

Homo sapiens or Cromagnon man

Bigger and more slender than the Neanderthal man, he appeared 40,000 years ago. They populated parts of Africa, and Europe and other continents. They traveled very much. When the climate became very cold (glaciation) they had to follow the herds over long distances.

Cromagnon men lived in groups of 30 at most ; that is a clan. Everyone, even the children participated in collecting food. The leader was often the best hunter. During the good weather season many clans could reunite and organize festivals.

They occupied shelters under rocks or leather tents. They specialized in certain areas : stone shaping, making weapons, kitchen utensils, working with bone and ivory... The utensils they used were made of flint, wood, bones or ivory. They hunted reindeer, goats, mammoth, and bison, but also small animals : hares, birds, foxes, and wolves for their hides. They used throwers with ropes in order to throw farther. They fished with harpoons, but they also invented the fish hook (made of bone). They constructed fish traps out of stone where the fish were trapped during low tide. Like the Neanderthal men they exploited everything they could find in nature. Gathering played an important role in their food supply.

Cromagnon man could make clothes out of hides beautifully decorated with shells, animal teeth and coral pieces. Clothes were certainly used besides ceremonies. They were sewn with bone needles. The everyday clothes were simpler.

Many frescos painted by Cromagnon men were found in caves.

We know of more than 350 decorated sites. They used all sorts of techniques : painting, engraving, sculpture, modelling. In Europe they represent mostly animals and geometric signs. There are few representations of humans except for hand prints. They also sculpted bone and ivory statues, and the objects are often decorated (assegaie , throwers with ropes)

The little statues which represent fat women are called « Venus » statues : they are possibly a motherhood/ maternity symbol. Music instruments, bone flutes... have also been found.

Vocabulary (to be explained)

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) Climate | 1) Grotto / Cave |
| 2) Clan | 2) Site |
| 3) Silex | 3) An artist |
| 4) Ivory | 4) « Venus » |
| 5) Harpoon | 5) A belief |
| 6) Thrower with rope | 6) Gathering |
| 7) Fish-hook | 7) Nutrition |
| 8) Ceremony | 8) Game |
| 9) Fresco | 9) An animal to be feared |
| 10) Engraving | 10) The preservation of food |