

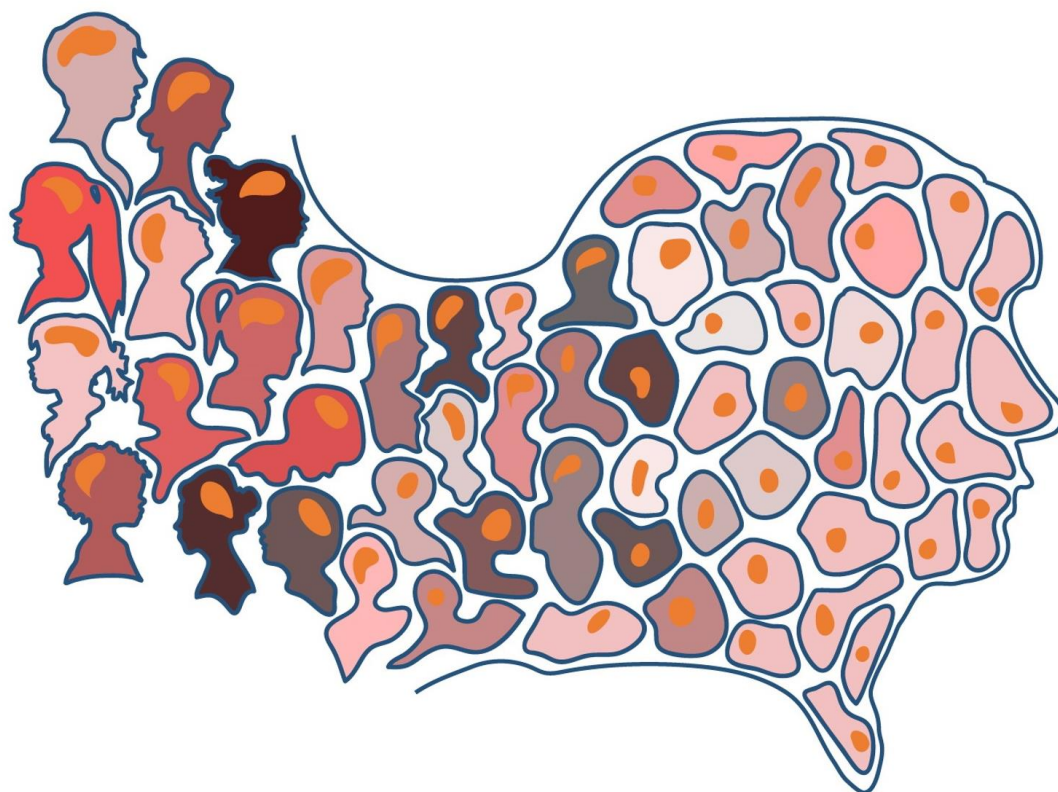
# PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY B

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

## Human socio-cultural evolution in light of evolutionary transitions

A theme issue compiled and edited by Yohay Carmel, Ayelet Shavit, Ehud Lamm, Eörs Szathmáry

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## About this issue

With elaborate division of labour, multiple hierarchies, and intricate communication networks, human societies are immensely complex. Some scholars proposed that human society may be, or may become, a new hierarchical level that may dominate the individual humans within it, similar to the relations between an organism and its cells, or an ant colony and its members. The possibility of this evolutionary transition in individuality raises interesting and controversial questions that are explored here from diverse perspectives: the general theory of evolutionary transitions, cultural evolution, human history, and specific routes of a possible human evolutionary transition. Altogether, this issue provides a broad and rich application of the notion of evolutionary transitions to human past, present and perhaps also future evolution.

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### For more information, contact:

The Royal Society  
6 – 9 Carlton House Terrace  
London  
SW1Y 5AG  
T +44 20 7451 2500  
E [philtransb@royalsociety.org](mailto:philtransb@royalsociety.org)

**Front image:** The cover image, drawn by Eitan Ben-Haim, illustrates a hypothetical societal dynamic, where a society gradually transforms into a higher-level individual, while individuals increasingly function as lower-level units. The papers in this issue contribute to the analysis of this controversial idea. Copyright Eitan Ben-Haim.

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