Lecture 1: Neolithic Origins of War

The mountains, rivers and valleys of the Near East
Chronology based on tool making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Toolmaking Stage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epipaleolithic (Mesolithic)</td>
<td>c. 18,000-8500 BCE</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Neolithic</td>
<td>c. 8500-6000 BCE</td>
<td>Pre Pottery Neolithic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. 6000-4500 BCE</td>
<td>Pottery Neolithic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalcolithic</td>
<td>c. 4500-3300 BCE</td>
<td>Chalcolithic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronze</td>
<td>c. 3300-2000 BCE</td>
<td>Early</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. 2000-1600 BCE</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. 1600-1200 BCE</td>
<td>Late</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron</td>
<td>c. 1200-925 BCE</td>
<td>Iron Age I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Timeline of Human Development

500,000 BCE hominid culture left Olduvai Gorge with stone tools
92,000 BCE *homo sapiens* and Neanderthal
- 62,000 fire
- 42,000 fire hardened spears

**Late Paleolithic (40,000-11,000 BCE)**
- 30,000 BCE Neanderthals disappear from arch. record
- 12,000 BCE herding animals

**Mesolithic (11,000-8,500 BCE)**
- 8,500 BCE domesticate sheep, goats, cattle, dog
- Harvest wild grains

**Natufian Culture**
- (Pre Ag villages)

Domestication of goats and sheep
200 millimeters of rainfall/year optimal

Dry Land Farming

- Propagation of grains (wheat) without irrigation
  - sowing in autumn
  - harvest in spring
  - allows simmer months for campaigning
  - evolution in wheat types
    - einkorn to triticale
Absolute Chronology:
- C14
- Fission-Track
- Thermoluminescence

Relative Chronology
- ceramic phases
  - changes in type
  - form
  - material
  - sophistication

Archaeobotanical
- grains and weed seeds
- threshed or native
- cultivation
- propagation

Archaeozoological
- domestication of animals

Natufian Culture
- centered on the Levant
- indicates earliest domestication of plants and animals
- social organization
  - complex art and structures

Early Natufian decorated skull from El-Wad,
Jericho (c. 9000 BCE)

- believed to be one of the oldest continuously-inhabited cities in the world
- roofed, oval semi-subterranean dwellings in a village,
- engaging in long distance trade
- growing and irrigating domesticated crops
- construction of the first tower (4 meters tall)
- defensive perimeter wall
- rectangular houses with red- and white-painted floors, with caches of plastered human skulls

Fortification:
- stone circuit wall around permanent spring
- V-bottom ditch cut to protect wall-face
- Circular stone bastion with a staircase leading up to the top of the tower.
Çatal Hüyük (c. 6500-5500 BCE)

- Located on the Konya Plain in Turkey
- Largest and best preserved Neolithic site found to date.
- 6,000 inhabitants
- Entire settlement composed of domestic buildings; the site has no obvious public buildings
- Population of the eastern mound has been estimated at up to 10,000 people
Three types of evidence that may point to the emergence of war:

- Artistic evidence
  - cave paintings showing organized conflict
- Mass burials with skeletons with weapon trauma
  - death pits in Germany
- Fortification
  - protection of food storage

Mass Burials with weapon trauma

- 6500 BCE Jebel Sahaba, Egypt/Sudan border
  - Cemetery 117
    - skeletal remains of 59 people (including women and children) with repeated arrow wounds and spear thrusts
- 5000 BCE Talheim, Germany
  - “Death Pit”
    - 34 bodies with wounds consistent with warfare
    - arrow pierced in vertebrae

Skeletal Evidence

6500 BCE
- 35 individuals
- all stained in red ochre
- mostly women and children
- ½ wounded before death
  - killed by blunt force trauma

Ofnet Cave, Bavaria Germany
Early Artistic Evidence

(6000 BCE) Neolithic
Morella la Villa, Castellon
First pictorial evidence of man fighting man

“Military Threshold”

Point at which warfare became endemic
- Plant domestication
- Surplus
- Boats
- Metallurgy
- Stone building techniques
- Militant gods
- Social organization