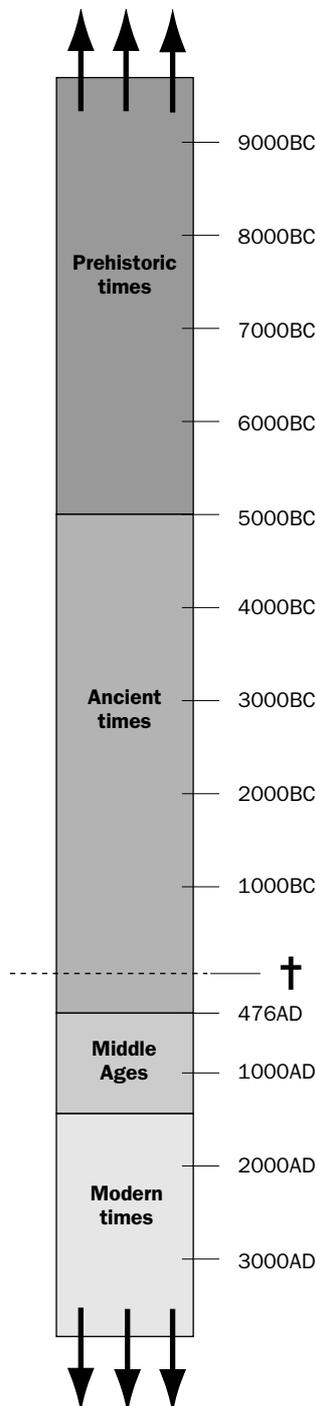


Unit 1: Timelines

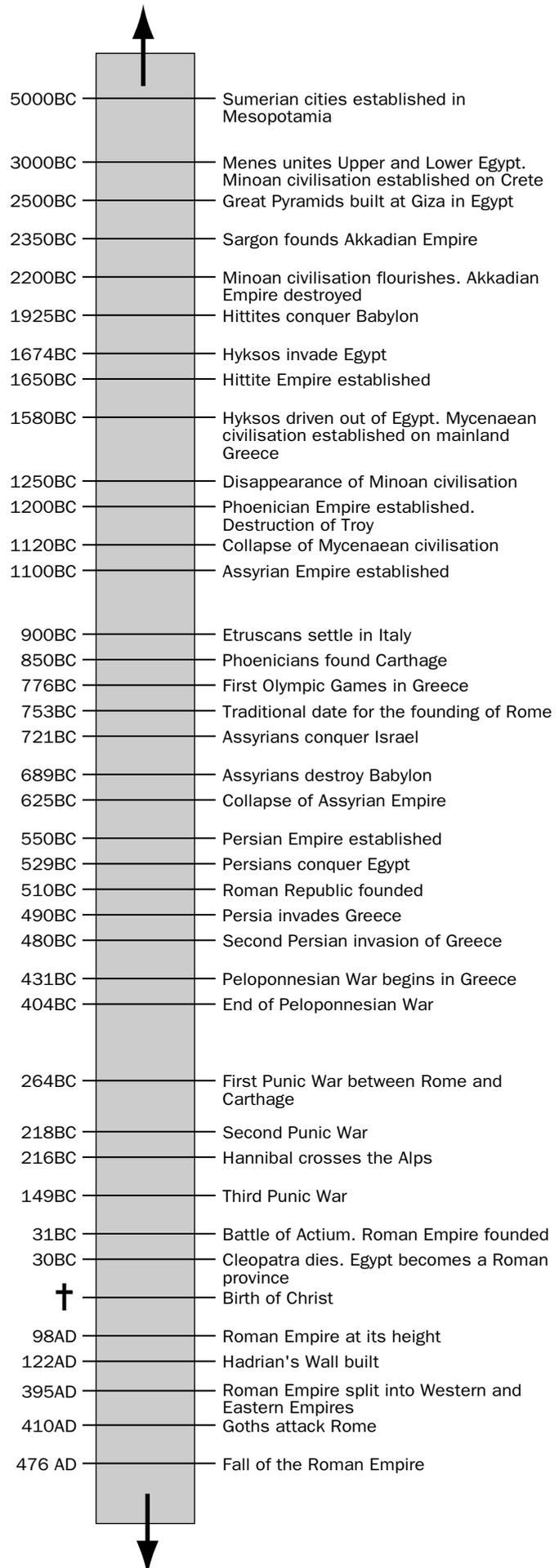
Skill Interpreting and constructing timelines

Studying the ancient past requires an understanding of when important events occurred and the order in which they happened. Timelines are a common method of presenting this information. A timeline is a diagram that shows dates and events in chronological order (i.e. from earliest to most recent) at measured intervals along a line. A timeline of ancient history shows dates and events in relation to the birth of Christ. Any event which is shown before this point on the timeline occurred before the birth of Christ (i.e. 'BC'). Any event shown after this point, occurred after the birth of Christ (i.e. 'AD'). Timelines are an important summary tool. They can be used to show events in someone's life as well as the historical development of a country or civilisation.

Source A Timeline of world history



Source B Timeline of ancient history



Source C The life of Arthur Evans

Arthur Evans was born in 1851 and studied at Oxford. At the age of 31, he became Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum. He had a passion for archaeology, especially prehistoric scripts. He studied sealstones found at Mycenae and started collecting them. He found some, similar to the Mycenaean ones, in an Athens antique shop and was informed that they were of Cretan provenance, so in 1894 he went to Crete, where he collected several more. He published his study of these objects in *Cretan Pictographs and Pre-Phoenician Scripts* in 1895. Evans' travels in Crete awakened his general interest in the antiquities on the island. He visited the hill of Kephala at Knossos, which was still virtually intact. Evans began negotiating to buy the site from its owners but the political situation on the island was not favourable. When Crete was declared an autonomous state in 1898, the situation changed. An archaeological law was drafted for the first time and the necessary preconditions for the excavation of Knossos were established. The purchase of the archaeological site was completed and on 23 March, 1900, the new systematic excavations at Knossos commenced, financed mainly by Evans himself.

At the start of the excavations there were thirty workers, but their number soon rose to over a hundred and the work proceeded at a very rapid pace. After only five days Evans had enough evidence at his disposal to realise that the large building which was coming to light belonged to a civilisation older than the Mycenaean. On the seventh day he found a clay tablet. On 13 April the throne of Minos was discovered. On 15 April Evans unearthed a large number of clay tablets inscribed with the prehistoric script of the Cretans. His interest in the script was being rewarded and, at the same time, the whole civilisation to which it belonged was being revealed. By the close of the first year (1900) the whole of the West Wing had been excavated and in the following year he began digging the East Wing. Within two years the Throne Room, the Central Court, the Grand Staircase, the Magazines and the Domestic Quarters had been revealed. By the end of the third season of excavation (late 1902) almost all of the palace had been uncovered.

Excavation stopped at the beginning of World War I (1914) and was not resumed until 1922. It then continued for a further ten years until 1932. Evans published his discoveries between 1920 and 1935 in his four-volume work *The Palace of Minos at Knossos*. In 1935 he was present at the unveiling of his bust in bronze, which was erected at the entrance to the site of Knossos. He died in 1941, aged 90, at Youlbury in England, having dedicated fifty long years to research into the Minoan civilisation.

Abridged from *Knossos—A Complete Guide to the Palace of Minos*, Athens, 1982, pp20–1

Figure of a goddess from Knossos



Comprehension skills

- 1 Read the introduction and answer the following questions.
 - a What is a timeline?
 - b How are dates and events arranged on a timeline?
 - c Where will events occurring in the BC period be found on a timeline?
 - d Where will events occurring in the AD period be found on a timeline?
 - e How are timelines used in Ancient History?

Interpretation skills

2 Source A

- a How many periods of time are shown on the timeline?
- b Which is the earliest period of time shown?
- c Which is the most recent period of time shown?
- d When did ancient times begin and end?
- e For how many years did ancient times last?

3 Source B

- a What is the earliest date shown on the timeline?
- b What is the most recent date shown on the timeline?
- c In which year did the following events take place:
 - the destruction of Troy
 - the founding of Rome
 - the building of Hadrian's Wall
 - the first Olympic Games
 - the death of Cleopatra?
- d Name the event that took place in the following years:
 - 850BC • 529BC • 1925BC • 410AD • 2500BC.
- e Which of these events came first:
 - the collapse of the Akkadian Empire or the disappearance of the Minoan civilisation
 - the crossing of the Alps by Hannibal or the unification of Egypt by Menes
 - the Battle of Actium or the Persian invasion of Greece
 - the destruction of Babylon by the Assyrians or Etruscan settlement in Italy
 - the fall of the Roman Empire or the birth of Christ?
- f Calculate how long each of the following lasted:
 - the Peloponnesian War
 - the Assyrian Empire
 - the Mycenaean civilisation
 - the occupation of Egypt by the Hyksos
 - the Roman Empire.
- g Find evidence in the timeline to support the following statements.
 - The Assyrians were a war-like people.
 - The Sumerians were the first urban civilisation.
 - The Romans and Carthaginians were enemies.
 - The Egyptians were early masters of stone technology.
 - The Greeks experienced a period of conflict during the 5th century BC.

4 Source C

- Put the following events in their correct order.
- Evans begins excavations at Knossos.
 - Evans dies at Youlbury, England.
 - *The Palace of Minos at Knossos* is published.
 - Evans is born.
 - Evans purchases the site of Knossos.
 - World War I interrupts excavations at Knossos.
 - The Throne of Minos is discovered.
 - Excavation of the West Wing of The Palace of Knossos is completed.
 - Evans visits Crete for the first time.
 - Excavation of most of The Palace of Knossos is completed.

Construct a timeline

- 5 Use Source C to construct a timeline summarising the life of Arthur Evans. You should have twenty-one events.

Extension work

- 6 Construct one of the following timelines:
 - a timeline of your life
 - a timeline of the life of an important historical figure.