

## **CHAPTER 2- EARLY SOCIETIES IN SOUTHWEST ASIA AND THE INDO-EUROPEAN MIGRATIONS**

The land is called Mesopotamia (meso=between, potamia=rivers) and lies in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley in what is modern day Iraq. The mix of desert and river environment led to one of the first uses of irrigation. Irrigation led to increased food supplies, which led to increased population, which, in turn, led to a need for large numbers of people to be organized, using what we now call government. The surplus food allowed governments to support building projects and more irrigation, which further increased the food supply. This is a pattern that was repeated in other river valley civilizations. These developments led to the rise of some of the first city-states (an urban center controlling the surrounding land). From Mesopotamia came other innovations. Mesopotamian society was the first to introduce the use of bronze (a mix of copper and tin) and then iron. The wheel and increased ship technology, for both trade and warfare, also developed. Mesopotamian society included kings and nobles to administer the laws, priests to deal with increasing complex religions, peasants/laborers to do the work, and a system of slavery. Hammurabi's Code shows examples of how different social classes and genders were treated by the law. The introduction of the written word, in the form of cuneiform, revolutionized society. It led to literature, mathematics, record keeping of all kinds, as well as education in order to teach these new disciplines.

This chapter ends with discussion of the Jews, Phoenicians, and the Indo-European migrations. The introduction of monotheism (mono=one, theos=god) began with Judaism. The rise of these pastoral nomads to the builders of Jerusalem and their culture is too detailed to delve into here, but its impact has had a profound influence on the two major monotheistic religions that followed it, Christianity and Islam. Elsewhere during this time period the great sea-borne trading peoples, the Phoenicians, rose to power and introduced the first alphabet. Also during this era the Indo-European migrations began. These horse-riding pastoral peoples spread from their homeland north of the Black Sea to western Europe, Scandinavia, India, and western China. Most notable among these peoples were the Hittites who brought advanced technology for both wheels and chariots and iron metallurgy to Anatolia (modern day Turkey) and Mesopotamia.

A pattern repeated many times in world history is the rise, the peaking, and then the collapse of empires. This pattern is seen within the empires of Sargon, Hammurabi, and the Assyrians, as well as others. The reasons may vary slightly but the pattern is always there and continues into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **Key Concept 1.3. The Development and Interactions of Early Agricultural, Pastoral and Urban Societies**

- I. Core and foundational civilizations developed in a variety of geographical and environmental settings where agriculture flourished.
- II. The first states emerged within core civilizations.

III. Culture played a significant role in unifying states through laws, language, literature, religion, myths and monumental art.