

# Global Prehistory

The background of the slide is a photograph of a cave wall covered in prehistoric paintings of animals. The paintings are in various colors, including ochre, red, black, and white. The animals depicted include a large bison or aurochs at the top, several deer or stags, and various smaller animals like horses and ibex. The rock surface is uneven and textured, with some areas appearing darker and more shadowed than others.

# Content Area 1: Prehistoric Art

- **Guiding Questions:** Why make art when, in the prehistoric world, there are so many more important things to do? What aspects of prehistoric art have continued through the ages? What possible meanings might prehistoric art have had for its original audience, and how do those contrast with the meanings of prehistoric works have for audiences today?
- **Works:** Camelid sacrum in the shape of a canine(3); Anthropomorphic stele(6); Jade cong from Liangzhu, China(7); The Ambum Stone from Papua New Guinea(9); Tlatilco Female Figures(10); Terra-cotta fragment(11); Apollo 11 stones(1); Lascaux Caves(2); Running Horned Woman(4); Beaker with ibex motifs(5); Stonehenge(8)
- **Vocabulary:** Anthropomorphic, archaeology, cong, henge, lintel, megalith, menhir, mortise-and-tenon, post-and-lintel, shamanism, stele, stylized

# Lesson #1

- Agenda: Bellwork, Prehistoric Art (background), Informal Analysis, Prehistoric Sculpture, Informal Analysis
- Bellwork:
  - Speculate why prehistoric art exists in the first place?

Historical Background

# **PREHISTORIC ART**

## Early Human Migration, 1,600,000–10,000 B.C.



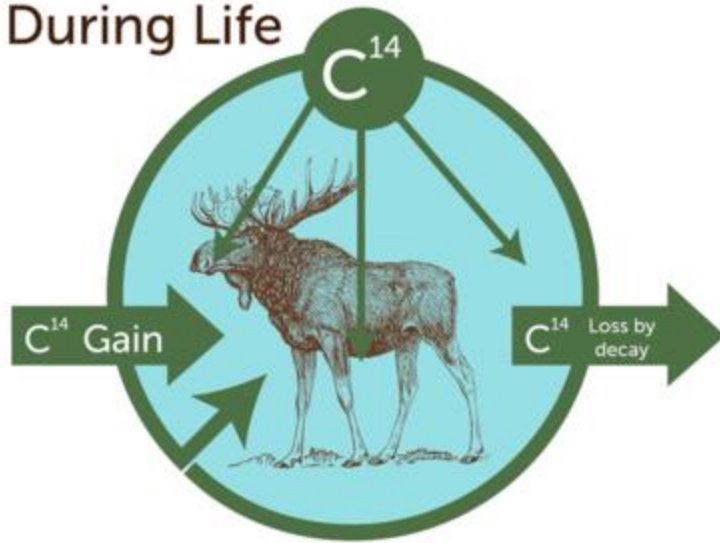
Anatomically modern humans (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) developed in Africa about 120,000 years ago; of these, a small group left the Continent around 100,000-35,000 years ago and spread throughout the rest of the world.

# Essential Knowledge and Historical Background

- Paleolithic (Old Stone Age)=30,000-8,000 B.C.E.
- Neolithic (New Stone Age)=8,000-3,000 B.C.E.
- PH art affect by climate change
- Seen through both practical and ritualistic objects
- Concern with cosmic phenomena and earthly concerns (globally)
- Human behavior
- Ceramics first produced in Asia
- People in the Pacific are migrants from Asia
- Cave paintings indicate strong tradition of ritual
- Early American objects use natural materials, like bone or clay, to create ritual objects
- Scientific dating is important to shedding light on the unknown
- **Archaeology** increases our understanding

# Carbon-14 and Living Things

During Life



Death



# Essential Knowledge and Historical Background

- No written record
- Need to create a strong human impulse
- Art seems to have a function (no art for arts sake) and in the form of rock paintings and carved natural and local materials and is associated with food production, settlement, status, and burial
- Attempts to understand meanings behind works is calculated speculation
- Hunter-gatherers (paleolithic)
- Neolithic peoples cultivated land, domesticated livestock, lived in permanent settlements, and had division of labor



Hypothesize why a person would do this? What could be the meaning?

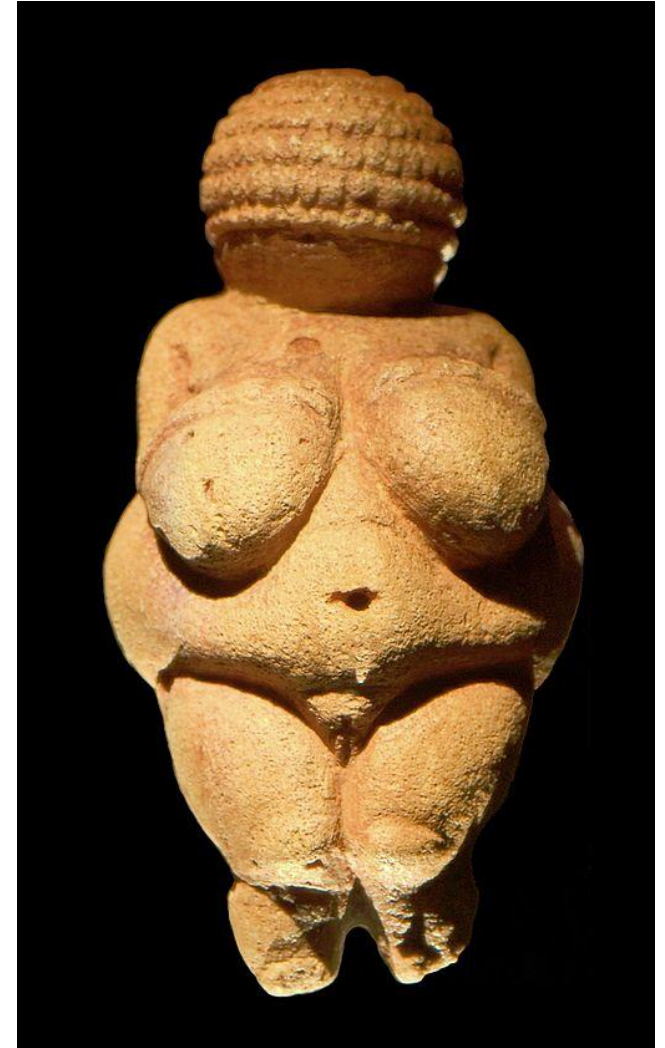


Sculpture

# **PREHISTORIC ART**

# Sculpture-Background Info

- Portable (mostly)
- Images of humans (many female) with enlarged sex organs, and small feet and arms (fecund).
- Materials include stone, bone, clay (rare), ceramics.
- Use natural shape of the landscape to enhance portrayals.



# Informal Short Analysis Practice

## 10 points

- Using your knowledge of the formal elements of art and prehistory knowledge, speculate how and why this work is created.
- Address form, function, content, and context.
- Be sure to defend your claims!



## 9. *The Ambum Stone*

Ambum Valley, Enga Province, Papua New Guinea

c. 1500 B.C.E.

Greywacke

Neolithic

20 x 7.5 x 14 cm

- Composite human/animal figure; maybe anteater head and human body; anteaters possibly significant because of their fat deposits.
- Theories: masked human, anteater embryo in fetal position, pestle, ritualistic purpose, sacred meaning







***3. Camelid Sacrum in the shape of a canine***

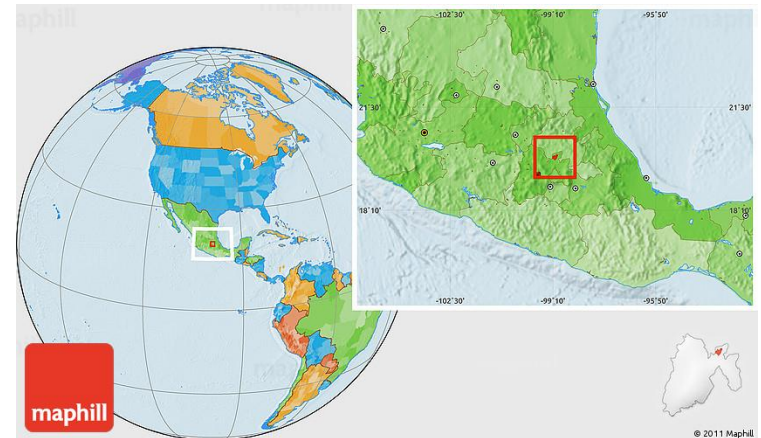
14,000-7000 B.C.E.

Tequixquiac, State of Mexico

Bone

Neolithic

- One of the earliest artifacts from Mesoamerica.
- Carved from a now extinct animal (looked like a llama or camel).
- Sacrum is pelvic bone at the base of the spine which has been shaped into a canine skull.
- One natural form used to make another.
- May have been used as a make that housed the spirit of a hunted animal in the context of a religious/spiritual ceremony to contact an otherworld spirit=“second skull”





## 6. Anthropomorphic stele

4<sup>th</sup> millenium BCE

Arabian Peninsula

Sandstone

Neolithic

92 x 21 cm



- Al-Magar is the site of the first Neolithic settlement in the Arabian Peninsula. Evidence also shows the site populated as far as 50,000 years ago.
- **Stele**-A vertical, commemorative stone.
- **Anthropomorphic**-having human characteristics
- **Stylized**-Simple and abstract design.
- Part of a group of several dozen steles, all with distinct clothing and appearance, found in an area that extends from present-day southern Jordan to Yemen.
- Associated with religious or burial practices.
- The statues of most common animals found at Al-Magar are sheep, goat, dogs, ostriches, falcons, fish and horses.



This horse (among others) found at the al-Magar site dates approximately to 9,000 years ago, challenging the commonly accepted data of 3500BCE in Central Asia.



**7. Jade Cong**, 3300-2200 B.C.E.,  
Liangzhu, China.  
Carved Jade.  
Neolithic

- Two distinct types of ritual jade objects: a disc, later known as a bi, and a tube, later known as a cong.
- Main types of cong have a square outer section around a circular inner part, and a circular hole.
- Corners of the cong can have mask-like characters with fangs.
- The meaning and purpose of bi and cong remain a mystery.
- Found in many burial sites of people of high rank, sometimes by the dozen, signs of intentional burning
- Chinese link jade with virtues of durability, subtlety, and beauty



## 10. *Tlatilco female figurine*

Central Mexico, Tlatilco site

1200-900 B.C.E

Ceramic

Neolithic

9.5 cm. high

- These small ceramic figures, often of women, are found in Central Mexico in lively poses and elaborate hairstyles.
- Tlatilco people existed 2,000-3,000 years before the Aztecs.
- There is an emphasis on wide hips, the spherical upper thighs, and the pinched waist in these figurines.
- The hair and its styling was important for the people of this region.
- The two connected heads are rare. The purpose for this is unknown, perhaps it expresses an idea of duality; congenital defects
- **Shamanism**-religion in which good and evil are brought about by spirits, influenced by Shamans, who have access to these spirits
- Other figurines from this site include animals, imaginary creatures, couples, men, and genre scenes







Video in notes



## ***11. Terra cotta fragment***

Lapita

Solomon Islands, Reef Islands

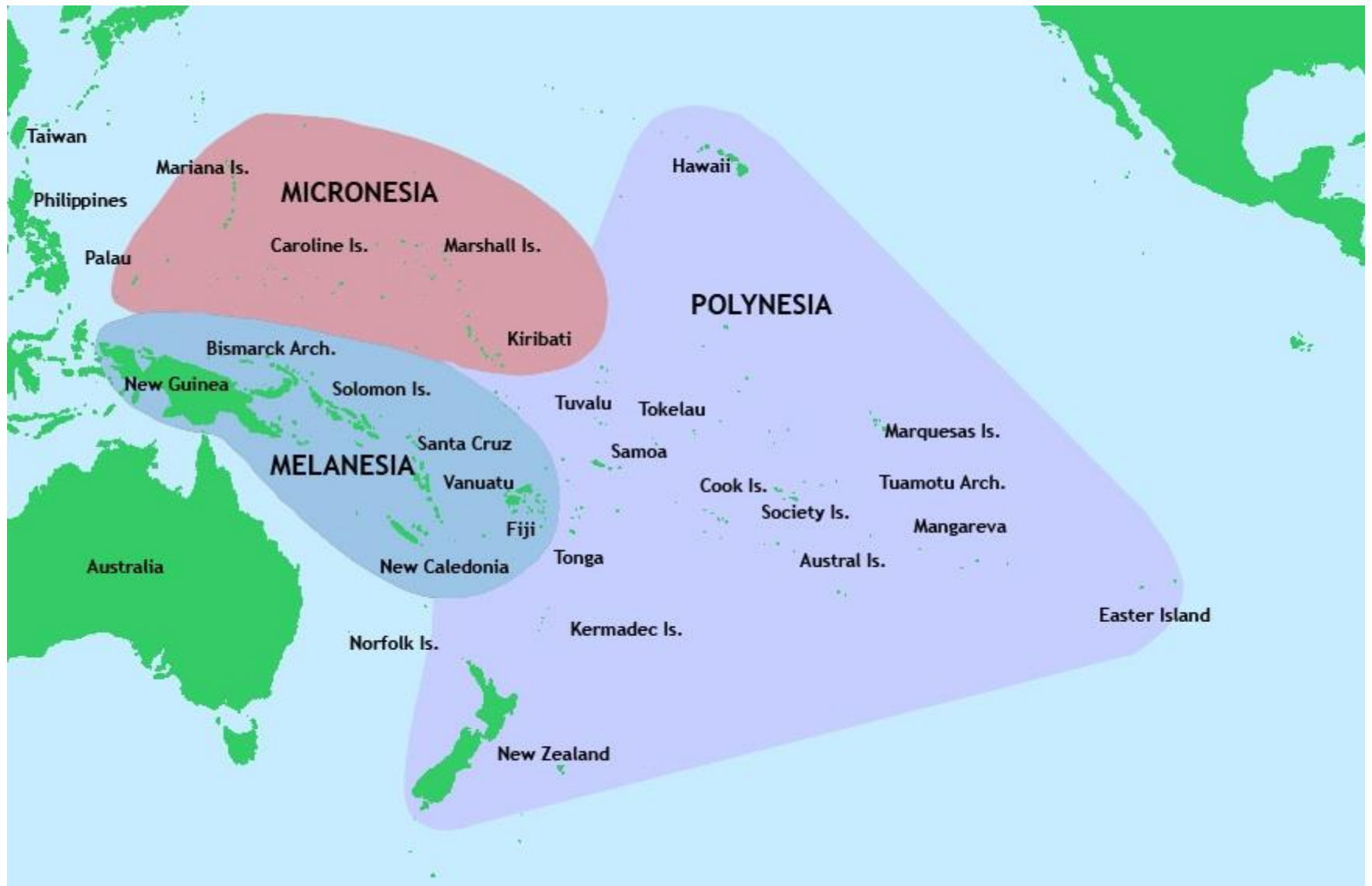
1000 B.C.E.

Terra cotta

Neolithic

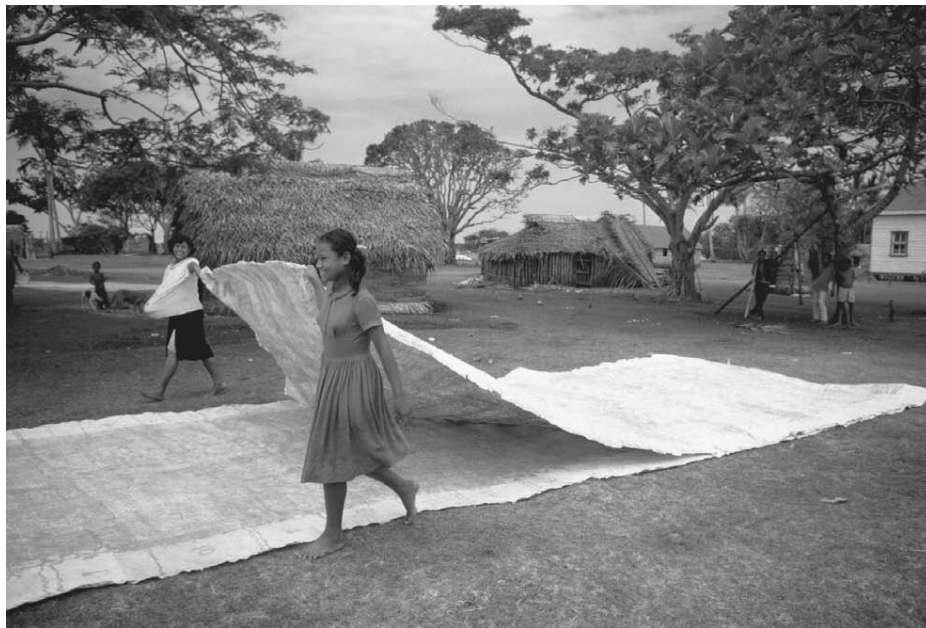
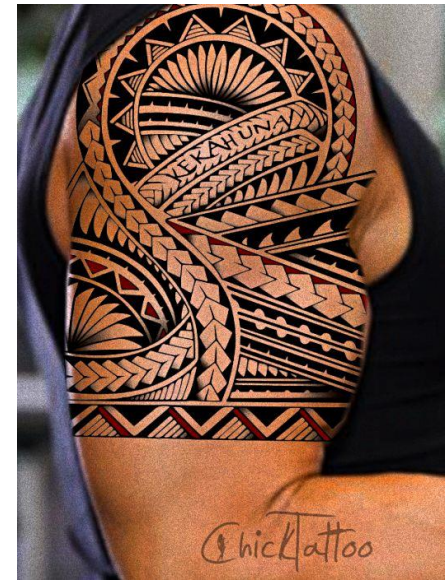


- Lapita refers to an ancient Pacific culture that archaeologists believe to be the common ancestor of the contemporary cultures of Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia.
- The culture takes its name from where the distinctive pottery was discovered.
- The Lapita were a seafaring people who settled primarily on the coast rather than inland.



- Lapita art is best known for its ceramics, which feature intricate repeating geometric patterns that occasionally include anthropomorphic faces and figures, dots, hatching, and circles.
- One of the oldest human faces represented in Oceanic Art.
- Pottery was probably used for storing and cooking food.



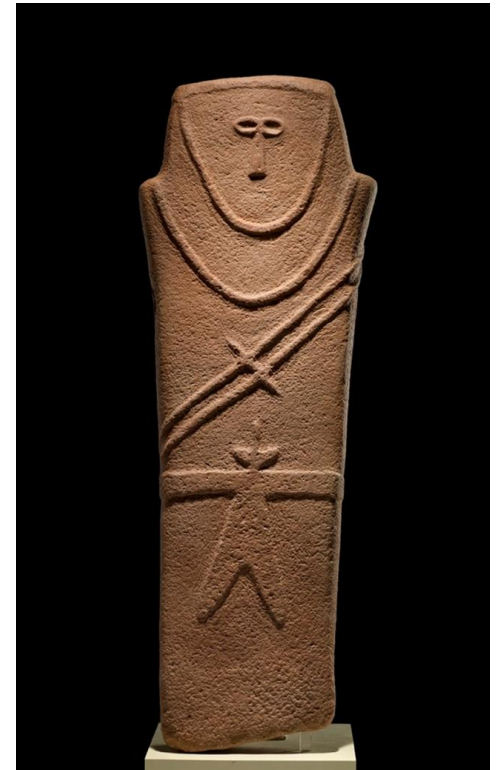


# Informal Short Analysis Practice

## 10 points



- Using the formal elements of art, compare and contrast the works. What is emphasized and what is omitted? What is the artistic intent?



# Lesson #2

- Agenda: Prehistoric Painting, UNESCO Interactive Experience, Research Assignment
- Bellwork:

From what you have seen so far how are humans/animals being represented? Why do you think they are represented in such a way?

Painting

# **PREHISTORIC ART**

# Prehistoric Painting

- Most surviving examples exist in caves.
- Images of animal dominate with black outlines emphasizing contours.
- Paintings next to each other do not appear to have any relationship with one another.
- Animals are depicted realistically, some in 3-dimensions, humans are depicted as stick figures with little anatomical detail.
- Handprints widespread globally.



## 1. Apollo 11 Stones

Namibia

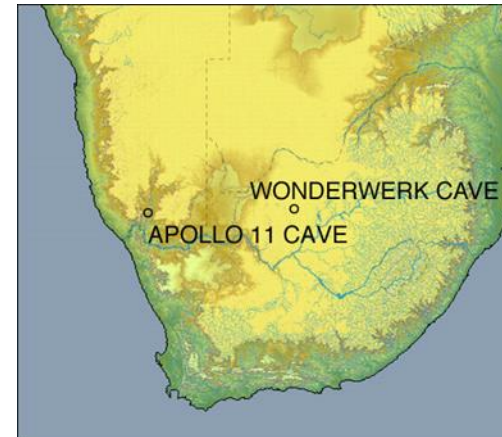
c. 25,500-25,300

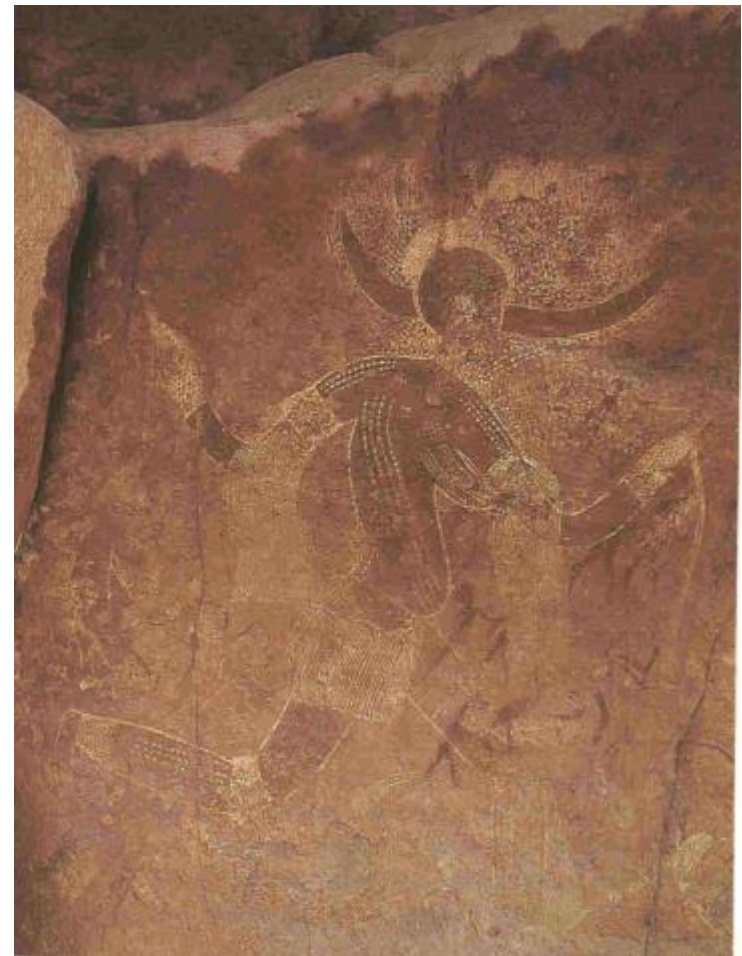
BCE

Charcoal on stone

Paleolithic

- Art is not only a much older phenomenon than previously thought, but it has its roots in the African continent.
- The oldest scientifically-dated rock art in Africa.
- Named Apollo 11, after NASA's successful moon landing mission.
- Consists of seven painted stone slabs depicting a variety of animals painted in charcoal, ochre and white.
- Depicting felines and/or bovids.





#### ***4. Running Horned Woman***

Tassili n'Ajjer, Algeria

6,000-4,000 B.C.E.

Pigment on Rock

Neolithic

# Rock Art in North Africa

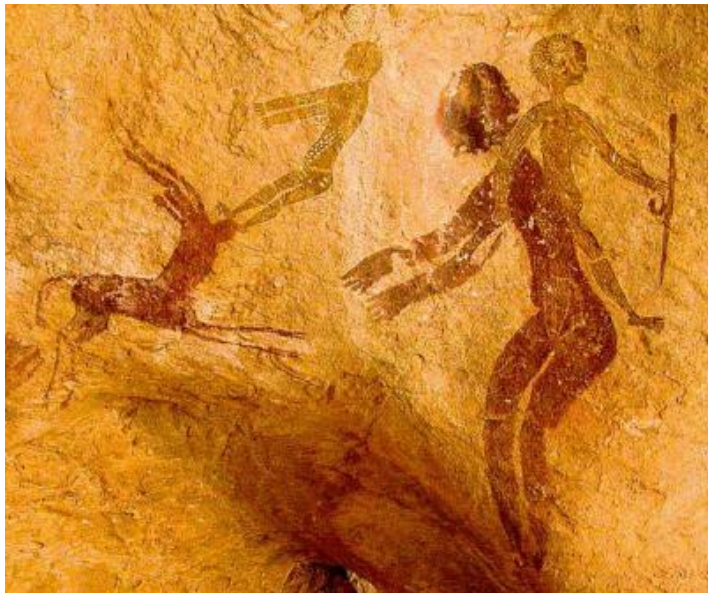
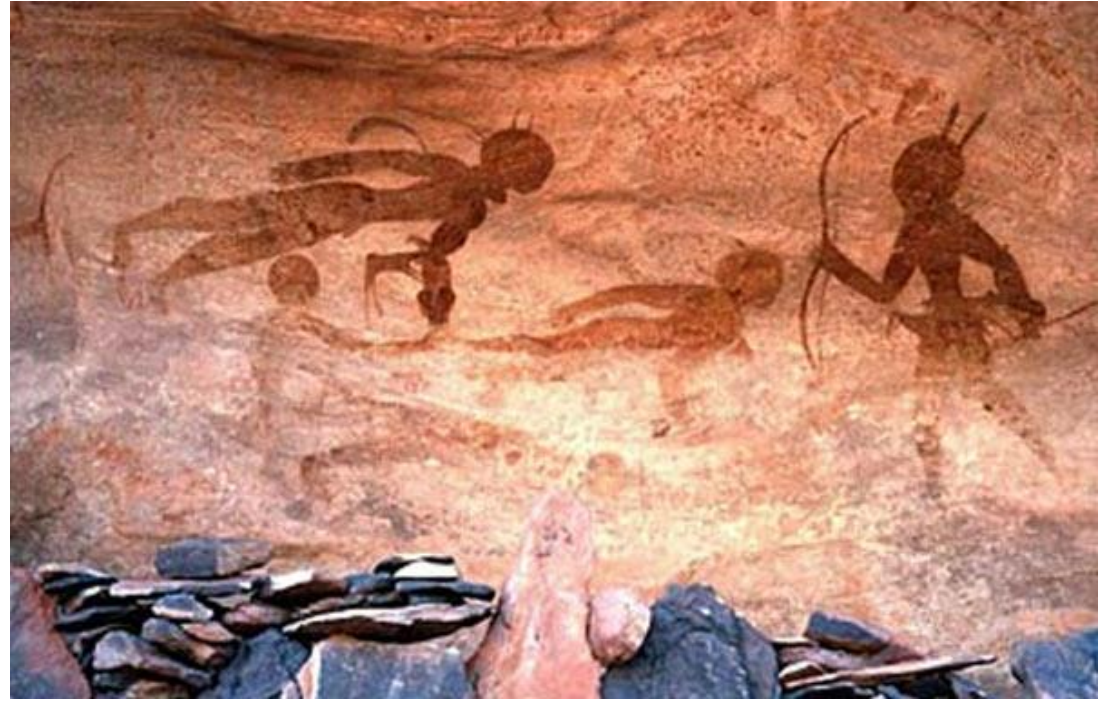
- Concentration of rock art exists in Algeria.
- Most famous is Tassili n'Ajjer .
- Water and wind erosion have cut “forests of stone” leaving smooth cave-like spaces at the base of cliffs ideal for carving and painting.







- Environment was once grasslands; flora and fauna depicted in the numerous rock paintings.
- More than 15,000 rock paintings and engravings, dating back as far as 12,000 years are located in this region; many groups of people would have used site.
- Depicts herds of cattle and large wild animals such as giraffe and elephant, as well as human activities such as hunting and dancing.
- Famous for its Round Head paintings which were first described in the 1950s.
- Around 9,000 years old, some of these paintings are the largest found on the African continent, measuring up to 13 feet in height.
- At this site there are figures with recognizable weaponry or clothing.
- **Composite** view of body=figure depicted from front and side.



## 5. *Bushel with ibex motifs*

4200--3500 B.C.E.

Susa, Iran

Painted terra-cotta

Neolithic

28.90 x 16.40 cm

- Hand thrown pottery, thin walls
- Found near burial site, but not with human remains; hundreds of other artifacts.
- Stylized
- *Frieze* of aquatic birds runs around the top. The parallel lines of their necks suggest a whole flock on the water's surface
- Underneath are running dogs with long, narrow bodies.
- The main part of the vase is decorated with large panels divided up with *meander* patterns. These may symbolize the settlement of the land by men, showing the borders of fields and villages and watercourses







- The center panel is the majestic figure of a goat; painted with simple shapes, triangles and circles; the horns are painted with an oversized abstract motif.

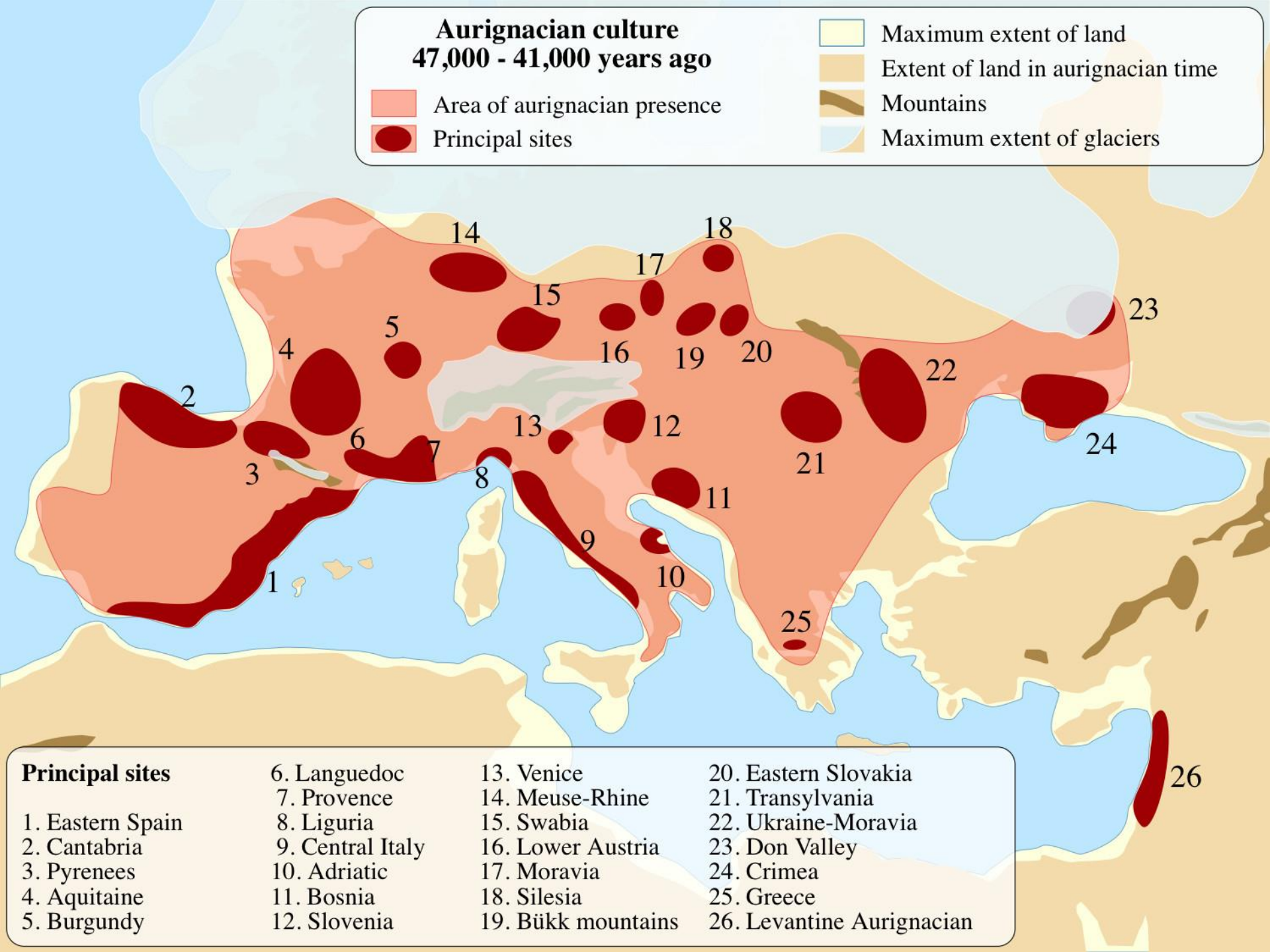


- Possibly serving to identify the vase and its owner as belonging to a particular group or a family.

**Aurignacian culture**  
47,000 - 41,000 years ago

- Area of aurignacian presence
- Principal sites

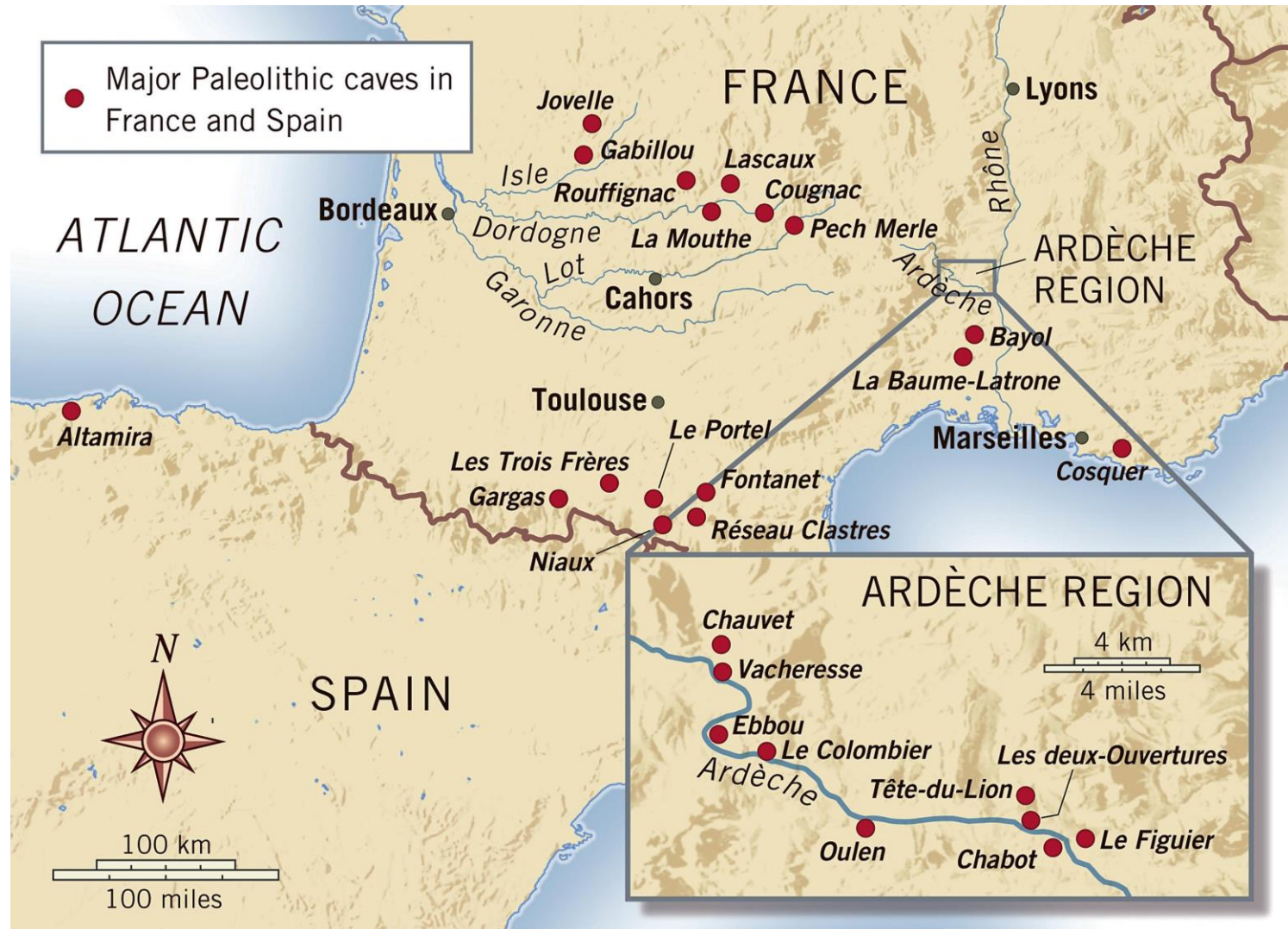
- Maximum extent of land
- Extent of land in aurignacian time
- Mountains
- Maximum extent of glaciers

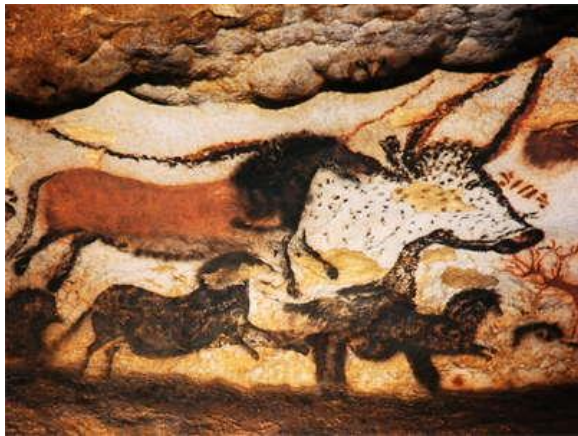


**Principal sites**

- |                  |                  |                    |                           |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Eastern Spain | 6. Languedoc     | 13. Venice         | 20. Eastern Slovakia      |
| 2. Cantabria     | 7. Provence      | 14. Meuse-Rhine    | 21. Transylvania          |
| 3. Pyrenees      | 8. Liguria       | 15. Swabia         | 22. Ukraine-Moravia       |
| 4. Aquitaine     | 9. Central Italy | 16. Lower Austria  | 23. Don Valley            |
| 5. Burgundy      | 10. Adriatic     | 17. Moravia        | 24. Crimea                |
|                  | 11. Bosnia       | 18. Silesia        | 25. Greece                |
|                  | 12. Slovenia     | 19. Bükk mountains | 26. Levantine Aurignacian |

What can we really know about the creators of these paintings and what the images originally meant?





# Lascaux

*2. Lascaux Caves*  
c. 15,000-13,000 B.C.E.  
Dordogne, France  
Pigment on Rock  
Paleolithic



# About the Caves

- Natural materials used: charcoal, iron ore, plants
- 650 paintings: cows, bulls, horses, and deer most common
- Paintings are deep into the cave; hundreds of feet from entrance.
- Bodies seen in profile or frontal; some animals looks pregnant
- Many overlapping figures.
- Evidence of scaffolding used to reach top and ceiling of walls..
- Caves were not dwellings (Paleolithic people lived migratory lifestyle); people may have sought shelter at mouth of caves
- Walls are scraped to make an even surface; flat stones served as palettes; paint mixed with animal fat; lamps lit interior of caves
- Mix of naturalism and abstraction.



© IFC Films / History Channel



# Theories

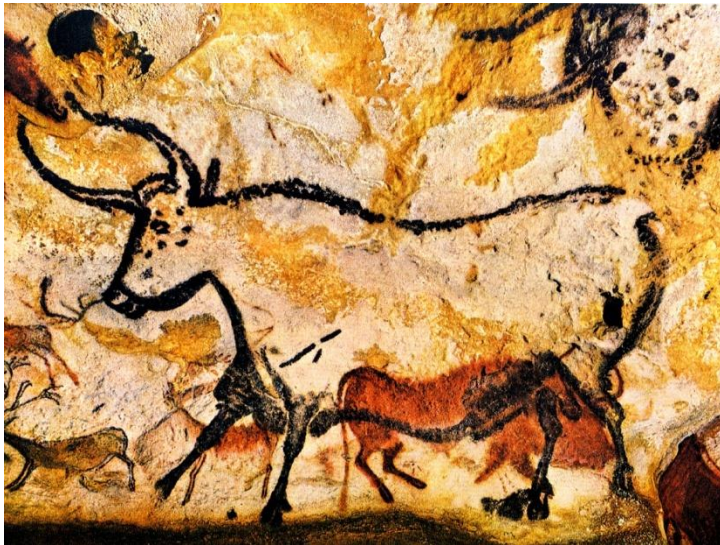
- Paintings were created to ensure successful hunt.
- Animal worship
- **Shamanism**





# Hall of the Bulls, Caves at Lascaux

- Do images evoke the spirit of the hunt?
- Do they communicate a story?
- Why does the humanoid figure have a bird head? And why is it drawn so crudely?
- Original cave closed in 1963. The replica is 200 yards away. Original is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Caves shows human need to communicate in the form of images since our beginnings.



Video in notes

# Prehistoric Works Project

- Find, identify, and research a prehistoric work not in our curriculum.
- You will create a presentation (using any technology you like) to present to the class.
- Choose appropriate images, use APA style for citing information and images.

# Lesson #3

- Agenda: Bellwork, Prehistoric Architecture, Style Sheet, Research/Presentations
- Bellwork:

What aspects of prehistoric art do you continue to see today?

Architecture

# **PREHISTORIC ART**

# Prehistoric Architecture

- Most famous structures were used for worship
- **Menhirs**-large individual stones, erected for worship
- **Megaliths**-menhirs cut into a particular shape
- **Henge**-circle of megaliths with surrounding ditch
- Structures are built to align with important dates.
- **Post-and-lintel**-two upright megaliths with another megalith across the top; fundamental architectural type in the prehistoric era.

## **8. Stonehenge**

Wiltshire, UK

c.2500-1600 B.C.E.

Sandstone

Neolithic



# Stonehenge

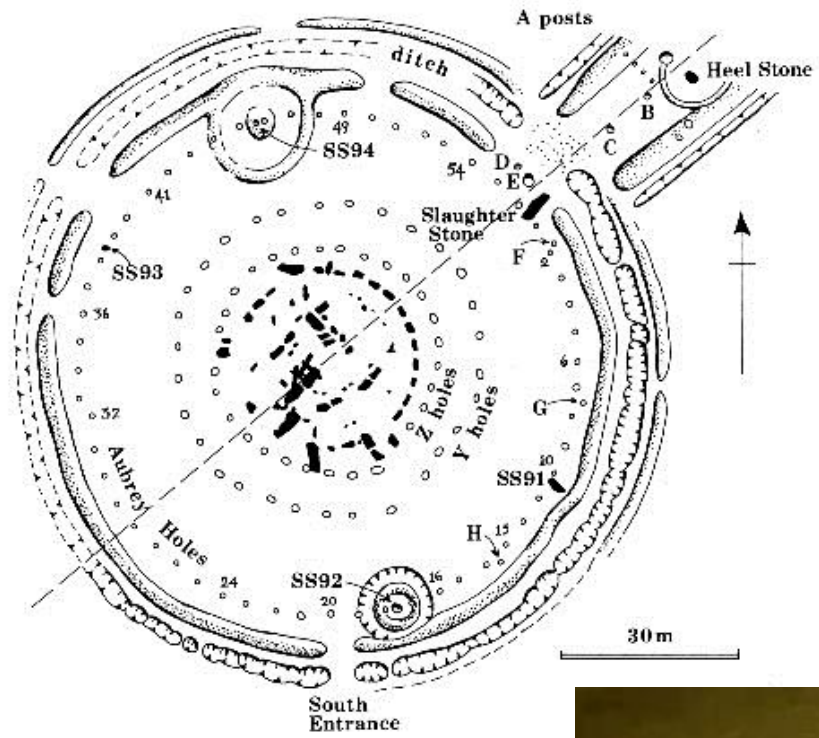
- Took thousands of years to complete; construction happened in 3 phases
- Post and lintel construction; lintels grooved in place by using **mortise and tenon** jointing.
- Largest megaliths in center are over 20 feet in height and form a horseshoe surrounding a central, flat stone; entire circle is 360 feet in diameter
- Some megaliths are over 50 tons.
- Hundreds of smaller stones at site with unknown use.
- Stones come from up to 200 miles away.
- Orientation of stones thought to be aligned with sun, summer solstice, and predict eclipses
- Another theory suggests that Stonehenge was the main site for death and burial ceremonies
- One of many henges in England.





Video in notes

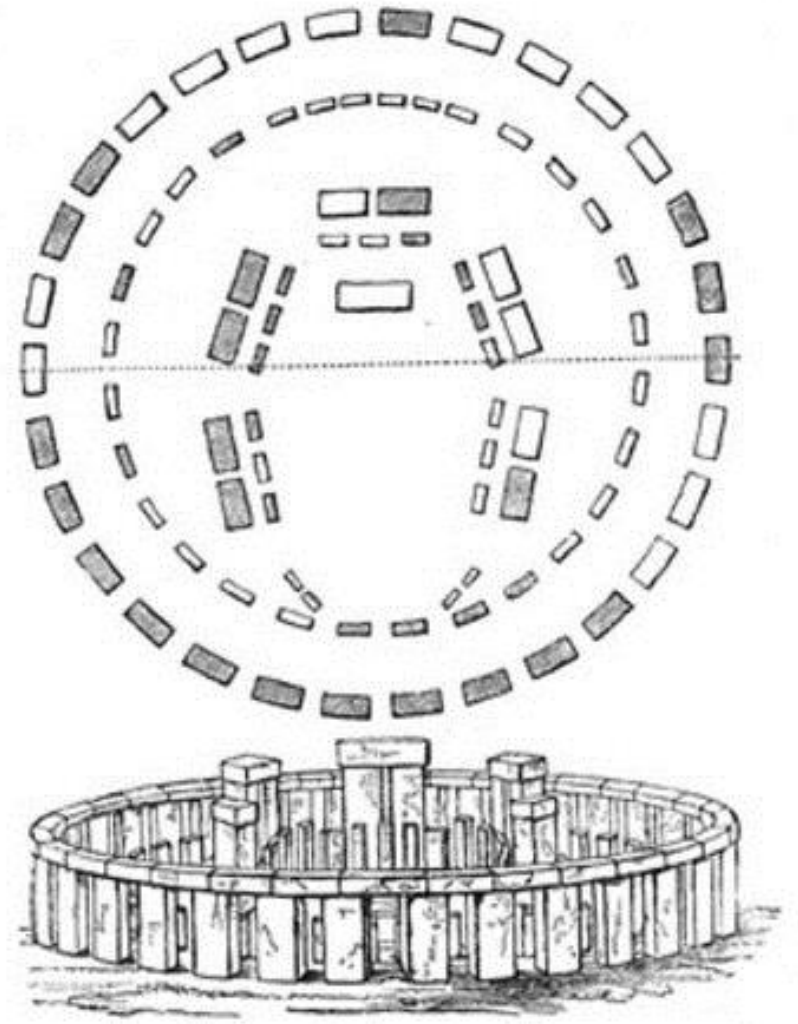
- The people who began work on Stonehenge were contemporaries with the first dynasties of Ancient Egypt, and their efforts predate the building of the Pyramids.
- First phase of construction occurred around 3100 BCE-when circular ditch was created.
- The second phase of work at Stonehenge occurred approximately 100-200 years later and involved the setting up of upright wooden posts, possibly a roofed structure in the center of the henge, more upright posts near the northeast and southern entrances. During this second phase at Stonehenge the site was used for burial.
- *Aubrey holes*, 56 pits that originally contained smaller stones or beams. About half of the holes were filled as burial pits.



- The second phase of work at Stonehenge occurred approximately 100-200 years later and involved the setting up of upright wooden posts, possibly of a roofed structure, in the center of the henge, as well as more upright posts near the northeast and southern entrances.
- During this second phase at Stonehenge the site was used for burial.
- At least 25 of the Aubrey holes were emptied and reused to hold cremation burials and another 30 cremation burial pits were dug into the ditch of the henge and in the eastern portion within the henge enclosure.



- The third phase of construction at Stonehenge happened approximately 400-500 years later.
- The remaining blue stones or wooden beams which had been placed in the Aubrey holes were pulled and a circle 108 feet in diameter of 30 stones were erected within the henge, capped with 30 lintel stones.
- Each standing stone was around 13 feet high, almost seven feet wide and weighed around 25 tons.
- This ring of stones enclosed five trilithons set up in a horseshoe shape 45 feet across. Bluestones, were erected in a circle, half in the outer sarsen circle and half within the sarsen horseshoe.
- At the end of the phase there is some rearrangement of the stones as well as the construction of a long processional avenue (*The Avenue*), consisting of parallel banks with exterior ditches approximately 34 meters across, leading from the northeast entrance to Stonehenge, leading to the banks of the Avon river.



# Sophistication of Stones

- The horizontal lintel stones were fitted using a tongue and groove joint and then fitted to each other using a mortise and tenon joint.
- The upright stones were dressed differently on each side, with the inward facing side more smoothly finished than the outer.
- The outer ring of upright stones were gently widened toward the top which makes their mass constant when viewed from the ground.
- The lintel stones also curve slightly to echo the circular outer henge.
- The trilithons in the horseshoe are arranged by size; from smallest to largest creating a kind of pull inward to the monument, and dramatizes the outward Northeast facing of the horseshoe.



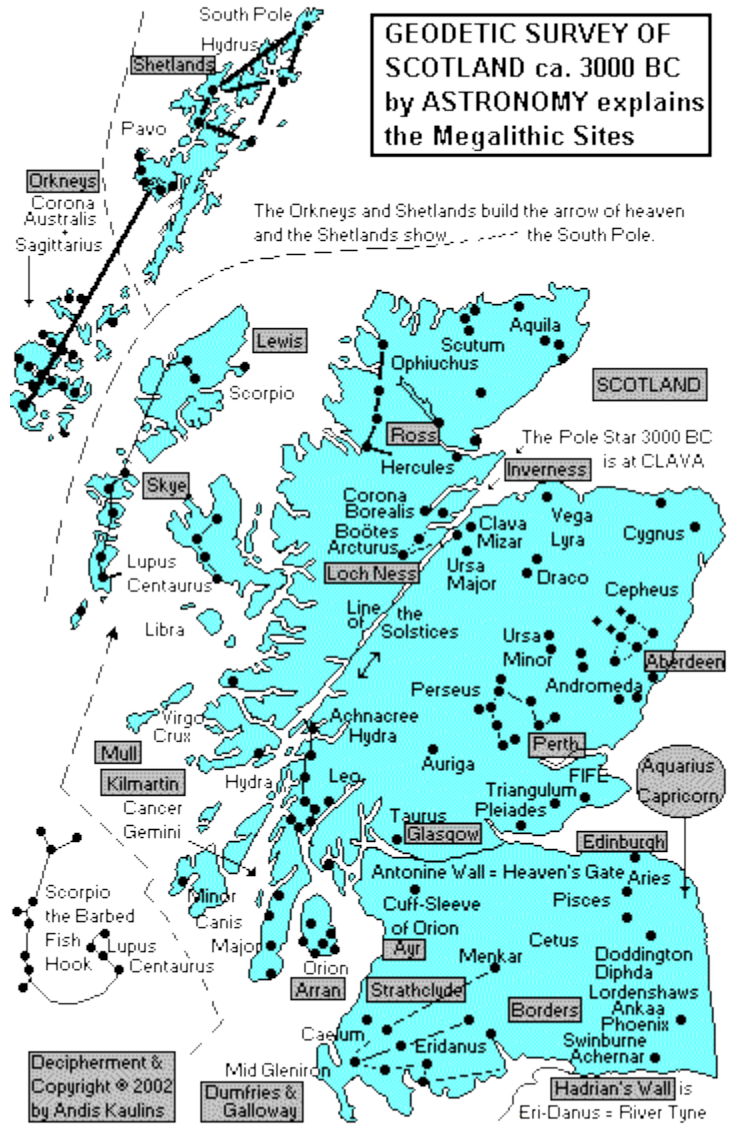
# Questions

- Who planned the henge and who organized whom to work together in its construction? Neolithic villages, are few and so many lie underneath later Bronze Age, Roman, Medieval and modern cities. Villages that have been explored show simple farming hamlets with very little evidence of widely differing social status. This means the first phase of Stonehenge's construction was an egalitarian endeavor, highly unusual for the ancient world.
- Who were the people buried at Stonehenge during its second phase? Nearly all the burials were of adult males, aged 25-40 years, in good health and with little sign of hard labor or disease. A burial at Stonehenge surely was a mark of elite status and these remains may well be those of some of the first political leaders of Great Britain. Meaning having the means of social distinction must have been desirable.



Video in notes

**GEODETTIC SURVEY OF SCOTLAND ca. 3000 BC by ASTRONOMY explains the Megalithic Sites**



Decipherment & Copyright © 2002 by Andis Kaulins

Dumfries & Galloway

Hadrian's Wall is Eri-Danus = River Tyne



The Normanton Down Barrows lie on the crest of a low ridge just to the south of Stonehenge. Excavation of the barrows has produced several rich finds, including beads and other personal ornaments



Bluestone outcrops in the Preseli Hills of southwest Wales, the source of the bluestones at Stonehenge



Castlerigg Stone Circle stands one mile to the east of Keswick and was built around 3000 BC. It is set on a low hill with magnificent views of the mountains of Skiddaw and Blencathra.



One of Dartmoor's most enigmatic features are the standing stones which sit on the remote hilltops surveying the centuries as they speed by. The sad fact is that in the whole of the Dartmoor National park there are only 12 which are left intact and stand on the open moor.



Orkney Islands is littered with stone structures. The Ring o' Brodgar is the most famous among them.





One of the most famous circles in the British Isles, Rollright in Oxfordshire consists of 77 stones. According to a legend, the Rollright Stones were once human beings: the army of a King whose story is explained in the King Stone page. There are other legends, though; one is that the King's Men are uncountable. A baker who tried to ascertain their number by placing a loaf on top of every stone was not successful, because he did not have enough loaves. Another story tells that at midnight on New Year's Day the stones go downhill to drink at a spring in Little Rollright spinney



Arbor Low, in the Peak District, Derbyshire, England, consists of about 50 large limestone blocks, quarried from a local site, which form an egg-shaped circle, with monoliths at the entrances, and possibly a portal stone at the south entrance.



The Callanish Stones are situated near the village of Callanish on the west coast of the isle of Lewis, in the Outer Hebrides, Scotland. Situated on a natural ridge that has a north-south orientation, the Callanish monument consists of a central circle of 13 stones from which four alignments extend to form a general cross shape. The northern alignment is longer than the rest and a double rows, forming an avenue.

# Style Sheet

Paleolithic	Neolithic

# Next Class

- Presentations
- Notecards due
- ID and vocab quiz