

## Chapter 2 Notes – *New Civilizations in the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, 2200-250 B.C.E.*

**Chapter Thesis:** During the second millennium B.C.E. more complex civilizations than the early Mesopotamian or Egyptian settlements emerged that were characterized by new networks of trade and being in more dynamic natural areas and conditions. These included the northern Chinese civilization along the Yellow River, the first tropical African cities, and the movement into the Americas in the Western Hemisphere.

- I. *Early China, 2000-221 B.C.:* Although Neolithic civilization had taken hold in eastern Asia around 8000 B.C., the Shang and Zhou dynasties beginning in the second millennium saw the development of more complex society that came about by capitalizing on the natural resource of the Yellow River for agriculture.
  - Advances included bureaucratic government, development of writing, cities, and labor specialization
  - A. Geography and Resources: Although China's geographic barriers separated it from many other western civilizations, early peoples of its civilizations utilized the Yellow and Yangzi River valleys to grow millet, wheat, and rice, all of which were affected by the varying climate of the north and the south.
    - China geographically is isolated: Himalayas to southwest; Pamir, Tian Mountains and Takla Makan Desert to west; Gobi Desert and Mongolian steppe to northwest and north
    - Yellow and Yangzi River systems were key for transportation between the east and the west in that time
    - Climate in East Asia varies greatly and determined the way early civilizations survived: eastern river valley cultures used intensive agriculture for food whereas Mongolian steppe and in Tibet, sparser groups mainly herded animals
    - Northern and southern regions of East Asia (China) also have variable amounts of rainfall based on how monsoons affect them: northern rainfall is unpredictable whereas southern China has heavy, predictable rainfall in the summer (at its most useful time for agriculture)
    - Chinese civilization began in the north, which required technological advances to compensate for the environment and catalyzed political and religious traditions
    - **Loess** (yellow-brown dust) is deposited from Central Asia in the North China Plain and in the Yellow River valley, which helps that land to have fertile soil

- Millet and wheat grown in northern China (spread from the Middle East) and rice (requiring a warmer climate) grown in southern Yangzi River valley – rice requires intensive labor but results in high yield and surplus
- B. The Shang Period, 1750-1045 B.C.: Leaving behind few clues as to the social and cultural picture of its time period, the Shang Dynasty is considered the first of its kind, and the archaeological discoveries we have from them show a practice of agriculture, raising livestock, tool-making, art, and religious beliefs that are influenced by the Shang ruler.
  - Early Neolithic societies of China practiced agriculture, raised pigs and chickens, developed stone tools, and produced art such as pottery and silk cloth
  - Shang is thought to be the first Chinese dynasty following a “Golden Age” of benevolent and ideal rulers (historical reality of Xia dynasty, thought to exist before the Shang dynasty, is questioned)
  - Not much archaeology suggests the process by which the Shang rule began since writing appeared towards the end of its reign over China
  - Oracle bones (dating back to the thirteenth century B.C.) used for writing concerning the king or his religious practices, rarely for any societal aspects of the Shang dynasty; early Chinese writing developed
  - Chinese practiced ancestor worship with supreme god, and the ruler acted as an intercessor between Di (supreme god) and the people (since he has access to recently deceased ancestors)
- C. The Zhou Period, 1045-221 B.C.: Overthrowing the Shang Dynasty and using the “Mandate of Heaven” to justify it, the Zhou Dynasty ushered in a host of religious, technological, political, and social changes including a new god, steel tools, feudal government system, and unequal, gender-based societal roles.
  - Shang dynasty was overthrown during the eleventh century B.C. by the Zhou who lived in the Wei River valley west of the Shang dynasty and became the longest lasting of all Chinese dynasties
  - Zhou prisoner began rebellion among Shang subjects and successful attacks replaced Shang capital leaders
  - **Mandate of Heaven** developed by first Zhou ruler, Wu, who used it to justify the conquer by essentially saying that the previous Shang rulers had been corrupt and lost the favor of Heaven and of Di (and introduced Zhou deity “Tian”) – this shaped Chinese politics for three thousand years after
  - Feudal government established by Wu, territories distributed to allies and relatives for administration in exchange for loyalty
  - Urban and city planning based on religious beliefs in a need for structural harmony with the terrain and climate in the cities’ layout – *feng shui*
  - Written texts from this time period (such as *Book of Changes* and *Book of Songs*) gave a picture of new religious practices brought forth with the Zhou dynasty and an insight into Chinese daily life and culture

- Zhou ruler's power gradually diminished because of feudalism and division of authority, resulted in attack on Zhou capital and the **Eastern Zhou Period** (771-221 B.C.) in which the dynasty moved farther east to Luoyang
- Eastern Zhou Period characterized by constant warfare and development of warfare technology as well as in government (more complex) and tool-making (invention of steel)
- D. Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Society: Throughout a period of the Zhou Dynasty in which essentially independent states persistently feuded with each other, the two largest Chinese schools of thought - that would shape much of China's history and social structure - were developed: Confucianism and Daoism.
  - Confucianism and Daoism developed in the wake of warfare and fragmentation during the Eastern Zhou Period, two of the greatest Chinese philosophical systems
  - Confucius attracted students to present his philosophical ideas on morality and government which were recorded as the *Analects*; his beliefs took tradition and modern thinking and put the two together: early Zhou period was an example to return to, family was a central part of society, benevolence and compassion should be shared as fellow humans
  - Laozi (thought to be the original teacher of Daoism), did not believe in the traditional thinking and rigidity of Confucianism and thought that knowledge had pervaded an easier life of intuition
  - Three-generation family became main social unit later in the Zhou period, rather than the kinship of the Shang and early Zhou dynasties; Confucianism changed thoughts on **yin-yang** equality between man and woman, and the male became the dominant figure
- E. The Warring States Period, 481-221 B.C.: In the latter part of the Eastern Zhou era, Chinese states began conquering one another in a competition for resources, wealth, and manpower, which spurred more changes in government policy (such as Legalism in the Qin state) and technology.
  - Feuding and competition between Zhou states increased during Warring States Period and resulted in absorbed and conquered states – only seven major states existed by third century B.C.
  - More government, technological, and political developments occurred as each state looked for its own sovereign security interests: expanding military, forming tactics, constructing walls
  - Qin state became the first to put Legalist philosophical ideas into their political system, in which the people were willing to sacrifice their own rights for the good of the state
- II. *Nubia, 3100 B.C. – 350 A.D.:* Nubia referred to a resource-plentiful part of modern-day southern Egypt and northern Sudan, along the Nile Valley between the ancient cities of Aswan and Khartoum that benefitted from natural wealth to support a large civilization.

- A. Early Cultures and Egyptian Domination, 2300-1100 B.C.: The African civilizations of Nubia and Kush that developed beginning around the 23<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. left their own signs of culture but were ultimately shaped by Egyptians who destroyed or conquered their civilization.
- Nile River was a central resource of Nubia, providing river irrigation where rainfall was scarce and climate was hot (in the north) and transportation
  - Fifth millennium B.C.: people in northern Nubia begin their own Agricultural Revolution into a Neolithic time period
  - Egypt became more aggressive towards Nubia during the Middle Kingdom and attempted to control the gold mines in the desert by cutting out the middlemen from Nubia
  - **Kush** was the name of the kingdom that had Kerma as its capital in tropical Africa
  - Egyptians grew more hostile to Nubia during New Kingdom period and destroyed Kush and overtook Nubia
- B. The Kingdom of Meroë, 800 B.C. – 350 A.D.: The Meroitic Kingdom arose after Egyptians lost control of Nubia which eventually resulted in a Nubian dynasty of Egypt for half a century before they were driven back, and collapsed hundreds of years later because of nomad attacks and changes in world trade.
- Egyptians lost authority in Nubia after about 1200 B.C. and in the eighth century a new kingdom emerged that has two divided parts of history: 800-400 B.C. when Napata from the Egyptian era remained the primary center and from 400 B.C.-400 A.D. which saw the center moved to Meroë
  - From 712 – 660 B.C., the Twenty-fifth Dynasty *of all of Egypt* ruled by Nubians was in place but they still practiced Egyptian culture because of assimilation during the Egyptian occupation, beginning an artistic renaissance of Egyptian works and architecture
  - When the Nubian dynasty allied with Palestine against the Assyrian Empire, they were driven back from Egypt and returned to their original Nubian area in 660 B.C.
  - Meroë was better suited for trade and agriculture and gradually became the center of Nubia; in Meroitic politics and social customs women had a more important role than in other civilizations, but the city was overrun by nomads in the fourth century A.D.
- III. Celtic Europe, 1000-50 A.D.: The Celts, from the limited information we have concerning them, were a people spread across their homeland in Europe until they began interacting with Mediterranean cultures and migrating throughout Europe to settle.
- A. The Spread of the Celts: We do not know much of the driving force behind the Celts migration across Europe, but their cultural reaches spread as far as Hungary, Spain, and Ireland despite not having a nation proper.
- “Celtic” means a language group of Indo-European languages in Europe and western and southern Asia

- Population movements of the Celts are not well-understood
  - Celts occupied almost all of France, Britain, and Ireland, assimilating with native peoples to create the Celtiberian culture in northern Spain; as a people group, they were spread across Europe from Hungary to Spain to Ireland
  - There is no common “Celtic nation,” but there were shared culture and languages between the groups
- B. Celtic Society: The three people groups making up the Celts included warriors, priests and bards, and commoners, all of which served to advance the culture in ways of agriculture, metallurgy, religion, or warfare.
- We know some things about Celtic society from the accounts of Greek and Roman conquerors
  - Celtic society had classes of people: elite warriors, professional priests and bards, and the common people
  - **Druids** were an “elite” Celtic group of priests in Gaul and Britain performing religious traditions and educational functions
  - Celts were able to support large populations because of heavy agriculture and leveraging the fertile soils of Europe
  - Celtic women were treated in a better situation than that of Greeks, Romans, or Middle Eastern civilizations
- C. Belief and Knowledge: The Celts had religious beliefs in many gods who represented or supported a special place or a lineage, and they would worship them at natural sites of their presence such as springs and hilltops until the Romans’ conquest caused them to assimilate into another culture.
- Hundreds of Celtic gods associated with locations or kinships
  - Celts used natural sites of “divinity” (springs, hilltops, etc.) for worship and did not build temples
  - Conquest of the Romans caused much of the Celtic culture to be done away with, people assimilated with Roman ways
- IV. *First Civilizations of the Americas: The Olmec and Chavín, 1200 – 250 B.C.*: Around 18,000 – 14,000 B.C., the first series of migrations began from Siberia to a land bridge into Alaska, beginning the populations of the Americas starting with the ancient cultures of Olmec and Chavín.
- A. The Mesoamerican Olmec, 1200-400 B.C.: Emerging in 1200 B.C., Olmec is one of the first civilizations of the Western Hemisphere and its people adapted to its land by harvesting different crops, developing tools and technology, and building multiple, specialized urban centers.
- Amerindian peoples settled in specific environments that they could adapt to and change, allowing them to focus on developing technologies and minerals
  - Corn (maize), beans, and squash were the staple crops and food for the Mesoamericans

- **Olmec** was an early Mesoamerican civilization existing between 1200 – 4000 B.C. near the tropical Atlantic Coast
  - Olmec centers were not competitive but specialized for different products
  - Olmec were polytheistic and had some form of kingship political system with religious influences and implications
- B. Early South American Civilization: Chavín, 900 – 250 B.C.: The Chavín civilization that arose from Andean coastal villages influenced the region for many centuries after it was gone, including by way of city planning, metallurgy, technology, and culture.
- Development of human society along the Andes posed natural challenges of diverse environments to people
  - Abundance of fish and sea life allowed for early urban centers along the coast in the Andean region, which gave rise to **Chavín**, the first major urban South American civilization, and lasting from 900 – 250 B.C.
  - Trade networks were formed from Chavín and inland agrarians, allowing for its people to take on projects such as roads, bridges, temples, and irrigation
  - Llamas were domesticated for their wool and meat, used also for transportation of goods and were critical to the development of Chavín
  - Local chiefs ruled by a more powerful monarch or ruler is the implied political system of Chavín
  - Metallurgy began in the Andean region and is associated with the rise Chavín; made products such as crowns, jewelry, and breastplates