

# Study on the agrarian revolution history essay

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



In the book *Human Web: A Bird's Eye View of the World History* by J. R. McNeil and William H. McNeill, various themes have been discussed and includes the growth of world religions, spread of agriculture and the coming up of European civilizations. The historical motor in this perspective is a developing web of interaction that connects together the then civilizations with the hunter-gatherer bands as well as the whole world where diseases, people, ideas and gods spread. As it connects ever more people even more tightly, the web creates conflict and enables people to build on each others strengths and share the benefits from their achievements. The Columbus extension web for instance led to the conquest as well as the exchange of maize and new world potatoes for the old small pox and world horses. *Ways of the World* on the other hand discusses a number of issues concerning development in a historical perspective and have been consolidated into various themes. The book is a real alternative for the global history survey courses. Initially designed as a brief text, the book focuses on the “ bigger picture” of important historical developments and is thoroughly worldly in its comparative and thematic approach. The single author's accessible voice with adequate classroom experience and also in the movement of world history provides the students with an insightful, thought provoking, chapter ending parts that bring about reflection on the significance of world history as well as synthesis of insightful nature.

The common theme that the two books discuss in detail is the development of agriculture. Many scholars have suggested a number of theories about the historical development of agriculture. Probably, there was a slow and gradual change from the hunter-gatherer to the agricultural society after a long

period of time during which some crops were planted deliberately while some were collected in the bush. Despite the local climate change favoring the explanation of the beginning of agriculture in Levant, the point is that farming was invented elsewhere at least three times thus suggesting that some of the social factors might have been quite instrumental.

In the book “ways of the world” the author suggests that agriculture comes second as a great human process after globe settlement, this implies that agricultural practices have come a long way in evolution. The book points out that agriculture began nearly twelve thousand years ago with major changes since the era of the earliest cultivation. Historians point out to the Middle East fertile portion as the earliest site where there was a well organized form of agriculture. The same sentiments are echoed by William and Robert in their book entitled the “human web”. The human web gives a similarity to ways of the world in the perspective of spread of agriculture as well (Strayer 55).

The two books have also articulated the issue of religion and the spread of agriculture. The medieval Islamic world for instance in the 8th century passed through a very important transition in agriculture making the historians to call the era “Arab agricultural revolution”. The authors suggest that these changes were brought about by a number of factors such as diffusion of various plants and crops along the Muslim trade paths. Also, the spread of more advanced agricultural practices as well as the agricultural economic systems brought about efficiency and high returns in terms of yields (McNeil and Robert 77).

Change in agricultural practices contributed to major changes in economy, population levels and distribution, agricultural productivity and vegetation cover among many other aspects of life in the Islamic community. An expansive area was covered by Muslim traders facilitating crop diffusion and farming practices across the Islamic region. Historians William and Robert argue that the spread initiated various vital crops through Al-Andalus together with their cultivation practices. Some of the very vital crops that were used in the transfer included cotton, rice and sugarcane. Also transferred included a number of fruit trees, vegetables and nut trees.

In this era were also some of the agricultural technologies such as crop rotation systems use of agricultural manuals and irrigation systems. A complex irrigation system made use of water mills, norias, reservoirs, dams and water raising machines. Some of the technological and infrastructural technological systems went on from the roman times and some came as a result of Muslim presence. Later on the Muslims transferred cultural qualities and highly advanced agricultural practices to western India and Turkic lands (Strayer 80).

Although the two books share the same sentiments about the agricultural revolution in the Islam world, there is a striking difference about in how the book ways of the world discusses agriculture in Europe. Robert Strayer says that the European agriculture underwent various major changes during the middle age. Tools like the plow and scythe were improved from the classical versions and also there was a three field system whereby crops were rotated. Some of the tools that were increasingly used were the moldboard

plow and the wheeled plow. There was also breeding of the draft horses so that they could be used as animals in most parts of Europe. The oxen also continued to be used as working animals as well. There was also high adoption of the metal horse shoes. By this time, most of the parts of Europe were densely populated with people.

According to Robert (88) most parts of Southern Europe practiced extensive and intensive farming practices that characterized those of the classical Roman age as well as those which were moved from the Islamic areas. The use of manure to increase yields was practiced during the late medieval age hence facilitating regular field fallowing. Robert also continues to give us how the Chinese agriculture developed. The Chinese agriculture comprised of nationwide system of granaries and the highly spread series of sericulture (99). The Chinese had come up with a hydraulic powered hammer mainly for agricultural purposes at the first century. Apart from its main function of pounding, decorticating and polishing grain, the hammer found other uses. A square pallet chain pump was also invented by Chinese in the same period and was powered by a water wheel. The chain pump was used mainly in lifting water from canals and irrigating the farms. Other minor functions of the chain pump also existed.

In human web, the authors give us the perspective of agricultural revolution in South America. The Andes region of South America was characterized by a lot of domesticated crops like the potatoes, various bean varieties and animals like the guinea pigs, llamas among many others. Coca remained a major domesticated crop of the Andes. Robert and William suggest that the

Andean civilization was mainly based on agricultural practices (120). Weather inclemencies and the fertility of the Andean region were highly taken advantage of by the Incas. The Incas managed to organize the production of a variety of the jungle, mountain and the coastal products based on the adaptation of the agricultural technologies that already existed (Robert and McNeil 75).

In conclusion, the two books are discussing a common theme of agriculture from different perspectives but still retain the point of agrarian revolution. Here, the readers have managed to get knowledge on how agriculture evolved from hunter-gatherer stage up to the present state where there is mechanization.