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978-0-521-67749-3 - Origins and Revolutions: Human Identity in Earliest Prehistory

Clive Gamble

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ORIGINS AND REVOLUTIONS

What changed in the three million years of human evolution? Were there tipping points that made us more recognisably human? In this innovative study, Clive Gamble presents and questions two of the most famous descriptions of change in prehistory. The first is the human revolution when evidence for art, music, religion and language appears. The second is the economic and social revolution of the Neolithic. Gamble identifies the historical agendas behind research on origins. He proposes an alternative approach that relates the study of change to the material basis of human identity. Rather than revolutionary stages, Gamble makes the case that our earliest prehistory is a story of mutual relationships between people and their technology. These developing relationships resulted in distinctive identities for our earliest ancestors and continue today.

Gamble challenges the hold that revolutions and points of origin exert over the imagination of archaeologists. He opens the door to an inclusive study of how human identity, in concert with material culture, has developed over the past three million years.

Clive Gamble is Professor in the Department of Geography at Royal Holloway University of London. He is one of the world's leading authorities on the archaeology of the earliest human societies. His many groundbreaking books include *The Palaeolithic Settlement of Europe*; *Timewalkers: The Prehistory of Global Colonisation*; the 2000 winner of the Society of American Archaeology Book Award, *The Palaeolithic Societies of Europe*; and most recently *The Hominid Individual in Context*, edited with Martin Porr. In 2005, he was awarded the Rivers Memorial Medal by the Royal Anthropological Institute in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the field. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2000 and in 2003 became co-director of the Academy's prestigious Centenary Project, *From Lucy to Language: The Archaeology of the Social Brain* that seeks to find out when hominid brains became human minds.

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