

Military Empires

1400 B.C.–570 B.C.



▲ Gold Assyrian jewelry

◀ Assyrian winged lion

1400 B.C.
Hittites develop
iron making

800 B.C.
Assyrians
establish empire

612 B.C.
Chaldeans
capture Nineveh

570 B.C.
Zoroaster
introduces new
religion

539 B.C.
Persians seize
Mesopotamia

Chapter Focus



Read to Discover

- How the Assyrians established and maintained an empire in Mesopotamia.
- What the Chaldean city of Babylon was like.
- How the Persians were able to rule an empire that stretched from Egypt to India.



Terms to Learn

empires
smelting
provinces
caravans
astronomers



People to Know

Ashurbanipal
Nebuchadnezzar
Cyrus
Darius
Zoroaster



Places to Locate

Nineveh
Babylon
Persepolis
Lydia

Why It's Important While the Phoenicians and the Hebrews were developing their civilizations, powerful kingdoms rose and fell in Mesopotamia. Built by the Assyrians, the Chaldeans (kal dē' uhns), and the Persians, these kingdoms were not content to stay where their civilizations began. Rulers raised large armies and expanded into neighboring lands. They developed new ways of organizing their **empires**—territories governed by a single ruler or nation. They also increased trade. Through conquest and trade, these three empire-builders spread their ideas and customs over a wide area.



Chapter Overview

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Reading Check

Which people used large armies to build powerful **empires** in Mesopotamia?

SECTION 1 The Assyrians

About 1,000 years after Hammurabi ruled, a people called Assyrians rose to power in Mesopotamia. Their country, Assyria, lay in the upper part of the Tigris River valley. The Assyrians spoke the same language and used the same writing system as the Babylonians.

The Assyrians were warriors. Experts believe their liking for war was influenced by geography. Assyria's rolling hills and rain-watered valleys did not provide protection against invaders. Assyrian shepherds and farmers had to learn to fight to survive. In time, fighting became a way of life.

The Assyrians built a powerful army. By 1100 B.C., they had defeated their neighboring enemies. By 800 B.C., they were strong enough to take over cities, trading routes, and fortresses throughout Mesopotamia.



CONTENTS



Fun Facts

New Model The Hittites developed a chariot that could carry two soldiers *and* a driver. Other peoples, including the Egyptians, used a two-person chariot. With their three-person chariot, Hittites could field twice as many soldiers as their foes.



ASSYRIAN SOLDIERS Assyrian kings often celebrated their victories by decorating palaces and temples with scenes of warfare. Here, a wall sculpture shows Assyrian soldiers. **How was the Assyrian army organized?**


The Assyrian Army The Assyrian army was well-organized. It was divided into groups of foot soldiers armed with shields, helmets, spears, and daggers. It also had units of charioteers, cavalry, and archers.

At first, the Assyrians fought only during summer when they did not have to be concerned about planting or harvesting crops. Later, as they took over more land, soldiering became a year-round job. When the Assyrians needed more soldiers, they hired them from other places or forced the people they had conquered to serve.

Assyrian power was due partly to their weapons, which were made of iron. Iron weapons are harder and stronger than weapons made of copper or tin. Iron had been used in the Middle East for many centuries. Until about 1400 B.C., however, it was too soft to be made into weapons. Then, a people called Hittites (hi' tītē) developed a process of **smelting**. They heated iron ore, hammered out its impurities, and rapidly cooled it. The Assyrians borrowed the skill of smelting from the Hittites.

The Assyrians were cruel warriors. For several hundred years, their armies spread death and destruction throughout the Middle East. They were especially skilled in attacking cities. They tunneled under walls or climbed over them on ladders. They used beams mounted on movable platforms to ram holes through city gates. Once they captured a city, they set fire to its buildings and carried away its citizens and goods.

Anyone who resisted Assyrian rule was punished. Those who did not resist had to pay heavy taxes. The Assyrians also

 **Reading Check**
How did the process of **smelting** work?

found a way to conquer people without fighting. They spread stories of their cruelty. Other people were so frightened by the stories that they would simply surrender.

Kings and Government Assyria's kings were strong leaders. They had to be to rule an empire that extended from the Persian Gulf in the east to the Nile valley in the west. Assyrian kings spent much of their time fighting battles and punishing enemies. However, they were also involved in peaceful activities. A great Assyrian king, Ashurbanipal (osh uhr bon' uh pol), started one of the world's first libraries. It held 25,000 tablets of hymns, stories, and biographies.

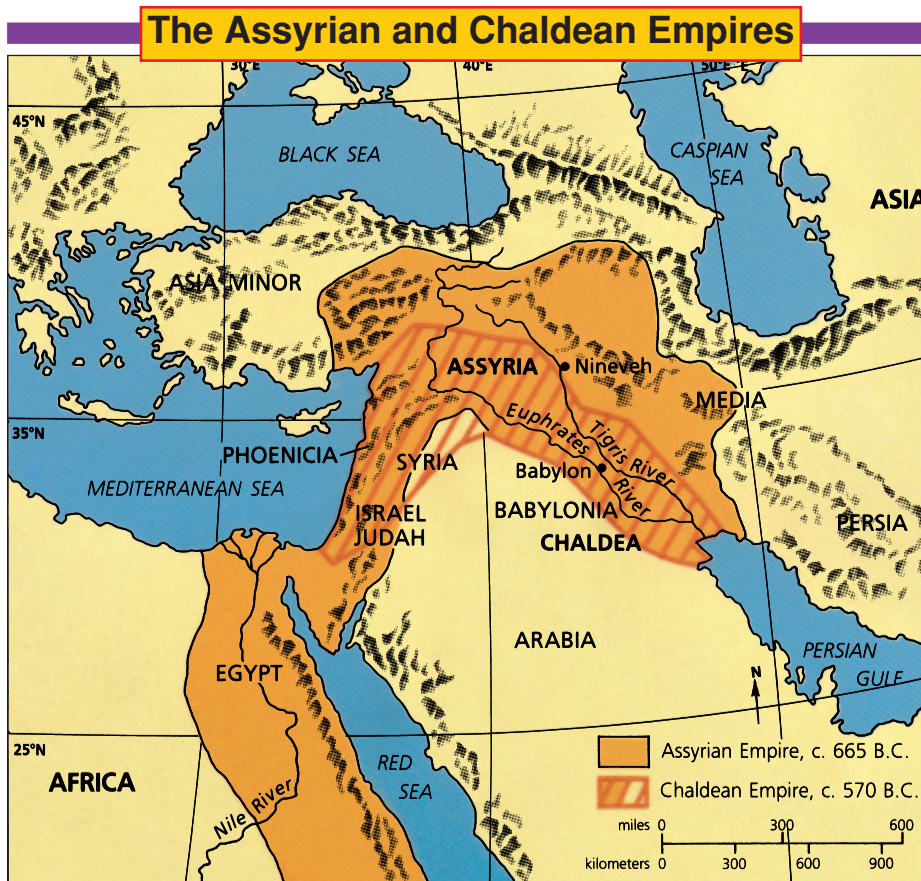
Assyrian kings had to control many peoples spread over a large area. To do this, they divided their empire into **provinces**, or political districts. They then chose officials to govern each province. The officials collected taxes and made certain the king's laws were obeyed.

All provinces were connected by a system of roads. Although only roads near major cities were paved, all were level enough for carts and chariots to travel on. Over the roads moved the trade of the empire. Government soldiers were posted at stations along the



Reading Check

Why did the Assyrians divide their empire into **provinces**?



MAP STUDY

THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS

The Assyrian and Chaldean empires were extensive. In which direction would you travel in order to get to Nineveh from Babylon?

roads to protect traders from bandits. Messengers on government business used the stations to rest and to change horses.

In time, the empire became too large to govern. After Ashurbanipal died, various conquered peoples worked to end Assyrian rule. One group was the Chaldeans. In 612 B.C., they captured Nineveh (nin' uh vuh), the Assyrian capital. The Assyrian Empire crumbled shortly after.

Section 1 Assessment

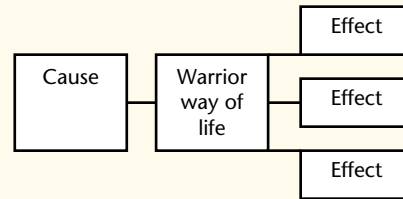
1. **Define:** empire, smelting, provinces.
2. How was Assyria governed?
3. Why did the Assyrian Empire fall?

Critical Thinking

4. **Forming Conclusions** Do you think ruling by fear is an effective way to govern? Why or why not?

Graphic Organizer Activity

5. Draw a diagram like this one, and use it to show the cause and effects of the Assyrian warrior way of life.



SECTION 2 The Chaldeans

Like the Assyrians, the Chaldeans were warriors who conquered many different peoples. Under their king Nebuchadnezzar (neb uh kuhd nez' uhr), they extended their empire's boundaries as far west as Syria and Palestine. The Chaldeans called themselves Babylonians. This was because most Chaldeans were descendants of the people who made up Hammurabi's empire about 1,200 years earlier. They built a new capital at Babylon in which nearly 1 million people lived.

Babylon was the world's richest city up to that time. It had its own police force and postal system. Huge brick walls encircled the city. The walls were so wide that two chariots could pass on the road on top. Archers guarded the approaches to the city from towers built into the walls.

In the center of the city stood palaces and temples. A huge ziggurat reached more than 300 feet, or over 90 meters, into the sky. When the sun shone, its gold roof could be seen for miles.


The richness of the ziggurat was equaled by that of the king's palace. The palace had "hanging gardens." These were layered beds of earth planted with large trees and masses of flowering vines and shrubs. They seemed to hang in mid-air. Nebuchadnezzar built the gardens to please his wife, who missed the mountains and plants of her native land.

Fun Facts

Seven Wonders Historians of the time counted the Hanging Gardens of Babylon among the Seven Wonders of the World. Other wonders included: the pyramids of Egypt, the statue of Zeus at Olympia, the temple of Artemis (Diana) at Ephesus, the mausoleum at Halicarnassus, the Colossus of Rhodes, and the lighthouse at Pharos.

To please the people, Nebuchadnezzar built a beautiful street near the palace. It was paved with limestone and marble and lined by walls of blue glazed tile. Each spring, thousands of pilgrims crowded into Babylon to watch a gold statue of the god Marduk (mar' duhk) being wheeled along this street. The Chaldeans believed that the procession would make their crops grow. They also believed it would help keep peace in the empire.

Outside the center of Babylon stood houses and marketplaces. There, artisans made pottery, cloth, and baskets. These were sold to passing **caravans**, or groups of traveling merchants. Traders came to Babylon from as far away as India and Egypt. Trade helped make Babylon rich.

 **Reading Check**
How did **caravans** help Babylon grow rich?

ENTRANCE TO BABYLON The Ishtar Gate was ancient Babylon's main entrance. It honored the goddess Ishtar and was covered with images of wild animals. Why was Babylon surrounded by walls with gates?



Reading Check

What do astronomers study?

Babylon was also a center of science. Chaldean **astronomers**, or people who collect, study, and explain facts about the heavenly bodies, believed that changes in the sky revealed the plans of the gods. So, they studied the stars, planets, and moon. Once they knew the movement of heavenly bodies, they made maps that showed the positions of the planets and the phases of the moon. Chaldean astronomers made one of the first sundials. They also were the first to have a seven-day week.

Babylon was the center of a great civilization for many years. As time passed, though, the Chaldeans began to lose their power. They found it hard to control the peoples they had conquered. Then, in 539 B.C., Persians from the mountains to the northeast captured Babylon. Mesopotamia became just another part of the Persian Empire.

Section 2 Assessment

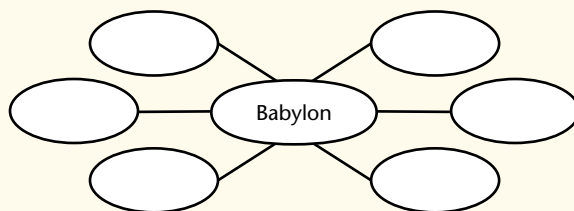
1. **Define:** caravans, astronomers.
2. What did the Chaldean astronomers contribute to science?
3. What led to the fall of the Chaldean Empire?

Critical Thinking

4. **Identifying Alternatives** Under whose rule—the Assyrians' or the Chaldeans'—would you have preferred to live? Explain.

Graphic Organizer Activity

5. Draw a diagram like this one, and use it to describe Babylon.



SECTION 3 The Persians

Fun Facts . . .

Persian Pony Express

King Darius established a postal system that operated much like the American Pony Express. Postal stations were set up a day's ride apart. At each station, a fresh rider and horse would wait to take the mail from the incoming rider.

Originally, the Persians were part of the people known as Aryans. The Aryans were cattle herders from the grasslands of central Asia. About 2000 B.C., however, the Persians began to separate from other Aryans. They finally settled on a high plain between the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea, where they established Persia. Today, this region is called Iran (i ran'), or "the land of the Aryans." Modern Persians are Iranians (ir ā' nē uhnz).

The Persians lived peacefully in the highlands for over 1,000 years. They divided most of the country into large farms owned by nobles. The nobles spent most of their time riding horses and practicing archery. Their farms were worked by laborers.

There was little water on the hot plain. Farmers depended on streams that came down from the mountains. They dug underground tunnels from the springs to the fields. With water, farm-

Linking Across Time

Coins The practice of showing portraits (below) or symbols on coins stretches back to the Lydians, who invented the use of coins, and the Persians, who spread their use. In 2000, the United States government issued a new one-dollar coin with the portrait of Sacajawea (far right). **Why do archaeologists and historians consider coins a valuable source of evidence about the past?**



ers were able to grow wheat and barley and to pasture flocks of fat-tailed sheep.

Army and Empire About 600 B.C., the Persians were conquered by the Medes (mēdz), a neighboring people. The Medes, however, were soon overthrown by the Persians under King Cyrus (sī' ruhs). Cyrus then organized an army to conquer new territory. The army grew until it numbered in the hundreds of thousands. Its officers were Persians, while its soldiers were either Persians or conquered peoples.

The best fighters in the Persian army were the Immortals. They earned this name because their number never fell below 10,000. When an Immortal became sick, was wounded, or died, another soldier took his place. The Immortals had the honor of leading the Persian army into battle.

Within a short time, the Persians ruled an empire that stretched from Egypt to India. The Persians were mild rulers who allowed their subjects to keep their own language, religion, and laws. The Persians believed loyalty could be won more easily with fairness than with fear or force. They wanted their subjects to pay taxes and to produce goods for trade. They felt these things would not be done if those under their rule were treated badly.

One of the strongest Persian kings was Darius (duh rī' uhs). He wanted a monument to honor his military victories. So, he brought artisans from many lands to build a grand palace-fortress-treasury in the capital city of Persepolis (puhr sep' uh luhs). Buildings with many columns were constructed on giant stone

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Student Web Activity

Visit the *Human Heritage* Web site at humanheritage.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 7—Student Web Activities** to find out more about Persian contributions.

People in History



Darius

c. 558 B.C.–486 B.C.

Persian King

Darius organized a vast empire. He wanted conquered people to pay taxes and to supply soldiers, but he respected their customs. He allowed the Jews to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem and consulted with Egyptian priests and Greek oracles in Asia Minor. However, he did not involve citizens in government. That innovation belonged to the Greek city-states that would challenge Darius near the end of his life.

platforms. In the gateways, workers carved figures that were half human and half beast. Persepolis became the most magnificent city in the empire.

Government Officials The king did not govern alone. There were many officials to carry out his orders. They all spoke Aramaic (ar uh mā' ik). This was the language used by Middle Eastern merchants.

The king chose a governor, a secretary, and a general for each of the 20 provinces of the empire. These officials collected taxes of gold, silver, sheep, horses, wheat, and spices and sent them to the royal treasury in Persepolis. These officials also settled local quarrels and protected the people against bandits. Each reported separately to the king. This helped keep them honest. If one was stealing tax money, for example, the others were sure to report it. The king would then remove the dishonest official from office.

Another group of officials was the inspectors. Called "the Eyes and Ears of the King," they traveled throughout the empire. They decided whether people were able to pay their taxes. They also checked on rumors of possible rebellion. The inspectors never warned provincial officials they were coming. This made provincial officials careful about doing a good job.

The last group of officials was the judges. They made sure that the king's laws were carried out properly.

Family Life The Persians lived in houses with pointed roofs and porches that faced the sun. Poor families had one-room houses. Noble families had houses with one set of rooms for men and another for women and children.

Persian families were large. Fathers ruled their families in much the same way the king ruled the empire. A father's word was law. Poor children worked with their parents. The children of nobles, however, were cared for by their mothers until they were five years old. Then, they were raised by enslaved people. Often, they did not see their fathers until they reached adulthood. Boys were trained to ride horses and draw a bow. Girls were trained to run households and raise children.

Rich women lived very sheltered lives. They spent most of their time at home apart from the men. If they had to leave the house, they stepped into a closed *litter*, or a carriage without wheels that was carried by servants. Poor women had more freedom, but they had to work hard.

Religion At first, the Persians worshiped many gods. Then, about 570 B.C., a religious leader named Zoroaster (zōr' uh was tuhr) told the Persians about two gods. One god, Ahura Mazda (uh hūr' uh maz' duh), was wise and truthful. He created all good things in the world. The other god, Ahriman (ar' i muhn),

made all evil things in the world. Ahura Mazda and Ahriman were at war with each other all of the time.

Zoroaster said human beings had to decide which god they would support. Zoroaster then listed the good and bad deeds a person performed. Good deeds were keeping one's word, giving to the poor, working the land, obeying the king, and treating others well. Bad deeds included being lazy, proud, or greedy. Zoroaster could tell from the list which god a person had chosen. He believed that in the end Ahura Mazda would defeat Ahriman. People who supported Ahura Mazda would enjoy happiness after death. Those who supported Ahriman would be punished.

Trade The Persians thought they should be warriors, farmers, or shepherds. They refused to become traders. They believed that trade forced people to lie, cheat, and be greedy. They did, however, encourage trade among all peoples they conquered.

The Persians improved and expanded the system of roads begun by the Assyrians. One road, the Royal Road, ran more than 1,600 miles, or more than 2,560 kilometers. A journey that took three months before the Royal Road was built took only 15 days after it was completed. The Persians also opened a caravan route to China. Silk was first brought west along this route.



MAP STUDY

THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS

The Persian Empire stretched from the Nile River to the Indus River, a distance of 3,000 miles, or 4,800 kilometers. Within this empire, the Persians ruled more than 50 million people. **Into what continents did the Persian Empire extend?**

The Persian Empire



The Persians spread the idea of using coins for money. The first known coins had been made in Lydia (lid' ē uh), a tiny kingdom in Asia Minor bordering on the Aegean Sea. After conquering Lydia, the Persian king decided to use gold coins in his empire. This helped to increase trade. It also changed the nature of trade. Merchants who had sold only costly goods began to sell everyday, cheaper things as well. They sold chickens, dried fish, furniture, clothing, and pots and pans. Since people could get more goods, they began to live better than they had before.

Section 3 Assessment

1. How did the Persians treat people they conquered?
2. What religious ideas did Zoroaster introduce to Persia?
3. In what ways did the Persians contribute to the growth of trade within their empire?

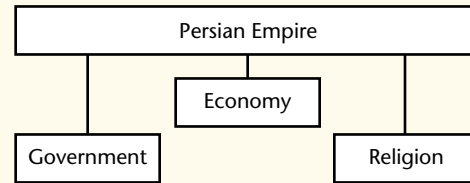
Critical Thinking

4. **Making Comparisons** How do the roles of government officials in the

United States compare with the roles of government officials in Persia?

Graphic Organizer Activity

5. Draw a diagram like this one, and use it to describe the government, economy, and religion of the Persian Empire.



Chapter Summary & Study Guide

1. About 800 B.C., the Assyrians built an empire in Mesopotamia.
2. The Assyrians used the Hittite process of smelting to make strong iron weapons.
3. The Assyrian Empire was divided into provinces linked by roads.
4. In 612 B.C., the Chaldeans captured the Assyrian capital of Nineveh.
5. Under Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldeans built a new capital at Babylon, which quickly became a center of trade and science.
6. Around 539 B.C., the Persians added Mesopotamia to their empire.
7. The Persians divided their empire into provinces, each governed by various groups of officials.
8. About 570 B.C., Zoroaster taught a new religion in which good and evil took the form of two gods who were constantly fighting each other.
9. Though the Persians did not become traders themselves, they encouraged trade within their far-flung empire.

HISTORY
Online

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Self-Check Quiz

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CHAPTER 7 Assessment

Using Key Terms

Imagine you are writing a feature magazine article about the Assyrian and Chaldean empires. Use the following words in your article to describe some of the achievements made in these two empires.

empires smelting provinces
caravans astronomers

Understanding Main Ideas

1. What do experts believe influenced the Assyrians to become warriors?
2. What made the Assyrians such feared fighters?
3. Why did the Chaldeans call themselves Babylonians?
4. What was the importance of the god Marduk to the Babylonians?
5. What was the relationship between the Persians and the Aryans?
6. In Persian government, who were “the Eyes and Ears of the King,” and what did they do?
7. How was family life in Persia alike for both the rich and poor?
8. Why did the Persians refuse to become traders?

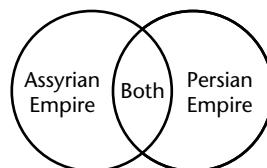
Critical Thinking

1. How can the reputation of a group like the Assyrians affect how others act toward that group?
2. How did the introduction of coins affect trade?
3. How would you describe the Persian attitude toward trade, and how wise was this policy?

4. In which of the empires discussed in this chapter would you have chosen to live? Explain.

Graphic Organizer Activity

Citizenship Create a diagram like this one, and use it to compare the governments of the Assyrian and Persian Empires.



Geography in History

Environment and Society What changes in their environment did the Persians make that extended ideas started by the Assyrians and Chaldeans? Explain your answer.

Using Your Journal

Review any details you may have noted about the contributions made by the people you studied in this chapter. Choose one of the contributions, and in a short paragraph, explain how it has been expanded and advanced.