

History

Theme I: Human Migrations

Chapter 3: First States, First Written Records

The first states developed in the **fertile crescent** of the Middle East.

Mesopotamia witnessed the creation of the first city-states which were controlled by kings who fixed the rules. In Egypt, the territory was organised around the Nile under the authority of an all-powerful ruler – the **pharaoh**. His people considered him to be a god and constructed temples, palaces and pyramids in his honour.



The population increase meant that **writing** was needed to count harvests (les récoltes), herds of animals and land. Writings also fixed laws and described the history of a civilisation. Different writing supports were used such as tablets, papyrus and the walls of monuments. However, only the **scribes** could read and write.

Some of the first recorded writing dates back to Mesopotamia around 3 300 years B.C. It is composed of pictograms. This was gradually replaced by what is known as cuneiform (wedge shaped) writing.