

ANTH140 Lectures

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Unit I: From Human Origins to Agrarian Communities c. 100,000–500 B.C.E.

Introduction

We associate civilization and history with relatively high levels of technology because we live in a literate and technology advanced society.

Important to?

1. Approach with an open and inquiring mind
2. Assume a small measure of intellectual risk to benefit from discussions

Chapters 1-6?

Examine the growth of ways of life in 5 different areas of the globe before 500 B.C.E

Chapter 1: The Earliest Human Societies

1-1 A Few Definitions of Terms

History – The record of what people have done in the past.

History depends on the evidence of the past

(Human actions in past time, as recorded and remembered)

Historiography – The systematic study of history, as processed through an author's brain and bias, working with the raw materials he or she has found.

(The writing of history to interpret it)

Archaeology – The study of cultures through the examination of artifacts (anything made by humans)

Word means “the study of origins”

Archaeologists – crucial to the study of human societies that existed before recorded history

Anthropology – The study of humankind as a particular species

The science that studies humans as a species rather than studying a special aspect of their activity

Paleo anthropologists – Study human evolution

Paleo environmentalists – Study ancient natural environments

Paleographers – study old writing

Hominid (human like creature) – Human like creature ~ 4.5 million years ago

Homo sapiens (thinking or wise man) –

- Originated in east Africa
- Migrated 100,000 years ago
- On every continent except Antarctica by 10,000 B.C.E
- Recent genomic studies trace the migration

1-2 The Evolving Past

Archaeology and Paleoanthropology have both evolved quickly over the past 40-50 years.

Archaeological evidence suggests that refined tools of bone and stone were made not as functional tools but as a form of art or aesthetic to the maker.

70,000 years ago, many thousands of years before our dated art has been recorded

1-3 The Paleolithic Age (Old Stone Age)

Paleolithic Age – Age from first known appearance of homo sapiens to 10,000 B.C.E.

Also called *The Old Stone Age* because many tools were still made from stone and other natural materials that were quite crude.

- By the end of the Old Stone Age humans inhabited all the continents except Antarctica
- Late Paleolithic people were hunter and gatherers, however famine was always near

Hunters and Gatherers

Hunting and gathering was done in groups and success depended more on organization and cooperation than on individual bravery or strength

- family was the basic social unit (normally extended family or clan -> includes more than nuclear family)
- bigger family unit was necessary for protection
- total number was about 40 people
- close family relations and interchange with other similar groups among the Paleolithic hunters was critical for their survival

Warfare was at an all-time low during this period.

However, conflicts did arise over hunting grounds, theft, water, etc....

If a group was threatened, they could easily move to another piece of land since there was so much land available

1-3a Human Development During the Paleolithic

Humans ability to reason, plan, organize, make tools, and create art changed a great deal throughout this time

- At least 17 different varieties of hominid evolved during this time
- Hominids became more upright during the Paleolithic age and their skulls enlarged and became more rounded to account for a larger brain
- Eyesight grew sharper, smell less so
- Less hairy bodies, shorter arms
- Larynx shifted to allow for speech

All these modifications and many other adaptations reflected humans' changing to their physical environments

By the late Paleolithic (c. 100,000 to 10,000 B.C.E.) groups were living in caves for extended periods of time. Groups also mastered their environment, creating clothes, fires, hammers, axes, chisels, etc....

1-4 The Neolithic Age (New Stone Age)

Agriculture and Livestock Breeding

Time that humans went from being nomadic food hunters and gatherers to producing food for themselves by domesticating wild plants and animals

1. Livestock breeding
2. Herding
3. Sowing
4. Harvesting

c. 10,000 to 2,000 B.C.E.

Holocene Era – Period in which archaeology and climatology that came after 10,000 B.C.E. and the last ice age

- Generally warmer climate that forced humans to locate near streams of water and hunt for food

Neolithic Food Producing Revolution (c. 10,000 – 3,000 B.C.E.) – Substitution of farming for hunting and gathering as the primary source of food for a given people

- Slow revolution most groups took 5 to 10 generation to complete it (200 – 400 years)

The revolutionary part is the dramatic series of changes in human societies that resulted from this change

1. A steadily expanding population that thrived primarily in **permanent or semi-permanent settlements.**
2. Concept of **private land** was created from the livestock and breeding
3. Food production needed a **systematized regulation** to enforce when disputes arose.
4. Increase in the **specialization of labor.** Made no sense for a farmer to be soldier.

Modern Hunter-Gatherer

Some believe that agriculture also led to an **enlarged public role for women** in Neolithic societies based on farming.

- First farmers were probably women
- Women associated with fertility
- Importance of mother-goddess
- Some evidence of matriarchy

Adoption of food-producing lifeways brought significantly harmful consequences for humans

- Diseases jumped from animals to people

Agrarian and Irrigation Civilizations

Changes brought by dependency on agriculture

- Population swelled dramatically
- Surplus wealth supported more complex societies
- Craft production and trade appeared
- New farming techniques
 - Use of draft animals
 - Irrigation
- Urban life developed
- Ruling elites emerged
- Need to maintain records led to invention of writing

1-5 Metal and Its Uses

Copper – the first metal used by humans

- Very soft metal

Bronze Age (7,000 – 1,500 B.C.E)

- Began in Western Asia
- Bronze – copper combined with tin and lead
 - Suitable for weapons, resistant to weather
 - Difficult to make, heavy, expensive
 - Could not keep fine edge for cutting

Iron Age (after 1,500 B.C.E.)

- Smelting began
- Tools and weapons became stronger, cheaper, sharper, and longer lasting
- Iron plowshares improved agriculture

Chapter 2: The Earliest Human Societies

Chapter Introduction

Cuneiform Writing

Cuneiform – Mesopotamian wedge-shaped writing begun by the Sumerians

Example in intro.pdf

- An astrological tablet from Uruk in Sumer
 - Serves as a *reminder of the linkage that existed between religious ritual and timekeeping in ancient agrarian societies*

Population increase created by the Neolithic Revolution led to the creation of

1. Farming villages
2. Eventually cities of governmental power, religious ritual, manufacturing, trade, and cultural sophistication

Sumeria – Earliest known civilization, based on city states. Located in southern Iraq along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers

2-1 Neolithic Southwest Asia

~15,000 B.C.E. the world's climate began warming after centuries of Ice Age conditions

1. Vast inland lakes
2. Streams
3. Forests

Natufians – Earliest settlers of the Levantine Corridor

- Founded the first known settled communities

~11,000 B.C.E. Younger Dryas Event

Glacial melt water had accumulated in a colossal, freshwater lake in northern Canada suddenly burst into the Atlantic Gulf Stream

1. Triggered a 1,000-year regression in Europe and southwestern Asia to the cooler and drier conditions of the late Ice Age.
2. Abundant sources of water and plant foods available to humans and animals disappeared

3. Forced Natufians to congregate in small, semi-permanent villages near surviving streams and rivers.
4. Natufians switched from hunter and gathering and instead planted domestic cereals such as emmer wheat, einkorn, and barley.

Levantine Corridor – Region that included most of the present-day Israel-Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and northern Iraq.

- Archaeologists have discovered the earliest evidence of agriculture here
- Location endowed with high water tables
- Indicates switch to agriculture and livestock breeding

1. Allowed people to grow their populations and congregate in towns and cities

Early Cities

- Jericho
- Catal Huyuk

Mesopotamia – “land between the rivers” meaning the fertile lands between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers

- This is where earliest known civilizations appeared in the fourth millennium B.C.E.

2-2 Sumerian Civilization

Euphrates and Tigris rivers run parallel to each other for about 400 miles before joining together to flow into the head of the Persian Gulf

Between 7500 – 6000 B.C.E. large scale irrigation was introduced into this region

1. Enabled them to engage in regional manufacturing and trade
2. Paved the way for emerging ruling elites

The Ancient Near East

Mesopotamian city-states were concentrated in the rich agricultural plain created by silt from the parallel rivers as they flowed toward the head of the Persian Gulf

Fertile Crescent – The wide belt of land reaching from Mesopotamia to Egypt along the Mediterranean coast

City-States – States or societies that are dominated by a single city

Populations ranged between 8,000 – 10,000 people

1. Eridu

2. Lagesh
3. Ur
4. Uruk

Here they developed ideas and techniques that would provide the foundation of a distinct and highly influential civilization

Sumerians were the first people to do a number of highly significant things

1. Created first large cities, distinct from towns and small cities such as Jericho
2. Developed first sophisticated system of writing, called cuneiform
3. Built the first monumental buildings
4. Probably invented the wheel as a load-bearing transportation device
5. Among the first to make use of horse-drawn chariots in warfare
6. First to design and build an irrigation system powered by use of gravity
7. First to use plow and other bronze utensils and weaponry
8. Mesopotamians and Sumerians were among the first to develop short and long distance trade

Sumerians left extensive records and physical evidence

~ 2300 B.C.E. is when the land between the rivers was brought under one effective rule

Sargon the Great – Semitic invader who conquered the entire plain

Sargon established his capital in the new town of Akkad

1. Akkadian empire lasted less than a century
2. Great influence because Sumerian culture was spread far and wide through the Fertile Crescent

Framing History (The Epic of Gilgamesh)

Epic of Gilgamesh – Collection of stories

- Earliest approach to analyzing the relations of gods and humans
- Portrays a society in search of a religious basis for human action
 1. Stories of the flood which occur in many ancient cultural traditions
 - Disastrous flood that engulfed the entire earth and nearly annihilated humanity

Main focus of the story is to stress the inevitability of death and the defeat of the hero as he attempts to achieve immortality

Mesopotamian counterpart of the biblical Noah is Utnapishtim

Gilgamesh is a grim tale that speaks of death and the afterlife in pessimistic and fearful tones

Epic ends with the failure of Gilgamesh's quest for the secret of immortal life

- Futility of trying to be immortal or seeking "the secret to immortality"

2-2a Earning a Living

Most Mesopotamians earned their **livelihood from land**

1. Directly as farmers and herders
2. Indirectly as carters, wine pressers, millers, or other agrarian occupations

Commerce was primarily with trade in metals and foodstuffs

Scribes, bookkeepers, and priests, are the few jobs that required formal training or degree

Trades such as leatherwork and jewelry making also existed

Slaves made up a sizable portion of the working population

2-2b Religion and the Afterlife

Knowledge of Sumerian religion is unsure

They believed in a host of nature gods

Polytheism – religion having many gods

Many female and male gods each with specific meanings in natural and human affairs

1. Inanna (Ishtar) - goddess of love and fertility
2. Enki – water god

These gods were like superhumans, with all the faults and weaknesses of men and women

Each city-state had its local gods and spirits of the land and sky who were crucial to the prosperity of the citizens

Ziggurats – Stepped and elevated temple structures that the ancient Mesopotamian civilization erected in honor of its gods

- Here hundreds of priests ritually prayed and made offerings to the gods on behalf of the city-state's welfare

Babylon – City where the famous Ziggurat of the Tower of Babel is located

Two features of Mesopotamia's natural environment that stood out the most

1. Aridity of the climate
2. Unpredictability of the rivers' annual floods, which people relied on

2-2c Mathematics and Chronology

Mesopotamian sense of time was shaped by the cyclic nature of seasonal change.

Their calendar was subdivided into lunar months, corresponding to the period between one full moon and the next

Sumerian math has held up well and has been influential in all later Western science, including that of the Greeks

Sumerian math is based on units of 60 and its divisors

- This is the reason why we still measure time in intervals of 60 seconds and 60 minutes
- 360-degree circle, also originated with the Sumerians

2-2d The Evolution of Writing

Lasting accomplishment of Sumerians is the invention of a system of writing, which evolved from their need to have good records

1. Keeping their calendar and predicting seasonal changes
2. Commercial and religious taxation
3. Marital and inheritance contracts
4. Other activities with a mutually agreed upon version of past events

Moved beyond pictorial writing or symbols derived from pictures, into further phase of conveying meaning through abstract marks

Pictography – writing of a simplified picture

- Cannot convey abstractions such as verb tenses and other language techniques

Sumerians got around this and expanded their writing by including special signs for abstractions

3,000 – 2,001 B.C.E

Scribes began using written signs to indicate sounds of the spoken language and is the beginning of a phonetic written language

- Signs have a direct connection with the oral language

Format of written language was a script written in wedge shaped characters, the cuneiform.

- Faded out about 1,000 B.C.E

2-2e Law

Earliest complete code of laws originated in post Sumerian Mesopotamia in the 1,700s B.C.E, during the reign of the emperor Hammurabi

Based on two distinctive principles

1. Punishment depended on social rank of violator
2. Offenders were subjected to same damages or injury they caused to others
 - Commoner would get more severe punishment than a noble or official

Hammurabi's Law Code – History's first known law code written by King Hammurabi in the 18th century B.C.E.

- People were not equal before the law
- Dealt with social and family problems

Mesopotamian law

1. Government should act as an impartial referee among its subject-citizens

2-2f Government and Social Structure

Two types of government

1. Theocracy – Rule by gods or their priests of the early city-states of the Sumerians and Sargon the Great of Akkad
 - A king, assisted by noble and officials and priests ruled the city

Village – social equality was rarely challenged

City – distinctions were expected and to be displayed by many ways

Mesopotamia had three classes of people

1. Small groups of priests, and noble landlords
2. Freeman who did most work and trading along the outlying farmlands – had some rights
3. Slaves who had no political rights – not based on race but bad luck or bad timing

2-2g Women's Rights, Sex, and Marriage

Early stage women shared more less equally in social prestige and power

Trend towards patriarchy

Patriarchy – society in which males have social and political dominance

Sex was sacred and seen as good thing

Sexual pleasure outside of marriage depended on status of individual

Adultery is bad for family because it undermined the family's continuity

- Punishment could be death
- Only applied to women as a man could do as he pleased

2-3 An Expansion of Scale and Trade

Scholars agree Sumerians were not Semitic

Semitic – Describes a person belonging to the most widespread western Asian groups and embraces Hebrew and Arabic

By 3,000 B.C.E. Sumerians extended their domain upriver as far as the future city Babylon

2-4 Successors to Sumeria

Conquest of Sumeria by Sargon of Akkad

Most important successors

1. Amorites or Old Babylonians
2. Hittites
3. Assyrians
4. Hebrews
5. Persian Empire

Chapter 3: Early Africa and Egypt

Chapter Introduction

Egyptian Peasants

Agriculture was the foundation of Egypt's great wealth.

- Peasant farmers made the land productive and built the system of channel irrigation
 - Were the overwhelming majority of the population

Africa has several different climates and topographies that produced civilizations of various levels of sophistication

Race has been less decisive factor in history and natural environment proved to be more important

3-1 African Geography and Climates

Coastal lowlands

- Deserts (north, northwest, southwest)

Inland, plateaus, highlands, and mountains

- (east and southeast) dominate vast interior

African Continent and Egypt

Five major subdivisions of climate and vegetation

- The enormous Sahara Desert divides the continent into its North African and Sub-Saharan components
- 1. *Mediterranean and Southern Coasts*
 - a. Lie outside the tropical zones and enjoy temperate weather and good soil
- 2. *Sahelian or Sahel*
 - a. Cross Africa from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean and are dry, mainly treeless steppes (semiarid grass-covered plains)
- 3. *Deserts*
 - a. Several deserts
 - i. Sahara
 - ii. Namib (southwest)
 - iii. Kalahari (southwest)
- 4. *Rain Forests*
 - a. Extends on either side of the equator in the west and center
- 5. *The Savanna*

- a. South of the Sahara Desert, north of the rain forest in West Africa, and in most of East, Central, and South Africa. Grassland regions of interior plateaus
- Mediterranean has been closely linked to Europe and the Middle East
 - Egypt was isolated in the Nile Valley
 - Tsetse fly and other diseases have hindered large-scale development almost to present time
 - Sahel Steppe land could only support a pastoral economy (nomadic farmers)
 - Coastal strip is only sufficient place for agriculture and village life

3-2 Africa's Neolithic Revolution

Paleo climatologist's have determined that between 11,000 – 3,000 B.C.E. Africa entered a period of much higher rainfall than today

- More grassy steppes, woodlands
- Lakes and rivers covered the “wet” Sahara
- Supported a variety of foods

Historical Linguists – Scholars who reconstruct the relative chronology, as well as changes in grammar, sounds, and methods of expressing ideas, in languages and families of languages.

- These techniques enable scholars to formulate at least general ideas about how past societies developed and moved about, how they lived, the peoples they came into contact with, and the ideas they borrowed from strangers.

Africans introduced a different way of producing food in Sahara between 9,000 – 5,500 B.C.E. and have identified and categorized them into language groups who produced food in the region

1. Khoisan speakers – At one time Khoisan speakers were found throughout much of subequatorial Africa, but are now confined to the deserts of southwestern Africa
 - a. Appear to originally inhabit part of East Africa in parts of Kenya and Tanzania.
 - b. Most remained hunter and gathering throughout their history
 - c. Adopted a unique technology for fashioning microlithic stone tools for a wide variety of applications (sewing, digging, cutting, stone bowls, and net bags)
 - d. Eventually displaced by Neolithic food producers forcing them to migrate into drier regions of Southern Africa, where they survive as hunter and gatherers and cattle herders
2. Nilo-Saharan speakers – Nilo-Saharan language family
 - a. Originally inhabited regions near the Nile River valley, far south of what became Egypt
 - b. Before the wet phase they remained hunter and gatherers
 - c. After the wet phase it allowed them to spread westward and southward from the Nile valley into the Sahara

- d. Many crossed the Sinai Peninsula and became people known as Semites
 - e. Those who lived along banks of rivers tended to settle down in permanent communities
- 3. Afro-Asiatic speakers – Afro-Asiatic language family
 - a. Originally inhabited regions near the Nile River valley, far south of what became Egypt
 - b. Before the wet phase they remained hunter and gatherers
 - c. After the wet phase it allowed them to spread westward and southward from the Nile valley into the Sahara
 - d. Many crossed the Sinai Peninsula and became people known as Semites
 - e. Those who lived along banks of rivers tended to settle down in permanent communities
- 4. Niger-Congo speakers – Niger-Congo language family
 - a. Originally inhabited the southern Sahara woodlands of West Africa during the wet phase
 - b. Sixth millennium converted to farming native varieties of yam and rice, supplemented with guinea fowl, and oil palm used to make palm wine
 - c. Later added black eyed peas, okra, groundnuts, and kola to their crops
 - d. After 5,500 B.C.E. people drifted southward and northward
 - e. Berbers farmed the desert fringe.
 - East African Swahili language ➡ One out of about 800 Bantu languages

3-2a The Bantu Expansion in Subequatorial Africa

Bantu speakers – People who speak one of the member languages of the Bantu language, part of Niger-Congo subgroup

- Profited from these technologies to begin and steady expansion south and east from the general Congo Basin.
- About 1,000 B.C.E. they emerged from the forest into the drier savannas that lay to the south of the river basin and to the west of Lake Victoria. Acquired iron technology and learned to livestock and grow grain crops. These innovations helped them enlarge their numbers.
- By these means, they succeeded in establishing a series of small kingdoms that stretched across eastern, central, and southern Africa.
- By 400 C.E. they reached southern tip of the continent in present-day Africa.
- Most of what we know is inferred from archaeological and linguistic research, since they had no written language

With the spread of desert conditions, the ancient Niger-Congoans moved southward into the savannas of West Africa.

- As skilled boat builders, they could easily navigate the numerous rivers and streams of the rain forest.
- With polished stone axes, they cleared openings in the forest
- Continued living in large communities and cultivating their yam gardens

3-2b Early Civilization of the Nile Valley

1. 5,500 B.C.E. – The Afro-Asians who migrated farther down the Nile Valley towards the Mediterranean Sea, settled as farmers along its floodplain
 - a. It is they who were the ancestors of the ancient Egyptians
2. 5,000 B.C.E. – First villages appeared along the Nile
3. 4,000 B.C.E. – Floodplain cleared; completing states arose
4. 3,500 B.C.E. – Three rival states (Nekhen, Naqada, This)
5. 3,100 B.C.E. – Pharaoh of This unites the Nilotic states
 - a. Pharaoh ruled in name of falcon god Horus, symbolized forces of order
 - b. Tradition says his name was Horus-Aha or Menes

Pharaoh – the title of the god-king of ancient Egypt

Horus – the Falcon-headed god whose earthly, visible form was the reigning pharaoh in ancient Egypt

3-2c The Land and People of Egypt

Like Mesopotamia, Egypt depended on the waters of a great river system.

Egypt is and has always been the **“Valley of the Nile”**

Nile – 4,000-mile-long river originates from the far south, in the lakes of central Africa, and flows north until it empties into the Mediterranean Sea at Alexandria

Population overwhelmingly peasants

- Most free tenant farmers working estates of large landowners, government officials
- Little Mechanization, work performed by humans or animals
- Intimate knowledge of nature, environment
- Dependent on strong government for protection and regularity of seasons

Maat – goddess who personified the principle of order and balance

Nile Delta – Where Nile empties in Mediterranean Sea

Mt. Sinai and Sinai – north of Red Sea

Giza (city) – North West Side of Nile

Cairo (city) – North East Side of Nile

Lower Egypt (region) – Middle of Nile

Thebes (city) – West of red sea

Upper Egypt (region) – West of red sea

Sahara – West of Red Sea, west side of Nile

Nubia (region) – South of Red Sea, east side of Nile, where the ancient African kingdoms of Kush and Meroe were found

3-3 The Pharaoh: Egypt's God-King

Egyptians religious beliefs reflected their environment to a considerable degree and the fully developed religion had an enormous impact on the nature of their environment

3,100 B.C.E. – 1,000 B.C.E. was Egypt's foundation period

- During this centuries, the land was ruled by an unbroken line native Egyptian divine kings who apparently faced no serious threats either inside or outside their domain
- Important to note that king was not “god-like” – he or she was a god who chose to live on Earth among his favored people for a time
- From the moment the days long ceremony was completed, he was no longer a mortal man, he had become immortal, a reincarnation of the god of order, Horus
- He was surrounded by constant protocol and ceremony to protect him from profane eyes and spiritual pollution
- Pharaoh's will was law and his wisdom made him all-knowing
- What he desired was by definition correct and just
- Orders must be carried out or the gods might cease to smile on Egypt
- Family shared the celestial glory somewhat, the son who would succeed him

3-3a Government Under the Pharaohs

Government under the Pharaoh

- Nomes – administrative districts in ancient Egypt
- Governors were noble landlords and temple priests with local power
- Pharaoh directly responsible for welfare of Egypt

Two short intervals where pharaoh's powers were diminished significantly

1. **Intermediate Period of 2,200 – 2,100 B.C.E (Loss of Control of Nomes)**
 - a. Partly result of pharaoh's loss of control over the governors of the southernmost Nomes
2. **Intermediate Period of 1,650 – 1,570 B.C.E (Invasion of Hyksos)**

- a. Hyksos – a people who invaded the Nile Delta in Egypt and ruled it during the second Intermediate period
 - i. Crossed the Sinai Peninsula and conquered the Nile Delta

3-3b The Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, and New Kingdom

Customary to divide Egypt into dynasties (periods of monarch rule by one family)

In all, there were 31 dynasties

- 1. Menes is the first dynasty
- 2. Ended with dynasty that fell to Persian invaders in 525 B.C.E.
- 3. Greatest were those of the pyramid-building epoch (3,100 – 2,200 B.C.E.)
- 4. Greatest were also those of the Empire (1,550 – 1,250 B.C.E.)

Dynasties are grouped into three kingdoms

- 1. Old Kingdom (period from 3,100 to 2,200 B.C.E.)
 - a. Extended from Menes to First Intermediate Period
 - b. Was Egypt's most fertile and stable period, most successful period
 - c. Governed from Memphis, seemed to be unchallenged leaders who enjoyed loyalty and labor of their people
 - d. Art, architecture, religion, stability, prosperity
 - e. Construction of Giza Pyramids
- 2. Middle Kingdom (period from 2,100 – 1,650 B.C.E.)
 - a. Followed first 500 years after the First Intermediate Period, with political stability
 - b. Refinement of arts and crafts
 - c. Rule of Pharaoh was extended further up the Nile to the south
 - d. Conditions of laboring people continued to worsen
 - e. Increased trade with Mesopotamia, Phoenicia (Lebanon), Crete, and Nubia
 - f. Religion more democratic, more could gain afterlife
 - g. Small middle class appeared (merchants, officials)

Chapter 4: