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# The goat in ancient civilisations: from the Fertile Crescent to the Aegean Sea

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## Abstract

Goats were apparently the first species to be domesticated as livestock about 8000 B.C. in the area of Mesopotamia, today's Middle East. This region of domestication was also the cradle of one of the first civilisations, the Sumerians, and goats had a strong impact on all phases of their life. The importance of this small but useful animal for the ancient people was also the reason for its being acknowledged as a holy entity for worship at the side of gods and for its recognition in myths and legends. In the current status of people in the Middle East, goats are an important economic part of utilising the arid and semi-arid lands through farming with goats and sheep, evidencing a long continuity of tradition and the lasting usefulness of goats, which are in many cases irreplaceable by any other livestock. Furthermore, goats have spread all over the world adapting well to many different climates, geological and management conditions, and have become a major part in the economies of the Mediterranean countries, on the

Indian subcontinent, the far east, Africa and the Americas.



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## Keywords

Domestication; Fertile Crescent; Mesopotamia; Neolithic revolution; Ancient civilisations ; Goats

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