

Singing the praises of the stick's role in human evolution

Sticks are probably where the story of craft begins—the point at which our very distant ancestors progressed from animalistic existences to lives materially enhanced by the objects around them. The transition is most notoriously depicted in the “Dawn of Man” sequence in Stanley Kubrick’s 2001: A Space Odyssey when, in a moment of epiphany, an ape holds aloft the bone he has just used to pulverize to death the leader of a rival tribe before casting it up into the sky.

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Wooden sticks present an even more challenging situation by virtue of the fact that, unless suspended in the extreme environmental conditions of desiccation or saturation, they decompose and turn to dust. Stones, on the other hand, survive the ravages of time and make it abundantly clear to us when they have been refashioned or altered by the human hand.

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Hafting—the technological capacity to attach a stick to a stone—really is the point at which craft becomes cemented as an evolutionary option for the human species. The composite tool or utensil was born, and with it the capacity to make at a much more advanced level than before. That seminal moment of creating a weapon or tool is, in my opinion, a crucial coming together. It is an event that signals a new dawn in human technical advancement—effectively the creation of an extended limb—and one that is certainly well developed by the Mesolithic.

Read full, original post: [The Stick Is an Unsung Hero of Human Evolution](#)