

2024 BUTLIN LECTURE

Zhiwu Chen

Chair and Cheng Yu-Tung Professor in Finance, University of Hong Kong

War and the Origins of Chinese Civilization*

Why did complex societies, characterized by densely-populated walled cities, first arise in northern China, jump-starting early Chinese civilization? We explore this question in three steps. First, the North, especially the alluvial plains along the Yellow and the Yangtze Rivers, had generally flatter terrains than the South. Second, by dividing km grid-cells and using our archaeological database, we demonstrate that cells with flatter