

VINCENZO FORMICOLA

FROM NEANDERTHAL TO THE HOBBIT

FOSSILS AND IDEAS AGAINST THE TIDE

The reconstruction of the evolutionary history of man is a topic in continuous evolution, to use a pun, as evidenced by changes in the interpretive scenarios that sometimes attain the discovery of new fossils. The book is dedicated to those recoveries that in the history of paleoanthropological research have sort of been "milestones": ie fossils. They have not found an easy acceptance in the scientific environment, due to the disruption of consolidated and widely shared ideas that they embodied, and the messages that they carried with them.

Fossils "against the tide", then, but also ideas "against the tide" born by men with insights and stubborn determination that have marked the history of the discipline. In the various chapters the reader will find outlined in popular form and following a historical record, the scientific and cultural context in which the various fossils came to light, the difficulties they encountered before they received credit and, in the final part, readers will be offered an overview of the state of current knowledge.

Starting from the discovery of the Neanderthal man and ending with that of the Hobbit, a singular small hominid whose remains were found recently in Indonesia, the volume is to cover a

period of a century and a half, running from the years of the birth of Human Paleontology to the present, thus giving the reader the chance to develop an idea of developments in the discipline.

THE AUTHOR

Vincenzo Formicola has a degree in Biological Sciences and has been teaching and researching in anthropology at the University of Pisa from the early '70s. His academic career began at the Institute of Anthropology and Human Paleontology, was completed in 2010 at the Department of Biology. During this time his research was pointed towards the study of the populations of Europe by modern humans during the Upper Palaeolithic, and the analysis of aspects of biology, culture and behavior of the last populations of hunters and of the first European farmers. The results of this activity are several scientific publications which appeared in prestigious international journals, promotion and participation in excavations of sites of archaeological interest, and invitations to international symposia. Included among the most relevant scientific contributions are works on the calculation of stature starting from ancient skeletal remains, the evolution of stature in European

prehistory, mortuary behavior of early modern humans and the relationship between economics, lifestyle and state of health in the populations of the past.

Currently he is involved in popularizing science through the organization of conferences for the general public and the drafting of museum guides in the sections dealing with the Natural History of Man.

