The Social Development of Man

In 15,000 years humans have gone from hunting and gathering to building megacities, spaceships and the internet. How we got there is an interesting story. Sir Edward Burnett Tylor was an English anthropologist first proposed that human cultures developed through three fundamental stages consisting of *savagery, barbarism, and civilization*. American anthropologist Lewis H. Morgan's took up Tylor's theory and refined it by describing the stages themselves in terms of technology.

The savagery state can be divided into three sub-sections: lower, middle and upper. The lower stage is the infancy of the human race; man lived in his original habitat subsisting on fruits and nuts, anything that could be gathered. The use of gesture language began in this period. The middle state of savagery saw mankind catching fish and building fires, a complementary relationship since fish becomes edible through the use of fire. During this period, humans began spreading out from their original habitat, usually along shorelines, and using monosyllabic language. The upper stage of savagery saw the invention of the bow and arrow, a decisive weapon, which led to the regular addition of wild game (animals) to the diet. In this upper stage we find finger weaving (without looms), the use of wooden bowls and

utensils, the invention of stone tools, and the rise of syllabical language and worship of the elements.[1]

"The barbarian is, first and foremost, the man who believes in barbarism." – Claude Levi-Strauss

The invention of the art of pottery sparked the change from savagery to the lower stage of barbarism. At some point in the late Neolithic age humans became aware of refractory (a substance resistant to heat). It is likely the first pots were created when people covered their wooden baskets in clay in order to make them fireproof, once the clay heated and cooled it became hard, and they had a pot. The invention of vessels which could be used to store things made a number of activities easier to do, such as prepare food, or store plant seeds or dyes.[2] The lower stage of barbarism also sees the beginnings of horticulture, when people began planting gardens.

The middle state of barbarism begins with the domestication of animals in the Eastern hemisphere (with Aryan and Semitic herders), and cultivation and irrigation in the Western. It is worth noting that the Eastern Hemisphere, the so called Old World, had nearly all the animals that were appropriate for domestication

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[1] http://anthropology.ua.edu/cultures/cultures.php?culture=Cross-Cultural%20Analysis

[2] http://artsci.wustl.edu/~anthro/courses/361/Morgan1877.html Morgan, Lewis Henry (1877) *Ancient Society*. Excerpt from Part I, "Ethnical Periods."

(for food or animal products), while the West did not have any (except the llama in a few places). The middle stage also saw the use of adobe brick and stone in architecture in some places, as well as the making of bronze[3]. The upper stage of barbarism saw the cultivation of cereals and grains by the Aryans herders (which probably began to meet the need of feeding their animals), and the smelting of iron ore. There is poetry and mythology in the upper barbarism stage, this is the age talked about in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey.*

The Neolithic Revolution was a revolution in agriculture that saw a wide-scale transition of many human cultures from a lifestyle of hunting and gathering to one of agriculture and settlement that supported an increasingly large population.[4] Archeological data revels that starting about 12,000 years ago humans began domesticating various types of plants and animals, at various locations all over the planet, independent of one another. These early farmers would plant the plants that were available in their region of the world, and seek out the best growing varieties in order to selectively breed. In South East Asia this meant rice, it meant maze in Mexico, Yams in West Africa.

With the agricultural revolution came a totally new way of living for mankind. No longer were you required to hunt and gather or farm every day in order to survive. There were many new occupations that did not require any

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[3] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Society

[4] Jean-Pierre Bocquet-Appel (July 29, 2011). "When the World's Population Took Off: The Springboard of the Neolithic Demographic Transition".

strenuous activity at all. The consequence of this is the rise of a sedentary lifestyle for some, this has resulted in an increase in an overweight and obese society.

Historians are not exactly sure why there was a global revolution toward the cultivation of crops. There is another alternative to hunting and gathering and agriculture, and this is the lifestyle of the herder. These people would take their domesticated animals and live with them on the road while they graze. The advantages of this lifestyles were a steady supply of meat, milk, wool and leather. The problem is that not many herding animals lend themselves to domestication. There are none native to North America and only the llama in SOtuh America. ON an interesting note there is evidence that during the Paleolithic period cavemen domesticated snails for the purpose of eating them. Snails are small, easy to carry, surprisingly nutritious and easy to "farm", as it were. [5]

What is termed a "civilization" is a debated topic, but generally there are recognized characteristics, which indicate a given society has reached civilization status. A few of these characteristics are surplus food production, the ability to construct a city, a specialized labor force (not everyone is a famer) and trade, also having some form of centralized government and writing. [6]With the division of labor meant many specialized occupations, and non-food producing members of society came about, along with the advent of social stratification and increased

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[5] http://www.lemnosnails.com/en/ιστορία-σαλιγκαριού/

[6] Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power,* Cambridge University Press, 1986, vol.1 pp.34-41.

centralization. People like kings, soldiers, scribes, artisans, etc.. were essentially absent from human societies until the rise of civilization. Some other indicators of civilization are density of population, monumental public buildings, modification of the natural environment, some may have standing armies and frequent warfare. There were lavish tombs and burial grounds for the rulers and elite. Ancient civilizations also took part in regular foreign trade. With this increased stratification also came greater social inequalities, you now had rich people and poor people.

Not everything about the agricultural revolution was good. While there was a clear advantage of being able to control the food supply, and hence having a much better chance of not starving, farming is hard work. The face that farming is very hard and labor intensive leads to the practice of slavery, which took over 2000 years to be eliminated on a wide scale and still exists in some areas. Also farming requires the altering of the environment, this could have devastating effects as we all know.

About 5000 years ago in the Indus river valley, located between the Indus and Ghaggar-Hakra rivers, is a flat flood plain that is perfect for growing crops. Here is where one of the first and largest early agricultural civilizations arose. Due to the very reliable twice a year flooding of the rivers the valley was continually resupplied with nutrient rich silt. This is the reason virtually all early civilizations are associated with rivers. This flooding made the Indus River Valley one of the areas with the most fertile areas in the world to grow crops.

The Indus valley civilization is one of the largest in antiquity, with over 1500 archeological sites discovered. Its two main cities being Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, These cities were designed intelligently; the buildings were made out of uniformly sized bricks, the streets were perpendicular, and they were oriented to catch the wind, so that every building had its own form of air conditioning, they also featured a gravity driven plumbing system that would have been the envy of many 18th century European cities. [7] All these innovations suggest that they had some sort of government authority with handled zoning. The largest building in was a public bathhouse, not a palace or religious center. As early as 3500 BC the Indus Valley people were trading with the Mesopotamians, another early civilization, mostly they traded cotton cloth. From the over 1500 sites unearthed, there was very little evidence of warfare and hardly any weapons recovered, leading us to believe this was a peaceful civilization.

During the 4th millennium BC the people of ancient Sumer had developed a sophisticated system of irrigated farming. This coupled with the continual replenishment of soil fertility, thanks to the annual flooding of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, allowed for an overproduction of food. The ability to store this surplus food in granaries allowed for a huge rise in population, and the creation of a new sort of economy; not everyone had to work at farming as before. This rise in population density created a large labor force, which in turn required a division of labor with many specialized arts and crafts to serve them.

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[7] Davreau, Robert (1976). "Indus Valley". In Reader's Digest. *World's Last Mysteries*

Sumer had sort of an ancient form of socialism with farmers contributing their extra crop to central city granaries. This led to a surplus of food, and food is what the majority of cities workers were paid with. The ancient city of Uruk was the capital of Sumer, it had many temples known as Ziggurats throughout, and the people of Sumer were a polytheistic people[8]. Mesopotamia lacked metal, stone, wood, had to trade with the people of the Indus River Valley among others. We know they traded because we have found seals created in Mesopotamia among the archeological sites in the Indus River Valley.

P.T. Daniels stated, "All humans speak; only humans in civilizations write"

The people of Mesopotamia needed a way to record wheat and grain transactions, so they invented cuneiform, one of the earliest known systems of writing. Cuneiform began as a series of images which would convey their meaning through representing a physical object; it would evolve to consist of a few consonant and syllabic signs, but would ultimately be replaced by alphabetic writing in the course of the Roman era.

An alphabet is a standardized set of letters that are used to write in a language, based on the principle that the letters represent basic significant sounds in the spoken language. With alphabetic language comes written history. The history of alphabetic language begins in ancient Egypt. By 2700 BC ancient Egyptian

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[8] Maisels, Charles Keith (1993). *The Near East: Archaeology in the "Cradle of Civilization"*. ISBN 978-0-415-04742-5.

hieroglyphs had 24 symbols for consonants, but they were never used on their own, instead always mixed in with hundreds of other symbols. [9]

The first alphabet was North Semitic, and it was invented some time in the Second Millennium BC somewhere in the Middle East. It is not clear how, when or even where this happened. It may have been in Byblos, a Phoenician city in what is now Lebanon; in the Sinai Peninsula; or even the Egyptian city of Thebes (also known as Luxor or Waset). Whatever the details, the North Semitic people had a working alphabet of 22 letters by about 1200 BC. It seems likely that the alphabet was inspired by Egyptian hieroglyphs. The hieroglyphic system had already been around for 1500 years.

Latin script, or Roman script, is an alphabetic writing system based on the letters of the classical Latin alphabet. It is used as the standard method of writing in most Western and Central European languages (Including Spanish and English), as well as many languages from other parts of the world. Latin script is the basis for the largest number of alphabets of any writing system and is the most widely adopted writing system in the world (commonly used by about 70% of world's population). It is also the basis of the International Phonetic Alphabet. The 26 most widespread letters are the letters contained in the basic Latin alphabet.

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[9] Lynn, Bernadette (2004-04-08). "The Development of the Western Alphabet".