

## PART TWO

# SECOND-WAVE CIVILIZATIONS IN WORLD HISTORY

600 B.C.E.–600 C.E.



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**Chapter 3.** State and Empire in Eurasia/North Africa, 600 B.C.E.–600 C.E.

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**Chapter 6.** Commonalities and Variations: Africa, the Americas, and Pacific Oceania,  
600 B.C.E.–1200 C.E.

## THE BIG PICTURE

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### AFTER THE FIRST CIVILIZATIONS: WHAT CHANGED AND WHAT DIDN'T?

Studying world history has much in common with using the zoom lens of a camera. Sometimes, we pull the lens back to get a picture of the broadest possible panorama. At other times, we zoom in a bit for a middle-range shot, or even farther for a close-up of some particular feature of the historical landscape. Students of world history soon become comfortable with moving back and forth among these several perspectives.

As we bid farewell to the First Civilizations, we will take the opportunity to pull back the lens and look broadly, and briefly, at the entire age of agricultural civilizations, a period from about 3500 B.C.E., when the earliest of the First Civilizations arose, to about 1750 C.E., when the first Industrial Revolution launched a new and distinctively modern phase of world history. During these more than 5,000 years, the most prominent large-scale trend was the globalization of civilization as this new form of human community increasingly spread across the planet, encompassing more people and larger territories.

The first wave of that process, addressed in Chapter 2, was already global in scope, with expressions in Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Those First Civilizations generated the most impressive and powerful human societies created thus far, but they proved fragile and vulnerable as well. The always-quarreling city-states of ancient Mesopotamia had long ago been absorbed into the larger empires of Babylon and Assyria. By the middle of the second millennium B.C.E., the Indus Valley, Central Asian, and Norte Chico civilizations had collapsed or faded away. Egypt too fell victim to a series of foreign invaders during the first millennium B.C.E., including the forces of Nubia, Assyria, Alexander the Great, and the Roman Empire. The end of Olmec civilization around 400 B.C.E. has long puzzled historians, for it seems that the Olmecs themselves razed and then abandoned their major cities even as their civilizational style spread to neighboring peoples. About the same time, China's Zhou dynasty kingdom fragmented into a series of competing states.

Even though these First Civilizations broke down, there was no going back. Civilization as a form of human community proved durable and resilient as well as periodically fragile. Thus, in the millennium between 600 B.C.E. and 600 C.E., new or enlarged urban-centered and state-based societies emerged to replace the First Civilizations in the Mediterranean basin, the Middle East, India,

#### AP® EXAM TIP

The historical events in Part Two make up 15 percent of the AP® World History exam.

China, Mesoamerica, and the Andes. Furthermore, smaller expressions of civilization began to take shape elsewhere—in Ethiopia and West Africa, in Japan and Indonesia, in Vietnam and Cambodia. In short, the development of civilization was becoming a global process.

Many of these second-wave civilizations likewise perished, as the collapse of the Roman Empire, Han dynasty China, and the Maya cities reminds us. They were followed by yet a third wave of civilizations, from roughly 600 to 1450 C.E. (see Part Three). Some of them represented the persistence or renewal of older patterns, as in the case of China, for example, while elsewhere—such as in Western Europe, Russia, Japan, and West Africa—newer civilizations emerged, all of which borrowed heavily from their more-established neighbors. The largest of these, Islamic civilization, incorporated a number of older centers of civilization, Egypt and Mesopotamia, for example, under the umbrella of a new religion. Thus the globalization of civilization continued apace. So too did the interaction of civilizations with one another and with the gathering and hunting peoples, agricultural village societies, and pastoral communities who were their neighbors.

### *Continuities in Civilization*

As this account of the human journey moves into the second and third waves of civilization, the question arises as to how they differed from the first ones. From a panoramic perspective, the answer is “not much.” States and empires rose, expanded, and collapsed with a tiresome regularity. It is arguable, however, that little fundamental change occurred amid these constant fluctuations. Monarchs continued to rule most of the new civilizations; women remained subordinate to men in all of them; a sharp divide between the elite and everyone else persisted almost everywhere, as did the practice of slavery.

Furthermore, no technological or economic breakthrough occurred to create new kinds of human societies as the Agricultural Revolution had done earlier or as the Industrial Revolution would do much later. Landowning elites had little incentive to innovate, for they benefited enormously from simply expropriating the surplus that peasant farmers produced. Nor would peasants have any reason to invest much effort in creating new forms of production when they knew full well that any gains they might generate would be seized by their social superiors. Merchants, who often were risk takers, might have spawned innovations, but they usually were dominated by powerful states and were viewed with suspicion and condescension by more prestigious social groups.

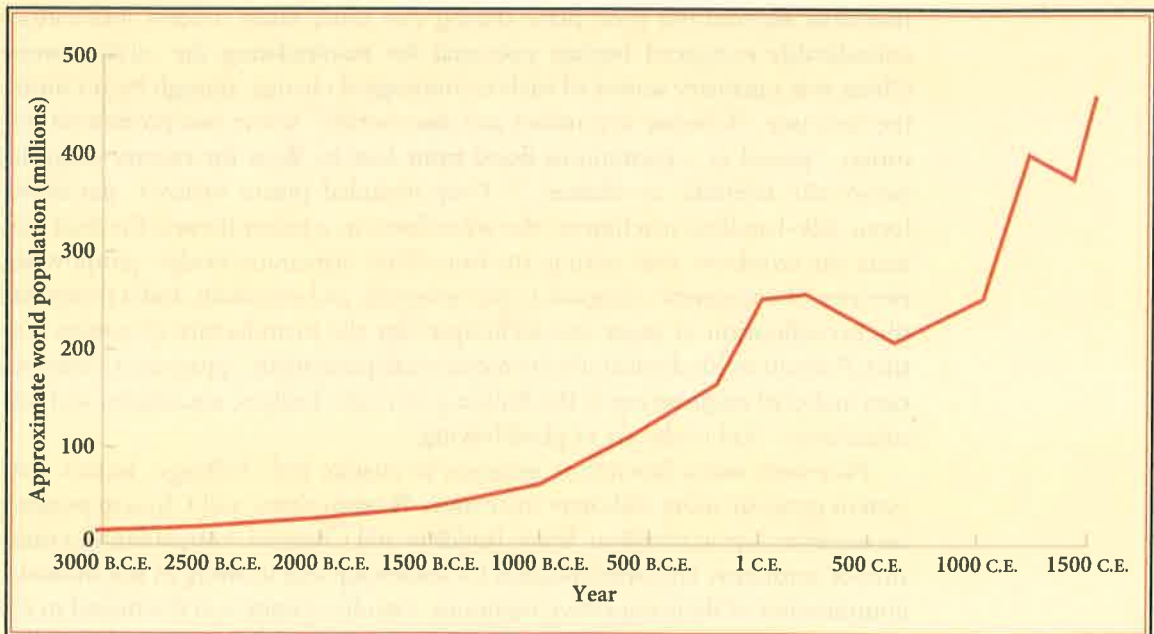
Many fluctuations, repetitive cycles, and minor changes characterize this long era of agricultural civilization, but no fundamental or revolutionary transformation of social or economic life took place. The major turning points in human history had occurred earlier with the emergence of agriculture and the birth of the First Civilizations and would occur later with the breakthrough of industrialization.

## Changes in Civilization

While this panoramic perspective allows us to see the broadest outlines of the human journey, it also obscures much of great importance that took place during the second and third waves of the age of agrarian civilization. If we zoom in a bit more closely, significant changes emerge, even if they did not result in a thorough transformation of human life. Population, for example, grew more rapidly than ever before during this period, as the Snapshot illustrates. Even though the overall trend was up, important fluctuations interrupted the pattern, especially during the first millennium C.E., when little overall growth took place. Moreover, the rate of growth, though rapid in comparison with Paleolithic times, was quite slow if we measure it against the explosive expansion of recent centuries, when human numbers quadrupled in the twentieth century alone. This modest and interrupted pattern of population growth during the age of agrarian civilization reflected the absence of any fundamental economic breakthrough, which could have supported much larger numbers.

Another change lies in the growing size of the states or empires that structured civilizations. The Roman, Persian, Indian, and Chinese empires of second-wave civilizations, as well as the Arab, Mongol, and Inca empires of the third wave, all dwarfed the city-states of Mesopotamia and the Egypt of the pharaohs. Each of these empires brought together in a single political system a vast diversity

### SNAPSHOT World Population during the Age of Agricultural Civilization<sup>1</sup>



of peoples. Even so, just to keep things in perspective, as late as the seventeenth century C.E., only one-third of the world's landmass was under the control of any state-based system, although these societies now encompassed a considerable majority of the world's people.

The rise and fall of these empires likewise represented very consequential changes to the people who experienced them. In the course of its growth, the Roman Empire utterly destroyed the city of Carthage in North Africa, with the conquerors allegedly sowing the ground with salt so that nothing would ever grow there again. Similar bloodshed and destruction accompanied the creation of other much-celebrated states. Their collapse also had a dramatic impact on the lives of their people. Scholars have estimated that the large population of Maya civilization shrank by some 85 percent in less than a century as that society dissolved around 840 C.E. It is difficult to imagine the sense of trauma and bewilderment associated with a collapse of this magnitude.

Second- and third-wave civilizations also generated important innovations in many spheres. Those in the cultural realm have been perhaps the most widespread and enduring. Distinctive “wisdom traditions”—the great philosophical/religious systems of Confucianism and Daoism in China; Hinduism and Buddhism in India; Greek rationalism in the Mediterranean; and Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam in the Middle East—have provided the moral and spiritual framework within which most of the world's peoples have sought to order their lives and define their relationship to the mysteries of life and death. All of these philosophical and religious systems are the product of second- and third-wave civilizations.

Although no technological breakthrough equivalent to the Agricultural or Industrial Revolution took place during this time, more modest innovations considerably enhanced human potential for manipulating the environment. China was a primary source of such technological change, though by no means the only one. “Chinese inventions and discoveries,” wrote one prominent historian, “passed in a continuous flood from East to West for twenty centuries before the scientific revolution.”<sup>2</sup> They included piston bellows, the drawloom, silk-handling machinery, the wheelbarrow, a better harness for draft animals, the crossbow, iron casting, the iron-chain suspension bridge, gunpowder, firearms, the magnetic compass, paper, printing, and porcelain. India pioneered the crystallization of sugar and techniques for the manufacture of cotton textiles. Roman technological achievements were particularly apparent in construction and civil engineering—the building of roads, bridges, aqueducts, and fortifications—and in the art of glassblowing.

Nor were social hierarchies immune to change and challenge. India's caste system grew far more elaborate over time. Roman slaves and Chinese peasants on occasion rose in rebellion. Some Buddhist and Christian women found a measure of autonomy and opportunities for leadership and learning in the monastic communities of their respective traditions. Gender systems too fluctuated in the

intensity with which women were subordinated to men. Generally women were less restricted in the initial phase of a civilization's development and during times of disruption, while patriarchy limited women more sharply as a civilization matured and stabilized.

A further process of change following the end of the First Civilizations lay in the emergence of far more elaborate, widespread, and dense networks of communication and exchange that connected many of the world's peoples to one another. Many of the technologies mentioned here diffused widely across large areas, as did the religious and cultural traditions of second- and third-wave civilizations. Long-distance trade routes represented another form of transregional interaction. Caravan trade across northern Eurasia, seaborne commerce within the Indian Ocean basin, the exchange of goods across the Sahara, river-based commerce in the eastern woodlands of North America, various trading networks radiating from Mesoamerica—all of these carried goods, and sometimes disease, technology, culture, and religion as well. In the early centuries of the Common Era, for example, Southeast Asia attracted distant merchants and some settlers from both China and India, bringing Confucianism, Hinduism, and Buddhism to various parts of that vast region. Disease also increasingly linked distant human communities. According to the famous Greek historian Thucydides, a mysterious plague "from parts of Ethiopia above Egypt" descended on Athens in 430 B.C.E., decimating the city.<sup>3</sup>

In all of these ways, the world became quite different from what it had been in the age of the First Civilizations, even though fundamental economic and social patterns had not substantially changed.

The first three chapters of Part Two focus in a thematic fashion on the Eurasian / North African civilizations of the second-wave era (600 B.C.E.–600 C.E.), which hosted the vast majority of the world's population, some 80 percent or more. Chapter 3 introduces them by examining and comparing their political frameworks and especially the empires (great or terrible, depending on your point of view) that took shape in most of them. Far more enduring than their empires were the cultural or religious traditions that second-wave civilizations generated. These are examined, also comparatively, in Chapter 4. The social life of these civilizations, expressed in class, caste, slavery, and gender relationships, also varied considerably, as Chapter 5 spells out. In Chapter 6, the historical spotlight turns to inner Africa, the Americas, and Pacific Oceania during the second-wave era, asking whether their histories paralleled Eurasian patterns or explored alternative possibilities.

In recalling this second-wave phase of the human journey, we will have occasion to compare the experiences of its various peoples, to note their remarkable achievements, to lament the tragedies that befell them and the suffering to which they gave rise, and to ponder their continuing power to fascinate us still.

# Landmarks in World History (ca. 600 B.C.E.–ca. 600 C.E.)

700 B.C.E.

600 B.C.E.

500 B.C.E.

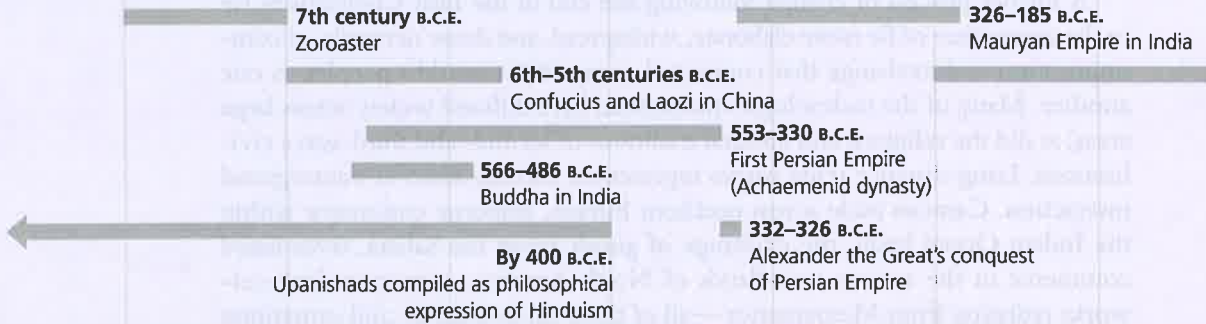
400 B.C.E.

300 B.C.E.

200 B.C.E.

100 B.C.E.

## ASIA



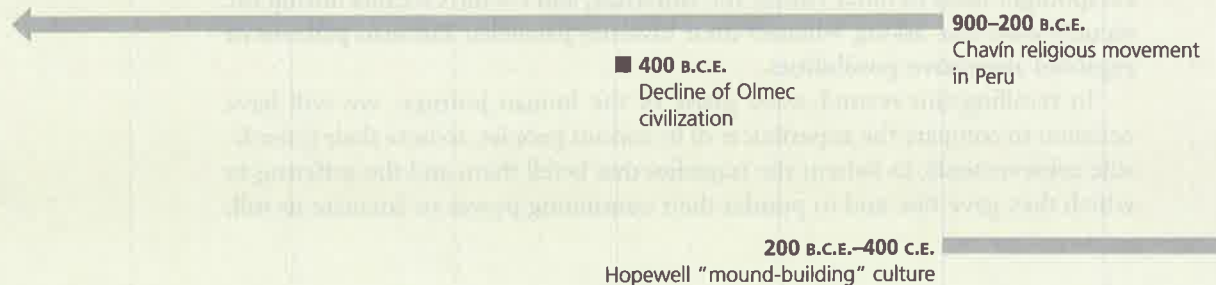
## EUROPE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN



## AFRICA



## THE AMERICAS



1 C.E.

100 C.E.

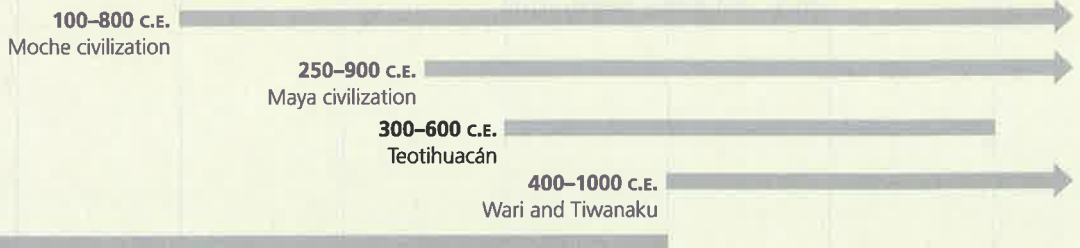
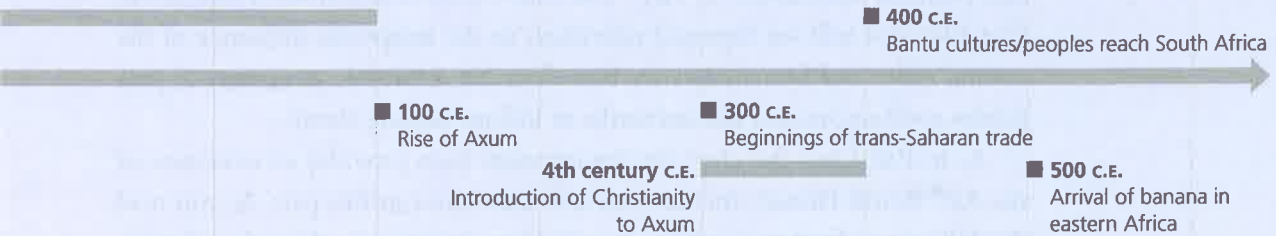
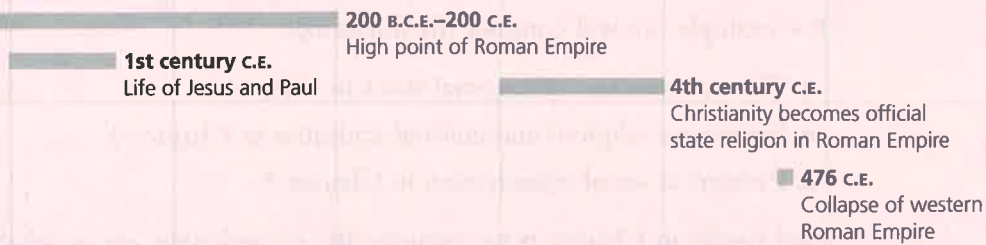
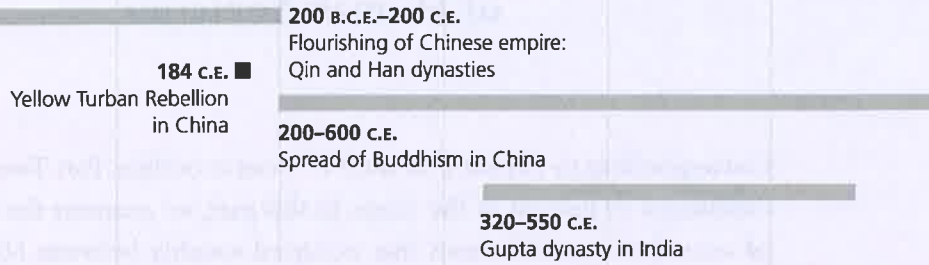
200 C.E.

300 C.E.

400 C.E.

500 C.E.

600 C.E.





# UNDERSTANDING AP® THEMES IN PART TWO

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## Organization and Reorganization of Human Societies

Corresponding to Period 2 of the AP® course outline, Part Two of this text constitutes 15 percent of the exam. In this part, we examine the millennium of second-wave civilizations that occurred roughly between 600 B.C.E. and 600 C.E. We will explore first the major civilizations of Eurasia and North Africa (Chinese, Indian, Persian, and Mediterranean) using a thematic approach. For example, we will consider the following:

- The construction of imperial states in Chapter 3
- Prominent religious and cultural traditions in Chapter 4
- Patterns of social organization in Chapter 5

And finally, in Chapter 6 we examine the second-wave era in sub-Saharan Africa, the Americas, and Pacific Oceania, with special emphasis on social and political alternatives to city- and state-based civilizations. Throughout Part Two, you will see repeated references to the reciprocal influence of the natural order and human activity as well as the economic structures of particular civilizations and the networks of linkage among them.

As in Part One, the chart on the opposite page provides an overview of the AP® World History themes you will encounter in this part. As you read the following chapters, continue to pay close attention to these five themes. Also watch for AP® Exam Tips throughout the text to assist in your coursework and exam preparation.

Environment	Cultures	State Building	Economies	Social Structures
Greek geography and environmental effects of Greek civilization	Cross-cultural perceptions in the ancient world	Eurasian empires of the second-wave era	Persian commercial networks and agricultural systems	Empires and the definition of masculinity
Environmental effects of Roman and Chinese civilizations	Chinese cultural traditions: Legalist, Confucian, Daoist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Persian</li> <li>■ Greek (Alexander)</li> <li>■ Roman: from republic to empire</li> <li>■ Chinese empires (Qin and Han)</li> <li>■ Indian empires (Mauryan and Gupta)</li> </ul>	Chinese agriculture, metallurgy, and landowning patterns	Class in China
African landscapes and environmental limitations of agriculture	Evolution of Indian religious thought	City-states: Greek, Niger Valley, Maya, Teotihuacán	Economic condition of Chinese peasants	Caste in India
Environmental diversity in Mesoamerica and the Andes	Birth and spread of Buddhism	Greco-Persian Wars	Merchants and state authorities in China	Class and citizenship in Athens
Maya environmental engineering	Artistic representations of the Buddha	Peloponnesian Wars	Economic functions of caste in India	Slavery in the Roman world
Ecological degradation: its role in the collapse of Maya civilization and the Roman Empire	The Greek intellectual tradition and the spread of Greek culture in the Hellenistic era	Vietnamese resistance to China	Indian commercial and cultural network in the Indian Ocean region	Patriarchy
"Verticality" in Wari and Tiwanaku	Greco-Roman cultural synthesis and the attractions of Roman culture	Chinese relationships with northern "barbarians"	Slave labor systems in the Roman world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Evolution in China and Roman world</li> <li>■ Athens/Sparta comparison</li> <li>■ Variations in Oceania</li> </ul>
Geography and continental variation	Art and architecture in Pompeii	Slave rebellion in the Roman Empire	Pastoralism in Afro-Eurasia and its absence in the Americas	Cities without states in West Africa
Iron making and deforestation in Meroë	Cultural interaction in the Kushan Empire	Meroitic and Axumite empires	Economic specialization in the Niger Valley	Female rulers in Meroë
The environment of Pacific Oceania and human impact on it	Monotheisms of the Middle East: Judaism and Zoroastrianism	Wari and Tiwanaku states	Axumite trade relationships	Urban life in Teotihuacán
Ecological collapse in Rapa Nui	The rise and spread of Christianity	Chiefdoms in Bantu Africa, the Americas, and Oceania	Patterns of economic and cultural exchange in North America	Social variation among Bantu-speaking peoples
	Chavin religious movement		Wari and Tiwanaku agriculture compared	Social differences in Oceania
	Moche art		Ritualized economic exchange in Oceania	
	Spread of Bantu culture			
	<i>Mana</i> and <i>tapu</i> in Oceania			