

16 September 2009

## PRESS RELEASE 3

SEVERAL PRINT QUALITY PICTURES OF THE NEANDERTHAL RECONSTRUCTION ARE AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD ON OUR WEBSITE TO ACCOMPANY THIS ARTICLE: [http://www.themandus.org/what\\_they\\_looked\\_like.html](http://www.themandus.org/what_they_looked_like.html)

### 70,000-year war with Neanderthals created modern humans

Neanderthals were a race of super-predators that hunted early humans to the edge of extinction in the Middle East until, at one stage, there were only about 50 of our ancestors left. These resilient survivors evolved into modern humans and staged a fight-back that led to the extinction of the Neanderthals.

These are just some of the claims of a new theory of human evolution to be published next week by Australian author, Danny Vendramini. In his book *Them and Us: how Neanderthal predation created modern humans*, Vendramini suggests the protracted inter-species conflict that raged between Neanderthals and humans for over 70,000 years was responsible for transforming archaic humans into fully modern humans.

The author has spent five years researching the 50,000 year period that Neanderthal and early humans both occupied the Levant and says the evidence is overwhelming that Neanderthals were not docile hominids. "These forest-dwelling creatures were the most lethal of all the prehistoric predators. They hunted the largest and fiercest prey, including lions, mammoths, rhinos, cave bears – and humans.

“Neanderthals evolved in ice-age Europe and that glacial environment, with a scarcity of edible plants, transformed them from hunter-gatherer omnivores into meat-eating predators. The shift to an exclusive meat diet transformed them into the ‘apex predator’ of Europe and Eurasia.”

Vendramini says the harsh environment influenced Neanderthals in other ways as well. They needed thick body fur to survive the lethal winters, as well as small ears, non-protruding noses and short limbs. Like most predators, he adds, they hunted at night, so evolved large nocturnal eyes, plus an exceptional sense of smell.

“They were ruthless, intelligent, six times stronger than humans, extremely tough and armed with razor-sharp flint-tipped spears. On top of that, a wealth of new evidence shows they were cannibals.”

One hundred thousand years ago, according to Vendramini, European Neanderthals moved into the Mediterranean Levant. At the time there were about 15,000 archaic humans living there. “The archaeology tells us,” he says, “they were docile primitive hominids who mainly foraged plants and fruits and hunted small prey.”

Vendramini says these timid humans were easy pickings for the cannibalistic Neanderthals. “It wasn’t personal, humans were just another source of food. For carnivores, it’s all just meat.”

Another theory that *Them and Us* espouses is that Neanderthals were also sexual predators.

“Early humans and Neanderthals were ‘sibling species’ so were sexually compatible, says Vendramini. “Neanderthal males could sniff out ovulating human females from miles away and would raid human camps to rape and abduct them.”

Vendramini makes the case that Neanderthal sexual predation transformed human sexuality from that of an hormonal primate model to the unique system we have today.

He explains that hidden ovulation, private sex, scent concealment, perfumes, sexual modesty, female breasts, pubic hair, pair bonding and romantic love are all evolutionary adaptations to make human sexuality ‘Neanderthal-proof’.

“In a nutshell,” he says, “every aspect of human behaviour and physiology – everything that stands us apart from all the other primates – is the result of our early ancestors being hunted, killed, cannibalised and raped by predatory Neanderthals. And it wasn’t just for a day or a week, it went on for 50,000 years.”

“It’s not a romantic picture of human evolution,” Vendramini concedes. “We don’t like to think our ancestors were hunted, raped and terrorised by monstrous forest creatures for thousand of generations. Fortunately, there’s a third act climax to this dramatic story. Just when humans were just a hair’s breadth from being wiped out, something extraordinary happened.”

The nub of Vendramini’s theory is that the only humans to survive were those born with what he calls ‘strategic adaptations’ – mutations for modern human characteristics like high intelligence, creativity, language, self-sacrifice, Machiavellian thinking, extreme aggression and courage.

Around 47,000 years ago, this handful of survivors coalesced into a single interbreeding ‘super tribe’. They were now effectively a new species – Cro-Magnons.

“These were the first fully modern humans, the ‘X-Men’ of the Stone Age.” In his book, Vendramini describes them as “the founding fathers of all modern humanity”.

The Cro-Magnons did something Vendramini believes is unique in evolution: “they reversed the predator-prey relationship. Humans became the hunters.

“The Cro-Magnons used their new high-tech weapons – their bows and arrows – to wipe out their former predators in the Levant along with all the half-human, half-Neanderthal hybrids they encountered. They then invaded the Neanderthals’ home territory in Europe and eradicated them there too. This could be described as the first genocide, following which the Cro-Magnons spread out to conquer the world.

“And the rest” says Vendramini, “is history.”

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.”

Professor Tony McMichael, from The Australian National University, says Vendramini’s predation theory appears to explain many peculiarities of human physiology and behaviour; “His thesis that intensive predation by Neanderthals enforced rapid, protective, evolutionary changes offers innovative insight into the many things about ‘us’ that we might otherwise take for granted.”

Harvard Archaeologist, Professor Iain Davidson, another advocate of Vendramini’s Neanderthal predation theory adds: “Sometimes it takes an outsider to cut through the most intractable problems in science.”

#### ILLUSTRATIONS ACCOMPANYING THE NEWS RELEASE

The author supervised new forensic reconstructions of a Neanderthal by Madrid-based digital sculptor, Arturo Balseiro.

“Arturo Balseiro’s computer-generated images give us a much more accurate impression of what Neanderthals looked like than anything we’ve seen before,” says Vendramini.

“If what you see frightens you, it’s because like all prey species, humans have an innate capacity to recognise their natural predator. It’s a survivalist thing. The memory of their likeness is hardwired into our genome. 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

ISBN:9780908244775 (pbk.)

Publication: 25 September 2009

AUD \$39.95

Website: [www.themandus.org](http://www.themandus.org)

Visit the website to request a review copy.

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#### Alternative title suggestions for News Release:

Neanderthals raped and ate early humans

Humans and Neanderthals mortal enemies for 70,000 years

Neanderthals the key to human evolution

How war with Neanderthals created modern humans

Neanderthals had early humans for dinner

Neanderthals the 'apex' predators of the stone age

The secret war between early humans and Neanderthals

Neanderthals were 'wolves with knives' new books says

The darker side of Neanderthals

New book reveals Neanderthals hunted and raped early humans

Humans and Neanderthals fought 70,000 year war