On the Peopling of the New World

Presented by: Kelly Phillips
Three Models:

1. Clovis First
2. Pacific Coastal Migration
3. Solutrean Origins
Clovis First

- Proposed in the 1960’s by Haynes
- Also known as “Bering Land Bridge Theory” and until recently has been the accepted model
- Due to lowered sea levels during the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM) people were able to walk from Siberia along a land bridge to North America around 11,500 BP
Why we know Clovis was NOT first:

- For the Clovis First Model to be true, no site should predate 11,500 BP

- BUT, at least a dozen sites have been found that predate 11,500 BP

- The most commonly known of these being Monte Verde in south central Chile which has conclusively been dated to 12,500 BP using stone tools, wood tools, and fire pits

- People may have come over the “land bridge”, they were just not the “first”
Pacific Coastal Migration

- Discovery of coastal occupations led Fladmark to this model in 1971
- Erlandson’s evidence: Daisy Cave 10,600 BP
Pacific Coastal Migration: Problems and Responses

Two Main Problems:
1) Where is the proof of this seafaring technology and what route did they take?
2) Aren’t we looking for sites older than 11,500 BP?

Responses:
1) Honshu, Japan 21,000 BP; Kelp Highway
2) If they existed they have been washed away…
Solutrean Origins

- First proposed by Jelinek; Now Stanford and Bradley
- Solutrean people of France and Spain (21,000 to 18,000 BP) migrated to the Americas and subsequently became the Clovis culture
- Most recent (and criticized) theory
Solutrean Origins: Stone Tool Comparison

- Stone tool technologies have a precursor. If Clovis originated in Asia then we should find it there.
- However, researchers have found no connection to date from collections in Eurasia, Asia, or the Far East.
- Stanford and Bradley turned to Europe and found the similarities between Solutrean and Clovis stone tools.

Solutrean

Clovis
Solutrean Origins: Migration Route

- Atlantic ice rim that stretched from the Southwest coast of Ireland to the Grand Banks off the coast of Newfoundland
What evidence is there of a seafaring culture among the Solutreans???

- Environmental conditions of the LGM forced the Solutreans to look to the sea for a new food source

- After becoming skilled fisherman they began traveling further and further until they reached the New World
Solutrean Origin Critiques

- Glacial environment was not conducive to human existence

- No evidence that the Solutrean hunted deep sea fish or marine animals

- No evidence of boats or the technology to build them
Solutrean Origins or Not,
East Coast Has Oldest Sites

Examples:
- Topper, South Carolina (20,000 BP)
- Meadowcroft Rock Shelter, Pennsylvania (19,000 BP)
- Cactus Hill, Virginia (15,000 BP)
What Do I Think???

- Solutrean Origins seems most plausible

- BUT, we still need more sites and more convincing evidence to be sure

- My solution: Could it be that both models are right? Scholars should look for evidence that both migrations occurred simultaneously instead of arguing who was “first”
Sources:

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Straus L. G.

Turner C. G.
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