

# Early Complex Societies

China and Egypt

## China



### Early Civilization in China: Overview

Emergred along the Yellow River (Huang He) around 8000 BCE. This civilization was relatively isolated with a desert to the west, ocean to the east, and the Himalayas to the south. Wheat and millets were introduced in 6000 BCE and in 2000 BCE, bronze was discovered. There was a mystical Xia dynasty said to rise around 2000 BCE; however, first recorded dynasty was Shang.

### Shang dynasty 1750 BCE- 1000 BCE

First historically verified Chinese dynasty. Centralized government with emperor and led by a warrior aristocracy, dynasty fought off "barbarians" and expanded borders by conquest. Created a patriarchal society- women were wives or concubines. Economically, Shang traded extensively (may have stretch as far as Middle West) using jade and silk. Developed pictorial/ pictographs writing system and uniform language. Fell to herding society that rebelled and eventually formed the Zhou Dynasty.



Each early civilization developed its own unique lifestyle but all shared common characteristics with complex irrigation systems, legal codes, some sort of money/ trade, a written language, formal knowledge with science, numbers, and calendars, and an intensification of social inequality

## Egypt



### Ancient Egypt: developed by 3000 BCE

This civilization developed around 5500 BCE on the banks of the Nile River. Egypt depended on the Nile's water for survival to the the desert terrain.

Egypt was considered a civilization with Upper and Lower regions united in 3100 BCE. An Old Kingdom was developed and basic social and political forms arose, later civil war would tear apart the Old Kingdom; however, a Middle Kingdom soon arose. The most influential, however, was the New Kingdom- they conquered a great deal of land territory in the Middle East and Africa.

Politically, the Egyptians developed a centralized society with a monarch/ Pharaoh and small caste of priest. Their pharaoh was considered the human form of their sun god. Economically, they built cities and a sizable economic network. Egyptian- Nubian trade brought in gold, ivory, ebony, and exotic animal skins from Sub-Saharan Africa (later Nubia was conquered in the New Kingdom). And socially, although women were secondary to men, they enjoyed certain privileges- such as household finances, right to divorce, and could own property.