

Periods of Art History I:
from Prehistory to Trajan



III. Neolithic Art
Early Cities and Ancestor Cults





“VENUSES”



Venus of Lespugue, ivory,
c. 26,000-24,000 BCE



Venus of Willendorf, limestone,
c. 28,000-25,000 BCE



Venus of Dolní Věstonice,
ceramic, c. 29,000-25,000 BCE

NATURALISM vs. ABSTRACTION (or likeness)

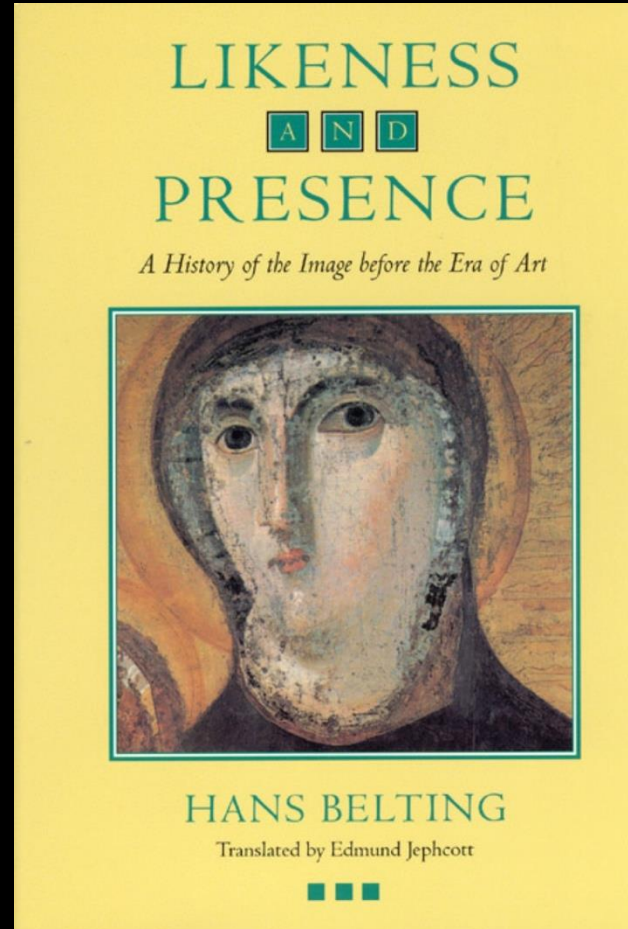


Bison figure on ivory, 10 cm,
from cave "La Madeleine",
France



LIKENESS and PRESENCE

Artwork LOOKS like the original,
tries to capture its appearance in
real life

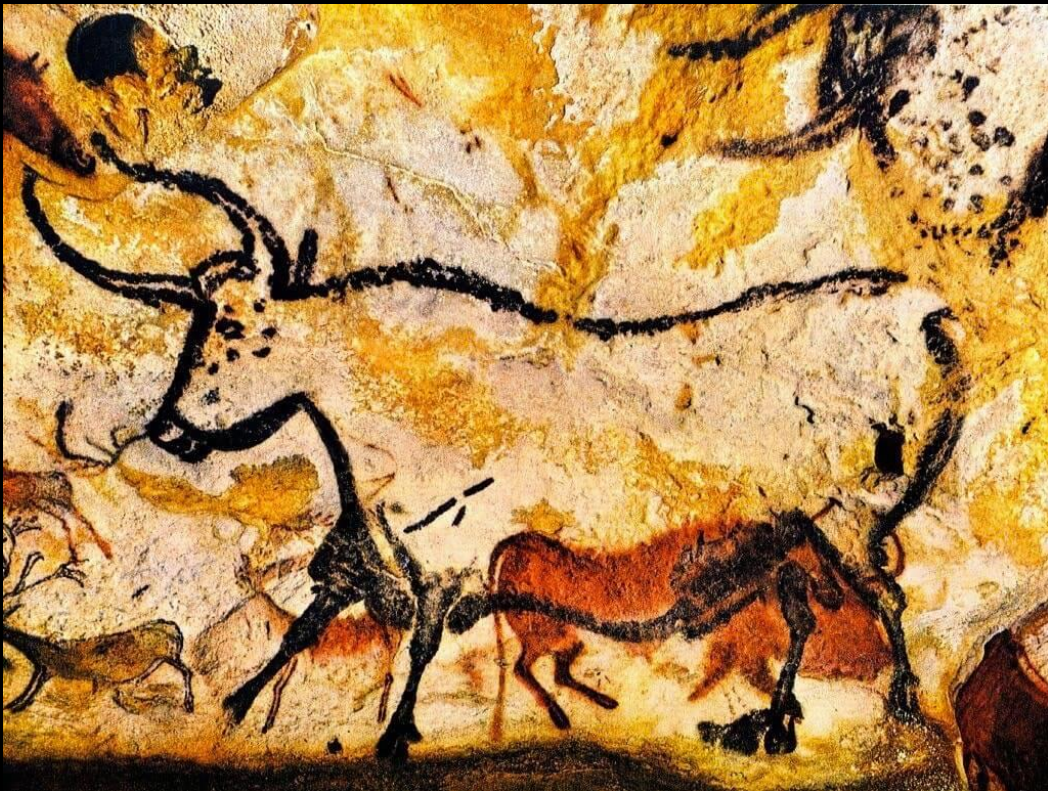


Artwork is meant to convey the
essence or the **presence** of an
object

These concepts are not exclusive, sometimes presence is conveyed through
likeness and sometimes by **abstraction**

NATURALISM vs. CONVENTION

Representing something that you really see in nature or in reality



An artistic device to **convey** what one knows to be true or what the artist wants the viewer to see

Absolutely no art is purely naturalistic, every representation employs some form of convention, abstraction or symbolism

Neolithic: The New Stone Age



Ice Age ends at about **9 000 BC**

From ca. 10 000 BCE: relative dating, not all cultures develop at the same pace

Animal domestication and agriculture

Invention of bow and arrow, ceramics and fiber art (textile, baskets etc.)

Tassili n'Ajjer, Algeria, Rock paintings, c.a. 6000 BCE to 1000 BCE

TASSILI N'AJJER, Algeria
Rock paintings
c.a. 6000 BCE to 1000 BCE



“Fertile Crescent”



“This borderland between the desert and the mountains is a kind of cultivable fringe of the desert, – a **Fertile Crescent** [...]. It forms roughly a semicircle with the open side toward the south. Its western end is at the southeastern corner of the Mediterranean, the center lies directly north of Arabia, and the eastern end is at the northern end of the Persian Gulf”.

James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Times: A History of the Early World. An Introduction to the Study and the Career of Early Man*, Boston 1916.



Çatalhöyük, c. 7,100 BCE

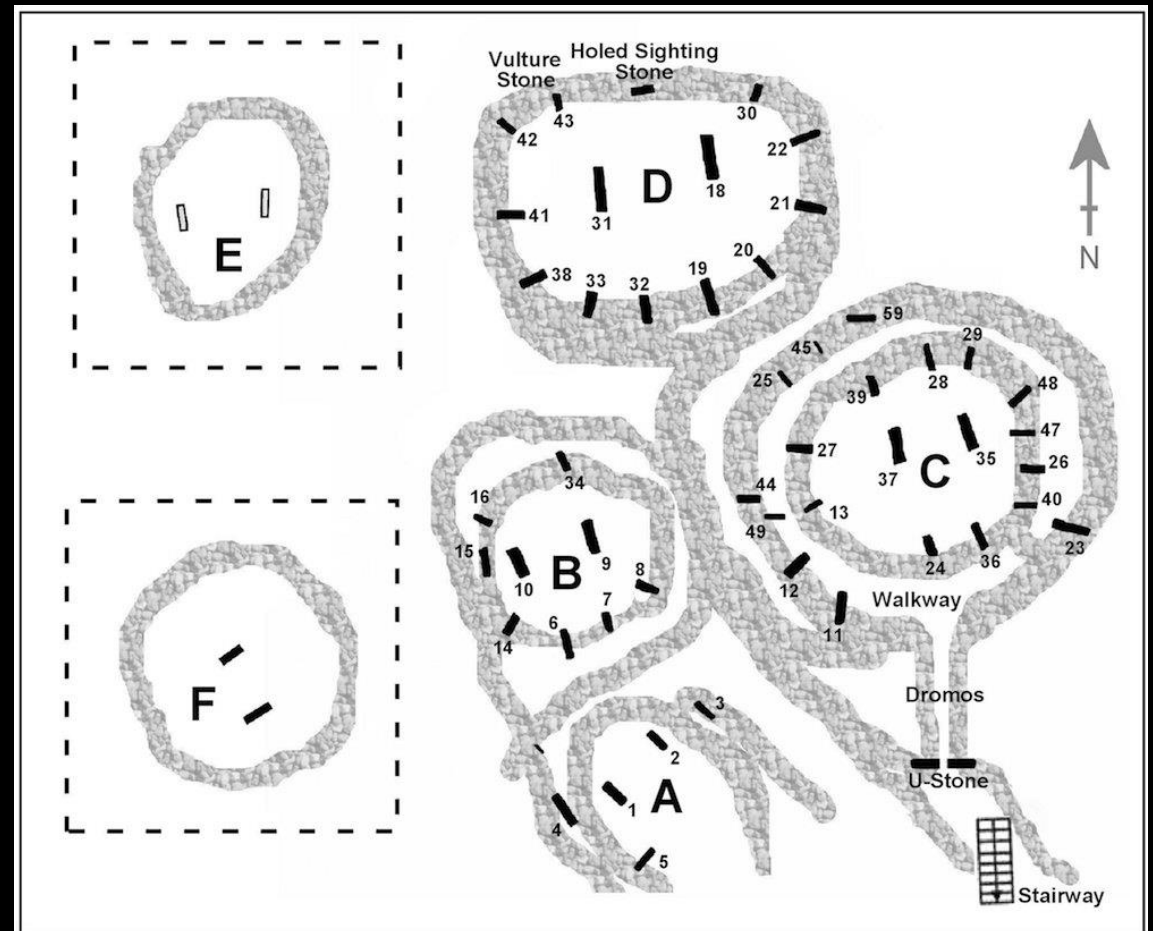
Göbekli Tepe, c. 9,900 BCE

Jericho, c. 9,600 BCE

Göbekli Tepe, Turkey

Dates back to the **Pre-Pottery Neolithic period**
(c. 9600 - 8000 BCE)

one of the oldest monumental structures known.











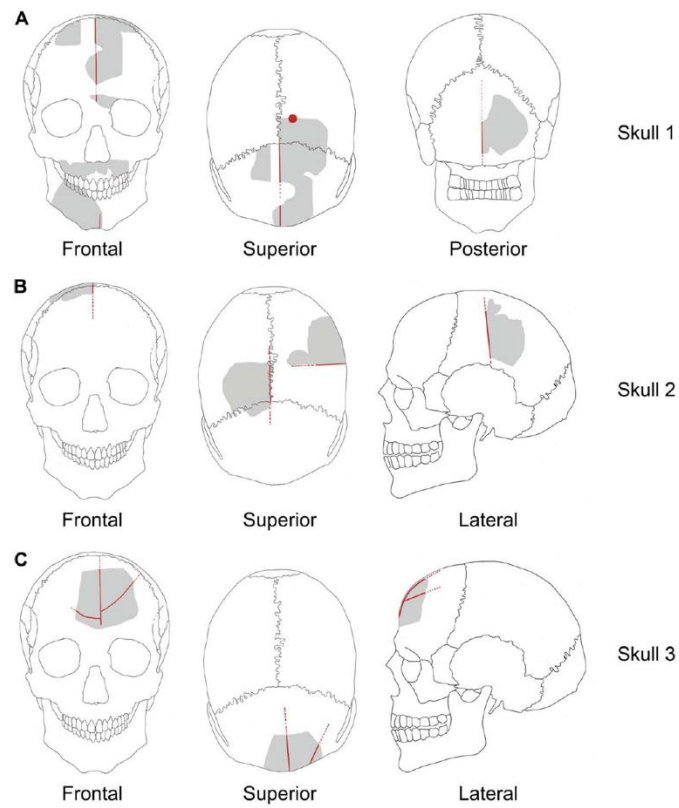
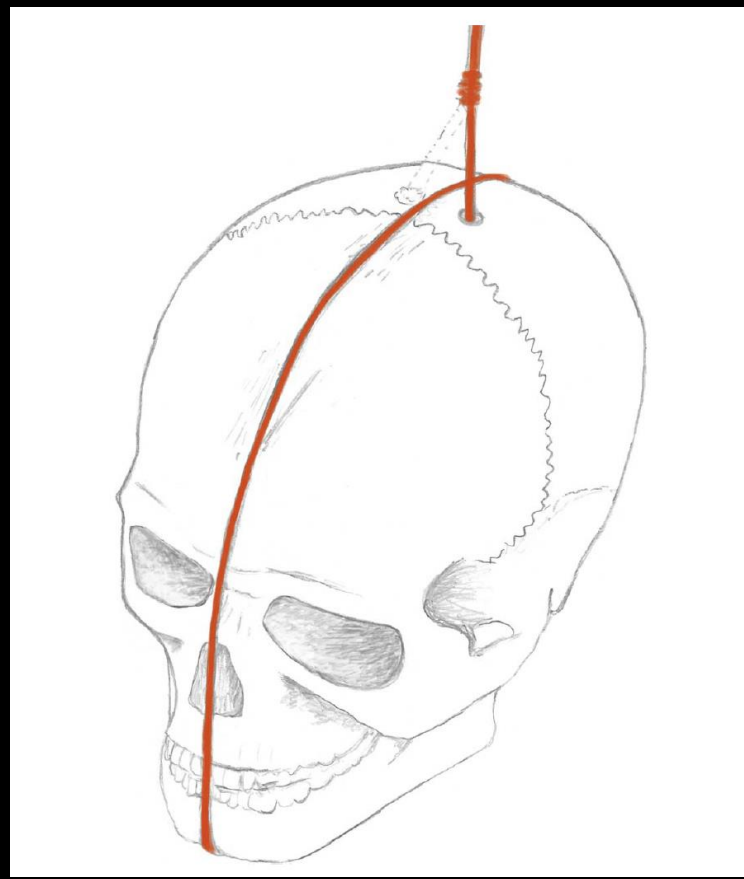


Fig. 2. Schematic drawings of Göbekli Tepe skulls. Gray, preserved elements; red, modifications. **(A)** Frontal, superior, and posterior view of skull 1. **(B)** Frontal, superior, and lateral view of skull 2. **(C)** Frontal, superior, and lateral view of skull 3.





A series of sculpted heads found around the site of Göbekli Tepe

THE
MUSEUM



Klaus Schmidt: "First came the temple, then the city"



Çatalhöyük, c. 7,100 BCE

Göbekli Tepe, c. 9,900 BCE

Jericho, c. 9,600 BCE

7500 BC

Çatalhöyük archeological site, c. 7,500 – 6,400 BCE





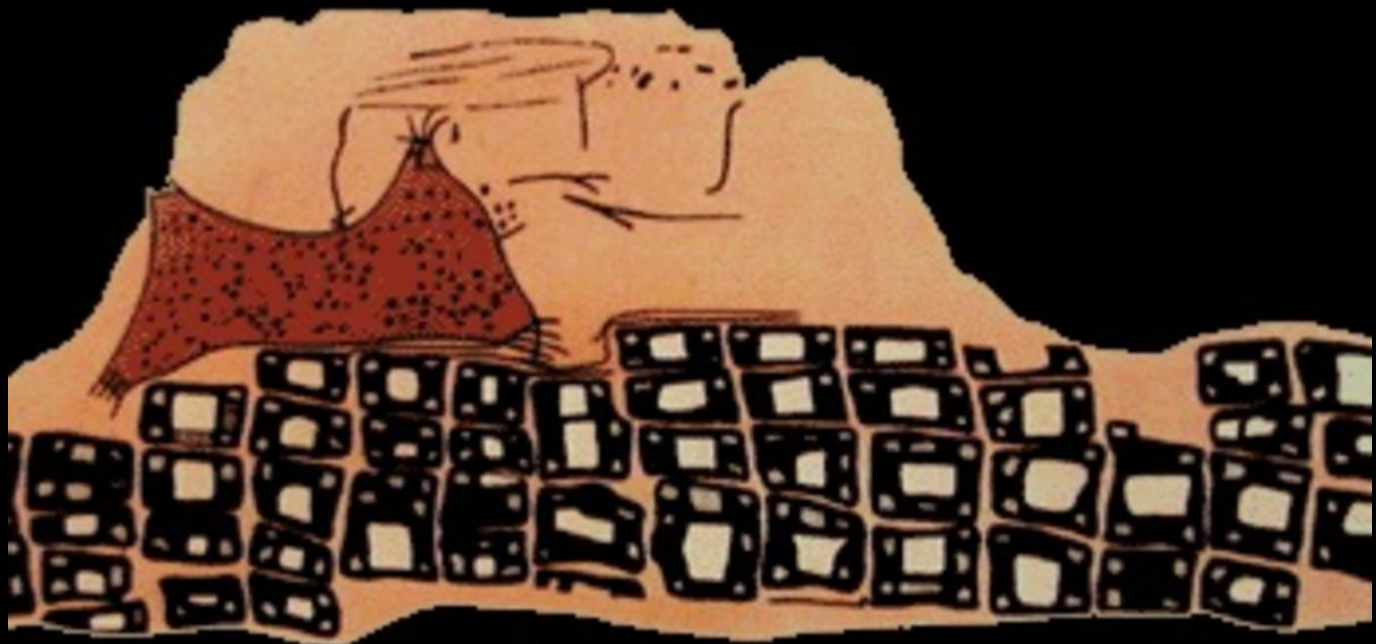
Seated woman of Çatalhöyük, clay and ceramic, c. 6,000 BCE



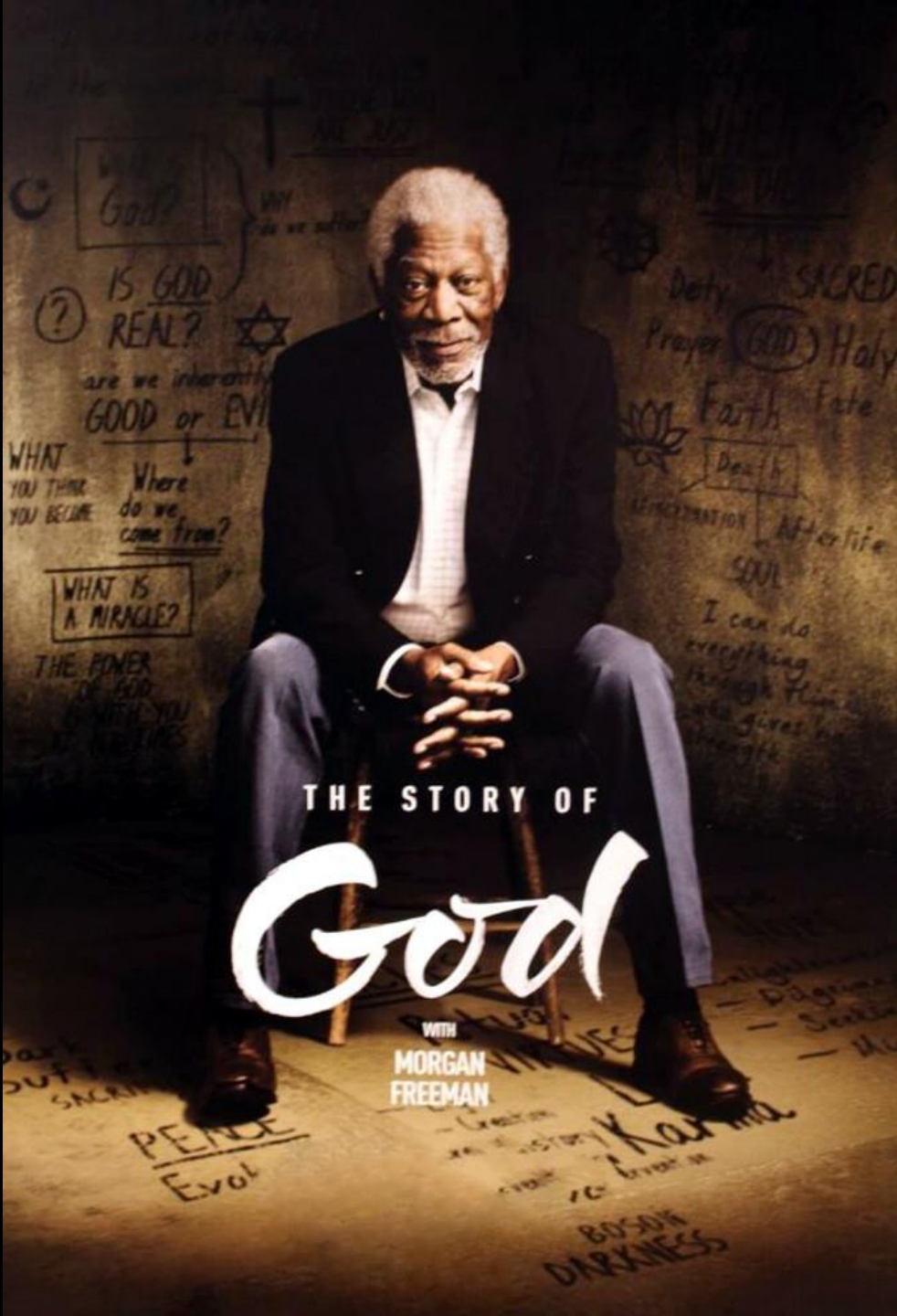
Woman figure from Çatalhöyük, stone carving, c. 6,000 BCE



Deer hunt, detail of a wall painting from level III, Çatalhöyük, Turkey, c. 5750 BCE







THE STORY OF

God

WITH
MORGAN
FREEMAN



Çatalhöyük, c. 7,100 BCE

Göbekli Tepe, c. 9,900 BCE

Jericho, c. 9,400 BCE

7500 BC

Tell es-Sultan, archeological site of ancient JERICHO

c.a. 9,400 BCE



Ancient Jericho

Towns became bigger as their populations increased. This made their architecture and urban planning more complex and they required more space to expand. The possibility of storing food surpluses meant that part of the population quit agricultural activities to devote their time to other things. Artisans, priests, traders... The wealth of flourishing cities attracted greed of the nomadic tribes and forced their inhabitants to build protective walls around their cities. This was the case of Jericho, in the West Bank, Palestine. With a history of more than 11,000 years, this was the first fortified city known ever and, up to the present day, it is considered the first city in history.

Jericho, the first one

Natufian hunter groups settled in this spot in 12,000 BC before it became the city of Jericho. Towards 9,400 BC, the settlement had more than 70 houses with around a thousand inhabitants and something unprecedented; a 3.5m high and almost 2m thick wall and a stone tower that reached a height of 8.5 m.

7000 BC
The round houses made with adobe, similar to igloos, were substituted by rectangular ones. Sanctuaries and ovens appeared.

Glory and collapse

The apparition of the Canaanites implied changes in house planning. This people absorbed the original culture and took Jericho to its most glorious times. According to archeological records, the city was destroyed by 1500 BC to be re-founded in the 9th century BC.

Houses
They had stone foundations, clay brick structure, 50 cm width walls and the roofs were covered with a mixture of reeds and clay.

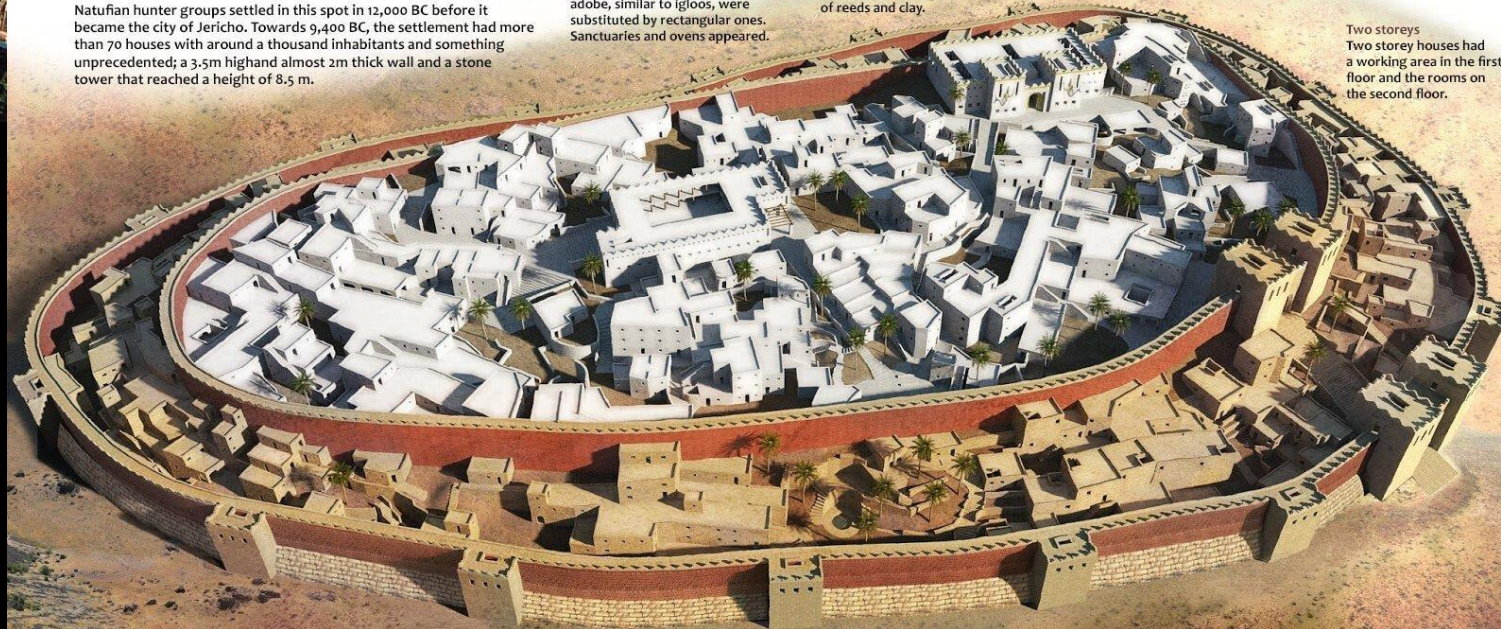
Courtyards
The buildings usually had a 7 metre square courtyard used to cook and preventing smoke from entering inside the house.

Double fortification
Similar to medieval fortifications, these were 3 m wide and more than 4 m high by 1700 BC. They were reconstructed at least 15 times.

Resources
There is evidence of cultivated plants and possible sheep breeding since 7200 BC. There was a water canal system.

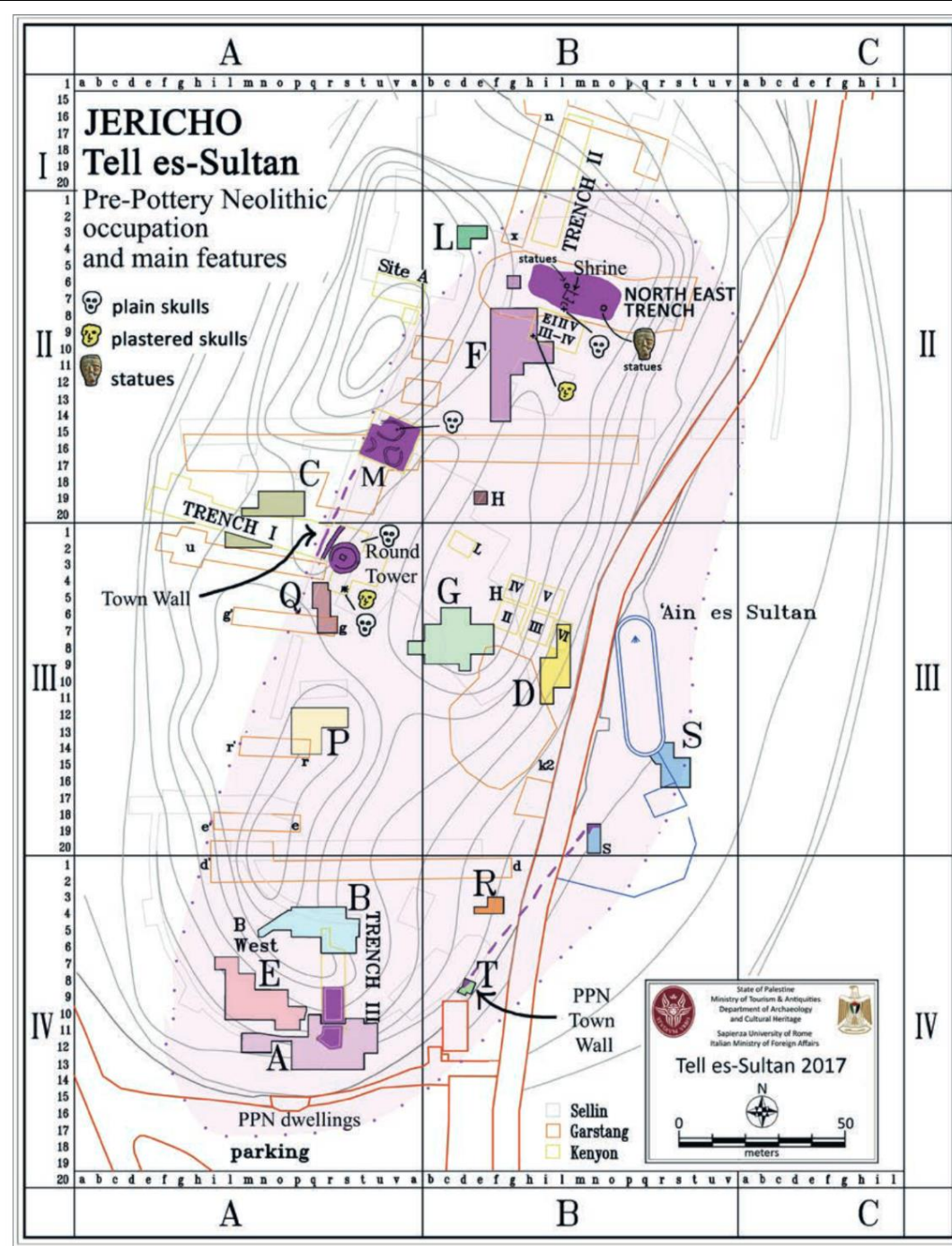
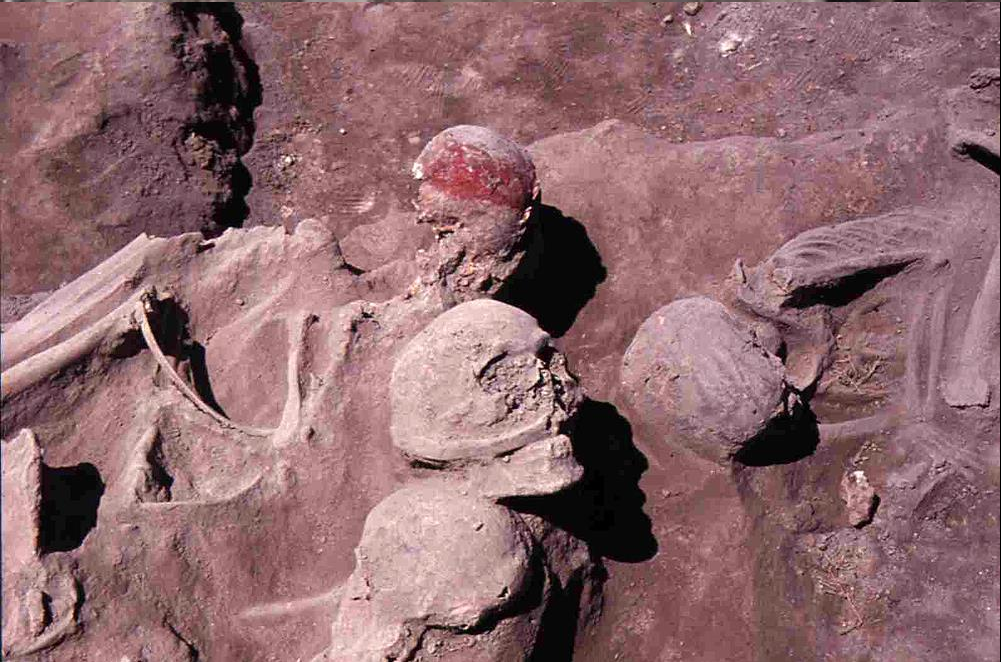
The Jordan River
Jericho was favored by the river and trade. Its walls became thicker and were surrounded by a moat.

Two storeys
Two storey houses had a working area in the first floor and the rooms on the second floor.





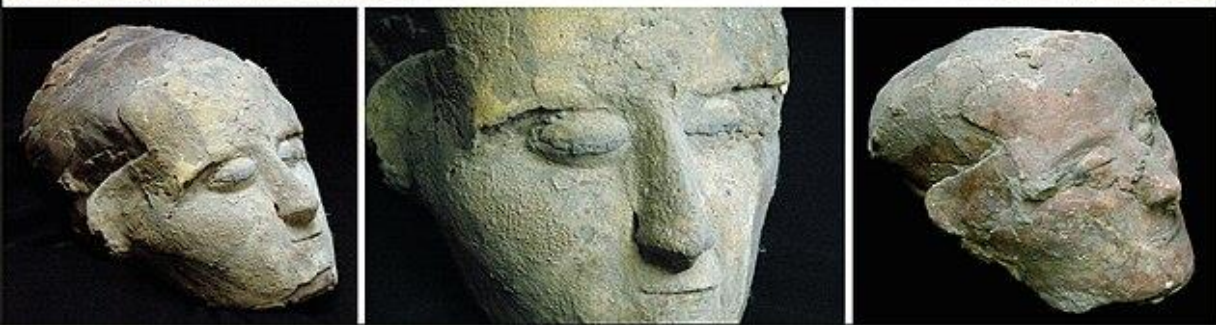
Jericho skulls, human skulls decorated with plaster and shells, found near Jericho (Palestine), c. 8,200–7,500 BCE / British Museum, London, and National Museum, Damascus



Tav. I – Map of Tell es-Sultan with excavated areas and the finding spot of plain skulls, plastered skulls and statues.



A facial reconstruction based on the human remains found inside the Jericho Skull



Plastered skulls from Tell Aswad, Syria, ca. 8,000–7,700 BCE



Fig. 1 – Map of Pre-Pottery Neolithic Southern Levant with sites where plain skulls, plastered skulls and plaster statues were found.

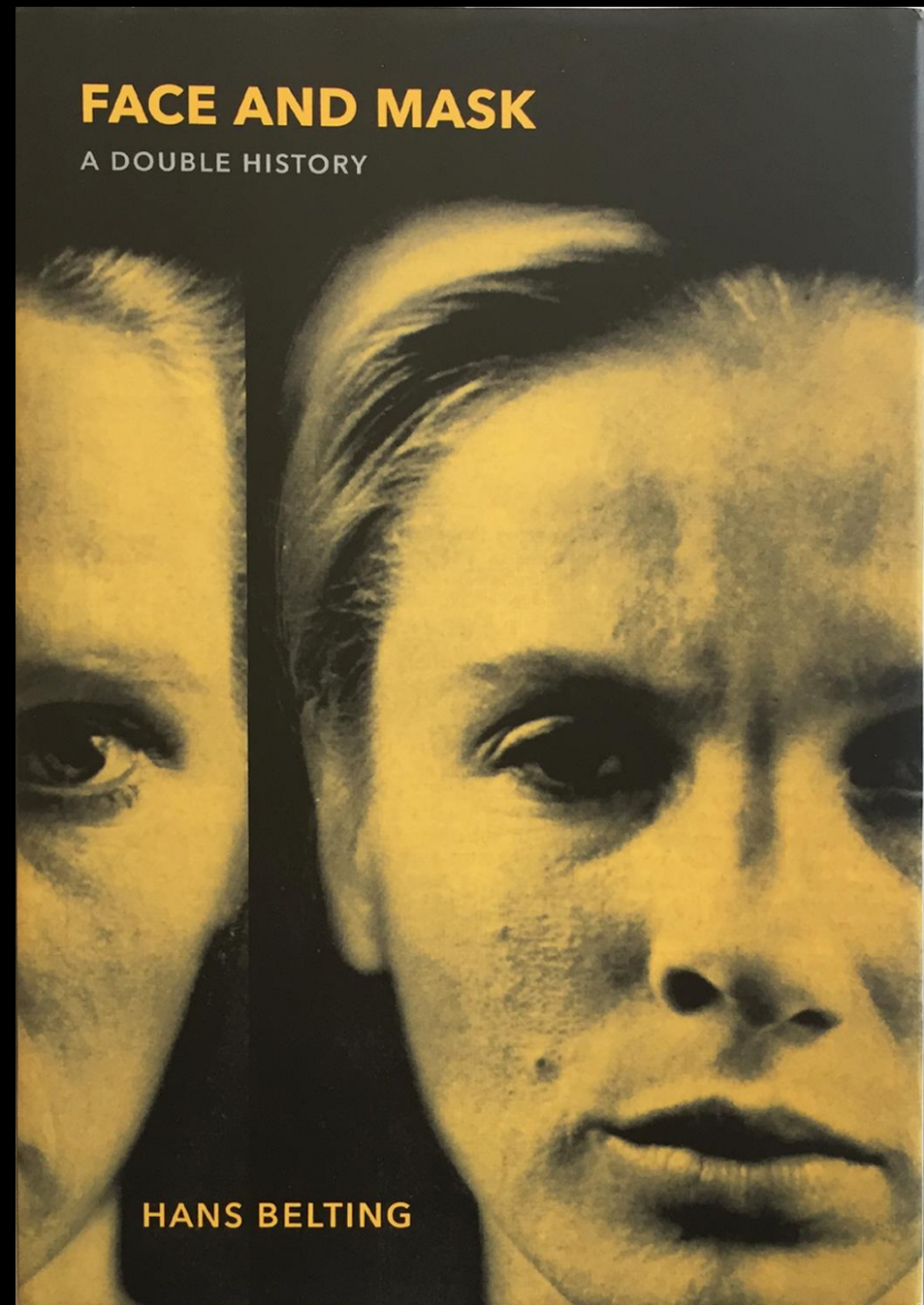


Stone masks, from Hebron (Israel, West Bank), c. 7000 BCE Israel Museum, Jerusalem



“There is much evidence that the cult of the dead predates all other cults and religions. Masks affixed to corpses can be found as early as prehistoric cultures. In such cases the ancestors were not presented as part of a mask ritual, but rather represented by a likeness. It goes without saying that masks were appropriate for the dead after their faces had been lost. If one wanted to restore a face to them it could only be in the form of a mask, which took the place of a living face. **In this we can see the roots of the human habit of producing images in general.**

Hans Belting, *Face and Mask. A Double History*, Princeton 2017, p. 34





Statuette of human shape, Ain Ghazal (Jordan), gypsum plaster, bitumen eyelids and pupils, c. 7,000 BCE / Musée du Louvre, Paris



Plaster sculpture of a head, Jericho , c. 7000 BC





Plumed cover of human skull, 5th -
6th dynasty, ca. 2514–2191 BCE, Giza,
Egypt



A mummy with inserted painting of a
face from Fayoum, Egypt, 1st century
CE



Remote Past (Mesolithic)

Present

Gobekli Tepe
11,500 BCE



Sumer
3,400 BCE



Stonehenge
2,100 BCE



Jericho
9,000 BCE



Çatal Huyuk
6,000 BCE



Pyramids of Giza
2,500 BCE



7- 4 BCE

8,000 years

5,400 years



Remote Past

Present



Chauvet Cave
35-37k yrs BP



Venus of Willendorf
22-24k yrs BP



12,000 yrs

12,000 yrs

8,000 yrs

5,400 yrs

