**Mrs. Jones Rm 231**

**World History Notes**

**SSWH1 Analyze the origins, structures, and interactions of societies in the ancient world from 3500 BCE/BC to 500 BCE/BC.**

1. **Compare and contrast Mesopotamian and Egyptian societies, include: religion, culture, economics, politics, and technology.**

Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations developed in substantially different environments. While both civilizations developed in fertile river valleys rich with silt from the annual flooding of the Nile in Egypt and the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia, the flood patterns and geography of the surrounding area were quite different. These differences led to the development of starkly different outlooks on religion and political histories. Farming villages emerged in both regions between 7,000 and 5,000 years ago. Over time these societies improved agricultural technologies like irrigation canals, leading to population growth and the development of the first urban centers like those in Ur and Uruk in Mesopotamia and the kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt.

* Mesopotamia developed in the fertile arch (known as the Fertile Crescent) along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers that runs from the Persian Gulf in the south to the Mediterranean Sea in the north.
* This desert region is prone to irradiate flooding and lacks natural boundaries, making it susceptible to frequent invasions.
* Egypt on the other hand developed in the narrow fertile ribbon on the banks of the Nile River.
* The Nile floods regularly from July to October of each year. Each time depositing rich silt that was ideal for agriculture, this regularity was known as the Gift of the Nile which led to remarkable stability in Egyptian society.
* Another factor that contributed to this stability included natural boundaries that made invasions unusual. To the north and east large bodies of water protected Egypt and to the south and west vast deserts.
* These environmental differences led to starkly different outlooks of religion. Both the Egyptians and Mesopotamians were polytheistic with Gods that represented elements of nature, but because the natural world of each civilization was so different, attitudes toward these Gods were quite different.
* In general the Gods of Mesopotamia were viewed as unpredictable and often elicited the fear of the population which tried to win their approval with sacrifices and the construction of elaborate temples called Ziggurats.
* Egyptian religion on the other hand, presented Gods that could be depended on to provide bounty and prosperity.
* This difference was also reflected in each civilization’s view of the afterlife.
* Mesopotamians believed that the afterlife was a fearful and gloomy place
* Egyptians believed that good deeds in life were rewarded with an afterlife rich in the same pleasures they enjoyed while alive.
* Egyptian views on death and the afterlife led to elaborate burial practices that included the construction of tombs and mummification.
* **Environmental difference also led to** remarkably different **political histories** with Mesopotamia marked by frequent change and Egypt experiencing substantial continuity.
* The first phase of Mesopotamia’s political history, known as Sumer, was dominated by several independent and often warring city-states, each with its own hereditary monarch.
* Each city-state had a walled urban area made up of simple mudbrick dwellings and a ceremonial and administrative center dominated by a Ziggurat.
* Outside of the city walls, each city-state controlled the large areas of surrounding farmland land.
* Around 4,000 years ago the King of Akkad, Sargon, conquered this region creating the world’s first empire. This empire was relatively short lived as several waves of invasions and insurrection shifted political power to other groups.
* One of these groups, the Babylonians brought important political innovation when they unified the region in the 18th century BCE.
* The Babylonian King Hammurabi introduced the World’s first written law code which limited the arbitrary justice of earlier kings.
* The Old Babylonian Empire as it is known by historians also witnessed a flowering in mathematics and literature.
* Babylonians succumb to invasion leading to a series of warring empires.
* These empires included the Hittites, an Indo-European speaking people who arrived in the region about 2000 BCE bringing iron technology,
* The Assyrians who rose in power around 1900 BCE
* The Persians who began to build a long-lived empire around 550 BCE.
* Egypt, protected by vast desert and seas, saw far fewer invasions and as a result had a remarkably stable political history for over 2,000 years.
* This history began about 3,000 BCE with the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt into a single kingdom ruled by a divine hereditary monarch known as the Pharaoh.
* The Pharaohs were aided by an elaborate bureaucracy that included priests, administrators and scribes.
* This government was able to undertake elaborate public works projects like the construction of Pyramids that served as tombs for the Pharaoh.
* Historians divide Egyptian History into the Old Kingdom (c. 2649 to 2150 BCE), the First Intermediate Period, Middle Kingdom (c. 2030-1640 BCE), the Second Intermediate Period, and the New Kingdom (c. 1550-1070).
* The intermediate periods mark the only major times instability in Egypt before 1070 BCE.
* During the Second Intermediate Period, Egypt experienced its first major invasion from the Hyksos of Mesopotamia who introduced the region to the horse, chariot and compound bow.
* **After 1070, the political histories of Egypt and Mesopotamia intersected as they both experienced invasions from groups like the Hittites** (who introduced Iron to the region), Assyrians and Persians.
* Fertile river valleys combined with technological advances like irrigation canals and plows allowed both Mesopotamia and Egypt to produce surplus food.
* With an agricultural surplus, both empires developed specialization of labor which in turn led to the development of social classes.
* Both societies had the same basic social hierarchy with the royal family at the top followed by priests, government officials, landowners, soldiers, and scribes constituting a ruling class followed by merchants and artisans in the middle and peasant farmers at the bottom.
* Mesopotamia tended to rely more heavily on slaves but Egypt developed a slave class made up mostly of foreigners later in its history.
* This specialization of labor allowed both societies to make notable cultural and technological advances.
* Both Mesopotamia and Egypt developed complex systems of writing, cuneiform and hieroglyphics respectively.
* Both also developed advanced literary, artistic and architectural traditions including The Epic of Gilgamesh from Mesopotamia.

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**b. Describe the societies of India and China, include: religion, culture, economics, politics, and technology.**

* Farming villages first appeared in South Asia about 3200 BCE in the fertile plain between the Indus and Ganges rivers.
* This region’s climate is dominated by monsoon rains and a wall of mountains to the north and west partially isolate its people.
* Urban centers appeared about 2500 BCE with Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa being the most significant.
* Little is known about these early civilizations because historians are unable to read the written language of the region but urban planning in Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa indicate the presence of a strong central government.
* The cities were elevated and surrounded by earthen walls and levees to protect them from flooding.
* Inside the walls, the streets were laid out on a grid system. Homes were constructed of baked brick, each with its own bathroom served by a city-wide sewer and plumbing system.
* Each city had a fortified citadel in the center which likely served as the political and religious center.
* Archaeologist have found a large number of children’s toys and few weapons, indicating that these societies were generally peaceful.
* The economy was dependent on agriculture with evidence of trade with the Middle East and Central Asia.
* Urban decay, possibly brought on by earthquakes and soil exhaustion set in around 1750 BCE.
* A new group of people, the Indo-European Aryans, migrated into the region in about 1500 BCE.
* This group eventually established the Magadha Kingdom which controlled a portion of northeast India by the second century BCE.
* The farming villages between the Huang He and Yangtze Rivers of China grew into cities about 2000 BCE.
* These urban areas both benefited from and suffered because of the rich but loose yellow silt called loess deposited by the flooding of Yangtze.
* While the soil supported agriculture its loose nature made major shifts in the course of the river and massive floods common.
* The first documented dynasty of China was the Shang which was founded about 1700 BCE.
* This dynasty started a long tradition of governance in China that included a hereditary monarch supported by a complex bureaucracy.
* Like other early civilizations, during the Shang period urban centers were walled and surrounded by large agricultural areas.
* While the economy was dominated by agriculture, craft production and trade were also present.
* China developed a writing system, complex urban planning, irrigation and flood control in this period.
* This period also saw the emergence of foundational and interconnected Chinese religious principles.
* These include concept of Yin and Yang which offered an early and enduring understanding of the universe as balanced between male and female forces.
* Daoism, founded by Lao Tsu, asked humanity to respect and live in harmony with nature and ancestor worship venerated deceased family members in the hope that they would intercede with the powers in Heaven on behalf of the living.

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**c. Explain the development of monotheism, include: the concepts developed by the ancient Hebrews.**

* Monotheism emerged in a variety of places and times including in Egypt under the Pharaoh Amenhotep IV in the mid-1300s BCE and in Persia after growth of Zoroastrianism in the 600s BCE
* Monotheism reached its most complete and enduring form among the Hebrews starting around 1250 BCE.
* These beliefs, recorded in the Hebrew Bible, begin with the Hebrew people (led by Moses) entering into a covenant with God in which God promises to protect His chosen people in exchange for their exclusive obedience to Him.
* The basic tenants and Judaism, including monotheism, were established in this period as the Ten Commandments.
* The Hebrew people established a kingdom on the eastern Mediterranean in about 1020 BCE which split into two kingdoms in 920 BCE.
* The concept of monotheism became more formalized during this period and was spread to other areas by the Jewish diaspora that began with the conquest of the northern Kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians in 721 BCE and the deportation of many Jewish leaders to Babylonia in 587 BCE.
* While in Babylonia, the institution of the Synagogue was established and in about 450 BCE Judaism as a monotheistic faith was fully developed with the completion of the Hebrew Bible.

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**d. Identify the Bantu migration patterns and contribution to settled agriculture**.

* Agricultural villages became common in West Africa below the Sahara desert about 4,000 years ago.
* Sometime after, these villages developed iron technology which they used to produce tools of agriculture.
* Extensive linguistic evidence suggests that West Africans from around the modern border between Nigeria and Cameroon began to use this technology to clear forest to the southeast for farming.
* This led to a slow migration of these Bantu speaking people to the southeast and south from about 500 BCE to 600 CE. This migration brought agriculture, iron technology, and a new language to a region previously dominated by hunter gathers.
* Anthropologist believe that this migration laid the foundation for a common cultural heritage present in much of West, Central, East and South Africa

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**e. Explain the rise of the Olmecs. Civilizations also developed in the Americas in this period.**

* Geographic isolation made them more unique but they followed many of the same patterns of civilizations in Afro-Eurasia.
* Agricultural villages based on the cultivation of corn, beans, and squash emerged about 3500 BCE.
* These villages grew into a variety of urban centers around 1200 BCE, the most influential of which was the Olmec culture found in the modern Mexican states of Veracruz and Tabasco.
* Political authority and social stratification developed in these urban areas as a result of agricultural surplus and the need to mobilize large numbers of people to construct irrigation systems, ceremonial buildings and to drain land for farming.
* Sophisticated urban planning based on the movement of the stars, the creation of monumental artwork including several giant Olmec head statues, and the construction of monumental architecture indicate a strong central government able to mobilize the labor of the population over time.
* Each Olmec city was likely independently ruled by a hereditary monarch who maintained power by presenting himself as an intermediary to the gods.
* These rulers, assisted by a class of priests, performed awe inspiring rituals on large platforms in the center of each city that included bloodletting and human sacrifice.
* These rituals served to reinforce the power of the state and laid the cultural foundations for the civilization that followed.
* The Olmec economy like other ancient civilizations was dominated by agriculture but sophisticated trade networks and craft production also existed.