

Early Human History

Introduction

Before I begin to talk about humans, I wanted briefly to place us in perspective. Life first began on this planet about 3.8 billion years ago, as far as we know, at this stage. That's 3.8 thousand million, or 3,800,000,000 years ago. The planet Earth is, of course, older still, currently dated to about 4.5 billion years old. The universe, in all its mystery, we currently estimate to be about 14.6 billion years old.

Human beings have existed for very little time, really, in the grand scale of things. And yet, so much seems to have happened. A hundred billion human beings have lived out their lives, and we're still uncovering chapters of our short history today.

The Stone Age

The Stone Age is defined as the period in which the ancestors of humans first began using and manipulating stone. It is commonly split into three sections; the early Paleolithic Stone Age, the Mesolithic Stone Age, and the later Neolithic Stone Age, with distinctive developments occurring in each.

Paleolithic

This period begins from around 3 million years ago, when current evidence suggests that the first stone tools were used by early evolutionary ancestors of the Homo genus. These were not biologically the same species as modern humans, but probably more closely resembled modern chimpanzees.

Some of the earliest stone tools (often referred to as "Oldowan tools" or "Mode One Tools") have been found in Gona, Ethiopia, by Professor Michael Roberts, published in 2003, and date back to 2.6 – 2.55 million years ago. They were found on the sediments of the paleo Awash River, the major river of Ethiopia, and come from the Busidama Formation, which lies above a "missing layer" of sediment which should date back to 2.9 to 2.7 million years ago.

Fragments of Australopithecus Garhi (whose remains date back from 2.6 -2.5 million years ago, and have been discovered with a few stone tools) and Australopithecus Aethiopicus (or Paranthropus Aethiopicus, 2.7 – 2.5 million years ago) have been found in different areas of Ethiopia and Kenya, and date back to roughly the same kind of time.

However, more recent findings (2010) nearby in Ethiopia have found animal bones with what appear to clearly be gouges made by stone tools, which date back to 3.2 million years ago. The bones were found in the Dikka region of Ethiopia, where remains of Australopithecus Aferensis have also been found dating back to a similar time.

As more paleontological evidence comes to light over time, we cannot yet be sure when exactly the first stone tools were used, or which species used them. The distinction between species is unclear in many remains that have been found in locations such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa and Chad, and which of these species are the direct descendants of Homo Sapiens, modern man, is disputed.

Homo Gautengensis, arising around 2 million years ago, is currently the earliest recognised species of the Homo genus, often proposed to have arisen from Australopithecus Garhi or from Australopithecus Sediba, whose remains date back to around 1.95 million years ago, and is regarded by some to be the key "missing link" between the Australopithecines and the earliest members of the Homo genus.

The first remains of *Homo Gautengensis* were found in 1977 in South Africa, but were not categorised as this particular species until 2010, by Dr Darren Curnoe. Following his examination of the remains, Dr Curnoe concluded that this species walked on two legs when on the ground, but probably still spent most of its time in the trees. Evidence of burnt animal bones near *Homo Gautengensis* remains suggests that the species may have used fire, and Dr Curnoe has said that there is also evidence that they used stone tools. Fully grown, *Homo Gautengensis* stood only about one metre tall, and weighed on average probably only around 50kg.

Homo Habilis remains have been found in Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania. This species arose around 2 million years ago (as early as 2.3 million in some studies, while others suggest something closer to 1.9 million years ago), and was considered for some time to be the oldest species of the *Homo* genus, and the first species to use stone tools. *Homo Habilis* stood at around 1.5 metres tall, and examinations of skulls found suggest this species had a protruding nose. It is clear from paleontological evidence that they used tools, and ate both meat and fruit.

Remains of large plains animals, such as giant buffalo, in East Africa from around the same time suggest that *Homo Habilis* lived in a time when the forests receded and grasslands expanded, forcing the species to spend less time in the trees, and more time on two legs.

Widely accepted as the direct ancestor of our own species, *Homo Ergaster* lived in southern and eastern Africa around 2 million years ago (remains date back to between 2.5 and 1.7 million years ago) and is possibly descended from, or shares a common ancestor with, *Homo Habilis*.

Remains suggest that *Homo Ergaster* stood tall at over 6 foot, and used more advanced stone tools than its predecessors. These stone tools have been referred to as “Acheulean tools” (as opposed to the earlier “Oldowan”) or as “Mode Two” tools. Studies of *Homo Ergaster* remains also suggest that the species had vocal chords similar to those of the modern human, and this, coupled with its larger brain size than any earlier species, has led some experts to suggest that *Homo Ergaster* had basic language.

While “Mode One” tools were just shards of flint, or flakes of sharp stone, “Mode Two” tools used the core of the flint, not just the shards that broke off, in combination with bone, antler or wood to shape the stone tools, to create much heavier, stronger and also more accurately carved stone tools.

Homo Erectus remains dating back to about 1.8 million years ago also used these “Mode Two” tools, and this species, while originating in Africa, spread as far as India, China, Java and even Europe. There is debate as to whether *Homo Erectus* is actually the same species as *Homo Ergaster* or, as some claim, that the two were one species in Africa, and that some groups of *Homo Ergaster* evolved into *Homo Erectus* as they migrated into Asia. The evidence currently is inconclusive.

There is strong evidence that *Homo Erectus* had controlled fire, and at some sites in the south of France, there is evidence that this species could actually light fires. However, their stone tools seem closer to the “Mode One” tools of its predecessors than the superior tools of the *Homo Ergaster*. Some evidence suggests that *Homo Erectus* may have also been the first species to use rafts to cross bodies of water, and to live in small band, or tribe, structures, caring for the injured or weak members of the extended family, and hunting in co-ordinated groups.

In Spain, remains of *Homo Antecessor* have been found dating back to 1.2 million years ago. Current research suggests that this species evolved from *Homo Ergaster*, and there is debate as to whether it then evolved into *Homo Heidelbergensis*, or whether the two are in fact the same species.

Homo Heidelbergensis is generally considered by experts to be the common genetic ancestor of Homo Sapiens and Homo Neanderthalensis. Remains of this species have been found in Europe and Africa and date back to 0.6 million (600,000) years ago. They were tall, often taller than modern humans, and more muscular. Their tools resemble the more advanced "Mode Two" tools of Homo Ergaster, and sites in Spain suggest that they buried their dead, even with gifts or offerings. Studies of their vocal structures indicate that Homo Heidelbergensis had a more developed language capability than any species before it, and examination of the inner ears suggest a hearing range far closer to modern Homo Sapiens than modern chimpanzees.

Homo Neanderthalensis diverged from Homo Heidelbergensis in Europe around 300,000 years ago. Neanderthals had advanced stone tools, lived in social groups, and anatomical studies of remains strongly suggest that they had some kind of language. Their tools ("Mousterian" or "Mode Three" tools) consisted of spears, sharp flints and hand-axes, often tailored for specific tasks. Sites in Europe show that Neanderthal was an intelligent hunter, setting traps for its prey. In 1995, in Slovenia, a hollow bear bone was found in what seems to be a Neanderthal site with what appear to be very deliberate holes drilled into it, making a very basic sort of flute. There is speculation as to whether or not this musical instrument was made by Neanderthals or very early Homo Sapiens, or as to whether it is an instrument at all.

Neanderthals spread across almost all of Europe, stretching into the Middle East and into Asia. There is strong evidence for interbreeding between Homo Neanderthalensis and Homo Sapiens in places in the Middle East around 80,000 to 50,000 years ago, and as a result 1 – 4% of the genome for Eurasian people is Neanderthal in origin.

Homo Sapiens diverged separately in Africa between 200,000 and 100,000 years ago. While Homo Neanderthalensis kept most of the physical attributes of Homo Heidelbergensis (a more muscular build, heavy brow, and protruding face), Homo Sapiens was taller and less robust, with a flat face and smaller brow than any known hominid. This species had a larger brain than Heidelbergensis, but on average a smaller brain than that of Homo Neanderthalensis.

"Aurignacian" or "Mode Four" tools found all across Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, dating back to around 50,000 - 30,000 years ago, were likely the tools of the first humans, and were more sophisticated than anything before it, using a wide variety of precisely cut stone tools, and utilised lots of animal bone.

There is currently no widely accepted theory of how it was that Homo Sapiens outlasted Homo Neanderthalensis, and all other hominid species. They were an intelligent species with sophisticated tools and hunting techniques, and so many simply believe that they thrived through more successful reproduction and competition for resources. Homo Neanderthalensis became extinct about 30,000 years ago.

Homo Sapiens had reached full anatomical and largely behavioural modernity around 50,000 years ago, and began to develop language, music and art. They had spread across Europe, Asia, and Australasia by around 40,000 years ago, and rich and diverse cultures flourished across the globe. In 1994, the Chauvet cave in the Ardèche region, in southern France, was discovered by Jean-Marie Chauvet, Eliette Brunel-Deschamps and Christian Hillaire, and dating back to around 33,000 years ago, are the earliest known "cave paintings". In Kotenski, Russia, very early needles made from bone and ivory, used to make some of the earliest clothing, most likely from furs to protect themselves from the cold, have been found, dating back to around 30,000 years ago. They had reached the Americas by around 14,000 years ago. Humans are the only hominid to inhabit every continent of the planet Earth.

Mesolithic

The early Mesolithic is a period in time which some historians actually call the “Upper Paleolithic”, and suggest that the Mesolithic era did not begin until later. Whether called Mesolithic or Upper Paleolithic, this period began in North Africa, the Middle East and the eastern parts of the Mediterranean in about 20,000 BC. This area of the world is often referred to as “The Levant”. This is a name that dates back to the Crusades, and comes from the French “lever”, meaning “rises”, referring to the area “from which the sun rises”. In this area archaeologists have uncovered “Mode Five”, or “Microlith” tools which date back to around 20,000 years ago and onwards. These were very small and very sharp flints, which were used in combination with wood or bone to create composite tools and weapons.

At around this time, in North America, Europe and Northern Asia, “The Ice Age” was underway (26,000 – 19,000 years ago), and vast sheets of ice covered much of the continents. The human societies living in the Northern Hemisphere continued to develop (with the Americas, the last continents to be inhabited by human beings, being populated by about 12,000 BC), also using Microlith tools, but most historians still consider these to be Paleolithic cultures, with the Mesolithic era arriving later in these Northern areas.

Aside from a few Microlith tools, there is little evidence left in the Levant of human society before around 12,000 BC. These cultures seem to have been almost completely nomadic hunter-gatherer tribes. However, in 1964, American anthropologist Fred Wendorf and his team uncovered what would be named Cemetery 117 in Sudan. What they found was the oldest known evidence of warfare; 59 full bodies and numerous fragments and remains, many clearly killed by pointed stone projectiles, all buried in three cemeteries on the Northern Border of Sudan. The remains date back to around 13,700 years ago.

From around 12,500 BC to 9,500 BC, the first sedentary, or at least semi-sedentary, human cultures developed in Israel and Lebanon. This marks the beginning of the later Mesolithic period in the Levant. This was before the development of agriculture, so the societies were still largely hunter-gatherer, but did harvest wild grains, such as rye. One of these cultures was the Natufian, who developed the first sickles, making harvesting grains possible, and evidence of humans buried with young dogs suggests the first domestication of animals. Natufian sites have been found in Syria, Israel, Lebanon and Jordan. Burials are located at these settlements, often buried with “gifts”, or with the graves covered with limestone slabs.

The Harifian are another Mesolithic culture from the Levant, arising in southern Israel in around 8500 BC. This culture demonstrates the earliest examples of triangular Microlith stone tools. These sharper, more aero-dynamic Microliths suggest highly improved hunting techniques. Juris Zarins, an American-Latvian archaeologist, also theorised that the Harifian were the original culture to spread the first Proto-Semitic languages (the spoken-word languages that would have preceded the earliest Semitic (root languages of modern Hebrew) written languages) through the region.

Other Mesolithic cultures whose remains date back to this period in time include the Antelian and Khabran (sites found in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine) the Zarzian (found in Iraq, Iran and Central Asia), and, slightly later on, the Caspian (Tunisia, Algeria and Libya, with some sites located in southern Spain and Sicily). There is obviously still much speculation about these cultures. Many findings are still not clearly attributed to one culture or another, and distinctions between cultures are often unclear. The people of the Levant at this time were largely hunter-gatherer, with some societies settling to create the first “cities”. Many historians see this settling and establishment of cities to be the mark of the end of the Mesolithic era in the Levant.

In Europe and North America, the end of the “Ice Age” and start of warmer climates began around 9,000 BC. The “Ice Age” civilisations had been arguably as technologically advanced as the human societies developing in the Levant, using nets and spears to hunt huge animals such as mammoths, but it is this point when the ice receded that most historians agree marks the beginning of the Mesolithic period in Europe, Northern Asia and North America.

The warmer climate created an abundance of food supplies from the marshlands that arose as the ice melted. Many European and North American cultures were still hunter-gatherer nomads, but some groups settled, such as the Maglemosian culture, from Scandinavia. At a site in Denmark, evidence has been found that shows that the Maglemosians lived in huts made of bark, had domesticated the dog, and had used flint, bone and wood to create fishing and hunting tools. Maglemosian settlements have also been found in England, Poland, Sweden and Northern France, and date back from 9500 BC to 6000 BC.

The Lepenski Vir culture arose in Serbia around 7000 BC. The site seems to reach its peak in around 5000 BC, with excavations revealing 136 buildings, including architecture which suggests a rich religious culture. All the houses in the site face the river Danube, and small sculptures found in the remains suggest a culture which worshiped fish-like river Gods. There were many other hunter-gatherer Mesolithic cultures across Europe, Northern Asia and Northern America during this time.

As more groups settled, the Mesolithic era came to an end in most of the northern hemisphere. As many of the cultures of the Middle-East and Mediterranean had done about 2000 years before, Europe moved into the Neolithic era.

Neolithic

The lines between Mesolithic, Neolithic, and any other “period” of history are blurred, as developments occur at different times in different places. However, most historians agree that the Neolithic period began in the Middle East in around 9500 BC with the development of agriculture. The end of the Mesolithic in this region had seen the rise of settled communities, the domestication of animals, and the first harvesting of wild grains. In Syria, the ancient settlement of Tell Abu Hureyra, situated in the valley of the Euphrates River, shows us the earliest yet evidence of farming.

Evidence for the cultivation of rye in this location dates back to around 9100 BC, and meanwhile in the Northern Hemisphere the “Ice Age” was coming to an end, causing drought in the Levant. It has been suggested that this drought led the Neolithic settlers in Tell Abu Hureyra to develop agriculture, instead of relying on the sparse rainfall and drying wild crops they had previously been foraging from. The houses in this settlement were made from mud-brick, and there is also evidence in this site of the herding of animals. Remains of pottery have also been found in the site, dating back to about 5350 BC. However, the site was abandoned in around 5050 BC.

The use of agriculture had spread to Mesopotamia (an area comprised of modern Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Iran) by around 7000 BC, and in Greece, Crete and western Turkey, evidence from a similar time suggests that the cultures had a thriving economy of food production; grains as well as sheep, goats and pigs. In China, rice, millet and beans were farmed as early as 8000 BC, and it seems likely that this development was independent of the progress in the Levant.

In around 5000 BC in northern and western Europe, the growing populations in sedentary communities seem to have led to the development of agriculture. The Céide Fields in the west of Ireland are some of the earliest remains of field systems in Europe, with sections of land marked out by stone walls. These fields date back to around 5500 BC.

In the Americas, the cultivation of maize had begun by around 3000 BC. However, a large number of these cultures remained nomadic, still largely living a hunter-gatherer lifestyle, for many centuries.

In Japan the Neolithic Era didn’t begin until far later, with the land still largely occupied by the hunter-gatherer Jōmon people, who came to Japan in around 20,000 BC from Siberia, settled during the Mesolithic era, and created the famous Jōmon pottery, with some examples dating back as far as 14,000 BC. The Jōmon peoples remained largely unchanged in Japan for a long time. Their culture was much later adapted by the Yayoi culture from Korea and mainland Asia in around 1000 BC, bringing with them the cultivation of rice paddy fields, and bringing Japan into the Neolithic Era.

Towards the end of the Neolithic Era, many cultures across the world had highly sophisticated cultures, with farms and economies. It is suggested by many historians that the growing economy created a need for documentation. From around 4000 BC, the earliest signs of written language begin to appear.

One of the earliest examples of writing is Cuneiform; developed in Sumer (a region in Mesopotamia, in what would now be Iraq) in around 3500 BC. Some early examples of “proto-writing” found in some areas of the Middle-East date back to around 4000 BC, and seem to be less sophisticated ancestors of Cuneiform. The script is the founding father of Akkadian, Egyptian and Hittite languages, to name a few, and was gradually replaced by the Phoenician alphabet from around 100 AD.

Seemingly independently, different scripts of writing also sprung up across the world at various times. In China, the earliest confirmed evidence of writing comes from around 1500 BC, the Shang Dynasty, and largely consists of markings on bone, bronze or tortoise shells. However, recent findings in Jiahu, and ancient Neolithic site in Henan, China are thought to date back to about 6000 BC. It is still questionable as to whether the markings found on tortoise shell are actually writing, or whether they are simply drawings.

Piecing together the earliest days of man is an ongoing process, and new finds are changing our ideas every day. However, as more substantial and comprehensive systems of writing developed in the Bronze Age, we find it easier and easier to trace our history through written accounts. The distinction between History and Pre-history is often marked by the advent of writing.

The Bronze Age

Typically agreed as beginning in about 2500 BC, the dawn of the Bronze Age marks the start of a series of developments in human tool use and technology. From about 3000 BC humans in many regions of the world had been experimenting with mining, and metals such as copper and tin became a valuable trade resource across the Mediterranean. However, copper and tin tools were soon surpassed by bronze tools.

Bronze is a slightly vague term used to describe an alloy of copper, and usually tin. An alloy is a solid metal made from two or more types of element. The term “bronze” can be used to describe any copper alloy.

“The Copper Age” (or “Chalcolithic Age”, meaning copper and stone age) existed for a time (around 3500 BC onwards) during the transition from The Stone Age to the Age of Metals, when people could smelt copper. When people began to smelt copper with tin, they found that it was much harder than both of its ingredients, and these new metal – “bronze” – made better tools than copper could alone.

Bronze tools were much stronger and less fragile than the earlier stone tools, and larger weapons were developed. Bronze daggers have been found in the regions near the Aegean and Black Sea, dating back to about 1700 BC. These weapons were longer, more powerful, and more deadly than any that had come before them. Bronze quickly became highly valuable, and there is evidence of trade routes for bronze stretching all over Europe, the Middle-East, and perhaps even as far as China from around 1900 BC.

Alongside these advances in tools and technology, the Bronze Age ushered in a time of other great advancements. All across the Levant and Mediterranean, small cities grew into vast kingdoms, and some of the greatest feats of architecture in the world were achieved in this period, such as the Great Pyramids of Egypt, (the earliest being the Pyramid of Djoser, built at Saqqara, north-west of Memphis, around 2600 BC) and the Knossos in Crete (a palace complex, complete with aqueducts, sewers and grain mills, built around 2000 BC, and origin of the legend of the Minotaur Labyrinth).

The Bronze Age saw the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt in around 3100 BC, and the First Dynasty of the Old Kingdom of Egypt began. This was, at the time, a great power covering vast expanses of land and commanding a much larger populace than most civilizations and groups had before. The King, or Pharaoh, of Egypt now controlled what had once been smaller, independent kingdoms, and a more complex government evolved, with evidence of taxation and regular population censuses to determine the number of people fit for labour in construction, farming and the military force.

Egyptians of the Old Kingdom worshiped their Pharaoh as a God, but despite the prevalence of myth, legend and superstition in their culture, many historians argue that scientific thought was born in Egypt during the Bronze Age; the polymath Imhotep, advisor and doctor to the first King of unified Egypt, Djoser, is credited by 20th Century Canadian physician and historian Sir William Osler as being the true and original father of medicine.

Imhotep is said to have written the first medical document devoid of magical explanation; the Edwin Smith Papyrus, brought to light by American archaeologist Edwin Smith, who bought the papyrus from an Egyptian antiques dealer in Luxor in 1862. The papyrus contains a list of 48 cases of injury or trauma to the body, and treatment options offered. Methods include taking a pulse, testing a patient’s vision and sense of smell, and checking for palpitations. The papyrus dates back to the time of Imhotep, although authorship is questioned.

Imhotep was also a prominent engineer, who designed the Pyramid of Djoser and laid the foundations (metaphorically speaking) for the developments in the architecture of the latter Red Pyramid, Pyramid of Khufu, and the Great Pyramid of Giza. Imhotep was highly regarded both during his lifetime and posthumously; he was deified upon his death, and was worshiped for almost 2000 years.

In around 2334 BC, the short-lived Akkadian Empire was founded by Sargon I of Akkad, and reined for about 180 years throughout much of the Middle East. This is regarded by many historians to be the earliest empire in history, and the Kingdom stretched from modern-day Iraq into Anatolia (Turkey), Afghanistan and Oman. The empire boasted silver, lapis lazuli, and copper mines, as well as a huge irrigated system of organised imperial wheat production, guarded by fortresses. As in Egypt, Akkadian kings were regarded as gods, and worshiped by their people.

The Akkadian Empire also provides us with our first known named poet; Enheduanna, daughter of Sargon of Akkad. These poems mark a significant development in the written language of Cuneiform and literature as a whole, shifting from third person earlier on, to first person in some later works. All around the Levant, kingdoms were springing up, building vast cities and epic monuments, fuelled by the wealth and prosperity of the improved technology that the Bronze Age had brought. And so, as is most often the case, with wealth and prosperity came the time and environment needed for leaps in thought, invention and understanding.

Further North, in Europe, the Bronze Age saw the construction of sites such as Stonehenge, in Wiltshire, England, built around 2400 BC; the use of the site is still in controversy, as the lack of written records throughout most of Northern Europe at this time makes understanding the culture more difficult. The site is still quite clearly and impressive feat of mathematical and organisational skill, as well as more developed tools and understanding allowing for careful stone masonry.

Also in England, three bronze age sewn plank-built boats were discovered in 1937 by Ted and Will Wright, in North Ferriby, Yorkshire. The boats date back to between 2000 – 1500 BC, and are some of the earliest examples of boats in Northern Europe. Once surviving in small villages and nomadic tribes, people across the world were finding ways to group together to form larger communities, and travel to new areas.

In China, the earliest bronze and copper artefacts date back to as far as 3100 BC, and are attributed to the Majiayao culture, from the upper Yellow River area, in Eastern Gansu, Qinghai and Sichuan. But there is evidence that China already had established trade routes with Levantine kingdoms by this time, as the discovery of the Tarim mummies in Xinjiang, China, seem to be people of Indo-European origin based on their DNA. These mummified bodies date back to potentially as far as 1900 BC, and testify to at least some connection between East and West, even in the bronze age. Reference to these peoples in China is also made by the ancient Chinese economist Guan Zhong, writing in 700 BC, about the “Yuezi” (fair haired, blue eyed, tall people) as being from the lands in the North-East, and trading with the Chinese precious stones such as jade. Such vast and prosperous trade routes not only spread valuable materials and resources, but also languages, religions and customs.

But the world was, metaphorically, still huge. Maps from around this time only seem to show the local area in which they were drawn. Even the Turin Papyrus Map, found in Egypt in the early 1800s, and drawn around 1160 BC, while being one of the earliest examples of such a detailed map, even showing geological knowledge of different types of rock and topographical detail, still only depicts the area surrounding the Nile River. It's clear that the Egyptians at this time had knowledge of other civilizations in other corners of the world, but maps of their lands are not to be found.

Some cultures too, seem to have been separate still from this early period of globalisation. In the Americas, bronze was not widely used at this time, although it was independently discovered by the Moche culture, in Northern Peru, in around 100 AD. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the Bronze Age was missed, somewhat, and neither bronze nor copper were ever widely used. The first metallurgy in this part of the world arrived with the dawn of the Iron Age.

The Iron Age

As bronze tools had replaced stone a thousand years before hand, so the discovery of iron smelting technology changed the world from around 1000 BC onwards. Iron tools were again stronger than bronze, and were not cast as bronze had been, but hammered into shape. Steel (an alloy made largely from iron and another element, usually carbon) was developed as early as 1400 BC, but was not efficiently produced, and the carbon content usually still very low at this time, making it little harder than iron alone. Iron swords, blades and tools replaced weaker bronze technology, and ushered in a new age of human history, particularly characterised by unprecedented military expansion with the advent of greater iron weaponry.

Following the collapse of some civilizations in the Levant at the end of the Bronze Age, due largely to drought in the region, the Iron Age brought about a resurgence and revival of lost civilisations. The Iron Age saw the rise and fall of the Ancient Greeks, the later Kingdoms of Egypt, and the Roman Empire. But that is a story for another time.