**Chapter 11**

*Chapter Summary*

The Neolithic set the stage for the development of sedentary farming villages in many places in the Old World. In the Indus Valley and China, an acceleration of cultural complexity led to the development of stratified social systems that controlled the excess wealth made possible by an agricultural food surplus. Social elites developed as part of a reorganization of society that allowed for orderly and systematic trade, the construction of irrigation canals to increase the food base, and with it, growing populations in larger and more dense settlements. As in other regions, the new way of organizing and controlling human labor was utilized by the elite to construct monumental works and engage in conspicuous consumption—the dramatic display of wealth as evidence of their status and power. As in Mesopotamia and the Nile Valley of Egypt, civilizations arose in the Indus Valley of Pakistan and in China. The social stratification and complexity of these early civilizations is still evident today in the urban planning of Mohenjo- daro and the opulent burial of the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty. As in Mesopotamia and the Nile Valley, the elite spared no expense in signifying status on their journey to the afterlife.