**Unit 1- River Valley Civilizations 1.2**

**SSWH1 Analyze the origins, structures, and interactions of societies in the ancient world from 3500 BCE/BC to 500 BCE/BC.**

1. **Describe the societies of India and China, include: religion, culture, economics, politics, and technology.**

**River Valley Civilizations: India and China**

Farming villages first appeared in South Asia about 3200 BCE in the fertile plain between the **Indus** and **Ganges** **rivers**. This region’s climate is dominated by monsoon rains and a mountains to the north and west serve as natural barriers. Urban centers appeared in the Indus Valley around 2500 BCE with **Mohenjo-Daro** and **Harappa** being the most significant.

**Urban decay** possibly brought on by earthquakes and soil exhaustion set in around 1750 BCE. A new group of people, the Indo-European **Aryans**, migrated into the region in about 1500 BCE. This group eventually established the Magadha Kingdom which controlled a portion of northeast India by the second century BCE.

The farming villages between the **Huang He** and **Yangtze Rivers** of China grew into cities about 2000 BCE. The loose yellow silt called loess deposited by the flooding of Yangtze had pros and cons. While the soil supported agriculture, its loose nature made massive floods common. These struggles are recorded in Chinese legend as the **Xia Dynasty** whose **Emperor Yu** is said to have brought flood control and irrigation to China.

**India and China: Politics and Economics**

The first documented dynasty of China was the **Shang Dynasty** founded about 1700 BCE. This dynasty started a long tradition of hereditary monarchs ruling China. Like other early civilizations, urban centers during the Shang period were walled and surrounded by large agricultural areas. While the economy was dominated by agriculture, craft production and trade were also present. China developed a writing system, complex urban planning, irrigation and flood control in this period.

**India and China: Religion**

This period also saw the emergence of foundational and interconnected Chinese religious principles. These include concept of **Yin and Yang** which offered an early and enduring understanding of the universe as balanced between male and female forces. **Daoism**, founded by **Lao Tsu**, asked humanity to respect and live in harmony with nature and ancestor worship respected deceased family members in the hope that they would intercede with the powers in Heaven on behalf of the living.

1. **Explain the development of monotheism, include: the concepts developed by the ancient Hebrews**

**First Monotheistic Religion: Hebrew**

While aspects of **monotheism** emerged in a variety of places and times including in Egypt under the Pharaoh **Amenhotep IV** in the mid-1300s BCE and in Persia after growth of **Zoroastrianism** in the 600s BCE, monotheism reached its most complete and enduring form among the **Hebrews** starting around 1250 BCE.

These beliefs, recorded in the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), begin with the Hebrew people (led by Moses) entering into a covenant with God where obedience equals protection. The basic tenants and **Judaism**, including monotheism, were established in this period as **the Ten Commandments**.

**Document Analysis 3**

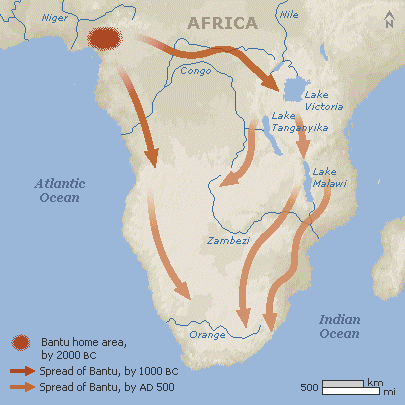
*Hebrew Kingdoms*



The Hebrew people established a kingdom on the eastern Mediterranean in about 1020 BCE which split into two kingdoms in 920 BCE. The concept of monotheism spread to other areas due to the **Jewish diaspora** that began when the Assyrians conquered the northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 BCE and deported many Jewish leaders to Babylonia in 587 BCE. While in Babylonia, the institution of the **Synagogue (**House of Worship) was established and in about 450 BCE Judaism as a monotheistic faith was fully developed with the completion of the Hebrew Bible.

1. **Identify the Bantu migration patterns and contribution to settled agriculture.**

**Document Analysis 4**

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**Bantu Migration**

Agricultural villages became common in West Africa below **the Sahara desert** about 4,000 years ago. Sometime after, these villages developed iron technology. West Africans from around the modern border between Nigeria and Cameroon began to use this technology to clear forest to the southeast for farming. This led to a slow migration of these **Bantu speaking people** to the southeast and south from about 500 BCE to 600 CE. This migration brought agriculture, iron technology, and a new language to a region previously dominated by hunter gathers. Anthropologist believe that this migration laid the foundation for a common cultural heritage present in much of West, Central, East and South Africa.

**e. Explain the rise of the Olmecs.**

**Rise of Olmecs**

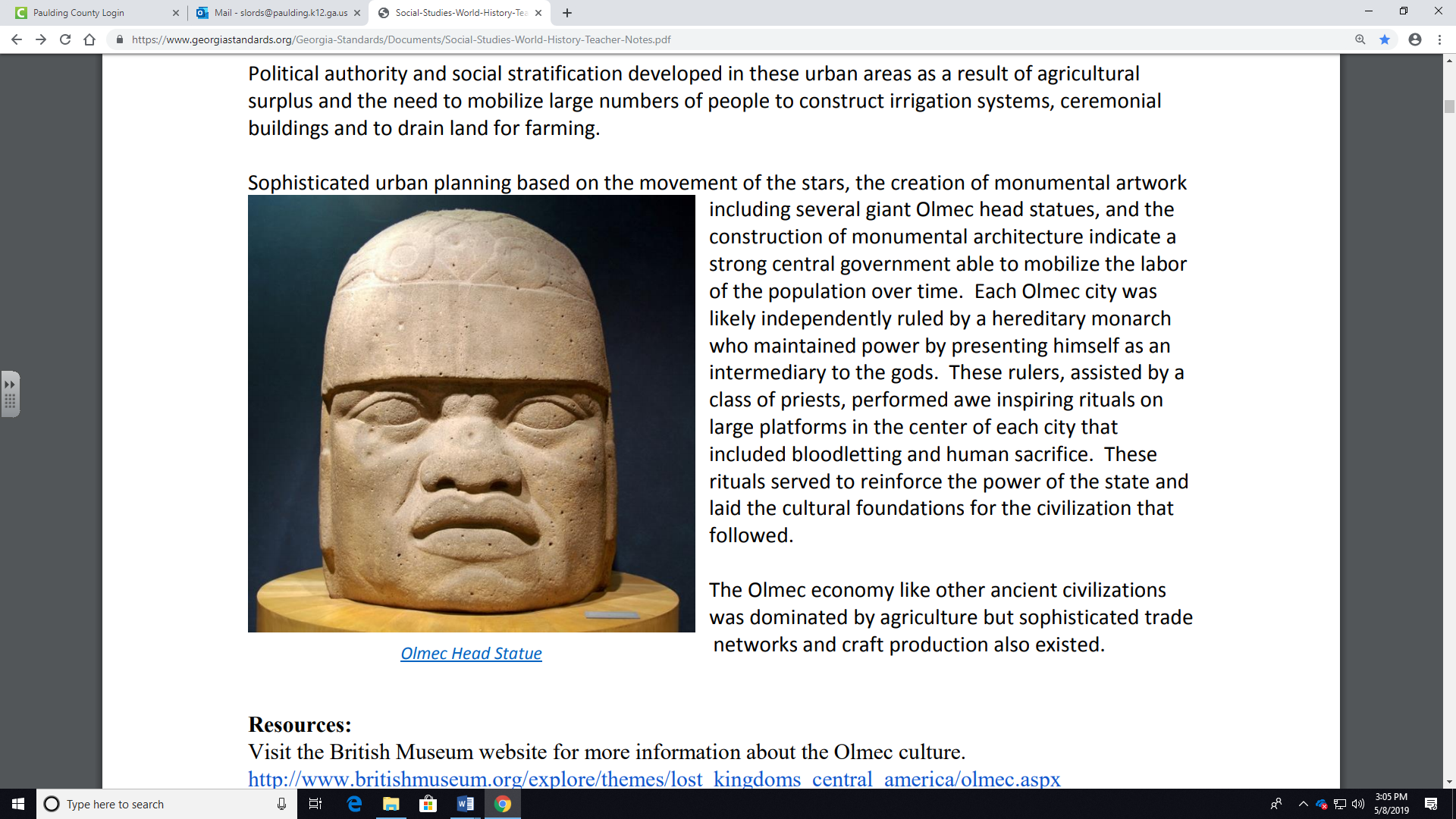
Civilizations also developed in the Americas in this period. Geographic isolation made them more unique, but they followed many of the same patterns of civilizations in Afro-Eurasia.

Agricultural villages based on the cultivation of corn, beans, and squash emerged about 3500 BCE. These villages grew into a variety of urban centers around 1200 BCE, the most influential of which was **the Olmec** culture found in the modern Mexican states of Veracruz and Tabasco.

Political authority and social stratification developed in these urban areas as a result of agricultural surplus and the need to mobilize large numbers of people to construct irrigation systems, ceremonial buildings and to drain land for farming.

**Document Analysis 4**

Olmec Head Statue



Sophisticated urban planning based on the movement of the stars, the creation of monumental artwork including several giant Olmec head statues, and the construction of monumental architecture indicate a strong central government able to mobilize the labor of the population over time. Each Olmec city was likely independently ruled by a hereditary monarch who maintained power by presenting himself as an intermediary to the gods. These rulers, assisted by a class of priests, performed awe inspiring rituals on large platforms in the center of each city that included bloodletting and human sacrifice. These rituals served to reinforce the power of the state and laid the cultural foundations for the civilization that followed. The Olmec economy like other ancient civilizations was dominated by agriculture but sophisticated trade networks and craft production also existed.