Chapter 1 p. 11 Section 2 – the Dawn of History

EQ: How does the human experience begin?

How do the lives of these people compare to yours?

How do the changes of the Neolithic era change the human experience?

Old stone age: Paleolithic

African origins

Hunter gatherers/nomadic for the most part

Early religious beliefs -- aminmism

Archeologists surmise, no real proof

First evidence of art

Small statues of fat chicks, cave paintings, beads, and complex stone tools

New Stone Age: Neolithic

Domestication of plants and animals circa 11Kya mean more consistent food supply – happens at different times in different places, was there a link that allowed the technology to travel between human populations?

Fertile Crescent area (Guns, Germs and Steel)

Plants from plentiful wild grains in the area

Domestication of local wild beasts – cattle, goats, sheep

Permanent settlements,

more stuff (personal property, tools, etc.)

Need for management of resources, creation of concept of private property, protection of settlements

Specialization of labor

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The rise of cities: civilization is defined as a complex, stratified system of social order.

Surpluses – allow for the support and creation of large, permanent settlements of humans for the first time.

River valleys – spontaneous settlement in different parts of the world – India, China, Egypt, Fertile Crescent – Mesoamerican settlements tended to be in the highlands

Rather than river valleys.

Rivers mean water, and transportation – also flooding and drought

People learn to cope with these challenges by adapting technologies to serve their interests.

Many early settlements have protective walls around them – first evidence of warfare on a large scale is found now.

Mesoamerican cities have their own story – settlements happen around religious centers in the highlands and grow from there.

Features of civilization: there are eight

cities

**Central governments** -- manage surpluses, then laws, collect taxes and tribute, run irrigation projects, run defense/military

**Complex religions:** polytheistic – most communities had their own deities, river gods, run gods, that could help out with natural forces. Some gods specialized with different human activities – birth, trade or war. Priests led Rituals, conducted animal (sometimes human) sacrifices, interceded on behalf of people with their gods.

**Job specialization:** artisans – craftsmen – merchants – performers – metalworkers – copper, bronze (mix of copper and tin), iron – soldiers – clerks and bureaucrats. Interdependence of members of society means people are less able to survive on their own and need the community for survival.

**Stratified social classes:** Priests and nobles, then wealthy merchants, humbler artisans, peasant farmers, slaves – usually women and children taken in war.

**Distinctive art and architecture:** reflected the beliefs and values of the society, and reinforced the belief in the strength and power of their religion and their government.

Massive public buildings, and public places some religious, some governmental. Employed craftsmen and artists of every sort. Rich people, and politically powerful, and religiously important were often buried with the finest examples of the artistic talent of the society.

**Large public works:** Because the government can organize people and money they also built irrigations systems, roads, bridges, defensive walls which became the way people could hang onto the stuff they had.

**Writing and recordkeeping:** Because there became a need to keep track of surplus food and other resources systems of recordkeeping and writing arose. Eventually these systems were extended to include recording history, religious rituals and prayers.

Pictograms – picture symbols, that evolved into distinct symbols. Scribes – were educated usually in temple schools, and learned to read and write to keep records for priests, government officials and merchants. This was not a profession that was open to women. It was a pathway to political power.

Vocab: polytheistic religions

Artisans

Pictograms, cuneiform, hieroglyphics

Creation of the city-state – city and surrounding countryside

Empires – several states and large territory controlled by one ruler

Enforced peace, creation of trade and commerce

**Not everyone bought into the new lifestyle** – still nomadic cultures, who became pastoralists and followed herds. They also developed art, technology, religion and customs of a sophisticated nature even though they did not have cities or complex government. They were mostly relegated to less fertile regions that weren’t suitable for agriculture.

**Environmental impact of humans on the landscape** – begin to actively alter the natural world to serve human communities – farming, irrigation, harvesting of stone and timber, diversion of rivers, creation of reservoirs. All change the natural world to serve human needs.

**Cultural diffusion** – conquest, warfare, trade all took ideas and information from community to community. There were travelers that covered large expansions of water and well developed trade routes across large distances. Religion, technology (farming techniques, bronze and metal working, glassmaking), language, stories all travel between human populations.

Chart on p.19.

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