

# Prehistoric Pottery of the Ancient Near East

## 1 - Introduction

Olivier Nieuwenhuyse

Brno April 2011



Deutsches Archäologisches Institut



Leiden University



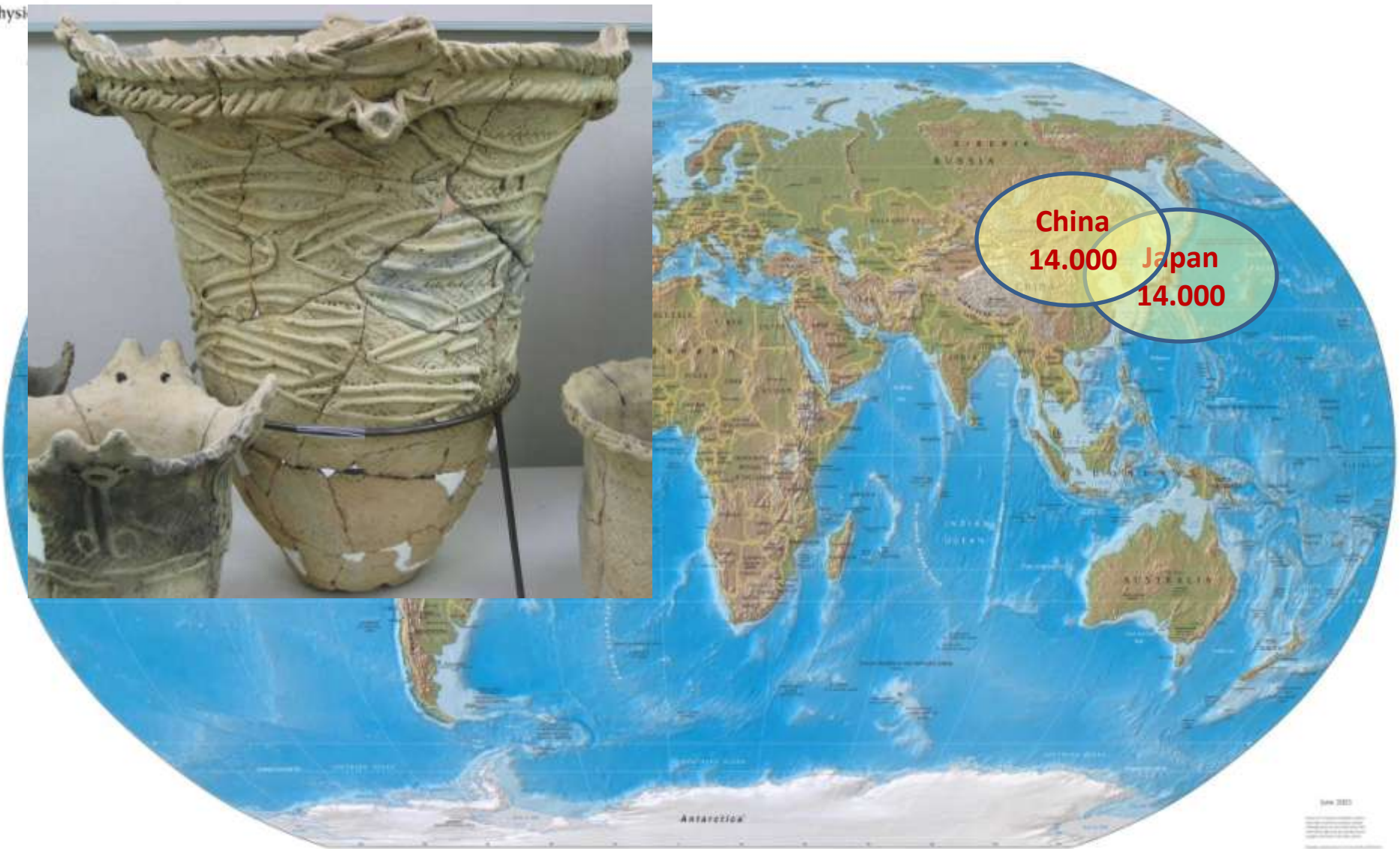
**Pottery is everywhere – even today**

# Physical Map of the World, June 2003

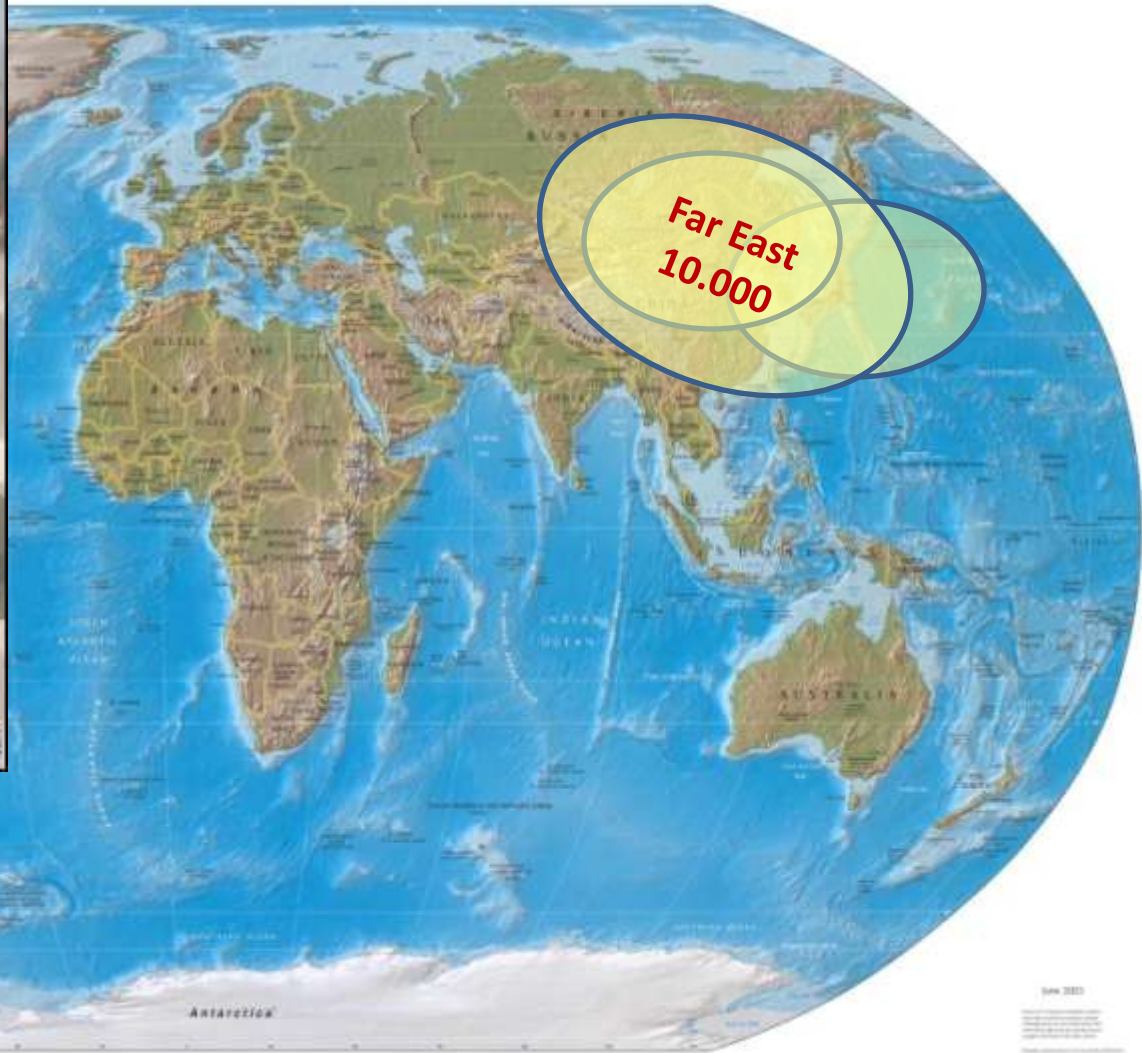
AUTONOMY: Independent state  
DEPENDENCY: Dependency or area of special arrangement  
UNDETERMINED: State / island group  
CITY: City  
SEA LEVEL: Mean sea level  
ELEVATION: Maximum elevation  
Source: CIA World Factbook



**Where did pottery begin?**

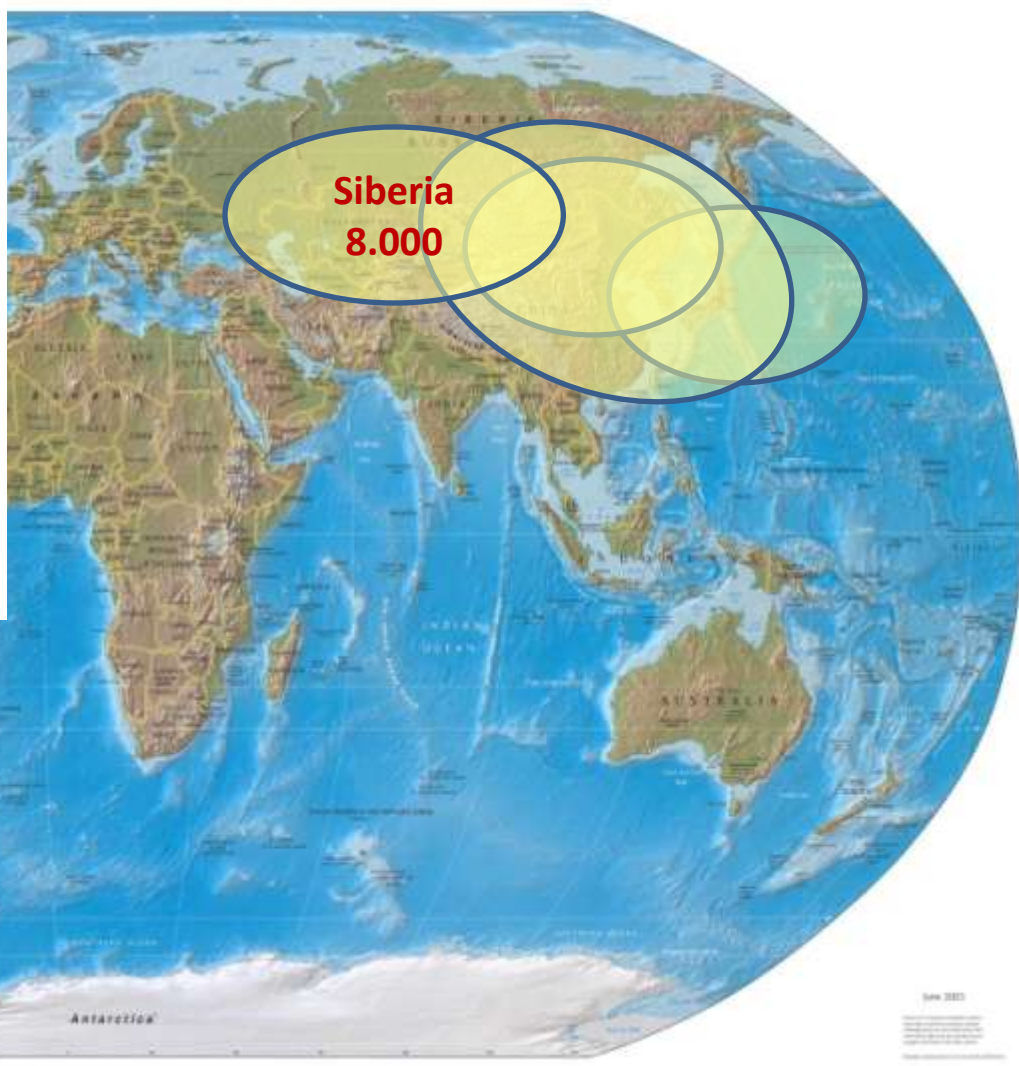
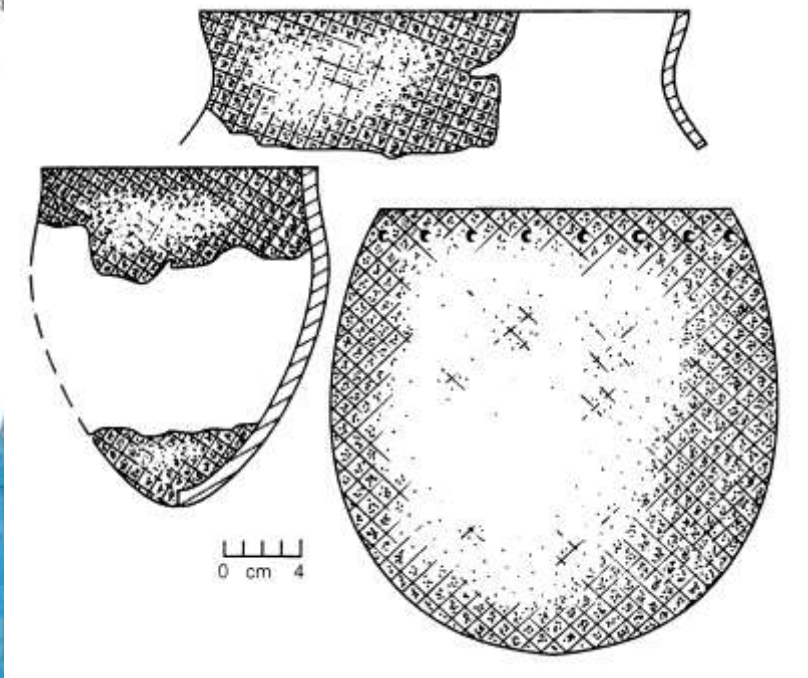


**Where did pottery begin?**



**Where did pottery begin?**

Physi

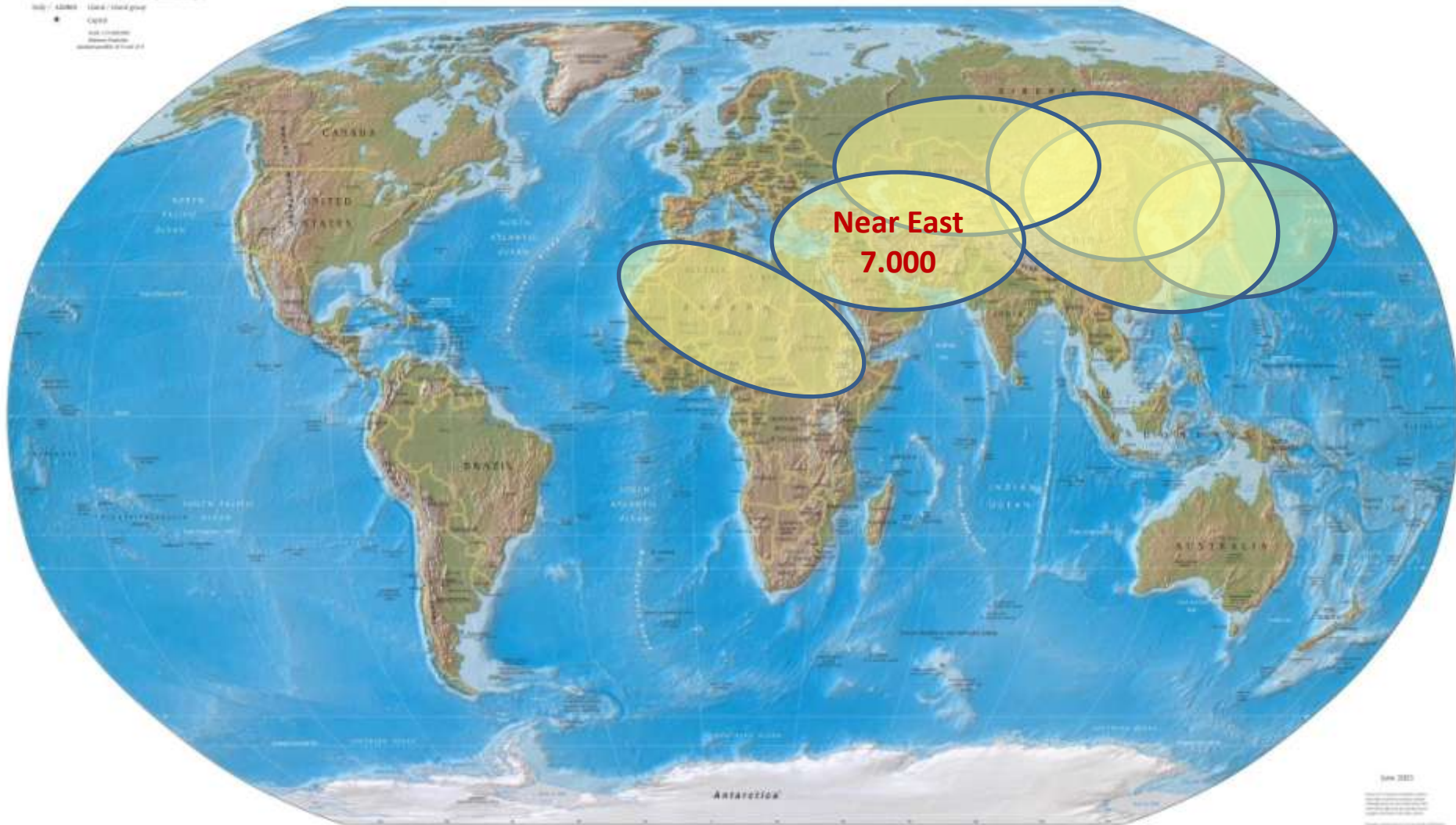


**Where did pottery begin?**



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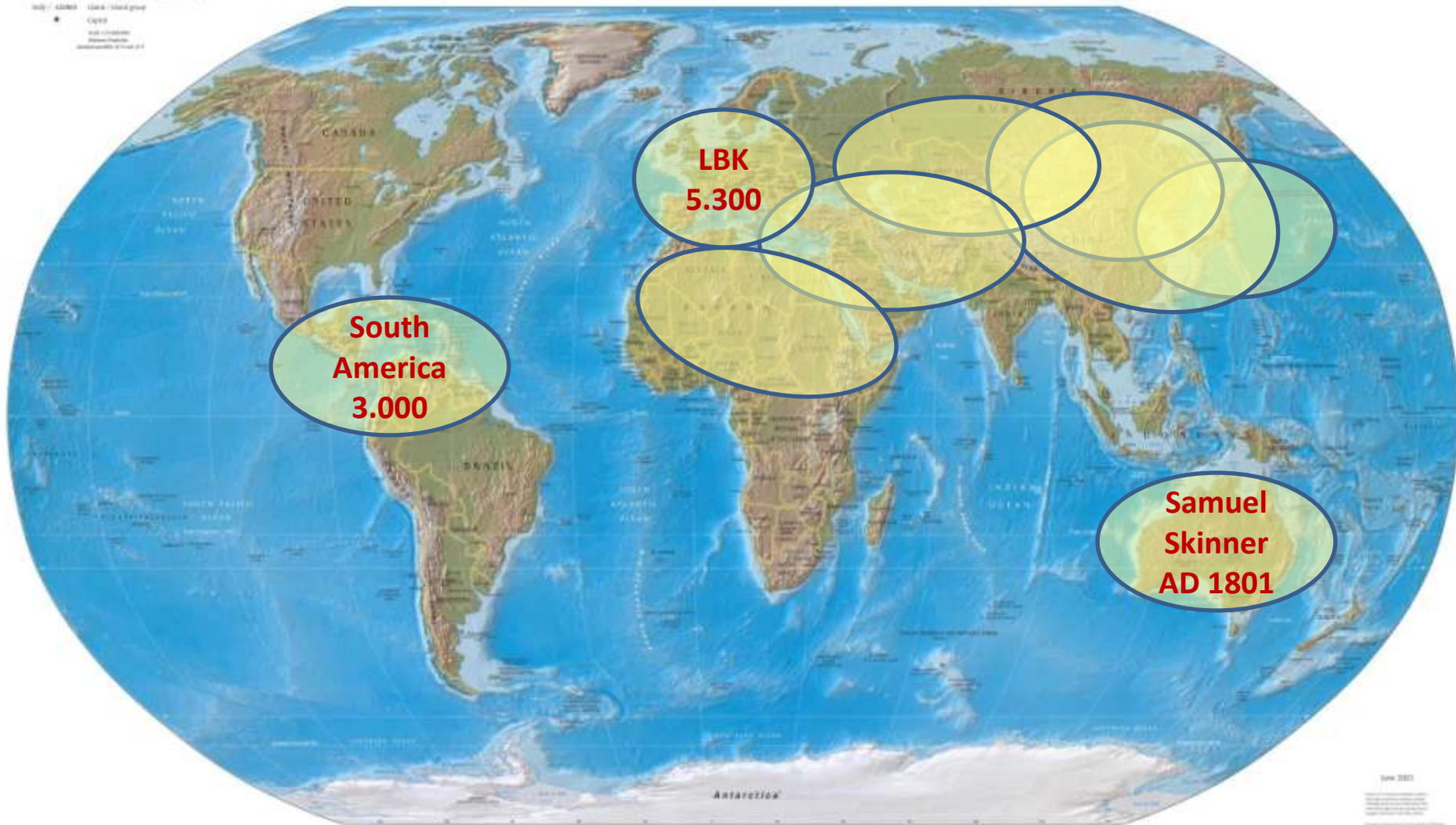
AUTONOMY: Independent state  
DEPENDENCY: Dependency or area of special arrangement  
ISLAND / ISLAND GROUP  
CITY  
SEA LEVEL: Mean sea level  
ELEVATION: Maximum elevation  
Source: CIA World Factbook




**Where did pottery begin?**



AUTONOMOUS: Independent state  
DEPENDENT: Dependency or area of special arrangement  
UNINCORPORATED: Unincorporated island or island group  
CITY: City  
SEA LEVEL: Mean sea level  
ELEVATION: Maximum elevation  
SOURCE: National Geographic Society



**Much later beginnings**



INTERPRETING THE  
**LATE** NEOLITHIC  
OF UPPER MESOPOTAMIA

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Organized by Peter M.M.O. Alkermans, Reinhard Bernbeck, Olivier P. Nieuwenhuys, Anna Ezzeldi, and volunteers



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**The importance of the Late Neolithic in current archaeology**

# The Middle East



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34°05'09.17" N 42°27'01.49" O verh 267 m

Ooghoogte 3198.82 km

**Time and place: where are we?**

# The Middle East

Caucasus

Upper Mesopotamia

Zagros

Central  
Anatolia

Northern  
Levant

Mesopotamian  
lowlands

Southern  
Levant

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36°48'16.65" N 38°16'19.27" O verh 921 m

Ooghoogte 1477.75 km

**Time and place: regional foci of intense research**

# The Middle East

Caucasus

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36°48'16.65" N 38°16'19.27" O verh 921 m

Ooghoogte 1477.75 km

**Time and place: regional focus in this course**



## Summary of Halaf-period Chronology for Upper Mesopotamia

After Cruells and Nieuwenhuysse, 2004, "The Proto-Halaf period in Syria", *Paléorient* 30-1: 47-68.

Cultural phase	Pre-Halaf	Proto-Halaf	Early Halaf	Traditional Early Halaf	Middle Halaf	Late Halaf	Post-Halaf
Cal. BC	6200	6100	5950	5850	5700	5550	5300
West Syria	Rouj 2c		Rouj 2d		Rouj 3		
Tell el-Kerkh							
Euphrates basin							
Tell Halula	HL-III	HL-IV	HL-V		HL-VI	HL-VII	HL-VIII
Balikh valley	Balikh IIC	Balikh IIIA	Balikh IIIB	Balikh IIIC		Balikh IIID	Balikh IV
Tell Sabi Abyad	levels 11-8	levels 7-4	Levels 3-1	NE mound	-	-	-
Upper Khabur							
Tell Chagar Bazar	-	CB-I	CB-II	CB-III	CB-IV	CB-V	-
Tell Aqab	-	-	-	Early Halaf	Middle Halaf	Late Halaf	HUT
Tell Boueid II	-						
North Iraqi Jezireh	Hassuna I-II	Hassuna III	Halaf Ia	Halaf Ib	Halaf IIa	Halaf IIb	HUT
NJP 72							
Khirbet Garsour							
Arpachiyah				Early Halaf	Middle Halaf	Late Halaf	

**Time lines and difficult terminologies**

# Tsukuba Conference, Tsukuba 29 October – 1 November 2010

Tentative comparative chronology for the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium  
 Olivier Nieuwenhuysse, with Marie Le Miere, Walter Cruells, Yutaka Miyake.

## Summary of Halaf-period Chronology

After Cruells and Nieuwenhuysse, 2004, "The

Cultural phase	Pre-Halaf
Cal. BC	6200
West Syria	
Tell el-Kerkh	
Euphrates basin	
Tell Halula	HL
Balikh valley	Balikh
Tell Sabi Abyad	level
Upper Khabur	
Tell Chagar Bazar	
Tell Aqab	
Tell Boueid II	
North Iraqi Jezireh	
NJP 72	
Khirbet Garsour	
Arpachiyah	

Euphrates		Balikh		Khabur		Tigris
Halula		Akarcay				
Phase 5 Primitif Halaf						
Phase 4 Proto-Halaf			Early-Halaf			
Phase 3			Transitional		Early-Halaf	
Later Pre-Halaf	Phase 3		Pre-Halaf	Proto-Halaf		Early-Halaf
Phase 2				Khazna		Hakemi Use
Middle Pre-Halaf	Phase 2		Early Pottery Neolithic	Proto-Hassuna	Seker: A-4 A-5 A-6	Salat C.Y. phase 3
Phase 1					A-7 A-8	
Early Pre-Halaf	Phase 1		Initial Pottery Neolithic	Pre-Proto Hasuna		Salat C.Y. phase 2
PPNB					A-8 A-9 A-10 A-11 A-12	Salat C.Y. phase 1
		PPNB				
			PPNB			

**Time lines and difficult terminologies**





# Themes:

- \* When did people in the Near East start making pottery?
- \* Where did the earliest pottery come from?
- \* What was the subsequent development of pottery?
- \* What was the role Neolithic pottery in the Near East?
- \* What was the organization of pottery production?
- \* What was the role of style and symbolism?
- \* What are the important Pottery Neolithic sites?
- \* What do you *do* with pottery?
- \* How do Late Neolithic pottery studies fit in the Near Eastern research framework?

**About this course**

## **Late Neolithic pottery from the Ancient Near East – an introduction**

### **Monday 18 April**

1. Introduction: time and place.
2. A history of pottery studies.
3. What do you do with pottery.

### **Wednesday 20 April**

4. First pottery: theory.
5. First pottery: a review of key sites.
6. First pottery: interpretation.

### **Thursday 21 April**

7. Pottery becomes firmly established.

## **Late Neolithic pottery from the Ancient Near East – an introduction**

### **Tuesday 26 April**

8. Painted Pottery: theory.
9. Painted Pottery: key sites.
10. Case-study Tell Sabi Abyad.

### **Wednesday 27 April**

11. The organization of pottery production.

### **Thursday 28 April**

12. Painted decoration styles: geometrics.
13. Painted decoration styles: figurative imagery.

### **Friday 29 April**

14. Sherds in surveys.
15. Late Neolithic settlement.
16. Pottery restoration.

# **The programme**

# What will *you* do:

- \* Lectures – *listen*,
- \* Literature – *read*,
- \* Questions and discussions – *talk!*

**About this course**