

Prososki, Lisa. "The Story Of... Cities and Civilizations." *Guns, Germs, and Steel*. PBS, 2005. Web. 27 Oct 2013.

The Story Of... Cities and Civilizations

The first great civilizations of the ancient world – Mesopotamia, Samarra, and Uruk – were born in the fourth millennium before Christ. They were home to great civilizations, built on the foundations of successful farming communities.

The birth of farming in just a handful of places around the world had a **profound** impact on the course of human history. Wherever communities could produce a **sufficient** agricultural surplus, thanks to the domestication of local crops and animals, then villages, towns and cities would eventually follow.

A **surplus** of agricultural products allowed some members of a community to leave the fields behind, and develop new skills. The earliest evidence for this lies in the Fertile Crescent.

Here, among the world's first permanent settlements, farming communities began to build larger and sturdier houses made of stone. They created pathways, staircases and public spaces. Experimentation with metal technology began. They **pooled** their resources, wove linen and wool from larger herds of animals, **ventured** abroad and exported their produce to neighbors far and wide.

The earliest farmers provided food for the earliest builders, stonemasons, plasterers, blacksmiths, weavers and potters. Economic specialization had begun.

With the **urban explosion** came culture and politics, democracy, dictatorship and war. Where the Fertile Crescent led, soon all of Eurasia would follow.

Very great or intense

Enough, adequate

More than what is needed or used; excess

Shared or brought together

Dare to do something

The rapid growth of cities