

Questions About “Modern” Humans

What does it mean to be behaviorally “modern”?

What are the archaeological indicators of “modern” behavior?

How can we explain the appearance of “modern” behavior?

What does it mean to be behaviorally “modern”?

- Examples: exploitation of coastal resources, complex use of fire for cooking, higher population densities, improved stone tool technology, ecosystem management, living structures, long distance trade networks, formal tools made of other materials, music and art, personal ornamentation, high degrees of in group cooperation, treatment of the dead with burials

What are the archaeological indicators of “modern” behavior?

- Upper Paleolithic technology (45,000-10,000 ya)
- Aspects of UP fit with what many recognize as “modern” behavior:
 - o Elaborate, composite tools
 - Blade tools have longer cutting edge but are more difficult to make
 - Carved/polished bone, antler tools
 - **Composite tools** (made of many different materials)
 - o Personal ornamentation
 - Early “non-utilitarian” objects (80 kya) and were found first in Africa.
 - Ex: holes in shells, teeth, and stone created by stone tool by gouging or carving
 - Body ornamentation is a form of communication
 - o Fancy burials

- An elaborate Upper Paleolithic burial from Sunghir, Russia
- o Art
 - **Mobile art:** sculpture, decorated tools
 - Upper Paleolithic “Venus” figurines
 - **Parietal art:** paintings/drawings on walls of caves
 - Famous cave sites confined to France and Spain and from 36-15kya
 - Ex: Le Chauvet 36kya
 - Even tools were sometimes decorated and embellished
 - Carved atlatl weights
 - Earliest musical instruments found
 - Paleolithic art is neither naïve nor naturalistic. It is highly “stylized”
 - Another “big question with no answer (yet):
 - Does recognizable art mark the origins of symbolic language, or just the first translation of symbolic language into material culture?
- o Accelerated rates of cultural change & regional diversification

How can we explain the appearance of “modern” behavior? How did modern human behavior evolve?

- Competing hypotheses about the origins of modern behavior
 - o **Revolution**
 - Product of a sudden change in cognitive ability
 - o **Evolution**
 - Product of gradual change in cultural repertoire

Food Production: Revolution, Evolutionary By-Product or Big Mistake?

Domestication and Agriculture Intensification and Intentionality Biocultural Consequences of Agriculture

- **Domestication & agriculture**
 - o **Domestication:** genetic modification of plants and animals so that they cannot survive and reproduce without human assistance (process)
 - o **Agriculture:** is an economy and way of life based on domesticated plants and or animals (economy/behavior)
 - o Almost everyone on earth today is a part of an economy based on domesticated plants and animals
 - o Domesticates and the changes in lifestyle they afford continue to affect our allele frequencies to this day
 - o We take things like grocery stores for granted (food supply)
 - o Evolution of corn: because of selection for a tough stem and a thick husk, corn plants cannot reseed themselves anymore
 - o Four questions about domestication
 - Where did it occur?
 - When did it begin?
 - How did it happen?
 - What effects did it have on humans?

- o Where did it occur?