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ANIMAL SCULPTURE OF THE ASSYRIANS

In the above representation of a lion hunt, says Dr. Breasted in the work which forms the subject of the following article by Mr. Roosevelt, "we have one of the best examples of Assyrian relief sculpture of the reign of Assurbanipal [grandson of Sennacherib, about 700 B.C., whose history is told by Isaiah, chapters xxxvi and xxxvii]. . . . The pathetic expression of suffering exhibited by some of these wonderful animal forms was a triumph of art which the Assyrian sculptor owed to a study of the superb lions and bulls of the exquisite old Babylonian seals of the age of Sargon I, two thousand years earlier"

THE DAWN AND SUNRISE OF HISTORY

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

WHEN the men who fought the Civil War were at school or college, the histories they studied treated of "antiquity" as being pre-eminently the flourishing time of the Romans and Greeks; Judea came just a little back of them; and what knowledge we had of Nineveh, Babylon, and Egypt was treated in condensed form as merely prefatory or introductory to the serious study of ancient times, which, for all except a very few erudite specialists, dealt only with Jews, Greeks, and Romans. Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, and Pharaoh-Necho stood as vague but formidable figures just on the further side of the misty abyss in which all accurate knowledge was swallowed up.

The last two generations have seen such immense additions to our archaeological and historical knowledge as completely to revolutionize our sense of values and proportions in this matter. We now know that the prehistory of man, during the period after he had become clearly human but before he had reached the lower levels of civilization or had learned to leave written records, covered a period of certainly two hundred thousand years, and probably twice as long. We have pushed the domain of actual history so far back into the past that Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar, together with the later Judean kings and the great prophets, stand about in the middle of the age covered by written records; the first rulers of whom we have clear knowledge beside the Nile and the Euphrates were separated by almost as long a period of time from the last Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian sovereigns as is the period that divides these latter from us.

An immense amount of research has been necessary in order to develop these facts; and during recent years, up to the outbreak of the great war, the research has gone on with continually increasing activity and success. Monographs which are monuments of exhaustive scholarship have been written about almost every phase of this research. Moreover, a very few first-class writers have generalized on the whole subject, doing—what can be done only by men who to minute original knowledge add a wide grasp of generalities and a power of vivid narration—for these ancient monarchies what men of similar exceptional ability had already done for the more familiar portions of history; that is, these writers have attempted to give intelligent laymen the chance to see this pre-Jewish, pre-Greek, pre-Roman world in entirety of outline. Until recently the Frenchman Maspero was the man who had done most to popu-

larize, without fictionizing, this extraordinarily interesting period of history—for Eduard Meyer has not been so accessible in popular form. But one of our own men, the distinguished Orientalist and Egyptologist, Professor James Henry Breasted, of the University of Chicago, has now produced the best book of its kind that has ever been written on the subject. His "Ancient Times: A History of the Early World,"¹ is written with the avowed purpose to be simple enough for use in high schools; but, perhaps for that very reason—inasmuch as the very best book for intelligent and well-grown boys is usually an uncommonly good book for grown-up men and women—his work is absorbingly interesting for every one who, without being an original student, is yet able to appreciate the tremendous drama of the ages which Mr. Breasted unfolds before our eyes.

The later stages of the prehistory of Europe include the period intervening between the last retreat northward of the glaciers—that is, the arrival of what were substantially modern physical conditions—and the beginning of recorded history in Greece. We can only guess, and that roughly, at the dates; but probably between ten thousand and five thousand years ago European man slowly passed out of the stage of mere savagery and achieved a cultivation far beyond that of our pre-Columbian Indians. He built permanent towns, which were often placed on piles in the lakes for safety. He erected huge monuments composed of rough stones weighing in some cases over a hundred tons. His tools were of stone, with ground edges, and included most of those in ordinary use by modern carpenters: axes, saws, chisels, drills, knives. He made pottery. He planted crops: barley and wheat for food, and flax which the women spun into cloth. He had domesticated sheep, goats, cattle, and perhaps swine; and he began to use oxen for the plow. There was some primitive commerce. But the people were not able by their own efforts to move further toward civilization; they remained without writing or the use of metals or ships for commerce; and history, the record of mankind by writing, did not begin in Europe, but in the "nearer Orient," round the eastern end of the Mediterranean. It was in Egypt and in hither Asia, between six thousand and five thousand years ago, that there occurred the slow and irregular transition between the prehistoric and historic epochs.

¹ Ancient Times: A History of the Early World. An Introduction to the Study of Ancient History and the Career of Early Man. By James Henry Breasted, Ph.D. Ginn & Co., Boston. \$1.60.

The historic epoch opens along the Lower Nile and along the lower Euphrates in the flat plain—the Plain of Shinar—through which the Euphrates and Tigris enter the Persian Gulf. The latter region can conveniently, although not quite accurately, be known as Mesopotamia—its civilization later included the region to which this term may with narrower propriety be restricted.

Both of these regions are strips of fertile ground surrounded by desert. In Egypt the desert comes up on both sides to the narrow valley which can be irrigated from the Nile. The country at the mouth of the Euphrates and Tigris is part of what Mr. Breasted has christened the Fertile Crescent, which stretches in a curve from Palestine through Syria, into Mesopotamia, with barren highlands to the north and sheer desert to the south.

The rise of civilization in each of these two seats of ancient culture took place at about the same time, and quite independently, as far as our present knowledge enables us to judge. It is in Egypt that we get our first definite date in world history, for just 6,158 years ago, in 4241 B.C., the Egyptians devised and put into use the calendar which we use to-day.

At that time the Egyptian and the dweller in the Plain of Shinar beside the Euphrates had already begun to irrigate their fields, were raising crops and were tending flocks and herds. The Egyptian also about this time made the two discoveries or inventions which have done more for mankind than anything since the cultivation of food plants thousands of years previously and the discovery of fire tens of thousands of years previously. He invented writing, developing it out of the rude picture symbols common among various savage tribes, and devised ink and made writing material out of papyrus; and in consequence to this day we speak of paper, although our paper has long ceased to be made of a reed. He discovered, probably in the peninsula of Sinai, copper mines, began to use the copper first as an ornament and then as a tool and weapon, and thus introduced the age of metals. As these two discoveries were developed they marked the transition between barbarism and civilization. The advance thus made was infinitely more important than the advance made in our own time by the use of steam and electricity.

Some five thousand years ago in Egypt there grew up settled states where several millions of people were governed by one head; writing came into use; huge masonry buildings were erected with metal tools; and seagoing ships were sent across the Mediterranean. A wonderful outburst of energy took place, and with the building of the great Pyramids there began a phenomenal progress in governmental organization, in art, and in industry. Europe was still savage when Egypt thus entered on this marvelous period of achievement for civilization.

This pyramidal age of Egypt represents the first high civilization of which we have any record. In all human probability, it was the first high civilization that ever existed. It began some five thousand years ago. There was one king who ruled the whole land of Egypt, and there were many great nobles under him; there was a highly developed priesthood, and officials of all grades—judges who administered a written law, scribes, tax-gatherers, physicians, architects. The professions were not wholly differentiated, and were sometimes oddly combined—as witness Imhotep the Wise, the earliest known architect of stone buildings. Imhotep was the builder of the first stone pyramid, cut with copper tools out of limestone. We still have his portrait statue. He was reputed a very wise man indeed, and was a physician as well as an architect. In later ages his reputation grew constantly larger and more shadowy, until in the popular mind he became a god; and when the enterprising, inquisitive Greek soldiers and traders came to Egypt, about the time that the last independent Jewish kings were ruling in Jerusalem, they translated his name into Æsculapius and made him their own god of medicine. To this day doctors all over the world often designate their own profession, humorously or half seriously, by some term derived from the name of this grand vizier of a forgotten Egyptian king who built the first masonry pyramid, beside the Lower Nile, nearly fifty centuries ago. When he lived, our ancestors in northern and central Europe were squalid savages using weapons and tools of stone; the lion was a beast of dread in Italy and Greece, and herds of elephants wandered over Syria; the white man of Aryan speech was still a barbarian so rude that he was not even dangerous; Sicily was as unknown to civilized men as the two Americas and Australia were to Dante.

Ages have passed; mighty empires have risen, perished, and passed utterly out of memory; civilization has gone forward and backward, upward and downward, in time and in space, until at the moment it covers most of the known world; the names of innumerable kings and heroes and sages have perished with their dust; and by a queer freak of time this one name has been preserved in the common parlance of civilized people throughout the globe.

On the walls of the tombs of the nobles there are yet visible carved and brightly painted scenes from the daily life of the period, showing its variegated work and pleasures. Mr. Breasted gives a picture of the villa of an Egyptian noble. It shows a dwelling in which the life was as refined and cultivated as in that of a great French noble of the early seventeenth century or a wealthy American slave-owner of the nineteenth.

Science had barely begun its career with the first development of astronomy, mathematics, and geography. But art was highly developed. The artists made wonderful portrait statues; and the architects of the great Pyramids, of the Sphinx, of the great halls and colonnades, did work at which modern ages still marvel.

To the pyramid-builders, the first kings of a great kingdom, succeeded a feudal society, in which great nobles ruled as in mediæval Europe. On the whole, these Egyptian lords who flourished two thousand years before our era were much further advanced in civilization than the European counts and barons were until at least after the year one thousand of our era. They had extensive libraries, and among their books are the most ancient of story books and the earliest “uplift” books, in which the sufferings of the poor and the humble are set forth and the effort is made to stir the hearts of the strong so that they shall be the protectors and not the oppressors of the weak. Much of the literature was religious; and there was poetry in praise of the king. The great nobles dug out for themselves wonderful cliff tombs. Their wealth was in lands and buildings and crops and cattle. But commerce had begun. The Egyptian ships traversed the eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and the first ship canal was dug connecting the two bodies of water—a remarkable achievement which shows the vision, dense population, and industrial energy of the time.

Then came the period of greatest extension, the period that is now known as that of the Egyptian Empire. Egyptian civilization extended far up the Nile; the Red Sea and the adjacent shores were practically parts of the Pharaoh's territory; his fleets dominated the seas and coasts of the western end of the Mediterranean, and under successive conquering monarchs his armies penetrated to the upper Euphrates. By this time—in the earlier part of the second millennium B.C.—the horse had reached Egypt, doubtless from Mesopotamia, where he had only recently appeared from mountainous inland Asia and had been named “ass of the mountains” by the puzzled donkey-drivers of Babylonia.

During the greatest days of the Empire, when mighty conquerors like Thutmose III led hither Asia captive, the armies were composed of native Egyptians. They were thoroughly organized and were composed of archers and spearmen, with, instead of cavalry, a mass of light chariots, in one of which the king himself often fought. The most famous of all early battle pictures is that series of sculptures in which Rameses II is shown in his chariot fight with the Hittites. Some of the queens of this period were almost as imperious and masterful as the foremost kings—a point of resemblance with the European centuries which saw Elizabeth, Christina, Maria Theresa, and Catherine.

There was one remarkable interlude, the reign of the reforming idealist Ikhnaton—a man born three thousand years too soon. Naturally his character has a special fascination for Professor Breasted. He built himself a new city, and the art he patronized was freed from the hard conventionality of most Egyptian art. The studio of one of his chief sculptors has been discovered, and the sculptures of this and other artists, the statuettes and portrait heads of king and queen and queen mother, seem half late Athenian, half Parisian, in their appeal of human friendliness and of charm and delicate refinement.

But Egypt's days were numbered. There were warrior kings—mighty temple builders and monument makers—who were yet to come. But these, the last Egyptian conquerors,

largely employed foreign mercenaries to do their fighting. The native Egyptians had become pacifists, whose women did not raise their boys to be soldiers; and they fell, as under such conditions every race is surely bound to fall.

Meanwhile the Mesopotamian kingdoms were rising to splendor and power. The earliest dwellers in the lower Plain of the Two Rivers, in the land of Sumer and Akkad, were the so-called Sumerians, a strange people whose speech was neither Aryan nor Semitic, and of whose ethnic kinship we know nothing. They early developed a civilization much like that of the Egyptians before the pyramid age. They invented writing in cuneiform characters and a system of organized warfare based on a phalanx of shield-bearing spearmen, and they tilled the irrigated soil, carried on the beginning of commerce by means of river boats and donkey carts, and were divided into small city kingdoms. Nomad Semitic tribes came in, fought with the Sumerians and with one another, mingled with the Sumerians, imposed their language upon them, and adopted and developed their culture. About the time that the age of the pyramids closed in Egypt these Semites of the Plain of the Two Rivers developed their first great ruler and conqueror, Sargon—the first of lines of similar conquerors who dwelt in the land for many hundreds of years. One of these conquerors was the great lawgiver—perhaps, rather, the great law codifier—Hammurapi, who lived four thousand years ago, but whose laws are in some important respects abreast of those of portions of southern and eastern Europe to-day. He was the ruler of Babylon.

Centuries later the more northern of these dwellers on the banks of the Two Rivers wrested the primacy from Babylon, and under the name of Assyrians became the most cruel and most dreaded conquerors the ancient world had yet known. From the cities of Assur and Nineveh, on the Tigris, the Assyrian kings conquered east and west, south and north. They subjected Babylon, they marched to the Mediterranean, conquered the Semitic and Hittite states of Syria, and finally conquered Egypt itself. They used iron weapons and employed battering-rams in the siege of cities. They were almost as remarkable in arts as in arms, and the stone slabs on which they recorded their feats in war and in the chase present most vivid and dramatic pictures.

Finally, this great and cruel Assyrian Empire was overthrown and crushed by the Medes, with the aid of the revolted Babylonians; and Chaldean Babylon saw a last revival of power, reaching a height of splendor in art, wealth, and successful war which she had not before known. It was the Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar, who destroyed Jerusalem—as Damascus and Israel and many other city kingdoms had already been destroyed by the Assyrian conquerors, Sargon II, Sennacherib, Shalmaneser, Assurbanipal.

Then, in her turn, Chaldean Babylon fell before the Persians; a generation later Egypt likewise fell; and with another generation we get down to the clash between Persia and Greece. When the name of Marathon is reached, we feel that we are on familiar, almost on modern, ground. Before this happened the Persians had done one thing of incalculable moment. They had restored the Hebrews to Palestine, and had therefore aided in leaving to the world the priceless legacy of the Old and the New Testaments and the Christian religion itself.

Long before this time civilization had begun in Europe. Before Hammurapi codified and published the laws for the better government of the irrigation farmers who clustered around the "dobe" cities of the lower Euphrates, while the Egyptian kings and barons were beginning to abandon the practice of pyramid-building and to carve their tombs in the rim-rock of the desert, the Ægean civilization was rising and flourishing in Greece and Crete and on the coasts of Asia Minor. The impetus to this civilization was given by Egypt; as Mr. Breasted says, Egypt stood to the Europe of that day as Europe has stood to barbarous lands during the last few centuries. Crete led the march of Ægean civilization, and it led it as an outpost of the Orient. By the beginning of the second millennium B.C. the Cretans had become a highly civilized people, and their kinsmen on the continents of Europe and Asia had built cities such as Mycenæ and Troy. The Ægeans were in the age of bronze. They developed a wonderful art and architecture, and invented or developed a peculiar writing; they carried on an

extended commerce. The lords and ladies, the upper classes in the cities, led an astonishingly free and modern life, and in their palaces they had bath-rooms and sanitary drainage such as were not dreamed of by our own squalid European ancestors of the "age of faith" three thousand years later.¹

But the curse of every ancient civilization was that its men in the end became unable to fight. Materialism, luxury, safety, even sometimes an almost modern sentimentality, weakened the fiber of each civilized race in turn; each became in the end a nation of pacifists, and then each was trodden under foot by some ruder people that had kept that virile fighting power the lack of which makes all other virtues useless and sometimes even harmful.

By the middle of the second millennium the barbarous Achæans and Dorians had begun to press in on the Ægean world, and by the end of the millennium they had completely conquered it, had destroyed the Ægean civilization, and had imposed their own language on the conquered people. The land relapsed into barbarism. Many of the fleeing Ægeans pressed south across the Mediterranean and helped to shatter the failing Egyptian Empire. One such tribe, the Philistines, settled in and gave their name to Palestine, where they fought with the Canaanites, Amorites, Israelites, and other Semitic tribes.

Slowly the barbarous Greeks, the Hellenes, began to erect their own civilization on the ruins of the civilization they had wrecked. They were warriors and pirates, living in the iron age. It was not until somewhere near 800 B.C. that they began to move rapidly forward. They borrowed and greatly improved the Phœnician alphabet. They turned from piracy to commerce, and colonized along the coasts and in the islands from the Black Sea to the Spanish Peninsula. They received and developed from Asia Minor the science of coinage. They began to develop their own art, and in a few centuries brought it to a pitch of perfection not only far beyond what had ever before been reached, but in certain lines beyond anything that has since been achieved by any race.

When we reach the days of Darius and Miltiades, of Xerxes and Themistocles, we have long passed the dawn and even the sunrise of history, and are in the bright light of day. Indeed, the next few centuries are more modern than anything we come across in the thousand years following the death of Marcus Aurelius. At least one idyl of Theocritus and most of Horace are as modern as Molière or Turgenev or Pope. Pericles, Demosthenes, Timoleon, Cicero, Pliny, Cæsar, Trajan, are men who, whether as friends or enemies, would understand and be understood by Alexander Hamilton, John Hampden, Webster, Burke, Guizot, Cavour, Bismarck, and Washington.

All serious students of history, whether boys and girls or men and women, need to learn about Greece and Rome from the point of view which Professor Breasted presents, and not as their history has usually been epitomized. But the outlines of the story are far more familiar than the outlines of that half of the "History of the Early World" dealing with "Ancient Times"—to use the heading and sub-heading of Professor Breasted's book—which concern the man of Sumer and Akkad and the desert nomad who overcame him, the Egyptian and the Chaldean, the Hittite and the Ægean, the architects of the pyramids and temples beside the Nile, and the builders of the hanging gardens of Babylon and the palaces of Nineveh, the armed hosts of Sesostris and Tiglath Pileser, and the shipmasters who sailed to Crete or to the land of Punt.

Recently not a few of our educators have been advocating that in our public schools the study of science should be pushed at the expense of the study of man. If, as the formalized classicists have insisted, the study of man means merely the study of Latin and Greek speech formations and a sentimental and conventional admiration of some of the first-class things in English literature, there is not very much to be said for it from the standpoint of universal use for students. But if the study of man is to be taken seriously, and to be presented with absorbing interest, as Professor Breasted presents it, then it should occupy the foremost place in the curriculum of our schools and colleges, and in the recreative study which hard-working, well-informed, cultivated men and women find essential in after life.

¹ The successive changes in race, empire, and civilization around the Mediterranean and in hither Asia are made clear by the admirable maps in Mr. Breasted's book.

CURRENT EVENTS ILLUSTRATED



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A LIFELIKE PORTRAIT-STATUE OF AN EGYPTIAN PYRAMID-BUILDER BY AN "OLD MASTER" WHO LIVED 5,000 YEARS AGO
This picture, which is reproduced from a recently published book, Dr. James H. Breasted's "Ancient Times: A History of the Early World," shows the sculptured portrait bust of King Khafre, builder of the Second Pyramid of Gizeh (next in size to the Great Pyramid). "More lifelike portraits have never been produced by any age," says Dr. Breasted. The statue was carved in an excessively hard stone called diorite. The falcon with protecting wings outstretched is a symbol of the god Horus. King Khafre flourished about 2900 B.C. The head of the Great Sphinx, near the Second Pyramid, Dr. Breasted states, is also a portrait of this King. See article by Theodore Roosevelt in this issue

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