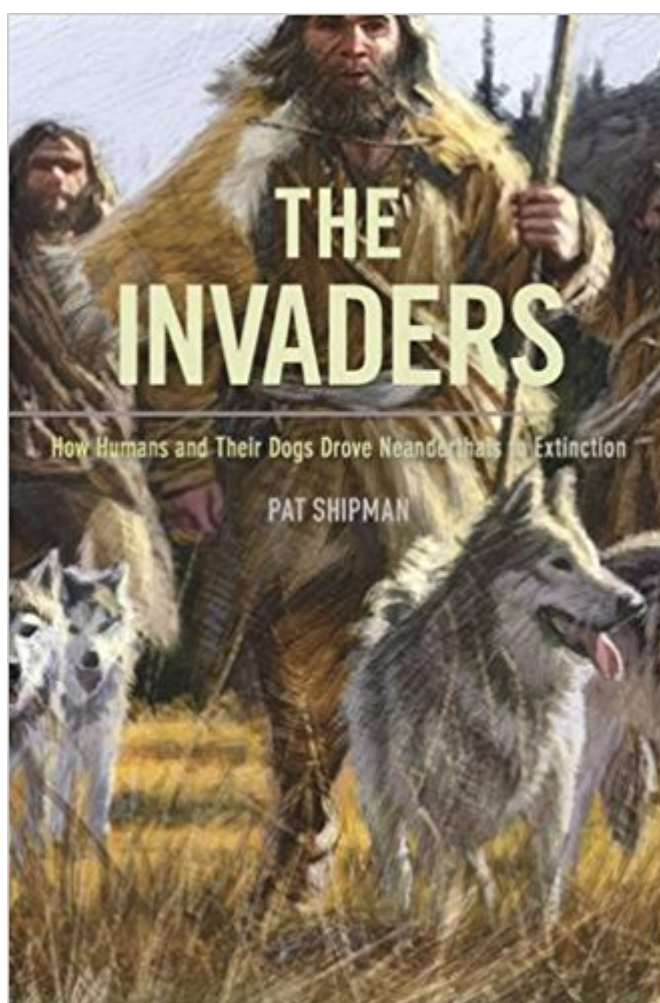


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The Invaders: How Humans And Their Dogs Drove Neanderthals To Extinction



Synopsis

With their large brains, sturdy physique, sophisticated tools, and hunting skills, Neanderthals are the closest known relatives to humans. Approximately 200,000 years ago, as modern humans began to radiate out from their evolutionary birthplace in Africa, Neanderthals were already thriving in Europe—descendants of a much earlier migration of the African genus *Homo*. But when modern humans eventually made their way to Europe 45,000 years ago, Neanderthals suddenly vanished. Ever since the first Neanderthal bones were identified in 1856, scientists have been vexed by the question, why did modern humans survive while their evolutionary cousins went extinct? The Invaders musters compelling evidence to show that the major factor in the Neanderthals' demise was direct competition with newly arriving humans. Drawing on insights from the field of invasion biology, which predicts that the species ecologically closest to the invasive predator will face the greatest competition, Pat Shipman traces the devastating impact of a growing human population: reduction of Neanderthals' geographic range, isolation into small groups, and loss of genetic diversity. But modern humans were not the only invaders who competed with Neanderthals for big game. Shipman reveals fascinating confirmation of humans' partnership with the first domesticated wolf-dogs soon after Neanderthals first began to disappear. This alliance between two predator species, she hypothesizes, made possible an unprecedented degree of success in hunting large Ice Age mammals—a distinct and ultimately decisive advantage for humans over Neanderthals at a time when climate change made both groups vulnerable.

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Customer Reviews

Shipman [is] a genial and authoritative guide to a complex field. Shipman admits that scientists have yet to find genetic evidence that would prove her theory. Time will tell if she's right. For now, read this book for an engagingly comprehensive overview of the rapidly evolving understanding of our own origins. (Toby Lester Wall Street Journal 2015-03-20) Few if any readers of this lucid and compelling exposition will come away believing that the early modern Europeans were not deeply implicated in the Neanderthals' disappearance. (Ian Tattersall Times Literary Supplement 2015-05-01) Are humans the ultimate invasive species? So contends anthropologist Pat Shipman and Neanderthals, she opines, were among our first victims. The relationship between Homo sapiens and Homo neanderthalensis is laid out cleanly, along with genetic and other evidence. Shipman posits provocatively that the deciding factor in the triumph of our ancestors was the domestication of wolves. Perhaps more troubling is the concept of early humans as invaders, rather than just another species finding its way. (Daniel Cressey Nature 2015-04-02) Since the discovery in the 19th century of Neanderthal remains, the cause of their extinction has arguably been the most compelling mystery in human evolution. The Invaders offers us the appealing prospect of an expert writing on her specialism and clearly having a great deal of fun doing so. Shipman builds an extremely compelling case for the role of Homo sapiens as an invasive species who arrived in Europe about 40,000 to 50,000 years ago and had an immediate impact on their new ecosystem. The Neanderthals were not the only victims. What makes Shipman's argument really stand out and offer a fresh perspective on the extinction of Neanderthals is the role that she gives to wolves in the process that led to the dominance of Homo sapiens. (Simon Underdown Times Higher Education 2015-04-23) According to a leading U.S. anthropologist, early dogs, bred from wolves, played a critical role in the modern human takeover of Europe 40,000 years ago when we vanquished the Neanderthal locals. If Shipman is right, she will have solved one of evolution's most intriguing mysteries. (Robin McKie The Observer 2015-03-01) [A] cautious but compelling argument. (Brian Bethune Maclean's 2015-03-22) Provocative. Shipman's story makes for a dramatic and compelling narrative. (Mark Derr Psychology Today 2015-03-16) If you want to understand your own mind, read this remarkable and important book. Summoning new evidence, Pat Shipman shows how our coevolution with wolves contributed to the extinction of Neanderthals and further transformed us through the process of domesticating dogs. You will never look at Fido the same

way again! (Nina G. Jablonski, Ph.D., Evan Pugh Professor of Anthropology, The Pennsylvania State University) Why did the Neanderthals disappear? In a judicious and enthralling account, Shipman makes a compelling case that, as a truly invasive species, humans were the main cause. An original twist adds an accomplice to the scenario: An unexpectedly early prototype of man's best friend proved to be the Neanderthals' worst enemy. (Robert D. Martin, A. Watson Armour III Curator of Biological Anthropology, The Field Museum, Chicago) With her lucid synthesis of recent research, Shipman demonstrates that Homo sapiens was and is the very model of an invasive species. (Harriet Ritvo, Arthur J. Conner Professor of History, Massachusetts Institute of Technology) Shipman's thesis is finely crafted, with loads of explanation and discussion for her various thought processes and details of the science they are based on. She also points out competing arguments, and her academic opponents are included in her acknowledgments. The discussions of how humans are invasive species and how dogs may have contributed to our success as invaders after we left Africa are alone well worth the purchase of this book. (K. Kris Hirst About Archaeology 2015-08-01)

Pat Shipman is retired Adjunct Professor of Anthropology at Pennsylvania State University.

. The theme of this book is that modern humans were an invasive species when they entered Europe, profoundly disrupting the ecosystem and forcing the extinction (cave bears and lions) or radical behavioral changes (brown bears) of other top tier carnivores. Neanderthals presented as a specialized human form with a static culture based on close encounters with big game. Their populations were stable with some fluctuation and climate deterioration may have affected them at times. But I think MIS 3 climate instability is over-blown here and Neanderthals had been around for more than one 100k cycle. Modern humans may have actually been more cold-hardy by virtue of better clothing and more adaptable life style. Better dates for some sites suggesting that there was relatively little overlap and that Neanderthals may have disappeared after 40 kya rather than existing beyond 30 kya. An illustration of the effect of an invading carnivore is given by the return of wolves to Yellowstone and their effect on limiting browse damage by a burgeoning elk population, along with a sharp decrease in coyotes and regrowth of aspen and willows. The invasive nature of humans demonstrated by their rapid population expansion to densities never achieved by their predecessors, and by the advent of "super sites" with remains of hundreds of mammoth individuals. This is taken as evidence of a great revolution in hunting methods, along with the ability to defend kill sites as they consume entire mammoths. Dogs are

proposed as the major difference in both defending kills and in driving game to kill sites. Some genetic work and a few early Belgian dog fossils used to date domestication before 20 kya. No actual proof there were dogs earlier than that. Incidentally, dog genes show that humans entering America from Siberia brought old world dogs with them. A digression about how human and wolf eyes are designed to show the direction of their gaze, making training and interacting especially effective. A nice little story here, but even the author admits that a lot of this cannot be substantiated without additional information.

I am the legendary "general reader" who academic authors used to write for in the good old days. Pat Shipman has written this book for me! So thank you. I have been reading several books about prehistoric man, and yet I came across new (to me) ideas on almost every page. Possibly a professional in the field wouldn't be as impressed, but I am. I should add that I'm 70 and have been reading about this subject for 50+ years. I have had the pleasure of visiting 5 caves in France with prehistoric drawings. At each one I was very impressed, though that is a very weak word to use. Basically the hair on the back of my neck stood up. These cave paintings make an impression! And yet I never thought to myself, "Where are the dogs???" But Shipman makes that point--all the other animals are there in almost infinite variety. But no dogs (or wolves, if you prefer). Nor are people portrayed (generally). So clearly (to me and Shipman at least), early man must have put "dog" into a category very similar to, if not the same as, "man." An obvious observation, but one I never thought of. This book brings together data from archaeology, animal behavior, climate change, DNA, scientific analysis isotopes to find out what animals (and people) ate, etc. etc. She does a great job of explaining the concepts, showing how they were arrived at, and even exploring the objections. If you are looking for an good overall view of the period when modern man entered Europe/Asia, this is it. I've read the other reviews, particularly by W Buckner, and the comments that follow it. To me the issue is the definition of the word "prove." As new techniques are discovered they show that what was once accepted as "proof" or a "fact" has now been replaced by a new "proof" or "fact." (For example, it was a "fact" that modern humans didn't have any Neanderthal DNA. But oops, then they discovered modern man DOES have Neanderthal DNA.) So knowledge progresses and develops. Makes sense to me. Shipman makes no bones about calling this book a theory or hypothesis. It fits the known facts, and as far as I can see, it doesn't leave out any contrary evidence. Does she "prove" her theory? Not in a mathematical sense, but certainly she shows it's plausible! One quibble, which I've had with other books about this period: An expert might be familiar with all the dates and terms ("MIS 3" etc.), but not general readers like me. It would have been

invaluable to make a chronological chart showing climate change, the major volcanic eruptions, the domestication of dogs, goats, etc., the appearance of modern man in Europe, etc. etc. Then you could see at a glance what was going on and when.

I loved this book. And yeah maybe it's because dogs are the heroes (according to the author's theory they may have helped humans survive over others hominids) and I love dogs (more than most other hominids) but I was able to get through some of the tedious science stuff to actually enjoy the tale of how we all got here. And yes, most of it is conjecture (scientifically, hypothesis) and some of it has already been disproved in the 3 years that this book has been out, but that didn't effect my enjoyment of it. Dogs saved us!!! Or more accurately, we survived because we domesticated dogs. Think about next the next time Rover wants a treat. Give it to him!!! He's the main reason you're here.

I read a lot of this sort of book--kind of have a left-over-from-University interest, you might say. This one's central theme: humans are invasive species. Teamed up with another pack animal. Not a bad take on how people have spread across the world, but I didn't think the case was quite proven. I also didn't think the invasive-top-predator argument was fully supported. It's fine to quote stats from reintroductions of wolves and so forth, quite another to provide evidence from the few bones and tools (and they are few, really) available to examine. And.. I always wonder why these researchers seem to miss or ignore the ONE thing we do have some evidence for as humans from one area enter another populated area: epidemic disease. 'Worked' for the conquistadors, didn't it? 'Worked' very well in N. America. If you more than decimate a population, the remnants may dwindle more quickly than otherwise expected. So I think I'd have liked to see a broader more comprehensive view--rather than a defense of a single, sliiiiightly improbably but interesting theory. The bit about dogs, though....very well put.

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