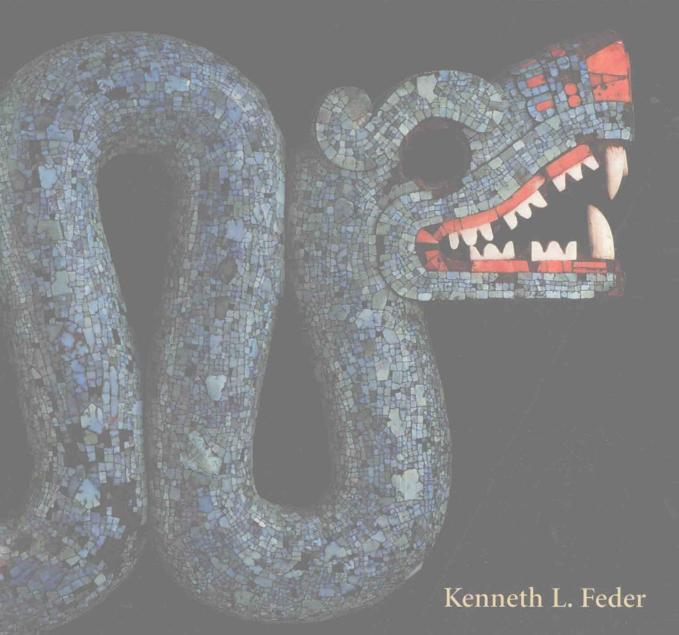
The Past in Perspective

AN INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN PREHISTORY



The Past in Perspective

SECOND EDITION

Kenneth L. Feder

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For Josh and Jacob

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Preface

"The past is a bucket of ashes," said the poet Carl Sandburg. Surely he was wrong. The past is not cold, dead, and spent. It is alive in everything we are and will be. We live in a universe filled with its traces. The stars in the night sky shine with a light that began its journey millions of years ago. The fossilized remnants of creatures that once walked the earth lie entombed in the soil beneath our feet. Cooking hearths and food scraps, pyramids and pottery, stone tools and bone awls, cave paintings and ivory sculptures—all date to the ancient human past yet exist in the present. The past is not a bucket of ashes, but rather, as writer L. P. Hartley put it, "the past is a foreign country." In this book, we will visit that country.

The Past in Perspective: An Introduction to Human Prehistory focuses on the dim echoes of the human past, presenting an accessible chronicle of human physical and cultural evolution. The audience for this text is undergraduates who have had no previous coursework in archaeology; for many, it will be their only academic exposure to our prehistoric past. Rather than overwhelm beginning students with an all-inclusive, detailed survey of the human past, this text looks at the major themes of the human evolutionary story. It begins with the evolution of our earliest hominid ancestors, traces the evolution of the modern human species, and follows the various pathways our ancestors took in the development of food-producing societies and complex civilizations. My goal throughout is to instill in readers an appreciation for the long chronicle of humanity and the ongoing processes we use to construct and assess that story.

HOW THE TEXT IS ORGANIZED

Chapters 1–3 provide context and background for the discussion of human prehistory. Chapter 1 places the study of the human past in the context of science, specifically the science of anthropology, using genealogy as a metaphor for the study of human prehistory. Chapter 2 focuses on how a scientific approach to the study of prehistory developed and the role biblical literalism played. Chapter 3 is a brief overview of key methodologies employed by archaeologists and paleoanthropologists.

Following these introductory chapters, Chapters 4–15 present a chronological survey of the human past. Each chapter follows a consistent format with these headings: Chapter Overview, Prelude, Chronicle, Issues and Debates, Case Study Close-Up, Visiting the Past, Summary, and To Learn

More. My belief is that a consistent format provides a pedagogical advantage; the trajectory of human physical and cultural evolution becomes far more apparent and connected. What we know, what we don't know, and what are still topics of vigorous debate will be clear to the reader.

The **CHAPTER OVERVIEW** introduces the primary topic of the chapter in several brief paragraphs.



The **PRELUDE** represents a conscious attempt on my part to provide a pedagogical "hook" for each chapter. Personal anecdotes or fascinating historical incidents, for example, immediately engage students in the key issue or issues of the chapter, whether it is upright locomotion, the origins of artistic expression, or the power of ancient civilizations.



The **CHRONICLE** presents in narrative form a consensus view of that part of the human past that is the chapter's focus. It represents the heart of each chapter, providing our current understanding of the time period covered, the hominids discussed, and the cultural evolutionary developments reflected in the time period.



ISSUES AND DEBATES sections discuss the answers we have been able to provide for key questions about human physical and cultural evolution as well as the unresolved issues that remain and the ongoing debates. These sections provide differing—and sometimes competing—perspectives. Students are thus exposed to the sometimes messy process of science fraught with disagreements, shifting paradigms, and only hard-won consensus.



The CASE STUDY CLOSE-UP is a detailed examination of one or more sites considered diagnostic or emblematic of the time period or primary issue of the chapter.



VISITING THE PAST sections direct readers to key sites mentioned in the chapter that are open to the public, suggest museums where the materials from important sites discussed in the chapter are displayed, and point out computer software "virtual visits" that provide detailed discussions, photographs, videos, and animations related to the chapter topic.

Each chapter **SUMMARY** provides a brief recapitulation of the key issues in the chapter.

TO LEARN MORE is divided into three sections: (1) "Technical Summaries," where students can find primary sources including articles in professional journals and books; (2) "Popular Summaries," including secondary sources like magazine articles and trade books; and (3) "On the Web," providing Internet sources related to the chapter topic.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

In addition to a consistent chapter format, I've included a number of other features that make this text a more useful learning tool.

- A timeline opens every chapter and helps place the key events and sites
 mentioned in the body of the chapter within a global historical context.
 The timeline in Chapter 1 shows at a glance the chronological focus of
 each chapter in the text.
- To help students better orient themselves on the world stage, I've included abundant maps throughout the book. In addition, for Chapters 4–15, I've provided at the beginning of each chapter a list of sites, broken out by country, discussed therein.
- A list of Key Terms at the ends of chapters identifies important terms that appear in boldfaced type within the chapters; definitions can be found in the end-of-book glossary.
- The text's visual appeal enhances its readability. Full-color photographs
 are cross-referenced to pertinent text discussions. Detailed, colorful
 charts and drawings, as well as abundant photographs, underscore significant points in the text. Captions for the artwork add information rather
 than simply label the pictures.
- The Glossary, References, and a comprehensive Index make information readily accessible.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THE SECOND EDITION

While maintaining the innovative organizational format from the first edition, I have introduced major content changes in the new edition based on the helpful comments of instructors who used *The Past in Perspective*. The text still provides broad coverage of the archaeology of human evolution, but the emphasis has shifted to post-Pleistocene societies, especially relating to the rise of civilization.

Here is a chapter-by-chapter overview of the significant changes:

- Chapter 1 is now a more straightforward introduction to the field of
 prehistory. Basic definitions of key terms and concepts—anthropology,
 archaeology, paleoanthropology, and so on—that did not appear until
 Chapter 3 in the first edition are now defined and discussed in the first
 chapter.
- The discussion of modern creationism that appeared in Chapter 1 has been moved to Chapter 2. This sets the scene for the historical development of a science of the past. There is now less emphasis on the development of evolutionary thought; greater emphasis is placed on how natural scientists came to the conclusion that the earth was ancient and

- changing and that human beings had changed greatly both biologically and culturally during that span of time.
- In Chapter 3 the material on archaeological epistemology has been expanded with more detailed discussions of dating methods and artifact analysis.
- Chapter 4 is a combination of Chapters 4 and 5 from the first edition.
 The material on the Miocene has been condensed, while relevant background information on the evolution of the apes has been retained. Discussion of the australopithecines and *Homo habilis* has been updated.
- Chapter 5, on Homo erectus, has been thoroughly updated. The chapter includes a discussion of lumping and splitting (a single species—Homo erectus—versus multiple species—Homo ergaster, Homo erectus, Homo antecessor).
- An expanded discussion of the material from Sima de los Huesos is included in Chapter 6. The Neandertal section has been significantly rewritten and updated. The degree of skepticism reflected in the first edition concerning the capabilities of the Neandertals has been tempered with the addition of new material that shows that they were effective hunters (and not just scavengers) and that they produced some items of personal adornment and, possibly, art. It should be more clear to students that Neandertals were different, but this difference does not imply that they were inferior to anatomically modern humans.
- Chapter 7 now includes analysis of Neandertal DNA. New data in the debate concerning the evolution of anatomically modern humans also has been added.
- Chapter 8 has an expanded explanation of the hunting and gathering
 practices of the Upper Paleolithic. The hypothesis of a neurophysiological explanation of ancient rock art is discussed.
- The discussion in Chapter 9 of the earliest settlement of Australia has been rewritten, with a more realistic—and skeptical—appraisal given those sites that are claimed by some to be more than 50,000 years old. The section on the earliest settlement of the New World has been entirely rewritten and includes a possible coastal route. Recently discovered, late-Pleistocene coastal sites in South America are discussed, and the growing consensus concerning the antiquity of Monte Verde is presented. The Kennewick skeleton has been added to the "Issues and Debates" section.
- A key issue concerning the Mesolithic is that of adaptational diversity, which is emphasized and expanded on in Chapter 10.
- In Chapter 11 new molecular data relating to the origins of agriculture are introduced. New evidence of the antiquity of rice cultivation in China, squash domestication in Mesoamerica, and the domestication of cattle in Africa is presented.
- Chapter 12 is a new chapter on the origins of complexity. A detailed discussion of how and why social, economic, and political complexity

- developed is included. Stonehenge, Mesopotamia, the Olmec, and Chavin are used as examples, with in-depth discussions of each.
- The development of complex state societies in the Old World is included in Chapter 13. Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus, China, and Minoan Crete are discussed. The historical Khmer state is presented as a "Case Study Close-Up."
- Chapter 14 is a new chapter on the later development of non-state complexity. Detailed discussions of the archaeology of the mound builders,
 Hohokam, Mogollon, Ancestral Puebloan, and Great Zimbabwe are provided. An important theme in the chapter is that complexity does not inevitably lead to state societies.
- New World state societies are discussed in Chapter 15, with updated and expanded discussions of the Maya, Teotihuacán, and Aztecs in addition to the ancient states of South America, including the Moche, Tiwanaku, Wari, and Inka.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

The Instructor's Manual includes a test bank of multiple-choice and short-answer/essay questions, as well as chapter overviews, lists of key words, and suggested sources for videos, CD-ROMS, and Internet sites.

A **computerized test bank** is available free of charge to qualifying adopters. It is a powerful, easy-to-use test generation system that provides all test items on computer disk for IBM-compatible and Macintosh computers. You can select, add, or edit questions, randomize them, and print tests appropriate to your individual classes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Textbooks, perhaps especially those about human biological and cultural evolution, are themselves evolutionary journeys. My invaluable guides on this voyage included colleagues who have made many useful suggestions concerning my route—both formally as reviewers and informally through letters, phone calls, and e-mails. Also assisting in this endeavor have been students, many of whom were generous with criticism, complaints, encouragement, and assistance. In particular, I wish to thank the reviewers of the first edition: Douglas B. Bamforth, University of Colorado at Boulder; Peter Bleed, University of Nebraska, Lincoln; Christopher DeCorse, Syracuse University; Richard Effland, Jr., Mesa Community College; Douglas R. Givens, Saint Louis Community College; Nicholas Honerkamp, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; and Paul D. Welch, Queens College, CUNY. I also owe a debt of gratitude to the reviewers of the second edition: Douglas B. Bamforth,

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Contents

Preface

iii

Prologue to the Past Chapter Overview AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL GENEALOGY AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE 5 OUR HUMAN GENEALOGY To Learn More 9 Key Terms 9 Chapter Overview 10 AN EVOLUTIONARY PHILOSOPHY 12 Creationism 12 An Evolutionary View 12 AN ANCIENT WORLD? 14 No Place for Amendments: An Unchanging World 14 A WRECK OF A WORLD 15 Noah's Flood 15 The Age of the Earth 15 The Catastrophists 16 EQUABLE AND STEADY CHANGE 17 James Hutton and the Radical View of Uniformitarianism 17 ANCIENT HUMANS? 19 The Implications of Frere's Discovery 20

21

More Stone Tools . . . and Bones

More Stone Tools 23
CHARLES DARWIN AND THE ANTIQUITY OF LIFE 23 The Voyage of the Beagle 24 A Paradigm for Life 24 The Mutability of Species 25 Darwin's Conversion to Evolution 25
THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES 26 Human Evolution 27 The Human Factor 27
CULTURES EVOLVING 28
OUR MODERN VIEW 30
Summary 30 To Learn More 31 Key Terms 32
Probing the Past 34
Chaper Overview 34
EPISTEMOLOGY: HOW WE KNOW WHAT WE KNOW The "Science" in the Study of the Past 36
PALEOANTHROPOLOGICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES How Sites Are Formed 39 How Sites Are Preserved 39 How Sites Are Found 40 How Data Are Recovered 41
ANALYZING ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA 43 How Artifacts Are Analyzed 43 How Ecofacts Are Analyzed 45 How Human and Prehuman Skeletal Remains Are Analyzed 45
DETERMINING THE AGE OF A SITE OR SPECIMEN Dating Techniques Based on Radioactive Decay 50 Dating Techniques Based on Biology 52 Dating Techniques Based on Radiation Damage 53 Dating by Measuring Chemical Processes 55 Dating by Measuring Paleomagnetism 55
DETERMINING THE AGE OF A SITE OR SPECIMEN Dating Techniques Based on Radioactive Decay 50 Dating Techniques Based on Biology 52 Dating Techniques Based on Radiation Damage 53

22

22

ANCIENT HUMANS REVISITED

Cultures Ancient and Changing

```
Summary
                  55
      To Learn More
                       56
      Key Terms
                   57
4 African Roots
      Chapter Overview
      MIOCENE PREFACE
                             62
        Fossil Apes of the Miocene
                                 62
        Why the Study of Apes Is Relevant to the Study of Humanity
                                                             65
        What Happened to the Apes at the End of the Miocene?
                                                         66
        The Irony of Extinction
      THE FIRST HOMINIDS
                               69
        Ardipithecus
                       69
        The Genus Australopithecus
                                   70
        Australopithecus afarensis
                                  71
      A FORK IN THE HOMINID ROAD
                                         73
      A FOREST OF HOMINIDS
                                  76
      A DIFFERENT PATH-HOMO HABILIS
                                              77
        The Ability to Make Stone Tools
                                      78
        Oldowan Technology
        The Fate of Homo habilis
                                 82
      WHAT WERE THE FIRST STEPS IN HOMINID EVOLUTION?
                                                                 82
      WHAT CAUSED THE PROLIFERATION OF HOMINID
      SPECIES?
                   83
      HOW DO WE KNOW THE HOMINIDS WERE UPRIGHT?
                                                             84
      IS THERE OTHER EVIDENCE FOR BIPEDALITY?
                                                       85
      WHY BIPEDALISM?
                            86
        The Upright Provider
                              86
        The Upright Scavenger
                               88
        The Efficient Walker
                             88
      WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE EARLY HOMINID
```

BRAIN?

89

WERE THE EARLY HOMINIDS HUNTERS? 90 SINGLE OR MULTIPLE SPECIES? 93 RATES OF CHANGE IN EVOLUTION 94 Summary 96 To Learn More 97 **Key Terms** 98 The Human Lineage Chapter Overview 100 HOMO ERECTUS 105 The Evolutionary Position of Homo erectus 109 HOMINIDS CONQUER THE WORLD 111 East Asia 112 China 114 Siberia 115 Homo erectus: Ocean Explorer? 115 Europe 116 THE AGE OF ICE 117 The Oxygen Isotope Curve 118 HOMO ERECTUS: THE TOOLMAKER 120 SUBSISTENCE 123 DID THE PLEISTOCENE CAUSE THE EVOLUTION OF HOMO ERECTUS? 124 WHAT ENABLED THE GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION OF HOMO ERECTUS? 125 Intelligence 125 Control of Fire 125 THE "ART" OF MAKING TOOLS 126

127

RAISING HOMO ERECTUS

WHEN DID HOMO ERECTUS BECOME EXTINCT? 130

STABILITY OR CHANGE? 131

CASE STUDY CLOSE-UP 133

VISITING THE PAST 134

Summary 134

To Learn More 135

Key Terms 136

Our Immediate Ancestors: THE PREMODERN HUMANS 138

Chapter Overview 138

PRELUDE 140

CHRONICTE LL

PREMODERN HUMANS: FOSSIL EVIDENCE 141

Africa 142

Asia 144

Europe 145

PREMODERN HUMANS: CULTURAL EVIDENCE 147

THE NEANDERTALS 149

Morphological Evidence 154

Fossil Evidence 156

NEANDERTAL CULTURE 158

Stone Tools 158

150

Subsistence 158 Compassion 161

Burial of the Dead 161

IRRITED ANTA DEBAPER TATE

WHY ARE THE NEANDERTALS EXTINCT? 163

COULD NEANDERTALS TALK? 165

DID NEANDERTALS WORSHIP CAVE BEARS? 166

DID NEANDERTALS PRODUCE ART AND MAKE MUSIC? 166

WERE NEANDERTAL BABIES LESS ALTRICIAL THAN MODERN

BABIES? 167

VISITING THE PAST 169

Summary 169

To Learn More 170

Key Terms 171

7 The Evolution of Us: THE ORIGINS OF MODERN HUMANS

Chapter Overview 172

PRELUDE 174

MITOCHONDRIAL DNA AND MOLECULAR ARCHAEOLOGY 174

RESURRECTING EXTINCT SPECIES 175

MOLECULAR ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN BEINGS 176

CHRONICLE 176

THE POPULATION REPLACEMENT MODEL 177

THE MULTIREGIONAL MODEL 178

A MIDDLE GROUND: GENETIC REPLACEMENT 179

SSUES AND DEBATES 180

REPLACEMENT OR CONTINUITY? 180

What We Would Expect on the Basis of the Population Replacement Model 180

What We Would Expect on the Basis of the Multiregional Model

What We Would Expect on the Basis of the Genetic Replacement

Model 181

Testing the Implications of Replacement and Continuity 181

HOW CAN MODERN HUMAN GENETICS INFORM US ABOUT THE ANCIENT ORIGINS OF HUMANITY? 194

WHICH EVIDENCE IS BETTER: GENES OR BONES? 197

CASE STUDY CLOSE-UP 197

VISITING THE PAST 199

Summary 199
To Learn More 200
Key Terms 200

Expanding Intellectual Horizons: ART AND IDEAS IN THE UPPER PALEOLITHIC

202 Chapter Overview

CHRONICLE

THE UPPER PALEOLITHIC GREAT LEAP FORWARD 205

Stone Blades of the Upper Paleolithic 205

Broadening the Subsistence Base 208

Larger Sites of Aggregation

Branching Out in Raw Materials 211

Abundance of Nonutilitarian Objects 213

Use of Exotic Raw Materials 214

More Elaborate Burials 215

Production of Art 215

THE MEANING OF UPPER PALEOLITHIC ART 216

The Earliest Art: Australia and Africa 217

Upper Paleolithic Art in Europe 218

The Venus Figurines 220

ISSUES AND DEBATES

WHY IS THERE NO CORRELATION BETWEEN ANATOMICAL AND BEHAVIORAL MODERNITY? 221

WHAT DOES THE ART OF THE UPPER PALEOLITHIC 222 MEAN?

DOES THE PALEOLITHIC HAVE A GENDER? 224

CASE STUDY CLOSE-UP

VISITING THE PAST

Summary 227

To Learn More 228

229 Key Terms

Expanding Geographical Horizons:

Chapter Overview 230 PRELUDE 232

CHRONICLE 232

THE SETTLEMENT OF GREATER AUSTRALIA 233

Paleogeography in the Western Pacific 233

The Road to Sahul 234

The Discovery of Greater Australia 235

THE EARLIEST OCCUPATION OF GREATER AUSTRALIA 236

The Archaeology of Sahul 236

Willandra Lakes 238

THE SPREAD THROUGH AUSTRALIA 240

The Australian Interior 240

TASMANIA 240

GREATER AUSTRALIA: A BROAD RANGE OF

ADAPTATIONS 241

COMING TO AMERICA 242

THE SOURCE OF LOS INDIOS 243

WHEN DID THE FIRST MIGRANTS ARRIVE? 244

When Was the Bering Land Bridge Exposed and Open

for Travel? 245

When Was Eastern Siberia First Inhabited? 245

What Is the Age of the Earliest New World Sites? 246

Beringia: Avenue to the New World 247

THE FIRST HUMAN SETTLEMENT OF AMERICA 247

One If by Land 249

Two If by Sea 251

ALASKA 253

Denali and Nenana 253

CLOVIS 255

.

Clovis Technology 256

The Clovis Advantage 258

Clovis Subsistence 258

INTO THE PACIFIC 259

A Pacific Islander "Age of Exploration" 259

Pacific Geography 260

Pacific Archaeology 261

Why the Pacific Islands Were Settled 263

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