

# The Humans Who Went Extinct: Why Neanderthals Died Out and We Survived

By Clive Finlayson

Hailed by Dan Agin in *The Huffington Post* as "fascinating...electrifying...an apocalyptic vision that puts a chill down one's back," this provocative book offers a new perspective on the extinction of the Neanderthals. Today, we think of Neanderthals as crude and clumsy, easily driven to extinction by the lithe, smart humans who came out of Africa some 100,000 years ago. But Clive Finlayson reminds us that the Neanderthals were another kind of human, and their culture was not so very different from that of our own ancestors. In this book, he presents a wider view of the events that led to the migration of the moderns into Europe, what might have happened during the contact between the two populations, and what finally drove the Neanderthals to extinction. It is a view that considers climate, ecology, and migrations of populations, as well as culture and interaction. His conclusion is that the destiny of the Neanderthals was sealed by ecological factors--in short, a major climate change--and it was a matter of luck that we survived while they perished.

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## The Humans Who Went Extinct: Why Neanderthals Died Out and We Survived Summary Details

The Humans Who Went Extinct: Why Neanderthals Died Out and We Survived by Clive Finlayson  
ebook read online.

pdetail:

- Sales Rank: #275777 in Books
- Brand: imusti
- Published on: 2010-12-09
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 5.10" h x .80" w x 7.60" l, .47 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 256 pages

editorial:

From Publishers Weekly

A cave on Gibraltar 28,000 years ago was one of the final homes of the Neanderthals. Finlayson, director of the Gibraltar Museum, uses his knowledge of that cave and others like it to explore the differences and similarities between modern humans and Neanderthals, and how the differences led to our surviving them. Presenting a host of data, he draws a single conclusion: modern humans weren't brighter, stronger or more capable than Neanderthals. Rather, we were luckier. Scattered around Europe, Neanderthals probably succumbed to various factors, from disease to drastic climate change—changes that led to an environment more friendly to *Homo sapiens*. Finlayson does a superb job of describing the factors behind the expansion of the genus *Homo* and its diversification into various species, of which only *Homo sapiens* survives today. He also offers a powerful critique of those who theorize differently about the expansion of our species with very little data. Finally, he challenges us to rethink early human migration around the globe, arguing that the pattern we see is simply a modest expansion, generation by generation, as environmental conditions permitted. In his hands the links between climate and evolutionary change are strikingly clear. 5 b&w illus. (Nov.)

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Review

Review from previous edition: "Informative."

--Ewen Callaway, *New Scientist* 07/11/2009

"A provocative new book."

--Sharen Begley, *Newsweek* 29.10.09

About the Author

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