Chapter 1 From the Origins of Agriculture to the first Early River Valley Civilizations
Before Civilization

- Stone Age - 2 million to 4 thousand years ago
- Stone age is subdivided into the Paleolithic age (old stone age to 10,000 years ago) and the Neolithic Age (New Stone Age)
- Stone tools are developed in the Paleolithic Age
Chauvet Cave
On December 18, 1994, this cave in southern France was discovered by Jean-Marie Chauvet, a French official. It contains the oldest and best preserved prehistoric cave paintings; more than three hundred paintings were found of animals that inhabited the Stone Age world, including panthers, cave bears, and mammoths. This black-painted panel in the Chauvet Cave shows horses, rhinoceroses, and wild oxen. (*Jean Clottes/Ministere de la Culture*)
Archaeologist Mary Leakey (shown at top of photo) found these remarkable footprints of a hominid adult and child at Laetoli, Tanzania. The pair had walked through fresh volcanic ash that solidified after being buried by a new volcanic eruption. Dated at 3.5 million years old, the footprints are the oldest evidence of bipedalism yet found.  

(SPL/Photo Researchers, Inc.)
The Agricultural Revolutions

- The first stage of the long process of domestication of plants was semicultivation pg. 8
- The next stage was the use of fire
- The transition to agriculture took place first and is best documented in the Middle East
- The environments in which agriculture developed dictated the choice of crops
Domestication of animals proceeded at the same time as domestication of plants

As with plants, domestication of animals occurred independently in various parts of the world.

Helocene Period 9000 B.C.E. - when most historians agree that a global warming made people transition from hunter gathering lifestyles to agricultural or pastoralist lifestyles.

This change took place most likely due to a reduction in the supply of game and wild food plants.

The agricultural revolution increased population from 10 million in 5000 B.C.E to between 50 and 100 million in 1000 B.C.E.
Centers of Plant and Animal Domestication
Many different parts of the world made original contributions to domestication during the agricultural revolutions that began about 10,000 years ago. Later interactions helped spread these domesticated animals and plants to new locations. In lands less suitable for crop cultivation, pastoralism and hunting predominated. (Copyright (c) Houghton Mifflin Company. All Rights Reserved.)
Life in Neolithic Communities

- Early food-producing societies used megaliths

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Early Towns and Specialists

- Most people in early food-producing societies lived in villages.
- Larger Towns would also develop in Neolithic times.
- The two best-known examples of the remains of Neolithic towns are at Jericho and Çatal Hüyük.
- Jericho, on the west bank of the Jordan River, was a walled town with mud-brick structures and dates back to 8000 B.C.E.
Jericho
Çatal Hüyük, in central Anatolia, dates to 7000–5000 b.c.e.

Çatal Hüyük was a center for the trade in obsidian.
Catal Huyuk

- The art of Çatal Hüyük reflects a continued fascination with hunting, but the remains indicate that agriculture was the mainstay of the economy.
Catal Huyuk

Partial Reconstruction of Chatal Huyuk huts

Based on a reconstruction by Orrin C. Shane III
Catal Huyuk
Neolithic goddess
Many versions of a well-nourished pregnant female figure were found in the Neolithic ruins of Catal Huyuk, a large town in central Anatolia (modern Turkey). Here she is supported by twin leopards whose tails curve over her shoulders. To those who inhabited the city this figure likely represented fertility and power over nature. (C.M. Dixon)
Mesopotamia
Mesopotamia is the alluvial plain area alongside and between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

- little rainfall
- warm climate and good soil.

The earliest people of Mesopotamia were the Sumerians Approx. 5000 B.C.E.
A Sumerian cuneiform tablet from the city of Lagash, 2112-2004 B.C., from the Ur III period. This tablet contains calculations of the area of fields for the town of Lagash.
Early Mesopotamian society was a society of villages and cities linked together in a system of mutual interdependence.

City States Developed

Larger Territorial states would develop

Akkadian state founded by Sargon of Akkad in 2350 B.C.E

Ur from 2112-2004 B.C.E

“Old Babylonian” state founded by Hammurabi

Hammurabi’s Code- The first great laws of early Mesopotamian society
Akkadian bronze of Sargon

This stern-faced, life-size cast-bronze head, with its stylized ringleted beard and carefully arranged hair, shows Mesopotamian craftsmanship at its finest. It is thought to be either Sargon (2371-2316 B.C.E.) or Naram-sin (ca. 2250-2220 B.C.E.). (Claus Hansmann)
Law Code of Hammurabi
The principal collection of laws in ancient Mesopotamia was the code of Hammurabi, the Babylonian ruler. Unearthed by French archaeologists in 1901-1902, this stele contained the code, which Hammurabi claimed rested on the authority of the gods. (Hirmer Verlag Munich)
Overview of Ur
This photograph gives a good idea of the size and complexity of Ur, one of the most powerful cities in Mesopotamia (present Iraq). In the lower right-hand corner stands the massive ziggurat of Umammu. (Georg Gerster/Photo Researchers, Inc.)
Saharan rock art
An unknown artist painted the dynamic scene of giraffes on a Saharan rock in what is now Libya in 5000 B.C.E. This was from a rainy era when hunters could view majestic herds of game. (Robert Estall Photography)
Mesopotamia

Resources

Territorial Expansion

Long Distance Trade
Mesopotamian Society

- Kings, Priests controlled wealth
- Three Classes of people
  1. Free landowning people
  2. Dependent farmers and artisans
  3. Slaves (Prisoners of War)
Development of Writing
Development of agriculture brought about a decline in the status of women.

Men did the value-producing work of plowing and irrigation.

Women had no political role.

They could own property, control their dowry, and engage in trade.

Women’s social status would continue to decline with the rise of urban merchant class.
Mesopotamian Religion

Anthropomorphic Deities
(Human Characteristics For Animals or Inanimate Things)

Tutelary Gods
(Gods that protect Each city)
- Temples (Ziggurat)
- Priesthood served the Gods
- Common people possibly had beliefs in magic
Technology and science

- Cuneiform evolved from the use of pictures to represent the sounds of words or parts of words.
Egypt
The land of Egypt is defined by the Nile River, the narrow green strip of arable land on either side of its banks, and the fertile Nile delta area.

The rest of the country is barren desert, the unfriendly “Red Land” that contrasted with the “Black Land,” which was home to the vast majority of the Egyptian population.
Egypt was traditionally divided into two areas: Upper Egypt, along the southern part of the Nile as far south as the First Cataract, and Lower Egypt, the northern delta area.

The climate was good for agriculture, but with little or no rainfall, farmers had to depend on the river for irrigation.
The Nile floods regularly and at the right time of year, leaving a rich and easily worked deposit of silt.

Egyptian agriculture depended upon the floods, and crops could be adversely affected if the floods were too high or not high enough.

Generally speaking, however, the floods were regular, and this inspired the Egyptians to view the universe as a regular and orderly place.
Egypt’s other natural resources included reeds (such as papyrus for writing), wild animals, birds and fish, plentiful building stone and clay, and access to copper and turquoise from the desert and gold from Nubia.
Divine Kingship

- Egypt’s political organization evolved from a pattern of small states ruled by local kings to the emergence of a large, unified Egyptian state around 3100 B.C.E.

- Historians organize Egyptian history into a series of thirty dynasties falling into three longer periods: the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms. These three periods were divided by periods of political fragmentation and chaos.
Kings known as pharaohs dominated the Egyptian state.

The pharaohs were regarded as gods come to earth to ensure the welfare and prosperity of the people.

The death of a pharaoh was thought to be the beginning of his journey back to the land of the gods.

Funeral rites and proper preservation of the body were therefore of tremendous importance.
Early pharaohs were buried in flat-topped rectangular tombs.

Stepped pyramid tombs appeared about 2630 B.C.E. and smooth-sided pyramids a bit later.
The Mighty Nile River: “Longest River in the World”

The Landsat image (left) shows the Nile flowing into its delta. An outline of the continental United States (right) shows the length of the Nile’s course. The actual length of the Nile with all its twists and turns is more than 4,100 miles.
Mesopotamia: ”Land Between the Two Rivers”

The Tigris & Euphrates River System

Marsh Arabs, So. Iraq
Egypt: The “Gift of the Nile”

95% of the Egyptian people live on 5% of the land!
Cairo, Egypt:
Most Populated City in the Middle East

17,000,000+
People!
Middle East: Population Density
Mountains & Plateaus

- Atlas Mts.
- Zagros Mts.
- Caucasian Mts.
- Taurus Mts.
- Arabian Plateau
- Anatolian Plateau
- Caucasian Plateau
- Iranian Plateau
- Hejaz Mts.