

Agrarian Society



As told by Dr. Frank Elwell

Agrarian Society

Also can be divided up into simple and advanced, though we will cover both in this presentation.



Purcell/Ald, Maryknoll Missioner

Agrarian Society



An agrarian (or agricultural) society is one relying for its subsistence on the cultivation of crops through the use of plows and draft animals.

Agrarian Society



The first agrarian societies arose approximately 5000 to 6,000 y.a. in Mesopotamia and Egypt and slightly later in China and India. From the time when agrarian societies first emerged until the present day, the majority of persons who have ever lived have done so according to the agrarian way of life.

Lifting water into an
irrigation ditch, a system of
irrigation in use for centuries
by Egyptian farmers.
(Courtesy of the United
Nations.)



Mode of Production



The invention of the plow, about 6,000 years ago, was an event so significant that many still speak of it as the "agricultural revolution."





Peasant using traditional plow, Iran.

Mode of Production



The use of the plow greatly improves the productivity of the land; it brings to the surface nutrients that have sunk out of reach of the roots of plants, and it returns weeds to the soil to act as fertilizers. Land is cleared of all vegetation and cultivated with the use of a plow and draft animals hitched to the plow. Fields are extensively fertilized, usually with manure.

Mode of Production



- The same land can be cultivated almost continuously, and fully permanent settlements become possible.
- The use of animal power to pull the plow makes one agriculturists far more productive than several horticulturists.



Rice paddies near Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India.

Mode of Production



- As a result, large fields replace small gardens, food output is greatly increased, and a substantial surplus can be produced.
- Agrarian farmers work much harder than do the members of earlier types of societies.



Firewood collection
usually is woman's
work. Ruandi-Urundi.

Carrying water is usually woman's work also. Denokil tribes women filling animal skins with water. Awash valley, Ethiopia.



Mode of Production



The tasks of clearing land, plowing, sowing and harvesting crops, tending animals require extensive labor inputs. Where irrigation systems must be constructed, people work even harder. Because of their efforts, agrarians produce much more per unit of land than do horticulturists.

Mode of Production



Much of what they produce constitutes an economic surplus, but their efforts do not yield for them a higher standard of living. Indeed, their standard of living is generally lower, and in some cases much lower, than that enjoyed by members of horticultural societies.

Mode of Production



Most members of agrarian societies are peasants. They are the primary producers, the persons who farm the land from day to day.



Swedish peasants. The building is a storage hut for peat used for fuel. (Courtesy Los Angeles County Museum).

Mode of Production



Eric Wolf calls them dependent cultivators because they exist in a politically and economically dependent or subordinate relationship to the principal owners of the land. They themselves frequently do not own their land, but are merely allowed the use of it.

Mode of Production



- In those cases where peasants do own their land, they have far more control over the dispensation of the products they produce on this land.
- Those peasants who depend on rainfall (throughout Europe) also have more control over more of the surplus than those who rely on complex irrigation systems.

Mode of Production



- Not all of the primary producers in agrarian societies are peasants. Some are slaves.
- Slaves differ from peasants in that they are legally owned and can be bought and sold, whereas this is not the case for peasants. In some agrarian societies--ancient Greece and Rome, for example--slaves outnumbered peasants.

Hillside cultivation of
wheat by planting in
shallow pits. Tanzania.



Population



- The potential size of agrarian societies is much greater than that of horticultural or pastoral communities; it can run to several million people.
- Agricultural subsistence allows for the establishment of cities, consisting essentially of people who trade their specialized skills for the agricultural products of those who still work the land.

Specialization



A substantial minority of the population does not have to work the land and can engage in specialized, full-time roles (such as blacksmith or barber), most of which are conveniently performed among concentrations of other people. These people trade their skills (directly or indirectly) for agricultural produce,

Distribution



Surplus expropriation is a distributive mode most generally found in agrarian societies.

Distribution



IT OCCURS WHEN A CLASS OF
LANDLORDS COMPELS ANOTHER
CLASS OF DEPENDENT ECONOMIC
PRODUCERS TO PRODUCE A
SURPLUS FROM THEIR FIELDS AND
HAND THIS SURPLUS OVER TO
THEM.

Distribution



The surplus is handed over in the form of rent, taxation of various sorts, and various types of labor services.

Distribution



THESE LANDLORDS HAVE
CONSIDERABLY GREATER POWER
THAN CHIEFS, AND THEY USE THIS
POWER TO PLACE MANY MORE
ECONOMIC BURDENS UPON
PEASANT PRODUCERS THAN CHIEFS
ARE CAPABLE OF PLACING ON THEIR
FOLLOWERS.

In highland Bolivia and Peru the potato is the staple food. To preserve them they are allowed to freeze at night and the water is then pressed out during the day and the residue dried.



Distribution



ALSO, THE FLOW OF VALUABLES
BETWEEN PEASANTS AND LORDS IS
SUBSTANTIALLY MORE UNEQUAL
THAN THE FLOW FROM CHIEFS TO
COMMONERS.

Distribution



The flow of valuables between peasants and lords cannot be called redistribution, since there is little counter flow from lords to peasants.

Distribution



Under medieval European feudalism, peasants owed landlords a specified rent for the use of the landlord's land that they paid either as a portion of their harvests, or by money (or a combination of the two).

Distribution



SINCE THE PEASANT WAS THUS
PRODUCING BOTH FOR THEMSELVES
AND FOR HIS LANDLORD, HE HAD TO
INCREASE HIS OWN TOIL AS WELL
AS THAT OF HIS FAMILY IN ORDER
TO MEET THESE ECONOMIC
DEMANDS.

Distribution



- Peasants were also subject to various taxes. A tax to grind their grain in the lord's mill, another tax to bake their bread in the lord's oven, and yet another to fish in the lord's fishpond.
- A third type of economic burden placed on medieval European peasants was that of labor services.

Distribution



PEASANTS WERE REQUIRED TO SPEND
SO MANY DAYS WORKING ON THE
LORD'S LAND. THIS BURDEN OFTEN
BECAME VERY OPPRESSIVE.
(SAWING OF PLANKS IN GHANA.
THE IRON AGE BROUGHT SOME
IMPROVEMENTS OVER SPLITTING OR
ADZING OUT PLANKS).

Stratification



Distinct social classes also make their appearance in virtually all agrarian societies. The wealth of these societies is almost always very unequally shared, with a small landowning minority of nobles enjoying the surplus produced by the working majority of peasants.

Stratification

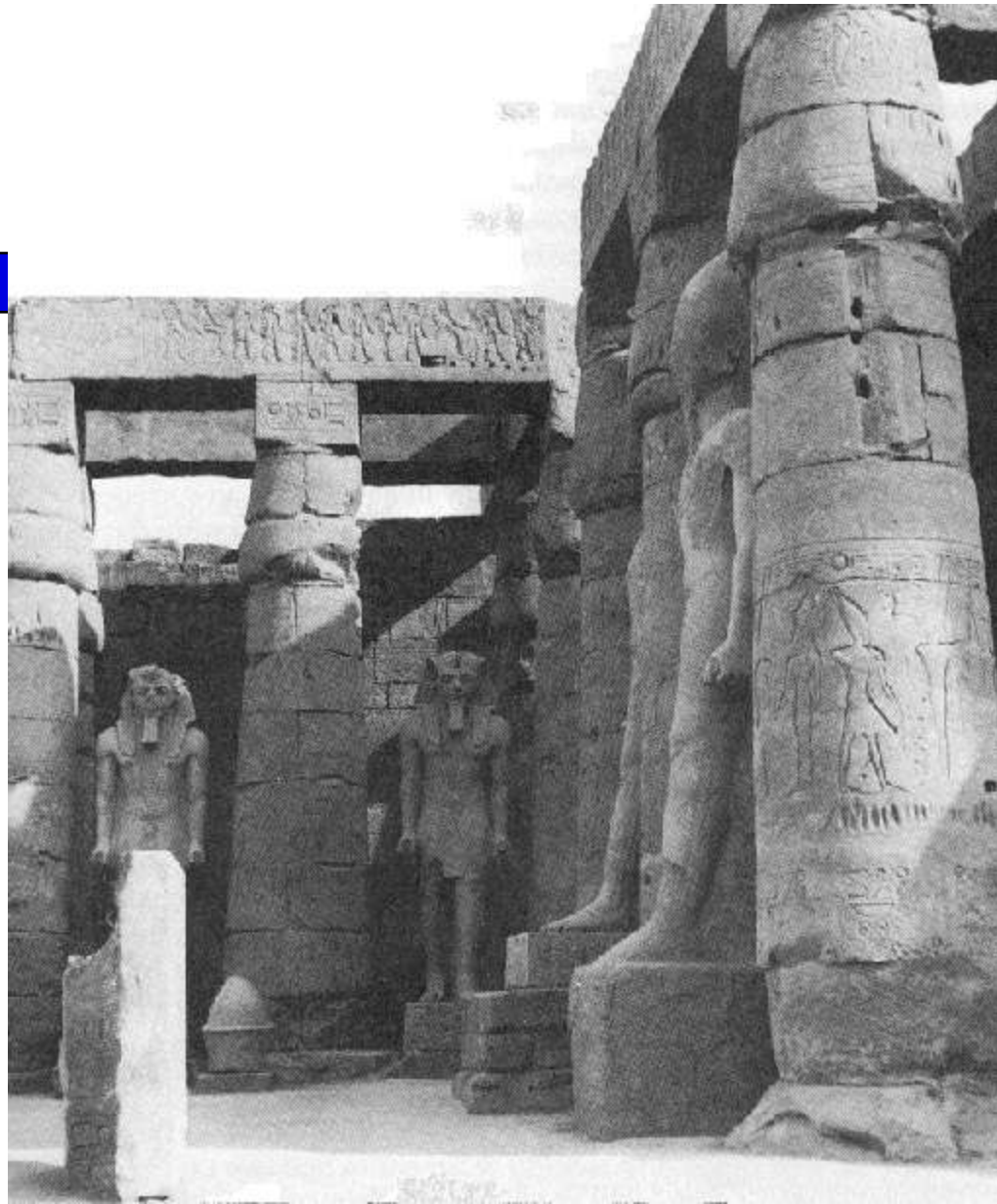


One of the most striking characteristics of agrarian societies was the immense gap in power, privilege, and prestige that existed between the dominant and subordinate classes.

Stratification



Most stratified of all pre-industrial societies.
Probably due to the disappearance of
kinship ties that formerly restrained earlier
societies. The majority of people thrown
into poverty and degradation.



The temple of Luxor, Egypt, built about 1400 B.C.

Agrarian Stratification:



- Political / Economic Elite
- Retainer Class
- Merchant Class
- Priestly Class
- Peasantry
- Artisans
- Expendables

Stratification



First four are privileged strata; political economic elite naturally the most privileged. Likewise, while peasants, artisans, and expendables were highly subordinate classes, the peasantry and expendables, since they constituted the majority of the population, was far and away the most subjugated groups.

Elites



The governing class consisted of those persons who were the primary owners of land and who received the benefits that accompanied such ownership.

Elites



The ruler in agrarian societies--monarch, king, emperor, Caesar, or whatever the title--was that person who officially stood at the political head of society. Both the ruler and the governing class tended to be both major landowners and major wielders of political power, and there were vital connections between these two segments of elite.

Elites

The elite typically comprised no more than one or two percent of the population while receiving about half to two-thirds of the total wealth.



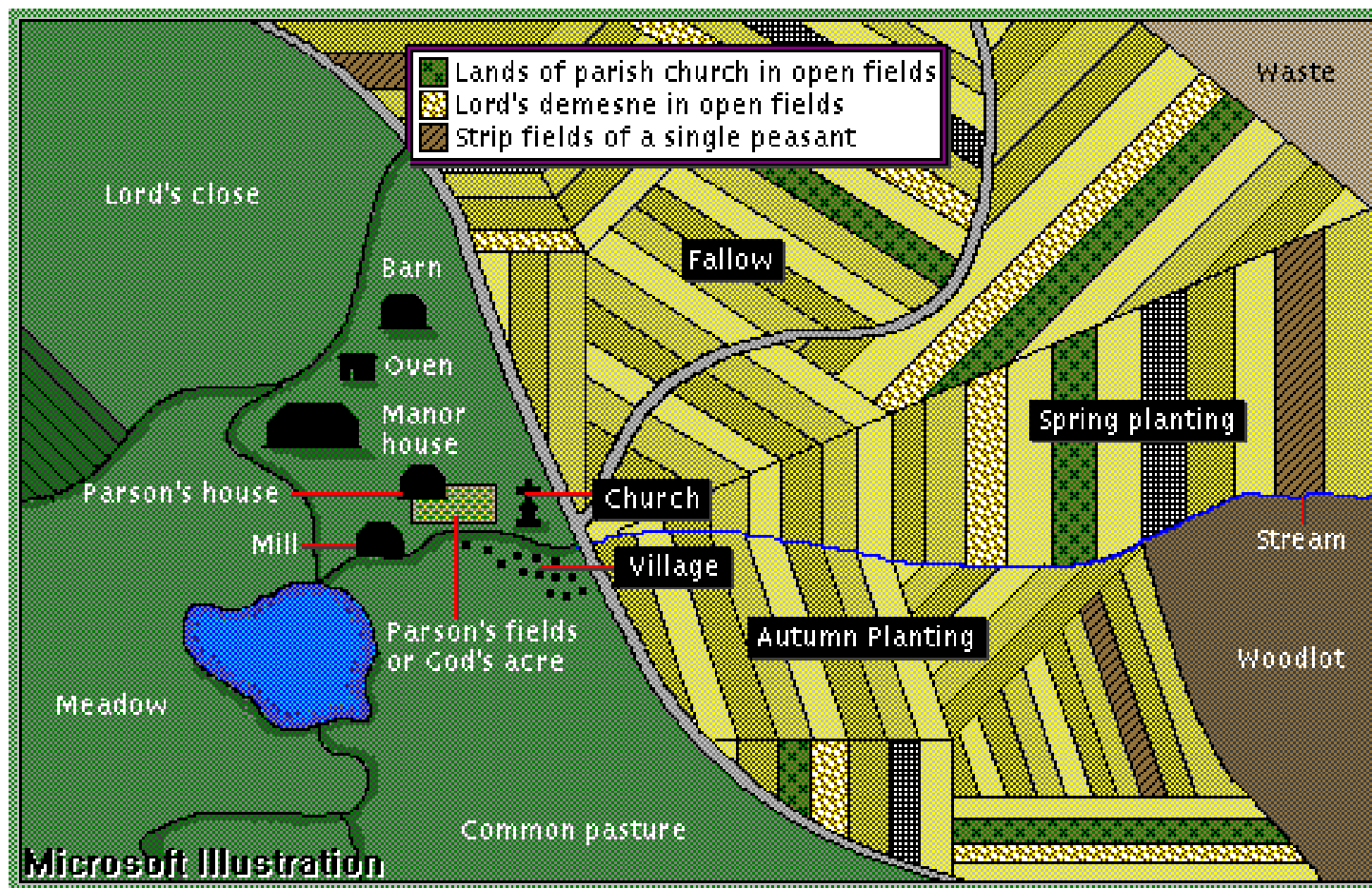
The Sultan of Meiganaga,
Cameroons (in west
Africa).



Elites



The specific relationship between the ruler and governing class varied from one society to another. In some the economic elite held the power (medieval Europe). In others, political power was highly concentrated in the hands of the ruler himself (Turkey or Mughal India--but the ruler was the largest landowner).

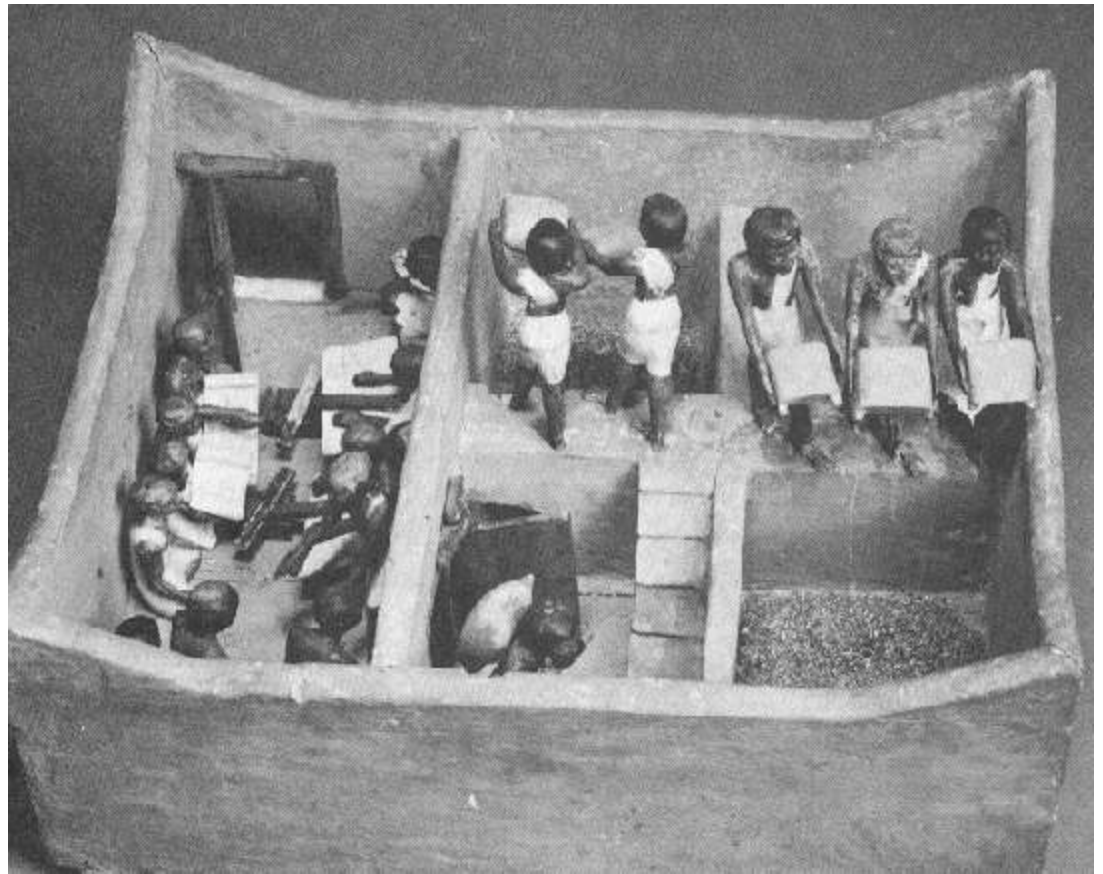


Elites

A majority of the huge economic surplus generated within agrarian societies almost always found its way into the hands of the political-economic elite.



Model of a royal granary, found in an Egyptian tomb (about 2000 B.C.). Note the scribes sitting by the door recording the deliveries of grain.



Elites

By the end of the 14th century, for example, English kings had an average income of about 135,000 pounds a year, an amount equal to 85 percent of the combined incomes of the 2200 members of the nobility.



Working equipment for
member of the governing
class in sixteenth-century
Europe.



Elites



Xerxes, emperor of Persia in pre-Christian times, is said to have had an annual income that would have totaled \$35 million a year by modern standards. Suleiman the Magnificent of Turkey was judged to have equaled \$421 million.

Elites



Lenski estimates that the income of the governing class probably was as much as one-quarter of the total income of most agrarian societies.



Retainers

A crucial role of this class was to mediate the relations between the elite and the common people. Actually carried out the day to day work necessary for transferring the economic surplus to the elite.



Retainers

- Comprise about 5% of the population.
- Functionaries such as government officials, soldiers, servants, and others who are directly employed by the elites. Generally a service class, it usually did pretty well.



Merchants



Merchants engaged in commercial activity and became a vital part of the agrarian urban economy.





The souk, or market, Fes, Morocco.

Merchants



While some remained quite poor, some amassed great wealth, a few were wealthier than some members of the elite. Yet despite these material benefits, merchants were frequently accorded very low prestige and political power.

Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife, by Jan Van Eyck (1434), a realistic portrayal of a representative of the newly emerging merchant class.



Priestly Class

While this class was often internally stratified, in general it is considered a privileged stratum. However, their power lies in their alliances with ruling elites, and they were often subject to confiscation.



Priestly Class



Priests have frequently commanded substantial wealth, and it has been common for them to be close allies of rulers and governing classes.

Priestly Class



In Egypt in the 12th century B.C. for example, as well as in 18th century France, priests owned 15 percent of the land. In pre-Reformation Sweden the Church owned 21%, Buddhist monasteries are said to have been in control of about 1/3 of the land.

Priestly Class



- It is also imperative to note that not all priests were wealthy and of high rank.
- In medieval Europe, for instance, priests were divided into an upper and lower clergy.



Canterbury Cathedral in England, an example of late English Gothic architecture.

Priestly Class



While the upper clergy lived in a privileged style consistent with their noble background, members of the lower clergy -- parish priests directly serving the common people--lived in a style resembling that of the common people.

A water wheel. The current turns the wheel, which lifts the water to wooden troughs to convey it to fields for irrigation. Cambodia.



Peasants

- The bulk of the population occupied distinctly inferior social and economic status.
- Economically, their lot has generally been miserable. Major burdens include taxation, the principal means of separating the peasant from the economic surplus.



Peasants



- During the Tokugawa era in Japan, the rate varied from 30% to 70%.
- In China, about 40 to 50 percent of total peasant agricultural output was commonly claimed by the landowners.
- In pre-British India, peasants handed over 1/3 to 1/2 of their crops to both Muslim and Hindu rulers.



The members of a Chimborazo (Andean) peasant household pose for their family portrait.

Peasants



Aside from taxation, peasants were also subjected to hardships like the corvee, or system of forced labor, confiscation of property without payment, or even their wives and daughters.

Peasants



Under the corvee, peasants were obligated to provide so many days of labor either for their lord or for the state. In medieval Europe, when a man died, his lord could claim his best beast. If his daughter married off the manor, the girls father could be fined.

Peasants



It should be obvious that the life of the average peasant was an extremely difficult one. By and large, life was lived with but the barest necessities for existence. The peasant diet was generally poor in terms of quantity, variety and nutrition.

Peasants



Household furniture was extremely meager, and most peasants slept on earthen, straw-covered floors. Sometimes conditions became so bad that a living was no longer possible and peasants had to abandon the land and attempt to sustain themselves by other means.

Peasants



In addition to the severe economic deprivation suffered by peasants, the peasantry occupied a very low social status in all agrarian societies.

By shifting his weight, this Indian farmer near Tanjore raises the water to the level of his field.



Peasants



- Upper classes regarded peasants as extreme social inferiors, frequently conceiving of them as something less than fully human.
- In some societies, they were formally classified in documents as belonging to roughly the same category as the livestock.

Thrashing barley by driving animals over the straw. Ethiopia.



Artisans



- Trained craftsmen, representing about 3 to 7 percent of the population, stood below the peasantry in the agrarian stratification system.
- Artisans were mainly recruited from the ranks of the dispossessed peasantry. Artisans were generally worse off economically than the peasants. Many lived in destitution, on the brink of starvation.

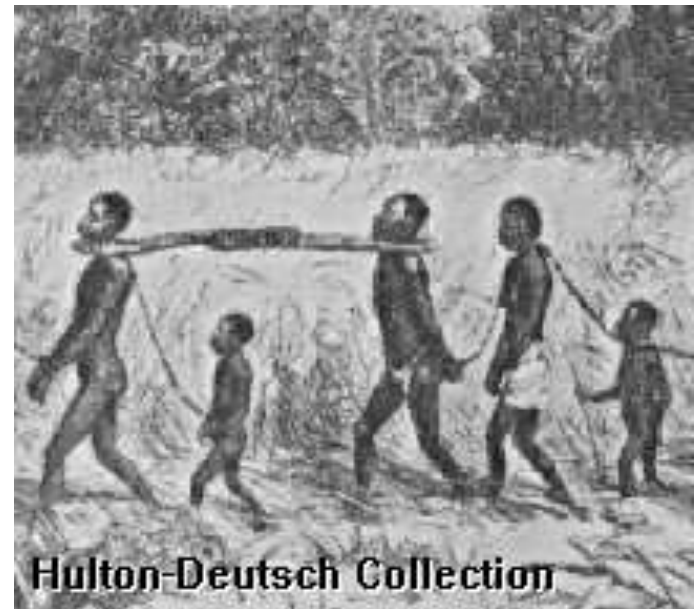
Expendables



Constituting five to ten percent of the population, these persons were found in the urban centers. Their ranks were filled by beggars, petty thieves, outlaws, and other persons who, as Lenski has noted, were "forced to live solely by their wits or by charity".

Expendables

Members of this class suffered from extreme economic deprivation, malnutrition, and disease, and had a very high death rate. The sons and daughters of poor peasants who inherited nothing often fell into this class.



Stratification



- One's class position in all agrarian societies was overwhelmingly determined by social heredity. Most persons died as members of the class into which they were born.
- Upward mobility seldom occurred; downward mobility was far more common. The possibility of improving one's disadvantaged position in an agrarian society was greatly limited.

A Theory of Stratification:



The "primitive communism" of hunters and gatherers gives way to the ownership of land by large kinship groups, but nonetheless ownership is still largely communal rather than private.

A Theory of Stratification:



- However, further increases in population pressure cause horticulturists to become more concerned about land ownership.
- Increasing scarcity in the availability of land suitable for cultivation leads some families to increased "selfishness" in land ownership, and some families begin to own more land than others.



Irrigated rice terraces. Bandung, Indonesia.

A Theory of Stratification:



Additional population pressure leads to still greater "selfishness" in land ownership, and eventually private ownership emerges out of what was originally communal ownership.



Open-air butcher shop in the Middle East.

A Theory of Stratification:

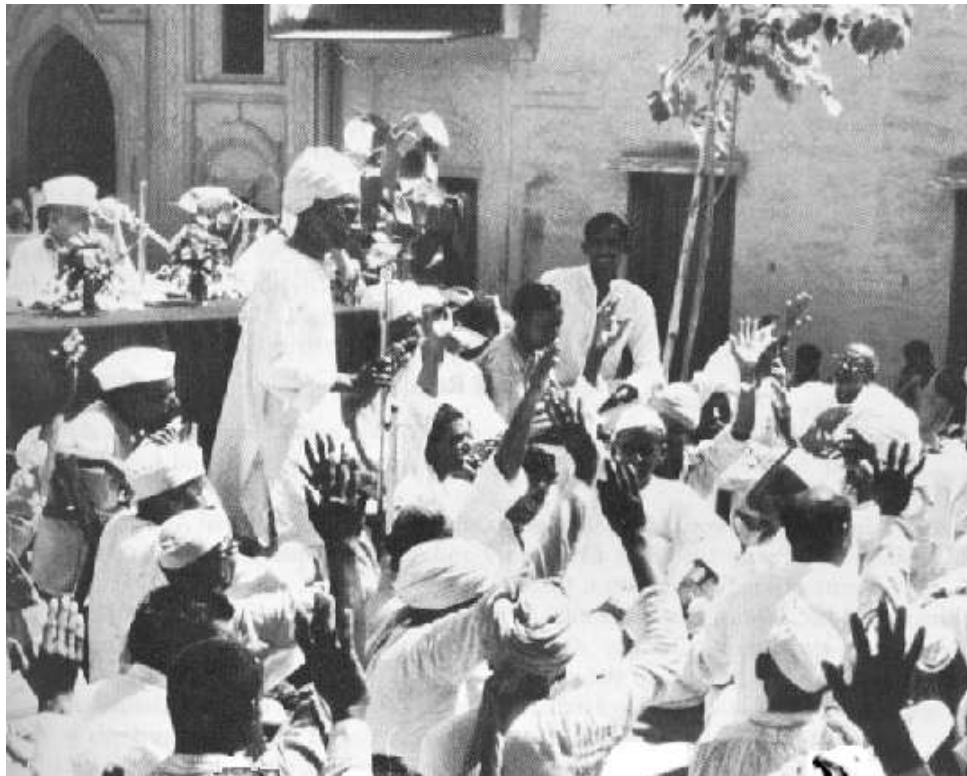


Since technological advance has accompanied population pressure and a declining standard of living, surpluses are now technologically feasible.

A Theory of Stratification:



Differential access to resources now exists, and one group may compel others to work harder in order to produce economic surpluses off which the owning group may live, a group that is now emerging as a primitive "leisure class."



Meeting of village elders. Faridabad, India

A Theory of Stratification:



With additional advances in population pressure and technology, differential access to resources becomes even more severe, and stratification becomes greater under political compulsion by owning groups.



Nutrients in flowing water permit close planting. Production is limited primarily by amount of back-breaking labor, here being performed by Javanese farmer and his wife.

A Theory of Stratification:



- Once there emerge in society groups with differential access to the mode of production, advantaged groups are highly motivated to maintain their advantage, and enhance it if possible.
- Once initiated, stratification takes on a life of its own.

Sexual Inequality



- In the transition from horticultural to agrarian societies, profound changes took place in technology and economic life.
- These changes had major consequences for the nature of the relations between the sexes.

Sexual Inequality



WITH THE SHIFT TO INTENSIVE FORMS
OF AGRARIAN CULTIVATION,
WOMEN WERE LARGELY CAST OUT
OF AN ECONOMICALLY PRODUCTIVE
ROLE, AND ECONOMIC PRODUCTION
CAME TO BE STRONGLY
DOMINATED BY MEN.



Brahman cattle used to plow rice field. Ceylon (Surinam).

Sexual Inequality



As men took control of production, women were assigned to the household and the domestic activity connected with it.



Sexual Inequality



THERE THUS DEVELOPED WHAT
MARTIN AND VOORHIES HAVE
CALLED THE "INSIDE-OUTSIDE
DICHOTOMY."

Sexual Inequality



- THIS INVOLVES THE PARTITIONING OF SOCIAL LIFE INTO TWO LARGELY SEPARATE AND DISTINCT REALMS.
- ON THE ONE HAND, THERE IS THE "PUBLIC" SPHERE OF ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE DOMICILE-- ECONOMICS, POLITICS, EDUCATION.

Sexual Inequality



ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE IS THE
"INSIDE SPHERE" OF COOKING,
CLEANING, AND REARING
CHILDREN. THIS SPHERE CAME TO
BE CONSIDERED DISTINCTLY
FEMININE IN NATURE.

Winnowing rice by
hand. Burma.



Sexual Inequality



Most societies below the agrarian level either do not recognize an "inside-outside" dichotomy or have developed it only minimally.

Sexual Inequality



IT APPEARS THAT THE INSIDE-
OUTSIDE DICHOTOMY DID NOT
EMERGE IN FULLY IDENTIFIABLE
FORM UNTIL THE RISE OF AGRARIAN
SOCIETIES.

Sexual Inequality



MEN AND WOMEN CAME TO LIVE IN
MARKEDLY DIFFERENT SOCIAL
WORLDS, AND THERE DEVELOPED
AN ELABORATE IDEOLOGY
CELEBRATING THE "NATURAL"
SUPERIORITY OF MALES AND
INFERIORITY OF FEMALES.

Sexual Inequality



THE RISE OF THE INSIDE-OUTSIDE
DICHOTOMY WAS ASSOCIATED
WITH THE DESCENT OF WOMAN TO
THE LOWEST POINT OF HER
STRUCTURED INFERIORITY.

Sexual Inequality



A widespread feature of life in most agrarian societies has been the seclusion of women and the restriction of many of their activities.

Woman grinding corn in an old canoe. The instrument in her hands is used with a combination of pounding and rocking motion. Amahuaca Indians, Peru.



Sexual Inequality



WOMEN HAVE BEEN FORBIDDEN TO OWN PROPERTY, TO ENGAGE IN POLITICS, TO PURSUE EDUCATION, OR TO ENGAGE IN VIRTUALLY ANY ACTIVITY OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF THEIR DOMICILE. IN MANY AGRARIAN SOCIETIES, WOMEN HAVE BEEN LEGAL MINORS AND DEPENDENT WARDS OF MEN.

Sexual Inequality



- Agrarian societies have typically exercised very tight controls over female sexuality.
- Many demand premarital virginity on the part of girls, and premarital and extramarital sex on the part of women is severely punished, even including the murder of the offending woman by her kinsmen.

Sexual Inequality



- Agrarian societies generally think of males as ideally suited for those tasks that demand diligence, strength, and emotional fitness.
- Women, by contrast, are deemed most suitable for roles that are menial, repetitive, and uncreative.

Sexual Inequality



BY AND LARGE, WOMEN ARE SOCIAL APPENDAGES OF FATHERS AND HUSBANDS AND ARE IN GENERAL COMPLETELY ECONOMICALLY DEPENDENT UPON THEM.

Sexual Inequality



WOMEN ARE VIEWED AS IMMATURE,
AND IN NEED OF MALE PROTECTION
AND SUPERVISION, AND THESE
CONCEPTIONS HAVE BEEN DEEPLY
IMBEDED IN AGRARIAN RELIGION,
MORALITY, AND LAW.

Sexual Inequality



While intensive male dominance is a widespread occurrence in many horticultural societies, agrarian societies have been the most consistently, thoroughly, and intensively male supremacist.

Sexual Inequality




IN THE MATERIAL, SOCIAL, AND
IDEOLOGICAL SECTORS OF
AGRARIAN LIFE, WOMEN HAVE
TYPICALLY BEEN ASSIGNED A
HIGHLY INFERIOR STATUS. THIS
FACT IS CLOSELY RELATED TO THE
NATURE OF AGRARIAN ECONOMIC
PRODUCTION.

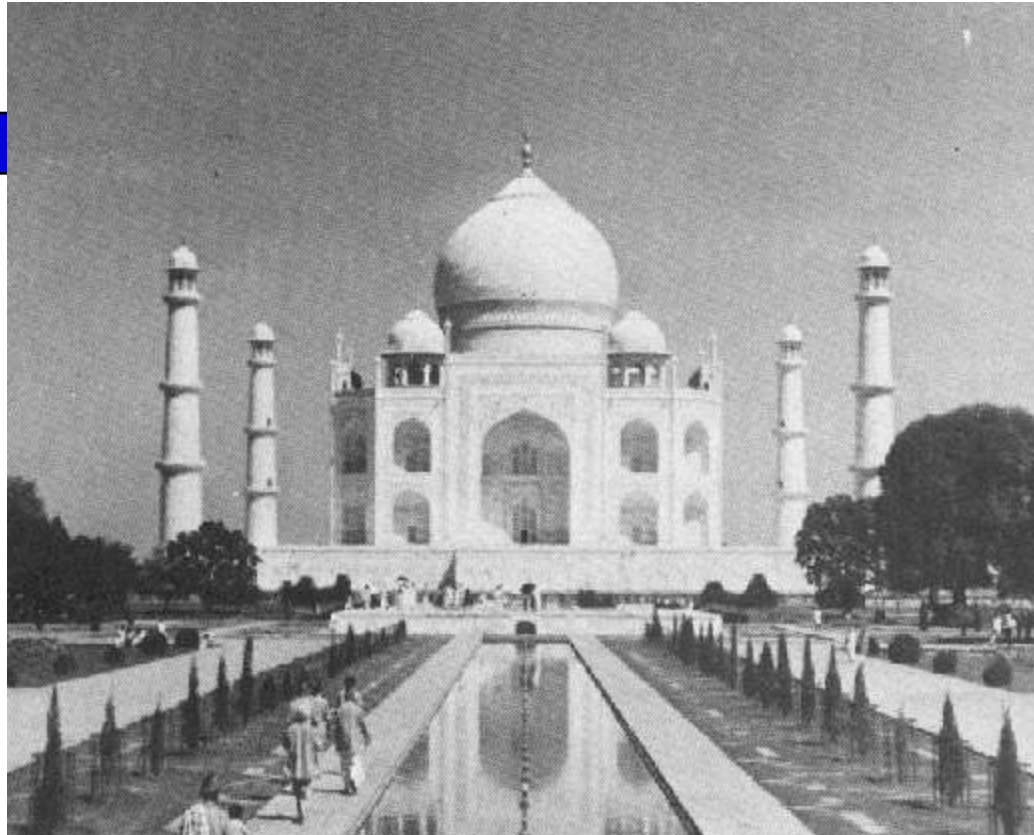
The State



- In more advanced agrarian societies the state emerges for the first time as a separate social institution with an elaborate court and government bureaucracy.
- Unlike the chiefdom, which contains only a limited capacity for compulsion, the state has a fully developed administrative machine to command obedience.

The State

- 
- THE STATE NOT ONLY CONTINUES THE GENERAL EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS OF INCREASING CONCENTRATION OF POWER;
 - IT ESTABLISHES A MONOPOLY OF FORCE NECESSARY TO BACK THAT POWER UP AND INSURE THAT THE WILL OF THE POWER HOLDERS SHALL PREVAIL.



One use of the economic surplus in an agrarian society: the Taj Mahal, a tomb erected by the Mogul emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his favorite wife.

The State

With the transition
to the state,
kinship ties
between ruler
and ruled are
generally
eliminated.



The State



KINSHIP TIES, SUCH AS THOSE OF CHIEFDOMS, SERVE TO MITIGATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF COERCIVE POWER. THEREFORE, STATE-LEVEL RULERS NO LONGER SUBJUGATE THEIR KINSMEN, BUT DOMINATE A GREAT MASS OF UNRELATED INDIVIDUALS.

The State

The naked use of force alone may be insufficient to guarantee compliance with the state's wishes, and rulers therefore commonly attempt to convince the people of their moral right to rule.



The State



THE GREATER THE PSYCHOLOGICAL
COMMITMENT OF THE PEOPLE TO
THE STATE, THE LESS THE
LIKELIHOOD OF REBELLION
AGAINST IT. LEGITIMIZING
IDEOLOGIES ARE OFTEN BASED IN
RELIGIOUS TERMS.

The State



- Finally, states, unlike chiefdoms, have generally not been redistributive centers.
- The flow of surplus to the state has been a one-way flow, and such surplus expropriation has resulted in enormous enrichment of the ruling powers.

The State



- The society itself often consists of several cities and their surrounding area, loosely welded together through periodic shows of force by those in central authority.
- As political institutions grow more elaborate, power becomes concentrated in the hands of a single individual, and a hereditary monarchy tends to emerge.

The State

The power of the monarch is usually absolute, literally involving the power of life and death over her subjects.



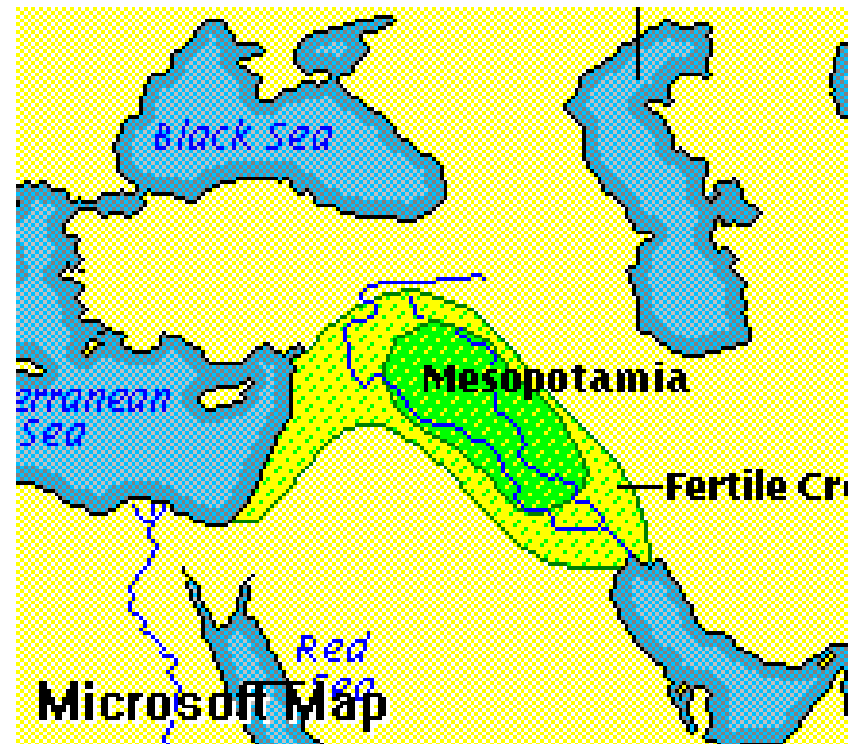
Origin of the State: A Theory



Robert Carneiro (1970) notes that a factor common to all major areas of the world where pristine states arose was what he has called environmental circumscription.

Origin of the State: A Theory

This exists when areas of rich agricultural land are surrounded by areas of very poor or unusable land or by natural barriers (mountain ranges or desserts).



Origin of the State: A Theory



- This factor can be seen in such areas of pristine state formation as the Middle East, and in Peru.
- In the Middle East fertile river valleys were surrounded by vast expanses of arid land deficient of rainfall. In Peru, fertile valleys were blockaded by major mountain ranges.

Origin of the State: A Theory



- Where there is an abundance of land population density remains low, pressure to intensify is negligible.
- Warfare, while common, is not fought over land in itself. A defeated group could move away and re-establish itself on new land.

Origin of the State: A Theory

Where there are sharp limits on the availability of productive land, population growth soon leads to growth in the number of villages occupying the land, with the result that all arable land is eventually under cultivation.



Origin of the State: A Theory



THIS PUTS PRESSURE ON INDIVIDUAL
VILLAGES FOR THE
INTENSIFICATION OF PRODUCTION
IN ORDER TO FEED THE EXPANDING
POPULATION.

Origin of the State: A Theory



WITH CONTINUING POPULATION
GROWTH, POPULATION PRESSURE
BECOMES A SEVERE PROBLEM,
LEADING TO THE INTENSIFICATION
OF WARFARE IN ORDER TO CAPTURE
ADDITIONAL LAND.

Origin of the State: A Theory



Under such circumscription, the consequences of warfare for the defeated group cannot be dispersal to a new region, since there is no suitable place to go.

Origin of the State: A Theory



THE CONQUERED GROUP WILL
THEREFORE LIKELY BE
POLITICALLY SUBORDINATED TO
THE VICTORIOUS GROUP, LEADING
TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
COMPLEX POLITICAL SYSTEMS AT
THE CHIEFDOM LEVEL.

Origin of the State: A Theory



With further intensification of production, population growth, and increased militarism over the struggle for land, chiefdoms will ultimately evolve into yet more complex state-level polities.

Origin of the State: A Theory



"By imperceptible shifts in the redistributive balance from one generation to the next, the human species bound itself over into a form of social life in which the many debased themselves on behalf of the exaltation of the few." --Marvin Harris (1977)

Origin of the State: A Theory



THE OUTCOME OF SUCH AN
EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS MIGHT
WELL BE THE FORMATION OF VAST
POLITICAL EMPIRES, SUCH AS THOSE
THAT PREVAILED IN SUCH
CIRCUMSCRIBED AREAS AS PERU
AND THE MIDDLE EAST.

Secondary States



Pristine states perished long ago, but once they evolved they created the conditions for both the intensification of state power and the formation of many more states over larger parts of the globe.

Secondary States



THE STATES THAT DEVELOPED IN
RESPONSE TO THE PRIOR
EXISTEDNCE OF ONE OR MORE
EARLIER STATES ARE THOSE WE
CALL SECONDARY.

Secondary States



HARRIS (1977) ARGUES THAT A
NUMBER OF SECONDARY STATES
HAVE FORMED IN ORDER TO
DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST
OTHER STATE SOCIETIES.

Secondary States



- SOME DEVELOPED TO CONTROL TRADE ROUTES.
- OTHERS AROSE AMONG NOMADIC PEOPLES WHEN THEY ATTEMPTED TO PLUNDER THE WEALTH OF STATE LEVEL SOCIETIES.

Religion

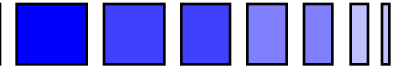
Religion also becomes a separate social institution, with full time officials, temples, and considerable political influence.



Religion



The religion of agrarians often include a belief in a "family" of gods, one of whom, the "high god," is regarded as more powerful than other lesser gods. this belief probably stems from people's experience of different levels of political authority, ranging from local rulers to absolute monarchs.



Yagua Indian, eastern Peru, dressed for a ceremony.

Economic Institutions

A distinct economic institution also develops; trade becomes more elaborate, and money comes into use as a medium of exchange.





Bartering yams and other farm produce for fish in New Guinea.

Writing

Writing is also associated with Agrarian society, probably with the need to keep accurate records for the state, trade and taxes.





An example of
Babylonian cuneiform
writing, derived
ultimately from
Sumerian cuneiform.

War

- Agrarian societies tend to be almost constantly at war and sometimes engage in systematic empire-building.
- These conditions demand an effective military organization, and permanent armies appear for the first time.





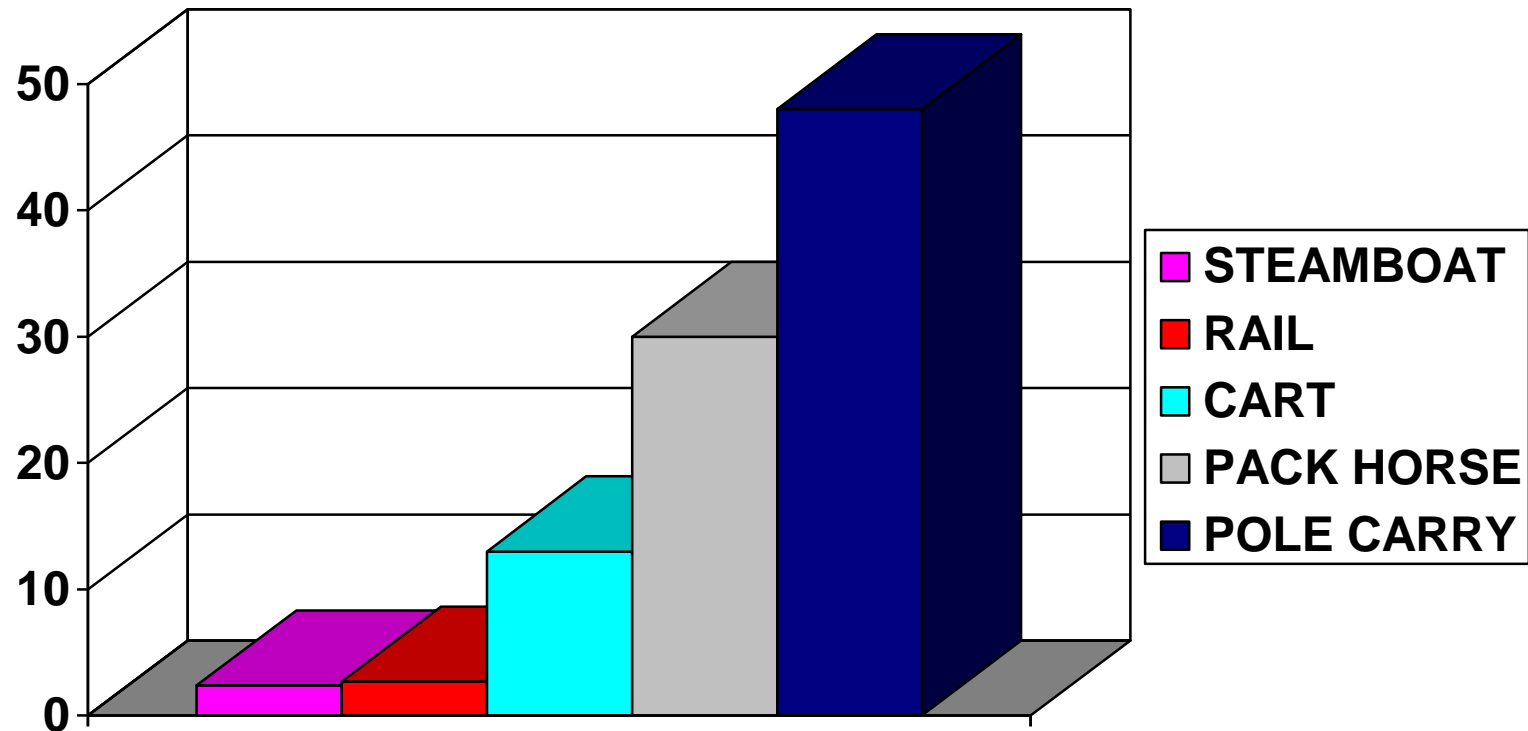
One consequence of the growth of empires was an increase in the economic surplus extracted from conquered peoples in the form of tribute: Egyptian carving showing tribute bearers (about 2000 B.C.)

Transportation



The need for efficient transport and communications in these large societies leads to the development of roads and navies, and previously isolated communities are brought into contact with one another.

Shipping 1 ton 1 mile; U.S. Cents



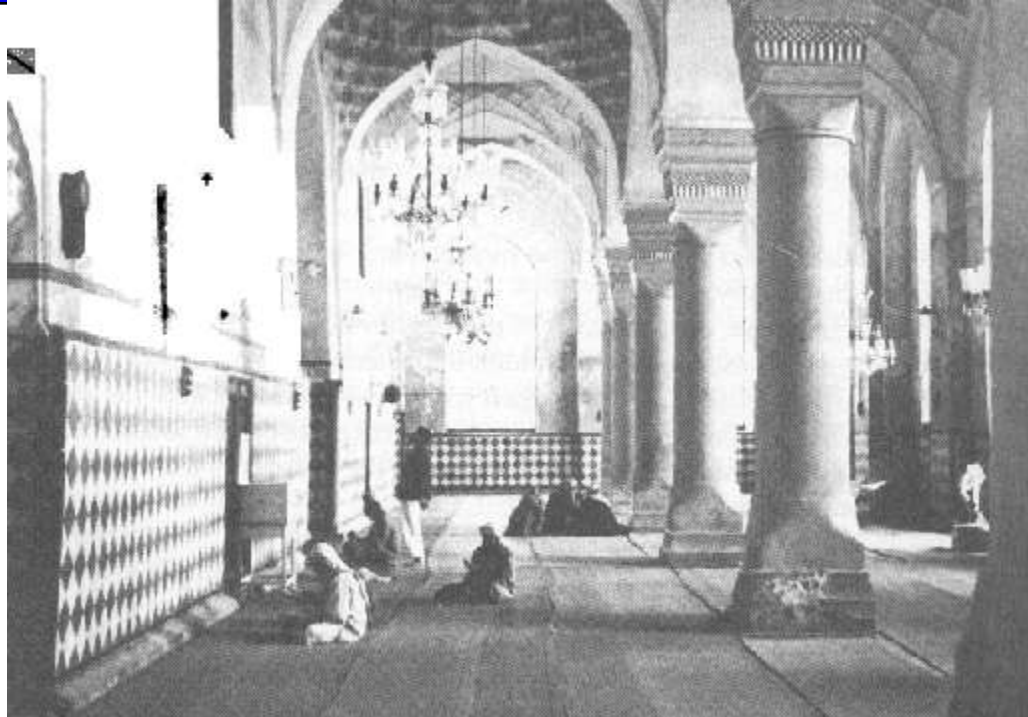
Surplus Wealth



The relative wealth of agrarian societies and their settled way of life permit surplus resources to be invested in new cultural artifacts--paintings and statues, temples, public building and monuments, palaces and stadiums.



Will & Deni McIntyre, Photo Researchers, Inc.



Islam is one of the universal faiths that emerged in the agrarian era: interior of a mosque in Baghdad, Iraq.

Summary



A society relying on agriculture as a subsistence strategy has a far more complex social structure and culture than any of the less evolved types of societies.

Summary



The number of secondary organizations multiply, the number of statuses and roles grow, cities appear, social classes arise, political and economic inequality become built into the social structure, and cultural knowledge becomes more diversified.