

## B.C.

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### 2,000,000 B.C.–50,001 B.C.

✱ *Homo erectus*, an early species of humans, began to appear in Asia (by ca. 1,800,000 B.C.–ca. 60,000 B.C.). The earliest-dated modern finds were at Trinil (1891–1892), in Java, with later Javanese discoveries at Modjokerto (1936) and Sangiran (near Trinil; 1941). Many other *Homo erectus* sites have since been found, including those in China at Zhoukoudian (Chou-k'ou-tien; 1927–1937) and several other sites.

Modern humans (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) were living in the Near East, as indicated by the archaeological finds at Qafzeh Cave, in Israel (ca. 90,000 B.C.).

### 50,000 B.C.–30,001 B.C.

Bull-roarer (thunderstick or whizzer) was in use as a ritual musical instrument in many Paleolithic Asian societies, as well as in many other societies throughout the world (by ca. 50,000 B.C.).

Modern humans appeared in southeast Asia by 50,000 B.C. and possibly somewhat earlier (ca. 60,000 B.C.–ca. 50,000 B.C.).

Modern humans lived on New Guinea by no later than 40,000 B.C., with settlements on the Huon Peninsula.

✱ Earliest known artworks include a considerable variety of small carvings (*mobilier*, or portable art), found widely in Asia, Europe, and Africa (ca. 35,000 B.C.). Among them were the “Venus figurines,” small statues of faceless pregnant women, with greatly exaggerated breasts and buttocks. Many have taken them to signify the existence of early goddess worship and fertility cults. Venus figurines found in Asia include those in Siberia (ca. 21,000 B.C.–ca. 19,000 B.C.).

Human settlements appeared in Australia by no later than 35,000 B.C., and quite possibly as early as 60,000 B.C.–45,000 B.C. Some so-far-disputed estimates place the beginning of human habitation in Australia as early as 80,000 B.C.

Hunter-gatherers who hunted mammoths, reindeer, and other animals on the central Asian steppe created very early art objects in animal-bone engravings, as indicated by the archaeological finds at Malaya Siya, near Lake Baikal (ca. 32,000 B.C.).

Tasmania, the island south of what is now the Australian mainland, had been settled by people crossing an Ice Age land bridge from Australia (by ca. 31,000 B.C.).

### 30,000 B.C.–20,001 B.C.

Humans had appeared in the Bismarck Archipelago, off New Guinea (by 30,000 B.C.).

Human settlements appeared on the Solomon Islands, in the Pacific Ocean east of New Guinea, by no later than ca. 28,000 B.C.

## 30,000 B.C.–20,001 B.C.

Venus figurines dated as early as 21,000 B.C. appeared in Siberia (ca. 21,000 B.C.–ca. 19,000 B.C.).

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## 20,000 B.C.–10,001 B.C.

Cave paintings were made at Koonalda Cave, Australia, possibly ca. 20,000 B.C., though with some continuing dispute as to that dating.

Hunter-gatherers spread through northern Asia, as did their distinctive bone engravings (ca. 20,000 B.C.). Humans may have reached northeast Asia by then, though some date settlement there to as late as 15,000 B.C.

Microblades and micropoints small enough to be used together in complex tools appeared in Eurasia (by ca. 18,000 B.C.).

Red ocher and flint were quarried at Koonalda Cave, Australia (ca. 18,000 B.C.).

With a rise in eastern Indian Ocean and adjacent southern Pacific sea levels, New Guinea became separated from Australia, and Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, and many other islands were separated from Asia, creating the Indonesian archipelago (ca. 15,000 B.C.–ca. 8000 B.C.).

As interglacial sea levels rose, Tasmania was separated from the Australian mainland (ca. 15,000 B.C.). The island's people then experienced a separate course of development.

Cave paintings were made at Cape York, Australia, part of a substantial number of Native Australian (Aboriginal) artworks found in many sheltered places throughout the continent (ca. 13,500 B.C.). Some Australian cave paintings have been very tentatively dated as early as 30,000 B.C.

Among the early "proto-languages" spoken in Asia may have been Nostratic (a forerunner of the Indo-European group), Altaic, Elamo-Dravidian, Uralic-Yukaghir, Korean, Semitic, Japanese, Sino-Tibetan, Eskimo-Aleut, Indo-Pacific, and Austric (ca. 12,000 B.C.).

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## 10,000 B.C.–8001 B.C.

Instruments used in many Asian cultures of the Upper Paleolithic were rattles, scrapers, whistles, the didjeridu (an indigenous Australian wind instrument), stamping tubes, drums, musical bows, flutes, panpipes, and conches (by ca. 10,000 B.C.).

Sun-dried bricks, without mortar, were used to build dwellings in Jericho, on the west side of the Jordan River, in the disputed area now known as the West Bank (ca. 10,000 B.C.).

Settlements began to appear in East Asia, as the climate warmed (ca. 10,000 B.C.). When farming began is a matter of controversy, some placing it as early as 10,000 B.C., while others place it in the 8000 B.C.–7000 B.C. range, probably starting with millet in northern China. During this period, several kinds of animals were domesticated, among them pigs, chickens, and dogs, and decorated pottery began to appear (ca. 9000 B.C.).

Dogs may have been domesticated in southwest Asia as early as 10,000 B.C.

Pottery appeared in Japan, in its earliest stages in the form of appliqué ware (ca. 10,000 B.C.).



## 7000 B.C.–6001 B.C.

Cloth was being woven in Anatolia (Turkey), as indicated by finds at the Çatal Hüyük archaeological site (ca. 7000 B.C.–ca. 6400 B.C.).

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## 6000 B.C.–5001 B.C.

Burial practices in Jericho included the creation of plaster “portraits” on the skulls of the dead, as well as burying nearly life-sized human figures with the dead (before 6000 B.C.).

Pottery appeared in Korea (ca. 6000 B.C.), originally appliqué ware, which was then replaced by Korea’s distinctively marked Chulman pottery.

Irrigation appeared in Mesopotamia (Iraq), so named because it lay between two rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris (by ca. 6000 B.C.).

Copper was smelted in the Near East as early as 6000 B.C.

Copper was being cast in Anatolia (Turkey) (ca. 6000 B.C.).

Bricks made in molds and then sun-dried were being made in Anatolia (Turkey) (ca. 6000 B.C.).

Wine was being made in Mesopotamia (Iraq) (ca. 6000 B.C.).

Peaches were being grown in China (ca. 6000 B.C.).

Bread wheat was being cultivated in the Near East by at least 6000 B.C.

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## 5000 B.C.–4001 B.C.

City-state of Ur was established in southern Mesopotamia (Iraq) (by 5000 B.C.). Ur, Uruk, and other city-states were established by the Sumerians, a people who may have migrated from the Anatolian plateau.

Indo-European language family appeared in southwestern Asia (ca. 5000 B.C.). The precursor of scores of languages, it would ultimately spread to India and much of Europe.

Yang-shao cultures flourished in China’s Yellow River (Huang Ho; Huang He) basin (ca. 5000 B.C.–ca. 3000 B.C.). A farming culture based on millet, as well as the domestication of pigs and dogs, it was later identified as a group of closely related cultures largely by its painted pottery.

Reed houses were in use in Mesopotamia (Iraq), in the Euphrates River delta (ca. 5000 B.C.).

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## 4000 B.C.–3001 B.C.

Copper ornaments were being produced and were widely found in southwest Asia (before 4000 B.C.).



Earliest White Temple, so named for its whitewashed sides, was built at Uruk (ca. 4000 B.C.). It stood on a high platform, an early ziggurat, a tower built of successively smaller mud-brick cubes, or stories, topped by the temple itself, and demonstrated that Sumerians were familiar with columns, domes, arches, and vaults. The entire structure, through many successive reconstructions, would reach a height of 43 feet by 3000 B.C.

Uniquely designed seals were used as “signatures” in Mesopotamia (Iraq). They would be part of the basis of developing written languages (by 4000 B.C.).

Indo-European languages had split into a dozen branches (by 4000 B.C.); those that continued to be spoken as local and regional languages in Asia in later times include Armenian, Iranian, and Indic, the forerunners of many other Asian languages.

Pottery kiln had been developed in Mesopotamia (Iraq) (by ca. 4000 B.C.).

Plow was being used in Mesopotamia (Iraq) (ca. 4000 B.C.).

In Sumer, gold was being smelted, largely for ornamental and artistic uses (ca. 4000 B.C.).

Austronesian peoples began moving south from Taiwan, traversing the Philippines and then occupying the Indonesian archipelago, from there moving out through the South Pacific (ca. 4000 B.C.–ca. 2000 B.C.).

Rice was being cultivated in Thailand (ca. 4000 B.C.).

Among the many musical instruments played in Mesopotamia (Iraq) were zithers, harps, drums, flutes, bells, and cymbals (ca. 3500 B.C.).

✱ Wheeled carts, often pulled by oxen, appeared in Mesopotamia (Iraq) (ca. 3500 B.C.). They had solid wheels and were heavy and hard to pull. Some archaeologists believe the wheel was originally developed earlier by peoples on the Eurasian steppe.

Potter's wheel was in use in Mesopotamia (Iraq) (ca. 3500 B.C.).

In Mesopotamia (Iraq), some bricks were being made in kilns, although most bricks were still sun-dried (ca. 3500 B.C.).

Rice was cultivated on Taiwan (ca. 3500 B.C.).

✱ In Sumer, a written language developed (ca. 3400 B.C.–3100 B.C.), which would spread the idea of writing throughout the Near East. It was made up of standardized symbols—actually abstracted pictographs—composed of different arrangements of wedge (*cuneus*) shapes, and so was called *cuneiform*. Writing instruments with sharp, wedge-shaped points were used to incise the symbols in wet clay. Early writing was done in vertical lines, but Sumerians and many others soon began to write in horizontal lines.

✱ Several great civilizations began to develop in the immense arc that includes Mesopotamia, the eastern Mediterranean, and the Indus River valley, in what archaeologists called the Bronze Age (from ca. 3400 B.C.). Despite the name, tools, weapons, and other artifacts made of bronze (an alloy of copper and tin) appeared only gradually in these regions, over the coming centuries.

In Elam, in southwestern Iran, a geometric-style script was developed (ca. 3200 B.C.).

Trading center existed at Troy, an intersection between Asia and Europe on Turkey's Aegean coast, three miles south of the Dardanelles (ca. 3000 B.C.). A major city by 2500 B.C., Troy would become the semilegendary site of Homer's Trojan War (ca. 1200 B.C.), as related in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (ca. 800 B.C.).

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### 3000 B.C.–2751 B.C.

Funerary and other painted pottery was being produced in Japan (by ca. 3000 B.C.).

✱ In cuneiform writing, pictographs were gradually transformed into syllables expressed as symbols, a central event in the development of that written language (by ca. 3000 B.C.). Collections of clay tablets carrying cuneiform writing soon became common in Mesopotamia (Iraq).



## 3000 B.C.–2751 B.C.

Two-wheeled chariots were used in Mesopotamia (Iraq), perhaps first in Sumer (ca. 3000 B.C.). Wooden rims were sometimes added, for greater strength.

Mainland Asians moved south through Malaysia into the Indonesian archipelago (ca. 3000 B.C.–ca. 2000 B.C.).

Reed boats and ploughs were used in Mesopotamia (Iraq) (ca. 3000 B.C.).

Cotton was being grown in India (ca. 3000 B.C.).

Uruk developed into the largest city in Sumer—and probably the world (ca. 2900 B.C.).

Longshan culture developed in north China's Yellow River valley (ca. 2900 B.C.–ca. 1500 B.C.). Artifacts found there include large quantities of distinctive black pottery, jade carvings, and late in the period, bronze castings.

Sumerian script, by then widely adopted in Mesopotamia (Iraq), spread throughout southwest Asia with some modifications (after ca. 2800 B.C.).

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## 2750 B.C.–2501 B.C.

Tyre was founded in Phoenicia (ca. 2750 B.C.), in what is now Lebanon. It would become a substantial seaport from ca. 2000 B.C. Phoenician colonists from Tyre would found the north African city of Carthage in the ninth century B.C.

✧ Lei Zi (Lei Tzu), the chief wife of Emperor Huang Di (Huang Ti), has been credited with having introduced silkworm cultivation and silk weaving to China (traditional date 2697 B.C.). Popularly known as Si Ling-chi (Lady of the Silkworm), she was said to have discovered silk by casually pulling apart a silkworm's cocoon in her mulberry garden. Although silk, along with jade, may have been traded on the Silk Road as early as 2000 B.C., China would keep silkmaking a state secret for many centuries, until the fifth century A.D., when silkworms and the methods of producing silk began spreading westward.

✧ Huang Di (Huang Ti; the Yellow Emperor), the legendary Chinese emperor, was later credited by Taoists with having been the founder of China (traditional date 2697 B.C.). He was also credited with having introduced many new artifacts and skills, among them the bow and arrow, writing, mathematical calculations, money, the compass, and ox carts. He was traditionally described as having come out of central Asia, "from the West."

Chinese emperor Huang Di (Huang Ti) reportedly sent Ling Lun to the western mountains for bamboo pipes to simulate the call of the phoenix (traditional date 2697 B.C.). The legend suggests that by this period pipes were in use in China.

Gilgamesh ruled the Sumerian city-state of Uruk (r. ca. 2675 B.C.); he would become the semilegendary hero of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (ca. 2500 B.C.–ca. 1400 B.C.).

Instruments played in Mesopotamia include arched harps, lyres, and divergent reed pipes (by 2600 B.C.).

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## 2500 B.C.–2251 B.C.

Ur-Nanshe founded the First Dynasty of Lagash, in Sumer (ca. 2500 B.C.). His dynasty would produce some of the earliest known historical documents.

Sumerian king Mesanni-Padda founded the First Dynasty of Ur (ca. 2500 B.C.). His royal tombs would be excavated in A.D. 1922.

War chariots were in widespread use in Mesopotamia (Iraq), usually carrying a charioteer (driver) and an armed fighter (ca. 2500 B.C.).

Professional dancers performed before royal courts in India and China (by ca. 2500 B.C.).

Chinese artists began working in jade (ca. 2500 B.C.). Much of China's jade supply would come from central Asia, often via the Silk Road.

Sumerian artists created limestone sculptures of rounded figures, often in repose, as with folded hands (ca. 2500 B.C.).

*Epic of Gilgamesh* (ca. 2500 B.C.–ca. 1400 B.C.), ancient Sumerian poetic cycle, was written. Its demigod hero was probably based on Gilgamesh, ruler of the Sumerian city-state of Uruk (ca. 2675 B.C.).

Writing appeared in the Indus Valley (Harappan) civilization; possibly a forerunner of later Indian writing (ca. 2500 B.C.–ca. 1700 B.C.).

In China and in the Indus Valley civilization of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, bronze was being widely used, for weapons and a wide variety of other artifacts (ca. 2500 B.C.).

Worked copper artifacts appeared in China (ca. 2500 B.C.). Whether copper was also smelted remains conjectural.

Tin was being smelted at Goltepe and other Anatolian sites (ca. 2500 B.C.).

Potter's turntables were in use in China (ca. 2500 B.C.).

Widespread Indus Valley (Harappan) civilization flourished, its centers being the cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro (ca. 2500 B.C.–ca. 1700 B.C.), in what is now Pakistan. An extensive farming and commercial culture, it would develop trade links as far away as Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Egypt. Its best-known surviving artworks are its small, varied, and very highly regarded seals, largely worked in animal figures.

Dromedary (one-humped) camel was domesticated in southern Arabia by ca. 2500 B.C., possibly as early as 3000 B.C.

Standard weights and measures were introduced in Sumer (ca. 2500 B.C.).

Bitumen, a petroleum derivative, was being used as a waterproofing material and also as one of the ingredients of a kind of cement in Mesopotamia (ca. 2400 B.C.).

Lugalzaggisi of Ur (r. ca. 2375 B.C.–ca. 2350 B.C.) created the temporarily unified Sumerian empire in Mesopotamia (Iraq), including parts of Syria and Anatolia (Turkey).

Sargon of Akkad (r. ca. 2340 B.C.–ca. 2315 B.C.) defeated Uruk (2334 B.C.). He would also conquer much or all of Sumer and establish an Akkadian empire extending beyond Mesopotamia (Iraq), into Anatolia (Turkey) and as far as the Mediterranean coast.

Korean state was founded by Tan'gun, a semidivine being, according to myth and legend (traditional date 2333 B.C.).

Enheduanna (active ca. 2300 B.C.), daughter of Assyrian king Sargon of Akkad, was the moon-priestess of Inanna-Ishtar. She was also a poet, and the earliest writer of either sex whose name and work have survived.

Indo-European speakers north of the Black Sea and farther east on the Eurasian steppe had probably domesticated the horse (by ca. 2300 B.C.).



## 2500 B.C.–2251 B.C.

Chinese five-note scale was set and each note given “social value” during the reign of semilegendary Emperor Shun (traditional dates r. 2255 B.C.–2206 B.C.). In the same period, musical instruments were divided into eight classes; the five-stringed zither and panpipes were also said to have been invented.

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## 2250 B.C.–2001 B.C.

Sargon of Akkad’s empire dissolved under the impact of successful invasions from the east (2250 B.C.). The Sumerian city-states resumed their separate identities, though continuing to vie for supremacy.

Legendary Chinese Hsia (Xia) dynasty (ca. 2205 B.C.–ca. 1722 B.C.) was said to have been founded by Emperor Yu, its first ruler.

New musical system (Ta-Hia) was reportedly developed during the reign of Emperor Yu (2205 B.C.–2198 B.C.).

Dagger later found at Alaca Hüyük, in Anatolia (Turkey), became the earliest known iron weapon (ca. 2200 B.C.).

Great Ziggurat at Ur was completed (ca. 2200 B.C.). With staircases ascending to the top, it was among the finest, largest, and best-preserved of Mesopotamian ziggurats.

Ur-Nammu, the first king of Ur’s Third Dynasty, published the earliest known Mesopotamian legal code, the *Code of Ur-Nammu* (ca. 2100 B.C.).

Chinese military began using chariots (ca. 2100 B.C.), at first as command posts and later as major and often decisive weapons of war.

Babylonian astronomers recorded a solar eclipse (ca. 2094 B.C.), one of the earliest such eclipse sightings that can be dated.

Elamite invaders from the east sacked Ur and destroyed the Sumerian empire (2006 B.C.).

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## 2000 B.C.–1751 B.C.



Indo-European-speaking peoples, probably originating from homelands north of the Black Sea, began a wave of migrations and successful invasions that would sharply change the ethnic and linguistic composition of Eurasia (ca. 2000 B.C.). Striking from the north, and fighting from horses and chariots, some Indo-European speakers began a series of invasions of Iran, while others swung farther south, into India. Hittites won control of northern and central Anatolia (Turkey), moving south and east in the Middle East. Greeks, Celts, Cimmerians, Slavs, Balts, and many other Indo-European-speaking peoples would later move into Europe.

As Amorite desert peoples migrated out of Arabia into Mesopotamia (Iraq), Ur fell, ending Ur’s Third Dynasty (ca. 2000 B.C.). Amorites founded the First (Old) Babylonian Empire, its central cities being Larsa and Isin.



Chariots, initially two-wheeled carts, began to be used as weapons of war in central Asia, becoming lighter and faster when spokes were introduced, replacing earlier heavy, solid wheels. Central Asian armies also developed the compound bow, capable of being used to great effect from moving horses and chariots. Their

horses, chariots, and weapons made them highly mobile and successful raiders and conquerors (ca. 2000 B.C.).

Terah, a Chaldean whose sons included Abraham, migrated west through Mesopotamia (Iraq), all the way to Canaan, in southern Palestine (ca. 2000 B.C.). Three major religions would later celebrate the journey: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Vessel rattles, frame drums, angular harps, and long lutes were being played in Mesopotamia (Iraq) (ca. 2000 B.C.).

Writing skills spread in Mesopotamia (Iraq), as schools for scribes were opened (ca. 2000 B.C.).

In Mesopotamia (Iraq), solid wheels gave way to wheels with spokes, and copper began to replace wood in some wheel rims (ca. 2000 B.C.).

Worked iron artifacts appeared in western Asia (ca. 2000 B.C.), but iron was not yet being smelted there. Iron may have been mined from meteor deposits.

Central Asian artisans worked in copper, bronze, and gold, as more advanced metal-working techniques became widespread (by ca. 2000 B.C.).

Standardized Sumerian weights and measures added several categories (ca. 2000 B.C.), among them the cubit, foot, log, and homer, which were combined with the earlier shekel and mina.

First known pharmacopeia was completed, at Ur, in Sumer (ca. 2000 B.C.).

Bronze was widely used in Syria and Palestine (ca. 2000 B.C.).

Bactrian (two-humped) camel was domesticated in Iran (by ca. 2000 B.C.).

Indian Ocean coastal trade between Sumer and the developing Indus Valley civilization flourished, from Melukkha (probably in India) to Dilmun (probably Bahrain) and southern Mesopotamia (Iraq) (ca. 2000 B.C.).

Lipit-Ishtar (r. ca. 1934 B.C.–ca. 1924 B.C.), the ruler of Isin, in Babylonia, issued the *Code of Lipit-Ishtar* (ca. 1930 B.C.), a codification of laws that resembled the earlier Sumerian *Code of Ur-Nammu* (ca. 2100 B.C.).

Oldest known load-bearing true arch was built at Ashkelon, in Israel (ca. 1900 B.C.).

Hyksos (“shepherd-kings”) raiders from southwest Asia made the first known foreign invasion of Egypt (ca. 1800 B.C.), using bronze weapons and horse-drawn chariots.

Balance scales were being used in Mesopotamia (ca. 1800 B.C.).

Jute was being grown in India (ca. 1800 B.C.).

✱ Hammurabi, who was to become a world historic figure, became king of Babylon (r. 1792 B.C.–1750 B.C.). He embarked on a series of alliances and conquests that by the end of his reign had developed the city-state of Babylon into an empire that ruled much of Mesopotamia (Iraq). His great achievement, however, was the *Code of Hammurabi* (ca. 1790 B.C.), which systematized his legal decisions, thereby setting down the body of law that had developed in his society since Sumer. The text of his code was inscribed on a stone shaft (*stela*), and placed in Babylon’s Temple of Marduk.

Hammurabi took Mari, on the Euphrates River in southern Mesopotamia (in what is now modern Syria), sacking the city and burning its massive royal palace and



## 2000 B.C.–1751 B.C.

much of the rest of the city (ca. 1760 B.C.). French archaeologists, originally led by André Parrot, would begin excavations at Mari in 1933.

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### 1750 B.C.–1501 B.C.

✧ China's Shang dynasty (1722 B.C.–1027 B.C.) succeeded the Hsia dynasty. From the 14th to 11th centuries B.C., the Shang capital would be Anyang, where the Shang royal tombs would later be discovered (1927).

✧ North Semitic alphabet, consisting of 30 letters or signs, was invented and used on the eastern Mediterranean coast, largely in Phoenicia and Canaan (ca. 1700 B.C.–ca. 1500 B.C.). The world's first alphabet, it was the model on which most other future alphabets were based. In Phoenicia, it would later be replaced by the 22-letter Phoenician alphabet (ca. 1100 B.C.).

Babylonians seem to have worked on solving basic equations (ca. 1700 B.C.), laying the basis for later algebra.

Rice was cultivated in the Philippines (ca. 1700 B.C.).

Hittite forces led by King Mursilas I (r. ca. 1620 B.C.–ca. 1590 B.C.) invaded Babylonia, taking and sacking Babylon, and ending the Old Babylonian Empire. Kassites, who had been moving into the region in the same period, took control of Babylonia, founding the Babylonian Kassite dynasty (1595 B.C.–ca. 1155 B.C.).

Egyptian forces conquered Palestine and Syria, as far as the Euphrates River, during the reign of Amenhotep I (r. ca. 1546 B.C.–ca. 1526 B.C.) and his son-in-law and successor, Thutmose I (r. ca. 1526 B.C.–ca. 1512 B.C.).

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### 1500 B.C.–1401 B.C.

Weapons-grade iron was being produced on the Anatolian plateau, and iron weapons were developed, probably first by the Mitanni people in iron-rich Armenia, as the Iron Age dawned (ca. 1500 B.C.). Early a secret technology, iron weapons would soon come to dominate warfare.

With the development of sophisticated Chinese bronze-casting techniques, Shang bronzework included a wide range of sacred and secular forms, including ceremonial vessels, cookware, and serving dishes (ca. 1500 B.C.). Sophisticated clay pottery also developed, as did a wide range of jade carving.

✧ China developed a written language involving pictographs (ca. 1500 B.C.), with some 2,000–2,500 script characters known from this period. Surviving examples of the script are carried on tortoise shells and animal bones, called "oracle bones." These were widely used as instruments of divination, used in foretelling the future and revealing other knowledge derived from supposedly divine sources. The technique involved heating oracle bones and reading the resulting cracks. Among the early information recorded were sightings of lunar and solar eclipses.

✧ Rgveda (Rigveda), the earliest known Indian text and the oldest known major work in any Indo-European language, was developed by the Indo-European speakers who conquered northern India (ca. 1500 B.C.–ca. 1000 B.C.). The work is a collection of 1,028 hymns in Sanskrit.

Siberia entered the Bronze Age, as bronzeworking skills began to be widely used, first in western Siberia (from ca. 1500 B.C.), and then in central Siberia (from ca. 1200 B.C.).