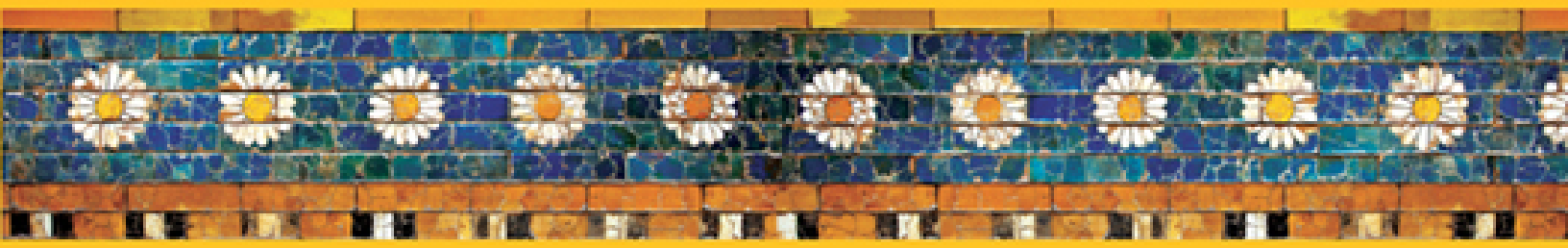
World History

A Concise Thematic Analysis

I

SECOND EDITION



Steven Wallech • Touraj Daryaee • Craig Hendricks
Anne Lynne Negus • Peter P. Wan • Gordon Morris Bakken

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VOLUME I

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Introduction

TEACHING WORLD HISTORY at the college level presents an instructor with an especially difficult challenge. Unlike most historians who conduct courses in the study of a particular culture, nation, or region, those who teach World History ostensibly must have familiarity with the history of all the earth's peoples. As daunting as such a proposition is, the matter is far more complicated. Because imparting the history of humanity within the confines of a college-level course is, of course, impossible, world historians must convey to their students an appreciation of the short- and long-term effects of human practices on local and regional environments, the interdependencies of humans, animals, plants, and pathogens, and the diffusion of ideas, technologies, and disease through trade, migration, war, empire building, and human resistance—phenomena that create cross-cultural, transnational, and transregional patterns over time.

To make things even more difficult, much of the historical literature on World History emphasizes the differences between regional cultures and local histories, leaving the instructor scrambling to find the similarities that might produce a lucid global narrative. In particular, the current generation of World History textbooks fails to succeed in conveying a unified, coherent account. Indeed, linear surveys lack a central storyline, with any potential core narrative submerged under a sea of details that simply overwhelms the student reader.

What probably explains this bleak state of affairs is the fact that as a distinct discipline, World History is only about six decades old. Begun in the 1960s as part of a slow shift from Western Civilization, World History gradually became a subdiscipline as increasing numbers of historians recognized

the usefulness of a global perspective to understand humanity's past. Developing steadily despite the vast amount of material that had to be digested and the necessary development of new mental habits of synthesis, World History finally achieved recognition as a discipline in 1982 with the establishment of the World History Association. Since then, the WHA has grown to 1,500 members, World History has become a standard general education requirement at the college level, and several major universities now offer advanced degrees in the field.

With decades of combined experience teaching World History—in community colleges and four-year institutions—we have witnessed firsthand the frustration instructors and students of world history experience with current survey textbooks. Deeming a new approach necessary, even overdue, in 2007 we brought out the first edition of *World History: A Concise Thematic Analysis*, the first truly concise, accessible, and affordable World History survey. Now, in response to feedback from student readers and instructors alike, we present the revised and improved second edition

In this new, second, edition we have refined the themes used to synthesize the narrative as presented in the first edition. In addition, we have made corrections to the overall presentation based on new research developed in climate history and studies recently done on farm technology. The overall effect of these changes has added a far greater depth to the entire project, producing a better integration of the material and a more thorough analysis of regional developments. Finally, in this second edition we responded carefully to feedback and specific criticisms leveled against the first edition by filling in key gaps in the original narrative and more thoroughly tying the storyline to a comprehensive vision of the world.

It will be immediately apparent to anyone familiar with the full-length or even so-called concise world history surveys

currently on the market that this book stands alone: its interesting and recurrent themes—conceptual bridges that span the many centuries—give it a unique voice. Its format helps the reader see the larger picture, to conceptualize patterns over time by importing concepts from one unit to another. And while this book might not offer flashy four-color maps and illustrations, its length and price speak for themselves. Too often students are required to pay a great deal of money for a book they have no hope of finishing, let alone comprehending or remembering long much longer than in the final exam.

To achieve the brief but coherent account of global events, the revised second edition of *World History: A Concise Thematic Analysis* comprises four complete units: the first is long, to lay a more thorough foundation for the entire narrative (eleven chapters); the second, short and concise (six chapters); the third is of medium length, with greater attention paid to consolidating and integrating the account of modernization (eight chapters); and the fourth and final unit is the same length as the third one (eight chapters), with new material to take the narrative of the contemporary world to the present.

Unit 1 employs three scientific themes to help explain the history of the ancient world. The first theme is a biological one used to explain the symbiosis of agriculture and the parasitism of disease. Coupled with this biological theme, a second one applies several geographic concepts to facilitate an understanding of the movement of plants, animals, tools, ideas, and germs from one major cultural hearth to another. Equally important is the condition of geographic isolation, which denied such movement. A new addition to the second edition is a third theme, climate history, which reveals clearly the impact of sharp changes in global weather conditions that dramatically altered the course of human events. Finally, Unit 1 introduces the concept of culture,

explaining how human creativity responded to the scientific themes mentioned above as people everywhere adjusted to the changing circumstances of life in the ancient world.

Unit 2, the middle years of world history, develops further the concept of culture, elevating it to the central theme that governs the six chapters that consider the years 500 to 1500 CE. This section also responds to a constructive criticism of the first edition concerning the location of Persian history in the global narrative. The Parthian Empire has been moved to Unit 1 and linked through a more thorough analysis of the Hellenistic experience to the role that culture played in the middle years of world history. In Unit 2, culture serves to explain how the dominant human communities of the globe expanded to their limits, while only one of them developed the potential to change world events. Hence, a broad analysis of each major civilization reveals why most of them preferred stability to change, even as one of them broke the mold of tradition to set in motion a whirlwind of change that laid the foundation for globalism and the modern era.

Unit 3 addresses the modern era, 1492 to 1914. Its major themes are modernization, the differential of power, and globalization. Focusing on European culture as the one that proactively transformed the world, this analysis of modernization considers the key institutional changes that created the nation-state in the West. In this second edition we have reduced the total number of chapters dealing with modernization by consolidating the narrative, adding a more thorough study of the differential of power, and illustrating more explicitly the link between the themes and the historical narrative. Using a comparative cultural analysis of political, economic, and military institutions to demonstrate the growing material might of Europe in contrast with the waning power of non-European societies, Unit 3 outlines the material advantages that Western peoples and cultures

enjoyed as they expanded outward— and were themselves transformed by the peoples, ideas, and resources they encountered in the Western Hemisphere, Africa, and Asia. Next, the theme of globalization helps explain how other cultures of the world imported many Western institutions, adapting them in an effort to survive, but ultimately sought to expel Europeans from their territories through the long and difficult process known as decolonization.

Unit 4 considers a new conceptualization of the postmodern world by revising its dates from 1914 to 2012. We chose 1914 rather than 1945 because 1914 marks the end of Europe's political and military advantages based on the theme, the differential of power. Most historians see World War II as the natural break in the modern narrative, but this text argues that the critical moment from a world history perspective is World War I. The Great War changed the balance of power in the world and started the era of decolonization that liberated what has since been called "the third world" nations from European colonial rule. While 1945 is appropriate for European history, the authors feel it is too Eurocentric for World History. This new set of dates, we contend, returns the narrative of history back to the world and diminishes the role played by Europe as a proactive culture. This also creates a more balanced storyline, and we have decided to preserve this approach.

The Post 1914 era begins by showing how global warfare, a harvest of violence set in motion by the empire building of Unit 3, destroyed Europe's hold over its colonies, protectorates, and spheres of influence and shifted dramatically the global differential of power. At the same time, we approached Unit 4 in a unique way. Given that 1914 to 2012 constitutes slightly less than one hundred years of world history, we strived to maintain an appropriate balance between its content and the remainder of the text. In other words, the last 99 years establishes the

contemporary world but deserves no more space than does any other period of global history. Therefore, we kept the content of Unit 4 as concise as possible, even as we show that the tumultuous events leading all the way up to the state of the world today are the products of, and the conclusions to, the preceding three units.

The advantage of this long-, short-, medium-, medium-unit presentation is that it allows for a logical division of the text for use in either the semester or the quarter system. For those on the semester system, the completion of Units 1 and 2 bring the reader to the dawn of the modern age (1500 CE), the classic stopping point for the first half of world history. Units 3 and 4 complete the story in the second semester. For those on the quarter system, Unit 1 covers the ancient world, the standard stopping point in a ten-week class. Unit 2 and the first half of Unit 3 link the middle years to the early modern era (1000–1750 CE) and bring the narrative up to the formation of nation-states, the standard stopping point for the second ten-week period of study. Finally, the second half of Unit 3 and all of Unit 4 cover modernization and the postmodern age.

As mentioned, each unit features a dominant set of themes. Not only do these themes constitute the thesis for the unit under consideration, but they reappear throughout the text, providing cohesiveness and unity where none otherwise exists and making World History accessible and meaningful to student readers. On the other side of the desk, both experienced and inexperienced instructors, eager to find footholds as an otherwise unwieldy narrative unfolds, will find the use of overriding themes helpful. In short, the introduction of themes in a World History text eliminates the problem of presenting an isolated and seemingly endless list of facts, figures, and dates: the “one darn thing after another” phenomenon that gives World History a bad name.

Themes also help the reader build a comparative analysis of regional histories. Such comparisons help students grasp how human creativity produces a unique stamp on the development of distinct cultures, even as people everywhere struggle with a common set of problems. Finally, themes highlight contrasts between cultures, making the text relevant to an increasingly diverse student population, as well as useful in the new comparative World History courses.

Whether you are new to the field of World History or have taught the subject for years, it is our hope that, having tried our approach, you will agree that a concise thematic analysis goes a long way toward making a complicated compendium of human numbers, economies, and cultures meaningful to student readers.

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THEMES FOR UNIT ONE

The Ancient World

- **The artificial existence of civilization**
- **The biology of civilization**
- **The geography of civilization**
- **The climate of civilization**
- **The relationship between belief and action**

UNIT 1 explains how the artificial existence of civilization emerged from the natural consequences of human interaction with geography, biology, and climate during the ancient era of world history. The **artificial existence of civilization** refers to the growing distance between human living conditions and nature as agriculture separated various peoples in different locations around the world from their passive reliance on the earth's bounty. The **natural consequences of human interaction with biology, geography, and climate** refers to the specific events surrounding the development of ancient cities as the people living in these urban centers developed the skills they needed to survive on the new food base generated by agriculture. Plant cultivation in turn imposed specific requirements on ancient human life—irrigation, field preparation, seed selection, food storage, rationing, the development of a calendar, the production of new tools, and an explanation of the local rhythms of nature—that elevated human consciousness to new levels of awareness in their new, but increasingly distant, relationship to the natural world around them. This new level of human consciousness launched world history once the people who dwelled in the

oldest urban centers began to record their struggles to exist in the new, artificial setting agriculture had created. That record lies at the heart of ancient world history, the central narrative of Unit 1 of this text.

The **artificial existence of civilization** began when human foragers created a new biological relationship between their population and a select group of “omega” plants and animals to create agriculture. An omega organism is an individual plant or animal that, thanks to some natural trait, fails to reproduce often or at all. Ancient foragers that selected seeds for food preferred omega plants because they had certain highly desirable qualities. Omega seeds matured at the same time each growing season, their seeds grew to exceptional weight and size, and the parent plants trapped their seeds inside pods or on a cob. From nature’s perspective, these omega plants could not reproduce well because any organism that traps its seeds inside a pod or on a cob denies those seeds access to the ground and the possibility of germination and, in time, reproduction. If a plant cannot reproduce, its genetic message is lost to the local plant population, and its genes soon disappear. If humans, however, select these plants and artificially cultivate their seeds, then these organisms do reproduce and a genetic code is artificially preserved, one that would otherwise disappear. Biologists call this creation of an omega gene pool *artificial selection* to distinguish it from natural selection. Once this gene pool was in place, the biology of civilization began.

The **biology of civilization** involves the development of a positive reciprocal relationship between humans and their omega plants and animals, known as a *symbiosis*. This artificially created symbiosis saw humans clear the land for their omega plants, change the environment, and generate a food surplus. This food surplus supported growing human populations that continued to expand the number and size

of the fields they cleared, thereby changing the environment and increasing the number of omega plants humans needed to continue to survive. Over extended periods of time this process completely changed the landscape from a natural to an artificial setting and demanded that people create and perpetuate a whole new set of skills to survive. These skills included water management, soil renewal, and organizing a complex division of labor to secure each year's food surpluses. Collectively called irrigation, these skills led to the appearance of clusters of agricultural villages, their inhabitants working in unison to dig canals, dredge channels, and build dams. In time, these clusters of villages fell under the authority of large cities that tapped the human labor of the outlying villages to exert control over vast areas under cultivation. For example, a huge amount of labor was required to control a river's water supply during its flood cycle so that the increased water, and the silt it carried, could reach the cleared fields and renew the land each year. These large cities were the hearths of civilization.

The biology of civilization has another aspect, as it also refers to the pathogens that took up residence with humans, omega plants, and omega animals, using them as hosts to sustain a local disease history. Thus a biological equilibrium developed whereby agriculture increased the numbers of humans, omega plants, and omega animals, with diseases periodically reducing the numbers of each through episodes of epidemics and pandemics: disease events that dramatically altered the course of human history. World history shows, however, that agriculture succeeded in preserving enough humans to sustain a continued growth of civilization and perpetuate an ever-increasing number of people, their omega plants, and their omega animals.

The **geography of civilization** refers to the specific events surrounding the development of the first cities,

whose populations learned the skills needed to survive on the new food base generated by agriculture. Geography focuses attention on specific sites on the surface of the earth where humans took up cultivation. Geography also refers to one site's location relative to another, which affected the probability of the lessons of agriculture being transferred from one site to another.

The **climate of civilization** played the final role in the human drama of ancient world history. The ever-increasing number of humans, plants, and animals caused by the symbiosis of agriculture, despite the occasional reductions in populations due to parasites and epidemic disease, expanded the total number of organisms dependent on any one geographic site under cultivation.

One of the most important new skills that humans living in such sites had to learn included the making of a calendar, forms of literacy, and ways to explain the local rhythms of nature—creating regional traditions and religions. Global fluctuations of wind patterns and sea currents periodically produced massive shifts in the volume and location of rain and snow that disrupted the rhythms of rivers and thereby undermined the survival of a given civilization. In sites accustomed to plentiful supplies of water, droughts undercut the artificial symbiosis of agriculture by disrupting the food supply, causing protracted famines and eroding the division of labor that sustained a civilization. In other, more arid, places, too much water from unexpected storms also disrupted food production, the excess precipitation overwhelming irrigation systems and ruining crops.

Climate also plays a key role in yet another facet of the artificial symbiosis known as agriculture. Humans cultivated omega animals the same way they controlled the reproductive cycle of omega plants. Omega animals are those individuals among social species that, because of their submissiveness or other such trait or quality, cannot

compete well with the dominant members of the herd and therefore produce fewer or no offspring. The social hierarchy of the herd imposes the will of the “alphas,” the individuals that natural selection rewards with numerous offspring. In effect, the course of nature partially “tamed” the omega animals before humans made contact with them. Humans selected the omegas because they were more easily controlled, the alphas having already preconditioned them, and their new human “masters” then offered the omega animals the opportunity to engage in sex and reproduce readily for the first time. These omega animals became the draft animals of farmers, or they developed into the domesticated herds that fed nomads. However, this artificial symbiosis created population pressures among nomads (people dependent upon herding animals) similar to those experienced by plant specialists. These pressures caused competition between nomadic tribes and led them to develop the art of war, which they waged to capture and protect the best grazing lands, or pastures. These wars periodically spilled over into the agricultural-based civilizations whenever the nomads unified and targeted the richest cities for conquest. In other words, climate exacerbated the hostile relations between nomads and cities. The droughts that destroyed the omega plants of a sedentary civilization also destroyed the grazing land of nomads. The loss of their grazing land set nomads in motion, these warlike people migrating toward whatever food sources were available. Such migrations caused massive, periodic invasions that civilizations sooner or later suffered.

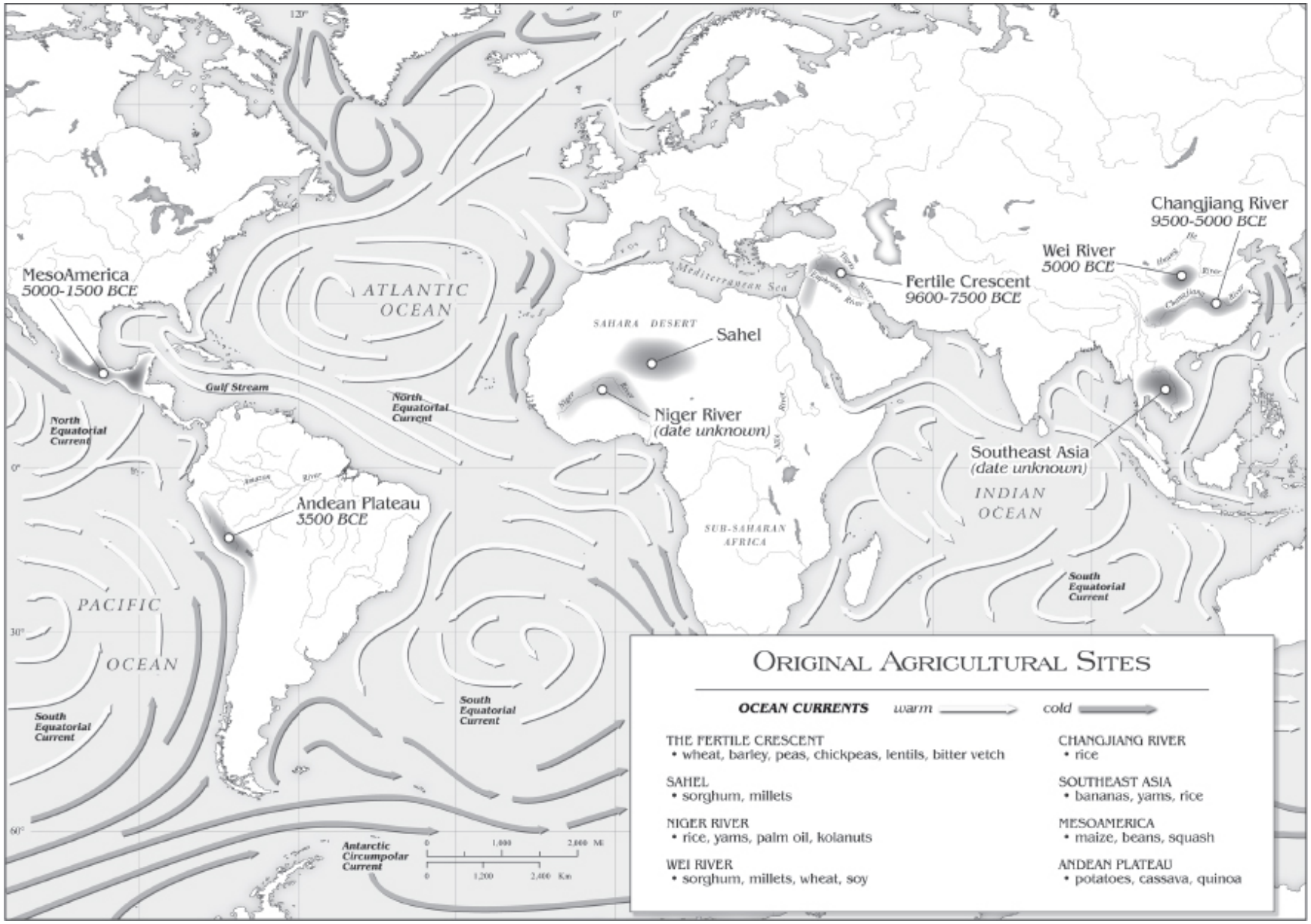
Climate, then, combined with disease to weaken civilizations living off omega plants and exposing farmers to conquest. Any global shift in weather patterns, therefore, disrupted agriculture in all its forms: both the intensive cultivation of plants by sedentary people and the extensive

use of large areas of land by nomadic societies. Short of major pattern changes, even prolonged droughts or storms could set in motion massive migrations that disrupted traditional patterns of life.

If sedentary cultures remained relatively free of disease and their climate conformed for a long period to the regular rhythms as forecasted on their civilization's calendar, urban societies spawned a new class of people, those with the free time to attain a new level of human consciousness. These people, in turn, were the first authors of world history. The people living in ancient cities that developed literacy described themselves through their art, literature, religion, science, and philosophy. They revealed how their beliefs complemented their actions to sustain the culture of their civilization. Thus was generated the raw material that historians use to this day to study and try to explain the events of the past.

The final element composing the central themes of Unit 1 is, therefore, the **relationship between belief and action**—that which explains why civilizations around the world generated the extraordinary artifacts, in all of their many forms, that continue to fascinate us. What, for instance, inspired the Egyptians to build pyramids? Why did Chinese philosophy generate such continuity in Chinese history as to produce a pattern of life that lasted longer than any other civilization in world history? Why did the Greeks create a philosophy that did not include any of their gods or goddesses, the so-called Greek miracle, which laid a foundation for science? What is it about Indian civilization that made the people of the subcontinent reject experience as a valid form of information to explain the rhythms of nature?

Remarkably, you can find the answers to all of these questions, and gain a cohesive and coherent picture of the history of the ancient world, by keeping the Themes of Unit 1 in mind as you read. At this point, learning World History probably—and probably should—strike you as a daunting, even impossible, task. Using the themes of Unit 1, however, reminds us of the humanity of our ancient ancestors and makes studying world history manageable. Their struggles in their daily lives and with their environments were very much like our own. Their view of the universe, which complements these struggles, makes perfectly good sense in the context in which they were forged. This type of history, then, is always and immediately relevant to anyone curious about the past. It is this type of history that makes studying past events both useful and enjoyable.


MesoAmerica
5000-1500 BCE
Andean Plateau
3500 BCE
Fertile Crescent
9600-7500 BCE
Changjiang River
9500-5000 BCE
Wei River
5000 BCE
Sahel
Niger River
(date unknown)
Southeast Asia
(date unknown)
ATLANTIC OCEAN
PACIFIC OCEAN
INDIAN OCEAN
SAHARA DESERT
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
Mediterranean Sea
Gulf Stream
North Equatorial Current
South Equatorial Current
Antarctic Circumpolar Current
ORIGINAL AGRICULTURAL SITES
OCEAN CURRENTS
warm
cold
THE FERTILE CRESCENT
• wheat, barley, peas, chickpeas, lentils, bitter vetch
SAHEL
• sorghum, millets
NIGER RIVER
• rice, yams, palm oil, kolanuts
WEI RIVER
• sorghum, millets, wheat, soy
CHANGJIANG RIVER
• rice
SOUTHEAST ASIA
• bananas, yams, rice
MESOAMERICA
• maize, beans, squash
ANDEAN PLATEAU
• potatoes, cassava, quinoa

CHAPTER 1

Biology and World History

Civilization and Nomads

The origins of *agriculture* mark the boundary between prehistory and history. Before the domestication of plants and animals, humans lived a nomadic existence of hunting and gathering. Since hunting and gathering involves following migratory animals, early humans continuously moved from place to place, which denied them the idle time necessary to develop the skills to produce a written history of their past. Instead, all the earliest humans left behind were fragments of their existence in the form of discarded or lost tools, broken or abandoned artifacts, deserted campsites, some cave paintings, and heaps of bones and debris that bear witness to their diet. With the development of agriculture, however, humans finally had the chance to settle down, develop cities, and in time refine an urban division of labor that included scholars able to leave an organized record of their people's past. Thus, world civilization began about the time people opted for plant cultivation over hunting.

Yet the question remains: Why would different groups of people at various times and in various places choose to abandon millions of years of living in harmony with the rhythms of nature in order to take up a new style of life based on agriculture? What forced different human populations to forsake a pattern of existence that met all of their (and our) ancestors' needs and substitute for it the

artificial mechanisms that eventually created ever more impenetrable buffers between humankind and nature?

Although not all historians agree on exactly why and how this change occurred, most of them believe that the primary factor common to people everywhere was population pressure. Among those who study population pressure, the most frequent explanation they provide is global climate change. These scholars propose a scenario that starts with global warming and resulted in what became known as the “Broad Spectrum Revolution.” This Broad Spectrum Revolution linked climate to ecological conditions, human diet, and human adaptability to mark the boundary between prehistoric and historic times.

This scenario began when the last ice age ended and the world’s ecology changed. About twenty thousand years ago global warming ushered in a new era called the Long Summer that continues into the present. During this Long Summer, the carrying capacity of the Earth increased to support growing human numbers, plant varieties, and animal populations, which encouraged different bands of human hunters to adjust to a new abundance. The way these hunters adjusted ultimately trapped them in a new lifestyle called agriculture.

How this transition from hunting-and-gathering occurred began innocently. When the Long Summer began, scholars estimate that the world’s total number of humans fell within the range of 3 to 8.5 million; this means that there was about one human for every 31 square miles. Such small numbers, as well as low concentrations of people, reflected both millions of years of hunting-and-gathering and the way a nomadic lifestyle limited the birthrate of each human generation. Since hunters relied on following, tracking, trapping, and killing game animals during the last ice age, this nomadic economy played a key role in defining the density and distribution of humans.

People’s life expectancy did not exceed thirty years, with middle age occurring at about fifteen and puberty around the age of twelve.

Generally, people who lived by hunting and gathering organized their societies in similar ways. Usually there was a sexual division of labor in which men hunted and women gathered. People’s life expectancy did not exceed thirty years, with middle age occurring at about fifteen and puberty around the age of twelve. Hunting bands traveled great distances to exploit seasonal variation in their food supply. When women became physically mature and capable of bearing children, they could no longer engage in hunting. Hunting required long-distance jogging to trap and kill large game animals, and once the kill occurred, hunters had to dress the meat and carry it back to camp. Jogging, trapping, killing, and carrying heavy loads endangered the survival of a baby during pregnancy.

Furthermore, pregnancy handicapped women who lived a nomadic lifestyle because they were compelled to march from camp to camp carrying everything they owned. Such long treks both increased the miscarriage rate among pregnant women and imposed extended nursing upon these same women once the birth occurred. Women extended their nursing because they had to carry infants and toddlers as they marched, since these children could not keep up on their own. While carrying their newborns, these mothers also found that nursing pacified their infants, and since no substitute for mother’s milk existed, they did not wean their babies until these kids could walk alongside the hunting band on their own.

Also, scholars estimate that a nomadic woman suffered a 50-percent miscarriage rate during her fertile years, and she