



Advancement in Ancient Civilizations

LIFE, CULTURE,
SCIENCE and THOUGHT

Harald Haarmann

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*Life, Culture, Science
and Thought*

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Traditional scholarship on how ancient civilizations emerged is outmoded and new insights call for revision. According to the well-established paradigm, Mesopotamia is considered the cradle of civilization. Following the cliché of *ex oriente lux* (“light from the East”) all major achievements of humankind spread from the Middle East. Modern archaeology, cultural science and historical linguistics indicate civilizations did not originate from a single prototype. Several models produced divergent patterns of advanced culture, developing both hierarchical and egalitarian societies. This study outlines a panorama of ancient civilizations, including the still little-known Danube civilization, now identified as the oldest advanced culture in Europe. In a comparative view, a new paradigm of research and a new cultural chronology of civilizations in the Old and New Worlds emerges, with climate change shown to be a continual influence on human lifeways.

German linguist and cultural scientist **Harald Haarmann** is vice-president of the Institute of Archaeomythology and director of its European branch. He has written more than 50 books in various languages, including numerous studies on cultures and languages. He lives in Finland.



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