



Patterns in Prehistory: Humankind's First Three Million Years

Robert J. Wenke

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Generations after generations have been living and dying on this planet for millions and millions of years. These ancestors have built societies, created cultures, and produced technologies. Yet many questions still remain about our ancestry and what relevance, if any, these past cultures hold for us.

Patterns in Prehistory takes an in-depth look at humankind's first three million years. From the origins of early hominids several million years ago to the evolution of the first great states and civilizations, this comprehensive survey of world prehistory also confronts important philosophical issues about the study of the past. The author reflects on the archaeological methods and theories of the 1960s and 70s while reviewing the methodological revisions of the 80s and 90s, relating the archaeological data from hundreds of sites to the great questions of prehistorical change. He focuses on the four great transformations in the history of our genus: the evolution of culture itself; the first appearance of us, Homo Sapiens; the evolution of agriculture; and the first appearances of cultural and social complexity in the form of the great civilizations of antiquity.

Thoroughly revised and updated, this fourth edition incorporates the most recent archaeological discoveries and addresses the insights and limitations of the new wave of "post-processual" or "cognitive" archaeology. It incorporates the latest research, particularly the new discoveries in Mesoamerican sites, Peru, southwest Asia, and Egypt, as well as new scholarship and theories on the origins of complex societies. Wenke also places more emphasis on gender, race, ideology, and religion. Ideal for courses in world prehistory and archeology, this new edition has been shortened to be more accessible to students.

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