Chapter 2 Study Guide Key

Key Terms

**Agricultural Revolution:** Also known as the Neolithic Revolution, this is the transformation of human (and world) existence caused by the deliberate cultivation of particular plants and the deliberate taming and breeding of particular animals.

**Austronesian:** An Asian-language family whose speakers gradually became the dominant culture of the Philippines, Indonesia, and the Pacific islands, thanks to their mastery of agriculture.

**Banpo:** A Chinese archeological site, where the remains of a significant Neolithic village have been found. (*pron*. bahn-poe)

**Bantu:** An African-language family whose speakers gradually became the dominant culture of eastern and southern Africa, thanks to their agricultural techniques and, later, their ironworking skills. (*pron*. BAHN-too)

**Bantu migration:** The spread of Bantu-speaking peoples from their homeland in what is now southern Nigeria or Cameroon to most of Africa, in a process that started ca. 3000 b.c.e. and continued for several millennia.

**broad spectrum diet:** Archeologists’ term for the diet of gathering and hunting societies, which included a wide array of plants and animals.

**Cahokia:** An important agricultural chiefdom of North America that flourished around 1100 C.E. (*pron*. cah-HOKE-ee-ah)

**Çatalhüyük:** An important Neolithic site in what is now Turkey. (*pron*. cha-TAHL-hoo-YOOK)

**chiefdom:** A societal grouping governed by a chief who typically relies on generosity, ritual status, or charisma rather than force to win obedience from the people.

**diffusion:** The gradual spread of agricultural techniques without extensive population movement.

**domestication:** The taming and changing of nature for the benefit of humankind.

**end of the last Ice Age:** A process of global warming that began around 16,000 years ago and ended about 5,000 years later, with the earth enjoying a climate similar to that of our own time; the end of the Ice Age changed conditions for human beings, leading to increased population and helping to pave the way for agriculture.

**Fertile Crescent:** Region sometimes known as Southwest Asia that includes the modern states of Iraq, Syria, Israel/Palestine, and southern Turkey; the earliest home of agriculture.

**horticulture:** Hoe-based agriculture, typical of early agrarian societies.

**intensification:** The process of getting more in return for less; for example, growing more food on a smaller plot of land.

**Jericho:** Site of an important early agricultural settlement of perhaps 2,000 people in present-day Israel.

**Mesopotamia:** The valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in present-day Iraq.

**native Australians:** Often called “Aboriginals” (from the Latin *ab origine*, the people who had been there “from the beginning”), the natives of Australia continued (and to some extent still continue) to live by gathering and hunting, despite the transition to agriculture in nearby lands.

**pastoral society:** A human society that relies on domesticated animals rather than plants as the main source of food; pastoral nomads lead their animals to seasonal grazing grounds rather than settling permanently in a single location.

**“secondary products revolution”:** A term used to describe the series of technological changes that began ca. 4000 b.c.e., as people began to develop new uses for their domesticated animals, exploiting a revolutionary new source of power.

**stateless societies:** Village-based agricultural societies, usually organized by kinship groups, that functioned without a formal government apparatus.

***teosinte*:** The wild ancestor of maize. (*pron.* tay-oh- SIN-tay)

Margin Review Questions

Q. What accounts for the emergence of agriculture after countless millennia of human life without it?

• The end of the last Ice Age brought a process of global warming around 16,000 years ago that by about 11,000 years ago made agriculture possible. The warmer, wetter, and more stable climatic conditions permitted the flourishing of more wild plants, especially cereal grasses, which humans would come to rely on.

• At the same time, this climate change, along with human hunting, pushed various species of large mammals, on which Paleolithic people relied, into extinction, adding to the need for new food sources.

• Humans were able to take advantage of favorable climatic changes because they had already developed a deep knowledge of the natural world and, in some cases, an ability to manage it actively. They had learned to make use of a large number of plants and animals.

• Moreover, they had developed techniques and technologies to encourage the growth of favored plants and to harvest wild plants and animals more easily.

• The need to increase food supplies to feed growing populations of humans also contributed to the emergence of agriculture.

Q. In what different ways did the Agricultural Revolution take shape in various parts of the world?

• In the Fertile Crescent of Southwest Asia, an extraordinary variety of wild plants and animals capable of domestication provided a rich array of species on which the now largely settled gathering and hunting people could draw. A cold and dry spell between 11,000 and 9500 b.c.e. seems to have forced the population toward agriculture. During the period, people domesticated figs, wheat, barley, rye, peas, lentils, sheep, goats, pigs, and cattle. Archeological evidence indicates that the transition in this region from gathering and hunting to a fully agricultural way of life occurred quickly, within as little as 500 years.

• At roughly the same time in Africa, domestication unfolded in the eastern part of what is now the Sahara Desert in present-day Sudan. During this period, rainfall was much higher. In this region, animal domestication preceded plant domestication, with cattle and donkeys being the first animals brought under human control. In Africa, different plants were domesticated in several different regions, including sorghum (eastern Sahara), teff and enset (Ethiopia), and yams, oil palm trees, okra, and kola nuts (West Africa). The more scattered nature of domestication in sub-Saharan Africa led to a less productive agriculture than in the more favored and compact Fertile Crescent.

• By 4000 to 3000 b.c.e., another pattern of domestication took shape in the Americas. As in Africa, domestication of plants in the Americas occurred separately in a number of locations. But what makes domestication most distinctive in the Americas was the absence of animals: the llama/alpaca was the only large mammal to be domesticated. This shaped how farming was conducted in the Americas, as farmers lacked animal power for plows or their manure for fertilizer. It also meant that hunting and fishing remained more important to agricultural people of the Americas. Moreover, the Americas lacked the rich cereal grains available elsewhere. Instead, maize was the key crop. But it required thousands of years of selective adaptation to become a productive crop in terms of calories and even then was nutritionally poorer than the protein-rich cereals of the Fertile Crescent. Because of the north-south orientation of the Americas and the relative isolation of agricultural regions, crops spread less successfully. The result was that full dependence on agriculture came more slowly in Mesoamerica, taking some 3,500 years.

• In China between 6500 and 5000 b.c.e. several key breakthroughs took place, with rice, millet, and soybeans being grown and pigs, chickens, and water buffalo being domesticated.

• In highland New Guinea between 7000 and 4000 b.c.e., taro, bananas, and yams were domesticated.

Q. In what ways did agriculture spread? Where and why was it sometimes resisted?

• Agriculture spread in two ways: through diffusion and through colonization. Diffusion refers to the gradual spread of the techniques of agriculture, and perhaps of the plants and animals themselves, but without the extensive movement of agricultural peoples. Colonization refers to the migration of agricultural peoples as growing populations and pressures to expand pushed them outward. Often this meant the conquest, absorption, or displacement of earlier gatherers and hunters.

• Successful resistance to the encroachment of agriculture occurred in areas that were unsuitable to farming or in regions of particular natural abundance where the population did not need to farm intensively. It also helped to not be in the direct line of advance of a more powerful agricultural people. Many gathering and hunting peoples knew of the farming practices of their nearby neighbors but chose to resist them, preferring the freer life of their Paleolithic ancestors.

Q. What was revolutionary about the Agricultural Revolution?

• the ability to support much larger populations

• the beginning of the dominance of the human species over other forms of life on the planet

• an explosion of technological innovation, including techniques for making pottery and weaving textiles and metallurgy

• the growing impact of humans on their environments

Q. What different kinds of societies emerged out of the Agricultural Revolution?

• Pastoral societies were societies that relied far more extensively on domesticated animals than on crops. Pastoral societies were common in regions where farming was difficult or impossible—arctic tundra, some grasslands, and deserts. Wherever pastoral societies arose, they were mobile, as they relied on moving seasonally, following the changing patterns of vegetation, in order to feed their animals.

• Village-based agricultural societies consisted of settled farmers. Such societies retained much of the equality and freedom of gathering and hunting communities, as they continued to do without kings, chiefs, bureaucrats, or aristocracies. Instead they were usually organized in terms of kinship groups or lineages, within which large numbers of people could make and enforce rules, maintain order, and settle disputes. These societies sometimes developed modest social and economic inequalities.

• Chiefdoms were those societies in which agricultural communities were ruled by figures who inherited positions of power and privilege. These chiefs ruled through their generosity or gift giving, their ritual status, or their personal charisma. Only rarely could they use force to compel obedience. Chiefs typically led important rituals and ceremonies, organized the community for warfare, directed its economic life, and sought to resolve internal conflicts. They collected tribute from commoners in the form of food, manufactured goods, and raw material, which they redistributed to subordinates after keeping enough to maintain their prestige.

Q. How did chiefdoms differ from stateless agricultural village societies?

• Chiefdoms were ruled by figures who inherited positions of power and privilege. Chiefs ruled through their generosity or gift giving, their ritual status, or their personal charisma. Only rarely did they rule through force. Chiefs led important rituals and ceremonies, organized the community for warfare, directed its economic life, and sought to resolve internal conflicts.

• Agricultural village societies possessed no such figure conducting their affairs as a full-time ruler. They often organized themselves in terms of kinship groups or lineages. The lineage system provided the framework within which large numbers of people could make and enforce rules, maintain order, and settle disputes.

• Chiefdoms possessed more well-defined and pronounced social inequalities, some of which were inherited. Agricultural villages developed modest social and economic inequalities, but they were not as well defined as those of chiefdoms and were not hereditary.

• Unlike members of agricultural village societies, commoners in chiefdoms provided tribute to their chief in the form of food, manufactured goods, and raw materials.

Documents Headnote Questions

Document 2.1: Germanic Peoples of Central Europe

Q. What can we learn from Tacitus’s account about the economy, politics, society, and culture of the Germanic peoples of the first century c.e.?

• Economy:

• The Germanic tribes preferred war and plunder to tilling the soil.

• Tilling the soil was regularly left to women and old men.

• A tribute system within and between clans created ties.

• They did not lend money at interest.

• Political system:

• They chose their kings by birth and their generals by merit.

• The kings had limited powers and the generals ruled more by example than authority.

• Priests were charged with punishing criminals through a mandate from God.

• A tribute system based on gifts defined the political relationships within and between tribes.

• Blood feuds were common among clans.

• Social order:

• Racial purity accounted for unusual physical traits.

• At the top of the social order were kings, generals and priests.

• Their fighting units were made up of families and clans and the women and children of these clans traveled on military campaigns.

• Women at times participated in public, as when they rallied troops in battle or participated in counsels.

• Warrior chiefs led by example.

• Their vassals fought for their chief and could expect to be fed and entertained by their chief.

• Slaves existed in society but were given management of a house and home and were expected to give their masters certain quantities of grain, cattle, and clothing each year.

• Land was occupied by the whole community and then split between families.

• Culture:

• They used songs to transmit stories.

• They were devoted to Tuisco and his son Mannus, who they viewed as the founders of their race.

• Their chief god was Mercury, to whom they sacrificed human victims.

• Augury and divination were regularly practiced.

• Both priests and fathers of families led religious ceremonies.

• The warrior elite possessed a communal culture centered on entertainment, feasting, and hunting. Charge of the household, home, and the land were given over to women and old men.

• They did not have cities.

• Instead they lived in scattered settlements.

• They did not build using stone or tile nor did they ornament their buildings.

• They possessed simple clothing.

• They had a strict marriage code based on monogamy.

• They possessed strict laws against adultery.

**Document 2.2: Social Organization among the Gikuyu**

Q. *How does Kenyatta describe the division of labor and marriage practices in Gikuyu families? Does his description suggest gender equality or patriarchy?*

***Division of labor:***

• Men:

• cut timbers and put up the framework when constructing buildings

• clear brush and trees from fields

• break virgin soil with digging sticks and hoes

• harvest the crops

• tend the cattle

• and slaughter animals and prepare their skins

• Women:

• cut and carry grass for thatching and plaster walls when constructing buildings

• undertake housework including cooking, bringing water from the rivers, washing utensils, and fetching fire wood. carry loads on their backs

• prepare the ground for sowing seeds

• and make dresses, pottery, and baskets

• Collectively, both men and women plant and weed. brew beer, and engage in trade.

***Marriage practices:***

• A man may have as many wives as he can support; and all women must be married in their teens (age fifteen to twenty).

• Whether the practices described imply gender equality or patriarchy can be open to interpretation. The evidence points to a lack of gender equality particularly in marriage, but there is little evidence of fully formed patriarchy in the reading.

Q. *What were the major stages through which Gikuyu men passed during their lives? What duties were associated with each of the age-grades?*

• The first stage focuses on the circumcision ceremony, which brought with it recognition of manhood and full rights of citizenship. The duty associated with this stage was becoming a member of the national council of junior warriors.

• The second stage was celebrated eighty-two moons or twelve rain seasons after the circumcision ceremony. At this point the junior warrior was promoted to the council of senior warriors, thereby taking on new duties.

• The third stage in manhood is marriage. Once a man is married and has established his own homestead, he is required to join the council of elders and is initiated into the first grade of eldership. They act as messengers, help to skin animals, light fires, bring firewood, roast meat, and carry ceremonial articles at council assemblies.

• A man enters the council of peace when he has a son or daughter old enough to be circumcised. At this stage he assumes   
the duty of peacemaker in the   
community.

• Finally, a man will enter the religious   
and sacrificial council when he has   
had practically all his children circum-  
cised and his wife (or wives) has passed   
the childbearing age. The elders of this grade assume the role of holy men,   
leading religious and ethical   
ceremonies.

Q. *How did the age-set system perform some of the functions of states, while avoiding their often oppressive features? How might you define the advantages and disadvantages of a stateless society in comparison to human communities organized around a formal government or state?*

• The age-set through councils provides venues where the community could make decisions.

• By assigning specific functions to specific age-sets, functions often associated with states are distributed to specific broad groups in society.

• Roles such as the organization of warriors for defense and peacemaking within the community are carried out by age-sets.

• This system could be seen as less oppressive than others because all (male) members of society can expect to take on the various authorities defined by age groups as they progress through life.

• The system is also potentially less oppressive because entry is only limited by age or life accomplishments; it is relatively open in theory and prevents a single person or small oligarchy from dominating.

• The descriptions of the powers held by councils are less coercive than in formal governments, as illustrated by the peace council whose primary source of authority is persuasion.

**Document 2.3: Religion in a Caribbean Chiefdom**

Q. *Based on this account, how might you describe Taino religious practice?*

• Religious practice was partially votive, as seen in the Taino belief in *zemis*,which were statues or idols made of stone or wood. It was believed zemis were agents of creation and could give people rain, wind, sun, and children, among other things, when needed.

• A priestly class known as *behiques* served as prophets, theologians, and soothsayers for the population.

• Religious practice also included divinations ceremonies, like the *cohoba,* conducted by chiefs. These ceremonies were used to help learn about the future.

Q. *To what extent does Las Casas’s Christian perspective color his account of Taino religion?*

• Las Casas identifies Yócahu Vagua Maórocoti with the God of the Christian tradition, and believes that the Taino knew of the Christian God but not his message.

• He imbues a Christian interpretation of the religious ceremony surrounding cohoba, interpreting the words of the chief as a prayer to the true God or to the one whom he held to be a god, and he associates the crowd’s response to this prayer with an “amen” in a Christian ceremony.

• Las Casas offers a Christian perspective when he speculates that the devil may have provided the divinations that were central to the cohoba ceremony, and may also have been behind the powers of *behiques* to heal and converse with statues.