

The Upper Paleolithic



Lascaux Cave, France

Upper Paleolithic

- ❑ Complex Hunter Gatherers at the End of the Paleolithic
- ❑ Dates: 47/45,000 – 20/18,000 b.p.
(Epipaleolithic=20/18,000-10,000 bp)
- ❑ Industries include microliths and bone tools—not found in previous periods
- ❑ Raw materials were exchanged over long distances in this period
- ❑ Wide range of materials, other than flint, come into use: bone tools, stone vessels, ochre, shells
- ❑ Some probably for ritual purposes

Upper Paleolithic Peoples: Cultural Impact

In contrast to early modern humans (and Neanderthals):



Cro-Magnon cranium

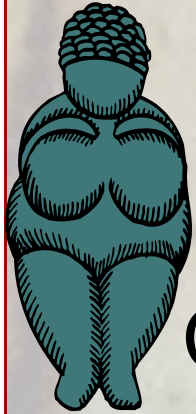
Size of teeth reduced

Size of jaw reduced

Muscularity diminishes

Less skeletal trauma

Increased longevity



Upper Paleolithic Artwork



Cave Art

Includes spectacular images of animals and abstract forms and, rarely, humans

Mobiliary Art

These portable art objects include Venus figurines

Body Ornamentation:

Pierced shells, pierced animal teeth, and bone beads were most likely work as necklaces or attached to clothing

Western European painted cave sites

Caves not living areas –
visited briefly only

- Most paintings are animals (usually in profile)
- Often located in remote & dark recesses of caves
- Carefully planned, skillful
- Most date to *ca.* 17,000 bp (Magdalenian Period)



Horse, Cosquer Cave, France





Penquin or Auk, Cosquer Cave, France

Chauvet Cave



Bear



Bison

Portable art



Patterns of cave art & mobile art: European Late Upper Paleolithic

- Decoration on short-lived objects (spear points) simple and schematic
- Long term objects, décor more careful & realistic



'Venus' figurines

Lespugue



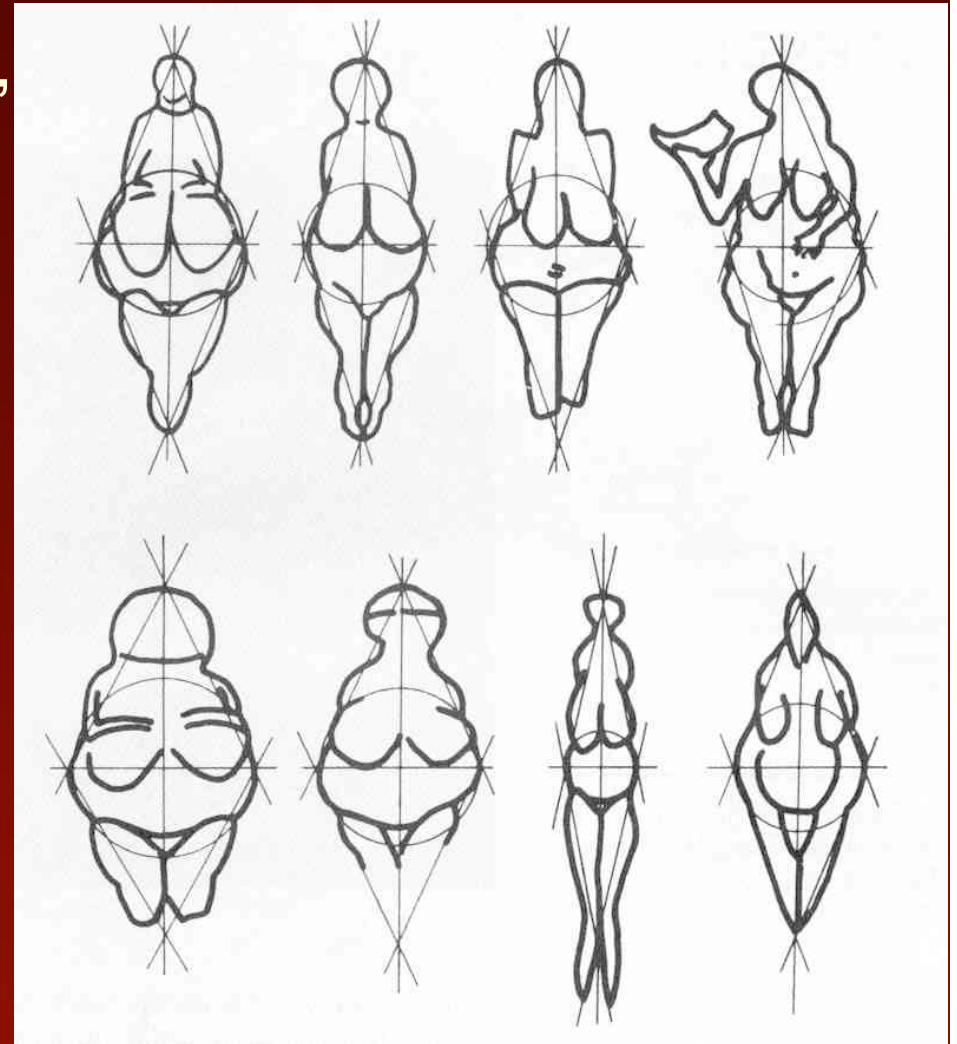
Dolni Vestonice

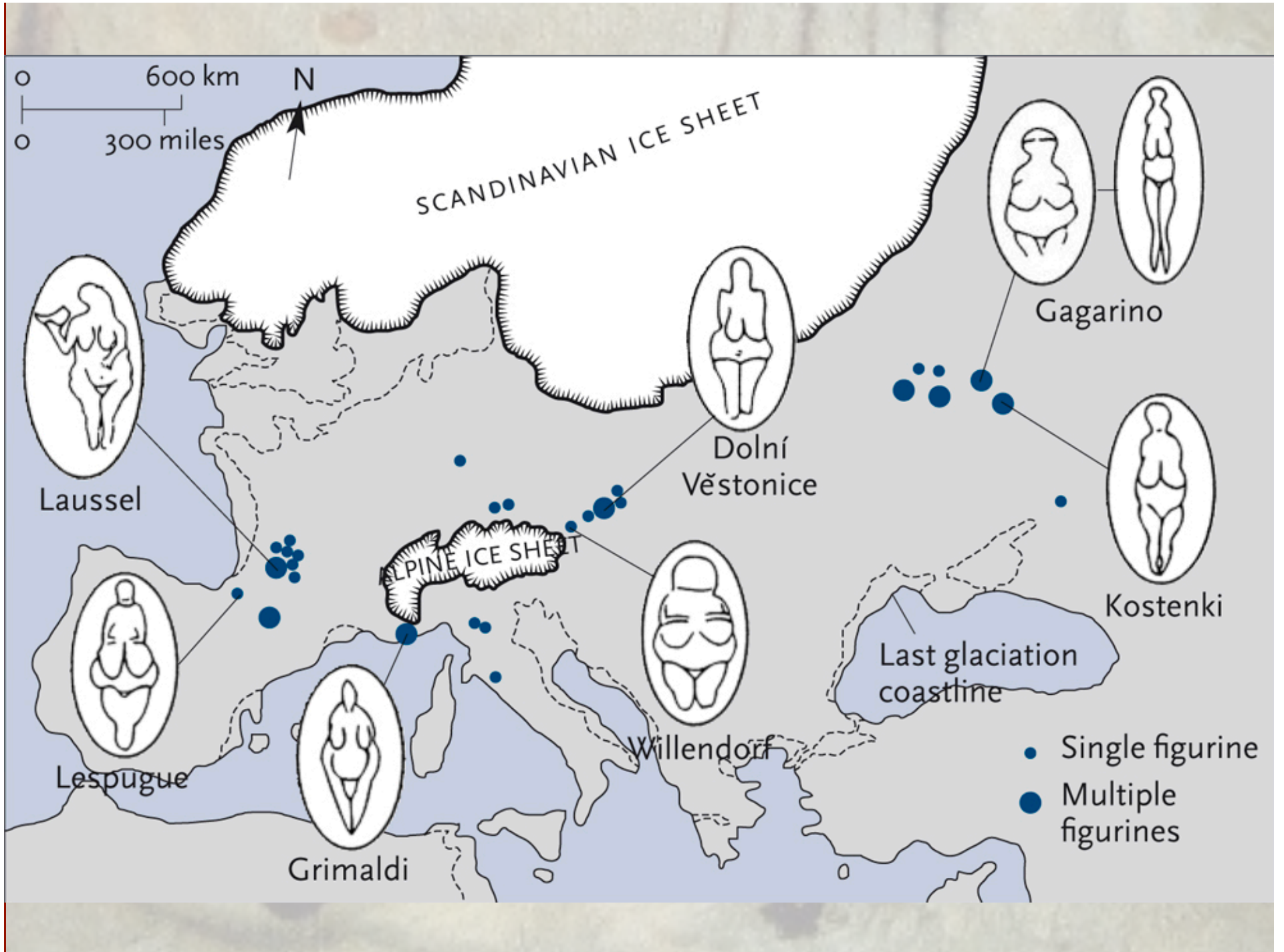


Willendorf

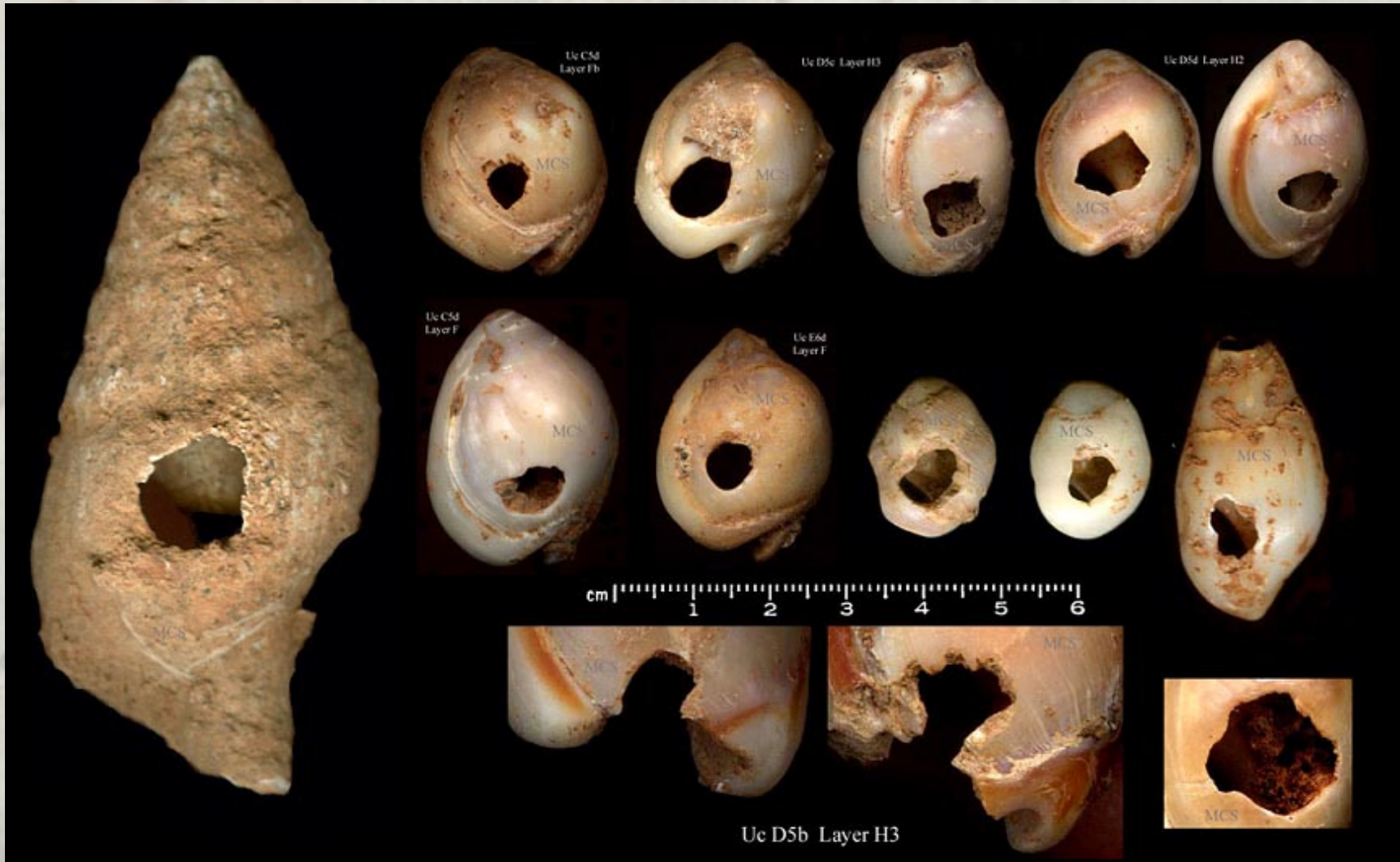
Venus Figurines

- Appear around 25,000 bp, Europe
- Carved in ivory, wood, stone, modeled in clay
- Breasts, hips, buttocks, thighs, usually large
- Head, arms, hands, legs & feet are only schematic
- Some are pregnant, others are not





Decorative items



Other Aspects of Upper Paleolithic Culture

Dwellings

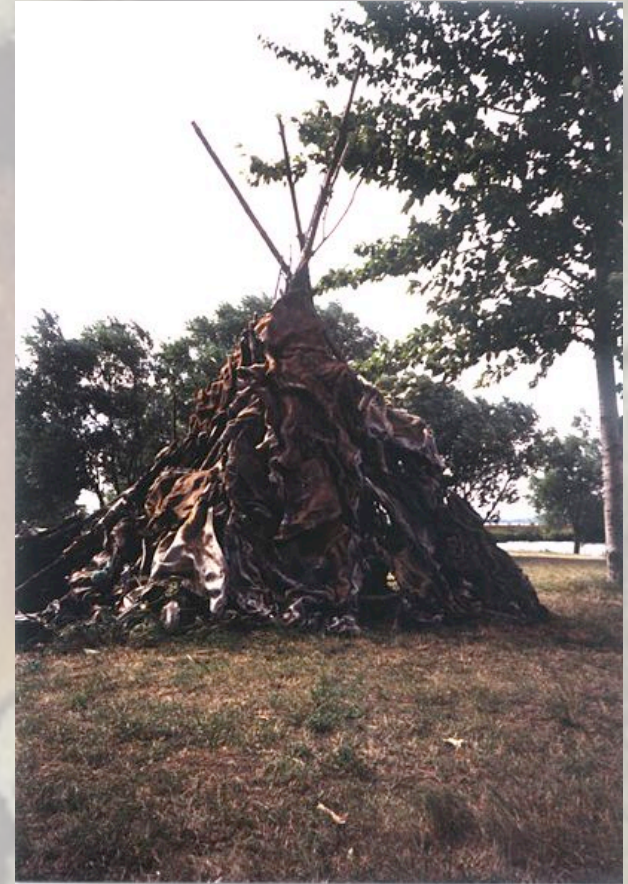
Huts with bone frameworks

Floors with inlaid stone

Stone-lined pits for hearths

Tailored clothing

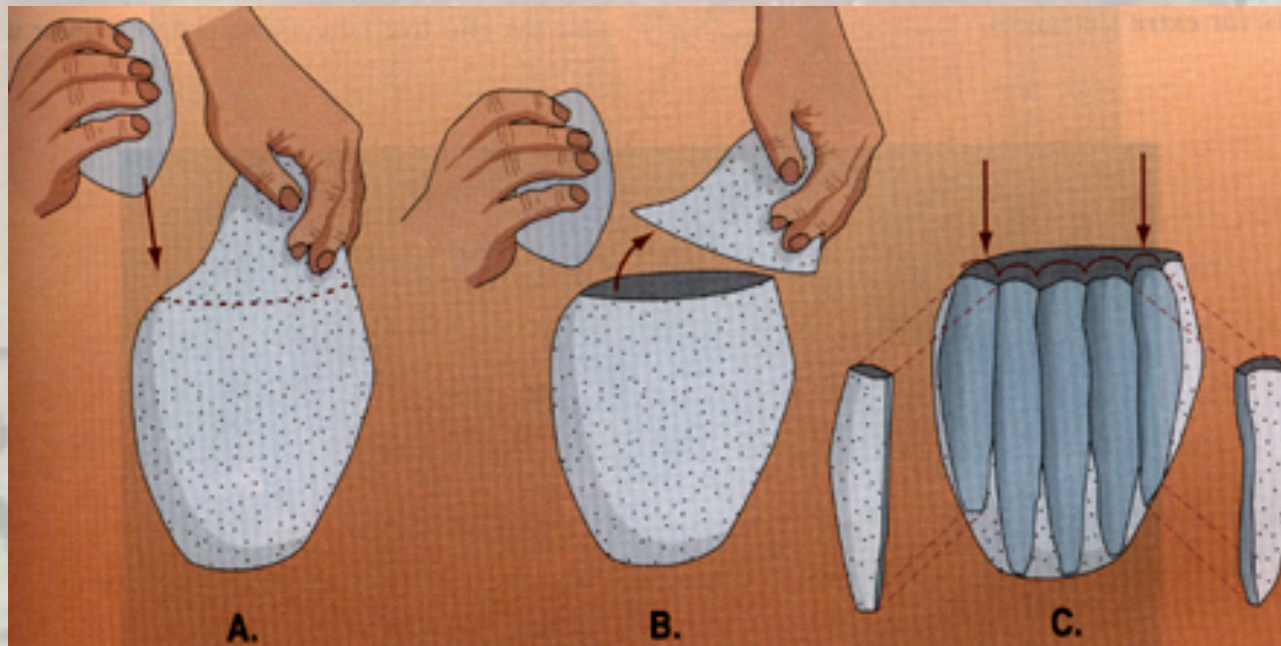
Long-distance trade



Upper Paleolithic Tools

Blade technique

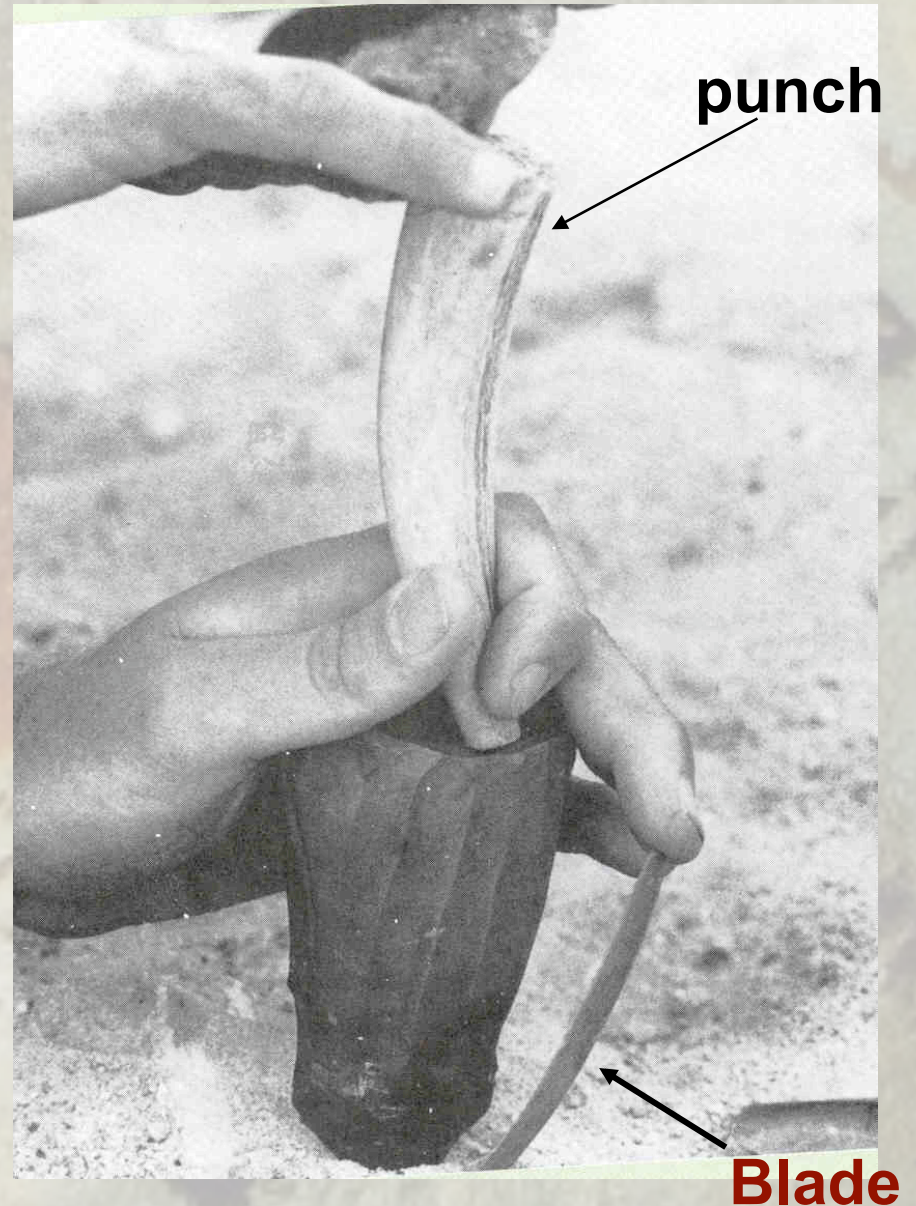
Long, parallel-sided flakes are struck off the edges of a specially prepared core



Blade manufacturing techniques

Blades: long flake, twice as long as wide

- Sharp parallel edges
- Removed from core like peeling carrot (sort of)
- Blades provide “blank” or form, which may then be shaped into different tools:
 - projectile points
 - burins
 - knives
 - drills
 - scraping tools



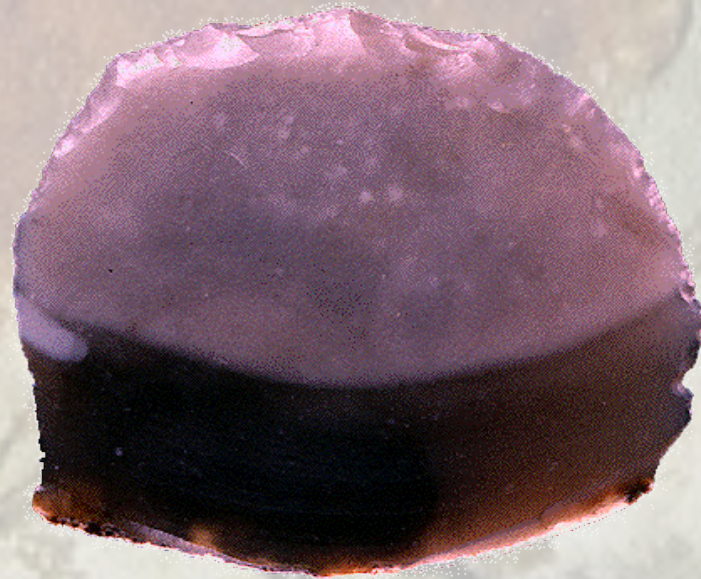
Tool technologies



- Variability of anatomically modern *H. sapiens* stone tools too great to define a single tradition
- Everywhere, more evidence for greater sophistication and specialization of stone tools

Upper Paleolithic burin

Scrapers, used for working hides



Upper Paleolithic Tool Manufacturing

Pressure flaking

Bone, wood, or antler is used to press small flakes from a stone



Upper Paleolithic Tools

Burins

Stone tools with chisel-like edges
Used for working bone and wood

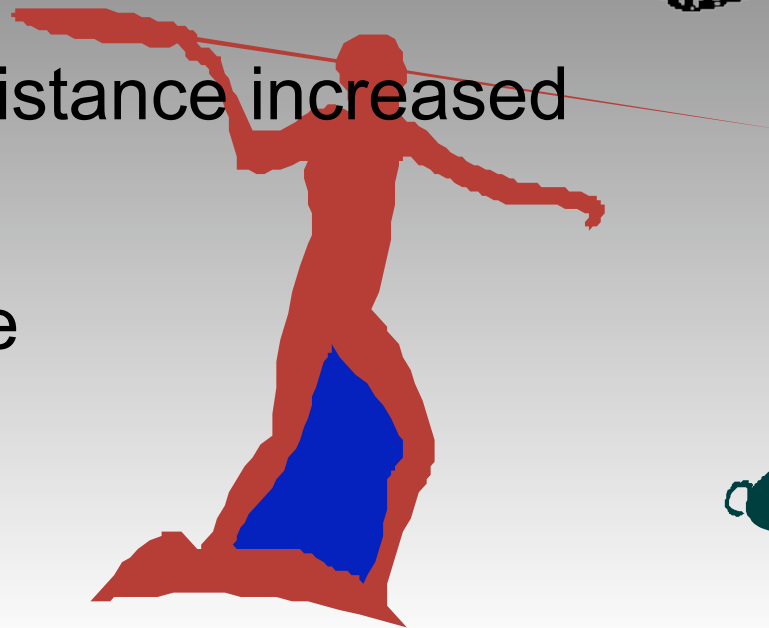


Spear-throwers

Effective killing distance increased

Net hunting

For smaller game

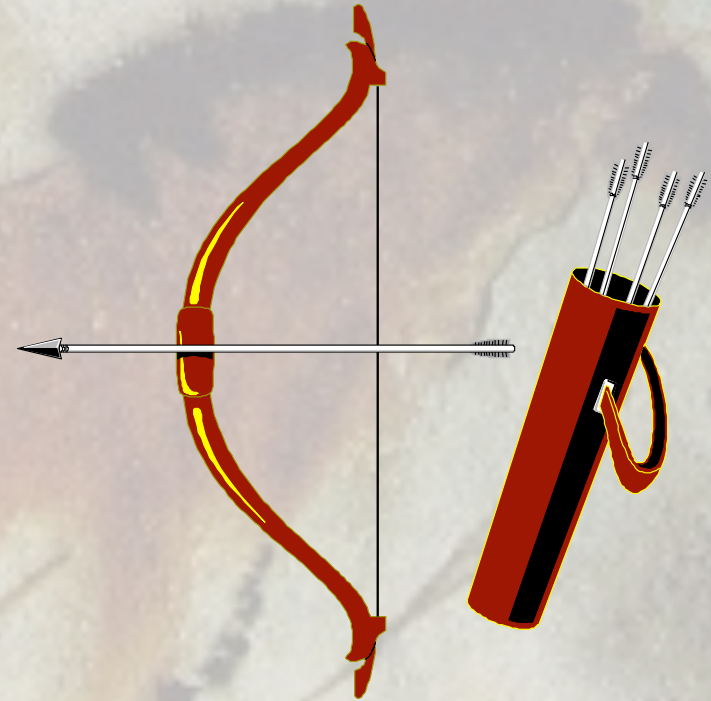


Upper Paleolithic Tools

Bow and arrow

First appears in Africa

Increases effective distance
between hunter and prey

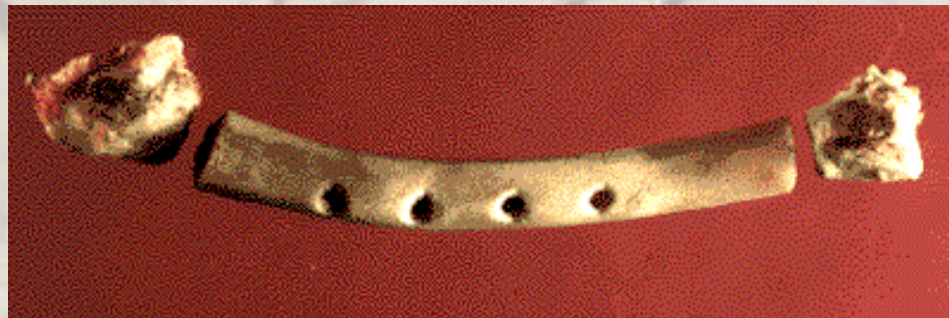


Musical instruments

Bow

Flutes

Whistles

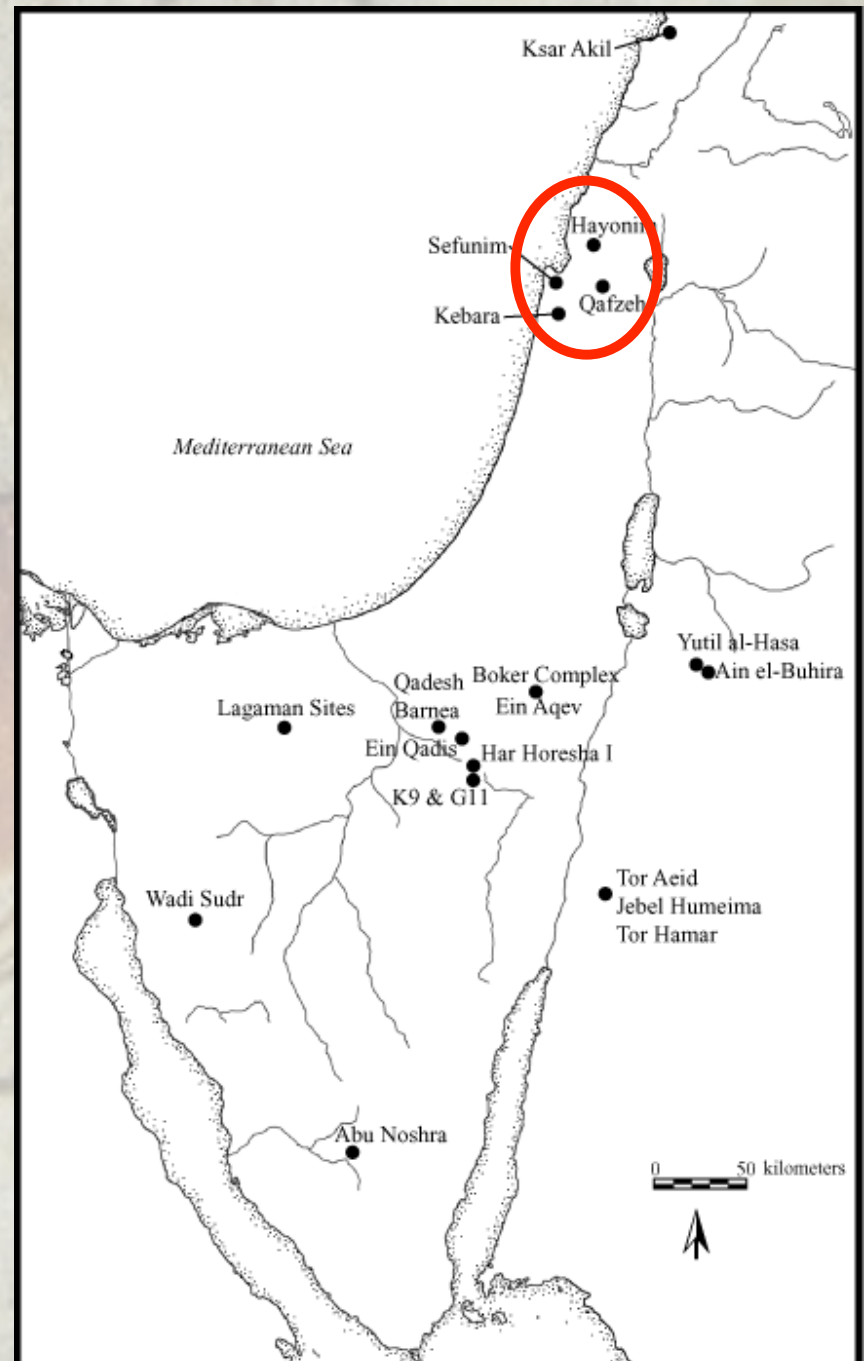


Levantine UP sites

Investigation of open air sites
important contrast to caves

‘Circulating’ pattern of
highly mobile UP groups

This contrasts to the
‘radiating’ pattern of
Natufian groups during the
Epipaleolithic



Levantine Climate: Three Phases

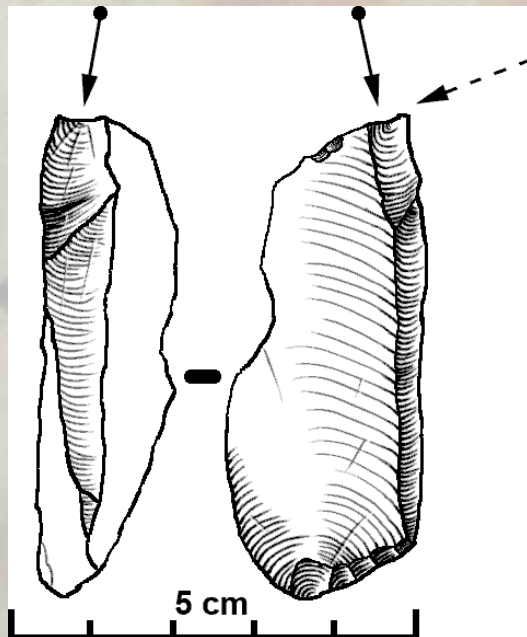
Phase A: ca. 45,000 – 32,000 bp
relatively dry

Phase B: ca. 34/32,000 – 20,000 bp
more humid

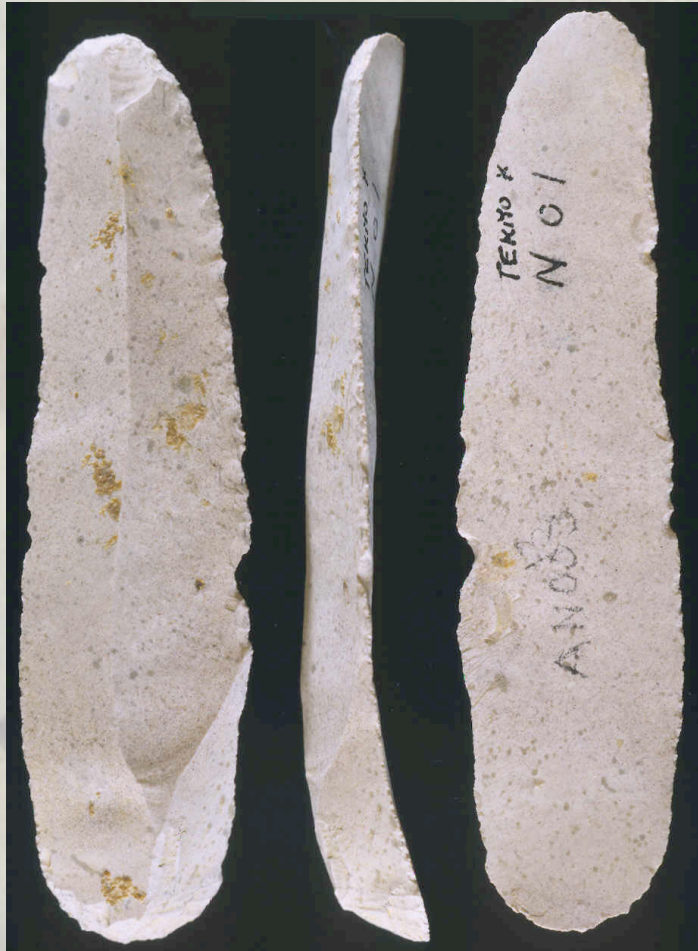
Phase C: ca. 22,000 – 13,000 bp
very cold & dry, lasts until the
Epipaleolithic

Levantine Aurignacian Tool Kit

Dominated by
endscrapers and burins



Aurignacian Flint tools



Scraper on blade

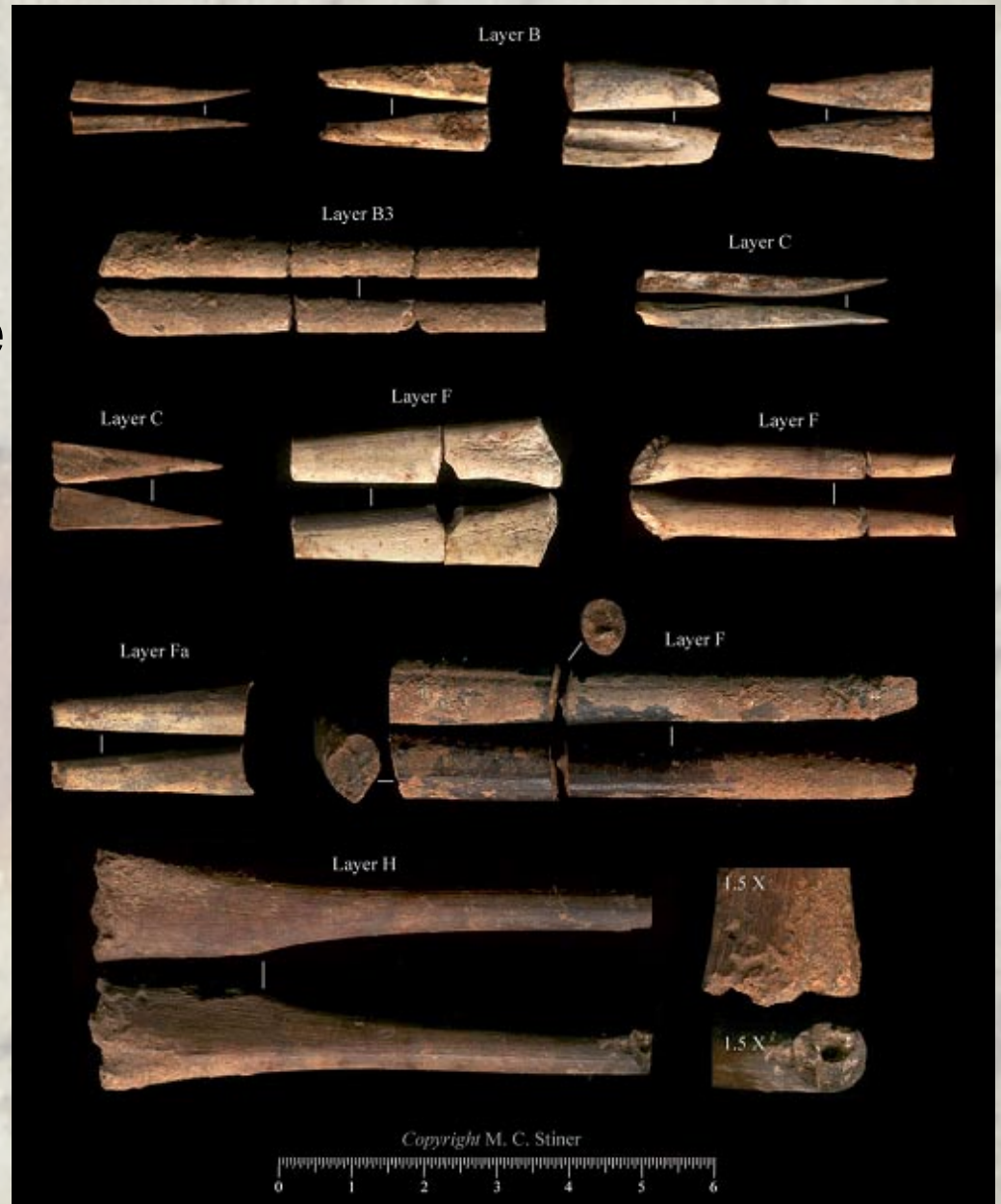


Backed blade (knife)

Bone tools

Awls made of bone

Bone and antler become prevalent in UP assemblages



Ucagizli Cave, Turkey

Friday February 19

Obsidian with
John Cherry

