

PLAYING CARD

PLAYING CARD. See **CARD GAME.**

PLAZA DE TOROS MONUMENTAL. See **MEXICO CITY** (Sports; picture: Colorful Mexico City).

PLEA BARGAINING. See **TRIAL.**

PLEBEIANS, *plih BEE uhnz*, were commoners in the early Roman Republic. The plebeians included freed slaves, peasant farmers, and dependents of *patricians* (aristocrats). It is not known how the difference between plebeians and patricians first arose, but it existed by the early 500's B.C.

Plebeians had to serve in the army, but were denied many rights. For many years, they could not hold public office, vote on laws, or become priests. They were forbidden to marry persons not of their class. Judges often treated the plebeians unfairly.

Early in the 400's B.C., the plebeians threatened to refuse to fight unless they were allowed to choose their own *tribunes* (officials). The plebeians were given the right to elect tribunes who could *veto* (reject) unfair acts of judges and lawmakers. Later, in 445 B.C., the plebeians received the right to marry patricians. In 367 B.C. they were allowed to run for the office of *consul* (chief government official). By 300 B.C. they had been declared eligible for the priesthoods and other offices. In 287 B.C., the *comitia tributa* (assembly of all the people—plebeians and patricians alike) was given the power to make laws that bound everyone.

Wealthy plebeians then began joining the patricians to form a new upper class. But tribunes and the *comitia* remained to protect the poor classes of Rome until the end of the republic, in 27 B.C.

HERBERT M. HOWE

See also **PATRICIANS**; **PRAETOR**; **TRIBUNES**.

PLEBISCITE, *PLEB ih site*, is a vote of the people on any question. But the term has come to mean the vote of inhabitants in a territory to choose the nation that will govern them. The plebiscite was first used during the 1790's when the citizens of Nice and Savoy voted for or against union with France.

Modern plebiscites are almost always under international supervision. In 1975, for example, the United Nations (UN) sent observers to witness a plebiscite in the Mariana Islands in the Pacific Ocean. All the islands except Guam were governed by the United States as part of a UN trust territory. In the plebiscite, the people voted to become a commonwealth of the United States. Plebiscites also decided the status of the Saar in Europe and British Togoland in Africa.

Plebiscites are intended to give territories freedom of choice, but interested nations sometimes try to influence the vote by military pressure. In any case, plebiscites have marked a long step forward in permitting people of certain territories some freedom in choosing their form of government.

PAYSON S. WILD

PLECOPTERA is an order of insects that lay their eggs in water. The young live in streams or along the rocky shallows of ponds and lakes. They form a large part of the diet of trout and other fish. The adults have wings but do not fly well and seldom wander far from their breeding place. They often can be seen clinging to rocks at the water's edge. For this reason, they are commonly called *stone flies*. See also **STONE FLY**.

PLECTRUM. See **BANJO**; **MANDOLIN**.

PLEDGE. See **OATH**.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE is a solemn promise of loyalty to the United States. It reads:

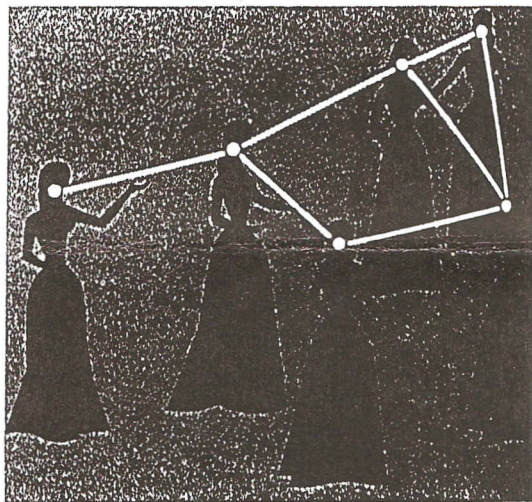
I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Public-school children first recited the pledge as they saluted the flag during the National School Celebration held in 1892. President Benjamin Harrison had called for patriotic exercises in schools to mark the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America. Francis Bellamy (1855-1931) of Boston, an associate editor of *The Youth's Companion*, wrote the original pledge. The National Flag Conferences of the American Legion expanded the original wording in 1923 and 1924. In 1942, Congress made the pledge part of its code for the use of the flag. In 1954, it added the words "under God."

WHITNEY SMITH, JR.

PLÉIADE. See **FRENCH LITERATURE** (The Pléiade); **DU BELLAY**, **JOACHIM**; **RONCARD**, **PIERRE DE**.

PLEIADES, *PLEA yuh deez*, or the **SEVEN SISTERS**, is a loose cluster of stars in the constellation Taurus. Astronomers estimate that the Pleiades is 490 light-years away from the earth. Six stars can easily be seen



The Star Cluster Pleiades, or the Seven Sisters, has six clearly visible stars and one faint star not shown here.

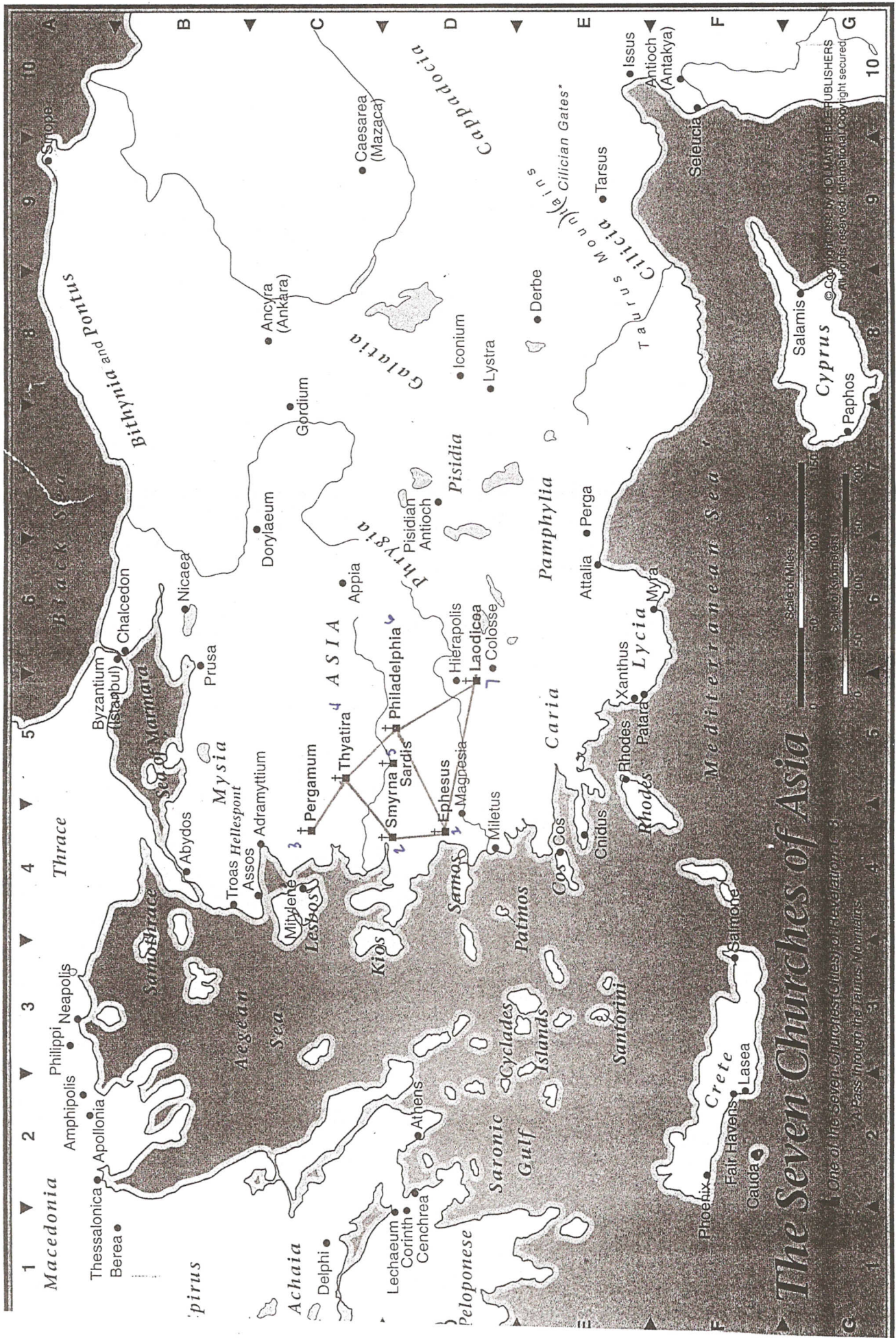
without a telescope. About 200 stars in the Pleiades may be seen with a telescope. Photographs of the cluster have revealed knots of nebulous material composed mainly of dust that reflects the light of the stars in the Pleiades. Many persons mistake the Pleiades for the Little Dipper.

In Greek myths, the Pleiades represented the seven daughters of Atlas and the nymph Pleione. According to one version, Zeus first transformed the sisters into doves, and then into stars to enable them to escape the attention of Orion. The sisters are Alcyone, Merope, Celaeno, Taygeta, Maia, Electra, and Sterope.

According to one legend, only six of the stars can be seen because Merope hid herself in shame over marrying a mortal.

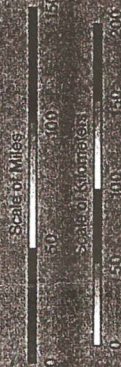
I. M. LEVITT

See also **STAR** (pictures).



The Seven Churches of Asia

1 One of the Seven Churches, City of Revelation 3
 2 Pass through the Taurus Mountains

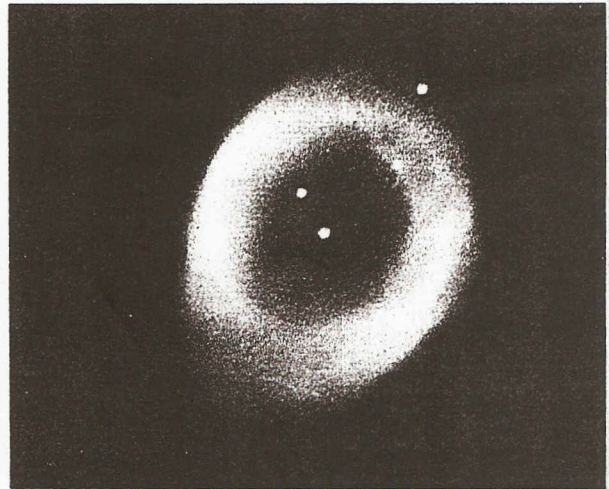


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Crab Nebula (M1, NGC 1952) in the constellation Taurus, a gaseous remnant of the galactic supernova of AD 1054, 6,000 light-years away, expanding at 700 miles/second.



Ring Nebula (M57, NGC 6720) in the constellation Lyra, a planetary nebula consisting mainly of gases thrown off by the star in the centre.



(Above) The inner part of the 30 Doradus Nebula, the most luminous nebula in the entire Local Group of galaxies. It is located in the Large Magellanic Cloud.

(Left) Bright nebula in the Pleiades (M45, NGC 1432), distance 490 light-years. Cluster stars provide the light, and surrounding clouds of dust reflect and scatter the rays from the stars.



Great Nebula in the constellation Orion (M42, NGC 1976), surrounded by glowing gas cloud, one of the largest gas-dust complexes in the Galaxy. Radiation from stars excites atoms of gas, causing them to emit the fluorescent light visible here.



Lagoon Nebula (M8, NGC 6523), in the constellation Sagittarius. This bright diffuse nebula is so large that light from the involved stars does not penetrate its boundaries and the bright nebula appears to be seen against a larger darker one.