

## Neolithic Foundations for the Rise of Urban civilization

The emergence and spread of food production by 6000 BCE across the Middle East established the social and economic foundations for the emergence of urban civilization. Farming and herding produced enough surplus food to support craft specialists, priests, and political leaders. The production of large-scale food surpluses also led to the emergence of economic inequalities as some farmers became wealthier than others and were able to pass their wealth along to their children. By 5500 BCE, we can see clear evidence for the emergence of towns – large settlements surrounded by satellite villages under their control. These towns served as both temple centers for religion, and as political centers for newly emerging chiefly leaders. By 3800 BCE, these temple towns in Mesopotamia had accumulated enough wealth, power, and population that we can rightly identify them as the world’s first cities.

*Professor Gil Stein, University of Chicago*

1. According to Gil Stein, list **two effects** of humans developing a food surplus.

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2. According to the document, what eventually happened to the first towns established in Mesopotamia?

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