

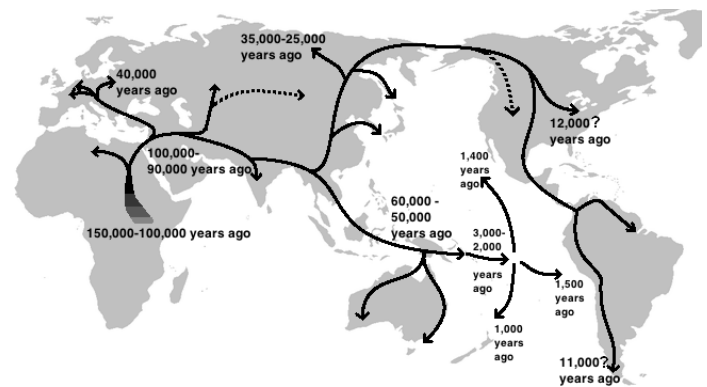
Pots or People?

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Expansion of modern humans



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19th-century chronology: based on materials

1. stone (lithic) age
2. copper
3. bronze
4. iron

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New and Old stone ages

Archaeologists realized that the Stone Age could be subdivided, still in terms of materials

Old Stone Age (Paleolithic) chipped stone

New Stone Age (Neolithic) chipped stone, ground stone, ceramics

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Middle Stone Age

Archaeologists then realized that the Old Stone Age could be divided further:

Old Stone Age (Paleolithic) chipped stone, extinct animals, spears.

Middle Stone Age (Mesolithic) chipped stone, modern animals, bows and arrows.

New Stone Age (Neolithic) chipped stone, ground stone, ceramics

Still in terms of materials.

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An economic distinction

What were Neolithic peoples doing with all those ground stone tools?

Farming! They were grinding seeds and nuts into flour.

Ceramics made sense, because Neolithic people were sedentary farmers, not mobile foragers.

So "Neolithic" came to refer to early farming.

Archaeologists began looking for seeds and other evidence of subsistence economy.

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Exceptions

- ▶ Pre-pottery Neolithic: farming without pots.
- ▶ Sedentary foragers with pots.

The former are considered “Neolithic,” but the latter aren’t. So the term is now about economy, not materials.

Timeline: from Manco

| Time | Events |
|-------------|--|
| Paleolithic | 46 kya, modern humans arrive in Europe |
| Mesolithic | 20–18 kya, last glacial maximum; 10 kya, people recolonized northern Europe |
| Neolithic | 6200 BC, farmers spread into Europe |
| Copper Age | 5000–4000 BC, copper in the Balkans; 3500 BC, wheeled vehicles, ploughs, wool sheep. |
| Bronze Age | 2300 BC, bronze in wide use |
| Iron Age | 800–500 BC, Hallstatt culture in Central Europe; 450 BC, La Tène culture. |

| Time | Events |
|--------------|---|
| Roman period | 458 BC, Romans begin to expand; AD 116 maxim extent of empire; AD 395–476, decline of western empire. |
| Migrations | AD 395, Huns invade eastern empire; AD 400, Angles, Saxons, and Jutes invade Britain; AD 481–511, Franks expand under Clovis; AD 500, Slavs settled around Oder; AD 660, Slavs invade Elbe-Saale region in Germany. |
| Viking age | AD 800, Viking raids began; AD 800, Rus took Kiev (Ukraine) as their capital; AD 1090, fall of last temple to Norse gods. |

V. Gordon Childe



Archeologist and philologist during 1st half of 20th century.

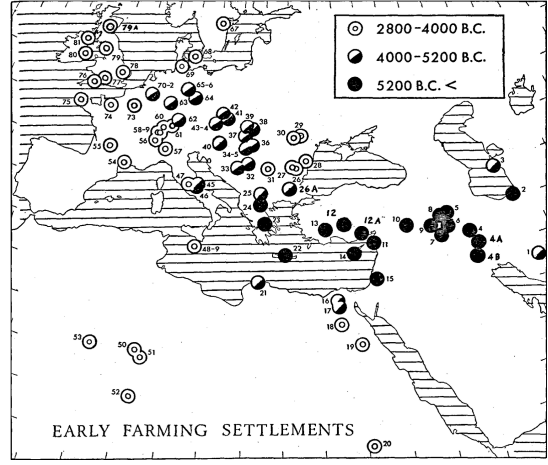
Childe: one population replaces another, over and over

We find certain types of remains—pots, implements, ornaments, burial rites and house forms—constantly recurring together. Such a complex of regularly associated traits we shall call a “cultural group” or just a “culture.” We assume that such a complex is the material expression of what today we would call “a people.”

—1929

In particular, Childe saw the European Neolithic as a movement of farming peoples into Europe, replacing the resident foragers.

1950s: radiocarbon changes everything



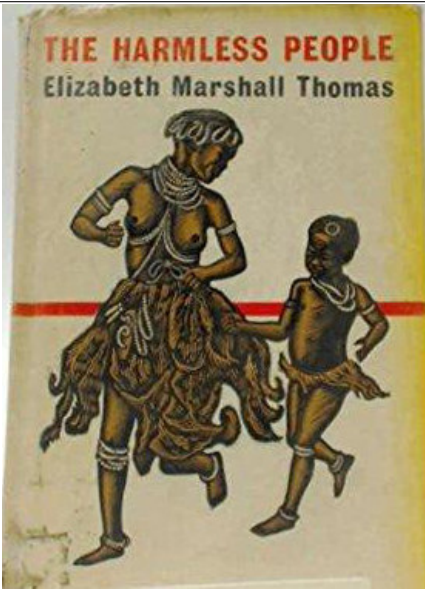
(Grahame Clark, 1965, Proc. Prehist. Soc.)

European prehistory after 1960



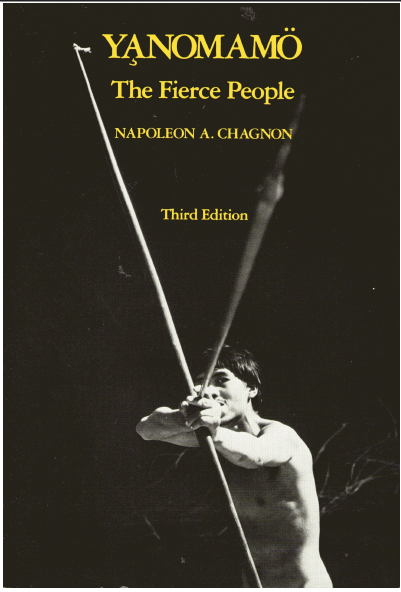
Grahame Clark

- ▶ Agriculture spread slowly across Europe—not an invasion.
- ▶ Diffusion of an idea—movement of pots, not people.
- ▶ Archaeology developed a deep skepticism toward explanations that involved large movements of people.



Peaceful foragers

Ethnography described peaceful foragers.



Warlike horticulturalists

It also described warlike horticulturalists.

The "Peace and Harmony Mafia"

Many anthropologists disagreed with Chagnon. An influential view has held that

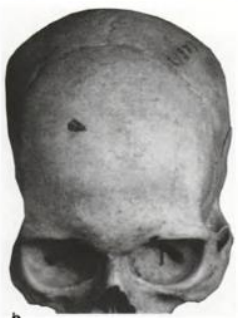
Humans and other animals are strongly inhibited from killing their own kind, that war is a recent invention, and that fighting among native peoples was ritualistic and harmless until they encountered European colonists. (Pinker, 2011, who was arguing otherwise)

This reinforced the "Pots not People" point of view. Without warfare, the Neolithic must have been the movement of an idea.

Yet there is plenty of evidence of violence in prehistory



Club injury (healed)

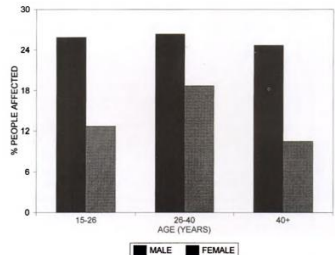


Projectile injury (chert point tip embedded)

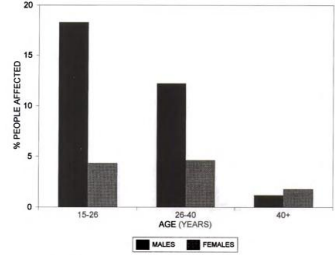
from Patricia Lambert, "Patterns of violence in prehistoric hunter-gatherer societies of southern California"

Prehistoric violence: skull injuries by age and sex

Prehistoric southern California coast mortuary data:

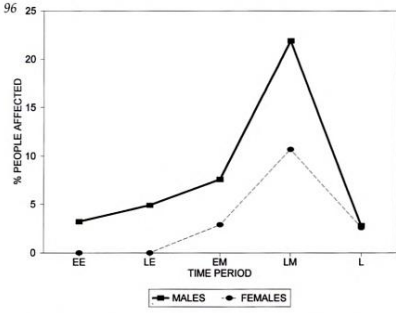


Healed cranial fractures (from Lambert)



Projectile injuries

Prehistoric violence: causes of death



Evidence of resource stress at peak violence period, prehistoric California coast (from Lambert):

- ▶ paleoclimate: hotter, dryer, periodic droughts
- ▶ forensic: skeletal evidence of declining health

Warfare cross-culturally: Death rate

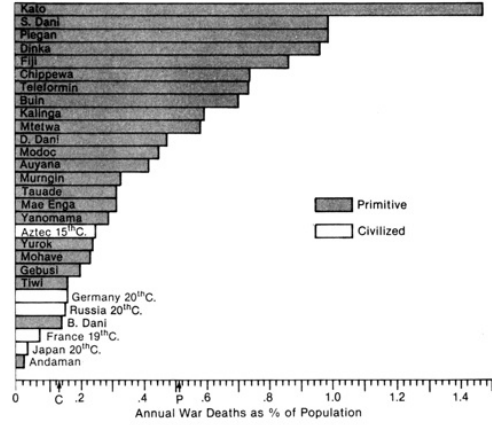


Figure 6.1 War fatality rates (percentage of population killed per annum) for various prestate and civilized societies (see Appendix, Table 6.1).

(from Keeley, War Before Civilization)

Warfare cross-culturally: Motives

Cross-cultural study of 186 mostly preindustrial societies found warfare associated with “fear of nature and fear of others”:

- ▶ More war strongly correlated with unpredictable natural disasters (no relationship with chronic scarcity)
- ▶ More war correlated with socialization for mistrust

Loss of social capital (interpersonal trust that facilitates cooperation) also features heavily in cross-national studies of violence

(cross-cultural study: Ember and Ember, 1992)

Summary

The European Neolithic is one of many episodes of large-scale change during prehistory.

Some anthropologists interpret these as movements of populations.

Others see them as the peaceful diffusion of an idea, with each local group in turn adopting a new economic system because it is advantageous.

Yet there is plenty of evidence for violence in prehistory, so there is no reason to dismiss the idea of an invasion.

As we shall see, genetic evidence has now settled this question.