

Was - population increase

R.M. Adams: The Evolutionary Process in Early Civilizations. The Evolution of Man. (ed.) Sol Tax, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960. p.160

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I am inclined to doubt that this process ever occurred anywhere prior to the special conditions created by modern medicine and sanitation practices, but at any rate it can be stated more categorically that there is no evidence to associate a high and rising population (relative, of course, to what is known of the available subsistence resources) with the onset of militarism in any of the early civilizations. Instead, what evidence there is, deriving mainly from surveys of ancient settlement patterns, very clearly suggests that "population pressure" was not a significant factor at all. In Mesopotamia the appearance of militarism probably coincided with a rise in population, but only to a level representing a small fraction of that attained in later antiquity with essentially similar subsistence methods^{1 2}. On the

Peruvian north coast, fortifications provide evidence of institutionalized warfare before a level of complexity comparable to that in Mesopotamia was achieved, but also at a time when population and settlement density were very much less than they became later.³

1. Jacobsen, T., and Adams, R.M. 1958. "Salt and Silt in Ancient Mesopotamian Agriculture," Science, CXXVIII, 1251-58.
2. Adams, R.M. 1958. "Survey of Ancient Watercourses and Settlements in Central Iraq," Sumer, XIV, 101-4.
3. Willey, G.R. 1953. Prehistoric Settlement Patterns in the Viru Valley, Peru. (Bureau of American Ethnology, Bull. 155.)

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The second highly dubious abstraction - that the administrative requirements of large-scale irrigation management brought into being the early civilized states and largely shaped the political forms they took (Steward¹, and passim) here follows tentatively one feature of Karl A. Wittfogel's more comprehensive theory of the relation of "hydraulic societies" to "Oriental despotism"² - rests on the assumed temporal priority of large-scale irrigation over the appearance of the early states. This assumption, too, is not in accord with the available evidence, as I have attempted recently to show.³

1. Steward, J.H. et al. 1955. Irrigation Civilizations: A Comparative Study. ("Pan American Union, Social Sciences Monographs," No. 1.)

TOWN FISH. REV., 1951, 3-17.

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2. Wittfogel, K.A. 1957. Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.
3. Adams, R.M. 1959. "Early Civilizations, Subsistence, and Environment." In Oriental Institute Symposium on the Expansion of Society in the Ancient Orient (in press).

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A few recent examples may serve to illustrate the range of differences in contemporary stage classifications. V. Gordon Childe, following, in general, the original views of L.H. Morgan, has distinguished Savagery from Barbarism by the introduction of food production at the beginning of the latter, and Barbarism from Civilization mainly by the presence in the latter of writing as "a convenient and easily recognizable index of a quite revolutionary change in the scale of the community's size, economy, and social organization"¹. Elsewhere he has provided a fuller discussion of the characteristics of civilization as a stage, including urbanism monumental public works, the territorial organization of society in the form of a state, the creation of a centrally controlled social surplus out of tribute or

taxation, the beginnings of exact and predictive sciences, class stratification, full-time craft specialists, expanded foreign trade, and the reappearance of naturalistic art - all in addition to the art of writing.²

1. Childe, V.G. 1951. Social Evolution. London: Watts & Co. pp. 22, 24.
2. --- 1950. "The Urban Revolution," Town Plan. Rev., XXI, 3-17.