

ASTR 308 "Into the Final Frontier"

The Discovers: Book IV

1. Briefly, describe the "The Awe of the Mountains". That is:

(a) What did mountains symbolize to people?

(b) What were the famous mountains of the following people and provide a one sentence describe the significance of these mountains to these peoples?

- i. Hindus
- ii. Japanese
- iii. Jews

(c) In the flat lands of

- i. Mesopotamia
- ii. Egypt
- iii. Mexico

Briefly describe the efforts of these peoples to emulate mountains (what were the names of the structures that each built?) and for what reasons did they build them?

(d) What was the "Tower of Babel"? Where did it take place?

2. In "Charting Heaven and Hell",

(a) What was the role of the moon and the sun in many ancient cultures?

(b) Briefly describe the journey of the after life according to the Greeks, including the judgment, and where the "bad" went and where the "good" went. Why did the Greeks place a coin in the mouths of the dead?

(c) Who was Dante Alighieri? What was the name of his significant work. Briefly describe his geography of the afterworld.

3. In "The Appeal of Symmetry"

- (a) What was the Homeric notion of the geography of the Earth? By whom was it ridiculed?
- (b) What were the contributions of Pythagorus and Plato to "Western Thought"? What did they believe the shape of the Earth to be and why?
- (c) What significant experiment did Eratosthenes perform? When? Briefly describe his experiment and how accurate he was.
- (d) Who is Strabo? When did he live? What marginal contribution (yet an important stepping stone) did he contribute to the science of cartography?
- (e) Who was Hipparchus of Nicaea? When did he live? What was his major contribution to the science of cartography and why was it so significant?
- (f) Who was Ptolemy? When did he live? For what reasons IS Ptolemy considered the "indisputable father of modern geography"? Provide a few examples of his contributions. How did these contributions "prepare Europe for World exploring"?
- (g) What errors did Ptolemy make that may have been historically pivotal in inducing Columbus to sail west and then discover the New World?

4. In "The Prison of Christian Dogma"

- (a) What happened to the science of geography and for how long did this occur (give the approximate years)? Why does Boorstin call this "The Great Interruption"?
- (b) What city became the center of all maps of the Earth?
- (c) What location was not known (but guessed at) and became the most important location to find on Earth? What analogy does Boorstin draw between modern "heroes" and those individuals who traveled a far to locate this place?
- (d) Who is St. Brendan? When did he live? For what reasons was he so incredibly famous? How many years transpired before he was found out to be incorrect?

5. In "A Flat Earth Returns"

- (a) What were anti-pods? Why was it heretical to believe in them?
- (b) Who "provided the standard source of geographic myth during all the years of the Great Interruption"?
- (c) Briefly compare the Christian geographers to those of the Chinese during the Great Interruption. What shape did the Chinese believe the Earth was?
- (d) Who was Cheng Heng? When did he live? What contribution did he make the science of cartography?
- (e) Who was Phei Hsui? When did he live? What contribution did he make the science of cartography?
- (f) what role did silk likely play in the development of Chinese cartography?
- (g) What role might the Arabs and Chinese have played in ending the Great Interruption in Europe?