

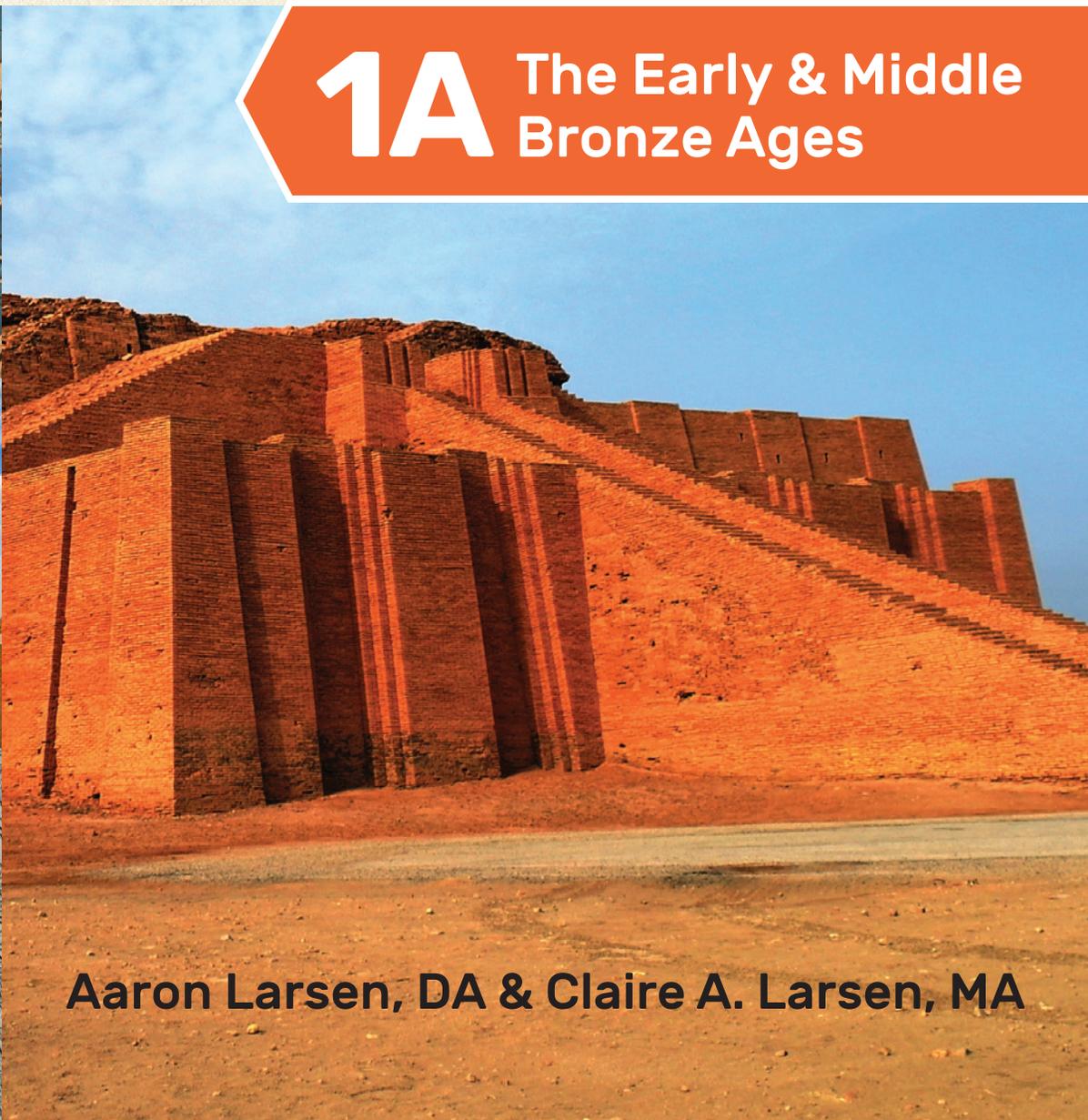
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# The Curious Historian



History & Culture  
of the Ancient World

**1A** The Early & Middle  
Bronze Ages



Aaron Larsen, DA & Claire A. Larsen, MA

## Dedication

*In loving memory of our beloved father and husband, David A. Larsen,  
a man who loved history and made the study of it an important part of his life.*

• • •

*Classical Academic Press would like to thank the scholars, peer reviewers,  
and teachers who contributed their time, expertise, and feedback in various ways  
throughout the development of this text.*



*The Curious Historian Level 1A: History & Culture of the Ancient World*  
The Early & Middle Bronze Ages  
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# Chapter 1:

## The Ancient Sumerians

### IMPORTANT WORDS

WORD	DEFINITION
Sumer	The first important civilization in Mesopotamia
Canal	A deep, man-made ditch through which water moves from one place to another
Irrigation system	A series of canals that move water from a river or lake to a dry area that needs water
Prosperous	Having plenty of what you need (usually wealth) to enjoy a successful life
Cuneiform	The writing system of the ancient Sumerians, created from wedge-shaped symbols
Step pyramid	A style of pyramid made with platforms stacked on top of each other, each one a little smaller than the platform below, so that the sides look like steps
Ziggurat	The style of step pyramid, made of clay bricks, that the ancient Sumerians used as a place to worship their gods
Interregnum <sup>1</sup>	A period between kingdoms

### IMPORTANT FIGURES

WORD	DEFINITION
Polytheist	A person who worships more than one god
Monotheist	A person who worships only one god
Patron god	A god chosen by the people to serve as the special protector or guardian of their city
Priest	A person who helps his people worship their god (or gods). A female priest is called a priestess.



Don't forget to learn this chapter's song verse(s)! See appendix A.

Do the words "Mesopotamia" and "hippopotamus" look just a little bit alike? Both come from the Greek word *potamos*, meaning "river." The word "Mesopotamia" combines *potamos* and *mesa*, the Greek word for "between," so this name literally means "land between the rivers." The word "hippopotamus" literally means "river horse"—an appropriate name because this large creature likes to swim in the river with just his nose and eyes popping out of the water!



-A.D.

1. See the alphabetical glossary for an expanded definition.

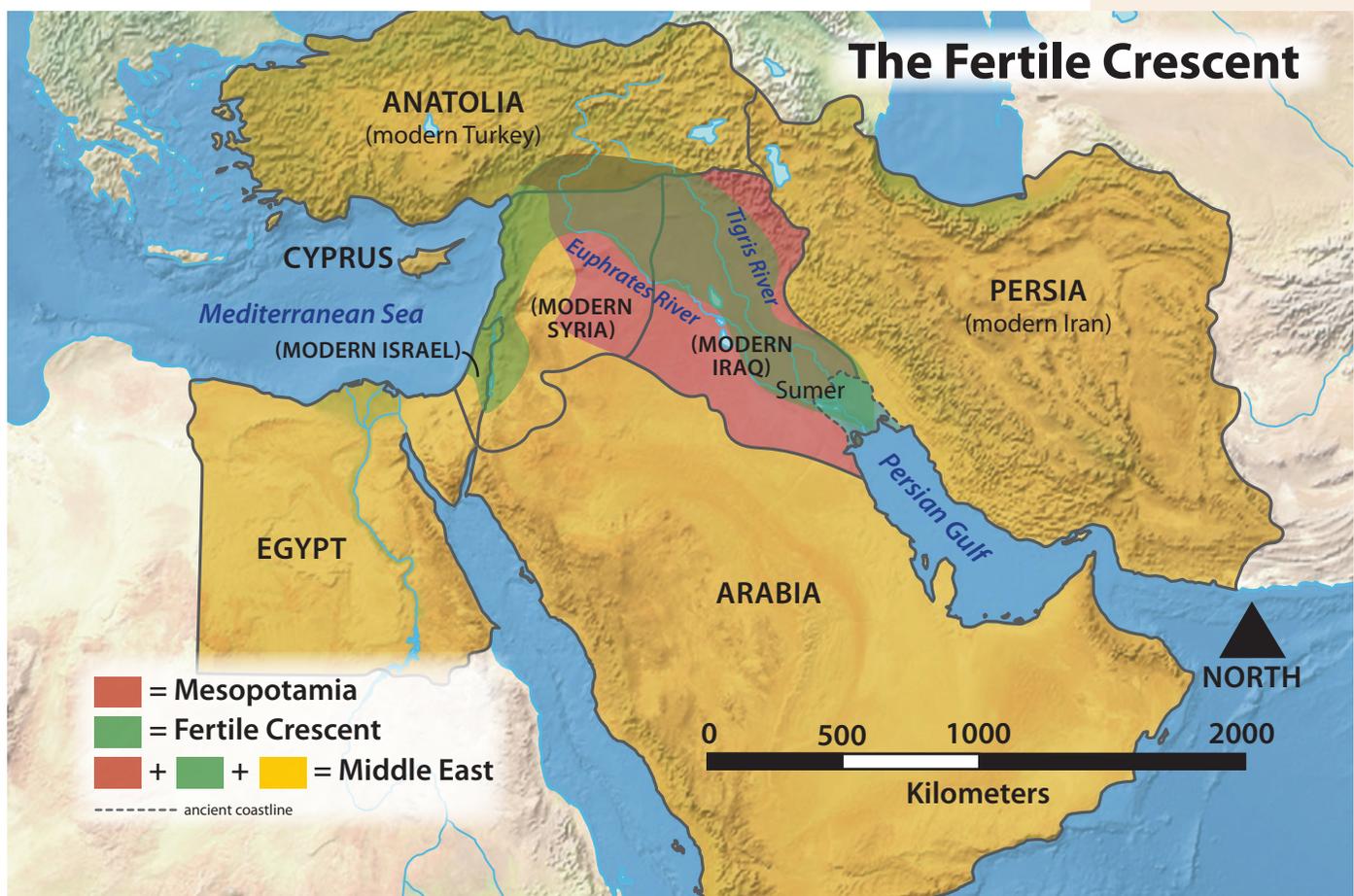
## The Earliest Civilization

Many, many years ago, in a land between two rivers, the earliest civilization began. This land was called Mesopotamia, and the rivers were named the Tigris and the Euphrates. That is where our story of history begins.

The people of Mesopotamia were not the first people to live on the earth. But they *are* the first people from whom archaeologists have found artifacts with writing on them. With these artifacts we have been able to understand some things about who the Mesopotamians were and how they lived. By studying artifacts such as stone tools, broken clay pots, and clay tablets with funny-looking writing on them, we get a window, so to speak, into the ancient world in which these people lived.

We call this early group of people the Sumerians because they lived in **Sumer**, the first important civilization in Mesopotamia. Sumer was located near where the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers flow into the Persian Gulf. Today, this area is the southernmost part of modern Iraq.

Historians are not exactly sure when the Sumerian civilization began. Based on the dates of artifacts that archaeologists have found, we know that Sumerian people were probably living in the region as early as ca. 4000 BC. However, most historians believe there is no physical evidence of a Sumerian civilization until ca. 3200 BC at the earliest. Much of the Sumerians' ancient past has been forgotten through the ages, but a variety of items from their daily life ended up buried in the ground. Some of these artifacts have decayed. Other pieces have been lost or used up. But from the surviving items dug up by archaeologists, we can create a bit of a picture about this long-ago people.



### ? The Wheel

How important is the wheel? Like everything else, it had to be invented. Wheels have been used in many ways over the years. What are some things that would not exist today if the wheel had never been invented?

## Transportation

So many things that we take for granted today did not exist in early Sumer. Think of all the modern inventions that make our jobs easier and able to be done in less time. For example, how do you think the Sumerians moved something from one place to another, or traveled between villages? When they needed to move crops or household items from place to place, they only had two options: carry the items themselves or use animals such as oxen to carry or pull the heavy load. And when the people traveled from village to village, they walked or rode on donkeys.

As the years passed, people came up with a better idea for a way to transport objects, and something amazing was invented that forever changed history. No one knows for sure who invented it, or exactly when it was invented. What was this history-changing invention? It was the wheel! Once the wheel was developed, many daily tasks and activities became easier. Two examples are transportation and pottery. Putting wheels on carts made it possible to move heavy things or a great many items with less effort, and much more quickly. The pottery wheel changed the way items such as pots, bowls, and other types of cookware were made. Using a pottery wheel resulted in finished pieces that were shaped more evenly and completed in much less time.



▲ Ljubljana Marshes Wheel, the oldest-known wooden wheel, ca. 3150 BC

## Farming and Irrigation

The Sumerians were experts at hunting and fishing, but in early Sumer most people survived by farming. They grew barley, wheat, onions, dates, lettuce, turnips, garlic, and mustard (the plant, not the condiment). They also raised cattle, pigs, sheep, and goats.<sup>2</sup>

Mesopotamia was not the best land in which to grow crops, because it was often dry. There was not enough rainfall during the year to keep the crops watered. The Sumerians lived close to the Tigris and Euphrates, hoping that the rivers would provide the water they needed, but the rivers did not always cooperate. During certain seasons, the rivers of the Fertile Crescent would rise high enough to overflow, flood the nearby fields, and water the crops. But there was a problem.

The best time for the rivers to overflow would have been in the fall and winter, when the crops were being planted and the need for water was the greatest. Instead, the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers overflowed their banks in the late spring. This was the worst time for flooding because the crops were almost fully grown! When the floodwaters covered the fields, the crops were damaged by too much water. During the planting season, when the Sumerians needed water the most, the rivers were often at their lowest levels. What were the people to do?

2. Stephen Leston, *The Bible in World History: How History and Scripture Intersect*, Illustrated Bible Handbook Series (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Publishing, 2011), 25–27.

The Sumerians solved the problem in two ways. First, they created a system of short canals to carry the water closer to the fields. A **canal** is a deep, man-made ditch through which water moves from one place to another. A series of canals that move water from a river or lake to a dry area that needs water is called an **irrigation** system. In addition to the canals, the people also dug basins. When the river levels rose too high, the Sumerians captured water in the basins to keep the floods from damaging the crops. They stored the water in the basins to use later if needed. Their second solution was learning about the seasons of the rivers. The more they could understand what times of year the rivers would be high and what times they would be low, the better the people could control the power of the rivers and use the waters to their advantage.

In addition to the irrigation systems, the people dug wells to get water.<sup>3</sup> Digging all of the canals, basins, and wells was hard, hot work, and had to be done by hand with simple tools. The Sumerians did not have sinks or pipes in their home, or wells with pumps. Every drop of water they needed for washing, cooking, and drinking had to be carried in heavy containers. Think how many buckets and trips it would take to collect all of the water a family needed to drink, cook, bathe, wash clothes, clean, water the animals, and water the garden!

Not all of Mesopotamia was hot, dry plains. The southern part of Mesopotamia was very different from the northern land. To the south of the city-states of Ur and Eridu lay an area of marshes. The marshes were not good land to live in, but they did provide something important for the people: tall reeds. The reeds that grew in the marshy areas were a valuable natural resource that the Mesopotamians used to make roofs and even to build elaborate huts. The people also wove the reeds into baskets for carrying and storing food, and into mats to use as seats and beds.<sup>4</sup>

A second natural resource found in the marshy areas was the date palm tree. Just like the reeds, the wide palm fronds were excellent for making roofs, and the bark of the tree could be turned into rope. But the most valued part of the date palm, was, of course, the juicy date fruit. The dates were picked in the fall. In addition to being easy to store, they were nutritious and delicious!

3. Marc Van De Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000–323 BC*, 2nd ed., Blackwell History of the Ancient World (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 12–13.

4. Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East, c. 3000–330 BC*, vol. 1, Routledge History of the Ancient World (New York: Routledge, 2005), 19, 21.



▲ Farmers dig an irrigation canal in Afghanistan



### To the Source:

*canal* from the Latin *canālis*, meaning “pipe”



### To the Source:

*irrigation* from the Latin *irrigare*, meaning “to water”



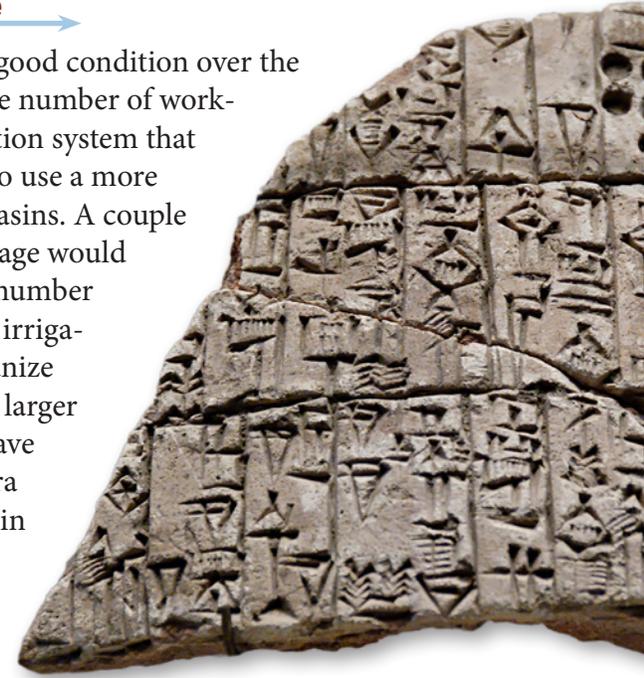
▲ Mesopotamian reed hut



◀ Date trees growing in Arizona

## Cities, Trade, Writing, and More

Digging canals, and then keeping them in good condition over the years in the harsh desert weather, took a large number of workers. A small village could build a basic irrigation system that worked well. Over time, the people learned to use a more complicated network of canals and storage basins. A couple of families living together in a very small village would not have had the manpower to dig the large number of deep trenches needed for a more complex irrigation system. So, the Sumerians began to organize themselves into larger villages, and later into larger towns, so that they could work together to have enough water for every family. With this extra manpower, the towns and the farmers living in the surrounding countryside also produced more and more crops on the dry, flat land of Mesopotamia. They sold the crops and became prosperous. Over time, the business of farming and trading brought about the growth of towns into cities.



▲ Piece of a clay cone with cuneiform symbols, ca. 2350 BC

The cities of Sumer had names such as Ur, Uruk, Kish, Nippur, Eridu, Larsa, Shuruppak, Bad-tibira, and Girsu. How fast can you pronounce those names? During the years ca. 4000–3200 BC, these cities did not have walls around them, so historians think it was probably a time of peace among the cities.<sup>5</sup> Later, after ca. 3200 BC, the cities began to fight against each other, each one trying to have power over the others. Now the people had to build walls around their cities to protect them from warring enemies.

Ancient records tell us that people in Sumer traded their goods throughout the Mesopotamian area, and this trade helped to make the cities **prosperous**. To be prosperous means having plenty of what you need (usually wealth) to enjoy a successful life. What else made the Sumerians so successful? Another reason is that they were one of the first people to have a writing system. Archaeologists have found examples of the Sumerian language written on pieces of clay from as long ago as ca. 3200 BC. Having a writing system can make it much easier to trade and conduct business with other cities.<sup>6</sup> A writing system is also important for a civilization because it gives people a way to record historical facts, keep track of spoken words and their meanings, and pass knowledge from one generation to another.

The Sumerians are remembered for creating and using a writing system called **cuneiform**.<sup>\*</sup> This writing system looks very different from our English alphabet because it used wedge-shaped symbols that could be put together in many different ways. You will learn more about cuneiform in chapter 5.

5. Walter R. Bodine, "Sumerians," in *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, ed. Alfred J. Hoerth, Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 22.

6. Leston, *Bible in World History*, 27–28.



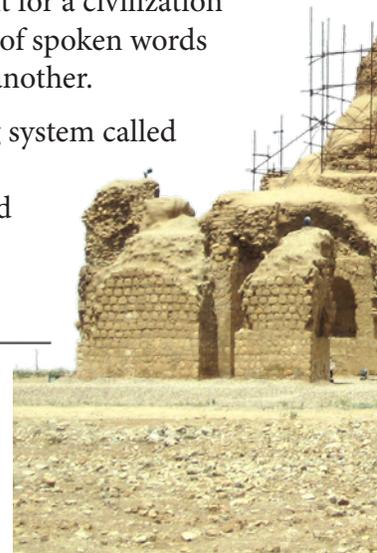
**To the Source:**  
cuneiform from the Latin *cuneus*, meaning "wedge, cone"



### The Importance of a Writing System

Having a writing system means people can do the following:

1. More easily trade and conduct business
2. Record historical facts
3. Keep track of spoken words and their meanings
4. Pass knowledge from one person to another many generations apart
5. Write down stories and legends
6. Write letters to people
7. Write inscriptions on monuments and buildings
8. Write down instructions for how to do a task
9. Write down poetry and songs
10. Keep business and family records





The Sumerians were advanced in several other ways as well. Their buildings had more complicated pieces of architecture, such as early forms of domes and arches. Domes and arches are difficult to build but make a building more stable because they provide strong support for a heavy roof and help the building to last longer. Domes and arches also bring beauty to structures, and are often used in temples and government buildings. The Sumerians also created a numbering system based on the number sixty. Do we use any numbering systems based on the number sixty today? If you guessed telling time and measuring circles and angles, you are right!<sup>7</sup>

### Religion and Ziggurats

Religion was an important part of everyone’s lives during this time, and the people in Sumer worshipped many gods. That means the Sumerians were polytheists, because a **polytheist**<sup>7</sup> is a person who worships more than one god. The following chart shows some of the differences between polytheists and **monotheists**, or people who worship only one god.

#### POLYTHEISM VERSUS MONOTHEISM

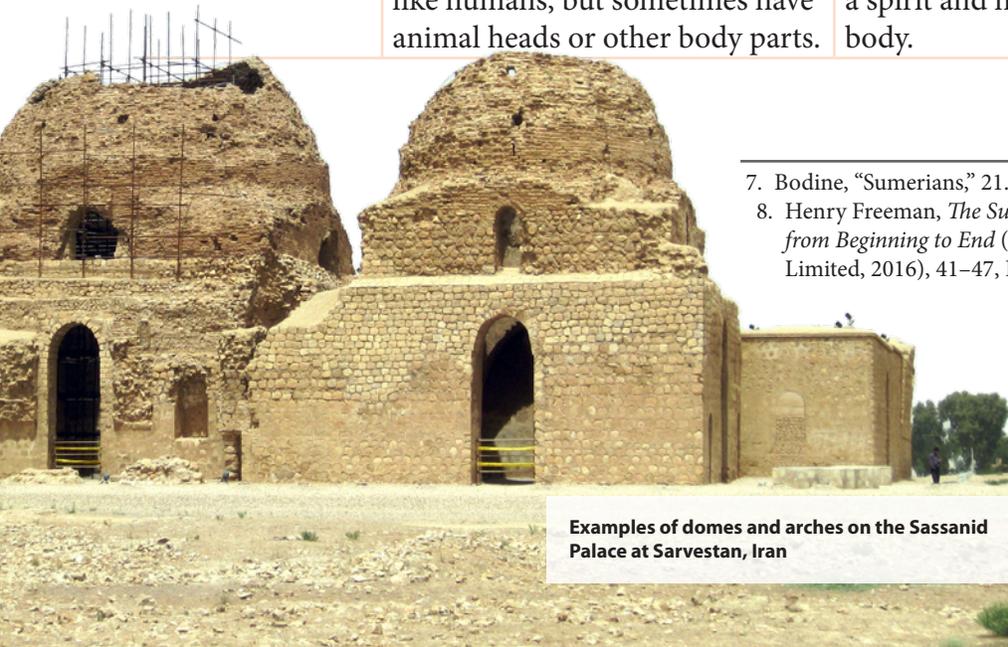
	POLYTHEISM	MONOTHEISM
Number	People worship many gods and goddesses.	People worship only one god.
Power	Each god has his or her own realm of power.	One god has supreme power and rules over the entire universe.
Culture/Religion	Ancient pagan religions, the Greeks, the Romans, Hinduism, some modern African religions	Judaism, Christianity, Islam
Choice	A person can choose which god to worship and can also worship many gods at the same time.	A person must worship only one god. Worship of anything else is forbidden.
Appearance	Gods or goddesses mostly look like humans, but sometimes have animal heads or other body parts.	The one god is considered a spirit and has no visible body.

### Sumerian Inventions

1. The wheel
2. First writing system (cuneiform)
3. Advanced architecture, such as early forms of domes and arches
4. Numbering system based on the number sixty
5. Earliest-known written laws
6. First libraries and first schools
7. First common system of weights and measures
8. 12-month calendar, 24-hour day, 60-minute hour, and 360-degree circle
9. First flushing toilet
10. First paved streets
11. An early form of plow called the seeder plow<sup>8</sup>

 **To the Source:**  
*polytheist* from the Greek *poly*, meaning “many,” and *theos*, meaning “god”

7. Bodine, “Sumerians,” 21.  
 8. Henry Freeman, *The Sumerians: A History from Beginning to End* (N.p.: Hourly History Limited, 2016), 41–47, Kindle.



Examples of domes and arches on the Sassanid Palace at Sarvestan, Iran

Each Sumerian city had its own particular god, called a **patron god**. This god was chosen by the people to serve as the special protector or guardian of their city. The most important building in each city was the temple of the patron god.

In many ancient Mesopotamian societies, both men and women served as religious leaders. A **priest** is a person who helps his people worship their god (or gods). A female priest is called a priestess. In larger cities, the patron god was served by a chief priest or chief priestess. In ancient Sumer, the king's daughter was often a chief priestess.

The jobs of the Sumerian priests and priestesses were very different from the work that religious leaders perform today. Instead of serving the people in their communities, the priests and priestesses first served their king, because the people believed the king had a special relationship with the gods. The priests and priestesses also managed the donations and taxes that the people gave to the temple. In some cities, the people gave so many donations that the priests and priestesses of the temple became wealthy. In addition to handling the temple's money, the priests and priestesses were responsible for the fields, herds of animals, and workshops that all belonged to the temple.

Sometimes hundreds of men and women worked in the temples. They cared for the gods by dressing the statues of the gods and offering them food, drink, jewels, and sacrifices. They also prepared feasts for the people to enjoy. On feast days, the temple would be opened to everyone in the city. The people would spend the day at



A modern photo of the Ziggurat of Ur

the temple, celebrating the gods and enjoying a day off from their hard work. Sumerian temples were lively places where the people could hear the sounds of musicians singing to the gods, smell the food offerings being prepared, and see the sculptors at work making beautiful statues.

Because the Sumerian people worshipped many gods, most of the temples were small and built on the ground. However, the Sumerians also built triangular-shaped step pyramids made from sunbaked mud or clay bricks. These step pyramids were called ziggurats. A **step pyramid** is a style of pyramid made with platforms stacked on top of each other, each one a little smaller than the platform below, so that the sides look like steps. A **ziggurat**<sup>9</sup> was the style of step pyramid, made of clay bricks, that the ancient Sumerians used as a place to worship their gods.

At the top of the ziggurat was a temple built by the people. They hoped that the god would find the temple to be a pleasant place and come down from the heavens to dwell there. That is why the word “ziggurat” means both “holy mountain” and “to raise high.” The people felt safer when they thought the god was dwelling in the temple atop the ziggurat. They wanted the god to be happy so that they would have good weather to grow their crops and would be protected from their enemies.<sup>9</sup>

Although some ziggurats were built very high, as you will learn in chapter 3, most early ziggurats were simple. A typical ziggurat was just a raised mound of dirt with a temple on top for the city’s patron god. The larger ziggurats were so high that the people had to build long staircases along the side of each platform, or step, in order to climb up from one level to the next.



#### To the Source:

*ziggurat* from the Akkadian *ziqurratu*, from *zaqāru*, literally meaning “to build high”



#### The Bible: The Tower of Babel

Do you remember the Tower of Babel? This tower was probably a ziggurat that was being built to honor one of the Mesopotamian gods.



9. Freeman, *Sumerians*, 61.

▼ Clay tablet with an early form of writing



Physical evidence of Sumerian civilization and language  
ca. 3200 BC

Walls of Uruk built  
ca. 3100–2900 BC

► Disc of Enheduanna,  
daughter of Sargon the Great,  
carved ca. 2350–2300 BC



Gilgamesh may have lived some-  
time during this period  
ca. 2800–2500 BC

**Sumerian Archaic Period**  
ca. 3200–2350 BC

**3200 BC**

after ca. 3200 BC  
Cities build walls  
for defense

ca. 4000–3200 BC  
Early signs of  
Sumerian culture



◀ A Sumerian statue,  
carved ca. 3300 BC

ca. 3100 BC  
Earliest Sumerian  
cuneiform writing



▲ Ancient ruins of Ur

**Bronze Age** ca. 3000–1200 BC

## How to Understand a Time Line

A time line is an important tool that helps us see when major events happened in history and how they were related to each other. For example, did they happen many years apart or very close together? The purpose of the time line shown here is to give you a “big picture” of the most important events in Mesopotamian history that you will learn about in all of unit I. This master time line also includes some extra information that you might find useful to know, such as when a city became the capital of a new empire, when noteworthy people ruled, and one or two other interesting facts or events. So, when you put all of this together, the time line shows you the whole unit in one big picture!

Does the Mesopotamian time line look complicated? Well, it’s really not. We are going to make it simple by saying that ancient Mesopotamian history has five main periods. These periods are shaded in blue on the time line so that you can see where one ends and the next begins. How can you remember these periods? Think of them this way: three periods of large, powerful kingdoms that brought parts of Mesopotamia together under one ruler, and two periods when city-states ruled themselves

independently. (You will learn the formal definitions of “kingdom” and “city-state” in the next chapter.) The study of ancient Mesopotamian history starts in Sumer, where great city-states were built during the Sumerian Archaic Period. The first kingdom is the Akkadian Empire, which Sargon the Great of Akkad built. This is the first great empire in history about which we have good, accurate information. The second large empire was known as Ur III. Then came a time we will call the **Interregnum**<sup>10</sup>: a period between kingdoms. During the Interregnum,<sup>10</sup>

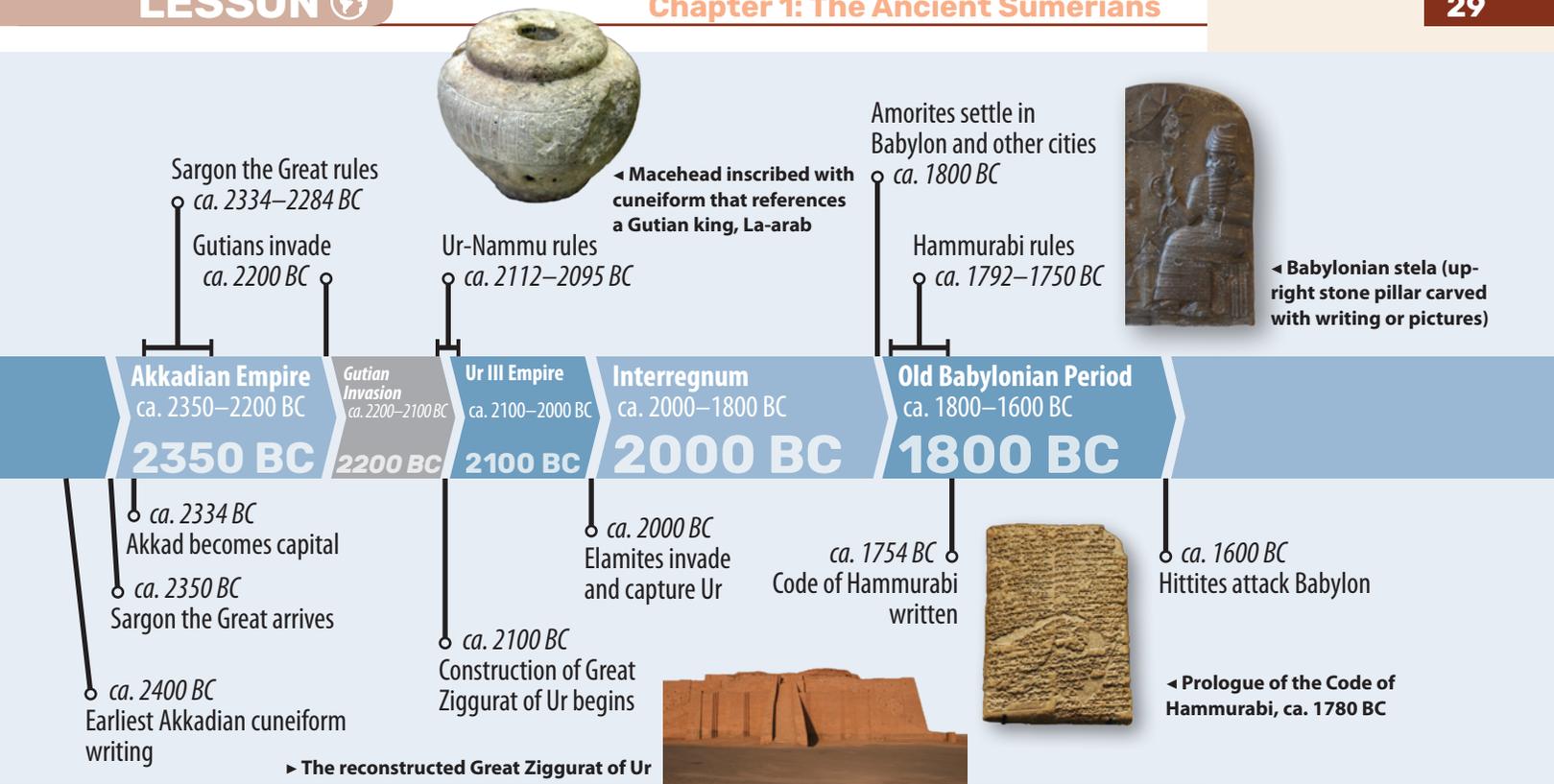


### To the Source:

*interregnum* from the Latin *inter*, meaning “between,” and *rēgnum*, meaning “realm”

Don’t worry—you do not have to memorize this whole time line in a week! Here in chapter 1, you have the entire unit time line. In the following chapters, we will take apart the time line and show it to you piece by piece, “zooming in” on the key events that you’ll learn about in each chapter. Then we will put the time line back together at the end of the unit so that you can again see together in one place all of the important events you have learned about. —A.D.

10. The word “interregnum” is capitalized when it refers to the specific period between kingdoms in Mesopotamian history.



the city-states once again ruled themselves and were not united under one powerful ruler. Finally, the Interregnum was followed by the third period you will learn about in this unit: the Old Babylonian Period.

When did all of these historical periods in Mesopotamian history happen? Well, they happened so long ago that no one knows exactly what the dates are. Do you see the little “ca.” that appears on the time line just before some of the dates? This is an abbreviation for the Latin word *circā*, which means “around.” When wise historians do not know for sure when something happened, they use the “ca.” as if to say, “We do not really know when this happened, but we think it happened around this time.” It is a way to be honest with their readers that they are not sure. When studying history that happened thousands of years ago, there are not many dates about which historians are absolutely certain.

One more important thing to know about dates: They often have either BC after them or AD before them. Have you been wondering what those letters mean? They’re actually very important. BC and AD are acronyms, or letters that stand for a longer phrase, and they help us place an event within the overall time line of world history. The BC dates refer to events that happened before what is considered to be the birth of Jesus Christ. (The letters BC, which always come after the date, stand for “before Christ.”) BC dates go from highest to lowest. In other words, an event in 3500 BC happened 3,000 years before an event in 500 BC. The AD dates refer to events that happened after the birth of Jesus Christ. (The letters AD, which always go in front of the date, are an abbreviation for the phrase *annō Domini*, which means “in the year of our Lord.”) AD dates go from lowest to highest. This means that the capture and destruction of the city of Jerusalem by the Roman army in AD 70 happened 406 years before the fall of the Roman Empire in AD 476.

That is all you need to know for now about time lines and dates. Let’s get back to Sumer!

### BC vs. BCE

For the most part, everyone used the acronyms BC and AD until the twentieth century, when two new acronyms were created: BCE, for “before common era,” and CE, for “common era.” The dates are exactly the same, so why did the letters change? Some historians and scholars prefer to use BCE and CE because they feel these two terms are more accurate. Another reason is that scripture does not give us the exact year of Jesus’s birth, which means He may not have actually been born in AD 1. Therefore, the terms BC and AD might not be completely correct, which can get confusing. Either way, though, we are talking about the same dates. Nothing has changed except the letters! So, now that you know the difference, you can choose which set of letters you would like to use. In our series, we will continue to use BC and AD, since this is the more traditional way of noting the era.

## Talk It Over

1. Pretend you live in Sumer. Talk about what your life is like. What kind of food do you eat? How do you get from place to place? What is it like to live in a land where all the water comes from irrigation canals?



"Peace" scene from the Standard of Ur (ca. 2600 BC), a Sumerian box decorated with mosaic panels showing times of peace and war

2. If you were an archaeologist looking for artifacts so that you could learn more about the ancient Sumerians, what kinds of things would you like to find buried in the ground? Why?



## Practice the Facts

The following are some of your new vocabulary words that are important to remember when learning about ancient Mesopotamia. On the line provided, write the number of the correct vocabulary word beside each definition.

- |                      |       |   |
|----------------------|-------|---|
| 1. Irrigation system | _____ | A. A person who helps his people worship their god (or gods)  |
| 2. Priest            | _____ | B. A period between kingdoms  |
| 3. Polytheist        | _____ | C. A god chosen by the people to serve as the special protector or guardian of their city                           |
| 4. Interregnum       | _____ | D. A person who worships only one god   |
| 5. Ziggurat          | _____ | E. The first important civilization in Mesopotamia  |
| 6. Sumer             | _____ | F. The style of step pyramid, made of clay bricks, that the ancient Sumerians used as a place to worship their gods |
| 7. Patron god        | _____ | G. Having plenty of what you need (usually wealth) to enjoy a successful life                                       |
| 8. Cuneiform         | _____ | H. A person who worships more than one god  |
| 9. Monotheist        | _____ | I. A series of canals that move water from a river or lake to a dry area that needs water                           |
| 10. Prosperous       | _____ | J. The writing system of the ancient Sumerians, created from wedge-shaped symbols                                   |

### Write It Down

Describe what religion was like for the Sumerians by completing the sentences in the following paragraph. Religion was very important to the Sumerian people, and they worshipped \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. In every city, each god had its own \_\_\_\_\_. Each city also had one particular god that was its \_\_\_\_\_ and served as the city's protector. In larger cities, the patron god was served by a \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_. The Sumerian religious leaders managed the temple's money and worshipped the gods by caring for the statues of them. On \_\_\_\_\_ days, the temple was opened to everyone in the city for a time of celebration.

### Know the Reason Why

Complete each of the following sentences by circling *all* of the correct answers.

- Historians think that the time between ca. 4000–3200 BC, before the Sumerian Archaic Period, was probably a peaceful time in history because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - the cities did not have walls around them
  - there are no pictures showing the people carrying weapons
- Finding buried artifacts from ancient civilizations is important because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - all artifacts are valuable and worth a lot of money
  - they help us learn who these ancient people were and how they lived
- Creating a writing system was important for the Sumerians because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - this made it easier for cities to trade and do business with each other
  - without a writing system they could not build temples for the gods
- The Sumerians built irrigation canals because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - the land was dry and it did not rain often
  - the people liked to ride boats on the canals for fun
  - they needed the canals to bring water to their fields
  - they lived miles away from the rivers



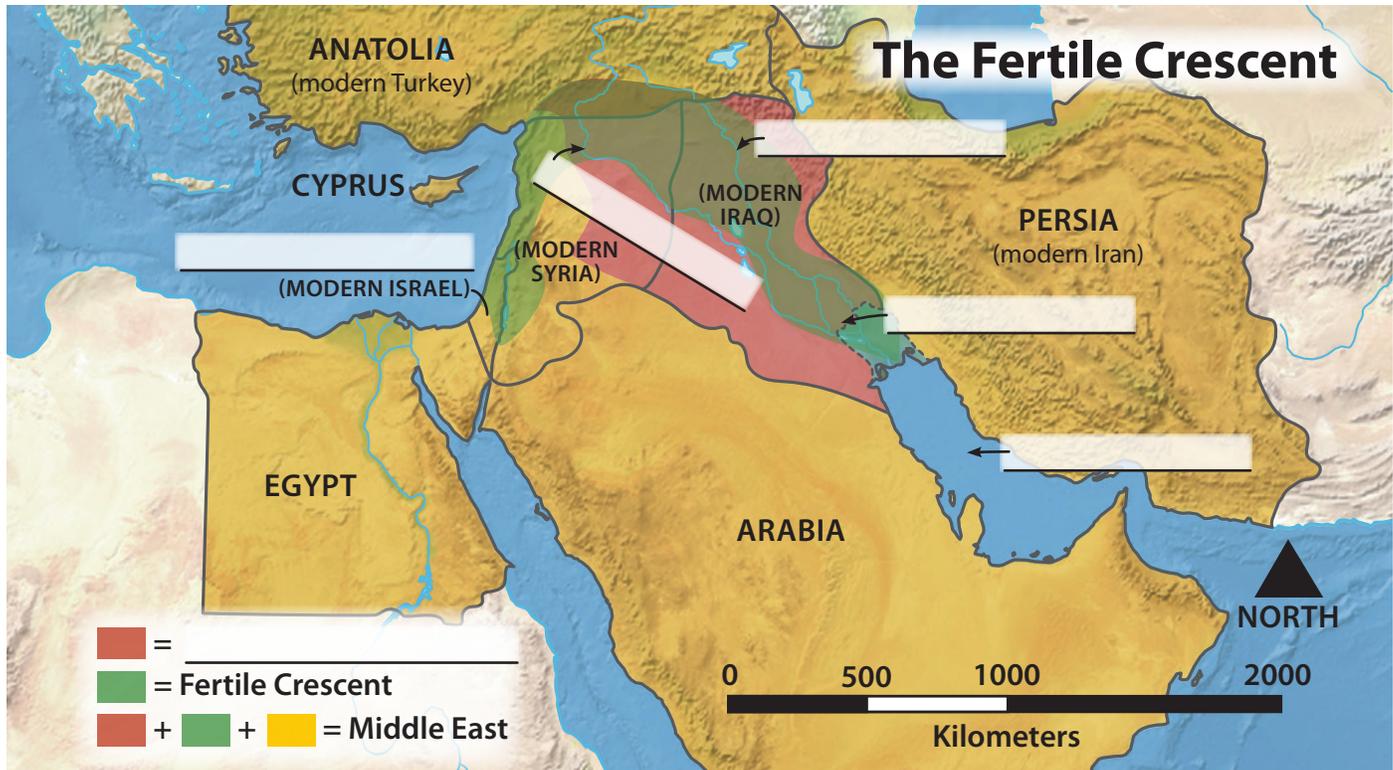
"Sun Temple" in Al-Zibliya area, Sumer, Al-Qadissiyah, Iraq

## Find It on the Map

### The Fertile Crescent

Label the following on the map:

1. Mesopotamia 2. Tigris River 3. Euphrates River 4. Mediterranean Sea 5. Persian Gulf 6. Sumer



## Think About It

In the beginning, people didn't know about the wheel. One day someone invented a wheel, and many things in life became easier. Think about how important the wheel is to everyday life. What are some ways that the wheel made life easier for the ancient Mesopotamian people? What are some of the many ways that we use the wheel in our lives today? How has this invention made life simpler and more comfortable? Write down some of your ideas. (Be sure to use complete sentences!)

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## Do It Yourself

Before the invention of the wheel, ancient people developed another clever method to transport objects. If they needed to move something that was too heavy for men or animals to drag or carry, they used log rollers. This was a difficult and tiring process. First, they would place several long logs horizontally on the ground. The number of logs they laid down depended on how big the object was that they needed to move. Then they would lift the object on top of the logs. As they began to push the object forward, the logs would roll and the object would move forward a bit. Soon the object would roll off the last log in the back. The workers would take this log from the back and move it to the front, and then they would start pushing the object forward again. Each time the object moved forward enough that it slid off the very last log, they would move that log

to the front again. This happened over and over until the object reached its destination. Imagine how long it would take to move an object even a short distance!

Would you like to try your hand at using log rollers? This activity will help you understand how they worked and why this method was so tricky and time-consuming for the ancient people. Your teacher or parent will supply you with a handful of wooden “log rollers.” Lay the “logs” beside each other in a row and place a stable object, such as a book, on top of them. Then push the object forward slowly. As the object rolls off the back-most “log,” move that “log” to the front and then continue pushing the object forward. Repeat this process until you have moved the object across the room!

### Bonus Activities

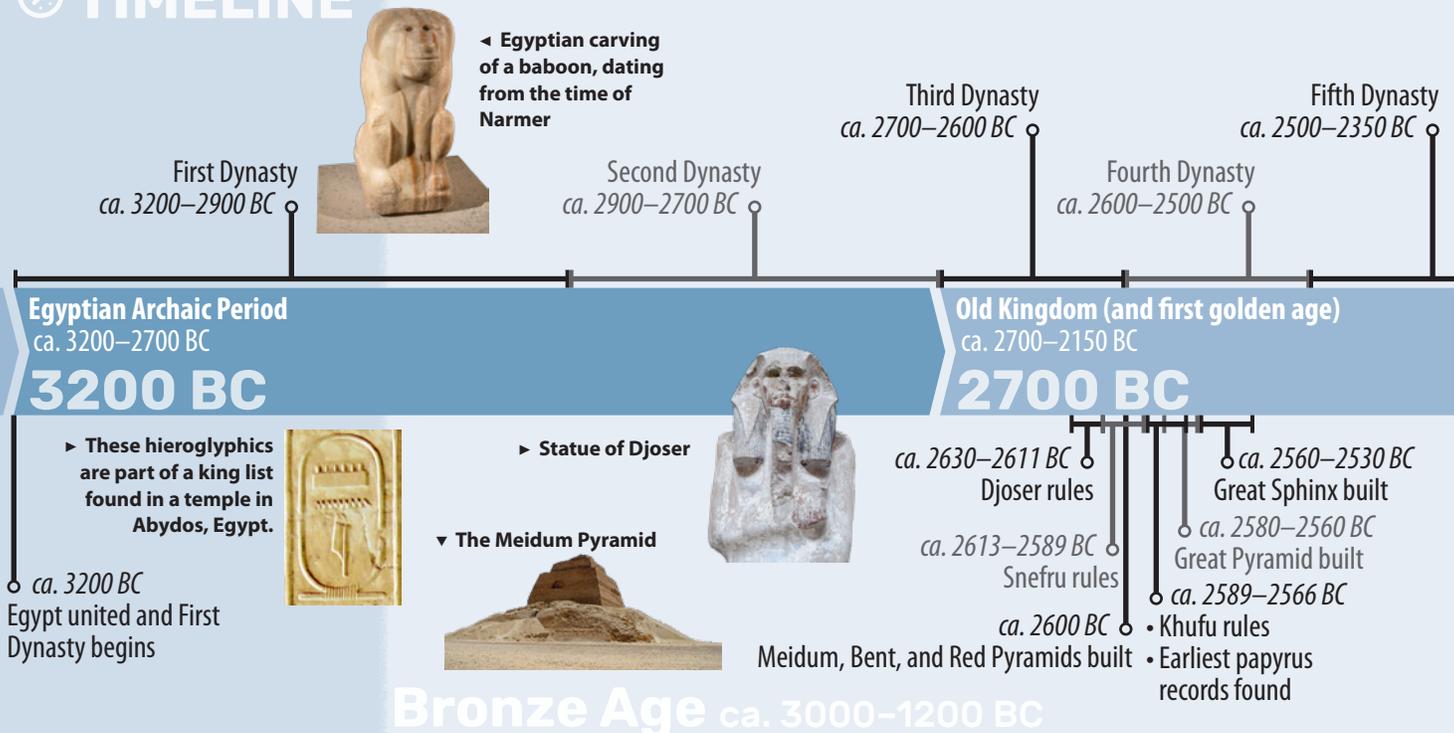
#### Draw a Picture

In the space below, draw a picture of one of the following:

1. Farmers working in the fields or digging irrigation canals
2. Ancient artifacts you might find if you were an archaeologist working in the Fertile Crescent area

(Look back at the photographs throughout this chapter for inspiration.)




**TIMELINE**


## Chapter 10: The Beginning of Egypt and the Egyptian Archaic Period

### IMPORTANT WORDS

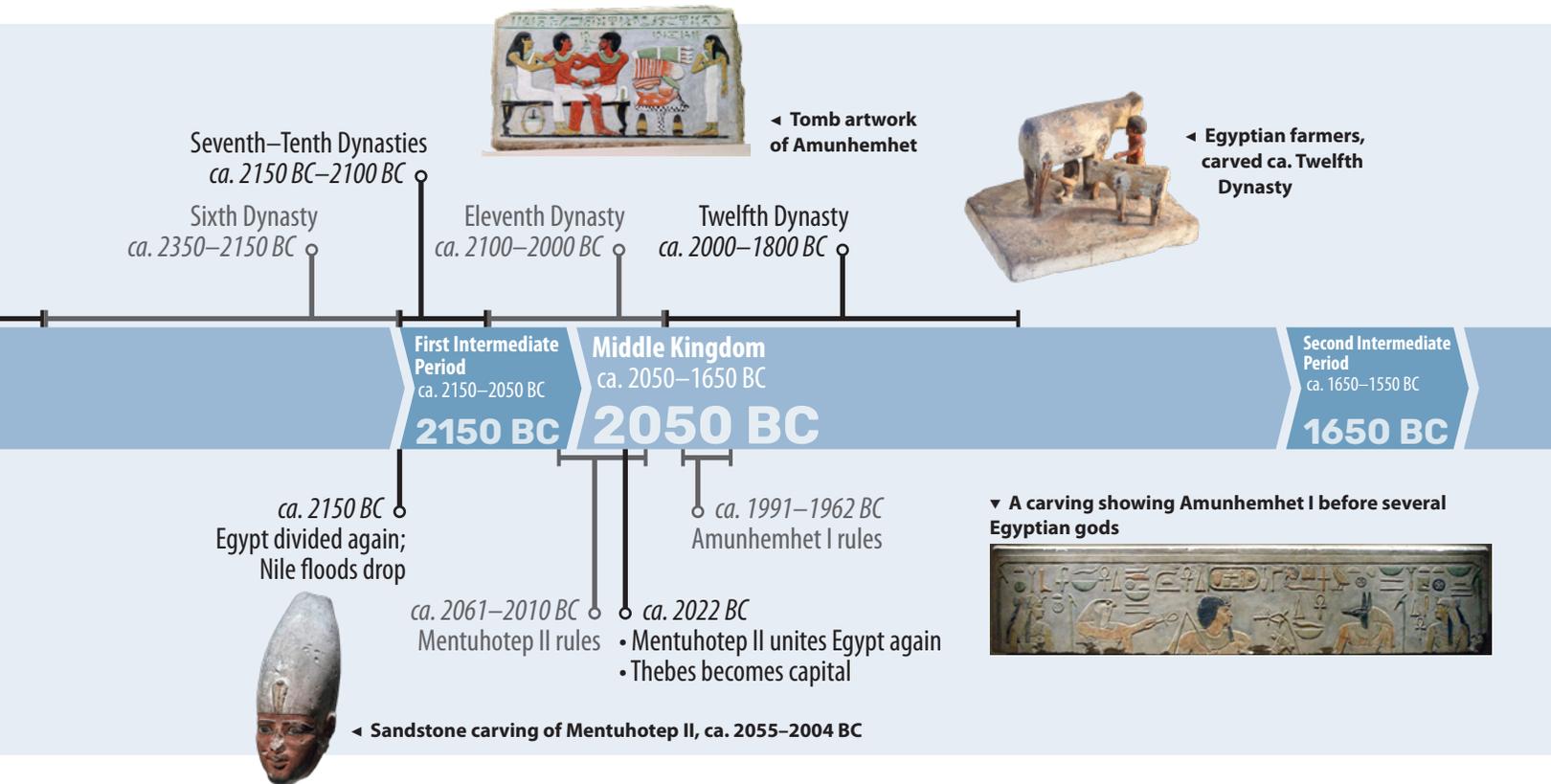
WORD	DEFINITION
Hieroglyphics	The writing system of the ancient Egyptians, created from pictures and symbols. (The individual symbols are called hieroglyphs.)
Pschent	The double crown of ancient Egypt
Dynasty	One family that rules over a kingdom or country for a number of generations
Divine	Coming from, related to, or being a god
Intermediate Period	A time when Egypt was politically divided or ruled by foreigners

### IMPORTANT FIGURES

WORD	DEFINITION
Menes	The legendary pharaoh once believed to have united the land of Egypt
Narmer	One of the pharaohs who helped to unite Upper and Lower Egypt into one kingdom, ca. 3200 BC



Don't forget to learn this chapter's song verse(s)!



Seventh–Tenth Dynasties  
ca. 2150 BC–2100 BC

Sixth Dynasty  
ca. 2350–2150 BC

Eleventh Dynasty  
ca. 2100–2000 BC

Twelfth Dynasty  
ca. 2000–1800 BC

First Intermediate Period  
ca. 2150–2050 BC

Middle Kingdom  
ca. 2050–1650 BC

Second Intermediate Period  
ca. 1650–1550 BC

2150 BC

2050 BC

1650 BC

ca. 2150 BC  
Egypt divided again;  
Nile floods drop

ca. 2061–2100 BC  
Mentuhotep II rules

ca. 1991–1962 BC  
Amunhemhet I rules

ca. 2022 BC

- Mentuhotep II unites Egypt again
- Thebes becomes capital

◀ Tomb artwork of Amunhemhet

◀ Egyptian farmers, carved ca. Twelfth Dynasty

◀ Sandstone carving of Mentuhotep II, ca. 2055–2004 BC

▼ A carving showing Amunhemhet I before several Egyptian gods

IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS

WORD	DEFINITION
Nile River	The mighty river that created and shaped the land of ancient Egypt. The Nile is more than 4,000 miles long and flows south to north, ending at the Mediterranean Sea.
Upper Egypt	The southern part of Egypt that was upstream on the Nile River
Lower Egypt	The northern part of Egypt that was downstream on the Nile River
Egyptian Archaic Period	The earliest period of ancient Egyptian history, ca. 3200–2700 BC, when Egypt was united. This period includes the First and Second Dynasties.
Memphis <sup>1</sup>	The first capital of Egypt and the place along the Nile River where Upper and Lower Egypt met

▼ Wall decorated with hieroglyphics and a portrait of Mentuhotep II



1. See the alphabetical glossary for an expanded definition.

## The Land of Ancient Egypt



### To the Source:

hieroglyphics from the Greek *hieros*, meaning “sacred,” and *glyphe*, meaning “carving”



▲ A piece of Egyptian pottery with a blessing written in hieroglyphics

### ▼ Scenes of Egyptian life

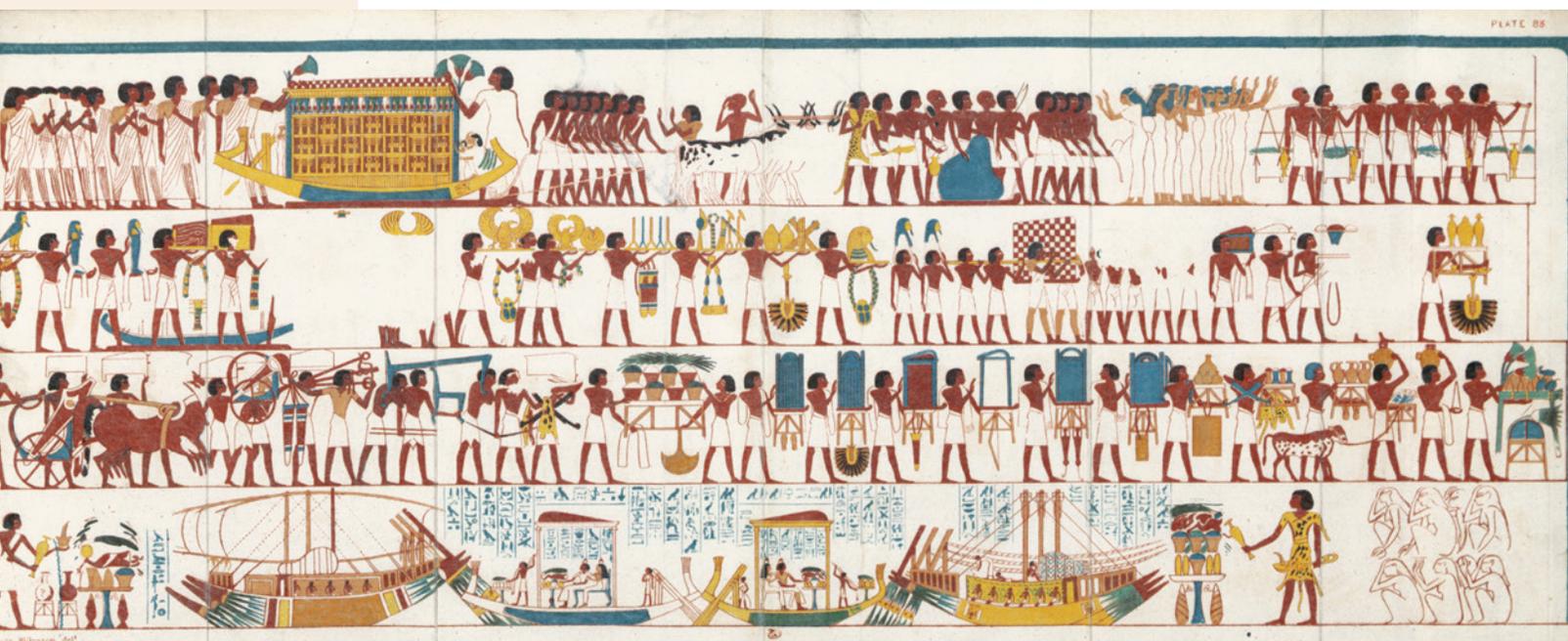
What comes to your mind when you think of ancient Egypt? Do you picture the massive pyramids that were built as tombs for the ancient pharaohs? Maybe you think of the fascinating animal-headed gods that the Egyptian people worshipped, or of **hieroglyphics**,<sup>1</sup> the writing system of the ancient Egyptians, created from pictures and symbols. (The individual symbols are called hieroglyphs.) Or perhaps you have seen some of the ancient drawings of Egyptian men and women with long, straight black hair and bangs. The men wear knee-length garments that look like skirts, and the women wear long, white, close-fitting dresses. Both the men and women are usually drawn with their faces staring off to their left. What do you think they are looking at?

It is hard to imagine another country with a history as long as that of Egypt. The land we know today as Egypt has existed for thousands—and we do mean *thousands*—of years. True, Egypt today does not have the same borders or territory as ancient Egypt. But while other lands came and went from the scene of history, Egypt was always there, a land of its own.

We do not have written records from the time before the pharaohs began to rule Egypt. However, archaeologists have found evidence of villages and other signs of a very early Egyptian culture. Statues, graves, tools, and pieces of clay pottery with pictures painted on them—all of these things help us to know what life was like for the first Egyptians. Based on the paintings, the earliest Egyptians were not very large, and they usually had dark wavy hair and dark skin. Most of their clothing was made from animal skins. They liked wearing beads and jewelry, and they decorated their eyelids with green paint.<sup>2</sup>

The constant flooding of the Nile River, farming of the land, times of war and construction, and many other things have destroyed most of what the earliest people left behind. What historians do know is that people came to Egypt because of its fertile farmland. At times the people were able to grow more food than they were able to eat! The early Egyptians also raised animals such as sheep, goats, cows,

2. Burrell, *Oxford First Ancient History*, 46–47.



and pigs. They gathered together in villages, living in huts made from the reeds that grew along the river.<sup>3</sup>

As in other lands, the people eventually realized that they needed to have some organization in their villages in order to make their lives smoother. Leaders arose to run things in orderly ways. Villages became cities, and each city had its own ruler. Over time, powerful kings called pharaohs came to rule in Egypt.

The early period of the pharaohs is full of legends and myths. Sometimes it is hard to separate fact from fiction. What is clear to historians is that the Egyptian culture, religion, and language that took shape during this early period would last for more than 3,000 years!

## The Nile River

Before we find out who was responsible for unifying Egypt into one powerful kingdom, let's look at the geography of Egypt. Like Mesopotamia, Egypt is mostly a desert country. Everything in the land of ancient Egypt was created, shaped, and kept alive by the mighty **Nile River**. This long, winding river begins deep inside Africa and flows for more than 4,000 miles, ending at the Mediterranean Sea. Without the Nile River, Egypt would never have become the powerful kingdom that it was. You'll learn more about the path of the Nile River in the next chapter, but for now, there's one key fact you need to know: The Nile River flows downstream from *south* to *north*.

The Nile River was so important that it defined what was “up” and what was “down” for the Egyptians. For the ancient Egyptians, “up” meant the south, or upstream toward the mountains deep in the heart of Africa, where the Nile River begins. “Down” meant the north, or downstream where the Nile flowed into the Mediterranean Sea. The Egyptians therefore divided their territory into two parts. **Upper Egypt** was the southern part of Egypt that was upstream on the Nile River, and **Lower Egypt** was the northern part of Egypt that was downstream on the Nile, by the Mediterranean Sea. This sounds backward and upside down to us because we're used to thinking of north as “up” and south as “down,” but it was not so for the ancient Egyptians!

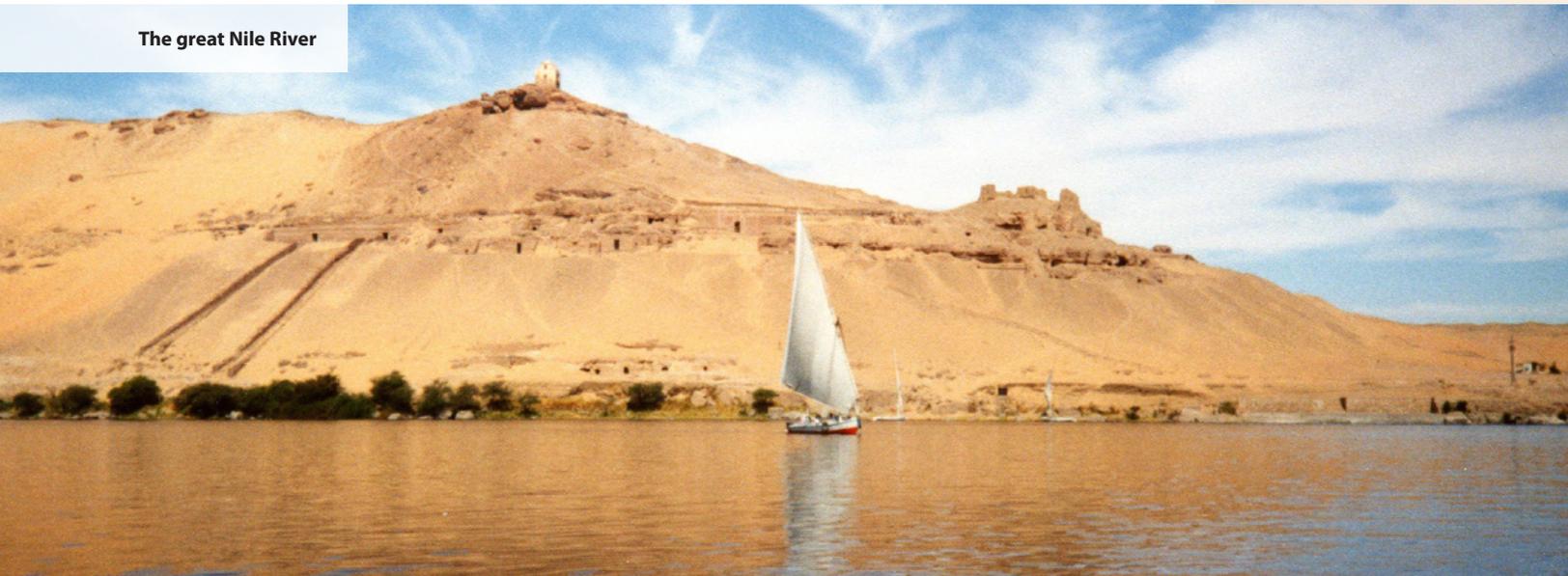
3. Burrell, *Oxford First Ancient History*, 46–47.

4. You will learn more about papyrus in chapters 11 and 15.

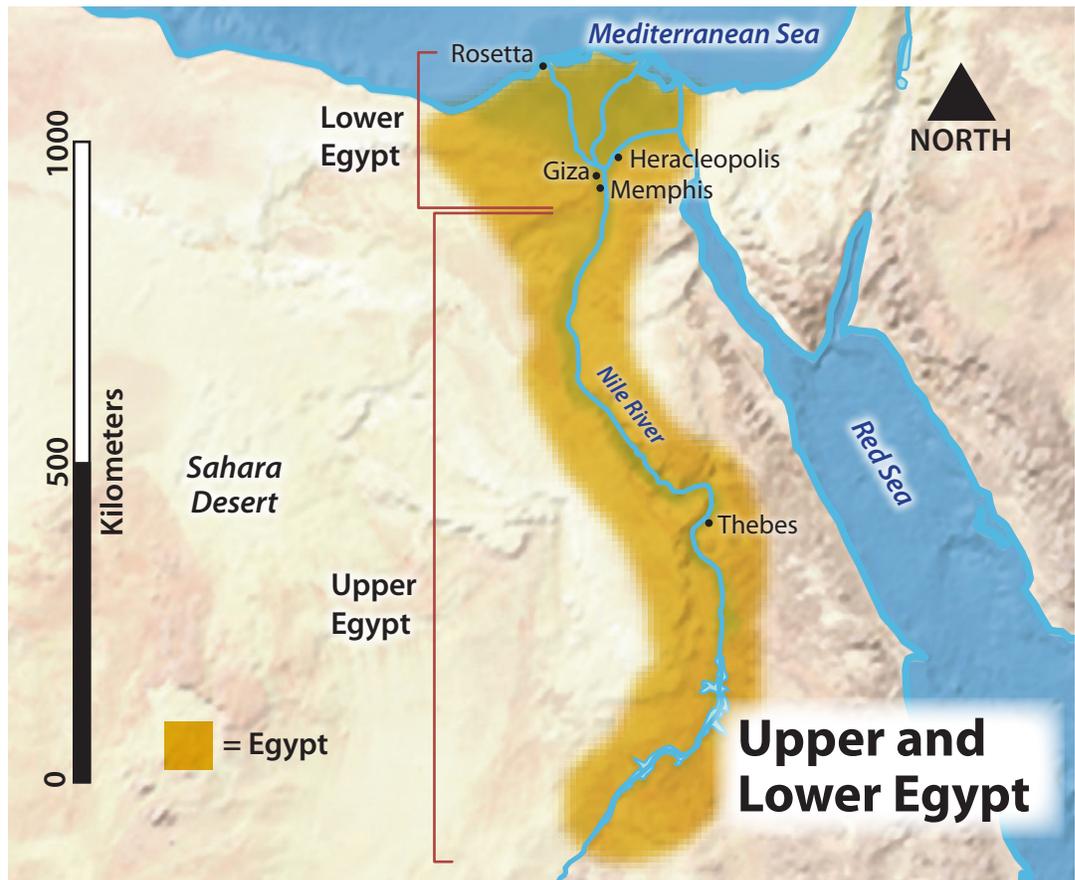
### Egyptian Inventions

1. Huge stone monuments and smooth-sided pyramids
2. Papyrus as a writing material<sup>4</sup>
3. Mummification (a way of preserving bodies for burial)
4. Writing ink
5. Levers and ramps for use in construction projects
6. Eye makeup
7. Solar calendar with 365 days

The great Nile River

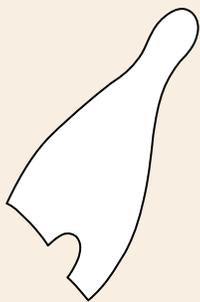


If so much of Egypt is desert, how could the people grow such an abundance of food? It was because of the Nile River! Both Mesopotamia and Egypt were dry lands that often did not receive enough rainwater to keep their crops nourished. The Mesopotamians solved this problem by digging small irrigation canals to help carry water from the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers to their fields, and basins to store the water from the floods. Similarly, the Egyptians relied on the Nile River and its regular floods to water their crops.

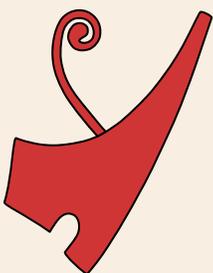


Even though rivers provided water for crops in both lands, Egypt's location had a couple of important advantages. First, the Nile's floodwaters were thick with silt, the dirt that sits at the bottom of a river. In some rivers, silt is mostly sand and not good for the earth. In the case of the Nile, the silt is filled with nutrients and minerals that make the soil good for growing crops. Every year, the floodwaters would spill over the Nile's banks and cover a large part of the land along the river. When the water levels went down again, the nutrient-rich silt was left behind, and the land was ready to produce a large harvest. Second, the Nile River floods occurred in the summer, before the crops were planted. In the fall, when the farmers sowed the wheat, the fields were already well nourished from the floodwaters and ready to receive the seeds.<sup>5</sup>

Because the Egyptians wanted to be prepared in case of a water shortage, they also trapped some of the floodwaters in man-made ponds or basins as the water drained from the land back into the Nile. As in Mesopotamia, these storage basins served as an emergency water supply that could be used if there was a particularly hot growing season and they needed extra water to keep their crops healthy.



▲ The white crown of Upper Egypt



▲ The red crown of Lower Egypt

5. Kathryn A. Bard, "The Emergence of the Egyptian State (c. 3200–2686 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 69.

## The Legend of Menes

In the very beginning of written Egyptian history, the land of Egypt had many rulers who seem to have called themselves kings. Each ruled in a different village or city. During this time, Egypt was divided into Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. One early name for Egypt was “the Two Lands.”

When and how Egypt became one kingdom, no one knows for sure, but historians agree on one thing. Some Egyptians wanted the land to be one kingdom, and there was a group of early rulers that had something to do with conquering and uniting the two halves of Egypt. (We do have a list of ancient Egyptian rulers that is similar to the Sumerian King List. However, as often happens with archaic periods of history, our knowledge is still not always the most accurate.) Uniting Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt into one kingdom took a long time. Many years passed, and many different rulers reigned before the land of Egypt was finally united. It is not until ca. 3200 BC that we can confidently say Egypt became one kingdom.<sup>6</sup> This event marked the beginning of the **Egyptian Archaic Period**, the period of ancient Egyptian history, ca. 3200–2700 BC, when Egypt was united.



▲ Limestone sculpture, possibly of Pharaoh Menes

A popular legend in Egyptian history says that the ruler who united Upper and Lower Egypt was a pharaoh named **Menes**. Even 3,000 years after Egypt had been united,

the people seem to have still believed in the legend of Menes! Over time, the legend grew larger and more fantastic. Egyptian priests claimed that Menes was a great builder and a conqueror of foreign lands. They said he did many impressive deeds, including changing the direction of the Nile River. It was even said that Menes had invented writing—something he definitely did not do! Some versions of the legend claim that after a very long reign, Menes was carried off by a hippopotamus.<sup>7</sup>

Also according to the legend, Menes made the city of **Memphis** his capital. Memphis was located at the place along the Nile River where Upper and Lower Egypt met, and was already an important Egyptian city. Many years earlier, Egyptians had settled in Memphis and made it a major trade city between the two halves of Egypt. Once it was the capital, it became more important than ever before.

While it is true that Memphis became the first capital of Egypt, most historians now agree that Menes was probably a legendary king and not a real person. Instead, one of the pharaohs thought to have unified Egypt was actually a man named **Narmer**. Why



▲ The double crown (pschent) of Egypt

▼ The two sides of the Narmer Palette



The Narmer Palette has artwork on both sides showing Narmer's victory. The pictures on the stone were used to show that Narmer had earned the right to rule over both Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. Remember, it was common at the time for kings to exaggerate their victories so that they would seem very successful and mighty in battle. On the Narmer Palette, the pharaoh is shown wearing his special royal garments, and he is the tallest figure in the picture. His officials are dressed in royal garments, too, but these men are all shorter than Narmer. Of course, no one could be as tall as the pharaoh, at least in the Egyptians' minds! The captured prisoners are much, much smaller than the Egyptians and wear almost no clothes: signs that they were the defeated enemy and the Egyptians were the victors.<sup>8</sup> —A.D.

6. Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, Blackwell History of the Ancient World (Oxford: Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2011), 33–35.

7. Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. Aubrey De Selincourt, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 132–133.

8. Bard, “Emergence of the Egyptian State,” 79–81.

### ? Who Else?

Is there another historical person we have already studied who also united two or more kingdoms? Think back to the Sumerian rulers that you learned about in unit I.



### To the Source:

*dynasty* from the Greek *dynasthai*, meaning “to be able” or “to have power”

### ? What’s in a Name?

Most names have a meaning connected to them. Maybe your parents chose your name because it had a special meaning that was important to them. Or perhaps you were named after a beloved family member, such as your father or grandmother. Do you know what your name means and why it was chosen?

did historians change their minds about Menes? Well, about a hundred years ago, archaeologists discovered a ceremonial stone called the Narmer Palette. This stone is carved with a picture of a king, identified as Narmer, triumphing over the people who lived in Lower Egypt. On one side of the Narmer Palette, the pharaoh is shown wearing a red crown, which represented Lower Egypt (the north). On the other side, he is wearing the white crown of Upper Egypt (the south). Because the stone shows Narmer wearing both crowns, it represents that he had become the king over Upper and Lower Egypt. Later on, the red crown and the white crown were combined to create a double crown, called the **pschent** (pronounced “skent”).

In the past, some historians suggested that Menes and Narmer were the same person. Now, however, historians think that Menes was actually a title that the kings of Egypt (who each had many names) took for themselves. Since the word “Menes” means “he who endures,” it would have made the rulers sound very important. All of this debate over Menes and Narmer is an example of how our understanding of ancient history changes over time as we make new discoveries and learn new ways of thinking about the past.

The victories of the early kings, including Narmer, led to a huge change in Egyptian history. Instead of a number of kings from different families ruling in many cities, one pharaoh at a time ruled over a united Egypt. When the pharaoh died, he was usually replaced by his son or another member of his family. (Sometimes the next pharaoh was a woman!) A group of pharaohs that came from the same family made up a **dynasty**. A **dynasty** is one family that rules over a kingdom or country for a number of generations.

From time to time, someone from a different family might take over the throne and become pharaoh. This usually meant the start of a new dynasty. Over the course of about 3,000 years, 31 dynasties ruled over ancient Egypt. The Egyptian Archaic Period includes the First and Second Dynasties. The First Dynasty ruled Egypt for about 300 years, ca. 3200–2900 BC.

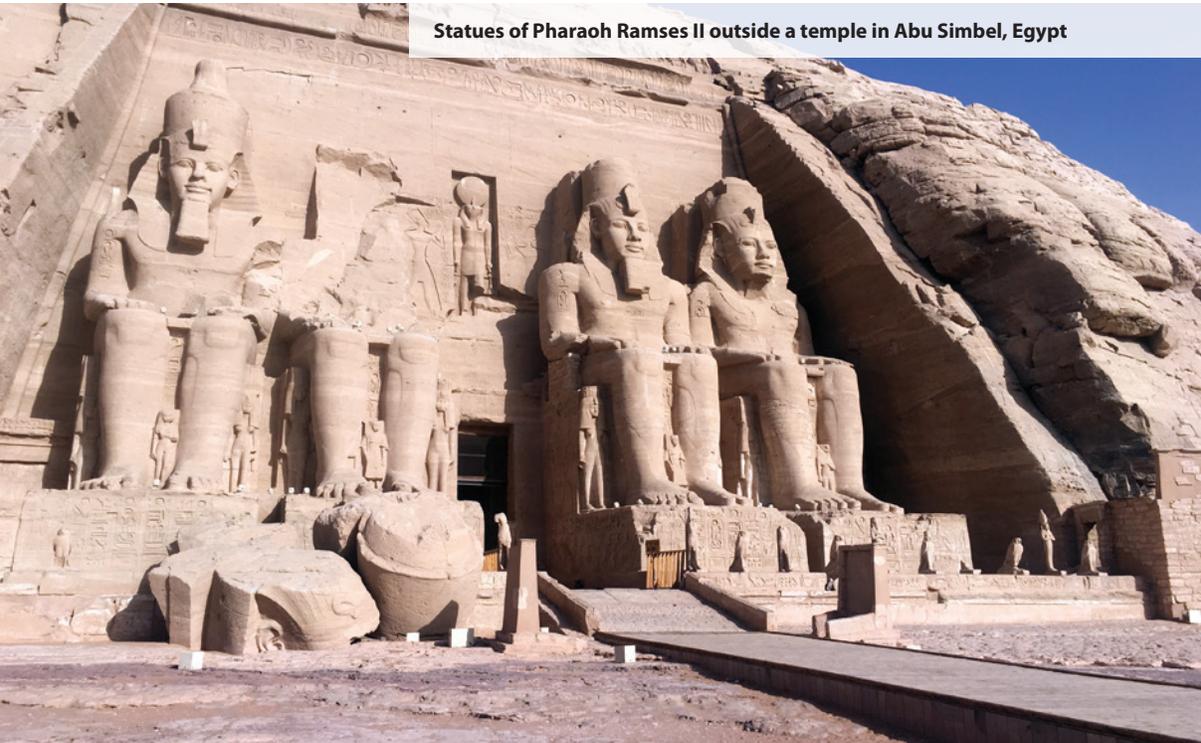
## The Power of the Pharaoh

Another important change that happened once Egypt was united under one ruler was the level of power the pharaoh held. The pharaoh of Egypt now had more power than any individual king before him ever did. The pharaoh controlled the military and was in charge of the scribes, craftsmen, and religious leaders. He

For the Egyptians, a person’s name could be one word or several words. Each name had a particular meaning that might be connected to an emotion or an idea, or to an important god. For example, the Egyptian word *nefer* meant “good” or “beautiful,” so an Egyptian whose name was Nefertiti would reflect the idea of being good or beautiful. Pharaoh Amunhemhet I, whom you will learn about in chapter 14, was named after Amun, the Egyptian god of mysteries and air. The name Amunhemhet meant “Amun is the head.”<sup>9</sup> When someone became pharaoh, he (or sometimes she) took on many additional names. In fact, it was typical for a pharaoh to have at least five names! One of these names, the Horus name, was given to the pharaoh at the start of his reign in order to associate him with Horus, the god believed to protect the pharaoh. (You will learn about Horus in chapter 16.) Hor-Aha, the Horus name of one early pharaoh, means “the Horus who strikes.”

—A.D.

9. David P. Silverman, ed., *Ancient Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 235.



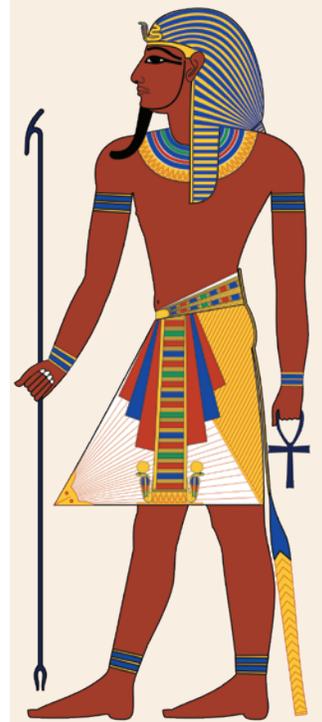
Statues of Pharaoh Ramses II outside a temple in Abu Simbel, Egypt

organized the labors of the common people and gave wealth and favors to the local governors who helped him rule.

The pharaoh also was believed to serve as a kind of divine messenger between the gods and the people. The word “**divine**” means “coming from, related to, or being a god.” Did the Egyptians really think that their pharaoh was divine? Our sources do not tell us for certain, but this belief would not have been unusual. In many polytheistic ancient cultures, the people believed that their gods had chosen their king to rule over them and had given him special powers.

How would you rule if you thought you were like a god? The Egyptians, like other ancient peoples, believed that the gods could do whatever they wanted to do. No one dared make a god or goddess angry, because if a deity became angry, then crops might stop growing, armies might invade, and all kinds of unexpected, terrible events might happen. By making themselves seem like the gods, the pharaohs would have been able to claim a level of power that nobody else could. It probably appeared as though the pharaohs could do anything they wanted!

But the pharaohs did not truly have unlimited powers. Maybe you have read a book or seen a movie in which a mighty pharaoh sits on a great throne, barking orders to his scared followers who rush to carry out his demands. It was not really like that in ancient Egypt. Of course, the pharaohs were powerful, and some of them did rule harshly. But the pharaohs had many responsibilities. They had to pay their soldiers, often with gifts of land. They needed to support religious traditions and ceremonies in order to keep the powerful priests happy. The pharaohs spent huge amounts of money on public building projects, such as temples and pyramids. They also had to keep the local governors happy by granting them favors, such as land and titles. The pharaohs paid for all of these things with taxes, but they had to be careful to not overtax the people. Imagine having priests, governors, and many others coming to you all day long, looking for favors. This was often the life of a pharaoh!



What about the common Egyptian people who lived under the pharaoh? Did they just follow his orders all of the time? Well, the pharaoh and his officials were certainly powerful, but the Egyptian people did sometimes speak up and complain when they experienced bad treatment. For example, during the reign of the powerful Ramses III, workers stopped building the pharaoh's tomb until they received their promised supplies of grain. Ramses III was forced to give the people what they wanted or be left with an unfinished tomb!<sup>10</sup>

The Egyptian people are often remembered for their beliefs in gods and magic, but they were also very practical, especially when it came to the Nile River. After all, the Egyptians' prosperity and very survival depended on the river. Many myths were told about the Nile, and the people celebrated its flooding every year with religious rituals. It is possible that some Egyptians believed that the mighty pharaoh had the divine power to control the river. In reality, the pharaoh knew the river was very important, so he and the farmers carefully watched the river. They became experts at predicting how much water was going to come in that year's floods, and even measured the depth of the Nile each year! If there was more water than the year before, there would be more food from the harvests, and that would mean the pharaoh could collect more taxes. But if there was a drought, then the pharaoh could be in trouble. His people would be hungry, and he would not be able to collect the taxes he needed to pay for his army, his building projects, and all of his favors. The pharaoh may have had power, but he was not as powerful as the river!

▼ The Nile River  
near its source, Lake Victoria

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10. William F. Edgerton, "The Strikes in Ramses III's Twenty-Ninth Year," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 10, no. 3 (July 1951): 137–145.



As you can see, the pharaohs of Egypt were indeed mighty rulers. Yet, in one ancient Egyptian tomb, archaeologists found a sad poem about pharaohs. Part of it reads:

What of their places?  
Their walls have crumbled,  
Their places are gone,  
As if they had never been!<sup>11</sup>

The pharaohs were human like you and me—and the Egyptians knew it!

## Dynasties and Disorganization

Even though Egypt has been one land through the years, it was ruled by many different dynasties of pharaohs. Sometimes these dynasties ruled for a long time, perhaps several centuries. Other times, a dynasty came and went very quickly. In between these long, powerful dynasties, Egypt also experienced short **intermediate** periods, or times when Egypt was politically divided or ruled by foreigners. During some of these intermediate periods, rulers from several different dynasties tried to take control of the kingdom.

So, what do we really mean when we say that the land we know as Egypt has existed since ca. 3200 BC? Well, sometimes Egypt was one unified land ruled by one pharaoh. And sometimes Egypt was politically divided. During some of its intermediate periods, Egypt was divided into two lands with two rulers, one ruling Upper Egypt and one ruling Lower Egypt. And during other intermediate periods, Egypt was under the rule of foreigners, or under several different kings who ruled over various parts of the whole kingdom. But no matter the ruler or the state of the kingdom, the territory and people of Egypt lived on.

How, then, is Egyptian history different from Mesopotamian history? There are many differences, and we can't mention all of them here. But one important difference stands out. In Mesopotamia, the kingdoms were constantly changing, mostly because one group of people would invade and conquer the people who lived there. Then, years later, another new group of people would invade and conquer them. For example, do you remember how the Akkadians conquered the Sumerians, and then later the Gutians conquered some of the city-states after the Akkadian Empire fell? These changes in power happened over and over again as different people with their own languages and cultures took charge of the land of Mesopotamia.

In Egypt, the rulers and dynasties changed, but most of the time the territory known as Egypt was still ruled by Egyptian people under one Egyptian pharaoh. Since Egypt also had one river, one language, and one set of religious beliefs, it was much easier for the land to stay unified under one ruler.

Now that you understand this, it's time to take a closer look at exactly how this one river, the mighty Nile, helped keep Egypt together and make it such a powerful kingdom.



### To the Source:

*intermediate* from the Latin *intermedius*, meaning “in the middle”

11. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings*, vol. 1, *The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 196.

## Talk It Over

Imagine that you are the pharaoh of Egypt. What kind of power and authority would you have as ruler? What would your responsibilities be? In what ways would your power be limited?



◀ A scene from the Narmer Palette

## Practice the Facts

On the line provided, write the number of the correct vocabulary word beside each definition.

- |                        |       |   |
|------------------------|-------|---|
| 1. Lower Egypt         | _____ | A. The southern part of Egypt that was upstream on the Nile River                                 |
| 2. Dynasty             | _____ | B. Coming from, related to, or being a god  |
| 3. Polytheist          | _____ | C. The double crown of ancient Egypt  |
| 4. Upper Egypt         | _____ | D. The first capital of Egypt and the place along the Nile River where Upper and Lower Egypt meet |
| 5. Divine              | _____ | E. The northern part of Egypt that was downstream on the Nile River                               |
| 6. Hieroglyphics       | _____ | F. One family that rules over a kingdom or country for a number of generations                    |
| 7. Memphis             | _____ | G. The writing system of the ancient Egyptians, created from pictures and symbols                 |
| 8. Pschent             | _____ | H. A time when Egypt was politically divided or ruled by foreigners                               |
| 9. Intermediate period | _____ | I. A person who worships more than one god  |

## True or False?

If the sentence is true, circle *T*. If the sentence is false, circle *F*.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Uniting Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt into one kingdom was easy to do and happened quickly.  | T | F |
| 2. The Egyptians, like the Mesopotamians, used irrigation basins to store emergency supplies of water for their crops.                          | T | F |
| 3. Before the Egyptian Archaic Period, ca. 3200 BC, Egypt had only one king.  | T | F |
| 4. The Nile River flooded late in the growing season, after the crops were already fully grown.   | T | F |
| 5. Historians think Narmer helped unify Egypt because pictures on a ceremonial stone show him wearing the crowns of both Upper and Lower Egypt. | T | F |
| 6. When the people believed the pharaohs were divine, the rulers were able to claim a new level of power.                                       | T | F |
| 7. A total of 50 dynasties ruled over the land of Egypt.  | T | F |

**Which Is Which?**

Using what you learned in unit I and in this chapter, see if you can finish filling in the blanks in the following chart with some more ways ancient Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt were different from each other. Write *M* next to the words or phrases that refer to Mesopotamia, and *E* beside the words or phrases that refer to Egypt.

Important river(s)	The Nile _____	The Tigris and the Euphrates _____
Geographical location	Middle East _____	Northern Africa _____
Purpose of the pyramids	Temples _____	Tombs _____
Title of the ruler	King or emperor _____	Pharaoh _____
Writing system	Hieroglyphics _____	Cuneiform _____

**Write It Down**

Choose the correct words from the word bank to fill in the blanks in each of the following sentences. (*Hint:* Not all of the words in the word bank will be used in this exercise!)

Great Sphinx • cuneiform • archaeology • Nile • intermediate period • hieroglyphics •  
 • history • dynasty • pschent • pharaoh • Memphis • archaic period • Tigris

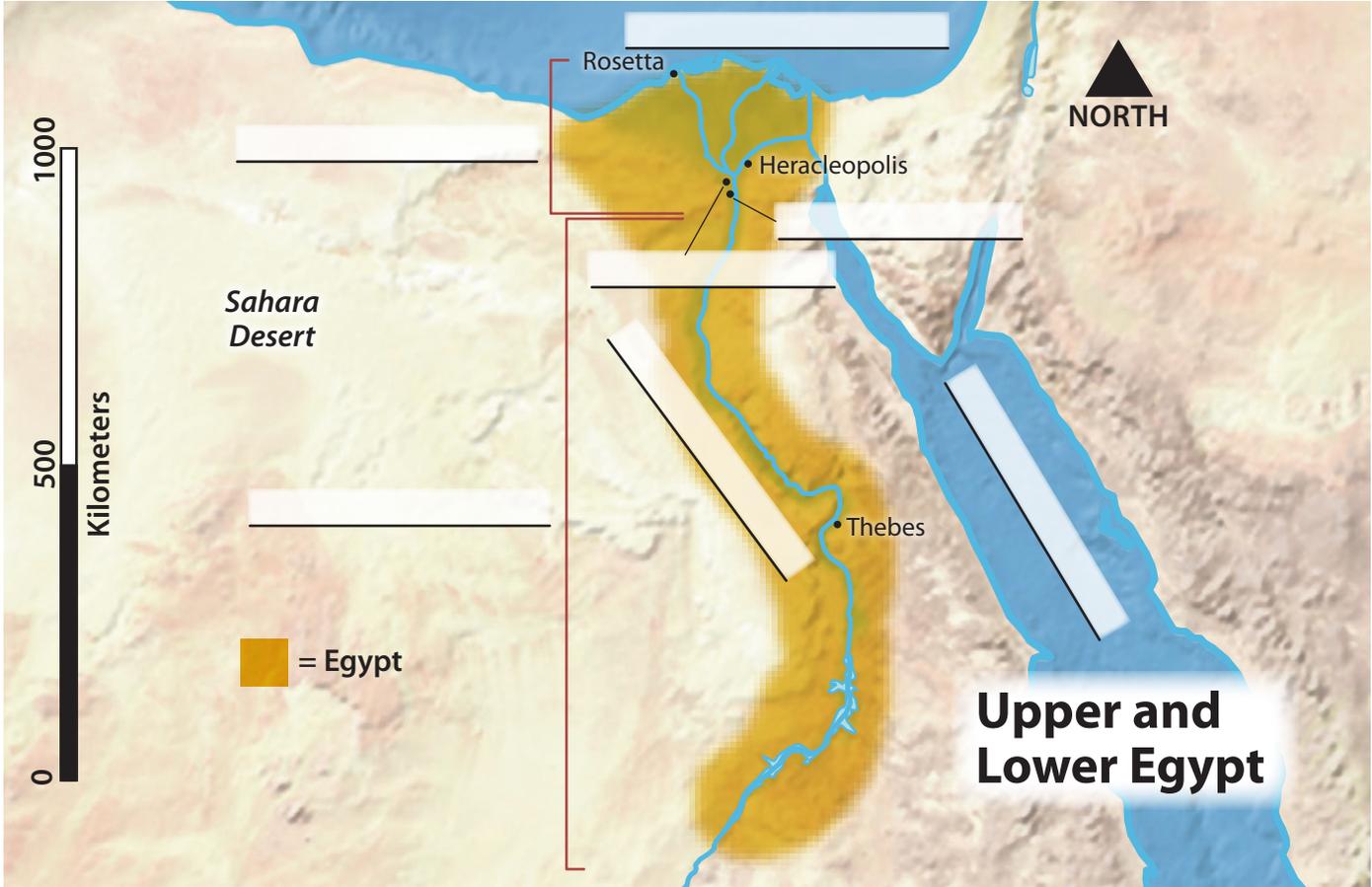
- The title for a king of Egypt is \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is a record of events that happened in the past.
- One family that rules over a country for a number of generations is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ was the first capital of Egypt and an important trading city.
- The famous statue outside the city of Giza of a mythical creature with a lion body and a human head is the \_\_\_\_\_.
- An \_\_\_\_\_ is a time in Egyptian history when Egypt was politically divided or ruled by foreigners.
- The writing system of the ancient Egyptians is known as \_\_\_\_\_.
- The mighty \_\_\_\_\_ River created and shaped the land of ancient Egypt.
- The double crown of Egypt is called the \_\_\_\_\_.

**Find It on the Map**

**Upper and Lower Egypt**

Label the following on the map:

1. Upper Egypt
2. Lower Egypt
3. Nile River
4. Red Sea
5. Mediterranean Sea
6. Memphis
7. Giza



**Make It Yourself**

Draw a picture of each of the three crowns of Egypt in the boxes below. Then write the name of the kingdom the crown represented beneath each picture.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_