

Seminario
“Mobility turn”.
Nuovi strumenti storiografici, dalla
preistoria alla modernità

Archeologia dei movimenti: ripensare la stanzialità

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This Seminar

Seminario 1. Concetti chiave, significati e critiche del Mobility Turn

Seminario 2. **Archeologia dei movimenti: ripensare la stanzialità**

Seminario 3. Affinità elettive tra modernità e mobilità

Seminario 4. Usare la storia per costruire il futuro dei trasporti





This Seminar

Seminario 2. - 22 Maggio 2019 – 10-13

Archeologia dei movimenti: Ripensare la stanzialità

Jim Leary and Thomas Kador, “Movemment and mobility in the Neolithic”, in Id. (eds.), *Moving on in Neolithic Studies: Understanding Mobile Lives*, Oxford Oxbow Books, 2016, 1-13



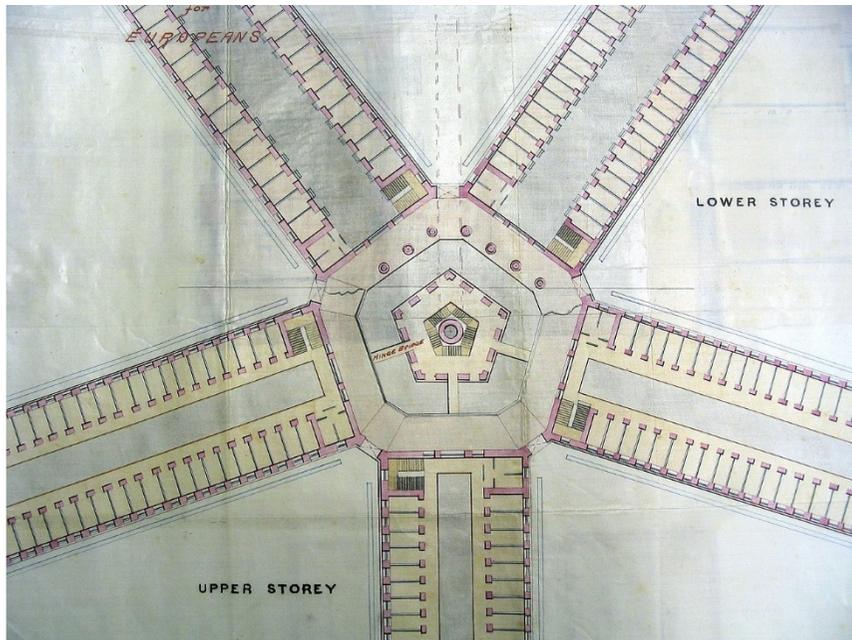


The name and concept of “mobility turn” come from two sociologists, John Urry and Mimi Sheller. The Turn shifted the attention from the traditional focus on **dwelling** (as fundamental to modernity) to that of **movement**.





On a very high scale this let moving form
Foucault *panopticon* to movement as ruling
social element.





The goal of today is better appraise the concept of mobility, which goes further of that of “transport”.

We will do this comparing modernity and prehistoric societies, and then focusing on Neolithic mobilities.



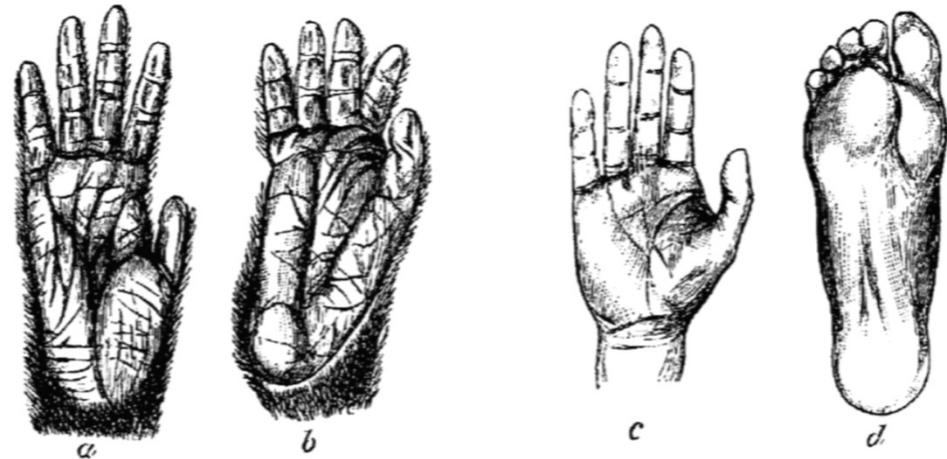


FIGURE 2 Hand (a) and foot (b) of chimpanzee; hand (c) and foot (d) of man.
Reproduced from Tylor (1881: 42)

As second element we analyze walking, following an anthropologist work:

Tim Ingold, “Culture on the ground. The World Perceived Through the Feet”, *Journal of Material Culture*, 9:3 (2004), 315–340.



We theoretical questions:

How much movement is a constant?

How much sedentarism is reducing mobility?

A critical appraisal of technologic?



[It has been] *assumed that all hunter-gatherers "move around a lot." This is not entirely accurate, for many hunter-gatherers move infrequently—some less than many "sedentary" horticultural societies.*

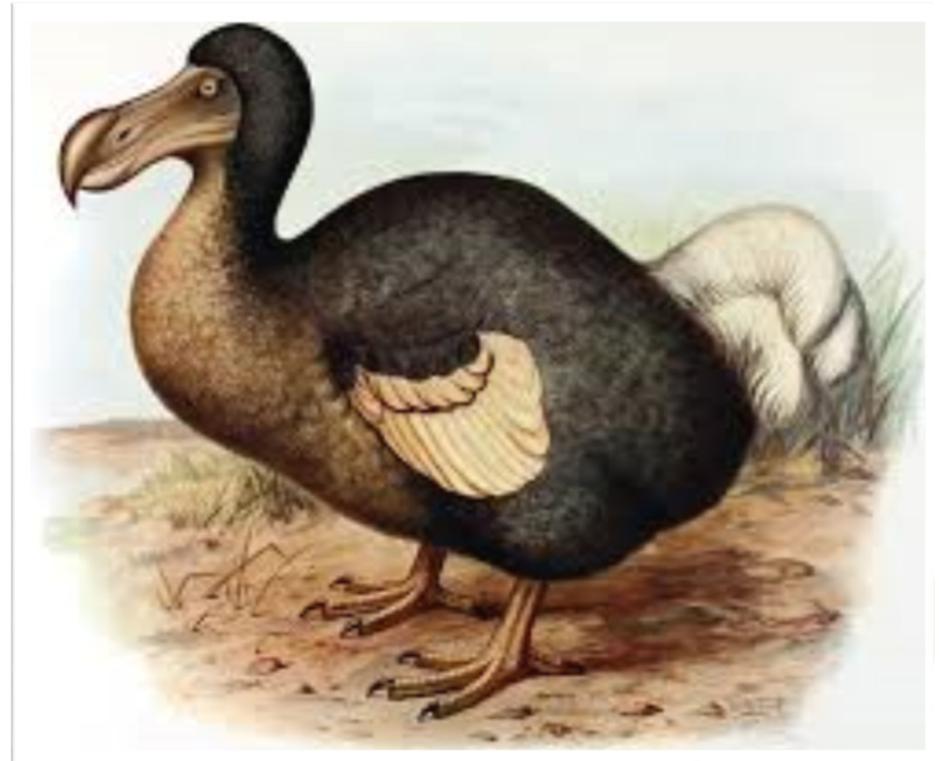
Early concepts of mobility blinded us to the fact that mobility is universal, variable, and multi-dimensional. (Kelly 1992)



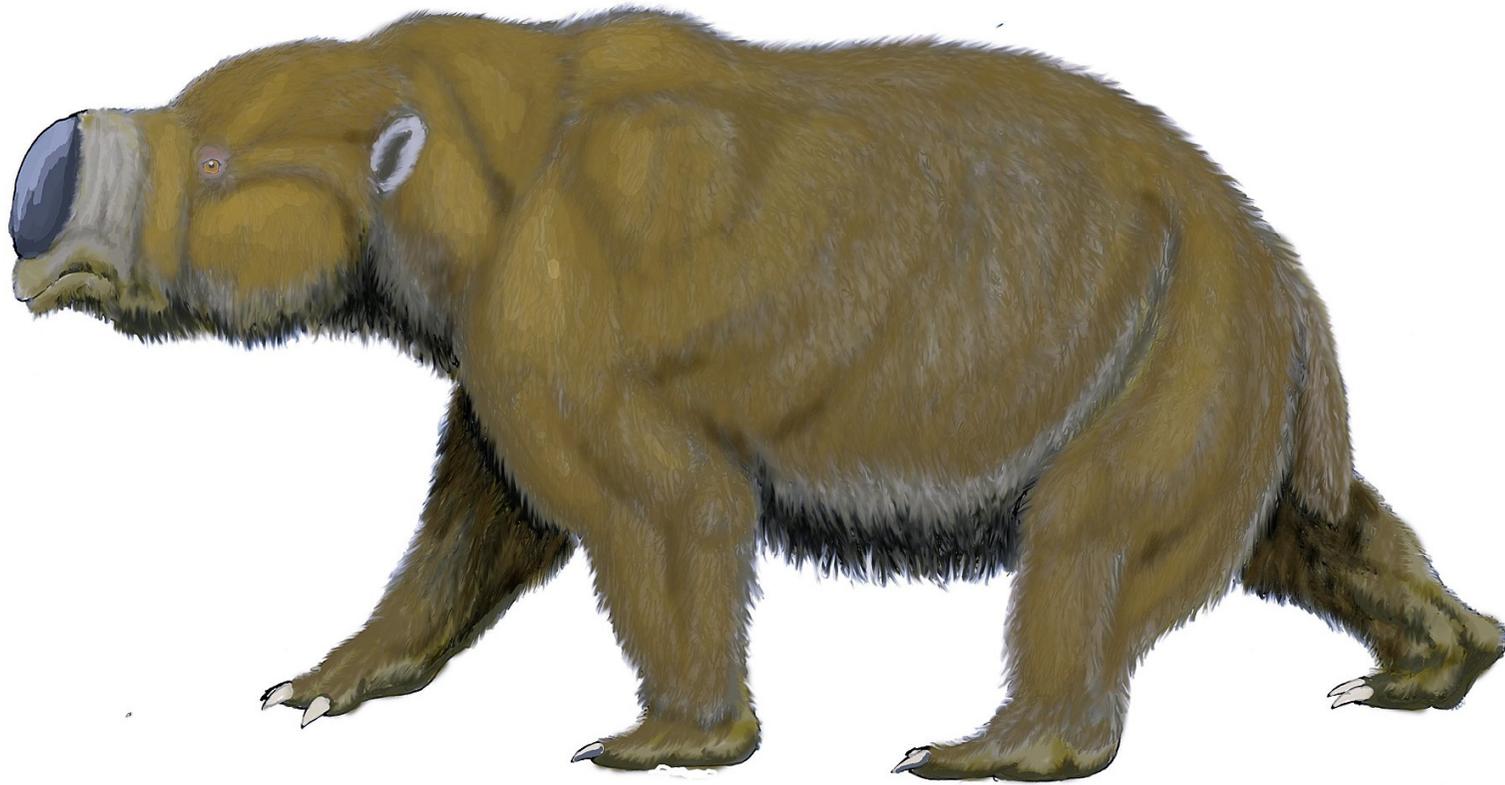


We believe that modernity is the source of power and movements.

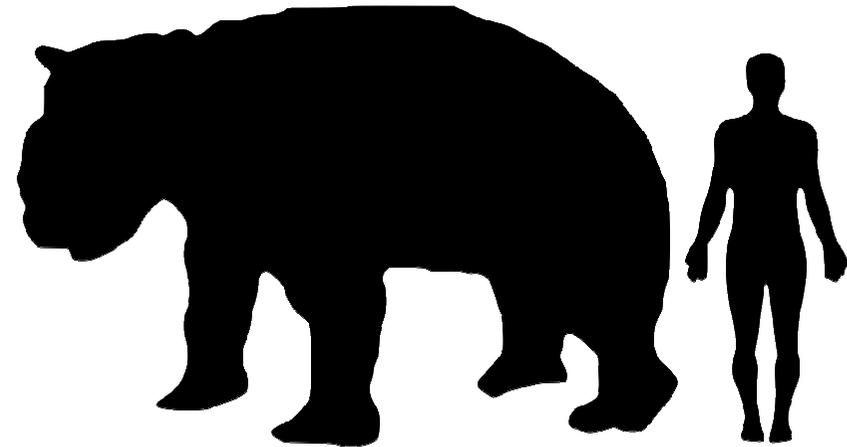
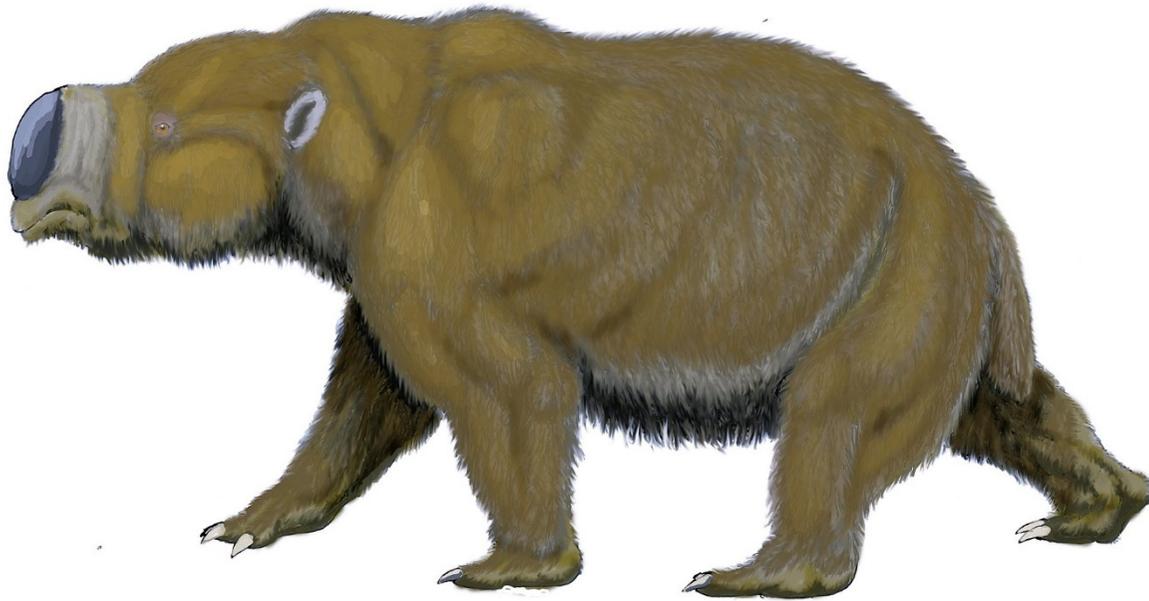
Actually, as Homo Sapiens, we already moved a lot in prehistoric times, and destroy nature before imperialism.







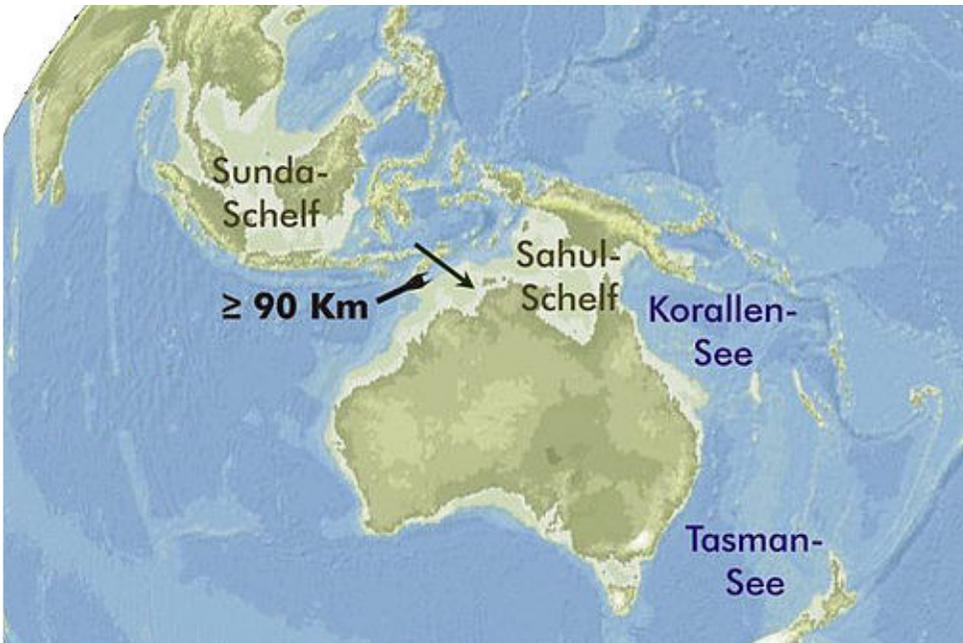
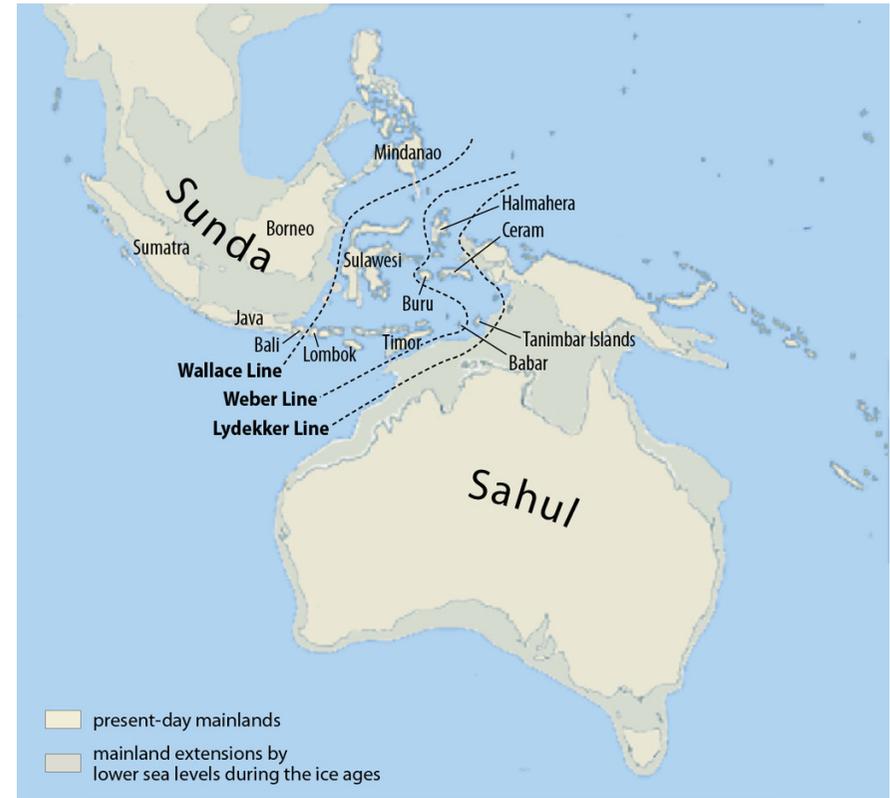
Diprotodon

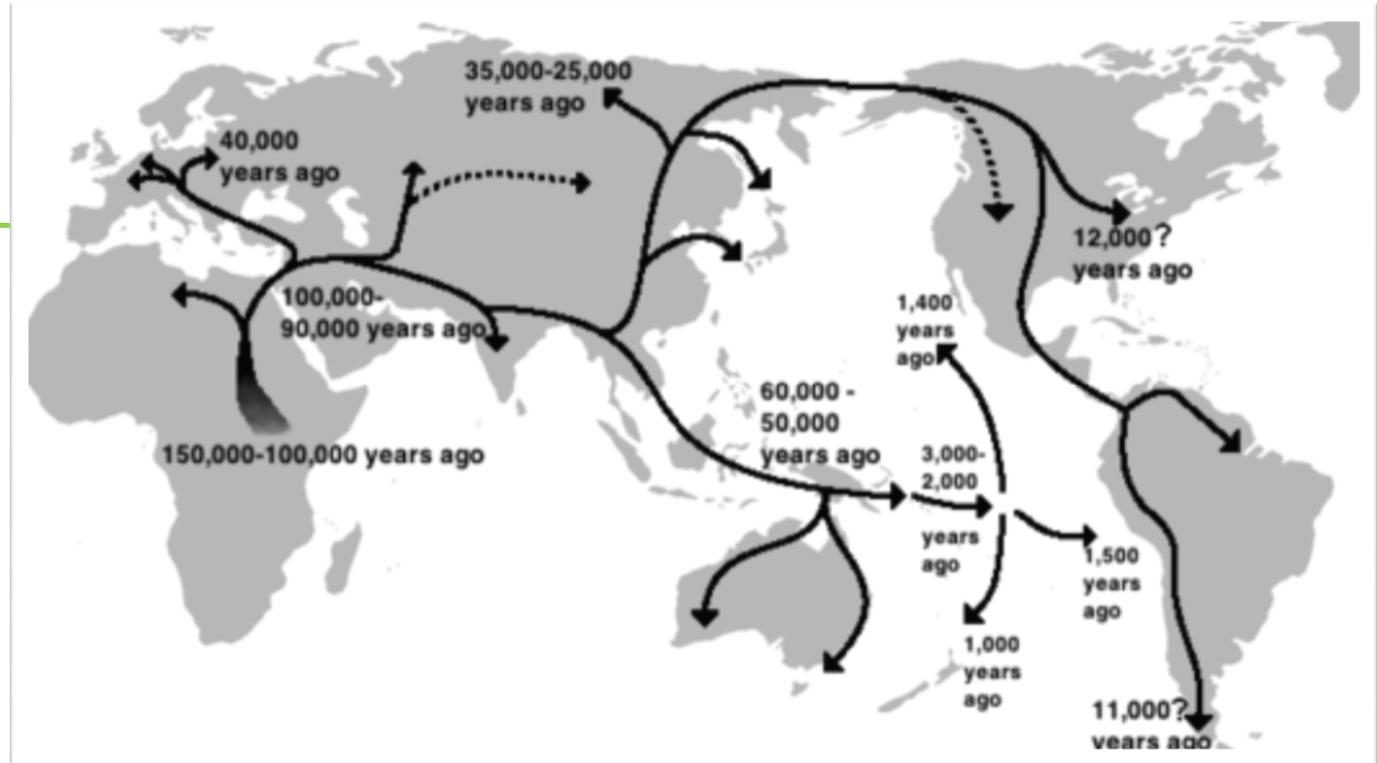


Diprotodon – Australia megafauna



Crossing the straits circa 40-60k years ago



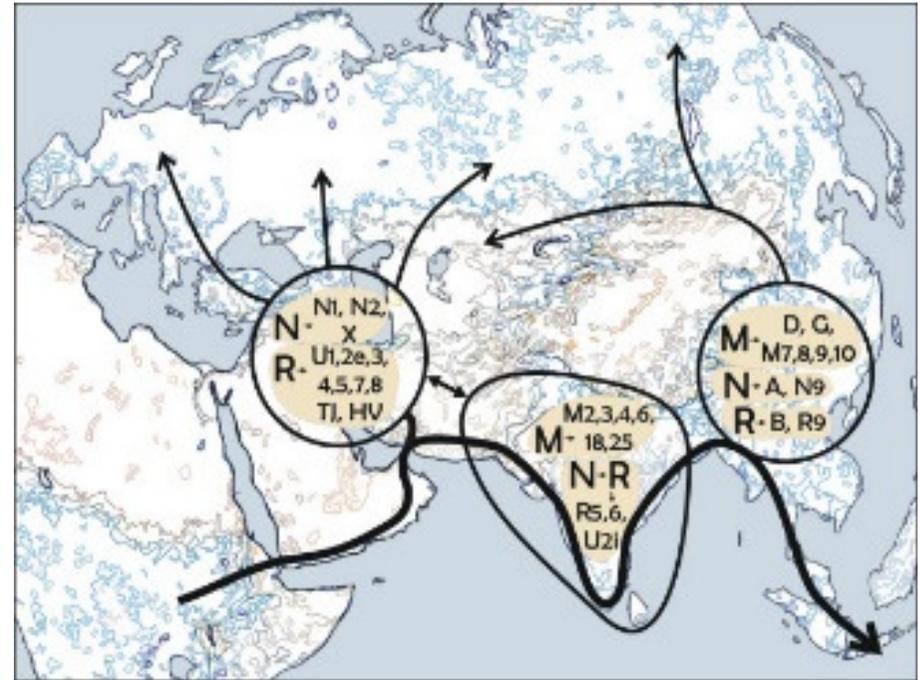


Out of Africa Theory

Transport is an „anthropological constant“?

If so, where is the novelty in modern time?





Coastal migration hypothesis

Never considered up to 20 years ago, because of our modernity bias: only modernity is high-mobile and skillful.



Cheddar Man (UK) circa 10k y ago (its existence asks for further immigrations waves)





Mobility is not a modern episode or a modern practice. It has been a constant.

As homo sapiens, we have been travelling quite a lot, on land and on sea, for about 100k years.

Still, we need to appraise what is different from Neolithic to modern time!





However, we have a first element for our understanding: mobility is not a modern, western, wheeled, motorized, male-dominate affair.

It must be understood as general, encompassing time, gender and other cultures.





The goal is better appraise the concept of mobility, which goes further of that of “transport”.

We will do this via Neolithic mobilities





[We should use] movement in its widest sense, ranging from everyday mobilities – the routines and rhythms of daily life – to proscribed mobility, such as movement in and around monuments, and occasional and large-scale movements and migrations around the continent and across seas.

[We should consider] movement of people, ideas, animals, objects, and information.





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Mobilities of different elements





Life was neither static and fixed, nor highly mobile, but composed of complex mobilities.

Mobility is walking, running, climbing, rowing, dancing, hunting and herding; it is cooking, cleaning, pot-making, flint knapping, hoeing, planting and fruit-picking.



These bodily techniques will have varied according to cultural conventions (see, for example, Mauss 1935), or to “age, ethnicity, class, family tradition, gender, sexual orientation, talent, skill, circumstances and choice” (Farnell 1999, 343). People also move on and around for a plethora of reasons: resource procurement, trade, seeking a spouse, adventure, curiosity, misfortune, illness, or to follow an influential leader (see suggestions in Whittle 1997a)





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That is, mobility changes according individual and social attitudes





... a broader narrative that has persisted from at least the nineteenth century and sees humans as emerging from a state of wandering wildness on a path towards settled civilization.

That is, as Homo Sapiens, moved a lot also in prehistoric times, so we can even argue that we have an anthropological constant about mobility





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In this framework, hunter gatherer mobility is determined by the movements of the animals they follow and hunt; they and their mobilities are at the whim of nature.



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In this framework, hunter gatherer mobility is determined by the movements of the animals they follow and hunt; they and their mobilities are at the whim of nature.

Settled farmers, on the other hand, have subdued and mastered their environment, and taken control of their mobility. In this account, human progress can be measured by people's ability to settle down, move less, and exploit the landscape.





(In this account, settling as civilization is then followed by modernity, in which the settler aims to move again, but not necessary as a migrant, but as a conqueror, who maintains his/her homeland. (Which gives us imperialism) He/she is able to govern and rule nature and conquest space.)





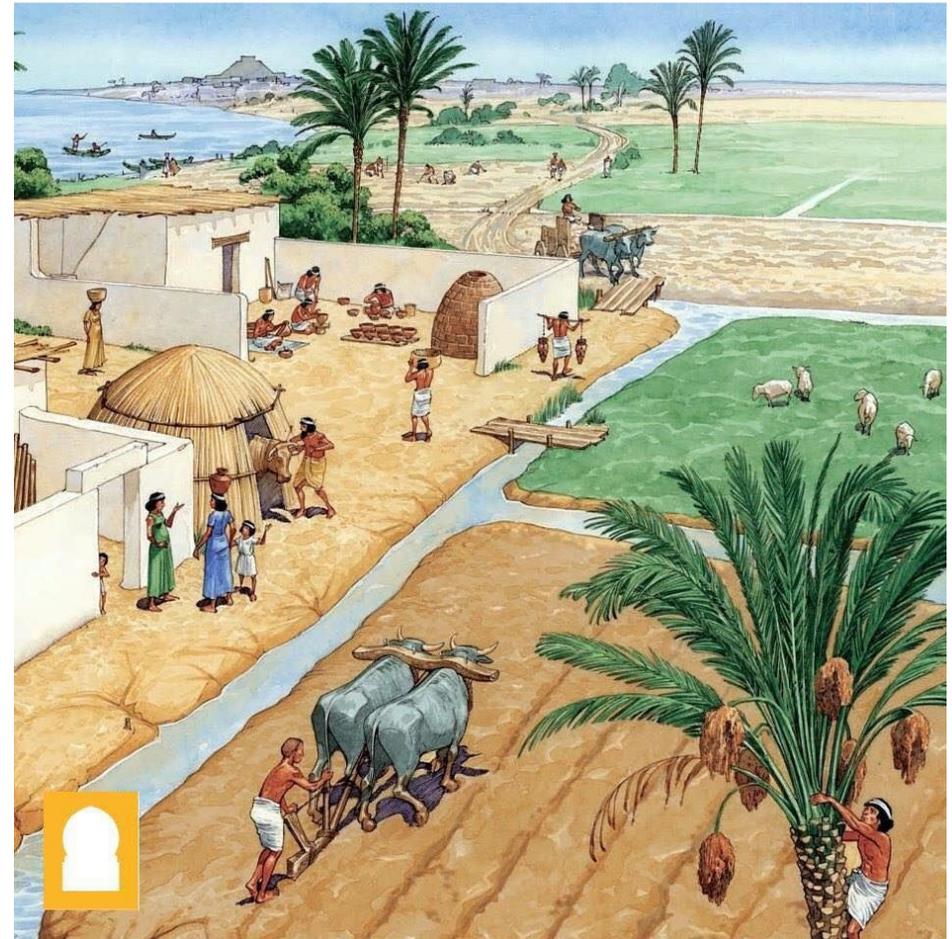
This aporia of settling and travelling is defined in Benjamin's comparison of peasant versus navigator-merchants.

This is naturally the core contradiction of modernity, which aims for stability but needs to "move".



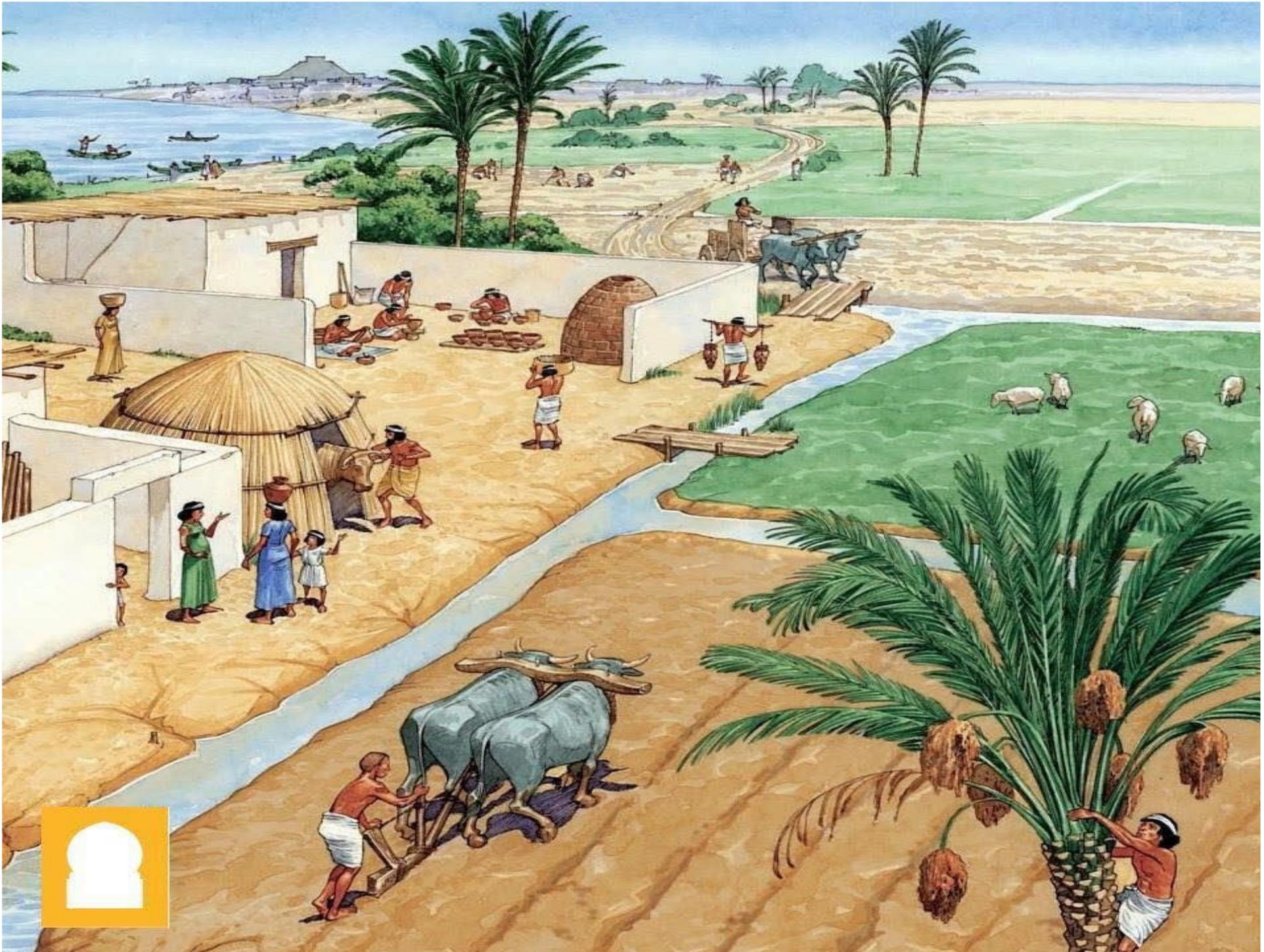
“It is agricultural societies that tend to be on the move; hunting people are far more firmly settled” (Brody 2001, 7). This is a point also made by Robert Kelly: “many hunter-gatherers move infrequently – some less than many ‘sedentary’ horticultural societies” (1992, 43; 1995).





“It is agricultural societies that tend to be on the move; hunting people are far more firmly settled”
(Brody 2001, 7).







Mobility can thus be performed in multiple ways. We can have indeed individual mobility, collective mobilities, but also human/animals mobility, as in Leary and Kador.



The Batek – a group of forest-dwelling hunter-gatherers in Malaysia – move with great speed through thick tangles of forest. Looking at this terrain as strangers to it we might believe that it is impossible to move through it at all; however, the Batek stoop, creep, crawl, climb and slither their way through the forest with ease, as well as “wading across rivers, pushing vegetation aside, cutting fruit-laden boughs, and eating the fruits, navigating the way ... and, of course, talking ...” (Tuck-Po 2008, 25).

The forest is their landscape.

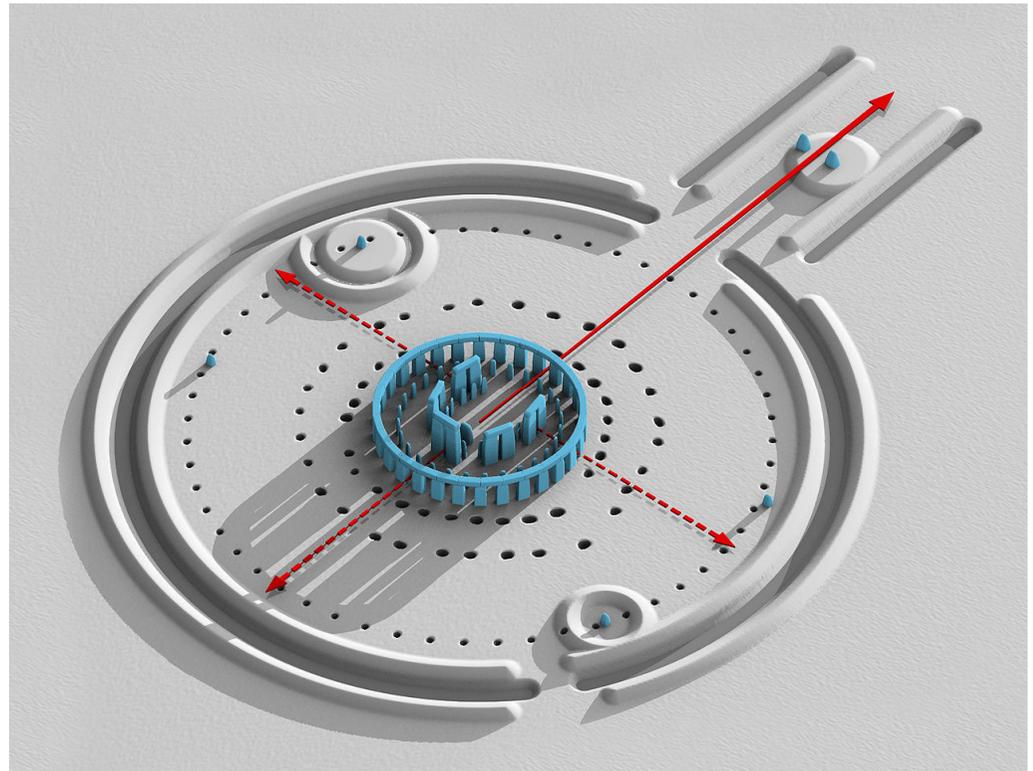




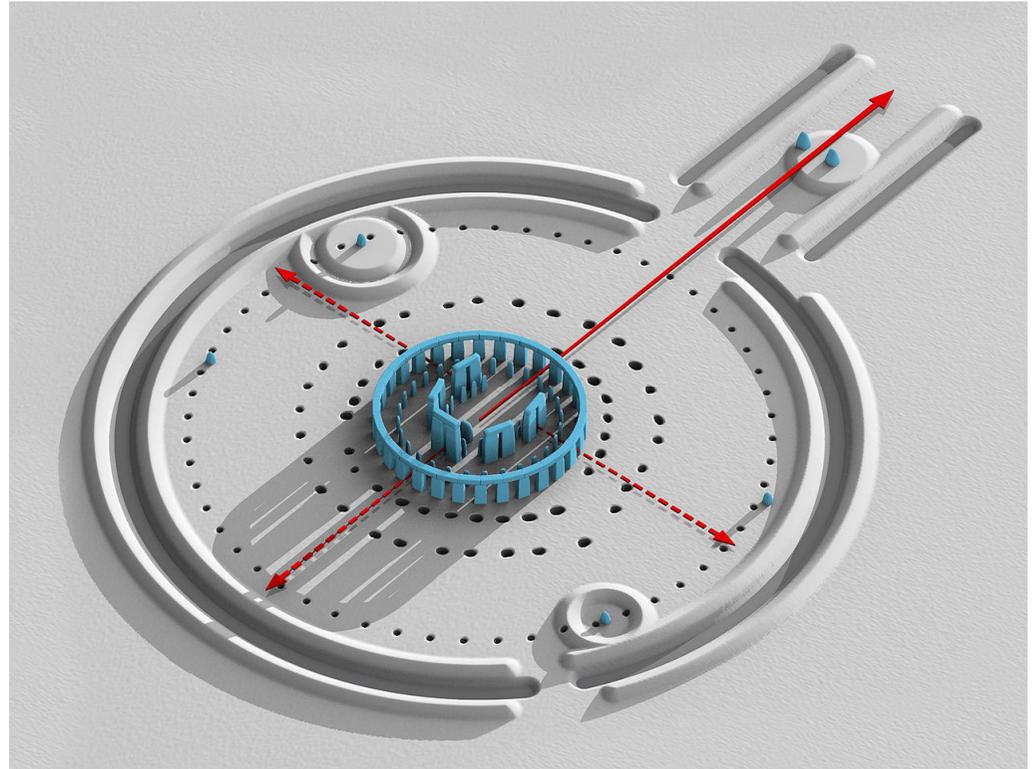
Movement for the Batek is highly social, and the group constantly talk over the best way to proceed, using a type of ‘topographic gossip’; “walking and talking are inseparable. ... paths are social phenomena” (Tuck-Po 2008, 26).

Mobility is a social activity





The [Neolithic] monuments themselves, however, can, to some extent, tell us about mobility (to them) and movement (around and along them).



Stonehenge as a “place of healing“. Skeletons found nearby are not local (including some Bavarian alike and Mediterranean bodies). But we have also a cosmology of movements embedded in the stone’s positions.



The evidence from pig teeth suggests that the majority of pigs came from beyond the Stonehenge landscape, with similar non-local origins for cattle (see also Viner et al. 2010), and, therefore, perhaps indicative of “mass droving”.



Stonehenge as a cosmic mobility clock. Let's think of tides, and cosmic mobility come as something of daily use.



Mobility as a universal activity of homo sapiens,
thus NOT a modern feature.

Mobility is often performed with sophisticated
technologies, which are not necessarily an
outcomes of modernity.







Mobility is more than moving (driven by a need) from A to B. it is a complex, social adventure, which ask socio-technical competences and can be performed in different ways.

Mobility is thus central in managing and forming identity, power as much as offering new experiences.



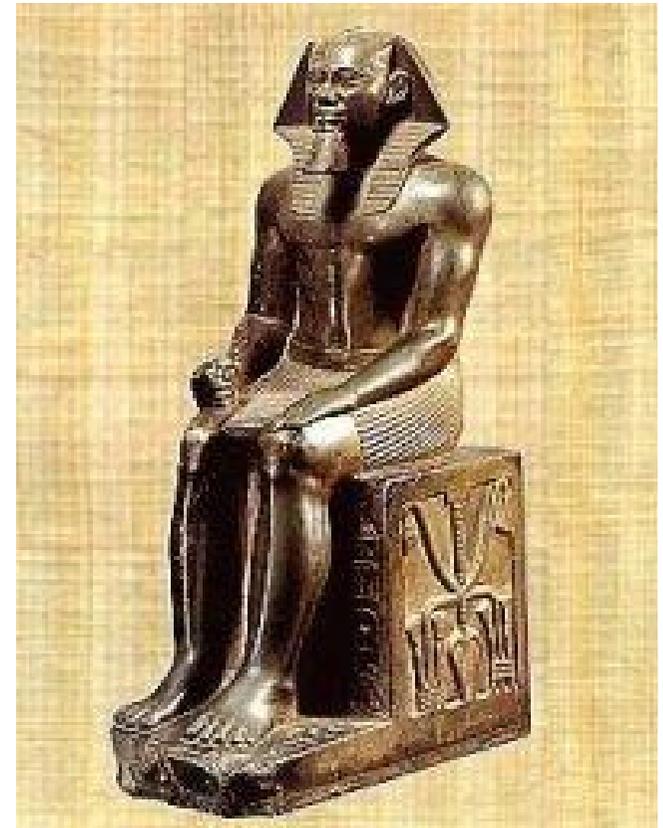


... in western society, where uprightiness or 'standing' is a measure of rank and moral rectitude, the squatting position is reserved for those on the very lowest rung of the social ladder – for outcastes, beggars and supplicants (Ingold 2004:324)





Actually, it is a long story, well before western society exists as such...



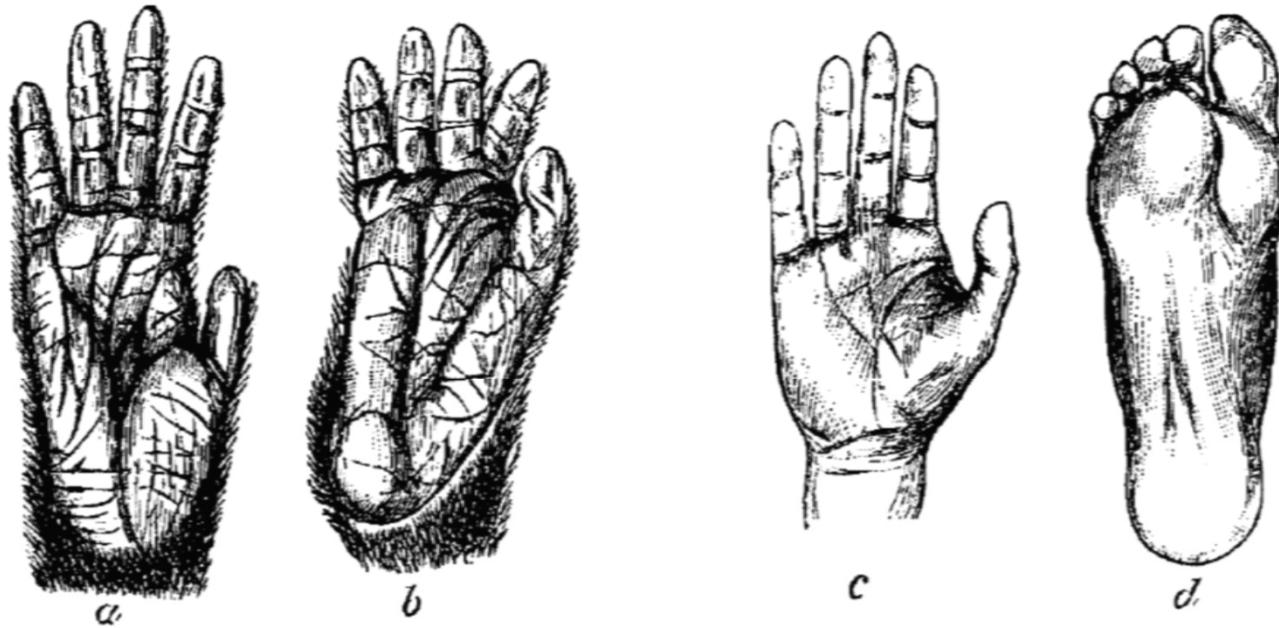


FIGURE 2 Hand (a) and foot (b) of chimpanzee; hand (c) and foot (d) of man.
Reproduced from Tylor (1881: 42)

As the savage was regarded as anatomically intermediate between the ape and the civilized human, it would stand to reason that his feet would retain some vestiges of the ape-like form.



Walking was for the poor, the criminal, the young, and above all, the ignorant (Jarvis, 1997: 23). Only in the 19th century, following the example set by Wordsworth and Coleridge, did people of leisure take to walking as an end in itself, beyond the confines of the landscaped garden or gallery.



The 'sitting society' to which we are so accustomed today is largely a phenomenon of the last 200 years (Tenner, 2003: 105). ...



Of course, human beings do not need to sit on chairs, any more than they need to clad their feet in boots and shoes. As the designer Ralph Caplan wryly remarks, 'a chair is the first thing you need when you don't really need anything, and is therefore a peculiarly compelling symbol of civilization' (Caplan, 1978: 18).





Whereas the European walks from the hips while keeping the legs as straight as possible, Japanese people traditionally walked from the knees while minimizing movement at the hips. The result is a kind of shuffle, not unlike that of a man who has lost his shoelaces, which to European eyes looks most ungainly.



We laugh at the 'goose-step'. It is the way the German army can obtain maximum extension of the leg, given in particular that all Northerners, high on their legs, like to take as long steps as possible. In the absence of these exercises, we Frenchmen remain more or less knock-kneed. (Mauss, 1979: 114–15)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMp8oY61AGA>





The goose step is only possible on the artificially monotonous surface of the parade-ground.

Nevertheless by public works, most metropolitan societies have transformed their urban spaces into something approximating the parade-ground, by paving the streets.

In so doing, they have literally paved the way for the boot-clad pedestrian to exercise his feet as a stepping machine.





Above all, the streets were made open and straight, creating a fitting environment for what was considered the proper exercise of the higher faculty of vision – to see and be seen (Ogborn, 1998: 91–104).

That is walking without looking at the floor.





What Goffman shows us, through his study, is that walking down a city street is an intrinsically social activity.

Its sociality does not hover above the practice itself, in some ethereal realm of ideas and discourse, but is rather immanent in the way a person's movements – his or her step, gait, direction and pace – are continually responsive to the movements of others in the immediate environment.





... the reduction of pedestrian experience that has perhaps reached its peak in the present era of the car, is the culmination of a trend that was already established with the boot's mechanization of the foot, the proliferation of the chair, and the advent of destination-oriented travel.





28 Maggio 2019 (13-16)
Affinità elettive tra modernità e mobilità

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