

# **Birth of Cities**

How did cities form?

Settlements where people grew crops, stored grain, and raised domesticated animals could reliably provide for people.

The **domestication** of animals and plants meant that more grain could be grown with less human work. People not needed in the fields could do other jobs. As more people began to live and work communally, a class structure emerged. Hierarchies of political and religious leadership developed, with members of society having rank and power according to their social status.

These early settlements grew, becoming villages and then towns. The larger towns were the religious and political centers of the area. After hundreds of years of growth, the largest settlements had enough residents, influence, and wealth to be called cities.

## **The World's First Cities**

**Jericho**, which was located in the **Jordan** River valley, is one of the oldest of the early cities. It dates back to 9000 BCE. Researchers estimate its population to have been between 2,000 and 3,000 people by 8000 BCE. The inhabitants lived in round or oval houses made of mud brick. The town had a wall and a ditch surrounding it and a stone tower about 30 feet tall.

Jericho's tower is the earliest known structure of its type.

Çatalhöyük in central Turkey dates as far back as 7500 BCE. It had several thousand residents and may have been the largest city in the world at one point. Homes there had no doors, but were entered from the top with a ladder. People applied plaster to their walls and decorated them with murals.

Just because there were permanent settlements did not mean that people were no longer on the move. People continued to migrate. As people moved from place to place, they shared ideas and cultures. Farming and technology spread, and the world's population rose.