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Anthropology (Quickstudy: Academic)

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ANTHROPOLOGY

Archaeology

A branch of anthropology focusing on the analysis of human material remains in an attempt to reconstruct past cultures.

SOME COMMON METHODS

- Excavation:** Uncovering buried materials from the past so that they may be recorded and analyzed.
- Survey:** Locating artifacts and potential sites through methods such as ground-penetrating radar and aerial surveys, remote sensing techniques.
- Field system:** A technique used in excavation allowing better recording of the location of artifacts; a grid is mapped out over the excavation area, which is then excavated one foot at a time and mapped according to the grid system.

DATING TYPES


Relative dating: The temporal location of artifacts is described in reference to other artifacts to determine a relative age.

Stratigraphic dating: Also known as chronometric dating, determine the actual age of an artifact in terms of years, centuries, or other units of time.

- Radioactive dating:**
 - Carbon-14 dating:** Measure dating method measuring the half-life and decay rate of C-14 in isotopes in organic materials.
 - Amino acid racemization:** A chronometric dating technique used on organic material, amino changes in proteins when an organism dies to calculate the age at death.
 - Potassium-argon (K-Ar) dating:** Chronometric dating method measuring the decay of potassium (K-40) to argon (Ar-40) in volcanic deposits.
 - Argon-argon (Ar-Ar) dating:** Relative dating technique used in conjunction with potassium-argon dating that estimates relative quantities of argon (Ar) to argon-40 gases in volcanic deposits.
 - Optically stimulated luminescence dating:** Chronometric dating of shallow artifacts by measuring the water absorbed on worked surfaces of the artifact.
 - Thermoluminescence dating:** Effective dating technique used to determine the age of ceramics, tiles, bricks and any other fired-clay artifacts.
 - Dendrochronology:** Also known as tree-ring dating, this absolute dating technique compares a tree sample that is radiocarbon-dated to an exactly dated tree-ring chronology for the area to determine the year the wood was first utilized by humans.
 - Electron spin resonance:** Chronometric dating method that measures trapped electrons in shell and bone.

POTTERY

- All fired clay artifacts made by humans.
- Hundreds of types: food storage vessels, cooking pots, bowls, burial urns, and pipes, etc.
- Widespread use is one of the most compelling indicators of civilization in a site.
- Pottery discovery used to date early and middle civilizations.



After pottery

TOOL MAKING

8,000-10,000 years ago	Upper Paleolithic: Late Stone Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flint Stone
8,000	Middle Paleolithic: Middle Stone Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flint Stone
4,000	Lower Paleolithic: Early Stone Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flint Stone
1,500	Iron	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iron Steel
2,000	Brass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brass Steel

Tool Traditions

- Oldowan tool tradition:** The earliest identifiable tool-making tradition, associated with Homo habilis, the Oldowan begins the Paleolithic (Old Stone Age), 2.5 million years ago.
 - Tools were made by striking a stone core, producing flakes which were used as blades and choppers and the entire core used as hammerstones.
 - Primary tool produced was the pebble chopper.
- Acheulean tool tradition:** Tool-making tradition after the Oldowan period, during time about 1.7 million years ago, associated with Homo erectus.
 - Made for uses very similar, but much larger and reflecting a more standardized design.
 - Primary tool produced was the Acheulean hand axe, a pear-shaped tool.
- Mousterian tool tradition:** Tool-making tradition of the Neanderthals from 100,000 - 400,000 years ago in Europe, Southwest Asia, Northern Africa.
 - Tools, generally much smaller, more varied and much more skillfully worked than those previous.
 - Tool makers utilized pressure-flaking techniques in contrast to the earlier percussion-flaking techniques.

Tool Techniques

- Lithic:** Used often in the Mousterian tool tradition, like tools of flaked stone were made by striking a shaped core.
- Blade techniques:** Blade produced by striking a core of stone.
- Pressure-flaking:** Stone, rather than wood, used to press small flakes off a flint core.
 - Allowed for more control over the finished flake.

TRANSITIONAL PERIODS

Paleoindians in the New World

- Initially, "Old Indians", first group of humans to come to the New World.
- Most researchers agree Paleoindians came to the New World sometime before 12,000 years ago, during the Paleoindian ("Old Stone Age").
- Marked mostly big game animals, known for distinctive spear-thrower artifacts.

Mesolithic

- Initially, "Middle Stone Age", an archaeological period of time beginning around 12,000 B.C.
- Humans became more sedentary and began to utilize an increasingly varied economy.
- "Natufian", a cultural tradition beginning in Southwest Asia during the Mesolithic period.
 - Composed of the first people who accepted permanent settlements and began domestication in this area.
- Archaeology term applied to Mesolithic cultures in the New World.
- Characterized by increasing cultural diversity as populations adapted to different environments.
- Created an array of cultures with unique lifestyles and technology.

Neolithic

- Initially, "New Stone Age", established plant and animal domestication beginning about 11,000 years ago in the Middle East.
- Domestication of plants and animals: Evolutionary process where humans (deliberately or unintentional) bred specific plants and animal genetics to better control their reproduction.

Early cities

- Four East:**
 - Uruks: The Sumerians began the domestication of wheat, barley and cattle about 35,000 B.P.
 - Harappan: Located in present-day Pakistan.

CIVILIZATIONS

Effect used to refer to the presence of the modern-day line of social development, rights today in advanced, more organized, more formal societies.

Early cities

- Mesopotamia:**
 - "The land between two rivers", between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, where first civilizations flourished from 3500 B.C.
 - The early Mesopotamian civilizations of Sumer witnessed growth of cities into a unified state system.
 - Cuneiform: Early form of writing used to record economic transactions, laws, and record-keeping.



Synopsis

Defines the most important aspects of various forms of anthropology, including archeology, cultural and biological anthropology. For students studying anthropology; most helpful for those in introductory anthropology.

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excellent

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