

# Civilizations of the Ancient World

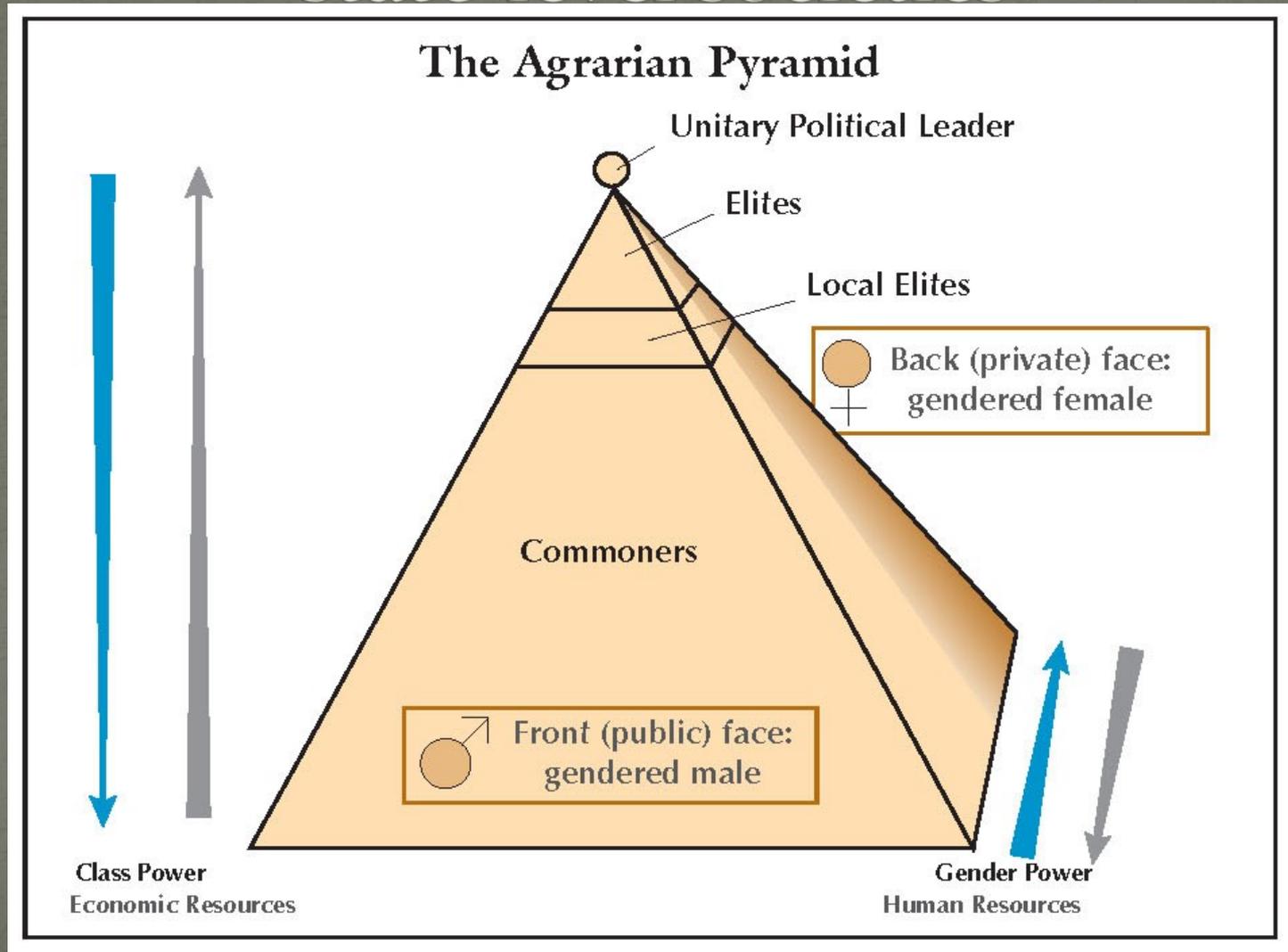
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Networks and Hierarchies

# Two Fundamental Constraints

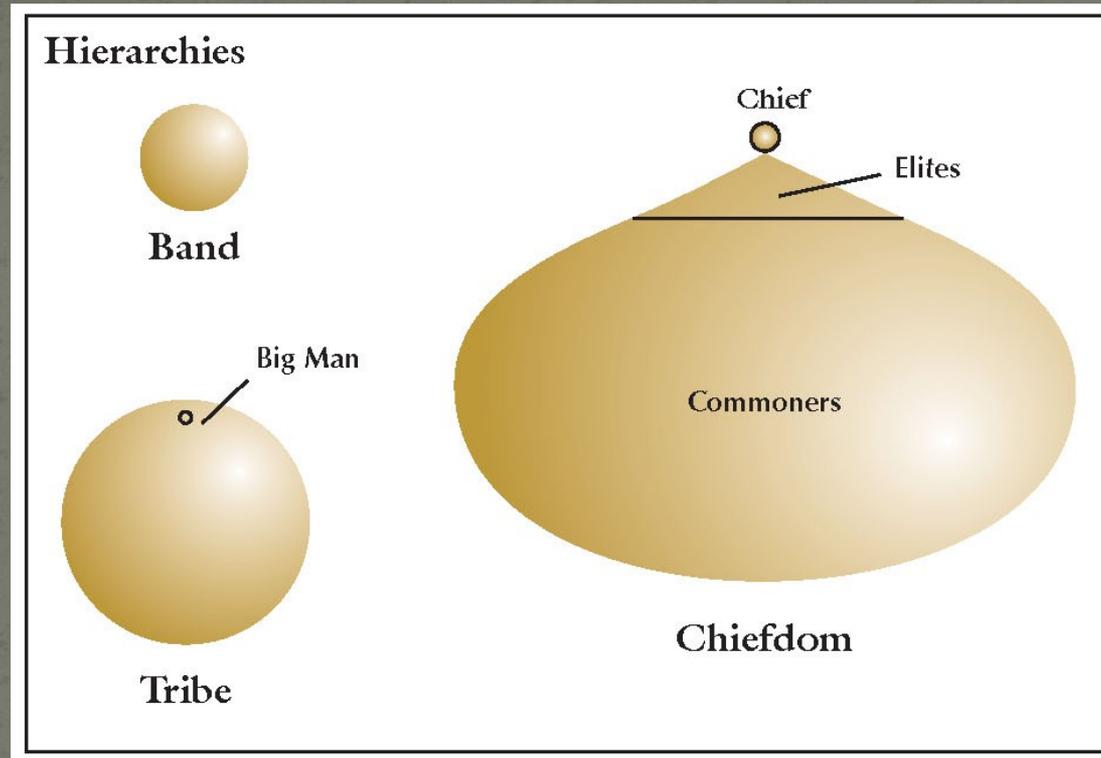
- Low Productivity
  - Very little surplus wealth, most people had to be involved in farming; sources of power for work = wind, water, muscle (animal & human)
- Slow Communications
  - The vast majority of people lived out their lives within close confines of home; people, goods, ideas that moved along a network were rarer
- **“Low and Slow”**

# Sociopolitical pyramid of Agrarian Era state-level societies



# Hierarchies:

## from simple to complex



**Conflict resolution**  
**Economic redistribution**  
**Emergency decision making**

# Hierarchies: Scribes & Peasants

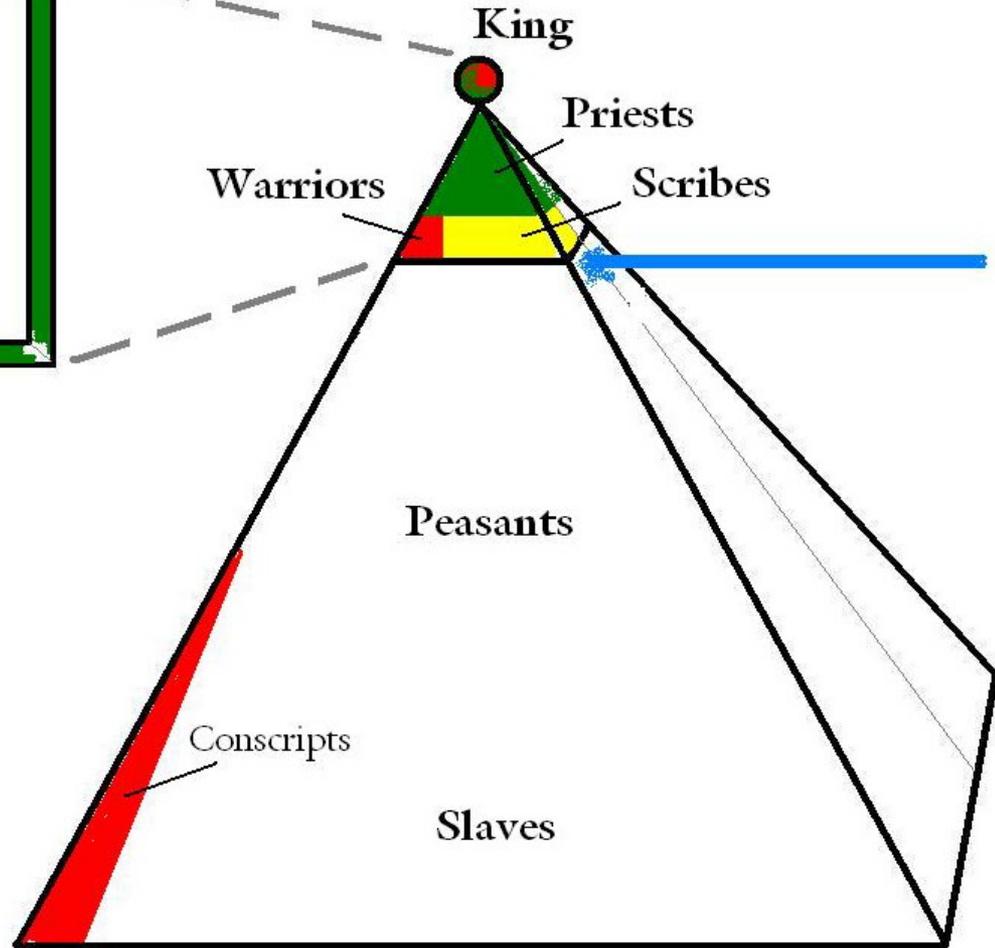




# Sumerian City-State

Divine kingship  
Sacrifice  
Unpleasant afterlife

Unpredictable gods



# Ancient Mesopotamia

*“Land Between the Rivers”*



- Inhabited by a succession of people:
  - Sumerians
  - Babylonians
  - Assyrians
  - Chaldeans
- Today – Iraq & Kuwait

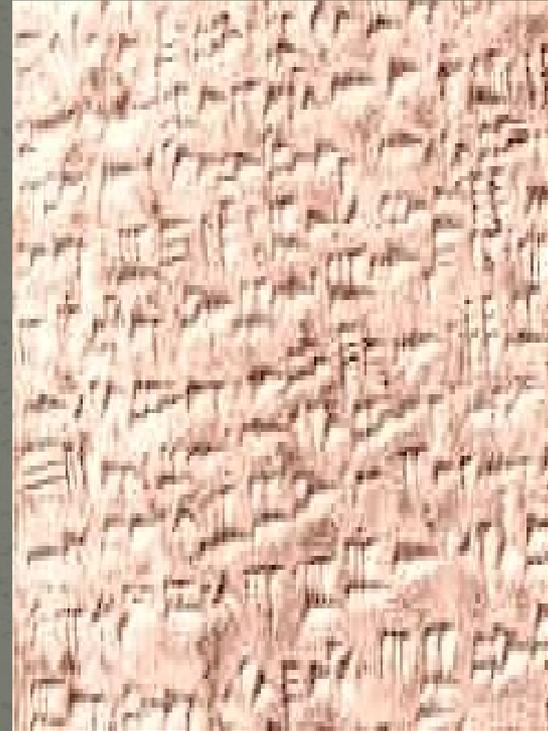
# Sumer: The First Civilization

- Headwaters of Tigris & Euphrates Rivers are in mountains of Armenia (modern Turkey)
- Euphrates flows for 1675 miles, Tigris for 1150 before they join north of Persian Gulf
- Flooding of rivers leaves rich deposits, requires irrigation & drainage canals
- One of earliest cities, Uruk
  - 1,000 acres
  - Six-mile long wall
  - Defensive towers 35 feet high



# Sumerians

- Sumerians arrived in Tigris-Euphrates valley by 4000 BCE
- By 3000 BCE, established independent city - states
- By 1700 BCE, came under the rule of Hammurabi of Babylon
- Cuneiform “Wedge-shaped” writing



# Sumer: Political/Social

- Monarch
- King/Priest
- Military Leader
- city-states, each with own *ensi*
  - *Military commander in city*
  - *Coordinated community activities, levied taxes*
- Artisans, bakers, brewers
- 85% of population were tied to land



# Sumer: Religion

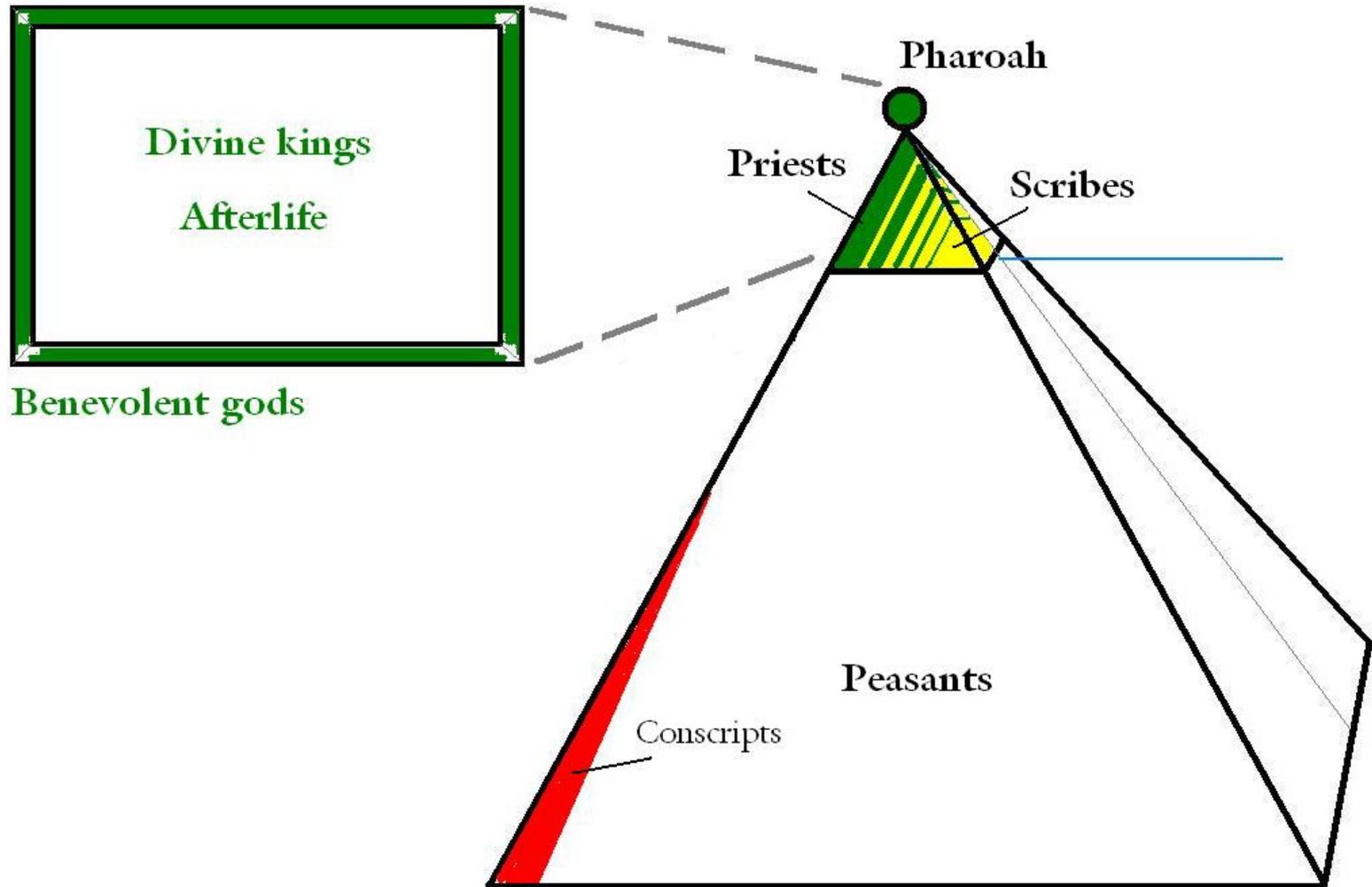
- Sought to establish security in this life through practice of rituals
- Polytheistic
  - Gods/goddesses had human forms and tendencies
- Ziggaruts
- No distinct afterlife
- astrology
- sacrifice of animals



# The Epic of Gilgamesh

- Oldest tablets from 1800 BCE
- Gilgamesh, King of Uruk
- Enkidu, Hairy man from the steppes who runs with wild animals
- Utnapishtim

# Old Kingdom Egypt



# The Three Kingdoms of Ancient Egypt

- **Old Kingdom (2686-2181 BCE)**
  - Upper and Lower Egypt unified under Menes
  - Capital--Memphis
  - Construction of Great Pyramids (pharaohs buried in pyramids) and Sphinx
  - Chief god is Re (sun god)
  - Only the Pharaoh is granted an afterlife
  - Women own property and choose the pharaoh
- **Middle Kingdom (2055-1650 BCE)**
  - Capital—Thebes
  - Kingdom divided into nomes
  - Priests and nobles gain power
  - Classical period of writing and language

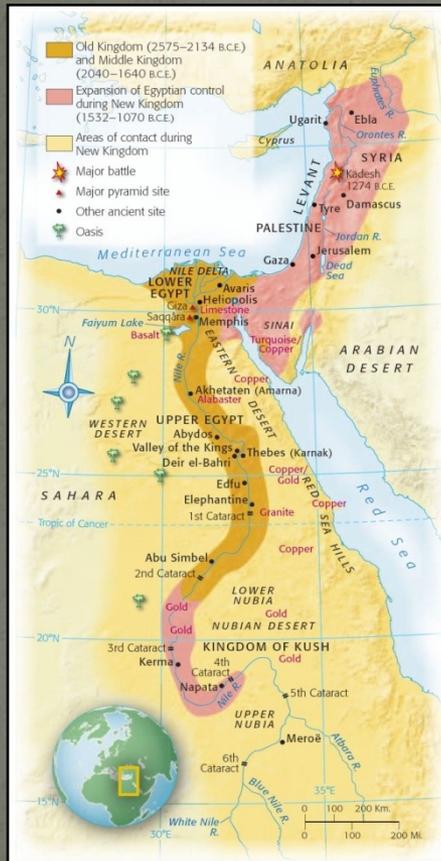
# The New Kingdom (1550-1070 BCE)

- Founded when Hyksos driven from Egypt; invasions of Palestine and Nubia (gold mines)
- The Book of the Dead collated—priests are all powerful; pharaohs buried in Valley of the Kings
- Important Pharaohs:
  - Hatshepsut (1478-1458 BCE)
    - Daughter, sister and wife of kings
    - Built Valley of the Kings with her vizier, Senemut
    - Her name and reign “erased” by her successors
  - Akhenaten and Queen Nefertiti (1353-1336 BCE)
    - Monotheistic worship of Aten

# The New Kingdom con't.

- Important Pharaohs con't.
  - Ramses II the Great (1279-1213 BCE)
    - Ruled for 67 years
    - Defeated Hittites at Kadesh
    - Massive statuary
- The “Problem” of the Israelites
  - No record in Egypt of the Israelites
  - Were the Hyksos the Israelites (not slaves but a mercenary army)?
  - Was Hatshepsut pharaoh's daughter who adopted Moses? Was Senemut Moses?
  - Is Ramses II the pharaoh of the Bible: Ra-moses vs Moses?

# African Civilization: Egypt



Nile River flows north  
almost 4200 miles

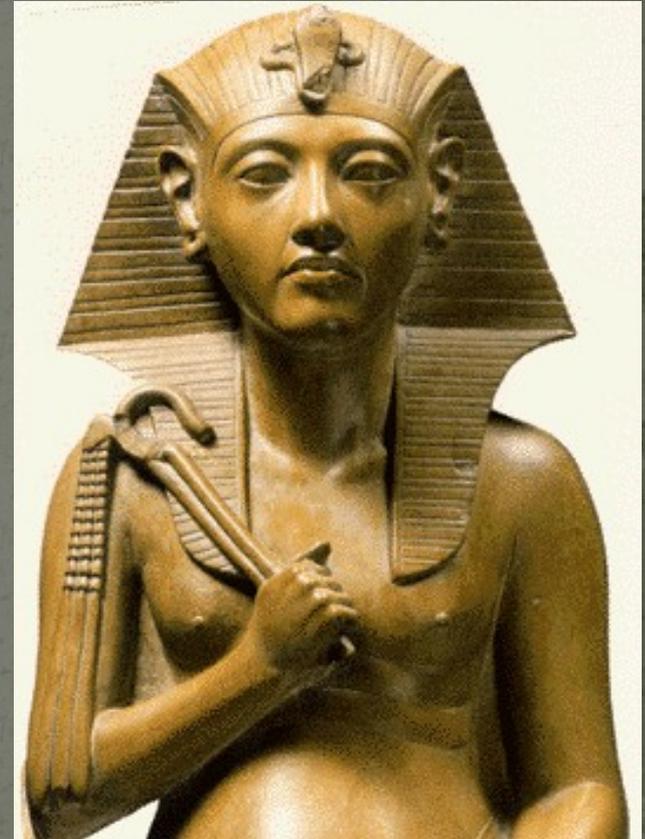
River floods every  
spring from June to  
end of October over 13  
mile wide stretch

In Nile Delta, river splits  
into branches

Lower Egypt is north,  
Upper Egypt is south

# Egypt: Political

- Pharaoh, considered to be divine
- Nomarchs, ruled over various city states
  - 22 provinces in Upper Egypt, 20 in Lower Egypt
  - Trade with neighboring lands
- After 2000 BCE, Thebes became the capital



# Egypt: Religion



- Polytheistic
- Osiris, killed by Seth, resurrected by Isis
  - King of the dead, pharaohs became united at death
  - Worshipped nature and animals of the Nile - fertility
  - <http://www.ancientegypt.co.uk/gods/home.html>
  - Strong belief in the afterlife
  - Mummification

# Egypt: Social Structure

- Pharaoh
- Priests/Scribes
- Warriors
- Artisans
- Farmers
- Slaves (fluid)
  
- More gender equality



# Africans in OT



- Kush (Cush) appears as one of great military nations in OT; Moses married Kushite woman (Num 12:1)
- Cushite messengers carried news of Absalom's death to David (2 Sam 18:21)
- Father of Zephaniah (Zeph 1:1) was Kushite
- Josephus refers to Queen of Sheba as Queen of Ethiopia

# Black Africans in the Ancient World



- European writings refer to black Africans as Kushites, blacks, Ethiopians
- 6<sup>th</sup> c BC, artistic portrayals in various countries in Italy, Greece, Egypt
- Mixed black-white representations appeared in mid-5<sup>th</sup> century BC

# Black Africans in the Ancient World

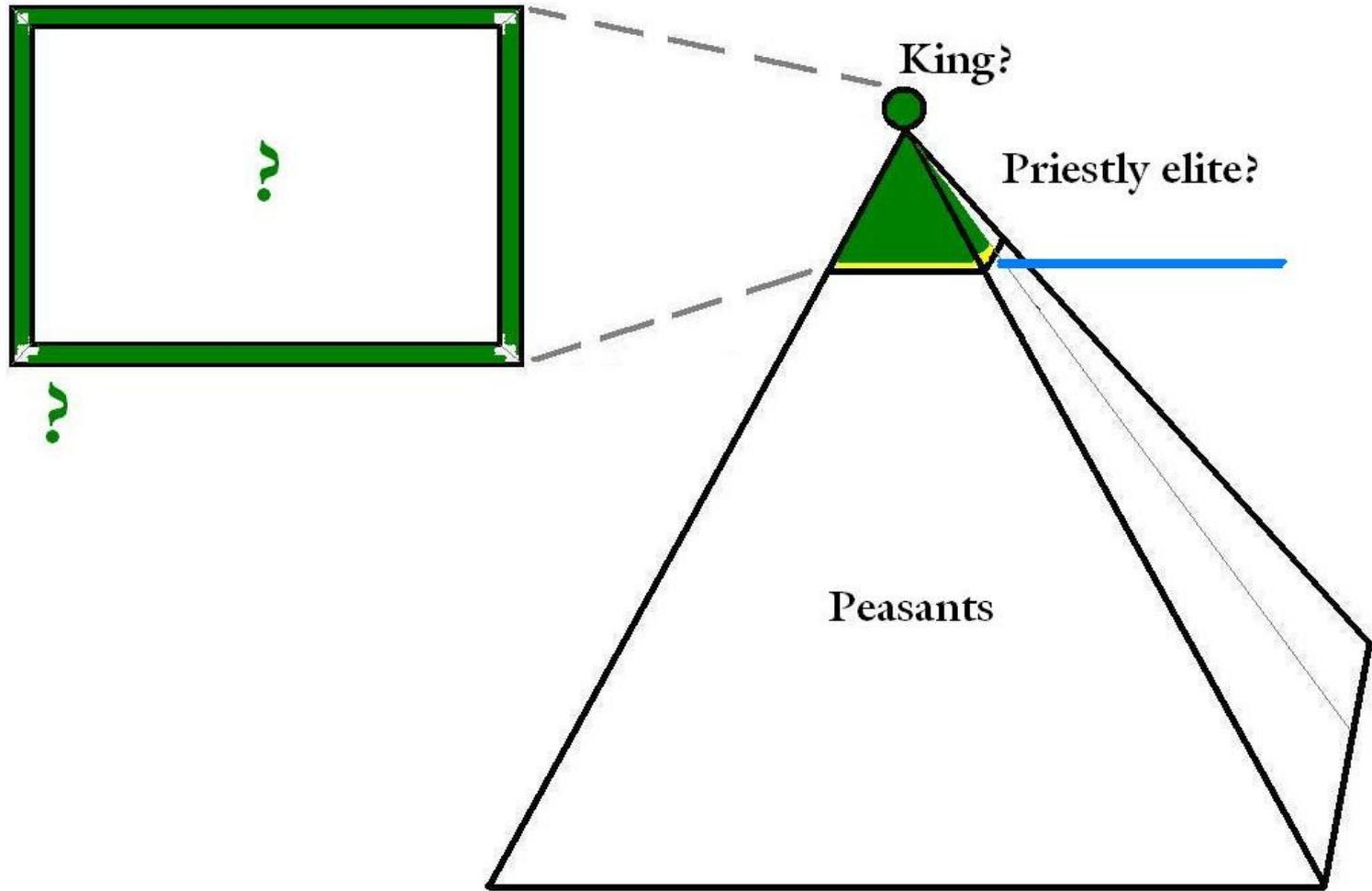
- Nubian archers (2000 BC)
- Ethiopian mercenaries in Persian & Greek armies
- Roman troops recruited black soldiers from northwest Africa
- Ethiopian warriors were renowned for skill in use of huge bows & deadly poisonous arrows
- Referred to as 3-eye or 4-eye men because of accuracy with bows



# View of Black Africans

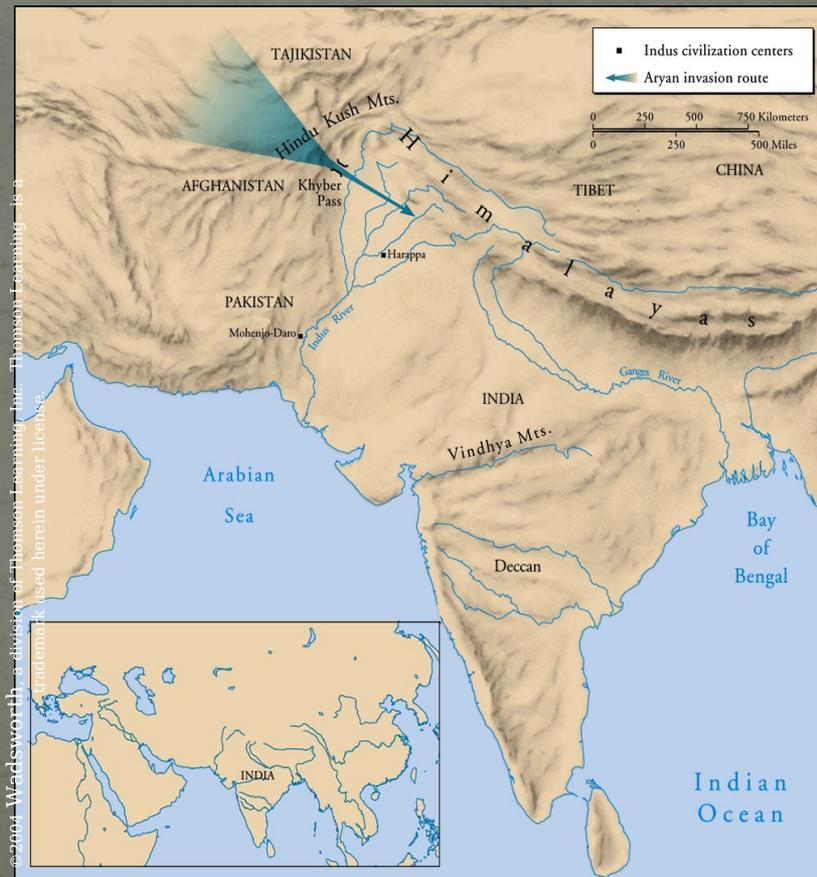
- Classical writers viewed Ethiopians as strong military power who had a love of freedom & justice, piety & wisdom
- Believed to have introduced Egyptians to astrology
- Great respect of nations towards Ethiopians; highly positive attitude
- Color was not basis for prejudice; not obstacle to integration into societies, common to have blacks and whites living together in cities
- No concepts of inferiority or equate with slavery that later developed in 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe

# Harrapan City-State(?)

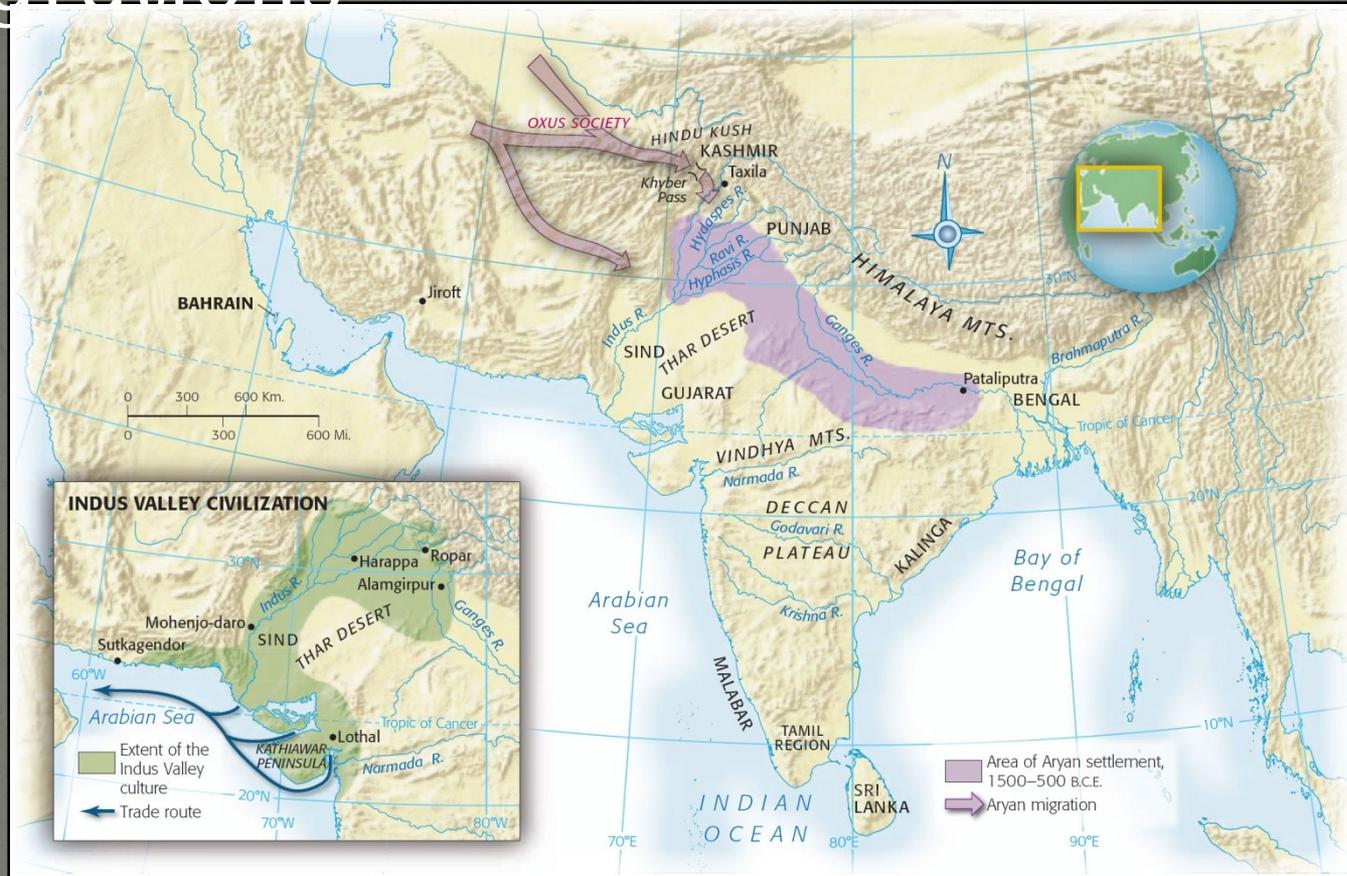


# The Indian Subcontinent

- South Asia:
  - India
  - Pakistan
  - Bangladesh
  - Nepal
  - Sri Lanka



# Harappan Culture and Aryan Migrations



- The Harappan culture emerged in the city-states of the Indus River Basin. They had collapsed by the time the Aryan peoples began migrating into India from Iran around 1500 B.C.E. and setting up states.

# Background to the Emergence of Civilization in India

## Mixture of people

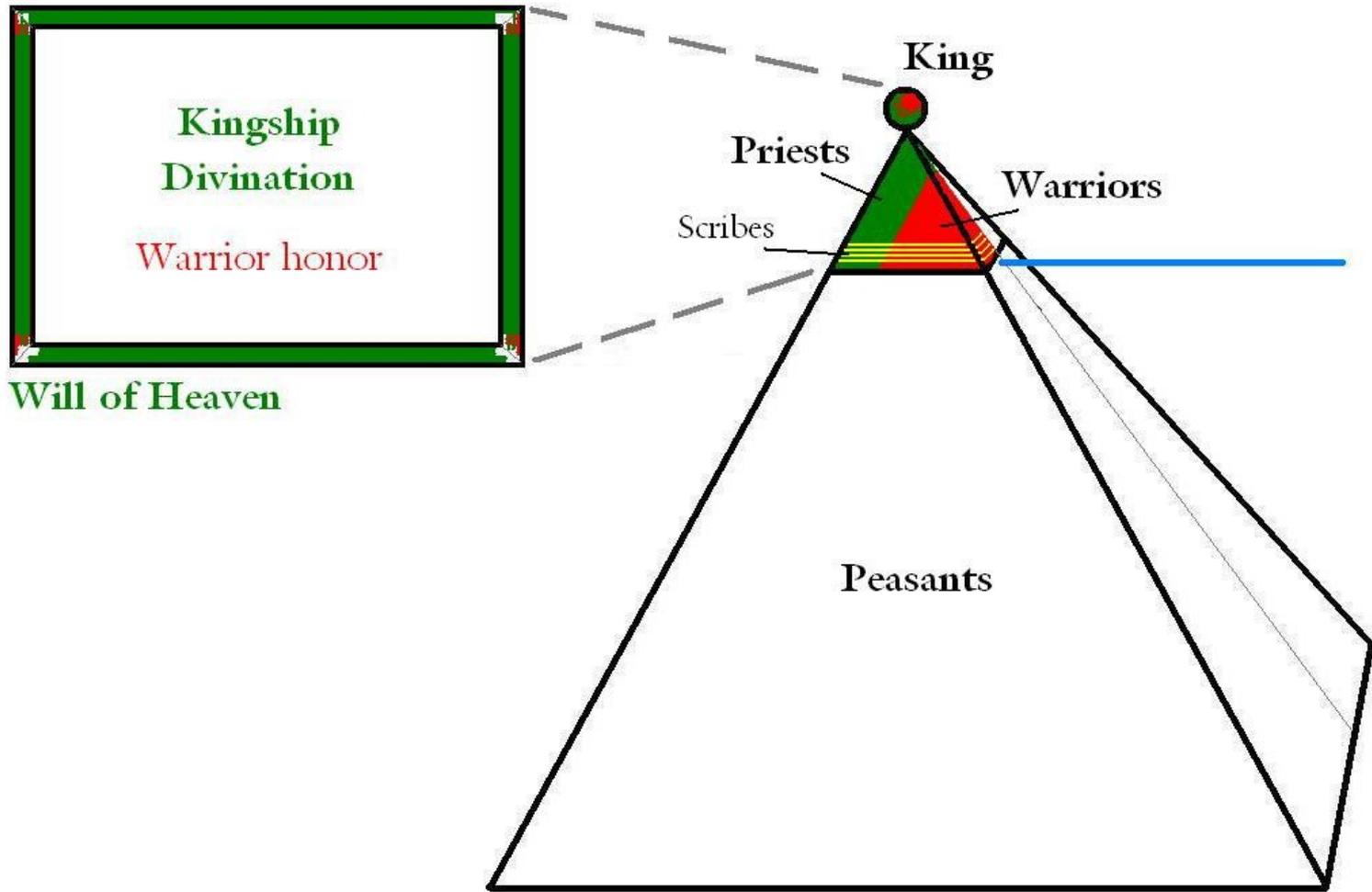
- Harappan Civilization: A Fascinating Enigma
  - Harappa in the Punjab
  - Mohenjo-Daro (City of the Dead) near the mouth of the Indus
  - Due to constant flooding of the Indus River, Harappa was rebuilt at least five times, Mohenjo-Daro at least six times
- Political and Social Structure
  - Villages in the Indus valley: 6500 - 7000 B.C.E.
  - Harappa a city more than 3 ½ mile in circumference with wall over 40 feet thick
  - Streets were laid out in grid pattern

# Early Civilizations in Indus Valley

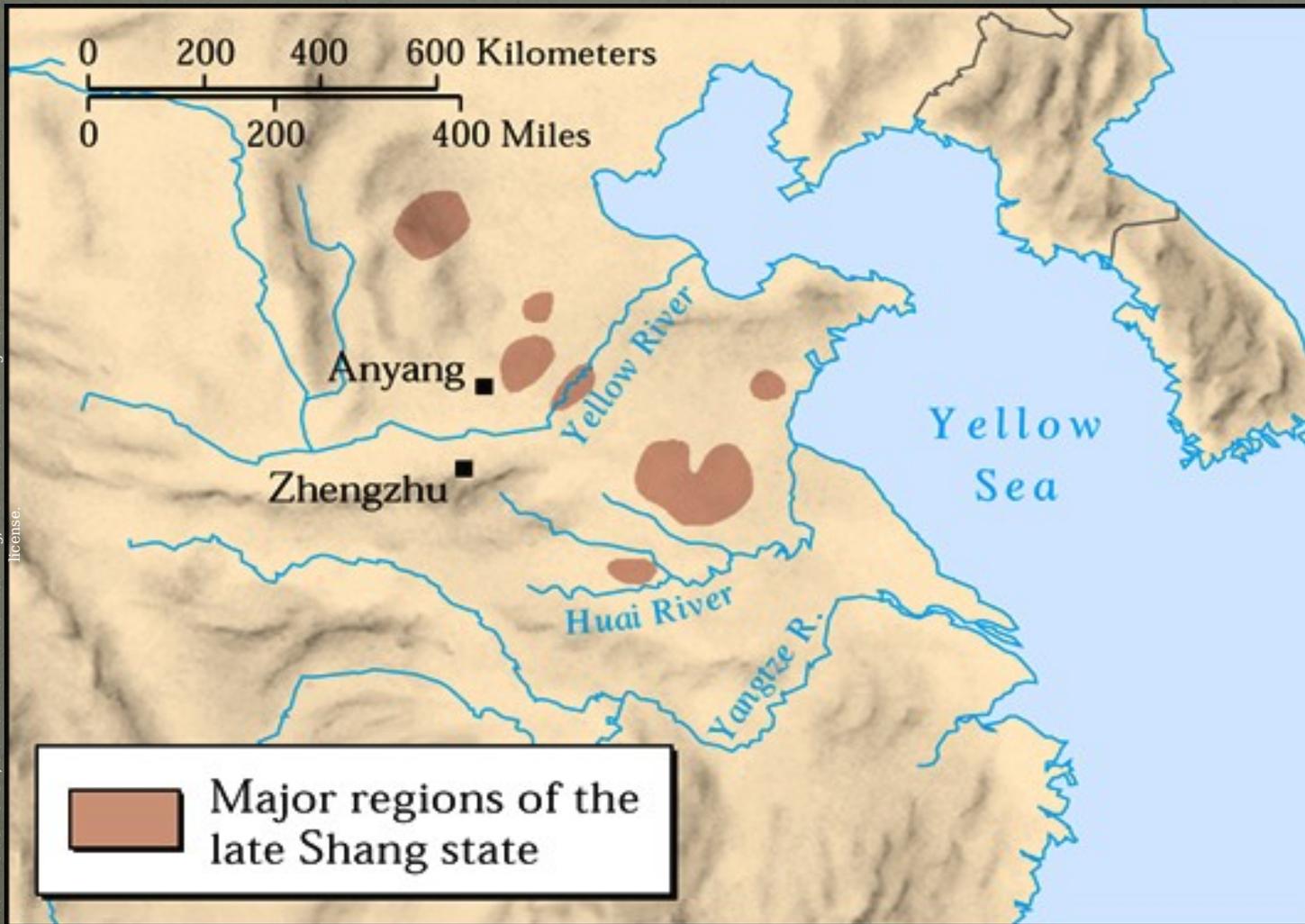
- Homes were at times three floors, built around central courtyard
- Granaries at the edge of the city (top)
- Cities included a palace and marketplace
- Main crops:
  - Wheat, barley, peas, lentils, sesame & cotton
- Pottery, sculpture, clay seals
  - Domesticated animals:
    - Cattle, dogs, goats, sheep, fowl, elephants & water buffalo
  - Manufacturing:
    - Cotton weaving, metal working, (copper and bronze) wheel-driven pottery
    - Gold from southern India & silver from Afghanistan



# Shang China



# Shang China



# Shang Dynasty

- Followed Hsia dynasty (Yu's son)
- Flourished from 1766 – 1122 BCE
- Built many fortified cities including Zhengzhu, oldest in China
- Controlled only a small part of northern China, yet through trade & military activity exerted wide influence
  - Two horse chariots
  - Box & arrow
  - Bronze metallurgy
  - System of writing

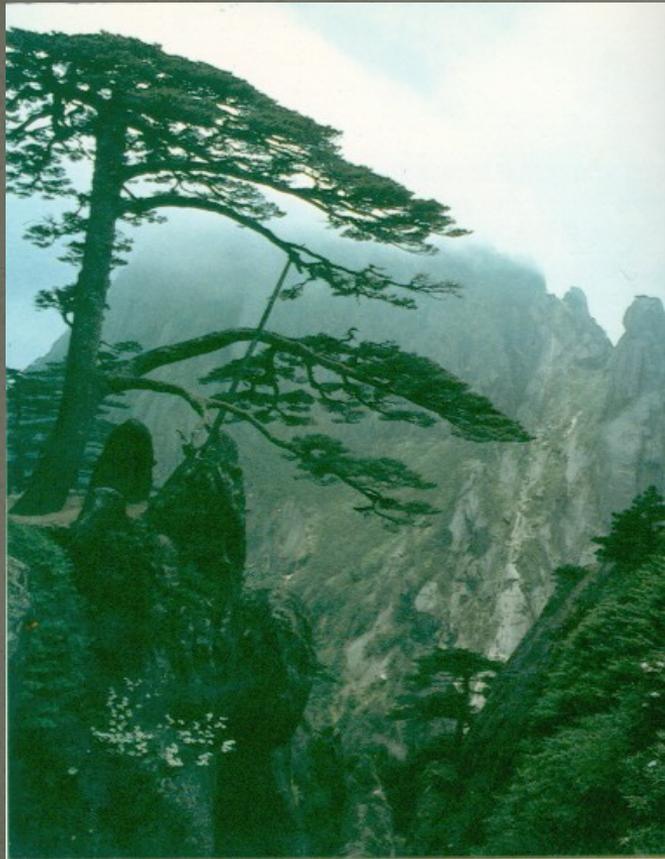


# Oracle Bones: Divination

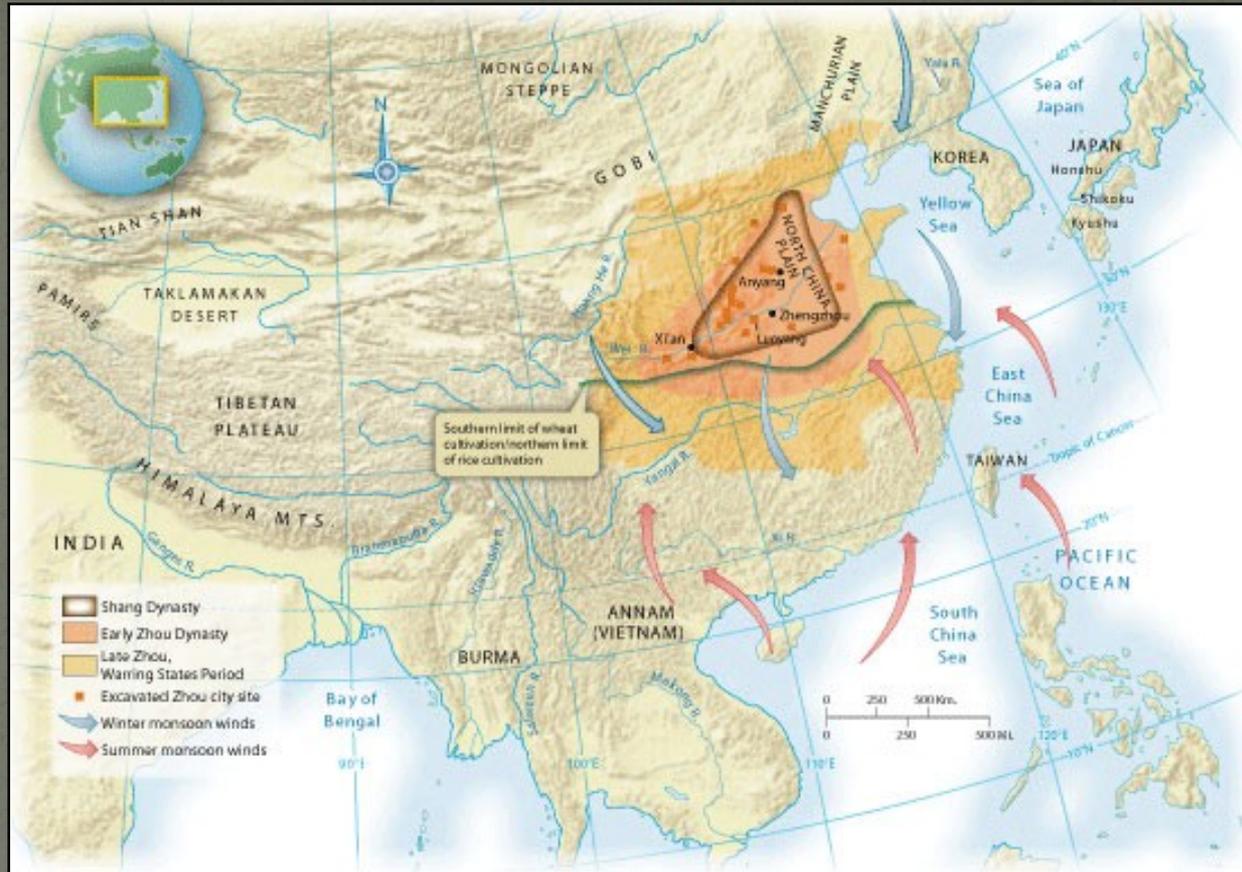
- Bones & shells on which questions were written
- Bones then heated or burned to see where cracks appeared, answers interpreted and written on bones
- More than 100,000 fragments have been found
- Shows ancient peoples believed in close connection between spirit and human realms



# Religion in Shang China, pre-Axial



- Divination practice shows no relationship between people & gods; no moral responsibility
- People received direction from gods
- Ancestor mediated with gods; people sought to keep ancestors happy through offerings
- Ghosts were spirits of the dead not properly buried
- Virtuous acts, de, had power in family & community



# Shang and Zhou China

- The earliest Chinese states arose in north China along the Yellow River and its tributaries. The bronze-using Shang dynasty was succeeded by the iron-using Zhou, who governed much of north and central China.

# Culture and the Traditional Pyramid

**Elite Culture**  
Unitary, transregional, written

## The Cultural Screen:

Major schools of thought or issues debated within the Cultural Frame

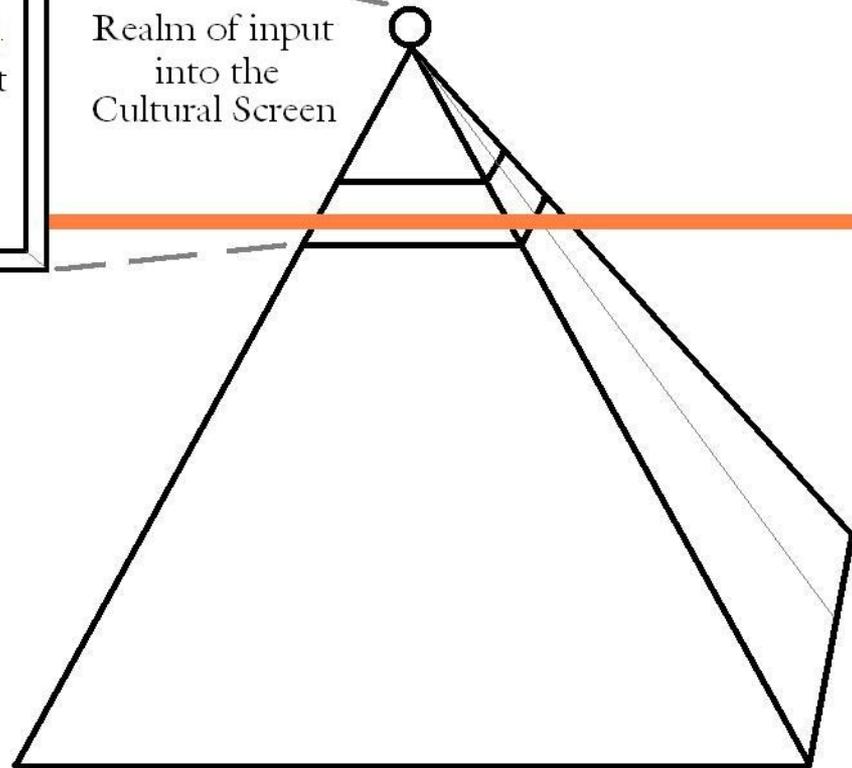
Realm of input into the Cultural Screen

**The Great Cultural Divide**

## The Cultural Frame:

Basic, implicitly agreed on cultural values

**Non-elite Culture**  
Multicultural, localistic, oral



# Limits of Ancient Civilizations

- Natural limits
  - Disease, climate, geography
- Hierarchical structures
  - Slow communication, low production, need to expand & maintain unity (Great Cultural Divide)
  - Locked in roles to preserve social arrangement
- Ideological limits... contradictions of the cultural frame and screen: Great Cultural Divide, nomads & sedentary peoples

# Summing up the limits

- Build a fragile structure to fit a specific environment
- Build it to resist change:
  - ...to maintain the fragile fit
  - ...because change is risky
- Building the structure changes the environment
  - ...which will inevitably change naturally anyway
- Forcing adaptation to change
  - ...which proves difficult to impossible