



The Origins of Civilization

Civilizations of the Ancient World | Meeting #2

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Upcoming Dates

- Monday, September 29
Essay #1 Due
- Thursday, October 16
Midterm Exam
- Sunday, August 31
Responses for Week 1 Due

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Four things today

- Evidence
- Periodization
- The Agricultural Revolution
- The City-State

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The course
website

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Questions about whatever

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website:
markbwilson.com

email:
mark.wilson@lehman.cuny.edu

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Evidence

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How do past events get to us?

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(1) Stories are passed on

- Written documents

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(1) Stories are passed on

- Written documents
- Oral history

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(2) Things survive

- Archaeology

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(2) Things survive

- Archaeology
- Material culture
 - tools, coins, household goods, etc.

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(2) Things survive

- Archaeology
- Material culture
 - tools, coins, household goods, etc.
- Art

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Example

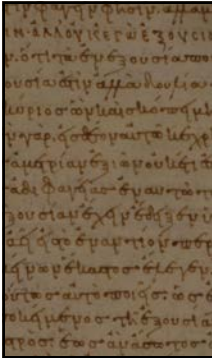
- *The Epic of Gilgamesh*
- Survives as 4000-year-old baked clay tablets
- Both the tablets and the contents are artifacts

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Kinds of evidence

- Primary source
 - Eyewitness testimony from the place and time being studied
- Secondary source
 - A scholar collects and interprets primary sources on a subject
- Tertiary source
 - General scholarly consensus on a subject
 - Includes encyclopedias, textbooks, and almost everything on the web
 - NOT ALLOWED as a source for history papers

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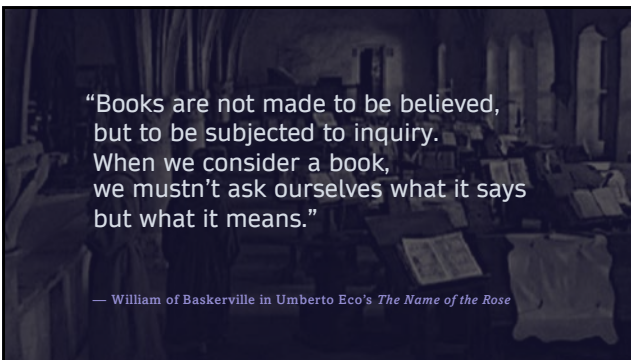


Problems with primary sources?

- Intentional bias
- Unintentional bias
- Point of view
- Survival
- Translation

CONCLUSION:
There are no facts in history


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“Books are not made to be believed, but to be subjected to inquiry. When we consider a book, we mustn’t ask ourselves what it says but what it means.”

— William of Baskerville in Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose*

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Example

- Eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, 79 CE
- Account by Pliny the Younger
- Nothing is ever written for no reason

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The stone age

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The Paleolithic (Old Stone Age)

- 3.3 million years ago
- Up through ~10,000 BCE
- Nature provides food, tools, protection
- Disperse across continents
- Trade between groups that encounter each other

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Neolithic: Agricultural revolution

- 10,000 – 3000 BCE
- Slow development of agricultural practices and technology
- Crop yield must increase to build an urban civilization

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Conversion to agriculture

- Sites across Eurasia and North Africa
- Many do not last

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Neolithic sites

- Homes clustered together in a "proto-city"
- No planning, centralized rule, or specialized labor
- Inhabitants farm surrounding lands by day and then return

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The city-state

- Economically independent
 - Urban center—skilled labor and manufacturing
 - Surrounding farmlands—part of central market and identity
- Politically autonomous
- Monumental building
- Patron deity



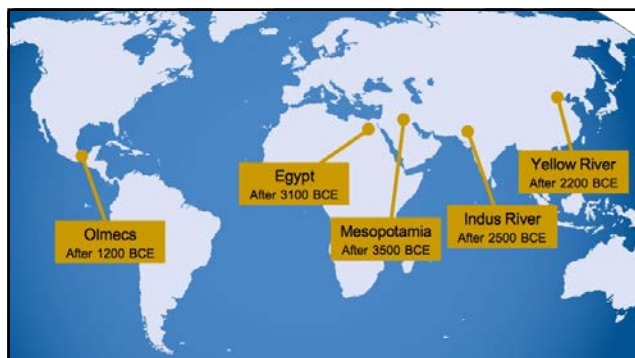
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City-state culture

- Shared...
 - Culture
 - Heritage
 - Language
 - Religion
- Rivalry for limited resources



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Civilization as social revolution

- Complex social structures
 - Division of labor
 - Class
 - Forms of government
 - Citizen and noncitizen
- The responsibilities of the citizen
 - The individual is subordinated to the community
- The responsibilities of gender
 - Male: public/present; Female: private/future

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Forms of government

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Democracy | δῆμος 'people' + κράτος 'power' | • Citizen | CIVITAS 'city-dweller' |
| • Republic | RES PUBLICA 'public matters' | • Constitution | CONSTITUO 'settled, agreed upon' |
| • Oligarchy | ὀλίγος 'few' + ἄρχων 'leader' | • Empire | IMPERIUM 'power to command, compel' |
| • Autocracy | αὐτός 'self' + κράτος 'power' | | |
| • Tyranny | τύραννος 'lord and master' | | |
| • Monarchy | μόνος 'alone' + ἄρχων 'leader' | | |
| • Dynasty | δύναμαι 'to be able, strong enough' | | |
| • Theocracy | θεός 'deity' + κράτος 'power' | | |

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