



THEM AND US

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PRESS RELEASE 2

Print quality downloads of the enclosed forensic reconstruction (plus several others) are available on our website: http://www.themandus.org/what_they_looked_like.html

Neanderthals were 'apex predators' who hunted and raped humans

If you thought Neanderthals were simply hairier, dumber versions of modern humans, think again. Australian independent scholar Danny Vendramini has spent five years researching Neanderthals for a new book on human evolution and says they were vicious super-predators and cannibals who hunted our ancestors to the brink of extinction.

Vendramini believes the key to understanding human evolution is to understand Neanderthals because the two species co-existed together in the same region for 70,000 years.

“And to understand Neanderthals,” says Vendramini, “you have to see them as a product of their environment.”

Neanderthals evolved in ice-age Europe, the harshest environment ever inhabited by hominids. According to Vendramini, the few edible plants that grew there could not provide Neanderthals with enough nutrients to survive the lethal winters.

“Only fresh meat could do that. Neanderthals needed the equivalent of 16 McDonald quarter-pounders every day just to maintain body temperature. The only solution was to abandon their omnivorous African diet and foraging lifestyle and become meat-eating predators.”

The shift to an exclusive meat diet, Vendramini says, transformed Neanderthals into a top-flight predator.

They became nocturnal hunters because prey are easier to catch at night, so evolved eyes twice the size of human eyes, with slit-shaped pupils to protect their retinas from sunlight. Hunting in the dark also generated evolutionary pressure for an exceptional sense of smell.

“The need to subdue a variety of wide prey gave them phenomenal strength – up to six times stronger than a human. They were so heavily muscled, they had to have extra strong bones to take the strain, giving them the impression of a body builder on steroids.”

After a half million years, they had killed their way to the top of the food chain, the undisputed ‘apex predator’ of Europe and Eurasia. Armed with razor sharp flint-tipped spears they hunted the largest and fiercest prey, including lions, mammoths, rhinos, bison and cave bears.

Vendramini says the harsh environment shaped Neanderthals in other ways as well. They evolved thick body fur to survive the lethal winters, and small ears and flat noses to prevent frost bite. They became forest dwellers because the wind chill on the open plains was lethal.

Vendramini’s view of Neanderthals as “the most lethal and vicious killing machine on earth” gains support from new archaeological evidence from Europe that convincingly shows Neanderthals were cannibals.

According to Vendramini’s new book, ‘Them and Us: how Neanderthal predation created modern humans’, when Neanderthals moved into an area of the Middle East called the Mediterranean Levant about 100,000 years ago, they encountered about 15,000 early humans living there. Vendramini is in no doubt that Neanderthals saw those docile humans as easy prey and began hunting them for food and sex.

“The main conclusion of my research,” concludes Vendramini, “is that Eurasian Neanderthals hunted, abducted, raped and cannibalized early humans in the Levant for over 50,000 years. This had a profound impact on human evolution. Only the smartest, bravest, most aggressive humans survived and they became the founding fathers of all modern humanity. Without Neanderthal predation, humans would still be rubbing sticks together to make a fire.”

A leading authority on Eurasian Neanderthals, Professor John Shea from Stony Brook University in New York, has evaluated Vendramini’s research:

“Vendramini presents a truly unique and innovative picture of the role of Neanderthal predation in human evolution. He pulls together countless different threads of scientific evidence to re-cast Neanderthals as ‘apex predators’, proverbial ‘wolves with knives’ who were effective rivals with our ancestors.”

‘Them and Us: How Neanderthal predation created modern humans’ by Danny Vendramini is published by Kardoorair Press, Australia.

CAPTION INFO FOR NEANDERTHAL ILLUSTRATION

For his book, Vendramini commissioned Madrid-based digital sculptor, Arturo Balseiro to create a forensic reconstruction of a Neanderthal based on his research findings.

“This is a much more accurate impression of what Neanderthals looked like than anything we’ve seen before,” says Vendramini.

He says some people are disturbed by the images. “I think it’s because like all prey species, we have an innate capacity to recognise our natural predator. It’s a survival thing. What they looked like is hardwired into our genes. Neanderthal predation was so traumatic that even 28,000 years after the last Neanderthal disappeared, they can still push our buttons.”

BOOK INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

Book: Them and Us: How Neanderthal predation created modern humans

Publisher: Kardoorair Press, Australia.

384pp, soft cover. Illustrated throughout with 280 B/W photos, maps and diagrams.

Includes index, 800 scientific references and glossary

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Visit the website to request a review copy.

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A longer News Release, dealing with Vendramini's Neanderthal predation theory in greater detail is available on our website: http://www.themandus.org/press_releases.html