

Early American Civilizations

It was from within the places called Paxil and Cayala that the yellow ears of ripe maize and the white ears of ripe maize come from. . . . Thus was found the food that would become the flesh of the newly framed and shaped people.

Popol Vuh, "The Discovery of Maize"

The early centers of civilization in the Americas, in the Andes Mountains and in *Mesoamerica*, produced several great civilizations. Two of the most significant ones in the Andes were the *Chavin* and later the *Moche*. In Mesoamerica, the *Olmecs* were a foundational civilization that heavily influenced two later groups, the *Mayan* and Aztec civilizations.

The Moche

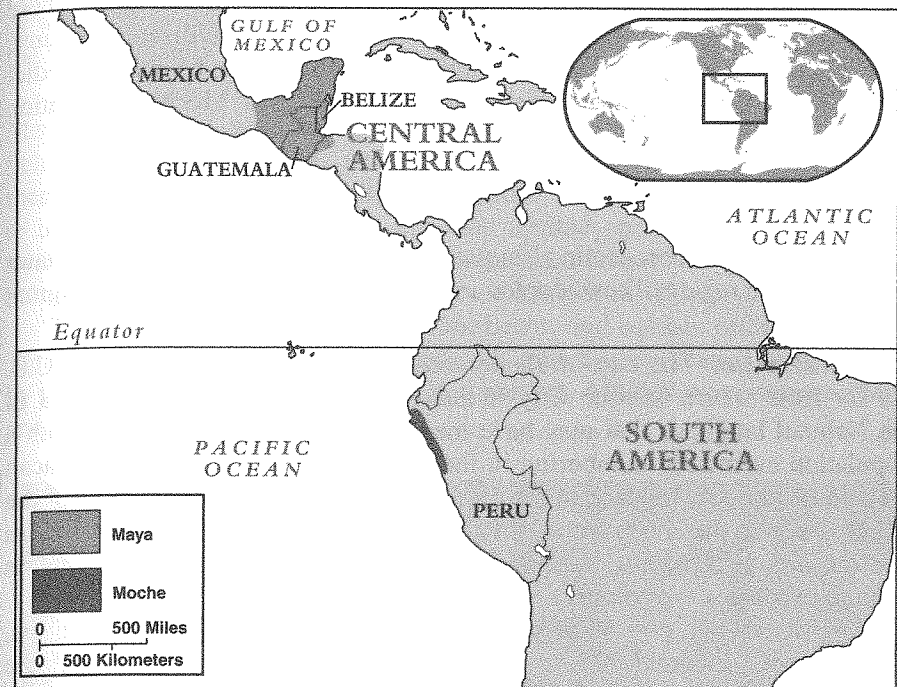
After the Chavin, described in Chapter 2 the next major civilization to develop in the Andes was the Moche, which arose around 200 B.C.E. and lasted until 700 C.E. Developing in the Moche and Chicham river valleys in what is today northern Peru, the Moche expanded outward into the valleys through both population increase and conquest.

Architecture Moche rulers supervised the building of a number of monumental structures centered around two temples. One was the *Huaca del Sol* (Temple of the Sun), a stepped pyramid. The other was the *Huaca de la Luna* (Temple of the Moon), a terraced platform. Both were made out of unfired adobe bricks. The Moche built a fortified city around these two temples. To assist in agriculture, the Moche built extensive irrigation networks, bringing water from rivers to fields via ditches. This was necessary since the civilization experienced fluctuations in rainfall from year to year. (Test Prep: Create a table that compares Moche architecture and agriculture with developments in Egypt. See page 23.)

Economy and Trade The Moche grew a variety of crops, including corn and beans, often in irrigated fields. Among the animals they kept were llamas. Llamas provided transport up and down the steep mountains, fibers to produce textiles, and dung to fertilize crops.

As in Mesopotamia and other places where agriculture developed, an agricultural surplus in most years allowed the culture to develop an artisan class. Artifacts created by the Moche included ceramic water jars, which

MAYA AND MOCHE CIVILIZATIONS, 200 B.C.E. TO 900 C.E.



were painted with images of rulers, slaves, warriors, priests, healers, gods, plants, and animals. Moche artisans also made beautiful jewelry and other objects from gold, silver, and copper. Their textiles were made from the wool of the alpaca and vicuña and from cotton.

Trade was mostly local, between Moche communities. Without large boats or wheeled vehicles, long-distance trade would have been difficult.

Society and Religion The complex Moche social structure was organized around *ayllus*, which were small communities based on the idea of communal work. Members of an ayllu believed they all shared the same mythical ancestor. This meant that even people who were biologically unrelated could still be considered part of the extended family of the ayllu through this shared ancestor. When a woman married, she would join her husband's ayllu, while still maintaining membership in her own. Like many people in cultures around the world in this era, the Moche venerated their ancestors.

Like the Maya in Mesoamerica (see following pages) and other early cultures, the Moche had important ceremonial centers where they conducted religious rituals. Some of the Moche rituals included human sacrifice at times. And like other early cultures, religion and government were closely linked. Like the Greeks, they believed in many gods, gods who often acted with the same emotions and passions as humans, but at times with greater powers.

Disappearance of the Moche Strong social cohesion kept the Moche civilization vibrant for nine centuries. However, it eventually vanished as a distinctive culture, perhaps because of climate changes—the region experienced

30 years of unusually heavy rains followed by 30 years of drought. These weather events might have seriously weakened the Moche civilization because Moche leaders gained some of their authority by claiming to be able to predict the weather. Whatever the cause, scholars believe that Moche civilization probably ended in violence and civil war.

Mesoamerica

The Olmec civilization declined in power, but it left a strong legacy on later cultures in the region. They adopted aspects of the Olmec language, religion, and economy.

Teotihuacan The city of *Teotihuacan* was founded around 150 B.C.E. not far from where Mexico City is today. Its name comes from a word in the Nahuatl language that may have meant “birthplace of the gods.” With a population eventually numbering in the hundreds of thousands, Teotihuacan grew to be not only the largest city in the Western Hemisphere, but one of the largest cities in the entire world of its time. The city’s orderly growth—it was laid out in a grid pattern and had multistory apartment buildings—suggests that the expansion was planned and regulated by a strong government.

The ceremonial portion of the city featured many important monuments, including the Pyramid of the Sun, the Pyramid of the Moon, and the Temple of Quetzalcoatl, named for a prominent god who was portrayed as a feathered serpent. A long road called the Avenue of the Dead connected these monuments. Priests and nobles, who were at the top of the social hierarchy, lived in extravagant homes. Peasants and artisans, who occupied the lower rungs of the social structure, dwelt in apartments within multiunit dwellings. (Test Prep: Write a paragraph comparing Teotihuacan with another city with orderly growth, read about Mohenjo-Daro on page 30.)

The city itself was surrounded by fields, which supported intensive agriculture; many of Teotihuacan’s people were farmers and peasants, although there was also considerable regional trade. One of the city’s main exports was *obsidian* (hard glass rock) deposits that were found in the area. Teotihuacan also thrived because of its many artisan workshops. Artisans tanned animal hides into leather and made pottery, obsidian tools, and weapons.

Decline Teotihuacan reached its peak around 500 C.E. and then began to decline, for reasons historians have not agreed upon. Sometime between 600 and 650 C.E., a large fire burned much of the city. Some of Teotihuacan’s people settled in the Mayan lowlands and may have been incorporated into the Mayan civilization.

The Mayans

Around 1500 B.C., the Mayan people began to establish small settlements. Over time, the villages grew as the Mayans developed an advanced civilization. Mayan civilization reached its height between 250 and 900 C.E. That is sometimes called its *Classic Period*. At its peak, as many as 2 million Mayans

populated the region. They stretched over the southern part of Mexico in much of what is now Belize, Honduras, and Guatemala. Most lived in or near one of the approximately 40 cities that ranged in size from 5,000 to 50,000 people.

Agriculture To provide for the large population of city dwellers, the Mayans practiced what is called *slash-and-burn agriculture*. They created fields by cutting down trees and plants in a patch of forest and then burning them. The resulting ashes fertilized the soil. The *Maya* also terraced fields to limit erosion of the land that they had cleared on hillsides. They drained swamps and built irrigation systems to water their crops. For meat, the Mayans hunted deer. Eventually, the Mayans would learn to raise deer.

The Mayans’ chief crops were corn, beans, and squash, referred to as the Three Sisters. Since the Mayans lacked draft animals, they seeded and harvested by hand. It was men’s work to seed and harvest, while women prepared food and, if needed, raised deer.



Source: Thinkstock

Mayan pyramids, with steps going up the side, were similar to Mesopotamian ziggurats. Similarly shaped architecture can be found from Spain and Algeria to China and Indonesia.

Cities The Mayans, using only stone tools, cut and shaped limestone blocks to build religious centers. By 200 C.E., these centers grew into cities with temples, palaces, and plazas for public gatherings. The most important temples were located on top of pyramids, to be closer to the heavens. The pyramids were up to 200 feet high—as tall as a 20-story building. They also served as observatories for Mayan astronomers.

Mayan Government The main form of Mayan government was the *city-state*, each one ruled by a king and consisting of a city and its surrounding territory. Most rulers were men. However, when no male heir was available or old enough to govern, Mayan women ruled. Wars between city-states were common, and sometimes the winner absorbed the loser. However, people rarely fought to control territory. More often they fought to gain *tribute*—payments from the conquered to the conqueror—and captives to be used as human sacrifices during religious ceremonies.

Each Mayan king claimed to be descended from a god. The Mayans believed that when the king died, he would become one with his ancestor-god. The king directed the activities of the elite scribes and priests who administered the affairs of the state. Royal rule usually passed from father to son, but kings who lost the support of the people were sometimes overthrown. The common people were required to pay taxes, usually in the form of crops, and to provide labor to the government. City-states had no standing armies, so when war erupted, governments required citizens to provide military service. No central government ruled all Mayan lands, although often one city-state was the strongest in a region and would dominate its neighbors.

Mayan Religion The Mayans worshiped many deities. Among the most important were those of the sun, rain, and corn. Priests held great power in Mayan society, a sign that religion had a major role in Mayan life. Women could be priests, and at least one god (the goddess of the Moon) was female. Priests led religious ceremonies and festivals at regular times based on the Mayan calendar. They made offerings to the deities so that prayers might be answered. As mentioned above, these offerings sometimes involved human sacrifice. War captives were killed in temple ceremonies as offerings to the gods.

The Mayans participated in a ball game—with features similar to today’s basketball and soccer—as part of the religious ritual. Players used their feet, hips, and legs, but not their hands, to move a ball through a hoop. Losers may have been sacrificed to the gods. (Test Prep: Write a paragraph tracing connections between the Olmec and Mayan religions and sports. See pages 38–39.)

Science and Culture The Mayan people have sometimes been called the “Greeks of the New World” because of their cultural achievements. Mayan science and religion were closely linked. Priests studied the heavens and calendars to predict the future and to decide if a time was right for war.

Although they had no telescopes, the Mayans were among the best astronomers of early times. An observatory, the *Caracol*, located in the city of *Chichén Itzá*, was built around 1000 C.E. Priests predicted eclipses of the sun and calculated the phases of the moon accurately. Indeed, their understanding of mathematics and astronomy, especially their observations of Venus from the Caracol, enabled Mayan priests to design a calendar more accurate than one used in Europe at the time. The Mayans’ advanced study of mathematics included the concept of zero and calculations that totaled in the hundreds of millions.

The Mayans also had the most advanced writing system of all the early American civilizations. Their writing used pictures and symbols akin to the *hieroglyphics* of the Egyptians, but with more than 850 different characters. The symbols were carved into a type of paper made from tree bark, which was sometimes bound together into books.

They decorated buildings, clay pots, and monuments with their history and other messages. Public buildings often had carved stone reliefs. The Mayans carved wood, although little of it has survived, and jade, when they could get it. Since the Mayans lacked metal tools, they carved using flint. In addition to carvings, the Mayans created vivid paintings on walls, as well as on pottery used as grave offerings.

Early Writing Systems

Culture	Time Developed	What Symbols Represent	Approximate Number of Symbols	Direction of Reading Symbols
Sumeria (cuneiform)	c. 3500 B.C.E.	Pictures	1,500	Originally top to bottom, but changed to left to right
Egypt (hieroglyphics)	c. 3400 B.C.E.	Pictures and sounds	700	Varied from text to text
China	c. 1500 B.C.E.	Pictures and words	varied	Right to left and top to bottom
Phoenecia (alphabet)	c. 1500 B.C.E.	Sounds	22	Right to left
Maya	c. 250 B.C.E.	Pictures and words	850	Left to right in 2-symbol columns

Decline of Mayan Cities Around 900 C.E., a variety of related changes came together to cause rapid changes in Mayan culture. Population growth had made cities crowded. The destruction of forests caused environmental damage. Stresses between cities led to increasing wars. The climate shifted, which resulted in many years of drought. The combination of these changes made living in cities difficult, and the urban population began to decline rapidly. Mayans began to abandon their cities and resume a rural life. The descendants of this culture still live in the region today, and more than 7 million people speak a variety of Mayan languages. Their religion combines two traditions: Mayan beliefs and Roman Catholicism. (Test Prep: Write an outline comparing the early Mayans with their descendants. See page 262.)

Environmental Problems Facing the Mayans and Romans

Issue	Mayans	Romans
Wetlands	Desertification reduced wetland areas	Wetlands spread
Forests	Biodiversity of forests reduced	Overuse of trees for manufacturing
Soil	Silt clogged rivers	Soil became poor from excessive farming
Weather	Prolonged droughts	
Crop Production	Crop output decreased	Crop failures
Grazing	Did not graze animals significantly	Overgrazing of domesticated animals

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: WERE THE MAYANS VIOLENT?

After the Mayans began moving out of cities around 900 C.E., the surrounding jungle quickly reclaimed the area. So when Spaniards began exploring southern Mexico and central America in the 1500s and 1600s, the great buildings and pyramids had been swallowed up by plants. The Spaniards heard stories about great ruins in the jungles, but not until the 1800s did scholars begin to uncover and study them. For example, the greatest known Mayan site, at Tikal, was unknown to people from outside the region until 1848.

As scholars began to uncover Mayan sites, they struggled to decipher the Mayan writing system. The first breaks came as they understood numbers and references to stars and planets. Hence, the first interpretations of Mayan culture focused on their great achievements in math, astronomy, and art. In addition, as more and more buildings and carvings were uncovered, people focused on the Mayans' achievements in art. The publication of *A Study of Mayan Art* by Herbert Spinden in 1913 brought wider public attention to all that the Mayan had accomplished.

During the mid-1900s, archeologists began to fill in their interpretation of what they saw. The great interpreter of Mayan culture during this period was a British archeologist, Eric Thompson. His 1954 book, *Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization*, portrayed a fairly peaceful and successful culture.

However, as linguists slowly made headway into deciphering more and more Mayan writing, the interpretation of Mayan culture changed. Instead of reading about only astronomical observations, scholars began to read about wars between cities, deadly struggles for political power, and sacrifices for religious purposes. In 1986, Linda Schele and Mary Miller organized an art exhibit, "The Blood of Kings: A New Interpretation of Maya Art." The Mayan, once viewed as so peaceful, were now understood to have a strain of violence in their culture as well.

Then, in 2006, the release of a Hollywood movie, *Apocalypto*, carried this understanding to a wildly inaccurate extreme. The Mayan were portrayed as bloodthirsty, evil savages enthralled with torture and mass executions. This unhistorical depiction led scholars of the Mayan to speak out in an effort to correct the public perception. If the Mayan were not as peaceful as scholars once thought they were, they were not as brutal as the people portrayed in the movie.

KEY TERMS BY THEME

STATE-BUILDING city-state tribute	ayllus Mesoamerica Olmec Teotihuacan	Caracol Chichén Itzá
CULTURE Moche Huaca del Sol Huaca de la Luna	Maya Mayan mother civilization hieroglyphics Classic Period	ENVIRONMENT obsidian slash-and-burn agriculture

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

- Which is a sign that Teotihuacan had a strong government?
(A) Streets were built on a grid pattern.
(B) Priests had larger homes than did peasants.
(C) Most people were involved in agriculture.
(D) A large fire burned much of the city.
- Unlike the Mayan, the people of Teotihuacan lived
(A) in one large city instead of many small cities
(B) mostly in lowlands that were often swampy
(C) much closer to the equator, so it was warmer
(D) primarily on small farms along rivers and streams
- In which way were the Moche and the Mayan similar?
(A) Both developed a system of writing.
(B) Both featured an Avenue of the Dead.
(C) Both emphasized the idea of communal work.
(D) Both saw their power decline when the climate changed.
- Which of the following describes civilizations in South America but not in Mesoamerica?
(A) People developed a writing system.
(B) People viewed the jaguar as a deity.
(C) People used llamas extensively for producing wool and transporting goods.
(D) People held ritual ball games that sometimes involved human sacrifice.

5. One similarity between the Chavin and the Moche is that both
- (A) carried on extensive trade by sea with the Maya
 - (B) lived primarily in the higher elevations of the Andes
 - (C) made jewelry and ritual items out of jade
 - (D) constructed irrigation ditches to aid farming

Question 6 refers to the image below.



Source: Thinkstock

6. The Mayan pyramid shown above is similar to the Egyptian pyramids because both demonstrated
- (A) the ability of the society to organize a large labor force
 - (B) the need to build structures for defense against invaders
 - (C) the syncretism between an older and a newer culture
 - (D) the value people placed on creating tombs for its leaders
7. Which statement uses the term *ayllu* accurately?
- (A) An *ayllu* was a large community led by one ruler.
 - (B) All members of an *ayllu* were related biologically.
 - (C) Women could belong to more than one *ayllu*.
 - (D) The purpose of an *ayllu* was to share work.

Questions 8–10 refer to the following table.

Sulfur Level in Yucatan Peninsula Soil	
Year	Percentage of Sulfur in Sediment
500	6%
600	5%
700	7%
800	15%
900	15%
1000	4%
1100	3%
1200	3%

Source: "Drought and the Ancient Maya Civilization." ncdc.noaa.gov. Higher sulfur content in sediment indicates drier conditions.

8. Which of these statements about the 800s and 900s does the data support?
- (A) Mayan cities probably suffered from drought.
 - (B) Mayan cities probably increased food exports.
 - (C) Moche cities probably raised fewer alpaca.
 - (D) Moche cities probably experienced increased flooding.
9. Which conclusion does the table best support?
- (A) Immigration to the region increased during the ninth century
 - (B) Population decline began around the year 1000.
 - (C) Population of the region began to increase after the year 1000.
 - (D) Interregional trade peaked in the ninth and tenth centuries.
10. By the tenth century, what demographic phenomena was happening in the Yucatan peninsula?
- (A) People were immigrating to South America.
 - (B) Citizens were abandoning the cities for the countryside.
 - (C) Mayan cities were growing in size.
 - (D) Diseases were spreading rapidly in the region.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE-OVER-TIME ESSAY QUESTIONS

Directions: You are to answer the following question. You should spend 5 minutes organizing or outlining your essay. Write an essay that:

- Has a relevant thesis and supports that thesis with appropriate historical evidence.
 - Addresses all parts of the question.
 - Uses world historical context to show continuities and changes over time.
 - Analyzes the process of continuity and change over time.
1. Analyze continuity and change in the size of Mayan cities between 1500 B.C.E. and 1000 C.E. and why this is significant.

Questions for Additional Practice

2. Analyze the continuities and changes in the societies and cultures of Mesoamerica from the Olmec through the Mayans.
3. Analyze the continuities and changes in the influence of geography on the Chavin and the Moche in the centuries prior to 700 C.E. .

COMPARATIVE ESSAY QUESTIONS

Directions: You are to answer the following question. You should spend 5 minutes organizing or outlining your essay. Write an essay that:

- Has a relevant thesis and supports that thesis with appropriate historical evidence.
 - Addresses all parts of the question.
 - Makes direct, relevant comparisons.
 - Analyzes relevant reasons for similarities and differences.
1. Compare how the governments in the Andes and in Mesoamerica between 600 C.E. and 1200 C.E. controlled their citizens using ONE of the following:
 - trade
 - religion

Questions for Additional Practice

2. Compare how people interacted with the environment in the early civilizations of the Americas and among the Austronesian peoples of the Pacific Islands.

3. Compare the Mayan civilization with Han China in TWO of the following areas:
 - government
 - religion and art
 - culture

THINK AS A HISTORIAN: RECOGNIZE HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

To interpret is not only to state facts, but also to explain the meaning and impact of those facts. Historians interpret facts by putting them into context and connecting them with other information, not just letting them stand isolated on their own. Often, interpretation is rooted in a comparison. To say a city was small, or a battle was influential, or an individual was powerful suggests a comparison with other cities, battles, or individuals. *Which TWO of the following are the best examples of interpreting facts?*

1. Around 1500 B.C., the Mayans began to establish settlements.
2. Pyramids were up to 200 feet high—as tall as a 20-story building.
3. Unlike Egyptian women, Mayan women could be priests.
4. Today, more than seven million people speak Mayan languages.

WRITE AS A HISTORIAN: REVIEW THE MAIN POINTS

Use words such as *significant* and *paramount* to cue readers that you are making an important point. *Which word in each statement suggests that the statement is making a main point?*

1. The most prominent early centers of civilization in the Americas were the Chavin and the Moche in the Andes, and the Olmecs, Mayan, and Aztecs in Mesoamerica.
2. Historians today believe the Moche civilization vanished primarily because of climate change—30 years of rain followed by 30 years of drought.
3. Teotihuacan thrived for several key reasons: a strong government, a large population, orderly growth, and superb natural resources.
4. Mayan farming was successful due to these crucial techniques: slash-and-burn agriculture, the terracing of fields to limit erosion, swamp draining, and the building of irrigation systems.

PERIOD 2: Review

Thematic Review

Directions: Briefly answer each question in paragraph form.

1. **Interaction Between Humans and the Environment** Compare how geographic factors affected unification in Greece and in Rome.
2. **Development and Interaction of Cultures** How did religion influence other aspects of culture in Greece, the Gupta Empire in India, and the Mayan civilization?
3. **State-Building, Expansion, and Conflict** Compare the ways two of these leaders administered their empires: Alexander the Great, Augustus Caesar, and Ashoka Maurya.
4. **State-Building, Expansion, and Conflict** Analyze the similarities and differences between Mayan city-states and those in Greece.
5. **Creation, Expansion, and Interaction of Economic Systems** Explain how the Silk Roads were connected to sea-based trade routes in the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean Sea.
6. **Development and Transformation of Social Structures** How did the Indian caste system compare with the social hierarchy in Rome?

TURNING POINT: WHY C. 600 C.E.?

Historians today often use 600 C.E. to mark the end of what some call the Classical Era in world history. By that date, the last of the several great empires of Eurasia had collapsed and been transformed. This date was also just before the rise of Islam and the expanded cultural interactions that occurred as a result of Islamic conquests and trade. The period after 600 was also marked by renewed importance of the Middle East.

However, many earlier European historians who focused on the importance of the Roman Empire chose the fall of the Western Empire in 476 C.E. as the key turning point. Historians of the Americas would likely choose a later date between 700 and 900 C.E. when the Moche and Mayan civilizations declined.

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

Direction: The following question is based on the accompanying Documents 1–10. (The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.)

This question is designed to test your ability to work with and understand historical documents. Write an essay that:

- Has a relevant thesis and supports that thesis with evidence from the document.
- Uses all of the documents.
- Analyzes the documents by grouping them in as many appropriate ways as possible. Does not simply summarize the documents individually.
- Takes into account the sources of the documents and analyzes the author's point of view.
- Identifies and explains the need for at least one additional type of document.

You may refer to relevant historical information not mentioned in the documents.

1. Using the following documents, compare and contrast the factors that made Cyrus the Great and King Ashoka successful rulers. Explain how another type of document could help you analyze the reasons behind these two rulers' success.

Document 1

Source: The Cyrus Cylinder, written in Babylonian script, describing Cyrus's conquest of Babylon in 539 B.C.

My vast troops marched peaceably in Babylon, and the whole of [Sumer] and Akkad had nothing to fear. I sought the welfare of the city of Babylon and all its sanctuaries. As for the population of Babylon . . . I soothed their weariness, I freed them from their bonds. . . .

All kings who sit on thrones, from every quarter, from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea, those who inhabit remote districts and the kings of the land of Amurru who live in tents, all of them, brought their weighty tribute into Shuanna, and kissed my feet. From Shuanna I sent back to their places to the city of Ashur and Susa, Akkad, the land of Eshnunna, the city of Zamban, the city of Meturnu, Der, as far as the border of the land of Qutu—the sanctuaries across the river Tigris—whose shrines had earlier become dilapidated, the gods who lived therein, and made permanent sanctuaries for them

Document 2

Source: A Jewish historian, Josephus, writing in the first century C.E., describing the departure of the Jews from Babylon.

“KING CYRUS TO SISINNES AND SATHRABUZANES SENDETH GREETING.

I have given leave to as many of the Jews that dwell in my country as please to return to their own country, and to rebuild their city, and to build the temple of God at Jerusalem on the same place where it was before. I have also sent my treasurer Mithridates, and Zorobabel, the governor of the Jews, that they may lay the foundations of the temple, and may build it sixty cubits high, and of the same latitude, making three edifices of polished stones, and one of the wood of the country, and the same order extends to the altar whereon they offer sacrifices to God. I require also that the expenses for these things may be given out of my revenues.

Document 3

Source: a Greek historian, Xenophon, writing in the fourth century B.C.E. about Cyrus the Great.

[Cyrus speaking to his father Cambyses] As for enforcing obedience, I hope I have had some training in that already; you began my education yourself when I was a child by teaching me to obey you, and then you handed me over to masters who did as you had done, and afterwards, when we were lads, my fellows and myself, there was nothing on which the governors laid more stress. Our laws themselves, I think, enforce this double lesson:—‘Rule thou and be thou ruled.’ And when I come to study the secret of it all, I seem to see that the real incentive to obedience lies in the praise and honor that it wins against the discredit and the chastisement which fall on the disobedient.

Document 4

Source: a Greek historian, Xenophon, writing in the 4th century B.C.E. about Cyrus the Great.

And he would bring more modesty, he hoped, into the hearts of all men if it were plain that he himself revered all the world and would never say a shameful word to any man or woman or do a shameful deed. . . . And his people, he thought, would learn to obey if it were plain that he honored frank and prompt obedience even above virtues that made a grander show and were harder to attain. Such was his belief, and his practice went with it to the end.

Document 5

Source: a Greek historian, Xenophon, writing in the fourth century B.C.E. about Cyrus the Great.

So it was that Cyrus called a council and spoke as follows: “Gentlemen and friends of mine, you are aware that we have garrisons and commandants in the cities we conquered, stationed there at the time. I left them with orders simply to guard the fortifications and not meddle with anything else. Now I do not wish to remove them from their commands, for they have done their duty nobly, but I propose to send others, satraps, who will govern the inhabitants, receive the tribute, give the garrisons their pay, and discharge all necessary dues.” . . .

With these words he assigned houses and districts to many of his friends among the lands he had subdued: and to this day their descendants possess the estates, although they reside at court themselves. “Now,” he added, “we must choose for the satraps who are to go abroad persons who will not forget to send us anything of value in their districts, so that we who are at home may share in all the wealth of the world. For if any danger comes, it is we who must ward it off.”

Document 6

Source: Edict 3 of King Ashoka, 257 B.C.E.

Twelve years after my coronation this has been ordered—Everywhere in my domain the Yuktas, the Rajjukas and the Pradesikas shall go on inspection tours every five years for the purpose of Dhamma instruction and also to conduct other business. Respect for mother and father is good, generosity to friends, acquaintances, relatives, Brahmans and ascetics is good, not killing living beings is good, moderation in spending and moderation in saving is good.

Document 7

Source: Edict 5 of King Ashoka, 257 B.C.E.

In the past there were no Dhamma Mahamatras but such officers were appointed by me thirteen years after my coronation. Now they work among all religions for the establishment of Dhamma, for the promotion of Dhamma, and for the welfare and happiness of all who are devoted to Dhamma. . . . They (Dhamma Mahamatras) work for the proper treatment of prisoners, towards their unfettering, and if the Mahamatras think, “This one has a family to support,” “That one has been bewitched,” “This one is old,” then they work for the release of such prisoners.

Document 8

Source: Edict 6 of King Ashoka, 257 B.C.E.

In the past, state business was not transacted nor were reports delivered to the king at all hours. But now I have given this order, that at any time, whether I am eating, in the women's quarters, the bed chamber, the chariot, the palanquin, in the park or wherever, reporters are to be posted with instructions to report to me the affairs of the people so that I might attend to these affairs wherever I am.

Document 9

Source: Edict 12 of King Ashoka, 257 B.C.E.

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, honors both ascetics and the householders of all religions, and he honors them with gifts and honors of various kinds. But Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, does not value gifts and honors as much as he values this—that there should be growth in the essentials of all religions. Growth in essentials can be done in different ways, but all of them have as their root restraint in speech, that is, not praising one's own religion, or condemning the religion of others without good cause. And if there is cause for criticism, it should be done in a mild way.

Document 10

Source: Edict 13 of King Ashoka, 257 B.C.E.

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, conquered the Kalingas eight years after his coronation.[25] One hundred and fifty thousand were deported, one hundred thousand were killed and many more died (from other causes). After the Kalingas had been conquered, Beloved-of-the-Gods came to feel a strong inclination towards the Dhamma, a love for the Dhamma and for instruction in Dhamma. Now Beloved-of-the-Gods feels deep remorse for having conquered the Kalingas. Indeed, Beloved-of-the-Gods is deeply pained by the killing, dying and deportation that take place when an unconquered country is conquered.

PERIOD 3: Regional and Transregional Interactions, c. 600 C.E. to c. 1450

Chapter 7 Byzantine Empire and Kievan Rus

Chapter 8 Islamic World Through 1450

Chapter 9 Expansion of African Trade

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Period Overview

Large empires, often rooted in revivals of core and foundational cultures that had developed in earlier history, emerged after 600 C.E. Though Rome had fallen under the power of non-Romans, most of the empire once ruled from there continued, with a new name, the Byzantine Empire. The capital moved to the city of Constantinople. In eastern Europe, the city of Kiev became the capital of an empire blending Slavic and Scandinavian influences and based on the prosperous trade between the Baltic Sea in the north and the Black Sea in the south. Following the teachings of Muhammad, followers of Islam carried their faith quickly throughout southern Asia and parts of Africa and Europe. They created centers of great intellectual achievement in Baghdad and Spain. In Africa, increased trade across the Sahara and along the east coast pulled Africa more deeply into global trade than ever before.

The revival of a united China resulted in great prosperity and innovation under the Tang and Song dynasties. While India was often divided, it had periods of unity and prosperity, and new trade-based empires emerged in Southeast Asia. In the 1200s, the Mongols, a group of Central Asia nomads, emerged and conquered lands from central Europe to the Pacific Ocean, creating the largest land empire in human history. While the conquest came with great devastation, the unity of so much territory under the rule of one group allowed trade to flourish once again across Eurasia, with new ideas and technology spreading easily.