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Ancient Times



Humans have come a long way since their ancestors walked the planet about 2.5 million years ago. For thousands of years, people lived simple lives as hunter gatherers, spending their time looking for food and defending themselves against animals and other forces of nature. Then, with the advent of farming, civilizations grew. Inventions and discoveries – the wheel, irrigation, and writing were slow at first, but progress has sped up ever since.

The First Farmers (9000-4000 BCE)



Since approximately 9000 BCE, the Agricultural Revolution transformed the way humans lived. People grew crops and kept animals for the first time, produced greater amounts of food, and started to live in permanent farming villages.

In the end, farming led to people living in towns and cities. Archaeological evidence has shown signs of irrigation in areas lacking sufficient natural rainfall to support crops for rainfed agriculture. The earliest known use of the technology dates to the 6000 BCE in Khuzestan in the south-west of present-day Iran. Latest findings show the first crops grown and cultivated by humans were *wheat, barley, peas, lentils, chickpeas, and flax*.

Irrigation Systems



Photo 1: Irrigation system to support agricultural crops.



Photo 2: The earliest irrigation technology in Khuzestan
6000 B.C.E.

Ancient Wine

Grapes have been produced for thousands of years, and making wine dates to as early as 7000 B.C.



The earliest wine jar has been found at the site of Hāji Firuz Tepe, in the northern Zagros Mountains of Iran. The wine dates to the end of the Stone Age period (5400-5000 BC).



(Above wine jar: Courtesy the University of Pennsylvania Museum)

The First Cities (4500-1000 BCE)

As farmers started to produce more food, people moved from villages into towns. This occurred from about 7000 BCE onwards. By 4500 BCE, some towns grew further into the first cities. Each city had its own laws and customs and social structure. The first cities became city states, in other words they were all small, independent nations.



The ancient city of Bam at the Edge of Lut Desert