

the frequency and devastation of conflict, and led to the downgrading of the female. These changes, although revolutionary in cumulative effect, took place gradually, and their occurrence may not have been recognized by the participants. Pfeiffer believes that maintaining tradition and limiting change were pre-eminent rules among hunter-gatherer groups. Adaptation to varying environmental conditions was often makeshift, consisting in attempts to minimize the change in lifeways or to postpone an impending food crisis.

In Pfeiffer's account, the changes in environment at the end of the last ice age, most notably rising sea levels with consequent diminution of human living space, were the primary stimulus that created a situation of overpopulation which he sees as the prime mover in the introduction of agriculture and ultimately urbanism. "The last ten millennia have been a struggle to keep in balance, a race between rising population and increasingly sophisticated use of the land, with population always running ahead" (p. 21). Initially, population pressure meant less moving around for the once mobile groups and a concentration on food sources that were previously only supplemental. Efforts were made to control food sources by herding the animals and cultivating the plants to be eaten. Population continued to grow, only now at an increased rate, necessitating further innovations. Storage of surpluses against bad years, irrigation to increase yields, cooperation to improve productivity, and many other practices were introduced as part of the agricultural revolution. Although the hypothesis that population pressure was the primary cause of agricultural innovation, as championed by Pfeiffer, enjoys considerable popularity among scholars today, some, myself included, find it simplistic and unconvincing, seeing population pressure as probably only a secondary variable in a constellation of other cultural-environmental factors.

While early agriculture is examined in detail for only the Near East and Mexico, the rise of urbanism and state society is discussed as it occurred in nine regions of the world. Pfeiffer's treatment of this phenomenon in Africa, Southeast Asia, Europe, and the Pacific is noteworthy because most global historians take little or no notice of those areas when discussing it. Pfeiffer does not focus solely on the earliest civilizations but is interested in the emergence of complex society wherever and whenever it occurred. Numerous factors are cited for the growth of cities and administrative

elites in each region. Expanding population remains the primary variable, while conflict, trade, and economic planning are suggested as contributing factors. With respect to the growing divisions within early societies, Pfeiffer sees people in positions of power attempting to increase their status through ceremony as well as direct control. Human fears about the unknown, awe of spectacular monuments and ceremonies, knowledge of calendrical cycles, improved productivity and security gained through land management and storage, and military might are all manipulated to establish societies based on inequality.

Overall, *The Emergence of Society* is provocative reading, and I recommend it to anthropologists and other social scientists who want the flavor of what this generation of archeologists is doing combined with current views of a broad spectrum of scholars on the rise of complex society. Unfortunately, though, Pfeiffer has fallen victim to the magnitude of the endeavor. With so many leads to follow, so many people to talk with, he took seven years to complete this book. Too many subjects and ideas are presented too briefly. Many of the subjects presented are intriguing, and it is frustrating to have only a few sentences about each before being transported to the next item. Moreover, diverse theories, especially concerning the growth of cities, are uncritically abstracted from the words of their proponents, with too little effort at comparison and integration. Ideas and theories of Carneiro (p. 87), Boserup (p. 146), Adams (p. 154ff), Rathje (p. 367), Lathrap (p. 390), Flannery (p. 466), Wright and Johnson (p. 468), and numerous others are interestingly presented, but the presentation does not reveal the contradictions that exist between many of their elements. Similarly, a wide variety of methods still in an experimental stage are presented as if they were operational and formed the basis of current knowledge. And Pfeiffer, although he explicitly expresses concern with the origins of sexism, continues to use the word "man" to refer to the human species.

In spite of the flaws of his book the field of archeology is better off because of Pfeiffer's efforts. The countless probing interviews he conducted while collecting his information stimulated many of those he interviewed to seek new directions as well as brought them up to date on the discoveries of their colleagues.

CHARLES L. REDMAN

Department of Anthropology,
State University of New York,
Binghamton 13901

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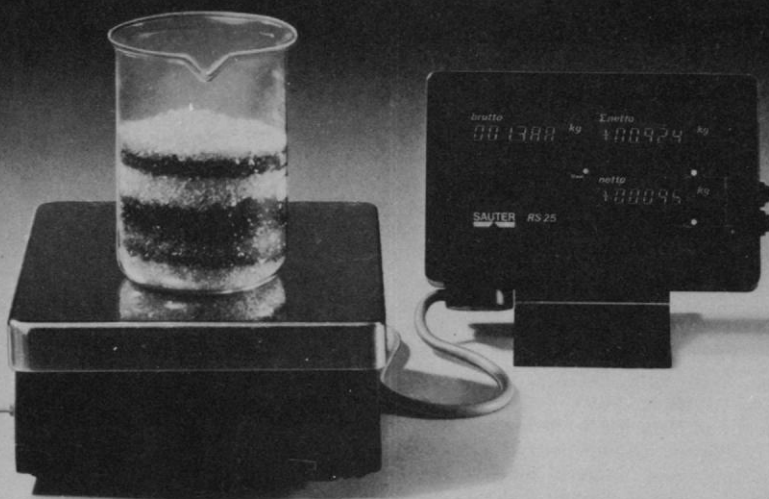
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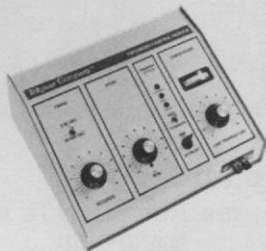
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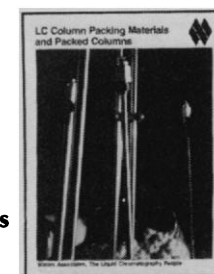


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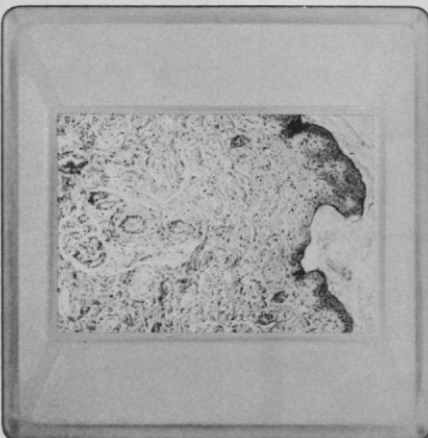
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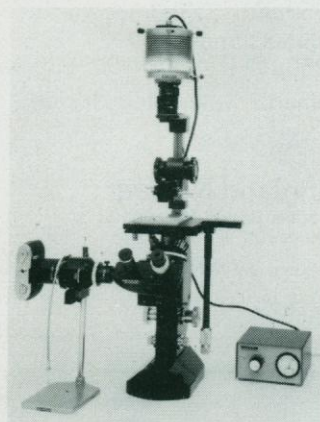
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