

THE  
**ROYAL  
SOCIETY**  
OF ARCHEOLOGY

*Notebook*



*London, April 27, 1933*

*After having sailed across every sea on the globe and crossed mountains and continents, it seemed to me that the time had come to set down in writing all the knowledge I had gathered about the most remarkable archaeological sites on Earth. These fascinating witnesses of vanished civilizations have shaped the history of humankind.*

*Thus I dusted off my old travel journals, faithful companions of many expeditions, with the intention of cataloguing the places I had visited. I also went through the notes I had taken during the long and enriching hours spent listening to the lectures of my peers at the Royal Society of Archaeology, in order to write a concise account of each site. I quickly realized it would be impossible to mention all the locations where excavations had been conducted so far. A single lifetime would not suffice for such a monumental task. Reluctantly, I resolved to describe about a dozen sites per continent. I chose those that could offer readers the most diverse and representative overview of human culture, knowledge, and imagination across the ages and around the world.*

*Of course, many sites remain to be discovered, excavated, and mapped. Likewise, some architectural and technological feats still defy explanation to this day. The book you hold in your hands does not claim to be exhaustive, nor does it aim to answer all your questions. Without any pretension, my only wish is to share with as many of you as possible the archaeological wonders of our planet before they vanish through natural disasters, wars, or the passage of time. And if this work inspires a calling among the youngest of you, I shall consider myself the happiest of men.*

*I wish you an excellent reading,*

*Sir Archibald W. Bonham III  
Archaeologist, Member of the Royal Society of Archeology*





# AFRICA

Cradle of humankind, Africa remains largely unknown, as do the civilizations that once flourished there. Ancient Egypt, however, is gradually revealing its secrets thanks to the numerous excavation campaigns conducted by European nations, driven by a fervent Egyptomania since Bonaparte's Egyptian campaign in 1798. Contrary to the belief of skeptics and other disillusioned souls who think everything has already been discovered, the unearthing of Tutankhamun's tomb by my compatriot Howard Carter on November 4th, 1922, stands as the finest proof to the contrary.





# AKSUM (AXUM)

Country	Ethiopia
Civilization	Aksumite Empire
Period	80 BC to 825 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1906 – Enno Littmann (German)

Near the northern border of Ethiopia, the ruins of the ancient city of Aksum mark the location of the heart of ancient Ethiopia. When the Kingdom of Aksum was the most powerful state between the Eastern Roman Empire and Persia, it controlled the trade between Africa, Arabia, and the Mediterranean basin. It was also the first great empire to convert to Christianity. The first excavations, initiated in the 19th century, revealed monolithic obelisks (the tallest being 33 metres), giant stelae, royal tombs, and the ruins of ancient castles. A series of inscriptions on stone tablets, presenting texts in three languages, have proven to be of immense importance to historians of Antiquity. In mythology, Aksum appears as the resting place of the Ark of the Covenant and the home of the Queen of Sheba.



# ALEXANDRIA



Country	Egypt
Civilization	Ancient Egypt
Period	331 BC – 3rd century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1909 – Hermann Thiersch (German)

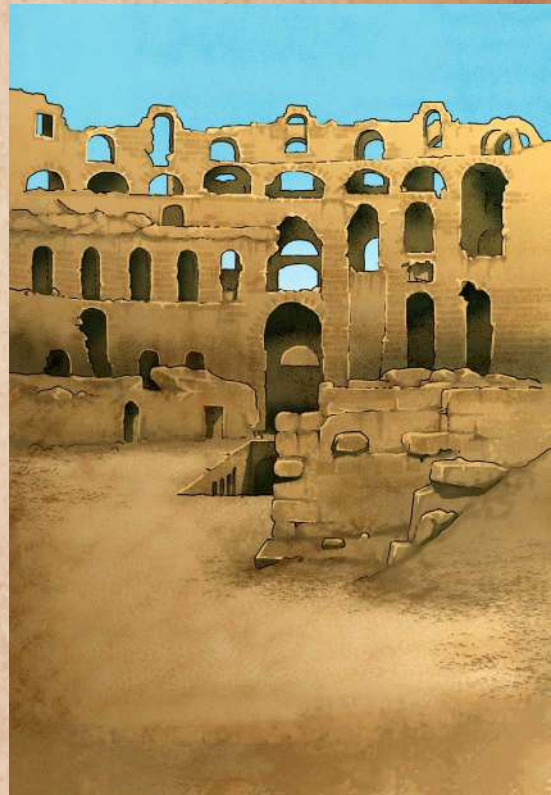
Founded by Alexander the Great, Alexandria was conceived as a port of commerce and culture. It quickly became a radiant metropolis, famous for its legendary library and its monumental lighthouse. Considered in Antiquity as one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the lighthouse was adorned with colossal statues of pink granite depicting the pharaohs and their queens. The enormous blocks of white limestone intensely reflected the Egyptian sun. At the corners of the terraces were six metal statues in the effigy of the god Triton. A bronze statue nearly seven metres high, representing Poseidon or Zeus, crowned the lighthouse. After cataloguing all the writings describing the monument, Hermann Thiersch recently estimated its height at 135m and hypothesised that the foundations of the lighthouse are still to be found within the keep of Fort Qaitbay, on the island of Pharos.



# EL JEM (EL DJEM)

Country	Tunisia
Civilization	Ancient Rome
Period	3rd century BC – 3rd century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1856 – Charles Tissot (French)

Founded on the ruins of the ancient city of Thysdrus, a former Phoenician city established by the Punics and prosperous under Hadrian, El Jem is a place «unique in the world» for us archaeologists, for it possesses three edifices, each belonging to one of the three great known categories of amphitheaters. The most recent of these is the largest in the Roman Empire (seating between 27,000 and 30,000 spectators) after the Colosseum of Rome and that of Capua. A testament to imperial splendour and the Romanization of North Africa, the great amphitheater of El Jem, which is neither excavated nor built against a hill, was used for gladiatorial games and public spectacles. The remains of workshops for metallurgy, bone-working, casting, and sculpture also bear witness to the ingenuity and creativity of the region's artisans.



# GIZA



Country	Egypt
Civilization	Ancient Egypt
Period	2600 BC – 2510 BC
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1816 – Giovanni Battista Caviglia (Italian)

Constructed approximately 4,500 years ago by the pharaohs Khufu, his son Khafre, and Menkaure, son of Khafre, the pyramids of the Giza necropolis are the only of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World to have survived to our day. Also known as the Great Pyramid of Giza, Khufu's is the largest of all. It stands 140 metres high and rests on an enormous base of 230 metres (with a perimeter of nearly a kilometre). It is thought to have required more than 2 million blocks of stone, each weighing between 25 and 80 tonnes. It remains for us to comprehend how the Egyptians succeeded in constructing this behemoth... The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology of the University of Pennsylvania has just launched a mapping project to confirm the existence of vast underground networks and catacombs beneath the Giza plateau.



# GREAT ZIMBABWE (SIMBAOE)

Country	Zimbabwe
Civilization	Empire of Great Zimbabwe
Period	11th – 15th century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1892 – James Theodore Bent (English)

The ruins of Great Zimbabwe, which, according to a centuries-old legend, was the capital of the Queen of Sheba, are a unique testament to the Bantu civilization of the Shona between the 11th and 15th centuries. The city, covering an area of nearly 80 hectares, was an important trading centre renowned from the Middle Ages. Archaeological excavations have unearthed glass beads and porcelain fragments of Chinese and Persian origin, as well as gold and Arab coins from Kilwa, which attest to the significance of commercial exchanges with the outside world. The first major scientific studies, conducted in 1929 by my dearest colleague Gertrude Caton-Thompson, at the head of an entirely female mission, confirmed the African origin of the city, which is impressive for its dry stone enclosures, built without mortar.



# IBSAMBOUL (ABU SIMBEL)



Country	Egypt
Civilization	Ancient Egypt
Period	1264 BC
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1813 – Johann Ludwig Burckhardt (Swiss)

Carved directly into the rock, the temples of Abu Simbel were built during the reign of Pharaoh Ramesses II to commemorate his victory at the Battle of Kadesh, one of the most famous conflicts of antiquity, but above all with the aim of imposing the pharaoh's power upon the Nubian populations. The great temple, dedicated to the god Amun-Re and to Pharaoh Ramesses II, displays bas-reliefs illustrating the key moments of the battle when, cornered, the pharaoh found an abandoned chariot thanks to which he managed to turn the tide of the conflict and claim victory. The monument is famous for its four colossal statues, 20 metres high, and for the solar alignment that illuminates the interior twice a year. The work carried out from 1907 by my Italian counterpart, Alexandre Barsanti of the Egyptian Department of Antiquities, has enabled the clearing and consolidation of the monuments of Abu Simbel.



# LEPTIS MAGNA

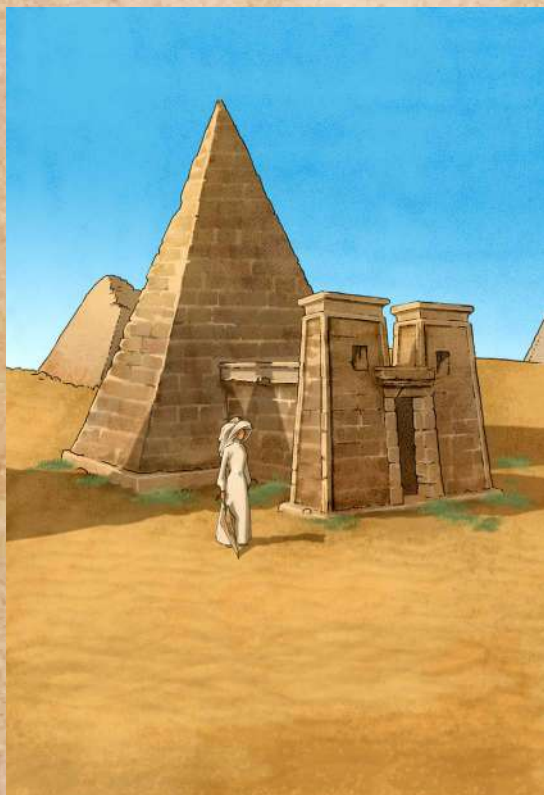
Country	Libya
Civilization	Republic of Carthage
Period	4th century BC – 3rd century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1911 – Pietro Romanelli (Italian)

Leptis Magna was one of the important cities of the Republic of Carthage before it came under the authority of the Roman Republic at the end of the Third Punic War. Embellished and enlarged by Septimius Severus, a native son who became emperor, Leptis Magna was one of the most beautiful cities of the Roman Empire, rivalling Carthage and Alexandria. The Augustan theatre, the amphitheater, the great baths of Hadrian, the forum and the basilica of Septimius Severus, its artificial harbour and its market are sumptuous. The decline of the Roman Empire, invasions, earthquakes, and the silting up of the site led to its abandonment.

The excavations conducted since 1911 by my Italian colleagues have revealed an exceptionally well-preserved example of Roman urbanism, making Leptis Magna, nicknamed the «Rome of Africa», one of the most impressive vestiges of the Roman Empire.



# MEROE



Country	Sudan
Civilization	Kingdom of Kush
Period	4th century BC – 4th century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1822 – Frédéric Cailliaud (French)

Capital of the Kingdom of Kush, Meroe was a major political and religious centre in Nubia, distinguished by an original culture, a blend of Egyptian and African influences, and a system of writing that is still poorly deciphered. The city presents exceptional ruins, including 200 pyramids where more than 40 kings and queens were interred. Erected in the heart of the desert, these tombs, from 6 to 30 metres high, are smaller and significantly steeper than those of Egypt. The sovereigns of Meroe were in turn commercial partners, adversaries, and vassals of the Egyptian pharaohs. Their vast empire extended from the Mediterranean to the heart of Africa, and they reigned over Egypt, hence their nickname of «Black Pharaohs.» The first programme of excavations, led by the mission from the University of Liverpool, was directed from 1909 to 1914 by my illustrious friend Professor John Garstang.



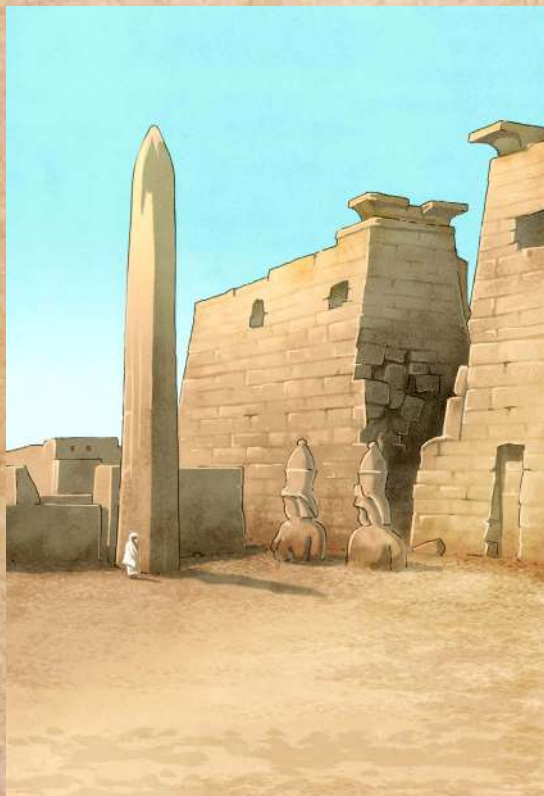
# THAMUGADI (TIMGAD)

Country	Algeria
Civilization	Ancient Rome
Period	100 AD – 535 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1880 – Edmond Duthoit (French)

Founded by the Roman Emperor Trajan with military veterans from the Legio III Augusta, Thamugadi was a prosperous city for hundreds of years, so prosperous that it even became a prime target for plunderers. After an invasion by the Vandals in 430, repeated attacks weakened the city, which never regained its former glory and was abandoned in the 8th century. Built according to a very rigid orthogonal plan, with its temples, baths, forum, and theatre, the city at its zenith occupied more than 90 hectares, making it one of the largest Roman cities in the world. Swept and then swallowed by the sands of the desert, this perfectly preserved and typical Roman city, nicknamed the «Pompeii of North Africa,» was rediscovered in the 18th century by a team of explorers led by a colourful Scottish compatriot, James Bruce.



# THEBES (THEBES)



Country	Egypt
Civilization	Ancient Egypt
Period	3200 BC – 663 BC
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1828 – Jean-François Champollion (French)

Ancient Thebes was the city of the god Amun and the capital of Egypt during the Middle and New Kingdoms. Also called Waset, «The Sceptre» or «The Powerful,» the city covered 93 km<sup>2</sup> and was known for its wealth and grandeur. Around 1350 BC, Thebes was the largest city in the world with a population of approximately 80,000 inhabitants. Its surroundings are home to some of the most important archaeological sites in Egypt, such as the Valley of the Kings, the Valley of the Queens, the temples of Ramesses II and Ramesses III, and the great temple complex of Queen Hatshepsut.

Located on the right bank of the Nile, the Temple of Amun at Luxor contained two obelisks. One of them has been in Paris since 1836, at the Place de la Concorde. The Temple of Amun-Re at Karnak is renowned for its hypostyle hall covering an area of 5,000m<sup>2</sup> and whose roof is supported by 134 columns.



# TIMBUKTU (TUMBUTU)

Country	Mali
Civilization	Mali Empire
Period	12th century AD – 1590 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1853 – Heinrich Barth (German)

Founded around 1100 by the Tuaregs, Timbuktu was an intellectual and spiritual capital in Africa, and a major centre for the diffusion of Islamic culture.

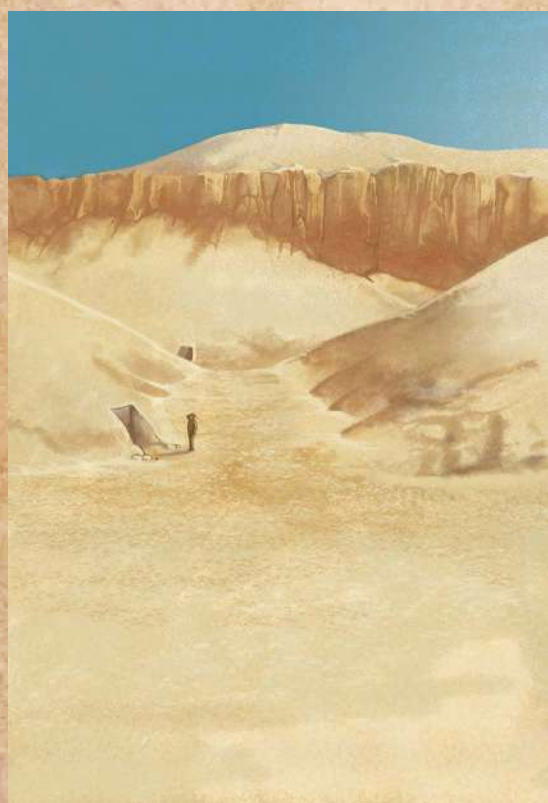
The University of Sankoré, built in the 15th century, comprised 180 Koranic schools and some 25,000 students. Nicknamed «the City of 333 Saints» or «the Pearl of the Desert,» Timbuktu was also a veritable hub of commerce where manuscripts and salt from the north were traded for gold, cattle, and grain from the south.

Long remaining inaccessible, Timbuktu has always maintained its qualification as a mysterious city, a reputation built around several great myths: its solid gold roofs, its trans-Saharan caravans, its intellectual and religious influence, its inaccessibility.

In any case, the self-sacrifice and courage required to reach it dissuades me from organising an expedition there.



# THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS



Country	Egypt
Civilization	Ancient Egypt
Period	1539 BC – 1075 BC
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1799 – Giovanni Battista Belzoni (Italian)

It is in the Valley of the Kings, situated on the western bank of the Nile at the latitude of Thebes, that the tombs of the New Kingdom pharaohs, from Thutmose I to Ramesses XI, were placed. During this period, the valley became a royal cemetery not only for pharaohs but also for queens, princes, high dignitaries, and the elite. We do not know the reason for this geographical choice. Sixty-two tombs have been unearthed there to date, the last of which, referenced as KV62, was that of the boy king Tutankhamun, discovered in November 1922 by Howard Carter. Curse or unfortunate coincidence? In any case, the newspapers have been having a field day since the death of Lord Carnarvon, the wealthy patron behind the discovery of Tutankhamun's treasure. It must be said that the series of deaths that has befallen the archaeological team for ten years now may seem suspicious in the eyes of the uninitiated...





## SOUTH AMERICA

With the exception of a few sites such as Teotihuacan, most archaeological sites in South America remain to be discovered or cleared, as vegetation has reclaimed its rights since the cities were abandoned several centuries ago. The ruins are generally known to local populations, and some had already been visited by Americans or Europeans, including John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood, starting in 1840. However, real excavation programs only began around 1900, funded by institutions such as the Carnegie Institution of Washington and the Peabody Museum.





# CALAKMUL

Country	Mexico
Civilization	Maya
Period	250 AD – 900 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1931 – Cyrus Longworth Lundell (American)

Rediscovered by chance during an aerial survey by the botanist Cyrus Lundell, Calakmul, the «city of two adjacent pyramids,» was one of the oldest and most powerful Maya cities, along with Palenque, also in Mexico, and Tikal in Guatemala. As the seat of the Serpent Kingdom, whose emblem-glyph is characterised by a serpent's head, Calakmul was occupied for more than 1,000 years. At its apogee, it had a population of 50,000 inhabitants and controlled localities situated more than 150 km away, before being swallowed by the jungle after its abandonment. The excavations currently being conducted by Sylvanus Morley of the Carnegie Institution have begun to reveal thousands of ancient structures, of which the most significant, the site's great pyramid, is thought to be over 45m high. This would make it one of the tallest pyramids of the Maya civilization.



# CHICHÉN ITZÁ



Country	Mexico
Civilization	Maya, Toltec
Period	750 AD – 1200 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1842 – John Lloyd Stephens (American), Frédérick Catherwood (British)

Chichén Itzá was one of the most important cities of the Maya empire, and likely, in the 10th century, the principal religious centre of the Yucatán. Its name means «at the mouth of the well of the Itza,» in reference to the sacred cenote, a natural well where deities were venerated.

The magnificently preserved site is home in particular to the circular observatory El Caracol and the elegant pyramid of Kukulcán, dedicated to the feathered serpent. It demonstrates the Maya's knowledge of astronomy with an architecture dictated by the solar calendar, producing the visual effect of the feathered serpent during the equinoxes. The city was abandoned around 1200 for reasons that remain unknown to us.

In 1904, Edward Herbert Thompson brought Maya artefacts to the surface of the cenote by diving with a helmet. The proceeds of the excavations were sent to the Peabody Museum.



# CHOQUEQUIRAO

Country	Peru
Civilization	Inca
Period	? – 16th century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1909 – Hiram Bingham (American)

Doubtless erected during the reign of the great emperor Pachacuti, the fortress of Choquequirao, «Cradle of Gold» in Quechua, stands at an altitude of 2,800 metres, as if suspended between sky and mountains. Its strategic position, ideal for guarding against possible attacks, suggests a military function. After the Spanish invasion, we suppose that the citadel was the last bastion of resistance for the 'sons of the Sun,' refugees from Cusco after the defeat of the armies of Manco Cápac II in 1535. Even vaster than Machu Picchu, the city is replete with vestiges of a past splendour: temples, palaces, ritual baths, agricultural terraces extending down the mountainside, all connected by an ingenious irrigation network. Yet, only a tiny fraction of the site has been explored to date, as access can only be gained at the cost of several days' march, on precipitous trails.



# COPÁN



Country	Honduras
Civilization	Maya
Period	7th century AD – 10th century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1839 – John Lloyd Stephens (American), Frédérick Catherwood (British)

Discovered in 1570 by Diego García de Palacio, the Maya site of Copán is one of the major sites of the Maya civilization. The ruins of its acropolis and its monumental plazas, endowed with stelae and fine sculptures, bear witness to the three great stages of its development, before its decline and abandonment in the 10th century. We believe that the fall of Copán was due to massive deforestation wrought by the Maya, which would have caused increasingly frequent floods and soil depletion, leading to malnutrition and infectious diseases.

The first modern archaeological excavations were conducted by the Peabody Museum of Natural History and Harvard University from 1891 to 1894. My friend George B. Gordon is currently studying the ruined blocks of the Hieroglyphic Stairway, which contains more than 2,200 Maya glyphs.



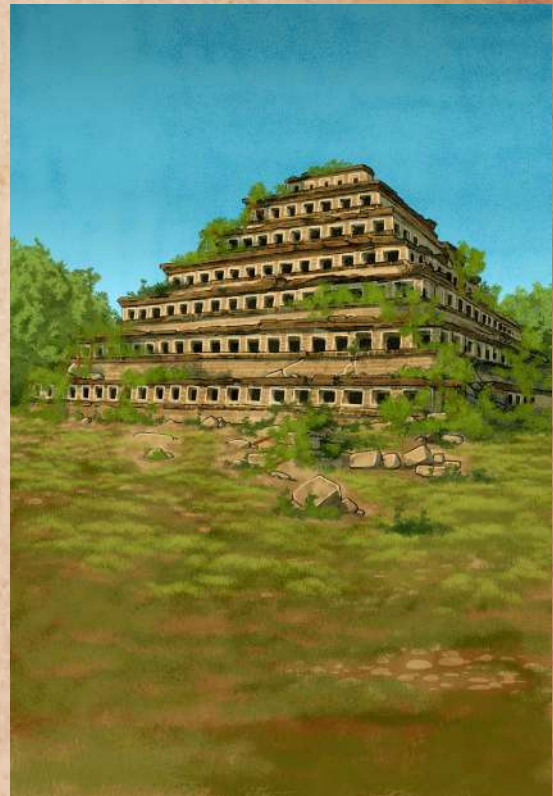
# EL TAJÍN

Country	Mexico
Civilization	Totonac
Period	600 AD – 1200 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1831 – Karl Nebel (German)

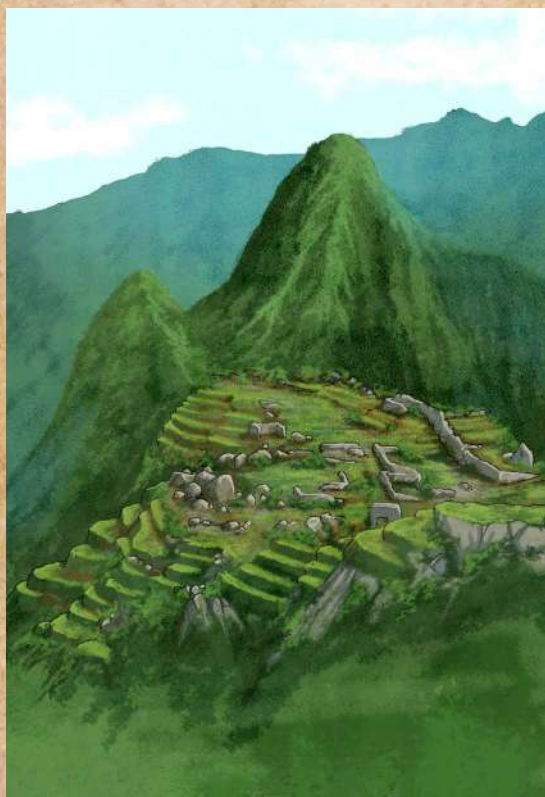
Built by the Totonacs, El Tajín, whose architectural style and wall frescoes testify to a refined culture and complex ritual practices, was situated at the crossroads of the country's trade routes, intended to control imported and exported goods.

Until 1200 AD, the city housed some fifty ethnic groups living from the production and harvesting of agricultural products such as maize, beans, and cacao. El Tajín reached its zenith after the fall of Teotihuacan, before suffering destruction and being swallowed by the jungle.

The German architect Karl Nebel was the first to graphically and narratively study the details of the Pyramid of the Niches, whose 365 cavities symbolise the days of the year. His drawings and descriptions were published in 1836 in a book titled *Voyage pittoresque et archéologique*.



# MACHU PICCHU



Country	Peru
Civilization	Inca
Period	1450 AD – 16th century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1911 – Hiram Bingham (American)

Truly rediscovered in 1911 by the American professor Hiram Bingham of Yale University, Machu Picchu is among the most mysterious places in the world. This ancient city, perched at an altitude of 2,430 metres on the edge of the Peruvian Andes, was built by the Incas in the mid-15th century, during the reign of the emperor Pachacuti, the ruler to whom the establishment of the Inca Empire is attributed. It appears magnificently preserved, with its some 200 constructions made of interlocking stone blocks and its well-defined plan. Built on a steep ridge, crisscrossed with stone terraces, it seems to have constituted a religious, ceremonial, astronomical, and agricultural centre. Bingham uncovered hundreds of tombs there, and exhumed jars, plates, and jewellery. I recommend the account of his discovery in the *National Geographic* magazine of April 1913.



# NAZCA

Country	Peru
Civilization	Nazca
Period	300 BC – 800 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1926 – Manuel Toribio Mejía Xesspe (Peruvian)

Mentioned as early as 1553 by the conquistador Pedro Cieza de León in his book *Chronicle of Peru*, the Nazca Lines were unveiled in 1927 by the Peruvian archaeologist Toribio Mejía Xesspe. As he was climbing the hills south of Lima, he saw furrows in the valley below that formed large images when viewed from above, notably a spider, a monkey, and a bird. According to him, these works of art would have been created by removing the reddish stones from the desert surface to expose the paler ground beneath, thus forming visible contrasts.

These lines present a double enigma for us archaeologists. Sometimes several kilometres long, they are perfectly straight. How was this feat achieved? And, above all, for what purpose? Toribio Mejía Xesspe sees in them a system of sacred paths used during ceremonies. I harbour some doubts...



# PALENQUE



Country	Mexico
Civilization	Maya
Period	5th century AD – 8th century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1839 – John Lloyd Stephens (American), Frédérick Catherwood (British)

Lost in the jungle and crossed by great streams, Palenque, also called Lakam Ha, «the place of great waters,» reached its apogee in 700 AD thanks to King Pakal the Great, who had most of the edifices built.

The elegance and mastery of the construction, as well as the delicacy of the carved reliefs, testify to the creative genius of this civilization. Rediscovered at the end of the 18th century, it was not until 1839 that Stephens and Catherwood conducted the first scientific study of this site. In 1841, Stephens published his famous work *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatán*, which includes a description of Palenque accompanied by illustrations by Catherwood. My late friend Alfred Percival Maudslay perfected the technique of papier-mâché there to create paper moulds of the bas-relief sculptures on the many monuments of Palenque.



# TIKAL

Country	Guatemala
Civilization	Maya
Period	200 AD – 900 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1880 – Alfred Percival Maudslay (English)

Tikal was the capital of a conquering state that became one of the most powerful kingdoms of the ancient Maya. At its apogee, the city politically, economically, and militarily dominated a large part of the Maya region, while interacting with other regions throughout Mesoamerica, such as the great metropolis of Teotihuacan. It is proven, moreover, that Tikal was conquered by Teotihuacan in the 4th century of our era. Despite the absence of nearby water resources, the Maya managed to make the city viable through the construction of dams and reservoirs that collected rainwater reserves. This extraordinary fact is worth emphasising: a great city supplied solely with water from stored seasonal precipitation. The city was thus able to develop a very advanced agricultural system using certain techniques of intensive farming.



# TEOTIHUACAN



Country	Mexico
Civilization	Pre-Columbian
Period	100 BC – 6th century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1864 – Désiré Charnay (French)

About fifty kilometres from Mexico City, Teotihuacan, the «city where the gods are born,» embodied a link between earth and sky, between men and gods. Its colossal pyramids of the Sun and the Moon, and the temple of Quetzalcoatl, were erected between the 1st and 7th centuries according to a plan that was as geometric as it was symbolic.

Besides its pyramidal structures, Teotihuacan is also known for its large residential complexes, its central avenue called by the Aztecs the «Avenue of the Dead,» and for its numerous murals with well-preserved colours.

At its apogee, in the first half of the 1st millennium, during the Classic Period, Teotihuacan was the largest city in all of pre-Columbian America and may have had more than 200,000 inhabitants, making it one of the largest cities in the world at the time.



# TIWANAKU (TIAHUANACO)

Country	Bolivia
Civilization	Pre-Inca
Period	12th century BC – 12th century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1903 – Arthur Posnansky (Austrian)

Perched at an altitude of 3,885 metres on the Bolivian altiplano, the site of Tiwanaku was the spiritual and political centre of a vast empire that suddenly disappeared in the 12th century. This empire likely populated the shores of Lake Titicaca from the 12th century BC and extended its territory, founding cities and colonies as far as the north of present-day Chile, the west of Bolivia, and even into Peru. Living from agriculture, animal husbandry, and fishing, the discovery of new techniques such as irrigation, and the construction of buildings and roads, contributed to its development around the 1st century AD until its apogee between the 8th and 9th centuries.

The structures of the Kalasasaya temple seem to follow the azimuthal positions of the sun in a very precise manner. In my opinion, archaeo-astronomical research could make it possible to date the edifice.



# UXMAL



Country	Mexico
Civilization	Maya
Period	500 AD – 10th century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1838 – Jean Frédéric Waldeck (French)

Uxmal, whose name means «thrice built» due to its long period of construction, is thought to have reached its zenith between 800 and 950 AD with some 25,000 inhabitants. Unlike other Maya cities of the Yucatán, Uxmal lacked natural water sources; this is why the rain god, Chaac, was venerated by the inhabitants. A \*chultún\* (cistern) located near the entrance to the ruins was used to store water on site. Uxmal has many very well-preserved edifices thanks to the materials used at the time, notably the Nunnery Quadrangle, the Governor's Palace, and the House of the Turtles dedicated to Chaac. The Pyramid of the Magician, a unique structure with its oval shape and five levels, stands apart from other Maya pyramids. Legend has it that it was built in a single night by a dwarf endowed with magical powers...





# ASIA

Although the concept of the “cradle of civilization” is the subject of much debate among my peers at the Royal Society of Archeology, it is commonly accepted that the civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt are the oldest. Yet other civilizations also emerged in Asia, along the great river valleys of the Indus and the vast plains of northern China. Western Asia likewise witnessed the founding of numerous Greek and Roman cities, enduring remnants of the colonial power and expansionist ambitions of these two ancient civilizations.

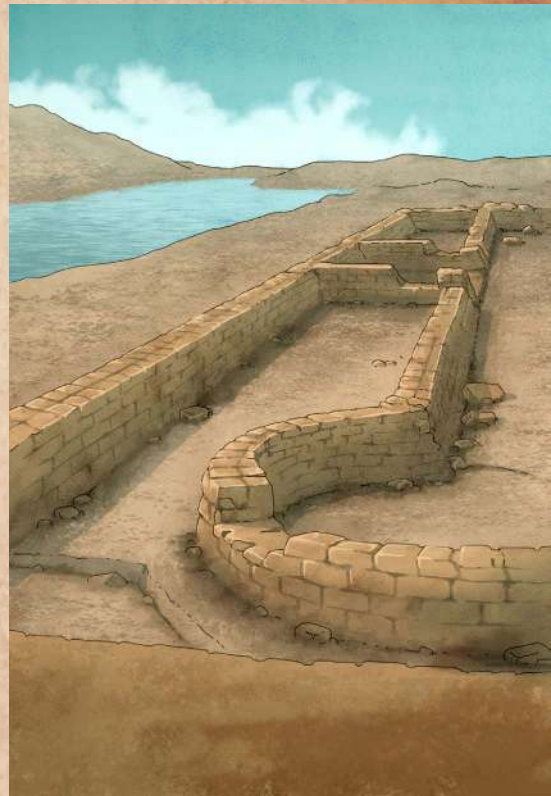




# AĪ KHANOUN (AĪ KHANOUN)

Country	Kingdom of Afghanistan
Civilization	Ancient Greece
Period	4th century BC – 145 BC
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1925 – Julien Barthoux (French)

Founded by veterans in the wake of Alexander the Great's epic journey to India, Aī Khanoum is identified as one of the famous Asian Alexandrias, Alexandria on the Oxus. However, it is not thought to be a foundation attributable to Alexander himself, but more likely to Seleucus I (305-281 BC), the founder of the Seleucid Empire. Situated at the eastern confines of the Bactrian plain, Aī Khanoum controlled an agricultural territory irrigated by a vast system of canals. It prospered for two centuries on fertile lands, rich in mineral resources and ideal for horse breeding, while benefiting from a trade network that connected it to the Chinese and Indian civilizations. The upper city (the Arg) dominates a vast area bordered by the banks of the two rivers and a powerful earthen rampart.



# ANGKOR VAT (ANGWOR WAT)



Country	Cambodia, French colony
Civilization	Khmer Empire
Period	802 AD – 15th century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1861 – Henri Mouhot (French)

The site of Angkor covers approximately 400 km<sup>2</sup> and consists of a multitude of temples, hydraulic structures (dykes, reservoirs, canals), and communication routes. For several centuries, Angkor was the centre of the Khmer kingdom, an exceptional civilization known for its temple-mountains, which are temples built atop a multi-tiered pyramid, as exemplified by the temple of Angkor Wat.

Built in the 12th century during the reign of Suryavarman II, Angkor Wat is the largest religious complex in the world. Its volume of stone is said to equal that of the Pyramid of Khufu. It is also different from other Khmer temples as it is inspired by Hinduism and is oriented to the west to pay homage to Vishnu. The perfection of the temple's layout, balance, proportions, reliefs, and sculptures makes it one of the most beautiful ancient temples in the world.



# BABYLON (BABYLON)

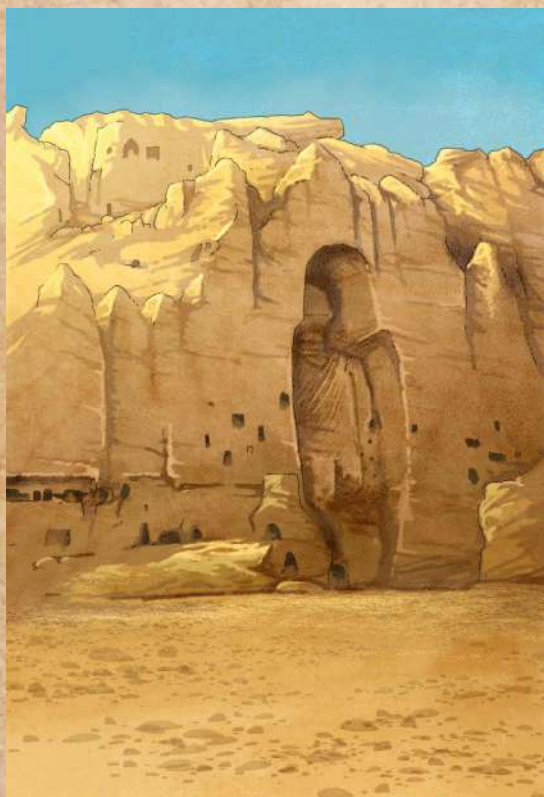
Country	Iraq, British colony
Civilization	Babylonian
Period	18th century BC – 170 BC
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1899 – Robert Koldewey (German)

Long a symbol of splendour and later of decadence in the biblical tradition, Babylon was one of the most illustrious cities of Mesopotamia, the capital of a vast empire that dominated the Middle East in the 6th century BC.

Immense and radiant, it was famous for its walls, its ziggurat—perhaps the origin of the myth of the Tower of Babel—and especially for its legendary Hanging Gardens, said to have been built by Nebuchadnezzar II to remind his wife Amytis of the wooded mountains of Media. Their existence remains a mystery, as does their location. As for the Ishtar Gate, discovered by Robert Koldewey, it now stands majestically in a hall of the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. The first traveller to conduct scientific work there was the Briton Claudius James Rich, who established the first cartography of the site in the early 19th century.



# BÂMIYÂN (BAMIYAN)



Country	Kingdom of Afghanistan
Civilization	-
Period	2nd century AD – 9th century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1922 – André Godard et Joseph Hackin (French)

Situated on the Silk Road connecting China and India to the Western world, Bâmiyân was a major Buddhist centre, one of the most important from the 2nd century until the arrival of Islam in the valley in the late 9th century. It hosted monks and hermits who resided in small caves carved into the cliff faces along the Bâmiyân Valley, under the benevolent gaze of immense Buddha statues sculpted in high relief into niches excavated from the sandstone. These statues were covered with a painted mixture of mud, straw, and stucco to enhance the rendering of facial expressions, hands, and the drapery of the robes. In 632, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang described Bâmiyân as a flourishing centre «with more than ten monasteries and over a thousand monks.» The giant Buddhas «were decorated with gold and fine jewels.»



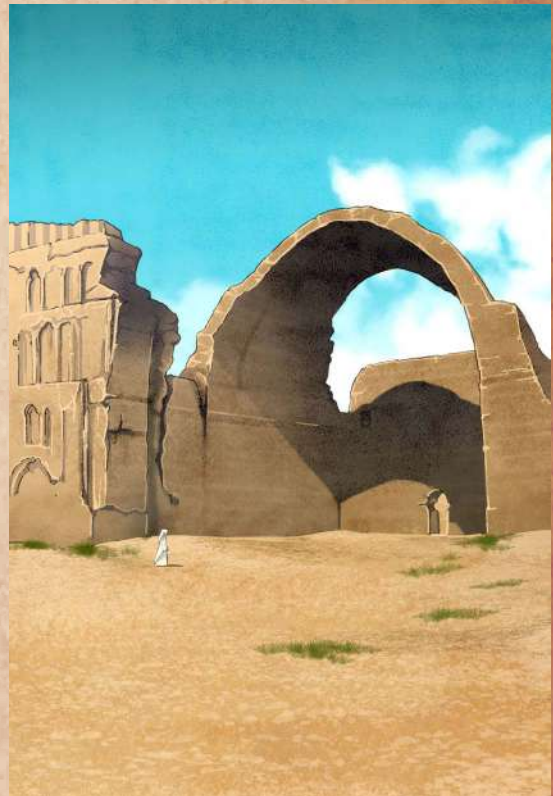
# Ctesiphon

Country	Iraq, British colony
Civilization	Parthian
Period	2nd century BC – 637 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1928 – Oscar Reuther (German)

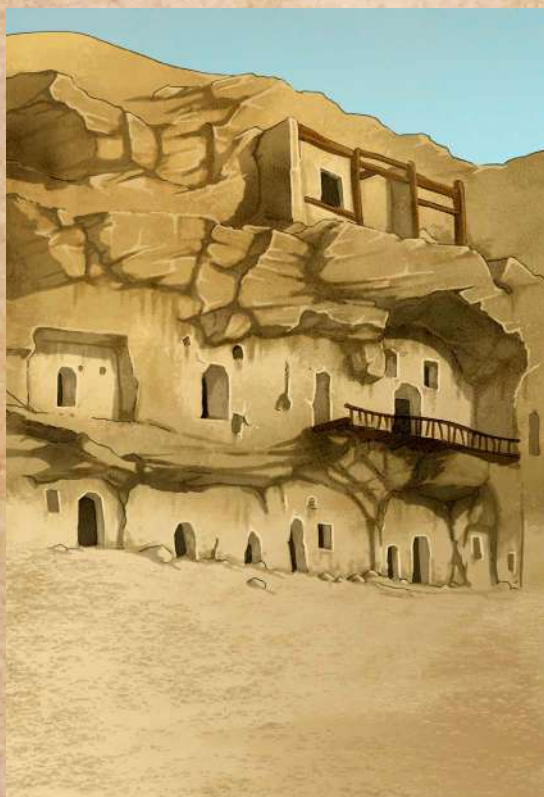
The former capital of the Parthian Empire, located on the left bank of the Tigris, southeast of present-day Baghdad, Ctesiphon became an important centre for trade along the Silk Road. Caravans stopped there with goods from China, which were then ferried across the Tigris to the city of Seleucia to be exchanged and continue their journey.

An important economic centre, it was conquered by the Romans three times and then invaded and plundered by the Muslim Arabs in 637. The city then experienced a rapid decline and became a ghost town. Of the royal palace, the Taq Kasra, the left wing and the 37m high vaulted arch, shaped like an inverted catenary, remain today.

The complexity of its curve must have required considerable mathematical knowledge for its construction. The right wing collapsed during a flood in 1888.



# Dunhuang



Country	China
Civilization	Chinese (Han Dynasty)
Period	111 BC – 15th century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1907 – Aurel Stein (Hungarian)

When the Silk Road was at its height, Dunhuang marked the entry into China. Thus, for the caravans emerging from the desert after crossing Central Asia, Dunhuang was a sign of safety and, above all, that the end of the journey was near. In the 2nd century, it had a considerable population of 76,000 inhabitants. The first Buddhist caves were excavated in 353 by merchants recounting their journey to China. The Mogao Caves, nicknamed the «Caves of the Thousand Buddhas,» are located at the foot of Mount Mingsha, 25 km southeast of the Dunhuang district; they constitute the largest and most famous complex of Buddhist caves in China. Carved on several levels into the mountainside, they currently comprise more than 400 caves of different sizes and shapes, covered with wall paintings, and more than 2,000 polychrome statues.

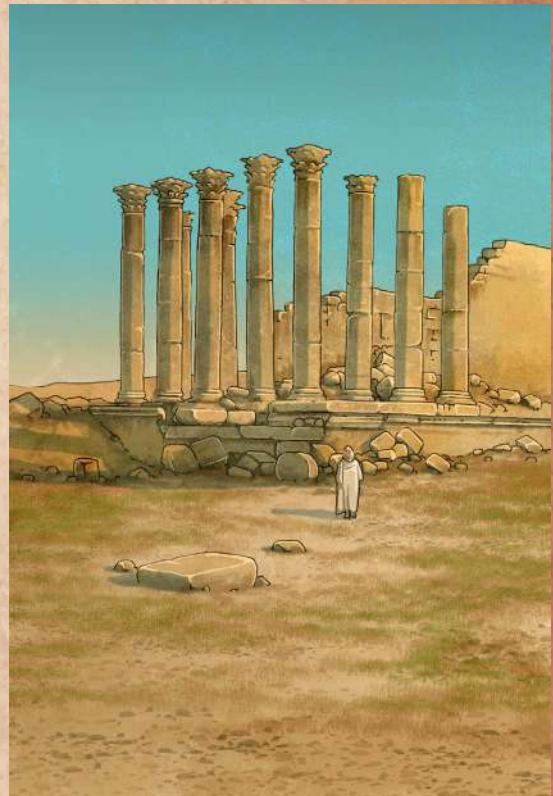


# JERASH (GERASA)

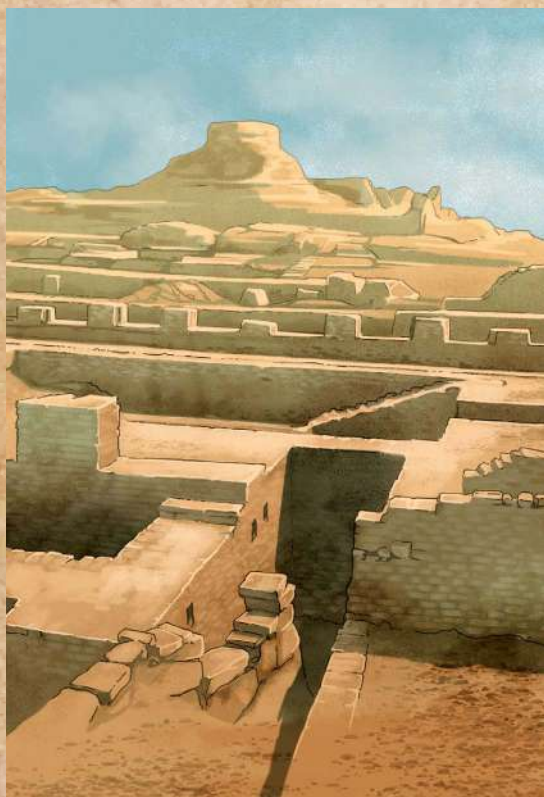
Country	Transjordanie, mandat britannique
Civilization	Ancient Rome
Period	2nd century BC – 748 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1806 – Ulrich Seetzen (German)

Developed during the reign of Alexander the Great, the ancient Gerasa was integrated into the powerful Decapolis, a league of ten cities in the present-day Levant. As a stopping point for merchant caravans travelling between the Orient and the Occident, it prospered and grew rich until it reached its apogee in the 3rd century. Plundered by the Persians in 614, then by the Arabs in 635, the city suffered several earthquakes, including a major one in 747-748. The final blow was delivered by the conflicts between Muslims and Crusaders.

It is an exceptional archaeological site, due to the incredible state of preservation of its remains. The Arch of Hadrian, the Temple of Zeus, and the Temple of Artemis bear witness to the rise of Greco-Roman civilizations in the region. And what can be said of the Cardo Maximus, a majestic street adorned with 200 columns stretching over 800 metres!



# LOULAN (LÓULÁN)



Country	China
Civilization	Chinese (Han Dynasty)
Period	2nd century BC – 330 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1901 – Sven Hedin (Swedish)

Founded in an oasis on the northeastern edge of the Taklamakan Desert, Loulan was the capital of a kingdom that flourished on the shores of Lake Lop Nur more than 2,300 years ago. It occupied a strategic position on the Silk Road, linking Central Asia to China. The interactions between Loulan and the Han court are described in detail in the Book of Han. The first mention of Loulan in Chinese records dates to 126 BC.

When, around 330, the Tarim River, which fed Lake Lop Nur, changed its course, drought and the advancing desert forced the population to abandon the region permanently. The Tarim mummies, discovered there by Sven Hedin and especially by my friend Aurel Stein, are fascinating and are thought to date back to the 2nd millennium BC.

The bodies were naturally desiccated and mummified by the sand!



# PALMYRE (PALMYRA)

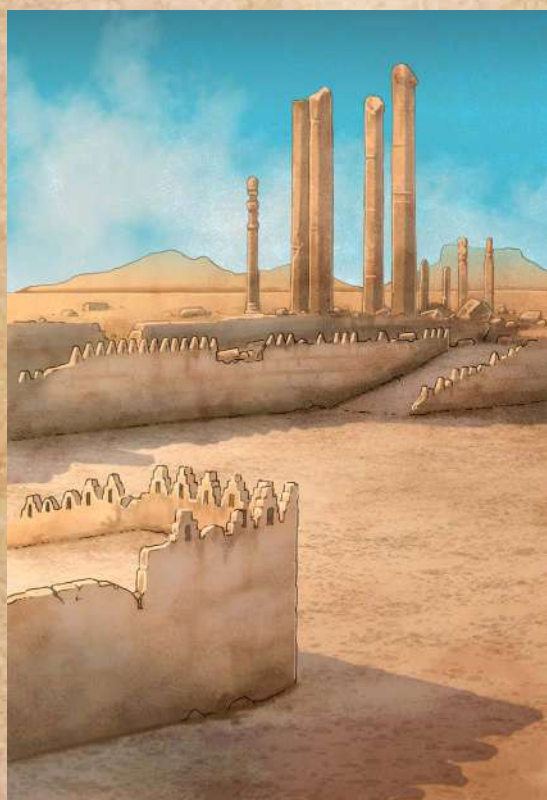
Country	Syria, French mandate
Civilization	Ancient Rome
Period	3rd millennium BC – 3rd century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1902 – Otto Puchstein (Prussian)

An oasis located northeast of Damascus, in Syria, the city of Palmyra is a symbol of the great cultural wealth of the region. It appears as early as the end of the 3rd millennium BC under the name of Tadmor, which means «the city of palm trees.» At the crossroads of several civilizations, the art and architecture of Palmyra in the 1st and 2nd centuries combined Greco-Roman techniques with local traditions and Persian influences.

In the 3rd century AD, Palmyra, at its apogee, was ruled by a woman: Queen Zenobia. She who claimed descent from Cleopatra VII and Dido had great ambitions for her city, then under the control of the Roman Empire. She wanted to make Palmyra the equal of Rome! The queen gradually conquered territories but ultimately failed against the Roman emperor Aurelian, before being killed under unclear circumstances...



# PERSEPOLIS



Country	Persia
Civilization	Persian
Period	518 BC – 331 BC
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1839 – Charles Texier (French)

Founded by Darius I, Persepolis, capital of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, was built on an immense terrace, half-natural, half-artificial, where the King of Kings had erected a splendid palace of imposing proportions, inspired by Mesopotamian models. This 13-hectare complex, with its majestic approach of monumental staircases, its throne rooms, reception halls, and outbuildings, is among the most important archaeological sites in the world. The terrace is a grandiose architectural creation, with its double flight of stairs, its walls covered with carved friezes at different levels, its gigantic winged bulls, and the remains of immense halls. The construction of Persepolis continued for more than two centuries, until the conquest of the empire and the partial destruction of the city by Alexander the Great in 331 BC.



# PETRA

Country	Transjordan, British mandate
Civilization	Nabataean, Ancient Rome, Byzantine
Period	8th century BC – 8th century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1812 – Jean-Louis Burckhardt (Swiss)

Founded towards the end of the 8th century BC, Petra was occupied around the 6th century BC by the Nabataeans, who made it prosper thanks to its position on the caravan route carrying incense, spices, and other precious goods between Southern Arabia, Egypt, Syria, and the Mediterranean. At its zenith, around the year 50, Petra was home to up to 25,000 inhabitants. Around the 8th century, the modification of trade routes and several earthquakes led to the gradual abandonment of the city.

Half-built and half-carved into the rock within a cirque of mountains pierced by corridors and defiles, Petra is an archaeological site where the influences of ancient Eastern traditions and Hellenistic architecture blend. Having fallen into oblivion in the modern era, the site was rediscovered in 1812 by the Western world thanks to the Swiss explorer Jean Louis Burckhardt.



# U<sub>R</sub>



Country	Iraq, British colony
Civilization	Sumerian, Babylonian
Period	3rd millennium BC – 3rd century BC
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1854 – John George Taylor (British)

«Ur of the Chaldees,» presented as the original city of the patriarch Abraham in the Bible, appears as one of the principal and most powerful Sumerian cities of the 3rd millennium BC, as illustrated by the royal tombs and the rich funerary goods that were exhumed there. A prosperous city that preceded the mythical Babylon, it was the capital of a powerful empire led by the kings of the Third Dynasty of Ur. Remarkable monuments were erected there, such as the great Ziggurat dedicated to the city's god «Nanna of the brilliant rising,» the Moon god, guardian of herds and fields.

It remained an important city at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC, as attested by the numerous discoveries of buildings and cuneiform tablets made by the archaeological teams led by my colleague Leonard Woolley, who have been exploring its ruins since 1922.





# MEDITERRANEAN

The ancient civilizations surrounding the Mediterranean have left us a wealth of writings that allow us to know in detail their histories, their conquests, and their downfalls. Many sites are remarkably well preserved, offering a rich and sometimes moving testimony to daily life, as in Pompeii. Yet the Mediterranean still keeps its share of mysteries. What is the meaning of the inscriptions engraved on the Phaistos Disc, found in the Minoan city of Knossos? What was the purpose of the Antikythera mechanism, discovered in an ancient shipwreck in 1900 off the Greek island of the same name?





# ACROPOLIS

Country	Greece
Civilization	Ancient Greece
Period	5th century BC – 8th century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1751 – James Stuart, Nicholas Revett (British)

The Acropolis, situated on a hill in the heart of Athens, was the religious and political centre of the city. Built in the 5th century BC, during the golden age of the Athenian empire, the ancient citadel is one of the most famous and iconic archaeological sites in the world.

Destroyed and plundered on several occasions, the Acropolis features some of the most famous monuments of the classical period of Greece: the Parthenon, the Erechtheion, the Temple of Athena Nike, and the Propylaea are some of the most important and striking constructions.

Built between 477 and 432 BC, the Parthenon, an imposing Doric-style temple, is believed to have been designed to house a colossal sculpture of Athena Parthenos, an offering from the city to the goddess. According to ancient historians, the statue was made of wood, ivory, and gold, and measured twelve metres high.



# ANTIOCH (ANTIOCHEIA)



Country	Ottoman Empire (Turkey)
Civilization	Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, Byzantine
Period	301 BC – 636 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1932 – George W. Elderkin (American)

Founded in 301 BC by Seleucus I Nicator, Antioch on the Orontes was, under the reign of Antiochus I, the capital of the Seleucid Empire and one of the intellectual and economic centres of the Hellenistic period. The city very early on became a rival to Alexandria and had between 300,000 and 400,000 inhabitants. After the Roman conquest in 64 BC by Pompey, it became the capital of the province of Syria and, far from weakening, retained the nickname «Crown of the Orient.» Evangelized from the 1st century, it was an important Christian centre with the famous School of Antioch. The Sassanian Persian invasion in 540 and the Arab conquest in 636 brought an end to its glorious period. The Church of Saint Peter, carved into the rock, is undoubtedly the first Christian church. It includes a tunnel that would have allowed the early Christians to flee in case of persecution.



# Baalbek

Country	Greater Lebanon (French Mandate)
Civilization	Phoenician, Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome
Period	3rd millennium BC – 637 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1898 – Otto Puchstein (Prussian)

Baalbek, whose history is thought to date back to the end of the 3rd millennium BC, was a flourishing Phoenician city where the cult of Baal was celebrated. During the Hellenistic period, the city was called Heliopolis, the «City of the Sun.» According to some hypotheses, this name was given because the Greeks associated Helios, the god of the Sun, with Adad, the Mesopotamian deity of Storms and Fertility. Others claim that the ancient city received this name during the Roman era, when Mark Antony granted it to Cleopatra.

The visible remains date mainly from the Roman period and include three main sanctuaries: those of Jupiter, Bacchus, and Venus, built by the emperors Nero, Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius. The six 22-metre-high columns that remain of the peristyle of the Great Temple dedicated to Jupiter give an excellent idea of what the dimensions of the monument must have been.



# Carthage (Karthago)



Country	Tunisia (French Protectorate)
Civilization	Phoenician, Ancient Rome, Byzantine
Period	814 BC – 698 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1833 – Christian Tuxen Falbe (Danish)

According to legend, Carthage was founded in 814 BC by Queen Dido of Tyre. Initially a Phoenician trading post, the city by the 4th century BC controlled all trade and navigation in the western Mediterranean and possessed numerous territories both within and outside of Africa: Mauretania, Numidia, Iberia, Ibiza, Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica.

A series of three conflicts between the Romans and the Carthaginian Republic, the Punic Wars, began in the 3rd century BC. Despite numerous setbacks and Carthage's maritime and strategic power, it lost all three wars consecutively. The cycle ended after a four-year siege with the victory of Rome and the destruction of Carthage in 146 BC.

A second, Roman Carthage was then founded on its ruins and became the capital of the province of Africa.



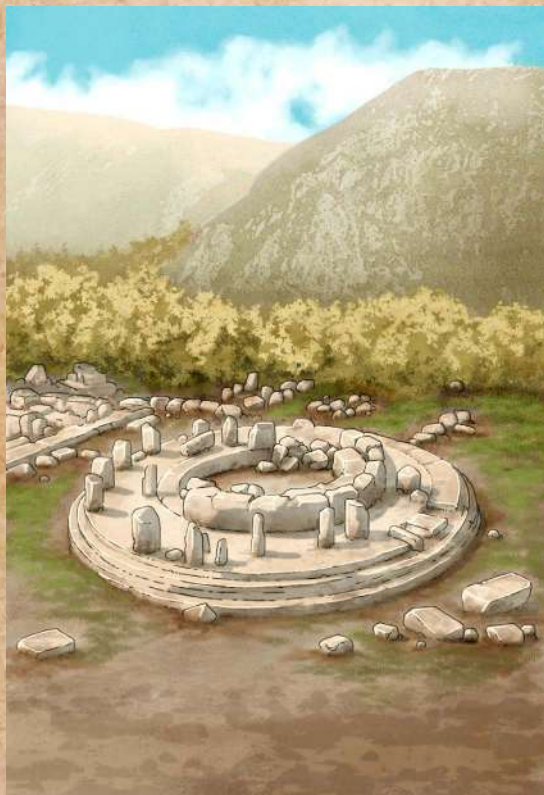
# Knossos (Knōsós)

Country	Crete
Civilization	Minoan
Period	2700 BC – 1200 BC
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1878 – Minos Kalokairinos (Cretan)

The palace of the legendary King Minos, linked to the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur, gives a measure of the degree of sophistication of the Minoans, who established a powerful thalassocracy in the Aegean Sea with Knossos as its capital. Designed to meet the needs of a complex society, with sections reserved for different classes, public reception halls, sanctuaries, workshops, and storerooms, its infrastructure bears witness to the refinement of the Minoan civilization, such as the sophisticated drainage system and the clever distribution of rooms to keep them cool in summer and warm in winter. My compatriot Arthur Evans, excavator of Knossos and founder of Minoan archaeology, divided Minoan history into three periods by comparing Cretan pottery with Egyptian objects discovered on the island and establishing a parallel with Egyptian chronology.



# Delphi (Delfoi)



Country	Greece
Civilization	Ancient Greece
Period	6th century BC – 4th century BC
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1892 – Théophile Homolle (French)

Built in the 4th century BC at the foot of Mount Parnassus, the Temple of Apollo was the place where the legendary Oracle once spoke through its prophetess, the Pythia. Dedicated to the Olympian god of light, knowledge, and harmony, the monument also contained the Omphalos or «navel of the world,» a sacred conical stone that represented the centre of the world and the fissure from which emanated the vapours that inspired the oracle's predictions.

Invested with a sacred union, the sanctuary was the true centre and symbol of the unity of the Greek world. Delphi had an immense impact in the ancient world, as evidenced by the various offerings from kings, dynasties, city-states, and great figures of ancient history who believed that making precious offerings to the sanctuary would ensure them the favour of the gods.

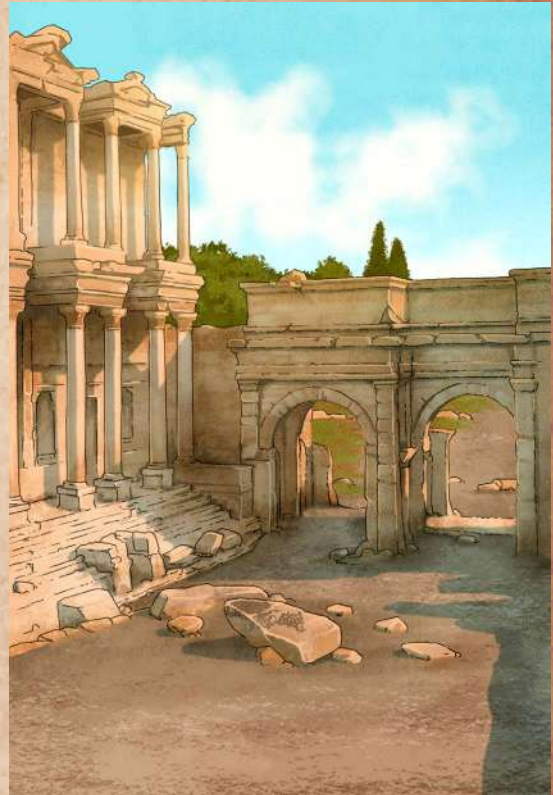


# EPHESUS (EPHESOS)

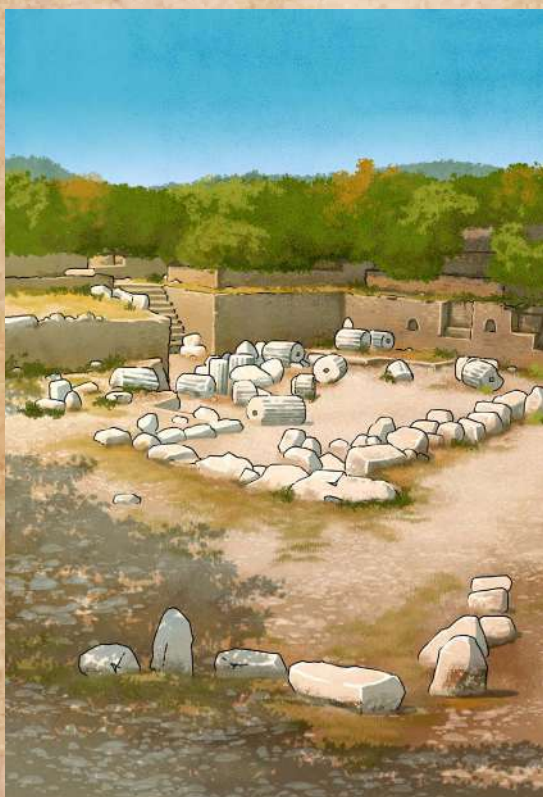
Country	Ottoman Empire (Turkey)
Civilization	Ancient Greece
Period	10th century BC – 262 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1863 – John Turtle Wood (British)

Built in the 10th century BC by Greek colonists, the city was conquered by the Lydian king Croesus in 560 BC, who had the famous Temple of Artemis built there. In the period that followed, the city came under the control of the Persians, Athenians, Spartans, the Kingdom of Pergamon, and finally the Roman Republic in 129 BC.

The Temple of Artemis burned down in 356 BC but was rebuilt by the Ephesians, who resorted to a public subscription to raise funds. It is part of the famous list of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, compiled in the 3rd century BC in the Greek world. The construction of a monument of such dimensions represented a real challenge for the engineering of the time. Pliny the Elder describes the ingenious systems devised by the architect to transport the marble blocks from the quarry, located 12 kilometres away.



# HALICARNASSUS (HALIKARNASSÓS)



Country	Ottoman Empire (Turkey)
Civilization	Persian
Period	1100 BC – 334 BC
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1857 – Charles Thomas Newton (British)

An ancient Greek city, Halicarnassus is best known for being the birthplace of Herodotus, the «father of history», and for housing the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, tomb of the governor of the province. When Mausolus died, his sister and wife Artemisia II had a monumental tomb erected in his memory, based on plans he himself had designed.

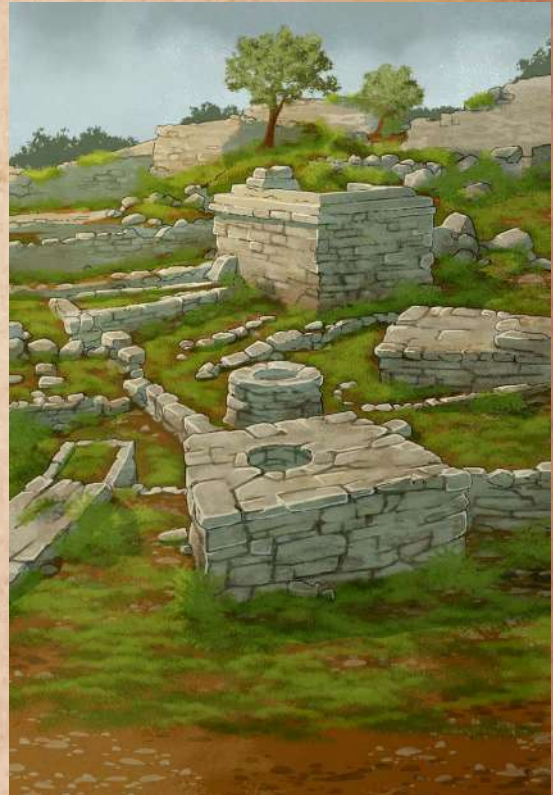
Considered in Antiquity as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the monument was admired for its size and decoration, so much so that ever since, any large tomb has been called a mausoleum. About 45 metres high, the monument was adorned with sculptures on its four sides, each created under the authority of a great Greek sculptor of the era. In 1857, Charles Thomas Newton located the monument thanks to his knowledge of ancient literature and a great mastery of interpreting fragments found on the ground.



# HISSARLIK (HISARLIK)

Country	Ottoman Empire (Turkey)
Civilization	Ancient Greece
Period	4th millennium BC – 600 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1870 – Heinrich Schliemann (German)

Troy is at the centre of tales and legends, notably the Trojan War, recounted in the Homeric epic poems, the Iliad and the Odyssey. In the mid-19th century, specialists still hesitated between two sites for the location of the city of Troy. In 1870, the wealthy adventurer Heinrich Schliemann began excavations at Hissarlik, relying on the accounts of Homer and Virgil and the convictions of the Briton Frank Calvert. He uncovered several Troys, built one on top of the other, which he numbered from I to IX, from the oldest to the most recent. In the ruins of Troy II, he discovered a considerable collection of gold and jewellery pieces, which he named «Priam's Treasure.» This led him to believe that the level of Troy II was that of Homeric Troy. To this day, we believe that Homeric Troy is more likely to be No. VI.



# MYCENEA (MYCENAE)



Country	Greece
Civilization	Ancient Greece
Period	2nd millennium BC – 468 BC
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1840 – Kyriákos Pittákis (Greek)

Mycenae is an ancient city located in the Peloponnese, surrounded by fortifications made of Cyclopean walls, an assembly of enormous stone blocks.

The city's importance between 1600 and 1100 BC gave its name to the Mycenaean period and makes it one of the most important historical sites of ancient Greece.

The powerful city shows several signs of destruction from the end of the 13th century BC. Their cause is the subject of much discussion within the Royal Society: foreign invasions, earthquakes, fires, or internal conflicts?

The first excavations of Mycenae, known since Antiquity, took place in 1840, notably with the clearing of the Lion Gate, an immense opening of 3.75 by 3.5 metres built around 1250 BC, on whose lintel are carved two rampant lions nearly three metres high.



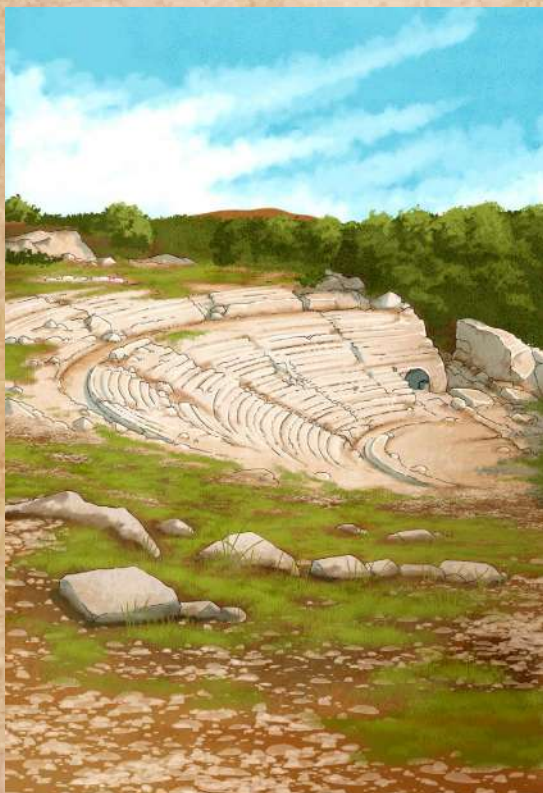
# POMPEI

Country	Italy
Civilization	Ancient Rome
Period	7th century BC – 79 AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1748 – Rocco Alcubierre (Italian)

Founded during the 7th century BC, this city became wealthy over the years, featuring many palaces, monuments, and gardens. Pompeii was a very prosperous Roman city until the year 62, when it suffered a great earthquake that seriously damaged the city. While the reconstruction work was still unfinished, in the year 79, a terrible event forever marked the course of the city's history. One morning, Vesuvius awoke with such force that the volcano entirely covered the city in ash. The excavations have unearthed a city frozen at the exact moment of the eruption, more than 1,800 years ago. Giuseppe Fiorelli, thanks to his ingenious casting technique of pouring plaster into the voids left by the ash, made it possible to discover the victims in the very posture in which death by asphyxiation surprised them.



# SYRACUSE (SYRACUSA)



Country	Italy (Sicily)
Civilization	Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome
Period	734 BC – 3rd century AD
1 <sup>st</sup> Excavations	1854 – John George Taylor (British)

Syracuse was a powerful city-state that exerted its influence over all the cities of Magna Graecia and beyond.

Rivalling Athens in size and splendour from the 5th century BC, Cicero described it in his time as «the greatest of Greek cities and the most beautiful of all.»

In 212 BC, the Romans seized and sacked Syracuse, before rebuilding it and making it the capital of the Province of Sicily. Renowned for its rich Greco-Roman history, its amphitheatres, and its ancient heritage, it was the birthplace of the famous mathematician Archimedes, who lived there until his death, protecting the city from a Roman siege. Legend has it that Archimedes developed giant mirrors to reflect and concentrate the sun's rays onto the sails of Roman ships to set them ablaze.



# AUTHOR'S NOTE

Dear players,

This document is a work of fiction, based as much as possible on the knowledge of archaeological sites available at the time Sir Archibald's text is set, that is, in 1933. The geopolitical situation mentioned is that of the era; the archaeologists cited really existed and worked to excavate these sites. Only their supposed connection with our archaeologist from the Royal Society of Archaeology is fictional.

When I started designing the prototype for this game, which was then called Terra Explorare, I quickly decided that it would be anchored in a historical reality, for several reasons.

First, I wanted to share with you my passion for ancient stones, lost civilizations, and enduring mysteries: an undeciphered language (the Phaistos Disc), unexplained construction (the pyramids of Giza, Tiwanaku), a site largely unexplored to this day (Machu Picchu, Choquequirao).

Next, I wanted to enhance your immersion into the role of these pioneers of modern archaeology by making the game actions performed by your explorers coherent and understandable. I myself am very sensitive to all these thematic and narrative elements when I play.

Finally, and most importantly, I was keen to introduce you to all these archaeological sites that have withstood the ravages of time and history to be with us today. Some are in a sometimes impressive state of preservation, thanks to the meticulous and relentless work of all these archaeologists, men and women, who sometimes dedicated their lives to excavating their El Dorado.

Therefore, I very early on conducted research to compile a list of sites that had already been discovered in the game's supposed era (1920-1930), for greater realism and to avoid anachronisms. I also spent a lot of time, for immersion but also out of curiosity and passion, searching for period photographs of the sites, in the state they could be observed at the beginning of the 20th century. Some were barely cleared (Tikal, Palenque), or even just discovered (Machu Picchu, Antioch), while others had been explored and excavated time and again (Pompeii, the Valley of the Kings). I would like to thank the entire publishing team, and especially Guillaume Tavernier, the illustrator, for keeping the idea of representing the archaeological sites as they appeared to the travelers and explorers of the time. Some have since disappeared or been degraded, like the Buddhas of Bâmiyân or the monuments of Palmyra.

I humbly hope that this booklet will inspire you to learn more about a particular civilization, to visit a particular site, or even to awaken an archaeological spark in some of you. There is still so much to discover about our past... I would be delighted to chat with you, at a convention or a game night, about the genesis of this game and my passion for this wonderful and sometimes surprising world of discovering ancient remains.

Happy reading,  
Eric