参考译文：

西南亚的早期定居点

The universal global warming at the end of the ice age had dramatic effects on temperate regions of Asia, Europe, and North America. Ice sheets retreated and sea level rose.■ The climatic changes in southwestern Asia were more subtle, in that they involved shifts in mountain snow lines, rainfall patterns, and vegetation cover. ■However, these same cycles of change and had momentous impacts on the sparse human populations of the region.■ At the end of the Ice Age, no more than a few thousand foragers lived along the eastern Mediterranean coast, in the Jordan and Euphrates valleys. Within 2,000years, the human population of the region numbered in the tens of thousands, all as a result of village life and farming.■ Thanks to new environmental and archaeological discoveries, we now know something about this remarkable change in local life.

冰河时代末期全球普遍升温，这对亚洲、欧洲和北美洲的温带地区产生了巨大的影响。冰原后退，海平面上升。西南亚气候的变化则更加细微，包括山脉雪线、降水类型和植被覆盖的变化。然而，这些日复一日的周期性的变化对该地区稀少的人类产生了重要的影响。在冰河时代末期，地中海东部沿岸的约旦河和幼发拉底河流域仅生活着数千人。随后的两千年内，农村生活和农业使该地区的人口数量变成了数万人。正是由于在环境和考古学方面的新发现，我们才得以了解当地生活中发生的这种显著变化。

Pollen samples from freshwater lakes in Sria and elsewhere tell us forest cover expanded rapidly at the end of the Ice Age, for the southwestern Asian climate was still cooler and considerably wetter than today. Many areas were richer in animal and plant species than they are now, making them highly favorable for human occupation. About 9000 B.C., most human settlements lay in the area along the Mediterranean coast and in the Zagros Mountains of Iran and their foothills. Some local areas, like the Jordan River valley, the middle Euphrates valley, and some Zagros valleys, were more densely populated than elsewhere. Here more sedentary and more complex societies flourished. These people exploited the landscape intensively, foraging on hill slopes for wild cereal grasses and nuts, while hunting gazelle and other game on grassy lowlands and in river valleys. Their settlements contain exotic objects such as seashells, stone bowls, and artifacts made of obsidian (volcanic glass), all traded from afar. This considerable volume of intercommunity exchange brought a degree of social complexity in its wake.

来自叙利亚和其它地方的淡水湖的花粉样本向我们揭示出在冰河时代末期森林覆盖迅速增长，这是因为当时西南亚的气候比现在要更凉爽，而且要湿润得多。当时很多地区的动植物种类要比现在丰富，这就使这些地区非常适宜人类居住。大约在公元前 9ooo 年 ，大部分人类定居点都位于地中海沿岸以及伊朗的扎格罗斯山脉和丘陵地带。一些区域，例如约旦河谷以及某些扎格罗斯谷地的人口就比别的地方要更加稠密。迁移性更低，更为复杂的社会在这里兴旺发展起来。这些人对周围的环境进行了充分的利用，他们在山坡上采集野生的谷物和坚果，在长满青草的低地和河谷中捕捉瞪羚及其它猎物。在他们的定居点发现了从远方交易获得的外来物品，例如贝壳、石碗和黑曜石（火山玻璃）制成的人造器物。这种数量可观的社会间的交换给这些社会带来了一定的复杂度。

Thanks to extremely fine-grained excavation and extensive use of flotation methods (through which seeds are recovered from soil samples), we know a great deal about the foraging practices of the inhabitants of Abu Hureyra in Syria’s Euphrates valley. Abu Hureyra was founded about 9500B.C., a small village settlement of cramped pit dwellings (houses dug partially in the soil) with reed roofs supported by wooden uprights. For the next 1,500 years, its inhabitants enjoyed a somewhat warmer and damper climate than today, living in a well-wooded steppe area where wild cereal grasses were abundant. They subsisted off spring migrations of Persian gazelles from the south. With such a favorable location, about 300 to 400 people lived in a sizable, permanent settlement. They were no longer a series of small bands but lived in a large community with more elaborate social organization, probably grouped into clans of people of common descent.

极精细的挖掘和浮选法（可以从土壤样本中发现种子）的广泛使用使得我们对叙利亚境内的幼发拉底河流域阿布胡赖拉的居民的觅食习惯有了深入的了解。阿布胡赖拉是建于公元前 9500 年的一座小村庄，村庄里都是狭小的洞穴房（房子的一部分是挖到地下的），芦苇做的屋顶是用木头柱子支起来的。随后的 1500 年，该地的居民享受着比我们现在略为温暖潮湿的气候，他们居住在树木繁茂的大草原，那里生长着大量的野生谷类植物。他们喂养着从南部地区迁移而来的波斯瞪羚的后代。在这个地理位置绝佳的地方，每 300 到 400 人会生活在一起，形成一个比较大的永久定居点。他们从小群体走向了具有更加复杂的社会组织的大群体，很有可能是按照共同祖先划分的部族。

The flotation samples from the excavations allowed botanists to study shifts in plant-collection habits as if they were looking through a telescope at a changing landscape. Hundreds of tiny plant remains show how the inhabitants exploited nut harvests in nearby pistachio and oak forests. However, as the climate dried up, the forests retreated from the vicinity of the settlement. The inhabitants turned to wild cereal grasses instead, collecting them by the thousands, while the percentage of nuts in the diet fell. By 8200B.C., drought conditions were so severe that the people abandoned their long-established settlement, perhaps dispersing into smaller camps.

从挖掘物中获取的浮选样本使得植物学家可以研究他们采集植物习性的变化，就像是通过望远镜观看变化的景致。许多细小的植物遗体显示了这些居民是如何采集附近森林里的开心果和橡子的。然而，随着气候变得越来越干燥，森林从定居点的附近向后退缩。居民就转而采集大量的野生谷物，他们饮食中的坚果比例随之减小。到公元前 8200 年的时候，干旱已经很严重了，他们放弃了居住已久的定居点，可能是散居到更小的茅屋中去了。

Five centuries later, about 7700B.C., a new village rose on the mound. At first the inhabitants still hunted gazelle intensively. Then, about 7000 B.C., within the space of a few generations, the switched abruptly to herding domesticated goats and sheep and to growing einkorn, pulses, and other cereal grasses. Abu Hureyra grew rapidly until it covered nearly 30 acres. It was a close-knit community of rectangular, one-story mud-brick houses, joined by narrow lanes an courtyards, finally abandoned about 5000 B.C.. Many complex factors led to the adoption of the new economies, not only at Abu Hureyra, but at many other locations such as ‘Ain Ghazal, also in Syria, where goat toe bones showing the telltale marks of abrasion caused by foot tethering (binding)’ testify to earl herding of domestic stock.

五个世纪以后，大约是公元前 7700 年，高地上出现了一个新的村庄。最初那里的居民仍然集中于猎取瞪羚。后来大约在公元前 7000 年左右，没过几代，这些居民就忽然转向饲养家养的山羊和绵羊，并种植一粒小麦、豆类及其它谷类植物。阿布胡赖拉迅速壮大，最终大约扩张到了近 30 英亩。它是一座结构紧凑的矩形村庄，单层的泥砖房屋与狭窄的小道和院子相连，这座村庄最终于公元前 5000年被废弃。有很多复杂的因素导致人们采用新的经济形式，这不只是发生在阿布胡赖拉，在其它很多地方例如在艾因加扎勒和叙利亚发现的山羊的趾骨上就有显示是由足部被栓（绑）造成的磨损的迹象，这就证明该地出现了早期的放牧。