Early Western Civilization

Institution

Date

**Section 1**

**The Epic of Gilgamesh**

The Epic of Gilgamesh is an ancient Mesopotamian poem, and one of the outstanding stories created around 2100 BCE. The story explains the events that were taking place during the time of its creation, and how supernatural beings (gods) strived to save humanity from floods. This story is significant to western civilization as it illustrates how western civilization spread from early Mesopotamia to Greece, Rome, and other parts of western societies. For instance, the resemblance between this story, and other Greek Mythology shows the significance of supernatural beings (gods) and their role in society during that time.

**The Valley of the Kings**

A valley in Ancient Egypt that contained precious rocks and materials. It is this area that produced rock-cut tombs for affluent members of the society such as Kings and Nobbles. This area is significant to western civilization as it shows the origin of social classes and nobles. The area influenced western civilization, as it introduced the concept of social classes, where affluent members are treated differently from the rest of the population.

**Chauvet Caves**

The Chauvet Caves is a group of caves that were discovered in France. The cave is significant as it contains drawings, engravings, and paintings, which are a clear embodiment of the western civilizations. These caves influenced early western history, as they contain drawings and paintings that help current generations to understand early western civilization and key drawing and paintings that were popular during this era.

**Cuneiform**

Cuneiform is an ancient system of writing, developed and utilized by Mesopotamians between 3500-3000 BCE. This system is significant to early western civilization as it advanced writing and communication during this period. Cuneiform influenced early western history by enabling Mesopotamians to record information about events and to communicate with each other easily. Cuneiform also impacted the ability of early Mesopotamians to store information and to keep records.

**Hammurabi**

An ancient Babylonian King, who reigned between 1792 BC to c. 1750. He is significant to western civilization as he introduced the Hammurabi code of conduct, that was widely accepted by other empires during the western civilization. Hammurabi influenced early western history as he was among the first rulers to introduce laws to govern how human beings relate with each other.

**Lucy**

Lucy is a renowned ape that is believed to have existed about 3.2 million years ago. Lucy is significant to western civilization as her remains help support key theories of human origin, particularly the evolution theory. Lucy is significant to early western history, as her discovery reshaped western history, and people gained more interest in understanding the process of evolution and human development.

**Akhenaten**

Akhenaten is an Egyptian anxiety ruler who lived between 1380 BC and 1336 BC. He is significant to early western civilization as he reshaped religion in early Egypt. For instance, he transformed this society from worshiping of multiple gods, into the worship of a single God. He influenced early western history by reshaping religion, art, and leadership. He is remembered for being among the first leaders to take an active role in shaping and controlling religion.

**Neolithic Period**

Neolithic Period is a period that began about 10,000 years ago, and greatly changed the course of human life. This period was significant to early western civilization as new tools, and stone-age technologies were introduced to improve human life. Neolithic Period greatly influenced early western history as it marked the earliest attempts by human being to improve their lives and to solve challenges facing them. For instance, this period was marked by the adoption of improved production techniques and new tools such as metals.

**Assyrians**

Assyrians were individuals who created, the Assyrian empire, which lasted between 850-605 BCE. Assyrians were significant to early western civilization as they established a strong empire which lasted for a decade, and established control over other neighbors, who had oppressed them for a long time. Assyrians are important to western civilization as they struggled to survive in region dominated by stronger neighbors. The history of Assyrians also showed how western civilizations spread and how it separated them from Babylonians.

**Ur**

An ancient Mesopotamian city that existed between 3800BC and was captured in C 2340 by the Sargon. This city is significant to early western civilization as it regarded as one of the key centers for the Sumerian culture. This city influenced early western history as it contains key information about this culture, and how it was blended with other cultures such as the Semitic culture. The city is also important as a key center for early Christianity.

**The Tanakh**

Tanakh is Jewish writing that contains prophets and holy writings such as the Torah. This writing is important to Jews, as it believed to contain the direct word of God. This writing is significant to western as it influenced Judaism, and how religious Jews relate with God. This writing is significant to western history as it contains rules that are observed and widely honored by religious Jews. These writings also help us to trace the origin of Judaism, and to understand it better.

**Cyrus the Great**

Cyrus the Great was a renowned Persian rule, who established the Achaemenid Empire, which was the first Persian empire. He is significant to western civilization as he defeated other empires such as Lydia, and established a strong empire that greatly reshaped western civilization. He is important to the western history as he is regarded as one of the strongest rulers, who defeated powerful kingdoms and helped establish a free empire, where religion was separate and distinct from the state.

**Fertile Crescent**

Fertile Crescent was a region in the middle east spanning across Mesopotamia, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, and other Middle East nations. This region is significant to western civilization as it is regarded as the origin of humans, and their civilization. The region was believed to be highly fertile and ideal for human beings. The region is important to western history as most of the early western civilization begun in this region before spreading to Rome and other regions.

**Thera**

Thera is an ancient Greek Island, that was devastated, and destroyed by Volcanic eruptions. This island is significant to western civilization as it shows how natural calamities influenced, and shaped early western civilization, including architectural designs that were developed later. The history of Thera shows the destructive powers of natural calamities, and early attempts by humans to understand these calamities. Thera shaped the history of western civilization as people began to prepare to deal with natural calamities that came later.

**Otzi**

Otzi is a renowned figure and the oldest Natural Mummy in existence. He is significant to western civilization as he is believed to be a special creature, whose copse remained intact after his death. Otzi influenced early western history, as he is regarded as unique being and there havebeen attempts to reconstruct his image. His remains are well preserved, and he is an embodiment of the early western civilization.

**The Phoenicians**

Phoenicians were individuals who occupied coastal cities of Phoenicia around 1200BCE. Phoenicians were significant to early western civilization as they helped spread western civilizations, particularly through trade. Most of them embraced trade since they lived in hostile and mountainous areas where agriculture was not possible. Phoenicians included early western history since they created cities based on commerce, and were among the earliest groups to engage in commerce for survival. They also influenced the history of cities such as Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos, by turning them into commercial hubs.

**Solomon’s Temple**

Solomon’s Temple is an old temple that was constructed in Jerusalem around 966 BCE. The temple is significant to western civilization as it is one of the few structures that are illustrated in the Bible. While the history of this temple is controversial, it is important to western history as it shows the origin and spreading of biblical teachings globally. The destruction of the temple is also significant as it helps show the challenges that faced religion during the early western civilization.

**The Stepped Pyramid of Djoser**

The Stepped Pyramid of Djoser is a Pyramid that was developed during the reign of Djoser around 2668- 2649 BCE. This pyramid is located in the same place with other structure such as the tunnels, chambers, and other temples associated with Ancient Egyptian leaders. This temple is significant to western civilization as it depicts one of the earlier architectural works in the early western civilization. The temple influenced early western history since it is one of the earliest works that influenced leadership and architectural design in other areas.

**Zoroastrianism**

Zoroastrianism was an ancient religion preserved by ancient Persian priests and widely adopted as a state religion by Persians. Zoroastrianism is significant to western civilization as it shows the existence of a relationship between the state and religion, and attempts by the state to control and enforce religion. Zoroastrianism influenced early western history as it shows how religion spread during early western, and factors that allowed it to spread.

**The Battle of Kadesh**

The Battle of Kadesh was a battle between Hillites, and Egyptians, that ended in a stalemate. This battle is significant to western civilization as it reshaped how early western civilization spread. For instance, after this war, the two sides signed a peace treaty that established the boundaries of each empire. This battle influenced early western history since it depicted the earliest by warring sides to make peace, intermarry and develop together.

**Section 2**

**Question 1**

The emergence of early forms of writings such as the Precursor to writing in Mesopotamia encouraged other people to embrace the use of written scripts. Some other major factors that inspired the development of written scripts include: The need to accurately store records, the need to communicate with ease, and the need to store information on trade, and other economic activities (Mathisen, 2015). Early societies also embraced the use of writing to mark key dates and events, which were important for their survival. The development of early forms of writing improved the lives of people, as they were able to store records on trade and to easily communicate with people who were distant away.

**Question 2**

The two empires were similar in that they had a highly established system of governance where citizens paid taxes to support governments day to day operations. In both of them, citizens were treated with respect and protected by their powerful armies(Mathisen, 2015). Both states also leveraged on their military strengths and their strong armies to govern and to protect their people. Despite the similarities, the two had different systems of governance. For instance, while Assyrian had a more centralized system of governance, where the king had immense powers and was regarded as all-powerful(Mathisen, 2015). On the contrary, the Persian king was less powerful and more consultative with his subjects. The two kingdoms used different approaches to integrate theirrealms. The Persian rulers had a more humane and gentle system where subjects’ rights were respected. Most of them used persuasion rather than coercion and force to bring citizens under their rule. On the contrary, Neo-Assyrian brought citizens under their rule through massive relocation and force. Further, Neo-Assyrian rulers brought people to work in the army and other projects for the benefits of all.

**Question 3**

The Nile was regarded as the source of Life for early Egyptians, as all their economic activities were aided by this rive. For instance, Early Egyptians used water from this river to irrigate their lands, allowing them to grow crops in the desert (Mathisen, 2015). Since a large part of Egypt is a desert, this river also provided water for consumption, cattle rearing, and for other economic activities such as painting and craftsmanship. Without the Nile, life in Egypt would have been tough, and no economic activity would be possible. For instance, farmers relied on this river to irrigate their crops, which they also sold to the neighboring areas.

**Question 4**

Minoans and Mycenaeans occupied Greece in different periods and greatly contributed to its culture. On their part, Mycenaeans engaged in trade with other traders in Egypt, and Mesopotamia. During this trade, they acquired new technology, ideas as well as Mesopotamian and Egyptian influences(Mathisen, 2015). These influences were later passed to and adopted by Greeks to become part of their cultures. On their part, Minoans occupied vast islands in modern-day Greece, and are believed to the first people to speak Greek language. Through their contact with external people across the Mediterranean, they established a strong civilization which influenced the culture of modern-day Greece. Since they had strong ships, they were able to move to far region, where they got new ideas and technologies that were incorporated into the Greek culture.

**Question 5**

Akhenaten was a revolutionary leader as he reshaped the concept of religion and art in early Egypt. His key reforms revolved around religion, whereby he spearheaded the abolition of traditional gods and spearheading the concept of Monotheistic Religion(Mathisen, 2015). Outside this, he was regarded as revolutionary leader since he moved the capital city, and encouraged people to worship and give sacrifice to a single god Aten. He also created a strong kingdom where strong emphasis was put on art. As a leader, he reshaped the Egyptian society, and promoted art, which is one of the major things that made the society stronger, and admirable by many. He was revolutionary since he totally changed how people in that society lived and worshiped.

**Question 6**

Minoan and Egyptian cultures compare and contrast in several ways. One key difference between them is in their art. Most Minion artworks are made of Fresco paintings, compared to that of Egyptians which is made of papyrus. The two artworks also differ in appearance, and messages passed across. For instance, most, Egyptian artwork is more detailed and are mainly used to depict deities and afterlife (Mathisen, 2015). On the contrary, Minoan art is more realistic and is mostly used to show things that matter to society among their strength. Despite the differences, the two cultures seem to share some common world view, especially on afterlife. Further, the two seem to share some common forms of writing, like Egyptian hieroglyphs as also evident in the Minoan cultures. Also, the Minion bull, which is a sign of divine power closely resemble, and was drawn from Hathor, which is an Egyptian god (Mathisen, 2015). Minoan architecture is mainly made up of clay, and native stone and timber used to reinforce the entire structure. Further, most structures in this culture are colorful and beautifully made. On the other hand, Egyptian architecture comprised of structures made up stones and mud bricks. Most of them were durable and required no reinforcement.

**Question 7**

The key problem with interpreting Neolithic cultures lied in their complexity. The Neolithic period lasted for a long time, from 3000 BC till now. During this period, there was a rapid change in the social, economic, technological, and cultural aspects of the people (Mathisen, 2015). Further, Neolithic cultures were diverse and complex, making it hard for any person to effectively interpret them. Lastly, the Neolithic culture was founded and defined on a traditional culture concept, which cannot be easily blended into the modern-day notion of culture. As a result, it is difficult to define the cultures or to explore how they relate to each other.

**Question 8**

Some notable technological and agricultural revolution by early humans include stone-age technologies, which made it easy for them to cultivate their farms. These tools include polished stone adzes and axes which allowed them to cut, chop and grind with ease. At around 8000 BCE, humans also invented pottery and weaving, which revolutionized food storage. Further, domestication of plants and animals during the Neolithic period were other significant innovations that improved their lives (Mathisen, 2015). Other innovations such as scratch plows that were pulled by bovines or humans made tilling easy, hence allowed humans to cultivate huge tracks which were not possible earlier. Also, it was during the Neolithic age that most people developed new tools such as Razor-sharp microliths, for harvesting grains. Overall, these technologies made farming easy and enabled early people to harvest and store products for a long time.