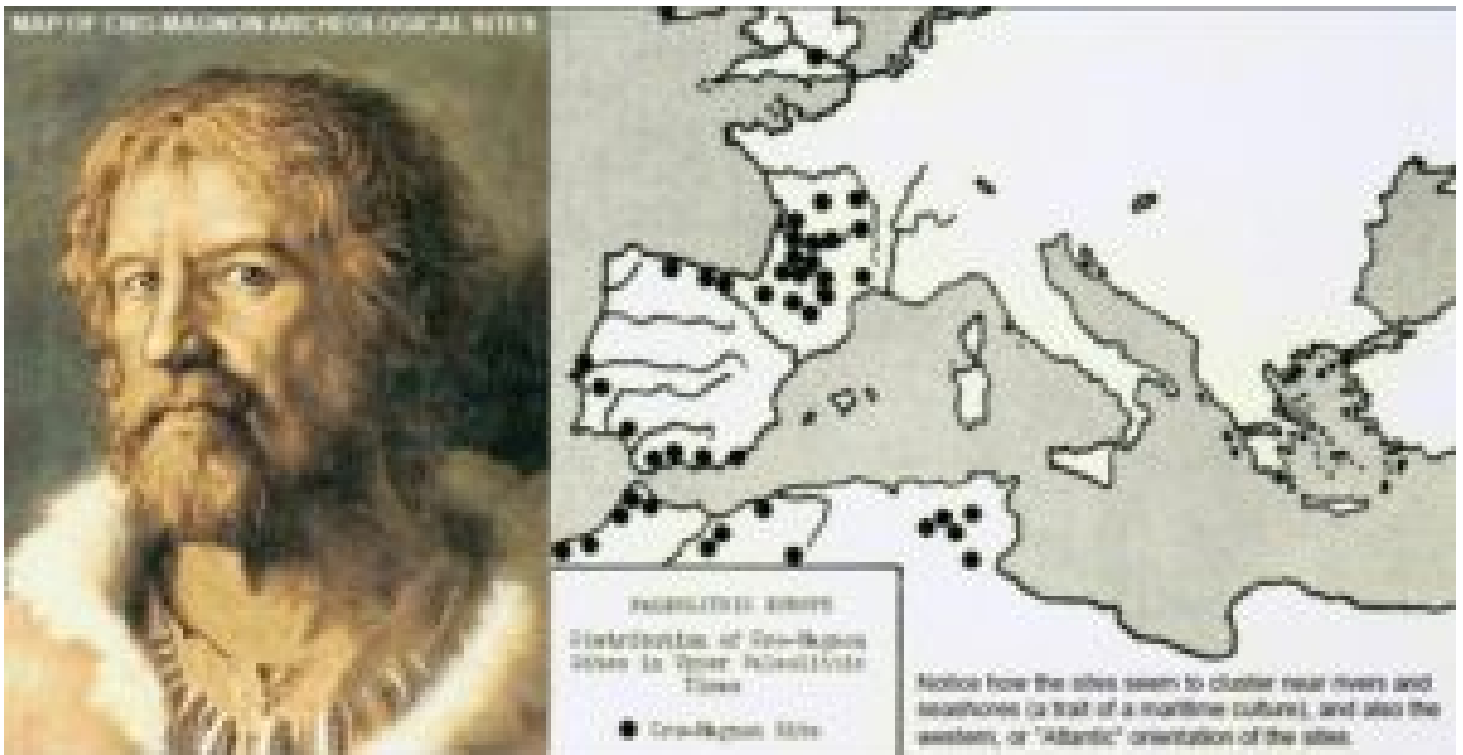


Who We Are #3 — Cro-Magnon Man: The Apex of Human Evolution?



DISSIDENT MILLENNIAL (EDITOR) • 17 JULY, 2017

2



by Dr. William L. Pierce

*World's First True Men Evolved in Europe
Did Cro-Magnon Man Equal Us?*

WE HAVE NOW looked at our ancestors' physical remains — fossil skulls, teeth, and other bones — dating from prehuman times down to the appearance of Cro-Magnon Man, some 37,000 years ago. Judging from these somatic remains alone, we have only slight evidence of any increase in evolutionary grade during long portions of the three-quarters of a million years since the first appearance of Homo sapiens. Cro-Magnon Man's remains indicate, if anything, a higher evolutionary grade than that of his present-day descendants. Only in the cultural evidence — tools, weapons, artistic creations, and the like — can we look for signs of really substantial evolutionary progress.

And it is highly questionable whether even the cultural evidence shows any increase in inherent human quality during the past 30,000 years, as we shall soon see. But, if we look back far enough, we can see in the remains of man's tools and other artifacts unmistakable signs of changing evolutionary grade.

We have good reason for believing that our race has advanced not only in its cultural achievements but also in its inherent capacity for cultural achievement — and, by implication, in its level of consciousness — during the last million years, if not during the last 30,000.

Meaning of Culture

Culture has been defined in different ways by different anthropologists. We will define it here as all purposeful animal behavior which is learned rather than instinctual and which involves artifacts or symbols. Artifacts are extra-somatic objects modified as a part of or in furtherance of learned behavior; tools, weapons, and clothing are examples. Symbols may be spoken words, gestures, or ritualized or customary actions.

Specifically excluded from the realm of culture is behavior which is purely instinctual. Thus, the nest-building activity of birds, even though it involves artifacts, is not cultural. The hunting behavior of predatory mammals, even though it is at least partially learned by the young from their elders, is not, in most cases, considered cultural unless it involves the use of artifacts (weapons).

Nevertheless, culture is not an exclusively human attribute. Man's prehuman ancestors possessed culture more than two million years before the attainment of the sapiens level, and some of man's living non-human relatives possess it today.

Non-human Culture

It has already been mentioned in an earlier installment in this series that chimpanzees use and, to a limited extent, make tools. They use stones as missiles, handfuls of leaves as toilet paper or napkins, wads of chewed leaves as sponges, sticks as levers or clubs. They also modify twigs in order to suit them to specific purposes, usually as probes for extracting insects from their nests, but occasionally for other purposes as well.

This tool-using and tool-making behavior certainly has an instinctual component; chimpanzees are born with both the ability and the urge to pick up and manipulate objects. But careful observation of chimpanzees, both in captivity and in the wild, has established the fact that they learn the specific uses and modifications of objects by observing other chimpanzees. Thus, they have developed a tool-using and tool-making tradition which is passed from one generation to the next by non-genetic means: i.e., they have a culture.

No Basis for Distinction

Some anthropologists have attempted to qualitatively distinguish non-human cultures, such as those of chimpanzees and man's earliest ancestors, from human cultures on the basis that the latter show progressive changes from one generation to the next, while the former remain essentially unchanged. There is, however, very little evidence for such a conclusion. Chimpanzee culture has been under close human observation for barely two chimpanzee generations, and while it is known that prehuman cultures remained virtually unchanged for thousands of generations, the same was true of early human cultures. It was also true of Australian aborigine, African Negro, and other non-White cultures even until recent times.

In this age of extraordinarily rapid cultural change, it may be difficult to realize that throughout man's long prehistory cultural change was much slower. The rule has been for cultural evolution to keep pace with biological evolution rather than to race far ahead of it, as in this exceptional and troubled age.

Thus, we have no good reason for considering chimpanzee and prehuman cultures to be qualitatively different from primitive human cultures. They differ only in their level of development, and we can with good reason hope to learn much about the origins of our own culture by studying that of the chimpanzees and our prehuman ancestors — just as we have already gained valuable insights into the purely instinctual aspects of human behavior by studying animal behavior.

Prehuman Culture

The first tools used by man's prehuman ancestors were the sticks and stones he could pick up around him and use without modification as clubs, projectiles, or hand-held hammers, just as chimpanzees use them today. The evidence of this earliest use of tools survives today in accumulations of hand-size stones found in association with the fossils of shattered animal bones at locations where stones of the type in question do not occur naturally. For example, when river-smoothed pebbles are found in caves several miles from the nearest stream, along with animal bones which have been smashed to get at the marrow, we may safely assume that some creature carried the pebbles there and used them as tools.

Sometime around three million years ago, pre-men learned that stones could be used for much more than hurling and pounding, if they were first modified. By striking stones together to fracture them, they produced sharp edges which could be used for cutting, scraping, or chopping. These first "pebble tools," as they have been generically labeled, were very crude tools indeed, but for the creatures who produced them they represented an enormous advance in ability to cope with the environment.

The First Tool Makers

Who were these creatures? We are still not certain. In the Olduvai Gorge and other archeological sites in East Africa the fossil remains of Australopithecines have been found with pebble tools dated at nearly three million years old. The

Australopithecines were omnivorous primates, not much larger than modern chimpanzees, who walked on two feet. Their cranial capacities averaged about 500 cubic centimeters, only 100 cubic centimeters larger than that of the modern chimpanzee. It is generally assumed that they made the pebble tools and hunted and ate the other animals whose remains are found with theirs.

But contemporary with these Australopithecines was a substantially more advanced primate, *Homo habilis*, whose fossils are much scarcer than those of the Australopithecines. *Homo habilis*, with a cranial capacity of 800 cubic centimeters, may have been the only maker of pebble tools three million years ago, and he may have hunted and eaten the Australopithecines whose remains have been found with these earliest artifacts. More evidence needs to be gathered before it can be decided with confidence whether the Australopithecines made pebble tools or were the victims of more advanced pebble tool makers.

Europe as Old as Africa

Pebble tools were also made in Europe three million years ago. A prehuman living site near Bugiulesti, in Romania, which is at least as old as the oldest sites in Olduvai Gorge, contains pebble tools and smashed animal bones — but no primate fossils. Whether the Bugiulesti site was inhabited by Australopithecines or *Homo habilis* or an early form of *Homo erectus* is unknown.

What is quite certain, however, is that from the time man's prehuman ancestors developed the first rudiments of culture — long before the first pebble tools were made — their cultural, social, and biological evolution became inseparably intertwined, all three interacting strongly with one another.

One can gain some insight into the tightness of the cultural-social-biological interdependence which governed the development of man's ancestors by considering only the social and biological implications of the first freeing of prehuman hands for tool using. As some early race of primates in man's line of descent gradually ceased walking on all fours and became erect, using their forefeet as hands, their pelvises necessarily changed. The new shape of the pelvis accommodated bipedal locomotion better, but at the same time it reduced the available space for a birth canal.

Origin of the Family

Since the use of tools required a larger brain than before, and since the birth canal had become smaller, infants had to be born in a premature state, with a relatively long period of postnatal development and growth ahead of them. This meant a long period of incapacitation for mothers, while they nursed and cared for their helpless young. And this in turn required a prolonged dependence of the female on the male.

Thus, stable male-female pairing, with the male taking the role of hunter-provider and the female the role of mother-nurse, became established in our evolutionary

line hundreds of thousands of generations ago. It is what is natural for our race, in that a predisposition for it is born with us. The foolish liberals who see it as the “oppression” of women and imagine that they can abolish it with a few acts of Congress or a Constitutional amendment have not the faintest understanding of what they are tampering with.

Sociobiology

Just as the nuclear family is much more than a purely cultural-social institution, so also were larger social groupings precultural in their origins. Only as a member of a band of his peers did the first inventor have a reasonable chance to transmit his invention to others, making it the collective property of the race, to be transmitted down the endless chain of generations.

Certain fundamental social institutions thus became genetically related to certain cultural developments, in that the race of primates which, at a precultural stage, developed social groupings and relationships favorable to the transmission of culture gained a survival advantage over races without such groupings and relationships. In this way an inborn predisposition toward certain general social forms became part of the race’s genetic heritage.

Another example of cultural-biological interdependence is given by man’s instinctual attachment to his weapons. For hundreds of thousands of generations of prehuman evolution — followed by some 30,000 generations of *Homo sapiens* — the ancestors of today’s men lived long enough to pass on their genes or not depending upon whether or not they had lethal weapons at hand, day and night, which they knew how to use effectively. As every gun lover knows, the modern American’s feelings for his firearms goes far deeper than reason, culture, or social tradition.

A similar explanation almost certainly holds for our racial predisposition toward tinkering with gadgets and hobbying with tools. Indeed, many men feel almost as deeply about their tools as they do about their weapons.

Ecological Revolution

So long as man’s ancestors were at the precultural level, they — like all other animals — were effectively confined to the habitat in which they had evolved and to which they were, therefore, biologically adapted. Without tools, weapons, clothing, fire, or artificial shelters, they had no control over their environment and were entirely at its mercy.

In the late Pliocene — four or five million years ago — the prehuman habitat was probably tropical savanna: grassland with scattered trees, intermediate between the open plains and the tropical forests. Outside such regions man’s ancestors could not survive, and the result was that most of the earth’s surface was uninhabited.

Then began what is known as the Ecological Revolution, with the first primate use of tools. Tool use gave man's ancestors their first partial independence of their environment, allowing them to expand beyond their original habitat. Probably sometime in the early Pleistocene — perhaps three million years ago — the habitat of tool-using prehumans had expanded into the earth's temperate regions, including southern and central Europe.

European Focus

And once prehumans' use of tools allowed them to live in the temperate zones, their rate of evolution — cultural-social-biological — greatly increased, due to the much more strongly selective climate of the temperate zones. Thus, the focus of prehuman evolution shifted from the tropics to temperate Eurasia about three million years ago and has remained there since.

By the beginning of the Middle Pleistocene about 800,000 years ago the very crude chipped-pebble choppers with which man's ancestors began their tool-making career had given way in more advanced areas to much more effective stone tools. Instead of merely knocking a few chips off a pebble to create a very rough cutting edge, the tool makers of this period shaped the whole pebble to convert it into a highly functional tool, which has been given the generic name "handax."

The owner of a stone handax had not only a formidable weapon which increased tenfold his ability to kill enemies or medium-size game, but also a tool with which he could easily skin and dismember animals — and cut the fuel for cooking them too, because he also was using fire regularly by then. (In Europe, that is, where the earliest known hearths are a million years old. In the more slowly evolving tropical areas fire did not appear until much later. It was not used in Africa until about 60,000 years ago.)

Human Threshold

At approximately the time the cultural threshold from pebble tools to handaxes was crossed, the biological threshold from subman to man was also crossed. From about three-quarters of a million years ago true men, with brains nearly as large as those of modern Europeans (and larger than those of modern Blacks), lived in Europe, although the tropical areas of the world continued to be inhabited only by submen.

It is interesting that the first handaxes should have appeared at about the same time as the first true men, but not really surprising, when one considers the interdependence of cultural and biological factors in man's evolution — and when one understands that pebble tools and the more sophisticated tools which supplanted them differ in more than the degree of craftsmanship required for their manufacture.

When one looks at tools of different ages in a particular area, one notes two types of differences. There is, first, generally an evolution in craftsmanship, so that one can

classify any particular type of tool, say pebble choppers, as relatively primitive or relatively advanced.

Then there are differences in the type of manufacturing process between different types of tools. Some of these latter differences allow us to draw inferences about changes in the level of consciousness of the creatures who made the tools. That is, there are sometimes quantum jumps in the degree of mental abstraction required on the part of the maker in advancing from one type of tool to another.

Harder Than It Looks

Pebble tools may not look very sophisticated, but the level of intellect required to make them is substantially higher than that required to use them. Every modern archeologist worth his salt learns how to make various types of stone tools. But the average person — carpenter or businessman or engineer — who gives it a try without any prior instruction soon finds that it's not as easy as it looks. Some types of stone will fracture properly, yielding a sharp-edged break when struck, and others will not. And there's quite a trick to knocking just the right sort of chip off even the most suitable pebble.

But beyond these difficulties is the requirement for imagination. The animal who has a smooth pebble and wants a cutting edge must be able to visualize beforehand the transformation he is attempting to bring about. When one then goes from the very simplest pebble tools to those with a cutting edge produced by knocking a series of intersecting flakes off a pebble, the degree of conceptualization required is even greater. It is certainly a step beyond the sort of imagination required of a chimpanzee who converts a twig broken from a tree into a smooth, straight probe for pulling ants from an anthill.

Capacity for Abstraction

In advancing from a pebble chopper to a handax, the significant difference is not a higher degree of manual skill or craftsmanship required. The significant difference lies in the fact that making a handax requires a more profound transformation of the original stone than making a pebble chopper; a higher degree of abstraction is required of the tool maker to visualize in the raw stone the finished handax which it will become.

By about 350,000 years ago handax makers were producing flake tools from carefully prepared stone cores which required nearly the same degree of visualization and foresight needed by a modern diamond cutter planning the cleaving blows with which he will reduce an irregularly shaped raw diamond to one or more perfectly faceted gems.

Another type of artifact which appeared during the Middle Pleistocene was the tool whose sole purpose was to make other tools: the second-order tool. Notched-stone spokeshaves for smoothing wooden spears and arrows, chisel-like stone burins for

working bone into needles and hooks, and elastic punches made of antler for producing flaked stone tools are examples.

Again, the evolutionary significance of such artifacts lies not in a higher degree of craftsmanship, but rather in the fact that they required a higher order of abstraction on the part of their makers than previous tools required. They could not appear until a certain threshold in human consciousness had been reached.

Riss-Wuerm Interglacial

By about 150,000 years ago, in the middle of the warm Riss-Wuerm interglacial period, man's tool-making capabilities allowed him to further expand his habitat. The principal move in Europe was to the north, from the Mediterranean toward the Baltic.

The early Europeans were by this time skilled makers of stone, bone, and wooden implements. They produced sewed leather clothing and used bone- and stone-tipped spears for big-game hunting. They lived in artificial shelters heated by fire during cold weather.

When they moved north the focus of human evolution moved with them, shifting from the Atlantic and Mediterranean coastal areas of Western Europe to the great northern Eurasian plain. The cultural achievements of these northern European big-game hunters of 150,000 years ago surpassed those of all other contemporary human groups.

What were these people of the Riss-Wuerm interglacial period like? Their physical remains are, unfortunately, much scarcer than their artifacts. From Fontechevade Cave, in central France, has come some of the best evidence we have to date. Portions of two skulls dating from that period indicate a race not remarkably different from today's Europeans. Their head shape was essentially modern, without heavy brow ridges and with a cranial capacity fully as large as that of present-day White men, but with a slightly more rugged and thicker bony structure.

No Sense of Beauty

It is only the cultural evidence — or the lack of it — which leads one to believe that man has made some evolutionary progress during the last 150,000 years. Fontechevade Man had no art, so far as we know. He was a skilled tool maker, but he and his kind left behind only their tools and weapons: no cave paintings, no engraved decorations, no sculpture, no personal ornaments, no indications whatever of a sense of beauty or a self-consciousness highly enough developed to lead them to portray in durable form their mental image of themselves and the world around him.

More than 100,000 years passed — in which Fontechevade Man was replaced by Neanderthal Man, who in turn gave way to Cro-Magnon Man — before solid

evidence appeared that man had reached a level of consciousness roughly equal to today's.

During Neanderthal times there appeared the first evidence of human self-consciousness, with human remains ritually buried instead of being left to decay where they fell. But, still, Neanderthal Man developed no art. Only with Cro-Magnon Man — who was physically at least as advanced as modern Europeans — did genuine artistic creation appear.

An End of Evolution?

Cro-Magnon Man differed only slightly from Fontchevade Man in his skeletal remains, but the cultural achievements of the former are a clear indication that he had achieved a new evolutionary level.

And, in fact, Cro-Magnon Man created art of such quality and variety, revealing such sensitivity and capacity for visualization, that one may well ask whether there has been any biological progress at all in the last 30,000 years. Certainly, there has been substantial progress in social organization (until the last 200 years, at least) and in culture. And a certain amount of European subracial differentiation must have still remained to take place since Cro-Magnon times.

But whether modern man's capacity for culture (as opposed to his actual achievement) is greater than that of Cro-Magnon Man remains an open question. If a thousand modern European infants could be magically transported back 30,000 years in time, to grow up in the care of their Cro-Magnon ancestors, would they turn out to be creative geniuses, relatively speaking, or just ordinary Cro-Magnon citizens — or perhaps even sluggards? We do not know, although further findings may eventually suggest an answer.

Thus, it may be that our race had already reached, in Cro-Magnon times, a point of diminishing returns in the balance between the biological and the cultural-social aspects of evolution. The more effective man's social organizations and his technology became in shielding him from the selective pressures of his environment, the less biological progress he made from one generation to the next. Indeed, there can be no doubt at all that the race has gone backward biologically during the last few hundred years, with large portions of each generation which should have been eliminated early in life by environmental pressures surviving to reproduce.

We may, in fact, see in this phenomenon the explanation for the narrowing of the evolutionary gap between the Mongoloid and European races during the last few hundred thousand years. Europeans achieved the *Homo sapiens* evolutionary grade long before the Mongoloids, but the superior European technology may have been the factor which allowed the Mongoloids, evolving in a climate of similar rigor, to begin catching up. Even the much more retarded races of Africa have narrowed the

evolutionary gap somewhat between themselves and Europeans in the last million years or so.

Conscious Evolution

The lesson in this is obvious: there came a point in the upward evolution of the Cosmos when the evolutionary mechanism of natural selection should have been smoothly taken over by a conscious process of artificial selection, not just on a temporary and local basis as in ancient Sparta and in National Socialist Germany, but permanently and universally. When that point came we cannot be sure, but it may have been 30,000 years ago.

It should also be clear that the way to clean up the present mess our race has gotten itself into and avoid getting into a similar mess in the future lies not in a cultural retrogression or Luddite-like suppression of, technological progress but in bringing the biological progress of the race once again into line with its cultural progress.

Next month we will trace the cultural and social progress of our race from Cro-Magnon times toward the Neolithic Age.