

Neolithic Revolution: Term given to development of agricultural societies. This revolution in economic, political, and social organization began in Middle East as early as 10,000 B.C.E. and gradually spread to other centers, including parts of India, North Africa, and Europe. With the rise of agricultural forms of economic production, humans were able to remain settled more permanently in one spot and increase their levels of specialization regarding particular economic, political, and religious functions. Additionally, emergence of agriculturally based societies caused massive increase in the sheer number of people in the world. Most evidence suggests that gathering and hunting peoples resisted agriculture as long as they could. About 3000 B.C.E., metalworking had become common in Middle East. Like agriculture, knowledge of metals gradually fanned out to other parts. Metalworking was useful to agricultural and herding societies. Agricultural peoples had resources to free up a small number of metal tool makers who specialized in this activity and exchanged their product with farmers for food.

Civilization: Word “civilization” comes from the Latin term for “city.” Formal states, writing, cities, and monuments all characterize civilizations. Civilizations also exhibit elaborate trading patterns and extensive political territories. Many ingredients of civilization had existed by 6000 B.C.E., origins of civilization, date to only about 3500 B.C.E. 1st civilizations were river-valley civilizations, as they all developed alongside major rivers to secure adequate water supply for agricultural production. Earliest river-valley civilizations began in Middle East and flourished for many centuries. Created basic set of tools, intellectual concepts ;writing and mathematics, and political forms that would persist and spread to other parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Most of the river-valley civilizations were in decline by 1000 B.C.E.

Tigris-Euphrates Civilization: Originated in valley of Tigris and Euphrates rivers in a part of the Middle East, Mesopotamia. 1 of few cases of a civilization that started from scratch, no examples for imitation. This civilization progressed due to the accomplishments of Sumerians, most influential people in the Tigris-Euphrates region. By about 3500 B.C.E, Sumerians had developed 1st known human writing, cuneiform. Were characterized by development of astronomical sciences, intense religious beliefs, and tightly organized city-states. Sumerians improved region’s agricultural prosperity by learning about fertilizers and using silver to conduct commercial exchange. Their ideas about divine forces in natural objects were common among early agricultural peoples; a religion polytheism. Sumerian political structures stressed tightly organized city-states, ruled by king who claimed divine authority. Key example how a civilization and political structures combined. Government helped regulate religion and enforce its duties; it also provided a system of courts for justice. Kings originally war leaders, and function of defense and war, including leadership of a trained army, remained vital. Sumerians eventually succumbed to the Akkadians, who continued much of Sumerian culture in Tigris-Euphrates region, and Babylonians, who developed Hammurabi’s code. Laid down procedure for law courts and regulated property rights and duties of family members, setting harsh punishments for crimes. This focus on standardizing a legal system was one of the features of early river valley civilizations.

Egyptian Civilization: Emerged in northern Africa along Nile River about 3000 B.C.E. Benefited from trade and influences from Mesopotamia, produced own distinct social structures and cultural expressions. Egyptian civilization featured very durable and centralized institutions. Mathematical achievements and impressive architectural structures characterized Egyptian civilization. From 2700 B.C.E. onward, Egyptian pharaohs directed building of the pyramids, to function as their tombs. Building of these architectural monuments only accomplished with use of an abundance of slave labor.

Indian and Chinese River Valley Civilizations: Prosperous urban civilization emerged along the Indus River by 2500 B.C.E., supporting several large cities, such as Harappa. Indus River peoples had trading contacts with Mesopotamia, but developed a distinctive alphabet and artistic forms. Invasions by Indo-Europeans resulted in complete destruction of this culture, little is known about its influence on India. Civilization along the Huang (Yellow) River in China developed in considerable isolation, some overland trading contact developed with India and Middle East. Organized state that carefully regulated irrigation in the flood-prone river valley. Chinese produced advanced technology and elaborate intellectual life about 2000 B.C.E. Less of a break between Chinese river-valley society and later civilizations in China than in any other region. The Shang ruled over the Huang River valley by about 1500 B.C.E. These rulers are noted for managing the construction of impressive tombs and palaces.

Heritage of the River Valley Civilizations: Basic achievements; wheel, alphabets, mathematics, and divisions of time, vital legacies of early civilizations. Mesopotamian art and Egyptian architecture influenced Greeks and Romans, passed on much of their heritage to Muslim and European civilization. Phoenicians devised a simplified alphabet that influenced Greek and Latin writing systems. Most influential of smaller Middle Eastern groups were Jews, gave world 1st clearly developed monotheism

1st Civilizations: Established pattern of division among world's peoples. After Homo sapiens spread and had little contact with each other, separate languages and cultures developed. By 1000 B.C.E. Phoenicians traded with Britain and Chinese silk sold in Egypt. Overall, 4 distinct centers of civilizations developed: Middle East, India, China, and Egypt. Each had important commonalities including trade, writing, and cities