

# ANCIENT CULTURES

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lecture one: V. Gordon Childe

savagery - hunters/gatherers

barbarism - farmers

civilisation - near eastern communities of the bronze age

## **1950 - he drew up characteristics of civilisations**

### **PRIMARY CHARACTERISTICS OF CIVILISATIONS**

cities, formal states specialisation of labour concentration of wealth inequality

- Iraq (mesopotamia)
- Egypt
- indus valley
- Shang china
- maya

### **SECONDARY CHARACTERISTICS OF CIVILISATION**

monuments trade art forms writing sciences

- Minoan crete and Mycenaean Greece
- the Sudan (nubia)
- south east Asia

### **THEORIES FOR CULTURAL CHANGE**

1. urban revolution - development of city prompting for state structures
2. ecology and irrigation - valleys rivers environment (most beneficial = development states)
3. technology - domestication of horse, development of wheel
4. warfare - competition of land trade resources
5. environmental change - influence of environment
6. cultural systems

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lecture 2: evolution, adaptation and migration

- punctuated equilibrium - periods of fast development then stability.
- plate tectonics created divide across atlantic ocean, primates colonised americas and old world,
- primates developed into "new world" monkeys
- 7 million years ago last shared ancestor between chimps and humans lived.

### **BIG BANG**

- 65 million years ago -K-T mass extinction, 70% all creatures on earth went extinct
- adaptive radiation of mammals occurred

### **HUMANS IN AFRICA:**

- period of major australopithecine species diversification (4-2 million years ago)
- "Lucy" famous Australopithecus, 1 mtr tall, 60% of skeleton was found - 3.8 mya
- colder and dryer climate caused ancestors to have to run away from predators rather than climb trees as trees weren't as common - development of bipedalism (two legs upright)
- between 3 - 1.8 million years ago, australopithecus Africans diverged into Homo species - homo habilis and homo Erectus/Ergaster
  - not great deal of height difference, yet great difference in brain size habilis (640cc) erectus (890-1040cc)
- homo habilis created cutting tools by hitting stones - learned by observation (cultural)
  - found marks on antelope jaw 2.5million years ago. cut tongue out.
  - ergaster created oldowan tools (2.6 - 1.8 mya) then developed into acheulean (1.75 - 0.1mya) - tear dropped shape with flat edge
  - first possible sign of technology and modernisation
- erectus were able to adapt and modify to different locations, became social - expanded out of africa colonises most of old world
- Georgia - Homo Erectus Georgicus - skull found in river valley

- contributed to ideas of features which suggested early humans were all one species rather than different species due to skull features
- China - 1.36 mya
- Indonesia - 840,000 years ago, Flores island "hobbit" (just over 1m tall, suggest isolation changed the size of homo species in this area) Homo Floresiensis. in this area water crossing was required.

## **RISE OF HOMO SAPIENS**

- Herto in Ethiopia, two adult and a child skull were found 160,000 BP
  - suggests behaviour change - ritualistic practices, repeated scoring marks across skull, polishing and decoration to skulls after death (after death rituals)
- Omo in Ethiopia - 195,000 (found by dating of geological area around skull)
  - studies of skull found here indicate modern skull
- Klasies River Caves - South africa - 125,000 -75,000 BP
  - seeing that people are accessing marine resources at this site - suggests technological change
  - lived by human methods - hunting and gathering own food, cooked using fires
  - caves weren't permanent, then moving to next hunting ground
- Blombos cave - south africa - 75,000
  - early jewellery found here - cultural origins, shows how people are thinking and behaving socially
  - coastal site shows adaptation - differs from river valleys

## **OUT OF AFRICA - MIGRATION AND COLONISATION**

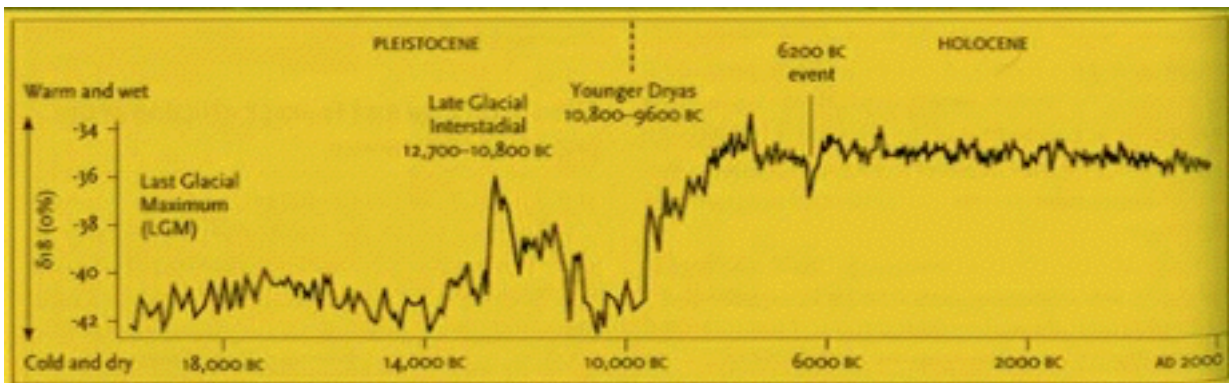
- africa to middle east
  - skuhl cave and qafzeh cave in israel - 130,000 - 90,000 BP
  - concentration of early human remains
  - environment created corridor for animals to move in and out of Africa
  - skull found similar to modern humans yet robust brow ridge
  - burials in this area - grave gifts (antlers of deer) people provide tokens to deceased - cultural changes
- mount toba event (sumatra) 74,000 BP
  - super eruption, resulted in volcanic winter - cooling climate, extinctions and population decrease - human race decreased significantly.
- Asia
  - Loijiang cave in China and Tam Pa Ling skull in Laos
  - 68,000; 46 - 63000 years ago
- Australia
  - Lake Mungo - NSW, 40 - 45000 BP
  - "mungo man and mungo lady"
  - mungo lady was cremation burial, one of first cremation burials known
  - sands moved to reveal mungo man skull - lived to 50
- Europe
  - peatera cu oase cave - Romania - 35000
  - Hahnogersnad in germany - 33000
  - les ezyies in france - 30000
  - "cro-magnon species (EMH early modern human, AMH anatomically modern human)
    - found tall rounded skull, near vertical forehead, reduced brow ridge, no prominent prognathism of the face and jaw
    - tall, 176cm, rectangular eye orbits solid legs and arms recognisable as humans
  - aurignacian tools produced by EMH in europe, also created cave paintings develop art
  - overlap between homo sapiens species and neanderthal species in europe - 0.23% difference in DNA
    - trauma in neanderthal skulls from falling of and fighting animals - lived short athletic lives
- iraq
  - shanadar 1 - 60000 45000 neanderthal found
  - crushed right side of body
  - blind in left eye
  - general bone infections
  - partial paralysis
  - living in social groups and supporting physically disabled people
  - flower burials, man was buried with array of floral material - social cultural ideas

- americas
  - two competing theories for settlement
  - 1. clovis hypothesis 12000
  - 2. pre clovis hypothesis 40,000
  - genetic evidence of back and forth migration
- oceania
  - series of islands - people had to have maritime skills to access islands
  - 5000 years ago dates by language dispersal



## lecture 3 - from foraging to farming

- currently in interglacial period - 9600 BCE
- 22 - 19000 BCE last global maximum **cold**
- 18000 BCE **warming** end of last ice age
- 10800 BCE dramatic brief cooling (younger dryas)
- 9600 BCE holocene **stabilising**



- at end of ice age significant changes in animals and plants
  - woolly mammoths and saba tooth tiger go extinct
- people able to survive and adapt
- south west asia - had caves and places where people could leave easily provided shelter
- fertile crescent - stretch of land behind mountain ranges of mesopotamia

### upper palaeolithic - old stone age

- period of rapid and dynamic development
  - stone tools technologies cultural change and innovation in behaviour (proxies: mortar pestle)
  - shows hunting changes - smaller species gives people chance to stay in one place for longer
  - people began to harvest and store plant materials

**Kebaran people:** upper Palaeolithic people living in Levant area

### Ohalo II - 19000 BCE

- three oval huts
- external hearths
- domestic waste area
- single burial
- fishing from the lake, hunting in the steppe land above
- semi sedentary - range of animals they've been accessing and repair of floor over time - multiple use
- kebaran communities in Levant, Zarzian community in the Zagros

