

THE HUMAN JOURNEY

Archaeology is perhaps the best tool we have for looking ahead, because it provides a deep reading of the direction and momentum of our course through time: what we are, where we have come from, and therefore where we are most likely to be going. – Ronald Wright (2004)

| TIME | EPOCH | ENERGY SOURCE | WORLD POPULATION | CULTURE |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|---|
| 2 Million years - 200,000 Before Present (BP) | Lower Paleolithic (pre homo sapiens) | Human muscle | Less than 1 million | Stone tools, Fire tamed and kept, Primitive clothing and shelter |
| 200,000 - 100,000 BP | Middle Paleolithic (homo sapiens) | Human muscle | 1 million ? | Cave painting, Religious ritual, Music, Spear |
| 100,000 - 10,000 BP | Upper Paleolithic | Human muscle | 2 - 3 million | First agriculture, First villages, Bow and Arrow, Neanderthals vanish (annihilated by homo sapiens?) Several large animals extinct (man?) |
| 10,000 - 3,000 BP | Neolithic | Human and animal muscle, Some wind, Water? | 5 million? | Domesticated plants and animals, First civilization in Sumer, First Writing, All but one continent occupied |
| 3,000 - 1,000 BP | Ancient | Human and animal muscle, Wind, Water | 50 million? | Multiple Civilizations (all collapse), Bronze and Iron, Structured Religion, Wheel, "Zero" |
| 1,000 - 400 BP | Middle Ages | Human and animal muscle, Wind, Water | 500 million? | Renaissance exploration, Gunpowder, Beginning of scientific enquiry |
| 400 - 100 BP | Industrial Revolution | Above plus wood, coke and coal | 1900: 1.6 billion | Steam and Internal Combustion Engine, Electricity, Printing Press, Modern Medicine |
| 100 - Present | Modern | Oil, Natural gas Nuclear energy, Solar | 2005: 6.5 billion | Human flight, Radio and TV, Genetics, Computer, Space Exploration, Nanotechnology |

Human beings like to believe they are in control of their destiny, but when the history of life on earth is seen in perspective, the evolution of homo sapiens is merely a transient episode that acts to redress the planet's energy balance. – David Price

Note: The above chart was prepared by the Editor, based in part on recent archaeological discoveries.