

Archeological Evidence for Cultivation of Sorghum/Millet in Goa during the Neolithic Age



Fig. 1 Ears of grains in front of the Iconic Face



Fig. 2. Expanded View of the Ears (Spikes)

Petroglyphic evidence at Usgalimal appears to indicate that the first farmers in Goa grew sorghum or millets, by dry farming, before the extensive landscaping for cultivating rice. This is consistent with documented fact that a variety of millet was first domesticated in India.

The map shows the sites of the first domestication of several food crops around the world. The Levant, Anatolia and the Fertile Crescent are the earliest sites where wheat and barley were first domesticated, around 10,000BCE. Millets were domesticated in India circa 5000BCE. (see map fig.3),

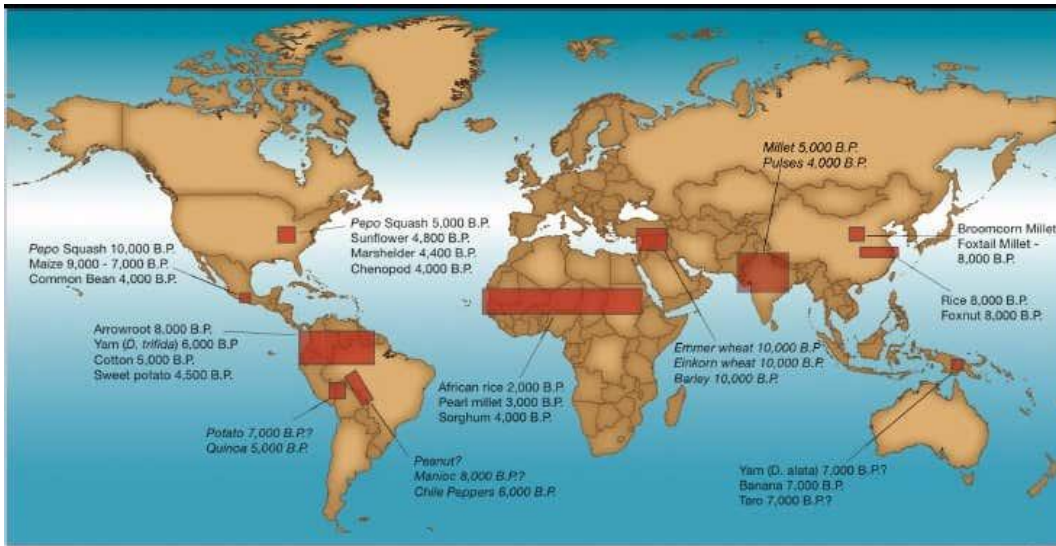


Fig. 3. Centers of earliest domestication of food plants around the world (Source Price and Bar Yosef)

When Megasthenes, a Greek envoy, visited the court of Chandragupta Maurya in Patna, around 2300 years ago, he wrote in *Indika*, that India grew a lot of millet, besides flax, sesamum rice, wheat, barley, pulse and other esculent plants. Some harvested twice a year and watered primarily by the summer rains.⁽¹⁾

Presently, several types of millets are grown in India such as, pearl millet (*bajra*), sorghum (*jowar*), finger millet (*ragi/nachni*), proso/common millet (*barri*), barnyard millet (*jhangora*), foxtail/ Italian millet (*kangni*) and kodo millet (*kodra*). Some of which originated in Africa and China. In Goa, *nachni* is very common and is the main ingredient for the traditional Goan workers' porridge (*teezan*).

The rock carvings at Usgalimal, estimated to be between 2500 and 4000 BCE old, would therefore indicate that within a thousand years or so, millets were widely grown in many parts of India. It would be interesting to determine the variety of millet that was grown from this carving.

This most significant section of a much bigger carving, depicting the stone tools used and the crop grown, (seen in fig.1), illustrate unequivocally that these petroglyphs were carved during the Neolithic Period. Undoubtedly, other hidden gems of information will be gleaned, after closer inspection and scholarly research.

1. <https://archive.org/details/AncientIndiaAsDescribedByMegasthenesAndArrianByMccrindleJ.W/page/n63/mode/2up?q=millet>