Last Glacial Maximum 18,000 years ago


BLACK SEA
GREECE
Troy
ASIA MINOR
CASPIAN SEA
Palace of Sargon II
Dur Sharrukin
Nineveh
Nimrud
Palace of Assurnasirpal
MESOPOTAMIA
PERSIA
Antioch
Knossos
Assur
ASSYRIA
CRETE
Palace of King Minos
CYPRUS
Euphrates R.
Tigris R.
PHOENICIA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Tyre
Ishtar Gate
Babylon
Jericho
Jerusalem
SUMER
Ur
Great Pyramids/Sphinx
Giza
Memphis
Nanna Ziggurat
EGYPT
PERSIAN GULF
Nile R.
Tutankhamun's tomb
Thebes
VALLEY OF THE KINGS
Karnak
Luxor
RED SEA
Funerary Temple of Hatshepsut
Heliopolis
The Ancient Near East
miles
0
200
400

WHERE FARMING BEGAN

The Fertile Crescent was the heartland of the Neolithic Revolution. Göbekli Tepe sat on the northern edge of this region that curves along the boundary between mountain and desert, rich in the wild grasses and game that became the first domesticated grains and livestock. By 6000 B.C. the transformation from hunter-gatherers to farmers was largely complete in this area. As selected sites on the map show, this shift—whether driven by religious rituals, environmental changes, or population pressures—happened in different places and at different times.

Grain domestication
Present-day grain cultivation is shown; the range of wild grains is thought to have been slightly larger.

Animal domestication
Wild sheep and goats were the first livestock tamed, about 9000 B.C. Pigs then cattle followed in the next thousand years.

KEY TO MAP AND GRAPHICS

- **Natufian culture** (13,000-10,000 B.C.)
- **Pre-pottery Neolithic A** (10,000-8500 B.C.)
- **Pre-pottery Neolithic B** (8500-6250 B.C.)
- **Settlement**
- **Plant and animal domestication**
- **Monumental architecture** Large man-made structure of earth or stone
- **Ritual art** Symbolic representation of surroundings, such as animal carvings

Wild wheat

Domesticated wheat

Plumper kernels distinguish domesticated grains from their wild ancestors. Wild kernels drop off when ripe, but domesticated strains hold their kernels, allowing a more predictable harvest.

Present-day boundaries, rivers, and shorelines shown.

Jericho's tower, 27 feet tall and 30 feet wide, may have been the site of harvest rituals.

Warm, wet climate | Cold, dry climate | Warm, wetter climate

NATUFIAN CULTURE (13,000 B.C. – 10,000) | PRE-POTTERY NEOLITHIC A (10,000 – 9000) | PRE-POTTERY NEOLITHIC B (8000 – 7000)

The rise of village life
Early hunter-gatherer settlements—some with several hundred people—were largely abandoned when the warming climate chilled again for 1,200 years. About 9600 B.C. temperatures rose and villages rebounded, with people still foraging for most of their food and sharing it. As farming took hold and village populations increased, individual families fed themselves.

In Natufian settlements (named for a site where they were first excavated) hunter-gatherers built stacked-stone huts, probably roofed with animal hides.

Estimated average community size, based on studies in the southwest Fertile Crescent.

18 people

Villages of mud-brick huts included community food storage. Evidence of plant domestication is debated, but wild grains were cultivated.

90 people

Thousands lived in farming villages of linked, multiroom homes. Interior walls displayed ritual symbols such as bull horns and skulls of ancestors.

900 people

FERNANDO G. BAPTISTA, NGM STAFF; PATRICIA HEALY; DEBBIE GIBBONS, NG STAFF (MAP)
SOURCES: IAN KUIJT, UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME; KLAUS SCHMIDT, JENS NOTROFF, AND CLINES DIETRICH, GERMAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE; GEORGE WILLCOX, NATIONAL CENTER FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, FRANCE; MELINDA A. ZEDER, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

The Agricultural Revolution

- By 9,500 wild grasses domesticated
- barley, wheat + legumes

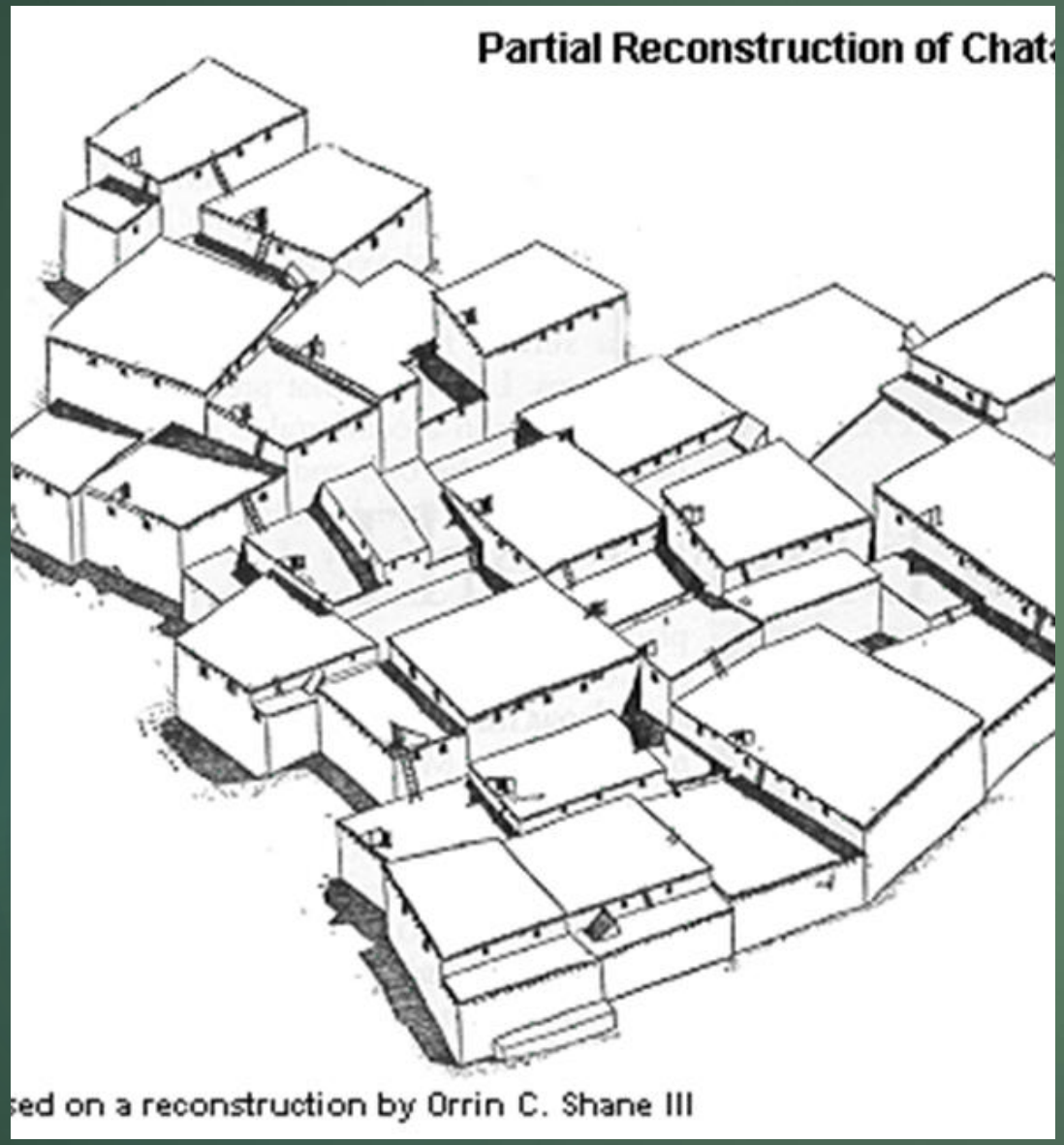
- By 9,000 BC villages begin

- Cattle = yogurt

- 8, 500 BC sheep & goats herded

Consequences of Agricultural Revolution:

1. Sedentary life
2. Social stratification/specialization of labor
3. Longer life for women=increased population
4. Spring time religious rituals
5. Acquisition of wealthy/goods
6. =more warfare
7. Irrigation brings us to civilization?


Partial Reconstruction of Chata
ed on a reconstruction by Orrin C. Shane III

To anc near east gentrain