

Strathfield
Rotary
Club



Rotary Club Strathfield Wednesday Night Meeting

Sergeant Session

10th September 2025

Theme : What Did The Ancients Do For Us?

A quiz based of BCE inventions that exist today.

Give your best answer of which ancient civilisation invent the following products or services

A re-doing of the famous question from “What Have The Romans Ever Done For Us?”, from Monty Python’s Life Of Brian

Question 1.

Who invented for many,
the most important
beverage BEER?



Question 2.



The financial tool Cheque, is still alive, just. Who gave it its genesis?

Question 3.



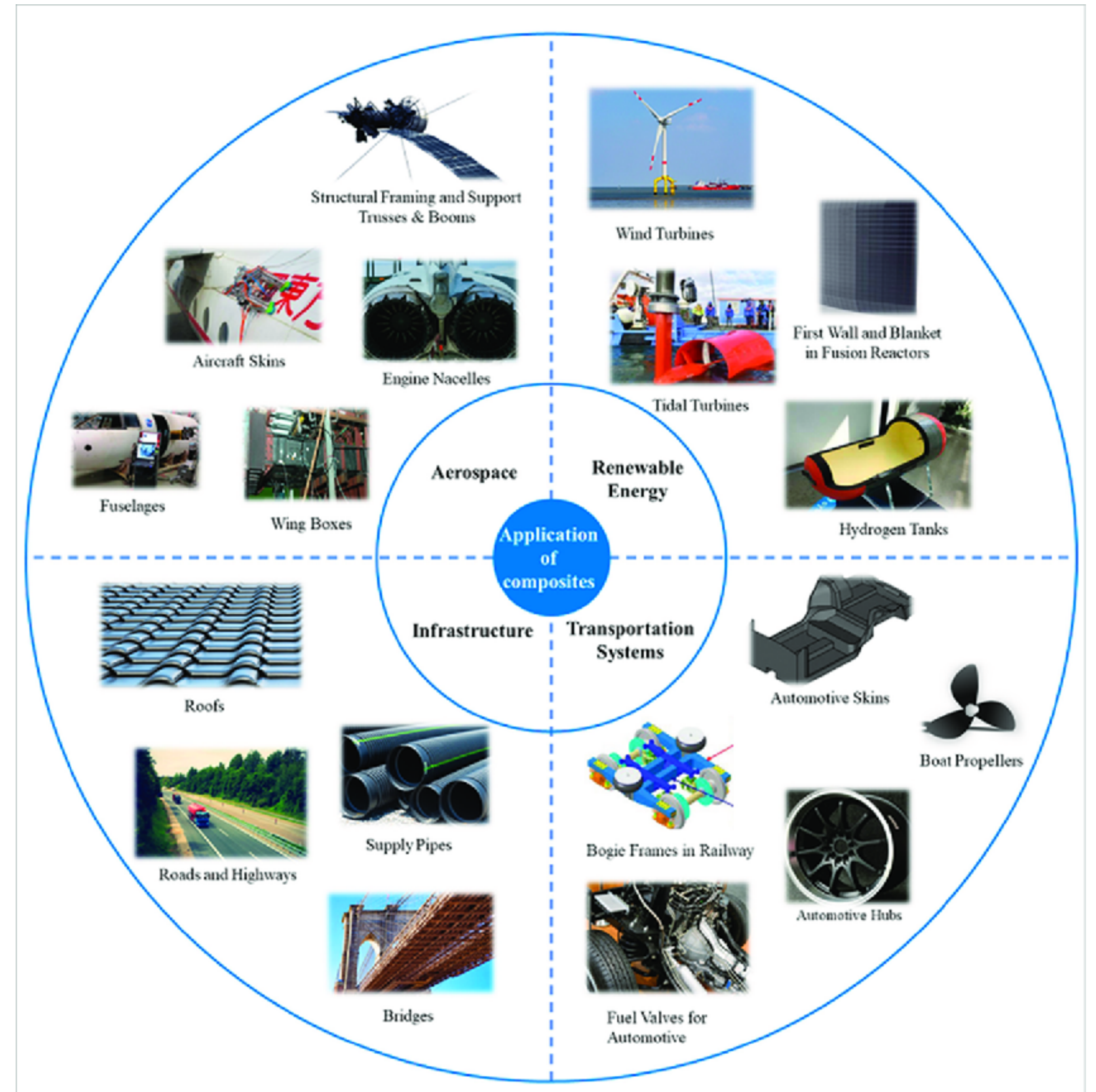
This service has been around for a long time.

Who invited this service?

Question 4.

Who had the wonderful idea of bonding different materials to make a useful new product, that is greater than the sum of its parts.

“The Composite”?



Question 5.

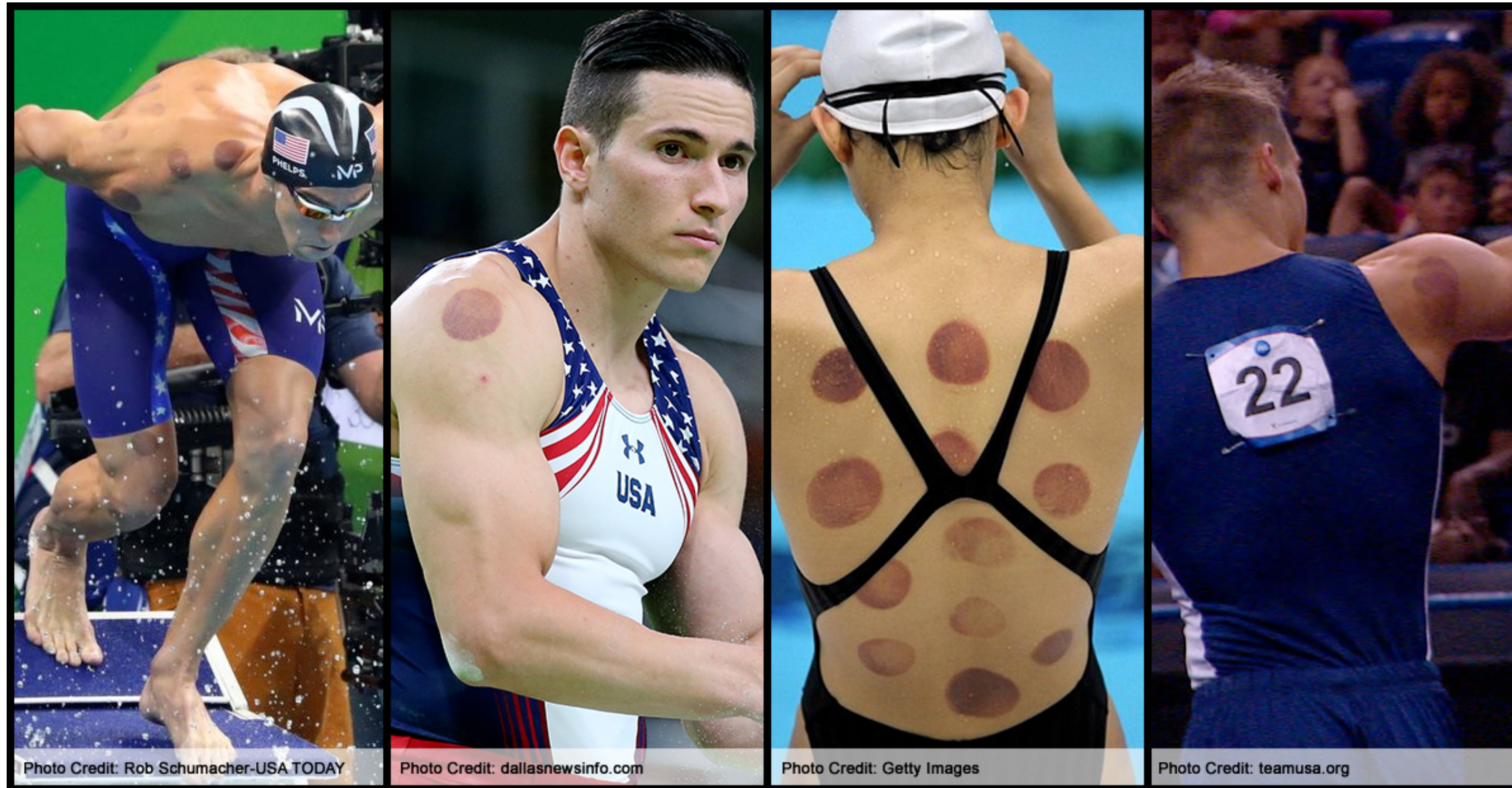
Australia is now the modern promoter of Shiraz wine.

Who was the first producer and promoter?



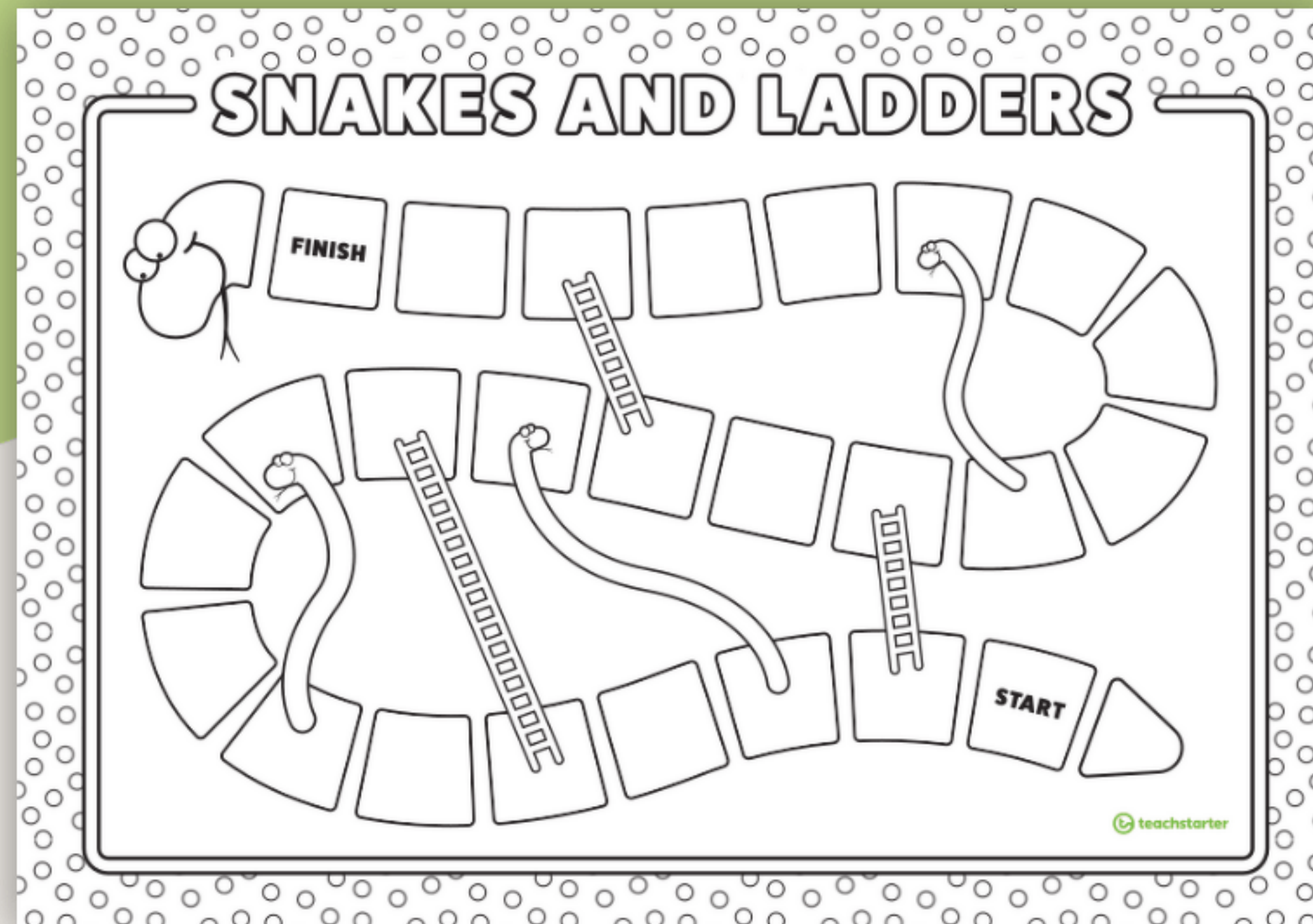
Erin + JJ
talk
Shiraz
The Wine
That Made
Australia
Famous

Question 6.



We have witnessed many sport stars with the tell tale signs of cupping therapy. Who invented it?

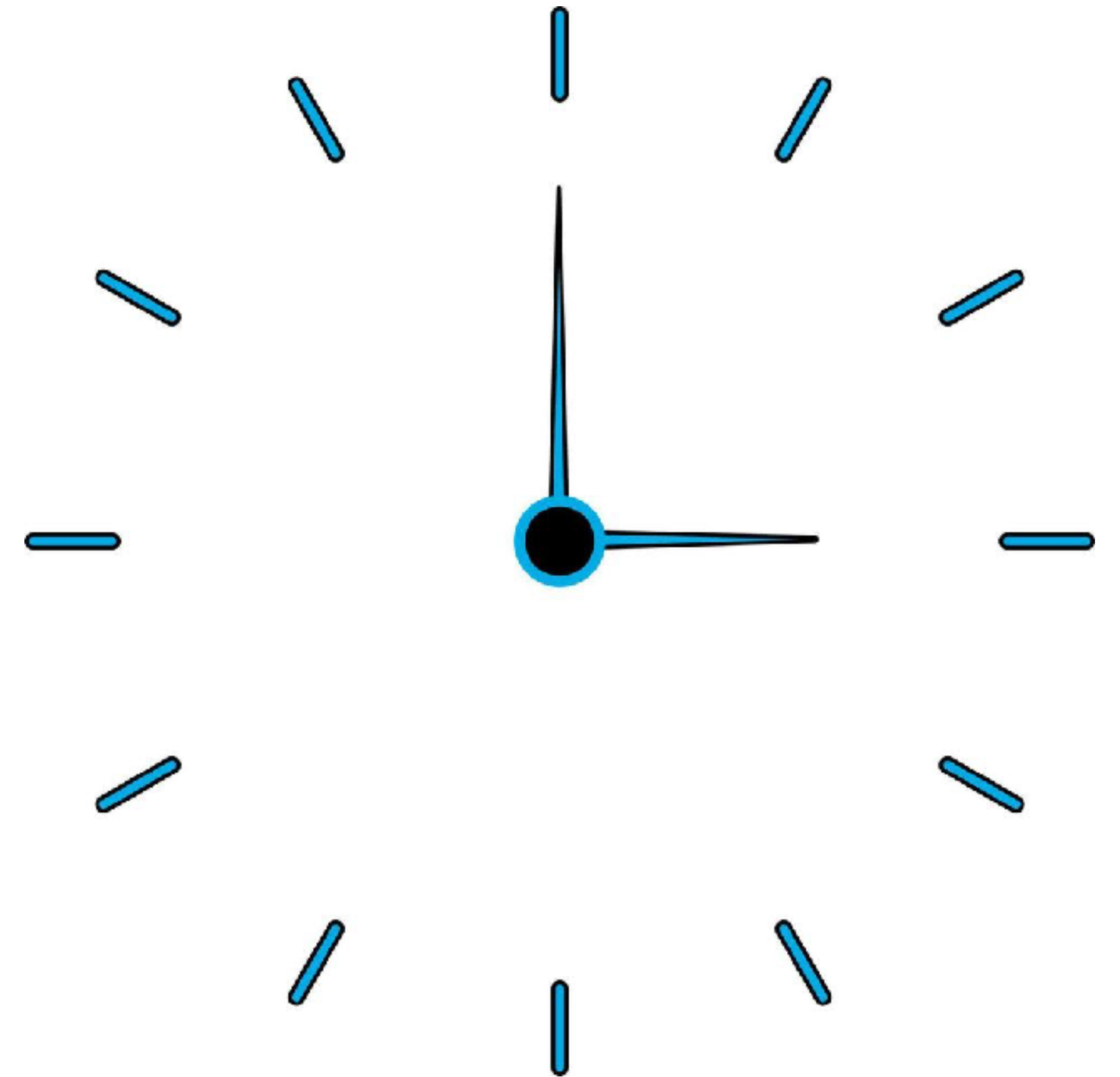
Question 7.



Who invented this classic game?

Question 8.

Who created our time system based on sixty minutes and 24 hours?



Question 9.



Who Invented Vowels?

Question 10.



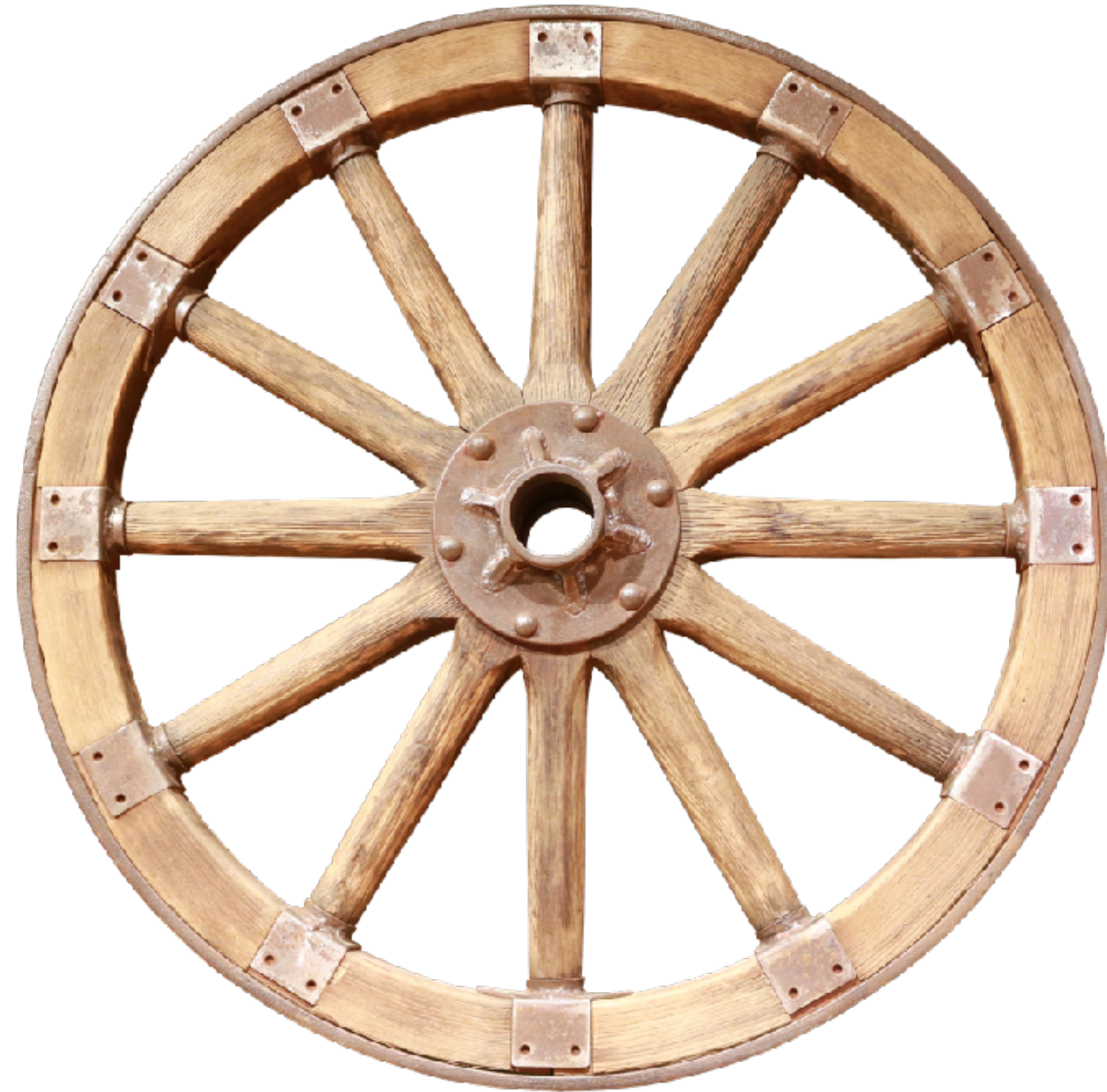
The ancient Greeks had their “Garos” and Romans “Garum”. But who did fish sauce before them ?

Question 11.



Who did the lighthouse first?

Question 12.



Who invented the wheel?

Answer 1. The Mesopotamians



Ancient Mesopotamian Relief of People Making and Serving Beer, 2700-2600 BC, via The University of Chicago Oriental Institute

From [written records](#), we know that the Mesopotamian cities were home to inns, taverns, and pubs, where travelers and residents alike came together to socialize, eat, and enjoy a drink or two.

These drinks were almost [inevitably beers](#), which were available in many different variations, including golden, dark, sweet dark, red and strained.

Source: <https://www.thecollector.com/mesopotamian-inventions/>

Answer 2. The Indians



[Cheque/Check](#) – There is early evidence of using cheques/checks. In India, during the [Maurya Empire](#) (from 321 to 185 BC), a commercial instrument called the "Adesha" was in use, which was an order on a banker desiring him to pay the money of the note to a third person (now known as or referred to as a "Negotiable Instrument").

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Indian_inventions_and_discoveries

Answer 3. The Persians

Although civilisations like those of Egypt and China are said to have been amongst the first to use postal services, and the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires in modern-day Iraq were using forms of mail delivery before the Persian Empire was founded in the 6th Century BC, the Persians of Iran took the idea of a postal system to previously unseen heights – and then some. They used an extensive network of roads worked by expert horsemen who covered stupefying distances throughout the massive, diverse empire with bewildering speed and unwavering resolve.



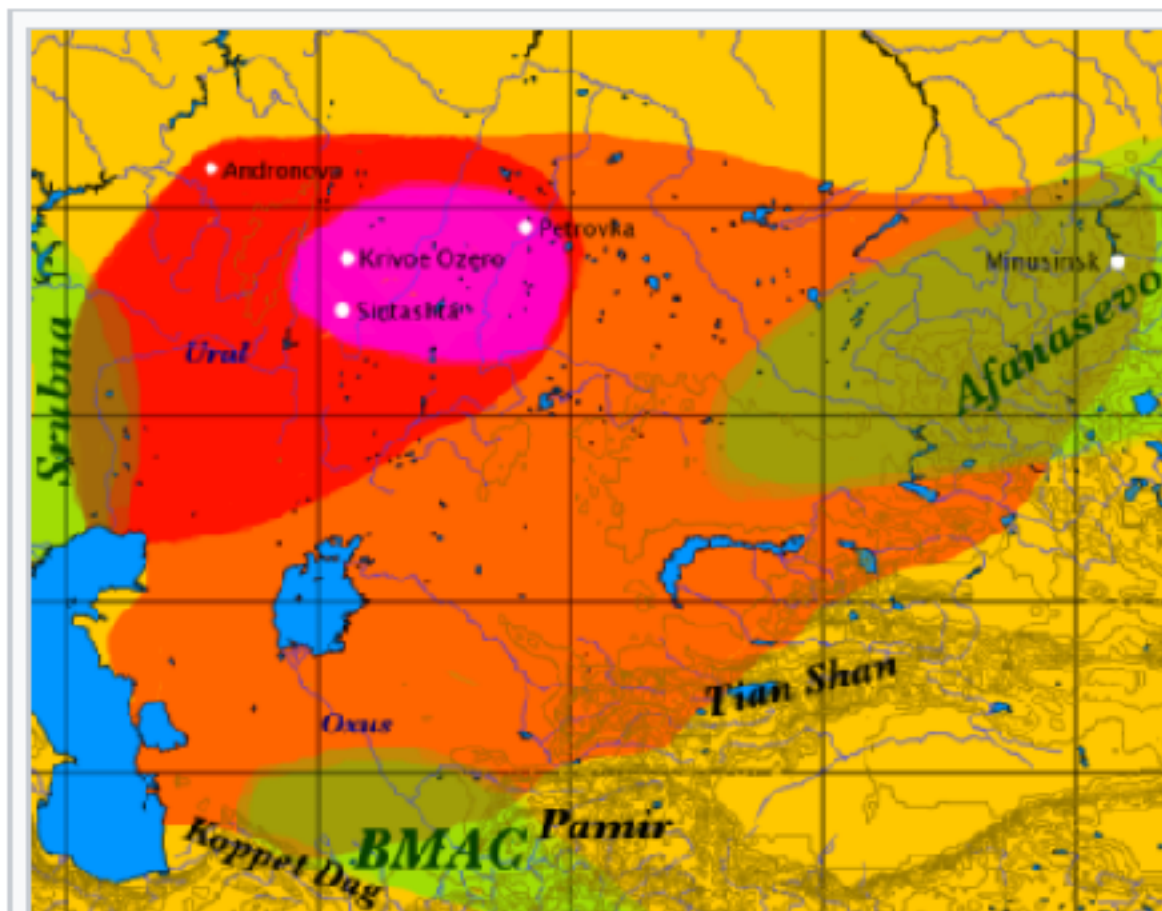
Source: <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20200624-iran-the-surprising-origins-of-the-postal-service>

Answer 4. Nomads from Asiatic Steppe

Origins and use [\[edit\]](#)

Composite construction may have become common in the third or fourth millennium BCE, in [Mesopotamia](#) and [Elam](#) (South-West Iran).^[7]

Associated with charioteers [\[edit\]](#)



Early Bronze Age cultures in the Asian steppe

Bows of any kind seldom survive in the archaeological record. Composite bows may have been invented first by the [nomads](#) of the Asiatic steppe, who may have based it on earlier [Northern Asian laminated bows](#).^[8] However, archaeological investigation of the [Asiatic steppe](#) is still limited and patchy; literary records of any kind are late and scanty and seldom mention details of bows.^[1] There are arrowheads from the earliest [chariot burials](#) at [Krivoye Lake](#), part of the [Sintashta culture](#) about 2100–1700 BCE, but the bow that shot them has not survived. Other sites of the Sintashta culture have produced finds of horn and bone, interpreted as furniture (grips, arrow rests, bow ends, string loops) of bows; there is no indication that the bending parts of these bows included anything other than wood.^[9] These finds are associated with short arrows, 50–70 cm (20–28 inches) long, and the bows themselves may have been

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Composite_bow

Answer 5. Iran or Persia

Ancient residue

An ancient clay jar has pride of place at the University of Pennsylvania museum in Philadelphia in the US.

It was one of six discovered by a team of American archaeologists at a site in the Zagros mountains in northern Iran in 1968.

The jars date back to the Neolithic period more than 7,000 years ago, and provide the first scientific proof of the ancient nature of Iranian wine production.

Chemical analysis on one of them revealed that a dark stain at the bottom was actually wine residue.

"This is the oldest chemically-identified wine jar in the world," says Prof Patrick McGovern.

The first evidence of grape cultivation in Shiraz came around 2,500 BC, when vines were brought down from the mountains to the plains of south-west Iran, the professor says.



Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38771806>

Answer 6. The Greeks or the Chinese



No definitive answer. The ancient greeks and the ancient chinese are the common documented practitioners in many sources.

Sources: From Wikipedia, National Institutes of Health, Massage Specialists etc

Answer 7. The Indians

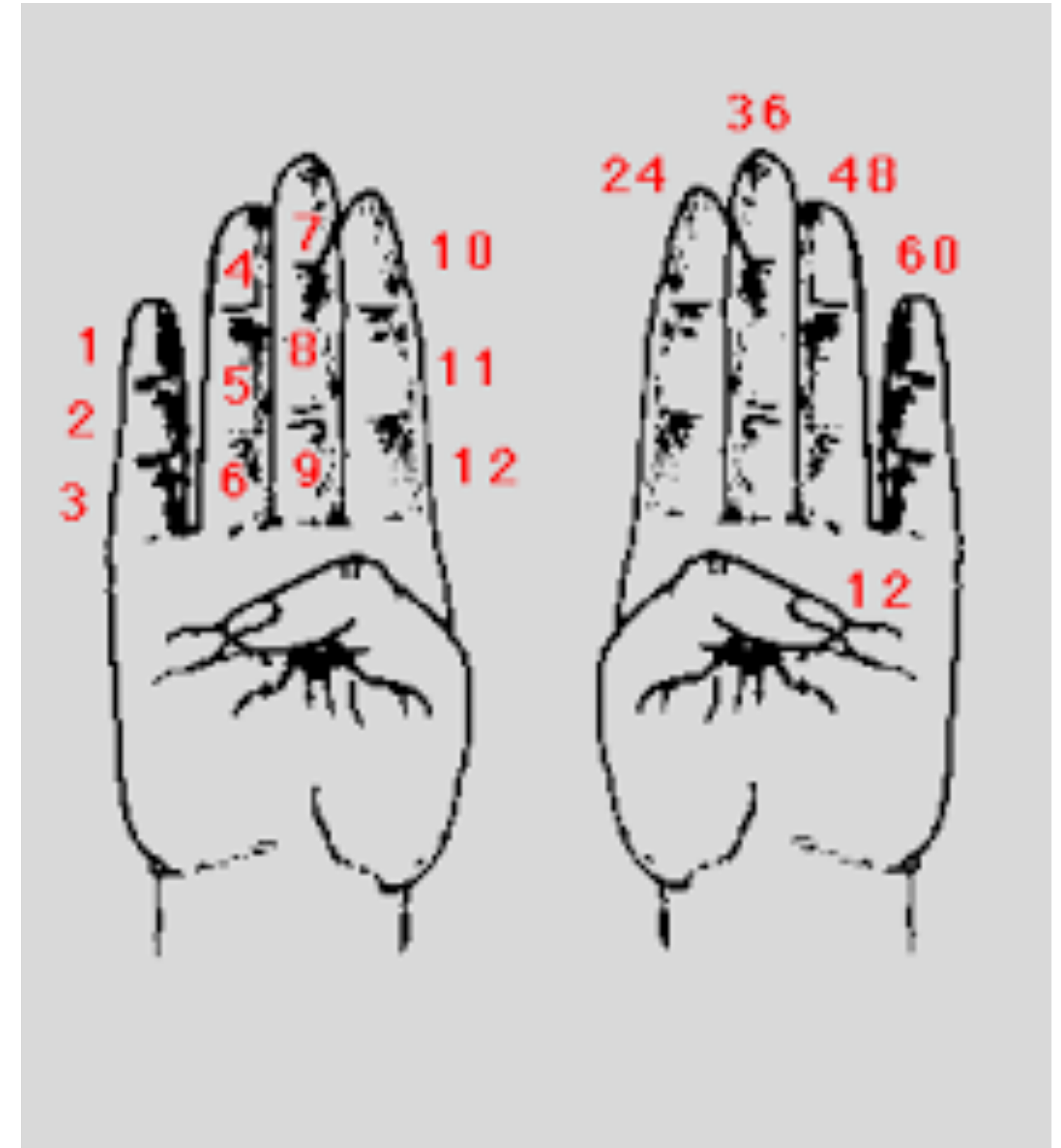


[Snakes and ladders](#) – Vaikunta pali Snakes and ladders originated in India as a game based on morality.

During British rule of India, this game made its way to England, and was eventually introduced in the United States of America by game-pioneer [Milton Bradley](#) in 1943.

Answer 8. The Mesopotamians

After they had figured out how to capture and convey the concept of space, the Mesopotamians moved onto time. They developed the [sexagesimal system](#) by which units of time are divided into 60 parts and its factors, which eventually gave us our minute of 60 seconds and an hour of 60 minutes. It is also from the Mesopotamians that we inherit the 24 hours of the day and the 12 signs of the zodiac, corresponding to the lunar months. To make these fit with the number of days in the solar year, the Mesopotamians added not leap days but leap months!



Answer 9. The Greeks

Alphabets with vowels [\[edit \]](#)

Greek alphabet [\[edit \]](#)

Main article: [History of the Greek alphabet](#)

By the 8th century BC, the Greeks borrowed the Phoenician alphabet and adapted it to their own language,^[18] creating in the process the first "true" alphabet, in which vowels were accorded equal status with consonants. According to Greek legends transmitted by [Herodotus](#), the alphabet was brought from Phoenicia to Greece by [Cadmus](#). The letters of the Greek alphabet are the same as those of the Phoenician alphabet, and both alphabets are arranged in the same order.^[18] However, whereas separate letters for vowels would have actually hindered the legibility of Egyptian, Phoenician, or Hebrew, their absence was problematic for Greek, where [vowels](#) played a much more important role.^[19] The Greeks used for vowels some of the Phoenician letters representing consonants which were not used in Greek speech. All of the names of the letters of the Phoenician alphabet started with consonants, and these consonants were what the letters represented; this is called the [acrophonic](#) principle.



Greek alphabet on ancient [black-figure pottery](#). There is a [digamma](#) but no *ksi* or

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_alphabet

Answer 10. The Chinese



History [\[edit\]](#)

Asia [\[edit\]](#)

Sauces that included fermented fish parts with other ingredients such as meat and soy bean were recorded in [China](#), 2300 years ago.^[4] During the [Zhou dynasty](#) of ancient China, fish fermented with soybeans and salt was used as a condiment.^{[5][6]} By the time of the [Han dynasty](#), soy beans were fermented without the fish into [soy paste](#) and its by-product [soy sauce](#).^{[7]:346,358–359} with fermented fish-based sauces developing separately into fish sauce.^[8] A fish sauce, called *kôechiap* in [Hokkien](#) Chinese, might be the precursor of [ketchup](#).^{[9][1]:233}

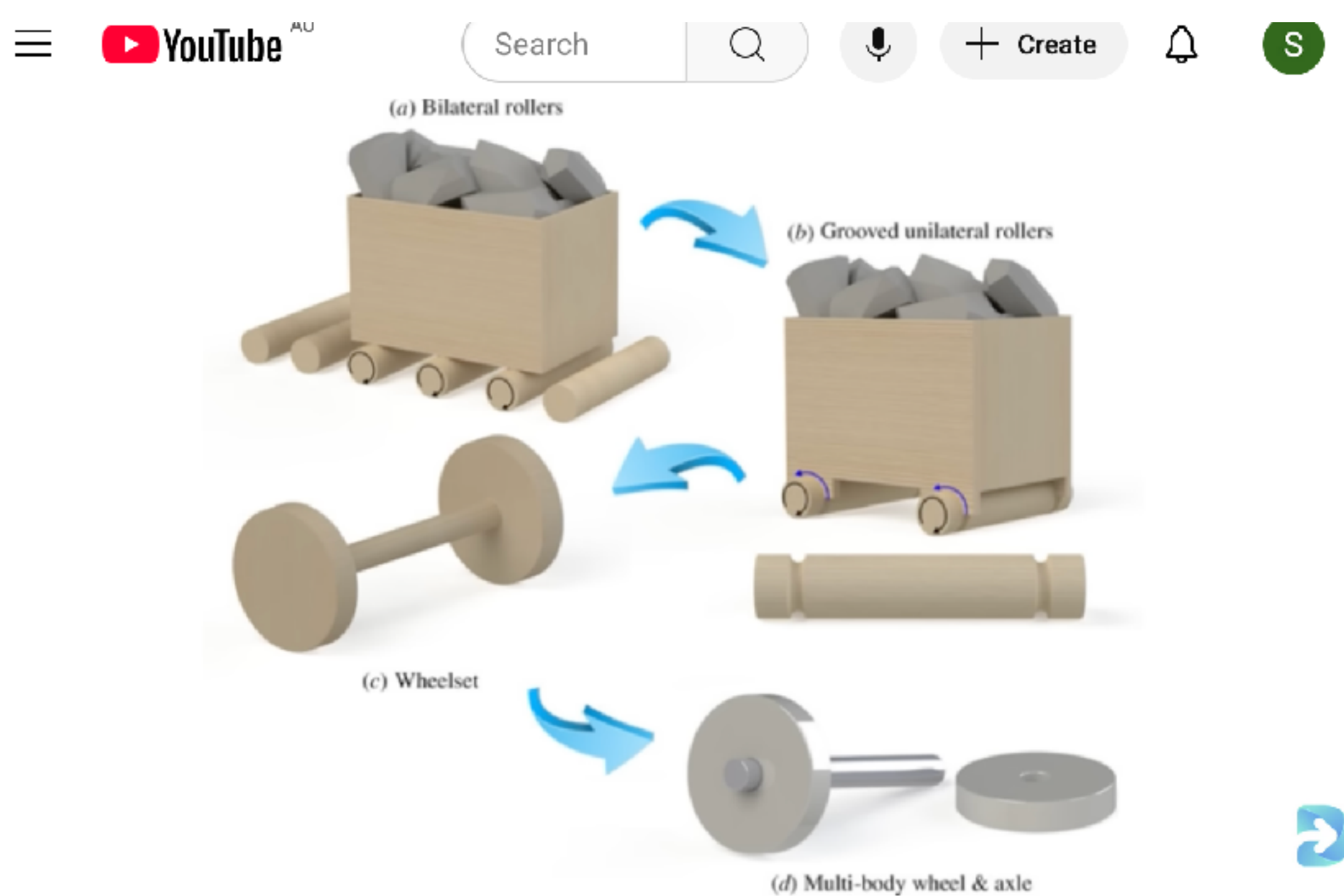
Answer 11. The Greeks



According to [Homeric](#) legend, [Palamedes](#) of [Nafplio](#) invented the first lighthouse, although they are certainly attested with the [Lighthouse of Alexandria](#) (designed and constructed by [Sostratus of Cnidus](#)) and the [Colossus of Rhodes](#). However, [Themistocles](#) had earlier established a lighthouse at the harbour of [Piraeus](#) connected to Athens in the 5th century BC, essentially a small stone column with a fire beacon.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_lighthouses

Answer 12. The Slavs not the Mesopotamians



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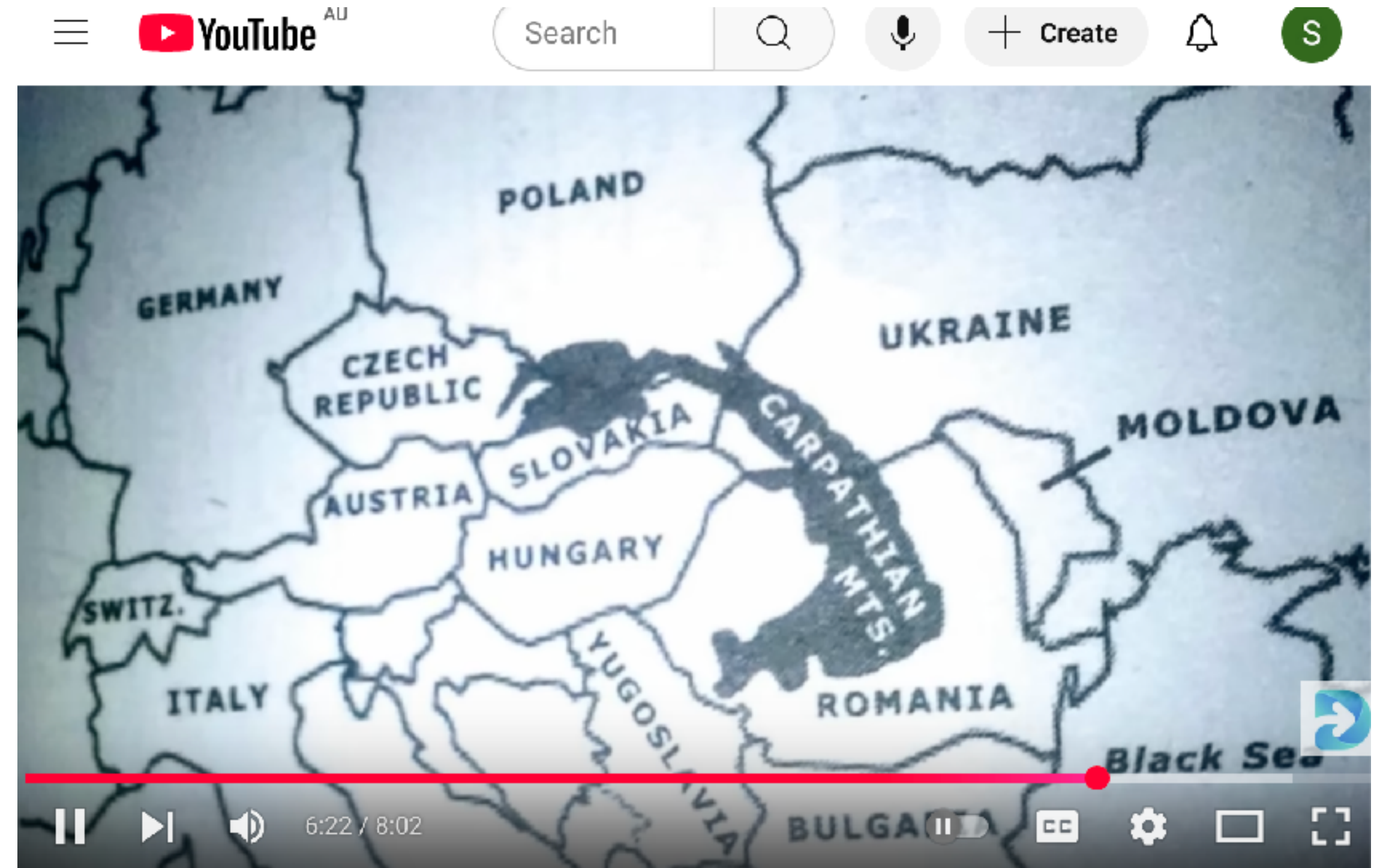


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Where and how was the wheel invented? This video explores a groundbreaking new study suggesting that the wheel emerged not from a sudden eureka moment in urban Mesopotamia, but rather through slow, practical innovation deep inside Neolithic copper mines in the Carpathian Mountains.



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Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2I3BJeI19U>