



Alex Mesoudi
Kenichi Aoki *Editors*

Learning Strategies and Cultural Evolution during the Palaeolithic

 Springer

Replacement of Neanderthals by Modern Humans Series

Edited by

Takeru Akazawa

Research Institute, Kochi University of Technology
Kochi 782-8502, Japan
akazawa.takeru@kochi-tech.ac.jp

Ofer Bar-Yosef

Department of Anthropology, Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138, USA
obaryos@fas.harvard.edu

The planned series of volumes will report the results of a major research project entitled “Replacement of Neanderthals by Modern Humans: Testing Evolutionary Models of Learning”, offering new perspectives on the process of replacement and on interactions between Neanderthals and modern humans and hence on the origins of prehistoric modern cultures. The projected volumes will present the diverse achievements of research activities, originally designed to implement the project’s strategy, in the fields of archaeology, paleoanthropology, cultural anthropology, population biology, earth sciences, developmental psychology, biomechanics, and neuroscience. Comprehensive research models will be used to integrate the discipline-specific research outcomes from those various perspectives. The series, aimed mainly at providing a set of multidisciplinary perspectives united under the overarching concept of learning strategies, will include monographs and edited collections of papers focusing on specific problems related to the goals of the project, employing a variety of approaches to the analysis of the newly acquired data sets.

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Editors

Learning Strategies and Cultural Evolution during the Palaeolithic

Editors

Alex Mesoudi
Department of Anthropology and Centre for
the Coevolution of Biology and Culture
Durham University
Durham, UK

Kenichi Aoki
Organization for the Strategic Coordination of
Research and Intellectual Properties
Meiji University
Tokyo, Japan

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Preface

This volume is being published as part of a 5-year research project, funded by the Japan Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, and Technology (Monbukagakusho), on the “Replacement of Neanderthals by Modern Humans (RNMH).” There are two basic premises of the RNMH project. First, Neanderthals were replaced or assimilated by modern humans (*Homo sapiens*). Second, the replacement or assimilation was driven by cultural differences between competing Neanderthal and modern human groups, potentially due to some advantage(s) associated with the culture(s) of modern humans.

The current volume focuses on how differences in the cultures of Palaeolithic or Stone Age hominin societies might arise as a result of differences in learning strategies, social and demographic factors, and so on. This includes the knotty inverse problem of inferring learning strategies from actual trajectories of cultural change. With the exception of one chapter, the replacement process itself is not addressed.

The majority of contributors to this volume are not members of the RNMH project. Nevertheless, we have invited them to submit chapters, because they are leading anthropologists, archaeologists, biologists, and psychologists who are directly involved in the effort to decipher hominin cultural change and cultural diversity during the Palaeolithic (see list of contributors).

In addition to the contributors, we wish to thank Jelmer Eerkens, Yasuo Ihara, Jeremy Kendal, Steven Kuhn, Charles Perreault, Katsuhiko Sano, Jonathan Scholnick, Pontus Strimling, Jamie Tehrani, Claudio Tennie, and Taro Yoshida, for valuable comments on and constructive reviews of the chapters. Their input is gratefully acknowledged.

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Durham, UK
Tokyo, Japan

Alex Mesoudi
Kenichi Aoki

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Contributors

Kenichi Aoki Organization for the Strategic Coordination of Research and Intellectual Properties, Meiji University, Tokyo, Japan

R. Alexander Bentley Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Bristol, Bristol, UK

Matthew T. Boulanger Department of Anthropology, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO, USA

Briggs Buchanan Department of Anthropology, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK, USA

Christine A. Caldwell Psychology, School of Natural Sciences, University of Stirling, Stirling, UK

Mark Collard Human Evolutionary Studies Program and Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, Burnaby, BC, Canada

Department of Archaeology, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK

Francesco d'Errico CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), UMR (Unité Mixte de Recherche) 5199, PACEA (De la Préhistoire à l'Actuel: Culture, Environnement et Anthropologie), Université Bordeaux 1, Talence, France

Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

Metin I. Eren Department of Anthropology, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO, USA

Marcus W. Feldman Department of Biology, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA

Laurel Fogarty Department of Biology, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA

Seiji Kadowaki University Museum, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan

Anne Kandler Department of Mathematics, City University London, London, UK

Marius Kempe Department of Anthropology and Centre for the Coevolution of Biology and Culture, Durham University, Durham, UK

Yutaka Kobayashi Department of Management, Kochi University of Technology, Kami-city, Japan

Mirna Kovacevic CoMPLEX (Centre for Mathematics and Physics in the Life Sciences and Experimental Biology), University College London, London, UK

Research Department of Genetics, Evolution and Environment, University College London, London, UK

Carl P. Lipo Department of Anthropology and IIRMES, California State University at Long Beach, Long Beach, CA, USA

Stephen J. Lycett Department of Anthropology, University at Buffalo SUNY, Buffalo, NY, USA

R. Lee Lyman Department of Anthropology, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO, USA

Mark E. Madsen Department of Anthropology, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, USA

Alex Mesoudi Department of Anthropology and Centre for the Coevolution of Biology and Culture, Durham University, Durham, UK

Masaki Naganuma Center for Ainu & Indigenous Studies, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan

Wataru Nakahashi School of Advanced Sciences, SOKENDAI (The Graduate University for Advanced Studies), Hayama, Japan

Michael J. O'Brien Department of Anthropology, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO, USA

Adam Powell Palaeogenetics Group, Institute of Anthropology, University of Mainz, Mainz, Germany

L.S. Premo Department of Anthropology, Washington State University, Pullman, WA, USA
Department of Human Evolution, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, Germany

Kerstin Schillinger Department of Anthropology, University of Kent, Canterbury, UK

Stephen Shennan Institute of Archaeology, University College London, London, UK

Mark G. Thomas Research Department of Genetics, Evolution and Environment, University College London, London, UK

Marian Vanhaeren CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), UMR (Unité Mixte de Recherche) 5199, PACEA (De la Préhistoire à l'Actuel: Culture, Environnement et Anthropologie), Université Bordeaux 1, Talence, France

Joe Yuichiro Wakano School of Interdisciplinary Mathematical Sciences, Meiji University, Tokyo, Japan