Chapter 4: A World of Modern Humans

# Chapter Summary [Copied from Olszewski 2019, Chapter 4]

* Hunter–gatherer–foragers of the Later Stone Age in Africa and the Upper Paleolithic in Eurasia are characterized by the extensive use of many technological innovations, such as spear throwers (atlatls), bow-and-arrow hunting, traps, snares, nets, and fishnets. This also includes extensive use of small stone artifacts (microliths), which often were parts of composite tools.
* Complex social relationships and networks in the Later Stone Age and Upper Paleolithic are represented by the intensive use of personal ornamentation, as well as art in the form of figurines and cave and rockshelter paintings. These relationships also can be seen in unusual burials in the European Upper Paleolithic, such as those at Dolní Vĕstonice and Sungir.
* Some of the earliest modern humans to arrive in Europe are recognized archaeologically as the Upper Paleolithic Aurignacian culture. These groups coexisted in Western Europe for several thousand years with the last Neandertals (see Chapter 3).
* The Aurignacian has the earliest modern human cave art, figurines, and musical instruments (flutes) in Europe.
* The Gravettian/Eastern Gravettian Upper Paleolithic in Europe coincides with the “mammoth steppe,” extensive use of Venus figurines, and the development of cultural buffers such as tailored clothing that allowed human groups to live in northern parts of Europe during some of the coldest times of the last Ice Age.
* The Magdalenian/Epigravettian Upper Paleolithic period represents a time when human groups were able to recolonize northern Europe after a period of intensive glaciation. These archaeological cultures are associated with the majority of Upper Paleolithic portable and cave art.
* There have been many interpretations of Upper Paleolithic cave art. These include art for art’s sake, hunting and fertility magic, entoptic phenomena, and social communication about group identity and territories.
* Some modern human groups migrating out of Africa before 50,000 cal BC eventually reached Sahul. They were the first people to colonize what is now Australia and New Guinea.
* Sometime before 25,000 cal BC, hunter–gatherer–foragers from Siberia began to move into the Alaskan part of the Americas. They are the first people to colonize the New World and are part of the ancestry of living Native Americans and First Nations.
* The first people to reach both Australia/New Guinea and the Americas encountered a situation in which the animals had no experience with humans. Because many of these animals, called the megafauna, became extinct at the end of the Pleistocene Ice Ages, some researchers suggest that human hunting practices were responsible for the extinction events. However, other researchers believe that megafaunal extinctions may have been the result of significant climate changes as well as hunting.
* There are two probable routes for the peopling of the Americas. One is by crossing the Beringia land bridge (caused by lower sea levels) between Siberia and Alaska and then moving south through the ice-free corridor between the Laurentide and Cordilleran glaciers covering most of Canada. Another is a Pacific coastal route in which people may have used simple boats to coast hop from Beringia to south of the glaciers.
* Pre-Clovis sites such as Monte Verde in Chile indicate that some Paleoamericans used the Pacific coastal route to enter the Americas. Slightly later groups may have used the ice-free corridor.
* Clovis culture is a well-known early Paleoamerican tradition characterized by fluted stone spear points. It is found mainly in North America and traditionally has been associated with kill/butchery sites of megafauna such as mastodons, mammoths, extinct bison, camels, and horses.
* South American Paleoamericans, who were contemporary with Clovis culture, not only hunted land animals but also used maritime resources such as seabirds and fish.
* There are many Paleoamerican groups throughout the Americas after the Clovis period. Research on their sites indicates that they continued to broaden their subsistence to include many types of plant foods, land animals, birds, freshwater shellfish and fish, and in some cases maritime resources. Like their counterparts in the Upper Paleolithic of Europe and the Later Stone Age of Africa, Paleoamericans had adaptations that incorporated art and tools made of bone and ivory.

# Key Terms

**Altamira**: a painted cave site in Spain with Magdalenian Upper Paleolithic images, including the famous Hall of the Bison.

**Apollo 11 Cave**: Later Stone Age site in Namibia in Africa, it contains the oldest known African rock art at 30,000 to 28,000 cal BC.

**Aurignacian**: an Early Upper Paleolithic archaeological culture, dating between 43,000 and 33,000 cal BC, and associated with modern humans. It is found in Europe and has the earliest evidence for art and musical instruments in this part of the world.

**Beringia**: a land bridge that connected Siberia to Alaska during the Pleistocene; when sea levels rose after the Pleistocene, this land bridge was submerged and the area today is the waterway called the Bering Strait.

**Blackwater Draw Locality 1**: a Paleoamerican Clovis kill and butchery site found near the town of Clovis in New Mexico. This is the source for the name of the Clovis culture and the Clovis point, although these distinctive fluted points were first found at Dent in Colorado.

**Bluefish Caves**: earliest site in eastern Beringia (Canada) dating to 22,000 cal BC.

**Buang Merabak**: one of the earliest archaeological sites in New Guinea, documenting the colonization of Sahul at least as early as 43,000–42,000 cal BC.

**Carpenters Gap**: archaeological site in western Australia dating to 47,000 cal BC, showing the spread of people into inland areas.

**Caverna de Pedra Pintado**: a Paleoamerican site in the Amazon region of Brazil. It documents the wide range of foods that Paleoamericans ate, and it also contains the earliest cave art known in South America.

**Chauvet Cave**: an Upper Paleolithic painted cave in France with the oldest known Aurignacian drawings at 35,000 cal BC; it also has art from later Upper Paleolithic periods.

**Clovis**: an early Paleoamerican culture in the Americas, dating between 11,300 and 10,850 cal BC; they made a distinctive, bifacially flaked stone spear point called a Clovis point and are associated with kill and butchery sites of mammoth and other now extinct animals.

**Dietz Site**: a series of Clovis Paleoamerican camp locales in Oregon. They are situated near a travel route between several different resource areas and contain artifacts made from various stone raw materials found in different parts of this region.

**Dolní Vĕstonice**: an Eastern Gravettian (Mid-Upper Paleolithic) set of sites in the Czech Republic in Central Europe, dating between 30,000 and 27,000 cal BC. It contains evidence for early experiments in firing clay-like sediment (making ceramics) and exceptional burials.

**El Bajio**: a Clovis Paleoamerican site in Sonora in Mexico. This region contains a quarry for stone raw materials, camp sites, and knapping locales where people made stone artifacts.

**Enkapune ya Muto**: also known as “Twilight Cave,” this site in Kenya is one of the oldest Later Stone Age sites in Africa and contains ostrich egg shell beads dating to 40,000 years ago (the dates are on materials that are not calibrated).

**Epi-Gravettian**: a Late Upper Paleolithic archaeological culture found in Eastern and parts of Central Europe from 20,000 to 10,000 cal BC; during this period people were able to recolonize northerly parts of Europe and Siberia.

**Folsom**: a Paleoamerican culture that follows Clovis culture. Folsom dates between 10,800 to 9,800 cal BC. It is characterized by the hunting of extinct bison and is found mainly in the Plains and southern Rocky Mountains in the United States.

**Folsom Site**: a Paleoamerican kill/butchery site of the Folsom culture in New Mexico; it is associated with the hunting of extinct bison.

**Gravettian/Eastern Gravettian**: archaeological cultures of the Mid-Upper Paleolithic, dating between 30,000 and 20,000 cal BC, and associated with abundant “Venus” figurines, experiments with firing clay-like sediments, and some unusual burials; Gravettian is found in Western Europe and Eastern Gravettian in Central and Eastern Europe.

**Grotte des Contrebandiers**: a Later Stone Age site in Morocco where the study of scaled pieces in the flaked stone artifact assemblage suggests that they were used as cores and thus represent an intensive use of stone raw materials that is similar to recycling.

**Guitarrero Cave**: a site in the Andes in northern Peru in South America. Its earliest occupation dates to the Paleoamerican period when people used the cave for short-term visits. In the later Archaic period, it yielded abundant evidence for cordage and textiles woven from plant materials.

**Hohle Fels Cave**: dating to more than 33,000 cal BC, this Aurignacian (Early Upper Paleolithic) site in Germany contains the oldest known female figurine (“Venus” figurine) and the oldest known musical instruments (ivory and bird bone flutes).

**“Ice-Free Corridor”**: a term mainly used to indicate the passageway between the Cordilleran and Laurentide glaciers that covered Canada during the Pleistocene; it is widely thought to be a route used during the peopling of the Americas after 11,500 cal BC.

**Lascaux**: a well-known Late Upper Paleolithic cave art site in France; most of the hundreds of images date to the Magdalenian period.

**Later Stone Age (LSA)**: the time period in Africa beginning before 50,000 cal BC; it is characterized by modern humans with modern human behaviors including abundant evidence for symbolism.

**Madjebebe**: The earliest archaeological site in Sahul, dating to 65,000 years ago. The site features a hearth, stone tools including hatchets, and ground ochre.

**Magdalenian**: a Late Upper Paleolithic archaeological culture found in Western and Central Europe from 15,000 to 9000 cal BC; the majority of Paleolithic cave art and portable art (figurines, etc.) were made during this period.

**“Mammoth Steppe”**: a vast dry grasslands set of habitats that characterized the entire region from Western Europe to Alaska during the Upper Paleolithic; it supported vast animal herds such as horses, bison, and mammoth, as well as unusual combinations of plants and animals that are not found together today.

**Mezhirich**: an Epi-Gravettian (Late Upper Paleolithic) site in Ukraine that is a winter base camp; it contains four substantial dwellings built of mammoth bones and tusks, large storage pits, and hearths.

**Monte Verde**: a site in Chile in South America which is one of the earliest sites in the Americas, dating to 12,600 cal BC; the presence of people in South America at this time suggests that some groups entering the Americas may have followed a coastal route from Beringia.

**O. V. Clary Site**: a later Paleoamerican site in Nebraska. It was a winter habitation with activities such as hide working, food processing (of bison), and possibly hide clothing manufacture.

**Paleoamerican**: a term used by some archaeologists to describe the earliest people in the Americas (other archaeologists use the term Paleoindian); their descendants are the Native Americans of North, Central, and South America.

**Quebrada Jaguay**: a Paleoamerican site in Peru that dates to 12,000 cal BC. It contains evidence for the use of maritime resources such as shellfish and fish, rather than an exclusive focus on hunting extinct forms of land mammals.

**Quebrada Santa Julia**: a Paleoamerican site in Chile that is associated with the bones of extinct horse and fluted spear points. It dates to 11,000 cal BC and represents Paleoamerican traditions that are not Clovis.

**Quebrada Tacahuay**: a later Paleoamerican site in coastal Peru. People here continued to focus on maritime resources, especially seabirds and fish.

**Rose Cottage Cave**: a site in South Africa with Middle and Later Stone Age deposits.

**Sahul**: the merged land masses of Australia and New Guinea during the Pleistocene; they were connected to each other by land exposed due to lower sea levels.

**Schaefer Mammoth Site**: a site in Wisconsin in the United States with dates between 12,800 to 12,200 cal BC; it predates the opening of the “ice-free corridor” and suggests that hunter-gatherers may have entered the Americas south of the glaciers by using a coast-hopping route down the western coasts along Alaska and Canada, and then spread east and south.

**Shawnee-Minisink Site**: a Clovis Paleoamerican habitation site in Pennsylvania. It yielded fish and plant remains, suggesting that Clovis diets were much broader than a focus on large animals such as mammoth and mastodon.

**Sloth Hole**: a Clovis Paleoamerican kill site in Florida in the United States. It dates to 11,050 cal BC and yielded more than 30 ivory points.

**Sunda**: the merged land masses of many of the Southeast Asia islands (such as those of Indonesia) and mainland Southeast Asia during the Pleistocene; they were connected to each other by land exposed due to lower sea levels.

**Sungir**: an Eastern Gravettian (Mid-Upper Paleolithic) site in Russia with several spectacular burials, including the double child burial that contained mammoth ivory spears, thousands of mammoth ivory beads, red ochre, ivory pendants, pierced arctic fox teeth, and ivory discs.

**“Venus” Figurines**: these female carvings are found throughout Europe during the Gravettian/Eastern Gravettian period of the Upper Paleolithic; the earliest known “Venus,” however, is from the Aurignacian period at Hohle Fels in Germany.

**Vilakuav**: archaeological site in the northern Sahul in the New Guinea highlands dating to between 47,000 and 42,000 cal BC.

**Wally’s Beach**: early site in Canada dating to 11,300 cal BC, occupied before the ice-free corridor was opened.