

REFLECTIONS

A Journey from Hominids to the “Human Era”

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Introduction

This study investigates the story of humans from early hominid origins to the so-called “Human Era.” It posits that modern humans, i.e. Prophet Adam’s descendants, merged with or supplanted other contemporaneous anatomically similar human populations. This hypothesis is supported by an interdisciplinary approach that includes religious texts, such as the Bible and the Quran, alongside scientific disciplines. The paper presents diverse findings to construct a coherent narrative on transitioning from hominids to modern humans.

The Emergence of Early Modern Humans

Fossil evidence indicates that anatomically modern humans (Homo sapiens) first appeared in Africa around 200,000 to 300,000 years ago. Over time, these early humans migrated globally, developing tools and surviving in various environments (see Figure 1). For instance, humans left Africa about 70,000 years ago and reached Central Asia around 40,000 years ago (Higham et al., 2014).

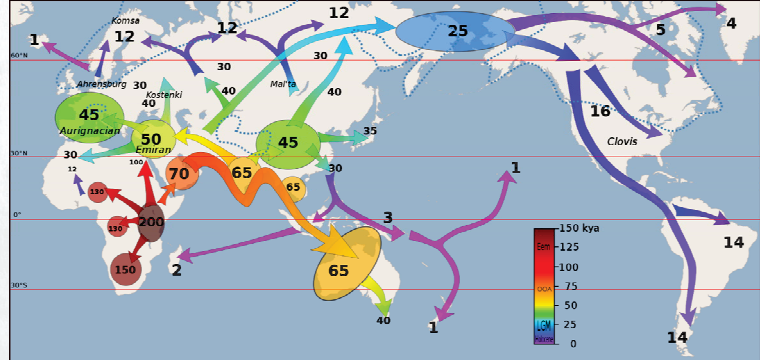


Figure 1: Migration of humans - when did humans arrive first at any given place on Earth (scale for time is in thousands of years)¹

1. Taken from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_human_migrations
49 | Monthly Renaissance November 2024

Coexistence of Early Modern Humans with Other Hominid Species

Early modern humans coexisted with other hominid species, such as Neanderthals and Denisovans, for thousands of years. Archaeological evidence shows these groups interacted, competed, and interbred, contributing to modern human genetic diversity (Prüfer et al., 2014). Neanderthals and Denisovans disappeared from the fossil record around 40,000 years ago, likely due to competition with early modern humans and environmental changes.²

Cultural Characteristics of Early Modern Humans

Anatomically akin to present-day humans, early modern humans demonstrated characteristics that are fundamental to our natural instincts and behaviours today:

- **Communications Skills.** Historical records and archaeological findings suggest complex communication abilities, such as symbolic cave paintings at sites like Lascaux (France) and Altamira (Spain)³.
- **Propensity to violence.** Evidence of skeletal trauma and weapon-inflicted injuries reveals early humans' capacity for violence, likely related to conflicts over resources or territory (Walker, 2001).
- **Clothing and tools.** Genetic studies on lice suggest clothing was adopted around 170,000 years ago, coinciding with human migration patterns (Toups et al., 2011). The use of clothes for protection and social purposes in the Palaeolithic era is evidenced by the discovery of bone tools believed to have been used for making clothing (Gilligan, 2010). Levalloisian stone-flaking technique for producing stone tools demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of geometry.
- **Burial rituals.** Intentional burials with grave goods suggest that early humans practised rituals (Pearson, 1999).
- **Diet.** Stable isotope analysis indicates a diet primarily composed of meat from large ruminants, with mammoths being a significant prey species (Richards & Trinkaus, 2019) (see Figure 2).

2. See <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2023/nov/18/where-did-other-human-species-go-vanished-ancestors-homo-sapiens-neanderthals-denisovans>

3. See https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/lasc/hd_lasc.htm

Goyet (MNI = 2), Belgium, 35-33 kyrs



Buran-Kaya 3 (MNI = 2), Crimea, 37-34 kyrs



Figure 2: Relative proportions (in %) of different prey species to the protein intake calculations based on $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ isotope analysis from two sites. Taken from (Richards & Trinkaus, 2019)

Commencement of the ‘Human Era’

About 12,000 years ago, the agricultural revolution began, fundamentally altering human society. With the advent of farming, humans developed stable communities, culminating in the first known cities. The city of Jericho is often considered the first known city, built around 9,000 BCE in the Levant region and Çatalhöyük in modern-day Turkey is regarded as one of the earliest urban settlements, existing from approximately 7100 BC to 5700 BC (Meece, 2006). Around 12,000 years ago, this period corresponded with the religious narratives of Adam, who was considered the first true human whose descendants developed agriculture and animal farming (Genesis 4:2).

This alignment is also indicated in Surah Baqarah of the Quran. God elevated humans to the status of “Khalifa,” or stewards of Earth (Quran 2:30). Angels questioned this promotion, referencing humans' tendency towards mischief and bloodshed, an observation possible only if humans had already existed on Earth before Prophet Adam. In summary, Prophet Adam's arrival signifies the handing over of the world's stewardship to Adam's progeny. This promotion resulted in the sudden employment of various technologies and humans' extensive exploitation of the earth's resources around 12,000 years ago.

This new era for humans is also called the Human Era or the Holocene Era, and it started with the Neolithic Revolution.⁴

4. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocene_calendar

Prophet Adam's Descendants and Other Humans

There were anatomically similar human beings⁵ before Prophet Adam, and he probably coexisted with them. The survival of Prophet Adam's descendants can be attributed to the spirit blown into Adam, as mentioned in the Qur'an 38:72 and the knowledge God gave to Adam and his progeny for agriculture, animal farming, as mentioned in Genesis 4:2, and a fully functional language. Other human populations may have perished due to environmental changes, assimilated through intermarriage with Prophet Adam's progeny and some killed by Prophet Adam's progeny.

For example, Neolithic Europe experienced significant genetic diversity changes due to population replacements and expansions, primarily from the Levant. These movements led to substantial genetic admixture with existing European populations, often involving partial or complete replacement of local populations (Smith & Ahern, 2013). However, this migration from Lavant has not been uniform to other hunter-gatherer populations across the globe. The dispersal of agriculture from the Lavant region exhibits a parallel pattern. Figure 3 shows the spread of farming from Lavant dating back to 9,000 BCE, while farming in other world regions appeared later in history.

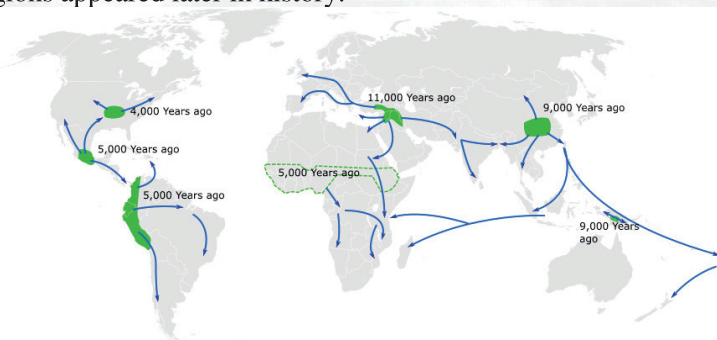


Figure 3: Spread of farming⁶

Migrations after the Great Flood

A significant event of the Great Flood⁷ occurred, which,

5. Homo-Sapiens

6. Taken from: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neolithic>

7. This event is generally correlated with the Black Sea deluge hypothesis. Seven thousand six hundred years ago, more than 100,000 square km of land was flooded, significantly expanding the Black Sea's shoreline.

Reflections

according to the Bible⁸ and Quran⁹, came as a punishment to Prophet Noah's nation. Following the Great Flood, the descendants of Prophet Noah's sons—Ham, Shem, and Japheth—initially settled in Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, respectively.¹⁰ Subsequently, their progenies migrated to neighbouring regions. Figure 4 shows these migratory patterns in terms of geospatial and temporal dispersions. For example, we see a pattern of Iranian farmers' migration to Northwestern parts of India, possibly from Shem's children, much earlier than the later migration of Central Asian pastorals to India, possibly from Japheth's children.

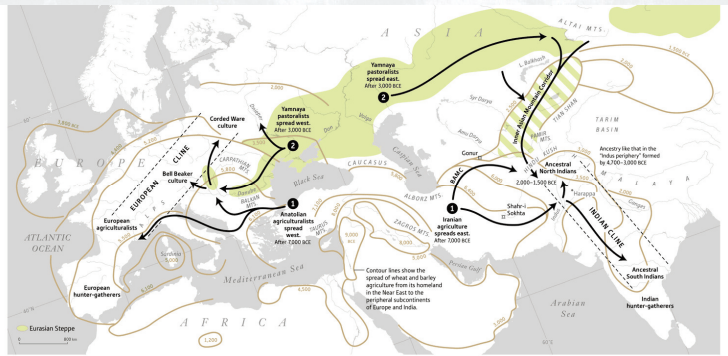


Figure 4: The prehistory of South Asia and Europe are parallel in both being impacted by two successive spreads, the first from the Near East after 7000 BCE bringing agriculturalists who mixed with local hunter-gatherers, and the second from the Steppe after 3000 BCE bringing people who spoke Indo-European languages and who mixed with those, they encountered during their migratory movement¹¹

Age of Abrahamic Prophets

Around 2000 BCE, the age of Abrahamic prophets commenced. During this period, God's judgement on a select group of people, which became proof of God's Judgment for other nations, was primarily restricted to Abraham's progeny, notably with the rise and fall of the Israelites. The Israelites experienced cycles of prosperity and decline, reflecting their relationship with God. After Prophet Jesus, the Israelites lost sovereignty, and the Ishmaelites rose to prominence with Prophet Muhammad about

8. Genesis 7:17-24

9. Surah Hud 11:25-48

10. Genesis 10:1-32

11. Picture taken from: <https://doi.org/10.1101/292581>

1400 years ago. Ishmaelites experienced rise and fall cycles similar to Israelites (Saleem, 2008).

Conclusion

Human history can be understood through a multidisciplinary approach combining fossil evidence, genetic analysis, isotopic data, archaeological findings, and religious texts. This synthesis provides a comprehensive view of human origins and development.

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