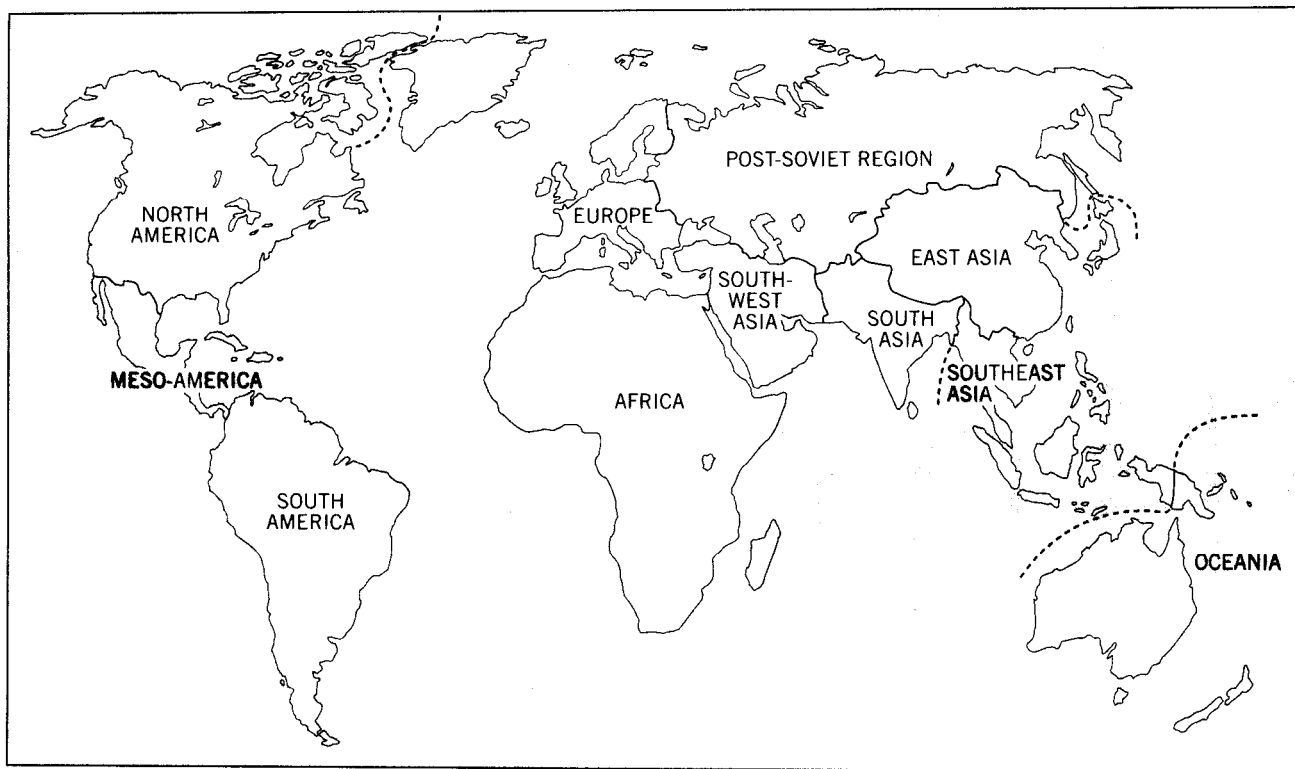
The Third Edition

On the threshold of the new millennium, this third edition of *The Humanistic Tradition* brings increased attention to the theme of global cross-cultural encounter and, in particular, to the interaction of the West with the cultures of Islam, East Asia, and Africa. In this connection, a full chapter has been devoted to the Islamic World, and the chapter on ancient Rome has been expanded to provide parallels between the cultures of the Roman Empire and Han China. Chapter 1 now includes a carefully chosen selection of creation myths. There are new readings from *Beowulf*, Christine de Pisan, Murasaki Shikibu, Ibn Battuta, Hernán Cortés, Jonathan Swift, Mary Shelley, and Alice Walker. Excerpts from the *Iliad* (in chapter 4) appear in the 1990 English translation by Robert Fagles. Sufi poetry, the transatlantic slave trade, Japanese theater, and contemporary computer art add new perspectives to this, the latest version of the text.

The third edition also features two new study aids, both of which are designed to facilitate an appreciation of the arts in relation to their time and place: *Science and Technology Boxes*, which appear throughout the chapters, list key scientific and technological developments that have directly or indirectly affected the history of culture. *Locator Maps* (keyed to the map that appears on p. xii) assist readers in linking specific cultural events with the geographic region in which they occurred. This edition also expands on the number of color illustrations and large color maps, renumbers the Readings by book, and updates the Suggestions for Reading and Selected General Bibliography. Finally, in the transcription of the Chinese language, the older Wade-Giles system has been replaced by the more modern Hanyu Pinyin.

A Note to Instructors

The key to successful classroom use of *The Humanistic Tradition* is *selectivity*. Although students may be assigned to read whole chapters that focus on a topic or theme, as well as complete works that supplement the abridged readings, the classroom should be the stage for a selective treatment of a single example or a set of examples. The organization of this textbook is designed to emphasize themes that cut across geographic boundaries—themes whose universal significance prompts students to evaluate and compare rather than simply memorize and repeat lists of names and places. In an effort to assist readers in achieving global cultural literacy, every effort has been made to resist isolating (or "ghettoizing") individual cultures and to avoid the inevitable biases we bring to our evaluation of relatively unfamiliar cultures.



Keymap Indicating Areas Shown as White Highlights on the Locator Maps.

Acknowledgments

Writing *The Humanistic Tradition* has been an exercise in humility. Without the assistance of learned friends and colleagues, assembling a book of this breadth would have been an impossible task. James H. Dormon read all parts of the manuscript and made extensive and substantive editorial suggestions; as his colleague, best friend, and wife, I am most deeply indebted to him. I owe thanks to the following faculty members of the University of Southwestern Louisiana: for literature, Allen David Barry, Darrell Bourque, C. Harry Bruder, John W. Fiero, Emilio F. Garcia, Doris Meriwether, and Patricia K. Rickels; for history, Ora-Wes S. Cady, John Moore, Bradley Pollack, and Thomas D. Schoonover; for philosophy, Steve Giambrone and Robert T. Kirkpatrick; for geography, Tim Reilly; for the sciences, Mark Konikoff and John R. Meriwether; and for music, James Burke and Robert F. Schmalz.

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SUPPLEMENTS FOR THE INSTRUCTOR AND THE STUDENT

A number of useful supplements are available to instructors and students using *The Humanistic Tradition*. Please contact your sales representative or call 1-800-338-3987 to obtain these resources, or to ask for further details.

Audiocassettes

Two ninety-minute audiocassettes containing a total of forty-five musical selections have been designed exclusively for use with *The Humanistic Tradition*. Cassette One corresponds to the music listening selections discussed in books 1–3 and Cassette Two contains the music in books 4–6. Each selection on the cassettes is discussed in the text and includes a voice introduction for easier location. Instructors may obtain copies of the cassettes for classroom use by calling 1-800-338-3987. Individual cassettes may be purchased separately; however, upon the request of instructors who place book orders, Cassette One or Two can be packaged with any of the six texts, so that students may use the musical examples *along with* the text.

Slide Sets

A set of fifty book-specific slides is available to qualified adopters of *The Humanistic Tradition*. These slides have been especially selected to include many of the less well-known images in the books, and will be a useful complement to your present slide resources. A larger set of two hundred book-specific slides is available for purchase from Sandak, Inc. For more information, contact your McGraw-Hill representative.

Instructor's Resource Manual

The Instructor's Resource Manual is designed to assist instructors as they plan and prepare for classes. Course outlines and sample syllabuses for both semester and quarter systems are included. The chapter summaries emphasize key themes and topics that give focus to the primary source readings. The study questions for each chapter may be removed and copied as handouts for student discussion or written assignments. A Test Item File follows each chapter along with a correlation list that directs instructors to the appropriate music examples, slides, transparencies, and software sections of the other supplements. A list of suggested videotapes, recordings, videodiscs, CD-ROMs, and their suppliers is included.

MicroTest III

The questions in the Test Item File are available on MicroTest III, a powerful but easy-to-use test generating program. MicroTest is available for DOS, Windows, and Macintosh

personal computers. With MicroTest, an instructor can easily select the questions from the Test Item File and print a test and answer key. You can customize questions, headings, and instructions and add or import questions of your own.

Humanities Transparencies

A set of seventy-one acetate transparencies is available with *The Humanistic Tradition*. These show examples of art concepts, architectural styles, art media, maps, musical notation, musical styles, and musical elements.

Culture 3.0 CD-ROM

Culture 3.0 CD-ROM is a unique Macintosh reference tool that emphasizes the interaction of varied disciplines. It contains 40 historical maps, 120 signature melodies, 50,000 hypertext links, and 170 essays on topics ranging from Greek gods and goddesses to the Cold War. Thirty-two CultureGrids are arranged chronologically from the biblical era to the twentieth century, organizing people, places, and events by country, discipline, and generation. (*Culture 2.0* is also available in a seven-disk set for Mac and IBM.)

Student Study Guides, Volumes 1 and 2

Written by Gloria K. Fiero, two new Student Study Guides are now available to help students gain a better understanding of subjects found in *The Humanistic Tradition*. Volume 1 accompanies books 1–3 and Volume 2 accompanies books 4–6. Each chapter contains: a Chapter Objective; a Chapter Outline; Key Terms, Names, and Dates; Vocabulary Building; Multiple Choice Questions; and Essay Questions. Many chapters also contain a Visual/Spatial Exercise and Bonus Material. At the end of each Part, Synthesis material helps students draw together ideas from a set of chapters.

The Art Historian CD-ROM, Volumes 1 and 2

This flexible two-volume series on dual platform (Mac and Windows) CD-ROMs is designed to supplement introductory level art history education. Volume 1 covers ancient and medieval art, and Volume 2 covers Renaissance to modern art. The images included on the CD were gathered from over three hundred museums, galleries, and private collections throughout the world, and the text and test questions were written by current scholars from universities across the United States. With *The Art Historian*, students may listen to multimedia presentations, review full-color high-resolution images, and test their knowledge with flashcards and essay questions. *The Art Historian* is flexible, allowing students to take notes, compare two images on the screen at the same time, and create personalized collections of images for study and review. With *The Art Historian*, we place the power of multimedia *and art at your fingertips*.

To 10,000 B.C.E.

8000

4000

2000

1000

WORLD EVENTS

PALEOLITHIC culture
5 million–10,000
Australopithecus uses
stone tools and weapons

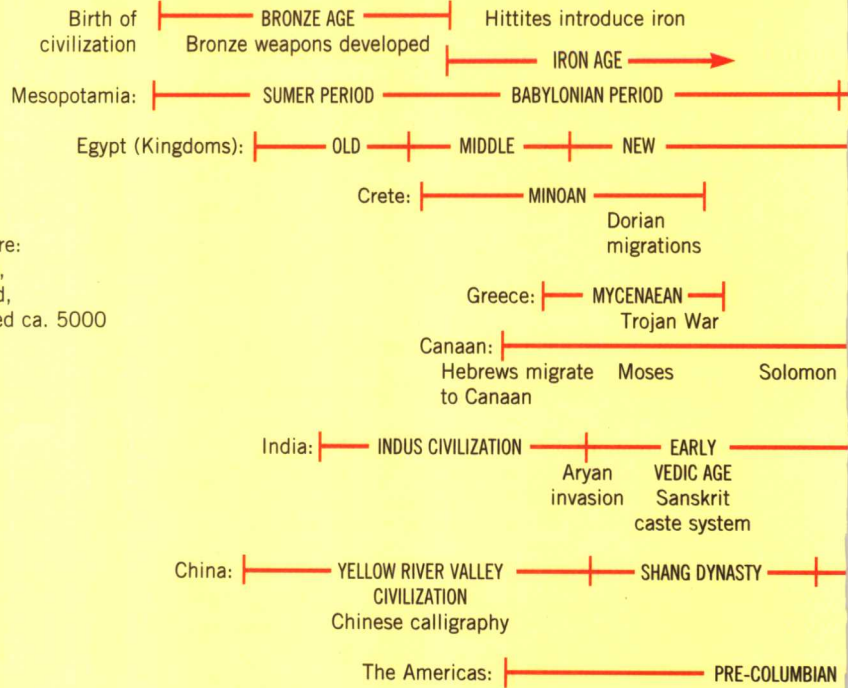
ICE AGE ca. 3 million–10,000

NEANDERTHAL culture
ca. 30,000–10,000

Evolution of
Homo sapiens
ca. 35,000

NEOLITHIC culture:
food produced,
villages formed,
pottery invented ca. 5000

Migrations to the
Americas ca. 12,000



LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

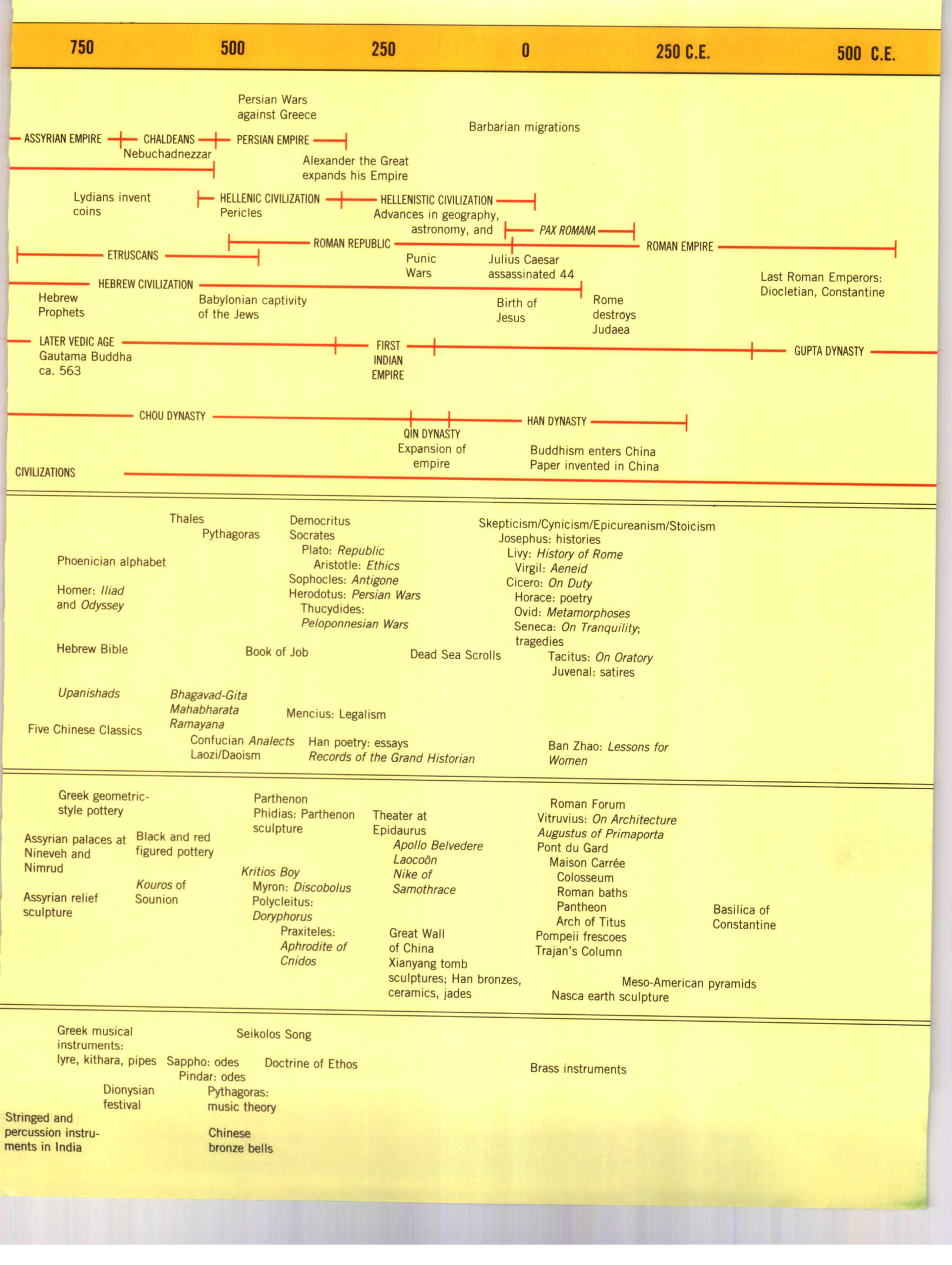
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Epic of Gilgamesh
Babylonian Creation
Hammurabi's Code
Hieroglyphs
Cuneiform script
Pyramid texts of Egypt
Egyptian Book of the Dead
Linear B Script in Crete and Greece
Hymn to the Aten
Vedas in India
Oracle bones in China

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"Venus of Willendorf"
Neolithic beaker from Susa
Palette of Narmer
Egyptian Pyramids
Sumerian ziggurats
Standard of Ur
Statues at Tell Asmar
Stonehenge
Palace at Knossos
Cycladic figure
Indus valley bronzes
Chinese jade disks
Portrait of Nefertiti
Coffin of Tutankhamen
Lion Gate at Mycenae
Olmec clay figurines
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Hymn to the Aten
Vedas (sung recitation)
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PART I PREHISTORY AND THE FIRST CIVILIZATIONS

The first chapters in the history of human life are often regarded as the most exciting. They present us with a gigantic puzzle that requires piecing together numerous fragments of information, most of which, like buried treasure, have been dug out of the earth. Reassembled, these fragments reveal the progress of humankind from its prehistoric beginnings through the cultural history of ancient civilizations in Africa, Southwest Asia, India, and China. However, the individual histories of these civilizations are not yet our major concern. Rather, these chapters develop three principal *themes*: the interaction of people and nature as fundamental to survival and the evolution of culture; the formulation of belief systems that provide meaningful bonds between the secular and spiritual realms; and finally, the establishment of the social order by way of law and other forms of cultural expression. These three themes often intermesh and overlap, so that the pages treating Egyptian religion, for instance, may also shed light on the Egyptian social order. Moreover, although these themes address concerns that are universal, they are illustrated here with visual and literary examples drawn only from humankind's earliest civilizations.

(opposite) Detail of The Fields of the Blessed: Deceased and Wife in Fields of Iaru, Adoring Deities. Tomb of Sennudjem, Egyptian, ca. 1200 B.C.E. Painted limestone, height 21 in., length 33 in., scale 1:2. Copyist: Charles K. Wilkinson, 1922. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Chapter 1, "Prehistory and the Birth of Civilization: People and Nature," deals with the period before written records and with the particulars surrounding the rise of urban communities. It explores the development of an increasingly sophisticated technology, the evolution of early forms of social and religious organization, and the formation of myth—all of which proceeded from our ancestors' earliest efforts to meet the challenges of their environment and to ensure their survival.

Chapter 2, "Ancient Civilizations: People and the Gods," compares the development of polytheism, monotheism, and pantheism, the three major belief systems formulated among ancient civilizations. It discusses the religious perspectives of ancient Egyptians and Mesopotamians, and examines the beliefs of each concerning life after death. This chapter also explores the unique features of Hebrew monotheism and Hindu pantheism (as it evolved in ancient India).

The third chapter, entitled "Ancient Civilizations: People and the Social Order," investigates the ways in which ancient people brought order to their lives in common, that is, as members of an urban community. This chapter examines the earliest forms of law in the ancient world, including that enshrined in Hammurabi's Code. The sections on the Hebrews and on ancient China explore the manner in which the bonds between the divine and secular realms fixed both the social and the moral order. The arts—the rich legacy of ancient civilizations—provide the primary sources for understanding the dynamic interaction between people and nature, people and the gods, and people and the social order.

1

Prehistory and the Birth of Civilization: People and Nature

Whether or not one believes that the beginnings of life were divinely generated, it is clear that human beings belong to a long and complex process of evolutionary development. The story of human evolution is a record of the genetic and behavioral adaptation of human beings to our natural surroundings. It is the last chapter in a long history that begins with the simplest forms of life that thrived in the primeval seas hundreds of millions of years ago and culminates in the astonishing achievements of modern human beings. Throughout our short history on this planet, human beings have faced the privations of the environment and of an often hostile geography and a threatening climate. Meeting such environmental challenges was the primary occupation of the earliest inhabitants.

Prehistory

The study of history before the appearance of written records, an enterprise that originated in France around 1860, is called **prehistory**. In the absence of written records, prehistorians depend on information about the past provided by the disciplines of geology, paleontology, anthropology, archeology, and ethnography. For instance, using instruments that measure the radioactive atoms remaining in the organic elements of the earth's strata, geologists work to determine the age of the earth. They report that our planet is approximately 4.5 billion years old. Paleontologists record the history of fossil remains and the life of the earth's earliest living creatures. Anthropologists study human biology, society, and cultural practices, while archeologists uncover, analyze, and interpret the material remains of past societies. Finally, a special group of cultural anthropologists known as ethnographers study surviving, preliterate societies. All of these specialists contribute to producing a detailed picture of humankind's earliest environment and the prehistoric past.

The earliest organic remains in the earth's strata are almost four billion years old. From one-celled

organisms that inhabited the watery terrain of the ancient planet, higher forms of life very gradually evolved. Some hundred million years ago, dinosaurs stalked the earth, eventually becoming extinct—possibly because they failed to adapt to climatic change. Eighty million years ago, mammals roamed the earth's surface. Although even the most approximate dates are much disputed, it is generally agreed that between ten and five million years ago ancestral humans first appeared on the planet, probably in eastern and southern Africa. The exact genealogy of humankind is still a matter of intense debate. However, in the last fifty years, anthropologists have clarified some aspects of the relationship between human beings and earlier primates—the group of mammals that today includes monkeys, apes, and human beings. Fossil evidence reveals structural similarities between human beings and chimpanzees (and other apes). More recent research in molecular biology and genetics indicates that humans are more closely related to chimpanzees than cats are to lions.

Paleolithic ("Old Stone") Culture* (ca. 5 million–10,000 B.C.E.**)

Early in the twentieth century, anthropologists discovered the first fossil remains of the near-human or proto-human creature known as **hominid**, who lived some five or more million years ago. Such hominids lived in packs; they gathered seeds, berries, wild fruits, and vegetables, and possibly even hunted the beasts of the African savannas. Hominid footprints found in South Africa in the mid-1990s and fossil remains uncovered in both South Africa and Ethiopia suggest that hominids may have walked upright as early as 3.7 million years

*The terms Paleolithic and Neolithic do not describe uniform time periods, but, rather, cultures that appeared at different times in different parts of the world.

**Dates are signified as B.C.E., "Before the Christian (or common) era," or C.E., "Christian (or common) era."