

# Digging Deeper

## Archaeological & Philosophical Perspectives

A Conference Hosted by the Florida International University Project on Philosophy & Archaeology

### Friday Dec 1 Room 475 Miami Beach Urban Studios FIU, Lincoln Road, Miami Beach

- 8:45 Welcome from Associate Dean **Anderson**; Tea & Coffee
- 9:00-10:10 Colleen **Manassa Darnell**, Hartford: "Paleolithic rock art in Egypt: Function and landscape analysis"
- 10:15-11:25 John **Darnell**, Yale: "*Homo pictus*, painted humans, and zoomorphic syntax in the early rock art of Egypt and Nubia"
- 11:30-12:40 Sean **Allen-Hermanson**, FIU: "Mythology and shamanism in Upper Paleolithic art?"
- Lunch Break**
- 2:00-3:10 Elizabeth **Scarborough**, FIU: "Reconstructions, restorations and ruins: Mý Soñ archaeological sanctuary"
- 3:15-4:25 Anton **Killin**, FIU/ANU: "Origins of music: Theory, evidence, prospects"
- Tea & Coffee**
- 4:50-6:00 Jesse **Prinz**, CUNY: "When did art start? Searching for art-making in the archaeological record"
- 8:00 **Conference Dinner** at Café Roval (a shuttle will pick us up at the Standard Hotel)

### Saturday Dec 2 Room 475 Miami Beach Urban Studios FIU, Lincoln Road, Miami Beach

- 10:00 **Tea & Coffee**
- 10:15-11:25 Francesco **d'Errico**, Bordeaux: "In search of mechanisms at the origin of symbolic material cultures. An archaeological perspective"
- 11:30-12:40 Marilyn **Johnson**, FIU: "Philosophical perspectives on communication by prehistoric bodily adornment"

**Lunch Break**

2:00-3:10 Murray **Clarke**, Concordia: "Upper Paleolithic Mind(s)"

3:15-4:25 Caleb **Everett**, Miami: "Numbers and the making of us: How the history of humankind was reshaped by a simple cognitive tool"

**Tea & Coffee**

4:50-6:00 Fred **Adams**, Delaware: "Consciousness: Why and where?"

**Sunday 3 Dec Conference Rooms at The Standard, Miami Beach**

10:00 **Tea & Coffee**

10:15-11:25 Edouard **Machery**, Pittsburgh: "Ethnic cognition and the Upper Paleolithic"

11:30-12:40 Adrian **Currie**, Cambridge: "Playing the prehistoric flute: Historical reconstruction, tracecentrism, and being human"

**Lunch Break**

2:00-3:10 Mary **Stiner**, Arizona: "Love and death in the Stone Age: What constitutes first evidence of mortuary treatment of the human body?"

# TITLES & ABSTRACTS

**Fred Adams, Delaware**

Consciousness: Why and where?

I am interested in the following sorts of questions:

- 1) Why consciousness evolved in biological systems? (What is its function?)
- 2) Which biological systems have consciousness? (Where is consciousness distributed among living things? Do only creatures with brains have conscious states?)
- 3) What other kinds of mental states, if any, are required for systems to develop phenomenal conscious states.

By conscious states I mean what Ned Block calls phenomenal consciousness—not access consciousness. These are states that have qualitative feel (qualia). What are the system requirements for such states and how could they have evolved? How far down the biological (or physical) scale do such states go?

**Sean Allen-Hermanson, FIU**

Mythology and shamanism in Upper Paleolithic art?

**Murray Clarke, Concordia**

Upper Paleolithic Mind(s)

In the Upper Paleolithic Period of Human Evolution, we find Stone Age Minds. But what constitutes the architecture of such minds? In this paper, I first briefly sketch a few details concerning the archeological and art historical record. Second, I frame my discussion by appeal to Dual Process Theories that posit two multi-purpose reasoning systems, System 1 and System 2, respectively, an Evolutionarily Old Mind and an Evolutionarily New Mind. Finally, I attempt to situate upper Paleolithic Minds within the context of recent debates between Evolutionary Psychologists (such as Cosmides and Tooby) and evolutionary psychologists (such as Buller and Sterelny).

**Adrian Currie, Cambridge**

Playing the prehistoric flute: Historical reconstruction, tracecentrism and being human

There's a commonsense way of thinking about historical reconstruction which I call 'tracecentrism': on this view, we reconstruct the past by inferring from present observations and objects—'traces'—to the past events and processes that formed them. I'll examine tracecentrism via two putative prehistorical flutes. One, from Swabian Jura in Southwest

Germany, is taken to be unproblematically a flute. The other, from the Divje Babes caves in Slovenia, is significantly more contentious: if it is a flute, it is a flute made by Neanderthals. By comparing the epistemic fate of these two finds, I've suggested that tracecentrism misses crucial parts of how historical reconstruction works. Historical scientists don't simply infer from current objects to the past, but set those inferences in rich contexts relating to our conceptions of the past and—I'll suggest in this case—ourselves. One reason the Divje Babes find is so controversial is that positing musical behaviour and instrument-making in Neanderthal would require a radical overhaul of our theories of that lineage. But it would also challenge conceptions of human uniqueness: we very much associate music with ourselves: it elicits deep emotion, fosters social bonds, often requires cooperation, and is creative in that special, somewhat mysterious way that we like to associate with the better side of humanness. If Neanderthals, and other hominids, were also musicians, this suggests that some crucial parts of our humanness must be pushed further back in time.

**John Darnell, Yale**

*Homo pictus*, painted humans, and zoomorphic syntax in the early rock art of Egypt and Nubia

Although the traditions are discontinuous, the desert borders of Upper Egyptian are unique in preserving evidence of both Paleolithic rock art, and some of the earliest evidence for the development of an iconographic system the presages and contributes to the development of writing in the Nile Valley. In both the Paleolithic art of the Kom Ombo-Aswan region, and in the Predynastic through Protodynastic rock art and inscriptional material from the border Upper Egyptian and Lower Nubian area, depictions of humans are rare. An examination of the interactions of rock art, tattooed ritualists, and later Egyptian 'proto-alchemical' descriptions suggests that for the ancient Egyptians, most rock art tableaux evoked ritual activities, and inserted the viewer into the tableaux as participant. An examination of the earlier Egyptian rock art may provide some insight into the function of rock art in the broader Paleolithic world.

**Francesco d'Errico, Bordeaux:** In search of mechanisms at the origin of symbolic material cultures. An archaeological perspective

**Caleb Everett, Miami**

Numbers and the making of us: How the history of humankind was reshaped by a simple cognitive tool

Numbers—words and other symbols for quantities—are found in most, but not all, cultures. In this talk I present evidence from linguistics, psychology, and archaeology demonstrating how humans developed numbers, and how numbers came to have a profound effect on the ways most populations think and behave. I also discuss contemporary populations that lack numbers. The research presented suggests that the development of number systems reshaped

the history of humankind, with their effects beginning in the upper Paleolithic and continuing to the present day.

**Marilynn Johnson, FIU**

Philosophical Perspectives on Communication by Prehistoric Bodily Adornment

**Anton Killin, FIU/ANU**

Origins of music: Theory, evidence, prospects

Music is a highly valued feature of all known living human cultures, pervading many aspects of daily life, playing many roles. And music is ancient. The oldest known uncontested musical instruments appear in the archaeological record from 40,000 years ago. I argue that from these we can infer even earlier musical artefacts/activities, as yet unrepresented in the archaeological record. Musical activities and traditions incrementally evolved throughout modernity (from 250 Kya onwards), global dispersal from Africa (60-100 Kya), and the Holocene (from 10 Kya) and I sketch this evolutionary pathway. I suggest that signalling theory sheds light on the picture of music evolution I present.

**Edouard Machery, Pittsburgh**

Ethnic cognition and the Upper Paleolithic

**Colleen Manassa, Hartford**

Paleolithic Rock Art in Egypt: Function and Landscape Analysis

Recent work at several rock art sites in Upper Egypt (undertaken by the Royal Museums of Art and History in Brussels and the Ministry of Antiquities), particularly in the regions of Kom Ombo and Aswan, have revealed at least two rock art traditions predating the continuous development of rock inscriptions that begin ca. 4000 BCE with the beginning of the Predynastic cultures in Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia. The earliest of these recently identified rock art traditions may be dated on the basis of sediment deposits and OSL techniques to ca. 18000-19000 cal yr BP. Thus far, these Paleolithic rock art sites concentrate in the near desert areas of the southern Upper Egyptian Nile Valley and provide some of the only evidence of an African rock art tradition contemporaneous with that of the well-known Western European sites. The Egyptian sites provide a parallel to the open-air sites, such as Coa, and interestingly reveal unexpected similarities in style and subject matter. An examination of the topography of the region and known and roughly contemporaneous archaeological sites in the area, along with what we know of this region during much later periods allows for informed speculation as to the purpose of the rock art and the reason for its locations.

**Jesse Prinz, CUNY**

When did art start? Searching for art-making in the archaeological record

According to some authors, art is a recent invention (e.g., Kristler, Shiner). According to others, art dates back to at least the upper Paleolithic (e.g., Halverson, Currie), and perhaps even further. Aesthetically compelling paintings, sculptures, and beads have been found, dating back tens of thousands of years, and both pigment use and point-making predate modern humans. This debate hangs on both the interoperation of prehistorical artifacts and the definition of art. If one defines art as incompatible with functional or religious use, then much turns on what ancient figurines, paintings, and pigments were used for. Here I defend a different approach, suggest that art-status is compatible with other functions, but it does require some kind of aesthetic regard. I offer some ways of testing for aesthetic regard in the absence of written records. On this basis, I conclude that Paleolithic (and older) artifacts do not meet that requirement, and suggest, instead, that art-making begins in Neolithic times. This places the origin of art far further back than those who argue for the recent invention thesis, while also suggesting that Franco-Cantabrian cave paintings and other breathtaking works of prehistory may not be art. The approach defended here can also be used to assess other contested cases, including Ancient Egyptian wall reliefs and sculpted religious artifacts from small-scale societies.

**Elizabeth Scarbrough, FIU**

Reconstructions, restorations and ruins: Mỹ Sơn archaeological sanctuary

Mỹ Sơn Archaeological Sanctuary, nestled in the Quảng Nam province of central Việt Nam, is the foremost Champa archaeological site, and the largest archaeological site in Việt Nam. At the time of its rediscovery in 1898, the site had 71 relics comprising 14 architectural groupings built successively from the late fourth/fifth centuries until the thirteenth/fourteenth centuries. In August of 1969, a bomb dropped by an American B52 bomber struck Mỹ Sơn, reducing its largest temple (A1) to heaps of unrecognizable rubble. In 1999 UNESCO deemed Mỹ Sơn a World Heritage Site. In this paper I will highlight different approaches to architectural cultural heritage preservation (e.g., reconstruction, restoration, and ruination) using Mỹ Sơn Archaeological Sanctuary as a test case for these concepts. In the last section of the paper I will briefly argue that we have aesthetic and ethical reasons to 'preserve' A1 as a ruin.

**Mary Stiner, Arizona**

Love and death in the Stone Age: What constitutes first evidence of mortuary treatment of the human body?

After we die, our persona may live on in the minds of the people we know well. Two essential elements of this process are mourning and acts of commemoration. These behaviors extend well beyond grief and must be cultivated deliberately by the survivors of the deceased individual. Those who are left behind have many ways of maintaining connections with their

deceased, such as burials in places where the living are likely to return and visit. In this way, culturally defined places often serve as metaphors of social association and shared experience. Humans are the only kind of animal that buries their dead, and this gesture is preserved in Paleolithic sites as early as 120,000 years ago. Though not the only method of honoring the dead in human cultures, the emergence of burial traditions in the Middle Paleolithic (Mousterian) implies that both Neanderthals and early Anatomically Modern Humans (AMH) had already begun to conceive of the individual as unique and irreplaceable. Claims of primitive mortuary behavior in earlier periods than the Middle Paleolithic fall short in that they lack any signs of positive social-spatial associations between the deceased and survivors. The archaeological evidence for burial behavior in the Middle Paleolithic provides the first clear translation of mourning into a stereotypical action. These burials therefore may represent the first ritualized bridge between the living and the deceased in human evolutionary history.