

Anthropology 2151

Ancient Peoples and Places

Winter 2023

Prof. Tim Kaiser

1

“The past is a foreign country:
they do things differently there”

L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between*. 1953.

2

The past endures in the present



An abandoned settlement in New England

3

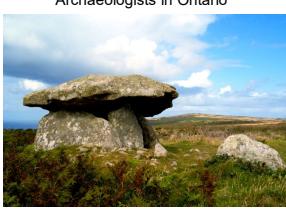
Vestiges of the past are all around us



Remains of Mr George Bland's
farmhouse, mid-19th c, Peel Region



Archaeologists in Ontario

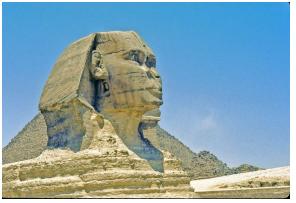


4,000-year-old burial chamber (England)

4

An underwater photograph showing a vertical wooden pile structure, likely a pile driver or part of a bridge foundation. The piles are weathered and covered in marine life. A scale bar is placed horizontally in the foreground for reference.

Mnjikaning Fish Weirs, Orillia. ca 3300 BCE



The Great Sphinx, Egypt



Ancient rock art, Vernal, Utah



The imposing Moai of Easter Island

5

A photograph of the Kukulcan Pyramid at Chichen Itza, showing its stepped structure and a small opening near the top.

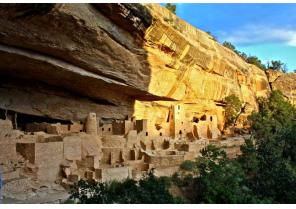
The Pyramid of the Magician, Uxmal, Mexico



Rock art in Chumash Cave, California



Stonehenge, England



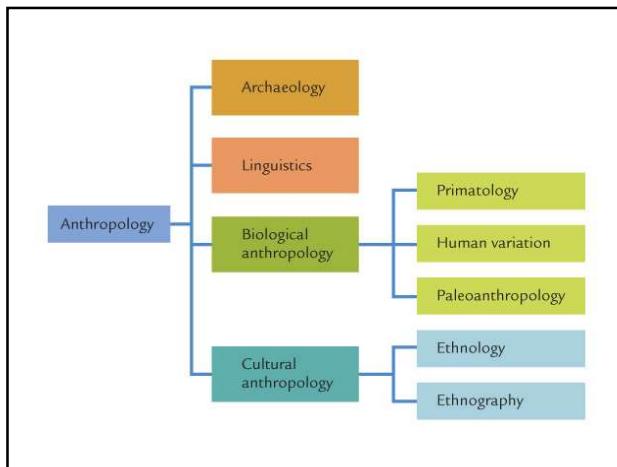
Cliff dwelling, Mesa Verde, Colorado

6

The anthropological perspective

Putting antiquity in context

7



8

Structure of the course

Most course content can be found on MyCourseLink (aka D2L)

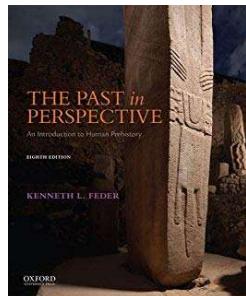
The course outline is posted online, on MyCourseLink

Term project instructions are there, too.

9

Readings and other sources

- Textbook
 - The Past in Perspective, 8th edition 2020
 - (earlier editions: take your chances!)
- Reserve readings (MyReadings)
- Other readings (D2L)
- Documentaries



10

Evaluation

- Midterm Exam 25%
 - February 16
- Term Project
 - Submit choice of topic by February 9
- Term Project Annotated Bibliography 10%
 - March 2
- Term Project 35 %
 - Research into either an ancient place (a significant archaeological site) or an ancient people (the culture history of a prehistoric cultural group), as revealed by archaeological evidence. Project will be realized in one of four different genres: a documentary, a design for an exhibition, a school teaching & learning unit, or a popular science article.
 - Detailed instructions on D2L.
 - Due April 4
- Final Examination 30%
 - Essay questions.
 - Covers the whole course, but emphasizes material taken up after midterm

11

The World's Human Past in 5 Steps

- **500 BP (Before Present)**
 - At this time, there were some central zones in the world, with high population densities, urban centres, metals, writing, complex state-level politics, warfare, etc.
 - These zones were found in Europe; around the Mediterranean; in Southwest, South and East Asia; in Africa; in Mesoamerica; in South America; and in Eastern North America.
 - Around them were small-scale farming societies, and, further beyond, some hunter-gatherers.



12

- 5,000 BP

- While most of the world's population still existed as hunter-gatherers, a growing number of societies had begun to subsist by farming, an innovation that was only several millennia old.
 - At this time, also, societies that were more complex could be found in a very few places: the Eastern Mediterranean, West Asia, Mesoamerica, and South America.



13

- 50,000 BP

- It's the middle of the last ice age.
 - Only the Old World is inhabited.
 - Several species of humans existed at this time including *Homo neanderthalensis*, the Denisovan hominins*, *Homo floresiensis*, and *Homo sapiens*.
 - Around this time, humans move into Australia; somewhat later the New World begins to be inhabited.



*No consensus on their taxonomic status, so sometimes: *Homo denisova*, *H. altaiensis*, or *H. sapiens denisova*.

14

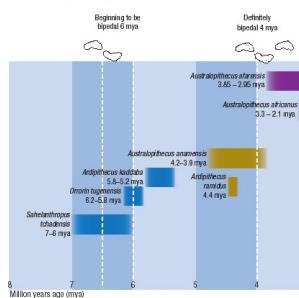
- 500,000 BP

- In the Old World (the Eastern Hemisphere), only the tropical regions and the temperate zones immediately adjacent to them were inhabited. No one lives in the New World (the Western Hemisphere).
 - Control of fire.
 - *Homo erectus*.



15

- 5,000,000 BP
- No human species other than Homo sapiens
- Bipedalism is the key to our success. Our hominid ancestors are evolving.



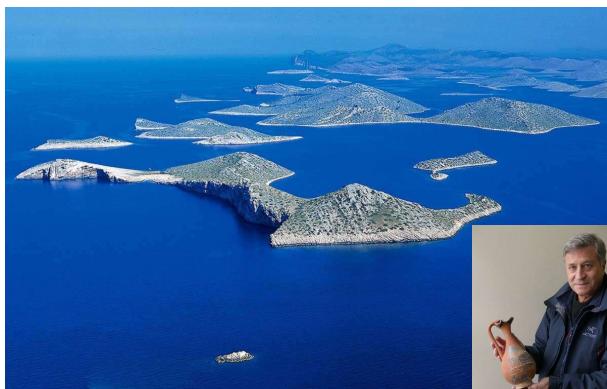
16

Topics to be covered

- *Modern humans*
 - The emergence of anatomically modern humans, *Homo sapiens*.
 - Ice Age hunting and gathering
 - Art
 - Complex foraging >> social complexity
 - Settling the planet
- *Origins and consequences of food production*
 - Domestication and sedentism
 - Origins of farming in West Asia, Mesoamerica and elsewhere
 - Spread of farming
 - Social consequences of agriculture
- *Early states and empires*
 - Old World: Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, Indus, Crete
 - New World: Mesoamerica, South America, North America

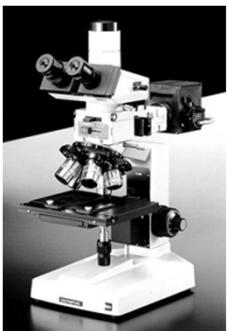
17

Hello...



18

Archaeology and scientific reasoning



There are lots of arguments about what science is.
"But if science is about the rational accumulation of knowledge, assessed in rigorous, systematic ways, then all archaeologists would consider themselves to be scientists. ... Science in this broad sense is often referred to by the German term *Wissenschaft*" (Johnson 2020:41).

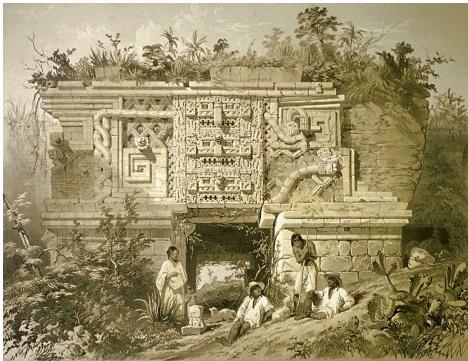
19



An archaeological field lab at an excavation in Israel.

20

A foreign country?



Frederick Catherwood- *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan*, London, 1844. Portion of a Building Called Las Monjas at Uxmal.

21

Postcards from the past

Is the past really a “foreign country” where “they do things differently”?

Not always....

22

Buried land surfaces



In 2018, near Las Cruces, NM, these human footprints were spotted in a dried-up lakebed (a playa), which contains hundreds of thousands of animal and human footprints dating from the end of the last ice age (about 11,550 years ago) to sometime before about 13,000 years ago.

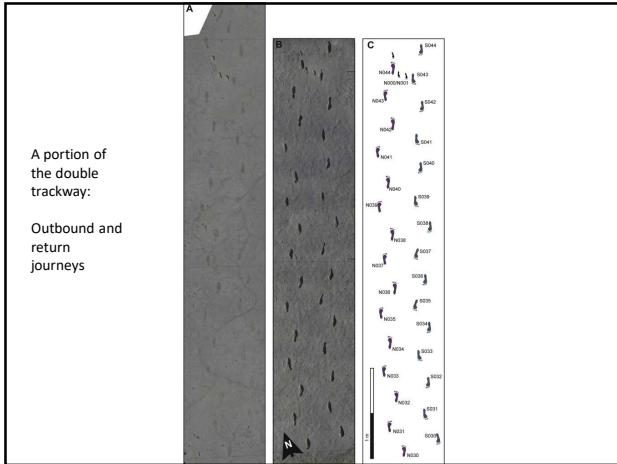
Unlike many other known footprint trackways, this one is remarkable for its length – over at least 1.5 km – and straightness. This individual did not deviate from their course. But what is even more remarkable is that they followed their own trackway home again a few hours later.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277379120305722#mmc1>

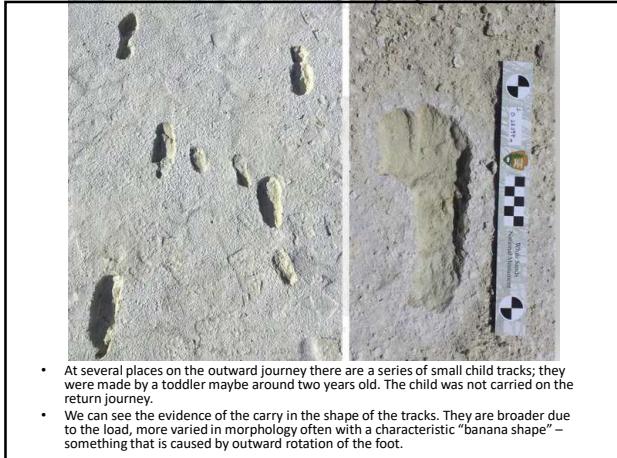
23



24

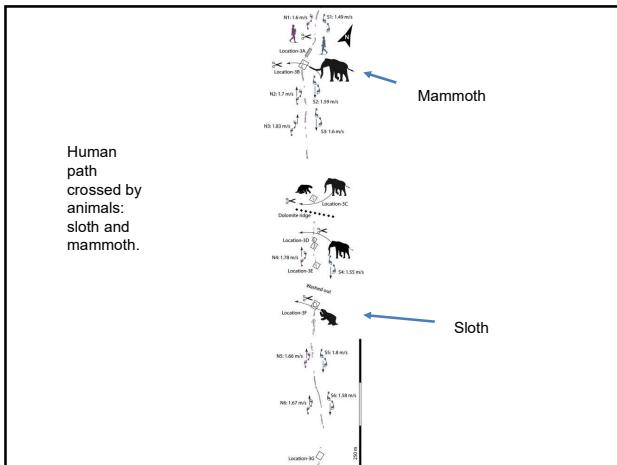


25

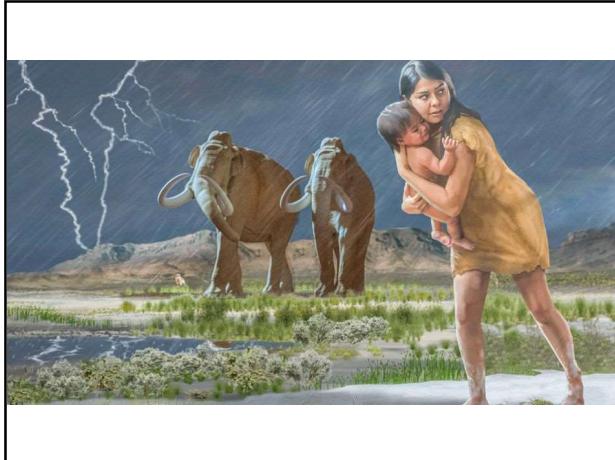


- At several places on the outward journey there are a series of small child tracks; they were made by a toddler maybe around two years old. The child was not carried on the return journey.
 - We can see the evidence of the carry in the shape of the tracks. They are broader due to the load, more varied in morphology often with a characteristic "banana shape" – something that is caused by outward rotation of the foot.

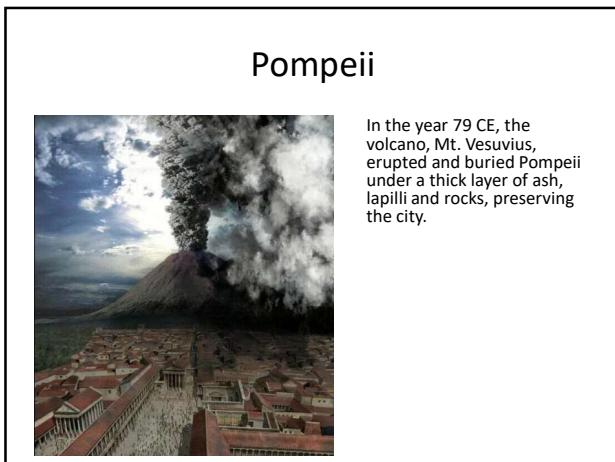
26



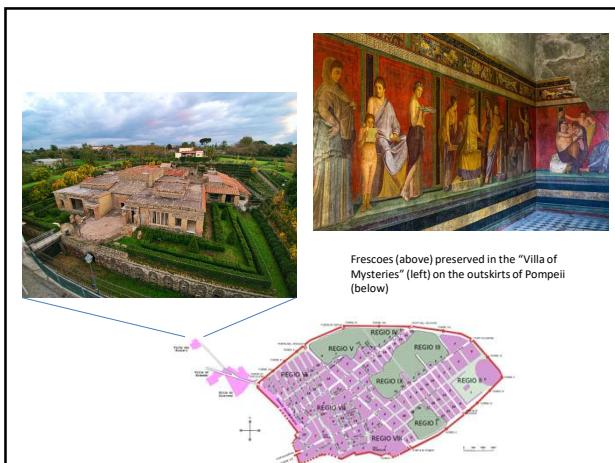
27



28



29



30

Fast food at Pompeii: a thermopolium



31



32



33

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*



*“The more it changes, the more it's the same thing.”

34

Questions or goodbye?



35