25th Anniversary
EXPANDED EDITION

the STORY of the WORLD

History for the Classical Child

Volume 1: Ancient Times

From the Earliest Nomads to the Last Roman Emperor

Susan Wise Bauer

The Story of the World

Volume 1: Ancient Times

ALSO BY SUSAN WISE BAUER

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From the Earliest Nomads to the Last Roman Emperor

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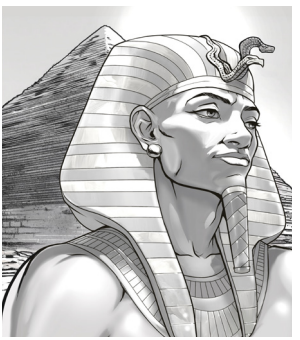

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Foreword

I started writing the *Story of the World* series back in 1999, right after finishing the original edition of *The Well-Trained Mind*. In that book, my mother Jessie Wise and I had recommended two principles for the study of elementary history: first, that history be studied by period, not by country (so that young readers can see what's going on all across the world at the same time); and second, that history be told as the fascinating, engaging story that it is.

Unfortunately, we couldn't find a single elementary history that followed these principles. The available books were either encyclopedias (nice pictures, boring disconnected snippets of text), or if they were told as narratives, they focused in on the history of a single country; and that country was almost always America, with little attention to the rest of this very large world.

So I decided to write my own.

It's hard to understand, at the beginning of a big project, just what you're letting yourself in for. At first, telling the story of the entire world for young readers seemed like a fun and necessary enterprise. But it didn't take me long to realize how difficult it would be to choose, out of more than four thousand years of recorded history, exactly the tales and characters that would bring the past alive— and also give my budding historians the important pegs of information that they would need to help them make sense of future studies of the past.

I believe that the first edition of *The Story of the World*—a narrative, big-picture, chronological world history—succeeded in this. The books have been enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of young readers and their families. They have learned about parts of the world that they never knew existed, delighted in the stories of past heroes, discovered how the ancient past still speaks to us today, and (let's not forget) they've mummified quite a few chickens.

I also heard from hundreds of readers who wished I'd done it differently: highlighted lesser known cultures, taken an alternative point of view, included a national hero that didn't make it into the original pages. In many cases, I had to sigh and say: "Well, if I only had another hundred pages or so…" But I also listened, and this anniversary edition takes that feedback into account. It is more strictly chronological, adds more non-Western history, and includes ten new profiles of history-makers, lesser-known characters from the past who nevertheless changed their countries, and deserve to be better known. They add even more layers to this story of our world.

Twenty-five years on, I constantly meet adults who say, "Oh, I LOVED *The Story of the World* when I was little!" The series opened their eyes to the size of the world, the beauty of other cultures, the enduring puzzle of human motivations, and the sheer fascination of the past (as Leslie Hartley famously observed, the past is a foreign country; they do things differently there). I believe that this anniversary edition will continue on in that tradition.

Susan Wise Bauer
Charles City, Virginia

Introduction
How Do We Know What Happened?

What Is History?

Do you know where you were born? Were you born at a hospital, or at home? How much did you weigh when you were born? What did you have to eat for your first birthday?

You don't remember being born, do you? And you probably don't remember your first birthday party! So how can you find the answers to these questions?

You can ask your parents. They can tell you about things that happened long ago, before you were old enough to remember. They can tell you stories about when you were a baby.

These stories are your "history." Your history is the story of what happened to you from the moment you were born, all the way up to the present. You can learn this history by listening to your parents. They remember what happened when you were born. And they probably took pictures of you when you were a baby. You can learn even more about your history from these pictures. Did you have hair? Were you fat or thin? Are you smiling or frowning? What are you wearing? Do you remember those clothes?

You have a history—and so do your parents. Where were they born? Were they born at home, or at a hospital? Where did they go to school? What did they like to eat? Who were their best friends?

How can you find the answers to these questions? You can ask your parents. And if they don't remember, you can ask *their* parents—your grandparents.

Now let's ask a harder question. Your grandmother was once a little girl. What is her history like? How much did she weigh when she was born? Did she cry a lot? When did she cut her first tooth? What was her favorite thing to eat?

You would have to ask *her* mother—your *great*-grandmother. And you could look at baby pictures of your grandmother. But what if you can't talk to your great-grandmother, and what if you don't have any baby pictures of your grandmother? Is there another way you could find out about your grandmother's history?

There might be. Perhaps your grandmother's mother wrote a letter to a friend when she was born. "Dear Elizabeth," she might have written. "My baby was born at home on September 13. She weighed seven pounds, and she has a lot of fuzzy black hair. She certainly cries a lot! I hope she'll sleep through the night soon."

Now, suppose you find this letter, years later. Even though you can't talk to your great-grandmother, you can learn the *history* of your grandmother from her letter. You could also learn *history* if your great-grandmother kept a diary or a journal, where she wrote about things that happened to her long ago.

In this book, we're going to learn about the *history* of people who lived a long time ago, in all different countries around the world. We're going to learn about the stories

they told, the battles they fought, and the way they lived—even what they ate and drank, and what they wore.

How do we know these things about people who lived many, many years in the past? After all, we can't ask them.

We learn about the history of long-ago people in two different ways. The first way is through the letters, journals, and other written records that they left behind. Suppose a woman who lived in ancient times wrote a letter to a friend who lived in another village. Her letter might say, "There hasn't been very much rain here recently. All our crops are dying. The wheat is especially bad. If it doesn't rain soon, we'll have to move to another village!"

Hundreds of years later, we find this letter. What can we learn about the history of ancient times from this letter? We can learn that people in ancient times grew wheat for food. They depended on rain to keep the wheat healthy. And if it didn't rain enough, they moved somewhere else.

Other kinds of written records tell us about what kings and armies did in ancient times. When a king won a great victory, he often ordered a monument built. On the monument, he would have the story of his victory engraved in stone letters. Or a king might order someone in his court to write down the story of his reign, so that everyone would know what an important and powerful king he was. Thousands of years later, we can read the stone letters or the stories and learn more about the king.

People who read letters, journals, other documents, and monuments to find out what happened in the past are called *historians*. And the story they write about the past is called *history*.

What Is Archaeology?

We can learn about what people did in the past through reading the letters and other writings that they left behind. But this is only one way of doing history.

Long, long ago, many people didn't know how to write. They didn't write letters to each other. The kings didn't carve the stories of their great deeds on monuments. How can a historian learn the story of people who didn't know how to write?

Imagine that a whole village full of people lived near a river, long ago. These people don't know how to write. They don't send letters to their friends, or write diaries about their daily life. But as they go about their duties every day, they drop things on the ground. A farmer, out working in his wheat field, loses the iron blade from the knife he's using to cut wheat from the stalks. He can't find it, so he goes to get another knife—leaving the blade on the ground.

Back in the village, his wife drops a clay pot by accident, just outside the back steps of her house. It breaks into pieces. She sighs, and kicks the pieces under the house.

Her little boy is playing in the dirt, just beyond the back steps. He has a little clay model of an ox, hitched to a cart. He runs the cart through the dirt and says, "Moo! Moo!" until his mother calls him to come inside. He leaves the cart where it is and runs into the house. His mother has a new toy for him! He's so excited that he forgets all about his ox and cart. Next day, his father goes out into the yard and accidentally kicks dirt over the clay ox and cart. The toy stays in the yard, with dirt covering it.

Now let's imagine that the summer gets drier and drier. The wheat starts to die. The people who live in the village have less and less to eat. They get together and decide that they will pack up their belongings and take a journey to another place, where there is more rain. So they collect their things and start off down the river. They leave behind the things that they don't want any more—cracked jars, dull knives, and stores of wheat kernels that are too hard and dry to use.

The deserted village stands by the river for years. Slowly, the buildings start to fall down. Dust blows overtop of the ruins. One year, the river floods and washes mud over the dust. Grass starts to grow in the mud. Eventually, you can barely see the village anymore. Dirt and grass cover the ruins from sight. It just looks like a field by a river.

But one day a man comes along to look at the field. He sees a little bit of wood poking up from the grass. He bends down and starts to brush dirt away from the wood. It is the corner of a building. When he sees this, he thinks to himself, "People used to live here!"

The next day he comes back with special tools—tiny shovels, brushes, and special knives. He starts to dig down into the field. When he finds the remains of houses and tools, he brushes the dirt away from them. He writes down exactly where he found them. And then he examines them carefully. He wants to discover more about the people who used to live in the village.

One day, he finds the iron knife blade that the farmer lost in the field. He thinks to himself, "These people knew how to make iron. They knew how to grow wheat and harvest it for food. And they used iron tools to harvest their grain."

Another day, he finds the clay pot that the farmer's wife broke. Now, he knows that the people of the village knew how to make dishes from clay. And when he finds the little ox and cart that the little boy lost in the yard, he knows that the people of the village used cows, harnessed to wagons, to help them in their farm work.

He might even find out that the people left their village because there was no rain. He discovers the remains of the hard, spoiled wheat that the people left behind. When he looks at the wheat, he can tell that it was ruined by lack of rain. So he thinks to himself, "I'll bet that these people left their village during a dry season. They probably went to find a place where it was rainy."

This man is doing history—even though he doesn't have any written letters or other documents. He is discovering the story of the people of the village from the things that they left behind them. This kind of history is called *archaeology*. And historians who dig objects out of the ground and learn from them are called *archaeologists*.

Chapter One
The Earliest People

The First Nomads

Where do you live? Where do you sleep? Do you sleep in the same bed every night, or do you move into a new house every week?

Thousands and thousands of years ago, families didn't live in houses and shop at grocery stores. Instead, they wandered from place to place, looking for food and sleeping in tents or caves. Ancient families who lived this way were called *nomads*. Nomad means "a person who wanders or roams around." In some parts of the world, nomads still wander from place to place today!

Nomads gathered their food from the land around them. They ate plants that they picked, roots that they dug out of the ground, and nuts and berries that they gathered from bushes and trees. When they had eaten most of the food in one place, they would move on to another place. Women and children had the job of digging up roots; picking nuts, berries, and plants; and collecting other kinds of food—eggs, wild honey, and even lizards and snakes. Men hunted for meat with spears, bows, and arrows. If the nomads camped near a river or lake, the men and women would both fish, too.

After the nomads had hunted in one area for a while, all the animals would move away from them. When that

happened, the nomads would pack up and follow the game. They would keep wandering and moving on.

In warm places, nomads built tents by stretching animal hides over wooden frames. They could take these tents with them when they moved. Nomads who lived in colder, rocky places used caves for shelter. We know that they lived there because they painted pictures of animals on the walls of the caves; we can still see these pictures today.

TARAK IS A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL WHO LIVES with her family in the days of the nomads. She likes warm weather the best, because she can sleep out in the open and look at the stars until she falls asleep.

One warm morning, Tarak gets up when the sun comes up. She is sleeping outside, so all she has to do is pick up the piece of animal skin she sleeps on and take it to her mother. She wears the same clothes all the time, so she doesn't even have to change out of her pajamas.

In the middle of the nomads' camp, the fire is still burning from the night before. Tarak's uncle and some of the other adults have taken turns staying up through the night, watching the fire and keeping it burning. They heard a wildcat screaming in the night and wanted to keep it away from the camp. Tarak's uncle says that the wildcat has already frightened away the flocks of small deer that the hunters were tracking. There's no meat for breakfast this morning. If the hunters don't shoot any deer today, the whole group of nomads will pick up their tents and skins and begin to walk towards a new place to hunt.

Tarak doesn't like the grain that her mother offers her for breakfast, so she decides to wait and eat when she goes out to gather food. Every morning, Tarak and her brothers go out with their mother to look for plants and berries. But they've been gathering food in the same place for a long time, and they've already picked most of the leaves that are good to eat. They've already scraped all the honey out of the wild bees' nest that her younger brother found in the crack of a rock. And they've taken the eggs from all the nests that they can climb up to.

She and her younger brother get their game bags—small bags made out of skin—and start out to look for food. "I'm going to find another bees' nest," brags her brother. "Then we can eat honey again."

"I'm the best lizard catcher in the family," Tarak retorts. "I bet I can find a lizard before you can find a bees' nest."

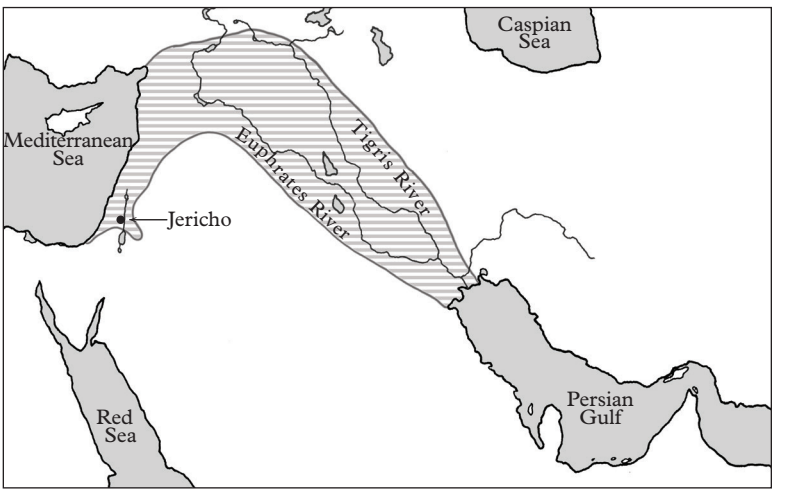
Sure enough, as they walk out of a patch of woods into the sunshine, Tarak sees a lizard dart away into the crack of a log. She leaps on the log and turns it over. Three lizards try to scurry away from her, but in a moment, she has scooped them up and dumped them into her bag. There isn't very much meat on a lizard, but her mother is a wonderful cook; she can stew the lizards in boiling water until every shred of meat has come off the bones, add herbs and roots, and serve a good filling stew to the whole camp. All the way back to the nomad camp, Tarak can feel the lizards squirming in her bag. It makes her hungry. She can't wait to taste her mother's lizard stew.

The First Nomads Become Farmers

One of the best places for nomads to live was in an area called the Fertile Crescent. It was called a *crescent* because it was shaped like a crescent moon— like this:

And it was called *fertile* because two rivers, called the Tigris and the Euphrates, ran through it. Rich grass, wild barley, and wild wheat grew in the damp soil of the riverbanks.

When nomads wandered through the Fertile Crescent, they saw herds of animals feeding on the grass. They saw grain that they could harvest, and wide rivers where they



The Fertile Crescent

could fish and get fresh water to drink. Because it was so easy to find food, nomads returned to the Fertile Crescent again and again. Some of these nomads began to live near the two rivers all year long, instead of wandering from place to place in search of food.

Nomads who settled in the Fertile Crescent couldn't just pick leaves, nuts, and berries to eat. Since they weren't moving on, they would soon run out of wild plants to harvest. Instead, they had to begin to plant grain for themselves. The nomads of the Fertile Crescent were turning into farmers.

These new fields of grain needed extra water to flourish. The land near the rivers was damp enough to make growing easy. But it didn't rain very much in the Fertile Crescent, and farther away from the shores, the land was dry for much of the year. So the farmers learned to dig canals from the rivers out into their fields. That way, even if it did not rain, they could bring water to their crops.

Today, irrigation machines are enormous metal sprinklers, higher than a house and longer than three or four semitrucks. They pump water out of lakes and spray it over entire fields. But long ago, farmers had a simpler machine to get water out of the canals and onto their crops. This machine was called a *shaduf*. Early farmers balanced a pole lengthwise on top of a pillar. They tied a weight to one end of the pole, and attached a leather bucket to the other. Then the farmers lowered the bucket into the canal, raised the bucket by pushing down on the weight, and then swung the bucket around to pour the water on the crops. The shaduf was one of the first farm machines.

A farmer with a shaduf

Farmers had to tend their crops every day for months. So they began to build houses that would stay in one place, instead of living in tents that could be moved every few days. They used whatever materials were around them. Farmers who lived near the river built houses out of reeds, or out of bricks that were made from mud and left to dry in the sun.

Soon, farmers discovered that it was best to build houses close together so that they could help each other to water and tend their fields. These were the first villages. The farmers also learned that they could tame animals such as sheep and goats, feed them grain, and then use them for meat. This was easier than hunting wild animals! Villages were often built around a central pen or field where the tame animals were kept.

Some villages were very successful in growing grain and raising sheep and goats. They even grew rich by

trading grain, sheep's wool, and animal skins to others for metals, pottery, wood, and other goods. Because they were afraid that they might be attacked and robbed by bandits, they built stone walls around their villages.

These were the first cities.

One of the earliest was the city of Jericho. Jericho had one of the thickest, strongest walls of the ancient world. It was made of stone, and it was ten feet thick and thirteen feet tall, with a circular tower on one side so that village lookouts could see enemies approaching. The tower was at least twenty-eight feet high—taller than a two-story house!

Not long after the day that Tarak catches enough lizards for her mother's lizard stew, Tarak and her family wander into the Fertile Crescent, searching for food. They find plenty of roots, nuts, and berries to eat. Tarak's uncle is excited because he sees large herds of horses and small deer to hunt.

But the most exciting thing Tarak sees is a huge river, flowing by right at her feet. She has never seen so much water in one place in her life. Usually, her family and the other nomads only find small pools of water, or tiny streams trickling through the rocks. They need this water for drinking—so Tarak has never been swimming. As a matter of fact, she has never had a bath in her whole life. Now, she can walk right into the water up to her chin.

At first, Tarak and her brother are afraid to get into the water. They just squat on the shore and splash each other. But slowly they put one foot, and then the other into the water. Tarak wants to

show her brother how brave she is, so she wades out almost to her knees. She hears her brother wading in behind her. He splashes her all over, so she turns around and dunks his head under the water. He comes up spluttering and yelling. He's never been under water before.

Tarak and her brother spend the whole morning in the river. When they get out, Tarak notices that her brother smells much better than he used to.

That night at dinner, there is horsemeat to eat. Tarak's uncle says, "I met other men a little farther down the riverbank. But they weren't hunting. They were putting seeds into the ground. They told me that if we put seeds into the ground too, grain would grow right here where we are. We could pick it, and we wouldn't have to keep looking for new fields to gather food in. I think we'll stay here for a while and watch what they're doing."

Tarak grins at her brother. She likes living on the bank of the river; she likes eating horsemeat instead of lizards; she likes the idea that she won't have to go searching for roots every day. And most of all she likes swimming.

Note: Nomads roamed through the Fertile Crescent from at least 9000 BC/BCE. The stone wall at Jericho dates to around 8000 BC/BCE.

Chapter Two
Egyptians Lived on the Nile River

Two Kingdoms Become One

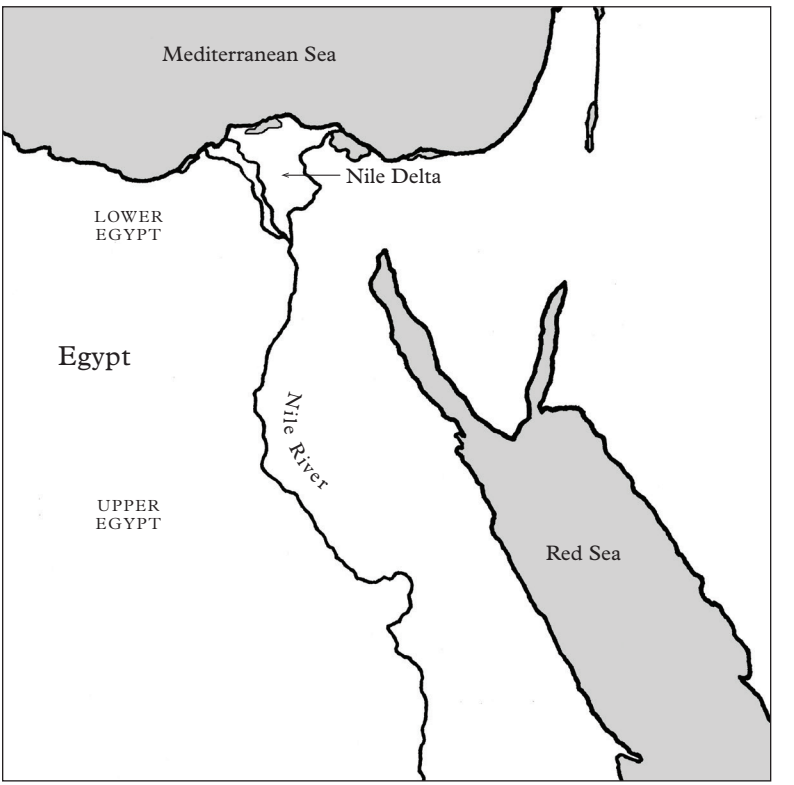
Tarak could go swimming almost any day she wanted to, because the Tigris River was full of water all year round. But the farmers who lived along the banks of the Nile River had a very different kind of river to deal with. Sometimes the river was very low—so low that you could almost see the bottom. Other times, it was so full that it flooded all over their farmland.

The Nile River is a long river in Africa. At the top, it splits into several different little rivers and runs into the Mediterranean Sea. This area is shaped like an upside-down triangle. The Greek letter for *D*, *delta*, is shaped like a triangle too. So this part of the river is called the Nile Delta, after the Greek letter of the alphabet.

Every year, the Nile flooded. During rainy seasons, water would fall on the mountains in the south, where the Nile River begins. The water would pour down the mountains, into the river, and run down towards the delta. So much water poured into the Nile at once that it overflowed its banks and spread all over the farmland on either side. The wettest place of all was the Nile Delta—all the little rivers ran over their banks and spread out so that the whole delta was underwater.

Would you like to live on the banks of the Nile? Do you think it would be a good place to build a house? What would happen to your house?

If a farmer had a river flood all over his crops today, he'd think it was a disaster. It would wash his crops away. But the farmers who lived along the Nile liked to see the river flood. The river flooded at the same time every year, so they were ready for it. When the water came up out of the river, rich dirt from the bottom of the river came with it. This dirt was called *silt*, and it was full of good vitamins and minerals for plants. The floodwater would



The Nile Delta

spread the silt all along the edge of the river, and then the water would recede—go back into the river until the next year. Then the farmers, who lived a little ways away from the riverbank so that their houses wouldn't flood, would come out and plant their crops in the rich silt. They learned to dig canals leading away from the river, so that floodwater would run into their canals. Then they would block the ends of the canals so that the water couldn't run back into the river. They could use the water in the canals during dry seasons.

The people who lived along the Nile were called *Egyptians*. Early in Egypt's history, there were two Egyptian tribes who lived along the Nile. The Egyptians who lived in the north, in the Nile Delta, were called the "Lower Egyptians." The Egyptians who lived along the straight part of the river, further south, were called the "Upper Egyptians."

When you look at a map, "north" is usually at the top and "south" is usually at the bottom. So it might seem to you that the Nile Delta should be "Upper Egypt." After all, it's on the upper part of your map.

But the ancient Egyptians didn't think about the world in that way. The Nile River flowed from the mountains in the south, down to the delta in the north. So the ancient Egyptians thought about the southern part of their country, Upper Egypt, as "up the river," and the northern part, Lower Egypt, as "down the river." If you turn the map at the top of this page upside down, you'll see the world as the Egyptians did.

The Lower Egyptians were ruled by a king who wore a red crown, and the Upper Egyptians were ruled by a king who wore a white crown. Both kings wanted to rule over

all of Egypt. So for years, the White Crown King and the Red Crown King fought with each other, and the Upper Egyptians and the Lower Egyptians sailed up and down the Nile and fought with each other too.

Finally, the two kings fought one great battle to settle, once and for all, who would rule Egypt.

The Upper Egyptian king, the White Crown King, was named King Narmer. Around five thousand years ago, King Narmer defeated the Red Crown King and took his crown away. Then he put the red crown overtop of his own white crown and announced that he was the king of all Egypt.

From now on, the king of Egypt would wear the Double Crown of Egypt, which had a white spike at the center and a red band around the outside. This showed that he was the ruler of the entire country—both Upper and Lower!

Gods of Ancient Egypt

Now that the Egyptians were all part of one country, the king of Egypt became known as the *pharaoh*. He carried a shepherd's crook to show that he was supposed to lead and take care of all the Egyptian people, just like a shepherd takes care of and feeds his sheep. Soon, the Egyptians began to think that the pharaoh was actually a god. They believed that he was able to make the Nile

overflow its banks every year so that their crops could grow. The pharaoh got more and more powerful, because no one wanted to make a god angry!

The pharaoh wasn't the only god the Egyptians worshipped. Ra was the god of the sun. He was the chief god; other gods were part of his family. Osiris was the god who judged the dead and decided whether they had been good or bad. Isis was Osiris's wife, and the mother of Horus, who was the god of the sky.

Egyptian stories about the gods often tried to explain why the Nile overflowed every year. One Egyptian story, or *myth*, tells about Osiris and his brother, Set. Here's the myth of Osiris as an Egyptian child might have heard it from his mother, long ago.

> Once upon a time, the great god Osiris and his wife Isis were ruling over the whole land of Egypt. Osiris went on a trip around the world and left Isis in charge of the kingdom.
>
> But while he was gone, Osiris's evil brother Set decided that he wanted to be king. When Osiris came back from his trip, Set invited him to a great feast with all the other gods. "Dear brother," he said, "come to my house so that we can celebrate your safe return!"
>
> Isis was afraid that Set wanted to harm Osiris, but Osiris laughed at her fears. "He's my own brother!" he said. "Why would he want to hurt me?"
>
> So they went together to the feast. After all the gods had eaten until they were full, Set said, "Look

what I have found!" He brought out a beautiful coffin, all carved and decorated with gold and pictures. When the gods all admired it, Set said, "I will give this beautiful coffin to whichever god fits into it the best."

The gods didn't know that Set had ordered the coffin made so that it would only fit Osiris. One by one, they lay down in the coffin. But all of the gods were too large or too small—until Osiris got in, and found that the coffin fit him perfectly. Osiris was so pleased that he lay all the way down in the coffin. "Look!" he said. "I've won the coffin!"

But as soon as he lay down, Set slammed the coffin closed and threw it into the Nile, where it floated away. "Now I'm the king of the gods, because Osiris has drowned!" Set announced. He took over the throne and began to rule Egypt.

But Isis went on a long journey down the Nile to find the coffin. Finally she discovered it, caught in the reeds beside the Nile's bank. She opened it, but Osiris had drowned.

Isis sat down and wept and wept for grief. Even the Nile cried over the death of Osiris, so that the river ran dry and all the Egyptians were desperate for water.

Finally Isis wrapped Osiris's body in linen—so that he became the first mummy. But as soon as she wrapped him in linen, he came back to life again.

The whole earth was glad to see Osiris alive again! The Nile filled back up and overflowed

its banks, so that all the Egyptians had water to drink, and their crops began to grow again. And that's why the Nile overflows every year—because it remembers that Osiris came back to life.

Note: The Upper and Lower Kingdoms were united around 3000 BC/BCE. King Narmer is also known as King Menes.

Chapter Three
The First Writing

Hieroglyphs and Cuneiform

The Egyptians were among the earliest people to use writing.

Why do you think it's important to be able to write things down?

Suppose I write a message for you on a piece of paper and put it on the table. Then I leave the room. If you look at the paper, you'll know what I wanted to say to you—even though I'm nowhere around. That's one reason writing is important. Once the Egyptians learned to write things down, they could send messages from one part of their kingdom to another.

What if you found my message a year after I wrote it? You would still be able to "hear" my words—even though I had written them down long before. That's the second reason that writing is so important. The Egyptians could write down the important events that happened during their lifetimes, and leave them for their grandchildren and great-grandchildren to read.

The Egyptians used pictures to write with. We call these pictures *hieroglyphs*. The pictures stood for certain words. The Egyptians used to carve these hieroglyphs into stone tablets.

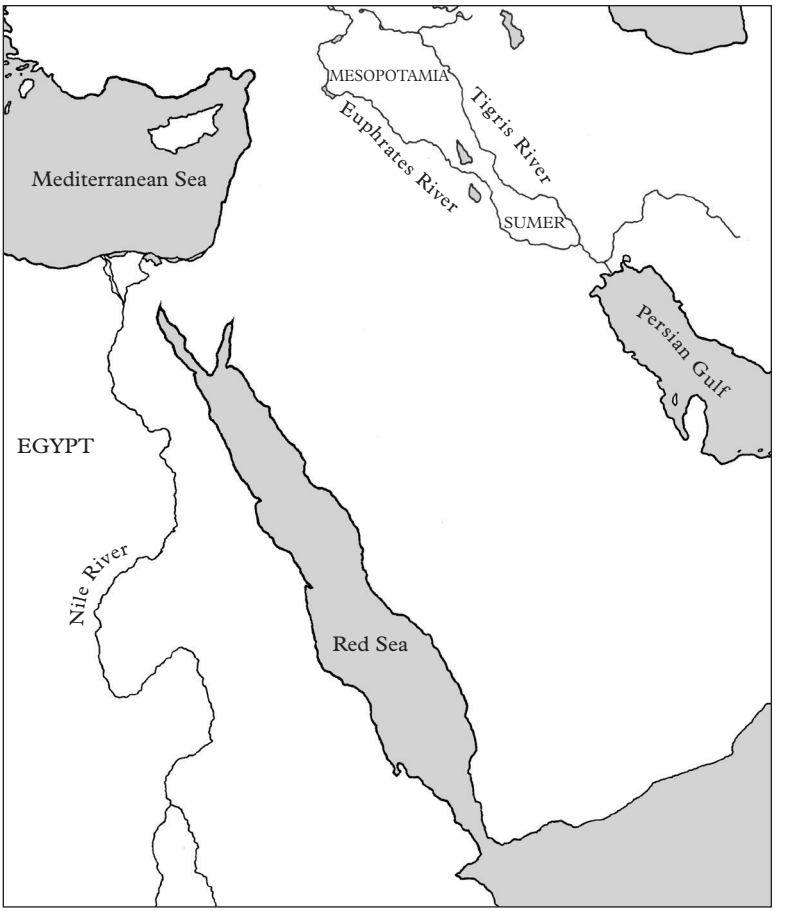
The stone tablets lasted for a very long time—but they were heavy to carry, and carving the pictures into stone took weeks of work.

Another country near Egypt had a better idea. They carved their pictures into tablets of wet clay instead.

This country was called Sumer. Sumer was in the Fertile Crescent, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The place between the rivers is called Mesopotamia. The word *Mesopotamia* means "between two rivers." Do you know what the word *hippopotamus* means? *Hippo* means "horse," and *potamus* means "river." A hippopotamus is a "river horse"! In Mesopotamia, we can see the word *potamus* again, only this time it has a different ending. *Potamia* means "rivers," and *meso* means "between."

The Sumerian picture writing was called *cuneiform*. Because the Sumerians lived between two rivers, they had plenty of damp clay. Instead of carving their cuneiform onto stone, they would mold this clay into square tablets. Then, while the clay was still wet, they would use a sharp knife or stick to make the cuneiform marks. After the message was carved into the clay, the Sumerians could either wipe it out and write another message (if the message was something unimportant, like a grocery list), or else bake the clay until it was hard. Then the message would last for a very long time.

Writing in clay is easier than carving stone. But even clay tablets can be heavy. And clay tablets are thick; if you want to store a whole lot of them, you need a lot of space—whole buildings full of rooms for even a small library.

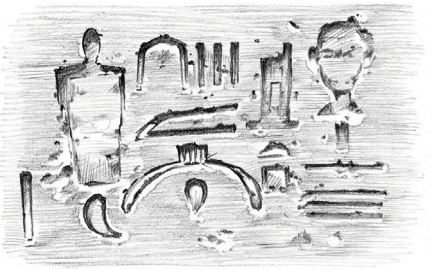


Mesopotamia and Egypt

After several hundred years, the Egyptians came up with an idea that was even better than clay. They learned how to make paper and ink.

Egyptian paper was made from reeds that grew along the banks of the Nile. The Egyptians learned how to soften the reeds, arrange them into crosswise layers, and then dry them into thin sheets. These sheets became

reed-paper, which we now call *papyrus*.



Egyptian Hieroglyphs

It was much easier to write on paper than on clay or stone. Paper was also easier to carry around; you could fold it up and put it into your pocket, or roll it up into a scroll. And paper took up less room. When they started using paper, the Egyptians thought they had found the best way to keep records.

But paper has a problem. When paper gets wet, the ink on it dissolves and the paper falls apart. And paper also starts to fall apart over time. The older paper gets, the more likely it is to crack up and turn into dust.

We know a lot about Egyptian history from the times that Egyptians wrote on stone, because those stone writings have lasted for centuries—from Egyptian days until now. We know a lot about Sumerian history too, because clay tablets last for a long time if they've been baked hard.

But we don't know a great deal about what happened in Egypt after the Egyptians started writing on paper, because in the thousands of years that have gone by, most of the paper writings of the Egyptians have crumbled and disappeared.

Note: The Sumerians and Egyptians used cuneiform from about 3200 BC/BCE, with Sumerian writing developing slightly earlier.

History-Maker

The Story of Mencius, The Greatest Follower of Confucius

About a hundred years after the death of Confucius, a baby boy was born on the eastern coast of China. His name was Meng-tzu, but we usually call him by the Latin form of his name: Mencius.

Mencius grew up in the little Chinese state called Zou, on the Shandong Peninsula. (Remember, a peninsula is a piece of land that juts out into a sea or ocean, so that it has water on three sides.) Zou wasn't one of the important

Mencius

Warring States—it was tiny and powerless, and Mencius's family wasn't wealthy or influential. And then, when he was only three years old, his father died.

His young mother had to move out of her husband's house—and decide how to raise her toddler son on her own. First, she settled down in a little house next to a cemetery. But after a year or two, she realized that while little Mencius was playing in the yard, he was imitating the funeral rituals that he saw people carrying out in the graveyard next door.

She didn't think this was a good way for a young boy to play! So she moved to an even smaller house, next to a marketplace. It didn't take long for her to realize that Mencius was now entertaining himself by pretending to be a salesman, shouting out to passersby to come and buy goods—just like the sellers in the marketplace.

So she moved for a third time, to a tiny house near a school. There, her growing boy started to copy the example of the teachers he saw every day. He began to read everything he could find, study with diligence, and learn about the world. Finally, Mencius's mother was content.

When Mencius was a young man, he began to study with Confucius's grandson, a teacher named Zisi. Mencius spent the rest of his life learning about Confucius's thoughts. He wrote down his own ideas, his conversations with other students and teachers, and many stories about his mother in a long book that was named after him. Centuries later, the book Mencius wrote would become one of the most widely read texts for students of Confucian thought. Mencius brought Confucius to future generations!

Mencius taught two very important ideas. The first was that people are essentially good. Mencius wrote that everyone is born with "sprouts of virtue" inside. Every

boy and girl can water and fertilize these sprouts of virtue by having a good attitude and trying hard to do the right thing. Then, the "sprouts" will grow up into full-grown flowers of virtue, and bring joy and gladness. To illustrate this idea, Mencius often told the story of his mother's choice to live next to a school. When young Mencius imitated the teachers he saw, he was watering his sprouts of virtue and becoming a better person.

Here is another story he told about these sprouts of virtue. "Imagine that a little boy falls into a well," he told his listeners. "Everyone who sees the child fall will rush over to the well and try to get him out. They don't do this because they want to please their neighbors, or make the parents happy, or because the child is bothering them by making too much noise. They try to get him out because of the sprouts of virtue inside them. They want to do the right thing!"

But in the time of the Warring States, many people seemed to be evil. They acted violently and selfishly. So not everyone agreed with Mencius that people are good.

His second idea was even less popular!

The Warring States were full of war leaders who called themselves kings. But Mencius taught that a king could only rule if the "Will of Heaven"—divine power—approved of him. The Will of Heaven didn't talk out loud, though. It didn't announce from the sky, "This is a good king!" Instead, to find out the Will of Heaven, you had to talk to the people in the ruler's kingdom. If they were happy, safe, had enough to eat and drink, and had good places to live, that proved that the king had the Will of Heaven on his side. But if they were poor and miserable, the Will of Heaven was not on the side of their king.

When that happened, Mencius believed that the people could remove the king from power and choose someone else who would actually carry out the Will of Heaven.

The kings of the Warring States hated this idea! They didn't want their power to be questioned by anyone. Mencius offered to become an adviser to several different Warring States—but all of the kings turned him down. They didn't want Mencius in their state, telling people that if they were wretched, they could rebel against their king.

So Mencius went back to the town where he grew up. When he died, he was buried there in a special place called the Forest Grove of the Second Sage.

Today, Mencius is remembered as one of the very first teachers to argue that kings and governments are supposed to serve their people—not the other way around!

Note: Mencius lived c. 372-289.

Chapter Twenty-Eight
Alexander the Great

Philip and His Son

If the Greek cities had stayed friends and allies, like they were when they fought against the Persians, Greece would have been a strong country. But instead, Sparta and Athens kept on quarreling. They were like sisters and brothers who were too busy arguing with each other to notice that a bully is coming.

In this case, the bully was a king named Philip, who ruled a country called Macedonia.

Philip noticed that Athens and Sparta had become weaker and weaker after years of battle. And so he came down into Greece with his army and conquered the Greek cities. They barely had enough energy to resist.

Now Philip ruled Macedonia and Greece. But he wanted even more cities. He wanted to sail across the Aegean Sea to Asia Minor and take over the Persian Empire as well. But before he could attack Persia, Philip died. And his son Alexander took over his throne.

Do you know what the name *Alexander* means? It means "protector of men." In the ancient world, you protected someone by ruling over them. Alexander became the most famous ruler of men ever. He was known by the whole world as "Alexander the Great."

Alexander had always been an unusual boy. Even as a child, he was strong and brave. Nothing scared him. Here is a story that the Macedonians told about Alexander's childhood:

When Alexander was still a small boy, he went with his father Philip to look at a warhorse that Philip wanted to buy. The horse, a huge black stallion named Bucephalus, bucked and kicked constantly. No one could ride him.

"He's too wild," King Philip said. "I don't want him. I would never be able to manage him."

"I can ride him!" Alexander said.

"Nonsense!" Philip said. "You're too little."

"But I can!" Alexander insisted.

"If you can ride him, I'll buy him for you," Philip promised.

Alexander had been watching Bucephalus carefully. He noticed the horse kicked and reared whenever the sun threw his shadow on the ground in front of him. Alexander thought that the huge stallion was frightened of his shadow. So he walked fearlessly up to the horse, took his bridle, and turned him so that he couldn't see his shadow.

Instantly, Bucephalus stood still. He allowed Alexander to mount him and ride him around.

So Philip bought the horse for Alexander. And when Alexander became king after his father's death, the great black stallion Bucephalus always carried him into battle.

We don't know if Alexander actually tamed Bucephalus when he was only a child—but we do know that he loved his warhorse. He even named a city after his horse. He called it Bucephela!

Alexander had many opportunities to ride that warhorse into battle. His father, Philip, had conquered Greece, but Alexander had even larger goals in mind.

He wanted to rule Persia.

The Persians had given up trying to conquer Greece, but their empire was still the largest in the world. It stretched all the way from Asia Minor to India. And Alexander wanted it. When Alexander met the Persian army in Asia Minor, he used his cavalry—soldiers riding on horseback—to push the Persians back.

Alexander and Bucephalus

Asia Minor was now his. But could he conquer the rest of the Persian Empire?

Here is another story that Alexander's men told about his conquests.

ONE DAY, riding across his newly conquered lands in Asia Minor, Alexander stopped at the city of Gordium. There, he saw something odd in the city's center—a chariot tied to its axle with a huge, complicated knot of rope, larger than a man's head.

"What is that?" he asked.

"That is the Gordian Knot," the people told him. "We have a legend about it. The man who loosens that knot will rule all the rest of Asia. But it is impossible to untie the knot. Hundreds of men have tried, and no one has ever succeeded!"

Alexander studied the knot carefully. Then he took out his sword and sliced the knot in half.

"There," he said. "I have loosened the knot."

No one had ever thought of doing that before. But the prophecy of the knot came true—Alexander conquered all the rest of Asia.

Whether or not Alexander did actually slice through the Gordian Knot, he *did* carry out the prophecy—and even more! He went south into Egypt and was crowned the pharaoh of Egypt. And then he came back up into Mesopotamia and took over the rest of the Persian Empire.

Now Alexander was king of more land than anyone else had ever ruled. He was truly "Alexander the Great"—the ruler of the largest empire the world had ever seen.

Alexander's Invasions

Once Alexander the Great arrived at the edge of the Persian Empire, he wanted to keep going. He wanted to conquer all of India.

Alexander's army began to invade India. Alexander learned how to use elephants in combat. And his soldiers won most of their battles.

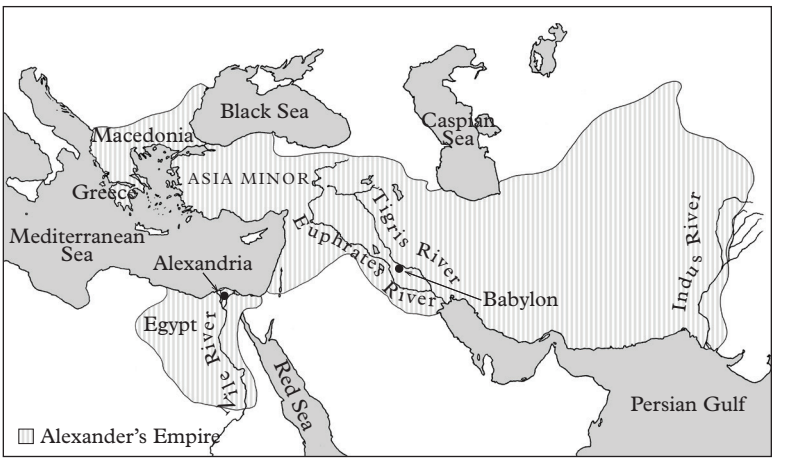
But the Indians who fought against Alexander were fierce warriors as well. Even though the soldiers from Macedonia won many battles, more and more of them died claiming these victories.

Finally, Alexander's army mutinied. After a particularly difficult battle, in which over a thousand soldiers were killed or badly wounded, the army refused to go any farther. "Be content with what you have!" they told Alexander. "We don't want to go on dying to make your empire bigger."

Alexander didn't want to stop. He stayed in his tent, sulking. He refused to see anyone, hoping that his army would change its mind.

But the men were firm: They would not fight in India any longer.

Finally Alexander agreed. He gave up trying to take over the rest of India. Instead, he put his energy into running the huge kingdom he already had.



The Empire of Alexander the Great

Alexander wanted the people of the future to remember what a great ruler he was. And he knew that cities last for years and years. So he built new cities all over his empire. He named many of these cities after himself: Alexandria. Some of these cities still stand today. Just as Alexander intended, they remind us that Alexander the Great was the greatest conqueror of ancient times—and ruled over the hugest empire that the world had ever seen.

The most famous city called Alexandria is in Egypt. This Alexandria was built near the Nile River and the Mediterranean Sea, so that merchants could reach it easily by ship.

Alexander himself marked out the city's walls, but he died before he could see any of the city's buildings. But after his death, Alexandria became the greatest city in the world. Many famous scholars and writers lived in Alexandria. It became a center for art, music, and learning. Today, Alexandria is still a big and important city.

Just outside Alexandria was the biggest lighthouse in the world. It was called the Pharos, and it was 330 feet tall. Ships could see it from miles away. They used its light to sail safely into the harbor of Alexandria.

Do you remember reading about the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World? These were seven amazing sights of ancient times. We learned that the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Great Pyramid, and the statue of Zeus at Olympia are three of the seven wonders. The Pharos is the fourth. No one had ever seen a lighthouse as large as this one.

The Pharos was destroyed long, long ago. No pictures of the Pharos survive from ancient times. But only a few

years ago, divers found huge chunks of stone at the bottom of Alexandria's harbor.

This stone may be all that is left of the Pharos.

The Death of Alexander

Alexander the Great became king when he was only twenty. Most people today haven't even finished college when they are twenty. But at this young age, Alexander inherited a throne and all the responsibilities of a ruler.

It only took Alexander eleven years to spread his empire all across the ancient world. One story tells us that when Alexander was still young, he burst into tears one day because there was no more of the world left to conquer. He had already seized it all.

What would Alexander the Great have done next?

We will never know, because Alexander died suddenly when he was only thirty-two. He was planning on taking an expedition with his army when he began to feel weak. He decided to wait a day or two until he felt better.

"Go ahead and make all the preparations," he told his generals. "We will go as soon as I recover from my sickness."

But that day never came.

Alexander got weaker and weaker. Finally, he was too weak to speak. His generals came to see him, but Alexander could only move his eyes. The next day, Alexander the Great died.

No one knows exactly why he died. Some people think he might have been poisoned by one of his generals who

wanted his power. Others say that he probably died of malaria—a fever caused by mosquitoes who carry certain kinds of germs. We will never know for sure.

Alexander's body was put into a glass coffin and taken back to the city of Alexandria. The coffin was placed into a stone sarcophagus, there in Alexandria.

Alexander's generals knew that no one else could keep control of Alexander's large empire. Only Alexander could manage to rule such a huge kingdom. So they divided it up.

One of the generals took Macedonia and the northern part of Alexander's kingdom in Asia Minor.

Another general, named Ptolemy I, took over Egypt. His family would rule Egypt for three hundred years. Ptolemy was responsible for finishing the city of Alexandria; he built a huge library in Alexandria and filled it with books.

A third general, named Seleucus, took over the southern part of Asia Minor and Alexander's lands in Asia, almost all the way over to India. The descendants of Seleucus were called the Seleucids, or the Syrians.

Now Alexander's great empire had become three separate kingdoms, with three kings fighting for power. Alexander had brought a very brief time of peace by uniting different cities and nations into one country. But that time of peace was over. Alexander's three generals and their descendants would spend the next hundred years fighting over control of different parts of Alexander's old kingdom.

Note: Philip conquered the Greek city-states in 338 BC/BCE. Alexander the Great ruled from 336–323 BC/BCE.

Asoka carved these ideas on stone monuments and pillars and set them up all around his empire. We can still read them today. He tried to reason with his subjects, rather than giving out strict, harsh commands. He tried to act kindly and mercifully to all his people. He had trees planted along the roads, so that travelers could walk in the shade. He built hospitals for sick people and for sick animals as well. He even made laws to keep people from being cruel to animals, and he became a vegetarian (someone who doesn't eat meat) so that no animals would be killed for his food.

Asoka became famous for his ideas and for his just, merciful rule.

The Jataka Tales

King Asoka gave up fighting and stopped eating meat because of the teachings of the Buddha. Many of these teachings are written down in one of India's most famous books. It has a very long name—the *Mahayana Tripitaka*.

This book contains all sorts of writings, but some of the best-known writings are called the Jataka Tales. According to legend, these tales were told by the Buddha to show the people of ancient India how to live. The stories explain that goodness, patience, mercy, honesty, and friendship will bring happiness.

One of these stories, called "The Hare," teaches that generosity will be rewarded. Here is how the story goes:

Once upon a time, a hare, an otter, a jackal, and a monkey lived together in a deep wood near a village. Through the deep wood wound a long, dark path. Many travelers walked along the path, traveling to the village on the forest's other side.

One night, the hare, the otter, the jackal, and the monkey sat together around their evening meal.

"Tomorrow is a special day in the village on the other side of the forest," the hare said. "We should be ready to give food to anyone who is traveling to the village. Let's be generous and give our best to any traveler who asks."

The otter, the jackal, and the monkey agreed. The next morning, the otter went out to the river nearby to hunt for food. Now, that same morning a fisherman had caught seven red fish and buried them in the damp sand to keep them fresh. Then he had gone off downstream to fish some more. The otter smelled the fish and dug them up. "Whose are these?" he asked, looking around. "I don't see anyone to claim them. I'll take them home and eat them myself."

The jackal went out to the edge of the village on the other side of the forest and sniffed around a poor man's hut. In the poor man's kitchen, he found two pieces of meat and a jar of milk.

"Well, I don't see anyone in this hut!" he said. "So I'll just take these home and eat them myself."

The monkey climbed up a forest tree and picked mangoes for himself. He scurried back

down the tree and hid the mangoes in his own bed. "Later," he said, "I'll eat these myself."

The hare went out into the field and started to pick grass. Grass was his favorite food. But then he stopped and thought, "A traveler will not want to eat grass! What else can I feed a hungry man who asks for food? I have nothing else! If someone begs me for a meal, I will offer myself for his dinner."

From up above, the god Sakka heard the hare's promise. "Can this be true?" he said to himself. "Will this hare really be so generous and unselfish as to give his own life? I will go down to the earth and see."

So Sakka disguised himself as a priest and went down to the earth. He walked along the forest path. Soon he saw the monkey.

"Monkey, monkey," he cried, "I am so hungry! Will you give me food?"

"I could share a mango or two," the monkey offered.

"Thank you," said Sakka. "I'll come back for it tomorrow."

Next he saw the jackal. "Jackal, jackal," he cried, "I am so hungry! Will you give me food?"

"Well," the jackal said, "you can have one of my pieces of meat, and a drink of my milk."

"Thank you," said Sakka, "I'll come back for it tomorrow."

A little further along the way, he saw the otter. "Otter, otter," he cried, "I am so hungry! Will you give me food?"

"You can have two or three of my fish," the otter suggested.

"Thank you," said Sakka. "I'll come back for it tomorrow."

Finally, Sakka met the hare. "Hare, hare," he said, "I am so hungry! Will you give me food?"

"All I have is myself," said the hare, "but you are welcome to eat me."

"But I am a follower of the Buddha!" Sakka objected. "I cannot kill an animal for food!"

"Then light a fire," the hare said, "and I will jump into it myself. Then I will be roasted for you to eat—and you won't have to kill me."

So Sakka built a fire. The hare shook himself, crouched down, and jumped into the flames. But although the fire licked at his fur, he felt no heat. "Why isn't this fire hot?" the hare asked. "It won't roast me so that you can eat!"

"Because I am no priest," Sakka said. "I am the god Sakka, come down to earth to see whether you would be as generous as you promised. Now, good and generous hare, live happily the rest of your life with my blessing."

And he made the hare a nest of soft grass and returned to his place in the sky. The hare lived happily ever after. When he died, Sakka drew his picture on the moon so that all could see it. Today, you can still see the picture of the hare on the surface of the moon!

Note: The Mauryan Empire lasted from 321–185 BC/BCE. Asoka ruled from 268–232 BC/BCE; the Mauryan Empire began to disintegrate after his death.

Chapter Thirty
The People of the Americas

The Nazca Drawings

We have been reading about the people who lived in Europe, Africa, and Asia. But over on the other side of the world, other ancient civilizations lived.

Like the people of ancient Africa, the people of the Americas didn't leave written records behind them. So we don't know as much about them as we know about the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Assyrians, and the Greeks.

But the people of the Americas did leave artifacts behind them—ancient buildings, ruined villages, and mysterious earth mounds.

If you put your finger on the Fertile Crescent again, and this time go *left* (remember, left is *west*), you'll go across the Mediterranean Sea and out into the Atlantic Ocean. And if you keep going across the Atlantic Ocean, you'll come to two *continents* (big masses of land) linked together in the middle by a narrower strip. These are the Americas. The top continent is called North America, and the bottom continent is called South America. We call the strip in the middle Central America.

South America has mountains all along one edge and flat, fertile land in the middle. Tribes of ancient people lived both in the mountains and down in the jungles of the flat lands.

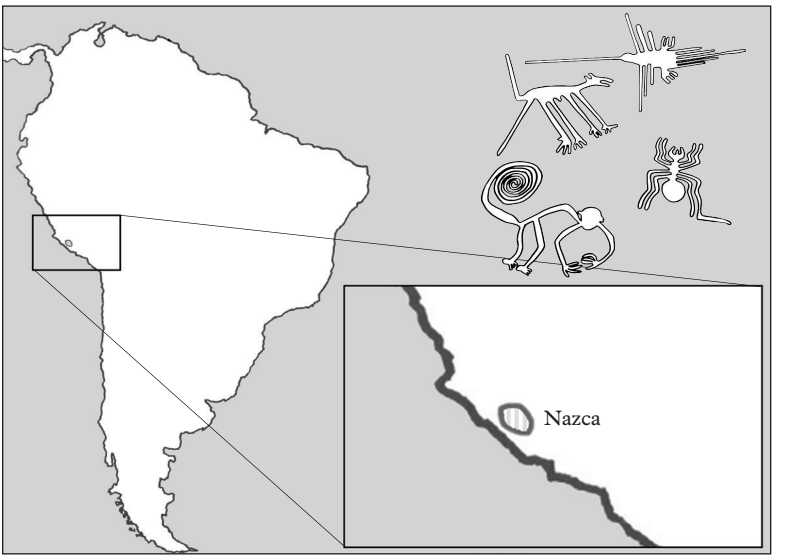
Like the people of ancient Mesopotamia, the people of ancient South America grew crops, kept animals, hunted, and caught fish. Just like the people of ancient Africa, they ate root vegetables every day. The African roots were known as yams, but South Americans grew a very similar root known as *cassava*. They learned how to dry the cassava roots and grind them up into a powder. They used this powder to make a kind of pudding that you may have eaten yourself—tapioca pudding. (If you haven't eaten it, ask your parents or your grandparents what it tastes like!)

One of these South American tribes was called the Nazca. They lived along the rivers of South America in a place that is now called Peru. The Nazca left behind them one of the strangest mysteries of ancient times.

More than two thousand years after the Nazca lived in South America, an airplane flew over Peru. The pilot looked down. He saw a drawing of a monkey—a drawing that covered hundreds of feet of ground. The lines of the drawing were scraped into the earth. From down on the ground, the drawings couldn't be seen. The lines just looked like old roads, or gashes in the ground. But from up in the air, those lines made pictures.

Soon, other fliers discovered more enormous pictures: a spider, a pelican almost one thousand feet tall, a hummingbird, and flowers. They also found spirals, squares, and other patterns carved into the ground. There were over a thousand line drawings and patterns there on the earth!

Because there is very little rain in the area where the Nazca drawings were made, the lines have lasted for over a thousand years. A highway was built across some of the drawings, and others have been damaged by cars driving



Nazca Line Drawings in South America

across them or by people scuffing at the lines with their feet. But many of the drawings are still intact. Look on this page for a map of the drawings. Can you tell what they are?

So how did the Nazca people make these drawings? After all, they couldn't fly. They couldn't get up in the air to see what their finished drawings looked like. Making a line drawing on the ground must have been like drawing with your eyes closed. Do you think you could draw these pictures with your eyes closed? It probably wouldn't look much like a bird when you were finished.

No one has been able to solve the mystery of the Nazca drawings. The best guess we can make is that the Nazca people were very good at mathematics. They could figure out how long each line should be, where it should turn, and where it should meet the next line through doing

History-Maker

The Story of Pliny the Younger, Survivor of Mount Vesuvius

In the seventh year of Nero's reign, a baby boy was born in a little town north of Rome.

He belonged to an important family; his grandfather was a Roman senator, and his uncle was a distinguished military commander who had written a best-selling encyclopedia of natural history. And he was given a long important name—Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus.

But his family called him Pliny. Because his famous uncle was also named Pliny, the child became known as Pliny the Younger.

Little Pliny's father died when he was still a very small boy, so his uncle Pliny the Elder helped raise him. Pliny the Younger was sent to the best schools. He grew up to become a lawyer and a judge. He held several high positions in the Roman government.

But what we remember the most about Pliny is that he wrote letters—hundreds and hundreds of letters!

Pliny wrote to kings and emperors. He wrote to other Roman officials, to friends and family, and to philosophers and historians that he admired. His letters tell us all about events in the Roman Empire—events that we would know nothing about, if it weren't for Pliny's letters.

One of those letters described something that happened when Pliny the Younger was only seventeen.

His uncle Pliny the Elder was commanding a fleet of ships off the southern coast of Italy. One summer, Pliny

the Younger traveled down to a seaside town called Miseno to visit with him. After they spent the afternoon together, Pliny the Elder went back to his ship for the night. Pliny the Younger finished his homework (in the letter, he says, "I completed my studies!"), had dinner, and went to bed.

During the night, Pliny the Younger kept waking up—because the ground was shaking. Loud rumblings and small earthquakes had been disturbing Miseno for weeks. But this was nothing new! Everyone in Miseno knew that the quivering earth and the odd growling noises came from Mount Vesuvius, just down the coast. Pliny could even see Mount Vesuvius, jutting up from the coast, if he walked out on the beach and peered to the east. Mount Vesuvius had been rumbling and shaking for many years. No one was worried about the noise and the quakes.

But this night was different.

Here is how Pliny the Younger described that night, twenty-six years later.

> *The ground had been shaking for many days. This happened all the time—and no one panicked! But during the night, the trembling grew much stronger. The ground began to rise and fall. When the sun rose the next morning, buildings had started to crumble. We were afraid that we would be trapped by falling walls, so we began to make our way out of Miseno.*
>
> *When we reached a flat open space outside of the town, we stopped to rest. But suddenly our carts began to move by themselves, even though we tried to block their wheels with stone. Just beyond, we could see the beach and the sea. The sea was being sucked backwards, leaving sea creatures writhing on the dry sand. Frightening*

The volcano Vesuvius destroyed Pompeii

dark clouds billowed up, pierced by twisted lightning. Below the clouds were huge plumes of flame.

And then a dense cloud swept towards us, like a flood of dirt poured across the land. Darkness came down over us—not like the dark of a moonless or cloudy night, but like the utter blackness of a closed and unlighted room. We could hear the voices of women weeping, children crying, men shouting. Some were calling for parents, others for children or their husbands or wives.

Then ash began to fall on us—a very great weight of ash. We stood up and shook the ash off again and again. Otherwise we would have been covered with it and crushed by the weight. I believed that I was perishing with the world, and the world with me.

Pliny and his friends kept trudging onwards, farther and farther away from the lava and the falling ash. Finally they reached safety.

Pliny had just seen the eruption of Mount Vesuvius—an active volcano that blew up in August of AD/CE 79. Most of the people of Miseno survived. But closer to Mount Vesuvius, the town of Pompeii was buried

Chapter Thirty-Nine
Troubles in China

The End of the Han Dynasty

The Han emperors had reigned over a unified China for many, many years. But while bad emperors ruled over Rome, China also began to suffer.

Famine wiped out crops in some parts of the vast Han Empire. Other villages and cities were drenched by violent storms; thousands drowned when dams broke and fields and houses were covered with water. Livestock died. Food dwindled. Scores of Chinese farmers had to leave their land and try to find somewhere else for their families. Hungry and desperate, many of them banded together to fight against their local governments. One Chinese historian wrote, "The poor had no way to stay alive. They rose up and became thieves and bandits instead!"

The Han emperors did their best to provide for their people. Throughout the first century AD/CE, the Han rulers tried hard to keep the peace, feed their subjects, and protect the Silk Road.

Slowly, the Han Empire began to recover.

But then, a strange thing happened. Children kept inheriting the throne!

When the Han emperor Zhangdi died, in AD/CE 88, his nine-year-old son inherited his title. This son died in his twenties, when *his* heir was only five months old. And

when *that* baby ruler died, his twelve-year old cousin became emperor!

This continued for many years. The next emperors were crowned at the ages of ten, one, seven, and fourteen. All of them died young. For over fifty years, the Han had a child as emperor!

You probably wouldn't be able to rule an entire huge kingdom all by yourself, without the help of any adults. Neither could the young Han emperors. They weren't really running their country. Their uncles, cousins, mothers, and aunts were ruling instead. And not all of those relatives were good people! Many of them were just trying to gain power and wealth for themselves. No one was paying attention to the well-being of the whole Han Empire. Instead, everyone was trying to gather as much land and steal as much tax money as possible.

Meanwhile, the many poor families of China had to work harder and harder to pay higher and higher taxes. Because trade along the Silk Road was so important, hundreds of young men were forced to join bands of soldiers who kept the Silk Road safe from thieves and highwaymen.

Then, more disasters swept over the country.

Horrible epidemics of sickness killed thousands and thousands of people. Floods wiped out more villages and still more farm animals. And then, a wave of locusts—grasshoppers that eat everything in their way—destroyed even more of the crops that the Chinese needed to survive.

The people of Han China were weak, hungry, and hopeless. So in AD/CE 184, a band of warriors who called themselves the Yellow Turbans declared that they were ready to fight back!

History-Maker

The Story of Zhang Heng, Astronomer, Poet, Mathematician, Geographer, and More

In the years when children were inheriting the Han throne, a young boy named Zhang Heng was growing up in the north of China.

His father had died when he was only ten, so Zhang Heng had been raised by his mother and his grandmother. Even though he loved them, he wanted to go to Chang'an, one of the greatest cities of the Han.

Zhang Heng longed to learn about everything in the world. He wanted to study poetry and philosophy, the stars and the moon and the sun, the way the earth worked, mathematics, painting, and more. And he knew that the Han dynasty had built a huge college in their capital city. It was called the Taixue. Students came from all over China to study at the Taixue in Chang'an. There, they could read all the great books of the past and learn about the most recent discoveries in math and science. The Taixue had thirty thousand students and teachers! It was like a whole city in itself, all dedicated to learning.

So when Zhang Heng was only sixteen years old, his mother and his grandmother packed him a suitcase, gave him a bag of food and all the money they could spare, and sent him to Chang'an.

Young Heng dove into his studies at the Taixue. He wrote poems and painted pictures. He read scores of books and argued with his friends about the ideas in

those books. He studied mathematics. He peered at the heavens and wrote down his observations. He listened to lectures by all of the most accomplished scientists and philosophers at the Taixue.

After five wonderful years of study, Zhang Heng returned home to his mother and grandmother. They were delighted to see him! And they were even happier when Zhang Heng got a job with the local governor of his hometown. His title was Master of the Documents. He was supposed to write all of the official inscriptions and announcements for the governor. He also had to write all of the poems to be performed at official events.

This suited Zhang Heng just fine! He loved writing. He spent many long evenings writing poems that used elaborate, flowery language to praise the rivers and mountains, the villages and cities, and even the trees, birds, and animals of Han China. These poems were called *fu* poems.

Here are a few lines of one of Zhang Heng's *fu* poems about the capital city of Chang'an, the home of the emperor:

> *Fine embroidery of green and gold drape over polished wooden beams.*
> *Blue and scarlet kingfisher feathers,*
> *along with scales of purple amethyst and gold mica,*
> *glitter in the fire,*
> *with shining drops of jade and glowing coral and chalcedony,*
> *all the walls are glorious!*

Zhang Heng wrote many *fu* poems on hundreds of different subjects. But as he grew a little older, he grew more and more interested in astronomy.

He observed the stars and drew pictures of their positions. He studied the mathematics that explained how the stars moved. He read everything about astronomy that he could find. He began to write and publish his own observations on the skies.

More and more people read Zhang Heng's writings. Soon, Zhang Heng was known throughout the Han Empire as one of the greatest students of the stars. And he received a message from the Han emperor: Please, return to the capital and share with the royal court all of your knowledge about the stars.

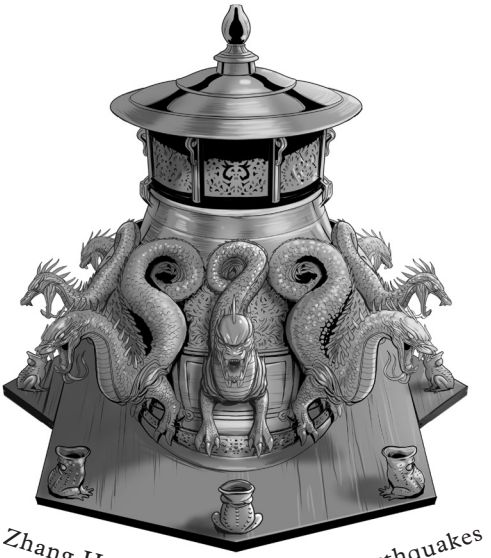
Zhang Heng decided to go back to Chang'an.

When he arrived, he was appointed Chief Astronomer for the emperor. As Chief Astronomer, Zhang Heng had seventy people working with him to help him study the skies. He listed out 2,500 stars and 124 constellations that could be viewed from the Han lands. He tried to explain the existence of comets, and why the planets give light.

And he was one of the first scientists to propose that the earth might be round like a ball, rather than flat and square. He wrote, "The heavens are like a hen's egg. The earth is like the yolk of the egg, and lies alone in the center. Heaven is large and earth is small!"

Zhang Heng even built an elaborate bronze *armillary sphere*—a model of the earth with the planets and stars around it. Some of the accounts from his time say that this armillary sphere was powered by water, so that the planets and stars actually moved around the earth!

But Zhang Heng had very many other interests as well. He invented an instrument that could detect earthquakes, even those that happened far away. We don't know exactly how this instrument, called a *seismoscope*, worked, but



Zhang Heng's device detected earthquakes

one account says that it was a bronze sphere with eight dragon heads in a circle around the top. Each dragon head represented a different part of the country, and each one had a copper ball in its mouth. When the ground shook, one of the balls would fall out of one of the dragon mouths and be caught by a bronze frog below. Scientists could tell, from which dragon mouth dropped the ball, where the earthquake had occurred!

Zhang Heng also invented a new kind of clock that could keep better time, using dripping water. He drew new, more accurate maps of the Han lands that showed exactly how far apart different cities were. He came up with a new device that could keep track of how many miles a chariot had been driven (an *odometer*). He learned how to paint on silk. And he kept on writing poetry!

Zhang Heng spent his entire life inventing and finding out. Today, we often call people like Zhang Heng

polymaths. This word comes from two different Greek words: *poly*, which means "much" or "many," and *mathes*, which means "having learned." A polymath is able to learn many different things about many different subjects.

Even though Zhang Heng was offered several more important government positions after he became Chief Astronomer, he turned them down. He wanted to use his time to study the natural world—to keep on being a polymath. When he died, his friend Cui Yuan wrote these words on his tombstone:

He solved the riddles of the heavens.
He exhausted the mysteries of the earth.
His talents and his arts
made him seem like a son of the gods.

Note: Zhang Heng lived AD/CE 78-139. His name is also anglicized as Chang Heng.

Latin, the language of the Romans. And the barbarians had begun to learn Roman ways and Roman customs.

But the Roman Empire itself was gone forever.

Over in the Eastern Roman Empire (which we now call the Byzantine Empire), people mourned. Rome had been a great and beautiful city, but now it was in ruins. As long as an emperor still ruled, there was hope that Rome might be great again. But now the last Roman emperor, a little boy not too much older than you are, had lost his throne.

Rome would never again rule the world.

The Gifts of Rome

The Roman emperor is long gone, and the Roman Empire disappeared long, long ago.

But the Romans gave us words and inventions that we use every single day.

You're using one of them right now! How many books do you have in your house? How often do you use a book?

The Romans were the first people to use books with pages. They figured out how to sew pages together along one side so that you can turn the pages and read both the front and back of each one. Before the Romans, people used *scrolls*—long, long pieces of paper or animal skin, that you had to unroll to read and roll back up whenever you were finished. Can you imagine reading a scroll in bed? Or in the car? Every time you read a book, you're using a Roman invention.

The words you're reading came from the Romans too. We use the Roman alphabet to write our words. Whenever you sing the alphabet song or write a word, you are using the letters that the Romans used.

Do you know the twelve months of the year? Most of those months have Roman names. *January* is named after the Roman god Janus. *March* is named after Mars, the god of war. *June* is named after Juno, the most important Roman goddess. *July* and *August* are both named after Roman heroes: July is named after Julius Caesar, the famous Roman general, and August is named after Augustus, Rome's first emperor.

Do you like to go swimming in the summer? If so, thank the Romans. The Romans built big bathtubs, big enough for twenty or thirty people to wash in at once. These bathtubs were the first swimming pools.

If you look at a United States penny, you'll see that it has the picture of a head on it. The portrait is of Abraham Lincoln, one of the greatest presidents of the United States. The Romans liked to put pictures of their emperors on their coins. Today, we put pictures of our leaders on coins—copying the Romans.

Now look at a dime. On one side of the dime, you can see some tiny words: *E pluribus unum*. Those words are in Latin, the language that the ancient Romans spoke. They mean "Out of many, one." This means that America has many different states in it, but all of the states are united together into one country. The Romans gave us these words to write on our coins.

We live on the planet Earth, but there are seven other planets in our solar system: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune. Most of our planets have Roman names. They are named after Roman gods and goddesses. Jupiter was the king of the gods. He was a big, important god, and Jupiter is a very big planet. Mars is named after the god of war; Mercury is named after the messenger of

the gods, and Venus is named after the goddess of love and beauty. Saturn is Jupiter's father, and Neptune is the god of the sea. Only one planet, Uranus, is named after a Greek god.

Finally, even our words come from Rome! The English language borrowed many, many words from Latin, the language of the Romans. Can you figure out what English words come from these Latin words?

The *frigidarium* was the room where Roman bathers jumped into very cold water. What word sounds like *frigidarium* and keeps things cold? The refrigerator!

A Roman child lived in a *familia* with his mother, father, sisters, and brothers. What is a *familia*? A family.

The Latin word for book was *liber*. What word sounds like *liber* and is a place where books are kept? A library.

In Latin, a ship is a *navis*. Do you know what word comes from *navis*? It means "many ships that sail together." That's right—navy.

Have you ever written "P.S." at the end of a letter? If so, you've used Latin words. "P.S." stands for the Latin words "*post scriptum*," or "after the writing." A "P.S." goes *after* the main *writing* of the letter.

In Rome, a *floris* was a beautiful plant that smelled good. Can you think of a beautiful plant that smells good and sounds like *floris*? Our word "flower" comes from the Latin *floris*.

Even though the ancient Roman Empire is gone, we use the words, inventions, and ideas of the Romans all the time. So, in a way, Rome will never completely disappear. The gifts that the Romans gave to us are still with us today.

Note: Romulus Augustus ruled AD/CE 475–476.

Appendix One
A Chronology of Ancient Times

BC/BCE Dates in Volume 1

(AD/CE dates start on page 391)

9000 BC/BCE	Nomads roam the Fertile Crescent
8000	Stone walls built at Jericho
3500	Climate changes in the Sahara
3000	King Narmer unites Upper and Lower Kingdoms of Egypt
3000–2100	Era of the Old Kingdom of Egypt
3000–1200	Gilgamesh Myth composed
2690	Huang Di rules China
2550	Great Pyramid built (burial place of Cheops)
2334	Sargon becomes king of the city-state of Kish
2200–1450	Peak of Minoan civilization
2040–1720	Middle Kingdom of Egypt
2000–1750	Harappan civilization is at its peak strength
1980–1926	Amenemhet becomes pharaoh of Egypt
1792	Hammurabi inherits the throne of Babylon
1766	T'ang becomes King of China
1766–1122	Shang Dynasty rules
1750	Exodus of Indus Valley
1567	Ahmose expels Hyksos from Egypt
1524	Thutmose I becomes pharaoh

Appendix Two
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A Listing of Maps in Volume 1

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Appendix Three
Pronouncing the Names of Ancient Times

A Pronunciation Guide to the People, Places, and Events in Volume 1

Notes on pronunciation:
1. Chinese pronunciation uses certain diphthongs that do not exist in English. They are represented here by two sounds connected by a hyphen. When these hyphenated sounds appear, they should be pronounced together smoothly as one syllable, not as two.

2. This guide occasionally uses more common, well-known pronunciations--the ones that the child is much more likely to encounter in subsequent life and reading--instead of more technically "correct" ones; for instance, Julius Caesar is rendered here as *JOO lee us SEE zer* instead of the (probably) more accurate *YOO lee oos KAI zar*. This pronunciation guide is meant to help you read the text aloud, not to cover all scholarly disagreements about the pronunciation of ancient names.

Abram. . . . . AY bram
Adad-Nirari . . . . . ah DAHD neh RAHR ee
Aegeus . . . . . EE jus or EE jee us
Aesop . . . . . EE sop
Ahmose . . . . . AH mos
Ajatashatru . . . . . ah juh tuh SHUH troo
Akhenaten . . . . . ah ken AH ten
Akkad . . . . . AH kad
Akkadia . . . . . ah KAY dee uh
Alaric . . . . . ah LAR ic

Alcibiades ..... al sih BYE uh deez
Amaterasu ..... ah MA teh RA suh
Amenemhet ..... AH men EM het
Amenhotep ..... AH men HO tep
Amun-Ra ..... AH men RAH
Amun ..... AH men
Amytis ..... uh MYE tis
Anansi ..... ah NAN see
Antiochus Epiphanes ... ann TIE uh kuss eh PIFF ah neez
Anu ..... AY noo
Anubis ..... uh NOO bis
Aphrodite ..... A fro DITE ee or AH fro DITE ee
Appian ..... AP ee un
Ariadne ..... AIR ree ADD nee
Ashurbanipal ..... ash ur BAN ih pal
Asia Minor ..... AY zhuh MY nor
Asoka ..... uh SO kuh
Assur ..... AH sur
Assyria ..... uh SEE ree uh
Astyges ..... uh STIE jeez or uh STEE uh jeez
Aten ..... AH tun
Athena ..... ath EE nuh
Attila the Hun ..... uh TILL uh the HUN
Augustus Caesar ..... uh GUS tus SEE zer
Baekje ..... behk jeh
Belshazzar ..... bel SHAZ er
Bhagiratha ..... bah gih RAH thuh
Bimbisara ..... BIM bee ser uh
Boadicea ..... BO uh dih SEE uh

brahmin	BRAH min
Brutus	BROOT us
Bucephalus	byoo SEH fuh lus or byoo SHE fuh lus
Caesar	SEE zer
Caligula	kuh LIG yoo luh
canopic	kuh NO pick or kuh NAW pick
CaoWei	tsow way ("ow" should be pronounced as in "crowd")
Capua	KAH poo ah
Carthage	CAR thij
Carthaginian	CAR thuh JIN ee un
Cassius	CASS ee us
Ceres	SEER eez
Chang Chueh	JONG joo-EH
Chang'an	CHONG AHN
chanyu	CHON yoo
Cheops	KEE ops
Cincinnatus	sin sih NAH tus
Claudius Pulcher	CLAW dee us PULL kair
Cleopatra	clee o PAT ruh
Confucius	con FYU shis
Constantinople	CON stan tih NO pul
CuiYuan	TSWAY yoo-en
Cyclops	SIE clops
Cyrus	SIE rus
Diocletian	DIE o CLEE shun
Diodorus	die oh DOR uhs
DongWu	DOHNG woo ("OH" should be pronounced as in "Oh my!")

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