Chapter 1 Study Guide Key

1. Austronesian migrations: The last phase of the great human migration that established a human presence in every habitable region of the earth. Austronesian-speaking people settled the Pacific islands and Madagascar in a series of seaborne migrations that began around 3,500 years ago.
2. Brotherhood of the Tomol: A prestigious craft guild that monopolized the building and ownership of large oceangoing canoes, or *tomols* (*pron*. toe-mole), among the Chumash people (located in what is now southern California).
3. Chumash culture: Paleolithic culture of southern California that survived until the modern era.
4. Clovis culture: The earliest widespread and distinctive culture of North America; named from the Clovis point, a particular kind of projectile point.
5. Dreamtime: A complex worldview of Australia’s Aboriginal people that held that current humans live in a vibration or echo of ancestral happenings.
6. Flores man: A recently discovered hominid species of Indonesia.
7. “gathering and hunting peoples”: As the name suggests, people who live by collecting food rather than producing it. Recent scholars have turned to this term instead of the older “hunter-gatherer” in recognition that such societies depend much more heavily on gathering than on hunting for survival.
8. great goddess: According to one theory, a dominant deity of the Paleolithic era.
9. Hadza: A people of northern Tanzania, almost the last surviving Paleolithic society. (*pron.* HAHD-zah)
10. “human revolution”: The term used to describe the transition of humans from acting out of biological imperative to dependence on learned or invented ways of living (culture).
11. Ice Age: Any of a number of cold periods in the earth’s history; the last Ice Age was at its peak around 20,000 years ago.
12. “insulting the meat”: A San cultural practice meant to deflate pride that involved negative comments about the meat brought in by a hunter and the expectation that a successful hunter would disparage his own kill.
13. Jomon culture: A settled Paleolithic culture of prehistoric Japan, characterized by seaside villages and the creation of some of the world’s earliest pottery. (*pron.* JOE-mahn)
14. megafaunal extinction: Dying out of a number of large animal species, including the mammoth and several species of horses and camels, that occurred around 11,000–10,000 years ago, at the end of the Ice Age. The extinction may have been caused by excessive hunting or by the changing climate of the era. (*pron*. meg-ah-FAWN-al)
15. Neanderthals: *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis*, a European variant of *Homo sapiens* that died out about 25,000 years ago.
16. n/um: Among the San, a spiritual potency that becomes activated during “curing dances” and protects humans from the malevolent forces of gods or ancestral spirits.
17. “the original affluent society”: Term coined by the scholar Marshall Sahlins in 1972 to describe Paleolithic societies, which he regarded as affluent not because they had so much but because they wanted or needed so little.
18. Paleolithic: Literally “old stone age”; the term used to describe early *Homo sapiens* societies in the period before the development of agriculture.
19. Paleolithic rock art: While this term can refer to the art of any gathering and hunting society, it is typically used to describe the hundreds of Paleolithic paintings discovered in Spain and France and dating to about 20,000 years ago; these paintings usually depict a range of animals, although human figures and abstract designs are also found. The purpose of this art is debated.
20. Paleolithic “settling down”: The process by which some Paleolithic peoples moved toward permanent settlement in the wake of the last Ice Age. Settlement was marked by increasing storage of food and accumulation of goods as well as growing inequalities in society.
21. San, or Ju/’hoansi: A Paleolithic people still living on the northern fringe of the Kalahari desert in southern Africa. (*pron.* ZHUN-twasi)
22. shaman: In many early societies, a person believed to have the ability to act as a bridge between living humans and supernatural forces, often by means of trances induced by psychoactive drugs.
23. trance dance: In San culture, a nightlong ritual held to activate a human being’s inner spiritual potency (*n/um*) to counteract the evil influences of gods and ancestors. The practice was apparently common to the Khoisan people, of whom the Ju/’hoansi are a surviving remnant.
24. Venus figurines: Paleolithic carvings of the female form, often with exaggerated breasts, buttocks, hips, and stomachs, which may have had religious significance.

Margin Questions

1. How did Austronesian migrations differ from other early patterns of human movement?

* They occurred quite recently, beginning only about 3,500 years ago.
* They were waterborne migrations, making use of oceangoing canoes and remarkable navigational skills.
* They happened very quickly, over the course of about 2,500 years, and over a huge area of the planet.
* Unlike other migrations, they were undertaken by people with an agricultural technology who carried both domesticated plants and animals in their canoes.

1. In what ways did a gathering and hunting economy shape other aspects of Paleolithic societies?

• Because gathering and hunting did not allow for the accumulation of much surplus, Paleolithic societies were highly egalitarian, lacking the inequalities of wealth and power found in later agricultural and urban life.

• Paleolithic societies also lacked specialists, with most people possessing the same set of skills, although male and female tasks often differed sharply.

• Relationships between women and men were usually far more equal than in later societies. This was in part the result of gathering women bringing in more of the food consumed by the family than hunting men.

1. Why did some Paleolithic peoples abandon earlier, more nomadic ways and begin to live a more settled life?

* Climatic warming allowed many plants and animals upon which humans relied to flourish. The increased food stocks allowed some groups of humans to settle down and live in more permanent settlements.

Document Questions

1.1

1. What conflicts in San life does Nisa’s account reveal?

* In the section “Family Life,” Nisa chronicles sibling rivalries.
* In the section “Life in the Bush,” Nisa indicates that there were frequent conflicts over the sharing of resources between families, with those who failed to share being labeled stingy.
* In the sections “Marriage” and “Lovers,” Nisa notes conflicts with husbands and lovers and indicates that these sorts of conflicts were common throughout society.

1. What does her story indicate about San attitudes towards sex and marriage? How might you compare those attitudes with those of contemporary society?

* San marriages are often brokered by parents. Nisa wed young to an older man and was unready to wed at the time of her marriage.
* However, San marriages could be based on real affection, as reflected in Nisa’s love for her first husband that grew with time.
* Nisa indicates that the San believe that sex when young is different from sex when older. In particular, Nisa relates that the young are inclined to have sex frequently, but that as people age they should engage in sexual activity less frequently.
* There are no taboos concerning remarriage in San society, as Nisa’s frequent marriages reveal.
* Infidelity and multiple lovers were ubiquitous in San culture.
* According to Nisa, in San culture women having multiple lovers brought both practical and emotional benefits. For example, she explains that multiple lovers make sense both because of the gifts they bring and the fact that no one man has enough attention for you.
* Perhaps the most striking difference between San views on marriage and sex and those of contemporary societies is that the San do not have as pronounced a sexual double standard. It is more acceptable in San society for women to take on multiple lovers, even while married, than in modern societies. Infidelity may also be more common generally in San society than contemporary society.
* There are also similarities between the views of the San and contemporary society, in particular concerning marriage, the reality of infidelity, and the tensions that infidelity can spark between couples and in society as a whole.

3. How does Nisa understand “God” or the divine?

• In Nisa’s account, God is primarily a force that destroys life or brings conflict. For instance, in the section “Loss,” Nisa states that God was responsible for the deaths of loved ones; she resents God for her losses, as indicated by her statement “That’s the way it is. God is the one who destroys. It isn’t people who do it. It is God himself.” In the section “Lovers,” Nisa credits God with giving humans extramarital affairs and the conflicts that they cause. In the section “A Healing Ritual,” Nisa asserts that God can also stop the n/um healing power if he desires: “*N/um* is powerful, but it is also very tricky. Sometimes it helps and sometimes it doesn’t, because God doesn’t always want a sick person to get better.” She also implies in section six that God is in some way behind the trance-like state that is part of the *n/um* ritual.

• Given Nisa’s emphasis on conflict and the destruction of life, when she refers to God she is likely referring to the god Gauwa (see page 28).

1.2

1. What does this story suggest about the relationships between women and men? Does it support or undermine notions of gender equality among Paleolithic peoples? Is it consistent with the story associated with Visual Source 1.2?

• This story is a tale of male dominance over women; the evil Mutjinga (a powerful woman who practiced magic and was the caretaker of totems and the cave where the spirits waiting to be reborn dwelt) was overcome by men because she used her powers to kill and devour them. The men took the totems and the spirits from Mutjinga’s cave to another cave, thus gaining control of her magic.

• In its depiction of why men control the access to the power of the spirit world rather than women, it undermines notions of gender equality among Paleolithic peoples.

• Both Document 1.2 and Visual Source 1.2 are consistent in presenting male dominance over women. However, in Document 1.2 it is a woman, Mutjinga, who originally possesses special powers, which she uses for the purpose of eating male flesh; in Visual Source 1.2 the male deity Nabulwinjbulwinj uses his powers for the purpose of eating female flesh. The male dominance in Document 1.2 occurs after a struggle—the story begins with a powerful woman who dominates men, but ends with men taking her powers from her.

• The story in Document 1.2 explains *why* men dominate women, while the narrative depicted in Visual Source 1.2 provides a straightforward tale of male dominance.

2. How are the familiar features of the known world—rivers, mountains, humans, animals, and male dominance—linked to ancient happenings in the Dreamtime?

• Selection one seeks to explain how waterways, geographic features humans and animals all came to be as they are on the surface of the earth. The tale credits the activities of the Rainbow Serpent for the waterways and the initial emergence of animals on the planet. The failure of some of the animals to live by the Rainbow serpent's laws led according to Dreamtime to the creation of mountains and hills. Humans were created out of obedient animals and were given the right to hunt the land.

• This story explains how men overcame a powerful woman by securing the spirit totems and with them dominance in society. Thus male dominance is explained through Dreamtime as a consequence of the actions of the ancestors.

3. What aspects of a gathering and hunting way of life are reflected in this tale?

• the role of religion in securing food

• the potential power of religious figures

• the gathering of bulbs and nuts along with the hunting of small game by women

• the important role of songs and dances to ritual and social life

• the role of traps and fire in hunting large game

the practice of storing meat in cold streams