

# Taking the Show on the Road

Human Dispersal Out of Africa,  
and the Archaeology of Homo  
Erectus and Cousins

# Key concept: punctuated equilibrium

- Short periods of rapid change, followed by long periods of stasis:
  - In biological evolution
  - In mobility and dispersal rates, distances
  - In technological shifts
  - In what other aspects? Social organization? Diet? Symbolic behavior?
  - “Change” seen over thousands, sometimes tens of thousands, of years

# Homo Ergaster

- African species
- 1.8 mya to ~600,000 ya
- Close to modern humans in overall body size
- Skull still thick, relatively small brain
- No remaining sexual dimorphism
- Introduced hand-axe, or “Acheulean” technology



# Homo Erectus

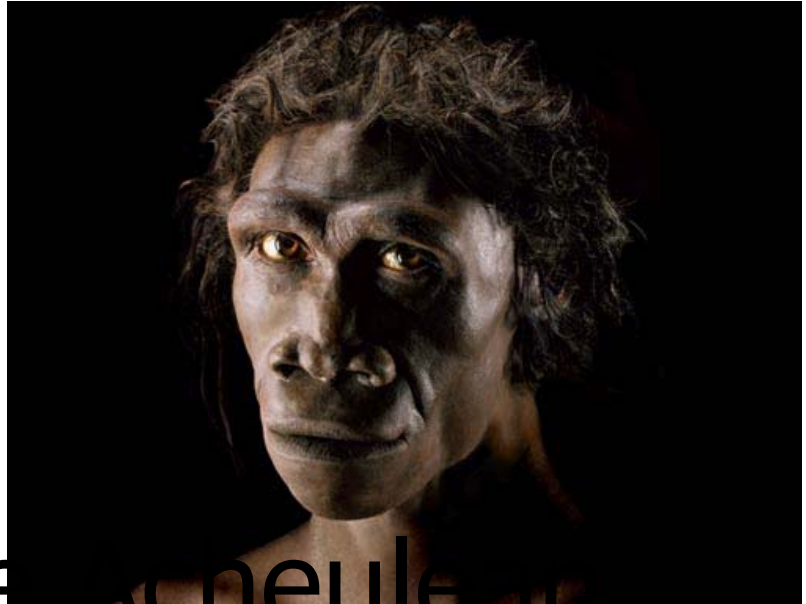
- Present in both Africa and Asia
- ~1 mya to ~50,000
- Different tool technology with focus on flake tools, smaller hammer/cobbles
- Possible use of bamboo?



# Homo Heidelbergensis

- African and European presence
- 600,000 to 400,000 ya
- Handaxes, flake tools
- Possibly associated with slight change in Acheulean technology: more flakes, more prepared cores



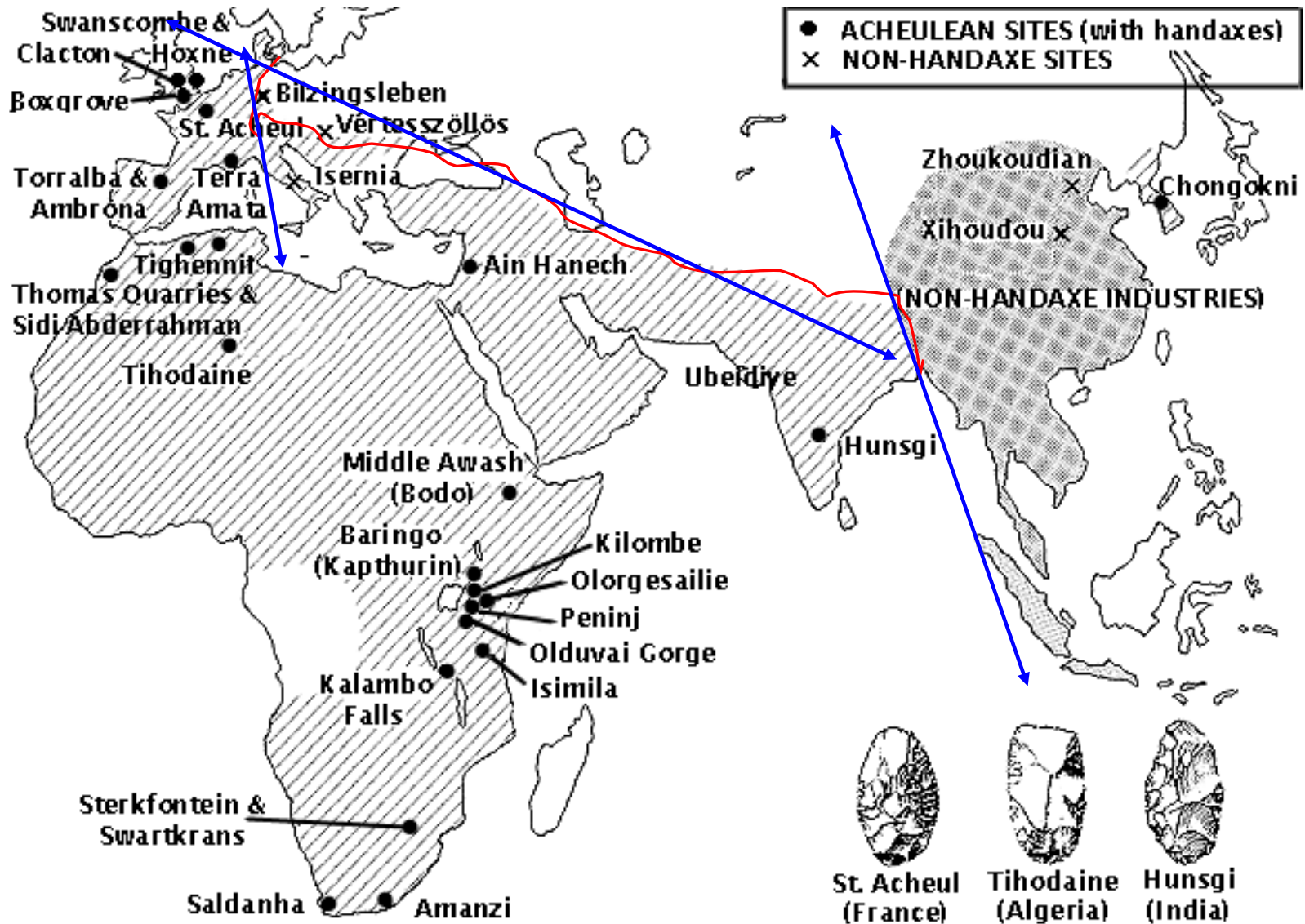


“People of the Acheulean



adition

# The Movius Line: extended



# Out of Africa

- How many times?
- To where?
- What counts as a successful 'migration'?
- How many species occupied the same large region simultaneously?



# Asia

- Difficulty with sample size, dating issues, for *h. erectus* sites
- Apparent persistence and regional evolution of the species for a great time depth
- Role of environmental change, especially distribution of tropical zones, in *h. erectus* success

# Europe

- Multiple efforts at colonization
- Impact of ice sheet advance and retreat on successive hominid species in Europe
- *H. heidelbergensis* shift in technologies: what caused it? What did it enable?

# Measuring Humanity in the Acheulian World

- Raw materials besides stone  
(Bilzingsleben elephant bone, Clacton  
spear)
- Site modification: hearths, wind breaks
- Fire
- Art: stoneknapping for symmetry, use of  
pigment, incised lines, figurine?
- Diet: hunting or scavenging? Learning new  
resources or following old ones?