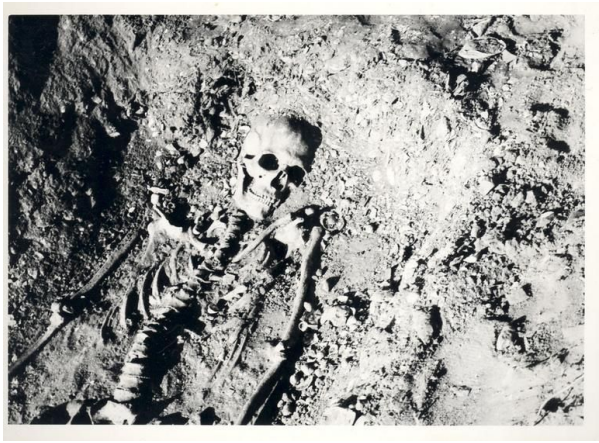
WHAT CAN ONE MAN TELL US ABOUT THE START OF FARMING?



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

A man who lived about 6,000 years ago in what is now Denmark may have experienced one of the biggest changes in human history: the move from hunting and gathering to farming. His skeleton was found in 1956 on the island of Sejerø, in an ancient rubbish heap made from shells and food waste. New tests suggest that he grew up eating mainly seafood, such as shellfish, flatfish and eels. When he was about 11, his diet began to include more food from land animals, probably because he had contact with farming communities on a nearby island. His burial also looked more like the burials used by early farmers. This suggests that hunter-gatherers and farmers did not always live separately or fight. Some people combined parts of both ways of life, continuing to gather food while also using animals and crops.

WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

The change to farming is often described as a revolution, but it did not happen everywhere at once. This man's life suggests that people adapted gradually. They could keep older traditions while borrowing new ideas, showing that major changes in history are often messy rather than sudden.

THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

"Why might someone keep hunting and gathering after meeting farmers?"

Source: Smithsonian Magazine

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/from-a-small-island-in-denmark-this-man-lived-through-the-transition-from-hunter-gathering-to-farming-6000-years-ag