

A Neanderthal Day

this cave has sheltered
our clan since the Beginning,
and will Evermore

our stone and bone tools,
made by elders of elders,
are kept in their place

our cooking hearth warms
sleeping beds of grass and ash
under auroch skins

spear points are sharpened,
we will hunt cave lion soon,
my son is learning

my hand with ochre
I made wall painting today
—sons' sons will know me



This typical day was replicated for 15,000 generations spanning 300,000 years until Neanderthal DNA became fully subsumed within Homo sapiens' genome by interbreeding about 40,000 years ago. They were our direct ancestors. Modern monotheistic religions emerged only about 2000 years ago. Photo: Krapina Cave Museum diorama, Croatia /417

26 June 2024, rev 7/31/24



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