

VYT 2024 Entry #2

From Ice Age to Agriculture: Environmental Clues in Archaeology

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Have you ever picked an outfit based on the weather or worked from home because the office was too noisy?

Just like us, ancient peoples had to make similar choices based on their environments.

Imagine living at the end of the last ice age, when humans in the Northern Jordan Valley began settling the world's first villages at sites like Wadi Hammeh 27. But why there? And why then?

Back then, the Jordan Valley, now home to the Dead Sea, held two large lakes.

Scientists once thought both lakes were extremely salty and had dried up before these settlements were founded, making it difficult to live there. But guess what?

We dug deeper—literally!

Using geological surveys, mineral studies, and plant and animal remains, we discovered the area was actually much wetter and less salty — providing a resource-rich environment perfect for settlement.

Just as we adjust to our environment, the world's first villagers did too — using their resources to pave the way for farming and agriculture.

Their environment shaped them, and their choices shaped their world, just as our environment shapes us.

And we can see it all in the archaeological record!

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