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Soggetti

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Sommario/riassunto

The end of the Pleistocene (c. 75-15 ka) is a key period for the prehistory of the Nile Valley. The climatic fluctuations documented during this period have led human populations from the Middle and Late Palaeolithic to adapt to a changing Nile. In particular, the global shift to more arid conditions regionally translated into the expansion of the Sahara, the lowering of sea levels and the desiccation of some major eastern African lakes. These climatically-induced environmental changes influenced the behaviour of the Nile —although how exactly is still debated— and its role as an ecological refugium for human populations living in its vicinity. Genetic and fossil evidence highlight a strong population substructure in Africa during this period, suggesting the alternation of phases of major dispersals of modern humans within the continent, as well as out-of and back-into Africa, with phases of relative isolation of populations, which might be linked to the creation of environmental refugia during the climatic fluctuations of this period. Understanding to what extent the technological variability observed in north-eastern Africa between 75,000 and 15,000 years ago is linked to environmental changes and/or possible contacts between different human populations is critical in this context. The best-preserved evidence for past human behavior are archaeological assemblages, most often lithic assemblages. However, the use of different terminologies, whether they refer to cultural or techno-typological entities, hampers any systematic comparison between the Nile Valley on one hand and neighbouring regions on the other hand. An outcome of this practice is the artificial 'isolation' of the north-eastern African record from its neighbouring regions. This monograph groups together chapters presenting updated reviews and new data on regional archaeological, palaeoenvironmental, palaeoanthropological and geological records from north-eastern Africa, North Africa, the Levant and...
