

# CHAPTER 1: FROM HUMAN PREHISTORY TO THE EARLY CIVILIZATIONS



Ms. Sheets  
AP World History

# PALEOLITHIC ERA

## OLD STONE AGE

### 2.5 MILLION - 12,000 BCE



- The human species has existed for about 2.5 million years.
- Hunting and Gathering: over 99% of human existence has relied on this.
- Paleolithic Era: time before people developed stationary civilizations and settled down to live in one place.
- Hominids: members of the family of humans (includes Homo Sapiens Sapiens)

# HUNTER-GATHERERS



- People who were tied to the seasons of plants (for food) that occurred naturally.
- People were tied to the migration of animals.
- A hunter-gatherer migrated from place to place throughout the year to gather food they could find and hunt animals they could find → “nomads”.

# CHARACTERISTICS OF PALEOLITHIC AGE

- Simple tool use (rocks and sticks) for hunting and warfare
- Use of controlled fire for cooking
- Population distribution all over the world
- Population growth
  - Estimated to be at 1.5 million humans by 100,000 years ago
- Emergence of speech
  - Homo erectus (100,000 years ago) began to transmit oral speech



# PROBLEMS WITH HUNTING AND GATHERING



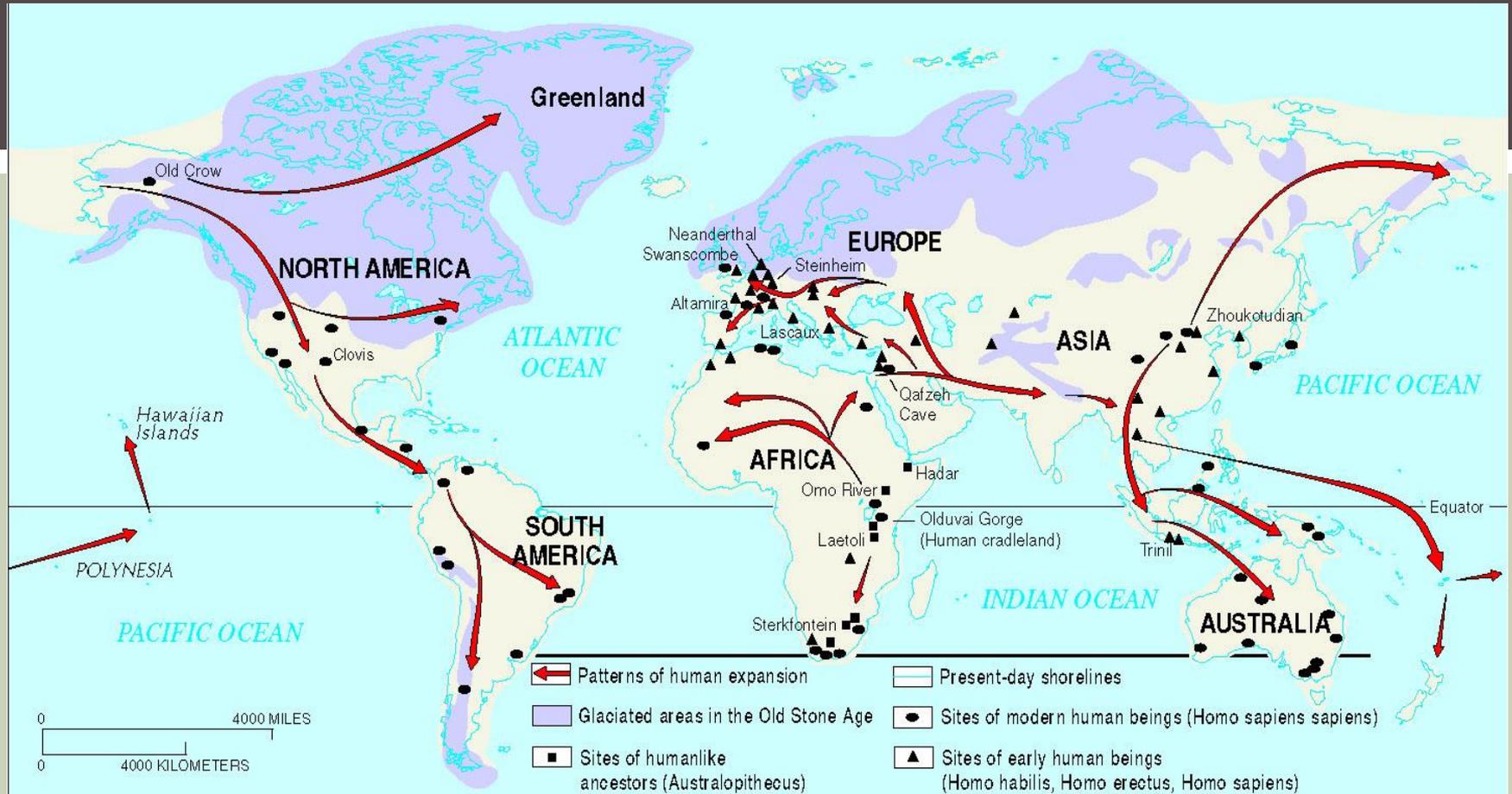
- **Population growth is small overall**
  - Gathering nuts and berries cannot support large populations
  - Giving birth could be dangerous for women
  - Nursing is a natural form of birth control
  - Women had to care for infants, which took time away to do other chores
- **Labor-intensive and dangerous life style**
  - Had to roam widely for food
  - Had to stalk and kill prey

# EMERGENCE OF ART

- Example of cave art: Lascaux, France.
- Estimated to be 16,000 years old.
- Over 2,000 paintings in Lascaux cave: animals, human figures and abstract signs.
  
- Why is it so significant that prehistoric peoples began creating art?



# The Spread of Human Populations



1. Where did the human species originate from?
2. What are most “sites” of humans located by?

# MESOLITHIC AGE

## 12,000 – 8,000 BCE

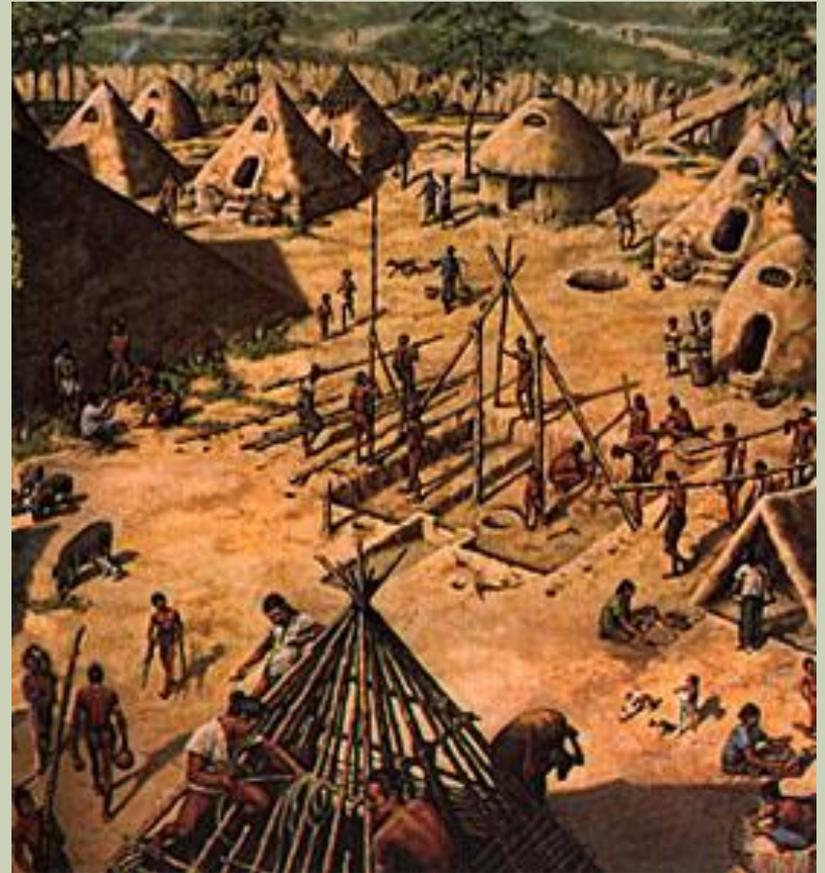
- Human ability to fashion stone tools and other implements improved greatly
  - Sharpen and shape stone
  - Create log rafts, pots, baskets
- Domesticated more animals
- Population growth accelerated
  - Increase in conflict and war



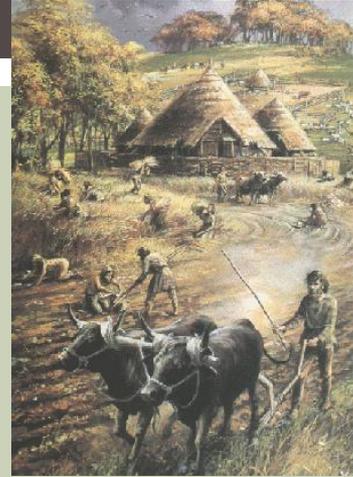
# NEOLITHIC REVOLUTION

## 6,000-4,000 BCE

- The Neolithic Revolution is the transition from hunting and gathering to agricultural settlement.
- Major developments:
  - Invention of agriculture
  - Creation of cities
  - Increased population growth

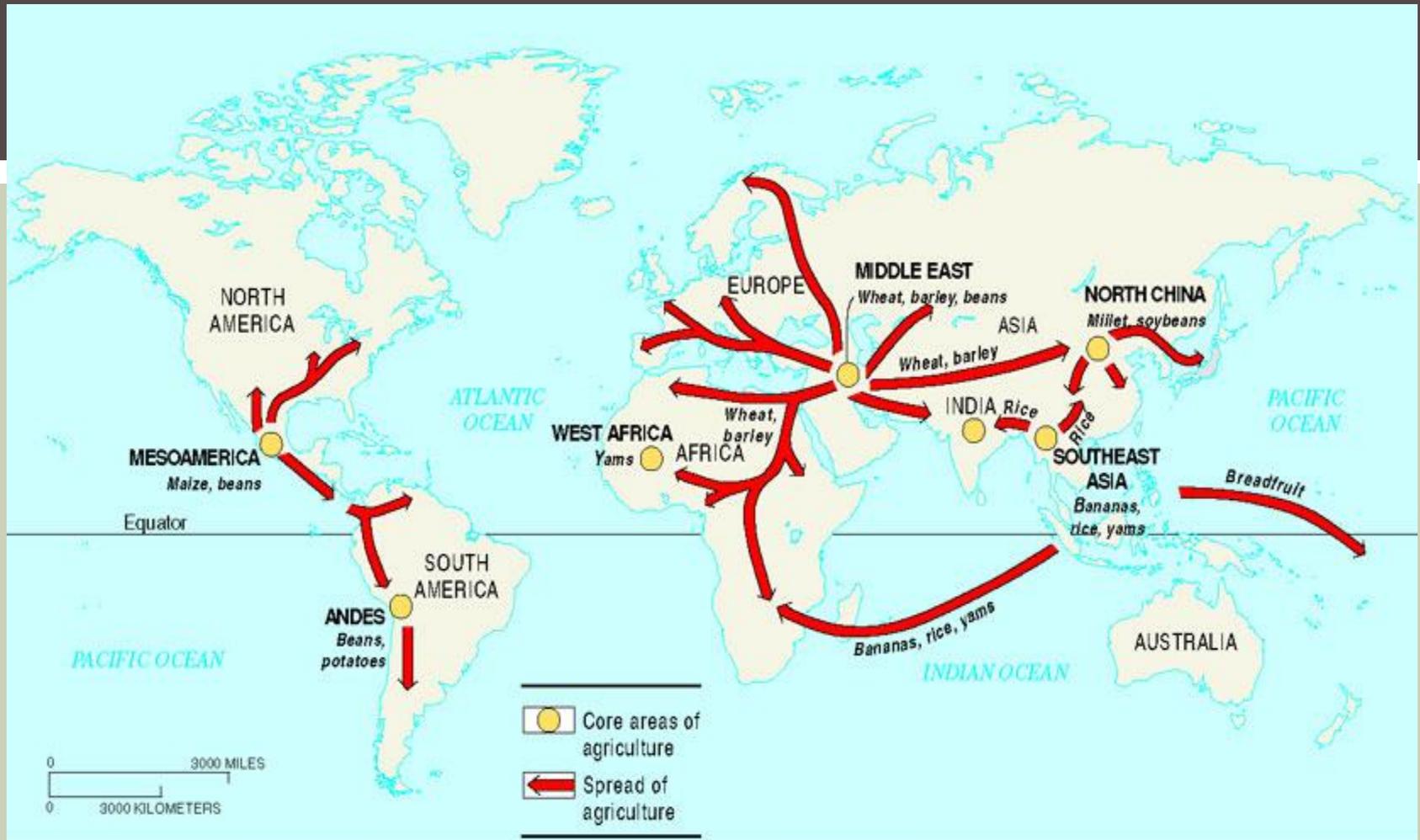


# INVENTION OF AGRICULTURE



- Humans deliberately planned to harvest plants, grains and vegetables for later harvest.
- People began domesticating (raising for food) animals (pigs, sheep, goats, cattle).
- Metal tools were developed for planting and harvesting.
- Slash-and-burn Agriculture: used slash-and-burn agriculture to clear more land to make it suitable for plants and animals by creating crop fields and pastures.
- Development of agriculture moved humans toward more sophisticated social and cultural patterns.

# The Spread of Agriculture



1. Where are the core areas of agriculture?
2. Where did specialty agriculture originate from?

# WAS THE NEOLITHIC REVOLUTION *REALLY* A REVOLUTION?

- No: agriculture was not a sudden transformation.
  - Learning new agricultural methods was difficult and had to be developed.
  - This revolution took over a thousand years.
- Yes: this revolution brought about monumental change to humans.

- **What is the major difference between the Paleolithic Era and the Neolithic Era?**

**QUICK  
REVIEW**

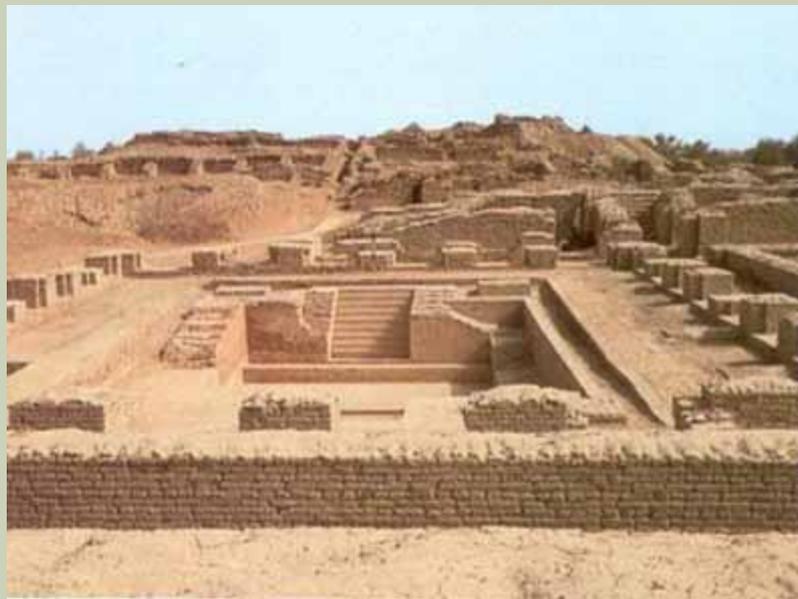
# IRON AGE

## 1900-1400 BCE

- Iron became common after the Bronze Age.
- Hittites in Anatolia discovered and improved iron smelting techniques to make iron weapons and tools.
- Led to advanced farming tools, made labor easier, and diminished the need for many farmers.
- Iron was more effective than bronze; significantly improved weaponry.

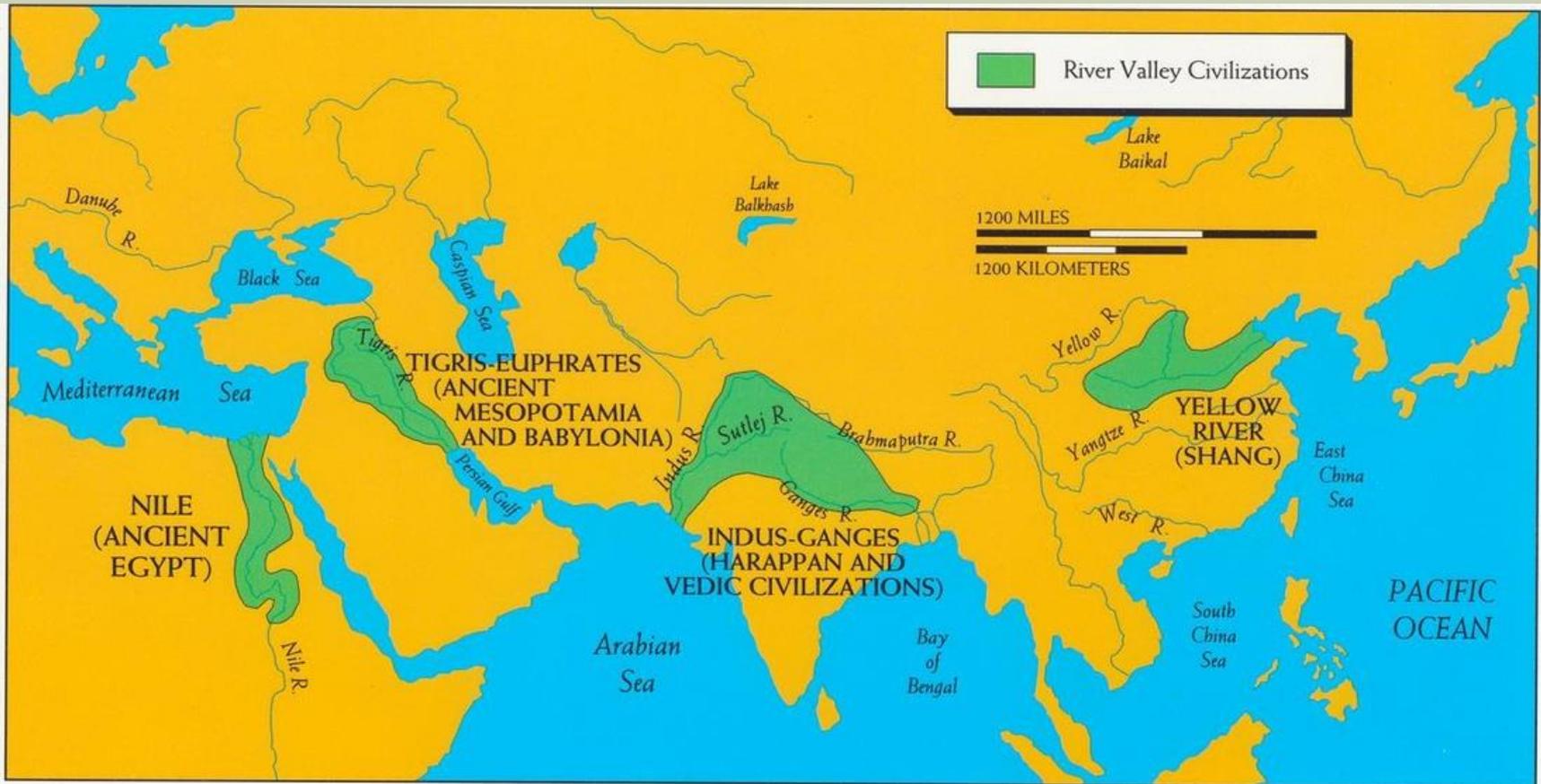


# WHAT IS A CIVILIZATION?



- A society distinguished by reliance on sedentary agriculture, ability to produce food surpluses, existence of non-farming elites, and social stratification.

# FOUR RIVER VALLEY CIVILIZATIONS



- Mesopotamia
- Nile

- Indus River Valley
- Yellow River Valley (Huang He)

# MESOPOTAMIA

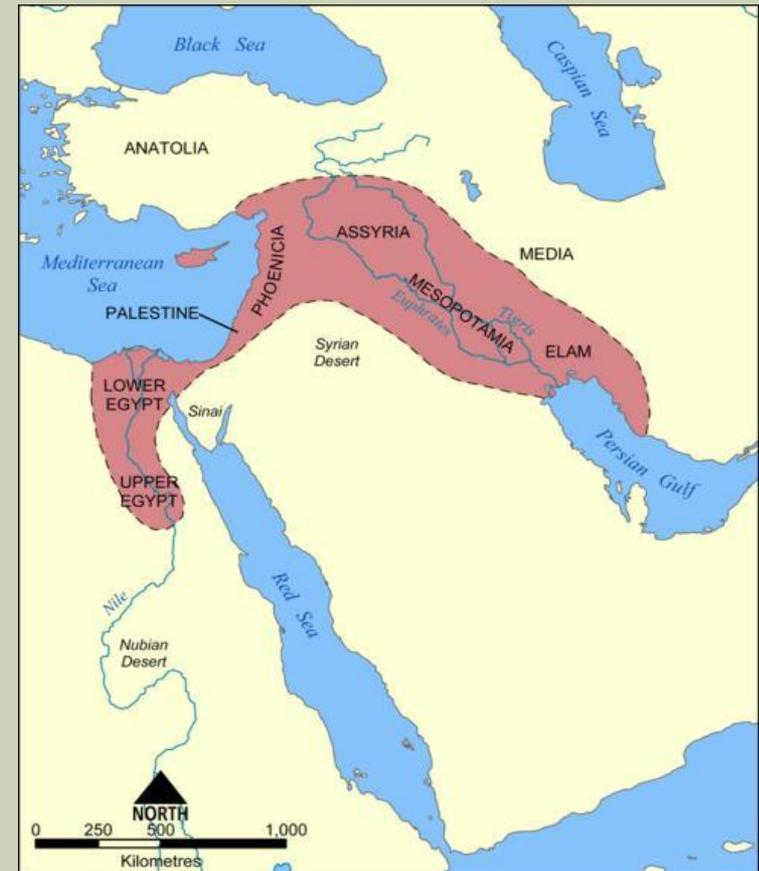
## “LAND BETWEEN THE RIVERS”



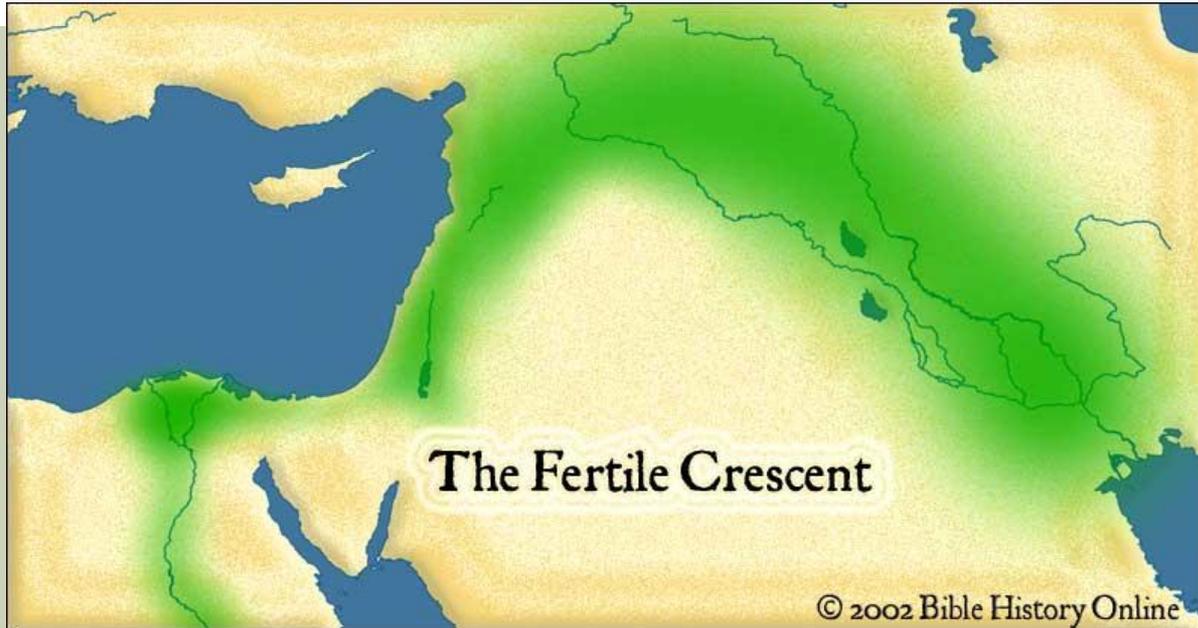
- Civilization that developed between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.
- Developed independently from any other civilizations.
- Home to many groups: Sumerians, Assyrians, Akkadians, Babylonians

# WHERE DID FARMING INITIALLY DEVELOP?

- As early as 10,000 BCE
- In the “Fertile Crescent” between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (Mesopotamia).
- Agriculture will emerge independently 1,000-1,500 years later in China.



# EARLY ACHIEVEMENTS IN MESOPOTAMIA



1. Writing (cuneiform)
2. Formal law codes (Hammurabi's Law Code)
3. City planning and irrigation
4. Architecture (ziggurats)
5. Institutions for trade

# SUMERIANS

## (3500-2000 BCE)

- Irrigated crops (barley, dates and sesame seeds)
- Abundance of food led to steady population growth
- Built canals, dykes, levees, dams and drainage systems
- Developed cuneiform
- Invented the wheel
- Developed ziggurats (temples)
- Developed a trade system, including bartering
- Could not unite lower Mesopotamia



# WRITING IN MESOPOTAMIA

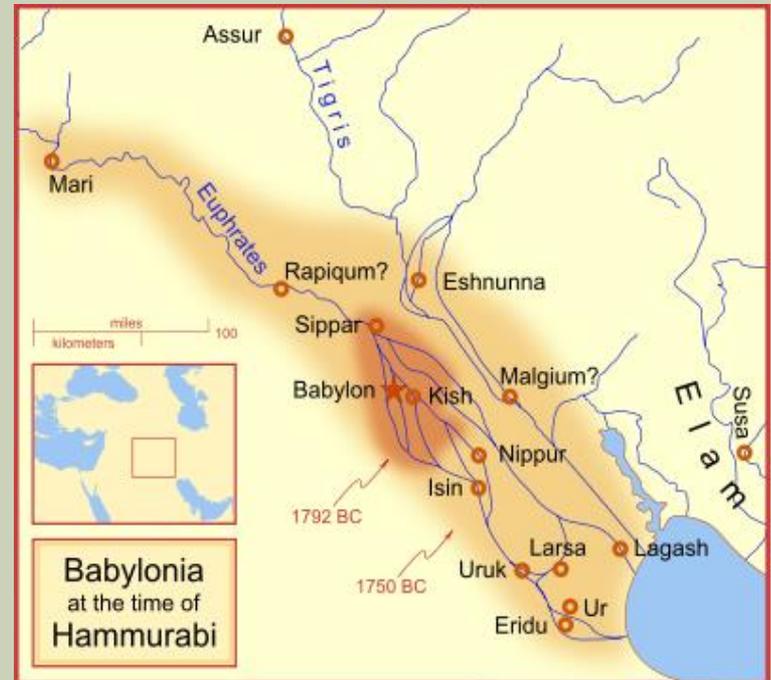
- Cuneiform: “wedge shaped”
- Used different pictures to represent objects, geometric shapes to represent sounds
- Up to 2,000 symbols
- Scribes - trained writers
- *The Epic of Gilgamesh* is an epic poem originating from this period and is one of the earliest known literary writings.



# BABYLONIANS

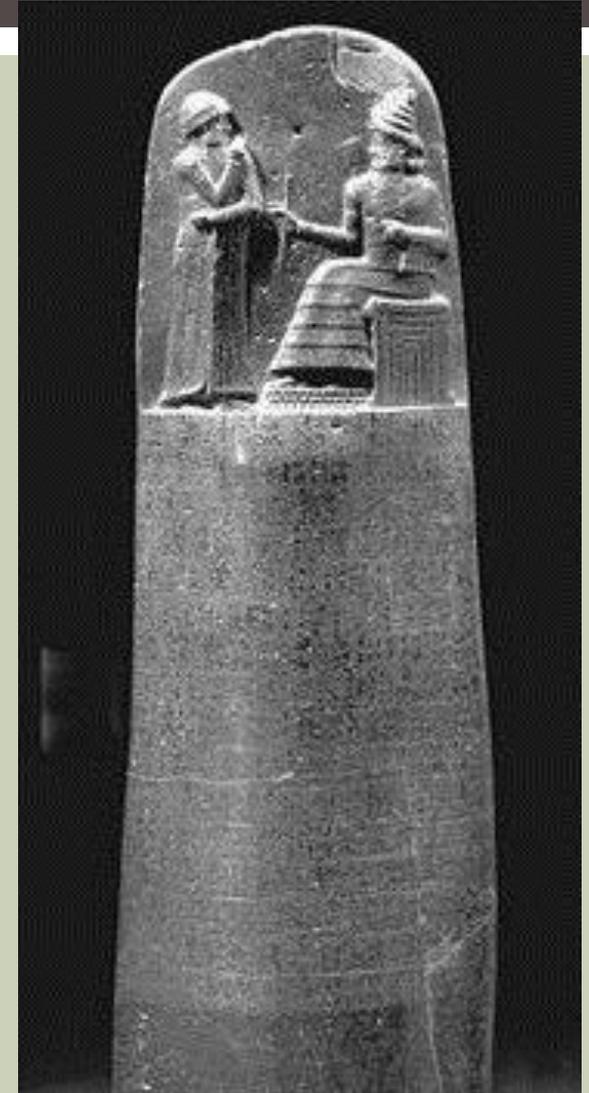
## 1830-1500 BCE AND 650-500 BCE

- Reunited Mesopotamia in 1830 BCE
- King Hammurabi
  - Conquered Akkad and Assyria
  - Established a law code
  - Built new walls to protect the city
  - Improved irrigation
- Economy based on wool, agriculture, and trade



# HAMMURABI'S CODE

- King Hammurabi of Babylon developed a law code in 1772 BCE that was written in stone and displayed in the city center.
- With 282 laws total, the laws were specific to social status and gender of the offender. Also, punishments were to fit the crime (eye for an eye).



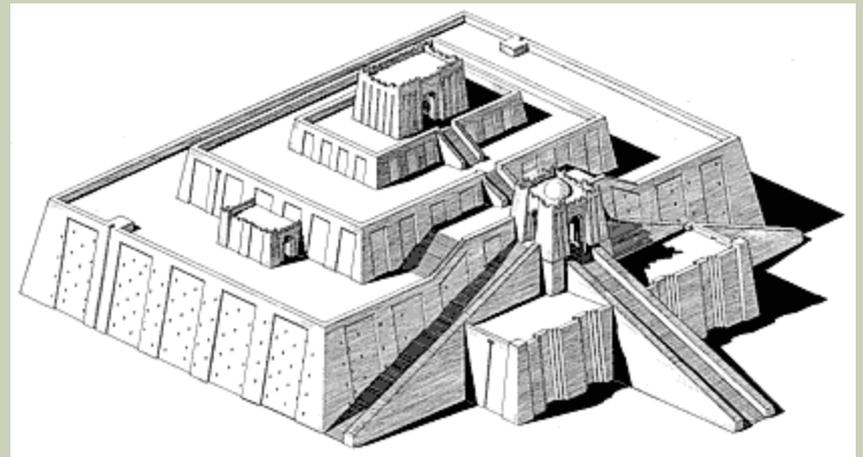
# IRRIGATION IN MESOPOTAMIA

- Construct irrigation canals to bring water from the Tigris and Euphrates to crops.
- Constructed levees, which held back flood waters from the rivers; the Tigris and Euphrates were unpredictable and powerful.
- Irrigation made Mesopotamian civilization possible.



# ARCHITECTURE IN MESOPOTAMIA

- Ziggurats, or religious temples, were developed in Mesopotamia. They were stepped to bring visitors closer to the heavens.
- Mesopotamians had complex religious beliefs, which included polytheism.



# RELIGION IN MESOPOTAMIA

- Polytheistic religion with over 3,600 gods and goddesses
- Kings ruled by divine right
- Each city-state had a god/goddess
- Kings and priests acted on behalf of the gods



Statue from Tell-Asmar

- **How would Mesopotamians have described their gods?**

**QUICK  
REVIEW**

# EGYPT

## 3100-1200 BCE

- Known as “gift of the Nile” because it is at the end of the Nile River’s flow from Lake Victoria (Uganda).
- The Nile River flows north, to the Mediterranean Sea.
- Therefore, “Upper Egypt” is in the south and “Lower Egypt” is in the north.



# THE NILE RIVER

- Each September, the Nile floods, which turns the Nile Valley into a marsh.
- After the water retreats, soil is fertile and crops grow very well.
- Egyptian civilization depended on the predictable flooding of the Nile.
- The Nile also produced other natural resources (reeds, copper, stone, clay)



# HISTORY OF EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION

- Political organization began as small states ruled by local kings.
- Breaks into Upper and Lower kingdoms
- Eventually, Egypt becomes a large and unified political body.
- Egyptian history is organized into 30 dynasties falling into three longer periods:
  - Old Kingdom
  - Middle Kingdom
  - New Kingdom



# OLD KINGDOM

## 2700-2200 BCE

- King Menes, founder of the first Egyptian dynasty, united the upper and lower Egyptian kingdoms in 3100 BCE
- Old Kingdom includes 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> dynasties
- “Pyramid age”
- Egypt was ruled by a strong government and pharaoh until priests and other officials demanded more power



The Sphinx and the Great Pyramid at Giza were built during this period

# MIDDLE KINGDOM

## 2100-1800 BCE

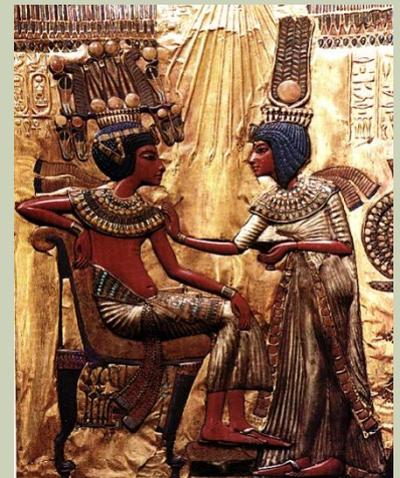
- Includes 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> dynasties
- Changes were made to the government so that the pharaoh did not have complete power
- Complex irrigation systems were developed



# THE NEW KINGDOM

## 1570-1075 BCE

- Includes 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> dynasties
- The Egyptians conquer several civilizations: Nubians in the south and Syrians in the northeast.
- Slavery was used among elite.
- At the end of the New Kingdom, there was a power-struggle between government officials. The empire was divided into smaller states.
  - Smaller states were weak and invaders took over Egypt



# SOCIAL CLASSES IN EGYPT

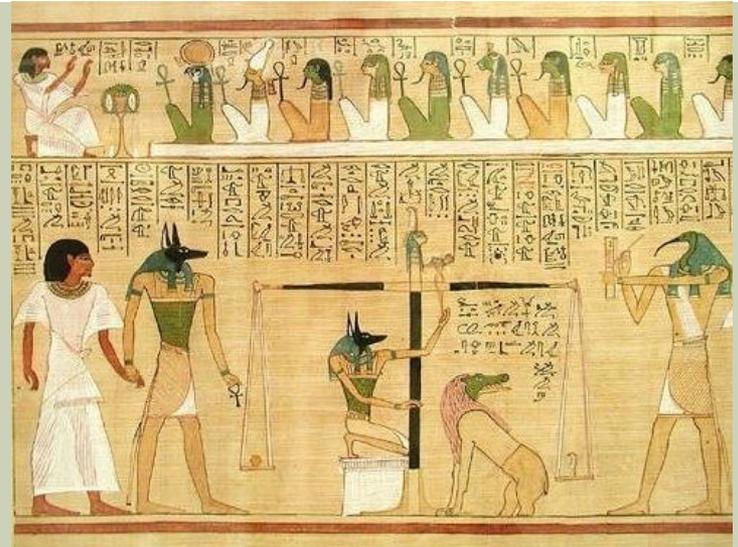
- 3 social classes
  - King and high-ranking officials
  - Lower level officials, local leaders and priests, professionals, soldiers, artisans and well-off farmers
  - Peasants (the vast majority of people)



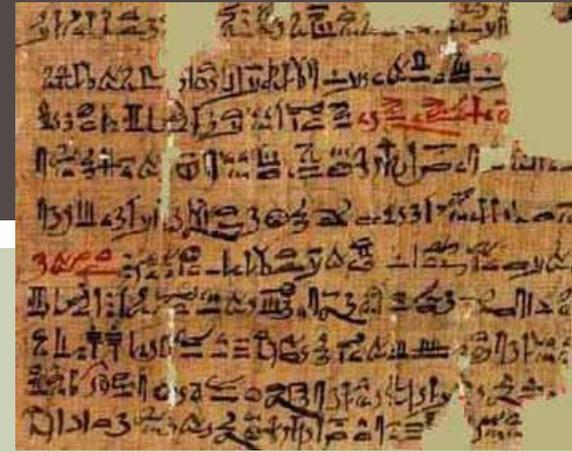
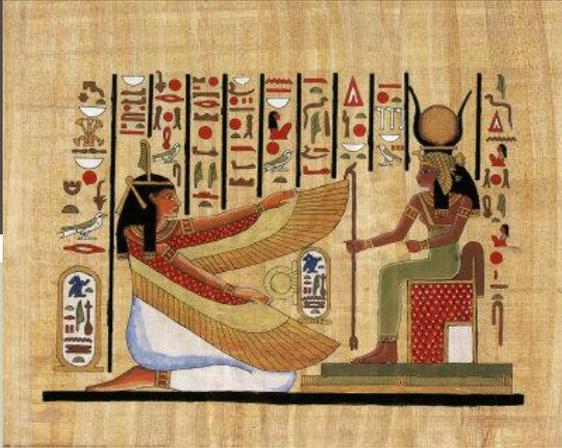


# EGYPTIAN BELIEFS

- Pharaohs (kings of Egypt) were considered to be gods living on earth.
- Egyptians were polytheistic.
  - Amon- sky-god
  - Ra- sun-god
- The Book of the Dead explained what happens after Egyptians died and called for mummification.
  - Allowed for detailed knowledge of the human body



# EGYPTIAN WRITING



- Two writing systems:
  - Hieroglyphics
  - Cursive script
- Egyptians wrote on papyrus (made from reeds) and carved into stone.
- Purposes: kept records, religious writing, secular writing.

- **How is the Nile different from the Tigris and Euphrates?**

**QUICK  
REVIEW**

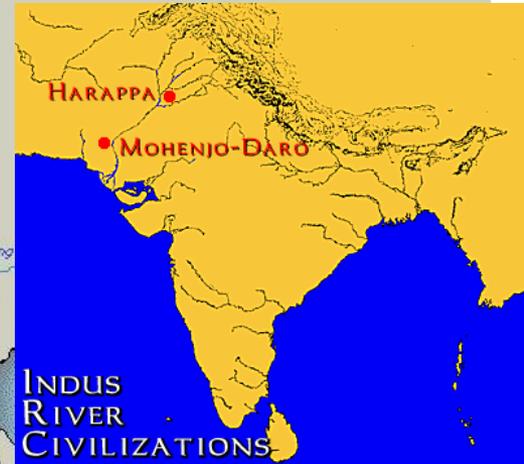
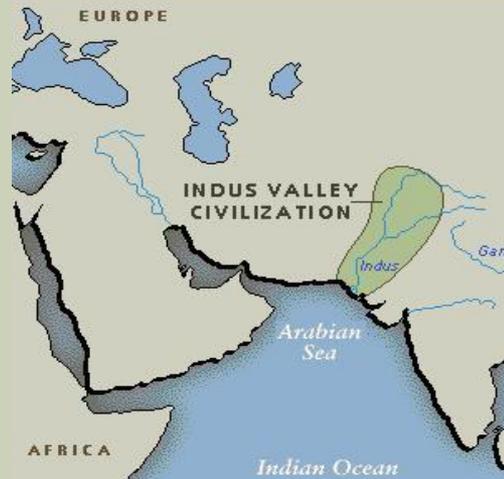
# EGYPTIAN ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Mathematic advancements**
  - Used mathematical operations: +, -,  $\times$ ,  $\div$
  - Fractions, volume, surface area, decimals
  - 24-hour day
- **Art and architecture**
  - Granite to carve statues
  - Pyramids and Sphinx
  - Used paint to create colorful hieroglyphics and paintings
- **Egyptian gods and goddesses influenced other religions**



# INDUS RIVER VALLEY CIVILIZATIONS

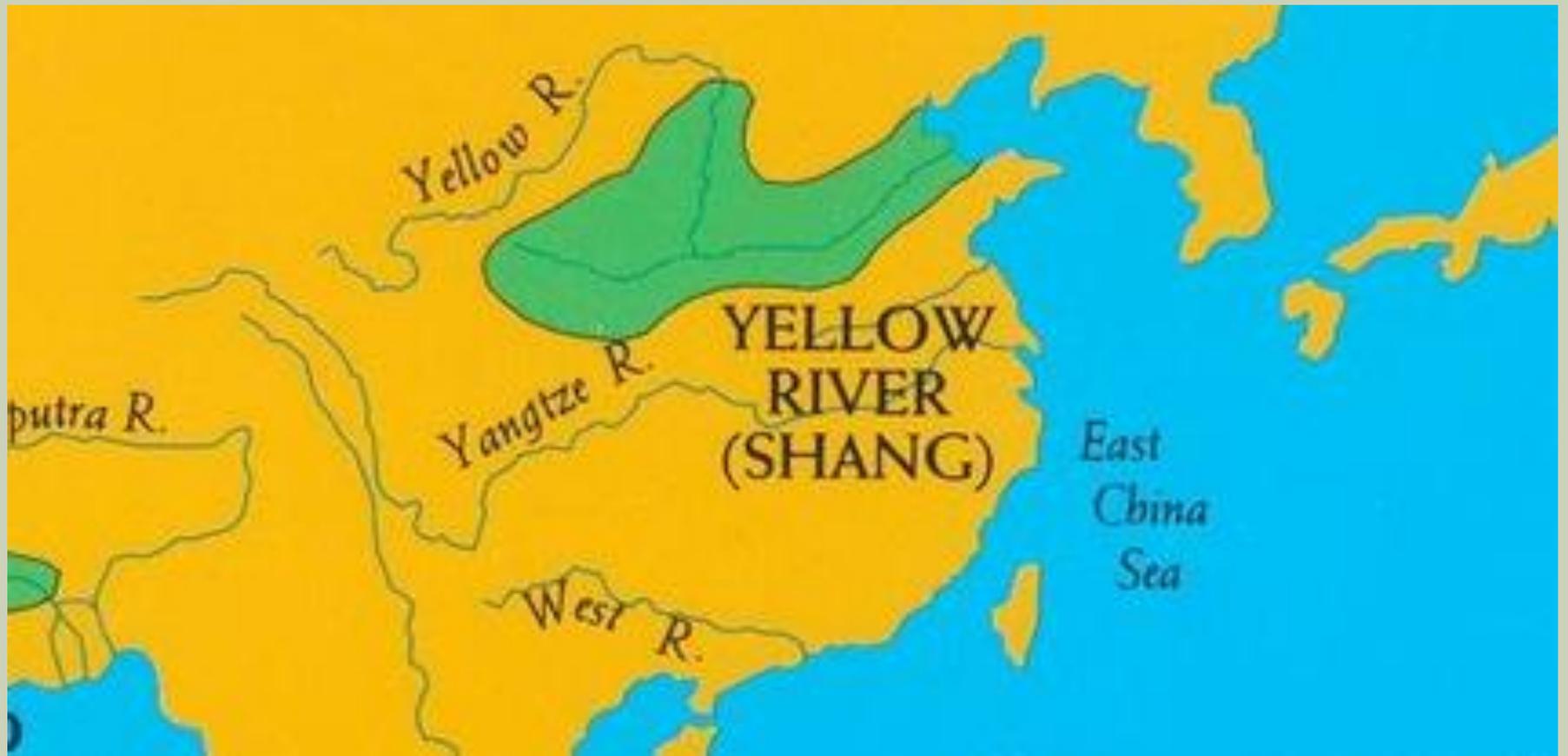
- Two large cities emerged around 2,500 BCE: Harappa and Mohenjo Daro.
- Harappan writing has never been deciphered; their civilization isn't well known. Thus, archaeological discoveries are crucial.



# HARAPPA AND MOHENJO-DARO

- Evidence has suggested:
  - Cities were part of a unified and organized government
  - No social classes
  - No remains of temples or palaces
  - No evidence of a military
  - Cities had fortifications, and people used bronze knives, spears, and arrowheads.
  - Cities traded with Mesopotamia, and Mesopotamian irrigation systems were adopted.
  - Crops: wheat, barley, peas, melon, sesame

# HUANG HE RIVER VALLEY CIVILIZATION (YELLOW RIVER)



# HUANG HE RIVER VALLEY CIVILIZATION (YELLOW RIVER)

- People settled on the Yellow River by 3,000 BCE.
- If Xia Dynasty existed, began around 2070 BCE
- Had discovered pottery, wheels, farms and silk, but had not discovered writing or how to use metals
- Highly developed social classes: kings, nobles, commoners and slaves.
- Developed in considerable isolation: develop agriculture on their own
- Organized state with irrigation
- Skilled horseback riders; used bronze, iron



# HUANG HE RIVER VALLEY CIVILIZATION (YELLOW RIVER)



- Used ideographic symbols: pictographic characters grouped together to create new concepts.
- People lived in simple mud houses.
- The Shang Dynasty was the first documented rule in China (Xia had no written records).
- Invasions caused a temporary decline in civilization.

# MEDITERRANEAN CULTURES

- Phoenicians:
  - alphabet of 22 letters, which helped to create the Greek and Latin alphabets
- Jews:
  - settled near Mesopotamia
  - first civilization to believe in and sustain the idea of monotheism
- Most river valley civilizations decline after 1200 BCE, due to nomadic invasions and internal warring.



- **What are the Four River Valley Civilizations?**

**QUICK  
REVIEW**