

# CHAPTER I OUTLINE

## I. Opening Vignette

- A. *The Hazda of Tanzania are one of the last gathering and hunting societies on earth.*
  - 1. likely to disappear soon
  - 2. will mark the end of what was universal human existence until 10,000–12,000 years ago
- B. *For 95 percent of human history, the means of life was gathering and hunting.*
  - 1. food collection, not food production
  - 2. has been labeled “Paleolithic” (old stone age) era
- C. *It’s wrong to ignore the first 200,000 years of human experience.*
  - 1. archaeology reveals a great deal about these peoples
  - 2. they settled the planet
  - 3. they created the earliest human societies
  - 4. they were the first to reflect on issues of life and death

## II. Out of Africa to the Ends of the Earth: First Migrations

- A. *Homo sapiens emerged in eastern and southern Africa 250,000 years ago.*
  - 1. stayed there exclusively for about 150,000 years
  - 2. Africa was home to the “human revolution,” in which culture became more important than biology in shaping human behavior
  - 3. humans began to inhabit environments not touched by earlier hominids
  - 4. technological innovation: use of stone and bone tools
  - 5. hunting and fishing, not just scavenging
  - 6. patterns of exchange
  - 7. use of ornaments, perhaps planned burials
  - 8. between 100,000-60,000 years ago: beginning of migrations out of Africa
    - a. adapted to nearly every environment on earth
    - b. much took place in the difficulties of the last Ice Age
- B. *Into Eurasia*
  - 1. humans started migrating into the Middle East around 51,000 years ago
  - 2. the best evidence of early European settlement comes from southern France and northern Spain
    - a. settlers in northern Europe were pushed southward into warmer areas around 20,000 years ago
    - b. developed new hunting habits, new hunting technologies
  - 3. the earliest Europeans left hundreds of cave paintings: depictions of animals and humans and abstract designs (maybe early form of writing)
  - 4. development of new technologies in Ukraine and Russia
    - a. needles, multilayered clothing, weaving, nets, baskets, pottery, etc.
    - b. partially underground dwellings made from mammoth remains
    - c. suggests semi-permanent settlement
    - d. creation of female figurines (“Venus figurines”); earliest dated at least 35,000 years ago
- C. *Into Australia*
  - 1. humans reached Australia about 60,000 years ago from Indonesia
  - 2. very sparse settlement; estimated 300,000 people in 1788
  - 3. development of some 250 languages
  - 4. still completely a gathering and hunting economy when Europeans arrived in 1788
  - 5. complex worldview: The Dreamtime
    - a. stories, ceremonies, and art tell of ancestral beings
    - b. everything in the natural order is an echo of ancient happenings
    - c. current people are intimately related to places and events in past

6. major communication and exchange networks
  - a. included stones, pigments, wood, *pituri* (psychoactive drug)
  - b. also included songs, dances, stories, and rituals

#### ***D. Into the Americas***

1. when settlement of the Americas began still argued over (between 30,000 and 15,000 years ago)
  - a. mode of migration (Bering Strait or by sea down west coast of North America) also argued
  - b. how many migrations and how long they took also argued over
  - c. evidence of humans in southern Chile by 12,500 years ago
2. Clovis: the first clearly defined and widespread culture of the Americas
  - a. name comes from the Clovis point, a kind of projectile point
  - b. flourished 12,000–11,000 years ago
  - c. hunted large mammals (mammoths, bison)
  - d. disappeared about 10,900 years ago, same time as extinction of a number of large mammals
3. next stage: greater cultural diversity, as people adapted to the end of the Ice Age in different ways

#### ***E. Into the Pacific***

1. the last phase of the great human migration, started ca. 3,500 years ago
2. migration by water from the Bismarck and Solomon Islands and the Philippines
3. very quick migration over very long distances
4. migrants spoke Austronesian languages (can be traced to southern China)
5. settled every habitable area of the Pacific basin within 2,500 years
  - a. also settled the island of Madagascar
  - b. made Austronesian the most widespread language family
  - c. completed initial human settlement of the world ca. 900 C.E. with occupation of Aotearoa (New Zealand)
6. Pacific settlers
  - a. took agriculture with them, unlike other migrations
  - b. apparently followed a deliberate colonization plan
  - c. created highly stratified societies or chiefdoms (e.g., Hawaii)
  - d. massive environmental impact on previously uninhabited lands

### ***III. The Ways We Were***

#### ***A. The First Human Societies***

1. societies were small, bands of 25–50 people
2. very low population density (because of available technology)
  - a. very slow population growth
  - b. perhaps 10,000 people in world 100,000 years ago
  - c. grew to 500,000 by 30,000 years ago
  - d. reached 6 million 10,000 years ago
3. Paleolithic bands were seasonally mobile or nomadic
  - a. moved in regular patterns to exploit wild plants and animals
  - b. since they moved around, they couldn't accumulate goods
4. societies were highly egalitarian
  - a. perhaps the most free people in human existence
  - b. did not have specialists, so most people had the same skills
  - c. relationships between women and men were far more equal than in later societies
5. James Cook described the gathering and hunting peoples of Australia as tranquil and socially equal
6. Paleolithic societies had clearly defined rules
  - a. men hunted, women gathered
  - b. clear rules about distribution of meat from a kill
  - c. rules about incest and adultery

## ***B. Economy and the Environment***

1. gathering and hunting peoples used to be regarded as “primitive” and impoverished
  - a. modern studies point out that they worked fewer hours
  - b. wanted or needed little
  - c. but life expectancy was low (35 years on average)
2. alteration of natural environments
  - a. deliberately set fires to encourage growth of certain plants
  - b. extinction of many large animals shortly after humans arrived
  - c. gradual extinction of other hominids, like the Neanderthals (Europe) and Flores man (Indonesia)

## ***C. The Realm of the Spirit***

1. it is difficult to decipher the spiritual world of Paleolithic peoples
  - a. lack of written sources
  - b. art is subject to interpretation
  - c. contemporary gathering and hunting peoples may not reflect ancient experience
2. Paleolithic peoples had a rich ceremonial life
  - a. led by part-time shamans (people especially skilled at dealing with the spirit world)
  - b. frequent use of psychoactive drugs to contact spirits
3. apparent variety of beliefs
  - a. some societies were seemingly monotheistic
  - b. others saw several levels of supernatural beings
  - c. still others believed in an impersonal force running throughout the natural order
  - d. Venus figurines make some scholars think that Paleolithic religion was strongly feminine, with a great goddess
  - e. many peoples probably had a cyclical view of time

## ***D. Settling Down: “The Great Transition”***

1. gradual change as populations grew, climates changed, and peoples interacted
2. collection of wild grains started in northeastern Africa around 16,000 years ago
3. last Ice Age ended 16,000–10,000 years ago
  - a. followed by a “global warming” period
  - b. richer and more diverse environment for human societies
  - c. population rise
  - d. beginnings of settlement
4. settlement led to societal change
  - a. larger and more complex societies
  - b. storage and accumulation of goods led to inequality
5. settling-down process occurred in many areas 12,000–4,000 years ago
  - a. Jomon culture in Japan
  - b. Scandinavia, Southeast Asia, North America, Middle East
  - c. bows and arrows were invented independently in Europe, Africa, and Middle East
6. the process of settlement was a major turning point in human history

## ***IV. Comparing Paleolithic Societies***

### ***A. Both the San and the Chumash preserved their ancient way of life into modern times.***

### ***B. The San of Southern Africa***

1. northern fringe of the Kalahari Desert (present-day Angola, Namibia, Botswana)
2. 50,000–80,000 San still live in the region

3. part of the Khoisan language family, inhabited southern Africa at least 5,000 years
  - a. gathering and hunting way of life, with stone tools
  - b. remarkable rock art, going back 26,000 years
  - c. most of the Khoisan peoples were absorbed or displaced by Bantu-speaking peoples
4. The San (Ju/'hoansi) still practiced their ancient life with few borrowings when anthropologists started studying them in the 1950s and 1960s
  - a. use some twenty-eight tools, including digging stick, leather garment for carrying things, knife, spear, bow and poisoned arrows, ropes, and nets
  - b. men hunt, women do most of gathering
  - c. adequate diet
  - d. short workweek, with even labor division between men and women
  - e. uncertain and anxious life, dependent on nature
5. San society characterized by mobility, sharing, and equality
  - a. basic unit is band of 10–30 people, connected to other bands
  - b. many people claimed membership in more than one band
  - c. frequent movement to new territory
  - d. no formal leaders, priests, or craft specialists
  - e. very complex social relations
  - f. high value given to modesty, cooperation, equality
  - g. e.g., “insulting the meat”: a hunter is expected to disparage his accomplishment
  - h. complex system of unequal gift exchange
6. relative equality between the sexes
  - a. free sex play between teenagers
  - b. most marriages are monogamous
  - c. frequent divorce among young couples
7. frequent conflict over distribution of meat; rivalries over women
8. belief system:
  - a. Creator god, *Gao Na*, is capricious
  - b. lesser god, *Gauwa*, is destructive but sometimes assists humans
  - c. *gauwasi* (spirits of dead ancestors) are most serious threat to human welfare
  - d. evil influences can be counteracted with *n/um*, a spiritual potency that can be activated in “curing dances”
  - e. state of warfare with the divine

### ***C. The Chumash of Southern California***

1. indicate a later Paleolithic stage than the San, with permanent villages
2. Chumash lived near present-day Santa Barbara, California
  - a. richer environment than the San
  - b. perhaps 20,000 when the Spaniards arrived in the sixteenth century
  - c. Chumash created new society after 1150 C.E. in response to violence and food shortages
3. central technological innovation: the planked canoe (*tomol*)
  - a. ability to make and own *tomol* led to social inequality
  - b. stimulated trade between the coast and islands
  - c. made deep-sea fishing possible
4. living conditions were more elaborate than the San
  - a. round, permanent, substantial houses (for up to 70 people)
  - b. a market economy, despite being gathering and hunting peoples
  - c. beginning of class distinctions (e.g., bearskin capes, burials)
  - d. emergence of a permanent, hereditary political elite
5. Chumash largely solved the problems of violence in the region

## ***V. Reflections: The Uses of the Paleolithic***

### ***A. The study of history is about those who tell it today, not just about the past.***

1. views of the past reflect our own smugness or disillusionment
2. Paleolithic era is sometimes regarded as a golden age
  - a. admired by feminists, environmentalists, anti-materialists
3. scholars have looked to the Paleolithic era in questioning explosive population and economic growth of recent past
4. gathering and hunting peoples of today have looked to Paleolithic era in an effort to maintain or recover their identities

### ***B. A basic question: "What have we lost in the mad rush to modernity?"***

### ***C. Nobody can be completely detached when studying the past.***